

## The Ivy League

All of a sudden on a Thursday afternoon, it hit me. It had been 3 or 4 weeks since my last Angel Flight and I did have Saturday free after all. I thought I really should go check to see what's available. Upon checking the [AFW missions available](#) website, I found something very much like this, except it was last week's list.

Angel Flight Information Database Service (AFIDS) - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

Back Forward Reload Stop Home <http://afids.angelflightwest.org> AltaVista Image

OCCU Sigalert BofA 7437 Jepp Wx Maps

Airport Wing: California, South Airport: Type: Pilot Needed

Update List

The following missions are available for Command Pilots. Click on the mission number to view detailed information about the mission and enter a request for the mission. Click on the airport name to view detailed information about airport (courtesy of our friends at [AirNav](#)). Green background denotes a camp mission. Yellow background denotes HSEATS mission. \*Weight is total weight including passenger, companions, and baggage.

96 missions. Displaying page 1 of 4 [Next page-->](#)

Mission#	Leg	Date	Origin	Destination	#Pass/ Wgt*	Dist.
137066 (Patient)	-1 <a href="#">(open)</a>	6/6/2007 (Wednesday)	<a href="#">SDL (Scottsdale, AZ)</a>	<a href="#">ONT (Ontario, CA)</a>	1 150	285
Illness:		Breast Cancer		Flight Time: Depart noon		
137317 (Patient)	-3 (filled)	6/6/2007 (Wednesday)	<a href="#">SAC (Sacramento, CA)</a>	<a href="#">SMO (Santa Monica, CA)</a>	2 330	307
Illness:		Urea Cycle Disorder (OTC)		Flight Time: 3 leg relay		
137396 (Patient)	-1 <a href="#">(open)</a>	6/6/2007 (Wednesday)	<a href="#">SBD (San Bernardino, CA)</a>	<a href="#">PAO (Palo Alto, CA)</a>	2 305	312
Illness:		Pulmonary Hypertension		Flight Time: Flexible		
137408 (Patient)	-1 <a href="#">(open)</a>	6/6/2007 (Wednesday)	<a href="#">FAT (Fresno, CA)</a>	<a href="#">PAO (Palo Alto, CA)</a>	2 370	122
Illness:		Renal Cell Melanoma		Flight Time: Arrive 10:30		
137409 (Patient)	-1 <a href="#">(open)</a>	6/6/2007 (Wednesday)	<a href="#">PAO (Palo Alto, CA)</a>	<a href="#">FAT (Fresno, CA)</a>	2 370	122
Illness:		Renal Cell Melanoma		Flight Time: Depart 2:30		
137431 (Patient)	-1 <a href="#">(open)</a>	6/6/2007	<a href="#">FAT (Fresno, CA)</a>	<a href="#">BUR (Burbank, CA)</a>	1 170	168

Done

There, on the top of the list was a flight from FAT (Fresno, CA) to L22 (Yucca Valley, CA) for Saturday. I knew exactly who that patient / passenger was. It was none other than Tom Ivy from Yucca Valley. I signed up for the mission, and when it was awarded to me, I called him to let him know he had a ride home secured.

Many of you may remember about Tom Ivy. He was my very first Angel Flight passenger. It was back in October 2005. I wrote a story about that flight and named it "I Wore the Hat" which was published in the MAPA Log.

