



Skywriter



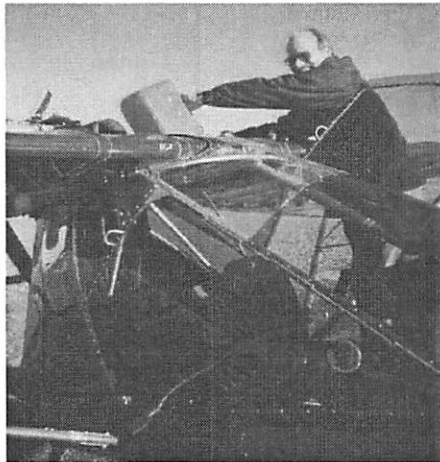
Monthly Newsletter of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club

August 2000

From The Cockpit

Well it's turned out to be a fantastic summer for flying. We've had our fair share of storms but for the most part everything is dried up ready for flying the next day. Wilf Stark finally dragged me out a few weeks ago in his RANS. I haven't been flying for a few years so it was some motivation to get my airplane done.

The RANS turned out to be a really good performer. It was a really hot evening and both of us made for a pretty full load but the airplane handled really well. The Rotax 582 seemed to have more than enough power to push us around the sky with ease. I'd like to go out on a cool day to see how this airplane really handles.



Wilf Stark fuels up the Rans.

We also had a bit of trouble that evening with a tire. When we showed up the right tire had gone flat on the plane. Wilf had talked to Ed D'Antoni about it previously and they thought just adding air would solve the problem. We pumped up the tire

and then went for a 40 minute flight. Upon returning Wilf offered to let me shoot a touch and go (which I admit was almost perfect). As soon as the rear wheels touched the nose instantly came down too and I had a really hard time holding it on the runway. Full power was not letting us accelerate so we pulled the throttle causing us to stop instantly. Looking out my door the right tire was again completely flat.

I have to say I'm glad this happened in a trike and not a tailwheel otherwise I'm sure there would have been some real entertainment that night. I'm thinking now maybe I need to turn my volksplane into a trike as well. I'm also thinking that maybe that tire was flat for a reason and we should have looked into it a little more closely.

Another unfortunate accident was the crash of the Concorde in Paris. While it's still early in the investigation it appears that they never had a chance from the beginning. With all the other political issues that

the Concorde has with noise and pollution this may turn out to be a very sad ending to an aircraft which had a nearly flawless career.

Another accident that happened in southern Alberta recently was a Stinson having to

make a forced approach and overturning after fuel exhaustion. Reading an article about insurance in AvWeb recently (<http://www.avweb.com>) the author discussed that while most accidents are forgivable (with a premium increase) making a claim based on fuel exhaustion can exclude you for life from ever obtaining insurance again. This is definitely something I'm going to continue to be vigilant about.

Also on the news yesterday Transport Canada has released some new safety figures. While overall the number of collisions is down (both air to air and ground to ground collisions) the number of near misses has risen from about 50 in 1997 to over 200 last year. Keep your eyes open, especially where we fly. I frequently see small twins and fast singles skirting the control zone near our airports and at 150 knots they're not looking for a 45mph ultralight on final to a grass runway they can't see.

Finally, Transport Canada is still on schedule to bring down passenger carrying by the fall. If you have 50 hours and don't yet have your Ultralight Instructor rating then now would be a good time to get it. Anyone with an instructor rating prior to the new rulings will be grandfathered into the new rules. Wayne at Blue Yonder was advertising a special in June so give him a call if you're thinking about this rating.

Have a good summer and I'll see you all in September. →

For Sale

Murphy Renegade Spirit - 260 TTSN, Rotax 532, 60 SMOH, always hangared, ASI, VSI, Tach, T/C, ALT, CHT, water temp, intercom, two helmets, 3-blade Ivoprop, 80mph cruise, Red & White Endura, hole covers, \$25,000. Bob Kirkby 569-9541 (7/00)

Three Point Restraints - A local supplier has a surplus of new heavy-duty three point harnesses. They are available in any color as long as it's YELLOW. Cost of the harness is \$50 + GST. Belts feature a military style release. Interested parties should contact Kim Skulsky, 208-2813 skuller57@home.com (5/00)

Wanted - An ultralight for \$5000 or less, in good flying order, strut braced, and registered to the person selling the plane. Rex McCarthy 403-504-1962 (5/00)

Beaver RX-550 - Rotax 503 dual carb, Warp Drive prop, electric start, enclosure kit, TTAF 625, TTE 105, \$9900. Victor Thiessen 403-546-4449 (4/00)

