

Sentimental Journey 2003 (A Fly In to the original home of Piper)

Preparations for an adventure

We Packed the Cub on Monday evening, June 16, 2003. In admission, we had previously offered the baggage to the aircraft two weeks prior to this. We were pretty confident, in spite of the cramped quarters, that we had found a way to stow everything on our list of essential creature comforts required for a camping expedition. Two folding chairs, the bug tent, sleeping mattresses, various essential items of clothing, sleeping bags, cooler, binoculars (two pairs), digital camera etc. Oh and of course the Aircraft Journey Log Book and Legal Documents, maps, Flight Supplements etc.



We found a way to stow everything on our list of essential creature comforts

There was still room for the Bopsie twins, as we are now called, matching vests, pockets filled with hand held GPS's, radios, reading glasses (both occupants now too old to read the fine print). Sun glasses to protect against that which we were never to see.

Day one the journey begins

We departed Windsor at 9 a.m. on Wednesday June 18th. Fred had performed the pre-flight ritual of phoning US customs two hours prior to our expected arrival in Sandusky Ohio. Even though we were loaded to the hilt, there was no problem parting company with runway 30 at Windsor. Our intended route took us South across Southern Ontario, a short hop over Lake Erie to Pelee Island then Island hopping enroute to Sandusky, the US port of entry. Dave had the easy assignment crossing the lake. Looking left there was nothing to be seen, just a thick wall of mist. On the right side of the craft, almost perfect visibility. Well, from an altitude of 500 feet or so the rippling water was clear to see. We continued to fly the wall of mist until we caught sight of the Ohio coast line. Well done Mr. Garmin, Mr. Yaesu and Mr. Bendix King.

We reported our intentions to Sandusky Unicom, landed runway 27 and taxied in to a happy smiling faced customs officer. The immigration formalities complete, we opt for breakfast at the FBO. Home fries are substituted with home diced tomatoes. The cook was sick yesterday and no potatoes were purchased. There were ample servings of chunky peanut butter though, as a fresh unopened pot was placed at our table, perhaps out of guilt for the lack of carbohydrates available from the kitchen.

FSS, (Flight Service), recommend no VFR flights in an easterly direction, So we decided to leisurely take care of the preparations for the next stage of the journey, fuel and check over the aircraft then wait in the lounge by the Weather Computer. Departure eventually occurs at 2 pm. The chosen route takes us south of Cleveland's airspace. Air traffic control is very helpful and spots us on radar after we tell them we have a waiver from the FAA for flying this trip with no transponder. We keep well south of the airspace, they seem grateful for our communication and we fly under their guidance.

We fly onward and eastward making contact with ATC at Youngstown Ohio. Squawk 1200 was the request of the controller, negative is our response. All we can offer is some verbal uttering that the FAA have issued us a waver to fly without a transponder. Rather than appear perturbed this declaration appears to spurn new life into the otherwise passive responses from ATC. They must have studied the radar screen in great detail because five minutes elapse and the message arrives "are you north east of the Youngstown VOR. Fred and I make mutterings in the cockpit "is he talking to us? And where the hell is the Youngstown VOR?" "We are not sure" His question becomes a little more rudimentary "is there a lake ahead of you?" Indeed there is. This guy must be a magician or soaring high above us watching our every move. We scramble, obliged to reference our location on something other than 2 Garmin Pilot III GPS screens. Indeed, the lake is north west of the VOR. We acknowledge our position and wonder why anyone needs the sophistication of instrumentation. Big brother knows were you are and what you are doing anyway!

Onward and Eastward to our next destination, Venango Regional Airport. We land on runway 2, taxi to the ramp and drain the fuel tanker of fuel (a full 9 gallons). After fueling and a potty stop we decide to partake of the 'late flight dinner special' and use the restaurant check to provide a 10% rebate on the fuel charge.

Weather check at the auto unit, after a self-education on its operation, a bathroom stop and VFR flight plan filed we are away. We decide a shoehorn is no longer necessary to get us in and out of the Cub. We select runway 11 for a straight out departure. Fred decides to go from the intersection and, despite the usually short take off capability of the Cub we appear to be hardly airborne as we swoop across the end of the threshold and out across the cavernous river valley.

