



VOLUME 55

AUGUST 2017

NO. 1

Charleston convention included challenging weather, lots of history and conversations with good friends

Our 54th convention was enjoyed in the historical city of Charleston, South Carolina. As we gathered on July 10, several pilots had to change their plans of flying in due to the summer afternoon thunderstorms. Everyone made it there safely, even though they had to finish the final miles by car.

What a city! Charleston has a rich history and plenty of things to do and enjoy.

I would like to give a very warm Southern "thank-you" to George Gratton and his wife, Irene (who we keep in prayer during her treatments), along with Fr. Mel Hemann, for all of their work to organize our convention.

During our stay, we were able to take a riding tour of the city of Charleston, closing with a boat ride across the bay to view Fort Sumter. This is where the first shot of the Civil War was fired. This brought to mind the great sacrifices that have been made by many for the freedoms we enjoy today.

We finished the evening by celebrating Mass at St. Mary's, the oldest Catholic church in Charleston. More thanks to the Diocese of Charleston and all the staff who helped with this event, especially Stephanie Stewart. Our banquet in the Harborview Restaurant overlooking the bay was complemented by two guest speakers, Rickey Bevington, who spoke about the



challenges of reporting with accuracy and integrity. We also listened to Steve Hedges of AOPA, who gave a review of the updates to the new pilot license without a third-class medical, BasicMed.

On Wednesday, we had the privilege of traveling to Patriots' Point, home of the USS Yorktown. After receiving a tour of the World War II collection of historical aircraft in the hangar bay, we enjoyed an explanation of the workings on the flight deck of the "Fighting Lady," which was commissioned April 15, 1943. The rest of the

day was left to explore the ship or visit the onboard "Medal of Honor" museum.

Later that afternoon, we held our annual business meeting. I would like to give a special thanks to Tom Enwright, who was unable to join us, but said he was willing to assist with our newsletter. Thanks, also, to Allen Corrigan, who offered to host our 55th convention in Medina, Ohio.

Fly safe everyone! Know of our sincere appreciation for everyone's efforts for a great convention. Good conversations with good friends. Plan now to join us next year on July 9-12 in Ohio.

Keeping the blue side up the best I can,

Fr. John Schmitz, NAPP President

2017 NAPP Convention highlights — Charleston, South Carolina

A note from Fr. Mel Hemann, convention co-chairman:

Monday night, July 10: Home Base was the Holiday Inn - center of all activities. Usual gathering, pizza and sharing.

Tuesday, July 11: City tour. Interesting tour with driver/guide enlightening all on the history of the area.

Following that, we got on the boat to Fort Sumter. We had ordered box lunches to eat on the way. Due to bad weather and members not able to arrive, we had plenty to share. We fed quite a number of fellow passengers, which led to interesting conversations. One couple: husband retired 747 airline pilot; other families from various churches. The gospel came alive as we fed those who were hungry, etc. The leftovers were taken back to the hospitality room refrigerator and kept members alive for two more days.

Banquet had two speakers. First was Rickey Bevington, niece of departed NAPP member Bill Bevington, and anchor on Georgia Public Broadcasting. She gave an interesting presentation on the role of the media. Her emphasis was the fact that all of present-day media is PROFIT DRIVEN. In other words, a few at the top are making a lot of money on the news. Could there possibly be just a bit of reality to FAKE NEWS?

Steve Hedges, regional AOPA rep, gave a very



interesting and informative presentation on the BASIC MED possibilities currently available.

Wednesday, July 12: Patriots' Point and aircraft carrier, THE YORKTOWN. Interesting time as we viewed aircraft from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, through to the present-day conflicts.

Mass at St. Mary's. President John Schmitz presided at liturgy in the oldest church in the Carolinas and Georgia.

Personal note: For the first time in 54 years, we experienced weather-related issues. Of the five planes, ONE made it on Monday. Occupants of two grounded planes rented cars to "get there." Two others overnighted and got in on Tuesday; one early enough to join the tour, the other got in by noon.



On the Thursday departures, two were able to make it home that day; three were grounded again. Two made it home on Friday; the third didn't get home till Saturday.

It was also the first time we have had four members cancel prior to the meeting due to illness. Looking at the members, I do believe it affirms the reality that some of us aren't as peppy as we used to be.

Photo credits

TOP: Fr. John Schmitz
LEFT: Vincent Kearns

2017 NAPP Convention highlights — Charleston, South Carolina

A note from George Gratton, convention co-chairman:

To my many friends, thank you all so much. Our 54th convention in Charleston is now over, and I hope you all had a good event. I hear Rickey Bevington from Georgia Public Broadcasting and Steve Hedges did a fine job at the banquet. Wish we were there.

