

Steel Nov 18/95 p. 8 Author of *Caribou - Ed - Biddy*

Romancing the bush pilot

Former resident pens books about northern life

By Jack Evans
The Intelligencer

Belleville and area residents will be able to meet an author with an original hometown touch when Robert (Bob) Grant comes to W. and R. Greenley Booksellers on Friday, Dec. 8 at 7 p.m.

Grant's new book, *Bush Flying: The Romance of the North*, is based partly on his true experiences as a bush pilot. But it is also a compendium of many stories about the north and bush piloting

Grant has collected.

While it is his first full book, Grant has been writing articles, particularly about his experiences for some years, many of which have been published in various magazines and newspapers.

Now a resident of Thunder Bay, Grant attended secondary school at BCI and Moira Secondary in Belleville from 1957-62.

He learned to fly at the Prince Edward Flying Club and later helped build the present Belleville Flying Club airport east of the city.

After a few years in the work force, he attended Waterloo Lutheran University as an adult student, majoring in biology, but he



Bob Grant

continued to spend his summers during university at his favorite pastime — flying.

He qualified to become a teacher and taught school in Parry Sound in 1971-73 before becoming

a full-time bush pilot.

This past summer was a particularly busy one for him, he said in a telephone interview. As a water bomber pilot, he was active in fighting the large number of forest fires in Northern Ontario.

His parents, John E. and Margaret Grant continue to reside in the Belleville area, outside Shannonville.

Not referring to himself, Grant describes the bush pilots he has met and worked with as "exceptionally skilled, intelligent and adaptable people. This country could use more of their drive and spirit."

Grant's book tells stories about crashes, survivals, hazardous flying situations, but also of grime-caked miners, wood-smoked trappers, resourceful natives, medical evacuations and pointless cruelty to animals. "I called it the way I saw it," he said, in his Hancock House-published book, now available at \$24.95.