

# ASCent

the journal of the Alberta Soaring Council



2008 Season

# Going north

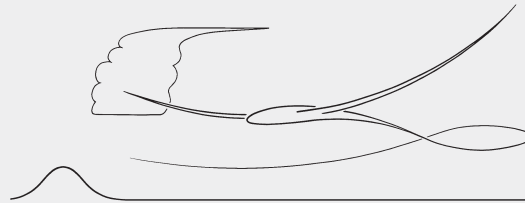
Walter Mueller, GPSS

**T**HIS YEAR'S COWLEY SUMMER CAMP was one of the best in years; the attendance was great, the weather cooperated, and many great flights were made. This was also my most successful camp with over 26 hours logged over the ten day camp. I ventured as far north as Chain Lakes and south close to Waterton, and for the first time I went far enough into the Crowsnest Pass to take a picture of the Livingstone Range from the west side as the late afternoon sun was shining on it – a beautiful sight. A few times it looked like I would have to make an out-landing but I was lucky to always find that last thermal to get me back to Cowley.

Monday, the last day of the camp, is usually pack-up time, and for a lot of pilots and their families that was the case as work was interfering with the joy of soaring. But Monday also promised to be the best soaring day and I, as well as a few other pilots whose birthday odometer has passed that magic number, had no intention of leaving for home while there was still a towpilot and a towplane available.

This time I was not looking for that last thermal to bring me back to Cowley, instead I

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editing and layout  
proof reading

Tony Burton  
Ursula Wiese

### Cover

*A howling Cowley wind lays the grass flat. The ESC Puchacz is tied down right after a flight to 28,000 up the front of an immense Chinook Arch.*

*photo: Wilf Plester*



The Alberta Soaring Council is the alliance of Alberta soaring clubs supporting the Soaring Association of Canada.  
Executive Director, Phil Stade, Box 13, Black Diamond, T0L 0H0  
(403) 813-6658, <[asc@stade.ca](mailto:asc@stade.ca)>

[www.soaring.ab.ca](http://www.soaring.ab.ca)

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headed off north aiming for Chipman in the hope that some late evening thermals, which I have encountered on several occasions around Chipman, would help me on the last stretch from Tofield to Chipman. At this point I should mention two things, one that Grace (my wife) due to medical reasons is unable to follow me with the motor home and trailer, and two, that I am a "Sightseeing Tourist Soaring Pilot", who takes his time to smell the roses. (Somewhere over a Hutterite colony I smelled a feedlot though.)

Shortly after noon, Dave Morgan towed me into a good thermal, I released at 2000 feet and soon was near cloud-base and heading northeast to get around the Calgary control zone via the village of Milo where my course would go straight north. On the east side of the Porkies I encountered a long stretch without any lift and when it was time to look for a suitable landing place I was several kilometres northeast of Claresholm. Backtracking towards the airport, I found lift again and I resumed my course past Vulcan towards Milo. Karl Soellig in his PW-5, who had the best flight of his flying career that afternoon, acted as my relay station for position reports.

From Milo towards Drumheller the thermals were nicely spaced and later my flight recorder showed that I had a stretch of 26 km without turning. As I was crossing the Red Deer River valley I was reminiscing about the time when my children went to high school at Drumheller while we were living at East Coulee.

Flying over the Drumheller airport north of the city brought back a memory of many years ago when it was just a farmer's grass strip from where I took Ursula (my wife) for a flight in a Luscomb borrowed from a friend. Farther north is a long stretch of an unlandable area, hundreds of small hills like moguls with a little bush and small sloughs and barbed wire fences. As an optimist, I was looking for the next thermal without worrying about the terrain below.

About halfway between Drumheller and Stettler I could see a large dark air mass blocking my course and as I came closer I could see heavy rain falling over Stettler and at least ten or more kilometres on either side of the town. I decided to go around it on the west side since it was moving east, but that area near Buffalo Lake had cooled off from the passing rain and didn't produce any more lift.

By now I had eaten my banana and all my cookies and the water bag was almost empty, so I decided to land at Stettler rather than go further north and was able to relay my decision via Karl, who at that time was still high over the Cowley valley. Since I had still plenty of altitude I just hung around until the rain had passed Stettler. When I flew over the town there were water puddles everywhere and the sun was shining on a freshly washed shiny black runway when I landed shortly after six o'clock. The flight duration was 5:49 hours for a distance of 364 km. It was a great flight which will go into my memory bank as one of the best so far.

After I dislodged myself from my Cirrus I pushed it off the runway onto the grass and tied it down. At the terminal building I entered my arrival into the airport log sheet. Not being able to contact a taxi, I started to walk towards town when an old fellow in a pick-up offered me a ride – he was a member of the Stettler Flying Club and proudly told me that he was eighty-five and a half years old and still has a valid pilot licence. We both shook hands and had a good laugh when I told him my age. At the "bus depot" (a coin wash with the bus schedule displayed in the window), I found that the next bus to Calgary left at 8:05 the next morning.

After a good night's sleep in a motel, I was on my way to Calgary the next morning, not on a bus, but in a Chevy van with a trailer behind. The owner had a contract with Greyhound and I got the scenic tour of rural Alberta as we stopped at every small town to pick up or deliver freight. In Trochu a second passenger joined me for the trip. Phil Stade picked me up at the Calgary bus terminal and we arrived at the Cowley airfield around supper time where Grace, the lone remaining resident, was happy to see us and feed us.

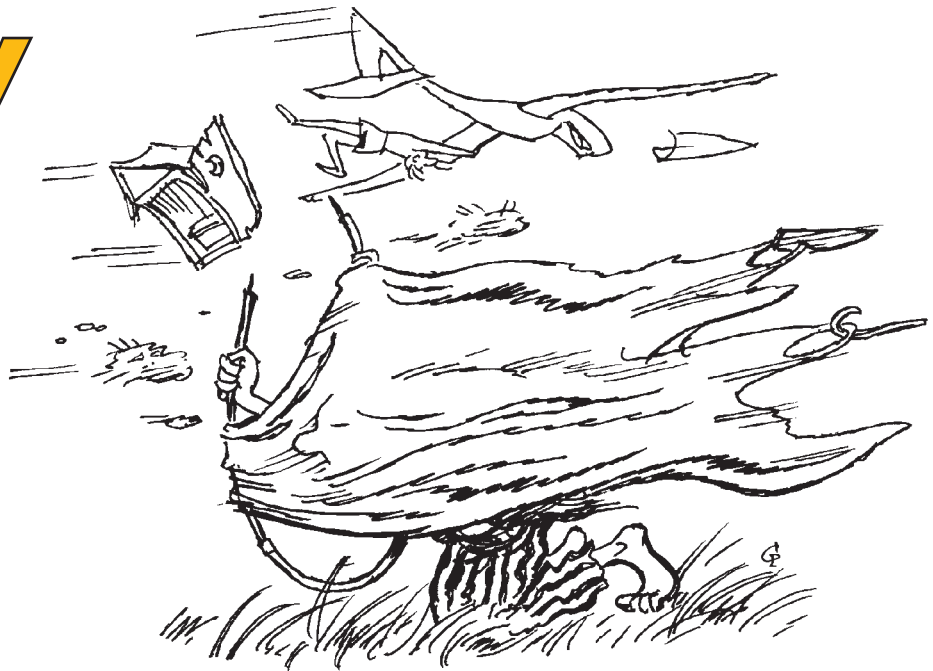
Wednesday morning Grace and I were on our way with the motor home and trailer towards Stettler where we arrived around five o'clock and were greeted by a reporter from the local paper. The interview was done while I was derigging. After that we drove to the Chipman airport where we stayed overnight to continue our trip homewards to Grande Prairie on Thursday morning.

This was a great flight – the retrieve was interesting too, including a couple of ground navigation errors and solving an electrical problem on the trailer brakes by the yard lights of a parking lot at a gas station in Camrose. □

# Cowley

there's no lift like it

**Phil Stade**, Cu Nim



**M**OST GLIDER PILOTS LIVE RATHER ordinary lives, but twice a year we can make a journey that will transform our flying experiences into the extraordinary. Orlan Dowdeswell describes it this way:

*I have attended Cowley camps sixteen times in the last ten years, so you may wonder what keeps me coming back. For me it is the variety of challenges that every flight presents. You see, I'm from Regina where there is only one type of lift – thermal – and you do one of three things: circle right, circle left or fly straight. Oh yes, there are some things I do to occupy my mind such as watching clouds, looking for plowed fields and looking out for the one other glider that might be in the air at the same time or perhaps watching for the daily helicopter pipeline inspection flight at 3 o'clock.*

*Cowley – what a rush! There is wave, rotor, wind, snow, hail, ice on the inside of your canopy, a dozen other gliders in the same airspace, badger holes, multiple runways, restricted airspace, hypothermia, other pilots talking on the radio, safety discussions, weather briefings, quick weather changes, wind shear, oxygen systems, smoke, water bomber traffic, and yes, thermals, and so I hear, ridge or slope soaring. If all this doesn't get your adrenalin pumping, then you are in a coma.*

Day One of the summer camp got us up and exploring. Walter Mueller posted the longest flight for the day at 3:48 hours and he would end the week with a great 364 kilometres, six hour flight to Stettler in his attempt to fly from Cowley to Chipman. His five Cowley flights totalled 1491 minutes for an average of just under five

hours! Congratulations Walter on continuing to inspire others and for seeking out new challenges for yourself at 87. That Diamond climb is waiting for you in 2009.

