

N.A.P.P.



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President's column: Fr. Allen Corrigan

Anniversary of icing tragedy serves as a reminder for pilots

Editor's note: This column was written on November 15, 2024

Dear members,

Today is the 70th birthday of Kenneth R. Ernst Jr., the brother-in-law of my sister, Donna Ernst, the brother of her husband Jim Ernst, and uncle of my niece Emmy Ernst and my nephew Kenneth Ernst. As I am writing this letter, Donna, Jim, Ken and his wife Emily are conducting a pilgrimage from their homes in the Cleveland area to Roselawn, Indiana, to



pay their respects at the roadside monument which marks the crash site of American Eagle Flight 4184, on which Jim's brother Ken was a passenger on a cold Halloween evening 30 years ago.

As duly noted at americaneagleflight4184.com, "Sixty-eight lives ended and uncounted others were changed forever on the cold, rainy afternoon of October 31, 1994. American Eagle Flight 4184, en route from Indianapolis to Chicago, encountered severe icing conditions and crashed into a field near Roselawn, Indiana, USA. None of the sixty-four passengers or four crew members survived. Those aboard came from

Continued on Page 2

Christmas in July: More than coincidence, upgrade was meant to be

By Fr. Phil Gibbs

Dear brothers, fellow priests, associate members and friends,

I am sure that you all have heard of Christmas in July used as a saying that equates with an occasion of good fortune that happens in the middle of the summer as if it were the 25th of December. I have never experienced this until this last July when I visited friends from my former assignment in Decora, Iowa.

A little back story... I have, for at least a few years, longed to upgrade my airplane from my trusty 1978 Piper Arch-

er II (N6554C) to an airplane with a bit more power and capacity. I had done some browsing on airfields, surfed the internet and perused aviation periodicals for potential replacements. I had done so with some hesitation and reluctance because of the hassles involved with the selling and the expense of buying an aircraft and/or the fear of having two aircraft at the same time and the nightmares associated with that potential reality.

It wasn't until this past January, when I was diagnosed with prostate cancer and the subsequent radical prostatectomy in

Continued on Page 4



Fr. Phil Gibbs with his trusty Piper Archer II in 2022.



Roadside Site Memorial for Flight 4184, Roselawn, Indiana

Continued from Page 1

many backgrounds, beliefs, religions, and nationalities. Collectively, they possessed an amazing breadth of accomplishments, interests, talents, and potential. They left behind loving family members and friends who miss them profoundly and think of them often.”

Among the bereaved were Ken’s wife Karen and their children Bradley and Marissa, and our entire family at that time.

As priest pilots, we have the dual responsibilities of ministering to those who have experienced the loss of loved ones through tragic events and also honing our skills as aviators, which sadly includes learning from the mistakes of others so we will carefully avoid them ourselves.

As with all the aircraft we fly, the ATR-72 has known vulnerabilities, particularly while holding in icing conditions, which require constant, careful surveillance. The necessity of knowing and respecting the performance limitations of our flying machines cannot be overstressed. Every time we hear sad reports of a disastrous incident, we might take a moment to rededicate ourselves to the proposition that every aviator should also be a constant learner. Every flight is a lesson.

My flying partner, Ron, and I heard of a heartbreaking mistake when an aircraft departing from Blue Grass Airport in Lexington in August of 2006 departed on the wrong runway. A look



Flight 4184 Memorial, Calumet Park Cemetery, Merrillville, Indiana

at the airport diagram shows how easily this error was to commit. Unfortunately, the runway was of insufficient length and the flight ended quite tragically with the loss of 49 lives. Since that report Ron and I have added an item to our checklist before throttle-up: the “triple check,” that the runway signage, DG and magnetic compass all agree. We’ll do this even at an airport with just one runway.

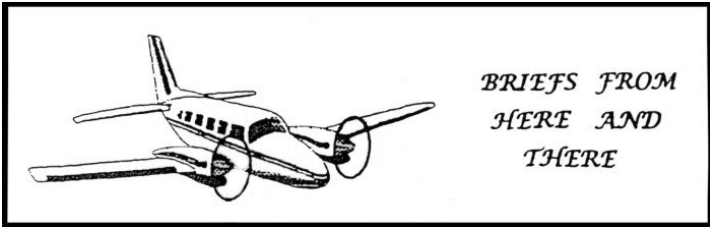
What is an incident or story that has changed your flying style and habits to make them safer, and to ensure that every flight will be what some of our members will know as *delectando monemus*, or “delightful instruction”?