As a host who didn't attend the convention, I truly missed the time and camaraderie we share. Illness, bad weather, and a busted elevator tried to mess up stuff, but alas, didn't. I want to thank Fr. Mel for his help. I'd be nowhere without him. I also wish to thank all those who attended, or tried to attend, the event. Special thanks to those who were so kind to Irene, which was everybody.

For those who don't know, Irene is battling lymphoma cancer. She arrived in Charleston quite ill but in good spirits. Plumbing for transfusions and chemo ports installed, we were off to Atlanta for treatment during the convention time. She was ill for the long car ride but we made it on time for scheduled treatment.

She has now lost all her hair, but at least feels better. Sunday, we move to Atlanta for a month, while she is in hospital for intense chemo and then the BMT transfusion center for stem cells. Magical stuff, this treatment, but still looking for the result to be CURE!

You guys who are praying for her, be aware: every one of those prayers is working! She had remission, clear bone marrow, and good stem cells for transfusion all way ahead of prediction.

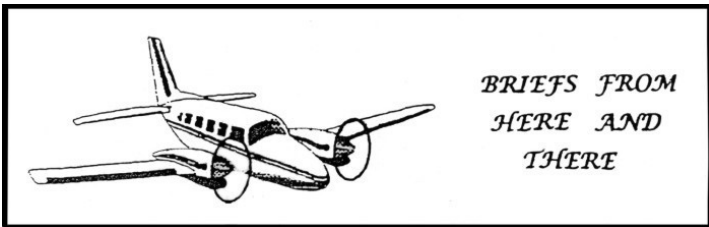
Irene and I are thankful to God for the cure, and health insurance for paying the doctors! God willing, we will see you all next year in Cleveland.

Thanks, blessings and all tailwinds!

George and Irene Gratton



Photos by Fr. John Schmitz



BRIEFS FROM
HERE AND
THERE

2017 Fall Midwest Regional: Monday, September 25, in Cherokee, Iowa. Hosted by Gene and Paul Murray. See sign-up sheet at the bottom of this page.

A note from Fr. Scott Garrett in Alaska:

I am back in Dillingham as a flying priest. I was transferred here in July 2016, after serving in Wasilla for five years. Before that, I was in Dillingham for six years at the St. Paul mission. Website: holyrosaryalaska.org. Here is a link to a draft of a video showing Fr. Scott flying in Alaska: <https://vimeo.com/169152777> Password: HOLYROSARY.



Below: St. Therese in King Salmon/Naknek.



Fr. John Swing of Nekoosa, Wisconsin, is building an Onex aircraft. Here's a photo of the fuselage he's building in La Crosse. "I have completed the tail feathers, built the main spar and am skinning the left wing at my rectory in Nekoosa," he reports.

A note from Msgr. Frank Mouch: If it is of any interest to the membership, I was once struggling with the FAA for a medical certificate and lost. They didn't deny me the third-class certificate, but discouraged me from trying to renew mine.

That is important, because the new system is not available to those with a denial. The new regulations are workable and I am flying once again at age 85.

There may be others in NAPP who are reluctant to try the process, but it was not that difficult. If you are not facile with the internet, you may need someone to help steer you through the "Self-Assessment."

NAPP MIDWEST REGIONAL MEETING

Monday, September 25, 2017

CHEROKEE REGIONAL AIRPORT- (CKP), Cherokee, Iowa

HOSTS: Gene and Paul Murray

RESERVATIONS TO: elmurray@evertek.net; 712-261-1246

Please RSVP by Thursday, September 21, 2017

NAME _____

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SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY:

10:30 – Arrival and sharing stories

12:30 – Lunch

Departure – Later in the afternoon

FiFi, DOC, Oshkosh and me

By Patrick J. McDonald

FiFi

I first met FiFi, up close and personal, in Fayetteville, Arkansas, on a clear and cool mid-September morning in 2013. I had lusted for a live encounter with FiFi while watching her perform in my all-time favorite movie, "The Right Stuff."

Sam Shepherd, now deceased, played Chuck Yeager, who broke the sound barrier in the Bell X-1. FiFi gracefully portrayed the pregnant B-29 that dropped the X-1 from her belly at 25,000 feet. Yeager lit the candle and the flight became history.

On that magical September morning in Fayetteville, I stand in the shadow of FiFi's greenhouse flight deck, facing a semi-circle of flight crew members, other eager voyagers, three close friends, and my only living brother.

The preflight briefing is professional and reassuring. Our crew members are airline pilots who volunteer to crew FiFi for the Fayetteville segment of her 2013 USA tour. To a person, we all laugh and play with words about whether to call our host the "The Commemorative Air Force" or "The Confederate Air Force." The crew remains indifferent but the Confederacy wins this light-hearted skirmish.

