

*John Olsen - Vernon Flying Club Member Flown West*

*The Vernon Flying Club will not be the same without John Olsen in his favorite spot telling his colorful stories. Since joining in 2012, John was a regular at the club for coffee mornings (he donated the Bunn coffee maker, among other things) and helped out when he could at pancake breakfasts and other events. For his generous contributions to the club over the years, and for initiating a yearly scholarship, John was made an Honorary Lifetime Member in 2022, sadly not long enough to enjoy it.*

*John was on his way to the club when he suffered a fall and was taken to the hospital, where he peacefully passed away on Thursday, February 23rd. In his honor, we are reprinting the monthly Member Profile published in the July, 2013 newsletter. His story is a classic "old bush pilot" tale that modern pilots can only dream about!*

*Have a smooth flight into the sunset, John. We'll miss you.*

## Aviator of the Month – John Olsen

- Alison Crerar



John Olsen is a familiar face around the flying club and has lots of good flying stories to tell. Although he no longer flies, John had a varied and colourful career in aviation and obviously loves to relive the good old days.

Born in Saskatchewan, John lived in the flatland for 30 years. It was while he worked as a hangar rat for Ray's Flying Service in Saskatoon that he awoke one morning to find he owned a good sized hangover and a Chipmunk! Since he'd paid the enormous sum of \$4,200.00 for the bird, he decided he perhaps better learn how to fly! At 25 years of age, John was too old to go to Air Canada, but nevertheless earned his commercial license, float rating, instrument rating, multi-engine rating and ATR, the latter from renowned Gina Jordan in Calgary. After 4 years, John sold the Chipmunk for \$6,000.00 but was soon on his way to owning many different aircraft over the years, including Super Cub, Beech 18 and lots of Cherokees.

Still with Ray's Flying Service, John flew in the northern bush to build time, experiencing life's adventures and flying in many locations all the way to the Arctic Circle. Some of the aircraft he flew in the north were Cessna 180 on floats, Super Cub on tundra tires, and a Piper Apache doing thousands of hours of aerial photography for the Canadian Wildlife Service.

John eventually became Chief Pilot and General Manager of Ray's and flew many interesting and challenging hours as a ferry pilot. Saskatoon was the depot for Crown Assets disposal of all Air Force aircraft. They were sold at Bristol Aerospace, but when Bristol could not do the maintenance to get ready for ferrying, Ray's took that over and John ferried the aircraft to their destinations. This entailed flights to Mexico, Barbados, and the United States, flying the SA16 Grumman Albatros, DC-3, Beech 18, C119 Flying Boxcars, Harvards, Navajo's and others. They sold 23 Harvards to Fox Studios for the filming of Tora Tora Tora, including his own (for which he had paid \$1250.00 a couple of years earlier) for \$4,400.00.



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There were one hundred Beech 18's flown to the United States and four to Barbados.

The Prime Minister said Canada was not selling aircraft to Third World Countries, but John was delivering them. He never knew who owned them because the permit said SRC (Space Research Council) but there was actually no such thing. They were sold to Barbados for Civil Aviation, which was non-existent, and McGill University paid the bill by cheque. In truth, the planes were going to the Shah of Iran through Barbados during the hottest part of the Cold War. John had fun though, 'strafing' the beaches of Barbados and sending the sunbathers scattering! As they flew by Cuba, all the guns of the battleship USS Missouri were trained on them.....they made sure they were on the straight and level as they flew by!

The SA16's were flown to the factory at Stewart, Florida, for refurbishing with bigger engines. There were 6 sold to Argentina. John was asked to go to Keil, Germany, to bring back 18 from the German Air Force, but when he turned it down the Luftwaffe did the delivery on a naval exercise. A year later, Grumman asked John to deliver 6 of the aircraft to the Indonesian Air Force, one per month out of the factory, and then stay in Indonesia to check out the Air Force on the Albatross. Captain John was 'promoted' to a temporary Colonel's rank complete with chauffeured car and officer's privileges. The first delivery was due at the end of November. As luck would have it, three weeks prior to that there was a coup and John did not get his cap with "scrambled eggs" or the chauffeured car! The Khmer Rouge was thrown out but so was the contract. The planes had been destined to service offshore oil rigs.



John went back to Fox Studios for 3 ½ months and test flew all the Harvards, which had been turned into Zero's for Tora Tora Tora. They were cut in two with 7 feet of fuselage added, the work done by German engineers. Unfortunately, one was crashed in 1964 so the movie was shelved for two years. John was asked to fly in the movie and was OK'd by the Pentagon, but he chose not to partake with so many 'amateurs' in aerial dogfights. The flying was eventually (and wisely) turned over to the Hawaiian Air National Guard. And the movie was made as close to the truth as possible.

