

May/June 2024



Ninety-Nines

Inspiring Women Pilots Since 1929

**AROUND THE
WORLD IN A
GAS BALLOON**
THE LOFTY ADVENTURES
OF BARBARA FRICKE

p. 10

plus

FINDING THE WARRIOR WITHIN
PAM MELROY IS THE NASA
DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR



Ninety-Nines Magazine

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our passion for flight.

Let's Get Social    

ON THE COVER

Barbara Fricke and partner Peter Cuneo during the launch of their
gas balloon "Charlie Foxtrot" at Balloon Fiesta in Albuquerque.

- 4 Calendar
- 5 President's Message
- 6 Holding Short
- 8 Touch & Go
- 9 Careers

10 Around the World in a Gas Balloon

The Lofty Adventures of Barbara Fricke

By Rebecca Burghy, *Intermountain Chapter*

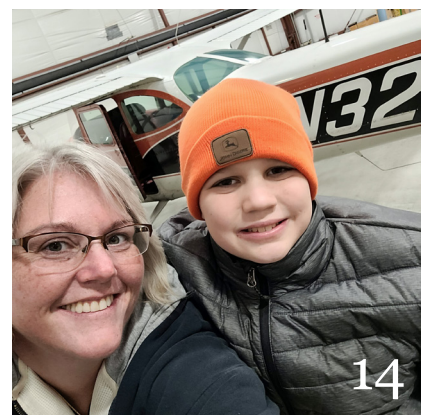
13 99s Member Pam Melroy is the NASA Deputy Administrator

By Marcia Gitelman, *Spaceport Chapter*

14 Finding the Warrior Within

By Corie Wild, *Chicago Area Chapter*

- 16 Reports
- 20 Essays
- 24 Book Reviews
- 25 Milestones
- 26 Grass Roots
- 30 Life Members
- Friends of The 99s
- New Horizons



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2024

MAY

3-5 Southwest Section Spring Meeting

Carson City, Nevada

✈ [Pat Chan, chiflys@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Pat.Chan@sbcglobal.net)

24-25 East Canada Section Annual Meeting

Goderich, Ontario, Canada

✈ [Annie Wen, annie.wen@outlook.com](mailto:Annie.Wen@outlook.com)

31 Deadline: Registration closes for 47th Air Race Classic

☞ airraceclassic.org

JUN

1 New York-New Jersey Section Spring Meeting

Long Island, New York

✈ [Frances Englund, fenglund@yahoo.com](mailto:Frances.Englund@yahoo.com)

14-16 German Section Annual General Meeting

Hildesheim, Germany

18-21 47th Air Race Classic

Carbondale, Illinois to Loveland, Colorado

☞ airraceclassic.org

JUL

3-7 Ninety-Nines International Conference and Career Expo

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

☞ **Registration and information:** 99sconference.org

15 Deadline: Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative (PPLI) Application for Mentoring Autumn Session

☞ ninety-nines.org/resources.htm
mentoring@ninety-nines.org

22-28 EAA AirVenture Oshkosh

Oshkosh, Wisconsin

23 99s Annual Aviation Appreciation Dinner

Oshkosh, Wisconsin

SEP

12-15 Northwest Section Annual Meeting

Olympia, Washington

Mount Tahoma Chapter

✈ [Theresa White, Magicmom444@hotmail.com](mailto:Theresa.White@magicmom444@hotmail.com)

27-29 South Central Section Fall Meeting

League City, Texas

Houston Chapter

✈ [LuAnn Pfeifer-Cotton, luannpfeifer@hotmail.com](mailto:LuAnn.Pfeifer-Cotton@luannpfeifer@hotmail.com)

OCT

1 Deadline: First Wings Applications

☞ Ninety-nines.org/scholarships.htm

18-19 New England Section Fall Meeting

Portsmouth, New Hampshire

New England Chapter

✈ Mary.Build@gmail.com

NOV

1-2 International Board of Directors Fall Meeting

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

✈ info@ninety-nines.org

DEC

1-9 India Section Aviation Conclave

New Delhi, India

✈ Indiasection99s@gmail.com

31 Deadline: Intent to Seek Election

✈ VirginieRollin85@gmail.com

2025

JUL

8-13 Ninety-Nines International Conference

Burlington, Vermont

MAGAZINE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

are one month prior to issue date.

JUL/AUG issue deadline: Jun 1.

Check the online calendar for the latest information.
☞ ninety-nines.org/calendar.htm

The President's Message



Robin Hadfield

President
The Ninety-Nines, Inc.
president@ninety-nines.org

Hi Members!

Welcome back to another edition of our Ninety-Nines magazine! It's always a pleasure to reconnect with you all and share the latest updates from The Ninety-Nines, Inc.

The past few months have been a whirlwind of activity for The Ninety-Nines as we navigated through one of our busiest times of the year. It begins with our Spring International Board of Directors meeting, followed swiftly by the Women in Aviation Conference in Orlando, Florida, and SUN 'n FUN in Lakeland, Florida. These

events serve as a crucial platform to showcase our mission, connect with women pilots who don't know about us yet, and highlight our organization to aviation industry leaders. None of this would be possible without the dedication and commitment of our volunteers.

I extend my deepest gratitude to every member who stepped forward to represent The Ninety-Nines at our booths, organized the Trailblazers in Aviation luncheon, and volunteers every day in our International, Section, and Chapter committees and within your Chapter events. Your contributions have been the cornerstone of our organization's success, empowering us to make a noticeable difference in our community and beyond. Your willingness to devote your time, energy, and expertise exemplifies a profound commitment to our shared mission and values.

Every hour spent volunteering, every task undertaken, embodies the spirit of service and compassion that defines The Ninety-Nines. Your passion and enthusiasm inspire us all, urging us to continue making a positive impact through The Ninety-Nines.

On behalf of The Ninety-Nines, I thank you for your invaluable service. You are the heart and soul of our organization, and we are immensely grateful for your unwavering dedication.

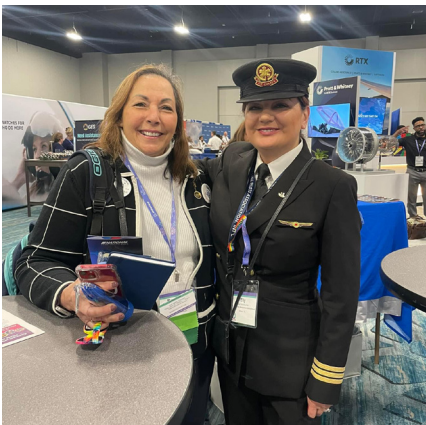
As we gear up for an eventful summer, I want to thank each of you for your continued support and dedication. Your contributions make our community vibrant and thriving.

Thank you once again for being an integral part of The Ninety-Nines.

Our team at headquarters is expanding! Joining Laura and Amy, we're excited to introduce Lacey, who will be stepping in as our new Membership Coordinator, and Nautica, our new Office Assistant. Remember to welcome them next time you drop by or call.

There are many aviation events coming up during May and June. Whether you're flying to your Section meeting or participating in the Air Race Classic, keep alert and fly safe!

Our team at headquarters is expanding! Joining Laura Ohrenberg, Martha Eaves, and Amy Stout, we're excited to introduce Lacey Bowman, who will be working with Amy as an additional Membership Coordinator, and Nautica Carter, our new Office Assistant. Remember to welcome them next time you drop by or call.



Holding Short

Alabama Chapter celebrates Friends and Winners

A New Friend of The Ninety-Nines



Adam Fox, Airport Director, Pryor Field (KDCU) Decatur, Alabama



Adam Fox, Alabama Chapter members Judith Burleson, Ramona Banks, and Chapter Chair Kathy Powell

In October, the Alabama Chapter hosted the Fall Southeast Section Meeting, and Adam offered Pryor Field to be the host airport for the event, along with hosting our opening night event. Adam's support allowed us to save money on the event, which means the funds raised went into our Minnie Wade Memorial Scholarship instead of a venue cost.

2023 Minnie Wade Memorial Scholarship Winner



- Kathleen Powell, Chair, Alabama Chapter

Adam Fox, the Pryor Field Regional Airport (KDCU) Director, has become a member of The Friends of The Ninety-Nines, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that aims to support The Ninety-Nines. Friends of The Ninety-Nines are individuals, businesses, and organizations of all backgrounds and nationalities who share an enthusiasm for aviation and a desire to support The Ninety-Nines. Adam is one such individual who supports not only The Ninety-Nines, but the aviation community as a whole. Over the last two years since Adam has been in this position, the Alabama Ninety-Nines has asked for help on events numerous times, and Adam has always come through for us. Because of all the support that Adam has provided, a member of the Alabama Chapter sponsored his membership.

The Alabama Chapter is pleased to announce **Page Zuccaro** was awarded the 2023 Minnie Wade Memorial Scholarship (MWMS)!

Page will finish her Commercial Single Engine add-on, CFI, and CFII with this scholarship award. She is the current President of the Alabama Collegiate Auburn Wing. Page had the honor of interning with United Airlines this past summer and plans on continuing her goal of becoming an airline pilot.

Whirly-Girls International Scholarship Fund Exceeds \$600,000 in 2024 Scholarship Awards and Mid-Year Scholarship Offering

Whirly-Girls International, a nonprofit, educational, and charitable organization dedicated to advancing women in the helicopter aviation industry, has announced the recipients of the 2024 Whirly-Girls Scholarship Awards. The scholarships were awarded at the Whirly-Girls Annual Reception during HAI Heli-Expo in Anaheim, California. Thanks to the support of aviation leaders, 39 scholarships were bestowed upon deserving female aviators, the largest scholarship program in the helicopter industry. Among these worthy pilots, nine are also members of The Ninety-Nines:

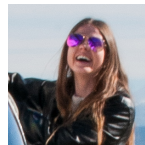
Recipients of the 2024 Whirly-Girls scholarships are:



Maggie Beseda, CAE SK-76 Initial Training for Helicopter ATP Scholarship, Dallas Chapter.



Olivia Bassett, Garmin Aviation Online Training Course Scholarship, Emerald Angels of the Gulf Coast Chapter.



Sarah Jackson, Leading Edge Flight Academy and Central Oregon Community College. Helicopter Instrument Rating Scholarship, Coyote Country Chapter.



Mariah Dugan, Oregon Aero CRM/AMRM Instructor Training Scholarship, Air Hearts-Utah Chapter.



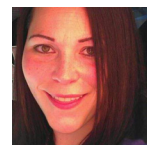
Andrea McGilvray, Oregon Aero CRM/AMRM Instructor Training Scholarship, San Antonio Chapter.



Rebecca Torres, Oregon Aero CRM/AMRM Instructor Training Scholarship, Georgia Flying Belles Chapter.



Kerry Hahne, PHI Aviation Bell 407 Scholarship, Aloha Chapter.



Leah French, Southern Utah University Career Flight Training Scholarship, Connecticut Chapter.



Olivia Anderson, Edward M. Thurn Memorial Scholarship, Australian Section Member.

