



# DIRECCIONES

Newsletter of the Arkansas-East Bolivia Partners of the Americas

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## President's Message

I would like to share some wonderful responses from our Partners friends from different parts of the hemisphere as to why we need and love Partners! Their responses pleasantly surprised and encouraged me. I feel they are worth sharing. They flowed from a series of events and writings. This is a report on them and how they developed.

Why don't we just quit Partners? During a board meeting earlier this year one of our older and more experienced board members asked, "Why we don't just quit Partners--we haven't had as many exchanges as we used to have," and so on.

I was upset and disappointed. I got on my computer immediately when we got home and wrote my thoughts from the heart as to why we should continue Partners. I shared them with other board members. Then I decided to offer them to Bob Frans in case he chose to further share them through Direcciones. He did (see previous issue No. 56).

Partners President Steven Vetter reacted. He wrote, "I found your President's Message of special interest, especially the section on the 'three personal reasons why I work for Partner's continued existence.' I hope you don't mind if I circulate the Newsletter to our staff, board and membership and ask if anyone can expand on them."

I was honored, of course, and Steve shared the Direcciones item. A sampling of the responses follow (they are more incisive and perceptive than mine):

Our counterpart Santa Cruz Chapter President Dr. Jorge Ibarnegaray, wrote, "Thanks very much for such an important initiative that has motivated us to express ourselves about the mission that we have in Partners. Thanks, Bob, for Direcciones. Even if my English is so elementary, I'll try to express myself as I can:

"Great values and principles come from our hearts. Interactions, friendship, and camaraderie, are great values that really enrich each others' lives. I agree with Wayne: 'The network, history of working together, and volunteer commitment is too important...'

"Volunteer work has to do with 'goodwill,' it is one of the most important spiritual factors that surpasses reason. We know that we can enrich and achieve a greater degree of freedom and happiness in doing not what we want, but in wanting what we have to do. So duty and the freedom to pursue it is also very important.

"I love to be in Partners, and I especially admire all of the volunteers' commitment and to see so many projects that join us together. While I recognize our own limitations, I believe in the mission of Partners and its commitment to create understanding and improve the lives of people in the Hemisphere. Above everything else, Partners gives me the autonomy to decide, in freedom, how we will work together to carry out the mission. This sense of partnership creates a consciousness of duty and opportunity to serve others."

Guillermo (Willy) Lockhart, of Uruguay and Partners, Inc., wrote:

"I think that Partners allows me to channel my inborn vocation of solidarity and voluntary service. In this way, besides helping others, I have been able to enrich my life, building a strong network of what I consider the most important fortune that I have in my life: Friends.

Paula Laschober, Washington Partners chapter leader, wrote:

"As I read Wayne's three reasons, I see the local interaction, the interaction with his counterpart, and the particular role Partners plays in US-Latin America relations. I agree wholeheartedly with all three.

"The Washington chapter is currently hosting 10 Chilean Youth Ambassadors and their two mentors. One of the mentors, Luis Ramirez, reminded me yesterday evening of a factor that Wayne mentions in his President's Message, i.e., that people who work at a paid job to feed their family often work just as hard at a volunteer job at the same time. Luis, who lives in Concepcion but has traveled many times to the U.S., says that the US has much to teach, by example, to people in Latin America about dedication to volunteerism. The spirit of volunteering is alive in Latin America, he says, but, in general, takes place on a more limited and short-term scale, e.g., helping out at a church-sponsored project.

"Given that Partners fosters long-term relationships, we who are members see that unique long-term view of volunteering in action almost daily--a view that fosters the caring about each other on a personal basis that Wayne mentions in his three reasons. I know that for me, my daily life would be totally different, more circumscribed and emotionally poorer, without the Chilean Partners. We communicate several times a week and it feels like they are just next door, not 9,000 miles away. Chilean Partners always open their homes to me! I know their spouses, children, grandchildren, parents, cousins and even their dogs, their personal health issues and recovery, their jobs and avocation.

"Yes, we arrange people-to-people professional exchanges together all the time, but our friendship goes way beyond that. There are few volunteer organizations that foster that depth of relationship as an integral part of their DNA. Perhaps that DNA is what makes us so special. We actually share emotional and intellectual DNA across countries and continents, and this is an invaluable contribution to the mutual peace, prosperity, and unity of our Americas."

