

N.A.P.P.



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## Flying Medical Service: Still caring for the poor and marginalized

By Fr. Pat Patten

She came with him from the war zone in eastern Congo. He was almost blind. He had a noticeably large head.

He is 23 years old. And though he could walk, he could barely talk, and he was incontinent, both urine and stool. He is her son. A university student studying economics, he had suddenly lost his sight. He started developing psychological symptoms. She thought of evil spirits. She heard that there was a church in Arusha, in the neighboring country of Tanzania, that could cure him. She brought him there four years ago. Four years of prayers in a multiplicity of churches didn't cure him.

In desperation, she and her son finally found Flying Medical Service. Our staff welcomed a very psychologically damaged young man and a mother who had run out of resources and almost out of hope. She had used all her money. Her family back in Congo would not send any more to her or to her son.

After several MRIs and a neurosurgical technique just newly available here, a Tanzanian neurosurgeon corrected the cause of the excessive fluid build-up on the young man's brain. His psychological symptoms disappeared within days. But his vision remains probably permanently damaged because of misplaced faith and misused prayers. What he experienced in churches, unfortunately, was both medical and religious malpractice.

Prayer didn't cure. It nearly killed him.

Christian prayer in need, properly used, helps us listen to God, to listen to what we should do to deal with a problem. What is God saying to us? Clearly, we don't need chants or shouting to cast out evil spirits, or singing, or anointings, or a multiplication of words. We need to listen and let that listening guide us to action.

At 76, I know I am not yet one of the oldest members of NAPP. But as an older and not-retired priest and pilot, I do know that I have to listen more and more carefully as the years go by.



This was the scene in previous years as people lined up for medical care at a remote landing strip in Tanzania.

For a long time, NAPP members have been very generous to Flying Medical Service with regular contributions. Though we have been grounded since April of 2022, unable to treat our average of 37,000 patients per year in very remote areas, we still serve the health care needs of the poor and the marginalized whenever we can, as with the example of the patient above.

There are many more like him. And we still try to help with what we have. We still hope. And we still struggle with our government, day by day, to once again get into the air. Our aircraft stands ready to go, fully maintained, with annual inspections always up to date.

The reasons behind our grounding are most likely political. The government has been trying to forcibly relocate the Maasai people from their traditional land, which still remains the most spectacular tourist area in East Africa. The government has systematically re-

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## Thoughts on dues, grants, bequests and a welcome upgrade

Dear members,

Since the calendar has turned to a new year, we have been able to make our annual grants to charitable organizations that use aviation in the service of ministry. Thank you to all the members who through the prompt payment of their annual dues have made it possible to continue these efforts at our agreed-upon rates.

The stories from our grant recipients seem to report situations which become increasingly grim with every passing year.

Therefore, I would like to remind all members that in addition to our PayPal dues fund, the [NAPP homepage](#) has another button to make an additional charitable gift. This is for those who are able and willing to offer some additional funds to support the ministries that have been so dear to us for so many years.

I know from time to time many of us turn to the somber task of updating our various final directives,



*Every so often we receive a bequest or special gift that provides the needed cushion to maintain our current level of philanthropy*


whether they be wills, trusts or other kinds of estates. I would simply like to offer a reminder that every so often we receive a bequest or special gift that provides the needed cushion to maintain our current level of philanthropy, even though our regular membership and convention attendance may be slipping a bit. Many thanks to those who have gone before us who have provided posthumously for our ongoing missionary commitments.

Turning to lighter things, I am happy to report that while I am temporarily grounded since my biennial flight review is overdue, our 1979 Skyhawk, N6172D, is also out of service during the month of February, but for a good reason. We are replacing the old steam gauges with dual Garmin GI 275's with the GMU 11 Magnetometer, ADAHRS's with Autopilot plus the matching GPS navigator and transponder. It's a big step, but all five members stepped up and, divided between us, it's quite an affordable upgrade.

So, I will soon be scheduling a combination BFR plus avionics familiarization. I'm looking forward to it!

Sincerely,

*Allen F. Corrigan*  
President



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Articles, news notes and photos can be sent to Tom Enwright, [napp.editor@gmail.com](mailto:napp.editor@gmail.com). Deadline for the April edition is March 31.

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**2025 NAPP Dues – U.S. \$30.00**  
*Fiscal year began July 1, 2024*

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

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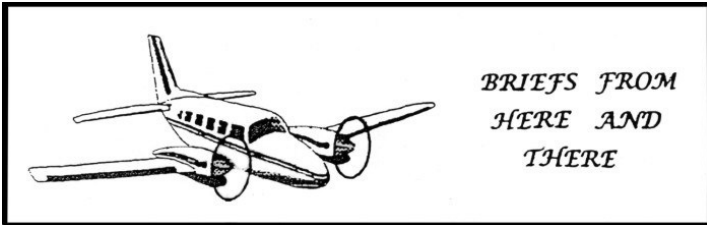
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**Make check payable to NAPP and mail to: Tom Enwright, Treasurer, 419 Chestnut St., Sauk City, WI 53583**

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](http://priestpilots.org) and click on the **Donate** button.





## Save the dates for 2015 NAPP convention

The 2025 NAPP convention is scheduled for Mason City, Iowa, in July. 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 is set for July 21-27.)

**Fr. Nick Radloff** and **Mike Makelbust** will host the convention.

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

Watch for details to come about the convention hotel, activities and registration.