Day 2 started early with Ryzard Gatkiewicz from Meadow Lake and I launching at 8:30 am to check out the clouds in the lee of the Livingstone Range. There was no wind on the ground but as we climbed through 2000 feet, we contacted wave and when we reached the primary wave we released in strong lift. A quick climb to about 16,000, photos of a beautiful rainbow below, over the top of the large rotor clouds and back down to land in less than an hour made for a very satisfying flight that got others enthused and flying.

Jean Claude took his first flight in the Cu Nim Jantar and after 3:40 hours he landed with the understanding someone was ready to fly that aircraft. No one else wanted it so off he went again for almost two more hours. Wilf Plester also recorded his first flight in the L-33 and the 2:57 flight was a personal best. The other seventeen flights of the day had a total time of about 39 hours.

Day 4 – busy! Thirty-three flights were launched, eight of them before noon. David Morgan stayed aloft in his Standard Cirrus for the day's longest flight at 6:12 hours. That's a real change from his usual situation in the back-seat as an instructor. We thought that all those flights with the first launch at 8:30 am and the last landing at 8:02 pm was a long day, but Day 7 was to beat that.



The 38 flights of 2 August started at 8:03 am and the last touched down after 8 pm. Jean Claude and I took the first launch of the day and experienced the most memorable flight of our lives. Very shortly after release we were at 15,000 feet near the Gap. Wave clouds stretched out to the west and we encountered very little sink as we pushed over to the Continental Divide. From there it was a quick run north in steady lift until we were west of the Chain Lakes. The trip south again and under the airway saw us flying at 100 knots and often with spoilers open to counteract the strong lift. Cloud bases started at about 12,000 and towered over us. It was truly an aviation wonderland. Lift seemed to be everywhere so we continued the flight south of Highway 3 and encountered strange conditions with thermals and wave clouds in the same vicinity. From there to the north end of Waterton Park was a struggle that continued as we headed back over the flatland and north for Cowley. Just south of Pincher Creek we saw Bruce Friesen heading south. He described the day this way:

*On 2 August, the Summer camp delivered the soaring pilot's trifecta: exceptional soaring conditions over a variety of spectacular terrain types, good food and great friends. Soaring conditions were in place at sunrise and persisted until sunset, although the nature of the lift and the locations of the lift shifted substantially throughout the day (and no one stayed in the air until sunset, choosing instead the aforementioned food and friends at the annual Saturday night barbecue).*

*I was lucky enough to sample an almost nine hour slice of those soaring conditions, launching at 11:20 am and landing at 8:00 pm to grab the last of the salads. The flight was entirely in convective lift, with evident influence from a strong westerly flow over the Rocky Mountains. Early in the flight, lift was strong downwind of the Livingstone Range. I had good climbs in thermals in the centre of the valley, using widely spaced cu as solid indicators of lift, and I also had a couple of good runs dolphin flying along the spine of the Porcupine Hills. In both cases, I believe there was some encouragement from weak wave across the valley, though not as strong an influence as had been the case on the previous day. Then it was quite possible to thermal up into wave and keep climbing, as is frequently the case at Cowley. Also evident the previous day was the downside of those conditions which is an excessive influence of wave on the thermals, resulting in a scratchy day for moving around the countryside.*

*Conditions were much weaker downwind of gaps in the Rocky Mountains. I experienced disappointing conditions downwind of the Crowsnest Pass on two separate attempts to reach Waterton Park Gate, and also southwest of Longview. Off tow, I tried to go south, but found little lift south of Highway 3 until I had drifted quite far east of the mountains. Heading north around 2 pm, I was thinking of bending west to skirt the Calgary airport*

*airspace, but conditions looked weak nearer the mountains across the Highwood River gap, so I decided to turn around and give south a second try. Conditions weakened as I left the Porcupines and crossed Highway 3, but there was a great thermal at the north end of the Waterton dam, and a good thing too because a foray southwest getting closer in to the mountains led to a tail-between-the-legs retreat back to the same saviour. Weak conditions yet again crossing Highway 3 just east of Pincher Creek led to tagging in to the Cowley house thermal at the south end of the Porcupines at a fairly low altitude hence a long slow climb back up.*

*(House thermal, yes, but in conditions like those today with the strong westerly flow, one must keep a cautious eye on the drift, or decide to land somewhere further east. It's always good sport at Cowley, while on the ground, watching a pilot scratching up over the Porkies meanwhile blowing downwind, and making bets on whether or not he would be coming back!)*

*One last run north along the Porcupines highlighted another facet of flying at Cowley, that being strong development, and overdevelopment, later in the day. Sadly, with powerful lift throughout the valley, at about 5:30 pm, near the compressor station, I turned back south out of respect for a black band of virga cutting off progress to the north.*

*Thinking my day was over, I had wandered south past Cowley, and then further south and west up into the hills above Beaver Mines, just enjoying the evening and the frequent thermals (average climb rates of 2–3 knots). Spotting a cloud street from Frank Slide easterly, I tagged onto it over Burmis and took a three knot climb to 10,000. Note, I was now right over Highway 3, my nemesis throughout the day. Well, in 20 minutes that cloud street took me past Brocket and to 11,000 feet with the street continuing to at least Fort Macleod. Turning around, and deliberately pulling south of the street out into the sunshine for warmth, I continued the dolphin flying all the way upwind to the Frank Slide. SeeYou gave me a total of 105 km at an L/D of 105, and that with deliberately missing the best lift on the into-wind portion! For some reason, the same westerly flow through the Pass that had been suppressing lift all afternoon had reinvented itself as a mammoth lift generator.*

*There's never a dull day at Cowley. Others made different choices, and had very different flights – in wave early in the day, running the spine of the Livingstones, insisting on going to Waterton (but not coming out again!), heading east out over the prairies (also not coming back!). Wonderful.”*

Dave Rolland and Peter Neary were determined to use the great conditions and declared a task to Medicine Hat. The first part of their mid-afternoon flight went

well but by the time they reached the Taber area it was clear that would be it. A long aerotow retrieve had them back for the barbecue with their families.

The last day of the camp usually involves more cleanup than flying but conditions and hopes resulted in fourteen flights plus the three ferry flights to Cu Nim. The highlight of the day for many was following Walter Mueller's progress north as he made radio calls to let us know how he was doing. At about 6 pm he radioed that he had landed at the Stettler airport. What a great way to end the Summer camp.

Fall Cowley was all wind! Winds in excess of 100 km/h shut operations down on a couple of days, and very strong turbulence on other days made flying anything but normal. On two days there were flights that included climbing up the face of snowstorms moving through the area. One such day saw Tim Radder in his Dart, Darren Clark in ISK, and Mitch Dryzmala and me in TEG climbing at 1000 ft/min and moving in and out of the lines of snow. Days like that led John Mulder to describe his interaction with Cowley conditions this way:

*One of the unique features of Cowley is the opportunity to experience several different types of lift, and often this can be experienced in the same flight! One of my most memorable flights recently started with a tow to 2000 near the house thermal by the Hutterite colony. Using this thermal I climbed to 8000 then headed to the west toward the valley leading in to the Frank Slide. Small thermals along the way helped me maintain my altitude as I ventured further to the west past Blairmore and Coleman. There the lift was getting soft, so I turned east again but was finding very little lift. I decided to try the ridge along the west side of Frank Slide as it was sunny and there was a westerly wind that might allow me to climb up the west face. Having few other options as the thermals had shut down in the valley, I started to fly along the slope about 1500 feet below the top of the ridge. Sure enough, there was 2-3 knots as I flew back and forth and started to climb up the west face. The lift began to increase as I reached the top of the ridge and a thermal was being released from the sunny west side. As the ridge seemed to weaken, I began to circle in the thermal which turned into a steady 10-12 knots and the elevator ride to cloud base at 12,000 was over quickly.*

*That was the save I needed to continue for several more hours along the Livingstone range.*

*My best wave flights for altitude and distance are equally split between the summer and fall camps at Cowley, so another unique feature of this fantastic soaring resource available to us is the opportunity to experience the different conditions in either season. There were several thermal flights this fall with the temperature at only 3-5°C! You did have to work around the snow flurries. →11*

IT WAS MONDAY, last day of Cowley Fall camp. The plan was to get in a few wave flights before starting the work of getting gliders back to Black Diamond. The first launch was Phil Stade and Henry Wyatt in FMJS (Edmonton's Puchacz). Next in line, I took my sister-in-law Evelyn up in Cu Nim's L-13, ISK, for one last attempt at catching the wave. When we released in the wave we continued to climb at 6 to 10 knots. We topped out at 12,700 and travelled back and forth between Pincher Creek and the Livingstone Range. The mountains and the clouds were incredible. Evelyn couldn't believe how fast we were climbing. She asked for an exciting ride so we did some high 'g' turns, wingovers etc. The experience amazed her.

The next launch after us was Ron Cattaruzza from ESC in his Acro. Then I radioed to see if other launches were going to happen. Lyn Michaud had arrived in ICO to tow a Blanik back but advised against landing for the time being. The gusts had picked up to 30 to 40 knots and Dave Rolland in PCK was circling and waiting for a chance to land. Eventually he diverted to Claresholm but it was too gusty there also, and went on to land back at Cu Nim. At this point, Phil and Henry had reached 28,000 feet. We were told to stay up for a while hoping things would settle down a bit. After two hours, we decided to land and basically descended like a helicopter, landing diagonally on the runway. When we landed, we began to roll backwards so I held the wheel brake until the quad arrived to tow us back. We had guys on both wings to keep the glider from blowing away and I stayed on the stick to steady the control surfaces.

Phil and Henry landed ten minutes later and Ron ended up landing at Cu Nim, 121 km away. We spent the next several hours figuring out how to derig the Puchacz and the L-33 in the extreme winds. Then pilots and vehicles had to be shuffled back and forth since Dave and Ron were forced to land at Cu Nim and Lyn couldn't fly ICO back to Black Diamond due to the wind.

