



HANGAR NEWS



COPA Flight 65



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We are celebrating our

80th

Anniversary

1946 - 2026

Highlight of the Club's Social Calendar Annual Christmas Potluck Supper and Party

The Club provided the turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy and everything else was potluck. It was delicious!



Cal Paley (the vegetarian carves the turkey!)



Cheryl Jackson and Alison Crerar make the gravy1



The Three Amigos Plus One (Clare Johnston, Dennis McLeod, Greg Green, Cameron Bottril)



Tim Moore (supper was so good, tasted like More)



The always dapper Brian and Marilyn Mellis



Kathleen Dauphinee



Cheryl and Barry Jackson



Luc Mailloux and friend



*Our MC's Cameron Bottrill (Vice-President)
and Rob McDicken (President)*



Laura-Lee Locheed



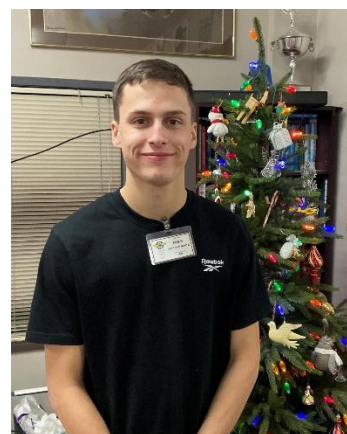
Roberta Drinkwater



Brenda and Floyd Edwards



Cal Desrosiers and Del Desrosiers



Aiden Satterwaite



Dennis McLeod





Alison Crerar and Marion Ross received lovely cards and earrings on behalf of the club in recognition of many hours, over many years, of contributing cheerful energies, and special skills in going away above and beyond the horizons, in dedicated and countless VFC Duties!



John and Kathy Jorimann



Cal and Louise Paley



Carolynn Hoffmann and Kathy Jorimann – Lots of Red!



Alison Crerar - lots of Bling



GUEST SPEAKERS

November: Flying the RV9 to Tuktoyaktuk, NWT Summer 2025

We were privileged to have **Darcy MacPhee** as our guest speaker at our November meeting.

He showed two videos and talked about his solo trip from Vernon, BC to Tuktoyaktuk, NT in his RV9.

Highlights included some spectacular scenery up the MacKenzie River, Canada Day in Inuvik, flying out over the Beaufort Sea and spotting 25 beluga whales. The return trip was made via Whitehorse, Dawson City and his old patrol area of Atlin / Dease Lake, BC.

Terrific presentation which was very well received!

Darcy and Sherrie are originally from Vernon, having both gone to high school at Vernon Senior Secondary (VSS). After getting married, they spent their first years at Dease Lake, subsequently transferring to 100 Mile House and then Kamloops for the last 10 years of his career. Throughout his time with the British Columbia Conservation Officer Service, he did a lot of flying in northern BC which involved tracking, looking for lost people and aircraft, and other conservation work. He always thought that he'd like to fly himself one day after he retired, and so he did. He earned his PPL in May 2023 and shortly after that bought his first aircraft, a Piper Colt C-FWED. The Colt was sold when Darcy found himself part-owner and then full-owner of Van's RV9 C-FAJO. He participates in Discover Aviation Vernon and is the latest member of The Snowflakes.



Darcy MacPhee with Rob McDicken, President, VFC with a token of appreciation



Darcy and his wife Sherrie have been members of VFC since 2022. He has become a fixture at the club and his and Sherrie's many contributions are very much appreciated!

January: Keith Readner and Steve Foord – Assembling our own engines for our RV10's



Keith and Steve each spent a week in Kamloops (at separate times) and built their own aircraft engines, at Progressive Air's build school where, alongside highly skilled engine technicians, they worked on and built (assembled) their own custom aircraft engine.

The presentation was well received as they talked about the experience and the excitement of seeing their very own engine start-up and run for the very first time.

Léo Major - Quebec soldier single-handedly liberated Dutch town.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/people-and-stories/leo-major>

Montréal, Québec

A hero in a foreign land

In the Dutch city of Zwolle, a Canadian flag waves in the breeze above a statue of a Canadian sniper who freed the city from its German occupiers at the end of the Second World War.

Léo Major's bronze bust—in military uniform, rifle in hand—stands on a stone pedestal looking toward the city he single-handedly liberated under a waxing crescent moon one spring night eight decades ago.

Everyone in this town—an ocean away from his home—knows his name.

Léo Major banner at a soccer game in Zwolle.

"Léo Major was the first Canadian soldier I (a boy of 14) saw, on 14 April 1945, and with him came the freedom from five years of Nazi-dictatorship," a Zwolle resident wrote in an online book of condolences after Major's passing in October, 2008.

"I then of course didn't know anything about him, but his appearance was the beginning of a new life for all of us."

"I was 12 years old and he became my instant hero," another Dutch man wrote.



Major was born in 1921 in New Bedford, Massachusetts, to French Canadian parents. The family moved to Montreal shortly after. He initially trained as a plumber before joining the army in 1940 at the age of 19. He trained in New Brunswick and England before landing in France on D-Day, 6 June 1944.

