

# RELATIVE



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## State pilots fly through strike

By Nancy Erickson Johnson

Two weeks into the long-threatened air traffic controllers strike, there seems to be little evidence of problems in North Dakota. Flights continue on schedule for the air carriers and general aviation has adapted to the reduced staffs at the four state towers.

The members of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers (PATCO) first threatened to strike during June, but last minute negotiations stopped the action. However, when the pact went to PATCO members for ratification, it was turned down by 95 percent of the membership.

New negotiations opened on July 31 and quickly broke down, sending most of the 15,000 PATCO members to the picket line Aug. 3. When the strike began, President Ronald Reagan informed the members this action was illegal and members not returning to the job within 48 hours would be terminated.

When the deadline passed, more than 80 percent of the membership was still walking the picket lines. Shortly after the deadline, termination notices started going out to the former traffic controllers.

Three major concerns were not negotiated to the satisfaction of PATCO President Robert Poli when the talks resumed. These concerns centered around wages, work week and retirement plans.

During the first round of negotiations, Poli had asked for a \$10,000 across-the-board annual increase for all controllers. He also asked for cost-of-living increases twice a year for the jobs, which range in pay from \$20,462 to \$49,229. The FAA offered a \$4,000 wage hike, which would have included a \$1,000 increase as part of the 4.8 percent raise given all federal employees this year.

Poli has also requested the five-day 40-hour week be cut back to 32 hours in four days. PATCO was also looking for an earlier retirement age and higher pension benefits. Currently, a controller can retire with half pay at age 50 if he has worked for 20 years, and at any age after serving 25 years. Poli asked that retirement be permitted to any controller after 20 years of work and with 75 percent of his base salary. The Government adamantly opposed this demand as contrary to its entire drive to hold the line against future Government expenses.

Just before the deadline set for June 22, Secretary of Transportation Drew Lewis offered a \$40 million package of improvements, including a 10 percent pay hike for controllers acting as instructors, an increase in the pay differential for nighttime work to 20 percent, from the present 10 percent, and a guaranteed 30 minute lunch period.

By July 31, the PATCO negotiators claimed they had reduced their demand by about 50 percent, but no settlement came from the negotiations.

Now, the air traffic control towers

have adjusted schedules, reduced service hours and commercial aviation in the state has "not been materially affected," according to N.D. Commissioners of Aeronautics Harold Vavra. All scheduled air service has taken place, with some changes for IFR general aviation flights the most noticeable change.

Currently, IRF flights are not being cleared through the Minneapolis or Chicago centers, Vavra reported. But on Sept. 9, "this should change, provided the system is not overloaded." Vavra encouraged general aviation pilots, flying aircraft under 12,500 pounds to fly VFR so they don't involve the air traffic control centers.

The FAA is "saying it can absorb this traffic if it is spaced out and not during peak hours."

One of the methods the FAA is using to smooth out potential problems is closing some control towers. Already, 17 towers have been closed and more than 40 are being studied for possible

closing. This apparently does not include closing any North Dakota towers.

At Fargo, the PATCO strike "hasn't affected us as much as we thought it would." Executive Director of the Municipal Airport Authority, at Fargo's Hector Airport, Joseph T. Parmer confirmed all flights by commercial air carriers had left the ground. One incident, on the first day of the strike, was a one hour delay of a commercial flight bound for Denver. The flight was held on the ground because it couldn't get clearance into Denver, he pointed out.

A concern of the commercial carriers has been the number of no shows during the first weeks of the strike. Parmer pointed out people were unsure about their ability to reach final destinations or return from those destinations on a timetable. "That's even back to normal, now," he added. "We have been fortunate, not losing our flight activities."

During 1980, Hector Airport had total traffic of 103,000 operations. The

general aviation traffic totalled 77,000 operations during the past year, with commercial and military planes comprising the remainder of the traffic. Each day, there are 32 scheduled commercial operations handled by the local tower, he explained. Since the strike began, the tower has handled up to 455 operations in one 24-hour period, with an average of about 300 operations.

The major effect on the Fargo tower has been the reduction of hours the tower is open, according to Tower Chief Don Driscoll. In the past, the tower has been open 24 hours a day. However, that was cut back to 17 hours with the start of the strike. The Fargo tower is now open from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., and will probably remain on a similar schedule in the future. A 90-day survey was taken this spring, checking the usage of the airport. He said the night hours were used by an average of seven planes, which is not enough to justify staffing the tower.

Right now, the tower at Fargo is being staffed by two controllers and one trainee, along with three supervisors and 14-year veteran Driscoll.

"Everything is running fine, it is going smoothly," Driscoll said of the tower operations during the first two weeks of the strike.

"A general comment we have been getting from pilots is they never had better service and really appreciate the controllers that have remained here. I have not had one pilot voice concern about the conditions. They feel conditions are safe and there is better service."

In a conference call with Secretary Lewis Aug. 17, Driscoll learned the government position of a hard line has not changed. "They will remain firm. They have no intentions of negotiations with a union called PATCO. The decertification of PATCO as the negotiator is almost positive."

"The government is willing to negotiate with working controllers if they are represented by a new union," he added.

Most of the termination notices have been sent by the FAA and removal of the striking controllers should be completed within a week or two. "I was sorry to see it happen. It was a good bunch and it bothers me that I lost those people. But we have to live with what happened."