Sincerely,

Allen F. Corrigan,
N6172D
President



Luncheon following the Kenneth R. Ernst Memorial Service. Standing, left to right, Jim and Donna Ernst. Seated, Allen, his parents Catherine and Gerald, and sister, Sharon.



please remember NAPP in your will. Email: napp.editor@gmail.com.

Obituary planning: Members who are making advance funeral arrangements are encouraged to include NAPP in the list to be notified by the family or funeral director. Email: napp.editor@gmail.com.

IRA gift honors the Hemann brothers

Barry and Nancy Brown of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, recently gave the National Association of Priest Pilots a \$750 donation in memory of the Hemann priest brothers — Mel, John and Ev. The gift is a qualified charitable distribution from Barry’s Individual Retirement Account. We are most grateful for this special gift that honors these three beloved priest pilots who devoted so much of their lives to leading and sustaining NAPP.

Nancy (Johnson) Brown was Fr. Mel’s dedicated co-editor and she designed the masthead we still use on the cover of each newsletter. Barry is a retired corporate pilot and currently works part time as a flight instructor. Read more about them on pages 6-7 of the [December 2020](#) newsletter.



‘The Odyssey of Father John Swing’

Fr. John Swing, a member of NAPP from Nekoosa, Wisconsin, recently was featured in the Catholic Life magazine published by the Diocese of La Crosse. The article is titled “The Odyssey of Father John Swing.”

“Father John Swing’s journey through life and faith is a compelling narrative of passion, transformation and trust in the Lord,” the article begins. “His story illustrates how even a modest beginning can lead to unexpected turns in life and bring profound spiritual fulfillment and service.” [Read the full article here.](#) (Photo credit: Catholic Life/Diocese of La Crosse)

Additional ways to support NAPP: Please remember NAPP in your retirement and estate plans. Those who need to take a required minimum distribution from their Individual Retirement Account can designate NAPP for a qualified charitable distribution. Also,



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.

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Fiscal year began July 1, 2024

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

In addition to the \$30 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.



Continued from Page 1

April, that I began to get serious about this venture. My prognosis is good as follow-up tests indicate there is no detectable cancer present. However, the gift of life as a cancer survivor becomes much more pronounced and somewhat more fleeting. This propelled me to get more aggressive about this goal of mine.

I made plans to be at our regional NAPP meeting in Mason City in early July. Before this, I was informed by my fellow pilot friends that Todd Kyle would be of great help. He is president and chief pilot of Northeast Iowa Air Service and is a trusted professional in aircraft sales and service. I had called and arranged to meet with him to get an evaluation of my Archer. I flew out to KMCW and, after our NAPP gathering, Todd was there to give my airplane a look over. After a brief inspection, he turned to me and surprisingly said, "I'll buy your airplane." He liked what he saw and needed to build up his fleet in Mason City, Charles City and Ames. We came to an agreement on



(N735YR). The pilot/owner there had three airplanes at the same time (my nightmare) and was looking to downsize his fleet.

The airport manager and I went to look at it in the hangar and we agreed to take it for an introductory flight. After that flight, I requested to inspect the books the next afternoon. I then called the own-

er and arranged to have a meeting the following morning. Since the airplane had been hangared and received its maintenance from the local trusted mechanic that I have known for years and years, I chose to forego the pre-buy inspection and made my best offer to the owner. He accepted! We agreed that when I returned from EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh, I would get my finances in order and make the transaction. All went very smoothly.

During those 48 hours in Decorah and just considering how all aspects fell into place, I sensed an opportunity of a lifetime and felt the presence of Divine Providence. All my friends told me that this was meant to be, and my prayerful discernment concurred. The timing, the opportunity, and the overwhelming desire for me to continue to fly was truly an experience of ... Christmas in July.

During those 48 hours in Decorah and just considering how all aspects fell into place, I sensed an opportunity of a lifetime and felt the presence of Divine Providence.

a price and established the fact that he would allow me to fly the airplane for as long as it took for him to find me an upgraded replacement. Good deal.

It wasn't two weeks later when I was visiting friends in Decorah, my former parish assignment, that I spent some time at the airport (KDEH) and caught up with the airport manager and his wife. I flew in and out of Decorah for 11 years. They asked how I was doing and if I was still flying my Archer. I told them that I had just sold it

and was in the process of looking for a different aircraft. They asked what I was looking for and I told them that I would be happy to have a Cessna 182 Skyplane. With a look of great surprise, they told me that one was for sale right there on the airfield and it was just listed on Trade-A-Plane. It is a 1977 182Q



Fr. Phil checks the fuel on his "new" 1977 Cessna 182Q. He and Fr. Nick Radloff took it on a long cross-country from Iowa to Fredericksburg, Texas, for the 2024 NAPP convention.

