



Panama Canal Society General Membership Minutes  
St. Petersburg Yacht Club, 1 Central Avenue, St. Petersburg, FL  
December 5, 2020

Meeting was called to order by Bill McLaughlin, President, at 11:47 a.m. Bill welcomed everyone and thanked all for coming to the luncheon.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Christine Kervin Tirpak

**Invocation:** Cheryl Russell

Bill stated we have 77 in attendance and thanked Noreen Hanson and Kathy Malin for organizing the luncheon. He asked all to review the Agenda, last membership meeting's minutes and the P&L that were left on each table and we will review after the lunch. Bill told everyone to enjoy lunch and would reconvene after lunch.

After lunch, Bill called the meeting back to order and asked if everyone read the November Membership meeting minutes on everyone's table. Bill asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Tom Wilder motioned to approve the minutes as written, Nancy seconded, and the motion was carried.

Bill introduced all the Executive Board Members present who were Brittney Wilder, James Beattie, Laura Kosik, Nancy Van Siclén, Patti Revello, Tom Wilder, Elaine Lewis, Noreen Hanson, Jacque Vowell, Bob Russell, Christian Tirpak and Kathy Malin. He then introduced the Past Presidents: Betty LeDoux, Elaine Lewis, Bob Russell, and Tom Wilder.

Bill explained that his wife, Margaret, could not make it because their dog is sick, but she did make the beautiful centerpieces and two wonderful door prizes.

The Society is always looking for Reunion volunteers and Laura Kosik is our Reunion Volunteer Chair and is very resourceful. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Laura or the Society office. The Society depends on volunteers for the Executive Board and the Reunion.

The Executive Board was looking at new office space, but the current owner has extended our stay through next summer which is great news and money saver.

The December *Canal Record* was mailed this week.

The Reunion is July 7-11, 2021 at the Caribe Royale All Suites Resorts in Orlando, FL. Here are some highlights:

The Yellow Pages were published in the December issue of the *Canal Record* and has all the Reunion information. Please read all the information provided in the registration packet carefully as information has changed this year. Get your registration in by February 10<sup>th</sup> to be entered in the early bird drawing for two free room nights during the reunion.

The Cultural Seminar will be presented by the University of Florida and the same program was moved from 2020 to 2021. The seminar's theme is on the inclusion of the Panama Canal in pop culture in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in comic books, pulp magazines, films, and radio and TV serials that focus on WWII.

The Annual Luncheon will have Charles Morris Brooks (Charlie) as the guest speaker and his topic will be on security of the Panama Canal and the Canal Zone during WWII. Charlie worked for 39 years with Panama Canal in security and ended up as the Chief of the Panama Canal Protection Division. Charlie authored a great historical portrayal of the



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security and defense of the Canal from the beginning to the end called "Guarding the Crossroads – Security and Defense of the Panama Canal."

The Board has decided to cancel the Saturday Night DJ After Hours dance because of poor attendance.

BHS Classes of 1976 will be hosting the Friday Night Dance and have a great night planned with a band by the name of "The Throwback Decades Band" with the sounds from 1960s-2000s. James T. Slate of BMG Music Publishing is a singer/songwriter from BHS 1976 and will be making a special appearance.

Bill has spoken to Frankie Pretto about Saturday Night Dance and is still 'up in the air' but wants to play. Hopefully we will have a band scheduled to be announced in our March *Canal Record*.

We are anticipating a large showing of class reunions this year since many were postponed in 2020. It is going to be a wild reunion.

There are many Reunion programs still in the works as we are going back to the Caribe Royale in 2021 and although we are not completely new to this hotel since we were there in 2004 and 2005, there many different formats, adhering to Covid19 safety measures and juggling of Convention Center space to be done to make the final plan and a GREAT reunion for all in 2021. It is so very hard to make plans and organize the reunion and these membership meetings in the times we live, but the planning must go on. We just must pray that the new normal comes soon.

Mickey Fitzgerald and Carole Miller from the Friends of the Panama Canal Museum gave a status report on the Silent Auction and the Friends of the Panama Canal Museum Collection.

Bill welcomed a new associate member, Jonathan Melnick, who is a vendor in the back of the room. Jonathan buys and sells old bottles and pre-Columbian pottery. Please make sure you visit all our vendors here today. Bill asked if there were any member comments, suggestions, or new business. Door Prizes were drawn. Patti Revello won the Marriott Grand Prize.

Bill thanked you to Ted and Mel Henter for sponsoring this wonderful venue for our luncheon here today. Bill called Noreen and Kathy to the front and gave them appreciation gift as well as thanking them for all their hard work in putting together this event. He thanked the members, their guests, vendors, and Board members for joining us today and wished all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. The meeting adjourned at 1:40 pm.

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

Bil McLaughlin  
President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kathy Malin".

Kathy Malin  
Office Manager