It takes only a few laughs and fewer minutes for the titanium and aluminum incarnation of history that overshadows us, to come to life – through story and pleasant recollection. Spontaneous narratives congeal into easily absorbed energy that will make our ride in FiFi the ride of a lifetime.

"My dad served on Tinian and serviced these beautiful machines," says one 55-year-old rider, holding back his tears. "I've waited my entire life for this mo-



On that magical September morning in Fayetteville, I stand in the shadow of FiFi's greenhouse flight deck, facing a semi-circle of flight crew members, other eager voyagers, three close friends, and my only living brother.

ment. I finally get my ride."

"My mom worked in Omaha at the Martin Bomber Plant during the war years," counters my brother. "She could have been there the day that Paul Tibbets toured the plant and selected the plane he wanted named the Enola Gay. The Defense Department gave him that rare privilege before they informed him about the nature of his mission."

Once we are secured in our seats and become airborne, we are released by a crew member to roam freely around the restored bomber. I remark that I prefer to relive history in my imagination, rather than with my life. I note, above the roar of the four engines, that there are no enemy fighters to mess with us anywhere in northern Arkansas. I feel secure as I pull myself upward into the central command station that controls every 50-caliber machine gun in the super fortress. I inch my way back into the tail gunner's nest, grateful that I don't have to ride in this claustrophobic perch all the way to Tokyo and back.

DOC

DOC enjoys some of the same developmental history as FiFi. He was saved from the target-practice boneyard of the China Lake California Naval Weapons Station.

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Tony Mazzolini worked tirelessly to salvage DOC, then gather a large number of The Friends of DOC to restore him to a productive life after 300,000 hours of volunteer help. Team efforts brought DOC's brilliantly polished aluminum body and soul to life under the current airworthiness certificate of N69972

I met Tony Mazzolini in DOC's shadow on the ramp in Oshkosh. We were surrounded by hundreds of other warbird fans, exchanging narratives about DOC's resurrection. Their comments offered a multi-layered color commentary on this massive project.

Oshkosh

I had flown in to AirVenture 2017 with a friend in his vintage Cessna 180. He'd been to Oshkosh 30 times, while I was a newcomer. We camped under the wings, drank beer, ate bland cheeseburgers from the Wisconsin Machine Shed and spoke airplane for three solid days. While there, we became part of the groundswell of fans who underwrote DOC and FiFi's efforts to rewrite aviation history. We cheered with thousands of other B-29 enthusiasts as DOC and FiFi flew overhead in formation. This marked the first time in 50 years that two B-29s had flown formation in the USA. The formation grew in magnitude as a B-17, B-52, B-1, B-2, and a group of B-25s joined the formation, flanked by several P-51 Mustangs.

My readers can watch the same show from DOC's flight deck on ksn.com/.../360-degree-video-shows-cockpit-during-doc-flight

You can also google the formation flight of FiFi and DOC on YouTube. Take your pick about which version is the most dramatic.

I left Oshkosh with gratitude for the great gift of aviation in my life. I've been licensed to fly for 50 years, and every moment of my less-than-illustrious career has been challenging and fun. There's a bond that exists between pilots. There's also an affectionate con-

nection between pilot and aircraft. For some, the bond is passionate and it deepens over time.

On departure day, strictly by chance, or by the winds of fate or by divine design, we taxi out behind DOC. He wants to hold for a time and warm up his big R-3350-26WD hybrid engines. Our ageless 180 is warmed up and ready to go, eager to follow the continuous parade of airplanes out of Oshkosh while it is still cool.

The tower speaks affectionately to DOC, while we hold. DOC defers to us, then the tower dispatches us out of there with indifference. DOC soon follows, with affectionate farewells from unidentified voices.

As we leave the Oshkosh area, we follow N69972 on our ADS-B IN and watch his traffic dart overtake us from behind and climb to a higher altitude. We strain for a visual contact but never catch sight of DOC. Sev-



eral minutes later, 972 disappears from our traffic range circle.

Our departure is a lackluster farewell to an emerging friendship, far too pressured to foster romance, but somehow symbolic of the ebb and flow, then final disappearance of life's captivating experiences. Whether hugging vintage aircraft, recounting the events of a particular era, exploring friendships formed through the joy of flight, or tenaciously hanging on to fantasies about flying far into old age, they all come on screen, stay long enough to create great energy, then disappear from view. Only innocent memories remain, but they sustain us.

P.J. McDonald lives in Iowa. Email him at ozonetrip-per@cs.com. For more about FiFi and DOC, see this [EAA article](#).

