Av-Gass

Nanaimo Flying Club Newsletter, Nanaimo, BC V9R 5K4 Vol. 1 No. 1 Jan./Feb. 2010

It's been gone far too long *Editorial by Manuel Erickson*

FOURTEEN YEARS is a very long time for a passionate, vital group like the Nanaimo Flying Club to be without its newsletter, its *Av-Gass*. My understanding is that the last issue was in September 1995. With the support of the members, this iteration of our newsletter will be with us for the foreseeable future.

(Some newer members might be interested to know how the newsletter got its name. Noreen Irbe relates that in February 1974, member Barry Harsent suggested that "Av" could be for "aviation" and "Gass" for what pilots do at the Club when not flying. And so, *Av-Gass*. Who am I to change a venerable name?)

By "support," I mean the contributions of the Club's members because without them, there cannot be an *Av-Gass*. It's that simple. As editor, I can publish your stories, but I cannot invent them because each story has its own truth. If I invent them, then they're merely fiction; if that's what we want, we can read any of the novels in our library; a newsletter isn't required.

So, tell me what you have done recently as pilots and as members of the NFC. I don't think we want to read yesteryear's news. Give me your opinions on aviation, Transport, the Minister, suggestions for improving the Club and the airport, prices of fuel both here and elsewhere, places you've flown to–virtually anything. We are curious about ourselves, others, other flying clubs, others' planes. This curiosity is part of our dynamic.

After all, *Av-Gass*, as a newsletter, is a tool to help draw us together and stay in touch. The only thing I don't want *Av-Gass* to become is a complaint sheet.

What are your experiences as pilots and owners? Did you or do you work in aviation? We love to read about ourselves, and we need to make our new members feel welcome among us. We are a large club, and growing.

I want us to celebrate aviation and flying and being pilots and spouses and friends of pilots and having planes and airplane mechanics to work on our planes and avionics specialists to help us with our single-purpose radios, and homebuilders and hangars and, yes, having an airport from which to take off and on which to land and as a place to park our lovely, beautiful toys from the simplest to the complex.

Ah! What a celebration that would be! We could do it two or three times a year. I'm sure no one would ever get bored at one of those.

We could talk about our history, about what it means to have a rare federal Charter, write and perform skits about Club flyers, write stories about the photographs on the walls, show each other our favourite pictures–whatever turns our cranks.

Aviation brings people together in various ways. This newsletter, your *Av-Gass*, is part of all that.✈

A bit about me *Manuel Erickson*

I WAS BORN IN TORONTO and am a new member of the NFC. After high school graduation, I worked in the Middle East as a farm labourer for two years, then returned to Toronto, doing odd office jobs. Along the way I obtained a B.A. in political science at the University of Waterloo and a certificate in word processing from Algonquin College, Ottawa, working in that field in Toronto and Vancouver.

I rented aircraft at CYNJ starting in 1994, then bought a 1956 Cessna 172 in 1998 and flew it from CYNJ for almost four years. In the early 2000s, I flew the 172 throughout southern BC, gathering information for a book on steam locomotives. Including rentals, I flew from Langley for ten years ending in 2004. I recently purchased a 1967 Cessna 150H.

Most of us remember when we first wanted to fly. I was five or six when the bug bit me, staring out the kitchen window of our Toronto home, watching a biplane shrink into a dot and wink out. I earned my Private Licence about forty years later in a '46 Ercoupe. Yes, I've written that story and read it on a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation radio program called "First Person Singular." That broadcast was directly responsible for re-connecting me with an old friend who understood my need for wings and who years before had urged that I learn to fly; we've flown together and correspond today.

Besides aviation, I am interested in writing, music, and sometimes politics.✈

History of the Nanaimo Flying Club *Noreen Irbe*

During World War Two, Cassidy was a military airport used to train glider pilots. Towing trucks launched the gliders. Abandoned by the military after the war, it was resurrected by six Nanaimo citizens who applied for and received Letters Patent on January 30, 1946 (without share capital nor pecuniary gain to its members), recorded February 6, 1946 (Liber 425, Folio 62) and referred to as the Nanaimo Flying Club. The charter (Letters Patent) gives the names of the applicants: Frank HONEY, sales manager; Lorenzo GIOVANDO, doctor of medicine; Jack Victor BATEMAN, farmer; Howard Bruce MATTHEWS, merchant; William Hugh POWER, chartered accountant; Robert Lawrence STACEY, manager; and Norman Tressider CORFIELD, Automobile agent, all of the City of Nanaimo.

