



# Skywriter



Monthly Newsletter of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club

## August 1998

### A Good Landing

Everyone already knows the definition of a 'good' landing is one from which you can walk away. But very few know the definition of a 'great landing'. It's one after which you can use the airplane another time. I guess this was just a good landing.

- Bernie



Bernie Kespe's Renegade

### A \$35 Hotdog

by Bob Kirkby

Saturday, July 18 was the appointed day to fly to Glenn Bishell's airstrip near Carstairs for smokies and bean. Stu Simpson did an admirable job of phoning around on Friday attempting to gather together fliers for a group flight to Glenn's on Saturday morning. I really wanted to go.

Although my Renegade is all back together and ready to fly again, I still don't have a new prop for it - so that was out of the question. I did have another option, however, I could take my Cherokee 235. It would only be a 20 minute hop in the Cherokee, but since I hadn't been to any fly-ins this summer (except my own) I

decided to go.

Louise and I were awakened at 0700 Saturday when Stu came roaring up the driveway in his new GMC omnibus, determined to arrive in plenty of time for the pre-arranged 8:00 am departure. I did a quick calculation (Ultralights will take 45 minutes to get there so I can sleep for another 25 minutes and still arrive at the same time) and rolled over. I eventually got up and was ready to leave at 8:00. I asked Louise if she wanted to come and received a muffled grumble about having to go into work. (I discovered when

I got home that she later changed her mind and was running out the door to join me just as I was taking off - too bad.)

I walked down to the taxiway and discovered a number of flying machines ready to take flight. Stu Simpson in his HiMax, Wilf Stark in his Koala, Ray  
(Continued on page 2)



Murray Ireland's Cessna 150 and Chris Kirkman's Rebel at Glen's

*Hotdog - continued from page 2*

Waller in his Challenger, Chris Kirkman in his Rebel, and Murray Ireland in his Cessna 150. Ed D'Antoni flew by in his Rans just as they were about to take off and joined up with the "Dragonflies" in flight. Andy Gustafsson later joined them



*Ray Waller's Challenger, a Beaver, and Wilf Stark's Koala on the ramp*

also as they flew by Delacour. After watching them depart I pulled my Cherokee out of the hangar and started getting ready. 20 minutes later I was taxiing out for runway 34.

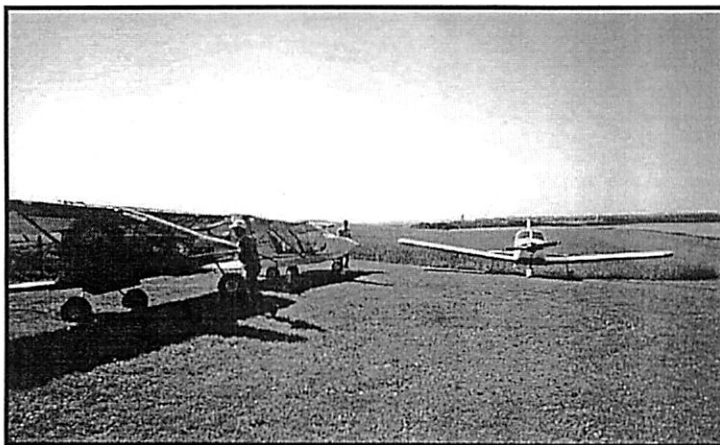
The day was perfect with clear skies and a 5-10 knot breeze out of the north. In spite of the 20+ degree temperature the Cherokee jumped into the air like a homesick angel. On climbout I tuned into Calgary Terminal on 119.4 MHz and heard a lot of chatter. There was lots of flying happening around Calgary this morning. Although I intended to fly under the 4800 foot TCA floor, I contacted the controlled to advise him of my intentions. He decided to track me anyway, which was good since before he released me north of Airdrie he had

advised me of half a dozen other aircraft in my vicinity. A few other pilots obviously recognized that this was a great day for flying.

I climbed to 5000 ft in anticipation of meeting up with the Dragonflies before long. Sure enough, as I passed Crossfield I picked up the usual Dragonfly chatter on 123.4 MHz. Every few minutes a Dragonfly would report his position to the flight leader (Stu). During my pre-flight I had decided to stop at Olds-Didsbury and buy some 100LL before returning home. The Dragonflies were just approaching Glenn's when I

reached them so I decide to go into Olds-Didsbury for fuel first, rather than spend 10 minutes circling while they all landed. I called Stu up and advised my intentions, then over-flew Glen's airstrip at 5000 ft just as Andy was making the first landing.