Bushmaster - 1986, 2-seat, dual-control, fully enclosed cabin, 503 Rotax, ground adj prop, 510hrs, complete with crop spraying equipment, always hangared, \$12000. Ken Giesbrecht 403-572-3294 (3/00)

Skis & floats - Powder coated skis for tri-gear or tail-dragger \$850, floats \$1500. Don Leonzio 250-427-2046 (3/00)

Hanger - One half share in indus hanger for sale, 38 ft door facing east call Ray Waller at 274 4388 or cell 540 2492 (3/00)

Flying-Flea HM-293 - Famous MIGNET Aircraft redesigned by GRUNBERG as an Ultralight. More than 100 flying. French plans and brochure with English translation, \$110.00, mailing included. Paul PONTOIS, 1890 Rang des Chutes, STE-URSULE (Quebec) J0K 3M0 (3/00)

Yarrow Arrow- Enclosed heated cab, dual control side by side seating, 55 HRS TT on new 503 dual CDI dual carb, 100 CH Alpha/100 radio, alum. skis, hangared. \$13,000. Located in Lac La Biche AB. PH: 780-798-2404 FAX: 798-3011, e-mail: rckb@telusplanet.net (1/00)

MiniMax - Rotax 447, GSC Ground adjustable prop, full panel, always hangared, only 115 hours since new. \$9,500. OBO. Dale 293-3826. (12/99)

Forward ads to Bob Kirkby 569-9541.

Ads from the St. Albert Flying Club July Newsletter:

1998 Fisher Avenger - Rotax 503, dual carb. Open/closed cockpit options. Wheels/skis. Always hangared. Asking \$9,000. Damien Belanger 780-939-6321.

1986 Bushmaster II - ultralight, high cabin, side by side seating, dual controls, heater. 130 TTSN. Rotax 503, SCSI, 120 TTE. Complete manuals, drawings, & logs. Never a trainer, only 2 pilots. Very good condition, \$16,500 OBO 780-459-0813 or e-mail tva@compusmart.ab.ca

Maule tailwheel - 6" pneumatic, \$100 firm. Simon 780-963-0737

Spinner - for three bladed prop \$50.00. Bill Schroffel 780-455-6557.

1994 Snowbird II - 180 hrs. TT, 618 Rotax, wheel & skis, \$26,500. Bill Schroffel 780-455-6557.

Hirth F-23 - used 6 hrs, 40 Hp, \$2,800.00 Dan 780-452-2491

Three bladed GSC prop - 64", almost new, \$500. Contact Viv 780-460- 8753.

1/2 Share - in "Goldfinch" advanced UL. Aerobatic, Rotax 503, electric start, brakes, sliding canopy, \$10,000.00 Dan 780-452-2491.

REDUCED! 60" x 38 Culver wood prop (left hand) drilled for Rotax. \$250.00 Contact Viv Branson 780-460-8753.

Flying Events

Aug 5-6 - Lethbridge International Airshow featuring the Snowbirds. See their web site for information: www.lis.ab.ca/cosmos/airshow.html

Aug 13 - Beiseker fly-in breakfast, 8:00 - 11:00 am, classic/antique cars and cycles.

Sept 16 - Rocky Mountain House fly-in breakfast/lunch and airshow. Contact Ken Fowler 403-845-4742.

Skywriter

Skywriter is the official newsletter of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club and is published 12 times per year. Forward your articles and letters to:

Editor: Bob Kirkby 569-9541
e-mail: kirkby@telusplanet.net

Assistant-editor: Bernie Kespe (see below)

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 7:00 pm, at the Northeast Armoury, 1227 - 38 Avenue NE.

President: Brian Vasseur 226-5281
e-mail: vasseurb@cadvision.com

Vice-President: Stu Simpson 255-6998
e-mail: simpsont@cadvision.com

Secretary: Bernie Kespe 255-7419
e-mail: kespeb@cadvision.com

Treasurer: Carl Forman 283-3855
e-mail: formanc@cadvision.com

Director: Dan Mitchell 238-4254
e-mail: mitchell@cadvision.com

Past President: Wilf Stark 935-4248
e-mail: wstark@compuserve.com

Visit the CUFC web site:
www.cadvision.com/cufc/

Woody's Pusher

Article by Ernie Hoblyn

Photos by Ed Hicks

Unusual is probably one of the nicer descriptions for the Woody's Pusher G-BSFV depending of course on your viewpoint. It is certainly unconventional, and when I first saw it at a fly-in at Henstridge I recall thinking it had to be some kind of amphibian.

