



Skywriter...



July 2010



*Jim Corner enjoys a summer flight.
Photo by Stu Simpson*

19th Annual Chestermere-Kirkby Field fly-in: A success!

By Bob Kirkby

Once again the weather turned out to be about as good as it gets for the 19th annual CFX8 fly-in breakfast. In all those years I can only remember one rainy day for this event. The first weekend in July seems to be a pretty good choice. I wonder if that has anything to do with Canada Day?

We had about 15 aircraft fly in and lots of cars drive in. I think we served something like 125 breakfasts.

I put the coffee can out for donations to the COPA Freedom to Fly fund and was pleasantly surprised to find \$308.50 in the pot at the end of the day. I sent this in to the COPA office right away. Thank you to all those who donated.

A number of members of the Calgary Balloon Club came this year and enjoyed themselves so much they promised to bring a balloon for tethering next year.

Thanks to those who volunteered to cook, marshal, set up and clean up.

I'm already looking forward to the 20th next year. See you then.

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FOR SALE

Volksplane VP2 for sale. Modified 2 place Volksplane made into a comfortable single with a 29" cockpit, 354 TTSN. Many extras and modifications including full canopy (fiberglass), cubby style landing gear with springs. Has extended wing tips which are counterbalanced below. Push pull tubes instead of cables for control surfaces, adjustable pilots seat, 4 point harness. VW engine is 1800 cc and is fully balanced with tuned exhaust and a reduction drive of 1.6:1. Climbs at 800 FPM and cruises at 80 MPH @ 3500 RPM using only about 3 GPH. Two 9 gallon wing tanks. Culver wood prop 72" x 44 pitch. Looking to trade up to a two seat airplane or sell. Asking \$15,000 OBO. Contact Guy Christie at c) 403 901-5594 or Bernie Kespe at h) 403 255-7419 Or Guy at gcpegasus@gmail.com or Bernie at stardustertoo@shaw.ca. 05/10

1992 Rans S-6ES
Coyote-II (BULA), Rotax 503 DCDI Single Carb with 100hrs SMOH, great plane just a little too small for a 6'3" 240lb pilot, \$11,000 or trade. Always hangared at Indus, you buy you can take over the space. Dave Goldsmith (403) 289-9310 (home) 203-8201 ext. 6224 (work) dgoldsmith@gienow.com

1991 Macair Merlin
(BULA) 780 hrs TTAf. Rotax 503 DCDI 170hrs SMOH. Dual controls \$18,900 OBO. Arnim Haase, (403) 240-1183, haaseab@ucalgary.ca

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Calgary Recreational and Ultralight Flying Club

COPA Flight 114

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month, except July and August, starting 7:00 PM at the Northeast Armory, 1227 - 38 Avenue NE, Calgary.

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Skywriter

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CAVU Dreams

By Ken Beanlands

First off, I have to apologize for the late date of this issue of the Skywriter. My vacation took up the first two weeks of July. The second week was spent at the cabin working on tiling floors. Fortunately, my vacation wasn't all work. The first week was spent on the CRUFC 2010 Air Adventure Tour. I won't get into the details here as Stu Simpson has done an excellent job of narrating the trip in his article, the first part of which can be found in this issue.

There are a few details that I will talk about. One is actually a confession. Stu mentions an incident which occurred between Castlegar and Creston where the Christavia's engine oil temperature became quite warm. To understand what happened, I'll take you back to June 19th, the morning of Glenn Bishell's fly-in breakfast.

I was finishing up the annual inspection on Chrissy that morning, with only the cowls and propeller installation remaining. The propeller was removed so that I could finally install a proper spinner on the plane and conduct a dynamic balance. By installing the spinner, I closed in a 2"-3" gap in the cowl around the circumference of the prop hub. I was pretty confident that this wouldn't cause any cooling issues, but it was one thing I had planned to watch on the first flights.

After a thorough inspection of the engine, I installed the upper cowl followed by each of the lower cowl sides, and finally the "chin" cowl over the air intake box.