I pulled up to the pump at Olds-Didsbury 4 minutes later and found the place deserted. Someone had told me to buy fuel there if I was in the area because the price was the best around. The only problem was I couldn't find any instructions anywhere on



*Ed D'Antoni's Rans, Andy Gustafsson's Challenger and Bob Kirkby's Cherokee on the south end of the ramp at Glen's*

**Skywriter**

Skywriter is the official newsletter of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club and is published 12 times per year. Articles and letters are very welcome and should be addressed to either Bob Kirkby, Bernie Kespe or Wilf Stark.

**Editor:** Bob Kirkby 569-9541  
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**Calgary Ultralight Flying Club**

Meetings of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club are held on the second Thursday of every month, except July and August, at 7:30 pm, at the Northeast Armoury, 1227 - 38 Avenue NE.

**President:** Wilf Stark 935-4248  
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**Vice President:** Stu Simpson 255-6998  
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e-mail: creaser@cybersurf.net

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e-mail: ed.dantoni@logicnet.com

how to go about buying fuel. Eventually I located someone at the far end of a row of hangars working on his Grumman Cheetah. He informed me that, although the CFS says fuel is available there, it is only available to Olds-Didsbury Flying Club members. Great! However, after we chatted for a few minutes and I admired his Cheetah, he suggested that if I could pay him cash for the fuel he would pump some for me and put it on his flying club tab. That sounded good to me so I dug out all the cash I had and loaded up with 90 litres.

Five minutes later I was on final for Glenn's beautiful 2500 foot strip. The grass was emerald green with a brilliant (continued on page 3)

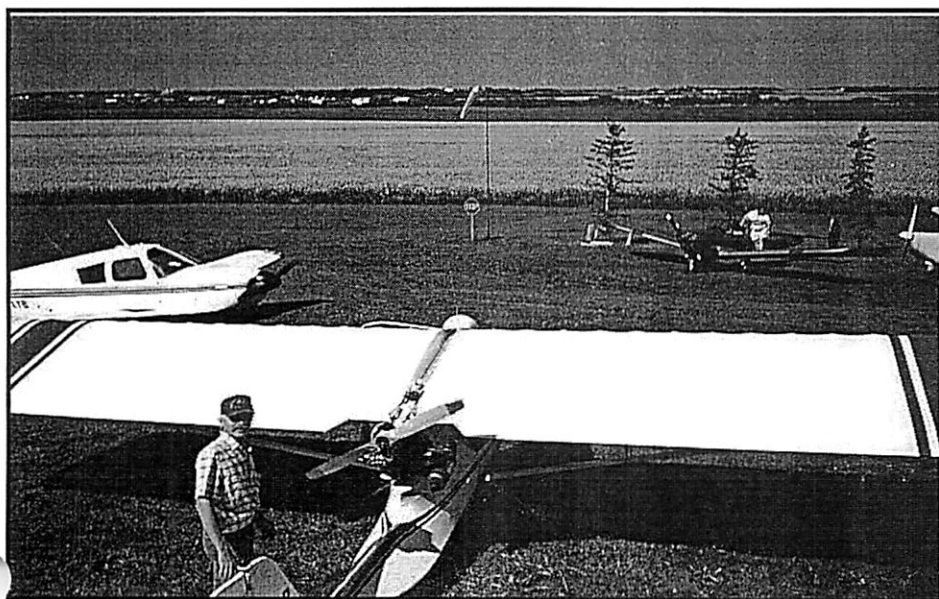
*Hotdog - continued from page 2*

yellow canola field on the left and a dark green barley field on the right. Following a soft touchdown I pulled into the taxi area and shut down beside ten other aircraft. Everyone else was on seconds as I helped myself to smokies and beans from the barbeque. What a feast! Nothing beats good food with a bunch of pilots among a flock of airplanes at a beautiful airfield.

We spent the next couple of hours having a great time thanks to the hospitality of Glenn and his wife. Then Andy announced he had to head home to go into work and proceeded to his Challenger to get ready. This seemed to be the signal everyone was waiting for. Within 10 minutes everyone but me was starting their engines and taxiing out. Andy ended up having to wait for the field to clear before he could taxi and was the last one off. I waited another twenty minutes then headed for home too. Just as I was leaving a Beaver and a Chinook that I didn't recognize landed, and the party continued.

When I got back to Airdrie I called up the Terminal Controller again and announced my intentions. It was no surprise when I heard him rapidly giving out traffic information on two flocks of Ultralights just east of Chestermere. As I proceeded to my place he warned me several times of

two Ultralights just ahead, which I told him were heading to the same strip I was. When I reached the circuit I spotted Stu and Wilf on right downwind for 34 so I overflew and circled two miles south until they landed. I was unable to contact them on 123.4 as the controlled was too busy chattering about the ultralights around me and the other group that was heading south. He commented, "That's a busy little airfield out there." Finally Stu landed and I told the controller I was descending for my destination (ready or not) and he released me. I think the controller got quite a kick out of all the Ultralight activity.



