

N.A.P.P.



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Look up and see what's important

Editor's note: Fr. Neil Ritchie, a member of NAPP since November 2024, is a priest of the Archdiocese of Liverpool in the United Kingdom. Read more about his background in his introductory article from [December 2024](#).

By Fr. Neil Ritchie

I am sitting over coffee with Steve, my instructor, in the restaurant at [Barton Aerodrome](#), our home airfield for the training syllabus I need to follow to convert my microlight private pilot license (PPL) to an SEP (single-engine piston) PPL. That would allow me to fly, as pilot-in-command, SportCruiser G-SCPI ("Skippy") of which I am the proud owner of a 1/10th share.

We are debriefing one of my early training flights.

"Any comments or questions?" asks Steve.

"The landing is challenging," I say. The Eurostar I used to fly came over the threshold at 60 mph. And being very light, it responded immediately to pulling the power off, and settled nicely into the flare. The Sport-Cruiser feels heavier (which it is), and comes over the threshold at 65 knots, and has more inertia.

The 700-meter (2,300-foot) runway suddenly seems shorter. And, for some reason, the point at which Steve calls "flare now — just lift the nose a tad," feels way too



Fr. Neil on a recent flight with another member of his flying group.



Fr. Neil Ritchie with "Skippy," the SportCruiser he flies in the United Kingdom.

high, as if we are still at 50 feet, although obviously we are not. Is it the different seating position, I wonder?

"Are you making sure that you are looking up — at the far end of the runway — when we come over the threshold?" And there it is. The most obvious thing. So easy to forget basic lessons. *Look up* — into the middle distance. Without that, depth perception is compromised, your situational awareness is poorer, and the landing is more likely to be a sudden "arrival" rather than the proverbial "greaser."

I hear Steve saying "look up" at other times, too! Looking up is important at all phases of flight, particularly in a plane like the SportCruiser, which has little inherent stability. Changing the transponder code in flight recently, I was horrified to look up and find we

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President's letter: Fr. Allen Corrigan

Looking forward to the 2026 NAPP Convention in Akron, Ohio

Dear Members,

I certainly hope that everyone is planning to attend our 2026 NAPP Convention, which begins with arrivals on Monday, September 14, and concludes with departures on Thursday, September 17. Our host airport is Akron Fulton Airport (KAKR) and our event headquarters will be [Comfort Inn and Suites](#) in Cuyahoga Falls.



I have been working with a great man and former parishioner, Sean McAllister, who is Destination Sales Manager for the [Akron/Summit Convention and Visitors Bureau](#). He has been very helpful to me in making connections with those who will make sure that our 2026 convention will be great!



Akron, Ohio, has long been a cradle of aviation innovation, from the early days of dirigibles to modern aerospace advancements. Akron is the fifth-largest city in Ohio. In the 1910s, Akron doubled in population, making it the nation's fastest-growing city. A long history of rubber and tire manufacturing, made possible by a strong labor force, abundant water, and excellent access to railroads and canals, gave Akron the nickname "Rubber Capital of the World."



Akron takes its

name from the Greek word for "Summit" because it was the highest point on the Ohio and Erie Canal, which was under construction when the city was founded.

There are many places of interest and fine dining in the Rubber City, as well as historic St. Bernard Church, which is larger than many cathedrals. A centerpiece of the downtown area is "The Akron Rubber Worker Statue," which we will be sure to see during our short time together. Meanwhile, other plans are coming together which I hope to announce in our next newsletter.

Sincerely,

Allen Corrigan, President



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 30.

NAPP Leadership Team

- President: Fr. Allen Corrigan
1st VP: Fr. Edward Moran 2nd VP: Fr. Bill Menzel
Secretary: Fr. Alex Nevitt
Treasurer & Newsletter Editor: Tom Enwright
Regional Directors
East: Fr. Alex Nevitt Midwest: Fr. Gene Murray

Advertisement in The Priest Magazine aims to recruit new members for NAPP

The National Association of Priest Pilots has an advertisement in the November and December editions of The Priest Magazine, which is published by Our Sunday Visitor.

