



Skywriter



Monthly Newsletter of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club

September 1992

View From Above

by Paul Hemingson



The month of August gave us some of the best, and some of the worst weather for UL flying in Alberta. A little of everything....sun, rain, hail, wind, snow and fog.

The Red Deer International Airshow (August 1-2) was a hoot. Although scaled down from previous years, the crowds were still in the 50,000+ range. I suspect the state of the economy is partially responsible, making it more difficult to find sponsors for some attractions.

The club had ten aircraft participate. We started out with more, but some never left the ground. Bob Campbell did not receive some aircraft fabric soon enough to permit replacement, and Bev Befus' new S-6 kit did not arrive on schedule. Some club members drove in. I met a lot of our long distance members.....intrepid UL pilots like Tom Thomas of Eckville, Armand Rivard and Patrick Rudiger of Leduc. Morgan Anderson of Rocky Mountain House had his partially built Rans Coyote on static display. Our Club fly-by went smoothly thanks to the conscientious efforts of Stu, Don, Ron, Todd, Gord and Bob.

A big thanks to Gord Tebutt for the ground support and setting up our information tent. Liz Tebutt got our booth organized, gave out complimentary hats to the cadet "guards",.....this was a small price to pay for these kids to stand out in the hot sun all day. Liz and Linda also came up with lots of good ideas for next year. Ideas like matching Club T-shirts for all and improvements to our display. Many of the pilots brought along their spouses: Arlene, Tina,

Eleanor, Louise and Linda provided ground support and moral support. They made sure the pilots acted responsibly and shared in the enthusiasm and atmosphere.

The return flight on Sunday evening was washed out due to Cumulus Horribillus clouds, and we decided to spend the night in Red Deer. We planned on leaving early the next morning, and did, but could not fly all the way home due to fog and LOW ceilings. How low you ask? Well lets just say the tops of grain elevators were not visible. I want to reflect on what happened for a while before commenting or writing a story on it....Hell, the ingredients are all there for a novel. I might title it "Spatial Attraction". One thing I know now is that my mind works in mysterious ways. It is incredible how a seemingly sane pilot who knows better can push on in weather that is not improving, nor staying the same, BUT GETTING WORSE ! I now beleive that one thing that seperates experienced pilots from injured ones is the extent of their luck. If you're fortunate enough to survive some things, you get experience that will ensure that you never experience the experience again. In other words, I now wonder if experienced pilots have not made their share of stupid mistakes, were fortunate enough to survive, and learned by them.

After meeting with the FSS and getting the weather I made the decision to GO! The weather at the time was a 1200 foot ceiling at Red Deer, with Calgary reporting 700 broken and the prognosis for improvement throughout the day. I tried to leave around 730 am, but was annoyed with some of the

other airshow performers who were also getting away then to points south of the border, but they all seemed to want to file their flight plans by air and this takes a lot of time on the tower frequency. I would have thought these professionals would have ground-filed.

I finally got away, but not far. Only as far as Olds, Alberta where I had to do a 180 and retrace my aerial steps..... carefully. It is hard to read a map, fly the plane and find an outlanding place at the same time. I eyeballed several fields but the amount of surface water and hail from the night before made them unattractive. I finally found a strip used by the RAF gliding school and not open for powered aircraft, except for emergencies. I reckoned this was one. I put into it, and was welcomed by Captain Barry Young and his cadets, who offered to hanger my plane until the weather improved and I could retrieve it. Enough said for now, I want to mule this one over in my mind before deciding what makes me so stubborn. I attended the Lethbridge Airshow (August 15) and although this is only the second year for this airshow, it has grown in size....both world class performers and world class sized crowds. The highlights for me included Joanne Osterud in her Biplane aerobatic routine who finished with an inverted ribbon cut 15 feet off the deck. Not an easy task, when the temperature was hovering around 33 degrees Celsius and the thermals bubbling. Michael Wiggin in his Cyclone is a dynamic act that generates enthusiasm as he talks through his act and expresses his feelings. It amazes me how these performers can do aerobatics (ie. loops, lomceveks, and other low level litanies) in a 1000 foot box safely. It makes the hair on my neck bristle just watching. The show also contained a large military contingent (Helicopters, Harriers, Warthogs and the Snowbirds).

(continued on page 2)

(View - continued from page 1)

TURBULENCE AHEAD ??

After turbulence, one can usually expect some clear air. I received my August issue of the Canadian Ultralight News (the yellow newspaper) and was encouraged by the "TC Ultralight Update" article written by Lindsay Cadenhead. I expect the Captain will soon be announcing some good news over the intercom.

Lindsay is responsible for bringing order from chaos by fine-tuning the 'final' version of the new UL policy. To his credit he has re-opened the door to revisit some issues not apparent in the original draft and sought the involvement of UL pilots across Canada in the decision making process. A good pilot knows when to make a 'go-around' when things don't look just right and Captain Cadenhead is doing an admirable job in piloting us through the maze of UL smoke. His report answers many of the questions for UL pilots.

The new UL policy is a good one in my mind, and in the minds of UL pilots in western Canada it reflects the new reality of UL flight. We have asked for additional privileges and with this goes increased accountability on our part. Ultralight flying is evolving, and we must begin to accept the new reality of version 1.6 of

the policy. The old policy is no longer adequate for UL flying as we know it today, and as it will exist in the future. I met with Lindsay on August 15 when he was out West for the Lethbridge airshow and we discussed some of the outstanding concerns of TC and the UL pilots of western Canada. Anyone can find fault and criticize, but what is needed is a positive approach to finding solutions. The current policy will almost certainly be modified to address some outstanding concerns and problems.

For example, Lindsay tells me he is now considering withdrawing the interim policy's 20% weight exemption in favour of a maximum takeoff weight. This is great news. All parties involved admit that there are some outstanding issues, but a vehicle now exists to resolve these problems and it is encouraging that the Technical Committee is gearing up to address these issues. Stay tuned for more amendments to the policy by following Lindsay's articles in the Canadian Ultralight News. To quote Lindsay, "the Ultralight Technical Committee is mandated to ensure that UL aeroplanes are BUILT, MAINTAINED, and OPERATED TO AN ADEQUATE LEVEL OF SAFETY". Its pretty tough to argue with that mission statement. I encourage those UL pilots of western Canada to phone Lindsay in Ottawa at

613-990-1036 for forthright answers. (Fax 613-990-6215). It has been a turbulent year for UL regulations, but I am beginning to see the end of the storm and will embrace the new regulations on January 1, 1993. There always seems to be a few ripples and light chop when we decide to set it down, but nothing we cannot safely navigate through. Return your seats to the upright position, and prepare for a landing. It might not be perfect, but it will be much better than what we have.






