

September/October 2026



Ninety-Nines

Inspiring Women Pilots Since 1929

GETTING COMFORTABLE IN THE MOUNTAINS

p. 29

plus

CONFERENCE WRAP UP

2026 INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

2026 ARC TERMINUS

Ninety-Nines Magazine

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scholarships, and mutual support while honoring our
unique history and sharing our passion for flight.

Let's Get Social    

ON THE COVER

Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship recipient Julia Polasik gets comfortable flying Idaho's backcountry during a mountain and canyon flying course with McCall Mountain Canyon Flying Seminars.

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Thank You to Our Sponsors



2026

SEP

- 1 **Houston Chapter Poker Run**
scs99s.org/houston-99s-poker-run-2026
- 1 **Pikes Peak/Colorado/Wyoming Chapters Poker Run**
pikespeak99s.org/2026-poker-run
- 12 **International Forest of Friendship 50th Anniversary**
 "World Friendship through Flight" Induction Ceremony
 Atchison, Kansas
vifof.org
- 23-24 **4th Female Instructor Pilots Meeting (FIPM)**
 Reykjavik & Húsafell, Iceland
elevatetheline.com
- 24-27 **Southwest Section Fall Meeting**
 Las Vegas, Nevada
sws99s.org/events/fall-section/
- 24-27 **Southeast Section Fall Meeting**
 Nashville, Tennessee
nashville99smeeting@gmail.com
scs99s.org/registration
- 25-27 **West Canada Section Fall Meeting**
 Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
bccoast99s@gmail.com

OCT

- 1 **Deadline for Fall First Wings Awards Application**
ninety-nines.org/amelia-earhart-scholarships-awards.htm
- 2-3 **Mid-Atlantic Section Fall Meeting**
[Maria Esparraguera](mailto:Maria.Esparraguera@comcast.net)
mdegirt@comcast.net
- 2-4 **North Central Section Fall Meeting**
 Indianapolis, Indiana
Indiana Chapter
[Erin Hammer](mailto:erin@hammergrip.tv)
erin@hammergrip.tv
- 23-24 **South Central Section Fall Meeting**
 Tyler, Texas
Texas Dogwood Chapter
scs99s.org/registration
- 25 **San Antonio Chapter Pumpkin Smash**
 Castroville Municipal Airport, Texas
secure.givelively.org/donate/south-central-section-of-the-ninety-nines/2nd-annual-pumpkin-smash-fly-in
- 25-27 **West Canada Section Fall Meeting**
 Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
- 31 **Little Flyer's Trick or Treat**
 Fayette County Airport, Somerville, Tennessee
Memphis Chapter
lois_nice@hotmail.com

NOV

- 6-7 **International Board of Directors Meeting**
 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
HQ@ninety-nines.org

2027

JAN

- 1 **Deadline for Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Application**
Apps@AEScholarship.org
- 15 **Deadline for Chapter to Section AE Scholarship Application**
 (where applicable)
Apps@AEScholarship.org
- 15 **Deadline for submitting Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative (PPLI) Application for Mentoring Spring Session**
ninety-nines.org/resources.htm

FEB

- 5 **Deadline for Section to Trustee AE Scholarship Application**
Apps@AEScholarship.org

MAR

- 5-6 **International Board of Directors Spring Meeting**
 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
HQ@ninety-nines.org APR
- 23-25 **Southeast Section Spring Meeting**
 Jonesborough, Tennessee
[Mary Woody](mailto:Mary.Woody@mmh.woody@gmail.com)
mmh.woody@gmail.com

SEP

- 10-12 **Ninety-Nines International Conference**
 Sydney, Australia

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

MAGAZINE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

are one month prior to issue date.
 NOV/DEC issue deadline: Oct 1.

IN SEARCH OF SERIOUS SLEUTHS

Help Us Continue Our Charter Member Project

The 99s Publications Committee has undertaken the very important project of featuring The 99s' charter members in the *Ninety-Nines* magazine. It is our intention to shine a light on all 99 of them in the issues leading up to The 99s' 100th anniversary. This project entails significant research, since many charter members married several times – so they'll have several name changes – and often little is written about their aviation accomplishments. Once the research is complete, a 400-500-word write-up must be submitted to the Publications Committee, along with a high-resolution photo of the charter member. While this is a great way for a 99 member to contribute to The 99s, others outside the organization can contribute to the project and will be given credit for their assistance.

If you have a love of history and research and are looking for a way to contribute to The 99s right now, Contact Lori at 99spubschair@gmail.com and join the team.



The President's Message



Terry Carbonell

President

The Ninety-Nines, Inc.

president@ninety-nines.org

that will inspire generations yet to come. The best way to honor our founders is not simply to look back at what they accomplished – but to continue the work they began.

Today, more than 7,500 members in countries around the world carry that legacy forward every time they mentor a new pilot, award a scholarship, preserve our history, volunteer in their chapter, or simply encourage another woman to chase her aviation dreams. That is the true strength of The Ninety-Nines.

We've already launched our first international flying activity – the Kickoff to Summer Scavenger Hunt – and I hope you'll join the fun. Whether you fly every week or are just looking for a reason to get back in the air, this is a wonderful opportunity to connect with fellow members while doing what brought us together in the first place: flying. Just email scavengerhunt@ninety-nines.org to get started.

The Centennial Committee is also hard at work planning activities and events that will carry us through the next three years and culminate in our 100th Anniversary celebration. We will need volunteers with every talent imaginable – not just pilots, but organizers, historians, writers, photographers, educators, mentors, and enthusiastic supporters. If you'd like to help shape this historic celebration, I encourage you to contact Centennial Committee Chair, Nancy Wright.

As we move forward together, my vision is simple: create more opportunities to fly, more opportunities to serve, more opportunities to connect, and more reasons to be proud to call yourself a Ninety-Nine. Achieving that vision requires a strong partnership between an engaged membership – individuals, chapters and sections, an active International Board of Directors, and a dedicated Headquarters team. I am delighted to welcome Tabitha Narvaiz as our new Executive Director. Together, we will combine strategic leadership with day-to-day execution to better serve our members, strengthen our organization, and ensure The Ninety-Nines enters its second century stronger than ever.

Every successful flight has a destination, a flight plan, and a crew working together. As we fly toward our Centennial and into our second century, I invite every member to be part of that crew. Together, we'll honor our remarkable past while building an even brighter future for The Ninety-Nines.

Launching Into Action

The 2026-2027 International Board of Directors was installed on July 11, and we wasted no time getting to work. Before the ink was dry, we were already charting our course toward our Centennial in 2029 – and beyond.

At our first post-conference meeting, we took several important steps to strengthen member engagement and preserve our legacy. We reinstated the Flying Activities Committee and the Oral History Committee, established the Council of Past Presidents to provide continuity and institutional knowledge, and created the Centennial Committee to help lead us toward one of the most significant milestones in our history.

Our Centennial is about much more than celebrating one day in 2029.

It is an opportunity to celebrate nearly a century of women lifting one another up through aviation while building an organization

Holding Short

Wright Brothers Master Pilot Awardees



Left to right: Jimmy L. Mygatt, FAAS Team Program Manager Miami; Capt. Maria Ziadie-Haddad, ret. Atlas Air, Air Jamaica; Ms. Yogini Modi, owner of The Pilot Training Center, Homestead Executive Jet Center (X51); Mrs. Myra Bugbee, former Southeast Section Governor, Let's Fly Now! First Flight Program Developer.

Captain Maria Ziadie-Haddad (retired Atlas Air, Air Jamaica) April 2026, Florida Goldcoast Chapter

Captain Ziadie-Haddad recalls, "My first Solo took place on June 6, 1975, at the Norman Manley International Airport (MKJP), Kingston, Jamaica. My CFI was F.C. Barnett of Wings Jamaica Ltd. I flew commercially until retiring in 2020 and currently work part-time with Pan Am Academy and Airbus Miami as a Flight Instructor."

SCHOLARSHIPS

Debbie Franceus Memorial Aviation Scholarship



Debbie Franceus was a proud member of the Michigan Chapter. After losing her battle to breast cancer, her husband, Friends of The Ninety-Nines member Mike Franceus, established the Debbie Franceus Memorial Aviation Foundation, which awards scholarships to female pilots pursuing their aviation goals. Applicants must be a member of or join The Ninety-Nines.

The Debbie Franceus Memorial Aviation Scholarship Review Committee has completed reviewing and scoring all applications for the 2026 Flight Scholarship Program! We are proud to announce this year's recipients of the 2026 Debbie Franceus Memorial Aviation Flight Scholarships.

A virtual award ceremony via Zoom was held in mid-July. Scholarship award checks will be sent directly to the recipient's flight school of choice on August 1, 2026, and added to their training account.

Please join founder Mike Franceus in congratulating these women as they pursue their dreams to take to the skies! We are proud of their drive and determination to reach their goals and objectives in aviation. Mike Franceus was this year's winner of The Ninety-Nines International George Palmer Putnam Award (see page 25).

Congratulations to these fine women!

Christine Clark, New Jersey Chapter

Stacy Pritts, Pikes Peak Chapter

Julianne Jones, Eastern Idaho Chapter

Joelle Wash, Tennessee Chapter

Lindsey Rudolph, Colorado Chapter

Patience Stoller, Lake Erie Chapter

Eden Bernstein,
Washington DC Chapter

Natalie Moncaleano,
All-Ohio Chapter

Tanya Yadav,
Florida Goldcoast Chapter

Allison Perrine, Intermountain Chapter

Sarah Haskett, Michigan Chapter

Ginger Ropka,
Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter

Michelle JoAnn, Aloha Chapter

Melissa Kocenas, Colorado Chapter

Brooklyn Kochert, All-Ohio Chapter

Virginia "Ginger" Kelley,
Memphis Chapter

Emily Paxson,
Columbia Cascade Chapter

Martha Reith, Wisconsin Chapter

Taylor Lorence, Lake Erie Chapter

Samantha Inguanzo,
Michigan Chapter

Mike Franceus,
Friends of The Ninety-Nines Member

Chicago Area Chapter AEMSF Winner

– Madeleine Monaco



Madeleine Monaco (left) presents Megan McArthur (right) her AEMSF certificate.

The Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship was presented to **Megan McArthur** for her CFII. Although Megan was not able to attend the presentation at the International Conference in San Diego, she was presented with the certificate in person in July.

Austin Hill Country Scholarship Winner

– Hannah Lundgaard

Christine Clark received the Spirit of the Wasp Aviation Scholarship. In honor of the Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASP), the Austin Hill Country Ninety-Nines proudly select a recipient each year to receive this aviation scholarship. For more information, reach out to us at austinhillcountry99s@gmail.com.

REPORTING POINTS

Pikes Peak Chapter

– Sarah Nguyen



Stacy Pritts and her "DPE."

Stacy Pritts, Scholarship Chair of the Pikes Peak Chapter, passed her CFII check ride in Roswell, New Mexico, on May 21, 2026. She admits her DPE, "while odd, was fun to fly with."

Payton McIntyre, member of the Pikes Peak Chapter and based out of Stevens Field Airport (KPSO) in Pagosa Springs, Colorado, passed her Private Pilot check ride on May 25, 2026. Payton hopes to take her grandfather on a flight before his 95th birthday!



Patsy Buchwald with Secretary Brian Richardson and Colorado Aviation Historical Society Steve Kelly.

Patsy Buchwald represented the Pikes Peak Chapter at the Colorado Aviation Classic at Boulder Municipal Airport (KBDU) on June 6, 2026. Patsy was also elected in June as Secretary of the Executive Board of Directors for the Colorado Aviation Historical Society based in Denver, Colorado.

Michigan Member News

– Barb Vukits



Claire Dunnigan after passing her Instrument Rating.

Claire Dunnigan received her Instrument Rating at Madison County Airport (KUYF) in London, Ohio. Claire was awarded a Delta Scholarship Fund Certification Program Award to use towards her future training. She also passed her Commercial check ride on July 11, 2026, at Willow Run Airport (KYIP) in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Samantha Inguanzo passed a Civil Air Patrol check ride (Form 5) and earned privileges of Instructor Pilot (IP), G1000 IP, Orientation Pilot, Transport Mission Pilot, and High Performance/G1000 endorsements.



Samantha Inguanzo is rapidly moving up the ranks in Civil Air Patrol.



Rachel Lindvig shares her excitement with Rebecca Duggan, with "Hairless Joe" in the background.

Rachel Lindvig has been named to the National Warbird Operators Conference – Warbirds 20 under 40 Class of 2025. The prestigious award recognizes rising leaders who are shaping the future of historic aviation. Rachel also flew the Michigan Air Museum's C-47 to the West Branch County Fly-In. Rachel and the "Hairless Joe" were part of the military aircraft display held at West Branch Community Airport (KY31) in West Branch, Michigan.



Susan Siporin crewed her first balloon ride of 2026 on May 31.

MEMBER NEWS

Minnesota Chapter's Nadine Sugden To Be Inducted

– Renee Bowman,
Minnesota Chapter



Nadine Sugden

Minnesota Chapter Life Member **Nadine Sugden** has been selected for induction into the Minnesota Aviation Hall of Fame! Nadine will celebrate her 100th birthday at a party planned by her children on September 26, 2026. Her induction into the Minnesota Aviation Hall of Fame will be April 24, 2027.

Minnesota Chapter's Renee Bowman has been on a campaign for Nadine's induction for the last couple years. Renee remarked, "No one is more deserving. She has been an active member of our chapter as well as many other aviation organizations, has flown the continent, and continues to support the Minnesota State University aviation program through her Sugden Endowment, the Sugden Family Aviation Scholarship for \$2,500." Nadine has been a continuous member of The Ninety-Nines since October 1971!

Holding Short

Warm Invitation to 2027 Conference in Sydney, Australia

– By Maria Stiles, Australian Section



Maria Stiles in Australian colors of green and gold at the 2027 Conference invitation presentation.

My journey to The Ninety-Nines 2026 San Diego conference started in January this year when Kathryn Koshan, Daytona Chapter and husband Will met me in Hobart and suggested I attend. Roll the clock forward and it is a brisk 1 degree Celsius on Monday July 6 at Launceston Airport Tasmania. Jetstar was on time to Sydney, and there I met Kathy and Will. They were renewing their now annual fondness for Australia's vast continent, especially majestic Sydney. We all travelled together on Qantas QF11 daily A380 service to LAX International Airport. My mission was to attend a Ninety-Nines conference in the United States of America and deliver our Australian Section invitation to The Ninety-Nines – Sydney, September 9-12, 2027 at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Mission accomplished! I owe my heartfelt thanks to Kathy and Will, Robin Hadfield, Jan McKenzie, Cathy Hobson, and Gail Leonard for assisting and caring for me. I was deeply impressed by the many friendly faces of Ninety-Nines attending from around the world. I will be looking out for you all in Sydney 2027.

For those considering using their pilot licence in Australia, go to <https://www.casa.gov.au/licences-and-certificates/pilots/pilot-licences/military-and-international-licences/converting-overseas-flight-crew-licence#Howtoconvertorverifyanoverseaslicence>

There are two options 1) Certificate of Validation – to use your current licence and 2) convert to a full Private Pilot

Australian Licence. Each option has an application fee of a maximum of AU\$150 and various steps (and expenses) to obtain. The nearest airport with flying schools is Bankstown Airport, Sydney.

Start booking your vacation leave for September 9-12, 2027 now!

Making Connections

– Cristina Gouin, Chair, Treasure Coast Chapter



Through an effort of 99s' connections, Genny (above) experienced flight with Maryland Chapter's Maria Esparraguera.

I used to live in Maryland and attained my Private Pilot Certificate there before moving to Florida. I had no clue about The 99s, EAA, AOPA, or other aviation organizations during my two-and-half years of flight training (then again, I only had one female instructor). Had I known about The 99s, it would have saved me so much money, lessened my stress, found me friends, given me insights. The list is endless. My awesome former neighbors Aimee and Ben moved, as did I, though we've stayed friends. Their daughter Genny expressed an interest in aviation, and Aimee reached out to me. I used our wonderful membership directory and connected with **Maria Esparraguera** from the Maryland Chapter in May. Despite delays due to weather and life, Maria was able to meet up with my friends at Chesapeake Regional Airport (KCPK) and go for a discovery flight in her C-182. You can see the utter joy in this picture. Genny took to the controls as if born to them. I think we may have a future 99s member! This is what being a 99 is about: networking, finding new friends, making connections, helping each other and inspiring others!

Remembering Wally

– Diane Earhart, Greater St. Louis Chapter



I met **Wally Funk** in 1990 when we were two of several pilots trying to fly to Prescott, Arizona, for the first Women in Aviation Conference. The commuter flight could not clear the IFR weather in the mountains between Phoenix and Prescott. Wally and I rented a car and drove to the conference. It wouldn't be the last time we shared a hotel room during a conference.

Later in that year, my student pilot flew her C182 he was considering buying from her. A few days later, she would radio me while I was flying a Citabria with another instructor, telling me I'd left my student and our rental C172 on the other side of Ohio with the keys to the Cessna in my pocket.

In 2009, Wally and her friend, Cheryl, flew into St. Louis Lambert International Airport to be judges for the National Intercollegiate Flying Association (NIFA) SAFECON, hosted by Parks College of Engineering, Aviation and Technology at St. Louis University in Cahokia, Illinois, and held at the airport where I was an air traffic controller. I picked them up at the airport, eager for any chance to spend time with Wally. There was confusion about credit cards and cars at the rental agency before I said, "Is there any reason you can't borrow my car instead?" There wasn't. We joked about driving my little orange car for several days until the last time we talked.

She agreed to be on the Advisory Board of General Aviation Space Group, a scientific and educational nonprofit I co-founded with another flight instructor.

I could fill a book with memories of Wally. There will never be another like her. 

