

SKYWRITER

Calgary Recreational Flying Club
COPA Flight 114



Our Mission

Promoting the safe enjoyment of aviation for pilots, aircraft builders and enthusiasts.

Our Vision

Welcoming owners and pilots of all types of aircraft including ultra-light, amateur-built, certified and other types of aircraft.

Connecting members through regular meetings, monthly newsletters, our website, social media, BBQ's and fly-outs.

Exchanging knowledge and information about flying and flight safety, and aircraft construction and maintenance via meeting presentations, newsletters and other events.

Sharing and enjoying real-world flying adventures.

THIS ISSUE

- 3 - President's Message
- 6 - Skywriter Update
- 8 - Great Air-berta Rally
- 11 - September Southbound
- 17 - Pilot Tips: Oil Leaks
- 19 - Tools for the Shop/Hangar
- 20 - Calendar
- 21 - Classifieds
- 23 - Your Executive

Featured on the Cover:

The view of Calgary's downtown skyline at night as seen from Troy Branch's Carbon Cub. Great picture Troy!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 2024 BRIAN BYL



Well, here we are almost halfway into the first month of 2024 !

I hope that you all enjoyed the Christmas season with family and friends and welcomed the New Year with a renewed hope and enthusiasm. We have a lot to be thankful for in spite of the challenges facing our country and the world.

Thirty-two members attended our very successful pizza and speaker night on December 13th. We also had a number of renewals and new members sign up and our membership has increased to 47. Let's hope that the trend continues!

Brian Vasseur picked up pizzas at Paul's Pizza and they were great. There was more than enough for

everyone and some people got to take extra pizza home, too. Thanks for doing this, Brian.

Our guest speaker, Rick Appleton, gave a very interesting talk about training and safety issues that he has experienced during his career. Along with some videos we reviewed, he told us about methods we can use to establish stabilized approaches and safer landings and go-arounds.



December 13, 2023



There was a lot of good interaction and discussion, and a lot of very good questions asked and answered. Thank you, Rick, for taking the time to share your knowledge and experience with us.

We will have a presentation and discussion on the new weather website www.metar-taf.com that Stu wrote about in the December Skywriter. Stu will be providing more information about that website and another one which he has discovered. It should be an interesting meeting. Anything that makes weather information easier to read and understand is good news for all of us.

