

A Tri Tip for Laura

It happens once in a while. A lady emailed me saying she wanted to go flying with me. A bodacious lady to be sure. (I like bodacious.) Per <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/bodacious?s=t> [boh-dey-shuhs] adjective

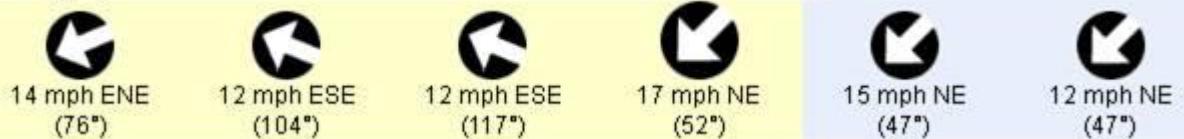
1. South Midland and Southern U.S. **thorough; blatant; unmistakable:** a bodacious gossip.
2. Slang.
 - a. remarkable; outstanding: a bodacious story.
 - b. audacious; bold or brazen.
 - c. sexy; voluptuous. (I can't include all of that stuff in here.)

Well, she is all of that - and more. She is Laura, the wife of my good friend Alan Van Leuven, who is now a pilot himself. I am partly to blame for that. Because I flew him to Sedona AZ for lunch and back in September 2004, (<http://www.mooneyevents.com/SedonaTripRecapped.pdf>), he decided he could do that also. So he took his flying lessons. And he became an FAA certified pilot. Finally.

He has not done too much flying after getting his wings. He also does not feel that he is ready to take on passengers because he flies so seldom. And he wanted to get to the stage where he was confident so he could ask his bodacious wife to go flying with him. I completely understand the feeling of being rusty at one's flying skills. I have been there.

Laura also had apprehensions about flying in a General Aviation airplane. My personal objective was to help her overcome those apprehensions so she could be a smiling companion flying alongside with her husband in the future. With all of those considerations in mind, I rejected us flying on Saturday and deferred to fly us on Sunday instead. The forecast winds were the reason.

Wind (mph):



The Santa Ana winds 'Do a number' on us pilots trying to land at Corona. When they are from the northeast, they spill over the trees just north of the runway. It is not an easy landing.

I also rejected us flying to Santa Barbara as suggested by Alan, as I do not have recent experience landing there. Again, I wanted Laura to see a confident pilot flying to a destination and appearing to know exactly what he was doing. I chose Camarillo. A great choice for excellent tri-tip sandwiches.

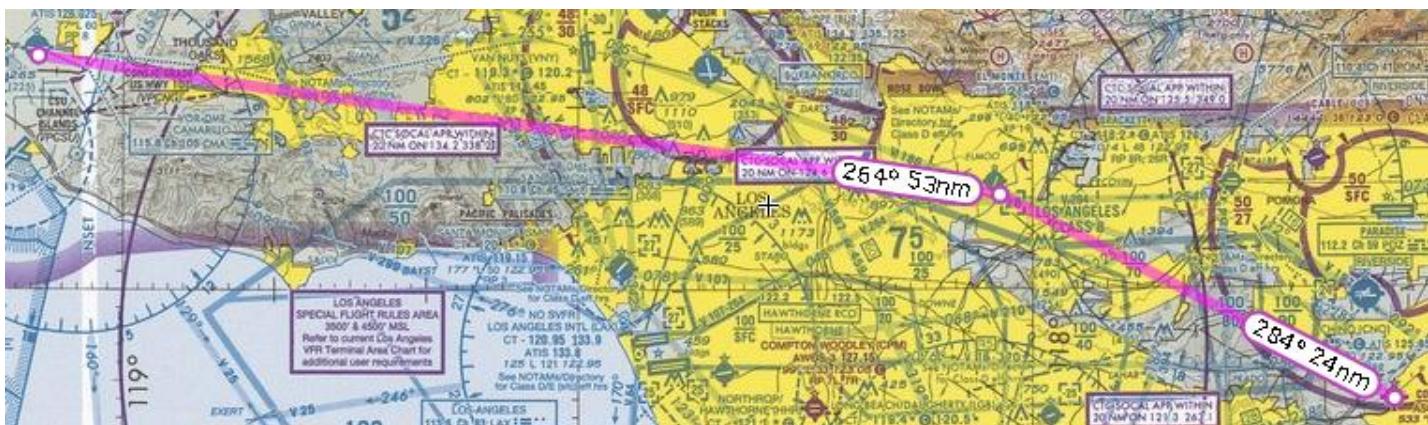
We met around 10 on a beautiful Sunday morning. The closest cloud was in Oregon. Alan and I shook hands. He smiled as Laura grabbed me with her bodacious good morning hug. I wavered, but she kept me from falling. The fuel truck was right there in our ramp fueling another airplane when we arrived, so we had Benny add enough fuel for a safe flight without making us too heavy for takeoff. It is a numbers game. We had to go through an unusual series of pulling the Mooney out of the hangar and later partially pushing it back in (twice) to accommodate my hangar neighbors and their airplanes, but Alan did all of the work and I am very grateful.

