

VMG New Years Day 2009

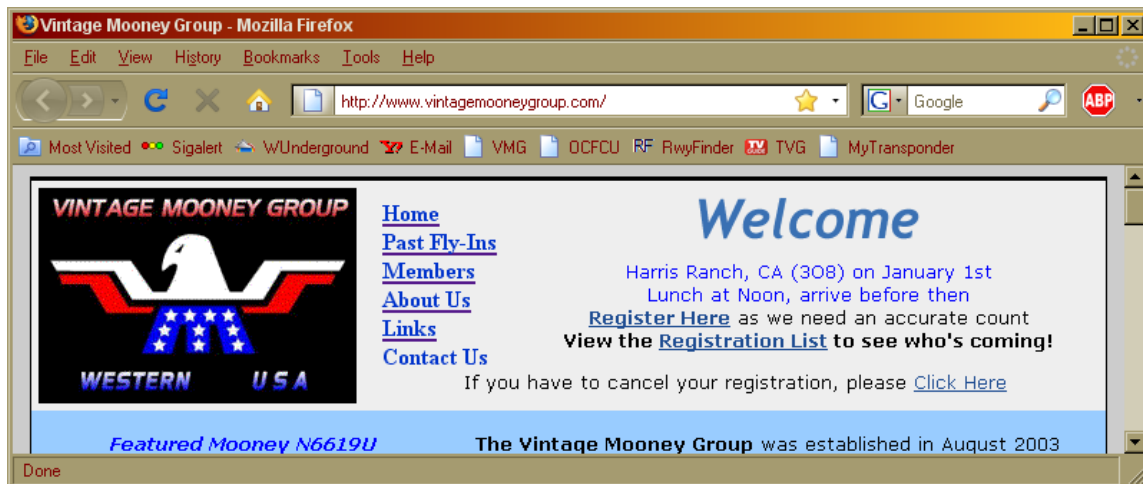
This story starts out over a year ago when two married couples decided to meet for an informal lunch at the Harris Ranch on New Years day 2008. The Harris Ranch is not where you go horseback riding, it is a well known steakhouse alongside I-5 near Coalinga CA, and they have their own public runway right next to the freeway. Yes, they flew in - in their speedy Mooneys.



The participants then were Phil and his wife Linda, and Mitch and his wife Jolie. They had met each other at Vintage Mooney Group fly-ins and got along very well with each other. I love all four of them, they are all great people and a lot of fun to be with.

Fast forward to the end of 2008. They decided to do it again on New Years day 2009 and extend an invitation to a few more people from their VMG group of friends to join them. That's when I got an email from Mitch to invite me to come along. I put out a broadcast email and Sofie said she would like to come with me. I emailed Mitch back we that were planning to join them at the Harris Ranch.

Someone must have enticed Phil to open up the invitation to the extended Vintage Mooney Group family because this notice showed up on the VMG web page.



Well, all wonder broke loose when he did that. As it turned out, many of us VMG Mooniacs must like this sort of thing. As of 12-31-2008, the VMG registration list indicated 19 Mooneys and 36 hungry mouths to be fed. What a growth expansion ratio!

I did not party on New Years eve so I awoke fresh and clear to clear blue skies on New Years day 2009. I hurried to get ready to go flying. I checked wunderground.com and found the whole San

Joaquin Valley also known as the California Central Valley was socked in completely with low clouds and fog. The Harris Ranch was impossible for me and for many other VMGers. I called Phil and he said he was checking into alternates. I called Sofie and said we will go flying. (I didn't know where).

She showed up, on time, after celebrating all night and getting a few scant hours of sleep. I don't know how these young ladies can do this. (She is younger than my children).



Good, Better, Best, Happy New Year to you Sofie!

Sofie gave me a welcome hug when I showed up. I explained that I was thinking of going to Palm Springs because of Mamma Nature, but waiting for a while was best. Sofie and I hung out at my hangar for 45 minutes and then my cell phone rang. My VMG brother said **Oceano of all places** was Severe Clear and forecast to remain clear all day. I said "We'll be there". We were off to L52.



Beautiful colors from the hills, the snow, and the shadows below



The scenery was awesome and the visibility over here was indeed Severe Clear

Saying that the trip was uneventful is an understatement. We couldn't find a bump. The flight was smoother than driving on hwy 91 to work in the morning. Same Mother Nature? We called L52's CTAF nine miles out and Jolie answered us from her handheld radio. What a VMG gal.



After landing, Jolie hugged me and made me feel welcome immediately



A wise crack about nice buns for lunch would not be in VMG good taste



Charlotte and Bob Keller at our wonderful picnic lunch with take out chicken on the table behind



Becki and John Rosenau flew in (late of course in a Cezzna 182RG)



Phil and the lovely Linda Corman are great friends of mine



See how well organized we can be when we really try?



Kevin, Darci, and N231MW certainly do have their act together

By now, half of the VMG gals had hugged me and I made sure to hug all of the shy ones. Why do you think I would go 200 miles for lunch? My hug counter registered 5 for the day so far. (There were only 5 gals there). I am not going to mention that Phil and Bob both hugged me as well as this is a family publication, but we do all seem to like each other a lot every time we meet up. And it grows over time. Sofie said that she was glad to be back with her friends after an 8 month absence. Mike Mount joined us also but I did not get a good picture, sorry Mike, next time.



Dave on the right and grandson Alec flew in from Big Bear after shoveling snow out of their way



Mitch and Jolie Setting up for our first VMG lunch of the year

Lunch was great thanks to Mitch and Jolie who thought of everything including driving in so they could deliver our take-out food and store bought goodies at the lowest price ever for a VMG lunch.