*Andy Gustafsson starts his Challenger while Ron Axelson climbs aboard his Ercoupe*



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On the ground Stu, Wilf and I compared notes on the fun morning we had. It would have been more fun flying with the Dragonflies in my Renegade, but I still had a great time in the Cherokee. Considering my fuel burn of 52 litres per hour, that Smokie cost me \$35. Wilf figures his only cost him \$12. I guess I should have eaten three! Still, \$35 is cheap for a half day of adventure and comradery with fellow pilots - and a great smokie!

I can't wait for the next one.

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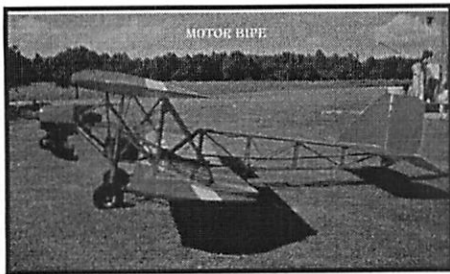
## CUFC Fly-in Barbeque

The plan is to have the barbeque and events on Sunday September 13th starting at 10:00 with the flying and about 12:00 with burgers and dogs. Rain date is the following Sunday (20th).

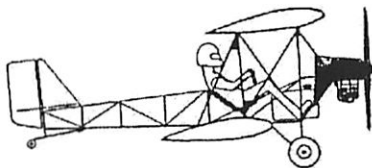
For more info contact:  
Brian Vasseur  
948-0688  
[vasseurb@cadvision.com](mailto:vasseurb@cadvision.com)

## Kit Of The Month

Compiled by Bernie Kespe



Wing Span	18.00 ft.
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## Old Pilots

From the Net by Andy Gustafsson

His car was old; he was older still.

"Not much going on today" he said. I looked up, and then out at the runway.

"Wouldn't say that. One on final, one turning crosswind, one running up on the taxiway," I replied.

"Oh, good. Good. You know if there's any banners?"

"I saw four in the air. They'll likely be here in another 20 minutes" I told him.

"Oh, good. Good." I looked at him again. He was obviously limping. One foot was at an odd angle, and his walk was very unsteady. Must have lost his medical, I thought.

"You come out here to watch the banner towers?" I asked him.

"Oh, I just come out to watch the planes. Relive old times. Haven't flown in 40 or 50 years..."

I looked at him again. Yeah, he was that old. Would I be that old one day, hanging around the airport, watching the young guys doing what I couldn't? Maybe. Maybe...

"You know, I'm going to go up and shoot a few landings anyway. You want to go along for the ride?"

"Oh, that would be fine. Just fine."

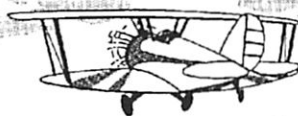
He followed me to my hangar, and I pulled out the plane. He had a hard time climbing in, but seemed determined. A lot of the flexibility and strength was clearly gone. He was amazed at the amount of instrumentation in my panel. He recognized the gyros, but was amazed that a civil aircraft would have an artificial horizon. He had never even heard of LORAN.

A quick runup and we were rolling down the runway. At about 200 ft I told him to go ahead and put his feet on the rudders and take the yoke. I don't normally let pax have that much control that low, but I had a good feeling about him. Sure enough, his hand was as steady as mine. The touch and goes could wait - I was going to let him play.

We flew around low and slow for maybe half an hour. He was amazed how little rudder the TriPacer needed until I explained about the bungees. He had a bit of trouble at first holding altitude in turns - he would pull the nose up as he rolled in and climb. His experience with heavy, marginally powered planes showed. Despite decades of inaction, he was still very obviously a pilot.

*(Continued on page 5)*

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*Old Pilots - continued from page 4*

And the stories he had. He had seen those white cliffs of Dover, nursing home a twin engine bomber with the control linkages to one engine shot out, the hydraulics gone, one engine stuck at 35 inches. He circled over the field while the crew pumped down the gear, but nothing he did would change the power setting. He didn't want to land single engine so on his turn to base he pulled back the good engine, stood on the rudders along with his copilot, and used differential thrust to turn final. Then he simply killed both engines and landed dead stick. He had stories of his primary training in a Taylorcraft, flying backwards in a stiff wind and landing in pastures for practice. He told of a time when he had picked his field and was coming up short. He was waiting for the instructor to call the go-around until finally, at about 50 feet, he called it himself. Instead, the instructor took the plane, dived into ground effect, flew to the fence, popped over it, and landed in the field. I wondered what people would think of that now. All the while, as he told the stories, he was flying the plane with a smoothness that was coming back.