Here is a neat side note to the day. The previous day I had lost my cell phone on the airfield. We spent hours looking for it, phoning it, etc. with no success. After we had touched down close to the intersection, Darren Clark came out to tow us back, stepped off the quad, picked up my phone and handed it to me. We practically landed on it!

It was an eventful day of memorable flights.

**Wilf Plester**, Cu Nim



Ursula and I were ready to travel to the Region 8 competition in Ephrata, Washington during the whole week prior to the contest – I only had to wait for the printer to send me a proof of *free flight 3/08* to check. Tues, Weds, Thurs – finally it arrived at 2:30 and I could “ok to print”. We got on the road almost immediately, stopped in Sandpoint, Idaho for the evening, and the next day we took the scenic route to Ephrata (via Hwy 2 west of Spokane) rather than the Interstate and on arrival rigged and tied down on the line right away to grab a good spot.

It looks like there will be only eleven in Sports and eight in 15m this year. Some of the usual competitors passed up the contest to use their holiday time for the US National Sports Class being held in Montague, CA that followed the Region 8 dates. This contest was moved up a week to avoid that conflict, and it was an unfortunate change for John Mulder who had got holiday time to come on the “normal” dates after I had been extolling the virtues of this site for some time.

Several of the BC regulars were on hand: Mike Thompson (Ventus 2), Dave Burgess (ASW-19), Dennis Vreeken (SZD-55), and Lothar Schaub (Ka6E).

### 22 June Saturday, practice day

Do your own gridding, 2-1/2 hour Modified Area Task (MAT) with Mansfield as first TP. A MAT task is the same as the standard area task except that one or more TPs are specified by the task committee. There was a fair amount of cirrus, and finally an Open ship launched about 1:30. Watched carefully, it climbed slowly under the clag. Dust devils are seen on hills at the south end of the plateau west of the airport. Finally, many launched (the usual scramble when 1 or 2 gliders are seen to move onto the grid), with the earlier ones landing soon. Others got away and completed the task with late starts after 3 pm when more sun reached the ground. A few cu actually formed on the east edge of the plateau. I got shot down immediately after my launch and didn't bother with a relight.

### 23 June, no contest

Forecast high was to be 81 (but it only got to 73), westerly winds 15 knots. Satellite photos showed a cirrus deck moving towards the task area during the day, but it was overhead as pilots left the pilot meeting at 1030. Cirrus got thicker, and after two 30-minute delays to the gridding time, the task was cancelled. Local 'scratchmaster' Helmut Gebenus was offered the opportunity

to sniff, but even he passed up a free tow. There was no improvement at all during the day – the sun barely cast a shadow – and no one even launched for fun.

### 24 June, Day 1

The soaring forecast was finally looking favourable, although mostly blue with an inversion forecast at about 9000 ft. High 80. Task, a 3.5 hour MAT with Nilles Corner and Wilbur the mandatory TPs.

I launched near 1250 and found early thermals hard to find and peaking at only 5800 feet msl. Finally around 1340 the ceiling popped and thermals got stronger and went to 6500, still quite low for an Ephrata start. Started at 1348 and headed off north. However, the next thermal was great – 6 knots average to over 8000, and south of Nilles Corner I got to almost 10,000 feet. It looked like it was going to be a great day after all.

Off to Wilbur to the east, the thermals were initially good but started to get harder to find. I soared in the 8000 foot range, got down to 5500 at Wilbur then got what turned out to be the last good one to 9000 and a bit just past Wilbur. I headed towards Dry Falls dam which was on the way home, and basically thermalled downwards, getting to Coulee City at 3000 (1200 agl) and was heading for the airport there when I got a climb to 7000 which was enough to go for Ephrata. I fully expected to get more lift somewhere on the remaining 37 km, enough to make Ephrata a TP, then do an O&R to a close-in TP to complete the 3.5 hours.

Nope, it was just steady sink and burbles over the good looking lava and fields and I just got back to an abbreviated circuit, landing 25 minutes short and 350 feet under the minimum 1000 foot finish height – that really knocked back my overall speed (which is based on the full 3.5 hour minimum time) to 44.24 mph handicapped and the 76 point low finish penalty dropped me from 6th to 9th place with a score of only 727 points.

### 25 June, Day 2

The forecast was for conditions much like the previous day but a bit weaker on average. The spoiler was cirrus that was to move in late afternoon, so the task was a shorter 2.5 hour TAT with TPs of Nilles Corner-Cannial-Mansfield, each with a 15 mile radius circle.

However, by the noon grid time the cirrus was already in the west and getting closer. By the 1230 launch time everyone was sure that the task would be derated and sure enough, it was dropped to a 2 hour MAT with only Wilbur to the northeast as a mandatory TP. Relief.

The pre-start thermals were stronger than yesterday, though still not going too high, but when the gate opened I was able to get to 7200 feet and trickle off towards Wilbur. The ground was being shaded by cirrus

but there were sunnier holes and the dust devils indicated that thermals existed.

I was cautious and didn't go too fast. Thermal climbs were improving on course but I didn't change gears, though I should have. Just past the turn at Wilbur the best thermal of my day appeared which took me to 9800 feet and enabled a long glide towards sunnier spots on the way home. I headed a little west of course to pick up the Dry Falls dam as a TP. I did get down to 4700 feet a bit north of the Coulee City airport before getting a climb. That spooked me and I hung on to 7500 feet to ensure a final glide to Ephrata.

I headed straight home even though the TP at the dam was just 8 km off track to my right but I didn't want a repeat of yesterday. I was overly cautious – there was lift on the way back and I finished in 2:10 hours. My score told the sad story – an actual course speed of just 38 mph – barely more than stall speed – good grief!

The evening featured a catered dinner on the clubhouse deck – followed by dog tricks (really).

### 26 June, Day 3

The forecast was about as hot as yesterday (83F) but with stronger winds (10-15 knots) and a stronger inversion at about 7500. Possible wave but no upper associated cirrus. They were right on the wave, very wrong on the cirrus! A sniffer was launched at 1230 and had a hard time staying up in weak choppy thermals. Launch was delayed until the sniffer got improved lift which occurred at 1330. The task had been backed off to the alternate and shortened a half hour to 2.5 hours; a TAT – Nilles Corner (10 sm ring) - Dry Falls (5 sm) - Mansfield (10 sm). During the wait for launch, a small intermittent wave cloud was seen above the plateau.

With the Sports class airborne, the thermals were usable, and the little wave cloud a few miles to the west was very enticing. Many of us thermalled up and pushed that way. I was able to connect above 8000 and got bumps of wave climb to 9200 feet, a great height to start from Ephrata, and I started at 1440.

Then, soon after the cruise north began, broad upper wave clouds began to form, and soon the whole north end of the course was in deep shade. There was even a spatter of raindrops out of this cloud deck. I was able to get in to touch the 10 mile circle at Nilles (I thought) and retreat south but the game was up – low down the lift was completely blown apart so I diverted southwest and made it to the Mansfield airport at 1555.

The next morning, the scorer said I was short of the 10 mile circle by about 300 feet. That was a puzzle since I was closely watching the Volkslogger count down the distance and I turned when it read under 16 km. Looking



at my trace however, the closest I got was 16.2 km – 100 metres short of 10 miles. I won't try to be as close to the limit like that from now on!

There were a lot of landouts and only a single pilot got around in our class; I have no idea how he did it. Some time after I had been down and wandering the quiet streets of Mansfield, I saw the DG-1000 being pushed along the runway. It is a BIG glider. The sky had cleared again by then but the first set of thermals hadn't got going and they had to drop in for a visit also. We chatted, and when the Pawnee arrived to aerotow it back, I ran the wing then radioed them to see if they could raise Ursula to find out where she was on my retrieve. She was almost at the airport.

My result – 44 miles for 286 points – sixth and still eighth place overall. I was feeling blue; what do I need to do to get my mojo back?

#### **27 June, Day 4**

Today was going to be an actual racing day. The forecast thermal strengths were about like yesterday, an inversion at 7500 that the best thermals (from dust devils usually) could break, winds now less than 10 knots and definitely no cirrus. Max temperature now 88-90F.

The Sports task was a 3 hour TAT with turnpoints at Nilles Corner, Cramer, and the US#2 highway intersection. The TAT circles allowed distances of 106 to 225 miles (163 mi nominal).

I was first off in the class and had to do a lot of soaring before the start. I got one thermal to 7800 even before the gate opened – a great height for the conditions, then thermalled downwards again and finally took a 5600 foot start at 2:25 just to get going. Swearing at myself for the poor start, I flew into the best thermal I had seen in a long time just three miles on course. That got me to 7800 feet again and I came back for a restart at 2:40 without a soul in sight. Again, the first thermal on track was a dust devil doozy that took me to 9200 and now I was off in fine style this time, and actually caught up with some gliders that had departed during my first start.

The day was decent for the first half of the task and I didn't get low enough to switch gears. After that there were three sequences of long glides before finding anything, followed by big climbs. The low points were in the 4000 foot range which had me looking at the local airport frequency for Almira on the chart while going for fields to the south with dust devils on them. Worrying, but it does increase overall speed as a result of fewer times futzing around in junk and less thermal centering time wasted.

On the third leg westward towards the US#2 junction, I again passed over my favourite low spot, Coulee City,

this time getting down to 4000 asl over the rocks right over the Dry Falls dam. I was haring around for anything and giving myself another 500 feet before backtracking to the airport, when I found my get-home thermal. It got better with height, and I hung on to it to 8600 feet, more than enough for a straight glide into the 5 mile TP circle and final glide 35 km back.

