

One Hundred Eighty Two Days

I am my father's son. Like him, I can't go anywhere or do anything without coming back with a story. This is a short story about today but some background information is in order to put things in perspective. Emmy taught me how to say way more than you need to know.

My first furlough day was on August 19, 2009. Phil had invited Krystal and me out to his place in Paso Robles for lunch and a day of fun and friendship, and Krystal said she could go. An added plus was that Bob and Charlotte Keller were going to be there as well. Bob had emailed me asking if I still had a picture from my August 4th flight story with Charles. I still had it and I sent it to him. It was this picture.



I have already written the story about all the fun we had that day at Paso. If you didn't get that one, it is right here <http://www.mooneyevents.com/Paso%20Pleasure.pdf>

Bob is a vintner. On that day, Bob presented me with a bottle of his award winning 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon. That very picture that I had taken was on his yellow wine bottle label. I was very excited when he gave it to me and I wanted to save it for a special occasion.



Bob on the right, presenting his wine, the yellow label with my picture in the middle, how cool is that?

I took the wine home and wondered where to put it. Wine racks let the wine bottle lay on their sides. I think Bob said the reason is to let the wine contact the cork to keep the cork wet and swelled to maintain a tight seal. I don't have a wine rack. I wanted a place where it was cool, dark, dry, and out of the way, not standing upright in the kitchen cupboard. Bingo, I got an idea. I put it in a back corner of my closet. There it rested undisturbed. I was waiting for that 'special occasion' to bring it out.

After what seemed like a long period of silence, I got an email from Krystal a few days ago. She was up for a flight. She loves to go flying. I love to go flying with her. She knew about my next work furlough day. We both said yes - let's do it. I wrote back asking about where to go and what to do. She wrote about meeting some of her family from Palmdale CA. OK, Fox Field, here we come.

Today is February 17, 2010. It is another furlough day and it is exactly **182 days** since Bob gave me that bottle. I hoped today might also be that 'special occasion'.

At the hangar, we talked for a long time and I explained some more airplane stuff. Then we pulled the Mooney out, parked cars inside, hangar doors closed, and climbed aboard. I was once again with my Special K. Then I said "Oh dang", as I had left my camera in my car. She said "Yea!" as she never likes her picture taken. She relents occasionally, but only occasionally. I chose to leave it home.

It was an easy flight over the San Gabriels followed by a steep descent which doesn't bother her, we settled down on that 7000 foot runway and taxied to the ramp monitoring ground point seven as instructed by the tower. This was the first time I have landed there when the winds were calm there. This was also the first time I have taken Krystal there.

Inside, I met Krystal's Aunt Marie, her son, and a neat three year old boy who is Aunt Marie's grandson (or is it great grandson) in Foxy's Landing, the airport café. Aunt Marie shook my hand.

After lunch an hour later we all walked out to my Mooney. The three year old got to sit inside and steer while making airplane sounds. The rest of us stood around watching airplanes take off and land and we had various conversations. When it was time to say goodbye, I was unexpectedly and pleasantly surprised when Aunt Marie walked up to me and gave me a goodbye hug. What a sweetheart she is.

We went the 'Long Way Home' heading southeast past Palmdale and looking out the right window at all of the snow on the north face of the San Gabriels near Wrightwood. Then turning right through the Cajon Pass and directly over I-15 for a little while, I started a gentle descent with another 30° right turn 5 minutes later, once clear of the mountains. Oh my gosh, was it ever hazy, smoggy, and yucky out there. Looking straight ahead (and almost into the sun) the path ahead was as if it was spray painted a light silvery gray. Thank you GPS. We pointed direct to Corona, even though it was invisible from the Ontario airport area 25 miles away.

We landed, taxied to my hangar, got out, opened the hangar, pulled our cars out, pushed the plane in, closed and locked the hangar doors. There is no [Blue Can](#) mention this time. Turns out that today was that 'special occasion'.

