



Skywriter...



October 2010



Glenn Bishell departs with his first load of “COPA for Kids” passengers on October 2, 2010. The Bushcaddy is sporting a brand new paint job... but it does leave you with a sense of déjà vu.

From the Cockpit

By Robin Orsulak

One cannot help but notice all the obvious signs of the arrival of the fall season. I find myself arriving at the airfield a little later than usual in the mornings and trying to win the race with sunset in the quest to get more airtime. Even so, I know the inevitable will come to pass... winter, with its cooler temps and shorter days. Not to worry too much though as I am sure there will be more tales to be told at the hangar that's all!

I spent the last few weekends flying south to the old Vulcan airbase with no reason in particular. I think I just like the lure of those old hangars and the history down there. The one thing I have noticed over those few flights is how the wind can change fairly rapidly and how that can influence my plans. On one particular flight I decided against landing and turned back and headed home. It was a real joy bucking headwinds and burning fuel...NOT! I think the point I am making is that one should try and make use of ALL available resources if possible (additional WX info in this case) and make sure you remain flexible and keep in a position to make safe a prudent decisions as need be. This was not that serious a situation other than a reminder for me as a pilot to plan for error on the conservative side.

I am pleased to announce our guest speaker for October's meeting will be Honorable Colonel H.C. "Skip" Armstrong (retired). The Colonel's career spanned 35 years in the Air Force flying fighter, trainer and transport aircraft. His command appointments included the Instrument Check Pilot School; 429 Transport Squadron; the NATO E3-A Operational Wing in Geilenkirchen, Germany; as Base Commander of CFB Winnipeg and as Commander of the Canadian Forces Training System in Trenton.

Following retirement, Honorary Colonel Armstrong was employed by General Dynamics Canada in

Calgary as Director
Business Development
and Director of
Homeland Security.

I look forward to seeing
you all at the meeting
and in the meantime...
stay safe, have fun....
and take a friend along.



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.

President:

Robin Orsulak
(403) 651-9064
vquest1@yahoo.com

Vice-President:

Stu Simpson
bushmaster@shaw.ca

Secretary:

Ed D'Antoni
(403) 247-6621
dantoni@telusplanet.net

Treasurer:

Kathleen Woodward
kewoodward@shaw.ca

Director:

Andy Gustafsson
(403) 247-3245
gustafsa@shaw.ca

Past President:

Pat Cunningham
(403) 276-2617
patcunningham@shaw.ca

Web site:

www.crufc.org

Skywriter

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Editor: Ken Beanlands
(403)295-2079
kbeanlan@telus.net

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CRUFC COPA for Kids Day

By Carl Forman, Pictures by Ken Beanlands

The Calgary Recreational and Ultralight Flying Club, COPA Flight 114 held its annual COPA for Kids Day on October 2 at Chestemere Kirkby Field. The weather was severely clear with very light, sometimes nonexistent winds and virtually no turbulence. It doesn't get any better than this.



A perfect fall morning for flying

We had a Cessna 140, 170, 182, Piper PA12, and a Stinson 108. It was notable that most of these aircraft were not only older than the Kids but were older than their parents and most of their grandparents as well as the pilots who flew them. They are all maintained in near new condition and when lined up on the flight line they represent an irresistible Kodak moment. From the amateur category we had a Kitfox 5, a Bushcaddy and a Zenair CH250.

Kids are registered prior to the event and are

Ground School with instructor - Stu Simpson.



Mike Sweere with his Cessna 170

assigned one of five flight timeslots. They arrive fifteen minutes early to complete the paperwork. Once all the kids for a particular timeslot are present, they are given ground school instruction. Ground school consists of a brief description of the various parts of the airplane and how they are activated by the pilot. After ground school, the Kids are escorted to their airplane by the pilot. After their flight their picture was taken with the pilot and the pilot then escorted them back to the hangar. The first batch of 10 Kids took off at 8:45 and the whole process was repeated at 45 minute intervals. We had coffee, pop and donuts available for the parents and kids.

After the event most of the participating aircraft and a few other aircraft took off for the 40 mile flight north to Lyndon for pie and debriefing.

The kids are full of enthusiasm and excitement and the parents are pleased and grateful. This event is as much fun for the volunteers as it is for Kids! I haven't met a pilot who can't remember his first airplane ride. The knowledge that we have implanted this life long memory in another 50 Kid's minds is really satisfying.

