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Fly-In Report

February Fly-In to Laughlin, Nevada Featured Great Friends, Good Food and Plenty of Hangar Talk

by Dorian Swartz
Southwest Tribe

Although the weather at Bullhead City Municipal Airport was windy and chilly on the morning of Friday, Feb. 6, the wind was straight down the runway, and the afternoon warmed nicely for the majority of our arrivals.

Comanche friends and their guests were greeted by Ed and Diane Wegner. Dorian and Ed were helping to relieve the pressure on the hotel shuttle by running a second van back and forth from the airport to the hotel until 5 p.m. Diane was at the FBO to hand out important fly-in information nearly all day, so most arrivals by air were able to meet a friendly Comanche face after parking their airplane.

Groups gathered for no-host cocktails and dinner on their own Friday night at the various eateries that the Colorado Belle offers. My personal favorite was oysters and champagne at the Orleans Room bar! And to make it an EXTRA special Friday night, at least one of our Comanche members hit a BIG slot payoff – for the SECOND YEAR IN A ROW! That lucky winner graciously paid the bar tab at our Saturday night buffet/banquet – thank you, thank you, and thank you to Dave Blankenbaker!

There was golf and movies, shopping and gaming to occupy everyone's time Saturday, and not to forget the always popular "hangar talk" out on Comanche Row at the airport.

The Saturday night buffet banquet kicked off with cocktails at 6 p.m. in the Mardi Gras Room, followed by a wonderful buffet of breads and salads, chicken, shrimp and roast beef, and luscious fruit pies and cakes for dessert – Mmm! Every

table was filled; we had 55 for the banquet dinner. More Comanches had flown in for the event, but not all were able to stay the weekend, and some flew in for the day just to see all those beautiful airplanes!

Door prizes and the 50/50 cash prize (won by Doug Lucy) were handed out to raffle ticket buyers at the banquet Saturday night, and Dorian Swartz, Tribe Chief, gave a nice talk after dinner on club business of interest to members in attendance.

Departures were leisurely on Sunday, most after a hearty breakfast

or brunch, and the backup shuttle was run again from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to shorten the wait for the hotel shuttle. Laughlin is a well attended fly-in held every February, and it was wonderful to see familiar faces and make some new Comanche friends. Be sure not to miss this one next year!



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Featured Fly-In

The Perfect Winter Respite

South Central & Mid States Tribes Enjoy Cruise to Mexico, Cozumel and Belize

by Rich Bullock - ICS #13877, Mid States Tribe Chief

Saturday, Jan. 31, ICS members and guests started arriving in Galveston for the cruise aboard Carnival's ship the *Elation*. On Sunday at noon, official boarding began as the ship was scheduled to depart the port at 4:30 p.m. Once on board, the ship was very spacious and most of ICS members' cabins were located in the same basic area on the upper deck. This made visiting, teasing and playing around easy, especially once you had figured out how to use the ship's room-to-room telephone system.

Lunch was available after boarding the *Elation* on the Lido deck located on the top of the ship; the view from there was spectacular. The Lido Deck contained a cafeteria buffet that allowed indoor or outside dining as you pleased, 24 hours a day. Each evening of the voyage, activities included live shows and entertainment that were provided in the Mikado Lounge. Other activities on the ship included bingo tournaments, spas, pools, gym, bars, listening to a variety of music ranging from classical to pop. There was dancing

available in the lounges such as the Gatsby or the Jekyll and Hyde. For those with a little luck on their side, the Casablanca Casino would provide a temptation to improve one's fortunes.

While sailing out of the port of Galveston on Super Bowl Sunday, some of our members and several hundred other passengers gathered in the Cole Porter Lounge and experienced the playoff. This spacious lounge provided viewing from a large screen projection. Available during the game were buckets of beer and

The Elation at port in Progreso, Mexico.



◀ The Bowlings and the Bullocks enjoy the beach at Cozumel.



▲ Representing the Australian tribe, Leslie and Bob Pope joined the cruise.



▲ Cruise hosts Peggy and Elmer Blum

◀ The entire Comanche group on board the *Elation*.



▲ Winning horse or old nag? Jim Kapeller, Bill Johns and Wayne Harclerode stuck by "Comanche Bill," who proved to be a winner in the end.

all the burgers and hot dogs you could want.

Monday was a relaxing full day at sea. Our itinerary had us cruising toward the port of Progreso, Mexico located on the northwest side of the Yucatan peninsula. While at sea, an ICS meeting and cocktail hour was held in the Jekyll and Hyde Lounge. There were introductions of Elmer and Peggy Blum as our cruise hosts, Southeast Tribe Chief Butch Baker and Mid States Tribe Chief Rich Bullock. Complimentary drinks were served as a courtesy and thank you from International Travel Inc., and Jan Vrooman our cruise planner.

Dr. Sharon Bowling from Pittsburg State University gave a presentation on international health and disease prevention. Dr. Bowling has worked with the CDC (Center for Disease Control) and WHO (World Health Organization) where she has given presentations in Paris, London, China and Mexico

regarding preventions and disease control. Dr. Bowling left copies of her booklet with our members. Darrell Norris, chairman of the 2004 ICS convention in Kansas City, introduced his convention staff and gave an overview for the convention. Also recognized were Bob and Leslie Pope for traveling the longest distance, all the way from Brisbane, Australia to join the ICS cruise activity. Recognition for the aircraft that flew the longest distance went to Sheldon Bresin of Phillips Ranch, Calif.

