



two birds with one stone.

Al accepted, but only if we added a third mission: have fun! Made sense to me.

LEADING EDGE FLYING CLUB

Al Waterloo joined our group, Leading Edge Flying Club, a year ago. The club is based at Chicago Executive Airport (KPWK) in Wheeling, Ill. (formerly Palwaukee Airport). We started the club with one Archer and six people, and it's grown to about 75 members.

We have monthly meetings, flyouts, social events—and we rent out two Pipers. We have an all-glass 2004 Archer III and just got a reconditioned, brand-new-like Dakota. Our members include business owners, airline captains, novice pilots, flying enthusiasts—even one of the Chicago television station's meteorologists is a member.

When we started the club, I started flying again. Al Waterloo is phenomenal and his presence has really created a whole new atmosphere in our club. I'm really close to finishing my IFR rating, and may have it by the time this goes to press. (Links to videos of Carrino's flights can be found at piperflyer.org. —Ed.)

For my training, we've done a lot of real-world flying. We've flown into fog into Racine and Kenosha, Wis. at night, and then came my ultimate real-world scenario: a business trip for an important customer.

FLYING WITH THE BIG GUYS

So off we went at 0545 in the Archer from KPWK, IFR through O'Hare's Class B airspace on our first stop to Bowling Green, Ky. (KBWG).

On our way we flew near Paducah, Ky. where I commented to Al that three more of my customers were located there. (I wondered if they needed to see me.) And I remember thinking that it sure didn't take long to get there. This could be a reason for my next trip...

After a quick fuel stop we departed KBWG and landed at Pryor Field in Decatur, Ala. (KDCU) at 1100. It took three minutes to get our free courtesy car from the FBO and after driving six miles, I was at Toray Carbon Fibers where my customer was waiting.

We had our meeting, solved my customer's problem and my official business was finished by 2:30 p.m.! If Al and I had decided to fly directly back to KPWK, we would have returned by 8:00; however, we now had to complete our last mission—to have fun.

Al wanted to buy me dinner at Rendezvous in Memphis. So off we went to KMEM in the late afternoon, flying

around some thunderstorm buildups, on our way to land at Class B in our 2,400 pound Archer!

Not only was this fun, but the learning experience was an incredible lesson in using good judgment on how to navigate around weather. It also demonstrated that we could land at an airport with the big guys in a GA airplane.

After dinner we departed KMEM ahead of five airliners waiting in line, and after a fuel stop at Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport in Springfield, Ill. (KSPI), we were back at KPWK.

TIME SAVED IS MONEY EARNED

It was an 11.5 hour day of flying, yet I completed this trip in less time than using the airlines, got some valuable time toward my IFR rating—and never once had to remove my shoes and belt. I was back at my desk at 8:30 the next morning.

The total cost of my business trip and personal/fun part ran about \$300 more than if I had flown with American. However, I completed the call in one day instead of two. I was also able to throw all of my equipment in the back of the plane and be at my customer's doorstep within minutes of landing.

This trip demonstrates how valuable the use of a GA plane can be to a small business, especially when you can't get there from here. Well, now I can. I'm a million-mile commercial flyer, but I've taken two cross-country business trips in the Archer so far, and both have been profitable for my company.

When I'm done with my IFR, I'm seriously looking to buy an airplane. The Archer is a great plane for training; the throttle quadrant makes you feel like a real pilot. I'll likely need something faster in the future, and if I double revenue in my business, I can get into a pressurized aircraft. |||

Al Carrino is the president of PureAire Monitoring Systems, Inc. in Lake Zurich, Ill. He is preparing to take his instrument checkride and looks forward to many more opportunities to use aircraft as a means to increase the sales of his business—and to have fun. Send questions or comments to editor@piperflyer.org.

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