Steve Vetter responded to Paula's thoughts. "You have put your finger on one of the truly remarkable qualities of the Partners of the Americas: It is not only the voluntary spirit but it is the long-term voluntary commitment that is so remarkable about us. I like the idea that you place this in terms of our organizational DNA and am now intrigued with the idea of uncovering better our 'organizational genome' which, like the Human Genome research project, has allowed us to better understand what makes us 'tick.'

"Many of the clues are found in the Partners International Kellogg Fellows: Invest in a well-designed, learning-rich program that brings people together around the topics of service and volunteerism and, if done well, the dividends will continue to pay well into the future.

"Or, identify and organize good programs and projects where volunteers can become engaged in making this a better world and they will stick with us over many years. Volunteers want to see change; conversely, they do not want to waste time in poorly conceived or ineffective programs. The current reorganization effort is based on these insights."

Conclusion. Partners is not done yet. Rather, it is adjusting and adapting to changing conditions. We need to change and adjust, too. But we must never lose the attributes and benefits of Partners that our friends have enunciated so well in their writings above. We continue to need and love Partners.

**Wayne**

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## **Odds & Ends**

It's been a while since we've gotten out a copy of *Direcciones*, so perhaps a word of explanation is in order. At the April meeting of the Board, it was suggested that we might want to try a newer method of communication. Consequently, in July, we met in Little Rock in the Language Lab at UALR. This was at the suggestion of **Leah Wilkinson**, who thought we might be interested in a new way of networking. This "new way" comes under the rubric of "Ning" one of several social networks now available on the web. If you've got a computer, and access to the web, just go to: [www.arkebolivia.ning.com](http://www.arkebolivia.ning.com). Once there, you'll find a line of choices - just click "my page" where you will be able to join up! You can create your own profile, add a picture of yourself (if you have one on your computer), add comments, see what other people

are saying or doing, etc. It's fun! And we urge all of our members to give it a try. Doesn't cost a thing and you will find it a great way to get in touch with other Partners and to find out what's going on. In time, we believe it will form our main method of communication within our partnership in Arkansas and, hopefully, we can encourage our East Bolivia partners to join in as well. When we learn more about it, and when we get more of you to join, we may be able to say: "bye-bye" to *Direcciones*, at least in paper form, and let Ning do our talking!

Until then, we'll try to keep this format going for a while longer. Ordinarily we try to produce four newsletters each year, but with the uncertainty of where we wanted to be we missed one issue already, as you will note from the heading, where we are combining two issues into one. Your Editor still finds it sometimes difficult to come up with interesting material for this newsletter, but Past President **Steve Neuse** has sent us some ideas and we will try to expand on them a bit.

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## Some local items

### Northwest Arkansas Profiles

**Margaret Clark** was featured in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* profiles section on Sunday, July 26. The profile features a two page article with a large photo. One person is quoted saying "Clark is 'a remarkable person who cares deeply about her community.'" It's remarkable how much she does for her university, church, and Arkansas in general. Way to go Margaret!

### POA Technology Updates

Central Arkansas Director-at-Large **Leah Wilkinson** and her daughter have worked hard in getting our chapter into the Twenty-First Century. First, they developed an electronic spreadsheet with comprehensive information about members and friends of our chapter. If you wish to access any of it get in touch with [rfrans@uark.edu](mailto:rfrans@uark.edu). They also developed first class Facebook, "Ning" for the chapter. We'd like to have as many of you as possible join up so we can communicate with each other. It is a secure site dedicated to our membership only. If you want to sign up e-mail Leah at [lxwilkinson@ualr.edu](mailto:lxwilkinson@ualr.edu) for direction. (Ed. Note: see also above for further information). Thanks Leah for a great job.

### International Conference

After a year's hiatus, POA will host its international conference in Washington D.C. from November 11 to 14. This year's conference will include representatives from other organizations and alliances with whom to partner. Details are not set yet, but go to [partners.net](http://partners.net) for more information. Let's see if we can get a good delegation in our nation's capitol.

