



Skywriter...



January 2011



Stu Simpson captures his newly rejuvenated Merlin "Merle" before flight!

CRUFC 2011 Annual Banquet and Silent Auction

This year's banquet and auction will be held on Saturday, February 26th 2011

Cocktails start at 5 pm, Dinner at 6 pm and auction from 7-11 pm.

The location is the same as last year at the Big Rock Grill – 5555 76th Avenue SE, Calgary

Cost has been held to \$35.00 @ or \$70.00 a couple.

Tickets will be on sale at the January and February meetings

From the Cockpit

By Robin Orsulak

Brrrrrrr Baby its cold outside! Sound familiar? I think that's an old song if memory serves me correct! I don't know about everyone else, but the view from my cockpit has been square and flat and two dimensional as of late. But alas, I will not complain, as it's really not that cold considering its January in Canada. With the holiday season behind us we are into another year and being optimistic... another decade. As a club, we can look forward to our annual banquet coming up February 26th, it will be held at the same venue as last year and ticket prices are being held at last year's prices as well. I hope to see many of you there to recapture the fun that we share.

Stu has announced another Air Adventure in early to mid June, this time they're off to Wendover Utah and there is a really cool World War II airbase to visit with notable history.

We have some nominee's listed for our election which will be held at the next meeting and things are looking good at this point and time. We are looking at ways to increase our membership and have some challenges but we have, and will be, trying some new approaches in this new year.

One of the things that happened last year was a

Don't Forget your Chequebooks!!

- *The annual club dues are now due and can be paid to the treasurer, Kathleen Woodward at the next meeting.*
- *The CRUFC Annual dinner and banquet tickets will be available at the January and February meetings.*

revamp of our website and it was with the intent of bringing a heightened awareness of the club and hopefully attracts new members.

Well amazingly, the website has really taken off and we just may have one of the best site's going currently. I will be having Al Perreault, our webmaster, give a presentation and update on our website at the next meeting. I promise he'll keep the language simplified in terms that we can understand. So as usual, we have a few things to get underway to kick off another fun year ahead and I for one am looking forward to it. If this weather doesn't improve in the near future take solace; we have some more aviation series coming to the square eye, should that be your cockpit for the time being.

Lastly... be 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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CAVU Dreams

By Ken Beanlands

GROUNDING!

This story starts in mid-August. I went to my family doctor in preparation for an annual physical. He gave me the blood work request form and I was on my way. On September 1st, I decided to go in and take care of the blood work as my physical was coming up on the 18th. This is when everything went sideways.

I knew there was a problem when my wife called me at work and said "are you on your way to the hospital yet?" When I said what are you talking about she said "Didn't Dr. Harvey call you?" I could hear the panic in her voice so I hung up and gave him a call. He immediately took my call and told me to get to an emergency room as soon as possible and that he would tell them I was on the way... my fasting blood sugars were over 18 when they should have been below 7.0. Needless to say, I made my way there and spent the rest of the day being poked, prodded, analyzed and examined. At one point, the blood sugar reading was just below 30! The intern prescribed me Metformin to help bring down my blood sugar levels. If you hadn't guessed, I had just been diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes!

While waiting (it seems I spent most of the day waiting) I left a message for Dr. Brendan Adams, my Civil Aviation Medical Examiner (CAME) to find out where this left me with respect to flying. He later confirmed what I suspected. The CAR's specify:

404.06 (1) *Subject to subsection (3), no holder of a permit, licence or rating shall exercise the privileges of the permit, licence or rating if*
(a) *one of the following circumstances exists and could impair the holder's ability to exercise those privileges safely:*

- (i) the holder suffers from an illness, injury or disability,*
- (ii) the holder is taking a drug, or*
- (iii) the holder is receiving medical treatment;*

(3) The Minister may, in writing, authorize the holder of a medical certificate to exercise, under the circumstances described in paragraph (1)(a) or (d), the privileges of the permit, licence or rating to which the medical certificate relates if such authorization is in the public interest and is not likely to affect aviation safety.

To have my medical situation authorized as specified in section (3), Dr. Adams told me I would need to get a recording blood sugar meter and record my levels several times a day, I would need a report from an ophthalmologist with the results of a dilated fundus examination and a report from a diabetic specialist outlining my symptoms. I bought a blood sugar meter capable of storing 3000 readings and downloading those readings to a computer to generate a report.

Dr. Adams was quite encouraging and suggested that Transport Canada was typically good with Metformin and that I shouldn't have much problem getting my medical back.