The ad (shown at right) was proposed by Fr. Edward Moran, NAPP's first vice president, in an effort to increase membership of priests and deacons, whether or not they are pilots. The ad was funded by a generous donor.

Reminder to pay your fiscal 2026 dues: Thanks to the 53 members who already have paid their dues for fiscal 2026 or beyond. If you haven't paid, please send your \$30 to remain a member in good standing. Additional donations are appreciated. Fiscal 2026 began July 1, 2025. See the dues form below.

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. For more information, 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.

EAA AirVenture dates for Oshkosh:

2026: July 20 - July 26 2027: July 26 - August 1
2028: July 24 - July 30 2029: July 23 - July 29

2026 NAPP Dues – U.S. \$30.00
Fiscal year began July 1, 2025

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

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Member category: Charter Regular Associate

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

In addition to the \$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.











The National Association of Priest Pilots Welcomes New Members

Since 1964, NAPP has supported aviation-related causes for nonprofit organizations that spread the Good News of the Gospel.

Regular membership is open to any Roman Catholic priest or deacon who holds (or has held) an aviation license. Associate membership is available to any person who is interested in the goals and activities of NAPP.



Dues are just \$30 per year. Learn more and join NAPP at priestpilots.org.

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had pitched suddenly up. Changing tanks, we lost 200 feet. When doing the en route checks, do *one thing at a time*, said Steve, looking up between every item to keep the attitude and check the altitude. Suddenly unsure of position? Look up and out. Don't get fixated on the map!

The Bible speaks about looking up, too. Luke 21: "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world... When these things begin to take place, stand up and *lift up your heads*, because your redemption is drawing near." (NIV)

Now, I would hope my flying isn't as horrifyingly apocalyptic as that, but I've tended to interpret those words as an encouragement to look beyond the trials and tribulations of this life, and this world, which can so often absorb us, draining us of hope; to set our life in a larger context; to try to see things from the perspective of eternity, which is our ultimate destiny.

Looking up is necessary to fly the plane. And the same is true in life. ... We look beyond the limits of this world, to the horizon of eternity, which is our ultimate aim.



Somehow, lifting up your head, or "holding your head high" in the pages of Scripture seems to be significant. Conversely, looking down is often a sign of a loss of faith, or perhaps vision.

Think of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:17): "[Jesus] asked them, 'What are you discussing together as you walk along?'" They stood still, their faces downcast." With the death of Jesus, their hope, their vision of the possibilities of the future seems to have evaporated.

Keeping your head up keeps your situational awareness in life and gives you some perspective.

Looking up is necessary to fly the plane. And the same is true in life. I hope I'm not stretching the analogy too far! We look beyond the limits of this world, to the horizon of eternity, which is our ultimate aim.

Looking down is important too — but don't get fixated on what is

close at hand, or the arrival might be a little more sudden than you'd hope!

From the NAPP archives ...

23 years ago | February 2002

The importance of knowing where we are

Editor's note: Here is a reprint of Fr. Everett Hermann's president's column from [December 2002](#).

Taking advantage of the classic Midwest winter solid overcast with a 2,000-foot ceiling, one local resident on the approach path to Milwaukee Mitchell Airport's 19R last year offered a neatly lettered rooftop sign, "Welcome to Cleveland!"

It reminds me of my brother John at his home airport, Charles City. Seeing a pilot exiting a C-152 carrying a logbook, John and the FBO recognized a student on a cross country. When the pilot entered the office, John nonchalantly said: "Well, I better get going. I'm headed over to Charles City and want to be



back before dark."

The student walked back outside, looking around for a sign to see where he REALLY was since he knew he was NOT at Charles City where he intended.