Now the FAA has begun a massive hiring program, calling on people who had been on the waiting list. Driscoll pointed out there were large numbers of potential controllers on that list because there had been no hiring since December. Those on the waiting list have been processed and will now be called up.

Driscoll pointed out those controllers on the waiting list with military controller backgrounds "would be useful in about six months at a small facility. They could be certified in about one year." Without that background, the potential controllers would have to at-

Continued on page 2

### Control tower operations listed in North Dakota

A week following the Air Traffic Controllers' strike in North Dakota shows the following level of operations at four control tower airports at Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks and Minot. The days and time of operations at each control tower are what existed as of Monday, August 10, 1981.

#### BISMARCK —

Tower Operations from 6:00 A.M. to 12 midnight, seven days per week.

#### Tower Staffing:

3 supervisors including Tower Chief, Russ Bracken.

4 Trainees

7 Total staff (Manpower 44 pct. of normal)

(Nine Controllers on Strike)

#### FARGO —

Tower Operations from 6:00 A.M. to 11:00 P.M., seven days per week.

#### Tower Staffing:

4 Supervisors including Tower Chief Don Driscoll

2 Controllers

1 Trainee

7 Total staff (Manpower at 50 pct. of normal)

(Seven Controllers on Strike)

#### GRAND FORKS —

Tower Operations from 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M., seven days per week

#### Tower Staffing:

2 Supervisors including Tower Chief Robert Burke

3 Controllers

3 Trainees

8 Total Staff (Manpower at 66 pct. of normal)

(Four Controllers on Strike)

#### MINOT —

Tower Operations from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Six days per week (Monday thru Saturday)

#### Tower Staffing:

1 - Tower Chief - Bob McDonald

(Manpower at 14 pct. of normal)

(Six Controllers on Strike)

# Tower chiefs project year long rehabilitation

From page 1

tend the FAA's training school for five months, and then take one and one-half to two years for certification.

At least one person will be joining the Fargo tower staff by mid-September, Driscoll continued. He said his facility is in "better shape than most in the region."

The striking controllers have been sticking together, he continued, "and you have to respect them for that." However, Driscoll said the conditions controllers work under have been overstated. "Obviously, everyone wouldn't work if the conditions were that bad."

The controllers remaining on duty at Fargo have provided good service and are dedicated, top notch people. "It is like losing a member of the family" with the strike on, Driscoll said.

At the Bismarck tower, nine controllers went on strike. That left four trainees and two supervisors, along with tower chief Russ Bracken to man the facility. The hours have also been reduced at the Bismarck facility, from 24 to 18. The tower is closed from midnight to 6 a.m.

"That has been the most drastic effect of the strike," Bracken said. "We have also reduced the number of instrument operations to four per hour, but we don't average much above that."

General aviation is about 85 percent of the traffic handled by the Bismarck tower each day. There are about 325 operations handled during a normal

day at that tower.

"We are pleased and proud of the controllers here for not going on strike. I would like to see them get the career advancements they deserve, which are now opening up at the larger facilities."

Bracken became tower chief at Bismarck in February and has 27 years of experience with air traffic control. The comments from pilots about the current situation include appreciation of the service provided.

The controllers now on duty have pro-

vided a more mature, polite service, according to the pilots landing at the facility. Anxieties about the strike have been bothering the controllers who left their jobs, Bracken speculated. Sometimes this anxiety came across and was disturbing when the controllers were short or rude.

"The people who are here enjoy their work, enjoy their job. We are here to serve the flying public rather than go on strike. The kids (trainees) who were left behind are thrilled with the job and

the money."

So far, the tower chief has received 85 applications from Bismarck residents alone, for the vacated jobs in the control booth.

Bracken pointed out air traffic controllers aren't the only trade which works under pressure to know their business and be professional. "If you know what you are doing, you can live with the pressure."

Bracken also commended the pilots in general aviation for taking the strike in stride. "On their own, they made adjustments in volume to help spread out the traffic and relieve the system. We appreciate their ingenuity."

When the six controllers went out on strike at the Minot tower, that left only tower chief Bob McDonald to run the place. He operates the tower from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

About 130 operations are average at that tower, although traffic is up 14 percent for the first part of 1981. This 19-year veteran of air traffic control said he will continue to man the tower by himself as long as he has to.

While "sorry it happened, in management we need to support" the President's goals.

Depending on the people sent during the rehabilitation, the Minot tower should have new controllers checked out in about one year.

At Grand Forks tower, the total staff is three controllers, three trainees and one supervisor, along with Tower Chief Robert Burke. The tower is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and four controllers are on strike.

## Pilots urged to avoid filing IFR flight plans

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) President John Baker has asked N.D. Aeronautics Commissioner Harold Vavra to assist in the organization in alerting North Dakota pilots on the importance of avoiding filing of any unnecessary IFR flight plans.

AOPA, according to Baker, urgently requests all pilots to avoid filing IFR flight plans unless the flight is an emergency one which cannot be made under visual flight rules.

This request came after discussions between AOPA and FAA Administrator Lynn Helms.

Voluntary curtailment of contact with traffic control operations may prevent implementation of a FAA contingency plan. That plan would severely curtail general aviation. Pilot cooperation is vital to a proper resolution of general aviation's place in the air traffic system.

