## The Box was Hot

After a four month hiatus from flying, for a multitude of reasons, I got back in the airplane again and I was grateful for my friend Charles who loves to go flying, loves to fly my Mooney, and is ready and willing to do all of the ground operations associated with flying a General Aviation airplane.



Corona to Camarillo - Course Change Over El Monte

Camarillo (CMA) is always an excellent lunch destination for pilots anywhere in or near the LA Basin. I plan for 35 minutes flying time from Corona. The route I choose going over El Monte keeps us out of the LAX Class B airspace which is reserved for commercial airliners making their descent into the Los Angeles International airport. We go over the Rose Bowl stadium and the HOLLYWOOD sign enroute. Van Nuys airport is just past the halfway point. The enroute flight was glass smooth with just 3 minutes of turbulence on approach to landing. The menu and service at the Waypoint Café on the airport never disappoints us and we always come away with smiles. The return flight was glass smooth with just 3 minutes of turbulence on approach to landing. A great day for both of us.



Clear. High of 81F. Winds from the WSW at 5 to 15 mph. » <u>ZIP Code Detail</u>

After the four month delay referenced above, I waited just four days to do it again. I am a pilot and many pilots always want to go flying. Charles has a friend named Oscar from Mexico who stays with him from time to time. There was around a half a tank of fuel onboard, so I knew I could safely invite Oscar to join us and still be within weight limits. Charles has the necessary keys, so he and Oscar got to the Corona airport first and washed my airplane before I arrived. Big thanks guys.

This Saturday presented a beautiful but nippy early morning in Corona that begged for a flight somewhere. <u>http://www.wunderground.com/</u> showed the closest significant weather was in Oregon to the north or in Texas to the east. My Mooney is in fine shape. With plenty of sleep behind me, I felt great. That takes care of the Big Three issues in my Go vs. No-Go decision when it comes to flying.

Borrego would be an excellent day trip from nearby Corona. I drove my RAV4 up to the plane and scrambled inside one way or another. Charles parked my car. They both wrangled my walker into the baggage compartment and took their seats. My disability aside now, we were all good to go.



This is an interesting route. My flight plan showed we were to leave Corona (AJO) at the top of this chart image, and head down to French Valley airport (F70) where it shows \$6.68 for fuel. This keeps us away from the two airports that had active sky diving operations in process. Then we were to head more to the east to an FAA published waypoint (a place on the earth for flight planning) named GAZOO. This led us into a V shaped valley which would let us gradually descend 5000 feet to the desert floor below instead of us topping a ridge and then trying to fall like a brick to get down in time for landing at Borrego Springs airport.

We fly-in 3 dimensions and we plan in 4 dimensions including the time enroute. As the time enroute determines the total fuel burn, we need to always be sure we have enough avgas so we don't wind up in a stupid newspaper story written by someone who knows nothing about airplanes and who always gets the facts wrong.



Oscar took this of us before startup



As we taxied out to the runway Oscar snapped a picture of some planes tied down.



Up a ways and looking down on the neighborhood



Following I-15 south by Lake Elsinore

These pictures were taken by Oscar, a first timer in a General Aviation airplane, and it is interesting to observe what was of interest to him.



As we descended down through that V shaped valley, we listened in to the pilots talking on 122.8 MHz and knew that everyone was using runway 8. Charles and I had both somehow assumed traffic would be westbound on 26 but it was not to be today. He was still flying and brought us around to the west of the airport to keep us clear of 'the box' Oscar captured the view out front on short final just as we came over the end of the runway.



The 'box' referred to is an area of airspace where pilots demonstrate their aerobatic skill, flying in all directions except straight and level, for competition purposes. They fly straight up, straight down, upside down, and are constantly weaving, looping, rolling, and doing their utmost to do well in competition. This red square shows the box which is a mile square and goes from the surface up to 5000 feet.

When it is being used, the **'box'** is referred to as **'hot'**. All other pilots are prohibited from flying into or through the box. So we just flew west of the box and the airport, turned south, turned east, doubled back to the west, and two right turns later, landed on runway 8 to follow standard protocol. As we taxied to parking at the west end of the ramp, we saw the competition judges in their effective blue tent-like shade covers and all of the beautiful sport planes that were there for the activities. I never found out the name of the organization that put this event on this weekend. I thought I might run into Brenda, a pilot from Riverside who was working the event but it didn't work out.

The Assaggio Ristorante Italiano on the field was a great lunch stop as always for me and my guests. I usually order Italian cuisine but today I just wanted a hamburger. They were out of hamburgers. Their salad and beef dip sandwich was awesome and I forgot about hamburgers quickly.

After lunch, we sauntered back outside. Wonderful weather, sitting in the shade, looking up, and watching the competition was fantastic. These pilots were giving it their all and they were outstanding. Charles and Oscar walked the line checking out all of the sport planes assembled there. When they returned, it was time to get ready to go home. If you noticed fuel there was only \$5.10, that was an Internet typo but it was only \$5.30 and I wanted some. Oscar chose to walk down to the fuel pump and we met him there. I took on 23 gallons bringing it up to 50 - still safe for our weight.

The guys had traded places and now Oscar was sitting up front next to me. After I had climbed several thousand feet, he took the controls and started flying for the first time in his life. Just like everyone on their first time, he was all over the place at first. It is an unusual experience with no way to tell if the airplane is going straight, the plane soon starts turning. I had him concentrate on a ridge ahead of us and that fixed it. We went straight.

That is until we had reached 6,500 feet above sea level. Then it was time to maintain that altitude as well as maintain straight flight. That is when many people get mentally overloaded. As soon as they concentrate on the up-down, the left-right gets forgotten. It takes a while to keep everything aligned. After a while he did get that Mooney tamed in a respectable manner. Soon it was time to start coming down to set up for the approach to Corona again. There was no special sensation looking out the windows even though we were doing 180 MPH then. We returned and I stopped at my hangar.



The guys backed 07T into the hangar and we chatted for a while, as always. As Oscar is a first time flyer in a General Aviation airplane, it is going to be my privilege to present him with an AOPA First Flight Certificate attesting to that fact. May many more good people follow in his footsteps.