

## President's Message

By

Jim Bannerman (EF 55-06)

**H**ere we are just a few months away from our 2009 AFNOA reunion in Dayton. There are several very important issues going on in our organization and I'll touch on a couple of them very briefly and then shut up and allow the team leaders to carry on the discussion in depth.

First, of course, is our October reunion. Vice President Sostense Suazo (Suaz) has done a fine job in arranging, what will most likely be, a very interesting reunion. We will be in convention from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of October with the General Membership meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> followed by our banquet that evening at the National Museum of the Air Force. It's important that you get your reservations in early so that Suaz has a count for ordering buses and making arrangements for the banquet. Suaz has included a registration form along with his complete description of the reunion events elsewhere in this issue of DR Ahead. As a matter of interest we have invited non AFNOA members, such as the James Connally group, to join us at the reunion, however they must join AFNOA for at least one year to do so.

The second item that deserves your immediate attention is the reissue of the Air Force Navigators Observers book. This beautiful volume, which was originally published back in 1997, contains not only a wonderful history of aerial navigation and the various navigation schools but also a biography and photos of hundreds of our classmates. Ron Barrett, our historian, working with Dick Meansfield, our Vice President, have arranged for a re-publication of an updated version of the book. Elsewhere in this issue of DR Ahead Ron will describe in detail how you may submit your biography and picture if you were not included in the original publication, or an update to your bio if you were included. This is a treasure for those interested in our history. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the re-published issue please contact Dick Mansfield ([RHMans2542@cfl.rr.com](mailto:RHMans2542@cfl.rr.com) or 352-854-3016) to let him know your interest. We must have a minimum of 150 requests before we can order the publication.

The third and final issue I want to mention is our Air Navigation History Museum Exhibit. It has become obvious that the National Museum of the Air Force in Dayton is not interested in our exhibit. As I noted in the last issue of DR Ahead we visited the Strategic Air and Space Museum (SASM) in Omaha to investigate it as a possible site for our exhibit. Now it appears that the SAMS museum is primarily interested in an interactive exhibit for school children. The SAMS T-29, although a beautiful airplane, has been stripped of all its navigation stations and equipment and made into a classroom where kids can play pilot with flight simulator on a computer. That's not what many of us had in mind. I envision our exhibit as a place where our records, our equipment, our stories, our memorabilia, our tools and our history will be preserved and appropriately displayed. A place where, long after the last of us who ever really navigated an airplane are long gone, interested people will be able to view the exhibit and say "WOW so that's how they did it before GPS". It should not be a playground for kids, but a respected repository for the evidence of **a great art**, which no longer exists. I look forward to a real discussion of this concept at our October General Membership meeting.

OK I've said my peace. Now I'll shut up and let Suaz, Ron and Dick tell you the rest.