As pilots we know the importance of navigating and knowing where we are. As priests, much of our ministry is guiding people on their spiritual journey. The magi stopped and asked directions, something many males find difficult.

In this Christmas season, may you realize more fully the dignity and honor which is ours. God has chosen to share our human life. We have been called to preach that Good News to others, by our lives and in our words. Our ministry is to give directions, indeed to walk with others, as they journey to the Lord. What a grace from God is ours.

I ask you also to pray. We celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace. Yet there is no peace in Bethlehem. We celebrate the King of Kings, yet we tend to lord it over other countries. Pray that we might be converted to this feast — God and human becoming one.

Complacency can be a very dangerous thing

By Fr. Gene Murray

Sometimes it's the simple things and the ordinary things that, if overlooked, can lead to potential disaster.

Recently, I was on a flight to Fort Dodge, Iowa. It was a flight of 61 nautical miles to a place that I was familiar with because it was my home airport in the late 1980s and early '90s, and a route that I had flown many times so I didn't even do a rudimentary preview



Fr. Gene Murray is shown here with his RV-8 in July 2023.

of the flight on the Garmin. My thoughts were on my priest friend who was in declining health in a nursing home in Fort Dodge. It was on a Monday in November that I decided to hop in the RV and fly over to visit him. It was to be a pleasurable flight, the route was familiar, and it was a CAVU/VFR day with 10- to 15-knot winds out of the northwest at about 290 degrees. The direction of flight was 94 degrees and, in the RV, a flight of 20 to 25 minutes. It looked to be a very simple and easy flight.

The flight went smoothly until I got about five or 10 miles west of Fort Dodge. KFOD has two runways, 06/24 and 12/30. I

planned to fly a downwind and land on 30. This is a non-towered airport, but it has regional airline service and since 24 is the longer of the two runways, the airline pilots favor landing on 24 when the winds are westerly, if they have an option between 30 and 24.

As I approached at pattern altitude from the west, I couldn't for sure recall the CTAF frequency. Monitoring 122.8, I was unaware of the regional jet doing a

I was tempted to just fly the normal downwind and land on 30. However, since 30 intersects 24, I had a foreboding that I should confirm the CTAF frequency.

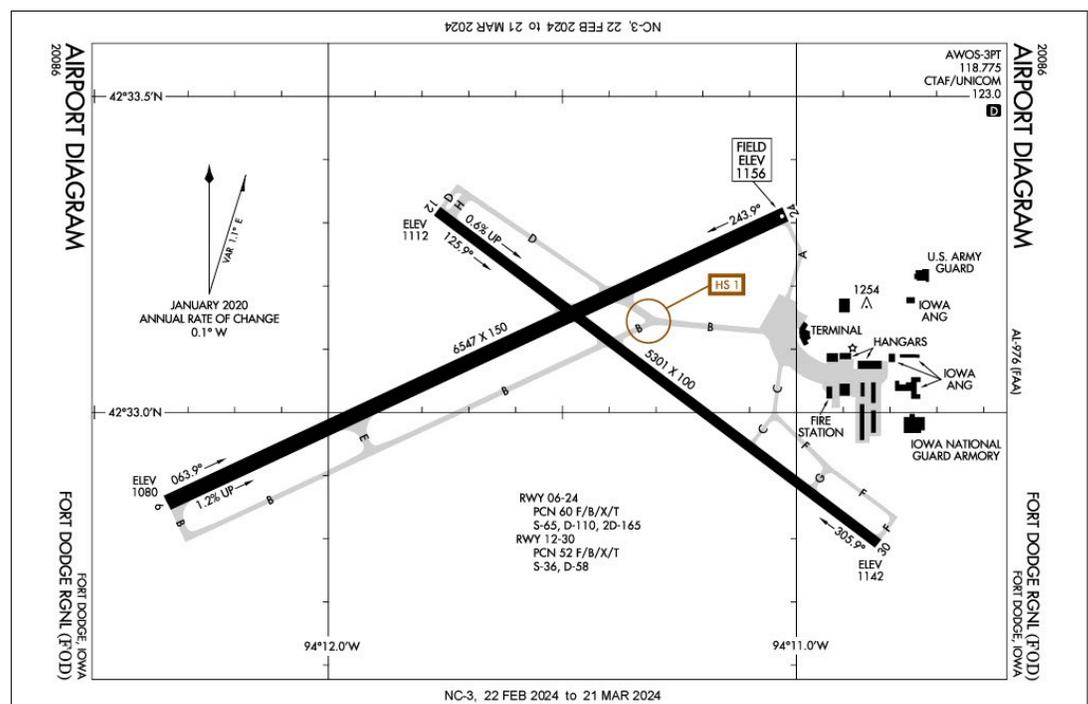
straight-in approach for runway 24, 10 miles east.