PAINTING A COMPASS ROSE: WHAT CHAPTERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LIABILITY AND BEST PRACTICES

– Ellen Nobles-Harris, *Delaware Chapter* and Maria Esparraguera, *Maryland Chapter*



Painting a compass rose is one of the most visible and celebrated service projects our chapters undertake. It brings members together, strengthens relationships with local airports, promotes The Ninety-Nines' name, and leaves a lasting mark of our presence in the aviation community. But because a compass rose can be used – intentionally or unintentionally – by pilots for compass verification, it also carries potential liability if it is inaccurate or improperly documented. Chapters should keep this in mind before beginning a compass rose project to help ensure the project is completed safely, accurately, and with appropriate protections in place.

There are two kinds of compass roses. Compass roses may be decorative only; they are painted on property which is not accessible by aircraft, and they are not surveyed. A surveyed compass rose painted on an airport surface, accessible to aircraft, may be used by pilots or maintenance shops to check the accuracy of an aircraft's magnetic compass.

Why Liability Matters

If the surveyed compass rose is inaccurate, outdated, or improperly marked, pilots or maintenance shops would be relying on incorrect information. Ultimately, that may lead to improper alignment of aircraft compasses, resulting in flying an other than intended course. While The Ninety-Nines are a volunteer organization, we still have a responsibility to minimize foreseeable risks and to clearly communicate the intended use – and limitations – of any compass rose we help create.

The goal is not to discourage chapters from taking on these projects. Rather, it's to ensure that every chapter has the tools and information needed to complete them correctly and safely.

The following points as to an independent survey and disclaimers would not apply to decorative compass roses. Because no survey is done with decorative compass roses, they should be annotated with the marking "Ornamental – Not for Operational Use."

Key Elements of a Safe and Compliant Compass Rose Project

1. Independent Survey

If a magnetic survey is done, it should be completed by someone other than a Ninety-Nine. This ensures independence, accuracy, and avoids any appearance that The Ninety-Nines are certifying the compass rose for operational use. A copy of the survey report should be sent to HQ for the chapter's file.

2. Following the Recommended Layout

Use the design and dimensions described in The Ninety-Nines Airmarking Guide. The Ninety-Nines logo should appear in the center circle. If the airport wishes to include its own logo, it should be placed outside the compass rose, off to the side.

3. Clear Disclaimers and Survey Date

Next to a surveyed compass rose, paint:

- The date of the survey at a minimum, but ideally include change in magnetic variation per year, and use this disclaimer: "Use at your risk. Verify accuracy."

These statements help ensure that pilots understand the limitations of the rose and that it is not intended as a certified navigational aid.

4. Appropriate Paint and Materials

Use the correct paint types and colors as recommended in the Airmarking Guide – typically:

- Blue (the same shade used for handicapped parking markings), and
- White

Appropriate paint and colors provide durability, visibility, and consistency with airport marking standards.

5. Documenting Volunteers

Keep a simple record of the volunteers (both Ninety-Nines and others) who participated in layout, and painting. This verifies the involvement and supports the chapter's risk-management practices.

6. Requesting a Release or Hold Harmless

For a surveyed compass rose, chapters should request a release or hold harmless agreement from the airport owner regarding any future use of the compass rose for compass verification. Some airport owners may decline to sign such a document. If that happens, the project can still proceed – but the painted disclaimer becomes even more important.

7. We Encourage Photos of Compass Rose Paintings

When these are taken, please get a photo release from the photographer and subjects so that we can use the photos of your hard work. Photo release form is in the Member's Only Library under Forms, Lists, and Guides.

Reports

A Practical Checklist for Chapters

Before You Begin

- For a surveyed compass rose, independent surveyor identified.
- Airport approval obtained.
- For a surveyed compass rose, release/hold harmless requested.

During Layout and Painting

- Layout follows the Compass Rose Guide.
- Ninety-Nines logo placed in center.
- Airport logo (if any) placed outside the rose.
- Correct paint colors used.

Final Steps

- For a surveyed compass rose, survey date and change in magnetic variation painted.
- Disclaimer painted.
- Volunteers documented.
- Photos taken for chapter records.



By approaching compass rose projects with care and a shared understanding of the risks, our chapters can continue offering this meaningful service with confidence. These projects showcase the best of who we are – pilots and volunteers committed to supporting aviation safely and responsibly. With thoughtful preparation, every compass rose can be both a beautiful symbol of The Ninety-Nines and a well-managed contribution to our airports and communities. Questions about possible liabilities should go to legal@ninetynines.org; questions about the painting itself should go to our Airmarking Chair, Ellen Nobles-Harris at pilot99ellen@comcast.net.

CONTINUING AMELIA'S LEGACY AT AEBM WITH DIRECTOR ASHLEY GILL

– Robin Laws, *Previous Chair and Current Advisor to the Board of Trustees*



Nestled in the heartland of Kansas, Atchison is well-known as the birthplace of world-renowned aviatrix, Amelia Earhart. The story of Amelia's beginnings starts at our Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum (AEBM). In May of 2026, our new Director **Ashley Gill** joined the team. An Atchison native, Ashley knows Amelia's story and how impactful the aviatrix was globally as an aviation legend as well as for women's empowerment. Ashley said, "That kind of legacy in a small town makes a huge impact for the younger generation. I want to share that with our visitors."

With a marketing background, Ashley comes to The Ninety-Nines with 10 plus years of experience building successful brands, collaborating to achieve business goals, and developing and executing integrated marketing. Ashley has a desire to build brand awareness, and it's already evident with some changes that have a promising outlook to increase revenue for our museum, including gift shop offerings (where our members can use their 10% discount for purchases in person and online). She noted, "Visitors want to buy something to remember their experience."

In addition to expanding gift shop offerings, Ashley is fine-tuning the visitor experience on-site. Ashley shares with enthusiasm, "We now have daily guided tours for only \$3 more (than the admission fee) that are offered at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. for walk-in guests that were previously only able to be purchased in advance."

Ashley also has plans for the future of the museum. Working closely with the Board of Trustees for the AEBM, she is excited to collaborate and implement the five-year strategic plan that was recently approved. The pillars defined are:

1. Financial Sustainability and Growth
2. Marketing, Community Partnerships, and Outreach
3. Preservation, Enhancement, and Restoration of the Birthplace Home
4. Museum Operations and Growth
5. Visitor Experience and Education

Naturally, Ashley is most excited about the marketing pillar, where she is enthusiastic to further partnerships with the community, corporations, and The Ninety-Nines, building our brand in the process. Ashley wants our museum to be a place for "people to come, learn, and be inspired." She has plans to continue expanding field trip opportunities which will build visibility for the museum and expand upon the legacy of Kansas and its historical significance. "It's such an impactful story," Ashley stated. "I want to share it with everyone."

The Board of Trustees is thrilled to have Ashley's expertise and enthusiasm to lead the museum forward. We have an exceptional team of employees that have carried on Amelia's legacy thus far and Ashley is an awesome addition to the team. Amelia once said, "Everyone has oceans to fly, if they have the heart to do it."

We have the heart. It's an honor to continue sharing Amelia's story. With Ashley leading the team, we are in great hands do that.

AMELIA EARHART FESTIVAL

– Janet Patton, *International Vice President*

One of my first opportunities to serve as your newly elected International Vice President was representing The Ninety-Nines, Inc. at the annual Amelia Earhart Festival, held July 17 and 18 in Atchison, Kansas. The two-day celebration brought together aviators, community leaders, historians, aviation enthusiasts, and the proud citizens of Atchison to honor the remarkable life and enduring legacy of Amelia Earhart. The festival is in July to honor Amelia Earhart's birthday on July 24.

A highlight of the weekend was the presentation of the Amelia Earhart Pioneering Achievement Award (PAA), recognizing individuals whose accomplishments embody Amelia's spirit of courage, innovation, and perseverance.

The Ninety-Nines were proudly represented throughout the festivities, and it was especially meaningful to visit the birthplace of our first elected president while connecting with so many who continue to inspire the next generation of aviators.

One of the highlights of the festival was a presentation by Ninety-Nines member Dr. Margie Arnold titled "Amelia Earhart: The Boston Years." Dr. Arnold explored a lesser-known period of Amelia's life before international fame, when she lived in Boston and devoted herself to social service work. Her presentation offered a fascinating look at what Amelia considered some of her happiest years, illustrating how her compassion, independence, and commitment to helping others helped shape the woman who would later become one of aviation's greatest pioneers. It was a thoughtful reminder that Amelia's legacy extends beyond her aviation accomplishments to include a lifelong dedication to service and humanity.

Also in attendance was the Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum Trust (AEBM Trust). I was pleased to watch Trust members and staff support the museum's mission of preserving Amelia Earhart's birthplace and sharing her extraordinary legacy with visitors from around the world. The partnership between the AEBM Trust and The Ninety-Nines, Inc. continues to strengthen our shared commitment to honoring Amelia's vision while inspiring future generations of women in aviation.

It was a privilege to represent our organization during this special celebration and to strengthen the partnership between The Ninety-Nines, the AEBM Trust, and the Amelia Earhart Festival. Amelia's legacy continues to inspire courage, leadership, service, and a spirit of adventure, and I look forward to building on these connections as we continue advancing the mission of The Ninety-Nines. —

Careers

Eliminating Overwhelm

By Donna Miller, *Colorado Chapter*

Imagine you're flying an instrument approach into a busy airport after a long day. The weather is deteriorating, the clouds are low, and light rain streaks across the windshield. Air traffic control changes your runway at the last minute. As you scramble to load the new approach into the GPS, ATC gives you a new heading and altitude. Then the autopilot disconnects unexpectedly.



None of these tasks are particularly difficult on their own. Together, however, they create task saturation: the point where the brain is processing so many competing demands that performance begins to suffer. Attention narrows. Small mistakes creep in. It's easy to skip a checklist item, miss an altitude restriction, or become fixated on one problem while another quietly develops.

The best pilots don't simply work harder in these moments – they simplify. They slow the airplane if possible and ignore anything that isn't essential. By deliberately shedding unnecessary tasks, they regain the mental bandwidth needed to make good decisions.

Life often feels like that instrument approach. Emails, meetings, social media, family obligations, and endless requests compete for our attention until we're mentally saturated. Just as in the cockpit, the answer isn't to juggle more, it is to identify what matters most and eliminate what doesn't.

It's time to pause and reprioritize. If you're working toward a new rating or preparing for recurrent training, remove the distractions that don't support your goal. If you don't establish your own priorities, someone else will, and they'll likely add another item to your already full plate. It's easy to mistake being busy for being productive. Instead, pare your commitments down to what matters most, then build a routine that supports your mission.

What if we committed to doing less, but doing it better? Which activities give us the greatest return on our investment of time? When we sit down to study, are we using the methods that best match the way we learn? Deep learning requires focused thinking, and focused thinking requires eliminating distractions. For some, that means setting a timer and refusing to check messages until it goes off. For others, it means putting the phone in another room or escaping to a library where there are few interruptions.

Just as important as focused work is intentional play. Research continues to show that regular physical activity benefits the brain. Exercise increases blood flow, reduces stress, improves sleep, and ultimately enhances memory, concentration, and learning. Sometimes the most productive thing we can do is step away for a walk, a workout, or another activity that refreshes both mind and body.

As we gain experience as pilots, more opportunities naturally come our way. One of the greatest challenges is learning to say no to many of them so we can wholeheartedly say yes to what matters most. By accepting only the opportunities that align with our priorities, we create space for meaningful work – the projects that reflect our passions, make the best use of our skills, and allow us to contribute at our highest level.

When you are clear about your destination, it becomes much easier to distinguish between the goals others have for you and the ones you have chosen for yourself. Eliminating overwhelm isn't about accomplishing less; it's about giving your best attention to what matters most. —

“SiriusXM helps me find the best tailwinds.”

Emmy Dillon, 777 Cargo & Air Race Pilot



“My use of SiriusXM weather begins on the ground where I’m able to see ahead to the weather conditions at our destination. Inflight, I use it to find what altitude has the best tailwinds and the base radar to help me avoid pop-up storms.”

Emmy Dillon

~3,800 hours, ATP, CFI, CFII, IFR, tailwheel, high performance and complex endorsements

International Cargo Airline Pilot, Air Race Classic Education Director, 2016 Air Race Classic Winner, 99s Chapter Scholarship Chair, B-25 pilot for the Commemorative Air Force, Patriots Jet Team music coordinator

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The Performance Cycle



Tammy Barlette

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

Have you ever wondered why two pilots can experience nearly identical flights, yet walk away feeling completely different about their performance? Or why some days you feel confident, composed, and capable, while on other days you seem to overthink every decision, second-guess yourself, and make mistakes you normally wouldn't? It's tempting to think performance begins with what we do. But by the time we act, much of what influences our performance has already been set in motion.

One of the most helpful ways to understand human performance is through what I think of as the performance cycle. This framework helps pilots understand not only why they perform the way they do, but also where they have the greatest opportunity to influence their performance. Rather than unconsciously allowing the cycle to shape them, it helps pilots recognize where they can take the controls.

While every part of the cycle influences the others, the greatest opportunity to influence it is with our thoughts. The thoughts running through our minds influence how we feel. Those emotions then create real physiological changes in our bodies. Our breathing changes. Heart rate changes. Muscle tension changes. Our attention narrows or broadens. Those physiological changes influence how we execute the task in front of us. Once we've performed, we naturally evaluate how we did, creating new thoughts that begin the cycle all over again.

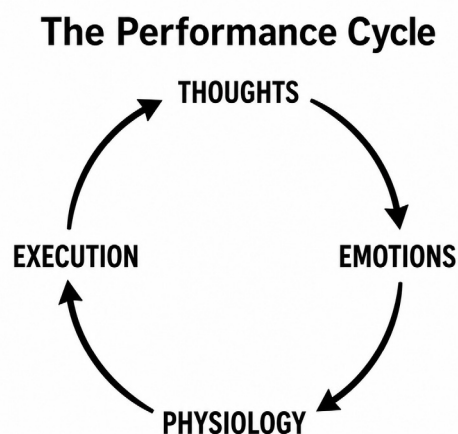
Imagine a student pilot turning final for landing. If the thought is, "Don't mess this up," it's likely to create anxiety. Anxiety increases muscle tension, narrows attention, and encourages overcontrolling the airplane. The landing becomes more difficult, reinforcing the belief and ultimately leading to the thought, "See? I knew I was going to mess it up."

Now imagine that same pilot thinking, "Fly the airplane. One step at a time. I've done this before." The circumstances haven't changed. The runway hasn't changed. The airplane hasn't changed. But the cycle has. Because the pilot's thoughts are different, the emotions are different. The body's physiological response is different. Execution is different. And the thoughts afterward are different, influencing the entire next cycle of performance.

This doesn't mean we should simply think positively. That's neither realistic nor the goal. The goal is to become aware of the cycle so we can intentionally influence it. That's where self-awareness becomes one of the most valuable skills a pilot can develop.

Many of us pay close attention to the airplane. We monitor fuel, engine instruments, weather, and traffic. But we rarely monitor ourselves with the same level of intention. And if we notice our emotions, we are often not curious about what thoughts produced them. We experience frustration, anxiety, or self-doubt and don't consider where they are rooted. The performance cycle is always running. The question isn't whether you're in the cycle – it's whether you're intentionally influencing it.

The good news is that we don't have to remain passengers in the cycle. By becoming aware of our thoughts, we gain the opportunity to influence everything that follows. The performance cycle is always running. The question isn't whether you're in the cycle – it's whether you're intentionally influencing it. 



*Adapted from the concepts presented by
Dr. Nate Zinsser in The Confident Mind*

Lady Mary Williams Heath

November 17, 1896 – May 9, 1939



Born Sophie Catherine Theresa Mary Peirce-Evans, she overcame a tumultuous childhood with her father locked away in a mental asylum for the murder of her mother. At only a year old, maiden aunts raised this adventurer. During her youth, Mary was discouraged from pursuing her passion for sports. Nevertheless, Mary excelled. She was top of the largely male class in agricultural science at the Royal College of Science in Ireland. In 1922, Mary finished second in the national high

jump. In 1923, she was the national javelin champion. She married Major William Elliot-Lynn. In 1925, after their move to Kenya, Mary's book of poetry, *East African Nights*, was published. Mary also wrote a coaching manual, *Athletics for Women and Girls*, in 1925.

That same year, Mary discovered the power of flight. Her passion shifted to aviation records and fame. In 1927, Mary owned three airplanes: an Avro Avian, a de Havilland Moth, and a S.E.5a – a biplane from the British Royal Aircraft Company. Mary became the first pilot, male or female, to fly a small, open cockpit airplane from Cape Town, South Africa, to London. It took three months, from January to May 1928. In addition to significant news coverage and lecture invitations, Mary wrote the book, *Woman and Flying*. By 1929, Mary was the first woman in Britain to hold a commercial flying license. After setting the altitude records in small planes and seaplanes, the press called her "Britain's Lady Lindy," after Charles Lindbergh. Mary was the first Irish woman to parachute from an aircraft.

America called. Mary answered quickly. She earned a mechanic's qualification. She became an aviation fashionista. Mary flew dressed in a mink or leather coat, pearls, and high heels. Amid all the whirlwind, she (after divorcing Major Elliot-Lynn in 1927) married Sir James Heath. Mary was known as the "Lady Icarus." But, in the Greek myth, Icarus was intoxicated with the thrill of flight, and he flew too close to the sun. His wax wings melted. He tragically plunged to Earth.

In 1929, right before the National Air Races in Cleveland, Ohio, Mary experienced a serious aviation accident that ended her plan to apply for U.S. citizenship. She did become a charter member of The Ninety-Nines. She flew to Reno, Nevada, and divorced Sir James. She returned to Ireland with her new husband, G.A.R. Williams, a horseman and pilot. In Ireland in the mid-1930s, Mary founded Kildonan Private Aviation near Dublin, which laid the foundation for Ireland's national airline, Aer Lingus.

