

November/December 2025



Ninety-Nines

Inspiring Women Pilots Since 1929

SEAPLANE FLYING

FROM FLORIDA FLATLANDS
TO CANADIAN WILDERNESS

p. 14

plus

CHARTER MEMBERS
SUMMER MEMORIES
FLYING AND FORESTS



Ninety-Nines Magazine

Published by The Ninety-Nines, Inc.[®]
International Organization of Women Pilots[®]

A Delaware Nonprofit Corporation
Organized November 2, 1929 (ISSN 1548-565X)

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The Ninety-Nines magazine is published
bimonthly by The Ninety-Nines, Inc.[®],
International Organization of Women Pilots,
at 4300 Amelia Earhart Drive, Suite A, Oklahoma
City, Oklahoma, 73159-1140.

The subscription is included in the annual
Ninety-Nines membership dues and Friends
of The 99s dues. Periodicals postage paid at
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and other additional
mailing offices. Neither The Ninety-Nines, Inc.
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Address Changes

Send to: The Ninety-Nines, Inc.[®]
International Organization of Women Pilots[®]
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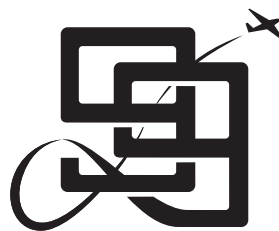
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The Ninety-Nines[®]
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promotes advancement of aviation through
education, scholarships, and mutual support
while honoring our unique history and sharing
our passion for flight.

Let's Get Social    

ON THE COVER

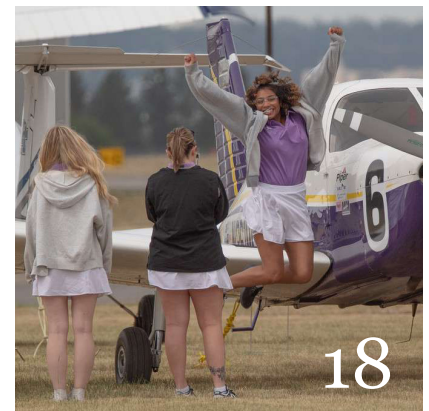
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Thank You to Our Sponsors



2025

NOV

- 1 **2025 Witches Fly-In with the Memphis Chapter**
St. Claire County Airport (KPLR), Pell City, Alabama
✉ memphis.ninetynines@gmail.com
- 7-8 **International Board of Directors Fall Meeting**
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
✉ Info@ninety-nines.org
- 8 **Penny-A-Pound with the Memphis Chapter**
Charlie Baker Airport (2M8), Millington, Tennessee
8:30 a.m.-Noon
✉ memphis.ninetynines@gmail.com

2026

JAN

- 1 **Deadline:** Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Application
✉ Apps@Aescholarship.org
- 15 **Deadline:** Chapter to Section AE Scholarship Application (when applicable)
✉ Apps@Aescholarship.org

FEB

- 5 **Deadline:** Section to Trustees AE Scholarship Application
✉ Apps@Aescholarship.org

MAR

- 27-29 **North Central Section Spring Meeting**
Batavia, Ohio
All-Ohio Chapter
✉ [Val.Palazzolo, val.palazzolo@gmail.com](mailto:Val.Palazzolo@gmail.com)

APR

- 1 **Deadline:** First Wings Applications to Chapter AE Chair (or Section AE Chair, if there are no chapters)
✉ Apply@Aescholarship.org
- 25 **New York-New Jersey Section Spring Meeting**
Rome, New York
✉ [Lisa Hotung, lisa.hotung@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.hotung@gmail.com)

JUN

- 26-28 **JHV German Section**
Hildesheim (EDVM)
✉ ninety-nines.de

JUL

- 8-12 **Ninety-Nines International Conference**
San Diego, California
✉ ninety-nines.org

MAGAZINE SUBMISSION DEADLINES are one month prior to issue date.
JAN/FEB issue deadline: Nov 1.

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



ANNE MCCLAIN
ASTRONAUT

MARCELLA RICHTER
WG#191

JUNE ELLINGTON
WASP 43-4

PRESERVING THE PAST INSPIRING THE FUTURE

*The Women Airforce Service Pilots Collection
at Texas Woman's University Libraries*

Between 1942 and 1944, over 1,000 women broke aviation barriers as the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), flying military aircraft and testing experimental planes during World War II. Despite their crucial contributions, these trailblazing aviators operated without official recognition, and their stories remained largely untold for decades. Texas Woman's University Libraries houses the world's most comprehensive collection of women's military aviation materials, including WASP archives and our broader Women's Military Aviators collection.

When you entrust your materials to TWU, you're placing irreplaceable pieces of history in expert hands. Our archives preserve personal letters, flight logs, photographs, uniforms, and oral histories that document women's contributions to military aviation from World War II through today, ensuring these inspiring stories will reach future generations.

Visit our website at twu.edu/library/womans-collection

The President's Message



Robin Hadfield

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

One of the greatest joys of serving as your President is the privilege of getting to know our members – whether in the United States, Canada, or across the globe. Each encounter reminds me of the camaraderie and mutual support that form the heart of The Ninety-Nines. Together, we carry forward our mission: advancing aviation through education, scholarships, and community, while honoring our remarkable history and celebrating our shared passion for flight.

As we approach the close of another year, many of us are also preparing for the holiday season – a time of reflection, gratitude, and giving. It is a perfect

moment to pause and thank each of you who so generously give your time and talent to this organization. From the members who nurture our Chapters and Sections, to the International Officers, Board members, Committee Chairs, and Trustees of our two museums, Endowment Fund, and Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund (AEMSF) – your dedication ensures that The Ninety-Nines continues to thrive.

A very special welcome goes out to all of our new members who joined us this year – we are delighted you have chosen to share your journeys in aviation with us. To our long-standing members, thank you for your many years of commitment and passion. It is the blend of fresh energy and enduring experience that makes our sisterhood so vibrant and strong.

Our membership is the foundation of our strength. Yet there are also other ways to help us soar even higher. A donation of any size supports:

- **International outreach and education programs** that inspire the next generation of women pilots.
- **Community engagement initiatives** that expand awareness of aviation opportunities worldwide.
- **The preservation of our headquarters and museums**, where the stories of our past continue to inspire the future.

Every dollar makes an impact – funding scholarships, strengthening our chapters, and safeguarding the places where our history lives on. Together, we keep the legacy of The Ninety-Nines alive for generations to come.



Make a Donation
www.ninety-nines.org/donation.htm

Step Into Leadership Elections Now Open

Now is the time to help shape the future of The Ninety-Nines. Our international elections are officially open, and we are seeking members ready to lead with passion, dedication, and vision. Positions open for election include:

- **President**
- **Vice President**
- **Secretary**
- **Treasurer**
- **Director x 2**

In addition, our Trusts are seeking **new Trustees** to serve on the Boards of the **Endowment Fund, Amelia Earhart Scholarship Fund, Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum, and Museum of Women Pilots.**

If you have ever thought about contributing to the growth and resilience of our organization, this is your opportunity to step forward. Leadership in The Ninety-Nines is both an honor and a chance to leave a lasting legacy.



Will you be one of the next to guide our future?

< Scan for the Intent to Seek Election Package.

Call for Nominations International Awards

Each year, our International Awards shine a spotlight on individuals and organizations who make aviation stronger, safer, more inclusive, and more inspiring. These awards celebrate those who embody the very best of our mission and values.

But we can't do it without you. Nominations come from our members, Chapters, Sections, and Trusts – and we need your voice to ensure outstanding contributions are recognized. If you know someone deserving of recognition, now is the time to submit a nomination and



help us share their story with the world.

< Scan for the International Award Nomination Form.

With gratitude and warm wishes for the season ahead,

Robin Hadfield

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

Executive Director Message



Jill van Egmond
Executive Director
The Ninety-Nines, Inc.

I recently shared that I've begun my journey to become a pilot – and that I immediately fell in love with flying. What came next surprised me even more than my first flight: I fell completely in love with ground school. I didn't expect to enjoy it as much as being in the air, but the way it challenges and fires up different parts of my brain has me hooked. Each new concept feels like unlocking another door toward my dream, whether it's tracing the aerodynamics behind the four forces of flight or drilling on aircraft systems until the terms roll off my tongue.

I've already filled stacks of flashcards with everything from planes, patterns and radios to airspace hierarchies, abbreviations, and so much more, and I quiz myself at every opportunity. My family has endured countless recitations of the phonetic alphabet, and yet somehow, they're still putting up with me. There's one thing I haven't nailed yet: calculating Zulu time. For reasons beyond me, that incredibly simple conversion still trips me up – but I know I'll get there, one practice session at a time.

As much as I enjoy the in-person ground school at Route 66 Flight School, I wanted more, so I enrolled in online lessons through Part Time Pilot. This lets me to study whenever I have a spare moment. Tracking my progress – both on the ramp and behind the desk – has made this journey feel multidimensional. It's not just about flying; it's about understanding the why of aviation.

Like every student pilot, I've had some setbacks. Scheduling flight time isn't always easy, but even on the days I don't fly I find myself buried in reading, note-taking, or mock exams. Every missed flight makes me that much hungrier for the next one.

And along the way, I've noticed something deeper – this isn't just flying lessons: It's pure joy, challenge, fear, and growth all rolled into one. It's my reminder that learning something new, something that stretches who you are and what you're capable of, is never easy, but it is always worth it.

So here I am, a pilot in the making, with a brain on fire, a logbook that I can't wait to fill, and a heart that already knows: this sky is home.

Looking for a way to volunteer for The 99s at the International level?

Join The Team!

Do you enjoy writing and proofreading? Historical research and meeting new chapter members? Consider joining the team of talented and dedicated members of the Publications Committee. This is a great way to get involved with The 99s, and can be accomplished remotely, with flexible time commitment.

We are actively seeking writers to interview members, proofreaders with a sharp eye for grammatical and graphic details, and researchers to assist in our Charter Member project. Committee members also assist with outreach to Governors and Chairs of the various International committees to remind them of deadlines and encourage submitting Grass Roots, Milestones and Committee Reports.

CONTACT US

Contact Publications Committee Chair Lori Plourd at news@ninety-nines.org or 99spubschair@gmail.com

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Holding Short

Wright Brothers Master Pilot Awardees

The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award is the most prestigious award the FAA issues to pilots. This award is to recognize individuals who have exhibited exemplary aviation expertise, distinguished professionalism, and steadfast commitment with at least 50 years of piloting experience. Thus far these 99s have been awarded:

Elizabeth Dinan, November 2009
– *San Luis Obispo County*

Karen M. Kahn, November 2019
– *Santa Barbara*

Sherry Grobstein, April 2021
– *Eastern New England*

Kathleen Stern Groves, March 2022
– *Santa Clara Valley*

Diane Sue Earhart, March 2023
Greater St. Louis

Kathy Royer, May 2025 – *Daytona*

Marcy Drescher, August 2025
– *Minnesota*

Patti Kihm, November 2025 – *Daytona*

For those 99s that missed the first request to those who have been honored with the FAA Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award, please send your information to Patohlsson@fly-in.com. Please email your name, month/year received, chapter name.

There are certain eligibility requirements; one is the effective start date for the 50 years is the date of the nominee's first solo flight or military equivalent. Applications are available on the FAA website: Pilots - Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award - FAA - FAASTeam - FAASafety.gov

TRAILBALZER ALERT:

Mickey Fearn has started her training as an ATGS!

– Rachel Consolini,
Eastern Idaho Chapter



Eastern Idaho Chapter is absolutely thrilled to announce that one of our amazing members, **Mickey Fearn**, has been promoted into temporary detail as an Air Tactical Group Supervisor (ATGS) trainee!

After dedicating 18 years to fighting fires on the ground and recently earning her Commercial Pilot Certificate, she's now taking her expertise to the skies in one of the most critical roles in aerial firefighting operations. Mickey is among a select group of women who have reached this level in aerial firefighting operation, making her training position even more significant for women in both firefighting and aviation.

As an ATGS, she'll be: coordinating incident airspace and managing air traffic; serving as the vital link between ground crews and aircraft; supervising lead plane pilots, aerial supervision modules, and helicopter coordinators; and assigning and evaluating aerial resources to support firefighting objectives.

From boots on the ground to commanding the skies – this is what breaking barriers and excellence in aviation look like. Her dedication to protecting our communities through fire service, combined with her passion for flying, makes her the perfect fit for this demanding role.

We couldn't be more proud to have such an inspiring leader in our group who continues to pave the way for women in both firefighting and aviation.

Congratulations, Mickey, on this well-deserved forward step in your passions!

Michigan Chapter Celebrates Members

– Barb Vukits, *Michigan Chapter*



Sarah Haskett received her co-pilot status for the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. To receive this upgrade, she had to perform a short checkride to

demonstrate her knowledge in ADM and SRM, and prove she can take off and land a Cessna 182.

Reya Dila of Ludington, Michigan, passed her Private Pilot Checkride in August at Wexford County Airport (KCAD). Reya shared that the best part was receiving compliments from her DPE for her "no flap, forward slip" landing.



Leah Murphy was awarded the 2025 Women in Aerospace Initiative, Inspiration, Impact Award. Leah was recognized for her outstanding

aviation-safety volunteerism and relentless advocacy inspiring the next generation of women in aerospace. This award is one of only seven that the organization awards annually. Leah is a dual-rated commercial pilot and currently serves as a helicopter ambulance pilot.

Loryn Heidema passed her Private Pilot Checkride in September at West Michigan Regional Airport (KBIV). Loryn shared that her best advice to fellow student pilots is, "Don't give up! It is so worth it!"

Alyson Galbraith received her Commercial, CFI, and CFII Ratings in August and her Multi-Engine Commercial Rating in September. Alyson accomplished all these additional ratings approximately 90 days after passing her Instrument Checkride last May.

Madison Barch passed her Commercial Checkride in September. Madison accomplished this goal just two months after receiving her Instrument Rating in June.

Chicago Area Chapter Member Updates

– Diane Cozzi, *Chicago Area Chapter*

From new member **Nina Busch**: I'm a RN, but I've always dreamed of becoming a pilot. My grandfather was a Naval aviator, and my father has his Private Pilot Certificate and Instrument Rating. I spent a lot of time flying with him in his Cessna 310 as a kid. I have four kids, so life is busy! I earned my Private Pilot Certificate in May 2025, and in June, my husband and I became 50% co-owners of a Piper Cherokee PA-28-180. I completed all my flight training in C172s, mostly with Stick and Rudder in Waukegan, Illinois. The transition to the Piper has been pretty smooth. I've flown 25 hours in the Piper in the last few weeks, and I've started to work on my Instrument Rating. Fun Fact: Gail LaPook was my DPE. She's the one who told me about The 99s!