Judith St Pierre: Recipient of The 2024 New Track Scholarship



We are pleased to award the 2024 New Track Scholarship to **Judith St Pierre**, Vice Chair of the Quebec Chapter.

In her words:

“At age 10, I had my first airplane ride and found my passion. I’m from a small rural town where women were rarely involved in male-dominated

work environments. I was not encouraged by my parents to pursue aviation studies but was pushed toward a traditional path despite my own desire to pursue an aviation career. I graduated high school at 17, and without the financial means to afford flight school, I attended university for a year before getting my first flight attendant job in 2017.

“In February, I accepted the position of Vice Chair, Quebec Chapter. I hope to make it an even more active and fun group to discuss everything aviation-related and create friendships that will last a lifetime.

“I’m delighted to receive the New Track Scholarship for 2024 and plan to use the funds for a float endorsement. Just as I had a feeling years ago that I should work on the other side of the cockpit door, flying seaplanes seems a natural path for me to follow. The scholarship will help me bring awareness to others about the career possibilities available to female pilots in bush flying operations.”

Note: Judith still uses her lucky pen, acquired during her flight attendant career with Air Canada Rouge.



The New Track Scholarship is possible due to generous donations from Lola Reid Allin and 99s President Robin Hadfield. Donations to this scholarship are welcome. All donations receive a tax receipt.

– Lola Reid Allin, *Education and Outreach Committee Co-Lead, First Canadian Chapter*

Pilot of the Year Scholarship Winner



Congratulations to the 2024 Pilot of the Year Scholarship recipient, San Diego Chapter member **Claudia Asmussen**.

Claudia reported that she is “honored and truly grateful I am to receive the Pilot of the Year Scholarship in

honor of Kim Olson, which will benefit my IFR Training.” We are so excited to hear about your journey to complete your Instrument Rating. Congrats, Claudia!

For more information about the San Diego Chapter’s scholarships, go to sandiego99s.com and click on the Get Support link to see the scholarships available!

– San Diego Chapter

Winner of Cessna Flight Hours



Congratulations to Manitoba 99s member **Laura Matheson**, Chapter Secretary and Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative (PPLI) graduate, on winning 20 hours of flight time in the Manitoba Chapter’s Cessna C-150 CFLUG.

Hard-Working Pilot Receives New Jersey 99s Scholarship



New Jersey Chapter Board Member Barbara Sobczyk presents the 2023 New Jersey 99s Scholarship to Sarah Crosby.

The New Jersey Chapter is very excited to announce that **Sarah Crosby** is our 2023 New Jersey Chapter Scholarship recipient! Sarah has been a very active member of our chapter. Not only has she volunteered to be our webmaster but most recently went above and beyond helping with our yearly Flyout Challenge fundraiser. Sarah is a career middle school teacher but has taken on extra jobs to help pay for her flight training. She is a waitress, works at Solberg-Hunterdon Airport (N51) on the ramp, and helps with flight school coordination. Sarah has been

able to combine her love of flying with her love for teaching. She implemented aviation as part of the curriculum at her school and has started an aviation club. Sarah plans to use the scholarship to continue training for her Instrument Rating. Her ultimate goal is to become a Certificated Flight Instructor – combining her love of teaching with her passion for flying!

– Julie Somers, *Treasurer, New Jersey Chapter*

Penny Hamilton on Colorado Authors' Hall of Fame Advisory Board



Longtime Colorado Ninety-Nine and aviation book author **Penny Rafferty Hamilton, Ph.D.**, (on left) recently joined the Colorado Authors' Hall of Fame Advisory Board at the invitation of Founder, CEO, and President Dr. Judith Briles. In 2021, Penny was inducted into this prestigious Authors' Hall of Fame with Dr. Briles presenting

Penny with her award and Laureate medal. Penny is dressed in a replica purple satin flying suit, white silk scarf, and flying goggles in homage to America's first licensed female pilot, Harriet Quimby. Penny added, "My Harriet Quimby purple satin flight suit was given to me by our beloved Emily Warner. She had it made early in her aviation career. But once she broke the flight deck open for women pilots in 1973, she wore her airline uniform. So, it's a very special gift."

Learn more at coloradoauthorshalloffame.org/phone/meet-the-board.html

Judy Cameron Received Order of Canada



Judy Cameron (center) with her youngest daughter, Kristi, and her husband, Ron.

Eastern Canada Section's very own trailblazer **Judy Cameron** recently received the Order of Canada. The Order of Canada is a Canadian state order and the second highest honor for merit in the systems of orders, decorations, and medals of Canada (second only to the Order of Merit). We are so very proud of you, Judy!

Judy Cameron has soared the skies to shatter stereotypes for women. Hailed for helping

to break gender barriers in the airline industry, she was the first female pilot hired by Air Canada, and the first Canadian woman to captain the Boeing 767 and Boeing 777. An impassioned volunteer with the Northern Lights Aero Foundation, she is a cherished mentor to women in aviation. Her trailblazing legacy continues through the Captain Judy Cameron Scholarship for women inspired to follow in her footsteps.

In Judy's own words, "I was delighted to be presented with the Order of Canada on February 22 by Governor General Mary Simon at Rideau Hall. Other honorees had outstanding accomplishments in fields such as medicine, law, and entertainment, and I felt inadequate in their company. However, I accepted this honor on behalf of all of the amazing Canadian women who defied societal norms to take to the skies."

– Zoe Adrian, *First Canadian Chapter*

NAFI Best Flight Instructor



Lin Caywood recently gained recognition from the National Association of Flight Instructors (NAFI) for her work as a Certified Flight Instructor (CFI). Lin shared her appreciation of being nominated. She remarked, "Thank you to my students

who nominated me for an award! I started teaching in mid 2021 after retiring from my mortgage banking career. To earn Best Flight Instructor for the Eastern Region of the United States is beyond my wildest dreams. I love what I do and hope to keep teaching for many more years. Next up is to earn my Multi-Engine Instructor Certification. Thank you to the instructors I had along the way that taught me how to be a good instructor myself. Onwards and upwards!"

Master Instructors Welcomes Barbara Filkins



Master Instructors is pleased to welcome Ventura County Chapter member **Barbara Filkins** of Fillmore, California, as our newest Master Aviation Educator, recognizing her commitment to teaching as well as seeking knowledge. Barbara says, "Although my career has not been

directly in aviation, aviation has been a theme and influence throughout. I learned to fly while in college, obtaining my Private Pilot Certificate through the Bates Aeronautics Program, a program that leveraged aviation to help shape future scientists and engineers as leaders in their field." Upon graduation, she moved to upstate New York and completed Instrument and Commercial Ratings. Back in California by 1978, she became a CFII and taught for the Bates Program until 2000. "Giving back to the program that gave me so much," Barbara recalls.

After a 14-year hiatus, she and her husband began building their Velocity V-Twin, Barbara obtained her Multi-Engine Rating and Multi-Engine Instructor, and they completed the Phase 1 testing on N527VT in 2017.

Barbara is now actively flight instructing, on faculty at California Aeronautical University (CAU), a FAAST Team Representative, and researching how automation and autonomy will shape the future of pilot training.

The Master Instructor Continuing Education Program (MICEP) was conceived in 1995 by flight instructors Sandy and JoAnn Hill of Longmont, Colorado. After two years of research, development, and vetting, the program was formally introduced by then-FAA Administrator Barry Valentine.

MICEP has grown from humble beginnings to an internationally-recognized and highly-coveted family of credentials appealing to a cross-section of aviation educators. As a measure of the program's significance, for example, former FAA Administrator Marion Blakey observed in 2007, "The Master Instructor accreditation singles out the best that the right seat has to offer." In 2008, acting FAA Administrator Robert Sturgell stated, "Kudos to Sandy and JoAnn Hill for their dedication to the Master Instructor Program and the Masters themselves."



Inspiration

By Donna Miller

It's always a joy to meet up with my friends at Women In Aviation. I love that The Ninety-Nines has such a strong presence, and our booth is always a great place to gather and catch up. I find so much inspiration from amazing women who are doing things beyond what a Private Pilot Certificate requires.

Who didn't get teary eyed when Nicole Battjes (Aloha Chapter) told how, at the tender age of 25, she started her own helicopter business in Hawaii? When COVID-19 shut down her entire operation, she used the time to rebrand her business as Rainbow Helicopters and retrofit her office to accommodate her growing family of baby boys. When Hawaii reopened, she was more ready than ever. And when the catastrophic fires engulfed Lahaina, she sprang into action using her fleet to support new mothers; filling her fleet with diapers, formula, and wipes. I was in awe (and tears).

Who didn't love the story of Dr. Sian "Leo" Proctor, who is a geoscience professor at a community college and a private pilot? She used her creative outlet to write a poem that won her a spot on the SpaceX Inspiration4 mission. She used that experience to write a book called *Space2inspire: The Art of Inspiration* and is the founder of The Proctor Foundation for Art and Science. Wow!

But let me tell you where I really found inspiration; Liz Booker (Florida Goldcoast Chapter) and the authors who participated in

her Literary Aviatrix Authors Connect Reading and Reception. We all have an aviation journey, but these women have gone beyond just having a great story to tell. They've been disciplined and skilled enough to write them down and brave enough to share them with the world. Liz puts in countless hours to make sure their stories are heard.

I'm also inspired by Amanda Barker. Three years ago, Liz, Aileen Watkins (Treasure Coast Chapter), and I attended the local chapter meeting at SUN 'n FUN in Florida. A young, single mom stood just outside the door, having wandered toward the house, not knowing the first thing about this amazing sisterhood. We invited her in and embraced her tenacity.

This year at the conference, Liz, Aileen, and I found ourselves sharing a house and Amanda appeared, seemingly out of nowhere. She is now working toward her Commercial Certificate and is the Chair of the Florida Suncoast Chapter. She gives back and is involved in several aviation activities. That inspires me.

There was another woman at the conference (who would rather not be named) who's just been dealt a difficult hand. She's held flying jobs, but not being a U.S. citizen and struggling with the fallout of geopolitics, she has been shut out from many opportunities, or the rug has been pulled out from under her when employers learn of her precarious passport/visa status. She is determined, and I have no doubt that there is something better for her in her future.

Stop and look around at the amazing stories that are unfolding around you and allow yourself to be inspired. And as I've said before, there are people who look at you and are inspired. 🌈



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By celebrating the industry and encouraging youth to pursue aviation career paths, AviNation magazine works to shape the future of the industry by cultivating the next generation of aviation leaders, business owners, service personnel, mechanics and pilots.

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Around the World in a Gas Balloon

The Lofty Adventures of Barbara Fricke

By Rebecca Burghy, *Intermountain Chapter*



Peter Cuneo and Barbara Fricke enjoy the view from the basket of their gas balloon. "Being in the balloon is magical," Barbara muses.

