

King Air

A MAGAZINE FOR THE OWNER/PILOT OF KING AIR AIRCRAFT

FEBRUARY 2023 • VOLUME 17, NUMBER 2 • \$6.50



Golden State Gem

Discover aerial wildlife and natural wonders worth a fly-out

Contents

EDITOR

Kim Blonigen

EDITORIAL OFFICE

2779 Aero Park Dr.,
Traverse City MI 49686
Phone: (316) 652-9495
E-mail: editor@blonigen.net

PUBLISHERS

Dave Moore
Village Publications

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Rachel Coon

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Mike Revard

PUBLICATIONS DIRECTOR

Jason Smith

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Jenna Reid
King Air Magazine
2779 Aero Park Drive
Traverse City, MI 49686
Phone: 316-409-7033
E-mail: jenna.reid@vpdcs.com

ADVERTISING ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR AND REPRINT SALES

Betsy Beaudoin
Phone: 1-800-773-7798
E-mail: betsybeaudoin@villagepress.com

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES

Rhonda Kelly, Mgr.
Jessica Meek
Jamie Wilson
P.O. Box 1810
Traverse City, MI 49685
1-800-447-7367

ONLINE ADDRESS

www.kingairmagazine.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

King Air is distributed at no charge to all registered owners of King Air aircraft. The mailing list is updated bi-monthly. All others may subscribe by writing to: King Air, P.O. Box 1810, Traverse City, MI 49685, or by calling 1-800-447-7367. Rates for one year, 12 issues: United States \$15.00, Canada \$24.00 (U.S. funds), all other foreign \$52.00 (U.S. funds). Single copies: United States \$6.50, Canada/Foreign \$9.00.

COVER PHOTO

Courtesy of Textron Aviation

2

Cover Story –
Soaring with Condors: Flying
To and Touring Pinnacles
National Park

by Matthew McDaniel

12

King Air Gathering –
Registration is Open!

by Kim Blonigen

16



16

Maintenance Tip –
King Air Cabin Windows –
Pane Management 2.0

by Dean Benedict

22

Ask the Expert –
Lever Lock Switches ... and a
Few That Look Like They Are,
But Aren't

by Tom Clements



26

In History –
Thunder Birds – The Mighty
Beechcraft A17 Biplanes

by Edward H. Phillips

30

Value Added

32

Advertising Index

King Air is wholly owned by Village Press, Inc. and is in no way associated with or a product of Textron Aviation.

King Air (ISSN 1938-9361), USPS 16694 is published monthly by Village Press, Inc., 2779 Aero Park Drive, Traverse City, Michigan 49686. Periodicals Postage Paid at Traverse City, MI. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to King Air, Village Press Inc., P.O. Box 1810, Traverse City, MI 49685. Telephone (231) 946-3712. Printed in the United States of America. All rights reserved. Copyright 2023, Village Publications.

ADVERTISING: Advertising in King Air does not necessarily imply endorsement. Queries, questions, and requests for media kits should be directed to the Advertising Director, King Air, P.O. Box 1810, Traverse City, Michigan 49685. Telephone 1-800-773-7798.

MANUSCRIPTS: King Air assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs, or art work. While unsolicited submissions are welcome, it is best to query first and ask for our Writer's Guidelines. All unassigned submissions must be accompanied by return postage. Address queries and requests for Writer's Guidelines to the editor.

COVER STORY

Pinnacles National Park in central California is one of the smallest in the national park system, making it a bit of a hidden gem. Though it has had national monument status since 1908, it was designated a national park just 10 years ago.

SOARING WITH CONDORS

Flying To and Touring Pinnacles National Park

by Matthew McDaniel | Photos by author unless specified otherwise



As we approached the summit of the High Peaks Trail, menacing Turkey Vultures circled overhead. Their inky black feathers and scarlet heads contrasted sharply against the pale blue sky as they effortlessly soared over the cliffs surrounding us. Riding thermals between and around the craggy spires, then crossing the valleys again to repeat each circuit, their display was the epitome of energy management. Reading air currents via pure instinct residing deep within their DNA, their ability to capitalize on rising air while minimizing their exposure to descending air would be the envy of any glider pilot. The display was enough to hold the attention of any person intrigued by the mysteries of the air and the creatures who call it home. If you are such a person, and find yourself with some downtime at any of the many airports within California's South Bay or Salinas Valley areas, consider a visit to the largely unknown Pinnacles National Park.

