



**Ray Tyson and Jack Pettigrew's
Idiotic Odyssey
Or
The \$2000 Pursuit of \$200 Jackets**

Day 1

August 2, 2005

2 Airports

Fellow Cessna 140 owner Jack Pettigrew and I decided upon hearing about the Ambassador Program that we would love to visit all 67 airports and the people that man them, since both are among our favorite things. After attending the kick-off on July 18th at the Virginia Aviation Museum we were so anxious to get started that we probably jumped the gun a little as we waited at the counter at Hanover Airport on August 2nd, while one of our favorite airport front desk people, Jenna, opened the package and put the first stamp in our passports.

We then fired up our two 1946 Cessna 140s and headed for Shannon Airport and one of our favorite airport owner and managers, Billie Toombs. She was up to speed on the program and ready with EZFs stamp and a warm welcome.

Day 2

August 3, 2005

8 Airports

Next day we launched early into the haze and heat and made our first stop at Wakefield where Sandy, one of our “new favorite airport people” was ready with AKQs stamp and friendly conversation. Second stop, Hampton Roads Airport, home of one of our favorite avionics shops, Jim Miller Bay Avionics. Here I left my ailing transponder for him to lay healing hands upon. Jack meanwhile located PVGs stamp in operations, next to one of our “favorite on-airport restaurants”. Good as it is, it was too early for lunch so we decided to push on to Chesapeake Airport, where we were met by one of our favorite airport managers, Joe Love and the staff of one of our favorite FBOs, John Beaulieu’s Horizon Aviation, who made us welcome. Somehow the stamp had not made it into their kit, but Joe came forth with an official Chesapeake Airport authority seal. Most official looking, so we hope it passes muster. Next stop, Suffolk, and another of our favorite on-airport restaurants, where we had lunch and visited the Fighter Factory, home of more military aircraft than some countries have. They had acquired a beautiful P-51 since our last visit, which incidentally is one of our favorite airplanes. The front desk had just received the Ambassador Kit, which we by now could identify by the carton. We helped with the unpacking and got our SFQ stamp before launching for Franklin Airport where we once again aided the very helpful attendant, who quickly became one of our favorites, unpack the kit and



Accomack County - Farthest East

along with a pleasant visit got our FKN stamp. A call to Emporia-Greenville revealed a very personable attendant named Bob, who was filling in for the day and had no information on the program. We surmised the



Ingall's Field - Highest Elevation

kit went to the Airport Commission office on Main Street, something we would encounter several times over the next days. Jack and I had devised a plan for unattended airports which we put into play here. We keep with us an August 3rd Richmond newspaper, which we hold standing in front of the airport name or identifying building, while we take each other's picture. (Pioneering can be a challenge.) In this case Bob signed our passport and showed us his surgical scars and became one of our new favorite airport characters.

Next stop Lawrenceville-Brunswick, where a very lovely lady who was sitting in for her brother made us welcome and added LVL to our passport and became a new "one of our favorite airport people".

Final stop of the day was Mecklenburg-Brunswick, where we were sorry to hear that one of our favorite monthly fly-in breakfasts was no more. A victim of hot summer haze, I suspect. I can still smell that bacon on a cold winter Saturday, though. The airport attendant, another new favorite, fueled my 140 and added AVC to our book. He is a "come here" from Pennsylvania and seemed to be enjoying the quiet beauty of south side Virginia.

A final leg home left us time to reflect on, among other things, what a wonderful country we live in. For two retired dudes, in two 59-year-old airplanes, to be able to experience a day like today, meeting really nice people, viewing the beauty of the land from low and slow and having great airports to use makes us want to do one of our favorite things tomorrow, go airport hopping.

