

JUST DO IT Part II

by Ron Siwik, M.D. and Rita Siwik, Home-based Communications

The May 23 atmospheric menu included headwinds, turbulence, thunderstorms and ice. 6000 feet IFR was filed, and the first half of the continental crossing was fine. But the 1900 NM flight on V12 took longer than next day's 2100 to Hawaii. Worst weather of the trip juxtaposed with the best.

Family and airport friends arrived around 7:30 for the send off. Last minute packing was not careful compared to months of planning, items thrown in not to be used. The group was very nice to have and hug.

With 240 gallons and me, the Bonanza is 310 pounds over gross. The 8 am takeoff used half the 3500 feet at home base. Nice performance with the first full tip tank load. Level at cruise the setup for the next 155 hours was selected:

- 58 percent power, 21 inches MP and 2300 rpm.
- 12.6 to 13 gal/hour, 75 degrees rich of peak.
- 140 knots indicated.

Passing Indianapolis Center a lady controller asked if 92W was really going nonstop to Santa Barbara. Feeling high and impish, the reply:

"Yes, to the Fess Parker Doubletree Inn and Resort."

A pause....Then:

"What do you do for a bathroom?"

"It's kind of shaped like a bottle"

Her smile could be heard at hand off.

At St. Louis a rumbling bass voice reminded me of Broadway, so I had to ask:

"Could we hear a few bars of Old

Man River?"

"I'm sure I could" The smile again audible.

The Western states were under an historic low with high surface winds, steep gradients, and the XM Wx was green and red, so back to business. Albuquerque approach vectored me around thunderstorms. Near Winslow, ATC was advised that rime ice might require a landing, but it stayed manageable.

I called Steve at home on the satellite. He was watching on Guardian Mobility and said the Bonanza dropped off for awhile due to low ground speed. The default is 70 knots, below which the system assumes you've landed. The ATC directed climb in a MOA slowed the plane a lot in this headwind. The dusk landing at SBA was welcome.

Subject: He's almost there
Hi all,

Ron left this morning at 8:00 a.m. It's now 9:45 p.m. and with tracking I can see he's almost there. He had knots of 132, 145, and now 165. He's been at 10,000 ft. When he was between Winslow and Albuquerque he had 10 gallons in each tip and full mains. He had 4 1/2 hours to go and thought his mains would be half full when landing. Mary, Jim and I have text messaged him. I've called him on our land line, my cell phone with international calling, and his satellite phone. We've spoken 4 times and his mood continues to be great. He's chipper and living his dream.

His itinerary calls for a Santa Barbara to Hilo, Hawaii flight tomorrow. That's flexible. We plan to talk in the morning for an update. I leave town at noon and

will be away. Darn!! A grandson's basketball tournament in Ft. Wayne is beckoning. I will email again before leaving as to when he plans to depart Hawaii.

When I receive tracking instructions from Mike Carroll, I will forward them to all of you so that any who wish can do their own tracking of N2092W.

We had coffee time at the hangar this morning. I was drinking from a "Life is Good" insulated cup. I'd never noticed the saying on the back.

"LOVE WHAT YOU DO, DO WHAT YOU LOVE"

Ron does and is!!!

Thanks for all of your good wishes.

Rita

P.S. 10:30 A phone call from Ron at the Santa Barbara FBO. 14 hours of flying, and, yes, he plans to continue on tomorrow to Hawaii. He sounds chipper, excited, exuberant. He must have had a nap he sounds so good!!!!

In the morning the hotel desk had the SkyPlan folder and box lunch. I called the dispatcher in Calgary and described troubles with the HF. He warned me that there might be problems with the controllers.

After fueling to 240 gallons and programming the Garmin for the first way points, take off and climb were greeted by Santa Barbara's assignment of HF frequencies. No contact with Oceanic. San Francisco ARINC answered on the satellite phone and relayed the first position report. This superb entity relayed to ATC through 20 time zones. The order to return SBA didn't happen.