Eventually we went to a local field so I could shoot my landings. I don't generally practice emergency procedures with pax but he was different. I idled the throttle and flew my pattern in emergency mode, staying close and high and then slipping

off the extra altitude. To him it seemed perfectly normal. Of course you idle the throttle and control glideslope by slipping - how else would you do it?

The look in his eyes... It will always haunt me, I think. Both joyful, at being back in the air, and, somehow, wistful. Why did he stop flying, as so many did when the war was over and they left the service? I'll likely never know; somehow it seemed wrong to ask. He had his reasons, I'm sure. Maybe good ones, maybe not. Did he regret his decision? I don't know. But he was there in the glory days. He saw a kind of flying that most of us will never see. In a way I really envy him.

I hear a lot about how important it is to give a kid a ride. And I guess that's right - they are the future of aviation. And in a way, I guess what I did had no practical purpose, unlike a Young Eagle ride or some such. He is likely too old to ever fly again. He is not the future of aviation - merely a bit of its living past.

I hope never to say goodbye to the sky, but sometimes life doesn't quite work out as we might wish. And I hope that if I'm ever that old man, hanging around the airport, watching the planes, some kid will give me a ride. For old times sake.

*Story by:*  
Michael Masterov PA-22-150 N3653P  
"Patches" crewdog@flash.net

## Classified

**Rotax 503** - Dual carbs, points, 50 hours since complete rebuild, no starter, \$2600. Don Rogers 242-6549. (6/98)

**Chinook 2 pl** - Rotax 503, dual carbs, B-box, 127 hrs., 2 props, Yamaha golf cart hubs, 8.50x8 tires, pneumatic tail wheel, alt, tach, dual EGT, VSI, new sails on elevator and rudder, large wing tanks, always hangared, \$6950. Dave Dedul 403-823-6054. (6/98)

**Super Koala** - C-IEIB (a 7/8 scale Taylorcraft look-alike). Only 26 months in use, with 503 DCIDI engine and 66-34 Culver Prop. Lovely, docile, predictable. 60 mph. at 4600 rpm and 11 litres/hr. consumption. 45 liter tank. 75 mph top speed. 51 hours total on engine/airframe. Will consider any serious offer and/or interesting barter proposal. Hangarage at Wild Rose negotiable. Wilf: 935-4248

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**Beaver 2 pl** - 1986 RX550, 275 hrs TTSN, Rotax 532, always hangared, no training history, complete panel, upgraded wing, brakes, \$11,500. Tony 217-5549 or Phil 246-2615. (4/98)

**Chinook 2 pl** - 1988, 186 hrs TT, Rotax 503, hangared, \$7990. Adrian Winship 640-7429 or 280-3631. (3/98)

**Wanted** - Ultralight aircraft, complete or requiring work. Allen 546-2588. (2/98)

**Warpdrive** - 70" 3-blade right hand, SAE1, with spinner, ground adjustable, \$800. Ken Johnson 403-546-2586. (11/97)

Classified ads are free to CUFC members. Forward ads to Bob Kirkby.



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## Just What Is a Pilot?

By Bernie Kespe

While attending Bob Kirkbys' annual fly-in drive-in breakfast, enjoying the unbelievably nice weather and seeing the limitless variety (well, almost limitless) of aircraft, I couldn't help but reflect on what all pilots share in common, what's the common thread? It certainly isn't the type of aircraft we fly or the way we make our living or the places we fly from. So the question ran through my mind, just what is a pilot anyway?

Is it a title people assume like some owners of private yachts who call themselves "captain", or a "colonel" of the Confederate Air Force. Is it the clothes people buy and wear like a baseball cap with "scrambled eggs" on the bill, a pilot helmet with goggles or a leather jacket with silk scarf, etc?

Is it a person who has a pilot license? A license is a piece of paper carried in a person's pocket. It proves the named person has met minimum standards of performance at its issue and thus is allowed to exercise certain privileges. There is no guarantee, however, that the meeting of these standards continues to be so without continued review and practice.

And then there is the physical certificate. It is another piece of paper carried in a person's pocket that indicates the holder met minimum requirements at the time of issue. Is a pilot one of a physical elite? A superman? Alert agile, quick bodies help, but they are not sufficient. Glider pilots have done just fine without a physical exam. Does the addition of an engine change this?

Does a pilot know all about operating an airplane? Knowing that "the throttle provides" the energy of flight, "the elevator divides" it into altitude and airspeed "and drag denies" use of all the engine energy is important, but not sufficient. Knowing how to turn, climb, descend and fly straight and level is also important but still not sufficient. Being able to take off and land an airplane is also important, but also not sufficient.

How about a pilot being an aeronautical engineer? Should they be able to design their own airplane? Some do, and that's great, but it's not required. How about pilots having a degree in engineering, math, physics, chemistry and metallurgy? This kind of knowledge would certainly be helpful, but I'm sure we would all agree it would be a bit of overkill. A pilot must intelligently assimilate the advice of others when determining the design integrity of an airplane they intend to fly without abdicating his or her responsibility for the safe operation of the airplane.

