

## Soni and Mom

I met Soni a month ago where I meet so many wonderful people, 1911 Aviation #32 Corona, CA. No, that is not my apartment, though I do pay rent, for my airplane. It is my hangar. We met to go flying, and that is what we did. I flew the Corona Loop flight that everyone likes. She said it was wonderful.



She was wearing black over pink that day



Soni took this one of us in flight

Eight days later we met again on a Monday around 7 after work. As I recall, she looked just stunning in heels and a beautiful wispy beige and brown dress. She had come from an interview and had intended to change somewhere before going flying. I had her grab her comfy clothes from her car, suggested she go in my hangar, showed her where the light switch was and then I closed the hangar doors. Perfect changing room. When she emerged, I had a surprise for her. Our first flight together had qualified her for an AOPA First Flight Certificate. So before we took off, I presented it to her.

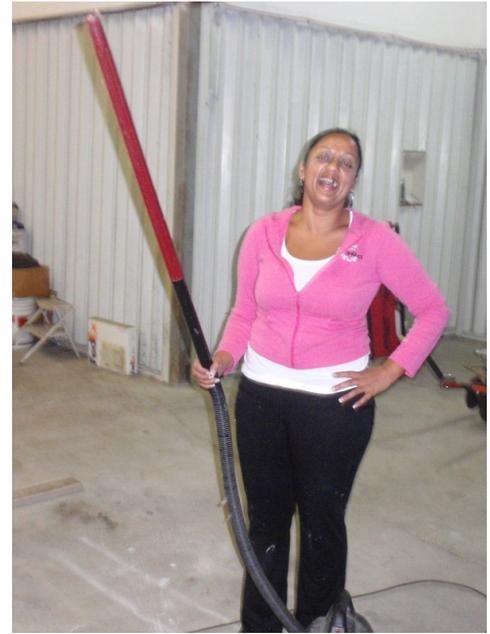


She was wearing pink over black that day



It was a wonderful night flight but my camera cannot capture the awesome sights we saw below

Then when we returned, she was bound and determined to pitch in and help with whatever needed doing. The dust bunnies from the Cottonwood trees needed to be removed from the hangar floor, so I got to sit back and watch. See what being a Mooney pilot is like?



The lighting was poor for a \$200 camera trying to zoom in at night from 20 feet

Now you know a little bit about Soni. This next part will ring true for some people. Flying my airplane has evolved for me over the past ten years from 'it's all about the flight', or 'it's all about the airplane', to 'it's all about the people'. And Soni is one of those people. She has almost a spur of the minute work schedule, not at all like my 9 to 5 type. Next we had set up a time to meet on a Wednesday after work, that she had to cancel. Then an after work house party on a Friday was missed because Google maps mis-directed me. Then a week ago she invited me over to her place for lunch today. I found her home properly and now today's 'Soni and Mom' episode starts here. Soni opened the front door and greeted me with a smile and a hug when I arrived. Her mom smiled and shook my hand.



It was an honor and my pleasure to meet Soni's mom



Who can't relate to a mom serving her food to her daughter and a guest?



A special flavored bread pre cut and buttered, a veggie medley prepared with curry, a tan/orange homemade lentil soup prepared with curry, and fluffy white rice. This was so cool for a mid-western raised boy to experience. (Cool was an anti-pun). Curry is quite hot in the spice ranking.



After lunch, we gravitated to the back yard where conversation was three-way interesting. Then I saw Soni futzing with something behind their backyard hot tub. While she was busy, I had a fantastic conversation with 'mom' about all manner of things. This includes facets of the history and the culture of India that I would never learn in print. And I learned how renowned her cooking is in the various communities who have been privileged to know her. I found her to be one fascinating lady.



Although outward appearances may be drastically different, which is unimportant to me, I found this lady to have the same set of values, the same strong character, the same everything worth thinking about, that my own mother had. I found that to be comforting. I still do. What a wonderful day.

Soni had work plans even for this Sunday evening so it was time for goodbyes. We were still in the kitchen where mom was making up a little special take home package of goodies for me to munch on when I felt like having a treat. Then mom smiled and gave me a hug. It doesn't get any better.



I just happen to find the contrast between these two pictures so amusing. On the left, Soni looks so happy with her dear mom. On the right, she looks like she has to endure being with me, even for a moment. Am I that bad?



On the way home from their place high up in the Anaheim Hills I grabbed this shot looking north way past highway 91 running left to right below the view here. I bet we were at least 3000' MSL today.

You know, I never did catch mom's name. . .