

## San Carlos Arizona 2010

The Vintage Mooney Group had scheduled another VMG fly in, this time to the San Carlos Apache Airport (P13). That is just east of the copper mining cities named Miami and Globe, in Arizona. This one was hosted by VMG members Larry & Debi Berger from Phoenix. Right across the highway from the airport is the San Carlos Apache Indian Casino, where Larry us set up with very generous perks.

I sent out my usual e-mail invitations and this time nobody replied. It's either feast or famine when I do this. This time nobody replied. I later found out why. It was Mother's Day weekend, & everybody had family commitments. Finally, a light went off and I called Charles Thursday night. He had not even read my e-mail and he said sure, why not, I'll meet you tomorrow at four o'clock.

Friday I left work at 3, knowing that freeway on the way home was clogged up the whole 10 miles, so I spent \$9.50 to take the FasTrak toll road, to get to the airport on time. I got to the airport by 4, an hour to go 24 miles! We stopped to get fueled up to the top, and it was almost 5 when we lifted off.



Charles Montgomery (a student pilot) and myself shortly before climbing aboard



The mountains north of I-10 by the Banning Pass were still snow capped, and no clouds anywhere



The desert landscape below is always dramatic, no matter how many times I have experienced it



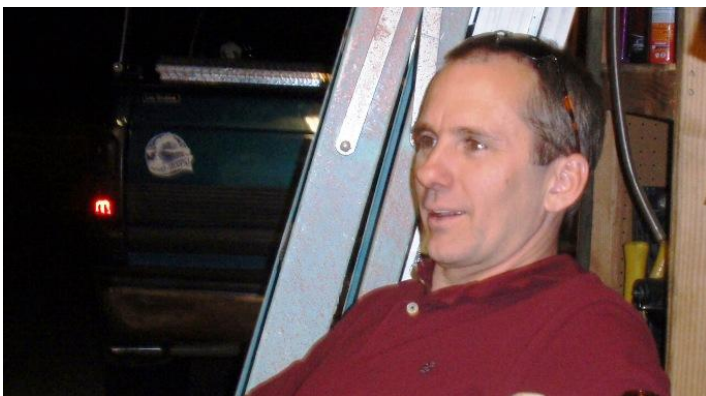
Charles was driving so we crossed the Colorado at a slightly different point this time, at 9,500'

We landed at Phoenix in daylight before 7. Wow, it was warm outside. My daughter Teresa picked us up at the airport, took us home, and Charles and I feasted on Darrin's superb enchiladas while I was seated on my personal 'Grandpa's Chair', that is always waiting for me in their garage. I am a garage dweller by choice, so is Darrin. Charles chose to join us. Darrin started telling us his great and unusual true life experience stories. Hearing Darrin tell his stories is always fun, fun, fun.





