



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR



We'd like to thank Clare Johnston for the generous donation of a brand-new Christmas tree. We will enjoy it for many years to come! The occasion was commemorated with a special decoration shown below with Clare 2024 on the bauble.



May this season find you among those you love, sharing in the twin glories of generosity and gratitude." — *Oprah Winfrey*

"At Christmas, all roads lead home." — *Marjorie Holmes*

"Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection." — *Winston Churchill*

"Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful." — *Norman Vincent Peale*

"May you never be too grown up to search the skies on Christmas Eve." — *Unknown*

"Maybe Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas, perhaps... means a little bit more!" — *Dr. Seuss, How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*

COPA National Director's Award

Certificate of Appreciation that the Vernon Flying Club has been awarded the 2024 Canadian Owners and Pilots Association Flight Excellence Award Presented with pride from all your pilot friends in the Okanagan.



STRONGER TOGETHER

HOW KEITH AND I CONQUERED THE 24-HOUR SURVIVAL CHALLENGE

By Pauline Readner

Picture this: A remote mountain wilderness, cool temperatures, and no comforts of home! It's just you and the elements or at least, that's how it feels. This was my reality during the 24-hour survival course, expertly led by the Okanagan Search and Rescue team in October 2024. More than a test of physical endurance, it was a true challenge of mental grit, decision-making and resourcefulness.

When I first told Keith I was signing up for the survival course, I planned to go alone. But Keith, having completed a similar survival challenge a few years ago, suggested he tag along - just for my first time. He said it would be a good bonding experience. I agreed, and it turned out to be the best decision I could have made. Looking back, I don't think I would have made it the 24 hours without him.

The adventure began on Friday night at the Kelowna Flying Club, where we gathered to review the details for the next morning. We went over the essentials for our survival kits, with a strict rule: Bring exactly what you would have in your airplane nothing more! As we checked our gear, I realized there was one very important item that I hadn't packed....good toilet paper! That's an important essential in the bush or anywhere, really!



The next morning, we set out early for the remote location and our 24-hour bonding time. The sun was out, but it was chilly as 12 participants gathered. I couldn't help but wonder, "Why do people pay to stay out in the cold and try to survive, myself included?"

The Okanagan Search and Rescue Team shared survival tips around a beautiful fire before sending us to our designated sites. Walking through the woods with all our gear was tricky-branches, tripping hazards, the works-but I made it unscathed, thanks to Pilates for keeping me flexible!

As we approached our site, the guide stopped and

said, "Keith and Pauline, here's your honeymoon suite!" I couldn't help but laugh-though the "suite" was nothing more than patch of ground surrounded by trees.

It was about 10 a.m. when we arrived at our spot. The sun was shining; it was a beautiful morning! Feeling optimistic, we peeled off a few layers of clothing and started making our plans. The first and most important task? Build the shelter! I'll admit, I was a little overconfident. This is going to be a piece of cake, I thought! I imagined getting everything organized, then sitting down with a cup of freshly brewed tea over the campfire and writing some articles for my business that I had been putting off.



Well, reality hit hard: it took us about four hours just to gather enough firewood for the next 17 hours. Our shelter started taking shape thanks to a massive fallen log we used as a foundation. We layered it with boughs and moss to make a comfy base to lie on-kind of like crawling into a very rustic bed. I even decorated our haven with mistletoe, after all it was called the honeymoon suite. Keith, being resourceful as ever, crafted a lounge chair using a survival blanket and we were feeling good about our setup.

Every couple of hours, the Okanagan Search and Rescue team could come check on us. They complimented our creativity and reassured us that we'd survive the night just fine. They started calling us the "honeymoon dream team". I think it had to do with the fact that despite the cold, the work, and the lack of comforts, we were still smiling and talking to each other.

By 3 p.m., everything was in order. Keith rolled into the shelter to test it out-yes, rolled because the opening was so low (lesson learned!). We made some adjustments, ensured it was waterproof, and felt good about our setup.