Dealers for
Macair Merlin
RANS Aircraft
T.E.A.M. mini-MAX

Build and fly this popular kit for only \$6500.00

- Flight Training
- Ground School
- Rentals
- Intro Flights \$20.
- Gift Certificates

Located at the Indus-Winter Aire-Park



EXECUTIVE

President
Paul Hemmingson 931-2363

Vice-President
Gord Keegan 238-0177

Treasurer
Gord Tebbutt 288-0545

Secretary
Bernie Kespe 255-7419

Director
Stu Simpson 240-3019

Skywriter Editor
Bob Kirkby 569-9541

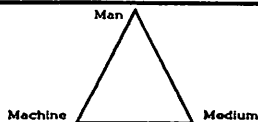
Skywriter is the official publication of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club and is published 12 times per year. Opinions expressed by our writers are not necessarily those of the club. Articles and letters to the editor are very welcome from any readers. Address correspondence to: Bob Kirkby, RR 7, Calgary, AB T2P 2G7

Meetings of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club are held the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30pm at

R.C.A.F. Association
110 - 7220 Fisher Street S.E.
Calgary, Alberta

Safety Corner

by Paul Hemingson



Where's That Instrument?

I recently changed the panel in my aircraft. I figured every airplane should have some wood in it. After seeing some photos of vintage aircraft with wood panels I just knew I had to have one myself. I guess I was smitten with a kind of reverence for wood and the pilots and planes of years past. My reverence for wood was renewed in the last year which saw me cut some spruce trees off my property and construct a nice little guest cabin. Years ago all aircraft were made with this Mother Natures' natural composite material.

I went down to the local hardware store and found an odd sized piece of Oak Veneer plywood remnant on sale that I stained with a light walnut oil based stain. I decided to change out my metal panel, and redesigned the new wooden panel to accommodate the instruments I already had, along with a little extra room for future panel additions. My first task was to decide on the shape and size of the panel. It had to be big enough to hold all my current instruments and leave some left over space for Xmas presents. Another thing to consider was the depth to hold the instruments, and the position of lord mounts to isolate it from vibration. At times it seemed a formidable problem, but I was pleasantly surprised after sleeping on the design for a few days. As is common in so many successful designs, the old adage of "form follows function" came to the forefront of my mind. In the end the solution suggested itself. The finished panel is vibration free, easily removed for repairs/inspection, and of course.....beautiful with the wood grain, giving warmth and security.

I had to spend a few hours looking for my old high school compass and Trig instruments, but once I found them I was a human dynamo. First I cut out paper circles and labelled them Altimeter, Airspeed, Tach, etc and shifted them around on the oak plywood trying to decide on their location. Another consideration along the way was the routing of wires and tubes. For one thing I wanted the compass to be as far away as possible from anything electrical. Another consideration was getting the airspeed front and center for easy and quick viewing requiring only a slight drop of

my eyes from horizon to panel and back again.

Everything went reasonably well in the process. After a few false starts I finally cut the holes slightly undersize with my jigsaw and then filed them out to final size for a nice fit around the instruments. The only tricky instrument is the altimeter with its distinctive bulge at the seven o'clock position where the reset knob protrudes. After carefully marking the screw attachment holes it began to take shape and come to life. Shortly after, there was nothing left to do, but flight test the panel for vibration.

This is where I got my first surprise. After so much careful work, I was mainly concerned with vibration, since nothing else had really changed....or had it?? I finished the mounting job about 8:30 one summer evening and since there was only a little daylight left I rushed my preflight, eager to test the panel for vibration. I know that no phase of flight should be rushed, but I was eager to get airborne. So I did. I just took off. On the takeoff roll, I noticed that the tach was not working, but I was already half way down my 900 foot strip and committed. About 50 feet up I noticed the airspeed was also not working. Nothing to do now but fly the plane by feel. Strange how we become accustomed to the comforting presence of our instruments but any good pilot should be able to sense his speed by control pressures....we all do this unconsciously. So I just climbed to altitude, got the feel of the plane and eventually returned for a landing and fixed the problem.

In my haste to get airborne I had failed to connect these two vital instruments. When I did hook them up, I got a second surprise. I had become so familiar with the previous location of the instruments in the old panel that I had to consciously scan the new panel to find and digest the information from their new location. This explained why I had not noticed their non-functioning nature on the initial test flight.

I guess the message is that if you change your panel, or are transitioning to a new machine it is probably good advice to just sit in the cockpit for a while and become familiar with your new environment. Mentally

go through the takeoff and landing sequences making the appropriate vroom noises and conjuring up which instrument you want to see and what you expect to see.

Coming Events

Sept 6 - Sundre Flying Club's annual breakfast. 7am to 11am. Call Larry Nielson for info - 638-3168.

Sept 6 - St. Paul fly-in and Rodeo breakfast. St. Paul, AB. Call Serge Larochelle for info - 645-4034.

Sept 7 - Stettler Flying Club's annual fly-in breakfast. 7am to noon. Call Bob Airey for info 742-6657.

Sept 12-13 - Wetaskiwin Flying Club annual fly-in and Grand Opening of the Reynolds-Alberta Museum and new home of Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame. Call Brett for info - 352-1883.

Classified

Ivo Prop - updated 3-blade, ground adjustable, 60", composite blades. New - \$300. OBO. Paul Hemingson 931-2363.

Rotax 503 - single carb, excellent condition. \$1200. OBO. Paul Hemingson 931-2363.

Rotax 532 - dual carb, 75 hours. \$1500. Bob Kirkby 569-9541

Chinook 2 place - with floats, Rotax 447, needs some work, \$4000.00. Terry Spokes 533-3748.

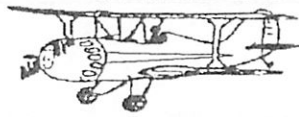
FireStar - Rotax 377, instruments, enclosed trailer, \$7000.00. Jim Creasser 226-0180.

Beaver RX550 - Rotax 503 dual carb, 60 hrs, ASI, Tach, CHT, ALT, Ballistic chute, \$9000. Barry Ochitwa, W 530-4031, H 236-9392.

Classified ads are free to CUFC members. Call Bob Kirkby, 569-9541 to place your ad.

One Pilot's Opinion

by Bob Kirkby



Red Deer Airshow

This was the first year I flew up to the Red Deer Air Show and I had a great time. I flew up on Friday evening with Stu, Todd, Don and Ron and aside from dodging thunder cells it was a fun flight. The weather was good for the two days (at least during the day) and the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club presented an excellent display, with 10 aircraft and flew a well coordinated fly-by with six aircraft.

Although the show was smaller and less extravagant than in previous years, I believe the ultralight contingent had a great time as a group, which included many spouses or close friends. After a great weekend, the ride home turned out to be somewhat less that fun.

The forecast on Sunday called for thunderstorms in the Calgary area in the late afternoon and evening. Gord Keegan decided to leave at noon to avoid this and made it home safely, although I understand he got tossed about somewhat. The rest of us decided to stay overnight and leave Monday morning. There was considerable debate over dinner about the morning departure time. Some wanted to get away at 7am whilst others want to get a little more sleep. In the end we split into two groups, the early risers and the snoozers. I was in the snoozer group along with Don and Ron.

