

N.A.P.P.



Volume 59

December 2022

No. 3

President's column **Navigating our way in search of eternal life**

By Fr. Phil Gibbs
President

Dear Brothers in Christ,

I pray that all of you have a blessed Advent (whatever remains of it) as well as a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope you get some well-needed rest af-



ter the hectic holiday schedule ends. For those who still fly during the winter, as do I, may your block heaters aid in your startup; your

engine heat warm the cockpit; and the only ice that you encounter be isolated in a tumbler filled with your favorite adult beverage **after** your plane is back in the hangar.

In contemplating the upcoming Christmas season celebrations that all fall on the weekends (which means a lighter workload but smaller collections) I thought back to a series of talks I gave during a parish mission this past Lent. The talks revolved around the three

Continued on Page 2



Fr. John Swing (left) with David Bishop who is restoring the Beech Staggerwing that Fr. John salvaged in Bolivia in the 1970s.

The odyssey continues

Wisconsin priest reconnects with the Staggerwing he rescued from Bolivia

More than 40 years ago, Fr. John Swing rescued a damaged, all-but-forgotten vintage aircraft from the weeds in Bolivia, had it shipped in a Boeing 707 cargo plane to Miami and drove it on a flatbed truck to his family's farm in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

The goal was to restore the Beechcraft Staggerwing D17S to flying condition, but Fr. John, a priest of the Diocese of La Crosse, realized it was a project better suited for someone with deeper pockets. He reluctantly sold the distinctive biplane in 1980 to a man in Wisconsin.

Indiana airline pilot tells how he acquired the Staggerwing by the grace of God — Page 7

One might think that was the end of the story, but he could never forget "Stag 4902" (known by its serial number). Every few years, Fr. John would try tracking down the current owner, always hoping to someday get a ride in the Stag that had crashed in 1970 in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, which coincidentally, is where he served as a mission priest from 1975 to 1981.

On October 13, 2022, Fr. John ful-

Continued on Page 4

Continued from Page 1

basic rules of flying (Aviate, Navigate and Communicate) which I wove into the common spiritual life that each of us should aspire to have.

While covering the topic of “Navigate,” I couldn’t help but to think of the Star of Bethlehem and how it relates to pilots (by sea or air) who, at one time, relied heavily on the stars for a sense of direction to get them to their destination. As an example, I used the historical figure of Charles Lindbergh and his epic flight to Paris in the Spirit of St. Louis. Lindbergh was not much of a man of faith. At that time in his life, he would claim to be “spiritual” but not religious. As a child, Lindbergh said he had resented church and found God “vague and disturbing” as remote as the stars, and less real — he said that you could see the stars on a clear night, but you never saw God.

In his younger days, Lindbergh said, “It doesn’t matter whether you believe in God!” As a child, while listening in on a dinner table conversation about science, he remembered thinking to himself, “Your experiment works, or it doesn’t. Science is a key to all mystery. With this key, man can become like a god himself. Science is truth; science is knowledge; science is power.” So, yes, Lindbergh was not particularly religious and it showed.

Lindbergh flew the Spirit of St. Louis with minimal instrumentation on board. He had no radio and no sexton. The only navigational aids were an inductor compass, a magnetic compass and an eight-day windup clock. This cockpit configuration came as no surprise as it reflected the reality of the man himself as one who lacked the “navigational instrumentation” from within, most specifically the absence of an interior moral compass with its orientation toward God.

Needless to say, this epic flight changed him. Lindbergh set off for his journey by the use of dead reckoning, coupled with course and time calculations. Over the ocean with no landmarks to trace, coupled with the lack of sleep and the onset of delirium because of it, Lindbergh began to question himself and **his math and science mindset**.

In his autobiography, as he contemplated falling asleep at the controls and pondered the grim possibility of crashing into the icy waters below, he wrote, “As life waits at the end of a dream, do you really meet your God, or does blank nothingness replace your being?”

He further writes, “It’s hard to be agnostic up here in the Spirit of St. Louis, aware of the frailty of man’s devices, a part of the universe between its earth and stars. If one dies, all this goes on existing in a plan so

perfectly balanced, so wonderfully simple, so incredibly complex that it’s far beyond our comprehension — worlds and moons revolving; planets orbiting on suns; suns flung with apparent recklessness through space. There’s the infinite magnitude of the universe; there’s the infinite detail of its matter — the outer star, the inner atom. And man, conscious of it all — a worldly audience to what ... if not God?” As he questions the frailty of man’s devices and also becomes ever more aware of the frailty of mankind, Lindbergh begins to believe in God.

