

2006 ACHIEVEMENT:

The Arctic Mission

July 28 - August 10 -2006

We did it !

From the world greatest aviation celebration
to the world greatest FLYING adventure!!!!
North of the 55th parallel!



challenge, 28 aircraft and crews, Alma airport August 8, 2006

Arctic

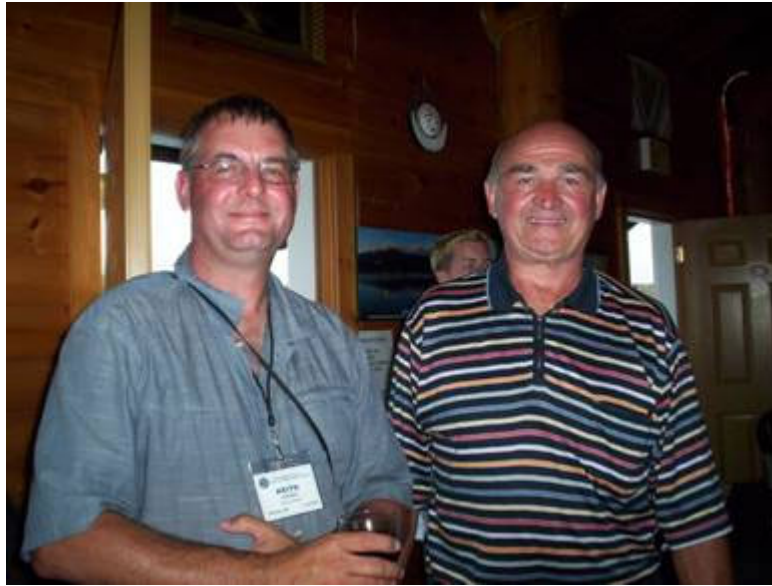


Arctic Challenge Organising committee: (Men in black) left to right
Mark Helseth, Camil Dumont, Alan Matson
Trevor Janz, Piper Flyer, Cessna Flyer association, Waupaca Wisconsin
Catherine Tobenas, president International Air Rally (in the middle)

The winners of the Arctic challenge:



The trophy was awarded to
Teleinvest Team, Switzerland, Pilatus PC12
Aurel Dan, pilot
Simone and Cesar Dan assisting crew members
with **1450 cumulated point**

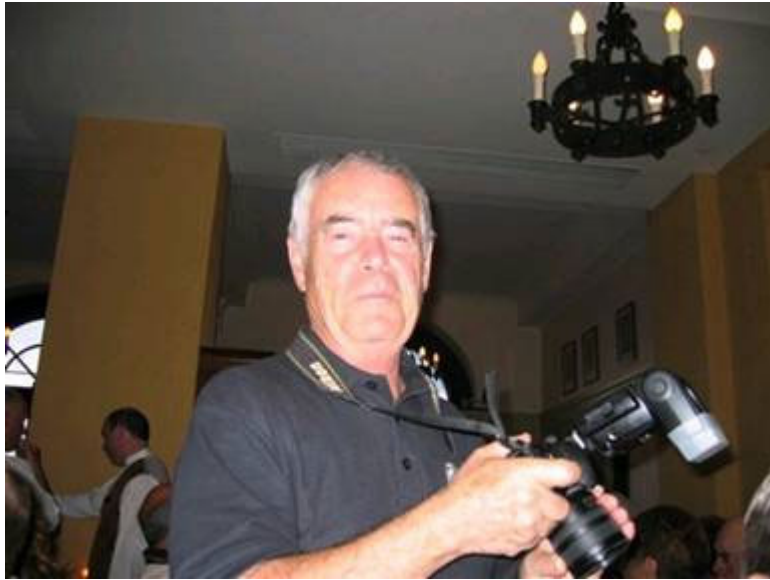


2nd place with only 10 points difference:
“Thinkage Mainboss Team”, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada with 1440 cumulated points
Cessna 182
Keith Dorken, pilot
Albert Reinhard



3rd place with only 60 points difference
Mark Brooks and Dave Steeves team, from Toronto Ontario with 1390 cumulated points
Cirrus SR20

Other well deserved awards :



Our dear Robert Sirdey, journalist from France received a trophy for his sharing pictures with all pilots year round (since 2003). also for the greatest articles written about our adventures.



