



The Fleet 2 at Mable Lake

Submitted by Geoff Pritchard

Just finished a day of air to air with Canadian Aviator magazine and Russ Niles. He sent me a few outtakes and this one was my favourite.

John Madsen flew his Citabria as the camera aircraft and did a great job.

We based out of Mabel Lake and had a great time.

The 2900' grass strip was nothing like I have ever seen....like a putting green!

The issue should be out in September, with the Fleet on the cover!

Photo by: Russ Niles, Canadian Aviator

Typical morning coffee get-together at the Vernon Flying Club!

The arrival of spring means having the morning "coffee break" outside.

If you can't find your spouse between the hours of 10:00 and 11:00, chances are they're "busy at the airport"!



In this issue:

- Voyage Across the Sky, We Finally Get Home
- The Vernon Flying Club Scholarship in Memory of Len Neufeld Awarded at April meeting
- Rust Remover a Resounding Success
- Len Neufeld Scholarship Awarded in April

Monthly Pancake Breakfasts – Fourth Sunday of Every Month (except December)

The volunteers who come to the airport early on the fourth Sunday of every month (except December) are looking forward to serving a lot of delicious pancake breakfasts over the coming months. With the wonderful Okanagan weather we anticipate an increase in customers especially fly-ins from other clubs in the Valley!



And a wonderful donation to our now more fully complete kitchen. Thanks to a donation of a new microwave oven from Cal and Del Desrosiers.

Del is a regular volunteer for the monthly pancake breakfasts and saw the need!

Schedule of Activities

SATURDAY, JUNE 15TH



Vernon Flying Club

8:00 to 12:00 noon

Members are invited to participate either by renting a table for \$10.00 to sell your own stuff or donating "treasures" to the club for us to sell.

We'll be asking for volunteers to help!

Your junk could be someone else's treasure!

- 15-Jun Yard Sale
- 18-Jun Regular Meeting + BBQ
- 23-Jun Pancake Breakfast
- 13-Jul COPA for KIDS**
- 16-Jul Barbeque
- 28-Jul Pancake Breakfast
- 20-Aug Barbeque
- 25-Aug Pancake Breakfast

17-Sep Annual General Meeting AND ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

There are plenty of opportunities to contribute to the success of the club; it is very much appreciated when the garbage is emptied; the floor washed; or the washrooms cleaned. The magazines and books need the occasional tidying and the tables given a wipe. Helping to set-up or clean-up after an event is important, too. Think about how you can help your club and get involved!

Thank-you for supporting your local Flying Club!

The pancake breakfasts and barbeques help to pay the costs of having a club which includes owning and maintaining the clubhouse.

For example, the monthly lease payment to the City of Vernon runs about \$330.00!

And a Big Thank-You to **Wyatt McMurray** of A&W for his continued support through his donation of burgers and buns for our barbeques!



Young Man Enjoys Open Cockpit Flying



I took this photo while taking Tristan Neufeld from Lake Country for his first Fleet ride.

He is one of the kids that I took for a ride in the RV 8 at last year's COPA for Kids airlift.

He was smitten with all thing flying, and his father has brought him up to my hangar on several occasions over the past year, and we talk about flying, and I have been encouraging him to think about taking lessons.

Turns out he will be starting with Kathleen this July, so he is one excited 16 year old.

Submitted by Geoff Pritchard

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THUNDER IN THE PEACE - AIRSHOW 2019

VFC Member, **Henry Vos**, invites you to come to the Peace Country at the end of July!

We are in preparation for the 2019 air show which starts with our Performers VIP Event on July 30 followed by the aerobatic show on July 31st, 2019. I've included the web address so you can watch for updates and for new developments such as airshow fundraising events, ticket sales, and of course the opportunity to win tickets with contests, games and more! <https://www.peaceregionalairshow.com/the-show>

SARTORIALY CHALLENGED...?

By John Swallow

Last Sunday, my brother and I along with two other flying club members flew to 100 Mile House for breakfast. After a filling meal at Smitty's Restaurant, I was first out the door and waited outside the building about five feet from the entrance.

Although I'm no 'fashion plate', I was dressed for the occasion: sneakers, Levis, sweater, and Jackie Stewart racing hat. Now, the sneakers may have been experienced (hole in right toe, peeling rubber on left toe), the Levis may have been unpressed and rumpled (but clean), and the sweater a touch unkempt (but warm). However, the Jackie Stewart hat was perfect.

Anyway, while standing – OK, OK – while slouched up against the wall with my arms crossed, a car drives up and parks in front of me. A well-dressed man and woman get out of the car and step to the side walk obviously just out of church and heading for Smitty's for breakfast.

He utters: "Good Morning".

To which, I reply: "Good Morning".

He looks at me for a moment and then, with concern in his voice and a sympathetic tone, he asks:

"You hungry?" ...

Siri kept calling me Shirley this morning and I was getting really annoyed, but I realized I had left my phone in Airplane mode.



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Voyage Across the Sky – Part Four

By Stu Simpson

Photos by Stu Simpson and Geoff Pritchard

Day 10

Fog and low cloud shrouded the airport when we arrived, but it was burning off quickly. And we found a pleasant surprise awaiting us, too. The Cub we saw in Roseburg had made it to its new home. Geoff and I were both very happy to see it on the ramp just a few parking spots away.



The Cub we saw at Roseburg tied down beside Geoff's plane at Vancouver.

We killed some time fuelling, and Pritchard disposed of the oil he'd drained from his engine yesterday after landing. His Continental C-85 lacks an oil filter so he has to change his oil every 25 hours. He was within minutes of the allotted time when we landed the day before.

The weather steadily improved and I was in a much better mood, too. There was still some haze and low cloud when we took off, but it was dissipating quickly as we turned

north along the Columbia River. We passed a Coast Guard helicopter going the opposite way, its orange, black and white colours glowing brightly in the morning sun.

It was a brilliant morning to be up flying. Numerous meadows and hay fields ambled by below us, calling out to our little tail draggers, inviting us to land. Our planes' designers had just those kinds of fields in mind when they started thinking about Champs and Merlins. We sincerely wanted to oblige the invitation, just to exercise the special freedom that such rugged airplanes offer. Instead, though, we flew on.

Making our way toward Seattle on a brilliant summer morning.



The only irritant on the day was once again the wind which hit us on the nose once more at 25 mph. Knowing that flying against the wind wouldn't last as long today, I had a much better frame of mind about it.

We passed one town after another, their citizens busy with the day, getting things done, making plans for tomorrow and next week. As we passed each little community, I could hardly wait to see the next one.

What is it that makes some men want to wander while others are content to stay put? Why do some continually seek what's around the next turn, or over the next mountain? Is

there ever enough for people like that; for people like Pritchard and me? I suppose that deep down we know we'll never catch the horizon. As for me, I don't want to catch it. I just want to see what's on the other side of it. And someday, I just might.

