



## Trip Report

The continuing saga of the three sisters...

**Max and Bobbi Grogan**  
N1512W, Bonanza V36B

*The saga of the three sisters, Bobbi, Louise and Glenda, continues (see past newsletters).*

So plans were made. Louise and Gary would drive their 38 foot motor coach (approx nine hours) and Glenda and Wayne would drive their Suburban while Bobbi and I would fly. Gary and Louise departed immediately in the coach. Glenda and Wayne would drive over on Friday and we would fly to Tunica on Saturday. So Bobbi and I flew N1512W our V35B Bonanza, "Bonnie II", back to Knoxville. We left Cedartown, GA, 4A4, with a four hundred foot ceiling but no icing in the forecast. Up through the clouds to "on top" by 7000' and on up to the requested MEA (altitude) of 9000' and all was well. Then we had a pretty flight with sunshine to home base DKX which was VFR upon our arrival.



The great thing about the plane, of course, is speed and not having to endure the boring drives to distant places with construction, wrecks, etc. We decided we only wanted one night of celebration and could scratch our gambling itch in just one twenty four hour period. We departed DKX late Saturday morning with a forecast for strong headwinds. We flew VFR as low as comfortable to avoid the bumps and "slogged" along with 130 to 135 knots groundspeed. I know, I know, this is FAST for the C172's and PA28-180's but it was 35 to 40 knots on my nose down at 4500'. We made the 326 nautical mile trip in two hours and thirty four minutes (eight hour drive through Knoxville, Nashville and Memphis). I was wondering if the winds could change direction enough for us to have a headwind both ways by Sunday afternoon??

Wayne and Gary met us in the Suburban and we left the airport, KUTA, for Sam's Town Resort (casino hotel) about ten miles distant. Wayne already had a complimentary room which we would share. The motor coach was set up in the RV park adjacent to Sam's. Now our challenge was to gamble enough "action" to get comps (free dinners) for the evening meal. Mission accomplished. The holiday buffet was retail \$27.50 each and was fantastic and "free". Here I will admit to succumbing to gluttony. Four lobster tails, many, many crab legs, crab claws, shrimp, frog legs and trimmings left little room for the dessert I could not resist. I concocted a finish of hand-dipped vanilla ice cream topped with strawberries and pineapple slices smothered in milk chocolate. Mmm-mmm good! I am blessed with a metabolism which always leaves me at the same weight so not a thought to the 10,000 calories.



After dinner we returned to the casino floor with mixed results (I always win, ask Bobbi. Would I lie?). For the New Year's celebration the casino had a second band set up in the huge hotel lobby entrance to the casino. They passed out hats and noise makers. At around 11:30 the cocktail waitresses began circulating with huge trays filled with champagne. It was party time and rocking. As the clock passed midnight we had the traditional kisses and toasted with the champagne. The balloons and confetti coming down from the ceiling added to the enjoyment. After that we soon retired to a sleep-in with a meeting scheduled for the morning. Brunch at eleven was nice and laid back with lots of ham and bacon with eggs cooked to order. French toast and waffles were excellent. I passed on the lobster still being served during the 24 hour extravaganza.

FSS said we would have ceilings of 1500' and solid to 8000' MSL at our chosen departure time of 1500Z. We called the FBO and ordered our plane pulled up and twenty gallons of fuel added to prevent the \$10.00 overnight parking charge. Their fuel is always reasonable and was \$3.45, so adding twenty was a savings of a few bucks. Their service was superb as always: Red carpet, baggage loading and insistence on pulling the chocks AFTER you are safely aboard. Three guys assisting us!! One sizable tip and "split it please" and we were aboard and ready for engine start. Then the line guys turned to the task of loading luggage on the King Air 350 they had pulled us up against. I had filed an IFR flight plan for direct DKX and needed to access clearance delivery after a leisurely taxi and run-up check. At KUTA they have a newly installed telephone interface on 122.725 mhz. There is a choice of keying the mike and saying "clearance delivery" or keying the mike four times. I had been on the frequency a few minutes and heard nothing. I followed instructions and got a voice on the land line with a query of "aircraft needing clearance state your request". Before I could respond the King Air taxiing toward us started his request. When there was a break I asked if he would relinquish the line as I was first and he never responded. Instead he continued his request for clearance to Chattanooga. Do the guys in bigger planes feel they have priority?

Rather than wait, my next action was an immediate VFR departure beneath murky skies. Scud running over flat terrain with no towers is fun. Having filed this route before I knew they would send me south and around the Memphis Class B airspace so I flew the same route they would have assigned and skirted the airspace at 1600' msl until I reached HLI Vortac approximately 25 miles east and was clear of the Class B. Here I called the departure frequency and received my clearance. At this time I learned the King Air was still on the ground having just gotten his clearance. Justice?! As I ascended into the clouds heading for



11,000' I smiled as I saw 120 knots indicated and 160 knots groundspeed on the Garmins. Our tailwind gods were smiling. We punched through to sunshine at around 9,000' into the glorious sunshine one always finds above dim overcasts. Soon we were at the requested altitude and setting up cruise power and lean for the 285 or so remaining miles. This is when we relish a fast plane AND a tailwind. I could not help but smile as the indicated groundspeed rapidly climbed beyond 200 knots finally settling between 215 and 218 knots. Nice!! Forty five on the tail is what we dream of. Here we decided to try our newly acquired oxygen system and enjoyed setting it up and breathing the enhanced air for about forty five minutes. No headache from high altitude along with safety is good.

Once again at DKX it was VFR with only a thin broken deck. Beneath that we closed our IFR flight plan and enjoyed the view across Lake Loudon and west Knoxville to a straight-in to runway 8 at home base.

One hour and forty minutes enroute calculates to 196 knots average groundspeed. Could life be better? Well, the slot machines could be a little less stingy. Maybe next time.