Thanks to Alan and Laura's efforts, my walker was stowed behind the back seats. I drove my car over to the airplane and hoisted myself up on the wing and swung inside. Once I am sitting in my pilot's seat, my osteoarthritis of the knees issue disappears and I am just as good as I used to be. Then Alan climbed in the back seat leaving me to flirt with Ms. Bodacious sitting right next to me. The numbers game paid off as we easily cleared the trees beyond the end of the runway. It was so smooth like I couldn't believe it myself. Not the usual ripples just west of the airport caused by the convergence of the Santa Ana mountains and the Chino Hills on both sides of CA 91 below. Nothing.

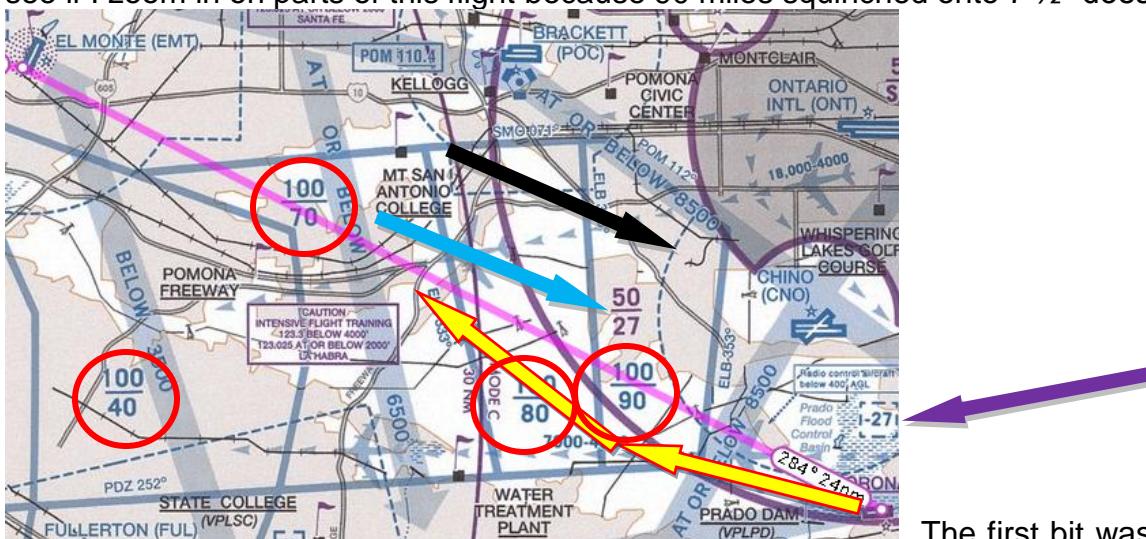


Well, this was my flight plan for today.

An astute pilot will recognize I planned our flight to CMA (a TACAN) instead of KCMA (an airport) but they are in the same place and I punched the correct destination into the GPS today. The plan was to overfly the El Monte airport, then turn 20° left to go straight to Camarillo. The reason for the dogleg route is for clearance between us and the LAX Class B airspace above and later next to us.