Hiding in Plain Sight

If your flying missions have ever taken you to the central coastal regions of California, you've likely been close to Pinnacles National Park (PNP) without even realizing it. It is less than 50 miles from the scenic Pacific Coast Highway drives through Big Sur, Pebble Beach and Monterey Bay. Pinnacles is relatively new within the national park ranks and far less known than some of its in-state siblings, such as Yosemite, Sequoia and Death Valley. It has been protected by the National Park System (NPS) for over a century, having been designated a national monument in 1908. However, it wasn't until 2013 that it was upgraded to national park status, making its 105-year gestation from monument to park one of the longest in NPS history. It's a sparkling

gem and the smallest of California's nine national parks (and 57th in size, among the current 63 U.S. National Parks). Covering less than 27,000 acres, Pinnacles is perfectly sized for day visitors.

While one could certainly make repeat visits and take in different sights each time, pilots passing through the area could easily get a great taste of PNP in a single day trip, whether they are solo, laying over with crew members or on a family adventure. Pinnacles is only a 1½- to two-hour drive from major hub airports such as San Francisco Int'l (SFO), Oakland Int'l (OAK) and San Jose Int'l (SJC). Monterey (MRY) and Salinas (SNS) Airports (Class C and Class D airports, respectively) are within an hour. Additionally, a variety of small, pilot-controlled airports are even closer, with the nearest two being King City's Mesa Del Rey Airport (KIC) to



KING AIR GATHERING 2023

April 12-14, 2023 | St. Augustine, FL
Registration Now Open!

This year's Gathering will include: educational seminars, breakout sessions, amazing food, a resort location at World Golf Village, and so much more!
View the schedule at www.kingairgathering.com

Speakers

Tom Clements
Erik Eliel
Brian Shul
Dr. Quay Snyder
Peter Basile
Dr. Scott Dennestaedt
Chip McClure
Dean Benedict

Companions Activities

Textron Sponsored Activity,
St. Augustine Tour, Luncheon,
Ground School & More!



the south and Hollister Airport (CVH) to the north. Both have runways plenty long enough for most King Air operations. Even a few likely King Air destinations within the Central Valley are within a couple of hours' drive time. Those include the Class C Fresno Yosemite Int'l (FAT), Madera (MAE) and Merced's two airports (MER and MCE). Best of all, all the above airports offer fuel, pilot services and instrument approach procedures (IAPs). Most offer rental cars, as well. Although, never assume and call ahead for specific details on available service and transportation options.

Stark Contrast

One thing any pilot who's flown much within California can attest to is the incredible variety of both nature and humanity within the Golden State. Rocky coastlines, vast deserts, intriguing islands, rugged mountain ranges, dense forests, urban sprawl and tiny rural communities all surround the enormous Central Valley. There, abundant harvests of fruit, vegetables and nuts are grown in such quantities they've earned the region the nickname "America's Salad Bowl."

Yet, there is something oddly out of place in the Salinas Valley and the Gabilan mountains. Remains of an ancient volcanic field have been shaped by eons of erosion into the foothills, caves, spires, cliffs and ramparts that now make up Pinnacles. But, only about two-thirds of that volcanic field is within PNP. The remaining portion is not simply outside the official park boundaries, it is 195 miles southeast, totally detached from its prehistoric neighbor. The reason is another one of California's famous features – The San Andreas Fault. Running just east of PNP, the active fault line's ever-moving tectonic plates split the volcanic field and have separated its components over millions of years, leaving Pinnacles as a unique topography within the surrounding landscapes. Additionally, the shifting of those same plates has helped create one of PNP's most fascinating features: its above-ground caves. Known as talus caves, they form (and change) as earthquakes topple boulders into and across deep and narrow gorges. Singularly or in clustered piles, the boulders span the gaps between rock walls, creating "ceilings" and blocking most (and sometimes all) light from reaching within. Yet, they are not truly subterranean.