Amphibian it isn't, but an interesting airplane it certainly is. The pusher configuration has become a bit more popular recently, mainly in microlight form. This, allied with a parasol wing arrangement and a fuselage which looks like one half of a catamaran, attracts attention wherever it lands. Mike Wells, its owner, seems to spend half his life explaining what it is and the history behind it, so it's definitely not the aircraft for someone who wants to get around unobtrusively.

When I first saw it five years ago it was not long after Mike had bought it. At the end of last year I was surprised and delighted to find that he had moved to the West Country and it would be parked in the hangar beside my plane. I was even more delighted when he offered me the chance to have a flight in it.

The pre-flight check is made easy by the fact that everything is out in the open. The engine is uncowled and



has removed the wheel spats, so inspection of the wheels, tires and braking system is a l s o straightforward.

The fuel tank is mounted on the wing centre section in front of the engine. This is not the most convenient of locations, but it

does mean that the fuel is gravity-fed as opposed to having to be pumped up an unacceptable distance from the fuselage.

mounted on the pylon to which the wing is attached, so oil leaks and exhaust blows, which could remain unnoticed for weeks on other types, are immediately apparent. For shorter pilots the oil dipstick and filler tube are difficult to get at, requiring a stretch up and over the trailing edge of the left wing

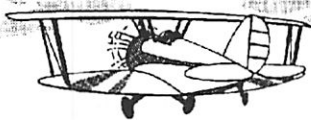
Checking the rest of the airframe, is simple and straightforward. The wings, which have wooden spars and ribs with fabric covering, are at eye level (assuming your eyes are at the right height), so any damage to the fabric or problem with the control cables would be obvious. The fuselage is of simple steel tube construction, again with fabric covering. The fin, rudder, tail plane and elevators are quite low but still easily inspected, as is the elevator actuating system, a neat bell-crank and push-rod arrangement under the tail plane. Mike

To get into the machine I had to stand on the spring-steel undercarriage and climb into the front cockpit. Solo flight is from the front cockpit only. Once inside and settled in the well-cushioned seat it was time for me to get acquainted with the controls and instruments. The instrumentation is basic, as befits an aircraft which can only be flown VFR. There is no seat adjustment, but the stick and the rudder pedals all felt comfortable for me—but then Mike and I are about the same size. I would imagine a very tall person might find it a bit cramped. The throttle quadrant is on the left-hand side, where all good throttles should be. The only other engine control is the carb heat, which is under the seat on the left-hand side. The rudder pedals are almost invisible under the instrument panel, but they also work the tail wheel steering and have toe brakes fitted to them.

Mike had already explained that there was no elevator trim fitted, something he intends to rectify when he renews the fabric on the aircraft this winter. For the short flight I did this is not a problem, but on long flights Mike has a Bungee which he hitches between his lap-strap and the stick. This provides just enough back pressure to overcome the very slight nose-down attitude which becomes tedious after a while.

Having got myself acquainted with all the controls it was time to fly. (continued on page 4)

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Woody's - continued from page 3

The "Armstrong" method of starting is employed, so Mike pumped the primer, which is conveniently mounted near the engine, and swung the prop to suck in the mixture. I then switched the mags on, he gave it a hefty swing and the engine started instantly.

Taxiing is an unusual sensation. The spring steel undercarriage is very bouncy and the plane sways laterally as well as fore and aft, a bit like being at sea. Sitting so far in front of everything else reinforces that nautical theme, giving a feeling not unlike being on the prow of a small yacht. Directional control using the rudder pedals and brakes is very good. The drill for take-off is to hold the stick back and keep the tail on the ground until the rudder becomes effective at thirty knots, then ease the stick forward slightly until the plane flies itself off at fifty knots.

Best climb speed is sixty knots and at that speed the VSI was showing 1,000 fpm climb, a touch optimistic in my opinion. I made it more like 600 fpm, and that would seem to fit in with Mike's comment that with two hefty men in, it



doesn't actually climb, it goes straight and waits for the curvature of the Earth to take the ground away.

I leveled out at 2,000 feet and started to get the feel of the machine. The immediate impression is one of floating through the air in a canoe. The nose slopes away in front of you, so the forward and downward view is wonderful, in some ways even better than that from a helicopter. You almost feel like a disembodied spirit floating over a green patchwork of fields—truly magical. Being so far ahead of the C of G there is



a slight feeling of being moved from side to side during yawing maneuvers, but I couldn't really detect the similar up and down motion during pitch changes. All controls were effective and reasonably well harmonized, with the ailerons being by far the heaviest. Although the ailerons are neither Friese type nor differentially operated, there was no apparent adverse yaw.

