



Skywriter

Monthly Newsletter of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club

October 2002

From the Cockpit

by Bob Kooyman

I am an avid reader and subscribe to both *Kitplanes* and *Custom Planes*. Recent editions of *Kitplanes* have left me flat. It is all very well to read about some guy's beautiful Lancair IV-P with a custom leather interior and a Walther turbine engine installation but when I go down to Kirkby's or Winter's Indus, I just don't see this type of aircraft buzzing around. I see Hi-Maxes / Mini-Maxes and Beavers and Chinooks. I see an increasing population of an aircraft I think will become very popular; a 1200 lb., two seat, tube and fabric aircraft like the Merlin and the Bushmaster. They are powered by a variety of 2 cycle engines with the odd 4 cycle auto derivative for good measure.

A letter by Clyde Carrier on Page 4 of the August 2002 *Kitplanes* really summed up the feelings of dissatisfaction I had been

Meeting Notice

The October meeting will be held at the NE Armory on October 10th at 7:00pm. Our guest speaker will be Marvin Merritt, talking about his flight across the Atlantic and around Europe in a Comanche.

stewing on. Clyde wrote that he built and flies a Hi-Max. While the lust to be bigger and better is in all of us, a million dollar show plane, or even a \$150,000 fiberglass rocket is not going to happen. He (and I) want to see articles about how to (build, modify, repair, fly) the little planes that can be owned on a disposable income of \$500 per month.

I really want to read article about people doing things with airplanes. I am really looking forward to Stu's article(s) in the *Skywriter* about the Great Air Adventure because it is just the type of flying that validates our choice of aircraft. Stu and our Club members are blazing new paths in the use of our small planes for recreational flying. The Canadian Ultralight (USA Sports Plane) is one of the fastest growing segments of the aviation industry.

At the same time, the strength of Ultralight Flying Clubs like the CUFC, St. Albert, and Lethbridge are forging new alliances within the Regulatory regimes. Increasingly, COPA and UPAC, and individual clubs like the CUFC, are becoming important stakeholders in the regulatory process able to weed out excessive legislation and burdensome regulation while maintaining safety and reasonable standards. I read daily of the challenges of trying to fly General Aviation aircraft within the US. The Canadian system seems much more sane, probably due to our consensus based rule making process.

Speaking of little planes, I stumbled across a gem of a website for a unique little plane. Dave King is an aircraft builder in his 40's who has designed and is building the GNAT in Kelowna, B.C. He is a member of RAA Chapter 433. As he describes it, "the GNAT is an evolution of several designs and can trace its genesis in the French CriCri and the Hummlebird. It's construction is simplified metal construction using Avex pull rivets and 6061-T6 alloy for economy. It can perform sportsman aerobatic maneuvers. It has a full three axis trim system and a mechanism to give artificial control forces comparable of a larger machine. The cockpit is designed to fit a 95-percentile person. This is someone who is over 6'1" in height and around 220lbs. The interior dimensions of the cockpit are 26" wide at the longerons and 24" wide at shoulder level. The estimated flyaway cost in July 2001 was \$2900 in Canadian funds. The estimated hours to build had been set initially at 600."

I recommend a visit to his web site at <http://members.shaw.ca/gnat>. I'll try to see if we can get Dave to travel out East to Calgary and give us an update. →

Useful Web Site

<http://216.55.140.222/> contains everything you need to know about aircraft electrical systems. Courtesy Gerry MacDonald.

For Sale

Parts - Lyc. and Cont. alternators, starters, generators, regulators. All new or overhauled, some certified, 85-100HP, 115-150HP. Cessna tail dragger skis, Fluidyne A2000A with rigging for Cessna 150. RV6 tail feathers, completed. Larry Motyer 273-7023. (09/02)

Cessna 150 - 1967, 150HP, Texas tail dragger, 2958TT, 830 on engine, 133 on prop, Horton STOL, GPS, King Xpdr, Cessna Nav/Com, ADF, intercom, excellent condition, \$45,000 OBO, Larry Motyer 273-7023. (09/02)