Similarly unique to Pinnacles is its wildlife. The talus caves attract a variety of bat species, all of which rest peacefully during most daylight hours. The soaring conditions created by the winds and terrain features, attract large raptors and scavenger birds alike. A variety of hawks, ravens, and vultures are common within PNP and are fairly easy for even the casual tourist to spot. Die-hard birders (and pilots too, I suspect) all hope to see one bird in particular, though. The massive California condor was brought back from the brink of extinction thanks to a decadeslong captive breeding program. They were reintroduced into areas

Your Beechcraft Parts Source

New Overhauled Used



Over 180,000 Part Numbers Available!



www.selectairparts.com

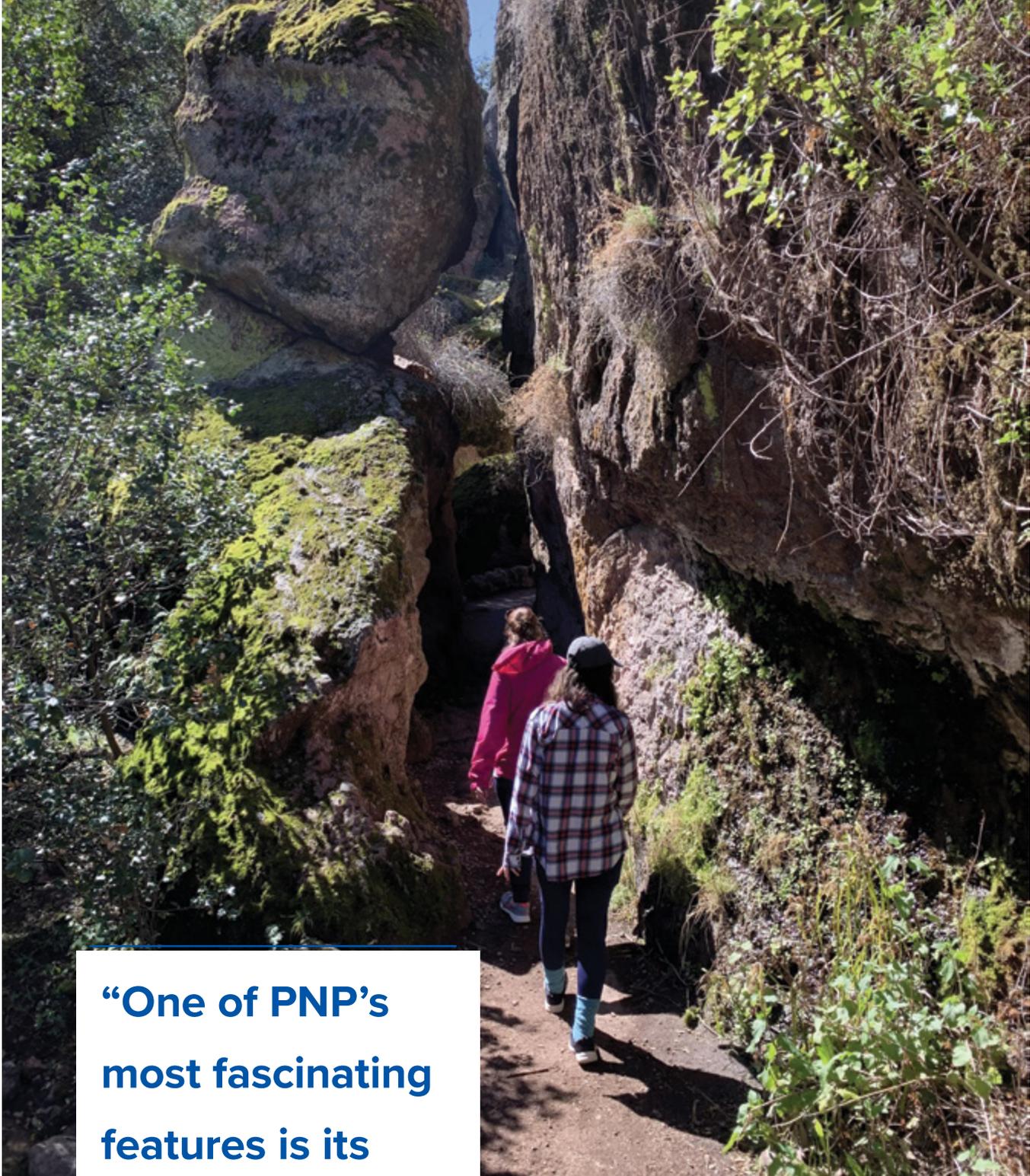
"Call Us. We Speak Beechcraft!"
1-800-318-0010