The Pennsylvanian forest is a beautiful site, not unlike scenery encountered while flying over the Yukon Territory a couple of years earlier. Rolling trees covering the hills and forest-laden valleys, remote and little in the way of civilization. Fred and I are constantly looking around for potential emergency landing sites. The terrain in these neck-of-the-woods provides little solace in that regard. The best we could hope for would be to belly flop the craft into the trees on the side of some hill and hope.

We press onward and eastward, as looking outside we appear to be descending, It must be trouble with the altimeter, No, finally we decide that we are remaining level but the ground is rising up to reach us.

The planned 2-hour flight intervals become increasingly uncomfortable and seem longer. Our bottoms no longer fit the profile of the seats. For the aeronautically less educated, the Piper J3 Cub has a tandem seating arrangement. The solo pilot is required to sit in the rear seat in order to maintain the appropriate balance. The rear seating is not spacious, the front seat even less so. There is only a small canvas baggage compartment just behind the rear pilot's seat. This compartment behind the rear seat holds the 2 sleeping bags and a smattering of loose clothing. The bug tent and one sleeping mattress are located on the parcel shelf behind the rear seat. 2 tents, 2 folding chairs, the second sleeping mattress, Fred's pillow, other small articles of clothing socks etc, are stowed overhead and secured to the internal framework of the craft with strategically located bungee cords. All necessary aviation equipment (handheld radios, GPS's etc) are located in the pockets of the wessies, (vests for the locals), take a look at the photographs in this document to see the neat packing job. There is little room for feet in the front seat on the best of days. Today a small cooler and Fred's (sorry Gina's Fred's wife), binocular case rest between the legs of Dave, whose only respite is the occasional supporting of his body weight by hauling on the aircraft frame pillars. That at least relieves the pressure of the seat cushion on the rear end for a few seconds.



Downwind for RWY 09 Lockhaven Airport

After about 1 ½ hours on this leg we tune the radio into Lock Haven's frequency, report our position and intentions and listen for traffic movements in the area. There seem to be two or three other airplanes approaching from different directions, we keep a close watch for the other traffic. Lockhaven is a very welcome sight as we join a left downwind approach for runway 9 behind another Cub and follow him over the old Piper factory and museum. Runway 9 left (asphalt) and runway 9 right (grass) are our options. We opt for the grass and make a perfect touchdown. We are ushered to a suitable parking and camping spot in row one at the extreme eastern end of the airfield camping area. This proves to be an excellent location on firm high ground considering the rain and accumulating water on the ground that later haunts the camping area.



We opt for the grass and make a perfect touchdown.

Fellow aviators and campers watch in awe as the campsite is erected. How on earth did 2 full grown humans carry all that stuff, 3 tents, full camping regalia and in such a confined space?

Our campsite neighbors came all the way from Seattle Washington in their Super Cub. Their 4 day journey was a mere fraction of the 364 day journey of their first visit to Lock Haven, makes us seem like armatures.



Row one at the extreme eastern end of the airfield camping area

Well, the travelling is done and we discover the beer tent where glasses of the local brew are served in return for \$1 donations. After 2 or 3 glasses the weary travelers turn in for the night, and a peaceful, restful night's sleep is had by both. Until 5 am that is, when the effects of the previous night's beverage requires a journey to the distant port-o-potty.

Day two exploration and Museum

Thursday June 19th Breakfast is served at a number of on-field vending locations. Dave misses the home brewed coffee from previous excursions. Less important items will be sacrificed for fresh coffee brewing equipment on the next Cub journey. Donated beer on the field is fine but spending good money on awful coffee is no consolation.

We breakfasted and poorly coffee'd we walk the mile or so along the field and adjacent roadway to visit the Piper Museum. The security guard allows us to view upstairs without collecting our entry fee. He must have been intimidated by the accents or confused by the humor. The lady at the desk upstairs in the museum is less tolerant of our absence of first floor registration, aghast at the fact we could have entered the museum without payment. We convince her of our honesty and made a commitment to pay on the way out. One of Mr. Piper's senior guides provides a guided tour of the museum.



Dave at the river after breakfast

Our day continues with a self navigated walking tour of downtown Lock Haven, in search of a venue for lunch. The security guard at the Piper museum recommended the Texas Restaurant, so we set out to look for it. Our assumption was that if Texas style food is recommended the cuisine from Lock Haven must require a little imagination. Lock Haven consists of Main Street and a street that

might re-main after flooding should the recently erected flood barrier not provide adequate protection against the next river flood. Again for the less well informed aviators? The demise of the Piper Aircraft Plant was caused by a flood in 1973 which destroyed numerous aircraft and the tooling and fixtures for the Piper Comanche.

