



Skywriter



Monthly Newsletter of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club

June 1996

One Pilot's Opinion

by Bob Kirkby

Handheld Radios

Many Ultralight pilots are opting to carry VHF radios. This is a good move and is a major contributor to safer flying, especially around airports inhabited by other aircraft. With limited panel space and even more limited budgets, conventional VHF radios are not usually a viable option. Fortunately there are a number of very good and reasonably priced handheld VHF radios on the market that are well suited for use in ultralights. In this article I will review six of the most common handhelds. Since I write for a relatively unknown newspaper I was not able to get the manufacturers to send me free samples to evaluate! Therefore this is not a performance evaluation but merely a comparison of the features and specification of the various units based on the literature available and two other such reviews.

I have shown manufacturer's SLP in Canadian dollars at a 1.37 exchange rate, and where possible a locally available price provided by Western Avionics. Other Calgary suppliers include Cascade Avionics and Calgary Pilot Supply. If you like phoning around for prices I suggest picking up a copy of Trade-A-Plane from Calgary Pilot Supply. In it you will find literally dozens of ads from US avionics distributors and a catalogue companies offering the same products at varying prices.

Handheld radios can be classified into three categories. The first are those that are VHF Comm transceivers only. Three of the radios reviewed are of this type and for most ultralight pilots offer all that is needed. All three have been around for a long time and are considered the first generation of handheld radios.

The second are those that are both a Comm transceiver and a Nav receiver offering VOR/CDI navigation functions. The nav feature can be of some value to the serious cross-country pilot, but for the average ultralighter, who never ventures more than 50 miles from home, it is of little use. I have this feature on my ICOM A20 (older model) and have used it a total of three times in six years, and then only for practice. These units fall into the second and third generation of handhelds and consequently offer some additional features not found in the category 1 types, such as memory and scanning.

The third category is a new breed of handhelds just hitting the market now which are both a Comm transceiver and a GPS receiver with moving map display. (Two manufacturers are now advertising these.) Although they win

hands down over GameBoy for portable fun, they are a very expensive toy for the ultralight pilot (list price in the \$2000 range). Again the nav function is of little use for ultralight flying and with the price approaching that of an aircraft kit, I decided not to include these Star Trekian gadgets in my comparison.

In addition to having built-in mikes and speakers all models presented have jacks for external mike, headset and push-to-talk connections. There are differences, however, in the types of connections offered. See the accompanying table for a comparison of the features of each model. Below is a discussion of the differences and peculiarities of each. I will cover the category 1 transceivers first.

Category 1

Delcom

The Delcom model AIR 960 is made in Hong Kong and is distributed in North America by McCoy Avionics. It will receive both the nav and comm bands (108.000 - 136.975 MHz or 760 channels), although it has no nav capability. In the US nav frequencies are often used to broadcast ATIS and

to permit conventional traffic to operate in a full-duplex mode with ATC. Around here this is not the case, so having the nav frequencies is of little use.

The 960 uses thumbwheels to select the first three digits of the frequency, after the 1. For example to dial in 122.8 MHz, the "1" is always preset; turn the thumbwheels to select the "2", "2" and "8". This is straightforward, but if you need to select the

	Nav ?	Tuning	Memory	Battery Type	Tx Power CW	Headset Adaptor	SLP Cdn\$
Delcom AIR-960	N	Thumb Wheel	N	NiCd Pack	1.5w	Opt.	\$478.00
Terra TPX720	N	Thumb Wheel	N	10 x AA NiCd's	2.5w/.5w	Std.	\$815.15
Comm Specs TR-720	N	Thumb Wheel	Y 3 Pos.	NiCd Pack	1w	Opt.	\$678.15
ICOM IC-A22	Y	Keypad	Y 50 Pos.	NiCd Pack	1.5w	Opt.	\$999.00
Bendix/King KX99	Y	Keypad	Y 10 Pos.	NiCd Pack	1.5w	Std.	\$863.00
Sporty's JD-200	Y	Keypad	Y 20 Pos.	8 x AA Alkaline	1.5w	Opt.	\$541.15

Handheld radios feature comparison.