Holding Short



From **Marilyn Handschiegel Black**: I'm thoroughly enjoying my Instrument training, but my greatest joy since getting my Private Pilot Certificate back in January has

been flying Pilots N Paws missions. In May, my flying buddy Dave and I flew Sasha from DuPage, Illinois, to her adorable new family in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Last week, we flew Cordell, Peach, and Shane from Muscatine, Iowa, to Burlington, Wisconsin. All four dogs were rescued from the streets in Texas, so a long journey for them was made a bit easier by flying. My passengers had no complaints about my less than stellar landings! These missions have been great for taking me to new airports and new environments while building my cross-country time. The best are the kisses and hugs from these special little souls; they really touch my heart!

Ruby MacDonald

A Place in Canadian 99s History

– Rich Little



I thought The 99s might be interested in this. My grandmother, **Ruby MacDonald**, was recently inducted into Brandon Municipal Airport's (CYBR) Wall of Fame. Her 15-year-old great-granddaughter, Rowan Little, is currently taking flying lessons at the Brandon Flying Club – the same place Ruby got her license. Ruby's photo and brief biography now hangs on the Wall of Fame. The biography from the Wall of Fame reads, in part:

"The International Organization of Women Flyers (sic), known as The 99s or 99s was reactivated in Canada in 1967. Ruby was elected Vice Governor for Canada. Along with other Canadian Representatives, she met with Prime

Minister Lester B. Pearson to discuss Women in Aviation during World Travel Week that year. Ruby became the Governor of Canada for The 99s in 1968. The Brandon Flying Club female pilots, The 99s, received their Charter in 1968. With Ruby as Governor, the Canadian Section of The 99s held their National Fly-In at the Brandon Flying Club and their National Meeting at The Canadian Inn in Brandon in 1969. She also organized an International 99s Fly-In and meeting at Jasper Park Lodge in Alberta. During her time with the Brandon Flying Club 99s, she was involved with the organization and hospitality for various fly-ins as well as recruiting and promoting women in aviation. Ruby and her 99s chapter were instrumental in promoting and securing the Canadian Forces jet that sits prominently on Highway 10 at the entrance to the Brandon Municipal Airport. Ruby continued to fly with her husband Jim until they sold their Cessna 310 in the 1990s. The couple logged many hours travelling with friends and family across Canada, the U.S., Mexico, the Caribbean, and South America."

Flight across Australia

– Dominique Estival,
Australian Section



Every year, I try to fly to the annual Australian Women Pilots Association (AWPA) Conference, but 2025 was a special trip: crossing Australia coast-to-coast with my partner as passenger, in a beautiful Piper Saratoga. Flying to those gatherings brings the joy of meeting other women pilots en route at refuelling stops and hearing old friends on the frequency during a long leg. Over a total distance of 3,900 nautical miles and 36 flight hours, the return trip from Camden, New South Wales, to Busselton, Western Australia, provided many such encounters. We experienced only minor maintenance issues, resolved swiftly by helpful engineers. The sometimes-

marginal weather meant we had to spend one more day in Mildura and to divert from the planned route on the way out, but we made up for it with two nights at beautiful Esperance and another two nights at the must-see outback Forrest Airport (FOS). And although our team didn't win any prize, we had lots of fun at the navigation trail around the famous Margaret River area.

Imagine what you can see and do when you visit Australia for the International Conference in September 2027!

REPORTING POINTS



Maryland Chapter member **Stephanie Baynes** received her Seaplane Rating in August and also passed 500 hours – a major milestone.



Michigan Chapter member **Olivia Arnold** reached 1000 flight hours in September, with that last hour being in a Super Decathlon.

Chicago Area Chapter member **Bailey Reiners** earned her CFI at Oshkosh and was accepted into The 99s' PPLI program the same week.

All-Ohio Chapter member **Gabriella Tan** passed her IFR written test.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Bulluck New Beginnings Scholarship

The Southeast Section is honored to sponsor the Corbi Bulluck New Beginnings Scholarship in the amount of \$3,500. This scholarship is established in memory of Corbi Bulluck, who passed away on April 6, 2025, following a courageous battle with cancer. The scholarship is designed to support student pilots pursuing their



initial pilot certification training. We are pleased to announce that **Renah Gallagher**, a member of the Georgia Flying Belles, is the inaugural recipient of our scholarship.

“I, Renah Gallagher, thank the Southeast Section of The 99s. My journey in aviation is fueled by both passion and determination. I’ve always been captivated by flight, and today I’m working toward earning my Private Pilot Certificate. I currently work at Aero Center at DeKalb-Peachtree Airport (KPDK) as a customer service representative, where I gain valuable exposure to the aviation industry while balancing my responsibilities as a single mother of three. My long-term goal is to become a Certificated Flight Instructor and eventually advance into Part 135 and Part 91 operations, where I can combine my love for flying with a career that provides stability for my family. More importantly, I aspire to mentor future pilots and help make aviation more accessible to those who may not see a clear path forward. I’m honored to be the recipient of the first Corbi Bulluck New Beginnings Scholarship.”

Ruehle Award for Advanced Ratings Scholarship Winners

– Kristin Smith, *Colorado Chapter*

The Colorado Chapter is pleased to announce this year’s recipients of the Ruehle Award for Advanced Ratings. The award is made possible by chapter member Jane Ruehle’s generous contribution in honor and memory of her late husband Walt, who was a pilot as well as supporter and friend of the chapter.



Jacepine Hokanson is excited to work toward her Instrument Rating. “I couldn’t be more honored to receive the Ruehle Award from the Colorado

99s. I took my first flight with my mom for my 18th birthday, and it’s been my dream ever since to become a professional pilot. This opportunity is a huge steppingstone towards that goal. I couldn’t be more excited to dust off my goggles and get back to work!!”



Anastasia McCune is finishing up her Instrument Rating, eager to move on to Commercial and CFI. “I earned my Private Pilot Certificate

over two years while working full-time and raising a family. It wasn’t easy, but quitting was never an option. Now I’m preparing for my Instrument Checkride and have nearly met the requirements for my Commercial Certificate. I’m aiming to complete my CFI and CFII as soon as possible. This award is a tremendous help in staying on track until I can begin instructing. The 99s have been a great support system – for me and for others – no matter the path or pace. I’m grateful for this award and the opportunity it brings, and look forward to giving back through The 99s for a long time to come!”



Alaina Paradise has plans to use her Commercial Certificate to help others. “I earned my private pilot certificate in 2016, the same year I began

volunteering with a nonprofit serving survivors of human trafficking. These two passions of mine can be summarized with one word: freedom. Flying has always felt like freedom to me, and I want to extend that freedom to others. I’m honored to receive the 2025 Ruehle Award and grateful for the opportunity to advance my training so I can volunteer as a pilot providing transportation for survivors here in the U.S. – blending my passions and extending freedom through aviation.”

JEANNE RIECK EARNS SECOND NAFI MASTER FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR ACCREDITATION



The National Association of Flight Instructors (NAFI) is proud to announce that member **Jeanne Rieck** has earned accreditation as a NAFI Master Flight Instructor – her second NAFI Master Flight Instructor accreditation. Jeanne is a member of the Phoenix Chapter.

Jeanne has been an active flight instructor since 2013 and is the owner of Airplane Rental Ventures in Mesa, Arizona. She has a master’s degree in special education and is a former special education teacher and administrator.

Jeanne has Commercial Single, Multi-Engine, Instrument and Seaplane Ratings, and a Tailwheel Endorsement. She is a CFI, CFII, AGI, and a Gold Seal flight instructor. She volunteers for The Ninety-Nines’ Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative (PPLI) program and NAFI. She owns two aircraft at Falcon Field (KFFZ) in Mesa, Arizona, a beautiful and demanding place to fly. When she’s not flying, Jeanne explores near the Grand Canyon with her husband at their off-grid cabin.

The NAFI Master Flight Instructor Accreditation is earned by aviation educators based upon a system of advanced professional standards and peer review. The accreditation identifies excellence, professional growth, and service to the aviation community. The NAFI Master Instructor accreditation is for two years and may be used to renew an FAA flight instructor certificate. Applicants must have been a CFI for two years and given 1,000 hours of flight instruction. In addition, candidates must meet and document activity in four NAFI Master Instructor categories (Instructor, Educator, Service to the Aviation Community, and Professional Activity). For more information about NAFI or the NAFI Master Instructor program, call 866-806-6156 or visit www.NAFINet.org.

SPIRIT OF FLIGHT FOUNDATION AWARD



Idaho Chapter, Mimi Steel, flies her Bellanca Citabria to the Spirit of Flight Foundation on the airport in Nampa, Idaho, promoting the WASP with the iconic Finifella® WASP mascot. (Courtesy photographs from Spirit of Flight Foundation)

Idaho Chapter member **Mimi Steel** was selected for the 2025 Spirit of Flight Foundation Award for her outstanding efforts to promote the Spirit of Flight Museum (SOF). Mimi has introduced many new organizations to the SOF and was instrumental in getting a flight suit donated to the museum that was used by Caroline “Blaze” Jensen, pilot of the No. 3 F-16 Fighter jet of the United States Air Force Thunderbirds Demonstration Squadron from 2012-2014.

Mimi Steel has attended every Spirit of Flight Day event by flying her Bellanca Citabria to the museum to promote the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) of WWII. She recently traveled to the Military Aviation Museum in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where she promoted the Spirit of Flight Foundation Museum. Because of her visit, a WWII Mitsubishi A6M3 Zero aircraft may stop by SOF on its way from Seattle to Virginia Beach soon.

“It is an honor to recognize Mimi Steel as this year’s winner of the Spirit of Flight Award,” said Gordon Page, president and founder of the Spirit of Flight Foundation Museum. “She has gone out of her way to help get the word out about our efforts to save aviation history and we are grateful to have her friendship and support,” added Page.

Mimi joins 16 other recipients of the Spirit of Flight Award, which is given annually to recognize outstanding efforts to promote the mission and purpose of the Spirit of Flight Foundation.

Founded in 1998, the nonprofit Spirit of Flight Foundation features over 3,500 aviation artifacts at the museum facility in Nampa, Idaho. Aircraft in the collection include a James Bond BD-5 jet, a 1947 race plane built by Art Chester, a 1937 Waco EGC-7, and a Radioplane target drone, built in the factory where Marilyn Monroe was discovered.

The Spirit of Flight Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and uses tax deductible donations to support its mission to save aviation history. Contact the Spirit of Flight Foundation at info@spiritofflight.org for additional information.

TWO FIRST CANADIAN CHAPTER MEMBERS AWARDED AN “ELSIE”

The Northern Lights Aero Foundation (NLAf) is pleased to announce this year’s recipients of the prestigious “Elsie” award, which recognizes Canadian women who have made significant contributions to aviation or aerospace. Two recipients are also members of The 99s:

Trailblazer: Denise Egglestone

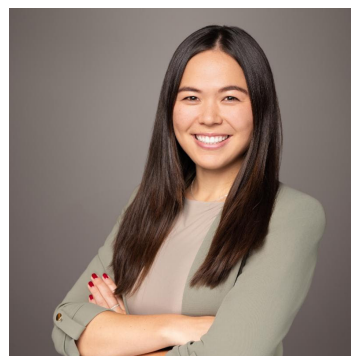
Rising Star: Heather Hills



First Canadian Chapter member **Denise Egglestone** has received the Elsie MacGill Trailblazer Award for her pioneering contributions to flight dispatch, aviation volunteerism, and decades of leadership in community outreach.

Denise retired from Air Canada as a Flight Dispatcher and ground school instructor.

She was one of the first women to hold either role. Currently, Denise is the President of Dreams Take Flight National and Vice President of the Toronto Chapter. She is the coordinator for agencies that select deserving children to go to Disney each year. Active with The 99s, Denise, a licensed commercial pilot, has held numerous board positions, is an active volunteer, and a former Amelia Earhart Scholarship recipient. She has been a board member for her local Women in Aviation chapter and is currently the treasurer, a position she has held for many years. As a past organizer of three Canadian Women in Aviation conferences, Denise coordinated speakers and tours. She is a board member for CASARA, the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association and is a member of Air Canada’s Special Assistance Team. In her spare time, she travels the world and is an avid cook.



Heather Hills is a member of the First Canadian Chapter and a Professional Pilot Initiative Program (PPLI) graduate. She is a captain on the Q400 at Porter Airlines. Heather holds an honors degree in Business Administration from the Schulich School of Business and is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Human Factors from Embry-Riddle

Aeronautical University. She is a graduate of the Integrated Transport Airline Licence program at the Brampton Flight Centre, where she also worked as a flight instructor before joining Porter. In addition to her flying career, Heather serves as the Program Coordinator for the Aviation Program at Conestoga College. Heather is the Vice President of the Upper Canada Chapter of Women in Aviation and sits on the board for the 2026 Canadian Women in Aviation Conference, having Co-Chaired the 2024 conference. This year, she completed a three-year term as a Junior

Invitation to Submit

NOMINATIONS FOR 2026 INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

The International Awards Committee is soliciting nominations for five prestigious awards to be presented by The Ninety-Nines, Inc. at the 2026 International Conference in San Diego, California. The deadline for submitting nominations is **January 31, 2026.**

AWARD OF ACHIEVEMENT (for Ninety-Nines)

Three Awards of Achievement may be presented for:

- Contributions to The Ninety-Nines
- Contributions to Aviation
- Humanitarian Efforts

Who May be Nominated? An individual member of The Ninety-Nines (living or deceased); a group of Ninety-Nines; or an organization within The Ninety-Nines, such as a Chapter, Section, Committee, or Trust. An individual recipient must be a current member or have been a current member at the time of her death.

AWARD OF MERIT (for non-Ninety-Nines)

Recognizes a significant contribution to any facet of aviation, such as aviation or aerospace education, aviation science, aviation history, aviation commerce, aviation legislation, etc.

Who May be Nominated? An individual (male or female, living or deceased) or an organization. The recipient may not be a current or former member of The Ninety-Nines or of a group within The Ninety-Nines.

GEORGE PALMER PUTNAM AWARD

(for non-Ninety-Nines)

Recognizes support provided to The Ninety-Nines by an individual (male or female, living or deceased) or an organization. The contribution may have occurred in the past or present, as a single action or a series of events.

