

## Arctic Circle, July 8 through 14, 2011

### Monday, July 4, Rock Springs, WY

Phoenix Arizona, 114 in the shade, hotter when in the sun, got to get out of here. With the start of Arctic Circle only about five days away, Karaen looked at me and said, are you ready? And I said yes so, Monday morning, the Forth of July, at 7:20 local, I opened the hangar door, pulled out the Commander, fired it up, and we were on our way. Interesting trip so far, went almost due North over some really nice country, our destination, Rock Springs Wyoming. Why Rock Springs, because it was about 45 degrees cooler. Landed a little before noon, the airport called a hotel shuttle for us, and it was into town for a Holiday Inn Break. Grabbed a quick lunch and did a little paperwork, and are now thinking about where we will stop tomorrow. Will get serious and start adding photos, this trip is just like eating an elephant, you just pick a spot and take a bite at a time. And, we will be putting up a SPOT address for those that wish to follow us "real time"



### Tuesday, July 5, Billings MT

Our second day, so far, no paperwork, no fees, just pure clean easy flight. Two new experiences, Rock Springs WY and Billings MT. Both really nice clean places to stop over at.

We are going to dinner with Dave and Bobbi Powers, Bush Pilot Members who live in Montana but also have a home on the beach near Mulege. Great people.... And then, in the morning, we are doing the International flight from the US into Canada.

### Wednesday, July 6, Lethbridge

Wake me up, it can't be true. Just checked into Canada, and I thought the US was easy. Wrong, try Canada.

Departed Billings MT this morning after a great stay downtown Billings. Weather was clear after passing a small buildup to the North.



Had filed both eAPIS, Flight Plan, and made the Call to Customs in Canada.

After the short 2 hour flight to Lethbridge and talking to Lethbridge Radio who advised me to land 24, he advised me that he closed my flight plan (what an idea) as well as where to park for Customs. Called Customs from my cell phone who indicated that there would be no inspection and we were free to go.

Boy does Canada have their act together.

Lets see, four flights over the past three days, no paperwork, no fees, no inspections, and we are in Canada.

After landing Lethbridge, we made a short 40 minute flight to High River where we visited with Dianne, Barry, and Kathrine King, Canadian BPI Members, spent the night, and the following morning, flew back to Leithbridge

### Thursday, July 7, Lethbridge

Today is to be a quiet day, confirm all plans are set, watch all the activity regarding Will and Kate, as well as absorb some of the energy from the Stampede. (Calgary)

And, Canadians love to talk. Ask them how to get to the shopping mall, they will first tell you about the old mall, what was there, when it was built, when the new one was built, what is there, and then, how to get there. (two blocks north and one block east)



### Friday, July 8, Lethbridge

Day one of our trip. And in the morning, it was the Stampede Parade, more of Will and Kate, and, and....

Bruce and Pete are coming in today, will be going out to the airport to pick them up, and we will meet Barry in Wetaskiwin in the Morning.

Weather does not look all that good however, all the locals tell us that if we don't like the weather now, look out the window in 10 minutes.

### Saturday, July 9, Lethbridge

Day two of the trip. Weather sucks. We have low visibility and rain almost all over Western Canada. So, had a pilots meeting at breakfast and decided to extend our stay in Lethbridge a day and drop Edmonton. Good move, the weather did not improve. Pete and P3 rented a car and drove down to Waterton National Park, Barry and Dianne stayed at

home in High River, and Bruce and Suzanne along with Karaen and I went to the Japanese Garden and then to the fairgrounds where there was a giant car show. Over 4,000 cars were involved including show, low-rider, dragsters, trucks, and more. Can't believe that we went up into the grandstands where we watched street legal cars hopped up drag race. No, not a 1/4 mile but one car at a time which ran wide open for 100 feet. Yep, best time was 2.2 seconds.

Looking at the weather, it looks like a go in the morning, watch the SPOT report to see how it goes. Destination will be Dawson Creek and the start of the Alaska Highway



### Wetaskiwin

Had to skip this stop because of weather

### Sunday, July 10, Dawson Creek

Weather was clear in Lethridge and forecast for 5,000 scattered, 8,000 scattered etc. in Dawson Creek so it was a go. What we missed was the part in-between. Departed with ease, flight of three VFR to Dawson Creek and all was good for about an hour. Then, the ceiling started to lower to the point that we were in and out of the clouds so, one by one, we called Edmonton Center and requested a pop-up for IFR. Really easy, told us that we were cleared to Dawson Creek at 6,000' and would get back to me with a squawk code. About ten minutes later, Center called with a code and we were set.

Solid IMC to within five miles of Dawson and then went clear so, cancel IFR and do the Visual.