Darrin's way of 'Holding Court' is like no one else in my life



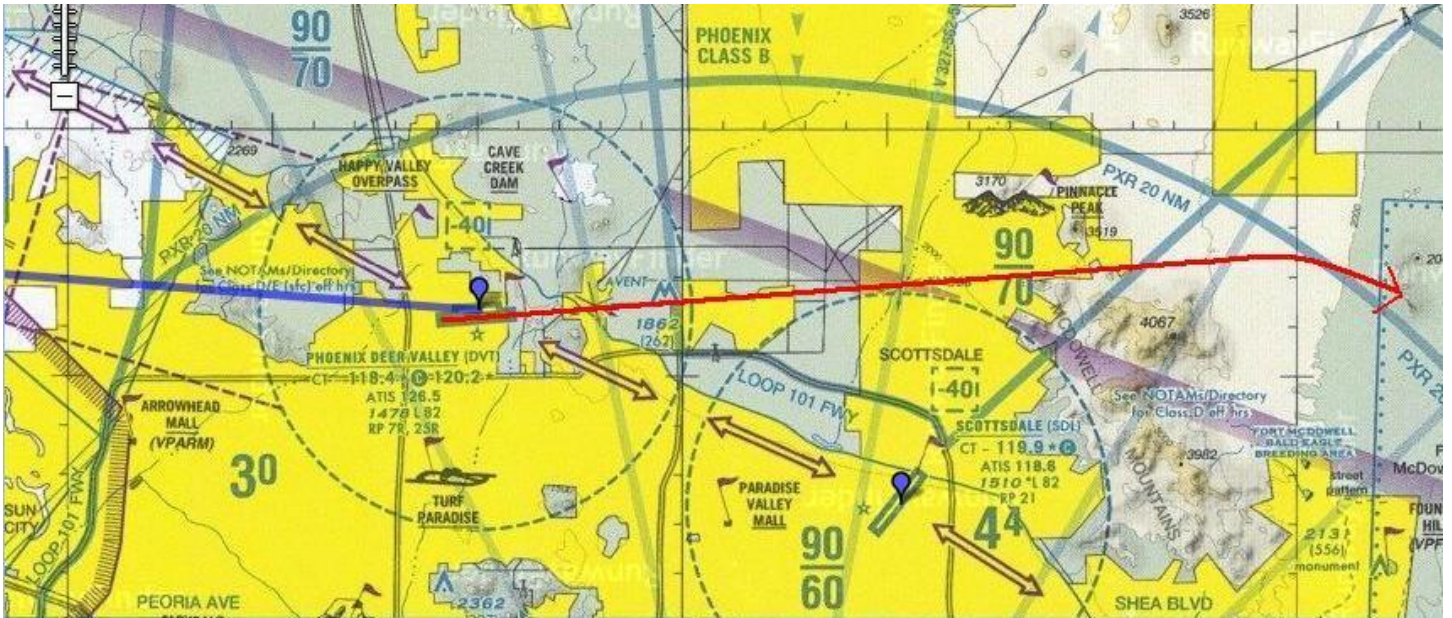
Charles was amazed and amused, and I was laughing much of the time



Darrin enjoyed our feedback



Saturday morning, it was in the 80s with very high cirrus clouds way above us. Darrin had just textured the living room walls on Friday, and was committed to paint them on Saturday, so he could not go with us. We left Teresa's just before 9 for the airport. With plenty of fuel and oil noted and logged, we departed runway Seven Left at Deer Valley airport. ATC advised that our runway heading would keep us from encroaching on the Scottsdale airport Class D airspace. It worked as expected.



Our departure route did keep us just north of Scottsdale's airspace outlined by the dashed blue circle. We picked up Phoenix departure on 120.7mhz for Flight Following and ventured eastward. The high clouds kept the area from heating up a bit but kept me from getting true colors in my pictures.



Mooneys, our beautiful birds of flight all lined up on the ramp at P13, Henry Punt's is in front





We met each other on the ramp by our Mooneys, then our huge blue 'shuttle bus' showed up



On the bus ride across the highway from the airport to the Apache Casino and Resort, I spotted that they had their own railroad depot, albeit one of the most meager that I have ever encountered to date

Everyone was in good spirits. Old VMG friends were re-acquainting themselves again and a few who were strangers at first, were finding new friends. It is always like that with us, no matter where we meet up. We always have our family atmosphere. Everyone that goes with me loves the VMG.



(Picture courtesy of their website)

Upon arrival, casino security took a head count, and there were about 35 of us. As promised, the casino staff then passed out \$15 gambling vouchers to each of us. We were told we could redeem these yellow pieces of paper for \$15 in cash at the cashier and we did, as soon as we all went inside.



We were almost organized at this point, but no one cared one way or the other

The \$15 gambling vouchers was just the first part of our perks. Next up, was a complimentary lunch served in the casino's banquet room. This was just for us. Served cafeteria style, there were salads, green peas and pearl onions, beef au jus, and roasted chicken. Chocolate cake and slices of excellent fruit pies were for dessert. There were round tables for eight, with white tablecloths and maroon cloth napkins set up for us. Glasses of water and iced tea were already poured and waiting for us to sit down. The VMG rocks.

Another VMG extra was an excellent demonstration of Apache traditional songs during our lunch. I had read about it on the VMG website but that was nothing compared to actually being there to appreciate it with the rest of our VMG family. Looking around, everyone seemed to be interested and smiling during the presentations.





This beautiful and very young lady was the star of the show being presented for our entertainment at lunchtime. She had a beautiful story to tell us and was occasionally coached by the lady by her side. There were moments when she became very nervous being 'on stage' but she prevailed. All of our entertainment was presented by the local native Apache people. We loved all of it. I felt privileged.

