



The Flypaper

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SVPA BBQ potluck at A30 on Thursday, January 1st at 6 PM.
Bring something to throw on the grill and a dish to share.

SVPA BBQ potluck on New Years Day

What better way to celebrate an 18-hour-old 2026 than coming to the SVPA BBQ potluck? The festivities start at 6 PM at the A30 Pilot Center.

The Scott Valley Pilots Association is
organized as a chapter of the
California Pilots Association

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I wish the weather would make up its mind.



Kinda wet down there.



A river runs through it.



Bucolic Callahan?



Harsh camping at Deer Lake.



A sea of clouds and the sea - the Pacific Ocean.



Sun and Shadow I - the Yolla Bolly Wilderness.



Sun and Shadow II - Bear Lakes.

Prez Sez

SVPA President Chuck Jopson

I am standing on the cold, sunlit A30 ramp staring south at a wall of fog just at the end of the runway. There is no willing this mist away, so I wait for sunlight and heat to do its job. I could take off to the north, turn and climb over this wall, but I am not certain what lies beyond it. It should dissipate in an hour or so.

An hour and a half later, the fog is gone, but there are still some imposing cloud banks at the south end of Scott Valley. I put the throttle to the Piper to investigate these closer. Once airborne, I am treated to the sight of a scattered patchwork of clouds hovering about 500 feet over the east side of the valley. The play of light and shadow is one of profound beauty – the kind you only see in real estate photos.

The wall of clouds at the end of the valley proves to be an illusion, the clouds are revealed as being scattered once the Piper is above them. The route is open to Cloverdale! My Trinity Alps haunts are covered in snow, courtesy of a Christmas storm. The Piper is zooming south at 130 mph thanks to a hefty tailwind. At first I think that Weaverville is socked in, but soon I see the airport below a scattered layer of clouds. Light, shadow and depth is constantly on display during this flight.

Once again, as I approach Cloverdale, it looks like my way will be blocked by a mass of clouds. There is a notch in a cloud bank over Hopland Grade, which I fly over at 5000 feet. The area beyond is clear! Power is cut back in order to

descend fast enough to land at Cloverdale, which is only at 300 feet elevation.

Shortly after landing, I take Evan over to the coast for his first ride in a small airplane. In a few places, we squeeze between some scattered clouds and the ridge tops, but otherwise we enjoy a smooth ride over the densely wooded coastal hills. We breeze past the ornate golden Odiyan Temple and fly over the sunny coastline before heading back to Cloverdale. Evan was happy to take in all of the geography from his lofty seat.

The next day, I head home just after noon, confident that the Scott Valley fog will clear before my arrival. A 20 knot headwind is forecast at 9500 feet so I fly as low as I can to avoid it. This pays off, the flight time back is 2 hours instead of the predicted 2 hours and 20 minutes.

When flying past Big and Little Bear Lakes in the Trinity Alps, I pass fairly close to a snow covered knife-edge ridge with only its crest lit by the sun. A second ridge, beyond the first and about a thousand feet lower, is similarly lit. Beyond that, there is a valley that is in shadow. The impression was one of staggering relief, an affirmation of the depth of the folds in our earth. The awe I felt during that moment stays with me as I descend into Scott Valley.

I manage to foil Murphy's law when I grease the Piper onto runway 34 - with two people watching. What a great weekend of flying!

Come to A30 for your second New Year's party! It's the January SVPA BBQ potluck on Thursday, January 1st at 6 PM.