Despite weather deviations and extreme fatigue, Lindbergh reached the coast of Ireland within three miles of his intended great circle course. But he knew that something other than skill or equipment had allowed such accuracy. It was by the hand of God that the winds, during his flight, had caused no significant drift. It was by divine providence that he completed that trip.

When it comes to navigation, as we fly airplanes or live life, we need a sense of direction that comes from both exterior markers and an interior compass. We have faithful communities that serve as fixed points along the way. And, with an informed and properly formed conscience, we can make the trip in good shape. Our final destination, in this life, is to get to heaven and, along the way we must encounter the ONE, in a variety of ways, who gave us life in the beginning and will give us eternal life in the end.

2023 NAPP Dues - U.S. \$25.00

Fiscal year began July 1, 2022

Use this form or use PayPal (go to priestpilots.org and click **Pay Now**).

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

PHONE: _____

Member category: Charter Regular Associate

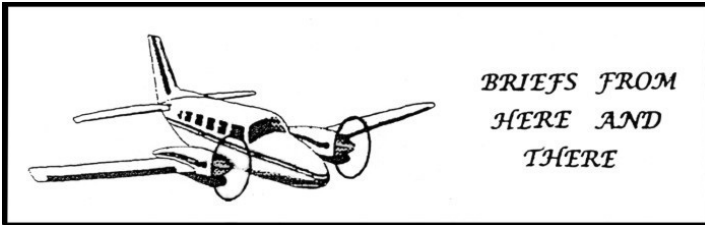
Make check payable to NAPP and mail to: Tom Enwright, Treasurer, 419 Chestnut St., Sauk City, WI 53583

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 and click on the **Donate** button.





[gins on Page 14](#). PJ's story was originally published in the [August edition](#) of the NAPP newsletter.

PJ and his brother were flying back to Iowa from Idaho in July when they found themselves evading a "green monster," spawned by a storm system that stretched from Montana to Iowa.

Flying excursion from the UK to France

Fr. Peter Geldard, an NAPP member in the United Kingdom, organized a flying trip to southwest France in July. The tour was documented by Judith and Stephen Niechcial in Instrument Pilot Magazine – PPL/IR Europe. [See this link for the article.](#) *On the Petit Train at Pau, France: Fr. Peter is in the front row in yellow with sunglasses.*



Josh Miller completes pastoral year in Alaska

Josh Miller, an NAPP member and seminarian for the Diocese of Fairbanks, wrote an extensive article in [The Alaskan Shepherd](#) about his pastoral year in Alaska, from fall 2021 to spring 2022. Josh, a former Army soldier, is completing his final two years of formation at Mundelein Seminary in Illinois. Here's an excerpt:

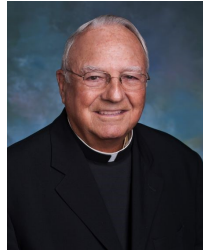
Village life reminded me of deployment, when you're missing the creature comforts of a typical American household. Some villages had no running water, while internet and cell coverage was spotty at best. Churches had paper-thin walls, with insulation reserved mainly to keep water pipes from bursting. We relied on small Toyo stoves to stay warm. Sometimes, it sounded like another Pentecost as the tundra's "strong driving wind" beat against the church and arctic air found its way via cracks.

Update from Barry Brown: Associate member Barry Brown from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has been busy with flight students at the MXO airport (Monticello, Iowa) as well as fill-in contract corporate jet crewing with a company in Muscatine, Iowa (MUT). "In between those activities, I have been working through my AOPA online CFI Renewal Course, a very time-consuming endeavor!" Barry's wife, Nancy, was Fr. Mel Hemann's newsletter production assistant and she designed the masthead we continue to use on the front page. [See story from December 2020.](#)

Reminder to pay your dues: Thanks to the 31 members who have paid their NAPP dues for the 2023 fiscal year, which began July 1, 2022. Please follow their example by supporting NAPP. **See form on Page 2.**

Words of aviation wisdom: 'Keep at it'

Editor's note: Msgr. Frank Mouch shares this delightful note that's sure to make you smile and give thanks to God for the gift of aviation.



By way of encouragement to all our members: Last summer, beginning to reach maturity or, as some people say, having reached what is considered the more advanced age of 90, I took the left seat of an Archer for a few trips in the pattern (in Port Clinton, Ohio) with a pilot whose mother had given me my first airplane ride 83 years earlier. My landings were a bit on the hard side, but my friend was charitable, saying: "I have seen worse." Keep at it!