Pilots are often asked where their interest in aviation began and many mention flying with a friend or grandparent or seeing a unique airplane at the airport. For Barbara Fricke, it was the colorful balloon in the epic adventure movie *Around the World in 80 Days* that caught her youthful imagination, creating an enduring fascination that would one day lead to her own trips around the world in a balloon.

Always adventurous, young Barbara enjoyed the annual family driving trips around the Midwest, seeing new things and new

places. She still thrives on being outdoors in the fresh air, whether walking, hiking, biking, skiing, or flying. "Being in the balloon is magical, like sitting in a chair on the porch at 12,000 feet, watching the countryside roll slowly by," Barbara muses. "I like being up there."

A longtime 99, Barbara was previously Chair of the Albuquerque Chapter and now serves as Vice Chair of the Rio Grande Norte Chapter. A tireless supporter of aviation education for young people, Barbara often dresses as Amelia Earhart to make aviation history come alive.

“There is no airspeed as most pilots know it. The balloon moves with the air, as part of the air.”

Barbara took her first hot air balloon ride in 1979 and began crewing for a local balloonist, literally learning the ropes. She decided flying was next, earning her Lighter-Than-Air (LTA) (with airborne heater) rating in 1989. Barbara purchased a balloon, truck, and trailer with flying partner and later husband Peter Cuneo, who earned his LTA rating a few months later.

Wide open spaces and sunny blue skies made Albuquerque, New Mexico, the hub of all things ballooning in the 1980s, '90s, and beyond. Barbara and Peter, happily immersed, applied their energies and talents to the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta (AIBF), the Albuquerque Aerostat Ascension Association (AAAA), and the Balloon Federation of America (BFA). Over the years, the pair has taken a variety of volunteer and leadership roles in each organization.

Barbara served a term as AAAA's President, and repeatedly chaired their education committee. She organized and taught innumerable ground schools, safety seminars, and the Fiesta safety seminars, receiving the AAAA's Bob Ruppenthal Education Award in 1994 and the Sid Cutter Award for Outstanding Contributions to Ballooning in 2000. A former Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE) for balloons, Barbara continues to teach ground school, and sits on the AIBF Board of Directors.

Intrigued with the expanded capabilities of gas ballooning, Peter took further training to remove the airborne heater limitation from his LTA rating in 1995, enabling him to fly gas balloons. He trained Barbara in 1996, completing the requirements of two required two-hour flights and one ascent to 5,000 feet AGL. Barbara remembers, “Since those flights, I always wanted to fly long durations. I like being up there and not knowing exactly where I will land. A general idea perhaps, but not specific like an airport.”

FACTOIDS:

Barbara holds a Private Pilot Single-Engine Land Certificate, earned in 2005 after her retirement from the University of New Mexico. She's accumulated over 300 hours of fixed wing time, while the bulk of her flight hours were earned the slow way – by balloon.

Barbara and Peter have three balloons: Hydrogen gas balloon (N505HY) and two hot air balloons called “Roadrunner” and “Sandia Sunrise.”

Peter and Barbara have tried their hand at balloon construction, building the gondola of “Foxtrot Charlie” and three hot air balloon envelopes, plus a small hopper balloon.



Barbara is all smiles as she enjoys viewing the world from her gas balloon. She remarks, “I like being up there and not knowing exactly where I will land.”

1997 marked the beginning of their long-distance gas ballooning adventures, competing around the world, and chalking up an impressive roster of successful races. Peter and Barbara have won the America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race four times and have competed in nine Coupe Aeronautique Gordon Bennett races, with third place being their best result to date.

Barbara recalls with a laugh, “After that first win in 2001, we found ourselves more competitive than I expected, but it has been fun. Gas balloon pilots are competitive in the air and good friends on the ground, something I really appreciate.”


The 2023 Gordon Bennett launched from Balloon Fiesta Park in Albuquerque, a field of 16 balloons from nine countries. “Our hydrogen gas balloon is N505HY and we try to have everything packed and ready one week ahead of the race. We then have enough time to get adequate rest, keep a close eye on weather, and prepare ourselves mentally and physically for three days of camping in the sky,” says Barbara. “Don't forget your long johns or the Cheez-Its!”

The race progressed well, with their ground support team providing weather updates and strategic advice, while keeping an eye on the other competitors. Based on their position and reserves, after three nights, 66 hours, and 10 minutes in the air, they landed in Troy, Alabama, (1210 miles from the start) resulting in a fifth place finish.

“The balloon can only go up and down. I just hope the wind will take me where I want to go.”

A quick dash to the local post office followed their arrival in Troy, continuing the tradition of balloon airmail. A small batch of postcards rode along on the flight, ready to be sent from the landing destination to family and friends.

Barbara notes that balloonists always receive a warm welcome from the communities they descend upon, even if they don't speak the same language. She recalls a race in Europe, “Nearing the end of the race, our flight path took us into Poland, and the moment we crossed the border, the satellite phones shut off. Our service stopped there. Upon landing, we had no way to contact our ground crew for pickup,” Barbara recalls. “Some local people came to us, wondering who we were. Fortunately, we had been given a sheet explaining the race event in several different languages, so they understood and kindly called our crew. Since it would take some time to drive to our location, we turned the basket against the weather, and huddled out of the worst of the rain coming down. A short time later, the locals were back with hot food and umbrellas.” Barbara says with a warm smile, “We found incredible kindness and helpful people everywhere we traveled.”

She's looking forward to returning to Europe in September for the 67th Coupe Aeronautique Gordon Bennett race. “After nine races, we thought about not going, but we have a lot of wonderful friends there. And I really want to make our flight record an even 10 races,” says Barbara with a competitive gleam in her eye. 

BARBARA FRICKE'S & PETER CUNEO'S GAS BALLOON RACING TEAM ACHIEVEMENTS:

America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race

– Albuquerque, New Mexico:

Winner: 2001, 2010, 2013, 2016
(only team with four wins)

Second Place: 2003, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2021

Third Place: 2012, 2014, 2017

Coupe Aeronautique Gordon Bennett

– World Championship
of Long-Distance Ballooning:

2004 – From Thionville, France

2006 – From Waasmunster, Belgium

2008 – From Albuquerque, New Mexico
(third place)

2009 – From Geneva, Switzerland

2011 – From Gap-Tallard, France

2012 – From Ebnat-Kappel, Switzerland

2016 – From Gladbeck, Germany
(fourth place)

2017 – From Fribourg, Switzerland

2023 – From Albuquerque, New Mexico
(fifth place)



Barbara, in helmet, after landing in Troy Alabama. The balloon still contains a bubble of gas.



99S MEMBER PAM MELROY *is the NASA Deputy Administrator*

By Marcia Gitelman, *Spaceport Chapter*

Pam Melroy was always a woman with a sense of mission. One time, during a visit to my home in Florida, just prior to a Shuttle launch, Pam Melroy’s mother said to me, “Astronaut! I never dreamed that she would become an astronaut.”

Pam went to high school in Rochester, New York. She decided that she would like to attend Wellesley College in Massachusetts. Although her father was ambivalent about the steep tuition, Pam, a problem solver, applied for and obtained an Air Force ROTC scholarship. She graduated with a degree in physics and astronomy. After graduation, as an Air Force officer she attended test pilot school. As a co-pilot aircraft commander, instructor pilot, and test pilot, she logged more than 6,000 flight hours in more than 50 different aircraft before retiring from the Air Force. She was selected as an astronaut candidate in December 1994, and served in several positions related to the space shuttle program. She was on three assembly missions for the International Space Station and in this capacity, she became one of only two women to ever command a space shuttle.

After retiring from the Air Force and NASA, Pam held leadership positions in several aerospace-related entities including the FAA and as an advisor to the Australian Space Agency. On

June 21, 2021, Pam was sworn in as the NASA Deputy Administrator, after approval by Congress. In this position, she carries out responsibilities designated by the NASA administrator. This includes all functions of the administrator should they be unable to perform in their leadership position. She is also responsible for laying out NASA’s vision and she represents NASA at the Executive Office of the President, Congress, and other appropriate organizations.

Recently, NASA held a tech demo, streaming the first video from deep space via laser. It featured a cat named Taters. This groundbreaking achievement was sent from 19 million miles away. Pam was quoted, “This accomplishment underscores our commitment to advancing optical communications as a key element to meeting our future data transmission needs.”

Pam has evaluated several NASA projects which advance STEM education for children. On September 25, 2021, NASA released its first digital, interactive graphic novel in celebration of National Comic Book Day, *First Woman: NASA’s Promise for Humanity*. (https://youtu.be/9s_GGDczAcg). “The story of Callie captures how passion, dedication and perseverance allow us to turn our dreams into reality. Callie, much like

myself, grew her skills, seized learning opportunities, and overcame challenges to become a NASA astronaut.”

Pam joined the Antelope Valley 99s in 1989. Antelope Valley is near Edwards Air Force Base in California. She remains a current member of The 99s.

Her story is an inspiration for all of us. 



Source: <https://www.nasa.gov/people/nasa-deputy-administrator-pam-melroy/>



Finding the Warrior Within

By Corie Wild, *Chicago Area Chapter*

I've never had illusions of grandeur in my life, but I've also never expected to soar through the sky the way I am now. I'm Corie Wild, 47, divorced, proud mother of an 11-year-old. My story begins at 17 when I was diagnosed with Crohn's disease. I know, a lot of people suffer from it, but mine is on the severe end of the spectrum and doctors could only medicate to control it for short periods of time. After several resections and installations of an Ileostomy in 2017, I finally made the decision to make it permanent in February of 2020. Right as the world shut down for COVID-19, I was inpatient at University of Chicago Hospital and underwent a procedure that consisted of 13 hours under anesthesia, two surgeries, two surgical teams –

and none of this had been executed before at that hospital, to my knowledge – followed by a guaranteed 14 days of in-hospital care. The surgery was on Wednesday because that was when the robot was used in the operating room. By Saturday, the lead surgeon came for a visit and announced, "You aren't using the skilled nursing care." I replied, "I know, I don't need the help, I feel fine." With that, he allowed that I could go home if I'd like. I contemplated it momentarily and thought that sounded like a good idea, but with a two-hour ride home through Chicago traffic, I would need some hefty pain medication for the trip. He agreed and made it possible. With that, I went home for an eight-week recovery that went relatively smoothly.