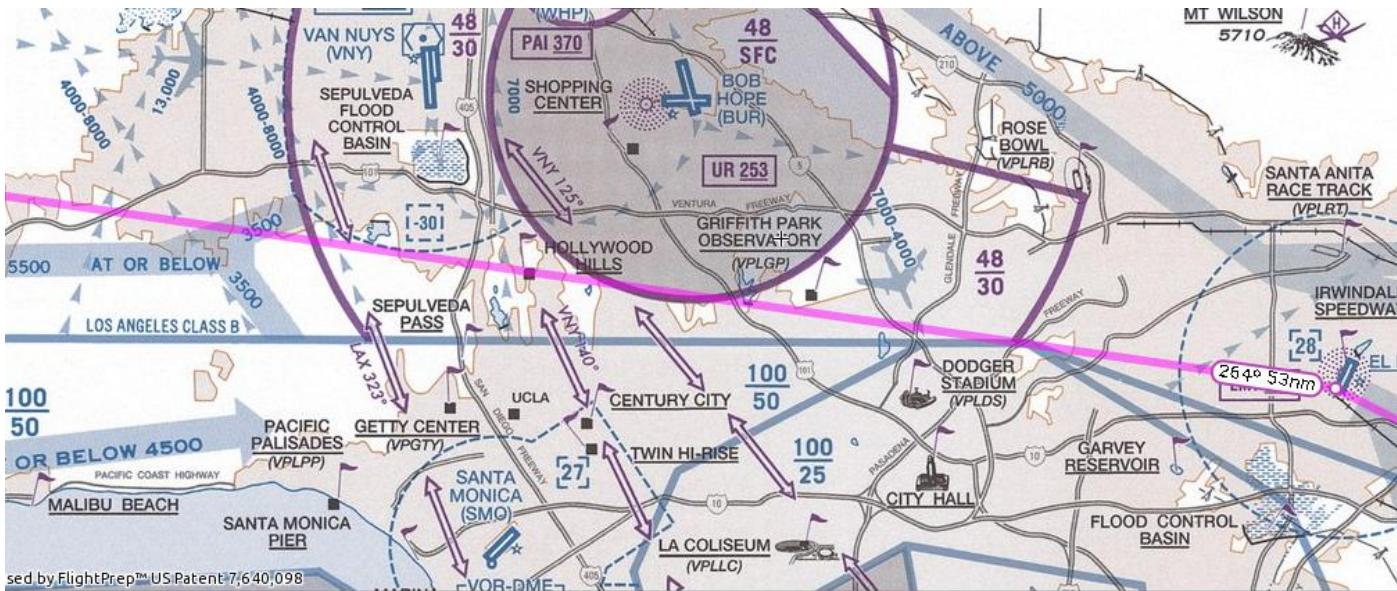


Corona on the right, El Monte at the bend, and Camarillo at the far left. But there is much more to see if I zoom in on parts of this flight because 90 miles squinched onto 7 ½" doesn't do it justice.



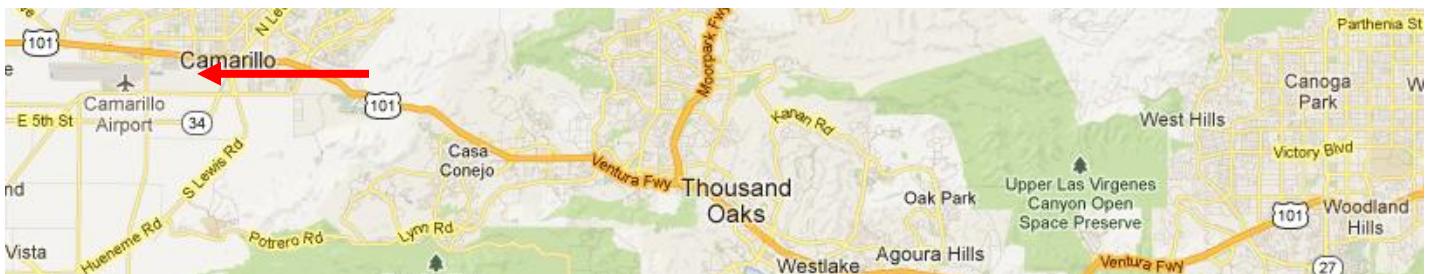
The first bit was actually more south till we got to where I wanted to turn right and converge on my pink planned route. The first reason is because of that dotted blue line circle the black arrow is pointed to. The purple arrow shows a [-27] which means that Chino's airspace is in that circle going up to 2,700 feet. I chose to not talk to Chino tower and ask permission to transition through their airspace, so I went around it. Zoom!

