

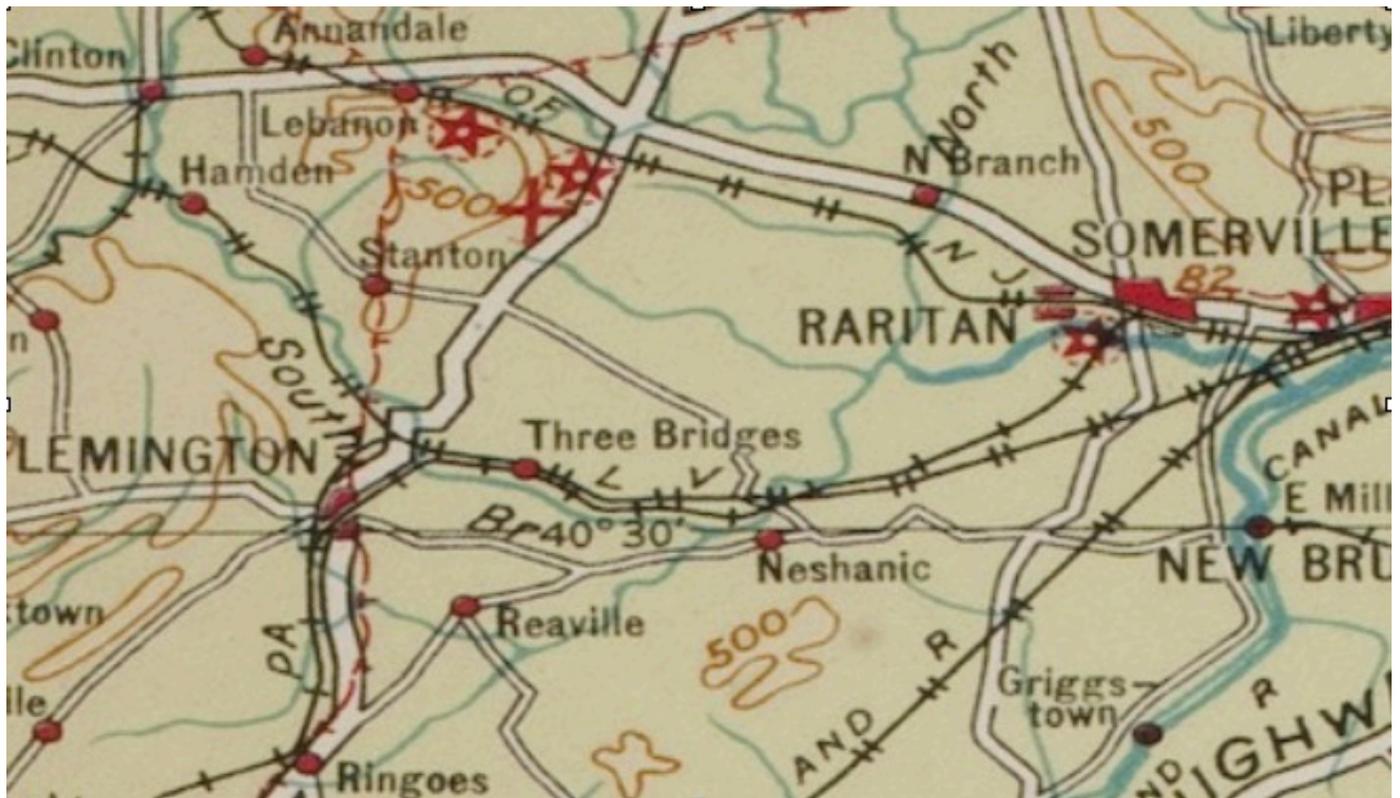
# CHOCK TALK

Newsletter of the Blue Sky Flying Club, est. 1957

**Airports and Runways.** Ever wish you had a runway available just a little closer? I don't think there's a pilot alive who hasn't. This summer at Oshkosh Airventure I learned a few things about early airports and runways in the EAA museum.

Transcontinental routes were marked by lighted beacons, the first nav aids, spaced 10 miles apart with emergency fields - literally - fields, located at every fifth beacon. The first "real" airports were created by the Army Air Service and the Post Office. During the Great Depression, the Works Projects Administration also built airports. This infrastructure was originally for Air Mail routes but in the late 1920's the mail carriers had started carrying passengers too, which was yet another driver of airfield development.