The Net Minder

by Wilf Stark

As I promised last month, this month we'll explore Canadian Aviation's Net Site 'CAVOK' (www.cavok.com).

A great amount of cross-links from this site to others on the Internet are now complete. You can now browse CAVOK's own services and visit other sites that I've previously described (such as the Ultralight Home Page, UK sites, various USA sites, etc.). But trying to get into weather sites from CAVOK (as from other sites) is still a frustration. CAVOK's links to Ohio State and Texas U are available, but there's no decent link to UPDATED Canadian weather info. I suggest a phone call to Springbank FSS is still your best bet.

A short aside here. I have to admit I don't see any advantage in trying to get weather info via the Internet. Simply put, the lengthy download time of the various graphics associated with Internet-based weather services is the main problem. Though it may look neat on-screen, I find I no longer have the patience to wait for it all to download, especially when the phone connections to the provider become a bit busy.

CAVOK is an excellent and high-quality Canadian effort of listing, indexing and updating aviation interest groups across all provinces, as well as providing updated information from various departments at Transport Canada. Additionally, it has easy links to dozens of other web sites worldwide.

Browsing is therefore easier than it has been before.

Also this month, I printed out Transport Canada's Global Navigation Satellite System update, which was 9 pages long (Sept '95 issue). This print-out provided a great birds-eye view of how GPS is progressing, and how Transport intends to support and promote this technology in the years to come. I'll be happy to provide a copy to anyone at CUFC who asks.

All the current air regulations are available on-line as well. I will print out relevant aspects over the summer break, and have them available for copying or faxing to anyone who would like them. In all likelihood, sections dealing with transport planes, passenger carriers, ag planes etc. will NOT be printed out. For those, you'll have to log in yourself.

As I do my monthly browsing on the Internet's aviation related sites, I find it takes a good hour of mouse-motion to get two or three print-outs or on-line visits that relate to my current interests. I suppose that's not a bad return for my time invested, especially when compared to the time that would be required to visit a news stand or library. But what I find to have the greatest consistent value to me is the on-line classifieds. There is both private and commercial ads, and they come from around the globe. They're so interesting, in fact, that I've decided to cover them as my topic for next month.

Classified

Chinook - 2 place, 1985, 2 hrs on rebuilt Rotax 447, cabin heat, battery, headlight, strobe, TPX-720 Terra radio w/PTT, good instrumentation, complete manuals, & \$7200.00. Ray Waller 274-4388.

Wanted - New or used 3 1/8" altimeter. Gerry 270-0877.

Intercom - 2 place Ultracom including 2 headsets, in good condition, \$400.00. Chris Kirkman 280-1843.

Chinook WT2 - new Rotax 503 Dual CDI, many extras, poor health forces sale. Mel Haakenson Box 66, Berwyn, AB, TOH OEO.

Rotax 447 - with gear box, wood prop, exhaust, carb, 40 hrs, \$600.00. Dave Dedul 403-823-6054.

Jeppesen - CR-3 circular flight computer, new, \$20.00. Bob Kirkby 403-569-9541.

Kolb Wings - like new, ready to fly. Jim Creasser 226-0180.

Props - 2 wood props: 64 x 32 and 64 x 34, \$200.00 for both. Damien Belanger 1-823-3027.

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



Executive

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Communications
Specialists
TR-720

Sporty's
JD-200

ICOM
IC-A22

(Opinion - continued from page 1)

KHz range as well it gets more complicated. There is a four-position slide switch labelled "0", "25", "50" and "75". Again an example will clarify - to select 122.75 MHz, turn the thumbwheels to "2", "2" and "7", then move the slide switch to "50". Sounds terribly complicated but considering that the KHz switch would mostly be set to "0", this is not a major drawback.

The other oddity the 960 is that both the volume and squelch controls are on the same shaft, with the squelch on top of the volume. In my opinion this is too cumbersome, particularly for ultralight flyers who frequently wear gloves to keep warm on winter flights. Having the squelch on top of the volume seems backwards since the volume is adjusted more often.

Internal connections are pretty standard with a BNC antenna connector and mini-jacks for mike and headphones (an optional adapter

cable is required to connect a standard mike/headset). Everything is mounted on the top of the unit which lends itself very nicely to mounting in tight spaces. In fact an optional 3 1/8" round panel mounting kit is available. Whether mounted in the panel or vertically on the side of you cockpit, the 960 provides easy control visibility and access.