With a roaring fire and Keith napping inside, I lounged in my recliner and was shocked to find I had Wi-Fi! I sent updates to friends and our pet sitter, bragging to the team about my "modern survival skills" including the SOS feature!

Darkness fell quickly, and distant campfires glowed through the trees. With rain starting, we cooked our "gourmet" freeze-dried dinner, sipped tea with a splash of Fireball, and praised our headlamps for keeping our hands free and being able to see so well!!

At 9 p.m., the team checked in, complimented our setup (probably telling everyone the same thing but very nice to hear), and assured us our firewood stash would last. Satisfied, we rolled into the shelter to attempt some sleep.

I prepared for sleep, layering up with clothes and placing hand and toe warmers all over-my new best friends! The steady rain had turned the ground soggy and dirty as we rolled into our shelter. I took the back, and Keith stayed in the front

At 2 a.m., everything changed. A torrential downpour hit, and our big fire didn't stand a chance. I woke Keith, and like a champ, he spent five hours in the pouring rain tending the fire and gathering more wood-despite our massive pile. By 7a.m., the rain let up, though it felt like the longest night of our lives.



At 8 a.m., we were greeted with a hot breakfast courtesy of the Kelowna Flying Club. Sharing stories and celebrating survival, I couldn't help but feel proud-I'd made it! I nearly quit at 4 a.m., but I pushed through.

Would I do it again? I've got the T-shirt to prove I survived, and while there were some tough moments, the knowledge and resilience I gained are priceless. I hope I never need these skills in real life, but I now know I can handle it.

Adjustments to our survival kit? Absolutely! Extra survival blankets (they're amazing), good toilet paper, and two different cell carriers-Keith had no service while I did.

Biggest takeaway? Keep smiling and breathing, no matter what!!



Christmas Dinner, Party and Gift Exchange

By Alison Crerar

Our annual Christmas Dinner/Party was once again a very successful evening of fun and good food. Thanks to many volunteers on one recent coffee morning, the tree, tables and the entire room were decked out in festive glory.

Forty-four jovial members arrived to enjoy cocktails, appies and Christmas cheer before the feast was served. The turkey was accompanied by plenty of gravy and a vast array of delicious side dishes brought by a host of excellent cooks!



There were some lovely desserts, but also chocolates and candy canes on every table to finish up the meal. While enjoying the meal and conversation, members also got to discuss the answers to the Canada Quiz at each place. When all were replete, Alison provided the answers to the tricky questions, and many were surprised by the answers. There were prizes for everyone – a small box of chocolates for each table – so there were no losers!

No Christmas party would be complete without our annual rousing rendition of “The 12 Days of Christmas” with the ‘daily gifts’ substituted with aircraft and such. Everyone sang the main part of the song with ‘volunteers’ contributing the individual key words, such as ‘two Twin Otters’. Well done, everyone!

Instead of a Door Prize presented after a random draw, everyone played a quick game of ‘Heads and Tails’. After each coin toss, those choosing the wrong side of the coin were eliminated until there were only two left, and Dennis McLeod was the lucky recipient of the prize. He had his choice of wrapped gifts, and each following winner chose from the remaining packages. The other winners were Carolyn Hoffmann for wearing the most red, Louise Paley for the most green, Lore-lei Fiset for the Mostest Christmas sweater, and Marilyn Mellis for the most sparkles.

The “Yankee Swap” Gift Exchange was fun, as it always is, with some very nice gifts and a few good-natured ‘thefts’ and swaps. Afterwards, there was little to clean up because guests had each brought their own plates and cutlery. A very big thank you goes to those who did stay in the kitchen to clean up the things that were left.

To put it in a nutshell, a good time was had by all!



Pauline was enthusiastically assisted by Wyatt Johnson throughout the gift exchange







Heather Leask with the MOT Approved Stress Test for Pilots 1997 – a welded box containing a bottle of Crown Royal – Cameron was the lucky recipient last year and it gets to sit on his shelf for another!