We walk the floodwall, admire the view of the river and head for the local sub store that we had spotted on our way into town. We purchase horseradish cheese and pepper cheese subs but not before tasting the cheeses at the store counter. Lunch is complimented with macaroni salads and ice cream, the ice cream is eaten on the way back to the camp site before it can melt. Light rain is falling now and a vendor offers us a ride in his Cadillac SUV. We, sucking on ice cream like big kids, ride in the back seat.

The afternoon is spent relaxing in the folding chairs on the flight line watching the Cubs do circuits and wandering the vendor's stalls in search of interesting Cubby things. Donations were made again in the evening, at the Beer tent, before turning in for a second restful night. Our neighbors still can't get over what we've lugged with us from Canada in our Cub.



Some spectacular airplanes (and Dave)

Day three the weather deteriorates

Friday June 20th starts out fine with campsite breakfast and circuits in the Cub. We attend a forum in the afternoon on fabric repairs and recovering. Punctually at 3 p.m. the rain starts and that's when the fun ends. We put on the ponchos that Blanche, (Dave's wife), had so kindly packed for us, we continued to walk around like 2 Halloween ghosts frightening everyone in sight.

We decide to take an early supper by accosting the transportation service. Actually we didn't intend to eat quite that early but there seemed to be major communication issues between the chauffeur and ourselves. Our primary target was the cross field FBO station for a weather check, but the request for a recommendation for good food later in the evening became the primary focus of the driver. Try as we might to redirect him to more urgent matters, undaunted he

continued with his mission to deliver us to the local Italian restaurant. In retrospect we were fortunate to arrive early because shortly after being seated there developed a long line-up at the door. It appears as though everyone in Lock Haven eats at this establishment on Friday evenings. It was rather pleasant.

The rain kept pouring down and showed no prospect of improvement. We call the transportation service from the restaurant and solicit recommendations for local hotel accommodations for the night. The local Best Western was full and unable to accommodate us so we settle for the Comfort Inn some 6 miles out of town. We abandon camp for the Comfort of the Inn for the night. The transportation service waits patiently for us as we retrieve a change of clothing and our wash equipment from the rain sodden campsite.



The Town of Lockhaven PA

The hotel room far exceeded the comfort of the campsite and without so much

as a beer we both fall asleep whilst scanning the channels searching for the weather on the TV. Tomorrow's prospects of a departure looked poor.

Day four the return trip, late departure

Saturday June 21st Indeed, after awakening on Saturday morning, the rain continued. We partake of breakfast at the local Perkins Restaurant adjacent to the hotel. After breakfast we make the decision to not check out of the room until later in case we need to stay for another night, we call the transportation service to arrange for the journey back to the airport. The hotel reception permits us to delay our decision to stay another night until noon. The rain has not quite ceased as we arrive at the airport but Lock Haven lies in a valley surrounded by hills. We suspect, because the hills are not in view this fine Saturday morning that the weather is not suitable for flight.

We walk to the FBO station on the far side of the runway and scan the remote weather computer. The news is not favorable. We chat with the other stranded travelers, read the daily (weekly) newspaper, and then hitch a ride with the extended golf cart shuttle back to the camping side of the airport. The driver attempts to be very courteous by wiping the seat of the open wagon, for which we are appreciative, but the rain is having the better of him. As he wipes, the seat becomes wetter from the precipitation. Fred acquires more paper towel from the FBO washroom and between the two of them they keep pace with the raindrops. We eventually saddle the mount and are driven the 500 yards to the camping area and our camp site.

We decide to break camp. Fred's tent is moist inside, well wet to be quite honest. As we break camp the rain ceases, we see clouds rolling up the adjacent hillside, although the tops of the hills do not become visible. Systematically we fold and stow the equipment into the limited space available.