Propeller - 3 blade ground adjustable IVOPROP for tractor configuration, 72" dia, 30" to 70" pitch range, weighs 8 lbs., 5 hours TT. Not recommended for use on Rotax 'B' gear box. \$725.00 CDN OBO. Bernie Kespe 403-255-7419 or bernie.raymac@shaw.ca (07/02)

Fisher 404 - bi-plane, 65hp Rotax 532, VHF radio, excellent condition, easy to fly, \$13,500 OBO, Ron (403) 207-1147 (07/02)

Piper Vagabond PA17 - 10hr since total rebuilt, Continental A65 10 hrs STO, \$25,000 OBO, Glen Clark, (403) 279-1036 (07/02)

COSMOS Phase II Trike - 1997, loaded with extras, 582 Rotax, 6-blade prop, 14.9 wing, electric start, trailer, high-speed/two-step floats (new), BRS900. Hangared, immaculately cared for and maintained only 200 hours. \$25,000 OBO. Call Ted Matthews (403) 722-3810 or trmatt@telusplanet.net (07/02)

Kolb Firestar - Single seat ultralight, excellent condition, good panel, Rotax 447, 160 hrs TTAE. 10 minute wing fold for easy storage. Complete with enclosed

trailer which can be used as a hangar. Asking \$15,000.00 For details and pictures contact Andy Cumming (403) 380-6291 or flyingac@hotmail.com (05/02)

Continental 65 - with prop, 300hrs, high compression pistons make it an 80hp, \$5500. Call Don LeOnzio (250) 427-2046. (05/02)

Propeller For Sale: 2-Blade wood, 68x32 tractor for Rotax 503DC. Leading edge protection, 60 hours TT, great condition. \$350 CDN, obo. Includes bolts and mounting plate. Call Stu at (403) 255-6998 or e-mail ssimpson@telus.net for pictures. (02/02)

Super Koala - Rotax 503, DCDI, Culver wood prop. Airspeed, Altimeter, Tach, CHT, EGT, Hour meter, Fuel gauge. Heated cockpit. Less than 200 TT on new engine and airframe. This is an attractive, predictable and easy to fly taildragger. Open to any serious offers. Dale (403)293-3826. (01/02)

Notice: Classified ad are free to CUFC members. Call Bob Kirkby to place or renew your ad 569-9541 or email to kirkby@skywalker.ca

Ads reprinted from the St. Albert Flying Club Newsletter

Team HiMax - licensed as a homebuilt, 40hp Zenoh twin 2 stroke, full electrics, brakes, radio, skis, 70mph cruise, 11 gals, ELT, \$11,500. Dan Pandur 780-418-4159.



Glen Bishell's fly-in was a great success. Photo by Peter Wegerich.

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@skywalker.ca

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: Bob Kooyman 281-2621
e-mail: kooyman-eng@home.com

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

Secretary: Bernie Kespe 255-7419
e-mail: bernie.raymac@home.com

Treasurer: Carl Forman 283-3855
e-mail: forman.c@shaw.ca

Director: Dave Procyshen 257-8064
e-mail: dprocyshen@shaw.ca

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

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

GSC 3-blade prop - for 912 hub, tractor, 66" with tapered tips, leading edge protection, 30hrs, cost \$650 new, \$450. Dan Pandur 780-418-4159.

Rotax 503 - mag ignition, single carb, electric starter, 60hrs SOH, \$3,000. Dan Pandur 780-418-4159.

Biplane - wings and fuse, no undercarriage, Continental A65 not mounted, no prop, needs paint, located Cooking Lake, \$6650. Tom Schroeder 780-922-1212.

Zenair 601 UL - Jabiru engine, 100hrs, 500 TTAF, good radio & intercom, fresh annual, 100mph on 3gph, 5hr range, Dave 780-459-8535 or 458-8324.

A Thousand Miles of Air Adventure

Part 1

By Stu Simpson

Please start for me this time, I pleaded silently. I swung the Green Giant's prop as hard as I could. But the spark just wouldn't take. I threw it again and again, but the only things my sweat and cussing earned me were silence and frustration. What a way to start an air adventure!

