

N.A.P.P.



Volume 59

February 2023

No. 4

2023 NAPP convention will be in the Poconos



Credit: Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau

Start planning your trip this fall for the 2023 convention of the National Association of Priest Pilots in the Pocono Mountains. Lodging and many of the meals will be at the [Shawnee Inn and Golf Resort](#) located along the Delaware River in northeastern Pennsylvania.

Arrivals will be on Monday, September 18. We'll have activities and time for relaxation on Tuesday and Wednesday, with departures on Thursday, September 21.

At the request of Fr. Phil Gibbs, NAPP president, Fr. Alex Nevitt did a scouting trip to Shawnee, which is about an hour's drive from his parish in Cedar Knolls, New Jersey. Fr. Alex gave the resort a thumbs-up and Fr. Phil worked out the details with the group sales director.

"My goal was to find a place for us to stay that would require minimal effort to organize, especially without the need to recruit a large team of volunteers," Fr. Phil says.

The NAPP group package will include:

- Lodging for three nights
- Breakfast on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
- Dinner on Tuesday and Wednesday
- Meeting room with refreshments

The package rate is \$819 per person for single occupancy and \$570 per person for double. Prices include state and local taxes and a resort gratuity.

Each member will be responsible for their own reservation and payment to the resort. Watch for details in the April newsletter.

In addition to the resort package fee, members can expect a convention fee to cover other NAPP expenses. Watch for more information

President's column

Reflecting on Benedict XVI who has 'Gone West'

By Fr. Phil Gibbs
President

Greetings to all of you brother priests, faithful laymen and women and fellow pilots! I hope that



you all had a blessed Christmas and a happy beginning to the New Year of 2023. Let's all continue to pray for each other and for

fair weather so that we can take to the friendly skies as often as we can.

As I write this column, I must admit that it has been over a month since I have flown my trusty Archer II. Work has been heavy during the holidays and the unfavorable winter weather hasn't been much better with gusty winds, low ceilings and freezing temperatures. The crummy weather has indeed led to some days of drudgery and prolonged grounding.

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So, I took a vacation in early January and enjoyed the warmth and sunny skies in Naples, Florida. During my time there, I spent much of the day outside basking by the pool in those favorable conditions. Naples Airport (APF) was not far away from my uncle's house where I stayed. I heard the comings and goings of general aviation aircraft.

Given the conditions that I experienced there in Florida and being mindful of the conditions back home in Iowa, I felt torn between wanting to fly in Dubuque during the weary winter months juxtaposed to enjoying the warmth and bright sunshine where I was at in the moment. Someday soon I hope to have the best of both worlds again. I hope to "have my cake and eat it too!" Come Holy Spirit! Come quickly warm, Spring and Summer seasons too!

I am happy to announce that we have secured the venue of our NAPP convention for September 18-21, 2023, in the Pocono Mountains of northeast Pennsylvania. The Shawnee Inn and Golf Resort is the location of our stay. Arrangements have been made for a venue that is "All-Inclusive" regarding the majority of our meals (breakfast and dinner) as we are usually out to lunch (physically, not mentally, HAHA) during the daytime excursions. We are still working on excursions. Please read on the following pages for further details.

As a member of EAA, I get the monthly magazine. I make a concerted effort to read and keep ahead of every issue the best that I can. (I just finished a bunch of back issues while on vacation in sunny and warm Florida.) At the very end of this magazine there is a tribute to all EAA members who have died. According to this special section, these members have "**Gone West —Not alone into the sunset but into the company of friends who have gone before them.**" This saying, I suppose, signifies that these deceased pilots have flown westward (the cardinal direction) toward the sunset into that great and gentle "Good Night" to be reunited with those who have gone before them.

The Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI, died on December 31 of 2022. Undoubtedly, he was a well-respected and holy man. A theological scholar and defender of the Catholic faith, Benedict XVI will go down in the annals of history as a straightforward and stalwart man of conviction dedicated to Christ and his Church.

He shined in a variety of different ways, but some ways were unknown to the bulk of faithful believers including me. According to a list of "interesting facts" compiled by the Catholic News Agency (via New York Magazine), the Pope, although he never drove a

car, had a pilot's license for the papal helicopter and enjoyed flying between Castel Gandolfo, his summer residence, and the Vatican. Can you believe that?!