This is the NFC charter under which we operate today. There are fewer than five such charters still in existence. Like no other, it gives us wide ranging powers to operate anywhere in Canada and elsewhere. It is priceless. Its purposes are spelled out:

a) To acquire, hold, operate and maintain all manner of lighter-than-air and heavier-than-air craft;
b) To promote flying and aviation in general and to teach and train persons;
c) To teach and train persons in maintenance and repair of aircraft;
d) To acquire and hold land for the purpose of establishing and maintaining flying and landing fields, airports, air harbours, depots (fuel), and hangars for the care, housing, reception and dispatch of aircraft for the purposes of the corporation and members thereof;
e) To make, use and conduct experiments in connection with flying and aviation generally, and to promote race meetings, speed and trial tests and other exhibitions of aircraft and to offer for competition and distribute prizes in connection therewith or for any other purpose or purpose likely to lend to the advancement of flying, aeronautics or aviation in general;
f) To establish, maintain, and conduct or **to** assist in the establishment, maintenance, and conduct of any organization, association or society formed for the purpose of advancing the study and practice of flying, aeronautics and aviation in general.

Our charter also specifies the types of membership we are allowed to have.

By 1968 there were only three buildings on the field. Just off runway 16 was Pacific Coastal Airlines with its own south entrance off the main highway. Presently occupied by Arbutus Trailers. Next to Pacific Coastal was the Madill Building (Aero Commander Stan Budd pilot) were the south end boys (homebuilts) now have their aircraft, and a few hundred feet north of Madill was the radio shack. The north entrance led you down a winding trail through the trees. There were trees, lots of trees, including a few pear and apple. This trail eventually led to the site where our hangar is today. There sat two or three aircraft. While the men flew, the women and children would sit in

their cars waiting for them to finish. For something to do, the children would climb trees: Griffith, Irbe, Erhart, and later on Cutting and Pirart children, to name a few. Yes, this included our present-day NFC President, Barbara (Irbe) Riddy. She was a pretty good "tree climber."
(*To be continued in the March 2010 issue of Av-Gass*)

Past President's report 2009

As I review our accomplishments I'm reminded of the tremendous contributions of NFC members and their role **on** keeping this club working. Eleven members were admitted to the Nanaimo Flying Club and several aircraft have been added to our club parking. I'm confident that our growth will continue as we welcome more new members in 2010.

Significant improvements were achieved through the hard work of several dedicated NFC members:

- Our fuel terminal was upgraded and moved inside the club house. A two-price fuel system was implemented for member and non-member fuel purchases.
- Electronic key access has been installed in the club house.
- Two computers, a printer, and internet were installed in the club house.
- The Ray Erhart Memorial Bursary was increased to $1,000 and awarded to a deserving local student.

Our club hosted an informative briefing on the new YVR airspace and another briefing on the Olympic airspace restrictions. Both briefings were well attended by local pilots.

Our flying club hosted a June fly-in that was a huge success and highlighted general aviation at the Nanaimo Airport. The fly-in was well attended and supported by local businesses, Nanaimo Airport, and members of the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association. Valuable lessons were learned from the fly-in that will be applied to future NFC flying events.

As the out-going president, I want to thank all the club members and friends of the Nanaimo Flying Club for their help and support during my two years as club President. I wish the best of success to the incoming NFC board as they face the challenges of 2010.

Safe Flying,
John Lamb✈

Pilot Workshop Tips

The following, about **dead-stick landings**, is from **Pilot Workshop Tips.** You can sign up for *free* Pilot's Tip of the Week at: http://pilotworkshop.com/tips.htm. *Like many Web sites, you will be required to register.*

Wally:

As a glider instructor, Bob, I've logged over 1,500 dead-stick landings. I regularly teach glider pilots how to get the airplane on the ground safely. The secret to getting the glider into the field is to use the same, consistent pattern every time.