It was the last Monday of August and the first day of the Alberta Air Adventure Tour 2002. We were an assembly of fifteen airplanes and five ground vehicles for a trip to northwestern Alberta and a brief skip across the B.C. border to Dawson Creek. Then we'd fly east to Slave Lake and back south around Edmonton before returning to Calgary. It was a really good plan, but would be a lot better if I could just get my plane started!

Day 1 Destination: Whitecourt

This was the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club's third major cross-country adventure. We were launching the whole thing from Kirkby Field, just east of the city, and heading 45 miles north to Glen Bishell's farm strip near Carstairs.

For the duration of the tour we broke into




Joe Harrington is first to depart in his Beaver Photo by Stu Simpson

three distinct flights, with the faster airplanes departing first so they wouldn't overtake the slower ones and cause overcrowding in the landing circuit. Or so went the theory. It would eventually prove to be wrong on a few occasions.

The first flight comprised Dave Conquergood flying his beautiful mid-80's Pietenpol, Fred Wright in his 1946 Aeronca Chief, and Glen and Kay Clarke in their 1937 Piper J-3 Cub. An interesting note about each of these planes is that they're all honest-to-God classics. And just to prove it, they all have to be hand-propped for starting. Truth is, they're really a bunch of overgrown ultralights, which makes them - and their pilots - especially valuable to have along on an air adventure.

The second flight consisted of me and my camouflaged Bushmaster, Carl Forman and his Minimax, Al Botting and Reid Huzzey in a pair of Challengers, and finally Glen Bishell, whom we'd pick up at his place, in his Bushmaster.

A special treat for the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club was the inclusion of a group of pilots from Lethbridge. Lead by Joe



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and his Beaver would join in.

Completing the roster was Bob Kirkby in a homebuilt Starduster Too, and Gerry MacDonald in his Cessna 182. Naturally, Bob and Gerry would be flying separately from the other groups because of the vast speed differential. The CUFC was showcasing something for everyone in the way of fixed-wing, just-for-fun, powered aircraft. There were ultralights, homebuilts and certified. Now, that's cool.

Once the pilots and ground crew were together we held a briefing to ensure everyone knew the plan. It was a pleasant surprise that several other CUFC members showed up to see us off. I was proud that they'd deem our trip ambitious and worthy enough to make a special trip out to watch us get underway. Hopefully some of them can make it next year.

Our briefing covered things like flight assignments, call-signs and radio procedures. All of us, except Kirkby and MacDonald, would use the call sign "Dragonfly", with an assigned number. My call-sign was Dragonfly 1, Carl's was Dragonfly 2, and so on. Experience shows this arrangement is much simpler - and definitely safer - than trying to remember and call an alphabet soup of aircraft idents, especially in an emergency.

Kirkby read the weather news. The winds were forecast to be right on our nose all day, and hovering around 15 knots. Troublesome possibly, since we planned to make Whitecourt, about 250
(continued on page 4)

Adventure - continued from page 3

miles and four flying legs away. Before we broke, I asked three things of everyone involved; be professional, be safe, and equally important, have fun!

That's about when the trouble started for me, because the Giant wouldn't. It's very embarrassing to be the leader and be unable to even get going. I felt shame. I realized a fuse in my starter circuit had blown so I was suddenly one more among the hand-proppers. Hand bombing the Giant is usually a piece of cake, but for some reason the engine flooded. I sent Harrington and his flight on ahead while I waited for my cylinders to dry out. As they got airborne, I finally got the Giant's 582 purring nicely.

The leg to Bishell's foreshadowed the whole day. The wind was downright nasty at 15 to 20 mph on the nose. The bumps from the prairie's daytime heating were starting to crop up, too, but they'd ease up as we approached the bush country near the foothills.

Bish was all smiles and giddy with excitement as we touched down at his strip. He loves these adventures as much as any of us. His wife, Alice, was driving their monstrous motor home as part of the ground crew, also transporting their daughter and granddaughter.

I managed to get my starter fuse changed while we waited for the ground crew to show up with the gas. We'd need the go-juice, too. Rocky Mountain House was some 70 miles away into that headwind. Not much of a stretch for the 182 or the 'Duster, but the low and slow guys would feel it.

Adrian Anderson was jumping in with me on this hop and our flight was to takeoff last, behind the Lethbridge guys. While Anderson and I warmed up the Giant we watched through the spinning prop as an endless array of airplanes filled the sky. We thrilled with the fact that we were only seconds from joining them.

