



Panama Canal Society Annual General Membership Meeting
Rosen Shingle Creek Resort, Orlando Florida
Reunion 2022 – July 8, 2022

At 10:04am, President, Bill McLaughlin welcomed everyone to the 2022 Annual meeting of the Panama Canal Society and announced Reunion time is the best time of the year seeing all the familiar faces. A quorum was established.

Bill announced that the Society is celebrating its 90th Anniversary. Bill spoke about the founding of the Panama Canal Society back on July 14, 1932. The founder fathers, including John F. Warner, were on the S.S. Ancon in New York Harbor near the Ambrose Lighthouse enjoying an evening in the Social Hall. They talked about finding a way to stay in touch after working together on the Panama Canal; thus, the Society was born.

At a previous board meeting, Bob Russell suggested sending a letter to the Mayor of Orange County, Florida, Jerry L. Demings inviting him to attend our Reunion. Mayor Demings could not attend today's meeting due to other commitments, but he declared that July 4-10, 2022, as the Panama Canal Society week. He sent a written Proclamation and Bill showed a video that Mayor Demings prepared for us.

Meeting was then called to order by Bill McLaughlin at 10:10 a.m.

Bill introduced the Chaplain, Carl Orvis who gave the Invocation. Then he asked for a moment of silence for all the members and friends who have passed in the past year. Bill introduced the Sergeant-at-Arms, Ted Kaufer who lead the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance:

Bill introduced the 2020-2022 Executive Board Members who were present on the dais. Brittney Wilder (1st Vice President); James Beattie (2nd Vice President), Laura Kosik (Director), Patti Revello (Director), Bob Russell (Director & Legislative Representative), Tom Wilder (Director-at-Large and FaceBook Administrator), Elaine Lewis (Past President), Cindy Alderman (Treasurer), Raymond Husum (By-Laws Chairperson), Carl Orvis (Chaplin), Ted Kaufer (Sergeant-at-Arms), Jacque Vowell (Editor), and Kathy Malin (Office Manager). Bill also introduced, Anna Hertrich (Office Assistant), Betty LeDoux and Nancy Van Siclen (Hotel Coordinators), Margaret McLaughlin (Decorations Chairperson), and Rae Donaldson (Sunshine Chairperson).

Bill thanked the 5 outgoing Board members for their past and continued contributions. The outgoing Board members are Brittney Wilder, James Beattie, Patti Revello, Bob Russell, and Tom Wilder. He also thanked two previous Board members that left the Board last year, Noreen Hanson and Nancy Van Siclen.

Then Bill introduced the Past Presidents who were in attendance: Margot Jordan (1997-1998), Betty LeDoux (1989-1991 & 2000-2002), Bill McLaughlin (2002-2004), Elaine (Vestal) Lewis (2004-2006), Bob Russell (2006-2008), Tom Wilder (2008-2014), Mike Coffey (2014-2018) and Shirley Avery-Bentley (2018-2020).

Members Attending: 225

Old Business:

Minutes Approval: Bill asked for an approval for the May 14, 2022, General Membership minutes held at Anderson Park in Tarpon Springs. Jim Duffus made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by George Downing. Motion carried.

Bill asked all to review the Financial Report packet that was handed out. Cindy Alderman prepared the packet and will now explain and show a slide presentation. Cindy highlighted the Balance Sheet, Income Statement, and Cash Flow. Membership is our largest revenue, and the *Canal Record* is our largest expense. Net income is trending down and as we are a dying breed, so we encourage your descendants and friends to join the Society. The expenses are trending up due to the national supplies and demands. Cindy did indicate that our 2022 membership is solid.

Door prizes donated by our Vendors were drawn.

Bill thanked Cindy and stated that this report will stand for audit and report will be published in the October *Canal Record*. He read his President's message that was printed in the *Canal Record* regarding a serious point in our timeline if we want our Society to survive. With the treaty implemented in 1979, it was the end of the American Canal Zone as we knew it. The Society's expenses are exceeding the income which is from membership. Bill pointed out the Society's Facebook



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page has over 6,000 members but the Society only has 2,100 members. He was everyone to encourage their families, friends, and classmates to join the Society.

Bill spoke about the 'scuttlebutt' on Facebook recently regarding holding the reunion at a different time than the 4th of July weekend. A person was stating that airfares and parking were high at this time of the year. John Husum spoke up that the cost of travel is not bad if you plan ahead. The dates of the next Reunion are printed in the *Canal Record* along with the dates for the next several Reunions. Bill has encouraged our speakers and band members to book their flights early to get the better deals. Everyone needs to plan early, and you can always cancel your hotel reservations 72 hours out if a problem arises.

