



HANGAR NEWS



COPA Flight 65



3rd Annual Amateur Built Fly-In – Terry Elgood's Tiger Moth (Photo by Paul Graham)



Pauline Readner and Melissa Brown (and Poppy) welcome participants at the registration tent.

Third Annual Amateur-Built Aircraft Fly-In

August 30, 2025 was a fabulous day for a fly-in! We had 33 aircraft on display and a good time was had by all! The apple turnovers were a tasty treat. It was a great show and we are already planning for an expanded version for August 2026! Thanks to everyone who participated especially our visitors!

Registration	Type	Owner	City
C-FXKX	C182N	Terence Manders	Kelowna
C-FZNM	C185E	Neil Mackenzie	Calgary, AB
N976CJ	Cirrus 22T	Company	Ogden, Utah
C-FHJF	Glasair 3	Marc Friesen	Mable Lake
C-GROM	Grumman Tiger	Mike Fournier	Prince George
C-FIOX	Kitfox	Dan Cook/Rob Seaton	Vernon
C-FFBJ	Kitfox	Brandon Jeppesen	Vernon
C-FLCY	Lancair Legacy	James Ford	Claresholm, AB
C-GLEA	Mooney	Rob Gagnon	Sherwood Park
C-FXNM	Mooney	Victor Cobb	Straffordville, ON
C-FJCV	Piper PA-22-135X	Nathan French	Vernon
C-GHZZ	Ran's S6	Dan Welsh	Salmon Arm
C-FOXY	SuperCub	Mike Hewson	Vernon
C-FATG	Tiger Moth	Terry Elgood	Vernon
C-FLYT	Van's RV7A	Ian MacSpayden	Hinton, AB
C-GMMD	Van's RV10	Keith & Pauline Readner	Vernon
C-FRSW	Van's RV10	Randy Wolsey	Grand Prairie, AB
C-FAYN	Van's RV12	Anish Kishore	Kelowna
C-GWYR	Van's RV4	Hamilton McClymont	Salmon Arm
C-GEAU	Van's RV4	Chuck Ross	Vernon
C-GZAX	Van's RV6A	Brady Mapstone	Medicine Hat, AB
C-FDMF	Van's RV6A	Dave Fish	Penticton
C-GXRT	Van's RV6A	Dennis Ellingson	Salmon Arm
C-GEOY	Van's RV6A	R. Inkster	Springbank, AB
C-GRBK	Van's RV6A	Rob Kennett	Vernon
C-GVRP	Van's RV6A	Josh Becker	Vernon
C-FVJR	Van's RV7	Mike Hewson	Vernon
C-GWMD	Van's RV7A	Monte Dauncey	Kamloops
C-GPMC	Van's RV8	Paul Malott	Olds/Didsbury, AB
C-FIFF	Van's RV8	Ron Townson	Penticton
C-GLGG	Van's RV9A	Steve Swallow	Vernon
C-FAJO	Van's RV9A	Darcy MacPhee	Vernon
C-GVYT	Van's RV9A	Steve Foord	Vernon

Photos by Edie Schleiss



Van's RV6A Dennis Ellingson & Brenda



Van's RV6A Josh Becker



Van's RV7A Ian MacSpayden





Ran's S6 Dan Welsh



Van's RV7 Mike Hewson



Cirrus 22T



Alison Crerar (and Quinnah) and Marion Ross



Van's RV7A Monte Dauncey



Van's RV8 Paul Malott 1



Cessna A185E Neil MacKenzie



Tiger Moth Replica Terry Elgood



Glasair 3 Marc Friesen



Van's RV6A Rob Kennett



Van's RV8 Ron Townson



Van's RV9A Steve Foord



Van's RV9A Darcy MacPhee



Grumman Tiger Mike Fournier



Van's RV6A R. Inkster



Kitfox Brandon Jeppesen



Van's RV10 Keith & Pauline Readner



Kitfox Dan Cook and Rob Seaton

My Dad, Clare Johnston

By Sarah J. Green, his daughter

Clare Johnston has been a familiar face at the Vernon Flying Club since 2016. Like many pilots, he's led an interesting and storied life — and since he's my dad, I've had the privilege of sharing much of it. We spent this past Father's Day together, which gave me a chance to dig deeper into the chapters of his life and learn more about his aviation journey.

