

ASCent

the journal of the Alberta Soaring Council



2024 Season

ASC president's report

Jason Acker

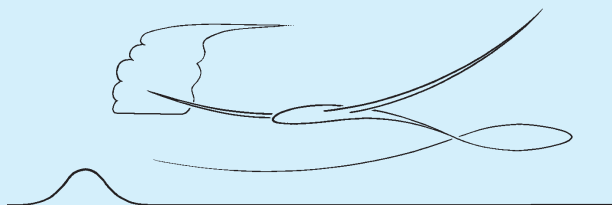
WITH THE 2024 GLIDING SEASON wrapping up, we are all now focused on getting our facilities prepared for the winter, boxing up all of the gliders and moving the equipment into storage. Many of the clubs will have hosted their final social event for the season where we have come together to recognize significant soaring accomplishments and honor those who give so much to support their clubs.

While soaring remains a niche sport in Alberta with only 158 active or social club members registered with ASC at the end of 2024 (slightly down from 2023), we have taken significant steps to ensure the long-term stability of our community. ASC financials have been significantly stabilized due to our success in managing an AGLC casino licence. Our casino in Edmonton in June brought in \$79,588.93 which will support ASC youth and senior programming and club operations. Our clubs are reporting a significant interest in the sport by youth members, and they have been able to move quickly through their OOT programs to licence in 2024. Our support for club, provincial and national contests in Alberta, and our investment into developing Cowley as a soaring site will continue to attract individuals to Alberta. We look forward to continuing to work with clubs to develop programs and initiatives that can help the sport grow.

For the second year now, ASC ran a multi-pronged Youth Development Program (YDP) which focused on four areas: affordability, instructor / coach development, equipment availability and facilities. We had nine applications to the program and provided eight of these youth pilots with up to \$750 to support their SAC membership fees, tow fees and glider rental costs. Congratulations to our 2024 YDP pilots: Zach Farvolden (ESC), James Fowler (ESC), James Millican (ESC), Moksh Parekh (ESC), Joshua Peace (Cu Nim), Austin Slingerland (LSC), Brooke Sonnenberg (ESC) and Daniel Nazarko (Cu Nim). Collectively, these eight pilots flew more than 167 hours (10,069 minutes) in 2024 as they completed their licence training and/or developed their cross-country and advanced soaring skills.

With funding provided through our AGLC casino licence we have been able to support this youth program and once again provide additional subsidies to our member clubs to support insurance costs for two-seat gliders, instructor qualifications, and a portion of the operating costs for our Cowley camps. If you are a youth member, consider applying next year (deadline for the 2025 program will be 1 May). → 17

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Cu Nim's DG1000 about to get on line for a launch from 07.

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CANADIAN NATIONAL SOARING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Tony Burton, CD

What a disappointment from the marvelous Nats at ESC in 2022!
It was a no-contest contest as well as being a tragic one.



21 May Practice Day

Task weather unstable, with wet ground and morning high cloud. A 3-hour task was set for both classes and pilots gridded to test operations.

Start line at the tanks south of Black Diamond to get pilots just outside the 8000' airspace, TPs Claresholm with 25 km circle, Atkins (15 km), Connemara (15 km), finish at Cu Nim. Min/nominal/max distances of 143.7/225.8/323.6 km.

Chris Gough and Ray Troppmann got around in the FAI class – but only Jesse Miller in Club.

The start of the every-two-day dinners in the clubhouse, run by Denise Vanderkooi, was much pizza and a keg of beer.

22 May Rain

No contest. At the morning pilots meeting a safety talk on dehydration (by Pavan and Tony), and beware of airspace violations that was easy to do around the task start line (one pilot was over 8000 yesterday). A useful subject was aired at every pilots meeting.

23 May Rain

No contest with a very unstable airmass. Bratwurst night.

24 May

No contest. Airmass exactly same, moist and unstable giving afternoon rain. "It better rain", muttered the task committee as conditions started to improve, and it did at 2 pm, even with a little hail added.

25 May A slight decrease in rain probability and a narrow window for a north/south course, so a two hour task with 20 km circles was set: Club – Claresholm O&R, FAI –

Granum O&R. However, the trough that was supposed to move east and provide the soaring corridor was slow to move and rain sprinkled over field at noon. Possible launch was delayed till 1 pm. The pilots were gridded, but the day was finally called.

The evening featured the excellent roast pig feast, prepared as usual all day by Denise with a catered spread, along with a country and western quintet, the Flat Top Flyers – let's call them a band, "quintet" sounds much too formal. They provided our entertainment during the sunny evening that showed off big CBs to the southeast.

26 May Drying out conditions forecast for the afternoon but a huge cell to north moved over the area and rained on us. TCU predicted as usual – day cancelled. It did clear up once the cell moved south and there was a short period mid-afternoon that was soarable given showers to avoid, and a glider or two launched.

27 May, Day 1 The forecast finally allowed us set a decent task. Although soaring forecast was good, the wet ground suppressed convection until a little before 2 pm when blue thermals got the launch going after sniffers at 12:00, 1300, and 1330 were launched. Each failed attempt shortened up TPs and minimum time for the tasks. The FAI class had to wait until 1327 for their gate to open.

An AAT task was called with Hartell the start line, TPs were Claresholm, Milo, Pine Coulee with 30 km circles. 172.7/307.0/467.2 km. Club 2:30 hr, FAI 2.15 hr.

It looked like there would be many landouts, and ten did, but five actually finished, Dave Springford in FAI class and

2024 NATIONAL SOARING CHAMPIONSHIPS

CLUB CLASS Day I					2:30 hour AAT			
					pos	kph	km	pts
Dragan Zubovic	D2	ASW-19	Vancouver	103.1	1	70.4	205.2	548
Carey & Casey	4E	Cirrus	Cu Nim	100.0	2	65.7	191.7	538
Jesse Miller	XC	ASW-20	Cu Nim	105.3	3	66.1	207.2	515
Seth Thorson	SO	LS-4	Cu Nim	105.3	4	—	173.5	382
John Mulder	2J	Genesis 2	CAGC	104.2	5	—	161.3	359
Chris Chiasson	HB	Cirrus	Cu Nim	100.0	6	—	147.3	342
Sasha Pejic	XS	Jantar	Cu Nim	101.0	7	—	141.4	325
Predrag Kupcevic	1DM	304CZ	SOSA	106.7	8	—	148.5	323
Frederic Bourgault	LH	Std. Libelle	Vancouver	98.0	9	57.1	183.8	a289
Sergey Skobkarev	EB	ASW-20	VSA	109.5	10	—	187.6	a 62
Kent Beckham	U8	SZD 55	SOSA	106.3	11	—	5.76	13
Derek Jones	LG	Discus CS	Cu Nim	108.6	12	—	4.91	10
Roy Eichendorf	HV	O. Cirrus	Pr. Albert	102.0	13	—	3.53	8
Pavan Kumar	57	DG-400	ESC	108.7	14	—	1.61	3
Ryan Wood	HG1	Std Libelle	PA & Sask	98.0	15	dns	0	0
Mel & Tyler Paradis	DW	LS-4	ESC	105.3	16	dns	0	0
Jay Allardyce	DX	ASW-19	Winnipeg	103.1	16	dns	0	0
Trevor Finney	TZ	ASW-20	ESC	109.5	16	dnf	0	0
Gary Hill	RD	ASW-20F	ESC	110.6	16	dnf	0	0
FAI CLASS Day I					2:15 hour AAT			
					pos	kph	km	pts
Dave Springford	F1	Ventus3T	SOSA	124.1	1	89.1	227.3	357
Chris Gough	99	Ventus b	Cu Nim	111.2	2	—	176.1	279
Martin Dennis	KT	ASH-26E	Cdn Rock	117.0	3	—	172.2	259
Jim Fryett	JF	DG808B	Vancouver	118.6	4	—	90.1	134
Cu NimTeam	NIM	DG1000	Cu Nim	111.9	5	—	77.1	121
Ray Troppmann	RT	DG1000	ESC	111.9	6	—	2.01	3
Ben Hornett	EH	LS-6b	Cu Nim	111.2	7	—	1.24	2
Kerry Stevenson	X1	LAK 17B	Cu Nim	116.3	8	—	0	0
Penalty codes					a = airspace dnf = did not fly dns = did not start			

made a morning no-contest call easy at the pilots meeting. It could have been a mistake as the afternoon was much better than the forecast (as on the previous day). We should have gridded and waited to see what might happen. Happily for the CD, pilots who did fly said the conditions were not good, so the apologies I had planned for a rushed call the next morning were somewhat muted.

However, Casey got around in second place in his Cirrus yesterday, a mighty achievement, and he was recognized at the meeting.

29 May Forecast good with stronger winds following the passage of a cold front the previous evening. With only three days remaining, there was much pressure to see if anything could be made of the days remaining.

Club: 3.5 hr AAT Cu Nim, TPs McGregor Dam, Gleichen, Twin Valley Dam 180.7/327.2/493.8 km, 3-1/2 h, 30 km circles. FAI: 4h AAT, Cu Nim. TPs Vauxhall, Bassano, Brandt. 4 hr, 30 km circles.

However, by noon the high cloud increased, but the FAI class was launched at 1 pm. Cloud cover further increased and there were relights. The Club class launch was delayed. Complete shade on ground down first leg by 1:45 and a task change on the grid was being made when a radio call came in of a glider crash just south of the field. After scramble to get location and pilot info, I cancelled the day.

It was Kerry Stevenson, sadly found deceased. Witnesses saw the glider in an unusual attitude; he jumped from his new LAK17 FES too low for his chute to deploy.

It was a somber evening club gathering, with a short *in memoriam* offered by Trevor Finney. The remaining days insufficient to have an official contest, the competition ended. ❖

four in Club class. The trick was to get high enough at the start, or even get to the start line. Twelve pilots were unable to start in the poor conditions and landed back. The BBQ was kept hot for burgers for retrieve crews.

At the morning pilots meeting a dramatic reading of “Casey at the Nats” had “Mighty Casey” landing out. The verse (a gliding takeoff of the old baseball poem, Casey at the Bat) originally recognized SOSA characters at a Nats there years ago, this time it was updated to our Nats at Cu Nim, particularly since we had Casey Brown flying in Club class.

28 May No contest. Solid wave cloud overhead that looked permanent and another forecast for afternoon rain



Philippe Erdmer

A history of Canadian record pilots

Tony Burton

Eric Dumigan



OVER THE HISTORY OF SAC since its inception in 1945, our pilots have been flying records. Many of them used record flight planning as their goal and personal motivation to excel in cross-country. Racking up your OLC points is great for club results; planning for and completing a long or fast course is more instructive, then praiseworthy.

Record flying often got quite competitive – for a period in Invermere a record would barely last a week if that, or when it was really *mano-a-mano* between Tim Wood and Adam Zieba.

This list sums all records achieved over all types and classes. The first record awarded by SAC was to Ralph Anders on 18 July 1948 for his 111 km distance flight from Oshawa to Trenton, ON in an LK10A (similar to Herrie ten Cate's in the photo above). The most recent goes to Melanie Paradis for her 3-record flight from Chipman on 23 April this year in ESC's Perkoz. In multiplace records, only the PiC was counted (the Stieber clan flights in Namibia being notable).