Most Red – Carolyn Hoffmann





Most Christmasy - Lore-lei Fiset



Most Sparkley - Marilyn Mellis



Most Green - Louise Paley



On the Ramp

C-GVBB, a 1966 C-172G based in Vernon, tangled with a fence at the Osoyoos, BC Airport and lost. Austin, the pilot and only one on board, said that "Hopefully it can serve as a reminder for some to practice good situational awareness."

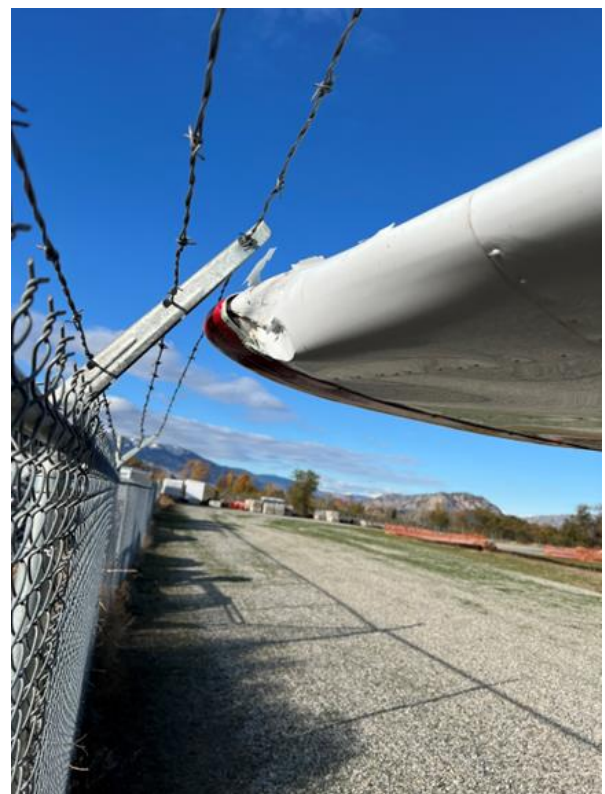
(Photos posted with permission)

"It was just me in the plane.

While taxiing in Osoyoos, the

right wing caught a fence post. This swung the plane around into the fence before I was able to stop it. The prop caught the top of the fence. The accident was pretty low speed but the prop took a substantial hit. The City of Osoyoos workers were very helpful in pushing the plane to their tie down area, where it sat for the last two weeks."

As with any incident or accident, we are glad that no one was hurt!



On The Ramp

Congratulations to Tim and Cathy Moore, our newest VFC members BTW, on their beautiful 1952 Cessna 170B.



A "new" aircraft on the field! Introducing Cal Paley's Glaser. Powered by a Subaru engine C-GFYM was built by Jeff Liot of Saanichton, BC in 2000. Cal is impressed by the speed and comfort (Louise says it is sure a lot faster than the Fleet Canuck (which is for sale, by the way!))

was the infamous blue protective plastic to remove from the aluminum. There was dimpling, deburring, filing, cutting, drilling and I got use Cleco's for the first time ever. Having been raised on a farm and with a background in electrical skills certainly helped prepare me for some of this but I had no idea what I was getting into. I had also purchased a practice kit and a Vans toolbox to use as my first attempts at this black art of airplane building. My first driven rivets looked horrible. I could do a decent job with the rivet squeezer, but that pesky rivet gun left smilies on most of my universal rivet heads. I was devastated. How can this be? It looked so easy on the You tube videos. After a consultation with Steve I learned that air pressure and technique will go a long way to making the head look good. Now I was ready to tackle the vertical stabilizer.

Well, it wasn't too long when putting dimples into the pre-punched skin holes that I proceeded to add an extra dimpled hole. I was devastated! I told Polly that I think this building is not for me. After all this could cause the airplane to fall from the sky someday. I needed therapy and fast! I consulted another builder who was building his 3rd RV-10 at Springbank Airport, Les Kearney. Les assured me that the airplane would live a long and happy life despite my error. His words of wisdom were "You will make mistakes...it's how you fix them that counts!"

