

March 17-27 2013 - Hilton Head Island, or - Sweet Home, South Carolina

I have maintained a presence on Hilton Head, SC since the mid-seventies and have always enjoyed the Island. I have marveled in they way that the local government has managed to control its growth by minimizing commercialization with regard to the businesses which operate here. Whether it is via signage restrictions, building architectural requirements or land usage limitations, they have kept commercial and even the residential growth profile very low for a tourist resort destination. This may be construed as harassment or restrictions of freedom by some... especially those who are in business, but for the average resident, they are generally looked upon as favorable policies.

Years ago, when I first began dating a lady from Florida, I used my twin engine Piper Comanche to fly between those two locations. The flight would take me somewhere between two and a quarter to two and a half hours to complete. Since building my new light sport Highlander all but one of those several dozen trips were via automobile. Well a couple of weeks ago I decided that it was time to try flying those 400 miles once again. Now that I am on the Sport Pilot's license, my flights have to be done only when the weather is near perfect. For the past several weeks winds have been very strong out of the north, so I waited until those perfect conditions finally arrived. When they did I loaded up the Highlander and began, what turned out to be, a 3 1/2 hour flight at almost 10 thousand feet altitude, in order to take advantage of favorable tailwinds.

I spent a delightful 10 days at my beach side condo and made a five mile walk, almost every day, on that beautiful wide hard sand beach. I took care of some necessary chores, went out for dinners at several of our delightful restaurants, and even did some tourist type activities. While flying my 20 MPG airplane is quite a bit more costly than going via my 40 MPG Volkswagen diesel automobile, there is something simply breath taking flying above the Atlantic coastline, while looking down at the passing terrain and viewing some two dozen miles off into the distance. When I bought the new Passat, I decided to keep the old VW Jetta, with its 200,000 plus miles, over at the Hilton Head Island airport, just in case I flew in, either commercially or with my own airplane. This proved to be a good decision, and I am now contemplating spending the next several months, over this summer, back on Hilton Head. With the beach less than a 5 minute walk away, generally delightful summer weather, and the airport a mere 15 minute drive, what's not to like?

I promised my downstairs neighbor, Barbara Bohan, a flight before she returned to her Champaign, IL summer home. On a day when the brisk winds finally let up, we went over to the airport to make a short flight around the Island. Hilton Head from the air is certainly a beautiful place. With a larger populace than back in 1977, when I moved to the Island, along with a denser housing, more condos, and many more hotels, restaurants and shopping centers, flying over the Island, shows very little of this congestion. Instead,

one sees only thick forests, greenery from the many golf courses and pocket parks, along with the lagoons, small lakes and tidal marshland. It truly is a beautiful place and I believe that I am going to greatly enjoy spending the summer back here.



Me, in front of Highlander, on Hilton Head ramp



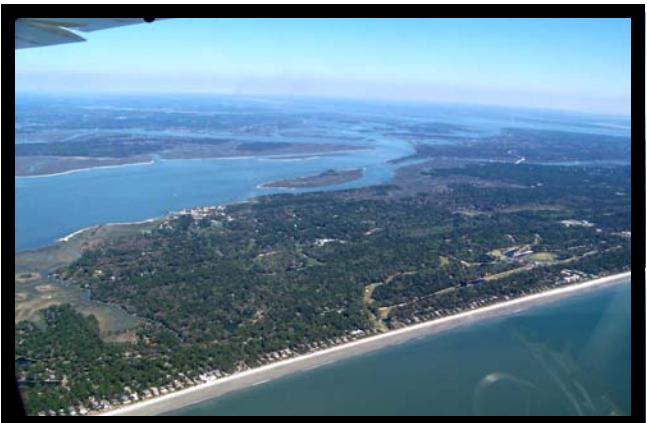
My neighbor, Barbara, readies for sightseeing



Flying along our beautiful and wide 13 mile beach



A view of the Island and marshland beyond



Another aerial view of this Island Paradise