New member: NAPP welcomes Fr. Neil Ritchie from the UK

Editor's note: Fr. Neil Ritchie from the United Kingdom is the newest member of the National Association of Priest Pilots. Fr. Peter Geldard is our only other member in the UK. By way of introduction, Fr. Neil shared the following story:

Thank you for accepting me as a member of NAPP. Originally from Scotland, I'm a priest of the Archdiocese of Liverpool, UK, ordained in 1992. Over the years I have had an interesting variety of assignments, which have included parish postings, seminary teaching, working on the clinical staff of the Saint Luke Centre in Manchester, UK (affiliated to the Saint Luke Institute in Silver Spring, Maryland) and for the last eight years, chaplain to the University of Liverpool. All have brought great blessings.

I've been passionate about aviation since my first flight in 1970 in a British Airways Viscount. My first light aircraft flight was in a de Havilland Chipmunk, as a teenage Air Force cadet.

Entering priestly ministry, I assumed that I would never have the chance to get my pilot's license, being Type 1 diabetic (and given the cost of general aviation on this side of the Atlantic), but I was wrong! God does have a habit of making the (seemingly) impossible possible.

When first ordained, a wise parishioner suggested I take up building and flying radio-controlled models. There was a good club nearby and I had lots of fun and learned a lot. Among other things, I learned about the need for patience in matters aeronautical!

Moving to another part of the diocese, I discovered a gliding club and learned to fly gliders in the beautiful Lancashire countryside, soloing in 2003. A few years later, after time getting my STL in Belgium, and teaching on a seminary faculty in northeast England, I returned to the northwest of England and discovered that I had the money to get my private pilot's license on fixed-wing microlights



(ultralights). I did this, getting my license in 2014.

For much of the time since then, I have continued to fly the delightful EV-97 Eurostar, hiring from my old flying school and staying fairly local, but recently decided to buy a share in a CZAW SportCruiser and am currently undergoing conversion training. The SportCruiser is

a step up from the simple and lightweight Eurostar; it's a heavier and faster ship, with variable-pitch prop and glass cockpit, very light in pitch, but a rewarding plane to fly and a great tourer. The other nine group members have been extremely helpful. It includes a former British Airways captain, an undertaker and now a priest!

Flying is a great privilege. It's challenging, expensive, sometimes frustrating and demands the best of yourself, but I return home after every flight with a sense of gratitude and a renewed perspective which adds a fresh perspective to ministry and life.



"It is with paternal satisfaction that the Holy Father views the efforts of the members of the National Association of Priest Pilots to encourage the use of air transportation to obtain ever more abundant spiritual fruits from their sacerdotal ministry and missionary apostolate."

The Vatican, September 29, 1964

Purpose:

1. To promote the use of private aircraft as a practical, safe, and efficient tool of the apostolic work of a priest.
2. To cooperate with other aviation and ecclesiastical groups wherever possible in order to promote aviation in the cause of the Church.
3. To insist on the safe and proficient use of the airplane by its members.
4. To encourage the use of private aircraft as worthy of the talents and dignity of priests.
5. To further the use of aircraft in the missions.

N6949M: Zing, sizzle and pop

First of two parts

By Jim Knights

Since earning my private pilot certificate in 1987, I've bought and sold four airplanes: A Cessna 150, a Cessna 210, a Taylorcraft BC12D (in which I obtained my tailwheel endorsement), and a Beechcraft 19 Sport. By the way, none of these airplanes were close to home. I'm an ATP and CFII now, but as a brand-new private pilot, I flew the 150 from Sacramento to central New Jersey hopping from VOR to VOR and much later the Sport from central Washington state to Pennsylvania. Obviously, those were multi-day cross countries. Getting the 210 and Taylorcraft home meant flying across only half the continent.

I sold the Sport about 12 years ago.

This past June found me on a beach on Prince Edward Island, Canada, talking with some friends over wine. I forget why, but for some reason I mentioned that I am a pilot. Something about that conversation galvanized me, rekindling the urge to again take the plunge — or the jump — into aircraft ownership.

