

Justin from Tustin to Phoenix

(AKA The Boys' Night Out)

This is a simple story of me arranging an airplane flight with a guy to have some fun. Isn't that what flying is supposed to be about anyway? I met Justin about six months ago when we went flying around the Orange County area, and we both decided to go flying again, but our next flight to Death Valley was canceled due to weather, so I kept thinking about well, the next time. This was that time.



I had suggested we go to Phoenix where my daughter Teresa and her hubby and my buddy, Darrin live. After Justin and I talked on the phone and he had a feel for what was ahead, he was ready to go. The weather was predicted by the FAA to be pretty good for the flight over to Phoenix and it was, Clouds were not a factor.

We met around 1 PM with all blue skies overhead. It was around 75° with gentle westerly winds. The takeoff would be on runway 25, into the wind. The haze wasn't too bad, certainly a VFR day. With 34 gallons of fuel onboard for an estimated 20 gal. trip, there was no need to fill up and add an additional 180 pounds of weight. This would help with our takeoff distance and climb rate.

The run-up was perfect including the mag check. Thanks Dave. As Justin is not a 'frequent flyer' with me, we double checked that the door was secure, his seatbelt was snug, his headset let him talk and listen OK, and that he was comfortable. He smiled, I released the brakes. We rolled onto 25 with me sliding the black throttle knob forward to the stop (as in I floored the gas pedal). That big 360 cubic inch Lycoming engine came alive and the spinning propeller pulled us forward faster and faster. At 70 Kts indicated, she became light on her feet and soon lifted us off into freedom. After two climbing left turns we went over my neighborhood around 1,500' above the ground and I aimed directly for the Banning Pass. That is my first waypoint. Justin was doing fine. I engaged the autopilot.

Some bumpy areas over Corona, followed by a smooth flight to Banning and Palm Springs. And then some more bumps and choppy air and some more. Justin and I were just fine with the turbulence aloft. I contacted SoCal Approach for Flight Following, who handed me off to LA Center, who handed me off to Albuquerque Center, who handed me off to Phoenix Approach, who handed me off to Deer

Valley tower and we landed 2 hours later. We were in the system the whole way. It was close to 90° Justin chained it down & Darrin soon arrived and drove us home.



It felt very warm there for me. We got 'home' feeling the Phoenix warm weather and Darrin had set up my 'Grandpa's Chair' ready for me in the garage where I always like to hang out. The table for my Blue Cans and ashtray was next to me and another chair was set up for Justin as well. Then Darrin took Justin over to Fry's to get some Green Bottles. They came back with Justin carrying a 12 pack and I called him a 'lightweight' as he walked by. Teresa and my grandson Alex joined us in the garage for a while and Justin took our picture right when I looked really 'Grumpy'. I wasn't at all.



Later, neighbor Ken and Darrin - with Justin coming out to the driveway to join in



Looks like Darrin is explaining something interesting - Note the NASCAR flags



Can't relate to you exactly what was said as this is a family story, but all the stops were pulled out for 'the boys' having some weekend fun

It was party time. Ken had a very large 7 and 7, Justin had his green bottle, always a brown long neck for Darrin, and of course my Blue Can. I have known Ken for some 4 years though we see each other maybe 1 or 2 times a year. There were some very funny moments for all of us as we were all on the same page. Justin became 'one of them'. After Ken walked home to make another 7 and 7, he also had a cold [Blue Can](#) for me in his other hand when he returned. Darrin came back out with a sandwich for Ken. He said no, so I had his awesome meatball and cheese sandwich right there.



Justin had just consumed his first ever genuine Darrin DiPasquale Italian meatball sandwich



Justin, listen up - hey, are you paying attention - we do it like this over here



I just happened to look straight up and this is what I enjoyed for the moment



Not sure, but think he was on the phone with his wife, and lovin' it here



My granddaughter Michelle came over for a surprise visit and that was a plus



She surprised me with a thoughtful ceramic airplane gift that will join my collection

It started to get dark and cool down nice. Ken chose to walk back home and we gravitated into the garage to listen to some of Darrin's always funny and almost unbelievable stories. The garage TV was off and an excellent radio station was playing my favorite songs in the background.

We all went to bed at a decent hour, I got 9 hours of sleep myself, and then it was coffee time in the morning. A good cup of coffee in the morning is great. Justin slept great as well and we were all refreshed Sunday morning. Out in 'our' garage, we saw Darrin's truck jacked up in the driveway with a wheel removed. He had been out earlier and his flex hose brake line had suddenly failed, leaving him with only back wheel brakes. He chose to get towed home which I think was a smart thing to do. He was working on it and already he was halfway done when I got outside. Justin grabbed a green.

I went in and had a hot shower to bring me back to 100% then I checked the weather. It was all good until about the last 30 miles which had a low overcast. Time for another cup of coffee. An hour later I saw the trend in the weather was indicating that we were good to go, so we all got ready.

Darrin had packed each of us an in-flight lunch of Italian sausage and cheese sandwiches with Dago red sauce on a long Italian roll. And BBQ flavored potato chips. I got my water bottle out of the freezer and Teresa put a miniature foam 'T-shirt' on it to help keep it cold and that worked great. Darrin borrowed Teresa's Highlander and we lickety-split back to the airport.