In 1939, Lady Mary Heath died in a fall inside a double-decker bus. Her ashes were scattered by her estranged husband from Croydon Airport where she had triumphantly landed in her epic 1928 Cape Town to London flight.

– By Penny Rafferty Hamilton, PhD, Idaho Chapter

Lady Mary Heath painting by John Lavery titled, An Irish Airwoman, circa 1924. (Wikimedia Commons)

Bonnie Chittenden Whitman

May 7, 1908 – May 14, 1998



Bonita Mae Chittenden Whitman, née Williams, was born in 1908 to Clifford A. Williams (1880–1950) and Blanche V. Williams, née Oyen, (1880–1963). Raised in Illinois, Bonnie (sometimes spelled "Bonny") had one brother, Clifford A. Williams Jr., who was born in 1914 when Bonnie was six years old. Bonnie moved to Los Angeles, California, in 1920. She graduated from Mount Vernon Select School and was a member of the Pi Chapter of the Psi Delta Sigma sorority.

Bonnie married Russel D. Chittenden of Fresno, California, in Pasadena, California, in a ceremony on September 30, 1927, when she was 19 and Russel was 25. Bonnie's evening marriage ceremony to Russel was the talk of the town in late 1927, with 400 guests in attendance. The ceremony was held at 9 p.m. in the chapel of First Methodist Church in Pasadena, with Helen Regan as her maid of honor and Dr. Daniel F. Fox as the officiator; Fox was the pastor at the church attended by Bonnie's parents in Chicago.

In 1929, Bonnie began her ambitious flight training under former war ace Hal Snead. By July 1929, Bonnie soloed with only 12 hours of flying under her belt after six weeks of training. At the time, only one other woman on the Pacific Coast had soloed in fewer hours than Bonnie. Bonnie aimed to complete her 100-hour solo mark only a few weeks after her first solo, and she told the *Pasadena Post* that she intended to enter a women's air derby in August 1929 and fly from Los Angeles to Cleveland. This may have been how Bonnie met and befriended Amelia Earhart and became a charter member of The Ninety Nines. Bonnie's dream was to eventually fly to Rome.

Bonnie filed for divorce in 1930 and later married Nathan D. Whitman Jr. (1909–1966) on May 9, 1938. They had one child together, Nathan D. Whitman IV (1938–2002).

Bonnie was said to have been a great animal lover, who kept cats, dogs, chickens, and donkeys. Her granddaughter, Charissa, remembered Bonnie as a "spitfire" who often had several of her animals walking through the house, including the donkey. Bonnie once wrote to the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* to implore LA locals to adopt an Angora kitten at the Pasadena Humane Shelter.

Bonnie sarcastically wore her Ninety-Nines pin upside-down when she was 66 years old. She was a member of the Reno Chapter.

At 90 years old, Bonnie died at Rolling Hills Care Center in Missouri. She is remembered to have been a significant part of the aviation community and heralded as one of only three Pasadena aviatrixes in the early 1930s.

– By Kayla D. Taylor, MS, PhD student at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Friends of The Ninety-Nines member

Photo from The Pasadena Post on July 8, 1929. Bonnie Chittenden is shown in her leather flying helmet as a flight student working to achieve her 100-hour solo after only a few short weeks of flight training. (Credit: The Pasadena Post, Monday, July 8, 1929, page 9)

Nancy Hopkins Tier

May 16, 1909 – January 15, 1997



Born into a prominent Washington, D.C. family, her physician father's family founded Johns Hopkins University. Nancy was named for her aunt, the famed Lady Nancy Astor, who championed women's rights in Britain. Another relative, the American artist, Charles Dana Gibson, created the iconic 1890s "Gibson Girl." Nancy's

achievements lived up to those of her famous relatives.

One of the early female flyers of the 1920s, Nancy noted that not all in the aviation industry welcomed women. "There wasn't much encouragement at airports because aviation was for men, and female aviators were just barely tolerated." But ability and determination often win over sceptics. In 1927, she had her first flight at Hoover Field in Arlington, Virginia. Soon, 18-year-old Nancy was flying. She took every opportunity to demonstrate her aviation skills. Always one to put on a show, Nancy flew a surprise low level pass right down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. during the March 4, 1929, Herbert Hoover Presidential Inaugural Parade. Immediately after that stunt, flight restrictions were imposed. Because she did not break any flight rules, she earned her limited commercial license (No. 5889) at the historic New York Roosevelt Field.

Nancy's FAI sporting license (No. 7677), signed by Orville Wright, quickly followed. Later, in November 1929, Nancy joined The Ninety-Nines. In the 1930s, air races were popular. Lucrative prize money attracted top aviators. During the Great Depression, eager crowds flocked to air shows. In 1930, Nancy entered the Women's Dixie Derby, a 2,000-mile air race from Washington, D.C. to Chicago. Nancy owned a Viking Kitty Hawk B4 biplane, tail number NC30V. Later that year, she entered the 5,000-mile Ford Reliability Tour sponsored by Edsel Ford.

This must have been an exciting experience for the 21-year-old as the only woman pilot in the Ford Tour. In 1931, Nancy earned a transport license. Gregarious Nancy was an official Roosevelt Field hostess, giving her access to many air pioneers. Nancy was named Connecticut Speed Champion. In February, she married pilot Irving Tier. Over the years, three children were introduced to the sky by their parents. In 1933, Nancy was one of the first women to fly solo coast-to-coast.

In 1942, she joined the Civil Air Patrol (CAP). During World War II, Nancy flew CAP coastal patrols. Nancy flew in the CAP for over 18 years. Colonel Nancy Tier became the first female Wing Commander. In 1963, Nancy flew first-day covers of the Amelia Earhart stamp from Atchison, Kansas, to New York City, where she presented the covers to the mayor. In 1983, the global aviation and aerospace Wings Club honored Nancy for her contributions. In 1986, Nancy founded the International Women's Air and Space Museum, becoming its first president. In 1989, at age 80 and still flying, Nancy joined the United Flying Octogenarians. In 1992, Women in Aviation International inducted Nancy Hopkins Tier into their Pioneer Hall of Fame. Although Nancy flew West in 2003, she was inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame in 2006.

– By Penny Rafferty Hamilton, PhD, Idaho Chapter

In 1930, young Nancy Hopkins flew her Viking Kitty Hawk biplane in the National Air Show. On August 22, the racers lifted off from Washington, D.C. via Atlanta to Chicago. (findagrave photograph)

Nora Alma Hopper White

November 24, 1899 – October 18, 1931



Born in Missouri the day after Thanksgiving in 1899, Nora Alma Hopper and her twin brother, Ora Almus, were a blessing to their parents, Alexander Hopper and Louisa Hardison. As twins, they were always close. Ora was very interested in mechanics. As an adult, he went on to become a watchmaker. Like her twin, Nora shared his passion for mechanical detail and precision. Nora, like many in the late 1920s, was inspired to learn to fly.

Early female pilots were rock stars with the potential to earn a substantial amount of money. The freedom and opportunity aviation offered them often outweighed the large risk of

injury or even death due to the aircraft mechanical failure. In Kansas and Missouri, aviation was popular.

Nora met a state highway department mechanic, Tom White, who shared her love for machinery and transportation. On February 28, 1921, they married in Leavenworth, Kansas. Both of them were interested in aviation. Eventually, they moved to the Kansas City area. In 1929, the Kansas City Municipal Airport was home to more passenger airlines than any other airport in the nation, earning it the title "Air Hub of America." Both Kansas City, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri, were aviation hubs.

In 1929, Nora began her flight training at the Commercial Airways flying school. Soon, she earned her pilot license (No. 9270). At that time, Nora was one of only two licensed female pilots in the Kansas City area. Nora was invited to join The Ninety-Nines in November as a charter member. In late September 1930, Tom earned his private pilot license with flight instruction from Nora.

On October 3, 1930, Nora earned her limited commercial license. They loved flying together. Nora began teaching her cousin, Hazel Cundiff, to fly. In other endeavors, Nora was involved as treasurer of the Jackson County Women's Republican Club and a member of the Business Women's Republican Club, too.

On the quiet Sunday morning of October 18, 1931, both Alma and her husband were killed as she was teaching him steep turns at a relatively low altitude. The newspaper reported that Alma was demonstrating at only 1,000 feet of altitude when the plane went into a tailspin, too close to the ground to recover, according to witnesses. Tom died on impact. Nora died a few minutes after the rescuers reached her. She had turned off the ignition. They were buried together in the Elmwood Cemetery in Kansas City, Missouri, a few days later.

– By Penny Rafferty Hamilton, PhD, Idaho Chapter

In 1929, Nora Alma Hopper White earned her private pilot license. In 1931, she received her transport pilot license. (Photograph from findagrave.com)



2026

Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund Winners

The Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund Trustees are pleased to announce the AE scholarship recipients for 2026. The Trustees received 78 applications and were able to fund 26 scholarships. Fully funded ratings included: two CFI, three CFII, two MEI, two IFR, seven Commercial Multi-Engine Add-on, two Commercial, one A320 Type Rating, one ATP/CTP, one advanced floatplane course, one mountain and canyon flying course, two Vicki Cruse Emergency Maneuver Training courses, and two academic scholarships. The total funding was \$241,000. Congratulations!



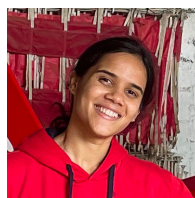
Claudia Asmussen

COMMERCIAL

San Diego Chapter, Southwest Section

Nearly a decade ago, I immigrated from Germany to the United States to pursue my passion for aviation. My curiosity, persistence, and diverse cultural background have made

me resourceful and adaptable. As Chair of the San Diego Chapter, I foster inclusiveness and camaraderie together with a mighty team of members. Professionally, I have been supporting emergency management and aerial firefighting for San Diego Gas & Electric, overseeing helicopter and unmanned aircraft missions. This vital work has guided me parallel to my flight training, deepening my commitment to aviation safety and inspiring me to mentor more trailblazing women pilots.



Chandana Bhagi

A320 TYPE RATING

India Section

I'm Chandana, a commercial pilot from the India Section Ninety-Nines, currently transitioning into airline operations after completing my type rating. Aviation, for me,

is more than a career – it is a commitment shaped by persistence, self-funded training, and a deep sense of purpose! As an active member of The Ninety-Nines, I contribute to aviation outreach and mentor aspiring pilots. With a background in psychology, I am also committed to supporting pilot mental well-being and strengthening the human side of aviation.



Valerie Badoni

MULTI-ENGINE INSTRUCTOR ADD-ON

Florida First Coast Chapter, Southeast Section

I grew up on the small island of Yap in Micronesia, where the rare sight of airplanes ignited a dream that once felt impossible. Years

later, I met my husband who believed I would be a pilot. I quit my job so I could pursue aviation full-time, earning my certificates from Private through CFII in less than a year. As a Ninety-Nine, I am passionate about mentoring and helping women discover aviation, rise above, and dare to dream. I instruct full-time and plan to earn my MEI to expand my instructional impact while working toward a future flying transport-category aircraft.



Ninoshka Bornes

COMMERCIAL

Indiana Dunes Chapter, North Central Section

I'm the first pilot in my family, and I will be the first to graduate from college. I've been pursuing aviation for three years now and have fallen

in love with it. With the Amelia Earhart Scholarship I will be able to complete my Commercial Rating. I then plan to get my CFI and instruct at New Horizons Aviation, my flight school where it all began. Once I build enough hours, I'm off to the airlines! When I'm not flying you can find me baking, volunteering, and spending time with my family.



Gina Calvario

COMMERCIAL MULTI-ENGINE ADD-ON
*Columbia Cascade Chapter,
Northwest Section*

I am a commercial pilot in training currently working toward my Certified Flight Instructor Certificate. I fly out of Troutdale, Oregon, while balancing full-time work as a flight attendant with Alaska Airlines. I am eager to complete my multi-engine training this summer with the Amelia Earhart Scholarship, and next summer I will go to Alaska for a float course! I am actively involved in The Ninety-Nines, where I serve in leadership roles and help organize community events with my Columbia Cascade Chapter. My goal is to become an airline pilot and give back by mentoring others along the way.



Sara Gagne

CFII
*Santa Clara Valley Chapter, Southwest
Section*

I am honored to be a recipient of the 2026 Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship will allow me to obtain my CFII in a timely manner, and in my favorite aircraft I've ever flown – a Maule M5. The AEMS will progress me towards my immediate goal of becoming a well-rounded flight instructor, capable and confident of instructing primary and advanced students. Once my CFII Certificate has been obtained, I look forward to transitioning to full-time flight instructing and continuing to work towards my ultimate goal of becoming an airline pilot.



Domenica Chieffo

**VICKI CRUSE EMERGENCY
MANEUVER TRAINING**
Alberta Chapter, West Canada Section

I'm Domenica Chieffo, a commercial pilot currently completing my multi-IFR training at Springbank Air Training College. I've been a member of The Ninety-Nines since 2022 and I'm currently serving as Governor of the West Canada Section. Aviation has been where I feel most inspired, challenged, and at home. I'm thankful to receive the Vicki Cruse Memorial Scholarship as it will help me strengthen my skills, safety, and confidence in the cockpit as I work toward a career flying professionally. I'm grateful to honor Vicki's memory and looking forward to continuing to give back to this amazing group of women pilots!



Stacie Goodwin

COMMERCIAL MULTI-ENGINE ADD-ON
*Reno High Sierra Chapter, Southwest
Section*

I grew up in Upstate New York near an airport, where my passion for aviation first took flight. At 19, I earned my Private Pilot Certificate at the University of Dubuque and later graduated with an aviation management degree from Southern Illinois University. I stepped away from flying for 25 years to raise my daughters and build an accounting career. In 2020, I reconnected with aviation through the Reno High Sierra Chapter that helped me regain currency. Since then, I have earned my Instrument, Commercial, and CFI Ratings. Besides flying, I also enjoy reading, traveling, and singing.



Alyssa Christian

CFI
San Diego Chapter, Southwest Section

I'm a commercial pilot currently working toward my Certified Flight Instructor Certificate, a milestone that feels especially meaningful and full-circle, thanks in part to the AEMS. My journey has been shaped by mentors who showed me what's possible with the right support, and that's something I'm committed to carrying forward. As a future CFI, I'm passionate about fostering an environment where students feel confident, capable and encouraged to keep going. I look forward to giving back through my local chapter by supporting study groups and ground instruction for aspiring pilots, helping others feel empowered to navigate their aviation paths.



Charlotte Granahan

**VICKI CRUSE EMERGENCY
MANEUVER TRAINING**
*Old Dominion Chapter,
Mid-Atlantic Section*

As you can tell from my shoes, cows almost make me smile as much as aviation. I am a private pilot with my Instrument Rating and working toward my Commercial and CFI Ratings as I want to be an instructor and corporate pilot. As an engine out survivor, I will be utilizing this emergency training to improve my skills in recovery procedures. In May 2025, I graduated with my engineering degree with honors from James Madison University and established a team to compete in the RC airplane Design/Build/Fly competition through the AIAA.



Victoria Czyszczon

ACADEMIC
*Florida Goldcoast Chapter,
Southeast Section*

I am a pilot and flight instructor with over 1,400 flight hours and a strong commitment to aviation safety, leadership, and mentorship. As past president of a flying club, I led operations and managed a multi-aircraft fleet while fostering collaboration among members, maintenance teams, and airport stakeholders. As a young professional in aviation, I understand that meaningful influence requires credibility and knowledge. I am pursuing a master's degree in aviation management at Purdue University, with certificates in aviation finance and aviation safety, to strengthen my leadership and broaden my impact across the aviation industry.



Jocelyn Hermesmeier

MEI
*San Antonio Chapter,
South Central Section*

I am a flight instructor from Kerrville, Texas, and have been flying for about four years now. This scholarship is a huge blessing as it will allow me to build multi-engine time while working toward my ultimate goal of becoming an airline pilot. I have been a Ninety-Nines member for several years now and will soon be stepping up as Chair for the San Antonio Chapter. In my free time, I enjoy spending time in the great outdoors with my husband and dog, as well as riding horses and drawing.



Rachel Huff-Wagenborg

IFR

Aloha Chapter, Southwest Section

I am a nonprofit leader turned aspiring aviator making a bold career change. With support from the Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund, I am pursuing my Instrument Rating.

Earning this certificate will build new skills, expand my confidence, and open doors for professional flying and philanthropic efforts. I'm especially interested in using aviation to connect communities across the Hawaiian Islands and opportunities to use an Instrument Rating to transport people, animals, and critical supplies. I'm grateful for the encouragement and generosity of the AEMSFS Trustees, whose support continues to propel my journey forward.



Cyndi Ice

IFR

Oklahoma Chapter, South Central Section

I'm a science teacher turned sky-chaser who believes aviation should feel possible for everyone. One step into a cockpit, and I knew: I'm here to spark curiosity and lift others to

greater creative heights. I stay active in aviation groups, volunteer at airshows, and champion opportunities for women and students who rarely see aviation up close. With the Amelia Earhart Scholarship, I'll earn my Instrument Rating and keep climbing toward Commercial, Multi-Engine, and CFI. My mission is simple: fly with purpose, teach with passion, and open runways for the next generation of aviators!



Elizabeth L'Heureux

ATP/CTP

Maui Chapter, Southwest Section

My passion for aviation began on an interisland flight from Oahu to Molokai, where I was inspired by the pilot who is now my husband. Since 2014, I have been an active member of

The Ninety-Nines, steadily advancing to earn my Instrument Rating, Commercial, CFI, and MEI Certificates. The AEMSFS Technical Training Scholarship for my ATP/CTP brings me closer to my goal of serving Hawaii as a professional pilot, supporting the unique transportation needs of our island communities. I am sincerely grateful for this support and look forward to continuing to give back through mentorship and service.