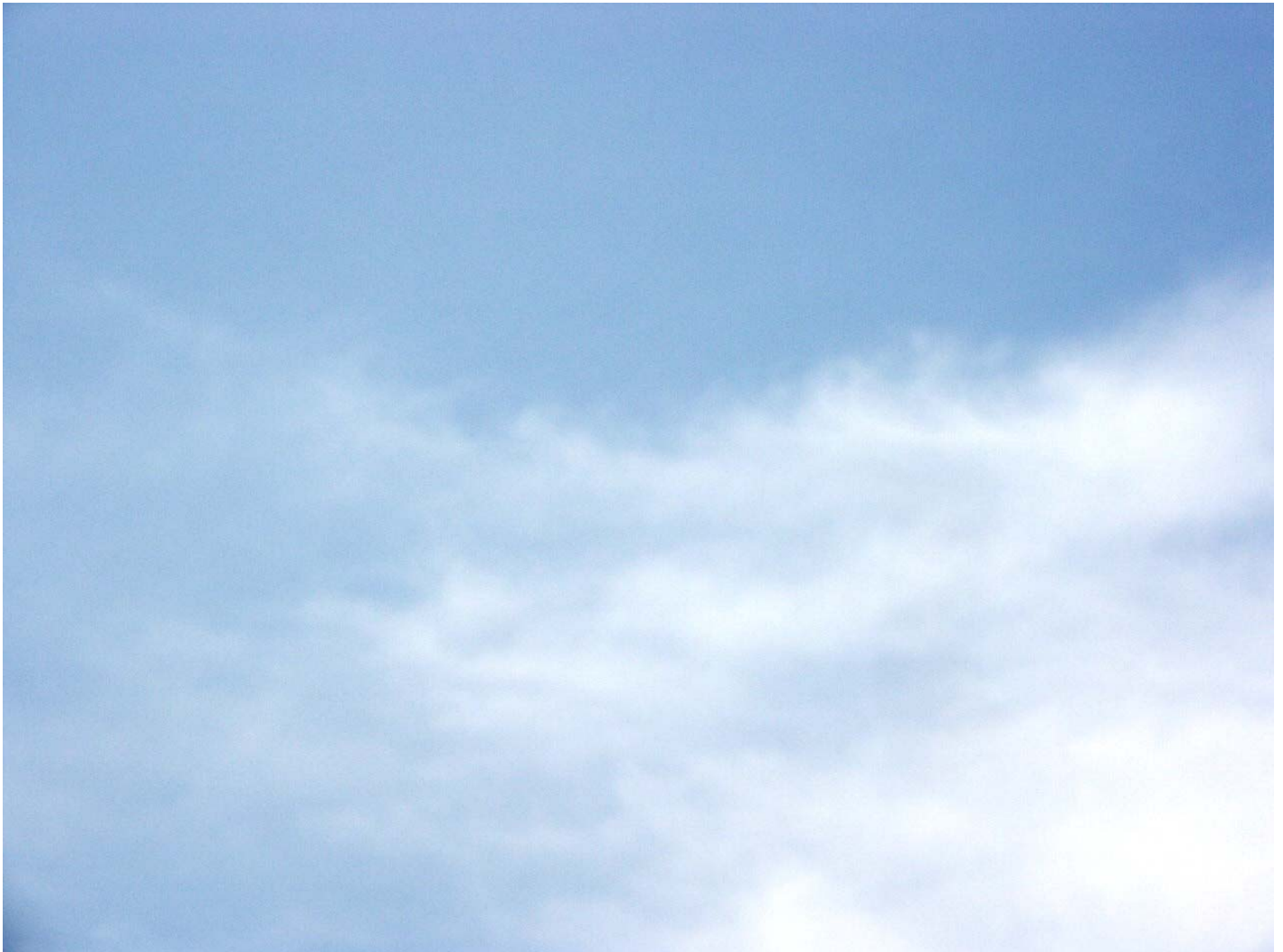
Clouds, yes clouds were my next concern. We had a low overcast that just would not burn off until late morning or early afternoon for the past several days. One day this week it was overcast here all day. When the whole LA Basin is covered with a low overcast, I just can't get outa Dodge VFR. Friday didn't seem much better. I was concerned and I'll tell you why.

I had missed an Angel Flight for the Ivys a few months earlier for the same reason. There was a lot of anxiety then on everyone's part, as the Ivys were stranded in Fresno. There was absolutely nothing I could do, short of driving my car to Fresno. An IFR rated AFW pilot finally was found and they finally got home hours late.

Amanda from AFW called me on Friday afternoon and told me they would look for an IFR backup pilot in case it was overcast on Saturday because she knew I was VFR only. Friday evening, my good buddy Joe Aldendifer called me to tell me he would be my backup pilot. Joe has an IFR rating. That really helped take the pressure off my mind. I had everything ready.



Saturday, I awoke and looked out of the nearest window to my bed. Overcast. Overcast everywhere. After checking <http://www.weatherunderground.com/US/CA/Corona.html> it looked like things would get better soon though. Cleaned up and dressed, I called weather and got the OK to go, called Joe to say I was going and would not need backup, called Tom to say I was coming, went to the airport, did the pre-flight inspection, and launched into the, by now, partly blue sky.



