

A Great Sue, Marty, and Jenny Weekend

It was solid overcast all over at 8 so I went back to bed. Marty surely was already up and Sue was already at the car dealer getting an issue diagnosed. Later it was still overcast but I made coffee and started my day. Sue called me, I called Marty, and we set up to meet at my hangar. I arrived first and it was still overcast so I sat on the back of my RAV4, listening to Leo Laporte, and sipping on the coffee I had along. Small areas of blue appeared overhead. They showed up and it was time for fun.



Sue found that by taking a picture of herself in my spinner, it enhanced her hips



Then they conspired against me once the plane was out on the ramp



Hey, what's that little do-dad thingy down there do?



Sue got belted in and lowered her microphone for the picture



A great pilot picture except we were still on the ground

Off we went into a mostly cloud free sky. We saw a really filthy gray sky up ahead. It was the worst going past Lake Mathews and once past Lake Elsinore, we finally got above all of that crud, and we could see for miles. See, snow way over there, and the haze below us.



Once above the haze layer, the turbulence seemed to settle down. 'George' flew us for while. Then we came to the decision point. To continue straight ahead to the Borrego Valley airport meant that our current altitude of 5,500' would just skim the hills ahead, while a 15° turn to the left would take us around those hills. We went left. We got to a lower area ahead and I asked Marty if he would 'take it' for a bit as the turbulence might get too much for the autopilot in the V shaped valley we were going to fly through. And we had to come way down. Marty took over and he loves to fly.

He did a superb job and brought us down and around the west end of the airport circumventing the Aerobatic Box established just north of the runway. Everybody noticed that it was getting warmer and warmer as we came down to traffic pattern altitude. I took over for the landing when we got close. A couple of turns and then the runway was lined up 2 miles in front of us. I had some work cut out for me. It was blowing at 20 gusting to 25 from 40° left of straight ahead. I worked for a few minutes and rolled out and slowed until a turn off the runway onto a taxiway was easy.

We rolled past a parked Cessna without a propeller, then a huge white 100LL fuel tank, a Beechcraft, and into our parking place on the ramp. By the time we parked, that white fuel tank was a block away. We got out of the airplane into a bright 95° sunshiny day with hefty surface winds.

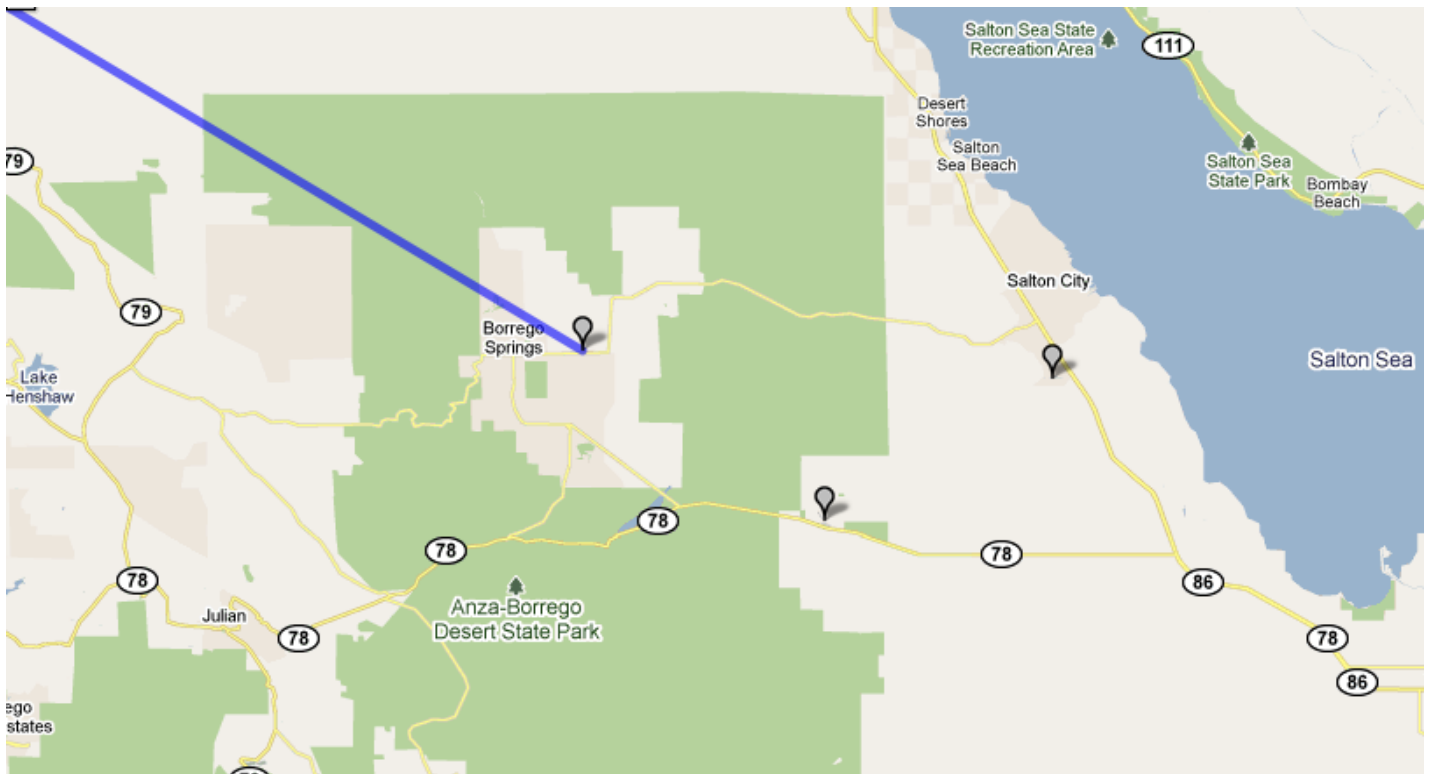
It was real nice inside the Italian restaurant on the field. Not overly cold, just nice. Huge murals of airplanes on the walls. We were there after the lunch crowd had departed and were told that today, they had an internet glitch and they could only accept cash, no credit cards. No problem.