The power-off stall was very gentle and could only be achieved with the stick hard back against the stop. There is no pre-stall buffet and when the stall does occur, at 42 knots, the only obvious sign is a decrease in airspeed and an increase in vertical speed. A slightly faster pull-back on the stick produces a definite nose drop but no marked wing drop. Once in the stall the aircraft is totally controllable, and using the rudder to pick up any slight wing drop, it could be 'walked' all the way to the ground. Spins are not permitted, and with such a docile stall I would imagine it would take some really ham-fisted handling to make it spin.

The only really unusual feature of the aircraft is the pitch change with changes in power settings. Due to the high thrust line, pitch changes are the reverse of what might be expected in a more conventional aircraft, i.e. power on produces a pitch down and power off a pitch up. Having said that, the pitch changes are not dramatic and can easily be countered without excessive stick movements.

Now for the tricky bit... getting it back on the ground in one piece! The final approach is flown at 63 knots, power off at the threshold and let it sink onto the runway. Mike had told me that the speed decays quickly with power off, but on my first attempt I went round, feeling that the speed was too high and the 400-metre runway at Watchford Farm too short to take the chance on a windless day. On my second attempt I took the power off a fraction sooner and it dropped gently onto the runway exactly as Mike had told me it would.

So, what are my feelings about the Woody's? I would have to say that it is not an airplane to suit everyone's taste, but then that could be said about many a good aircraft. It's draughty, noisy and it isn't everyone who enjoys hand-swinging their engine before they can go flying. My personal feeling is that flying is about having fun, not necessarily about getting from A to B in supreme comfort and as quickly as possible. This is a plane from which Mike gets a tremendous amount of fun and having flown it I can understand why. The view is exceptional, the handling perfectly safe and the general flying characteristics are comparable to many similar machines, such as a Cub for instance.

Although the useful load would allow for two standard-sized people, full fuel and thirty or forty pounds for luggage, in practice there is little storage space and the rate of climb (or lack of it) at full-load has already been mentioned. However, Mike has certainly proved that it is feasible to go touring in it, albeit solo. In the two weekends before I flew it he had visited Seppe in Holland and the

(continued on page 5)

Woody's - continued from page 4

PFA Rally at Cranfield; the following week he was off to the RSA Rally at Epinal and so on throughout the summer.

Specifications:

Span: 29 ft
Length: 20 ft 5 in
Height: 6 ft 3 in
Empty weight: 720 lb
Max weight: 1,200 lb
Load: 480 lb

Fuel capacity: 12 gallons

Performance:

Vne: 99 kt
Cruise: 75 kt
Stall: 42 kt
Range: 170 nm
Climb: 600 fpm
Engine: 85 hp Continental.

Plans for the Woody's Pusher are still available from Vintage Ultralight and

Lightplane Assoc. You can visit them at their web site: <http://www.vula.org> or e-mail Scott Perkins at: 2scott@bellsouth.net

Orders for plans are payable to Scott Perkins and send to:

Scott Perkins
V.U.L.A. Vintage Ultralight and Lightplane Assoc.
74 Brookwood Dr.
Marietta, GA 30064
(770) 973-3860

Member Profile

by Wilf Stark

It's been a while since we have profiled one of our long-time CUFC members. Bob Kirkby qualifies in spades, and is in fact one of the founding members, who was instrumental in the formation of our club back in 1983. He also served a term as President in 84-86.

Bob had built a Mirage Ultralight in '82 (rag-tube UI, with a Kawasaki 440 on a boom-tube above cockpit), and put over 90 fun hours on this airplane, until the bug hit him to sell the Mirage and build something more substantial.

In 1989, a Murphy Renegade Kit seemed the ideal choice. After only 750 hours of build-time, Bob was able to enjoy a plane that he felt was even more fun to fly, a great performer, extremely agile, yet easy to fly (I'm quoting him directly). Those of us who didn't join the club until more recently, should have no trouble recognizing his plane: it's gorgeous on the ground, looking like it was built just yesterday, with that red and white Endura finish barely worn, and it's wonderful to watch in the air. Whenever Bob flies with a group of us 60-65 mph speed demons, he's the one doing the frequent 360s and perimeter patrol, as that seems a more comfortable way to accompany a slower gaggle of UIs in a Renegade whose cruising speed is 80 mph. He has so far put over 250 enjoyable hours on the Renegade, which has even included the perfunctory "532 silence, land in

rough field, flip plane over after successful landing, re-build 2 wings and one engine" moment that many of us hear about, but may not yet have experienced.