We got to the airport and 90° felt very warm for us wimps

Between the two of them, the Mooney was opened up, unchained and inspected all around. We let it cool down for a while as it was even warmer inside. I still had 12½ gallons but filling it up there was my plan. The Sibran self serv fuel place is way over on the north side of the airport, but it is 65 to 80 cents a gallon lower than the full serv fuel trucks. I wanted savings.



I like this one, two great guys who both made my weekend a wonderful experience

We got in, said goodbye to Darrin, and I fired her up. The plan was to taxi from south side transient parking to the north side fuel area to fill up. It gets tedious here as I never had to do this before.

I listened to ATIS on **126.5** and we got information Charlie.

I switched my radio to Deer Valley ground control on **121.8** and said I was at the south side transient parking area with information Charlie and I requested a taxi clearance to the north side fuel area.

I was instructed to taxi to, and hold short of, runway 25L and then to contact tower on **118.4**.

I did and I was given a clearance to cross runway 25L and then to contact ground control on **121.8**.

I did and I was given a clearance to taxi to, and hold short of runway 25R and contact tower on **120.2**.

I did and I was given a clearance to cross runway 25R and then to contact ground control on **121.8**

I did and I was given a clearance to taxi to the fuel area. What a bunch of bunk as all of these controllers are looking at me from the same tower. Why not have one of them stay on the same radio frequency with us throughout the whole process? I shut down and parked at the fuel area.

We got out, and my plan was to show Justin how this type of self-serv fuelling operation works. It didn't. The credit card transaction screen was locked up and we had no way to clear it.



Here we are at the Sibran self-serv fuel area with the broken credit card terminal on the left

A neat feature there is their fuel tank extension forming an overhang to provide shade. Shade is so important in Phoenix in the summer months. A phone number for service was posted right in front of us so I asked Justin to call 602 320-6688.

The serviceman answered and was on his way. We had time for a smoke. He was out in less than 10 minutes. Another 5 minutes and he had it reset. He is a cool dude.



Pushing the correct button on the credit card terminal's printed circuit board.

All worked perfectly and Justin pumped 51 gallons of 100LL into the Mooneys wing tanks. The plaid shirt guy's stories of the history of the airport were so interesting. I learned a lot including that that Art Linkletter used to own the whole airport in the 1950s. He sold it to the city of Phoenix.

It was time to go so we got in, fired her up, and got ready to taxi again. I listened to the latest ATIS broadcast. Information Delta was current now. I broadcast - "Deer Valley Ground, this is Mooney 5807Tango at north side fuel with Delta, request taxi to runway 25 Left." We were cleared to taxi, so we went to the 25L run-up area and everything checked out fine.

I chose Runway 25 Left because we were now heavy and it was near 90° out. 25R is 4500' long and 25L is 8208' long. We did fine and lifted off somewhere in the middle of the runway. The jiggles started immediately. I kept the nose low to increase airspeed. That helps engine cooling and soon the Mooney's wings started to provide more lift. It was nearly 90° when we took off and the first time I checked, it was 85° out. We kept climbing and the outside temp kept falling. Once we leveled off at 8,500', it was 50° out. It was still bumpy, just like parts of my drive to work. And we had dirty air compared to the Saturday flight. The constant turbulence irritated me. Justin was doing just fine.

Just as we got over all of the agriculture area on the west side of the Colorado, the flight smoothed out. Justin chose to have his in-flight food service and he says thanks Darrin! I stayed alert for changes and checked the current weather at 6 airports coming up. No reported cloud layer anymore.



We motored on in the haze which had gotten thicker as we went west. In the low area, way ahead, a lighter color in the sky indicated pretty heavy smog in the LA Basin. A layer of very high cirrus clouds obscured the low sun in front of us which helped some.



Justin seemed to be having a great time regardless of the conditions outside



I see this occasionally, a string of clouds different than anything else going on in the area.

Past Palm Springs and just past Banning, we started descending. I floored it for takeoff back at Phoenix, and this is the first time I reduced the power setting. The haze got thicker and thicker and it was pretty gray outside, but my two onboard navigation tools told me we were right on course for Corona. Around 10 miles out, although I could see the Santa Ana mountains, I-15 and CA91, and I knew exactly where we were, I could not see Corona's airport. Haze. 3 - 4 miles out, all was fine. The traffic pattern procedure was normal and the landing was acceptable. At least nothing broke.



Justin pushing the Mooney back into her hangar after a couple of energy inducing [Blue Cans](#)

He had experienced so many new things over the span of two days that we just talked and unwound for an hour or so. He thought about Teresa and Darrin and blurted out "Good people." I smiled.

It was time for the "Ta-Da" shutdown time so we headed on home. Just over the tracks, I put my right turn signal on - so he would not miss his turnoff onto Maple street to get to the on-ramp for 91 west to Orange County. I went straight and saw him turn off to the right behind me.



I saw the Marine Layer spilling over the Santa Anas and knew he would be under an overcast when he got home. Only a pilot would notice, I guess. Thanks for everything Justin, hope you had a blast.

Ed Shreffler

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Pictures by Justin and myself

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