



Panama Canal Society Annual General Membership Meeting
Marriott World Center, Orlando Florida
Reunion 2019 – July 5, 2019

Meeting called to order at by Shirley Avery-Bentley (President) at 10:00 a.m.

Location: Marriott World Center, 8701 World Center Drive, Orlando FL 32821

Shirley Avery-Bentley welcomed everyone to the 87th meeting of the Panama Canal Society. A quorum having been established, she asked Sergeant-at-Arms to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of Allegiance: Laura Kosik (Sergeant-at-Arms)

Invocation: Carl Orvis

Past Presidents: 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).

Board Attendees: Shirley Avery-Bentley (President), Richard Grimison (1st Vice President); Brittney Wilder (2nd Vice President), Mike Coffey (Immediate Past President), Noreen Hanson (Treasurer), Lee Bentley (Director), Roderick Snyder (Director at Large), Patrick Smith (Director), James Beattie (Director), Raymond Husum (By-Laws Chairperson), Carl Orvis (Chaplin), Laura Kosik (Sergeant-at-Arms), Bob Russell (Legislative Representative), Jacque Vowell (Editor), and Kathy Malin (Office Manager)

Members Attending: 194

Minute Approval: Shirley asked for an approval for the May 18, 2019 General Membership minutes, Steve Gilbert made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Tom Wilder; Motion carried.

Door Prizes: Several door prizes were drawn and Richard Grimison thanked all the vendors and encouraged everyone to stop by and support the sponsors and vendors who generously donated door prizes.

President's Report: Shirley reported on her year as President including the return to Der Dutchman in Sarasota for the September luncheon/meeting; our cruise along the Hillsborough River aboard the Yacht Starship for the October meeting – noting that we would likely go back to that venue in a year or so – the Christmas Luncheon at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club – thanking Mel and Ted Henter for their continued support of this event – Carnavalito held on the East Coast of Florida where Mardi Gras was recreated with brilliant masks made by Diana Grimison and Peggy Huff, and ending the year at the University of Florida for the March Luncheon. Shirley thanked the members for their continued support of our events throughout the year both in Florida and other States in which we help to sponsor events. The main objective of the Society was to maintain friendships and it is with this in mind that we hold these events through the year. We also have a responsibility to keep our members current on Legislation that may impact our members. Bob Russell continues to do a fabulous job in keeping us informed through his reports in our Canal Record.

Shirley reported that the Board approved conducting a full audit by an outside firm. We did this earlier in the year and called on Mike Coffey to report on the audit and the financials.



Panama Canal Society Annual General Membership Meeting
Marriott World Center, Orlando Florida
Reunion 2019 – July 5, 2019

Mike reported that the audit was successful. We have good bookkeeping protocols in place, our membership is kept informed and the Board is making good financial decisions. If we have a surplus, we reinvest it towards members events and reunion activities. Membership renewals have decreased over the year, thus Mike stressed renewing dues are critical. He highly recommended the Governor's Club 5-year Membership and the Associate Membership for those who may not meet the regular membership criteria.

Reunion Coordinator Report: Bill McLaughlin reported that we started working on this reunion last August with our after-action reports. We kicked off the Reunion with the 39th Chagres Invitational Golf Tournament yesterday. Katie Beattie and Patrick Smith co-chaired this event. Bill thanked Katie for doing such a great job and asked her to report on the tournament. Katie reported that we had 76 golfers, 19 foursomes. 1st Place Ed Malin, Frank Lee, Ron Bowman and Glenn Seeley. 2nd Place was taken by the Ubben brothers and their nephew, Mario Wootan, and 3rd Place: Mark Roscoe, Sean Williams, Louis Vogel and Jason Bacot.

Bill mentioned the many sponsors this year including Condor Tours and Travel and Varela Imports, a/k/a Ron Abuelo and Ron Cortez, along with the Bentley family. We have many sponsors for the pool party on Saturday featuring Shorty & Slim including the Gattorna Grimison team, the Grimison family, B&C Financial Advisors, BHS Class of 1979, CHS Class of 1979, Howler Monkey Sauce, Hobey Richey family and Fred and Melanie Bales. Additionally, the Space Coast Zonians sent a donation for our Annual Despedida. We thank all of our sponsors for their continued support.

After today's meeting, at 2:00 is the Cultural Seminar. In conjunction with the 30th Anniversary of "Operation Just Cause" we are thrilled to have a select and very informative panel of experts that will be discussing different aspects and effects that "Operation Just Cause" had with the Panama Canal Commission; logistical support provided to employees prior to, during and after the invasion, economic impact of the sanctions on employees, Canal operations, world shipping and the Republic of Panama and the impact on the Department of Defense employees and dependents. The panel will consist of Joe Wood, Dick Morgan, Bob Rupp and Kurt Muse. The Cultural Seminar is sponsored by the Panama Canal Society, University of Florida Smathers Libraries, and the Friends of the Panama Canal Museum. For those wanting something different at the Reunion this year, join the group at Painting with a Twist. At tonight's Ping Ding dance, the music by Sentimiento Panama will literally take you to the Rincon Typico in Bejuco with some great Panamanian Ping Ding music and cumbia.

