



# NEWS In the Sky

January 2021

([www.opa.aero](http://www.opa.aero))

January 7th, 2021 - Social Hour 6:30 p.m.  
Dinner Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

**The January OPA Dinner Meeting will be held as scheduled. We are taking the recommended safety measures for the health of those who attend. We ask each member to determine what is best for their health and wish everyone a very HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**A Shade of Blue** will be our performing guest during the January Membership Dinner. This swing/jazz group plays songs from the Greatest Generations.



## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

If you plan to attend, please **RSVP** as soon as possible so we can get a count to the caterer. You can **RSVP** by sending an email to [dinner@opa.aero](mailto:dinner@opa.aero)

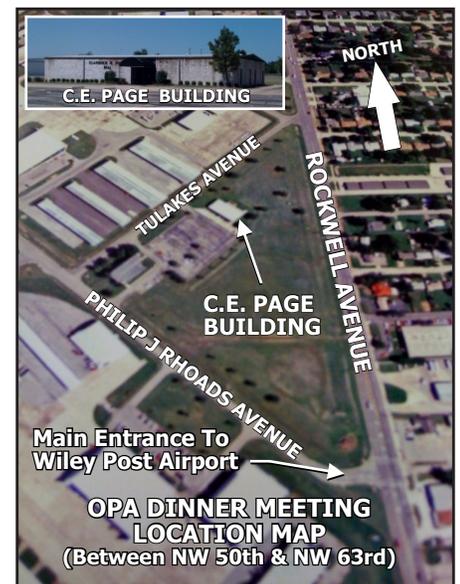


February 4th, 2021 - Social Hour 6:30 p.m.  
Dinner Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

**Speaker: To Be Announced**

**If you are looking for a tax deduction, gifts to the OPA Vic Jackson Memorial Scholarship Fund or to OPA are valid tax deductions.**

The Oklahoma Pilots Association (OPA) meets the 1st Thursday of each month at the Clarence E. Page Building, located on Wiley Post Airport. From N. Rockwell, enter the airport at the traffic light (Phillip J. Rhoads Ave.), take the first right, and drive back to the light gray brick building.





Oklahoma Pilots Association is a member-controlled not-for-profit organization for all pilots and aircraft owners. OPA strives to serve the needs of general aviation pilots statewide, promoting aviation, education and safety in personal and business flying.

Membership consists of student pilots through airline transport pilots, both civil and military and is open to all pilots and aircraft owners. Annual membership dues are currently \$35.

OPA holds monthly dinner meetings at the C. E. Page Building on Wiley Post Airport in Oklahoma City. Distinguished guest speakers present educational and safety related programs at the monthly dinner meetings.

OPA hosts monthly Fly Aways for lunch or dinner and weekend Fly Aways to interesting destinations.

OPA, through its charitable non-profit corporation, accepts money or property donated to fund the Vic Jackson Memorial Scholarship Fund which is awarded annually to a college student with career aspirations in the field of aviation. Your contributions of money or property are tax deductible.

OPA Newsletter Staff  
 Editors: Ben & June Roy  
 Circulation: Mike Rangel

Members' contributions of articles and other information relative to aviation are encouraged.

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**Snow is Not Rain**

But it is wet. I learned the hard way. No rain in the last month and only about 5 inches of snow, several days ago. I landed on a nice grass runway. No problem with the runway. Another plane had recently landed.

But - when I turned off to park, yikes!! (That word is not in my dictionary) ("Yippee" is in the dictionary. This was not a yippee experience!)

Fortunately, I was moving very slowly while the owner directed me to park by his hangar. My front tire went down a couple of inches. No harm, but we needed his tractor to pull my plane back a few feet.

We turned the plane around and I exited where we verified the ground was okay.

Lesson learned: Snow is not rain. It is not running off. It sits and slowly melts. So, days after the snow fell, the ground may still be mushy.

A big flat grass parking area was still mushy. Be ye ever so careful.

Happy New Year!

By Lee M. Holmes

**Editors' Memories from 2020**



**We had sunshine and flowers while social distancing from family; then being able to spend time with them while healing.**



**Hail, an ice storm, and 7" snow; and lots of love.**



## OPA President Greg Finley

### OPA President's Article Part 1

Anyone that has lived in Oklahoma, for even a short time, can attest to the wide range of inconsistent weather conditions that blow through this region. For instance, some winters we may not see any snow and have fairly mild days throughout; but some winters we experience back-to-back snow and ice storms that will even take out electrical grids for a few days. However, there is one factor that does remain consistent with each season. The daylight hours get longer and shorter depending on the time of year.



