



Volume 63

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No. 2



President's letter: Fr. Allen Corrigan

Thanks to all those who helped with convention

Dear Members,

The 2026 Annual Convention of the National Association of Priest Pilots is now a matter of record, and Tom Enwright has provided an excellent synopsis in this newsletter. I sincerely thank the dozens of persons who contributed to the success of the event, including numerous parishioners of Saint Victor Parish, in Richfield, Ohio. I greatly appreciated the assistance of Tom, who promptly responded to many of my requests for advice on numerous questions. I also had conversations with Gene Murray and Bill Menzel whose wisdom informed many of the plans for the week.

As Tom reports, Sean McCallister of the Akron and Summit County Convention and Visitors Bureau was instrumental in assuring the success of our gathering. He helped put us in contact with Captain Michael Dougherty, Chief Pilot of Airship Opera-

Goodyear airship tour is the big attraction at 2026 gathering

The 2026 convention of the National Association of Priest Pilots was held in the Akron, Ohio, area from September 14-17. Sixteen members attended in person and three joined the annual meeting via Zoom. Fr. Allen Corrigan hosted the convention with help from his parishioners at St. Victor's Church in Richfield.

Three aircraft (piloted by Fr. Phil Gibbs, Fr. John Schmitz and Mike Makelbust) arrived on Monday at Akron Fulton International Airport (KAKR). They had a total of eight members. Others drove from various places. The Comfort Inn & Suites Cuyahoga Falls-Akron was our convention hotel.

A rare tour of the Goodyear Airship Operations base at Wingfoot Lake, near Akron, was the highlight on Tuesday's schedule. Captain Michael Dougherty, chief pilot of the Goodyear airships, gave an extensive indoor presentation, followed by time to see N1A, one of Goodyear's three blimps, which was moored on the grounds. Members were invited to go inside the cabin to view the flight deck and check out the passenger seats.

After Wingfoot, we went to Akron's famous Luigi's Restaurant for lunch, followed by a special tour of the Akron History Center. A group dinner was held at Butcher & Sprout in Cuyahoga Falls.



Fr. John Schmitz and Fr. Christopher Hoffmann check out the flight deck of Wingfoot One.

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Left to right: Chief Pilot Michael Dougherty of Goodyear Airships; Fr. Gene Murray; Fr. Edward Moran; Jim Knights; George Gratton; Fr. Bill Menzel; Deacon Dennis Kudlak; Fr. Christopher Hoffmann; Fr. John Schmitz; Jim Stoltz; Fr. Jack Fitzgerald; Fr.

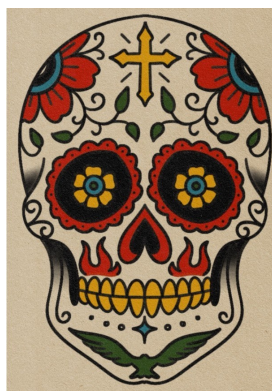
Allen Corrigan; Tom Enwright; Fr. Phil Gibbs; Fr. Bob Lacey; Mike Makelbust; Fr. Joe McCaffrey; Jessica Miladinovich, pilot for Goodyear Airships. (Photo by Sean McAllister)

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tions for the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, for the outstanding tour which served as the capstone of our visit.

As a resident of Summit County, I was proud to share the story of our historically important region. David Lieberth, also known as “Mr. Akron,” provided us with a rich narrative detailing the many contributions of Akron and Summit County to the industrial and cultural growth of the entire Midwest, including its role in aviation.

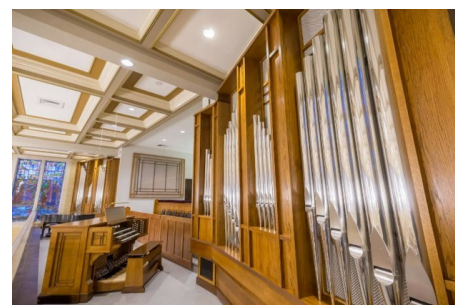
At one point during our conversations, we had a discussion of Ryan Hobson’s design of a sugar skull, which was particularly appropriate for a priest pilot. Since we are drawing near to *Día de los Muertos* which will be celebrated from October 31 to November 2, I’m including the design for which I commissioned Ryan “Francois” Hobson of Francois Tattoo in Amherst, Ohio.