Hourly lat-long telephone reports

use a format that first was written in the log, then read off when due. ARINC advised not to be too late, since paperwork is required if a report is late beyond 90 minutes.

Six thousand feet was smooth for 14 hours, gradually pushed by trade winds at about 1 knot gained per hour. Looking down at the smooth water, emotions were examined. How are you feeling about flying over all that? After introspection, the best word seemed to be contentment. In 41 years of flying, the old rules of pre flight preparation and planning still apply. Human factors make a flight safe just as they do driving on the freeway without wrecks. Be professional. 92W won't let you down.

Back into radar vectors in Hawaii after dark. The Hilo ILS helped distinguish the runway from city lights. Ground control said to wait at the far end of the ramp for security. The guard said this was the first clear day in weeks, that I was lucky to get in.

A few days were allowed for island hopping. First was Kona, next morning, using left over fuel. Enough gas for 3 hours. Skirting the South shore, helicopter traffic was heard, tourists seeing the world's most active volcano. Plumes of steam and ash billow from the water's edge, and the Bonanza was steered well clear.

After a one hour cruise, landing at Kona International and renting a car, the Captain James Cook monument was sought. With no markers one must stop for directions several times. The locals are aware of it but it must not be visited often.

The white obelisk is visible a mile across Kealakekua Bay, accessible by kayak. Too time consuming for a day trip, afternoon already, so an hour was spent gazing across the water.

Captain Cook's first visits were a success. He was received tantamount to a deity. His sailors behaved fairly well. But stress was breaking his steady mind, and poor judgment was guiding him by the third entrance into the Bay. This unscheduled return for emergency



repair coincided with cultural changes on shore. The Hawaiians were less hospitable. Thefts enraged Cook. When he went ashore with a few Marines the British firearms were no match for the crowd of hundreds. The Captain died from clubbing and stab wounds.

The afternoon flight around the North shore revealed high cliffs from the wooded bluff hundreds of feet down to the pounding waves. This is the least populated area of the big island. The few large homes seemed to be served by a private looking airstrip.

The next day a round trip to Maui showed the upscale side of Hawaii. Manicured homes and resorts, not at all like laid-back Hilo. A cabbie named

Eric agreed to a half day fare. For lunch we stopped at the country club where his wife Martina served. With her shift ending, the three of us drove around looking at lava formations and long beaches.

This couple is from Slovakia. Eric was in law enforcement. He tells of frustrating cases, example: arrest of a Mafia figure after years of investigation only to lead to his release due to corrupt judges.

Subject: Tomorrow, Wednesday, is a flying day

Ron will depart Hilo in the morning, 7:00 a.m. Hawaiian time, 1:00 p.m. EST. He has another long leg, this time to Samoa, a little farther than California to Hawaii which was around

14 hours. These past three days he's done some sightseeing, local flying, and today he mainly rested. He's anxious to be on his way. His only complaint so far has been very swollen feet on his previous 2 flying days. His mood is sky high!!!!

Rita

Preparing for the third leg to Pago Pago, American Samoa, an extra 20 gallons was added to the tips. It is 2200 nautical miles and SkyPlan forecast headwinds. 2 hours reserve is desired. Before GPS the standard was 4 hours reserve. The take off to the East on Hilo's runway 8 was on a warm and humid morning. Sluggish. Poor per-

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formance, wallowing to 1000 feet over the waves. With the trade winds, that altitude seemed best. Maybe avoid the headwinds at altitude. Picking up the South-southwesterly on-course heading, Honolulu informed me that no IFR clearance was possible that low. Since it was below cloud, they didn't mind the VFR; in fact they lost interest quickly. Good. No recall when the HF failed all 3 frequencies assigned. ARINC relayed the hourly reports again.