Extra care in VFR operations is urged. Pilots should not extend VFR flight into IFR conditions. Avoid operating in marginal flight conditions.

# Helms defends realignment plan

FAA Administrator J. Lynn Helms last week appeared before the House Subcommittee on Government Activities and Transportation to defend his decision ordering a realignment of FAA regional headquarters across the country. His decision cut the number of regions from eleven to six, and started a protest move by some FAA employees in several of the larger regions.

Helms began his testimony by reminding the subcommittee of his

background in the private sector. He had been in various managerial positions for the past twenty years. "Cost reduction and personnel reallocations are a way of life in business," Helms said, adding, "Maximizing productivity and minimizing cost are continuing concerns to every business manager."

Helms said he will "press for ways" to meet President Reagan's mandate from the American people, and intends to "hold down the FAA's costs while making continued productivity gains." In doing so, he said he will keep in mind that the primary mission of the FAA is to "provide for the safe and efficient movement of aircraft in the nation's airspace." Helms said he will not make any changes that would diminish safety.

All Federal agencies have been hit by budgetary constraints in one way or another. Helms said that while he wasn't around when the FAA FY-1982 budget was prepared, he has since visited the regions and determined that safety has not been compromised by the budget and staffing reductions. "To

the contrary," Helms said, "the agency has taken a number of positive steps to assure greater efficiency and productivity through measures such as part-timing facilities where traffic demands are little, reducing excess facility overhead staffing, equipment modernization, and the like."

Helms assured subcommittee chairman John L. Burton (D-CA) that as he continued ways to cut the FAA costs he would not lose sight of the agency's safety functions. "There is no question in my mind that the majority of work done by the FAA represents a proper investment of the taxpayers' money," he said. "There is also no question that the FAA... can and should aggressively pursue additional ways in which to deliver the best service to the American public at the

cheapest cost."

Since his decision to consolidate the FAA regions was announced June 12, Helms said he has received broad support for the undertaking. But, he admitted, that there were also questions raised concerning the selection of regional headquarters sites. Helms informed the subcommittee that he is re-examining the original data used as the basis for the site selections. "No final implementation of regional consolidation will be undertaken until the FAA's re-examination of this issue has been concluded and I have had an opportunity for a careful review of the data developed," he said.

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## Air ambulance guidelines . . .

CHICAGO — Need for standardized information on air ambulance services and greater knowledge of high altitude flight's effect on serious medical conditions have prompted the first printing of *Air Ambulance Guidelines*.

Produced jointly by the American Medical Association's Commission on Emergency Medical Services and the U.S. Department of Transportation, *Guidelines* is available from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Guidelines, with an initial press run of 18,000, attempts to provide both physician and air ambulance operator with medical factors to consider when planning air transportation of the seriously ill or injured.

The commission's Air Emergency Task Force, chaired by Willis A. Wingert, Jr., M.D. a former flight surgeon, prepared *Guidelines* with the assistance of the Department of Transportation.

Complimentary copies can be obtained by writing, General Service Division, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C., 20590.

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# Robertson Field: It was a day for air- plane lovers at Langdon

By Sue Retka

Summer cumulous and a warm, light wind were perfect weather for Langdon's memorial air show and fly-in Sunday, July 19. Planes from North Dakota, Minnesota, Montana and Canada flew in for the breakfast, and stayed around for the dedication ceremonies and air show. Along with the pilots came carloads of people — an estimated 2,500 total. Many were friends of John Robertson who was killed in an airplane accident near Langdon on June 5. Robertson was well known throughout the state as a spray and charter pilot, flight instructor, air ambulance pilot and precision aerobatic performer, as well

as the fixed base operator at Langdon. He was being recertified for aerobatic flying prior to an upcoming air show when the fatal accident occurred. The Langdon Airport Authority — most of whom were pilot friends of Robertson — planned another, bigger air show in honor of their friend. The Langdon municipal airport was renamed Robertson Field as part of the festivities.

It was a day for airplane lovers. Air show announcer Walt Pfeifer, Duluth, Minn., described the features and history of the airplanes parked on the ramp and being flown in. Visiting pilots parked their planes at the south end of the runway and were given a ride to the north end, only to be greeted at the ramp by Pfeifer, who did an instant interview for the crowd.

Old planes, new planes, an Air Guard helicopter and a homebuilt were scrutinized by the crowd. The most attention was given to an ultralight, motorized hang-glider. The spectators also got a look at a twin turbo-prop when Governor Allen Olson dropped in briefly. (A Sarles native, he remembers flying with his father into Langdon's old airport.)

The dedication ceremony got off to a start with parachute jumpers, the singing of the Star Spangled Banner, along with the dedication of a new flag-pole and memorial rock. Bagpipers escorted Robertson's mother and wife, Francis and Judy, to the runway for the ribbon cutting. The day was topped off with an air show by Stuart Lucke, Inkster; Gary Slater, Jack and Gregg Grahn, Rosseau, Minn. Gene Ellan, Leeds, added a comic touch by "stealing" a Piper Cub and providing a precision flying comedy routine.

When it was over, one little girl was overhead saying: "It makes me wish I could fly."



