

## Minutes

### May 08, 2025 Press Club Meeting

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. in East Activity Center Crystal Beach Room

*Present: Doug Kates, Editor; Tom Butcher, President; Donna Gagnon, Vice President; Joanne Cordes, Secretary; 17 members*

#### **Call to Order** – at 1:30 p.m. by Doug

Doug asked Joanne to give a reading of the highlights of our last meeting which was actually the Appreciation Dinner. Joanne offered the number 1 highlight that Valerie Martin had brought 2 games – cornhole and scrabble. Both were a hit, both were played. And Doug offered that we will keep ‘games’ in mind for next year’s event.

To continue, Doug told a story about a new, recent advertiser. The jeweler/owner of the business stopped by OTOW office to get a copy of our paper and after stopping to read it, thought that he must have picked up 3 copies since it was so sizable. He was delighted to learn the paper was just 1 issue with a much greater volume than he expected. He was impressed, needless to say.

#### **Installation of Officers** –

As Doug held a copy of our current newspaper edition, Tom, Donna, and Joanne stood with one hand on the paper and repeated the oath as Doug read it. Yes, we promise to attend as many meetings as possible, contribute stories as we are able, provide support to Doug as needed, uphold the standards of the Press office, and also promise never to argue with Doug. 😊 Mary Lou Wall took pictures as we stood taking the oath.

#### **Current News** –

- Doug introduced one new building reporter, Richard Broadhurst, who briefly shared why he wants to write for the newspaper.
- Doug explained that the paper’s current financial status is \$5,000 in the red. This is due to the fact that we have <sup>1)</sup> too few advertisers, <sup>2)</sup> too many stories resulting in too many pages without ads. He raised a paper showing 2 full pages – all stories, no ads. And <sup>3)</sup> Doug has too many hours resulting in overtime. This is primarily due to the fact that when advertisers’ requests or stories come in late/past the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, Doug has too little time to meet his publishing deadline. A few staff members offered ideas for increasing advertisers and reducing Doug’s workload. The bottom line, most helpful decision is that stories are best when they are *on time* and *news-worthy*. Doug gave the example that he has already received 15 stories for the June paper. This is very good.
- Doug asked how many of us were aware that the paper is now being rated online by our readers. To access: OTOW website > Newspaper > Box Office > Click here for this month’s issue > Click here to rate this month’s newspaper. Current aggregate rating is 9.99.
- Another change to the paper is a new format. Doug happily told us that he has another computer setup and this change is welcomed. Several in the meeting voiced approval of the font change which made it easier to read and also that the calendar design is appreciated.

#### **New Business** –

- Doug recapped the Appreciation Dinner in April, explaining there was an error in the May paper...that there were 2 more names of those qualified but not noted. (these are Betty Spoerle and Kathy Walters – though they were not named in the meeting). Doug asked that we all consider ways to get more people to contribute and to qualify for the annual dinner. One suggestion by Doug is to change up the meeting venues and possibly the meeting time.
  - A brief discussion on time change was tabled after just a few minutes.
  - Doug decided our August 8 meeting will be at the Eggs Up Grill restaurant at 2 p.m. This restaurant encouraged Doug that they had meeting space for a meeting. The address is 1500 McMullen Booth Road, Ste. A13-14, Clearwater.
  - Taking a 'raised hand vote', we decided to meet at the Varsity Club for the January 8 meeting at 1:30 p.m.
- Another opportunity for our club to change the pace to encourage interest is to join the Italian-American, Travel, and Canadian clubs on February 27 at Tampa Bay Downs for lunch and the horse racing entertainment. Someone mentioned cost as \$45 and this is something to be clarified. Several expressed interest in going.
- Doug asked us to participate in an oral quiz about the upcoming vote on the Reserves yes/no topic. He had wanted to write an article explaining what reserves are and are not, but this was denied by the publisher. We were then asked a number of questions and it was soon apparent there was confusion on the subject of Reserves; this, unfortunately, proved Doug's point...that there was not a good understanding in the community about our upcoming vote. We spent a fair amount of time in discussion but it may be too late to improve the situation. The community needs a majority of at least 2,550 'NO' votes to avoid the addition of \$77 /month to residents' monthly fee in the name of a Reserves Fund.

*Note: 2:20 p.m. – Joanne left to attend another meeting which had begun at 2 p.m.*

In closing, Doug asked that we keep our narratives focused on the subject and absent editorializing.

**50/50 Drawing – Donna Gagnon** officiated the drawing and distribution of funds. \$16 collected, allowed for \$8 to winner Joanne Cordes.

**Adjournment -- 2:35 p.m.**

Minutes Submitted By: Joanne Cordes, Secretary

Special thanks are owed Cheryl Butcher, who made the most heavenly Bread Pudding with warm brandy sauce. And Donna brought Vanilla Bean ice cream as a topping. Donna also did the setup and tear-down for refreshments. As a curious side note, the main ingredient of the pudding was the hot dog buns left from the April Appreciation Dinner. Now, how resourceful is that? [this is editorializing]