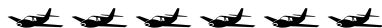




Fly North

Volume 5, Number 3:
July - September, 2013



NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRE

*Preserving and celebrating the diverse history of aviation in the northwest,
through the collection and preservation of artifacts and stories of the persons
and events that made this region unique in aviation history*

NOAHC NEWS:

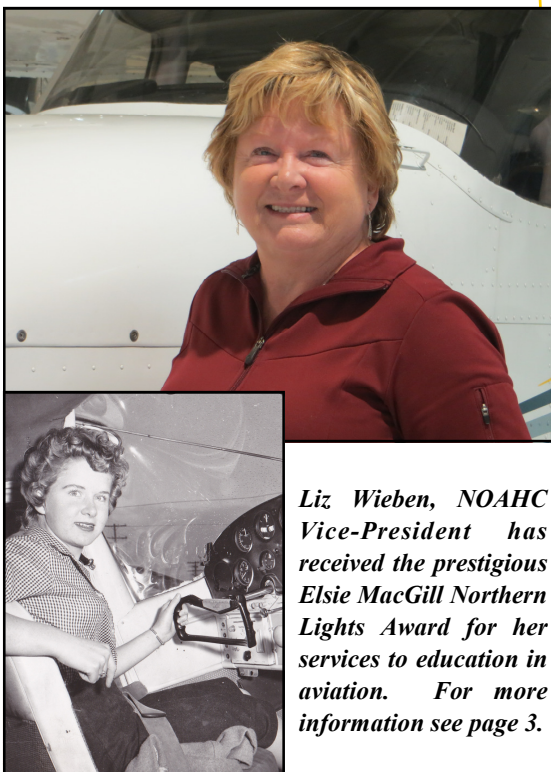
We completed the move into our new quarters in early summer and were ready to re-open. However, at about the same time, the city began major road reconstruction on Waterloo St. which led to the closing of the road and allowed access to the Centre only via some convoluted detours. Now that the road works are completed, we are open for business again with our usual hours of 1:00 to 4:00 pm on Sunday afternoon.

Our first open day will be **Sunday, September 22** and every Sunday after that. Come along and see what we have on display in the new Centre. It is in the same building as our previous quarters, next to the Da Vinci Centre. We share a front door with the music store. Look for our banner at the entrance.

THE "BEAR" AT 50: Congratulations to Bearskin Airlines, one of our corporate supporters, which in 2013 is celebrating 50 years of service to northern and northwestern Ontario. It was founded in 1963 by John Heywood, who named it after Bearskin Lake, a remote First Nation community located 270 miles north-east of Sioux Lookout. The airline is now owned and operated by Harvey and Cliff Friesen along with other owners including Karl Friesen (no relation), Rick Baratta and Brad Martin.

Starting as an air charter company using float-equipped aircraft, it began scheduled flights in the late 1970s, with routes between Sioux Lookout, Big Trout Lake and Thunder Bay. Until 2003 it served more than 20 First Nation communities when that part of the business was sold to Wasaya Airways. Today the "Bear" with its 16 Fairchild Metroliners and 300 employees provides scheduled service to 18 destinations in Ontario and Manitoba, including Ottawa and Waterloo. Acquired by Exchange Income Corporation in 2011, its management and staff remain unchanged, and Bearskin continues to make a major contribution to the aviation business in the northwest with its head office in Sioux Lookout plus an administrative office, maintenance unit and pilot base in Thunder Bay.

NORTHERN LIGHTS AWARD



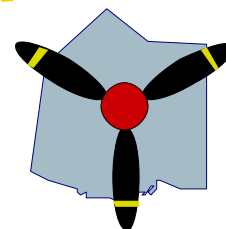
Liz Wieben, NOAHC Vice-President has received the prestigious Elsie MacGill Northern Lights Award for her services to education in aviation. For more information see page 3.

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Oral History: In early August, Ian Dew and Kathy Crewdson, whose company *NextLibrary* is undertaking oral history interviews for NOAHC, visited Kenora. There they interviewed Neil Walsten, Rollie Hamerstedt and Jack Howard on the aviation history of the Kenora area. They also visited Lori Nelson at the Lake of the Woods Museum to see how that organization collects, displays and informs the community about its aviation heritage. After previous trips to Red Lake and Fort Frances this was Ian and Kathy's third trip in to the region, allowing NOAHC to build up its oral archive of aviation activity in the northwest.

NOAHC extends its thanks to Bearskin Airlines for helping to make the trip possible and to Cliff Friesen for his contribution to the team's hotel accommodation.

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OUTWITTING THE WEATHER - by William Turner

Tuesday, August 16th, 1996 saw a series of severe thunderstorms pass through Northwestern Ontario. I was sitting quietly at our cottage 50 miles west of Thunder Bay reflecting on a successful trip to Oshkosh with the new Rebel. The aircraft was extremely well received and everyone's kind comments left my son and I feeling better than ever about the result of all our hard work [building the plane]. As I looked out the window at C-GLME tied up at the dock, the TV announcer was reviewing a severe weather warning issued by Environment Canada. A strong cold front had dropped golfball-sized hail on Fort Frances, and was headed our way. I have seen what hail can do to an airplane and was not prepared to see that happen to our pretty new Rebel.