The sugar skull is a celebration of all of those who have gone before us, including parents, grandparents, friends and others who have gone on to the other side

of life. It is a recognition of my respect for Mexican culture and friendship with many of that world. I asked Ryan to create a sugar skull that would include a cross for “priest,” and wings for “pilot.” Not only are both important aspects of my identity, the ink serves as a point of connection with other family members who have also benefited from Ryan’s artistry.

I was very happy to learn that our 2027 convention will be in Wichita, Kansas, where there are many interesting things to do and see. Jim Stoltz has already reported that several members of the Knights of Columbus in Wichita are looking forward to our visit next year. I learned that Wichita features several Catholic churches renowned for their historic and magnificent pipe organs, and I’m secretly wishing that our Commemorative Eucharist in 2027 might be at one of those places!



2020 Berghaus Organ, Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Wichita

Sincerely,
Allen Corrigan, President

NAPP 2026 Convention: Goodyear Airship Operations



Chief Pilot Michael Dougherty gives the history of Goodyear's commitment to airships



Fr. Phil Gibbs



ABOVE: Jim Knights and George Gratton with pilot Jessica Miladinovich. BELOW: Fr. Gene Murray chats with a crew member.



Convention photos provided by
Fr. Allen Corrigan, Jim Knights,
Jim Stoltz, Fr. Joe McCaffrey,
Sean McAllister and Tom Enwright

NAPP 2026 Convention: Hospitality, dining out, riding in a classic Willys Jeep



The hospitality room is the spot for catching up with what's new at home and in aviation. Left to right: Fr. John Schmitz, Fr. Christopher Hoffmann, Mike Makelbust and Fr. Gene Murray.



There were lots of conversations going on at one large table during our Tuesday dinner at Butcher & Sprout in downtown Cuyahoga Falls.



Pizza is a tradition for our Monday evening get-together. Left to right: Fr. Jack Fitzgerald, Jim Stoltz and Deacon Dennis Kudlak.



Tuesday's lunch was at Luigi's classic Italian restaurant in downtown Akron. The staff was very accommodating for our large group and the food was excellent. Left to right: Fr. Bill Menzel, Fr. Phil Gibbs and Mike Makelbust.

RIGHT: Fr. Joe McCaffrey (right) ventured from Pennsylvania in his restored 1964 Willys Jeep, which was built in Toledo, Ohio. Joining him was Jim Knights.

BELOW: Fr. Mac had a full load for an excursion to an aviation museum. In the front are Fr. Jack Fitzgerald and Fr. Mac. In back are Fr. Gene Murray, Mike Makelbust and Jim Knights.



The best hospitality team: Lori Macso, Fr. Allen Corrigan and Linda Corsi did a remarkable job of stocking the hospitality room with an assortment of beverages, snacks and treats.



NAPP 2026 Convention: Museums, banquet and Mass



One of the options for Wednesday was a trip to the MAPS Air Museum in North Canton. LEFT: Jim Knights is ready for a lesson. RIGHT: Douglas A-4 Skyhawk used by the Navy's Blue Angels team. The museum is operated by the Military Aviation Preservation Society.



The Akron History Center has 3,000 square feet of exhibits, including a model of the Goodyear Airdock, which was built in 1929.



Concelebrating the annual memorial Mass with Fr. Allen Corrigan were (left to right) Fr. Christopher Hoffmann, Fr. Bob Lacey, Fr. John Schmitz, Fr. Bill Menzel and Fr. Joe McCaffrey.



Ned Parks, president of the North East Ohio Pilots Association, was the keynote speaker for the Wednesday evening banquet. One mile of highway gets a traveler one mile, he said. But one mile of runway offers unlimited access to the national airspace system.





