



The Windsock

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International Organization of Women Pilots
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

Push To Talk

As 2025 comes to a close, it's hard to believe the year is already over, and what a year it has been! I started the year with instrument training and after a 6 month break due to various factors, I am ready to get back at it. I was able to do my last flight of the year with Sal, our Chapter Secretary, as my safety pilot so I could knock off a little rust in instrument flying before I schedule a few lessons with my instructor to get ready for a check ride in 2026. It was a beautiful sunny day, and unfortunately, I didn't really get to see any of it as I practiced approaches under the hood at Watsonville, Salinas, and back to Reid Hillview.

Speaking of check rides, 2025 saw quite a few accomplishments in our Chapter. Several student pilots became private pilots, and we've had an instrument rating, a couple of commercial and seaplane certificates, and a new CFI! We've also had some student pilots fly their first solo pattern and first solo cross country flights, which are huge accomplishments. I love celebrating everyone's achievements at our monthly meetings. If you've accomplished something, please share it with us so we can celebrate you, too.

In early December, Sal and I gave our first FAA Safety Seminar at the San Carlos Flight Center. The topic was on seaplane flying – what the rating entails, what skills you will get out of it, and where you can do it. It was a lot of fun to partner on this and share our unique experiences. There's a possibility we may do this again in the future, so if you are thinking about a seaplane rating, consider joining our seminar the next time. You'll learn some valuable skills in earning the certificate and it's the most fun you will likely ever have flying!

Our Chapter held its annual holiday party in mid-December, and it was nice to see so many members. There was a fun white elephant gift exchange in addition to dinner, and we got a chance to visit with Chapter members who aren't often able to make it to our meetings, as well as family members who joined in the celebration. I'd like to extend a big thank you to Pat for organizing the event and providing cupcakes for dessert, as well as Maki, who handled the finances, did calligraphy for our place cards, and made lovely bookmarks out of old sectionals as party favors. Thanks to everyone who brought a toy for the toy drive and to Marcie for getting them to the donation center.

In closing, I would like to remind everyone that we will be planning our annual fly outs at our January meeting, so please consider attending, bring your suggestions, and volunteer to "host" one of the fly outs. I hope to see you there.

Mary McEnroe
Chapter Chair
ChapterChair@SCV99s.org



Special Delivery

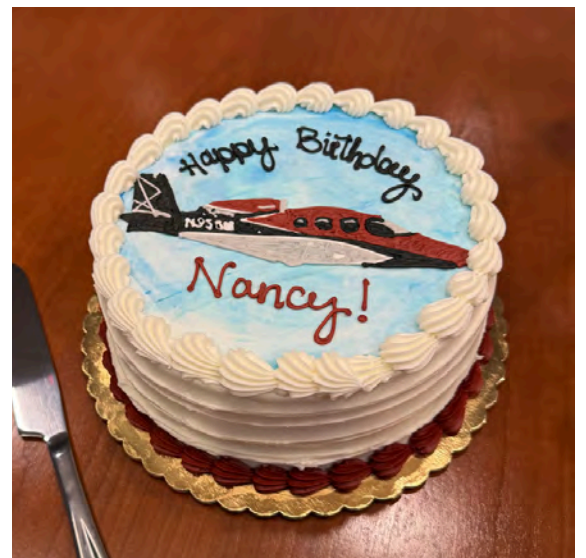


by Nancy Sliwa

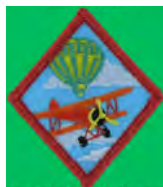
In early October, right after the Monterey Section meeting, I met my husband Steve in Knoxville, TN to accept delivery of our new Vision Jet, N955M (nicknamed "Morgan"). Cirrus makes a major spectacle of delivering their new aircraft. We were escorted in a big black SUV into the Cirrus delivery hangar where we could see the shadow of the jet behind a curtain. Rock music filled the air as the curtain rose, and flashbulbs created a strobe effect as we approached the aircraft and checked it over nose to tail. We were given an assortment of accessories to care for our new baby: for adding oil, to take care of the de-ice boots, to attend to the comfort of our passengers, and of course all the required documents. Later in the day we took an "acceptance flight," a departure from the Knoxville airport and wide pattern to an approach on the same runway. Afterwards we lunched as we signed the stacks of paperwork - dozens of forms, just like buying a house. The Cirrus delivery team had heard that it was my birthday, and so provided a cute cake for our dessert.