In the early 90's Bob decided to continue his flying education and expand his skills. Gaining his conventional license in 1993, with considerable time built up in Cherokees, he decided to buy a Cherokee 235 of his own, when an older 'cream puff' came along about 6 years ago. Since then he has put over 210 trouble-free hours on this airplane, which has included quite a few long-distance flights visiting other provinces and states, on both sides of the Rockies. In his day-job, running a successful computer cable manufacturing facility with 65 employees, he's found quite a few occasions where a business trip in his Cherokee, with 2 people aboard, made more sense than squishing into a commercial jet. Volunteering his time as corporate pilot for such purposes probably was more than ok for fun factor, even without bonus pay.

For the past 12 years, Bob has also put in selfless hours every month, as editor and publisher of our fine Newsletter. For those that think this is not such a big deal, imagine being asked the following by your employer: "I know you really like your job around here, and we sure do appreciate you, so, would you please give us one extra full working day every month? You will? Great! Please make that on a weekend, as we can't spare you from your other duties during the week. Wonderful! Oh, by the way, there's no budget for this, so thank you in advance for doing it for free. Don't worry, it will only be for 12 or so years - you'll get used to it!"

Somehow, Bob finds the time to run a company, maintain a wonderful aerodrome that is home to several of our Ultralights (Chestermere Aerodrome (Kirkby Field) in the Flight Supplement), produce the Skywriter each month, get in some flying time, and balance it all.

I had asked Bob to comment on how the club has evolved over the past 17 years: "We started by getting UL pilots together to promote safety, and interface with UPAC and TC. We then additionally became a fun flying organization, with competition fly-ins organized by the club, as well as social events. Lately, we seem to have become more of a builder's club and a social club".

On a final note, Bob feels that if there is going to be another Ultralight in his future, it would differ from the Renegade, by being enclosed.

Since he's far from finished having fun yet, we all will continue to benefit from his sharing. Still Waters run deep!

Thank you Bob! →



Bob Kirkby & his Renegade

CUFC Members for 2000

Light Engine Service	780 452 4664	Fedaj, Ted	403 897 2117	Myslawchuk, Ivan	403 533 3972
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Beck, Fred	250 787 7098	Haakenson, Mel		Pook, Jim	780 873 3953
Beck, Ted	403 253 2220	Harris, G.b. Jo	780 495 7449	Procyshen, Dave	403 257 8064
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Cheung, Danny		Kirkman, Chris	403 280 1843	Simpson, Stu	403 255 6998
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Colborne, J.r.	519 864 4663	Kooyman, Bob	403 281 2621	Skulsky, Kim	403 208 2813
Corner, Jim	403 288 8924	Leonzio, Don	604 427 2046	Stark, Wilf & Lynn	403 935 4248
Crane, Lenora	403 292 5227	Macdonald, Gerry	403 275 6880	Tanner, Casey	403 276 6837
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				Vasseur, Brian	403 226 5281
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The Pilot's Desiderata

by Thomas F. Legg

Discover your far horizons; but embrace the sky softly, quietly, so that others of your kind may follow.

Know your limitations from moment to moment and be humble when the elements are against you.

Accept advice from those before you, seeking out their truths.

Use your temper as a catalyst to keep you advancing; guarding it with vigilance though, lest you be obliged to bite your tongue.

Leave your mistakes behind you, noting their lessons as part of your tuition for learning.

If you quit - and will want to - beginning again will be lonely.

You cannot know the colour of truth unless you wear the cloth; therefore let honesty itch your mind, gleaming conspicuous in the eyes.

If you become hostage to the fear of the unknown, challenge it with tenacity; keeping in mind, however, that only a fool is fearless.

Remember how lucky you are to see and touch the sky, the blind may only dream.

Be the opportunist, the forever hesitant are losers.

In each of us there is a conflict - daydreaming versus reality. May dreaming prod your curiosity, but reality wield the sword.

Expect the unexpected. It will develop an awareness for Murphy's Law; if something can go wrong - it will.

Your time on this earth is a perpetual flight

plan cancelled with your passing; you are wise then. to spend each day as though it were your last among those of the living.

You are entitled to complain; use maturity if you do.

With your wings you will receive wisdom, courage and joy, but moreover you will have joined the college of a thousand friendships; never forget them.

Fly at the wind from every quarter; climb high, hesitate and tumble. Yet above all, know when it is time to fold your fragile wings. Remember you are not God-like, but a mere mortal, vulnerable - a pilot, and that is world enough.

- Submitted by Ken McNeill and reprinted with permission of the author.

One Pilot's Opinion

by Bob Kirkby

More ads

On page two of this issue you will see Classified Ads from the St. Albert Flying Club's July newsletter. Marty Slater, editor of the SAFC newsletter has agreed to send them to me monthly for inclusion. This will give Skywriter readers more shopping options as well as extending the reach of their ads. I am hoping Marty will reciprocate and run our ads in.

