



# Skywriter...



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**October 2011**



*Clark Seaborn's Stampe departs from Chestermere Kirkby field after enjoying a sweet treat at Bob Kirkby's "Fly for Pie" event. Photo by Bob Kirkby.*

# From the Cockpit

By Robin Orsulak

With all the indications surrounding us we cannot deny the season of fall upon us.

So, here's a question to ponder "How did we do?" Of course, this is a wide open question but I think as a club and as pilot's it's a question worth exploring. So as a club, perhaps one could ponder where are we headed as we meet the on coming winter and new year. Where are we going? How did we do as pilots this past summer season and what are our dreams, plans and aspirations as such? How about our new friends and fellow aviators that have joined our ranks? Have they considered what might lay ahead for them? For myself, there is a pledge to be safe and continue to fly well into my advanced years if I am lucky enough.

Despite what is happening economically around the world, there has never been a better time to get into flying or perhaps purchasing an airplane. There are many deals out there and of course, many new and exciting designs that are emerging. I challenge those of you so inclined to examine that possibility and go after your dream as time waits for none of us.

Speaking of time... It's going to be election time for CRUFC. I have been speaking with various members in my travels and have mentioned that we will be requiring the following positions to fulfill in the new year: President, Treasurer and Secretary. The duration of term is two years for each position. I urge you to consider taking on a position as it can be a very rewarding experience as well as getting out there and meeting and greeting fellow aviators. We have a great club that I am very proud to be part of and I think most would agree with me.

So... "Where are we headed?" Great question! One that I anticipate and look forward to answering. Till then, stay safe, have fun... and take along a friend.



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## Calgary Recreational and Ultralight Flying Club

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### Skywriter

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# CAVU Dreams

By Ken Beanlands

Well, what an incredible month! Weather has been fantastic and I'm sure that there have been many flying adventures throughout September. There had been a number of events scheduled this month and I was able to take in two of them. The first occurred on September 25<sup>th</sup> at Bob Kirkby's place where he hosted a "Fly for Pie" event. This was a well attended event with a number of interesting aircraft showing up including three amphibian aircraft and four biplanes! OK sure, one of the amphibians WAS a biplane, but it still counts! Bob sent along the following comment:

*"The first Fly-for-Pie event netted \$305 for the COPA Freedom-to-Fly Fund. We had about 20 aircraft, 10 cars and 2 motorcycles. We sold about 80 slices of pie."*

Credits:

- Pies home-made by Elsie O'Keefe
- Pie, ice cream, and coffee served up by Barb Roberts and Louise Nesterenko.
- Aircraft marshalling by Stu Simpson and Carl Forman

*Thank you to everyone who helped out and to the people who came for pie!"*

Pat Cunningham and I flew down from Carstairs. Pat had his Cessna 120 and I was in the Christavia with my wife Renée. The weather was quite pleasant if not a little cool with a temperature of only 8°C. The calm winds lulled us into complacency as we took off and climbed to 4500'. I quickly realized that the conditions had changed. First, the GPS was only showing 48 kts instead of the 90 kts normally expected. Secondly, I had a sudden hot flash! A quick check of the OAT and I realized that the hot flash was not due to a hormone issue, but rather an outside temperature of 25°C! It took over 45 minutes to cover the 35 nm miles. Of course, the trip back was only 18 minutes!

The next Saturday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, the COPA for Kids day was scheduled. The night before, the TAF called for rain, and basically a dreary day by 10 AM. We postponed the event until the following day and, of course, Saturday was actually flyable. OK, it did rain a bit, but it was not the torrents forecasted.

Sunday was a beautiful morning, although a bit cool. The temperature at Carstairs was 0°C when we pulled out the planes. However, we were dressed for the day and were quite comfortable. I did forget to swap out the

memory foam cushions for the normal ones. This meant that the seat was rock hard and my head was bent over to avoid the upper cabin structure, but it only took about 20 minutes to soften up and conform to my generous butt.

That was not to be the only issue caused by the cold. Once we all assembled in Chestermere, Bob Kirkby called the pilots and ground crew together for a briefing. 20 minutes later we were done and arranging for our first flights. As I was admiring the fresh paint job on the RV-10, Troy pointed out a layer of frost forming on his metal wings. Sure enough, all the planes had formed a nice layer of frost. We quickly rearranged the planes so that they were all pointing west to allow the sun to melt the upper surface of the wings and tails (all but two were taildraggers).

