

May/June 2025



Ninety-Nines

Inspiring Women Pilots Since 1929

MENTORS HELP CHART SUCCESS

LT. KATRINA MCLEOD

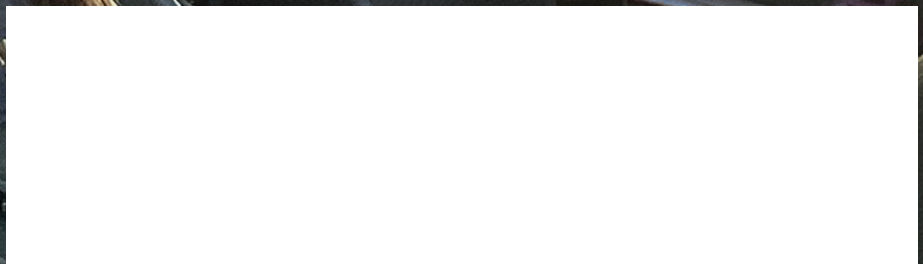
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plus

CHARTER MEMBERS

ESSAYS

GRASS ROOTS



Ninety-Nines Magazine

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promotes advancement of aviation through
education, scholarships, and mutual support
while honoring our unique history and sharing
our passion for flight.

Let's Get Social    

ON THE COVER

Lt. Katrina McLeod, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), is one of the eight percent of military pilots who are women and is the first woman ever to hold her current position of HC-144B Instructor Pilot and Flight Examiner at the Coast Guard Aviation Training Center.

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Thank You to Our Sponsors



2025

MAY

- 16-18 **Southeast Section Spring Meeting**
Lakeland, Florida
✦ [Marilyn Shafer, probbmom@gmail.com](mailto:Marilyn.Shafer@probbmom@gmail.com)
- 23-25 **East Canada Section Annual Meeting**
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
✦ [Adrian Zoe, zoe.adrian@yahoo.ca](mailto:Adrian.Zoe@yahoo.ca)
- 31 **Deadline:** For on-time registration –
2025 International Conference
Burlington, Vermont
- 31 **Mount Shasta Chapter
50-year anniversary gathering**
Mount Shasta, California
Red Bluff Municipal Airport
✦ [Nancy Overton, Nancy_Overton@yahoo.com](mailto:Nancy.Overton@yahoo.com)

JUN

- 17-20 **Air Race Classic**
Fairhope, Alabama to Spokane, Washington
☐ airraceclassic.org
- 27-29 **JHV German Section Annual Meeting**
Hildesheim, Germany
✦ governor-team@ninety-nines.de

JUL

- 6-8 **East Canada Section Gold Cup Air Rally**
CYLS Lake Simcoe to CYRO Trois Rivières
✦ [Grace Howell, gracehowell43@gmail.com](mailto:Grace.Howell@gmail.com)
- 9-13 **Ninety-Nines International Conference**
Burlington, Vermont
Hilton Lake Champlain
☐ akatravelteam.swoogo.com/99s2025
- 15 **Deadline:** Professional Pilot Leadership
Initiative (PPLI) Application for Mentoring
Fall Session
☐ ninety-nines.org/resources.htm
- 21-27 **EAA AirVenture Oshkosh**
Oshkosh, Wisconsin
Wittman Regional Airport
☐ eaa.org/airventure

OCT

- 1 **Deadline:** First Wings Applications to
Chapter AE Chair (or Section AE Chair, if
there are no chapters)
✦ Apps@AEScholarship.org
- 23-26 **South Central Section Fall Meeting**
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Rio Grande Norte Chapter
✦ [Jo Cunningham, lucyfur@me.com](mailto:Jo.Cunningham@me.com)

NOV

- 7-8 **International Board of Directors
Fall Meeting**
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
✦ Info@ninety-nines.org

SPAM WARNING



Important ANNOUNCEMENT

Attention All Chapter & Section Members:

We have issued a **spam warning** and request that you refrain from using your personal email addresses on Chapter and Section websites, as well as in calendar announcements published in the magazine. Scanning technology for email addresses has become more advanced and is now targeting public documents on websites.

MAGAZINE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

are one month prior to issue date.
JUL/AUG issue deadline: *June 1.*

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

The President's Message



Robin Hadfield

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

As I reflect on the past month, I'm filled with pride and gratitude for the energy, enthusiasm, and generosity of our members who continue to show up and shine a spotlight on The Ninety-Nines across the country.

At the Women in Aviation International Conference in Denver, our booth was buzzing with excitement, thanks to the many volunteers who gave their time to represent us so beautifully. Just a week later, our members gathered again in full force at Sun 'n Fun in Lakeland, Florida.

From handing out materials to welcoming prospective members and sharing their love of aviation, you were the face of The Ninety-Nines—and what a warm and inspiring face it was.

These efforts paid off: we've welcomed approximately 70 new members into our organization this month alone!

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the dozens of volunteers who staffed our booths at both events. Your presence made a real difference. A special thanks to Jane Winters of Sun 'n Fun, for sponsoring the Ice Cream Social at The 99s House—a tradition I hope continues, that brings joy and connection to so many. And to Heather Grimes, Florida Goldcoast Chapter, and recruiter for CommuteAir—thank you for bringing even more sweetness to The 99s House with your wonderful Cupcake Social that welcomed members new and old. You have done a great job at lining up all the volunteers for the booth, and being there to take it all down and ship everything back to our headquarters!

I also want to recognize and thank Liz Booker, Florida Goldcoast Chapter, whose energy and creativity made The 99s Trailblazer Luncheon a truly standout event. Liz not only organized the luncheon but arranged for our exceptional member, Dr. Cecilia Aragon, Western Washington Chapter—author, professor, and aerobatic champion—to speak and inspire us with her incredible journey. What a gift to have Cecilia share her story with us!

To all of you who pitch in, step up, and help out: thank you. We couldn't do this without you. Every handshake, every story shared, every scoop of ice cream served, and cupcake offered helps grow our community and shows the world what it means to be a Ninety-Nine.

Next up is EAA AirVenture, Oshkosh. We have two booths there and encourage you to sign up as a volunteer. We will have a notice in the May 2025 Straight & Level newsletter, with the link for the volunteers sign-up schedule.

Enjoy a few of the photos taken throughout Sun 'n Fun.

Robin Hadfield

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



Holding Short

The Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative (PPLI) 2024B Graduating Class

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

Phase I - Captain

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

Phase 2 - Captains' Circle

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

Phase 3 - Navigator

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

Coordination Team Members Are Volunteers

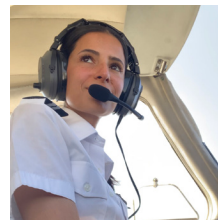
Aside from Mentoring Coordinators, the PPLI needs support with pre-program Google Classroom setup, administrative duties, payment processing, and participant tracking. Our Crew Coordinators, Online Admins, and Leadership Coordinators fill these roles. You may hear these terms in relation to the PPLI.

Do you know of a Ninety-Nines member who would benefit from joining the PPLI? Do you have experience from which others could learn through volunteering with the program? If so, please reach out to mentoring@ninety-nines.org or refer to The Ninety-Nines website for the PPLI application, which is due January 15 and July 15.

Congratulations to the 2024B PPLI Graduates



Jenny Conway
*Georgia Flying
Belles Chapter*



**Sarah Al
Wasaibei**
Arabian Section



Mandi Neuman,
Wisconsin Chapter



Kerry Hahne
Fort Worth Chapter



Sarah Long
*Air Hearts-Utah
Chapter*



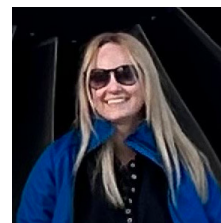
Paige Fary
NOLA Chapter



Kelly Keane
*Eastern New
England Chapter*



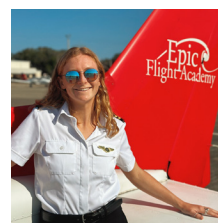
Laine Apple
Daytona Chapter



Paige Scott
*Eastern
Pennsylvania
Chapter*



Riley Watkins
*Reno High Sierra
Chapter*



Leah Jaicks
Daytona Chapter



**Eloisa Glynis
Olgado**
Las Vegas Chapter

Daughter - Mother Air Race Classic Teams



Skybound Scotts

Pilot - **Lauren Scott**
Las Vegas Chapter, Southwest Section

Co-Pilot - **Anna Scott**
*Michigan Chapter,
North Central Section*

In 1995 and 1996 Lauren raced in the Air Race Classic (ARC) as a college student for Purdue University (Lauren Nicholson, then). Many years later Lauren taught her daughter Anna to fly and afterwards Anna went on to earn the additional ratings at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU). Lauren is now a First Officer and Anna is a DPE and First Officer. Both are grateful recipients of the Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund (AEMSF) awards.

Lauren and Anna can thank their Aunt Mary Webb Nicholson who was a charter 99 and WWII ferry pilot for showing them the way with The 99s.

Daughter - Mother Air Race Classic Team



Poison Ivy

Pilot - **Ivy Steiner**
Alabama Chapter, Southeast Section

Co-Pilot - **Misty Dyas**

REPORTING POINTS & SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

Michigan Chapter

- Barb Vukits, *Newsletter Chair*



Sarah Haskett, Cherry Kan and **Esme Lowry** received scholarships at the Women's Aviation Career Symposium held on March 15, 2025, in Battle Creek, Michigan. **Leah Murphy** earned her commercial seaplane add-on rating. This was made possible by the Women Making a Splash Seaplane Scholarship. She completed her training at Southern Seaplane in New Orleans, Louisiana.



Deborah Howell received the Mary Rawlinson Creason Scholarship which she is using to fund her Private Certificate.



Suzette Biela completed her ATP-CTP training and passed her ATP written exam.

Kentucky Bluegrass Chapter

Congratulations, Kaye!

- Sue Glisson, *Membership Chair*



Kentucky Bluegrass member **Kaye Combs Moore** marked her 60th year as a Ninety-Nine!

All-Ohio Chapter

- Margaret Hazlett, *Secretary*

Evie Lechuga received the All-Ohio Chapter Checkride Scholarship.

Ellen Cross was awarded a First Wings Award.

Holding Short

Whirly-Girls International Reveal 2025 Scholarship Recipients

Whirly-Girls International, a non-profit, educational, and charitable organization dedicated to advancing women in the helicopter aviation industry, has announced the recipients of the 2025 Whirly-Girls Scholarship Awards. The scholarships were awarded at the Whirly-Girls Annual Gala during VERTICON in Dallas, Texas. The largest scholarship program in the helicopter industry is made possible with the support of aviation leaders and 46 scholarships were presented to deserving female aviators and maintainers.

Here are recipients of the 2025 Whirly-Girls scholarships who are also Ninety-Nines:



Emily O'Hara
– Whirly-Girls Initial/Add-on Flight Training Scholarship; Australian Section



Marjolein Pawlus – Whirly-Girls Jean Tinsley Memorial VERTICON Scholarship; Northwest Section



Erin Walling
– 3G Getting Started with Helicopters Scholarship; All-Ohio Chapter



Lauren Hutson
– Garmin Aviation Online Training Course Scholarship; Fullerton Chapter



Mandolyn Leader
– PHI Aviation Bell 407 Scholarship; San Antonio Chapter

“I’m so proud of our Whirly Girl Scholarship program which continues to attract and inspire many women; some are just beginning their journey, and some have many years of experience in need of advancing their career. Every year, with the help of our amazing sponsors and board members, we’ve been able to add new scholarships and value to the program. The caliber of women applying to these scholarships is impressive and it’s very satisfying to see the long-term effects on the growth of female helicopter pilots and maintainers. I can personally attest to the impact the Whirly-Girls scholarships and community has and meeting other women in the field going through the same experience is amazing. I hope to continue to support the organization’s impact on others, in fact, I talk about it so often, now the guys at work know my spiel and are helping me to promote it too! It’s great to feel the love industry-wide.” said Annie Paya, Whirly-Girls International Scholarship Director.