Some aircraft take off and radio that ceilings are 2,000 feet and rising in the westerly direction. Since this is the general direction of our intended flight, we set a plan to depart as soon as possible. Dave calls the hotel to cancel our reservation for the night, the hotel refuses to accept the cancellation since we are still occupying the room, remember we postponed checking out. I look at

Fred standing just feet away from me and attempt to convince the receptionist that we are not still occupying the room. I wonder if Fred is just a cardboard replica and move over to touch him. Sure enough, he responds as any live human would under the circumstances. I relay this message to the person on the other end of the line but she is still not convinced that we are not in our room at the hotel. This must be a dream; I swear we are at the airport. I hand the phone to Fred he is also informed by the hotel reception that we are not where we think we are. We both begin to wonder how we got here and if we will ever be allowed to leave. As free travelling spacemen in a future age we decide we don't care, hang up the phone and decide to leave Lock Haven anyway, convinced that we will not be retained by the local constabulary who are no doubt setting roadblocks to apprehend visitors who are there but not.

The clouds keep going up and down the hillside but the ceiling in the general direction of travel continues to look quite promising. We stow everything into the cockpit, take a final potty break and then mount the steed for the journey home. The forecast indicates that we need only travel a few miles and we will encounter much improved conditions.

We opt for the hard surface runway, concerned that the standing water on the grass surface may hinder our ability to get airborne. We depart and make one circuit of the airport with a low and over to signal our departure from the sentimental journey and to shoot some digital photographs of the location. The temporary air traffic controller is thoroughly apologetic for the conditions and asks us meekly if we might return next year. We have the inside scoop from fellow travelers that the weather is only fine one year in four. Apparently last year was acceptable. "See you again in 2006" was our reply.

The weather contours the terrain and the clouds stay about 1,000 feet above the ground for 50 miles or so. We are once again amazed by the remoteness of the countryside and wonder what we would do if an emergency landing were required. The rolling terrain covered with trees makes for awesome viewing; remote homes are sighted in the forest, occasionally a road and river but seldom a clearing large enough to land. Unusual that one of the screws holding the instrument panel in place should back out during flight. Dave catches the screw before it leaves the hole and disappears onto the floor. Fred hands Dave the fuel tester with screwdriver bit attachment on the end, Dave refastens the screw and

tightens it in place.

We retrace our steps from the flight to Lock Haven. First destination Vernango Regional. The weather does improve by the time we have Vernango in sight. The local traffic is using every available runway, weather is calm, and so we opt for runway 29. The craft is fueled, the pilot and passenger visit the boys room, the weather is checked, a flight plan is filed for Burke Lakefront on the Lake just outside of Cleveland Ohio and we are away, destination Burke Lakefront, Cleveland.

We fly over the Youngstown VOR and the weather is wonderful. We can see the Lake Erie shoreline from easily 60 miles. Here there are numerous opportunities to land the cub should an emergency situation arise. We arrive at Burke Lakefront at around 8 p.m. and land on runway 9 left. We taxi to the Arrivat Esso FBO and fuel the aircraft. Since we only have about an hour of light left we decide we have gone far enough for the day and convince the FBO attendant that the Cub requires accommodation for its overnight stay. He obliges us by removing a Navaho from the hanger.

That pesky instrument panel screw has worked its way out again. Fred takes control of the screwdriver this time convinced that Dave had not eaten his wheaties this morning and therefore lacks the strength to tighten an insignificant fastener!

We secure the 'baby' make arrangements for a hotel and accept the FBO attendants' offer of a ride to the accommodation. We are informed that there are tall ships in the harbor. We check into the room, shower and walk the mile or so to the harbor before following the driver's instructions to the local restaurants and nightlife. East on St. Clair between 9th and 3rd are the instructions. We walk for miles with no sight of even a McDonalds. Persistent as we are we don't give up, eventually we find the nightlife and settle for a table outside on the street watching all the girls go by. Dressed in our flight "wessies" (vests) jeans and running shoes we stand out against the night sky but enjoy the wine, salad and pizza all the same.

There is some dispute as to the directions for the shortest walk back to the hotel but, blisters on our soles and food in our bellies we do arrive to a restful sleep.

Day five and Vermilion Beach

The weather is beautiful on this Sunday morning June 22nd as we rise, shower and breakfast in the lobby of the hotel. We decide that the airport is within walking distance of the hotel and that the walk will do us good and assist in the digestion of breakfast. Dave is concerned that our entry to the airport facility will be difficult if we just arrive on foot. Fred promptly talks to the airport staff by phone and is assured that all we need to do is ring the doorbell and someone will let us in. Off we go, on arrival at the airport FBO we ring the doorbell, announce the call sign of the aircraft and Walla, the gate is remotely opened. We wonder if the same treatment would have applied if we had announced the call sign of any one of a dozen planes that were within our view from the perimeter gate. We know we are honest, but those folks who take pleasure in exploiting the freedom of this great land may be less trustworthy than we.