I knew warm air and high temps would not set well with a full plate lunch so chose their Chicken Parmesan Hero sandwich. Good choice. Marty's stories kept us entertained while lunch was coming.



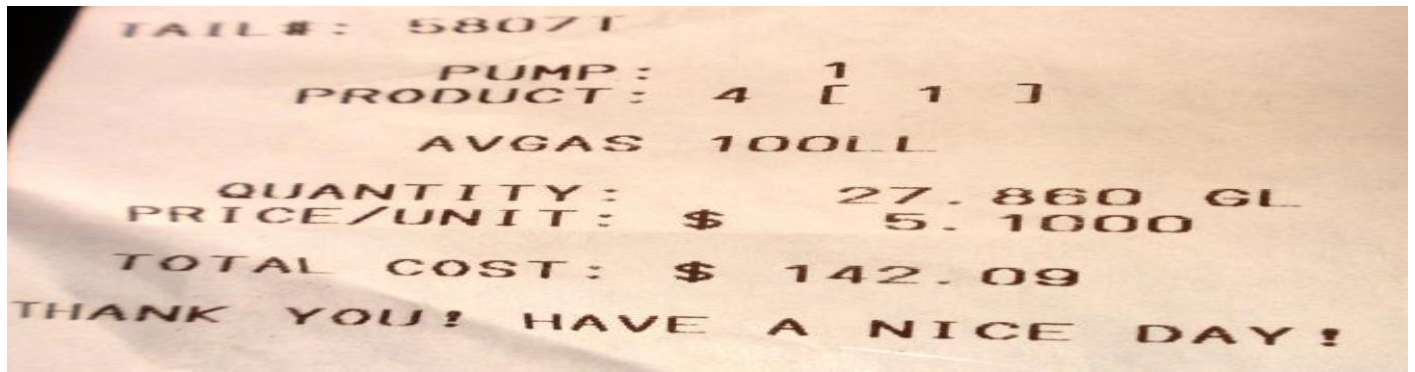
This was a great tasting sandwich.

Sue and I took the second half of our sandwiches home, for later. After we walked back outside, Sue was interested in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, so Marty walked next door to the airport manager's office and was given a brochure all about it. It turns out that we were right in the middle.



Next up, get some gas, 100LL fuel, you know, avgas. Engine start and taxi back to that huge white tank which held what I desired. I had calculated that with 50 gallons in my tanks, we would be at max gross weight for my airplane with the 3 of us onboard. A plus was the long runway and hefty headwind. A minus would be the density altitude due to the high temps. I suggested 25 in each tank.

Marty pumped and Sue watched and learned. He held back a gallon to compensate for full tummies.



Yes! Today's secret is that you can get 100LL at L08 for only \$5.10 a gallon

Full tummies and almost 50 gallons of fuel onboard, I launched into that wind and we started climbing by the middle of the runway. I raised the landing gear, retracted the flaps, and once we were at a couple hundred feet above the ground, dropped the nose to a zero climb attitude to pick up airspeed. Mooneys love that and soon we were climbing beyond expectations. I flew a climbing turn around the airport to get us up higher for the hills ahead. With the intermixed desert thermal turbulence, it was a lot of work to drive that airplane. So I offered it to Marty who flew us 2 more times around the area.



From that altitude, Sue snapped a good one of the Salton Sea, 15 miles over there, to the east



We saw haze coming back into our life ahead and clouds over there in the Orange County area



Sue kept finding areas of interest below as we flew back to Corona and it was only 53° outside, up there at 8,500' after we had just experienced 90+ degrees outside on the Borrego ramp.



A solitary cloud coming up just below us with that thick haze blocking all of the features below



Another cloud up close and personal going by at 200 MPH

Marty had hand flown the whole way back to Corona and I again slid my seat forward in time to grab the last 5 minutes of the action. (I can't reach the brakes from way back there). More crosswinds for landing at Corona. As we taxied back to the hangar, we noticed that fuel was 29 cents a gallon higher here. And Corona usually has cheaper fuel than the surrounding area.



