

## June 1, 2018 - Breakfast with some close friends @ the KOBE County Airport

When I lived and flew in New Jersey, back in the '60's and '70's it was considered to be excellent weather whenever visibilities would reach 5 statute miles. Back then the norm was 3 miles in smoke, haze and plain old dirt saturating the atmosphere. Many times I would have to ask Teterboro Tower for a special VFR clearance in order to clear their control zone due to obstructed visibilities of 2 or 2 1/2 miles in smog. The air that we flew in, and more importantly breathed, was full of really bad stuff back then. Not so much anymore, and even less so down here in Florida where, on most days, visibilities are well above 10 miles. The air is just plain cleaner today. So, when I made this morning's short flight from my home base at Indiantown over to Okeechobee County Airport, some 38 miles away, I was temporarily brought back to my New Jersey flying days as visibilities were down to that 5 miles in "mist". As it was early (about 7:30 AM) and the sun was not yet high enough to burn away the morning fog, I knew that things would improve as the day wore on. This was to be my regular weekly get-together for breakfast with some of the Van's RV pilots that were/are active commercial/air carrier pilots. As I taxied up to the terminal building I noticed



that I was a bit late as, apparently, our **"guest of honor"** had already arrived and had parked next to my regular spot at the restaurant. Only joking... as the only people that I took note of was our normal motley crew. However I was genuinely interested as to why the Trump helicopter was gracing this airport's ramp as I knew that the President now only travelled on government transport. I waited as the helicopter's pilots approached where I was standing, next to my own means of transportation, and struck up a conversation. I mentioned that when I used to live in NJ and would fly to many of their nearby airports for breakfast or lunch, or to "go down the shore" for a weekend at the beach, I would occasionally run across "The Donald's" whirly-bird, although a much smaller 6 place version. He replied that, actually, this version, a Sikorsky model 76B, was only a 6 seater as well. While originally configured for 14, it contained their VIP executive seating of a sofa for 4 and two swiveling and reclining captain's chairs with a small conference table. He told me that it is one of three similar 175 MPH machines that the Trump organization owns and is generally kept here in Florida at KPBI (Palm Beach International). Another is based in New Jersey and one in Washington, DC. "Why?", I asked, since I knew that the President is not be allowed to fly on same. "For the family and friends" he replied. He also indicated that in the morning this aircraft would be making the 1,000 mile, 6 hour flight up to NJ so as to be available to all those friends and family during the busy summer months. It must be nice to both be **President** AND have **money!**