Scud Running

We arrived at the Red Deer Airport at 9am. Our wives waited until we rolled our airplanes out of the hangar then optimistically sped off down the highway. Being slightly less optimistic, I went over to Flight Services to check on the weather. I was told the local ceiling was 1000-1500 and the ceiling was broken and considerably better in Calgary. In between, the conditions were unknown but suspected to improve towards Calgary.

After a brief conference we agreed to proceed home. We started our engines and requested clearance to taxi out. We were told to taxi and hold short of runway 16. We would hold short of 16 for 15 to 20 minutes waiting for incoming traffic to clear. It struck me very odd that there was so much incoming traffic, but the radio chatter was normal and none of the incoming pilots made any comments.

Finally we were cleared for takeoff. I led with Don second and Ron third onto the runway. We took off and headed straight south for Innisfail. It wasn't long before I discovered that the ceiling was only about 800 feet. Although the ceiling was low, visibility was good in all directions, so trusting that things would improve as we ventured south, we carried on.

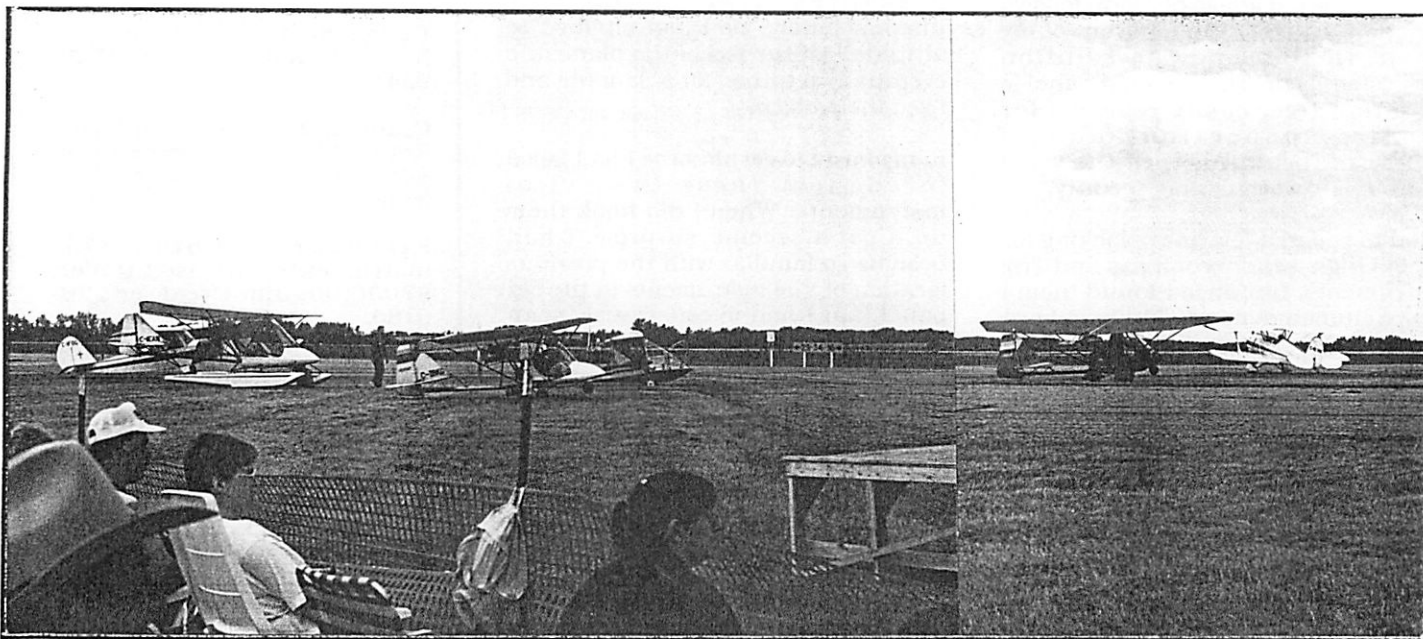
As we passed Penhold I spotted a Pitts heading north about a mile off my left

wingtip. Then I heard him announce to Red Deer Radio his intention to land. I was sure I had seen the same Pitts take off ahead of us about 25 minutes earlier. Now why was he coming back? In retrospect I should have called and asked him for a condition report, but I felt a bit out of place chatting it up with a show pilot on the radio (I now know that was foolish).

Because Don had a receive-only radio, I was concerned with maintaining visual contact with him but at the same time maintaining a safe distance. Don made that easy by staying at my altitude and keeping a close eye on me at the same time. I didn't want to fly circles so I kept the throttle back to maintain 60 mph which resulted in a nose high attitude, giving me poor forward visibility.

Ron, on the other hand, insisted on flying at the cloud base which meant he would disappear in a puffy white cloud every now and then. Over the radio, I asked him to come down to our altitude so I could keep him in sight and received a brisk "Don't worry about me, you fellas just keep going". It seems these R.C.M.P. types tend to be an independent lot.

We agreed to follow the road just in case visibility deteriorated and navigation became an issue. As it turned out this was a good idea. About another 15 minutes into the flight the ceiling started to drop. When it got down below 500 feet I asked the crew if they wanted to make a precautionary landing at the Olds- Didsbury airport. Ron proclaimed that he wasn't having much fun and would like to land and Don dipped his "yes" wing. We were *(continued on page 5)*



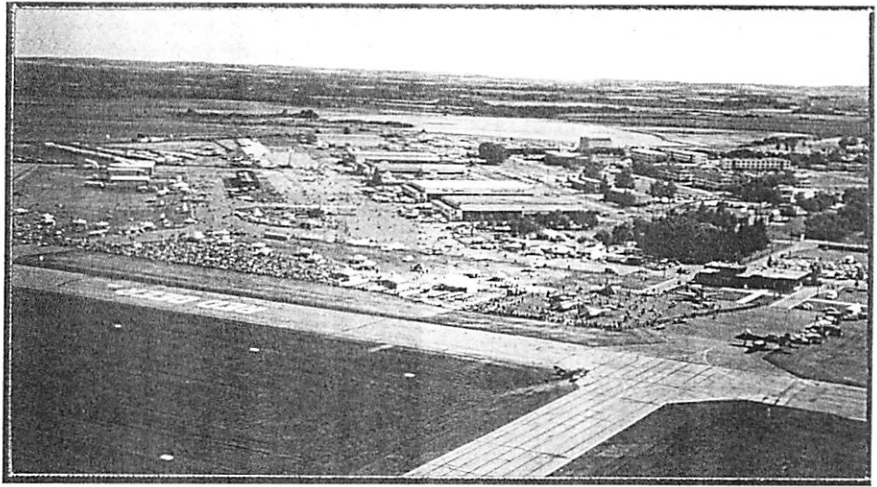
The Ultralight demonstration team preparing to taxi out.

