

## The Way Ahead for the NWSA

*“The rumors of our death are greatly exaggerated.”  
(to paraphrase Mark Twain)*

During the highly successful Reunion #47 Cruise on *Celebrity Summit*, the attendees held wide-ranging and serious discussions on the future of the Naval Weather Service Association. Prior to the reunion, there were a number of well-intended and thoughtful email exchanges on the subject. As the current president, I took an action item to come up with a draft document to outline the challenges we face and our plans to meet them.

**Membership.** We all recognize that our membership is decreasing as the natural result of time. Almost all of our members served our country’s Navy during the 20th Century. For decades we’ve tried to connect with the younger generation. We’ve spoken to the schoolhouse, to headquarters, and to individuals. We’ve posted on AG and METOC social media pages. The bottom line is that there is essentially no interest among younger people in groups like ours. We are not unique in this situation. Service groups and social associations are dwindling throughout the country. This is something we will live with as long as we continue to exist.

**Finances.** As the great majority of us are life members, very little income is generated from annual dues. Reunions are smaller and no longer generate additional income. The association has been breaking even in recent reunions. We have some expenses that we must meet, like the cost of maintaining our website and printing and mailing the *Aerograph*. (We can reduce expenses to a degree, and we will.) But bottom line, our funds will shrink along with our membership.

In my estimation, our membership and our available funds will get smaller at close to the same rate. Eventually, they will both reach a level when we will have to “sail off into the sunset.” However, the sunset event is some years down the road.

**AMS Scholarships.** This is the true legacy of the NWSA. Each year, two students receive partial support for their education from the funds that we have turned over to the American Meteorological Society. The AMS has been doing a fine job of managing our funds and ensuring that they are

well-used. Bravo Zulu to Mike Gilroy for his long-time dedication as the chair of the Scholarship Committee.

**Reunions.** Some members cherish our annual get-togethers. Others are not able to attend — or chose to spend their limited travel and vacation time elsewhere. Reunions are optional, but are the really the life-blood of the NWSA. We plan to continue holding reunions for the foreseeable future. “Whenever two or three shall meet, and old tales be retold ... from low to highest in the Fleet, will pledge the Blue and Gold.”

**The Immediate Future.** We have leadership succession in place and volunteers to host the next two reunions. Thanks to Pat O’Brien for his tireless work as the Nominations Committee chair. Ed Straten will begin his two-year term as President in June of this year. Tom Berkeridge stepped up as First VP and Tim Kenefick is willing to become our Second VP. Reunion #48 is being planned by Tom Berkeridge. It will be held in The Villages, FL in May 2024. Bob and FJ Cutting are willing to take the reins for #49 on the Mississippi Gulf Coast in 2025.

**Farther Down the Line.** As we’ve “kicked the can down the road” for now, we will still have challenges to face.

1. Aerograph mailing to members who do not have computer access is one of them. It is important that all members get the Aerograph if they want it. We will publish a notice in the May and August issues that mailings will be discontinued UNLESS the person contacts the Secretary/Treasurer to specifically request a hard copy mailing.
2. Continued funding of the Aerograph and the [navalweather.org](http://navalweather.org) website. This Aerograph and the website should continue for even longer than we hold in-person reunions. They are the glue that hold us together. We may have to solicit contributions from members at some point. (I’m betting that there will be some willing members.)
3. What do we do with the “stuff?” Historian Tom Hanagan has a large collection of NWSA memorabilia. At some point we want to make sure that the good things find the best home we can manage.

In summary, we’re in the fourth quarter, but the game is far from over!