On the first day of the battle, he helped capture a German armoured vehicle. Days later, he had his first encounter with an SS patrol in Normandy. He defeated all of the soldiers, but not before one threw a phosphorus grenade at him, claiming his left eye.

Major was 87 when he died in Longueuil, Quebec, in a hospital bed surrounded by family, many of whom were still learning parts of the humble hero's military past.

His story of bravery is the stuff of movies. Some call him "the Rambo of Quebec."

"The Rambo of Quebec" – a well-earned nickname

The evening of 14 April 1945, Major was still recovering from a severe back injury after capturing 93 German soldiers and surviving a landmine explosion during the Battle of the Scheldt. By now, he had also adapted to wearing an eye patch on his damaged left eye. That night, he and his friend Corporal Wilfred (Welly) Arsenault set out toward Zwolle on a reconnaissance mission for the Allies' planned attack the next morning.

The two Régiment de la Chaudière snipers were tasked with gauging the size of the German garrison and getting word to the Dutch resistance fighters.

When Arsenault was killed by machine gun fire outside the town, an enraged and fearless Major spent the rest of the night avenging his death. He took Arsenault's guns and ammunition and stormed into Zwolle—alone.



Welly Arsenault (left) and Léo Major (right) c. 1944

Major ran through the town firing his machine gun and throwing grenades. With the help of some underground resistance fighters he met, he took dozens of prisoners and set the Gestapo headquarters on fire.

When the Allies arrived at dawn, the Germans were gone and Zwolle's 50,000 citizens—held hostage for nearly five years of Nazi occupation—were free.

As the "Sweetest Spring" began, daffodils and tulips bloomed along the banks of the rivers and canals and Canadian soldiers were celebrated in the streets.

A modest hero

In 2005, three years before he died, Major was made an honorary citizen of Zwolle. The liberation story is taught in schools and there are streets named in his honour in the Netherlands and also at home in Quebec. In 2020, on the 75th anniversary of the Netherlands' liberation, the local soccer club put his name on their game jerseys.

Léo Major (and his wife, Pauline), last visited Zwolle in 2005 when Major was made an honorary citizen of the city.

Major's children knew nothing of their father's story until a Dutch official landed on their doorstep 30 years after the war ended. His son was nine years old when his father finally shared what happened that night in Zwolle.

He told his son how senior military leaders tried to send him home when his eye was injured but he refused.

"I'm a sniper. I only need one eye," Major's son remembers his father saying.

He is the **only Canadian to receive a DCM in two wars**

Major was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) for the liberation. He was given the prestigious award a second time for his bravery six years later, in 1951 when he led the capture of a key hill during the Korean War.

When Major died on 12 October 2008, in Montreal, many Dutch dignitaries attended his funeral, including the Mayor of Zwolle. Zwolle named a street after him, made him an honorary citizen and holds an annual ceremony to remember his heroism.

The [Léo Major Park](#) in Quebec is named in his honour. He is buried at the [Last Post Fund National Field of Honour](#) in Pointe-Claire.

On 29 April 2020, Canada Post Corporation issued a stamp in Léo Major's honour, to mark the 75th anniversary of V-E Day, 1945.



Kelowna Tower

By Alison Crerar

The Flying Club was granted a tour of the Kelowna Tower for 20 members recently. Everyone met outside the tower at 11:00 am on the eighth of November, a beautiful day. Manager Grant Nelsen met us at the door and, although he had suggested a half hour talk about the airport and tower function, we were happy to hear at least an additional 20 minutes of great information out in the sunshine. All in attendance were pilots except one student pilot and her dad, so there were a lot of good questions asked. Grant is very accomplished and knowledgeable in many areas, and it was a pleasure to hear all he had to say. One pertinent fact is that the Kelowna Airport area is the biggest municipally owned airport in Canada and the complex terrain within tower control entails mountains, lakes, valleys and farmland. It's the ninth busiest airport in Canada as well, even though it only has one runway and one taxiway. The controllers are top notch as they deal with several airlines with both jets and turboprops as well as several flight schools training a good number of students.



After sharing a wealth of information and also assuring us that the tower staff are there to accommodate pilots and make our flights safer, Grant separated us into two groups to go up into the tower cab to observe their operations. The staff on duty were very open to questions when asked at the appropriate times. We were assured that tower operators anywhere are there to help and are happy to do so, but occasionally we might bump into a 'cactus'! If so, he wants to know about it. He's happy to receive both compliments and helpful hints and criticism so as to improve the operation. In that regard, Grant asked me to share his contact information so that anyone can reach him. He has also agreed to come and give his informative presentation after our February meeting. I highly recommend everyone attend – you won't regret it!

After our tour, several of us met for a delightful lunch at the Peak Cellars restaurant. Since the tour had lasted a little longer than planned, some who had intended to join us had to decline because of conflicting appointments. Those of us who were there enjoyed our time in a private lounge.



Feel free to reach out to Grant Nelsen, Kelowna Tower Manager, at grant.nelsen@navcanada.ca or at (604) 996-3703

GRAPE IMPRESSIONS!