One of my goals for this adventure was for all pilots to get as many ground crews as possible up in the

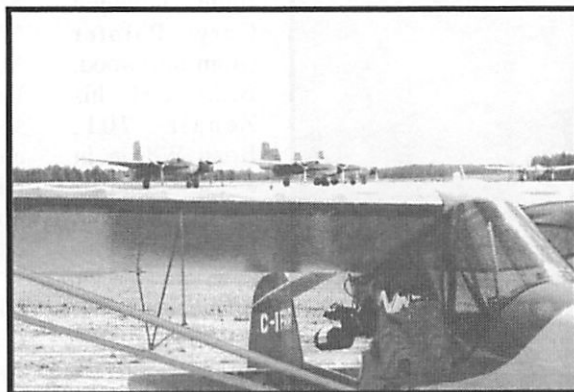
airplanes. It was just a way to say thanks for their time and invaluable support. We had to make sure we were carrying other people legally and safely. For instance, Bish and I could only carry other pilots, since we fly Basic category planes on UL permits.

Huzzey, MacDonald and Kirkby could carry anyone as per their licences and aircraft categories.

The ride to Rocky was bumpy so I was glad to have Adrian's extra weight along to help smooth out the potholes a bit. We eventually caught up to the Lethbridge crew, their planes appearing as colourful specks in the sky above as we closed on their six.

Approaching Rocky's airport turned into a problem for the respective flight leaders. Harrington had a different idea of approaching the strip than I did, which required me and my flight to make some changes to fall in behind his flight. We took a few minutes to adjust our spacing and all of us made safe landings. We were learning quickly about having so many airplanes at once in the same little bit of sky.

We took time on the ground to look carefully at a half dozen A-26's on



Allan Botting's Challenger at Rocky with A26's in background Photo by Stu Simpson

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Rocky's air attack ramp. Each one oozed gallons of oil, decades of history and thousands of adventures. I marveled at their big round engines and wondered what the environmentalists would say of the black puddles beneath their cowls.

As we awaited the ground crew, a military helicopter crew appeared and began to fire up its Griffon for departure. Bishell, Botting and Huzzey realized the rotor wash could flip their planes when it came time for the chopper to lift off. They each made sure to have a good grip on their wing struts. Good thing, too, because as the Griffon hover-taxed to the active, it kicked up a huge wind wave and a cloud of dust that seriously rocked all three airplane.

Robin Orsulak was my copilot for the jaunt to Drayton Valley. The first part of this flight was over serious bush country. Having flown search and rescue in a previous life, I didn't like the odds of the camouflaged Giant being easily spotted if we went down. That worry was reinforced as my wingmen occasionally asked us to remove the Giant's invisibility cloak. Apparently, my plane just disappeared every now and then against the terrain. I made sure to follow the highway very closely.

Gerry was able to keep us in sight well enough to circle in close a couple of times. Robin and I tried to snap a few shots of his 182, but something got lost in the translation and we got nothing but blurry white spots against lots of trees.

(continued on page 5)

Adventure - continued from page 4

I've flown ultralights in the mountains before, but never over flat, desolate bush like we were seeing. I wondered how anyone ever found their way down there. And people had definitely been down there. Cut lines for electricity, seismic activity and pipelines criss-crossed the terrain like tendrils of uncooked spaghetti. The bush looked as thick as the Amazon jungle and I wondered if guys needed machetes when walking through it.

We had no landing congestion problems at Drayton Valley because the Lethbridge crew left last from Rocky. With their slightly slower airspeed the landing arrangements worked out beautifully. They entered the airport area just as our flight turned final.

Drayton Valley has a nice little airport that seems well able to handle fair sized airplanes, probably even light jets. On the ramp we met with Dan Pandur and Ed Dumas of the St. Albert Flying Club. Dan surprised us all by announcing that the SAFC was planning to throw us a barbeque when we arrived there on Thursday night. What a wonderful and flattering gesture.