(Opinion - continued from page 4)

approaching the Olds turnoff from Highway 2 and the ceiling was still dropping so we followed directly over the road to Olds then turned south to follow Highway 2A to the airport. Don and I were maintaining visual contact, me on the left of the road and he on the right side. Ron was somewhere behind us out of visual contact.

At Olds the ceiling suddenly dropped to about 100 feet. Just after turning to follow 2A we found ourselves flying at 50 feet at times. At this point I pulled out my map. Flying over the Highway, the only obstacle I could think of was a high tension power line. I couldn't find any on the map between Olds and the Olds-Didsbury airport, which made me feel a little better. Next I tried to estimate the distance from Olds to the airport so I would know when I should spot it. Overshooting the airport in these conditions would be like missing the arrester cable on a carrier landing.

Doing all of this map reading, however, meant that I had my head in the cockpit an inordinate amount of time. I kept shooting glances at Don on my right, then the road to make sure I was no more than ten feet off to the side, then to the left and right of my cowling, then back to map reading for a couple of seconds, then start the cycle all over again. Over and over again I repeated the scan. About two minutes out of Olds, as I glanced to the left of my cowling, a huge antenna mast loomed up no more than a hundred feet ahead and about twenty feet left of the road. The top disappeared into the clouds like a needle in a pin cushion. Simultaneously, I snapped the stick right and looked at Don to check for clearance. Don had already seen the obstacle and had banked right to give me room. The Renegade instantly through itself into a 45 degree bank as I looked back over the left side to see the guy wires passing menacingly under my lower wing. Too close for comfort I thought to myself as I righted my aeroplane and re-aligned with



Show centre. Taken by Todd during fly-by.

the road.

As I was issuing warnings to Ron on the radio about the antenna and telling him to keep to the right of the highway, the ceiling suddenly opened up to well over 1000 ft with over 3 miles visibility. I couldn't believe it. There it was, half a mile west of the highway, exactly where it was supposed to be. The Olds-Didsbury airport awaited our arrival.

As we landed I called off our progress to Ron but he was still over Olds and having trouble identifying Highway 2A. I didn't realize it at the time, but Paul had landed at the RCAF glider strip north of Olds about an hour before. For want of something to do he was listening to the radio on the Olds-Didsbury frequency and heard our exchanges. He then contacted Ron and talked him safely into the glider strip which was about the same distance north of Olds as we were south.

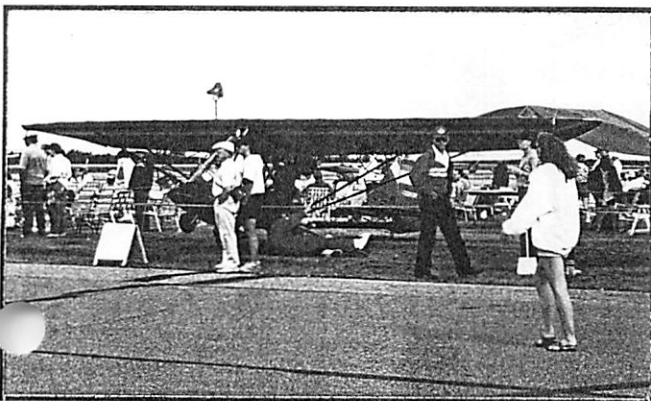
Don and I borrowed a vehicle and managed to find Ron and Paul. We then decided we had had enough Scud Running for one day and called Calgary for a rescue vehicle to be sent out for us. Louise was kind enough to

drive back and pick us up. We secured our aircraft until our return the next day when we had a clear flight home.

The trip home on that Monday morning is an experience never to be repeated. I learned some valuable lessons that day. Here's a sample:

1. When FSS gives you the weather at "A" and "B", don't assume there is a linear gradient between A and B. If there are no reports, assume the worst.
2. If the conditions are worse than reported after you take off, assume they are going to deteriorate.
3. Don't be afraid to ask for a piprep if you are aware of a pilot just arriving from the direction you are headed.
4. Turn around when things start to deteriorate.

I can understand why VFR over the top is not a good practice. The ceiling can change dramatically in a matter of minutes if the weather conditions are right. I've been there, and it ain't no picnic. Meanwhile, stay out of the soup.



Gord's Beaver.



Larry's Merlin and Ron's Crusader.

ULCTC Update

by Bob Kirkby

In the August Skywriter I listed the names of the individuals making up the Ultralight Central Technical Committee. I had gathered this information from the Canadian Ultralight News and the RAA Magazine, but it turns out I misinterpreted the actual structure of the committee. In his column in the August issue of Canadian Ultralight News, Lindsay Cadenhead clarified the structure and he enlightened me further in a telephone conversation just recently. Here is the way things are as of August 26, 1992 (straight from the horse's mouth, so to speak).

The initial committee, as listed in the August Skywriter, was not an ULCTC, but simply a temporary working committee to get things off the ground. This committee has since been disbanded, and as of this date does not exist. One of the things that this initial committee did was to appoint a "management" trio which would carry on with the coordination and further organization of the entire process. This management trio is made up of Ted Slack, Howard Bexon and Lindsay Cadenhead. Their job is to see that the necessary funding is put in place and that the ULCTC is appointed and becomes functional as soon as this funding materializes. Lindsay indicated that the ULCTC cannot be initiated until the funding is in place, which could take a few months yet.

The management trio will

also be responsible for organizing various working groups as required in the future, to develop and implement future regulations or amendments. The ULCTC itself will eventually consist of 11 people who will be chosen based on their ability to apply technical and operational expertise to resolving future ultralight aviation issues. The ULCTC will be acting as an advisory committee to both Transport Canada and the Ultralight Aviation Industry.

Regarding the issue of new, 2-seat, non-AULA ultralights after January 1, 1993, Lindsay indicated that he will be looking seriously at a way to accommodate them. However, he cannot proceed with any such changes to the regulations until after the ULCTC has been formed. He must have the backing of this committee to insure that all the relevant technical issues have been properly addressed. If the funding for the ULCTC is delayed, making it impossible to resolve this issue prior to January 1, 1993, there is a possibility of a temporary exemption, for maybe 6 months, to allow time for

the process to take place. This is only a possibility though, no guarantees.

I hope this clarifies the situation a little. Lindsay Cadenhead has gone out of his way to try to keep us informed and collect our input. I am quite impressed by the process that is being established. I would like to thank Lindsay for his open-mindedness and cooperation.

Abbotsford Expedition Cancelled

The planned flight to Abbotsford by several club members had to be scrubbed. A number of people had to drop out and the remainder of the group decided to no-go. It may be planned again for next year.

The planning process did result in an excellent trip to Banff and a trip to Radium for some of the group.



Stu's Beaver, Todd's float equipped Beaver and Paul's Hiperlite.

Don's Chinook and Bob's Renegade.

Around The Patch

by Stu Simpson



Of Dragonflies and Thunder

A swarm of tiny shadows danced in unison as they raced northward across the sun-charred fields east of Calgary. The airplanes were ultralights, six of them in all, no two the same. The pilots called themselves Dragonflies, the unofficial call sign of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club. Their destination was the Red Deer International Airshow.