Suggested list price is \$478.00 and local price is \$450.00.

Terra

Like the Delcom, the Terra TPX 720 has all of its controls on top. Volume and squelch, however, are separated. Although it only handles 720 channels that's not a problem in this neck of the woods.

The Terra is the largest (9.9x3.27x1.9 inches) and heaviest (2.1 lbs.) of the group. It is also the only unit in a completely metal case - rugged it is. While all other units use a proprietary NiCd battery pack, the Terra uses 10

standard AA NiCd batteries. This means alkaline batteries may be used if desired.

On the plus side the Terra is the only handheld that uses standard aircraft-size mike and headset jacks, making adapter cables unnecessary.

Suggested list price is \$815.15. Local price unavailable.

Communications Specialists

The Communications Specialists' TR-720 has mechanical thumbwheel tuning, but it also has a memory for storing three frequencies.

Although it comes with a NiCd battery pack there is an optional alkaline battery case available. The unit can be ordered with either the standard 450 ma NiCd pack or an optional 750 ma NiCd pack, for almost double the battery life.

Like the Delcom a 3 1/8" panel mounting kit is available, although *(continued on page 4)*

(Opinion - continued from page 3)

... from the radio manufacturer. It can be ordered separately from Ken Brock Manufacturing at a price of \$267.15.

Suggested list price is \$678.15. Local price unavailable.

Category 2

ICOM

The ICOM IC-A22 is one of the more popular handhelds on the market. It is the third model produced by ICOM in the last 8 years and represents a significant advance over the previous models. It is the smallest of the group

(6.75x2.25x1.25 inches) and weighs in at just over 1 lb. Frequency and function selection is by front keypad and everything is displayed on an LCD. Power is provided by a NiCd battery pack or an optional AA alkaline battery case.

It can store 50 frequencies in memory with assigned alphanumeric names for those of us with failing memories. The memory channels can be set for selective scanning so that multiple frequencies can be monitored.

One unique feature of the IC-A22 which is very valuable to ultralight pilots is the ANL (Automatic Noise Limiter). This is a pulse-noise filter that can be engaged or not as desired. It is very effective at reducing the interference caused by ignition noise which is prevalent in ultralights with Rotax engines. (I have this feature on my older IC-A20 model and I use it all the time.)

The IC-A22 has full VOR navigation capability with a good CDI display and an automatic direct radial to VOR feature. As mentioned earlier this is not particularly useful for ultralight flying, but if the radio could be used for backup in a conventional aircraft at some time it may be worth having.

Suggested list price is \$999.00. Local price is \$850.00.

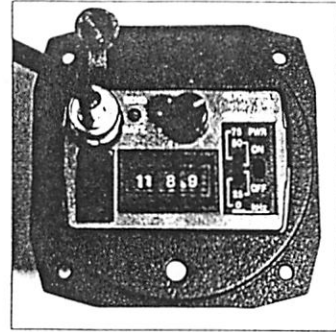
Bendix/King

The KX99 is essentially the same as the first model of the ICOM (IC-A20). Rather than continue to upgrade as ICOM has done, Bendix/King has left the KX99 as is and instead just released their KLX100 combination handheld transceiver and GPS receiver, which I am not going to go any further into. The KX99 continues to be available.

It has front keypad frequency and function selection but with only 10 memory locations and no alphanumeric names, but the same scanning functions. Volume and squelch knobs are on top along with the external connectors. The VOR CDI display is similar to ICOM's.

There are oodles of options available for the KX99 including three different battery chargers, an alkaline battery pack, leather case, epaulette speaker/mike, shoulder strap and more.

Suggested list price is \$863.00. Local price is \$775.00.

