

The Vintage Mooney Group goes to the Payson AZ Fly-in 2008

To recap a little bit, when I got home from my last VMG flight to Tehachapi a month ago, I noticed that a segment of my JPI EDM-800 had gone dark and that there were oil leaks on my propeller. I asked Dave, my A&P to yank them. He did, and the next time I visited my hangar, the prop was on the floor waiting for shipment and the JPI was on the wing waiting for me. Dave sent the prop to his favorite prop shop for an overhaul and I drove the JPI down to the JPI home office just off to the west side of John Wayne (SNA) airport. As the spinner had an old weld repair that created a blemish, and it was already off, I chose to get that prettied up at the same time. What's a few more hundred dollars?



The blemish in the chrome plating that I wanted fixed.



My McCauley propeller was freshly overhauled and ready to be installed again

Thanks to Dave, everything fell into place, and all was re-installed by my planned departure date. So far so good. I took a vacation day off from work to fly as far as Phoenix on Friday, the day before the VMG fly-in. Friday morning, I got up late on purpose, the Santa Ana winds were still active so I drank some coffee and did other stuff around the house for a couple of hours. The winds diminished. It was when I got to my hangar, that I remembered how much was left to be done before my departure. I had to dust the whole plane off due to the filth that the Santa Ana winds had kicked up.

It had rained since the earlier dust accumulation, and the roof leaks a bit, so I got to wash off the mud spots as well. Windows needed washing. She needed a quart of oil. Then the tires received some much needed air pressure.

I was planning to fill up the tanks before leaving but found she was only 6 gallons down (from 64 total) so I passed on that. It must have been past 3 o'clock by the time I launched. The flight was smooth, and 40 miles out from Phoenix, I could see the Wickenburg airport lights out my left window. Yes it was already dusk and the air was that clean.

Darrin was right there to meet me and he secured my Mooney for me, drove me home, and had a cold Blue Can waiting for me. We went to sleep at a decent hour to be fresh for Saturday.

Per Mapquest.com, the trip from Phoenix to Payson AZ is "Total Estimated Time: 1 hour 28 minutes." 07T did it in under a half hour. ☺ What awesome weather. Light winds. We couldn't find a cloud anywhere. No bumps - clean air - we could see for 50 miles. Plop, bang, splat, I landed.



Look at us, Mooneys of every age and color and not a cloud in the sky





Lori and Jon walking past Ozzie's Snazzy Mooney



Can you smell the pine trees in front of the majestic Mogollon Rim?



Dance lessons from our movie star were an unexpected plus



Are we pensive - or just way too serious for such a beautiful day?



Let me explain this to you



Ozzie from Tucson AZ and Phil from Paso Robles CA scheming



Typical scene of VMG good times with great VMG people after an excellent catered lunch



It's my way or the highway!



"The preacher? Sure you can, he's standing right next to me"



The weather did this. Do I bleach the hair, or color the beard?

What was not to like about a wonderful day like this with such great people? I had my buddy Darrin with me. Shredded beef sandwiches melted in your mouth. All thoughts of work were 350 miles away. My Mooney performed flawlessly. It wasn't even jacket weather even though we were at an elevation of 5157 feet above sea level. We all got to introduce ourselves after lunch.

In addition - don't let me forget to tell you about the special VMG welcoming committee. Anita, Jo, Colette, Gina, Linda, Gerry, Charlotte, Lori, Bonnie, and other wonderful VMG gals gave me warm welcome hugs as I met the assembled group. How lucky can a guy from Corona get?

It was too soon - time to launch again and after our goodbyes, 07T smoothly pulled Darrin and me up and off the runway and gave us a good view of the hills ahead. They were smooth rolling hills, but they were way higher than we were and only five miles away. Hmmm, I looked to the left and that was an easier way to go. I looked to the right and saw a saddle between two hills that seemed safe enough. I looked at my airspeed indicator and found the answer. I was indicating 110kts. Good, but not optimum. Once I coaxed the Mooney's nose a few degrees higher, the climb rate increased and the top of the hill started to slide down from view. Left or right diversion was no longer a required consideration. Point to Phoenix and go! Go, trusty steed, go.



I want to interject a couple of pixs from the day before. For those of you pilots that have a Garmin 396 or 496 with an XM weather subscription, you probably know that you can click on a weather pendent extending left from an airport symbol and see the pop-up METAR framed in white above. It is so nice to get current weather info before you get there. Moreover, most of you know what happens when you hit Enter while looking at the above...



That's right; you see the same thing decoded into English. The time is converted from Zulu into local time. The temperatures are converted from Celsius into Fahrenheit. However - the thing that I never knew before that day is that the Density Altitude is calculated for you. This is a potential lifesaver for someone out there. So, check this out on your run-up.