Francis and Judy Robertson, wife and mother of John Robertson share some of the day's activities with N.D. Governor Al Olson. (Photo by Sue Retka)



The Winnipeg, Manitoba pipers escorted Francis and Judy Robertson, mother and wife of the late John Robertson, to the ribbon cutting. (Photo by Sue Retka)



A picture of the late John Robertson and his family's Scottish crest marked the guest book and donation jar. (Photo by Sue Retka)

## Reagan to sign Airport-Aid Bill

President Reagan is expected to sign a Congressional Bill while on vacation at his California Ranch, which will extend for one year the Federal-aid Airport Program, which will provide North Dakota airports \$2.3 million for airport improvements, according to Harold G. Vavra, Director of the State Aeronautics Commission. Vavra said the authorization bill provides federal airport funds at 90 percent matching for fiscal 1981 years, which expires on October 1st this year. Vavra said this means that airports

### Airports to get \$2.3 million

with federal-aid construction projects must enter into a grant agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration before October 1st, 1981. After that date, the funds expire, if they are not obligated.

Amounts in the bill for North Dakota major airline airports earmarked as earned enplanement monies include:

Bismarck \$499,145; Fargo \$509,994; Grand Forks \$371,262; and Minot \$278,913.

In addition, the FAA Rocky Mountain Region will have about \$5.4 million discretionary funds which can be used as added funding on high priority airline primary airports in the regions six states of North and South Dakota,

Colorado, Montana, Utah and Wyoming, Vavra said.

The bill also includes \$371,000 federal-aid for general aviation airport projects in North Dakota and \$240,000 for commuter airline airports at points that enplaned 2,500 passengers or more in 1980. These points include Devils Lake, Jamestown and Williston.

In addition, the FAA Rocky Mountain Region will have \$800,000 discretionary monies which can be used on high priority general aviation and commuter airport projects in the region.

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# Gerry Beck wants 'the perfect' design

By DIANE HEYSSE  
Daily News Writer

"Aviation was like a disease. Once you got the bug, you can't quit. I didn't have my first airplane ride until I was 21 years old and, I guess, the second ride, I jumped out of the airplane, parachuting," said Gerry Beck, 31, who is co-owner with Larry Linrud of Tri-State Aviation, Inc., Wahpeton.

Relaxing in his chair in the fixed base operator's office, which has various airplane models about, the sandy-haired blue-eyed crop sprayer and airplane mechanic explained how he turned his avocation into a vocation. Wearing blue jeans, a western shirt and track shoes, he leaned down to pick up his company "guard cat,"

Dirtball, and said, smiling, "I'm always pretty casual."

Tri-State Aviation is a full service operation which sells, fuels, and maintains airplanes and provides flight instructions and crop spraying services, said Beck.

"It's a hard business to break into. There's two ways you can get an airplane mechanic's license — go to the school and get a license, or you can work on the job for the required amount of time and then take the test for your license. I worked on the job. Larry and I bought a wrecked airplane from Bob Odegaard from Kindred. In the original purchase, the deal was, we would rebuild it, and he would sign off all the work, which was done," said Beck, adding Odegaard was a licensed mechanic at the time.

While fixing the wrecked airplane, Beck and Linrud joked and talked about how nice it would be to have their own airplane business, and while Linrud was crop spraying near Hillsboro, Beck learned how to fly, he said.

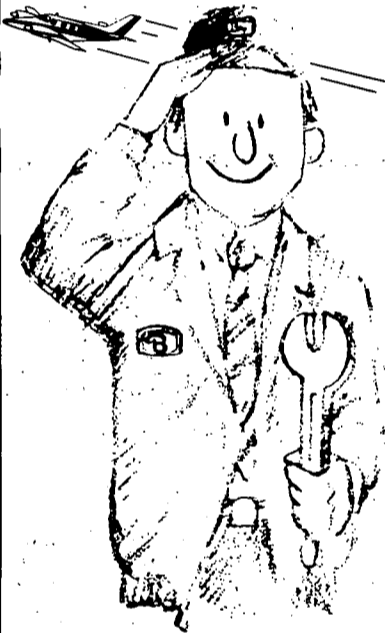
"We came to town with an old beat up airplane and a tool box. We bought wrecked airplanes from insurance companies and rebuilt them. At one time, every airplane we had, had been a wreck, and when we got done, you couldn't tell them from the new," said Beck emphatically.

Through on the job experience, Beck earned his airplane mechanic's license, he said.

Smiling brightly, he said optimistically, "My motto is, if I can't fix it, it isn't broke. The

Continued on page 5

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Donzetta Strandjord

## Correction

Our apologies to Donzetta Strandjord of the state aeronautics commission office. In the last Relative Wind in a story on that office staff, her name was incorrectly spelled.

Sorry about that!

## New avionics shop at Fargo

Dakota Aero Tech has purchased the avionics repair portion of Lake Region Aviation in Devils Lake, ND. The equipment has been moved to their shop in Fargo and is in the process of installation and calibration.

They extend an invitation to the Aviation public to stop in and see their new facility.

John Klien will head this new department.

It is anticipated that FAA certification application will be approved in time and the facility operational by Aug. 28th.

## Watts line for weather

The Federal Aviation Administration has introduced a statewide pilot weather briefing and flight plan service inward watts line. No. 1-800-732-4247 to Grand Forks Flight Service Station. This service was introduced to provide weather and flight plan service to all pilots in North Dakota. All zenith lines and local service will remain and pilots are urged to use local and zenith lines where available for briefing and flight plans, because only one line is available for watts for Grand Forks.