Here is an email we received from one of the parents: "Thanks so much for your email and the photos. Thanks for the great morning all the kids had. My kids and their friends thoroughly enjoyed the experience and were very appreciative!"

I only heard good things from everyone, kids and parents alike! The whole event was well planned and a special treat for all the kids that could participate. Well done!!! THANKS so much for the thoughtfulness extended to all the kids in giving them this opportunity:)

Please pass on our thanks to all the pilots and everyone involved serving and facilitating. We received a lot of similar emails.



Goose Bumps

By Warren Arnholtz

On November 2, 1947, with the world watching, Howard Hughes flew the widely criticized Spruce Goose for about two minutes. He made history, silenced critics and altered aviation. He proved scaled up aircraft really could fly. This blazed the trail for aircraft like the Boeing 747 and the Antonov An-225.

On December 5, 1980, I made my first solo flight, also for about 2 minutes. The world wasn't watching, but I'm sure I was just as thrilled, and felt just as much excitement as Howard Hughes did on his historic flight.

The story of the Spruce Goose has captivated me my whole life. I was fascinated that anyone could even dare to dream of, let alone build, such an enormous flying machine at that time in aviation. It was an incredible accomplishment given the constraints of the day. Because the war was in progress Hughes was restricted to using wood and was not allowed to hire experienced engineers from established companies. He had to hire and train new engineers on the job.

Hughes' accomplishments inspired me to stretch my dreams, to attempt to obtain a pilot's license. This led to an even bigger dream of actually owning my own airplane, which I accomplished five years ago.

When the opportunity came along to join Stu Simpson and Ken Beanlands on a flight to Portland, Oregon, I couldn't resist, especially since the Spruce Goose is housed just a few miles from Portland. To fly my own plane to see the Spruce Goose would exceed my wildest dreams.

Since I launched my Merlin in 2005, I've gained confidence by making trips into the Rocky Mountains, to Sparwood, to Ram Falls, to Kananaskis and to Red Deer Forestry. The Rotax 912-powered Merlin has proven to be a very capable aircraft. Though my Merlin has provided no end of satisfaction - right from rebuilding it, up to all the local flying I've done with it - I started to want more. I knew there had to be more to flying than just going to Linden for pie, enjoyable a treat as that is.

I'd never made an extended cross country trip, let alone a border crossing. Flying my Merlin to the US seemed intimidating and I don't think I would have considered it on my own. However, with an opportunity to tag along with Stu and Ken, I didn't give it a second thought.

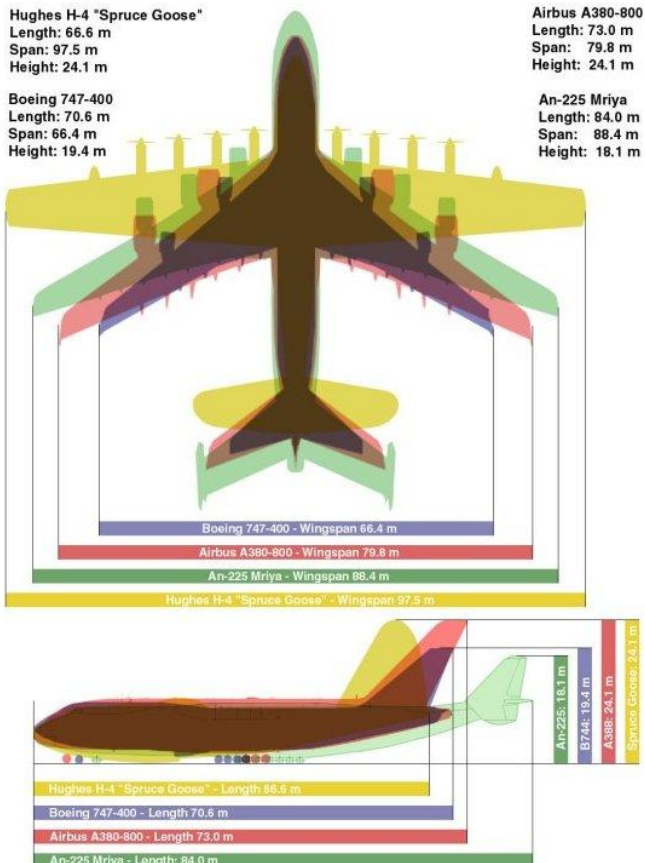
Since 9/11, the US of A, understandably, has become a bit sensitive about aircraft crossing their border. Preparation to make a trip to the US in an ultralight without a transponder can seem complicated. But it really is a matter of a bit of research and perseverance.