## NAPP issues charitable grants

The National Association of Priest Pilots issued two \$1,500 charitable grants in January as approved by members at the September 2024 annual meeting:

- **Flying Medical Service in Arusha, Tanzania** — FMS currently is grounded by the Tanzanian government, but the grant will help pay for ongoing aviation expenses such as maintenance, insurance and GPS subscriptions. This is designated as the Hemann Brothers Grant, which honors three deceased priests, Mel, John and Ev Hemann, who were longtime leaders of NAPP. (See Fr. Pat Paten's story on Page 1.)
- **Diocese of Fairbanks in Alaska** — This grant is for commercial air travel to rural parishes. Bishop Steven J. Maekawa, OP, wrote: "Thank you so much for your generous donation to our mission diocese. Your gift will continue to help us cover the substantial costs of bringing the Mass and sacraments to the faithful across northern Alaska."

## Airport planning expertise

**Fr. Bill Menzel** of Wisconsin Rapids has been appointed as a member of the [Master Plan Stakeholder Committee](#) for Alexander Field South Wood County Airport (KISW). The new Master Plan will provide a framework to guide the maintenance and development

of the airport for the next 20 years, positioning the airport to meet changing user needs and accommodate future growth and economic development.

## SUN 'n FUN forum

Associate member **George Gratton** plans to present a forum at [SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo](#) in Lakeland, Florida. His topic will be "MAYDAY! Surviving single-engine failure in IFR." All his sessions will be at 11 a.m. in CFAA-12. Dates: Wednesday, April 2; Thursday, April 3; Friday, April 4.

In his presentation, George describes an in-flight emergency while flying to the NAPP convention in July 2021. See "Emergency over Georgia" in the [August 2021 NAPP newsletter](#).

**Comment about ADS-B/nav lights:** Associate member **George Gratton** wrote this note after reading Jim Knights' article about acquiring a 1949 Stinson ([December 2024 newsletter](#)).

"My empathy with anyone that had a 'duh' moment when the ADS-B didn't work, only to finally see the little placard on the dash saying it only operates with the nav lights on! I flew a newly acquired Cherokee from Washington, DC, (Potomac airspace) to Savannah, Georgia. I got to communicate with controllers in Richmond, Raleigh-Durham and Fayetteville who were quite nice about it. Florence, South Carolina, let me in sans ADS-B, and even granted me a free pass to leave. Their departure controller must have been a pilot/owner when he asked if we had the nav lights on. Voila! ADS-B works! Savannah controllers were much happier. Don't feel bad; 'duh' isn't nearly as uncommon as you might think!"

**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, please remember NAPP in your will. Email: [napp.editor@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:napp.editor@gmail.com).





# Gratitude for altitude: One member's story about NAPP

By Rev. Mark Menacher

The following article was suggested in an email to me from Mel Hemann on 04 January 2021, that I should “share what a friendship with Jim [Falsey] has meant in [my] personal journey.” Sadly, Mel is not here to read this long-overdue contribution to the NAPP newsletter, and despite many delays and excuses, Tom Enwright has graciously encouraged me to submit the following when able.

In August 1999, I returned from 10 years in the United Kingdom with my Welsh wife and two young daughters in tow and “landed” in Au Gres, Michigan, on the Lake Huron coast. I received my private pilot's license in 1979 in one summer after graduating from high school. Not having flown in nearly 20 years, I looked forward to that prospect. So, I obtained the application form and rule booklet for the Iosco Flying Club at 6D9 just outside East Tawas, Michigan. Unfortunately, within a couple of months, my wife's mother was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and all my limited flying money was spent flying my wife and daughters as often as possible to be home with her mum (*sic*) in North Wales until she died.

In 1999, the metropolis of Au Gres sported a population of 840. I was called to serve St. Paul Lutheran Church, which had broken off from St. John Lutheran Church some 25 years earlier. (Aren't Protestants fun?) The parish priest at Au Gres' St. Mark Catholic Church was Father Jim Falsey. Although I was not able to place him, Father Jim was one of the priests at St. Mary Catholic University Parish at Central Michigan University (CMU) from which I graduated in 1984. Most of my family is Roman Catholic, but my

dad married a Lutheran girl, and I was raised Lutheran. Going to Mass was, therefore, nothing new to me, and while at CMU I would attend the 6 p.m. Sunday Mass at St. Mary with floormates because the chances of me getting to the campus Lutheran church across the street on Sunday morning were slim at best. In brief, Father Jim was one of the priests at St. Mary when I attended, and roughly 20 years later we found ourselves again in another small Michigan town, only this time each of us serving our respective parishes.

Father Jim was a fixture in Au Gres. His generosity was well-known in the community. He was a leading light in the town's food bank. His warm and joyful personality was particularly evident when the town's six pastors met monthly for breakfast. He is even a live organ donor. Occasionally, he and I would talk flying, and at some point, after my mentioning it, Jim became active in the Iosco Flying Club.

One day in the spring of 2005 while out walking, Jim stopped by the parsonage, and in conversation he mentioned the flying club. I said, “I have been thinking about doing something about that,” to which he replied, “You will be thinking more seriously about it.” Then, he gave me an envelope and went on his way. The envelope was open, and I could see the Iosco Flying Club application form and rule booklet that had been sitting on my desk for the previous five years. So, I put the envelope on the mantelpiece.