When filing a flight plan on the 800 watts number to Grand Forks, pilots must advise local Flight Service when in radio contact to open or close their flight plan and that the pilot already filed with Grand Forks Flight Service by phone.

## New director

Darrol G. Schroeder of Davenport, N.D., has been appointed director of aviation services for the Management Services Division of Lear Siegler Inc.

The division, headquartered in Oklahoma City, Okla., provides management and technical services for the corporation's aerospace systems and other aviation activities.

Schroeder farms and operates businesses in Cass County but his new appointment will not alter his activities in North Dakota.

He will function as a board member at periodic meetings of the Management Services Division.

Schroeder is also Vice Chairman of the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission.

## Stock for pay at Republic

Republic Airlines' employees are being asked to consider taking stock for part of their pay to ease the financial pinch of the air traffic controller's strike, the Minneapolis based airline announced.

That was the latest regional development in the strike that went into its sixth day on August 8, but to date has failed to drastically curtail air travel in North Dakota.

Under the Republic Airlines' "stock-for-pay" plan employees, including management, would take 15 percent of their September pay in stock, generating about \$6 million to help the airline's cash flow problems resulting from the strike according to Walter Hellman, Republic spokesman.

The report indicated that Republic Airlines' employees are considering the stock plan and could reach a decision shortly.

Hellman said the stock plan would be "only a temporary thing." Republic's losses exceeded \$3 million the first three days of the strike, which began on August 3. Hellman said that passenger loads improved towards the end of the first week, although he said he had no dollar-loss figures for those days. Hellman said fifty-two percent of available seats were filled on Thursday, the fourth day of the strike, just off the 53 percent the airline needs to break even.

Republic Airlines has about 15,000 employees including 1,800 pilots, and operates in 31 states, District of Columbia, three provinces in Canada, Mexico and Grand Cayman.

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# Targeting chemicals a sprayer's concern

From page 4  
impossible takes just a little longer."

"I manage the shop and take care of maintaining all the airplanes, and Larry takes care of all the flying. He does the instruction, and then in the summer we both spray," said Beck matter-of-factly.

"I guess the spraying has to be the most fun. I like to be outside, and I grew up on a farm. It's exciting. Every year it's different," he smiled.

"You have to go to the field, and look it over, and figure out how to do your job. Things happen pretty quickly. We go 125 miles an hour, so in one second's time, we cover 183 feet. If there's a set of wires at the end of the field, you don't have time to think about it, because, in that amount of time, you're through the wires. It's all reflex. You have to have the right attitude. You don't go out there to see how close you can come to the wires," Beck said raising his eyebrows emphasizing his point.

"Our biggest concern is all the other crops we're working around — targeting the chemicals. I guess the chemicals are a necessary evil to feed the world. Actual application is more susceptible to draft," said Beck, adding he and Linrud were not happy with the spray boom on the first airplane they rebuilt.

"The spray broom is the piece of pipe at the back of the wing of the airplane through which the chemical is dispersed. That's how I got involved in designing this new boom system we now manufacture and sell. Because of the fuel cost, and after seeing what the boom did for the airplane, we decided to try to build a ring cowl to put on the radial engines to reduce some of the

drag on the engine. What it does is reduce the reflected frontal area of the airplane," Beck said, attempting to keep his explanation simple.

"I enjoy the designing. I like to make things, and I like to fix things. I'm kind of a perfectionist. Even the crates we ship the booms away in have to have the right number of nails in them," he said his eyes smiling mildly at himself.

In order to repair airplanes strict Federal Aviation Regulations must be followed, he said. "That's why general aviation has a safety record it does have," he insisted.

Beck majored in industrial technology at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, where he met Linrud. Beck also has a background in electricity, electronics, physics, and drafting, he said.

"I've been building things, since I can remember. It's a beautiful background for an engineer, and that's one of my goals. I'd like to get an engineering degree some day," Beck said sincerely.

And what's his ultimate goal? To design the "perfect" agricultural aircraft, he said undaunted.



Gerry Beck and his 'guard cat' Dirtball.

## Over 50 smaller control towers will be closed

Drew Lewis, Secretary of the Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C. announced in a move to get additional air traffic controllers where they are needed, that the FAA has closed 17 control towers at small airports in California, Texas, Nevada, Massachusetts and Connecticut. He said another 40 control towers would be closed within a week, but they had not been selected as of August 10th.

## West Central Airways Fergus Falls Airport



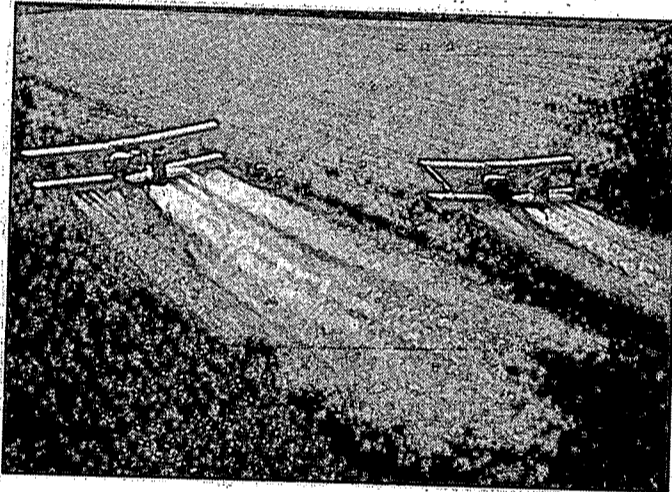
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# Apiary owner expresses concern

By TINY MACHEEL

Members in any relationship benefit to some degree from contact with one another. So it is with honey bees and sunflower in the Red River Valley. Although the two largest crops needing pollination by honey bees to produce fruit or seed are alfalfa and sweet-clover, the sunflower industry also benefits greatly from these insects.

