



# Skywriter



Monthly newsletter of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club - COPA Flight 114

## January 2003

### From the Cockpit

by Bob Kooyman

A New Year is upon us. I hope one and all had a festive Christmas Season. From my family to yours, I wish one and all Best Wishes in the New Year. At this time of year, one is always tempted to look back at the year that was and forward to the year that will be. So lets get out the crystal ball and take a look.

2002 was a very significant year in the Club's development. We have had a very active round of social and flying engagements with the winter social, fly-in breakfast and fly-in barbecue. Under Stu's guidance the Club took its most ambitious Air Adventure ever flying over 1000 miles in 5 days from Calgary to Dawson Creek and return - safely. (Rumor has it that 2003 will bring a trip to Saskatchewan.) The Club membership climbed to over 130 members. The Club voted to affiliate itself with COPA as Flight 114.

When I look into the COPA Flight, the CUFC is a unique and dynamic organization. It hosted a number of interesting meetings throughout the year inviting members of the greater flying community to join in sharing the dream of flight. It has written a number of interesting and dynamic articles. We may be way out West, but we are creating a stir throughout aviation.

Looking forward into 2003, I see a number of interesting developments occurring. I hope in the New Year to see increased

participation from Transport Canada in Ultralight Aviation. On the horizon are amendments to the CARs to introduce passenger carrying in AULAs by Ultralight Pilots with a suitable endorsement. On the negative side, the abandonment of general aviation by the Federal Government is beginning to raise its ugly head in the form of user fees for airport access and decreased availability of these facilities in the year to come. This is an area where we will need to be watchful and prepared to participate in the discussions.

South of the border, aviation is in turmoil in the wake of the September tragedy. Increased pressure for airspace competes with economic pressure in a stagnant economy. At the same time, the existence of a fleet of commercial air carriers is crumbling. The fallout of high security and low passenger loads has resulted in the Delta's Chapter 11 filing. Rumor has it that other airlines are in similar straits.

Inaccurate perceptions of need for security have resulted in turf wars and promulgation of a variety rules and regulations that clutter and complicate life. A reading of Aero-News.Net is quite enlightening.

The "Sports Plane regulations continue to wend their way forward. It seems like a consensus is emerging from the "sports plane manufacturers" (read Canadian Ultralight) which could cause this rule to be published by summer. Hopefully we will see new designs, and through increased production, reduced costs. With new airplane costs for certified aircraft over \$150,000 for basic (C-172) aircraft, the simpler Sports Plane will fill a niche.

Other areas to look for are the (rumored) entry of Japanese car manufacturers into aircraft production. Nissan has reportedly test flown a prototype built by Scaled Composites (Burt Rutan). I am also looking for new engine designs in the 60 to 100 hp class (four strokes?) and lower prices through volume and competition.

In summary, 2003 will be an exciting year for our sport with significant developments. I hope for everyone to have a safe New Year of exciting flying in 2003.  
→

### Election Results

Elections were held at the December meeting for the positions of Vice-President and Secretary. Stu Simpson was re-acclaimed as Vice-President and Mac Harrison was acclaimed as Secretary. Thank you to Stu and Mac for standing for these positions.

A big thank you is in order to Bernie Kespe who steps down from the position of Secretary. Bernie held this position for years and put in many hours each month looking after membership and mailing out the Skywriter. Now he can concentrate more on building airplanes.

### January Meeting

Hopefully the technical difficulties of the last meeting have been overcome and we will be able to watch the 2002 Air Venture video. The annual draw for an Icom A5 and Elmer's Harvard wind vane will highlight the meeting.

# For Sale

**Rotax 503** - Dual carbs, single ignition, 60 hrs since overhaul, electric start, \$2500. Peter Wegerich 403-861-7148 or [wegericp@telusplanet.net](mailto:wegericp@telusplanet.net) (12/02)

**Ragwing Special** - plans, fin, stab & rudder built, ribs for top wing built, sitka spruce for longerons and spars, glue and metal parts. \$500. Dave Dedul 403-823-2214 (11/02)

**VP2** - C65, 200 TTEA, homebuilt, 1982, new paint & graphics, new crank seal and engine gaskets, brakes, compass, slip indicator, VSI, Tach, ASI, Alt, Oil press/temp, CHT, antenna, \$12000 OBO. Dave Dedul 403-823-2214 (11/02)