After returning home from Canada, I flew with a good friend, Father Joe McCaffrey, in his beautiful Cessna 177RG Cardinal. At the end of the day, as we were pushing his airplane into its hangar, I happened to ask him if he knew of any available hangars at his airport, New Castle Municipal (KUCP), in New Castle, Pennsylvania. The next day, the airport called to offer me a hangar near Father Mac's. I explained to my wife, Dorothy, that it would have been impolite to Father Mac for me to decline. Naturally, I needed something to put in my new hangar. I started perusing *Trade-A-Plane* and *Controller*.

Dorothy wasn't shocked. She knows what hangars are for.

I wanted something different. Something with *zing, sizzle and pop*, not just another plain vanilla tricycle-gear Cessna, Piper or Beechcraft. There were several

contenders, including a de Havilland Tiger Moth (with two sets of skis) and a de Havilland Chipmunk, both military trainers, both taildraggers, and both in Canada. Though they were tempting, I didn't relish enduring the FAA's bureaucratic gauntlet to obtain an airworthiness certificate for a foreign warbird. I had also come across a couple of Cessna 170s. I have always admired that model. What about one of those?



Associate member Jim Knights found a gem in this restored 1949 Stinson 108-3. He purchased it in New Mexico and flew it home to Pennsylvania, keeping careful notes along the way so he could write this two-part story for the NAPP newsletter.

However, another taildragger kept "flying" off the page of *Controller*: a 1949 Stinson 108-3 "Flying Station Wagon." She had only 750 hours since new and had been *completely* restored. I have always liked Stinsons, but had never flown one, and this one kept drawing me back. She was gorgeous and almost seemed to be flirting with me. She had *personality*. She was more exciting than a Cessna 170 and certainly wasn't your run-of-the-mill tricycle-gear airplane. She was *different*.

Soon, it became clear that she was "the one." N6949M. My choice was affirmed by a

friend, Andy, who recently retired from the FAA. He also owns a very nice Cessna 177 Cardinal, but after seeing photos and a description of 49M, he told me that, in his opinion, she was definitely "the one." "Besides," Andy said, "170s handle like a truck." 49M was no truck.

In keeping with my tradition of buying only airplanes that are located far from home, 49M was in Las Cruces, New Mexico (KLRU), tucked in the southeastern corner of the state not far from El Paso, Texas. I dialed the number in the ad. My call was answered by Mike, the owner's son, a first officer for a major airline and a CFII. Mike gave me some of the backstory. The rest I got from two local mechanics and Mike's mother, Barbara.

Mike's dad, Ken, only the second owner of 49M, had restored the airplane several years earlier. Sadly, Ken died from a lengthy illness just over a year earlier in July 2023. Barbara and Mike were still coping with their loss.

Continued on Page 7

Continued from Page 6

Ken found the airplane in the early 2000s stored in a hangar in east Texas. He began his aviation journey as a teenaged Civil Air Patrol cadet from Mercer, Pennsylvania, coincidentally not far from New Castle, before his family moved to Southern California. Later, he became a warrant officer Huey Cobra helicopter pilot in Vietnam, where he had been shot down and wounded. After earning his degree, he became a Delta Dart pilot with the California Air National Guard, then went on to fly for the airlines before his retirement. Ken had previously restored a beautiful Stearman PT-17. He was a passionate and talented guy with an established track record. It took him about eight years to restore the Stinson after he trucked it to Las Cruces from Texas. Barbara estimated the cost of restoration, including *everything*, was around \$186,000. Ken finished the restoration in 2014. Due to his advancing illness, he could only fly it on short local hops.



As an aside, Ken had also purchased another Stinson 108-3 project that he used as a donor aircraft for 49M. He traded in the engine from that airplane for a rebuilt 165-horsepower Franklin for 49M. It's as beautiful as the rest of the airplane. "Franklin" is stamped in raised lettering on each of the six valve covers. Ken took advantage of that by highlighting each letter in gold paint. He paid attention to detail. After he finished 49M, he started on the second project. Barbara tells me he made good progress. That Stinson is still in pieces but is complete except for the engine. Ken wanted to restore it as an amphibian using a more powerful Lycoming, but he never got the chance. The last I heard, it was still available.

After speaking with Mike, the two mechanics who had helped Ken with the airplane, Oscar and Ernesto, and of course, Barbara herself, it was clear to me that she has a very strong emotional connection to 49M. Ken loved aviation and poured himself into restoring the airplane that was his final project.