Who May be Nominated? An individual (male or female, living or deceased), or an organization. The recipient may not be a current or former member of The Ninety-Nines or of a group within The Ninety-Nines.

Who may submit nominations?

A Ninety-Nines Chapter, Section, or Trust.

How to nominate: Submit a one-page letter, signed by two officers or trustees (as appropriate). The nomination must include the name, address, and telephone number of the nominee, or the nominee's next-of-kin if the nominee is deceased. Up to three additional pages of substantiating material may be attached to the letter.

Email your nomination to **Awards@ninety-nines.org.**

Nominations should be received by the deadline, **Sunday, January 31, 2026.**

Note: Previous nominees may be resubmitted.
Questions? Email Awards@ninety-nines.org

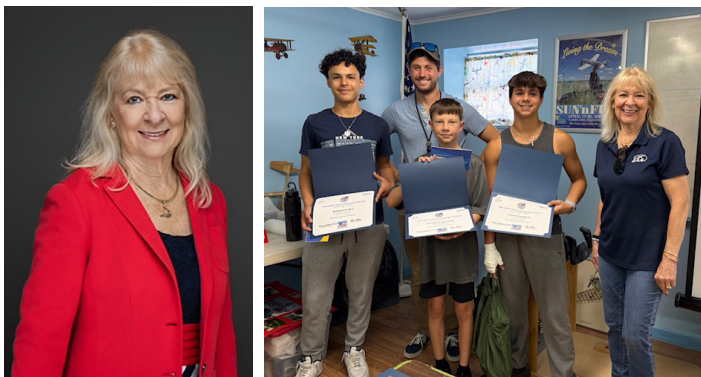
Board Member of the Northern Lights Aero Foundation. Heather began teaching part-time at Conestoga College in the fall of 2025. An avid tennis player, Heather has competed at the varsity level and now enjoys giving back through coaching.

The award, named for aviation pioneer and human rights activist Elsie Gregory MacGill, recognizes outstanding women across seven categories. "The 2025 "Elsie" recipients represent the diversity of the industry-wide roles in which women are natural leaders and role models who inspire and support their colleagues to excel in aviation and aerospace. We look forward to celebrating their achievements at our 16th Elsie gala," says Lynne McMullen, President of the Northern Lights Aero Foundation.

This year's gala awards dinner was held October 4, 2025, at the Pearson Convention Centre in Brampton, Ontario.

For further information about the Northern Lights Aero Foundation, visit: northernlightsaerofoundation.com and follow NLAF on social media.

NAA DISTINGUISHED STATESWOMAN OF AVIATION AWARD WINNER

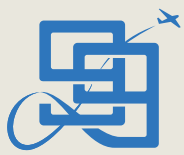


Left: Barbara Walters-Phillips. | Right: Barbara Walters-Phillips with her Introduction to Aviation students at their graduation flight.

Barbara Walters-Phillips, Lifetime Member of The Ninety-Nines and a member of the Spaceport Chapter, will receive a National Aeronautic Association's (NAA) Distinguished Stateswoman of Aviation Award on November 6 at the Press Club in Washington, D.C. She also received the Katharine Wright Trophy in 2019.

Barbara is President of EAA Chapter 74 and the Orlando Youth Aviation Center where she organizes and provides instruction in Introduction to Aviation – a program for middle and high school students that meets on Saturday mornings at Orlando Executive Airport (KORL). She also provides a forum for teachers each year during AirVenture.

The NAA, the nation's oldest aviation organization, is a nonprofit dedicated to creating opportunities for full participation in aviation activities and fostering public understanding of the significance of aviation and space flight in the United States. The NAA is the steward of some of the most prestigious aviation awards globally and certifies all national aviation records set in the United States, playing a crucial role in promoting and recognizing excellence in aviation.



CHARTER MEMBERS

By Penny Rafferty Hamilton, Ph.D., Idaho Chapter

Helen Virginia Cox Clohecy Bikle

December 16, 1902 – January 22, 1992



Helen was born in Hagerstown, Maryland, which in 1902 was experiencing significant growth. Because of the expanded rail lines and strong agricultural area, shoe factories and textile mills were located there. Helen was fascinated by machines, cars, and by her teenage years, airplanes.

In the 1920s, airshows in Hagerstown showcased the advancements in aviation technology and offered rides to the public. Helen thoroughly enjoyed her flying experience with the barnstorming pilots.

Barnstorming air shows were very popular during these years. Many women pilots were featured flying daring stunts and aerial acrobatics.

Because the Kreider-Reisner Aircraft Company built and tested their airplanes in Hagerstown, Helen hoped she might be a test pilot someday. In 1926, the “Midget” was a popular design. That same year, the low-wing monoplane won the Scientific American Trophy. Helen was a frequent flyer at the aircraft company airfield, which opened in 1928. Today, it is the Hagerstown Regional Airport (KHGR).

Helen continued to build her aviation credentials while attending college to earn her English degree. But, aviation was her goal. As a pioneer aviatrix, Helen was the first woman to hold an Air Transport Pilot license in Maryland and one of the first women to hold that license in the United States. She took part in the 1927 Miami Air Races. She became a test pilot for Kreider-Reisner. Every six months after earning her Transport Pilot’s License #7767 on June 7, 1930, Helen passed the renewal/endorsement required until late 1934.

She was the first fixed-based operator for Hagerstown Airport with her first husband. Helen even flew the U.S. mail route. In 1929, Kreider-Reisner became a subsidiary of the Fairchild Aircraft Corporation. But, Fairchild brought in its own pilots and engineers to the expanded aircraft corporation.

Helen, the “go-getter,” taught English for many years in the Washington County system. She earned a master’s degree from the University of Maryland. She retired from teaching in 1972. She was a member of the American University Women and Retired Teachers Association. She owned and operated the successful Bikle’s Fruit Farm with her second husband. In 1979-80, Helen was featured in Who’s Who among American Women.

In 1986, the OX5 Club, which is dedicated to preserving and promoting early aviation history and “Early Bird” pioneers, honored Helen with the prestigious Wing Award. The OX5 Curtiss was an early American production V-8 aircraft engine. It was the first to enter mass production. A charter 99, Helen Cox Clohecy Bikle blazed a path for others to follow, even today.

Myrtle Madeline Brown

April 1899* – June 1, 1934



The Brown family had deep roots in Nebraska, but in her late teens, Myrtle relocated with her family to the East Coast. Myrtle was interested in science. After her graduation from Brownell Hale, she attended advanced classes in Chevy Chase, Maryland. This school focused on education of women and was considered a “finishing” school.

In 1922, her sister, Dorothy, married the famous Italian-American pioneer airplane designer and builder, Giuseppe Mario Bellanca. Until 1921,

Bellanca was successfully designing biplanes for the Maryland Pressed Steel company, which closed. In 1921, Bellanca partnered with Victor Roos to build airplanes in Omaha, Nebraska.

In 1922, Bellanca built the first enclosed-cabin monoplane, called the Bellanca CF. Today, this iconic design is on display at the National Air and Space Museum. Given family aviation enthusiasm and the women pilots of the late 1920s, Myrtle created her own aviation flight plan. Training in Wilmington, with 13 hours of instruction and only ten hours of solo flight, Myrtle Brown became the first female licensed pilot in Delaware, license #7701.

The headline from a July 11, 1929, newspaper announced, “Delaware Aviatrix has great ambition – secures license as airplane pilot – hopes to span ocean.” She operated the fledgling Pennsylvania airfield at Painter’s Crossing, before moving to Omaha, Nebraska, to attend the medical school at the University of Nebraska.

Myrtle was always a big thinker and aviation promoter. She approached the Omaha town leaders several times for sponsorship of flights from the United States to Europe. She proposed a New York to Rome flight where she would be a passenger. The \$25,000 cost, around \$465,000 today, was not deemed a good investment.

In 1930, she proposed a non-stop flight from Omaha to Paris, which she would pilot. Friends tried to dissuade her from this dangerous idea. Her response was, “My time to die hasn’t come yet, and I’ll make it.” While promoting the building of a new airfield in Cody, Nebraska, she was overcome with a ruptured appendix.

Rushed to the Omaha hospital for treatment, Myrtle died of peritonitis there on June 1, 1934. A story published June 2 in the Daily Gazette of Berkeley, California, reporting her death announced, “Noted Aviatrix Dies.” The last sentence states, “Brown was a member of New York’s ‘Club 99,’ composed of women fliers”

Photo: February 15, 1929, Myrtle Madeline Brown in Wilmington Delaware, during her flight instruction. (Wilmington Memories web site)

** Born in Nebraska in April 1899 (even on her headstone the day is not listed)*

Bernice Gertrude Blake Perry

March 2, 1905 – July 10, 1996



Bernice was born on a cold day in Manchester, New Hampshire. Her family owned Blake's Creamery and created a very successful restaurant business, which in later years allowed Bernice to give back to her beloved New England community.

In 1929, at 24, Bernice became the first woman to earn a pilot's license in New Hampshire. At that time she was one of only 117 licensed American female pilots. Of course, Bernice became a charter member of

The Ninety-Nines when several women pilots asked her to join them in their founding. Aviation played a big part in her personal and professional life. She met her husband, Winthrop Perry, at the airport.

Later, Bernice became the first female commercial pilot in New England. She formed a photography and aerial photography business with her husband. Commissioned by the MacDowell Colony, founded in 1907 to foster artistry, Bernice's award-winning photographs for that organization and the nearby Cathedral of the Pines reflected her love of nature and the sky. Her photograph of composer Leonard Bernstein while he was in residence at the MacDowell Colony garnered world-wide attention.

Bernice also was hired by various news organizations, including New Hampshire's The Cabinet. Throughout her prolific career, her aerial photographs included every airfield in New Hampshire and other sites in order to help develop new airports throughout New Hampshire and New England. Upon her death in 1996, Bernice donated over 43,000 photo negatives she had taken during her long career to the Milford Historical Society.

Adding to her legacy in 1984, Bernice helped create the annual Hot Air for High Hopes Balloon Festival, which raised thousands of dollars for local charities until 2006. Bernice Blake Perry left \$4.5 million in scholarships for local students in Milford, Lyndeborough, and Wilton. In the town of Milford, New Hampshire, in the Centennial Park at Union Street, an historic marker stands, embossed in brass:

"In 1929, Manchester native Bernice Blake Perry became the first woman in New Hampshire to pilot a plane and the first female commercial pilot in New England. She spent her adult life in Milford and was a charter member of The Ninety-Nines, a pioneering group of female pilots led by Amelia Earhart. Perry became known in the 1930s for her aerial photography, including site mapping to help develop airports in New Hampshire. A member of the Blake's Restaurant family, she was also a well-known philanthropist in the region."

Photo: Bernice Blake Perry remained active in aviation for most of her life.

Vera Hazel Brown

1895* – March 10, 1976



Born in Grand Ledge, Michigan, Vera Brown blazed into the all-male big time newsroom of the Detroit News two days after her graduation from the University of Michigan in 1918. Although World War I did create more employment opportunities for women, this was a bold move for both Vera and newspaper leadership.

Vera proved she could handle any story. But, she was a gifted storyteller and readers loved her feature stories. In the late 1920s, she earned pilot license #10591.

She parlayed that new flexibility and skill into her journalism career. She became the "flying" reporter covering stories around the state. She flew to meet "her" legion of readers in more rural areas.

By 1930, Vera was hired away from the Detroit News to the Detroit Times. Vera became the first woman licensed commercial pilot in Michigan. Vera was a prolific writer. She wrote 13 novels, which were serialized in newspapers. Four books were published. Two of her stories were serials produced on radio. In 1941, Vera's novel, Redhead, was produced into a major motion picture, starring June Lang and Johnny Downs in the romantic comedy.

During World War II, Vera created an innovative Michigan news roundup column each week that could be easily clipped from the newspaper and mailed to service members overseas. Her efforts to support the troops with "home town" news was honored in 1947 with the coveted Ernie Pyle Award.

In the 1960s, Vera began losing her vision. Her media colleagues and legion of citizens raised money for expensive eye surgeries. She was able to continue writing. However, the last 13 years of her life, she was blind. Vera was still able to serve on the Mayor's Commission on Children and Youth and continued to encourage aviation education and writing.

Photo: Vera Brown used aviation to further her career as a journalist with the Detroit News and Detroit Times newspapers. She earned the nickname "Michigan's Flying Reporter" because she flew across the state to cover stories. (photograph.findagrave.com)

**Born 1895 (no month nor day in her obituary nor on her gravestone)*

Historic Research Help Needed!

See the bottom of page 6 for details.

Seaplane Flying

from FLORIDA FLATLANDS
to CANADIAN WILDERNESS

By Kelli O'Donnell, *Florida Suncoast Chapter*





There are quite a lot of differences in the training required for a Seaplane Rating under the U.S. FAA rules and a Seaplane Endorsement under Transport Canada rules. As a FAA-rated seaplane pilot, flying as a true bush pilot in Canada has been on my bucket list for quite a while – especially to help expand my limited seaplane training skills. Since I’ve only experienced flat land conditions with heavy ATC availability, flight experience in an environment like Canada would help prepare me to achieve my goal to start an aerial marine biology business utilizing seaplanes. Thanks to The Ninety-Nines Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship, I was able to fulfill this dream while earning 50 hours of advanced seaplane flight training in Ontario, Canada, along with a few bonus flying experiences in Quebec.

Earlier this year when I found out I was a recipient of the scholarship, I quickly reached out to my preferred flight school in Canada to see if they had availability. Why Canada? Well, currently, nowhere in the U.S. offers this sort of advanced opportunity as a regular part of flight training for seaplanes. Why does Canada offer it? Because with 50 hours of training and flight time in a C-registered seaplane, you can instruct in seaplanes even without a Transport Canada Instructor Rating. This is definitely not how things progress under FAA rules. This course goes beyond the seven hours required to obtain a Transport Canada Seaplane Endorsement, providing advanced training that prepares pilots to instruct or qualify for commercial seaplane roles. Due to limited leave availability from work, I asked if they would be willing and able to complete my course in two weeks. They hadn’t done it that quickly before but were agreeable to try it. My training was set for the beginning of June. After an awesome experience – way above and beyond what I was expecting – I finished the course in 12 days. I was on an eat-sleep-fly-repeat schedule and got lucky that we didn’t have any delays. Both the school and I learned our limits – six hour training days for me and, for the school, offering an accelerated course – and we both grew from the experience.