Diocese of St. Petersburg honors Msgr. Mouch

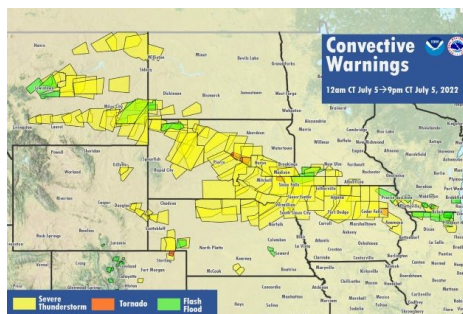
Bishop Gregory Parkes of the Diocese of St. Petersburg presented Msgr. Frank Mouch with the 2022 Fr. Luis de Cancer Distinguished Priestly Service Award during the diocesan annual Convocation for Priestly Renewal on October 4.

Since 1998, the diocese has honored one priest annually who best exemplifies selfless and dedicated service to the people of God.

"Msgr. Mouch has served our diocese well, even in challenging times, to lead in big ways. He has had a major impact on the Catholic community of west-central Florida because of his priestly ministry. He has served at the Pastoral Center, various parishes, St. Leo University and the Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle," said Msgr. Michael Muhr, pastor of St. Lawrence Parish in Tampa. [See story in the Gulf Coast Catholic.](#)

'Flanking the Derecho' published in Midwest Flyer

NAPP associate member Patrick J. McDonald's gripping essay, "Flanking the Derecho," is published in the December/January edition of Midwest Flyer Magazine. [Here's a link; the article be-](#)



Continued from Page 1

filled his dream to again meet Stag 4902, this time in Madison, Indiana, where it is being meticulously restored, piece by piece, by David E. Bishop and his team at [Bishop Air Service](#). It was like seeing a long-lost friend again after four decades.

“We had access to Piper Comanche N6442P with Fr. Bill Menzel, IFR pilot; Tom Enwright, retired journalist; and me on board,” Fr. John says. “We filed IFR from KISW, Wisconsin Rapids, to C29, Morey Field near Madison Wisconsin, and then to KIMS, Madison, Indiana. David Bishop and DeLynn gave us the royal treatment.

“We toured all three of their aircraft restoration locations. It was eye candy for any aviation enthusiast with countless airplanes in various stages of restoration. There were parts of Stag 4902 at two of the locations.”

Stag 4902, which has the FAA registration number N2277Z, is owned by Charles R. Morgan, an airline pilot living in Shelbyville, Indiana.



Fr. John checks out the flight deck of another Staggerwing that is being refurbished by Bishop Air Service.



David Bishop, Fr. Bill Menzel and Fr. John Swing

The restoration project is expected to spread over five years, culminating with what promises to be a historic return to flight — and Fr. John hopes to be there.

The D17 gets its Staggerwing name from the unusual wing configuration. The upper wing is staggered behind the lower wing. The first Staggerwing was produced in 1932 during the Great Depression. It was designed to be a fast cabin-class aircraft for business executives.

In January 1979, Fr. John wrote a



Part of the tail assembly already has been restored.



Fr. John and David Bishop look over the bare-bones fuselage.

detailed article about Stag 4902 for [The Vintage Airplane](#), a publication of the Experimental Aircraft Association. In the article, he noted that this particular aircraft was built in 1943 for the U.S. Army. In 1955, it was purchased by an air taxi firm in Santa Cruz. In 1970, it crashed after a power failure, landing short of a runway in Santa Cruz.

The wreckage was moved for storage to Cochabamba (elevation 8,400 feet), which is where the “rest of the story” unfolded when Fr. John first set eyes on the aircraft with hopes of seeing it return to flying condition.

Fast forward to 2022 and Fr. John arranged to see the restoration in progress. Before setting off on a flight from central Wisconsin to southern Indiana, he wrote the following story about Stag 4902.

By Fr. John Swing

In 1975, I was assigned to our mission parish in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. After a week of settling in the parish, I moved to Cochabamba to study Spanish at the Maryknoll Language Institute. I was there for four months and then returned to Santa Cruz to work in the parish. After one year, as planned, I returned to Cochabamba to study Spanish for two more months. This time I had the parish motorcycle with me.

The language studies were very in-

Continued on Page 5



Continued from Page 4

tense. I often got on the bike at the end of the day and toured the area. The airport quickly became a favorite place to go. Besides being the Cochabamba municipal airport, it was also a Bolivian Air Force base. P-51s and B-25s were often flying. One day, while bumming around the airport, I found a Beechcraft Staggerwing sitting in the weeds with children playing house in it.