Mark Brooks, Cirrus team from Toronto, was honoured for the navigation assistance he provided every pilot



**Laurie Nadeau, Sherbrooke,
Honoured for his great assistance in the fuel distribution process**



Robert Harold, from Butler Indiana, USA, “Hey the Mechanic!”

Honoured for being there for every body at all times. Bob received the Iqaluit award

We wish we could have honoured everybody for making this air rally such a success. Collaboration between pilots, the camaraderie spirit, the professionalism of the members of the organising committee and the application of instructions by every pilot was essential to this trip possible for everyone especially for the few low time pilots who flew the rally from beginning to end

IFR pilots like **Aurel Dan, Pilatus Team, Mark Brooks-Dave Steeves, Cirrus team, Ron & Nancy Norman, Sylvain Maher, Aeropro** and VFR teams such as **Don Loundsbury/Laurie Nadeau** and **Denis Hamelin/Perry Burford (Winsor Flying Club)** helped the organising committee a great deal during the whole challenge. Some might say that we have been “LUCKY” to have made it ! eventhough careful planning, weather evaluation and a cautious approach combined with an understanding of each pilot’s capabilities brought us safe flights and happy landings.

PICTURE gallery:

We are still waiting for pictures from different sources to build the gallery. Marks Brooks has agreed to let you share his gallery in the meantime. Control/click here:

<http://www.dropshots.com/day.php?userid=189191&cdate=20060809&cimg=5>

INTERNATIONAL AIR RALLY 2006 ARCTIC CHALLENGE STORY

Written by Catherine Tobenas

Reviewed and corrected by George Erickson

It was a great adventure! For most of us the best EVER ! Although we said the same last year after the Cree Challenge, the Arctic Edition outdid them all. It was rich on experience and filled us with great emotions and unforgettable memories.

I have done my best to take you along with this article and **George Erickson**, "author of *True North: Exploring the Great Canadian Wilderness by Bush Plane*" who was among us, was kind enough to help me bring you the story.

Our group of pilots presented again all levels of competence, from the professional cross continent pilot, Aurel Dan flying a Pilatus PC12 to the 150 hour adventurous VFR pilot on board a Warrior. Surprisingly many did not have an IFR rating considering the type of challenge proposed: **2850 nautical miles**, wilderness, unpredictable weather and more water than the average pilot is accustomed to (Hudson straight 90 NM over freezing water). We like to think that pilots trust the organisation and jump at the opportunity to benefit from the high level of supervision and security that the Air rally provides. Three of our teams had only 150 hours of experience when the rally began. Today they have 190 hours and have overcome many "apprehensions"!

This year, aware of the difficulties we would encounter and after having done a great part of the trip himself, **Camil**, our organising committee president, did not take any chances and gathered four, top experienced pilots to compose the committee.

The Air rally started in Waupaca, Wisconsin, home of **Piper Flyer** and **Cessna Flyer** organisations. **Trevor Janz** Co-Founder of **Cessna Flyer** and **Piper Flyer** and a highly qualified pilot himself contributed to the establishment of a permanent air rally base there. *Waupaca airport is a strategic location and very convenient for pilots combining the Air rally event with the Oshkosh Air venture celebration.* Located only 29 NM NW from Oshkosh, the airport's 5200 foot runway and vast parking ramp is an ideal alternative during the Oshkosh AirVenture show. At Waupaca, Air Rally participants were greeted by **Russel Bargo**, the airport Manager and his lovely wife **Lisa** from **Riverside Aviation**.