**MiniMax 1600R** - 85 TTSN, Rotax 503DC, dual CHT/EGT, wing tanks, strobes, cabin heat/air, all speed fairings, steel Eros landing gear, always hanged, beautiful plane, \$15,000. Guy Bishoff 4 0 3 - 3 2 0 - 1 7 6 8 o r [gtbishof@telusplanet.net](mailto:gtbishof@telusplanet.net) (11/02)

**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)

**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](mailto: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 STOHR,

\$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. Hanged, immaculately cared for and maintained only 200 hours. \$25,000 OBO. Call Ted Matthews (403) 722-3810 or [trmatt@telusplanet.net](mailto: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](mailto:flyingac@hotmail.com) (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](mailto: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 [bob@skywalker.ca](mailto:bob@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.

**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.

**Continental O-200** - Key start with logs. Certified. 800SMOH. Dan Pandur 780-418-4159.

**Rotax 503** - DCSI, rebuilt, A-drive, offers. Dan Pandur 780-418-4159.

## 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:

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Assistant-editor: Bernie Kespe  
[bernie.raymac@shaw.ca](mailto:bernie.raymac@shaw.ca)

## 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@shaw.ca](mailto:kooyman-eng@shaw.ca)

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Director: Dave Procyshen 257-8064  
e-mail: [dprocyshen@shaw.ca](mailto:dprocyshen@shaw.ca)

Past President: Brian Vasseur 226-5281  
e-mail: [vasseurb@cadvision.com](mailto:vasseurb@cadvision.com)

Visit the CUFC web site: [www.cufc.ca](http://www.cufc.ca)

by Dan Mitchell

The old club web site is now dead. The old site was created by my son's company, Pyroglyphics Multimedia. They are now creating the new site for the CUFC. My son tells me that the new site should be complete early in the new year. I have not made any effort to change any of the search engine links or the other sites that link to the club site yet. That should be done after the new site is up and running.

The address to the new site, which is still under construction, is www.cufc.ca. It still has a ways to go yet before it is finished. Although the club has committed to paying a small fee to have it built, based on the going rate in the industry, this project is almost a freebie. Therefore the progress is slow while the "paying" clients are attended to first.

The format and appearance of the site has been upgraded. I have also requested additional modifications to what is currently posted on the net. However, the big changes to the site are behind the scenes where the casual visitor to the pages will never see them.

The site is being set up to allow interactive administration. Previously, every change that appeared on the pages was made to the page itself. The web site files for each page were edited and uploaded for every single change. This was a time consuming process. By going to the web page while on the internet, and using a password to access an administrative page built as part of the web site, all changes to the new site can be made directly online. All of the input data will then be managed by the built-in website administrator to display the pages in the proper format.

Special software or knowledge of how to create a web page will not be required to manage the new site. Portions of the original site are also being deleted in the new one. Very little input is available for the Profiles or Projects sections and they have been dropped. The Links page has been edited to only include a short list of

The screenshot shows the website for the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club. At the top left is a logo with a propeller and the text 'CALGARY ULTRALIGHT FLYING CLUB'. To the right is the club's name 'CALGARY ULTRALIGHT FLYING CLUB' and an email address 'info@cufc.ca'. Below this is a navigation menu with links for 'Home', 'Events & Activities', 'Newsletter', 'Classifieds', 'Photos', 'Nav. Aids', 'Field Information', and 'Links'. The main content area has a 'Welcome to the C.U.F.C.' heading. There are three columns of text: 'WHO ARE WE?' describing the club, 'MEETINGS' detailing the schedule, and 'UPCOMING EVENTS' stating there are none currently. Other sections include 'IN THIS MONTHS SKYWRITER' with a 'Ground Pounders' article by Mac Harrison, and 'CONTACT THE CUFC' with a request for questions or comments.

the most useful sites. I learned today that the average life of a web site is only 44 days! Because of this short life cycle it was nearly impossible to keep the links page up to date.