The second reason is because of those fractions I have circled in red. For example, the 100 over 70 means that the LAX Class B airspace starts at 7,000 feet and goes up to 10,000 feet. The boundaries are the blue lines. I felt safe and legal going under it as I planned to climb up to 6,500 feet today going westbound. Then there is that magenta 50 over 27 for Ontario's Class C airspace above us. Overwhelming at first? Maybe. Doable with experience? Yes when it all makes sense.



The next segment has us up at cruise altitude, me flirting with Laura and the air was smooth as silk.

As we could see out the left window, Dodger stadium and the downtown LA skyscrapers went by our left windows and then off to the right were the Bob Hope and Van Nuys airports. Then on our left Malibu Beach was right down there. From there we still had to go past Woodland Hills, Calabasas, Agoura, Westlake Village, and on over Thousand Oaks on the way to Camarillo. Time to descend.



About 20 miles out I switched over to KCMA ATIS and got information Victor which I relayed to SoCal TRACON. All three of us inside were wearing headsets and could hear everything that was being said on the radio. We could expect a straight in landing to runway 26. The 101 was off to our right.

So I topped the last hill to the east, pulled the power back, and popped the speed brakes to help diminish lift from those awesome Mooney wings. I wanted everything to go just as scripted from a Disney movie for Laura's sake. Two miles out, on glide path, lined up for the runway, speed nailed for final approach, no crosswind, almost a hands in your lap landing and ATC says "Mooney 5807 Tango, expect a go around". One mile out. We could all see the airplane ahead of us rolling down the runway for takeoff. Half a mile out, slower, lower, watching and listening, all looking good to land.

I reduced my speed further and slid down to about 50 feet off of the ground. We could all see that that the departing airplane ahead of us was now airborne and higher than we were. Forty feet. Thirty feet. Twenty feet. Ten and - "**Mooney 5807Tango, go around.**" - boomed over the radio.

Oh poop. What was that all about?

Pilots know what I mean, a five or ten dollar bill wasted because of an ATC directive. I slid the black power lever forward and soon we were again developing close to 200 horsepower from a 4 banger. Positive rate of climb, gear up, flaps positioned properly. The strawberry fields were not forever, but they were right down there out my left window. Being directed to offset to the left, a 20° left turn made the tower controller comfy. We climbed back up a thousand feet to get another clearance to land.

I went around their traffic pattern and was cleared #2 for landing following a Cessna. I extended my downwind for extra spacing then carved a descending left turn back to the runway.

I now had a Beechcraft Baron two miles in trail, so in his interest, I pulled off of the runway on the first turnoff so they would not have to endure a go around as well. We taxied to the Waypoint Café ramp.

It was cooler at Camarillo than it was when we left Corona. Laura confided in me that she had felt a bit of apprehension on my takeoff roll and climbout in Corona just because it was not a common occurrence for her, but once we were airborne, she was comfortable again. Later she mentioned that her confidence in my piloting skills let her really enjoy the fun of going somewhere via airplane.

You know, that just made my day! For me, flying is more about the people than it is about airplanes. And to hear that I helped turn someone who started her day with apprehension into a happy lady who wants to do it again just made me feel good.



From head to toe, Laura and Alan were happy campers on the grass in the café's front yard



It was really nice there and soon we were out near the ramp just 100 feet from the airplanes and 100 feet from the tri-tips. It was booked with a half hour wait. So what? A half hour watching airplanes landing is a bad thing? The restaurant gives their customers a black plastic device to hold when there is a wait, as many people go back out on the lawn to watch airplanes while waiting. When our table was ready, that device started to vibrate, happily alerting whoever had it of the news that the wait was over. I'll keep the innuendos to myself as this is a family publication..



This is the real deal here at the Waypoint Café

I already knew the real deal because I had been here before but a couple of days before we went flying, I had emailed the 2 of them some of the pilot reviews that I had read on <http://airnav.com/>

From Mark Miller on 27-Mar-2011 Best place to fly into for lunch. New owners did a great job remodeling and improving the menu. My wife use to humor me by eating at the Waypoint because I like planes, now she goes because she loves the food.

From Mike Borden on 01-May-2012 I love their food, I agree with the comment above that it is the best airport restaurant around.

From Jerry Phan on 27-Jun-2012 Holy crap the waitresses working in the cafe are like the hottest I've ever seen. I went back and told my friends and they all flew there the next weekend. I wish I could remember how the burgers tasted, I can't even remember how much I tipped. Hell I don't even remember what I ordered. All I remember was that I was mesmerized and just pointed to some picture in the menu.