Two weeks later just before the next pastors' breakfast, I thought that I had better hand on heart be able to say that I looked at the envelope's contents. So, I re-

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Mark Menacher flying with his elder daughter, Emily Rose

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moved social services from the area. They seem not to realize that there are wild animals here precisely because the Maasai people do live here and do not hunt and do not farm.

I would urge you to look at the [May 2024 issue of The Atlantic Monthly](#), available in your library. Read the excellently written cover article by the Pulitzer Prize-winning former Nairobi bureau chief of the Washing-

ton Post, Stephanie McCrummen. When you're finished, multiply that story by one hundred.

Many thanks for your concern and for always being kind.

*Flying Medical Service, based in Arusha, Tanzania, is a nonprofit, volunteer organization that provides health care regardless of religious affiliation, ethnic background or ability to pay. NAPP is a financial supporter of FMS.*

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trieved the envelope from the mantelpiece and pulled out the same old application form, the same old rule booklet, and the same old check for \$500. Oops. Deeply embarrassed for not looking and thanking him earlier, I immediately dashed over to Father Jim's residence at the parish church to thank him profusely for his very generous gift. That sum covered the flying club's entry fee and four hours with a CFI, which sufficed to convince the CFI that after 23 years not only could I still fly but that I could do so in the club's C150 and C172.

The following year, Jim invited me to attend the NAPP national convention in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. In preparation for that, I got checked out in the club's C182, which we flew to KOSH. Having learned to fly in Holland, Michigan, on the Lake Michigan coast, crossing the "big lake" in a single-engine aircraft was not recommended, but Jim bravely navigated us across the lake at high altitude with the benefit of a special lake flight plan. Safely on the ground and at the hotel in Oshkosh, I was warmly welcomed at the convention. John and Mel Hemann took Jim and me out to dinner, which in hindsight might have been my interview to become an NAPP associate member. For a variety of reasons, I have been unable to attend another convention. Nonetheless, I continue to pay my dues to support NAPP, even if in such a small way.

One often hears the phrase "an attitude of gratitude," but in my case it is "gratitude for altitude." Honoring Father Jim's \$500 gift has entailed the self-imposed obligation to keep flying. After being called in 2007 to serve in San Diego, California, the frequent oceanic coastal cloud layer necessitated obtaining an instrument rating. That led, as finances allowed, to receiving a commercial certificate, and eventually I became a CFI myself. From 2009 to 2019, in addition to parish responsibilities, I also taught aviation weather and aviation law in the mission aviation department at San Diego Christian College. Who could have foreseen that a small gift between pastors in a small, northern Lower Michigan town would have borne such fruit over so many years?

For all the time spent at various altitudes since 2005, I wish to express my gratitude to NAPP for allowing me to continue to be an associate member and for the wonderful memories from the only convention I attended. I thank John Hemann for imparting to me how one makes holy water, which I often relayed to others. I am grateful to Mel Hemann for his patience with my

*One often hears the phrase "an attitude of gratitude," but in my case it is "gratitude for altitude."*

chaotic paying of NAPP dues, which were somehow usually paid one to two years in advance, but that may not be the case today. I also thank him for suggesting writing this article. In that vein, I thank Tom Enwright for recently checking in on me "out of the blue" because of the wildfires in Los Angeles.

Obviously, I could not thank any of the preceding NAPP members if it were not for Jim Falsey who opened the skies for me again, for which I thank him, well most of the time. In light of the considerable outlay

required to obtain my advanced rating and certificates "to keep flying," I have often wondered whether Jim's gift might actually have been a Roman Catholic plot to bankrupt a Protestant pastor!

To conclude, perhaps the most important expression of gratitude needs to be given to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit who finds ways for His people to serve and foster one another across and sometimes even despite our various denominational boundaries. May He richly bless NAPP, all its members and its aviation mission within the apostolic mission of the Church.

*Mark D. Menacher is pastor of St. Luke's Lutheran Church in La Mesa, California.*



*"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.

# The colorful history about Super Cub 143 Tango is ready for a new chapter and owner

*Editor's note: Paul Murray, a former associate member of NAPP, died in August 2024 at the age of 89. His brother, Fr. Gene Murray, wrote a tribute in the [October newsletter](#), and now Gene shares the history of Paul's Super Cub, which is for sale.*

**By Fr. Gene Murray**

N143T was built as a primary flight trainer for the U.S. military (1951-53) during the Korean War. Because the military needed a primary flight trainer, one that was basic and fairly easy to learn to fly, they ordered 250 Super Cubs. The only trainer available at the time was the AT-6 and it was much too complex for primary students. They needed a simpler airplane for the flight cadets to learn. Enter the Tango Cubs.

143 Tango came off the assembly line in 1952. A total of approximately 250 of this model were built. The engine was a Lycoming O-235. The airframe was equipped with toe brakes rather than heel brakes and it had no flaps.

The first owner was Hawthorne School of Aeronautics, a contractor that trained pilots at Spence Air Force Base in Moultrie, Georgia.

By 1954, the Air Force acquired a new trainer made by Beechcraft, designated the T-34. So, all the Tango Cubs were turned over to the Civil Air Patrol or sold to the public. 143T was sold to Edward H. Steinleitner from Pennsylvania with 1,496 hours on the engine and airframe.

