

Issue 27

December 2025



SKYWRITER

Calgary Recreational Flying Club
COPA Flight 114



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

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.

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Featured on the Cover:

Some whimsical seasonal imagery in the spirit of the coming Christmas season!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

December 2025 *BRIAN VASSUER*



December has a lot more snow than I was prepared for,

and I am having trouble adjusting to the cold. I've started pre-heating the plane before I fly now and I'm glad that I finally have figured out a working cabin heater for the Zenair.

As I've been working on my RV6 I've been paying very close attention to how the heating system works to make sure I can enjoy flying all year round.

One thing I am excited about this month is our guest speaker. David Deere is a WestJet pilot who has had a very interesting career including flying F18's. I don't want to give too much away but this is a presentation you don't want to miss. I'm hoping everyone can attend. The Air Museum is undergoing major renovations and they are doing a lot of work inside. This month we will be in the Lancaster room off to the side where we used to meet last year.

I've also heard from a few friends that they have been ramp checked recently. I've never been ramp checked before and I'm sure it's not a pleasant experience. If you're not sure what documents you need on board now is a good time to check. The acronym ARROWILL is how I remember.

<https://airplanepilot.blogspot.com/2008/02/bits-of-paper.html>

Some additional points are to make sure you have an entry in the logs showing that the annual was completed with the correct wording, that the ELT shows when it was serviced, a Pitot Static if you fly in controlled airspace, and even the compass correction card has to have an annual date on it.

Hopefully you get some flying in before the meeting. I will see you all there **December 10th, 7PM** at the Air Museum.

Brian Vasseur

Skywriter Update

Newsletter Editor

GREG LABINE



Ho ho holy snow!

Winter has arrived. I'm surprised the mild fall season lingered as long as it did. I have a theory that our seasons have shifted and all four of them arrive later than what we've experienced in the past. Just a theory. LOL.

I hope everybody gets an opportunity to fly a lot, as weather allows this winter.

This month we have an interesting article by Stu Simpson regarding the "Contrasts" prevalent in aviation today. Some interesting perspectives shared. It segues nicely into the next article.

Following that up, we have a nice update from Brian Vasseur on upgrades he's incorporating into his RV6. We are fortunate to live in an era where technology is bringing pretty sophisticated features and functions into homebuilt aircraft that were only dreamed about not too many years ago.

Finally, we have some humorous and thought provoking quotes sent to us courtesy of Glenn Bishell. I like a laugh and we could all use one as we are shoveling snow... AGAIN, which I have to go do right now.

So, in the meantime and in between time, I look forward to seeing y'all at the next meeting **December 10th, 19:00 at the Air Museum.**

Wishing you and your families a Very Merry Christmas and much happiness, and Flying, in the coming New Year!

Greg.



THE AGE OF CONTRASTS

By Stu Simpson



Something that often strikes me about our airplanes is the wide array of technological contrasts they present. Airplanes have been around for well over a hundred years now, and aviation as a whole has undergone some unbelievable transformations in airframes, engine technology, and navigation advancements.