We also had three beautiful high school age Apache girls tell us a bit about their daily lifestyle and culture as well as sing their favorite traditional songs to us in their native language. They displayed for us an excellent combination of family values, religious beliefs, and service to others.

Two of them were wearing their beautiful buckskin dress that was presented to them when they experienced their 'coming of age' ceremonies. There is quite a tradition behind their buckskins. The parents have a lot of influence in the choice of colors and style. Only certain people create them and evidently, they are always made to order.

The third young lady was wearing a white sash over her pink outfit that demonstrated she had recently won as Miss Mt. Turnbull in a local contest or pageant. I tried my best to get everything straight but so much was new to me. I found their singing to be a beautiful new art form for me.



The young ladies posing for us after their presentations

These three had a sense of composure and maturity not often seen in many American teens. After their entertainment concluded, they politely went table to table to offer us any information or answers to our questions about their lifestyle and their surrounding countryside. Turns out that besides great fishing, some world class hunting is available right there. Many types of animals call that area their home.

As the buckskins were a departure from what I am used to, I asked the young lady in the yellow toned buckskin what she normally wears in daily life, like when she is home in the afternoon after school and doing her homework. It turns out that she wears much of what any clean cut teenager in America wears. Jeans and stuff.





Several of our entertainers talking with us at our tables after their presentations

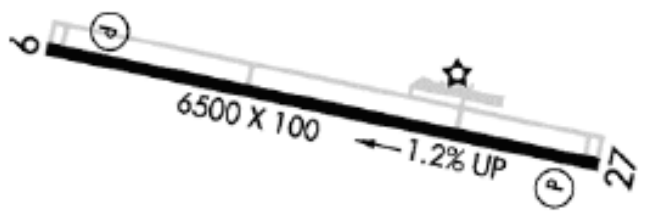


Ozzie stood up and made the announcements about our group's upcoming fly-ins. His main topics were the upcoming Minden and Mexico fly-ins. He also gave my stories a big plug in front of all. Charles and I shared a table with Ron & Shawn Monette from Show Low Arizona. It had been a year since we had crossed paths and it was good to meet up with them once again. I was also very happy to see Dave & Colette Eneboe once again. He is great at teasing me and she gives me great hugs. Mooney love to both of them. Colette will become a pilot someday soon. Go Colette!

Next up: Casino time. Charles and I hit the slots with gusto.



I quickly transformed my first new free \$5 bill into this special and valuable document

We said goodbye to all of those who were there. I took the \$10 bill home with me. At least it will cover 4% of my weekend fuel bill. We grabbed a shuttle van back to the plane and checked out the Mooney and our fuel supply. We were good to go. It was nice out. Winds were from the west.

<p><b>Communication Freqs:</b> WX 120.075T UNICOM 122.8      CTAF 122.8</p> <p><b>Lights:</b> Actct MIRL Ry 09/27 - CTAF. PAPI Rys 09 &amp; 27 Opers Continuously</p>	<p><b>Elevation: 3,261 ft (994.0 m)</b></p> 
<p>Generated 05/11/10 at <a href="http://www.aopa.org/airports/P13">http://www.aopa.org/airports/P13</a> Copyright 2010 Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association</p>  	

(Airport diagram and pilot info from the AOPA website)