The next morning, after a brief flight test flight that showed no issue with cooling, a group of us headed to High River for the Father's Day Fly-In Breakfast. Everything went well until I joined the downwind on the return trip to Carstairs. The oil temperature gauge was at 210°F, about 30° higher than normal. I elected to do a touch and go to reproduce the cruise conditions and see if it was a gauge error or real problem. The temperature stayed pegged at 180°F with no faltering. During all of this, I had also cycled the air valve that controls the cooling air directed to the oil cooler.

After landing, I did a thorough check of the engine compartment and found nothing out of the ordinary. I suspected one of two things, either there was a gauge error, or the air valve had stuck partially closed. I have been using the valve to help warm the oil during cold starts, much the same way that cowl flaps are used on other airplanes.

Next came the prop balance. This went quite well and I was able to reduce the vibration from 0.6 ips to 0.04 ips; an order of magnitude less. In addition, I cut about 1.5" off of the right rudder pedal return spring to eliminate the left turn tendency in cruise.

The test flight revealed a great reduction in vibration. Although I still need right rudder pedal in climb and at high cruise settings, I can fly feet off in economy cruise. I was feeling quite confident about the Portland trip as the plane was flying better than ever!!!

The first two flights of the trip from Carstairs to Chestermere and then from Chestermere to Cranbrook proved to be trouble free. However, on the short flight from Cranbrook to Creston, the oil temperature once again came up to 210°F and held steady. This was surprising as the outside air temperature was only 6°C. This time, I noticed the oil pressure drop to the bottom of the green which confirmed that it wasn't a gauge error.

In the previous flight I had used the air valve to bring up the oil temperature from 160°F in the cool air at 8500'. I was starting to suspect that the air valve was stuck and the cable was simply bending. Attempts to cycle the valve didn't fix the issue. I decided to continue on as the temperature was still in the green and holding.

In flight, I had decided that if the air valve was OK, I would remove the chin cowl and fly with it off to see if the cooling issue would go away. On the ground at Creston, I pulled out the tool bag and started in. First I checked the air valve control and it appeared to be working fine. Next I removed the air duct from the air valve to the oil cooler to see if there was a blockage in the hose or at the cooler. Again, no faults were found. Finally, I removed the chin cowl and decided to fly that way for the next short hop to Porthill.

We went up to the terminal to relax but my mind was still contemplating the problem. I realized that although I had checked the air valve control on the back of the baffles with the hose off, I hadn't looked to see if there were any issues ahead of the baffles. The nose of Chrissy is over 6' high with the baffles being above eye level. I opened up the cowl and stretched to see the top of the engine. To my horror and relief, the problem was quite evident!

Over the past few years, our dog's food has been coming in clear, plastic tubs about 4" in diameter. As she goes through two every three days, I've been cleaning them and using them as parts tubs. I've taken them to school, work and my hanger. For the most part, they work great. However, I was now looking at one of those tubs sitting neatly over the intake end of the air valve completely sealing it off!



Can you spot the tub in these two pictures?

I was now confident I had identified the problem... but how did it get there? I distinctly remember taking a close look over the top of the engine before installing the cowls. I've made this a practice to ensure I haven't left tools sitting on top of the engine, an easy mistake to make.

That night at the hotel, I was preoccupied with this issue until it finally dawned on me what had happened. The first cowl I installed was the upper cowl which has the two upper side cowls attached by piano hinge. As I attached the lower side cowl, I had the upper side cowl open. As I attached the last two screw/bolts, I placed the tub on the open cowl (now open and upside-down). When I went to install the second, lower cowl, I would have closed the first upper cowl and opened the second one. That was when the bucket dropped down inside the baffles to rest on top of the cylinders.

When I did the pre-flight inspections after the annual, the tub must have been sitting down tight against the baffles where I couldn't see it from one side, and the fact that it was clear prevented me from seeing it from the other side (remember, I can only open one upper cowl at a time).

What was happening in flight was that the tub would occasionally work its way over the oil cooler intake air and seal it off. The first time it happened, I did a touch and go immediately after that must have dislodged the bucket, leading me to improperly diagnose the problem.

After this issue was sorted out, the rest of the trip was trouble free. In fact, I made a climb from 22' MSL to 9500' MSL to clear the Cascade Mountains at maximum rate of climb on a warm, 25°C morning and the oil temperature stayed below 210°F, dropping to about 200°F above 6000'.

