

# Turn Bank



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF RAAC CHAPTER 85

October 2003



Feature article on Bob Cutting's newly finished RV-9A page

The TURN AND BANK is the monthly publication of RAAC Chapter 85 and is intended to keep members informed as to the club's activities, and to promote safety and technical excellence in the field of sport aviation. No responsibility or liability is assumed, expressed or implied as to the content of articles contained in the Turn and Bank: the intention is to provide a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas.

Newsletter contributions should be mailed to Doug Brown, 9260 Pinewell Cr., Richmond, BC, V7A 2C6, no later than the 12th of each month. Or e-mailed to [brown\\_d@fc.sd36.bc.ca](mailto:brown_d@fc.sd36.bc.ca)

Enquiries to the Membership Chairman should be mailed to Rob Prior, 3032 Carina Place, Burnaby, B.C., V3J 1B5

Regular chapter meetings are held on the first Tues. of each month at 20:00 (8pm) in the clubhouse:

Delta Airpark, 4103-104th Street Delta, B.C.

Clubhouse phone: 596-3644

Mailing Address: Chapter 85, RAAC

c/o Delta Heritage Airpark, 4103-104th St., RR#3, Delta, B.C. V4K-3N3

Executive meetings are on the third Tues. of each month at 19:30 (7:30 pm) in the clubhouse.

Chapter aircraft pilots, mail cheques

(Payable to RAAC Chapter 85) to:

Tedd McHenry

RAAC National Homepage: <http://www.raa.ca>

RAAC Chapter 85 Homepage: [http://www.b4.ca/raa\\_85](http://www.b4.ca/raa_85)

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one day soon

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	946-4152 (bus) 293-0663 (pager)	
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	Bruce Prior	437-4219
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Aluminum:	George Worden	433-5564
Computers in Aviation:	Rob Prior	422-8446
General:	Paul Trudel	532-8570

## Calendar of events

This space will be used for notification of upcoming events and activities such as fly-ins, breakfasts, banquets, and really big birthday parties. If you know of any activity which the members should know about please give me a call (275 1405).

- Oct 7 Election of officers for RAAC Chapter 85 (this is the October regular general meeting)
- Oct 8 Meeting for all tenants and pilots of Delta Heriatge Air Park to discuss flight procedures out of the airpark
- Oct 12 Breakfast at the Cafe, 09:00
- Nov 11 Formation fly pass for Remembrance Day



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### Minutes of the General Meeting, 2 September, 2003

Call to order: 8:00 PM by President Tim Baker.

Hunter / Walker: that the Minutes of the General Meeting of 5 August, 2003 be adopted as printed in "Turn & Bank"

Discussion Carried.

Correspondence: Letter received from BCIT Bursary Department advising that Mr. James King of Abbotsford as been given Chapter's \$ 500 bursary for studies in the BCIT AME Program.

### Committee Reports:

-Treasury: Per President Tim Baker: Don Souter away so no report however Tim advises that with increased costs of everything, dues and all other charges are going to have to be increased. Executive will attend to such matters at the September Executive Meeting. All members are, of course, invited to attend Exec. meetings.

-Membership: Rob Prior: 127 members of all types including several who joined this evening.

-Buildings: David Bell: Our fridge is thoroughly clapped so if anyone has one, it would be gratefully accepted.

-Library: John Macready: Going well although it is an illiterate time of the year. Thanks Gerrard Van Dijk for the donation of books.

-Vice President: Gerrard Van Dijk: 50 / 50 draw held. Recollect that proceeds of these draws goes to subsidise the Annual Bash.

-Newsletter: Doug Brown: Going Fine ( and Secretary says another great issue ) Doug would like to institute a callendar of event page so if you have any events that need publicising, let Doug know.

-Program: John Macready: Tonight we have Mr. Rick Church to give a demonstration of aircraft rivetting ( and very good it was !)

-Aircraft: per Gerrard Van Dijk: Turbi very busily engaged. Enough to go through 2 oil changes. It is working well.