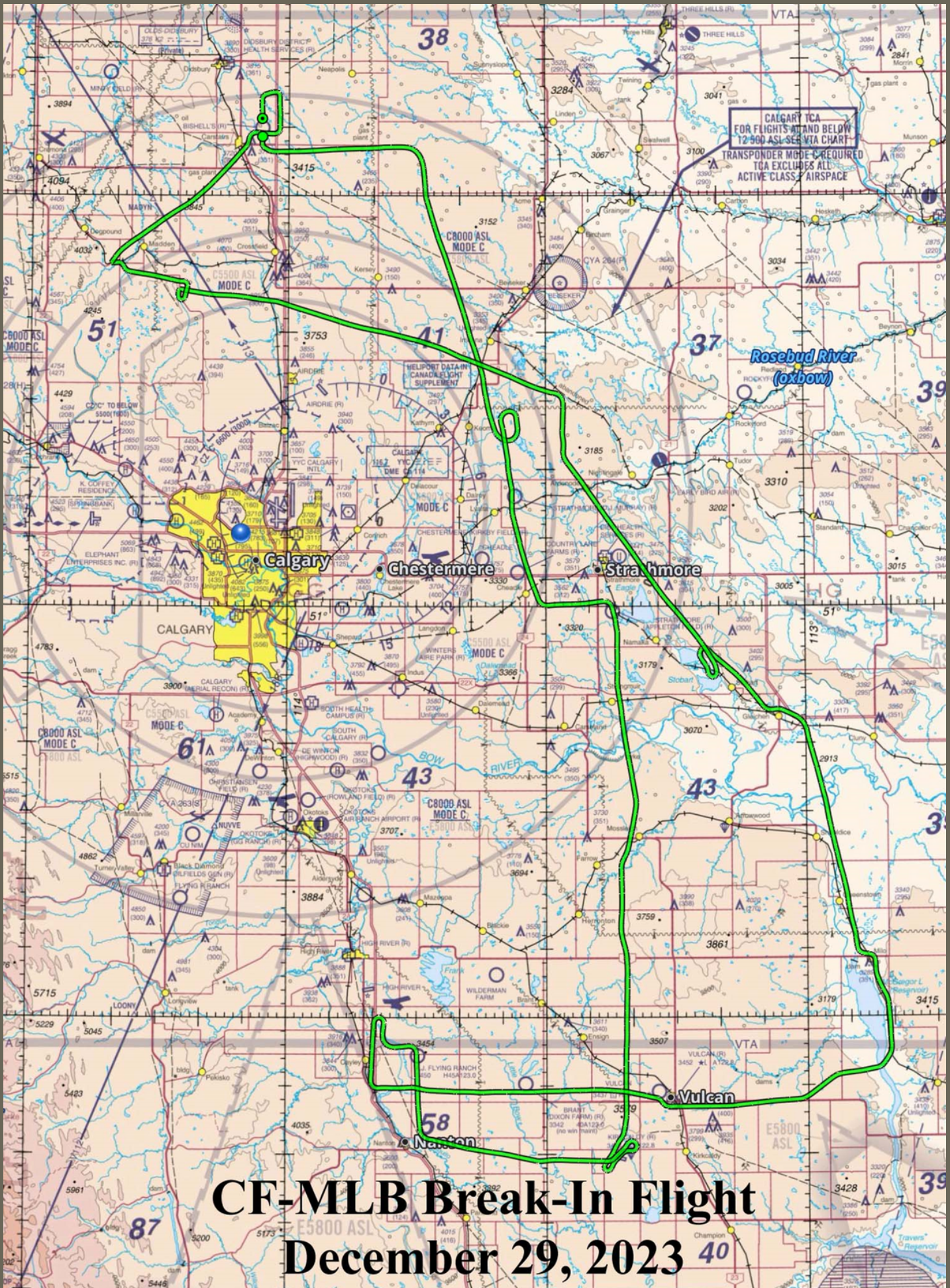
As I write this blurb (late December) we are still enjoying the fantastic weather that has continued for the several months. I hope everyone is able to take advantage of the nice weather while it lasts.

I did manage another 2.3 hour flight in the 195 a couple of days ago and am happy to report that I consider the break-in process of the two new cylinders successful. Nine hours so far and not a change in the oil level. The oil consumption has never been this low. Maybe my oil dipstick is stuck and needs to be replaced!!

The days are now getting longer and so that means spring is just around the corner. Ok, maybe that's a little optimistic. Regardless, enjoy the weather while you can and get some air under those wings! Not many shopping days left until Valentine's Day!

See you Wednesday, January 10, at 19:00 at the Hangar Flight Museum. We will be back in the main area of the museum.

Brian 



**CF-MLB Break-In Flight
December 29, 2023**

Newsletter Update

Director/Newsletter Editor **GREG LABINE**



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

As everyone **“Carries Totals Forward”** into a New Year, I hope many of you are planning flying endeavors of all varieties for 2024. From big trips, to short hops, fly-ins, air rally events, or just puddle jumping around the local pea patch, I wish all of you lots of hours, good weather, the camaraderie of friends and the making of many good memories.

This month we have more great content from our members. The usual quality writings of our Club President Brian Byl. With the organizing that he does behind the scenes to make everything run so well, I’m surprised he has time to hammer out these great contributions. This month it includes a few good Pilot Tips related to maintenance, as well as a good tool find for the shop. Good “tip” Brian, pun intended.

We have the first installment of a new story from our intrepid aviator, Stu Simpson, relating to an adventurous trip to Memphis Tennessee. This time he brought his wife Tina to share in the journey. The first picture at the start of the article says it all. They look truly happy exploring the sky together, wherever it takes them.