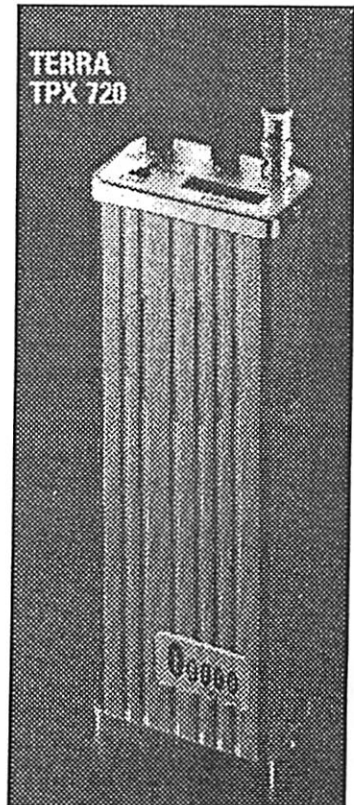
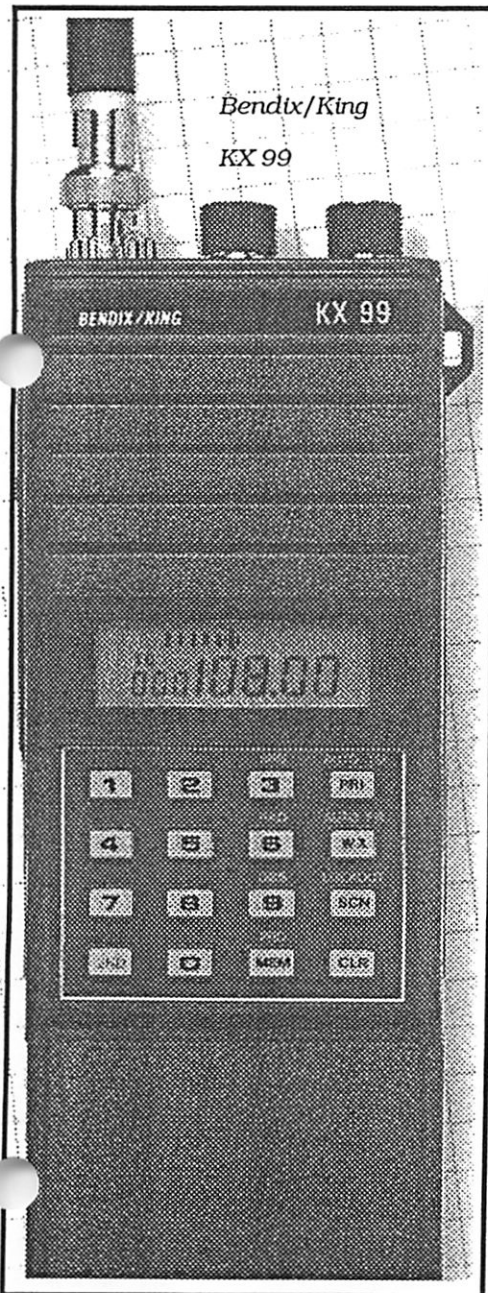


Delcom shown in 3 1/8" panel mount.

Sporty's Pilot Shop

The new kid on the block with a handheld transceiver is Sporty's Pilot Shop with their JD-200. This is an LCD display/keypad style with comm and nav. It is basically the same as the KX99 or the earlier IC-A21 in a slightly more modern case. The memory holds 20 frequencies with the same scanning functions and the nav CDI display looks identical to the others.

Power is provided by eight AA alkaline batteries, although a NiCd battery pack is available as an option at \$135.63. Presumably you could use NiCd AA's although they may have to be removed for charging. Other options include a mike/headset adapter cable and a cigarette lighter *(continued on page 5)*



(Opinion - continued from page 4)

apter.

The JD-200 can only be ordered directly from Sporty's at a list price of \$541.15.

Power Booster

While researching for this article I came across a transmit power booster for handhelds. Called a CS-10, it will boost the signal strength 10 times and is available from the mail-order company, Chief Aircraft Inc.

The unit is designed to go in between the handheld and an external antenna and comes with the necessary cables. As you might guess with that kind of power output it is not battery powered. Instead you must connect it to a 12-14 volt DC electrical supply in the aircraft. A cigarette lighter connector comes with it, although in an ultralight you would probably attach it directly to your electrical system.

Once installed it is transparent to the user and requires no attention during operation. Whether your handheld is permanently mounted or strictly portable, as long as you are connecting it to an external antenna in the aircraft the CS-10 will give you big-aircraft radio performance at a fraction of the cost.

