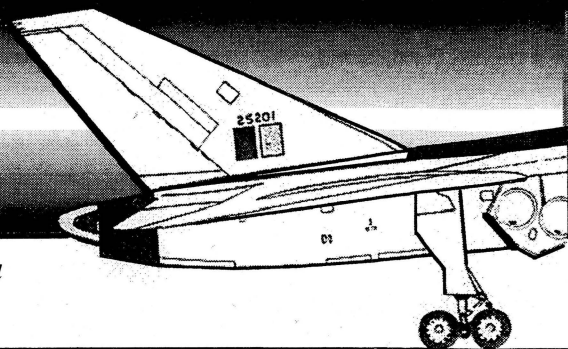


# Pre-Flight

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*Mac, Gerry's great dog.*

## **High-Hike** ( Chapter Two ) by Gerry Barbour

*In our last issue of Pre-Flight, we left the intrepid youth, Gerry, at the doorstep of a career. He had received a letter from Central Technical School, accepting him for the 1937 Fall Semester. But first he would need a place to live, and the second, non-negotiable, keep his great dog, Mac, with him. Now he tells us how it was done.*

It was simple. I did any job, however menial, to buy his license and it cost me \$2.50, yearly, a horrendous sum back then. In those days every butcher in town had his own slaughter house, usually some distance out in the countryside and from there the parts destined for the dinner table of townsfolk were transported to his establishment in town. A huge wooden chopping block dominated the centre of his shop which was usually deep in sawdust, and there, prior to cutting, slicing and carving whatever his customers desired, he sharpened his knives with swift upward strokes on his sharpening iron. He knew he looked good and made every effort to put on a show. That was a truly magnificent sight. The flashing steel never failed to put me in mind of D'Artagnan of Three Musketeers fame.

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**Aerospace Heritage Foundation of Canada**



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## From the President

Welcome to our first issue of Pre-Flight of 2011. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all members and their families a happy, prosperous and healthy 2011.

I was especially proud of our exhibit at the popular annual Hobby Show, held last November at the International Centre at Malton. The central feature of our display was the Avro Jetliner, scratch-built for the use of AHFC at various functions. We plan to continue such exhibits because they are a good way of reminding people of the great contributions of Avro. We cannot forget those who were involved in the design and manufacture of Avro aircraft.

Last year was very busy for myself and the Board of Directors and we will keep up the activities throughout 2011.

*Frank*

## High-Hike ( continued )

His customer's purchases were delivered. Always a fitness buff, I delivered them. On the run. Whenever, wherever. For that service I had access to scraps for Mac. Plenty of them. On more than a few occasions better scraps found their way onto the dinner table at home. Although busy with schooling and such I would not give up my dog. Mac had a couple of serious faults. He hated cats, having been badly scratched as a pup and he was a firebug. He loved to go to fires, so much so that the volunteer fire brigade adopted him as a mascot.

It is an accepted fact that the animal of choice for a fire brigade is a Dalmatian but here was a Collie assuming that role. At the first ding of the town fire bell he was gone, flat out, following the fire engine or sitting beside the Captain and at the scene barking his approval of the efforts of the firemen and getting tangled in their hoses. Occasionally they sprayed him with water just to cool his exuberance and he would arrive home dripping, dishevelled but happy. I often wondered if he ever thought of helping to douse the fire by lifting his leg. I was blessed with wonderful parents. "Bring Mac ...we'll make out."

But a polio epidemic of major proportions prevented the Toronto schools from opening until a month later. I doubled my working schedule, gained a few more dollars and fate again took a hand. William Shakespeare, the immortal Bard had written, "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." How true, Will, how true. Purchasing a ten cent lottery ticket paid off. I won, I actually won the first prize. Two hundred dollars went into my piggy bank. While not a fortune by today's standards I knew it would take me a long way down the road. Combined with my savings it gave a nice warm feeling in my left hip pocket. I bade farewell to my landlady, Edna Alton, a sweet, truly fine woman and with my worldly possessions jammed into a battered suitcase, and with Mac, firmly attached to his leash, we bravely set out to hitchhike to Toronto to begin a new life.