I quickly found out that it belonged to an insurance company. The airplane had landed in Santa Cruz short of the runway, between two fence posts. The lower wing and landing gear were damaged.

Navigating logistics and paperwork

Lloyd Aéreo Boliviano, the Bolivian airline, had a Boeing 707 cargo plane that made a weekly trip to Miami. Typically, it would go up empty and come back full. I made friends with the cargo people in Cochabamba. It looked like a possibility.

I also had the support of priests from Dubuque, Iowa, who were working at the La Fatima Parish in Cochabamba.

Another essential link was an American living in Cochabamba, who was a pilot for an evangelical mission group. He had a Cessna 172 there. He also owned a farm outside Cochabamba. He agreed to let me store the Staggerwing on his property while I negotiated the paperwork.

Finally, indispensable to this project was an attorney who had offices in La Paz and Santa Cruz. He is the one who made it possible for me to export the airplane. I purchased the Stag for \$3,000. It took over one year to work through the bureaucracy and secure the necessary paperwork for exportation.

I purchased the plane in 1976 and



Upper left: Stag stored on a farm just outside of Cochabamba for about one year while paperwork was done for exportation. Right: Building pallet for fuselage. (All done with Bolivian mahogany.) Lower left: Hand-crank crane to lift the fuselage onto the pallet.

brought it back to the United States in 1978. One day, a courier appeared at the rectory door in Santa Cruz. He had a large packet for me. It was everything I needed to ship the plane. It also stated that I had 30 days to get it out.

I asked Fr. Ed Penchi, the pastor, if I could take my vacation now, on the spot. He said OK. So I went to Cochabamba and contacted my friend on the farm. I got permission to work on the plane in the middle of the airport, between two runways, in the open air. My friend had a trailer with which we brought the Stag back to the airport. I worked several days, from dawn to dusk, building pallets and mounting the pieces on the pallets.

Exhausting days

One of the most difficult tasks was the removal of the propeller. I simply could not get it off. Some cadets from the Bolivian Air Force came over to see what was going on. One of them took on the project of removing the propeller. He had no step ladder. With his legs over the propeller, hanging in midair, he did whatever it took to get the propeller off. He's my hero and I don't even know his name.

Well into the week, the loadmaster

from Lloyd Aéreo Boliviano came out and told me that the airplane would not fit. I had to take off the engine. The Pratt & Whitney weighed about 650 pounds. I rented a hand-operated crane. With basically a few wrenches and a locking pliers, I removed the engine and bolted it to its own pallet. At one point during this operation, I was on my back, on the ground, working from the underside of the plane. I happened to see movement from the corner of my eye and here was a giant scorpion coming toward me!

While I was working on the plane that week, there was a lady in a nearby kiosk who kept me hydrated with Coca-Cola. As the week went on, I could hardly put one foot ahead of the other at the end of the day as I returned to the Fatima Parish where I was staying.

One day, when I was close to having the plane ready for shipment, there was a pickup truck coming across the airfield at high speed, coming right toward me. It turned out that he was the airport manager. He was livid because I was out there without his permission. He was clearly an absentee administra-

Continued on Page 6

Continued from Page 5

tor. His nose was out of joint. I explained to him how I had purchased the plane and was preparing it for export. I told him that I had all the necessary papers complete. He demanded that I have a copy of every paper on his desk, first thing in the morning. It involved over 100 pages. I complied with his request, and he was mollified.

Finally, the day arrived when the 707 was on the ramp and ready to be loaded. It was April 27, 1978. I had to purchase a regular passenger ticket to fly with it. It loaded nicely and I was quickly in the jump seat of the 707. Because of the high elevation, over 8,000 feet, we had to take off with limited fuel and fly to Santa Cruz (elevation 1,300 feet), load with full fuel and then fly to Miami.

On that flight, I was allowed to sit in the right seat for about three hours and fly the plane. We were at about Flight Level 390. I would hand fly it until I got it out of whack and then I would push the autopilot and get myself back on course.

On the road with a stop at the Beech museum

We arrived in Miami on a Friday. I had reserved a U-Haul truck. It turned out that the plane did not fit on the truck. My credit card was tied up with the U-Haul, which I couldn't use. I found a Ryder flatbed. He reluctantly accepted my check. However, the rental could



Piece by piece, the Staggerwing is loaded into the Boeing 707 freighter. Below, Fr. John gets to try out the controls on the flight to Miami in April 1978.



not be one way. I had to bring the truck back to Miami.