There is simply no way to have a seamless departure on a big trip. No matter how much you plan and prepare, the night before a big trip is never restful. Do you have everything packed? What have I forgotten? What if...? So you get almost no rest and get up extra early.

Aside from all of the concerns about a cross-border trip, the weather looked OK, but it was one those days, that you really didn't know how the weather would be until you actually got into the air. This added to my pre-trip anxiety.

Day One

When I arrived at the airport, everything looked good. Weather seemed good, getting CZG loaded and ready to fly went faster than I thought, and there were no last minute snags. I was itching to get airborne. Finally, I received a text from Stu that DDN and REN were on their way. We would meet in the air. Great!





“Indus traffic, Merlin Charlie Zulu Gulf rolling on 28, with a left-hand turnout for Portland, Oregon... Indus traffic.”

The trip from Calgary to the Crowsnest Pass was benign. Then began a game of dodging under and around the clouds that were building. Ken, with the faster aircraft, threaded his way through, then radioed back to Stu and I about the challenges we'd face. He said that once we were through the pass it was clear sailing. This made decision making a lot easier. Touchdown at Cranbrook I felt great, the first step done!

Next the border...

Though I submitted applications to the FAA a couple of months previous, and received approval, we had changed our departure date and I did not think to amend my crossing request. So when we called the border to notify them of our intended arrival time. They said CZG was not on the list of arrivals. Fortunately, Ken noticed the date error, US Customs accepted the explanation, and agreed to our arrival. This is a good example of how the process of border crossing is friendlier than you might think. Crossing the border was a highlight in my flying career.

Flying from the border to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, proved to be a Snakes and Ladders game with shower cells. Again, Ken gave us status reports of the weather ahead. Real-time weather intel was priceless as Stu and I picked our way through and around the showers. I was feeling a bit overwhelmed with the flying, the weather, navigation, watching for traffic and looking for the airport. So I was happy to lock onto

Stu's tail feathers and follow him in on KCOE's runway 01.

As I taxied to the tie down, my cell phone chirped a text message alert. Susan had been following me from Calgary on my SPOT tracker. "Welcome to Coeur d'Alene", she texted.

Amazing technology like SPOT and texting has made a huge difference to my flying experience. It's quite comforting to know that hundreds of miles away my location is continuously monitored and I'm instantaneously in touch with home.

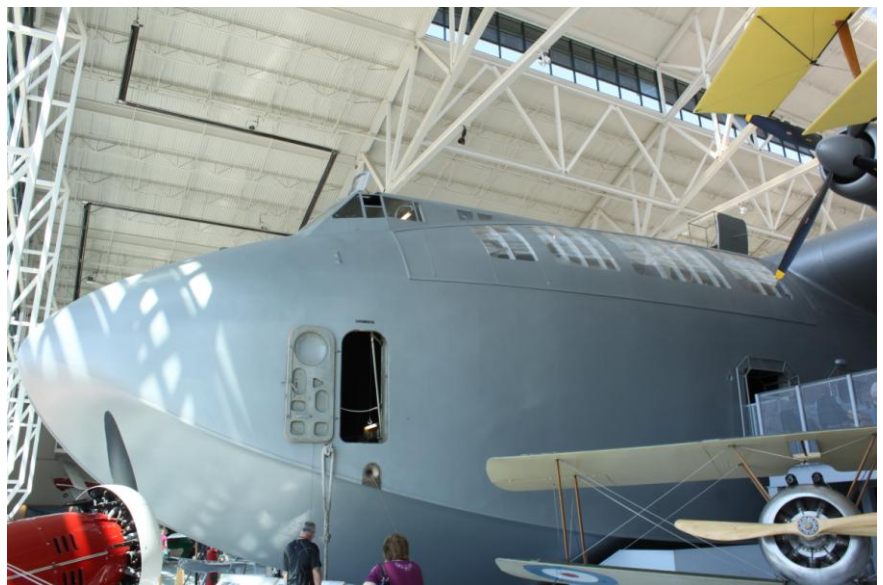
With CZG tied down, I felt like I had just finished the Ironman. With a restless night before, not much to eat and a long day of intense flying, I felt exhausted but incredibly satisfied.