The complete details of every record flight can be found in the *The Book of the Best* on the SAC website, recently thoroughly checked and updated by Ursula Wiese. Note that often several records are now being claimed from a single flight, much more frequent after free distance records were established by the FAI in 1992. ♦

Tim Wood	42	Wolf Mix	5
Charles Yeates	30	Melanie Paradis	5
Adam Zieba	24	Pat Templeton	5
Tony Burton	23	Chester Fitchett	4
Tracie Wark	22	Gordon Oates	4
Thomas Stieber	21	Albert Pow	4
Bruce Friesen	18	Rolf Siebert	4
Walter Weir	17	Robert Shirley	4
John Firth	17	Ian Spence	4
Dave Marsden	16	Hal Werneburg	4
Joerg Stieber	15	Richard Cook	3
Antonia Williams	13	Mike Glatiotis	3
Brian Milner	11	Dick Mamini	3
Jerzy Szemplinski	10	John Proudfoot	3
Dave Springford	10	Ernst Schneider	3
Michael Stieber	10	Chester Zwarych	3
Trevor Florence	9	Lloyd Bungey	2
Chris Gough	9	Deirdre Duffy	2
Julien Audette	8	Bruce Hea	2
Peter Masak	8	Royden Gray	2
Nick Bonnière	7	Anthony Kawzowicz	2
Frank Brame	7	Dave Webb	2
Spencer Robinson	7	Kurt Weiss	2
Ursula Wiese	7	Ralph Anders	1
Dave Mercer	7	Don Band	1
Barry Jeffery	6	Les Baranowski	1
Jack Ames	5	Marion Barritt	1
Mike Apps	5	Jay Beattie	1
Kevin Bennett	5	Shorty Boudreault	1
Walter Chmela	5	Glen Buhr	1
		Bob Cheston	1
		Ron Claudi	1
		Willi Deleurent	1
		Brenda Histed	1
		Malcolm Jones	1
		Dale Kramer	1
		Willi Krug	1
		Jane Midwinter	1
		Denes Pandur	1
		Christine Pattinson	1
		George Redzich	1
		Steve Simon	1
		Larry Springford	1
		Luke Szczepaniak	1
		Ruth Thumm	1
		Ray Troppmann	1
		Ulli Werneburg	1
		Ralph White	1

My Downwind Dash to Swift Current

Ray Troppmann, ESC

Saturday morning, 1 June, I had a task created for a 502 km downwind dash to Swift Current, my finish line being 20 km from the Swift Current airport. I didn't know of how much traffic they get and wanted to stay out of any circuit traffic. Skysight was still showing good thermal conditions and strong winds from the NW, changing to SW about halfway through the task, with the thermals starting at around noon. It was about 11:30 by the time we got the gliders rigged, now I'm preparing myself for the flight. I checked the FLARM config information on the LS4 and it's correct; I declared the task to the FLARM and it's accepted.

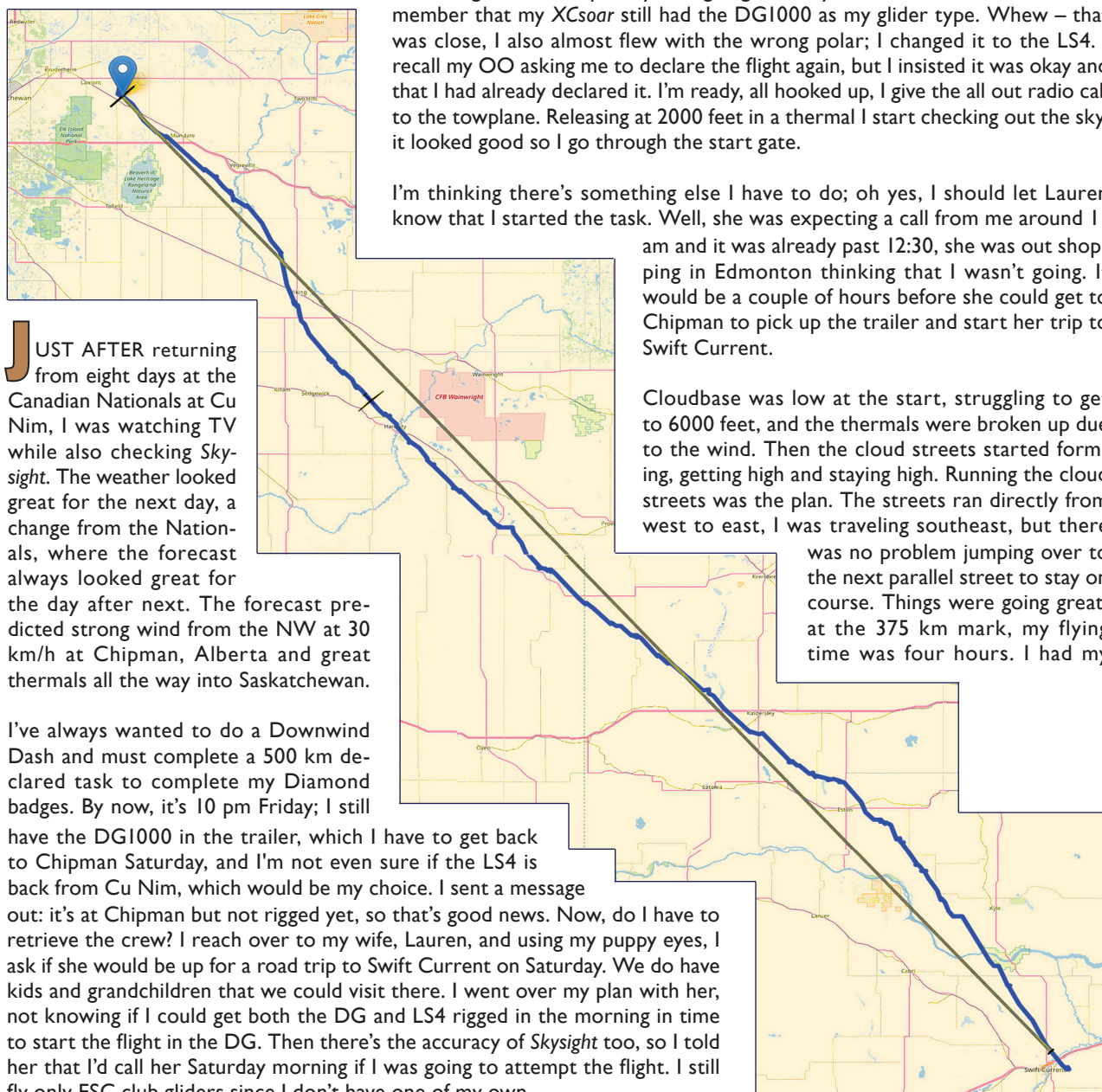
I'm sitting in the cockpit, my OO going over my task and checklist, when I remember that my XCsoar still had the DG1000 as my glider type. Whew – that was close, I also almost flew with the wrong polar; I changed it to the LS4. I recall my OO asking me to declare the flight again, but I insisted it was okay and that I had already declared it. I'm ready, all hooked up, I give the all out radio call to the towplane. Releasing at 2000 feet in a thermal I start checking out the sky, it looked good so I go through the start gate.

I'm thinking there's something else I have to do; oh yes, I should let Lauren know that I started the task. Well, she was expecting a call from me around 11 am and it was already past 12:30, she was out shopping in Edmonton thinking that I wasn't going. It would be a couple of hours before she could get to Chipman to pick up the trailer and start her trip to Swift Current.

Cloudbase was low at the start, struggling to get to 6000 feet, and the thermals were broken up due to the wind. Then the cloud streets started forming, getting high and staying high. Running the cloud streets was the plan. The streets ran directly from west to east, I was traveling southeast, but there was no problem jumping over to the next parallel street to stay on course. Things were going great, at the 375 km mark, my flying time was four hours. I had my

JUST AFTER returning from eight days at the Canadian Nationals at Cu Nim, I was watching TV while also checking Skysight. The weather looked great for the next day, a change from the Nationals, where the forecast always looked great for the day after next. The forecast predicted strong wind from the NW at 30 km/h at Chipman, Alberta and great thermals all the way into Saskatchewan.

I've always wanted to do a Downwind Dash and must complete a 500 km declared task to complete my Diamond badges. By now, it's 10 pm Friday; I still have the DG1000 in the trailer, which I have to get back to Chipman Saturday, and I'm not even sure if the LS4 is back from Cu Nim, which would be my choice. I sent a message out: it's at Chipman but not rigged yet, so that's good news. Now, do I have to retrieve the crew? I reach over to my wife, Lauren, and using my puppy eyes, I ask if she would be up for a road trip to Swift Current on Saturday. We do have kids and grandchildren that we could visit there. I went over my plan with her, not knowing if I could get both the DG and LS4 rigged in the morning in time to start the flight in the DG. Then there's the accuracy of Skysight too, so I told her that I'd call her Saturday morning if I was going to attempt the flight. I still fly only ESC club gliders since I don't have one of my own.



SeeYou Navigator on so I could be tracked, and I noticed some comments coming through Slack about my average speed of the flight.

At that point things started getting more challenging, no more cloud streets to the south. I had a choice, do I stay in the streets to get as far east as possible or do I wander off for the odd cu to the southeast. The wind was still strong, so I decided to stay on track with my southeast track, thinking I could grab enough cu to get a final glide to Swift Current. Well, that worked for a bit, chasing cu, but it wasn't long before they started disappearing about the time I got to them. I'm at 5000 feet (2500 agl), and now I'm looking at ground features that could be setting off thermals. I spot a nice dark field that's being plowed and head towards it, when I hit 2-knot blue thermal and decide to take it as long as possible. That gets me to 8000 feet, enough to continue on again. For the remainder of the flight, I started counting on blue thermals, of which I had two more before I had the final glide for my finish line. Now the question is, how much more altitude will I need to make the Swift Current airport? I figured another 2000 feet would be plenty, so I spent more time obtaining that extra 2000 feet before going over the finish line.

Once I was on the ground at the Swift Current airport, I called Lauren to let her know that I completed the task and was safe; she estimated that she was still over four and a half hours away. I started looking at messages and comments coming through my phone; it turned out that quite a

few people were watching via the OGN. Some talk about new speed records being set, which was not my intent, I was just going for my Diamond distance.

It turns out my .igc file had the DGI000 with its registration stored. If only I had declared my flight *after* changing the glider type in XCsoar as my OO had suggested. This came to light the next morning after my OO, Lauren, sent off the .igc file she had downloaded from the FLARM the previous evening. By the time we had the glider derigged in Swift Current, it was 11:30 pm, and she still hadn't had any supper, so she didn't send out the file until the next morning. My OO in Chipman and his mentor in Vancouver had been working on determining which records could have been claimed. The four records that I may have qualified for were: distance to declared goal Club Class 500 km and 400 km, 15m Class 400 km, and distance to declared goal Club Class. I couldn't even claim my 500 km declared task, which is what my initial goal was, but I did learn and will remember that XCsoar glider type overwrites what the FLARM has in its config file for glider type and registration.

People ask me if I'm upset with the outcome. I'm disappointed that my stubbornness once again cost me, but I'm not upset; I've got used to it. I had a great experience on the flight, which I'll treasure until a better one comes along. Perhaps this flight will be remembered more because of its outcome than if it was a valid claim. A special thanks to my retrieve crew Lauren, and OOs Michael Carson, Bruce Friesen and Lauren Troppmann. ❖

Other than that, it was a great flight

Glider pilots in western Canada will be saddened to learn of Dick Mamini's passing on 8 October in Black Diamond, aged 89. He was an important contributor to the establishment of Cowley as well being an ever-adventurous and an active cross-country pilot in his infamously difficult-to-land ASW-12. I think he was the first to cross the Rockies in 1969 in an HP-16. Here is a tale he told that appeared in Free Flight in 2005. Tony Burton

FOR SOME REASON I was the only one flying in the Columbia valley on Saturday. As I was scraping low along the Steeples I passed a large Golden Eagle sitting on top of one of those ridges. He was watching me and I swear I heard him say, "this guy is nuts". Being low on the Steeples is just what I had told others never to do. The lift, such as it was, was quite turbulent close to the rocks so I had to fly fast, and with over a 10 lb/ft² wing loading [of my PIK-20E] this was not a fun time. I was too involved with staying up to eat my lunch. Later I made a desperate move to get on top of some lower ridges and that worked.