Circa 1960, Jeep Kruger from George, Iowa, purchased it and flew it back to Iowa with the intention of converting it into an aerial applicator by adding flaps and a larger engine. At some point, he took it to his farm home and disassembled the wings to modify them and put flaps on them. Unable to complete the project, it languished on his farm with the fuselage in the alleyway of the corn crib, the wings in a chicken coop turned into a shop. The prop and assorted parts were stored in the attic of the house. In this condition, Jeep Kruger's son Steve from Ames was in charge of disposing of the airplane from the estate. He offered the aircraft for sale at an auction, accepting sealed bids



on a Sunday afternoon — October 9, 2000 — at the farm site in rural George. The bids were to be opened on site at 2 p.m. The purchaser was to pay for it on site and come prepared with a trailer to remove it.

**THE PURCHASE:** My brother Paul and I found out about the airplane from Elmer Den Hartog (Hotdog) who was a pilot friend from Sheldon, Iowa. Paul got really excited about buying it as a rebuild project and asked me if I wanted to be a partner. Originally, Paul and I agreed to purchase it and rebuild it together. However, after I had completed rebuilding the wings, about a year later we decided that it should be his project since I already had a Cub. The airframe had 2,058 hours on it when Paul purchased it.

*Originally, Paul and I agreed to purchase it and rebuild it together. However, after I had completed rebuilding the wings, about a year later we decided that it should be his project since I already had a Cub.*

(How we arrived at a price and how the bidding went is a whole other rather humorous story — best told over a bottle

of beer at another time — as well as the trailer that Paul borrowed from Bill Lang to haul it home.)

**THE REBUILD:** The rebuild process took about four years and included much work done by Paul and me. However, any of the welding required certification was done by a certified shop. The airframe was taken down to bare metal and any tubing that needed attention was replaced. The airframe was sent to Dakota Airframe, a certified Aircraft Repair Station in Larchwood, Iowa, where a flap handle was installed in the sidewall to allow the airplane to retain toe brakes. The airframe was then sandblasted and power coated for rust protection. In the meantime, the engine (Lycoming O-290) was sent off for overhaul by Neal Hinman, a certified shop at Webster City Municipal Airport.

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# N6949M: Zing, sizzle and pop — coming home

*Editor's note: Associate member Jim Knights of Pennsylvania concludes his two-part story about his purchase of N6949M, a 1949 Stinson 108-3 "Flying Station Wagon." Jim purchased the aircraft in Las Cruces, New Mexico, in August 2024. The first part of his story appeared in the [December 2024](#) newsletter.*

## By Jim Knights

We left off in the last edition headed to Lubbock, Texas, on Friday, September 13th.

New Mexico and Texas have a lot of "flat." Having once lived near Dallas, I wasn't surprised, but I was certainly reminded. The terrain is flat to the horizon in all directions and interspersed with isolated mountains jabbing the sky at random. Throughout the entire trip home I used Flight Following, with Albuquerque Center being my first guardian angel.

East of El Paso, communications were poor with not a little static. At one point, another pilot attempted to act as a relay, but I couldn't hear him well enough, either. Still, it was the desert and conditions were CAVU. In an attempt to improve reception, I climbed to 11,500 feet but had little success. At least the air was smooth — until I descended below 5,000 as I approached Lubbock, then I got bounced around.

I became concerned about arriving safely and not breaking "Barbara's" airplane. Surprisingly, and to my immense relief, I managed a decent landing. 49M again exhibited a tendency to diverge from the center line, but it wasn't heart-stopping. I attributed it to my neophyte tailwheel skills. Due to a headwind, from engine start to shutdown it was 3.0 hours.

After understanding what 49M meant to Barbara, as well as the vintage airplane's provenance, I began to think of myself more as her caretaker rather than her owner. The idea of having to tell Barbara I had damaged 49M in a landing accident would have broken my heart. My constant mantra throughout the journey home was this: "Don't break Barbara's airplane." When I eventually told her that, she, being the kind soul she is, expressed concern that I might break myself. Not me. I was worried about 49M.



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 story.

I refueled at the self-serve pumps, then taxied to the FBO. Not surprisingly, 49M was complimented by the line folks and a customer at the FBO who was also admiring a beautiful Cessna 195 that had come in after me. The winds were picking up. I noticed the 195 pilot checking the weather. As for me, I checked the

windsock and U.S. flag, both of which suggested I remain on the ground. The 195 pilot made the same decision, and both of our beauties were tucked into hangars for the night.

I managed only one leg on the first day. *C'est la vie*, or, more appropriately in Spanish, *Eso es la vida*. There was more to come.

The next morning, Saturday, September 14th, 49M and I departed for Wiley Post Airport (KPWA) just north of Oklahoma City. That leg took 2.7 hours and was uneventful except that 49M again wanted to exit the runway before I did. What was going on?

We were soon back in the air and headed northeast to Branson, Missouri. Winds aloft were becoming an issue, so I knew the landing would be challenging. When I planned my flight that morning, the wind favored Branson West (KFWB) and its single runway, 03-21. That changed as I got closer to my destination. I decided the best option was Branson itself (KBBG), which also has just a single runway, 14-32.

49M was teaching me to avoid airports with only one runway.

I originally flight-planned to KFWB, and I did pass it while sorting myself out to land at KBBG. That evening, Barbara told me that she and Larry, Ken's good friend and former Air Force flight instructor who resides in Michigan, had been following me online.