### Projects

**Paul McLeod**, University of Arkansas Ag. Professor is off for East Bolivia on August 2 on a Farmer-to-Farmer Project. It will focus on educating and helping local farmers to produce vegetables for market. He will be visiting several small villages and towns for the assignment.

The second program was scheduled for July 21, but will be delayed because of swine flu problems in Bolivia. At some future date **Kameri McMullen**, will travel to both Santa Cruz and the Beni for a long anticipated program involving domestic abuse education. **Gina Foianini** (Hermes Justiniano's wife) has worked up a number of seminars and workshops with both religious and secular groups. We'll keep you in touch on the timing for the project.

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## **Bolivian president's surprising critics by John Enders, *Chronicle Foreign Service* 7-26-2009**

Savina Cuellar, the nation's only female governor, is one of President Evo Morales' most unlikely critics.

A Quechua Indian who grew up herding sheep and pigs in the highlands, she is chief executive of Chuquisaca Department and a member of the ruling Movement Toward Socialism party, or MAS. She accuses Morales of governing, with help from Cuba and Venezuela, and forgetting residents who live outside the capital of La Paz and the highlands region the president's main areas of support.

"He (Morales) hasn't respected the Constitution. He hasn't respected the laws," she said.

Since taking office three years ago, Bolivia's first indigenous president has been the target of numerous conservative critics in the resource-rich eastern lowlands, home to many Bolivians of European and mixed descent. This includes bankers, ranchers, investors, legislators and media moguls, who are irate over a rewritten Constitution approved by referendum in January that grants more rights to the nation's 5 million indigenous inhabitants, caps private property and gives the government more control over the economy and natural resources.

But critics also come from a most surprising group - other indigenous leaders.

At least four indigenous politicians have announced that they will run against Morales in national elections scheduled for Dec. 6. They include: Rene Joaquino, the Quechua mayor of the city of Potosi; Alejo Velez, a Quechua leader in the city of Cochabamba; Roman Loayza, a MAS co-founder, and former Vice President Victor Hugo Cardenas, an Aymara.

These politicians say Morales has betrayed his rural roots by focusing more on consolidating power and allowing his government to be dominated by urban socialists than creating jobs in rural areas, where 80 percent still live in poverty.

They also are angry that Morales cut back cooperation with the United States on fighting the drug trade, which sparked Washington to end Bolivia's preferential trade status and has deeply hurt indigenous clothing and artisan manufacturers.

"The government is not fulfilling the political goals that brought it to power," said Loayza.

Velez says Morales favors Aymaras over other indigenous groups, and argues the new Constitution is dividing the country's disparate groups. "He wants to return our people to something that existed 600 years ago, but he's trying to relive something idealized that never existed," he said.

Neither Morales nor any of his senior ministers responded to repeated requests for interviews for this story. But MAS legislators Jorge Silva recently told reporters that the government recognizes that the opposition will use "well-known indigenous figures to divide and weaken Morales."

Morales supporters say he remains popular among the majority of indigenous residents for fulfilling several campaign promises, including nationalizing natural resources, integrating the indigenous majority into the power structure for the first time, and doling out payments to poor families and pregnant women to keep their children nourished and in school. Since his opposition remains highly splintered, Morales is expected to win in December.

MAS leaders hope Morales will not only win re-election - the new Constitution allows him to stand for another five-year term - but that the party will capture two-thirds of congressional seats, giving them power to amend the Constitution to allow Morales to run for a third term.

Some analysts say two indigenous politicians could constitute the strongest ticket to oppose Morales in December: Cardenas and Cuellar. To undermine her power base, the federal government recently withheld important revenue-sharing funds for her department, according to news reports and the governor's office.

Cardenas, who was elected vice president in 1993, is the founder of the Revolutionary Liberation Movement Tupac Katari, named for an Aymara rebel who led Indian forces against the Spanish in 1781. Cardenas campaigned against the new Constitution because he believes it does not sufficiently protect private property and individual rights, and he accuses the government of financial mismanagement and failing to clean up Bolivia's electoral registration system.

In April, Jose Luis Exeni, president of the national electoral court, discovered 700,000 suspect voter registrations, including some who were long dead. Electoral Court officials say they will install a computerized registration system by December.