It was getting late and I needed help loading the plane. There was a bunch of Cuban workers who wanted to get home Friday night. I gave them each \$20 to stay and load the plane. Late that evening, the plane was precariously loaded. I drove to the nearest motel and crashed. The next morning, I found a hardware store where I bought rope to tie down the load.



Finally, after a long day, the Stag is loaded and ready for the road trip to La Crosse.

My next stop was Tullahoma, Tennessee, home of the [Beechcraft Heritage Museum](#), which includes an exhibit of the first Staggerwing. They treated me like a king. They put me up in a guest house and called a crew over to secure the cargo. They took a picture of the plane, which appears on page 231 of the book entitled, "Staggerwing," which chronicles all the Staggerwings in existence. Next, it was on to our farm in La Crosse, where a bunch of friends helped unload the plane.

We put the plane in the barn, but it was too long. The tail stuck out a couple of feet. That night, my dad had a dream that I was flying the plane and the tail fell off. The next day he went out and built an enclosure around the protruding tail.

After a few days visiting with family and friends, I returned the truck to Florida. The trouble was, someplace in northern Florida the engine quit. It turned out to be a broken camshaft in the motor. Ryder gave me another truck to complete my journey to Miami.

And then it was gone

I never saw the Staggerwing again. With the help of my dad and ham (amateur) radio, I sold it to a man

Continued on Page 7



Friends help unload the Stag in La Crosse. It was secured in the barn (background).

By the grace of God ... Finding the perfect owner

Editor's note: Fr. John Swing invited Charles Morgan to offer some comments about the restoration project and his interest in giving this particular Staggerwing a new lease on life in the air.

Please let me introduce myself. I am Charles Morgan of Shelbyville, Indiana. I now own Staggerwing sn.4902. I am first of all a devout Catholic, a husband of over 40 years and a father of five children. I am also a pilot. I began flying in 1975 and today I am an Airbus A320 Captain for American Airlines. I hear boos, I know.



In the summer of 2000, I had an unexpected vacation due to Covid. I would sit on my front porch and watch cars go by, listen to music and of course do what pilots do, look through Trade-a-Plane and Barnstormers. Well, I found a Beech Staggerwing project in southern California. I thought to myself, "hmm, that's nice," but kept looking.

It was the summer of Covid, we all thought we'd get it

and be hospitalized or worse. Also, the airline industry was reeling. I had to save every penny. Besides, I am not the homebuilder type; I wouldn't fly a plane I'd built or restored for a million dollars. But I was about to turn 60 and if I would ever have a really nice plane, it was going to have to happen soon (me rationalizing).

Well as summer wore on; I wasn't sick and was still on the porch looking at airplane ads, and the Staggerwing project was still for sale. So, I got my nerve up and called Tom Guadagnola, the owner, a very nice gentleman. We talked a few times and suddenly I had acquired Father John's Staggerwing sight unseen. Now to tell my wife.

Tom recommended a very nice lady named Elizabeth O'Hara to haul my new (old) plane most of the way across the country to Salem, Indiana, where my brother, the doctor, has a big hangar. In aviation it really helps to have these; a brother who is a doctor with a hangar. With all this going for me, I do, however, have a couple of interesting stories for you.

I say the Rosary daily, but my intentions are never for

Continued on Page 8

Continued from Page 6

named Smith in Verona, Wisconsin. He later sold it, and it went through two more hands until Tom Guadagnola in San Diego, California, bought it. Last year, as was my custom every so often, I called Tom to see how the Stag was coming. He said he had sold it to Charles Morgan.

Charles is an airline pilot, close to retirement. He entrusted the Staggerwing to Bishop Air Service. David Bishop and his team have restored many classic airplanes, including one other Staggerwing. Charles has told me that he will give me a ride.

Postscript

Of special interest to me was the fuel valve that ostensibly brought down Staggerwing CP-613 in 1970.



Above: The original fuel valve. Right: Restoration of the wing components.



They were attempting to switch fuel tanks when evidently the valve seized, and the engine failed because of fuel starvation. Note in the picture that the handle is bent.

I am so pleased with the care and good work that has been done on 4902 by all the owners since I brought her home.

I am elated by the prospects of bringing this staggering project to

conclusion. The new owner, Charles Morgan, and Bishop Air Service are poised to put her in the air. The odyssey continues.

