

CANAL GATOR TALES

August 2022

Celebrating 10 Years at the Panama Canal Society Reunion

We had a terrific time at the Panama Canal Society Reunion this year, and it was wonderful to see so many of our Friends in Orlando. We received many compliments from the hundreds of visitors who viewed our exhibit, *Transiting Ten Years with the Panama Canal Museum Collection*, which spotlighted important acquisitions, milestones, and activities from the past decade. We also distributed copies of a special book published in conjunction with the exhibit: [*Celebrating Ten Years*](#). We had a great time selecting objects for this exhibit and book, and we hope that everyone enjoyed learning more about the development of the collection and the diversity of our activities over these ten years.

The Cultural Seminar was a terrific success. Dr. Stanley Heckadon-Moreno of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) presented on three fascinating topics: ornithologist Alexander Wetmore's expeditions in Panama, the explorations of geologist Robert H. Stewart, and the research Dr. Heckadon-Moreno conducted for his book, *A Creole from Bocas del Toro: The Story of Carlos Reid*. It takes a team to organize the seminars, but we would like to give a big thanks to Bob Russell for leading the planning for several years and to Bill McLaughlin for scheduling and making arrangements for speaker travel.

Thank you to everyone who stopped by to donate materials to the collection, to renew your Friends membership, or just to chat. More than 25 people renewed as members or joined for the first time, and these memberships raised over \$1,400 to support the collection. Several people joined at the \$125 Gorgas level so that they could get one of our special commemorative 10th anniversary lapel pins.



Thank you for your support over the past ten years, and we look forward to working with you for many years to come. We're already looking ahead to the reunion next year!

Silent Auction a Terrific Success

We're thrilled to report that the Silent Auction organized by the Friends of the PCMC raised \$10,100 this year! A huge thanks to auction organizers Mickey Walker Fitzgerald, Kathy Egolf, and Carole Walker Miller, as well as to the dozens of people who donated their items and/or their time to support the auction. The auction volunteers work incredibly hard every year soliciting items from donors, setting up the auction, monitoring bidding over three days, and managing the always-hectic end of bidding period. This year, they raised \$8,861 from auction items and \$1,239 from the Buy It Now items on sale. As you may recall, the auction raised over \$8,000 in 2021 so we're excited to surpass that by almost \$2,000. Listed below are auction items that received winning bids of \$100 or more. The list demonstrates the variety and uniqueness of the items that were donated.

Cocobolo Bust of Balboa

Donor: Joan Price

Top Bidder: Stephens F. McCauley, \$320

Quilt (Mola Designs and Border)

Donor: Charlotte Kerksiek

Top Bidder: Karen Mullins, \$270

Red & Yellow Kuna Quilt

Donor: Charlotte Kerksiek

Top Bidder: R. Boyer, \$150

Huaca Necklace

Donor: Karen N. Price

Top Bidder: Renee Lavecchia, \$145

Al Sprague Black & White Drawing

Donor: Michael & Chris Parrish

Top Bidder: Dave Rivera, \$130

Panama, The Country

Donor: Edna Crandall

Top Bidder: Ellie Gale, \$100

Pollera Skirt & Blouse

Donor: Ed & Andy English

Top Bidder: Grace Casey, \$100

Pair of Stirrups

Donor: Michael & Chris Parrish

Top Bidder: Bill Kern, \$100

French Grave Marker

Donor: Charlie Vowell

Top Bidder: Betsy Bemis, \$100

The top ten auction bidders were:

- Ellie Gale, \$455
- Stephens McCauley, \$320
- Karen Mullins, \$270
- Bill Kern, \$260
- Jim Grant, \$220
- C. Eric Peterson, \$200
- Len Brockman, \$170
- Val Richey, \$170

- Bette Russell, \$166
- Carol Fritz, \$162

All auction funds raised this year will be contributed towards our [Oral History Campaign](#), so that we can continue to conduct interviews and share them globally in our digital collection. Thanks again for your support, and we're looking forward to the auction in 2023!



PHOTOS. Top Left: Bidders reviewing auction items
 Top Right: Selection of books on the Buy It Now tables
 Bottom Left: Lots of bottles and inkwells available
 Bottom Right: Posing with the Bust of Balboa, our highest bid item

Join the Friends of the PCMC Cruise!

Join the Friends of the PCMC for a 15-Day Ocean to Ocean Panama Canal Princess Cruise, January 17-February 1, 2023. The cruise will originate in San Diego and end in Fort Lauderdale with ports of call in Mexico, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Colombia -- PLUS a day on the Pacific side of Panama and a transit of the new locks. Prices start at \$1859 per person. Contacts: Lori Snow (lori@condortt.com) and Pat Pritchard (pat@condortt.com), or via phone at 770-339-9961.

A Very Special Social Event

In a special ceremony that Friends President Joe Wood characterized as “slightly less-than-solemn,” the Panama Canal Museum Collection and the University of Florida Smathers Libraries renewed their “wedding” vows on July 7th at the reunion to assure the continuation of the museum’s “marriage” with UF in perpetuity. The occasion was to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the transfer of the collection to UF. Dean of University Libraries Judy Russell was unable to attend the reunion, so Sara Piety represented the Libraries in her place. Bob Russell was the distinguished “Officiant” and witnesses included John Nemmers as “Albert the Alligator” and Kathy Egolf as a “Zonian from the Other Side.” Following the celebration, the UF team handed out Orange and Blue Gator-shaped cookies.



PHOTOS: Top Left: Sara Piety and Joe Wood after renewing vows
Top Right: Orange and Blue Gator cookies
Bottom Left: Bob Russell officiates the ceremony
Bottom Right: Invitations and keepsake cards for attendees

The full text of the ceremony was as follows:

Officiant: Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today, on this 7th day of July, in the year two-thousand and twenty-two, before these witnesses -- Albert the Alligator, for the Smathers Libraries at the University of Florida, and a Zonian from “The Other Side,” for the Panama Canal Museum Collection at UF -- to celebrate the 10th

Anniversary of “a most perfect union” that was entered into between the young, upstart Panama Canal Museum and the well-established Smathers Libraries. To commemorate this significant milestone of the merging of this unique partnership, the parties have willingly consented to renew their vows as a reflection of their commitment to continue to remain faithful and true to each other far into the future.

If anyone can show *JUST CAUSE* why these two distinguished entities should not lawfully be bound to a lifetime of blissful entanglement, let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace....Since I hear no objections, coerced or otherwise—

Do you, prestigious Smathers Libraries at the University of Florida, take this up-and-coming, 10-year-old Panama Canal Museum Collection, to nurture, to grow and to help prosper, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, whether the Gators are winning - or losing, whether gas prices are high - or low, till the changing climate and rising seas do you part?

Sara Piety: I Do.

Do you, brash, young, pre-teen Panama Canal Museum Collection, take this well-endowed Smathers Libraries at the University of Florida to be your lifeline, your savior, your sugar daddy, to hang on to and hold tight, from this day forward, until Zonians become extinct, forever and ever--or *in perpetuity, whichever comes last?*

Joe Wood: I Do.

Now, with the power vested in me by Teddy Roosevelt, George W. Goethals, and the University of Florida Cheerleaders, I pronounce you irreversibly and historically linked; you may now go forth and multiply.



SAVE THESE DATES

Oct. 10, 2022

Curator Talk: The Panama Canal Museum Collection at 10 Years. Join PCMC curators John Nemmers and Betsy Bemis as they present highlights from the past decade, share excerpts from oral history interviews, and spotlight recent and upcoming exhibitions. Registration and additional information forthcoming.

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