The Whirly-Girls Scholarship Fund, Inc. (WGSF) was incorporated to oversee and administer the scholarship funds raised by the Whirly-Girls and their Associates. Initiated in 1968, the scholarship program has grown from a single \$500 scholarship to a wide range of training and development scholarships valued today at \$600,000. For more information on Whirly-Girls International, please visit www.whirlygirls.org

2025 Captain Judy Cameron Scholarship Recipients

The Northern Lights Aero Foundation is pleased to announce eight recipients of the sixth annual Captain Judy Cameron scholarship for Canadian women in aviation. Air Canada and CAE generously provided funding of \$5,000 for each scholarship recipient. Seven pilots and one Aircraft Maintenance Engineer were chosen from across Canada for their accomplishments, inspiration, and encouragement of other women in aviation.

“Meeting scholarship recipients at the Northern Lights gala each year is the highlight of the evening for me,” said Judy Cameron, retired Air Canada Boeing 777 Captain. “These young women are the future of aviation. They have not only shown determination and excellence in their training, but they have also encouraged other women by mentoring and volunteering. Thanks to Air Canada and CAE for supporting diversity in these fields where women are so underrepresented.”

Two of this year’s Air Canada recipients of the Captain Judy Cameron Scholarship are also Ninety-Nines:



Aymie Rioux
Quebec Chapter



Trisha Virdee
First Canadian Chapter

Recipients will be acknowledged at the Northern Lights Aero Foundation’s annual gala on October 4, 2025, at the Pearson Convention Centre in Brampton, Ontario.

For more information about the Captain Judy Cameron scholarship or the Northern Lights Aero Foundation, visit northernlightsaerofoundation.com.

The Dark and Stormy Night

By Donna Miller, Colorado Chapter



“It was a dark and stormy night” is actually the beginning of a novel written by Edward Bulwer-Lytton in 1830. It has come to be known as the cliché worst beginning of a book ever written, not to mention the start of everything ever written by a cartoon beagle. I have heard that phrase often from the instructors and evaluators in the simulator as the

weather scenarios change during our annual training and become one of many challenges. Nothing good happens when the sim is set to “dark and stormy night.” We deal with it as best we can, and when things don’t go well, we analyze it step by step in the debrief.

Having just returned from the Women in Aviation conference in Denver, I was inspired to tears by the speakers. What I noticed is that every one of these women faced profound obstacles on her road to success. To hear firsthand of the tenacity to overcome seemingly insurmountable hurdles to triumph made me feel grateful to be in their presence. I realized that we all have to dig deep and use failures and disappointments to our advantage. What I learned from these women is that challenges provide us with the best opportunity for growth. How can we improve if we never have to review and analyze our performance, especially when it isn’t our best? Sometimes, in our shame, we choose to forget about the incident and hope that it never happens again instead of reviewing it moment by moment to learn what went wrong. Instead of hoping, we can hedge our bets that it won’t repeat by learning from our mistakes.

In the autobiography *Through the Glass Ceiling to the Stars* by Col. Eileen M. Collins and Jonathan H. Ward, the obstacles that Eileen overcame since birth are astounding. While she was figuring out how to navigate a difficult childhood, Eileen spent hours in the public library. She enjoyed the escape from her difficult home life but learned about flying from the myriad of books available on the subject. With the grit that she developed at a young age and the knowledge she gleaned from her curiosity, Eileen became the first American woman to command a space mission.

Could obstacles then be a gift? If we learn how to overcome them and use that knowledge in future experiences, then I say absolutely yes. Obstacles rarely feel like a gift in the present, but in hindsight, we can see their benefit. Had I not developed tenacity and discipline early in my quest for a pilot career, I’m not sure I could have stuck it out long enough to become an airline Captain when the industry took a turn for the worse after 9/11. But I learned through grueling experiences that I could do hard things, and I truly believed it would be worth it. The best hangar stories rarely start with “It was a clear and sunny day.” With perseverance and determination, we can get through the dark and stormy nights.



Winners of the 2024 Debbie Franceus Memorial Aviation Foundation Scholarships (left to right): Megan Schittenhelm, (Michigan Chapter); Gabriela Tan, (All-Ohio Chapter); Cherry Kan (Michigan Chapter); Arian Perez (Michigan Chapter).

Women’s Aviation Scholarship Foundation

Beginning April 1, 2025 and extending through June 15, The Debbie Franceus Memorial Aviation Foundation began its 2025 Aviation Scholarship Program to award women, pursuing their dreams to fly, the financial resources to continue their training for their Private Certificate and/or advanced ratings.

Now in its third year, The Debbie Franceus Memorial Aviation Foundation was created in 2023 to continue Debbie Franceus’s mission to see more women fly both personally and professionally to achieve their goals in aviation. Debbie Franceus was a passionate aviatrix who believed that any woman who wished to, should have the resources to achieve their dreams to fly.

In 2024, The Foundation received applications from women nationwide, and awarded 11 Aviation Flight Scholarships of varying dollar amounts to women applicants from coast to coast.

This year, the 10-week application window which began on April 1, will close on June 15, 2025. Recipients of the 2025 scholarships will be notified on Monday, July 8, with an in-person Scholarship Award Ceremony occurring on Saturday, July 12, 2025, at Toledo Suburban Airport (KDUH) near Toledo, Ohio, and also a virtual Scholarship Award Ceremony (via ZOOM) on Monday, July 14, 2025.

The number and size of the 2025 scholarships were officially announced on April 1 in conjunction with the beginning of the 2025 application period’s startup. In 2024, scholarship amounts ranged from \$1,000 - \$3,500 and were awarded based on scoring of each applicant’s scholarship application. The Foundation is planning a similar award structure for the 2025 program which, this year, will award at least 16 aviation flight scholarships to women nationwide.

Information and qualifications for the scholarship program can be found on the Foundation’s website and applications for the 2025 Scholarship Program are available beginning April 1 via the Foundations website at <https://www.debbieflyies.com>. The applications can either be filled out on-line and emailed or direct mailed to the Foundation’s office. Applications must be received by June 15, 2025 to be considered for the 2025 Scholarship Awards.

The Debbie Franceus Memorial Aviation Foundation is looking forward to a rewarding 2025 Aviation Scholarship Program and we applaud each and every woman pursuing their dreams to fly!

“SiriusXM gives me choices.”

Alicia Sikes, Major Airline Captain & Mooney Pilot



“SiriusXM weather helps me with strategic planning when I’m flying my Mooney. On a flight to Hilton Head, I looked at the weather near my fuel stop and decided to keep flying to avoid getting stuck by the weather moving in.”

Alicia Sikes

~26,000 hours, ATP MEL, Commercial SEL, CFI, CFII,
Ground Instructor – Basic, Advanced, Instrument

Type ratings B727, B737, B757/767, DC3, DC9, A320, BA3101

Major Airline Captain, Air Race Classic Safety Officer & Scoring Director,
99s Chapter Scholarship Chair, Aeroclub of PA Board Member

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FIRST WOMAN PRESIDENT OF AMERICAN BONANZA SOCIETY IN 57 YEARS.

– Susan Delgado, *Santa Clara Valley Chapter*

The American Bonanza Society (ABS) is proud to announce that **Susan Delgado** will serve as their Board President for the 2024/2025 period. Susan is the first woman to serve in this position in the 57 years of the organization's existence. The ABS and the ABS Air Safety Foundation serve Beechcraft enthusiasts by providing members with customized programs, products, and services to promote and assist in the safe operation, maintenance, and ownership of Beechcraft Bonanzas, Debonairs, Barons and Travel Airs. ABS supports over 10,000 members across the US and internationally and hosts events throughout the year to support owners and enthusiasts with a mission to protect lives and preserve the Beechcraft fleet. Susan has been flying for over 32 years and is a lifetime member of ABS and AOPA, a member of WIA, and The Ninety-Nines. She has owned her Bonanza for 12 years and actively supports and flies as a volunteer pilot for Pilots n Paws, transporting close to 700 dogs over the past 14 years.



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL-OHIO CHAPTER MEMBER PEG BALLOU

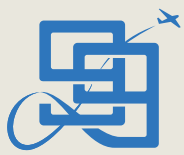
AOPA Recognizes Top Flight Instructors, Schools in the Nation

Peg Ballou received the 2025 AOPA best regional instructor for the Great Lakes region, and the best flight school was Ballou Skies Aviation, at Port Bucyrus-Crawford County Airport (17G) in Bucyrus, Ohio. Students and pilots submitted more than 2,500 reviews, sharing their thoughts on instructors and flight schools vying for annual Flight Training Experience Awards.

AOPA Foundation Senior Director of Flight Training Education Chris Moser said, "The awards program was created in part to highlight best practices, and help the entire industry focus on what works."

"We definitely saw a theme this year from the reviewers about a great combination of customer service and community."

"Having a friendly and family-like atmosphere has always been a hallmark of excellent instructors and flight schools, but this year there was also a strong trend of describing some truly amazing ways that instructors and schools went above and beyond to serve their customers," Moser said.



CHARTER MEMBERS

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

Thea Doku Rasche

1899-1971



Born into a prosperous German family, Thea's father was a brewery owner. Thea excelled in tennis, hockey, and equestrian pursuits. In 1924, her family arranged for Thea to attend the Agriculture Institute for Women to acquire domestic skills for a "good marriage." After her father chose a "suitable" husband, Thea left home immediately.

In Muenster, Thea registered as a flight student. Her friends introduced her to glider flying at

the Wasserkuppe, a German soaring Mecca. Thea's first lesson was with World War I Ace, Paul Bäumlé. In only four days, 25-year-old Thea obtained her glider pilot license. Thea moved to Hamburg to train at Paul's flight school. Under Paul's expert tutelage, Thea's life was forever transformed.

She trained in Paul's Udet Flamingo. When Thea earned her airplane license, she became Germany's first woman after World War I to do so. In another five months, Thea secured her aerobatic license becoming Germany's first female stunt pilot – "Germany's Flying Fraulein." Thea loved the precision and focus aerobatic flying requires. Famed German World War I Ace, Ernst Udet, said, "This woman can really fly – nobody can touch her." Thea performed at European air shows. In 1929, Thea demonstrated aerobatics at several important American exhibitions.

When the first Women's Air Derby was announced, Thea was contacted by the Lowell, Massachusetts, Moth Aircraft Corporation to fly their de Havilland Gipsy Moth. Because the new plane was not ready, Thea flew an older, borrowed Gipsy Moth on race day without testing it. Along the way, Thea had a forced landing where foreign objects were observed in the tank. The racers had been warned of possible sabotage. In Cleveland, Thea completed the race, finishing in the Light class with a time of 46 hours and 30 minutes.

In 1932, Thea became the first German woman to earn a seaplane license. In 1933, she was the editor of the magazine *Flug-Illustrierten* ("Flight Magazine"). During World War II, she was a nurse. For several years after the War, Thea moved to the United States. Returning to her homeland in 1953, Thea continued to mentor young women in aviation. In 1971, she died in Essen. Her aviation legacy is honored with three German streets named for her in Frankfurt, Freudenstadt, and Berlin near the Gatow Airport.

In 1929, Thea joined with many of the women air racers in the founding of The Ninety-Nines. Obviously, Thea was the first German member of this now long-standing international organization.

Photo credit: San Diego Air & Space Museum.

Iris Louise McPhetridge Thaden

1905-1979



Flying fascinated Louise. At age seven, she jumped off a barn, holding an umbrella, to see if she could fly. By age 15, she entered the University of Arkansas. Soon, Louise moved to Wichita, Kansas, with her flying dream. Walter Beech hired Louise for his West Coast Travel Air distributor. Louise, a top-notch assistant during the day, at night took flying lessons. In just a few months, Louise earned her pilot's license. Flying Travel Air fleet airplanes, Louise qualified for her transport

license. On December 7, 1928, Louise set a new altitude record of 20,200 feet. Three months later, she set a new endurance record of over 22 hours.