SkyPlan's folder also indicated a band of weather straddling the Equator. Discussing this with them on the BlackBerry before takeoff, seems there were embedded thunderstorms with tops to 43 thousand feet. The well-known intertropical convergence zone is usually there. One can count on a few hours of



instrument flying.

As these formations came into view, I called ARINC and picked up my IFR clearance at 6 thousand. Not much on the Stormscope. Without land masses to heat, CBs are apparently less formidable.

Maneuvering speed, 130 KIAS into the buildups gave moderate turbulence and rain. No effort to deviate, having learned that another towering cumulus waits. There was no hail or lightning.

The showers continued to Samoa, slacking off into broken clouds. With Faleolo control talking from some unseen island, I was cleared for the ILS. Nice to touch down, and glad to avoid the published missed.

Wandering around the dark ramp and stopping in a nice tropical shower, a chat with the poncho-clad line crew resulted in a decision to wait for tomorrow to fuel. Sammy the marshaller took me to the Tradewinds Hotel. I declined his kind offer to stop for a few beers. I must stay on schedule with the rigid permit structure. In the morning Sammy said the gas would be cash, so we stopped at the ATM. No limit here, repeatedly entering the card until \$1500 equivalent was in hand. Not sure what would have happened if the ATM maxed out like at home.

The Samoan men are built like anvils or NFL lineman, and wear to-the-ankle shorts. The school children wear uniforms including a jumper for the girls. One thinks of Latin America or the Caribbean while jouncing along the roads in an ancient vehicle. Sammy had the met folder off his fax, and the weather looked good.

Subject: Samoa Update

A groggy Ron just called after 7 or 8 hours of sleep. It was 1:30 p.m. here when he called, 6:30 a.m. in Samoa. He only flew thru one time zone yesterday. He's delaying his departure 4 hours to around 7:00 this evening, EST. His handler is taking him to breakfast. Ron says he made customs, fuel, etc. easy. He speaks very good English but converses in another language to the locals. The flight to Fiji is shorter. He stays there 2 nights and he sounds ready to do some resting.

Yesterday's flight was good. He saw

no ships, islands, or had no air traffic reported--just Ron and his beloved Bonanza.

To be continued---Rita

Faleolo control, on the unseen island, issued a clearance in the non radar environment. Same broken English as last night. Get it right, though, with moderate traffic. Flying through layers of cloud and into and out of billowing cumulus, the Sky watch was active as Britten – Norman Islanders were spotted on their air taxi routes.



En route to Fiji, the longitude count-down was watched as 180 degrees, the Dateline, was approached. Yesterday it was the same at the Equator. Nothing happens, the numbers just count down to zero and back up. After crossing it I asked an Aussie airline Captain if I had lost or gained a day, and he said "Unfortunately you've lost a day." It was easy to contact commercial flights and we chatted about my trip. Many people are fascinated and there are questions about the route and other details. Most professional pilots say they would like to do it some day. He signed off with "Good on you."

Approaching cloud covered Fiji, mountain tops poked through the clouds.

Nandi, on the opposite side, required an instrument penetration in this non-radar locale. But the shore was visible to the right, so why not fudge a little and stay VFR. Later, talking to Steve, who was watching in Tucson, said he



could see me following the North Coast on the Guardian Mobility website:

"Must be beautiful"

"It is."

The Fiji traffic was not coming up on Skywatch and seemed well clear. Descending below the edge of the clouds and intercepting the localizer into Nandi, landing was in daylight. The parking for 3 days was at a regular airline gate between Boeing and Airbus.

The marshaller drove me to Dene-reau Island, the local luxury equivalent



of Maui. During the half hour drive to there, Fiji is reminiscent of Bahamas out-islands, relatively modest. Crossing the bridge to manicured gardens and being admitted by the guard, the drive passes championship golf courses and 5 star hotels. My stay was at the superb

Radisson. The buffet breakfast and lunch was as expansive and varied as ever seen. No need for dinner. After relaxing among Aussie and New Zealand guests, a feeling of catch-up on rest and time zone was nice.

