

**International Order of the Blue Gavel**

**Winter Regional Meeting**

**Saturday, March 4, 2017**

**Clearwater Yacht Club**

**Clearwater, Florida**

**Call to Order:** The Winter Regional Meeting was called to order by President Rosalie Davis-Green on March 4, 2017 at 9:00 A.M. EST.

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

**Eight-Bell Salute:** In grateful acknowledgement of dedicated service to IOBG, the eight-bell salute ended the stand-of-watch for Jerry Rudd, past International President and Francis D. Ramsey, past NCVP Area VP and Past President of District 8.

**Roll Call:** Executive Committee Present: President Rosalie Davis-Green, Immediate Past President Joe Dowdell, President-Elect Tony Durieux, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Bud Higginson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Sherry Barone. A quorum was present. AVPs Present: North Central Vice President Mark Vadaj, Southeastern Vice President Robert "Buzz" Bisanz, and Northeastern Vice President Steve Tisack. Appointed Officers Present: Legal Officer Gary Green and Recording Secretary Marsha Landreth. Absent: Treasurer Marshall Nemoy, Northwestern Vice President Lani Lightle, and Southwestern Vice President Kathleen Smith.

**Introduction of IOBG International Past Presidents:** Louis Key, Joel Kay, and Joe Dowdell.

**Introduction of Hosts:** President of the IOBG Chapter at CYC Hoyt Nichols, District 8 Director Karen Shea, and Southeastern Vice President Buzz Bisanz.

**Self-Introductions of Members and Guests:** Jerry Key P/P Aux 1997, Lloyd Baque Dist 7, Larry Inguagiato Dist 9 Director, Karen Shea Dist 8 Director, Dennis Bosi Treasurer Dist 8, Tom Kennedy Dist 8, Dick Boblenz Dist 8, John Sukis Dist 7, and Linda Loftis Dist 15.

**Minutes of Last Meeting:** The minutes of the Fall Regional Meeting held in Marina del Rey, California on October 22, 2016, were approved as amended.

**Executive Committee Reports:**

**Treasurer:** Treasurer Marshall Nemoy is improving after a stroke. Legal Officer Gary Green gave the report. As of December 31, 2016: Savings account balance \$50,316.67. Checking account balance \$117,919.94. Revenues: \$20,312.90. Expenses: \$26,844.83. With a loss of \$6,531.93. This is only a quarterly report, surplus loss should not be a concern. Year end review will be given at spring meeting. Budget based on 1565 members, have less paid members as of Feb. Losing 50 members a year.

**Second Vice President:** Sherry Barone reported that the Northwestern and Southwestern areas have analyzed the results on the survey and set goals for membership retention and increase membership by 20%. Sherry has been focusing on international membership with visits to Royal Thames Yacht Club in England as well as Newcastle Sailing Club, Italy, and Australia. In Australia, she visited Royal Perth Yacht Club, Clairmonth Yacht Club, and Royal

Flying Fish Yacht Club. She had lunch with Steve & Shirley Willing and Vern & Linda Benson at the Royal Perth Yacht Club, discussing IOBG and reviewing the brochure and web page for Ron Myers. Australians wanted to know why so cheap. She explained that it was an exclusive membership and that it was only \$11 because IOBG is trying to build up international membership. HRH Prince Charles has accepted membership.

Sherry, Mark Vadaj, and Julie Albright, as members of a subcommittee on branding, are addressing perks and discounts for IOBG members, such as cruise discounts, BoatUS discounts, West Marine, and bank card discounts, to name a few. The think-tank group continues to meet to address growth and new ideas to enhance the future of IOBG. Mary Nye Meyers has developed a new and updated web page as she continues to provide excellent social media tools to our membership and potential members. District 11's on-line membership pilot program has been very successful with a number of members utilizing the tool thanks to Director Sheila Anderson and Mary Nye Meyers.

**First Vice President:** Bud Higginson recapped that the member retention survey was to understand the concerning drop in membership over the last several years from approximately 4000 to 1600. Area Vice Presidents will share their survey findings.

**President-Elect:** Tony Durieux reported that relevance, retention, and recruitment can solve the pressing problem of dwindling membership. Must be made to feel pride in being a member of IOBG. Auxiliary involvement helps with retention, and with a high retention rate, recruitment becomes much easier. Need to place recognition articles in newspapers. Direct people to the website. Tell the world about IOBG, and what IOBG does. Take pride in members' accomplishments and mention the Blue Gavel for name recognition.

**Immediate Past President:** Joe Dowdell reviewed the facts leading to the ultimate approval of the Executive Committee of the use of the IOBG-NAF in the name of the 501 c 3 charitable foundation started by District 5. He read extensively from the correspondence back and forth between the Executive Committee and District 5 in chronological order from the time the EC was first notified of their action. He reminded everyone present that the EC founded the Humanitarian Foundation in 1992, they are the only voting members of the HF, and as trustees elect the directors of the HF. As such, it is illogical to believe that the EC would do anything contrary to the interest of the HF at any time.

