

A trip across North America 1

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In June 2011, Larry Baum, CEO of The Computing Center, his wife Trudy, and two close friends traveled across North America to Alaska and Canada in Larry's airplane. This Blog of the trip was originally published on the East Hill Flying Club web site. It is divided into separate entries in reverse order.

Kalispel and Glacier Park, Mt: Sun June 12, 2011 @11:30am MT: I didn't

get a chance to post Saturday's flights till Sunday. We stayed at the Lake McDonald Lodge on Lake McDonald in Glacier National Park. There is no Internet or cell service at this area – I needed to use a pay phone for the first time in what seems like forever to call the FBO with our fuel order!! How quaint!!! The trip from Green Bay (KGRB) to Glacier Park International Airport (KGPI) took almost exactly 6 hours with a stop in Bismark, ND (KBIS) for fuel and lunch. It's a long way with many changes in scenery. We dodged some thunderstorms and heavy rain showers throughout eastern Montana and ended up at Flight Level 220 for the last part of the trip to be able to top some of the lower level rain showers and to see the cells clearly enough to fly around them. The locals call these "popcorn" thunderstorms, single cells with not frontal association. They also didn't move much. KGPI is in a large valley and the only rain that we actually experienced on the way in was on the ILS into the airport. Kind of a difference experience starting an ILS at 12,000ft, intercepting the localizer about 20 miles from the airport at 9,000ft, and intercepting the glideslope at 7,800ft. Glacier Park and Lake McDonald are nearly indescribable in their beauty. We didn't have a lot of time there, but we were able to take a short hike Sunday morning. In just three miles we saw a small lake (called a pond in the east) and a creek that's the size of most rivers in the east. The large snowpack this year has kept the rivers and creeks really high. I've uploaded a batch of photos (unedited) at: <http://larry72.slickpic.com/a/GlacierPark>

Green Bay, Wi – Fri June 10, 2011 @ 21:30 CT: "The Best Laid Plans..." Things didn't go as planned today. When we got out to the plane this morning, we discovered a minor problem that could have become a significant issue later in our trip. So, after a quick call to our Aerostar mechanic near Harrisburg, Pa, (Mt. Joy, Pa – N71) we headed southwest – not exactly the direction we were supposed to be flying. After a straightforward fix and a reroute to Fargo, ND through Erie, Pa, we were on our way, or so we thought. About 20 minutes into the flight, the artificial horizon that drives the autopilot failed. Although not dangerous and because we have two backup horizons, we could have gone on. However, the thought of "hand flying" the plane for several thousand miles or having to deal with shipping a replacement horizon out to Washington, or Alaska was pretty unappealing, so back to N71. Fortunately Joel at Juliet Delta Aviation was able to quickly find us replacement artificial horizon that connects to our autopilot.

So, at about 16:00ET we headed for Erie (KERI). (By the way, for those of you following our progress on FlightAware (www.flightaware.com) and our plane number of N60LM), the system kept the original flight and added the second!) After getting a full load of fuel at KERI, we set off for Fargo, ND (KFAR), about 4:30 away. About an hour into the flight, it was evident that we were all pretty tired, so we decided to stop for the night at Green Bay, WI (KGRB). We were on an IFR flight plan and told ATC of our change in destination. The controller asked us the reason for the diversion. "We're tired! – It's been a long day!" I told them, chuckling. To which the controller responded: "I completely understand – so are we!" So, our 4:30 planned flight turned into a 2:10 flight ending with an ILS to Runway 6 at KGRB. Turns out that a Radisson Casino Hotel is right across from the airport FBO. A quick dinner and no gambling for us! On to Kalispell, MT in the morning.

Burlington, VT – Thu, June 9, 2011 @ 21:15 ET: Our first stop – picking up our friends Bruce and Cyndy. For all you weather geeks, there was a coldfront that passed through the northeast today breaking the hot and sticky weather we've had for the past two days. It kicked off a bunch of thunderstorms which had mostly passed by the time we took off for Burlington. We had a couple of small cells to fly around – they showed up nicely on the Nexrad, our weather radar, and my "Mark I" eyeballs! We begin to head west Friday morning. Trip Log – Distance 187nm – Flight time 0:55.

Ithaca, NY – Wed, June 8, 2011 @ 11:00 am: About two years ago, we learned through the Aerostar Association of a guided self-fly tour program called Let's Fly Alaska.

(www.letsflyalaska.com) We along with six other Aerostar owners connected with Dale Hemmen, the owner of the company and after a lot of preparation will be traveling to Alaska beginning on June 10, 2011. By we, it's myself, my wife Trudy and our friends Bruce and Cyndy McGeoch. I met Bruce our first day at Cornell as freshman and I introduced him to Cyndy to whom he's been married to for 40 years. This Blog will help us chronicle the trip and will be connected to additional photographs of the trip. **Our Itinerary** The trip begins in Olympia, Washington. So, for us, we start with a transcontinental flight of just over 2000nm. The last time I flew a small plane across the United State was in 1977. Our plan is to stop in NorthDakota the first evening, then fly on to Glacier National Park the second day arriving in Olympia Sunday mid-day. In the Aerostar, it will be about 10.5 flying hours. The trip first heads up to Prince George, British Columbia, Canada, then to White Horse in the Yukon Territory. We return to the US, flying into Fairbanks. There's an optional flight one day up to Prudhoe Bay. From Fairbanks, we head south past Denali (Mt. McKinley) and into Anchorage. Our last Alaskan stop will be in Ketchikan. In all we'll spend 12 days with the tour. On the way back, our

plan is to stop in Calgary Alberta and spend three days at the Fairmont in Lake Louise for a bit of pampering! It's Bruce and Cyndy's 40th wedding anniversary and our 30th, so a celebration will be in order! The trip back should only take about 7.5-8 flying hours (with a tailwind). Then back to reality! As some of you know, I was a photojournalist back in the 1970s, so the plan is to take and publish photos and to write about the trip as it happens. I've also been a private pilot since 1973 and have co-owned our Aerostar, N60LM with Mike Newman since 1996. So, this should be quite an adventure.