Also in this issue, we have a fantastic article from member Dennis Fox. He relates the story of his participation in the “Air-berta” Rally. It’s written in a way that makes you feel as though you caught a ride in the empty seat of his RV on this trip. The first part of the article begins this month, with more to follow in the next issue. This article really makes me think about all the “Rally” type of events, like Poker runs and so on, that used to happen more frequently. I would sure love to see these become a more common occurrence again. Thanks for the story, Dennis!

As a special note, a longtime club member, Jim Corner, will be a guest speaker at the Canadian Aviation Historical Society (CAHS), later this month. He will be giving a talk about his submarine hunting career with the RCAF in the early 1960's cold war era. He flew in the Lockheed Neptune and the Canadair Argus. It is a great opportunity to learn about the airplanes, tactics and flying over the Pacific from someone whose been there and has a few tales to tell. For those interested in attending, see event details below on the Calendar of events page. Thanks to Carl Forman for sharing this info.

And as always, if anyone still needs a name tag, please send me a picture of your airplane and how you wish your name to appear, and I'll make one up for you: crufcnews@gmail.com



**See you next Time,
GREG.**

THE (SOON TO BE) GREAT



AIR-BERTA AIR RALLY

PART ONE - BY DENNIS FOX

Day 1 of the first ever Airberta Air Rally. Hosted by the Harvard Air Museum at Red Deer Regional Airport-CYQF, was geared up and ready to kick off at high noon on Tuesday Aug 25, 2020. The weather was severe clear all around and winds were light. I lifted off from Three Hills at 11:16 for the short flight to my starting point of CEM3- Big Bend Airport near Innisfail, the location of the 2019 COPA AGM.

After landing and parking in front of the terminal I checked around but it's pretty quiet, nobody was around. I was hoping for a big welcome! I took a selfie shot of the RV and the terminal just for evidence and headed northwest to CYRM-Rocky Mountain House.

A short 20 min flight and the airport comes into view just north and east of the city. This was the host airport of the Canadian Aerobatic Championship later that same year. It is also an air tanker base for the Forest Service. A quick stop, selfie and off southwest into the foothills for a run to Ram Falls.

It's a former Forestry strip that is one of several now maintained by the local flying clubs. You get a great full-on view of the falls when on final for 25, breathtaking. (If you have time to look)



Red Deer Forestry strip

Next stop was CFR7- Red Deer Forestry strip, about 40 miles to the south over some spectacular mountain scenery. It's not quite into the first range of the Rocky's, so the smaller mountains here are still mostly tree covered. If you go another 20 miles west you get into the "real rocks". This was my first run into Red Deer Forestry but all reports about it were good.

After looking in the wrong valley the first time, I hopped over into the next valley and there it was. The winds were light and drifting from the east. That was unusual as the prevailing winds here normally come roaring over the Rocky's out of the west. It's a very pretty spot just on the north side of the Red Deer River. It would be a great place for a picnic, but for that I would need a basket of food and I forgot that detail. A quick picture and I'm off to the next stop.

CFN7- Sundre is downstream on the Red Deer River, so it's an easy navigation to the airport about 20 minutes northeast as the RV flies.

As I climb out, I hear some familiar voices over the airways just leaving Sundre, and we make contact. They're also on the Air Rally and heading for CFV2-Beiseker, so we arrange to meet up there. A Short stop in Sundre and I blasted off for CFV2 and set-up a high fuel flow rate to catch up.

This is a little off my route plan, as it takes me to within 20 miles of my starting point this morning. FV2 was going to be my last stop of the day before returning home to CEN3. It's not the first time my route plan has taken the long way around, more airtime that way.

I caught up to Mel and Allan from Medicine Hat. So now on the ramp we have a trio of RV's. Mel's RV7, my RV8 and Allan's RV9, all "A" models with the 3rd wheel up front, where it belongs (a little dig to get back for all those comments about the third wheel on the wrong end).

We compare notes and decide to carry on to Airdrie-CEM4, about 30 miles southwest. To get in we have to duck under the Class C of Calgary YYC, no problem just have to do a slightly lower circuit.