Checked in and headed downtown to do the photo thing at "Milepost Zero" of the Alaskan Highway and found a car show in the middle of everything. Did the photo thing, got my picture taken with the Canadian Moose, visited two museums, and it is now time for a

quick nap before doing our 6:00 pm social followed by dinner at 7. Watching the weather, will need to know what it looks like for our three hour flight to Whitehorse in the morning.

### **Monday, July 11, Whitehorse**

Canada has some interesting rules....

You can fly IFR (IMC) without a flight plan or talking to some one in many parts of the Country. And, much of the country does not have radar coverage. That being said, the weather was down in Dawson Creek this morning so we all filed IFR for Whitehorse. No problem, called an 800 number and a person in Quebec City took my information, we went out to the airport, talked to Dawson Radio (like a tower with no authority) who told us the altimeter setting, etc. and asked us to report when ready, tell him when we had back-taxed, tell him after we departed and let him know when we were 10 out. He then advised me to talk to Center who gave me a squawk code and confirmed my filed altitude and we were set. Solid IMC for about an hour and then we were out for a pleasant additional two hours.

Was passed from Center to Center and then to Whitehorse tower who gave us the runway to use (31L) and cleared us to land. (Atis Could have provided the wind information however, I had the worlds largest windsock in sight)



What a great place. It is about 80 degrees, no wind, and there are endless coffee shops, places to stay, things to do, and more. A person could easily stay here a week.

However, we ended up doing Dinner that night at the Salmon and Rib BBQ followed by the Frantic Follies Vaudeville review. What a hoot, I made arrangements for all of us to sit in the front row and, as Vaudeville is an audience participation show, somehow, Karaen got involved. I think it was because she was doing a lot of yawning. However, she was asked where she lived which she answered "Queen Creek" and the entire evening seem to

rotate around Queen Creek. What a plug for a great little community.

A trip to Whitehorse would not be not complete unless you do this show. It is a really great show, seats in the front row, old time vaudeville with great talent, good jokes and skits, as well as the Cremation of Sam McGee, it is a must.

### **Tuesday, July 12, Whitehorse**

This was the morning to be a real tourist. We walked the town, did some museum crawling, some were home runs and others that were not. My favorite was the machinery museum located at the airport. It had great displays of how the railroad and highway came into being and the impact it had on the expansion of the area. And the least liked museum (for me) was the McBride



Museum. It is off my list.

One of the really neat things about Whitehorse is that when you are ready to fly, there is an actual flight service station located at the airport and there are real people there to help you. Got a good weather forecast, they put in your flight plan as you stand there, and you are ready to go



### **Wednesday, July 13, Dawson City**

Filed a VFR flight plan and it was on to our last scheduled stop of the trip. Had a little weather but managed to keep out of the clouds most of the time.

The airport at Dawson is dirt however; they had just graded it so it was smooth and easy. And there was a nice terminal with some local activity. Talked to several local pilots that were flying charter as well as listened to a Citation pilot who asked (while inbound for landing Eagle, US) if he needed a flight plan to cross the border from Canada to the US. Kind of wondered if he should be up there but....

Dawson is a small city of 1,200 people. The industry that supports this area is gold mining. It sounds like a "second" stampede is about to happen. Large companies have hired 100's of young guys to re-stake the entire area. Look to see large dredging operations start back up there soon.

However, back to Dawson. What a hoot. There is one paved street (the Klondike Highway) and all the rest dirt. Well, not dirt but tailings from the mines and when it rains, (and it did) the streets turn into a sea of yellow mud. (slime)

We stayed at the Downtown Hotel which was located right in the middle of everything. The hotel is just what you expected it to be. The only thing that was missing was Clint Eastwood and Lee Marvin from the hit movie, "Paint Your Wagon". Just loved the place. The entire city is a museum with so much to see. And dinner that night was at Diamond Tooth Gerties Gambling Hall, an old time dance hall, saloon, and gambling joint. And yes, that was the night that one of the dancing girls grabbed my hand, took me up onto the stage, and taught me to play patty-cake.

### **Thursday, July 14, Dawson City**

The land of the midnight sun, we did not leave Gerties until about 1:30 in the morning. And when we stepped out the door, it was still light and there were people walking, talking, and having a good time. Seems that clocks are not a big deal here.

However, I paid for it as today was a very long day. We hired a local with a van and he spent about 5 hours doing an inside tour of how the mining efforts

worked, the history of it, as well as a trip through a mining dredge that has been restored and is open to the public.

And tonight, it is time for our farewell dinner and talk about who is going where in the morning. And then it is early to bed as we will be flying again in the morning.



### **Friday, July 15, Dawson Creek**

What a trip. We all learned a lot. Several things could have been done a little better, the

biggest that you get every chart that you might think you might need, and then get one or more two that you don't need. The biggest example was that on our way back, the flight should have stayed in the Yukon and British Columbia and I had approach plates for those two provinces. However, I needed fuel on the way back and elected to land Watson Lake (which was in Alberta. Solid IMC down to about 500 and I did not have the charts I needed.