One other thing I learned on the trip was just how great some of the new technology is. I bought an iPhone 3Gs this spring. With the new audio panel, I can plug it in and listen to tunes or audio books while making these long trips. This feature was pretty obvious.

One that wasn't so obvious was just how helpful the iPhone was for other things. One of the legs brought us into some unstable weather with a number of thunderstorms in the area. I was able to bring up a weather web site showing real-time radar info. With the built-in GPS in the phone, I was able to determine where the rain showers were and pick my way through them. Yes, I know that XM weather built in to the new aviation GPS's will do the same thing, but since I already have the data plan and the phone, this is a free service. XM on a Garmin GPS almost doubles the cost and you need an XM subscription to make use of it. Of course, you do need 3G cell coverage to make use of this, but I had coverage for about 90% of the flying.

I also have a GPS navigation application on the iPhone that works great for flight planning and as a back-up GPS in flight.

Even the text messaging works well when travelling with a group. At one point, I had come out of the mountains west of Springbank to find the entire plains under fog and cloud. Fortunately, I could tell that Sundre was clear, but I wanted to let Stu and Warren know of the conditions as they were not as predicted. They were on the ground in Invermere so a quick text message was sent to warn them. So far, I'm quite impressed.

Well, that's it for this month. We had an incredible trip with a number of memorable moments and fantastic scenery along the way. See you all in September.

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2010 Air Adventure Tour

By Stu Simpson

The clouds boiled and lurched in a violent belching of energy and anger, doing their best to pound the mountains into rubble. The leading edge of the weather made no attempt at subtlety as it swallowed all that fell before it, steadily trooping eastward across the Livingstone Range of the Rocky Mountains of southern Alberta.

I watched the big storm from the cockpit of my Merlin, gauging its speed, watching it consume forests and stone ramparts alike. The monster was huge, but it was a slow, lumbering giant that we'd easily outpace. It wouldn't catch us here, between the Rocks and the Porcupine Hills. But I worried about the meteorological demons awaiting in the Crowsnest Pass.

Off to the east, morning sunlight sliced its way through a mid-level cirrus layer and lit up the verdant pine forests bracing the Cowboy Trail beneath our wings. Vehicles, driven by mere mortals, slipped away behind as we continued southbound.

To my left, in his own Merlin, flew Warren Arnholtz, silhouetted against the morning sky as we snapped pictures of the mountains and each other's planes against the dramatic back drop. The GPS showed us making excellent progress and I said a quiet thanks to the wind for the little push it gave us.

The weather closes in from the west, swallowing the Rockies. By Warren Arnholtz.



Up ahead and out of sight, Ken Beanlands radioed that he was about 20 NM back from the Cowley airstrip. I envied him because he'd see first the magnificent transformation of the landscape. He'd see the forests disappear from the valley, replaced by a stunning display of prairie where few trees had courage enough to face the dreadful Chinook winds that burnish the area year round.

Beginnings

Such was the beginning of the first leg of our Air Adventure Tour; a week-long flying trip with the goal of reaching the Pacific coast near Portland, Oregon.

Warren, Ken and I planned to reach Coeur d'Alene, Idaho by day's end. Of course, that would depend on whether or not we got ambushed crossing the Continental Divide. I knew if we could cross the Divide and reach the Columbia Valley, we'd also reach Coeur d'Alene.

Ken radioed from his Christavia that he was rounding the corner near the Frank Slide and that there was definitely some challenging weather ahead. We'd likely be out of touch with him shortly as the mountains blocked our radio signals.

Ken would always be head of us on this trip. He cruises a bit better than 100 mph, while our Merlins move closer to 87 mph. Both Warren and I are pretty satisfied with those numbers, and it means we get to fly a bit longer.

As we approached the Crowsnest Pass, we heard intermittent snippets from Ken stating he couldn't hold 8500' and had to descend to stay clear of the clouds. We rounded the corner into the Pass and started our westward trek across the spine of the Rockies.

Warren and I checked our maps and discussed a good route that would shorten our time over the Divide and still keep us clear of the weather. The sky was moving in on us now from two directions - from the north, and from above. The storm that had earlier been stalking



Turtle Mountain and the Frank Slide. By Warren Arnholtz.

eastward over the Livingstones had also grown southward and was rapidly pressing on toward us. The clouds steadily came down, so we did, too.