The city of Waupaca and the **Comfort Suites** and **Best Western motels**, make pilots feel at home with special rates, courteous staff, shuttle services : from & to the airport in addition to to & from Oshkosh AirVenture. We were immediately adopted by Mary, manager of the Comfort Suites. Mary's great sense of humour and hospitality made us feel at home right away. A day at the Oshkosh Air Venture ended with a BBQ organised in a beautiful nature setting. Waupaca officials greeted participants and delivered the city's flag to the organisers.
www.cityofwaupaca.org

*Every year the Air Rally organisation works in close collaboration with our hosts to make every destination a home to our pilots. We actually leave home to go home 13 days in a row. Every destination is "aviation friendly". The assistance and collaboration we receive at every stop is a good way to prove it. This website will soon be upgraded with a new page : **IAR guide**: a listing of all the destinations covered by the Air rally since 2003 including discounts, contact names, suggestions and recommendations, stories and more.*

Day 1-July 29, the first day of competition, took us to the **Gore Bay, Manitoulin airport, Ontario, Canada**. If you went to Oshkosh this summer, you know that by the 28th of July, storms had developed around the Great Lakes, making our flight around Michigan Lake towards Sault Ste-Marie and Manitoulin. Island "interesting." Some pilots decided to fly over water keeping the land in sight and that was a wise decision as visibility kept improving.

Gore Bay at last ! We couldn't ask for a better place to clear customs ! A charming little airport located on the largest freshwater island in the world, Manitoulin Island is Northern Ontario's best kept secret. Customs procedures were quickly expedited.

Our visit in Gore Bay was the work of one man - Robert Colwell, airport manager who gathered volunteers to handle the back and forth to town and to the hotels. (Robert - you probably will get a little busier in the years to come! Your airport is highly recommended.) In the evening, every one enjoyed

the excellent supper at the legendary Rocky Racoon, which overlooks the marina. The owner of the restaurant provided the wine which was very much appreciated by all.

<http://www.manitoulin.com/gorebay/>

<http://www.manitoulin.com/gbair/airport.htm>

Day 2-July 30: Pilots started to get into a serious flying mood as we began our flight to the great northern wilderness. Our next destination was the city of Hearst, last conventional destination before reaching Iqaluit, Nunavut. Groups of planes started to practice a very casual type of formation flying, coached by Alan Matson, a specialist. Two Huskies owned by *PK and PJ Odendaal's* from *South Africa* and *Paul Nopper* of Ontario, accompanied by *Mark Helseth*, USA and *Denis Hamelin/Perry* Burford also from Ontario, offered us a beautiful group formation show on the way while taking hundreds of pictures of one another! Camil's Cessna went zooming by and headed towards Hearst airport, where he practiced a few very low approaches, extended "touch and goes" getting the population gathered at the airport, very excited! Of course I have to say that Alan, his co-pilot and instructor is also an aerobatic pilot. Not satisfied with their performance, they turned back to gather the "group Flying team" and lead them into a group approach and consecutive touch and go landings and take-offs, impressing everyone with the show! "*The Air Rally patrol*" was formed that day! We all enjoyed a great Mechoui supper offered by the city of Hearst. *Mr. Daniel Sigouin* and *Shana Verrier* organisers of our visit, presided the feast held in the local tavern where the beer was abundant. Thus, our exciting flying day that ended with a great celebration! <http://www.hearst.ca/>

Day 3 & 4 –July 31-Aug. 1st: After leaving Hearst, endless wilderness spread beneath us as dark clouds drifted by overhead. Again, difficult weather conditions reminded us that we had to obey to nature first! The group of pilots kept each other in sight and continued radio contact. The Air rally VFR "patrol" decided to return to port of departure, hoping for better conditions to develop, which they did in a couple of hours. Some landed in *Moose Factory* for fuel and a short visit of the area before proceeding to Wemindji.

The Cree Nation of Wemindji is a unique community located at the mouth of the *Maquatua River* along the East coast of *James Bay*. In 2005, Wemindji hosted the Air Rally and the experience was so enjoyable that we were very happy when they agreed to host the rally in 2006. Reggie Mark, who had retired from his chief position, was replaced by Chief Rodney Mark, his son, who greeted Air Rally pilots during a feast that included great food and western dancing as well as Karaoke. Ron and Shirley Stokes from Texas demonstrated their western country talents.