Day 3

August 4, 2005

9 Airports

So we did – 9:30 found us bound for Lake Anna Airport, which we knew to be unattended, but whose 25 ft. wide runway is one of our favorite skinny airports. The airport is in good condition and is located near beautiful Lake Anna. A photo of us, our newspaper and Runway 26 (the 26 takes up the entire width of the runway) and we were on the way to Louisa where one of our favorite airport managers, Dawn Pickard was ready with a warm greeting and an LKU stamp for the passports. Dawn had returned from Las Vegas only hours before but was her usual sunny self. Tearing ourselves away we headed for one of our favorite tower controlled airports, Charlottesville, where the friendly controller let us perform our flight of two formation landing (only on wide runways). One of our favorite FBOs Piedmont-Hawthorne had the unopened kit so we again identified the carton, helped unpack and got our CHO stamp. Our flight of two departed for Gordonsville, one of our favorite unattended (mostly) airports. GVE is a very old airport that has a neat old hangar with the name and elevation in fading paint which served as backdrop for our proof of visit photo. While there a Luscombe and Aeronca Champ shot touch and goes. It could have been 1946 there for a little while. I remember the 1960s when Gordon Whitmore had an active operation there; shop, instruction, rental, charter and he did it all, was an icon in his day, and lived to retire to Florida. Next stop Orange, one of our favorite airports featuring falling

bodies (via parachute). Good things are underway there, full length taxi-way, new hangars, ramp, etc. Alas no one had any info on the Ambassador Program; however a young man located a stamp with Orange county Airport on it, thereby becoming one of our favorite airport people. Next stop Culpeper, one of our favorite growing airports, with about 100 hangars and out of the DC ADIZ. The friendly airport staff was ready with the CJR stamp for a quick turn and on to Warrenton-Fauquier another of our favorite growing airports, new taxiway ramps, etc., and out of the ADIZ. A very hot walk across new ramp found more friendly airport staff up to speed on the program and ready with the W-66 stamp. Our next stop, Hartwood, one of our favorite special use airports, (more falling bodies), prompted us to heed the “Suggestion for Pilots” section in the brochure concerning runway length, etc. Density altitude being a factor we chose the 2470 foot runway (by 35 feet). We found no activity on this hot hazy Thursday, so we did our photo routine and considered our best route of escape. 2470 is plenty for our 140s but we have gotten used to looking down 5000+ feet of runway. Our suggestion for this stop is to pick your day and load. Last stop of the day was our favorite “new” airport, Stafford County. A long time in planning, it is located alongside I-95 just south of the DC ADIZ and is destined to become very busy as facilities are added. We found a friendly staff who greatly admired our vintage Cessnas thereby becoming some of our “new favorite airport people.” The short ride back to Hanover County paralleled I-95 and made us very grateful to be viewing the crawling traffic from our lofty (2000 ft.) perch.

Day 4

August 5, 20205

1 Airport

We decided to lay off a few days as the temperature continued to climb into the high 90s. However as luck would have it, on Friday the 5th I needed to fly into my favorite “close to my river place” Hummel Airport. Since this is my second home, I have many favorites there: Oscar, Leo, Moe, Mike and Denise among them. Again the kit went to the county offices; however, the county gas guy called them and they delivered the kit while I was doing my chores. They were quickly added to my favorite airport people list. This put me one stamp up on Jack, but knowing him from 140 trips to Texas, New York and Florida, this won’t last long. We await with much anticipation our next flying day. (My one-up lasted 48 hours as Jack snuck in a quick flight to Hummel on Sunday).

Day 5

August 8, 2005

2 Airports

Monday the 8th found Jack and I joining my old business associate Van Crosby in the Arrow he flies to conduct his business, which on this day included both Manassas and Leesburg. I have flown my 140 into Manassas since the ADIZ and found no problem, however my transponder lay unhealed in Hampton Roads. Manassas, being my favorite tower controlled General Aviation only airport, is always a pleasure to visit, and see old friends from my working days. After a little confusion about who had “the stamp” on the east side we got our HEF stamp, had a nice visit and departed, again IFR, to Leesburg. I was at the Leesburg Airport dedication and it has always been one of my favorites, probably partly because I remember the “old” airport’s dust and mud, never in-between. The new terminal is beautiful and the counter folks had the JYO stamp and added number 22 to our passbooks. What fun.