Another important thing is to review the Airport supplement. Although flight in Canada is much the same as in the US, there is different terminology that you have to pick up on. And almost all major airports have a person in a tower that you contact however, he is there to give you weather information including directions of the wind at the airport and you tell him what runway you are going to use, when you are going to depart, that you are taking position on the runway, that you are taking off, and when you are clear of the runway. And, when you do all of this, he opens your flight plan for you without even asking. That is cool.

And.... today is departure day. One aircraft went north to the Bering Sea to do the toe in the ocean thing, another departed to Alaska to spend a week in an exclusive lodge in a National Park, and Karaen and I made the decision that it was time to start back home time.

We have had horrible weather for the last six days and almost all flights have been IFR. All departed separate ways IFR with Karaen and myself planning to fly to Dawson Creek with one stop for fuel at Walker Lake. Departed Dawson and had nice weather for about an hour and then it turned solid IMC. So, we contacted Yellowknife radio and did a popup to go IFR, climbed to the appropriate elevation, and then ground on for 4 1/2 hours solid IMC. Never felt better when I shut down the engines in Dawson Creek, climbed into the Best Western Hotel van, and do Tony Roma's for dinner

### **Saturday, July 16, Lethbridge**

Filed and departed early for what we thought was Kalispell, MT. Hotel took us to the airport and dropped us off. However, the terminal was locked and no one was in the tower. Called the tower on my handheld and got a person in Whitehorse who indicated the terminal (airport) and tower was closed on weekends.

So, in a heavy rain, we loaded up the commander, taxied to the now self-service pumps, topped off at US\$8 per gallon, opened our IFR flight plan, and were on our way. Had solid IMC for about one hour and then broke out. That being said, as we were getting closer to Kalispell, the wind was getting stronger and stronger so, as both Karaen and I were fairly whipped from all the IMC, I diverted to Lethbridge which is out in the flatland, taxied up to the FBO, they gave us a crew car to use, found a hotel, and then it was time for a hot shower followed by dinner

And, US Customs works a lot differently at the north border than the south border. When I get caught up, I will report on this experience (all good)

### **Sunday, July 17, Back to US and Arizona**

What a shock.... woke up, looked out the window, and the sun was shining and the sky was clear. Opened up the weather on my iPad and it is severe clear all the way from



Lethbridge to Arizona.

Looks like it will be VFR most of the way home.

So, we did the eAPIS thing, (again on my iPad) filed my flight plan, started up the engines, and it was off to Grand Rapids (MT) to check into the states.

Just a short 60 minute flight, we landed, rolled up to Customs, and all was a done deal when Karaen looked over at the runway just as a Cessna 421 was landing. Was this possible? I said no and she said yes and she was right. It was Pete and P3 landing. The last time we saw them was in Dawson City three days ago and they were on their way to Tuk and we were on our way to Dawson Creek.

Seems they had a real adventure. Weather at Dawson City was good and weather was reported good at Tuk and it was about a three and a half hour flight. That being said, just because the weather is OK at your departure and landing airport does not mean that it is good in-between in Canada. (or anywhere)

Seems that they were going to follow the road but by the time they had gotten to Tuk, they had climbed as high as 18,000 feet. However, weather was good at Tuk.

The story, as related to me is that when they landed on this small and isolated island in the Bering Sea, most of the town came out to greet them.

A women with a van offered to show them the town which they accepted. It seems that this women and her van was the village's only taxi, ambulance, funeral hearse, delivery truck, and more.

What a panic. As she was doing the tour, she was picking up and dropping off passengers. In addition, she had to go by her house as she had left her breakfast bacon cooking on the stove.

And, as this was summer, some or the locals were on the beach harvesting the whales that they needed to get through the winter

Pete and P3 were so interested in the town, they decided to stay the night at a little B&B. Pete indicated that although barren on the outside, it was really nice inside.

And, Pete & P3 decided they needed some groceries so they walked to the store (nothing is over 200 yards away) where they bought a loaf of bread, a jar of peanut butter, a jar of raspberry jam, and drinking water.... and.... the cost of these items in this small village where everything had to be brought in by air, was \$135 dollars Canadian.

So, back to our meeting in Great Falls.... Karaen, myself, Pete, and P3 (along with the Customs agent) sat in the customs office where we spent about two hours sharing stories about the last two weeks.

The entire trip was one that will be impossible to forget. The places, the people, the weather, and more.

So.... it was time to fly again so, we departed Great Falls, again VFR for Twin Falls ID where we spent the night.

