

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

» Getting to Know
COPA Pilots



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.



Flying Through It How Mark Colin Outflew Motion Sickness and Never Looked Back

by Laurie Einstein Koszuta

It's hard to imagine a pilot being prone to motion sickness, yet that contradiction sits at the heart of Mark Colin's aviation story. It didn't start that way. As a 6-year-old boy in the 1960s, Mark had the chance to fly on a commercial airliner, an experience that galvanized a lifelong love of aviation.



▲ COPA member **Mark Colin** with his 2020 SR22T G6.

As a teenager, a few flights in a private aircraft reignited that spark. Because lessons were expensive, Mark put aside his desire to become a pilot and life took precedence. Throughout his 20s, 30s and 40s, he focused on raising his family and managing his construction business that specialized in building hospitals and medical facilities.

The Motion Sickness Question

“When I got into my 50s,” he said, “I finally had the time and the ability to pay for lessons. But I had a problem with motion sickness.”

A few early lessons left him queasy enough to question whether flying simply wasn’t meant to be.

He added, “I thought, if it’s going to feel like this every time, I don’t want to do it.” While at work one day, one of his employees who was a pilot, casually commented that drivers don’t routinely get motion sickness, and neither do pilots as long as they are at the controls.

It was a comment that lingered long after the conversation ended. Instead of walking away, Mark booked a discovery flight with Oakland Flyers at the Oakland International Airport (KOAK). Although the bumps still bothered him during the



⤴ **A great day to fly:** Mark and his Cirrus SR22T, Esther.

“After flying the Cirrus, I realized there was no going back. I loved the plane and thought, ‘Wow, I’ve been missing out.’”

flight, he noticed something had shifted when he was at the controls. “The more I flew, the better I felt.”

Mark signed up for lessons and soon earned his private certificate. In the Bay Area, however, a pilot without an instrument rating doesn’t fly often because of the fog and marine layers. It was another hurdle for Mark to overcome.

Learning Through the Fog

“I knew that wearing goggles, especially in turbulence, during my instrument flight training, wasn’t exactly a cure for nausea,” he said. “It probably took me twice as long. We’d start a lesson, and sometimes I’d have to cut it short because I was feeling lousy.”

Still, Mark was determined not to let discomfort define him and tried different remedies to manage the motion sickness. “I wanted to find a way to make it work.”

More than 20 years later, Mark is still flying and has logged roughly 2,000 flight hours, even adding seaplane and aerobatic training to build tolerance and confidence. For much of that time, he flew a Cessna 182, which he generally rented from local clubs around Palo Alto and San Carlos.

The 182 and the Cirrus

“I was once a high-wing 182 snob,” he admitted, “and totally skeptical of the sleek composite Cirrus aircraft flown by younger Silicon Valley pilots. I’d hear people talk about the Cirrus and how the plane was always in the shop because it was high-maintenance. I believed it.”

Eventually, his curiosity about the Cirrus won and he took an introductory flight with JATO Aviation in San Carlos.

“At the time, I was on the verge of buying a turbocharged 182 with some partners,” he said. “After flying the Cirrus, I realized there was no going back. I loved the plane and thought, ‘Wow, I’ve been missing out.’”

Love, Lunch and Aviation

About that time, Mark met his now-wife, Emine, a native of Turkey and an endodontist. They both joked that one of the conditions of dating was that Emine had to like flying.

“I told him that he didn’t have to break my arm for that,” she said. “I’ve loved flying since I was in the U.S. Army.” One of their first dates sealed the deal when Mark flew her to Monterey for lunch.

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Although they share a love of aviation, Emine's aviation path has been less linear. She has taken flight lessons over the years and accumulated dozens of hours, all while raising four children as a single mother and building three endodontist practices.

Emine noted she is comfortable with takeoffs and cruising but still wants help with landings and radio work.

"Once I got into aviation, I wanted to do more," she said. "It was appealing and intrigued me. I wanted to find a way to make it work."

But inconsistent weather in Santa Rosa and the realities of work made regular flight training difficult. Further, the 2017 California Tubbs Fire forced her family to evacuate with only minutes' notice. The devastating fire destroyed some of her flight records along with nearly everything else.

Now 60, Emine has sometimes wondered if it is worth pushing to attain her private certificate. Still, she hasn't closed the door on finishing.

"It's the only thing in my life I haven't completed," she said.

Buying Esther

When the couple took delivery of their brand-new 2020 SR22T G6, they affectionately named her Esther after Mark's grandmother. "The plane has been a dream. I trust her completely. She takes me where I need to go," Mark stated.