All pilots and journalists enjoyed two relaxing days of canoeing, polar bear watching (on a twin Otter) and other activities. Some slept in the comfortable tepees prepared with great care for the Air rally, others enjoyed the Maquatua Inn hotel or the cozy "Kukum Sarah" bed & breakfast We were again impressed by the hospitality of this community which, regardless of cultural differences, made everyone feel at home.

<http://www.wemindji-nation.qc.ca/>

Day 5-Aug. 2nd: We were sad to leave the security of our new home but at the same time, excited about what was lay ahead: The landscape started to change drastically as we moved slightly North-East towards Radisson, our refuelling point. We then headed straight East following the "*Rivière La Grande*" (great river), the mother of large hydro electric dams. The team of Michel and Danielle Neveu were grounded there due to mechanical problems and met us back later in Alma. The tundra vegetation began to appear. A multitude of lakes created a lace like pattern. *The Trans-Taïga* road was a reassuring sight all the way to *the Caniapiscau reservoir* were the most remote Canadian road ended.. Let's not get too dramatic! Every 250 nm was serviced by a landing strip owned by Hydro Quebec power, the Quebec owned energy provider that has developed all the existing man-made infrastructures in the region, including the city of Radisson where stands the largest hydro-electric underground dam in the world.

In Caniapiscau we were received by an outfitter called Explo-Sylva. Our stay there was very brief with no frills, but after a good supper a good night sleep and a great breakfast we were ready to fly to our next destination: Kangiqsujuaq.

Day 6-Aug. 3rd: Today we crossed the line over the *55th parallel* into Nunavik territory. The planes didn't crack and there were no major changes in our personalities (???) but switching pilots became a necessity and not an option for one of the crews who experienced navigation difficulties on the previous leg. Camil had anticipated problems of this kind in the preparation of the journey and wisely had arranged for *Jean Denis*, IFR commercial pilot, to join the group in Wemindji. Jean Denis was assigned to take over the pilot seat.

Kujjuaq, an intermediate destination and the capital of *Nunavik* houses a very busy airport in the middle of a major revamping. Unfortunately Kujjuaq had offered no cooperation to our Rally and the same applied to major Inuit airlines operating in the area. Except for the Pilatus, the planes were moved away from the tarmac to a site we called the "Dirt pit". The manager was kind enough to let us use his office for weather briefing. The weather was hot and humid to our surprise; the room had no ventilation making pilots more impatient as time went by. A series of events made us feel as if we were to be grounded there. The airport manager informed us that Mining exploration helicopters were crowding the airport in Kangiqsujuaq leaving no room on the tarmac. This information was quickly verified with Kangiqsujuaq and problem set aside. Weather forecast was uncertain but a later update gave us the window to go - some pilots were still apprehensive until Aurel Dan, pilot of the Pilatus joined the committee and shared with all his expertise and interpretation of the charts. Suddenly it all made great sense and we surely took the opportunity to get out as we did not want to stay a minute longer in Kujjuaq.

To reassure all pilots and increase the security for VFR pilots, the IFR Cirrus team of Dave Steeves and Mark Brooks from *Buttonville Flying club*, Ontario volunteered to depart ahead of the group as a scout to verify weather conditions along the way. Aurel Dan, next in line also provided the group with regular updates. Faster planes kept in constant communication with slower planes. Slower planes regrouped keeping in close range from each other. Everyone was safely brought to the next destination! Except for two teams : *PK and PJ Odendall* left the Husky in the "Dirt pit" in Kujjuaq and flew straight to Iqaluit on board *Ron Norman's* Piper Navajo one day ahead of the group. PK and PJ admitted later that they regretted their decision. They missed a great opportunity to fly over the Arctic glaciers.

