

PANAMA CANAL SOCIETY, INC.
ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
ROSEN SHINGLE CREEK RESORT, ORLANDO, FLORIDA
JULY 2, 2010

President Tom Wilder welcomed the 164 members and guests, in attendance, to the 78th Annual Business Meeting held at Rosen Shingle Creek Resort, Orlando, Florida and called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

Cheryl Russell, Chaplain gave the invocation and **Chris Wilder, Sgt. at Arms** led the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Tom Wilder recognized past presidents, Pete Foster, Betty LeDoux-Morris, Marje Foster, Jim O'Donnell, Margot Jordan, Faith Brundage, Bill McLaughlin, Elaine Lewis and Bob Russell.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, copies of the general membership meeting minutes held on May 2, 2010 in Sarasota, Florida were distributed to the membership, therefore, the president asked for a motion to accept the minutes as written. Margot Jordan made a motion to accept the minutes; it was seconded by Elaine Lewis. Motion carried.

The May Financial Statement was also distributed to the membership and stands for audit.

The president recognized Cheryl (Dunning) Lowery from Tokyo who travelled the farthest to attend the Annual Meeting.

Tom also recognized the Executive Board members including 1st Vice President Margaret McLaughlin, 2nd Vice President Tom Spence, Director, Shirley Avery, Director, Mike Coffey, Director, Pam Reid, Director-at-Large, Bliss Connerton, Treasurer, Jim Parthenais, Immediate Past President, Bob Russell for their input, counsel and experience has been valuable over the past two years. Tom also thanked the standing committee members including By-Laws Chairperson and Historian, Bill McLaughlin, Legislative Representative, Jim O'Donnell, Chaplain, Cheryl Russell, Sunshine Committee, Albert and Aura Wilder, Insurance Liaison, Beth Brandenburg. He also thanked the staff, including *Canal Record* Editor, Jacque Vowell, *Canal Record* Assistant, Carol Masino, and Office Manager, Nancy Van Sicien. He also thanked his wife Kathy and children for all their support over the past two years.

Tom Wilder, President reported that the past year has been tough on many. We know that our members have experienced the down turn in the economy, but thankfully the ground under our feet has changed from quicksand to more stable ground and we are seeing a recovery not only as a society, but as a nation. The board continues to address expenditures and ways to save money. One notable cost reduction was re-negotiating our office lease that will save the society more than \$12,000 over the next three years. We will continue to evaluate ways to reduce expenses.

In our efforts to improve communication to our members we launched a Facebook page. Within a few weeks we exceeded our expectations now utilize Facebook to augment the *Canal Record* with announcements of events.

Our website this year will be moved to our own in-house server which will improve functionality. We will continue to make improvements to forms and features. Also, we will begin to explore the need for an improved integrated database. Having our own server will allow us to move forward on this important technology improvement.

The *Canal Record* is our most visible chronicle of our Society. We believe this publication will help perpetuate the Society for many more years. Because of technology, we have been able to increase the number of color covers without substantial additional expense. And it is my hope that we are able to periodically provide the members with a full color issue.

The president provided the membership with a snapshot review of the State of the Society as follows:

1) Membership has declined another 149 members since 2009, while this is significant; we feel that strides are being made by the board to slow the rate of decline. We did show a large drop in members from 2008 to 2009, but less than half that number did not renew from 2009 to 2010. We will see a slight gain in membership during the reunion. This year we have enhanced our pro-active approach to membership and our membership committee recommended that we begin sponsoring membership drives at different events attended by Zonians. A membership kit was assembled and member sponsors volunteered to recruit members at these events. One of these events was during the Annual Cayuco Race in Panama where more than a dozen members signed up.

2) General Membership Meetings have been successful and provide members the opportunity to attend and meeting with board members throughout the year. These traveling meetings will continue.

3) General Income versus Expenses from August thru May for the past three years (2008, 2009 and 2010). The \$10.00 dues increase has helped move our income above our expenses. To try and cut any further would begin to affect the level of service we provide our members.

