

A New Jenny

A new team moved into our Annex a few months ago and I had thoughts of maybe finding a new fly buddy in the mix, so I started to ask around. Elizabeth recommended I contact Jenny and gave me a phone number. That turned out to be a comedy of errors as the phone number was for a different Jenny at the court who thought I was pulling a prank phone call. We got all of that sorted out, and then I met Jenny New. She actually works in the next office space over from Elizabeth, 6 feet away.

We met at my hangar on Saturday 5/8/2011. The word might have gone out, as she walked up to me with a big smile and a big hug. A great way to start the day with a new fly-buddy.

We talked for a long time and got to know each other a lot better than you do 'down at work'. I learned that she had jumped out of an airplane - and had also gone part way through her flying lessons as a younger gal. And she was fun to be with. I explained things that brought back some good flying memories to her. Maybe a word here or there that she hadn't heard in years. We got in and taxied out to the run-up area. Something new to me happened right then. The engine run-up was OK but one gauge was not functioning properly. My A&P (almost magically) was right there and explained the condition to us and said that we were good to go, so we did.

My A&P had absolutely no control over Mother Nature however. It was bouncy right after takeoff. It did not smooth out as we climbed southeast over Corona. Passing through 3,000' it was still unruly and I was clenching my tummy muscles to mitigate the effects of this unusual harsh turbulence. We were maybe 10 to 12 minutes into the flight when I mentioned over the intercom, "If, at any time, you would rather turn back, let me know." "I wouldn't mind." - came right back to me over the intercom. We went right back to Corona and back to the hangar. Another hour of fun ensued as we were talking all about flying and about us flying again. That one gauge condition was fixed by Dave later.

She was busy the next weekend then I went flying to Phoenix with Justin a week after that. And some bad weather messed up some plans and it was 5 weeks later, on Sunday, June 12 when we tried again. More low clouds overcast the LA Basin that morning. The local phrase is 'June Gloom'.



Jenny was starting to really enjoy the ride and the sights below. An email from her the next day confirmed that when I read [It is so cool to be up above everything flying with blue skies, even if there is the usual So Cal haze](#). I love to get those emails. We leveled off at 7,500' and motored on.

When we got within 35 nm, there were a few cumulus clouds strung out in a line 1,000 feet above us and then there was a ridgeline to be crossed. Flying under the clouds rocked our boat for a minute but then crossing the ridgeline was a smooth ride. To be proper to my passenger, I did not 'drop like a rock' once we were past that ridgeline to get down to pattern altitude, I extended south coming down gently and doubling back at the right altitude to set us up for a proper landing approach.

Surface winds were 220° at 20 gusting to 25. We were landing runway 26 so that was a healthy crosswind component to be dealt with on my approach. That last minute was 'busy time' for me. It culminated in a smooth landing and I smiled. We parked near the restaurant that is closed June through August due to the summer heat there. It was 92°. We got out and found some shade.



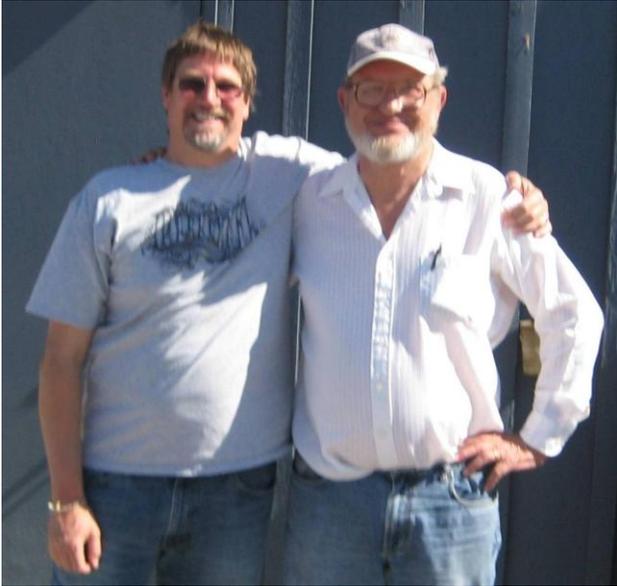
Exhibit A - OAT is Outside Air Temperature

We chatted and soon after, a Cessna 172 landed and pulled up into transient parking near where I had parked. The pilot got out and started walking across the tarmac towards us. As we knew that the airport restaurant was closed, I shouted out the 'closed' info to him in case that was the only reason he was there. Soon he hollered back, "Is that - that old codger - Ed Shreffler over there?"