Megan McArthur

CFII

Chicago Area Chapter, North Central Section

Almost five years ago, I was introduced to aviation, and I haven't looked back since. As a single mother and a CFI, this journey has

been both challenging and rewarding. I'm incredibly grateful for my Ninety-Nines sisters and the support I've found along the way. I'm honored to have earned a scholarship for my CFII through the AEMSFS. I look forward to continuing to grow as an instructor, inspiring my students, and giving back to the aviation community through mentorship and support.



Elizabeth Menozzi

MULTI-ENGINE

Western Washington Chapter, Northwest Section

I began my aviation journey in my late forties and progressed from student pilot to CFI with an Instrument Rating in just two years. My

desire to connect with more women pilots led me to The Ninety-Nines and an eighth-place finish in the 2025 Air Race Classic. Currently, I provide flight instruction at my local club on Orcas Island, where I empower the next generation of pilots. I will use this scholarship to earn a Multi-Engine Rating, the next milestone in my transition to a professional pilot career where I intend to mentor and champion late-career women in aviation.



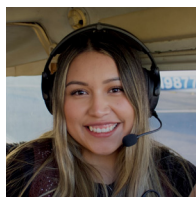
Julia Polasik

MOUNTAIN AND CANYON FLYING COURSE

Eastern Idaho Chapter, Northwest Section

I first discovered my love of flying while doing aerial surveys for raptors as a wildlife biologist. Once I realized I could learn how to fly, I quickly became hooked and over the last year and a

half have earned my Private Pilot Certificate, Instrument Rating, and am now working towards Commercial. I am beyond grateful for the support of The Ninety-Nines and to be a recipient of an Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship that will allow me to take a mountain and canyon flying course to help reach my goal of flying in the backcountry as a professional pilot.



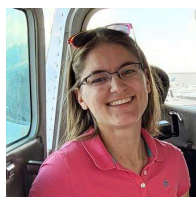
Daniela Ponce

COMMERCIAL MULTI-ENGINE ADD-ON

Phoenix Chapter, Southwest Section

I am a first-generation pilot and CFI/CFII based out of Falcon Field in Mesa, Arizona, and am featured in *Latinas in Aviation*, Volume 4. I fell in love with aviation through an unexpected

path – the medical field. My geriatric patients, many of whom had aviation backgrounds, shared their incredible stories and encouraged me to book a discovery flight and that was all it took. The Ninety-Nines have been instrumental in my growth as a pilot and given me lifelong connections – a community I am dedicated to giving back to as a mentor and, one day, an airline pilot.



Martha Reith

CFI

Wisconsin Chapter, North Central Section

I learned to fly as a personal challenge during the pandemic, but it quickly became a defining passion that reshaped my career path. I earned my certificates and gained diverse experience

in varied flying conditions while training across the country. I am thankful to receive this scholarship which will help me achieve another milestone in my journey from the cubicle to the flight deck. After completing my CFI, I plan to instruct at my flight school as I continue to build hours towards the ATP requirements.



Aymie Rioux

ADVANCED FLOATPLANE PROGRAM

Quebec Chapter, East Canada Section

My name is Aymie. I grew up in rural Quebec on the shore of Lac-à-la-Tortue, where a small hydro aerodrome sparked my early fascination with flight. I first pursued outdoor studies and

built a decade-long career guiding sea kayaking, sailing, and hiking expeditions in polar regions and remote parts of the world. Travel shaped my life, but a discovery flight over Quebec City reshaped my future. In 2024, I pivoted from sea to sky, entering aviation with the same curiosity and determination. Now a commercial pilot, I'm also Vice Chair of the Quebec Chapter.



Salvador Valdes

CFII

Santa Clara Valley Chapter, Southwest Section

With help from a Monterey Chapter scholarship, I earned my Private Pilot Certificate in 2010, then shifted focus to my career in engineering

and only recently returned to aviation. Teaching has been my favorite part of any role, and I'm excited to bring that energy to flight instruction. With experience in aerospace and software engineering as well as teaching, I love making technical topics approachable – especially IFR. That's why this CFII scholarship means so much to me. Throughout my journey, The Ninety-Nines have been my home base. I'm a pilot and CFI because of your support and friendship.



Chelsea Samudio

COMMERCIAL MULTI-ENGINE ADD-ON

San Antonio Chapter, South Central Section

I am a mother and determined aviation professional transitioning from 11 years as a flight attendant with American Airlines to the

flight deck. I earned my Private Pilot Certificate while seven months pregnant, proving motherhood does not limit ambition. I have since earned my Instrument and Commercial Certificates while balancing full-time work, family life, and raising my three-year-old daughter. Now working on my CFI, the Amelia Earhart Scholarship will help me pursue my Multi-Engine Rating as I continue toward becoming an airline transport pilot, showing my daughter that no limits exist with determination and heart, and inspiring other mothers to pursue their goals unapologetically.



Kate Whipple

ACADEMIC

Las Vegas Chapter, Southwest Section

I am a Senior studying mechanical engineering at the Colorado School of Mines. I earned my Private Pilot Certificate in April 2023 and my Instrument Rating in August 2025. At Mines, I

am a member of the varsity softball team and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA). I am passionate about pursuing a career in the aerospace and defense industry, where I hope to apply both my engineering background and aviation experience and to continue advancing my pilot certifications. I am incredibly grateful for this scholarship and to be part of a supportive, inspiring community of women.

AEMSF Research Scholar Grant Recipients



Taylor Smith

COMMERCIAL MULTI-ENGINE ADD-ON

Iowa Chapter, North Central Section

I am from a small town in Iowa. My love of aviation began when I went for an airplane ride at 16. From that day forward, everything had changed, I knew this was the right career path. I

have gone on to earn my Instrument Rating, Commercial, and will use this scholarship towards my Multi-Engine Rating! Whenever I am not flying, I spend the majority of my time at the airport, where I assist in the maintenance shop as an A&P apprentice. Thank you to all the incredible women who made this scholarship possible!



Sarah Byrn Rickman

Pikes Peak Chapter, South Central Section

RESEARCH SCHOLAR GRANT AWARDED –

Let's Make a Race Of It! The Story of Those Daring Women Who Flew The Powder Puff Derby

Sarah Byrn Rickman is a retired journalist with an extensive background in research. She has published 13 books concentrating on the histories of the WAFS and their role in WWII. She has been a member of the All-Ohio Chapter and is a current member of the Pikes Peak Chapter.



Savanna Summers

COMMERCIAL MULTI-ENGINE ADD-ON

Intermountain Chapter, Northwest Section

I spent nearly a decade running sled dogs, packing mules, and commercial fishing before stumbling into aviation. The Ninety-Nines helped me gain traction in an industry I knew

nothing about, and now I strive to do the same for my students. I currently instruct at a flight school in Washington, and with this scholarship will pursue my Commercial Multi-Engine Add-on – the next step toward my Multi-Engine Instructor Rating, so I can support my students through every certificate and rating they pursue.



Dr. Rani Tolton

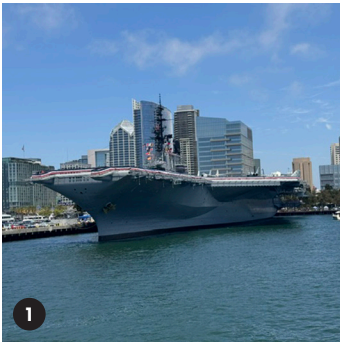
Eastern Ontario Chapter, East Canada Section

RESEARCH SCHOLAR GRANT AWARDED –

An update to the 2006 book on Canadian Women Pilots. This book will feature biographies of the Canadian

Ninety-Nines, a history of the 12 Canadian Chapters with highlights of prominent Chapter events.

Rani Tolton holds an MD from the University of Manitoba, a diploma in aviation medicine and a master's in health sciences in aviation medicine from the University of Otago, New Zealand. She is currently the Governor of the East Canada Section.



THE 2026 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

is a Wrap!

By Cathy Prudhomme

International Conference Committee Chair



Southern California delivered blue skies and gorgeous summer weather for The Ninety-Nines International Conference, held July 8-12 in San Diego, California. Members, guests, and Friends of The Ninety-Nines descended on The Westin San Diego Gaslamp Quarter hotel, located near the historic Gaslamp Quarter and San Diego's famed Embarcadero, the harborfront district that is home to many shops, restaurants, and the USS Midway Museum.

Early arrivals on Wednesday explored San Diego on their own during the day or participated in the optional Gaslamp Quarter Food Tour that evening, sampling food and beverages at a variety of independently owned restaurants housed in historic buildings.

The Conference officially opened early Thursday morning with a continental breakfast and an inspirational keynote address given by Jessica Cox, who shared the extraordinary journey that took her from being born without arms to becoming the world's first licensed armless pilot, the result of her unshakable determination, creativity, and refusal to accept limitations. Long lines formed after the presentation to purchase autographed copies of Jessica's book, *Disarm Your Limits*.

A variety of presentations followed the keynote address, appealing to many interests. Many thanks to our Thursday presenters: Maria Esparraguera ("Clear the Legal Skies"); Tammy Barlette ("Why Your Mind is Your Most Important Flight Instrument"); Dr. Rachael Ferraro ("Preflight Your Physical"); and Jeanné Willerth ("SHENanigans in the Sky: Women, Speed, and Air Racing.") Thursday afternoon provided time for Trust meetings, a Council of Governors meeting, networking in the hospitality suite, browsing the Fly Mart, or taking an optional tour. Everyone was back in time for the Thursday evening welcome reception, held on the beautiful garden terrace of the hotel, where guests enjoyed a light buffet and balmy weather.

Wake up alarms went off early again on Friday morning, as a large crowd attended a seminar with a unique format. Attendees had lots of fun simulating the game show Jeopardy, reviewing aviation terms and regs while engaging in friendly competition and earning FAA WINGS credit if they wished. Kudos to Kate Proctor for facilitating this seminar. Two more excellent presentations followed, given by Julie

Keane and Lauren Scott ("Ten Tips to Ace Your Check Ride") and Jenny Beatty ("Fabulous First Female Flyers.") The Friday morning seminar lineup concluded with "Laugh, Learn, and Lead," where lively round-table discussions provided information and inspiration for attendees to bring back to their chapters and sections.

Friday afternoon offered more options for San Diego touring, including the opportunity to attend a San Diego Padres baseball game that evening, where The Ninety-Nines were recognized on the stadium's big screen.

The Ninety-Nines, Inc. Annual Meeting took place on Saturday morning for members present at the Conference and those participating virtually. Following the Annual Meeting, 82 Life Members attended a sponsored luncheon in recognition of their support of The Ninety-Nines. The Life Member Luncheon was made possible by former International President Corbi Bulluck, who came up with the idea of a Life Member Luncheon in 2022 and procured the funding to sponsor it. Corbi, who passed away in April of 2025, strongly believed that the Life Members should be honored in some way for their financial commitment to the organization.

Two of Saturday afternoon's seminars had a distinctly travel theme, as New Zealand Section Member Dee Bond presented "The Spirit of Flight – Flying for a Cause in Australia's Outback" and Anna Lawlor of AKA Travel presented preliminary information about the 2027 Conference in Sydney, Australia. Also on Saturday afternoon, the 2026 Career Panel, "Blazing the Trail for Today's Career Pilots," featured four pioneering pilots who shared their experiences and insights to an appreciative audience of professional and aspiring professional pilots. International Vice President Janet Patton organized the session and served as moderator, with aviation trailblazers Barbara Barret Clark, Maria Ziadie-Haddad, Nivedita Bhasin, and Valerie Palazzolo as panelists.

The Conference concluded on Saturday evening with the awards banquet, honoring the recipients of The Ninety-Nines International Awards, the President's Award, the Award of Inspiration, and the Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship. More than 275 members, guests, and award winners attended. The San Diego Chapter provided handmade candles as a favor for each attendee.

1. The USS Midway Museum was one of the highlights of the San Diego waterfront. | 2. Conference attendees enjoyed a cruise around San Diego harbor and were delighted to have a female ship captain. | 3. Dee Bond, New Zealand Section; Maria Stiles, Australia Section; Kathy Koshan, Daytona Chapter. | 4. San Luis Obispo County Chapter members Dana Davis and Susan Conner-Steeb during the San Diego Naval Base tour. | 5. Fullerton Chapter members Cameron LaFont, Madona Ray, Samarra Dalrymple, Kim Ernst, and Cheri Rhynard. | 6. Nivedita Bhasin, India Section Governor, with Sapna Sharma, India Section Secretary. | 7. Sue Ballew, Santa Clara Valley, with Mohini Shroff, India Section. | 8. International Awards Chair Laurie Peake with International George Palmer Putnam Award winner Michael Franceus and Ninety-Nines Immediate Past President Robin Hadfield. | 9. Conference attendees got down to business during the well-attended in person and online via Zoom Annual Business Meeting. | 10. Ninety-Nines representing the International Society of Women Airline Pilots (ISAW+21). | 11. San Luis Obispo County members Susan Conner-Steeb, Anele Brooks, Janice Odell, Leala Willman, Elizabeth Dinan, Xandria Zepeda, Celine Kluzek, Alex McGill, Dana Davis. | 12. San Diego Chapter members Yulia Johnson, Crystal Hoffman, and Kathleen Devlin enjoyed some down time in the hospitality suite. | 13. New England Section members: standing, Georgia Pappas, Glenna Blackwell, Trish Sauve; seated, Lucy Young, Margot Cheel, Lori Plourd. | 14. Educational Seminars included Aviation Jeopardy Challenge for WINGS credit. | 15. Past North Central Section Governor Sue Glisson and Keynote Speaker Jessica Cox. | 16. Jun Oikawa, Membership Chair, All-Ohio Chapter; Janet Patton, Ambassador Virtual Chapter, International Vice President; Valerie Palazzolo, Chapter Webmaster, All-Ohio Chapter; Yuan Zhao, All-Ohio chapter.



1. Incoming Ninety-Nines Vice President Janet Patton with Incoming President Terry Carbonell. | 2. The Ninety-Nines enjoyed a special welcome during a San Diego Padres baseball game. | 3. Special guest Bobby Choudhury, Awards Banquet Mistress of Ceremonies Laurie Peake, Award of Achievement for Contributions to The Ninety-Nines winner Mohini Shroff, Immediate Past President Robin Hadfield; India Section members Nividita Bhasin and Sapna Sharma. | 4. Past North Central Section Governors Sue Glisson and Deb McGee toured the San Diego Air & Space Museum. | 5. San Luis Obispo County Chapter members Dana Davis and Susan Conner-Steeb share the flight to The 99s International Conference in San Diego, California. | 6. Professional Pilot Career Panel with moderator (standing) Captain Janet Patton, International Vice President. Seated, left to right: Eastern Airlines' First woman pilot guest Barbara Barrett Clark; first woman commercial pilot hired by Air Jamaica Ltd., Maria Ziadie-Haddad, Florida Goldcoast; one of India's pioneering woman airline pilots, Nividita Bhasin, India Section; American Eagle Airlines' first woman Captain, Valerie Palazzolo, All-Ohio Chapter.

Thank you to the Southwest Section for their contributions to the Conference, especially to those chapters who helped make the hospitality suite a special destination for networking and catching up with friends, and to the members who assisted with ground transportation for general aviation arrivals. Thanks also to the members of The Ninety-Nines International Conference Committee for the many hours they donated to the planning and execution of the 2026 Conference, and to the International Board of Directors for helping to make the 2026 Conference a huge success! 🏆

THANK YOU, 2026 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESENTERS

Jessica Cox	Julie Keane	Barbara Barret Clark
Maria Esparraguera	Lauren Scott	Maria Ziadie-Haddad
Tammy Barlette	Jenny Beatty	Nivedita Bhasin
Dr. Rachael Ferraro	Dee Bond	Valerie Palazzolo
Jeanné Willerth	Anna Lawlor	
Kate Proctor	Janet Patton	

The Ninety-Nines 2026 International Conference Committee

Cathy Prudhomme,
Houston Chapter, South Central Section
Committee Chair

Claudia Asmussen,
San Diego Chapter, Southwest Section
Hospitality & Local Arrangements Chair

Ramona Banks,
Alabama Chapter, Southeast Section
Conference Publications

Anele Brooks, San Luis Obispo Chapter,
Southwest Section
*Immediate Past Southwest
Section Governor*

Kris Irvin-Herron, Arkansas Chapter,
South Central Section
Conference Treasurer

Linda Horn, Colorado Chapter,
South Central Section
Technology Advisor

Leslie Ingham, Santa Clara Valley
Chapter, Southwest Section
Section Liaison

Rosanne Isom, New Jersey Chapter,
New York-New Jersey Section
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Maria Lamia, Blue Ridge Chapter,
Southeast Section
Conference Program Advertising

Jan McKenzie, Colorado Chapter,
South Central Section
*Seminars and Speakers, Governors/
Presidents Reception, First Time
Attendees Meet and Greet*

Lori Parker, Sedona Red Rockettes
Chapter, Southwest Section
*Seminars and Speakers; Laugh, Learn
and Lead Seminar*

Tania Rivers, Southeast Section,
San Diego Chapter Chair

Luz Schaible, Ventura County Chapter,
Southwest Section Governor

Tiffany Silverman, San Diego Chapter,
Southwest Section Liaison
Conference Bags and Jackets

Minnetta Gardinier, Iowa Chapter,
North Central Section
International Board of Directors Liaison

Anna Echols Lawlor, AKA Travel Team
*Hotel, Registration, Tours and Travel
Arrangements*

THANK YOU

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Janet Patton

SPONSOR A STUDENT PILOT

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Nancy Sliwa
Wendy Whitsell
Lucy Young

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Aviation Collectibles	Janet Patton
California Aeronautical University	Phoenix Chapter
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Elevated Access	San Diego Chapter
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	The Ninety- Nines Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund
Indiana Dunes Chapter	The Ninety-Nines Museum of Women Pilots
Jess Lucas and Amanda Glover	Uni Aviation
Margot Cheel	WAI San Diego

Invitation to Submit

NOMINATIONS FOR 2027 INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

The International Awards Committee is soliciting nominations for five prestigious awards to be presented by The Ninety-Nines, Inc. at the 2027 International Conference in Sydney, Australia. The deadline for submitting nominations is **January 31, 2027.**

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, 2027.