This month, I would like to start a two-part article to briefly discuss some considerations about flying at night. By the time you read this article, we will have already crossed the winter solstice [December 21, 2020] in which our days are officially getting longer. Nonetheless, it still gets dark earlier and the daylight does not break over the horizon as early as in the summertime. This almost beckons the issue of flying at night and our flying currency; or should I emphasize "proficiency".

There is a difference between the two, and I suggest that even though the former is regulatory the latter is a necessity. We are all familiar with CFR 61.57 which tells us that in order to carry passengers in an airplane a pilot needs to do at least three take-offs and landings within the preceding 90 days in an aircraft of the same category, class, and type (if type rating is required). If any portion of the flight is to take place during nighttime, then the take-offs and landings need to have been done at night and to a complete stop. We can take advantage of the shorter, winter days and remain night current at a more decent hour of the day; but does that necessarily mean we are night proficient? Although there are many things to consider when flying at night, the purpose here is to keep this a two-part article and not a textbook.

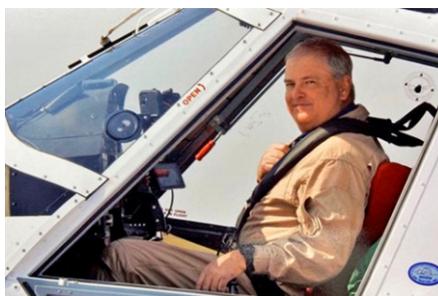
I think you will agree that one may not necessarily consider themselves a rusty pilot if they fly on a regular basis; but if there has not been a night flight in some time, I would suggest that proficiency may be lacking in that respect. I hope this article will spark an interest to become more proficient in flying during the hours of darkness.

Let us look at currency vs. proficiency. Three take-offs and landings while remaining in the traffic pattern is much different than executing a night cross country flight. Flying at night can present a whole new set of challenges than in the daytime. For instance, some may be piloting the only airplane in the pattern at an uncontrolled airport and their focus is on nailing the regulatory take-offs and landings. But are these pilots proficient at locating and tracking other aircraft with city lights in the background, multiple altitude and course changes, changing radio frequencies and communicating with the different levels of ATC, choosing the correct airport in a forest of rotating beacons, and keeping clear of towers - all at night? There are pilots who routinely fly at night; but I would suggest that there are some who only conduct night flight operations occasionally.

A couple of years ago, I found myself needing to do an Instrument Proficiency Check (IPC) because I had not done enough instrument flying during that time. The flight instructor and I were only able to schedule the flight at night. Although most of the flight was simulated IFR, some of it was conducted VFR. Essentially, we departed R.L. Jones-Riverside (KRVS) Airport and travelled to Okmulgee Regional Airport (KOKM) where we did a VOR approach then went to Tulsa International Airport (KTUL) for an ILS approach, returning to Riverside for the RNAV in to 1L. Even though I planned for the flight the best I could, I had to recognize that I had not done any night flying for several months prior. I had at least two things going for me that night. Due to most of the flight being simulated IFR, I had my focus on the inside of the cockpit and did not need to add all of the outside workload to my brain. Also, I had another pilot with me to assist. Yes, everything went smoothly, we did taxi backs so I could regain my night currency, and I passed the IPC; but it did cause me to realize I was nowhere near the night proficiency as I would like to have been. It was clear to me that I needed to plan and conduct frequent night cross country flights so I can be prepared for that one time I need to do a night flight.

Instead of simply doing our regulatory take-offs and landings in order to fulfill our recent flight experience, it seems to be a good idea to take advantage of the early seasonal sunsets and do a couple of night cross country flights in an effort to reclaim night proficiency.

Next month in part two, I will continue to discuss flying at night and briefly discuss some aeromedical factors. If you have any questions about this article or have suggestions for a future article you can contact me at [president@opa.aero](mailto:president@opa.aero)



**Two OPA pilots made their final flights in 2020.**

## Private Public Airports

Our thanks to Dee Ann for the article and photos

Submitted by Dee Ann Ediger

Fairmont Field, Oklahoma

Formerly OK16, private owned/private use

Now 1OK, private owned/public use

Several years ago during the Kansas Air Tour, Ken and I happened to hear Tom Chandler, AOPA representative for Kansas and Oklahoma, state that Oklahoma had rescinded the law protecting private owned airports from being encroached upon by the construction of wind turbines.

