

## TRUSTING IN JESUS PAUL PANKRATZ (PRESIDENT MN) FEATURE ARTICLE

A while back our president Tim Layne asked if I would write an introductory article about myself and my past flying experiences or memorable flight moments. It's not in my nature or upbringing to "blow my own horn" and I hope the following will not come across as boasting or bragging. Ok, so much for the disclaimer. Here goes. I joined the Civil Air Patrol in Green Bay Wisconsin when I was 13 years old. Our squadron had a beat up old silver grey J3 Cub in the army L4 configuration. One of the best days of my life was when I got my very first airplane ride ever... there in that Cub. The second best day was when I soloed that same Cub when I was 16 years old. I've since lost that first log book but I think I was 16 because I remember that I could fly solo but I didn't yet have my driver's license.

I got my Private after I turned 18 near the end of high school. I remember because I was able to give airplane rides to my high school friends. What a great way to meet chicks! I stayed current pretty much over the next 37 years even picking up first the instrument rating then the multi and commercial as time and money became available. I feel fortunate to have piloted 20 different makes and models of aircraft over that time. One of the most interesting was a "paraplane". It can best be described as a three wheeled go-cart suspended from a sport (rectangular) parachute. Think of a lawn chair fastened to a metal tee frame with one wheel out in front and one out behind you to either side and an engine mounted behind the seat. There were only two controls, the throttle for going up or down or level and your feet, either one which with leg extended would warp the chute creating drag which resulted in a turn in the draggy direction. What a hoot! There were three of us who answered the newspaper coupon add for a chance to solo the thing after a 20 minute ground instruction and \$25. After strapping you in the seat, starting the engine and holding up the chute to fill with air, the instructor stepped away and stayed on the ground and talked you through your first flight via a radio in the helmet you had on. After a short ground roll you found yourself dangling from the seat straps at a slight nose down attitude but climbing. The seat wiggled back and forth in yaw as you went upward. You were a pendulum at the bottom of some wires that connected your chair to the inflated canopy above you. It felt like you were sitting on an uneven stool going up on an elevator. The visibility was spectacular since there was no structure around you to block your view (or to hold on to for that matter). Perfect circles and figure 8's were easy to make at a altitude as the voice over the headset directed you. That voice lined you up for approach and told you when to gradually cut back on the throttle, more, more... not that much... ok now cut it... and you ended with a thump and a rollout on the grass. My heart was pounding. What great fun! Then I watched as the next of the remaining two folks strapped on and did the same thing. Then it hit me. I was apprehensive about my first flight in that thing but I was already a pilot and had some idea of what to expect. Now these next two had never flown in their lives... and they were embarking on their first flight ever of any kind... all by themselves!!! I grew a new appreciation for the courage of the common man and woman.

Speaking of parachutes and such, I took the opportunity to take parachute lessons a few years back. Now... riding in a powered chair beneath a sport canopy is one thing but jumping out of a perfectly good airplane with a chute stuffed in a back pack was another thing entirely. My goal was to get to the point where I could free fall and pull my own rip cord. The first two jumps were solo with the rip cord tethered to the aircraft so that the chute unfurled once you were 10 feet away from the plane.



**Alabama Chapter  
Tommy Lee-President  
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The South Alabama Chapter of Pilots for Christ recently flew its longest mission so far this year. To Cleveland, OH, on to Manassas, VA, then back to Monroeville, AL logging 1,614 nautical miles!

God continues to bless us as we fly those in need...clear weather, safe flights, and most importantly, the opportunity to minister and witness to the many people we serve through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Psalm 5:11 says, "But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you..." We love you, Lord and rejoice in You as we serve You through this ministry!"**

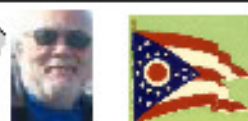


**Arriving home from their flights are (left to right) Jonathan Comalander, step-dad Larry McLain, mom Melissa Comalander McLain, Cathy Carpenter and her daughter Ashley Roberts. Jonathan needs open-heart surgery, and Ashley needs treatment for her low immunity system.**





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Greetings to all of our PCI family from the great state of Arkansas! It's hard to believe we are already into the 2nd quarter of 2012! Mission requests for the Arkansas chapter have been a little slow through the first quarter of the year having only flown 5 missions so far. However, that doesn't mean that God is not blessing and using APFC! We are busy preparing to serve the Lord in a big way for the rest of the year and beyond. We are currently "gearing up" for our 3rd annual Flights for Christ Fundraiser on May 19th at the Kirk Field in Paragould AR (PGR). This has typically been our best fundraiser of the year and we are excited to see what God will do this year. We expect to do plane rides for 250 to 300 people. One of our recent endeavors has been to design and publish a gospel tract with an aviation theme. We have succeeded in that effort and we are very pleased with the result. It is our plan to place a bible and a gospel tract in the hands of every passenger we transport, as well as place bibles and tracts airports and pass them out at our Flights for Christ event and other air show events where we participate. This tract could easily be modified to accommodate any chapter of PCI. If you are interested please contact me and I would be glad to share my file with you electronically. Two of our missions this year was to help get Christopher Felix from Pontiac MI to Memphis TN and then back home again. The pictures below are from the return trip. We had the privilege to take part in a "pony express" mission with the Michigan chapter to transport Christopher Felix from Memphis TN, where he had been scheduled for a followup visit to the St. Jude Children's Hospital the day before, back home to French Lick IN.



**Left to right, Christopher's Dad (Ramiro), Christopher, And Arkansas PFC pilot Tony Forehand.**



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Mission in support of REACH Ministries

By Tom Tracy, Pilot

Merry, Tom



& Terra

Our Lord has so richly blessed me in aviation as a pilot for Pilots for Christ. Being able to give back to and share Christian beliefs with those in need assists me in my faith as well as lending a helping hand to those in need. Our flight Saturday January 28, 2012 was no exception. I flew the short flight from Bremerton National Airport to Tacoma Narrows Airport at 9:15 am arriving just 10 minutes later to pick up 2 young ladies, Merry and Terra, both representing REACH Ministries.

Merry and Terra's mission was to make a Christian visit to a young man incarcerated by the State of Washington for drug offenses. The young man has no viable connections outside the prison walls; therefore, REACH Ministries is working with him to try and bring faith into his life and give him some direction and options prior to his release back into society.

Per standard practice, before starting the engine at Tacoma Narrows Airport we prayed for a successful flight, a successful mission as well as thanking our Lord for allowing Pilots for Christ to help serve our Lord's desires through REACH Ministries. We flew on an instrument flight plan from Tacoma Narrows Airport to Ritzville Airport where ground transportation to the prison was provided by a relative of Terra.

I waited at the airport from 11:00 am to 3:30 pm while the Merry and Terra proceeded with their ministry at the prison. The return flight started at 4:15 pm with prayer by the girls. The flight was in the clouds from east of Moses Lake to Kent (where we broke out of the clouds at 4,800 feet). We were vectored for the instrument landing system approach for runway 17 at Tacoma Narrows Airport thankful that our Lord had once again provided a safe and successful mission in His name. After safely delivering Merry and Terra at Tacoma Narrows Airport, I proceeded to home base at Bremerton National Airport.

Praise the Lord, for He is so very good!!