Navigator? Does a pilot need to master pilotage, dead reckoning, radio navigation, celestial navigation? They are all useful in various situations. A pilot must determine and then acquire the skill needed for the flight at hand.

Meteorologist? Must a pilot be able to predict the weather? No. He or she must gather the information that is available. Then they must evaluate the weather as the flight progresses. If the weather becomes a threat to the safe completion of the flight a pilot must make the proper decision in time.

Lawyer? Must a pilot know all the Regulations? No. Regulations are a way of knowing what to expect of other pilots and they in turn know what to expect of you. A pilot will review those pertaining to the flight. It may not be fun, but it's needed for safety.

Then, there is attitude. This trait is as important as it is to all other activities of life. It is determined only by ourselves. And it can vary from day to day and hour to hour if we are not disciplined. Attitude is not directly measurable. Anyone can conceal their attitude if they wish. As a result, pitfall attitudes can go unnoticed for a while. Do any of the following apply to you?

Indestructible - I can do anything at any time.

Fatalistic - what has been ordained will be, I can do nothing about it.

Protected - someone will get me out of this problem.

Denial - who says there is a problem, I don't see a problem.

Superior - I am above the rules, conformity is for the weak.

Vain - my image is more important than proficiency.

Foolish - I'm too busy to "waste" time on practice.

(Continued on page 7)



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Proud - I have no intention of admitting that I make mistakes.

Stupid - I don't make mistakes.

Judgment. It depends on needed skills, experience and attitude. Therefore, judgment is a result of all the above and is learned like all the rest. I would say that "judgment" is the ability to make the best decision for the conditions that exist. It takes time to develop good judgment. Therefore the need for caution when operating in conditions near the limits of our knowledge, skills or past experience. Our ability and willingness to invoke the needed caution depends on our attitude. Good judgment means that we always leave ourselves a safe out.

A pilot is one who possesses the needed amount of all the previous qualities for the type of flying being done. No one can be expert in all of them. A pilot, however, always strives to develop his or her abilities to the fullest for the time they may unexpectedly need them. Deficiency in knowledge, skill or the judgment that is built on them however, makes a poor pilot and invites an unsatisfactory outcome of the flight. Proficiency beyond the minimum required provides reserve for unexpected conditions. This leads to additional enjoyment as well as safety of the flight.

A "real" pilot prepares himself to meet the challenges of the situation and refuses to take on challenges not prepared for. Being prepared means both acquiring the needed knowledge and developing the needed skills as well as reviewing past experience. A pilot acknowledges "I, the pilot, am responsible for the conduct of the flight."

Good pilots also enjoy helping others with less knowledge and skill than theirs and at the same time seek to improve their own knowledge and skill. Good pilots are not indicated by the size and speed of the airplanes they fly. It's the size of their willingness to learn and the speed of their good judgment and willingness to share it with others that I feel makes good pilots.

## FAIRINGS, FITTINGS AND AIRSCOOPS

Compiled by Bernie Kespe

I have a couple of reasons for presenting these tips. For one, we airplane builders spend a lot of time and energy designing and making the various scoops and bumps that are attached to our planes, but there has been very little written about the process in any of the magazines.

Another reason is that a lot of builders probably don't realize that there are alternatives to the fiberglass-epoxy methods usually described in the various magazines. Every one of the bumps and scoops described in this article are made of materials that can be purchased at your local hardware store.

### Aluminum Bumps

There are three basic rules you must follow to form sheet aluminum into the shape you want. First, you have to use the right aluminum—I get mine from local sheet metal shops, even Revelstoke carries it. It should be untempered and almost pure, and it should have at least a 0.040 inch wall thickness to make a bump that is 3/4-inch deep. For the bump in this tip, I used type 303 sheet aluminum.

The second rule for forming aluminum is that you must *persuade*—not force—aluminum into the shape you want. The persuasion is accomplished by zillions of taps with the ball of a ballpeen hammer. But if you start banging away like the village blacksmith, you'll soon be in trouble, beating the metal to death. Nice and easy does it. My hammer head weighs 10 ounces and my stroke is about 1-1/2 inches. All I do is lift the hammer and let it fall

Third, you must anneal the aluminum often. As you tap away, you'll get a feel for the metal. Keep the tapping velocity constant, and when you notice that the metal is not moving as much as when you started, or that the hammer is bouncing off the work, stop and anneal the work. Annealing is, of course, heating the

aluminum to make it softer, more flexible and less brittle.