That fact being revealed caused me to do some further research on Benedict's writings and I came across this gem he wrote regarding the occasion of the first century of the death of Cardinal John Henry Newman. Pope Benedict penned this on April 28, 1990, when he was still a Cardinal. I believe it gives an implicit indication of his fondness for flight. Perhaps it is a stretch to make this connection but it sure is fun to speculate and so I paraphrase:

"Throughout his entire life, Newman was a person converting, a person being transformed, and thus he always remained and became ever more himself. It was something like that which Gregory of Nyssa described in his *Ascent of Moses*: "Just as bodies, after having received the first push downwards, fall effortlessly into the depths with ever greater speed, so, on the contrary, *the soul which has loosed itself from earthly passion rises up in a rapid upward movement... constantly overcoming itself in a steady upward flight.*"

From the heart of a holy man and from the hands of a helicopter pilot. Amen! We pray that Benedict XVI buried facing East as a believer and having "Gone West" as a pilot may make his way into heaven, in whatever "Cardinal" direction it takes and rests in eternal peace.

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: _____

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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.



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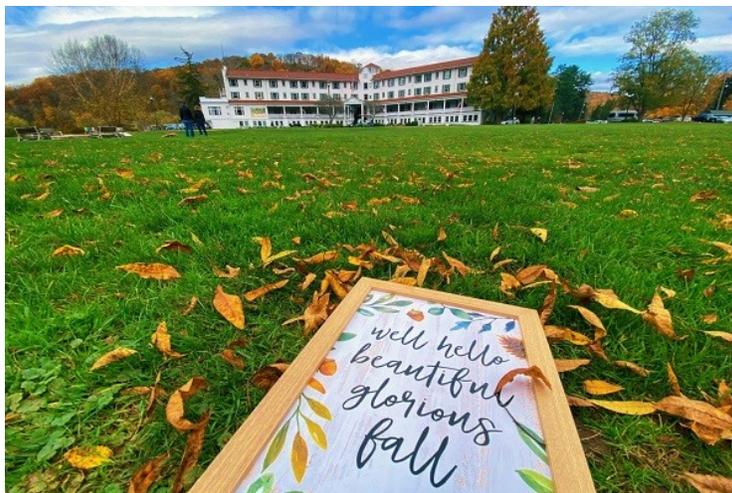
on activities/tours that might involve a fee. Plans are still in the works for lunches on Tuesday and Wednesday.

“There is great hiking in the area and water activities on the Delaware River,” Fr. Alex says. “There is the [brewery](#) and train fall foliage trips. Also, potentially horseback riding. There is also fishing. For flying activities, the best is to fly the Hudson River tour, which allows you to fly around the Statue of Liberty. You can also fly over EWR (Newark) airport’s

runways and have a Boeing 787 land under you. Not a bad day.”

Fr. Alex offers two recommendations for general aviation arrivals:

[KMPO](#) – [Pocono Mountains Municipal Airport](#) in Mount Pocono,



Credit: Shawnee Inn and Golf Resort

Pennsylvania

[IN7](#) – [Blairstown Airport](#) in Blairstown, New Jersey

For commercial airports (for those traveling by airline), he recommends [Lehigh Valley](#) (which is Allentown) or [Wilkes-Barre/Scranton](#).

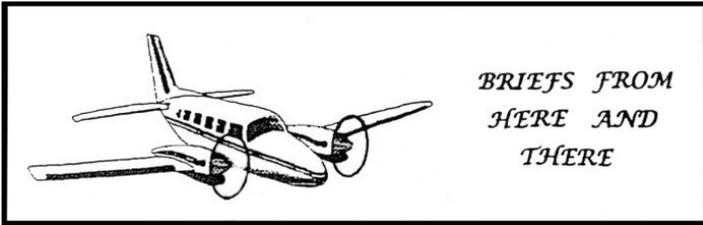
More about the resort:

- [Resort Guide](#) (winter edition)
- [Hiking](#)
- [River trips](#)
- [Golf](#)
- [Amenities](#)

[Things to do in the Poconos](#)

[Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau](#)





PJ McDonald is published again in Midwest Flyer

NAPP associate member Patrick J. McDonald has a new article published in the February/March edition of Midwest Flyer Magazine.. His essay, [“Smokeout 2021,”](#) describes the whitewater rafting trip he and his brother had planned for the Salmon River in Idaho. They departed from Iowa in PJ’s Piper Arrow and got as far as Billings, Montana. However, smoke from numerous wildfires in the Far West resulted in a change of plans. Given the reduced visibility and TFRs for fire zones, it would have been too risky to press on, so they returned home to live another day.