Leaving Drayton Valley presented us with our first maintenance difficulty. Hans Leblanc had a flat on his Challenger. Glen Bishell radioed directions to finding an air pump in his motor home. We learned later that the ground crew had the tire removed, patched and replaced almost before Hans' prop stopped turning. That's why we love those guys the way we do.

Ken Taylor jumped in on this flight to help me fight that blasted headwind. In terms of mileage, this portion was the longest of the day at 85 miles. I enjoyed watching Taylor enjoy himself and felt really pleased again in my decision to buy the Bushmaster. Sharing this stuff with other pilots was one of the primary reasons I picked it.

Taylor was doing a good job navigating or the flight and then became an essential pair of eyes when Carl's radio died. We were flying over ripened crops

where Forman's green and yellow Minimax can be surprisingly tough to spot. Ken worked hard to keep an eye on him in the late afternoon sun.

As Mayerthorpe drifted by a few miles off our right wing, Bob announced his plan to change frequencies and shoot a bump-and-run there in the 'Duster. On the horizon ahead, a ridge of hills sat in silhouette with Whitecourt just beyond. I impatiently cursed the wind as I anticipated the end of the day and a good meal.

Whitecourt's airport finally appeared, hacked out of the jungle west of town. The flight service specialist seemed a little taken aback on the radio as five planes, then four more, were suddenly inbound to his destination. My landing was passable and I again appreciated Taylor's irrepressible enthusiasm as we taxied in and shut down. Quite a number of spectators soon appeared, checking out our planes and asking questions as we refuelled and tied down for the night. The airport manager was really pleased to see us, and that's always a good sign for ultralights.



Hans removes flat tire from his Challenger with Brian's assistance in Drayton Valley. Photo by Adrian Anderson.

One of the best parts of these trips is the evening meal. Everyone's happy to have a day of flying adventure under their belts, and then we get to sit down together and talk more flying. I turned in that night



Approaching Rocky Mountain House. Photo by Adrian.

with a very satisfied grin on my face.

Day 2

Destination: Dawson Creek

The next morning found us flying north-west for Fox Creek, only 45 miles up the road. Bruce Piepgrass was seated next to me, all smiles as he worked Carl's video camera around the cockpit and the bright, cloudless sky.

Suddenly, a scratchy message came across the radio.

"Ground 1 to Dragonfly 1, do you read?" called Adrian. He was in Piepgrass' pick up with the horse tank full of fuel.

"Go ahead, Ground 1," I replied.

"Can you check.....?" His transmission became too garbled and scratchy to understand.

"Dragonfly 1 to Ground 1, say again please," I responded.

Anderson tried again. I turned to Bruce and asked if he could make it out. No luck. Finally, Al Botting radioed that he heard it all.

"He's asking Bruce to check if he's still got the keys to the fuel truck with him." Piepgrass dug into his pocket and sheepishly pulled them out. I reluctantly turned the flight around. Bruce felt shame.

Fortunately, we were only about 10 miles (*continued on page 6*)

Adventure - continued from page 5

out, so we only lost a few minutes by returning to Whitecourt. I know what you're thinking because we were all thinking it, too. But aside from the fact that dropping the keys to Anderson would have been illegal, it would also make it easier to lose them.

The first four of us landed and taxied past Adrian's position. The Giant was stopped less than 10 seconds as I passed him the keys, then headed for the active again. We were so quick at it that Bish, number 5 in the formation, didn't even have time to land. He just over flew the runway and circled to join us once we all got airborne again.

The leg to Fox Creek was smooth, with that stubborn headwind now at only 10-12 mph. We stayed low to minimize its effect, especially since we'd unexpectedly lengthened our air time on this leg. We blessed the divided highway beneath us as it coursed through the endless, rugged bush. It would be our salvation if the engine angels decided one of us needed our wings clipped. It dawned on me that the highway was essentially a 40-mile long runway straight to our destination.

We spent the duration of the trip lining guys up for Bruce to shoot video tape. Our wingmen's brilliantly coloured ships contrasted sharply and beautifully against the deep green forest and the charming blue sky. These video tapes become precious gems when the trip is over, especially if your airplane is on them.