Subject: Fiji

Hi again,

Yesterday, Thursday, Ron left Samoa around noon Samoan time. Five hours later he landed in Fiji and it was Friday. He crossed the International Date Line. He just called me (it's Friday afternoon here) and he was just getting up and it is Saturday morning there. He'll fly for New Guinea tomorrow, another shorter flight. If I can figure out when he's flying EST, I'll pass it on.

Again, he's raving about the terrific Handler that met and helped him.

Rita

For those of you with an itinerary, here is a key to help in identifying destinations.

PHTO Hilo, HA

NSTU American Samoa

NFFN Fiji

AOPY Papua New Guinea

RPLL Philippines

VVDN Vietnam

VTBD Thailand

VABB India

OOMS Oman

LGIR Crete

LPPT Lisbon

LPAZ Azores

CYYT St. Johns, Newfoundland

CYUL Montreal

He has permits for overflights over Indonesia, Cambodia, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. At this time, only Indonesia is confirmed. The others are pending.



Eventually the met and flight plan folder for Papua New Guinea was gathered at the Radisson desk. Airport folks picked me up. The handlers had baked a chocolate happy retirement cake. They had a glass plate of fresh cut fruit. Fuel was charged to SkyPlan. Nice send off for the Captain.



Crossing the Southern Solomons, ghosts of WWII appeared. Guadalcanal, battleground from August 1942 to February 1943, slid by. Off the left wing, the Coral Sea, scene of the crucial American victory which, together with Midway the following month, marked the high tide of Japanese Conquest. With the loss of Guadalcanal the Rising Sun knew the loss of the Pacific was inevitable.

What an interesting experience being contacted by Honiara, departure point for the P38s that shot down Admiral Yamamoto's flight in April 1943.

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This strategic strip was begun by the Japanese but won by American forces landing on Guadalcanal. Many battles raged around the airport. Now an Australian voice assisted the Bonanza's passage.

Passing through Brisbane Center airspace, a lady controller's voice sounded good.

A night into Port Moresby, New Guinea, back to the comfort of radar vectors. VFR with lots of city lights. Scheduled to leave in the morning 4 hours were spent trying to fuel. No other piston aircraft, and all trucks committed to airliners. After getting their full attention, an international oil carnet or cash was requested, no Visa or MasterCard or Skyplan credit. Next day was used raising \$5000 cash, with the airport money exchange taking the Mastercard. Pleas from SkyPlan were ignored: Cash Only. Of the 1650 liters of 100LL on hand the Bonanza took 740.

Thus was a day used as one of the



grace days in the 48 hour permit window. Fueling again delayed until the morning of departure but glad to get it.

Subject: *Delayed in New Guinea*
Good evening to all,

Ron should have been on his way to Manila by now, but he arrived Sunday evening in Papua (about a 9 hour flight) and there was no handler to help him thru the maze of requirements. They wanted only cash for fuel, which wasn't possible, and there was much confusion about permits and paperwork. It took him hours to reach me by phone. Finally we talked, I called SkyPlan whom he hadn't been able to contact, and they're now assisting Ron. The handler has appeared and Ron is spending the day (for him Monday) getting fuel, filing a flight plan, getting weather briefings, and completing required paperwork (maybe even cleaning out the plane a bit). He now plans to leave early Tuesday morning for Manila, which is Monday evening for us (it's now 14 hours later than EST). He'll be there about 6 days, staying with a retired surgeon from Geauga Hospital. Dr. Oca's main home is in

Cleveland, but he has family in Manila as well. His brother is building a hospital there, and Dr. Oca is helping furnish it with medical items and visits frequently. His brother has an R 44 Helicopter. Do you suppose they might fly it? Oh, yes!!!

He's anxious to stay put a few days and do some organizing and catching up (laundry), as well as some sightseeing.