Clare was born in Grande Prairie, Alberta, on July 13, 1947, the oldest of five children. His father returned to the Grande Prairie area after fighting in WWII, bringing with him Clare's mother, a war bride from the Netherlands.

His early years were spent on a quarter-section homestead east of Grande Prairie. Life there was harsh, the land had to be broken by hand, and the family lived without running water and electricity. But the land was free, granted through the government's Veterans Land Act.

The family worked hard to establish themselves as farmers — raising cows, pigs, chickens, and turkeys, tending a vegetable garden, and supplementing their livelihood with Clare's father's job at a local lumber mill. With more goods than money on hand, much of life ran on bartering and trading. Clare recalls monthly trips to the Hudson's Bay trading post, traveling by horse and cart.

When Clare was six, the family sold the farm and moved into Grande Prairie so the children could go to school. He attended the Catholic school system, excelling in math, physics, and mechanics.

A gifted athlete, he won numerous trophies in track and field and skiing. He was also popular — a natural-born leader with a flair for the rebellious — and he and his friends kept the nuns who ran the school on their toes with their frequent shenanigans.

One of Clare's favorite childhood pastimes was riding his bicycle to the local airport to watch planes take off and land. Building things was in his blood, and at age ten he completed his first "homebuilt" project — adding homemade wings to his bicycle. He launched it over a jump, flew 75 feet, and crashed into a fence. Technically, this was his first flight!

He also loved building boats, furniture, cabinets, and — eventually — full-sized airplanes. By 1963, sixteen-year-old Clare was restless and eager for adventure. Armed with a driver's license and a set of wheels, he left the prairies to explore new horizons. He traveled west to British Columbia, where he worked in forestry, and east to Ontario, where he worked in the nickel mines of Sudbury — losing half a finger in a workplace accident.

A skilled pool shark, he supplemented his income playing billiards for money, even traveling to Chicago in hopes of challenging professional pool legend "Minnesota Fats" (though they never met).

Over the years he worked in lumber, construction, concrete, taxi driving, and more. With being the oldest child of a large family came a lot of added responsibility. This, combined with the hard work needed to survive his early years, instilled in him a work ethic that was hard to keep up with.

Eventually, Clare settled in Edmonton and enrolled in the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology's Engineering Technology program. He excelled, putting his skills to good use, tutoring

fellow students and becoming Publication Chairman on the NAIT executive. He fondly recalls spending time in the NAIT lounge overlooking the Edmonton Municipal Airport, watching aircraft come and go.

He took ground school there with Canadian Aviation Hall of Famer Vera Dowling, alongside a fellow student — Jeanne, was also from Grande Prairie. Later, she would become his wife.

After school, Clare worked for the concrete company Super-Crete and rose quickly through the ranks. He purchased his dream car, a brand-new red 1970 Corvette Stingray, and with his soulmate, a great job, and a new diploma, life began to take off.

In 1975, Clare and Jeanne moved back to Grande Prairie to help run the growing family business. The Alberta oil boom created a high demand for housing, so Clare's father launched a truss manufacturing and prefabricated house package company. Clare quickly took over much of the operation, expanding into central Alberta, northern B.C., and the Northwest Territories.

With so much business travel, it was the perfect time to earn his pilot's license — which he did in 1976 through Wapiti Aviation. Soon after, he bought his first airplane, a Cessna 120, in Carnduff, Saskatchewan. The flight back to Grande Prairie was eventful: the plane nearly caught fire in Vegreville, got its wheel pants clogged with mud in Whitecourt, and suffered a radio failure mid-journey.

Not long after, he purchased a new Cessna 185. That same year, Clare and Jeanne married and welcomed their daughter Sarah — who loved flying with her dad from a young age. They bought farmland north of Grande Prairie, built a home and hangar, and even made their own runway so Clare could fly into town for work. The economic downturn of the early 80's slowed business, leading Clare to downsize and shift his focus to smaller construction projects, cabinetry, and countertops.



Young Sarah with Cessna 120



Clare with Cessna 185

The family sold the farm and moved into town in 1982.



