



Skywriter



March 2016



*Club Secretary Andrew Crocker's Luscombe at Mossleigh
Photo courtesy Stu Simpson*

Next Meeting Wednesday Mar 9 at the AeroSpace Museum

Monthly Newsletter of the Calgary Recreational & Ultralight Flying Club – COPA Flight 114

Our Mission: To promote safety and camaraderie amongst aviation enthusiasts.

President's Message

By Ed D'Antoni

President's Message.

Once again I am in Victoria BC on meeting night. As I write this I am sitting on a park bench watching floatplanes land. If room is available Norm may even include a photo.



Bashar will fill in and Carl Forman will go over the latest TC Flight Crew Recency Requirements Self -Paced Study Program. For those of you that haven't completed your currency, filling out the answers will fulfill those requirements for the next two years.



We are putting together a list and short synopsis of all club members along with member photographs. So far we have 11 Bio's

and 33 photographs. In order to be on the published membership list we must have your permission to do so. Please fill out the Bio (Blanks will be available at the meeting) and check off what information you would like included in the membership list. Beside monthly meetings we have not had any club functions in the last two years. The directors will get together before the next meeting to plan activities for the coming year. Should you have any ideas or would like to organize a function please contact any of the directors. Email address's are in the newsletter.

President Ed

Calgary Recreational and Ultralight Flying Club

COPA Flight 114

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month, except July and August, starting 7:00 PM at the Aerospace Museum, 4629 McCall Way NE Calgary.

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Skywriter

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The View from the right seat

Most of the pilots I talk to in the club agree this sport is best when shared. I flew a good number of hours last year in spite of my health issues and many of the hours were next to a nice little yellow savage cub. I usually have to push the Buzzard to almost full throttle to keep up with the 912 powered Cub and he has to slow down some to stay with me. Our club has more planes that fly at over the 100mph mark and less that fly at the 60mph speed of past ultralights. That said there is nothing better than flying slow, a few hundred feet AGL, in my humble opinion.

Well maybe. One of the things I truly enjoy is the right seat of Brian Byl's Cessna 195. Recently it was one of those days where the call went out from Stu to fly to points unknown. Brian asked if I would like to join him and while I initially thought I had too much to do for the day, I decided it was time for a flight in the 195. We headed to Red Deer via Chestemere Kirkby's and enjoyed lunch at the Circuit Café. There were eight of us at the table.



Wade Miller flew into RDR in his Kitfox, Gerry in his 182, Past President Bashar piloted his Merlin, Stu his Cavalier and Bob Kirkby flew in with his Cherokee.

Six airplanes showed up on the ramp at RDR.

By the way if you fly to Red Deer it is best to park by the Circuit Café. There was a rumor at one time that parking in front of the terminal could generate a bill from the airport authority.

Quiz of the Day

Which Club member has a club logo on his plane.



We will have to check with Bashar to see if he received anything in the mail.



Real planes have tailwheels and round motors. Is that true?



Bob Kirkby's and Gerry Macdonald's planes outside the Red Deer Flying Club Circuit Café area.



Stu's Cavalier sitting proudly on it's own.

After lunch Stu flew to Rocky Mountain House and Brian and I followed.

This is one of the pictures Brian took from the cockpit while I kept the plane straight and level.



I think this is an Alberta winter version of Alien Crop Circles?

Progress on the KitFox was slow this month. My excuse is the Chemo had weakened my immune system and Shingles grabbed me for a few days. I was lucky enough to catch it within 24 hours and with some good drugs I was able to get through it quickly.



The motor is on the Kitfox you can see the motor sticking out the nose. The cowl has had hours of sanding and prep work and will take hours more to get it ready for paint. Tons of work to go on this project.



A great day of flying with Jim Corner landing at Linden. I walked to the till to buy lunch for Jim and I, only to discover I had left my wallet in my other pants. Jim still thinks that was just a convenient excuse.



Barry Davis in his Zenair getting ready for flight.



Look at the wing closely and you can notice Carl Foreman has the Club logo on his wing.

My ELT Story

Tim Vader

Now I'm well aware that for a lot of people ELTs are a touchy subject in that their failure rate after crashes is very poor. They become submerged and won't transmit, they burn in the post fire crash and won't transmit or they don't transmit well with an overturned aircraft on them. The fact is that certified and amateur built aircraft are required to have a functioning ELT on board the aircraft. So, after Transport Canada started making noises about mandating 406 MHz ELTs and that SarSat satellites stopped monitoring 121.5 MHz I decided it was time to buy and install a new 406 model. I had been waiting for ACK to get their new 406 model certified but it was taking forever for them to jump through all the government hoops. When it looked like it would take another six months or a year I bit the bullet and bought the Ameri-King AK 451, their 406 and 121.5 MHz offering.

