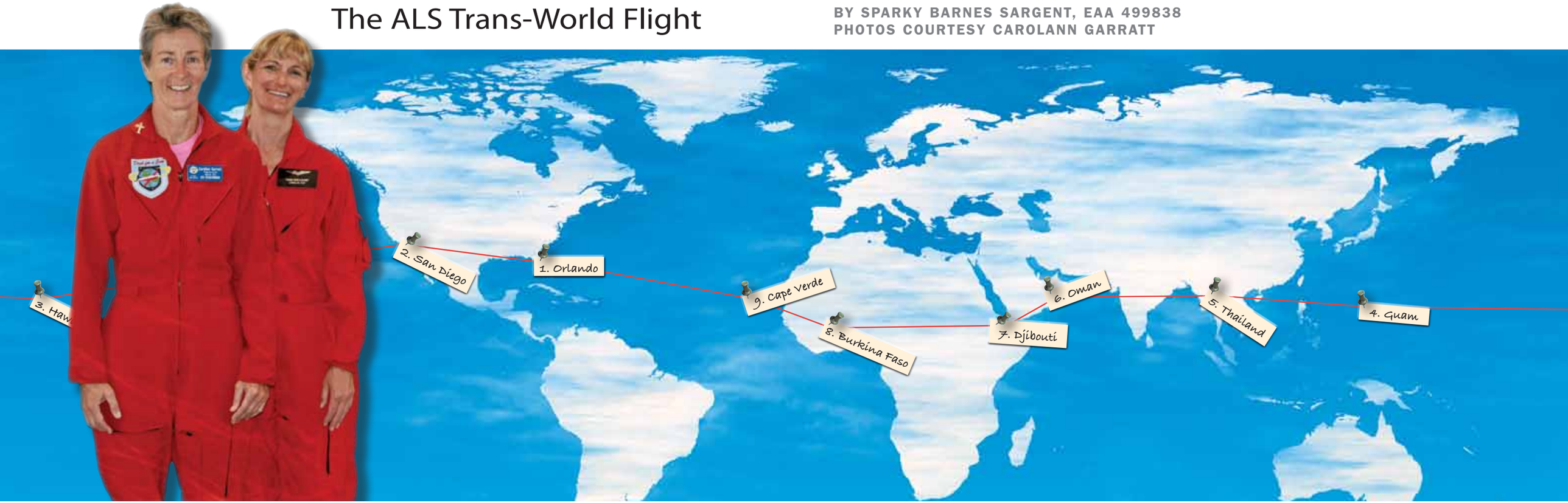
Record Dash *for a* Cure

The ALS Trans-World Flight

BY SPARKY BARNES SARGENT, EAA 499838
PHOTOS COURTESY CAROLANN GARRATT



CarolAnn Garratt (left) and Carol Foy.

TRIP DETAILS

1st leg: Tuesday, December 2, 2008
Orlando, Florida (KMCO) to
San Diego, California (KSDM)
Flight time: 16 hours, 41 minutes
Ground time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

2nd leg
California to Lihue, Hawaii (PHLI)
Flight time: 16 hours, 41 minutes
Ground time: 9 hours

3rd leg
Hawaii to Guam (PGUM)
Flight time: 23 hours
Ground time: 8 hours

4th leg
Guam to Chiang Mai, Thailand (VTCC)
Flight time: 20 hours, 23 minutes
Ground time: 8 hours

5th leg
Thailand to Salalah, Oman (OOSA)
Flight time: 20 hours
Ground time: 3 hours, 20 minutes

6th leg
Oman to Djibouti, Africa (HDAM)
Flight time: 5 hours, 24 minutes
Ground time: 12 hours, 20 minutes

7th leg
Djibouti to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Flight time: 20 hours, 8 minutes
Ground time: 1 hour, 15 minutes

8th leg
Burkina Faso to Sal,
Cape Verde Islands (GVAC)
Flight time: 10 hours, 10 minutes
Ground time: 2 hours, 45 minutes

9th leg: December 11, 2008
Cape Verde to Orlando, Florida
Flight time: 22 hours, 39 minutes

Slight of build and strong of will, CarolAnn Garratt has a gentle yet serious demeanor, and it's evident upon first handshake. Her roots in aviation spring from her youth, and her self-confidence and systematic approach to anticipating problems and solving them were honed by a 20-year career in the manufacturing industry. These factors, combined with an intense personal motivation, spurred her on to become an EarthRounder and ambassador for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), flying her Mooney M20J around the world with co-pilot Carol Foy.