You have a lot of time to kill in recovery, and there is only so much TV I can tolerate, so I decided to join Instagram. Instagram focuses mostly on photos, and you can follow those subjects that interest you, as well as people you know or celebrities you enjoy. Shortly after joining, I received several messages in my inbox from people that would like to chat. One in particular caught my eye. He was a very handsome man, obviously much younger than me, but seemed interesting enough. Immediately I thought, "Why would this guy contact me since we have nothing in common?" He asked me about myself, so I told him the truth, "Okay, I'm 44, been married for 18 years, and have an eight-year-old son. Is this conversation over?" His response was quick, "No, I'm interested." Let me say, while this made me smile, it was laughable to me because there is no way (if I was actually talking with the man in the picture) that he would ever be interested in me, and I was completely honest about my life situation knowing this. I'm an educated woman, so when he told me he was "35, single, and a first officer with Delta based out of Miami," (Miami wasn't

Top left: Corie immediately following her first solo with an appropriate shirt for the occasion. | Bottom left: Corie shown with the Piper Warrior she enjoyed flying the most. | Right: Corie and Deb Meznarsic prep lunch after hosting the Chicago Area Chapter's February meeting that took place at De Kalb Taylor Municipal Airport (KDKB). The chapter learned about drone production that took place in DeKalb, Illinois, during WWII (notice fuselage in the background).

a base for Delta) I knew he was full of it, but also thought, “well this could be fun!” For the next three months, I tried to trip him up. What I remembered about being single was that any potential girlfriend would be interested in their beau’s occupation, so I asked questions. A lot of questions! Along the way, I shared with him the deterioration of my marriage, and he gave me ideas to try to help reconnect with my husband. We developed a nice friendship, aside from the fact I knew he was lying about his identity. As time progressed, the questions got more challenging, down to the specifics of flying an Airbus A320, certifications, and the process of becoming a pilot.

I became interested in the aviation industry and researched quite a bit; not just information to ask my would-be scammer, but also because I was quickly realizing that, ironically, the very surgery from which I was recovering was also the answer to many roadblocks of hindered silent dreams.

My road to that surgery was paved in constant pain: A decade of prescription narcotics for survival day-to-day and relying on anti-depressants so I could function in normal life. While I wasn’t depressed, they aided in quality of sleep to help me feel more rested and allowed me to function normally. I learned to cook because I couldn’t eat processed food. Unfortunately, I was good at it, and because of the physical limitations of Crohn’s disease, I weighed in at 359 pounds. I was killing myself slowly. The 13-hour surgery not only saved my life but gave me a chance at having one. My internet scammer helped me realize what could be possible. As I researched aviation, I learned that while there really isn’t a weight limit to become a pilot (some schools do have limits), there is a high standard of health. That day in February, the surgical team took away my pain. They removed the need for narcotics. With no pain, there was no reason to be a couch potato, so I began to exercise. With the higher level of endorphins from the exercise, I was able to wean myself from antidepressants.

Was I seriously considering becoming a pilot? Could I do it? Would I pass the medical exam? Am I too old to learn how to fly? There are no bad days when you have planes around to look at and people traveling to faraway destinations; for me, it is a dream. It’s a dream that I was beginning to believe could come true. I recall peering into every cockpit of every plane I’ve ever flown in and looking at all the switches, gauges, buttons, and lights, wondering and hoping to learn what each and every one did. I was a broadcasting student in college so the Christmas tree effect was always in full force each and every time, whether entering a cockpit or sound studio.

I finally did find the real Instagram page of the person whose face was in the photos. I took a screenshot and sent it to my scammer, questioning him, “Now that you’ve introduced me to Yiannis, who is Greek, by the way, tell me who you are.” His apology was profuse and immediate and based on his location, I already knew his reasoning on why he did what he did. I told him he was a terrible scammer. His reply, “Why say such things?” “Because you never asked me for anything,” I replied. He told me that to be honest, he was enjoying the conversation. I admitted, I was too. He introduced himself, a name which I am unable to pronounce, but said I can call him Henry. He is 21 and lives in Abuja, Nigeria. I can now call him my friend and am proud to do so. For his 22nd birthday, I sent him a Northern Illinois University football team jersey and believe he is one of the only gentlemen in Nigeria that represents our Huskies.

Since then, the tables have turned quite a bit. The conversations are far more interesting because I feel a part of his family, even having met his mom via video chat. I began taking flight lessons as I pursued my FAA Medical Certificate and discovered I have a profound love of aviation. I’m interested in all of it; the planes, helicopters, aerobatics, engines, propellers, maneuvers, and even though it is unnecessary at this point in my training, Skew-T Charts. You name it, if it is aviation I’m interested and learning even now, at 47! Now when I tell Henry of my adventures, he asks me the aviation questions, and I’m the one with the answers, whereas he has never seen the beauty of our planet from the sky. I send him pictures when I have them of Chicagoland from the air, so he can have just a taste of what he beautifully, unknowingly sold to me.

Achieving my medical has been an adventure all on its own. Being free of FAA-banned medications is, of course, mandatory, but also maintaining a consistent self-care regime to be able to stay healthy is a massive responsibility and priority for me. The requirements for a person like me, with the medical history the length of a multi-volume epitaph, are phenomenal. With patience, persistence, and a good attitude, I was awarded my Class 3 medical clearance and was allowed to fly solo. It’s a special issuance, and I ridded the planet of a whole forest of trees with the number of medical documents the FAA requested, four and a half reams of paper printed two per page! With a few setbacks along the way and several different instructors, I’m now on the precipice of my check ride and while I’m frightened, I’m excited for the opportunities it will afford me to explore a world I missed out on for most of my life. I was too sick to live and have been given a second chance inspired by Henry, my very own internet scammer.

Moral for this saga: Everyone and every circumstance has a reason to be in your life at the time they or it arrives, but it’s your free will to accept or deny the challenge presented. I accepted and haven’t looked back. I’ve learned the only limitations we have in this lifetime are the limitations imposed upon us by ourselves. I wonder what I’ll achieve tomorrow. What will you achieve? 🌊



Corie with her son Jack in front of the Cessna 172 she currently flies out of Schaumburg Regional Airport (O6C).



AMELIA EARHART BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM FAMILY DINNER

This summer is the second annual Family Dinner at the Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum! This event will take place on July 18, 2024, and several of Amelia's descendants will join museum staff in welcoming ticketholders to this exclusive event. From 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. that evening, there will be a cocktail hour on the grounds of the museum where 20 guests will have the opportunity to mingle and have drinks while talking with Amelia's family. Following the cocktail hour, six exclusive guests will enjoy a catered dinner in the museum's formal dining room.

While Amelia Earhart had no biological children, her younger sister Muriel did. Muriel had a daughter, Amy, and a son, David, with her husband, Albert Morrissey. and Muriel's grandchildren are excited to share stories of their parents and grandmother once again, all of whom knew Amelia Earhart.

These special stories are not found in the history books – this is your chance to learn about the woman behind the legendary aviation career!

Last year, Amelia's grandnephews brought their family Bible that had original photos of Amelia's extended family, alongside the recordings of the births, deaths, and marriages of the family stretching back for generations. Join the family and museum staff this year to learn even more about Amelia Earhart's familial history. Executive Director Heather Roesch is "beyond excited to, once again, spend the evening with Amelia's family at their familial home. Last year it was wonderful to hear the stories of their lives and of Amelia and Muriel."

The event will take place at the Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum at 223 N. Terrace St., Atchison, Kansas. Proceeds of the event will go towards the preservation and renovation of the house. Guests will have the option of being included on the museum's donor board.

Cocktail Hour tickets are \$100/person.

Dinner tickets are \$5,000/person and \$9,500/two, which includes the cocktail hour and a behind the scenes white glove tour of the museum.

Reserve your spot soon, space is limited and spots are filling up quickly!

Questions or to reserve your spot email director@ameliaearhartmuseum.org, call (913) 367-4217, or scan the QR code >>>



– Mika Schrader, Assistant Director, AEBM

Save the Date!

The 99s Annual Aviation Appreciation Dinner at EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh will be held Tuesday July 23, 2024 at 6pm La Sure's Banquet Hall 3125 S Washburn St. Oshkosh, WI 54904

Adrian Eichhorn
"Around the World & Over the Pole – Risk Management"

Tales from the cockpit as this retired airline pilot flies his 62-year-old restored Beechcraft Bonanza solo around the World and over the North Pole. In 2016, Adrian flew a challenging 24,000-nautical-mile flight around the World and in 2021 he completed an epic nonstop 21-hour flight from Reykjavik, Iceland, across the North Pole to Fairbanks, Alaska. Adrian will give you a glimpse of parts of the world that most people may never get to see, through amazing pictures and videos. He will also talk about the challenges he faced with preparing for and completing these flights.

Wings Credit

Register after June 1, 2024 at: www.99sOshkoshdinner.com
Email: 99sOshkoshdinner@ninety-nines.org

Ninety-Nines
Inspiring Women Pilots Since 1929

NINETY-NINES INDIA AVIATION CONCLAVE 2024

December 1-9, New Delhi, India

The India Section is pleased to invite you to an exciting event this December 1-9, 2024.

Registrations are now open!

Be inspired by the classic sights of the Taj Mahal, the beautiful pink city of Jaipur, and historical Delhi. You'll get to experience India from its rural areas to its cultural hubs as well as enjoy world-class hospitality of staying at the iconic Taj Mahal Hotel.

We'll be staying three nights in New Delhi (December 1-3), one night each in Agra (December 4, Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri) and Bharatpur (December 5, Keoladeo Bird Sanctuary), two nights in Jaipur (December 6-7, Amber Palace, Digg Palace, Abhaneri Stepwell, Hawa Mahal) and then the last night in Delhi (December 8, Hotel Andaz).

Our Conclave Day (in New Delhi on December 2 or 3) will consist of workshops, seminars, and aviation talks by internationally-renowned speakers, followed by a gala dinner. There will be great sightseeing, delectable cuisines, exploring a nature reserve, historical monuments as well as unlimited shopping bargains! Not to forget, musical shows and a farewell night, too.

Arrival and Departure city: New Delhi, India

Plan to arrive on December 1 (or November 30 if your flight arrives in the evening). The departure flight should be on December 9.

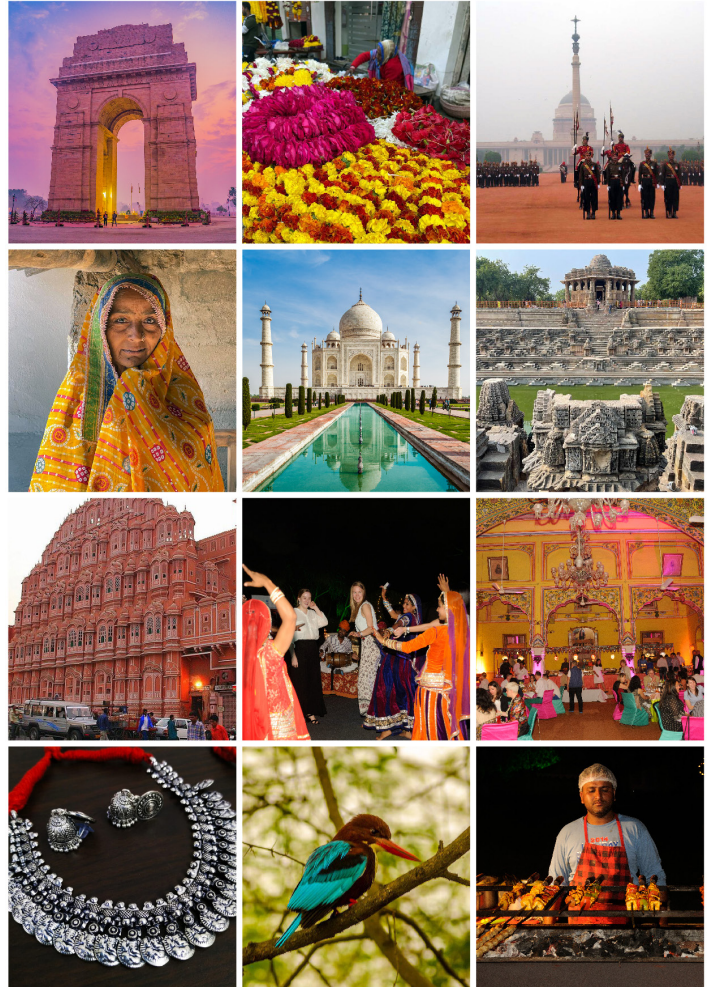
(For early arrivals we can suggest an extra night at a conveniently located hotel near the airport).