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Seattle beckoned from the distance, but we weren't going to make it against this wind. Not without some extra gas, anyway. We landed at Centralia – Chehalis airport, topped off and lit out once more. We were heading into the busiest airspace in this part of the world.

And busy it was! We had to avoid a military operational area south of Seattle, then enter the Mode C veil surrounding SeaTac airport and make our way up the east side of Seattle's airspace.

Stu concentrates on flying in the busy Seattle airspace.

My radio was acting up the whole time, too, just like it did yesterday in Portland. For some infuriating reason whenever I got over a large American urban area my radio would become nearly unreadable. I was able to hear the tower just fine, but they couldn't get any readable transmission from me. I value professionalism and this was hardly professional. I think the problem has something to do with the intense concentration of other radio signals in these urban areas. Strange that it doesn't happen in the Calgary area.

The controller was a really good fellow, though, and like his colleague in Portland, allowed me to acknowledge his transmissions by squawking my ident.



At one point the controller called out some traffic of a Canadair Challenger whose call sign was Flight Check and who was five miles west of us at our altitude. I think these are the planes the FAA uses to check the calibration of nav aids around airports on a regular basis. Transport Canada does the same thing. The Challenger reported he had us in sight, and then proceeded to buzz us! He passed so close behind us that Geoff and I took evasive action to avoid this idiot! If he missed us by 200 feet, I'd be surprised.

We continued up the east side of Seattle fighting the turbulence from the afternoon heat and trying to stay within our altitude bracket. The city and its suburbs splayed out all around us, jammed between the ocean and the mountains. I've seen Seattle this way before, but the metro area's sheer enormity still amazed me.

After an hour of flying over Seattle's surrounding suburbs, Snohomish Harvie Field finally appeared and we began our descent. The controller cleared us to change frequencies and told us to remain VFR. We switched over to Harvie's frequency, flew the circuit and landed.

"That was the most intense hour of flying I've ever done!" Geoff declared when we met at the pumps. "I was stuck in formation with you like glue." He feared we'd get separated and then he'd have to find me in controlled airspace with my bad radio.

We also exchanged how angry we were at the Flight Check goof who buzzed us. I suspect he set off all sorts of proximity alarms in the tower by pulling such a stupid stunt.

We taxied to the transient tie downs and unloaded our gear. The temperature easily hit the mid-30s and the humidity was ridiculous. I was soaked with sweat by the time we lugged all our luggage back to the airport office.

A half hour later, though, with a rental car in hand we set out to explore Seattle for the next day and a half, and all the aviation related offerings it had for us.

Day 11

We spent this day as airplane tourists, which was fun. Our first stop was at The Flying Heritage Collection Museum, a living flight museum featuring fighters from World War II, including a P-40, P-47, P-51, an FW-190, ME-109, Me-163 rocket plane, and so, so many more. Many of these airplanes are actually airworthy and fly occasionally.

Across the field is the Historic Flight Foundation, featuring an F7F Tigercat, F8F Bearcat, a Spitfire, a Staggerwing; and my favourite, a DeHavilland Beaver. Then we hooked up with one of the museum's docents who graciously allowed us access to a B-25 out on the ramp. Museum staff were getting ready to fly it to the Arlington air show the next day. That was an incredible treat for both of us.

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Geoff and a very rare Grumman F8F Bearcat. It still flies occasionally.



We also visited the Seattle Museum of Flight's annex building, where numerous airplanes are on display and under restoration. All these museums are on Everett Field. They are the museums the Rocket Man spoke of in Bend.

It was an astounding contrast to stare at history reaching back 70 or more years, then step outside, look across the street and see dozens of Boeing airplanes that are among the most modern in the sky. 787s, 777s, 767s and 747s, littered the ramps around us.

We then drove to the Museum of Flight on Boeing Field, where I left Geoff to his own devices for a couple of hours while I toured around the field proper. I also visited the gift shop which has the best collection of aviation books and videos that I've ever seen. I was

pretty proud to look at the shelves and realize that my personal collection pretty closely matched the stuff I saw there.

By the time we sat down for dinner on the waterfront, we'd been completely saturated in airplanes. Aviation tourism is the best kind of tourism.

A brand new Boeing 777 at Everett's Paine Field, home of Boeing Aircraft.

Day 12

Weather set us back, again. We arrived at the field to look up at low scuddy cloud, rain, mist and a series of thunderstorms moving in. The thing is, the cells, which were loud and very close, were moving from southeast to northwest. I've been a weather watcher since I was a teenager and I've never seen thunderstorms move that way. I don't know, maybe it's pretty common around there.



Waiting out the weather at Harvie Field.



After a three hour delay, things had improved enough for us to head out. The sky was still well overcast, but the ceiling had risen to about 1300'. Visibility was up to near eight miles. We rolled down runway 15 on our last sea level take off. Even heavily loaded, our planes jumped into the sky at the low elevation and cool temperature.

We set a course southeast through a broad valley to intercept I-90, the road we'd follow through the Snoqualmie Pass. We flew over a bright blue prison and lush green forests as light rain fell down on us. Geoff and I kept a close lookout for planes headed the opposite direction to Arlington. The

marginal weather forced us to dodge the odd low cloud and stay over the lower parts of the valley.

"This cloud is pretty low, Stu," Geoff said, sounding worried. "It's well over a thousand above ground level, and it's rising with the terrain. You okay if we give it a little longer?" I asked. "Roger that," Pritchard replied, sounding less than

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enthused. I was pretty confident we'd be okay. Previous flights through this area showed that the weather improved as we got closer to the pass. There were a couple of airfields on the route we could use if needed, and the cloud ceiling was definitely rising with the terrain.

At Fall City we flew over the Snoqualmie Falls, which tower 280 feet. Funny how I'd missed them all the other times I'd flown this way. Even from a thousand feet in the air, they were spectacular. I really wanted to land and visit them up close.

We intercepted I-90 and headed into the mouth of the pass as mountain walls closed in from either side. Geoff was still apprehensive and I couldn't blame him. The weather wasn't getting much better, but it also wasn't getting much worse.



Tracking I-90 toward the Snoqualmie Pass in some marginal weather.

Patches of blue sky showed up every now and then, and the ceiling, evidently only a few hundred feet deep, was still okay. Visibility had dropped to about four miles, though.

The weather was still okay for Merl and the Champ, but it was nibbling at our limits. In 15 miles, or so, we'd either be through the pass or headed back to where we came from.

We flew on, scraping through the lower cloud bottoms, which seemed to be breaking up a bit. More and more blue leaked through and patches of sunlight dappled the mountain sides giving them, ironically enough, a somewhat camouflaged look.

Finally, two miles back from the pass, as the road really started to climb, the weather broke. We banked around the Snoqualmie Summit and stared into brilliant sunshine and a wide, flat valley heading east. Geoff was very relieved, and I was really glad we didn't have to turn around.

