

THE SWINBURNE SAGA



By Mike Spence

Swinburne has come and gone again for the year 1978. For some it has been a very enjoyable convention, for others disappointing and for the rest they have not stopped moaning yet.

Firstly, I would like to add that a great deal of time went into preparing for this year's convention. There were no less than four trips by myself and Alex Saul to Swinburne to discuss progress with Ian Dyer. We inspected the field the first time, discussed the general layout and the cutting of the grass, as also the hotel accommodation, eats, general arrangements etc. The second time down, we examined the strip which was found to be 100% acceptable for light aircraft. We then proceeded to make arrangements to cut the grass for the forthcoming event. Prior to cutting the grass, we flew down rather urgently for some final discussions on the layout and general arrangements at the hotel. We then marked out the field and started cutting.

As all present will have observed it was a beautiful sight to see, the grass having been cut and cleared in no less than two days. This was accomplished by David Lesley who kindly donated his tractor with a grass cutter, 28 labourers and his big Mercedes truck. Not being farmers it would have taken us E.A.A. members six months to do the same job. David Lesley kindly allowed us the use of his workers who went on non stop from seven in the morning until six at night for two days. The fence was then laid out by the farmers in the area, which was the dividing fence between the public and the aircraft. The toilets were then erected for ladies and gents, which was a great improvement on last year.

We then had two 'lean-to's' erected with tarpaulins, one for the food and the other for the Headquarter Group, Millie, Yvonne etc. A control tower was erected out of scaffolding and the new wind-sock which was made between Alex Saul and myself was then erected. We are very proud of our windsock, especially the paint job.

The day of the actual convention dawned and as you know a few aircraft arrived on the Friday afternoon. We were all holding thumbs for the weather! As is known Dr. Bergamasco managed to get through from Cape Town, but the P.E. boys, unfortunately, could not make it after three attempts.

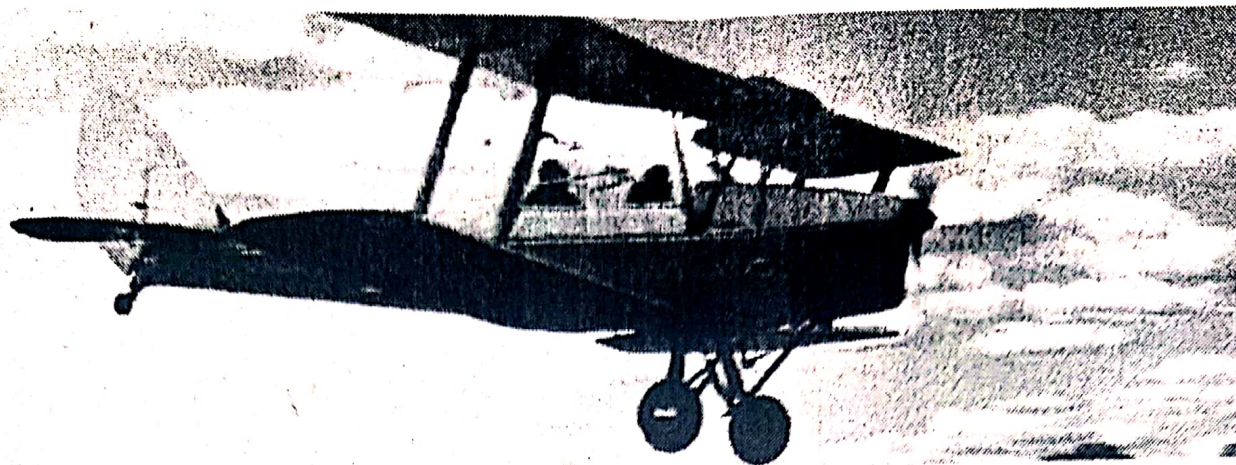
Dave Smith of Queenstown arrived by car and this was his first convention attendance. We found his enthusiasm far above average, which was a great boost for our morale.

Things then started going wrong. Unfortunately, Nick Turvey did not pitch up for the Aerobatic Show which was scheduled for 10 a.m. This was a great let down as the public would have enjoyed it. At the same time, they felt they had been let down.