## High-Hike ... *cont'd.*

A hitch-hiker had to be patient back in the dirty thirties, automobiles were few and far between in the country. A horse and buggy? Sure, they were in vogue. Trotting briskly along for several miles took the two of us to a junction of what then would be termed major roads. Both were plain dirt and obviously well travelled by both modes of transportation judging by the ruts and the horse apples distributed over its surface. A kindly farmer driving a loaded hay wagon caught up to us, sawed on the reins calling "Whoa Nellie!", motioned to the seat beside him, and took us to within walking distance of Barrie the County seat, a bustling little town situated on the shores of Kempenfelt Bay, an arm of Lake Simcoe.

**The traffic** thickened, automobiles mostly, and along came a Model T Ford which had surely seen better days as it required frequent stops to top up the radiator to prevent a boil-over. "Hole in the rad, Lad, I'll fix it one day". That good man deposited us in the little village of Richmond Hill. I began to suspect that the sight of a collie dog, brushed till his coat shone, sitting by the roadside in the sunshine, placidly surveying the world around him, supremely confident his young master would take care of him, just might be prompting people to stop. It proved to be so.

**A chauffeur-driven** limousine pulled up, and a feminine voice called to us from a rolled down window. "Like a ride, Kid? The dog may sit in the back with me. You may sit in the front beside Wilbur." Instant suspicion flared. Dognappers. As soon as I got Mac safely in the back they would take-off. Oh no! I might be a country boy but I wouldn't fall for that game. The gentleman seated beside the lady lowered his newspaper, raised an eyebrow, gave a slight nod toward his wife (I presumed she was his wife) and said. "Hop in Son. Both in the back. You can sit on the jump-seat. Keep the dog on the floor." With that, he resumed the reading of his newspaper. The seating arrangements clarified and positions assumed, Wilbur put the car in gear neatly cutting off a milk wagon in the process.

**Sound familiar?** Like today's drivers? You bet. A short silence. Then "The dog got a name."

"Mac, Madam."

"He looks intelligent. Can he do tricks?"

"Sort of, when he's in the mood."

"I wish he could talk. I would enjoy a little intelligent conversation for a change. I don't get any. My husband buries himself behind that newspaper at the breakfast table and in the car. All I get is the occasional grunt in answer to any question."

The paper was lowered. The gentleman gave me a quizzical look and a glare at her.

"My dear, if your questions had any merit I would give them an appropriate response." Ah. Domestic bliss is wonderful. I don't think.

I was mindful, even at that very young age, of Benjamin Disraeli a former Prime Minister of Great Britain, who made the now famous quote ...one that shall live forever in the minds of unhappily married men. "Every woman should be married ...and no man." All this gave me an uncomfortable feeling and grasping at straws, I attempted to pour oil on the troubled waters.

"Yes Madam. Mac can talk on command."

"Show me."

When I could get his mind off cats and fires, Mac had shown a marked ability to follow verbal commands and also those issued by gestures or gentle nudges. One nudge-a short bark. Two nudges-two barks and so on. Trouble was, we hadn't performed that caper for some time. Would he remember and respond?

"Your name please. Madam."

"Mary."

One syllable. "Mac-pay attention". A nudge and a short bark. Well well, Mac was in a good mood.

"Your husbands name please Madam."

"Robert."

Two syllables. Two nudges. Two barks. Down came the newspaper.

"I have one for him. Try him on Rumpelstiltskin."

Wow!! Four syllables. Four nudges carefully spaced. Four quick barks. Can you believe it? My pal had passed the acid test. He even allowed the lady to pat him on the head, something he disliked intensely. There was a long period of silence with "Mary" gazing pensively at Mac. I had an uneasy feeling something was about to happen. It did.

"Robert! I must have this dog. Buy him."

With a weary sigh, Robert said. "Will you sell the dog, Son?"

"No. Mac is not for sale at any price."

"There! You see my dear. The boy won't sell."

"Offer him a hundred. These ragamuffins always need money."

Ragamuffin! Me? Not me, Lady. While not new, my clothes were clean and tidy. My landlady made sure of that. Besides, I had just told her Mac wasn't for sale at any price. Was she thick in the head?

Panicky, I said. "I won't sell Mac."

Suddenly Mary turned into a female Jekyll and Hyde. Obviously used to getting her own way, she screamed.

"Wilbur! Stop the car." To me, she said. "Get out and take that filthy dog with you."

Wilbur pulled over, hurried around and opened the curbside door. Taking hold of the leash, I prepared to make a hasty exit but Robert held up a hand and said,

"Stay where you are."