After leaving the Steeples and while making a run for the Elko Ridge, I thought I had time to grab a bite of my chicken

salad sandwich. These sandwiches are from Extra Foods in Fernie and they have over an inch thick of slimy filling and this squirted out and a big lump fell onto my external catheter (condom). This was a retread (second use) and the adhesive was not too good. I reached down to grab this lump of filling so it wouldn't get all over the place and partially pushed the condom off and it started to leak. Things not going well, I decided to land back at the Elko airstrip because of the condom dilemma.

Normally I switch hands when I put the gear down but this time because my left hand was busy trying to stem the leak I reached over quickly with my left hand and unlocked the gear handle. My bum little finger on the left hand hangs down and it got caught as the gear handle slid forward. I must have severed a small artery as blood was pouring out and getting on everything. It looked like an axe murder had taken place. I had to lock the gear with my right hand anyway. Then I wrapped the plastic bag that the sandwich had been in around the finger to contain the bleeding.

... other than that, it was a great flight. ❖

AN 8-DAY ROCKS TOUR

a flexible destination, a rewarding journey

Chester Fitchett, Cu Nim

WITH MY PREVIOUS SELF-LAUNCHER, the APIS, I was doing a few multi-day tours – over to Invermere, to Chipman, even Hanna once... It was obvious that a bigger, higher performance ship would allow me to attempt way longer trips, and it was also obvious that to range over the mountains for multiple days would require a lot more planning ...

Day 1

"The Tour" started on 13 July (not a Friday, relax...) when conditions looked okay for the next few days. I've been as far west as Kootenay Lake, and I've promised relatives in Nakusp and Vernon that I would soar out to them.

The day started with a self launch out of Cu Nim. I battled west in the foothills, and needed a relight to get on top of the main ranges. Getting to the mountains from Cu Nim in the middle of summer is very difficult. I was challenged to connect with lift after each major valley crossing, in particular the Columbia valley and after crossing the Arrow Lakes by Nakusp. After connecting with lift in the Monashees, I messaged my relatives that I would be landing in Vernon.

Vernon is the biggest airport I've ever landed at – and no one even noticed.

Day 2

After a great visit with relatives, I struck off to the east. After taking off, I realized I had forgotten to consider the

runway lights. Vernon's runway is about 75 feet wide, ZWW is 65, not much room.

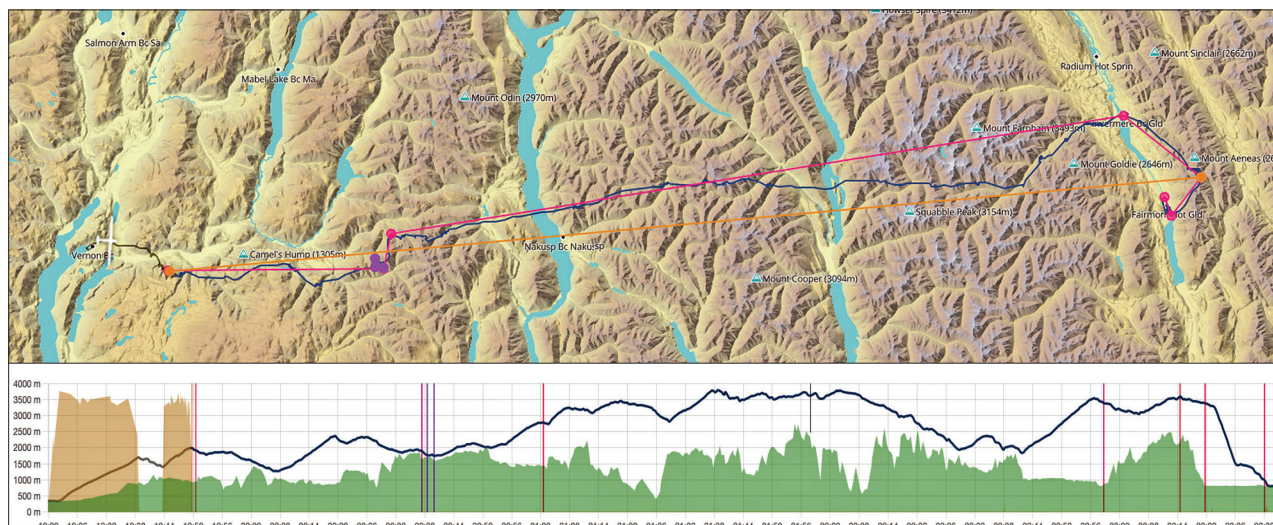
A lesson learned today – go where the lift is. My mission from Vernon was to go east back to Cu Nim or the Invermere valley. But the high rocks getting the sun to make clouds were to the west. I should have motored west to connect with lift, instead of heading across the blue to the east. I needed a relight, and even then it was a very long struggle to get to the high ground of the Monashees for better lift.

I got low going through Jumbo Pass west of Fairmont, and had to run all the way to the Columbia valley before finding a good thermal. On the entire tour, I only needed the engine to connect with lift while leaving airports. The day finished in Fairmont, where Pavan Kumar and Martin Dennis fly their motorgliders.

Day 3

The return to Cu Nim was in doubt, with a forecast of thunderstorms for the Kananaskis area and the prairies. At this time of year, towing or motoring to 9000 at Invermere is often necessary to connect with good lift. And the day starts late – often past noon.

A huge convergence on the last mountain range before the prairies had a lucky opening at Highway 40 to allow VFR flight at 12,500, getting me back to Cu Nim. I went home and slept in my own bed, thinking the tour was over.



Day 4

Skysight says otherwise – the mountains are forecast to have great soaring conditions for the next several days, especially to the north. I inform Casey Brown who is the “responsible person” monitoring this tour that my route would be Ram Falls/Jasper/Ram Falls/Cu Nim over the next four days. That was the plan, anyway. I had to deploy the engine an extra two times to get to the mountains. Not very elegant.

On Days 1 through 3, Casey was keeping track of me using websites like *FlightRadar24*. We discovered that I had a cell signal at 12,500 more often than I had transponder coverage! On the Jasper leg, I took a *Spot* satellite communicator, which transmitted my location every 10 minutes.

Strong lift along the Bow Valley and Icefields Parkway kept drawing me north. At 5 pm, at Saskatchewan River Crossing, I considered continuing to Jasper. A narrow but thick band of smoke almost turns me around. At 6:30, I arrived at Jasper, the Hinton airports were being rained on, and my attempt to reach Valemount failed.

Day 5

Jasper airstrip has an excellent cliff to the west, which gets direct sun in the morning. I spent six hours wafting around, checking out Mount Robson and Valemount, and trying to get to Grande Cache. A high band of cirrus stifled the lift in the area, making a trip to Grande Cache likely an “out with no return”.

At 5 pm, the lift was getting stronger, and I decided I might make the Ram Falls airstrip. My one decision to take a shortcut to the east cost 5000 feet of height. Ouch. Lesson learned – don’t fly into drainages, where prevailing winds are descending. The flight trace shows the strong sink, and I fully expected to need a relight, but a nice thermal allowed me to recover from my mistake.

Everywhere on this 8-day tour, I had a final glide to somewhere where I was willing to land. Obviously I would have used the engine, but if the engine had failed, I needed to be able to walk away from a landing, even if ZWW had to be shipped to Germany for repairs.

On the theory that the Red Deer Forestry Strip would have spoons, and perhaps sausages and beer, I continued past Ram Falls. Casey’s head must have been spinning with the rapid fire changes in my flight plan.

Day 6

I had Red Deer Forestry all to myself, but no beer. Still, it’s such a beautiful airstrip. It also has amazing hills to the west that allow quick connection to mountain thermals.

There is no cell signal in the Red Deer headwaters, so I didn’t have the latest soaring forecast. During this tour, any-

time I had data I would take screenshots from *Skysight*. I could go home, but clouds to the west look amazing.

Heading over Castle Junction to the Invermere ridge, I found myself wishing I had a “landout” right on top of Luxor Pass, so I knew the glide ratio required to clear it. The feature that makes the Invermere ridge so perfect for mountain soaring, that 140 km long, continuous ridge, makes it very dangerous to be to the east of it. It doesn’t matter if I technically have final glide to the Columbia valley, if there are rocks in the way.

On this tour, I seemed to have a talent for flying right through blue holes. Finally I had to conclude that if there’s a blue hole, there is a reason for it. I repeatedly took shortcuts through blue holes, and it was never worthwhile unless on a really high final glide. It seems the actively working areas are actively pushing air down in the blue areas. An implication is that valleys are almost always areas of sink. A further implication is that if the escape route is to run down a valley (which it always is), there will almost certainly be sink, and you won’t achieve your glider’s theoretical glide ratio.

The rest of the day was spent tearing up and down the ridge at Invermere. The ridge is amazing, and low risk since it’s not necessary to fly through areas of sink to cross valleys. I can see why Invermere pilots spend so much time racking up OLC points, instead of wandering further east or west. The downside – there is so much soaring traffic to watch for, especially paragliders.

Casey texted that the smoke forecast for the next day looked terrible, but it was too late to fly back to Cu Nim. And I wasn’t sure how to ask for ATC clearance to climb very high and descend through Class B. I gave Martin at Fairmont ten minutes notice, and at the end of day, beer and sausages were procured.

Day 7

Smoky, and the thermals were marginal. I stayed on the ground, rather than burn fuel and push on a marginal day. Soaring is a condition-dependent sport.

Day 8

I launch westwards from Fairmont, which doesn’t usually work according to the locals. Lift is good, but clouds are already sufficiently developed to produce rain. By now, I’m no longer surprised by sink and lift – mountain soaring makes way more sense than it did a week ago. Smoke is increasing rapidly, and BC is on fire behind me. Time to go home. I arrive back at Cu Nim with 9L of gasoline left in the tank.

The tour worked out perfectly, and I would have liked to keep going. In fact, I’m discussing with another pilot about doing a multi-glider soaring safari from the Mexico/US border to Alaska. ❖

A contest in Ephrata

Patrick McMahon, Cu Nim



Patrick McMahon

FOR THE PAST FIVE OR SO YEARS, I've had the same three goals for a flying season. Even when I've had great flying season, I hadn't been accomplishing them. They were, in order: to complete my FAI Diamond badge, fly in the US, and fly with water ballast.

On 12 June I finished my FAI Diamond badge by completing my Diamond Distance (505.8 km), adding to my Diamond Goal from 2021, and Diamond Altitude from 2019.

On 22 June I set off for Ephrata, Washington to race in the Soaring Society of America's Region 8 contest in Club Class. I arrived at dusk and my diesel Sprinter van seemed to interrupt the reunion of pilots on the patio.

Like so many gliding events, it can be daunting being a newcomer, but I have heard so many great things about Region 8 from pilots on both sides of the Rockies. I was intimidated as I parked my glider between an ASG-29 and a DG-800, a few spots down from a brand new Twin Shark and a Ventus-3 FES.

The first competition day was Monday: *Skysight* didn't paint a fantastic forecast, the terrain was daunting, and the routine was different from what I'm used to in Canada. I was on the grid too early, and you're not supposed to leave gliders on the runway – lesson learned.

Aerotows from Ephrata go northwest over the town then along the 150 foot ridge of 'the plateau'. Contest Director Mike Bamberg provided the hot tip that thermals at the

southern edge of the plateau should be used to get further onto the plateau where lift is stronger.

Plateau use requires dry land farming, and it is very dry! Many fields are only worked every 3 or 4 years. Farmers work to build up a crust on the soil as they believe it traps moisture in. Under that crust is dirt that is baby powder fine – ask Sasha (XS) about that. Ephrata is known for strong thermals, and if they aren't also marked by clouds, the strongest ones are regularly marked by dust devils. The plateau is wrapped by the Columbia River to the north then west, and the Rocky mountain foothills further north, and is notable for its large fields, coulees, and lava beds.