We had just rendezvoused in the air near Chestermere Lake. What a terrific array of planes we were. Todd led the formation in his float equipped 2-seat Beaver. Rounding out the Indus contingent was Ron in his Crusader, Larry in his Merlin and Don in his Chinook. Bob Kirkby in his pristine Renegade and me in my single Beaver, completed the formation after launching from Kirkby's strip.

Our only worry was a pair of thunderstorms ahead of us. The larger storm, to the northwest, was a huge bugger. To the northeast was another, smaller cell that was growing quickly. There was a slot between them that looked just right for our flight to sneak through.

As we passed abeam Airdrie, I suggested to Todd that we divert to the west and see if we could sneak around the west side of the larger cell. So the

formation swung to a westerly heading for about five minutes. It took that long for me to realize that I had goofed. The storm was much larger than it appeared and there was no way we were going to get around behind it.

We all swung north again. As we tried to out-run the western cell's trajectory, we also had to stay clear of the other storm's growing intensity. We were seeing lightning at regular intervals and the air was getting rougher. A massive swath of hail pounded the earth below the big storm. Frankly, it just didn't look like much fun.

We took about five minutes of rain as we finally threaded the needle and dodged Thor's hammer.

The air on the other side of the cells was cool and calm. We droned on, chattering back and forth on the radio, and just enjoying flying together on a beautiful evening.

Soon, Todd made the call for the Dragonflies to switch to Red Deer's frequency and we got back to business. He arranged a straight-in approach for us on runway 34. A few of us had to make 360's to properly space ourselves in line for landing. But one after the other we touched down and cleared the active. I imagine that for about ten minutes, Red Deer, with six planes on final, and more

lining up, was one of the most congested airports in the province. We taxied to our designated hangar and shut down for the night.

Walking toward the terminal, we couldn't help but notice a pair of rather unique jets sitting on the ramp. They were twin-engined, twin-tailed, and painted blue and gold. These were the MIG-29's of the Ukrainian Air Force.

We had a golden opportunity before us. Since there were no cordons around the airplanes, it seemed only natural that we examine them close up - which we did.

As I peered into the wheel wells and exhaust nozzles, as I examined the wing roots and tail surfaces, I marvelled at the incredibly sturdy structure of the MIG-29. And I couldn't help but think how five years ago it would have been impossible for MIGs and Dragonflies to be standing there on the ramp beside each other. As I said, it was a golden opportunity.

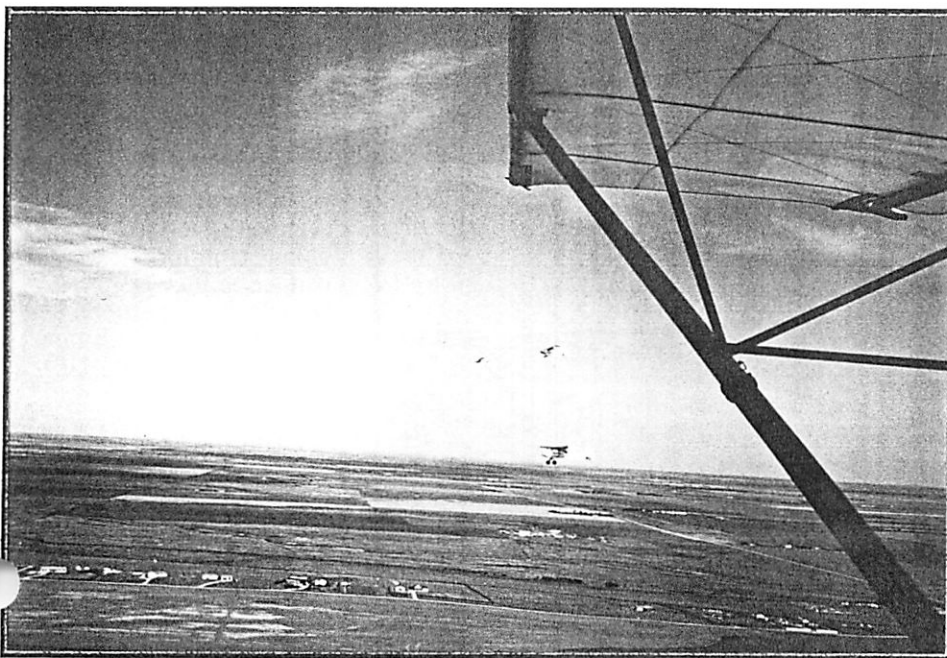
We spent the rest of the evening getting settled in at the Red Deer Lodge and chowing down.

We were beginning to worry about another ultralight jock who was supposed to be joining us, but hadn't shown up yet. Gord had planned to fly his 2-seat Beaver up the west side of Calgary, re-fuel at Olds-Didsbury, and fly on to Red Deer. We eventually learned that he had landed in the middle of a vicious hail storm at Olds-Didsbury. If it was the same storm we had narrowly avoided, he was lucky to have landed at all. Gord had to spend the night on the couch in the Olds-Didsbury airport pilot lounge. But he arrived in Red Deer in time for breakfast the next morning.

The next two days were a mix of frenzied activity in the mornings, and pleasant sun-soaking in the afternoons. We had practiced a routine for this year's show, based on a takeoff from the taxi-way, as we'd done in past years. But the airshow officials wouldn't allow a taxi-way takeoff and we had to move out takeoff to the main runway. This meant our planes would be further from the crowd and harder to see. It was no big deal, just a little disappointing.

Our routine, basically a large S-shaped pattern with a pitch-out to downwind, then landing, went off quite well both days. Many thanks go to Bob in his Renegade for an excellent job of leading the flight.

(continued on page 8)



The flight to Red Deer on Friday evening.

(Around - continued from page 7)

We spent the remaining time on the ground exploring the airshow, hangar flying with other pilots, and answering questions about our airplanes.

I was amazed this year at the large amount of interest generated by the flock of ultralights. We spoke with a lot of conventional pilots who were disgruntled at the high cost of flying Spam-cans. Most figured our machines were definitely the way to fly. Todd's airplane was especially popular and he was kept busy all weekend with inquiries about it. It was the same for Bob.

Ultralights made an awesome showing at Red Deer, with a total of 10 different types on display. Paul Hemingson, president of the C.U.F.C., deserves much of the credit for this tour de force, as does Gord Tebutt. Hemingson arranged everything so the guys were able to participate in the show. Tebutt was really busy hawking club hats and brochures. Both he and Paul did a beautiful PR job for our club and for UL flying.

After we'd flown our show on Sunday, I noticed a large amount of gear oil dipping from my gear box. Before I could say "Holy Rotax, Batman!", Bob and Don had ripped the gear box off, located the problem, and found a way to fix it. Things were back to normal in less than an hour. Thanks guys.

