



# CHOCK TALK

Newsletter of the Blue Sky Flying Club, est. 1957

**Note from the Editor** This edition of Chock Talk marks just over five years of publication. I've managed to keep it going on a bi-monthly basis and I'm proud of the product. But I am looking for someone to assume the mantle, becoming the new editor.



If you'd like to help the club and are interested, let me know and I'd be happy to sit down with you to discuss. And happy to mentor.

**Lower Rates** In keeping with our transparent rates policy, it's great news that we are reducing hourly rates. This is due to lower fuel prices at our home base pump. When the price dropped below \$6/gal. it fell into the next lower 50¢ window, triggering an adjustment. New rates, effective Feb 1, 2024:

- Skyhawk: \$154/hr
- Skylane: \$186/hr
- Dakota: \$180/hr

**The Bylaws and Operating Instructions** As most of you know from our membership meetings and minutes, the Board has been hard at work reviewing and rewriting both of these documents. Frequently, when solving issues that pop up, we refer to these documents and just as frequently we are frustrated or surprised by the language. The two documents are sometimes at odds with each other; in other instances the language is inscrutable. This is, no doubt, due to piecemeal additions that have taken place over the years, without a comprehensive 30,000' view of how these changes mesh with the rest of the document.

One example is the elections/nominating process. It's a minor issue but the bylaws require that nominations be by signature. Quaint, but we don't really operate with the fountain pen anymore, and we have been using email for quite a while, so that will change. In the interest of encouraging/enabling "new blood" on the Board, we are also planning to impose term limits and two-year terms with staggered elections, rather than one-year terms with all five members being elected (or not) every year.

With the hardening of the insurance market, the issue of aircraft damage has become a vexing problem. Additionally, we have conflicting language in the bylaws and Operating Instructions (to be renamed "Operating Procedures"). That will be harmonized.

When the project is complete, a comprehensive explanation will be given to the membership and an opportunity for all to weigh in on our work.



Ultimately changing the Bylaws requires an affirmative vote of 2/3 of the membership, so that will be on the radar too.



**Dakota Upgrade** In a couple weeks, N2915M will be ferried to N40 for its avionics upgrade. Given the mashup of new-ish avionics and antiques in this airplane, it's going to be a major upgrade. Everything comes out and only a few things go back in. At the end of the day (month?) the panel will look very similar to our other two planes and also like a new cockpit. There will also be a significant upgrade to the interior paneling.

This will complete Blue Sky's most ambitious modernization in its history. Three new glass panels in two years! Not only will it give us low-maintenance solid-state avionics, more importantly, it gives us fleet commonality. When members transition from one plane to another, the avionics will be so similar that the learning curve should be far less curvy. Not only will that make for less to remember and more fun, it will also make for a safer club.



Cheers!

**Wind Turbines ...** are proliferating. On average, over 3,000 new turbines have been erected in the U.S. each year since 2018.



They're also getting taller; in that same period the average height has increased by about 200' to approximately 540'.

They are typically lit with medium intensity flashing red lights, but

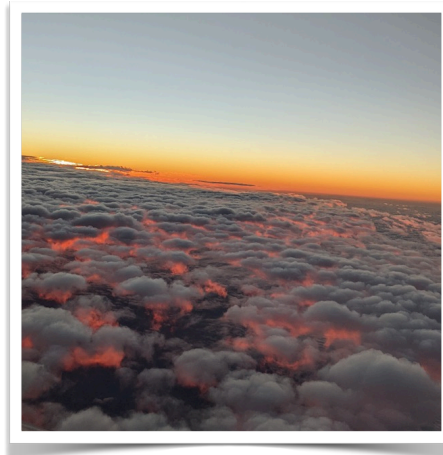
those lights are on the hub, not on the tip of the blade, which can be 200'-300' long. Some wind farms have proximity sensors that detect nearby aircraft and illuminate the lights until the aircraft are no longer sensed.

The elevation figure on VFR charts *does* include the height of the blade and when a "wind farm" exists (three or more), they are depicted with a hashed area and a single max elevation for the entire area.

Other potential problems for pilots include low-level turbulence, which could be a nuisance near an airport. They can also disrupt doppler radar imagery.



MSL. UC = Under construction or reported: position and elevation unverified.