When finished, I expect the new CUFC web site will be as good as the old site and far more user friendly, both for the visitor and the administrator. Hopefully the membership will be pleased with the upgrade. →

### Annual Raffle

The annual CUFC membership raffle is on. This year we have two prizes:

1<sup>st</sup> prize is an Icom A5 radio

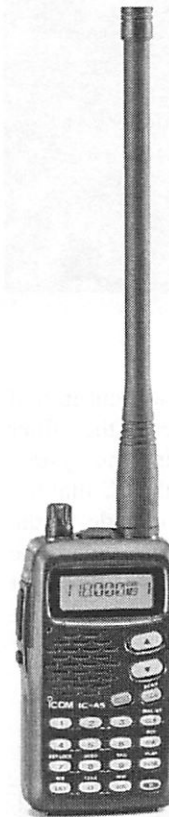
2<sup>nd</sup> prize is a model Harvard wind vane built and donated by Elmer Dyck

Tickets are \$10.00 each available at the club meetings or from Bernie Kespe.

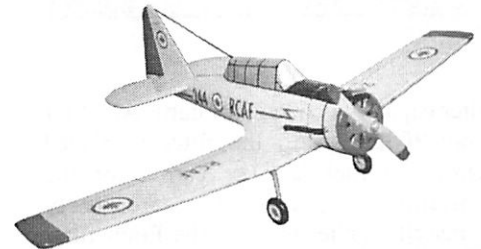
The draw takes place at the first meeting of 2003 on January 12<sup>th</sup>.

Remember, you must be a 2003 paid-up member to be eligible to win, so renew your membership and enter the draw at the same time!

Membership fees for 2003 are only \$20.00.



1<sup>st</sup> prize: Icom A5



2<sup>nd</sup> prize: model Harvard wind vane

## Economy Gas Collator

by *Bernie Kespe*

The FRAM G-3499 can be used as a gas collator as shown in Photo 1. Simply attach the filter at the lowest spot on your fuel system. The outlet facing down is connected to a spring loaded "Quick Drain."

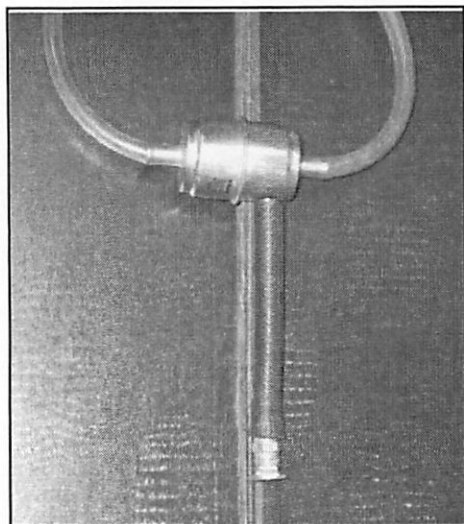


Photo 1

Photo 2 shows a G-3499 that I cut in half with my Dremel to check the filter innards. Any debris entering the system will drop to the bottom of the "Collator". The debris will be on the outside of the filter and will be flushed away when one checks for water during their pre-flight inspection.

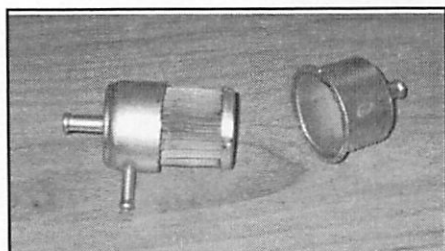


Photo 2

Filter capacity is 60cc (1/4 cup). Also, for every 30 cm (foot) the filter is placed below the fuel tank or carburetor the "collator" capacity is effectively increased another 60cc. The Fram filter price is less than \$4.00, clamps included.

## Tour Video Available

A 1-hour video program of the Alberta Air Adventure Tour 2002 is available from Allan Botting. Allan undertook the task of producing this video from the video footage taken by several different people on the tour last August. With some excellent editing by Allan and voice-over by Stu Simpsons this turned out to be a really high-quality production.

The video will be shown at the January meeting.

You can obtain a copy from Allan (402-241-9166) for a nominal \$5.00, to cover his costs.

"It is not necessarily impossible for human beings to fly, but it so happens that God didn't give them the knowledge of how to do it. It follows therefore, that anyone who claims he can fly must have sought the aid of the devil. To attempt to fly is therefore sinful."

-- Roger Bacon, a 13th-century philosopher

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## Aerial Oddities

By Walter J. Boyne

Though largely unsuccessful, the Airacuda fighter positioned Bell to become an industry leader.