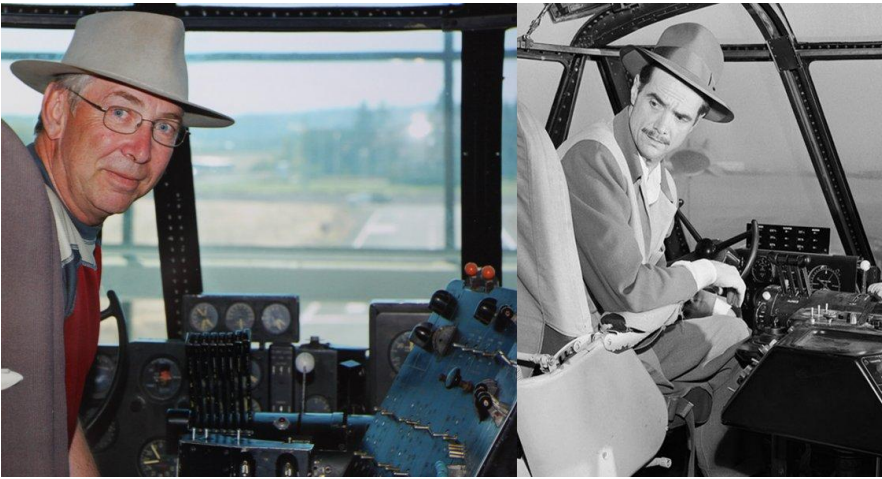
Day Two

I am sure I've had better sleeps, but I really can't remember when. The weather on day two was a completely different story than on day one. Severe clear and light winds. Yessssss! Can't wait to get in the air. Bring IT on!

The trip from Coeur d'Alene to Portland was a visual smorgasbord. It started with hilly wooded lake lands, then became barren plains with dust devils in Washington state. It soon changed to snow covered peaks like Mount St. Helens and then to the coastal logging country of Oregon. Wow! There is simply no experience that compares to the geographic vistas from the air.

Our destination at Portland, actually Vancouver,





Washington, was only 3 miles from Portland International's busy airspace. Arriving mid-afternoon on a hot day made for an interesting time. I found a low stall speed isn't always your friend. The mechanical turbulence and a nasty cross wind provided more action than I cared for.

On final, I transitioned from pilot to steer wrestler, locked in battle with a cantankerous beast. Pitching and rolling above the runway for what seemed like an eternity. With my heels dug in, we smacked onto the runway, the beast still bucking. Finally, my speed bled off and the battle subsided. I transitioned back to being a pilot and serenely taxied to the pumps. Geez, I sure hope no one saw that. "Got it all on video," Simpson said with a grin, as I poured myself out of the plane.

Damn.

Day Three

We had originally planned to fly from Portland to McMinnville to see the Spruce Goose. But after checking the weather we chose instead to take advantage of our rental car and not have to worry about the deteriorating afternoon flying conditions. Thus, we could more easily enjoy the day at the Evergreen Air Museum.

For me, it was a relief not to have to think about flying and to have a day off to drink in this amazing aeronautical museum.

I'd spend the better part of my life imaging what it would be like to actually see, touch and feel the enormous flying enigma that is the Spruce Goose. It's been a part of my being for such a long time, and I wondered if I'd be disappointed. I need not have worried.