That wasn't the only bit of excitement for me this week. It was a bit slow at work so I took a couple of days off and went to work on the Buttercup. This was the first bit of work on the plane in about four months. I was finally able to get the landing gear installed. OK, well it wasn't all that exciting, but I think it looks really cool.

Granted, the landing gear wasn't without its challenges. You would think that a task like sliding the main wheel onto the axle should be a one minute job. For me; two hours! It turned out that the axle was a couple thousandths of an inch too big. As I slid the wheel on, the bearing jammed onto the axle. I had to disassemble the wheel to get at the bearing and then find a way to pop it off without damaging it. It was then another hour or more sanding the axle to bring it down to size.

See you all on Thursday! ➔



# COPA For Kids

By Carl Foreman  
Photos by Wawzonek

*"Thank you very much!! They had the time of their life and couldn't be happier. We all enjoyed it very much!! The picture is beautiful, thank you one more time and I hope this is the first but not the last time they have the chance to enjoy flying as they did yesterday."*

*"Thank you very much Carl for such an awesome service you and your colleagues offer our kids!! This was a great thrill for them that they are telling all their buddies about ... over and over!"*

**In the end, a grand total of 32 kids we introduced to the joys of flying. ➔**

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 clear with very light, sometimes nonexistent winds and virtually no turbulence. It was perfect for a young aviator's very first flight.

Seven pilots and seventeen support staff worked together to make this event possible. We had a Cessna 140, 170, Piper Cherokee 235 and an Aeronca Champ. From the amateur category we had a Christavia, Bushcaddy and a RV10.

The kids were full of enthusiasm and excitement and the parents were pleased and grateful. They'll never forget this day. It was as much fun for the volunteers as it is for Kids!

**Here is a few emails from the parents:**

*"What a fabulous start to our Sunday morning. Please pass along my thanks to ALL of the volunteers for such a positive educational day. I didn't have the car to the highway and Rory was already talking about "next year" and doing it again."*



# Saskatchewan Flight

*By Geoff Pritchard*

No doubt, for many general aviation pilots, and especially for CRUFC members, the thought of participating in an extended cross country flights holds an element of excitement and anticipation; but it could possibly be also viewed as somewhat routine. Not so for the owner of a newly “minted” 1946 Champ, with aspirations of getting some hours logged after almost two years in the shop unbending said aircraft after an untimely and very quiet landing in a mature barley crop. Although I have spent from

Saskatchewan. The date of departure: the end of July. Hearing this, I suddenly had a strong desire to expand my flying horizons, and told Stu I was in, though an occasional butterfly was felt doing circuits around the idea from time to time after that.

Ten days before departure we rendezvoused at a local restaurant, complete with maps of the proposed route, to do a little planning. The trip looked pretty straight forward: south to Medicine Hat and a fuel stop, across the Cypress Hills, a refuel in Shaunavon and then on to Swift Current for the night. The range and the extent of the trip became clear and I realized, with Stu in the lead, I would be benefitting greatly from his knowledge and experience on this trip.



time to time, some long hours in the narrow confines of a Champ cockpit, the opportunity for an “overnighter” has not presented itself until this summer in the form of an invitation from fellow club member, Stu Simpson. Stu is no stranger to flying along side of Hotel Juliet Charlie in his trusty Merlin, and has been instrumental in getting yours truly “back in the saddle” after my restoration hiatus. The long evenings of this past spring saw our two aircraft visiting local favorites such as Linden, Vulcan, and Three Hills... every flight a small affirmation that the airplane was indeed put back together the way it came apart, and that the new 85 HP engine was performing as only the expenditure of an enormous amount of money could possibly guarantee. Even the occasional bout of marginal weather, at times somewhat disconcerting, helped restore my stick-and-rudder confidence to “pre-barley” levels.

Spring slowly evolved into summer, and soon the topic of an “air venture” was broached by Stu after one of our local flights. The destination: southern

July 28<sup>th</sup> dawned clear and bright, with temperatures in the high teens. The winds were fair from the south and we were set for perfect take-off weather. I’m glad I arrived at the hangar an hour and a half before our 8:30 AM lift off. The extra time well spent performing numerous walk-arounds, packing and re-packing and polishing the windscreen to like-new condition. Flight leader Stu soon arrived and after his pre-flight, we briefed about our first leg and flight positions; then strapped in, started up, and soon we were headed south.

The weather was perfect and although the modest headwind slowed us a bit, we were certainly in no race to be anywhere in a hurry. Rich fields of various shades of green drifted by below us, punctuated now and again by the bright yellows of canola. We soon crossed the Bow River, lazily carving its way across the prairie landscape and our aerial adventure was on its way.