**Lee County - Farthest West
Ray Tyson holding a newspaper**

Day 6
August 12th
8 Airports

August 12th found me back in town and ready for some more hot hazy touring. At 10 a.m. we were airborne for Tappahannock, our favorite airport with a water tank. There were two very friendly gentlemen who filled us in on the new airport to be built soon. We will miss the water tank. Passports stamped, we departed for West Point's Middle Peninsula Airport, where one of our favorite airport managers, Jim Gaylord, holds forth in their new (air conditioned) terminal. The combination of nice people, good conversation and above mentioned air conditioning made it difficult to leave. However with passport stamped and exit visa granted, (Jim was



Abingdon -Last Airport

busy) we headed for New Kent, home of one of our favorite airport managers, Bill Kelly. Since this is close to home and one of our "Let's see what's going on at New Kent" stops, and with passports in order we were soon airborne for Dinwiddie County, home of one of our favorite fly-ins, the State EAA affair set for October 2nd and 3rd. Another stamp and another departure, this time to Blackstone AAF being careful to stay clear of the restricted area, making sure the military was not using the facility and getting no response on UNICOM (or phone), we chose Runway 1. On short final, I observed very faint yellow Xs on the runway so executed a go around to right base to 22, a "big" concrete runway. Taxiing to some

WWII era buildings past a big old hangar with many broken windows we shut down and located a gentleman who informed us we were on the "military" side of the field. A 50 ft. walk put us on the "civilian" side and sure enough a much more modern brick building facing another ramp was open and occupied by a nice young man who, believe it or not, was unpacking the Ambassador Kit. Five minutes either way and this would have been a photo stop. Instead he became a new favorite airport person, stamped our passport and informed us the Xs were from some project of years ago, but the black paint had worn off. We couldn't resist getting our photo in front of the tower however. Cool. Next stop Lunenburg County, one of my favorite unoccupied airports. The nice terminal building, which I had never found unlocked on previous visits, was in fact open, clean, cool and had the Ambassador Kit and stamp laid out on the flight planning desk. Since not a single airplane is based there, I call it unoccupied but not unattended since someone must open and close the terminal. If you are looking for a beautiful airport with lots of grass and shade to have a picnic on a cool fall day, this would be it. Self-stamped we made the short flight to Crewe, home of my favorite aircraft tire recapper, Bill Wilkerson. The terminal was open but no one around. A call to the number posted quickly brought the airport manager to the airport with the Ambassador Kit and W-81 stamp, thereby elevating him to one of our favorite airport managers. Old friend Tom Trump showed up as did Bill Wilkerson who departed in his beautiful Baron. Full of honor system snacks and cold drinks we took our leave for our favorite Richmond airport with a restaurant, Chesterfield County. We have many friends at FCI and were greeted this time by our genial English friend, Mike Jewel, CFI, etc., etc., and alumni of Hanover County Airport. This completes a day with eight new stamps when would have bet on at least two photo ops. All that was left was a hop over Richmond to OFF, put 'em in the hangar and make Happy Hour. Can it get better?

