CZEG Staff Meeting - February 15, 2023

Call to Order

A Staff meeting of CZEG Edmonton was held on February 15, 2023 in the Teamspeak Staff Room. It began at 2115ET and was presided over by Thomas Smith (FC), with Cody Newman(WM) as scribe.

Attendees

Staff members in attendance included: Thomas Smith (FC), Nathan Dean (DC), Tony Koch (FE), Simon Brown (EC), Cody Newman (WM)

Guests in attendance included: Phil Dowling (VC1), Ryland Kruk (AFE)

Welcome

Welcome from Thomas. Last meeting was supposed to be in November however due to training commitments and timing we were not able to meet. We will aim to have our next meeting next quarter.

Staff Reports

Events update presented by Simon Brown.

Since August we have ran multiple events with varying success:

"Townsville Take 2" "CYEG Scenery release" both did not perform well.
"Turkey Gobbler" "North Pole Express" "Clear to Land 23" all went very well.
"Great Canadian Sled-dog races" was canceled 6 days prior.

We planned a "catchfire" with Montreal which is delayed due to timing issues with the team in Montreal. Catch fire is a concept where like CTP we would send a bunch of airplanes from one of our airports to the other so rather than having 1 really long event for everyone involved we would be online for the departures and they would have to be on for the arrivals. Alternatively with a double catchfire over a long distance we can be online, send planes, then logoff and come back when their airplanes hit our border.

"Anchor the horse" coming in March is a go. Anchorage is really excited for the event as the new team has recently been formed after their split from PCF. (Tony comments on airspace changes related to this event are in the FC update)

Northern Lites Tuesday discussion: Simon asked if the event is still useful for training or becoming a "same three people'' event. Cody commented that the times he controlled it (particularly on one occasion) it was the busiest he has ever had controlling YMM and YZF - the traffic is there but we need students to get into it. Thomas remarks we need to get people cycling through the positions again. We are hopeful the event will transition to more of a weekly staff up rather than a training event so we can get away from the YMM/YZF focus to have more variety. Tony remarks to keep up the weekly event as his experience consistently staffing FSS on weekdays was to get a following of pilots who remain loyal and will show up.

Social media - Simon is working on reviving Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram but he is not actively promoting NLT weekly as it's repetitive, but asks what kind of effort we want to put into SM? Thomas

asked if there is much of a following that would come flying if we post things? Answer is to do your best effort but should not be top priority or onerous.

Facilities presented by Tony Koch.

It was announced today that a new selection "VATSIM" from the connection dialogue will be available. This picks the best server available with the lowest number of connections and closest to your location. Ideally controllers should get into using this connection instead of direct to servers which will no longer be possible soon.

Sector files have been adjusted for the upcoming Anchor the Horse event with Anchorage. CZEG_N_CTR has been set up as a low/high sector above Whitehorse to the border with Anc. This will allow for a dedicated centre controller for event traffic and an FSS controller to deal with the rest of the airspace during the event. Details about CZEG_N are available in the LOA with Anchorage as well as our Centre training documents.

No signs of any new versions of Euroscope coming, nor any traffic on the ES forum for major issues and solutions that we can currently draw.

Website/Discord presented by Cody Newman.

Not much to update at this time. My time is mostly with Division as VATCAN3; however, our website is stable in its current form and regular security updates and minor tweaks are being performed. Plans for the redesign are on the side burner for now.

Discord: It is important for staff to refrain from making direct links to the Discord and share with people. This is circumventing the website process where we need to link a user's discord ID with their CID. The bot is unable to process people who directly join the discord.

Training presented by Thomas Smith.

We have a lot of new people to the FIR, currently there are a lot (9x) of S1's training. 4x are certed to control of which 2 somewhat control. 7x who appear to be stalled completely. Only 2x S2's certed on YYC tower. 1x S2 who is on radar training who should be solo soon. No S3's training at this time. Hopefully 1x new I1 coming online to help alleviate the load on Thomas/Nathan.