Honey bees add millions of dollars to North Dakota's economy annually. Honey and beeswax are the most obvious contributions by the bee but the pollination of crops may far exceed the value of any other service the bee performs. Even some varieties of flax must have honey bees for production or improvement of yield.

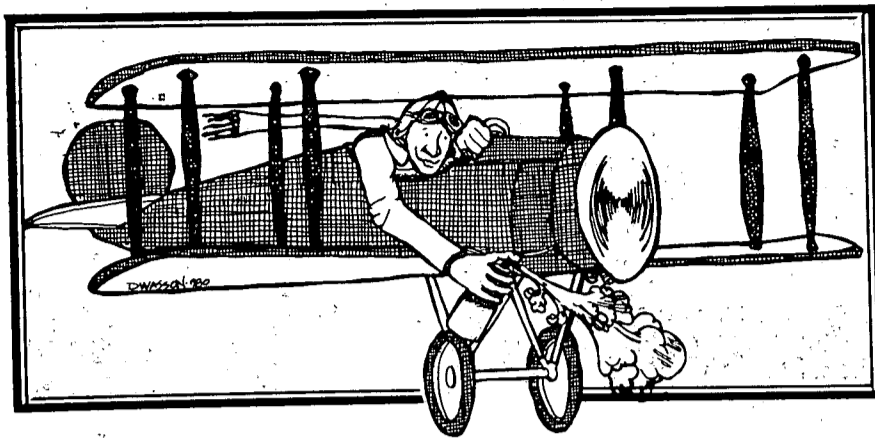
According to Dr. Gary Fick, sunflower plant breeder and research director at SIGCO Research, "Bees can increase sunflower yields of even self-compatible hybrids. Although sunflower hybrids boast some self compatibility, or the ability to pollinate themselves, bees still help."

Sunflower and honey bees certainly have an intimate relationship but as with the best of relationships, problems arise from time to time. Pesticide spraying is a major concern at this time for apiary owners servicing sunflower yields. Honey bees are as important to agriculture in this area as moisture and sunshine and yet entire colonies can be destroyed with one application of insecticide applied without careful planning on the part of the apiary owner, farmer, and sprayer, according to those in the bee industry.

Such was the case for Dick Ruby, Milnor, N.D. owner of one of the largest apiaries in the state. He has 10,000 hives scattered throughout Richland, Sargeant, Ransom, Barnes, and Cass counties. Each hive houses 60,000 to 70,000 bees. His bees produce an average of one million pounds of honey per year. He has two buildings totaling 18,000 sq. feet in which to process honey, store empty bee hives in winter, and keep general equipment. He also provides employment for about 15 local people.

Ruby has a great deal invested in the honey bee industry and contributes a great deal to local and state economy and yet in 1980, he said, insecticide spraying destroyed most of his bees.

Ruby feels the near disaster occurred because of poor communication between himself, farmers, and aerial sprayers. To alleviate this problem and



The Dick Ruby family, front row center, Dick and Nicole, 5; standing from left, Melissa 10, Donna, holding Rebecca 2 and Douglas, 11. (Photo by Tiny Macheel)

help prevent its recurrence, he has spent thousands of dollars and many hours printing, distributing and personally sharing information concerning bees, insecticides, and sunflower to sunflower growers and aerial sprayers in this part of the state. He's realistic about the problem and is willing to do what is necessary to help lessen it.

"A farmer has to spray and I realize that," he acknowledged. (I realize too that aerial spraying is the fastest and most effective way to distribute insecticides.) "I just want to be informed of the intention to spray so I can protect my hives."

The majority of time protecting the bees means moving the hives to a new location, "and believe me that takes

time. If a large number of hives must be relocated, it may take a day or two. We have to move them at night to make sure the bees are in the hives. Otherwise during the day they are out in the fields," Ruby said.

After pausing a few minutes to reflect about the situation, he continued his explanation. "You see, I can't just cover the hives for their protection from the spray. The hives are already quite warm internally and if covered, the bees become very agitated and create a lot more heat. Soon, they would suffocate. And like I said," he continued, "bees are in the field from dawn to dusk. Of course that's when aerial spraying must be done."

"That's why good, open com-

munication between apiary owners, farmers, and aerial sprayers is so vitally important! We need time to relocate our hives before the spraying is done. At present that's the best protection we can provide the bees. The future may hold a simpler answer for us. Right now I'm experimenting with a wire cover that can be placed over the hive so the hive can be covered with a cloth. The wire cover would permit the bees to move around, keep the hive cooler, and still protect it from the insecticide," he expounded, holding up a sample of his new creation which is mesh wire attached to a wooden base designed to set on the top of the hive. Hopefully this will alleviate the time crises. We may be able to keep the hives in the same yard and simply cover them, thus saving time and hassle for everyone concerned."