I had too much height in hand really, and was flying in the yellow arc of the ASI to finish at a reasonable height agl. I could – should – have flown further across the 5 mile TP circle to add distance (and resultant achieved speed) to the flight before turning home. The really annoying part is that I completely forgot about the 3 hour minimum time and I finished about 8 minutes under, which dropped my scored speed a little over 1 mph.

Everyone got around – it was a good day, finally. Ursula and I headed off to have dinner before the scores got posted. Then we drove back to the field – I thought I would be in the middle of the pack if I was lucky, but I won the day! Actual distance/speed was 133 mi/44.6mph (158/52.9 handicapped), 1 mph over second place, even with the time penalty ... I did get my mojo back.

#### **28 June Day 5, last day**

The forecast is yesterday again except it will be almost 10 degrees hotter with a max of very high 90s. The wind is light as we are in the middle of a high, but today a few knots out of the east. This will give the pilots a tailwind component home – an unusual bonus in Ephrata. The best thermals will likely get over 10,000 feet. It looks like it's going to be the ideal day for a Russia.

The task is a 3 hour TAT: Waterville (20 mi circle) - Creston (15 mi), a nominal 157 mi around with a 93/223 mile min/max distance.

No problem with climbs today. Pre-start, I moved to the south of the airport off the plateau and got a slow climb to about 8200 feet, moved another mile south to get out of the 5 mi start ring, and was then on my way west. Generally speaking the conditions turned out a little weaker than yesterday – evident by fewer and smaller dust devils – the thermal tops were a thousand feet lower – the inversion was definitely chopping off the weaker thermals at 7500 or so.

I went to the extreme western edge of the plateau at Waterville and turned east at 8200 ft. Thermals became harder to find as I neared Banks Lake, and a lot of 5 knot sink in the area got me down uncomfortably below 5000 feet over the last good-looking fallow fields on the west edge of the basalt cliffs before the lake. I needed more to safely reach the fields on the other side. It was hot in the cockpit! I got a weak thermal and was climbing when a large hawk came over, joined me, and then helped me get centred – thank you very, very much! → 20

# “Air Dogs”

Discovery Channel discovers wave flight  
**Phil Stade**, Cu Nim



KNOW THERE WOULD BE CAMERAS ON BOARD, but all these other cables, microphones, recorders and transmitters don't leave much space for pilots! The sound and camera guys have spent the last four or five hours duct taping everything into place in 'CU', Peter Neary's 20 metre two-seat IS-32 'super' Lark. They've checked video and sound recordings many times and now that the rain has stopped it's time for Mark and I to try it out.

Yes, this is the Fall camp but the extras are the crew for Mark Miller's production of another Discovery Civilization **Air Dogs** episode. Mark and 'Rooster' (Capt. Robert Reichert) are the hosts of the show, which revolves around the two pilots experiencing some interesting corner of the flight envelope of a wide variety of aircraft. This time their adventure was to challenge the Livingstone lee wave in a glider. Boy, were they in for a ride!

The director, Neil Thomas, is the son of Garnet Thomas, an active ESC glider pilot in the 1980s and 90s and a past-president of the ASC. (As a youngster, Neil attended Cowley camps with his father.) Garnet first contacted Tony Burton in the summer to sound out the possibilities and practical aspects of doing a gliding episode that met the adventure theme of the TV series.

The rain has been wiped off the canopy and Lyn Michaud in ICO takes up the slack for our first tow with all the

equipment aboard. We don't expect any wave but, as we head southwest toward the Pass and the Frank Slide, we see that rotor clouds are forming to the east of Centre Peak, a sure sign of activity. Mark tries his hand on tow but a few seconds is enough of a challenge and the glider wins. We do contact lift and Mark gets his first taste of rotor and wave flying. Both are a lot more active than he anticipated which, of course, is what we hoped for, and we must wait to see how his reaction appears on TV.

Back on the ground there are a few interviews to record, scenarios to act out, and changes to be made to the wing tip high definition camera mount. On tow the shape of the duct taped camera mount has added lift to the left wing and Rooster, a military test pilot, has come up with a solution. He duct tapes a pencil across the face of the mount to trip the air flow. It works and flying controls again respond as they should.

Sunday looked like a great day for wave so we tried to get started early but it was still mid-morning by the time Rooster and I were ready to launch in CU. He flew the complete aerotow which was more demanding than usual since we were flying in formation with a Cessna 182 chase plane with a camera man on board. Safety was foremost on our minds so each change of direction was pre-announced and the occasional roar of the 182's engine reminded us of the need to be alert.



The line of rotor clouds associated with the primary wave was ahead so I advised Rooster to tighten his belts. The moment we hit wave the chase plane was at our eight o'clock and the towplane was straight ahead. Rooster was doing a great job handling the extreme turbulence, but suddenly we were rocketed up. The chase plane and towplane were no longer in sight – we both hauled on the release and moments later the average climb rate was over 16 knots! We saw the towplane making a run for it below and we could hear on the radio that the chase plane was struggling valiantly in an attempt to catch us.

We were still finding pockets of rotor and the glider was just doing its own thing, which was never smooth and level. Rooster had his hands full so the conditions were perfect for the show. Unfortunately, the camera man who was strapped in the open door of the chase plane got very little footage as he lost the battle fighting the negative and positive 'g' generated by the rotor. In moments we were over 11,000 feet. It would have been tempting to continue climbing but Rooster had a meeting to attend on the East Coast and a connecting flight to catch in Cold Lake. Landing the Big Bird is sometimes a handful but Rooster showed his stuff and aced it.

Mark Miller's turn was next and, since the Air Dogs show is presented as a friendly contest between the two hosts, Mark was out to beat the altitude Rooster had achieved. The turbulence was just as strong as on the previous flight so Mark got a real Cowley rotor ride. Once off tow he took the controls and battled with the rotor until we hit the smooth lift of the wave. What a contrast! One second we were in wing-bending turbulence and then silence and smooth air. We couldn't have picked a better way to illustrate what wave flying at Cowley can offer glider pilots. Time constraints again intruded and although we climbed close to Rooster's maximum altitude we weren't able to beat it before heading back for a landing.

There were more camera changes: the one on the top of the tail was relocated behind the wheel and facing forward and the one facing me was mounted behind the release to record the departing tow rope. More interviews and hours of filming the aircraft on the ground with a boom-mounted camera brought the on-site portion of the work to a close on the third day of filming.

Neil will be editing more than 40 hours of filming down to the 22 minutes required for the Air Dogs show. We have great hope that his association with wave soaring will generate a final cut that highlights our sport in an exciting and accurate way. The soaring episode will likely be broadcast during the spring of 2009, so keep checking the Discovery Civilization web site at:

<[http://www.discoverycivilization.ca/schedule/series.aspx?timezone=EST&type=series&series\\_name=air\\_dogs](http://www.discoverycivilization.ca/schedule/series.aspx?timezone=EST&type=series&series_name=air_dogs)> (note the space between 'air' and 'dogs'). □

## Cowley

from page 6

*Using the thermals allowed me to climb into the wave this fall. After an early release, thinking I was established in some good feels-like-wave lift, and finding it wasn't there, I headed back to the field for a relight. As I crossed the creek to the west, I started to circle in a strong thermal at 1200 above ground, and drifted to the east over the Porkies while climbing to 9500. This allowed me to contact the tertiary wave and start flying to the north, crossing into the secondary for a flight to the compressor station and back. I have discovered that wave flying doesn't need to be about climbing to 20,000 feet. It can be used to fly some cross-country at a higher than normal speed in the smooth flow of the wave, without climbing above 12-14,000 feet.*

Steve Hogg's 6 October flight in the Jantar was memorable. It was his second solo flight into wave and his climb to 26,000 ft. was the camp record to that time, unfortunately he didn't have a recorder on board. Greg Nuspel and I in the IS-32 climbed to within 1000 feet of him and can verify that he did achieve that altitude. It was great fun to have visual contact at that height but disconcerting to lose it as frost formed on the canopy.

Two unfortunate accidents occurred at the camp. A pilot experienced PIOs on takeoff and contacted the ground with enough force to take the aircraft out of commission. The other accident resulted in severe damage to Cu Nim's towplane but again there was no injury to the pilot and we were very thankful for that.

The last day of the camp was the most dramatic. Three aircraft launched and climbed into wave before the flight line was shut down because of gusting high winds. After the last tow, PCK was unable to land due to the conditions and towpilot Dave Rolland diverted to Claresholm and eventually flew on to Black Diamond where calmer conditions existed. There were still three gliders in the air and all had very interesting flights. Henry Wyatt and I climbed to 28,000 in the Puchacz (no recorder!). Wilf Plester and his sister-in-law climbed to about 12,500 in an L-13 and spent about two hours waiting for better landing conditions. Ron Cattaruzza in XKM took off last and his choice was eventually to divert to Black Diamond to land! Henry and I watched Wilf setting up for his landing and observed very little ground roll after touchdown. With that landing and the wind speed evidence it supplied, it was our turn to land. Our final started with an airspeed over 70 knots but we had to push that to over 90 knots to deal with the very strong wind. The gusts had dissipated somewhat so all turned out well for the last landing of the Fall camp.

Thanks to everyone who helped out with preparations for the camps and especially to the towpilots for their participation that made all our flying possible. □

# Reflections

## on the Western Canada Soaring Contest

Al Stirling, Cu Nim

I HAD PLANNED TO WRITE ABOUT ALL MY FLIGHTS in great detail, describing my strategy and the decision-making events that affected them. However, once I started, I realized I was having a senior's moment and couldn't remember them well enough to do so.