Samuel S. Hicks

Killed: November 19, 2008
Age: 33
Where: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Special Agent Hicks was executing a federal arrest warrant associated with the takedown of a violent drug-trafficking organization near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Upon entering the subject's house to make the arrest, Special Agent Hicks was shot and killed. The subject was subsequently taken into custody. The planned arrest was the culmination of a year-long investigation involving multiple federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.



FBI aircraft dedicated to FBI special agents who died in line of duty

I recently attended a reunion of FBI pilots held at the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio. While in Dayton, we were given a tour of one of the FBI's four new Pilatus PC-12 surveillance aircraft.

Three of them were dedicated to FBI special agents who died in the line of duty. Pilatus #3, pictured here, was dedicated to Special Agent Samuel Hicks of the Pittsburgh Field office. Sam, 33, was murdered by a drug suspect in November 2008, leaving behind a young wife and son. The aircraft's registration number, N247SH, represents the Bible verse 2 Timothy 4:7, "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the*

race, I have kept the faith."

The "SH" are Sam's initials. The plaque (shown above) is mounted in the aircraft.

The fourth Pilatus bears registration number N629AW and is dedicated to all past and present members of the FBI's air wing. "FBI" is represented by "629," each letter's position in the alphabet. "AW" stands for "Air Wing."

What I once did from 3,000 feet, this aircraft can do from 30,000 feet.

Jim Knights

NAPP associate member

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The annual meeting was Wednesday morning, and then members had free time to relax or check out areas of interest. Three flew to a small airport in Carrollton County for lunch. Others went to the MAPS Air Museum, which is operated by the Military Aviation Preservation Society, and one went to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton.

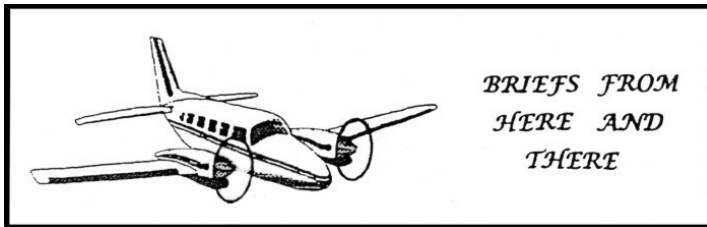
Later, we took a charter bus to St. Victor's for the annual memorial Mass as we prayed for the deceased members of NAPP. Mass was followed by a social and banquet, which was attended by staff and volunteers from the parish.

The keynote speaker was Ned Parks, president of the North East Ohio Pilots Association. He spoke about

the economic value of local airports, specifically about a coalition trying to prevent the closure of Burke Lakefront Airport in downtown Cleveland. He noted the importance of coordinating efforts with stakeholders to communicate the value of a local airport.

Fr. Allen offered appreciation to the volunteers and benefactors from his parish, along with Sean McCallister of the Akron Summit County Convention and Visitors Bureau. Their combined efforts created a spirit of generous hospitality and culminated in a successful convention.

At the annual meeting, Fr. Allen was re-elected to a second two-year term as president. Fr. Edward Moran was re-elected to a second term as first vice president. The 2027 convention will be September 13-16 in Wichita, Kansas.



Diaconate ordination: NAPP associate member Nick Chapman is scheduled to be ordained a deacon on October 1 at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. He is a seminarian at the Pontifical North American College, in formation for the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut. The ordination Mass is scheduled to be telecast on [EWTN](#) at 3 p.m. EDT (19:00 UTC).



Blessed Fulton Sheen: Two NAPP members, Fr. Christopher Hoffmann from the Diocese of Jefferson City and Fr. Nick Radloff from the Archdiocese of Dubuque, were among those attending the beatification Mass for Blessed Fulton Sheen in St. Louis on September 24. Fr. Christopher was pictured in a story in the New York Times.