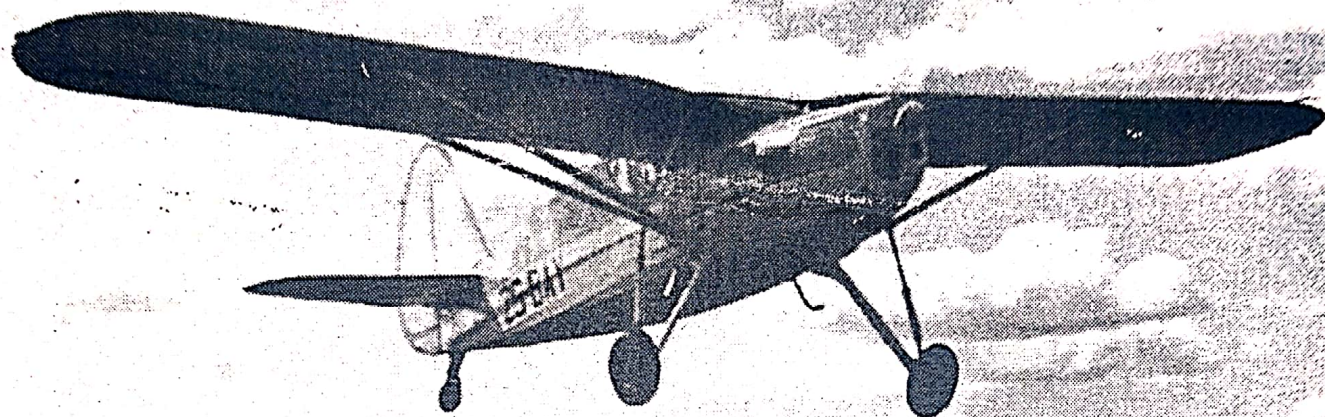
We then proceeded to install our P.A. system which worked wonderfully for approximately four minutes. It then died a sudden death. No matter how much coaxing or trying it just would not work. The tragedy of this was that some of the E.A.A. members just lost interest in the whole Show. The reason being that we could not call people and we could not address the public.

The next item was the Bombing. This was delayed no less than four times. I repeatedly asked E.A.A. members to please help organise the bombing but they blatantly told me where to get off as they were not interested. This unfortunately was from some of the senior members of the E.A.A.

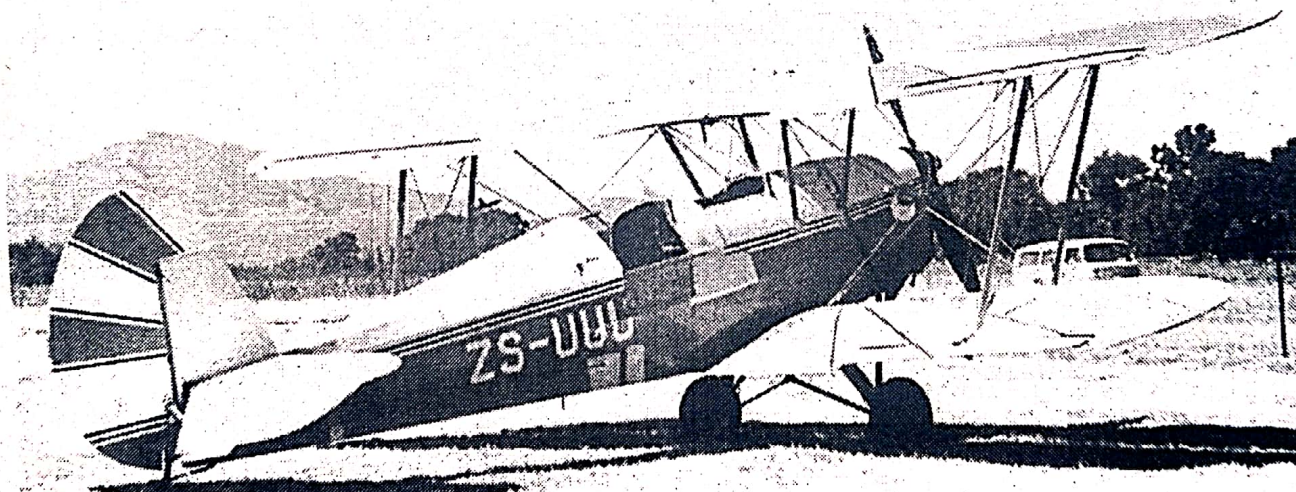
The Air Rally was the next item on the list, which was also delayed three times. The big problem was to get all the pilots and competitors together at the same time. Nevertheless, finally it got off the road and as you know, various people made the grade. There were a few "tricks" built in to the air rally which did catch some of the competitors. Unfortunately for us, this did not help the public who started murmuring and leaving the field for lunch. They expected to see a lot more.