Between December 1928 and April 1929, Louise set three aviation records – in altitude, endurance, and speed, becoming the first American woman to hold these records simultaneously. In 1929, Louise married Herbert Thaden, an ex-army pilot and aeronautical engineer. With his help and Walter Beech's backing, Louise entered the first Women's Air Derby. On August 26, 1929, in Cleveland, Ohio, at the end of the race, Louise finished first, winning the heavy class in 20 hours, 19 minutes and four seconds.

During the 1930s, the Thadens welcomed two children with Louise continuing aviation pursuits. In July, 1936, Louise set yet another speed record. She was invited to compete in the 1936 Bendix Transcontinental Air Race. Flying with co-pilot, Blanche Noyes, upon landing at Mines Field in Los Angeles, they were surrounded by a huge, cheering crowd. They WON! Louise and Blanche were awarded the \$4,500 first place money (about \$102,000 today) and the coveted Bendix Air Trophy. They also won the \$2,500 prize for the first female team to cross the finish line. Louise won the 1936 Harmon Trophy for Champion Aviatrix.

Thaden was a Beech Aircraft Company demonstration pilot. During World War II, Louise volunteered for Relief Wings and worked with her husband at their Thaden Engineering Company testing flight equipment for the U.S. Navy. Upon his 1969 death, Louise continued the company until she flew West in 1979. In her book, *High, Wide and Frightened*, she wrote, "Flight is the essence of the spirit. It nurtures the soul. It is awesome. Often ethereal..."

In 1951, her hometown Bentonville Municipal Airport was named Louise Thaden Field. In 1999, Louise joined the National Aviation Hall of Fame. In 2000, she was named to the Women in Aviation Pioneer Hall of Fame. A Charter 99 member, Louise served as 99s Vice President (1931-36), and as Treasurer (1930-34).

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons.

Florence Gunderson Klingensmith

1904-1933



In August 1928, Florence Klingensmith was living in Fargo, North Dakota, a 24-year-old divorcee. Having been a motorcycle daredevil in her Minnesota youth, she decided to fly an airplane after seeing the world famous Charles Lindbergh. Florence agreed to skydiving to pay for her flight lessons. With minimal parachuting instruction, her first jump over a packed fairground left her unconscious. Florence continued parachuting because she wanted to fly.

Even before she was licensed, Florence solicited sponsors to purchase a plane. Florence planned to promote Fargo at 1929 flying meets. Sure enough, Fargo Laundry owner, William T. Lee, and other business leaders raised \$3,000 (which is almost \$50,000 today) to buy her Monocoupe. Florence christened her new plane, “Miss Fargo.”

In June, 1929, Klingensmith became North Dakota’s first licensed woman pilot. That summer she barnstormed county fairs and flew in her first race. On June 22, 1931, before more than 50,000 spectators and National Aeronautics Association officials at Minneapolis Wold Chamberlain Field, Florence flew for four and one-half hours wowing the crowd with loops and more loops. Landing a little groggy and gagged by gas fumes, Florence set a verified world record of 1,078 loops.

At the 1931, 21-mile National Air Races in Cleveland, Ohio, Florence won four woman-only events and \$4,200 (which is almost \$100,000 today). At the 1932 Nationals, she won the Amelia Earhart Trophy. The prize was an Essex Terraplane automobile. Florence continued earning aviation fame and prize money until she was killed flying a bright red Gee Bee Model Y Senior Sportster as the first and only woman entered in the prestigious 1933 \$10,000 (about \$250,000 in 2025) Frank Phillips Trophy Race at the International Air Races held in Chicago.

The fabric-covered airplane originally designed with a Lycoming 220 HP engine now had a 680 HP Lycoming engine. In fourth place in the 8th lap of the 12-lap pylon race, flying at 200 miles per hour, a tiny bit of the red fabric began to flap in the rushing wind. Florence flew off the race course. On that fateful September 4, one day after her 29th birthday, the powerful plane crashed. Florence was killed instantly. Even worse, her death was used as an excuse to bar women from competing with men in air races. Florence Klingensmith opened the sky for women. Her home town Moorhead Minnesota airport is now Florence Klingensmith Field. She was a charter 99.

Photo credit: Clay County Historical Society.

Ruth Rowland Nichols

1901-1960



Born into a wealthy family, Ruth’s father arranged for Eddie Stinson Jr., an “Early Bird of Aviation,” to fly Ruth as her high school graduation present which changed Ruth’s life. Ruth attended Wellesley College. Secretly, she took flying lessons. In 1924, after graduation, Ruth earned her pilot’s license. Next, she obtained a hydroplane license, the first woman to do so. In January, 1928, with her flight instructor, Harry Rogers, they set a record for their non-stop

New York to Miami flight. The press named Ruth, the “Flying Debutante.” By 1927, she was licensed to fly transport planes. Nichols held simultaneously women’s aviation world speed, altitude, and distance records. She flew in the 1929 Women’s Air Derby. In 1931, she set the women’s world altitude and speed record again. In June, 1931, Ruth attempted to become the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. However, she was severely injured in a crash. Undaunted, after her injuries healed in October, Ruth set another women’s distance record from Oakland, California, to Louisville, Kentucky. In February, 1932, Nichols set another world altitude record. Over her aviation career Ruth Nichols held 35 women’s aviation records. She flew every type of aircraft developed, including the dirigible, glider, autogyro, fixed wing, seaplane, transport, and a supersonic jet. In 1958, at age 57, she set the women’s world records for altitude and speed in a TF-102A Delta Dagger.

In her autobiography, *Wings for Life*, Ruth Nichols explained her passion. “To the public I suppose I have often seemed to be the original ‘flying fool.’ While flying over one hundred and forty different models of aircraft, I have piloted a plane in a plaster cast and a steel corset, too impatient to wait for bones to knit from the last crash. I have frozen my tongue sucking oxygen at sixty below zero, six miles up. I have escaped twice from burning planes. I have clung to a life raft in cold, mountainous seas. I have had most of the bones in my body broken...Family and friends have urged me to keep my feet on the ground... The only people who haven’t tried to change me are flyers. They comprehend.”


Later in her life, Ruth worked with several humanitarian organizations using her aviation celebrity until flying West. In 1992, she was posthumously inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame. In 2009, Ruth Nichols was inducted into the Women in Aviation International Pioneer Hall of Fame. She was a Charter 99 member. 

Photo credit: Library of Congress.



Mentors HELP CHART *Success*

Lt. Katrina McLeod

By Jann Clark,
Eastern New England Chapter

Lt. Katrina McLeod, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), has an exemplary record in aviation. She is one of the eight percent of military pilots who are women and is the first woman ever to hold her current position of HC-144B Instructor Pilot and Flight Examiner at the Coast Guard Aviation Training Center in Mobile, Alabama. In her Coast Guard flying of over 2,000 hours, many in Search and Rescue (SAR) missions, Katrina is credited with 16 lives saved and 26 lives assisted. In addition to SAR, the USCG is often at the forefront of drug interdiction and Katrina is credited with enabling the seizure of more than 2,500 kilograms of cocaine valued in excess of \$91 million.

Katrina's non-military activities focus on advocating for young women who are interested in aviation. She is Vice President of her local chapter of Women in Aviation and Treasurer of the Emerald Angels of the Gulf Coast Chapter of The Ninety-Nines, actively participating in the outreach activities of both organizations.

On March 27, 2025, in celebration of Women's History Month, Katrina was awarded the City of Mobile, Alabama, Outstanding Achievement Award.

Katrina's journey to her present position was not exactly in a straight line. She was born and raised in Texas and knew no one who was a pilot, much less in the military, while she was growing up. After graduating from Texas A&M in 2008, she worked as a breeder flock supervisor, managing the care of hundreds of thousands of chickens. While driving from farm to farm for her job, she noticed local crop dusters and would often spend her lunch breaks watching them, but flying herself still wasn't on her radar. After three years, she shifted gears and became an engineering technician, helping to build the topsides of enormous oil platforms. Her worksite was located under the flight path for T-6B trainers at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi. After watching them fly by every day, she finally asked, "Why can't that be me?"

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Katrina's journey to her present position was not exactly in a straight line. After being engaged in several careers, ranging from agricultural to engineering, she was at a worksite located under the flight path for T-6B trainers at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi. After watching them fly by every day, she finally asked, "Why can't that be me?"

She took a few flying lessons in a Cessna 172, and her instructor recommended that she look into the military as a way to get paid for becoming a pilot. She researched the requirements for becoming a pilot in the major branches of the military and found that the age limit was usually 27 – she was 28 at the time. She took the Aviation Selection Test Battery (ASTB) anyway, hoping maybe she could get an age waiver.

Then, one day, she saw an HH-25 Falcon screaming down the coastline and realized that the Coast Guard had fixed wing planes, as well as helicopters. She researched the age limit for their aviation program and discovered she wasn't too old after all. About that time, she serendipitously ran into a Coast Guard pilot in a coffee shop. She struck up a conversation with this stranger, and he ultimately became her mentor as she went through the long application process for Officer Candidate School with the Coast Guard. He encouraged her not to give up when she ran into less than helpful recruiters, and with encouragement from him and other mentors, she persevered until she was ultimately accepted into the program.

Katrina had about 35 hours of flying lessons when she entered the program, but her ASTB results got her accepted. She excelled in flight training and worked her way up to flying the HC-144B, the "Ocean Sentry," a medium range twin-engine turboprop aircraft used by the Coast Guard in search and rescue missions and other maritime operations. This is the plane in which Katrina now instructs.

Katrina's most rewarding moments in the Coast Guard have come during search and rescue missions. "I'm not sure if there is anything quite as rewarding as having a profession in which your day job can lead to you saving someone's life – someone who has little to no hope of being saved. I can only imagine the elation a survivor must feel after floating for hours or days on the ocean, probably giving up hope that they will see their loved ones again, and then seeing our plane overhead pushing a life raft out to save them." Drug busts are also satisfying. "To me, there are few things more rewarding and gratifying than flying an airplane lights out, stalking a vessel loaded down with cocaine for hours while on night vision goggles, vectoring in an allied boat to intercept, and seeing the surprise on the faces of the smugglers as the intercepting boat suddenly turns on their spotlight just a few feet away. I can only imagine the shock of suddenly having a boat full of law enforcement officers appear seemingly out of nowhere next to them far off shore in the middle of the ocean."

Katrina's next aviation undertaking will be to fly in the Air Race Classic 2025. Check out her website, TwoGirlsOnePlane.com to follow her on this adventure! When her 11-year commitment to the Coast Guard is fulfilled, she may explore the many options the world of aviation offers for new experiences.

Katrina's advice to aspiring pilots: If you want to be a pilot but have no idea where to start, I can only say that you can never give up! Join as many organizations as possible related to aviation to start networking. Aviation in general is largely a social animal, and you never know who you will meet that could be your potential mentor one day. Don't be afraid to put yourself out there; introduce yourself to anyone and everyone you come across that is involved in aviation. The random Coast Guard pilot I met in a coffee shop was an invaluable help in my aviation journey! I wouldn't be where I am today without the mentorship of countless individuals that I fearlessly put myself out there to. The worst thing that can happen to you is that someone tells you no. If that happens, just shake it off and go up to the next person you think can help – that's how I found my many mentors! 🌊



Top: This past November Katrina was selected as lead instructor for the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School capstone project in the HC-144. Over five days, Katrina taught ground school and simulator events for three test pilot school candidates, concluding with six hours of flight maneuvers and evaluations. Left to right: Lt. Kevin “Midnight” Choi (USN), Maj. Chris “MacGruber” Reed (USMC), Scott Dornish (NTPS instructor, USMC ret.), Lt. Jared “Loper” Lee (USN), and Lt. Katrina McLeod (USCG) | Bottom left: On March 27, 2025, in celebration of Women’s History Month, Katrina was awarded the City of Mobile, Alabama, Outstanding Achievement Award. | Bottom right: Katrina and Giovanni Gonzalez, aka WilBA (left) are the 2025 Air Race Classic Team Two Girls One Plane. Follow their air race adventures at TwoGirlsOnePlane.com.