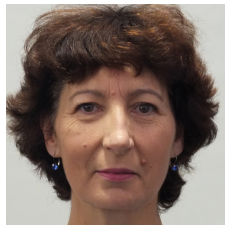
Note: Previous nominees may be resubmitted.
Questions? Email Awards@ninety-nines.org

2026 International Awards

AWARD OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO AVIATION

DEE BOND

New Zealand Section



Many people who know **Dee Bond** as a pilot may not know that she trained as a ballerina, became a speech and drama teacher, and studied at university for a BCA in accountancy

and commercial law before she discovered the world of aviation.

Growing up sailing, she thought she would become a ship's captain and sail around the world, but after buying her first aircraft, a LA4-200 Lake Buccaneer, even before she could fly, she ended up flying GA aircraft around the world instead.

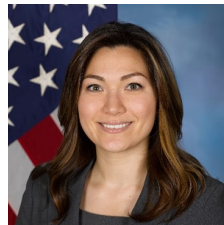
Dee, now a Life Member, joined The Ninety-Nines in 1989. She has twice served as the New Zealand Section Governor, currently serves as the Section Membership Chair, has assisted on several International Committees, served on the International Board of Directors from 2018 to 2021, and regularly represents New Zealand at international events including Ninety-Nines Conferences, the Air Race Classic (ARC), Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), and at the World Precision Flying Championships. Dee and her partner own and operate a boutique hotel and an airfield in New Zealand with a small fleet of Cessna aircraft and own New Zealand's only commercial aircraft manufacturer, NZAero. Dee is a senior flight instructor with 1,900 hours of flight instruction time, and 5,300 hours total flight time acquired mostly in general aviation sport flying.

Dee recalls that her love for The Ninety-Nines started when she represented New Zealand at the 1996 World Precision Flying Championships hosted by the U.S. at Meacham Field in Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas. In Dee's words, "The Ninety-Nines were the predominant hosting body welcoming us as we stepped off the plane, providing hospitality like no other aviation organization I know, and coordinating the whole event. The Ninety-Nines friendships I made at that event, and all the subsequent Ninety-Nines and ARC events I have attended, have been the main reasons I continue my membership and promote the organization in my home country and around the world."

AWARD OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS

STEPHANIE BAYNES

Maryland Chapter



Stephanie Baynes is a Baltimore, Maryland native. She holds a MS in operations research from the Florida Institute of Technology and a BS in mathematics from

the University of Maryland, College Park. She is a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School Senior Executive Fellows program and MIT's Seminar XXI. She also holds multiple technical certifications, including Physics of Space Systems from the Naval Postgraduate School.

Stephanie took her first flight in 2015 and has been hooked ever since! She is a Certified Flight Instructor who most recently added her all-time favorite rating, the Single-Engine Sea.

Stephanie is a senior analyst with technical and leadership experience driving mission-critical programs across the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Energy (DOE). Throughout her federal career, she has been recognized for her ability to lead complex studies, modernize resource allocation, and implement innovative data and software solutions.

A dedicated public servant, Stephanie serves on multiple nonprofit boards, where she provides strategic and fiscal oversight for international and domestic missions. On the Board of Directors of Peter & John Ministries, she works to encourage positivity, encouragement, and support within her local Baltimore community. She serves on the Board of Directors for Operation One, an organization focused on child sponsorship and building self-sustainment in Uganda. Over the past 10 years, she has traveled to Uganda five times to support the mission, where she also visits with the children she personally sponsors. During a 2022 trip, Stephanie drew on her experience as a Certified Flight Instructor to teach an aviation class for local students. The class eagerly drew 150 children who were captivated by the principles of flight, inspiring several to dream of pursuing aviation. This effort reflects her goal of using aviation to inspire and create new opportunities for underserved communities. She actively combines her passion for flying with her commitment to humanitarian work through volunteering with The Ninety-Nines, the local EAA Chapter, Scouts, and other local organizations.

Stephanie is engaged to Jamie Edwards. They have two cats, Hugo and Maya, and are looking forward to saying "I do" this October!

AWARD OF MERIT

THOMAS J. HALL



Thomas J. Hall was born in Glendale, California, and grew up at Lake Tahoe in northern Nevada. His father was an aircraft mechanic, pilot, flight instructor,

acrobatics flight instructor, and captain for Western Airlines. Tom received his wings in 1966, with Single-Engine Land (SEL), Glider, and Instrument Ratings, ending with about 2,500 flight hours in various aircraft concluding with his 1981 Beech Bonanza A36TC.

Tom's achievements and contributions to aviation are numerous:

- Incorporated the Reno Stead Airport Association and served as its President for several decades.
- Joined EAA, AOPA, and ABS, and flew over 100 EAA Introductory Flights.
- Served at the AOPA ASN for Reno/Stead Airport (KRTS).
- Served as President and Chair of the Reno Air Racing Foundation.
- Co-Founded Pathway to Aviation and served as its President for many years.
- Served as Co-Trustee, President, and Chair of George W. Gillemot Foundation, which made the largest gift in the University of Nevada history of \$38 million to start a Department of Aerospace Engineering there.
- Organized, guided, and promoted 16 Annual Aviation Speaker Programs at the University of Nevada.
- Assisted in creating the first Aviation Academy in northern Nevada with the Washoe County School District.
- Assisted in creating an aviation scholarship of \$250,000 per year for northern Nevada student pilots.

Through his involvement with the Reno Air Racing Foundation, Tom has blended his passions for education and aviation. While serving as Trustee and Chair of the Reno Racing Foundation, he co-founded Pathways to Aviation, an educational outreach program designed to inspire youth through aviation education to become pilots and aircraft maintenance personnel, ending in careers and workforce development.

In recognition of all this work, Tom has been honored by the 2026 Distinguished Nevada Award by the Nevada System of Higher Education.

GEORGE PALMER PUTNAM AWARD MIKE FRANCEUS



Mike Franceus created the Debbie Franceus Memorial Aviation Foundation in 2023, shortly after Debbie's passing, in response to Debbie's desire for women to enjoy the love of

aviation by pursuing their dreams to fly. Since its inception in 2023, the foundation has awarded 31 flight training scholarships to women across the United States. These women are not only working on their initial pilot ratings, but also on advanced ratings to fly both personally and professionally. The foundation plans to continue helping many more women achieve their goals in the coming years.

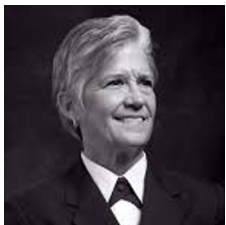
Mike received his Private Pilot Certificate in 1980, accumulating over 1,000 hours of flying in single-engine aircraft. Mike received his Instrument Rating in 2016 and has been flying the 1962 Beechcraft Debonair he and Debbie purchased together since 2011. In addition to his love for flying, Mike is a skilled scuba diver, and he and Debbie traveled the globe to many remote diving destinations during their 44 years of marriage, swimming with whale sharks, eagle rays, barracudas, and other marine life.

Mike retired from supercenter retailer Meijer, Inc. in 2019, after serving with them for 44 years in various leadership capacities, most recently as Market Director for the Toledo, Ohio, market. Additionally, during his tenure with Meijer, Mike served as a board member for The American Red Cross.

Mike continues to enjoy playing acoustic guitar, gardening, and hunting whitetail deer and has enjoyed many successful hunts for deer, mountain lions, Alaska-Yukon moose, and other big game animals with family and friends. Mike enjoys spending time with his three children, Cory, Kurt, and Kaysi, along with his nine grandchildren. Mike resides in Temperance, Michigan.

AWARD OF INSPIRATION DEBBY RIHN-HARVEY

Houston Chapter



A native of Nebraska, **Debby Rihn-Harvey** is a third-generation aviator. Her grandfather, Roy Furstenberg, operated a barnstorming

business and trained mechanics in Omaha, Nebraska, in the 1920s. He designed and built the Overland Sport aircraft and was

later inducted into the Nebraska Aviation Hall of Fame. Her father, Jack Furstenberg, flew in WWII and continued the family legacy as a Certified Flight Instructor, guiding many, including all three of his children, to solo on their 16th birthdays.

Debby began flying gliders at age 13 and soloed at age 16 in a Cessna 150 at Omaha's Eppley Airfield. While earning her biology and medical technology degree at Hastings College, she also completed her Commercial and CFI Certificate, Instrument and Multi-Engine Ratings.

She later moved to Houston, Texas, where she worked in a hospital laboratory and met her husband Eoin "Doc" Harvey, who inspired her to begin flying aerobatics. She qualified for the U.S. Unlimited Aerobatic Team in 1983; this was the beginning of a competitive and airshow career spanning more than 40 years. She qualified for the U.S. Unlimited Aerobatic Team 16 times and had won more world medals than any other U.S. competitor by the time she retired. She was overall National Aerobatic Champion three times, and Women's National Champion 14 times. She was also inducted into several halls of fame. She was often punctuated with a "Yeehaw!" or "C'mon, baby!" while performing inverted maneuvers at airshows. In 1989, she became the 11th woman hired by Southwest Airlines, where she worked for 27 years and retired as a captain.

She and her husband started Harvey & Rihn Aviation, and it has been in existence for 49 years. She continues to work at the business as a Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE) and brings her trademark enthusiasm with her. Her colleagues often describe her as a "national treasure" whose generosity, skill, and passion have left a lasting impact on the aviation community.

PRESIDENT'S AWARD JACQUE BREEDEN BOYD

Rio Grande Norte Chapter



I learned to fly in Grand Island, Nebraska, and was fortunate to experience a tremendously active chapter, even as a student pilot. My CFI, Dolly Salisbury,

was a Ninety-Nine, and my examiner, Bernadette Bower, was a Ninety-Nine. The first thing she had me sign upon completion of my Private Pilot check ride was my Ninety-Nines application, and that was in 1976.

My original chapter was Nebraska, followed by Mid-Tennessee, Fort Worth, Golden Triangle, and then becoming a Founding Mother of the Rio Grande Norte Chapter. The women from those chapters have

been integral to my aviation, personal, and professional survival.

I was awarded the Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship in 1979 for my MED in aerospace education, and then an AE Research Scholar Grant in 1994 for my research on maternity policies for women pilots. Dora Dougherty Strother McKeown brought me onto the Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund (AEMSF) as a Research Scholar Grant consultant in 1995, and then I was elected as a Trustee in 1996. I later became a Permanent Trustee.

It has been my sheer pleasure to serve as a Trustee. That work has helped me focus on giving back. I literally would not be where I am, or for that matter, who I am, without The Ninety-Nines.

AWARD OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NINETY-NINES MOHINI SHROFF

India Section



Life Member Mohini Shroff, who is a Charter Member of the Indian Section, first joined The Ninety-Nines in 1965. Although her family was not supportive of a

career in aviation, she was awarded an opportunity when she received a governmental Free Flying Scholarship in 1959. At that time, Mohini was working full time and attending college. One of the requirements of the scholarship was to complete 50 flight hours within a year, a challenging goal for women in India at that time, as women pilots were almost unheard of.

She acquired her Private Pilot License (PPL) in 1965 and in 1967, Mohini, along with fellow female pilots, gathered other women aviators from around the country and founded the Indian Women Pilots Association (IWPA). Today, the group has more than 300 members and supports the development of women in all professions involving aviation and aerospace. Through the hard work of the Indian Women Pilots' Association, aviation doors were eventually opened to women.

In 2003, Mohini made history as the first woman to participate in the Air-Race India organized by the Aeronautical Society of India – a milestone moment for women in Indian aviation.

Mohini believes that "anyone who takes to flying gets addicted and it starts running into your bloodstream; it is very difficult to give up like any other passion." Mohini continues to fly and keeps her Private Pilot License current. 

ARC 2026 Terminus

Mount Vernon, Illinois

- By Diane Earhart, Greater St. Louis Chapter



Where are you when you've been flying six to 10 hours a day for three or four days over 2,700 miles, only to land 65 miles from where you started? You're at the terminus of the 2026 Air Race Classic (ARC) in Mount Vernon, Illinois (KMVN).

What started in 1929 continues annually. The first Woman's Transcontinental Air Race was a nine-day, 2,800-mile trip from Santa Monica, California, to Cleveland, Ohio, won by Louise Thadden. The idea was initially met with opposition with the race organizers ruling a man (a "real" pilot) must accompany the racers. The Women's Air Derby would be too much of a task for the ladies. Louise Thadden was furious, and Amelia Earhart threatened a boycott endorsed by other entrants. The press that followed forced the organizers to back down.

The 2026 ARC departed from the St. Louis Regional Airport (KALN) in Bethalto, Illinois, on Tuesday, June 23, continuing through several states before ending in Mount Vernon, Illinois. The dedication of the airport manager, Chris Collins, and airport administrative assistant, Sheila Jolly Scrivner, made everything at the terminus come together.

With a great team of volunteers, Sheila asked me to be the head timer. The position started with watching a training video detailing the duties, printing a thick stack of information for the head timer's binder, and assembling a team and supplies. The duties included a long list of supplies the timing team would need, including handheld radios, clipboards, pens, preprinted forms, binoculars, and, perhaps most importantly, clocks capable of displaying the atomic time to the second. The training actually said, "Synchronize your watches." We'd waited years, watching spy movies and TV programs, to actually hear someone say that!

I was concerned about the availability of all the items. I would also need a team available to rotate duties during shifts, potentially 12 hours long on the third day of the race, June 25. More than half of the 42 teams planned to arrive by Thursday evening. Site-specific instructions for the racers were provided for each of the nine airports along the route with information about

which runway to use and where the timing line would be located. As each racer passed a checkpoint, or in our case arrived to land, she would fly at an altitude of 200-400 feet AGL (above ground level) with wings level and strobes, landing light, and beacon illuminated. The timers would note the hour, minute, and second the racer crossed the timing line. I studied the instructions as well as the racers' rules in the days before the event. I was concerned about chargers for cell phones and laptops. I was concerned about doing a good job. I said the Shepard's Prayer. Alan Shepard, that is.

By the third day of the four-day race, everything was assembled. The 4Ts were in place: the Terrific Terminus Timing Team, including two men who had previous experience as timers. I was particularly nervous about the exact location of the timing line and repeatedly nagged Chris about painting or otherwise marking where the timing line was so it could be visible to the racers as well as the 4Ts. To my relief and delight, when I arrived at the timers' tent next to the parallel taxiway, there was a visible line of small orange flags lined up on both sides of the runway.

Team 11 arrived at 10:16:34. One member of the 4Ts looked through binoculars to see that appropriate lights were on and wings were level at one mile from the runway. Another team member watched for the decal racer number on the cowl. Two more team members watched for the moment the airplane crossed the timing line. I recorded the time as the racer then climbed to enter the pattern to land.

The head timer at the previous stop in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin (KPDC), would alert me when racers had left her airport. We could watch the progress of each airplane on the MAPprogress website. The 4Ts could also guess how long it would take each airplane to fly the 300 miles from Prairie du Chien.

ARC rules require the entire route must be completed in VMC (visual meteorological conditions), and we all know Mother Nature can be merciless. There was a massive line of rain and thunderstorms from Kansas east into Indiana. The ladies would have to avoid it from Russellville, Arkansas, north to Wisconsin

and then south again to the terminus. While two more teams made it to KMVN shortly after noon on the third day of racing, most of the women waited out the storm, and 18 teams arrived between 16:51:24 and 19:58:27. Several teams were stuck in Arkansas due either to weather or mechanical problems, and seven teams overnighted in KPDC. The weather was no better on Friday, June 26, when the race would officially end at 17:00:00.

The head timer in KPDC alerted me at 10:15 a.m. on Friday that all seven teams had departed. We watched their progress (or lack thereof) on the laptop. One team stopped in Peoria, Illinois (KPIA) and five others stopped at various locations approximately an hour away from the terminus. The other team arrived in a cornfield due to catastrophic engine failure. The three young ladies and the airplane were all uninjured. Team 45, The Real Housewives of KCPS, Sarah Jelliss, Rebecca Treis, and Natalie Bianchino, was the only team to complete the ARC on the final day, arriving at 15:15:55, and all three of them kissed the ground when they exited their Piper Archer! Several teams withdrew from the race and completed the route on an IFR flight.

The evening the race ended, the Meltdown Party involved mandatory attendance as a chance to relax and communicate with other racers. All the ladies had the opportunity to pose with funny signs at the photo booth and to paint a small picture under the tutelage of a local artist. Most participants chose an aviation theme for their portraits.

Saturday was meant to be a Youth in Aviation Day with Young Eagle flights and opportunities for posters and trading cards to be autographed by the racers. The rain was relentless, and all activities were cancelled. Nevertheless, each racer had a baseball-type trading card with her photo and fun facts, and the cards were a big hit. Sunday was the awards banquet, which all teams attended, arriving by plane, train, or automobile. There are cash awards for the top five teams in the collegiate and non-collegiate categories, as well as awards for the top three teams in each leg. I had the honor of being the keynote speaker.

The team in Mount Vernon has set the bar high for the terminus in Nampa, Idaho, for the 2027 ARC. As the saying goes, "A fun time was had by all."