Arriving over Fox Creek, Bruce and I saw more brilliantly painted Dragonflies down on the ramp. But the strip itself, aligned with the highway and only a few meters off to the side of it, seemed an incongruous intruder; out of place, completely enveloped and deeply unwelcome by the forest. It looked like the bush was ready to move in and take back the runway if given half a chance.

Regardless of the earth's sentiments toward the Fox Creek airport, the

Dragonflies were certainly glad it was where it was, and we got down to the business of landing there. I kept my plane over the road rather than the surrounding trees as I headed for the runway, then just jogged to the right to line up for short final. The landing looks really cool on tape and irrefutably proves I've pulled off at least one greaser in the Giant.

The local newspaper was out to do a story on us. The reporter interviewed a couple of the pilots and then took a group picture of us in front of the Clarke's Cub. With all the ground crew members, it was a very full photo.

We also picked up a stray at Fox Creek. Bill Davies, a friend of Joe Harrington, was joining us. He was flying an open cockpit Beaver that would obviously be the slowest plane of the bunch. Brian Wilson volunteered to power back his Sky Raider and be Davies' wingman. Davies' wife was kind enough to lay on donuts for us, and we had plenty of spectators. It seemed we were making quite an impact at each place we landed, especially when the local airport was quite close to town.



*On final at Dawson Creek. Note float strip on right.
Photo by Adrian from Stu's Bushmaster.*

One of the nicest surprises of the trip was turning out to be the Lethbridge crew. They showed a strong sense of professionalism in the cockpit. They emphasized safety and looked out for each other in the air. It's always a gamble flying with someone new, but our gamble in welcoming them along was really paying off.

Before we left Fox Creek, we gave Bruce a round of applause as he made sure to hand over the fuel truck keys to Adrian. Piegrass then hopped in with Bish, and Robin Orsulak took over my empty seat. I was looking forward to this leg because it meant Piegrass was finally going to get some video tape of the Giant. I've carried a lot of guys who've shot video of many other CUFC planes, but I haven't got any of mine yet. I could hardly wait to see such a great looking plane on TV.

The landscape below changed back to prairie again as we flew north, and this surprised me. I figured there was nothing but bush beyond Rocky Mountain House. As I surveyed the farm land I marveled at the pioneers who'd toiled to clear the land so many years ago. And I marveled equally at the bush pilots, like Wop May and Punch Dickens, who opened up air routes back in the 1920's over what was then such desolate territory. I had to wonder what those guys would think of our planes and our trip.

As we approached Valleyview, it happened that we wound up with nine planes in the circuit at once, and another five steaming in quickly from the south. Dave Conquergood, leading the first flight in his Pietenpol, landed and back-tracked to the ramp on the grass beside the runway, thus setting the example for all the other pilots. Nonetheless, Kirkby, with the Starduster's higher speed, wisely exited the crowded pattern and circled to the east until things cleared out.

Mac Harrison, his wife and their two daughters, Doris and Maria, were among the ground crew. They had the idea that we should actually eat lunch before flying on, so they stopped and got some groceries to prepare sandwiches for us. It was a remarkably thoughtful and helpful gesture. They did this for each of the remaining days of the trip.

Another reporter soon appeared from Valleyview's local paper. She enthusiastically scribbled notes, snapped
(continued on page 7)

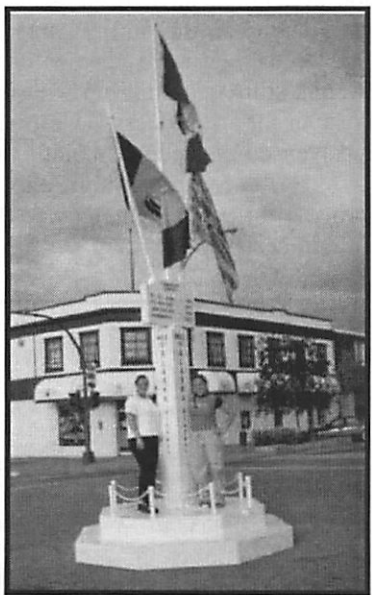
7 *Adventure - continued from page 6*

pictures and promised to send us some copies of the issue in which we'd be immortalized. A charter pilot was also there, tending to a Piper Navajo. He studied for a university course and waited patiently for his passengers, a group of oilmen, to fly them back to Calgary. He said he was just building time toward an airline job. Did he see the same adventure in flying that each of the Dragonflies still did - and always will? I hoped so, but I wouldn't have traded places with him for anything.