Even before speaking with Barbara, who naturally was Ken's executor, I understood how significant 49M had to be to her. Barbara and I got along quite well. She told me during our first call that it "wasn't about the money," but "finding the right person for the air-

plane." I heard her. She wanted the right person who would care for the airplane that had been the focus of her husband's passion, someone who would appreciate and respect his work. In fact, having spoken with Oscar and Ernesto, I felt confident in making an offer sight unseen. Barbara accepted without hesitation. She told me that she had turned down two other potential buyers because they "weren't right" for the airplane. After I met her in person, Barbara told me that the other two had attempted to persuade her to lower the price by finding fault.

Those two potential buyers hadn't been tuned in, so their strategy was ill-conceived and had backfired. Twice.

Truthfully, there was no fault to find. 49M really is museum-quality.

Barbara and I became friends. Mike, with a young family, had been unable to take 49M because of other commitments in life. After getting the airplane home, I put a codicil in my will directing that Mike have "right of first refusal" should my family ever need to sell 49M. If that becomes necessary, Mike should have his dad's airplane.

I arrived in Las Cruces on August 8th. It was 100 degrees. Density altitude at KLRU was just shy of 8,000 feet. Barbara later told me that I initially made her nervous when, after arriving at the hangar and seeing 49M for the first time, I walked around the airplane three times inspecting it. I don't have a clear recollection of having done that. In my mind, I had committed to 49M before I left home for Las Cruces, but apparently, I hadn't impressed that upon Barbara, who repeatedly reminded me on the phone, "The plane is yours." She told me she was greatly relieved when I finally announced, "It's better than the photos."

In fact, having spoken with Oscar and Ernesto, I felt confident in making an offer sight unseen. Barbara accepted without hesitation. She told me that she had turned down two other potential buyers because they "weren't right" for the airplane.



Continued on Page 8

Continued from Page 7

The airplane was, indeed, better than the photos. She is a deep maroon with gold pinstriping and lettering. Her wings and horizontal stabilizer are cream, as is her rudder trim tab (rudder trim!). Ken had polished all the inspection hole covers to a mirror sheen, creating a striking contrast with the maroon fuselage. Among her other enchanting qualities, she has four beige leather seats that had been recovered by a shop at KLRU, a cream-colored instrument panel and headliner, and a rich deep brown wood-paneled interior framed in light wood in perfect condition and hand-made by Ken. Even the rear floor is wood. She even has two custom-made leather seat cushions that are more like pillows, each with an embroidered Stinson logo. Her panel is basic 1949, except for a few concessions to latter-day technology that Ken installed in a way that wasn't offensive to the airplane's vintage. Aside from her stunning beauty, the first thing I noticed was that 49M's interior had the compelling scent of an antique pickup truck that took me back to my childhood.



This is a good place to explain that for airshow competitions, Ken had even gone to the effort of fitting the original 1949 comms radio faceplate to brackets so it could be used to camouflage the modern GPS/Comm unit and transponder. Sadly, he never had the chance to show off 49M at an airshow.

Ken had done a remarkable job, and he had documented it thoroughly. Along with photos taken at every stage of the restoration, Barbara gave me a leather binder, 3 inches thick, containing complete documentation for 49M, including the owner's manual, avionics, weight and balance, etc. She gave me so much, including spare sparkplugs, that I had to ship most of it home.

Ken had christened 49M in Barbara's honor. He emblazoned the tail with "Heavenly Creature" in gold. 49M is definitely that.

Oscar told me that 49M would attract attention wherever I stopped for fuel, and she does.

I've got the prettiest girl at the dance.

The airplane was missing just one minor thing: ADS-B. It simply isn't necessary in the New Mexican desert, but is, of course, very necessary in the congested Northeast. As Las Cruces has no avionics shop, my only alternative was to stop at El Paso International Airport (KELP), 40 miles south of Las Cruces on the

other side of the Organ Mountains. Barbara told me those mountains have snared a lot of airplanes. I would have to wait several days in El Paso while the work was done, but there was one more wrinkle. 49M is strictly VFR. Given her history and beautiful period restoration, I wanted 49M to remain as original as the day I bought her, so IFR certification is off the table. However, Andy, who was an FAA operations inspector and is a CFII, strongly recommended I replace the turn-and-bank indicator with a Uavionix AV-30. This digital unit, which slides into a standard 3-inch instrument hole, can be switched back and forth between directional gyro and artificial horizon. Having an artificial horizon on the panel could be a life-saver should I find myself inadvertently in IMC. That has happened to me twice in my aviation career, so my decision was made for me.