I started on task and was very disoriented, everything was askew – the runway, the mountains, and roads. I had my moving map set to 'track up'. My track intercepted the first turnpoint along the western edge, not within the cylinder like I had planned. So I made the turn to (what I thought was) the west, then ESE, S, then NW to catch a collector turnpoint home and finished early. I had a couple good climbs, was in awe of the dust devils marking thermals from below, amazed by a gaggle of over 100 paragliders out over the course during their national championships. I ended up in third (-68 points from the leader).

Day 2 (Tuesday) set up for more of the same – hot, blue and thermals to 8000 feet. I spent more time prepping myself and my glider before pushing out, and I thought I had a better sense of the course looking up toward the plateau. I chose a good turn in the first cylinder, could not push as

far into cylinder 2 due to softening conditions, my path to cylinder 3 deviated for lift and I slowed down, but connected to a line of good lift at Coulee City north of Ephrata then pushed for max distance from there, before I double backed for the final collector turnpoint, expecting an early arrival. I won the day and moved into second overall (now -10 points from the leader).

Feeling validated, I eavesdropped on some conversations on the patio, protected by Martin Dennis who flies from Fairmont, BC. I was listening to a great story about one of the pilots who talked about some technology he developed in the late 70s that ended up generating a recruitment call from Steve Jobs shortly after the Apple 2 was released. He (Patrick McLaughlin) didn't take the job, but did end up founding and continues to run Mountain High Oxygen.

My frantic 'Googling' under the picnic table to try to figure out if these stories could be true, and who these people were, lead me to Google "founder Vans Aircraft" after a few clues and some intuitive commentary from the gentleman to my left suggested these might be connected – and they were, Richard VanGrunsven was racing his Antares in the FAI class. Super cool.

We were back to racing on Thursday, and the forecast included clouds – I timed getting on the grid better, I finally wore shorts, and thought I knew which way was up geographically. Out of the start I followed a line of clouds to the west side of the first cylinder but chose to climb, dive for the cylinder and retreat to my last thermal. The big blue hole I expected to be on the winning course appeared to be a near certain landout. In my mind, I thought people wouldn't make it around, and I said to myself "in order to finish first, first you must finish". I started following clouds with the intention to patiently fly the looong way around the blue hole. Then my flight computer recalculated a route, and I found myself on a cloud "Interstate" toward the southern edge of the second cylinder with a nearly 20 knot tailwind. Concerned about the tailwind and my fear of the terrain between my position and the Ephrata airport, I turned early and headed home – early again, finishing second on the day (now -88 points from first).

Friday was 'the day'. Clouds everywhere, higher top of lift, and I had my routine in place including a hand drawn visual representation of the task area for the first time all week. A

delayed launch led the CD to reduce our task time by a 1/2 hour, but I still thought it was going to be a max distance kind of day. I was patient and deliberate with my start, at one point thermalling with a dust devil down my left wing and a cumulus off my right wing – this is where I'm supposed to be, let's GO!

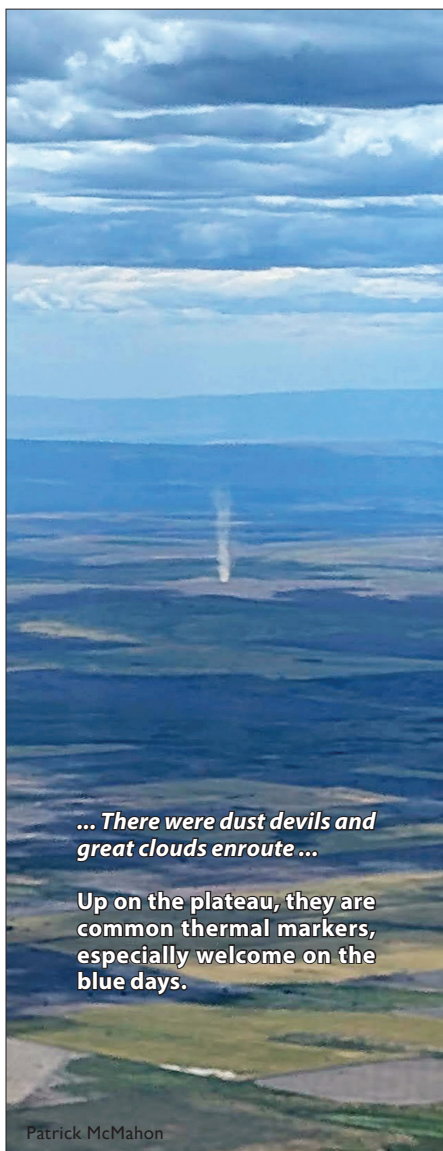
The first leg was blistering – 95 km at 107 km/h with a headwind. I turned at the end of the cloud street, but should have pushed through the next 10 or so km to the end of the cylinder. I turned to the NW for cylinder 2 and tried to line up clouds. I took two mini-thermals, but covered the next leg of 112 km at 130 km/h and knew I would be under time. To get all the distance I could, I would need to cross north over the Columbia River, though it's 'ill advised'. I flew north until my altimeter reached about 7000, then doubled back to the south side, hoping to connect to the lift I had left, but didn't.

There were dust devils and great clouds enroute, so I started moving home. An 8.5 knot climb put me well over final glide and I blasted home around 120 kts and finished undertime again. I was stoked after this flight, and ended up winning the day, bringing me within 12 points of first place.

Regrettably, on the last day, Saturday, the task committee didn't call a task due to the risk of high cloud coming over the plateau later in the day. I thought the conditions were forecast to be similar as the day before, so I took a launch. Without the pressure of a task, my flight was a bit too meandering, but it would have been one of the best task days I'd flown this season.

I made some new friends at the Region 8 and plan to go back. It is a great venue for those flying their first or one of their first contests. The people and the facilities, conditions, and location make it a really worthwhile event!

Now, if I can find an opportunity to fly wet this season, I'll have cleaned the slate for flying goals ... ❖



... There were dust devils and great clouds enroute ...

Up on the plateau, they are common thermal markers, especially welcome on the blue days.

Patrick McMahon

COWLEY

Ray Troppmann, camp manager

THE 2024 SEASON had a slow start due to poor soaring weather conditions in most locations across Canada. That mood seemed to follow into the 2024 Summer Camp registration, the start of the camp had 16 registered pilots and by the end there were 28, a smaller attendance but with four first-time attendees.

It takes a group of people to make a successful camp and here are some of the key role assignments:

Camp director – Ray Troppmann

Logistics and events – Sheldon Steinke

Safety and LSC liaison – George Haeh

Chief Tow Pilot – Dale Brown

Weather reports – Patrick Pelletier aka “Peanut”

The camp had two towplanes and a winch on site, coordinated by the ASC. Over the ten days, we had 98 flights logging 210 hours and 16 minutes in flying time. Those numbers include 14 instructional flights with 9 hours in flight. Possibly one Gold altitude claim will be made from the camp. No safety incidents were logged, we did have our daily discussion on safety topics in the morning meetings.

The top six flights by distance were:

Date	Pts	Name	km	Club
31 Jul	568.86	Frederic Bourgault	478.48	VSA
31 Jul	530.19	Patrick Pelletier	449.13	ESC
28 Jul	469.20	Chris Gough	437.13	Cu Nim
31 Jul	424.46	Patrick McMahon	403.49	Cu Nim
28 Jul	385.54	Sasha Pejic	303.13	Cu Nim
31 Jul	330.69	R Troppmann/K Gwynne	301.32	ESC

At the first camp morning meeting, our weatherman, Peanut, predicted that we could get some decent wave during the camp, which is less common at the summer camps. The first good flights started on Sunday, a thermaling day, with Chris Gough flying past Lethbridge and back, then continuing around the Cowley Block.

On Monday we activated the Cowley NOTAM, as wave was forecast. Several pilots were successful in getting into some wave; others spent a lot of money in relauches trying. The day ended with a group gathering at the local Boston Pizza in Pincher Creek for supper. Of course, there's the recap of the day's flights during the supper conversation, always entertaining and educational.

Tuesday 30 July turned out to be a thermalling day. Some flights went into the 4-hour range and some decided to go for a hike up Turtle Mountain. Once again we had a group dinner at the sushi restaurant in Pincher Creek, with conversations all around the table.

Wednesday 9 am, Peanut is knocking on our camper door. “We should open the NOTAM today, the wave is looking good for the day”. I got on the phone, and in 10 minutes our Cowley Block was activated for 10:30 am. The highest altitude attained was to the top of the block, 28,000 feet by Peanut and he could have gone even further.

Several outstanding flights were achieved that day. Patrick McMahon launched at 3 pm and landed at 7 pm, for 424 km at 118.6 km/h. Patrick says he'll be highlighting that one in his logbook. There is also a Gold altitude claim that will be submitted from Josh Peace. The day ended a bit later than usual, some made food at the campsite and a smaller group had supper at the Boston Pizza.

Thursday 1 Aug, we had some pilots joining the camp for the weekend. Once again an average thermal day with the smoke not being too bad, and some of the pilots found some mountain wave. The day ended at a decent time and it was the local entertainment night at the Oldman Brewery in Lundbreck. We had some interactive entertainment and great food. I heard the most interesting version of “Billy Jean” that night, a lot of talent. The week continued with more wave but nothing above the 18,000 foot ceiling that we have in our airspace.

On Saturday evening, our camp windup barbeque featured amazing ribs from the local butcher. The grill was hot and the ribs just started when a mighty wind hit the site. Within about three minutes the wind went from a calm evening to around 40 mi/h. We had one glider still in the air, we got on the radio to let him know how strong the winds were on the ground. He already knew. The downwind ground speed and drift he had was the most I'd ever seen. He chose to land directly into the wind in the field between runways 21 and 29, avoiding the hay bales. He had to stay in the cockpit and continue to fly it to keep it on the ground until we arrived. The rest of the camp scrambled to the tie-down site, checking and tightening up the gliders. There was no



Ray Troppmann



Phil Stadel

damage to any glider and with everything snug and secure, we got back to barbeque for an evening of great food and company.

We were all glad to see that the local birdlife at the campsite also made it through the windy night. Our resident hawk was still scolding us the next day as she took care of her nest and two chicks!

FALL CAMP

It came later than usual on the calendar this year which was a concern of mine mainly due to the weather risk. I thought we'd have a good chance of it being bitterly cold with snow but, as it turned out, we had almost summer-like temperatures hitting mid-20s on some days and only had frost on two of the mornings. The weather also was fantastic for flying, we had the mountain wave on 8 of the 10 flying days.

Registrations were down from the previous 3 years with 27 pilots throughout the camp. We had 4 pilots from BC and one from Ontario. There were 84 flights for a total of 185:07 flight time, of which 9 were instructional with 5:17 flight time. That's an average of over 2 hours per flight. There was 1 flight over 6 hours, 4 over 5 hours, 8 over 4 hours, 10 over 3 hours, and 31 flights over 1-2 hours.

The Cowley fall camp is known as the Diamond Mine for altitude gain flights. This year did not disappoint, with 3 Diamond altitude badge claims and 3 Gold altitude badge claims this camp. A lot of pilots flew to and over 25,000 feet on several days. The ASC oxygen trailer was well-used with twenty tank fills.

The top 8 flights for OLC points for the camp were:

Date	Pts	Name	km	Aircraft
8 Oct	612.6	Frederic Bourgault	533.9	Std. Libelle
6 Oct	552.9	Chris Gough	577.5	Ventus b 15m
7 Oct	485.7	Frederic Bourgault	424.6	Std. Libelle
9 Oct	477.6	Kelvin & Owen Cole	474.2	DG 1000
9 Oct	471.1	Patrick McMahon	480.4	ASW-20
6 Oct	425.9	Frederic Bourgault	388.4	Std. Libelle
7 Oct	424.7	Ray Troppmann	396.6	LS4
11 Oct	408.5	Frederic Bourgault	367.7	Std. Libelle

What's interesting here is the increased distances being flown in the wave. Patrick McMahon also did some analysis on the last ten years of Cowley flights and sees a trend occurring for the fall camps. There have been more flights over the past three years that were 300+ km at speeds of over 100 km/h. Is this happening because the pilots are flying longer distances in the wave? It appears so. It could be a trend started by Chester Fitchett who has had several flights over 1000 km in the wave lanes created a couple of years ago by Tyler Paradis with Transport Canada.