Chief Aircraft lists the CS-10 for \$231.53.

Addresses

Western Avionics
275 Palmer Road NE
Calgary, AB
T2E 7G4
403-250-2644
1-800-668-9704

McCoy Avionics Corp.
6145 Scherers Place
Dublin, OH 43017
513-642-8080

Terra
3520 Pan American Fwy NE
Albuquerque, NM 87107
505-884-2321
1-800-328-1995

Communications Specialists
26 W. Taft Ave.
Orange, CA 92665
1-800-854-0547

Ken Brock Manufacturing
11852 Western Ave.
Stanton, CA 90680
714-898-4366

ICOM Canada
3071 #5 Road, Unit 9
Richmond, BC
V6X 2T4
604-273-7400

Bendix/King
General Aviation Avionics Div.
400 N. Rogers Road
Olathe, KS 66062
913-782-0400

Sporty's Pilot Shop
Clermont County Airport
Batavia, OH 45103
1-800-543-8633

Chief Aircraft Inc.
1301 Brookside Blvd.
Grants Pass, OR 97526
503-476-6605
1-800-447-3408

Coming Events

June 9 - Hinton Flying Club Fly-in Breakfast & Mini Air Show, Hinton, AB, 09:00 to 11:00. Contact Loren Lewis 403-865-7440.

June 9 - Innisfail Flying Club Fly-in Breakfast, Innisfail, AB, 08:00 to 12:00. Contact Eldin Wlter 403-343-1709.

June 16 - High River Airport Fly-in Family Fun Day, 09:00 to 16:00. Hamburgers available 11:00 to 13:00. Contact 403-652-3444.

July 7 - Newell Aeronautical Society fly/drive-in Breakfast, Brooks Airport, AB, 08:00 to 11:00. Contact Dale Porter 403-378-4536.

July 13-14 - Wings Over Calgary Air Show, Sprinkbank Airport. Contact Sheila Epp (403) 276-2176.

July 20 - Kirkby Field Annual Fly-in Breakfast, 08:00 to 13:00. Contact Bob Kirkby 403-569-9541.

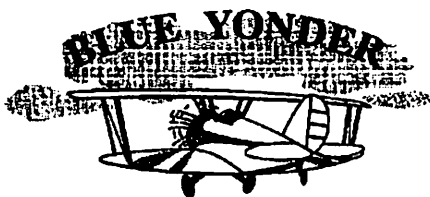


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Around The Patch

by Stu Simpson

The Good Old Days

I think about the "good old days" a lot. You know, the era of the 1920s. The golden age of biplanes, barnstormers, and airborne adventure. Most people in aviation think it's an era long gone, never to be seen again. But I disagree. Because if you fly ultralight airplanes, you're already living what are destined to become the good old days.

Here's what I mean. When someone talks about the "good old days" they're usually referring to when things were less expensive, simpler, and more rewarding than the present. I usually hear it from people who've gone on to more advanced levels of whatever their chosen activity is, including flying. And speaking of flying, I can't think of anything that's cheaper, easier, and more satisfying than ultralights.

Ultralights are definitely cheap, which is to say inexpensive. For instance, I dare anyone to try and find another type of airplane that can be had brand new, and exactly to order, for less than ten grand. And what about operating costs? Anywhere from five to ten dollars an hour. Hangars - fully enclosed, one plane each - can be found by the careful shopper for around fifty bucks a month, or less.

Don't want to own? Try renting for \$40 - \$45 dollars an hour - wet, that is. What about licencing? Figure on shelling out a bit more than a thousand clams for a PPL-UL. The ultralight numbers are a fraction of what conventional flying costs.

And let me tell you about easy. Ultralights, when compared with other forms of aviation, are almost regulation-free. Certainly, there are rules to learn. But the rules are reasonable, easy to comply with, and most importantly, darned few.

We ultralight jocks are allowed to build our own planes, which gives an indescribable sense of pride. We can maintain them ourselves and aren't forced into paying someone else to do so. We can make our planes look anyway we like, outfit them anyway we want (no, Virginia, rocket launchers are still not allowed). We can even count our ultralight flight time towards higher, graduated licences. And, as mentioned, we can

even afford our airplanes. Yes, we are indeed spoiled.