The flight to Kangiqsujuaq, was a real treat – rugged landscapes we'd never encountered before and sceneries far more impressive than any of the photo we'd seen. As we approached Kangiqsujuaq we could see the runway perched on a hill overlooking the village and the Bay. The village is snuggled in the hollow of a splendid valley surrounded by majestic mountains, a landscape of unspeakable beauty. This little community of Kangiqsujuaq meaning: "The large bay" has a population of 479. Kangiqsujuaq occupies an exceptional site, 10 km from the Hudson Strait, on the shore of Wakeham Bay.

Kangiqsujuaq is the highest point on the western side of the Ungava Bay and therefore the closest to the shores of Baffin Island. The People of Kangiqsujuaq were there to greet us all, proud pilots filled with great emotions. Our experience there was magic and far more interesting than anything we had expected.

The pilots and media were greeted at the airport by **Mayor Mary Pilurtoot**, a beautiful and classy lady. **Martha**, also a beautiful young lady was in charge of the transport with other community helpers. The people of Kangiqsujuaq were also present to greet us all... Some of us stayed in the teacher's dorms but many were welcomed to private homes and comfortably organised for the night. In one case, a family of three of our participants discovered that their hosts had spent the night outside in a tent so their guests could enjoy the comfort and privacy of their home. My family and I had the great privilege of staying at Mary's home where we met her charming husband **Lukasi** and beautiful two children.

We were invited for a community supper at the brand new gymnasium and conference hall facility where a feast was organised. Pilots had been requested to load on candy and toys for the children prior to departure for the Air rally journey and it was the right time to spoil them. (Wemindji children and all the native children met along the way received the same treat). It was a wonderful evening. Our first impressions and experience with the Inuit people were unforgettably good ! Frankly, our experience there was magic and far more interesting than anything we had expected.

I didn't have the opportunity yet to tell you about "**Propwash**". Her real name is **Hailey**. She was nick-named by **George Erickson**, journalist for AOPA Pilot and writer of the famous *True North* best seller book. This beautiful

little girl is only 8 years old. She was the fourth member of a ladies only crew from Ontario. They had been appointed representatives of the “**Ribbon of Hope**” **breast cancer campaign** organised by **Royal LePage**. Hailey, was with her mother **Jaqueline**, A breast cancer survivor herself, **Carla** a 19 year old pilot and **Donna** the pilot in Command all from **Hamilton, Ontario**. Had I asked for the nicest “all woman crew” -the first in the Air rally history- I couldn't have done better! Those girls were incredible and I will take them along anytime!. Needless to say, Propwash made great friends in Kangiqsujaq and Jaqueline enjoyed the company of her hosts so much that they decided to enjoy another couple of days there. Wise decision! Of course they couldn't find a better place to stay. Their hosts specialised in traditional Inuit clothing including skin boots..... We would pick them-up on the way back from Iqaluit.

Day 7 & 8-Aug. 4-5: Although many pilots had planned to stay on the south side of the Hudson strait, parting was out of the question. Talk about pilot cooperation! **Laurie Nadeau** from Sherbrooke and **Perry Burtford (Windsor Flying Club)** took over the gas pump and managed the fuel distribution, sucking every drop of fuel from the 700\$ drums reserved for the Air Rally. The Cirrus crew, **Dave and Mark** agreed to split up to help getting a team across. There we went, across **the Hudsonstrait**- 90 nm of icy water. ----- I know for a fact that some passengers had a go at their finger nails leaving enough to chew on for the way back. Slower planes flew in lose formation – the proximity of other aircraft providing a comforting sight while crossing the Strait. When the shore of Baffin Island appeared the first sign of civilisation was the airport of Kimmirut. We proceeded towards **Iqaluit**.

We landed on the 8,600 ft asphalt runway. Our pilots seemed so happy with their accomplishment that they had great difficulty leaving the airport. Pilots regrouped around Aurel's plane and shared with him their joy. Aurel opened the champagne right on the tarmac. A table was dressed; foie gras, saucisson, olives, etc... were served to accompany the champagne. A nice, very European touch and “after landing” ritual. In 2005 it came as a surprise, but this year we became so accustomed to his post-flight treats, we expected him to open up his cargo door everyday.