We drifted ever higher, chasing thermals again, searching for height. Whiskey Dick Mountain sat about 40 miles ahead and we needed about 6000' to cross it and get to Ephrata. It's an old bomber training base from World War II. We'd land there, get some gas and scoot east to Sandpoint, Idaho, for the night.

Where we really wanted to go was Castlegar and Nelson, in southern BC. My dad's in Castlegar, and Pritchard used to live in Nelson. But if we flew there today the coming weather would cage us in for days. Those places rest in very deep, narrow valleys and the odds were pretty high that the forecast weather for the next few days would leave us utterly trapped there. I had previous experience getting out of Castlegar in bad weather and didn't care to repeat it.

Instead, Sandpoint is in a broad, low valley and joins another low valley leading to Cranbrook. Our chances of making it through in that direction were infinitely better.

Once we cleared the mountain ridge we stayed high to combat the heat of the desert down below. Ephrata's AWOS claimed a temperature on the ramp in the high 30s with high humidity, too. How odd to have such humidity in the middle of a desert. Quite frankly, I took it as an omen, an evil omen, of the weather to come.

Geoff nearly lost control again on landing as the tail wheel shimmied uncontrollably until he slowed enough for it to stop. The steering arm we'd straightened in California was bent once more, and we both knew instinctively that it'd snap off should we try to bend it back. Geoff would simply have to do his best and stay off the tail and on the brakes as much as possible.

I don't recall ever having experienced heat and humidity like we had in Ephrata that day. Fuelling up was simply hell on earth. After that I spent half an hour replacing a fuse in my GPS' power circuit. I spun Merl around to an angle where the wing would provide some shade while I made the repair. My God, it was hot; utterly knackered!

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Making minor repairs to Merl at Ephrata, Washington. The heat was absolutely stifling.

We shuffled to the airport lounge for a cool drink of water and a respite from the sun. After we pottied and filled our water bottles, I turned to Pritchard;

"You want to sit in here for a while and cool off?" Up till now he was strangely quiet here, but I put it down to his concern over the Champ's tail wheel.

"No," he said quickly and firmly, "Let's get the hell

out of here." I was taken aback and it showed. "There are too many ghosts here," he said. "What do you mean?" "Too many kids left here and never came home," he said sombrely. I understood and appreciated his sensitivity. This was a former WWII bomber training strip. We headed back to our planes, fired up, and continued east.

As we flew on, the world again transformed beneath us switching steadily back to fertile farmland and then low alpine mountains near Spokane. We crossed over Deer Park, then Priest River, and soon angled north for the last few miles into Sandpoint.

Sandpoint was every bit as hellishly hot and humid as Ephrata. We laboured again with fuelling, unloading and tying down. A terrific kid named Darren, who was the assistant airport manager, drove us the short distance to our hotel. Formerly a California surfer, he decided to give aviation a try and found he was really enjoying the experience. Darren was a very welcome saviour at the end of a long, long day.

Day 13

Sometimes it sucks being right, especially about the weather. The omen I'd felt in Ephrata had proven accurate. Thunderstorms rattled through the night and well into the morning. Low wispy clouds tore at the tree tops in and around Sandpoint, and a hard rain fell. We resigned ourselves to another day of being weathered out.

After breakfast, when the rain had eased, I walked to the airport to get some exercise and to see if we could rent a car for the day. But as I got closer to the field, it seemed the clouds were breaking up a bit. I decided to wait on the car and instead used the computer in the airport building to monitor the weather.

An hour later things were good and getting better. We could fly. Darren very kindly lent me his truck so I could collect Geoff and all our gear. In short order we prepped our planes to the point where all we had to do was spin the props and be gone. Then we ran into another delay.

Of course, we were about to cross the border back into Canada. Thus, we each had to file a flight plan, and then a border crossing notification with the Canada Border Services Agency. I fully understand and support these measures. The problem came in having to wait on hold for 15 minutes to even begin filing a flight plan. Then the very well-meaning briefer insisted on telling me the weather that I knew better than he did because I'd read it countless times already that morning. Then Geoff had to file his own flight plan, but at least we could use the same briefer.

Next it was a call to the Canada Border Services Agency. Another wait on hold, then two more individual filings for crossing. Our agent was very good at her job, though, and once we got underway things went smoothly. All told, the phone filings cost us more than three quarters of an hour.

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Some of the weather we skirted as we made our way north to the Canadian border.

We said our goodbyes and a sincere thanks to Darren, and headed out to the planes. We took off heading north, and forty minutes later the Porthill border strip slipped beneath us as we crossed back into Canada. It was good to have northern Idaho to our rudders.

I glanced west at the Kootenay Pass, one of two choices that would have been available to us for getting out of Castlegar. The violent morass of clouds chewing on the mountain tops instantly justified flying to Sandpoint, instead. We wouldn't have had a chance at Castlegar.

Nonetheless, we were back in Canada, and within a day of home. At least now, if we had any problems we'd have them in our home country and within driving distance to Calgary. With that realization in mind the ride to Cranbrook was a little better. But as we worked our way closer, I started to worry.

Thick clouds crowded the northern sky and more seemed to be spilling from the east over the mountains and down into the Columbia Valley. How bad was it on the other side of those mountains in the Elk Valley and Crowsnest Pass? We wouldn't be sleeping at home tonight if they were locked up. What about north; might that way be an option? I'd have to do some pretty careful weather investigation after we touched down.



Worsening weather near Cranbrook, BC.

We landed, did our customs thing and got fuelled as quickly as possible. We walked to the passenger terminal to get an internet connection for checking weather. Oh, boy, it didn't look good. A 15-mile wide circle of good weather sat over Cranbrook. Beyond that circle it was crap. A series of highway cameras showed intermittently good cloud ceilings in the Elk Valley and the Crowsnest Pass, and then the clouds would be nearly down to the ground

again a few minutes later. Anywhere north toward Invermere was simply terrible and shut down to us completely.

We faced a maddening dilemma. At times the Elk Valley and Crowsnest looked passable, but what if it socked in while we were flying through? We'd have no back door, no means of escape. What were the chances it would close in during the twenty or thirty minutes it would take us to get from one end to the other? I suddenly became acutely aware of all the 'gotta get home' crash stories I'd ever heard.

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"How's it look, partner?" Geoff asked, peering over my shoulder. "Piss poor, actually," I replied in frustration. "There's maybe a chance we can make it through the Elk Valley and the Crowsnest. Once we're through, we'd have to head to Pincher Creek for gas because we won't make it north along the Cowboy Trail, that's for sure. From Pincher, it's pretty low, flat terrain north to home. But it all depends on what's in the Elk Valley."

Geoff pondered my remarks for a moment, then: "What do you want to do?" Good question, I thought. A look out the window revealed that the clouds were still spilling over the mountains into the Columbia Valley. It was a pretty strong indication of what lay on the other side in the Elk. But there just might be a chance.