I was tempted to just fly the normal downwind and land on 30. However, since 30 intersects 24, I had a foreboding that I should confirm the CTAF frequency. Checking the map, I found that the CTAF frequency was not 122.8 but 123.0.

As soon as I tuned 123.0, I heard the unseen regional jet reporting in at 10 miles out for a straight-in on runway 24. By that time, I had entered the downwind for 30, so I reported my position on approach to 30. I continued to fly the pattern somewhat abbreviated and safely stopped well short of the 24 intersection. As a courtesy to the jet, I announced "clear of all runways" a few minutes before the jet touched down on 24.

While the landing was uneventful and safe, I was caught off guard, and the outcome could have been otherwise had I not retrieved the proper CTAF frequency.

I think the lesson I learned that day was not to take anything for granted even though you might be very familiar with the airport on a VFR day. Complacency can be a very dangerous thing, especially in the airport pattern.



Book review: Landings in America

Come along for this 7,000-mile adventure in a Piper Cub

By Tom Enwright

Landings in America, a flying memoir by Peter Egan, is a treat to read if you're looking for a good aviation book this winter.

It's a story about the transcontinental journey Peter and his wife Barbara accomplished in the summer of 1987, flying their 1945 J-3 Piper Cub low and slow in search of adventure and a broad taste of Americana.

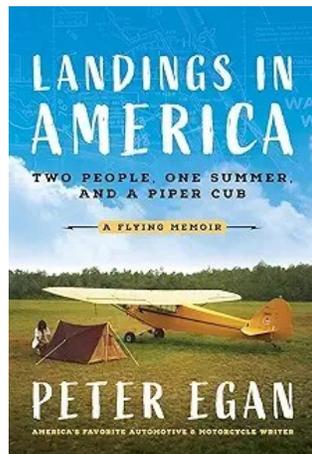
Their yellow Cub was a bare-bones airplane without an electrical system, so no radios for navigation, just a compass. Besides, these were the days before GPS. The one modern piece of equipment was a handheld VHF radio.

So, Peter and Barbara — both private pilots — navigated via highways and railroads by following sectional charts and a road atlas.

They saved up six weeks of vacation from their jobs (Peter as an automotive writer and Barb as a physical therapist), and set off from Southern California, aiming for Southern Florida, then up the Atlantic Coast, across Pennsylvania and Ohio before taking an extended tour of Wisconsin — then heading home through Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. From there, they retraced their outbound route through the mountains of New Mexico and Arizona, then back to California.

Each chapter leads with a handy map of the next phase of the 7,000-mile journey. The 65-horsepower engine produced a top speed of 70 mph — on a good day, as the author says.

Peter served in the Army during the Vietnam War and graduated with a journalism degree from the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 1971. *Cycle World* magazine hired him as a staff editor in 1980, and he and Barb moved to California. In 1983, he also started writing for *Road & Track* magazine. They moved back to Wisconsin in 1990.



Landings in America (published by Octane Press in 2025) is more than a travelogue. It's an intimate portrait of the people Peter and Barb encountered along the way.