Day 7

August 14, 2005

3 Airports

Sunday, August 14th, another hot hazy day, but what better thing to do than go flying? Jack finished his church duties and arrived for take-off by 1:30. This was to be a short day to re-visit some “local stops”. First stop Newport News/Williamsburg, (forever in my mind to be Patrick Henry), with Jack leading my “transponder-less ship” flight of two. Even with two FBOs we didn’t locate one who had any knowledge of the Ambassador Program. Rick Aviation staff, one of our new favorites, made a great effort including a ride to the airline terminal information booth. No luck, we had to settle for signatures in our passports. Next stop, one of our long time favorites, Jean and Larry Waltrip’s Williamsburg-Jamestown Airport, and long time favorite on airport restaurant, Charleys. Their stamp was well used and added to our passport, as we overate as usual. A great visit and inspection of a Taylorcraft undergoing restoration to “like new”. Jack once owned one that he flew to California and back, as he has his 140. We left for Richmond International into the late afternoon haze. This is our favorite airport with a museum on it. This was a short flight which the tower did its best to prolong as it practiced vectoring our flight as I once again followed Jack. Old favorite FBO, Aero Industries Sunday counterman located RIC’s stamp and sent us on the way, all 13.5 NM of it, to Hanover and home for the day.



Virginia Tech Airport - planned site of a new Historic Marker

3 Museums

August 16, 2005

Our next venture out was by Malibu, Chevrolet that is. Tuesday the 16th was an IFR day so we headed for the Tidewater and a museum(s) visit. First stop was the Virginia Air & Space Center. Jack and flying buddy Roy Nichols had not been there before so I acted as informal guide. Stamped and hunger chased by lunch on the waterfront, we set out to find the Airpower Museum, a collection of jet fighters in an outside setting. They were in much better condition than on my last visit years ago. The very nice staff had to look hard for their stamp, but didn’t give up until it was located and we departed after an enjoyable visit. We decided to stop by Newport News Airport to check on the status of the stamp. Rick Aviation had received it and we got the PHF stamp over their signatures. Happy that we had made the effort we departed for the Fort Eustis Transportation Museum. Easy to locate, a little harder to access. Security required us to open all doors, trunk and hood, exit the car and show photo IDs. No real problem as everyone was very courteous and we were soon in the main building where a nice lady searched down the stamp in an inner office and our fourth museum was in the book. There were L-19s, helicopters and some really strange vehicles from Army transportation’s past. Outside are other army aircraft and copters under an open sided building. We beat the p.m. traffic up I-64 and put this in the book as a good and fun day.

Day 8

August 18th

3 Airports

I received word that my transponder had been healed so we set out in the 140s Thursday the 18th to retrieve it. Knowing we had this trip to make we planned on visiting Norfolk International to check the transponder. I

got to lead, it worked, we got to land as a flight of two and visit one of our favorite FBO chains, Piedmont-Hawthorne, where we got our ORF stamp and admired all the big iron on the ramp. We had two more airports in Eastern Virginia to visit, Accomack County and Tangier Island. Norfolk departure gave us straight out on course so we got to admire the Bay Bridge Tunnel and the ship traffic of Hampton Roads on the best day we have flown in weeks. Our favorite Eastern Shore airport soon came into view and as we landed an Arrow held on the midfield taxiway where we joined him so a Baron on a straight in would not have to break off. Soon all four of us jockeyed on the runway so we could go our respective ways. More traffic than we saw at ORF, and a welcome sight. A friendly counter guy stamped our passport in the beautiful terminal which is a unique structure. There were brochures for local restaurants but on this day we were looking for a Tangier Island crab cake. We soon departed for our favorite Virginia Island airport in the middle of the Chesapeake Bay. No one was on duty but the building was open and the stamp in sight as well as a sign requesting visiting pilots to leave the \$5 landing fee on the desk. This we were happy to do, since this airport provides access to what Jack described as the best crab cake he had ever eaten. If you haven't been there you should go. It's an off-the-beaten-track spot that offers a little something different. Sometimes PAX River approach can let you depart west through the restricted area bombing range but not today. This is where a moving map GPS is nice as you can proceed down the bay until south OFR6609, turn west and, in our case, head for home.