We confer about the next stop, and High River-CEN4 is suggested. Although it's not on the list of 24 airports in the Rally, it is near the original High River WWII training base and we can get points for that also. It is directly south of Calgary so we have to divert east to get around YYC.

This takes us over Kirkby's east of Calgary, and then over Indus/Winters further to the south.

There is lots of activity today so we're on the lookout for traffic as we transit the area. Our formation flying is pretty loose and we soon lose sight of each other.

Allan and I carried on to High River, and wait for Mel...and wait and wait. We decided to carry on east to Vulcan, another training base. A call out for Mel and he is already over Vulcan-Kirkcaldy and trying to decide if he wants to land or not. It still has a full triangle of runways however he is unsure of their condition so decides to carry on. Allan and I also do a fly-over and carry on to Bassano where we catch up to Mel. The airport is busy with crop sprayers as we're now in the southern Alberta irrigation country.

The Bassano Airport is the first place we have stopped at that is taking the Air Rally seriously. The Terminal has a big "Welcome Aviators" poster, and the fridge is stocked with beverages and snacks for our enjoyment. It's nice to feel welcome, thanks Bassano!

This is our last airport stop for the day, so time to head for home. We just happen to be about midway between my home of Three Hills, and their home of Medicine Hat, good planning, except there was no plan.

We decided to carry on tomorrow and meet at our first stop, Mel's old home town of Coronation- CYCT.

...Stay tuned for Day 2, Dennis.



September Southbound

By Stu Simpson
Part - 1



**“You ready, Baby?”
I asked Tina.
“I’m ready,” she
replied.
“Okay, let’s go then.”**

I pushed the Cavalier’s throttle in, released the brakes, and we were off. Not very quickly, mind you, but we were rolling. With my wife beside me, and our luggage in the cargo bay, the Cav’s usual sprightly acceleration was instead somewhat sluggish along Kirkby’s grass runway. It took a lot longer to get the tail up, too.

But, as I knew it would – and as it always has – the Cav got us airborne off runway 16 with plenty of room to spare. Gary Abel waved to us as we went by. I kept the nose lower than usual to build airspeed, and once through 90 mph I banked into a gentle climbing turn to the southeast and pulled up the flaps. We were on our way.

Southbound

Tina and I had talked for quite a while about a big trip together in the Cav, but a variety of factors prevented us from pulling the trigger on it. Now, though, a few days after the Labour Day weekend, we were making it happen.

I’ve long wanted to visit Memphis, TN. I didn’t know too much about the city before we departed, but there were some things I definitely wanted to see. Elvis Presley’s Graceland was one, and the Civil Rights Museum was the other. Tina wanted to visit Beale Street due to its musical history. We had no idea where we’d go from Memphis, but that’s a nice freedom to have.

We delayed our departure from Kirkby's by a day due to heavy smoke in the Calgary area, but the forecast claimed the smoke wouldn't be quite as bad this day. As we climbed up to 4500' I was glad we waited. Visibility was about eight or ten miles. Not the usual unlimited vis we're normally used to, but much better than the couple of miles the previous day.

We had no clouds and only a light wind from the southwest which allowed us 125 knots over the ground. Our first stop would be Swift Current for a top up with gas, then on to Williston, ND, to clear customs.

Shortly after we passed Lake Newell south of Brooks, visibility started to deteriorate substantially. It dropped to about four miles, as measured by the section lines of the farmland below. I wondered how long it would last.

Turns out it didn't last much longer at all. It soon reduced to only three miles. The bad visibility persisted along the southern edge of the Suffield Range and all the way to Swift Current. We had a long way to go this day, ideally all the way to Bismarck, ND. How long would the smoke haunt us, and how bad would it get?



The Cav on the ramp at Swift Current. By Tina Simpson

We fueled at Swift Current and I called to file a trans-border flight plan. I asked for a trans-border squawk code even though the preferred practice is to get one in the air just before crossing. Doing that has been troublesome in the past. And on this day, due to the smoke, there was a really good chance I wouldn't be able to get high enough to radio for one along the route.