## High-Hike ... cont'd.

Quite calmly and without relinquishing his newspaper, Robert moved to his left, swung his right foot around up onto the seat and with a vigorous shove, propelled a startled Mary out the open door where she sprawled ungracefully on the sidewalk, her purse bursting open and scattering its contents.

With a curt, "Close the door, Wilbur, and drive on". He resumed the reading of his newspaper.

Wilbur, evidently used to the moods of his master and mistress did just that. I sat there frozen. A long silence ensued. Then the newspaper was folded, Robert smiled.

"I have been wanting to do that for a very long time and you provided the perfect excuse and opportunity. My wife is a bit unstable. She will be all sweetness and light when I arrive home this evening and Sonny, you can make book on that."

Unused to domestic violence, I timidly remarked,

"But Sir, she may leave you."

"Not a chance," he snorted. "She likes the good life too much. She was a 'hooper' when I met her and she's too old and fat to go back to that."

Wow! I mentally told myself. "NEVER GET MARRIED."

Robert interrupted my thoughts.

"Wilbur, pull into that JOY station up ahead. Fill the tank. Here's two dollars. Don't forget to get a camera. I have film. I want a picture of this lad and his dog."

That's right. Joy Gas Stations. A chain. Owned by a woman. For two dollars the attendant filled your tank and gave you a camera. Free. It's a far cry from the 75 cents for a litre of regular unleaded gasoline the oil barons demand these days. We had our picture taken and departing the limousine, bade farewell to Robert and Wilbur.

Somewhere gathering dust in the bottom of some drawer is a picture I would dearly love to have; a lad, looking trifle dazed, and a collie, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.

We set out along Bloor Street both a little shaken by the recent events. Me anyway. Mac was just plain unperturbed.

This city was big. Everybody hurrying and not a friendly face anywhere. Passing Varsity football field, I knew I had to be in the vicinity of my parents home. I tried to stop several passers-by but they adroitly side-stepped and continued on. One said, "Get lost, buddy!" So I tried a different approach. I loudly yelled, "Anybody know where Huron Street is?" A dozen hands pointed west. I learned a lesson.

City people don't care to be directly addressed; as a group, fine. Trotting along, I observed the number of churches: Bloor Street United, St. Thomas Anglican, and Knox Presbyterian.

Boy, if I wished to top up my religious tank this was the place. As darkness was beginning to fall over the city, I found the address. Not bad. A nice 3 storey brick home, evidently turned into apartments. I tentatively tapped on the door. It swung open and I was welcomed back into the bosom of my family. I should say! Me and Mac received pats and hugs and that settled any lingering doubts I may have had about his welcome. He, in his typical doggy fashion, literally turned himself inside out with joy. He never forgot who fed him when our family was together... Mother.

My Dad, phlegmatic as usual, merely said. "Cut it a bit fine didn't you? School on Monday. Don't be late." We had arrived. The adventure was about to begin.

*Yes, it will continue in Chapter Three with Gerry at Central Tech in Toronto. He could not have chosen a better school, with its multidimensional aircraft specialty.*

## Members Matter

Here are the **lucky winning names and ticket numbers** of the CASMuseum, held October 1<sup>st</sup>., 2010!

- 1<sup>st</sup> Prize, C. Hathaway #0883, Ride for 5 over GTA in Bell 22B Helicopter.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize, J. Pilling #6767, Formation flight of 4 Harvards over GTA
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize, Yvonne Penney #0044, Flight for 2 on Porter Airlines ( select cities )
- 4<sup>th</sup> Prize, Mike Rivet #1037, Flight in DHC-2 Beaver.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Prize, Kathy Samson #7627, Flight in Tiger Moth biplane.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Prize, Jeremy Geisler #5512, Janusz Zurakowski AGS Arrow Watch ( limited edition ).

The CASMuseum congratulates the 6 winners and thanks to all the AHFC members participating in their Lottery. We too thank them for supporting a good cause. In fact, our members sold the most tickets of other groups which participated.

Your Board of Directors is already rolling up its collective sleeves to what appears to be a rather busy years for AHFC. No fear, though, for the members are eager and dedicated. And I, as a member of the Board, am committed to making sure that, among other things, you receive a first class newsletter: *Pre-Flight*.

*Mich*