**President:** IOBG faces challenges to maintain viability as an organization, as do other yachting associations. Publicize the good works of the order will help. Show our involvement and receive credit for it. Community involvement is not specifically highlighted in the Log. Mary is in the process of making changes to the website. The website will feature community activity of the month. Activities throughout the world. Public image will match mission statement.

### **Officer Reports:**

#### **Area Vice Presidents:**

**Southwest:** Sherry Barone gave Kathy Smith's report. Kathy focused her report on some of the Community and Charitable involvement activities. District 10 provides their members with

CPR training and certification. District 15 provides an annual Yacht Club Management Seminar, and supports two charities within their area. IOBG fields a bicycle team for the Amazing Race, which raises funds for Make-A-Wish. They collect donations for ElderHelp of San Diego at their member-appreciation event, their annual Race Your BoD Regatta, and IOBGA's several Jewelry Exchanges. District 16 held its second annual Chowderfest, which raised over \$40,000 for the Channel Islands Maritime Museum. These are the types of activities that help make IOBG relevant to members, the yachting community, communities at large.

**Northwest:** Sherry Barone gave Lani Lightle's report. Recruitment and Retention has been a subject of discussion in the Northwest. The results on the survey showed a variety of challenges. Recruitment has been a problem in District 5. Convincing potential new members has been a challenge. Social functions have been difficult because of the lack of membership and the cost. The good thing is the success of the National Safety Foundation. District 1 has its unique problems, too. The geography of the district has members traveling over 350 miles to go to a function. A surprising thing is the large number of members who travel these distances. Lani will be sending out the survey results and it will be a topic of discussion in District 1 and 5.

**North Central:** Mark Vadaj's region is comprised of Districts 25,23,9, and 7 which continue to work together for success as a whole vs. working as individual districts. Throughout the year, these districts will conduct their individual events and efforts for the benefit of Members of IOBG, their Chapters, their Clubs, and their Fellow Boaters for the rewards of Social Interaction, Humanitarian Efforts, Fund Raising, Preservations of Yachting Customs, Yacht Club Support and more. With this same philosophy the districts in the North Central Area will also join together as a collective group to accomplish the same results. Mark invited all members to events and functions in the North Central Region, wished Treasurer Marshall Nemoy much health and a speedy recovery, and thanked everyone for continued commitment to "Yachting's Most Prestigious Fraternity."

**Northeastern:** New AVP Steve Tisack reported that he is struggling to reach out to reestablish the Northeastern Area. If anyone has contacts with NE, please email Steve. District #3 has had some fantastic events. Attendants has grown from 40 to 93 for their two-hour dinner cruise on the Miss Buffalo. They are looking for branding opportunities.

**Southeastern:** Buzz Bisanz thanked the Clearwater Yacht Club IOBG Chapter and P/C Hoyt Nichols, President of the Chapter, for their hospitality in hosting our 2017 IOBG Winter Regional Meeting. He also thanked District 8 Director Karen Shea for her assistance in coordinating this meeting and guest speaker Captain Curtis A. Wold, US Navy Reserve (Retired) – Chief, J31, Joint Reconnaissance branch – U.S. Special Operations Command. During the past few months the District 8 Executive Committee has been contacting the IOBG Chapters in the District to follow-up on the survey question identifying what the Chapters are doing to retain membership. The results are documented in District 8 Director Karen Shea's report and they will be published the results in the IOBG LOG. He thanked the District 8 leadership team headed by District Director, Karen Shea and President Peter Franck on retaining the #1 District in IOBG membership. Continued hard work is being invested by District Treasurer Dennis Bosi and other members of the team to successfully retain and recruit District membership. District 18 (Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina & South Carolina) remains in "recruitment

mode” The biggest area of interest among the local yacht clubs is unquestionably involvement with Youth Sailing and the district is looking for ways to incorporate IOBG into that community as volunteers, and potentially race operations.

### **District Directors:**

**District #9:** Director Larry Inguagiato announced that the Executive Board has filled the open position of President Elect. Vice President Steven Hyder, who now represents the clubs of Michigan South will acclimate to the President at the District 9 Fall Meeting. Although membership roster has dropped slightly, they have initiated a drive that has already brought back some Past Commodores that have fallen from the roles. According to Area Vice President Mark A. Vadaj, they now hold the number two ranking and will widen that margin with this initiation. District 9 will be sponsoring a Blue Blazer event on October 1<sup>st</sup>, at Detroit Beach Boat Club. Invitations will be sent to all District 9 current Commodores, Vice Commodores, as well as most recent Past Commodores and to all International Dignitaries. Humanitarian efforts include the sponsorship of underprivileged children to attend the Junior Sailing School at North Cape Yacht Club. They will also be making a sizable donation to the Ovarian Cancer Connection.