“Weighing 20 pounds or more, with wingspans up to 9 ½ feet, they can fly at 55 mph and soar to altitudes of 15,000 feet.”



The California condor population was brought back from the brink of extinction due to a successful captive breeding program, and some being reintroduced to their natural habitats including Pinnacles National Park.

(Credit: National Park System)



“One of PNP’s most fascinating features is its above-ground caves known as talus caves.”

The author’s wife and daughter exit the Moses Creek Trail to enter the talus cave area along the Bear Gulch Cave Trail.

they were known to inhabit naturally, including both Grand Canyon and Pinnacles National parks.

The condors routinely fly from those areas to the Pacific coast and back, sometimes nonstop. For those lucky enough to spot one or a pair, they are an impressive sight to behold. Weighing 20 pounds or more, with wingspans up to 9 ½ feet, they can fly at 55 mph and soar to altitudes of 15,000 feet. Their ability to spot, procure and survive on the scraps left behind by less hardy species is no less impressive. The abundance of aerial wildlife, in general and the condors, in particular, within PNP is the reason that VFR aeronautical charts for the area warn pilots to remain 3,000 feet above ground level (AGL) or higher when overflying the park. This is slightly higher than the standard 2,000 feet AGL that pilots are required to remain above wildlife areas, national parks and other protected lands.

Gulches and Peaks

Touring within PNP doesn't require a great deal of pre-planning for simple day trips. However, understanding the basic geography of the area is critical to making the most of your time. The most important element to understand is that, unlike many national parks, there is no scenic drive that traverses the park. It has two entrances (west and east), but the roads that bring you

to each do not connect within the park. If driving from one entrance to the other, one must circumnavigate the park and allow a couple of hours' time to do so. Of course, there is plenty of scenic driving to be had on each side of the park, but the most dramatic vistas and experiences must be accessed on foot, via the many trails that emit from each side of the park and meet within its heartlands.

We had flown into the South Bay area (SJC, specifically) and driven to the Monterey and Carmel-by-the-Sea areas for casual sightseeing. Nonetheless, I elected to drive into the park via the east entrance, rather than the slightly closer west gate. I did so because I'd read good things about the picturesque drive down Highway 25 and Pinnacles Parkway, which proved worthy of the accolades. Additionally, the (East) Pinnacles Visitors Center is far more active and offers a free weekend shuttle to the Bear Gulch region (which gets you deeper into the park while alleviating parking concerns). This proved perfect for us, given that we only had a single day available.

The trail system within PNP allows hikers to take long perimeter hikes of 10 miles or more around the central park sections where the most noteworthy natural wonders are clustered. However, more casual walkers/sightseers can choose a variety of shorter hikes that

Lumatech LED™
Reliability & Performance
You Can See...

King Air
BeechJet
208 Caravan
Cessna Piston Twins

LT Lumatech Technologies LLC
Partners in Quality & Innovation
Phone: 425.643.4000, x305 info@lumatech.com

New LED Gear Status Lights For King Air

effectively shortcut the longer loop trails. For those who have the time and fitness levels to take in the more distant sights, the North Wilderness Trail snakes 7 miles through the park's backcountry, while the Chalone Peak Trail heads 5 miles (each way) into the southern portions of the park, including to the two highest peaks (each around 3,300 feet elevation). Our goal was to experience both the talus caves and the high pinnacles, while keeping our hiking time within reason.