-RAAC: Rob Prior: RAAC AGM will be in Calgary toward the end of September. Rob is probably going and he invites members with any comments or ideas to take to the meeting to see him.

-Air Park Committee ( formerly DHAPCOM): Terry Wilshire: 1) Breakfast, Sunday 14 September.

2) Corn Roast, Saturday 20 September. Bring everything else. DHAPCOM providing the corn.

3) Our licence to operate the Air Park is secure

but we are coming up on the renewal soon. Also, we are still looking for the zoning changes that will permit much work to happen. 4) To be a Flight Operations Briefing Wednesday, October 8, 7:30 in our club house. All DHAP tenants and frequent visitors are urged to attend.

### Old Business:

Bruce Prior elections / nominations chairman urges a lively political activity. He says that we need new and better blood in the Chapter.

Nominate ! Run ! Storm the Barricades ! ( Bruce, incidentally, is up for re- election. So much for new and better blood. )

### Announcements:

Doug Brown looking for some wood suitable for building the doors on a Tailwind. Don't know if this is for functional or artistic application. Talk to Doug.

Brown / Walker: that we adjourn, which, actually, we did.

Jim Hunter, Secretary ( largely clotted. )

# Bulletin Board

## **New Rate for Turbi**

Tedd McHenry, Aircraft Chairman

The Chapter Executive has decided to raise the hourly rate for the Turbi, and to change the rate structure. The Turbi isn't raising enough revenue to cover its costs. We hope to raise a bit more money with the new rate, and we also hope to discourage extremely short flights with the new rate structure.

The new rate will be 60 dollars per hour, wet. There will be a 30 dollar minimum charge, per use. "Per use" means that you can do a short out-and-back with each leg less than 0.5 hours and only pay the minimum charge once, not on each leg. But if you make a single flight of less than 0.5 hours you pay 30 dollars. The new rate will take effect after the July general meeting.

## **Remembrance Day Formation**

Tedd McHenry

The Remembrance Day formation will be organized a little differently this year from the past few years. If you want to participate, it's essential that you let me know as soon as possible, because there will be a limit on the number of aircraft, and we will start the practices earlier than in previous years. We're going to establish a minimum number of required practices, and you will have to meet that requirement to be eligi-

ble to fly on Remembrance Day. Eric Munzer has volunteered to lead this year's formation. As in previous years, the formation will be built from threeplane elements. But this year I'm going to identify specific pilots and give them additional training as element leads, well in advance of Remembrance Day. Regular formation members (wingmen) will practice first with an element lead, as a three-plane formation, before we attempt to put together the full formation. Wingmen will simply position themselves relative to their element lead, and will not have to spend as much time watching the planes ahead of them as in previous years. The objective is to create a more uniform and safer formation by putting the primary responsibility for spacing on the element leads.

The element structure will also allow a more orderly and efficient break-up of the formation at the end of the flight. More orderly handling of emergencies. If an airplane has an emergency, the entire element can separate from the formation and the other two airplanes in the element can, where possible, help the airplane with the emergency. Three pilots have volunteered to be element leads: Hammy McClymont, Donn Hubble, and Bob Solway. Along with Eric, that makes four 3-ship elements for a formation of 12 airplanes. That will be the maximum. However, to allow for unservicable airplanes or pilots I would like to have a couple of back-up element leads as well. If you would like to be trained as an element lead, please contact me

(604-574-4764 or [tedd@mchenry.ca](mailto:tedd@mchenry.ca)).

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## **Now Featuring: Bob Cutting's RV-9A**

Last weekend I had the pleasure of accompanying Bob on a short flight in his newly completed RV9A. While speed was building on the take off roll the aircraft tracked true and straight as an arrow down the runway. It seemed that very little rudder was necessary to keep it on a straight line. We accelerated to 160 mph very quickly and it just purred along just as nice as could be. Wow. This RV-9A is powered by a Lycoming O-290, completely rebuilt by Bob. To get this speed out of an O-290 the airplane must obviously be very clean. Built in 2500 hours from May of 2001, finishing in July of 2002. First flight was in September of 2003. Taking a look at the riveting I was awestruck by the craftsmanship that went into each rivet. All perfectly dimpled and bucked. I'm thinking that the whole thing was built with this same care and attention to detail. This is Bob's stock and trade. While the RV is a kit plane, there is much that the builder must do him/herself. Including the instrument panel and firewall forward.

