



PANAMA CANAL SOCIETY
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES
Der Dutchman Restaurant, Sarasota, FL
October 24, 2020

The October General Membership Meeting was called to order at 11:45 a.m. by President, Bill McLaughlin.

Bill McLaughlin welcomed the 44 members in attendance stating that it is great to finally have a meeting since the last meeting was in March 2020. Everyone was sad that we were not able to hold a Reunion this year. Bill McLaughlin reported that the outgoing and incoming boards held a meeting on August 4. The outgoing board appeared via conference call and the incoming board was present while remaining socially distant. The new officers were installed, and the new board began its work.

Jacque Vowell led the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance and Chaplain, Carl Orvis gave a most moving invocation.

Bill McLaughlin reported that the Der Dutchman Restaurant has gone to great lengths to make our luncheon as safe as possible. Our traditional family style lunch was changed to the buffet with lots of safeguards so that there is a little as possible exposure and touching of plates – a lot of safeguards so that we can still enjoy a great meal and great company. Bill McLaughlin thanked Bob and Cheryl Russell for making all the arrangements for us today.

Bill McLaughlin reported that the meeting minutes from March, 2020 along with a P&L report are on the tables. We will vote on the minutes once we reconvene after lunch so please take a moment to review them. If you have any questions, we can address those after lunch.

Meeting adjourned while guests enjoyed lunch. Meeting reconvened at 12:50 pm

Bill McLaughlin introduced the board members in attendance:

Nancy Van Sieten, Office Manager Emeritus and Director
Laura Kosik, Director
Noreen Hanson, Treasurer
Elaine (Vestal) Lewis, Past President
Carl Orvis, Chaplain
Bob Russell, Legislative Representative
Christine Tirpak, Sgt. At Arms
Jacque Vowell, Record Editor

Past Presidents, Betty LeDoux (1989-1991 and 2000-2002), Elaine (Vestal) Lewis (2004-2006), and Bob Russell (2006-2008) were recognized.

Bill McLaughlin expressed a special thanks to Margaret McLaughlin for all her support of him and her ideas with the Society and the Reunion. She has been by his side for the last 20+ years with Society business and special events and now a second time around as president.

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Bill McLaughlin extended a special welcome to Jeanne Walker who is here from Alaska. She is visiting her sister, Mickey Fitzgerald, but timed her trip to be able to join us today.

Bill McLaughlin reported that Mickey Fitzgerald is here on behalf of Friends of Museum and they are looking for volunteers to assist with the Silent Auction at the Reunion. He added that Laura Kosik is also looking for volunteers for the Reunion. If anyone is interested, please get in touch with Mickey and Laura.

Bill McLaughlin announced that we are looking for a new location for the Society office. We currently have office space in a building owned by Aging Solutions, and they are growing and need the offices that we currently occupy. Kathy Malin is working with a realtor to find possible locations for our office. If and when we do move the office, we will post it on the website, Facebook, in the Canal Record and send out email blasts. We are also in the process of revamping our computer systems, software, database and website hosting to improve the daily operations.

Bill McLaughlin reported that the Fall Directory and October *Canal Records* have been mailed and everyone should have received theirs by now.

Bill McLaughlin reported on the 2021 Annual Reunion. Reunion dates are July 7 – 11, 2021 at Caribe Royale Resort. Yellow Pages (reunion registration information and forms) will be published in the December issue of the *Canal Record* which you should receive in Mid-December in the mail. On-line registration will be posted on the Society's web site starting approximately December 15th. Please read all the information provided in the registration packet yellow pages carefully as much information has changed this year being at a new property.

Get your registrations in early to insure you get a villa or suite as they go quickly, especially the villas. If you get your registration in before February 10, 2021, you might win the drawing for a free suite for two nights during the Reunion.

Hours of operation for Registration, Information and Ticket Sales has changed this year to better accommodate our attendees. Read the Schedule of Events in the registration packet.

The Cultural Seminar will be presented by the University of Florida. John Nemmers from UF indicated the subject will be about Panama Canal pop culture during WWII. This seminar was supposed to happen at the 2020 reunion.