The next day Steve and I started our trip back home to KMEV in Nevada. Steve let me fly left-seat all the way back home. Our first leg was made more exciting by some weather on the climb-out, but once we reached our cruising altitude of FL300, all was clear to our next stop at KTUL (Tulsa, OK). Following that, we stopped at KPUB (Pueblo, CO) before our final leg back into Minden, NV (KMEV). As we approached, we realized that a number of Steve's airport buddies had gathered to see his arrival. They encouraged him to do a high-speed pass to "clear the runway of coyotes." Steve was happy to oblige, then let me do the landing. We taxied to our hangar, which our friends had decorated to celebrate. We shared the rest of the birthday cake with them and enjoyed several champagne toasts. It really warmed our hearts to have our friends gather to celebrate with us.

In the six weeks since delivery, we've already put over 50 flight hours on Morgan, with many more flights already scheduled on our calendars. We just love our new magic carpet!



Chapter Events



Girl Scout Aviation Badge

In October, members of the SCV99s met at Palo Alto Airport to help Girl Scout Troop 2165 complete their aviation badge. The session began in the conference room with introductions. Each girl received a booklet to record what she learned.

The group then headed out for a guided airport tour followed by a series of hands-on aviation activities.

They explored weather and wind, learned about the Civil Air Patrol, practiced route planning with maps, and examined a Cessna during a preflight check. They also got the chance to chat with a Palo Alto Airport Tower Controller.

The event wrapped up with everyone back in the conference room for final questions and reflections.



December Fly-in 12/13

by Pat Gregory

On Saturday, December 13, the weather finally cleared enough to fly to Paso Robles. Our plan was Harris Ranch, but the tule fog in the Central Valley lingered on for several weeks, making it impossible and impassible to get to Harris Ranch. Two planes caravanned from Santa Clara Valley to PRB and dined at the One-Niner Diner on the airport. Louise and Miguel arrived in 5KP while Pat, Laura, and Gaby flew down in 8MK. We were neck and neck all the way along with a host of other planes that were also confined to that stretch of California, also unable to go inland. Laura and Pat had a wonderful time getting to know one of our newest members - not really even a member yet. We are very excited to see Gaby eager to move into student mode and join our chapter. And she had as delightful a time riding with us as we had getting to know her. I love how this year has brought so many more women into aviation. They are our future and I think we are in very good hands.

Remember that the January business meeting is when we plan our monthly flights for 2026. Please attend on Thursday, January 15, and bring your ideas for new and exciting ways to get together in the air or on the ground. On Saturday, January 10, we will host our annual Whale Watch fly-in along the Monterey coast. More information will come very early in January regarding where to meet for lunch. The restaurant at WVI has new ownership - not sure right now if it's going to be open for us. Stay tuned! Please keep us all informed of the fun flying you are all doing and any progress toward new ratings by sending your stories and photos to Laura for the Windsock.

Happy Holidays and Safe Flying this holiday season.

SCV Annual Holiday Party

by Pat Gregory



I can't believe another year has gone by already - time is surely marching to a faster beat these days. Yet, we still managed to have a wonderful banquet with good food, live music and time to meet and greet many new women pilots as well as catch up with long-time friends. About 35 of us met at the Three Flames Restaurant on Meridian in San Jose. We had a lovely private room, the usual very good food, and were regaled with lively holiday music from Jessica Ohlmann (one of Pat's fiddle friends).

It was heart-warming to see so many new students and recent pilots and Maki's two delightful boys. Our usual gift exchange event was fun for all and we collected new toys to donate to needy local children. Here's hoping more of you can make it to this favorite event next year. Happy Holidays and Mele Kalikimaka to all.



SCV Annual Holiday Party



Member Stories

From Sal

In November, I took Josh, a new controller from KPAO, up for an IFR flight to Livermore. It was a fun and educational flight for both of us. Not surprisingly, it's pretty awesome having a controller in the right seat.



On Saturday, December 6, Nancy Sliwa hosted the Phoenix 99s Christmas lunch at her home in Fountain Hills, AZ. We all enjoyed delicious food and great conversation. We also collected goodies for 12 Treats for Towers bags to distribute to all the area airport control towers.