This is Bob's 10th airplane project. He started way back in the 60's building when he was a young 20 year old lad. Will he be embarking on yet another airplane project? I haven't heard him mention anything, but one can only assume that this is not the end. I am becoming convinced that Bob enjoys building more than he enjoys flying. Perhaps there's yet another, after he has finished rebuilding the 1962 MG, and this likely in record time.

See photos of this awesome aircraft on the next page.



Nicely laid out panel. Looks to be full IFR. I'm thinking Bob's gonna be doin' a lot of fast, carefree flying



A very fine airplane , built by an expert.

# President's Message

This summer has been a record for having calm, dry weather and as such most delta pilots were able to take advantage. Many chapter members were able to attend other fly-ins and fly-outs in our area. Our club aircraft has put on record number of hours this year thanks to the good weather and more participation by club members. The clubhouse has received a couple coats of paint, unfortunately the wood preservative is bleeding through the paint so we may have to put a few more coats on it. Otherwise, the clubhouse is looking a great deal better. Special thanks to Edo Schaftsma for his donation of a much needed fridge for the clubhouse. It even color matches the stove. We still need someone to repair the floor. So if anyone knows of someone who does floor repair or if you are able to do floor repair, your help would be greatly appreciated. Our Volunteer Appreciation BBQ on September 20th was a good success and kudos to all delta airpark volunteers for a great job at operating this unique airpark.

As been mentioned at various meetings in the past year, Chapter 85's financial situation, though not desperate by any means, is now at a stage where serious consideration must be given to increase revenue to cover costs to ensure the future of the club. Without sounding morbid or opportunistic, members may consider giving a donation to the club through the settlement of their estate. A simple addendum to one's will can be written on a plain piece of paper and is legal as long as it is dated and signed by two witnesses who will not be beneficiaries and dated and signed by the person in question. Such a donation can be anything from cash to cashable assets such as aircrafts, vehicles, tools and/or equipment.....but not your ex-mother-in-law!!!!!!! Remember you will never see a hearse with a trailer hitch towing a U-Haul trailer because you can't take it with you!!!...but you can decide who gets to take it!

October is election month so please try to attend the October's general meeting to participate in the great function of democracy that the foundation of our club is based on. Do not forget October 8th's DHATCOM Flight Procedure Seminar - 7:30 p.m. for all delta airpark users. Finally, COLIN WALKER had completed extensive research in the effects of re-enforced rubber and frictional interaction with scrap iron. Colin has discovered that truck tires and protruding steel can have a detrimental effect on your cash flow. Many thanks to Colin for his pain-staking and self-sacrificing research into this endeavor. Anyone who is wanting more detailed data on this research, please feel free to contact Colin personally. That is it for this month. Fly safe. Tim

## Technical/Safety

A Bad Decision to Fly  
Tedd McHenry  
RAA Chapter 85

I was about twenty feet above the runway on a touch-and-go when I heard the engine let go. While I had been fortunate never to have experienced a catastrophic engine failure before, it was immediately obvious that something was seriously wrong with this powerplant. I put the nose down and pulled the throttle to idle. The next thing to become immediately obvious was that there was nowhere near enough runway left to put this thing down safely. I was looking at trees—ugly trees. I opened the throttle, lifted the nose, and was greeted with a sound like schedule 40 pipe hitting the deck of a drilling rig.

How did I come to find myself in this predicament? Like most pilots, I think of myself as fairly sensible, and a good decision-maker. After many years of reading accident reports, and a year or so of SAR work in the air force, I had formed the opinion that most accidents fall into one of two categories. The first are the dumb accidents, the ones where the pilot clearly made a bad decision, and should have known better. The second are the more insidious accidents, the ones that really frighten pilots, in which a series of seemingly reasonable decisions, combined with unexpected or unknown circumstances, lead to tragedy. I expect most pilots worry about the second category of accident. We've all read the reports, and we've all thought, "I could have done that." But, perhaps like most pilots, I didn't think I was the type to make a really dumb decision. I was wrong.