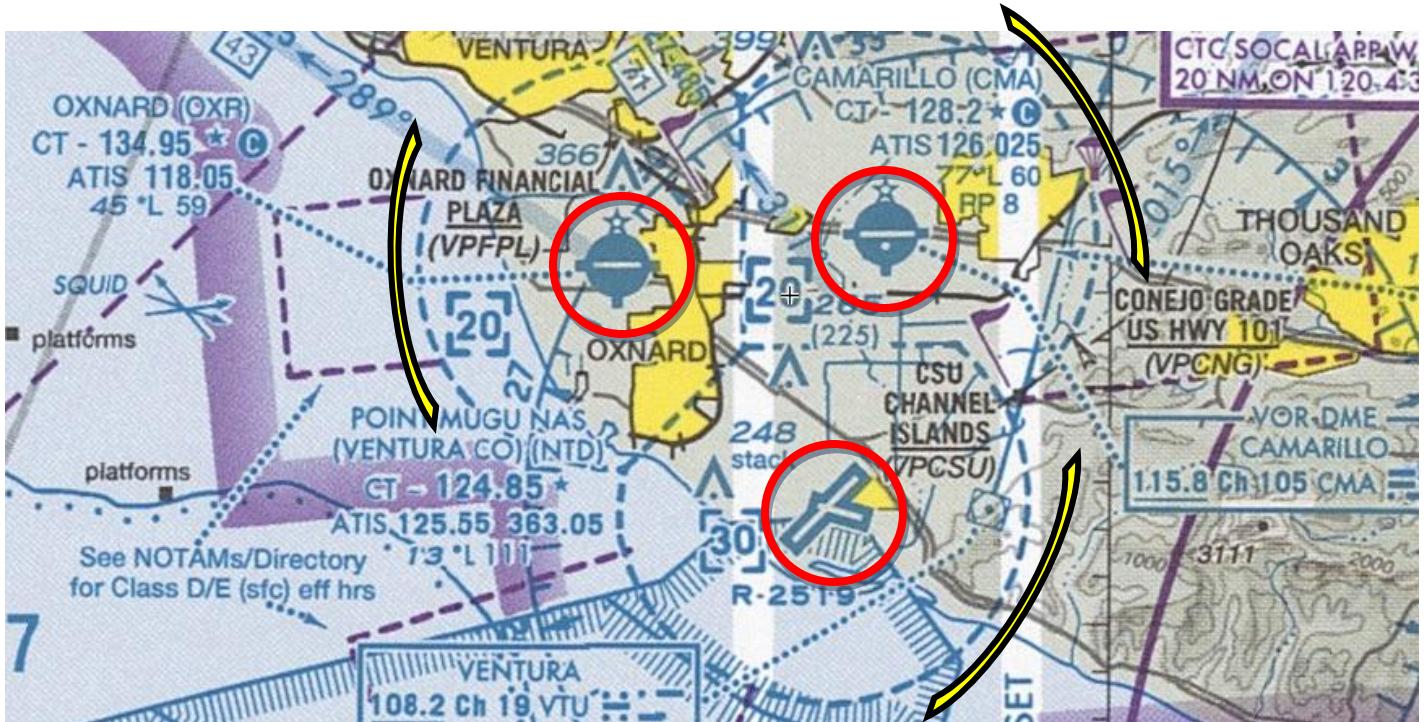
Our waitress was certainly an attractive lady, and she was also very pleasant.



Once back outside Laura befriended two dogs and ignored us for a while until she had her canine fix for the day. Then back at my Mooney, Alan demonstrated how easy it is to roll over into a right 45° bank with his hair covering one eye. He calls me dad sometimes.

Alan got my cart loaded much easier this time after following all of my suggestions and even listening to Laura. Then she popped into the back seat and Alan was now up front. The fun continued.