Charlie Morris Brooks will be the guest speaker at our Annual Luncheon and his topic will be the Canal Zone during WWII through the treaty years. Charlie wrote the book "Guarding the Crossroads – Security and Defense of the Panama Canal" and was the Chief of the Panama Canal Protection Division. Charlie was supposed to talk at the 2020 reunion.

Due to our Saturday Night DJ After Hours dance decline in attendance, the Board has decided that we will only have the DJ dance on Friday Night in 2021.

We are anticipating a large showing of class reunions this year since many were postponed in 2020. BHS 76 has tentatively accepted to host the Friday Night Dance. More info in the December book.

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Bill McLaughlin reported that he has been in touch with Father Frank Pretto about Saturday Night Dance and is still up in the air but wants to play.

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 and juggling of Convention Center space to be done to make the final plan and a GREAT Reunion for all in 2021. All the information will be in the December Canal Record along with the registration forms as I mentioned before. It is so very hard to make plans and organize the Reunion in the times we live, but the planning must go on. We just must pray that the new normal comes soon.

Jacque Vowell gave an update on the recent By-Law Amendment which passed. 72 ballots were received, and 1 ballot was invalid. Of the 71 ballots, 68 members voted yes and 3 voted no. There being no questions, Bob Russell made a motion that the ballots be destroyed, seconded by Elaine (Vestal) Lewis and the motion carried.

Mickey Fitzgerald gave a report on the Friends of Museum efforts. She advised that there is something for everyone at the Museum so if members have not already visited UF to see it, they should take the time to do so. They are expecting a large turnout at the Silent Auction at the Reunion 2021 and are looking to volunteers. Laura Kosik is helping Mickey with setting of the online volunteer registration site and hopes to get volunteers to help in this worthwhile effort. Mickey reminded everyone that if members sign up as a volunteer, they will have a good time and they will never get fired.

Carole Miller reported that the exhibit is that of WWII and goes into great detail about the role that the Panama Canal played during the war.

Joan Ohman reported the Friends of the Museum folks have been very busy and are happy to have Mickey Fitzgerald and Carole Miller assisting. Joan encouraged all members to sign up as a member of the Friends of the Museum. They are still looking for members to participate in the Oral History segment – one can talk about anything that was significant during their time in the Canal Zone.

Betty LeDoux gave a report on Carnavalito 2021. This will be an excellent opportunity for us to get together and enjoy time with our Zonian family. Rosen Shingle Creek has provided us with a rate of \$132.00 / night which is an excellent rate for Florida in February. We already have commitments from many of our vendors to be there, we are looking at a possible mini golf tournament and mini pool party. The information is in the October book and updates will be in the December book. We hope to see you all there.

Bill McLaughlin asked the members if anyone had any questions.

Laura Kosik stated that she has been asked if the Reunion Registration paid in 2020 would be rolled over to 2021. Bill McLaughlin reported that it would not. The Registration for 2021 starts new just as in years past and further reported that although the Registration fee is typically non-refundable, an exception was made this year given the circumstances of the pandemic. Members were given the opportunity to request a refund of the Registration fee – some members did make such a request while many members donated their registration fee to help with the 2020 Reunion expenses.

Nancy Van Sieten made a motion that the minutes from March 2020 be approved, seconded by Elaine (Vestal) Lewis, and the motion carried.

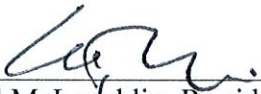
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Bill McLaughlin reported that the next Board meeting will be via Zoom. He added that the Executive Board is looking forward to traveling to the East Coast for the Space Coast picnic.

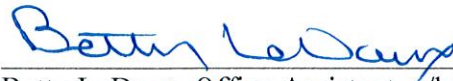
Door prizes were given out with Del Rae Allen winning the grand prize made by Margaret McLaughlin.

Motion made by Joan Ohman to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ed Ohman and the motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 1:20 PM.



Bill McLaughlin, President



Betty LeDoux, Office Assistant, o/b/o
Kathy Malin, Office Manager