## Are you “over the top” or “on top”?

Let’s say you depart VFR and are cruising at 6500’ westbound. That 5000’ SCT enroute weather at departure time has now turned into a 5000’ BKN deck beneath you. But the weather at destination is CLR. Is that legal VFR? Sure; you just need to comply with the cloud clearance requirements. You are flying “VFR over-the-top”. No clearance required, no ATC comm, and no flight plan required. The term just describes what you are doing. It can be a useful tool for flying in better conditions (think haze or turbulence), but requires prudent planning and monitoring. If you aren’t instrument rated, you should be keeping a close eye on your options i.e. destination and enroute METARS and trends.

“VFR-on-top” is a different animal. Some pilots have been known to use the terms interchangeably; that’s incorrect. “VFR-on-top” is available to instrument rated pilots on an IFR flight plan, *when requested*. It allows you to change altitudes at will, provided you maintain VFR cloud clearances. Again, it can be a useful tool. But honestly, it’s unlikely you’re going to get it in our busy Northeastern airspace. Still worth tweaking the controller with a request!

## Equipment Codes for your EFB

Tail Number	Surveillance Code	Equipment Code	Wake Turbulence	ICAO PBN
N642SP	B2, E	B, G, R, S, Y	L	O2, S2
N9758H	B2, E	B, G, R, S, Y	L	O2, S2
N2915M	B2, E	B, G, R, S, Y	L	O2, S2

These codes can be entered and stored in your EFB for the purposes of filing flight plans. If you use Foreflight, go to the individual stored aircraft and scroll down to the “FILING” section. That S2 code is based on approach minima capability and the fact that our are capable of flying to LNAV/VNAV DA. Since we no longer file flight plans with the FAA format, and only use the ICAO format, it shouldn’t make any difference but, if you want, you can put “/G” in the FAA Equipment section. I’ve also been told that much of this (but how much?) is irrelevant since the information seen by controllers may be truncated and not include all codes. Still, I believe it’s best to have the information loaded in the event that it is or becomes available to ATC.

### Next Membership Meeting

Monday, February, 5 7:30 p.m.

Calvary Bible Church  
144 Readington Road

**Note: We are now meeting in Room 131 upstairs  
Hybrid meeting with a virtual option via Discord/CTAF**

**Presentation: “Glass Panel Failures”**

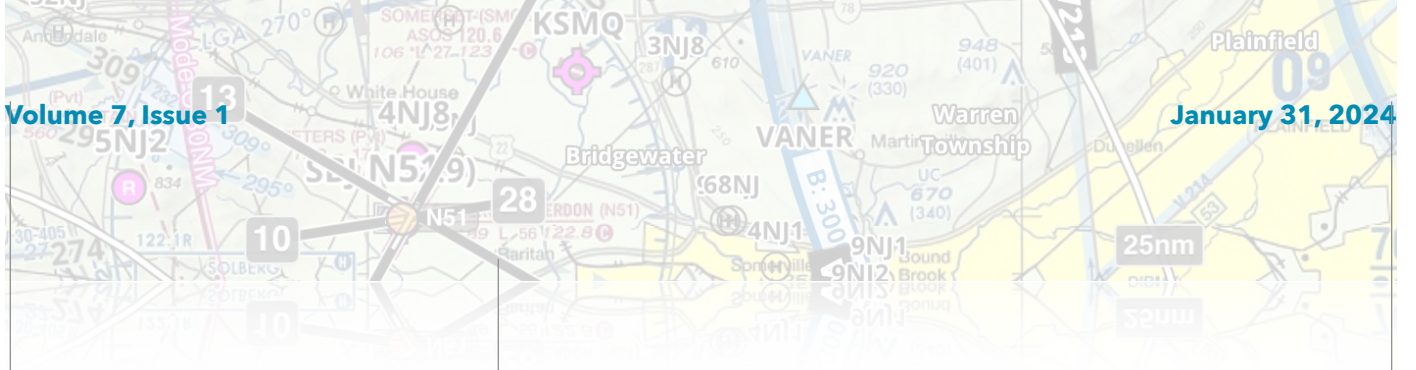
Roger Harris, CFII

#### Fuel Prices (ranked in order of price)

Central Jersey \$5.35  
Sky Manor \$5.35  
Solberg \$5.54 (Must use the Phillips card)

**It’s your money! Spend it wisely!**

*“If you hit something and your nose wheel isn’t on the line, you’re in trouble. If you hit something and your nose wheel IS on the line, you’re in trouble.” Confucius* **3**



*“A mile of road takes you a mile. A mile of runway takes you anywhere.”*