Fr. John Swing, a licensed pilot and member of the National Association of Priest Pilots, is pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Nekoosa and St. Alexander Parish in Port Edwards, Wisconsin.

Memories of Lucille's: We cherish a place to gather and tell stories

Editor's note: Fr. George Remm shares another of his "Life Lessons from Rudy Frasca" based on the 2004 NAPP convention and Rudy's book, "From Cubs to Spitfires."

By Fr. George Remm

When we gathered for our [annual meeting](#) in 2004 at Frasca Field in Urbana, Illinois, the location for our sign-in, daily sharing and hospitality was called "Lucille's Flying School and Hot Dog Stand." It was part of a hangar adjacent to the landing strips.

Rudy was captivated in July 1954, on a blind date, by a gorgeous-looking gal with dimples and a ponytail, named Lucille Matern. That year, he put 33,000 miles on his car, so he decided to propose to her because he figured it would be cheaper to marry her and move her down to Champaign with him.

Together they nurtured a family of eight children and built a fledgling business. Through the years, Lucille's was a gathering space not only for the family but for

many aviators. Many of the pilots who came for air shows at nearby Chanute Field would spend evenings with Rudy and Lucille, so they ended up with their own impromptu airshow at Frasca Field.

In later life, Rudy reflected on how central she was to his life of flying and to his understanding of the need to gather and to share.

That realization is one of the key elements for the gatherings of NAPP. We treasure the opportunities to share with one another the stories of flying and priesthood. These moments of reflection create the bonds that motivate us to gather regionally and nationally. In some ways, the NAPP newsletter has become our "Hot Dog Stand and Flying School."

August 2022: [Life lessons emerge from the world of aviation](#)

June 2022: [Lesson from Rudy Frasca carries over to NAPP today](#)

June 2020: [Remembering Rudy Frasca](#)

Continued from Page 7

myself. I have so much; I really have been very blessed and cannot complain about anything in my life. But God knows what is in your heart and sees things that you may need. Miracles happen daily. Well, here are mine:

Elizabeth delivered the airplane in the middle of November. You would have needed a gang to unload that trailer. Well, as it



Staggerwing arrives in Indiana

happened, there was no one to help, so I called the local wrecker company and asked if they could bring their crane to unload the fuselage. Sure, \$300 cash. Well, OK. I bet I could get them to help some; nope. They helped get the fuselage off and left.

Elizabeth was great, but probably weighed 110 pounds and there was lots of stuff on that trailer, including the approximately 700-pound R-985 engine.

How are we going to get that off the trailer? I am an old farm boy, but now what? Well, around the hangar comes a Bobcat (sent by God) to do some groundwork on the hangar next door. God's timing is perfect. In the back of his truck, he even had the forklift blades

needed to unload the engine. Rosaries work.

The next miracle was hiring David Bishop to restore my plane. I really thought I would be able to do some of the restoration myself. When I unloaded the parts, yes, they were all there. But no way!

If it would have been labeled in the toy store, it would say, "Not suitable for ages 20 and below, but for three A&Ps with 15 years of experience or greater." I could never do this; I just fly airplanes.

Back to Barnstormers, there was an ad by David Bishop. I called and he was looking for work. I was looking for someone who knew what they were doing, and guess what? He was right down the road about 40 miles away. Truly a Godsend. He does great work and to paraphrase St. Paul, he is a "laborer worth his wages."

That's about it. Now all I do is pay the bills, which is the really easy part. By the way, I used to admire pilots, being one and knowing way too many; not so much anymore. Familiarity breeds contempt. But I've always held in greatest esteem Catholic priests. You are truly doing the most important job on earth. I plan on painting Father John's Staggerwing in green and gold and I'll name the plane "Ordinary Time" and, of course, Father Swing's name will be under N2277Z's pilot seat window. Thanks be to God.

Your friend,
Charles Morgan

Iowa to Phoenix in a King Air on a round-trip flight of mercy

By Fr. Gene Murray

This is a story of a flight to retrieve a priest, Fr. Larry McCarty, from the Phoenix area. Fr. Larry spent many years in his retirement assisting in a parish in Fountain Hills, Arizona, during the winter months.

Shortly after his arrival in January 2022, he was afflicted with a rare E. coli bacteria resulting in multiple life-threatening conditions. He was hospitalized and in rehab centers for over three months. Healthy when he went to Phoenix, the E. coli not only affected his digestive system but caused a stroke, which impaired his ability to walk as well as leaving his vision impaired. It was questionable that he would be able to make the flight commercially or make the three-day drive home to Iowa in May.