Day 9

August 22, 2005

11 Airports

We were occupied with more mundane pursuits until the 22nd, which turned out to be by far the best weather day in a month. 8:30 a.m. Monday we headed for Chase City where I was prepared to do a photo proof of visit. Instead we encountered a very down to earth lady in the airport office that wasn't. Instead she ran the office for a trucking company out of the building and had "the stamp" thereby becoming another of our favorite airport characters. We departed for the short flight to Clarksville's Marks Municipal, again a nice airport but unattended. The big tobacco warehouse on the end of the runway somehow gives the illusion of landing up hill. All we could do was take photos of the sign proclaiming Clarksville as the only Virginia town on a lake. We took the sign's word for it and added Clarksville as our favorite town on a lake. Another short but beautiful flight found us on South Boston's William Tuck Airport. Unfortunately we were the only people to be found on the airport. Building open, but no sign of the Ambassador Program. A cell phone call to the "number to call" resulted in the phone at my elbow ringing. Jack answered it but was of absolutely no help. Another photo, my printing bill mounts. We did add their grass runway to our list of favorite grass runways before we departed for Danville. Mike Rembold, son of Paul Rembold, Virginia Aviation Hall of Famer, runs General Aviation, a long time FBO there. Even though we didn't buy anything, they gladly loaned us a crew car to go to a very nice lunch at a nearby restaurant, thereby being added to our favorite FBO list. Next stop Martinsville's Blue Ridge Airport, where we had planned to eat before we found the restaurant is closed on Mondays. No matter, we were met by two very helpful airport personnel, one of whom owned a Cessna 120. They helped us with refueling and added the MTV stamp to our passports and became two of our favorite airport good guys. More beautiful flying to Joe Burgess's Smith Mountain Lake Airport. Joe and I go back many years to when he employed my son on weekends when he attended Ferrum College 20+ years ago. Joe showed us a beautiful condo right on the ramp that is available for short term rental. A great set up, so we added this to our favorite condo on an Airport/Lake. Very short list. Passport stamped and ready for some more great flying, we headed for Virginia Aviation Hall of Famer Rucker Tibbs' New London Airport. Rucker ranks high on my all-time favorite aviation people list and you've got to visit New London to see what a down-home airport is all about. It's like a time warp to leave New London and arrive moments later at tower controlled Lynchburg Regional, home of another favorite FBO, Jim Lampman's Virginia Aviation. We go back through many years

of business relations. Always a pleasure. The next and shortest of our flights today put us on downwind for the one-way runway 28 at Falwell Airport. This is our favorite airport with a hill. We were fortunate to find Virginia Aviation Hall of Famer Lawrence Falwell and his son Jimmy in the office and have them stamp our passports. I also go back many years with Falwell Aviation and Calvin and Lawrence are our favorite brother team in the Hall of Fame. We departed down the hill (fun) on the way to Brookneal/Campbell County, another nice airport, unoccupied and unattended and no based aircraft. What a great place to shoot landings. We did our photo trick and headed for an old favorite stop, Farmville. Tommy and Kim Grimes' Heart of Virginia Aviation runs not only Farmville but Martinsville and our home field, Hanover County. Definitely among our favorite FBO owners. Passport stamped all that was left was the fifty mile flight to OFP for our 12th landing of the day. I even managed a couple of good ones. Even though Jack made the short turn off at Brookneal and I didn't, nothing could detract from such a great day of flying, visiting and the great scenery from low and slow.