By now you're cringing at the rising expense of my choosing 49M as "the one." I'm used to it. With the exception of the Taylorcraft, which had no electrical system, I've upgraded the panel of every airplane I've purchased (\$\$\$).

I sent the turn-and-bank indicator to Barbara as a memento of 49M. She added it to her collection of Ken's aviation memorabilia.

I was under pressure to get back to Pennsylvania and wanted to get in the air, but as is the norm, my insurance company mandated I receive one hour of instruction in 49M before going solo. Barbara and Mike had gone to extremes to find an experienced tailwheel instructor who met with their approval. They didn't have to do that, but that's the kind of people they are. Barbara told me that she was so worried during the search that she suffered stress headaches. Las Cruces is a bit isolated and there were no appropriate CFIs at the airport, except the mechanic, Ernesto, who was going to be away over the approaching weekend. Barbara gave me a list of her approved tailwheel CFIs, but none of them were immediately available. So, Ernesto it was. However, he wouldn't be free until the following Monday, so I spent the weekend in Las Cruces, New Mexico, with no plans. I was now behind schedule, which I'm certain has never before happened to any other pilot. Yeah, right.

I was saved by the [War Eagles Air Museum](#) in nearby Santa Teresa, New Mexico, and White Sands National Monument. I spent Saturday at the museum and Sunday at White Sands. I'd never heard of the museum (it was great), but I'd always wanted to visit White

Continued on Page 9

Continued from Page 8

Sands. Instead of silica sand, the dunes there are composed of brilliant white gypsum sand that goes on for miles. It's the largest expanse of gypsum in the world. Unfortunately, the Trinity Test Site, the location of the world's first atomic detonation during World War II, is only open a few days per year and was closed when I visited.

Ernesto had a go at me Monday morning, August 12th. Only *once* did 49M want to scoot off the side of the runway.

I was to find that to be a recurring problem during the trip home. The checkout lasted 1.3 hours, which surprised me. Despite Ernesto's encouraging remarks, I didn't feel confident to take the airplane solo, but he was the instructor and the clock was ticking. Sound familiar? While I'd flown my former Taylorcraft BC12D for something less than 80 hours, that had been a long time ago and at 1,200 pounds max gross weight — easily qualifying for the FAA's sport category — the Taylorcraft is a bantamweight compared to the Stinson 108-3's 2,400 pounds in the normal category. The Stinson is twice as heavy and has a very large vertical stabilizer. The -3's tail is considerably larger than those on the -1 and -2. It's called the *Flying Station Wagon* for a reason. Remove the back seats and you can carry 600 pounds in the expanded cargo area. The large tail was intended to enhance stability while carrying heavy loads, but every solution creates another problem. That tail is also very efficient at attracting every crosswind. Compounding the issue is the fact that instead of enlarging the rudder to match the larger vertical stabilizer, Stinson kept the rudder the original size, which didn't help with crosswind correction. 108-3 pilots must be very quick with their footwork, as I was to discover. I also discovered that 1.3 hours with Ernesto wasn't enough for this airplane.

I was to learn that my Taylorcraft experience wasn't really transferable to 49M. I had flown heavier airplanes, such as my old 210, a couple of Seneca IIs and even a King Air, but they weren't taildraggers.

On the other side of the coin, that big horizontal stabilizer does its intended job: 49M handles beautifully once airborne.



The large tail was intended to enhance stability while carrying heavy loads, but every solution creates another problem.

El Paso International is Class C, so ADS-B, which I didn't have, is required. I called El Paso tower to get permission to enter their airspace without it and was told, "We don't even look for that." Problem solved. You wouldn't hear that in my neck of the woods. Flying in the Southwest is so much easier.

I planned to leave the next morning, Tuesday, August 13th. Time was short and I had to get home to depart for a long-planned cruise on the Queen Mary II followed by a flight from London to Germany to retrace

some of my father's steps during WWII. The next morning, I dropped off the rental car and Barbara took me to KLRU. I wasn't surprised when she told me she didn't want to see the airplane leave. She'd drop me off at the hangar, go for coffee, then return after I'd left with her husband's pride and joy.

