

The Great Transformation

Let me explain that title later. This is not going to be one of my long winded flying stories and so it will not be published on the Web. Or maybe it will be, depends on how it comes out. The winds of change blow right through here from time to time. Anyway, it is a story about me going flying with Adriana D. - twice. Today was the second time we flew together in the past 30 days. We had a great time - both times.

Like so many people before her, I met her for the very first time at my hangar a few weeks ago. She had been reading my flying stories for part of a year and so she knew what I liked. She met me with a big hug. Wow!



We posed for you just we boarded my Mooney and left Corona for the first time.

She is young and short. This is from my perspective. I am old and tall. That is from her perspective. Makes no difference, we set out to have fun and we did.

On Sunday 11/1/2009 we met and flew to the Oceano County airport (L52) and had lunch together at a picnic table on the airport grounds in gorgeous sunshine. She graciously provided the lunch. We had a great day. Before we returned to Corona, we had our picture taken. This is what we looked like there at Oceano.



It was quite a bit cooler but we stayed comfortable



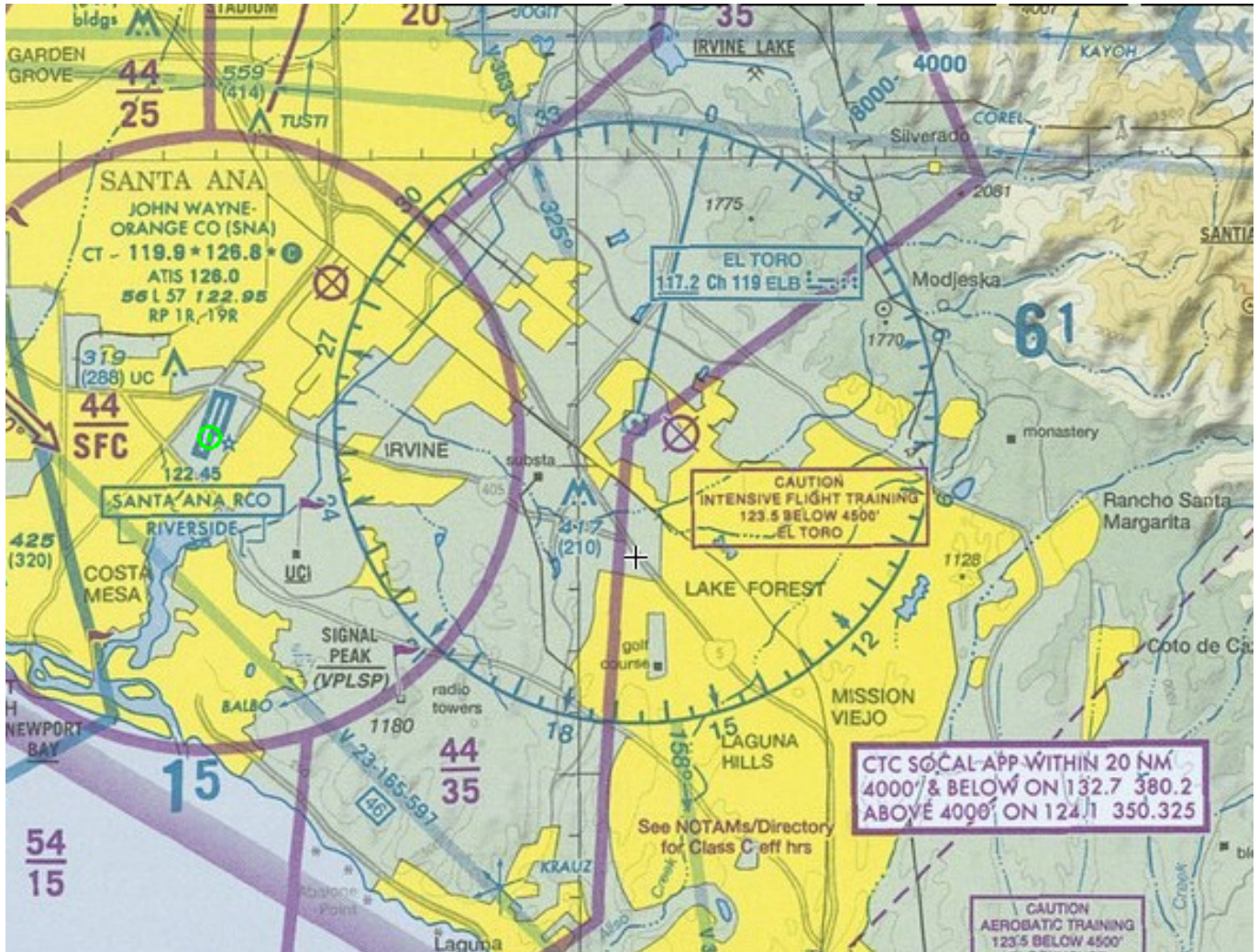
First thing is have enough fuel - only \$4.049 a gallon today in Corona