I paid \$704.00 for the unit from Aircraft Spruce in November of 2012. The installation in the airplane was simple as it has the same footprint as the Ameri-King 121.5 MHz I had in the plane. I flew with the new ELT for a short time and then had some major engine difficulties with the plane so it only had a few hours of flight time on it. I turned it off but left it in the plane while I made my repairs.



The repairs dragged on but I finally was able to get back to flying last spring and was going to do some cross country flights last fall. I thought I better check the functionality of the ELT and found it to be completely dead. The battery pack for this unit will set you back \$200.00 but the batteries are supposed to last for 5 years. Not so. I started researching for problems associated with this ELT and found lots of complaints on the web. Many complaints were that the batteries didn't last even until the warranty period was up because of some sort of short in the circuit board that put a small yet constant drain on the batteries, some people even found that the audible alert would constantly buzz at a very low level draining the batteries. Most of the complainants would also state that Ameri-King would recommend that the unit be returned for repairs costing between \$200.00 and \$500.00. As my warranty period of two years was up that is what I was told.



I thought this may just be a battery problem but wasn't sure so once again I checked the web and found you can buy similar or the same 4 batteries that Ameri-King wants me to pay \$200.00 for \$7.00 each online. I bought the online batteries and tested the ELT after they arrived. I also had a 20 year old Artex ELT that I had left the D cell batteries in and tested it at the same time. The Artex fired up on the 121.5 frequency immediately during the test. The Ameri-King would not. I

tried the shake test with the Ameri-King and got nothing. I set the Ameri-King on the coffee table with no movement. About an hour later with once again no movement the Ameri-King started sending signals.

I spoke with the staff at Ameri-King and they said to send it to them and that I may have to pay as much as \$500.00 to fix it. Didn't want to do that. I thought I might get Aircraft Spruce involved as they were the vendor of this very important piece of potential lifesaving equipment. Jim Irwin, the owner of Aircraft Spruce responded to my complaint. In a string of emails between myself, Mr. Irwin and Ameri-king I made the point that I would not pay another nickel to fix this piece of equipment and that I felt that Spruce should not be selling a product of lifesaving equipment of dubious quality.

A very entertaining You-Tube video posted by a Swedish helicopter company who bought many of the units claims that the units have a 70% failure rate. (check out Ameri king 406 elt ended by dynamite)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-clpmgsbac>

There is a wrongful dismissal suit going on in the states by an ex employee of Ameri-King who claims he was fired because he told people outside of the company that his job was to scrape off the "Made in China" stickers and put "Made in USA" stickers on. He also alleges that Ameri-King repairs the ELTs with used parts from returned models. This story available at:

<http://www.orangecountybusinessattorneyblog.com/2015/01/29/huntington-beach-manufacturer-faces-whistleblower-case-ex-employee/>

I spent \$35.00 to send my ELT back to Ameri-King. They told me the unit was not repairable but I could purchase a new one from them for \$370.00; a 50% discount of the retail price. I adamantly kept telling them in subsequent emails I would not pay for another

AK 451. The kept reducing my cost to a final price of \$198.00. I told them to drive over it with a car.

My option was then to reinstall my old Ameri-King AK 450 (121.5 only model) bought in 2010 which was taken out of service when I installed the AK 451. It had been stored with the batteries out of it since the fall of 2012. I believe it was serviceable when I removed it but I did not check. I bought new batteries for the AK 450 and installed them. When I switched the unit on the red light came on but no signal on 121.5. It would not give a signal in the arm position with a shake test. It too was unserviceable. In contrast the 25 to 30 year old Artex ELT (that I replaced with the AK 450) that was stored since 2005 with the batteries in it gave a clear signal on 121.5 as soon as I switched it on. Worked fine on the shake test as well.

The saddest part about this story is not the \$704.00 that I lost on the AK451 or the \$189.00 that I lost on the AK 450 but the fact that an essential piece of lifesaving equipment mandated by government to be on most aircraft in the world can be of (in my opinion) such poor quality and can be marketed so readily. I believe in this case there should be ongoing certification checks. There must tens of thousands of these things installed around the world and may or may not work when lifesaving equipment is needed the most. I wonder what brand Malaysian Air Flight 370 had.

