



Dakota Montgomery

Canmore cadet tops provincial speaking competition

DAVE WHITFIELD CANMORE

"This is your captain speaking, we'll be cruising at 30,000 feet this afternoon and below to your left is the beautiful Bow Valley."

The above announcement may not be a tongue twister, or particularly witty or illuminating, but it does relate to two important aspects of 878 Squadron Warrant Office II Dakota Montgomery's life.

First, just last week, Montgomery, 18, won a provincial championship in effective speaking in Red Deer. Second, with a glider pilot licence and private pilot licence already under her belt, she's going to be working toward a commercial pilot's licence at Calgary's Mount Royal – and you never know when the two may be combined.

As far as the effective speaking competition goes, after making it through zone competition, Montgomery competed with 10 other cadets from around the province for bragging rights as the most effective speaker.

Each competitor gave two speeches; a five to six-minute speech they prepared on their own, and a two to three-minute impromptu piece on a topic they were given and allowed two minutes for preparation.

"The impromptu really teaches you to think on your feet," she said.

Her prepared speech, "How cadets has affected my life" was a snap compared to the one judges threw at her for the impromptu work – "What makes a great Governor General?"

While Montgomery won a memorial award and keeper trophy, along with a gold medal, "mostly it's for the bragging rights," she said. "I've been trying this for seven years and just barely made it to zones, so first place was a surprise."

Even with the last second impromptu speech, each speaker had to develop an introduction, body and conclusion and present it well before four judges and a group of peers and parents.

"It was terrifying. You can see a timer running and you focus on the audience, but you worry about the speech not being long enough, or too long. It's challenging."

After her provincial win, Montgomery now moves on to a national event in Regina, June 17-19, where a flight around the city is part of each competitor's participation.

In Montgomery's case, a flight in the Regina area is hardly worthy of mention, as that's where she took her pilot training.