Fortunately, I was able to negotiate with the flight service specialist to get a code for the whole leg from Swift Current to Williston. He understood my plight and quickly got me some numbers. A big relief, that.

As we put Swift Current to our rudder the visibility improved to five or six miles and I climbed to 4,500'. Within minutes I was starting to lose sight of the ground. I told Tina we had to descend to 3,500'. It was disappointing that I couldn't show her the landscape. She was concerned about the poor visibility and the subsequent possibility of a mid-air collision. I assured her there were unlikely to be any other planes up on a day like this and how the Cav's ADS-B can give us a huge safety advantage.

It was getting bumpy, too. I was using my autopilot, which is only single axis, but it will track a GPS course. Quite bluntly, if I didn't have it, I would have turned us around.

It was one of those situations where I questioned whether we should continue. I looked at it from a risk management perspective. What was the risk? If the autopilot or EFIS failed, could I still fly safely? The answer was yes. I could still see the ground, the terrain along our route is flat and familiar, we had 3 miles visibility, no clouds, and no impending weather or darkness.

I also had a total of three GPS's on board, two of which were then in use. Everything was working well, and if there was a sudden electrical power loss, I could still get us easily and safely to an airport where we could land using the back-up battery power in the EFIS and the GPS's. We also had lots of gas.

I decided to continue, albeit with regular risk assessments as we proceeded. That basically consisted of judging the visibility in the smoke versus the Cav's operational performance.

We crossed the border and Tina peered down to see if she could spot anything more telling than the simple fence line that exists there. She couldn't. We were now into the northeast corner of Montana.

About half an hour from Williston, it hit me that I was flying primarily - and quite comfortably - mostly using the Cav's instruments. I looked out the window occasionally, but mostly I concentrated on what the Dynon EFIS, the nav display, and the autopilot were telling me.

Tina made an interesting comment then. "I can see why you use the autopilot," she said. "Flying in this without it would be absolutely exhausting!" She was right.

We landed at Williston, cleared customs and swapped sim cards in our phones. Since our cell provider charges outrageous US roaming rates, we purchased US sim cards for \$30.00 each. That gave us US telephone numbers, unlimited calling and texting all over North America, and a bucketful of data usage. It wound up saving us about \$200.00 over the course of the trip and we can use them again in the future.

Then we hit a frustrating and unexpected delay. The US flight service contractor, Leidos, has made it nearly impossible to talk by phone with a briefer anymore. This was a vast difference from the trip Bob Kirkby, Carl Forman and I made to the US earlier in the summer.

Basically, you now have to set up an account based on your cell number and do all your filing and closing online. It's absolutely infuriating and I wonder how many lives it's going to cost as people avoid filing flight plans and getting briefings by voice over the phone.

After many minutes on hold, I finally got to speak to a briefer to file for the last two legs of the day. That evening, though, I grudgingly built an account, which mostly worked well for the remainder of the trip.

I had no intention of paying Williston's fuel prices, so we headed out for Watford City, 25 miles southeast and with lots cheaper gas.

After that, there was only 135 miles to go. We were making good time, but we were knackered.



The Missouri River seen through the smoke south of Watford City, ND. By Tina Simpson

We'd lost an hour, too, due to that part of the US being on Central Standard Time, not Central Daylight Time. At least Bismarck was only a little more than an hour's flying time from Williston, and less from Watford City.

I was very glad to set down on Bismarck's runway and taxi to the ramp. I creaked and groaned my way stiffly out of the cockpit to tie the Cav down for the night.

Executive Air's staff treated us like royalty, like nearly every other US FBO does. I was well used to it, but Tina was simply blown away by the experience. They even loaned us a crew car for the night.

On the way to our hotel we passed a sign advertising a joint-pain relief clinic. Tina said I should ask if they have a drive-through. Funny girl, that wife of mine.