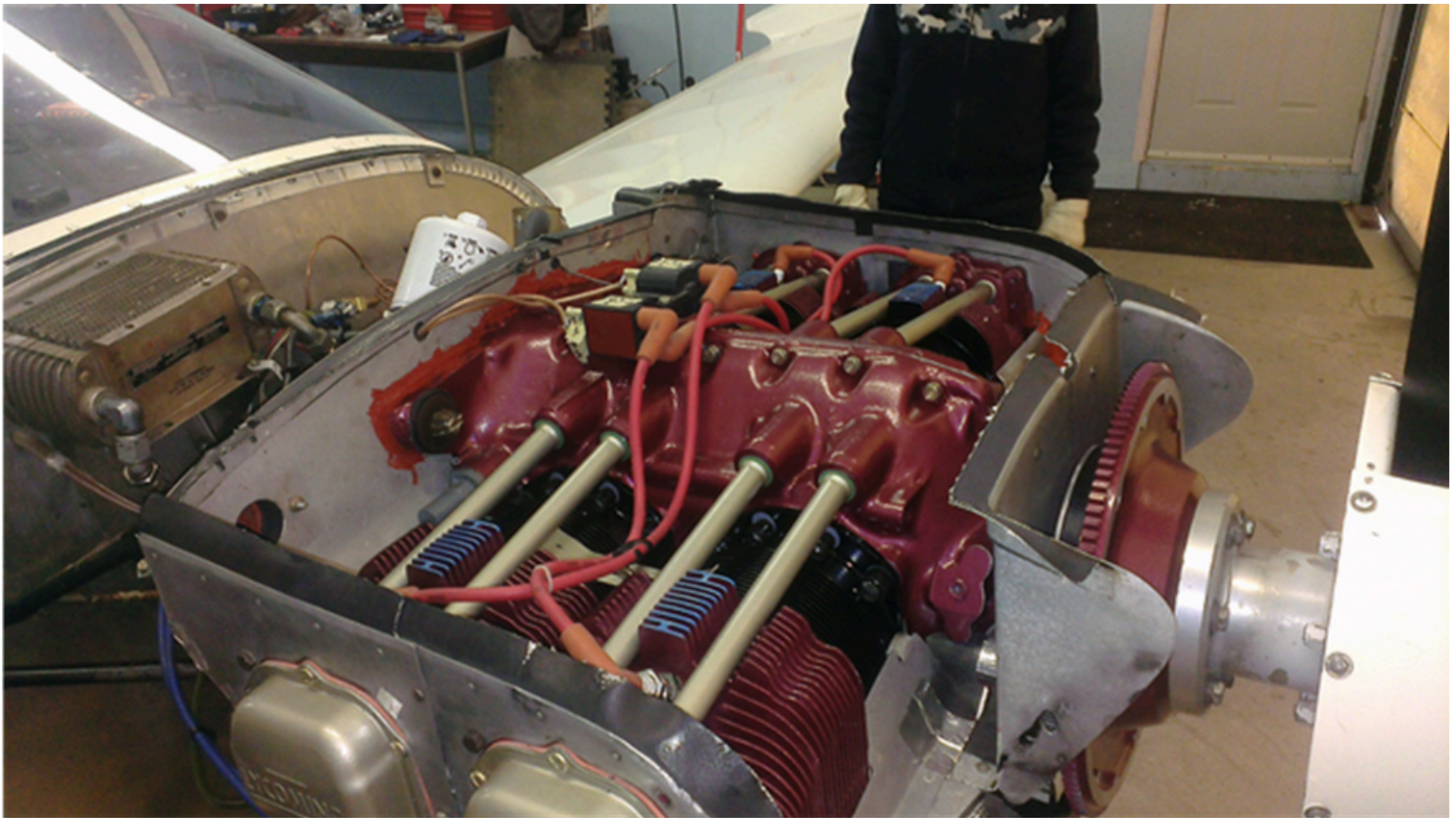
Some of that ever evolving technology has made its way into our corner of aviation populated by ultralights, homebuilts and small certified planes. As a result, we often find recreational airplanes sporting a real mix of technology, from seemingly ancient tractor-style mechanisms to the latest panel mounted electronics. It's really interesting to me to see what's changed, what hasn't, and how it all fits together.

Lets start with engines. The Rotax line of two-stroke engines started out in snowmobiles back in the 1950s. Yet you can easily find these engines still plying the skies, as they have been since the 80s, in planes like Merlins, Kitfoxes, Chinooks and Beavers. But the Rotaxes now have some pretty cool tech built in. I really enjoy the contrast between the old dirt simple two-strokes designs and the more recent iterations that use modern and reliable dual electronic ignition and liquid cooling systems.

I don't include the Rotax 912 series because I don't consider them to be old technology. The 912s have been around since 1989 and have been under continuous development ever since. The basic design is pretty advanced, and later turbocharged models are really sophisticated.

By contrast, Continental and Lycoming aircraft engines could easily be considered ancient. They started out in the 1930s powering small aircraft of the day, and were then widely used through World War II and beyond. Their carburetors and magneto ignitions could also be found on tractors, cars and trucks of that era. The engines have seen some minor updates, but they're still largely as they've always been.

Nowadays, though, there's quite a bit of contrasting technology that gets bolted on to these dinosaurs. Electronic ignition is the most obvious. Lightspeed, P-Mag, Surefly, and even Lycoming itself all produce modern, durable ignition systems strapped onto powerplants whose origins date from nearly a hundred years ago. Fuel injections systems also fit into this category with an excellent example being Calgary-based Simple Digital Systems (SDS).