Sunday also turned out to be a day of frustrating indecision. Gord had come up

with the idea of leaving at noon. It looked like there were going to be major thunderstorms developing by late afternoon. Gord, understandably gun-shy, wanted to bug out before the weather closed us in. Some guys thought it was a good idea, and some guys didn't mind the idea of another night in Red Deer.

In the end, Gord was the only one who did leave at noon. He had a safe flight home, and as later events would show, he guessed right.

The rest of us stayed another night. The forecast called for T-storms all night and clear skies in the morning.

The forecast was wrong.

The next morning dawned cold and grey. The ceiling was about 1200ft overcast and the temperature had dropped to about 15 degrees. Reports in Calgary indicated a higher ceiling, with a more broken cloud layer. In other words, it appeared the weather was better as you went south.

We'd decided to depart in two groups; guys who wanted to go earlier, and guys who didn't. Todd, Larry and I would be the early group. Tony would join us in an S-10, which he'd flown up on Friday for static display. Bob, Don, Paul and Ron would follow a bit later. It looked like it would be pretty routine.

The first group blasted off at about 7:00 am and headed for home. As soon

as we were in the air, we saw an entirely different weather picture from what we'd been told. All we could see was a low, broken cloud deck. It appeared to bottom out around 500' AGL, so we thought we could ace it. After all, we could fly low and slow enough to easily avoid any tall obstacles with plenty of time to spare.

We began following the power lines that would lead us straight to home. We stayed over the lines as much as we could. But the cloud was getting lower and thicker with every mile.

We dropped our altitude a bit to keep the ground in sight. Soon it became rather obvious that we couldn't follow this path much longer. The ceiling ahead was lower still. We had to make a deviation and soon.

We'd lost sight of Tony by this time. His faster S-10 just couldn't fly slowly enough to stay with us. His plane was NORDO and he was out there somewhere in the soup. But we could do nothing for him.

We heard a familiar voice on the radio. It was Paul, who had apparently left Red Deer on his own.

Now, he sounded worried and a bit confused. He'd run into the same low cloud layer we were in and he'd decided to find a place to set down. But he was several miles west of us and also on his own.

Then I saw a hole, a way to slip through and make it home. Off to my 11 o'clock ran a small creek. It coursed through a valley in a southeasterly direction. For reasons I couldn't fathom, the ceiling and visibility were better above this valley and to the east of it.

I called Todd and suggested we follow the valley. I figured it would put us somewhere near Beiseker. From there, it's an easy jaunt to home. Our little formation turned southeast.

We'd only gone a couple of miles when Todd called Paul on the radio. Paul sounded even more worried this time and his transmissions were getting weaker. It felt like we were listening to the last, desperate calls of someone lost in the (continued on page 9)



Stu and Todd inspect the Ukrainian Air Force MIG29.

(Around - continued from page 8)

Bermuda Triangle. Paul's last transmission left me with chills.

"I'm very low now. I'm circling around, looking for someplace to land. I just hope I don't run into a tower or something."

That was the last we heard of him. We tried for a few minutes more to contact him, but height and distance were against us. We simply flew on, hoping for his safety.

The valley that looked so promising had turned ugly. We were down to 300' off the deck and still dodging thick cloud. A few miles west of Torrington, the valley turned south again and we thought that was a good sign. Trouble was, the valley quickly disappeared into flat prairie again.

We discussed the option of trying for the Three Hills airport. But a quick look at the eastern sky quelled that notion.

We were totally winging it at this point, flying strictly by the seat of our pants. We had maybe 150' of altitude, half a mile visibility, and only dirt roads for land marks.

Then it started to rain. Just a light drizzle at first. But it quickly graduated to a steady down pour, during which my radio died. That's when I saw the lightning. We had flown into the middle of an embedded thunderstorm.

Again and again the lightning flashed, just barely enough to see. It seemed to smirk at us, to gloat as if we were it's prey, unwittingly drawn into the storm's hidden tentacles.

There was nothing we could do but fight it out and hope to win. The wind was throwing us around so badly that it would have been disastrous to even attempt an emergency landing. I had lowered my RPM's to try and save my wooden prop from rain damage. I found out later that Todd nearly stalled as he tried to slow also.

We were lower than 100' and I could hardly see. My windscreen was a kaleidoscope of water, my helmet visor little better. This was definitely high adventure.

We scraped through the storm only to find the same bleak horizon ahead of us. I had a rough idea we were north of the town of Linden, but no way of knowing for sure. I figured we would simply continue south and eventually cross the Trans-Canada highway.

I checked my wingmen and was delighted to find they were still welded in a tight echelon off my right wing. We had to fly that way to keep each other in sight in such dismal visibility.

A few tense moments later I spotted something that looked familiar. I motioned for Todd and Larry to follow and started a gentle turn to the east.

Just barely visible, was the town of

Acme. I knew then we were only a few miles from Beiseker. We followed the highway between those towns like it was the last trail out of hell.

We finally landed at Beiseker at about 9:30 am and spent the next three hours there. We were able to phone my wife Tina and learn that the other group was trying to get to Olds-Didsbury. Tina was doing an excellent job of coordinating information on the ground. She had received disjointed information that two planes had landed at Olds-Didsbury and the pilots were out looking for another one. Exactly what that meant we weren't sure. We also learned that Paul had landed safely at an Air Cadet glider strip north of Olds.

Two more thunderstorms passed over Beiseker during our stay there. We decided to get out before a third one arrived.

We blasted off at about 12:30 pm and headed southwest for a hole in the overcast. About five miles from Beiseker we popped out into good weather. The ceiling was back up to 2000' and the visibility was 15 miles or better.

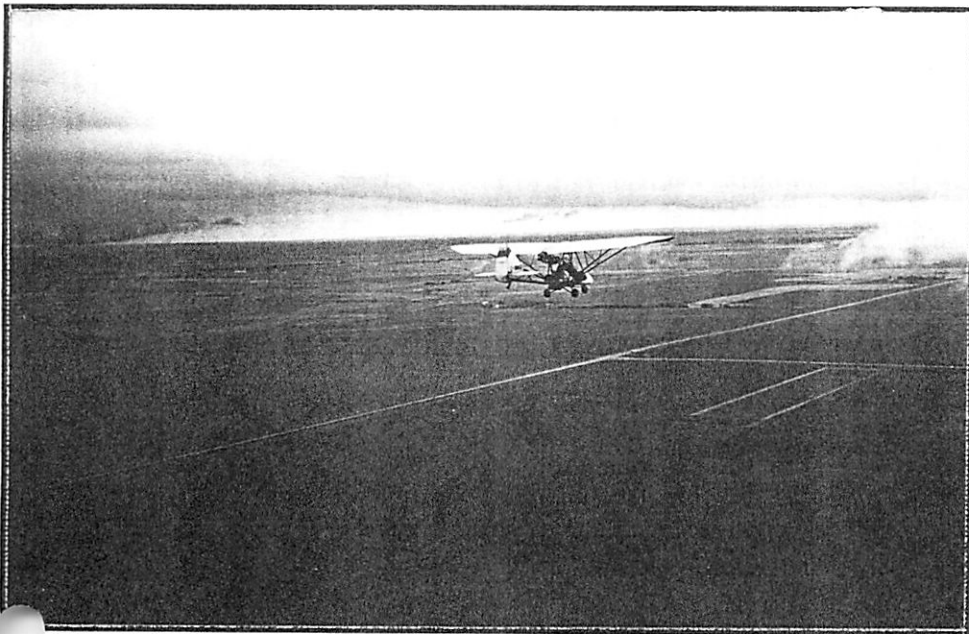
As we droned toward home, Todd called my attention to the ground. A Spam-can, it looked like a Cherokee or similar, had made a forced landing in a grain field directly below us. The crash was obviously recent as the RCMP were still there, along with a few other vehicles. We had to wonder what the Piper driver thought as he watched three ultralights buzz by.