Darrin and I had to slide down right away after those hills were behind us to get below the PHX Class Bravo airspace before we got there. Albuquerque Center handed us off to Phoenix Approach and a few minutes later Phoenix Approach handed us off to Deer Valley Tower. It all went by so fast. I was screaming in from the northeast at 200 MPH and the tower controller was so extra busy that I just didn't like the feel of what I was hearing. This poor gal was way overloaded with a very high workload demand! She gave me a suggestion that was unclear and so I made a sweeping turn back to the north. I let her deal with all of the other pilots and when she had the time to look on her radar display, to locate me, she asked me about my intentions. I explained that I had left the area to give me some space, and to give her some time to deal with everyone else. She thanked me and brought us in safely on runway 7R. Once I switched the radio over on ground point 8, I asked the ground controller to congratulate that lady working the tower frequency on 120.2 for an excellent job under fire when she had time. Three other pilots immediately chimed in with similar words of accolades for her.

After we had secured the airplane, and we were walking through the Deer Valley Airport terminal building to get out to Darrin's truck, I heard someone call out "Hey Ed". Thinking it was for some other Ed (as no one knows me there), I continued out the front door and then I heard it again. It was Todd Underwood of my '1000 Mile Odyssey' story, of all people! Todd told me of a story about a conversation he had, with an older guy who happened to be a retired priest. They had been talking

about my stories and the 'retired priest' had asked Todd "What is a Blue Can?". I thought that to be amazing. It is also coincidental, as I have one next to my keyboard right now. Ahhhhh-

For all of you first timers reading about a Blue Can, I have to spill the beans right here.



The Infamous **Blue Can**.

We ate dinner and went to bed early again on Saturday night. Darrin got up early and found the skies to be completely overcast. He also checked www.wunderground.com for weather. Bummer.



When I got up it was better, but it was not good

We were watching NASCAR on TV. It happened to be in Phoenix that weekend. Then all hell broke loose. The rains came. They stopped the race. We knew it would blow our way real soon.



Hail hit the driveway and I was glad that I was on the ground



The sky turned really nasty



THEN THE SUN EXPLODED !

OK, so I got carried away for a moment, but I am the storyteller here. These are real pictures of that day that I took from my daughter's place.

It was time for me to make that go or no go decision, so I called Flight Service. They knew nothing about the sun exploding but all of the rest of the above was confirmed to me. There were more storms to the west, right in my proposed flight path, with an 'alley' to sneak between them. When he told me about the PIREP for icing at 6000' at Banning, that sealed the deal, and I told him I was staying on the ground. Now I could have a **Blue Can**, as I wasn't going anywhere today.

It was a stormy afternoon in Phoenix and I wasn't worried about being at work Monday morning because I was scheduled to show up for jury duty Monday and my supervisor knew about that. I called the automated jury service line and learned that they did not need me, and that my service obligation was satisfied for the year. Pressures lessened.

We ate dinner and went to bed early again on Sunday night.

I got up early Monday and knew that my plan B was very doable based on what I saw outside. I called Flight Service, and they confirmed that no unsafe weather conditions existed. I yelled through the door at Darrin (who was taking a shower) that I was good to go in five minutes. Once at the

airport, he helped with my preflight, gave me a hug, and wished me well. I taxied to the run-up area, confirmed that all was running fine, and switched to the tower frequency. It was then that I heard a flight instructor for Pan Am say that I had a big piece of tape hanging from below my right wing. I went back to the terminal building and Darrin came to my rescue, pulling it off and handing it to me through the door, while my engine was still running, to take home and show to my A&P. I had an uneventful take off and pointed 07T to Corona.



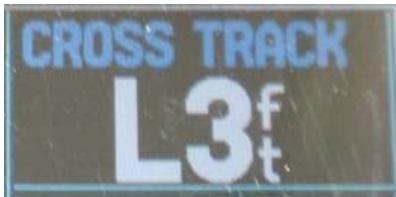
Look what I found out in the middle of nowhere, cloud-making machines



I always love flying through this valley about 50 mi. west of Phoenix



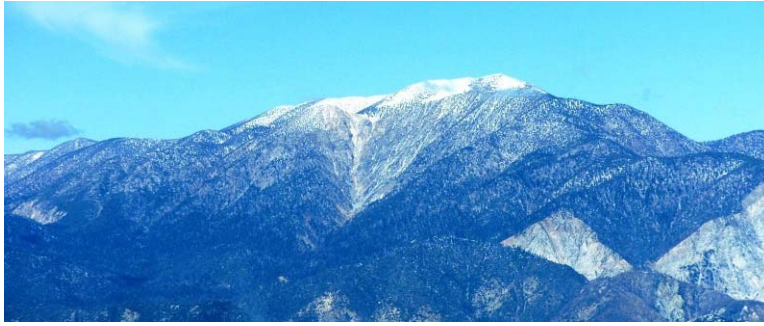
Poor place to run out of gas?



Just bragging that I was only three feet off course



What is that mystery building north of I-10 near Banning



Saw some new snow near Big Bear



Had some clouds to contend with (down there) in the LA Basin



A small piece of March Air Reserve Base sliding by

Plop, bang, splat, I landed in Corona. Jumped out of the plane and into my car, and drove another 24 miles to work. I got there at 11:30 and still put in a full day's work. Whew!

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