A Lycoming O-320, an engine based on World War II era technology. This one has an old style magneto, commonly found on tractors and trucks in the 1930s and 40s, as well as a much newer electronic ignition.

Let's not forget engine monitoring technology. Bob Kirkby's 1964 Piper Cherokee, which is 61 years old at this writing, has a digital engine analyzer that can display and record a wide variety of engine operational data such that it can pinpoint the very second when any anomalies, such as plug fouling or valve issues, occur.

Note that none of the modern tech I've mentioned is particularly 'new' anymore. It's been around for a number of years now, but what makes it important is that it's largely accessible to guys like us. For instance, we no longer have to rely only on tractor-based carb or magneto technology for our engines.

Having said that, there are reasons that the old tech still flourishes. It works and it's reliable. Its faults are well known, as are preventions and fixes. But the biggest reason we still have such old engine designs is how expensive it is to get ANYTHING changed or re-designed on certified airplanes, which is where most homebuilt tech derives from. That's where our end of aviation really shines. We can experiment. We can take advantage of new thinking pretty cost effectively.



Pat Cunningham's Cessna 120, a very modern design in the 1940s featuring what was then the latest in aluminum semi-monocoque construction. It's still flying strong nearly 80 years after it rolled off the assembly line.



Doug Eaglesham once owned by This Flight Designs CTSW advanced ultralight. Hailing from Germany, it typifies European design efficiency. It'll fly at 145 mph on only 100 hp and about 5 gallons an hour. It has a very advanced panel, but still has old tech analog instruments.

In terms of aerodynamics, Europe has led the way with dramatically more modern and efficient airframes, frequently made of composites like fiberglass and carbon fiber. I include gyros and trikes in this group. Their panels and interiors (or pod enclosures, as the case may be) are equally modern, and most have Rotax 912 derivatives pulling them along. Maybe they're not really relevant in a discussion about contrasts, but they definitely demonstrate how even the simplest aviation technology can evolve. I very much appreciate those modern designs and how they wring such great performance out of the materials they use.



A Quad City Challenger II, built with aluminum tubing typically found in ultralights dating from the 80s, and powered by a Rotax two-stroke motor.

When ultralights were first a thing, back in the 80s, they were almost exclusively aluminum tubing and polyester sail cloth. Lazairs, Beavers, Challengers, and Bushmasters all had single-ignition Rotax two-strokes strapped to them harnessing lightweight strength to help guys get into the air. And it worked really well. There are still plenty of the designs from that era still flying and sporting some pretty sophisticated panels and Rotax engines. Several Rans models spring to mind.

How about aircraft covering? These days you can take an airframe made entirely of the most ancient building material, wood, and cover it with the most modern fabric technology. You might not even have to paint it, either.

Oratex offers pre-coloured fabric already treated with sealant and UV protection. It can be used on certified planes, too. Additionally, it's no secret in our club that Carl Forman's RV-9, a traditional aluminum semi-monocoque design, is covered in adhesive vinyl sheets. Who could have possibly imagined even 30 years ago that you could encase your whole plane in stickers?



Carl Forman's vinyl covered RV-9. An airplane covered in stickers, though you'd never know it if Carl didn't tell you.

The most prominent contrasts, of course, sit right in front of us on our instrument panels. The array of modern digital avionics available for our cockpits is simply staggering, as are their capabilities. This goes for ultralights, homebuilts and certified planes. Frankly, I love that.

My Cavalier's panel has a mechanical tachometer (I swear it's nearly as old as I am), a mechanical aneroid altimeter and a simple analog airspeed indicator. By contrast, just inches away is a digital EFIS screen that displays in one small space everything and more that the old instruments tell me for a literal fraction of the weight, parts count and complexity.

There's also a whiskey compass, technology that's hundreds of years old, contrasted with the four separate GPS devices I use, which are all accurate to within a couple of metres. They'll tell my heading, ground speed, altitude and more. Those GPS's, while capable, aren't even that sophisticated by current standards. My ADS-B sure is, though. It shows me where certain other airplanes are as if I had an on-board radar unit.



The future meets the past on the author's panel. The Cav can talk to satellites, the internet, and other aircraft, and that's without even using the comm radio. All this in an airplane design rooted in the 1940s.