In the hope of adding to the great wealth of anecdotal experience we all draw on as pilots, I'd like to examine the circumstances around the

decisions I made that day, and the consequences of them.

The airplane was C-FWBE, RAA Chapter 85's Druine Turbi. My first inkling of a problem with the airplane actually came two days earlier. Returning home from a flight to Courtenay Air Park, in the final minutes of the flight, I thought I noticed a slight knocking sound from the engine. I've always eyed Lycomings with a bit of suspicion. With their fixed spark advance and air-cooled cylinders they seem designed for detonation and pre-ignition. And that was my first suspicion. But it was late in the day, and I was feeling some anxiety about landing while there was still enough light, as neither the airplane nor the airport were equipped for night operation. By the time I reached the hangar I had convinced myself that I was just being hypersensitive. The engine's performance seemed normal.

The next day, a Saturday, another pilot took the airplane for a round trip of an hour or two. I asked him if he had noticed anything amiss with the engine. He had not. This was a pilot I knew to be conscientious, and who had more experience than I with this particular airplane, so I was reassured by him not noticing anything unusual. I went ahead with my planning for another flight to Courtenay on Sunday.

The weather Sunday morning was pretty normal for the lower mainland: a low-ish stratus ceiling and steady rain. But the forecast was for good VFR weather by noon, improving throughout the

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Paul Trudel 532-8570

FOR SALE: I have just finished minor repairs to a classic Cessna 140 I recently purchased, and now the aircraft is available for sale. If you know anyone who may be interested please pass this along to them. 1947 Cessna 140 S/N 12394 Total time is 6400hrs Engine time is 1030 Prop 117hrs. 3 years remaining on 5 year insp. Narco Comm 120 (Just serviced and repaired) Old ADF Model? Full gyro panel and everything works. (I haven't tried the ADF) Asking \$27,500 Cdn, or \$20,000US Will deliver anywhere in North America for costs. A great little fun airplane that is about as cheap as it gets to operate. 4.5 Gals per hour. 100MPH. Auto fuel OK. Insurance on my other 140 is less than my pick-up truck insurance! R  
Rick Church 604-533-2746  
rchurch@telus.net

day. I changed the oil and filter in the Turbi, maintenance that was due. Still harboring some suspicion about the engine, I kept an eye out for anything unusual, but I did not cut open the oil filter to examine it, as I sometimes do. The oil change went normally, as did the run-up and circuits afterward. I still thought I detected the knocking sound, but it was as subtle as before, and I was becoming convinced that it had always been there but I'd never noticed.

We departed for Courtenay around noon, Susan and I in the Turbi and our friends Hammy and Torill a transponder, our route was up the east side of CYVR mode C airspace and through Vancouver Harbour. I was listening closely to the engine the whole way. Climbing to 4500 just west of Gower Point, I became convinced that the knocking sound was worse, and set up a precautionary landing at Sechelt-Gibsons, only a few miles away. Other than the RC aircraft exhibit taking place on the field, the precautionary landing went as planned. Hammy and Torill joined us on the ground a few minutes later.

By a stroke of luck, a local AME was at the field that day, working on an airplane on the ramp. Word of our precautionary landing must have gotten around quickly, because he was on his way over to talk to us by the time we shut down. I explained the symptoms, and he very graciously offered to help us chase down the problem on his own time. After looking inside the cowling for anything obvious, we did some run-up checks, both with him in the cockpit and outside listening. He noticed the knocking sound, too, which by now could be felt between the shoulder blades when sitting in the pilot's seat during a run-up. We removed the cowling, carefully examining parts at each step, and searched for anything that might produce such an effect, from baffling impinging on the alternator drive to loose components on the firewall. We found nothing unusual. I decided to button everything up and try a circuit. Looking back, this seems an odd decision. Why fly an airplane with a known problem, just to find the problem? I suspect that I was reassured by knowing that an AME had looked at it and found nothing, and didn't seem unsettled by my plan to fly it. I also reasoned that if I got to the run-up check and still was suspicious about the engine I could always abort. And that's exactly what happened. The engine did not magically get better, the knocking sound was still there during the run-up, and I taxied back in.

