

# 'Ontario Flying Farmers' descend en masse on Huronia Airport for visit



Just arrived at Huronia Airport

Doug Wilcox, president of the Ontario Flying Farmers and a Tay Township resident greets Grant Harrington as he alights from his Cessna 180 at Huronia Airport last Sunday. Harrington, an Arkona resident, and his

family were among more than 70 flying farmers from across the province who flew or motored to the association's monthly 'fly-in', held this month in the Midland area.

Staff photo

If you noticed more buzzing in the skies over Midland than usual last Sunday, you can rest assured that it wasn't an invasion - at least not a major one.

It was simply a fly-in for members of the Ontario Flying Farmers who, once a month, get together for a lunch and chat in one Ontario city or town. This time it was the turn of Midland and Doug Wilcox, president of the Flying Farmers association.

Threatening skies and turbulences in some regions of the province did little to deter the avid flyers, some of whom flew in from as far away as Windsor and London.

"We just flew right above it... about 6,000 feet," Grant Harrington told a worried host Wilcox.

"Couldn't see much till we got just about up here," Eileen Harrington volunteered, re-iterating the less than perfect flying conditions.

But in the end upwards of seventy flying farmers, their wives and children boarded the bus commissioned by the Farmers' president to take them to his 88 acre Tay Township home. Loaded onto the bus too were hampers for the 'pot-luck' lunch and special boxes and containers which would later reveal sweet delights baked by the Flying Farmers' teens for the bake sale they would be holding later in the afternoon.

Members first banded together 14 years ago when an airline pilot (who farmed on the side) and

two high flying farmers formed the first of what would grow to six flying farmers chapters in

Canada. There are 41 international Flying Farmers chapters now, one in Mexico, the

Canadian group and 24 in the USA, mecca of recreation flying in North America and headquarters for flying farmers. Ontario's flying men will get together in Barrie this September for the 14th Ontario Flying Farmers convention, a convention which, Wilcox says, will be attended by upwards of 300 of the dedicated Ontario flying farmers.

Although socializing at conventions and the monthly fly-ins is the major raison d'être for Flying Farmers, members do take an active interest in promoting flying safety programs and assisting the Department of Transportation in setting up new regulations for recreational and commercial flying. Unfortunately, says Wilcox, the Ontario Flying Farmers brief on bilingual air traffic control (the OFA is opposed) fell on deaf ears. "But we do take an active interest in what problems and solutions the DOT is working on," he adds.

### 'Land it'

For the ladies in the OFA there's a 'ladies land-it' training program which will teach hesitant co-pilots how to solo an aircraft, take-off and land it with a 'land-it' certificate at the end to prove they've mustered any hesitations. And the OFA also actively supports and promotes an Annual Proficiency Test (APT) which insures each pilot keeps up to date on his flying skills. This program is offered over and above the annual license renewal test each flyer must undergo.

Safety in the air - and fun on the ground - that could easily be the Flying Farmers' motto. The monthly fly-ins are so popular that many flyers who cannot get into the air because of adverse weather conditions will drive-in rather than miss the day 'hangar flying', as members call it.

"We're the most family oriented group you ever came across," says a pleased Wilcox, pointing to the dozens of small fry and teens who've accompanied their parents to Midland. "We have a very active teen organization - today they're having a bake sale, next month (in Campbellcroft) they're going to wash airplanes.... Funds from these ventures go to the annual teens' dance and to the parent organization in the USA which keeps flying teens in touch with each other. A few have even caught the flying bug and have taken out their pilot's licenses at the 'ripe old age' of 17.

Wilcox himself has been flying since 1960 but didn't get his own plane, a vintage Piper Pacer, until 1970 and then joined the Flying Farmers in 1975. He built his new Tay home with flying friends in mind - the five bedrooms would accommodate a lot of visitors if weather proved unsuitable for take-off. "We always bunk at each other's houses," he explains. "It saves money."

Right now Wilcox is also in the process of constructing a 2,200 foot

private runway which, if he can get the grading and seeding finished this fall could be operational early next spring. The flying bug has really caught him - "I bought the property with that in mind!" It'll make getting to and from monthly fly-ins all the easier - and faster - for this flying farmer.

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## Pile-up behind high school results in \$225 damages

No one was injured in a pile-up in the rear of Penetanguishene Secondary School in the early hours of Saturday morning. Penetanguishene Police were called to the scene of the accident at about 3:30 a.m. They found two cars involved, one driven by Guy Desroches, of Concession 1, Tiny Township near Midland, and the other driven by David Legault, of Oshawa. Desroches' car sustained \$125 damage, while there was \$100 damage done to Legault's car.

### Causing a disturbance

Two men were charged with causing a disturbance by fighting early Sunday morning after an incident on Main Street.

Roland Buttineau, of R.R. 2, Highland Point, and John Stewart, of Toronto, were found fighting in front of the Olympia Restaurant at 1:15 a.m. Sunday. The investigating officer was Constable Brady.

## Police report

No charges were laid as a result of the accident, which was investigated by Constable Michael Brady.

**Hit and run**  
Penetanguishene police apprehended a hit and run driver Saturday, after a car was hit in the town dock area.

The accident occurred at 11:20 p.m. Saturday, when a car driven by Alfred Desroches, of 8 Harriett Street was struck, causing \$200 damage.

An investigation by Constable Bernard Maracle revealed that the driver of the other car was Brian Dusome, of 30 Peel Street. His car sustained \$300 damage. No one was injured.

Dusome was charged with failing to remain at the scene of an accident.

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