

PANAMA CANAL SOCIETY, INC.
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING
ORLANDO WORLD CENTER MARRIOTT
ORLANDO, FLORIDA
JULY 5, 2013

President Tom Wilder welcomed the 114 members in attendance to the 2013 Annual Meeting held during the reunion at the Orlando World Center Marriott in Orlando, Florida and called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

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

Tom welcomed past presidents Pete Foster, Betty LeDoux, Margot Jordan, Faith Brundage, Bill McLaughlin, Elaine (Vestal) Lewis and Bob Russell who were in attendance.

Tom announced that prior to the commencement of the meeting, copies of the minutes from the General Membership Meeting held on May 4, 2013 at Der Dutchman Restaurant in Sarasota, Florida were distributed to the membership, and therefore, the membership was asked for a motion to accept the minutes as written. Faith Brundage made the motion to accept the minutes; it was seconded by Margot Jordan. Motion carried.

At this point in the meeting Tom Wilder introduced Betty LeDoux who presented Karen Naughton from the Orlando World Center Marriott with a Panama Canal Society Associate Membership. Betty explained that Karen has been our representative for several years at the hotel and Betty had sponsored her as an Associate Member.

The president welcomed everyone to the 81st Annual Membership Meeting and began by thanking each of the board members who have sacrificed time over the past year to volunteer their time to the Society including Mike Coffey, 1st Vice President; Shirley Avery, 2nd Vice President; Noreen Hansen, Director; Kelly Parthenais, Director; Mike Young, Director; Bliss Connerton, Director-at-Large; Bill McLaughlin Treasurer and Historian; Brittney Wilder, Sgt. at Arms and Bob Russell, Immediate Past President. He also thanked the Standing Committee Members including Kathy Malin, By-Law Chairperson; Jim O'Donnell, Legislative Representative; Cheryl Russell, Chaplain and Beth Brandenburg, Insurance Liaison. And last but not least our staff who works tirelessly in the day to day operations of the office Jacque Vowell, *Canal Record* Editor and Nancy Van Sien, Office Manager.

Tom also thanks his wife Kathy for all her support over the past five years while he has served at President of the Society.

President Tom Wilder reported that the board is continually striving to be fiscally mindful of our expenditures. Saving money when possible and avoiding unnecessary expenditures continues to help our bottom line. Randy Drake our independent auditor will provide a report on our financial health later in the meeting.

Tom reported that we have renewed our office lease for another three years and as promised we negotiated a good price for the space.

The president announced that some of you may have heard that Carol Masino who was a part-time employee hired under Pat Beall as the Assistant to the *Canal Record* Editor departed a bit earlier than expected. This vacant position will allow us to move forward with bringing someone on board and training them in preparation for when Nancy retires. Carol was an asset and she will be missed, but from a business sense we needed her position for succession planning of the office staff.

The Society Facebook page continues to be a hit with members and we are up to over 2,600 friends. We also partnered with the Panama Canal Museum to digitize all the *Canal Records* up to 2010. This task has been completed and you can find a link on the Society webpage since they are now available online.

Our membership is critical to the success of the Society, and Tom thanked everyone who took the time to vote in favor of the new by-law allowing for Associate Membership.

Tom highlighted the Annual President Report that was given to each member before the meeting. In regard to membership over 282 members have taken advantage of the Governors Club. As the graph indicates membership has declined again. Please do your part in recruiting eligible Zonians and now Zonian friends for membership.

Our traveling meetings continue throughout Florida and this year we will be on the move again and if we are in a city near you please join us.

Tom spoke about our income versus expenses over the past six years. The Governors Club dues are credited for each year and not as a lump sum in the year you joined the club. What is reflected in this graph shows that the Executive Board continues to watch our expenses and we have continued to have higher income over expenses for the last four years.

The Canal Record costs are up as a result of publishing color photos. While we believe the cost continues to be within acceptable limits we will be doing a "Request for Proposal" in the near future to ensure we are still getting the best pricing.