The temperature was nudging 30 degrees as we took off for Grande Prairie. We were scheduled to land at a strip called Bacon Field, just east of GP. Lorne Windum, who bought Fred Wright's Himax a few years back, had heard of our jaunt northward and suggested we land at the local UL patch rather than Grande Prairie's municipal airport. The Dragonflies agreed we'd probably fit right in at such a strip, and with the people who populated it.

Arriving overhead we saw Fred's old Himax that Windum had set out near the airfield road as a marker for the flight and ground crews. Conquergood warned us on the radio as we approached that his flight had endured pretty squirrely winds on landing. He also cautioned us on a small drainage ditch bordering the east side of the runway. Apparently, it had nearly tipped one of the planes in his flight.

Turning downwind to Bacon's runway 16, my heart raced just a bit faster. I mentally reviewed my crosswind landing technique as Wright radioed information about the strip's downhill slope. He said to be careful of landing long.



Doris and Maria beside the Alaska highway mile-0 marker in Dawson Creek. Photo by Mac.

Despite the earlier reported wind conditions our landings went well. The only problem came in trying to clear the runway over the small bridges the GP guys placed over their drainage ditch. Parking was another story. I wasn't sure all our planes would fit in Bacon's very small parking area. But somehow, they managed to find space for 13 extra airplanes (Bob and Gerry went straight through to Dawson Creek).

Again, we got a surprising amount of attention on the ground. The Grande Prairie people treated us like royalty and simply couldn't do enough to help. I'll tell you, it's fantastic to be part of an aviation community whose members treat each other so well. A local TV station sent a camera to cover the event, and the reporter promised to forward us a copy of the raw footage and completed story.

After gassing up, it took a lot of jockeying to get each flight of planes over the ditch and ready to taxi. My prop wash gave a very welcome breeze to the sweltering cockpit. The last leg to Dawson Creek was just ahead.

The wind was still on our nose, but it was definitely easing. The familiar thrust of the Rockies on the horizon was a welcome and familiar sight for us Calgarians. The land quickly turned again from farmland to bush country northwest of Grande Prairie, and I even noticed a visible change in the highway as we crossed the border into B.C.

Carl's radio died again, right on cue. It was no surprise, so the rest of us made sure to keep a close eye on him should he have any further troubles.

Getting close to Dawson Creek, we had to make a couple of dogleg turns for spacing as an MU-2 turboprop, that we hadn't yet seen, approached from the northwest. We finally eye-balled him, going like a rocket, as he banked sharply to join the



The Air Adventure 2002 Route.

left-hand downwind.

A Beech 1900 turboprop airliner waited on the ramp while we touched down on runway 24. Since there's only one way out to the runway from there, the Beech couldn't leave until we all cleared the active and taxiway. We rolled past the 1900 and thanked the crew for their patience. One of the pilots cheerfully replied that it was no problem and that she and her copilot enjoyed seeing us.

Kirkby and MacDonald hooked up with the airport manager while waiting for us. He was very excited to see us and said that had he known of our plans he'd have organized an elaborate reception and even a barbeque and hangar dance for that evening. It was starting to sink in that perhaps we'd missed a golden opportunity to better highlight recreational aviation in some fairly remote communities.

At dinner that night, another hangar-flying-filled affair, we discussed where we'll go for the summer of 2003. I was leaning toward Boise, Idaho, but my wingmen informed me in very clear terms we're going to northern Saskatchewan. I guess that's settled. They told me to dig out the maps when I get home and come up with a route.

The Adventure continues next month. See 100's of picture of the trip on-line at: <http://142.179.223.70/airventure/index.htm>

My Merlin C-IKEA

by Andy Gustafsson

It has been a fulfilling 16 months of aircraft construction. Building is a process that should not be rushed or hurried. But no matter how long you take or how much time you spend on your project, you stand back and think that there are a few things that could have been done a little different. The best reward is, however, when you get praise for what you have accomplished. You swell a little with pride and it feels good to be recognized for all the time and effort you put in. That first time all the club members start to scrutinize your pride and joy is quite trying. They check your plane inside and out and offer advice on how they would have done it. I take all advice to heart and make mental notes of the advice that I get. It is, of course, all in the name of safety.