This consistency helps establish an awareness of appropriate glide angles and can be used at the home field or in the event of an off-field landing. Off-field landings are not uncommon in the glider world and are routinely done without any incidents.

The same technique is also the secret to successful emergency landings for power planes. You need to plan and practice a standard pattern which you'll use every time. Doing it this way provides two distinct advantages.

One, a standard pattern constantly allows the pilot to adjust his approach as he flies through lift and sink and changing winds. Second, it's something we can practice on a regular basis, so we're apt to be more proficient when the time comes.

Bob:

Wally, can you describe for us what this pattern looks like?

Wally:

Sure, Bob. The standard pattern should start on

downwind leg. Abeam the touchdown spot: the spot that you've chosen in the field.

You should do that at approximately 1,000 feet above ground level, and at a distance that will put that touchdown point at about a 45-degree angle below the wing. This will be closer than the typical landing pattern that a power pilot is accustomed to.

Bob:

It sounds easy enough, but how do I determine 1,000 AGL when I'm landing in a strange field?

Wally:

First of all, one should always have a general idea of the elevation of surrounding terrain if they're keeping up with their navigation. Furthermore, you'll get a chance to practice every time you enter the traffic pattern. If you pay attention, you'll soon recognize the fidelity of ground objects from this altitude.

It's an altitude you use regularly every day. If you look out the window and try to establish references, it'll become quite easy for you to do it even in a strange place.

As a further exercise, you can fly out to a sparsely populated area where you know the elevation. Level off at 1,500 feet AGL. Look around, descend to 1,000 feet, and note the difference. Then descend to 500 feet (if it's safe to do in this area) and note the difference again.

Climb back up to what looks like 1,000 feet without your altimeter and see how you do. I'll bet you'll be pretty close. Practice this exercise from time to time and keep it fresh in your mind.

Also, each time you enter the pattern, descend to what looks like pattern altitude to you without the use of the altimeter, then check to see how well you did. You'll be surprised how well you can do. You can practice this every time you fly.

Actually, it's not important to be 1,000 AGL on the downwind as long as you set up the 45-degree angle. Your altitude will compensate for the distance. If you're a little low, you'll be closer. If you're a little high, you'll be farther out.

This **tip** is about **teaching your fingers to recognize buttons and switches**:

Bob:

"One of the things we used to do in the Air Force was perform a blind cockpit check, and you say, well, what is that all about? We are creatures of habits and when we're reaching out with our hands for a switch, if we hit the wrong switch we're in a world of hurt. So it might be interesting to just challenge yourself. Sit there with a friend or with a flight instructor and close your eyes and see how close you come to finding fuel selectors, mixtures, and flaps and gear because if you hit the wrong one, you are in a world of hurt."✈

Adam Parer: a top contender in the world of hang-gliding

While flying in Australia recently, his glider was subjected to unforecast and unreported extremely strong air disturbances, probably not dissimilar to what a small plane would experience if the pilot attempted to land too close to a just-landed 747. Read about Adam's experience by clicking the link below.

http://adam-parer.blogspot.com/2009/11/g-force.html

(Many thanks to John McClintock for suggesting this story.--Editor)✈

More than anything else the sensation is one of perfect peace mingled with an excitement that strains every nerve to the utmost, if you can conceive of such a combination. — Wilbur Wright on gliding

From Texas to Texada

Introduction by John Hubbard:

AS MANY KNOW, I love to share my passion for aviation with other people. I've been associated with Young Eagles, Angel Flight, donated flights to be auctioned off for charity and have flown numerous passengers for scenic flights around the mid-Island area.

I asked my friend Janice to write an article for this issue of *Av-Gass* from the viewpoint of a passenger exploring our little bit of paradise. Janice is a physical education teacher with the Snohomish School Board in Washington State, an avid right seater, and a special friend of mine.

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LATELY, THE THOUGHT OF "living in the moment" has been on my mind a lot. When doing menial tasks, sitting in dull meetings, etc., my mind drifts to places I'd rather be and activities that I'd rather be doing.

