

N.A.P.P.



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**President's column:**

**2022 NAPP convention proposed for September**

**By Fr. Joe McCaffrey**  
*NAPP President*

What is your favorite time of year? I have to admit that mine is certainly the fall. Some people do not like the fall because they know winter is shortly to follow. But true joy comes from living in the moment. And the special moments that fall provides are usually beautiful and comfortable. The weather is cooler, the skies are clear, and the trees turn amazing colors. It is a perfect time to fly!



As I mentioned in the last newsletter, some of our members suggested perhaps we consider our next convention be moved from July to September. The reason for this move is the weather tends to be much more flyable in September. In addition to this, rates for hotels, etc., usually are less in the fall after the kids go back to school than during the height of the vacation season. I have asked Fr. John Schmitz, our host in Branson, Missouri, to compare prices and see if we could acquire better rates and accommodations for our convention if we move the date to September. Most of our members are retired and have much more flexible schedules. Those of us who have assignments, as long as we know ahead of time, can usually block off our vacations. Hopefully a year's notice would give everyone the opportunity to schedule their time off for the convention.

There is a precedent for adjusting our convention date. I know several conventions in Alaska required extra time. And there were times when the convention was

during Oshkosh AirVenture, which moved the date as well.

I think it's certainly worth a try. Don't you? What does the week after the 11th of September look like for you? Arrive on Monday, September 19th; convention activities Tuesday-Wednesday; depart on Thursday the 22nd.

To help us remember, we can say the convention is the week after 9/11, just like we say it's the week after the Fourth of July.

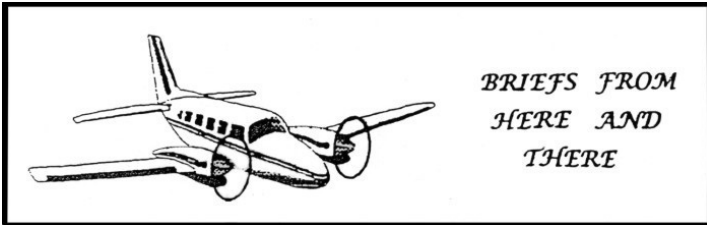
We need to get moving on this as soon as possible. So how about we just go with it for next year's convention unless there are strong objections?

John Schmitz will be putting out information regarding the convention. Please respond as soon as possible. I know how challenging it is to set up a convention especially when we do not know what our numbers might be. My hope is that moving the date to the fall may enable even more people to attend. We pray the Lord blesses us with beautiful flying weather next September!

In the meantime, please keep in touch, fly safe, stay healthy and pray like your eternal life depends on it ... cuz it does.

Blessings on you and yours,

*Joe*



**Remembering 9/11:**

In observance of the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the United States, Fr. Joe McCaffrey, NAPP president and an FBI chaplain, was interviewed on [Pittsburgh radio station KDKA](#). The FBI also posted a [video interview](#) as he recalled consoling the families of those who were on United Flight 93, which went down near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, on September 11, 2001.



**Air Facts Journal:** Congratulations to Fr. Mel Hemann for being published in [Air Facts Journal](#).

He tells the story about the famous picture of the three Hemann brothers (Mel, John and Ev), all priests and pilots. The story originally was published in the [June 2021](#) NAPP newsletter.

**All Priests and Pilots**  
by Mel Hemann

Astronaut Mike Collins ended up heading the new Air and Space Museum when he left the astronaut corps. One thing important to him was a section devoted to general aviation, and notifications went out for suggestions. Fr. Dick Skriba of Chicago recommended my brothers and me. No one doubted we were weird in many ways, but Dick felt we did offer something unique to the flying world: three brothers, Roman Catholic priests, and all priest pilots.

[READ MORE](#)



**New member:** Mike Garrison is the newest member of the National Association of Priest Pilots. He is a private pilot and retired engineer. He is a member of St. Helen Parish in Glendale, Arizona.

**Funeral for Fr. Kapaun, Servant of God:** Fr. Nick Radloff, NAPP 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, was among those attending the funeral of Fr. Emil Kapaun at the Hartman Arena in Wichita, Kansas, on September 29.

Fr. Kapaun was an Army chaplain during the Korean War. He was taken prisoner of war in November 1950 and died in a prison camp on May 23, 1951. He was awarded the Medal of Honor in 2013 for his heroic actions on the battlefield.

Fr. Kapaun's remains were among 4,200 sets of remains returned to the United States in 1954. His remains were identified in March 2021 and plans began to transfer his remains from Hawaii to Kansas in September. In 1993, Fr. Kapaun was named a Servant of God, beginning his cause for sainthood.