Until we heard that comment, we were under the impression that a 2015 law protecting private owned airports from close tower construction was still in effect.

We own a 2500 X 60 grass runway just east of Enid in Garfield County. Over the last ten years, we have seen several wind farms appear in our county and we thought we didn't have to worry about turbines being built closer than 1.5 miles (the setback distance that had been established in the 2015 statute). In fact, a wind farm built during 2018 is 1.6 miles from the end of our runway and the distance is a result of the 2015 law that was in effect when the wind farm was planned and plotted.

A setback of 1.5 miles of the end of a grass runway is barely considered safe when one considers the climb rate during a hot summer day, but at least it is better than nothing. Those towers 1.6 miles away can look very menacing when climbing at 200-300 feet per minute.

Another friend who has a 50-year-old grass airstrip in the area was also dismayed to hear that we no longer were protected from the danger of having a wind turbine built just off the ends of our runways, so we began to contact our state senators and representatives to see if we could get some protection.

During our research for the issue, we found that the 2015 law protecting our runways had supposedly been used by some Oklahoma residents to keep a distance between private property and wind turbine construction. There were "private owned/private use airstrips" popping up on the FAA sectionals. Some of these airports were accused of being fake – nicknamed "shamports" by the wind lobby.

Because of the strength of the wind energy lobby, our state representatives were convinced that there were dozens of "shamports" being chartered just to keep turbines from being built and this was supposedly going to hurt the income stream for the state.

So, in 2018, our legislators rescinded the protection for private owned airports to keep the wind lobby happy. The 1.5-mile setback was retained for all municipal and public use airports, as well as hospitals and public schools (not private schools, though). This is the legislation that Mr. Chandler told us about.

During the 2019 and 2020 legislative sessions, several private airport owners attempted to get protection for private airports restored. There are over 400 airports in Oklahoma and more than 200 of them are private use, but apparently an airport owner does not have as much clout with our legislators as the wind energy lobbyists.

I even met with my state senator and a group of seven lawyers and lobbyists for NextEra wind energy company to discuss the issue and during the meeting the lobbyists suggested a measure that they would not work against. This measure would allow for the inspection of an airstrip as well as having the airstrip meet conditions in order to receive a setback protection. Among the conditions were: 1) airport owner or manager is a licensed pilot, 2) there is an aircraft based on the airport, 3) aviation activity of at least 24 landings and takeoffs per year can be demonstrated. These seemed to be logical conditions to me and to most of the pilots I talked with, also. The wind lobbyists also asked that only those airports chartered before the 2015 law took effect be protected, but that provision would mean there would never be any protection for any future private owned airports in the state. We considered that to be a little extreme.



A beautiful sunrise takeoff in our Cessna 182 before the wind turbine field was built near us. We won't be able to enjoy that sight anymore because there is a huge turbine field where the unobstructed sunrise used to be.



And a takeoff by a Stearman now that the turbine field is 1.6 miles from the end of the runway.

## Private Public Airports - Continued from Page 4

Even though we were successful in convincing a couple of our local legislators to at least write bills to restore the protection for private airports containing the suggested conditions, none of the legislation was released to the full senate or house in order to call for a vote to approve. We were not told whether the wind lobby reversed its assurances that they would not fight the legislation, or if legislators deemed the bills to be of benefit to too small a group of their constituents.

The result is that since 2018, wind turbines can legally be erected in the flight path and anywhere close to any private owned airport – including private use fly-in communities, private use agricultural aerial application airstrips, private use recreational airstrips near lakes, private use airstrips that have been in existence for dozens of years (some as long as 75 years), and private use airports like ours that we built in 2003.

Because of the large investment in our property and the enjoyment we get from it, Ken and I decided we were not willing to take a chance that we could face extinction as an airport if some company succeeded in leasing land close to our airport in order to construct wind turbines. The only way we could gain protection from wind turbine and tower construction was to apply to the FAA for a change in status of our airport from private owned/private use to private owned/public use. In April 2019, I began that process. After repeated phone calls to check on the progress of the application I finally was able to get an FAA representative in the Dallas area to make sure the submission was going through the right channels while I stayed on the phone with him. During the conversation with the FAA rep, I learned that unless I had kept bugging him, the process would have stalled due to no one having been designated a sponsor in order to get the application through.