Day 2

We left Bismarck behind a TBM 750 turboprop with hope the sky would be clearer. It was for about five miles, then frustratingly socked back in to about three or four miles visibility.

It was, however, a nice smooth morning with no bumps and a light tailwind. Things sure could have been worse. We slipped unseen past Aberdeen, SD, and I thought of the times that Bob and Carl and I have stayed there while flying to destinations further east.

While filling up at Madison, SD, we were approached by a fellow in beat up coveralls who was totally smitten with the Cav. He was very excited to see it and asked all sorts of questions. As many Cavalier admirers do, he compared the vertical fin to that of a Maule, and was totally surprised to learn the Cav is made of wood. He was a wonderful fellow to chat with and a former professional pilot. He said he'd flown a Piper Aerostar around the world many moons ago. I could see him wistfully recalling his past flying adventures as Tina and I were living out ours. When we taxied out past his hangar he saluted us and gave us a little prayer bow. We waved back, smiling happily.

We finally outran the smoke about half an hour north of Des Moines, IA, our destination for the day. It's amazing it extended so far south and east. We could finally see more of the farms beneath us, their various crops, and other land uses. Combines and other equipment worked busily beneath us and we pondered what crops they might be harvesting.

I studied the airport info and com procedures for Des Moines from the Cav's nav display and got myself comfortable with the upcoming approach.

DSM's approach controller couldn't see me on radar when I made my initial call. I recycled the transponder once, with no joy, then squawked ident and he found me. I began the descent about fifteen miles out. Closer in, we switched to tower who soon cleared us to the left base for runway 05 as a business jet landed there ahead of us. The controller cleared us to land, asked me to keep it fast and tight due to a Cherokee inbound from the south.

I kept my speed up with only one notch of flaps, carved around to short final maybe a third of a mile back, forward slipped a bit, and bled the last 20 mph of speed coming over the threshold. Runway 05 at Des Moines has a nice little upslope to it, which helped a bit, too.

"Experimental Bravo Quebec Romeo, exit right on Papa 4, give way to the taxiing Airbus. Then turn left on Papa 4 and a right turn to the Signature ramp."

I read back the instructions, waited as the A319 rolled by, waited a few more seconds to avoid the jet exhaust, then taxied to the ramp. Once more we had unbelievable FBO service, this time from Signature Aviation.



Signature Aviation offered us overnight hangar space for the Cav. By Tina Simpson

They even offered to house the Cav in their cavernous hangar – free of charge – because they didn't have any available tie-downs.

Then they drove us to the airport terminal so we could rent a car, and returned it to the agency for us the next morning. I love flying in the US!

Part-2 coming next month. Stay tuned.

Checking for Leaks after an Oil Change

Featuring Dean Showalter

Question:

What's the best way to check for leaks after I change my engine oil?

Answer:

Any time the engine oil and filter are changed, extra care should be taken to verify there are no leaks. Before starting the engine, pull the dipstick one final time and verify the proper oil level. I've heard of an airplane engine being started with no oil in it after an oil change.



Start the engine and watch for oil pressure. Be prepared to shut the engine down if oil pressure does not come up (into the green band) within the recommended time for your engine, which will likely be 30 seconds in warm weather and 60 seconds in cold weather.

However, keep in mind this may be too long to wait if you normally see oil pressure within 10 seconds after start.

After verifying oil pressure, taxi forward and make at least a 90-degree turn and look behind the airplane to make sure you're not leaving a trail of oil. If so, shut down and find out why.

If you have an oil leak after the oil change, it's better to find it right after starting the engine rather than after you've done the complete runup and potentially made a big mess.

If the runup goes well and everything is normal, be sure to taxi back to the ramp, shut down, and check the engine closely for any leaks, especially the oil filter and the oil drain plug or quick drain. If you removed the oil suction screen, check for leaks there too. If everything is dry and you have no leaks, you're ready to close it up and go fly.

Remember, never fly an airplane after an oil change until the engine has been run and checked for leaks, and an appropriate maintenance record entry has been made.