We angled south, away from Highway 3, following a road that would lead to some railroad tracks that would then take us to a lower saddle in the mountains. That would pop us out over Fernie in the Elk Valley. From there, it was an easy hop to the south end of the valley near Elko.

We caught a fleeting message from Ken saying we'd need to be down to 6500' to get through the Elk Valley, but once past Elko things really opened up.

"How're you doing back there, Warren?", I radioed.

"Oh, I'm thumping along just fine," he replied, referring to the turbulence that shoved us around every now and then.

A logging road and a clear-cut in the highest part of the saddle, a region known as Coal Creek, slipped away beneath us. The clouds crowded down from above.

Then, Fernie appeared, nudging into view from around the corner of a mountain, and we began a steady descent to stay in the clear. I relaxed a little then, glad we weren't any later in the day.

We flew the few miles to the end of the Elk Valley and turned to the northwest for Cranbrook. Here, the clouds were indeed fewer and higher enabling an easy flight into Canadian Rockies International.

Ken told us on the ground he was starting to get worried since he hadn't heard from us due to the terrain blocking our radios. He was quite relieved when he heard us call up on Cranbrook's frequency.

We fuelled the Merlins and paid for the gas, then went to file our flight plans. We called Flight Service and filed for Porthill, Idaho with an intermittent stop at Creston. That would allow us to get out of Cranbrook and the rapidly building weather there. We could then fly the 5 mile jaunt to the border strip at Porthill and time our arrival more precisely.

We endured a few heart-stopping moments when we called the border station and they told us they didn't have Warren's pre-filed paperwork filled out properly. As we dug a little deeper into the problem, Ken realized that the date on Warren's file was wrong. We had earlier needed to amend our departure date due to the American holiday and Warren had forgotten to make the change.

We all breathed a big sigh of relief as the border patrolman said he'd look after the change on his end, and we'd be welcome to cross today. That's good service.

Potential Trouble

We departed Cranbrook in a line-astern formation takeoff headed southbound. We cleared Cranbrook's airspace and all checked in on our enroute frequency.

Then Ken transmitted, his voice sounding noticeably worried. His oil temperature was much higher than normal, he reported, and he still wasn't finished his climb. I asked him if he wanted to turn around, but he said he'd continue on. The temperature, though high, was still within limits.

This was a potentially huge problem. Ken had proclaimed proudly before we turned into the Crowsnest that his Christavia was running extremely well. What could have caused the oil temperature to so suddenly spike?



The clouds crowding the sky around Simpson's Merlin. By Warren Arnholtz.

The weather was starting to haunt us again as small cells began building up. We flew through a few drops of rain as the turbulence from daytime heating and instability rocked us noticeably. The breeze stayed low, though, still giving us a gentle tailwind as we followed the highway.

Ken told us his oil had stabilized near 210 degrees, about 30 degrees higher than it normally was. He announced a fix that he could work on in Creston. He could open up the bottom of the cowling, he said, to help vent more engine cooling air. Ken still sounded worried, but also a little more encouraged now that he'd formed a plan to attack the problem.

Warren and I chatted about what I thought was a monument of some sort on the top of a small mountain near Yahk. Wade Miller had spotted it last year on our flight to Seattle and I couldn't help wondering what it really was. Warren spotted it, too, and set things straight when he said it was most likely a radio relay tower. Warren is wise in the ways of these things, you see. Mystery solved.

The mountains in this region are fairly benign compared to those elsewhere in the Rockies. They're lower, more rounded off, almost like overgrown foothills. They lack the dramatic jaggedness of the Continental Divide and the coastal ranges. They're really quite pleasant to fly over.

We coasted into Creston settling deeply beneath the level of the tall pines bordering the runway. I taxied in to see Ken already popping his cowling to search for the oil cooling problem. Nothing obvious jumped out, leaving us all stumped. Ken mentioned he may have to turn back because the forecast for where we

were headed called for very hot weather. Ken didn't want to cook his engine.

He proceeded to pull the bottom part of the cowling off, opening the outflow even wider. But we all still wondered, why the sudden temperature jump?

We settled in the pilot's lounge for a bit, killing time until our border crossing slot, and quietly pondering the oil temp mystery.

