



PANAMA CANAL SOCIETY
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES
Der Dutchman Restaurant, 3713 Bahia Vista St, Sarasota, FL 34232
September 9, 2023

Meeting was called to order 11:40 a.m. by Bill McLaughlin (President).

Bill welcomed the 40 members and guests present and thanked them for coming.

Bill introduced PCS Chaplain Bill Lane to give the invocation, followed by a moment of silence for recently departed members and friends.

Bill then introduced PCS Sgt at Arms, Ted Kaufer, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Bill thanked Elaine and Jacque for chairing this event.

Bill asked all to look over the July Annual Membership meeting minutes on the tables. Also on the tables is a flyer with today's Agenda, a contact list of the new Executive Board members and a thank you to the Reunion sponsors. He reminded everyone there are still two vacant positions: Treasurer and Legislative Chair. If anyone is interested or knows someone who could fulfill these roles, please contact Bill. He also reminded everyone that the PCS Annual Financial report for 2022 will be printed in the October Canal Record, and the 2023 Financial report will be distributed in July at the annual meeting in 2024.

The meeting broke for lunch and resumed at 12:40 p.m.

After lunch, Bill introduced the Board Members present: Laura Kosik (2nd VP), Penny Wilder Canamas (Director), Margaret McLaughlin (Director at Large), Elaine Lewis (Past President), Ted Kaufer (Sgt-at-Arms), Jacque Vowell (*Canal Record* Editor), Bill Lane (Chaplain), Anna Hertrich (Office Assistant).

Bill recognized the Past Presidents present: Bob Russell and Elaine Vestal Lewis.

Bill asked if all were able to go over the July Annual Membership meeting minutes on everyone's tables. Elaine Vestal Lewis motioned to approve minutes, Penny Wilder Canamas seconded, and the motion passed.

Bill also requested a vote to shred the bylaw ballots. Elaine Vestal Lewis motioned to shred the bylaw ballots, Bob Russell seconded, and the motion passed.

Bill stated the PCS Reunion 2023 was a success in many ways. We had 1,902 members and guests registered. The goal of the reunion financials is to break even and not go in the red, and we came out in the black. There were many that attended that did not register, but if they had registered we would be up with our membership numbers. Thank you to all the volunteers that helped make the reunion a success.

Bill encouraged everyone to register early for the 2024 reunion. The 2024 Reunion will be held July 3 – 7, 2024 at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando. The theme for the 2024 reunion is "**A Star Spangled Reunion**".

He reminded everyone that it doesn't cost to reserve a room, and you are able to cancel up to 72 hours before the check-in, if you need to. Registration begins mid-December or when the December *Canal Record* is received in your mailbox or online. As written in the reunion registration packet:



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Members are encouraged to register early for the 2024 reunion and for their hotel room. Reunion Registration and Hotel Reservation forms received by **February 7, 2024**, will be included in a drawing to take place on **February 24, 2024**, at the Space Coast Picnic. The winner of this drawing will receive a complimentary two-night stay (king or double queen room) at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort during the 2023 Panama Canal Society Reunion. A second drawing will be held on **April 6, 2024**, at the PCS/UF/Friends of the Museum luncheon at UF. (1) Complimentary three-night stay (king or queen room). (2) Upgrade to a suite. (3) Dinner certificate for \$200 for Calla Bella or A Land Remembered fine dining restaurants. All of these will be redeemed at Rosen Shingle Creek Resort during the 2024 PCS Reunion. Prizes are non-transferable and only valid for the person winning the drawing. All these prizes are donated by the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort.

The Society is already looking for volunteers for the 2024 reunion. Email the volunteer chairperson at office2@pancanalsociety.org or call the PCS office 813-949-6699 if you are interested in volunteering.

We are also looking for sponsors. Our sponsors offset our expenses. We need sponsors in all areas, including for the golf tournament. Please call the PCS office 813-949-6699 or email Office@pancanalsociety.org if you are interested in sponsoring an event at the reunion.

Bill announced that after a lengthy discussion, the Executive Board determined to discontinue holding the Annual Luncheon this year, due to the proposed mediocre menus and proposed cost of the luncheon being too pricy and unreasonable for our members.

As shown in the minutes provided, the CD investments are doing well with the interest so high today.

The Society is continuing our membership campaign as mentioned in the *Canal Record* President's Report and at the 2023 Annual Meeting. Please encourage your friends and family to join and maintain memberships. Encourage descendants of Zonians to become members. Even sponsor an Associate Member. Membership dues are our only sustainer right now. Reminder that annual membership dues have increased to \$50 a year. Governors Club has increased to \$250 for a five-year membership.

It is nominations time again for the new board that will be voted in at the 2024 Reunion. Bill introduced the Nominating Committee Chair, Margaret McLaughlin, to give the Nomination Committee report.

Margaret stated that Article V of the Bylaws requires that a Nominating Committee be selected within two months following the Society's Annual business meeting of the Executive Board's second year's term of office. The Nominating Committee's responsibility is to compile a slate of officers that, in our collective opinions, would best serve the Panama Canal Society. Nominating Committee members will also be required to attend a ballot count meeting on July 5, 2024, at 8:00am, prior to the Annual Meeting. The Nominating Committee will consist of five members – a chairperson, two members from the Executive Board, and two members of General Membership. The President appointed Margaret McLaughlin, Director-at-Large, as the Nominating Committee Chairperson. Two members from the Executive Board were elected at the August 2023 Board Meeting. They are Chaplain Bill Lane and Sgt-at-Arms Ted Kaufer. The remaining two committee members will be elected today at this meeting. Cheryl Williams and Dixie Barrons volunteered to serve on the Nominating Committee and were elected. Article V also stated that the Nominating Committee shall announce to the



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general membership that nominations are in order, in the first issue of the *Canal Record* following the annual meeting of the Board's second year's term of office. This announcement will be published in the October *Canal Record*.

If anyone is interested in seeking election for a Board position, they must submit a letter of intent to the Nominating Committee Chairperson via the PCS Office. All nominations shall be received prior to the published deadline date of January 6, 2024 for the printing of the official ballot.

Bill thanked Margaret and invited Carole Miller and Mickey Fitzgerald of the Friends of the Panama Canal Museum to report on the 2023 silent auction. Mickey reported that the silent auction had more items, donors, volunteers, and bidders than previous years and was a success, raising over \$13,000. Some of the highest bid items were coins from Panama, watercolors from Al Sprague, Madden Dam historical plaque, Guinep tree, Panama marble gourd light, and a 'swagger stick'. Some other highlights were Laura Causey's grandson, Jackson, playing bass, "music to bid by" and Barbara Dedeaux's surprise celebration. The current fundraiser for the museum is doing great, with the cruise from Hawaii having 15 people registered already. Please see the ad on page 105 in the October *Canal Record* for more information.

Twenty-five years ago, the museum was founded. To commemorate the 25th anniversary, the museum is launching a fundraising campaign in October, with a goal to raise \$12,000 for the Museum's Oral History program. The \$13,000 raised from the silent auction and the \$12,000 from this fundraising campaign comes to \$25,000, representing the 25th Anniversary. If you haven't already, please consider the Friends of the Panama Canal Museum membership.

Bill asked if there was any new business, comments, or suggestions.

Bill thanked Jacque and Elaine for teaming up and organizing this luncheon. Great job!

Door prizes were drawn.

Bill wished everyone a safe drive home and reminded everyone to attend the Christmas Luncheon on December 2nd at the Columbia Restaurant in Ybor City.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

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

Bill McLaughlin, PCS President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna Hertrich".

Anna Hertrich, PCS Office Assistant