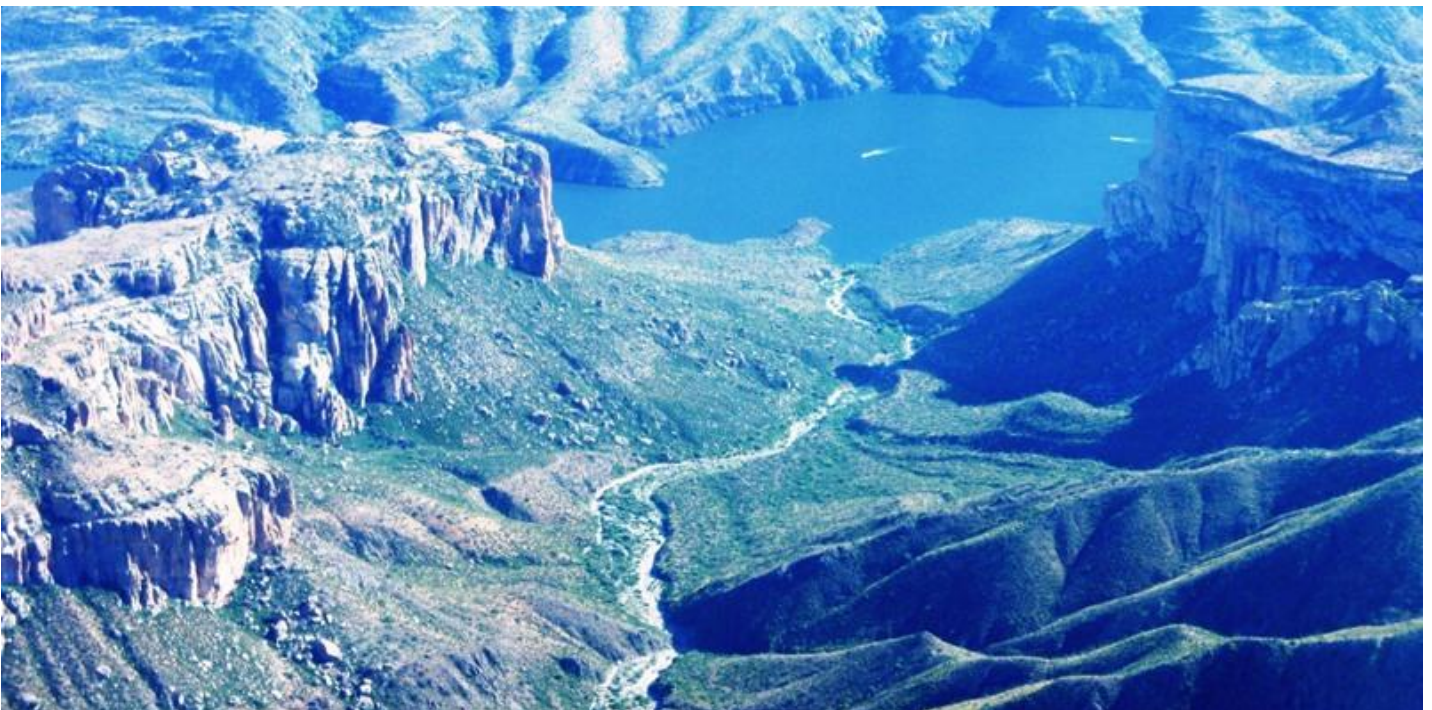
We departed runway 27, westbound. I am still to this day, amazed that a 74" propeller bolted to a 200 hp 4 cylinder engine can propel a 2740 pound airplane down the runway with the acceleration that we feel when I slide that black knob forward. Charles was at the controls. I called off the indicated airspeeds from the gauge on my side of the instrument panel as we accelerated. When I said "70, rotate" Charles pulled slightly back on his yoke and the tire wear ceased. At 80, I retracted the landing gear and at 90, I brought the flaps up. Then I slid my seat all of the way back as there was not much for me to do and this gives us much more shoulder room being in a staggered seating configuration.

While on our climbout, we passed over the mining cities of Globe and Miami and the huge open pit copper mines just to the south. At 6500 MSL, Charles lowered the nose, I brought the RPMs down to 2500 with the blue knob, the fuel consumption down to around 9 GPH with the red knob, and closed the cowl flaps. Charles kept us pointed toward Phoenix. Now my time on the radio began. I dialed in 123.7 on Com 2 and called up Phoenix TRACON for Flight Following to Deer Valley airport. ATC issued us a squawk code and Charles dialed that into the transponder. When we heard "Mooney 5807T, radar contact.", we were again back in the system. I monitored the gauges, Charles flew the airplane. Synergy at work. We were out in wilderness territory again. We slid north for sightseeing.





Where else do you get these views?



A couple of boats having fun on Apache Lake out my left window.