A different version of PJ’s article was published in the [October 2021](#) NAPP newsletter.

PJ had another essay, [“Flanking the Derecho,”](#) in the December/January edition of Midwest Flyer. That article originally appeared in the [October 2022](#) NAPP newsletter.

George Gratton to present forum at SUN ‘n FUN

Associate member George Gratton plans to present a safety forum at the SUN ‘n FUN Aerospace Expo in Lakeland, Florida.

His topic will be “Single-Engine IFR Engine Failure Survival.” George will describe an in-flight emergency in his Piper Comanche while flying from Georgia to Iowa for the NAPP convention in July 2021.



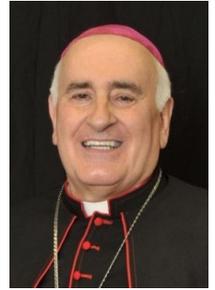
SUN ‘n FUN will be held March 28-April 2, but the program schedule still was pending as of February 5. Check back later on the [event website](#) for the date and time of George’s presentation.

See [“Emergency over Georgia”](#) in the [August 2021](#) NAPP newsletter.

Reminder to pay your dues: Thanks to the 34 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.**

Bishop Kettler of St. Cloud retires

Bishop Donald Kettler, a member of the National Association of Priest Pilots, is retiring as bishop of the Diocese of St. Cloud in Minnesota. His successor is Fr. Patrick Neary, C.S.C., a member of Congregation of Holy Cross. As part of the announcement from the apostolic nuncio on December 15, Bishop Kettler was appointed as apostolic administrator of the diocese until Bishop-elect Neary’s installation on February 14. See the [diocesan website](#) for details.



Bishop Capelli of Gizo prepares for retirement

Bishop Luciano Capelli, SDB, of the [Diocese of Gizo](#) in the Solomon Islands, sent Christmas greetings and a couple of photos (right) to share with fellow NAPP members.

Hi from the Pacific; all the best Christmas ever...

Bishop Capelli turned 75 on October 19 and is awaiting his retirement to be approved by Pope Francis.

The diocesan website has an [article and photos](#) highlighting Bishop Capelli’s final pastoral visit to the parishes. Here is an excerpt:



“Celebrating his birthday, the bishop asked everyone to have a dream. He clarified that without a dream there is no energy to go through the challenges of life. ... ‘There are so many dreams that, with the help of each other, we can achieve.’ ... In his messages, he continued to ask us to promote and highlight three words promoting Synodality. These are Communion, Participation, and Mission.”

More about the Flying Bishop from Gizo: Fr. Mel Hemann wrote an article in the [April 2019](#) newsletter about Bishop Capelli’s use of a small seaplane to reach the scattered islands in his diocese. It’s definitely worth another read to gain an appreciation for the value of aviation in ministry.

Msgr. Ivan Vap, who co-hosted 1965 convention, dies at age 94

Msgr. Ivan Vap, an early member of the National Association of Priest Pilots, died December 14, 2022, in Lincoln, Nebraska, at the age of 94. A priest for 68 years, he was known as a builder and teacher in the Diocese of Lincoln.

In a brief article in the [August 2022](#) newsletter, Msgr. Ivan recalled the early years of NAPP.

“I co-hosted the meeting in Columbus, Nebraska, many years ago (1965). Possibly the first meeting not in Kentucky. We met in the Elks Club for the meals ... [Max Conrad](#), the flying grandfather, met with us one evening and [Bill Lear](#) flew in his new jet to the Columbus airport. It was still ‘experimental’ so we could only sit in it parked on the ground, but it made a big hit in that small town. I think the Hemann brothers were the draw for both Max and Bill.”

Fr. Albert Ruschman, a charter member of NAPP, recalls that he and Msgr. Ivan were in the seminary together in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Bishop James Conley called Msgr. Ivan a real “workingman’s” priest. “His fingerprints are all over this diocese, in parishes and schools and diocesan buildings,” the bishop said in an article for the [South-](#)



[ern Nebraska Register](#). “He never hesitated to roll up his sleeves to fix a leak, to repair a broken pew, or to oversee in a ‘hands-on’ way, a new construction project in the parish or school.”