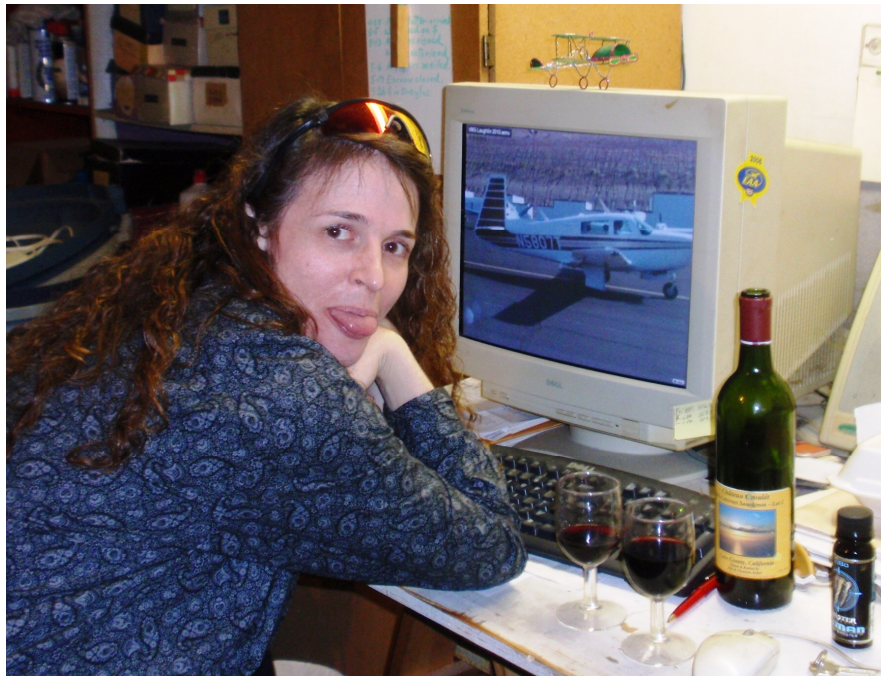
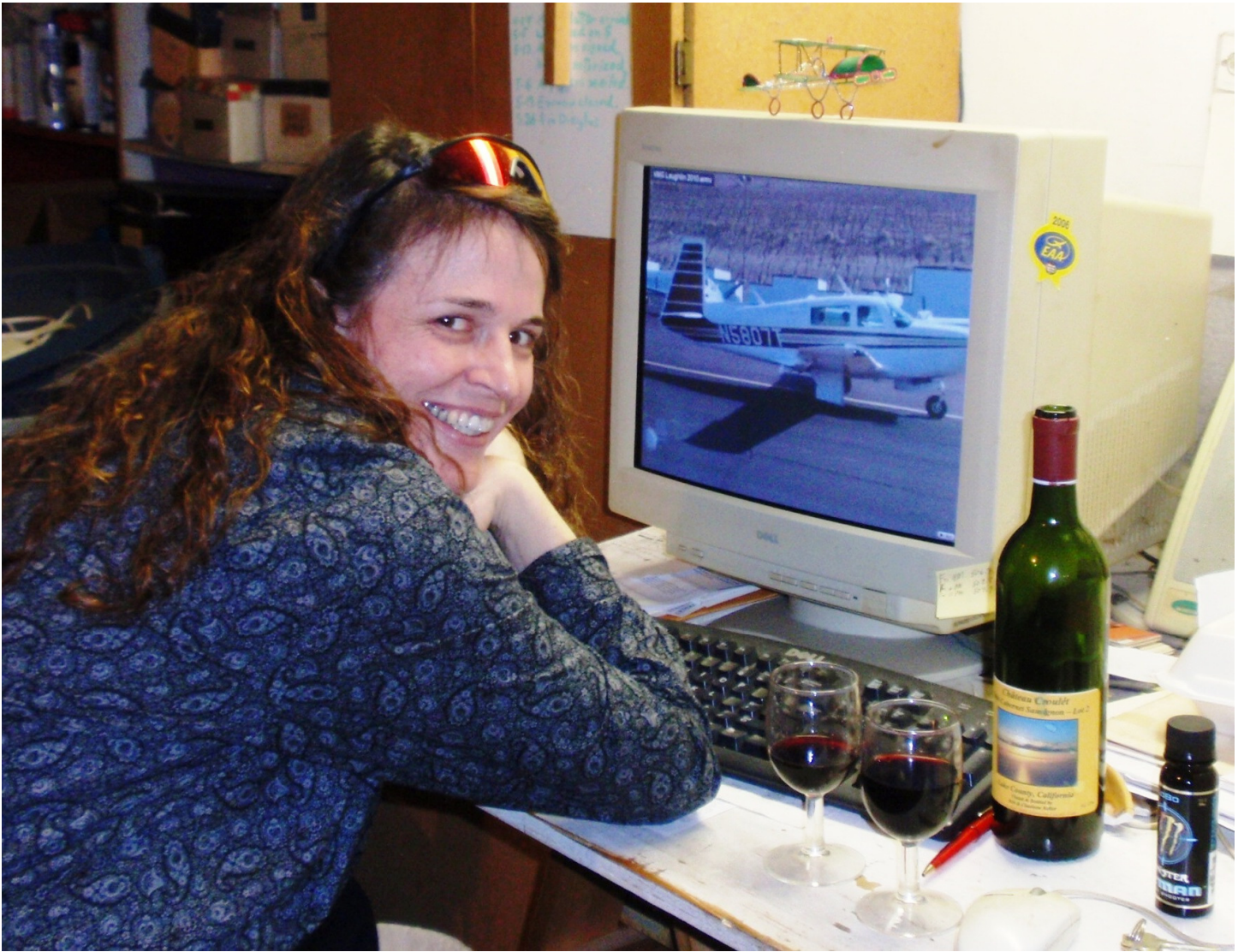
We each drove the two miles to my place. I took my camera out of my car and put it into my jeans pocket. We went inside, and I headed to that bottle in my closet. I always wanted to wait to share this special bottle with this special gal. So, 182 days later I opened it and poured two glasses in the kitchen. It smelled so fine. It tasted better.

Turns out we are both garage people. We like to hang out in the garage, not in the kitchen, or sitting around the dinner table, or on the couch in the living room. So went back out to my garage. I was soon sitting on the back of my RAV4 with Krystal standing 3 feet away in the driveway, just after sunset, in the fading sunlight. It was nice and warm. Standing is usually better for her back. Sitting is usually better for my knees. We sipped Bob's wine and chatted with each other. Then she sat next to me for a while. We are still learning about each other bit by bit.

Then I had another treat for Krystal. It is Phil's excellent video of last weekend's Vintage Mooney Group fly-in to Laughlin NV. My main PC is also in my garage, so I turned it on. I wanted to show her the funny parts that he captured. He is so good at this stuff. First she giggled and then she laughed aloud. I had a plan in mind. I wanted to take her picture looking at Phil's video on my PC and enjoying Bob's wine, so I paused the video with my Mooney going by, and took a picture. She said she wanted to stick her tongue out. I said "Go ahead". I took another one.

I was just going to send out those two pictures when I started this. For those who suffered all of the way down to here, those two pictures are next. For those who want to see all of Phil's video, it is right here http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqslmHlkA98&feature=player_embedded

We shall meet again soon, I guarantee it.



Ed Shreffler
2/17/2010