

May 25-31, 2013 - Oshkosh, WI & Chicago, IL
"Planes, ~~Trains~~ Ships & Automobiles"

Some of my airplane related trips are, unfortunately, conducted via the commercial airlines. One such occasion was my recent flight from Florida to Chicago in order to be able to tour the EAA's headquarters in Oshkosh, WI. After picking up my rental automobile, a 2013 VW Jetta, which was almost identical to my new 2013 VW Passat, I drove up to the that Wisconsin museum. I have been a member of the Experimental Aircraft Association for almost as long as I have been in the Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association, which I joined way back in 1965. The EAA, through their various workshops, were very helpful during the construction of my experimental light sport homebuilt. Both of these organizations are instrumental in furthering the aspirations of general aviation and the private pilot.

On this particular visit I was really looking forward to taking a flight in one of their classic airplanes. Unfortunately heavy rain, low ceilings and limited visibilities made my anticipated ride in a 1927 Swallow bi-plane an unrealized goal. However I did spend an entire day touring through their main museum as well as at the 1930's era Pioneer Airport's grass strip, just adjacent. And, any day spent looking at airplanes is always a good day.

With regard to this piece's title, as taken from the 1987 Steve Martin, John Candy movie, the "trains", or rather "ships" portion of my trip was taken on the cross Michigan Lake ferry, the SS Badger. After a couple of days visiting with some old High School friends located in both Illinois and Wisconsin, I boarded this large car carrying ship for a 4 hour cruise over to the Michigan side of the lake. Unfortunately thick fog, present until reaching the eastern shoreline, greatly limited my scenic viewing over the water. However, upon reaching the Ludington MI harbor, the fog cleared away, and the skies again became blue.

There are some serious sand dunes located all along the eastern shoreline of Lake Michigan. While most of these are "off limits" to the public, there are a couple which are open to commercial traffic. One such was the nearby Mac Woods Sand Dunes Tours which I booked for the following morning. This was an interesting and enjoyable 45 minute ride over 7 miles of continually shifting dunes. On the day of my ride the winds were brisk at 15 MPH, making the wearing of caps, sun glasses and jackets an absolute necessity against the blowing and stinging sand. We were told of the history and geology of this weather caused phenomena and had a chance to explore, on foot, some of these sand hills.

Much of my week long travels were to visit old friends and acquaintances (along with their pets) who are located in the mid-west. I love to explore portions of the country that I do not routinely have access to. This is one of the main reasons that I enjoy flying and during the days of my Comanche airplanes, many of my trips were to distant destinations. However on this particular occasion I had to make much of my 800 mile journey by rental car. However sometimes "low and slow", whether it be by auto or small homebuilt airplane, is the only "way to go".



Entrance to EAA Museum in Oshkosh, WI



WWII display area inside the EAA Museum



Adjacent grass strip of the Pioneer Airport



1927 Swallow Bi-plane available for rides



The SS Badger, my Lake Michigan ferry



Arrival at the Ludington, Mi. harbor



I took a Michigan side sand dune tour



Just one of the "dunewood" tree scapes



Automobile portion of my trip - a rental VW



The white barked Birch is my favorite tree



**"All play and no work makes Jack a dull boy"
(from "The Shining" starring Jack Nicholson)**



Little "Abby" was one of my trip's joys