I got back into the shop and kept going. Weeks went by and before long I had a vertical stabilizer, rudder, horizontal stabilizer, elevators and even trim tabs constructed.



Bobbi admiring the finished work.

In April of 2021, the fuselage kit arrived from Vans Aircraft in Oregon. I was on a roll. By now it was clear that airplane building is a two-person sport especially when your arms aren't long enough to hold both a bucking bar and a rivet gun. After a few practice lessons with Polly, she started on the

rivet gun. This can be a test of any husband-and-wife relationship and after we got our communication clearly defined, we were good to go.



Polly with the Rivet gun "We can do it."

That summer Kleko joined the family and was a companion to Bobbi in the shop performing quality control. The airplane was starting to look more like a canoe versus something that would soon take us to destinations all over North America.



Bobbi and Kleko helping.

Once the wings arrived and the finishing kit it was clear that this was a huge undertaking to build a fully functioning airplane. There were several bumps in the road, I had opted to have the wings (aka

quick build) built by Vans to save me some time, but they had issues with corrosion on the wings as they are assembled in the Philippines. This set me back several months but fortunately I had things I could keep building. Then the laser cut parts (LCP) hit the scene. Fortunately, all my parts were pre-LCP so that was a huge relief.

Of course, an airplane without an engine is kind of useless so I had the foresight to pre-order my engine in 2021 from Aerosport Power in Kamloops. Unfortunately, Covid put a wrench in the supply chain at Lycoming and engines were being delayed. Another setback! However, I was still able to keep building with what I had on hand and in the end, it really didn't slow me down. The bright side was that Aerosport once again was offering their build school where a customer can go to their shop and, with the help of an experienced technician, build their own engine. I was all in for that.

What a great experience. You arrive on day 1 and on day 3 the engine that you helped to build is mounted on a test truck and fired up for the first time. What a great sight to see that first puff of exhaust smoke and see 265 hp come to life.



Eddie (Aerosport) and I with the finished IO-540

Steve and I had that engine hung on the airframe shortly after I brought it home.

We now had almost everything needed to complete the airplane except some avionics. For that part I worked with Midwest Panel Builders in the USA to create a panel that I could use for IFR flying. They provided a suite of Garmin avionics that includes two large screens, two GPS navigators, a 3-axis autopilot system and all the other bells and whistles that go into panels these days. Louie the shop cat made sure all the wires went to the right locations!



Louie providing entertainment.

By the summer of 2024 it was clear that we were getting close to the finish line. The upholstery was done, the avionics and electrical were installed and the rough fiberglass work completed. I had yet to sit in the seats and make airplane noises, but it was tempting. There were so many little things to finish off and I was determined to get the airplane painted prior to first flight. I just didn't want the hassle of taking it all apart and putting it back together a second time. I finally found a painter by Armstrong who had a paint booth and did autobody work part time. We loaded up the fuselage, wings and all the other parts and by late August we began the laborious task of painting an airplane. I never thought it would be so much work. The scuffing, filling pinholes, sanding, laying out the design seemed to never end. I learned a lot from Jeff the painter. I also learned that spraying the paint is just a small part of the whole process. We finally completed the project and with Ron's help transported the pieces to the airport for assembly. We were able to secure a heated hangar to assemble and store the airplane for the winter. The finish line was near.

On November 26, 2024, the final inspection was conducted on C-GMMD. The inspector from the MD-RA spent 3 hours going through the airplane and paperwork. December 12, 2024, I was issued a Special Certificate of Air Worthiness by Transport Canada. We made it!

Now we needed the weather for a test flight. Chuck Ross graciously offered to go with me on the first flight. I'm so thankful he did. That first flight is like drinking from a firehose...its information overload! We planned to depart runway 23 to get some altitude make a 30° right turn before making the left turn for downwind on 23. The thought was that if the engine quit, we wouldn't have quite so far to swim to the shore.