Clare logged countless hours over the years, enjoying fly-ins, airshows, test flying, bush piloting, and participating in searches for downed aircraft. He also acquired night and float ratings. True to his builder's nature, he constructed several of his *Starduster II* own planes.

His first homebuilt took thirteen years to complete - a Starduster II biplane with a Lycoming IO-360- A1B engine. Later, he swapped that engine out for a Continental 670 radial from a WWII tank. This wonderfully loud and bright biplane became a local icon as it roared through the prairie skies. He loved doing aerobatics and giving flights to anyone who wanted one. He also built two kit planes: an Avid Flyer Model B ultralight and a Highlander II. Other aircraft in his logbook included a Maule M-4 and a Bellanca Scout.



Clare with Avid Flyer on skis

An avid outdoorsman, Clare enjoyed hiking, snowmobiling, canoeing, fishing, and golfing with the Grande Prairie men's league every Wednesday. He also collected and rode motorcycles, favouring old British bikes like BSA and Triumph. A huge animal lover, Clare enjoys feeding birds and can be found at home with a cat snoozing in his lap.

After retiring from business, Clare and Jeanne moved to Vernon, bringing the Highlander II with them. He joined the Vernon Flying Club, secured hangar space, and became a fixture in the skies — so regular in his flying schedule that you could set your watch by him; three circuits starting at exactly 10:15 a.m. He eventually sold the Highlander and retired from flying, but remains a regular at the club, enjoying morning walks and conversations with fellow members.

At home, Clare and Jeanne enjoy watching from their patio, airplanes take off and skydivers come down. He also enjoys flying RC planes with a club out in Grindrod on Sundays.

Grateful for the experiences and friendships aviation has brought him, Clare may no longer fly, but his heart and soul will always belong to the skies. That's my dad.

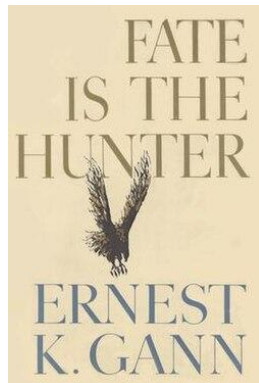


RC plane at Grindrod

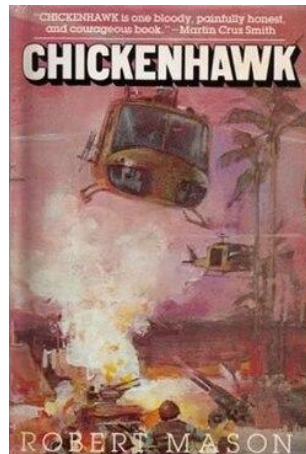


Highlander II

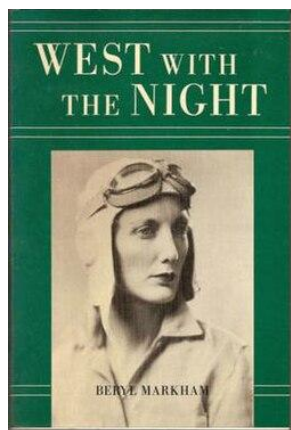
Books for the aviation enthusiast as recommended by members of the Vernon Flying Club



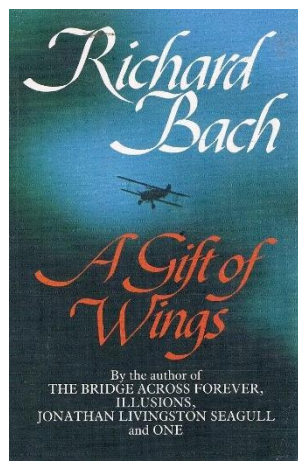
Fate Is the Hunter Ernie Gann: A classic memoir of a pilot's life in the golden age of aviation, full of adventure and drama.



Chickenhawk by Robert Mason. A riveting account of flying a Huey in 1965-1966 Vietnam war.



West with the Night: Beryl Markham's memoir of her life as a bush pilot in East Africa is a beloved classic for its poetic prose and adventure.



A Gift of Wings by Richard Bach. A collection of aviation short stories. There's a few that aren't great but most of them are awesome and read like they're true. Also by Richard Bach: **Stranger To The Ground, Biplane, Gift Of Flight, Nothing By Chance**

High Flight

By John Gillespie Magee Jr.

"Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
of sun-split clouds, — and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of — wheeled and soared and
swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,

I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air....

Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace.
Where never lark, or even eagle flew —
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
— Put out my hand,
and touched the face of God."

Introducing the VFC's Cessna 172

The Vernon Flying Club has made a significant advancement in the local aviation community through the acquisition of a meticulously rebuilt Cessna 172. Although the aircraft is not brand new, it has undergone extensive refurbishment, including a fresh coat of paint and installation of modern, upgraded instrumentation. This work was completed by Skytek Aviation in Vernon, the owner of the aircraft, who now leases it to the club.



Aircraft Availability for Qualified Pilots

The club's Cessna 172 is accessible to pilots who hold a minimum of a Private Pilot Licence. To fly the aircraft, individuals must be current members of the Vernon Flying Club or join as new members. The opportunity to fly the Cessna 172 is particularly valuable for those aiming to upgrade to a Commercial Pilot Licence, as it removes the need to travel to another location for training. Additionally, it is an appealing option for club members who do not own their own aircraft and simply wish to enjoy recreational flying.

Expert Instruction and Support

Three highly qualified and experienced instructors will be present at the open house to answer questions and provide detailed information regarding the aircraft and club membership. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage directly with these instructors and learn more about the benefits of joining the club and flying the refurbished Cessna 172.

Event Details

All interested pilots are invited to visit the Vernon Flying Club at 6210 Tronson Road, Vernon, on Saturday, October 25, 2025. The open house will run from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Further Information

To access additional details about the Cessna 172 and obtain contact information for the check-out pilots, please sign-into the club's website <https://www.vernonflyingclub.org/>

Any questions can be directed via email to flyingclubvernon@gmail.com



Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting was held September 16, 2025 and the following were acclaimed as the **Board of Directors for 2025/2026**:

- President: Rob McDicken
- Vice-President: Cameron Bottrill
- Treasurer: Betty Lee Longstaff
- Secretary: Marion Ross
- Director at Large: Alison Crerar
- Past-President: Pauline Readner. Thank-you, Pauline, for your service and leadership over the past two years.

The following were acclaimed as the **COPA Flight 65 Executive for 2025/2026**:

- Captain: Art Ratte
- Co-Captain: Cameron Bottrill
- Navigator: Keith Readner

Thanks, also, to all our members for their continuing support of the Vernon Flying Club and our volunteers who do so much to keep us going!

80th Anniversary in 2026

VFC will be celebrating its 80th Anniversary in 2026!

Any suggestions as to how we can commemorate this event would be appreciated!

Facebook Followers

Thanks to all our Facebook followers, as well!

1,000 aviation enthusiasts interested enough in our little club to click on our page! We have followers from Canada, USA, Mexico, and Australia among others.

Return your empties is easy and helps raise funds for the Vernon Flying Club

Return-It Express is the simple and convenient way to return your beverage containers for refund! With Express, you no longer need to spend time counting and sorting your containers - just bag them and drop them off at an Express Depot.



1. Bring your unsorted containers in sealed, clear or transparent bags up to 90-litre capacity to an Express site. Tip: put only a maximum of 12 glass bottles in each bag to prevent breakage. Please keep glass and metal in separate bags.
2. Use **250-241-2531** to log in at an Express Kiosk.
3. Print your tags, tag your bags, and leave them at the Express Counter. Tags are also available on the clubhouse bulletin board.
4. They will sort and count the containers, and our Express Account will be credited with your deposit refund.
5. You can take your bags to any Express site! The one in Vernon is at Chaser's Bottle Depot

VERNON FLYING CLUB / COPA Flight 65

2024 / 2025

PRESIDENT: Pauline Readner
 VICE PRESIDENT: Cameron Bottrill
 TREASURER: Betty Lee Longstaff
 SECRETARY: Marion Ross
 DIRECTOR: Alison Crerar

COPA CAPTAIN: Art Ratte
 COPA Co-CAPTAIN: Cameron Bottrill
 COPA Navigator: Keith Readner



TEMPORARY Newsletter Editor: Marion Ross (**VACANT**)

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

e-mail: flyingclubvernon@gmail.com

website: www.vernonflyingclub.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/flyingclubvernon>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/vernonflyingclub/>