My next appointment with my family doctor was the following Monday at which time we went through a lot of things and helped me with referrals to the required specialists. As part of his normal treatment of diabetes patients, he referred me to a diabetic specialist and an ophthalmologist. The only problem turned out to be the long lead times to see these busy professionals. The diabetic specialist appointment was set November 3rd and the ophthalmologist was set for December 6th! That accounted for three months of waiting to fly!

In addition, I found out that my cholesterol levels, which had always been good, were now unacceptable. It's not that they changed, but with addition of diabetes, the new acceptable level was now half of what it was. I was now prescribed Lipitor to help control this. Fortunately, I was otherwise quite healthy!

At this point, I was feeling quite depressed. I was going to have to start a new diet and change my lifestyle to lose some serious weight. Three years prior, I had left my office job with a Calgary oil and gas company to go back to school and study to be an AME. At that time, I was just under 300 lbs! During those three years, I dropped to 265 lbs simply by going from spending 8 hours a day behind a desk to doing physical work on planes... not to mention two summers building a cabin! Now I needed to get busy with a daily workout regiment and by cutting out all sweets from my diet.

At first, the results were not stellar. I soon discovered through some research that bread products and white potatoes were responsible for my continued high blood glucose readings. By cutting these out and switching to rye and pumpernickel breads, the readings finally started to drop. The daily walks up Nose Hill Park quickly lengthened from 3kms to 8kms with the occasional 10kms hikes. I started out-walking our 11 year old dogs but they could only do about 3 to 4kms before tripping over their respective tongues! At one point, I went three weeks without missing a single walk.

Through this time I also busied myself with work on the cabin and on the Wittman Buttercup going together in the garage. I also took the time to do some maintenance and upgrades on the Christavia MK 1 I normally fly. With my blood sugars getting under control, I found that I was no longer lethargic, especially in the evenings. I made a lot of progress on both fronts. However, despair about my condition did lead me to list the Buttercup engine for sale at one point as I started to think I'd never fly again. Fortunately, it didn't sell and I feel much better about my prospects of flying the plane someday.

At first, I tried to keep my condition a secret, but this soon proved to be impractical and I began to let some close friends know. I finally decided to go "public" with it at our COPA for Kids day in October. I had originally committed to fly but, of course, had to decline. However, I did attend as the official photographer. When they learned of my predicament, it was not surprising how much encouragement and sympathy I received from my flying friends! I was also given a number of suggestions to help me get back in the air including some generous offers of the right seat.

One suggestion was that I might still qualify for a class 4, self-declared medical. Unfortunately, this also failed as it specifically excludes diabetics on medication. Well, it was worth a look...

By the time the appointment with the diabetic specialist came up, I was down 17 lbs and my blood sugar levels were back in the normal range. In fact, the haemoglobin A1C levels (a measurement that indicates an average blood sugar level) had dramatically dropped. At the end of the appointment I understood a lot more about diabetes and was feeling quite happy with how things were going.

Dr. Adams suggested that we do the full aviation medical shortly after the appointment with the diabetic specialist. The thought was that Transport Canada may not require the ophthalmologist report. This was done on November 8th. At this point, my medical status was "deferred" until it could be reviewed and approved by Transport Canada. I was surprised at just how fast I received a response back from Edmonton... a mere nine days! Unfortunately, it wasn't a medical renewal, but a list of requirements needed to get my medical back.

I had already met three requirements: a standard electrocardiogram, the blood sugar monitoring log and a blood test showing haemoglobin A1C and fasting blood sugars. As expected they also wanted the dilated fundus examination report and the diabetic specialist report (which still hadn't been sent). The only surprise was the need for an exercise electrocardiogram (stress test). This meant another

visit to my family doctor to get yet another referral. The earliest I could get scheduled for this was December 13th.

Out of all the examinations I've undergone, this was the worst. It wasn't that the stress test was particularly stressful, it was just that the clinic was really disorganized and unprofessional. At one point I was told that I had a weird blip, which was later proved to be quite normal. Of course, this left me worried that I was going to be denied by Transport Canada due to heart issues.

By December 16th Dr. Adams had all the necessary reports and had forwarded them onto Transport Canada. Again, they were extremely prompt and on December 24th (yup, Christmas Eve!) we had another letter from Transport Canada. My wife, Renée and I were both off work that day. I had popped out to get us some breakfast from Tim Horton's when the mailman gave the letter to Renée. She was quite torn about what to do. If it was good news, then she knew it would make my Christmas! If it was not good news, I'd be pretty glum through the holidays. I later suggested that she should have opened it and either stick the medical renewal in my stocking, or keep the bad news until after the New Year. Not being that devious, she was waiting for me when I walked in, unopened envelope in hand.