If we went to have a look, could we turn around if we needed to do so? Yes, I decided. The Columbia Valley between Cranbrook and the mouth of the Elk had remained clear enough for visual flying all day, and the Elk Valley was broad enough, even down low, that our little planes' tight turning radius' could get us around and headed the other way if we had to run. There was also an airstrip at Elko, right at the mouth of the Elk Valley, that we could use if things got really bad down in that direction.

"I want to go have a look," I said, finally. I explained my logic to Pritchard, and he agreed it was worth a peek. He wanted to get home, too. As we saddled up, a nearby Cessna 182 was also turning over. He radioed his intentions to the tower, taxied out and took off. A few minutes later we too were airborne, taking off into some light rain. We angled southeast to track the Columbia Valley toward the mouth of the Elk.

The rain near Cranbrook only lasted about ten minutes, but as we went further the weather looked worse than I first thought. The cloud bank cascading down the mountain slopes to the east had thickened up along our flight path. Tantalizing swatches of blue dotted the sky above us, but patchy gray clouds hovered all around us at our altitude.

As we flew nearer the mouth of the Elk Valley my hopes, fragile to start with, began to crumble even further. The weather was worsening; the clouds were solidifying around us and visibility was dropping slowly, but steadily. I crossed my fingers that things would improve in the Elk, but my guts told me there was no way.

"Traffic in the Elko area, this is Cessna 182 Hotel Lima Tango, approximately ten miles north at 6000 feet. I'm heading toward the Elk Valley. Elko area traffic." This was the 182 that left Cranbrook just before us.

"Hotel Lima Tango," I called, "this is Merlin Delta Delta November, plus one. We're currently about seven miles north of Elko at 4800 feet. We're also headed toward the Elk Valley, but I think you'll get there before we do. We'd be grateful for a condition report when you get there." "Okay," he replied, "I'll let you know what I find, but it sure doesn't look good from here."

"Roger that. Thanks." His comment was no surprise. The clouds above were definitely worse and I don't know why he was up that high. We still had reasonable, though slowly diminishing VFR at our height. We flew on, getting closer to our decision point.

As expected, the 182 quickly passed us and the pilot reported poor conditions at his altitude. Just as Pritchard and I turned east into the mouth of the Elk Valley, the 182 pilot made his decision. "Hotel Lima Tango is turning around and heading back to Cranbrook," he reported. "Roger that, thanks," I responded. I kept telling myself he was too high, that the weather lower down might be okay.

Geoff had the Champ at my six o'clock as we turned east into the Elk Valley. Ahead, things looked pretty crappy, but still passable, at least up to the sharp corner that's five miles east of the entrance. The valley turns sharply north at that point. We were probably spitting into the wind, but there was still just a slight chance. I wanted to see what was around that corner.

"I guess this pretty much settles it, eh, Stu," called Geoff, sounding more than a little nervous. "Not quite," I radioed back, "I want to see what's up around that corner ahead. It's just a couple more miles."

We flew deeper into the darkening maw, heading ever closer toward walls of rock and cloud that would force our hand one way or the other. Our altitude was still well above the valley floor, but I moved us more to the right side so there'd be plenty of room for the upcoming turn. Moderate rain fell now, and we cut through low scud coming down off the surrounding peaks. Rain water splashed into Merl's cockpit through every little opening it could find.

"This is getting really bad," Geoff pleaded. "Just give me thirty more seconds," I said, "then we'll likely make the left-hand one-eighty and get out of here". 'Likely', I'd said. I realized instantly how absurd that sounded. No way were we getting through this garbage.

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Sure enough, after what must have seemed an eternity to Pritchard, maybe longer, we came to the corner and I called it. I'd seen what I wanted to see; a gray fortress of cloud and rain piling right down to the ground, filling the valley to the north. I racked Merl into a hard, steep turn. "Geoff, I'm in the left hand turn, headed back west," I told him. "Roger. I'm right behind you," he said tensely.



Turning Merl around at the south end of the Elk Valley in impassable weather.

I looked over my left shoulder to see him close on my tail, only a couple hundred feet back, turning just as tightly. Remarkable, I thought, that even in such dark, gray and rainy conditions, that beautiful Champ still practically glowed against the mountain side.

Suddenly, I marvelled at the trust that Geoff had placed in me. He followed me straight into the mouth of a dragon, wanting with everything he had, and wisely so, to turn and run back to the light. But I told him there may be a chance, just the faintest hope, we might slip safely through and go on. So he came with me. And when I ran smack up against the limits, he was right there, too. His faith in me – this day and every day of our adventure - was deeply, deeply humbling.

In seconds, we completed the turn back to a much brighter future in the Columbia Valley. Disappointed and frustrated, but knowing we chose correctly, we returned to YXC. I tried to comfort myself with the improved forecast for tomorrow. We'd get home then, I thought, in one, maybe two, relatively easy legs of flying.

Boy, was I wrong.

Day 14

Each day of the trip I spent numerous hours writing a web log for our fellow flying club members back home. Here's an excerpt:

Day 14

Boys;

This is extremely frustrating. We're stuck here in Cranbrook due to the weather. It's great within ten miles of Cranbrook, but anywhere else is crap. The big problem is all the friggin' heat and moisture in the air which causes the clouds to build up as the air runs into the mountains. It's clogging up the Crowsnest and the route north has cloud right down to the ground at Radium.

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There are a bunch of C-180s and C-185s here for a Skywagon convention that ended last night. They want to go in every direction, but they're all stranded, too. I'm spending all my time waiting in the terminal where I can get internet access for the laptop. We can access all the BC highway cameras and all the other weather info we need, too. As frustrating as it is, it sure takes the guesswork out of it.

Things may improve later this afternoon after the current bit of rain and moisture goes through, but there's another one within a couple of hours behind it. Guess we'll just have to wait and see.

Blue Skies,

Stu

We waited, and we saw. We waited until our asses were sore from sitting. We saw the weather either staying the same or getting worse. Two things were certain; we couldn't fly our planes home, and we wouldn't stay another night in Cranbrook. We'd had enough, been gone too long.

I've never left an airplane behind before and I didn't like the thought of it now. But just before noon, we made our decision and started looking for another way to get to Calgary. Geoff learned that a ride out on a Dash 8 cost just shy of \$400.00 each. I called a rental agency and secured a car for a total of \$250.00.

We headed out to Merl and the Champ, which we had earlier unstrapped, loaded up, and gotten ready go. We quickly began reversing all that. As Geoff was tying back down, a pretty blue and white Rans S-6 taxied in to the spot right beside the Champ. I concentrated on my tie down job, but I wondered how far from Cranbrook those guys had gotten before having to turn back.

Pritchard chatted with the Rans pilots and explained how we were stranded. They listened attentively, then one of them said; "Well, you better take my truck to Calgary, then." "Wha...? What did you say?" Geoff asked, shocked. "I'll loan you my truck so you can get back to Calgary," the man repeated casually. "But you don't even know us," Pritchard exclaimed.

"It's alright," the man said, "pilots don't steal from other pilots."

