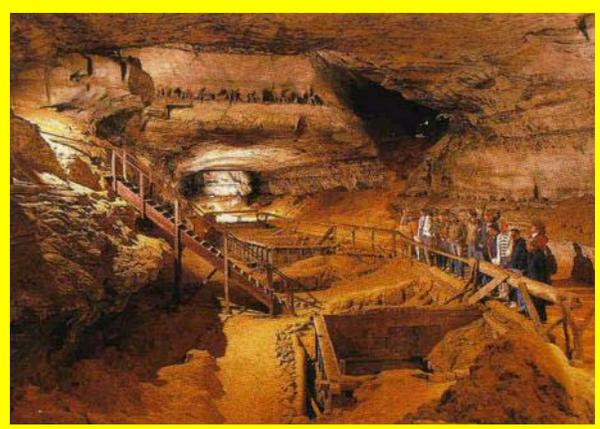


May 20, 2009 - Pre-Trip Thoughts or “Travel, so what’s the big deal?”

A few days ago I was visiting with an old college buddy in NJ. We not only were in school together, but went into the Army together as well. I have known Tom, who is a CPA, for almost a half century. I was surprised then, when he responded to my conversation about wanting to get back traveling with my plane again this summer with ***“Travel, so what’s the big deal? No matter where you go these days, whether it is here in the United States or in other countries, there are McDonalds and Holiday Inns everywhere, and they all look the same”*** Well, he is correct... if what you are wanting to visit are McDonalds and Holiday Inns. For me travel is more about seeing the distinct landmarks and the natural beauty that make up the various places that I am visiting. It is learning about the differing cultures and peoples, their history and uniqueness. It is about seeing things that you cannot see anywhere else. For example, last year when I flew around Devil’s Tower in Wyoming, viewing it from all of its unique angles, and watching as its patterns and shape changed with the sun’s shadows, I knew that this was something that I could only experience from an airplane. When I flew alongside the rim of the Palo Duro Canyon just outside of Amarillo, Texas, I was seeing something that had been created millions of years ago from a vantage point that the average person, without a personal aircraft, would never experience. Looking down at the faces on Mount Rushmore, in South Dakota, from above gave me a perspective that the individual viewing this same national monument from his parked car would never have. Flying a plane with its ability to view the rich beauty and uniqueness of America from above is something that only a pilot will ever get to enjoy. It is for this reason that I relish owning, flying and traveling with a light sport aircraft.

But the enjoyment of travel goes well beyond the vehicle, be it auto, boat or plane, that allows these perspectives. The desire to travel, to see differing places, cultures and peoples is something that is ingrained in an individual’s psyche. And like flying, once you have tasted these experiences, it is hard to ignore them. I remember 1961 when my friend Tom and I were down at Fort Knox, KY, taking tank training for our National Guard reserve unit. We had the opportunity to make a weekend field trip to Mammoth Cave, courtesy of the US Army. It was an absolutely free event, and we didn’t even have to wear our uniform. I had never been in a really large cavern before, and willingly signed up for the event. Tom wanted no part of it, and chose to stay behind, and rest at our barracks. As luck would have it, that day the Sergeant was looking for a couple of men to pull guard duty, and Tom was one of those selected. My trip to Mammoth Cave was memorable, and instilled a desire in me to see more of this great country of ours. So when we were finally mustered out of the Army, in February of 1962, I decided to take my 1960 Thunderbird and make the drive from Fort Knox, down to see tourist sights of sunny, warm Florida, before heading back to dreary and cold New Jersey. I invited Tom to come along. He instead wanted to immediately head back home; and while I don’t remember him saying it I suspect that he was thinking **“travel, so what’s the big deal”**



Inside Kentucky’s Mammoth Cave



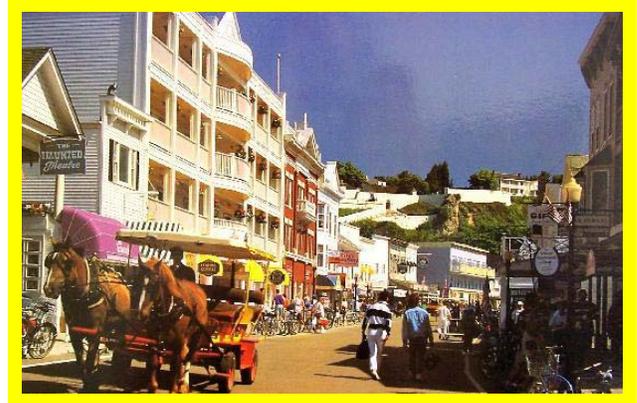
Shortly after I married in September of 1963, I took my new bride to our local airport to look at a small plane that I had learned was for sale. My first experience with private flying had taken place back in 1957 and much like travel, once you have tasted this freedom, you develop a pressing need to continue on with the addiction. I purchased that 1946 Ercoupe and learned to fly it, earning my pilot's license a year later. We then traded that small 80 mph 2 seater in for a larger, faster and roomier 125 mph Cessna . At the time I was working for the Bendix Corp. in northern New Jersey (later to become part of Allied Chemical), and I distinctly remember turning down the opportunity to join with some of my co-workers on their bowling team and then in their investment club. I elected to bring my lunch to work in paper bags, instead of going to the local pub with them each payday. They berated me for driving an inexpensive VW bug, instead of a fancier and costlier car, and for living in a garden apartment, instead of a house. Thus, I earned the reputation of being "frugal", to the point of receiving a plaid Scotsman's "sock purse" as a Christmas joke gift one year. However the joke was actually on them. On weekends, instead of spending my time cutting the grass, cleaning the garage, or just sitting around watching ball games on TV, my wife and I would climb into that 125 mph Skyhawk and spend our saved money to take to the skies on trips to see and experience new and exciting places. Whether it was a short trip down to Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, or into the Shenandoah mountains of western Virginia, up to Quebec City, Canada, or over to the unique motor vehicle free Island of Mackinac, just below the Straits of Michigan, we never let a good weather weekend go by without traveling someplace special and different. And this love and desire to travel began extending well beyond the geographical limitations of our airplane. We began to explore Europe and Mexico and Hawaii on more extended multi week commercial airline vacations. I have never lost that love for travel and the opportunity to see new exciting and far away places. This fall my fiancée and I are going on a cruise along the Denieper River in the Ukraine and last year we did a similar river cruse on the Danube in Germany and Hungary. We are literally addicted to travel, whether it be by motor home, plane or cruise ship. And, no, we **NEVER** eat at McDonalds.



Virginia's Shenandoah Mountains



The Boardwalk at Rehoboth Beach, DE



Downtown Mackinac Island, Michigan



Chateau Frontenac Hotel, Quebec City