

SWIFT MUSEUM
FOUNDATION, INC.
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MCMINN CO. AIRPORT (KMMI)

2025 Holiday Schedule

Thanksgiving

Closed
November 27th & 28th

Christmas & New Year

Closed
December 24th
through
January 5th 2026

If your Swift group is planning an event this year please let us know so we can include it in the event schedule.

Swift Museum Foundation, Inc.



Volume LVII Issue #12

November 2025

Executive Director Report

By *Scott Anderson*

Generally, I like to use my column to report on activities that your Board, Committees, and I are doing to promote and grow the Swift Museum Foundation.

I don't often write anything about myself personally. This month is different... Those of you who know me are aware of my passion for Swifts and helicopters, that I have had since I was very young. I have been blessed with the opportunities to make both an important part of my life. I have owned several Swifts and made a career of rebuilding and maintaining Swifts for over 35 years. I was also fortunate enough to have a five-year experience of flying helicopters for a living, finishing that adventure flying offshore to oil platforms in the Gulf of Mexico. I actually have far more hours in helicopters than airplanes.

I then resumed working on Swifts here in Athens, thanks to Charlie Nelson making that possible. In 2017, when Pam wanted to retire, she convinced me to take her job and continue working on Swifts at the same time. I took that on and over time working on airplanes became less of my focus and running the day to day operations here became more of my focus.

Four years ago I acquired a small experimental helicopter to allow me to continue experiencing one of my passions. I thoroughly enjoyed being able to fly rotor-wing again. On November 4th, I took the aircraft for what was supposed to be one last flight to be sure it was operating with no problems as I had a gentleman from Missouri wanting to purchase it. I had a very enjoyable time looking at the beautiful fall colors then returned to the airport for landing. All indications were normal until I was about two feet from touchdown. Then the world went spinning out of control. Something in the tail rotor drive system failed and I could not control the aircraft. After a couple of revolutions, bouncing on and off the grass, the helicopter went up on it's nose while still spinning, fell back, then rolled on it's left side. I knew I was bleeding but nothing seemed to be broken so I was shutting off switches when a county employee came running over yelling for me to "get out now! That thing is on fire! ". I unlatched my belts, kicked out what was remaining of the windscreen and crawled out with nothing more than a cut to my head. Later I learned I also had some bruising and possibly a cracked rib or sternum. I was very lucky. If this had happened at a higher altitude, things may not have gone as well for me. The same couldn't be said for my helicopter as it was completely consumed by the fire. Hull insurance for an experimental helicopter is unobtainable so it was a substantial financial loss. My injuries were minor and I am already mostly recovered from those. That will sting for a while but I can make more money.... I've barely missed being at Swift performing my duties there and am glad to have something to do to keep my mind off the accident as much as possible. Emotional healing will take longer than the physical.

SMF Committees**Executive**

Paul Barnett
Paul Mercandetti
Sam Swift
Scott Anderson

Nominating

Paul Barnett
Pick Freeman
Scott Anderson

Audit

Paul Barnett
Paul Mercandetti
Sam Swift

Finance

Sam Swift
Paul Barnett
Scott Anderson

Fund Raising

Jim "Frog" Jones

Newsletter

Pamela Nunley
Scott Anderson

National Convention

Paul Mercandetti
Sandy Mercandetti
Scott Anderson

Parts

Steve Wilson
Scott Anderson
Steve Roth

Formation

Paul Mercandetti
Jim Roberts

Building

Roger Weber
Scott Anderson
Paul Barnett

IT/Web

Heather Day

Aging Aircraft

Steve Wilson
Dave Carpenter

I have had a great deal of support from my family, friends, (mostly Swift people) and co-workers since this event happened.

Sometimes things are out of your control and you hopefully live to deal with the consequences. God must have decided my work here on earth isn't done yet.

I decided to share this with you, the membership, to get the story straight instead of by hearsay that changes with every version.

My experience with the FAA was a positive one. They were kind and compassionate and quickly got their work done. I now must wait for the NTSB to inspect the aircraft before disposing of it. It was so completely destroyed, I'm not sure we'll be able to determine what exactly failed. I would really like to know the answer to that question.

A silver lining for me was that this happened to me and not my prospective buyer, had he made the purchase. He may not have been so fortunate and I would have had a far more difficult time dealing with that.

You think this sort of thing only happens to other people and will never happen to you. I'm still here and can tell you...it can happen to anyone. Flying has plentiful rewards but it does come with risks. I want to return to flying as soon as I have a way to.

Sometimes stuff happens and living in fear isn't living. Fly, enjoy and be safe. I want to wish everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving. Be sure to thank God for your blessings. I know that I surely will.