Cardenas also blames Morales for deepening racial, social and economic divisions by his strident condemnation of opponents. “The government does not accept dissident opinion. Today, if you criticize the government you are declared an enemy,” he said.

Indigenous women from El Alto have marched through the streets of La Paz, chanting, “Death to the traitor Savina Cuellar.” In March, several hundred MAS supporters attacked the Cardenas family home near Lake Titicaca, ransacking and attempting to burn it down. They also called him a traitor for campaigning against the referendum. His wife, Lydia, was hospitalized with light injuries.

Some analysts agree that Cardenas will have a tough time unifying a disparate and often rowdy opposition. He must also overcome accusations that, by serving in the previous white-dominated government of former President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, he “sold out.”

But others say Cardenas and other indigenous candidates have demonstrated a clear intention to unite the country and govern for the poor and dispossessed.

“The Participation of indigenous candidates in the December presidential elections will worry President Morales and the government, because he won’t be able to demonize them for being candidates of the oligarchy or new-liberal,” said Jorge Crespo, a former ambassador to the United States.

Some 36 indigenous groups comprise approximately 5 million of Bolivia’s nearly 10 million inhabitants.

The two largest groups are the Quechuas, who speak the language of the ancient Incas, and the Aymaras, who have maintained a separate culture for hundreds of years. The third-largest group - the Guarani - live in the southeastern lowland region and are not a political force.

Before the Inca conquest, several Aymara subgroups maintained independently governed areas and revolted against their rulers on a regular basis. Quechuas have been more open to integrating into dominant Spanish society, while Aymaras have been reluctant to mix with outsiders.

President Evo Morales’ power base is made up mostly of Aymaras of the highland plains and inhabitants of the coca-growing Chapare region near Cochabamba, where he worked as a union leader.

Nevertheless, when their interests coincide, the Quechuas and Aymaras work together. In 2005, they helped elect Morales, the nation’s first indigenous president.

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## **Bolivia: vanishing glacier threatens La Paz water supply**

The 18,000-year-old Chacaltaya glacier overlooking La Paz has vanished six years earlier than scientists predicted, ending the world’s highest ski run - threatening water supplies to the Bolivian capital. The World Bank says water could be diminished imminently to the 2 million people in La Paz and neighboring El Alto.

Chacaltaya - “bridge of ice” in the Aymara language - has been a barren slope devoid of permanent snow for some six months as the Southern Hemisphere’s summer came on. Scientists had forecast for its disappearance for 2015. The World glacier Monitoring Service at the University of Zurich says that from the Andes to the Alps, glaciers have retreated for 18 years - twice as fast now as a decade ago.

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## **Doctor Dies from Swine Flu in Bolivia (from the Latin American *Herald Tribune*)**

LA PAZ - A doctor has died from the AH1N1 flu virus, raising the death toll from the disease in Bolivia to 12, the Health Ministry said.

The physician was treated for more than three weeks but did not recover, health officials said.

The doctor died in La Paz, but she caught the flu while treating patients at a hospital in the Andean city of Oruro, Health Ministry epidemiology director Eddy Martinez told Efe.

The physician was taken from Oruro to La Paz on July 16 for treatment, Martinez said, adding that she might not have sought medical care in time and the case was under investigation.

“We have to see what happened, but it was obviously something that concerns us a lot because it deals with a health worker,” Martinez said.

Two other deaths in La Paz and Santa Cruz are being investigated to determine if they were due to influenza. A total of 953 people have been infected with the AH1N1 flu virus, according to the latest health Ministry figures, with 653 of the cases reported in the eastern province of Santa Cruz. Santa Cruz has accounted for some 69 percent of the total AH1N1 flu cases.

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## **Morales Leads Still Undefined Bolivian Presidential Race (by Erin Hatheway, AIN)**

With less than four months until the December 6<sup>th</sup> Bolivian presidential elections, the field of candidates is disorganized and constantly shifting. Recent polls indicate that current President Evo Morales will likely be reelected. Although opposition leaders discuss plans to create a “united front” to challenge the incumbent, no viable alternative candidate has emerged, and individuals appear reticent to join coalitions so early in the process. Many candidates have past political experience in or allied with traditional parties. Others continue to seek affiliation with new political groups in an attempt to recreate their identity for skeptical voters. Lack of solid campaign platforms and complaints of funding shortages characterize the election atmosphere, and in many cases unofficial campaigns and contradictory press coverage make it difficult to discern who will eventually run. Opposition candidates considering alliances seem to be united only in their rejection of Morales, instead of any shared vision for governing the nation.