Reports

ONE MEMBER ONE VOTE - CREDENTIALING PROCESS ALL ONLINE

At the 2021 Annual Meeting, the members voted to amend Bylaws Article VII: Annual Meeting Section 2: Voting to move forward with “One Member, One Vote,” versus the delegate process. Additionally, Standing Rules VII – Annual Meeting requires all members, who wish to attend the Annual Meeting to complete the Credentials process. The Credentials process establishes current membership in The Ninety-Nines, Inc.

The 2025 Annual meeting is employing a hybrid (In-person, Online) approach; therefore in order to attend, either in person or virtually via Zoom, every member must complete the Credentials process. Good news, the Credentials process is done ALL ONLINE using the same platform we employed in 2021 - 2024. The software application: (1) confirms you are a member of The Ninety-Nines, Inc., using the email address on file at International Headquarters; (2) once confirmed your email address matches the Headquarters database, the application will assign you an Election Buddy password. Your email address and application issued password will be forwarded to Head Teller for setup in Election Buddy. Election Buddy will once again be used as the voting platform in Vancouver, which also is used to establish a quorum in order to conduct The Ninety-Nines’ business meeting where voting is needed. Being a credentialed member grants you voting privileges and Election Buddy will forward to you any motions up for vote, and especially if vote is too close to count during the meeting.

On June 16, 2025, Headquarters will send out an email notification that The Ninety-Nines Annual Meeting Credentials Website is Open and outline the process for each member to attend The Ninety-Nines Annual Meeting, whether it be in person or via Zoom. Chapter Chairs check your membership rosters and encourage members to sign up for electronic voting as well as obtaining an email address if none is currently listed in the directory. Members without an email address on file at Headquarters may establish a free email account using GMAIL or YAHOO and forward to HQ. Members can even request for their email address to be omitted from the online directory if anyone is worried about unwanted solicitation.

Key Dates:

June 16, 2025 – email from HQ announcing credentials desk online is open along with instructions on completing the online application

July 10, 2025 – Online Credentials desk will close at midnight

July 12, 2025 – Check your email 1-hour before the Annual Meeting for an Election Buddy email confirming your credentials process was a success. Election Buddy will be used to establish a quorum and for voting during The Annual Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Lois E. Horne
Credential Committee Chair

GENERAL COUNCIL UPDATES EMAIL

– Karissa Davan, Maria Esparraguera, Shelley Ewalt, and Natasha Voloshina

Need to reach the General Counsel of The Ninety-Nines?
Contact us at our new email address: legal@ninety-nines.org



Karissa Davan
Katahdin Wings Chapter



Maria Esparraguera
Maryland Chapter



Shelley Ewalt
New Jersey Chapter



Natasha Voloshina
Columbia Cascade Chapter



Our most recently enlisted Friends of The 99s

Teja Butcher
Lakeland, TN

Tim Cone
Fresno, CA

Loan Dang
San Jose, CA

Sarah Hyland
Mesa, AZ

Kevin Melton
Lake Charles, LA

Virginia Newell
Santa Rosa, CA

Kathleen Shelton
Oklahoma City, OK

Alexander Snow
Seattle, WA

Robert Szabo
Naples, FL

UPDATES AT THE AMELIA EARHART BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM

– Robin Laws, *Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum Board of Trustees Chair*

We have kicked off our fundraising campaign and are excited to have membership participation in monthly or annual gifts to support the longevity of the museum. These donations allow the continuation of our mission to promote education to visitors of all ages and backgrounds about Amelia Earhart's life and legacy through its historic grounds, collection, activities, and events.

Currently, our goal is to have 450 members donate \$30 monthly, or \$360 annually. This goal will raise \$162,000 for the museum, which is a huge contribution to the annual expenses and upkeep of this historic site. Also, remember with donations of \$250, \$500, \$1000+, your name is placed on our memorial pedestal! This beautiful piece is proudly displayed in the museum, topped with a globe to symbolize Amelia's worldwide reach.

Employee Updates:

In January, Mika Schrader moved into her new role as the Director of Operations of the AEBM. She has expertly stepped into this role and helped in tremendous ways to orient projects and goals we have for the upcoming season. She continues to work with local Atchison entities and build relationships, which is a vital part of networking in town. Mika's expertise in the museum field and eight years of experience, two of which are at the AEBM, have helped her step into this role and dream of what the future of the museum could be. She has already started implementing these plans and is working closely with the board for future projects.

One major focus for the next 12 months is to increase field trips to the museum. We hold a priceless piece of history and it's time to ramp up tours and show off this hidden gem! Amelia was a world-renowned aviatrix and ultimately the reason that The Ninety-Nines organization exists. In order to showcase our exceptional museum, our Collections Manager, Wren Falk, has taken on the task of leveling up the exhibits.

Celebrating her one-year anniversary of working at the AEBM, Wren recently completed an exciting museum refresh! In her time at the museum, she has been curating new exhibits to encourage repeat visitors.

She continues to write grants, seeking funding for upkeep and archival preservation of our irreplaceable artifacts. She's been able to stabilize humidity levels at the museum, which is critical for preservation and longevity of museum collections.

Wren has implemented a collections management system (CMS) and has already begun cataloging the items in the



museum's collections. This CMS provides museum staff the opportunity to fully understand, track, and locate all the items in the collection. Additionally, this CMS will eventually allow the museum to open the collections to the public both on the website and for researchers.

The employees understand this isn't just keeping the doors open; we are looking to preserve the history and artifacts for generations to come. Between Mika and Wren, they are developing a script for our film, which will open up the ability for us to host virtual tours worldwide! Our project is filming this June and estimating a release date of early 2026.

We are fundraising for projects as well as the film. Please consider joining us in supporting the cause with monthly, annual, or memorial donations directly to the AEBM. Contact Mika for questions at: director@ameliaearhartmuseum.org

Mastering the Sky: A Journey Through Emergency Maneuver Training at CP Aviation

By Nobi Buntin, *Santa Clara Valley Chapter*

The thrill of vertical flight and the rush of pulling 3.4 Gs might sound like scenes from a movie, but for one fortunate pilot, these experiences became reality thanks to the prestigious Vicki Cruse Memorial Scholarship for Emergency Maneuver Training at CP Aviation in Santa Paula, California. This six-day journey into the world of aerobatic and emergency maneuver training would prove to be not just transformative but life-changing in ways that extend far beyond the cockpit.

The adventure began with a seven-hour drive down California's iconic Highway 101, where wildfire smoke painted the horizon in an ethereal haze. Armed with a thermos of hot coffee and homemade sandwiches, this determined pilot navigated the coastal highway in an electric vehicle, making strategic charging stops along the way. The journey itself became a metaphor for the training ahead: careful planning, precise execution, and knowing when to pause and recharge. Fortune smiled on arrival day as legendary master instructor Rich Stowell delivered an inspiring talk on aerobatic flying. His presentation, coupled with his comprehensive EMT videos and book, laid the groundwork for the intensive days ahead.

The facility itself spoke volumes about CP Aviation's commitment to excellence. Under the watchful eye of world-renowned aerobatic pilot Judy Phelps (Ventura Chapter) and her husband Clay Phelps, the meticulously maintained fleet gleamed in the California sun. Each aircraft stood as a testament to the program's uncompromising standards, with systems meticulously maintained to ensure peak performance and safety during the demanding maneuvers. Working with instructor Rochelle (Ventura Chapter), whose expertise and thoroughness proved invaluable, each day brought a perfect blend of ground school and hands-on flight training. The program's structure – two lessons daily, each combining theoretical knowledge with practical application – created an ideal learning environment for mastering complex maneuvers.

The training progression was carefully structured to build competence and confidence. Day one launched with fundamental but crucial exercises: Dutch rolls, elevator trim stalls, secondary stalls, accelerated stalls, slips, and falling leaf stalls. For many pilots, including myself, the Citabria, Decathlon, and Super Decathlon were an introduction to taildraggers. The aircraft's unique characteristics demanded a new approach to takeoff – applying forward pressure until the plane was ready to fly – a skill that would become second nature by training's end. The challenges extended

beyond just the maneuvers, as motion sickness made its presence known. Yet the instructors came prepared, recommending honey lemon gummies and hot tea – small comforts that made a significant difference in the training's effectiveness.



As the program progressed, the complexity of maneuvers increased dramatically. Day two introduced aggravated spins, unusual attitude recoveries, and various spin entries and recoveries. The training even incorporated climbing Dutch rolls and Turning Dutch rolls, pushing pilots to their limits while always maintaining a focus on safety and control. Mother Nature added her own challenges to the mix, with 30-knot winds testing both aircraft and pilot capabilities. These conditions provided valuable real-world experience and demonstrated a crucial lesson in aeronautical decision-making: sometimes, the best choice is to wait for better conditions. This pause in training, which required a second visit three weeks later, emphasized the importance of respecting weather limitations.

The return to training brought new excitement and challenges. Day three elevated the intensity with aileron rolls, half rolls, and the introduction to inverted flight. The experience of pulling 3.4 Gs during advanced maneuvers offered a physical reminder of the forces at play during emergencies. Combined with simulated flight control failures, one and two-turn spins built confidence in handling unusual attitudes and emergency scenarios. Day four pushed the envelope further with aerobatic turns, loops, half loops, and Immelmans – each maneuver built upon previous lessons, creating a comprehensive understanding of aircraft control in all flight attitudes.

The highlight of the training was mastering the hammerhead maneuver. This advanced technique requires flying the aircraft vertically, timing the energy decay perfectly, and then

executing a precise combination of aileron and rudder inputs to transition into a controlled nosedive. It's a maneuver that demands complete aircraft control and spatial awareness – skills that prove invaluable in emergency situations. The program's culmination brought an unexpected but brilliant challenge: designing an original aerobatic sequence combining at least five maneuvers while considering crucial factors like altitude requirements, energy management, and the parameters of a 3,300-foot box.

The most profound impact of the training came in the form of renewed safety awareness. The program highlighted how everyday items – from iPads to towbars – can become dangerous projectiles during unusual attitudes. This awareness extends far beyond aerobatic flying, influencing how pilots approach every aspect of flight operations, from preflight checks to passenger briefings. The impact of the International Aerobatic Club (IAC) and CP Aviation's training extends far beyond aerobatic skills. While pilots emerge from the program with enhanced understanding of aircraft control, energy management, and safety considerations, the real value reveals itself in practical flying.

These skills have proven particularly invaluable during King Air charter operations and while conducting humanitarian missions with Aloha Aviators. The precise aircraft control and heightened situational awareness gained through EMT have proven essential when delivering vital supplies to surrounding communities. This advanced training has transformed challenging humanitarian flights into confident missions, allowing our non-profit organization to serve communities more effectively while maintaining the highest standards of safety. As a flight instructor (CFI, CFII & MEI), the value of this training is so evident that I now recommend all my students attend Emergency Maneuver Training after earning their private pilot certificate and before beginning instrument training. This strategic timing allows pilots to build upon their basic aircraft control skills before diving into the complexities of instrument flight.

For those considering emergency maneuver training, CP Aviation's program offers a comprehensive curriculum that goes well beyond basic upset recovery. It provides pilots with a thorough understanding of aircraft control that could prove invaluable in critical situations. The program's combination of ground instruction, flight training, and practical application creates a learning environment where pilots can safely push their limits while building life-saving skills.