As you probably guessed, it was good news and a freshly minted Class 3 medical renewal awaited inside. Unfortunately, Renée vetoed my idea of flying on Christmas Eve. She did OK me for flight after Christmas gifts were opened on Christmas Day, but timing just didn't work out. However, much like the shoppers waiting in line for the malls to open, I was waiting in the plane for it to get light enough to fly... which occurs surprisingly late just five days after the winter solstice! It was tremendous to get back in the air again.

For my next medical, I have a much better idea of what Transport Canada expects. Although I'm under 45 years old, my Class 3 medical needs to be renewed every year. I'll need to have all the same examinations done again, but it will be much easier next time as I now have regular appointments with the diabetic specialist including blood tests that can easily be scheduled to fall just before my medical is due. And, next time, I'll use an optometrist rather than an ophthalmologist reducing the wait time from three months, to about two weeks. Finally, the stress test is only required every five years until the age of 50, and then every two years.

As you can tell, none of this really bothers me. I'm licensed to fly and can easily maintain that status with continued dietary diligence and regular exercise. I still have a way to go to get to my goal of 200 lbs,

but I'm halfway there! Although there have been many highs and lows over the past four months, I have to reiterate just how great the support of family and friends has been. I was quite embarrassed to have been diagnosed with diabetes, believing I had brought it all on myself. However, at no time was I ever made to feel this and as I learned more about the condition, I realized that there was a lot more involved.

If you happen to find yourself in the same situation, you should be encouraged to know that getting back in the air is quite possible to do with just a little effort.

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A Few Notes From 2010

By Andy Gustafsson
Photos by Stu Simpson

My second entry in my pilot logbook for 2010 reads as follows: *Today I shook hands with a man who shook hands with a man who shook hands with Wilbur Wright.* (Silly isn't it.)

The first describes a local flight just because I wanted to get some airtime that day. A great start of the year.

After every flight I write down where I went, the weather for that flight and if I flew together with



someone else in our club. I have recorded every flight and details from every flight that I have made since that day out at Springbank in a PA-28 Warrior in 1987, when I first got in to the left seat of an aircraft. My interest in aviation has not diminished one bit over the years, but rather expanded thanks to the group of enthusiasts like the CRUFC.

I remember the day a number of years back when I flew to Stettler in my Challenger. The morning started out like a perfect summer's day with the weather being reported to be great flying weather. The flight up was dream-like with smooth air and a light breeze from the southwest. My oldest son Kris was working in the patch up there that summer and he picked me up at the Stettler airport. I felt pretty special to fly into an airport and be picked up like a VIP. A crop duster pilot wondered where I came from and he was surprised to hear from where.

I spent the day and as the day wore on the wind picked up. It was reported to be good flying weather so off I went, homeward bound. The wind got stronger as the town of Stettler disappeared behind me. As I crossed the Red Deer River my ground speed showed 28 mph. The amount of fuel in the 10 US gallon fuel tank diminished rapidly and my GPS told me that I would not make it non-stop to Calgary. I had a 5 gallon jerry can strapped down in my back seat, just in case. I slowly added miles to my flight, but it was oh so slow going south bound. I landed at Three Hills and topped the tank up and continued south. The sun was setting in the west and with the daylight disappearing I landed at my home place. A lesson learned for a low time pilot. I honed my skills for 360 hours in the Challenger in all kinds of weather and conditions before I sold her to a new pilot up north.

The spring and summer this year kept me fairly close to home to places like Linden, Vulcan, Red Deer, Sundre, High River, Hanna and Drumheller that are within my "patch". I have done several flights exploring the neighbourhood especially out east along the rivers, coulees and valleys from here to Hanna. If you have not explored the area from Rockyford east, past the quaint little town of Rosebud to the town of East Coulee, you have to plan it for the spring. I have flown along the railroad that runs east along the Rosebud River and counted the railroad bridges and came up with 37. The river makes a sharp left turn at the town of Wayne before it dumps into the mighty

Red Deer just east of Wayne. There the Red Deer River valley opens up with a breathtaking view both to the north and the south with the endless prairie fading in the afternoon haze eastward all the way to the horizon. It is easy to dismiss our Alberta landscape east of the Foothills as just a vast expanse of nothingness. When you fly low and slow like we do, its beauty can equal just about anywhere on earth. I have tried to find a place to land within walking distance of Rosebud but so far there is only a straight road on top of the hill to the southwest of town that look like a reasonable landing strip. For my Merlin it is more than enough space.