What I do recall, however, is that fate and luck can sometimes play a greater role in cross-country flying than strategy and pilotage. I also do remember distinctly Phil Stade's philosophy about the competition. As CD, he continually emphasized the safety and the fun nature of the meet. About half the field had no contest experience and many of those had limited cross-country experience. The tasks were set up in such a way so that potentially everyone could complete the tasks and those with more experience could attempt much longer distances if desired.

This made it fun as well as being a challenge for everyone.

Generally speaking, I chose a conservative approach to the tasks and very frequently thermals were there when I needed them. That, combined with flying a sailplane which has more than adequate performance, I managed to complete all the tasks with relatively good distances and speed.

I would like to thank all those who participated in the competition for their great attitude helping to make it a fun and enjoyable event. Also, my thanks to those who helped with the organizing, and especially to Phil who spent a great deal of time organizing and paving the way for a successful meet. Even the weather cooperated this year. I look forward to the next one. □

### Cumulative scores

Pts	Trophy	Name	Glider	Jul 1		Jun 30		Jun 28		
				Rank	Pts	Rank	Pts	Rank	Pts	
1	2386	Club #1	Al Stirling	ASW-20B	1	944	1	628	1	814
2	1631	Club #2	Frank Cwikla	ASW-15B	6	710	3	451	8	470
3	1576	Club #3	Phil Stade	Jantar	4	732	6	298	7	546
4	1510		John Toles	L-33 Solo	2	808	4	327	12	375
5	1483		Ron Cattaruzza	SZD-59 Acro	9	615	7	222	5	646
6	1441		Roy Eichendorf	Open Cirrus	3	771	10	0	3	670
7	1412		Dowdswell/Westphal	DG-400	11	171	2	564	2	677
8	1370		John Mulder	Genesis 2	5	711	10	0	4	659
9	1343	Novice #1	Hank Hees	Apis	6	710	10	0	6	633
10	1279	Novice #2	Carol Mulder	Jantar	7	709	9	108	9	462
11	1039		Henry Wyatt	Ka6E	8	676	10	0	13	363
12	1023		Walter Mueller	Open Cirrus	10	256	5	312	10	455
13	400	Novice #3	Gary Hill	ASW-15B	12	0	10	0	11	400
14	385		Deschamps/Radder	Dart	12	0	8	135	14	250

### Daily winners

				pts	km/h		dist.	
					hand.	true	hand.	true
Day 1	Club	Al Stirling	ASW-20B	814	78.16	86.85	195.02	216.69
	Novice	Hank Hees	Apis	633	41.40	39.81	182.25	175.24
Day 2	Club	Al Stirling	ASW-20B	628	58.54	65.04	114.36	127.06
	Novice	Leo Deschamps	Dart	135			26.03	23.95
Day 3	Club	Al Stirling	ASW-20B	944	80.92	89.91	195.80	217.55
	Novice	Hank Hees	Apis	710	55.89	53.74	124.47	119.69

Novice = First contest and less than 200 hours PI

# experiencing Battleford

**Hank Hees**, Saskatoon Soaring

**T**HE EXPERIENCE OF ATTENDING and competing in the 2008 Western Canada Soaring Competition was a thrilling culmination of many small steps that I had taken over the last three or four years to reach the point of being able to take part in such an event. Ever since I experienced an 'intro' ride in Hawaii back in 1990, I'd been waiting to find the right time to take up the sport of soaring. So 15 years later, as a middle-aged fellow who finally felt that I had the time to pursue this dream, I commenced my journey as an enthusiastic student glider pilot at the Saskatoon Soaring Club in 2005. With my determination to fly every chance I could get, and with the help of some great club instructors, I progressed gradually through the typical rewarding milestones:

- reaching solo status in our club's Blanik L-13,
- becoming a licensed glider pilot,
- flying the club solo glider (L-33 Solo) for the first time,
- achieving my first flight over 2 hours in duration,
- getting my Bronze badge.

I was finding so much enjoyment in soaring, and now wanted to start honing the skills for cross-country flight. I had already taken the plunge of ordering my own sailplane (an Apis) and I waited patiently for it and its trailer to arrive in Canada from Europe. By late last August I got it and did have the opportunity to fly it a few times at our local club before our season ended. To help deal with the torture of waiting during the long winter for flying season to begin again, I was fortunate to be able to attend the all-day CAS Soaring Seminar which was being held in conjunction with the SAC AGM in Montreal. There I soaked up the information presented by experienced Canadian cross-country soaring pilots on topics such as weather forecasting, improving thermalling skills, flying for badges, landing out safely, etc.

Early in our club's flying season this year, I attained a 5-hour flight and the 1000m altitude gain, completing two parts of the three requirements for the Silver badge. On a subsequent flight I declared a 50 km task, which unfortunately I didn't achieve on that first attempt, losing lift less than 10 km from my destination and being forced to experience my very first landout in a farmer's field (yes, I remembered everything I'd learned at the seminar about landing out safely!).



In this sport, everyone follows their own path to achieve the goals that they set for themselves, and in my case there was no better next step in my evolution as a glider pilot than to be able to take part in the Western Canada Soaring Competition in late June. To rub shoulders with so many other glider pilots (both experienced veterans of the sport as well as fellow novices like myself) was a thrill. The pilot meetings held every morning were a value experience for me, as I learned some more about weather, tephigrams, safety issues, and task-setting for each day, all within an atmosphere of camaraderie and laughter which can't be beat. I still have much to learn, but to have my glider set up in position on a flight line each afternoon with well over a dozen other gliders made me feel as though I had arrived as a legitimate member of the soaring community. I had my maps at the ready and my turn-points entered into my flight recorder and suddenly it was my turn to get aerotowed and start my task. Quickly I was pushed onto the runway, hooked up, and away I went!

After that the days went by too fast and before I knew it the competition was over and it was time for everyone to start heading back home. I returned to Saskatoon with great memories; it's sure fun to be part of an event such as this, which was not intimidating for a novice and yet offered a reasonable challenge for someone wanting to learn some cross-country and soaring competition skills. So now it's back to my home club; I guess it's time for me to try that 50 km declared task again so I can get that Silver badge before the season is over! □

# “Team Mulder”

Carol & John Mulder

Well, what are you all doing sitting on the ground next to that lawn ornament you call your glider!?

**T**HE CONCEPT OF “*Team Mulder Soaring*” started off as a T-shirt slogan. We wanted to get some T-shirts made before North Battleford, which we could also use at some other soaring events (Cowley, etc.). In determining a team name, we wanted to avoid segregating ourselves, so we rejected any idea that had the word “Club” in them. We weren’t trying to start a new club, but create our own supportive soaring team. We have eight fully-fledged members of the team, but we will make anyone an honorary member. The demographics of Team Mulder Soaring could be the envy of any gliding club. The eight members incorporate three pilots, four youth, two seniors, one disabled person, and five dedicated support crew! Our shares in equipment also reflect our diverse membership. We have five gliders (plus a loaner), two RVs and a towplane. All of this allows us to show up en masse to any local soaring event.

Although we started with just a T-shirt, the team developed a few unspoken goals over the summer. We wanted to show that soaring is a great family sport, and not just for the old codgers (no offence to any codgers out there!). Taking from the concept of “build it and they will come”, we attended events as a family and, sure enough, we started to see and hear from other families. I heard several times over the summer how much people enjoyed visiting Innisfail, due to the fact that we welcomed families and held social get-togethers in our campground. I also heard it said that “the Mulders have improved Cowley” by bringing out the family and helping to make it a popular family soaring destination again.

We also try to encourage our pilots to improve their performance. We convinced some to fly at North Battleford and both summer and fall Cowley. The On Line Contest was another focus. We have encouraged pilots to submit their flights, and many now see how easy it is. CAGC submitted 68 flights by 8 different pilots. Six had flights over 100 km.

John’s goals this year were to fly his 300 km Gold distance badge flight, to fly well at North Battleford, and to win the Stachow Trophy (for highest flight in Canada). My goals were to fly some 100 km tasks (to prove my 50 km badge flight last year wasn’t a fluke), participate in North Battleford, finish the instructor’s course, get a

Diamond altitude climb, and possibly to try for my 300 km. I’ve always felt that if you always reach all your goals, then you’re not setting them high enough. We didn’t fulfill all our goals this year, but we managed to make it through some of them. We’ve also started a substantial goal list for next year. We had many memorable flights over the summer – below are some of our favourites.

## **May 10, Innisfail AB (Carol)**

Jeff Runciman, Tim Radder, and I all wanted to fly an out-and-return 100 km task (Tim and Jeff were trying for their Silver distance). The path to the east looked pretty good, and we decided that Elnora and back was the way to go. Jeff was having problems making the task declaration before he took off, so decided to fly without one.

We all took off and proceeded east at our own pace. As I got closer to Elnora, I noticed that a rain shower was curtaining off the area. I debated going around, but didn’t think that would work. Since I was only going for OLC points, I decided to divert south to Trochu. I made it down there, and back to Innisfail, but what of Jeff and Tim? Jeff decided to push through the rain (he insists there was lift in it), and made it to Elnora, but alas he had not made his declaration. Tim saw the rain, and decided like me, not to push through. With Elnora as his declaration though, he turned around and headed home. Putting all three flights together on *Strepla* or *SeeYou* makes for fascinating viewing. You can see exactly where the decision point was for us all.