**Links:** [Fr. Kapaun's cause for canonization](#) | [Fr. Emil Kapaun returns home to Kansas](#)

**A friendly reminder about dues**

Thank you to the NAPP members who have paid their 2022 dues. If you have not sent your payment to the treasurer, please use the payment procedure found below.

You also may wish to make a charitable donation to the "Missionary Gift Fund" and that can be made in the same manner.

**NAPP Dues – U.S. \$25.00**

**2022 fiscal year began July 1, 2021**

*Use this form to send your dues or use PayPal (go to [priestpilots.org](http://priestpilots.org) and click on **Pay Now**).*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Member:  Charter  Regular  Associate

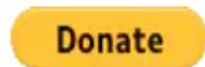
**Mail to: Msgr. John Hemann, NAPP Treasurer, 481 N. Shore Dr., Apt. 301, Clear Lake, IA 50428-1368**

In addition to the \$25 annual dues, we encourage members to make a separate donation to the **NAPP Missionary Gift Fund**,

which will be used to support the organization's charitable grants.

Donations can be sent to the same address or

you can use PayPal. Go to [priestpilots.org](http://priestpilots.org) and click on the **Donate** button.



**NAPP Leadership Team**

President: Joe McCaffrey

1st VP: Nick Radloff      2nd VP: Bill Menzel

Secretary: Allen Corrigan      Treasurer: John Hemann

**Regional Directors**

East: Al Ruschman      Midwest: John Hemann



## Midwest Fall Regional in Boone, Iowa

The Midwest Fall Regional was held on September 27 at the municipal airport in Boone, Iowa (KBNW).

In attendance were, left to right: Fr. John Swing, Fr. John Herzog, Mike Makelbust (host), Fr. Bill Menzel, Fr. Gene Murray, and Tom Murray.

The group toured [W&C Aircraft Works](#), which offers workspace and assistance for building and repair of experimental aircraft as well as for restoration of select vintage aircraft. "Keith Campbell, co-owner of W&C, did a great job and everyone enjoyed it," Mike said.

There were plans to tour the Iowa Army National Guard's Aviation Support Facility, but it was closed that day.





# Navigating with Pope Francis

## Trip to the scenic West leads to sad reckoning about our fragile environment

By Patrick J. McDonald

For months, my only living brother and I anticipated another carefree sightseeing flight to the Great West and this flight would incorporate another whitewater rafting trip down Idaho's famed Salmon River.

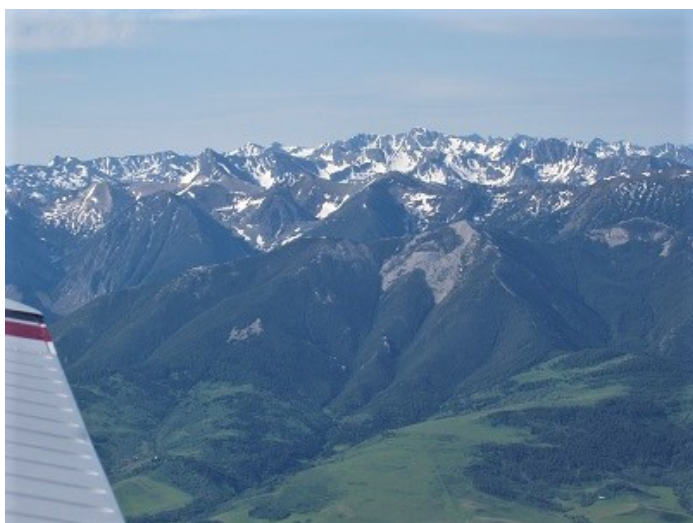
On the morning of August 5, we depart Perry, Iowa, in my Piper Arrow. The first hundred miles are VFR, but with a declining visibility factor. I remark to my brother that this



slight inconvenience is probably due to the stubborn wildfires in the Far West and that we'll likely be in clear skies all the way to the mountains. I support my comment with the fact that every ASOS, AWOS, and ATIS from Perry to Salmon broadcast clear skies and 10-mile visibilities.

By the time we jointly squint, and finally spot the runway at Mitchell, South Dakota, the trip has a different smell to it. "Foul today, but at least we're still VFR," says our lineman as he activates the 100LL fuel pump. "Not so the case the last three days ... all IFR. No traffic. We had folks hung up here for three days on their trip back home from Oshkosh. No rooms available in Mitchell."

"Ya know that foul smell?" he asks as he points to his nose and looks skyward. "It really gets to me. I have to shower every night to get rid of that rotten bonfire



stench. Even my food tastes like it's burnt."