One specific I've heard is that they will fly (commercial) to the island where Magellan died. Ron, the history buff, is very excited about that.

He continues to be enthusiastic. This is a guess, but he'll probably be in the air Monday evening around 6:00 EST. It looks like it will be another 8 or 9 hour flight. There are 14,000' mountains inland, so he's being routed along the coast.

With 240 gallons of fuel on board, he's not able to fly over them.

The adventure continues.....

Rita

The route West from Papua New Guinea stays South of the Owen Stanley Range. Thence to Indonesia before the right hand dogleg to the Philippines. Late afternoon a brown - yellow haze of pollution appeared left and front. Sunset accentuated it. The notorious smog at the upcoming Olympics could be seen. Asian smoke and dust extends far down wind. Crossing the Equator Northbound, more clouds in the convergence zone.



Passing Leyte Gulf, MacArthur's famous return was recalled, the wading ashore liberally photographed. The gulf is also the scene of the first naval aviation battle where aircraft only were involved, the carrier fleets widely separated.

Radar contact was established at Mactan, and the 15 1/2 hour flight ended VFR in Manila. The handlers rapidly appeared. Jay spirited me to the Intercontinental Hotel with little fuss at customs.

Next morning I called Oscar Oca at his home in the US. He was just leaving to meet me, and said his niece, Tessie Prieto would do lunch.

Jay from the airport picked me up to move the plane indoors and attend

to details. During the ride he looked startled at the name Tessie Prieto:

“Really! She is very famous, the winner of our American Idol equivalent!”

Tessie laughed later and said: “No, no, that’s Tessa Prieto Valdez, no relation. Uncle Oscar is always giving me a hard time when Tessa is on TV.”

Subject: Manila Bound

My tracking shows Ron still on the ground, but I just spoke with him on his satellite phone and he’s been flying 2 hours. The headwinds have subsided and he was thrilled with 165 knots. So two hours down-about 12 or 13 to go. Our conversation was cut short because he had to report his position. Again, he’s doing absolutely great and is in a fantastic mood!!!



While flying to New Guinea, he communicated with some Australian Commercial pilots who assisted him in forwarding radio messages. He says they first of all wondered what in the world he was doing out there, and then became very interested and chatty.

When we talked last night, he said he wouldn’t make this trip again. What would be the point!! I breathed a sigh of relief. Yes, there is a God!! Now all of you

airport buddies, if he ever starts hinting at another one of these rounders, remind him of his words, “Once is enough”.

I’ll rest easier tonight knowing Ron is doing some coastal flying.

Later.....Rita



The Oca family is prominent in Manila, owning a shipping company, mariner training schools and 5 hospitals. A week of their fine hospitality allowed me to visit Corregidor,

Bataan and Cebu, the latter the site of Magellan’s demise at the hands of Lapu – Lapu, the local hero.

Magellan got involved with local politics, taking sides in the Mactan-Cebu quarrel. A mural depicts Lapu-Lapu clubbing Magellan with the two in knee deep water.

Many people have asked me if I was worried or in trouble on the trip, and I say no, because if you stay away from bars and bad neighborhoods, there is no trouble.

Subject: We’ve talked

Well, a very contented Ronald just called as he was slipping off his shoes at his hotel and preparing for some rest. I’ve been amazed at his stamina thru these long flights.

It is exactly 12 hours later there, so it was 10:30 p.m. Tuesday, Philippines time, when we spoke. It seems there is no need for a mechanic or avionics shop while there. Everything is performing as it’s supposed to, thanks to all the time, work and energy of so many of you that have helped make Ron’s dream a reality. He laughed when saying, “I am half way around the world now, aren’t I?” Yes, indeed, and then some.

There’ll be some silence from me for awhile as he stays put until June 9th. Then it’s on to Danang, Viet Nam. I’ve enjoyed responses from you as we’ve followed Ron’s journey. Thanks so much. I’ve passed them on verbally to Ron. Hopefully he’ll have time this week to use his laptop and read them himself.