### **Monday, July 18, Twin Falls, ID**

What a treat. After departure and a bumpy ride, we were cleared to land Twin Falls. Piece of cake. Taxied up to the FBO, shut down, and walked into the office. Reeder Flying Service knows how to do business. About the nicest lobby / waiting room I have ever seen at a small airport. They discounted my fuel, gave us a list of hotels that offer crew rates, and gave me the keys to CC1 or, crew car #1, a Ford Torus, 1 of 3 matching crew cars. And Twin Falls is a beautiful small town with a very interesting downtown. Really nice, Both Karaen and I both agreed that we would go back there in a flash.

### **Tuesday, July 19, Ely NV**

Well, Karaen and I have been traveling for 16 days traveling from Phoenix to the top of



Canada and back again. Have slept in 11 different beds, have sampled food from all parts of Western Canada including the worst ever Chinese food, (in Lethbridge) and are really thinking that home would be really nice.

We are close.

Departed Twin Falls for a short jump to Boise where we visited and overnighted with my cousin Terry and his wife, Val, then made the short 2 1/2 hour flight to Ely, NV where Karaen did it again. She is up to \$400 on a penny slot and the night is not over. And, there is a large convention in Ely, a little city in the middle of nowhere and the entire town is sold out. However, I do know the owner of the Nevada Hotel and he did manage to find us a casino room. And....

the rack rate for this "casino room" was \$38.83. Least I say more about this historic small town in Nevada, one which contains three legal brothels.

### **Wednesday, July 20, Queen Creek and home**

We are home....

Departed Ely about 6:30 this morning for the short 2 ½ hour flight to 5AZ3, our home base where the hangar and house were awaiting us.

Incredibly smooth ride even with the high temps.

After landing, rollout, and shutdown, my cell phone rang. It was Kim, my daughter who many know from Whales and the Guatemala trip indicating that she saw us land via SPOT and was on her way out to see us. She and her daughter Helen showed up just as I was putting the airplane away and, as they were so happy to see us, stayed visiting with us for about six hours. It is really nice to be wanted....

The trip was amazing. It was shorter than any of my Central America trips but, because of the horrible weather almost all the way through Canada, it was my hardest.

Would I do it again, not tomorrow but, perhaps in a week or two.

And, according to every local we talked to, the weather was the worst it has ever been at this time of the year. A week before, it was severe clear and now, looking at the satellite, is not much better.

However, we made a lot of friends along the way as well as have enjoyed the friendship of Bruce and Suzanne and Pete and P3. And it has been a long time since Karaen and I have made a long trip out of the country together.

### **We will see what it looks like in 2012....**

**and....** for next years CenAm trip, we are going to hold the countries that we are going to visit to no more than two or three.



Ident	Crs	Hdg	Dist	TDist	Time	TTime	Burn	TBurn	Altitude	Power	TAS	GS	WDr/Spd
SAZ3	001	001	517	517	03:09	03:09	69	69	13500'	60	200	164	000/0
RKS	353	353	254	254	01:39	01:39	34	34	14500'	60	200	165	000/0
BIL	312	312	286	286	01:46	01:46	39	39	12500'	65	200	162	000/0
CYQL	309	309	67	67	00:27	00:27	10	10	12500'	65	200	149	000/0
CEM	126	126	67	67	00:27	00:27	10	10	13500'	60	200	147	000/0
CYQL	311	311	454	454	02:46	02:46	61	61	12500'	65	200	165	000/0
CYDQ	268	268	555	555	03:22	03:22	74	74	12500'	65	200	165	000/0
CYXY	307	307	230	230	01:26	01:26	32	32	12500'	65	200	160	000/0
CYDA	099	099	372	372	02:17	02:17	50	50	13500'	60	200	163	000/0
CYQH	105	105	380	380	02:19	02:19	51	51	13500'	60	200	164	000/0
CYDQ	120	120	454	454	02:45	02:45	61	61	13500'	60	200	165	000/0
CYQL	140	140	141	141	00:56	00:56	20	20	13500'	60	200	152	000/0
GTF	190	190	328	328	02:04	02:04	46	46	14500'	60	173	158	000/0
TWF	286	286	100	420	00:32	02:36	12	57	12500'	65	200	191	000/0
BOI	151	151	263	263	01:39	01:39	36	36	13500'	60	200	159	000/0
ELY	142	142	397	397	02:22	02:22	52	52	13500'	60	200	168	000/0
SAZ3													

== SUMMARY ==

Total Dist (nm):	4666	Rem Dist (nm):	1411	Block Speed (kts):	163
Total Fuel (ga):	666	Rem Fuel (ga):	108	Mileage (nm/ga):	7.41
Flight Time:	29:50	Rem Cruise Time:	08:33	Burn Rate (ga/hr):	22.0
Overall Time:	39:56	Dept Time (MST):	03:51 am	Arrival (MST):	06:47 pm