(Barbara's late husband, Ken, was the previous owner of 49M. See Part 1 for more about Ken.)

Larry texted Barbara that he thought my circuitous route to KBBG suggested I might be touring Table Rock Lake, which winds across the landscape. I told Barbara I hadn't been in a touring mood because I was worried about breaking her airplane.

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After 2.7 hours, I landed — sort of — on KBBG’s runway 14. Due to the considerable turbulence, I flew a higher approach speed and didn’t use flaps. Still, the turbulent crosswinds had their way with me. The landing was rough and once again, 49M wanted to veer violently off the side of the runway as soon as the tailwheel made ground contact. It took all my effort to stop before exiting the asphalt. Had I tried to land at Branson West, things might have gone very, very wrong.



Imagine that you’re driving along the highway when suddenly your car veers off at a 45-degree angle. That’s similar to what I was experiencing. My logbook reflects almost 4,000 hours. Was my piloting technique that bad?

Due to the turbulence, I declined any further flying that day and had the FBO put 49M in a doorless community hangar. It was better than nothing. This fabric-covered airplane cannot be left out overnight. I sent Barbara a photo of 49M at rest, which she forwarded to Larry. When I later confessed my ham-handed landing to Barbara, she told me that Larry had kindly given me a thumbs-up because the airplane looked like it was still flyable.

I mustn’t break Barbara’s airplane.

The next morning, 49M and I departed Branson for Columbia, Missouri (KCOU). As 49M and I taxied to KBBG’s runway 14, the tower asked me to expedite for an airplane behind me. I declined, explaining that 49M was new to me and, having a tailwheel, it was difficult for me to see past the cowling without doing S-turns. Instead, I offered to pull over. There was room. The controller withdrew his request.

A little later, I had a lesson about how Flight Following can be a lifesaver. There was a heavy overcast. I couldn’t go higher than 3,500 feet and still maintain legal VFR distance from those clouds. As fate would

have it, ATC asked if I could go higher to avoid the antenna towers ahead that topped out at 3,600. I was stuck at 3,500 and they were at 3,600. When I explained I couldn’t go higher, ATC vectored me around the towers. When I passed them, I craned my neck to see their tops.

Would I have seen those towers in time? They were centered in my path of flight. I like to think I would have, but I congratulated myself for having Flight Following. The controllers also vectored me around a TFR over an airshow south of Columbia.

Again, 49M would not track straight and true after landing, but she got more love from the line employee who met me asking if I had just left the airshow.

She’s a beautiful airplane. Have I mentioned that?

That morning’s weather briefing said nothing about convective activity, yet when I got out of 49M and looked around, I saw cumulonimbus buildups in all quadrants. I was surrounded. I wanted to continue on to Columbus, Indiana (KBAK) but the little voice in my head began uttering doubts. I got a very helpful briefer on the phone who confirmed what I could see and also that the buildups were not forecasted. On ForeFlight, I could see bits of green, yellow and red south of Columbia. She recommended a route farther north to avoid the storms, but cautioned that since the buildups I could see at Columbia were not forecasted, there was the distinct possibility of new buildups along the alternate route. Our conversation lasted about 10 minutes. My personal rule is that if I have to worry about the weather for longer than 5 minutes, I should remain a terrestrial creature. When I told the briefer I had decided to RON where I was, I could hear the relief in her voice.

It had been another one-leg day. I was grateful I was not in a hurry.

The next morning, September 16th, the storms had gone. We never did get one, but caution had ruled the day and Barbara’s airplane remained unbroken. 49M and I departed for KBAK. This was to be our last day. If all went well, we’d make it to 49M’s new home after two long legs.

Then another problem cropped up. When I tried to en-

*A little later, I had a lesson about how Flight Following can be a lifesaver. There was a heavy overcast. I couldn’t go higher than 3,500 feet and still maintain legal VFR distance from those clouds.*

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ter KBAK as a destination in the GPS, it wasn't recognized. Wanting to get on my way, I gave up after several attempts. I had no experience with panel-mounted GPS units and had no idea what the problem could be. I wasn't enamored with the thought of spending more money on a GPS. I could navigate using ForeFlight on my iPad and iPhone, so that's what I did. No problem. Later in the flight, I learned something else: 49M needs discreetly placed power outlets for modern electronics. The airplane has none, having been built in 1949. Fortunately, I'd brought along a power bank that kept me going for the final two legs of our trip.

After arriving home, Father Joe McCaffrey suggested Ken may have loaded only the database for the western United States, which was all he would have needed. That, indeed, was the case. Thanks, Father Mac! I have since uploaded the entire North American database.

This was another of several learning experiences. I hope you're taking notes.

I touched down 3.5 hours later at Columbus Municipal in Columbus, Indiana. Bladder-wise, that had been a long flight. Again, I stopped 49M just in time when she began to follow her own course off the runway toward the weeds. This was becoming a little nerve-wracking.

Again, I engaged in self-deprecation over my sorry tailwheel skills.

Upon departing Columbus, I learned two other tailwheel lessons:

First: *Tell* the tower what you want. Insist, if you have to. I listened to ATIS and again checked ForeFlight, which helpfully indicates the most favorable runway considering the winds. As I recall, the best runway with the given wind was 02, which I should have insisted on regardless of the longer distance I'd have to taxi. Instead, the ground controller, who seemed impatient, cleared me to runway 13, which was much closer and would not have been an issue had I been in a tricycle-gear airplane.