## **May 29, Innisfail AB (John)**

My first 300 km attempt was from Innisfail, flying northwest to Rimbey, east to Big Valley, southwest to Olds-Didsbury, and return. I set out to Rimbey and then to Big Valley with nice clouds leading the way but overdevelopment appearing to the west of Innisfail. Staying in front of the overdevelopment towards Big Valley made for a quick leg, but shoulder checks to the west showed the return legs would be challenging. I decided to fly south and try to get around that side of the weather, then west to complete the task. I was finally south of the weather at Drumheller, but the skies looked flat behind the weather passage, and a landing at the Drumheller airport was required. An aerotow back to Innisfail completed this attempt.

### May 31, Innisfail AB (Carol)

Again, Jeff, Tim and I were out to fly a 100 km task. This day we decided that north to Rimbey was the right direction. Tim and Jeff both had their declarations prepared this time. There was quite a headwind that we were battling, and again we all set off at our own pace. This time, none of us would be denied, and both Tim and Jeff finished their Silver distance. Both Tim and I were quite close to landing out, but kept at it as the lift cycled. Again, the greatest enjoyment of this day was to view the flight tracks on the computer all at the same time. Jeff actually made it back in time for John to do some cross-country too, so his flight on that day completes the aerial ballet.



down at Cutknife

### June 28, North Battleford SK (Carol)

This day was a 300 km day. The only thing with 300 km days is that you have to start early enough to take full advantage of the day. Due to competition and gridding delays, I don't think we started early enough. Everyone was in great spirits on this day, and there was quite a bit of positive chatter on the radio. Being able to hear the people around you made it just a little less lonely out there. I had declared the turnpoints for a 300 km task, and figured that I'd give it a try. I made the first turnpoint with ease and then headed southwest. When I reached the river, it was blue on the other side. Dialogue on the radio let me know that a few others weren't willing to push into the blue, as they already had the turnpoint area required for the contest. I thought about whether I wanted to do well in the contest, or perhaps finish my 300 km. I decided to try for the 300 km, and kept going for the turnpoint. The turnpoint was an airport, so I figured it was a good backup plan for landing out. (I found out the next day that the airport was closed, and landing out there would not have been a good idea!) I made the turnpoint, but was starting to get low. Luckily I found a thermal and got high enough to begin to fly east again. At this point, struggling to stay airborne, I looked at the map to see what my options were. The

chatter on the radio had died down significantly, and the people who were still on the radio didn't sound like they were doing well. I wrongly assumed that everyone else was already back to North Battleford.

We had an unofficial agreement with John's daughter Kelli, who was watching the kids while we were flying, to only land out at airports so that we could get an aero-retrieve. I headed for Cutknife, and found no thermals to speak of, hunted around the area a little bit, but eventually had to land. For an airport, the foot long grass was surprising! I phoned back to the contest and arranged an aero-retrieve, and Bob Hagen came to rescue me.

I was pretty apprehensive about my first wing-down takeoff with that grass. All went well though, and as I returned to North Battleford, I found out that others were just landing from their flights. My perceptions of being the last person out were not even close. We never had a competition day as good as the first one, so I didn't get a chance to try for 300 km again.

### (John)

My first flight in North Battleford was my second attempt at the elusive 300 km. It started well and though I was flying slowly and climbing to the top of every thermal (slowing me even more), I was making reasonable progress. Venturing into blue skies at the second turnpoint after consistent lift for the first half of the flight was somewhat daring, but into the turnpoint I went. After making the turnpoint with a long glide and no lift, I started back to North Battleford hoping to make the field. With a little up or even zero sink, the third waypoint could be in reach. With the final turnpoint only 15 km off the nose, but no lift late in the day and other pilots starting to pick fields, I turned back for home just short of my goal.

The remainder of the weather for the contest didn't provide a great opportunity for another 300 attempt, but I did learn that I need to fly faster (or actually climb more efficiently and not linger at thermal tops) both for competition and future long cross-country flights.

### August 1, Cowley AB (John)

A windy morning with defined rotor was the view out the window on August 1. John Gruber in 4E and I managed to get airborne before the wind blew out further launches. We both soared up and down the valley in consistent wave lift in the primary of 3-4 knots. I decided to see how high the lift would take me, and climbed to 26,000 without much difficulty. It was cold and I hadn't planned to fly that high. Fortunately my canopy cover was behind my head and I managed to pull it out and use it as a blanket. I also found the glareshield cover shading my feet, along with a few air leaks, keeps the temperature quite chilly on the feet and legs. I would need to fix that before Fall Cowley. → 20

# Tony made us do it

Peter Neary, Cu Nim

**B**EING ALLOWED TO ATTEND the Summer Cowley camp when you are new dads is an unexpected treat. However, that is exactly where David Rolland and I found ourselves in July with our wives and young children in tow. With this came certain responsibilities like feeding, changing diapers and entertaining our young ones. Unfortunately, this also meant that we often watched gliders flying overhead (often my own IS-32A Lark two-seater) while we were still with our families at our travel trailers, daydreaming of flying.

Most years at Cu Nim begin with club member Tony Burton challenging us to set a goal for the season. But with most of the season already behind us, David and I had yet to fly a true task. So, on the last Saturday of the camp, parenting duties done and Tony's voice in my head saying, "Declare a task. Declare a task", we hurriedly prepared to launch on an out-and-return task of 400 kilometres.

But why just a task, when you can try for a Canadian record or two (a multiplace speed-to-goal and a free out-and-return distance). The only problem was that it was already 3 o'clock. But, with a favouring wind, a record did seem possible. So with a new stock of pee bags, water, a cell phone, 25 cents in my pocket, no food or landout kit, we started our roll on perhaps the worst-prepared record attempt possible.

An uneventful tow dropped us into a 5 knot thermal and an easy climb to 9000 feet to start our task. The computer chirped that we were in our start zone and we were off.

Fort Macleod was soon off our right wing (50 km in 30 minutes and only a thousand feet of altitude lost), but not without some debates between the pilots. A bit of spotty lift along the way teased us into turning but the drone of the front seat pilot convinced the plane to push on. At this pace, the first record (200 km speed-to-goal) was ours for the taking. A quick climb to 12,000 in a 6 knot thermal and we pushed east. Ahead, the clouds near Lethbridge did not look very appealing with dark scud, perhaps virga, that we would have to find a hole

through. Again the back and front seats were at odds. I was for speeding up and pushing through. The rear seat (David) was for slowing down and ensuring we got through this possibly turbulent area with the wings intact. The rear seat prevailed.

Some chatter on the radio from the back seat to Lethbridge Radio and a confirmation that they could see our transponder on their screen and Lethbridge was behind us and blue sky lay ahead. We were 107 km into our task, with only 100 km to go. A quick check of the computer and it confirmed we had our final glide to Bow Island with enough altitude left over for a circuit. But we had to

find some lift on the way to claim the speed record – arriving with greater than a 1000 metre loss of altitude would invalidate the task.

But the lift disappeared as we pressed eastwards. A 1000 foot climb followed by an 800 foot climb was all we could scrape out of the prairies for the rest of the flight. A long

struggle over the town of Taber for only a 2000 foot gain ended any chance of setting a record today. (Later, we would find out that we didn't get a valid start anyway.) Both of us agreed that our wives would appreciate getting the retrieve started sooner rather than later, which prompting the decision to land at the Taber airport.

A long look at what seemed like a very skinny runway dotted with landing lights, the wingtips reminding me that a 20 metre sailplane fits on a 75 foot runway with less than 5 feet on either side. No problem, I could do it in my sleep – at least that was the story I was telling myself to boost my confidence. But the landing was uneventful, and a quick call back to the camp brought some good news: instead of a long wait for my vehicle and trailer, a towplane was being dispatched. About two hours later we were back in the air on tow and heading west.

Releasing thirty kilometres from camp and racing the towplane back to the Cowley airfield with the sun setting was the ideal end to a wonderful day. Thanks, Tony. □



*Homeward bound from Taber at sunset.*





# CLUBS

## Edmonton

We began the year as usual with 16 hours of ground school. All lectures are now on PowerPoint. As it turns out, Dan Cook told us at Cowley that the SAC Training committee is collaborating with Paul Moggach to produce an interactive ground school program on Moodle, which should fit the need and cater to a generation accustomed to computer based learning. In the meantime we will run PowerPoint for a season or two more. Judging by the size of the ground school we should have been heavily committed to student training. Though many signed up, family commitments must have held some away from regular lessons, so that in the end the teaching load was not too heavy. If everyone who attended ground school went on to fly gliders we would have many more pilots, but strangely not all do.

Last year we provided flight training on Thursday evenings. It was very popular, presumably because students would then have the weekends for other things. But this year we were not able to continue.

Our club Safety Management is developing slowly. The first item through the process took a long time, but with good decisions in the end concerning oxygen use for high altitude flight. We need to become more familiar with the process to make it much faster, but at least we have a beginning.

Our glider fleet remains at two L-23s, one Puchacz, a PW-5, and an ASW-15. This is more than adequate for our needs, providing a range of training and soaring experiences for all members, but of course, we would love to have a more modern, higher performance sailplane.

The weather did not serve us well this season. Weekend days were lost, either for wind, or showers, or both. The result, taken with the smaller student turnout than expected, meant that we ended the year with a little over half the flights of last year. We need to do better next year.

An interest in soaring is growing in the club. Three members went to the North Battleford contest, four or five to each of the Cowley meets, one to the Valemout meet, and three to the Innisfail winch course. Gary Hill achieved his Gold climb, and Dale Armstrong his Silver climb. One pilot, Dale Travis, pushed himself hard for a fifty kilometre flight at Cowley, starting and finishing at the airfield, but his claim lacked the essential information after the flight and could not be submitted. Barry Mihychuk flew an excellent five hour claim out of Chipman, but again the needed details were not completed. We will run an OO course this winter to make sure all pilots understand the requirements,

and to make sure we have enough OOs. Not surprising, the pilots experiencing these failures become pretty disillusioned.