John did the sched runs for Norcan Air in spring and fall during freeze-up and break-up. He was also a relief pilot for Athabasca Airways in Prince Albert when they were short-handed. As a Charter Pilot, John flew Pierre Trudeau 20 times and was teaching him to fly. They used the Navajo when the destination runways were not suitable for the jet, and John took him on the western campaign swing. Other celebrities he flew were John Diefenbaker, Senator Dave Stewart, Otto Lang, Colin Thatcher (he learned which politicians to trust!), Harry Belafonte, Bobby Hull (John did the flying for a movie with him for Kaleidesports, CBC, but after editing there was only a brief glimpse of the plane), Johnny Cash (to LaRonge), Lorne Green, and Colonel Sanders (a real Southern gentleman). Crop spraying in a Super Cub was another flying adventure.



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*RCAF Version*

Unwanted excitement included three engine fires - oil fires in a C119 Flying Boxcar and a Chipmunk - and one in a Harvard on the way to Tora Tora Tora that turned out to be a huge bird's nest. John had two crashes; the first when he ran out of gas two blocks short of the runway at Edmonton Municipal in a C172. That happened on February 4, 1964, the day before scheduled talks regarding closing of the Muni as prompted by Councillor Kanski, and when John put down at 97<sup>th</sup> Street and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, he was unfortunately ejected into Julian Kanski's yard! The two passengers were unhurt but John suffered many cuts and required 135 stitches in his face.

Ray made him "get back in the saddle" and fly back to Saskatoon a few days later. There had been strong headwinds leading up to the landing and no landing strips enroute, and three others encountered problems as well.

A C180 on skis was cause for another 'adventure' when John encountered white-out conditions and had to set down on the Beaver River. Unfortunately, there were 12 inches of snow but only one inch of ice. He could feel the ice breaking underneath him and managed to get the plane to shore, settling in a foot or so of water. He had to walk out 23 miles in -63 temperatures. And then there was the runaway prop on a Cherokee 6 - somewhat alarming to say the least, but he got the plane back to Edmonton all right.

Banner towing with a Super Cub was the most dangerous job John ever had. It was out of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, over an Indian Reserve during their Fair Days. The natives were restless and used the banner for target practice....John came home with 18 bullet holes in the aircraft and banner!

Another time he had to pick up a deceased native man who was frozen solid. There not being any way to maneuver him into the Super Cub, they tied him outside to the strut of the aircraft. All was well until John had to land in Prince Albert for gas. Gord Phylie, the MOT inspector, just happened to be there and John was issued a severe reprimand....but then Gord laughed and let John continue with his unorthodox load.

While flying a northern run for Norcan with a Beech 18 out of Uranium City, John needed to get a native crew of 13 from a mine on an island, but of course the aircraft had seats for only 8. So, what was there to do but take the seats out? When John landed he saw the DOT aircraft on the ramp, so he taxied to the other end of the airport. Sure enough, there was Gord Phylie again. Knowing John well, he just shook his head and looked the other way as the 13 men plus pilot got out of the plane!

On the occasion John damaged a tail ski when it went through the ice, he used his ingenuity and jury rigged a scoop shovel to the gear leg. It worked great, and he made it safely to Prince Albert for fuel. Who should be there but...you guessed it...Gord Phylie. In Saskatoon a week later, still with the scoop shovel firmly affixed, Gord was there again and was of course compelled to issue a further reprimand. John explained they were still conducting an 'evaluation' on the merits of the scoop shovel!

When using the Beech 18 to service Cree Lake Lodge, it was often 'necessary' to overload the aircraft when hauling supplies. The Gross Weight of 8,600 lbs was just not adequate to handle all the plywood, groceries and such, and the oleos were often tested to their limit. On one such day, they were already at their limit when 4

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passengers and their gear arrived. Gord Phylie, once again, shook his head and said "I don't see this". John says every trip was 3,000 lb. over gross – great aircraft!

One last comment from John – he said, with a wistful look in his eyes, "The Shrike Commander is like a sportscar". John flew everything from 'sportscars' to freighters and obviously loved every minute. He quit flying in 1979 with back problems but has accumulated some 9,000 hours. He sold 17 properties in Saskatchewan and bought an apartment block in Vernon, where he and his wife Anne retired in 1983. John and Anne have 6 kids, and we hope they're enjoying life in Vernon as much as we enjoy John's stories at the club on coffee mornings!

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## CUTTING DEALS

A guy is coming to the end of his life and, knowing he doesn't have much time left, starts bargaining with God. "Please, I can't leave all this wealth behind! Please, let me take it with me!" God finally gets fed up and says he can take one duffle bag ONLY.