Charles brought us in all of the way. We were now talking to Deer Valley tower on 122.2 and I requested the south runway if available. I slid my seat forward 3 notches because I cannot reach the brakes from way back there. We were about 7 miles out. A minute later we heard, "Mooney 5807T, switch to runway 25 left and contact tower on 118.4." I thanked him and pointed slightly left to 25L out the front window to help guide Charles. Now on 118.4 we again made contact and heard "Mooney 5807T, cleared to land runway 25 left. I worked the black, blue, and red knobs, lowered the landing gear, and brought in some flaps as we slowed down from 170 to around 80 knots. Over the runway threshold now and indicating 70 knots. Power back to idle, and around 60, she settled down on the smooth surface. I took over as my side is the only side with brakes. Charles dialed in 121.8 to be ready for our next frequency change. "Mooney 5807T exit Charlie 7 and contact Ground point 8." This really does make sense to us, so we did. Soon we were parked, but then found out that where we were parked - at the tie downs with blue stripes, belonged to Atlantic Aviation. We were already standing outside, so we pushed her over to a free city operated tie down spot with yellow stripes.

That night we feasted on Darrin's homemade pizza and some more cerveza, followed by some more stories by both of us as he wanted to know all about our flying day.



My great grandchildren, Riley age 6, and Celeste age 4, slept over

On Sunday morning, Charles and I were located right in the middle of a good sized Mother's Day brunch. There were at least 25 people in the house. I counted five mothers. My ex-wife Estelle, our daughter Teresa, her daughter Michelle, Darrin's mom Joan, and his daughter Sarah are mothers. Darrin cooked French Toast, eggs, and sausage for everyone. I think I saw some champagne but I had to fly, so I did not have any interest in that. I wanted coffee.

I don't ever eat much in the morning, so I grabbed a cup of coffee and headed back out to the garage to 'Grandpa's Chair', and lit up a cigarette. I was completely comfortable being alone.

Then Charles, laden down with a plate of Darrin's cooking came out and sat down next to me. Mike, who is Darrin's father, was next and he sat across from us. Darrin was soon there too. More chairs were set up. Sarah, her husband, and her young son were next along with another young man that



came over with them. A few others drifted in and out just to see what we were up to out there. Charles and I told a few flying stories to provide some entertainment.

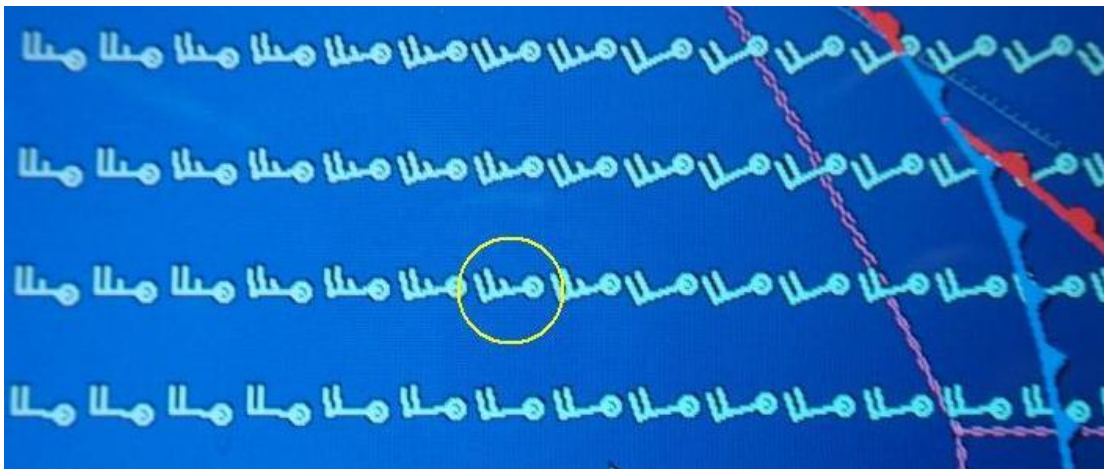
Excuse me, I forgot to mention one more mother. Mother Nature was to play a big role in our day. All of the forecasts included high westerly winds between Phoenix and Corona. Westerly means from the west. They were supposed to get stronger as the afternoon progressed. Not a good day to lollygag around. We gathered up our stuff. The others started to depart. Estelle and Joan each gave me a hug and went on home. I grabbed a sweet roll and a glass of orange juice and that was all I wanted. This time Darrin drove us to the airport as Teresa was watching over her grandchildren.

