

Flying to Ramona with Kent - May 2005

It was springtime and I got an email that the Vintage Mooney Group was having a fly-in to Ramona next month. It was to Ramona CA on May 21 2005. I sent out my email to a group and got a response. Kent Harclerode wanted to join me for this one so it was a go. Time to start the planning.

We did things a lot differently back then. I spread my Sectional Aeronautical chart out on the kitchen table and drew a line from Corona's airport (at top) southeast to the French Valley airport in Temecula, and then down to the Ramona airport at the bottom. Then I got to thinking of alternate ideas. Why go back the same way? So I drew some more lines northwest from Ramona out over the ocean, up the coastline, and then back to Corona. There, that seemed much like a lot more fun. Kent loved the plan. So that's what we did. This is a photograph of a paper Sectional Chart.



Now it is all done on the computer, usually on the internet. Click, click, done.

This route back circumvented Camp Pendleton's restricted airspace and gave Kent a chance to fly over a city area and then the ocean instead of just going back the way we came in the morning.



We were ready to go so I set the timer, put the camera on my car, and click!



Oh-oh Captain, we have a small problem. My seat belts would not go around Kent's ample tummy. Mr. Innovation went to his pickup truck and returned with the solution. His bright orange nylon safety strap was securely connected to my seatbelt and we were good to go. We launched, sending a scare to the trees at the far end of the runway, but slowly my Mooney got us both higher and higher.

I settled down and contacted SoCal for Flight Following. I hated to tell Kent that this was quiet time but I did not want to miss an ATC radio call for us. When we got up to 5,500', I leveled off and we cruised fat, dumb, and happy for a while. Soon it was time to let down, check weather, contact the tower, and set up for a landing. Non-eventful, we taxied over to where all of the rest of the Mooneys were parked. As soon as we got out, Kent's one-of-a-kind magic started to spread. Here he was amidst a bunch of people he had never met before, and he just fit right in!



I snuggled 27V right in with the rest of those Mooneys on the ramp and took pictures