A Life Well-Lived, Iris Critchell

By Anne Minder, Long Beach Chapter



On January 24, 2025, Iris Critchell jumped into her North American P-51 for the last time and took off into the clouds. She was 104 years old. Much has been written about Iris, a famous, highly accomplished pilot who contributed hugely to aviation and to The Ninety-Nines. But we in the Long Beach Chapter that she helped to found will remember the human dynamo we got to know and love in her later years so we would like to share some of our stories with you as a memorial to her.

Iris's "can do it" personality blossomed early and won her a place on the U.S.A. swim team in the 1936 Olympics that took place in Berlin during the rise of Hitler. Yes, she could tell stories about that experience! She became fast friends with Louis Zamperini on the boat to Europe. Louis became famous in his own right for his running event wins in Berlin and later for surviving Japanese concentration camps during WWII. Iris told of witnessing her good friend climb a wall to take down a Nazi flag right in front of the Nazi gestapo. Out of the corner of her eye she saw him head for the wall, thinking "Louie, don't do it, don't do it." But he did and got away with it.

One of Iris's proudest achievements was as a member of the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS) during WWII. We asked her to describe what life was like in that role. It was hard to get her to leave facts and statistics out of it but it was worth the wait for her story. Iris would report for duty to either Mines Field (now LAX) or Long Beach Airport and be driven by jeep out to the plane she was to ferry. It could have been any of a number of

types and likely the ferry flight was to be its test flight, coming right off the factory floor. Quality control was so high that the aircraft were usually flawless. A typical mission was to fly a P-51 to Newark, New Jersey (KEWR) with no night or IFR flying because the aircraft were so precious. She would figure out how much fuel she had and plan her first stop accordingly, then follow a prescribed route. The ladies carried only a few personal items in small bags they wore under their flight suits, things like a toothbrush, comb, only necessities. If you've ever been in a fighter aircraft you know the floor is the fuselage, so if you dropped your pencil or a chart you wouldn't see it again till landing, if ever. She landed at KEWR and taxied up near a ship waiting on the waterway near the runway, started to gather her limited belongings, but she was immediately yanked backwards – they were already loading the P-51 on board! The WAFS would hop out and head directly to the next train or plane going West; they could bump anyone off, and repeat this schedule again.

In 1952, a group of lovely and ambitious ladies: Iris Critchell, Barbara London and Mary Pinckney founded our Long Beach Chapter of The Ninety-Nines. Iris had served under Barbara who was her WAFS squadron leader and they became best friends for life. It was amazing what all these strong ladies managed to accomplish in a time when they communicated by writing letters or by making very expensive phone calls, perhaps on a home "party line" that was shared with someone else to save money. Her accomplishments included flying in the All Women's Transcontinental Air Race 17 times (otherwise known as the Powder Puff Derby) in planes like a Taylorcraft and Cessna 150, and serving 30 years on its board. By now these women were also wives and mothers, transitioning post-WWII WAFS into 1950s lives. Chapter dues back then were \$2 a year, a fact our Chapter leadership just learned when we updated our actual original Chapter by-laws created by Iris, Barbara and Mary.

In about 2015, when Iris was only 95, our Chapter began meeting her to celebrate her December 21 birthday. She would drive herself and meet us at a local airport restaurant and later her daughter Sandie, who is also a pilot, would do the driving. Some years Iris was caring for her husband "Critch" so we planned around her schedule. She was a strong hugger, the kind of person who made each of us feel very special as she moved around the room to chat with ladies she had never met before. It was still "her chapter." On her 99th birthday at the Brackett Airport restaurant we gave her a Christmas flying gift, Santa Claus in an airplane that played a little holiday tune which she seemed to really love. Seeing her reaction was especially cute because she was an engineer and one of the most data-driven,

exacting, intelligent, facts-based people you will ever meet.

When COVID-19 made us all learn to Zoom, Iris enlisted the help of her son Robin and daughter Sandie, to help her learn the technology and she was a superstar! You could tell how much she prepped for it, hair, makeup and just the right dress, beautiful as always. It was so meaningful to be able to remain in active contact with her through those scary times.

Several years ago the Southwest Section Meeting was held near Iris's home in Claremont, California, and she and Sandie invited this writer and young Chapter member Cindy Santoso to stay overnight at her home. What a night! We gals got in our pj's and sat around the kitchen table telling stories, eating snacks and laughing until after 1 a.m. Iris began to follow Cindy's career and was so proud of her as she got her dream job "flying big airplanes" for JetBlue. There are countless others whom Iris taught to fly including two astronauts, leaders in many aerospace companies, and airline pilots.

The last time this writer spoke to Iris was January 2, 2025. Sandie warned me that she was getting weak and not taking many calls. But I could hear her pushing her way to the phone, "Oh Anne, I want to talk to her!" It was the same Iris but there was a change in her as we began to converse. The minute we started talking about our Chapter her brain went into afterburner and she was totally engaged. She was offering advice, thinking through options about how to keep our chapter, her chapter, vibrant. And we talked for almost an hour.

It struck me that being a 99 and still being in the Chapter she helped to create was one of the most important things in her life. In the background while we talked I heard the music of the Santa in the airplane gift we Long Beach gals had given her several years before.

You will live on with us, Iris Critchell. With love from your Chapter, the Long Beach 99s.





Left: Sister 99s begin their inspirational tour of the Cradle of Aviation Museum. | Right: Future 99s Erin and Cheyenne joined Kelly Hilbert, Kelly Donovan, Yana Synytska and Erika Kjersgard at the Cradle of Aviation Museum's Ninety-Nines exhibit.

A Day of Aviation, Inspiration, and Sisterhood at the Cradle of Aviation Museum

By Yana Synytska, Long Island Chapter

The day started with the crisp morning air filling the sky and in the best possible way — with a flight at my flight school, where I continued working on my training. There's something truly special about taking to the skies, feeling the aircraft respond, and refining the skills that bring me one step closer to my dream. After landing and wrapping up my lesson, I could hardly contain my excitement as I headed to meet an incredible group of women aviators from the New York-New Jersey Section, Greater New York Chapter, New Jersey Chapter, and Eastern New England Chapter for a field trip to the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Long Island, New York.

This amazing trip was organized by Kelly Donovan of the Greater New York Chapter, whose dedication and effort made the entire experience truly special. From the moment I arrived, I knew this was going to be an unforgettable day.

Walking into the museum, I was immediately captivated by the grandeur of the aircraft hanging from the ceiling, frozen in flight, telling stories of aviation pioneers who paved the way for us. The exhibits showcased everything from the earliest flying machines to modern space exploration, making me feel a deep sense of admiration for the industry I am so passionate about.

One of the most memorable moments was stopping at The Ninety-Nines display, where I proudly posed for a picture with my sister aviators. Standing there, I felt connected not only to the inspiring women beside me but also to the legendary aviatrixes who came before us — trailblazers like Amelia Earhart, who helped establish this incredible organization. As a Ukrainian, it was truly special to be part of this group of strong, determined women who share the same passion for flight.

Beyond the museum's fascinating exhibits, what truly made the day special was the opportunity to meet sister Ninety-Nines from different chapters. We exchanged stories of our flying experiences, shared advice on training, and even discussed future collaborations. One of the most incredible stories came from Kelly Hilberth from New Jersey Chapter, a balloon pilot, whose experiences completely captured our attention. I cannot forget to mention Erika Kjersgard from the Eastern New England Chapter — an engineer, future CFI, and an incredibly dedicated and cool person. She drove three hours just to meet up with us and spend time at the museum, which truly shows her passion for aviation and the Ninety-Nines community.

I was so happy to find new friends who understand the challenges and joys of aviation. Despite our different backgrounds, we were united by the same dream — to take to the skies and push boundaries.

After the museum visit, we all gathered for a wonderful dinner, sharing laughs, delicious food, and stories of our aviation journeys. The camaraderie was incredible, and I felt so grateful to be surrounded by such inspiring women. As we said our goodbyes and headed home, I couldn't stop smiling. I felt truly happy, knowing that I had not only spent the day immersed in aviation history but had also gained new friendships and strengthened my connection with this amazing community.

A huge thank you to Kelly Donovan for organizing this fantastic trip! This experience wasn't just about exploring aviation history — it was about building friendships, strengthening our aviation sisterhood, and celebrating our shared love of flight. The Cradle of Aviation Museum was the perfect backdrop for this unforgettable experience, and I can't wait for our next adventure together!

Failure: Let it Inform You, Not Define You



Tammy Barlette

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

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

Failure. It's a word that often carries a heavy weight, especially in aviation. Pilots are trained to avoid mistakes at all costs, yet failure is an inevitable part of any high-performance profession. The key isn't to fear failure but to use it — to let it inform you, not define you.

In my years of flying, especially my years instructing, I've seen firsthand how failure can either be a pilot's greatest teacher or their biggest roadblock. The difference lies in mindset. Those who see failure as a personal shortcoming often get stuck, allowing self-doubt to take over. But those who view failure as a source of information — just another data point in their training — are the ones who continue to grow.

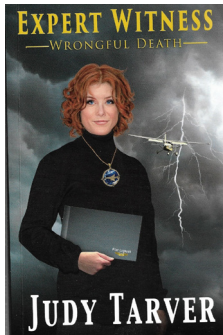
Think about it: every mistake provides valuable feedback. Whether it's an unstable approach, a botched radio call, or a missed emergency procedure, each misstep is an opportunity to improve. But too often, we let our mistakes become part of our identity. "I'm just not good at this." "I'll never get it right." That kind of thinking shifts failure from being a temporary event to a permanent label. And that's where it becomes dangerous.

Instead, we need to approach failure with curiosity rather than criticism. What went wrong? Why did it happen? What can I do differently next time? This mindset shift allows failure to become a tool for progress rather than a barrier to success.

Aviation has a long history of learning from failure. The industry itself is built on it. Every procedure in a checklist, every safety protocol, every system redundancy exists because, at some point, something didn't go as planned. But instead of letting those failures define aviation, they were used to refine it. The same approach applies on an individual level.

This is why mental performance training is so important. The ability to reframe failure — not as a reflection of your worth, but as a stepping stone toward mastery — separates the pilots who stagnate from those who excel. If you allow failure to inform you, each challenge becomes a lesson, each setback an adjustment, and each mistake a step forward.

So the next time something doesn't go as planned in your training, in the air, or even in life, remember this: failure is feedback. It is not a definition of who you are, but rather a tool to help you become better. The best pilots — and the best leaders — aren't the ones who never fail. They're the ones who know how to use it. —



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EXPERT WITNESS – Wrongful Death

Author: Judy Tarver (Friend of The Ninety-Nines)

This current edition is a “reissue” of a tremendous book – no editorial changes, but a new cover, which seems to be a little more sinister than the original 2017 cover.

Expert Witness – Wrongful Death has it all. Aviation accidents, conspiracies and a female protagonist who has a deep background as an aviation expert witness – plus more than a bit of attitude. In my estimation, that’s sort of like the author herself. The story is fast-paced and beautifully planned. Everything fits – until you get hit with an unexpected twist or turn. It’s a great storyline.

Judy Taver has been an integral presence in the aviation area since 1978, and this book rings true because of that expertise. She’s consulted with numerous airlines, government agencies, and pilots for years. Her other books include *Flight Plan to the Flight Deck: Strategies For a Pilot Career*.

My advice – get it! Read it! You’ll enjoy it!



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SOME ANGELS HAVE ROTOR BLADES

Author: Darcy Guyant (Friend of The Ninety-Nines)

Illustrator: Novel Varius

First – this one is going to make you cry – guaranteed.

Yes – this is a “children’s book” but it’s got so much more that every age will fall into. We go from “young” Dale on the first day of summer break from school, to “Grandpa” Dale with his grandkids visiting an aviation museum. The episode that connects those time periods is handled beautifully. Some “trauma” in a children’s book can be just that, but Guyant makes this an adventure in courage and fortitude – both on the part of Dale and again with his rescuers. I love the quiet, calm bravery he portrays with the descriptions of the Coast Guard crew – modeled after one of his own rescues as a Coast Guard helicopter pilot.