Our travel partners are a friendly bunch of professional individuals who will look after all our travel within India, hotel stays, and sightseeing. Arrangements will be made to pick you up and drop you to the airport if your arrival dates are on November 30 or December 1 and departure on December 9. Arrival prior to December 1 and departure post December 9 will incur an additional cost.

The approximate cost for the trip will be around \$1,900 USD per person on twin sharing basis. A single supplement will cost approximately \$1,000 more than twin sharing, that is \$2,900 total. Triple sharing is not admissible in Taj New Delhi, however a price for the other cities can be worked out. This cost covers all hotel stays, most meals, all sightseeing, and entrance fees. It also includes registration for the event.

It excludes your air travel to and from India, all gratuities, alcoholic beverages, and few meals.

We already have 72 confirmations. We will have to limit the number at 105-115, so please express your interest if you haven't done so already at the earliest, and reserve your seat now.



Respond at: indiasection99s@gmail.com with the following details:

NAME
CHAPTER
SECTION
EMAIL
PHONE NUMBER
WHETHER SHARING ROOM

Please bear in mind this is a tentative plan.

Once you are registered, further updates will be communicated.

– Nivedita Bhasin, Governor, India Section,
International Director



THE NINETY-NINES

Museum of Women Pilots

MUSEUM MATCHING FUNDS CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Since opening in July 1999, the Museum of Women Pilots has occupied the second floor of The Ninety-Nines International Headquarters building. With the relocation of the headquarters to its original building next door, the museum will occupy both floors, adding over 3,000 square feet of gallery, storage, and workspace. The major expense of the project is replacing the nearly 20-year-old temperature/humidity control system (HVAC) and extending it into the new collections storage area.

An interested benefactor is funding a \$5 for \$1 matching campaign for all donations earmarked for the HVAC system. Because of your generous support, we are only \$1,389 from meeting our goal of \$15,000 to secure the full \$75,000 pledge. It's not too late to support this 25th Silver Anniversary milestone year by donating at www.museumofwomenpilots.org/donation.htm. You may also mail a check to the museum. Make sure to note it's for the HVAC. A full list of the 50-plus donors will be published once the campaign has concluded.

Museum Receives Substantial Gift

The museum recently received a gift of \$100,000 from Paula Bazar-Sandling, San Fernando Valley Chapter, on behalf of the Mary E. Bazar-Robin Foundation. The donation honors Sandling's mother, Betty, who started the foundation in 2016 and continues her legacy by supporting charitable interests in the fields of medicine and aviation.

Bazar-Robin was a founder, President, and CEO of Sensor Systems, Inc., an aviation antenna company that would evolve into a major supplier for commercial and corporate aircraft. Sandling previously stated, "My mother built an incredible business. She worked her whole life; she worked hard; and she sacrificed. When she passed away and the business was sold, we knew it was a great opportunity to spread the word about my mother and help people; we just wanted to share what she started."

As part of its expansion, the museum will relocate portions of existing exhibits and displays to the new space which will create room for new exhibits on women pilots engaged in hot air ballooning, helicopters, gliders, physically challenged pilots, and more. This gift will facilitate completion of these projects and fund other museum operation's needs.

Foundation CEO Susan Baker said, "We believe that she (Betty) would be moved by your efforts to preserve the stories of women pilots and would want to support your endeavors."

Museum Hires New Manager



Brandy M. Ball is the new MWP Manager, effective April 1. Brandy earned a B.A. in History-Museum Studies from the University of Central Oklahoma and will complete her master's degree this summer. She served as a museum and teaching assistant in the Museum Studies Department and has experience in the registration and care of objects and artifacts, planning and creating exhibits, and research. She

also taught at an Oklahoma City-area high school. She holds memberships in the Oklahoma Museums Association and the American Alliance of Museums. Brandy will spearhead the final stages of the expansion project in addition to her regular duties.

- Lisa Cotham, Chair,
Museum of Women Pilots Trust



MEET THE BYLAWS COMMITTEE

The International Bylaws/Standing Rules Committee continues to work on some old and new projects. Our committee consists of four members and our board liaison. Our current committee members include Ellen Nobles-Harris, Christina Bentley, Jeanne Fenimore, and our board liaison Leslie Prellwitz.

In addition to requests for clarification on some bylaw questions, we have finalized our work to present five proposed bylaw and standing rule amendments at our international meeting in lovely Vancouver.

We look forward to presenting them to you in July.

- Juliet Lindrooth, Chair
International Bylaws/Standing Rules Committee



FIRST QUARTER ONLINE REACH JANUARY - APRIL 2024

NINETY-NINES.ORG |   



Users: 49K
New Users: 47K

Global Stats

COUNTRY	USERS
United States	36K
Canada	3.8K
United Kingdom	793
India	580
China	458
Germany	436

Woah! Here are our top 6 places website visitors were located.

Queries

What are the most common search words for someone to find our website?

- ninety-nines
- 99s
- the 99s
- the ninety nines
- amelia earhart
- 99s aviation
- ninety-nines

Most Popular Pages

Page title	Clicks	Impressions
ninety-nines.org/	7,560	108K
/scholarships	1,350	52K
/our-history	1,210	46K
/women-aviation-article	1,030	56K
/amelia-earhart	620	310K
/find-a-chapter	600	36K

If you're a member who is a visitor of our website - you are not alone! Here are the most popular pages you visit in the main area.

Google Search Console

Total Clicks

22.9K

Total impressions

1.38M

Total impressions: the total number of times a person has seen ninety-nines.org as a search result. **Total clicks:** the total number of clicks on our website through Google.

Audience Size



-  Facebook - Page 19K followers
-  Facebook - Group 8.9K members
-  Instagram 9K followers
-  YouTube 557 subscribers



Photo by D. Brown Photography LLC

BREAKING BARRIERS: MY HISTORIC FLIGHT

By Ava Shelly,
Treasure Coast Chapter

January 21, 2024, is a date that will forever be etched in my memory as the day I dared to rewrite the rules of aviation. I'm Ava Shelly, and I'm here to share with you the amazing journey of how I, a 16-year-old girl with a dream and a passion for flight, accomplished something that had never been done before.

It all began at the crack of dawn at North Palm Beach County General Aviation Airport (F45) where I stood face to face with the Cirrus SR20, a sleek and powerful single-engine land airplane. I started flying this airplane just a few months before and needed 10 hours in this type of aircraft before I was allowed to solo. With a mixture of excitement and nerves coursing through my veins, I climbed into the cockpit and prepared to take off into the golden sky. As the engine roared to life and the wheels left the ground, I felt a surreal calmness unlike anything I had ever experienced before. Flying three solo patterns in the Cirrus SR20 was a moment of pure

exhilaration. This was a testament to the years of hard work, dedication, and unwavering determination that had brought me to this point.

I wasn't content to stop there. The winter weather was beautiful as the sun painted the sky in shades of pink and gold. I made my way to New Hibiscus Airpark (X52) in Vero Beach, Florida, where I faced the next challenge of my journey, earning my Private Pilot Certificate in a glider SGS 2-33. I started glider flight training soon after I turned 13 and soloed on my 14th birthday, the first day I was legally permitted. I'd been prepping for this day for a long time, and I kind of knew what to expect. The hour-long oral exam with the Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE) and the three check ride flights were daunting tasks, but I approached them with a calm and steady confidence, knowing that I'd prepared myself for this moment. As I soared through the skies in the glider with the DPE in the backseat, harnessing the power of the wind and the thermals, I felt a sense of freedom and serenity wash over me. Passing the written and oral exams, the check rides, and earning my Private Pilot Certificate was a moment of triumph, not just for me, but for every young girl who has ever dared to dream of taking to the skies.

As the day wore on and before the sun began to dip below the horizon, I faced one final task, flying solo in a Robinson R44 helicopter. Flying helicopters wasn't really on my radar until just a few months ago when I learned that I could legally fly a helicopter solo at 16. I found the closest helicopter flight school and started taking lessons. The R44 requires 20 hours of training before I could solo, and I hit that prerequisite the day before my birthday.

The afternoon sky was brilliantly blue without a cloud in sight. I took to the air once more, the roar of the rotor blades filling me with a sense of exhilaration and freedom. Maneuvering through the air with precision and skill, I felt a profound sense of pride knowing that I was making history with every turn. The helicopter solo required three full patterns to a complete stop, just like the airplane. I made a right traffic pattern at about 500 feet AGL and hovered to a full stop each time.

As I touched down on my final solo flight, exhausted but elated, I couldn't help but reflect on the journey that had brought me to this moment. Flying solo in three different aircraft categories in a single day, all on my 16th birthday, was a feat believed to have never been accomplished by a female pilot.* This is an accomplishment that I'll carry with me for the rest of my life.

Reflecting on the whirlwind of excitement and achievement that was my 16th birthday, I'm filled with gratitude for the incredible people and opportunities that aviation has brought into my life. From soaring through the sky in a glider to mastering the art of helicopter flight, I've proven to myself and to the world that age is just a number when it comes to following your dreams.

Here's to breaking barriers, defying expectations, and daring to dream big! When you believe in yourself and your abilities, the sky truly is the limit. I'll be cheering you on while chasing my dreams and inspiring others to reach for the stars, one flight at a time. 🌩️

**As of press time Ava's record-setting documents have been submitted to Guinness World Records and are awaiting verification.*

KEYSTONE CHAPTER MEMBER ANNA MORELL IS HEADING TO NORWAY

By David F. Bradley and Anna Morell, *Keystone Chapter*



The Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) – The World Air Sports Federation, hosts a biennial world championship competition for the radio-controlled (RC) soaring sport classified as F3J (thermal duration soaring). The 2024 World Championship will be hosted in Norway, beginning in July (www.f3j.no). All are welcome to attend and cheer on the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) (www.modelaircraft.org) team representing the USA.

Of note in this year's event is the world championship debut of 17-year-old female pilot, Anna Morell (www.teamusajuniors.org).

Anna soloed in a glider at the age of 14 and earned her Private Pilot Glider Certificate at 16. She flies out of Beltzville Airport (14N), a 1900-foot grass strip in Lehighton, Pennsylvania, and loves soaring the skies of eastern Pennsylvania. Anna's been a Keystone Chapter member since August 2021.