The bishop said Msgr. Ivan was a skilled craftsman in wood, construction projects and electronics. “He was never afraid of work. But more importantly, he labored for the salvation of souls to build up the Body of Christ, a true pastor of souls.”

Fr. Kenneth Borowiak, who served as Msgr. Ivan’s assistant pastor from 1987 to 1991, preached the funeral homily. In an email, he offered insight into Msgr. Ivan’s interest in aviation:

“He became a pilot in the early 1960s. He had his own plane and flew as much as he could. In his 70s, he built an ultralight from scratch. When he got it done, it was flightworthy, but age caught up to him and he never got a chance to fly it.”

[Obituary](#) | [Funeral video](#)

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.

Who is the patron saint of pilots?

A teacher in South Carolina recently wrote to NAPP: “I am a Catholic school teacher helping my 7th grade students pick their Confirmation saints, and one of the boys is absolutely obsessed with planes. A quick Google search turns up **St. Thérèse of Lisieux, St. Joseph of Cupertino, and Our Lady of Loreto** as the patrons of aviators, but I happened upon the Priest Pilots site and was wondering if you knew of any more-recent saints or blessed who actually *flew* planes.”

Fr. Phil Gibbs, NAPP president, came up with the same three names, but he also found an excellent article from General Aviation News in 2009: [Flying Saints: Who is watch-](#)

[ing over pilots?](#) It’s written by Eric Chandler who at the time was an F-16 pilot with the Minnesota Air National Guard in Duluth.

We also shared with the teacher that NAPP members have a special prayer on the back of their membership cards. Msgr. John Hemann wrote about it in the [December 2017](#) newsletter.

The “Flyer’s Rosary” was composed by Max Conrad (1903-1979) on one of his many flights from the United States, across the North Atlantic, to Europe.

Fr. Mel Hemann wrote more about Max and the Flyer’s Rosary in the [February 2018](#) newsletter.

Flyer’s Rosary

By night on swift enchanted wings I fly.
Bright stars above become my Rosary.
Each star a lonely prayer which bids me try
To live in faith and hope and charity.
At times I seem to question truth above
And even doubt sublime eternity.
Yet countless stars tell me a Holy Love
Will watch and care for me eternally.
All through the night I prayed my Rosary
On heavenly beads where only angels trod.
How can I ever doubt life’s mystery
When first at dawn my humbled soul is awed?
The generous sun gives me so tenderly
Another day—that I may live for God.

—Max Conrad

The final words of an address given by Mr. Conrad at the Charter Banquet, July 15, 1964, in Carrollton, Kentucky

Longing for peace in Tanzania

Dry weather, political intimidation bring dire consequences

Editor's note: Fr. Pat Patten, a member of NAPP, sent this report in January from Arusha, Tanzania, where he is director of [Flying Medical Service](#), a non-profit, volunteer organization.

Happy New Year to all of you NAPP members, and to all those around you.

It is rough here in north-central Tanzania.

There is a prolonged drought, only just broken by a long, gentle rain on Christmas Day. But people are hungry. Children are underweight. It is the least rainfall we have had in 17 years. For those of you who are not farmers, you need a minimum of 20 inches of rain – within 60 to 100 days – and better double that, to get a good crop of corn. Corn is the staple food here. We only got 20 inches in the whole year.

Just a couple of days ago, I was on a bus from Nairobi. I went there for treatment for macular degeneration. It is like a desert for most of the 140-mile journey from Nairobi to Arusha. No sign of rain. On the way, on a remote part of the road, the bus driver slowed down and then stopped. Four Maasai boys, no more than 10 or 11 years old, were herding a few emaciated cows across the road. The last cow, like the others, mostly skin and bones, stumbled on the gentle embankment and fell face first on the road. The bus driver was kind. He didn't crowd the herdsboys or their cows. The four boys struggled to lift up the shaking animal. They succeeded with some effort and got it, wobbly, across to the other side of the road. I wonder if it will live till the grass has time to grow.

Then, Flying Medical Service, for reasons unknown to us, has been grounded since early April of 2022, the first time in 39 years of operation. No one will give us the real reason, but perhaps it is that we serve in the Loliondo,

Ololosokwan, Ngorongoro areas where the Maasai are being forcibly removed to make room for Arab hunting. Politics is tense. People are intimidated and afraid. Thirty were shot and injured or killed by the police. Twenty-four village councillors, together with the chairperson in Ngorongoro District of the ruling national Revolutionary



One of Flying Medical Service's archive photos shows a long line of people coming for medical care.