I called the local Flight Service Station to see if they had any more specific information. They advised that their weather radar confirmed the existence of the front and the associated hail. I asked him if taking the aircraft fifty or a hundred miles due north would get it out of the path of the approaching storm. "That should do it," he replied.

It was now about 7:30 pm, and darkness descends about 9:30 at that time of year. I grabbed a small cooler and threw in a couple of cans of cola, two bran muffins, a small container of fruit salad, a banana and a piece of cheese. I thought that would be more than adequate for what was supposed to be one night in the bush. I did a quick walk-around and sampled the fuel. I also topped off one of the tanks, which gave me a total of 28 gallons, enough for about 4 hours with reserve. A quick phone call to my neighbour, Bud, satisfied the flight notification requirement.

By now the wind was starting to generate white-caps on the lake and I could sense the approaching system. The approaching low was generating winds from the SSE, so at least I would have a tailwind, wherever I decided to go. A couple of degrees of oil temperature, a run-up, a take-off check, and I was airborne after about a ten-second run. My track took me over country I have flown through all my life, so no map was necessary. The airspeed indicator read eighty knots, but the ground speed was closer to a hundred.

About thirty minutes into the flight, things started getting interesting. Lightning flashed straight ahead. My first thoughts were of the flight service station guy who neglected to mention these thunderstorms. These thoughts were not kind. Obviously I could not continue north. I was unwilling also to return the way I came and risk damage to the aircraft from the approaching storm. Fortunately, Northwestern Ontario is full of outpost camps built by tourist outfitters for the use of their customers, and the unwritten law of the bush permits the use of any shelter by a traveller in need. I felt I was starting to get needy and I knew of just such a place on a nearby lake.

Several low passes over the lake allowed me to select a clear landing path. Raindrops were just starting to hit the windshield as I touched down. While the landing was pretty uneventful, the subsequent docking manoeuvre was anything but. Picture a dock constructed of available materials, mostly rocks and trees, projecting into the lake from a seriously rocky shoreline. The wind was gusting about 15-20 knots straight onto shore and the only deep water was at the end of the dock. The wind was far too strong to approach straight downwind. Sailing in backwards would put the heels on the rocks before I could get out and tie up. My only choice

was to approach the end of the dock crosswind. It sounds easy until you try it. The problem is, as soon as you shut down the engine the aircraft tries to weathercock in to the wind. Sure enough, as I was climbing out, the aircraft was turning into the wind and drifting for shore. You have never seen an old age pensioner move so fast as when I grabbed that paddle and paddled for all I was worth to keep the airplane off the rocks. Within a few minutes the plane was secured to the dock. Hopefully the dock was equally secure.

It was raining for real now and daylight was beginning to fade. I grabbed my flashlight, cooler and sleeping bag and ran the fifty yards to the cabin. The cabin itself was securely locked and a thorough search failed to turn up the key, which is usually hidden nearby. Fortunately the cabin had a screened in porch, which was open. This was about fourteen by twenty-four feet with a small cot in one corner. This would have to do as I was hardly desperate and could not justify breaking a window to gain entry. As daylight was fading rapidly now, I unrolled my sleeping bag and began to settle in for the night, confident that I had saved our Rebel from a severe beating.

I was just beginning to doze off when I felt a presence outside the porch door. Miles from a road, I wondered how anyone could have approached without my hearing an outboard motor. I decided to investigate and just as my bare feet hit the floor, I saw what had disturbed my slumber. Framed in the lower half of the screen door was the face of a black bear. I have seen many bears in my 72 years, but this one was BIG! The screen in the door was close thirty inches wide and this bear's head filled two thirds of that. The door was not locked, although that would have made little difference if he had decided to come in. I let out a yell that I'm sure was heard for miles, and fortunately he turned and ran. Concerned that he might return, I barricaded the door with a garbage pail and the few pieces of furniture from the porch. I had no delusions that this might stop him, but at least it would create enough noise to wake me up so I could witness my demise. I was beginning to think that breaking the window might now be justified. I returned to my sleeping bag, and once the adrenaline stopped flowing, started to doze off once again.

I don't know how much time passed, but I soon heard movement outside once again. It was now completely dark so I grabbed my flashlight and crept quietly to the door. I switched on the light, and there he stood, broadside to me, not thirty feet away. This was definitely the same bear, as few bruins in this area reach that size. I was intrigued by his nearness. Having spent my entire life in the bush, I was confident that he was more afraid of me than I was of him. Unfortunately, this bear did not seem to be familiar with this rule. I yelled and banged on a garbage pail lid until my ears hurt. He just stood there with a slightly puzzled look on his face. We stared each other down for two or three minutes, while I wondered how hard it was to break a window. Finally, the bear gave a final sniff and ambled off into the bush. I listened carefully for a few minutes, but he seemed to have moved off in search of a quieter neighbourhood. Again, I returned to my sleeping bag, and soon drifted off to sleep.