### Forming the Bump

Draw an outline of the base of the bump you want to form onto a rectangular piece of 3/4-inch plywood that is at least an inch larger around than the shape of the bump

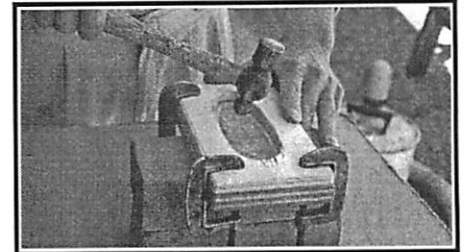


Photo 1. When forming aluminum bumps, the metal is clamped between a pair of plywood boards that have a hole the shape of the bump cut out of them.

to be formed. Cut the shape out and round the edge of the hole on one side. Then trace the hole onto a piece of 1/2-inch plywood the same size as the 3/4-inch piece. Cut the hole in the 1/2-inch piece of wood 1/4 inch larger all around. Make a sandwich of the aluminum and the two pieces of plywood, with the 1/2-inch piece on top, then clamp it all together with C-clamps as shown in Photo 1.

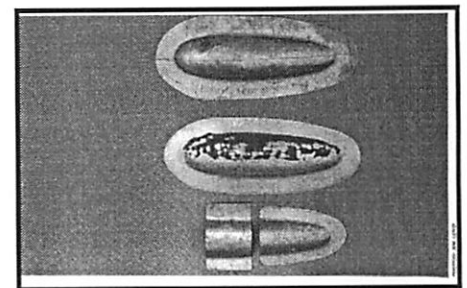


Photo 2. The top bump shows the cracks that develop if the aluminum is not heated often enough or if one spot is hammered too much.

Now you can start tapping around the edge of the hole, working your way toward the center. In no time, the surface will be covered with dents. Keep tapping in a circular direction, concentrating on flattening out the dents. Don't tap in any one spot more than a couple times. You are trying to stretch the whole surface (continued on page 8)

simultaneously, so if one spot gets too hard too soon, it will start to crack as shown in Photo 2.

Annealing aluminum is easy, but tricky. First, put a layer of soot on the bump with a candle or acetylene torch. Then carefully burn it off with a propane or acetylene torch. Always keep the torch moving in a circular direction. A back-and-forth motion builds up extra heat at the ends of each stroke and may melt the bump. Remember, the more you stretch the aluminum, the thinner it is. Heat the thick flange and sides first and let the heat flow up to the thinner top so a minimal amount of heat is applied directly to the thin areas.

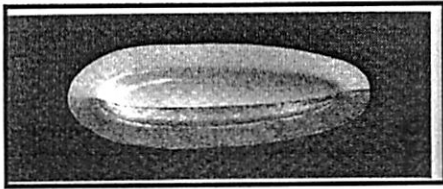


Photo 3. An unfinished aluminum bump looks a little rough until puttied, sanded smooth and painted.

Let the bump cool, then start tapping again. As the wall of the bump gets thinner, you have to tap more lightly. When you finally have it in the shape you want, use a smooth, hard surface (vise jaws) as an anvil and gently tap out as many of the remaining bumps as you wish. I say "as you wish" because you can spend a lot of time smoothing out the bump. I'm a bit lazy, though, so I usually spread some body putty on the thing and sand it smooth.

Photo 3 shows a bump that has been half-puttied and smoothed. Forming aluminum this way is not as tedious as it sounds. Once I got my act together, I formed, smoothed and painted this bump in about 3 hours.

These are but a few of the ways you can make bumps and scoops yourself. In a future issue we'll continue with several other methods that include working with Plexiglas, paper mache, disposable foam, Ducco cement and cardboard.

## A news item from the AVweb

### CESSNA'S CITATIONJET PROTOTYPE BUYS THE SHOULDER...

Somebody's living right -- maybe all three Cessna engineering test pilots who were aboard the company's original Model 525 CitationJet prototype, N525CJ. Their Experimental ride suffered a complete loss of power on both engines July 9 during a test flight from Wichita's Mid-Continent Airport. The crew successfully landed their newfound glider in the eastbound lanes of Kansas state route 96, a four-lane highway, some five miles northwest of ICT, at about 2:00 p.m. CDT. The crew -- pilot Scott Simpson, copilot Mark Chavez, and flight engineer Trenton Shepherd -- was unhurt.

### ..LITTLE DAMAGE, BUT AN EXCITING LANDING...

AVweb sources tell us that in setting down the CJ, the crew avoided hitting an automobile traveling down K-96, touching down with the left main and nose gear on the pavement, but with the right main gear on the dirt shoulder, narrowly missing a drainage ditch. What little damage was sustained involved dirt and mud ingested into the windmilling right engine, plus minor dents in the right wing leading edge from roadside reflector posts. The initial failure of the motorist to make way for the glidin' Citation, which the driver apparently didn't see until

the last minute, led one wag to suggest the CJ's option list might be fattened a bit by adding an extra-loud horn. Even so, the crew clearly did a great job of putting the plane down safely under difficult circumstances. Nice work, gentlemen.