Swift National Committee Report

By Paul Mercandetti

I've been talking with Steve and Barb Wilson and they are already making hotel and meeting room arrangements for the **2026 Swift Fly-in and Convention** in Granbury Texas next May.

We realize this is a calendar change for us but it was a request of our hosts due to their availability. Our goal is to make it as painless as possible for anyone who would like to host in the future. Barb's report on current information pertaining to Swift National 2026 is on Page 3 of this newsletter. In the meantime, we want to wish you a very blessed holiday season.

Formation Committee Report

By Paul Mercandetti

No news from FAST is good news. As we near the end of the year get out there and fly a formation with some friends. Log it and fill out the Proficiency Report. You can download it off the flyfast.org website. Sometime between now and January 31, mail it in to Swift along with your \$15 Formation dues and late January to early February I will send out your new card. Be sure to follow the directions for the form so we don't have to play phone tag trying to fix it.

Performance is great this time of year so get out and have some fun. And don't get so fixated on fun that you forget the basics. Flaps are an option, Gear is mandatory. We've had more than our share of gear up landings. Very embarrassing.

Checkspeedgeardownlandingchecklist (all one word)

Swift National 2026

By **Barbara Wilson**

I'm excited to announce the Swift National Flyin will to be Texas in spring of 2026, but this time in Granbury GDJ. The dates are May 13-17, 2026. I have 50 rooms at the group rate of \$139/night reserved for us at the freshly remodeled Comfort Suites in Granbury, TX. We have exciting things planned with something for everyone. If you have ever been to the Granbury airport, we have a new N/S runway and the old runway is now a taxiway. New Airport diagrams should be available online when the FAA publishes the next update.

Enterprise Car Rental is available in Granbury. Go to Enterprise.com to book. If you create an Enterprise Plus account, they have prearranged pickup and drop off at the Granbury Airport.

To book your room at the hotel use the link below. It takes you directly to our group rate. You can select your arrival and departure dates as needed. If you call the Comfort Suites make sure you ask for the Swift group BSLFBF Rate.

<https://www.choicehotels.com/reservations/groups/TA87D5>

Comfort Suites Granbury

903 Harbor Lakes Dr
Granbury, TX 76048
(817) 579-5559

<https://www.choicehotels.com/reservations/groups/TA87D5>

If you have any questions you can contact the TX fly-in committee:

Barb Wilson 817-578-9878
Steve Wilson 817/578-9877
Pat Hockett 913-207-9457
Terry Gillaspie 936-662-8887

Welcome To Our New Members!

Wes Williams	Georgia
David Monroe	Florida
Ronald Redpath & Beverly Toulson	Florida
Tyler Rokosny	Florida
Didier Breuque	France
Donald & Gwen Burge	Florida
Don Elmore	Virginia
Jeff Taylor	New Jersey
Scott Watrous	Connecticut

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Vice Chairman

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Jim "Frog" Jones

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Historian

Jim Roberts

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jimswift46@comcast.net

**Founded —1968 by
Charles E. "Charlie" Nelson**

Swift Emergency Gear Extension Test

By Jim Roberts

The Swift is up on jacks, and for about the 25th time in so many years I'm starting to crank down the landing gear for an emergency extension check. The IA is watching from out front, along with two of my Swift friends, Paul Mercandetti and Danny Pitts. Everyone is in a fine mood on this sunny September afternoon. I begin cranking the handle clockwise, and note more resistance than usual.

Not to be deterred, I crank some more, waiting for the relief on the crank as the gear begins to unlock. "BANG!" Well that's not right. There's now zero resistance on the handle, and the reality sinks in. I forgot to lower the landing gear handle before starting the procedure. The pull-down cable has broken, and an uneventful annual inspection just went off the rails.

I feel like the biggest dummy in the world at having hurt the airplane, and completely embarrassed at having done it in front of my friends. Now there's the question, "How do we fix this, and when will I get home?"

Turns out the Swift parts department has a replacement cable in stock, and Paul mounts up in his Swift with Danny to fetch the part. It's only about an hour round-trip, so I've got that going for me. While he's gone, the mechanic and I go to work removing the old cable. This involves removing the cable pulleys in the gear wells and the pulleys in the cockpit at the crank down mechanism.

When Paul returns, we all three go to work to route the new cables into place around the pulleys, and re-install the pulleys. That done, it's a matter of properly rigging the cable tension with the turnbuckles in the gear well, testing the system, and putting the safety clips on the turn buckles. Trust me, it's not as easy as it sounds. I won't go into detail, except to say I am forever grateful to Paul and that IA.

After doing a final crank-down test, I was VERY careful to crank the handle counter-clockwise to return the mechanism to the full "UP" position, per the placard in the cockpit. A final check of the normal retraction and extension process went well, and that problem was solved.