Today, Wednesday 11/18/2009, we met for the second time to go flying. We flew south near I-15 to Temecula. The airport there is called French Valley (F70) and we walked around after we landed. After we looked at some airplanes, and she recognized another Mooney, we jumped (not really) back into my Mooney. My 'Hot Start' procedure did not work. I gave it two tries and nada. Time for a deep breath and to think before doing it again. I decided to try a hybrid version with the mixture $\frac{1}{2}$ way in. That Lycoming sprang to life. Departing runway 18 straight out and after touring the city of Temecula we continued flying south 20-30 miles. Then veering off to the right, we saw the Pacific from 30 miles away.

A funny thing happened when we were over the Oceanside airport. I couldn't find it this time. Adriana said "There it is, over there", pointing to an airport out the right window. I just knew that the airport she saw was the Camp Pendleton MCAS airport in restricted airspace but I just had to know for sure. So I started circling around to the left where I could see down. Sure enough, the reason we couldn't find the Oceanside airport is because it had been directly below us.

We headed west a few miles out over the ocean. I briefly thought about Hawaii, but not having that much fuel or money on board, I quickly scratched that idea. A much closer island is Catalina, but we could see the low marine layer of clouds over there and way below us, so I also opted out of going over there. We flew around looking for dolphins or whales but seeing none, we continued up the coast to Dana Point. On the way, we spotted the San Onofre nuclear power plant. It looked like two giant bee hive shaped concrete domes.

Here is where having a neat fly-buddy on board comes into play. I had briefed her about reading a certain part of the LA Sectional chart in case I wanted some specific info while we were in-flight. I also explained the transponder to her. She understood completely and placed the chart in the back seat for future reference. When I wanted the info, she reached back to retrieve the chart and told me what I wanted to know.



I asked her "What is the radio frequency for us a tad above 4000 feet?" and she said over the intercom, "124.1". That's what I am talking about. She is not an airplane passenger, she is a fly-buddy. I dialed 124.1 in my communication radio and made an initial call up to SoCal. He gave us a squawk code and Adriana dialed in 4623 in the transponder. We were back 'in the system'.

Because we were talking to SoCal Approach, we heard advice to not climb above 4000'. I replied that we would not. Then we heard ATC instruct a Lear Jet to not descend below 4500'. He acknowledged as well. We saw him fly right by us - right to left and 500' over us out the front window. The ATC system worked for us.

Once we were north of the Santa Ana Class C (John Wayne) airspace he dumped us. He told us to switch to advisories and squawk 1200. I tuned the com radio to 122.7 and she set 1200 in the transponder.

When we left the OC area, we turned right over hwy 91 to Corona and toiled around the area for a while losing altitude. It was warm and sunny out and I was in my favorite place (my Mooney), so why end it quickly? All good things... so anyway I made my second nice landing of the day and we went back to where we started. We got our cars out and sipped on drinks of our choice. Jon Elinsky stopped by and met Adriana and a Blue Can at the same time. He helped me push 07T up the hill into my hangar and he stayed and chatted with us for a while.



Fellow Mooney owner, Lori Elinsky's hubby Jon, Jon, and Jon

My A&P (mechanic) Dave came by with his son Matt as previously arranged, to start my oil change. Both are really nice guys, and as the oil was warm, it was perfect timing. As always, we all met each other. That is so natural at a small airport setting. Everything there seems natural and real.

I heard out of my left ear, "Time to go" so I turned left and I was met with a great goodbye hug. She went off to pick up her daughter. Dave and Matt were continuing with my oil change. I said goodbye and drove home.

End of story - - or maybe not. Remember the story title, 'The Great Transformation', well I am finally getting to that part. I could not put my finger on what it was today, but Adriana looked a lot prettier today than the first time I flew with her. Now I know why after looking at the pictures.



She had let her hair down and I just happen to like the looks of long hair on a gal