4) Our current investments have not dropped below our established threshold of \$160,000. It is important to note that due to the diligence of our Treasurer Jim Parthenais and having one of our own with Sun Trust, D LaPorta who what over our funds we did not loose any money during the market drop.

5) The *Canal Record* cost has reached a cost level that is acceptable. Going forward, we believe we will not realize any further reductions in these costs and maintain what we have. We know costs will fluctuate slightly up and down for various reasons. The only way to further reduce the cost of publishing the *Canal Record* would be to reduce the number of publications or pages in each edition. Reducing these numbers may be necessary at some future time, but to do so now would significantly hurt the importance of the publication.

6) The 2009 Annual Reunion was touch and go as far as meeting our minimum room numbers. In the 11th hour we were able to meet our obligations to the hotel and as a result did not lose any convention space. It remains our goal to have the reunion pay for itself. It is important to note that there are costs which are not captured. If they were included we would see that the annual reunion is a break even event.

It takes many volunteers to have a successful reunion. Our thanks to the committee chairpersons all those members who take time out to volunteer in one of the areas such as; Registration, Ticket Sales, Information just to name a few. Also, thanks to our Reunion Co-Chairs Bill McLaughlin and Mike Coffey. I would like to thank Margaret McLaughlin and her committee who do the decorations for the dances. Every year we are impressed with how she transforms the ball room that takes many hours to accomplish.

This year Rosen Shingle Creek thought outside the box and offered “stay 4 nights get the 5th night free” as a way to help the Society entice members to attend this year’s reunion. This gesture was not part of our contract and didn’t have to be offered. I would like to thank all the staff, administration and Mr. Rosen for the hospitality they have shown the Panama Canal Society members over the past several years. And thank you also to Betty Morris who oversees our hotel rooms and the many “special requests” made by our members. She does a lot of “behind the scenes” work that help make our stay seamless.

Next year we will transition back to the Orlando World Center Marriott. While we have made many friends here at Rosen Shingle Creek, we have learned that our members like change.

In closing, we know that sustaining or increasing membership continues to be a priority. This board has worked hard to be good stewards of the member's funds and as this board concludes our term we have built on the ideas of our predecessors and I believe made improvements.

Randy Drake, C. P. A. reported that he has been associated with the organization for a number of years when he did a full audit of the financials for the Society and that then transcended into doing the tax returns yearly. He still has the opportunity to talk with the board members and Treasurer during the year and it is a pleasure to continue on. The Society is doing some good things and over the years the board has been very competent in their leadership. Randy commented that the membership has constantly put together a successful board. It takes a great deal of leadership to establish a great company and your board continues to manage the Society very successfully. Secondly, the Society has a stable group of office staff, which helps with a smooth transition. Randy reported that the Society is continuing cost controls at all different levels. In closing, Randy told the membership that he would be available to answer any questions that they had and thanked them for the opportunity to speak at the Annual Meeting.

Bill McLaughlin, Reunion Coordinator, reported that most of the activities will take place in the Gatlin portion of the Convention Center expect for the Annual Luncheon which will be held in the Panzacola Ballroom on the other side of the Convention Center. We have provided all attendees a Reunion Flyer that has all the information and locations of the reunion activities. Also, our activities are shown on the Teleprompters throughout the hotel and in your room.

If you have any questions or concerns, please stop by the Information Desk at Galin Registration Desk #1. There are also bulletin boards at Information with information on activities, class reunion locations, etc.

Bill reported that we had 70 golfers sign up for this year's tournament and he asked Margot Jordan, Golf Tournament Chairperson to give a report. Margot reported that the attendance did drop the past two years, but those who did play enjoyed the day and the luncheon was outstanding following the tournament. She also reported that Scott Edmundson won the two nights plus golf fees at the Orlando World Center Marriott.