Party, spent five months in prison in Arusha, falsely accused of murdering a policeman (who was killed the day AFTER they were arrested!).

So the Christmas message of peace on Earth is, as in Jesus' time, still something to be hoped for, but not yet here. The press is intimidated; a UN human rights rapporteur was sent home last week by the government, empty handed. It all makes Jesus' admonition to "not be afraid" all the more important, especially where fear is ever present.

And so we continue.

*Pat and Crew
Flying Medical Service
Arusha, Tanzania*

P.S. While it's not a postscript to my life here, if you are interested in more details of the conflict here, check out this [blogsite](#).



More archive photos from the Flying Medical Service website.

Countdown to darkness: Calculating the risk of bush flying

Editor's note: NAPP associate member Jacek (Jack) Rejman is the director and founder of [Arusha Medivac](#), an air ambulance service based in Arusha, Tanzania. The company operates a twin-engine Piper Navajo aircraft equipped with advanced life support equipment, capable of night flights and landing at bush airstrips. Jack began his flying career with Flying Medical Service, where he volunteered for eight years. Arusha Medivac began operations in July 2017. He sent this article in January.

Many greetings from Arusha! It is the end of short rains here so it is very green and beautiful.



In our medical flying, we go through waves of being busy. Sometimes we sit on the ground for days or even weeks at the time and sometimes we deal with numerous medical

emergencies at the same time. I definitely haven't figured it out yet what causes those waves ... my best guess is: Full Moon

Last week ... (top of the busy wave ...) we got a distress call from one of the national parks late in the afternoon. A tourist fell out of a safari vehicle and got seriously injured, in need of evacuation.

We took off as soon as we could (it usually takes us about 35 minutes) and landed at Kuro airstrip in Tarangire National Park 20 minutes before sunset, so not a lot of time to spare. In Tanzania, we are legally able to land or takeoff 15 minutes after official sunset. It gets dark very quickly.



Of course the patient was still on the way to the airstrip, so I started to think what if I have to take off after dark. Can I do it? It is a downhill runway with a ridge not far from the end of the

runway (about 2 miles) I thought ... I know the place well, have been there hundreds of times before ... the weather is good ... should be OK.

Our patient arrived just at sunset, so we had 15 minutes to load, start the engines and make it to the

beginning of runway 09.

Hmmm ... we did the best we could and I found myself ready for takeoff with all possible aircraft lights on (I love LEDs!) at the threshold of runway 09, 20 minutes after sunset.



Pretty dark but I still could see something outside ... takeoff roll, no problem at all ... got airborne, sucked the gear in and still could see the approaching ridge somehow ... pushed our Navajo to blue line for maximum performance and started a laborious climb ... the trees on top of the ridge that I could still see somehow approached super quickly and I cleared them with maybe 100 feet to spare.

No problem, except I was so grateful that I could still see the trees. It made me think ... what if it would be few minutes later in pitch dark ... what if I wouldn't use the blue-line speed after takeoff?

This "What If" factor plays a big role in flying and we are trying to minimize the risk by planning and avoiding dangerous situations, but somehow we still need to have this feeling that everything is going to be OK and it was.

After two hours of night flight, we arrived in Dar es Salaam (big international airport) and our patient got safely to the hospital for much-needed treatment. (The patient was diagnosed with a femur fracture and broken ribs.)

Another day ...

Stay safe.

Jack

All the photos are from the mission that Jack describes in the story.



Journey to Tanzania: Read about the Navajo's journey from the United States to Tanzania. In July 2016, Fr. Pat Patten (who operates Flying Medical Service) wrote a blog for NAPP about the trip he made with Jack Rejman. On the [NAPP home page](#), there's still a featured photo of Pat, Jack and Fr. Mel Hemann with the Navajo.

'Air Born Again' author shares life's joys and turbulence

By Tom Enwright

Some years ago, I recall seeing a reference in an NAPP newsletter about a memoir written by Deacon Dennis Kudlak, an NAPP member from Erie, Pennsylvania. His book was published in 2016. Thankfully, my wife Mary remembered that I had mentioned the book and she gave me a copy this past Christmas.