Thirty minutes later I peeled away from the formation to land at Kirkby's, where I hangar my plane. Todd and Larry went on to a safe landing at Indus.

We learned that Tony had landed at Springbank and the other Dragonflies had made it safely to ground in the Olds area, though at two separate airports, and not without their own hair raising story.

I think I know how barnstormers in the 20's and 30's felt. It's a great feeling to have conquered such overwhelming odds in an airplane and to have true tales of adventure to recount.

The Dragonflies will go on to other flights, other destinations and other adventures. But that weekend, with it's MIGs, it's thunderstorms, it's danger, and it's friendship will always be remembered.



One of the clearer spots on the way home.

The following is our current mailing list. Please find your name and let us know if any of your information needs updating. If you have an aeroplane and it is not listed, please let us know. Contact Bernie Kespe with updates (see his address below).

ALLORE, BRAD, 18822 FORD ROAD, PITT MEADOWS, BC V3Y 1W1, (604)465-0947
 ANDERSON, MORGAN, #204-5119-53 AVENUE, ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE, AB TOM 1T3, (403)845-7973, RANS S-6
 BAINES, ROGER, 17, 10030 OAKMOOR WAY S.W., CALGARY, AB T2V 4S8, (403)281-0956
 BEFUS, BEV, 620 MARLBOROUGH WAY N.E., CALGARY, AB T2A 2V9, (403)235-1843
 BOBIER, KEN, 2120 CROCUS ROAD N.W., CALGARY, AB T2L 0Z8, (403)282-3607
 BOWIE, HOWARD, BOX 156 STN J, CALGARY, AB T2A 4X5, (403)240-1140
 BRADBURY, JIM, CHECKLIST PILOT SUPPLIES, BOX 21, SITE 16, RR 2, CALGARY, AB T2P 2G5, (403)247-6200
 BURKHOLDER, DALE, 87 ERIN GROVE CLOSE S.E., CALGARY, AB T2B 2T4, (403)235-0749, FISHER FP101 C-IAPP(LOST)
 BURNS, GORDON, 42 WEDGEWOOD DRIVE S.W., CALGARY, AB T3C 3G5, (403)240-9290
 CADENHEAD, LINDSAY, TRANSPORT CANADA BUILDING, PLACE DcVILLE, OTTAWA, ON K1A-0N8, (613)990-1036
 CALGARY, CARES, BOX 25, 575 PALMER ROAD N.E., CALGARY, AB T2E-7G4, (403)250-1410
 CAMPBELL, R., BOX 184, STRATHMORE, AN TOJ 3HO, (403)934-3657, HYPERLITE C-ITWO
 CLARK, WILLIAM, RR 8, CALGARY, AB T2J T2P, (403)931-3143
 CLEMENTS, DAVID, BOX 8, SITE 6, RR 1, OKOTOKS, AB TOL 1T0, (403)938-4623, 5151 MUSTANG
 CLEMENTS, GERRY, 1928 27th AVENUE S.W., CALGARY, AB T2T 1H3, (403)245-2552
 COLLINS, JOHN, 4008 14 AVENUE S.E., CALGARY, AB T2A 6P8, (403)273-4250
 CREASSER, JIM, RR #2, BALZAC, AB TOM OEO, (403)226-0180, (NO-NAME) C-IBSA
 D'ANTONI, EDWARD, 32 VARBAY PLACE N.W., CALGARY, AB T3A 0C8, (403)247-6621
 DALEY, RICHARD, 2201 135 LYNNVIEW ROAD S.E., CALGARY, AB T2C-2G6, (403)236-2795
 DIGNEB, BRUCE, 65 - 21163 LOUGHEED HIGHWAY, MAPLE RIDGE, BC V2X 2R4, (604)467-6760, RENEGADE
 DUPUIS, MIKE, WESTPOINT SCHOOL OF AVIATION, BOX 4, SITE 16 RR2, CALGARY, AB T2P-2G5, (403)288-0228
 EASTHAM, KEN, 2811 CEDARRIDGE DR. S.W., CALGARY, AB T2W 2B2, (403)281-2641, BEAVER RX550
 EVERETT, LARRY, SITE 36, BOX 12, RR 2, CALGARY, AB T2P 2G5, (403)288-1120, HIPERLITE
 GRASSL, PETE, 320 3rd AVENUE BOX 348, IRRICANA, AB TOM 1B0, (403)935-4225
 GREENSLADE, JOHN, BOX 325, DIDSBURY, AB TOM 0W0, (403)335-3289
 HAAKENSON, MEL, BOX 66, BERWYN, AB TOH-OEO, \$100 DONATION IN 1991
 HAMMOND, BRIAN, BOX 1918, PINCHER CREEK, AB TOK 1W0, (403)627-4994
 HANDY, GERALD, 2812 COCHRANE ROAD N.W., CALGARY, AB, (403)289-5220, OFFICE:284-1033 GYRO PILOT
 HEINZ, DALE, BOX 325, DIDSBURY, AB TOM 0W0, (403)335-3289, MIRAGE C-IACM
 HEMINGSON, PAUL, RR #1, PRIDDIS, AB TOL 1W0, (403)931-2363, HIPERLITE C-IEXP
 JACQUES, MITCH, 133 POPE AVENUE, COCHRANE, AB TOL 0W1, (403)932-3768
 KANE, BOB, RR 4, PONOKA, AB TOC-2H0, (403)783-2055, CHALLENGER
 KEEGAN, GORDON, 188 WOODBROOK WAY S.W., CALGARY, AB T2W 4J2, (403)238-0177, BEAVER C-IDYB
 KESPE, BERNIE, 6 SPOKANE ST S.W., CALGARY, AB T2W 0M5, (403)255-7419, BEAVER C-IBOL
 KIRKBY, BOB, RR7, CALGARY, AB T2P 2G7, (403)569-9541, RENEGADE C-IBWV
 KIRKMAN, CHRIS, 5507 TEMPLE RD N.E., CALGARY, AB T1Y 3B1, (403)280-1843, MINI MAX