The last I saw of them, they were walking off somewhere together.

Chapter Two - Flying with Jenny

I did get to have my first (and second) flight with Jenny the following day.

A project team had relocated to our building at work a couple of months ago. Elizabeth was a part of that team. Several weeks ago I mentioned about flying sometime and she said thanks, but that the thought scared her. But she did mention that another person on the same project team probably would be excited to go flying. Elizabeth gave me a name and a contact number - hello Jenny.

After a phone number mix-up where I called the wrong Jenny, who thought it was a prank call about going flying with a stranger, I checked back with Elizabeth the next day. She gave me a second number to call another Jenny - - no answer, but the following day it was all unraveled.

Then I got to meet Jenny. She had taken flying lessons many years ago but she didn't get to finish them for personal reasons. She seemed eager to take to the sky again. I emailed directions to her to find my hangar. We established a plan for a fun flight on Sunday, the day after the Borrego flight described above. The weather forecast included those pesky morning clouds.

Sunday morning's overcast was low and lingering so we didn't even meet until noon. It was going to be her first time flying with me. We spent a good hour in the hangar having fun talking about my Mooney and flying in general before we rolled the airplane out and put our cars inside. The clouds broke up some as we talked. As an added bonus, Jenny fixed my hangar door.



A lot of clouds were still present, but a lot of blue sky as well

At the run up area, my factory installed tachometer displayed an unusual reading (0 RPMs) during the Right Only mag check. My JPI tachometer said all was normal, and my ears confirmed that. The Left Only mag check really got my attention with no RPM drop at all, so I scrubbed the takeoff, apologized to Jenny, and taxied back close to where my A&P happened to be working on another airplane. Dave magically showed up while we were still inside the airplane. He explained that I had I had a "Hot Mag" condition and Ground Ops could be dangerous but if I had normal RPMs on a takeoff roll, I was good to go, otherwise to abort the takeoff. Jenny and I were both comfortable with that explanation.

Back at the run up area, I did everything by the book and expressed to her on the intercom that I thought it was OK to take off. Jenny concurred, then I did a full throttle test with the brakes locked, saw normal indications from all gauges including normal RPMs and after confirming again with Jenny, I keyed the mic, "Corona traffic, Mooney 5807Tango departing runway 25 for a Left Downwind departure, Corona traffic" Brakes released, nose pointed down those white center lines, we rolled ahead faster and faster into that wonderful feeling of smoothness when we were no longer getting feedback from the tires. We started up into our departure climb. There were jiggles from Mother Nature almost immediately.



Still mostly cloudy ahead, but we would be turning to go the other way

The only thing slightly disturbing to me was a healthy hissing sound in our headsets. Wind noise does that, so I adjusted my overhead vent and temporarily blocked the one for Jenny, but the hissing continued. Rule #1, is always to Fly The Airplane. I did not allow it to distract me from my main objective but it was a good surprise test. We soon found that it was the door, which was latched properly at the main point, but not on the overhead clamp. We came around the pattern, landed, secured the door, and took off again after another careful run-up.

Another choppy batch of air was tossed at us again on departure, but that is normal for Corona. Once away from the 'funnel' area caused by the shape and proximity of the Santa Ana mountains and the Chino foothills to the west, the ride usually settles out in 5 minutes or less. Not today.

This was a day of constant change and constant decision making as well. The area to the northeast, out to the Hesperia, Victorville, Apple Valley area looked great on my PC at home but now we saw a low line of clouds with thick haze below that. I opted to head southeast where the air looked cleaner.

Passing through 3,000' and no longer under any clouds, conditions were still unruly as we followed over the I-15 freeway southbound toward Temecula. The constant banging from the turbulence was starting to irritate me. I mentioned to Jenny, "If at any time you feel that you would like me to turn around and head back to Corona due to this turbulence, please speak up". It was a pretty rough ride. "I wouldn't mind going back." - came back into my headset and so after I confirmed with Jenny, I made a 45° banked left turn to dump altitude and start to head on back. Our total flight time was probably under ½ hour, but we did go flying.

We landed, stopped at my ramp area, opened up my hangar, drove our cars back outside, and grabbed a cold drink from my hangar fridge as the Mooney cooled down a bit. You know what I chose. In fact when I'm gone, a **Blue Can** would probably make a fitting final marker for me.

Before I am gone however, I think I still have a lot of people to introduce to the world of aviation. I hope I get to meet all of them in time.



I would say Jenny looked like a happy gal regardless of the turbulence we encountered up there.

We talked and had fun for at least another hour before she gave me a goodbye hug. All things aviation. We will do it again soon and I hope it will be a much better flying day.



I think this gal belongs
1 at an airport - 2 then in an airplane - 3 then in the sky

Ed Shreffler

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Pictures by everyone mentioned

Email me at: eshreffler@sbcglobal.net

More of my stories are at: <http://www.mooneyevents.com/shreffler.html>