

CANAL GATOR TALES

June 2021

Support the Silent Auction!

The Friends of the PCMC need your help with the Silent Auction at the Panama Canal Society reunion in Orlando!

Please consider volunteering to be a part of the incredible team that manages the auction. We're a few weeks away from the reunion, and we need volunteers to help with a variety of activities including setting up, monitoring the room, and so on. Your support ensures that we can raise funds to support the PCMC in a variety of activities including our oral history.

Highlighting this year's Silent Auction are several albums containing rare, historical postcards acquired over many years by collector Brad Wilde, who donated them for the auction.



The postcards have been carefully selected and placed in acid-free albums with archival preservers that are safe for long-term storage. One album contains 118 postcards and three other albums contain 98 postcards. Each album is a "one of a kind" collection containing postcards not readily found elsewhere. In addition to the albums, several postcards are available in frames.

Contact Mickey Walker Fitzgerald (mickeyftz@aol.com) or Kathy Egoft (pankee@aol.com) to learn more about volunteering for the Silent Auction. Thank you!



Linda Morris (left) with a postcard album and Joan Harris (right) with framed postcards.

Panama Canal Society Reunion Exhibit and Cultural Seminar

During World War II, the Panama Canal appeared in hundreds of comic books, movies, radio programs, and dime novels. The Canal was defended by characters such as Captain America, Superman, Dick Tracy, Captain Marvel, and a host of other superheroes, secret agents, soldiers, sailors, and flying aces. The Canal Zone was depicted as a hotbed of international intrigue with spies, double agents, traitors, and criminal masterminds. The Canal's popularity as a setting for wartime stories reflects the importance of the Canal to U.S. defense, shipping, and wartime strategy. Readers and film-goers were presented regularly with scenarios in which the Canal was attacked as the first phase of a sneak attack or invasion by an enemy nation. Visit our exhibit at the Society's reunion this year to see examples of the Canal's frequent portrayals in the 1930s and 1940s.

We also invite you to attend the Cultural Seminar at the reunion this year. Panama Canal Museum Collection curators John Nemmers and Elizabeth Bemis, Ph.D., will discuss their research to document the history of the Canal's frequent role in the movies, comic books, radio programs, dime novels, and other popular entertainment of World War II. They will present dozens of examples of Golden Age comics, pulp fiction, film clips, and recordings that show how the Canal was portrayed - for better or worse - and its popularity as a setting for wartime stories.



These entertaining, eye-opening, and often humorous examples reveal the thinking of authors, illustrators, filmmakers, and the general public regarding the war and the Canal.

We hope to see you at the reunion!



Support the Oral History Program

The campaign to raise funds to support our Oral History Program is off to a great start. Thanks to everyone who has generously donated!

The program was established in 2010 to capture the stories and personal experiences of the American Era of the Panama Canal. Oral history interviews allow people to tell their own stories in their own words and share their own tales of everyday life and work, challenges faced, and achievements reached. We have already produced over 90 [oral history interviews](#) and made them available online, and we are transcribing and editing more than 40 interviews to publish online this year. We offer these and future oral history recordings freely to a global audience as part of the [UF Digital Collections](#) and the [Digital Library of the Caribbean](#). We share these interviews with students of all ages and include excerpts in our online and physical exhibits so that everyone can learn from your firsthand experiences, insights, and perspectives.

With your help, we can reach this goal! Our new PCMC fundraising campaign aims to raise \$250,000 for our [Panama Canal Museum Collection Endowment](#), an amount that will support the oral history program in future years. To prepare for this new campaign, the Friends of the PCMC, in 2019, contributed \$25,000 in funds raised by the annual Silent Auction in the past few years. The auction proceeds, along with funds from the Libraries, were used as seed money needed to hire personnel dedicated to the initiative. As the campaign began to take form in 2020, we received a lead gift of \$25,000 from a generous donor, a gift representing 10% of our goal.

The 10-year anniversary of the museum collection at UF is coming up in 2022 and it would be wonderful to celebrate that anniversary with the completion of this oral history fundraising campaign. You can help by making a gift and being part of this vital program. Together we can make it a great success, one that will benefit the PCMC and education and scholarship far into the future.

To make a gift by check, please make your check payable to the University of Florida Foundation/PCMC Endowment #017606. Please mail the check to the Office of Development, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, PO Box 117000, Gainesville, FL 32611-7000.

To make a gift with a credit card, please call the UF Foundation's Gift Processing toll-free number: 1-877-351-2377 (and mention Fund #017605) OR give online at https://www.uff.ufl.edu/give-now/?fund_id=017605.

For more information, contact the Development Office at (352) 273-2505 or lib-development@ad.ufl.edu

SAVE THESE DATES

July 7-11, 2021

Exhibit, Cultural Seminar, and Silent Auction at the Panama Canal Society Reunion at the Caribe Royale Resort, Orlando, FL. Please contact Mickey Walker Fitzgerald at mickeyftz@aol.com if you wish to volunteer your time or items for the Silent Auction.