Carol Foy and CarolAnn Garratt getting into the Mooney at AirVenture 2008 for a 24-hour "sit in" to simulate a day spent in the aircraft during their around-the-world dash.

TRANS-WORLD FLIGHT: The Record

The prior world record was 54.6 mph, set by two men in a Bonanza in 1988. Garratt and Foy's record stands at a calculated speed of 115.35 mph and was ratified by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, for "Speed Around the World, Westbound (for piston engine airplanes weighing 2,205 < 3,858 pounds)." Their flight was selected by the National Aeronautic Association as one of the "Most Memorable Aviation and Space Records of 2008." Their actual flight path and time en route was tracked by TracPlus Global Ltd.
Total flight time: 158 hours – **Total ground time:** 46 hours

Personal Flight Path

Garratt attributes her early love of aviation to her late father. "My dad loved flying and planes, and when we came over to the States from England in 1964, he had the opportunity to take flying lessons," adds Garratt, smiling. "All the kids tried it at one point, and three of us ended up with our licenses. I worked at the airport while I was in high school, and a brother was working as a lineboy there. I started learning to fly in a Cub and soloed in a Citabria, but didn't get my license until after college. Then I was working, climbing the corporate ladder, and I stopped flying for 13 years."

Later, she made it her New Year's resolution to return to flying, and did so on January 1, 1996. Interestingly, she confesses that she "was really bitten by the bug more the second time than the first time. I had about 400 hours by then, and now I have 3,500 hours. So I fly a lot more now and have three planes and a hangar."

Garratt's interest in aviation extends into the realm of flying in service for others, and even homebuilding. She flies Angel Flights and is on the board of that organization for the southeastern region, she has flown 300 Young Eagles, and she is also a flight instructor. "I teach Civil Air Patrol cadets—they're focused, driven, they do all their studying at home," shares Garratt, "and I enjoy teaching them because they're not doing it for any other reason than their love of aviation."

It's evident that Garratt is energized by sharing the sky with others—whether it's giving a ride or teaching a student. "When students solo, their smiles are just unbelievable, and you can't wipe it off their faces for a week," she laughs. "It's great! And then the Young Eagles, usually the younger group, are just so verbal and excited about their flight—so you get that immediate feedback. Both of those experiences, repeated several times a year, are just really rewarding."

She has also acquired her airframe and powerplant (A&P) certificate and invested three years in building a RANS S-7S, which she test-flew in December 2006. "Now I have 308 hours in it and love it," she proclaims, "and two years ago, I bought a single-seat EAA Biplane, which is a lot of fun to fly. The three airplanes all have their own purpose—and the Mooney is for traveling."

"Dash for a Cure"

Her modified Mooney is a world-class traveling machine. Garratt, who lives in Ocala, Florida, invited fellow Mooney pilot Carol Foy, of Spicewood, Texas, to be her copilot for her second around-the-world flight (Garratt previously flew around the world in 2003). Foy, a winning participant in the Air Race Classic (an all-woman cross-country race), is also a flight instructor who currently flies professionally as a contract pilot in a King Air and a small jet. Together the two women, with excellent support from their ground crew, set a new speed record for flying around the world, westbound, in December 2008. (See page 65 for details.) The primary objective of their eight and a half day flight was to raise a million dollars for ALS (commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease) research.

Why ALS? Because both women have been profoundly touched by it. "My mother died from ALS," shares Garratt, "and Carol's cousin has ALS right now.

TOP LEFT: Universal Weather support team (Houston, Texas) members show CarolAnn Garratt and Carol Foy some of the data they'll be able to relay the duo in flight. LOWER LEFT: Refueling the Mooney at night in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Lassana, the local handler, accepts fees and permits from CarolAnn. RIGHT: Carol and CarolAnn after weather briefing for departure from Hawaii.

Once you're touched by ALS, you *want* to work to raise donations to find a cure, because it is a terribly debilitating, terminal disease."

Elaborating on the disease that has no known cause or cure, Garratt says, "At any given time, 30,000 people in the U.S. have ALS, and they usually die within two to five years. Every 90 seconds, somebody else is diagnosed with it, but because they die so quickly, there isn't a huge population. It is a very cruel disease, because mentally your mind is working away, while your body deteriorates every day—they call it 'being entombed in your own body.' Statistics say that within the next 10 years, everyone will know somebody with ALS—yet no pharmaceutical companies are working on a cure. ALS Therapy Development Institute (TDI) is the largest not-for-profit organization that is seriously researching and working on a cure. We've raised about $186,000 in funding for research."