I thought back to the controller at Branson who had asked me to expedite my taxi. I bet neither controller was used to dealing with tailwheel airplanes. As a

matter of fact, during the trip, two ground controllers at different airports referred to 49M as an "experimental."

Lesson 2: Air traffic controllers have less experience with tailwheel airplanes than was the case years ago and, consequently, they probably don't have an adequate understanding of their unique characteristics and susceptibility to crosswinds. That's something I will have to keep in mind during future trips with 49M.



As it was, 49M let me know she wasn't happy with that crosswind.

The winds continued to be a significant problem at altitude. I was unable to hold altitude and my headset was knocked askew when I banged into the headliner. However, the forecast indicated the winds would calm the farther east I flew. This time, the forecast didn't lie. The winds dropped considerably by the time I crossed the Pennsylvania line. My final Flight Following guardian angels were Cleveland Center, then Youngstown, Ohio, who cut me loose when I had New Castle, Pennsylvania, in sight.

After another 3.5 hours in the air, I executed a beautiful (at least to me) landing on runway 05, but as soon as the tailwheel touched down, 49M tried to depart the runway to the right.

It was all I could do to stop it in time. Regardless, we'd made it without breaking Barbara's airplane.

I escorted 49M to her new home and was picked up by my wife, Dorothy.

Now, what about those near-runway excursions? Andy, my friend who had recently retired from the FAA, suggested I have the tailwheel checked. Was the problem me or the tailwheel? Through a friend I'd met in the Civil Air Patrol, I contacted Ron, a local Cessna 170 pilot and CFI. Like Andy, Ron suspected the tailwheel was wonky. He explained that I should try to turn the tailwheel by hand. There are detents at 45 degrees left and right, he explained. When the tailwheel reaches 45 degrees, a spring pops into the detent, halting any more rotation unless a considerable force is applied via the rudder pedals. I knew nothing about the internal workings of tailwheels. Ron suspected there was problem with the spring or associated part.

I did as Ron suggested. I jacked up the tail and turned the tailwheel by hand. It freely castered left and right like the wheel on a shopping cart, only "clicking" at

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the 45-degree points. There was my gremlin. The tailwheel was broken. Every time 49M settled on her tail after landing, the tailwheel pivoted and 49M headed for the weeds. I began to feel better — at least somewhat — about my tailwheel skills.

Father Mac had given me the name of his mechanic at KUCP, Joe, who loved tailwheel airplanes and was currently working extensively on a 1948 Stinson 108-3 in the hangar right next to Fa-



ther Mac's Cardinal. What were the chances? Joe is also a CFII and a tailwheel instructor. Again, what were the chances that someone with the exact qualifications I needed would make an appearance? The next day, I returned to visit 49M and phoned Joe. He had no idea who I was, but when I finally made it clear that I had just brought a beautiful 1949 Stinson 108-3 to live at KUCP, he literally couldn't stop laughing. Through his chuckling, he managed to say, "It's Christmas!"

I explained my castering tailwheel issue. Joe came out the next day and confirmed the problem. He removed the tailwheel and, indeed, found some broken components and general wear. He rebuilt it using a kit. Then we later flew it without incident. Though there was a dramatic improvement in handling, 49M still challenged me during landings when that tailwheel touched the asphalt. I thought I knew why.

I have rather short legs, which made using the rudder pedals



somewhat uncomfortable, but doable. As Joe explained, a good tailwheel technique is to put pressure on both pedals at once. Instead of pushing, say, the right rudder pedal to keep the airplane tracking straight, you lessen the pressure on the *left* pedal. To avoid over correcting, as soon as the airplane starts to

turn, you apply opposite pressure. It takes practice. A trip to the local Walmart produced a seat cushion that I repurposed as a back cushion. Now I can reach the rudder pedals without any problem. That was a simple fix.

The difference in controllability made by rebuilding the tailwheel and using the cushion was amazing.



While I know I still need more time in the airplane and more tailwheel instruction — more is better than less — I'm now much more confident in my ability to control 49M during taxi, takeoff and

especially landing. She's a sweetheart, but she's very assertive and demands constant attention. Because of her large tail, I have to "fly" 49M all the way back to her hangar. If my mind strays even for a couple of seconds, so does she.

I wanted a taildragger because I knew I'd be challenged, and this airplane is challenging. 49M is humbling. I'm not taming *her*. She's taming *me*.

Throughout my journey with 49M, I thought *I* was the problem. Why? Because I kept hearing and reading how difficult the Stinson 108-3 was to land because of that large vertical stabilizer. Those around me kept inadvertently reinforcing that idea. One person even told me, "That's the one everyone hates, right?" That's an important point because it prevented me from considering that the root of the problem might lie elsewhere. Andy had suggested I have the tailwheel checked, but countering his advice was my conviction that I was at fault. I was a victim of my own confirmation bias. Every time 49M swerved on landing, it reinforced the idea that the problem was with me, not the airplane. I knew I'd been away from taildraggers for a long time, and I knew the airplane had been cared for *and* it had just come out of annual. My confirmation bias was so strong that I dismissed the well-known fact that airplanes are statistically more prone to mechanical issues immediately after an annual inspection.