My Merlin is registered as an advanced ultra-light and as such can be flown with a passenger if you have the proper licensing or permit.

Wayne Winters did the honors of doing the first test flight and there were only a few small adjustments needed. The one problem we had was with the 2-blade ground adjustable 72" Power-Fin propeller and the "cavitation" at static run-up on the ground. The Rotax 912 engine was too much for the propeller at our altitude of 3500 ft, and the pitch on the prop had to be set too coarse in order to bring the rpm down to factory specs. I am now spinning a 72" 3-blade prop that eliminates the "cavitation" and makes the whole installation run much smoother. The 912 engine is a good power plant for this type of aircraft. It is quiet and smooth running, good on fuel, and extensively proven in all types of aircraft around the world.

I have soloed after some dual training with Wayne. It will take a little time to get through the transition to the tail-dragger. My landings are getting better. I had some trouble with bouncing when landing in a three point landing configuration. (A tri-cycle gear Merlin is soon to be offered). In the air the flight characteristics of the Merlin instill

confidence and a feeling of safe comfort. The roll rate is very impressive due to the "Junkers" type ailerons. Having the ailerons out in the slipstream underneath the trailing edge of the wing makes them incredibly effective in the undisturbed air right down to the stall and beyond. The stall, if you can call it that, is very gentle preceded by a mush or gentle sink before the very gentle break. The ground handling and directional control down the runway is equally very forgiving and easy.

The cockpit is very roomy, to say the least. Visibility is good and with my added rear side windows even the view towards the back is good. I also installed a rear view mirror so I can see backwards through the skylight if someone sneaks up on me from the rear. Behind the seat you'll find a cavernous luggage bin. It holds anything that you'd want to bring along. There is room enough for your St. Bernard dog. I don't know if you legally can take along your dog in an ultra light aircraft unless the dog is a pilot? In the leading edge of your cockpit above the windshield there is a large shelf for your charts or maps.

The Merlin is a little heavier aircraft than the average run of the mill ultralight because of increased strength in the airframe construction. Where other aircraft manufactures are using 1/2" tubing, the Merlin is using 5/8" in many key areas. The standard landing gear with it's bunge cord suspension system, coupled with the 19" diameter "Tundra" tires, is built to take hard landings on just about any surface. The final weight still fits comfortably in either the Basic or the new increased weight of the Advanced ultra light class.

I am now in the process of manufacturing and installing a cabin heat system that is simple and effective. I am harnessing the hot air that comes out of the oil cooler and leading it through a 3" duct to a heat box on the firewall. The oil cooler gives off much hotter air than the coolant radiator and should warm up my cabin quite comfortably. I found a picture of a heat box in a catalog and

thought to myself, "I can make one of those." So instead of spending \$70.00 US, I made my own from scrap pieces of aluminum sheet metal. I will be able to regulate the amount of heat that comes into the cockpit with a simple adjustable door. The heat box is all aluminum without any plastic parts.

Wayne Winters is a man with many irons in the fire. With new orders coming in from all over the continent the company is trying to keep up. At present time they are busy building a Merlin EZ completely finished, to be delivered to the Maritimes, ready to fly. I have contacted Wayne by phone or visited his shop many times and he has always taken time out to go through and explain the way the factory proceeds in the building. There were a few gray areas in the building manual but after talking to Wayne the difficulties were cleared up. The building manual is in the process of being upgraded but should not present a problem as it is now. The kit contains more than enough material for the project with lots of extra rivets and bolts, nuts, and washers. For the covering process there is plenty of fabric, glue, tapes and fabric sealer.

This last installment of my building articles may sound like a Merlin advertisement but I truly think that I have built an aircraft that will last me for a good long time. Building a kit aircraft takes a lot of patience and dedication. I have been working on it almost every day in my garage for the last 16 months and I have to thank my wife Cheryl for putting up with me through the building process. I promise that I will trim the hedge, paint the hallway and the windowsills, check the roof...on second thought, let's go flying! →