There's been increased interest in traveling north and south outside the Cowley Block. We had several flights to Waterton Park in wave below 18,000. Flights north don't last long under 18,000 until you require approval from Edmonton Control and are usually restricted to 12,500. One flight on the last day of the camp got within 19 km of Black Diamond and then back to Cowley. The Cu Nim DG1000 landed out at the High River airport on the last day of the camp – that certainly shortened up its trailering distance.

I find it interesting that we, the pilots at our camps, are feeling like pioneers of the Cowley camp, but these camps have over 60 years of history. We'll be sitting around the fire pit in the evenings discussing the flights of the day, then Tony Burton will take us back further, talking about the big camps in the 80s and 90s when the entire campsite was filled with tents and trailers with hardly space for more. He said a 100 pilots registered one of those years (that out-house closer to the hangar is there for a reason). These days we have two towplanes at the camps with maybe ten gliders lined up, but in the 80s there was often only one towplane to launch twice that, some pilots waiting hours. There have been some amazing flights from Cowley camps that still hold records today. In total, 123 Canadian pilots have earned their Diamond altitude, and 45 of those were completed at Cowley, the first in 1962.

As usual, we had a camp dinner and this year our logistics director Sheldon Steinke booked the Lundbreck Community Hall for a fabulous catered Turkey Thanksgiving Dinner. After the dinner, the live entertainment started with a fiddle and saxophone. The evening proceeded with multiple high-intensity card games. Overall, a pretty good camp. ❖

So I set my sights on High River ...

Josh Peace, Cu Nim

THE SOARING DAY WAS EXCELLENT. The lenticular clouds were forming and twirling at an astounding rate. It was the last day of the fall Cowley camp. From about Friday on, day by day the camp got smaller and smaller until there were only a handful of pilots (around seven or so) who had plans to surf the mountain wave that cold and frosty Monday morning.

Reviewing the forecast with my friend Daniel, we saw that the wave held some distance potential, especially to the south towards Waterton and the US border, although later in the air we found that this was more true to the north, rather than south to southeast.

Daniel in SO got towed straight into strong primary wave, so I knew I held at least a pretty good chance of having a nice flight in the DGI000. I connected, climbed, and soared the wave that the Livingstones offered, though not being able to climb much higher than 16,000. Other pilots were also having good luck with the wave but weren't really adding any kilometres to their flights.

So, being a newly-born cross-country pilot, the desire to explore set in and outweighed the nervousness of leaving a Cowley final glide. I decided to head south to try out the wave down there. Finding there was not much strong lift worth fighting for, I turned back north, this time tracking along the secondary wave which was working decently. I (re)climbed in that band and while I maintained my altitude mostly above 15,000 feet a small idea began to grow in my head: "What if I were to be able to make it back to Cu Nim?" After all, being the very last day of the camp, it was *derig* day, and shortly after I landed we were set to take the wings off this 20 metre bird and haul her back to Cu Nim that afternoon. "Landing at home would sure be nice," I thought. So I hit 'GO TO' on my flight computer, and I was within the final glide! And I would make it there with an extra 5000 feet! How pleasant!

Having reached the north end of the Livingstone Block, I still had plenty of final glide to Cu Nim, but the wave was definitely weakening. Daniel in SO was considering obtaining a clearance into the Bravo airspace to the north. The club ship I was flying was not equipped with a serviceable transponder so I didn't really have that luxury. Daniel eventually decided to head back southwest to the good stuff while still in this net zero climb air. Circling, messing with the rotor, I got nothing that would benefit me.

At this point the weak/neutral wave had switched into very strong sink, and the more I flew the worse it got. Turning westerly to find it again, it didn't get any better. And the deep, depressing sound of STRONG sink on the vario combined with the view of the complex foothills below me didn't sit very well. I was trapped in almighty bad air. I quickly lost final glide back to Cowley, and soon thereafter even my precious final glide to Cu Nim.

So I had got myself into a situation where I didn't know where I was going to end up. Experienced pilots will tell you that the landing options in the Chain Lakes area are sparse, mostly uneven pastures, and the odds of finding a really good spot were even worse. I was sinking faster than I ever imagined so I really started looking. So much for making it anywhere, the only place I was going was into the Porcupine foothills! Eventually I found a field that was decent and started to mentally go through what this landing would look like. I radioed that I was ready to land out. At around 6500 feet, I found some lift and decided to take it – I really wasn't quite sure what it was, but lift is lift. This thermal(?) was working so I gained as much height as I could while still keeping an eye on my selected field just in case I still needed it. I was able to regain my final glide to Cu Nim ... marginally.



I (a new cross-country pilot) was left with an important decision that needed to be acted on, and fast. I could potentially make it to Cu Nim with barely any final glide margin, a bad plan with wave around, or I could find somewhere else within range to set the glider down.

As someone once said, would you rather make it back home just barely clearing the fence on final, or use your precious gas in the tank (altitude) to make a safe off-field landing to mitigate the risk of damaging your expensive sailplane or even yourself.

The choice was clear so I started searching. Some fields looked quite nice, but as I continued my scan I saw the town of High River vaguely off in the distance to the east. More broadly, I thought to myself, "what is even *better* than a field?" An airport. "Where was a close airport?" "HIGH RIVER" – I could see the town with my

own eyes. I had plenty of height to make it, and the westerly tailwind would also help out. Landing at a 'real' airport would prevent any last minute second guesses on the landing site, which was definitely a fear I would have being inexperienced in the field selection process. This seemed like the obvious option.

So I set my sights on the High River airport, and lowered the nose. I was there before I knew it, and now came a different challenge. It was no longer making it there, and was actually landing. High River is a busy airport, and I had been there many times with an engine, but never in a glider. I made the appropriate radio calls and announced my presence and desire to land. There was other powered traffic also coming into land but it didn't take much coordination to arrange a plan. I was to take the #1 spot. I certainly felt special! After a little questionable move made by another plane cutting in front of me to begin an orbit (good intentions were there, but could have been executed a better), I made my SWAFTS check and entered a left downwind for runway 25. I treated it just like a normal landing and planned to touch down late, in hopes of clearing the busy runway via the taxiway leading to the apron.

Landing the glider on pavement, I completed my first ever outlanding! Now a new challenge – getting the glider off the active runway and securing it. I promptly hopped out and got ready to push. With helpful timing, a Cessna pilot offered to let his passenger out after his landing to assist me!

Kudos to his going out of his way to help this alien looking 'glider' that had needed priority to land and was now blocking the runway. After getting help from the good-hearted passenger, I used a nearby pair of chocks to secure the glider and deployed my spoilers. I had landed safely and had some valuable new experience under my belt!

I phoned to let Cowley know, and arranged a plan to retrieve me and take the glider back to Cu Nim. Many thanks to Sheldon and Daniel for helping, and taking me back to my stranded car in Cowley.

Overall I was quite satisfied with the flight, and I had earned the 50 km requirement towards my Silver badge! Some takeaways of the experience included:

- Mountain wave is powerful. Extremely. When there is strong lift, there is strong sink, and it isn't always easy to get out of it.
- Always choose the safer option, even if it means more work (ie. landing out). It paid off! I carried out a successful landing with no damage, and made it home that night.
- Anything can happen. A short time back I was on the ground in Cowley, and the next I was sitting in High River, waiting for a retrieve. One second I was at 16,000 feet, the next a couple thousand over unlandable terrain contemplating my options. Whew! ❖

Stop press ! – Environment Canada in forecast scandal

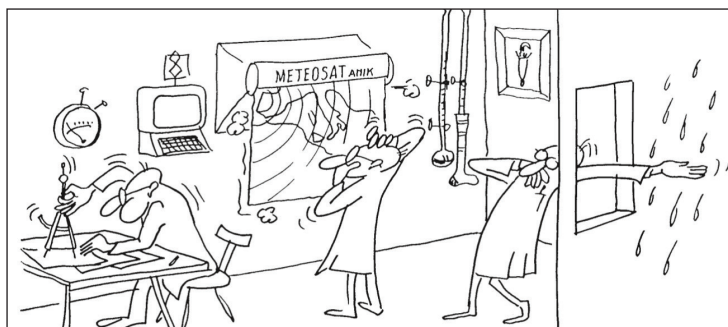
IT WAS CLAIMED TODAY that Environment Canada issued a 24-hour weather forecast on Friday, 26 April that subsequently proved to be correct. The forecast for southern Alberta predicted strong southwest winds, easing in the afternoon. At 10 am on Saturday, 27 April, an eyewitness near the town of Longview observed that the wind was indeed from the southwest and noted windspeeds of up to 30 knots using a handheld windspeed measuring device. Subsequent recordings clearly established a decrease in the velocity, to an average of 10-15 knots at noon.

A spokesman for Environment Canada strongly denied the allegation, claiming, "Weather forecasting is an inexact science in which there is a statistical probability that a forecast and the actual conditions may coincide; however, we cannot be held responsible if such an unlikely conjunction between it and our official forecast actually occurs."

He also called into question the validity of the report by noting that the eyewitness was observed to assemble a flimsy craft made of aluminum tubes and cloth, to which he attached himself. In attempting to move this craft while on a hillside, it was caught by a

wind gust, lifting both the craft and the eyewitness into the air. What followed was a horror ride lasting more than an hour, with the craft at times observed to be at least a thousand feet above the ground. The eyewitness appeared remarkably cool after his ordeal, and insisted that his actions were based on the forecast.

"After an experience like that, I would think that the eyewitness is in shock and unlikely to have a clear recollection of the facts," the spokesman claimed. He expressed grave concern that such an attitude sets a dangerous precedent: "We really cannot have people going around and making plans on the basis of our forecasts." ❖



12 June 1982 – 3773 km !

Tony Burton

HOW MANY TIMES in the past have there been when pilots have said “It was a ‘500’ day for sure – if only I had been ready to go!” Well, on the day above, six pilots flying from Cu Nim completed 3773 km of cross-country tasks. Two Canadian records were claimed, plus a Diamond distance ... it is still the best single day of club accomplishment in Canadian soaring. So, on that Saturday Hal Werneburg and Willi Krug were busy trying to match turnpoints with record triangles on their respective maps – others were planning also. That morning the task board on the flight line soon advertised the most awe-inspiring wish list anyone had ever seen in a Canadian club:

Hal Werneburg, Mini-Nimbus: 804 km Cu Nim / Milk River / Halkirk for Canadian Δ distance & 750 km speed.

Willi Krug, Ventus A: 785 km Cu Nim / Ponoka / Bow Island for Canadian Δ distance & 750 km speed records.

Rainer Zimm, Std. Cirrus: 706 km O&R Maple Creek, SK. Canadian O&R distance record.

Rob Young, Open Cirrus, same task as Rainer.

Kevin Bennett, Open Cirrus: 514 km Cu Nim / Waterton Reservoir / Brooks for Diamond distance.

This list was the definition of ‘a little incentive’! So I added to the board: *Tony Burton*, RS-15, 622 km O&R Walsh, for a Canadian O&R distance record if the other claims failed. Everybody was ready by 1030, but the thermals weren’t. Cu had developed everywhere but overhead. Finally, with everyone glancing repeatedly their wristwatches, launching began about 1130. As it was evident that I wasn’t going to get airborne until about 1220, I shortened my task declara-

tion to Medicine Hat airport and return for 516 km. The day was not spectacular, but it lasted until almost 2100. The first couple of hours gave 3-4 knots to about 8500 feet and improved in the late afternoon to 6 knots and 11,000, with some large blue holes to add spice to the homeward legs. The winds were light, about 5 knots from the SE.