Last weekend, I lived in the moment the entire time! I was the fortunate right seater with John Hubbard, pilot extraordinaire, flying in his bright yellow Piper Cherokee!

On Friday, we flew an incredibly beautiful loop around Vancouver Island that included Nanaimo, Courtenay, Tofino, Comox Glacier with a side trip to Vargas Island, Vargas to Nitinat Lake, Cowichan Lake, Copper Canyon, Chemainus and back to Nanaimo.

The following day, we flew to Texada Island, where we were picked up at the airport and taken to a delicious lunch at the Texada Island Inn and followed by a gorgeous walk to the beach.

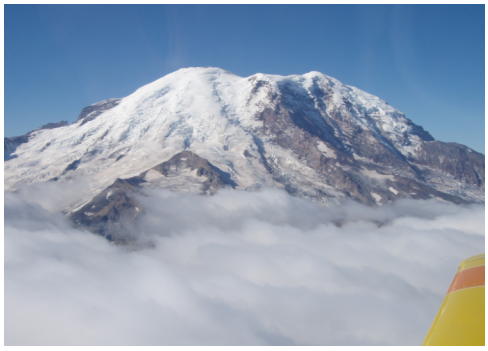
I'm not a pilot but I am a general aviation enthusiast. In the past three years, I have flown with various GA pilots, primarily in the Pacific Northwest. I've also flown a little with friends while living for ten years in Texas. I've lived in Texas, Washington State and Germany and have travelled quite extensively in Europe along with some trips to BC, Alberta, Quebec, Alaska, Mexico, Florida, Grand Cayman, Maui and some of the US Southwest.

Last weekend's flying was at the top of my list for beauty and friendly people! I was most appreciative of this wonderful opportunity to fly, have fun and most important, live in the moment!

Janice Olson
Lake Stevens, WA

Here are some photographs of John and Janice's trip:

Mount Baker



Approach to Texada/Gillies Bay

John and Janice on the Beach at Texada/Gillies Bay

Catching the Dream

John Veale

FOR A BRIEF MOMENT on this summer's day in 1944 when I was five, life presented a thrill of unimaginable proportion. I was playing in the sandbox, warmed by the summer sun. Birds sang. Dragonflies flew high-spirited aerobatics in their frantic search for insects. Suddenly, the loudest noise I'd yet heard invaded my little boy's world.

Over the treetops thundered a bright yellow, low-wing airplane. I could hardly believe my eyes. There were two pilots, one behind the other, wearing brown leather helmets. The wheels were tucked up flat under the wings. It had a big round engine and a tiny little tail wheel and that's all I was able to take in before it was gone over the trees at the edge of the yard and up over Mary Hill behind our home. It was an incredible experience and left a huge impression on this blond-haired boy from Pitt River Road, Port Coquitlam.

A few years went by and I matured to paperboy status. I was delivering down on the flats below Pitt River Road one day, a familiar area of scrub brush and fenced pastures, when my eye caught a flash of yellow in the corner of an open field. An airplane? My heart rate jumped at the prospect of being able to see a real airplane up close. I left my bike, headed across the pasture, watching for annoyed farm critters with sharp horns. Unlike the first airplane I'd seen, this one had wings on top with little wheels under the door and an even smaller wheel under its tail. The plane was covered with cloth of some sort and it looked so fragile. I could see parts of its little engine poking from the sides of the engine compartment. Its wooden propeller was varnished to a high shine. With heart beating ever faster, I climbed up onto the right tire and, with one hand on the strut the other against the window to shade my eyes from the bright summer sun, peered inside. There was a stick with a grip at the top attached to the floor and strange-looking instruments and switches on the panel and pedals on the floor. *What were they all for?* It all looked very complex and bewildering to my nine-year-old mind, but what a rush! My reaction was not wanting to fly, but boy, it sure did give me bragging rights. Unlike my friends, I had seen the inside of a real airplane.

Several years later a new adventure began with goodbyes to my parents and I boarded a train bound for Vancouver and my ultimate destination, Powell River. A few days later, I began working as a pump-jockey for Bill Gaston at a small Shell Oil service station at the Government Wharf on Powell Lake, selling auto, marine and aviation fuel. We also acted as agents for a small BC Airlines float-based charter service. One of my duties was to take flight bookings when the pilot was on a trip in his Cessna 170. I also handled the ground-to-air radio, talking with the pilot when he enquired about the weather and with other flights. Though the work was interesting, the aviation spark had still not been ignited.