So, Fr. Clair Boes and I approached a friend, Tim Brown, with the request that he donate the use of his King Air to fly Fr. Larry home. To our utter delight, he readily agreed and donated the King Air. The flight took place on May 6, 2022. Christmas came early for Fr. Larry.

The King Air 200 was waiting on the ramp in Cherokee, Iowa (KCKP), at 7 a.m. CDT and the pilot, Levi, had the flight plan filed and was ready to depart. Levi fired up the turbines and we departed with four souls on board. I rode in the copilot's seat with a headset. Fr. Clair and Fr. Larry's nephew Tom were in the passenger seats. The early morning fog dissipated and we climbed to 28,000 feet on the first leg to Lamar, Colorado (KLAA), a flight of about two hours.

After refueling, we filed direct to Phoenix Sky Harbor (KPHX) via Gallup, New Mexico, and the Eagle 6 arrival; a leg of about two hours.

Because the Phoenix area has multiple airports (including Mesa Gateway, Luke Air Force Base, Scottsdale and Glendale) plus smaller airfields with pilot training programs, traffic density requires complex approaches.

The last 30 minutes got very busy with multiple ATC communications (I counted 23) including frequency changes,



Arizona's Mogollon Rim from 28,000 feet



Left to right: Fr. Clair Boes, Fr. Larry McCarty, Joe McCarty, Tom McCarty

altitude and heading changes, vectors, waypoints, step-down levels with airspeed restrictions, etc. Sometimes my pen was a little too slow to write them all down. Needless to say, our pilot was busy making the changes to the com and nav radios and autopilot and acknowledging them to ATC. He had asked for a sterile flight deck, which meant that I kept my mouth shut and my hands on my lap in the copilot seat during this phase of the flight. I readily complied.

To keep busy, I listed for my own benefit the changes and communications that kept the pilot busy during the last 20 or 30 minutes of the flight.

Here are some things I copied:

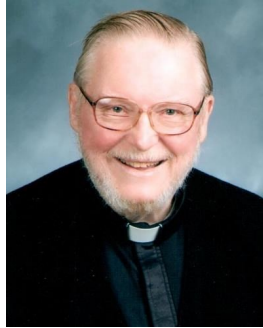
1. Cleared Eagle 6, FL 280, Freq. 132.22
2. Freq change 132.80 ABQ CNTR
3. FREQ chg. 124.32 ABQ
4. PHX altimeter 30.14
5. App waypoint direct NEPTN ARRIVAL
6. PHX app 132.90
7. Short cut. Direct HOMR DESCEND TO 20000 FT
8. DESCEND 11,000 @HMR
9. ATIS info Charlie 128.65
10. Told to expect RWY 8



Landing on Runway 7R at Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport

Fr. Francis Gerald Scanlon dies in Illinois at age 87

Fr. Francis Gerald Scanlon, a longtime member of the National Association of Priest Pilots, died on October 19, 2022, at St. Benedict Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Niles, Illinois. He was 87 years of age and a priest for 61 years. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated October 27 at St. Damian Church in Oak Forest, Illinois.



Fr. Jerry was born on September 15, 1935, in Chicago. He graduated from Quigley Preparatory Seminary in 1954. He attended Mundelein Seminary and was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Chicago on May 1, 1961. In

addition to parish ministry, he served as chaplain for the Illinois National Guard from 1966 to 1995.

Frieda Bertello, director of the Healing Ministry at St. Damian Parish, recalls that Fr. Jerry “was able to relate to any age group, probably because of his wisdom and experience and his ability to be young in spirit.” She was quoted in the Chicago Catholic. “Fr. Jerry treated everyone with kindness and respect, and you usually left with a joke or a laugh. We expect there will be more laughter in heaven now that he’s home with the Lord.”

Fr. Jerry attended his last NAPP convention in Dubuque, Iowa, in July 2021. Associate member George

Continued on Page 11

Continued from Page 9

11. PILOT REMINDED ATC WE WERE GOING TO Cutter Aviation
12. ATC amended: expect RWY 7R
13. From this point, we were given vectors over the top of the airport to a righthand downwind to RWY 7R
14. Fly HDG 190 Descend to 7,000
15. Descend to 5,000
16. Descend To 4,000
17. Fly HDG 280
18. Fly HDG 360
19. Fly Runway HDG
20. CLEARED FOR THE VISUAL APP TO LAND 7R
21. CHANGE FREQ TO GND.
22. PROCEED TO CUTTER via TxwayHotel

23. Of course, I let out the big sigh of relief as we taxied in. Being an IFR-rated pilot, I knew what to anticipate — that the arrival would be busy. As I listened on my headset, I counted somewhere near 25 communications within the last 15 or 20 minutes, not counting the pilot’s responses. I know I missed a few of ATC’s instructions because I got distracted with the scenery and watching the pilot who took it all in stride. He enjoyed the challenge, so I never felt threatened by the complexity of it all nor did he. Pilot ability, aircraft capability, along with proper planning and preparation were critical to success and safety. Because the approach and landing were in visual conditions, they went very smoothly.

