



### *Flight Across the USA*

**“The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.”**

—Psalm 121:8, KJV

Ray has accepted the position of President of AWA, which requires us to be in Wilson, NC frequently versus remotely. Because flying is our life, we decided to fly versus driving the 2,839 miles, thinking flying would be the fastest route!

We chose the 1968 Mooney in the fleet. Packing for the small space was a challenge. We had to consider our weight, the weight, and balance of the plane and luggage.

We settled on packing: three small suitcases, two small

backpacks, Airways magazines, refreshments, and the necessary electronics needed for Ray to fly the plane. We planned 2-3 hour legs each day to specific small airports that had courtesy cars and were close to towns where we could spend the night in a motel and have at least one hot meal per day.

Putting our journey in God’s hands to safely guide us to our destinations, we headed out in smoky conditions from the wildfires in the Okanagan Valley. We flew from Oliver, BC, to Oroville, Washington, a short 15-minute flight over the border. We knew from experience to stay on the plane until the customs officer arrived. Then we handed our passports out through the door, and only then were we allowed to depart from the plane.



US Customs inspected the plane with a portable x-ray machine to see if there was anything suspicious and asked us specific questions, “Where are you flying to? Do you have any tobacco, illegal drugs, firearms, alcohol, or fresh fruit?”

Once cleared, Ray called to set up a flight plan and programmed the radio communications and GPS coordinates on the iPad, iPhone, and spot tracker.

Climbing as high as 13,500 feet to avoid haze from the smoke and to feel “closer to the heavens,” we settled into our journey to Choteau, Montana. Halfway there, it was noticed that the airplane battery was not charging. That meant that all the radios and the electronics were not charging, so Ray turned off most of the electronics to conserve power. To land, he used a handheld radio to communicate with the airport and any other airplane traffic in the area. The airport manager, Warren, was very helpful in finding us a hangar to park the plane and drive us to a local hotel. The next day, Ray figured that a new alternator was needed. Thankfully, there was a mobile mechanic in the area, and after a two-day delay for repairs, including a severe wind storm, we safely took off to Miles City, Montana. We landed, fueled up, and departed for Madison Airport in South Dakota.

While refueling, Ray noticed the fuel tank was not venting. A mechanic was recommended and fixed the problem, but again strong winds delayed us an extra day.

Praying there would be no more issues, we flew to Marshall, Illinois, then County Regional, Kentucky. Because the responsibility for flying cross country fell solely on Ray, the demands were physically and mentally exhausting. After the eventful 6-day journey, we were relieved to finally land in Wilson, NC.

We are thankful for those who went out of their way to help us and allow us to share what we do, leaving an Airways magazine for reading at each stop. We pray that we will be of good service to AWA as we continue the next leg in our journey for Mission Aviation.

We thank you in advance for all your prayers and support.

May God bless each of you!

*Ray and Julie Young*