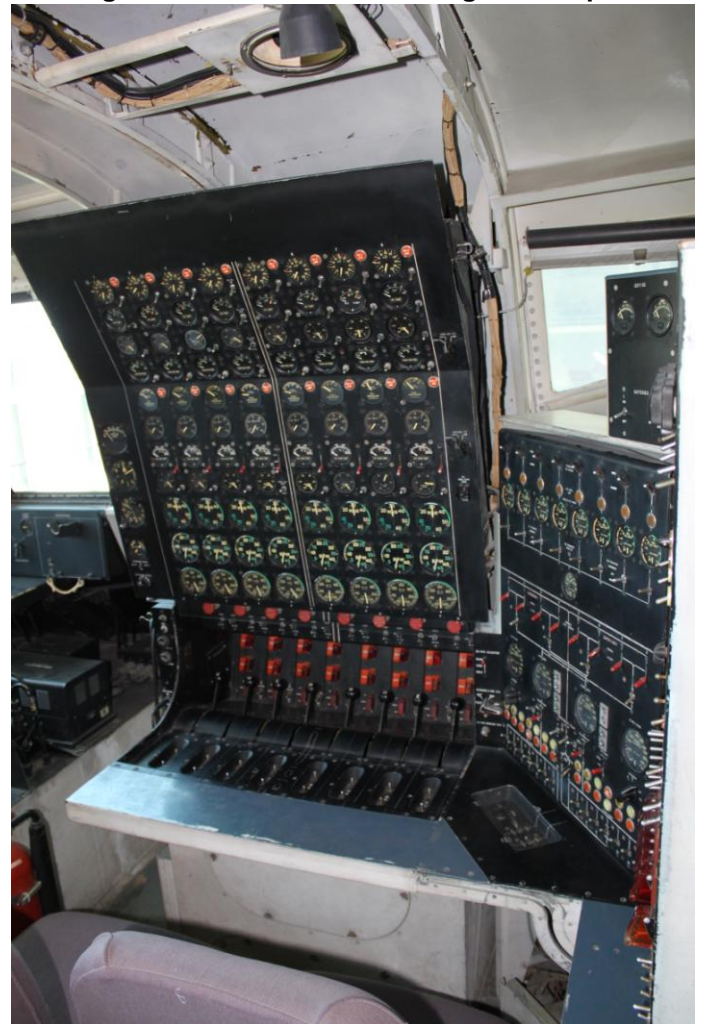
We paid our fare and entered the museum. The entire place, enormous as it is, is absolutely dominated by the Spruce Goose. I stood there, awestruck, this phenomenon finally before me... goose bumps.

I know there are a lot of other fascinating aircraft in that museum, but I really couldn't tell you what they are. I was totally captivated by NX37602, the Hughes H-4 Hercules, the world's largest experimental seaplane.

The construction details of this plane are simply fascinating. The span is 320 feet. The fuselage is massive at 30 feet high and 218 feet long. The upper flight deck alone is larger than my living room. But for a huge aircraft with eight engines, the cockpit is remarkably sparse, though beautiful in its simple functionality. On the rear bulkhead of

the flight deck, I spotted a 50 gallon oil tank to provide in-flight make-up oil for the engines. Two gas-powered, hand-started generators provided power to start the first two engines. At the rear of the flight deck is an entrance to passage ways into each of the enormous wings. The flight engineer could easily access the eight Pratt & Whitney 4000 hp radial engines.

I savoured every second of our time at Evergreen, drinking in the details of this magnificent piece of





engineering and all its history and mystery. But the day had to end eventually and we headed off back to Portland. I noticed on the way out that the entrance road to the museum is painted to resemble a runway.

Day 4

Our next destination on the trip was Snohomish Harvey Field. Getting there was another intense bit of flying, threading our way out of Portland and then through the busy Seattle airspace. Again, I kept DDN off my nose as Stu navigated us through the maze of airspace and the barrage of air traffic controllers' instructions. This afforded me more time to keep an eye out for traffic. I saw some heavy stuff like C-17s and 767s. I know we were well clear of them, but they still appeared closer than I'd have liked. As well, we passed numerous light aircraft going every which way. After flying over what seemed to be an endless urban sprawl, Harvey Field, a small friendly airport, appeared and was a very welcome sight.

We capped off this amazing day by taking in a Seattle Mariners/New York Yankees ball game, complete with a foot-long hotdog and a brewskie.

Oh yea... this is livin'!

Day 5

We piled into our rental car for a short drive to the Arlington Airshow. It was my first time attending this famous fly-in. It was a beautiful hot day, and the place was abuzz with aircraft of every flavour. It wasn't long after we arrived and were wandering around the numerous pilot gadget peddlers when a couple of familiar faces appeared. Troy Branch and Carl Foreman had arrived that morning from Calgary. We shared the afternoon air show, like a mob of gawking meerkats huddled under the tail of Troy's RV 10 hiding from the blazing hot sun.

After a great meal and more flying war stories, it was back to the comfort of an air-conditioned room with a hot shower. Unbridled luxury after the day in the heat.

That night, I pecked on my Netbook, updated my Facebook status, emailed pictures and our progress on Google Maps from the SPOT tracking website. Sharing our trip, with spouses and friends day by day, enhanced the adventure.

Day 6

It was time to start making our way back to Canada. For this day of flying Stu and I choose a friendlier route through the Snoqualmie Pass with a planned fuel stop at Ellensburg. Ken chose a scenic shorter route, straight across the mountains to Coleville.

Enroute, Stu, gauging our progress, suggested we push on further than Ellensburg, to a place called Ephrata. Never heard of it, and neither had Stu, but it sounded good to me, so on we went.