The results? Willi arrived at 1855 at 108.6 kph, claiming both records for a short time until Hal got home 50 minutes later at 99.5 km/h, taking the distance from him. Kevin completed his task at 82.3 km/h. Rainer, Rob and I were all out at the far ends of our tasks at 4 pm, I made Medicine Hat about then and decided to turn for home. Rainer reached the Saskatchewan border and could see Maple Creek some 40 km ahead but realized the goal was out of reach for the amount of day remaining. A few minutes later, Rob passed over Irvine, just west of Walsh. Both abandoned their task and headed home. A large area was going blue west of Medicine Hat. I crossed, using a few cu as stepping stones, and got back to Cu Nim at 1845 with 82.6 km/h for the task. Rainer arrived at the now bigger hole an hour and a bit after me and had a much tougher scrape getting home, arriving at 2045 and completing 628 km. That’s twice now he has beaten the O&R distance record without being able to claim it (last year his barograph failed). Rob elected to go south of track a long way to stay with the best looking cu, but eventually he had to turn northwest for home and landed at Vulcan, completing 526 km.

The day was an inspiration and a prod. Usually, once a good task is completed for the first time in an area, it seems many do it. Mostly, it’s a matter of will and preparation... Willi was heard muttering, “I could have done a thousand, I could have done a thousand.” ❖

On standard units of measure

Do you think we shall ever see a worldwide standard set of measurements in aviation, and what should they be?

- Start with gallons and pounds. I saw an explanation once of how much one gallon of water is in pounds. One litre equals 1 kilogram is much easier, isn’t it?
- Ah! But those were US gallons. A proper (UK) gallon of water weighs 10 pounds.
- I’m also familiar with readings on the ASI and vario both being knots – a simple mental division gives an idea of achieved glide ratio. (Even sink in 100s of ft/min is good enough.)
- But when the ASI is km/h and sink rate in m/s, all one has to do is the same mental arithmetic, then divide the answer by – what is it, 3.6? or is it multiply?
- In the UK it’s simple. We measure height in feet, speed

in knots, and distance in kilometres. What a cocktail!

- And in New Zealand it’s height in feet, ground distance in kilometres, air distance in nautical miles, runway length and width in metres. It does keeps one thinking.
- And if you have an engine, you measure fuel in litres when you buy it, and gallons per hour when you burn it.
- Once, flying a glider in Germany, it took a little while to get my head around the altimeter which was calibrated in kilometres with zero at the bottom of the dial.
- Did you hear about the astronomer who had his vario calibrated in microparsecs per millennium? The reader is invited to do the conversion. (answer #1 below).
- Or the UK glider pilot with his vario calibrated in furlongs per fortnight. (answer #2 below).

2. 1/16 ft/min – good only for British thermals, I think!
1. Just under 2 knots

ASC President's report

from page 2

The 2024 Summer ASC Cowley camp saw 28 registered pilots complete 99 flights (210:16 h) and Fall Cowley had 27 pilots complete 87 flights (185:09 h). Thank you to CAGC for providing NJK to help backstop PCK with the towing for Fall Cowley; the global challenges with the Pawnees was an unexpected mini-crisis that clubs had to manage this fall. Thanks go to Ray, Sheldon, and George for organizing both camps and continuing the tradition of having a summer BBQ and fall supper to wrap them up.

ASC has re-signed a new 10-year licence agreement with the Government of Alberta for the use of the Cowley airstrip. In negotiating this renewal, we were able to add language to the agreement making it contractually clearer that ASC has the right to rent out the unused agricultural portion of the land. While we have had an informal arrangement with a local farmer for many decades, this clarity now permits ASC to go to the local market to secure a much more competitive rental agreement which we anticipate will bring in new funding in 2025 and future years.

This is the best place to note the passing of Dick Mamini this October, aged 89. His major contribution to Cowley's existence is well documented in *Stalking the Mountain Wave*. Dick was a great cross-country pilot and the epitome of being "a man's man" as described by old Cu Nim members – we are all reduced by having one less adventurous character like him around to inspire us. A fine description of his ever-outdoors lifestyle of which gliding was a major part is given in his obituary at <https://shorturl.at/u7tU3>

This summer, Cu Nim hosted the 2024 National Soaring Championships and attracted pilots from across Canada. With 27 aircraft registered in the two classes, and an out-

standing organizing team and volunteers, it had the potential to be another successful Alberta contest. However, the event suffered from poor flying conditions which severely limited the number of flyable days possible. This was the second year in a row we've had unseasonably smoky or wet weather hamper our contests. And tragically, we all know that this year's contest came to an abrupt end with the tragic death of our friend, club member, and fellow competitor Kerry Stevenson. A tribute to Kerry's contributions to our sport and his legacy at Cu Nim and gliding in Alberta can be found in this issue of ASCent. Our thoughts continue to go out to the Stevenson family, the Cu Nim club, and all those who had the privilege of knowing Kerry.

As we reflect on 2024 we are reminded of the fun, excitement, challenge and joy that this sport brings each and every one of us. However, we are also reminded of the increased risk that we take on when we strap into the cockpit. Looking forward to 2025, I would like to challenge all of us to consider what steps we can take to help further our personal and collective commitments to making this sport safer. Over the winter, take the time to develop your skills and knowledge in whatever way you can. Spend time on the simulator competing with others, update your technical knowledge by reading (I recommend *Advanced Soaring Made Easy* or *Gliding: The Basics*), binge *The Thermal Podcast*, participate in the club ground school or instructor development courses, or volunteer to help out the club maintenance team to learn more about our gliders and towplanes. Winter is a great time to prepare for the spring soaring season ... how will you use the time to make things safer at your club?

I look forward to seeing all of you at the in-person ASC Spring Safety Seminar on Saturday, 1 March (location TBD) where we can kick off the 2025 season! ❖

ASC Treasurer's update

Simon Garside

Financial reporting to the end of November 2024 continues to show that the efforts made over the past 3 to 4 years have helped stabilize the council's finances through funding from an AGLC casino licence, enhanced use of PCK to support club activities and provincial events, and prudent spending controls.

In June 2024, we hosted our second AGLC casino in Edmonton which brought in \$79,588.93. These funds must be used to support eligible expenses and have been critical in permitting ASC to offer our youth program and offset the costs associated with maintaining our aircraft and facility assets. The funds must be spent over the next 30 months, but we will be eligible for another casino in 2026.

Both the Summer and Fall Cowley camps were successful in that they had very good attendance and will likely result

in them collectively "breaking even" for the year. Each camp brings in approximately \$8,000 in camp registration and tow fees which covers the costs to put on the camps. The additional expense of having a second towplane at each camp has generally been seen as a value-added cost to the events. We look forward to successful camps in 2025.

Due to a towplane problem at Cu Nim, and the use of PCK to help qualify new towpilots at both ESC and Cu Nim, we have seen a significant increase (>140 hr) in the overall use of PCK this year. This unexpected revenue will be partially offset by some expected increase in maintenance costs (like oil changes), but will be a welcomed variance in the final 2024 financial statements. It is good to see increased use of this important provincial asset.

In summary, our Cash and Investments total as of mid-November are \$96,101.76 (up from \$81,893.71 at end of FY 2023 and \$51,710.06 at end of FY 2022), with an additional \$72,928.85 in our Casino account. ❖

“Survival mode”

Roy Bourgeois, from Wings & Wheels

THIS ARTICLE is about things to do (and not do) on a cross-country glider flight when you are well below your planned height band, have already selected a field or airport to land in, and are trying to stave off that landing. Within this subject, we must talk about thermalling low, which is a dangerous practice – especially in windy and gusty conditions.

It's a controversial subject that some writers address by a blanket rule of “don't thermal below 'X' altitude.” While that may be reasonable, I believe the decision on when to abandon thermalling and execute the landing is an individual one that should be determined by the pilot after a careful inventory of many factors including experience, currency (both general and in a particular glider), wind and gust conditions, time of day, quality of the field or runway, approach obstructions, personal comfort, degree of tiredness, and (especially for pylon-type motorgliders) whether there will be an attempt to start an engine before the landout – requiring more altitude in reserve.

While I state no rule on this, it must always be remembered that landing out is just inconvenient, a thing quickly forgotten. But a crash is a disaster that at best reverberates throughout an entire flying career – and at worst ends that career entirely. If there is any question of safety, the decision must be made in favor of terminating the flight.

*“Hope is not a strategy”
a note on the instrument panel of
Dick Butler's Concordia*

When you fly gliders cross-country, you will get to this place sooner or later. The flight has not gone according to plan, we are now low and approaching a landout (either at an airport or in a field) and have only a few hundred feet of altitude (before committing to land) to work with and save the flight. We have already selected our field or runway and decided the approach that we will use to get into it. We are no longer progressing on the course ahead. But there is still some time and spare altitude to work with. So, mindful of Dick's pithy observation above, how can we use that limited time and altitude to maximize the possibility of a save?

Here are some ideas that have worked for me over the years and that you may find helpful.

Prepare for the fight

It's only natural to postpone physiological tasks like eating, drinking, and urinating until you are high, cool, and relaxed.

But that can be a mistake if you have a long tough climb-out battle ahead of you, especially at a hot, low altitude. Once you get below say, 2000 feet agl, do a quick inventory of these things and deal with them promptly before you get really low. We must stay hydrated and keep electrolyte levels up to fly well. And the constant pressure of needing to urinate can make the ground seem much more attractive than grinding out a half-knot thermal.

Get the glider as far upwind of the landing target as possible

Leave enough altitude for a zig-zag flight path back to the target. This technique allows us to locate and work very weak lift and still drift with the wind toward the safe landing spot. If we search downwind of the landing spot for lift, a weak thermal will take us away from where we need to be and if the climb is unsuccessful, we can easily consume all of our altitude trying to get back upwind to a rushed landing. If your landing target is an airport runway then try to avoid the traffic pattern in your search area if you can, but still, get the glider upwind as the first order of business.

Do not cover the same ground twice

Your search upwind of the target field should be a triangle, a zig-zag, or a sideways “W” that takes you over likely thermal sources (infrastructure, tall buildings, farm silos, rail yards, towers, feedlots, junkyards, large power lines, and metal structures) that will trip or focus thermals. Avoid cool or wet areas like swamps, ponds, fields with puddles, or irrigated crops. You can collapse or expand the triangle or zig-zag flight path depending on changes in your altitude reserve. The problem with heading straight out from the selected landing field toward a single likely thermal source is that if it doesn't work, you must cover the same useless terrain on the return trip. This wastes time and altitude. Frequently when I review a landout flight trace for a beginner, I see something like a bow tie or shoelace knot pattern clustered around the ultimate landing spot. That thrashing around back and forth to the same point is a waste of time and altitude. Your final flight trace should not backtrack over itself.

Accept you are in survival mode

If you are carrying water ballast, dump it all, right now. You need the glider light and maneuverable. You must be able to climb and exploit any lift that you find, and you will need the extra margin that being light gives you over the stall speed – especially in the tight turns needed in small ther-

mals close to the ground. The small advantage that ballast “might” give you later (if you save the flight) is not worth the trouble that the ballast causes when thermalling down low. And if your search strategy doesn’t work, you want the glider as light as possible when you land in a farm field.

Work any lift you find – no matter how weak

A low save is not the time to be choosy about the strength of a thermal or to slavishly stick to some McCready setting. You are buying survival time. Waste nothing. Work any thermal that you find – no matter how weak. This gives you time and opportunity to look around and see other resources like birds circling, other gliders climbing, smoke starting to go vertical, dust devils forming, and any other sign of a thermal working up from the ground. Do not leave a weak thermal until you are certain that the next step will be better than what you have now. Sure, you will be slow – but you will be even slower sitting on the ground.