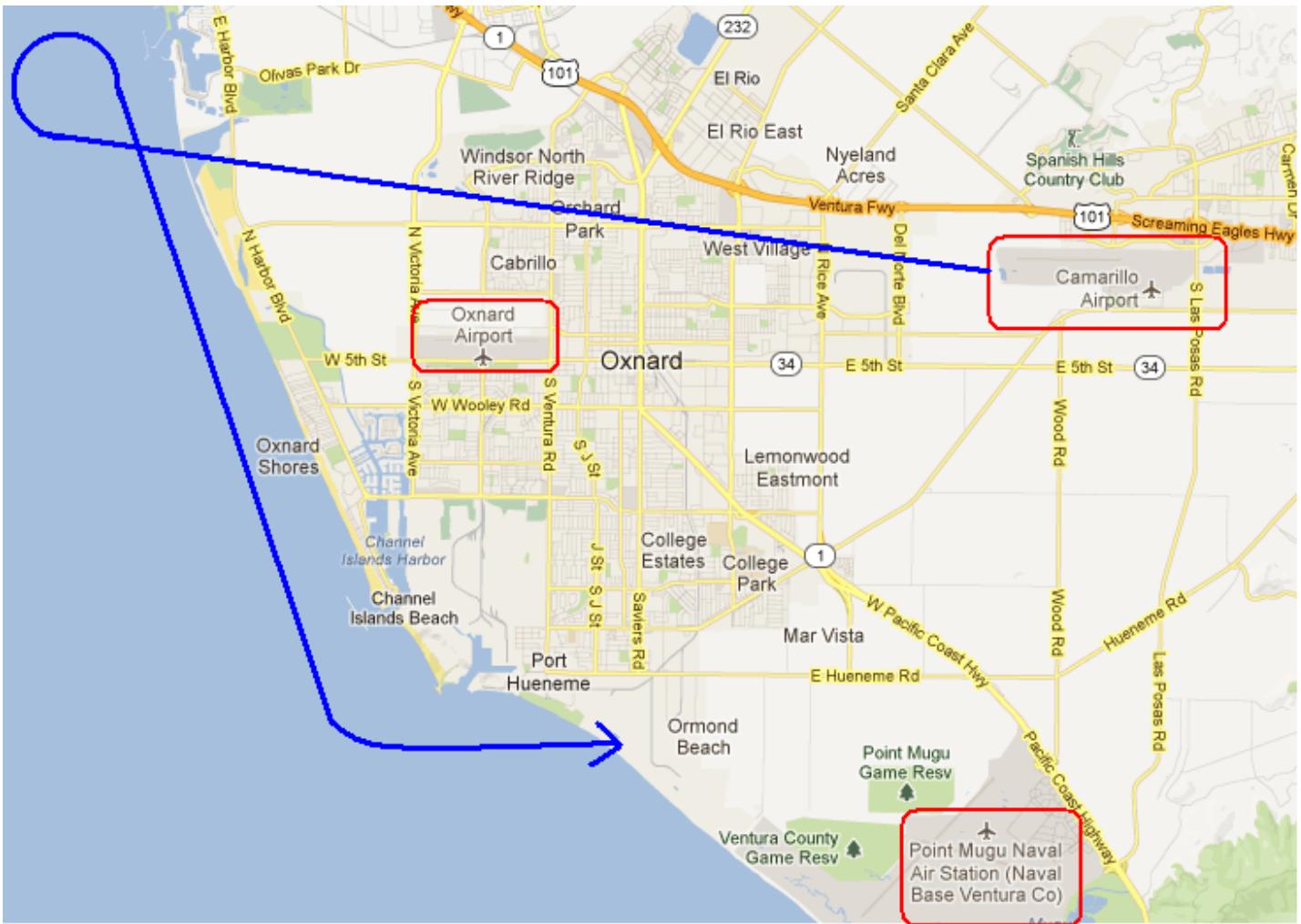
After our taxi to 26 via Alpha, Alpha 2, we found the run-up area and all that went smoothly. My Mooney was doing everything right. Soon we were cleared for takeoff. I knew we were heavier now due to 3 lunches in 3 tummies so I applied some power and picked up some speed in my daring left turn onto the runway. There were no trees to climb over at the end of this runway but there were those strawberries and I knew we had to clear them. (We did by at least 500 feet). ☺☺☺



This grouping of three Class D airports with their airspace touching each other is one reason why we hear "If you can fly-in the LA area, you can fly anywhere." The limits of their controlled airspace is shown as partial blue circles made of dashed lines just inside of my added arcs. Partial circles because all 3 of them are squished against each other creating dashed straight lines dividing them.

