

# Outlook from an "Old Timer"

A Contribution by Bill Martin

A couple of months ago the idea of a newsletter for our local NAL Chapter was discussed and many felt it would add a welcome new dimension to our programs. I am honored to offer this brief article in the inaugural issue of the NAL newsletter and hope this section of the newsletter will feature contributions from Past Presidents, Board Members, and others who have helped make NAL what it is today.

Here is my contribution, and I hope you find it interesting.

My tenure with the Space Program began in Huntsville, Alabama with the Army Ballistic Missile Agency and then NASA in 1958 on the Redstone and Jupiter Programs. I was in the Saturn Systems Office and was transferred by my company, Hayes Aircraft, to Cape Canaveral. After 10 years with Hayes, the final year as Division Manager in Cocoa Beach when we were building the swing arms for complex 34 and then 37, I left Hayes and came with KSC/NASA. I spent 31 years with KSC/NASA, ending as program manager for the university programs in the Advanced Projects Office.

From my personal observations, retirement sometimes means the end - or mostly closed doors - to relationships with friends, fellowship, and opportunities to discuss the contributions we think we made to the profession or industry we used to earn our living over a period of thirty or more years. That can be a devastating blow to our feelings of self-esteem.

When the NASA Alumni League first began, it became obvious to me that these missing elements of our "need to feel needed" could be satisfied in our relationships with the other chapters and our monthly meetings with our former co-workers. There was time for fellowship around the lunch table, talks - speeches - by those currently in jobs we formerly held, projects and programs for our contributions and involvement, and an occasional question or request to "help out" with a new problem which we might have encountered in the "far distant past".

As with most organizations, a formal structure existed which required that we elect boards of directors and leaders for our league to function and for our monthly activities. After several years of the KSC Chapter existence and functioning, I was asked to serve on the board of directors, elected Vice President, served two terms and was then elected President. There are several who served in that office before me and several since my term.

As a past president, I appreciate the NAL and the continued dedication of the people who accept offices and maintain the organization, sustain programs, and constantly develop new interests and activities as new KSC people retire and our membership grows. The Headquarters Alumni League maintains contact with the NASA Administrator and the Headquarters people and

keeps the local chapters tied to the whole integrated purpose of the original founders of the NASA Alumni League. I think we contribute in a meaningful way, not only for our own local people, but also for the larger group of NASA employees nationwide.

As this newsletter matures and others who have served in offices of the NAL are requested to contribute articles, we will garner more tidbits of knowledge about our membership and allow more to "have a say" about what we do and how we do it. I hope you will step forward when asked, or volunteer your own perspective to make this a channel for rich information and better relationships among all NAL members. Thanks for allowing me to be a part of this great organization.

Bill Martin