To a lesser degree, of course, I *was* partly at fault due to my lack of recent tailwheel experience and having no experience in this make and model. On the flip side, instead of believing I'm a terrible tailwheel pilot, I can now tell myself I flew an airplane with a broken tailwheel halfway across the continent without rolling

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it into a ball while humbly acknowledging I learned a number of lessons along the way.

Whenever I've brought home a new airplane from across the country, it taught me lessons.

At the end of the day, I did *not* break Barbara's airplane.

Speaking of Barbara, after 49M and I arrived at New Castle, she told me that as a Civil Air Patrol cadet in Mercer, Pennsylvania, Ken had earned his private pilot certificate. She said he had spoken of sometimes landing at New Castle. Yet another "synchronicity." I again find myself saying, "What are the chances?" What are the chances that I would have brought 49M across half the country to live at an airport where Ken himself had sometimes landed decades earlier as a teenager?

The coincidences don't end there. My sister-on-law's brother was also a warrant officer helicopter pilot in Vietnam. Though he and Ken never met, he did — incredibly — know Barbara. After serving, he became an attorney in Las Cruces where Barbara was working as a court reporter. They remembered each other!

That's simply amazing. Again, what are the chances?

Consider the timing of the multiple events that somehow aligned: A chance conversation on a Canadian beach reigniting my desire to own an airplane, not one that I was familiar with and would have been comfortable flying, but one that would challenge me, one with *zing, sizzle and pop*; a *sizzling* Stinson *popping* off the page and being available at just the right time; Barbara turning away two previous potential buyers who had gotten there before me; Father Mac finding me a hangar at New Castle, Pennsylvania, where Ken had landed years ago; a mechanic/CFI at the same airport with expertise not just with tailwheel airplanes, but specifically with Stinson 108-3s. It seems that someone behind the scenes is pulling strings. The end result is that 49M really is "home" and Barbara is happy.

As for 49M herself, she demands absolute focus and awareness. She's the jealous type and resents it if my attention wanders even for a second. She demands I live in the moment!

I wanted *zing, sizzle and pop*. That's exactly what I got.

In more ways than one.



*What are the chances that I would have brought 49M across half the country to live at an airport where Ken himself had sometimes landed decades earlier as a teenager?*

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The wings were in very good condition overall. However, there were two ribs that were destroyed by mouse urine. These were replaced with new ribs from Dakota Cub. The wings were completely disassembled, and the ribs were cleaned of any corrosion. All steel fittings were removed and sandblasted and primed with zinc chromate. The aluminum spars were in very good shape, and they only needed a little cleaning for reassembly. The wings were then put together and transported to Storm Lake for covering.

A new boot cowl was fashioned with a stainless-steel firewall and 2023 T3 aluminum. The old wheels and brakes were replaced with new Clevelands. A King com radio and an ELT were added. All the upholstery and floorboards were replaced with new material. Some of the original instruments were retained.

The engine, airframe and wings were assembled for a pre-cover inspection. It was then disassembled for

covering. In 2004, it was certified and returned to service by Jim Bartholomew.

Super Cub 143T is now for sale and hangared at Storm Lake Municipal Airport (KSLB). If you are interested, contact Paul's son, John Murray, at the Murray Law Office in Storm Lake. Phone: 712-732-8181.





# Flight instructors expand knowledge, skills at annual summit

By Fr. Edward Moran

The [National Association of Flight Instructors](#), according to its website, provides national organizational support for certified flight instructors. “NAFI provides valuable resources to all flight instructors to further its 50-plus-year commitment to raise and maintain the professional standing of flight instructors in the aviation community.” Its code of ethics provides a standard of character and professionalism that not only meets the Federal Aviation Administration standards of training but also acts to provide support of those standards of training, a forum for discussing accident investigation, and vital feedback to the FAA and the pilot community for all levels of air traffic control, and aviation safety of operations.

NAFI’s monthly magazine, *Mentor*, gave me a great idea of the extent of their work and prompted my online participation in their specialty teaching areas in which I am rated (fixed wing, rotary wing, seaplane, gliders, instrument flying and drones).

While I have been a CFI for 29 years and a member of NAFI for nine years, I’ve never taken the opportunity to attend their annual summit. This year was different. In signing up in July 2024, few of us considered the Florida hurricane season. When Hurricane Helene swept through northern Florida, its destructive aftermath caused the cancellation of the scheduled August meeting. Then I received messages in late October that the summit would be moved to January 2025. Everyone who knows the Florida weather in January and is a certified flight instructor who enjoys the camaraderie of the profession gave me a strong inducement to come to the summit to enjoy the professional information, and the kind of weather that certainly would not be present in eastern Texas at that time of the year.

Arriving at the summit the evening before on January 13, the welcome reception was a good way to meet NAFI’s president, Paul Preidecker, along with many of the participants, presenters and members from the federal flight administration as well as faculty members of Embry Riddle University where the summit was being held. Paul expressed a distinct interest in getting to know more about the National Association of Priest Pilots and the Catholic Aviation Association whom I came representing.

The next two days were a whirlwind of presenters with topics ranging from the keynote address by Dr. Susan Northrop on updates to the FAA medical process, especially regarding mental health determinations and a revised process for reviewing canceled flight medicals.

The first afternoon included topics like teaching engine failures after takeoff, how to instill the “captain mentality” in training students, integrating health and well-being into safety management systems, and auditory help and safety for pilots. That evening at our dinner, we were regaled with a speech by John and Martha King, who have taught more pilots than anyone in the history of aviation and are the founders of King Schools of Aviation. Their talk on the history of developing their specialty in the development of multimedia training programs on many aviation subjects was a high point of the summit. Having used their books and ideas in my primary flight training, it was a genuine joy to meet and thank them for their work.