I highly recommend the school where I trained: Lake Country Airways. They were so accommodating to my wants and needs for training and really catered the program for me. This experience was nothing short of extraordinary. I could not have asked for friendlier staff who really had a wealth of knowledge. I’d highly recommend this course to anyone, even someone who thinks they are proficient. A good pilot is always learning, and I’m sure this school offers a practice environment you could learn from. Feel free to reach out to me with any follow up questions about attending the training. I’m currently in the middle of converting my FAA certificate to a Transport Canada license in anticipation of maybe flying there in the future – since I’m now eligible to instruct or fly for hire in a C-registered aircraft. If I had some advice to share, it would be if you don’t ask, your answer is “no,” and if you don’t apply for a scholarship, you’ll never win one. Find a good aviation mentor. There is great power in how they help you overcome imposter syndrome and write your recommendation letters. I hope you enjoy some of the photos of the experiences and learn from the timeline I had during the training.

Day 1

Arrived at Lake Country Airways in Orillia, Ontario. Practiced landings in the Cessna 172 on straight floats to brush off the dust, did some simulated engine failures, then moved to finding the remote lakes – no magenta line to follow here. Logged 2.5 hours plus ground.

Day 2

I was excited to see O'Donnell Point Provincial Park from the air. Maybe it's some distant relation to my family? Learned about precautionary flyovers, remote lake landing and beaching, and then off on another non-magenta-line cross country to find fuel when the home airport was out. Docking practice started. So much full rudder needed for taxiing today due to cross winds; my thighs were tired. Logged 3.4 hours plus ground with 5.9 hours total completed.

Day 3



Worked on low-level circuit work (or patterns as they call them in the U.S.), crosswind, one float take offs and landings, sailing techniques, long cross-country planning with minimal fuel stop options, how to measure lake distance as part of pre-planning or in the air, some bush field repair techniques, filling the tanks with jerry cans, landing at a remote camp, and my first seaplane solo and passenger. Solo is not something that is allowed or part of obtaining your Seaplane Rating in the U.S. due to insurance and liability issues, so this was a real treat. Logged 1.8 hours plus ground with 7.7 hours total completed.

Day 4

I learned how to process a Canadian commercial dangerous goods flight and what to be aware of for that. Flew back to the camp with these goods to get the propane and battery system hooked up.



Then tested the boat. Back to base to get additional food supplies and obtain my Canadian medical. First step to getting my FAA to Canadian conversion certificate. Back to camp to clean up downed tree branches, spend the night, and first time docking by myself without an experienced person with me or on the dock to help. I nailed it! The school was gracious enough to let me solo fly my boyfriend and myself out there so we could have a little romantic getaway. What a great experience. Logged 1.6 hours plus ground with 9.3 hours total completed.

Day 5

Packed up camp and then took a scenic trip back to the home base, finding lakes by GPS waypoints – a first for me. Back at the airport for review of a wilderness survival kit and crossover of what would be good to have in one for Florida. Some solo spot landing practice, then cross-country planning to a new airport without going dual first, followed by my smallest lake landing yet to check out another camp location. Finished off with a slow taxi through a shallow, narrow, winding river to a seaplane base. Didn't have enough rudder authority due to the tailwind on the way out and got stuck in the reeds twice. Luckily sailing got us out once. The other time, it took about 30 minutes of trial and error to avoid going in the water. I was told, "You're not in Florida anymore," and going in the water should be a last resort. Finished the day off with some glassy water landing practice. Logged 4.6 hours plus ground with 13.9 hours total completed.

Day 6

This day really increased my minimums and was not only challenging but required flying I've never gotten to do before. I felt proud that in just a short time, the flight school owner entrusted me and my skill to a long solo cross-country to another one of their locations in Quebec to drop off one seaplane and bring back another in 20-knot wind (gusting 25 knots). Luckily I was able to take off and land into the wind for the most part, but getting off the dock and flying a seaplane in that weather is no joke. While at the other location, my training was turned up a notch with mountain and valley flying, learning canyon turns and some river operations on the Ottawa and Gatineau (and all in the same strong winds). The day ended with more sailing technique when the winds were too strong to get back to the dock. Logged 5.6 hours plus ground with 19.5 hours total completed.



Day 7

Today's lesson was, "Even though you're within the envelope and the POH and weight and balance say you should be able to fly, if there's no wind, the C-172 says no to getting off the water with three people." So gusty yesterday to no wind today. So, an hour of circuits with only two people to burn some fuel, then drain five gallons of fuel for good measure, then try again. We finally got off with three people and were able to stop at Wreck Island for a hike. But after our first fuel stop, the wind died down even more and the combo of that and slightly warmer temperatures (for Canada) meant we were stuck if we only had the C-172 as an option. However, we happened to be at another location of

Lake Country Airways in Parry Sound, Ontario, and got an upgrade to the Cessna 185! That way, we could still make our end goal of getting to the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre in Sault Ste. Marie with all three of us. Due to our delay, the museum was closed when we got there, but we were ready for first thing in the morning when they opened. Logged 6.2 hours with 25.7 hours total completed.

Day 8

Arrived at the museum and boy, was it worth the wait! So many cool planes and history in what was originally the Ontario Provincial Air Service hangar. I was glad I brought a jacket because while it was almost the middle of summer, the temperature in the "Soo" (8°C) didn't agree to my idea of what summer weather should be (29°C). Then a long cross-country back to Parry Sound Harbor with map navigation and learning about making position reports. A switch back to the C-172 from the C-185, then headed back to Orillia with some beaching, checking out the last camp I haven't been to, lots of real glassy water landing practice, and finishing the day off with docking at the smallest dock yet to get an ice cream. Ended with a drive back up to Parry Sound as that's where I finished up the second week of my training. Logged 5 hours with 30.7 hours total completed.



Day 9

Today training started in Parry Sound in an upgraded aircraft, the Cessna 180 on straight floats. I learned algae only takes a couple days to start staining the floats and they need to be scrubbed regularly when the plane is kept in the water. People don't keep their planes in the water, even freshwater, in Florida, so this was new to me. Flew to the famous Henry's Sans

Souci for lunch and met a new seaplane friend who'd been following my Facebook posts documenting my training journey. Reminds me what a small world seaplane flying is. Kept staring at my dream plane in the harbor, the DHC-2 Beaver, and my next upgrade. Logged 5 hours with 35.7 hours total completed.

Day 10



I flew on another long cross-country further up north to check out the town of Killarney and the world-famous fish and chips place, Herbert's. I also learned what an Inuit rock formation called an Inukshuk was. Did some more landings on the way back and then it was time to solo the 180 and continue practicing landings on my own. My second seaplane aircraft solo! Logged 5 hours with 40.7 hours total completed.

Day 11

Today was the day I'd been waiting for. While not something typically included in the training, I negotiated to complete my first dual hour in Beaver serial number 370. I learned all about the preflight needs such as draining the "snot box" and flight power differences. This was the first time in a while I felt I was really having to learn new things to fly an aircraft. It was just as awesome as I always thought it would be. Hopefully, this was the first of many flights in one of these pieces of history, and maybe one day, I'll be lucky enough to have one myself. Afterwards, I tried to find remote lakes by visual reference only and more rough water practice in the 180 since winds were back up to 20 knots. Logged 3.5 hours with 44.2 hours total completed.

Day 12

I was always impressed how fast the weather changes here without an associated front and clouds like I would see in Florida. From 20 knot winds yesterday to glassy water today, so back to glassy water landing practice, during which I saw my first moose! Then it was off on a cross-country for lunch and to find the lakes I couldn't find the day before. Finding specific lakes amongst many surrounded by forest without any other good reference points really made things hard and gave me a newfound respect for bush pilots. I finally found them though, saw a cool marine railway for boats, and finished my 50-hour course! These 12 days were definitely a whirlwind of learning and experience that for sure made me not only a better seaplane pilot, but a better pilot overall. Logged 6.3 hours with 50.5 hours total completed. 🐾



Kelli has been a member of The Ninety-Nines since 2016 and is routinely involved with their activities. She is a two-time winner of the Amelia Earhart Memorial Flight Training Scholarship and previously was awarded the Amelia Earhart First Wings Scholarship when it was the Fly Now Award. She is now an FAA Commercial Instrument Rated in Airplane Single-Engine Land and Sea and is scheduled to start her Multi-Engine and Certified Flight Instructor training soon. She has served in multiple leadership positions within the Florida Suncoast Chapter and is a field director for the Seaplane Pilots Association. Contact her at kelliodonnell2003@yahoo.com and follow her adventures on Instagram @seaplanesirens.



2025 ARC participants. (Photo Jeneanne Visser (ARC))

Summer Memories Fairhope, Alabama to Spokane, Washington

– Minnetta Gardinier, 99s Vice President

As I write this article, I am at the midpoint between the end of the **2025 Air Race Classic (ARC)** and the opening of registration for the 2026 Air Race Classic. It’s a great time to reflect on the memories of a challenging race that took us from H.L. “Sonny” Callahan Airport on the shore of Mobile Bay to historic Felts Field, Spokane’s original commercial airport (originally, Parkwater Airport) and host of the 1927 National Air Races. Racers were challenged to fly 2100+ nautical miles in four days with timing lines at nine stops in eight States – daytime VFR only.

I have flown every ARC since 2008, and this year was my 16th race. No race is “routine.” Every race is new with unknowns and surprises. Weather is ever-changing. Volunteers at every race stop welcome racers with local hospitality and celebrate each team’s arrival on their ramp. About half the racers are returning and half new “rookie” racers (56%, 2025). About 50-60% of the racers are 99s (59%, 2025). About one-third of the teams are collegiate racers (47%, 2025). It is this mix that draws me back to the race every year. It’s great fun and a great challenge to introduce new racers to ARC by offering them the right seat in my Cessna Cardinal. I love seeing them take the yoke to make their first high-speed flyby on a timing line.

Start morning in Fairhope was overcast with threatening skies. We all raced to the airport for breakfast and our take-off briefing. It was not the launch that we all wanted. Weather and storms blocked our 8 am launch to Starkville (KSTF; Mississippi). Unfortunately, stop #1 was cancelled for weather, and racers were advised to fly to stop #2 Harrison (HRO; Arkansas) however they could, safely (VFR or IFR). Their race would begin after they refueled, launched, and flew the timing line out of HRO. Forty teams took off on Tuesday and began their adventure.

More weather challenged us between HRO and McPherson (MPR; Kansas), and most teams hunkered down for the night at HRO and took off Wednesday morning. The race to the Pacific Northwest was on! Brenda Frye (Iowa Chapter), my copilot, and I were Team #16 (“Is This Heaven?”), and we joined many other teams leaving HRO. Several planes made it through to Rock Springs (RKS; Wyoming) on Day 2, but

we and others remained overnight (RON) one stop before in Gillette (GCC; Wyoming). Mountains and high density altitude were now the challenges and new experiences for many racers.

Day 3 took us through the Rockies – RKS, Jerome (JER; Idaho), La Grande (LGD; Oregon). The views were stunning, especially for those from the Midwest. Flying east to west across the country was certainly not providing us with coveted tailwinds on this route. It was a matter of choosing to fly with the best weather you could muster for each day, especially given that day 1 was “weather-stalled” for most race teams. We were thrilled to make it to the next-to-last stop on day 3 with only the leg to the Terminus to fly. Brenda had a grand time VFR flying that leg dealing with peaks, valleys, and clouds. Touching down at Felts Field, we celebrated the accomplishment. Every team, every racer celebrates that achievement – tired yet victorious in completing a challenging course.

Now as the leaves are turning and falling to the ground, I begin to daydream about the 2026 race from East Alton, Illinois to Mount Vernon, Illinois – nearly 2,400 nautical miles! Racers will visit stops in Kentucky, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Kansas, and Wisconsin. Racers look forward to new challenges. You may think that you’re not a racer, but everyone with a private pilot certificate flew a long cross-country. That’s all the race is – a series of long cross-country flights. Consider it. I hope to see you on the race next year – maybe a racer, maybe a volunteer at a stop. Learn more at www.airraceclassic.org.

Top Five – Competition Class

1	Skybound Scotts	Lauren Scott & Rebecca Carroll
2	Freakin’ Awesome	Lin Caywood & Susan Beall
3	Is This Heaven? (No! It’s Iowa!)	Minnetta Gardinier & Brenda Frye
4	The Skunks	Annabelle Kellogg & Gretchen Jahn
5	Sight Seein’	Teresa Camp & Denise Robinson

Top Three – Intercollegiate Class

1	UND Frozen Force (University of North Dakota)	Helena Lind, Charlotte Fuller & Caroline Kelley
2	Liberty Belles I (Liberty University)	Megan Cotter, Ashley Asselin & Isabella Hauri
3	War Eagle Women – Orange (Auburn University)	Campbell Glasgow, Emily Brutko & Maggie Peacock



Left: IFOF – Amelia Earhart Statue, Gazebo, and Moon Tree. | Right: 2025 Honorees (Front row, L-R) Cindy Apple (IFOF Co-Chair), Lin Wells (IFOF Co-Chair), Lesley Page, Robin Gartman, Angie Tanton, Sponsors of Ora Delle Hightower, Sponsor of Eleanore Reichenbach, Shannon Osborne, Kate Landdeck, Barbara Schultz, Robin Laws (Back row, L-R) Erin Bliss Thompson, Cheryl Thompson, Mandi Neumann.



Flying and Forests ...and Honoring Aviators

– Minnetta Gardinier, 99s Vice President

“You haven’t seen a tree until you’ve seen its shadow from the sky.”

– Amelia Earhart

Each September, the **International Forest of Friendship** (<https://ifof.org/>) hosts its honorees who are being installed in the Forest. They were nominated by family, friends, and colleagues. Each year, a contingent of Ninety-Nines are among the honorees.

This year, a 99 honoree was also the event’s keynote speaker – Angie Tanton from the British Columbia Coast Chapter shared her story with the attendees. Her story traced her professional path in aviation that spanned continents, flying diverse missions in the Arctic, Australia, Chile, the Maldives, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, and the U.S. Her missions are equally diverse – aerial firefighting, aerial marine surveillance and pollution control, airline ownership, bush flying, humanitarian flying, tourism, and VIP transport.

