

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

» *Getting to Know
COPA Pilots*

From Groupon to G7: Marty Goodman's Unexpected Journey into Aviation

by Laurie Einstein Koszuta

Sometimes, the most extraordinary journeys begin in the most ordinary ways.

For Marty Goodman, it was a \$49 “Learn to Fly” Groupon received as a birthday gift that changed his life and opened the door to a new passion.

“Unlike a lot of other COPA members, I had zero exposure to flying in my family,” noted Marty, who now lives in San Diego. “I grew up in Ohio and didn’t know a single person who flew planes except on commercial airlines. Maybe it was because of the not-so-great weather there.”

“I had always been curious about aviation, but I’d never thought much more about it until I saw that Groupon.”

With two kids heading off to college, Marty was entering the empty-nest stage of life and wanted something to challenge his mind and keep him engaged. So he used the Groupon and booked a discovery flight out of Montgomery Field (KMYF) in San Diego. That first flight in May 2018 in a Cessna 172 was transformative. “From the moment the wheels left the ground,” Marty said, “I was hooked and thought, ‘I could do this.’”

He began training in earnest and by November had earned his private pilot certificate in the 172. Shortly before he received his certificate, he decided to purchase a refurbished 1967 Cessna 182 that he found on Trade-A-Plane. That airplane had low engine time, only two previous owners and a G500 glass panel – a rare upgrade at the time.

“I was trying to decide if I should finish my training in the 172 or take a little extra time and get used to the 182,” said Marty. “I flew several of the 172s in the club, but it worried me not knowing which plane I would get on any given day or who flew it last. That’s why I wanted my own plane.”

The great news about the purchase of the 182 was that it came with a bonus: Robert Schapiro, the seller, an American Airlines pilot, paramedic and former military helicopter pilot, offered to fly it with Marty from its base in Maryland to San Diego, teaching him along the way.



LAURIE EINSTEIN KOSZUTA has been a freelance writer for many years and along with her husband, John, now owns a Cirrus SR22. With John as the pilot-in-command and Laurie as the partner, they regularly travel to see family, visit friends and enjoy our beautiful country. You can read more of Laurie’s work on her website: www.laurieeinsteinkoszuta.com.



⤴ **COPA member Marty Goodman** logged 600 hours during the first year of owning his 2019 SR22T. He also owns a 2024 SR20 G7 which he leases back to Coast Flight Training.

“That cross-country trip was an education in itself,” Marty said. “Everyone should do one early in their training because there are so many weather patterns that come up in different parts of the country. For example, a storm in Oklahoma means something totally different from cloud cover in the mountains. There are also different risks and airspace scenarios you’d never get just flying locally.”

Discovering Cirrus

After earning his instrument rating in the 182 in April 2019, Marty began thinking more about safety, particularly because he wanted his family to fly with him. “I was looking for a place to hangar my 182 and met Kevin Slatnick, the co-owner of the FBO and soon-to-be Cirrus Platinum Training Center. He told me about the airplane and mentioned that I should meet one of their representatives. That was my first introduction to the Cirrus.”

Marty began researching the Cirrus extensively, which eventually led to ordering a brand-new 2019 SR22T. Delivery took place eight months later in Knoxville, Tennessee, with well-known COPA member John Bone as his delivery instructor.

The two hit it off immediately, and even made a side trip to Apalachicola, Florida, because of the weather. Soon after, Bone invited Marty to come to the Bahamas to learn to “fly the islands.”

“That’s actually one of the first trips I took with my SR22T, from San Diego to the Bahamas,” he said. “It was one of many memorable trips during the 600 hours I logged that first year.”

As an SR22T owner, Marty quickly found ways to combine business and pleasure. “I had different investment deals in various places,” he said, “and California’s sales tax laws also favored flying the plane out of state more than half the time.”

A view of Sedona, Arizona, from the airport
(KSEZ) – one of Marty's favorite places to fly.



Three years later, with rumors swirling about the introduction of a new Cirrus model, Marty decided to place a deposit on a plane and, in June 2024, became one of the first owners of an SR20 G7. Today, he owns the SR22T and the SR20, leasing the latter to the Coast Training Center as part of their student training fleet.

Becoming an Instructor

Though now retired from his 30-year career as a real estate broker, Marty wasn't done learning and earned his commercial certificate "just for fun" in August 2020 with aviation enthusiast and aerobatic instructor Brian Sagi.