Finally, eight months later, we have received a new airport designator and will appear on the charts as a private owned/public use airport. Oklahoma statute states that no wind turbine can be constructed closer than 1.5 miles from either end of our airport and no closer than 1.5 miles from our center line to each side.

We did have to give up an important right when we were converted from private use to public use. In Oklahoma, recreational use of private land like hiking, boating, fishing, hunting, and aviation, is covered in a liability exemption clause protecting the private landowner from lawsuit resulting from recreational use (not for compensation) of their land. Now that we are a public use airport, that private liability protection has disappeared so we will be forced to obtain liability insurance for our airport if we want that type of protection. There are only a few companies who insure private owned airports so we are considering our options in that area. We will also not be able to restrict use of our airport like we could when it was designated private use.

Local pilots and local CFI's are always very considerate when hoping to use our airstrip and if they think the surface might be soft due to rain or snow they always call in advance to make sure we don't mind landings. Being public use might bring some unwanted activity by non-local pilots, but we are certain those based in the area will continue to respect working with us to keep the airstrip from being damaged in wet conditions. As owners, we also have the option to issue NOTAMS about temporary closures and establish landing fees for airstrip use.

We will continue to strive for private use airstrip protection with future legislative actions and if protections are established, we have the option of converting back to private use to regain the liability protection offered by the state. But until then, we can hopefully rest assured that our airstrip will not face the danger of a 500-600-foot-tall tower being constructed in our landing pattern.

The new designation for our airport is 1OK and it began showing up on the aeronautical charts and in GPS databases with the March 2020 updates.



This is our farm with the 2500' grass runway showing up in the milo field. The photo was taken before the wind turbine field was built. There are now 75 turbines starting 1.6 miles south and east of the airstrip and 100 more being built about 5-10 miles away.



Aerial view of our EAA chapter fly-in that we host every year.



**Kids gathered in the hangar for a presentation.**

We host youngsters at our airport to introduce them to aviation. That experience might be lost if we can't protect private airstrips.



# OPA Memories from 2020



Peter Richard Cappadonna received the Master Pilot Award



### OPA Memories from 2020



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### OPA Memories from 2020



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**All scheduled items are subject to change as necessary to meet directed Covid 19 requirements and for the health and safety of our members and guests.**

**2021 OPA Calendar**

**January 7th** - Dinner Meeting 6:30 p.m.  
 Page Building, Wiley Post Airport  
 Wiley Post Airport

**January Fly Away - Cancelled due to Covid**

**January 21st** - OPA Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.  
 Page Building, Wiley Post Airport

**February 4th** - OPA Dinner Meeting 6:30 p.m.  
 Page Building, Wiley Post Airport

**February 13th - OPA Fly Away**  
 To Be Announced

**February 18th** - OPA Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.  
 Page Building, Wiley Post Airport

**March 4th** - Dinner Meeting 6:30 p.m.  
 Page Building, Wiley Post Airport  
 Wiley Post Airport

**March Fly Away** - To Be Announced

**March 18th** - OPA Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.  
 Page Building, Wiley Post Airport

**Make dinner reservations at [dinner@opa.aero](mailto:dinner@opa.aero)**

**Monthly Oklahoma Fly-Ins**  
**CHECK THE OPA CALENDAR PAGE ON THE WEBSITE FOR UPDATES**

CANCELLED DUE TO COVID

1st Saturday - Ponca City Aviation Booster Fly-In  
 Breakfast - Call Don Nuzum 580-767-0470

1st Saturday - Pauls Valley Lunch Fly In  
 Call 405-268-3925 (Breakfast in Summer)

3rd Saturday - Enid Fly-In Breakfast - Woodring Airport (WDG) April through October



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**ANNUAL DUES ARE \$35**  
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**Material for publication will be accepted up to the deadline which is the 15th of each month, space permitting.** The editorial staff reserves the right to accept, refuse, or edit any material submitted. Publication of articles and opinions in the OPA Newsletter is not an endorsement by the Association, nor does the Association assume any responsibility for the accuracy of the information contained in the Newsletter. Permission is granted to reprint, provided credit is given to The Oklahoma Pilots Association Newsletter. **For circulation issues including newsletters not received or email and address changes contact Roger Walton 405-219-5149 or email [mem@opa.aero](mailto:mem@opa.aero).**



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