One spring I received an evening phone call from Maurie Mercer, our BC Airlines Pilot. "John," he said, "I'm taking a short flight up the lake tomorrow. How'd you like to come along?" At lightning speed, thoughts of disaster raced through my mind. I could be killed–I have my whole life ahead of me–I've never flown before… Maybe I *should* try flying. My friends would be so jealous! "Sure Maurie, I'd like that."

The spring-like morning dawned clear with only a hint of wind as I walked the mile to the float base. When I arrived on trembling knees and sweaty palms, I had convinced myself that I was looking forward to the experience of flight. Then, comfortably belted into the right seat of the Cessna 170 (CF-ISQ) I looked around the cockpit. The environment was totally foreign. There were so many strange-looking instruments and two sets of flight controls that appeared pretty complicated.

Following a complete inspection of the aircraft's exterior systems, Maurie pushed us away from the wharf and climbed in. He started the engine and began taxiing out into the lake, explaining what he was doing as we sailed. He checked that our seat belts were fastened and all engine and control systems were working properly, then added power for our take-off run down the lake. With the control column pulled fully back to help get the floats onto the step and keep the prop out of the spray as much as possible, we slowly gained speed in the choppy water. Observing this new world, I felt unnerved when I noticed the instrument panel shaking badly. *A poorly maintained airplane*, I thought, but Maurie explained later that the instrument panel is shock-mounted for longevity. Finally, we were off the water and the vibrations ceased. As we climbed to a thousand feet above the lake, I marvelled at the miniature world below, with its tiny boats and buildings at the shoreline taking on a Monopoly appearance. It was beautiful indeed, but I still couldn't help wondering what would happen if the engine quit. Would we fall out of the sky? A troubling thought.

After trimming the aircraft for level flight, Maurie began to explain flight aerodynamics, instruments, and flight surface controls. The more he talked the more excited I became. The extra good news was that if the engine did fail, we would not just fall out of the sky, but rather glide to the surface under complete control.

Powell Lake is just inland from the Pacific and stretches into the interior coastal mountains for about forty miles. Goat Island rises from the waters about midway up the lake. The island is capped by Frogpond Lake, a sparkling jewel about ten miles long set into the surrounding forests on the island's summit. As we coasted along, it was fascinating to have a birds-eye view of the landscape which, until now, I had seen only from the vantage point of a boat. Powell Lake has 300 kilometres of shoreline, but our flight this day took us only about twenty miles down the lake to the end of Goat Island. We landed there and taxied to a float home to deliver a package. The owner invited us in for tea, anxious for some visitors, but Maurie promised to stop again later in the week.

By now, the grin on my face had become pretty wide and I looked forward to the next leg of the flight with great anticipation. Maurie climbed the Cessna to about one hundred feet and gradually brought the airplane around 180 degrees to head for home. I was used to walking everywhere I went, so travelling at one hundred miles an hour, one hundred feet off the surface of the lake, seemed supersonic to me. This, I decided, was definitely in the fun category! Too soon, Maurie began to slow the plane to landing approach speed and, flaps extended, we settled onto the water and taxied back to the wharf. I couldn't stop grinning and by the time we got back to his office, Maurie knew he'd recruited another devotee to aviation.

Our total flight time was about thirty-five minutes but it took only ten of them to go from fear to fascination. In those few minutes, the direction of my life changed. Though I didn't realise it then, the real adventure was just beginning.

I followed my heart to Alberta to see Patricia, a beautiful girl I'd been corresponding with. I was able to establish myself quickly with a place to stay and another Shell service station job, paying $200 a month; not a lot, but it allowed room and board, some dates with Pat, and the pursuit of flying training. It took a few conversations to convince Pat that learning to fly was a good idea and, having made the decision to encourage that pleasure, she has never looked back. Even now, when the weather is good she says, "Going flying? It looks like a nice sunny day for it."