Unfortunately, the candidates have yet to articulate clear proposals for their political, governmental and constitutional initiatives. This reflects a much deeper issue in contemporary Bolivian politics: the need for proactive alternative proposals. So far, the three vague options for Bolivian voters are to stick with the current MAS leadership and see how their reforms develop, despite the probability of continued political obstacles; revert to the traditional party model still championed by conservative leaders fighting for reelection or choose a more moderate candidate whose proposals do not differ significantly from MAS initiatives. In this panorama, it is likely that even Bolivians less enthusiastic about MAS will still opt for the incumbent in the absence of fresh ideas.

The candidates capacity to bridge deep regional and ethnic divides will also present an interesting campaign challenge. Recent elections and referenda results demonstrate the need for opposition contenders to tap into voter demographics outside of the urban, upper-middle class mestizo populations, which have historically represented conservative opposition groups core support. The urban working class, rural and indigenous populations have generally supported Morales. Some indigenous groups feel the Morales administration watered down their proposals in the process of making concessions to gain approval for the new Constitution. In particular, they have expressed frustration about the low number of new special congressional seats assigned to indigenous leaders. Yet, indigenous, municipal and regional autonomy initiatives included in MAS-promoted legislation could also provide significant benefits once they are legally defined.

Opposition strategists and the mainstream U.S. press tend to promote erroneous generalizations of indigenous voting preferences - as if they simply want to elect indigenous politicians - reflecting broader misconceptions of Bolivian politics. For example, a recent San Francisco Chronicle article that stated that some of Morales’ “critics also come from a most surprising group - other indigenous leaders.” In truth, this is nothing new. Bolivia’s indigenous peoples are diverse with sometimes conflicting interests, and shifting alliances characterize all political spheres. Indigenous people are far from homogenous and like any voters anywhere, they tend to critically consider many complex issues at play in politics beyond ethnicity.

According to the new constitution approved in January, the winning candidate in this year’s election must receive 50 percent or more of the votes. Or earn a minimum of 40 percent and beat the next closest competitor by at least 10 percent. If this does not occur, voters must return to the polls within 60 days of the first election to choose between the two contenders who initially received the most votes. President Morales currently leads polls with 47 percent; his next closest competitor garners only 9 percent approval.

Media coverage is confusing and speculative, reflecting the general disorganization of this campaign season so far. For example, despite the indications of this poll, Ruben Costas explicitly announced that he would not be “a presidential, vice presidential or legislative representative” candidate. The media also continues to speculate about former President Carlos Mesa as a possible contender, although in April he announced he

would not run for reelection.

As part of the recent electoral law debate, congressional opposition leaders demanded a new “biometric” voter registry that would save electronic records of voters’ fingerprints and photo identification, claiming that the existing registry facilitated electoral fraud. They obtained this concession as part of the new electoral law.

In response to conservative leaders’ criticism of the existing voter registry, moderate representative Alejandro Colanzi emphasized that, ironically, they did not question this same system when they were elected:

There has been talk of the supposedly sullied electoral register. However, concerns about that same (registry) which elected the senators, representatives, mayors and prefects who demanded it be cleaned up didn’t cause them to resign; so, their attitude doesn’t make sense. It’s because the registry only interests politicians that use democracy as a tool, without understanding that it is supposed to serve the citizens....who, obviously have been abandoned.

In response, the Bolivian government contracted an Argentine company to carry out the registry process and install necessary equipment.

However, MAS leaders express concern that this process will not be complete for the December 6 election deadline. The House of Representatives, led by a MAS majority, passed a bill that would allow the old, manually generated voter registry to be used in case the biometric system cannot be implemented in time. But the conservative opposition-dominated Senate rejected the bill the night of July 7. Senator Walter Guiteras (PODEMOS) indicated that opposition leaders would consider modifying the electoral law if the biometric system fails. The president to the National Electoral Court, Antonio Costa, announced on August 9 that he approved a contingency plan to back up the electronic registry system. Costas estimates that the registry will be complete by October 15 and replacement machinery and personnel are ready to implement should the need arise.