Tony asked if we are happy with the new training sequence and if it's settled down. Thomas said yes the new flow does work if the students will stick it out, there is opportunity for quick advancement if they show competency and control often. Cody commented the issues with retention is being felt from the entire division right now and there are some actions needed to interest and keep controllers in all FIRs.

Generative Thinking

Generative Thinking was presented by Thomas Smith.

Events: Thomas remarked that we are seeing certed S1 controllers either not control at all, or only control during NLT. Nathan suggested event controlling time would not be used as FIR SOP requirement time - debate had. Cody suggested that GCAP will somewhat help with an event endorsement - although because NLT is a training event it's not going to fully solve the issue. Tony suggested the issue is due to an unwillingness to control on their own with no traffic. Cody suggested our S3+ controllers could start to advertise our intention to control on Discord so that S1's might come online while we are on to see if traffic can be created by a group controlling rather than individual. Potentially a discord channel where we can call out the students. Thomas remarks that

more instructing staff (Ins/Mentors) will allow Nathan and Thomas more freedom to be able to control more to generate this type of activity. Tony agreed this is a good idea.

Division Update by Phil:

Division is hiring a new VC5 who will help with advertisement on division social media accounts and clean up our communication strategies. We hope to see more cross FIR events planned with this new hire to help drive C1 activity.

Technology changes coming soon to Division Web Services and TS. The current cluster of servers is cost prohibitive and not worth the uptime/redundancy so we will be reducing that soon.

Division is looking for someone to sit on the CTP advisory board. This person would represent Canada and is nominated by division staff. Our hope is this person will advocate for Canada and make sure Phil is representing the division fairly. Hopefully this person will hold the planning team's nose to the fire on generative thinking to make sure the event is better.

We are trying to create a "Cross the Land America's Edition" to mirror the highly successful event that Europe/Middle East hold. Details to come but early planning stages presently.

Division is recommending Edmonton keep up its policy with calling supervisors for any of the known troublemakers. Supervisors and DCRM are paying attention and the more papertrail the better. Thomas remarked that this is now in the SOP and being socialized to our controllers.

Finally, VATNA had a year in review and Canada came 2nd for controller hours behind the states. Overall controller time is down 22% from 2020 which means we have retained some of the COVID growth which we should be happy with. ZEG got 3rd spot for Centre uptime which is great considering a small team of certed controllers who are dedicated. Airplane traffic levels: YYC came 5th and YEG 6th.

Division Training by Cody:

Continued discussion on Retention. Its being felt in all FIRs as confirmed by FIR Chiefs and I have observed you can see across all the programs the advancement has slowed down on new controllers.

Division is starting a General Training Standard document which will build on all the success across all the programs. This will include training expectations from students, instructors, how to become an instructor/mentor, OTS guidelines, and Instruction staff expectations of behavior and leadership. Early days but a WIP.

Tony asked about network pilot numbers. Cody responded that the numbers Phil has from VATNA exec might help describe the situation better but his personal observation is # pilot connections are trending downwards from the COVID/FS2020 boom. Usually depending on the time of the day an avg of 600-1200 pilot connections.   The bigger pain being felt everywhere including social media is that people are frustrated on how much effort is put into training controllers but anyone can buy FS2020 and come create havoc on the network - this is also driving away the ones who care about their flights and dedicated controllers so there is some work to be done across the entire network.

Actions

Ryland to email the backlog of welcome session students from a non-VATCAN email. Thomas will follow up on the week of Feb 20 to see where we are at in the overall list.

Cody to look at creating a Discord channel for S3+s to announce to students for group controlling.

Announcements

Stay turned for a new instructor being announced on Feb 16, Staff welcome Ethan Best to the training team.

Cody Newman (WM)

February 22, 2023 (TS)

Scribe

Date of Approval

Edmonton FIR