Anna is accomplished in the art of soaring flight, which made her entrance into the RC sailplane sport nearly effortless. In fact, she became the newest member of the F3J Junior Team USA in the fall of 2023 at the Team USA selection event.

Anna's aviation journey was launched when she was 14 years old when her father, Steve, introduced her to his new hobby of gliders. They were both student pilots at the time, under

Beltzville Soaring Club instructor Randy Rickert. Beltzville is located only a few miles from her home in Palmerton, Pennsylvania. Randy taught them to be safe, competent pilots and accelerated Anna's path until she reached her goal of obtaining a Private Glider Certificate at the age of 16. At that point, she continued learning about aviation and practicing piloting as frequently as she could.

Anna is currently a high school student and is employed part time at the local Walmart. She's been inspired to consider becoming an air transport pilot; flying has grown to be a very enjoyable part of her life.

As one of the Beltzville Soaring Club instructors, I approached Anna in July 2023 to join the junior RC soaring team we were building. Although she had no experience with RC gliders, she was intrigued enough to try. Anna started the adventure with an open mind to learn the sport of RC sailplanes. Shortly after mastering control from outside the cockpit as an RC pilot, she adopted the sport with a joyous enthusiasm, and her competitive spirit of seeking perfection soon became unstoppable. So many of us have caught the flying bug in a similar manner, and we are generally thrilled to see others enter the hobby.

Our RC soaring team taught Anna the RC world and provided her with equipment to use while practicing, some of which is older than Anna! Others also helped. Steve Lucke, a member of the Eastern Soaring League (ESL) (www.flyesl.org), kindly donated one of his gliders for Anna to use. The *Aspire* is a little older than Anna. It's a sporty 3.7-meter, 80-ounce ship. Top-performing sailplanes are rated on their span and weight. Competition ships, like what the European teams fly, have typically been 4-meter span and weigh about 65 ounces.

With the *Aspire*, Anna's newly developed skills were further enhanced by an upgrade from the trainers in span and weight. Her scores have steadily improved as she continues to practice. For comparison, the latest generation ships, like a *Prestige 2PK PRO*, would be considered state-of-the-art. They launch faster and higher and offer a better glide

ratio, lower sink rate, and cost about \$3,000 each.

Each pilot brings three ships to the World Championship. ESL club member Chris Burns donated his *Xplorer* to Anna's cause to join the *Aspire* in her roster. An outreach to find or purchase her third ship is actively underway.

My employer, Thermal Solutions, Inc., has offered matching fund donations, and the AMA, a 501(c)(3) organization, has made donating easy. With Thermal Solutions Inc.'s sponsorship, the team funds have reached the baseline. This will ensure that these new world travelers can schedule flights and hotels for themselves and their chaperones. These youths will expand their worldview and participate at a level of world competition rivaling the Olympics.

The F3J RC competition at the world level is a fantastic experience, and very competitive. At the end of the day, winners are decided by seconds of flight time and inches of landing tape.

If you would like to help Anna (or her teammates) improve her performance by sponsoring the team simply visit www.teamusajuniors.org. Sponsorships will permit us to upgrade to lighter, newer, 4-meter ships.

We are all eager to follow Anna's accomplishments towards her goal of becoming a professional pilot! 



Top photo: 2024 F3J Norway Youth Team with Anna on the far left. Below, Anna (holding the *Aspire* RC glider) with like-minded RC pilots.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TO ALASKA: FLYING BEYOND THE COMFORT ZONE

By Jacqueline Burch,
San Diego Chapter

My husband Tobias and his Swiss pilot friend, Markus were planning a trip to Alaska that left me either staying home or flying by myself, since they were taking our two-seat Carbon Cub. This was just the push I needed to work up the courage to fly myself to Alaska as a low-time tailwheel pilot. Their goal was to explore Alaska; my goal was just to get to the bottom corner of the state, and then see how it went. My husband, having made the trip to Alaska two times previously as PIC, was much more experienced and that helped me a lot, but it still felt overwhelming to fly myself all that way in my almost 80-year-old, underpowered, short-ranged, and slow airplane. At the same time, what an opportunity! So, buckle up buttercup is exactly what I did and took it one leg at a time.

We left our home airport early in the morning with full tanks and headed north. Our first fuel stop was at Tehachapi, California, sitting at around 4,000 feet, which was great so we didn't have to climb as much. Markus jumped in the Taylorcraft with me for the next leg, as he wanted a better view than what the tandem Carbon Cub hammock seat offered. We made it to Columbia, California (our first overnight stop), where I experienced the beginning of a series of horrific landings and, to boot, this was with my first-ever passenger I carried since becoming a tailwheel-rated pilot. Markus, who is also a pilot but not tailwheel rated, took it like a champ and remained perfectly calm as I porpoised my poor little Taylorcraft down the runway. Of course, I had never done that before, but part of being a tailwheel pilot is saving yourself and the plane after a garbage touchdown. Around we went! The wind was a bit swirly as it was a very hot midafternoon, and on short final you must come close to terrain to meet the downhill runway. And, I was trying to land short and show off to my husband and his friend. On the second try, the landing was much more manageable, and I was able to safely get us on the ground and over to the fuel station where I filled my fuel tanks to the absolute brim, which led to the next catastrophe.

Due to my horrible landings, I took the Taylorcraft out again after the heat of the day started to subside. I knew I had full fuel as I could see my fully erect bobber stick (the mechanical fuel gauge), so I jumped in and started her up. As soon as I did, fuel started gushing straight up three to four



inches out of my header tank and down the cowl. I immediately pulled the mixture and shut down. The fuel had expanded and was under pressure, which was released by the vibrations of the engine causing the geyser. We had a hand pump and fuel canister for our trip, so Tobias and Markus took some of the fuel and put it in the fuel canister.

That could have been very bad if there had been some kind of spark, but fortunately there was not, and I learned another lesson: don't overfill your tanks on a hot day!!!

After a few laps in the pattern, I had smoothed out the landings and was ready for the next day of adventure. We had planned for a total of four legs to make it up to Orcas Island, Washington, which would set us up perfectly to cross into Canada and fly up the coast to Alaska.

With a sunrise launch, off we went again. I took off first as I was in the slower airplane and had a fuel stop in Oroville, California, since I didn't have the range that Tobias had in the Carbon Cub. Full tanks in Oroville and off to Medford, Oregon, for more of the liquid blue stuff. Snack lunch next to the fuel pump before taking Markus with me again to be my autopilot, as the Taylorcraft does not fly straight. Always a little right rudder and right aileron. With my autopilot engaged, he noticed my amp meter showing a discharge; sure enough, we were discharging electricity. We were in radio communication with my husband, and he was telling me to turn everything off including the master. I turned everything off, but the master. I was scared the engine would stop. So off we went, flying with no radios and communicating through text

messages to save the battery. We found an airport to land at to troubleshoot this issue. As we came closer to the airport, I turned the radio back on and communicated as normal and had a beautiful landing, which restored my passenger's confidence in me. I was always surprised he wanted to fly with me again in my old, slow, questionable landing, and now broken airplane.

As soon as we landed, I turned the master off, and guess what, the engine kept running! Imagine that! After cycling the master, I applied more power and sure enough, the generator was working again and we were making power! Great! We blamed the electrical issue on an overload on the auxiliary power. Everything seemed to be working just fine as we continued north.

We crested Washington and flew over the beautiful sights of the Puget Sound with the Seattle skyline off in the distance. As the sun was getting low in the sky, we finally approached our final stop of the day, Orcas Island, Washington. What a beautiful place that was. Again, I had another smash and go and had to come around again as it's not the longest runway. It was time to call the CFI who gave me the Tailwheel Endorsement to have a talk about these atrocious landings, but after over nine hours of flying that day, and all the excitement already, I was just glad to make it down safely!

Upon arrival, we fueled, prepared our paperwork and flight plans for crossing into Canada, took hot showers, ate hot meals, and slept in our tents under the wings. It's a very nice airport, complete with an icemaker.

The next morning, we had a 6:30 a.m. launch time. Again, I went first in the Taylorcraft, alone this time as we were crossing into Canada, and I would have had to declare a passenger on the paperwork I submitted. The plan was to take off, call Seattle Radio to activate my flight plan and get the border crossing transponder code, and land to clear customs at Campbell River, British Columbia. All was going according to plan until my electrical system started to discharge again right when I was about to cross the border. I called up Seattle Radio, alerted them of the issue and told them I needed to cycle my electrical system. They had no issues. I turned everything off for a minute, then on. The generator started working again, and I reestablished connection with Seattle. Yay! We continued with no additional issues onto Campbell River.

Upon landing at Campbell River, my husband was able to clear us all through customs with a single phone call to CANPASS. That was easy. We fueled up and started to look very closely at the weather, as it wasn't 100% blue skies. In fact, at our next fuel stop, at Bella Bella, British Columbia, it was reporting low IFR, but had a forecast to clear to VFR in the next few hours. We waited at Campbell River for a while to give the weather an opportunity to clear. It was clearing, but slowly. We decided to give it a try, and we took off with Bella Bella still reporting IFR. It was about a three-hour flight that was mostly cloud covered. We were either going to make it, have to turn around halfway (as I only have a four-hour range), or divert to the only other airport in the vicinity, Port Hardy, which also had questionable weather.

As we approached the halfway/decision point, we checked in with Flight Services and sure enough, Bella Bella was now reporting marginal VFR and the clouds below us weren't as dense as we were able to start seeing the rugged Canadian coast below us. We continued with more confidence. After two and a half hours of flight, we made it to blue skies and puffy clouds in Bella Bella. I kissed the ground upon arriving! That was 100% the most stressed I had ever been while flying, as I'm not used to flying above dense clouds over extremely rough terrain with questionable weather at our destination. But we made it!

We got fuel, ate a quick Mountain House (freeze-dried food) lunch, and loaded up to launch for our next stop, which we planned to be at Prince Rupert, British Columbia. Markus joined me in the Taylorcraft to support me on the next two-and-a-half-hour leg. The plan was to land at Prince Rupert, British Columbia, to alert customs of our arrival back into the United States at Ketchikan International Airport (PAKT) and for Markus to switch back into the Cub to be consistent with our paperwork.

The flight to Prince Rupert was uneventful until Prince Rupert went IFR, which, I learned, is typical. Oh dear, what now?!? Ketchikan was an additional 45 minutes past Prince Rupert and was reporting clear sky VFR. We had enough fuel to make it to Ketchikan so Tobias called customs from the air and confirmed it was okay for us to fly direct to Ketchikan, so that is what we did. But, I now had a passenger that was not on my paperwork. Let's see how this goes.