I was sitting on the outside steps that lead up to the second floor observation deck and I was also behind those vertical gray slats which made me hard to see from his point of view. But as he got closer, the visual matched the voice. It was none other than Alan Van Leuven who had successfully navigated and flown alone all of the way from Chino to Borrego Springs. The smiles, introductions, and automatic teasing self-ignited. Alan is a special friend. I tend to think he is a pilot because of my influence. It was warm, very warm outside. The nice lady at the

FBO next door called out that she was closing up and did anyone want to go potty? One of us went over there right away and soon came back with a smile. She closed up and left, we took pictures.



Alan and an old grinning codger - Jenny sporting airport hair while holding me off with her right hand

These captions are fun because I get to say anything that comes to mind. And that is just how it is on my free time. My only rule is to have fun. And we all were having fun there. And it was warm.



Alan took one more picture and proved that the longer Jenny flies with me, the younger she is

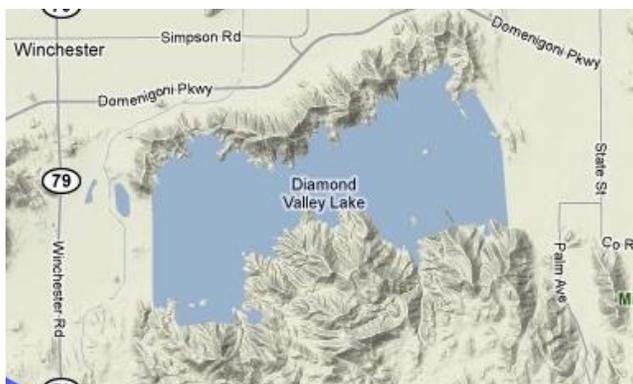
We took off back to Corona and I planned for a cruise altitude of 8,500. To get there properly, I took off on runway 26 westbound, into the wind, then turned downwind, and extended my downwind climb for 5 to 10 miles while slowly climbing east up off of that warm desert floor. Yes there were some jiggles and bounces in the local air close to the ground. Soon we climbed above all of that disturbed air. The Salton Sea out the front window was striking and then we turned northwest to Corona.



Meanwhile, Alan (grasshopper) who thought he could climb above terrain while flying a more direct route, found himself taking a quick lesson in Density Altitude and called out that he would circle around one time (he said to take pictures, we knew it was to gain altitude). We were still talking on 122.8 to each other. Actually we were three pilots who had all departed Borrego valley airport within 5 minutes of each other, and all of us were talking to each other. I found Alan's airplane on my traffic display and adjusted my course to converge on his flight path. There he was just flying along.

Attack mode, I gave the command. Jenny pulled the orange lever out and down, exposing our Mooney armament console, and she flipped up the four bright red switches labeled A, B, C, and D, exposing and arming all 4 of my 30cal. wing mounted automatic weapons. The Mooney flying gunship was on a mission. We were high and at his 4 o'clock so I dove straight at him and we closed in fast. Just before she let a hail of fury send him to a perilous conclusion, I realized that this was just a bit of my fantasy. No, not while we were flying, while I was writing this. We were just flying there.

We pulled up next to him (a half mile away) and we saw him appear to be flying backwards out of the side window. Such an accomplishment I thought, flying a Cessna 172 backwards. We chose to leave him alone as he traveled back in space (and time?). I think Jenny was impressed or just plain dismayed. He went on to survey Diamond Valley Lake for reasons of his own. We aimed for AJO.



It was only 54° out at 8,500' and the cool air coming in the overhead vents was perfect. When it got too cool, we just diminished the air flow. The view outside was still superb and we smiled. Alan was back there somewhere. We went along seeing the LA Basin haze in the distance.



Can't find one good landing spot down there from my point of view



I took two pictures and used half of each to make this composite of the fun seekers up there

Jenny was enjoying this flight so much more than our first one, I was having a ball, and we were building a good friendship in the process. She was picking up on things quickly. She had already talked on the phone with my wife, and later this day they would meet each other after we left the airport.



It always looks this way down there when heading west towards the LA Basin in the late afternoon

That is LA haze and I have to find my way home in spite of it. I am used to it but I can imagine what that visual out the front window might be like to a student pilot (or Alan). We let down slowly and arrived at the area at the proper altitude. ATC turned us loose, I switched to 122.7 and Jenny dialed in 1200 on the transponder. Not a bad landing this time even though there were some crosswinds.

The fun wasn't over as we kicked back with a couple of Blue Cans. So much to talk about. I always love this post flight time as well. She said she wanted to do it again, and we planned a flight for just 6 days later. We would wind up going to Tehachapi on Saturday and have more fun that you could imagine. A great Apple Shed sandwich would be enjoyed by us in the special pilots lounge there.



Via my crystal ball, I could even see what we would be wearing next Saturday

Ed Shreffler

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