That's Ted Phelps in his magnificent Tiger Moth doing a low-level fly-by on 160.



Fairchild ZS BAY taking-off for a flight to Harrismith.



ZS UUU, the French Stampe, which was used for aerobatic flips and demonstrations.



Brian Stapleford in Breezy. Note the battery box behind the rear seat – very easy to pre-flight this bird.

A number of us, six in all, took off from the aerodrome, and flew over Harriemth and the adjoining areas, to endeavour to get up some enthusiasm, but to no avail.

Back to the more joyful side. I would say at least 75% of the members paid us compliments for the work which had been achieved on the landing strip organisation. I must also say that the lads, Anthony Spence, Michael Lee and Colin Spence worked hard at the petrol pumps with Alex Saul and we did not seem to get very much joy out of the members.

Hannes Naude handled the gate rather well. Rick Cottle also did a stand at the gate. Keith Ross did rather well at marshalling, but by lunchtime was tired out and therefore retired. Nick Kruger was very helpful with his little "follow me" truck which, of course, made it easier for everybody.

And so ended Saturday 22nd April of our 1978 convention. All was not lost, however,

with the Dance and Presentation. We were very pleased to have Mary Nash, the Vice-President's wife to present the prizes at the prizegiving and, of course, Arthur Thomas from D.C.A. who handed out the Aerobatic Prizes. We give a special vote of thanks to both these people.

The dance was an overwhelming success. The floor was packed and the dance carried on until one in the morning.

Everybody thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

At the presentation the following prizes were awarded:

GRAND CHAMPION HOMEBUILT	Toy van Rensburg — "Mini Ace"
GRAND CHAMPION ANTIQUE	Ted Phelps — "Tiger Moth"
GRAND CHAMPION (CLASSIC)	Errol Williams & Neils de Graaff — "Fairchild"
OUTSTANDING AIRCRAFT, of course, was the "breezy" flown by Brian Stapleford.	
BEST HOMEBUILT WOOD	Stan Hewitt — "VP 2"
BEST HOMEBUILT METAL	Bob Hay — "Pitts. Special"
BEST ORIGINAL RESTORATION	Errol Williams and Neils de Graaff — "Fairchild"

I would like to add at this point that Errol Williams received the EDITOR OF THE YEAR AWARD for his outstanding contribution to our magazine.

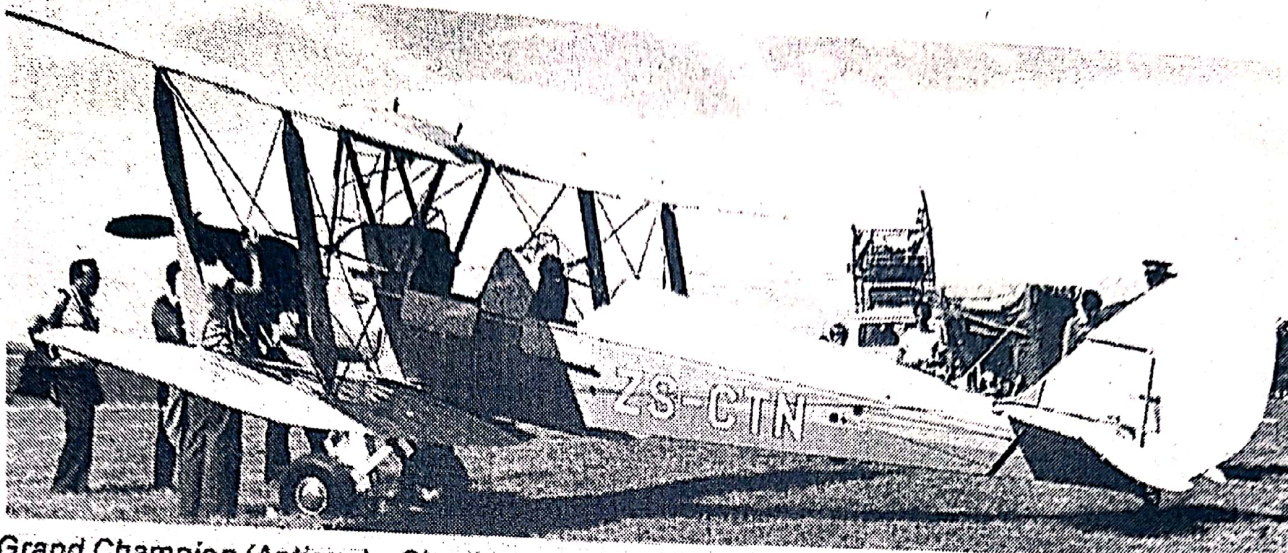
Services to the E.A.A.:

BEST HOST AND HOSTESS	Jill and Ian Dyer
OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTOR	David Lesley
Oom Kotie and Tante May who make the whole thing possible by giving us the ground also received an award. Members will be pleased to know that this land is loaned to us at no cost.	
SPOTLANDING	J.P.T. Harrison
FIRST IN THE AIR RALLY	Peter Goldin
SECOND	Dr. von Moltke
THIRD	Mrs. Sally Jasprizza

Sally was also presented with a floating trophy from 3M as being our only LADY COMPETITOR

Bill Keil keeping an ever watchful eye on the proceedings while Brian Zeederberg and Jimmy Popham look on.

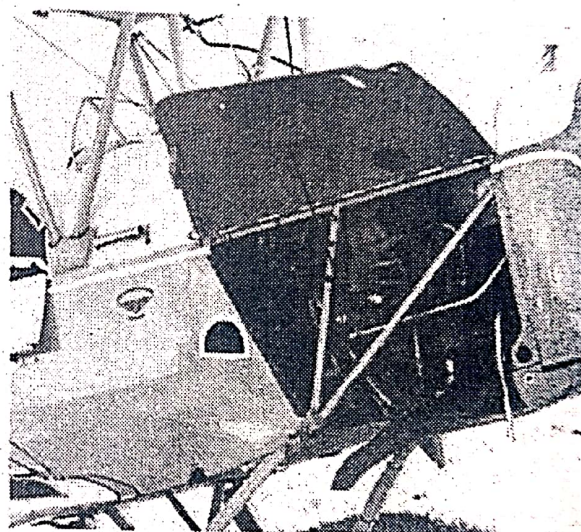




Grand Champion (Antique) – Charlie Tango November being scrutinised by the judges. This aircraft was restored by Ted Phelps.



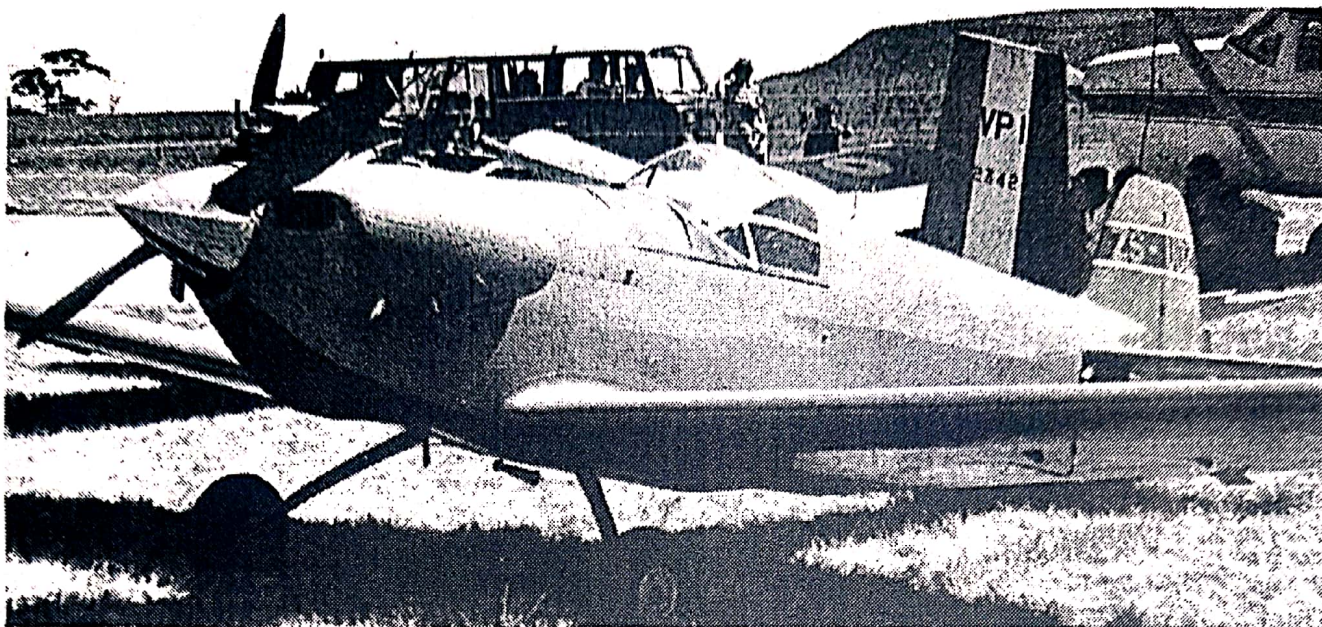
Bill Keil and the "Boys" in the "Tower" – 'Keeping the show on the road'.