What lessons can we learn from my mistake? First, I'm ALWAYS going to refer to the checklist when doing a test of the system, just as I would with an actual inflight problem. I think I might have been distracted chatting with my friends during the inspection, and strict checklist adherence could have prevented the mistake. I've made a checklist for the system test, which differs slightly from an actual inflight emergency extension:

Landing Gear Emergency Extension Test

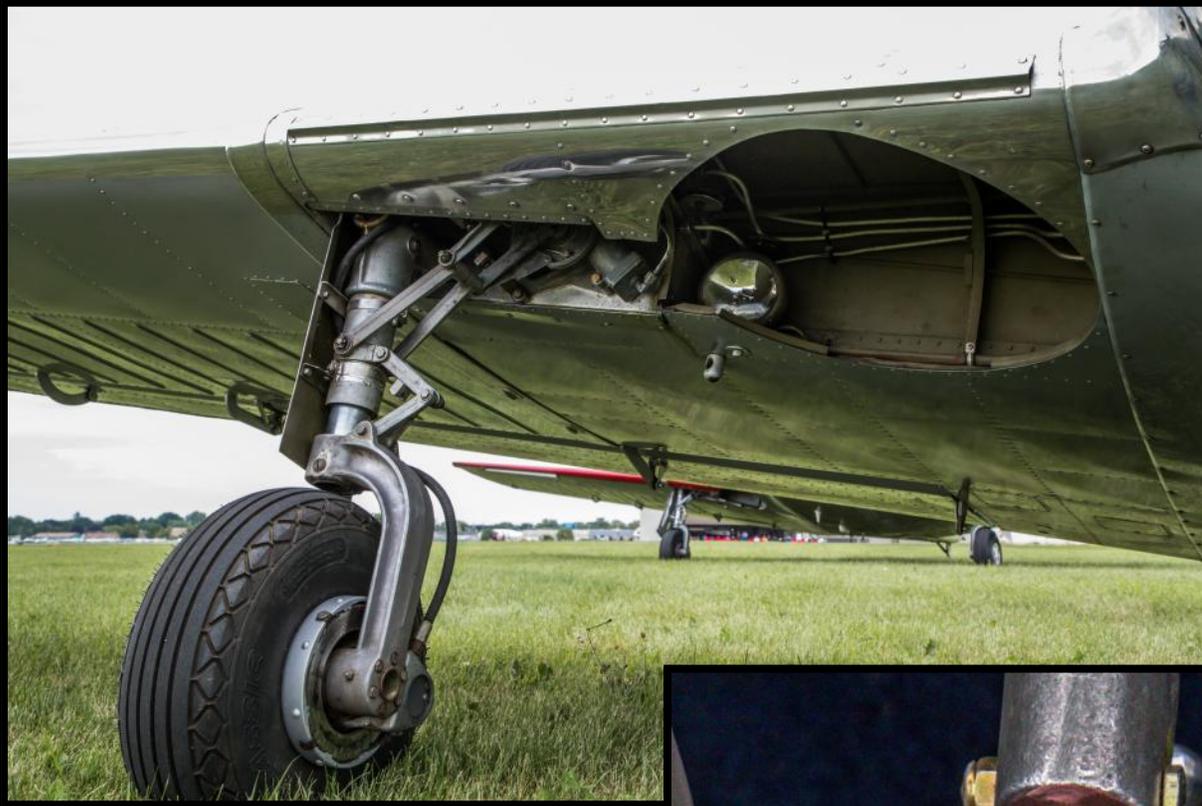
1. Following normal gear retraction, leave the gear handle UP and Master Switch ON
2. Pull the landing gear CB
3. Place the landing gear selector DOWN
4. Crank the landing gear down until the mechanism reaches its limit, (approximately 52 turns clockwise).
5. When gear is visually confirmed down, Push IN the Landing Gear CB
6. Check for a green light only.
7. Rewind the emergency extension cable (Counter-clockwise).

NOTE: After Exercising the emergency pull down system, the crank **MUST** be returned to the normal position before the next retraction cycle. The handle must be placed in the stowed position the **LAST TIME** it passes the slot freely.

8. Recycle the gear up, then down, checking for normal operation.

Rewinding the emergency extension cable (Step 7) is critical. I know some Swift owners who have forgotten this step, and ended up with a broken cable.

Other lessons learned? It's always good to have a "wingman" during the annual inspection. Paul proved invaluable getting the airplane back in the air. Extra hands make for lighter work, as long as we don't let ourselves get distracted. And I have to compliment the Swift parts department for having that cable in stock. It's the best money I've spent in a long time.



Swift landing gear.

When all else fails, read the placard!





***Congratulations Mark!
On your induction into the
EAA Vintage Aircraft Association
Hall of Fame.***

Mark Holliday & Sparky Barnes