Flashback: one of our first lessons in grade one in Port Coquitlam was in the use of crayons. This meant learning about the colours. I was a shy little kid in those days and afraid to ask questions, but I just couldn't get it. "What do you mean this isn't blue? It's purple? But they look the same!" I worked like a trooper to identify those crayons but was wrong most of the time.

Fast forward to August 1958, when the doctor giving me my pilot's medical said, "So far, so good John; now let's give you the test for colour blindness." It turned out that I had some colour deficiency. This new discovery was good and bad. I knew that I hadn't been so dumb about colour in grade one after all, just colour blind. I would be restricted to a Private Pilot's license. I left the doctor's office with mixed feelings, knowing I was partially colour blind, but still with a medical certificate saying I was fit to fly.

The big flying school in Edmonton in 1958 was the Edmonton Flying Club, based at the downtown Municipal Airport. I signed up for flight instruction and then, loaded down with an armful of flying manuals, went home to study. The books were intimidating, but a day or two later, with Medical Certificate and flight training Permit in hand, I arrived at the club for my first lesson. I met flight instructor O'Neill, his first name unrecorded in my logbook and long since forgotten. Other details of the day, however, are still etched on my mind.

The airport environment was a new world with a mystique of its own. The hangar smelled of airframe repairs and maintenance. The odour of cotton fabric used to cover wing and fuselage surfaces assaulted my nose along with the dope painted on the fabric to tighten and seal it. There were aviation fuels; the chatter of rivet guns echoed through the hangar. Big and small airplanes shared the space, some fabric-covered, others aluminium. There were high wings and low wings. Most had main gear and a tail wheel: the conventionally-geared airplanes. Now, a newer and easier-to-handle type of gear system was coming on the market called "tricycle" which had a nose wheel instead of a wheel at the tail.

Most of the Club's planes were conventionally-geared Fleet Canucks. They were manufactured in Canada, mostly in the 1940s. They were high-wing airplanes built of steel tube and fabric and painted in brilliant yellow and blue.

I am not sure what I expected the order of flight instruction would be, but I was surprised when O'Neill said, "Let's go strap on an airplane!" There on the apron sat our Fleet Canuck with registration

CF-DYY. Observing my instructor, we did a "walk-around" inspection checking for oil in the engine, the exterior flight control surfaces, wheels and brakes and all moving components.

Satisfied that all was in good order, O'Neill suggested we get in. Automatically, I headed for the right seat, knowing that the pilot sat in the left. "Where are you going?" said O'Neill. "Didn't you say I was to get in?" I answered. "Yours is the left seat," he said. "You're the pilot today." I didn't think I qualified for this title, but did as I was told and climbed in. The cockpit was strange and nothing like my car. Instead of clutch and brake pedals, it had rudder pedals, no gas pedal, no visible brakes, no steering wheel, just a control stick attached to the floor, and an array of very strange-looking gauges and levers on the instrument panel.

Seat belts tightened, O'Neill showed me the engine-start procedures. Then the engine barked to life. O'Neill showed me how to check for oil pressure, fuel pressure, and the list went on. Finally, it was radio work, but thankfully O'Neill attended to that, talking with ground control, and getting clearance to taxi toward the active runway.

How do you steer the airplane without a steering wheel? O'Neill explained how the rudder pedals work and I followed through with my feet on the pedals as he got us to the end of the runway.

I wondered if this business of learning to fly wasn't going to be more difficult than I expected. Nothing we'd done so far was at all familiar. Maybe just owning a car was enough. Perhaps I was mistaken about how much fun flying could be. Maybe it was too expensive. My mind returned to the reality of the moment when O'Neill said, "Now we advance the throttle, push the stick forward to get the tail up to level attitude and keep the nose centred down the runway with the rudder." It appeared straight forward (he did the work, of course) and then the ground dropped away. We were flying!

We left the city behind and flew to the practice area. Far above the ground, O'Neill explained the various flight manoeuvres, but my main job was to track a straight line while keeping the aircraft level. "See that grain elevator?" O'Neill said, pointing to the distant horizon. "Do your best to keep the nose of the airplane tracking toward it." Yeah, right! Unlike my car which moves in a two-dimensional world, the airplane moves in three dimensions. So there I was, wandering left and right and up and down a hundred feet or so. Hey, this isn't as easy as it looks! We eventually arrived overhead the grain elevator and, with a thoughtful observation from the instructor ("You're catching on, John"), it was time to head back to the airport for a landing and a debriefing session in the coffee shop.