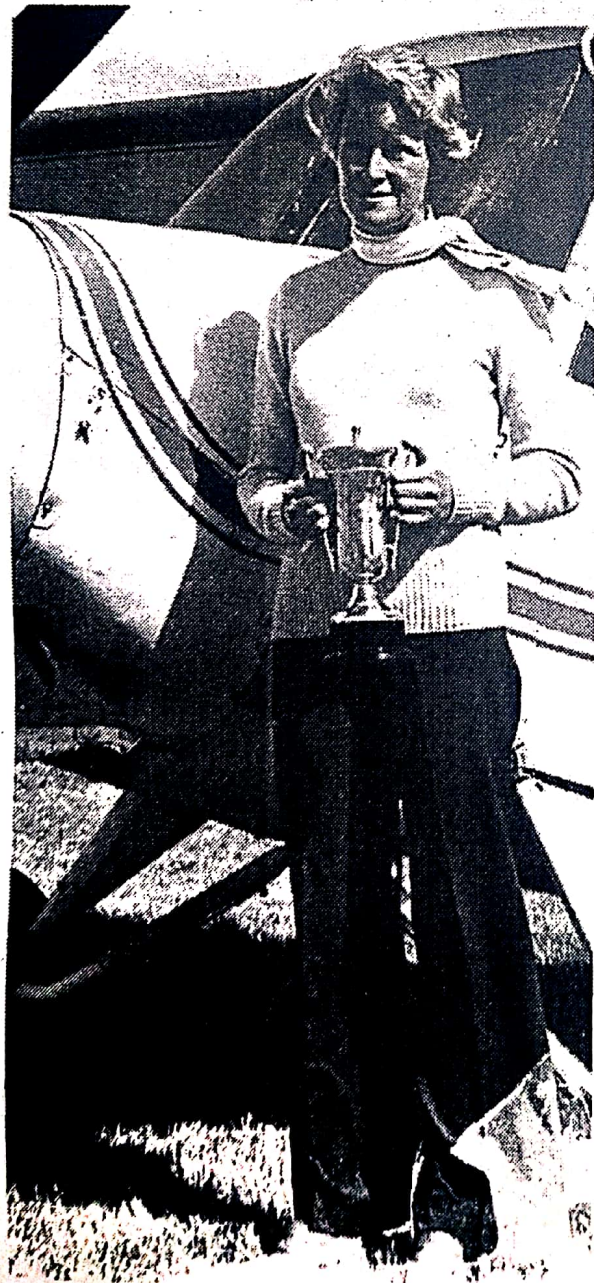
The business end of Ted Phelps's Tiger. Note the very sanitary installation and hour meter to record engine time.