Day 10

August 25, 2005

7 Airports

We wanted a pretty weather day for our Shenandoah Valley visits and we got in on Thursday the 25th. 8:30 found us airborne to Winchester, our favorite northernmost Virginia airport. It is also run by a favorite airport manager, "Renny" Manuel, who was honored at the Aviation Conference earlier this month as "Airport Manager of the Year". Renny gave us a Winchester Airport cap on condition we wear it when visiting another Valley airport and convey a message. A great way to start the day's visits. Next stop, Front Royal and Reggie Cassag of Cass Aviation. Reggie remembered me somewhat pleasantly from my salesman days, thereby insuring his place on our favorite FBO list. The terminal lobby is a mini museum and worth a visit. Folks were launching a sailplane to enjoy their version of fun flying as we departed for Luray, our favorite airport near caverns. A new parking ramp is just being completed, a needed improvement, and the friendly attendant stamped our passport. It being too early to enjoy their airport shuttle to lunch, we departed for New Market, a favorite airport with a pilot shop. Unfortunately no one was home and the doors were locked. The only instruction was "In Case of Emergency Dial 911". Even the need for a passport stamp did not seem to justify that, so we did our photo trick with August 2nd newspaper, looked longingly through the window at the goodies on the shelves inside and departed for Bridgewater Airport, an old favorite "Airport near a son's college". My oldest graduated from Bridgewater in the early 70s. Karl Stoltzfus's operation is something to behold, as is his three-story headquarters building. In the lobby is a coffee table made from a radial engine that once powered one of his dad's crop sprayers. Neat stuff.

By now hunger was a factor, as well as the need to deliver Renny's message to Greg Campbell, manager of Shenandoah Valley Airport. A Cirrus landing ahead of us asked if the restaurant was open and was informed it was "Double Cheeseburger Day". Music to a pilot's ears. Greg, a favorite airport manager, was in a meeting so I had to deliver Renny's message in writing. Her instructions were to wear the caps and inform Greg that we had started at the top and were working our way down. We are certain she meant the Shenandoah Valley. Even though we were only the messengers, we were pretty sure we wouldn't be getting a Shenandoah Valley Airport cap so we, full of double cheeseburgers, headed for Eagle's Nest, our favorite public use airport fly-in community. There are beautiful homes overlooking the runway and had we not just eaten we could have used their crew car to visit a local restaurant, something we have done in the past. A nice visit but a hasty retreat was in order since we were blocking the gas pumps and a just-landed Skylane needed fuel. We got a quick exit visa to go with our stamp and climbed out toward the Blue Ridge Mountains and a smooth ride in to ever-increasing visibility. A great way to end another fly-for-fun day.

Day 11
September 2, 2005
2 Airports

After being grounded for about a week by real world obligations, we planned a two airport day before the Labor Day weekend got underway. Our first destination was our favorite “highest airport east of the Mississippi River”, Ingalls Field at Hot Springs, elevation 3792 feet. A beautiful flight into a beautiful location, even though the haze made visibility a little less than hoped for. Airport manager Rebecca Mann made us welcome although she was facing a broken water line problem, which rendered certain facilities inoperative. She and her equally friendly lineman, who refueled us, told of a bear sighting on the taxiway earlier in the morning. They were definitely added to our list of favorite airport people.

Jack led our flight of two through very thick haze on the short flight to Roanoke, our favorite airport with a star on the approach. Piedmont-Hawthorne FBO was quickly added to our favorite list when counterperson Rita arranged for a line service vehicle to take us to a local restaurant and later retrieve us. They were enthused about our 56 passport stamps, and made us feel welcome amid the corporate jets. A 1.3 hour ride home, again into unlimited visibility, was a treat and made us feel very fortunate indeed.



Just before touchdown at EAA Fly-in
October 1, 2005

Day 12
September 9, 2005

On September 9th, we finally got good weather and our family obligations under control at the same time. We departed for Virginia Tech Airport, the western-most airport left in our odyssey. A beautiful flight and, even though it wasn't a home game weekend, it was still a favorite college town airport. We spent some pleasant time with airport staff, got our passports stamped and departed for New River Valley, our favorite “once an airline airport”. I was present when it was dedicated in 1962, and it brought back memories of Piedmont Airlines and Steve Shelton who was the driving force behind the airport being built. Another pleasant visit,