There are few things in life that are more satisfying to me - and to most other UL jocks I know - than the joy of flying the airplane I built. I absolutely love being in that stick-and-rudder cockpit on a summer evening, flying low and slow with my leather jacket flapping in the slipstream and the smells of grain fields nibbling at my senses.

An ultralight is uniquely rewarding because it demands that the pilot fly it, rather than merely monitor it during flight. We ultralight pilots, like our winged forefathers, are darned good stick-and-rudder men. We have to be. Our mounts are much more manoeuvrable and less inherently stable than conventional aircraft. UL's have lighter wing loadings, making them more susceptible to the wind. Most ultralight pilots aren't afraid of a tail-wheel, and we often fly out of impossibly short runways as a matter of routine. Consequently, UL pilots have to fly their planes every minute the engine is running.

UL pilots get to hand-prop their engines and fly from grass strips, a wonderfully nostalgic treat. We gauge the wind by the waves on a pond, or by

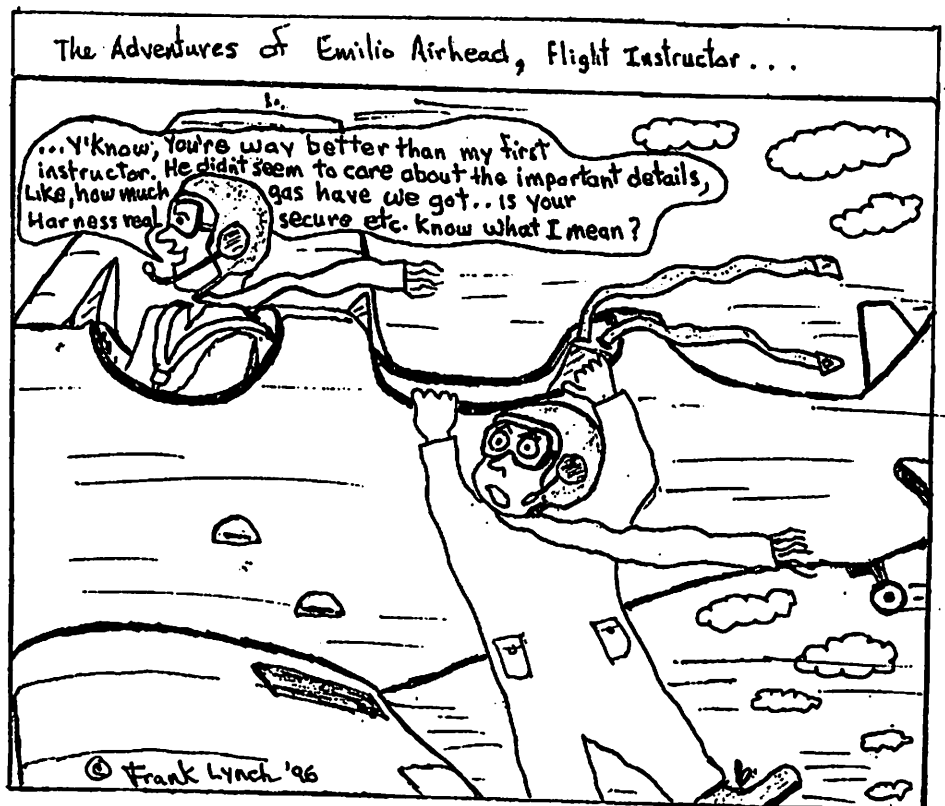
the direction a cow's rump is pointed. Every takeoff and landing is a challenge, every flight an adventure.

In fact, if you think about it, ultralight flying today is very similar in spirit to the way flying was done in the '20s. It's cheap, simple, and enormously satisfying.

I know a private pilot who once ferried a brand new Diamona Katana from the Ontario factory to Calgary for its new owner. After 600 hours of flying Cessnas, the pilot stated that this one ferry-flight had far and away been the highlight of his flying career. I couldn't help but pity the man. Because after the tens of thousands of dollars he'd poured into conventional flying, only one flight stands out as the highlight.

