

Seaplane *Flying Club*

COME RENT A SEAPLANE IN AMERICA'S SEAPLANE CITY!

by Matthew Elia

Finding a seaplane available to rent is a real challenge today due to high insurance and operating costs, making seaplane rental a very rare option for pilots. This was noticed by the team at Jones Brothers & Co. and they have come up with a unique and exciting solution to make seaplane rentals a reality for pilots! The Seaplane Solo Flying Club by Jones Brothers & Co. "took off" here at the Tavares Seaplane Base in late May.

It's easy to see that the community of Tavares, Florida has adopted the brand of being "America's Seaplane City." Seaplanes come and go on a daily basis from the shores and water of Lake Dora. Throughout the City seaplanes and aviation concepts are incorporated everywhere




from the City's welcome gateway signs to murals in local restaurants.


Jones Brothers has been providing scenic flights in seaplanes as well as seaplane flight

instruction at the Tavares Seaplane Base since 2010. In 2015 Jones Brothers expanded their services by adding FAA Part 135 on-demand, passenger air charter services. This service


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Seaplane *Flying Club*

allows Jones Brothers passengers to travel from the Tavares Seaplane Base to a wide range of destination.

As our City team works to expand our aviation presence, Jones Brothers & Co. has continued to play a pivotal role in representing the City by providing seaplane services to our community. By forming the Seaplane Solo Flying Club, Jones Brothers is providing a very unique service, which is thrilling for the City of Tavares and is a natural fit for "America's Seaplane City"!

The Seaplane Solo Flying Club operates a classic, bright yellow, Piper Cub on straight floats, which arrived at the Tavares Seaplane Base in late May. Very quickly the plane was splashing and dashing as the first club member, Don Bartlett, was completing his check flight. Don visits central Florida multiple times a year from his home in southern Illinois. At home, Don owns three aircraft, is a professor and an airplane mechanic. When he visits Florida, he is a seaplane guy.

Don was one of the early pilots to complete their seaplane rating training with Jones Brothers years ago when they first opened. Since then, Don has been a regular during his visits to Florida, often reserving time with an instructor to fly with Jones Brothers. These flights were enjoyable, but often limited by the availability of the aircraft and instructor as well as Jones Brothers' need to serve other customers. Now, with the flying club, Don can schedule in advance and then come and go on his schedule, without having to worry about the schedule of a flight instructor.

After speaking with Don about his experience as the first member of the seaplane flying club, I sat down with Rob Galloway, the owner of Jones Brothers & Co. to learn more about the operation. Rob made a point to say, "Over and over I heard the same message from customers. Learning to fly a seaplane sounds like fun, but what can I do with a seaplane rating?"

Of course, the seaplane flying club is the perfect answer to this question, prospective seaplane pilots now have a reason to come to America's Seaplane City to learn to fly floats. Once they complete their seaplane training, the ability to rent a seaplane and fly on their own schedule is a reality! As Rob went on to explain, "The club creates an avenue for seaplane pilots who don't own a seaplane to maintain proficiency and have access to seaplane flying."

The new and exciting club is just "getting off the water" now, so it's definitely the time to join! The first 15 members who select a Premium membership have a \$0 buy-in! Yes, you read that right... The club offers two levels of membership, Premium and Basic.

The premium membership is \$199.50/month and the basic membership is \$99.50/month. With the added cost of a premium membership come a number of benefits beyond access to a seaplane which comes with either level of membership. The premium membership also includes aviation renters insurance, good at any FBO at no additional cost and there is no fee for the annual recurrency flight with a flight instructor which is

designed to satisfy the requirements of a pilot flight review. Further, there is no charge for a flight instructor for training flights if needed for recurrency up to 6 hours. All of that, plus a lot more!

Rob Galloway describes the flying club, "As a way to encourage seaplane flying and aviation activity." This can easily be seen as one of the other great components of club membership is the quarterly safety and social meeting. Attendance at the meeting is optional, it is not a club requirement, but it is a great opportunity to get to know fellow club members and learn more about aviation safety topics.

The bright yellow, classic Piper Cub is a great addition to our based aircraft at the Tavares Seaplane Base. Everyone knows the Piper Cub, the iconic yellow airplane has been a staple of aviation for many years. Similarly, having the flying club based at our seaplane base makes all the sense in the world as we work to advance our brand and aviation presence as "America's Seaplane City".

For more details about the Seaplane Solo Flying Club and Jones Brothers & Co. visit their website: www.jonesairandsea.com.

Matthew Elia is the Aviation Manager for Tavares, Florida. A seaplane pilot and flight instructor himself, Matt enjoys flying and shares his passion on ReviewBeforeFlight.com. Prior to joining the Tavares team last fall, Matt worked in airport management in Massachusetts and taught aviation management courses at two New England colleges.

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