Fr. Edward Moran with Martha and John King

Day 2 began with an FAA update briefing that showcased the important initiatives to the flight community the FAA was

trying to implement. This was followed by all sorts of interesting talks such as proven strategies for retaining students; training with virtual reality through the FAA aviation workforce development grants; eliminating accidents in general aviation; role models in coaching and mentoring students; and the Transportation Security Administration’s briefing on updated security requirements. I especially enjoyed “transitioning older, rusty pilots into high-performance aircraft,” feeling my age amid the onslaught of technology in the cockpits of today’s aircraft. Then there were the talks on flight instructing training in the era of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) and finally the closing remarks.

It was a worthwhile two days! I can highly recommend the NAFI summit to any flight instructor in the NAPP and the CAA. They meet again in Akron, Ohio, in September. Go online and check out NAFI. Let me know if you are interested in attending. We could coordinate a flight to Akron!

*Fr. Edward Moran is 1<sup>st</sup> vice president of NAPP and a member of the Catholic Aviation Association.*



# 2024 Year in Review

## FEBRUARY 2024

President's column: Lent is a time for reorientation to get the shiny side up (by Fr. Phil Gibbs)

Flying Medical Service: 'Grounded or not, we still serve the best we can' (by Fr. Pat Patten)

Fr. John Wolesky reflects on his service in the Civil Air Patrol

A Japanese aviator (by Michael Einarsen)

NAPP \$2,000 grant will help pay for ongoing aviation expenses

Hotel reservations now open for convention in Texas

On a snowy winter's day, I found a treasure ... (by Patrick J. McDonald)

Alaska and NAPP: Mode of aviation travel is changing as funding is tight

Flyer's Rosary

2023 Year in Review

Briefs:

- IRA gift honors the Hemann brothers
- Priest pilot ascends to membership in the UFOs

## APRIL 2024

President's column: Look beyond the compass to find the Risen Jesus (by Fr. Phil Gibbs)

Associate member Jack O'Neill dies at age 99

Fr. Jim Falsey finds missionary joy in the beauty of Alaska

Two NAPP members will be ordained to priesthood in June

Midwest Regional gatherings mark the passage of time (by Tom Enwright)

Fr. Miles Barrett finally found the perfect home for his Arrow (by Tom Enwright)

Hotel reservations now open for convention in Texas

Briefs:

- Blessing of airplanes at EAA AirVenture
- Jubilee recognition
- SUN 'n FUN forum
- Fr. Mac goes on the radio to talk about St. Patrick's Day
- Checking in on Fr. Paul Baseford
- Membership updates

## JUNE 2024

President's column: Amazing grace: Let's recognize the Eucharist as an awesome gift from God (by Fr. Phil Gibbs)

Coming soon: Itinerary for the September convention in Texas

Midwest Regional set for Mason City

Obituary: Fr. George Remm drew inspiration from 2004 convention

Milestone anniversaries in 2024

Small Wisconsin airport sports an impressive museum (by Tom Enwright)

Three planes in one day: Enjoying the spectrum of aviation (by Fr. Miles Barrett)

What went wrong here? (by Fr. Gene Murray)

Planning ahead: Jim Knights fulfills Fr. Mac's special request

Briefs:

- Fr. McCaffrey appointed as Episcopal Vicar
- Two NAPP members being ordained in June
- Flying update from Fr. Mike Kerin

## AUGUST 2024

Final call for the NAPP convention in Texas

Two NAPP members are newly ordained  
Catholic Aviation Association asks priests to invite new members

Midwest Regional in Mason City is blessed with blue skies

NAPP members spotted (and random scenes) at EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh

Briefs:

- Parish bids farewell to Fr. McCaffrey
- Burial service for Fr. John Herzog
- Happy birthday to Fr. Paul Baseford

- New associate member: Larry Camerlin
- Additional ways to support NAPP

## OCTOBER 2024

President's column: NAPP annual gathering combines history and fellowship in the Texas Hill Country (by Fr. Allen Corrigan)

Texas provides warm welcome for NAPP

Convention speaker: 'These things we do so others may live,' says retired commander

Scenes from the 2024 NAPP Convention in Fredericksburg, Texas

Remembering Paul Murray: Fr. Gene shares the story of an emotional farewell to a special Cub (by Fr. Gene Murray)

Bishop Steve relies on commercial air services to reach Alaskan parishes

Briefs:

- Fr. Bill Menzel mentors EAA Ray Aviation Scholars
- Report on Hurricane Helene
- Additional ways to support NAPP

## DECEMBER 2024

President's column: Anniversary of icing tragedy serves as a reminder for pilots (by Fr. Allen Corrigan)

Christmas in July: More than coincidence, upgrade was meant to be (by Fr. Phil Gibbs)

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

N6949M: Zing, sizzle and pop (by Jim Knights)

Convention in Mason City will have lots of airfield hospitality

Invoices will be tested with members who haven't paid in several years (by Tom Enwright)

Flyer's Rosary

Briefs:

- IRA gift honors the Hemann brothers
- Diocesan magazine article: 'The Odyssey of Father John Swing'
- Additional ways to support NAPP