While the most impressive talus caves are on the Balconies Cliffs Trail, it was on the opposite (west) side of the park. So, we began our trek on the Moses Spring Trail and took the Bear Gulch Cave side-trail in order to get at least a little exposure to talus caves. Climbing out of the talus caves, on that route, put us at the Bear Gulch Reservoir, a perfect spot for a picnic lunch and some relaxing wildlife viewing. With bellies refueled, we proceeded up the Rim Trail and High Peaks Trail. We elected to tackle the steep and narrow sections (rated as "strenuous," in places), but there is a more moderate (though slightly longer) detour, if you prefer. This was the highlight of the day, making the effort well worth it for the up close and personal views of the pinnacles and the soaring birds. The sections of trail that included single human foot sized steps carved into the steep rock faces were great fun for the teenagers and created a great appreciation for the work that goes into creating these trails and maintaining them for public

use. Descending from the High Peaks, we circled back to Bear Gulch via the Blue Oak and Condor Gulch trails. Our 6.1-mile hike was certainly a bit tiring but equally rewarding. Since we did it in a leisurely fashion, taking plenty of food, drink and photo breaks, it was entirely manageable with two teenagers in tow and needing only to carry very light backpacks.

California Dreamin'

Pinnacles National Park is open all year, with the most popular seasons being spring and fall. Temperatures are generally agreeable from October to May but can become quite hot in the summer months (especially if combined with strenuous hiking). Our late-March timing provided comfortable temperatures and pleasant conditions. We removed layers of clothing as the cool cave routes opened into sun drenched clearings, only to add them back again as the whipping winds in the higher elevations cooled us back down from the sweaty climbs. On average, about 200,000 visitors enter PNP per year. In spite of that number rising during the recent COVID years, dense crowds are not (yet) a concern and we never found ourselves feeling crowded. Quite the opposite, in fact.

In 1850, California became the 31st state and over the next century it became the most populace state. Today, in spite of its nearly 32 million residents, vast stretches of

KING AIR ACADEMY

INITIAL, RECURRENT & PERSONALIZED TRAINING

www.kingairacademy.com

G1000/NXi Full Motion Sim
G600TXi/750 Full Motion Sim
EADI/530's Motion Sim
ADI/530's AATD

Host of the King Air Gatherings
Insights by Tom Clements
King Air Training Videos

Model Specific Training
In Aircraft Training
Insurance Approved

"We'll train you in any aircraft, as long as it is a King Air."

King Air Academy is home to the most experienced King Air pilots and instructors in the industry. Our mission is to provide efficient, relevant and personalized instruction, specific to the King Air, for today's flying environment while respecting your time and money.

602-551-8100 info@kingairacademy.com

Inside the talus cave of the Bear Gulch Cave Trail. Some light sneaks through gaps in the boulder roof, but the depths of the cave remain quite dark, even near midday. Because the eyes have little time to adjust from the brightness outside the entrance, wise hikers will have headlamps or flashlights at the ready to help navigate the cave's narrow passages and sometimes slippery and uneven footing.





PT6A & PT6T Repair & Overhaul

PRIMETURBINES

A global network serving you

Dallas | Pittsburgh | Phoenix | Miami | Brisbane | Sydney

sales@primeturbines.com

972.406.2100

Scan and check us out on our social media platforms!



Our Services Include...

- ▶ Engine Overhauls
- ▶ Hot Sections
- ▶ Fuel Nozzles
- ▶ Bleed Valves
- ▶ Power Sections
- ▶ Gas Generators
- ▶ M.O.R.E. Program
- ▶ Engine Exchanges

and More!