I should have known better, but I was preoccupied and not a little nervous about flying an unfamiliar tailwheel airplane over unfamiliar and hostile terrain into an unfamiliar airport. In fact, all of that went well. However, once I arrived at my hotel in El Paso that night, Barbara confessed she had never left the airport after dropping me at her hangar. She had parked within sight of the runway, not

only to watch what had been her husband's airplane depart Las Cruces for the final time, but to video my departure. She sent me that very tearful video during which she conveyed very sweet and encouraging wishes and asked Ken to watch out for me. She had noticed I was on edge.

The impressive Organ Mountains run in a north-south chain just east of Las Cruces. At the southern end near the Mexican border, there is an expansive pass, hence the name El Paso. There is another pass closer to Las Cruces, but it's at a higher elevation. Ernesto advised against attempting to fly over it since the last pilot who tried ended up ripping off his landing gear. Good advice. Another reason to head south is that east of the mountains opposite Las Cruces there is a large and always-active military restricted area. It was best not to risk skirting it. I used the GPS, of course, but navigation was easy: Just follow the Organ Mountains south to the huge and very obvious gap, then turn east and there is El Paso, Texas. The airport is easy to spot. It's also easy to confuse with adjacent Biggs Army

Continued on Page 10

Continued from Page 9

Airfield. ForeFlight warned me about that. As Ernesto predicted, I was assigned the shorter 26R and was directed by El Paso tower to remain south of 26L before turning base. Landing was uneventful, but 49M did want to veer left after touchdown. Hmm ... In a Cessna, the landing would have been a non-event. I guessed I needed more experience in the airplane. Taxiing to the avionics shop on the other side of the airport seemed to take about as long as the flight from Las Cruces. Happily, the shop wasted no time in getting to work.

By now, I had exceeded my allotted time and had to get home within a few days. At that late date, I couldn't risk weather delays during the flight home with 49M and I didn't want to risk falling prey to "get-there-itis," that infamous killer of pilots. I needed Plan B. Fortunately, the shop has its own T-hangars, so I could store the airplane safely, fly home commercially, go on the one-month trip, and then fly back to El Paso to retrieve her. My blood pressure started to come down. It took the shop three days to install the Uavionix AV-30 and the ADS-B, which was a Uavionix SkyBeacon that replaced the left wing's position light. The transponder was dated, but Andy had sold me a later model that he had replaced when he upgraded his Cardinal. Being the same brand, a new tray and wiring wasn't required. The shop only had to swap it out and do the paperwork.

On the second day, I received a call from the shop manager. While the AV-30 fit the 3-inch instrument hole in the sub-panel vacated by the turn-and-bank indicator, the top panel blocked access to the unit's controls. He wanted my permission to trim the beautiful original panel. *Ouch*. Why can't things be simple? I had no choice but to agree. When I later inspected the work, I noticed the trimmed section wasn't symmetrical. The shop fixed it. Fortunately, Barbara had given me a can of the spray paint Ken used, so the shop didn't have to do any color matching.

Back to the ADS-B. Unfortunately, I didn't realize



that I had to turn on the position lights for the ADS-B to work. As I write this, I realize that it should have been intuitive, but it wasn't. I *assumed* the SkyBeacon was hardwired for power, but by the time I returned to El Paso to retrieve 49M, a month had passed, a lot had happened, and that was a detail that slipped through my mental net. That accounts for some confusion while en route home when ATC sometimes couldn't see me. It wasn't until the last day of my trip that I noticed the small placard beneath the GPS/COMM on the left side of my yoke: "Navigation Lights Must Remain On For ADS-B Out." Duh. Lesson learned: Never assume. I should have asked someone at the shop and read the documentation, but again, I was focused on the days ahead.

I have ForeFlight on an iPad. Earlier, while waiting in Las Cruces, I often checked the weather along my anticipated route of flight home. Being August, there were thunderstorms every day, especially in the afternoon. I was hopeful

that by delaying my return for a month, I'd avoid the storms. That's *mostly* how it worked.

Fast forward.

Dorothy and I had just arrived home on September 10th after a long transatlantic flight across several time zones. On September 12th, after only one day of rest, I flew from the Eastern Time Zone to the Mountain Time Zone. I knew what time zone I was in, but my body was thoroughly confused, and I felt it. Regardless, I planned six legs of two to two-and-a-half hours each over two days, which actually became three days, and the legs became longer due to headwinds. We plan. God laughs. It could have been worse.

First stop, Lubbock, Texas. It was September 13th.

To be continued ...

Convention in Mason City will have lots of airfield hospitality

Plans are taking shape for the 2025 NAPP convention in Mason City, Iowa. Please note two changes from our recent scheduling pattern. This one will be in July instead of September, and it will be Tuesday-Friday instead of Monday-Thursday.