Again we study the weather, ready and pre flight the Cub, notify Canadian customs and file a flight plan, before setting off on the final leg of our sentimental journey. Dave manages the fuel tester while Fred turns the fuel nozzle on; whoosh a puddle of fuel hits the floor as the nozzle sticks in place. The chosen route is along the northern Ohio coast line via Cleveland toward Sandusky. At some point on this stretch of Lake Erie's southern coastline we will select a convenient point to cross the lake via Pelee Island to the Ontario mainland. We depart runway 9 left, confused by the fact that the tower appears to be manned although the airport directory indicates that the facility is closed prior to 9 a.m. on Sundays. We establish communication and the controller provides us with ATC frequencies for the route close to Cleveland's airspace. Again, cross border flights with no transponder requires a waiver from the FAA and we need to announce our intentions to the controllers. We depart turning left over the lake and follow the coastline 1000 feet above the ground to stay below Cleveland's airspace. We look directly down at the Cleveland Browns new stadium and can see 100 miles in the clear early morning air and blue skies of this Sunday morning.

Dave is committed to returning early today, actually yesterday, in order to drive his son Sam to Toronto Pearson airport for an excursion to Russia for vacation. Sam is visiting his girlfriend in St. Petersburg for the next 2 weeks. Last night's phone call to Sam from Cleveland assures Sam of our intention to be in Windsor by 10.30 a.m. providing ample time for a flight in Fred's Twin Comanche to

Toronto or a stately drive via the 401.

Curiously we notice the intermittent smell of aviation fuel. Fred puts this phenomenon down to the earlier fuel draining experience assuming remnants of spilt fuel adorn the inside of the cowling. The altimeter needle is vibrating and bouncing around; we had not noticed this before. The other instruments appear stable. Upon reflection the altimeter being a very sensitive instrument would of course indicate any irregular vibration!

From the excellent visibility and reference to the map we select a point for the turn over water to start our island hopping crossing of Lake Erie. Vermillion point is easy to see although some 25 miles ahead of us. That is where we will start our climb and turn toward Pelee Island, now just visible in the distance over the lake.

Our communications with Cleveland ATC are maintained and they confirm our position on radar.

Turning a Piper into a Beachcraft

2 miles out over the lake and at an altitude of 1,000 feet, the droning rhythmic calm of the cabin is suddenly broken with a wicked noise and vibration from the front of the aircraft. An internal engine failure? Fred closes the throttle immediately and establishes a best glide attitude turning from our northwesterly heading through west toward south, toward the coastline. Fred's mind is completely focused on the issue at hand, flying the airplane, choosing an appropriate emergency landing site, airspeed, try to figure out what is wrong, all the things which are such a dominant part of pilot training, Dave is still.

Fred requests the airspeed.

Piloting the Cub from the rear seat with a front passenger obscures all vision of the sparsely instrumented panel. Dave confirms 65 mph. We are both scanning the coastline for an emergency landing site praying that we clear the water and considering the option of ditching the craft in the drink. The coastline is dotted with dwellings and trees. Well beyond the trees appears to be a few fields and clear areas although from our initial altitude of 1,000 feet and distance of 2 miles to the coastline we have no chance of reaching these destinations. The only feasible landing surface is a strip of beach.

The engine seems to be tuning over without any major clanking sounds, it does not appear to be a blown cylinder or connecting rod, The vibration, (like an out of balance helicopter rotor), suggests a problem with the propeller, no chance of using power without risking a major structural failure. Fred manages to radio our emergency situation and intentions via the still active ATC frequency “I believe we have a propeller failure and are attempting a forced landing on a beach ...”.