But as an ultralight flyer I can honestly say that even with only 300 hours, I'd have a tough time trying to narrow it down to TEN highlight-flights, let alone one.

I didn't intend for this piece to read like a page from The Ultralight Pilot's Propaganda Handbook, but I'm afraid it might. I just thought you'd like to know that ultralight pilots are re-living a long-closed chapter of aviation history. And I hope you see that the good old days are here, again.



President's Message

by Ed D'Antoni

The new Canadian Air Regulations are expected to become law soon, and Transport is seeking input from various ultralight groups in Canada, including ours.

On May 10, I was asked by Lindsay Cadenhead to attend meetings from May 21 to May 24 in Ottawa. The first two days would cover licensing and the next two would deal with airframes. A quick meeting was held with a few members to formalize a presentation. After much discussion we decided to present the following recommendations. We also felt single-place ultralights are becoming more popular yet are being largely ignored.

Licensing:

1) Basic ultralight permit: We recommend it remain similar to the present Ultralight Pilot Licence with absolutely no passenger carrying privileges.

2) Control Zone Operations: After a specified number of solo hours and an instructor's check of radio and circuit procedures at a tower operated airport, the permit would be upgraded to allow operation in control zones.

3) Helmets: All occupants of C-IXXX registered aircraft be required to wear helmets.

4) Passengers: We are opposed to Ultralight Pilots carrying passengers. But if this is allowed, we recommend it be limited to aircraft that meet the old Advanced Ultralight Standards (TP10141) or aircraft that have been constructed and inspected in the same manner as our present homebuilts (Airworthiness manual section 549). The pilot must have at least 50 hrs. total time, have a medical similar to that of the Recreational Pilot, and have additional training. The currency requirement for carrying passengers should be 2 hours solo and six full stop take offs and landings on type.

Airframes: We feel not enough attention is being paid to the single-seat aircraft. Our recommendations are for single-place aircraft to have a gross weight of 650 lbs., stall speed of 40 mph or less, and no wing area requirements.

Two place: Recommend 1200 lbs gross weight, maximum stall speed of 45 mph at gross. This includes any

enclosed factory assembled components. Manufacturers indicating their 2-place ultralights meet Transport's standards must submit calculations with their statement of conformity declaration.

At the time we held the CUFC executive meeting, Transport Canada had provided me with airline tickets, but accommodation was my responsibility, and I was prepared to travel east to present our recommendations. The next day, I received a call from Lindsay's secretary saying the meeting had been called off.

Then, on May 21st I received a copy of a first draft of Transport's proposed changes to both ultralight licensing and aircraft standards. Surprisingly, the proposals melded closely with what the CUFC members had recommended, except that it completely ignores single-place ULs. The paper is much too extensive to cover here, so contact me directly if you have questions about Transport's proposals.

Lindsay is scheduled (at this writing) to appear at our June meeting.

Transport's Internet Stuff
Reading Transport Canada's internet homepage one finds the titles CARS and CARAC, however there is virtually no information on these two topics. At this time I feel we're missing some vital information. If anyone can fill me in please feel free to give me a call. In the meantime I'll hold my breath.

News...

...from the Blue

New Canadian Ultralight

An Ontario company called Freedom Lite Inc. has introduced a new Canadian-made ultralight. The Skywatch SS-II appears outwardly identical to the now-defunct Beaver RX-650. Freedom Lite claims a cruise speed between 70 and 90 mph, a Vne of 114 mph, and a gross weight of 950 lbs on a Rotax 503DC. The Rotax 582 is an option, as are other engines up to 80hp. The company says floats for the airplane will be available this summer. FMI contact Freedom Lite at Box 51, Walton, ON, NOK 1Z0. Phone (519) 887-9966 or fax (519) 887-6465.

TCA Eliminating Two Local NDB's

Transport Canada Aviation says it wants to decommission two non-directional beacons in the Calgary area. Transport would like to eliminate the Turner Valley and the Pigeon beacons as a cost cutting measure. TCA is asking for pilots' input on the proposal but says the cut off date for comments is May 31st.

COPA Goes To The Net, Too

The Canadian Owners and Pilots Association now has an Internet address where COPA will receive E-mail. COPA says it will retrieve and reply to E-mail at least once a day. COPA's next step will be to establish an Internet home page. The E-mail address is copa@magl.com.