When critically low, never leave zero sink

“Zero sink” is a thermal that matches the sink rate of the circling glider and, if you use it well and perfectly, you will climb. If the day has otherwise been good, zero sink is either the beginning of a thermal (which is wonderful) or the end of a thermal – which still gives you some time to think and sort things out. Either way, you should stay with it until it’s gone, or you see an alternative that you are sure is better.

Focus your mind on here and now

This is the time that you must fly smoothly and excellently. There is nothing else important to think about. Forget the mistakes that you made getting here and forget how late it will be if you get back. Ignore what your buddies or the other competitors are doing. Your universe is only *THIS THERMAL, RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW*, and you must work it smoothly and perfectly. Move your circle smoothly to first establish a positive rate of climb for a full 360 degrees of each circle. That’s a huge first step. Adjust your bank to maximize the climb rate.

Remember that thermals are smaller down low, and you will need more bank. Also, remember that increasing the climb from a mere 1/2 to 1 knot cuts your climbing time in half. When you have the thermal centered and have maximized the climb, keep trying to make it even better, and don’t relax until you get to a more comfortable altitude.

The radio is a distraction you don’t need

If your landing target is an airport, you should have already tuned to the local frequency when you arrived in the area and all you need to make is a simple crisp report like, “Hometown” traffic, glider XYZ maneuvering one mile northwest of the airfield at 1100 feet. That’s all that is needed. If you are working a weak thermal and get a radio call

from another glider, your response should be only a curt, “Busy now”, nothing more. There will be time for talking later.

Get your head out of the cockpit

This is probably the most important thing. Use the audio vario with only brief glances at the instruments. Focus on what is happening outside. Look for birds, dust devils, smoke rising straight up, or other gliders. Look at the ground and try to visualize what will get warm and stay warm. Look for vertical structures that will focus or trip thermals. Moving cars, trucks, and trains will kick off thermals as will airplanes on the runway and moving machinery in a farm field. Sand pits and rock quarries hold heat well. And don’t forget to look straight up – frequently you will see a building cloud that wasn’t there when you started the climb, or a bird, or another glider.

Know when to quit

This is discussed in the introductory note and is of fundamental importance. The lower you attempt to thermal – the higher the risk you are taking. Wind and gusty conditions greatly increase your risks while they diminish the likelihood of success (because they chop up the thermals down low). Decide in advance what your limits are for today and stick to them. Commit to a safe organized approach, lower the gear, and execute that plan. Sometimes it is helpful to think about why you got low on this flight. If it was just bad luck and the air is still alive, and the flight salvageable – that may be a consideration. But if it is late in the day with the sun angle low or a building overcast causing the ground to cool off – are you just postponing the inevitable? And taking risks to do that?

This is my 50th season flying gliders and while I have made thousands of flying mistakes that I would do over differently, none of them were the decisions to end a flight and land safely. I hope that these ideas and strategies may help you to avoid a landout. They have helped me sometimes. But even if they don’t work, you will step out of the glider knowing that you did your best, that you had a strategy, and that you executed that strategy. That’s something that takes away the sting of the landout and gives you confidence for the next flight. Stay safe. Have fun. Get better. ❖

Karl Striedieck, flying with Sarah Arnold, took first place in the 20-Metre Class at the 38th World Championship held in Uvalde, TX. They were the first USA champions in 39 years, but also, Karl was the oldest unlimited glider champion ever. This win made him, at 87, the oldest world champion in any sport! The closest was a 67-year old billiards champion.



Cu Nim

THE 2024 season may be remembered as a stumble along the growth trajectory we've experienced in recent years as a club – it was full of challenges. Our start was delayed due to lingering winter weather with slow membership registration. Club members prepared Cu Nim to play host to the 2024 Canadian National Soaring Championships, and the club responded incredibly professionally to the opportunity. However, the contest was mired in “unsoarable” weather conditions and, late in the contest, on 29 May during a grid launch, Kerry Stevenson ejected from his glider, and did not survive the fall.

While the gliding community waits for the results of the TSB investigation, we fondly reflect on Kerry's character and his years of contributions to build what Cu Nim has become today. A decades long member, popular instructor, he served as club president in 2018 and 2019. Through his returning to “regular membership” he advocated openly for the club to be transparent with members, something I found difficult this year, but hope future Boards will renew. The soaring community gathered at Cu Nim with Kerry's family and many friends shortly after the accident for a celebration of life. Kerry will be remembered as a gentle and supportive member of our broad soaring community, and many other communities where he contributed with genuine care for those around him. He will be missed by many, and sorely missed by his wife Lynne, their children Chad, Robbie and David (and the dogs).

As members re-engaged with the club, our training program was once again turning out results – by late October instructional flights represented 49% of all flights flown from our field – we added four new licensed pilots and sent four individuals on their first solos (possibly with more to come) before the end of the year. Our Object Oriented Training (OOT) program for students enters its fifth year, with great results to showcase. In response to a wait list which rivals the size of our membership, Membership Director Dan implemented a vetting process of candidates and this has revived a high first year success rate with at least three and potentially five of eight students achieving their first solo before the end of the calendar year. Dan is ready to roll again and will have his next batch of high calibre individuals identified very early into the new year.

Cu Nim will fall short of our flight target for the year, our intro target, and we had fewer pilots participating on OLC or WeGlide than target (and even last year's), and Cu Nim finished the 2024 season in fifth of Canadian clubs against our target of third. No performance target was hit.

Cu Nim's members – especially our “youngsters” Daniel, Josh, and Thomas – made the most of their time at Cowley where the club contributed human capital and gliders for both camps in 2024. Thanks to Chris Chiasson for his work on the summer camp and guidance through the fall camp. Many pilots, especially the aforementioned youngsters proved unequivocally that epic flights from Cowley can only be flown if you attend Cowley – and epic flights were had for those who made the scenic trip down Hwy 22 during both camps.

We welcome another private glider roosting at the field with Marc's purchase of a DG-300 from Texas. Additionally, Ben and I added MR, our ASW-20 to the fleet.

Cu Nim's XC pilots made their marks at home and away, Sasha and myself completed our FAI Diamonds this season (two legs for Sasha, one leg for me), and showed well at the SSA Region 8 contest in Ephrata, WA (fourth for Sasha in Sports Class, second for me in Club Class). Our CFI Chris placed fourth at the US Club Class Nationals held in Hobbs, NM. Many great Cu Nim flights took place in the US this season, although these points do not contribute to our Club ranking or pilot rankings among Canadian peers based on OLC rules. Of Canada's top 50 pilots (OLC-Plus) in 2024, eight are members of Cu Nim, with Chester leading the country.

Cu Nim will apply for SAC's Roden Trophy again in 2024, if successful it would be our third consecutive year receiving the trophy which is, according to SAC, “*awarded annually to the club which has demonstrated during the year the best utilization of its gliding equipment.*” This is a testament to our commitment to cross-country development which will sustain and support the ongoing growth of the club. I hope it remains at least in the periphery of leadership for years to come and we establish this as “Cu Nim's to lose”.

We pressed ASC to spend their remaining SportConnect training grant funds, which they did and it supported

the entry of NIM in the Canadian Nationals, as well as supporting tow-pilot training adding 2.9 new tow-pilots in Sasha, Chris, and Carey. Welcome aboard!

Chester, almost playing another sport, completed incredible escapades from Black Diamond, including travel by glider that took him to Jasper, Vernon, Fairmont, and other spectacular locales. Notable in the sport we're familiar with (soaring, not enduro racing), Chester completed another monumental soaring flight on 12 April, covering 1735 km (OLC scoring) with legs between Turner Valley, AB and Augusta, MT. Incredible!

Treasurer Derek Jones had his hands full managing the club's financial performance, rocked by big surprise expenses with our only towplane – first a near catastrophic failure with a magneto followed immediately by the AD on Pawnees late in the season. Damage to our balance sheet was compounded by under-performance in flights, intros, and contest activity. Cu Nim continues to evaluate capital projects beyond the horizon of our current constraints – the fleet and consequently hangar space.

On the bright side, Cu Nim cleared a years-long hurdle to secure an AGLC casino licence. This work was led by past-president Ben Hornett, and propelled to the finish line by now departed member Philippe. In 2024, Cu Nim passed two by-law revisions to address lingering impediments identified by AGLC before it approved the application in early summer. Cu Nim's first casino allocation is for early 2027. Thanks to all who supported this work, especially Ben and Philippe, the by-law committee of Gerald, Tony, and Harry, and members who had to endure two Special Meetings. This work finishes the strategic financial goals of obtaining a COPTER exemption and the casino identified in 2019, both of which will pay large dividends for decades to come!

CTP Larry Kopstein has done a great job with the tow plane portfolio over the past number of years, and helped us through this season once again managing the gymnastics of TTY's "issues". Very special thanks to Larry and Jos for sharing their personal Scout (ICO) for towing at critical times. A long time sustaining member and "everything man" (including reliable and very local aerotow provider) Simon Youens said farewell to Cu Nim as he makes his way to Vancouver Island (via Vietnam) in pursuit of a life at sea, or near the sea, or both. So long, and thank you good sir!

One consequence of our new by-laws and my real conflict of interest with *Take Up Slack* is that I can no longer serve in an elected capacity with the club, so this is my last up-date representing Cu Nim.

I'd like to thank the members for their trust, patience and personal contributions as we've collectively gained momentum and taken on new initiatives launched following the tragic loss of Allan and Adam in 2019. I'd like to thank the Board for their support, collaboration, hard work, and dedication to the member experience and sustainability of the organization, with a special thanks to our VP Carey Cunningham who has been steadfast, effective, and consistent in that position through my entire term as President.

I am overwhelmingly confident that the positive momentum driven by simple, sustainable programs and strategies will continue next year and serve us for many years to come. I hope that Cu Nim remains fertile soil for new ideas that advance the club toward my stated goal of establishing Cu Nim as the premier soaring site in Canada – safe operations, member experiences, and self-actualizing flying pursuits. Thank you all very much for your support and participation. Fly safely!

Patrick McMahon

† Kerry Stevenson 1958-2024

There was an astonishing attendance at his Celebration of Life on 6 June at Cu Nim. 148 cars parked in the unused area at the west end of 25 as the long grass there was mowed even while cars arrived to fill the space.

The hangar was packed with 300+ of Kerry's gliding friends current and old from Alberta clubs, his family, and many friends from his other areas of recreational interest, work and church. Kerry was an influential, very well regarded, friendly, often funny, and quiet person who helped direct the flying careers of many Cu Nim glider pilots over many years as a supportive flight instructor, and shaped the club as a vice-president 2013-17 and president 2018-19. He pursued the love of the sport as a cross-country pilot, mostly in the Duo-Discus, was a regular at Cowley, and a frequent participant in soaring competitions held in Alberta.

In his life away from the club, Kerry was a husband, father of three sons, a realtor, a motorcyclist, and many other titles. Kerry will be fondly remembered and missed by Cu Nim members and by members of the many communities where he contributed.



Central Alberta

The season started about as early as we have experienced in many years with checkouts starting 4 April. We had a slow but steady season flying at least one day every weekend that the weather allowed. Generally, the weather cooperated and much to my surprise, other than a few days of smoke in May, the skies were clear enough to fly, unlike so many previous seasons of thick smoke from the forest fires blanketing the province. Our logbooks indicated we maintained our 10-year average number of flights and hours on the club fleet in 2024. We had a steady showing of introductory flights this season as well, introducing our sport and generating interest in our club.

Some of you may know Tom (TL8) from Condor soaring competitions, where over the previous winter he maintained his flying skills and was ready to solo soon after we started flying. Tom continued to complete his solo requirements and got his licence towards the end of the season.