The first entry in my logbook read Aug. 29, 1958, Aircraft Fleet 80 registered CF-DYY with Pilot O'Neill and Second Pilot "Self" and the remarks 1st Familiarisation. Total time dual instruction 1:00 hr. I was on my way to becoming a pilot!

Cash was in pretty short supply in those days. Total time necessary to obtain a private pilot's license was thirty hours. The Edmonton Flying Club was charged $13.00 an hour for dual instruction, and $9.00 for solo flying. It seems pretty inexpensive now, but considering that my 1958 wages were $1.25 and hour, it was indeed an expensive project. I managed to keep some cash reserves, though, as most of my dates with Pat were spent at the airport watching airplanes come and go. (What an amazing girl!)

I managed close to four hours of instruction over the next three months and then decided I was getting nowhere fast with a dollar and a quarter an hour, so I applied for a job in Yellowknife with Giant Yellowknife Gold Mines. I became a "northerner" in late January 1959. I had the added benefit of reasonable room and board as I stayed with my parents who'd moved north a year earlier.

I perused the flying scene and found that Hank Hicks of Raven Air Service was operating a small flying school, so once again instruction began. It was a very different scene now. The weather was cold and the aircraft, another Fleet 80, CF-BYW, was mounted on skis, not wheels. We were flying from a small shack on Frame Lake on the edge of Yellowknife. We'd take off from the lake and do our air work and circuits on the ice strip on Back Bay at the northwest arm of Great Slave Lake, adjacent to Yellowknife's old town.

Slowly my logged time built and now totalled 6 hrs and 45 minutes. It was April 7th, 1959, about 7:45 in the evening. We'd been doing circuits on Back Bay for about 15 minutes, when Hicks suggested we pull off the strip. He climbed out, saying, "It's all yours, John. Take it around the circuit once and land, then we'll call it a day."

Wow! Was I ready for this? My instructor thought I was and, down deep, I did too. Heart thumping just a little bit, I taxied back to the end of the strip, checked the systems again and applied the power. With all eighty-five horses pulling and the prop biting into the minus 23C air, I was off and airborne in short order, climbing at a brisk 300 feet per minute; my level of excitement climbed at about

the same rate as I began a well-practised circuit. I couldn't believe I was up here alone and the thrill of achievement flooded my senses in this, my new airborne world.

Ah, but I still had to land this airplane! Paying full attention to the job at hand and with recent instruction foremost in my mind, I turned onto base leg, then final approach for a surprisingly smooth landing. As the skis chattered along the ice runway, a warm internal glow dispelled the chilly air of the cockpit, and I recalled that wonderful warm summer morning, when the bright yellow low-wing airplane flew low over my blond five-year-old head on Pitt River Road, Port Coquitlam. Now it was my turn. I had soloed an airplane, and what a grand feeling it was! Given time, I may become a real pilot and I wondered just where my wings would take me.

John has owned a Cessna 140, CF-IRL, but sold it in 1969 to begin scratch-building this Bushby Mustang ll, C-GAIF. The Mustang first flew in the spring of 1981 and is now based at CYCD with a little over 1200 hours in its Journey log. He has been a member of EAA International as well as COPA since 1960 and the Nanaimo Flying Club since 2007.✈

Major Engine Repair

Manuel Erickson

MAJOR REPAIRS TO AN ENGINE are probably among the most harrowing events an owner can experience. What could be wrong? Why didn't the engine fail on my last flight? What if it *had* failed? Where did the corrosion come from? What are all those metal pieces the size of grains of sand doing in my oil filter? Could the engine have exploded in my face?

In the case of my Cessna 150, GHPK, it started when Phil Gell at Bakerview Aviation in Abbotsford discovered corrosion in the cylinders. That was the time to have stopped the purchase, but something had told me—could it have been the low-time engine?—that this plane was meant for me. Phil sent the cylinders to Vike Aeromotive in Kamloops and Ken Vike did a fine job of erasing the damage. I followed Bakerview's recommendation that a full-flow oil filter be installed to replace the screen, because the oil screen doesn't catch the smaller particulates.