**District #7:** President-Elect Lloyd Baque presented the report on behalf of Rich McKee. District 7 is looking forward to 2017 and the new boating season, which is not too far away. The IOBG Calendar of Events for this year consists of upcoming events that include St. Patrick’s Day, the annual Blue Blazer, and the Greater Cleveland Boating Association Rendezvous in June. Their Auxiliary also has an annual Brunch on the Nautica Queen in April, which is always a great time.

President Debbie Light took over office in October and has done a great job putting together a full calendar for this year. District #7 looks forward to another outstanding year in boating.

**District #50:** Mark Vadaj reported that many of the members-at-large will be transferring to the Northeast Area now that Steve Tisack is AVP.

**District #8:** Director Karen Shea. As of March 1, 2017, District #8 has 221 paid members compared to 229 last year in 24 Chapters. There are 18 more memberships “in the mail” which will bring membership above last year’s membership at 239. So they remain strong. Again, The key to keeping members interested is keeping them informed and communicating with them via the website at D8IOBG.ORG, newsletters, emails and phone calls from the Executive Committee. Another tool is a roster of all the District members in a simple alphabetical format. Karen summarized the results of the members’ survey. What works for them is communication with Chapter Presidents and members via phone calls from your executive committee, emails, newsletters, updated websites and an alphabetical membership roster. Check each of your Chapters yacht club websites to insure they have info on their IOBG Chapter.

### **Appointed Officers:**

**Legal Officer:** Gary Green – no report

**Communications Director:** Mary Nye Meyers is down with the flu, but sent a reminder that reports need to be turned in by March 18.

**Protocol Officer:** Marsha Landreth – no report

**Appointed Representatives:**

**Boat US** – Gary reported that IOBG members receive a small discount on basic membership cost. Gary said it would be nice if we could also get a discount for towing.

**Humanitarian Foundation:** no report

**National Boat Foundation:** annual meeting in March at Marina del Rey Yacht Club.

**Coast Guard:** Pratt, a division commander, will submit report.

**Auxiliary Report:** Sandy Durieux

The Auxiliary's new project is donating children's books to the impoverished. Ongoing project. Retention was a topic of discussion. Their approach will be for the district directors to talk one-on-one with prospective members. Auxiliary gave a donation to HF in Jerry Rudd's name. They are setting up database. Not on website but a tool for Executive Committee. Their meeting was productive.

**Change of Watch:** Tony Durieux - Oct 19-22. Westlake in Cleveland. Fundraising is a raffle for a very nice basket, part of the proceeds will go to HF. Information on website after June meeting. Will take fees online. \$109 Doubletree. Croker Park is a large shopping area in Cleveland.

**Spring Regional Meeting:** Portland meeting June 8<sup>th</sup>, discounted rates at Doubletree will be \$143.98-\$153.98. Reservation number is RR7.

**Nominating Committee:** Joe Dowdell - 2nd VP and all Area VPs terms are for one year. Must reapply in writing to all members of the committee before June. Committee members are Joe Dowdell, Joel Kay, Rosalie Davis-Green, Linda Loftas, and Roger Isphording

**Auditing Committee:** Auditing Committee results may be late. We are expecting to get the audit packets in May.

**Old Business:**

**Membership survey** - Bud reported that the information will be posted in the Log. Recap – membership is down. The survey will help determine what members would like to get from their membership. AVPs were responsible for surveying members, Bud will compile the results, received approval from EC and publish in Log.

**PR Consultant** – Sherry reported that she has brought in a public relations expert to look at IOBG website. Jennifer's analysis gave constructive ideas. Mary is working on the new website to reflect suggestions. Jennifer will volunteer more time to consult. Need up-to-date, interactive changes. IOBG publicity of hosting International Boating at Del Rey. Gary suggested photos of children will have impact, as well as having action photos on the Log cover.

**District Service Award** – Tony presented a mock District Service Award pin with the words Relevance, Retention, Recruitment written on it. Giving the pin for merit will generate pride and, therefore, generating growth because if members feel important, becoming a member will become important. Tony didn't think IOBG's drop in membership was connected to the dues increase, rather relevancy. Tony credits much of District #7's success to the auxiliary. The auxiliary is involved with activities, turning drab meetings into memorable times. Cost of pin will be around \$1.25. Rosalie – the pin is an effort to reach out. Club who retains members will also grow. This will be an AVP-driven program. Results will be publicized in Log.

**New Business:**

**Humanitarian Foundation's request for Policy Manual change.** Lengthy discussion in closed session of the Executive Committee ended with a compromise decision that, in the future, the requesting organization must receive permission from the EC to use IOBG in its name. After the language is agreed upon, a letter will be sent to the Humanitarian Foundation.

**Good of the Order:**

To fund raise for the Annual Convention, Tony is selling raffle tickets for \$5 per ticket. The raffle prize is an impressive cooler full of colorful bottles.

Thanks to Curtis Wold for speaking at lunch. Thanks to the Winter Regional Meeting Committee members: Karen Shea, Hoyt Nichols, and Buzz Bisanz.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 12:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Marsha Landreth

Recording Secretary