

International Flying Day @ North Palm Beach Airport - May 16, 2015

First, a word about my flying, or perceived absence from it! Yes, I am still very much flying... each and every day that weather and other of life's obstacles allows. It's just that I am not writing about many of my current daily travels as most have already been detailed in previous blog entries. I am trying to limit entries to new places or events. Such was the case this past weekend when I noticed that the North Palm Beach General Aviation Airport (F-45) was hosting an International Flying Day event. This somewhat large (3 runway) airport is located about halfway between my West Palm Beach home and the Indiantown airstrip which I fly out of. At one time I was actually based at this very busy general aviation airport until its cost (twice the parking/hangar fees of my current field and 50% more for fuel) began taking too much of a financial toll. I elected to make the extra 20 minute drive in order to save some serious money. As I was not flying at night, or under instrument conditions I did not need all the extra amenities of this large County run operation. However I have made flights over to this field with my Highlander on several past occasions. Today's trip was to take part in a low keyed aviation event which featured static airplane displays, introductory rides in both GA aircraft and helicopters, an EAA sponsored fly in pancake breakfast, as well as various kiosks and booths selling a myriad of "stuff", including pet rescue adoptions. I wandered the grounds for about an hour taking special interest in a old '40's era DC-3 which had been converted over to twin turboprop engines, along with the addition of a 3 1/2 foot extension onto its nose. It was being operated by a missionary flight group which transports food, supplies and bibles, mainly to Central America and Haiti. I enjoyed a quick tour of the inside of this 220 MPH airplane and then it was over to the main hangar where the food was being served. I opted for EAA's \$5 pancake breakfast including coffee and juice, as it was only 10 AM and the barbecued pork was still cooking for the upcoming lunch. As I looked around for a place to sit, I happened to see a familiar face over at a nearby table. John owns and operates a custom "golf cart" assembly plant on my home field, which specializes in manufacturing large commercial electric and gasoline cart type vehicles. They are used by industry as well as by municipal governments for fire/rescue, aircraft refueling, golf and tennis court maintenance, landscaping, etc. I sat down, and we caught up. I learned that John and a friend had recently flown his Beach Bonanza over to the Bahamas in order to deliver a few rolls of tar-paper to his daughters house, under construction. In addition to his plane's fuel for the trip, he had to pay a \$30 landing fee, a \$29 per person departure tax, and a full 100% of the tarpaper's cost in Bahamian duty. What we pilots won't do for an excuse to fly somewhere.

