



PANAMA CANAL SOCIETY
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES
Der Dutchman Restaurant, 3713 Bahia Vista St, Sarasota, FL 34232
September 8, 2018

Meeting was called to order at 11:50 a.m. by Shirley Avery Bentley (President).

Laura Kosik was asked to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Shirley welcomed the 81 members and guests present and thanked them for coming. She thanked her husband, Mickler Bentley, for all his continued support.

Shirley introduced the Past Presidents in attendance: Pete Foster, Bill McLaughlin, Elaine Lewis, Bob Russell and Mike Coffey. Then she announced the Board members present: Noreen Hanson, Treasurer; Laura Kosik, Sergeant-at-Arms; Carl Orvis, Chaplain; Bill McLaughlin, Reunion Coordinator; Jacque Vowell, Editor; and Kathy Malin, Office Manager. Shirley thanked Nancy Van Siclen for all her years working for the Society and teaching her about being a Board member.

Carl Orvis gave a wonderful invocation. The meeting broke for lunch and resumed at 12:35 p.m.

Five door prizes were drawn. Shirley asked if all read the June Annual Meeting minutes that were in their packets. Elaine Lewis motioned that the minutes be approved; Steve Nehring seconded, and minutes were approved.

Shirley then announced the upcoming PCS events. She expressed that Carnavalito's planned hotel is still being renovating after the hurricane last year. The Society is searching for another hotel and Carnavalito dates to be determined.

Shirley shared a membership report by Betty LeDoux that in 1961, the dues were only \$3; 1978 - \$10; 1997 - \$30 then in 2009 raised to \$40; thus, the dues have grown only \$37 in 48 years. She encouraged people to sign up for membership.

Bill McLaughlin gave a Reunion update report. He stated the coordination for the next reunion starts right after the current year finishes. The Yellow Pages will be completed and ready for the December Canal Record; i.e.: contracts to be signed; registration and other forms to be developed; etc. On-line registration will be open about December 18 and 90% of our registration is completed on-line. Bill stated the Reunion will be from July 3-7, 2019 with Fireworks on July 4th. He encouraged all to register early for the reunion to qualify for the early bird drawing which will be for 2 nights at the Marriott during the reunion.

2019 will be historic year with the 55th Anniversary of the 1964 riots, 40th Anniversary of Treaty Implementation (1979) – *End of the American Era and Canal Zone*, which will be the theme for the 2019 Reunion, and 30th Anniversary (1989) of *Operation Just Cause*. The Annual Luncheon topic will be on *Operation Just Cause* and our guest speaker is Kurt Muse. General Marc Cisneros was asked to speak but had to send regrets for health reasons. UF hopes to video tape an oral history with the General.

The Cultural Seminar on Friday afternoon will be a panel of experts: a retired military person, a Panamanian and a Panama Canal Company retired representative. They will discuss Pre- *Just Cause*, during and the clean-up.



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Bill stated that the UF is in the planning stage of several special events in 2019 to commemorate the historic events. The first will be the PCS/UF/Friends of Museum luncheon on March 16 with a Latin buffet. The Museum Gallery will display "Treaties and the Transfer Period". Next September/October timeframe, UF will host a reception about the "Children's Experiences during the Conflict". UF will also organize a session regarding the "Flag Riots and US/Panama Relations".

Margaret McLaughlin is working on a new program for next year's reunion – *Painting with a Twist*. Bill stated it will be on Friday afternoon and more information to follow in the Yellow Pages.

The 11th Annual Pool Party will be on Saturday afternoon with *Shorty and Slim* playing. Jim DesLondes declared that this year's inside Pool Party was a great idea. Bill assured all that if it rained, we will have an alternate inside location.

Jacque Vowell affirmed that the Directory and October Canal Record will both be ready for printing in the next two weeks. For the December Canal Record, send in any news to your Area Reporters. The table decorations are a "Salud" to the Canal Records and were made by Cheryl Russell.

Kathy Egolf came to the podium and gave an update on UF and *Friends of the Panama Canal Museum* news. She asked all to review the 2 pages that are printed in every Canal Record for information. Also, if you donate to the UF Smathers Libraries in the name of the Panama Canal Gallery, you will receive monthly emails called the *Gator Tales*. UF needs your correct email. In addition to the historic events that Bill mentioned, the *Friends of the Panama Canal Museum* are going on a Cruise to Cuba and the Eastern Caribbean beginning on January 22. There are 43 that have signed up and the travel agency donates some funds to the *Friends of the Panama Canal Museum*. Kathy mentioned that next year's Museum Auction might be the last one during the Reunions. They need more volunteers to keep this tradition going.

More door prizes were drawn.

Mike Coffey gave a Communications Report expressing the first email blast that went out this past week announced a new benefit to PCS members called BenefitHub. Be sure the office has your correct email. The PCS office plans on sending out more email blasts that benefits the Society members.

Shirley asked if anyone had any New Business and no one did. Shirley thanked Bob and Cheryl Russell for their hard work with organizing the luncheon.

Door prizes were drawn and Alba Burgos-Nehring won the grand door prize of 2 nights at the Marriott.

Shirley thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

Shirley Avery Bentley, President

Kathy Malin, Office Manager