In Bolivia, it is difficult to predict election outcomes four months before the vote. Unforeseeable political alliances will likely be formed with little notice and will shift constantly until Election Day as candidates shop around for parties and popular support. It is important to note that politics in Bolivia have always made for strange bedfellows. For example, in the 1980s the leftist Revolutionary Movement (MIR) partly proclaimed that “rivers of blood” separated them from the politics of conservative dictators. Eight members of their party were murdered under the authority of dictator Luis Garcia Mesa on January 15, 1961. Evidence also implicates Garcia Mesa’s second in command, Luis Arce Gomez, in the plane accident in which a severely burned MIR leader, Jaime Paz Zamora, was the only survivor. Ironically, MIR reversed its position in 1989 as the party formed an alliance with another former dictator, General Hugo Banzer, to allow third place winner Paz Zamora to assume the presidency. At that juncture MIR asserted, “We built a bridge of democracy.”

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## President Swegle announces the Annual Meeting

Your faithful and hard-working Annual Meeting planning committee has been hard at work--with good results. They include **Thecia Taylor**, Central Arkansas Regional VP; **George Vena**, widely-anticipated new Chapter President; and yours truly, soon to be out to pasture. So here's a brief early report.

Mark your calendar for October 23 and 24 to attend the Annual Meeting in Little Rock. The event kicks off with a reception at the AR river-side home of **Sandy and Wayne Swegle**, starting at 7 p.m., Friday evening. Special guests will be our next-day speakers--**Matt Claussen**, VIP from the Washington office of Partners; and **Paul McLeod**, Chair of our Agriculture Committee. Easy directions to our home will be available later. We are considering a couple of locales for the meeting, starting at, say, 9:30 Saturday morning.

Our outstanding speakers will have must-hear messages. Although we haven't discussed his subject in detail, you know Matt will tell us about what's happening in the hemisphere-wide realm of our organization, outcome of his recent meeting in Cochabamba, including Santa Cruz president **Jorge Ibarnegaray**, and about the November 12-13 Partners conference in Washington, DC, for starters.

Paul recently returned from Bolivia, where he helped people in the fast-growing population of the eastern region learn how to grow more vegetables and other garden produce. This is sorely needed and will help reduce or prevent serious malnutrition in the area. Furthermore, Paul has been involved in other Farmer-to-Farmer

(FtF) projects, both in Latin America and southeast Asia. He has a fascinating story to tell. We have been involved in implementing FtF projects for many years.

We're leaving you to enjoy the fine food of Little Rock for lunch--we'll have suggestions of nearby spots. Then we have planned a lovely sit-down dinner at Vieux Carre restaurant Saturday night. We had a wonderful meal and lively conversation there at our last Annual Meeting in Little Rock. (Your planning committee had lunch together at several choice restaurants in our research project to find what we thought was the best for you. We were glad to go that extra mile on your behalf.)

Again, in review: Friday night reception at the Swegles; Saturday meeting with outstanding speakers Matt Claussen and Paul McLeod, and minimum Chapter business; lunch on own, with some suggestions; group dinner Saturday night at Vieux Carre.

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## **Final thoughts**

Once we got started on this issue, it was hard to stop! We apologize for its length but perhaps that makes up for the earlier missing issue. It's also a bit disjointed, what with announcing goings and comings seemingly out of order but perhaps you will forgive us for that.

DUES - we really haven't bugged you much about such this year, but if you have not yet paid, won't you please take care of this little matter? We are dependent upon member support for our continued existence. If you do not remember your status, just contact Bob Frans (address, phone, and e-mail on the masthead) and he'll be glad to bring you up to date.

Remember the Annual Meeting in Little Rock, October 23 and 24 and plan to attend. It's always fun and renewing to get together at least once a year. Undoubtedly there will be a more formal announcement a bit later with venues and directions - look for it. Also the International Partners meeting in Washington in November should be of interest. Consider going.

Finally - talk up Partners. It's something to be proud of. Go out and find a new member - get them interested in Bolivia. Inspire people to consider taking a trip there - lot's of people are always looking for new places to go - this might be it.