"Everyone involved with the bee, benefits from the other involved person," Ruby stated, speaking softly. And we all need each other to make the venture worthwhile, he continued. We'll just have to develop a better line of communication between the three of us in this unusual agriculture relationship, the farmer, the sprayer, and myself or any other beekeeper." "There are several ways of doing this," he summarized. Any and all of the following will help.

1. Beekeepers should be alerted as to intended spray areas so they can take appropriate measures to protect their bees. This I feel is most important!
2. Farmers need more detailed information from chemical companies concerning the chemicals used. Detailed information about potency of chemical, life span or duration of chemical activity is important too. We need to realize that all insecticides kill bees. It's just that some are much more lethal than others.
3. The aerial sprayer should be told the exact location of hives so direct spraying or contamination by drifting chemicals can be avoided.
4. A crop should not be sprayed while in bloom unless absolutely necessary. Bees are naturally attracted to the flowers.
5. If possible, spray when there is minimal bee activity in the fields, (i.e. 9 p.m. to 5 a.m.)
6. Many times a field is sprayed unnecessarily. Fields should be checked accurately and carefully to make sure the insect levels are high enough to warrant spraying.

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# Honey is important to state's economy

Honey is important to the economy of North Dakota, but the pollination of crops by honey bees is a service to agriculture far exceeding the value of honey and beeswax produced.

"The two largest crops in North Dakota which must be pollinated by honey bees to produce fruit or seed include alfalfa, and sweetclover," said Jerry Hauff and Gordon Erlandson, agricultural economists from North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Recently, the sunflower industry has both contributed and benefited from honey bees. New honey bee pastures have been created by traditionally low honey producing areas where farmland has been planted to sunflower. Research indicates that insect pollination is needed to produce high yields and oil percentages on hybrids to medium to low self compatibility.

Even some varieties of flax are dependent upon honey bees for production or improvement of yield.

"Honey bees foraging on alfalfa, sweetclover and sunflower produce a high quality honey with excellent production potential in volume," the researchers pointed out.

North Dakota is an excellent honey producing state because of several reasons. One reason is the excellent potential for a large volume honey crop produced by colonies placed on North Dakota lands

which is further evidenced as North Dakota led the United States in honey production in 1979 with 22.8 million pounds.

Another reason is that North Dakota beekeepers harvest a high quantity of water-white and extra-white honey which is sometimes sold at a premium to certain packers and buyers who use honey color as a primary criteria for price determination.

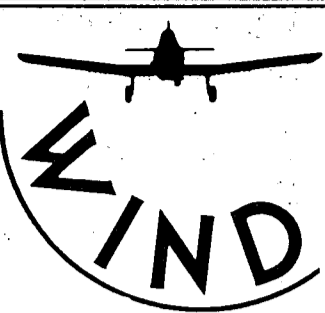
North Dakota's bee colonies have increased at a rate of 661 percent in 20 years from 33,000 colonies in 1960 to 251,000 in 1980. Colonies in the United States during the same period decreased at a 17.3 percent rate. Colonies have increased because of the ample supplies of sweetclover and alfalfa in the western and central part of the state where the greatest volume of honey in the state is produced.

Other reasons North Dakota is preferred as a honey producing state is because of higher insecticide risk to honey bees outside of North Dakota, occasional dry conditions in production areas outside of North Dakota and preference of honey bees to areas of low humidity and low rainfall.

Pollination potential for honey bees is evident when it is realized that honey bees of a single colony make four million trips per year and during each trip an average of about 100 flowers are visited. Honey bees are the most dependable pollinators as they collect nectar and pollen without harming the plant in the process. They are the most important pollinating insect known to man as it is estimated that over 80 percent of the pollination of fruit and seed crops in the United States is accomplished by honey bees.

North Dakota leads the United States in production per colony with an annual average of 110 pounds which is over twice the national annual average of 50 pounds per colony from 1975 to 1979.

# RELATIVE want ads . . .



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**Sad scene . . . Ray Schuster, a beekeeper from Doran, MN, a community in the Red River Valley experienced a heavy loss of bees recently due to aerial spraying in the area where his bees were pastured. Schuster joins other beekeepers in asking aerial sprayers to give them a chance to move and protect hives before spraying operations begin. (Photo and information provided by Dave Youngquist, managing editor, Daily News, Wahpeton, N.D.)**

## Need permit for hazing . . .

Farmers of yesteryear may have been on the right track with the use of the old fashioned scarecrow to chase blackbirds out of the corn field.

The idea was to scare the pesky birds and keep them from roosting in the

field.

Today's farmers need more than scarecrows to keep blackbirds out of the sunflower fields and any other crops that may appear appetizing to these flocks.

One method is hazing the birds with low flying airplanes. Due to the large black bird population in the state, pilots are being allowed to haze them, according to Pershing Carlson, North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

BUT don't just jump in that plane

and head out. First you need a hazing permit from the N.D. Game and Fish Department, 2121 Lovett Ave., Bismarck, N.D. 58501. There is no charge for this application.

NOW, ready, one, two, three, go . . . right? NO, wrong.

You also need a low-level flying permit from the State Aeronautics Commission in Bismarck.

Once you have both permits, head for that plane and let those blackbirds know that they'd best roost elsewhere.

## BEEBSITE is new program for AGNET

A new program has been developed to provide up-to-date information on the location of beehives throughout North Dakota.