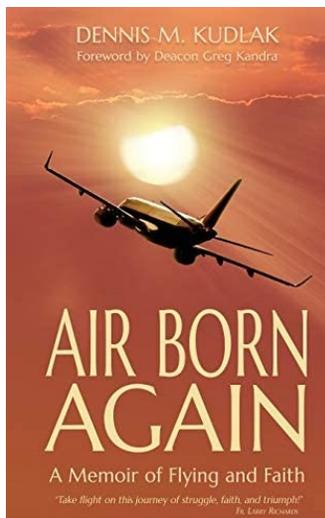
I met Dennis at the NAPP convention in the Cleveland area in July 2018. As a retired captain for United Airlines, he helped arrange a first-class tour of United's maintenance facility at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

(See story and photos in the [August 2018](#) newsletter.)

Dennis writes about his view from three seats in his life: Pilot's seat; as a permanent deacon; and the seat of suffering.



Dennis Kudlak with United Capt. George Henning during the NAPP hangar tour. Below: NAPP members get an up-close look at a Boeing 737.



his life, including the death of his younger sister, financial struggles, and family drama. But he also eloquently describes how God kept inviting him to have hope, deepen his Catholic faith, and build a stronger family life.

"Throughout my life, (Jesus) is the one who has sustained me in my suffering, offered mercy to me in my failures, and steadied me when my life was spinning out of control," Dennis says in the final chapter.

It's an excellent book. Dennis' writing style reminds me of two people having a conversation. He tells about the ups and

downs in his life, and he tactfully asks good questions, encouraging the reader to discern God's will.

In a recent phone call, Dennis was thankful that his wife Lynn encouraged him, at the appropriate time, to pursue his calling to the permanent diaconate for the Diocese of Erie. He celebrated his 20th anniversary of ordination in 2022. Dennis and Lynn have four children and seven grandchildren. In addition to his church service, Dennis volunteers as a pilot for Angel Flight missions, providing free air transportation for medically related needs.

"Air Born Again" is available in paperback from various book retailers, including Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble.



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 April edition is **March 31**.

NAPP Leadership Team

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Treasurer & Newsletter Editor: Tom Enwright

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- It's a new dues year

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The end of an era for NAPP (by Fr. Gene Mur-
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Peter Geldard)

Fr. Phil Schmitt, charter member, dies at 91

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More memories of Fr. Mel Hemann and Fr. Phil
Schmitt

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Remembering Charles McGee, 102, one of the
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- Frasca sold to FlightSafety
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- Sign-up for Midwest Regional in South Sioux City, Nebraska

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Stolen fuel ... and then another emergency
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- A small price to pay: Fr. Bill Menzel's
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- Maryland museum: NAPP members are
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Flight instructor Fr. Miles gets an inside view of
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Count is needed soon for the 2022 convention
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'Approach, are we cleared for NAPP Branson
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Fr. Jack Paisley, longtime NAPP member, dies
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NAPP memoir: 52 hours in the air touring the
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It was time to sell N42PG, but the stories won't
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Midwest Regional features history center,
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Life lessons emerge from the world of aviation
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NAPP convention sites — 1964 – 2022

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Fr. John Schmitz and his parish volunteers roll
out the red carpet for NAPP convention

Fr. Joe McCaffrey looks back on his presidency;
Fr. Phil Gibbs elected next leader of NAPP
NAPP banquet speaker Craig Huck gives insid-
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NAPP member helps build the 'One Week
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AirVenture: Volunteer helps prospective pilots
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- New associate member: Ed Jozsa
- Al Taylor completes 100th Young Eagles
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- Blessing of Planes and Pilots
- New assignment in Florida for Fr. Craig
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- Reminder to pay your dues

December 2022

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search of eternal life (by Fr. Phil Gibbs)

Wisconsin priest reconnects with the Stag-
gerwing he rescued from Bolivia (by Fr.
John Swing)

Sidebar: By the grace of God ... Finding the
perfect owner (by Charles Morgan)

Memories of Lucille's: We cherish a place to
gather and tell stories (by Fr. George
Remm)

Fr. Francis Gerald Scanlon dies in Illinois at age
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Iowa to Phoenix in a King Air on a round-trip
flight of mercy (by Fr. Gene Murray)

Seaplane training: Joy of flying takes on a new
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- Diocese of St. Petersburg honors Msgr.
Mouch
- Flying excursion from the UK to France (a
note from Fr. Peter Geldard)
- Josh Miller completes pastoral year in
Alaska
- Update from Barry Brown
- Reminder to pay your dues