..AS THE INVESTIGATION BEGINS But, they might still need some help with the post-flight paperwork. Investigators from the NTSB, FAA and Cessna quickly converged on the scene, but it didn't take them long to determine the cause of the flame-out: fuel exhaustion -- the tanks were dry as a bone. Speculation on the cause ranges from a miscalibrated non-standard gauging system to thirstier engines than standard, or both. The unplanned landing brought out more than NTSB and FAA investigators. Cessna quickly dispatched a pumper truck to wash down the contaminated right engine and a Cessna fuel truck then refueled the aircraft. After a careful inspection, the aircraft was permitted to take off from K-96 and fly to Mid-Continent.

*Editor: It happens to the pros too!*





## MY FIRST AND LAST SOLO FLIGHT

You say that on your first solo flight you wrecked a plane, destroyed a chimney and detassled a cornfield? And now your wife has left you, you're grounded, and your instructor is in the nuthouse? Is that what's bothering you, Bunky?

My ultralight flight instructor's white hair, and 3 layers of bags under his eyes belies the fact that he is only 34 years old. He's really a wonderful person, and I almost feel guilty about his being committed to the Hospital for the Mentally Infirm. Let me tell you about the events leading up to his incarceration....

I arrived at the flight park at 5:30 am for my first solo. Conditions were perfect: visibility-200 feet, ceiling-300 feet, and a gusty 35 mph crosswind pulled my white scarf jauntily at a horizontal angle to the WW II leather bomber jacket I'd purchased at G.I. Joes Surplus Store. I felt quite comfortable about going up alone for the first time. After all, hadn't I extended my dual place training in the MX IIA? (Over 100 hours!)

I had my wife discard the empty six pack in the trash can beside the porch while I rang the International Morse Code for "SOS" on the instructors' door buzzer-three shorts, three longs, three shorts. He appeared very quickly, haggard looking with a pink bra in his right hand and only one leg in his polka-dot pajamas. (I've noticed since that many of my unmarried friends answer the door in this fashion at 5:30 in the morning.)

The instructor (we'll call him David) expressed extreme surprise and elation at seeing me two hours earlier than my scheduled arrival time. He was so obviously impressed by my enthusiasm that he told me to go ahead and pull the Eipper MX out of the hangar and preflight it all by myself! (This was a great honor, as this procedure was usually reserved for wives and/or girlfriends.)

My heart thumped audibly beneath my bomber jacket, perhaps from pride, perhaps from anxiety, perhaps from the two Alka Seltzer tablets I'd rinsed down with my last Budweiser. I wheeled the MX out and lined it up with the runway. By sheer luck (or perhaps genius), I found two concrete blocks to wedge into the tubing next to the right wheel to keep the wind from flippin' er over while I did a meticulous preflight inspection. I dutifully strummed all the cables except the two at the back of the wing, which always drooped. These weren't "flying wires." They were to keep the wings from folding up like the Sunday funnies should one smite an immovable object on the ground, David told me. Satisfied that this little bird was indeed flyable, I deftly lifted my left leg over the concrete blocks so as not to touch the "tele-flex" tube that connected the control stick to the rudder. At this moment, at the rear of the plane, my wife decided to whip the elevator up with both hands to test the integrity of the hinge pins. The stick shot back smartly, rapping me in the nether regions. In an instant, my posture dropped from flamingo to sitting duck. The merciful howl of the wind obliterated my howl of pain and I dropped gracefully to the ground, pretending to inspect the inflation of the right tire.

At this point David yelled from the house that he'd be out right after he'd wolfed down some breakfast and that I shouldn't do anything till he got there. Now, if this wasn't a challenge being issued, what was it? He obviously wanted to see if I really wanted to solo, so he was pretending to busy his self with "ground stuff," while leaving me with a perfectly safe ultralight in a "prepare-to-go position."

Well, I wasn't going to muff this one! It was apparent to me that this was the old "don't touch anything until I get there-unless you *really* want to" ruse so often used to get wheelchair patients to walk. Accepting the subtle challenge, I waited until I could smell bacon frying, then leap enthusiastically into the MX, bending the tele-flex tube in the process. My wife scrounged up a pitchfork, which I used to bend the fragile tube back into what was almost straightness.

I reached back and pulled the choke lever down. In the same motion I flicked the ignition switch towards the red "on" position. I told the wife to grab the rope handle with both hands and await further instructions. She did so, and on the count of three I elbowed her in the midsection. She folded sharply forward and the 33 hp Rotax roared to life. So sudden was the acceleration that I barely had time to flick the choke lever back up before the little red disc in the plastic tube was up to the twenty line.