9/11 special program: Fr. Joseph McCaffrey, a member of NAPP and longtime FBI chaplain in Pittsburgh, was interviewed for the EWTN program, "Hope After 9/11: Stories of Faith and Courage." The one-hour special program commemorated the 25th anniversary of the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001. Fr. Mac shared his memories of responding to the scene of the airliner that crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. He was there to comfort and pray with family members of the victims. (Fr. Mac was interviewed for an FBI video in 2021 to mark the 20th anniversary. [That video is available on YouTube.](#))



Reminder to pay your fiscal 2027 dues: Thanks to those members who already have paid their dues for fiscal 2027 or beyond. If you haven't paid, please send your \$30 to remain a member in good standing. Additional donations are appreciated. [Fiscal 2027 began July 1, 2026. See the form on Page 9.](#)

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.

Fr. Michael Murray dies at age 76

Fr. Michael J. Murray, a member of the National Association of Priest Pilots, died August 13 at the age of 76 after a five-year battle with cancer. He would have celebrated his 50th anniversary as a priest in September.



From 2006 until the time of his death, Fr. Murray was priest director of Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated August 20 at St. Jane Frances de Chantal Church in Bethesda, Maryland.

He studied at the Catholic University of America in Washington and the Pontifical Gregorian and Angelicum Universities in Rome before being ordained a priest for the archdiocese on September 18, 1976.

From 1986 until 1988, Fr. Murray served at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Fairbanks, Alaska. While in Alaska, he earned a pilot's license and continued to enjoy flying for many years. "You see the beauty of creation," he said about flying in a 2016 Catholic Standard interview when he was celebrating his 40th anniversary.

Associate member George Gratton shared this story about Fr. Mike:

"Fr. Mike Murray also had a hobby of following the lives of all the signers of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution. This was a reflection of his love of American history and profound patriotism. He and Fr. Peter Sweeney flew down to Savannah to follow up on Button Gwinnett. Irene and I were delighted to hear so much more of our Georgia founding father than we ever knew. He was a treasured visitor! ... Your Mooney was fast, but now Godspeed is with you. Thank you, Fr. Mike."

For more, see the [Catholic Standard's story](#) about Fr. Mike.

Two associate members join NAPP

Dan Norris | Bluffton, South Carolina

I'm a private pilot (with Instrument Rating). I can't recall how I first learned about the Catholic Aviation Association, but it was through CAA that I heard about NAPP and that I could join as an associate member. So, I thought now is a great time to support NAPP!

I'm currently a little over halfway through my diocese's formation program for the permanent diaconate, so one day I might be a deacon too.

My wife agreed to marry me a little over 11 years ago and between the two of us, we have three adult children scattered around the United States plus a year-old puppy that keeps us busy too. (He also enjoys flying with us.)

I work remotely for a large software development company and am looking forward to retiring in another several years when I can take up flying more often, I hope.

I appreciate the honor of joining NAPP and was thrilled to learn that such an organization exists! Locally, I've taken two of our priests for flights (to see their families — a relatively long drive, but manageable flight) and they loved it!

Hugh Hiner | Angola, Indiana

I'm just a tailwheel pilot fixing my 1946 Stinson, soon to be flying again. Married to my loving wife Deb Hiner. I was referred to you by the Catholic Aviation Association. My 1946 Stinson Voyager 108 is N97405. I just installed ADS-B in/out, hard-wired to a 796 Garmin, plus LED strobe/nav lights. It was quite a task in a fabric plane.

I was in the Navy from 1980 to 1986 and worked on F-14 Tomcats. I had two deployments on the America and the Enterprise, VF-114 stationed at Naval Air Station Miramar, California.

I have been in aviation all my life. My father was a World War II T-6 and PBY pilot. A lot of pilots landed in our fields when I was growing up, so it's kind of in my blood.

I became a Catholic in April 2025 at age 65. I drive truck to pay bills, and work with my brother, an Army Vietnam veteran, on small planes in our area.