If you have one of these in your aircraft do a function test before your next flight. Maybe you can get it back to them before your warranty is up. I

f you are considering purchasing a 406 MHz ELT I would strongly recommend you give this one a pass. Your life may depend on it.

Weather Resources for Pilots

by Stu Simpson

Weather affects everything we do as pilots, and it's no secret that we need to have the best weather information available to aid in safe flying. The Internet age affords us previously unimagined abilities to get up-to-the minute weather information. We can easily - and cheaply - access this data at the airport or in our cockpits thanks to mobile technology.

I've compiled a list of weather resources I've found that are free, or very inexpensive. Pilots can access most of these resources in-flight when necessary with the obvious caveat of adequate cell coverage for any given area. And since nearly all CRUFC members receive Skywriter digitally, using the links to these weather information sources below will be effortless.

Nav Canada's Aviation Weather

Website: <https://flightplanning.navcanada.ca>

This is a fantastic source of aviation weather that includes METARs and TAFs, graphical forecast maps, upper winds data, PIREPs, current wind and visibility info at select airports, and even weather cameras. The number of cameras is growing and many, like the ones at Springbank and Lethbridge, include METAR information.

CRUFC members flying in the Calgary area are fortunate that Calgary's terminal area forecast is issued every three hours. Smaller centers away from Calgary only enjoy forecasts every six hours. The site offers the METAR/TAF data in both coded form and in plain language. There are also online tutorials that explain the site's operation and how to read the information so I won't elaborate on

that aspect here. Take the time to get to know this site; it's well worth it.

There's another link on the AWWWS that may surprise you. It's the one for US aviation weather or ADDS. It actually offers some weather data for Canada, specifically maps of winds and weather systems up to 48 hours ahead. Nav Canada only forecasts that information to a maximum of 12 hours ahead for weather systems, and 24 hours for upper winds.

Environment Canada Public Weather

http://weather.gc.ca/canada_e.html

This is the weather site for the general public. Users can select specific towns or cities, and the forecasts extend 7 days ahead. The current weather information is updated hourly and provides data in metric units unless you choose Imperial. I really like the radar and satellite links that this site presents, and the links to them are available from any location's forecast page. Jet stream data is also available, but only for the next day, not the current one. If you need jet stream info do a search for "today's jet stream".

Environment Canada's site also provides links to more complex weather maps. I once found these useful for longer range flight planning, but the format changed a couple of years ago and now I find other weather resources are more easily accessible and readable. However, this site does have a lot of good, useful information and it's well worth exploring to see how it can help you.

Unisys Weather Maps

weather.unisys.com/nam

Unisys is a large data processing and data management company. One of the services they offer online is a weather application. Go to the link above and click on the map. You can then click through chronologically to see

surface level pressure and precipitation forecasts up to 60 hours ahead for the US and southern Canada. There's even a link that let's you play an animated loop of the conditions over the forecast period.

I find this site is very useful when looking at how much precipitation we can expect, and by examining the pressure gradients, what the winds might do. It takes a little bit of interpretation to read it properly, but that skill is easily acquired with a bit of practise reading the site's legend. The site updates each morning and evening Calgary time.

511 Alberta

<http://511.alberta.ca/>

This is actually a highway information site. The Alberta Motor Association established a series of highway cameras throughout the province in the late 2000s and the Government of Alberta eventually took over the cameras and website.

This is one of the most useful weather websites I've found for flying. It's one of the rare instances where one can actually 'look out the window' at what the weather is doing wherever these cameras are situated. The cameras update every ten minutes, or so. They show the sky and the cloud cover and most of the locations have a weather station that provides temperature, wind speed and direction, and humidity. The cameras either offer only one direction, or three views spread through roughly 180 degrees.

Some of the cameras are located in Calgary and were established by the City of Calgary, but appear to be used by 511 Alberta. There are some cameras on this site that are broken and have been for quite a while, no doubt a result of budget restrictions.

BC Highway Cameras

<http://images.drivebc.ca/bchighwaycam/>

This is British Columbia's answer to Alberta's highway camera system. When you go to this page you'll see a series of tabs in the middle of the page. The one that CRUFC members will most likely be interested in is the SIR tab, meaning Southern Interior Region.

Once you've selected the tab you want, a series of small photos appear showing the highway conditions at numerous locations throughout BC. Clicking on one of the photos enlarges the image, and provides a description of its location. A map also appears showing the camera's location, direction of view, and other cameras nearby. Each one refreshes at two minute intervals.