"I've always been the type who likes to collect degrees and certificates," he admitted with a grin.

In 2023, at the urging of Slatnick, Marty pursued his certified flight instructor (CFI) and certified flight instructor - instrument (CFII) ratings at Venture North Aviation in Minnesota. His choice

of school was intentional: Venture North's owner, Bill Stone, had served as Cirrus's safety director for its first 10 years.

"I wanted to be trained by people who truly understood Cirrus aircraft, not just a traditional CFI," Marty said. "There are more people getting into aviation later in life," he explained, "and many of them prefer not to be trained by a 20-something who's just building hours to leave. That's when Kevin asked me if I'd consider teaching part time."

Today, Marty teaches one or two days a week at Coast Flight Training in San Diego, mostly on call, handling overflow or subbing in for other instructors. His favorite type of instruction is focusing on IFR students, mountain flying and transition training. With encouragement from Coast Training CSIPs Will Hutchings and Ronnie Greathouse and tips from CSIP and designated pilot examiner (DPE) Julie Keane, he's logged nearly 500 hours of dual instruction, a role that allows him to give back to the aviation community while staying deeply engaged with the aircraft he loves.



“It’s funny to think that all my flying adventures started with a \$49 ‘Learn to Fly’ coupon. ... Not a bad return on investment.”

“I wanted to be a better pilot,” he explained. “Teaching forces you to be hyper-aware of situational awareness, weather planning and following standardized procedures.”

He also created the idea for the new www.Copa.fyi website that he and a COPA task force team developed to help pilots access everything they need to get started flying a Cirrus.

Marty frequently travels to challenging destinations like Vail, Colorado, and Jackson Hole, Wyoming, which allows him to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of mountain flying, icing conditions and the capabilities of the SR22T TKS system.





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« **Marty often flies with his partner, Reyna, who actively participates in flights since taking the Partner in Command course.**

“I am the kind of instructor who likes students who want to go places, not just circle the pattern,” he said. “And, I’m a skier, so I’m often flying into mountain airports during winter. Learning to land on messy runways and handle crosswinds has been invaluable.”

More Adventures

Marty’s two grown sons often join him on trips and his partner, Reyna, who took COPA’s Partner in Command course, has become an active participant. “She doesn’t want to become a pilot, but she can talk on the radio, push the level button, deploy the chute, if needed, and give me a side Heimlich if it came to that,” he added.

One of his favorite flights is to Sedona, Arizona, as well as flying to Catalina Island off the coast of California. “I often do an extra circle around the island as I leave because it is just so beautiful.”

Since his father lives in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, Marty has also stretched his wings internationally, venturing far south into Mexico to learn the ins and outs of flying there. To assist with that, he joined the Baja Bush Pilots, a membership-based flying club and community that supports pilots who want to fly their own aircraft into Mexico and other places south of the U.S. border.

But the lack of maintenance support, concerns over security and the less-than-welcoming private pilot environment eventually caused him to stop flying there. “Flying over 1,000 miles

of jagged rocks with nowhere to land or get help made me think twice,” he said. “And being greeted by machine guns and guard dogs at some airports isn’t exactly a friendly experience.”

For Marty, not all challenges have come from flying abroad, as he has had to declare an emergency a couple of times. On one flight into Kansas City, he experienced a complete multifunction display (MFD) failure, with all instruments going red just 30 miles from the airport.

“I had no idea what was going on,” he said. “I was at 15,000 feet, and the Kansas City air traffic controller told me to descend to 3,000, but I politely refused. I remembered that altitude is your friend, and if you have an emergency, stay high. That is what I did until I was closer. It was something that’s been drilled into me at various COPA events.”

Fortunately, Marty was able to land safely and soon discovered everything was fine with the engine. It turned out that the problem was a bad harness that affected all the instruments on the MFD. “It was an experience that reinforced the importance of good aeronautical decision-making,” he said.

“It’s funny to think that all my flying adventures started with a \$49 ‘Learn to Fly’ coupon. But it allowed me to have thousands of hours of flying, teaching and helping other pilots. Not a bad return on investment.”

Marty would like to dedicate the launch of COPA.fyi to the memory of Kevin Slatnick. Kevin, along with his son, Jared, developed Coast Flight Training into a Platinum Training Center and inspired Marty to become an instructor. Kevin was taken far too soon and will be missed by all. (Find more information about COPA.fyi on page 36.) [+](#)