I used Flight Following again, both up and back. The trip up was smooth and uneventful, but the air was hazy. I landed 29 Left. Tom was standing outside of Mercury Air Center waving and hollering a welcome to me. I could hardly hear him because my ears were still somewhat plugged up, but I waved back from the plane. I climbed down, and walked over to Mercury Air. We shook hands and went inside where I got to meet Lori for the first time. Her doctor had just given her a shot of painkiller that just about had put her asleep. She managed a smile. The necessary paperwork was signed and faxed to AFW so we went out to 07T for a picture, departed, and headed south down the usually pretty San Joaquin Valley.



Tom and Lori Ivy

Haze was everywhere, so no scenery pictures this trip. Lori was sleeping in back, Tom was nodding off occasionally, and I was watching to make sure George was flying the Mooney properly. After Bakersfield, the terrain raises abruptly about 6000' for a bit to separate the San Joaquin Valley from the High Desert. Once south of those mountains, I started a descent to California City for a fuel stop and a chance to stretch our legs.

BAM, BAM, yank, jerk, bang, jerk, bang, jiggle, jiggle, yucky-poo. All hell broke loose as we started to pass over the hot High Dessert sand below. A real tough area of turbulence aggressively pushed the airplane around in all three dimensions at the same time. Pushed is an understatement. Picture multiple invisible potholes while driving a jeep. It's gut wrenching. My voice ranged through three octaves in a single sentence. I slowed to 120 knots right away. Things eased up five minutes later and fifteen minutes later we landed peacefully.

California City had a surprise in store. The web published \$3.55 fuel was actually \$4.07. (I updated AirNav.com and 100LL.com as soon as I got home). I just got \$100 worth instead of filling up. It was really warm, around 97F. Tom and Lori went inside for soft drinks while I fueled my baby. We all walked real slow in the afternoon sun. After a smoke break, we walked back to the airplane and strapped ourselves in.

California City had another surprise in store for me. My hot start procedure didn't work, for the first time in six months. What a time and place for an IO360 to pull that trick. David McGee, where are you when I need you? After 8 attempts, all bad, I reluctantly told my passengers that we would be doing nothing for the next 15 minutes while my starter motor cooled back down. Once you sling solder, well – you know - you just trashed a starter motor. We got back out and headed for the nearest shade.

Tom was sure he was the jinx part in all of this so he "hid" behind a yellow fire truck 15 minutes later while I went back to the plane alone. Sure enough, it fired right up. I taxied up to them, and with the RPMs real low, to reduce windblast, they climbed in again.

We were now heavier than we were in Fresno due to the 147 pounds of new fuel. We were close to max gross weight. It was also much warmer out. Thank goodness for the 6000' long runway. We climbed at an agonizingly slow rate compared to most flights. If you want to be nice to a Mooney, lower the nose for increased airspeed and engine cooling. She will respond in kind with additional lift, and soon we were back to around 150 and climbing steadily.

I called up Joshua Approach, and they watched us till we left their airspace. LA Center took over until we got close to Yucca Valley. Tom has made this trip with many AFW pilots. We were now in Tom's neighborhood, so I took queues from him on which way to turn and when. I made a great landing. Really. You should have been there. Come on, really.

When they got out, we all shook hands again. Per prior arrangement, I stayed inside and left the engine running, slowly. I didn't want to attempt another "hot start" in a place like Yucca Valley. I felt like the odds were against me right then. No Yucky-Poo Valley weekend stay for me.

Tom said that most pilots circle to gain altitude to clear the hills five miles west of the airport. I kept that in mind as I back-taxied on 22. I was now 450 pounds lighter and wondered how the Mooney and I would do. 5807T cleared the hills with ease. What wasn't easy was seeing where I was going. The air was filthy.

I called up Palm Springs Approach on 122.70 for Flight Following as I headed into the thick haze. Flying westbound in the afternoon is the absolute worst for visibility when it is hazy. They watched me on their radar and upon descent, held me at 8000' until another airplane passed going by the other direction at 7500'. Once clear of their area, SoCal Approach watched me all of the way to Corona. Another good landing. OK, so I only bounced once but you didn't see it. I taxied to the hangar.

That morning, I had arraigned for an oil change when I returned. Dave, my mechanic showed up right away to help push 07T up the rise into my hangar and start to drain the oil. 625 miles of absolute experience, and time for a Blue Can. Ahhhh.

ed