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Letters

From readers



Editor:

Recovery System or Not?

In 1973 I started hang gliding. In those days all we wanted was to FLY (just like today, eh?). The equipment was the old rogallo style, usually you could make it to the bottom of the hill or mountain, as long as it was steep enough. Parachutes were for people jumping out of airplanes if something went wrong! In the meantime I flew approximately 1,000 hours in hang-gliders and ultralights, and 4,000 hours in aeroplanes. As one gets older the comfort of leather seats and pressurization can not be denied, however, every once in a while I just want to FLY. So what has change?

Over the years the equipment we fly has changed - hopefully somewhat improved. Rules and regulations have been developed, aircraft have been certified, safety systems invented, teaching courses and requirements set up. A 100% accident and incident free aviation environment can not be achieved, as it can not be achieved in any other activity. However, steps can be taken to minimize one's risks.

After several years of buying and selling different aircraft (and "having" to fly them) I came to the conclusion that the certification of airplanes is not that bad after all. At least some kind of minimum guidelines are met.

When I was looking for an aircraft to teach ultralight flying in our school the decision was made more on

knowing the previous owner (and his attitude towards maintenance and flying) and convenience than on the aircraft type and model as advertised. The builders of ultralight aircraft most likely have the best intention to build an "airworthy" aircraft. However, how does the material and construction hold up to 100's or 1000's of hours of flying? Some changes in the properties of the materials used may only be detected by Non-destructive Testing (NDT) of parts to the airframe (prior to the ultimate test - catastrophic failure). Very seldom is this done in ultralight aircraft.

Even with the best care of your aircraft I believe that for ultralight aircraft a backup recovery system is essential. It does not guarantee 100% safety; good maintenance, airmanship and pilot judgement are certainly still required, but it does take safety a step further. Especially if you take a paying student with you in your aircraft. I believe you owe it to yourself and your customer.

We are currently in the process of putting in an order with Ballistic Recovery Systems (BRS) for ballistic parachutes. There are no dealers in Alberta, Saskatchewan or Manitoba. We are acting as a dealership for BRS on a demand basis, however, if you are interested in a backup system, please give the author a call at 652-3444 as soon as possible. In this order we try to let everybody be ready for the upcoming summer season and also, if the interest is big enough, some great savings may be achieved for one of the best recovery systems currently on the market.

Alex Bahlsen
High River Flight Centre Ltd.

News...

...from the Blue

Avid Magnum, Now With Nose Gear

Avid aircraft has stuck a nose wheel on its Magnum line of kit-built aircraft. Avid says that the tail-wheel and trike versions are almost identical in performance with cruise speeds of 130 mph and a stall of 39 mph, while bearing a Lycoming O-320. Avid's also offering a 160hp Subaru Legacy engine package. The tail-draggers start at \$19,995 US, while the three-wheelers start at \$21,495 US.

Rotorway Offers Helipac

Rotorway International, makers of the popular Exec home-built helicopters are now offering a belly pod for their whirly birds. The Helipac attaches to the bottom of the fuselage and is designed to carry the helicopter's doors. The company ships the pods unfinished, and says the builder will require one day to complete finishing work.

Survival Training With A Difference

Emergency egress and survival training has largely been the domain of the military and offshore helicopter companies. Until now, that is. A company in England is offering a series of Aviator Underwater Escape Courses for flyers at large. The training includes full simulation in a six-seat dunker and theory on both ditching and emergency egress, including use of life rafts and other equipment.

GPS Is Now Primary Nav System

Evergreen International Airlines, an air freight company, has removed the INS from one of its B747s and replaced it with a triple redundant GPS. The airline has already operated the plane on an around-the-world flight in which three Trimble GPS receivers were the primary navigation instruments.

Turbine-Powered Lancair

American homebuilder Jack Pezold is installing a 1,000 shp Garrett turboprop in his pressurized Lancair IV. He's expecting a maximum cruise of 400kts, a 4,600 fpm climb rate, and a range of 1,200 nautical miles. The cost, he says, is "Not less than seven figures." We're not surprised.



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