There was another row of Mooneys over to the right

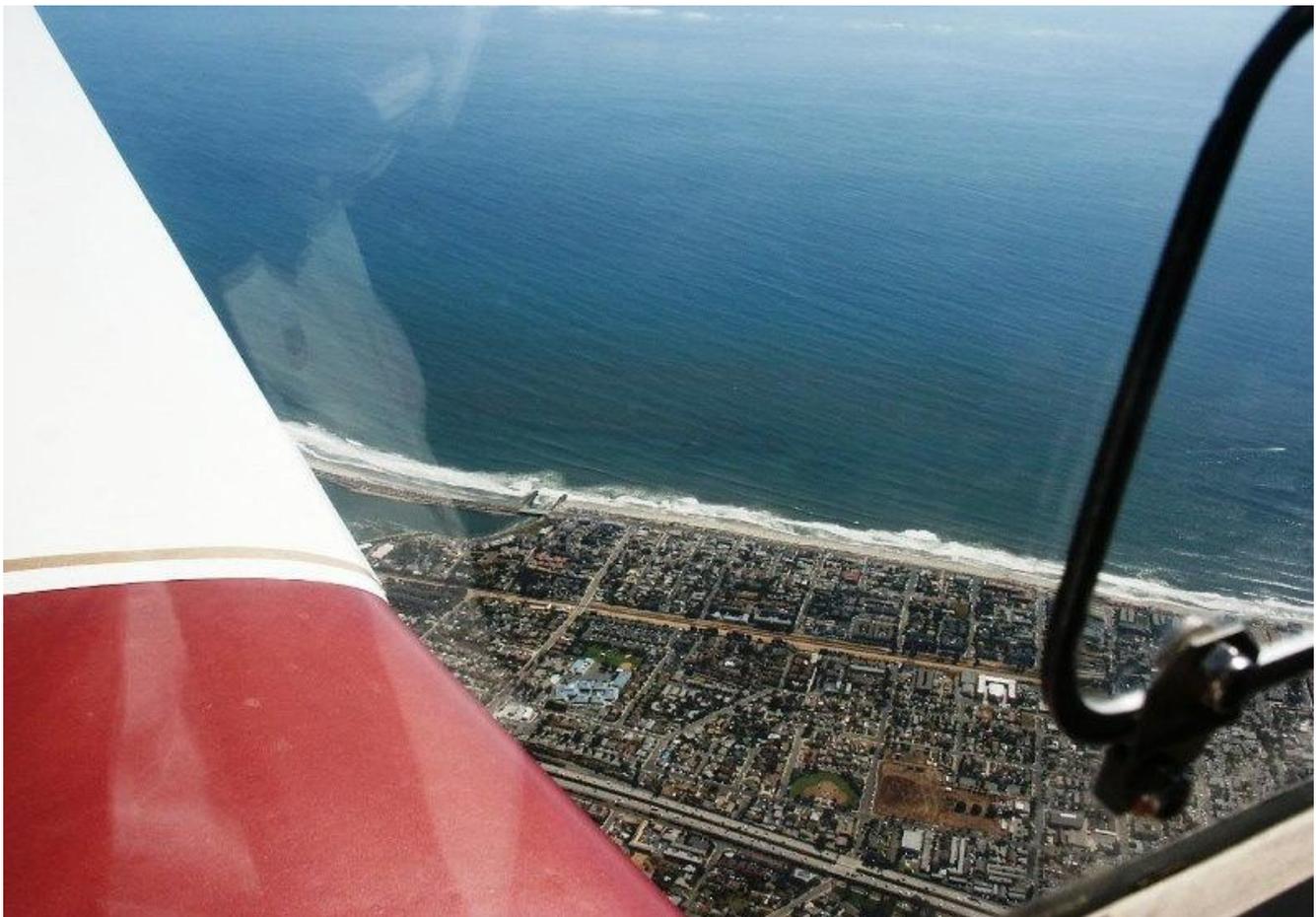
It was really warm that day and some shade was a desired commodity, I would stop for a minute to talk to someone and when I looked around Kent was gone. Kent was not a pilot and he had never met any of the VMG families that were there but that didn't slow him down one bit. Oh, there he was - over there, and he was entertaining the people he had just met. There was not a shy bone in this guy. I think he met everybody there that day. Thanks to Carl, our VMG host for the day, lunch was catered to us right there on the ramp. A serving table was set up next to the caterer's trailer and I waited in line behind Kent who was still intermingling.

I got my lunch plate and a cold soda and walked over to the control tower looking for shade. Kent had disappeared again! The control tower door was unlocked and I went into the base of the tower. Looking around, I was in a room with several doors, so I opened one. It was a conference room with a large table, and there was Kent sitting at the far end, chowing down. Oh boy was that good chow. And air conditioning to boot. Something about "Great minds think alike" came to mind. Some more guys came in and joined us. Then, we went back out for some dessert and another can of soda, then back inside. After lunch, we mingled with the other pilots and had a great time in the heat.



I found this group photo on the Vintage Mooney Group website
I count about 30 of us so that averages out to about 15 Mooneys that flew us there

Time to get going again, we headed northwest to just south of Oceanside. It was a lot cooler up there. We soon got to the coastline.



It looks so cool and refreshing, Kent was happy and so was I

He just couldn't keep quiet as he kept seeing things that he just had to describe. When a plane went by going the other way, our relative speeds surprised Kent because usually the ground seems to go by so slowly from our vantage point a mile up. When we got near Dana Point, it was time for a right turn that would point us back home again. We would be near and then in Class C controlled airspace. I had to be able to hear ATC so I was forced to remind him to hush for a while.

We landed back in Corona and hung out for a while. Had I recorded all that he said then, this recount would be 10 pages longer! Kent could tell jokes, tales, stories, and antidotes nonstop for hours.

I never got around to putting this particular memory of us together until 2012. A lot has happened since then. We have had several more great flights together in the following years including one to Minden NV, up by Lake Tahoe. I have a different Mooney now and Kent is no longer with us. He passed in 2010. I later had the pleasure of meeting, and flying with his sister Dale in 2011. He always referred to her as his "sees'-tor".

The world was a much happier place with you around buddy. Thanks for being a part of my life. We all miss you.

Ed Shreffler

5/21/2005

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