"Planning is very, very important— but you just don't get credit for it. People don't notice things when they go so smoothly."
— CarolAnn Garratt

Making It Look Easy

Garratt will be the first one to tell you that it takes a tremendous amount of planning to make a world flight such a successful venture that the media hardly noticed. The rewards of 18 months of full-time preparation were huge; virtually every leg of the record-setting flight ran flawlessly, with the precision afforded by efficiently orchestrated teamwork. "One person said to me, 'You made it look so easy.' That's because there were no crises—thanks in part to a great ground crew," explains Garratt. "Planning is very, very important—but you just don't get credit for it. People don't notice things when they go so smoothly."

What did they do to make it so successful? For one, Garratt relied upon the lessons she had learned during her 2003 flight around the world in N220FC, her Mooney M20J. Granted, that seven-month journey was more of a travelogue around the world, with plenty of rest, relaxation, and exploration. But she learned that each country has its own rules regarding flights and airspace, as well as customs and immigration. And she knew that on a record-attempt flight with longer legs and fewer stops, she'd need a copilot with whom she could share the flying.

She started making a list of names, and when she wrote down "Carol Foy," it all came together. "We met at Oshkosh in 2004, at the Mooney Aircraft Pilots Association. She's small and would fit in the Mooney's limited space; she didn't have any ties at home, having lost her husband recently; she was ready for some adventure like this; and she had the tie with ALS in the family. Plus, I kind of wanted it to be a female thing," comments Garratt with a laugh, "just because if I had had a male pilot with me, it would have been assumed that the guy was the pilot and in charge."

To make the 2008 flight truly a "dash," Garratt knew they wanted as few stops in foreign countries as possible, so they could avoid delays induced by bureaucratic paperwork. India was at the top of that list, and fortunately, Garratt contacted a Ninety-Nine (a member of the international woman pilot association) who had a friend in air traffic control in India. She helped them obtain approval for their overflight route ahead of time.

Sue Kanoho in Hawaii, presenting the team with donations for ALS research. RIGHT: Refilling fuel tank from barrel, in Salalah, Oman.

Garratt and Foy exhaustively researched their options and made informed decisions. They sought advice from other EarthRounders, contacted friends who lived in other countries, crunched performance numbers, consulted weather data (thanks to Universal Weather in Houston, Texas), charted their route, applied for overflight and landing permits—and made a point to keep the flight plan within their own personal boundaries of calculated and acceptable risk.

Fuel capacity was paramount for flying endurance legs, so two 60-gallon tanks, custom fit for a Mooney, were installed behind the front seats. N220FC was approved for a 15 percent overgross by the FAA, and all told, they had a fuel capacity of 195 gallons. "We figured we would burn 7.9 gph for the first half of each leg, and then 7.3 gph for the second half," explains Garratt, "and that gave us 26 hours' endurance, or 3,500 nm distance, with no wind. That was a bit iffy with a 3,300-mile leg, but I looked at the weather charts and every leg had tail winds, except for our first leg across the southern United States. So it looked like it was doable and we would be comfortable.

"The weather in December is benign, and that's when we chose to go around," says Garratt, "and I checked Google Earth for every single runway at the airports we were going to use, to look at the terrain, elevation, how it rose at the end of the runway, and where the population and congested areas were in relation to the airport."

Every square inch of the Mooney's available space was used; gear was strategically stored in locations as appropriately accessible as possible during flight. Provisions included charts, food and water, oxygen and oximeter, tool kit, Winslow life raft, Iridium satellite phone (with e-mail capability), HF radio, antenna and permits, and a Garmin 496. Each of the pilots had room for a toothbrush in her top pocket.

Oxygen was essential, but how did they carry enough to last for eight days? By limiting its use—the non-flying pilot at night received no oxygen. They stayed hydrated by sipping water from spill-proof CamelBak pouches, which were stored atop the cabin fuel tanks. For sustenance, they each had two food bars and two pieces of fruit for each leg. "We ate PowerBar Crunch bars, which are high protein and low carbohydrate. I ate them throughout the trip," declares Garratt with a winsome smile. "I don't eat them any more. They were perfect for the trip, because you don't want to take too much in because you don't want too much coming out."