Time comes, guy kicks the bucket and meets St. Peter at the Pearly Gates. "You can't bring that in here!" says Peter, shocked. "Yes, I can!" the guy insists. "The Boss told me so!" Shaking his head, Peter goes to check. Sure enough. When he comes back to let the guy in with his bag, he says, "Just out of curiosity, what's in the bag that's so important God had to let you bring it in?" The guy eagerly opens the bag to show St. Peter, and it's chock full of gold. Bars & bars of the stuff. St. Peter looks at him incredulously. "PAVEMENT?! You brought PAVEMENT?!"

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## WELL, DAMN.... JUST DAMN...

A woman named Shirley was from Beverly Hills. One day, she had a heart attack and was taken to Cedars Sinai hospital. While on the operating table, she had a near-death experience. She saw God and asked, "Is this it?" God said, "No, you have another 30 to 40 years to live." Upon her recovery, she decided to stay in the hospital and have collagen shots, cheek implants, a face lift, liposuction and breast augmentation. She even had someone dye her hair. She figured since she had another 30 to 40 years, she might as well make the most of it. She walked out of Cedars Sinai lobby after the last operation and was killed by an ambulance speeding up to the hospital. She arrived in front of God and said, "I thought you said I had another 30 to 40 years?"

God replied, "Shirley! I didn't recognize you!"

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## LITTLE JOHNNY'S LITTLE BROTHER...

Little Logan and his family were having Sunday dinner at his grandmother's house.

Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When little Logan received his plate, he started eating right away. "Logan, wait until we say our prayer," his mother reminded him.

"I don't have to," the little boy replied.

"Of course you do," his mother insisted, "we say a prayer before eating at our house."

"That's at our house," Logan explained, "but this is Grandma's house and she knows how to cook."

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**VERNON FLYING CLUB "MEMBER OF THE MONTH"**

Hi my name is Keith Readner. My spouse and co-pilot is Pauline Readner. We live on an acreage overlooking Swan Lake where we are building an RV-10 four place airplane. We moved to Vernon in 2018 and thoroughly enjoy the area and the mountain flying.



My interest in flying began when I was 19 years old. I took a Cessna discovery flight at the Edmonton Flying Club and was hooked. I think back then it was about \$25.00! From there I decided I wanted to be a commercial pilot and make it my career. Unfortunately, back in the early eighty's jobs were very scarce. After completing my Commercial, Multi IFR and float ratings and trying to rack up as many hours as possible I finally gave up. I am currently semi-retired and still active in the pipeline consulting business. When not helping me with the airplane build Pauline is busy with her coaching business.



Pauline grew up with a love for aviation as well and has since enjoyed our trips when we owned a 1968 Cherokee 180. When we sold the airplane in 2019, we decided to embark on the adventure of building the RV-10. Since starting this project in October of 2020 here at our acreage it has been a steep learning curve on metal fabrication, setting rivets, reading technical information and drawings and so on. The amount of research required just to keep the project moving forward is mind boggling.



Our plans for the RV-10 are to fly throughout North America. Trips to Oshkosh, Fun and Sun, the Bahamas are all on the radar. Pauline plans to take a ground school course to get the fundamentals of flying. If all goes well and supply chain issues get resolved, first flight is slated for spring of 2024. Until then I am trying to get as many hours in the shop as possible.

**THE RISE AND FALL OF THE PA 47 PIPER JET**

When designing a single-engine jet, there are only so many places one can mount the engine. To avoid asymmetric thrust, it must be mounted on the centerline of the fuselage, and doing so introduces new challenges. Something must be done to provide the engine with clean, undisturbed air for the intake, for example, and the design must somehow prevent the hot exhaust from damaging tail surfaces.

In mid 2007, when many manufacturers were developing new designs for the newly-identified very light jet (VLJ) category, Piper began development of their own VLJ with the goal of finding the simplest solution possible. They decided against housing the engine within the fuselage, as this would present complex challenges with regard to ducting airflow cleanly through inlets. Additionally, an engine housed

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within the fuselage must be engineered to minimize the risk to the occupants in the event of an uncontained compressor blade or disk failure.

Avoiding such constraints necessitated an engine positioned outside of the fuselage, and to ease cabin access with shorter, lighter landing gear, this meant on top. Piper needed to protect the tail surfaces from the aforementioned hot engine exhaust, but they wanted to avoid the use of relatively heavy and complex designs like some competitors were using. The Eclipse 400 Concept Jet, for example, utilized a V-tail that required a separate engine pylon, and Adam Aircraft opted for a massive twin-boom design for their A700.

Perhaps drawing inspiration from the McDonnell Douglas DC-10 airliner, the team opted to integrate the engine with the vertical stabilizer. This configuration offered several significant advantages. Chief among them, the engine would be provided with clean, undisturbed airflow, and there would be no concerns about hot engine exhaust affecting the airframe.



The simplicity of this configuration provided some ancillary benefits, as well. Because the fuselage was relatively conventional, existing components could be used. For the proof-of-concept aircraft, the team repurposed a Meridian fuselage. The wing was also conventional and didn't require any significant engineering beyond that of existing aircraft. Compared to an entirely clean-sheet design, these factors would reduce the complexities of certification and production.