On the lighter side, the Society is staying afloat, and we have our biggest turn out at a Reunion in the last decade, so maybe things are on the turn for the better. We are looking into cost saving measures.

Bill encouraged all to stay behind after the meeting for the cake cutting ceremony and a piece of cake.

Bill then spoke about Bob Russell's service of 19 years at various positions on the Board. He thanked him for his service. Bill stated that Tom Wilder has been on the Board for 20 years and serving as President for three consecutive terms. Tom has also been the FaceBook administrator since the PCS page was created. It will be certainly hard to fill their shoes. The Board is looking for a new Legislative Representative and a FaceBook Administrator.

Door prizes donated by our Vendors were drawn.

Reunion Report:

Bill stated that this year's Reunion is one of the largest turnouts in recent years. He encouraged all to be patient with the hotel as well as our events with the large numbers of people. Bill then asked Katie Beattie to speak about the Golf Tournament held on Thursday. Katie stated that there were 92 players, the largest turn out in years.

Bill thanked all the sponsors: Lori Snow and her family [Condor Travel and Tours] for creating 2 fabulous trips to Panama; Tom Ellis, BC Financials and Howler Monkey for their continued support of the Pool Party; the Bentley family for sponsoring our lanyards; since Ricardo March retired, we found another representative from Abuelo who donated all the Ron Abuelo for the 3 Happy Hours being held this reunion; UF for sponsoring the Cultural Seminar; BHS 65 & 76 sponsored the Annual Luncheon; Space Coasters and Peggy Huff sponsored the Despedida; and Revello Medical Center sponsored our 90th Anniversary buttons.

The Cultural Seminar is this afternoon, and the speaker is Dr Stanley Heckadon-Moreno from the Smithsonian Tropical Institute (STRI). He has two presentations planned and when he was last here in 2010 when he spoke, he packed the room.

The Friday night dance, "Come Back to the Teen Club", is sponsored by CHS and BHS Classes of 1972 and is free of charge. We have pre-sold about 900 Ball tickets. Prior to the Ball, we have a full Murga starting at 8:30pm and a special appearance by "Zonie". Don't forget you can pre-purchase dance tickets out in front of Registration as well as lottery tickets for the drawing on Sunday morning at Despedida. Everyone attending the Pool Party needs a name badge and an ID if drinking beer.

Valerie Smith McAlister donated 500 plus slides that her father had taken over the years as a photographer for the Panama Canal Company. Many of these pictures are on display in the Clubhouse.

The number of attendees is up for this year's Reunion, one of the highest in years, but we do have fewer vendors. Please show your support and visit the Vendor Room.

Door prizes donated by our Vendors were drawn.



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Bill introduced John Nemmers, Curator to the Panama Canal Museum Collection at the University of Florida (UF) Smathers Libraries. John told the group that Dean Judith Russell sends her regrets, but she had a family emergency. At our Annual Spring Luncheon, the speaker was Al Sprague who spoke on how he became a painter along with some boyhood adventures. Al has produced a book on his paintings and adventures in the Canal Zone.

At PCS Reunion exhibit, UF has a book on the 10-year retrospective of the PC Museum. There are 240 members of the Friends of Panama Canal Museum Collection; it is only \$26 a year to join. They have a 10-year anniversary pin for anyone who becomes a Friends member and donates \$125 Gorgas level or above. John thanked the donors and encouraged others to join the Friends of the Museum. He says "our heritage is in good hands"

John spoke about how the Reunion Auction raised over \$8,500 at last year's Reunion and would like to exceed it at this year's Reunion. The funds went to support the Oral History program. Last fall, UF and the Friends of the Museum had a fund raising to match last year's Reunion monies and they were excited to raise \$20,000. The Museum is looking to raise more funds to support the Oral History recordings. John spoke about gallery visitor's traffic and number of researchers online. The exhibit next year is on Engineering.

In 2010, Dean Russell and Joe Wood exchanged vows when the Panama Canal Museum was turned over to the UF. The vows were renewed yesterday, July 7th. Both organizations also pledged to continue their partnership in support of the Panama Canal Collection at UF Smathers Libraries.

New Business:

Bill introduced Ray Husum, the ByLaws Chairperson. Ray expressed how he and the Board would like to introduce two new ballots in the October *Canal Record* to the members. The Board recommends changing the language in Article III – Membership and Dues, Sec. 5 Dues and Fees of the Society from "D. Dues shall be forty dollar (\$40.00) annually..." to "D. The Executive Board, in its discretion and in the due course of business, shall set the annual membership fee."