Soon after their marriage in 2020, Mark traveled with Emine to Turkey to meet her family, arriving just as Istanbul shut down during the pandemic.

"We went exploring and flew over the Aegean coast," Mark noted. "It is there where olive trees stretch like vineyards do in Northern California." What started as a half-joking thought of buying a few trees became a full-scale leap as they bought 500 acres and nearly 10,000 trees, some two to six centuries old.

Knowing "absolutely nothing" about olive oil production, the couple hired a consultant, learned the craft from the ground up, and eventually built their own mill, cultural center and café in Turkey to control quality. Their brand, Oro di Milas, has since earned international gold medals and was recently named among the top 100 olive oils in the world.



A proud family moment: taking delivery of their Cirrus SR22T.



➤ **One of the old-growth trees** at Oro di Milas, rooted in centuries of olive-growing tradition.

The Cirrus and the Olive Oil Tour

Flying has powered more than efficiency. It has fueled a second act.

Last summer, the couple launched what they called the “Great American Turkish Olive Oil Tour,” flying the Cirrus across the country and stopping for tastings at retail outlets that carry their oil.

“Most of the time when we travel in our plane, it’s because we’re going somewhere to do something meaningful,” Mark explained. “Because high-quality Turkish oil remains relatively unknown in the United States, we like to teach Americans what great oil tastes like.”

Mark also uses his Cirrus to travel to construction sites where he builds cancer centers, imaging facilities and highly specialized medical spaces. Many hours are logged as training or business, and he’s quick to admit he needs to fly weekly. “If I don’t stay proficient, then I’m a danger to myself. I can’t go without it.”

The Cirrus allows him to reach Los Angeles in two hours from his home base, Sonoma County Airport (KSTS), for a site meeting instead of navigating commercial airline schedules. Projects in places such as Portland, Oregon, Seattle, Washington, and even Alaska feel more accessible. “I haven’t flown to Alaska for a site meeting yet,” he said. “But I want to. That would be pretty cool to fly to Alaska for the day.”

With COPA, Mark has found a great community of pilots sharing real-world knowledge and perspective. “It’s the most amazing cross section of people,” he said. He’s built friendships that extend far beyond the cockpit and has even flown in formation into Oshkosh.

“I’m so glad that I stuck with it and didn’t let the motion sickness win,” he expressed, “because I really love this.” ☺

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3 Numbers = 1 Letter	2 Numbers = 1 Letter	4 Numbers = 2 Letters
ZK	19D	58K
4J	19P	58C
4K	11F	59P
4Y	11Q	59G
4Z	11T	59I
5C	11Z	59K
5T	12C	59K
5Y	12E	59S
6C	12M	59U
6E	13L	59W
6H	12U	59X
6N	13F	600
6S	13G	59S
7D	13Q	60M
7L	13R	60N
7Q	13S	60Q
7T	13U	60V
7V	13V	61B
7Y	13Y	61C
7Z	14D	61D
8C	14E	61E
8E	14F	61P
8G	14N	61H
8Q	14S	61J
8R	14Y	61K
8T	15C	61N
8C	15G	61Z
8D	15Q	62L
8H	15W	62N
8T	16D	62P
8W	16H	62Z
8Z	16K	63C
	16T	63H
	16V	63N
	16Y	63Q
	16Z	63U
	17D	63Z
	17K	64A
	17Q	64B
	17V	64R
	17X	64T
	17Y	64U
	17Z	64V
	18H	64W
	18K	64Y
	18Q	64Z
	18U	64V
	18X	64W
	18Y	64X
	18Z	64Y
	19C	64Z
	19D	64V
	19E	64W
	19F	64X
	19G	64Y
	19H	64Z
	19I	64V
	19J	64W
	19K	64X
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	19N	64V
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	19P	64X
	19Q	64Y
	19R	64Z
	19S	64V
	19T	64W
	19U	64X
	19V	64Y
	19W	64Z
	19X	64V
	19Y	64W
	19Z	64X
	20A	64Y
	20B	64Z
	20C	64V
	20D	64W
	20E	64X
	20F	64Y
	20G	64Z
	20H	64V
	20I	64W
	20J	64X
	20K	64Y
	20L	64Z
	20M	64V
	20N	64W
	20O	64X
	20P	64Y
	20Q	64Z
	20R	64V
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	20Y	64X
	20Z	64Y
	21A	64Z
	21B	64V
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	21I	64X
	21J	64Y
	21K	64Z
	21L	64V
	21M	64W
	21N	64X
	21O	64Y
	21P	64Z
	21Q	64V
	21R	64W
	21S	64X
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