Twelve new stones – all 99s – were laid along the walkways in the Forest, adding to those of 1700+ past honorees. Area children, residents, and guests volunteered to parade the State and Country flags to their stations beside their representative trees in the Forest. On Saturday morning September 13, Atchison Mayor La Rochelle Young welcomed everyone to the Forest. Lin Wells, son of our charter member Fay Gillis Wells, introduced each honoree and provided a glimpse into their aviation stories.

Our other 99s honorees included Shannon Osborne (Greater New York), Robin Gartman (Palomar), Ora Delle Hightower (deceased) (Houston), Kate Landdeck (Ambassador), Robin Laws (Ambassador), Mandi Neumann (Wisconsin), Lesley Page (First Canadian), Eleanore Reichenbach (deceased) (Florida Goldcoast), Barbara Schultz (Antelope Valley), Cheryl Thompson (Northeast Kansas), and Erin Bliss Thompson (Kentucky Bluegrass).

It was an unseasonably hot day in the Forest, and while the honorees enjoyed the shade of the gazebo, many attendees sat in the shade of the Moon Tree. This American Sycamore grew from a seed that orbited the moon in Apollo 14 (1971). Over the past 50+ years, it has grown to 30+ feet, encircled at its trunk by stones honoring the memories of astronauts who lost their lives in the quest to expand our knowledge beyond Earth. This year, honorees and attendees had an opportunity to take home their own “Half Moon” trees, saplings grown from seeds of the Moon Tree.

The IFOF is planning a big celebration in 2026, its 50th anniversary and America’s 250th anniversary. Just as The 99s, the City of Atchison, and the Kansas Forestry Service came together to “gift” America the Forest in 1976, it will come together again to renew that relationship. The IFOF Board of Directors invites The 99s to actively join in the celebration next year. Honor your “star” members by installing them in the Forest. Fly into Amelia Earhart Airport (K59), and let’s pack the ramp next September. Bring home a “Half Moon” sycamore sapling to your community to share the legend. 🌳



Julie Paasch
Mount Tahoma Chapter

Do you have a question that you've always wanted to ask a Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE)?

Email Julie Paasch at askadpe99@gmail.com

Your question may be answered in the next issue!


I am approaching my private pilot checkride and I feel overwhelmed about what I should be studying to pass the oral portion of the practical test. What should I be studying?

Preparation for the Private Pilot oral can be very overwhelming and intimidating. This is especially true when training under Part 61. As an applicant, you don't quite know what to expect since you haven't experienced an aviation testing environment. It is important to remember to have confidence in yourself and remember your CFI will not sign you off for your checkride until you are ready. A few key places to start studying would be looking through the Private Pilot Airmen Certification Standards (ACS), studying your notes from your ground lessons and getting a mock oral with the senior CFI or chief pilot at your school.

The ACS is the testing document that your DPE will use to create their plan of action and evaluate you to determine if you meet the standards. You will be tested on a minimum of one knowledge area, one risk management, and all the skill tasks. Go through each of these areas in the ACS and reference the FAA documents like the Pilot Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge (PHAK) to make sure you understand the subject area you will be tested on. One of the knowledge areas in the Performance and Limitations Area of Operation is aerodynamics. This is a HUGE topic area and is a stand-alone knowledge code. Make sure you study and have adequate knowledge of aerodynamics. In addition, you will be tested on all your written test codes you got incorrect. Those are like freebees! Your examiner is required to test you on those areas, so make sure you studied those topics in-depth.

It is very helpful to study with other students and study your notes from your ground school. A study method I used when going through my training and in college was taking notes during class, reviewing them again at home that evening and then again before the next class. Most of the time, I could remember the information, but also was able to ask questions in class or ask my CFI if I didn't get a concept. This method helps get the information into the long-term memory of the brain. If you are studying with other students, have them ask you questions and practice explaining it back to them.

Once your CFI thinks you are ready for your checkride, do a mock oral with another CFI. In the Part 141 environment, stage checks are required to graduate from the course; however, in the Part 61 environment, this is not required. This will help you practice what it will be like on your checkride and hopefully will reveal if you have any weak areas. Sometimes it is easy to look at something in a book and think to ourselves "I know that," but when someone asks us to explain something, it is much more challenging.

Remember to have confidence in yourself and to put in the work to study and learn the information. Ask your CFI lots of questions, take notes and review the ACS. Most people are very nervous for their checkride, but you have all the tools to be successful. 

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Taking Flight: The First-Ever Aeronautical Book Tour

By Michaela Renee Johnson, *Bay Cities Chapter*



A century ago, aviation was defined by firsts. First across the Atlantic. First around the world. First solo. First woman. Each milestone was a testament to courage and discovery. Today, with air travel so routine, it can feel like all the great frontiers of flight have been crossed.

This summer, I was humbled and honored to discover a new one: the world's first-ever aeronautical book tour.

In just 12 days, I flew more than 7,000 nautical miles coast-to-coast, touched down in 30 states, and dropped 100 advance copies of my book into the hands of readers. Along the way, I parked “Scarlett” – my beloved 1940s Stinson Reliant – beside the legendary B-29 “Doc” in Wichita, Kansas, received a behind-the-scenes tour of the Teterboro Air Traffic Control Tower, visited with the New England Section (sisters in aviation, far from my home chapter), and even met my book designer and project manager from Forbes after months of long-distance collaboration.

The journey was as unpredictable as any grand adventure should be. On the very first day, thunderstorms rolled over the Sierra Nevada, an oil line needed repair, and Scarlett vapor-locked over Truckee, California. I made a precautionary landing at Reno Stead Airport, then pressed on only to be greeted by more storms over Winnemucca, Nevada. But sunlight broke through the pass, and I decided to do what aviators do best – go wheels up.

Automatic Rough

Pilots know a term called automatic rough. It's the sensation – often over water or mountains – when your mind convinces you that every engine vibration is a sign of imminent failure. For the first six days of the tour, that was me, swinging between panic and calm.

Life has its own form of automatic rough, too. Some days run smooth and steady; others rattle your nerves and leave you questioning whether you'll make it through. The trick is learning to trust the process, even when fear whispers otherwise.

Across the Rockies and High Plains

Day two brought smoother skies, a fire crew Blackhawk tour, and a stop at Idaho University. Crossing the Rockies was manageable, though Rock Springs, Wyoming, tested me with 35-knot gusts and a crosswind landing I won't forget. Then came a breathtaking discovery: a concrete arrow still embedded in the ground, once used to guide early airmail pilots through darkness and storms. Standing over that relic, I felt the connection between the pioneers of yesterday and my own modest place in aviation history.

Turbulence, however, was relentless. By the time I reached Sioux City, Iowa, my back and neck – still sore from a recent car accident – were screaming. I let the hot shower beat down on me until exhaustion won. It was a reminder that even the strongest journeys require moments of surrender.

Friends, Food, and Flightseeing

The Midwest lifted my spirits. In Louisville, Kentucky, I finally met Instagram friends I'd followed for years. I enjoyed a meal at a 1920s French restaurant that felt frozen in time. The next

morning, the kind couple gave us homemade pumpkin muffins before we continued east.

At a small airport in Bradford, Pennsylvania, I was four cents short for a bag of chips. I left all my change with a note: Bradford, I owe you four cents.

Reaching Maine was a milestone. Commander Andy, my partner, took me flightseeing over his childhood home. From above, the green hills mirrored Alaska so closely I laughed out loud. “Mini-Alaska,” he'd always called it, and now I finally understood.

The following day was a gift: rest. Whoopie pies, wild turkeys in the yard, and the stillness of a Maine ranch reminded me that slowing down is as important as pressing on.

The Heart of the Journey

From there, the tour only grew more exciting. At Teterboro, New Jersey, Carlos welcomed us into the tower for a sweeping 360-degree view of the New York City skyline. In Madison Square Garden, I recorded a podcast with Silver Disobedience. In Wichita, Kansas, I had the honor of attending my friend Julie Clark's induction into the National Aviation Hall of Fame – inside the hangar that houses Doc, the B-29. Scarlett got to park right next to Doc for the party.

But more than the landmarks, it was the people who shaped this tour. In the Shenandoah Valley, strangers hugged us like family. In Arkansas, bats skimmed the river as we landed on a grass strip at dusk. In the Ozarks, a one-handed man traced his nub in my adventure log and told me, “You'll never forget me.” He was right.

And then came the thrill of meeting three other Stinson Reliants – an extraordinary sight, given that only about 25 remain in service. Fellow pilots pointed out that Scarlett's fuel vents were facing the wrong way, causing the vapor lock I'd been calling “boba lock” – like a tapioca pearl stuck in a straw.

Giving Wings to Wounds

With a quick adjustment, the issue disappeared, and Scarlett flew flawlessly the rest of the way home. After 13 years in a hangar, Scarlett was remembering how to be an airplane again – smooth, strong, reliable. By the time I reached Dallas, Texas, I trusted her completely. Sticky storms sparked near a temporary flight restriction (TFR) forced me to drop books just outside the 30-nautical-mile ring for aviators to collect later. Lightning streaked across the wingtip, and for a moment I considered requesting clearance through the TFR. Instead, a sliver of visual flight rules opened ahead, and a rainbow painted the desert floor, pointing me toward clear skies.

The end was in sight. Bermuda Dunes, California (KUDD) was a warm welcome, and Flabob Airport (KRIR) – a last-minute weather diversion – turned out to be a living, breathing relic of aviation past. By the time I crossed back over home turf, I could breathe again. Every airport and emergency landing strip below me was familiar. The finish line was near.

That's when it hit me: 100 books had now been dropped across the nation. No longer secret, they were out in the world – open to reviews, good, bad, or otherwise. Vulnerability rushed in. But I knew that, too, was part of the mission.

This tour wasn't about sales – the books aren't even available yet. It was about creating movement. Those 100 advance copies of *7 Primal Wounds: Break the Patterns Keeping You Stuck* are traveling hand-to-hand, state-to-state, like hot potatoes with wings. Readers are invited to discover their wound, sign the flight log, and pass the book on. The goal? To see these copies reach at least seven countries before the official launch in March 2026.

Because healing, like aviation, is about movement. It's about lift, trust, and the courage to take off even when fear insists you should stay grounded.

Pat Williams May Be the Oldest Newest 99!

By Eileen Carter, *Eastern Ontario Chapter*



March 27, 1960, was a day so windy in Toronto that the cable ferry to Toronto Island Airport couldn't run, so Miss **Patricia Williams** took a little tugboat across instead. Pat, just a month shy of her 29th birthday, wanted to start flight training. She had the choice between two schools: Central Airways Flying School, run by the Wong brothers, or Airgo,

which flew sleek Luscombes. Pat chose Airgo and arranged a trial flight. A retired RCAF pilot, Alexander Vance "A.V." Marshall, took her up for the introductory flight – or perhaps to try to scare her away! As Pat describes it, they climbed up to 5,000 feet, where the wind was so strong the plane was flying backward. Then A.V. put the airplane into a tailslide, followed by two inside loops. "He looked at me, and I'm beaming from ear to ear, and he knows he's got a live one," she described to me recently when I visited for her 94th birthday.

Her logbook shows what happened next. Her first official lesson was the following Sunday. She and A.V. took a 1959 Luscombe, C-FLVW, up several times a week for a month. Each flight in the sleek taildragger lasted about an hour, and she loved every minute. She remembers paying \$17 an hour for the plane and the instructor, paying for the lessons from her earnings working at a life insurance company.

She described her instructor, A.V. Marshall, as rough. "He could be a son of a bitch," she told me, laughing. "It took me a while to realize, when I was first flying and I'm lined up and coming into land, and all of a sudden a plane does this!" She waved her hand back and forth, and I can visualize the Luscombe inexplicably yawing back and forth on final. "He's putting his feet in the rudder pedals and throwing me off on purpose just to make me correct, which was smart." Pat grinned as she told me, remembering the challenge.

Almost exactly a month after that first lesson, and after 16 hours of dual training, Pat took C-FLVW into the sky solo. Her 10-minute flight on April 28 was followed by another 30-minute solo later that day. She mostly flew Victor Whiskey, and sometimes the second Luscombe, Victor Victor. Because Victor Whiskey didn't have flaps, she had to learn to slip proficiently, which became one of her favorite maneuvers to fly. A week after her first solo, she flew cross-country to London, Ontario, and then to Brantford, Ontario. On June 5, 1960, she completed her Private Pilot flight

A First That Won't Be Forgotten

This book tour may have been about planes and pages, but it was also about people. About the strangers who became friends. About choosing to soar when life tempts you to sit still. About rediscovering that even in a world of lasts, there are still firsts to chase – if only you're willing to chase them.

And for me, this first will never be forgotten.

test. She would have tested earlier, but the school was behind in providing the ground school, and she needed to complete her written exam.

In the following months she flew Cessna 172s, Cessna 140s, Cessna 150s, and a Fleet Canuck. She completed a Night Rating in late 1960 and then did a float checkout on a Piper PA-12 in 1961. She took family and friends flying in the Toronto area. In the fall of 1960, Pat and three other new pilots arranged to rent a Cessna 172 to fly to the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association (COPA) convention in the Laurentian Mountains region of Quebec. She was chosen to be PIC because she had the most recent instrument training, from completing her Night Rating. Unfortunately, the fog was so thick the morning of departure that their trip was canceled. She laughed about the story of an experienced pilot who told her he used the "iron compass" for navigation in poor weather. It was puzzling until he explained that he followed the railroad from town to town.

Her flight school, Airgo, had some regulatory problems in late 1961 and was sold. Pat wasn't a fan of the new school that replaced it. She did a few flights with them in early July 1962 and recalls that one of the new instructors challenged her to slip the Cessna 150 on final approach. She impressed him enough with her favorite maneuver that she was allowed to rent without further checkout. She had logged 125 hours in the two years of flying, in eight different types of aircraft. The final flight in her logbook is July 31, 1962. By then she had bought a sailboat and gotten married, ending her flying adventures.

Pat and I connected in 2021 through our mutual love of genealogy. One of my COVID-19 pandemic hobbies was genealogy, but Pat had been researching for 40 years! We were matched via Y-DNA from our mutual male ancestors, and I drove to Toronto to meet her in person in 2022. Her paternal grandmother was born a Carter, and through Y-DNA, we can infer that around 250 years ago, we share a common Carter male ancestor and historical locations, although we have yet to find a documented link. Perhaps in the future! We were also excited to find that we also shared a passion for aviation. I find her story inspirational, and I love hearing about her adventures.