Kirkby Field

Our annual fly-in breakfast was somewhat hampered by weather this year. We had strong winds and rain in the early morning but it cleared up by 10:30. With the Pine Lake tornado less than a day old nobody wanted to tempt fate and fly in. Nevertheless, about 40 people drove in and enjoyed lots of food and hangar flying.

There was, however, one fly-in customer. About 11:30 Buzz Modsley arrived in his newly acquired Ralley. We all enjoyed having a close look at this sparkling aeroplane.

Thanks to everyone who did come for making it a fun morning in spite of the weather.

Sign In

There is a Visitor Log book in the pilot's lounge at Kirkby Field. Although we've had many aviators through in the few weeks it has been there, nobody has signed-in. Please sign-in when you land so I can get a feel for the amount of traffic using the facilities. →



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Ultralights Across the Rockies

by Allan Botting

The Calgary Ultralight Flying Club chose a trip to Castlegar, B.C. for this year's cross-country adventure. The trip was a very ambitious project for ultralight aircraft and we all knew from the outset that good weather would be vital.

On Monday, June 26th, a flight of three ultralight aircraft, with call signs Dragonfly 1, 2 and 3, departed Chestermere-Kirkby Field east of Calgary, and headed for High River. Four more club members followed as ground crew. The pilots planned to top up with fuel at High River then fly west and cross the Continental Divide at the south end of Kananaskis Country near the Highwood Pass. This would have put them in the north end of the Elk Valley about 45 miles north of the Sparwood-Elk Valley airport.

However, the cloud shrouded peaks along the Divide called for a change of plans. Elmer Dyck in one of the ground vehicles contacted Flight Service and learned Pincher Creek's AWOS was showing an east wind at 6 knots. How often is there a light, favourable tail wind from the east going through the Crowsnest Pass? Perhaps one day a year and that was the day! It looked like the Dragonflies could enter the Rockies via the Crowsnest. All aircraft and ground crew turned south and headed to Pincher Creek for the next fuel stop.

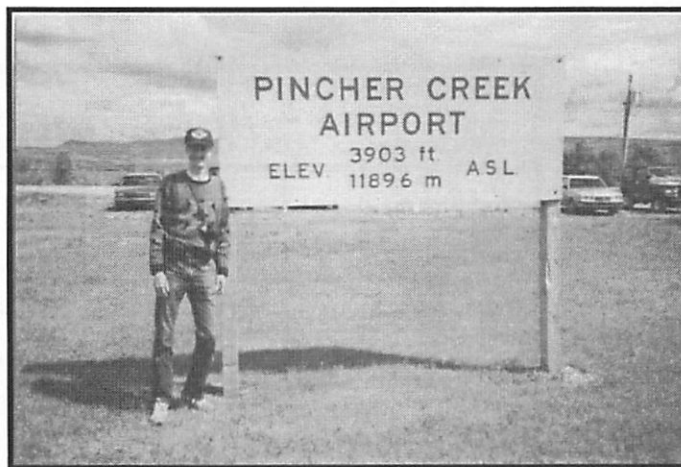
While all this was going on I was flying my Challenger II from Invermere to Elko in the south end of B.C.'s Columbia Valley. I wanted to bring my Challenger back to Calgary because I'd get to fly it more often than if it were hangared near our property in B.C. It'd definitely be more fun flying it back with other CUFC members, especially if I got to

Calgary via Castlegar.

I was resting, having a pleasant nap, under a tree beside Elko's grass strip, waiting for the Dragonflies. Along came Stu Simpson in his Hi-Max, Carl Foreman and his Minimax, and Glen Bishell with his

Bushmaster. We then had a two-hour wait while the ground crew caught up. Apparently, while in Lundbreck, one of the ground vehicles blew a tire, which delayed them for a full hour. We were anxious for their arrival, and our subsequent departure, as we saw thunderstorms developing to the northwest between us and our next stop, Cranbrook.

Our ground crew, consisting of Adrian Anderson, Elmer Dyck, Ivan Myslawchuk, and Bruce Piepgrass, eventually arrived. Ivan was driving his motor home and Adrian's van hauled a trailer with a slip tank full of gasoline.



Bruce Piepgrass relaxing in Pincher Creek

At about 3:00 p.m., after fueling up, we made for Cranbrook. The afternoon CBs



Glen Bishell and Alan Botting over the Columbia Valley

were still growing and they gave us some rain showers to dodge. The afternoon weather caused me a bit more concern than the other Dragonflies. Convective turbulence, or any other type for that matter, has been no friend to my Challenger and me, especially with the plane's large wing area and light weight. But Ian Coristine (Mr. Challenger of Canada) has counselled me to go up and accustom myself to these conditions as the airplane has shown exceptional strength and capability in turbulence. But as he said there is one weak link and that's the comfort and experience level of the component between the seat and the stick.