Few aircraft have made such a tremendous impression on the minds of the American aviation public as the beautiful and lethal-looking Bell Airacuda. Fewer still have proved so intractably impractical. But whatever the Airacuda's shortcomings, it served to fasten the public's eye on a brand-new company, the Bell Aircraft Corporation, thereby easing Bell's entry into the highly competitive world of Army procurement at a time when aircraft were being bought at the rate of less than 400 per year. (Ironically, this is a sizable number by today's procurement standards.)

The Bell Airacuda was the result of a confluence of ideas and desires. Future general of the Air Force Henry H. "Hap" Arnold was distressed by the performance of U.S. pursuit planes in the 1930s and spoke of the need for a heavily armed, multi-place fighter that could knock enemy aircraft out of the sky in a single pass. His ideas coincided exactly with those of outspoken Captain Harry Johnson, a longtime advocate of the multi-seat fighter. It was Johnson's belief that a multi-engine, multi-place aircraft had to be created to engage the large all-metal bombers that he knew were on the designing boards of aircraft manufacturers all over the world. He wanted an airplane that would be able to cruise for long periods and then engage any incoming bomber force with large-caliber cannons.

In the manufacturing industry, the gifted and ambitious Larry Bell was interested in breaking off his relationship with Reuben Fleet and Consolidated Aircraft and forming his own firm. And a capable young engineer and designer who was working for Fleet-Robert J. Woods- had some ideas of his own, including some for a multi-place bomber-destroyer. In the Army Air Corps there were a handful of dedicated officers who understood that, despite their limited budgets, they had to



*Designed by young engineer Robert J. Woods, the radically different Airacuda incorporated twin pusher engines driving three-blade propellers via an extension shaft.*

find some way to keep an aviation industry alive, and that they had to generate new ideas.

As it transpired, fate would help all those parties achieve their desires. Captain Johnson, who had been a backer of the two-seat Berliner Joyce P-16, had seen a big advance in Woods' Consolidated PB-2A design, which was fast but mounted conventional armament. It set the stage, however, for a new round of procurement in which his ideas would take hold. Fleet was intent on moving Consolidated to the sunny climate of San Diego, where his flying boats could easily be tested all year long. Bell had developed the courage and the backing to launch on his own. Woods decided to stick with Bell, for he felt that his multi-engine fighter design had more chance of acceptance in a new and innovative outfit. And the Air Corps, staffed with first-rate test pilots such as 1st Lt. Benjamin Kelsey, was ready and willing to invite newcomers into the marketplace, especially if they came with a salable idea.

It took time to form Bell Aircraft, and the firm survived for a while on some subcontract work provided by Reuben

Fleet, a very generous act in an industry not known for charity to competitors. As Woods continued his development work, the design began to mature. He and Bell both knew all too well that money was tight, so he tried to make the Airacuda into a multi-role aircraft that could replace more than one type of plane in the U.S. Army Air Corps inventory.

In the meantime, Larry Bell was learning firsthand how the Air Corps worked, and also doing a masterful sales job. He captured the attention of Major Oliver Echols, one of the unsung heroes of World War II, and Brig. Gen. Frank M. Andrews, the newly appointed commander of the General Headquarters Air Force. (The degree of serendipity that launched the Airacuda might be inferred from the fact that the two archrivals for the Air Corps' top position, Arnold and Andrews, were both favorably disposed to the idea.)

Bell's mastery of a sales pitch was evident during one meeting in which the Air Corps expressed interest in a tail gun. Bell knew the Airacuda was already heavy, even without the addition of a gunner and a turret in the tail. So his  
*(continued on page 6)*

*Oddities - continued from page 5*

comeback was, "That makes about as much sense as putting teeth in the ass of a tiger."

A competition was required, of course, but it was limited to two firms, Bell and Lockheed. The latter firm was obviously going to be a tough competitor, for it was already manufacturing twin-engine, allmetal aircraft, and it had the combined design genius of Hall Hibbard and Kelly Johnson at its disposal. In any event, Bell won the paper evaluation contest by a very slim margin. With a maximum point total of 100, Bell's XFM-1 scored 72, while Lockheed's XFM-2 scored 71.6.