The second amendment to the ByLaws that is recommended is to Article XIII – Dissolution, Sec.1 Method Of: from "In the event the Society should be dissolved for any reasons, after bills are paid, any remaining assets shall be distributed as determined by a majority vote of the remaining active members within the scope as specified in Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code as amended from time to time." to "In the event the Society should be dissolved for any reason, after bills are paid, any remaining assets shall be distributed to the Panama Canal Collection at the University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries for the preservation of the Panama Canal Collection."

Ray encouraged members to look for it in the October *Canal Record* and to vote. A member asked a question about raising of the membership dues. Ray responded any raising of the dues, will be the discretion of the new Executive Board. This doesn't mean the Board will raise the dues; the Board is elected by you to ensure the Society prospers.

Bill introduced Bob Russell, the Chairman of the Nomination Committee. Bob thanked his Committee of Betty LeDoux, Elaine Lewis, Jacque Vowell, and Barbara Lancaster. Bob then announced the new Executive Board for the 2022-2024 term of President, Bill McLaughlin with 234 votes; 1st Vice President, Carl Orvis with 239 votes; and 2nd Vice President, Laura Kosik with 236 votes. All three of these positions ran unopposed. For Directors, there were 3 positions and 4 members running. The 3 new Directors are: Penny (Wilder) Canamas with 183 votes; Alejandro "Bosco" Hoyte with 187 votes; and Mikey Young with 220 votes. Rae Donaldson had 154 votes. Total number of ballots were 258 with 13 being invalid, resulting in 245 valid votes. Richard Grimison moved to destroy the ballots, Jackie Deering seconded, and the motion carried.

Bill awarded Certificates of Appreciation to the outgoing Board members and Reunion Chairpersons who were Tom Wilder, Patti Revello, James Beattie, Brittney Wilder, Bob Russell, Kathy Wilder, Nancy Van Sicien, Noreen Hanson, and Christine Tirpak.

Bill opened the floor for questions and comments. Dennis Gilbert went to the microphone and was glad to see the Financials and the \$349K in assets. He feels the extra funds should be invested in CDs or Mutual Funds not in a savings account. He then recommended half of the extra funds go into Bonds or CDs. Dennis feels since the membership is



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trending down and the expenditures are increasing, the Society needs to invest. Dennis proposed a motion to Cindy Alderman, the Treasurer, to investigate and move half the funds into conservative 3-5 years of Mutual Funds. Linda Basham seconds the motion. Cindy commented that the Board will be judicious and look for ways to invest. Joanie Crane proposed an amendment to Dennis' motion to seek advice from financial advisers. Jack Hoyle seconded the motion.

Bill returned to the podium stating the Board had spoken to Tom Ellis of B&C Financials and the Board was split on investing or not investing and Bill broke the tie by voting no. Elaine Lewis feels the industry is risky and feels we are not living up to our fiduciary duties if we invest right now. Tom Wilder commented that the Society is a Not for Profit organization and not here to make money. Bill stated the Executive Board will investigate the risks, rewards, fees, and contact more Financial Advisors to educate the Board and we will have something posted in the October *Canal Record*.

Bill issued a challenge to all members to get 2 people to join and encourage your descendants. Please consider joining the Governor's Club which is a protected membership rate. Bill suggested we shut down the FaceBook page since over 4,000 people are not Society members. Jim Duffus spoke up that if it closes, it is dangerous to the members not being able to stay involved. We need to stay positive as Zonians.

The final 3 door prizes were drawn. The Panama Canal Society donated a Governor's Club membership, and it was won by Carol Wright who donated it to a friend, Alida Lynton who was a spouse to a Canal Zone Police Officer.

The 2 Grand Prizes which are trips to Panama were donated by Lori Snow of Condor Tours and Travels. Bill thanked Lori for her dedicated hard work throughout the years. Randy Rios won the first Grand Prize which included 2 nights at the Gamboa Rainforest Resort, 2 nights at the Westin Playa Bonita Resort, and 2 nights in Tower Executive room at the Bristol Hotel [all hotels include breakfast] and a half day city and canal tour for two. The second Grand Prize was won by Cindy Meadows which included 2 nights at the American Trade Hotel in Casco Antiguo, 2 nights in Bocas del Toro - Bali over the water bungalow, 1 night at the Radisson Panama Canal for two people. Bill mentioned if you want to take a trip to Panama, see Lori's Condor Tours and Travel Ad in the *Canal Records*.

Debbie Lane motioned for the meeting to be adjourned, Charles Giavelli seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 pm.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill McLaughlin".

Bill McLaughlin
President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kathy Malin".

Kathy Malin
Office Manager