Once we landed, we were greeted by our friends “**the Polar pilots**” who had provided information and recommendations for our journey to Iqaluit.. To our surprise **Bert Rose** was given the responsibility of the Air Rally visit to Iqaluit. Although the Air rally committee had made prior arrangements and commitments directly with City officials including Mayor **Elisapee Sheutiapik** none of the people originally officially involved showed up at any of the functions. We owed the transport to **Mr. Hanson, R.L. Hanson Construction Ltd** of Iqaluit. We had expected the Polar pilots to lead our planes to the most interesting sights around. That wasn't the case. Bert had to drive the bus! The Air Rally committee gathered a few planes to fly to the beautiful small fishing town of **Pangnirtung**, were we would find a great amount of hand made tapestries, sculptures and jewellery and better representation of Nunavut culture and people. Air Rally journalists were taken on board different small planes to take pictures. They indeed took great pictures but unfortunately we never reached **Pangnirtung**, as weather conditions began to deteriorate

Two days were spent in Iqaluit. The first evening we were offered a hot stew diner. Deputy Mayor **Glenn Williams** a non-Inuit resident, delivered a speech and presented the Iqaluit Flag. **The Iqaluit reward** was handed to **Bob Harrold** also known as Bobbie, Robbie and “hey you mechanic”! Bob is from Butler Indiana. Bob has a 300 acre soy bean farm with his own 3000' air strip and hangers for his aircraft repair business. Bob has been an aircraft mechanic since the Korean War (1950) when he repaired B-29 bombers for the USAF. Bob kept busy during the whole rally, going around filing propellers, fixing broken seats or checking on engine problems. That same evening we enjoyed a slide presentation from **George Erickson** about his travels and his famous book **True North: Exploring the Great Wilderness by Bush Plane**. George had very kindly distributed a book to every crew in the Air Rally

<http://www.city.iqaluit.ca/>

The Arctic challenge was a special -one of a kind- Air rally. Because of the unusual remote character of this challenge that required a lot of group concentrated effort and human contact, the participants were tested on navigation skills but also participation, collaboration and team spirit during the whole challenge. What made the best teams is not only based on technical and practical factors but also on human relations and cooperation with one another.

Day 9-Aug. 6 : Time to go back to **Kangiqsujaq**. Kangiqsujaq has no restaurant; therefore, we loaded with tomato cans, peppers, onions, spaghetti, garlic, bread, etc... You guessed it! we were all in for a serious spaghetti cook-out ! As we landed, Mary and Martha were there to take us home. We took over the community center and gymnasium's kitchen. **Robyn**, a general practice (internist) doctor at the Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale Arizona along with **Irene**, from Montreal and **Francine** from Iroquois Falls Ontario, took care of supper for all of us and our guests. One of the Inuit ladies searched the town for a piece of fresh caribou and a grinder. It wasn't long before we were enjoying the best spaghetti we ever had. While the ladies were cooking others got into a volley ball tournament including Aurel who disregarded knee problems and went flying a few times across the floor. I must say he was very good and athletic and so was George Erickson. **Gregory Gallagher** and

Robert Sirdey, always in search for exclusive interviews and pictures, met with a famous Inuit lady decorated with the Order of Canada for her teaching work to Inuit children. Gregory discovered were the sleight dog champion resided and took several pictures of the dog winning team. Apparently, Gregory is booked on the next race! We went for a walk on the barrens overlooking the town.... A sight that will lie deep in our memories. Thank you so much Mary for sharing your little heaven with us. Thank you for the invitation to come back. We will be back !