VFR into IMC

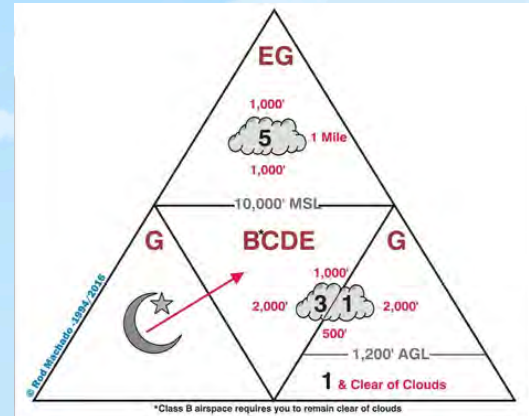
by Louise Mateos

Safety Tips

VFR into IMC

We like acronyms. To refresh your memory, VFR = Visual Flight Rules and IMC = Instrument Meteorological Conditions. In your primary training, you learn that VFR flight is possible when conditions at your airport include flight visibility of at least 5 statute miles and ceiling of at least 3000 feet above ground (or 3 sm and ceiling 1000 ft AGL for marginal VFR). In addition, you must adhere to cloud clearance requirements which have some variation, but are generally 500 ft below, 1000 ft above, and 2000 ft horizontal, unless in uncontrolled airspace during the day or in class B, in which case you just need to remain clear of clouds.

At this time of year, when we don't have a storm blowing through, we often find low clouds and/or fog early in the morning at local Bay Area airports. And then, as the day progresses, the fog may burn off and leave hazy reduced visibility conditions with scattered clouds in the area. So, unless you are instrument rated (and I hope proficient), you may find yourself anxiously awaiting the next hour's ATIS report in anticipation of the conditions improving to at least marginal VFR.



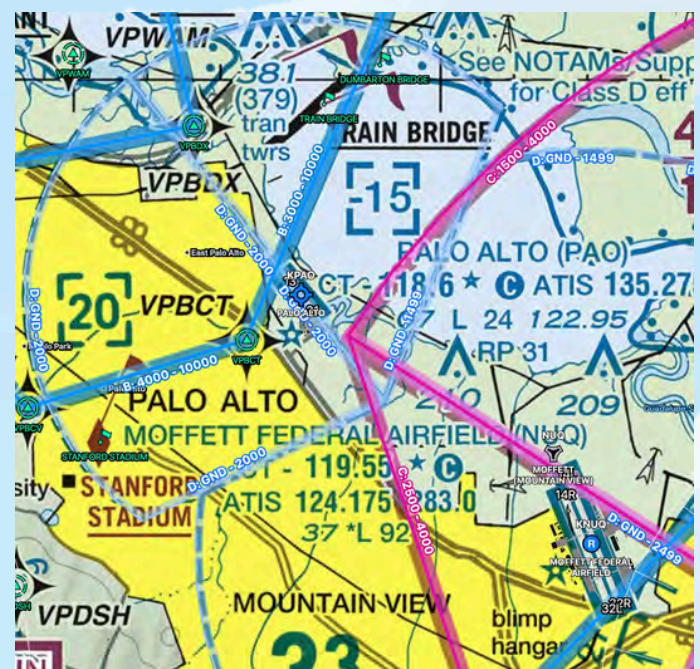
Let's consider the risks associated with jumping in an aircraft as soon as the fog lifts and you can start to see some sunlight.

Dealing with Reduced Visibility



are roughly 4 sm from Moffett Field. If you can barely see the big hangar through the haze, that's a sign your flight visibility is reduced to marginal. If you are on final at the amphitheater and barely able to see the runway, your flight visibility is nearing VFR limits. Now imagine flying into an unfamiliar area where the landmarks are just points on map and not part of your visual memory. When the visibility is reduced, our risk increases.

We get used to clear skies and visibility greater than 10 sm — in fact, actual flight visibility might be good enough to see the sierra foothills from Mt Diablo or vice versa, almost 100 distant. So what does reduced visibility look like? Imagine flying in the right downwind for runway 31 at Palo Alto, you



VFR into IMC, continued

Risk Assessment

Flying VFR into IMC remains one of the most persistent and deadly hazards in general aviation. Pilots of all experience levels are susceptible, but newer pilots may be more prone due to limited exposure to marginal



conditions and less refined weather evaluation skills. Experienced pilots, on the other hand, may fall victim to complacency or overconfidence. Spatial disorientation, a rapid loss of situational awareness, and controlled flight into terrain (CFIT) or obstacles are the leading threats once IMC is entered unintentionally.

VFR into IMC may occur at any time, often due to deteriorating weather, poor preflight planning, or pressing forward into marginal conditions. You might think that

conditions will improve ahead, or you might not recognize gradual visibility reduction. At what point does flight through increasing haze become flight into a cloud where you can no longer see the ground? Once inside IMC, non-instrument-rated pilots have only seconds before losing reliable control references. Even instrument-rated pilots can become overloaded without proper preparation or equipment.