And I can tell my autopilot to talk to one of the GPS's and then fly me to anywhere I want to be. Along the way I can make telephone calls, or even make dinner reservations over the internet from a few thousand feet up.

Consider this is all in an airplane that's 42 years old, of a design that's over 60 years old, that's based on another design over 75 years old! It's made of wood that likely grew for centuries, and is powered by WWII era engine technology. The technological timeline the Cav scales is both magical and amazing.

It's been terrific watching the parade of technological advancements in recreational flying, and I love seeing how the tech just keeps marching forward. Nearly everything in my plane, and I suspect in yours, too, was at one time considered cutting edge, but is now well on it's way to being old technology, if it's not already.

Looking back from here, I guess that seems to be pretty standard in this age of contrasts.

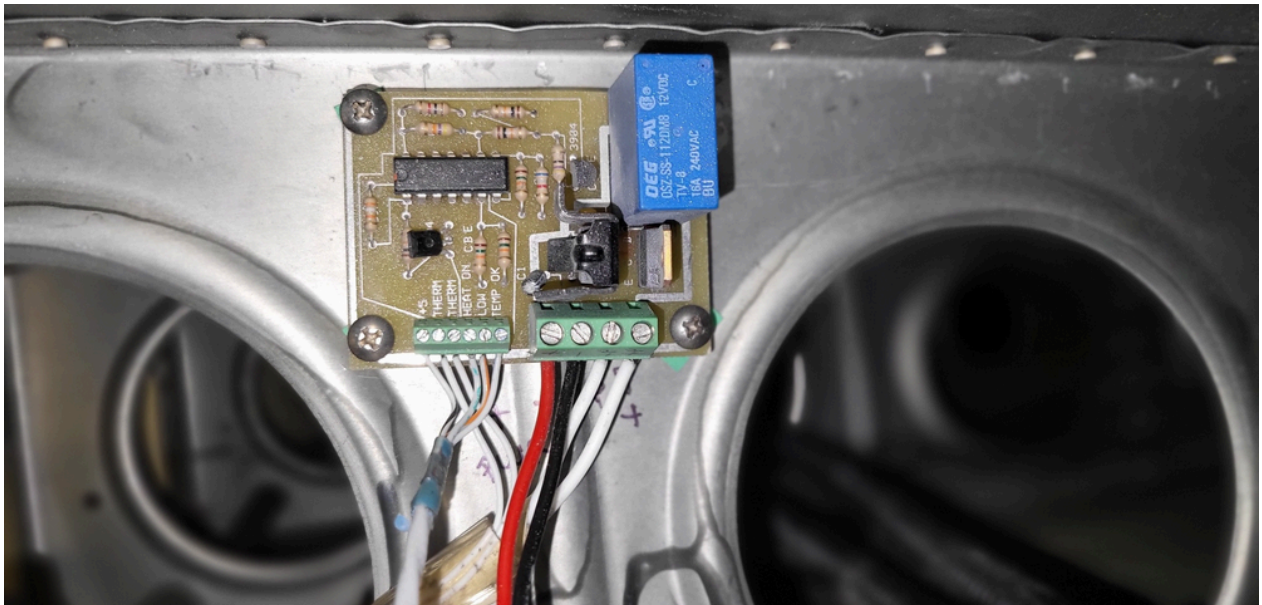
NEXT CENTURY RV6

By Brian Vasseur

Now that I have an RV6 one of the first requirements was to bring it into the 21st Century. That meant I wanted to take advantage of all of the latest technology and install systems that were better than what you would find in your typical Cessna that we all trained in.



Pitot mast installed on the wing



Pitot Heat controller

One of the key upgrades I needed was a heated Pitot system with a better indicator than just burning your hand to test that it was working. The two pictures above show the pitot on the new pitot mast and the control board installed in the wing.

This keeps the pitot warm, but not hot, and has indicators in the cockpit to show the temperature and cycle status. In place of the old pitot I installed the Garmin OAT probe.