His comments foster the beginning of a slow energy drain that deepens as we depart Mitchell for Rapid City. The ground disappears in the first thousand feet of our climb-out. ATC guidance assists us all the way to the active runway at Rapid City. The heavy smoke deprives me of the usual beauty of the Black Hills. The ATIS still insists that the noonday ramp temperature is now 100 degrees-plus, and the visibility holds at 10 miles.

Airborne again in a deepening complexity of challenges, other ATC controllers help us thread the needle between the multi-layered and expansive Powder River MOA and the Bighorn Mountains. I catch only a glimpse of the normally massive Bighorns, now wrapped in heavy smoke and punctuated by developing thunderstorms. Sheridan is reporting erratic 50-knot surface winds.

The mix of opposing forces taunt us with heat, humidity and complaints of moderate to severe turbulence from low and high altitudes. Billings Approach Control mercifully delivers our soggy and fatigued selves to the active runway. ATIS insists on 10 miles visibility, but we don't spot the runway numbers until a half-mile final.

A cool motel room and cold beer bring back some enthusiasm for flying, but the anticipated pleasant morning flight across the Continental Divide into Salmon doesn't seem promising. In good VFR, the route is stable and enjoyable, since most of it meanders through a long network of scenic passes, with snow-capped peaks marking the boundaries of clear running rivers and lush green valleys.



*Meriwether Lewis at Lemhi Pass, looking for a Shoshoni outfitter.*

In an imaginary replication of the Lewis and Clark Corps of

Discovery, my planned low route crosses over Lemhi Pass near Dillon, Montana, then descends into the Salmon River valley. From there, the Main Salmon flows undisturbed for 150 miles through high alpine forests, and sun-bathed river rafters exit the river at

*On a clear day near Dillon, Montana. Captivating.*

*Continued on Page 5*

## Obituary: Fr. John Vakulskas , the ‘carnival priest’

Fr. John A. Vakulskas Jr., 76, of Sioux City, Iowa, died September 27, 2020, following a seven-month battle with pancreatic cancer, which was accelerated by the coronavirus, according to his obituary. He was a member of the National Association of Priest Pilots.



He earned a bachelor’s degree in 1965 from Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa. In 1969, he earned a master’s degree in theology from Mount St. Bernard Seminary (Aquinas Institute of Theology), Dubuque.

He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sioux City on May 24, 1969.

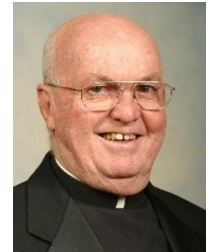
In 1969, Fr. Vakulskas began his ministry to carnival workers when he was called to the Plymouth County Fairgrounds in Le Mars, Iowa, to minister to the owner of the carnival that was in town.

Pope John Paul II appointed him International Coordinator of Carnival Ministries in 1993. In 2012, Pope Benedict recognized him for his service to carnival workers. Pope Francis honored Fr. Vakulskas in 2016 for his ministry to migrants and itinerant people at a Vatican Mass celebrating the carnival industry.

[Links: Obituary](#) | [Remembering “Carnival Priest” Father John Vakulskas](#) (Siouxland Public Media; October 1, 2021) | [Rev. John Vakulskas Dies at 76; Carnivals Were His Parish](#) (New York Times; October 20, 2020) | [Diocese of St. Petersburg death notice](#)

## Obituary: Fr. Raymond J. Crowe, O.M.I.

Fr. Raymond J. Crowe, O.M.I., 95, died June 12, 2021, at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Residence in Tewksbury, Massachusetts. He was a member of the National Association of Priest Pilots.



Prior to entering the seminary, he served in the Navy during World War II.

Fr. Crowe entered the Oblate Novitiate in Ipswich, Massachusetts in 1948. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 30, 1954, in Washington, D.C.

Fr. Crowe’s first assignment was to the missions in Brazil from 1955 to 1962 and from 1966 to 1968.

In 2005, Fr. Crowe, joined the community at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Residence in Tewksbury where he remained until his death.

[Link to obituary](#)

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Riggins, Idaho. The Main Salmon becomes the Lower Salmon and it continues down to the Snake River – then on to the Columbia; finally, the open Pacific Ocean. Lewis and Clark got it partly right, but their effort to follow the Salmon after Lemhi Pass went on the rocks about 40 miles southwest of today’s city of Salmon.

Sleep brings rest and renewed energy the next morning for pressing on to Salmon, but the energy turns to serious laments as the early morning weather reports assert themselves through my iPad. My familiar route now manifests five new TFRs, identifying fresh fire zones. The mountain peaks all along my route are obscured in smoke. Hazardous warnings about three to six miles visibility are prominent.

Going IFR into Salmon is out of the question without a turbocharged airplane. I entertain images of approaching Salmon, not seeing the airport, then swallowing hard to climb back out of the valley and return to Billings.