The departure and return flight to Fort Dodge (KFOD) was routine, direct to La Junta, Colorado, direct to Fort Dodge, Iowa.

We left Tom McCarty in Phoenix to drive Fr. Larry’s car home. Fr. Larry, along with his brother Joe, boarded the King Air in Phoenix at around 11:45 a.m. MST We arrived at 6 p.m. CDT in Fort Dodge where a car

was waiting to take Fr. Larry to the place where he will continue his rehabilitation.

Tired and weak though he was, Fr. Larry was very happy to be home. The return trip required about 4 hours and 15 minutes, but compared to the three days and two nights in a motel that it would have taken by car, it was not nearly as difficult for someone who had already suffered so much. Fr. Clair and I were joyful that we could be a part of the trip and help where we could.

I believe that the Holy Spirit was very much at work that day. The variables of plane and pilot availability and suitable weather all came together to bring about Fr. Larry’s retrieval. Thanks be to God for the goodness and generosity of some very key people and their willingness to bring about this flight to a very successful and satisfying conclusion.

Christmas truly came early for one very deserving servant of God.



Seaplane training: Joy of flying takes on a new dimension

By Fr. Gene Murray

Training in a seaplane is a great kick in the pants. Early in October is a great time to fly in Maine but it is especially memorable to do it in a seaplane. On October 3, I boarded a United Airlines flight for Portland, Maine, to possibly get a seaplane endorsement in my logbook.

It all began in late July at the Jesuit Retreat House in Oshkosh while attending EAA AirVenture. I met Mary Build and Chase Donaldson. Mary lives in Bridgton, Maine, and Chase and his wife Judy live on Lake Sebago near Raymond about 25 miles away. Mary, a veteran seaplane instructor and author, offered to give me seaplane instructions and Chase offered his guest house for a place to stay. As they say, "It was an offer I couldn't refuse."

The first day I was there, Chase took me for a delightful scenic ride in his very nice Grumman AA-5 out over the coast from Lewiston to east of Portland, to the northeast all the way up to Rockland and back to Lewiston.

For the remainder of my time there, I flew the seaplane. I logged five hours in a PA-12 on floats. With Mary as my instructor, we practiced everything from step taxiing to glassy-water landings to a simulated



Above: Seaplane instructor Mary Build and Fr. Gene Murray. Left: Fall colors over Maine.

engine-out landing and a lot of other stuff in between. I did not do the checkride because of limited time and funds but Mary felt confident I was ready for it.

For me, it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The weather was perfect, and I had an excellent instructor. For a priest from a small town in Iowa who grew up picking eggs out of a hen's nest, it was about as good as it gets.

Continued from Page 10

Gratton said he was a bit surprised nobody mentioned Fr. Jerry's "constant attention to the NAPP in the obituary," although NAPP was mentioned in the homily during the funeral Mass. "I was also noting on his last written communications with me he spelled his name Gerry, with a G, not Jerry. He changed that from time to time, but at the Savannah meeting, he commented his nametag was Gerry, for Gerald, but had gotten accustomed to using Jerry. I like Jerry and appreciate the guys for the concern for his health at our Branson meeting."

[Obituary](#) | [Funeral video](#) | [Death notice from the Chicago Catholic](#) | [Story on Patch.com](#)

Editor's note: Members who are making their own advance funeral arrangements may wish to include NAPP in the list to be notified by the family or funeral director. Email: napp.editor@gmail.com.



The National Association of Priest Pilots newsletter is published online six times per year (August, October, December, February, April, June). Fiscal year begins July 1. Website: priestpilots.org

Articles, news notes and photos can be sent to Tom Enwright, napp.editor@gmail.com. Deadline for the February edition is January 31.

NAPP Leadership Team

President: Fr. Phil Gibbs

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

Secretary: Fr. Allen Corrigan

Treasurer & Newsletter Editor: Tom Enwright

Regional Directors

East: Fr. Al Ruschman Midwest: Vacant