Over the years I've told her about my involvement in The Ninety-Nines and recently suggested that we should help her become a member too! So, on my way home from the recent Eastern Canada Section Annual General Meeting (AGM), I dropped by her Toronto home to visit. She had found her logbook, and we submitted her application to become a Ninety-Nine just a few days later. 🌈

The Three-Minute Debrief That Changes Everything



Tammy Barlette

*Tucson Chapter,
Founder and CEO of
Crosscheck Mental
Performance Training*

Every pilot knows the importance of a post-flight debrief. We review weather decisions, analyze our performance, and note areas for improvement. But how often does that debrief leave us feeling defeated rather than motivated? How many times have you walked away from a flight focused solely on what went wrong, replaying your mistakes on an endless mental loop?

There's a better way, and it comes from the work of Dr. Nate Zinsser, whose research on mental performance has transformed how elite performers approach their training. In *The Confident Mind*, Dr. Zinsser introduces a powerful end-of-day practice: recording your ESP – effort, success, and progress. This simple technique trains your brain to recognize and reinforce what's working, building the confidence bank account that every high performer needs.

As pilots, we can adapt this practice into our post-flight routine with remarkable effect. Here's how it works: After every flight – whether it's a training session, a routine cross-country, or a challenging checkride prep – take three minutes to write down your ESP. Not just think about it. Write it down.

Effort: What did you put energy into? Maybe you arrived early to preflight thoroughly. Perhaps you pushed through fatigue to maintain your crosscheck during a long flight. Or you worked really hard to refine your flare. Effort isn't about outcomes, it's about recognizing that you showed up and gave what you had.

Success: What went well? This is where we often stumble because we discount the things that feel routine. But every smooth landing, every correct radio call, every stable approach is a success worth noting. Did you nail your altitude on that airwork? Execute a go-around decision without hesitation? Maintain situational awareness in busy airspace? Write it down. These aren't participation trophies – they're evidence of competence.

Progress: What improved, even slightly, since your last flight? Maybe your power management was smoother. Your scan became more efficient. You recovered from a mistake faster than before. Progress doesn't require perfection; it requires direction. Even recognizing what you learned from an error is progress.

The magic of ESP lies in what it does to your reticular activating system – the part of your brain that filters what you notice and pay attention to, as discussed in last month's column. When you consistently direct your attention toward effort, success, and progress, your brain learns to spot these patterns during flight, not just after. You're literally reprogramming your focus from threat-scanning to opportunity-seeking.

This practice doesn't mean ignoring mistakes or glossing over areas needing improvement. Those still matter. But they should be balanced with the reality that you're also doing many things right. Dr. Zinsser's research shows that confidence is built by systematically collecting evidence of your capability – ESP provides that evidence in writing.

Make this your new post-flight checklist item. Secure the aircraft, complete your logbook, and capture your ESP. Three minutes that could transform not just your next flight, but your entire trajectory as a pilot.

Because what you document is what you remember. And what you remember shapes who you become as a pilot. 

Tammy Barlette, a retired Air Force pilot with extensive instructor experience in the T-37, T-38, A-10, MQ-1, and MQ-9, understands the critical role mental performance plays in aviation. Her passion for teaching and belief in the transformative power of mental performance training drives her mission to help aviators enhance focus, reduce stress, and build confidence. These skills are not only essential for success in the cockpit but are also crucial for maintaining peak performance in every aspect of aviation.

Hey, Ladies...

Isn't it about time you had a uniform that's both flattering and functional??



Fit For Women

For female pilots, finding a uniform that truly fits remains a challenge. Most options are simply "sized-down" versions of men's designs, resulting in poor fit, restricted movement, and discomfort. From gaping shirts to awkward tailoring, many women are forced to compromise professionalism and performance for lack of better options.

Aeris Aviation Apparel is changing that. With thoughtfully tailored fits, functional and feminine details, and true-to-size designs, Aeris is setting a new standard for women's pilot uniforms. Their first line, launching in time for Christmas, promises professional attire that's as capable as the women wearing it.



Women's bodies aren't one-shape-fits--but most uniform vendors still act like they are. Without true-to-size fits, pilots are left with shirts that pinch, pull, or hang like boxes. Even with clothing stipends, many are restricted to one vendor—if the fit is off, they're stuck.



Functions on the Job

Beyond fit, functionality matters. Poor pocket placement, awkward closures, and restrictive tailoring can interfere with a pilot's job. A uniform should support performance, not hinder it.

Aeris understands that a pilot's shirt is more than just clothing, it's a tool. By designing with women in mind, they're helping pilots focus on flying, not fighting their uniforms. With Aeris, women in aviation can look sharp, feel comfortable, and perform at their best.



Elevate Your Uniform

To learn more, you can find Aeris Aviation Apparel on their website (www.AerisAviationApparel.com), Facebook ([AerisAviationApparel](https://www.facebook.com/AerisAviationApparel)), Instagram ([@AerisAviationApparel](https://www.instagram.com/AerisAviationApparel)), X ([BeAnAeris](https://twitter.com/BeAnAeris)), and LinkedIn ([AerisAviationApparel](https://www.linkedin.com/company/AerisAviationApparel)), or check out the company's story here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tOAixqyg6Q>.



Support our Kickstarter... launching soon!!

Wings Restored: The HIMS Program and the Road Back to the Skies

By Dr. Rachael Ferraro, AME and Pilot Advocate, Intermountain Chapter

I spent a few days in Denver, Colorado, surrounded by recovering addicts.

I prayed with them. I held their hands. I listened as they shared stories of brokenness and redemption, and I learned how to help guide them back to their wings. For most, the Human Intervention Motivational Study (HIMS) program didn't just save their careers – it saved their lives. It offered hope, forgiveness, and a road back home.

Not what you'd expect to hear from an aviation medical examiner attending a conference, right? Yeah, me neither.

I started writing this on my flight home, still raw from the experience. I haven't been moved like that in a long time. Memories of my father came rushing back, filling my heart. I remembered the serenity prayer, engraved on a Bible that sat open in our dining room. I thought about the day my mom caught him in relapse and, later, how a medical injury led to opioid addiction. Addiction may have clouded seasons of his life, but to me, he was always strength, stability, and love.

This wasn't just another medical meeting; this was a gathering of unions, pilots, the FAA – everyone with skin in the fight to save lives in aviation. Addiction is one of the heaviest topics our industry faces, and it demands attention.

The event opened with a speaker who is now a captain for a major airline. He recounted the day he hit rock bottom while sitting in a crack house. Yes, a crack house. Others spoke of jail time, divorce, and losing everything that mattered. And yet, here they were – living proof that recovery is possible and that broken wings can fly again.

That's where HIMS comes in.

HIMS began decades ago as an experimental program and has since grown into a nationwide safety net for pilots. It's a unique partnership between the FAA, airline unions, pilot peers, and aviation medical examiners like me. Together, we identify, treat, and

monitor pilots struggling with substance use disorders.

The goal isn't punishment. It's restoration.

The program is built on the recognition that addiction is a disease – treatable, but relentless. Left unaddressed, it destroys families, careers, and lives. But with structure, accountability, and support, recovery is possible. HIMS provides that framework: formal treatment, long-term monitoring, peer mentorship, and medical oversight.

What makes it powerful is that pilots don't walk this road alone. They have sponsors – other pilots who once sat where they sit now. They have airline peers who call, check in, and guide them through every stage. And they have AMEs who are trained not just to measure fitness for flight, but to help rebuild lives.


One of the highlights of this conference was being reunited with my friend and colleague, Dr. Teri Finklea. Teri is a senior AME in Jacksonville, Florida, and we first met a year ago during AME basic training. This time, we were together again to complete the next step in our training – certification as HIMS AMEs. Over the past year, we've shared not only professional milestones, but also personal conversations about life, family, and the meaning of this work.

For Teri, the HIMS program isn't just professional – it's deeply personal. As the wife of a major airline pilot who successfully completed the program, she's seen its power firsthand. "In medical school, we briefly studied how addiction affects the brain, but we never learned the personal side – how it devastates families and careers," she told me. Through HIMS, she came to understand the crucial difference between abstinence and sobriety. Abstinence is simply stopping the use of alcohol or drugs, which is nearly impossible to sustain without help. Sobriety, however, is a complete life change supported by structure, accountability, and community.

For Teri, that is the power of HIMS: It doesn't just return pilots to the cockpit, it restores relationships, repairs trust, and provides a support network unlike any other. "There will never be a larger, more loyal group of people that are genuinely invested in its members, wanting them to succeed in their sobriety and change every aspect of their life," she emphasized. "No one can walk that road alone – and that's exactly why I wanted to become a HIMS AME, to help guide airmen and their families along a proven path to recovery."

The numbers speak for themselves. More than 85% of pilots who enter HIMS successfully return to the cockpit, often with a stronger sense of purpose than before. Many will tell you the program didn't just save their wings – it saved their marriages, their health, and their lives.

What I witnessed in Denver was humbling. Pilots who once sat in jail cells, recovery centers, or crack houses now stand before their peers, not in shame, but in gratitude. They tell their stories, so others know it's possible. They're proof that aviation doesn't turn its back on its own.

And as I left that conference, I carried this truth with me: Even broken wings, with time and care, can return to stronger flight. 



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Disclaimer: This is general information and not medical advice. Always consult your AME or medical provider for personalized guidance.

Milestones

Sydney Alquiza-Dacumos
Solo
– Monterey Bay



Zohrah Amiri
Multiengine
Commercial; CFI
– Minnesota



Anita Ammon
CFI and CFII
– Dallas



Susan Bailey-Schmidt
A350 Captain for Delta
– Minnesota



Madison Barch
Commercial
– Michigan



Sophie Bowman
CFI; CFII
– Minnesota

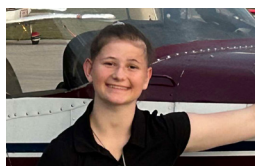
Mckenzie Byrne
CFI, CFII
– Orange County



Gabby Cassettari
CFI
– Oklahoma



Victoria Delshire
CFI
– Minnesota



Reya Dila
Private
– Michigan



Jennifer Drosos
Instrument
– Kentucky Bluegrass



Kimberly Elsholz
Commercial Seaplane;
Tailwheel
Endorsement
– Florida Suncoast



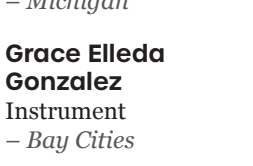
Rebecca Erb
Tailwheel
– Bay Cities



Sarah Fudali
Solo
– Maple Leaf



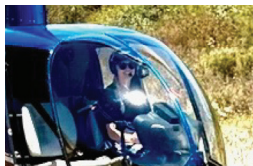
Alyson Galbraith
Commercial; CFI;
CFII; Multi-engine
– Michigan



Grace Elleda Gonzalez
Instrument
– Bay Cities



Mina Gu
MEI; CFII
– Bay Cities



Candace Hartjoy
CFI (Heli); CFII (Heli)
– Orange County



PingPing He
Solo
– Minnesota

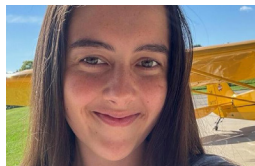


Loryn Heidema
Private
– Michigan

Bridgett Higgins
Instrument
– Monterey Bay



Alli Hinmon
CFII Helicopter
– San Diego

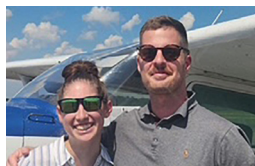


Katherine Jett
Private; Tailwheel
Endorsement
– Tennessee

Paige Kuhn
Instrument
– Wisconsin



Sydney Lavoie
Instrument
– Lake Charles



Brooke Lee
Private
– Kentucky Bluegrass

Julia Lindow
Solo
– Eastern New
England



Josie Newman
Private Pilot
– Minnesota



Alicia Plate
Private
– Maryland



Bailey Reiners
CFI
– Chicago Area



Vanessa Sampson
Multiengine
Commercial
– Minnesota



Lauren Stettbacher
Tailwheel; Instrument;
Commercial
– Wisconsin

Yvy Von Helde
CFI
– Old Dominion



Joelle Wash
Instrument
– Tennessee

Eden Witt
CFII
– Wisconsin

Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative Spring Class of 2025

– Laura Matheson, PPLI Team Lead, Manitoba Chapter

Congratulations PPLI Graduates!

We are proud to present our 2025A Class of Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative (PPLI) graduates. These ladies saw massive personal and career growth over the past 18-plus months. If you know them, reach out and congratulate them on this accomplishment.

Alex May	Liz Brassaw	Kelli Weed
Bisola Saliu	Elizabeth Hunt Carll	Sara Jolie Gagne
Bridgett Cornett	Halley Mallory	Victoria Czyszczon
Lizzie Domingue	Ivy Adams	Kristi Weber

Congratulations, Emily Dykstra and Zoan Harclerode 2025A Mentoring Coordinators of the Session



After college graduation and during a short stint in finance, Emily's neighbor introduced her to aviation with a fun flight in his Beechcraft Duke. Although Emily always loved being in airports, it never occurred to her that she could be the one flying the planes. She signed up for flight lessons and quickly realized that nothing compared to being in the air. She completed her flight training and

transitioned to full time instructing in February 2023, when she had the opportunity to instruct in Cirrus aircraft. In July 2024, Emily joined NetJets as a Citation Latitude pilot and enjoys giving back to the community that helped her through mentorship and camaraderie.



Zoan's journey began when a high school friend took her on a flight. She knew it was only a matter of time and money before she would become a pilot herself. Ten years later, she was able to take leave from work and, in four months, completed her ratings through Certificated Flight Instructor. She was hired by a high-volume flight school in Arizona and a year later qualified for the ATP-AMEL. For the

next 30 years, she continued instructing and, with her husband's support, raised two daughters. While instructing, Zoan was able to broaden her experiences – teaching formation flying, aerobatics, air racing, mountain flying – and earned private pilot privileges in helicopters. She flew for individuals in a Duke, Golden Eagle, and a Twin Comanche, and as second in command (SIC) in a Citation II. It was her time in the Citation that gave her jet fever. She was unsuccessful in training at SkyWest but will be forever grateful for the time and mentoring she received. After a year and a half serving at a Part 141 flight school as the chief instructor, she retired from flight instructing to get her first Type Rating in a Citation Excel. After graduating from PPLI 2022A, she received her Type Rating in the Citation Jet series and was hired by Pinnacle Aviation as a captain.

It's with an abundance of enthusiasm and gratitude that Zoan drives on, to learn and share all she can about the privileges and responsibilities of piloting an aircraft. She especially looks forward to uplifting and inspiring others.