Once we were at the airplane, I checked the fluids. It had plenty of oil and we still had 33.5 gallons of fuel on board. Normally this is a 20 gallon flight, but with these forecast headwinds? I decided to give it a go as we were and monitor our fuel as the flight progressed. There are many fuel stops down there along this route of flight. As these two guys each know everything else to check on the airplane, I climbed aboard and filled out my log sheet for the flight. Not FAA requirements, I just like to keep track of certain things, like our fuel on board.

With a half of a tank of fuel we were 164 pounds lighter than when we left Corona on Friday so our climbout was great. Right away, it was bouncy. And we were constantly rolling over a little bit to the right and left. I was driving with two hands due to the aggressive gusts and turbulence in the area.

I waited for things to settle down. No big deal to either of us, but it would not be a good day for a first timer. I leveled off at 8,500 and waited for our ground speed to build up. It didn't increase as much as I had wished for. I engaged my autopilot, and finally put my hands in my lap and relaxed.

The ground speed is the speed we are traveling over the land below. Airspeed is the speed we are traveling through the air. These are equal to each other only when there are no winds aloft. My normal cruise speed is 150 - 155 knots, around 175 MPH. I was seeing around 120 knots ground speed on my GPS. As I have real time weather on board, I checked the winds aloft in our area and at our altitude on my GPS. Sure enough, 30 knots from just left of straight ahead. This was not going to be my usual 2 hour Phoenix to Corona commute. This is a file photo, not from the flight.



I circled a symbol showing wind from just about due west, about 260°, at 25 knots.

A while later, Charles thought he could react to the turbulence quicker than the autopilot and minimize our tossing and turning. I said go ahead, and turned it off. The advantages of youth, he was faster than the autopilot. The ride was better for the passenger (me).

At the midpoint, near the Colorado River, after about 140 nautical miles, I checked our fuel which indicated we had used 11.8 gallons and had 22.7 gallons left. I am not talking about the Mooney factory's fuel gages, they are notoriously off in many small airplanes. Mine is no exception. I use my JPI 800 Fuel Flow information which I have calibrated down to under a 2% error factor. With that great level of accuracy, I knew that the actual fuel on board was within 4/10 of a gallon of what it displayed.

I explained this to Charles and he agreed that we were still good to keep going. The bouncing let up for a while, then it returned every time I wanted to take a picture. I checked multiple airports' weather in the general Corona area. Most places were reporting scattered to broken clouds down at 3,000 to 4,500 feet. We had just high cirrus clouds way above us most of the way, so far. Then we saw it.



It was a massive row of cumulus clouds dead ahead but the ground was visible below



Just like a virtual gatekeeper to the LA Basin, it ran north and south across the Banning Pass area, near Palm Springs. Always choices - under, over, or around were my options. We talked it over and went for 'under' knowing that flying under an active cumulus cloud often means bumpy air. Why not, we had been tossed for nearly the whole ride anyway.

I gently pulled the power back and Charles dropped the nose 10°, then more to 15°. I popped the speed brakes for a few minutes to keep our airspeed in check. I informed ATC what we were doing and why. They informed us that they would lose radar contact with us at the lower altitudes, but gave us 134.0 to contact once we were west of Banning.



Oh boy, that was a big guy once we were up close

It was not as bad as I thought and soon we were picked up on radar again. While descending, we screamed towards the Corona area at around 200 mph. 10 miles out, I started flying again and as I can't remember anything to the contrary, it must have been a good landing. About 2.4 hours enroute this time with 11.8 gallons of fuel remaining. We deplaned and relaxed for a while recounting the flight with each other. He had two [Blue Cans](#) in the time it took me to enjoy one.

Good times all around, as usual.

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My other stories are at  
<http://www.mooneyevents.com/shreffler.html>

Note: For my non-pilot readers who might wonder why I include these cryptic codes like the San Carlos Apache Airport (P13). The P13 part is the FAA airport identifier for that particular airport, just as LAX is the FAA airport identifier for the Los Angeles International Airport, and JFK is the FAA airport identifier for New York's Kennedy International Airport. Right here in Corona CA, our smaller Corona Municipal Airport is identified as AJO. This information is also available on pilots' navigation charts. Looking closely at the airports shown on page 3, you will see [PHOENIX DEER VALLEY \(DVT\)](#) and [SCOTTSDALE \(SDL\)](#).