Vermilion beach

Fred glides the Cub toward the westerly end of the beach over the river estuary and we carefully scan the beach for people and other obstacles. A Sunday morning sunbather is stretched out on a beach chair toward the westerly (approach) end of the beach. There are concrete blocks lined up along the edge of the water and 2 relatively large tree stumps further down the beach no doubt washed up in some recent storm. The easterly end of the beach rapidly narrows to a point and is littered with rocks. We glide in over the unsuspecting lady sunbather clearing her by 20 feet or so in an attempt to provide as much landing roll as possible without collision with the deck chair. Fred executes a masterful

landing but the Cub continues to roll. The beach is contoured with a sharp drop off of two or three feet toward the water. Tree stumps left and right of our roll out path. Dave is able to see left and right of the aircraft, Fred piloting has no vision at all, the landing nose up attitude preventing any forward view. Thankfully the wind this morning was very light as our approach direction forced a downwind landing. Altitude was insufficient to opt for the normal into wind landing. The plane keeps rolling and sliding precariously to the left down the grade of the beach and toward the line of concrete blocks. We are unsure of our location on the beach but have slowed to about jogging speed so Fred applies right rudder and we slide to a halt facing southward toward the tree line as if we had just washed up on shore. The left wing dipped during the turning maneuver but did not touch the sand. Dave watched the whole process as if in some time looped slow motion video replay. The reality of sitting there safely finally overwhelms the occupants. Dave turned to Fred, shook his hand and congratulated him on a near perfect emergency execution. After securing the engine and shutting off the fuel we both climb out of the aircraft and are greeted by the local inhabitants of the beach community.



Fred applies right rudder and we slide to a halt

Getting acquainted with the locals

Indeed, 6 inches or so of the tip of the propeller had forsaken us in flight. The first instinct is to relay our safe landing to the flight service authorities. Fred is already charging up the beach with our new found friends the Roehrenbecks, to use their telephone. Cellular signals are non existent in this part of the world. By the time Dave tracks down the location of the Roehrenbecks beach property, Fred has telephoned the emergency services and enjoyed a glass of cool water. Dave is offered a fresh cup of coffee but, no sooner is it poured than messages come in that the place is littered with police looking for us, so the coffee is forsaken for the anguish of finding and greeting the visitors with the accounts of our ordeal for their records. Indeed, police are swarming all over the place in search of the culprits that landed a little yellow airplane on Vermillion beach.



6 inches or so of the tip of the propeller had forsaken us in flight

With Fred still on the phone to Cleveland ATC and Canada Customs, Dave goes to the rescue of the establishment and reviews the crime scene with Sergeant Gordon Adams and patrolman Glover. Sergeant Adams washed up on the shore in a police patrol boat, which was alerted by ATC after our emergency transmission.

A host of questions are followed by an examination of the beach in an effort to establish the actual touchdown location. The police have commandeered Mat, the Park Superintendent to cordon off the area of the beach to preserve the evidence and tire tracks to the touchdown point. Dave escorts an officer down the beach.

There was no clear track or indication of the route the Cub took along the beach

but we can confirm we landed there.

Crowds of onlookers have now gathered on the beach and many questions asked. The local police officers are obliged to engage the services of the State Troopers. State Troopers have jurisdiction over all aviation incidents/accidents. State Troopers Modarsky and Zehnder appear on the scene and take control of the situation. Formal statements are taken from Fred and Dave. Fred spends what seems like hours with Trooper Modarsky in his patrol car. The FAA is notified but advise they will not be visiting the scene. Their presence is reserved for incidents/accidents involving personal injury only.



Crowds of onlookers have now gathered on the beach

All statements satisfactorily documented, trooper Modarsky sets about taking photographic evidence of the incident scene prior to releasing the aircraft for relocation on the beach.

Five people easily relocate the Cup to the relative security of the grass verge farthest away from the lake water. There it is secured and cordoned off awaiting the plan of action.

In the meantime the Cleveland press and TV reporters have descended on the quiet community and requested interviews with key witnesses and us. Eventually Family Ron and Jayne Roehrenbeck provide us sanctuary from the crowds, the questions and the hot sun now high in the sky. We are treated to cold drinks, fresh fruit and peach pie. In contrast to the poor meteorological conditions encountered at Lock Haven, the weather today is absolutely beautiful, 80 deg temperatures and not a cloud in the sky. Janet Kessinger indicates that she has taken many photographs of the situation and we exchange addresses and e-mail addresses for later contact.

The Park Superintendent is anxiously waiting to collect the park entry fee, (some people will do almost anything to avoid paying entry fees).

Nancy and Kenneth Bliss are obliging with their offer of a bed for the night should we be unable to make arrangements to remove the plane and travel home.

A very enthusiastic individual, who just happened to be on the beach and who claimed to be a pilot couldn't stop talking. We consistently searched for the volume button or off switch but alas none could be found. He did appear to have contacts in the local aviation community and together with Fred went in search of the local mechanic from Wakeman Regional Airport and did indeed make contact with someone in possession of a replacement propeller to fit the aircraft.