After checking everything twice we fired up the Lycoming and taxied for the run up. Me not being used to a catering nosewheel probably looked like a drunken pilot on taxiway Delta. Differential braking for steering is definitely an art.

After lining up for runway 23 I gently eased the throttle forward. At this point we had no idea if the engine would make full power or if the low pitch stops were set for the correct prop RPM. Once we got to 65kts I rotated and C-GMMD (aka Ms Destini) defied gravity and Bernoulli's law took effect. We were airborne! Four years and 2 months of persistence and hard work paid off. I had the RV grin. After about :30 of making high speed laps around Vernon airport and a short journey out to Swan Lake we were confident that it would land uneventfully. We lined up for Runway 23 and landed safely, although a bit squirrely with the toe brakes. What an amazing flying machine. The speed, acceleration and handling are as described in the Vans brochure.



Chuck and I after the first flight

This has been an incredible journey. There were some days I was so discouraged it was hard to keep going but in the end persistence and determination paid off. We have met so many great people who are fellow builders and aviators that have offered support and advice along the way. Thank you especially to Steve Foord for your hands on help, encouragement and advice. To Les, Chuck, Mark,

Randy, Dwight, Andy, Seth, Stu, Darcy, Ron, Jeff, Don, Terry, Robin, Skytek Aviation and many others who have been a part of Ms. Destini's creation.

Many have asked what I am building next? The answer is memories. This airplane was meant for travel and Oshkosh 2025 is on the list.....then the sky is the limit.



Ms. Destini

Our Charity of Choice for 2024

In 1891, Captain Joseph McFee wanted to help the vulnerable in San Francisco, especially during the Christmas season, but he didn't know where to get funding to do so. He remembered, during his earlier days in Liverpool, England, seeing a large kettle where passengers of boats that docked nearby were able to toss coins to help the poor. Captain McFee placed a similar pot at the Oakland Ferry Landing, and encouraged the public to "Keep the Pot Boiling." He collected enough to host a Christmas dinner for the poor. The first time a kettle was used in Canada was in Toronto in 1903.



Generous VFC/COPA Flight 65 members donated **\$630.00** through our own "kettle campaign".

Farewell Tea for Bill & Mary Ann



Bill and Mary Ann Wilkie are moving to Edmonton and we gathered at a morning coffee party to say good-bye.

They have been members for 20 years. Bill has held every position on the Executive and was responsible for the current VFC Constitution and By-Laws as well as being the name tag maker.

Bill was instrumental in renovating the kitchen and he and Mary Ann put up the baseboards in the "new" part of the clubhouse. They were active and supportive of the club and they will be missed.



Photo by Bill More

Here’s to Blue Skies and Tailwinds Throughout 2025!

On behalf of the VFC Board of Directors, I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and best wishes for a happy, healthy 2025!

This has been another exciting year for the Vernon Flying Club / COPA Flight 65 with many outstanding events such as all the wonderful guest speakers we had at our monthly meetings, the delicious pancake breakfasts and barbeques (thanks to the very generous donation from Wyatt and Jonathan McMurrery of the A&W Group), the very successful Rust Remover, and a terrific Discover Aviation event.

The Executive has planned many more opportunities where members can get together in 2025!

The Board is always interested in hearing suggestions and receiving feedback! Please share your ideas and thoughts on making the Vernon Flying Club bigger and better than ever! Membership is down from last year and we want to make sure that the Vernon Flying Club meets the needs of its members. We won’t know what your needs are if you don’t let us know!



To all of you, members and Friends-Of-The-Vernon-Flying-Club, all the best for a joyous and safe Holiday Season! - Editor

**VERNON FLYING CLUB / COPA Flight 65
2024 / 2025**

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- VICE PRESIDENT: Cameron Bottrill
- TREASURER: Betty Lee Longstaff
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TEMPORARY Newsletter Editor: Marion Ross

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

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