The 2012 Annual Reunion was another success. We work hard to ensure that the Annual Reunion and all associated costs are paid for by the attendees of the reunion and not from operating funds that come from the annual dues. The chart shows that the events are almost a break even.

Please remember that our reunion is run by volunteers – without them taking the time to help out we couldn't do such a good job. Please be sure to thank them.

Treasurer Bill McLaughlin reported that the May Financial Statement is in your packet and stands for audit. At this time, he introduced Randy Drake, CPA, to highlight the 2012 Audit and Financial Summary.

Randy reported that the 990 tax returns for 2012 have been filed and that the board continues to be good stewards of the finances. The board has several controls in place, they hold regular meetings and keep an eye on the expenses, and two signatures are required on checks for payment of expenses. Randy informed that membership that he would be willing to answer any questions from members after the meeting. He also announced that the Society is in very capable hands.

On-site Reunion Coordinator Mike Coffey reported that the Reunion is a group effort and run with the help of all the volunteers during this time. He announced that we will be leaving the Marriott this year and going back to Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in 2014. He called on Margot Jordan for a report on the golf tournament.

Margot reported that they are 64 players this year and the luncheon that followed after the tournament was well received by the players. The low gross winners were Robert Gregory and Pat Smith and closest to the pin was Ann Richardson and Louis Vogel.

Mike reminded our members that the Clubhouse is open and our theme this year is “Zonian Days” and you will see posters in the Clubhouse and Vendor Room showing old photos that members sent in to Bill McLaughlin reminding us of our days in the Canal Zone. We also have a yoga class again this year, our Cultural Seminars are scheduled for Friday afternoon with Dr. Bruce McFadden at 2:00 p.m. and Brian Allen at 4:00 p.m. The Blue Stone Circle will be playing at the Friday night dance and Frankie Pretto will be on Saturday night.

Mike Coffey also reported on the Membership Committee and suggested that members' sign up for the Governors Club – pay once and you are a member for five years. He also said that someone suggested having a Corporate Membership and this would have to be brought up to the board and then voted on by the membership.

Friends of the Museum Joe Wood introduced **Judith Russell** from the University of Florida. Dean Russell reported that they appreciate the support of the members of the Society in support of the University. She reported that many items have already been digitized including year books, the Spillway and the Panama American newspaper. She mentioned that they had received a \$20,000.00 donation to help defray the costs of digitizing year books and this was matched by the University. She said that there will be many activities during the year 2014 in honor of the 100th Anniversary of the opening of the Canal including a concert in August 2014 in Gainesville and a mola exhibit. The mola exhibit will be on display from August 2014 thru December 2014. She also asked that if you can go to Gainesville and volunteer or go on-line to identify artifacts would be most appreciative.

At this point in the meeting the S. W. O. T. exercise was conducted with the following results from the membership participating:

Strength – Canal Record

Weakness – Regional Events; Discounts for Memberships; Add Missing Names or Email Addresses to Record; Youth in Membership; Feedback/Surveys; Look Beyond Reunion; Gift Memberships; Motto Not Keeping Up With Time; Appeal to Broader Audience; Military.

Opportunities – Panamanian Government; Corporate Sponsorships; Youth Membership; Associate Memberships – Marketing To; Meetings in Panama; Survey Monkey – Reach Members; Lifetime Membership; Student Membership.

Threats – Resistance to Change – Board and Membership

During the entire meeting door prizes were given out which were donated by the all our vendors in the Vendor Room. The Grand Prizes were won by: Rick Nelson, Sara Snow, Pete Foster, Fred Robinson, Len Brockman, Brittney Wilder, Lois Jones, Debbie Lee, Steve Balmas, and Joy Maale.

Meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

NANCY VAN SICLEN
OFFICE MANAGER/SECRETARY

TOM WILDER
PRESIDENT