Wood's design was really radical for that time. It incorporated twin pusher engines driving three-blade propellers via an extension shaft (which not only functioned well but would also be seen again in the P-39). The engines were Allison V-1710s that were supposed to generate about 1,150 hp. but had been developed only to the point where they were putting out about 1,000 hp. The sleek nacelles were intended to house forward-firing 37mm cannons and the gunners to load and service them. Later in the design process, two .30-caliber machine guns would be added, one in a top turret and one in a ventral tunnel.

By the time Lieutenant Ben Kelsey took it on its first flight on September 1, 1937, the XFM-1's gross weight was expected to be more than 18,000 pounds. (Compare that with the contemporary first-line fighter, the Seversky P-35, which grossed out at just over 5,600 pounds.) The weight stemmed in part from the fact that the big airplane was ruggedly built, having fighterlike 8.5 positive G and 4.25 negative G limit load factors.

Kelsey's first flight was exciting, as most flights in the Airacuda would be. The engine cooling was totally inadequate, and the port engine backfired on takeoff, damaging the engine cowling. After repairs, Kelsey made a second flight on September 24, only to have the right landing gear collapse. The prototype then made a number of successful test flights,

accumulating 103 hours of flying time, making it by far the high-time Airacuda.

The Air Corps awarded a contract for 13 service test aircraft. A variety of Allison engines were installed in these, and three YFM-1As were built with a tricycle landing gear. Meanwhile, continued testing showed that the design fell far short of its intended performance. Top speed was estimated at 270 mph, instead of the predicted 317 mph. It also became obvious that the gunners in the nacelles would have trouble escaping in an emergency.

The Air Corps accepted 12 of the service test orders (one having crashed) and placed them at five different Army airfields, but their maintenance problems meant that most became hangar queens. Major General John Alison flew the Airacuda stationed at Langley Field, taking it on a long cross-country Jaunt during which he had a number of interesting emergencies. For the most part, however, the Airacudas sat on the ground, averaging only about 40 air hours each when they were finally written off.

Was the Airacuda a failure? As an airplane, certainly, and also as a concept, for like the Messerschmitt Me-110, there was no way that a heavy, twin-engine fighter could withstand the assault of a lighter, faster, single-engine fighter. But as a business device, it was a sensation. A country that had come to accept a few large major producers-Boeing, Curtiss, Douglas, Martin-liked the idea that an innovative new company like Bell was on the scene. Larry Bell's timing had been perfect; the Airacuda served to get Bell into the fighter business just as it became evident that W.W.II was just around the corner. The Airacudas would be followed by more than 12,000 Bell fighters-P-39s and P-63s and would position Bell to become a leader in the newly emerging helicopter industry after the war.

Bell YFM-1 Airacuda Factory Specs.

Type: heavy escort fighter, bomber, destroyer aircraft

Crew: 5

Armament: two 37mm cannons,  
two 12.7mm machine guns,  
two 7.62mm machine guns,

up to 146 kg of bombs or rockets

Specifications:

Length: 14.0 meters  
Height: 3.9 m  
Wingspan: 21.3 m  
Wing area: 55.8 sq. m  
Empty Weight: 6200 kg  
Max Weight: 8650 kg max at takeoff

Propulsion:

No. of Engines: 2  
Powerplant: Allison V-1710-13 (pusher config.)  
Horsepower: 1133 hp each

Performance:

Range: 2880 km  
Cruise Speed: 383 km/h  
Max Speed: 490 km/h  
Ceiling: 9755 m

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## CUFC New Year Dinner

The club's annual New Year dinner will be held on February 22<sup>nd</sup> this year at the McKenzie Meadows Golf Club.

Contact Dave Procysen for more information.

Details:

McKenzie Meadows Golf Club  
17215 McKenzie Meadows Dr SE

Saturday, February 22, 2003

Cocktails: 6:00

Dinner: 7:00

Silent Auction: 8:00 - 10:00

Tickets: \$25.00 each

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**Calgary Ultralight Flying Club  
Cash Receipts and Disbursements  
Year Ended December 31, 2002**

