

A Fish Story, Almost

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As pup pilot with a successful check ride completed weeks ago and nearly 200 hours of total flight time, I was ready to fly my bride to the Chesapeake Bay for some seafood. Back in sectional and plastic plotter days, long before GPS, I determined that a destination of 77.2 nautical miles away would be a great first cross country flight as a real pilot for a \$100 burger, or seafood.

I diligently filed my flight plan from KHGR, Hagerstown, MD, home base for my new, used 1966 Piper Cherokee 180, to M06 on the Susquehanna River by the Chesapeake Bay for some seafood. After takeoff I contacted Flight service to open my flight plane and get VFR flight following and was very pleased with my piloting and communication skills as we headed southeast towards our destination.

I could almost smell the boiled shrimp about 10 nautical miles from Havre de Grace airport when flight service called my number, "Piper 9386J, are you a seaplane?"

"Negative," I replied, "9386J is a fixed gear Cherokee 180."

"You are the pilot in command," the voice on the radio advised me, "But we suggest landing a fixed gear aircraft on the water at a seaplane base might not be in your best interest."

"Understood," I responded, " I would like to amend my flight plan and return to KHGR, 9386J."

"Flight plan amended, Good day," they said.

We safely returned to KHGR and had fried shrimp at Red Lobster. That was in 1986, 39 years ago, and my wife is still laughing.