The book also contains a section for parents and teachers, with discussion guidance for “Understanding the Impact of Our Actions” and broader discussion. This is one heck of a little book and highly recommended.

Stay tuned for more reviews of Guyant’s marvelous books.

The story is wonderful and the history behind it is beyond eye-opening. This book is a must read.



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EYE IN THE SKY – An Alaskan Mystery

Author: Toni Niesen

Eye in the Sky introduces us to Beri Quinn, an Alaskan flight instructor. This book features her skills as a glider instructor. It also features her skills as a sleuth and a government agent – AND an Alaskan Ninety-Nine!

There are several plots and storylines going at the same time, but Niesen does a masterful job of sequencing throughout the book. For me, she tied up questions before I asked them, yet often surprised me at the turns the story took. PLUS – her general aviation knowledge is spot-on. This truly is a page turner.

NOTE: This is Niesen’s second book featuring Beri Quinn. The first is Part Unknown, written in 2017. I probably should have read them in order, but after having read this one I am for certain going back and reading the other which will probably answer some questions I had about Beri Quinn’s “past.” I only hope that sometime in the future we’ll get to enjoy a third take on Beri Quinn!

Maintaining a Healthy Weight as a Pilot: Why It Matters and How to Do It

One of the key components of the FAA flight physical exam is height and weight, which are used to calculate Body Mass Index (BMI). While BMI is a simple measure, it doesn't tell the whole story about a person's health. However, it is something pilots can control, and it plays a crucial role in overall well-being and long-term medical certification.

As both a board-certified internal medicine physician and a bariatrician (board certified in obesity medicine), I have a deep passion for this topic. In aviation, obesity might seem out of place, but the reality is that flying requires a lot of prolonged sitting. While pilots must maximize their mental acuity, the physical demands of the job are sometimes minimal. Add in irregular schedules, sleep disruptions, hormone fluctuations, fatigue, and stress, and weight gain becomes a real concern.

Why Does Weight Management Matter in Aviation?

Weight management is at the core of preventative medicine. Maintaining a healthy weight can significantly lower the risk of several health issues, including certain cancers, cardiovascular problems, and diabetes. Keeping your weight in check can significantly impact your ability to maintain your medical certificate and avoid health issues that could ground your career.

For example, obesity is the leading cause of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), a condition that can directly affect your ability to fly. Obesity is also linked to several serious health conditions, including:

- **Cancers:** Such as esophageal adenocarcinoma, postmenopausal breast cancer, colon, rectal, uterine, gallbladder, kidney, liver, ovarian, pancreatic, thyroid, and brain cancers (including meningioma), as well as multiple myeloma.
- **Cardiovascular Issues:** Obesity increases the risk of high blood pressure, stroke, coronary artery disease, and cardiac arrhythmias like atrial fibrillation (Afib).
- **Diabetes:** The leading cause of type 2 diabetes is insulin resistance, and excess body fat, especially around the abdomen, is a major risk factor for this disease.

This is just the beginning...

Understanding BMI and Body Composition

BMI is a quick and accessible screening tool which allows us to categorize as follows:

- 25-29: Overweight
- 30-35: Class 1 obesity
- 35-40: Class 2 obesity
- Over 40: Class 3 obesity

Other methods for measuring body composition include bioelectrical impedance analysis (BIA) and air displacement plethysmography (ADP). However, the gold standard is a DEXA scan, which provides detailed insights into fat distribution, including visceral fat (the fat surrounding internal organs). Why is this important? Visceral fat is linked to health issues. For example, fatty liver disease over time can lead to cirrhosis. Note, not a drop of alcohol is needed in that equation, we are only talking about visceral fat. Surprisingly, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is one of the most common causes of liver disease in the U.S., affecting about 24% of adults, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The Role of Nutrition

Despite their crucial role in health, doctors often receive minimal formal training in nutrition. As a result, many pilots turn to the internet for health advice, where misinformation can abound. One widely accepted principle is increasing protein intake, and here's why: digesting protein burns more calories than digesting carbohydrates or fats. This is due to the thermic effect of food (TEF), which means that:

- Protein burns 20-30% of its calories during digestion.
- Carbohydrates burn 5-10%.
- Fats burn 0-3%.

For pilots on the go, finding healthy food options in airports can be challenging. For this reason, I'm working on a Healthy Eats Map on my website to assist in locating the healthiest options in major U.S. airports. In many cases, planning and packing your own meals might be the best option.

Exercise: The Foundation of Health

The standard recommended amount of exercise is 150-300 minutes per week, but this doesn't require expensive gym equipment or a membership. The key is setting SMART goals — specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound — and creating a routine that works for you. Start at your fitness level to avoid burnout or injury.

For those who like numbers, tracking your calories burned based on weight and activity can keep you motivated. Here's a simple formula to calculate calories burned using METS, or metabolic equivalents, which is a unit of measurement used to quantify the energy expenditure during physical activity:

$$\text{METS} \times 3.5 \times \text{Body Weight (kg)} / 200 = \text{KCAL/min}$$

For example:

- A 225-pound person burns about 270 calories in 30 minutes of walking (METS = 5).
- A 150-pound person burns about 285 calories in 30 minutes of moderate cycling (METS = 8).

Even small adjustments, like taking the stairs, walking during layovers, or using fitness apps, can add up. If you have a gym membership, check if they offer nationwide access, or consider free apps like MINDBODY to find drop-in classes while traveling.

What About Weight-Loss Medications?

There are various medications that treat obesity depending on the patient. The FAA has given its approval for the use of a variety of them to include metformin, liraglutide, semaglutide, and tirzepatide. This approval requires you have never been diagnosed with diabetes. Diabetes has its own FAA pathway. The GLP-1 injectable medications (Zepbound and Wegovy) have been making headlines, both good and bad. When prescribed and monitored by a qualified medical provider, they can be a safe and effective tool for weight loss. However, they should never replace a foundation of healthy eating and exercise. All of the approved FAA medications are a CACI (Condition an AME Can Issue) so no special issuance is needed if you qualify.

Simple Steps to Stay Fit as a Pilot

- **PLAN AHEAD:** Just as you plan your flight, plan your nutrition. Look for healthy options at layovers or pack your meals. Some airlines offer healthier crew meal options, so consider these on your next flight.
- **STAY ACTIVE:** Use hotel gyms, check if your gym membership includes partner locations, or explore local fitness options with apps like MINDBODY. Outdoor exercise — weather and safety permitting — offers the added benefit of fresh air.
- **PARTNER WITH A BARIATRIC CLINIC:** Having a doctor guide you on your medical weight-loss journey can be a huge benefit. I work with Inclusa Health & Wellness, which offers completely virtual telehealth visits to accommodate your busy life.
- **CONSIDER FITNESS/NUTRITION APPS:** These can help you stay active no matter where you are or what equipment is available. They can also assist with calorie counting and hydration goals. I have personally used the Coeur Lifting Club App and 1st Phorm but find one that is right for you.

Final Thoughts

This is just an introduction to the vast topic of health and wellness for pilots. Staying in optimal health is one of the best ways to protect your medical certificate and extend your flying career. If you have questions, feel free to reach out — I'm happy to help!

Send your questions or suggestions for upcoming articles to info@aviatemedical.com.



Dr. Rachael Ferraro

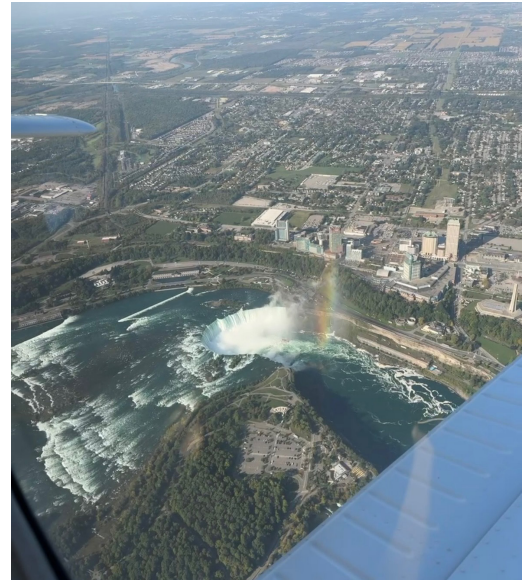
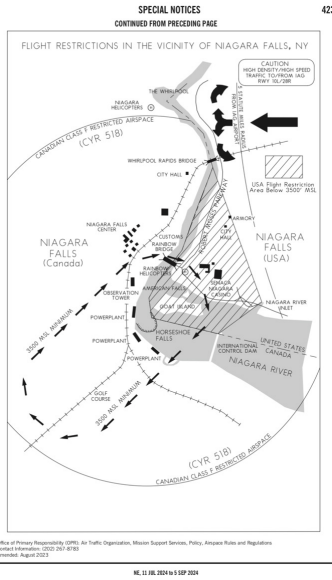
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Disclaimer: This is general information and not medical advice. Always consult your AME or medical provider for personalized guidance. This article has not been sponsored, and the opinions expressed are solely my own.

Places to Go & Things to Do



Procedure for the special air traffic rule area to be used in flying over the falls. | Dinner outside on the hotel balcony overlooking the park. | Flying over the falls.



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

As warmer weather returns and northerly locations again appeal, consider Niagara Falls as a destination. Not only can pilots fly a planned route over and around the falls, but interesting ground trips and accommodations are available, as well.

Above is the procedure for the special air traffic rule area to be used in flying over the falls. This procedure can be found in the Northeast U.S. Chart Supplements. It provides altitudes, frequencies, direction and location of track to be flown. Since there are many detailed offerings available on the internet explaining how to conduct this flight from AOPA, YouTube, flight schools and more, I won't spend much time and space on the details here. Let me just say that we conducted our flight in September. After departing from Niagara Falls International airport (KIAG), we stayed in contact with Buffalo Approach the entire time we were over the falls. Since it was a remarkably quiet day with few clouds and good visibility, we were allowed to vary some from the procedure. Our tour of the falls turned out to be much less complicated than we expected. However, I'm sure it can be very different on a heavy traffic day or with poorer visibility or clouds. After doing several circuits above the falls, we departed south on our IFR flight plan to Morgantown.

I expected the flight over the falls to be spectacular and it was. Definitely, a bucket list flight. I wasn't expecting much for the

ground portion of our stay. This is where I was very pleasantly surprised. We had flown in the preceding day and landed at Niagara International overnighting at Calspan Air Services FBO. Although this probably wasn't the cheapest option, it proved worthwhile in proximity and convenience. Calspan was professional and accommodating and we took an Uber for the 12-15 minute drive to the DoubleTree Hilton Niagara Falls on 401 Buffalo Ave. What really set this location apart was, first, its restaurant. We enjoyed a group dinner on the outside balcony enjoying tree-top level park views and good food. Our evening outdoor weather was delightful. Second, the hotel's pleasing and convenient location backs onto a green, tree-filled park connecting to Niagara Falls State Park. There are hiking trails, easily accessible roads and a hotel shuttle bus to Prospect Point from which the falls could be viewed.

The falls are illuminated nightly with a changing program of colors starting at dusk and giving it a magical appeal. For those interested in the traditional "Maid of the Mist" boat tour in and under the falls, the "Maid of the Mist" viewing tower and ticket facility is within easy walking distance from the hotel. The tours operate after the risk of icing is over so opening day varies yearly. Both the bus and boat tours are seasonal, so be sure to call ahead to make certain they are operating during your planned visit. And if this isn't enough, the Seneca Niagara Resort and Casino is only a few blocks away. Have fun!