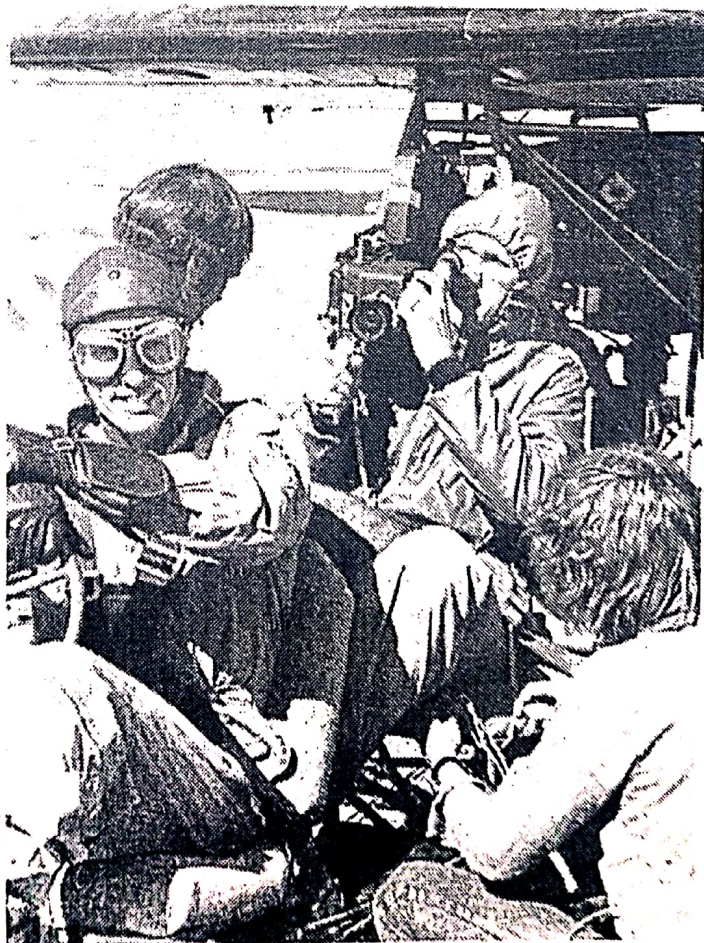
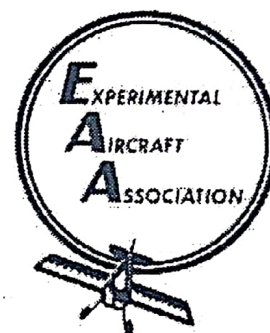
Grand Champion (Classic) – ZS BAY, owned and flown by Neels de Graaff and Errol Williams.



Fluffy McKerchar's Taylor Titch with Stan Hewitt's VP1 in the background.



Sally Jasprizza with her trophy donated by 3M Company.



Our Intrepid SABC TV camera-man being strapped in for a 'blast' around the airfield.

Sunday morning dawned the most beautiful day with hangovers like cumulous cloud. We had breakfast and then proceeded with the Annual Convention which, I must admit, this year was better organised than last year. Ron Nash controlled the meeting as it should be, everybody felt happier. There were no ugly demonstrations or disagreements.

Election of office bearers went on smoothly. For office bearers see the Minutes.

We then proceeded to the field to board our aircraft and return to our various hometomes.

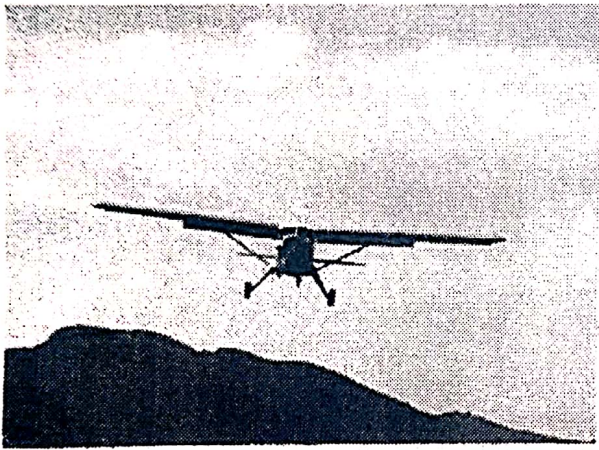
As a final comment, I would like to add that if everybody in the E.A.A. was prepared to work and do his bit, our conventions would be a joy to all.

This year for those few who did work and spend many days afterwards trying to get everything right, it was rather long, but very rewarding.

If people participate and become part of anything, they get far more out of it than those who sit on the side and make remarks and comments and complain, but do nothing. Let us hope this coming year we see more people throughout the country actively participating in the convention and I am sure we will all have a wonderful time. I think we should all adopt the phrase to the effect "E.A.A. FORWARD".

MIKE SPENCE

"It's duh FUZZ!!!"



Big Brother flies in to watch. DCA's Beaver testing the strip, and executing one of the best landings of the weekend.