Utterly floored, Geoff strode over to me and Merl. "Hey, guess what," he said, "we have a free ride to Calgary." "What do you mean?" I asked him sceptically. He went on to explain what just happened and how the Rans pilot, Myles, as we soon learned, is the patron saint of general aviation in Cranbrook. He loves helping out other pilots in need.

As Geoff explained things, I too was soon flabbergasted by the gift before us. I quickly cancelled our rental and finished unloading and tying Merl down. Carrying all my gear, I trudged over to meet my new hero, Myles.

Myles Murtack owns Runners RV in Cranbrook, right on the main drag in the city. We drove to the dealership where Myles unloaded a few items from the truck, reluctantly took our contact information, and turned over the keys to us. We promised we'd be back next weekend to deliver the truck and retrieve our planes.

Myles Murtack trades contact info with Geoff after offering his vehicle for us to drive back to Calgary.



"Okay, there's no rush," he said. Geoff and I were simply overwhelmed by his extraordinary generosity and willingness to help.

The drive to Calgary lasted four hours. Of that time, there were perhaps 45 minutes when it wasn't raining. Much of the time it rained hard. Some of the time it rained torrentially. The cloud was often down to forty or fifty feet above the ground. We wouldn't have made it in our airplanes.

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The weather conditions on the drive home. There's no way we'd have flown through this.



All the way back, we spoke repeatedly of Myles' amazing generosity and our good fortune to have been right where we were at the moment he taxied in. A few minutes either way and we'd have missed him completely. We agreed that when such a gift falls into your lap that way it's crucial to pass it on whenever possible.

We were finally back in Calgary, but our adventure was far from over.

Day 15

Seven days after we left our planes, we returned to Cranbrook to fly them home. Geoff had instructions from Myles to leave the truck at the airport, so after we gassed up and fed ourselves, we headed straight there. But as we drove up the airport access road, a bolt of fear shot through me.

Huge pine and spruce trees, some 80 feet tall, lay scattered throughout fields on either side of the road. A terrific thunderstorm with an extreme gust front hit Cranbrook the night before. Dozens of trees were snapped off and lay like match sticks dropped on the ground. What had the wind done to our planes?

We parked the truck, grabbed our gear and headed for the airplanes. Geoff's looked just fine as I walked past enroute to Merl. It too looked good from this distance. I breathed huge sigh of relief as I set my gear down under the wing and began my pre-flight.

Then I stopped in my tracks, because what I saw shocked me. My windshield was snapped right into two pieces! "How's your plane?" Geoff yelled. "I'm screwed!" I hollered back, "utterly and completely screwed." He trotted over, a very worried look on his face. "What's wrong?" he asked.

I pointed to my windscreen. It's a large piece of Lexan that curves around the cockpit and under the wing. For some reason, it had snapped from top to bottom at the front left corner bend, leaving Merl with a gaping hole there.



The Merlin's windshield snapped into two pieces.

A fleeting idea crossed my mind... no, that wouldn't work. It's too much to hope for.

"I think we can fix this," Geoff stated. "Do you have any tape?" Strange that he'd voiced my very thought right then. But if he thought so, too...

"I always carry tape in my plane. It's saved my bacon more than once."

We pushed the two pieces

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together to check the fit. It was rough, very rough, but if we could set it so the side piece supported the front piece, we could pull this off

The application of some foil tape saved the day.



Using foil tape that I carried for use on the prop's leading edge, we carefully positioned the windshield pieces and started layering it on, both inside and out. The tape job turned out to be pretty solid. I'd know for sure one way or the other within seconds of starting the engine, but I was pretty sure I'd be able to avoid a bus ride home.

We untied, finished our very careful pre-flight inspections and loaded up. Then came the moment of truth. I turned the key and

after a few blades the engine tumbled to life.

The windshield held! I reached forward to check how it felt. It wasn't moving a bit. Yup, I'd be flying home! I radioed Geoff with the good news.

We were soon airborne off runway 16 and turning north up the Columbia Valley. I kept a very close eye on the windshield repair, but it was absolutely solid.

Merl departs runway 16 at Cranbrook with the windshield staying intact.

Barry Davis, was waiting for us in Invermere with his Zenair 600. He couldn't make the flight to San Francisco and we had sorely missed him. But he wanted to fly the last leg home with us from Invermere. Barry's touching gesture meant even more since he had to fight headwinds up to 40 mph to get there earlier in the day.



Geoff and I had a tailwind for this leg, and though it wasn't much, it was still a treat we thoroughly enjoyed. Our ground speed registered anywhere from 85 to 100 mph, and we had a very short ride to Invermere.

On touch down, Pritchard had trouble with his tail wheel, again, which was now just barely holding together. Both steering control arms were bent up nearly 90 degrees from their correct positions. Fixing it would have to wait until we got home, but we only had to make one more landing, and that would be on grass. Our adventure had certainly taken its toll on us and our very tough little airplanes.

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Barry and his Zenair were waiting for us. Seeing him again really brought back the memories of when we three flew to Spokane for a weekend the previous autumn.

Barry Davis and his Zenair 600 at Invermere to escort us the last leg to home.



We quickly fuelled and after a pre-flight briefing returned to our planes to fire up. But Barry's plane wouldn't start. We spent half an hour trying to fix a vapour lock issue before his engine finally roared to life.

Our next challenge was simply leaving Invermere. Getting airborne was easy enough, but there was no wind to speak of. I lifted off the runway into 25 degree heat at 2800 feet ASL, got thirty feet into the air, and pretty much stayed

there. The trees ahead worried me, but I had anticipated this. I simply slid my airplane a few feet to the right so I was over the highway. Just like magic, the heat from the highway gave me the lift I needed.

Merl started climbing well toward the high terrain ahead, aided just enough from the little thermal. We all continued working the lift and the mechanical updrafts as we made our way toward the pass at Radium only a few miles distant. We banked eastward into the narrowest pass I've ever seen, and continued clawing for height. The 4800' summit slid under us several minutes later and we angled north up the Kootenay Valley. This valley was wide and very green, and thick cumulus clouds hung around the mountain tops. There was no danger from them here, though. They were well above us and staying that way. Visibility was excellent in the dry mountain air.

Turning at Kootenay Crossing, we entered the narrower Vermillion Valley. Our three planes inched steadily higher as we traveled its length. We wanted about 6000', preferably a little more. The Vermillion Pass, which grants passage into the Bow Valley, sits at 5700', so some extra altitude couldn't hurt. We cleared the Vermillion Pass and popped out into the Bow Valley and were finally back into Alberta. Landmarks more familiar to us appeared left and right, welcoming us onward toward home, barely 90 minutes away now. Sulphur Mountain was there with the chateau on top where those poor souls who couldn't fly had a view nearly as good as ours.



Banff slips away beneath Geoff's wing as we eagerly head home to Calgary.