Simultaneous landing at the Dinwiddie County Airport

although no rental car was available to drive to Twin County Airport in Galax. The airport was closed for reconstruction and the manager not on site and off for the weekend. We settled for circling the field while I took photos of Jack's 140 with closed runway in the background. It then became our favorite closed (for now) airport. We departed the area for Mountain Empire airport. We got our stamp but not much conversation at this stop. Still it was our favorite airport while we were on it. Next stop was Tazewell, forcing us to leave the beautiful New River Valley and I-81 behind for some real mountain flying. The airport is pretty and well kept and staffed by friendly

folk, one of which was from the Richmond area. He gave us advice on gas prices (all cheaper than the Richmond area) and, after a pleasant visit with our new favorite airport people, we again went mountain flying to Grundy, a 2258 foot airport, 2300 feet above sea level. The drop-offs at both ends are breathtaking and thousands of feet. The airport is unattended and phone calls non-productive so we resorted to our photo routine. This has to be our favorite airport on a tabletop. This makes Ingalls look like Dulles. As we departed a Jet Ranger flying up the valley was what looked like a thousand feet below the runway. Neat. Next stop, Lonesome Pine Airport in Wise, Virginia, our favorite airport with loaner bicycles with automatic transmissions. We took a short ride looking for Happy Hour material but came away empty-handed. We decided on fuel instead and the friendly attendant made some calls to our next stop, the new but unattended Lee County Airport. He had no more luck so we departed our favorite airport built on a strip mine and headed for Lee County. As we taxied out I had memories of a stagger-wing Beech I once took in trade from the Dodson Brothers on a new 1962 Cessna Skylane. I get heartburn remembering what I sold it for. Our next trip through the mountains took us over the closed Pennington Gap Airport (another 2200 ft. strip) and on to the new 5000 ft strip at Lee County. This quickly became our new favorite airport in the middle of nowhere. We had traveled from the self proclaimed "Center of the Universe", Ashland, Virginia, to what appeared from the apron to be the exact center of nowhere. As we parked (plenty of room) a state trooper



Randy Burdette, Director of the DOAV, presenting Ray and Jack with their jackets. Honorary Ambassador Sara Parmenter was also on hand.



Congratulations to the first two Ambassadors, Ray Tyson and Jack Pettigrew

drove up, took one look at us and left. I guess we, with our tinker toy airplanes, were not a threat to blow up a coal mine. Again a photo deal with the August 2nd newspaper and it was decision time. Where to spend the night? Jack voted for Middlesboro, Kentucky because he had enjoyed an earlier visit and the P-38 Glacier Girl is based there. The afternoon haze was very thick, the terminal was unattended, there was no transportation available, and the county was dry. Glacier Girl was in her hangar but both of us had seen her before so I cast my vote to fly an hour to Virginia Highlands Airport at Abingdon where conditions were sure to be friendlier. Serves us right for leaving the Old Dominion for foreign soil. Besides, Virginia Highlands is our 65th and last

airport we can fly into on this odyssey and we can celebrate in style there. The haze was better looking east as we skimmed over the Clinch Mountain Range and into Abingdon a little after 6 p.m. After tying down and inquiring about transportation, etc., the nicest thing happened. Local flight instructor, Susan Van Fleet was just finishing her last student and offered us a ride to a motel, which the counter man had already called for us. People do make the difference and they were added to our favorite airport people list. We had a great dinner in a restaurant within walking distance, topped off with an Italian ice cream in a shop half way back up the hill. A wonderful finish to a wonderful day-of-fun flying.

We have visited 65 airports in 39 days. The flight home Sunday the 10th featured low visibility but a smooth ride and the satisfaction of completing a really fun task. Jack and I have enjoyed each and every airport and all the people we met. We strongly believe this program can provide you a reason to do something different when you get the chance to do some fun flying. Visit all the airports in your home region, draw a circle on a chart and visit those airports, or get your credit cards out and aim for a flight jacket. Any way you choose to participate, you will enjoy meeting new people and airports. All that's left for us is a drive to Reagan and Dulles. The drive to Northern Virginia will make us appreciate our 140s even more.



Ray and Jack's Aeronautical map showing the routes they took to complete their odyssey

**All photos courtesy of
Ray Tyson**