Another key upgrade was the autopilot servos that tie into the Garmin G3X. Garmin sells a mounting system specifically for the RV6 and I had hopes this would make this an easy afternoon install. Unfortunately not all RV6's are built exactly the same so my install took a few days of test fitting and adjusting before it all fit perfectly. One nice feature is that the autopilot integrates nicely with the Ray Allen trim servos that were already installed. (See Below)

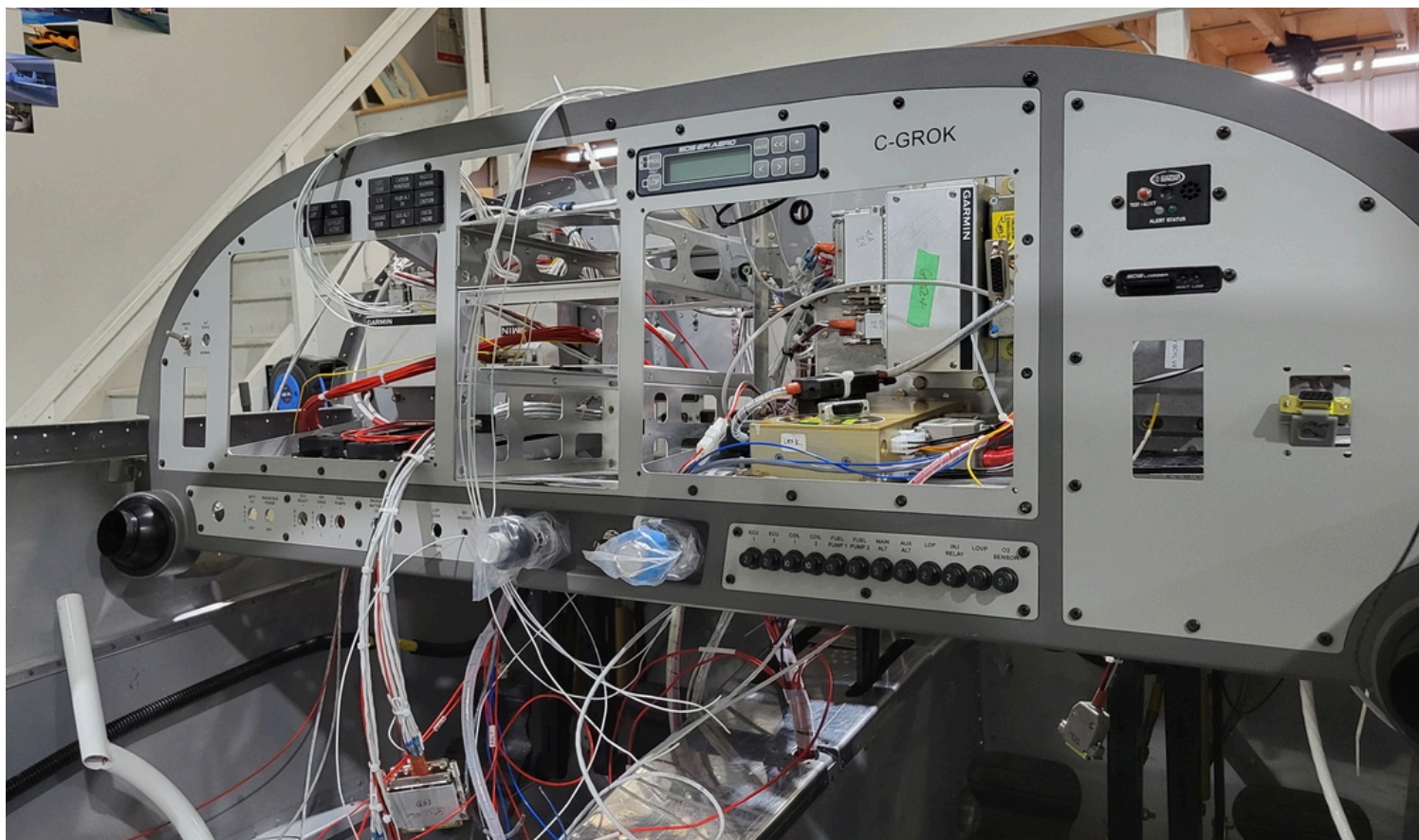




Box of modules for the G3X system.

The next big job is the fabrication of the panel. I have all of the modules required and I just needed to create enough places to mount everything. What I've ended up with is the front panel for the instruments, a subpanel about 8 inches behind that, and then a hinged bottom panel which I can swing down to mount things and for access. It's a bit of a jigsaw puzzle but I hope to have pictures for the next newsletter. I've included a picture (below) from another builder to show how he packed everything into his RV10.

Brian



Friend's RV10 installation.