What a perfect takeoff run! Between the concrete blocks over the right wheel, a flat tire on the front, and my wife dragging along the left side, the 35 mph crosswind didn't affect the longitudinal stability of the MX at all! At the 600 foot marker, the front wheel rotated off the ground, the two concrete blocks vibrated out of the framework, and my wife let go of the starter rope-all at the same time! I climbed majestically to 30 or 40 feet under full throttle, crabbing away from the hangar but getting ominously closer to David's house. The tail skid snapped off sharply against the chimney of David's house, taking with it one of the tail wires. "What the heck," I thought. "Probably wasn't a flying wire anyway." I did a snappy 90 degree bank just in time to see the instructor exit through the back screen door without benefit of utilizing the hinges thereon. I made a mental note for future reference that from 30 feet one could see scrambled eggs and black coffee spilled down the front of red polka-dot pajamas. I made several passes down the runway at a safe altitude of 45 feet and could see David waving his arms wildly in encouragement. On the second pass, even at full throttle, I could discern my wife lying on her back at the 600 foot marker while David fanned her face with a copy of the Skywriter News Letter.

Everything looked good. Cylinder head temperature had flattened out at 600 degrees F, airspeed was reading 75 mph before the little red thing popped out of the top and back through the prop, and only three wires had snapped (as a result of the outside loop). By now a large crowd  
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*Solo - continued from page 9*

had gathered down on the ground, all of them dancing around and waving their arms. I knew I was doing really good, but this was ridiculous. I've never seen such celebrating!

Only one thing remained undone to cap off this perfect solo: a story book landing. Remembering that most students use too much runway on their solo landing, I cut the switch 3 miles out. I couldn't rely on the spoilerons to slow me as they had been brushed off during an inverted fly-over on my forth pass, so a deadstick landing seemed to be my best bet. The engine sputtered, shuddered, and then fell dead silent. Only the wind through the remaining wires reminded me that I was flying at all. My crab angle was such that, by looking directly down the bottom of the left wing, I could see the grass strip coming toward me.

At about a half a mile out, I could see that I was going to arrive slightly short of the runway-perhaps 200 maybe 300 yards-and

would have to restart the engine. I flicked the switch back on and reached up for the pull handle. I was amazed at how easily it pulled down a full 24 inches without hardly any effort at all. I was equally amazed at the explosion under my left wing as the ballistic recovery chute shot out of its canister. I barely had time to pull the ends of my seat belt across my lap when the 6-g mid-air stop snapped the remaining upper wing wires. The nose shot above the horizon like a rocket as the big canopy blossomed. I remember seeing the strobe light shoot past the toes of my Converse tennies and go flying toward the blue, trailing broken electrical wires like a gutted tadpole.

The BRS chute brought down the remains of the MX more or less in the center of a haystack beside just short of the runway. (I made another mental note to write the manufacturer about utilizing a steerable canopy on future models. This would certainly be helpful for novice pilots.) The wind pulled the canopy and wreckage into the adjoining hayfield while I watched, unscathed, from my lofty vantage point

atop the haystack. The chute finally stopped when it wrapped itself around the John Deere tractor which was pulling the E.M.S. truck out of the mud. Thus ended my solo and alas, like the ephemeral mayfly, my one day aviation career.

Since then, my wife has left me for a carnival guy who shoots himself out of a cannon. She left a farewell note saying she needed to relax. I owe 60 more payments to the bank for the loan I took out to cover damages incurred during my solo flight. David's relatives sold off his flight park and planes to defray the cost of his internment. I tried to visit him at the "cookie farm" last month, but the very sight of me made him violent and he had to be restrained by three orderlies. Transport Canada revoked his instructor's license and the Supreme Court ruled 9-0 to never allow me to fly anything larger than a hand tossed paper plane weighing up to, but not exceeding, one ounce. I do, however, think that the "parental supervision" clause was a bit over kill!

Anonymous

## Another Great Fly-in at Kirkby Field

Saturday, July 11 turned out to be a perfect day for flying. Coincidentally it was also Bob Kirkby's 5<sup>th</sup> annual fly-in pancake breakfast. Pilots arrived with family and friends via fourteen aircraft, a dozen cars and three motorcycles.

This was definitely one of the best yet. The variety of airplanes was remarkable - Beaver, Rebel, Renegade, HiMax, MiniMax, Merlin, Quickie, Cessna 150, Cessna 140, Aeronca Champ, Challenger, plus those that are based at the field.



*Fourteen airplanes line the ramp while flyers and families eat pancakes and sausages in the main hangar.*



*Pilots caught telling tales between a Cessna 150 and a Cessna 140*