All three of those airports have control towers and I must have a clearance just to transition through their airspace. I had told Camarillo (CMA) of my intentions to fly west over Oxnard (OXR), so shortly after CMA tower was confident that I would not harm any of their delicious strawberries, they handed me off to OXR tower on 134.95 as shown on the chart segment above. OXR tower was easy going and just asked me to follow the (101) highway, which I did allowing us a good view of their airport out of the left windows. The air was clear and the ride was smooth.

Laura was oblivious to all of this, she was just looking down and seeing those 'Strawberry Fields Forever'. Sorry, I just had to do it. Next up, the Pacific Ocean. We climbed above the OXR airspace so we were handed off to a nice lady on the radio from Point Magu Approach Control. She watches a larger section of air all around the Point Magu Naval Air Station. It is the bottom airport on the graph above. I told her of my intentions and she was cool with that.



We did something like this although more over Hwy 101. A mile out over the ocean, I gently banked into a 45° right turn giving Laura a great view but no discomfort. We were still pretty low, maybe some 2,500' above the water. Then I cruised southeast parallel to the shoreline and handed the controls over to Alan.

He took over and did the climbing left turn to head eastward and I fiddled with the GPS to determine exactly which way to go - to overfly El Monte again. I gave him the heading and set up the HSI so he could glance over at the yellow needle for directional guidance. When we were up to 5,500', he leveled off for cruise. I pulled the power way back so we would go about the speed he is used to in the Cessna 172 he flies sometimes. (115 knots). Then adjust RPM to 2500, leaned out to economy, cowl flaps closed, and nothing else to do but flirt with Laura the rest of the way. A tough life. It was so smooth flying east along the north end of the LA Basin that Sima is going to accuse me of fibbing, but it really was that smooth. It was almost like a small party bus with the giggles on board.

When we were a mile above El Monte, I could see the green of the Santa Ana River wetlands, the white color of the hangars at Corona, the rest of the city beyond it some 28 miles away, with the backdrop of the Santa Ana mountains framing a beautiful view, and a pretty blue sky beyond.

I pointed over there, and Alan made a 20° right turn to point us to home as I pulled the throttle back to 20" on the MP gage while still gently flirting with his wife just to prove I can still multi task.

I told ATC we were going down. "**Mooney 5807Tango, descend and maintain four thousand five hundred.**" - boomed over the radio. These "Climb and maintain (to some altitude) or descend and maintain (to some altitude) restrictions are for spacing from other airplanes on IFR flight plans and if they have time, they also keep us VFR guys separated.

"Mooney 5807Tango, turn left to 100 degrees." I pointed on an angle over to the left to give Alan an rough idea to follow while I fiddled with the knobs on the instruments to shore up an exact 100° on the yellow needle for him to follow from then on.

Sometimes we wonder why - and sometimes we know why we are diverted by ATC. This time was easy. An airliner out of Ontario airport went by from left to right, 2 miles in front of us, at about our altitude. **"Mooney 5807Tango, resume own navigation."** I fiddled again and pointed. Alan flew us to Corona with no more fanfare. He let me do the 2 final turns and attempt my self destruct routine but we did fine. I landed and taxied back to my hangar which as you all know is #32. - - -

I stopped, shut it down, opened the door, and they both escaped in a hurry. ☺ I tossed out the keys for my hangar as I was busy logging some flight numbers for my records. I get the numbers from several instruments so it takes a minute or so.

Alan is soon back at up at the airplane doorway explaining that the key will not work no matter how much he jiggles it, and "Is there a secret?" I told him it is the big key. He said he used the big key. I asked him what hangar did he try to open. He said #31. I said try #32, and went back to logging.

These two people are awesome. They pitched in and helped with everything for me. The hangar was opened, my car was back out on the ramp, my rollator was out of the airplane, and soon I was rollating over to my RAV4 again. BOOM, Ms. Bodacious gave me a surprise thank you hug before I had a chance to clear my ears and hear what she was saying.

Alan rolled the Mooney back into the hangar, Laura made the beer runs to the fridge, and I answered all of their questions while seated on the back of my RAV4. Blue Cans under a blue sky equals conversation time. What do you bet when Alan decides to get his own plane, he chooses a Mooney?

Always wishing fun could last forever, but it was time to go. Unexpectedly I got another (better than chocolate) hug from one very happy lady. Yes, this one came complete with a quick kiss on my cheek. *Flying is really about the people!*

Ed Shreffler

10/28/2012

Feel free to email me at: eshreffler@sbcglobal.net

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