As we approached Banff the roughness kicked in. And kick it did! For twenty minutes we were merely at the whim of moderate to severe turbulence as it threw us about like twigs on river rapids. Finally, the valley widened out near the Kananaskis Highway, and the ride smoothed out considerably.

For the next half hour we flew on, sailing easily over the foothills and the brilliant emerald prairie, descending smoothly as Calgary grew bigger in our sight. Downtown was visible from forty miles away. Now *that's* unrestricted visibility!

We curved around the south end of the city, headed a few more miles east, and finally entered the

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circuit for Kirkby Field and home. My landing was terrible against the gusty 20 - 25 knot west wind that was blowing. Fortunately, Kirby's runway 26 provided plenty of room for my transgressions. I gratefully taxied up to my hangar and shut down.

Geoff fights the afternoon turbulence to land back home at Kirkby Field.



Geoff clearly had some trouble with the turbulence on his approach and landing but managed to use the brakes to make it safely back to his hangar. Barry landed safely, too.

Now our adventure was over.

In Summary

"This isn't a memory; it's a tattoo," Geoff told me a month after we returned home. "I keep re-living little vignettes of the trip in my head."

I knew what he meant. For the first week or so of being home, without even knowing it, I'd find myself wandering

through some little piece of the adventure; like driving in California, realizing we really flew our planes to where there are palm trees. I recalled my silly nervousness flying near volcanoes; and looking down onto the ramp at Cresswell, Oregon, at the last L-4 ever made that a father and son flew all the way from south Texas.

I think Geoff got more out of this journey than either of us reckoned he would. He underwent a remarkable transformation. He began with tentativeness and uncertainty, since this was only the third cross country flying trip he'd made since gaining his pilot's license many years prior. Then one day he set out to fly to the edge of the continent.

As the trip progressed, as he conquered each new challenge that arose, he became less and less worried about things like mountains, wind and rougher terrain. His confidence and ability grew further each time he landed the Champ with a bum tail wheel in turbulent conditions, and while it definitely worried him, he'd figured out how to handle the problem.

When I was feeling down and frustrated on some of the tough weather days, Geoff encouraged me. He reiterated that this was an adventure. He reminded me that anyone could fly to San Francisco, but only a few could fly there the way we did. Pritchard very much impressed me.

My world is larger, too, for having made this voyage. My aerial voyeurism, my desire to see, feel and experience more, both in the sky and on the ground, has been thoroughly sated. The places where we flew have touched me, and I will remember that touch. I'm proud of what Merl and I did, of the stories we can tell.

I did make some errors when I plotted our San Francisco trip, and many of my expectations were completely incorrect. There was a lot more mountain flying than I anticipated, much more wind, and more weather delays. I learned that we really are spoiled flying in southern Alberta.

In mathematical terms, we travelled 2700 miles in about 32 hours of flying, which is pretty big stuff for little airplanes. We made 23 landings and takeoffs at 20 different airports, rented or borrowed (thanks, again, Myles) 7 cars, stayed in 10 different hotels, and were 14 days gone.

It's hard to tell others about our flight unless they're pilots, too. Normal people can't quite grasp it, and how could they? Unless you've been there, how can you know the pure cold fear of an impending engine failure 500 miles from home over terrible terrain in a craft you dearly love because you built it yourself? Can non-pilots fathom what it is to fly right to the edge of a wall of weather, knowing it will kill you if you don't turn around? And if people don't fly, how can they know the serenity and the flight perfection that we knew over the Sacramento Valley?

As incredible as this journey was, very little of it unfolded as we thought it would. Nearly everything we did, every leg we flew, took longer or was more difficult than we expected. Wind, weather and mechanical problems, sometimes on their own, sometimes in combination, meant that virtually no plan went unchanged. And it's these unexpected trials and troubles that formed the soul of the adventure.

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When I started seriously thinking about and planning our expedition, places on the map were merely dots of different colours. They lit my imagination, and made me want to know what was there, but each one had no more soul or character to me than an ink blot. There was no *connection*. But that's all different now, changed forever.

As Pritchard and I either landed at these spots, or flew over and simply laid eyes on them, they took on new meaning. Villages, towns and cities – like Richland, Redding, and Novato - that before were just ink spots, transformed into so much more. They crystallised as places where people make their homes, where they love their kids, realize their dreams, and live and die. These places finally became real. To have seen them, to have touched them in some small way because our airplanes took us there, is a gift beyond measure.

But it is the people we met, the ones who helped us, or who simply and kindly befriended a pair of winged vagabonds along the way, who made the deepest impressions. We may have met them for only a few moments, but they made a mark that doesn't rub off. People, like Liz at Southfield Aviation in Coeur d' Alene, who arranged a car for us on an instant's notice when we were stranded. There was the RV pilot at Redding that brought us cold beer on the ramp on a scorching afternoon, and the mechanic in Red Bluff who lent us wisdom and wrenches without a second's hesitation.

Richard Ramos, the Fairchild owner in Sonoma, has become a friend. The beautiful book we each received from John LeNoue will indelibly affix to our story, and our memories, the remarkable hour that we spent with him and Mark O'Neill. And, of course, we can't forget the extraordinary kindness of Myles Murtach, who selflessly rescued us in Cranbrook without so much as asking our names, simply because we were pilots in need.

They are aviators, each one, and we are very much richer for having met them, for they are the real treasures, the best part of what we discovered on our voyage across the sky.

On the Lighter Side

At Heathrow Airport today, an individual, later discovered to be a public school teacher, was arrested trying to board a flight while in possession of a compass, a protractor, and a graphical calculator.

Authorities believe he is a member of the notorious Al-Gebra movement.

He is being charged with carrying weapons of math instruction.

"My fear of flying starts as soon as I buckle myself in and then the guy up front mumbles a few unintelligible words then before I know it I'm thrust into the back of my seat by acceleration that seems way too fast and the rest of the trip is an endless nightmare of turbulence, of near misses. And then the cabbie drops me off at the airport." -- Dennis Miller

Fully Automatic Piloting System

The passenger aircraft was fully loaded and in the air after takeoff when the announcement came over the loudspeaker:

"Ladies and gentlemen, we've been working on a fully automatic piloting system for years that doesn't need a flight crew and are proud to announce that it has been perfected.

You are the first passengers to fly controlled by software only with nobody in the cockpit. We are proud that during all our testing there has never been a mistake, mistake, mistake, mistake, mistake, ..."

Submitted by Doug MacKinnon:



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The Vernon Flying Club Scholarship in Memory of Len Neufeld

The annual scholarship was awarded to Braeden Barnard at the April meeting with his Dad, Ron, proudly looking on.