On approach into Ketchikan, I called the Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) about nine miles out and Ketchikan Airport Advisory provided information about surrounding traffic which included a float plane near the airport, nothing to worry about. I called again when I was established on a five mile straight in for runway 29, and the Airport Advisory advised me of an incoming Alaska Airlines. I had heard the 737 call and thought I'm much closer but much slower, but I should still make it before they do and the Airport Advisory didn't give any direction otherwise. I kept my speed up at 100 mph.

I was confused by this Airport Advisory system. It's like a regular CTAF where you make your own calls, but with someone in the tower giving advisories, but no instruction. My first and only experience with this was at Campbell River earlier that day, which already seemed like a lifetime ago. As we approached, I made more calls, and the Airport Advisory was also providing my location and speed to the 737 and suggesting they slowdown, which they did not. I was really starting to feel the pressure of that airliner scream up behind me. When I was on short final, my plan was to land short and try to catch the first turn off the runway.

A plan is one thing, but the reality was so different! Instead of a beautiful short landing, it was the opposite, I landed hard and bounced big. I added power and watched my chance of getting off at the first exit disappear. The power smoothed out the touchdown, and we were safely on the ground. The plane was somehow still usable, and my passenger was calm. The next thing I saw as I taxied down the mile of excess runway was the 737 blasting over the top as they had to go around. Oh well, that was not my intention, but it happened that way, and everyone was safe. I probably gave the 737 passengers a fright with their unexpected go-around.

Now, to find my husband and see what Border Control had to say about my passenger I'm "smuggling" back into the United States. At this point I had been completely overloaded by many of the events of that day and previous days. We taxied to where my husband and Border Control agent were waiting and proceeded to provide the paperwork and watched my

plane get inspected. The Customs agent had a radioactive detection machine he was using to scan my airplane. Of course, it lit up the machine as my plane was built in 1945 and probably the whole control panel was radioactive. I had to explain. I also had another minor issue with my registration paperwork as I had a letter from the FAA stating that my plane did in fact have registration even though I didn't have the normal registration card because the FAA had made a mistake that I had discovered just before this trip. Another thing to explain. Nothing was said about my unexpected passenger. I let out a huge sigh of relief!


From the events of the previous two days and the stresses of that day, I was in a major stretch zone and total overload. Crappy landings, electrical issues, traveling farther than I had ever traveled before, flying over clouds toward an airport with unknown conditions, making a 737 do a go-around, scaring my poor passenger, potentially getting in trouble with Border Control for a radioactive airplane, incomplete paperwork, and for smuggling in a passenger. It was all just too much!

Then my husband wanted to move on to the next airport, Petersburg, Alaska, as the accommodation would have been much easier to organize since Ketchikan is very touristy and, therefore, expensive.

I didn't know it at the time as I figured I just needed a coffee break to continue, but it turned out I was completely done for the day! I couldn't go on; I had reached my threshold of pressure, stress, and excitement. I had stretched so far outside of my comfort zone I needed a night of rest and a break from flying.

We found the only affordable accommodation in Ketchikan, a church hostel that only had a male dorm and a female dorm, no private rooms, and we were fine with that! We needed our space as I could tell he didn't want to be held back in Ketchikan, but I couldn't go any farther.

Once settled in the hostel, we went out for drinks and dinner to finally celebrate our huge accomplishment of just getting to Alaska!! We had traveled over 22 flight hours in those three days and two nights with 10 fuel stops. I truly couldn't believe it and feel so blessed to have had the support and push, even though it was too much sometimes, from my husband. I couldn't have done that without him.

We made it, and the adventure was just getting started! For more info about our 32-day trip to Alaska, you can visit our Instagram @cubtrekking to see reels and posts about the journey. 



Publisher: Creative Neurology
www.flyingauthor.com
ISBN: 978-1735163451
Format: Paperback
Available on Amazon

MY MAMA IS A PILOT

Author & Illustrator: Saba Shahid (Connecticut Chapter)

This is absolutely one of the most delightful books I've ever read. The illustrations are beautiful and so representative of the family involved in this flying adventure. There is a load of information – much more than some children's books provide. It's not only a lesson in what some mamas do, but it's truly an introduction into flight. The diversity illustrated in the book is attention getting, not only with how the family is portrayed, but in what all women pilots can be like. This is a must for your library, whether or not you approach it as a children's book!

Because of where I live and what I lived through a year ago, the subject of the next two books is close to my heart. It's an awful attention-grabbing experience to be on the verge of evacuation for a forest fire. I found that having 18 helicopters based at my airport, Angel Fire Airport (KAXX), increased the curiosity of our younger population. The pilots and firefighters went out of their way to give tours when they could and answer as many questions as possible. These two children's books would have been invaluable to have at the airport.



Publisher: Blue Balloon Books
(an imprint of Ballast Books)
ISBN: 978-1962202015
Format: Hardcover
Available on Amazon

HELO GIRLS The Firefighting Pilot

Author: Kodey Bogart

Illustrator: Barbara Gyuricza

The blurb on the back cover says a lot about the approach taken by this neat little book: “We need your help to locate the fire and sources of water so we can fill our bucket. You are our observer! Can you locate the fire off in the distance?”

Not only is this an introduction to women as flying firefighters, but it's also an interactive experience into the firefighting process. There's a lot of technical details, but it's done intelligently and doesn't overload the young reader. There's even a checklist to evaluate the fire and firefighting: What was our mission? Who was involved? Did we notice any obstacles or hazards? How do you feel about this mission?

If you know a young person living in a fire-prone area, this book does a superb job of answering questions and demystifying the mission of a flying firefighter!



Publisher: Huey's Books
(an imprint of Sweetgrass Books)
ISBN: 978-1737238638
Format: Hardcover
Available on Amazon

THE FIRE TRUCK THAT COULD FLY

Author: Patricia Osborn

Illustrator: Eric Castleman

This children's book involves all sectors of a mountain community. The firefighters, a small plane pilot who spots the initial fire, a military support team, aircraft support mechanics, and a Chinook helicopter in the lead as the fire support in the air. Other aircraft are introduced into the firefighting arena: a C-130 and a “Super Scooper” seaplane. Explanations are given about how they all collect water and do their job to help put the fire out.

The illustrations are beautiful. There is a great illustration at the back of the book which labels the parts of a Chinook helicopter, including some firefighting gear. This little book would be a great question-starter (while also providing answers) for kids in a fire-prone area. You will not be disappointed. Even though this book is nearly ten years old, her writing and the story are still relevant.

Milestones



Parker Anderson
Private
– Lake Charles



Laura Bauer
CFI
– Houston



Camille Bergeron
Private
– Quebec



Caitlin Buckner
Multi-Engine
– Houston

Abby Budz
Private
– Chicago Area



Chloe Clark
Instrument
– Tennessee



Alyssa Christian
Solo
– San Diego

Isabella "Bella" Doles
Private
– Chicago Area



Timber Dawson
Advanced Ground Instructor (AGI), Instrument Ground Instructor (IGI)
– Kentucky Bluegrass



Jessica Deis
Private
– Kentucky Bluegrass



Addison Dry
Solo
– Oklahoma



Rachel Golden
Instrument
– Houston



Yvy Von Helde
Private
– Old Dominion



Miranda Keller
Multi-Engine
– Orange County

Raynee LaGrange
Commercial
– Iowa

Trinity LaGrange
Commercial
– Iowa



Candace Lamb
Solo
– Appalachian Aviatrix



Alexis Loveland
CFII
– Nashville



Allyson Mangold
Commercial
– Florida First Coast



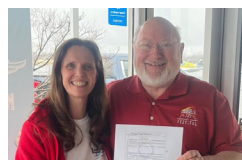
Lauren Mangus
Instrument
– Florida First Coast



Alexandra Nalevanko
Solo
– Ventura County



Rosie Pongracz
Instrument
– Santa Rosa



Karyn Ranzau
Instrument Ground Instructor (IGI)
– Kentucky Bluegrass



Brittany Richardson
Multi-engine
– Florida First Coast

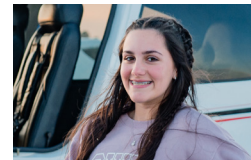
Anna Roberts
Private
– Chicago Area



Carmen Scruggs
Private
– Arkansas



Anaija Senior
Private
– Eastern Ontario



Ava Shelly
Solo (Fixed Wing Airplane),
Private (Glider),
Solo (Helicopter)
– Treasure Coast



Racquel Stephens
Private
– Orange County



Michelle Trobaugh
CFI
– Houston

Grass Roots

CHICAGO AREA CHAPTER

Thank you to Corie Wild and Deb Meznarsic for hosting our meeting at De Kalb Taylor Municipal Airport (KDKB). We enjoyed chili and cornbread with all the fixings. After a short business meeting, we were joined by local KDKB pilots and guests to hear speaker Roger Keyes. His presentation about the WWII drones – which were produced right there at De Kalb – was fascinating (for one thing, they were way bigger than what we now perceive to be drones). Keyes is a local historian who has done a massive amount of research and travel to put all the pieces together about this lesser-known history in our area.

Our meeting at Blue Skies Flying Services, Lake in the Hills Airport (3CK), was a working meeting and plans were being made for big upcoming events. Soon we'll be holding our Girls in Aviation Day, and in the next couple months we'll be painting a compass rose at a local airport, honoring members at our annual awards meeting, and then hosting an Air Race Classic stop. It was a working meeting, but that doesn't mean we didn't have fun. Thank you to our hostesses Megan McArthur and Eva Kozlowski who also provided a luncheon entree.

Congratulations to three new pilots in the chapter. Isabella "Bella" Doles passed her check ride and then treated her mom to a flight to Watertown and Sheboygan, Wisconsin, for her birthday. They have plans to fly together again at the end of March. Anna Roberts successfully passed her Private Pilot



Top: Chapter members at the Lake in the Hills meeting standing in front of the Blue Skies' photo honors wall | Middle: Guest speaker Roger Keyes presents program on WWII drones | Bottom: Chapter member Denise Daichendt, flying in to the De Kalb meeting with friend John Doerner in his Grumman Tiger

check ride. She's been making the most of her new privileges by taking her mom and friend flying. She's eagerly anticipating her first attendance at the Women in Aviation Conference as a pilot. Come fall, she will enroll at Southern Illinois University to pursue studies in aviation management, flight, and join Air Force ROTC. Abby Budz has earned her Private Pilot Certificate and is now diving into her Instrument training. She expresses immense satisfaction in achieving what once seemed impossible!

- Diane M. Cozzi

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AIR CAPITAL CHAPTER

Bonnie Johnson hosted our chapter at her private airport (complete with new landing runway lights) on March 19, 2024. Guest speaker Carol Foy gave an excellent presentation with some fun trip photos of her adventure around the world in eight days. Carol, along with CarolAnn Garrett, flew a Mooney 201 in a Dash for the Cure event to raise awareness of ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease). The flight took eight days, 12 hours, 23 minutes, and 53 seconds.