The 11th annual Pool Party will be held tomorrow by the Spa Pool on the West Terrace. PCS members band *Shorty and Slim* have come to the reunion this year to entertain us at the pool party. As a reminder, if you plan to attend the pool party, make sure you have your reunion name badge and photo ID cards for the pool party refreshments.

Dance and Despedida lottery tickets will be on sale during registration hours so you can still get dance tickets if you haven't gotten them yet and purchase lottery tickets for your chance to win some money. Saturday night come by and dance to the music of Frankie Preto and the Paranda band. The Murga will start the night at 8:30 in front of the ballroom.



Panama Canal Society Annual General Membership Meeting
Marriott World Center, Orlando Florida
Reunion 2019 – July 5, 2019

We also have Yoga taught by volunteer Butch Hall and Bingo on both Friday and Saturday afternoons. A Teen meet and greet will be held later today in the Atrium and Catholic mass will be held on Saturday at 4:00 pm. Bill thanked the volunteers and noted that without them, the Reunion would not happen.

Shirley thanked Bill and the many Reunion Chairpersons for their hard work in making this Reunion such a success. Shirley stated that check out on Sunday may be a bit crazy as we will be checking out as another group is checking in. Please be patient with the bell and valet staff but plan your departure with this in mind.

Shirley reported that we continue our partnership with the University of Florida. She called upon Dean Judith Russell from the University of Florida, Smathers Libraries, The Panama Canal Museum Collection and the Friends of Panama Canal Museum Collection report. Dean Russell encouraged everyone to visit the digital Collection where the researchers' popular topics are: genealogy, towns & buildings, WWII defense and Caribbean workers. This year, there has been over 4.9 million views and 68 gift donations. She also noted that many visiting the Museum, which displayed the major Anniversaries including "Operation Just Cause", have become quite emotional with the memorabilia that is displayed. Next year the Museum Collection theme will be Defense of the Canal Zone during WWII. Dean Russell reported that the Friends membership is now at approximately 150 members. She reported that the Silent Auction raised \$6,300.00 last year. They need volunteers for the Auction next year or there will be no auction.

Richard Grimison called more lottery numbers for door prizes.

Shirley reported that next year the Reunion will be held at the Caribe Royale resort. She called on Betty LeDoux to provide additional information regarding the Resort. Betty LeDoux reported that we will be holding the Reunion at the Caribe Royale Resort for the next two years. As a reminder the Caribe is a suited property. All sleeping rooms are actually mini suites which have a small living room area, a wet bar area that has a refrigerator, microwave and then either King or Double Queen sleeping rooms. The rate is \$159.00 per night for the suites. There are also villas as part of the resort which are two-bedroom, two bath villas. There is a full kitchen in the villas with large refrigerator and stove. The villa rate is \$259.00 per night. The rates for both the suites and villas include breakfast each morning which will be a continental breakfast and hot breakfast sandwich. Further, they have instituted a resort fee and parking fees since we signed the contract. Betty confirmed that these fees will be included in our rate which represents a savings of about \$50.00 per day. Guests coming to the reunion for just the day will be charged the daily parking fee. Betty noted that there are more meal venues at Caribe than the last time we were there. The space on the first level of the registration area is now a full-service restaurant, as well as 24-hour room service, little mini marts in each of the towers. The Clubhouse at Caribe has been the best that we have ever had – they will have awesome food, great atmosphere, pool tables, foos ball tables, pinball machines and music. Since originally being at the Caribe, we have tried to duplicate the Clubhouse that they provided and we have not been able to do so – you will definitely enjoy spending time in the Clubhouse next year. Following our two years at Caribe, we will return to Rosen Shingle Creek.

Shirley thanked Betty and also thanked Betty and Nancy for their work with the room reservations this year. Shirley reported that we had a Certificate of Appreciation for Frank Lee, but he is not here today. Frank has worked with the Office Manager, Kathy, on sending out our *eNewsletters*. We couldn't do it without Frank and are grateful for his help.



Panama Canal Society Annual General Membership Meeting
Marriott World Center, Orlando Florida
Reunion 2019 – July 5, 2019

Richard Grimison called more lottery numbers for door prizes.

Shirley asked Lori Snow to come to the front to announce and award the grand prizes. Lori provided three terrific door prizes including, Prize #3 for a 3-day/2-night stay at DoubleTree Hotel, 3-day/ 2-night stay at Los Mandarinos Boutique Hotel in El Valle and 1 night at Central Hotel. John Woods was the winner of this prize.

Prize #2 consisting of 3-day/2-nights at Radisson Panama Canal, 4-day/3-night stay at Sheraton Biajo and a 2-day 1-night stay at Santa Maria Hotel which was won by Carole Miller.

David Hannigan won the Grand Prize consisting of 3-day/2-night at Gamboa Resort, 4-day/3-night stay at Westin Playa Bonita and 3-day/2-night stay at Bristol Hotel.

Shirley asked if there were any questions or comments from the membership. There being none, the meeting adjourned at 11:10 am.

Shirley Avery-Bentley
President

Kathy Malin
Office Manager