Arrivals will be on Tuesday, July 15, convention activities will take place Wednesday and Thursday, and departures will be on Friday, July 18. (Note that this is the week before EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. AirVenture will be July 21-27.)

Fr. Nick Radloff is leading the planning for our convention, assisted by Mike Makelbust.

Here is Fr. Nick's early look at a tentative schedule, with activities still subject to change:

"I've spoken with Doug Rozendaal (host of the Third-Thursday Burger Burn) and he's excited that we're having (our convention) in Mason City. We brainstormed some activities and my shortlist for now is a tour of the Frank Lloyd Wright designed Stockman House in Mason City, a tour of the Surf Ballroom Music Enrichment Center (set to open in the summer of 2025), a lake

Arrivals: Tuesday, July 15
Activities: Wednesday-Thursday
Departures: Friday, July 18

cruise on the Lady of the Lake paddleboat, and of course the Third-Thursday Burger Burn, which is a mini-airshow itself. Because of the Burger Burn, we will most likely have our meeting and banquet on Wednesday instead of Thursday. I'm still working on hotels."

The Burger Burn happens year-round on the third Thursday of each month at Doug's hangar. Here's what it says on the Burger Burn [Facebook](#) page: "Bring something to throw on the grill, what you want to drink, and a dish to share. We start the grill at 6 p.m. Fly in or drive in — everyone is welcome!"

[North Iowa Air Service](#) is the FBO at [KMCW](#). United Express provides commercial flights between Mason City and Chicago.

So, mark your calendars! Thanks, Fr. Nick and Mike, for your efforts to make this a memorable convention.

Third Thursday at KMCW
Third Thursday of Every Month

Where?
Rozendaal Hangar
Cars to the South
Planes to the North

When?
Grills Light Up at 6pm

What?
Something to Grill
Something to Share
Something to Drink



The late Msgr. John Heumann, a charter member of NAPP, was a regular at the monthly Burger Burn at the Mason City airport. In March 2014, he was honored for five years of perfect attendance. He even was presented with a throne, according to the Burger Burn's Facebook page. (Photos from Facebook)



Invoices will be tested with members who haven't paid in several years

By Tom Enwright
Treasurer and Newsletter Editor

At the NAPP annual meeting in September, members agreed with my suggestion to try emailing invoices for the \$30 annual dues.

As a test run, we'll start this in December by sending to members who haven't paid since Fiscal Year 2021, 2022 or 2023.

We're currently in FY 2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025).

For those who are behind in their dues, it's not necessary to make a catch-up payment; we simply would like you to pay for the current fiscal year.

We'll use the PayPal invoice service, which is part of our existing PayPal payment program. PayPal deducts a small fee for each electronic payment we receive, although the invoices will not cost us anything.

We have been relying on the honor system for members to pay their dues, but that means each person needs to check the membership directory (either through the website or the PDF that is sent with each newsletter email).

One of our associate members suggested it would be easier for him to pay from an invoice rather than having to check the directory. So, we're going to give it a try.

How will the invoice appear in your email box?

From: service@paypal.com
Date: xxxxxxxx
To: xxxxxxxx

Subject: Invoice from National Association Of Roman Catholic Priests Pilots Inc. (That's the legal name for NAPP.)

There will be a message from me within the body of the invoice. Payment can be made from the links on the invoice to pay via PayPal or with a credit card — or you can mail a check to NAPP Inc. at the address in the message box.

Why is this important? Having an accurate count of our membership is one way to measure the health of our organization. If some people haven't paid for three or four years, it's a good guess they no longer are interested in NAPP, so it's reasonable to delete them from the list if there is no response to a final appeal.

What about financial hardships? If anyone can't afford the dues because of their financial situation, they should contact me (phone call or email napp.editor@gmail.com). There are a few "Good Sa-

maritan" members who have offered to pay the dues for those who need help.

What are our membership numbers?

The NAPP directory currently lists 87 members (individuals or couples) plus two associations.

Number of members listed by their last dues payment:

FY 2021 – 1	FY 2022 – 8
FY 2023 – 8	FY 2024 – 15
FY 2025 – 45 (this is the current fiscal year)	
FY 2026 – 5	
Complimentary – 5	

Thanks to the 50 people who are current (or ahead) in their dues payments. Let's hope for even more up-to-date memberships in the year ahead.

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