

# JUST DO IT

By Ronald Siwik, M.D.

Looking back at the reasons for wanting a round the world flight, a long incubation emerges. World War II America liked aviation. Cars had fins and the Studebaker had a faux propeller. My father and uncles talked of the late war, weapons and aircraft and the family watched Victory at Sea and Crusade in Europe Sunday evenings. There was no NFL and no NBA.

We played Bombs Over Tokyo after Doolittle's Raid, toy airplanes in the dirt. We built models, with my favorite, a Stinson Voyager. A frequent Sunday afternoon was spent at the airport watching DC3 airliners. Seemed like Church.

There was a ride in a Stearman from a farm strip. A neighbor bought one of the new Beechcraft Bonanzas in 1947, and the conversation that Morey Schumaker had with my dad stands clear in memory. I thought Mr. Schumaker was very cool. Which of us kids failed to look

up as an airplane flew overhead? Sky King was popular. Gadabout Gaddis had a Bonanza on his outdoor fishing show.

As a Captain in the Air Force Medical Corps I joined the Aero Club in 1967, flying the Cessna 150 for \$6.00 an hour solo and \$11.00 an hour dual. I soloed at Stinson Field in San Antonio. The private pilot check ride was February 7, 1968.

That autumn we had a bumpy ride from Topeka to Detroit in a C172, kids using Sic Sacs. Quoth the mother: nevermore. My son Steve at age 4 rode in the right seat on a booster chair when we flew the Cessna 150 for proficiency.

As a resident in radiology at Ohio State, \$600.00 got a 40-hour block in



*The uniform is very important for customs and immigration, no ambiguity for the officials. That and the picture ID badge reinforce the US passport making it easy for everybody. I used World Wide Airways as my "company".*

the aviation department. I attained commercial, instrument, CFI and instrument instructor while a resident. Multi-engine, ATP, tail wheel and aerobatics followed. While I was in Columbus I met and flew with Robert L. Wick, Jr., M.D. He later became FPA President and was leader of the organization for the Toronto meeting in 1975.

My own Bonanza was bought in 1973 during the oil embargo. We saved \$5,000.00 for a down payment and I was concerned about fuel availability. Rita, she of sac expertise, insisted we buy 2092W with our hard saved money, saying "there is always a reason not to buy. We are going to do it".

Our aircraft was put to hard use traveling the hemisphere from Alaska to South America and coast-to-coast. The reading habit that I started in the 4th grade yielded some of the desire for airborne adventure. I bought the



Ron Siwik with son, Steve Siwik, a physician pilot also who flies a Baron and lives in Tucson, AZ.

entire series of Tarzan books, trading a Knight's Templar sword for the fifteen or so volumes, and throughout life the library grew with books by Ernest K. Gann, Larry Ball and Louise Sacci. ABS newsletters were read from beginning to end before I bought the Bonanza. Every available periodical and membership in every flying organization was natural.

We joined Flying Physicians Association in 1971 and our first annual meeting was at Mackinac Island. Francis X. (Cy) Sommer flew around the world in 1967, the 40th anniversary of Lindbergh. His monograph *Around the World on the Lindbergh Trail* is a gem. Also the little monograph *Bonanza Facts* published by Air Facts is a good resource, along with Larry Ball's book. Robert L. Wick, Jr. wrote intriguing material in the ABS Newsletter.

We bought 20-gallon Brittain (Osborne) tip tanks in 1975 for the Latin American, Caribbean and Alaska trips. Our Flying Physicians Association tours to Alaska, Central America and our national parks added to our experience and friendships. We soloed our son Steve at age 16 and he got his private license on his 17th birthday. We joined Frank Haile of Dallas in a proposed Moscow tour in 1993. Success breeds success and the round the world flight became inevitable.

Our 1966 Bonanza originally was equipped Mark 12A navcoms and war

surplus gyros. The first panel makeover was 1982, KX170 navcoms. In 1995, the second makeover utilized KX155 and GPS/Loran. The third makeover, the current panel, started in 2007. This latest panel is a new laser cut sheet metal and silk-screened beauty with all new breakers, switches and unrestricted selection of the best avionics. Frank Haile sold us his 100-gallon tip tanks in May of that year as the earthrounding plan morphed from idea to action. Frank was surprised at my decision on the first call, second sentence. He gets lots of calls from cautious shoppers and said that there were going to be a lot of disappointed people.

For dispatch assistance, I contacted Skyplan of Alberta about six months before leaving. Departure was set for May 23, 2008. Like preparing for an exam, there was not enough time as the deadline approached but it was a firm commitment nonetheless. Not only for myself but for the contractors and radio shop folks.