The most important lesson for mountain flying is to have favourable weather and, if possible, do all your flying in the morning when the air is smoother. Calm air is so much more enjoyable and the scenery in the morning light can be fantastic.

We did our first overnight in Cranbrook. The group went out for Chinese food at a restaurant that offered interestingly enough, Calgary Ginger Beef. But we were all too hungry to wonder why it was different from normal ginger beef.

The next morning we met at the Cranbrook airport and eventually took off (continued on page 9)

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at 7:20 a.m. to Creston, our first fuel stop for the day. We thoroughly enjoyed a calm hour-long flight along highway 3, passing over Moyie Lake. We made the most of this stunning mountain morning and landed at Creston to await our ground crew.

Note also that the ground crewers were all having a good time on the trip because they were in contact with us on the radio (most of the time), thanks to the antennas that club member Gerry MacDonald fabricated for the trip. Each one also took turns flying with Glen Bishell in his two-place Bushmaster (all the ground crew are rated UL pilots). The crew also looked on the trip as a learning experience for their future participation in cross-country flying.

For an ultralight cross-country trip a ground crew with fuel and other equipment is absolutely invaluable. A ground crew can carry fuel, tools and other equipment the airplanes just don't have room for. They also provide ground transport at each destination. Frankly, our ground crew was the glue that held the whole thing together. Thanks, guys.

From Creston, we formed up and headed to the highest mountain crossing of our trip. The Kootenay Pass, between Creston and Salmo, is nearly 6000 feet ASL, but we climbed to a bit more than 7000 feet going over the top. There was still plenty of



The Kootenay Pass taken by Stu Simpson.

snow on the peaks. We soon passed over the airport at Salmo, which the charts show as being closed. Apparently, the strip is now part of the local golf course. However, we're told there's a sign on the course advising golfers to clear the area if they see a plane circling low overhead. Makes me wonder just how closed the strip really is.

Travelling on to Castlegar we enjoyed a very unique and wonderful view. We were westbound over the Salmo-Castlegar pass when we suddenly found ourselves looking down at the airport and town nearly a mile below at 1600 feet. The approach was interesting, with a rapid descent required. What a beautiful location for a town and a challenging location for an airport!

Stu's father, Lionel, met us at the airport. He and wife Sandy very kindly provided us with both a barbecue supper and accommodation for the night on their beautiful riverside acreage.

Another observation we noted was that we were met at each airport by friendly people who came to see our aircraft, talk airplanes, and offer any assistance we might need. The flight service stations at Cranbrook and Castlegar were also helpful. No doubt, the sound of our Rotax



Alan Botting prepares for departure in his Challenger.

engines backed-up our claim to being Dragonflies!

The next morning, bright and early, we started making that long climb back up through the passes. Stu and Glen went through at 7000 feet again, but Carl and I climbed to 8000 plus for the return to Creston. Even near 8500 feet the Rotax, with non-altitude compensating carburetors, performed very well, although our CHT & EGT temperatures were lower due to the richer mixture. Our ultralights climbed to altitude very adequately, probably matching a Cessna 172 in rate of climb. During the trip our average cruising speed was 60 mph and my Rotax was turning only 5000 rpm, resulting in a fuel consumption of a little over 3 gal. Per hr.

Refueled once again at Creston, we departed to Cranbrook for the next overnight stay. We enjoyed another light tail wind and arrived in Cranbrook as the afternoon thunderstorms chased us in from the west. I've heard Cranbrook Airport is called the crosswind capital of Canada and we had the experience of those sudden wind changes. But for me the turbulence was becoming much less of a concern and more of a challenge as my experience grew. Formation flying for picture opportunities was another new experience and the each of the second crewmembers in Glen's Bushmaster (remember they were taking turns) got some fantastic pictures.

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That night we had dinner with CUFC member Bruce Tillen, a true gentleman who owns the Challenger dealership in that part of the world. We all spent a great evening inside talking airplanes while outside the thunder rolled and the rain poured down in sheets.

Thursday morning we took off before 7:00 AM for the return to Calgary. The weather cooperated once more giving us another beautiful morning for flying. Our first stop, after an hour-and-half flight, was Sparwood-Elk Valley at the west end of the Crowsnest Pass. Next came the longest single leg of the journey, the flight back to High River, Alberta.

We popped out of the Crowsnest and looked ahead to the foothills and flatlands of Alberta, suddenly realizing that an emergency landing would be possible almost anywhere below. This flight took two hours at 6000 to 7000 feet with, would you believe, a slight tail wind. What luck, what scenery!