Iraj, a returning air cadet from the previous summer, also completed his licence this season. He was the third of three cadets we assisted in completing their licences after their gliding scholarship summer camp was affected by poor weather and they were unable to complete their licences there in 2022. The Air Cadet League of Alberta supported these cadets financially to allow them to obtain their glider pilot licences. They were also exposed to soaring at the club and I hope we will see them with us again in the future.

Artem joined us this season and completed his first solo and has continued working towards meeting his licence requirements, so we expect to have another newly licensed pilot in 2025. Peter, our clubs oldest member at 93, was out almost every weekend helping with the flight line, towing gliders out, and getting some flying in.

Two former club members rejoined the club after a 10-year absence. That is what happens when work gets in the way, but they found themselves able to fly with the club again and we are excited to have them back! We also had an experienced tow and glider pilot who was active with the air cadets prior to COVID join the club and she has been a wonderful addition. We also had a flight with the PiC at both ends of the rope being female. I hope we can continue the work to make this normal across our sport.

In 2014, we had a hangar section collapse that required innovative thinking to repair our building by inserting a tent structure in the center of the hangar that had collapsed. It was about 10 ft higher than the existing building so a fabric skirt was attached to the front and back of the structure to seal it up. Unfortunately the skirt had deteriorated by wind and UV to the point that a solution was urgently needed to seal up the hangar again. One of the pilots in the area was standing there looking at the structure and asked why don't

we lower it 10 ft so the roof profile more closely matched? How do you lower a metal structure with fabric over top that is 60+ ft wide and 40' high? Well, like eating an elephant, one small bite at a time. The existing metal structure needed to be cut back to lower the tent structure inside, and when ready, we started lowering each side about 18" at a time. It took several weeks and lots of hands, and we missed summer Cowley as this was our club's priority for the season, but the job was successfully completed, and the hangar is once again sealed. I can't overstate the effort, engineering, and support of the club to complete this project, but once again teamwork made the dream work!

We continue to try and obtain a casino licence. Tom has put an incredible amount of effort into the application process, but our lack of junior and senior competitors is the current obstacle. The restrictions on our finances have left the 1-26 at the back of the hangar this season, but we hope to find a way to get it flying next year.

Our successes and activity have been posted on social media thanks to our members taking pictures and telling stories of the season on Facebook. We appreciated SAC sharing our posts to provide more visibility to CAGC and our sport in Alberta.

John Mulder

Lethbridge

WE STARTED THE SEASON by losing several members for a variety of reasons. This has a big impact on a small club like ours, but remaining members were dedicated to keeping the club going and flying as much as possible. On the plus side we gained two instructors this year who kept our students progressing. By the end of October we had 64 winch launches (plus a few aerotows at the Cowley camps), adding up about 19.5 hours of flight time. And we still plan to fly another day in November.

We did lots of work on the ASC winch, including repairing the winch antenna to improve radio reception. It's loud and clear now. We also cleared additional length on runway 21 to maximize usable rope length for winch launches. Finally, the club rolled out a new Daily Inspection checklist for our Grob G103 club ship to ensure a consistent and efficient DI.

A few memorable flights from the season:

- A family member visiting from Ontario enjoyed a flight off the winch, getting a good view of the Livingstone Range and reaching 11,000 feet.
- I soloed on the winch on a nice calm fall day.
- Of course, the Cowley camps. Several members enjoyed the opportunity for aerotow. And it was great to share the winch at the Fall camp, providing visiting pilots winch launch experience. Remember, we welcome visiting pilots throughout the season – not just at camps – for winch training. We've also flown cross-country and into Cowley wave from winch launches, so it's not just for training! The highest

launch off the winch this year was 1700 feet. Reach out if you'd like to come for a visit and try to beat that height!

At the end of the season we received a donated 2-22 from Manitoba. It needs some work to get flying (has a bent airframe), but with four active instructors planned for next year, a second ship in our fleet would certainly help get everyone up in the air more.

Finally, we'd like to thank a few people:

- Ray Troppmann and Dale Brown for instructing our students at the Cowley camps.
- Former (and likely future) member Jordan for coming to the field to help on the ground.
- Our neighbour (and published author) Tyler Trafford for helping with wing running.
- Member George Haeh for volunteering to help run the Cowley camps, and always working hard to keep the club flying.

Matthew Line

Edmonton

ANOTHER GREAT SEASON on the books. By all measures, ESC 2024 was on mission and successfully advanced towards our stated goals of encouraging badge and XC flying while simultaneously concentrating on adding more qualified pilots to our roster(s). The continued work on our field, fleet and facilities by members is also facilitating these goals. The culture around the club is electric and incredibly supportive, with many new and fresh faces, with a noticeable smattering of both youthful and "less youthful" pilots supporting all kinds of goals.

For the first time in many years, we revived a long-lost tradition. On 1 January, 15 hearty souls took to the skies over Chipman for the first 8 flights of the new year. Over the winter the club was again very involved in Condor races. These regular Sunday flights are attracting pilots from all corners of the community, from numerous countries, and offered a fantastic opportunity to increase your XC skills while we waited to get back into the sky.

After our usual ground school in March, we were flying again in early April. XC and badge flying began in earnest soon after operations started. On 23 April, in the early days of spring soaring weather, our newly-minted CFI Mel Paradis led by example as she completed a 300 km task on a chilly day, earning her Silver/Gold duration and Diamond 300 badge legs, and in the process she also set three Canadian female records.

Then in early June, Ray Troppmann decided to scratch his itch for long, one-way soaring flights. On a Friday night there was a Slack message trying to muster a crew to do a retrieve on Saturday. Ray then set out and made his amazing 500+ km downwind dash to Swift Current. Another fantastic veteran member setting a great example. As fleet man-

ager, Ray somehow kept all club aircraft serviceable throughout the season.

Our CTP Tyler took full advantage of the ASC Scout PCK and spent the spring in the back seat to train five new tow-pilots. Though it sounds selfless, he says it was purely to allow him more time for soaring XC. Regardless, the new converts relieved pressure on the veteran towpilots and added operational hours and days to our season.

In support of our continued emphasis on Objective Oriented Training (OOT), by maintaining a stable number of ab-initio students, Amanda Vella did an exceptional job as our student coordinator. We have been very successful at encouraging and supporting young soaring pilots. We had ten youth members including three under sixteen. They were very engaged and consistently came out early and were always eager to go. One dedicated youth member, JP, was able to join the club at the end of August as a new student and pass his flight test by the end of October!

In 71 total flying days at Chipman we had 906 flights in club ships and an additional 53 by private owners. We converted two power pilots and licensed one more former air cadet pilot and we flew over 125 intro flights. We added two Class 3 instructors, upgraded three more, and added several new OOs. There were many record flights, record attempts and badge legs and other personal goals accomplished.

Our investment in our facilities continues as we had the glider hangar roof recoated in the hope of getting another 40 years of use. We also found a 12 foot mower to help to reduce the hours our volunteers put in on the smaller Kubota mowers. Near the end of 2023 season Clayton literally "moved the earth". Making further improvements to field drainage enabled another early season start for 2024. Indoors, we revived our slightly tired flight simulator, and took the OGN hardware and software to the next level thanks to new member Peter Harvey. Of course, there is always work to do and Keith, Guy, Bob, Ed, and too many more to name, quietly keep so many things operating, not leaking, and comfortable for all of us.

Another significant honorable mention goes to Conrad Lamoureux. Again this season Conrad was consistently the first one at the field, showing the rest of us that we can get started before 10 am! Conrad's constant hustle also shows in his logbook, as his 160 glider flights are double that of the next closest member (Amanda). He also played a huge role in the coordination of 125 intro flights and somehow found time to do his towplane conversion/checkout. Thanks Conrad, you're an inspiration to all members.

As we close the season, ESC has restarted another old tradition with a season ending celebration and awards night. We all look forward to getting together soon to look back on 2024 and forward to 2025.

Steve Godreau

2024 pilot achievements 2024

What's your personal goal for 2025?

Solos

Derek Blatchford (ESC)	Douglas Kinas (ESC)
Evgeny Chernov (ESC)	James Millican (ESC)
James Fowler (ESC)	Barry Miln (Cu Nim)
Martin Hurtaj (Cu Nim)	Thomas Scott (Cu Nim)
Matthew Line (LSC)	
Myles Pribeg (Cu Nim) – return to solo from air cadets	

Badges & badge legs

Derek Blatchford (ESC) – B badge
Casey Brown (Cu Nim) – Silver /Gold duration
Joe Bowering (ESC) – Silver distance
Walter Di Tommaso (ESC) – C badge
Keith Gwynne (ESC) – C badge, Silver duration & altitude
Douglas Kinas (ESC) – B badge
Sharon Lee (ESC) – B badge
Ian McCormack (ESC) – B badge
Daniel Nazarco (Cu Nim) – Silver badge & Gold altitude
Melanie Paradis (ESC) – Silver dur, Gold dist. & Diamond goal
Shaneel Pathak (Cu Nim) – Gold altitude
Josh Peace (Cu Nim) – Gold altitude
Sasha Pejic (Cu Nim) – Diamond dist & altitude (Dia. complete)
Mathieu Petit (ESC) – C badge, Silver distance
Patrick McMahon (Cu Nim) – Diamond dist. (Dia. complete)
Amanda Vella (ESC) – C Badge

Licence

Joshua Bagrowicz (Cu Nim)	Sharon Lee (ESC)
Kaleb Bagrowicz (Cu Nim)	Daniel Nazarko (Cu Nim)
Derek Blatchford (ESC)	Mircea Pereni (Cu Nim)
Douglas Kinas (ESC)	

Instructor

Clayton Bartz (ESC)
Michael Dineen (Cu Nim)
George Haeh (LSC)
Conrad Lamoureux (ESC)
Jean Claude Menasen (LSC)
Melanie Paradis (ESC)
Tyler Paradis (ESC)

New towpilots

Derek Blatchford (ESC)
Chris Chiasson (Cu Nim)
Carey Cunningham (Cu Nim)
Steve Godreau (ESC)
Conrad Lamoureux (ESC)
Sasha Pejic (Cu Nim)
Jordan Stefaniuk (ESC)

OLC club results

Cu Nim	27,794.6 km	151 flights
	18 pilots	31,962.5 points
Edmonton	13,304.2 km	93 flights
	16 pilots	15,213.7 points
Central Alberta	575.5 km	5 flights
	1 pilot	644 points
Lethbridge	no cross-country this year	

2024 OLC year, 2000+ pts for best 6 flights

Chester Fitchett, Cu Nim	4809.7 points
Chris Gough, Cu Nim	2787.8 points
Pavan Kumar, ESC	2703.2 points
Sasha Pejic, Cu Nim	2631.4 points
Patrick McMahon, Cu Nim	2353.8 points
Tony Burton, Cu Nim	2181.2 points
Struan Vaughan, Cu Nim	2103.1 points
Patrick Pelletier, ESC	2057.0 points
Gerald Ince, Cu Nim	2030.4 points

Best 400+ km flights

Chester Fitchett, Cu Nim	Arcus M	1735.2 km
Patrick McMahon, Cu Nim	LS-6	544.4 km
Sasha Pejic, Cu Nim	Jantar	519.4 km
Chris Gough, Cu Nim	Ventus	453.9 km

Records 2024

Melanie Paradis	Free ▲ dist. Female – 338.8 km
(same flight)	Free O&R dist. Female – 253.4 km
	3TP distance Female – 324.0 km
Chester Fitchett	Free 3TP ▲ distance – 1384.8 km

US Region 8 contest – Ephrata, WA

Patrick McMahon (Cu Nim) – Club Class – 2nd
Sasha Pejic (Cu Nim) – Sports Class – 4th

US Nationals – Hobbs, NM

Chris Gough (Cu Nim) – 4th Club Class