With respect to fuel, the internal ferry tank was unacceptable. Cy Sommer and John Rieger had a tank made in the shape of front seats. Carol Ann Garratt used a 55-gallon drum in her Mooney. A Baron recently flew to Hawaii with a collapsible bladder on the floor. My 20-gallon tip tanks have been so successful we knew that fuel should be carried there. Frank Haile's Texas

Tips have 115 gallons usable but really only 80 gallons a side is necessary. With the 80 gallons in the mains, that is 240 gallons or 18 hours duration. Louise Sacci's book from 1979, *Ocean Flying*, features a table showing 2100 miles, California to Hawaii, is 13 hours at 58% power and 160 KT.

The route was determined by meeting Dr. Oscar Oca in Manila and Rita in Greece. Once they had airline tickets I gave the contract dispatch company a sketch and they connected the dots according to fuel availability. Skyplan has standard routes with handlers or marshals for their corporate clients and we adapted to their template. Skyplan has few piston or Avgas customers but stay busy 24/7 with plenty of staff for their turbine clients. Louise Sacci wrote her 1979 book *Ocean Flying* before such a service, delivering 333 piston aircraft around the globe. We traveled through Latin America and Caribbean in 1970s, 1980s and 1990s without such a service but I wouldn't do it now.

Equipment and support I would like to arrange in order of importance:

1. Garmin 530
  2. Skyplan Services LTD, Calgary Alberta
  3. S TEC 55X Autopilot
  4. Iridium Satellite Phone
  5. Photo ID and captain's uniform.
- The clothing obtained from Sporty's

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Panel and Avionics



*The oceanic cabinet rests on the copilot seat with seatback removed, same bolts mount the cabinet which tilts back for exit and entry. Cabinet contains HF, satellite phone, DZM tracking device and Vistanav synthetic vision backup glass panel.*

Pilot Shop and the authentic photo ID from Part 135 charter company

6. Flightcell in New Zealand the DZM Tracker, a position reporting device which is programmable, our choice being a report every 6 minutes to a monitoring service in Toronto, Guardian Mobility.

7. Garmin 430

8. Garmin GMX 200

9. JPI 930 Engine Monitor giving % HP along with all of the other engine and performance data

10. Sandel 4500 HSI

11. Analog EGT by Alcor, for quick reference and cross check

12. Tip tank gauges by Osborne, very accurate coupled to the Texas tip tanks

13. Vistanav Synthetic Vision Tablet PC

14. WX 500 Stormscope

15. Blackberry World Edition cellular Telephone allowing voice communication in any country and allowing E-mail communication.

I place Skyplan ahead of an autopilot. I would not have thought such a ranking before the trip, but after two months in

the third world I realized that the trip would not have been possible without their superb planning, weather and overall service.

Note the omission of HF. The HF radio is unreliable with spotty test results with my unit before departure and essentially no successful communication during the trip. I suppose HF

works with the expensive Selcal feature. Valuable spoken advice from Frank Haile: go westbound, more daylight and better circadian rhythm. Frank Haile recommended the clothing stating that the worse thing you can do is to arrive in a T-shirt, shorts and ball cap. Frank went around East twice and westbound twice, stating that winds can be anywhere and the thought of prevailing headwinds westbound is not a factor. This proved true for me with essentially no problem with headwinds during the entire two months. Frank's trips were each three weeks because his round the world flights were breaks from his business and he had to get back to the office. He had copilots. When I suggested three weeks to Skyplan they asked "What's the rush, don't you want to enjoy?" Carol Ann Garratt took seven months. We decided on two months.

Insurance was the biggest hurdle with rejects from AON, my

insurer for 31 years. AOPA, EAA, ABS and my local personal agent were not interested. I finally got coverage from INEX, Evolution Insurance Brokers, 8722 Harrison Street in Sandy, Utah 84070. The premium of \$2,005.50 was wraparound coverage for liability only.

The Jepp Nav Data and Electronic Charts cost more than \$11,000.00 for worldwide coverage. I did get a refund of over \$7,000.00 on returning to US coverage. Three cards have to be programmed, 530 WAAS, 430 WAAS and GMX 200. TAWS B terrain awareness and warning only functions in the Northern Hemisphere. I got terrain warnings in Hawaii, but not at Guadalcanal.

Essential support came from Mike Carroll of NetChoice, who programmed the DZM for a position report every 6 minutes to Guardian Mobility, and Dale Berger of Aero Pro avionics who did the avionics.

May 23 came too soon like any exam, but "JUST DO IT".

*Installment II will be featured in the January Online Bulletin followed by Installment III in the Spring-Summer Flying Physician Magazine.*



*Tip Tanks: 20 gal tips used from 1975-2008; 80 gal Texas Tips used for earthrounding.*