At the SAC instructor course two of our instructors were upgraded to Class 1 and one to Class 2. We also have one new Class 3 instructor. Even so, it is hard for instructors to find time for their own flying, and most end the season with less solo time than they should have.

As members of the Alberta Aviation Heritage Society, we can use space and equipment adjacent to the Aviation Museum to service our fleet in almost ideal conditions during the winter. This winter we shall also be able to store the gliders in the secure yard at the back of the Museum, saving us from the problem when the fleet at Chipman is inaccessible behind snow banks when we drive out to fetch them.

**Henry Wyatt**

An account of this year's activities wouldn't be complete without first recognizing the efforts of Doug Lessard, Lyle Shwetz, and Bob Hagen, who spent the winter of 2007/2008 constructing a new flight line trailer. Its features include a DC inverter which supplies electricity suitable for charging aircraft batteries and powering a VHF radio. The covered trailer is very sturdy, and will serve the club well for many seasons to come.

The club purchased a new wing mower attachment for its Kubota mower this year. The amount of time required for cutting the field has been reduced significantly.

A new large capacity fuel tank was recently installed.

Plans for the construction and implementation of a flight simulator, to reinforce concepts taught in ground school and at the field, are taking shape. The simulator will be transportable and require minimal effort to set up. During the flying season, it will be at the ESC clubhouse; over winter, it will be at the Aviation Museum hangar in Edmonton. Interestingly, a few of our younger students had spent many hours using flight simulator software, such as Microsoft FSX, prior to becoming student pilots. The ease with which these students transitioned from the computerized to real-world flying environment is remarkable.

Gary Hill, Doug Lessard, and Brian Murray have been working on a computerized flight logging system. This system will integrate into the billing program, decreasing the amount of time required to generate invoices.

More ESC members have joined the On Line Contest, a website where flight durations and distances are tallied alongside fellow glider pilots from around the world. Bruce Friesen, Gary Hill, Henry Wyatt, and Guy Blood are making contributions to our club scores on the site. ESC members are encouraged to join the contest; we anticipate that this will motivate many more cross-country flights in the future.

Wireless high-speed internet access is now available at the clubhouse. This has proven to be a very worthwhile expenditure, as

many members who stay overnight are able to check forecasts, e-mail, etc. regularly. Future plans include boosting the wireless signal so that it reaches our flight line trailer, whether it's located at the west or east end of the flight line. A camera system will be installed at the clubhouse. Images will be uploaded to the ESC website regularly, affording visitors a real-time view of the runway and current weather conditions. Our weather station is internet-capable, and its real-time data will also be available at the site.

On Saturday, 18 October, the ESC provided a number of intro flights to a group of Boy Scouts. This is only one example of the many community-oriented initiatives that the ESC embarks upon each year. Past passengers have included students from Grant MacEwan Community College, the University of Alberta, and members of the Red Hat Society.

ESC has entered into a partnership with <TryThat.ca>, a company that facilitates numerous adventures and once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Exposure to ESC's intro flights and facilities via TryThat.ca is not only beneficial to our club, but to the sport of soaring across Canada. Incidentally, this season we saw an increase in the number of people who visited for an intro flight because "this is something I've always wanted to do". Maybe this could be attributed to films such as *The Bucket List*.

Although we saw a reduced number of flights, 2008 was a productive year, and many beneficial projects were undertaken and completed. We're all hoping for a short winter followed by an early spring!

**Grant Ranson**

## Central Alberta

2008 was a safe, fun, and productive year for our club. Our season kicked off on 23 March with pilot and instructor check flights. Spring was the usual unpredictable Alberta weather. The best days always seem to be a weekday.

Club membership this year has grown to thirty regular members and four life members. Of the membership, seven were students (Valerie Deschamps, Tom Korte, Rene-Marc Bisson, Rob Pinkerton, Dan Tayles, Brian Taylor, and Cindy Turner). We had two pilots join us with experience, but not having been in a glider for a few years (Nico Marais and Lin Norris-Wagstaff). Congratulations to Rob Pinkerton for finishing his licence in Invermere, and to Dan Tayles for reaching solo standard.

With all the training, our instructors and CFI had their work cut out for them. Dale Brown almost single handedly instructed through to August when we were able to host the Western Instructor Course, producing three new instructors for our club (Carol Mulder, Shane Cockriell and Drew Hammond). CAGC had members at all the ASC events this year. At the Western Canada Soaring Contest in North Battleford, we had John and Carol Mulder, Leo Deschamps, and Tim Radder. Jeff Runciman also flew in for a day. At Summer Cowley we had

eight pilots attending: Drew Hammond, Jerry, John and Carol Mulder, Leo and Val Deschamps, Mel Walters, and Jeff Runciman. Six pilots attended the Fall Cowley camp: John and Carol Mulder, Jeff Runciman, Tim Radder, and Leo and Val Deschamps. The August winching weekend was a success again with visiting pilots Jean Claude from Cu Nim, and Vern Kallal, Dale Armstrong, Gary Hill, and Henry Wyatt from ESC.

Overnight camping at the airport really caught on this year and added to the social aspect of weekend soaring. John Mulder, our CFI, spearheaded the National Week of Soaring in May and it was just what we needed to get the members out and flying in force. The \$500 generated for the Canadian National Team seemed to give the club a sense of belonging in the big picture.

Carol continued to mentor our group of pilots in badge flying. Tim and Leo both finished their Silver badge this year. A Colibri flight recorder, purchased with our ASC excess funds disbursement, is a new addition to our soaring tool kit.

We can't write about 2008 without thanking our towpilots who put in many hours of flying for light reward: Jerry Mulder, Tom Schollie, Dale Brown, John Mulder, Jeff Runciman, Liam O'Connell, Don Bais, Bram Tilroe and Trent Leinenweber. We're now in the planning stages for 2009, looking to improving our fleet and looking forward to another successful flying season.

**Drew Hammond**

## Cu Nim

Cu Nim started the season very optimistically with a flurry of activity on the e-mail discussion group, even before the first checkflight of the year. A number of pilots were discussing grand plans for a downwind dash to John Gruber's parents' farm in Saskatchewan. The weather did not cooperate and none of these flights were achieved. However, the planning is not wasted; there is always next season ...

Our old Ford tractor is for sale if anyone is interested – we purchased a brand new Mahindra during the winter. It has given hours of entertainment to our would-be farmers, especially on the wet days at the beginning of the season, but mainly has made cutting the runway grass much faster.

Flying began slowly due to the damp spring, but improved throughout the season. There were only a few good cross-country weekend days, and Tony Burton was able to take best advantage of one of them to fly a Canadian Club class 300 km triangle speed record on 4 May in his Russia.

Flying still continues as I write this report at the end of October. As a result, although our income was below budget at the middle of the season, it has improved in the second half.

Cu Nim's glider fleet currently consists of three L-13s, an L-33 Solo and a Jantar.

Our members supported the Cowley camps, both by attending and by providing equipment. Notable Cowley flights were a flight by Phil Stade and Henry Wyatt (ESC) in Edmonton's Puchacz to 28,000 feet; and a flight by our newly licensed Steve Hogg to 26,000 feet in the Cu Nim Jantar. Phil Stade deserves special mention for hosting the Discovery Civilization "Air Dogs" TV team during the Fall camp (more details in his story on page 10). We look forward to seeing the wave flying footage that they took. Attending members also thoroughly enjoyed the contest at North Battleford, and congratulations to Al Stirling for leading the field in the Club class.



Al Stirling (left), Club class winner of the Western Canada Soaring Contest, is presented the ASC Bruce Trophy by Phil Stade in front of Cu Nim's clubhouse.

Of note was Jean Claude engaging in his favourite activity on the air tow to the summer Cowley camp; he landed out in a Blanik with a student (Mark Teskey) ten minutes after take off from an inadvertent towrope release!

An unfortunate incident occurred near the end of the Fall Cowley camp. Cu Nim's Scout towplane was overturned past the end of runway 21. The towpilot was unhurt, but extensive dam-



age was done to the towplane. Both wings would need to be replaced with the metal spar version, and initial estimates put the repair costs at close to the insured value of \$70K. At the time of writing, it has not been determined if the aircraft will be repaired or written off.

On a more positive note, Cu Nim has decided to purchase a brand new ASK-21. This will be used as a cross-country trainer and also to provide flying to people with disabilities. The aircraft has been ordered with hand controls in both cockpits to allow disabled students to progress to rear seat flying and to eventually become instructors. Cu Nim is excited to be working with Peter Musters to become the fifth chapter of *Freedom's Wings Canada*, an organization that provides people with disabilities the opportunity to fly. Peter has been successful in raising money for disabled flying through government grants, and he is assisting Cu Nim to do the same. We hope to raise at least \$90K towards the cost of the ASK-21 through grants, assisted by selling one of our Blaniks.

Wilf Plester attended the Western Instructor course at Innisfail, and graduated as a Class 3 instructor. Jean Claude was also added to our towpilot roster after a lot of hard work.

As always, it takes many hardworking volunteers to run a gliding club. However, I would like to highlight the efforts of a few people in no particular order:

- Kerry Stevenson for setting up the very successful glider exhibit with Darren Clark and Tony Burton at the Alberta International Air Show at Lethbridge.
- David Morgan for instructing, towing, and being the general treasurer, repairman, and just about everything else.
- Peter Neary for once again allowing us the use of his high performance IS-32 Lark.
- Phil Stade for manning the flight booking phone and scheduling student and introductory flights all season.
- Al Parker and Jean Claude (and all their assistants) for extensive structural upgrade to the small hangar.