I had taken delivery of the aeroplane on August 8, 2009 (complete with repaired cylinders and new oil filter) and flown to Qualicum Beach where I started the insurance-mandated pilot proficiency check with an instructor. Everything seemed good. The engine didn't miss a beat.

About two weeks later, I flew to Qualicum again for the annual inspection. Everything went well until Pavel Novak checked the oil filter. Surprisingly, a magnet attracted small, grainy bits of steel. Pavel recommended an engine tear-down to inspect for damage.

This was going to cost a lot of extra money. I hadn't minded spending a bit on the corrosion and full-flow oil filter because I thought it would be a good

investment in an aeroplane with a low-time engine, but the tear-down and inspection could possibly lead to a full overhaul.

After the annual I flew back to Nanaimo and arranged to have the engine removed and shipped to Vike Aeromotive. George Irbe and Galt Durnford kindly allowed me to use their hangar. It was necessary to pull an aeroplane out of the hangar so that HPK could be hauled into it. Darren Adams, the "Mechanic on the Wing," removed the engine and took it to Comox Overlander in Nanaimo.

In Ken Vike's emailed report he said, "the source of the steel contamination appears to be the alternator drive coupling. It has turned about 60 degrees in its retainer, causing the retainer to wear. Also the starter clutch assembly has started to wear.

"Other than that, your engine is in excellent shape."

"Excellent shape?" What about the grains of steel? Well, Ken said in a phone conversation that they had not migrated into other engine parts. So it was good news because I wouldn't have to buy a major overhaul.

In his email, Ken provided two options:

Option 1
We will basically wash all the parts, replace all of the bearings, connecting rod bolts and nuts, repair the alternator drive assembly, and install a new lightweight starter. There is also an A.D. on the carburetor that we will comply with. This can be accomplished for $4,500.00 Canadian plus taxes.

Option 2
Will have all the new parts as in Option 1 PLUS a new Slick magneto and harness kit. Your Bendix magnetos have the early riveted style impulse couplings, and [they] should be replaced. This can be accomplished for $7,000.00 Canadian plus tax.

It sounded as if I would be getting an almost-new engine for minimal extra outlay, so I told Ken by phone that I would choose Option 2. He said it was a smart move and the engine could be ready to ship back to me in two weeks. That meant by October 21.

Ken tested the engine on October 20 and it passed. He wrote that it would be shipped out the next day.

A week later a white, 5-ton truck backed up to the open hangar doors. Within ten minutes the shrink-wrapped engine sat on its padded pallet in the hangar, as much out of the way as I could manage.

I signed the receipt and stood looking at my newly-returned engine. Expectancy rose, along with anxiety: what if something is still wrong? I fought down that negative thought, replacing it with a positive one: I can't wait to get back into the sky!

Darren, my AME, started to re-install the engine. It was a perfect day—raining. Together we filled some containers with water and hung them on the motor mount as counterweight to the fuselage and wings. Then we replaced the Comanche that was in the hangar with my Cessna.

The job was basically finished after five hours of steady work. I couldn't help much, except to bring Darren something or to hand him a screw. We were both beat, Darren because he never stopped working, and I, because I was on my feet the entire day and my back ached. But the new starter still needed to be connected, along with the starter button.

With the propeller installed, we dragged HPK to its parking spot, then eased the Comanche back into the hangar. Later, after Darren connected the starter and button, we test-flew the plane together. The engine purred like a well-oiled sewing machine.

"*... sailing the skies on glorious wings,*
a whirling propeller that sings ..."✈

Interesting URLs

http://www.vrcbc.ca/vantage%20spring%202009.pdf (scroll down to page 4) -- thanks to Barb Riddy.

This blimp ride would have been $425 per seat. For the free ride, click on the link below.

http://home.comcast.net/~bzee1b/Zeppelin/Zeppelin.html

John Owen writes: Here is an interesting link of a friend's adventure a couple of years ago.
http://www.ggfx.com/husky/index.html