



Panama Canal Society General Membership Minutes
Columbia Restaurant, E. 7th Ave. Tampa, FL 33605
December 6, 2025

Meeting was called to order by Carl Orvis, President, at noon. Carl welcomed everyone and thanked all for coming to the luncheon. We have a quorum to conduct business with 102 members in attendance.

Bill Lane gave the Invocation followed by a moment of silence for our recently departed members and friends.

Carl asked everyone to stand and Ted Kaufer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Carl asked all to review the July and October membership meeting minutes that were left on the tables, and we will review and vote after lunch. He mentioned we have 4 great Raffle prizes plus Vendors in the back of the room. Carl told everyone to enjoy lunch and would reconvene after lunch. He also thanked Cheryl Williams for the beautiful table decorations.

After lunch, Carl called the meeting back to order at 1:03 pm.

Carl introduced the Past Presidents present: Betty LeDoux, Elaine Lewis, Bob Russell, Mike Coffey and Shirley Avery-Bentley. Carl then introduced the Executive Board in attendance: Mike Young, 1st Vice President; Penny Canamas, 2nd Vice President; Directors: Cheryl Williams & Dixie Barons; Director-at-Large is Kelly Fenton; Noreen Hanson, Treasurer; Ted Kaufer, Sergeant-at-Arms; Bill Lane, Chaplain; Jacque Vowell, *Canal Record* Editor; Rae Donaldson, Sunshine Chairperson; Susan Burk, our new Office Assistant, and Kathy Malin, Office Manager & Reunion Coordinator. Please contact Rae if you know of a sick member and she will mail out a get-well card.

Carl announced that the Crouch family has 5 sisters in attendance today. They are Joan, Ruth, Alice, Annie, and Marian. The sisters grew up in Curundu Heights and today is Alice's birthday.

Carl asked if all read the two sets of minutes, Shirley Avery-Bentley motioned to approve the minutes, Dixie Barons seconded, and the motion was carried.

In the President's report, Carl spoke about the upcoming 2026 events which were printed on the back of the program. He encouraged members to attend the Space Coast potluck on February 28 and the UF Museum luncheon on March 28.

Carl asked Dixie Barons, our Nominating Committee Chairperson, to make an announcement. Dixie announced there were no write-in ballots from the membership. She read the slate of officers and made 3 'calls-outs' for any other nominations and there were none. Dixie stated the nomination for the 2026 – 2028 officers were closed.

Carl spoke about the ByLaws change that will be in the December *Canal Record*. He encouraged all to send in their ballot regarding "In the event that no other eligible member is available or willing to serve, it shall be permissible for the current board member holding the affected position to serve unlimited consecutive terms in that capacity."

A few door prizes were drawn by Mike Young and Ted Kaufer.

Kathy Malin was called to the front to speak about the 2026 Reunion. She stated the dates are July 8 – 12. Kathy told all that the Reunion Information was condensed in a new format and to please read once you receive the December *Canal Record*. She also mentioned that it will be online on December 10th. Kathy spoke about the changes to the Schedule of Events. First, to draw a better crowd to the Annual Meeting, the Board decided to move the meeting from Friday morning to Saturday morning at 10:30am. At the end of the meeting, the Lottery tickets will be drawn. Thus the Vendors and the Friends' Silent Auction will be open all day on Friday and just a half day on Saturday.



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Kathy spoke about the new events in 2026. There will be a Meet & Greet on Friday at noon with a Navy SEAL author who has written several thrillers on Panama and Latin America. He was in *Operation Just Cause* in Panama. At the same time, there is a Children's Magic Show in the Clubhouse. Our spectacular event is the Grand Tivoli Soiree. This will replace the annual luncheon with an elegant dinner before the Annual Ball. Also, at this event there will be the Folklore dance show and photo ops with a Tivoli background and white wicker rocking chairs. The theme is black and white.

Kathy told the crowd that the Society is purchasing bags again this year, if you want a lanyard to bring one from home. My Pollera Experience is back. Laura Kosik is our Reunion Volunteer chairperson, and she is looking for volunteers. The Board decided on great gift for volunteers next year. The Society is hosting a raffle in the Vendor room and is looking for donations.

Carl introduced Kathy Egolf, Vice President of the Friends of the Panama Canal Museum Collection (PCMC). Kathy reported that funds from the Fall 2025 fundraising campaign will be used for digitizing more of the PCMC and other projects. The digitization project is making great progress, but more contributions to the campaign are needed to match the \$11,000 the Friends made from the 2025 auction. Lori Snow and Condor Tours & Travel have donated a Panama vacation package consisting of two nights at each of three Panama hotels. Names of all who have donated at least \$26 to the Fall 2025 fundraising campaign will be entered into a raffle, and the drawing will take place at UF on December 16. Lori and her travel agency have also donated to the PCMC \$900 from the Fall 2025 New England/Canada cruise.

The next PCMC Friends activity is the popular spring PCS/PCMC meeting to be held on March 28, 2026, at the George A. Smathers Library in Gainesville. The opening of a new exhibit in the Albert H. Nahmad Panama Canal Gallery will take place that day and have water and the Panama Canal as its theme.

Work is beginning already in preparation for the PCMC auction fundraiser to be held at the 2026 PCS reunion. The Friends' team is trying to streamline the work for the volunteers and so they would welcome more volunteers before, during, and/or after the auction to help make this possible. As always, too, the Friends' team appreciates the donations of items for the auction. You can help in any way, please contact Joe Wood, Carole Miller, or Kathy Egolf. This year the auction bidding will close at 3 PM on Saturday, July 11 which is earlier than in the past.

Labor Day weekend will be the perfect time to travel with the Friends on a short, quick cruise to the Bahamas on Royal Caribbean's new, large *Utopia of the Seas*. Sponsored by Lori Snow and Condor Tours & Travel, cruisers should have a great time supporting this PCMC Friends activity.

A few door prizes were drawn by Mike Young and Ted Kaufer.

Carl asked the members for comments and suggestions. Carl told all about Steven Price, a BHS 1977 graduate, who has cancer and is campaigning in Congress to have Canal Zone civilians added to H.R. 2447 – Panama Canal Zone Veterans Act of 2023. Carl mentioned many years ago at a Reunion, many Zonians gave blood samples. These samples were collected by a college in Texas and now are lost. Steven is working with a Texas Senator to find these samples. Steven and others promise there was Agent Orange in the Panama Canal Zone.

Carl thanked the members, their guests, Mike Young, Ted Kaufer, and Kathy Malin, for chairing the event and making this luncheon possible.

Door prizes were drawn. After that, Mike and Ted drew the raffle tickets which had 4 great prizes. They were a PCS and Panamanian goodie basket, stone Balboa bookends, a Abuelo and Coca-Cola bucket donated by Charles Norval and the one that everyone wanted was a native Panamanian nativity scene donated by Cheryl & Pat Williams. Betty came up to



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the podium with two other surprise raffles which were 2-night stays at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando. Noreen Hanson and Wanda Fanning won Rosen hotel stays.

Carl thanked all for coming and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Years.

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m. with Shirley Avery-Bentley making a motion to adjourn, Lynn Nehring seconded and the motion carried.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "C. Orvis", written over a horizontal line.

Carl Orvis, President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Kathy Malin", written over a horizontal line.

Kathy Malin, Office Manager