Milestones

Allie Balding
Type Rating 747
– NOLA



Madison Barch
Private
– Michigan

Yanina Belazorava
ATP rating in a Citation
525
– Chicago Area



Alana Bicoy
CFII
– Old Dominion

Amanda Jo Brand
Commercial
– NOLA



Cait Buckner
CFI
– Houston

Emma Conroy
Commercial
– NOLA

Bridgett Cornett
SIC Cessna Citation
CJ3+; initial training
Gulfstream GVII
G500/600
– Wisconsin



Emily Davila
Commercial
– Kentucky Bluegrass



Shay Eagleheart
CFI
– Sierra Gold



Katrina Evans
Private
– Georgia Flying Belles



Jenna Gorup
CFI
– Houston

Mina Gu
Commercial
– Bay Cities



Anastasia Heitmann
Private
– Sutter Buttes

Andrea Huguenin
Instrument
– NOLA

Charity Ison
Commercial
– NOLA

Sydney Kay King
Commercial
– NOLA

Audra Knieper
Private
– NOLA



Stephanie Kraft
CFI and Commercial
– Tennessee

Paige Kuhn
Private
– Wisconsin



Evie Lechuga
Private
– All-Ohio



Dawn Madeja
Commercial
– Wisconsin

Jennie May
Commercial Airplane
– NOLA



Lainey Mungle
Solo
– Arkansas



Leah Murphy
Commercial seaplane
add-on rating
– Michigan



Mandi Neumann
SIC Checkride in the
Shorts 360 for Air Cargo
Carriers
– Wisconsin

Wendy O'Malley
G7500 Type Rating
– Bay Cities

Katelyn Popejoy
Solo
– Greater St. Louis

Martha Reith
Commercial
– Wisconsin



Maddie Sell
Private
– Keystone

Deborah Snavelly
Airframe & Powerplant
Inspection Authorization
– Paradise Coast

Brittany Snyder
First Jet PIC Type in the
ERJ
– NOLA

Maya Spriggs
Solo
– Greater St. Louis



Amanda Stahl
Multi-engine Commercial
– New York Capital
Region



**Rose M. Staples
Deese**
Private
– Carolinas



April Thompson
Private
– Florida First Coast



Julie Paasch
Mount Tahoma Chapter

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

Email Julie Paasch at askadpe99@gmail.com

Your question may be answered in the next issue!

Scary Moments


Have you had any scary times where you had to take over the flight controls on a checkride?

About once a month on average I take the flight controls on a checkride because an applicant does something that potentially could compromise the safety of the flight. If the examiner intervenes for the safety of the flight, the checkride is unsatisfactory. I have been an examiner for a little over 10 years and the top two most memorable instances happened in the last year. I had a Private applicant that entered an incipient spin and a Commercial AMEL applicant entered the start of a Vmc roll. In both instances there are takeaways that we can learn from.

The Private Pilot applicant was attempting to perform a power-on stall and entered an incipient spin. The applicant improperly added full flaps and then applied full power. As they applied back pressure they did not stay coordinated and when the full stall occurred, the airplane broke hard to the left. I verbalized to the applicant to recover. The applicant froze up and I took the flight controls and recovered. It's important to think about the safety hazard, that had I not been present the applicant may not have recovered. It is so important to recognize un-coordination when practicing stalls and also verifying proper configuration for the stage of flight. While it is not required to practice spins, it's imperative that spin recovery technique be memorized and chair flown. I have taught spin training and aerobatics in the past and even when you brief and review before you enter a spin often pilots will freeze up.

The second memorable moment and learning experience for me was when an applicant started into a Vmc roll. I had flown with this particular applicant on two of his previous checkrides. He had done well on his other checkrides and was very well prepared and knowledgeable. On the Commercial AMEL checkride it is required to do an actual engine failure and then restart. The applicant was in a shallow left bank, I failed the applicant's right engine. I was sitting back in my seat, generally relaxed. His response caught me very off guard. He immediately applied full right rudder, slight back pressure and full power. This caused us to bank and roll hard to the right. I jumped in my seat, pulled the power back, yelled "left rudder, forward pressure, my controls," while I applied left rudder. He was not releasing the right rudder and fighting me on the flight controls. Thankfully the airplane didn't completely roll over, but we did lose close to 2,000 feet of altitude. Eventually, he released the right rudder and I was able to fully recover.

Later in the debrief, he indicated he really had not practiced many right engine failures and didn't expect me to fail his right engine. We also discussed the danger of improper recovery and the impulsivity of his inputs. I flew with a captain early in my career for my corporate job, he taught me when an emergency happens to "pick your nose" then make your first input during an emergency. While this is pretty gross, it has really "stuck" with me so to speak in that we don't want to be impulsive in our responses. I learned and was reminded about complacency. Even with all my experience, it was an important reminder that I need to be ready and on guard.

Everyone makes mistakes. It's important to slow down during emergencies and utilize Aeronautical Decision Making (ADM). Take the time you need to be prepared for your checkride and for any flight you do. 



SOUTH CENTRAL SECTION

Ninety Nines from Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arkansas, and Louisiana who were in attendance at the South Central Section meeting held in Sulphur, Louisiana, are shown at Citadel Completions Design Center on Chennault International Airport. The tour was made possible by Col (Ret.) Kevin Melton the Airport Executive Director of Chennault.

- Dr. Sandra Leder



Back row, left to right: Dalya Abu-Shaweesh, Evie Lechuga, Kay Johnson, Margaret Hazlett, Chris Creamer, Linda Blodgett. Front: Peg Ballou, Ellen Cross, Valerie Palazzolo, Debra Henrichs, Leota Lane (guest).

ALL-OHIO

In March, the All-Ohio Chapter met at the International Women’s Air and Space Museum at Burke Lakefront Airport (KBKL) in Cleveland, Ohio. While there, we attended a lecture from USAF Major (Ret.) Cholene Espinoza, U-2 Pilot, physician, USAF Academy graduate, and pilot instructor. What a woman!

- Margaret Hazlett



Left to right: Rebekah Seifer, Lisa Richardson (guest), Lucia Mencia, Caren Roushkolb, Laura Takacs (guest), Lauren Palagi, with honorary curling captain: (front row) Charlotte Palagi.

WASHINGTON DC CHAPTER

Sanity was frozen before the “curling team” of the Washington DC Chapter made merry at the Potomac Curling Club. On Saturday, February 8, 2025, seven hardy members had a delightful time recognizing how talented the Olympic Curling Team of Scotland really is. Our 99s group threw 40-pound curling stones, broomed, knocked out and cheered each other on. A grand time was had by the Washington DC Chapter.

- Lucia Mencia

KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS CHAPTER



Top left: Thanks to all our Kentucky Bluegrass members and others who presented our annual Girl Scout Day at Flight Club 502 in Louisville, Kentucky, and to organizer Terri Donner and Girl Scout contact Terri Sanders. | Top middle: Learning about the uses of drones was one of eight sessions presented. | Top right: Association of Women Aircraft Mechanics present aircraft maintenance to the Girl Scouts. | Center: Airline pilots introduce the Girl Scouts to flying. | Center right: Girl Scouts learn about air traffic control. | Bottom left: The Girl Scouts had an opportunity to learn about the airplane controls and sit in the plane. | Bottom right: Kentucky Bluegrass members serving as group leaders at our annual Girl Scout Day.



Left to right: American Airlines Airbus pilot Tan Hao, New York-New Jersey Section member Susan Loricchio, retired American Airlines' first female pilot Bonnie Tiburzi, Kristina Lindbergh, New Jersey Chapter member Shirley Onacilla, Reeve Lindbergh, and Long Island Chapter member Nancy Neumann. (Photo by George Hodge, 49½)



Greater New York and New Jersey 99s volunteers with the CAP plane used to demonstrate pre-flying during the pre-flight module.

NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY SECTION

Aviation Expo 2025

On March 10, 2025, the Explorers Club in New York City hosted a presentation about Anne Morrow Lindbergh, a pilot, pioneer and author. The presentation included her daughter, Reeve Lindbergh and her granddaughter Kristina Lindbergh. Several 99s attended the presentation and were joined by other lady pilots. The family shared stories and the history and adventures of Mrs. Lindbergh. Each attendee was given a copy of Mrs. Lindbergh's book *North to the Orient* signed by the family members.

- Nancy Neumann

Greater New York 99s Girl Scout Event

Saturday, 15 March 2025, Girl Scouts from Westchester County Troops 1536 and 2642, Putnam County Troop 1097 were hosted by Greater New York Chapter, and Civil Air Patrol (CAP) local girl cadets at Million Air, the FBO at Westchester County Airport (HPN)

Once again The Ninety-Nines introduced local Girl Scouts to piloting skills as they rotated in small groups through STEM workshops that included: chart reading, weather for pilots, how to pre-flight an aircraft, pilot "talk" and the phonetic alphabet; they sat in the pilot seat of CAP's search and rescue Cessna 182 and a privately owned Cessna 210; they also had a tour of the ARFF truck – that's the airport's Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting unit; and they took home a swag bag filled with fun aviation-themed goodies. More than 70 participants were involved to make sure everyone enjoys this exciting and informative experience.

- Jacqui A. Sturgess



One of the Girl Scout troops along with some of The 99s and CAP cadets.



Girl Scout patch presentation.



ARFF staff with another Girl Scout group after the tour.

Grass Roots

MICHIGAN CHAPTER

PPLI panel discussion and Women's Aviation Career Symposium

Our March meeting included a panel discussion with leaders from The Ninety-Nines Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative (PPLI). In addition to our chapter members, North Central Section members were also invited. The discussion was led by Laura Matheson (Manitoba Chapter) Team Leader, and Kaylynn Tobias (Greater New York Chapter) Lead Captain's Circle Coordinator. Twenty-three members attended the fantastic presentation. Sincere thanks to Laura and Kaylynn.

Many of our Michigan 99s attended the 2025 Women's Aviation Career Symposium (WACS) on March 15. Our members represented all aspects of aviation, from student pilots to airline pilots. Everyone had an opportunity to successfully network throughout the day as there were many aviation companies, schools, and other organizations in attendance. This was the first year the Michigan 99s sponsored a booth at WACS, and it gave us a chance to show off our brand-new banner. Our information table was a success, thanks to our members who volunteered their time to talk with all of the attendees who stopped by. The lip balm and parachute chick swag probably helped as well! Overall, we had over 60 women stop by to talk and over 30 requested more information about who we are and what we do. We look forward to seeing some new faces at our future meetings. Highlights of the day included round table discussions which gave our members glimpses of various aviation career opportunities, workshops for writing successful resumes and scholarships, aircraft tours, simulator sessions, an engaging and inspirational keynote speaker, NASA astronaut Jasmin Moghbeli, and a fantastic lunch where we were able to create lasting connections with other women in aviation. The best part of the day for the Michigan 99s, however, was having three of our very own members receive flight training scholarships. A big congratulations to Sarah Haskett, Cherry Kan, and Esme Lowry.

- Jennifer Little

Aviation book discussion and member news

Our April meeting included a book club discussion of *Queen of the Clouds: Joan Merriam Smith and Jerrie Mock's Epic Quest to Become the First Woman to Fly Solo Around the World* by Taylor C. Phillips. The discussion was led by Chapter Secretary Frances Rose, and we were extremely fortunate to have the author join us. Mr. Phillips shared background information about the book and his research. His book reconstructs the stories of both women as they set aviation records and had to deal with multiple hazards – both natural and man-made.

Membership: The Michigan Chapter 99s now has 108 members. Since January 1, 2025, we have seven new members. Welcome to our newest members: Shawna Belanger, Rachel Hughes, Megan Gorak, Annelies Palombi, Hannah Allen and Abby Shah.

- Barb Vukits



Top: Michigan 99s Jennifer Little, Lydia Hodgson, and Destany Parker staffed a booth at Women's Aviation Career Symposium, which gave them a chance to show off their brand-new banner.

Middle: Michigan 99s attended the 2025 Women's Aviation Career Symposium (WACS) on March 15.