Thank You, PPLI Volunteers

The PPLI is made possible by the following women who dedicate many hours every month to mentoring, running the PPLI backend, and getting the program ready for the next session's incoming applicants.

Ali Peterkort	Jeanne Rieck	Maria Jose
Allison Harker	Jen Davis	Montero Cordero
Antonia Coppey	Jennifer Chance	McKenzie
Beth Powell	Jennifer	Krutsinger
Christine Oksas	Prutsman-Pfeiffe	Melissa Shantz
Contessa Bishop	Joelle Erickson	Rebecca Van Snick
Em Hogenson	Kaylynn Tobias	Riley Watkins
Emily Dykstra	Kelly Sielis	Sarah Al Wasaibai
Emily Salley Hicks	Kerry Hahne	Shelby King
Emmy Dillon	Kim Barwick	Stacy Sheard
Erica Swenson	Laura Matheson	Stephanie Kight
Heather Hills	Lili de la Cruz	Sydney Rapp
Ileana Pineda	Sanchez	Yanina Belaziorava
Irene Lopez	Maria JungYeun	Zoan Harcelode
	Cho	

About the Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative

PPLI Overview

The PPLI aims to accelerate the advancement of women in all pilot professions, facilitate dynamic mentoring, and enhance our leadership role in the aviation community. The program typically takes 18 months to complete, broken down into three phases for participants: Captain, Captains' Circle, and Navigator.

Phase 1 – Captain

Incoming PPLI participants are called Captains. They are paired with two mentors during the first six months of the program – a Navigator and a Mentoring Coordinator (MC). Navigators are near graduation and remain in the program as participants. Navigators and Captains communicate three to four times a month to provide structure and accountability. Mentoring Coordinators are volunteers; MCs communicate once a month with their Captains and Navigators, either separately or together.

Phase 2 – Captains' Circle

During the second half of the program, Captains work together to discuss important aviation topics – such as preparing to upgrade to pilot in command (PIC) or staying healthy with a flying job. They also have optional career advancement resources like resume and interview workshops and seminars available to them.

Phase 3 – Navigator

During the final six months, participants become Navigators and work with an incoming Captain to provide mentorship and guidance. As mentioned above, Navigators work with a Mentoring Coordinator during this phase as well.

Coordination Team Members Are Volunteers

Aside from Mentoring Coordinators, the PPLI needs support with pre-program Google Classroom setup, administrative duties, payment processing, and participant tracking. Our crew coordinators, online admins, and leadership coordinators fill these roles. You may hear these terms in relation to the PPLI.



Who We Become

By Donna Miller, Colorado Chapter



“You cannot stay on the summit forever; you have to come down again. So why bother in the first place? Just this: What is above knows what is below but what is below does not know what is above. One climbs, one sees. One descends, one sees no longer, but one has seen. There is an art of conducting oneself in the lower regions by the memory

of what one saw higher up. When one can no longer see, one can at least still know.” – Rene Duamal

When I read this, I immediately thought about flying for so many reasons. We are changed when we return from every flight we take.

Learning to fly changes us. When I was a fairly new pilot, I asked an airline captain about her most memorable flight. Without hesitation, she said, “My first solo.” I was disappointed – had I really already experienced my most memorable moment? Of course, I learned that there would be thousands of memorable flights and moments, but nothing changes us so profoundly as who we are when we return from our first solo flight. It’s the foundation for all the adventures that await us. It’s joining a community of fellow aviators who know what we seek to learn. It’s the joy of discovering something new with a rich history and an unlimited future.

I love being with fellow flyers – the camaraderie that comes from the shared experience of having seen the world from a different perspective. I love that whether we’re new or seasoned, civilian or military, professional or recreational, piston or jet, hot air or rotor, what joins us is that we all share the same sky. We regale one another with our stories and share intense emotions as we imagine ourselves in one another’s shoes.

I’m inspired by aviators for their courage and for how far they take their passion for flying. I look at the intense devotion of brand-new pilots ready to take on the Air Race Classic – not knowing what they don’t know, willing to learn, and knowing they’ll become better pilots for having accepted the challenge. I love following the journeys of pilots who take aviation in directions I never sought out, like my friend Kerri, who flew Navy P-2 Neptunes as firebombers before pursuing a career as an airline captain. I admire the amazing Julie Clark, who, while navigating an airline career as one of the very first women airline pilots, was also a full-time professional airshow pilot. I’m in awe because they’ve seen the sky from a totally different perspective than I have.

As Rene Duamal stated, “We cannot stay on the summit forever.” As the weather cools and there are fewer fly-ins to attend, let’s cherish the memories of this past year. Though we may be grounded by the weather, we are better humans for having climbed into the sky.



Lake Charles Chapter members Cathie Cox, Sandra Leder, Karen Wade, and Margaret Ferguson.

LAKE CHARLES CHAPTER

The Lake Charles Chapter met in conjunction with a fly-in at De Quincy Industrial Air Park (5R8), in De Quincey, Louisiana. From the display tent, information about The 99s was provided. A high school student, Maggie Conde, and her father visited and received information about our organization. Pictured by the helicopter that was on display and owned by Karen and her husband, Ashley Wade, are: Cathie Cox, Sandra Leder, Karen Wade, and Margaret Ferguson. Dominique Durand and Anna-Kathryn Potier also attended “Pancakes and Propellers” at Abbeville Chris Crusta Memorial Airport (KIYA) in Abbeville, Louisiana.

– Sandra Leder



Chairman Vickie getting ready for a flight with a member of the Sky Soaring Glider Club.

CHICAGO AREA CHAPTER

Two recent Chicago Area Chapter meetings this summer showed we are always learning. Sharon Schorsch hosted our meeting at Kenosha Regional Airport (KENW) in Wisconsin. A presentation that qualified for FAA WINGS credit was given by Elaine Kauh from the Milwaukee FSDO titled, “The Wide World of Aviation Careers!” The following month, we met at Sky Soaring (PVT), hosted by Chapter Chair Vickie Szewczyk. Chicago has a great history of gliding, with Octave Chanute developing and flying his glider designs at nearby Indiana Dunes. The Sky Soaring Glider Club provided a very interesting presentation, followed by rides for those who wanted them; Vickie and Chapter Secretary Lisa Mitchell were the first to jump at the chance.

– Diane Cozzi

Grass Roots



Top: Minnesota 99s celebrating the birthday of 99-year-old Nadine Sugden. | Bottom left: Minnesota 99s at compass rose painting at the Luverne, Minnesota Airport (KLYV). | Bottom right: Marcy Drescher received the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award for 50 years of active and safe flying.

MINNESOTA CHAPTER

Summer has been a busy time for the Minnesota Chapter and our members. In July, we had an outing to the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport (KMSJ) viewing area. Then in August, we planned a flyout to the Granite Falls Municipal Airport (KGDB), but bad weather diverted us to a local lunch event instead. Cheryl Daml, Ellen Quist, and our chapter hosted a companion flyer course at the Anoka County Airport (KANE) on August 16, and we made \$210 for our scholarship fund.

We went to Albert Lea for Marcy Drescher's Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award ceremony on August 23. Congratulations, Marcy, for 50 years of active and safe flying! Only 168 Minnesotan pilots (including two women, one of whom is a 99) share this award. She received a plaque, a pin, and a blue folder from the FAA that contained all the paperwork they had on her as a pilot (test scores, ratings, renewals, etc.). Over the years, Marcy has attained a long list of ratings and certificates, including Single and Multi-Commercial, ATP, Balloon Solo, Seaplane, CFI, and CFII. She also has her own flight school at the Albert Lea Airport (KAEL), and she flew freight for United Parcel Service.

We had our summer Quarterly Meeting on September 7 at the Anoka County Airport (KANE). Girls in Aviation Day was once again a success with our annual booth on September 20 at the Flying Cloud Airport (KFCM). And at the end of September, we painted a compass rose at Quentin Aanenson Field Airport (KLYV).

Lastly, please join us in wishing Nadine Sugden a very happy 99th birthday! Yes, she is a 99 that is 99! Nadine has been a 99 since 1971 and started to fly in 1958. Nadine and her husband George, a dedicated 49½, flew all the time. She has served as Chapter Chair and flown daffodils for the Cancer Society and blood for the Red Cross. Nadine and George flew Mayo Clinic patients and were very instrumental in the aviation program and sponsored scholarships at Mankato State University. Nadine recently created the Sugden Aviation Endowment to support aviation students at Minnesota State University. She and George were inducted into the Forest of Friendship in 2014. We helped celebrate her big day with a party in September.

- Dr. Melissa Aho



Top: Cheryl Thompson's induction with Linton Wells II, Forest Co-Chair; her family is in foreground. | Bottom left: Joan Widener speaks to one of the groups at Topeka Regional Airport; Cheryl Thompson stands by. | Bottom right: Tammy Willits in her Corvallis with two kids at Flying Cloud Airport.

NORTHEAST KANSAS

September was a super busy month for the Northeast Kansas Chapter. We honored our longtime member Cheryl Thompson with an induction into the International Forest of Friendship in Atchison, Kansas. Chapter members also participated in two Girls in Aviation Days: one at Topeka Regional Airport (KFOE) and one at Flying Cloud Airport (KFCM) in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

- Sara Tompson

BAY CITIES CHAPTER

Wings Over Water: Bay Cities 99s Explore Volunteer Aviation with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

At our May 2025 meeting in Livermore, California, the Bay Cities 99s were honored to welcome a very special guest: Commodore Jim Losi of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary 11th District. He was joined by fellow auxiliariist and pilot Adam Kovalevsky, who shared insights into the Auxiliary’s aviation program and its many opportunities for licensed pilots.

Their visit sparked genuine interest from many of us. Jim and Adam walked us through the breadth of missions that Auxiliary pilots support, from maritime patrols to environmental monitoring, and extended a warm invitation for our members to attend the Auxiliary’s upcoming bi-monthly meeting. Several of us – Lydia Royaute, Ashley Walker, Jessica Arciero, and myself – enthusiastically accepted the invitation and attended.

At that meeting, we learned even more about the Auxiliary’s vital work and were invited to participate in their annual crew safety meeting. Even more exciting: we were offered the chance to fly a simulated Coast Guard patrol flight. Naturally, we said yes.

I had the privilege of flying my aircraft, “Madam,” for the patrol with Adam and Ashley. We departed Livermore, California, on a Delta Patrol – a simulated mission to locate abandoned derelict vehicles (ADV) that might pose a hazard to boaters near the Antioch area. From there, we followed the deep-water channel to the Port of Sacramento, then tracked the separate deep-water route to the Port of Stockton. We flew the mission at approximately 1,000 feet mean sea level and cruised at 100 knots.

The experience was equally eye-opening and inspiring. It highlighted how Auxiliary aviation supports maritime safety in practical, tangible ways and how pilots like us can meaningfully contribute.

Even if you don’t own your own plane, you can still join the Auxiliary as a pilot. Many missions are flown using member-owned aircraft with shared crew roles, making it easy for any qualified pilot to participate.

Whether you’re flying a patrol route, attending safety briefings, or supporting community education, there is a place in the Auxiliary for every skill set and interest level.

Why Consider Joining the Coast Guard Auxiliary?

Aviation with Purpose

Pilots in the Auxiliary conduct coastal and inland waterway patrols, assist in search and rescue training, and support environmental missions. It’s a fulfilling way to put your flying hours to meaningful use.

Broader Missions

Not all service is in the air. Volunteers also assist with public education, boating safety classes, communications, and community outreach.

Ongoing Training

Members receive training in navigation, emergency procedures, radio operations, and more. The crew safety meeting we attended underscored the organization’s high standard of professionalism and commitment to safety.

Community and Camaraderie

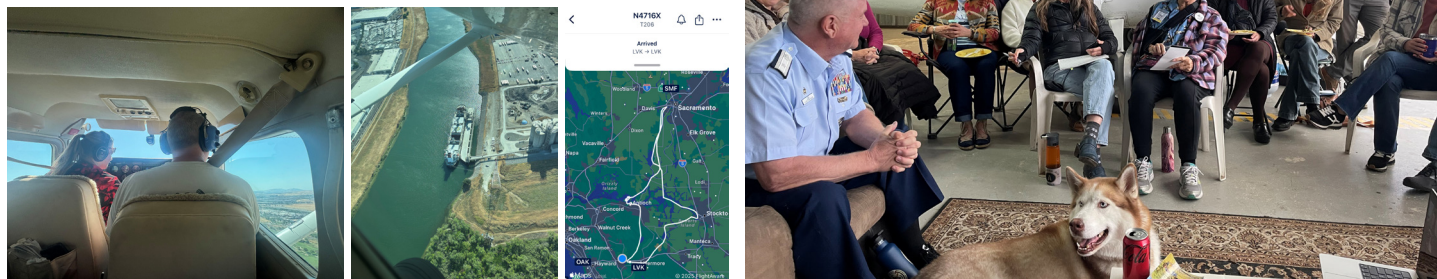
Joining the Auxiliary means becoming part of a nationwide network of service-minded individuals. It’s a welcoming, mission-focused community that values teamwork, integrity, and readiness.

Flexible Involvement

Whether you can contribute a few hours a month or dive into regular missions, there are roles to match every schedule.

The Auxiliary is currently welcoming new members, and Commodore Losi and Adam made it clear that the door is wide open for The 99s. If you’re looking to extend your wings and serve your community from the air, there’s never been a better time to get involved. To learn more or find a local flotilla, visit www.cgaux.org

– Sheila Jessup



Photos left to right: Pilot Sheila Jessup (left), and co-pilot Adam Kovalevsky during “simulated” USCG patrol (“simulated” since not on official orders). (Photo by Ashley Walker, Bay Cities Chapter). | Photo taken of cargo ship in deep water channel while on “simulated” USCG patrol. (Photo by Sherri Sylva, guest of Bay Cities Chapter). | The route taken of the “simulated” USCG patrol (Photo by Sheila Jessup, Bay Cities Chapter) | Bay Cities Chapter meeting at Livermore Airport (KLVK) on May 12, at Sheila Jessup’s hangar: (left to right) Jim Losi (USCG Auxiliary), Bay Cities Chapter members Nicole Malherbe, Patty Barrera, Amanda Boyd, Jenny Dixon, Maya Cardenas-Berkowitz, Cynthia Glenn, Maggie Cook, Ashley Walker, guest Cody Jokela, Erica Ames, and finally, Sheila’s dog Silas. (Photo by Adam Kovalevsky, USCG Auxiliary).