Mitigations

Preflight Planning

Thorough weather analysis is the strongest defense. Pilots should review METARs, TAFs, graphical forecasts, winds aloft, NOTAMs, and radar imagery. Alternate plans—both enroute and destination—should be established before departure. If conditions approach personal minimums, delaying, diverting, or cancelling is the safest option.

In-Flight Procedures

Pilots must continuously compare real-world conditions with forecasts. Listen to ATIS/AWOS reports from airports along your route of flight. Any unexpected reduction in visibility, rising terrain, or deteriorating ceilings should trigger an immediate reassessment. Early course reversal, altitude changes supported by ATC, or precautionary landings are effective responses. Always maintain legal VFR cloud clearances.

Situational Awareness

Stay ahead of the aircraft by monitoring escape options, noting terrain, airspace, and weather trends. Use flight following whenever available. Ensure your charts are up-to-date, and use ADS-B weather (supplemental only) and terrain awareness tools if possible.

VFR into IMC, continued

Incorporate these Procedures into your Proficiency Practice

How to Avoid VFR into IMC

Practice conservative go/no-go decision-making. Establish personal minimums for visibility, ceilings, and winds and stick to them. Use “weather checkpoints” during flight: predetermined points where the pilot evaluates conditions and is willing to turn back immediately if they worsen.

How to Respond Safely in an IMC Encounter

If inadvertent flight into IMC occurs, transition immediately to instrument references. While you had at least 3 hours practicing under the hood during your primary training, this is a skill that warrants ongoing practice as you gain experience. Maintain wings level and a constant altitude. Initiate a standard rate 180-degree turn to exit into known VFR conditions (presumably behind you). Communicate with ATC as early as possible—controllers provide vectors, radar assistance, and climb or descent instructions. If equipped, practice using an autopilot to maintain a wings-level attitude while managing workload. Take a safety pilot or CFI along with you to get some practice before you need to use these skills in the real world.



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HAPPY
NEW YEAR
2026

CHAPTER BOARD 2025-2027

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Vice-Chair Louise Mateos
Treasurer Maki Yu
Secretary Sal
Director Nancy Sliwa
Nominating Committee
 Pat Gregory
 Carol Munch

CHAPTER COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership & Student Pilots: Mary McEnroe
Windsock: Laura Del Favero
Flying Activities: Pat Gregory
Airmarking: Marcie Smith
Scholarships: Debby Cunningham
Forest of Friendship: Pat Gregory
Tech Committee/Website: Pat Gregory, Susan Tilley, Nisha, Maki Yu

CHAPTER DONATIONS

You can make a donation to the chapter to help offset costs of running the chapter. The chapter suggests an annual donation in the amount of \$15.

You now have the option to donate via Venmo (QR code below).

If you'd like to make a donation, you can pay via PayPal or by check. Make check out to SCV99s. Email Treasurer Maki Yu for PayPal instructions or mailing address: treasurer@scv99s.org.



CHAPTER CALENDAR

2026		JANUARY					
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
				1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

Chapter Meeting Thursday January 15

Our next meeting is scheduled for January 15 at the Palo Alto Airport. This is our annual fly-in planning meeting.

Whale Watch Fly-in Saturday January 10

See if you can spot some whales. Meet at noon for lunch at SNS.

Contact Pat Gregory if you will come.
plowers@pacbell.net

Upcoming SWS and International Meetings

Date	Meeting	Host/Location
January 31, 2026	2026 Winter Workshop	Host chapter: Palomar Location: Carlsbad, CA
March 27-29, 2026	2026 Spring Section Meeting	Host chapter: Coachella Valley Location: Palm Springs
July 8-12, 2026	2026 International Conference	Location: San Diego
Sept 24-27, 2026	Fall 2026 Section Meeting	Host chapter: Las Vegas



The Windsock Information and Deadlines

To our members, please send me your ideas, articles, and photos for the newsletter.

Article Due Dates:

- The Windsock is delivered bimonthly
- The due date for articles is the **last day** of even-numbered months (**Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, and Dec**)

Preferred Content Format:

- Please provide articles in Word docs or as text within an email
- Photos as picture files (not in the document or body of an email) preferred

Thank you,
Editor
Laura Del Favero
ladelfavero@gmail.com