After lunch it was time for more Mooney talk and family picture taking. See how much fun you can have just by learning to fly an airplane? BTW, congratulations to Alan Van Leuven for earning his freshly minted pilot certificate a few weeks ago. [Way to go Alan - Grab some blue sky!](#)



I need a good caption for this picture from you, because no matter how many ways I twist "The Beauty and the Beast" around, backwards and upside down, I will still wind up with two black eyes, and the loss of two super friends, Phil and Sofie. It was time to gather around after lunch for our official Group Photo. After 10 minutes, we got our collective act together in very loose formation.



Can you really believe that these people are great Mooney airplane pilots?



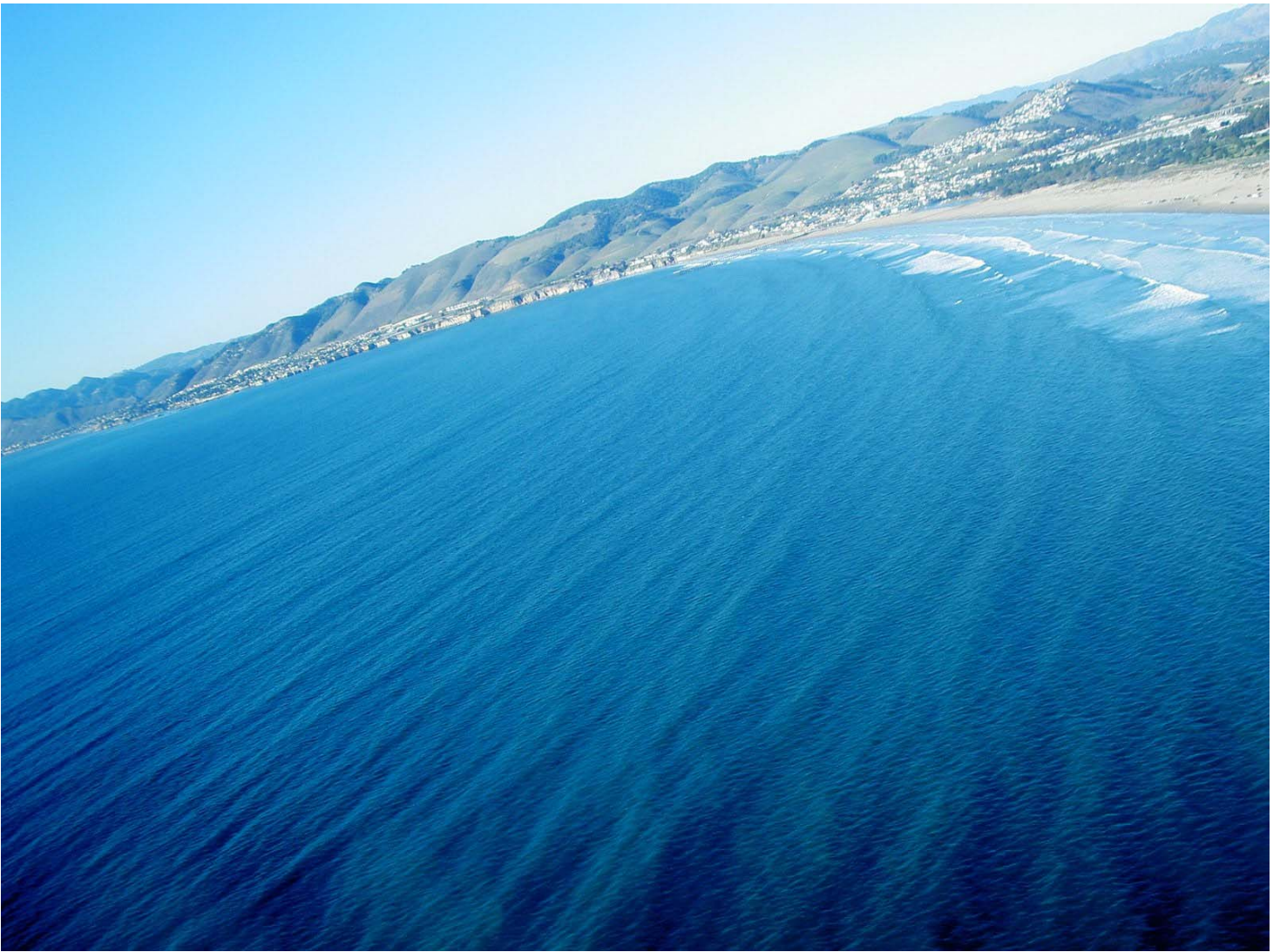
We had Charlene, our own VMG princess visit with us this wonderful day



This caption is easy - Silly and Sofie



I took a quick glance at some sleek Mooneys on the taxi out for take off to Corona



On departure I did a big sweeping 270 to the right and Sofie got this beautiful shot looking north



I did a high speed pass southbound after the 270 and we dried Linda's hair



More neat scenery on the way home



Contrasted by low overcast clouds over by Santa Barbara



And real HAZE around downtown LA



It got better before I had to attempt a landing, this haze is ridiculous

As you were not there, I made a smooth landing, at the airport of my intentions, and rolled up to my hangar. Sofie opened up the hangar and got everything organized as I tallied my flight numbers in my records. After we drove our cars back outside, Jon and Lori Elinsky from the VMG who also keep their Mooney at Corona drove up to say hi. As soon as I finished hugging Lorie, I introduced Sofie to them and then Lori hugged Sofie! This is becoming the **Vintage Mooney and Hugging Group !!!** I will promote that any day.

They took off to go have dinner together. My hug counter now registered 6 for the day. I was a very happy camper. Where do I log that? Soon, Sofie said it was time to go back home, so I stood up and received a bonus hug. I went home to hug my wife. Bingo! I really started this year off right.

Ed Shreffler
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Pictures by Jolie, Phil, Sofie, and ed

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