Bottom: Michigan 99s' information table at the 2025 Women's Aviation Career Symposium was a success, thanks to our members who volunteered their time to talk with all of the attendees who stopped by.



Northeast Kansas Chapter members with Aviation Explorers Squadron 8. From left: Secretary Sara Tompson, Chapter Girl Scouts Liaison Tammy Willits, Explorers Squadron 8 President Sayer Taggart, Chapter Chair Laura Burnham, and member Cheri Thompson.

NORTHEAST KANSAS CHAPTER

On March 8, 2025, the Northeast Kansas Chapter visited the Billard Airport (TOP) to make a financial contribution to the Aviation Explorers Squadron 8 (www.post8.org/) housed there. Chapter Chair Laura Burnham gave an overview of The 99s to the Squadron meeting (the squadron now has more female members than ever before!), and then the chapter team presented a check to Squadron President Sayer Taggart. Aviation Explorers (being renamed Aviation Exploring) is an arm of the Boy Scouts of America, open to all young people aged 14 to 20. Our area Squadron 8 is the oldest in the country! And, unlike many squadrons, they, through an affiliated organization, have two Piper Cherokees, a 160 and a 180, and active flight training. Our chapter is proud to support this group of focused young people!

- Sara R. Tompson



Right side: Cyndi Ice with guest Callie Edsall, Teresa and Bill Camp, Dawn Mills, Leona and Greg McGee. Left side: Elaine and Bob Regier, Angela Drabek, Wyvema Startz, Gabby Cassettari and guest Amber, Janis and Jon Love, guest Breanne Anderson and companion.

OKLAHOMA CHAPTER

The Sweetheart Dinner is a cherished tradition for the Oklahoma Chapter of The Ninety-Nines, serving as our February meeting and an opportunity to gather for fellowship and camaraderie. This annual event fosters a sense of connection and inspiration among members as we come together to celebrate our shared passion for aviation.

This year, the dinner was held at the Saltgrass Steak House in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Members attended alongside their guests and spouses, making the evening a memorable occasion filled with laughter, great food, and meaningful conversations. We look forward to continuing this heartwarming tradition in the years to come, strengthening the bonds within our chapter and celebrating the incredible spirit of The Ninety-Nines!

- Cyndi Ice



Left to right: Brenda Corby, Dakota Tustin, Dawn Maloney, Shelia Collier, Susan Ray, Joanne Stover; center: guest Adela Magaña. (Photo by Brenda Corby)

VENTURA COUNTY

Inspiring Vibes, Women's History Thrives!

March 2, 2025, Ventura County 99s kicked off Women's History Month at the Aviation Museum of Santa Paula at the Santa Paula Airport (KSZP), Santa Paula, California, with an incredible celebration of our pioneering women in aviation!

Our amazing pilot crew — Dawn Maloney, Brenda Corby, Sheila Collier, Joanne Stover, Susan Ray, Ava West, Emma Elkington, and Dakota Tustin — showed their unwavering support, greeting curious aviation enthusiasts in full pilot regalia. They embodied the spirit of trailblazers like Amelia Earhart, Pancho Barnes, Harriet Quimby, and more, giving onlookers a taste of the nostalgic essence of our pioneer Aviatrices.

We are so proud of our chapter's enthusiasm — together, we are the best of us!

- Dakota Paige Tustin

Grass Roots



Top: Ed Hollendonor, Senior Winter Survival Trainer for the Boy Scouts, speaking about winter survival equipment to carry on a cross country. | Bottom: Table at “Souper Saturday”

CHICAGO AREA CHAPTER

Virtually all our Chicago Area Chapter meetings are fly-in/drive in, with food as well as interesting and educational programs. A recent meeting was held at the main terminal building at DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport (DKB). Thank you to our hostesses, Corie Wild and Deb Meznarsic, who served their “Souper Saturday Special” – featuring a variety of great soups with toppings and bread along with dessert. We then had a presentation on Winter Survival in the Midwest. Larry Martin from the FAASteam did an IMC/VMC situational analysis of a seaplane accident highlighting the benefits to “chair fly” a trip so that you can think of possible issues and how to prepare for them. Ed Hollendonor, a Boy Scout Cold Weather Camping Trainer spoke on emergency items to take in a plane for cross-country trips in case of an off-airport landing, especially in cold weather. D’Wayne Collins from the FAASteam invited people to nominate pilots and mechanics for the Wright Pilot Master Pilot Award and the Dwight Taylor Master Mechanic Awards. Wings credit was available for those in attendance.

Another meeting was held at Blue Skies Flight School at Lake in the Hills Airport (3CK). Our hostesses were Megan McArthur and Lisa Mitchell. This was a “Dip Party” with everyone bringing their favorite dip and what to dip in it (sweet, savory, fruit, veggies, chips, cookies, whatever) for all to share. Then the airport manager spoke about new upgrades coming for the airport, including four cameras, adding additional aircraft parking, and a new AWOS-3PT system; he talked about potentially hosting an air show at DeKalb as well.

– Diane M. Cozzi



Our newest Life Members

- | | |
|--|---|
| Sue Ackley
Greater St. Louis Chapter | Judith Johnson
Spaceport Chapter |
| Elizabeth Chapple
Western Washington Chapter | Jerry Jurenka
Texas Dogwood Chapter |
| Marilyn Dickson
First Canadian Chapter | Dottie Lyons
Santa Maria Valley Chapter |
| Irene Engard
Orange County Chapter | Lynne Orloff
San Joaquin Valley Chapter |
| Janeen Gaul
Ventura County Chapter | Cheryl Rhynard
Fullerton Chapter |



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.

- | | |
|--|---|
| Leritha Harris
Monterey Bay Chapter
October 30, 2024 | Paula Rumbaugh
Scioto Valley Chapter
February 22, 2025 |
| Carolyn Brooks
Golden Triangle Chapter
December 26, 2024 | Ethel Bailey
Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter
March 7, 2025 |
| Katharine Barr
Life Member
Eastern New England Chapter
February 8, 2025 | Fran Strubeck
Tucson Chapter
March 11, 2025 |
| Sue (Constance Arline) Matheis
Greater St Louis Chapter
February 9, 2025 | Chanda Budhabhatti
Life Member
India Section
March 30, 2025 |
| Nanette Gaylord
South Central Section
February 10, 2025 | JoAnn Stype
All-Ohio Chapter
March 30, 2025 |
| Eleanore Reichenbach
Life Member
Florida Goldcoast Chapter
February 17, 2025 | Corbi Bulluck
Past International President
Kitty Hawk Chapter
April 6, 2025 |



Aviation’s light has dimmed with the passing of **Corbi Bulluck**, Immediate Past President, and devoted 99. Admired, respected and loved by many, she was called from us far before her time after fighting cancer for years. A tribute to Corbi will appear in the next issue of the *Ninety-Nines* magazine. Please keep her family and loved ones in your thoughts and prayers.



THE NINETY-NINES 2025 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

JULY 9-13, 2025 | BURLINGTON, VERMONT

Hosted by the New England Section

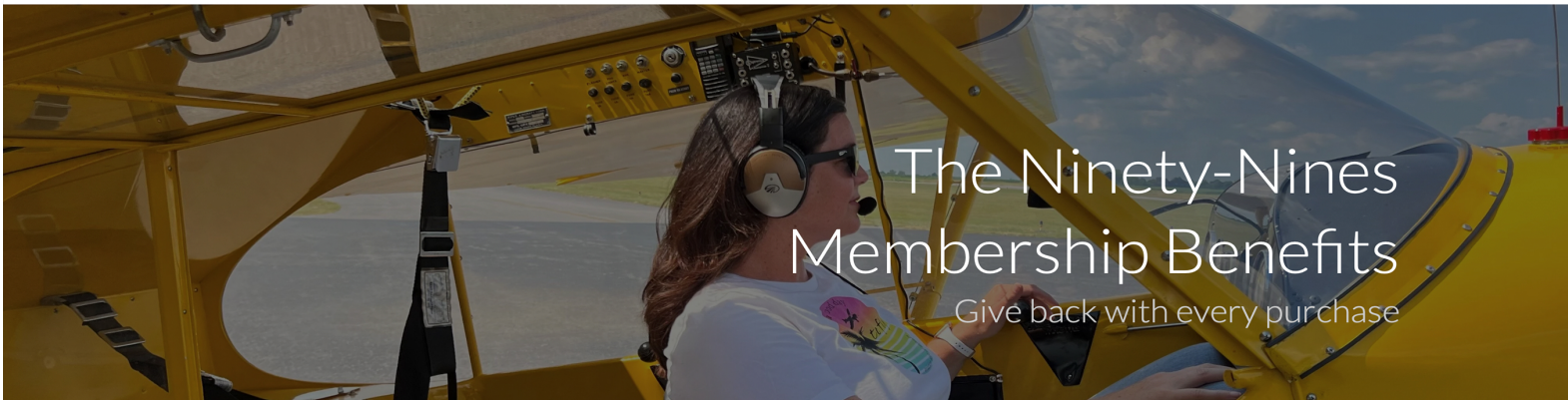


We are delighted to welcome **Bram Kleppner** as our honored guest at the International Conference Welcome Reception on Thursday, July 10. **Bram is the great-nephew of Amelia Earhart** and will deliver a welcome as well as sharing a few anecdotes about his grandmother Muriel and his great-aunt Amelia. Bram is also a member of the Vermont State House of Representatives. Attend the Conference for this special opportunity to meet a descendent of our first International President!

JOIN US! July 9 – 13, 2025

HOTEL CHAMPLAIN BURLINGTON | Curio Collection by Hilton

Registration is OPEN - 99sconference.org



The Ninety-Nines Membership Benefits

Give back with every purchase

We are offering members of The Ninety-Nines and Friends of The 99s \$100 off the Lightspeed Delta Zulu. Use promo code **99s100**.



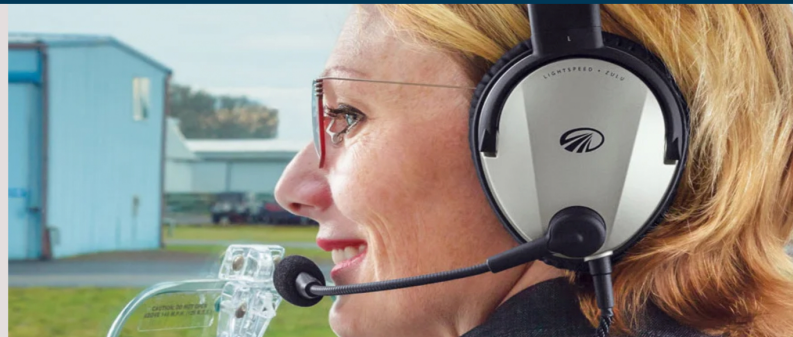
When you purchase a Lightspeed Delta Zulu or Zulu 3 ANR headset through the link below, Lightspeed will donate 10% of your headset purchase to the Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund. Your investment in top-tier aviation gear also helps fund the dreams of aspiring female pilots—it's a win-win for you, the Ninety-Nines and the future of flight!

<https://go.lightspeedaviation.com/ninety-nines>

Exciting News for Ninety-Nines Members!

Ninety-Nines Quarterly Drawing

Enter to WIN a Lightspeed Delta Zulu ANR headset each quarter!



Lightspeed is thrilled to partner with The Ninety-Nines for an exclusive quarterly giveaway of our cutting-edge Lightspeed Delta Zulu headset! Every three months, we'll randomly select one lucky Ninety-Nines member to receive a free headset—just for filling out a simple entry form!

- You must be a current Ninety-Nines member to participate.
- Fill out the entry form. The link is available in the February 2025 Straight & Level e-newsletter in the Members Area at www.ninety-nines.org

Congratulations to the winner of the Lightspeed Delta Zulu headset Heather K., 99s Houston Chapter.