ARC Stop at Pryor Field Regional Airport

– By Lois Horne, Memphis Chapter

The 49th Air Race Classic (ARC) included a Southeast Section stop at Pryor Field Regional Airport (KDCU) in Tanner, Alabama. The timing team at KDCU was made up of members from the Alabama Chapter, the Memphis Chapter, and local volunteers. Although the race began on June 23, racers did not arrive at KDCU until June 24. One racer chose to complete a flyby, while the others stopped because of weather concerns ahead, the need for fuel before the next leg, or simply the opportunity to enjoy the wonderful hospitality of the KDCU staff, led by Adam Fox and Denice Marco. Alabama Chapter members, led by Chapter Chair Faith Hooper, provided hospitality inside the FBO. Racers and volunteers were also treated to a social event at the Cirrus Training Center. Everyone had a great time, especially the racers, who voted KDCU the best stop of the 49th Air Race Classic. Congratulations to Adam, Denice, and their entire team. If you have the opportunity, stop by and congratulate the KDCU team on a job well done. I am sure they will spoil you in return – it is Southern hospitality, after all, although I think one or two of them may be from the North. Be sure to check out next year's race and see whether there is a stop where you would like to volunteer. The timers stayed with Ramona Banks, and KDCU provided meals, making it a very low-cost vacation and a wonderful opportunity to spend time with my sisters in The Ninety-Nines.





Olivia (center) with her DPE Franklin Burbank (left), and instructor Jan Driessen, after her check ride.

Soaring... What It Means to Truly Fly

By Olivia Fuller, Sugarloaf Chapter

After years of flying powered aircraft in both military and airline operations, I thought I understood what it meant to truly fly. Then I discovered soaring.

What surprised me most about gliders was how quickly they changed my relationship with the sky. In powered aircraft, you move through the atmosphere. In a glider, you become part of it. Every movement of air matters. Every change in lift, temperature, wind, and cloud formation becomes something you can feel.

My introduction to soaring began in Hawaii with ridge flying out of Kawaihapai (Dillingham) Airfield (PHDH), and glider aerobatics. I still remember how quiet everything felt once released from tow. Without an engine, the experience became incredibly pure – just the sound of the wind and the subtle feedback of the aircraft. It felt intuitive in a way I hadn't experienced before.

Later, I had the opportunity to fly a mountain wave over New Zealand's Southern Alps near Mount Aoraki/Mount Cook. That flight completely transformed how I viewed soaring. The scenery alone was unforgettable, but what stood out most was seeing the atmosphere come alive: smooth mountain wave lift, lenticular clouds stacked above the peaks, and the invisible energy of the air suddenly becoming visible. It was one of the most beautiful and technically fascinating flights I've ever experienced.

One of the things I appreciate most about soaring is how mentally engaging it is. Every flight becomes a continuous exercise in planning and decision-making. You are constantly evaluating weather, searching for lift, thinking about glide range, and identifying possible landing areas. It teaches you to stay ahead of the aircraft while remaining patient and adaptable.

At the same time, soaring has reminded me why I fell in love with aviation in the first place. There is something peaceful about circling in a thermal with birds nearby, climbing higher without burning a drop of fuel, and feeling the glider respond to the smallest control inputs. Thermal hunting feels almost like solving a puzzle hidden in the sky.

As someone with a military background, I was also surprised by how familiar some aspects of soaring felt. Aerotow, for example,

immediately reminded me of formation flying. Keeping proper position behind the tow plane requires precision, coordination, and constant awareness. Smooth corrections matter. Overcontrolling becomes obvious very quickly. It develops a level of stick-and-rudder discipline that carries over into every other type of flying.

Soaring has also deepened my understanding of aerodynamics and energy management. Without an engine to rely on, you become more aware of coordinated flight, glide performance, weather patterns, and how energy must be managed carefully from takeoff to landing. It builds confidence while also teaching humility.

I'm also incredibly thankful for the support of The Ninety-Nines and the Sugarloaf Chapter annual scholarship program. The scholarship has been instrumental in helping me pursue my glider goals and continue expanding my aviation experience. Opportunities like this make a meaningful difference by encouraging women pilots to explore new areas of aviation and continue challenging themselves. I'm truly grateful for the encouragement and support from this community.

I've come to believe that glider flying makes pilots better overall. It sharpens situational awareness, improves aircraft handling skills, and encourages a deeper respect for the atmosphere and the decisions we make as aviators.

Most of all, soaring reminded me that aviation can still feel magical. Even after years of flying, there is nothing quite like shutting out the noise and silently climbing with the air itself.



Shannon O'Brien with her mentors: left, Lt. Col. Brian Hodor, Squadron Commander of the 757th Airlift Squadron, and right, Jessica Maslach, Lake Erie Chapter Chair.

From Dream to Super Hercules: How The Ninety-Nines Helped Launch a C-130 Pilot

By Maria Esparraguera, Maryland Chapter

When Shannon O'Brien first joined the Maryland Chapter of The Ninety-Nines, she was already a force of nature — working as a Delta flight attendant, serving as Captain of the Baltimore Ravens Playmakers, and participating in pageants. The Playmakers are the Baltimore Ravens' professional appearance team in the National Football League (NFL). They travel throughout Baltimore, Maryland, during the NFL season, engage with fans at

home games, and raffle off promotional merchandise and tickets at events. Shannon brought that same energy, positivity, and drive into every space she entered.

Her commitment to supporting the military and veterans was equally powerful. As part of her pageant platform, she founded Letters of Love, an outreach initiative that wrote, collected, and delivered more than 1,000 letters of appreciation to military members and hospital patients around the world.

But from the moment she began flight training, Shannon was clear about her dream: She wanted to fly C-130s for the military. During her private pilot cross-country flights with her CFI, Jessica Maslach, she would land at Youngstown/Warren Regional Airport (KYNG) in Ohio, look across the ramp at the line of C-130s and imagine herself in one. Today, she stands on the other side of that flightline — now a C-130J pilot — sharing her passion for the 910th Airlift Wing's mission with her Ninety-Nines sisters.

Shannon joined The Ninety-Nines as a student pilot while working toward her Private Pilot Certificate, knowing she wanted to apply to the Air Force Reserve. By the time she began submitting applications, she had earned a bachelor's degree in communication studies and public relations, a master's in leadership and human resource management, and had built a strong record of volunteer service with The Ninety-Nines, Civil Air Patrol, and her pageant platform. She applied widely to Air Force Reserve pilot openings across the country.

Even with a 100% on her FAA private pilot written exam, a 98% on the Air Force Officer Qualifying Test, and an 83% Pilot Candidate Selection Method score — indicators of strong potential for pilot training — she was not selected at first. She kept applying. She kept trying. She did not give up. The Ninety-Nines supported her, awarded her a scholarship and encouraged her to keep going.

Three years ago, Shannon was selected for the U.S. Air Force Reserve pilot training by the 757th Airlift Squadron at Youngstown Air Reserve Station (YARS) in Vienna, Ohio. The 910th Airlift Wing, based at YARS, flies the C-130H and C-130J Super Hercules in support of agile combat operations, tactical airlift, and aerial spray missions. Their work includes low-level infiltration into combat environments, delivering personnel and supplies through both airdrop and air-land operations.

Acceptance was only the beginning. Shannon would need to complete Officer Training School, Survival School (SERE), Undergraduate Pilot Training, and C-130J Maintenance and Aircrew Training System (MATS) training, each step demanding resilience, discipline, and heart.

After two years of intensive training, Shannon achieved her goal: she became a C-130J pilot and a commissioned officer in the United States Air Force Reserve Command. She now flies the Super Hercules and continues to give back — to her community, to the military, and to The Ninety-Nines. She recently arranged a visit to her squadron for the Lake Erie and Pittsburgh Chapters, eager to share the mission that inspired her for so long.

Shannon reflects often on the support she received along the way. "My aviation journey in Ohio, where I learned to fly and entered into my military career, has developed a deep love for the state and its aviation community," she says. "The Ninety-Nines sisterhood encouraged me through flight training, making this day especially meaningful to give back by sharing my passion for aviation and military service with Ohio and Pennsylvania."

She carries deep gratitude — for the trailblazers who paved the way, and for the mentors, instructors, teammates, crew members, friends, and family who lifted her up as she pursued her dream.

It was a full circle moment hosting her former CFI Jessica Maslach, Chair of the Lake Erie Ninety-Nines, who was also a Delta flight attendant and her CFI during private pilot training, and her current Squadron Commander of the 757th Airlift Squadron, Lt. Col. Brian Hoder, who gave her the opportunity to pursue her lifelong dream of becoming a U.S. Air Force pilot. March 13, 2026.



Julia Polaski (right) with instructor Lori MacNichol of McCall Mountain Canyon Flying Seminars (left).

Getting Comfortable in the Mountains

By Julia Polasik, *Eastern Idaho Chapter*

Thanks to an Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship I was able to participate in a four-day mountain and canyon flying course through McCall Mountain Canyon Flying Seminars LLC in Idaho this summer. I went from being scared of making emergency canyon turns at the beginning of the course to being comfortable flying through the canyons and mountains in Idaho's backcountry at low AGLs by the end of the course. That includes confined area operations, making stabilized approaches into backcountry airstrips in nonstandard patterns, and even getting some unexpected tailwheel time in a Super Cub when my Cherokee didn't have quite enough power to pull off the backcountry airstrip takeoffs with the warm summer temperatures and high-density altitudes.

Everyone at McCall Mountain Canyon Flying Seminars was incredible and Lori MacNichol went out of her way to find a way to make sure I could land in the backcountry by flying in her Super Cub on the last day, saying that it was her contribution to my scholarship! Since taking the course, I have already become much more comfortable flying cross-country across mountain ranges, flying low over terrain and ridges, and more confident as a pilot overall in the skies of Idaho that I call home. All of the skills I have gained will also be invaluable when I begin flying aerial wildlife surveys professionally in the near future — one of my main career goals. I couldn't be more grateful to have been given this once in a lifetime opportunity thanks to the generosity and support of The Ninety-Nines and the Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Foundation.

Teal in the Cockpit: Ovarian Cancer Awareness for Female Pilots

By Dr. Rachael Ferraro, *Senior AME, Aviate Medical, Intermountain Chapter*

September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, represented by the color teal. For female pilots, it is an important reminder to recognize persistent changes in the body and seek medical evaluation when something does not feel right.

There is currently no simple, reliable screening test for ovarian cancer in asymptomatic women at average risk. A Pap test screens for cervical cancer; it does not screen for ovarian cancer. This makes awareness of symptoms, personal risk factors, and family history especially important.

Understanding Ovarian Cancer

Ovarian cancer is not one single disease. It includes several tumor types that may begin in the ovaries, fallopian tubes, or nearby peritoneal tissue. The behavior, treatment, and prognosis of these cancers can vary considerably.

Possible symptoms include:

- Persistent bloating or increasing abdominal size
- Pelvic or abdominal pain or pressure
- Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
- Urinary urgency or frequency
- Constipation or changes in bowel habits
- Unexplained fatigue or weight changes

These symptoms are common and frequently have noncancerous causes. The concern arises when they are new, unexplained, persistent, progressively worsening, or different from what is normal for that individual. Women should seek medical attention when unexplained symptoms persist or become more frequent.

Pilots are trained to notice subtle changes in an aircraft's sound, handling, and performance. We should apply that same situational awareness to our health. A symptom does not need to be dramatic to deserve attention.

When symptoms or risk factors warrant further evaluation, a clinician may recommend a pelvic examination, transvaginal ultrasound, CA-125 blood testing, or other diagnostic studies. These tests may help evaluate a concerning symptom or finding, but they are not recommended as routine ovarian cancer screening for every asymptomatic woman.

Understanding Risk

Certain inherited genetic changes, including BRCA1, BRCA2, and those associated with Lynch syndrome, can increase the risk of ovarian cancer. A personal or family history of ovarian, breast, uterine, pancreatic, prostate, or colorectal cancer may be relevant when considering genetic counseling or testing.

Genetics, however, are only one part of the risk picture. Non-genetic factors associated with an

increased risk of ovarian cancer may include:

- Increasing age, particularly after menopause
- Endometriosis
- Excess body weight or obesity
- Postmenopausal hormone therapy
- Never having carried a pregnancy to term
- Infertility
- Older age at the first full-term pregnancy
- Earlier onset of menstruation
- Later menopause
- Previous radiation treatment involving the pelvis

Some of these associations are modest, and researchers do not always know whether the increased risk is related to the factor itself or to an underlying medical condition.

Having one or more risk factors does not mean that a woman will develop ovarian cancer. Many women with recognized risk factors never develop the disease, and many women diagnosed with ovarian cancer have no known genetic mutation or clearly identifiable major risk factor.

Treatment

Treatment is individualized and may include surgery, chemotherapy, targeted therapy, hormonal therapy, or a combination of treatments. The plan depends on the tumor type and stage, genetic findings, overall health, and response to treatment.

An Aviation Pioneer's Story

Ovarian cancer has touched the aviation community. Retired U.S. Navy Captain Rosemary Bryant Mariner was one of the first women to earn her Wings of Gold and became the Navy's first female tactical jet pilot. She later became the first woman to command an operational aviation squadron.

Captain Mariner died from ovarian cancer on January 24, 2019, at age 65, following an approximately five-year battle with the disease. Her funeral was honored with the Navy's first all-female pilot Missing Woman Flyover. Her life remains a powerful example of courage, leadership, and determination within aviation.

Her story is also a reminder that ovarian cancer is not merely a medical statistic. It affects aviators, families, careers, and the communities that women pilots have worked so hard to build.

Aeromedical Factors

A diagnosis of ovarian cancer generally requires individualized FAA review. The aeromedical concerns include the cancer itself, the extent of disease, the possibility of recurrence, and the effects of surgery, medications, and other treatment.

Active cancer or treatment may cause fatigue, anemia, pain, nausea, weakness, neuropathy, infection risk, impaired concentration, or other effects that may be incompatible with safe flight. A pilot should work closely with her treating physician and AME before returning to aviation duties.

Certification may become possible when treatment has been completed or stabilized, the pilot has recovered adequately, there are no aeromedically significant symptoms, and medications are acceptable and do not cause impairment. Every case is evaluated individually.

Pilots should be prepared to provide the FAA with comprehensive records, which may include:

- A current oncology progress note
- Pathology and staging reports
- Operative and hospital records
- Chemotherapy, radiation, or other treatment summaries
- A complete medication list with side effects
- Recent laboratory and imaging results
- Current clinical status and prognosis
- The planned surveillance schedule

The FAA's AME Guide is updated regularly, so pilots should consult their AME before submitting an application following a new cancer diagnosis or treatment. Arriving at the examination with complete documentation may help prevent avoidable certification delays.

September offers an opportunity to wear teal, learn your family history, understand both genetic and non-genetic risk factors, recognize symptoms, and encourage other women to seek care when something has changed. Taking care of the pilot is an essential part of every preflight.

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

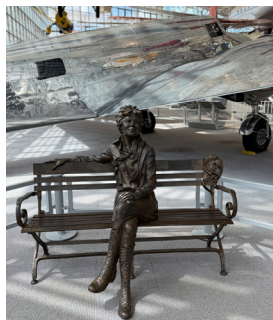


Dr. Rachael Ferraro

Senior AME, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho Aviate Medical PLLC, HIMS
www.aviatemedical.com | 208-777-5282

Places to Go & Things to Do

Seattle, Washington



Left: The main gallery at The Museum of Flight at KBFI. | Center: Statue of Amelia in front of the replica of her airplane which retraced her historic flight. | Right: Florida Suncoast Chapter member Mary Bryant and daughter Claire Bryant at the Boeing Future of Flight aviation center after touring the production line for B777s at Paine Field.



Mary Bryant
Florida Suncoast
Chapter

Mary has been a pilot and 99 for over three decades. She holds ATP, CFII, MEI, and CE500 Ratings. She is an aviation business owner, aircraft owner, and active pilot. She loves to fly and is always looking for places to go and things to do; suggestions always welcome!
marybryant100@gmail.com

Summer months and early fall often bring respite to the notorious gloomy and rainy weather of Seattle. Take this period to enjoy the many options of this world-class city. I'll focus mainly on opportunities near airports for those flying in or making a quick stop, but if time avails, be sure to visit the nearby downtown's famous attractions like Pike Place Market (home of the first Starbucks), the Space Needle, and museums including the Museum of Pop Culture, Seattle Art Museum, Chihuly Garden, and more. The Olympic Sculpture Park features a beautiful walk along the waterfront and is definitely worth doing. It's also easy to spend several hours just watching the seaplanes come and go in the busy harbor, taking a ferry or boat ride to the nearby Bainbridge Island, viewing the many houseboats made famous by the movie *Sleepless in Seattle*, or even by earning a Seaplane Rating. If you have an extra day, a hike on Mt. Rainier can be spectacular. This list just begins to scratch the surface of things to do in Seattle, not the least of which is visiting the many diverse restaurants.

But back to the airport attractions. Seattle is home to Boeing aircraft and Boeing Field (KBFI). Located just south of downtown, KBFI provides general aviation access via Signature Aircraft or Modern Aviation. Two closely spaced runways – one over 10,000 feet and another under 4,000 – accommodate both Boeing aircraft just out of the factory being flight tested, and GA training aircraft. Flying into the busy airspace requires attention but the airport is very doable for small GA aircraft and is the most convenient to downtown Seattle.

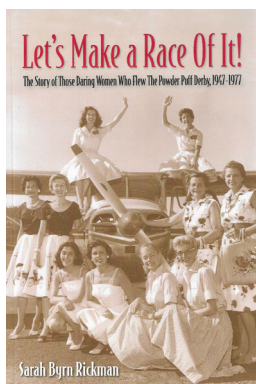
KBFI is the location of The Museum of Flight, one of the best aviation museums I've visited and, with over 150 historically significant aircraft, it's among the largest collections in the U.S. (<https://www.museumofflight.org>). General admission is \$29. One could easily spend more than one day here among the historic collection,

some original, some reproductions, including early Boeing and Fokker planes, a Wright Brothers replica, a Blackbird, Lindberg's *Spirit of St. Louis*, a Gee Bee, F4s, and drones. An Electra restored by Linda Finch to replicate Amelia Earhart's plane is on display along with a life-sized replica of Amelia. In 1997, Linda also replicated Earhart's around the world flight plan as closely as possible, dropping a wreath near Howland Island to remember her sister aviator. Other very large, historic aircraft are found outside in the covered Aviation Pavilion and Memorial Park including the first Air Force One, a B-57, a B-52 Stratofortress, a B-29 Superfortress, a Concorde, and the first B747. An interesting fact about the Concorde is that it expanded 14 inches in flight. Snacks or lunch are available at the cafe.