Several of our members attended the Monday morning horse auction held in the Mikado lounge where six wooden cruise race horses were auctioned off. The interactive horse races are a regular cruise activity that passengers find amusing and competitive. The ICS group bid on and won horse number 2, after it was almost left lonely and dejected by lack of bids. I believe the bid on this simulated nag was \$1.50. Well,

the horse had to have a story and a name!

Since this was Bill John's birthday and his activities in the ICS go a long way back, the members decided on naming the horse "Comanche Bill." The tribes made donations toward the horse by auctioning off some of the complimentary champagne, raising some funds to support the horse. The horse had quite a story that was made up by Bill and Paola's ICS group. A lot of fun was had with our horse, which went with our group to dinner and shows and was stabled in Bill's cabin. Yes, Comanche Bill won three of the awards. Winning the first race and winning best-dressed horse. By the end of the competition we were proud of Comanche Bill. He made some money during the first race with the 2-1 odds for our members, also he ending up capturing 30 percent of the open pot that will be used to support the ICS 2004 Kansas City Convention.



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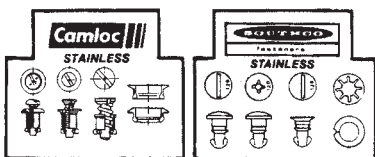
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Tuesday morning we woke up to find ourselves in the Port of Progreso. From here members went on tours to Merida and Progreso or took the tours to Tulum and Chitzanitza; exploring what is considered the finest examples of the early Mayan cities and ruins. The weather was wonderful with the temperature in the mid 80s and a few billowing cumulus clouds against the azure blue skies.

That night, we left Progreso traveling east then making the turn southward around the Yucatan Peninsula toward Cozumel. The seas in the gulf were a little more rolling during this eastward travel; however, most had gained their sea legs by then and had adjusted to the motion of the ship.

Wednesday morning it was fun to wake up to a new port of call on the island of Cozumel, part of the Mexican state of Quintana Roo. Here members went on Jeep adventures,

sailing, swimming with dolphins, snorkeling, sightseeing the island and even taking in a beach party. We heard on television how the upper Midwest was embedded with snow and below freezing temperatures. How glad we were to be in the warm tropics somewhere between the tropic of Cancer at 22 1/2 degrees north and the Equator.

Some of us, including myself, just happened to have a pocket GPS such as the Garmin III Pilot or a Garmin 295. Several GPS units were brought on board on the cruise. We joked as to the Captain's course and where we were at any given time. The various Garmin databases did an excellent job in showing the roads in Mexico as well as portraying the harbors and airports.

Wednesday evening, we left Cozumel heading south for Belize, located next to Mexico on the Southeast side of the Yucatan, south of Cancun Mexico. During the early

morning hours, the ship zigzagged around the reefs as it negotiated its course toward Belize. The reefs were spectacular in the morning light with turquoise, greens and blue colors reflecting off the water. Maneuvering was an amazing feat as the Electro propulsion systems and water jets could turn the ship quite tightly. Steering is done through the GPS program in the ship's autopilot.

Each morning as we came toward a port of call, a pilot boat would pull along side and a harbormaster would board and monitor the steering into the new port. At Belize, with all of the reefs, the pilot came aboard almost two hours prior. The ship anchored about two miles outside of the port. This required high speed tenders transporting passengers to and from the port for excursions. Excursions focused on snorkeling on the second largest barrier reef in the world or adventuring into the jungle viewing the native

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birds and monkeys.

The country of Belize used to be British Honduras until it gained its independence in 1973. English is spoken as the primary language. The capital Belmopan is the world's smallest capital with only 6,000 people residing there and Belize City is the largest with a population around 70,000. In 1638, shipwrecked British sailors established the first known European settlement in Belize. During the next 150 years, the British established several more settlements on the lower Yucatan. Spain did little to exercise its rule over the area, and Britain gradually gained control of it. In 1862, Britain named the area the Colony of British Honduras.

Sailing home, Friday and Saturday were relaxing days at sea, enjoying the onboard activities, swimming pools and recounting tails of off-board adventures. Friday in the library a gathering of the 2004 Kansas City ICS Convention personnel and interested members came to review

the convention layout and floor plans. This was followed by a GPS open forum discussion relating to the use of GPS equipment and the introduction and benefits of the upcoming WAAS upgrades.

The biggest problem after this cruise was coming home and suffering "Cruise Withdrawal." I woke up and I could not find the Lido Deck for breakfast. When I returned to the bedroom, the bed was not made up, with fresh chocolates placed on the pillow? And where was that bowl of ice cream with cookies and fresh fruit? Our afternoon tea was served with appetizers and cookies in the piano lounge while listening to a pretty lady softly playing a piano. Where are they?

The Carnival cruise turned out to be a great ICS adventure for the 63 members and guests taking part. The cruise was co-hosted by the South Central and Mid States Tribes. A special thanks to Peggy and Elmer Blum for putting our cruise together. ☺

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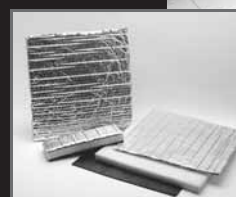
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