Like Linden, it would be nice to visit these easy to reach little towns. Linden did bury the overhead power line which is a very friendly gesture of invitation to frequent their little town. We have landed at Nanton in a stubble field on the western edge of town but that is only possible after harvest. A strip at Nanton would be very good for the town business. They have the Lancaster museum and all kinds of restaurants and stores there. What a boon for Nanton and scores of pilots.

Several flights out towards McGregor Lake are also recorded in my logbook. In clear weather the reservoirs show up as a glittering band of crystals many miles out. There is a small strip a mile off the lakes edge on the west side where Highway 531 crosses McGregor Lake (bright red hangars), east of Vulcan. Flying along both the lakes of McGregor and Travers Reservoir is a must, and a stop-over at Vulcan for lunch is a nice break.

Several fly-in breakfasts are noted in the log book. I always enjoy the variety of aircraft and the pilots flying them, a rare breed indeed. The most memorable breakfast flight was the one at Beiseker on September 27th. I left my home strip in zero wind conditions and as I closed in on Beiseker the winds picked up to west southwest at 25 mph. I tightened the seat belt and announced my intentions to turn right down wind for 16. I immediately got a call from a ground station regarding wind conditions at Beiseker, wind west southwest 25 mph to 30 mph and gusting. The gusty winds seemed to test what I have learned through the years and I thought that the challenge would enhance my experience in the art of flying. The wind was still west southwest and seemed stronger

and gustier closer to the ground. The winds gave me a really good work-out, although my speed over the ground was the speed of a man walking. I touched down almost at a standstill, but was picked up again and pushed sideways with the tires screeching and leaving black marks on the pavements. I should have landed backwards I thought. The breakfast was great and I was looking forward to my return flight. Take-off run was about 20 feet and I climbed to 500' before the end of the runway, free altitude gain. Upon landing at my home strip the wind was calm, just like when I left. This goes to show the unpredictable winds that can sometimes give us a surprise in our travels. We must always be prepared for the unexpected, but not be afraid of gaining more experience, within reason of course. Our warm, inviting Chinook winds can throw us a curve ball when we least expect it. The windy conditions this past summer did delay my excursions back into the foothills like Red Deer forestry strip and also the return to Ram Falls. It is really recommended with the surrounding mountains and the challenge of higher elevation of their strips. Bring your lunch.

Lately the snow conditions have warranted ski operations. The climate has changed back to what I experienced when I first set foot in Canada. The snow is deeper than I have seen in many years, and ski-flying feels very safe and comforting, should the engine take a breather. I have, for the first time, experienced deep powdery snow and it requires a different technique than what we have been used to in the last several winters. For example, after touching down I keep moving in a circle so that I can stop in my tracks and not be bogged down. I have watched the "big" guys do that and it makes perfect



sense. Deep, soft snow may hide obstacles, so vigilance is paramount when landing in unfamiliar areas.

On the 27th of November I logged 3 hours bumming around the area. First to Kirkby field, then Indus, then stopping in for coffee and cake at friends of mine just west of High River. After that I set a course for friends who farms just north-east of Beiseker. Here I landed in a field and taxied right in to the yard and shut down. Ski flying sure opens up a whole new world.

So 2010 was a great experience for an aviator like me with 77 hours total for the year. Canada is great and where else can a “wannabe” bush pilot and barnstormer enjoy the freedom to fly as I can. →

The S3 Spider

By Bob Kirkby

The day I received the latest Spider model S3 from Spidertracks for evaluation I had to do a four-hour trip in my car so I took the S3 along to get to know it. Before leaving I logged on to their web site and set up my account without any difficulty. Like SPOT you can direct messages to both email addresses and cell phones for SMS text messages. I set it up so all messages would come to me during my testing.

The unit only came with a brief guide so I downloaded the user manual from the web site but this proved confusing since the manual was written for the S2 model. There are several differences so I hope they produce an S3 user manual soon.

Once the Spider is powered on it looks for the GPS satellites and the Iridium satellites and an LED indicator lets you know when it has found them. I found it would always lock onto satellites within 30 to 60 seconds. It then does nothing until it is moving at more than 40 knots, at which point it starts sending position reports every 2 minutes, and a blue LED turns on so you know Spiderwatch is active.