The first airfields were just that, pastures or fields. But they had to be fairly well maintained; the airplanes were fragile machines that only flew when the air was calm and the fields were dry. WW1 airports were often round - imagine that, you never had to deal with a crosswind. Just point into the wind and takeoff. Later, with the advent of scheduled operations, hard all-weather surfaces were necessary to avoid getting stuck in the mud. Thus, the "runway" was invented - originally rolled cinders. And as aircraft such as the Ford Tri-Motor were getting larger and heavier, asphalt and concrete runways became the norm.



1923 Sectional (before Rte 202, Rte 31, and N51) Dashed circle w/star = rotating nav beacon, cross = unimproved field. Published by the Army Air Service when lighted beacons were the primary means of night navigation. This early air navigation map is what the 21-year old Air Mail pilot, Charles Lindbergh, would have been using in the years prior to his famous New York-Paris flight in 1927.

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

Let’s say your 5000’ SCT enroute weather at departure time turns into a 5000’ BKN deck beneath your 6500’ cruising altitude. But the weather at destination is CLR. Is that legal VFR? Sure (just remember 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.

“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 it’s unlikely you’re going to get it in our busy Northeastern airspace.]

**Mark’s Know Your History Quiz:** We don't accept Student Pilots as members. Why not?

**Answer to previous Know Your History Quiz:** In 1968 and again in 1974 the Blue Sky Aviation Association created a “club within a club”, both times in order to purchase and operate a Twin aircraft. The first club was called the Skyways Aviation Association, Inc and owned a 1957 Piper Apache. The second club was called the Apache Club and owned a 1956 Piper Apache. Each of these clubs were maintained as separate entities from Blue Sky with their own Bond, monthly dues, and rates. Members joining these clubs had to join Blue Sky first and pay the Blue Sky’s Bond and dues as well. Unfortunately, both experiments were unsuccessful due to financial and operational constraints. The Skyways Aviation Association disbanded after about 2 years and the Apache Club ceased operation after a member crashed & totaled the plane trying to land on runway 31 at N51.



Retrofit kits now available.  
Turn your pitot tube into a mini-rocket launcher

**Mark’s Compliance Corner:** Did you know that it has been two years since the Email Payment Process (EPP) was adopted by Blue Sky as the official method for payment of monthly dues & fees? The process has been a success saving time & money and increasing the security of the monthly transactions. As of today, only a handful of the “Old Timers” still use the old ways (paper check, money order, etc.) to pay their bills! Old habits die hard!

**PIREPs:** How often do you give PIREPs? If you're like most pilots - not too often. I think some of us hesitate to do it because we feel that we should give it in the proper order. If you're lucky enough to get ahold of FSS, this is the format they would like:

- Location
- Time
- Altitude
- Type
- Sky cover
- Visibility & WX
- Temp C°
- Wind
- Turbulence
- Icing
- Remarks

But... there's an easier way; just call ATC and tell them you've got a PIREP - and don't bother with the format. They can enter it for you. You don't have to give every bit of info either - just the important stuff like turbulence, icing, temperature, and winds (if you've got 'em). Check out this [short video from AOPA](#).

**Trivial Pursuit:** There's a common misconception about fuel gauges - that they only need to be accurate when the tanks are empty. *Wrong.*

The misconception originates from the pre-2017 version of FAR 23 and was certainly *never* the intent of the wording. FAR 23.1337(b)(1) stated that each fuel quantity indicator must be calibrated to read 'zero' during level flight when the quantity of fuel remaining in the tank is equal to the unusable fuel supply. Since FAR 23 contained no further guidance, pilots tended to claim that as the only requirement.

**But** more importantly, FAR 91.205 lists required equipment - "a fuel gauge indicating the quantity of fuel in each tank". That's nothing new.

Then in 2017, FAR 23 was rewritten, eliminating that wording. The *new* FAR 23.2430 says that fuel systems must provide the flight-crew with a means to determine the total usable fuel available.

Fuel - don't leave home without it.

**News you can use:**

**Next Membership Meeting**

February 3rd, 7:30pm  
Calvary Bible Church (Classroom 002/003)  
144 Readington Road  
Whitehouse Station, New Jersey

**Presentation**

Oceanic Airspace Procedures on the North Atlantic Tracks  
(very useful stuff for Blue Sky fliers)  
Roger Harris

**Cheap fuel**

Central Jersey	\$4.35
Sky Manor	\$4.71
Solberg	\$4.79 (Must use the Phillips card)