Bill reminded the membership that the clubhouse is located in the Conway Signature Ballrooms; there will be two Cultural Seminars co-sponsored by the Panama Canal Society and the Panama Canal Museum on Friday and Saturday afternoons and Dr. Stanley Heckadon, STRI Staff Scientist with the Smithsonian Tropical Research will present two very interesting presentations; we again offering the dance class on Friday afternoon; the 2nd Annual Pool Party will take place on Saturday afternoon; the Panazonian Dance and Ball will feature Tito Mouynes y SU Conjunto tonight at the Panazonian and Frankie Pretto and his Paranda Band will play on Saturday night.

Bill also reported that this year we are having "Friday Family Night Dance". From 8:30 – 9:30 p.m. children under 12 will be allowed into the Panazonian dance for free, but must be accompanied by a parent.

At this time, Bill reported that we would like to recognize a few key players from Shingle Creek that have been instrumental in the success of our four reunions here at Shingle Creek and presented each with a Certificate of Appreciation. Those receiving the certificates were Steve Braun, Roger Molnar, Juan Marchiel, Fred Creter, and Celeste Frucht. Bill on behalf of the Panama Canal Society thanked all the staff at Rosen Shingle Creek for their outstanding support.

Jim O'Donnell, Legislative Representative, highlighted the June Legislative Report (original attached to the minutes).

Albert and Aura Wilder, Sunshine Committee, reported that over the year they have sent out several cards to members who were recuperating from surgeries, not feeling well, etc. He said that if anyone knew of someone that was sick to please notify the office so a card could be sent.

Mike Coffey, Membership Committee, reported that the Society created a Facebook page and we are on LinkedIn during the past year. He also mentioned that the committee suggested that we travel to different functions during the year and this year we had a representative of the Membership Committee in Panama for the Cayuco Race. He also stated that if you are planning a regional event to please get in touch so that the information can be posted on the Society website. Mike also stressed that the members needs to maintain their membership each year.

Joe Wood, Panama Canal Museum, reported that the Panama Canal Museum and the University of Florida were united in marriage during the reunion to celebrate the partnership between the University and the Museum. Joe also reported that 22 oral histories are planned this year at the reunion.

Betty LeDoux Morris, Past President, introduced Nector Collazo and Lilliam Berlingeri representatives of the Orlando World Center Marriott. Nector informed the membership that the entire staff at the World Center is waiting to welcome them back in 2011.

Bob Russell, Nominating Chairperson, announced the results of the election ballots for the term of 2010-2012. He stated that 352 ballots were received and four were invalid plus 19 ballots for directors were invalid because of voting for more than three directors. The results are as follows:

President: Tom Wilder	343 votes
1 st Vice President: Tom Spence	332 votes
2 nd Vice President: Mike Coffey	345 votes
Director: Noreen Hanson	267 votes
Director: Chris Wilder	241 votes
Director: Shirley Avery	230 votes
Director: Pam Reid	212 votes

Since there were four directors on the ballot for three positions for director the top three with the most votes were elected. Following the results of the voting a motion was made by Jim O'Donnell to destroy the ballots; it was seconded by Elaine (Vestal) Lewis. Motion carried. Bob Russell, the immediate past president installed the new board officers by administering the oath of office to Tom Wilder, Tom Spence, Mike Coffey, Noreen Hanson, Chris Wilder, and Shirley Avery.

Throughout the entire meeting door prizes were awarded which were donated by the vendors. The grand prizes donated by Orlando World Center Marriott, Condor Outfitters and Copa Airlines were won by Bob Russell (2 nights at Orlando World Center Marriott); Shirley Camby (four nights at Breezes Resort plus COPA Airline Tickets; John Schmidt (El Panama & Bambito Hotel (two nights each); Robert Forsythe (Los Mandarinos two nights); Nancy Van Siclen (Hotel Riu (four nights); and Dawn Gressang (Gamboa Rainforest and Playa Bonita Resort (two night each plus Copa Airline tickets).

Margot Jordan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:00 noon; it was seconded by Joan Ohman. Motion carried.

NANCY VAN SICLEN
OFFICE MANAGER/SECRETARY

TOM WILDER
PRESIDENT