 LEE, EDWARD, R.R.1 BOX 53, COCHRANE, AB TOL 0W0, (403)637-3729
 LOUGHEED, SEAN, P.O. BOX 2835, BANFF, AB TOL 0C0, (403)762-8042
 MACDONALD, GERRY, 47 BEACONSFIELD WAY N.W., CALGARY, AB T3K 1W9, (403)275-6880
 MACKELL, RAYMOND, 6104 PENWORTH ROAD S.E., CALGARY, AB T2A 4K1, (403)235-5866
 MAIER, FRED, 421 - 36 AVENUE N.E., CALGARY, AB T2E 6R1, (403)274-8964
 MAWDSLEY, H.R. (BUZZ), BOX 8, RIONDEL, BC V0B 2B0, GYROCOPTER
 MCARTHUR, TODD, 405, 1810 - 11 AVENUE S.W., CALGARY, AB T3C 0N6, (903)229-1367, BEAVER RX-550 C-IEAN
 MELLISH, MARK, BOX 1846, ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE, AB TOM 1T0, (403)845-5515, (W-845-7474)
 MERCIER, RICK, 7103 TEMPLE DRIVE N.E., CALGARY, AB T2Y 4Z4, (403)293-3907, RENEGADE CFB ROM
 MIDWINTER, STEWART, 444 23 AVENUE N.W., CALGARY, AB T2M 1S4, (403)230-7769
 MILLER, STEVEN, P.O. BOX 1957, STRATHMORE, AB TOT 3H0, (403)934-2909
 MILLER, W.L., 131 CARTER CRESCENT, SASKATOON, SA S7L 7K3, POTENTIAL MEMBER
 MOTYER, LARRY, 4 PENWORTH CRESCENT S.E., CALGARY, AB T2A 4C6, (403)273-7023
 MUHLBERGER, HELMUT, R.R. 2, COCHRANE, AB TOL 0W0, (403)932-2601
 MYSLAWCHUK, IVAN, BOX 42074, 9737 McLEOD TRAIL, CALGARY, AB T2B 2E2, (403)533-3972, LAZ C-IVAN, ULSTR C-ICRY
 NANTAIS, JIM, 36 BOV VILLAGE CR. N.W., CALGARY, AB T3B 4X2, (403)247-6201, LAZAIR (X2) C-ICSV,C-ICTF
 NETIK, DANNY, P.O. BOX 2278 STATION "M", CALGARY, AB T2P 2M6, (403)640-2019
 OCHITWA, BARRY, 173 RIVERGLEN PARK S.E., CALGARY, AB T2C 3Z1, (403)236-9392, BEAVER RX550 (OFFICE 530-4031)
 OLESEN, KI, 2108 MURPHY ROAD N.E., CALGARY, AB T2E-5X5, (403)277-6700, WORK NO. 268-4020
 PIKE, ALAN, TORONTO AEROSPORT INC., P.O. BOX 174, BALDWIN, ON L0E 1A0, (416)722-5364, BEAVER C-IEWG
 PONTOIS, PAUL, 1890 RANG DU CHUTES, STE URSULE, PQ J0K 3M0, (819)228-3159, SKYPUP C-IHNR
 RESVICK, BARRY, 436 - 13 STREET N.W., CALGARY, AB T2N 1Z2, (403)283-3581
 RICHTER, DON, 515 - 5 STREET N.E., CALGARY, AB T2E 3W5, (403)266-4823
 RICKARDS, GEOFFREY, 52 TEMPLEHILL CRES. N.E., CALGARY, AB T1Y 4C5, (403)285-2728
 RIVARD, ARMAND, RR #2, LEDUC, AB T9E 2X2, (403)986-1335, CHINOOK
 ROGERS, DON, 4808 GLAMORGAN WAY S.W., CALGARY, AB T9E 5C2, (403)242-6549, LAZAIR (X2) C-IATU,C-IANG
 ROTH, JAIMIE, TRANSPORT CANADA, 200 - 680 PALMER ROAD N.E., CALGARY, AB T2E-7G4, (403)292-5227
 RUDIGER, PATRICK, BOX 55, SITE 9, RR 2, LEDUC, AB T9E 2X2, (403)986-3159, CHINOOK C-ICWY
 SIMPSON, STU, 37 ARBOR CRESCENT S.E., CALGARY, AB T2J 0X6, (403)255-6998
 SIRUCEK, RUSSELL, BOX 8 SITE 37 R.R.4, CALGARY, AB T2M 4L4, (403)239-3550
 SONDERGAARD, R.E., 5157 NESBITT RD N.W., CALGARY, AB T2K 2N7, (403)289-9662, CRUSADER C-IFOG
 STARK, WILFRIED, 844 LAKE ONTARIO DRIVE S.E., CALGARY, AB T2J 3K1, (403)271-7793, OFFICE 269-2656
 STEFANICH, RAY, 233, SITE 4 RR7, CALGARY, AB T2P 2G7, (403)936-5965
 STEHR, TONY, 114-1602 11TH AVENUE S.W., CALGARY, AB T3C 0M2, (403)244-0280
 TANNER, CASEY, BOX 156, STATION J., CALGARY, AB T2A 4X5, (403)948-3914
 TEBBUTT, GORD, 2 VARDELL PL N.W., CALGARY, AB T3A 0B8, (403)288-0545, BEAVER C-IDRS
 THEN, BERNIE, 1300 FALCONRIDGE DR NE, CALGARY, AB T3J-1H9, (403)280-3955, CHINOOK 2-PLACE
 THEN, RON, 5916 - 28 AVENUE N.E., CALGARY, AB T1Y 2E6, (403)285-8484, CHINOOK 2-PLACE
 THOMAS, TOM, RR 1, ECKVILLE, AB TOM-0X0, (403)746-5445, C-IEOJ BEAVER RX550
 THOMPSON, JORDIE, BOX 18, SITE 3, S.S.#3, CALGARY, AB T3C 3H9
 TWISS, JOEL J., P.O. BOX 1450, PONOKA, AB TOV 2H0, (403)783-6332
 WARD, DOUGLAS, 1518 23rd AVENUE N.W., CALGARY, AB T2M 1V1, (403)282-0806, BEAVER RX650 C-IDJW
 WHITNEY, LES & BETTY, 327 2nd AVEUNE S.E., HIGH RIVER, AB T1V 1H7, (403)652-4498
 WINGATE, CLIFF, 101, 1604 - 39 STREET S.W., CALGARY, AB T3C-1V6, (403)246-6154
 WINSLOW, DARRELL, 3624 - 29A AVENUE S.E., CALGARY, AB T2B 0G2, (403)248-9243
 WINTERS, RALPH, BOX 12, SITE 9, RR 5, CALGARY, AB T2P 2G6, (403)238-0406, FISHER 101 C-IAPP
 WOLOSZYN, WAYNE, AVIATION SYSTEM SAFETY, 202, 63 AIRPORT ROAD, EDMONTON, AB T5G 0W6