Time for some R&R for me, too.
Rita

Departing Manila, very smooth check out with fuel charged to SkyPlan. Calling SkyPlan as usual, supplementing the faxed met folder, no Sigmets over the South China Sea.

The shortest leg of the trip was this one, to Danang. Approaching the coast, Ho Chi Minh Control skillfully routed me thru Phu Cat and North to the highland coast. On a one mile final Danang tower said:

“Bonanza 2092W I have a question.”

“Go ahead.”

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"Do you need a ride to town?"

"No Thank you, VDN Aviation is meeting me."

On the roll out:

"92W you have a pretty plane."

"Thank you very much."

The vast apron is empty concrete now, vacant revetments stretching into the distance. The greeting was cordial and being the only person in the terminal, processing was easy. The next day, fueling was with 95 octane car gas. A few \$20 bills got enough into the right main to reach Bangkok with reserves. Instead of traveling to my 1968 haunts at Tuy Hoa, Saigon and Bien Hoa, Vietnam was used for rest. There were invitations to tour on scooters, but relaxation was preferred.

Most of the people I saw were born after the war. They are anxious to work with Americans and profess good feelings toward the United States.

Good morning,

I just spoke to Ron as he was heading for bed. He'll be departing this evening around 8:30 EST for Bangkok. It's his shortest hop so far--maybe 3 or so hours, all over land--PIECE OF CAKE!!. He'll

be there three nights, and hopes to visit the Bridge Over the River Kwai.

After the steamy, shirt soaking weather in Manila, he's been staying out of the heat and enjoying air conditioning and his room at the Furama Resort Hotel. There's nothing but 50 yards of beach between him and the ocean. It sounds beautiful. He's been sitting on his balcony, enjoying the view and reading about Greece in anticipation of our being there soon. Darn, maybe I should have gone after all. There's definitely a part of me that wishes I wasn't missing out on at least the land part of this trip. He was in the lobby as two buses of tourists arrived that looked American, but spoke another language. He said the welcome they received included music, drinks, and entertainment. It sounded very festive.

He's been surprised to find DaNang such a small, manageable city. There are lovely paved, wide boulevards full of bicycles and motorbikes, few cars. He said he would never attempt to drive in Manila, but DaNang seems manageable. As in previous places, there's been much friendliness.

As part of Ron's preparation for this trip, he spoke often to Frank Haile in Dallas, Texas. Frank has made this trip four times in his single engine aircraft,

and was a tremendous source of practical information for Ron. For instance, it was his advice that determined that Ron would fly west instead of east, having longer days that way for his long flights. He also felt the body adjusted easier to the time zone changes going that direction. We also purchased our Dolly Parton tip tanks from him. They were used by him on his flights and are experienced world travelers--if they could only talk. Another piece of advice from him was that Ron should not get in or out of the plane in shorts and a t-shirt. He should look more official, and in that way receive faster service. Ron says it's true. He puts on his white shirt with the shoulder bar stripes and dons his pilot hat before stepping out of the plane. He is addressed verbally and in all written communications as Captain Siwik. Again, when I asked Ron if he was really doing it, (I had been a little skeptical) he said he was and it was really necessary to look more official. Mike Carroll also made him a laminated photo id card (of course, the photo is of him in his official pilot garb) as well as a "World Wide Airways" Business card, with his Captain Ronald Siwik name, and his world phone and email address, all to make him more official.

So the tip tanks are empty for now with less fuel requirements. He has been requested to fly at 14,000' so that he will be on their radar.

I hope the new tracking will work for all of us. By the way, if N2092W doesn't appear, the L07147445 is also Ron. If anyone else wants the tracking info, let me know.

Rita

Texas ★ Tips
Oversize Tip Tanks for Bonanzas



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