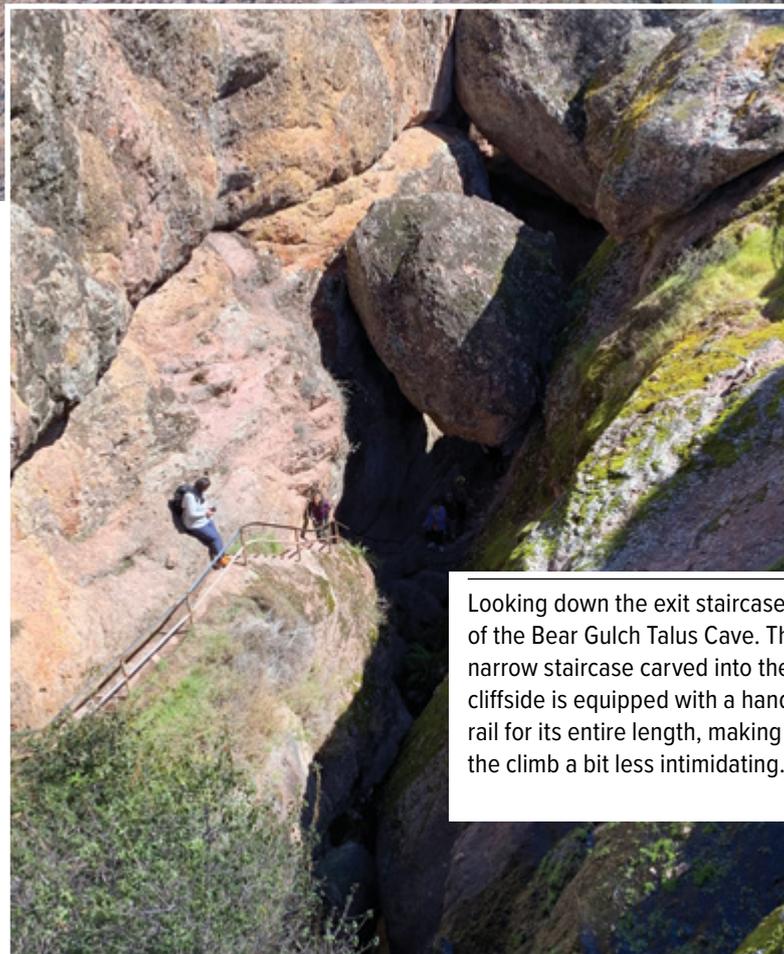
The author's family descends the steep and narrow section of High Peaks Trail between the Scout and Hawkins peaks (elevation 2,600-2,700 feet). These "staircases" are blasted or jackhammered into the rock and most have handrails, cables and an adjacent rock face to grasp for balance.

California remain sparsely inhabited and feel as rural and remote as some of the least populace states. For aviators, California's diversity can be both enticing and challenging. Sporting over 500 airports, about half of which are public use, there are few areas you might wish to explore where a suitable airport cannot be found nearby.

Thus, the question becomes one of circumstance. Will you visit Pinnacles National Park because you are in the area anyway with some idle time to fill? Or will you visit simply because it is so close to many airport choices and, therefore, makes a great excuse to plan a fly out for a day or weekend excursion? Either way, you won't be disappointed and will likely depart with thoughts of how and when you can find another reason to return to Pinnacles and soar with its condors again (metaphorically speaking, anyway). **KA**

Copyright 2023, Matthew McDaniel
First publication rights granted to the Village Press, for King Air magazine
All other rights reserved by copyright holder

Matthew McDaniel is a Master & Gold Seal CFII, ATP, MEI, AGI & IGI and Platinum CSIP. In 33 years of flying, he has logged over 21,000 hours total, over 5,800 hours of instruction-given and over 2,500 hours in various King Airs and the BE-1900D. As owner of Progressive Aviation Services, LLC (www.progaviation.com), he has specialized in Technically Advanced Aircraft and Glass Cockpit instruction since 2001. Currently, he is also a Boeing 737-Series Captain for an international airline, holds 8 turbine aircraft type ratings, and has flown over 125 aircraft types. Matt is one of less than 15 instructors in the world to have earned the Master CFI designation for 10 consecutive two-year terms. He can be reached at: matt@progaviation.com or 414-339-4990.



Looking down the exit staircase of the Bear Gulch Talus Cave. The narrow staircase carved into the cliffside is equipped with a hand-rail for its entire length, making the climb a bit less intimidating.