*Prepared by Carl Forman*

	2002	2001
<b>Receipts</b>		
Members dues	2860.00	2110.00
New Years party	573.73	596.70
Raffles	1227.52	771.18
Skywriter advertising	100.00	195.83
Map - net	74.35	0.00
Other including interest	149.35	95.00
	<u>4322.42</u>	<u>3676.31</u>
<b>Disbursements</b>		
Postage	773.96	630.29
Caps and Crests	-662.53	-92.40
Printing	1364.25	1246.23
Club events(fly-ins)	802.54	523.56
Meeting hall rent	575.00	500.00
Website	212.93	212.93
Aviation days		200.00
Other	25.00	28.48
	<u>-3753.68</u>	<u>-3341.49</u>
<b>Excess of receipts over disbursements</b>	<b>568.74</b>	<b>334.82</b>
<b>Cash, beginning of period</b>	<b><u>4642.99</u></b>	<b><u>4308.17</u></b>
<b>Cash, end of period</b>	<b><u>5211.73</u></b>	<b><u>4642.99</u></b>

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## April Meeting

Humourist and author Garth Wallace will be our guest speaker at the April meeting. Garth is the author and publisher of numerous aviation humour books based on his years of flight instructing. Some titles are: Fly Yellow Side Up, Derry Air, Pie In The Sky, Cockpit Follies, and more. Garth recently retired as Editor and Publisher of the COPA Paper to devote his time to writing even more great books.

Garth will entertain us in person with some of his flying stories on April 10<sup>th</sup>. He will also bring along some books to sell. Mark it on your calendar!

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# The Night Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas, and out on the ramp,  
Not an airplane was stirring, not even a Champ.  
The aircraft were fastened to tiedowns with care,  
In hopes that come morning, they all would be there.

The fuel trucks were nestled, all snug in their spots,  
With gusts from two-forty at 39 knots.  
I slumped at the fuel desk, now finally caught up,  
And settled down comfortably, resting my butt.

When the radio lit up with noise and with chatter,  
I turned up the scanner to see what was the matter.  
A voice clearly heard over static and snow,  
Called for clearance to land at the airport below.

He barked his transmission so lively and quick,  
I'd have sworn that the call sign he used was "St. Nick".  
I ran to the panel to turn up the lights,  
The better to welcome this magical flight.

He called his position, no room for denial,  
"St. Nicholas One, turnin' left onto final."  
And what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a Rutan-built sleigh, with eight Rotax Reindeer!

With vectors to final, down the glideslope he came,  
As he passed all fixes, he called them by name:  
"Now Ringo! Now Tolga! Now Trini and Bacun!  
On Comet! On Cupid!" What pills was he takin'?

While controllers were sittin', and scratchin' their head,  
They phoned to my office, and I heard it with dread,  
The message they left was both urgent and dour:  
"When Santa pulls in, have him please call the tower."

He landed like silk, with the sled runners sparking,  
Then I heard "Left at Charlie," and "Taxi to parking."  
He slowed to a taxi, turned off of three-oh  
And stopped on the ramp with a "Ho, ho-ho-ho..."

He stepped out of the sleigh, but before he could talk,  
I ran out to meet him with my best set of chocks.  
His red helmet and goggles were covered with frost  
And his beard was all blackened from Reindeer exhaust.

His breath smelled like peppermint, gone slightly stale,  
And he puffed on a pipe, but he didn't inhale.  
His cheeks were all rosy and jiggled like jelly,  
His boots were as black as a cropduster's belly.

He was chubby and plump, in his suit of bright red,  
And he asked me to "fill it, with hundred low-lead."  
He came dashing in from the snow-covered pump,  
I knew he was anxious for drainin' the sump.

I spoke not a word, but went straight to my work,

And I filled up the sleigh, but I spilled like a jerk.  
He came out of the restroom, and sighed in relief,  
Then he picked up a phone for a Flight Service brief.

And I thought as he silently scribed in his log,  
These reindeer could land in an eighth-mile fog.  
He completed his pre-flight, from the front to the rear,  
Then he put on his headset, and I heard him yell, "Clear!"

And laying a finger on his push-to-talk,  
He called up the tower for clearance and squawk.  
"Take taxiway Charlie, the southbound direction,  
Turn right three-two-zero at pilot's discretion"

He sped down the runway, the best of the best,  
"Your traffic's a Grumman, inbound from the west."  
Then I heard him proclaim, as he climbed thru the night,  
"Merry Christmas to all! I have traffic in sight."



*Adrian Anderson is the proud new own of this Fisher 404 biplane. Congratulations Adrian!*