*(Read about Bill Turner's further adventures in the next issue of **Fly North**)*

This story first appeared in the November 24, 2000 edition of *Greenmantle*

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NOAHC Vice-President, Liz Wieben honoured with Elsie MacGill Northern Lights Education Award

The following is Liz Wieben's biography provided by the Northern Lights Award Foundation on its website www.northernlightsaward.ca. She is the second member of her family to receive a Northern Lights Award - her sister, Robbie Taylor was recognised in 2011. (see *Fly North*, v3, no4 October-December, 2011)

Elizabeth Wieben EDUCATION AWARD

Liz grew up in a family run air charter business in Thunder Bay called Superior Airways Ltd. She has flown as a bush pilot in Canada, an outback pilot in Australia and landed a co-pilot position on DC-3 in the U.S. under the condition she was not seen or heard by passengers!

While still in High School, Liz earned her Canadian Private and Commercial Pilot Licences and Flight Instructor Rating and also later earned her Australian Commercial Licence, American Commercial and Instrument Licence and Canadian Airline Transport Licence.

After living and flying in Australia and in the United States, Liz, husband and four young children returned to the north shore of Lake Superior where they operated an air charter and outfitting business where she flew the much loved Dehavilland Beaver.

In 1988, Liz accepted a position with Confederation College to establish, coordinate and teach the Women into Trades and Technology (WITT) program. From there, she joined the Aviation Flight Management faculty and served as Aviation Program Coordinator, Director of Flight Operations, Flight Instructor and Designated Flight Test Examiner. Confederation College presented Liz with an Outstanding Service Award and honoured her with the designation of Professor Emeritus upon retirement.

In addition to her significant contributions at Confederation College, Liz achieved several personal accomplishments in aviation including the International Organization of Women in Aviation Amelia Earhart Scholarship and prestigious appointments by the Governor General and Transport Canada.

Liz is an active participant in the 99s Sleeping Giant Chapter and continually inspires the younger generation of female aviators with her vast and interesting experiences, stories, struggles, and accomplishments. As an educated, accomplished, hard working and dedicated professional, she has served as a remarkable role model and will continue to encourage and inspire individuals for years to come. Liz continues to be active in the aviation community both at Confederation College and as a founding Board Member of Northwestern Ontario Aviation Heritage Centre.

Northern Lights Award

This award is named after Elsie Gregory MacGill. She was the first Canadian woman to graduate with a degree in electrical engineering, the first woman in North America with an advanced degree in aeronautics, and the world's first woman to become an aircraft designer. While at Can-Car in Fort William, Elsie designed, oversaw production and was aboard the test flight of the Maple Leaf Trainer II. She was "Queen of the Hurricanes" and pivotal in the production of the Hawker Hurricane in Canada during World War II



Elsie Gregory MacGill

The Derelict Aircraft of Northwestern Ontario from the Robert Arnold Collection



BEECH 18-3NM, c/n CA-214, CF-DLN at Sioux Lookout back in September 1989. The aircraft was formerly operated by Slate Falls Airways. Prior to Slate Falls Airways it was operated by the RCAF as 2335.



NORSEMAN c/n 831, C-FDRD. I took this photo at Kuby's Aviation in Kenora back in May 1985. It first went to the US in May 1945 and worked for various operators there before coming back to Canada in April 1953 where it was reregistered to Ontario Central Airlines out of Kenora as CF-DRD. It then went to Teal Air of Winnipeg in November 1958. In September 1968 it went back to O.C.A of Kenora. August 1973 the aircraft went to Dryden and worked for SwanAir. In February 1974 it went to Wings Ltd of Red Lake. It was reported to be last flown in 1981. It was registered to Kuby's Aviation of Kenora in March of 1990. It was purchased by the Town of Red Lake and restored to display condition and placed on a pedestal on the waterfront in Red Lake in 1992.



DHC-3 SINGLE OTTER c/n 165 C-FDDX. This photo was taken during a visit to Kuby's Aircraft, Kenora back in May 1989. Formerly operated by Severn Enterprises out of Thunder Bay Ontario. Despite its decrepit appearance, C-FDDX has been converted to a Vazair turbine and is currently working for Hearst Air Services based out of Hearst Ontario.



BEECH C-45H, c/n AF-763, CF-OIL. This Beech C-45H was found tucked under the wing of Norseman C-FDRD while on a visit to Kuby's Aviation in Kenora. A March 1973 issue of the Canadian Civil Aircraft Registry shows it registered to Ignace Airways based out of Ignace Ontario. The date of retirement is currently unknown but it appears to have been retired for some time when I took the photo back in May 1989.



DHC-2 BEAVER c/n 78, C-FOCX The remains of the fuselage for this DHC-2 were found at Kuby's Aviation during one of my visits to Kenora back in May 1989. The aircraft

started its career with the Ontario Government back in May 1950. The March 1981 issue of the Canadian Civil Aircraft Registry showed it registered to Fort Francis Sportsman Airways, based out of Fort Frances Ontario. It appears to have been dropped from the registry by March 1986. The last known entry was 1985. The reasons for removing it from the registry are currently unknown. Note the wings for Cessna 185 C-GEDN in the foreground once belonging to Sky North Ltd. based out of Red Lake Ontario.