

THE PHOENIX FLYERS NEWSLETTER

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The Undiscovered Country What Baja has to offer the small plane pilot Introduction

By Hutchinson Persons: Desert islands across an expansive sea of blue. The inside of Tres Virgines—the Three Virgins volcanic crater. A huge solar farm. The broad bays at La Paz, Los Angeles and Concepcion. The world's largest evaporative salt production mine at Guerrero Negro. Whales you can pet, and craggy mountains ripped from shore and sky overlooking the most beautiful private sailing cove in the world at Puerto Escondido. For sure, I've gained a lot of knowledge from the more experienced guys in the club. But originally, there were only two reasons I joined Phoenix Flyers. One, I was tired of renting but not yet ready to own a plane by myself. And two, I really liked the idea I could take our planes into Baja California. Three years ago in N30749—and then again last year, I did just that. It was a blast!

On the Ground

I've driven that 1000 miles three times by car. First time, down through Sonora and Sinaloa on the mainland then via ferry out of Mazatlan to La Paz and all the way back up the peninsula highway. Second time, down the peninsula then five weeks later all the way back up to San Diego again. The drive is long and longer. I far prefer flying

privately, renting a car locally. While there are so many wonderful things to see by air, when you get out of the sky there are even more unusual and fascinating sights to enjoy on the ground. Baja has many nicely maintained, picturesque, edge-of-the-water, low-traffic landing strips. Around the larger peninsula cities, rental cars are easy to come by.

Surrounded by 2000 miles of coast, Baja California is the longest peninsula in the world. World-class surfers ride crashing tubular waves on the Pacific side. Kite-boarders and windsurfers leap airborne alongside marlin and manta fished from the Sea of Cortez side. You can go inside missions 300 years old, built in days when the Jesuit mule trail was all that linked a precarious existence. A guided tour of the cave paintings near Mulege can offer you a glimpse 5,000 years before that.

Drive the back country hills, ideally with a second backup vehicle—to the goats and friendly Mexicans at isolated ranchos, and the multi-colored grave houses for the dead in the middle of nowhere. From the restaurants and excellent beach hotels of Los Cabos—to the less populated beaches near the fun and funky restaurants of Todos Santos, Loreto and La Paz. It's a place where thousands of colorful fish swarm to greet snorkelers and SCUBA divers. And where you can find some shockingly great deals interlaced with potential pitfalls in foreign ownership of Mexican real estate in the bank-trust fidecomiso.

The Tale

In the coming months, I'm going to tell you a story. Space allowing, your positive feedback encouraging me, I'll let this column offer you the wonderful things you can find south of the border on the most brilliantly desolate, yet excitingly versatile place you can fly one of our planes—all beginning less than an hour and a half away. I'm going to tell you some of the better ways to do it, where to stay, what paperwork to fill out, how to make it easier and safer, what not to miss and what to watch out for—even how to take your dog with you if you have one. All you have to do is read—and let Tom and me know via email (ourtreasurer@phoenixflyers.org) you like the start we've made here. Viva Baja!

Disclaimer

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Aircraft Stuff

Locations

Chandler T-Shades Deer Valley Hangars

Archer; N47601..... TS-10 Archer; N30749..... East 9-9
Comanche, N9014P... TS-2 Skylane, N493JL... West 7-12

The next rotation of the Skylane and Comanche will be in early October.



Maintenance



30749:

- RT strobe reported out but seems to work fine at the moment
- Stall switch repaired

47601:

- IFR certification completed
- Annual inspection completed

493JL:

- Front strut overhauled
- Autopilot still being repaired. Looks like the turn coordinator has been causing the issue. It's being replaced under warranty.

9014P:

- Pilot's seat secured in full upright position. Needs new cams.

Please remember to log oil use on the flight invoice!

Side Notes

Aircraft rate increases

At the meeting on July 29th, the board reviewed the operating costs of our aircraft and determined that the rates would have to be adjusted to compensate for the increased fuel prices. As noted in an email to the members the current hourly rates for the aircraft, effective August 1, 2008 are:

Comanche	\$147
Skylane	\$142
Archers	\$97

The Skylane also reflects an adjustment for maintenance costs based upon the fourteen months of data we have.

We've probably all noticed the gas prices going down at the pumps recently. If aviation fuel follows suit, the board will review the fuel costs again and perhaps we can see a downward adjustment down the road (or airway).

Member resignations

We had three member resignations in July. Rod Johnson resigned having been in the club for just over 20 years. Rod has been splitting the good life of retirement between Utah and Arizona and found he has less time for flying. Rod was one of our board-approved instructors. Five flyers became CFI's under his tutelage including Neil Tracht. Michael Thompson took a new job in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Tony Rinella also submitted his resignation. We wish them all the best.

Next board meeting

The next meeting of the board of directors will be held at **Deer Valley Airport** in the **Cutter Aviation** conference room on **Tuesday, August 26th, at 7:30 PM**. As always, members and guests are welcome to attend.

Board of Directors and Officers

Club Officers are elected by, and are members of, the board of directors.

PresidentJeff Quackenbush Vice-president/Safety Officer Neil Tracht
Secretary Dan Streufert Treasurer..... Tom Lessor
Maintenance OfficerKen Conteen Operations Officer.....Damon Kelling