Alternate arrangements for Sam's airport shuttle are initiated. A call placed to Blanche means that she and Gina will be driving Sam to Toronto airport.

Fred and our enthusiastic helper returned to the beach where Dave was keeping watch over the aircraft and looking after things while countless visitors from the local community and afar, who had heard of and came to look at the Cub on the beach.

Help arrives with the ride home

Fred's son and daughter-in-law, Adrian and Moria, who drove down from Windsor upon hearing of our plight, arrived in their banana yellow Neon car. How could Mo have forgotten the bikinis. It became an expensive Sunday excursion because Mo never shops for one item. Their visit to the local stores resulted in numerous costumes suitable for sun bathing on the beach being acquired.

To lighten the airplane as much as possible All of the contents of the plane were unloaded and transferred to Adrian and Moria's little yellow Neon.

It was impossible to prevent our helper from removing the damaged propeller in anticipation of arrival of the mechanic. Mr. enthusiastic had made contact with the world outside the beach so it was difficult to prevent him from reaping terror on the stranded travelers. Eventually Mr. Tom Cullen the airplane mechanic and friend arrived and profusely apologized for Mr. Enthusiasm claiming that everyone in Northern Ohio is sane with the exception of the exuberant one, again repeated apologies. So it wasn't just the visitors from Ontario who thought he was a little eccentric. Joking aside our helper's assistance assured a successful conclusion to our ordeal.

Getting the Cub off Vermilion Beach

Tom the mechanic made quick work of inspecting the airplane and mounting the 'new' propeller, the trial run of the engine revealed no other apparent damage or problems so the airplane could be signed off for a ferry flight off the beach. Now to prepare airplane and beach for a sandy take-off.

The park superintendent plowed a runway in the sand with the John Deere utility vehicle while Dave cleared locals from their private beach in preparation for the take-off. The Cub was pushed back to the far east end of the sand and the engine started. The take-off roll commenced slowly with Fred having to haul the cub off early to reduce the drag of the soft dry sand and gain flying speed. Later it became apparent that the replacement propeller was a cruise prop with a coarser pitch which was detrimental to short take-off and lift but advantageous to cruise speed. Fred realized enroute to Wakeman Regional that he was flying at

an indicated airspeed of 100 mph well in excess of normal cruise (80 mph). After the beach lift-off Fred flew out over the lake in a large right hand circle to climb to altitude and returned flying overhead the beach rocking the wings in farewell to all those who were watching in amazement. The crowd showed their appreciation by clapping, whistling and cheering and boats on the lake sounded their horns.

Dave traveled with Adrian and Moria in the glowing yellow Neon to the airport some 20 miles south of Vermillion. Fred, Tom the mechanic and Don the airport owner were in discussion when the Neon arrived. An open hanger was allocated to house the Cub while it awaited a new propeller and complete inspection; time was spent looking at the mass of airplanes located in the main hanger. The people at Wakeman must be fine airplane Checkers players when one wants to fly.

Four humans, a trunk full of personal effects and a broken propeller left Wakeman, in the yellow Neon, for Windsor. The travelers, more hungry than weary stopped at an Applebee's Restaurant on the Ohio turnpike. Other travelers beware. You may order extensive meals and appetizers for four people, a check that would be in excess of \$50 US, but you are required to pay for extra nachos when you order the Nacho Supreme appetizer which serves 4 but comes with nachos for 1.

Now fed we set off in the direction of Southern Ontario. The drive seems to take hours, due to Adrian's choice of the more 'scenic' return route. Upon arrival at the US/Canadian border we wait patiently in line to clear customs and immigration. "Anything to declare?" is the question from the officer. "No" is the unanimous response from inside the vehicle. "Oh, you always travel with a spare propeller do you?" He seems satisfied with his comment and releases the vehicle and passengers.

It certainly feels good to arrive safely home.

In the following weeks the new propeller arrives from Sensenich, Tom installs it and the airplane is returned to its home in Windsor without further incident. We receive a CD of photos from Janet Kessinger and an envelope of photos from Nancy and Kenneth Bliss. Ron and Jayne Roehrenbeck sent a video of

proceedings including the TV news clips covering the events of the weekend.

Thanks go to everyone who helped during our ordeal and unscheduled visit to Vermilion beach.