

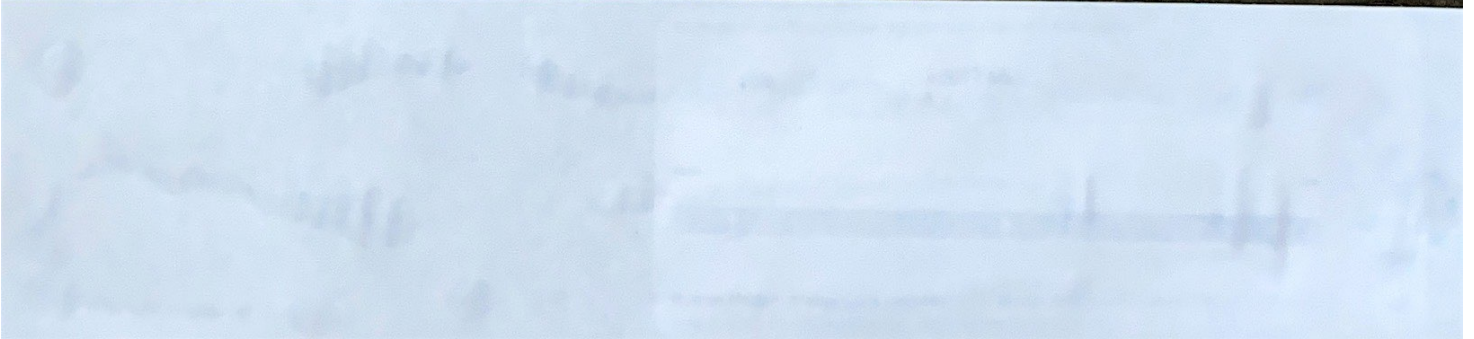
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Model Aviation

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A Canadian Flies in Arizona



Sunny morning at the FICO field.

Submitted by Jim Cogle

What is it like to fly model airplanes in Arizona? I have been asked this question enough times that I am compelled to write about it. 'Delightful' is the first word that comes to mind. And while there are numerous flying clubs in Arizona, I have only belonged to the Green Valley RC Flyers, where I am currently the only Canadian. They are an active club with 98 members and two flying fields, Twin Buttes and FICO field.

Being a retirement community, many members are older, like me, and can spend more time at the field. This makes for a good sense of community with many hours of flying interspersed with pleasant conversations under the sun shelters. I enjoy listening to the guys tell stories almost as much as I enjoy flying. At home, we enjoy the same type of camaraderie at our Durham flying field near Fredericton.

A typical winter day in southern Arizona is from 16C (62F) to 25C (77F) degrees with sun almost daily. By March, the temperature can get into the low 30s (80s), but unlike Florida, it is a dry heat and very pleasant. There is little grass; Southern Arizona is comprised primarily of very hard gravel, almost like concrete. This makes for a great flying surface but a dreadful one for crashes; a plane can be demolished quickly.

What about rattlesnakes? Yup, Arizona has them. Luckily, in the several winters spent there, my wife and I have never seen one. Snake bites are rare and usually involve a person under thirty and

alcohol consumption. But caution is advised if your plane goes down in the sagebrush; the same goes for other activities. One great old club member was relieving himself on the edge of a trench behind the pit area when partway through; he noticed a big rattlesnake about a foot away. The boys still laugh about him tearing out of there while still in the process of completing his objective.

Flying in the United States requires a pilot to pass a written test on the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) website and obtain a drone license, costing \$5.00 for three years. Associate membership with AMA (Academy of Model Aeronautics) is also mandatory if flying at an AMA club and costs \$45.00 per year. Club membership dues vary but are usually under \$100.00. At most clubs, one must also pass a flight test to demonstrate that one can fly safely.

But like everywhere, there are great memories that come from flying at a great field. One memory is the time I had just cleared the ground with my T-28, the right wheel came off, and a considerable crosswind hit. I cut the throttle enough to allow the plane to descend without stalling, crabbed it into the wind and just before touchdown, I pointed it down the runway while giving it enough left aileron to keep the plane level. The old bird landed as if it had all three wheels and settled down softly. Could I ever do it again? Sure, in about a thousand attempts. As my flying buddy Dan would say, "Never confuse luck with good flying."

I recognize that I am very privileged to spend winters in a beautiful place like Green Valley and fly with such a great bunch of guys. And I don't take it for granted. Ever. ✨



T-28 that survived a two wheel landing.



Getting the new bird ready.



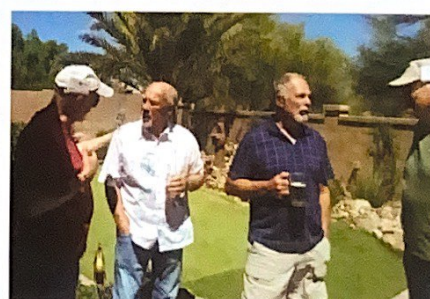
A Tiger ready for flight.



Warbirds ready for 2023



Hellcat and T-28



Sharing wisdom.