Safety wiring is essential after many aircraft maintenance tasks - and maybe people get it wrong. Even mechanics make mistakes at times. See how it should look in this excerpt from Aircraft Engines:

https://pilotworkshops.s3.amazonaws.com/Engine-manual/Pages_from_airplane_engine.pdf

Tip Courtesy of Pilot Workshops

Brian's Last Word:

After I replaced the cylinders on the 195 I had to do a run-up to make sure there were no leaks or anything else wrong before the first flight. I had to follow the same procedure as I would do after an oil change.

First, when I drained the oil and cleaned the oil screen I stuck a ribbon of masking tape onto the oil filler cap marked " NO OIL". I did not want to take a chance of trying a start with a 'dry' engine.

Once we were ready to start I cranked the engine over, without the front spark plugs or cowl installed, until I saw the oil pressure start to rise. Once I saw the oil pressure rise I knew there was oil being pumped and it was Ok to attempt a start. If there was no pressure indication after 30-45 seconds I would have stopped cranking and looked to see if there were any problems.

Another final check for leaks and then we were ready to start. The plugs were installed and the engine started. I ran it for several minutes until the oil temperature started to rise, cycled the propeller and then did a normal shutdown. After another thorough inspection I installed the cowl and everything was ready for the first flight.

Review the link above on Safety Wiring. It's very helpful!

Tools for the Shop/Hangar – A tool “tip” from Brian Byl

“Crap! That stupid Phillips bit slipped again and bugged the screw head. I wish it would stop doing that. @*^\$(\$@!!

How many times has that happened to you? Maybe the screw was really tight and as you applied torque, the bit slipped out rounding the screw head! Now you’re really in a quandary. If you’re lucky you just apply more pressure and get that screw out without further problems. If not the task becomes complicated and more frustrating. I’m pretty sure it’s a common occurrence while we’re working on our aircraft. I’m pretty sure it’s a common occurrence in many shops and hangars around Calgary.

So how do you prevent this from happening? Thanks to the experience of a club member, Bob Zabolotney, I can share some information that can help reduce the chances and headaches of stripped screw heads – APEX bits by Omega Technologies! Bob gave me one a couple of years ago and said many maintenance shops use them. First of all, they are much harder and less prone to deformation while applying torque. Second, they have and can be bought with Anti Cam Ribs (ACR) which help prevent slip out of the bit. They come in Phillips, Robertson, Torx and other types.

They are available locally at Acklands-Grainger Canada. I ordered 5 each of two kinds of Phillips bits:

APEX # 446-2-ACR2X
Limited Clearance
\$6.20/each



APEX # 440-1-ACR1X
Insert Bit Hex Drive
\$2.82/each



They were available for pickup (free delivery to the store) within a week of ordering. While the prices may seem high they will not “cam out” or deform as easy as the much cheaper bits that one normally gets with multi-bit screwdrivers. I think they are worth the extra cost as they should last a long time and not damage screw heads. They also come in Power Drive format for electric screw drivers, etc. Amazon also has them but in a very limited selection (beware of cheap imitations!).

Links:

APEX Bits: <https://apexbits.com/>

Acklands-Graingers: <https://www.grainger.ca>.

And just to be clear, I don’t own shares in any of the mentioned companies!!
More tool tips to come, next month.



Calendar of coming Aviation events

Thursday January 18 - CRFC Club member Jim Corner is the guest speaker at the January 18th meeting of the **Canadian Aviation Historical Society (CAHS)**. He will be giving a talk about his submarine hunting career with the RCAF in the early 1960's cold war era. He flew in the Lockheed Neptune and the Canadair Argus. It is a great opportunity to learn about the airplanes, tactics and flying over the Pacific from someone whose been there and has a few tales to tell.

The CAHS meets on the third Thursday of each month starting at **7:00 PM**. The meetings are held at the **SAIT Campus - Art Smith Aero Centre for Training and Technology: 916 McCall Way NE**.

This is just north of the Hanger Museum where we meet. The price is right - It's free admission!

Thanks to Carl Forman for bringing this to our attention.

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