Come time to leave, we ambled out to the ramp where Ken decided to have one more look in the engine bay. He checked the oil cooler inlet and discovered some plastic debris blocking the inlet almost totally. He'd left it there after some work on the

engine prior to the trip, but it didn't block the oil cooler until we left Cranbrook.

Another huge sigh of relief, and Ken and Warren immediately set to working re-attaching the cowl bottom. They worked quickly and happily, determined to make our time slot at Porthill.

Last Leg of the Day

We left Creston for what was likely the shortest flight I've ever made between two airports. Seven minutes later I touched down at Porthill and taxied to the parking ramp.

Clearing customs was easy and we enjoyed a friendly chat with the border patrol staff as they processed our papers. Soon enough, they sent us on our way and wished us a good holiday.

Minutes later we fire-walled our throttles and scooted along the downhill threshold of Runway 15 for the last leg into Coeur d'Alene.

This valley is wide and lush with brightly coloured farm fields and crop types we couldn't identify. We skirted the mountain ridge to the west, coasting upward on the afternoon thermals and keeping an eye on even more weather building in our path. Hmm, I thought. This stuff might actually give us some trouble.

Ken went on ahead, as usual, and served as a scout for us. He described the building cells and voiced a plan that we may have to set down for a while at Sandpoint to wait things out. I didn't really like that

idea because we might miss our rental car. Still, I knew it'd be cheaper than a funeral so I was ready to divert if required.

Warren and I watched the main troublemaker, a cell that was steadily moving eastward along a path north of Coeur d'Alene, right between us and the airport. The storm was still pretty juvenile, but maturing quickly.

As we closed to within 15 miles of the airport I radioed Warren. "What do you think of trying to sneak through that gap ahead between the showers, Warren?"

There was silence while he weighed the options. "You decide and I'll just follow you, Stu," he answered cagily. Smart guy, that Warren.

I heard another pilot who'd just left Coeur d'Alene and asked for his position. All I got in response was something that sounded like Charlie Brown's teacher. He was on the other side of the storm so maybe that had an effect.

I decided to shoot for the gap between the showers.

We dropped some height to stay well clear of the bottom and I steered in toward the gap. I looked to the right and saw Warren off my right wing closing in a bit more tightly to stay within the frame of our opening.

Just as I was about to reach the storm line, Warren peeled off to the right to go around the back side of the cell. What I should have done was follow him. What I did do was press on just as the gap in the rain closed.

Suddenly, I was deluged with the heaviest rain I've ever experienced while flying. I could even hear it over the sound of my engine. I could still see through the storm, and quite a distance beyond it. And the turbulence, while pronounced, was still manageable.

What troubled me was that I was descending at about 1000 fpm. I had hit the storm at the same instant that a microburst had bottomed out. Great timing, eh?

Luckily, I was in the storm for less than a minute and was in no danger of being forced into the ground. As I popped out of the torrent Coeur d'Alene's airport sprang into view. Warren and I descended onto the left downwind for Runway 01.

I landed in a bucking headwind and taxied clear to watch Warren come in over the numbers with barely any forward movement. I sat in sequence behind a Hawker 125 business jet waiting to cross the button after Warren passed.

"Are you even moving?" one of the jet pilots radioed. He marvelled (ed. I thought he was snickering) at the Merlin's snail-like approach speed against the strong headwind.

It was too rainy and windy to fuel right then so we decided to wait until morning. We all taxied over to the itinerant parking and strapped the planes down for the night.

Our first day took us just over 4 1/2 hours of flying through some very challenging weather. Each of us was glad the flying day was done. We were also looking forward to the next day where we'd all be going places we'd never seen before.

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All three planes on the ground at Creston. Ahead of the weather, but searching for clues about Ken's high oil temperature. By Warren Arnholtz.



FLYING EVENTS

WEEKLY Lethbridge, AB – The Lethbridge Sport Flyers (COPA Flight 24) would like to invite you to our weekly Saturday morning breakfast, 7:30 am, held at Smitty's Pancake House, 2053 Magrath Dr. S. in Lethbridge, Alberta. We encourage you to call ahead if you're in the area. For more information see our site at www.lethbridgesportflyers.com. To contact us please call our club President, Brian Wilson 403-345-6603 or send us an email at Lethbridge-Sport-Flyers@telus.net.