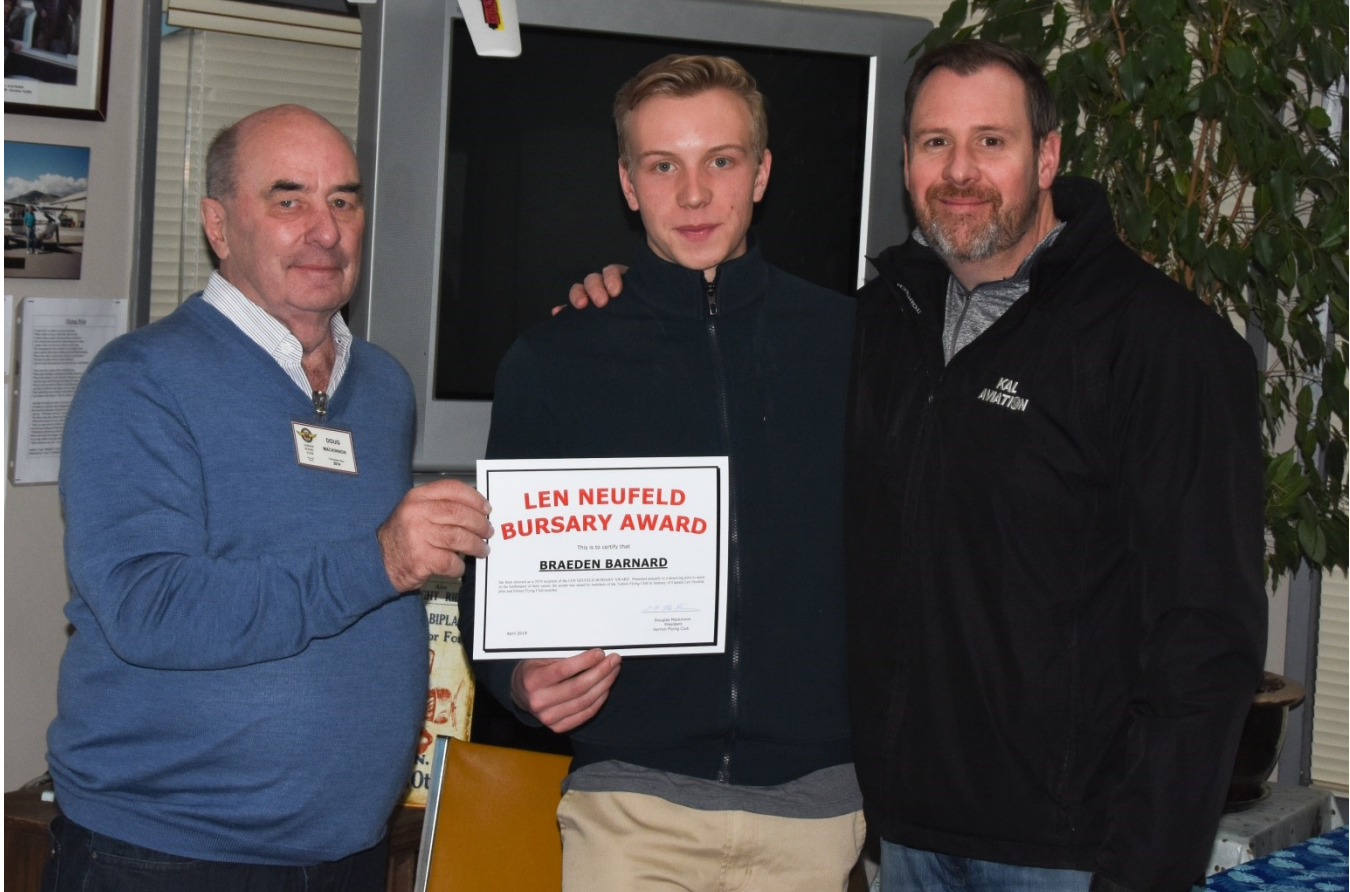


Photo by Bob Marsh

This was his application letter:

My name is Braeden Barnard. I am 18 years old with my Private Pilot Licence. I am currently half way through my Commercial Pilot Licence. The one thing in life that inspired me to fly was my father, Rod Barnard. I can remember myself at 6 years old sitting in the front of a Twin Otter on floats thinking it was the best thing ever!

I soon found myself going on flights as much as he could take me. Every time I flew with him I would learn more and more each time. That's when I fell in love with aviation.

In grade 12 I took the second semester off because I had enough classes to graduate and completed my Private Pilot Licence with Kathleen at Full Moon Air Services.

My goals are to obtain my commercial license this year and find a job flying floats for the next two years while I do my IFR training.

In a few years I hope to find myself in the IFR world of aviation flying corporate business jets.

Thanks,

Braeden Barnard

Congratulations, Braeden!

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Visitors to the clubhouse will notice a new print hanging on our wall. "Ramrod" by Robert Taylor autographed by Johnnie Johnson, has been generously donated to VFC in memory of Rob Mackie by Bill Eser. Bill is a retired flight engineer who was a good friend of Rob's. They spent many years together working for both Wardair and Japan Air Lines.



During operation Ramrod 792 on 25th April 1944, leading his Spitfire wing, Johnnie Johnson had a long running combat with an FW190, which ended in victory for the Allied Air Forces leading fighter ace.

Rob's nickname for Bill was "Spitfire" so this painting always held special meaning. Bill and his wife, Lynn have recently moved to the Okanagan and have joined the flying club.

Welcome Bill and Lynn!

Another RV joins Van's Air Force, Vernon Chapter!

Congratulations to Steve Foord on completing his beautiful, sure-to-be-award-winning RV9-A.



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19th Annual Rust Remover Resounding Success

Vernonites may have noticed increased aircraft traffic in the early morning hours of Saturday, May 4th at the Vernon Regional Airport and may have asked, “Why so many planes!?”

The Vernon Flying Club (VFC) and the local Chapter of the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association (COPA Flight 65) hosted the 19th annual “Rust Remover” so-called because the aim is to help pilots “get the rust out of their heads” for the upcoming flying season. The venue was the Okanagan College Aerospace Campus at the Vernon Airport, home of the Aircraft Maintenance Engineer “M-Licence” program.

Twenty-two aircraft arrived from all over BC within a 20 minute window which made for a very busy time for the four fellows directing them to parking spots. Not so easy for the general public to notice was all the vehicles driving through Vernon to participate and enjoy the hospitality and camaraderie of fellow aviators.

Pilots, some with their families, came from Red Deer, Okotoks, Calgary, High River, Alberta; and from all over British Columbia. The weekend event started with the Friday Night Social Evening held at the beautifully decorated clubhouse. Delicious food and warm conversation was enjoyed by all who attended.

Through their attendance at the event one-hundred-fourteen pilots received certification valid for their biennial recurrency as mandated by Transport Canada.

The Program was well-rounded and was well-received by the participants.