Day 10-Aug. 7: Time to go back south ! some of us had the opportunity to fly over the “**Cratère du Nouveau Quebec**” The New Quebec crater. Others flew straight into Kujjuaq. By the time planes had reached Kujjuaq, weather had deteriorated going south. The Pilatus proceeded through, filling IFR but others, including the Navajos, the Cirrus, IFR & VFR crews were hesitant to move south and debated in Kujjuaq. Indeed the weather in Schefferville, our next destination, was very bad with pouring rain and gusts of wind. Luckily I was onboard the Pilatus. When we arrived at the airport I expected to see our hosts, the community of **Kawawachikamach** who had arranged to host the event. To my surprise, no one was there although I had spoken to them in Iqaluit to confirm our arrival. One of our teams, **Paul Clark, from Ontario**, had left us in Iqaluit to proceed to Kujjuaq. We recognised the Bonanza covered-up on the tarmac. The crew had made it to Schefferville one day ahead and told us that it was very unlikely pilots would come in as no IFR flight plan had been filled. Well, I got a surprise for you, after the first plane landed (**Sylvain’s** Piper Navajo), others started to arrive one after the other. Aurel was right, the weather was to clear after a couple of hours. Our committee, with the help of **Sylvain Maher of Aeropro** had agreed on same!

It wasn't long before the whole community of **Kawawachikamach** arrived with pick-up trucks to take us all to the grounds where a big feast had been set-up. Thanks to **Jessica Mitchell** and **chief Jimmy James Einish**, we all enjoyed a great evening with the Naskapi people and there again were received in different homes. Some of us enjoyed the comfort of the community center and played pool, ping pong and watched TV.

Our hosts, **The Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach** is a First Nation with a population of approximately 750. They reside approximately 16 kilometres northeast of Schefferville. The vast majority of the residents of Kawawachikamach are Naskapis. Naskapi is their principal language. English is their second language. The Naskapis still preserve many aspects of their traditional way of life and culture. Like many northern communities, the Naskapis rely on subsistence hunting, fishing, and trapping for a large part of their food supply and for many raw materials. Harvesting is at the heart of Naskapi spirituality. Jessica gathered the children for a show at the airport, we travelled with them on the bus and it was great seeing them sing along with Dona, who of course knew a lot of camp songs. We again distributed our candies, took memorable pictures with all. Thank you very much **Chief Einish** for letting us discover your people and community where we truly felt at home and welcomed. <http://www.naskapi.ca/>

Day 11 Aug. 8 : As I get towards the end of this story, I realise that everyday was memorable in different ways. Many unexpected events took us by surprise and we had to compose on a day by day basis. Never before had this happened. This is why 2006 Air rally has been such an incredible experience. Read on for more surprises.....

In order to get to Alma ahead of the others, I was flying again onboard the Pilatus PC12 with Simone, Cesar, Aurel and my two children. We were enjoying the scenery looking out the window, when, to our surprise we saw an **F18** jet positioned “stand-still” right behind the right wing. He was so close that we could see his helmet. I was impressed at first and very proud to show that our Canadian Air force was taking the time to salute a plane flying the Swiss flag ! Though, when I realised that he was fully armed with rockets, Simone decided it was time to tell Aurel. To our surprise, Aurel had no knowledge of the presence of this impressive machine and started switching frequencies to finally get into communication with the “bird outside the window”. Finally the bird left us to our own destiny free of any pressure. We found out later about the terrorist scare in England and we had been intercepted for verification due to very edgy security conditions. Aurel was thrilled about the experience and will surely let all his friends back in Europe know about this great and very unusual experience. His wife Simone asked that the logo that he proudly exposed on his plane and says “**PREDATOR**” *the ultimate weapon* be removed when they return.