Some humorous and thought provoking quotes sent in by Glenn Bishell

"People who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do."

- Isaac Asimov

"Money is not everything, but it ranks right up there with oxygen." - Zig Ziglar

"The difference between stupidity and genius is that genius has its limits." - Albert Einstein

"My psychiatrist told me I was crazy and I said I want a second opinion. He said, 'Okay, you're ugly too.'" - Rodney Dangerfield

"If you think you are too small to make a difference, try to sleep with a mosquito in the room." - His Holiness the Dalai Lama

"Remember, today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday." - Dale Carnegie

"Expecting the world to treat you fairly because you are a good person is a little like expecting the bull not to attack you because you are a vegetarian." - Dennis Wholey

"Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else." - Margaret Mead

"The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time." - Abraham Lincoln

"All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt." - Charles M. Schulz

"Life is hard; it's harder if you're stupid." - John Wayne

"Forgive your enemies, but never forget their names." - John F. Kennedy

"The surest sign that intelligent life exists elsewhere in the universe is that it has never tried to contact us." - Bill Watterson



Calendar of coming Aviation events

First Saturday each month-

CEN3 Three Hills, AB. Fly- Coffee 9:00 to 12:00 noon.

Second Saturday each month-

CYXH Medicine Hat, AB. Fly-in Breakfast 8:00 to 12:00.

Third Saturday each month-

CEK6 Flagstaff - Killam/Sedgewick, AB. Coffee and Treats by Shelly.

Third Saturday each month-

CEG4 Drumheller, AB. Coffee.

Fourth Saturday each month-

CEX3 Wetaskiwin, AB. Coffee 9:00 to 12:00

Fourth Saturday each month-

CFX6 Vulcan AB. Coffee

If you have any future events, please feel free to forward the details to me so I may share them here with the members. crufcnews@gmail.com

CLASSIFIED

Buy and Sell

All things related to Aviation



Rotax 912 Exhaust kit

\$890



Rotax 912 Exhaust kit fits UL & ULS engines. New, never used. Complete. \$890

Al Baljak

403-708-0369

dolac91@gmail.com

New Falcon ASI

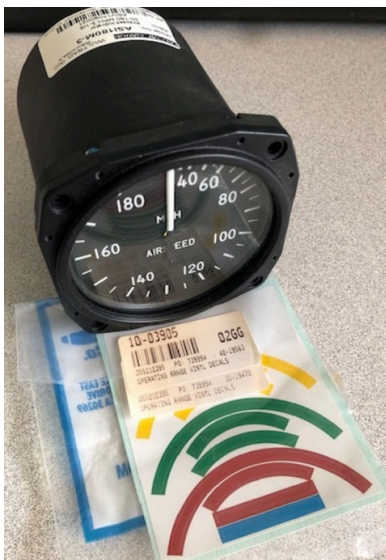
\$375

New Falcon ASI P/N ASI180M-330-180 MPH, 3-1/8" (Aircraft Spruce part # 10-03000)
Operating range vinyl decals included (A/S Part# 10-03905) Still in the box, \$375.

Bob Kirkby

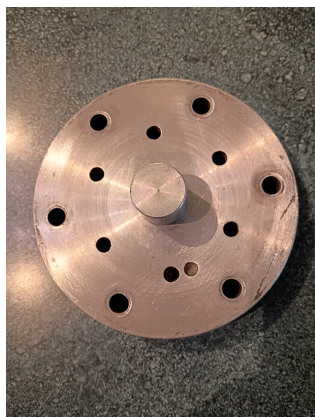
403-512-9158

Bobk@skywalker.ca



Airplane stuff

\$Various



Prop Spacer
1" X 5 3/8" Last on
a Continental O-
200 with a three
blade Warp Drive
prop. (Used)
\$35.00.



**AVCOMM Headset Model No.
AC-200PNR**
Good condition, Like New.
Asking \$65.00



**SPOT Emergency Personal
Tracking Device**
Can be used in aircraft, boats,
hunting etc. 1st generation.
Never been used. Requires a
subscription. **Asking \$35.00**



**ACK -ELT Remote
Panel Switch** Part
E-01-05.
(Used)
Asking \$25.00



ACK 406 ELT Mounting Tray
With straps (New).
Asking \$10.00



Pilot Knee Board
For notes/maps
etc.
Asking \$25.00

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