MONTHLY First Thursday of every month High River Airport (CEN4), AB – EAA Chapter 1410 Monthly Meeting at the Dueck Hangar the 18:30hrs to 21:00hrs. Come by and visit! Please contact Paul evenings at 403-271-5330 or eaahighriver@shaw.ca or visit www.eaahighriver.org for more details.

July 24th – 25th, Lethbridge, AB (CYQL) 2010 Alberta International AirShow. For more details see <http://www.albertaairshow.com/>

July 26th - August 1, Oshkosh, WI – EAA Airventure

August 4th, Whitecourt, AB – Wings over Whitecourt 2010 Air Show. For more information please visit <http://www.whitecourtairshow.com/W.O.W./Home.html>

August 8th, Westlock, AB – COPA-Flight 139 Fly-In breakfast from 07:00 to 11:00. If you have any questions please contact Georg Hertz-Kleptow at 780-349-1094.

August 18-20th, Calgary, AB – Webster Trophy Competition to select Canada's top amateur pilot. COPA is a key contributor and President Kevin Psutka is one of the judges. Regional competitions are on now, visit <http://webstertrophy.ca/> for more information on how you can participate. Lots of fun and a great opportunity to hone and demonstrate your skills. Download poster here (for French here) and post it at your airport to encourage others to participate.

August 21st, Moose Jaw, SK (CJS4) – Moose Jaw Flying Club Fly-In breakfast from 0800 to 1100. Moose Jaw Municipal, N50 26 05 W105 23 16. For more information contact Gerry Julian at 306-692-8932 or gjulian@sasktel.net.

August 21st, Villeneuve, AB (CZVL) – Villeneuve Fly-In & Open House. N53 40 06 W113 51 20. Villeneuve Airport is pleased to be hosting the 6th annual Open House and Fly-In BBQ from 11:00 am to 2:30 pm. Rain or Shine! The BBQ is FREE but we will gladly accept donations for Hope Air. For more information please contact Theresa at 780.890.6736 or ttsoukalas@flyeia.com

August 21st & 22nd, Disley, SK (CDS2) – E.A.A. Western Canada Chapter Fly-In Breakfast. E.A.A. Western Canada chapter get together Saturday afternoon and evening (E.A.A. members only) with a Fly-in Breakfast on Sunday morning 0800 to 1200 hrs which is open to everyone. For more information please contact Vic Zubot at 306 731 2249.

August 28th, Medicine Hat, AB – Walk-In, Fly-In, or Drive-In! Everyone is welcome to sample the hospitality at the Medicine Hat Airport. Core hours are from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Activities will be centered near the RAA Hangar. Enjoy the corn, special sausage, hot dogs, etc.. Rain date is August 29. Additional info may be obtained by contacting Boyne Lewis at balewis@shaw.ca or by telephoning Boyne at 403-527-9571.

September 6th, Stettler, AB (EJ3) – COPA Flight 135 Stettler Flying Club annual Fly-In Breakfast Labour Day Monday. All you can eat pancakes, eggs, ham & sausages from 8:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. For more information, please contact Henry Johnson at 403-740-6415 or e-mail ohana@telus.net also Garry Fix at 403-742-6104 or email gagafix@gmail.com.

September 11, Airdrie, AB (CEF4) – 3rd Annual Show and Shine. Aircraft and Automobiles 10 am to 3 pm BBQ Hamburgers and Drinks available. For more information contact R Zabolotney at 403-804-8094 or zabo1@telus.net

September 11th, Cooking Lake, AB (CEZ3) – Speedy Aviation is holding an open house/pancake breakfast between 7am and 11am on Saturday September 11th. Breakfast will be provided by The Firehall Diner, South Cooking Lake. For more information, contact Terry Allen at (780) 934-0503.

September 14th – 21st, Reno, NV, USA – 2010 Reno Air Races and Air Show. For more details, see <http://www.airrace.org/indexJS.php>

September 18th, Rocky Mountain House, AB (CYRM) – COPA Flight 166 Fly-In Breakfast 08:00 til Noon. Everyone's welcome. Come and enjoy. For more information please contact Fred Nash 403 844-3511 or email frednash@shaw.ca

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