Ephrata was an amazingly large airport in what seemed to be the middle of nowhere. Along the trip Ken and Stu had been reliving scenes from the movie "Always", which, according to Stu is one of the best flying movies ever.

After we finished fuelling, we stood in front of the terminal at Ephrata, where I noticed Stu had a quizzical look on his face. We entered the terminal to file our border crossing plans.

For a very quiet airport, the terminal building was rather large and immaculately kept. On one side was a tiny museum, it told a story of Ephrata as a WWII bomber training base. This explained the large well-kept airport and terminal. On the other side of the building was a large briefing room, the perfect spot to file our flight plans. As we entered the room, a huge movie poster for the film "Always" dominated the wall.

"That's it!" Stu exclaimed, "That's why this place looks so familiar! This was the location for some of the movie scenes." Cool...

From Ephrata we headed east, then north to cross the border and spend the night in Castlegar as guests of Stu's father. It was a beautiful trip, but once we crossed the border, afternoon showers were closing in. The tight valley at Castlegar, felt like flying into a shoebox after the expansive plains of Washington State.

On the ramp at Castlegar we stayed in our Merlins

and called Canadian Customs. By the rules we were obliged not to move from our planes until we were cleared. We fuelled and tied down just ahead of a heavy shower.

After six days of hotels and restaurants, the gracious hospitality, numerous belly laughs and home cooked meals provided by Lionel and Laverne were welcome treats.

Day 7

From Castlegar we flew north over Nelson, and east to Crawford Bay enroute to Kimberly and then a fuel stop at Invermere. It was a spectacular flight. At Kimberly, Ken elected a direct route and headed straight for home base at Carstairs. Stu and I continued on to Invermere.

We touched down in a brisk quartering cross wind, and I found that what used to be a tense type of landing for me, now seemed routine.

The clouds were kissing the mountain tops as we followed the highway back to Banff. Past there we broke out of the mountains to the prairies skies in front of us. It was a familiar and very welcome sight.

I shot a text to Susan, "Look out here we come". She had been following us on SPOT, heard us coming, and watched from our fourth floor condo balcony as the two homeward bound Merlins passed by on the final leg of an incredible flying adventure.

Dragonfly 2 (my in-flight group call sign) broke off for Indus as Stu in Dragonfly 1 headed for Chestermere Kirkby Field. I touched down on runway 16 in a brisk south wind and had no problems with the landing. I felt confident,

satisfied and elated to be home. It was hard to comprehend how much we had experienced in the last 7 days and I was already savouring the memories.

Final Thoughts

I can't say that this experience has eclipsed my first solo flight in terms of a sense of accomplishment. However, it has changed what flying is for me. I'm more confident in my Merlin and will definitely be taking on longer and more adventurous trips in the future. I will still go to Linden for pie, though. And I'll still love doing it.

It was truly a luxury to have the freedom to focus on trip preparation and actual flying, without fussing over the details of the exact route, or having to deal with how and where to cross the border. Ken and Stu planned that part of the trip superbly. I'm very grateful to them for providing me the opportunity to join them on this amazing flying adventure. This trip has fulfilled one of my life long dreams and has rejuvenated my passion for flying.



The Air Venture 2010 route, as captured by the SPOT tracker.



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. 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.

October 16th, Springbank, AB (CYBW) – The "JUST BECAUSE" Fly-In / Drive-In Smokie Lunch. As good a reason as any to have a gathering of flying folk to visit & talk about flying! Where – Ralph Inkster's Hangar, 344 Noorduyn Pk Place, Springbank Airport 'Delta' taxi way, building 'W41'. Small charge to cover food expenses. Bring yourself & flying friends & flying stories (believable or not).

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FOR SALE

Coleman portable generator for sale. 10 hp, excellent shape. \$500 OBO. Contact Ken Beanlands (403)295-2079 or at kbeanlan@telus.net (10/10)

Lycoming O-320-D2G for sale. 160 hp @ 2700 RPM, 0 SMOH, Dynafocal mount, new Slick magnetos, light-weight starter. Fully certified and all records. \$16,500 OBO. Contact Ken Beanlands (403)295-2079 or at kbeanlan@telus.net (10/10)

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. 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. Looking to trade up to a two seat airplane or sell. Asking \$15,000 OBO. Contact Guy Christie at (403)901-5594 (cell) or at gcpegasus@gmail.com or Bernie at stardustertoo@shaw.ca. (05/10)

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

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