Although tours of the Boeing factory are not available at Boeing Field, they are at Paine Field (KPAE) in Everett, Washington, about 25 miles north of Seattle, where the B777s are built. The tour costs \$46, takes a few hours, and also includes admission to the Boeing Future of Flight aviation center which focuses more on current and future endeavors including autonomous electric vertical lift vehicles and space modules.

There is also another, smaller museum on the field, the Flying Heritage & Combat Armor Museum. This museum was formerly Paul Allen's collection and was purchased by Stewart Walton. Although admission is free, hours are limited, so plan your time if you want to include it in your visit. The GA friendly FBO, Propeller Aero Services, provides excellent service. Like most of Seattle, prices can be high, so be prepared. There is also a well-known hotel chain on the field for overnights.

So, get this trip in before the rain and low ceilings of Seattle winter return and the sunny days of summer are gone. —



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Available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble etc.

LET'S MAKE A RACE OF IT!: The Story of Those Daring Women Who Flew The Powder Puff Derby, 1947-1977

Author: Sarah Byrn Rickman, *Pikes Peak Chapter, South Central Section*

It is an honor and a pleasure to review *Let's Make a Race Of It!* This book was supported by the Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund Research Scholar Grant. Sarah Byrn Rickman was awarded this grant in October of 2025. The RSG funded Sarah's background research and writing of the book. In Sarah's RSG proposal, she requested that all proceeds from the sale of the book go directly back into the AEMSFS Research Scholar Grant. As with all AEMSFS RSG projects, the organization holds copyright on the grant outcome. This book is the outcome of that grant. It is a great honor to have this be The Ninety-Nines, Inc. first publishing experience. Thanks also to Gretchen Jahn and Mary Mawlewski, both contractors on the grant for their expertise and guidance with Sarah along the way.

Sarah Rickman is one of the most prolific writers and researchers that I've ever had the pleasure of working with. Sarah and I have been friends since her first book on the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS), *The Originals*. Sarah's writing is absolutely stellar, but she knows the first place I always go in a nonfiction book is to the back in the appendix and reference section. This book was no exception, and the information I found there was not a disappointment.

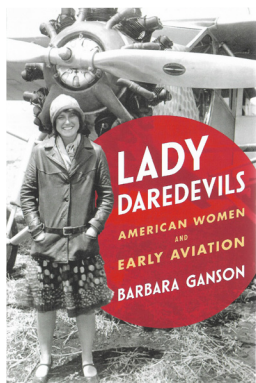
This book is chock-full of wonderful anecdotal stories, perceptions, recollections, and profiles of the racers through the years. Even if the reader believes they are an aficionado of air racing, they'll be surprised at what pops up in the narrative. There are excerpts from many of the race programs, essays from Ninety-Nines' Presidents who were also air racers, a little poetry and written pieces from many of the winners. The maps of the routes are well spaced throughout the book, providing a great background for the stories that accompany them. And the photos – well, those add a touch that will leave you smiling. The book chronicles so many of the aspects of air racing – great stuff!

The book is dedicated to Iris Cummings Critchell. Iris introduced Sarah to the All-Woman Transcontinental Air Race (AWTAR). That close relationship shines through much of the written narrative in this book. Thanks to Sarah for sharing that lasting legacy, both of their friendship and the skill and dedication of a fellow Ninety-Nine.

This is a reference book wrapped in a marvelous story. You will definitely want this one for your library.

LADY DAREDEVILS: American Women and Early Aviation

Author: Barbara Ganson, *Florida Goldcoast Chapter, Southeast Section*



Publisher: University of Illinois Press (publication supported by a grant from the Winston U. Solberg U.S. History Subvention Fund)
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ISBN: 978-0252089312
Available on Amazon

Barbara is one of my favorite type of writers – she's an academic who can tell one heck of a story. As with any non-fiction book, I turn to the back first to roll through the information in the appendices and notes section, and of course, the bibliography. This time I got much more than I bargained for and saw information that I had never seen collected in one place. In Appendix B – Licensed Women Pilots in The United States, 1930 – the pilots are listed by state and license type. I have never seen this sort of breakdown before and I loved it!

I was a little confused with the organization of the book. Each chapter heading is self-explanatory, but the information contained in each is pretty wide-ranging. That being said, I felt more of an opportunity to read and search once I figured out that this wasn't the kind of book that I had to read "in order." There is so much information that I'd start in one place and find myself flipping through to another spot in the book to see what was there, too. However, the index and the specific chapter references in the back of the book make a lot of the information very accessible and helped me find what I thought I was looking for.

In my estimation, Ganson has written a book that gives us a more comprehensive picture of early women pilots than we have seen before. Clear a place on your bookshelf for this one!

Milestones

Jessica Arciero
CFI
– Bay Cities



Sophia Bowman
Commercial
Multi-Engine
– Minnesota

Alicia Brown
Commercial
– Sedona Red Rockettes



Anah Campbell
Solo
– Kentucky Bluegrass



Kedaton Campbell
Private
– Santa Clara Valley



Katherine Carr
Private
– Greater St. Louis



Alyssa Christian
Multi-engine
– San Diego

Noelle Cors
Commercial; CFI
– Austin Hill Country

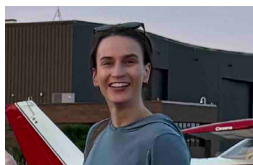
Malia Curtis
Private
– Sedona Red Rockettes



Carsey Eliason
Instrument
– NOLA



Timber Dawson
Commercial
Multi-Engine
– Kentucky Bluegrass



Sarah Devron
Instrument
– Michigan



Claire Dunnigan
Instrument;
Commercial
– Michigan

Takiyah Franklin
Solo
– Bay Cities



Talia Hanson
Instrument
– Minnesota



Maria Harkins
Solo
– Greater St. Louis



PingPing He
Private
– Minnesota



Chasity Jackson
Private
– Kentucky Bluegrass



Doreen Joseph
Private
– Sacramento Valley



Carmen Kivisto
ATP, Envoy Airlines
– Minnesota



Paige Kuhn
CFII
– Wisconsin



Ashley Lane
MEI
– Minnesota



Rylie Lewis
Private
– Keystone



Kim Marcell
Commercial
Multi-engine
– Minnesota



Payton McIntyre
Private
– Pikes Peak



Anna Morell
Solo
– Keystone

Lillian Mutch
Instrument
– Oregon Pines



Hannah Nakka
Instrument
– Sutter Buttes



Michelle Noland
CFI, CFII and MEI
– Minnesota

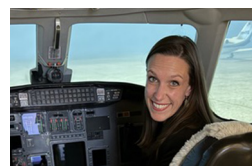


Chloe Park
Multi-Engine
– Kentucky Bluegrass



Priya Patel
Solo
– Keystone

Stacy Pitts
CFII
– Pikes Peak



Vanessa Sampson
MEI; Citation XL/XLS
type rating
– Minnesota



Cherie Scalzi
Private
– Sacramento Valley



Lauren Stettbacher
Commercial
Multi-engine
– Wisconsin

Matreiya Viafora
Private
– Sedona Red Rockettes



Left: Alicia Brown was the recipient of the \$5,000 Chart Your Next Course Milestone Award, and the newly formed \$3,000 Achsa Milestone Award. | Center: Sedona Red Rockettes enjoyed a tour of the Flagstaff control tower and Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) unit. | Right: Sedona Red Rockettes Chapter celebrated Matreiya, Alicia, and Malia with cake.

SEDONA RED ROCKETTES CHAPTER

Investing in the Next Generation

Last year's Sedona Red Rockettes Chapter scholarship focused on supporting a student pilot, but this year the Sedona Chapter expanded its vision by creating an advanced milestone award known as Chart Your Next Course. Applicants were asked to outline three milestones toward their aviation goals that could be achieved with the support of the \$5,000 award, along with an essay describing their plan for success.

We are thrilled to announce that **Alicia Brown** was selected as the recipient. Her proposed goals included passing the Commercial Pilot written exam, passing the Commercial Pilot check ride, and earning a college semester GPA of B+ or higher. Since receiving the award, Alicia has successfully completed all three goals. Congratulations, Alicia!

A Legacy That Continues to Soar

One of the most heartwarming events of the spring began with a call from Sedona Airport's manager. He had been contacted by Janet Reynolds, a vibrant, energetic 90-year-old woman who had read about the Sedona Red Rockettes Chapter in the newspaper. Janet has long been fascinated by female pilots and shared that a dear friend – Achsa Donnels, a Charter Member of The Ninety-Nines – had personally known Amelia Earhart.

Janet joined us at the Sedona Airport and quickly decided to support an aspiring female professional pilot. She generously donated a signed book from her friend Achsa, inspiring the creation of the Achsa Milestone Award. The Board added funds to bring the scholarship total to \$3,000.

Due to Janet's health concerns, the scholarship timeline was expedited, leaving us with only one month to publicize the

opportunity. Once again, Alicia Brown submitted an outstanding essay outlining her next step toward becoming a professional pilot – earning her CFI Certificate. Alicia plans to continue her training in California, where she can gain valuable experience flying in actual IFR conditions. While we will certainly miss her, we are excited about her next chapter, and she promises to keep in touch.

Tower Talk and Firehose Fun

On May 9, several members brought treats to the Flagstaff Pulliam Airport (KFLG) control tower. Due to unusually high winds, tower traffic was quieter than normal, giving the air traffic controller extra time to answer our questions and share insights about tower operations. The group headed next door to the Flagstaff AARF (Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting) unit, where they toured the facility, and even had the chance to learn how to operate a firehose from the truck!

Two New 18-Year-Old Private Pilots!

Two recently graduated high school students from the Sedona Red Rockettes passed their Private Pilot check rides within two weeks of each other! Then, with Alicia passing her Commercial Pilot check ride just a week later, the chapter celebrated with pizza, cake, and gifts. One of the young pilots even said she had never had her name on a cake before!

Matreiya Viafora, the recipient of last year's student pilot scholarship, and **Malia Curtis**, the Sedona Red Rockettes' newest member, are both heading off to college to continue their pilot training. We are so proud of them and excited to watch their aviation journeys continue!

– Lori Garland Parker



Left: back row (left to right): Martha Reith, Ann Sederquist, Rose Dorcey, Nancy Burton, Sara Kohl, Laurie Probst, Jensen Sandstrom, Stacy Wolak, Crystal Simon, Audra Van Wie. Front row (left to right): Tina Hartlaub, Paige Kuhn, Lauren Gallagher, Cindi Pokorny, Minal Hahm, Dana McLaren. Not pictured: Monica Radzin and Young Eagles pilots Alyssa Miller and Rebecca Loduha. | Top right: Wisconsin Chapter assist participants at the Girls on the Fly event. | Bottom right: Martha Reith, Tina Hartlaub, and Paige Kuhn at Piston and Props Airshow.

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

The Wisconsin Chapter has been very busy when it comes to youth aviation education outreach. This spring, members volunteered at three well-attended events: EAA's Girls on the Fly, the Wisconsin Chapter Girl Scout Aviation Badge Day, and Janesville's Pistons and Props.

Girls on the Fly is offered each fall and spring through the Experimental Aircraft Association's (EAA) Education Center, located in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. This is a full day of hands-on sessions, guest speakers, a tower tour, and a Young Eagles flight for each participant. The Wisconsin Chapter facilitates an RC aircraft build at one of the sessions, and some of the members volunteer as Young Eagles pilots. The event exposes girls in grades 6-12 to women mentors who can answer their questions, as they talk about aviation opportunities and The Ninety-Nines.

In May, 41 Girl Scouts attended the chapter's aviation badge event at the Manitowoc County Airport (KMTW). Stations included: Hot Air Ballooning, Airplane Preflight, How to Use Flight Computers, Navigation with Sectional Charts, and Exploring Aviation Careers. A morning and afternoon session were held to accommodate busy family schedules.

At Pistons and Props Airshow at the Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport (KJVL), Janesville, Wisconsin, three chapter members, Martha Reith, Tina Hartlaub, and Paige Kuhn, facilitated a session on ATC. Kids explored how to talk like a pilot using towered airport procedures. This event is open to local schools and youth groups to help expose students to STEM careers.

– Laurie Probst



APPALACHIAN AVIATRIXES

Members of the Appalachian Aviatrixes were joined by prospective members for their June planning meeting. Wendy Turner and 49½ Joe hosted the meeting and potluck at their beautiful new home at Hensley Airpark (04TN). Plans for the upcoming Girl Scout Day at Knoxville Downtown Island Airport (KDKX) were discussed. Members decided to use the upcoming Southeast Section 5K fundraiser to increase scholarship funds. Prospective member Pam Mitchell offered the use of her farm, which includes an ultralight landing strip, as the location for the fundraiser. This was greeted by much enthusiasm, and plans to include an ultralight fly-in were discussed.

– Janice Pelletti

Top: Members of the Appalachian Aviatrixes Chapter are joined by prospective members in Wendy's hangar. Left to right: Ginger Merrill (prospective member), Liz Edgar, Janice Pelletti, Olivia Watson (prospective member), Wendy Turner, Pam Phillips Mitchell (prospective member), Brenda Robinette, and Mary Woody. | Bottom: View from Wendy's home of the 3000-foot asphalt runway at Hensley Airpark, Chuckey, Tennessee.



Grass Roots



Top left: Completing the compass rose layout. | Top Right: Compass rose painting underway. | Bottom left: Finished Ninety-Nines logo on the KASH compass rose. | Bottom right: KASH Manager Chris Lynch, Jessica Phinney, and Lori Plourd after completing the finishing touches.

NEW ENGLAND SECTION

Compass Rose at Boire Field Airport (KASH)

Members from all three chapters of the New England Section descended upon Boire Field Airport (KASH) on June 6, 2026, to replace the compass rose on a repaved section of the airport. The project started bright and early at 7 a.m. to take advantage of cooler temperatures and hopefully finish before forecasted afternoon rain. Eastern New England Chapter's Kelly Short headed up the project, working with Airport Manager Chris Lynch to obtain all the necessary permissions, survey, and paint and supply donations. They were joined by chapter members Jessie Zuberek, Jessica Phinney, Holly Intravia, Bella Atbinder, Servet Yatin, and Margot Cheel. Glenna Blackwell from the Connecticut Chapter; and Section Airmarking Co-Chair Lori Plourd from the Katahdin Wings Chapter rounded out the crew.

Servet, Holly, and Margot had the pleasure of flying into KASH in Servet's Piper Arrow. After meticulously measuring, snapping chalk lines and taping, the compass rose pattern took shape. Paint bucket lids came off, and the crew got to work making good time with rollers and brushes. Airport management treated us to a sub sandwich lunch while the paint dried. Ninety percent of the painting was done before the forecast showers showed up. The finishing touches and the center Ninety-Nines logo were completed later on in the month. As always, the compass rose project was a fabulous endeavor that brought section members together as a proud tribute to aviation history and women in flight.

– Lori Plourd



Top: Lake Charles Chapter members at Rocking on the Runway included (left to right) Emma Stropola, Sydney Lavoie, Sandra Leder, Margaret Morby, Dominique Durand, Kay Babst, and Abby Thibodeaux. | Bottom: Jerrica Bennett teaching the girls at Girls in Aviation Day at Louisiana Tech University.

LAKE CHARLES CHAPTER

Sydney Lavoie and Jerrica Bennett hosted a Girls in Aviation Day at Louisiana Tech University. Jerrica created a presentation assigning each child a card about a significant woman in aviation, and she talked about their history and how they played a role in aviation. There were five stations for local children in the Ruston, Louisiana area. They included a paper airplane making and distance competition, a flight simulator lesson, bracelet making, sectional making, and a game of pin the propeller on the airplane.

The Lake Charles Chapter attended Rocking on the Runway in Sunset, Louisiana, where they also had a display of Ninety-Nines history and brochures about The Ninety-Nines. Attending were Emma Stropola, Sydney Lavoie, Sandra Leder, Margaret Morby, Dominique Durand, Kay Babst, and Abby Thibodeaux.

– Sydney Lavoie



OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

Women Can Fly at Warrenton/Fauquier Airport (KHWY)

The Old Dominion 99s had a fabulous day on June 6 for Women Can Fly. It was a busy day, but thanks to every one of our volunteers, it was a safe day. It included a lengthy delay thanks to a T6 pilot who made an emergency landing after losing his propeller minutes before we tried to launch our flights.

Here are the numbers:

- 225 people attended our safety briefing led by Claire Shindler, a used-to-be local pilot who is now a first officer with Kalitta Air flying the Boeing 747.
- 45 people made cell phone stands at Women Can Build to learn skills with Clecos and rivets.
- 34 pilots came out to fly in 28 airplanes.
- 11 static display aircraft joined in the fun.
- 215 people got to fly with us and receive a flight certificate.

Laura Savino and Mary McCutcheon staffed The 99s table and found at least 22 women who wanted more information about joining our chapter and The 99s.

Hannah Rust, Cynthia Axell, and Sue Passmore provided marshalling services for the airplanes.

Charlotte Granahan volunteered as a pilot and flew participants in a Cessna 150. Charlotte was a participant in this event in 2018, and look where she is now! Charlotte's mom volunteered at the Women Can Build tent: she is a true supporter.

