

Sept. 6-8 - Chicago, Chicago...my kind of Town

My Friday arrival at "The Windy City" was to [Schaumburg Field](#), a small city owned non-controlled airport about 25 miles due west of downtown Chicago and only 10 miles from busy O'Hare International. Although located in Class "B" airspace, since I would be operating under the 1800 foot floor (1,000 feet above ground elevation) where it was mandated that I talk to approach radar, positive control would not apply to my flights. Thus I would be free to come and go as I pleased, simply by announcing my position, altitude and intentions on the common advisory frequency. In addition, this was the weekend when Schaumburg was holding its annual "aviation day", and the field was busy with all sorts of aircraft activity, including WWII planes such as the P-51 Spitfire, a Navy PB-Y, a Grumman Hellcat carrier based airplane, as well as a Douglas C-47 troop transport that was giving 20 minute rides for \$125 each person.

The reason that I stopped off in the Chicago area was to pay a visit to a longtime friend from High School. Lynn Clay and I met in Study Hall during our freshman year back in 1954, and we have stayed in contact by e-mails and occasional phone calls since our 25 year New Jersey reunion. She accompanied me on Saturday for a short plane ride around the area and actually handled the controls a bit...with a little help from my feet on the rudder pedals. After landing we enjoyed lunch at the airport's restaurant, Pilot Pete's, which carried the airplane/flying motif into its interior design. The meal was good, the company better and a chance to see Lynn again...priceless.

Weather was grand and on Sunday we decided to go into the city to spend a few hours at the [Navy Pier](#). Now its been at least 35 years since I last played tourist in Chicago, and I must say that this attraction was really neat. The pier, which extends out from Lakeshore Drive is over 3,000 feet long, and has a bunch of things to do and see. One of the first was the gigantic 250 foot high Ferris Wheel which gives a fabulous view of both the downtown skyscrapers, as well as adjacent Lake Michigan. You sit in an enclosed gondola, and the ride is both slow and quiet. I enjoyed standing and looking out of the open doorway at the slowly passing scenery.



Seen in the foreground is the East/West runway of Schaumburg field. In the background is the Chicago Skyline. In between is O'Hare airport



My friend, Lynn Clay just before our Sat. flight



The old, original building at the end of Navy Pier



Lynn and I during our Sat. lunch at Pilot Pete's restaurant on Schaumburg field, and at Navy Pier on Sunday morning



While looking down from the rotating Wheel, I noticed a large boat just below. It seems that there are a bunch of sightseeing vessels that tie up to the pier, offering lake cruises varying from 1/2 to several hours in duration. The water was dead calm with absolutely no wind present, and since temperatures were in the mid 70's, we decided that a pleasant cruise along the inland harbour would be most enjoyable. During our boat ride we had a chance to see the skyline from a different perspective and it was a totally relaxing experience.

After the ride we came across a small eatery right there on the pier called the [Billy Goat Tavern](#), which was featured in Saturday Night Live during the old John Belushi days. Remember "**Cheezborger! Cheezborger! No fries...only cheeps! No Pepsi...only Coke!**" Well, I do, and so did Lynn, so we stopped and had some "cheezborgers". The Billy Goat Tavern is also the impetus for the "Curse of the Cubs", which began in 1946 and continue to date. It is an interesting story, and you can view their website for complete details of that bit of sports history.

My visit to Chicago was a really enjoyable stopover, even though my airplane was used for only about an hour and we only had one day in the City. Every once in a while it is good to stop and see things from ground level. And it is always great to have a chance to visit with old friends. Now that I am reaching the downhill portion of my trip, these opportunities will become more and more limited. It's hard to believe that in just another couple of weeks, I will have been out on the road for 2 months. It is almost getting time to begin to work again.

On Monday morning I got an early start out of the city for the 4 hour drive over to the Sturgis, Michigan area to visit with Randy Bureck of [Classic Mfg. Co.](#), the people that fabricated my trailer. Randy has become a friend, and it is always nice to see him and his wife, Patti.



The 250 foot tall Ferris Wheel on Navy Pier



View of the downtown skyscrapers from the Pier



Looking down at the harbour from the big Wheel



Looking toward downtown & the Pier from sightseeing boat

