

## In the Spotlight – Bolivia

By Ed “Hazukashii” Howell

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Bolivia has been civilized dating back to at least 400 BC, and created impressive structures on par with other advanced ancient civilizations. Bolivia was ruled from about 700-1000 AD by the Tiahuanaco empire, but were eventually conquered by the Incas in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Spaniards arrived in 1533 and conquered the Incas, and ruled until 6 Aug 1825 when Bolivia gained its independence from Spain. The country took the name Boliva in honor of the leader of the resistance, Simon Bolivar, according to [localhistories.org](http://localhistories.org).

Originally based on silver, tin mining eventually became the primary revenue in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the top attractions are the Uyuni Salt Flats, National Park Madidi, Lake Titicaca, and riding the Cable Cars in La Paz, which is the [highest administrative capital](#) of the world at nearly 12,000 feet (3640 m) at city center, and rises to nearly 13,500 feet (4100 m) on the edges. Current day, Bolivia is a poor country but still rich with resources, and gold mining and tourism have become the major economic thrust. The future looks bright for Bolivia.

The Hash House Harriers first arrived in Bolivia on 22 Feb 1988 when Lonnie 'Klinger' Kitterer founded the **La Paz H3, the Hash with Altitude**. Klinger had been hashing with the Balikpapan H3 in Indonesia. I was able to track down Klinger and get his story on the founding . . .



*The La Paz HHH began with an official letter to the Inter-Sec [Magic] in Bangkok, Thailand. The letter began with the proclamation that Katmandu was now the Second Highest HHH. A letter was then sent to various Embassies and businesses in La Paz stating that the La Paz HHH would have its first run on February 22, 1988 and that all Hashers were welcome (urged) to attend. Twenty-two hounds showed up and the pack set off on the first LPH3 (later changed to LPH4 standing for Highest Hash House Harriers) run.*

*The LPH4 was, at first, for Men Only. However, at a point, about one third of the way on the trail, a group of women joined the pack! Among them was the wife of the Hare who had extensive HHH experience in Singapore and Balikpapan. At the post run circle everyone agreed that the LPH4 would be of mixed gender. I believe something was said like "Ok, we'll take the Women, but not the Irish!"*

*The original effort fell short, and after one year it was restarted and reorganized with Joe Liebner as GM and Lonnie Kitterer as On-Sec. The LPH4 would be mixed adults and would take place on Monday evenings. The "fat years" of the LPH4 seemed to be the early to mid-1990s. Then membership dwindled until Jim Dunlap {Stool Sample} took over as GM in 1998 when it began to grow again. Joe Liebner (Beef) had been long gone, and I departed Bolivia in June 1999 with 257 LPH4 runs.*



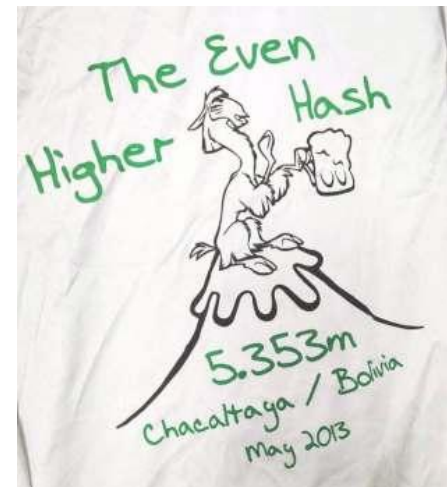
Klinger would return to La Paz to help celebrate LPH4's 500th run in June 2000, but soon after, Stool Sample was transferred to Lima, Peru sometime in 2001. Unfortunately, after he left, the LPH4 began to fade away. Klinger says he continued to receive E-Mails and other correspondence until sometime in 2004, when it appeared the La Paz H4 totally ran out of steam.

Klinger also enlightened me on a few highlights of the LPH4. "The Logo (somewhat copied from the Balikpapan H3) is a toilet seat featuring a Llama, with running shoes, crossing a mountain peak while following paper. Of course, inscribed is La Paz Hash House Harriers and La Paz Bolivia. At the bottom is written 'Our Hash Gets You Higher'." Another interesting and unique part of the LPH4 is not only do they exist and run weekly in the highest capital city in the world, they also travel to an even higher point for outstation runs. Klinger stated . . .

*Run #14: May 21, 1989 was the first Chacataya run. La Paz airport is 13,300 feet in altitude. The main city center is 12,000 feet, and the area used for most of the runs is at 10,000 - 11,000 feet. The Highest Run takes place at Chacataya Ski Resort. The 'run-slog' begins at the ski cabin at 17,500 feet up to the top at 18,000 feet. I measured these altitudes with an aircraft altimeter.*

Another memorable event took place on 29 Oct 1994, on run 300 of the LPH4 . . .

*Sometime during the circle, the Asshole of the Week (AOW) was awarded. Included on the run were about 5 Army Special Forces members who were [on temporary duty] in La Paz. I believe [their] Home HHH was called the Carolina Trash. They were "animals" which means that they were a lot of fun. Their leader was "Two Dogs Fucking." Although we didn't really miss it, about two weeks later we received a letter with photos of them holding our AOW award in front of the U. S. capitol building. Included was a ransom note. Over the next few months, we received notes and photos of them with our AOW from Paris, and Cairo. They indicated that we might be able to get it back at some future Interhash event. I had alerted our members and stated "how dare they come in here, rape our cows, stampede our women and steal our AOW" (with respects to Mel Brooks). Stool Sample, Jim Dunlap, later attended an Inter [Americas] Hash event in Florida and managed to retrieve it. It involved many Down-Downs and large block of ice! Two Dogs Fucking was heard to mutter something like "I don't know how we got this"!*



A second hash club briefly appeared in 1990, when Rob Young founded the **Santa Cruz H3**, in the lower 'economic capital' of Bolivia, having come from the Perth H3 in Australia. Klinger mentioned that . . .

*The Santa Cruz HHH had its first two runs on October 20 & 21, 1990. It was started by Rob Young who was a close friend of Joe Liebner of La Paz H4. Rob had a lot of hashing experience in other parts of the World. Joe, John Foss and I flew to Santa Cruz to help get the first two runs set and organized.*

In order to get the new hash going, Rob Young asked the nearby hashers in La Paz to come down and support his new hash club. Over the next couple of year, the hashers in La Paz would journey down to Santa Cruz to attend various events, and otherwise drop in on their hash club for their regularly scheduled trails. Unfortunately, as we have seen all over the world, when Rob, the main protagonist left, the club began to falter and fade away. Klinger was not sure how much longer they lasted after Rob left.

Since the end of the original La Paz H4 back in 2004, the club has been resurrected on a few occasions by the current GM, Christian 'Handy Job' Conitzer. Handy Job had been hashing in Germany, but returned to Bolivia in about 15 years ago. Handy Job is also the main organizer of the annual La Paz Marathon, which must be a challenge for even the most experienced competitive runners around the world.

As previously stated, the La Paz H4 is currently the only hash club in Bolivia, and hash runs are very sporadic at best. I was able to join their most recent hash trail on my birthday, back in December. It was my own highest hash run at 10,735 feet with the La Paz Highest H3 (LPH4) . . . eclipsing the trail I set in Ecuador for the Quito H3 a couple years ago at 9,872 feet. Comparatively, I have also run with the Baku H3 in Azerbaijan a couple years ago, the lowest capital city in the world, at 57 feet below sea level. What a contrast, breathing alone makes hashing in Bolivia such a challenge. Both were such a great experience in hashing.

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