"Once you're touched by ALS, you want to work to raise donations to find a cure...."
— CarolAnn Garratt

To ensure that her Mooney and its 200-hp Lycoming engine was in optimal condition for the intensive flight, Garratt and her A&P mechanic with an inspection authorization, Arthur Miller, performed an annual inspection in June 2008. "I had 750 hours on the engine, and that's a pretty reliable time in the engine's life. So we pulled the accessories, including the alternator, vacuum pump, fuel boost pump, and magnetos. I either had them overhauled or replaced, so that all the equipment on the engine and the instruments would have at least 100 hours on them before the trip. That gave us reliability by reducing early failures, so we reduced the risk to a minimum." Garratt and Foy also flew several long flights together prior to December, just to make sure that all the final details were okay. Their thoroughness yielded hefty dividends; they had no equipment failures during the trip.

TRANS-WORLD FLIGHT: By the Numbers

- **158** hours flown
- **4** hours IMC, in clouds
- **81** hours at night
- **46** hours on the ground:
  28 refueling and maintenance
  18 hours sleeping in hotel
- **20,400** nautical miles
- **1185** gallons of avgas
- Almost **$20,000** total cost
  Over **$5,000** for permits
- Most expensive avgas in Djibouti, **$710/55** gal. drum = **$12.91** per gallon
- **25** country permits obtained
- **26** PowerBar Crunch bars eaten, a few vanilla unscathed; all chocolate consumed

During EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2008, Foy and Garratt staged a "sit in," of sorts. It started as a media stunt, but ended up as an excellent prep test. The two women sat in the Mooney together for 24 hours, doing *everything* they'd need to do during the actual flight. Doctors gave them leg exercises to help prevent deep vein thrombosis and advised them to take baby aspirin a week in advance of the trip, as well as during the flight.

Ground support fulfilled a vital role in the flight's successful outcome. "We had ground support 24 hours a day—they were all over the world, including the United States, Thailand, Switzerland, and Denmark. All of them had everybody's contact information, and each of the ground crew were picked based on their experience around the world and their knowledge," Garratt elaborates. "All ground crew knew our decision points for the three long legs, so if circumstances existed for us to deviate from our original plan, everyone had that information."

In-flight communications were facilitated by two items—a satellite phone and HF radio, the latter of which was required by air traffic control. "I had the Iridium satellite phone so I could talk to my ground crew at any time," explains Garratt, "and we were able to talk to kids in school while we were at different points around the world. We prearranged that with the teachers, and the kids were also able to track us on the website. Talking to the kids was one of the highlights of the trip—they loved it, and that was a lot of fun for all of us!"

Carol Foy, left, and CarolAnn receiving U.S. and World Record from NAA Director Art Greenfield at the National Aeronautics Association banquet following accreditation of the flight by NAA.

The "Dash"

If you're wondering why their flight was christened "Dash for a Cure," for one, it was a quick trip. Yet, there's another reason that the moniker is apt, and it ties in with Linda Ellis' poem entitled "The Dash" (*www.TheDashMovie.com/linda*), which is reprinted in the front of Garratt's second book, *Upon Silver Wings II—World-Record Adventure*. The poem eloquently refers to "the dash" that appears between the birth and death dates on a tombstone, subtly symbolizing one's lifetime—and Ellis gently prods us to make the most of our own dash.

Garratt is making her dash count for others who have been impacted by ALS. Her eyes easily reveal the depth of her earnest, compelling drive to make a difference in the field of ALS research by promoting awareness and raising funds. She is continuing to carry the message about her ALS world flights to aviation audiences and tries to schedule at least three presentations a week. To that end, she has committed the next two years to giving presentations about the ALS World Flight to various aviation organizations throughout the United States.

This year, her speaking tour will take her from Florida up the East Coast, across the upper Midwest, down across California, and eastward through Arizona, New Mexico, before returning to Ocala. Afterward, it's a distinct possibility that she will once again set the challenge of flying her Mooney around the world. And, with a nod to the future, she smiles and says, "I'm going to build a 90-percent-scale, replica Spitfire. That's the only warbird that I really enjoy, and it has beautiful, gorgeous lines!"

Foy also has an important message to convey, with which Garratt agrees. They both want to inspire kids by letting them know that they can do almost anything they want to do, just by taking the necessary steps and continuing to move forward, even when a project seems overwhelming. Through dedicated persistence and thorough planning, lofty goals can become tangible accomplishments—as evidenced by Garratt and Foy's "Dash for a Cure" world-record-setting flight.

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For more information about the flight, please visit
www.ALSWorldFlight.com.

For more about ALS TDI, visit
www.ALS.net.

To order Garratt's books about her world flight, visit
www.ALSWorldFlight.com/media.php.