Simple math tells me that my fuel reserves will not support that kind of gamble. So we reverse course and head home.

All the way home, through slowly thinning smoke and haze, I cannot help but reflect on what is happening to our planet. I accept, at an intellectual level, the now-universal assessment of global warming phenomena. As I work hard to stop my eyes from itching and to repress a nuisance cough, my encounters with global warming move to the experiential level.

We exit Montana and begin to see the greening of central South Dakota. We also hear news of another massive fire on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, with several communities forced to evacuate.

The whole misadventure is very sad. I have never seen widespread conditions like this in my 40 years of flying through the Great West.

I replay images of Pope Francis, captured so convincingly by Director Wim Wenders in the feature movie *Pope Francis: A Man of His Word*. When asked about the reality of global warming, Francis tears up and confesses, “We are destroying Mother Earth.”

I arrive back in Perry with a solid conviction that every citizen of this beautiful, fragile, blue globe we call home is called upon to relate to Mother Earth in a new and respectful fashion. She provides the only home we know.

## NAPP members share favorite stories with Air & Space

Two NAPP members, John Casey and Patrick J. McDonald, had short stories published in a special “We All Fly” supplement for Air & Space Smithsonian magazine (August/September 2021). The magazine asked its readers to share their best memories of flying. More than 400 responded, with tales ranging from the suspenseful to the humorous to the historic.



of my anxiety-driven imagination and I fight not to turn them loose. If I feed my internal monsters, they'll devour me as well, so I make a choice: overreact to an alien environment or go with the energy of the moment. I secure the autopilot to continue my easterly heading, then turn down the panel lights to a dim glow. The darkness, the lack of any sensation of motion, the absence of a time flow, an absolution from preoccupation about direction, open up a deeper reality: images of total solitude. I become a disjointed consciousness, suspended somewhere in space a mile above my home planet, grateful for only the moment. The spell is broken by Vero Beach Approach Control, welcoming me home. I return to flying chores. The darkness becomes a sea of Florida coastal lights. I am solidly home.

### Long live the Beech 18

By John Casey

Flying a Beech 18 into Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport on a routine return morning freight run from Brownsville, Texas, for a small-business airline, I was advised to expect 35R. It was a beautiful clear day with virtually no wind. I went through all appropriate checklists, captured ILS inbound, lowered gear and flaps at the marker, when I looked to my left and was startled to see paralleling me inbound to 35C was the Concorde SST with the colors of British Airways. I could not help but marvel that I was in an airplane designed in the thirties, older than I was, still relevant, still in the game, still competing in the flying world with one designed in the seventies, the latest sophisticated technology of the time. It made my day!

*(John says he was flying for SMB Stage Lines; it was his first professional airline job when he moved to Des Moines in 1975 or '76. SMB was an acronym for Sedalia-Marshall-Boonville. John says it was a bus line out of Missouri that morphed into an airline.)*

### Night Monsters

By Patrick J. McDonald

It is obscenely dark over the Florida everglades. I'm alone in a Cessna 206, cruising toward Vero Beach at 5,000 feet. There are no stars to guide my way or lights to mark civilization. I've never, in 2,500 hours of piloting, encountered darkness like undiluted black latex paint. Miles of swamp, twisted vegetation and mangrove trees hide the night monsters, ready to feast on whatever is left of me if my engine quits. I remind myself to totally trust the instrument cluster in front of me, because I don't want my life to end at midnight on May 20, 1984. Night monsters also dwell in the depths

### Weather Woes

By Patrick J. McDonald

I'm bathed in warm January sunshine, with a cloud deck below. Waterloo Approach confirms my earlier briefing: "There's no reports of icing within 200 miles," my controller affirms, as he clears me for a routine 20-mile approach into Oelwein, Iowa. "Oelwein reports five miles visibility under an 800-foot overcast." I enter the clouds with maximum pleasure, but pleasure turns to panic in three minutes. My windshield is iced over and the wings are loading up with ice. It's gotta be freezing rain. I can't climb because of the ice load. I can't go down because of a city beneath. I have to follow the chart instructions and continue. The icing intensifies and I need full power to stabilize my descent. As the bases thin out, I see the Oelwein airport slide by 500 feet below through my side window. Ice does unpredictable things to any aircraft and a quick turn to make the airport will create a stall and I'll crash. I fight panic and begin to fly a long goose egg pattern back to the airport, with no more than a three-degree bank, keeping the airport in view through my left window. The landing gear comes down and locks. Full power now flattens out my descent, and I land while looking out the side window. The aircraft stalls at 90 knots. In a warm hangar, I peel off chunks of ice, while listening to new weather: freezing fog and low visibility.

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

**Deadline for the December edition: November 30.**