The sky and cloud conditions are visible in a lot of these shots, but not in all of them, so be sure to interpret them carefully. I've used these cameras in the past to great effect and I'm glad they exist to help out with mountain flying.

General Webcams

There are a number of other general webcams around Calgary and southern Alberta, too. Here are some that I've found.

Shaw Communications

<http://webcams.shawtv.com/athome-cams/cam1.jpg>

This camera sits on Shaw's building atop Cemetery Hill. It faces north and usually gives a good picture of the weather over Calgary.

Brewster Travel

<http://www.brewster.ca/>

Brewster is a bus and travel company specializing in the Canadian Rockies. They have webcams at popular tourist spots in the Rocks, my favourite being the one situated atop Sulphur Mountain. When it works, which is most of the time, it shows two views - east and west - of the Bow Valley from Banff. It's a

terrific look at what the weather is doing there at any given time.

Just click on the link above and select the webcams link at the bottom of the page for the Sulphur Mountain and others.

Sunshine Village

<http://www.skibanff.com/conditions/cams/>

This ski resort west of Banff has some cameras that may be useful for glimpsing the weather in the mountains.

Weather Apps for Mobile Devices

There are dozens and dozens of apps for aviation weather for all types of mobile operating systems. They run the gamut of pricing from free to quite pricey. Check them out and see which is for you.

AeroWeather

by Sparkling Apps. Available for Android and iPhone.

AeroWeather is the only av weather app I have on my phone now. I tried some that were free and they didn't seem to be as reliable or as comprehensive as this one. One of the features I like best is how you can build a group of airports, name the group, and simply click on it to get METARs and TAFs at all those locations. Thus, if you're flying a specific route, you can build a group that covers the route and check those stations when you want to. It saves having to punch in a separate station each time for its weather info. I also appreciate that it offers decoded information, similar to what the AWWWS offers. AeroWeather only costs about four bucks and it's worth it to me.

XM Satellite Weather

<http://www.xmwxweather.com/aviation/>

XM Weather is the only service on our list that is not cheap, though for some it may be well worth it. XM offers hourly and in some cases

up-to-the-minute weather data via satellite link through your GPS receiver, multi-function display, or mobile device. Prices start at \$54.99 US for Canada, up to \$99.99 US for the pro service. Canadian subscribers can access the usual METAR & TAF data, as well as satellite and radar imagery, PIREPS, SIGMETS, AIRMETS, upper winds, some mapping products and more.

Pilots I know who use XM absolutely love it because of the depth of information they can access. Having said that, pilots can now access most of that same data for free with mobile devices if they can hook to a cell tower.

Legalities

One last thing to note is that as far as I understand using a cell phone or cell connection in the air in a small airplane is illegal in Canada and the US. However, I've never seen or heard of any sky cops hauling someone away for using a cell phone from their plane. If you know more about this subject, please send a letter to our editor, Norm, to share your knowledge.

Weather forecasts in southern Alberta are notoriously inaccurate. I often wonder how so many people can earn so much money and still be so wrong so often.

But these links can help you become a better weather detective so that you don't need to rely on just one weather source. I encourage you to use them to investigate the weather for your flying, especially when you're going to cover some distance. As your knowledge grows so will your confidence and your ability to accurately read and forecast the weather. And how can that be anything but safer?

FOR SALE

FLYING EVENTS



2005 Challenger II, AULA, 220 TTSN, Rotax 503, DCDI. Full instrument panel incl. vert. compass, ball, ASI, AI, VSI, tach, EGT, CHT, fuel, voltage, GPS, radio, intercom. Throttle quadrant. Custom seats. 15 USG fuel tank. Heater. Always hangared. \$23,000. For more information, contact Ken Taylor at 403-863-2157 or ktaylor2157@gmail.com (02/15)

For Sale: Wag-Aero engine assembly and storage stand with castors, \$200 obo. 11 qts of AeroShell 15W50 AD oil available for \$6.00 per qt. Please contact Ken Beanlands, kbeanlan@telus.net or (403)921-2079

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After welcoming everyone from near & far for the past three years, it is with a heavy heart that we have to finish this chapter in our lives and shut the café down due to recent economic challenges. The Circuit Café will be hosting a celebrating of life, serving our last meals on Friday March 18 & Saturday March 19, then closing the doors. . We would like to invite everyone to come in for food and friendship and to reclaim any memorabilia that you may have donated for display

Thank you very much

Barb & Mr. Good-Lookin



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