

June 12, 2017 - Flying to the Sky Manor Airport in New Jersey

I first learned to fly in 1957, right after graduating from High School in New Jersey, but then had to take a half dozen year hiatus in order to attend college, do my military service and get married. Following that, and for the next 18 years, I flew 3 different aircraft and based at 3 different north Jersey airports logging well over 2,000 hours in the process. So, I have a warm place in my heart for "The Garden State" and I try to get back up there for visits with old friends and family members at least once each year. Today I had such the pleasure, when on a very hot (mid 90's) summer day I drove the 70 miles from my south Jersey base, to visit my previous instrument flight instructor, Robert Greene, for a flight, in his Cessna Skylane, over to a nearby airport which featured a really good on-field restaurant. Bob flies out of Somerset Airport, located 35 miles due west of New York City. While our flight over to Sky Manor would not take very long in Bob's 150+ MPH aircraft we still



had to perform a full pre-flight briefing including a call to check the status of the TFR (Temporary Flight Restriction) of two days prior, when Pres. Trump was at his summer home located at nearby Bedminster Golf Club (memberships start at \$300,000+). It turned out that he had already returned to Washington, so nothing

was going to keep us from taking to the air. As a flight instructor Bob has always been a stickler for proper procedure and this plane's pre-flight inspection was slow and thorough. Bob put me through the paces for almost a year in order to gain proficiency flying during instrument weather conditions. He must have done a pretty good job as I then went onto using my Piper Comanche for much of my business travel and I have logged over 200 IFR hours in all sorts of bad weather. There is nothing like making a full instrument approach when the clouds reach almost to the ground. But today there would be no weather to contend with and the few puffy clouds that were visible were all of the fair weather variety and very widely scattered. Except for the occasional turbulence bumps along with the exceptionally hot temperatures, it was a very nice day to fly.



This particular trip was very much like my regular daily breakfast and lunch flights back in Florida. As it was a Monday, when many of the local restaurants are closed, we discovered that the only field that would have an open eatery was Sky Manor, a mere 30 minute flight away. But any opportunity to fly is a good one, and it is never the destination, but rather the journey that is most important to pilots. Once airborne we climbed up to 2,000 feet where the air was a bit more stable. Bob concentrated on the plane's flight controls and gauges, while my task was to keep an eye out for possible traffic. This was made easier by a panel mounted instrument which picks up the transponder output from nearby aircraft, along with their altitude above or below our airplane, and shows their position on a digital "map" located directly in front of us.



The Cessna 182's instrument panel is quite a bit more sophisticated than my little sport Highlander. However once you know where all of the gauges are and how to work them, flying one airplane is pretty much like flying another. The main thing to master is the touch and pressures needed on the controls to make the aircraft respond and, of course, the "numbers" relative to its flying capability such as the lift off speed, the optimum climb out speeds, (both rate of climb and angle of climb) and, the most important of all, the stall speed at which the wings will no longer develop the lift necessary to kept the craft aloft. Bob seems to have mastered all of these numbers and I was impressed with the rapid climb performance and cruise of this roomy 4-place airplane. It is the ideal all around aircraft for load capacity, efficiency and economy. I only wish that I had one!



I know that New Jersey is the butt of late night TV comedian's jokes, but it is truly a beautifully scenic state. It has beaches, the tidal lands, the pine barrens on the south portion of the peninsula and the big vibrant cities on its north. And in between are the fertile farmland plains, the rolling hills of the states middle and the mountain foothills on its western boundary. And there are lakes galore, many on state owned preserves and wildlife management areas, which allow fishing, hunting, boating and bathing on pristine sand beaches. It is also one of the most expensive and heavily taxed states in the union. Property taxes are the steepest in the country along with a very high income and sales tax. It is a place where I spent over half my life but could no longer afford. So while I greatly enjoy my yearly visit, I am glad that I no longer have to live here.



Once we landed at the Sky Manor strip and parked our airplane, it was only a 100 foot walk over to the restaurant where we both feasted on a really tasty Pastrami sandwich along with some crispy sweet potato fries. I elected to skip the very tempting fresh baked cakes and pies as I still had dinner scheduled for that evening with my long time childhood friend, Steve Demarest, who now lives in Toms River, in the southern portion of the state. After we returned to Somerset Airport and the plane was refueled I was pleased to discover that we had made the trip over and back on less than 8 gallons of gas (since I was paying for fuel). Even at the northeast's price of \$4.85 per gallon this trip was accomplished on less than \$40 dollars in gas and \$30 for food. And, as always, the experience was **priceless!**