- Kelowna Airspace Issues & Procedures, by Kelly Smith, Nav Canada, Kelowna Tower
- Weather, Flight Planning & Communication, by Dale Maher, Kamloops Flight Information Centre, Nav Canada
- Forced Approaches, Brian Penner, Safety Inspector, Transport Canada, Kelowna
- Okanagan College Aircraft Maintenance Training, Hal Hobenshield, Northern Lights College Instructor, Vernon
- Custom Procedures for GA Aircraft Entering & Departing from the USA, by Officer Rick Martinez, US Customs and Border Protection, Oroville, USA
- Aircraft Batteries, Types, Purchase, Install, Maintenance, Disposal, by Norm Thompson, AME Instructor



An event like this wouldn't be possible without many volunteers who organize, set-up, take-down and generally keep things running smoothly. A **Special Thank-You** must go to the spouses of VFC members who were drafted to help feed all those people under the capable direction of Dianne Usher.

We gratefully acknowledge long-time VFC member, **Wyatt McMurray** of the **A&W Group** for his continuing sponsorship of the Vernon Flying Club with his contribution of hamburger

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patties and buns for the barbeque.

A huge Thank-You to **Watkin's Motors** for the use of four, beautiful, vehicles as shuttles to take people from the Clubhouse to the Okanagan College on the other side of the airport.

The presenters' gift bag contained coffee donated by **Max Voets Coffee Roasting**, honey lip balm donated by **Planet Bee Honey Farm and Honeymoon Meadery**, a VFC coffee mug "Home of The Rust Remover",

Lastly, a special mention goes to all the **AME students** who cleared the hangar floor and helped to set up chairs in preparation for the Rust Remover.

The Ladies of the Flying Club

These lovely ladies finally get to take a well-deserved break for lunch following the Rust Remover.

The Board would like to say an extra-special thank-you to **Dianne Usher** for her excellent organizational skills and for adding the special touches to the refreshments and lunch that was so well-received by attendees!



(L-R) Beverley Madsen, Connie MacKinnon, Del Desrosiers, Dianne Usher, Carolyn Hoffman, Mary Ann Cooper-Wilkie

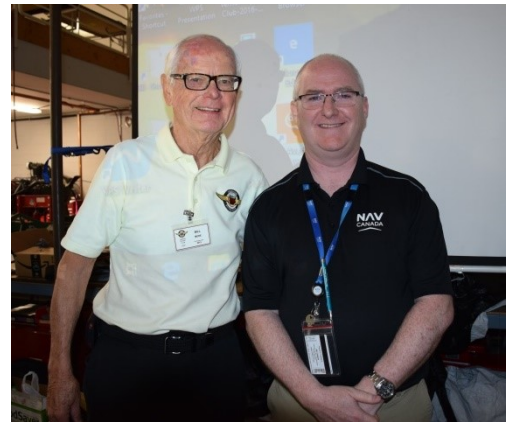
Some of the ladies in the Flying Club get together Wednesday afternoons from 1:00 to about 3:00. We visit, work on crafts, write letters, go for a walk around the airport, whatever we feel like doing. Once we went to the ceramic studio downtown and spent a very pleasant couple of hours painting "projects". This is a drop-in so there's no commitment, just show up and enjoy spending time with other women in the Flying Club. Come on down to the airport some Wednesday, everyone is welcome!

The Rust Remover 2019 (Photos by Edie Schleiss)



Bill More, MC, with:
(l) Kelly Smith,
Kelowna Tower

(r) Dale Mahr,
Kamloops FSS



Bill More, MC, with:
(l) Brian Penner, Transport
Canada, Kelowna

(r) Hal Hobenshield, Northern
Lights College AME Instructor





Officer Tom Martinez, United States Custom and Border Patrol. Oroville. WA



Bill More, MC, presenting Norm Thompson with a token of our appreciation.

Residents of Polson Long Term Care Visit the Airport

The Flying Club was pleased to host 6 senior men and their Recreational Assistants from Polson Extended Care for a tour of the airport Friday, May 31st



Don Usher acted as tour guide as Brian drove the van around the airport looking at all the different aircraft and hangars.

The Kal Air Citation was out being washed so they even got to admire that.

Coffee and cake was served at the clubhouse and they had a close-

up look at **Terry Elgood's** beautiful Tiger Moth, **Chuck Ross** did a couple of circuits in his RV4, and **Clare Johnston** with his lovely Highlander and **Hamilton McClymont** who just happened to fly in from Salmon Arm for coffee in his RV8 made up the static display.



Membership Dues Formula

For new members only, annual dues are pro-rated based on the quarter in which the dues are paid.

| | |
|---------|-----------------------------|
| \$85.00 | October, November, December |
| \$75.00 | January, February, March |
| \$50.00 | April, May, June |
| \$25.00 | July, August, September |

Annual Dues are payable on October 1st of each year after that. It would be greatly appreciated if members would submit their dues by the October meeting. This facilitates budgeting and reduces the “begging” that goes on between the end of September and the Christmas Party which is the end of the “grace period” for late payment of membership fees. A hearty Thank-You to everyone who renews their membership in the Vernon Flying Club / COPA Flight 65!

Potential members are always welcome to complete an application form!

Five Boys Tour Airport and Go Flying! *(Photos by Edie Schleiss)*



Boys from a local Scout group thoroughly enjoyed their tour of the airport and flights organized by C4K Coordinator, Rob McDicken (left in the FLY! t-shirt) on Saturday, May 11th. Thanks to the pilots (continuing from Rob L-R: **Rob Kennett**, **Albert Bueckert**, **Stu McLean**) for spending quality time with these youngsters. Missing is **Steve Foord** who was busy flying one of the Dad’s when we wanted to take the group photo!

Steve Foord and Sam Poulin

COPA for KIDS (C4K)

We are looking for volunteers for Saturday, July 13th – there are about 100 youngsters signed up to fly, not to mention all the wee ones who love to ride in the Barrel Aeroplanes.

If you can help on the ground, please contact Marion Ross, Ground Ops Team Leader at 250-241-2531.

If you are a pilot with an aircraft and have completed your Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC), please contact Rob McDicken, C4K Event Coordinator at 250-306-0526.



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Communication Issues Between VFC and our Members:

As you know, communication between the Board and VFC/COPA 65 members is done via email. If members do not receive the messages, members may not be aware of important information.

Dan Cook had a suggestion when he heard some people saying that they weren't getting the newsletter or other emails from the flying club and that they didn't know about activities until it was too late.

"Most often spam filters catch emails with long distribution lists. Usually the receiver can set up the sender as a trusted site. I usually tell folks to check their spam filter regularly especially if it has been confirmed that the email address being used is correct."

VERNON FLYING CLUB / COPA FLIGHT 65**2018 / 2019**

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| PRESIDENT: | Doug MacKinnon |
| VICE PRESIDENT: | Bill More |
| TREASURER: | Bill Wilkie |
| SECRETARY: | Marion Ross |
| DIRECTOR: | Alison Crerar |
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| COPA CAPTAIN: | Stuart McLean |
| COPA Co-CAPTAIN: | Stan Owen |
| COPA Navigator: | Bill Wilkie |



| | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Newsletter Editor: | Bill More |
| Publisher: | Marion Ross |

VFC Meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

e-mail: flyingclubvernon@gmail.com

web-site: www.vernonflyingclub.org