Another couple of hours of looking and head scratching followed. The AME had since gone back to his revenue-generating work. After dismantling the cowling a second time, and even more poking around the engine compartment, we still found nothing that could explain the knocking. By this point most of the day had gone by. We all had engagements that night we didn't want to miss, and the Citabria could only hold Hammy and one passenger. So we needed to make a decision fairly soon. I still had in my mind the idea that the problem probably wasn't anything serious—though why I can't explain. So I decided a second time to try a circuit. I was going to use the results of that "test" to determine if I would fly the airplane home.

This time, although the run-up was no different than before, I did not abort. I taxied to the runway, took off, and flew a circuit. The knock was there, and I could not decide if it was getting worse or staying the same. So, despite having planned only one circuit, and because I simply could not make the decision that the engine was broken, I decided to do a touch and go and another circuit. It was on this touch and go that the engine finally let go.

After deciding that there was insufficient runway to abort, I opened the throttle all the way and hoped that the engine would last a little longer. As soon as I cleared the trees surrounding the airfield—which are a good hundred feet high—I throttle back until the engine sounded like it would not fly apart. This was 1500 RPM, luckily enough to maintain altitude. I noticed that the oil pressure was still normal, and that made me feel a lot better. I made as short a circuit as I could, and landed back on the runway. Subsequent investigation turned up what had failed: all the studs securing cylinder 3 to the crankcase had snapped. Miraculously, the two crankcase through-bolts held and the cylinder didn't completely depart the airplane.

Looking back, the decision to take off in an airplane with a known bad engine seems amazingly foolish. I can hardly believe I did it. But I did. These are the factors I think led to that poor decision. Get-home-it is. If I had been at Delta (my home airport) there is no way I would have taken off in that airplane. But I didn't want the hassle of finding another way home and having to deal with the airplane's problem while it was stranded at an airport far from home.

Underconfidence. I was sufficiently convinced of a problem while airborne that I made a precautionary landing. None of the factors that led to that decision had changed, so there was no reason to revise it. But an AME had looked at the plane, and what I perceived as lack of alarm on his part caused me to question my own assessment of the situation. At the time, I had relatively few hours flying piston engines, most of my time having been on turbines. Right from the first time I noticed something with the engine two days earlier I had been doubting my own judgement. If anything, that very lack of knowledge should have made me more cautious, but in a way it had the opposite effect. I was unconsciously gauging the reactions of the AME and other pilots, rather than simply satisfying myself that what I was doing was safe.

Overconfidence. Here's an interesting detail: one of the options I considered was that I'd fly the airplane home myself and find another way to get Susan home. Why would I consider the airplane okay for me but not for Susan? I can think of only two reasons. First, I was more comfortable risking my life than Susan's. That's fair enough, but it proves that I was talking myself into taking a risk that there was no good reason to take. The inconvenience of abandoning a broken airplane at a distant airport is pretty trivial in comparison to the inconvenience of being dead. Second, I diminished the risk in my own mind by believing that I could handle an airborne engine failure. Preparing for emergencies is one thing, but how foolish of me to have so much faith in myself that I took an unnecessary risk! I had inverted the definition of the proverbial "superior pilot" that day, counting on superior skill to save myself after exercising inferior judgement.

How interesting that both underconfidence and overconfidence were factors!

I've since developed three questions to ask myself, to avoid making a similarly foolish decision in the future. First, if I was at my home airport leaving to go somewhere else, would I take off under the same conditions? Second, have I satisfied myself—not anyone else—that I'm making the right choice? Third, would I take Susan on this flight?

*I would like to thank Tedd for his candid and frank discussion of this sometime sensitive topic.*