The late morning sun was starting to spawn a few thermals as we followed the newly christened Cowboy Trail (highway 22) through the Porcupine Hills. Soon enough we were back over prairie fields and on final to High River's runway 24. I found on this leg that I was much more relaxed and "going with the flow". At High River we once again awaited the ground crew and the life-blood they carried for our

airplanes.

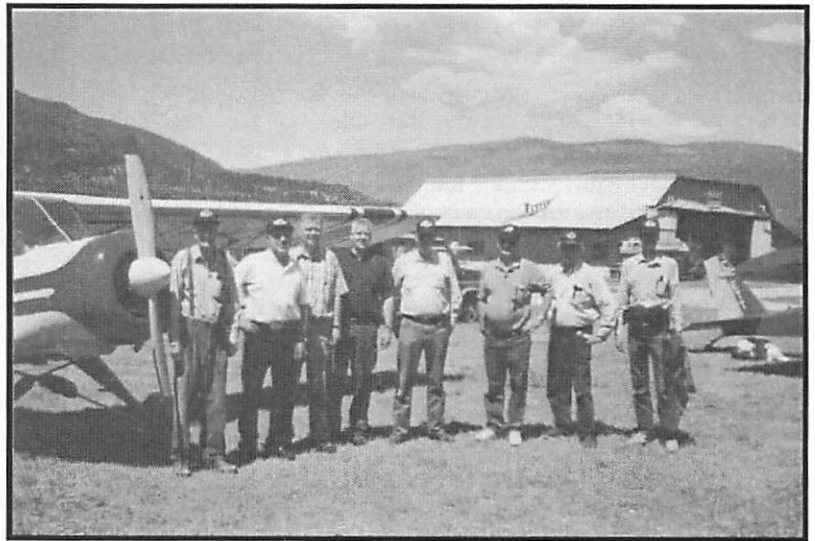
The last leg of our journey was to home, back at Chestermere-Kirkby Field, a 45-minute flight that we completed in a nice, deliberate formation. Our route took us over Indus Airpark. Perhaps the people standing on the field watching our four planes wished they'd come on this cross-country flight. Arriving at Kirkby's was a perhaps bit more exciting for me as I rolled my plane into it's new home, a brand new hangar that Bob Kirkby built especially for the Challenger.

Before Glen Bishell flew north to Carstairs and his home 'drome we closed the hangar doors on our planes and equipment, then held a debriefing. We took a look at

things that worked well, like aircrew-ground crew communication; and things that didn't work so well, like a difficult join-up over Creston on day 2. We decided we'd keep doing the things that worked and improve those that didn't. We'll apply those lessons to all the shorter cross-country trips in the

year ahead, which will, in turn help us prepare for the next big one in 2001.

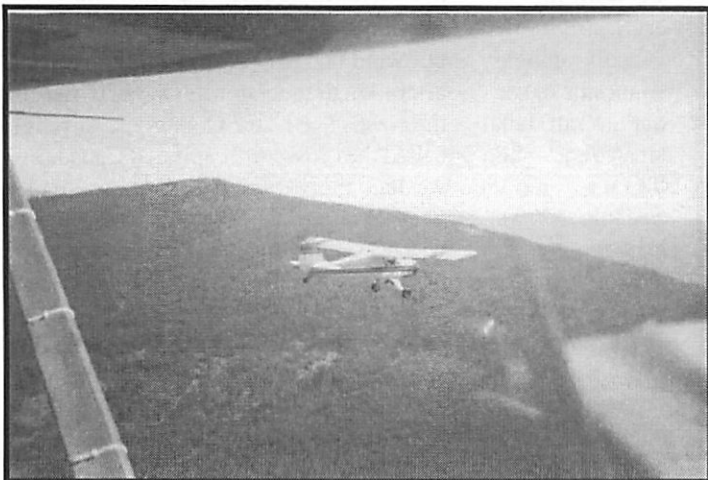
This was a well-organized trip with a lot of



The crew(l to r): Elmer, Adrian, Carl, Stu, Glen, Alan, Ivan, Bruce



Adrian captures the view, with a hand from Elmer.



Glen Bishell taken by Stu.

planning by our flight leader, Stu Simpson, and the other air and ground crew members. The second key element in our success was good teamwork. Everyone stuck to the plans we made and constantly watched out for one another. Nothing replaces good planning and safe operating procedures by the group. We had no problems and only a couple of very minor delays despite each airplane and pilot logging over 14 hours of flight time in four days.

Everybody on the trip felt they were part of a fantastic adventure. I feel privileged to have been part of the flight and to be able to return my Challenger to Calgary in the process. I can't wait until next year! ➔