- Linda Leatherman



Top: Presenters at the Kentucky Bluegrass Chapter annual Girl Scout Day. | Middle: Current and former UPS pilots: Samantha Haskins, Terri Donner, and Crystal Korff. | Bottom: Kentucky Bluegrass members: Kacy Thompson-Smith, Kimberly Marcell, Karyn Ranzau, and Timber Dawson, who presented private pilot and drone pilot sessions.

APPALACHIAN AVIATRIXES



The Appalachian Aviatrixes Chapter was invited to an exclusive tour of the Bell Helicopter facility in Piney Flats, Tennessee, March 22, 2024. This Bell facility specializes in the custom outfitting and painting of new helicopters.

New helicopters are flown from the manufacturing plant in Montreal, Canada, to Piney Flats. These stripped-down helicopters are then custom fitted to fill the owners’ needs. Typical interiors include law enforcement, medical evacuation, and corporate designs.

After a two-hour tour through several Bell buildings, members met to plan activities and meetings for the year.

- Janice Pelletti

Appalachian Aviatrixes tour the Bell Helicopter facility in Piney Flats, Tennessee. Left to right: Mary Woody, Tim Lewis, Liz Edgar, Patrick Pelletti, Janice Pelletti, Meagan Harr

KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS CHAPTER

The Kentucky Bluegrass Chapter held its annual Girl Scout Day at Flight Club 502, Bowman Field (KLOU), Louisville, Kentucky, on March 9, 2024. We appreciate all our Kentucky Bluegrass members and friends who served as presenters and guides and to organizer Terri Donner for another successful Girl Scout Day.

- Sue Glisson



Front row seated: Jenn Walinowicz, Bev Allen, Jonna Doolittle Hoppes. Middle row: Alli Hinmon, Vera Fair, Diane Myers, Celia Vanderpool, Shirley McFall, Donna Harris, Sara Cahill, Diane Titterington-Machado. Top row: Nicole Karraa, Mary Sherwood, Kenli Seaman, Marisol Duran. (Not pictured: Karen Vaughn).

ORANGE COUNTY CHAPTER

Members of the Orange County 99s joined the Aero-Space Club of Laguna Woods Village at their February luncheon featuring Jonna Doolittle Hoppes, granddaughter of legendary aviator General James “Jimmy” Doolittle.

Jimmy was born in 1896 in Alameda, California, and grew up in Nome, Alaska, where his father was a carpenter who built houses and panned for gold. Jimmy knew that wasn’t the life for him, so he returned to California where he attended community college and University of California, Berkeley. In 1917, he enlisted in the Army Reserve Signal Corps where he learned to fly. His (secret) first record was being named officer of the day more than any other officer. His first publicized record was flying cross-country from Pablo Beach, Florida, to Rockwell Field in San Diego, California, in less than 24 hours. The Army Air Corps sent Jimmy to both mechanic school and engineering school. He was one of the first to marry these two disciplines together. He earned a master’s degree at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and was the first person to receive a doctorate in aeronautics from that institution. His notes (typed by his wife Josephine “Joe”) became the first aeronautics textbook at MIT. Those of us pilots who’ve spent time under the hood should know that he was the first person to pilot a plane without reference to anything but cockpit instruments.

Jimmy is known primarily for his leadership of the bomber raid on the Japanese home islands. Jonna shared insight into the complex planning for that operation. Jimmy didn’t ask his crew to undertake anything that he himself didn’t participate in. The raid on Japan made him famous, but he was agonized by the number of his boys who didn’t return. His humility and dedication to his crew prompted him to refuse his Medal of Honor awarded for the raid. He felt that being the only raider to receive a medal cheapened it and he dedicated that medal to every one of his raiders. Due to the perceived success of the

famous raid, Jimmy was promoted from Lieutenant Colonel to General, skipping the rank of Colonel. Even as a three-star general, he waited in line with everyone else to wash out his own mess kit.

Jonna also honored the memory of her amazing grandmother Josephine “Joe” Doolittle, who was brilliant in her own right and had a photographic memory. Joe nurtured a loving home (known to soldiers as the pilot’s lounge) where everyone could gather and drink beer that Joe had brewed herself. She was an incredible cook and could make something from nothing to feed the (sometimes large) number of visitors in her home. Even when Joe had breast cancer and was going through difficult times herself, she always focused on other people by writing letters every day to support and uplift the families of servicemen.

The love story between Jimmy and Joe captivated our hearts and emotions. They were high school sweethearts. Joe’s father didn’t think Jimmy was good enough for his daughter, so the two eloped. On the day of their wedding at city hall, Joe saw a frayed woman on the steps and pressed coins into her palm though they barely had \$25 between the two of them. Joe believed that thoughtful act brought them luck throughout their 70 plus years together. Joe suffered a massive stroke in the 1980s. Jimmy came home that day and never left her side again until he had to be physically present to receive his fourth star as a general.

Through Jonna’s engaging and vivid storytelling, we received great insight into her grandfather and grandmother, not only as legends in history but also on a personal dimension. Jimmy believed that we should all leave the world a better place. Jonna preserves her grandfather’s legacy by encouraging all of us to write detailed letters for our children and grandchildren, sharing our lives and memories.

– Vera Fair

INDIA SECTION

48 Glorious Years of The India Section

In 1966, Isabelle McCrae, a nurse by profession and a 99, while on a cruise stop over at Bombay, India, visited the Bombay Flying Club. On meeting with one of the women pilots there, she invited these feisty women to join The 99s. A group of ladies became 99s members-at-large and were generously sponsored by the El Cajon Valley Chapter.

99s President Lois Feigenbaum visited India in 1976 and thus our India Section was chartered with six founding members: Chanda Budhabhatti, Mohini Shroff, Rabia Futehally, Sunila Bhajekar, Durba Banerjee, and Saudamini Deshmukh. Chanda Sawant Budhabhatti was our first Governor. She now lives in Tucson, Arizona, and has been instrumental in introducing the Indian 99s to the world.

On March 26, 2024, we celebrated 48 years of our section. All The 99s in Bombay were invited by member Indra Thengal for a get together at her cozy home to celebrate to celebrate the momentous day. It was indeed extremely special as all four charter members living in Bombay came from far and near to be a part of our celebrations. They regaled us with their stories of yester years. How they started flying in their sarees, how The 99s sponsored them in their homes in the U.S., and the challenges they faced so many decades back. Saudamini and I reminisced about the time when we flew the very first all-women-crew-flight in 1985. We missed Chanda and The 99s who could not attend due to work and family commitments.

We had a returning member, Manjeet Lamba Hirani, and a new Friend of The 99s (FO99s) Dr. Punita Masrani, an aviation medical specialist, join us, too.

Sunila Bhajekar proudly displayed her 99s ring that she got from Lois Feigenbaum, when she visited the U.S. She has worn it for every 99s meeting and conference for over five decades now.

On a lighter note, no food was served until we completed our business, that is, taking decisions for our forthcoming conference in December, which we unanimously named Ninety-Nines India Aviation Conclave.

Indra's hospitality was unmatched. She served us delicious homemade yummy snacks and high tea. Traditional sweets, Dosa, (Indian style pancakes), fritters, and a scrumptious mango chiffon cake (with a 99s topper) which was the highlight of the evening.

From six charter members, we now stand at 43, in addition to three FO99s. India Section is proud of its diversity of membership, with private pilots, airline pilots, seaplane, helicopter, glider pilots, as well as instructor pilots. We are indeed grateful to our sisters in the U.S. for introducing us to this unique sisterhood of pilots.

- Nivedita Bhasin



Top photo: Charter/founder members front row: Mohini Shroff, Sunila Bhajekar, Saudamini Deshmukh, and Rabia Futehally. Back row: Indra Thengdi, Manjeet Lamba Hirani, and Governor Nivedita Bhasin. | Middle photo: Sunila Bhajekar, Dr. Punita Masrani (FO99s), Rabia Futehally, Indra Thengdi, Manjeet Lamda Hirani, Saudamini Deshmukh, Mohini Shroff, and Nivedita Bhasin. | Bottom photo: Sunila Bhajekar proudly showing her 99s ring.

Grass Roots



Tammy Willits (back row, center, in black jacket) shared an aviation presentation with Girl Scouts, parents, Scout leaders, and CAF leaders.

NORTHEAST KANSAS CHAPTER

Northeast Kansas Chapter Girl Scout Liaison Tammy Willits gave a presentation on aviation on March 22, 2024, to 19 enthusiastic Girl Scouts and 10 adults (parents, Scout leaders, and CAF leaders). The event was held at the Commemorative Air Force (CAF) hangar at New Century AirCenter Airport (KIXD) in Olathe, Kansas.

- Sara Tompson



SPACEPORT CHAPTER

Melbourne Orlando International Airport Authority welcomed approximately 20 women pilots (from central Florida) and their guests to a special behind-the-scenes tour of the airport facilities. Following the tour, everyone was treated to lunch in the premium lounge. We had 99s from several chapters (including Spaceport, Florida Goldcoast, Treasure Coast, and Daytona) as well as new chapter members.

- Judi Oswald



Our newest Life Members

Joy Bowden
Houston Chapter

Jenna Elwood
Spaceport Chapter

Donna Guillaume
Florida Suncoast Chapter

Mardell Haskins
Phoenix Chapter

Phyllis Tate
Midnight Sun Chapter

Barbara Walters-Phillips
Spaceport Chapter



Our most recently enlisted Friends of The 99s

Prithvi Bharadwaj
Thunder Bay, ON
Canada

Amanda Brooks
Henderson, NV

Geraldine Carrera
Port St Lucie, FL

Debbie Franceus
Memorial Aviation
Foundation
Mike Franceus,
Temperance, MI

Richard Furr
Superior, CO

Ammy Jorgenson
Santee, CA

Jennifer Kerlin,
Jupiter, FL

Punita Masrani
Mumbai, Maharashtra
India

Yaeli Mayberry
Lenexa, KS

Casey McCormack
Edmond, OK

**Mackayla
Melendez**
North Miami, FL

Andrew Newland
Garden City, MO

Robert Rousey
Tuckahoe, NY

James Slade
Winnipeg, MB Canada

Nicole Wettstein,
Cedarville, NJ

Justin Willingham,
Forest Hills, NY

Natalie Wilson
Tehachapi, CA



New Horizons

This space is dedicated to our members and 49½s who have passed on to New Horizons. We will miss them, and thank these 99s for all of their contributions to our organization.

Louise Wicks
Life Member
December 7, 2023
Oregon Pines Chapter

Alyce Rohrer
February 1, 2024
San Fernando Valley

Stephen Kline
49½ of Elinor Kline
Life Member
February 14, 2024
Florida Suncoast Chapter

David Oreck
49½ of Jan Oreck
February 15, 2023
NOLA Chapter

Elizabeth Church
February 26, 2024
Kentucky Bluegrass Chapter

"Laura" Ying Gao
February 28, 2024
Florida Suncoast Chapter

Arlene Feldman
March 1, 2024
Eastern Pennsylvania

Lucile Bledsoe
April 1, 2024
Colorado Chapter



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For more information:

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Cathy Prudhomme - cgprudhomme@gmail.com