Paul Murray's name is added to EAA Memorial Wall in Oshkosh

Fr. Gene Murray's late brother, Paul, was recognized on July 26 at the annual memorial service as part of EAA

AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Fr. Gene and Paul (a former associate member of NAPP) made many trips to AirVenture over the years.



"Of course, one of the highlights for the Murray family was the memorial service," Fr. Gene said. "There were 10 of us, including nephews and friends that gathered at the memorial that beautiful Sunday morning to honor Paul and to remember him. There were 18 new names placed on the wall that day, and so there were over a hundred people present for the service. It was beautifully and tastefully done and concluded with a 'Missing Man' flyover."

Fr. Gene shared this side note:

"(The late) [Fr. John MacGillivray](#) was quoted at some length at the beginning of the ceremony. Fr. John was the longtime chaplain of the EAA. He was a member of the NAPP and was the priest who offered Mass at 6 p.m. on Saturday evenings in the Theater in the Woods. Fr. John was, I believe, for a while, chancellor of the Diocese of Antigonish, Nova Scotia. My brother, Fr. Ed Murray, and I became friends with Fr. John and flew up to Nova Scotia after the NAPP Convention in Boston in 1989 to spend a few days with him. So, to hear him quoted at the memorial had special meaning for me."

[Paul's obituary on the EAA memorial website](#)
(submitted by Mike Murray)

[Fr. Gene shares the story of an emotional farewell to a special Cub \(October 2024\)](#)

[Super Cub 143 Tango is ready for a new chapter and owner \(by Fr. Gene Murray, February 2025\)](#)

[EAA's full video of the memorial ceremony](#)

[EAA video clip from the memorial ceremony.](#)

[Search for names on the Memorial Wall](#)

[Learn more about the EAA Memorial Wall](#)

Friend of NAPP inducted in Iowa Aviation Hall of Fame

Doug Rozendaal, who hosted a dinner for the NAPP convention in Mason City, Iowa, in July 2025, is a new member of the [Iowa Aviation Hall of Fame](#).

Doug was inducted on August 30, 2026, at the [Iowa Aviation Museum's Annual Fly-in/Drive-in](#) at Greenfield Airport, which is south-west of Des Moines.

Here are some excerpts from a story in the August edition of the members-only newsletter published by the museum:

Doug is known as both a phenomenal airshow pilot and talented instructor and has inspired many pilots. He has more than 10,000 hours spread across more than 250 different kinds of aircraft, was a FAA Designated Pilot Examiner for nearly 20 years, and is known for the care he takes in shaping prospective pilots.

Doug has a passion for preserving and exhibiting aviation history and has long been involved with the Commemorative Air Force, as a pilot, project leader and Chairman of the Board of Directors. In 2026, he



Doug Rozendaal was the featured speaker at the 2025 NAPP Convention in Mason City, Iowa.

was inducted into the CAF Hall of Fame. As part of his efforts to preserve the legacy of the planes and pilots of the past, Doug has flown many commemorative flights. A particular point of personal pride for him was flying "That's all...Brother," a C-47, back to Normandy on the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

Doug is well known in the aviation world for his passion for community, where he gives time, opportunity, and advice to any pilot who needs it. He is the host of the Third Thursday BBQ, held at his hangar at the Mason City Airport since 2009 and is considered "the premier monthly social aviation event in the Midwest."

Doug lives in Clear Lake, Iowa, with his wife, Kim. He owns and operates the PetroBlend Corporation, is a freelance aviation writer, and buys and sells a few airplanes to fund his aviation habit.

[Learn how to become a member of the Iowa Aviation Museum.](#)

Doug's EAA presentation: Commemorative Air Force pilot Doug Rozendaal recently presented about the art of flying historic warbirds and vintage airplanes. His talk was part of the EAA Aviation Museum Speaker Series in Oshkosh. [Click here to watch the presentation.](#)



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 December edition is November 30.

NAPP Leadership Team

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2027 NAPP Dues – U.S. \$30.00

Fiscal year began July 1, 2026

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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.

Donate