Alma At last! We arrived a bit late after all. The airport of Alma is a beautiful little airport. The hosts and hostesses were absolutely charming offering each one of us a box of delicious chocolate coated Blueberries and Blueberry beer, specialties of the region. Our pilots were thrilled by the accommodations they found at the **Hotel Levesque**. Before supper, we were given a guided tour of the town: As the capital of the Lac-Saint-Jean region, Alma enjoys an exceptional living environment and its people have a true sense of hospitality reflected through numerous festivities, events, which have all contributed to Alma's reputation as the town of hospitality. We were all taken to the marina where supper featured –mechoui- (roasted piece of meat). We were all a little tired but very happy of the Arctic challenge accomplishment. At that point we needed someone who would lead

our celebrating. The disk jockey **JELLO**, hired for the occasion did just that. It did not take long before he had a few of us dance crazy, on tables, dressed-up with his costumes of clowns and other... We had a Ball and stayed till the early hours of the morning. The group of youngsters of the rally, which I have not mentioned yet in the story, jumped in the water fully dressed and played beach volley ball.

This year we had on board a group of young people age 12 to 20, three of them licensed pilots. They stuck together since the beginning of the rally, organising their own activities. One of them, **Martin**, 17 years old had come from France to team-up with **Robert Tyler** a lawyer from Virginia (Air rally recommendation). Those kids are still communicating via internet and have committed to meet again next year. A new generation of Air Rally addicts is born.

Panorama Helicopters Ltd. made it possible for us to take an aerial picture of our pilots planes and passengers together with the Flags dressed before us right on the tarmac. Thank you so much Alma, our participants are already asking if we will go back next year.

<http://www.ville.alma.qc.ca/>

Day 12-Aug. 9 : We were allowed to sleep in a bit – A relief from our usual early-to-rise routine - Next and final destination was only 90 NM away.

Renowned for its beautiful landscapes, the **Charlevoix** region is where nature and culture exist in perfect harmony. We took the long path flying over the **St-Lawrence River** to see the whales. We just had to keep an eye on the tourist boats below and we were guaranteed to see them. It worked. The Pilatus tilted to the right and to the left providing good shots of those impressive mammals. Turning towards Charlevoix we enjoyed the charming little villages and majestic hills bordering the St. Lawrence River. Charlevoix region is indeed one of the most beautiful regions in Canada. It is not surprising that Charlevoix was designated a World Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1989. Charlevoix is one of the only biosphere reserves in the world with human settlement..

When we arrived at the **Charlevoix airport**, the fences were lined with sight-seers who had come to greet us. Charlevoix airport is a very beautiful airport set on the hills in a charming town called St-Irénée. This airport has been recently renovated and the building is equipped with a beautiful conference room, fire place and latest equipment. It is used primarily by one of the most powerful families in Canada who owns a huge Estate nearby. President Bush father and other presidents and powerful personalities have landed their private jets at this airport in different occasions.

Hosting the air rally was for **Mr. Tremblay, airport manager** an important step towards the promotion of his airport facilities in order to attract pilots who indeed deserve to add this beautiful destination into their travelling log. **Tourism Charlevoix**, the **Town of Clermont** and the **glamorous Casino of Charlevoix** without forgetting the great collaboration of the **Manoir de Richelieu** contributed greatly to the organisation of our visit.

<http://www.casino-de-charlevoix/>

Soon after we all landed and enjoyed a great pizza, we were taken to the glamorous 400 room and suites **Manoir de Richelieu** historical building which overlooks the St-Lawrence river. Luxury was the finishing note on which we ended this beautiful and memorable experience. **Mrs Bouchard**, representative of the Casino of Charlevoix one of our principal sponsors presided the ceremony of the trophy awards. The ceremony was followed by a cocktail during which **Moët et Chandon** champagne was served, courtesy of **Select Wines**

Thank you to our faithful partners **Joslyn Canada** and **Aeropro** and all our hosts for making this event possible every year.

The efforts, the financial implications and most of all the hospitality provided by each and every partner make of this flying event "**the world greatest FLYING celebration!**" Our pilots know no limits and no frontiers.

Thank you to **Alan Matson** and **Mark Helseth**, from Minnesota, USA and to the members of the organising Committee, for all their work in making this Air rally better every year.

See pictures here : <http://www.dropshots.com/day.php?userid=189191&cdate=20060809&cimg=5>