After several hours of pleasant sight-seeing, I began my first approach to Medicine Hat closely following Stu’s Merlin. Before long we were taxing up to the pumps at the local FBO and were met by a congenial line guy that promptly looked after our fuel needs who invited us to relax for a few minutes in the office lounge. The first leg of the journey was completed and although the nervous anticipation had not entirely worn off, it was great to be underway. In the distance to the southeast I could see the faint outline of a pronounced elevation and I knew we were close to the Cypress Hills, an area I had not visited until now. Soon we were set to return to the air, but not before the Champ received one of many hand-props I would receive on the trip from an expert in the field, flight leader Stu. Firing on the first blade, we once again fell into line and taxied to the active, all with the

help of the unseen and pleasant Medicine Hat Radio voice.

Gaining altitude, it became clear that a distinct elevation rise was not that far away and, in what seemed like a matter of a few minutes, we were flying alongside the steeply banked and forested slopes of the Cypress Hills. The noon day sun accentuated the rolling contours below mile after mile and created a sharp contrast to the relatively flat surrounding prairie. The view from our vantage point of 500 ft AGL allowed us to closely experience this geographic wonder in sharp detail as we skirted it's perimeter in our low and slow fashion. I happily checked off in my mind one more area of the province I had always wanted to see, particularly from the air. The Hills were truly a delightful visual experience.



After a visually stunning hour and a half we landed at Shaunavon, at the eastern edge of the Cypress area and taxied up to the fuel pumps by a small cluster of hangars. The airfield was completely deserted and I immediately began to wonder about our ability to obtain fuel. On further examination of the fuel pump, we noticed a list of names and phone numbers taped to the glass that was obviously the local call-out list in the event that fuel was required. In short order, Stu was on the phone trying number one, a local business, but got no answer. We continued down the list and either received no answer, or in one case a very disinterested party that was too busy at the moment to come to our aid. Luckily the last number connected to a helpful voice promised to be out in about 30 minutes to fuel us up. While waiting in the

increasing heat of the afternoon, a short walk confirmed that this seemed to be a very agricultural airfield, with the occasional ag-plane parked between hangars. To further confirm this, the young fuel supplier soon showed up and in the course of servicing our airplanes, revealed that he had a very early morning start helping out his father, a local air spray pilot, ready his Ag Cat for the day. We had roused him out of a short nap before returning to the field to help out with another spray load. We let him know how much his efforts were appreciated, then we were off and rolling for takeoff to Swift Current.

The terrain below soon began to change from the mottled browns of southern Alberta to rich checkerboard of green farmlands of Saskatchewan as far as the eye could see. The forty five minute flight to Swift Current, although somewhat bumpy in the afternoon heat, was a good introduction to the broad expanse we were to witness from the air. Even the clouds took on a different appearance, seemingly arranged in neat uniform rows, all the same cumulus shape and at the same altitude extending to the horizon like a huge canopy.



Soon I was lined up on final, with the shape of the faithful Merlin a quarter mile ahead leading the way. The Champ wove and bobbed in the rising afternoon air, and I executed one of those landings that was appreciated, but hopefully not witnessed by the locals. Taxiing over to the tie-down area, large white hangars of a bygone era loomed on the perimeter of the field

and gave silent witness to their wartime heritage. Although large in area, the Swift Current airport was all but deserted being home to only a handful of private aircraft, some hangared and some tied down close where we opted to park. An engaging local pilot welcomed us to Swift Current and kept up a line of airplane chatter while we unloaded. I tried to be somewhat nonchalant about using my new tie-down kit, secretly harboring the fact that I had never used it before and had only tied down an airplane once or twice in the last decade and a half. I found the cargo straps were somewhat confounding until our still chatting local advised me that I had the whole rig upside down. Not missing a beat, I reversed them expertly as if this was my daily routine.



Having buttoned up the airplanes, we gathered up our overnight baggage, and proceeded to wait for the Enterprise rental car to be delivered by the entry gate. I passed the time in quiet amazement that I had flown to another province in my own airplane, was in the process of leaving it outside, not at its home field for the first time. "What if it rains and it gets wet?" I thought to myself. I scanned the small collection of other outdoor airplanes that were sharing the same fate and thought at least the Champ will be in good company.