This would also enable the team to focus on the unique engineering challenges introduced by the tail-mounted engine...and after the aircraft's first flight took place in July of 2008, they discovered several to address. The most significant was identified early on in the design program – the high thrust line. Because the engine was placed so far above the aircraft's center of gravity, the application of thrust would result in a nose-down pitching moment, and a thrust reduction would result in a nose-up pitching moment.



This thrust/pitch coupling could be addressed in several ways. Various systems like vectored thrust and active trim could be utilized, but systems like these introduce weight, complexity, and additional points of failure. Piper instead developed a simple and clever fixed nozzle system that produced a variable thrust angle.

The nozzle did so through the Coanda effect, in which air clings to a surface and can thus be aimed via this air pressure alone. At low speeds, the Coandă effect was pronounced and created a greater thrust vector that effectively countered the high thrust line. At high speeds, the effect was minimal and resulted in a 2.2 percent geometric loss of thrust, which was considered acceptable.

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This system was a success. Even with the high thrust line, go arounds could be accomplished hands free, a rare handling characteristic even among more conventional designs. Test pilots reported power changes had a less pronounced effect than propeller-driven aircraft.

A special exhaust nozzle effectively addressed the challenges of a high pitch line with minimal effect on cruise efficiency.



The team encountered another challenge when they discovered that the use of full flaps could produce a tail-plane stall. This would result in an uncommanded pitch down, which is obviously an undesirable characteristic. The issue was resolved by altering the horizontal stabilizer, increasing its span, increasing the elevator size, and adding 30 percent of sweep, which moved the aerodynamic center aft and solved the problem.



The initial tail design incorporated a traditional, unswept horizontal stabilizer. This would later be switched to a swept design to avoid tailplane stalls.

With significant engineering accomplishments under their belt and 180 pre-orders for the \$2.2 million aircraft, Piper moved forward with development of a new version called the Altaire. The Altaire would incorporate a larger, roomier cabin, and projected performance of a 35,000-foot maximum cruise altitude, a 360-knot maximum cruise speed, and a 1,200- to 1,300-nm maximum range.

Despite the numerous engineering accomplishments and an optimistic initial outlook, the PiperJet program ultimately succumbed to market conditions. Economic and market forecasts became bleak, and rather than risk the company on a single new aircraft subject to the projected market downturn, Piper put the program on indefinite hold.

When it became clear the program would progress no further, the Smithsonian expressed an interest in acquiring the sole prototype, with the caveat that Piper include the first Piper/Taylor E-2 Cub ever sold. The Florida Air Museum in Lakeland also expressed an interest in acquiring the prototype but included no such contingencies and ultimately received the aircraft.

There, the sole PiperJet remains on display for the public and future generations to admire.



*Jason McDowell is a private pilot and Cessna 170 owner based in Madison, Wisconsin. He enjoys researching obscure aviation history and serves as a judge for the National Intercollegiate Flying Association. He can be found on Instagram as @cessnateur.*

Technologically Challenged Person: "Can you give me the telephone number for Jack?"

Operator: "I'm sorry, I don't understand who you are talking about". TCP: "On page 1 section 5, of the user guide it clearly states that I need to unplug the fax machine from the AC wall socket and telephone Jack before cleaning. Now, can you give me the number for Jack?"

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**HELICOPTER TRIVIA**

Those of you who have always wondered how helicopters stay airborne when, like a “person of the evening” (Politically Correct term for, well, you know...), they appear to have no visible means of support, can now rest easy. The individual blades of the rotor system are held in a more or less horizontal position by a tug-of-war between two things: centrifugal force which is trying to keep the blade in a horizontal plane, and the lifting force, which is trying to pull the blade into the vertical plane. The angle between the tip path plane and the horizontal plane is known as the coning angle. As the lift force is more or less constant i.e. it must support the

weight of the machine, only the speed of the rotor system (RPM) can affect the coning angle. If the RPM begins to taper off, then the lift force will become prime and the coning angle will increase. Note the near horizontal position of the tip path plane in the photo above; the helicopter is in a three-foot hover just prior to entering autorotation. Contrast that with the picture shown below just as the helicopter touches down. As can be seen, with no power driving the rotor system, lift must be maintained by increasing the angle of attack on the individual blades; this increases the drag and slows the rotor which reduces the centrifugal force, thus increasing the coning angle. At touchdown, the collective lever is bottomed to preclude further coning, RPM decrease, and possible damage to the machine. Now, aren't you glad you asked?


**VERNON FLYING CLUB / COPA Flight 65  
2022 / 2023**

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 COPA Co-CAPTAIN: Stan Owen  
 COPA Navigator: Michael Crutchley



Newsletter Editor: John Swallow

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