Grass Roots



Top left: Mechanic Miranda Spurgeon with North Central Section Governor Sue Glisson. | Top right: Kentucky Bluegrass members staffing the booth at Capitol City Airport Day, Frankfort, Kentucky. | Middle left: Kentucky Bluegrass members staffing the booth at WAI Girls In Aviation Day Bowman Field, Louisville, Kentucky. | Middle right: Erin Thompson, International Forest of Friendship 2025 Honoree. | Bottom left: Kaye Combs Moore going for a birthday flight. | Bottom right: Kentucky Bluegrass members and friends at Derby Dinner Playhouse play, *Come From Away*.

KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS CHAPTER

Kentucky Bluegrass 99s met at Clark County Airport in Sellerburg, Indiana, in August. Guest Miranda Spurgeon shared her experience as an A&P mechanic for the flight club there. Miranda is a pilot with more than 1,500 hours whose ultimate goal is to fly for an airline. Kaye Combs Moore celebrated her “something-plus” birthday with a flight from Georgetown Scott County Regional (27K). Kaye, a FAA Master Pilot Awardee, recently marked 60 years as a 99.

Kentucky Bluegrass members were busy in September enjoying a performance at the Derby Dinner Playhouse. The play, *Come From Away*, was about the grounding of all aircraft on September 11, 2001. Passengers on flights landing in Gander, Newfoundland, were assisted during their stay by townspeople until flights could resume. It was a lively, entertaining production highlighting the kindness of the Canadian townspeople.

September also found us staffing two 99s booths on the same day. One booth was at the WAI Girls In Aviation Day at Bowman Field (KLOU) in Louisville, Kentucky, and the other at Capital City Airport (KFFT) Aviation Day in Frankfort, Kentucky. Thanks to our members who presented our sectional scavenger hunt to those that visited our booths.

Erin Thompson, nominated by the Kentucky Bluegrass Chapter, was an honoree at the 2025 International Forest of Friendship. We thank Erin for her many years of service to The 99s and the chapter.

- Sue Glisson



Orange County Chapter members enjoyed an in-depth lecture titled “Discover What You Can Do with Drones,” presented at Santa Ana College.

ORANGE COUNTY

On August 29, 2025, members of the Orange County Chapter gathered at Santa Ana College for an engaging lecture titled “Discover What You Can Do with Drones.” Thirteen Orange County 99s, along with a few guests, attended the event, which was led by Professors Dori Dumont and Myrna Aguilar – both faculty members at the college. From the beginning, the presenters emphasized that drones, known as small uncrewed aerial systems (sUAS), are rapidly transforming many industries and offering numerous exciting, new career opportunities. Beyond recreational flying, today’s sUAS are being used in public safety, logistics, search and rescue, commercial inspection, mapping, surveying, social media, entertainment, underwater marine biology, and even academic research. Dori noted that attorneys are already building practices around the use of sUAS, underscoring the technology’s growing impact on society.

The lecture attendees also learned about the FAA’s Part 107 framework, which governs commercial drone operations, and core rules: maintaining visual line of sight (VLOS); using Remote ID; employing anti-collision lights for flights over people or at night; and the requirement of eight hours from bottle to throttle. Both commercial and recreational fliers must now complete the Recreational UAS Safety Test (TRUST) exam and be ready to show proof upon request. Registration, the professors explained, is conveniently managed through the FAA’s DroneZone portal. Additionally, the FAA’s B4UFLY app helps pilots easily identify where – and in what airspace – they can safely pilot their sUAS. One participant inquired whether hands-on flying was required before earning a remote pilot certificate; both professors explained, surprisingly, it is not.

The evening closed with a discussion about Santa Ana College’s certificate and associate’s degree programs in sUAS, designed to prepare students for professional careers in drone operations. Dori emphasized that while many Southern California sUAS operators remain amateurs in their ability to operate and comprehend sUAS capability, the college’s mission is to offer the professional training needed to fly safely, legally, and with purpose. By the end of the session, attendees left with not only a stronger understanding of drone regulations and opportunities but also a sense of excitement about the possibilities that sUAS bring to aviation and beyond.

- Sanjal Gavande



Top: Girls in Aviation participants at the Detroit, Michigan, event | Bottom left: Alyson Galbraith and Sarah Haskett at The 99s experience booth during Girls in Aviation event in Grand Rapids Michigan. | Bottom center: Rebecca Durbin, U.S. Marine Corps Captain, was the keynote speaker at the Detroit Girls in Aviation event. | Bottom right: Dolly Ross and Chapter Chair Linda Langrill at the opening of the terminal at Hillsday Municipal Airport (KJYM).

MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter held Zoom meetings in both August and September. In August, our Aviation and Space Education Chair Melanie McNicholas shared important information about upcoming changes to the FAA NOTAMS system – planned for implementation in October 2025. In September, our Secretary and Social Media Chair Frances Rose led a discussion of our book club selection, *Straight on Til Morning* by Mary S. Lovell. The book is a biography of Beryl Markham, who was the first person to fly solo non-stop across the Atlantic Ocean from east to west.

Chapter Chair Linda Langrill also provided members with an overview of the changes to the Mary von Mach Scholarship during our September meeting. Member Julie Lowman, the first winner of the scholarship following recent changes, shared how she will be using the scholarship to help her reach her flying goals. The Mary von Mach Scholarship is a \$1,000 scholarship, awarded annually to be used to pay for certification and rating checkrides.

The Chapter recognized the following members who were awarded the Michigan Chapter Sandy Denton Traveling Trophy:

- **Madison Barch** – Instrument Rating (July)
- **Rachel Morrow** – CFII (August)
- **Reya Dila** – Private Pilot (September)

We recently welcomed four new members: Olivia Forest, Julie Lowman, Abby Keller, and Grace Eger.

Debbie Howell has volunteered to serve as the Chapter's Fundraising Chair and Reya Dila will be assisting Social Media Chair Frances Rose with enhancing our presence on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Michigan Chapter member Dolly Ross traveled from her home in Naples, Florida, to attend the dedication of a new terminal at Hillsdale Municipal Airport (KJYM) in Hillsdale, Michigan. Dolly's daughter, Ginger Moore, oversaw the construction and funding for the airport during her tenure as airport manager. Dolly and her husband, George, flew out of Hillsdale in the 70s and 80s. Dolly has been a member of The 99s since 1971 and she will turn 95 years "young" on December 23 of this year.

Michigan Chapter members volunteered at multiple Girls in Aviation events sponsored by the Women in Aviation on September 20, 2025. The events were targeted for girls ages 8-18 interested in careers in aviation and were held at multiple locations across the state. Member Sarah Haskett staffed an experience booth at the event held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, highlighting opportunities with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. Member Rebecca Durbin, U.S. Marine Corps Captain, was the keynote speaker at the Detroit event.

– Barb Vukits



Top left: 99s at AirVenture in Oshkosh: Jun Oikawa, Cat Stritenberger, Captain Laura Savino (Old Dominion Chapter), 99s Executive Director Jill van Egmond. | top right: Civil Air Patrol Captain Lisa Blair and guest Lt. Samantha Fisher at the Cleveland Air Show. | Bottom left: Erin Walling and EV Lechuga at Girls in Aviation Day at the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton. | Bottom center: Oshkosh volunteers, 49 1/2 Andy Peterkort and Ali Peterkort, Jun Oikawa, Minetta Gardinier. | Bottom right: Jun Oikawa and Liz Poepelman at their WASP exhibit.

ALL-OHIO CHAPTER

Our members Peg Ballou, Jun Oikawa, Ali Peterkort, and Catherine Stritenberger volunteered in The 99s booth at Oshkosh in July. Lisa Blair is a captain in the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) and shared information about CAP with the public at the Cleveland Air Show in August.

September 28 was Girls in Aviation Day at the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio. Our members EV Lechuga, Erin Walling, and Jun Oikawa volunteered and led a riveting activity demonstrating what Rosie the Riveter experienced. They also had the girls make key chains with mini aircraft. Our chapter booth had over 300 visitors and was very popular.

– Margaret Hazlett

Grass Roots



Left to right: Mary Woody, Adrienne Smith, Diane Coffey (prospective 99), Ashley Coffey (prospective 99), Liz Edgar, Makenzie Estevan (prospective 99), Wendy Turner, Janice Pelletti. Not pictured, Brenda Robinette.

APPALACHIAN AVIATRIXES CHAPTER

The Appalachian Aviatrixes gathered on September 13 to meet and greet new and prospective members. After a potluck at the home of Brenda Robinette, members learned about each other's aviation experiences and about the organization and its benefits. New chapter member Wendy Turner (formerly Houston Chapter) is going to mentor Ashley Coffey as she begins flight lessons and joins The 99s.

- Janice Pelletti



OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

Over the weekend of September 13-14, the Old Dominion Chapter and friends painted a new compass rose for Culpeper Regional Airport (KCJR) in preparation for Culpeper Air Fest on October 11, 2025.

Assisting in this effort were Nancy Schuster, RJ McGlasson, Tom Leone, Patric Roos, Sanya and Sumeet Bhalla, Hannah Rust, Mirelle Groff, Jim Restel, Catherine Lomis, Barb Gruber, MaryAnn and Gary Schaffer, Cynthia Axell, Frankie Valesquez, Saman Fatima, Rebecca Akhigbe, Barbara Koehler, Allan Badrow, Sam and Tonya Woodward, Tatiana and Ekatarina Zoubareva, and Chris Godart and Carter.

Also, a shout out to all the fellow 99s from various chapters who offered advice.

- Susan Passmore



MONTEREY BAY CHAPTER

On August 29, 15 volunteers completed repainting the compass rose and CTAF numbers at Salinas Municipal Airport (KSNS) in Salinas, California. The painting required 200 gallons of paint and took eight hours to tape the numbers, letters and borders, then paint and clean-up. Lunch was at the airport restaurant, The Flying Artichoke, and provided by the airport staff. So, whenever you have a chance to fly over the California coastline going north and begin to see green patches of farmland, look for our compass rose and CTAF. We are located at 36.39°N, 121.37°W. Michaele Serasio is our Airmarking Chair.

- Jeanne Sabankaya



COLORADO CHAPTER

A Fresh New Compass Rose at Greeley Airport!

The Colorado 99s took to the ramp with paint, teamwork, and plenty of spirit to create a striking blue-and-white compass rose. Pilots can now align their aircraft with true accuracy – and admire the artistry – thanks to the volunteers who braved the sun and made it shine. A true landmark of aviation tradition and community pride!

- Kristin Smith



Top left: Memphis Ninety-Nine Deborah Yarbrough's brother, Terry Caudill, assisted by reducing all measurements from an 80 foot diameter rose to a 10 foot rose. (Photo Architect). | Top right: painters of the kitchen compass rose. | Bottom: Memphis Chapter members at Delta Regional Airport.

MEMPHIS CHAPTER

On June 21, 2025, the Memphis Chapter gave “women in the kitchen” a whole new meaning – painting the iconic 99s compass rose in the kitchen of Fayette County Airport (KFYE).

With energy and teamwork, our members carefully laid out the north-south and east-west lines, followed by the full compass rose design, scaled to one-eighth the size of a traditional compass rose. Fayette County Airport generously provided the paint and even matched the kitchen colors to complement our masterpiece.

Painted with epoxy, we had to move fast. There were no second chances once it started to dry. The final touch came with free handing the blue paint to preserve the crispness of the white. No tape, just talent!

A huge thank you to everyone who helped make this creative project a success. We left our mark in the most unexpected and beautiful way. Painters included Cristin and Chris Bell, Ashley Jones, Linda Richards, Lois and Randall Horne, Deborah Yarbrough, Rhonda Ashbey, and Marcell Bink.

On Saturday, August 2, 2025, pilots from the Memphis Chapter landed at Delta Regional Airport (KDRP) in Colt, Arkansas, where they began their day with a pancake breakfast followed by an FAA flight safety seminar. The event brought together aviation enthusiasts for a morning of good food and vital flight safety education. The *Times-Herald* published an article about the event: <https://thnews.com/women-pilots-gather-with-ninety-nines-at-colt-airport/>

– Lois Horne



Our newest Life Members

Alicia Austin

Western Washington Chapter

Elizabeth Britten

Santa Clara Valley Chapter

Susan Conner-Steeb

San Luis Obispo County Chapter

Kathleen Felker

Palomar Chapter

Lara Gaerte

North Central Section

Lori Parker

Sedona Red Rockettes Chapter

Jan Squillace

Kitty Hawk Chapter

Pat Thomas

Southwest Section

Millie Thomas

Florida First Coast Chapter

Catherine Vajtay

New Jersey Chapter

Joyce Woods

Rio Grande Norte Chapter

Audrey Young

Sutter Buttes Chapter



Our most recently enlisted Friends of The 99s

Dr. Margaret Arnold

Beverly, MA

Francis Algoso

Burnaby, BC

Skye Amherst

Elmhurst, IL

Cassidy Bell

Reno, NV

Don Campion

Fort Lauderdale, FL

Megan Fine

Silverthorne, CO

Josee Forgues

Orleans, ON

Janie Haynes

Bartlett, TN

David Kloss

Andover, MA

Barbara Peterson

Cheyenne, WY

Grant Prellwitz

Romeoville, IL

Carrie Raymond

South Paris, ME

Robert (Rob) Rousey

Scarsdale, NY

Abigail Smith

Carson City, NV

Al Stuber

Lawrence, KS

Kiu LamWong

Winnipeg, MB



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.

Constance Breien

Monterey Bay Chapter

December 5, 2024

Nell Bright (WASP)

Sedona Red Rockettes Chapter

June 28, 2025

Paula Hook

Scioto Valley Chapter

June 28, 2025

Adele Fogle

First Canadian Chapter

July 20, 2025

Sharon Bockleman

Greater Kansas City Chapter

August 3, 2025

Rachel Pruett

Tennessee Chapter

August 5, 2025

Carolyn Van Newkirk

Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter

August 10, 2025

Kathy Walton

Reno Area Chapter

October 5, 2025

MEMBERSHIP GIVEAWAY!

WIN A LIGHTSPEED DELTA ZULU HEADSET

ENTER THE FREE DRAW

All members can receive a \$100 discount on a Lightspeed headset, and Lightspeed will donate 10% of sales to the Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Trust – making it possible for The Ninety-Nines to award more scholarships.

Use promo code 99S100 at checkout.

HOW TO ENTER

1. Scan the QR code
2. Register online