As we go into winter, the executive and committees have many plans to keep everyone busy. Some of these are to look into the practical issues in lengthening our main runway to support winching, and to come up with a framework in which private and club hangars could be built. The students and instructors will also be busy as we are hosting a ground school during November and December.

Cu Nim continues to thrive and we are all looking forward to a busy and exciting 2009 season.

**Derek Jones**

#### note from Tony:

Although most of this issue is in glorious black and white, all the photos are in colour in the ASCent archive files available at <[www.soaring.ab.ca](http://www.soaring.ab.ca)>.

## Team Mulder

from page 15

### August 2, Cowley AB (John)

The second last day for us and another good day seemed to be developing. After a second tow from Bob Hagen, who is used to giving me several tows as I try to stick (3 attempts in North Battleford, thanks Bob), I found some consistent lift and turned north to chase Tony Burton and Bruce Friesen up the valley. After the first turnpoint at the Hwy 22 / Nanton junction, I turned east towards Claresholm. Some good-looking cu ahead and another glider thermalling to the east built my confidence. I tried to raise the other glider on the radio but as I got closer, I realized it was a Stemme S-10, and not from Cowley. I said, "Wow, a Stemme". I wonder if they said, "What is that strange looking, bat-like flying apparatus?"



"Bat-planes" at Innisfail – 2J, flown by Jeff Runciman and John Mulder, and DM flown by Dan Cook and Dave Collard from Vernon, BC.

After reaching cloudbase, a quick run to Claresholm and then south to Waterton Park began. I heard lots of other aircraft having great flights also, and some were flying where I was headed and reporting good lift. And it was there, right up to 25 km from Waterton Park, where the skies turned blue with no lift. I headed into the blue hoping some lift might be present, but found

none, so turned north back to the clouds and climbed back to cloudbase. I had final glide back to Cowley and could turn for home, but I was SO close. I decided to go for it. Flying into the rocks with no lift present seemed aggressive, but thought there should be something providing lift among the rocks. There wasn't, so a final glide into the turnpoint, then a search for a good field on the way out again, while hoping for some scraps of lift or a flight saving thermal. Near this time I heard a glider planning a landout at Pincher Creek, so it was starting to sound like the lift was getting soft. A field ahead looked like a good option and the landing was completed. Once again I met some interesting people. The owner of the property turned out to be the uncle of a pilot I fly with at WestJet!

### October 8, Cowley AB (John)

I arrived at Fall Cowley with a slight head cold, so altitude flying wouldn't be an option. On the first Monday there was some nice wave late in the day and I used the primary to scoot up and down the block between 12,000 and 15,000 feet. It was tough listening to two other gliders flying above 25,000 and not having the head to climb up there. Except for the cold, it was another fun Cowley camp. We left a day early because I needed to get back to work, and it sounds like we missed a great day to close the camp. Jeff and I managed to put 75+ hours on the Genesis this season with a third or more of the time put on in Cowley. What a fantastic resource we have close by. If you still haven't put Cowley in your plans, put it on your schedule now for next year!

One of the reasons we were able to have so much success this year, was because of our supportive team members. Soaring is a great family sport, but with two children under four, someone has to stay on the ground to watch them. Team members Kelli, Dicky, and Jerry gave us a lot of help this summer to keep Jay and Jocelyn entertained. We're looking forward to 2009 to reach for our goals, and support others to reach theirs. □

## Ephrata

from page 9

I felt that I was going poorly, the thermals smaller than yesterday, square, and always on the other side of the first turn. Working east towards the second turnpoint circle which was close to Wilbur, the 3 hour time was nearing. I didn't think that I would get any faster so I turned for home, about a 30 mile run. I soon got a last good climb over 8000 and had a 25:1 final glide that gave me a long, fast 80-100 kt run back, landing about 5:30. It was gratifying to overtake a 15m ship coming back a bit lower. I didn't think much of my day though – maybe I would be in the middle of the pack somewhere.

Quickly – get the flight data downloaded, derig, motel, cold shower (aahhh!), put on my special gliding banquet

shirt, and then off to dinner with a bottle of wine and Ursula, just as people were sitting down for the meal.

When I got to the head of the buffet line, I didn't see the results sheets stacked on the table. Ursula picked one up and exclaimed, "You won again!". Distracted, I said no, that must be yesterday's sheet. "No, it's Day 5". I was dumbfounded, had a close look, and saw that I had won, by 2.6 mph! It was 2 mph slower than the previous day but I guess everyone else had been in the same boat (airmass, that is). My final placing was 7th of 11, but this day was a satisfying end to what had been a disappointing contest for me. I even got one of the "attaboys" the CD was handing out. E2 can go fast, but it really does need a guaranteed thermal to head for first. □

# Alberta pilot achievements of 2008

## **Solo!**

Steve Hogg (Cu Nim)  
Greg Nuspel (Cu Nim)  
Rob Pinkerton (CAGC)  
Dan Tales (CAGC)

## **Licence**

Darren Clark (Cu Nim)  
Steve Hogg (Cu Nim)  
Rob Pinkerton (CAGC)

## **Badges & Badge legs**

Dale Armstrong (ESC) – Silver altitude  
Leo Deschamps (CAGC) – all Silver legs and badge, Gold altitude  
Gary Hill (ESC) – Gold altitude  
Tim Radder (CAGC) – Silver badge  
Jeff Runciman (CAGC) – C badge, Silver distance & altitude  
Dan Tales (CAGC) – B and C badges

## **New instructors & instructor upgrades**

Carol Mulder, Drew Hammond, Shane Cockriell, Dale Brown (CAGC)  
Guy Blood, Wayne Watts, Richard Pougnet, Gary Hill (ESC)  
Wilf Plester (Cu Nim)

## **Records**

Tony Burton – 300 km speed triangle, Cdn. Club class

## **Competitions**

Al Stirling (Cu Nim), winner – Club class, Western Canada comp.

*Congratulations to all on these steps along the way.  
What's your goal for 2009 – you do have one, don't you?*

## Minutes Annual General Meeting 9 February 2008, Red Deer Legion

The meeting was called to order at 15:17 by President Danny Russell.

### 2007 ASC trophies

The following trophies were presented by President Danny Russell.

Carling trophy (best flight)	Bruce Friesen
McLaughlin trophy (best 5 flights)	Bruce Friesen
XC-100 (best flights by novice)	Gary Hill

### 2007 minutes

The minutes from the 2007 AGM were presented.

Motion: Danny Russell, seconded Tony Burton,  
"to adopt the minutes as recorded." *Carried*

### Committee reports

Treasurer – Gerald Ince  
The balance sheet and 2007 financial summary were reviewed.

Motion: Al Hoar, seconded Jerry Mulder  
"to adopt the financial reports as presented." *Carried*

Motion: Tony Burton, seconded Derek Jones  
"to approve the examiners of the financial statements, Danny Russell and Phil Stade." *Carried*

(The examiners see that the statements fairly reflect the activities of ASC, they do not audit the statements).

2008 Budget – Phil Stade, Executive Director

The ASC Executive voted to increase the Executive Director's salary to \$14,000 per year from \$12,000.

Motion: Phil Stade, seconded Guy Blood,  
"to adopt the 2008 budget as amended." *Carried*

The following information was provided:

- Executive Director – Cowley wind sock ripped. Permanent sock needed.
- President – ASC needs to interact with clubs more
- Safety – More thought on ASC's role in SMS (Safety Management System).

Motion: Jerry Mulder, seconded Gerald Ince  
"to adopt committee reports as presented." *Carried*

Motion: Al Hoar, seconded Dale Travis  
"to ratify the actions of the executive for 2007." *Carried*

### Election of Officers

Vice-president – Tony Burton nominated  
Motion: Guy Blood, seconded Jerry Mulder  
"to acclaim Tony Burton as Vice-president." *Carried*

Treasurer – Gerald Ince nominated  
Motion: Al Sunley, seconded Phil Stade  
"to acclaim Gerald Ince as Treasurer." *Carried*

Secretary  
Ron Cattaruzza wishes to step down as Secretary. No one wished to be nominated. Ron will act as secretary until replacement found.

- Trophies chairman is vacant - need a replacement.

### New Business

- Cowley meteorological towers - Phil Stade will be meeting with the Planning and Appeal Board for the Municipal District of Pincher Creek #9 to ensure our opposition to the tower, and that any subsequent wind turbine farm is clearly visible.

Call for adjournment by Drew Hammond at 16:42.  
Seconded Al Sunley. *Carried*

awards luncheon

&

# **Annual General Meeting**

14 February 2009

arrive at 10 am

## ***Red Deer Flying Club***

*Red Deer airport*

*Everyone welcome  
come and spend  
the day with friends  
from other clubs  
and be a part of what  
we do in Alberta*

## ***Menu***

### **Planning meeting** **1030 sharp**

Tying up any loose ends for 2009 activities: sorting out any details for major activities, the Cowley camps, and preliminary discussion on new business for the afternoon AGM, etc.

### **Awards luncheon** **1200**

soup & sandwiches buffet

### **Presentation of provincial honours** **1315**

### **Annual General Meeting** **1330**

- approval of minutes of 2008 AGM  
(see copy opposite as req'd by bylaws)
- 2008 executive & committee reports
- 2008 financial report
- 2009 budget presentation
- old & new business, motions
- election/confirmation of executive

### **2009 elections**

- Vice-president
- Treasurer
- Secretary

*Contact Phil Stade to confirm  
your presence for the luncheon.  
(403) 813-6658 or <asc@stade.ca>  
We need to know the numbers  
ahead of time. DO IT NOW!*

**return address**  
**Box 13, Black Diamond, AB T0L 0H0**