Rebecca Akhigbe, one of our student pilots, flew with Banu Cole in the helicopter and then volunteered to help "hot load" the participants in the helicopter. Rebecca also flew in a light sport aircraft.

Heather Penney brought her beautiful Stearman to the airport later in the day. Her daughter, Sierra, soloed earlier at Horsefeathers Airport with instructor Chuck Tippet.

Sarah Patten has been running this event for nine years. Over the years, we've had 1,902 people attend the preflight briefing, and we've safely flown 1,740 people. These are phenomenal numbers; they represent a great team effort led by an awesome team leader. The Old Dominion 99s have co-sponsored this event since 2013 with the Virginia Department of Aviation and the KHWY airport manager.

AOPA was there to document the event: https://www.aopa.org/news-and-media/all-news/2026/june/11/women-can-fly?utm_source=pilot&utm_medium=email#

After the event, we celebrated guest Gail Keys's retirement from United Airlines. Forty years in aviation!

What an incredible aviation community we have at KHWY.

– Susan Passmore



Heather Penney's Stearman attracted attention on the ramp. Heather Penney, Sierra Penney, Erin Miller, Sue Passmore, Hannah Rust, Laura Savino, and WCF volunteer. (Photo by Hannah Rust) | Laura Savino, Mary McCutchen, Amanda Proctor, and Hannah Rust at our 99s table. | Rebecca Akhigbe had a joyous flight in the light sport aircraft. Photo by Cynthia Axell. | Sue Passmore, Cynthia Axell, and Charlotte Granahan on the ramp. Photo by Charlotte's mom.

Grass Roots



COLORADO CHAPTER

This year, the Colorado Chapter organized their first annual virtual 5K, which was a resounding success!

With 39 participants registering at a fee of \$35 and an impressive \$324 in donations, this event has effectively supported the chapters' mission of outreach and community engagement. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 79, and joined from various locations across the United States, including Nevada, California, Wyoming, South Carolina, and, of course, Colorado. They all managed to complete the 5K in their own way. It was exciting to receive finisher pictures, showcasing participants on trails, mountain tops, and beach trails. Each participant received a commemorative finisher medal, an event T-shirt, and an aviation-themed bib. Additionally, participants were automatically entered into a raffle, with the chance to win an air foil jacket and flight lift bag donated by Flight Outfitters, as well as four hats and four \$50 gift cards donated by Bold Aviator.

This event's immense success was all thanks to the tireless efforts of Lea Hadzick, Social Media and Membership Chair, who provided exceptional advertising across multiple social media platforms and in-person promotions at various events, and Brittney Laughlin, Fundraising Chair, for organizing the virtual 5K, securing sponsorships, and coordinating the event from start to finish.

The Colorado Chapter looks forward to building on this successful inaugural event and making it even bigger next year!

– Kristin Smith



Austin Hill Country Chapter members celebrated Tailwheel Day with members sharing tailwheel discovery flights.

AUSTIN HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

Tailwheel Day and Spirit of the Wasp Scholarship Dinner

Nothing says “let’s go fly” quite like a ramp full of taildraggers. On the morning of July 11, members gathered at Stiletto Airpark (XS79) in Bertram, Texas, for a full day of tailwheel discovery flights in a lineup of classic tailwheel aircraft, and the generosity on display was hard to beat: Every single flight was provided to our members completely free of charge. Approximately 20 members and their loved ones turned out for the event, filling the ramp with energy well into the afternoon as they felt what it’s like to dance the rudder pedals on takeoff and landing, coming away grinning ear to ear (and maybe a little humbled). That evening, the celebration continued at Haywire, the wonderfully eclectic Austin restaurant that set the perfect offbeat backdrop for the Spirit of the WASP Scholarship Dinner. Approximately 12 members gathered there to honor our 2026 scholarship winner, Christine Clark, whose dedication to aviation embodies everything the Spirit of the WASP Award stands for. Between the toasts, the stories, and the shared pride in watching one of our own take the next step in her flying journey, it was a full day that reminded everyone why we fell in love with flying – and why we invest in the next generation of women pilots.

– Hannah Lundgaard



Top: Girls in Aviation Day at Flight Club 502, Louisville, Kentucky. | Bottom left: Sue Glisson, Kaye Combs Moore, Skye Newsome, and Terri Donner – all four Kentucky Bluegrass Chapter officers at The Ninety-Nines International Conference in San Diego, California. | Bottom center-left: Kentucky Bluegrass Chapter volunteers for the 2026 Air Race Classic stop in Frankfort, Kentucky. | Bottom center-right: Kentucky Bluegrass and Memphis Chapter timers at the ARC stop in Frankfort, Kentucky. | Bottom right: Timer, Amy Bogardus at the ARC stop in Frankfort, Kentucky.

KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS CHAPTER

In April, Kentucky Bluegrass Chapter held our 25th annual Girls in Aviation Day at Flight Club 502, Louisville, Kentucky. We enjoyed providing area girls with several aviation education presentations.

We met at the Bardstown Fly-In, Bardstown, Kentucky, in May for a delicious breakfast and our final planning for hosting the 2026 Air Race Classic's first stop at Capital City Airport (KFFT), Frankfort, Kentucky.

June 23 was the big day for the 2026 Air Race Classic start. Kentucky Bluegrass Ninety-Nines were delighted to receive over 40 teams as they stopped for fuel and food at Capital City Airport.

It was a very busy day for our volunteers, timers, stop chairs, airport staff and, of course, the racers.

In July, all four of our chapter officers, Chair Sue Glisson, Vice Chair Kaye Combs Moore, Treasurer Terri Donner, and Secretary Skye Newsome attended The Ninety-Nines International Conference in San Diego, California. We cheered Skye on as she received acknowledgement as a Spring First Wings awardee.

Welcome new members Tami Conti, Lacy Perry, and Peyton Sylvester.

– Sue Glisson



NORTHEAST KANSAS CHAPTER

In June, the experienced Air Race Classic Timing Team from our Chapter and friends once again timed at the St. Joseph, Missouri stop this year. In the middle of corn fields! We never all got together for a photo op, but all who participated were: Clancey Maloney and Laura Burnham, co-Timing Chairs; Rhona Cash; Cindy DeVan; Steve Klotz; Doug Tilghman; Megan Ryan; Cheri Thompson; Sara Tompson and Tammy Willits.

On July 11, the Northeast Kansas Chapter held our annual fly-in/drive-in hangar potluck in conjunction with EAA Chapter 1535 at member Tammy Willits' hangar at Lawrence Regional Airport (KLWC). This year, we had a special guest speaker: Ashley Gill, the new Director of the Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum in Atchison, Kansas. Her presentation evoked a number of interesting questions.

Grass Roots



Left: Michigan Chapter members at WomenVenture during AirVenture at Oshkosh: Melanie McNicholas, Frances Rose, Lydia Hodgson, Linda Langrill, Nicki Acker, Marie Zeffer (former Michigan Chapter Chair). Top center: Airmarking team at 8D4: Dick Acker, Nicki Acker, Samantha Inguanzo, guest James MacGregor. Bottom center: Linda Langrill, Mara Jefferies, Julie Lowman, Brenda Reisig, Samantha Inguanzo and Kelley Roger and the finished compass rose at 8D4. Right: Michigan Chapter Airmarking Chair Samantha Inguanzo.

MICHIGAN CHAPTER

Special activities held in the past two months

The Michigan Chapter held a meeting via Zoom on June 2 and were inspired by our guest speaker, Jo Walker. Jo is the owner of SkyWalker Flying service located at Lenawee County Airport (KADG) in Adrian, Michigan. Jo founded her flight school when she was unable to find flight instruction in her area. Jo has built a flight school focused specifically on meeting student-centered goals. The rental fleet includes eight single and multi-engine airplanes. Several past students attended the meeting and shared how pleased they were with training received from Jo and her CFI team. The flight school offers training from Private Certificates up to Multi-Engine Ratings. Recruited to re-join The 99s by Chapter Chair Sarah Haskett, Jo is now helping to organize a chapter in-person event in late October for trick or treating at KADG.

On June 13, 2026, Michigan Chapter painted a compass rose at Paul C Miller/Sparta Airport (8D4) located in Sparta, Michigan. This was a monumental undertaking led by our Airmarking Chair, Samantha Inguanzo, who did an amazing job coordinating with the airport staff, recruiting volunteers, and organizing all the supplies. The day before the event, Nicki Acker, Dick Acker (Nicki's husband), and local CFI James MacGregor created chalk lines and taped the entire compass rose. On June 13, a team of members, friends, airport staff, and local pilots painted the entire compass rose. Huge thanks to members: Kelley Rogers, Linda Langrill, Marah Jefferies, Julie Lowman, Barb Vukits, and Brenda Reisig. We received a wonderful letter of thanks from 8D4 Airport Manager, Michael Krzciok, who complimented Samantha for her leadership and attention to detail during the event. Michael also expressed appreciation to the Michigan Chapter for providing a beautiful addition to their newly re-surfaced airport apron and how the completed compass rose significantly exceeded his team's expectations.

Michigan Chapter members attending EAA AirVenture enjoyed gathering for Margarita Monday on July 20, 2026, for tacos and

drinks at the Nicki Acker's campsite in Camp Scholler. Nicki and former Michigan Chapter and current Wisconsin Chapter member Jen Little also participated in the EAA band concert. Samantha Inguanzo volunteered at the LightSpeed booth. Linda Langrill, Immediate Past Chapter Chair, organized members for a group picture following the WomenVenture luncheon program on July 22, 2026.

A new virtual study group has been formed based upon a suggestion from Megan Gorak. Through an online sign up, members can add their name, availability, and the rating they are pursuing, then connect with other members working on the same goal. Megan is managing the sign-up list and assisting members.

We recognized the following members who received the Michigan 99s Sandy Denton Award. Award winners receive a certificate from the chapter, and the member with the most new ratings at the end of each year will be awarded the actual trophy for the upcoming year.

June – Linda Langrill: Two terms (four years) as Michigan Chapter Chair

July – Claire Dunnigan: Passed her Instrument check ride on June 17, 2026, in London, Ohio; and Sarah Devron: Passed her Instrument check ride in May in Holland, Michigan.

August – Lydia Hodgson: Passed her Private Pilot check ride on July 12, 2026, at Jack Barstow Airport (KIKW) in Midland, Michigan; and Claire Dunnigan: passed her Commercial check ride on July 11, 2026, at Willow Run Airport (KYIP) in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

The Michigan Chapter welcomed new members Chloe Miner, Cara Knasel, and Kael Yothers.

– Barb Vukits

MINNESOTA CHAPTER

Minnesota members Patti Sandusky, Tracy Davenport, Lisa Karan, Cheryl Daml, PingPing He, Majel Baker, and photographer Becky Juarez completed the airport name and elevation airmarking at Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport (KBRD) on May 3. We had previously done the compass rose there.

The Minnesota Chapter had their booth at the Great Minnesota Aviation Gathering (GMAG). We talked to many interested ladies. We also had our booth at EAA 237's pancake breakfast at Anoka County/Blaine Airport (KANE), Blaine, Minnesota.

We hosted our first Let's Fly Now! event and gave 15 young women their first small airplane flight. The weather was fantastic, and we were treated to a formation takeoff of six Army Reserve Blackhawk helicopters that were at the airport.

A large group of us attended dinner and the Guthrie Theatre to view *Come From Away*.

Eighteen members attended EAA AirVenture at Oshkosh this year. Heather McNevin and Brenda Hanson gave presentations. Heather retired from her position as Air Traffic Controller and has been giving presentations to help pilots navigate ATC. It was her 10th year presenting at Oshkosh during AirVenture. Her seminar was titled "How to Talk to ATC" and walked everyone from student pilots through ATPs on how to better understand and operate in the National Airspace System. She discussed everything from phraseology to ATC equipment and functionality and how to get the best service in the system. It was complete with stories and even some 80s rock music! Attendees also received FAA Wings credit.

CFI Brenda Hanson presented a seminar titled "The Last 20%: Using Metacognition to Break Through Training Plateaus," a practical, no-nonsense session that shows you how to help students overcome training plateaus and meet their check ride with confidence. Attendees could receive FAA Wings credit for attending the seminar. She shared a handout that is a section of the notebook that she developed called *Notes on The Fly: A Student Pilot Flight Journal*. The complete notebook is available on Amazon. She has also developed an aviation-related coloring book, which is also available on Amazon.

– Patti Sandusky

Top: Minnesota Chapter members in attendance at the Let's Fly Now! event. | Middle: Airmarking crew at Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport (KBRD) were, from left to right: Patti Sandusky, airport contact Trudi Amundson, Tracy Davenport, Lisa Karan, Cheryl Daml, PingPing He, Majel Baker, and photographer Becky Juarez. | Bottom: Members attending Guthrie Theatre's *Come From Away* performance, left to right: Cheryl Daml, Patti Sandusky, PingPing He, Brenda Hanson, Lisa Karan, Jennifer Lewis, Becky Juarez, Ellen Quist, Jan Moll. Also in attendance was Lisa Karan's Mom, and Brenda's husband, Scott.

CHICAGO AREA CHAPTER

On March 30, some of our Chapter members had the privilege of meeting NASA Astronaut Eileen Collins, Life Member of The 99s and Space Shuttle Commander. After viewing the new film about her, *Spacewoman*, at the invitation of Liz Ogilvie of 7057 Media, a group of Chicago Area members and some guests were thrilled to be part of a Q&A with Eileen Collins and Director Hannah Berryman. The movie was terrific; see it if you get a chance!

The Chicago Area Chapter is planning an air meet open to any 99 from any chapter. A proficiency air meet is not a speed contest – the winner is the team that most closely predicts their speed and fuel burn. The triangular course will be approximately 150 miles and is flown as a regular cross-country flight under VFR conditions and FAA regulations. No complex airspace. Depart KIGQ and return, no stops. We need a minimum number of planes to proceed with the race. If you have an interest in participating or have questions, please contact our Chair, Vickie Szewczyk.

The Bessie Coleman Aviation Film Festival held May 2, 2026, welcomed more than 100 attendees for a celebration of aviation storytelling, history, and innovation. The event featured 12 aviation-themed films ranging from historical documentaries to contemporary stories about flight, exploration, and future aerospace careers. The event launched with an honorary flyover by Tuskegee Airman Ken Rapier. Flight simulators and STEM educational opportunities were available for students of all ages. Audience members really enjoyed the filmmaker panels. Film awards were given for the best feature film, the best short film, the best drone film, and the audience choice.

– Madeleine Monaco



Top: Cyndi Ice with The Ninety-Nines President Terry Carbonell and Janis Love at a dinner party to welcome Terry in her new position. | Bottom: Cyndi Ice, Leonna McGee, Gabby Cassettari, Trina Southard at the Chickasha Wings & Wheels Air Show.

OKLAHOMA CHAPTER

In June, Oklahoma Chapter members Cyndi Ice, Leonna McGee, Gabby Cassettari, and Trina Southard represented The Ninety-Nines at the Chickasha, Oklahoma, Wings & Wheels Air Show.

Later in June, members hosted a dinner party to welcome new Ninety-Nines' President Terry Carbonell. Members present were Cyndi Ice, Terry Carbonell, Janis and Bill Love, Jami Jarvis, Angela Drake, Dawn Mills, Izzy and Josh Kernery, Clark and Trina Southard.

In July, members Teresa Camp, Izzy Kerney, and Nancy Wiley Channey celebrated the United States' 250th birthday in combination with the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center (MMAC) 80th anniversary and Bring Your Kids to Work Day. They enjoyed speaker Kayla Barker's presentation of her allegory that every pilot needs a runway to fly, elaborating that the metaphorical runway is not just the physical, but the support of friends, ATC, instructors, and resources.

- Cyndi Ice



Our newest Life Members

Andrea Amberge
German Section

Carma Glasser
Montana Chapter

Ronni Minnig
Long Island Chapter

Debra Minnock
Spaceport Chapter

Madeleine Monaco
Chicago Area Chapter

Abingdon Mullin
NOLA Chapter

Sharon Rajnus
Crater Lake Flyers Chapter

Linda Sutton-Nutsch
Nebraska Chapter



Our most recently enlisted Friends of The 99s

Scotty Anderson
Ottawa, ON

Abigail Bryson
Corona, CA

Jennifer Bryson
Corona, CA

Layla Chandler
Santa Monica, CA

Jenni Haines
Alpharetta, GA

Michael Hoffner
Placerville, CA

Christopher Johnson
San Diego, CA

Diane Jones
Corona, CA

Jerilyn Lopez Mendoza
North Hills, CA

Stacey Luftig
New York, NY

Caralyn McDaniel
Hoover, AL

Caroline Morgan
Chester, VT

Urooj Naveed
Santa Monica, CA

Theresa Ragland
Brandywine, MD

Karl Schricker
Coupeville, WA

Jay Schwartz
Pembroke Pines, FL

Selah Mae Thody
Redmond, OR

Dawn Tyler
Lakeside, CA

Valerie Wooden
Huntsville, AL

Shelby Wooster
Miami, FL



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.

Carolyn Hambidge
Intermountain Chapter
December 8, 2025

Kathryn "Kitty" Curl
Eastern Idaho Chapter Life Member
April 30, 2026

Shirley McFall
Orange County Chapter
May 15, 2026

Margaret Weiss
New York Capital Region Chapter Life Member
May 24, 2026

Carol Keinath
New York Capital Region Chapter
May 30, 2026

Marian Jensen
Greater Seattle Chapter
June 10, 2026

Sophia Payton
Florida Suncoast Chapter Life Member
June 11, 2026

Dr. Sunila Ashok Bhajekar
India Section
July 1, 2026

Wally Funk
Fort Worth Chapter Life Member
July 8, 2026

Donna Crane-Bailey
Monterey Bay Chapter
July 20, 2026

Lois Brown
Lake Tahoe Chapter
July 30, 2026

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