Priest pilots find inspiration in the heavens

By Christina Lee Knauss
The Catholic Miscellany, Diocese of Charleston
August 1, 2017

CHARLESTON—Father Allen Corrigan, of the Diocese of Cleveland, likes to say that he first started flying an airplane in elementary school.

When he was in the third grade at Catholic school in Ohio, he would “fly his desk,” drawing the controls of an imaginary cockpit on the surface and pretending to fly during class. The young man’s interest was noticed by the nuns who taught him, and it never fell away.

In 1997, several years after he was ordained, Father Corrigan took to the skies for real. He learned to fly and became the co-owner of a Cessna 172 Skyhawk.

As a priest who loves having wings, he is also a member of the National Association of Priest Pilots (NAPP), an organization of Catholic clergy and associate lay men and women who share a love for aviation.

The group’s members call themselves the “Flying Padres.” First formed in 1964 by two priests from Kentucky, it started out with about 80 members. That year the group also received the endorsement of Pope Paul VI. Today, it has more than 100 members from around the U.S. and overseas, including Brazil, Africa and Australia. They represent all levels of the hierarchy, from parish priests to bishops, and all levels of flying experience, from students to experienced professionals and flight instructors.

The organization held its national conference in Charleston for the first time July 10-12. Thirty priests

from all over the United States and as far away as Jamaica spent three days worshipping and praying together. They visited historic sites in the city and talked about the two things that bring them together: their commitment to sharing the Gospel and the joy of soaring through the skies.

Father John Hemann, of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, has been a member since the beginning and currently serves as treasurer. He started taking flying lessons shortly after he was ordained in 1961 and earned his pilot’s license in 1964. Over the years, he has owned or flown 11 different airplanes and only recently stopped flying himself, content to ride along with his fellow priests as a passenger.

“Many people are surprised when they hear about a group of Catholic priests who are also pilots,” Father Hemann said. “It is something many don’t think a priest would do.”

Father Hemann enjoys being part of priest pilots because of the close friendships he developed with fellow clergy who share a love of flying. He talks readily about the diversity of experience the men bring to the table.

Some are diocesan priests, while others are in religious orders. Father Hemann himself spent 28 years as a military chaplain, retiring as a brigadier general in the National Guard. Father Joe McCaffrey, a member from the Diocese of Pittsburgh, is a chaplain for the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Father Hemann also is proud of the group’s commitment to charity. He said they regularly raise money to purchase airplanes for priests doing mission work overseas, as a way to help carry out ministry in the

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Left to right: Father Phil Gibbs, Father Jack Paisley and Father John Herzog.



Father Joe McCaffrey (right), of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, sits in the cockpit of his plane with a colleague.

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field. Many of the priests say flying offers a unique chance to evangelize.

“As a priest and a pilot, you encounter people you wouldn’t ordinarily meet,” Father McCaffrey said. “Many of them fly themselves, or are initially interested in the fact that you are a pilot, and those conversations will often turn into a chance to talk about God and the Church. It’s a whole different way of encountering people.”

Father McCaffrey, who has been flying since 1998, tells the story of a friendship with a couple at one of his parishes. The wife was Catholic. Her husband was not, but he did have an interest in flying. Father McCaffrey showed the man his plane and took him along on a few flights. Along the way, talk moved from flying to spiritual matters, and now the man has joined the Church.

Flying also serves as a much-needed release from the daily stresses of running a parish or ministry. Father John Schmitz, of the Diocese of Jefferson City in Missouri and the group’s president, said he tries to take his Cessna 150 up once a week, although sometimes his work makes that a challenge.

When they are above the clouds, many priest pilot members say they find inspirations for homilies and learn new dimensions of their faith.

Being high in the air at the controls of a plane offers a different way of understanding life, they said, and a new focus on surrendering completely to God.

“When you are 3,000 feet up, you have a very different perspective on life,” Father Corrigan said. “You can’t worry about the little things.”

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<http://themiscellany.org/2017/08/01/priest-pilots-find-inspiration-in-the-heavens/>

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(Go to: www.priestpilots.org and click on PAY PAL)

Msgr. John W. Hemann

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Clear Lake, IA 50428-1368

Any Questions? Contact me.

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KINDLY DO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! THANKS

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1st Vice President	Joe McCaffrey
2nd Vice President	George Remm
Secretary	Allen Corrigan
Treasurer	John Hemann

Regional Directors

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Please send newsletter articles, notes and photos to: Tom Enwright, napp.editor@gmail.com; 419 Chestnut St., Sauk City, WI 53583

Deadline for the October edition is September 30.