Known as BEEBSITE, the program is part of AGNET, the computerized service to agriculture through the state's Extension Service.

The service lists the hive location to quarter section, the name of the beekeeper and the beekeeper's telephone number. Once the program is called up on the AGNET terminal, the user is asked for range number, township number and section or sections number.

The program then gives a listing of all of the hives registered in the area listed. If a user wishes to have a listing of all hives in the township, he can ask for all, instead of a section number.

It is felt that BEEBSITE will reduce the number of bees killed during the pollination season by chemical spraying.

At present, hive locations are being added continually to the master list. It will be several weeks before all of the permanent sites are listed since North Dakota has more than 7,000 permanent bee sites. Next season, this program will be on the AGNET line at the beginning of the growing season.

In counties that do not have an AGNET terminal, the location of hives can be obtained by phoning the state Department of Agriculture, (701) 224-2232.

## ... Around the state

**BEULAH** . . . has trailer house for sale which can be used for a mini terminal set up for an airport. They are asking \$600 and you can call 701-873-4667 for more information. The Airport Authority is presently considering plans for pavement to increase the airport apron and tie-down area.

**HAZEN** . . . is considering mixing some lignite fly-ash, soil cement, and existing top soil to create a smooth runway surface on some test sections on the airport. The present NW-SE turf runway is rough and the grass re-seeding program did turn out mostly weeds.

**MOHALL** . . . is currently reviewing site locations for a NDB. The Airport Authority is considering fencing the airport for security reasons. Sewer and water facility will be hooked up in the trailer house to develop a mini-terminal for the airport.

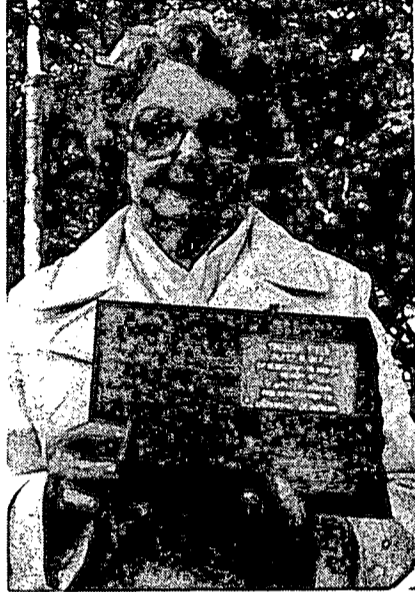
## Trulson field dedicated . . .

A fly-in pancake and sausage breakfast as part of Plaza's 75th celebration was attended by many local and persons traveling many miles to enjoy past memories and meet new and old friends.

Roy Sandstrom of Plaza, a long time pilot and friend of many, acted as Master of Ceremonies for the airport dedication. The airport was named Trulson Field in honor of Lyle Trulson and a wind cone built and put on the airport for use by pilots.

Accepting a hand made plaque of a wind cone was Mrs. Noreen Trulson in honor of her late husband.

Mr. Trulson was a non-pilot but enjoyed airplanes, donated a parcel of land on which the airport is presently located. Today, the airport has his name and a lighted wind cone in his honor. Roger Pfeiffer, Assistant Director and Mark Holzer, Planner for the Aeronautics Commission attended the breakfast and dedication



ceremonies.

"Trulson Field" airport consists of a E-W turf strip 3200' x 60' wide. The apron area has a mini terminal trailer house for pilots to brief themselves before flight. The runway is marked with boundary side markers and has low intensity runway lights.

**PARSHALL** . . . Airport has weather modification radar mobile unit and plane based on the airport for the summer. A metal tower was just delivered and will be used to install the antenna system for an NDB.

**MEDORA** . . . plans to relocate the airport runway to get length of approximately 3500'. The present 2200' runway is hazardous and rough. It is not advised by the airport manager for use since it is uneven due to gopher holes. The need for a recreational airport in North Dakota is substantial and Medora is one of our state's most popular tourist attractions.

**KILLDEER** . . . Will be looking at paving costs for the runway, taxiway and apron. The 4600' long dirt strip is smooth but can't be used after heavy rains. Six or seven helicopters are presently using the airport for seismographing.

**COOPERSTOWN** . . . is awaiting FAA site approval for the NDB. Also have sealed cracks with a rubberized material and reports favorable results. Spraying for beetles is keeping the airport busy.

## 'Time in your tanks'

The fuel on board your aircraft is only "time in your tanks". As a pilot, you should give the management of that time a very high priority.

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3. Know and understand the positions of the aircraft fuel selector valves. Markings should be legible, valves should be smooth, and easy to operate and with positive detent action.

4. Be familiar with the sequence for selecting fuel tanks of the aircraft. The use of fuel from tanks other than as

recommended (especially on takeoff and landing) can result in eventual fuel starvation. Many aircraft return unused fuel from the carburetor to a tank. If the tank is full, the fuel goes overboard through the vent and is lost, thus reducing the range of the aircraft.

5. A pilot should know the useable fuel on board the aircraft before flying. The unuseable should not be considered when planning a flight.

6. Make a visual inspection to assure that the fuel tanks are full. Complete trust in fuel gauges have resulted in fuel depletion short of destination, damaged aircraft and more serious bruises than just a bruised ego.

7. Make a thorough fuel drain check of all sumps before each flight.

8. During a pre-flight inspection, determine that all tank vent openings are clear of obstructions.

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