Soon the rental agency driver appeared, just as the adrenalin of a very full day was giving rise to a certain level of fatigue. We piled into the car and headed to town to drop off the driver and then onto the hotel. Stu's native sense of direction took us to



the highway strip and by a process of elimination, we found our lodgings and pulled into the parking lot. The hotel was actually a motel and, oddly enough, the office was on the outdoor second level. After the standard check-in procedure, we located our rooms (separate rooms, as Stu is rumored to produce all manner of nocturnal sound effects) and I proceeded to unpack what little I brought with me as

baggage. The thought resounded, as I scanned the sparse but clean interior, that I had not driven to this town. I had flown here; in my own airplane. That's right, we flew here.

After dinner at the local Boston Pizza, we took a car tour of the town and found it to be very clean and pleasant to be in. Neat small homes with manicured lawns and lazy sprinklers bordering on treed parks with duck ponds gave a sense of unreality and a feeling that we were definitely in a different place. We rounded out the evening at the local ice cream parlor and entertained ourselves by people watching from the outdoor seating. The occasional polished muscle car cruised the street in front of us, creating the illusion of an entirely different era. Soon, with energy levels on reserve, we headed back to our accommodations and set an 8:00 AM meet up time for the morning.

After a full breakfast, we picked up the driver at Enterprise and retraced our route back to the airport to begin preparations for another day of flying. The morning was crystal clear with cobalt blue skies, little wind and the anticipation of excellent weather and further exploration was at a peak. With our checks all done, we taxied out and were airborne just before 10 AM, heading north to Kindersley for fuel. It would be a fine day for flying.

Having decided in advance that we would cruise at 500' AGL, we were continually rewarded with the vast amount of detail we discovered in the landscape below. Many times I have heard disparaging remarks made about Saskatchewan in terms of its seemingly endless vista of flat, featureless terrain, but we were amazed at the subtle variety of rolling hills, river valleys and numerous bodies of water, both large and small that passed below our wings. A small Ukrainian church, luminous in its reflective silver finish, stood as a solitary beacon against a brilliant green background. Small towns were seen closely

clustered around what was once an active, life-giving rail line which now seemingly abandoned. Combined with the patchwork quilt quality of the farmland, this ever changing geography witnessed at such a low altitude was a constant feast for the eyes and certainly encouraged a whole new assessment of our neighbour province to the east.

In less than half an hour we landed at the Kindersley airport, quickly located and taxied up to the pumps. We chatted briefly with a few local folks while we fueled up and noticed a number of well used agricultural aircraft on the nearby apron, their oily round engines and worn finishes a silent testament to their busy working careers. After strapping in and having my faithful "proptologist" Stu give me a blade, we launched to the northeast enroute to Lloydminster.

Two hours later we were in contact with Lloyd radio. We were invited by a very welcoming voice to use the turf runway and soon we were on final to land on a well cared for strip. With another fuel up completed, we taxied to a grass boarder and began the tie down ritual once more. A rental car was dispatched to pick us up and after a short wait, we were on our way to the hotel in this town that balances itself between two provinces. After light meal, we convened in Stu's room to plan out the next day's route and it was soon decided to head for home, with a stop in Wetaskiwin.

On Saturday morning we were greeted with a steel grey overcast and a steady wind from the southwest. After the rental car was returned and we were dropped off at the airport, Stu and I went about the task of making ready for the day's flying. Taking off into the steady breeze just before 10 AM, the cool air made for a smooth, if not slightly slower progress towards our destination. The landscape below was going through a subtle transformation, and gone were the wide open vistas of the day before, replaced by random bodies of water and an increasingly mixed pallet of browns and dull greens as our aircraft arced further into Alberta. We sampled various altitudes in an attempt to evade what had begun to be increasingly turbulent air as the morning approached the noon hour. By the time we had reached Wetaskiwin, the idyllic site seeing of the day before had been replaced by a vigilant concentration to stay stable and on course. Fueled once again, we set our sights on home and lifted off into the uneven and opposing warm breeze that dogged us mile after mile making for a fatiguing several hours in the cockpit.

Soon recognizable small towns appeared on the horizon and although we had been away for a relatively short time, it felt very satisfying to be approaching home base. Although brief in duration, the trip had given me an opportunity to hone some rusty skills and had put to rest any doubts about the

integrity of both the aircraft and engine I had just flown with. The trip afforded me the chance to see a variety of landscapes, experience new airports and towns, and expand my flying confidence. A large measure of thanks is due to Stu Simpson for the invitation to join him on this adventure and for the valuable mentoring I received during my time flying along side of him and Merl. Where to next... and when do we leave?

# 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](mailto: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](mailto:eaahighriver@shaw.ca) or visit [www.eaahighriver.org](http://www.eaahighriver.org) for more details.



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