Peter has a knack for blending memories that are relevant to the trip. He reminisces about family vacations and long-distance rides when he was doing test drives for the magazines. The anecdotes add a personal dimension to the basic story of getting from here to there in the Cub.

He also provides valuable historical context for their visits to places like Kitty Hawk, Gettysburg and Lock Haven, the town in Pennsylvania where the Cub was manufactured four decades earlier. The inside cover

has a map with dots showing all the places he and Barb visited. More than 60 color photos complement the words in this 40-chapter memoir, which is subtitled "Two People, One Summer, and a Piper Cub."

Throughout the book, one can appreciate how Peter and Barb longed to move away from the congestion of the Los Angeles area. What better way to see America and wonder, "Is this the place we should call home?"

There are plenty of moments of drama and suspense, like squeezing through a mountain pass and encountering a downdraft, and occasional warning signs of an engine malfunction. And then there was the sudden fog bank that drifted in as they departed on a sunny morning, necessitating a 180-degree turn back to the Eagle River airport in Wisconsin. Then there was the time in rural North Carolina when rowdy young people came looking for trouble while Peter and Barb

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were camping at a secluded grass airport.

It's amazing how many kind and helpful people they met on this trip. Unfortunately, there were others who were downright unfriendly.

One of the helpful souls was Rich Morey, who operates Morey Airplane Co. at the airport in Middleton, a suburb of Madison, Wisconsin. Rich helped guide the Cub into his large hangar to keep the yellow bird with fabric-covered wings safe from the threat of hail.

“The thing is, there’s really nothing quite like a Cub. ... It’s an airborne armchair that can lift you above the rooftops of your neighborhood or take you all the way across America. Low and slow. It’s the ideal scout plane for finding your natural home.”

— Peter Egan



During this extended visit to the state, Middleton was home base for local flights so Peter could take friends up for a ride.

One day trip was to Elroy, about 80 miles northwest of Middleton. Peter and a childhood friend flew up to their hometown, marveling at what they could recognize from the air and then landed for a tour of the town where so much had changed.

Throughout the book, one can appreciate how Peter and Barb longed to move away from the congestion of the Los Angeles area. What better way to see America and

wonder, “Is this the place we should call home?”

That dream came true when they moved back to rural Wisconsin in 1990, taking the Cub with them.

Other Cub owners will attest there is something special about this classic airplane. Peter says it so well in this excerpt from the concluding chapter:

The thing is, there’s really nothing quite like a Cub.

When you fly a more modern and powerful airplane, you tend to climb higher and cruise faster, simply because you can. The extra altitude and speed give you a broader perspective of the earth and a wider choice of



**Did you say Luckenbach, Texas?
Yes, the NAPP group was there in 2024**

NAPP members who attended the 2024 convention in Fredericksburg, Texas, will particularly appreciate chapters 11 and 12. Here’s an excerpt:

We were heading into the fabled Texas Hill Country now, where small trees dotted a variegated landscape of limestone bluffs and broad valleys with creeks winding through them. The area was the home of the Lyndon Johnson ranch and — more importantly — Luckenbach, Texas, a town made famous by Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson, who’d recorded a song named after the town.

... Luckenbach was a tiny village along a creek, essentially a post office, dance hall, country store, and bar with a couple of houses back in the trees. But Sunday afternoon outdoor jam sessions along the creek behind the bar had turned into a regular scene, and soon the place became a sort of Woodstock West, with big-name bands and large crowds turning up.

emergency landing spots.

But when a Cub eventually reaches one or two thousand feet, you’re perfectly happy to level off, fold open the door and window, and look around at the countryside. Your flight path follows that ideal zone between the cool remoteness of the sky and the living warmth of the ground. It’s an airborne armchair that can lift you above the rooftops of your neighborhood or take you all the way across America. Low and slow. It’s the ideal scout plane for finding your natural home.