Two things are then happening at the Spiderwatch servers. Each reporting point message is stored with your account so that a track of your route will be available at any time. Secondly, the Spiderwatch software is monitoring each of your position reports and timing the intervals. If it does not receive a report for 15 minutes it sends out an email and SMS alert message to your designated contacts in what they

call the Tier 1 alert list. The alert can be cancelled in one of three ways – by answering an email alert message with the word “cancel”, by answering an SMS text message the same way, or by logging on to your account and cancelling the alert.

If another 15 minutes goes by without the alert being cancelled the software sends out a second alert message to the Tier 2 alert list. The expectation is that you will set the Tier 1 list to your friends or family members who have been instructed what to do if they receive an alert. Then set the Tier 2 alert list to some search and rescue person or organization that is prepared to take action.

The theory is that if your aircraft goes down it will lose power which will prevent the Spider from sending messages. This will trigger the alerting process. You can manually activate alerting by simply press the SOS button on the Spider and it will start the alerting sequence immediately as well as switch to 30 second reporting intervals.

My testing was varied. I used the S3 in my car on four trips, two of which were in the mountains (Kananaskis and Banff). I used it on five flights, two of which were in the mountains on a trip from Calgary, AB to Golden, BC and return (2.5 hrs). I tested it a total of 9 hours in my car and 5.5 hours flying. I examined my tracks after each trip and the Spider did not miss a single report.

I used my SPOT alongside the Spider and noticed a big difference in the quality of the tracks. The SPOT reports every 10 minutes which is not bad when you are travelling from A to B in the flat lands. But in the mountains it's a different story. Following the valley routes the SPOT shows track that jump over mountains as you wind your way through the valleys. With Spider reporting every 2 minutes the tracks shown on the Spiderwatch web site look very close to your actual track, confirming that you are indeed following your intended route and making locating a downed aircraft easy. I was flying at 130 knots and my tracks following my actually valley route precisely. If you prefer, over hostile terrain you can set it to report every minute.

Once the Spider starts sending reports it doesn't stop until it either loses power or you press a button to tell it to cancel reporting (and tracking at the server). In this case the blue light flashes until it receive an acknowledgement message back from the server then the blue light goes off signaling it is ok to power down. If you turn off power to the Spider before that point it will begin the alerting sequence. So, the proper shut-down procedure must be followed to avoid false alerts.

I tested this a few times. In my car I forgot to cancel

tracking before pulling the power and within 15 minutes I receive the alert messages. In the air I deliberately pulled the power and waited. I received both the 15-minute and 30-minute alerts on my smart phone, both as emails and as test messages. I then plugged the Spider back in and it automatically started position reports again within 30 seconds.

It seems to be pretty fool-proof. The only proviso is the need to remember to hit the button to cancel tracking after landing and before shutting off the master. So directing alerts to your cell phone, as well as others, will let you know if you forget to cancel tracking before you drive away from the airport.

The S3 Spider is designed for GA users and the company offers several different service plans to suit the amount of flying your might do. The lowest usage plan gives you 48 hours of tracking per year (4 hours per month) for \$120. If you go over in any month you pay the overage by the minute. Other plans give you more base time, similar to cell phone plans.

There are other convenience features and offerings unrelated to finding missing aircraft. The Spider can send four different Mark messages that you can use to identify waypoints on your tracks for later reference. When looking at the track on the web site you can click on a report point or Mark and it will display the date, time, lat and long, altitude, speed and direction of travel. It also lets you store a description with each data point for future reference. Since tracks are stored indefinitely you can use this as a virtual log book. Spidertracks is in the process of developing something they call the Aviator Club, which will let you add lots of information to your trip records and share this with friends and family via a social networking forum. In addition to the photos you took on your trip you can now keep charts showing your routes along with commentary.

This service has potential be a good alternative to ELT's, not just a supplement. I am looking forward to watching as Spidertracks continues to develop their offerings, which are devoted to aviation. →

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.

February 26th, Calgary, AB – CRUFC 2011 Annual Banquet and Silent Auction. Cocktails start at 5 pm, Dinner at 6 pm and auction from 7-11 pm. The location is the same as last year at the Big Rock Grill – 5555 76th Avenue SE, Calgary. Cost has been held to \$35.00 @ or \$70.00 a couple. Tickets will be on sale at the January and February meetings. The buffet will include Stuffed Chicken Breast and Salmon Wellington.

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FOR SALE

Coleman portable generator for sale. 10 hp, 5000W, excellent shape. \$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)

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