By Alison Crerar

One Saturday morning, Dave and I were running behind schedule to catch a short flight from Kelowna to Vancouver to attend a wedding. We had missed breakfast and, running into the terminal to catch a noon flight, realized we could not likely expect anything substantial to eat until the reception at 7 o'clock that evening. Deciding we might have time to grab a sandwich to take on board, we quickly dashed to the snack bar after checking in and making our choices. Unfortunately, what I had requested was not ready made. As Dave took his sandwich and a sealed container of juice and went out to check on the flight, I waited while the server began making my sandwich. Moments later, Dave rushed back and said, "We have to go **now - right** now!" As the woman was about to put a second wrap of cling film around my lunch, I told her there wasn't time and I would take it as it was.

Rushing through the gate to the passenger area, I snagged the strap of my shoulder bag on a railing. My arm was flung backward and my clumsily held sandwich fell apart in my hands, bits of lettuce flying in every direction. I ran on, gathering the remains together while I tossed my purse and carry-on bag onto the X-ray conveyor. Grabbing my bag at the other side, I ran out to the waiting aircraft. Just as the aircraft door was closing, the security attendant dashed in with my purse, left behind in the rush.

As Dave stood in the aisle so that I, awkwardly clutching the remnants of my sandwich, could take the window seat, he realized the plastic container of juice - **grape** juice - had punctured and was leaking into the pocket of his sports jacket. He quickly sat down and placed the container on the fold-out tray while he fastened his seat belt. By this time the flight attendants were well into their safety demonstration so unable to offer any assistance. Seeing the ever-widening pool of purple liquid spreading on the tray, Dave grabbed the container, tore off the foil cover and attempted to down the contents as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, the juice took the wrong course and, with a tremendous 'pfsssssssssshhhh', exploded back into the atmosphere.

As I sat helplessly and the flight attendants continued their demonstration of proper use of seat belts and oxygen masks, all eyes were on Dave as he choked and spewed grape juice from nose and mouth, his bulging eyes watering and his face turning almost the colour of the liquid which still pooled on the tray in front of him. As he finally regained a semblance of composure and the plane taxied out onto the runway, the flight attendant was at last able to help out with paper towels, though the clothes Dave was to wear to the wedding were completely spattered and stained with purple juice.

As nearby passengers continued to look at us with a combination of concern and curiosity, we tried to nonchalantly eat what was left of our lunch. I couldn't help but be thankful though, after our incredible display, that this didn't happen when Dave was in his Captain's uniform.

It ended well. We picked up our rental car and went straight to a One Hour drycleaner that was able to accommodate our needs, and we were able to enjoy the wedding.

What Should I do if I see a Disabled Aircraft on the Runway at Vernon?

There have been several instances of disabled aircraft on our runway here in Vernon; gear-up landings, flat tire, ground loop, brake failures, etc. The first instinct is to help get the aircraft off the runway. The City of Vernon has asked us to just stop and take a breath before racing out to the disabled aircraft.

Unless it is on fire and the occupants are in immediate danger, the protocol is to contact Curtis Linton, our Airport Supervisor at 250.545.3035. He will contact 911 (fire and ambulance, if necessary), the Manager of Public Works and Airport, Ian Adkins, as well as make a report to Transport Canada.

Basically, the urge to get the disabled aircraft off the runway needs to be curtailed and left to the professionals.

I'm a flight attendant on a plane coming into Colorado Springs. I like to pepper my announcements with some 'fun facts' as it helps me to learn about places and adds an extra level of service to some of our guests.

Me: "We will shortly be landing in Colorado Springs. Fun fact: Colorado Springs is the highest-elevation city in the USA with a population above 100,000, with an elevation of 6,035 feet, or 1,839 meters!" *I then go into my usual 'prepare for landing' spiel.*

As I'm walking toward the front, a passenger gets my attention.

Passenger: "Was that true? That thing you said about Colorado Springs being so high up?"

Me: "You mean the elevation? Yes, it's true."

Passenger: "Why didn't anyone tell me?!"

I think she's about to mention that she's extra sensitive to altitude sickness or something, but then:

Passenger: "I'm super scared of heights!"

My work takes me to lots of remote and far-flung places. As a result, I am often travelling with domestic airlines in small countries that not many people know of. I am aware of certain international aviation rules that all airlines must follow, though, no exceptions.

I call the attendant to my seat.

Me: "Excuse me. I've been smelling cigarette smoke for about twenty minutes now. I'm definitely not imagining it."

Flight Attendant: "Did you have a question?"

Me: "Uh... could you find out who is smoking and make them stop? It's not legal."

The attendant looks confused but nods and seems to check the whole cabin. They don't return to me, so I assume they found the culprit and told them to stop, but half an hour later, I can smell the cigarettes again. I call over the attendant again and explain.

Flight Attendant: "Oh, yes, I checked. The pilots are smoking."

They tell me this as if this is an acceptable answer.

Me: "Uh... that's not a great answer."

Flight Attendant: "Well... it's to help them with their hangovers."

Absolutely none of this was said in jest. I did not fly with them on the way back.

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.

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