

NINETY NINE

NEWS LETTER

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

OF WOMEN PILOTS

SPECIAL EDITION

JANUARY 15, 1940

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EXTRA! EXTRA!

Believe it or not, the NORTHWEST SECTION of the 99's, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Washington and Oregon, is now a reality, not just a name on a piece of paper!

This Section has had a rather tough time with 99 activity, because there were so few girls here who flew. But now there are more and the number is growing by leaps and bounds--so wish us luck!

In the first place, Edith Foltz Stearns was our Fairy Godmother. Being a charter member of the 99's, she tried to start a Northwest Section in 1929. The five or so pilots in these seven states at that time were scattered from heaven to supper. Edith wrote letter after letter trying to get the group together, inviting them to stay at her house and doing everything she could to make a get-together possible. But to no avail! Getting everyone together in a Section of this size means that most of the girls would have to be away from their home port for three days to make the trip--if they flew! And since it takes twenty-six hours to get from Seattle to Western Montana on the train and even longer when leaving from the small towns, the girls who couldn't fly would find it quite a trip. Some of them didn't own their own ships, so it was utterly impossible to accomplish anything toward getting organized.

In 1934 another attempt was made, this time with Cora Sterling at the helm. Five members were rounded up from this edge of the section but there was no activity, and the group rapidly went into a decline which ended in total obscurity.

So now we've started out again and rounded up five more members--and this time intend to keep the ball rolling or else. In fact, it already looks a little like a snowball, picking up more and more material as it goes along!

First thing on the reorganization program was a get-together in Seattle on December second, to which all the Seattle girls interested in flying were invited. At this social gathering the purpose of the 99's was explained to the group; even those girls not eligible for membership having been invited in order to acquaint them with the qualifications for membership and the accomplishments of the organization. Cooperation from some of the girls who were eligible was assured, and shortly thereafter plans for a meeting of all licensed women pilots in the Northwest were under way.

Of the thirty-nine girls who were urged to come, only six were able to attend; in spite of the fact that special rates had been arranged at the Olympic Hotel and free hangar storage was provided for those who flew in--not to mention all transportation while in Seattle.

Those who came were Irma Westover Wallace, Helen Durrah, Cora Sterling, Laura May Brunton (at whose home the meeting was held), all of Seattle, Leah Hing of Portland, and Gladys Crooks of Kennewick, Washington.

The constitution was read, and afterward letters from some of the girls who expressed enthusiasm and willingness to cooperate but who were not able to attend.

Helen Durrah and Leah Hing then joined the 99's, and Cora Sterling, who had been a member but had let her membership drop, rejoined.

This was followed by the election of officers, as follows: Laura May Brunton, Governor; Irma Wallace, Vice-Governor; Leah Hing, Secretary-Treasurer. The plan is to have three Chapters at first--one in Washington, one in Oregon, and one for members east of the Rockies.

Until we get better established we will have a Sectional meeting once every four months, the first to be at the Aero Club in Portland on April 13. If any of the 99's from other parts of the country happen to be nearby at that time, we would like very much to have them come to our luncheon meeting and to the dinner-dance that evening.

NOW may I introduce our new members and welcome them into the 99's:

LEAH HING. Has her own J-5 Travelaire, which she has flown since about 1936 or 1937. Before the Travelaire she had a Fleet. If you ever visit the Aero Club of Portland, her cheery smile will be the first to greet you. Leah is one of the few Chinese members of the 99. She is a petite thing with a very sweet personality, and we are proud to have her in our Section. Incidentally, she is, as we knew she would, turning out to be an extra-special Secretary-Treasurer. Efficient is the word for Leah!

HELEN DURRAH started to fly in February of last year, and in this short time has logged enough hours to put her well on her way toward her private certificate. This she intends to get in the Spring, and hopes to have it before we go to Portland for our meeting in April. Nothing but the weather--which we have plenty of around here--will be able to prevent her from so doing. Helen is working for the Standard Oil Company of California here in Seattle. We could say a lot of nice things about Helen. She's the type of a little blonde lassie whom you'd notice in a crowd. And she is a real flying enthusiast who enjoys nothing more than she does constructive hangar lounging!

IRMA WESTOVER WALLACE'S middle name should be Friday!--she was certainly a right-hand man on this organization business. Black-haired and blue-eyed, she'd weigh in at about 100 pounds if wet enough. Her 49.5er flies for Northwest Airlines. Irma started to fly in 1934 in

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Portland. Showing that even a woman has faith in women pilots, she took her original instruction from Dorothy Hester, who held the women's world record for acrobatic flying. The Great Lakes in which Irma made her original solo is the one that Tex Rankin now uses at Cleveland for his acrobatic flying. She joined the 99's in 1938 with the Bay Cities Chapter, and is one of our most enthusiastic helpers. (Bay Cities Chapter please note.)

CORA STERLING began her flying career in September, 1932, and got her ten-hour Private in December of that year. The L. C. came along in 1933, and she's had a Transport since 1935. Her log-book now boasts of well over 500 hours. Even the skeptic males at the field willingly concede that the blonde, attractive Cora knows her stuff!

That is all of our "Charter Members."

DORA SKINNER is another member of this Section, but she needs no introduction to you-all because she is one of the country's old-time pilots and has been a most enthusiastic 99er since 'way back when. In spite of the fact that this Section has never been active, she has paid her dues faithfully through all these years and has gone right on supporting the organization in every way she could. And please, you girls who have it wrong, her name is not Doris, as you seem to think, but DORA. And more power to her!

EDITH STEARNS who has rejoined the organization, has already been introduced--as though she needed it! She and her husband are now in Portland, more than busy with the responsibilities of organizing a new Airline for Oregon. This is a much-needed line, and while it is a tremendous undertaking, we all know it will be a big success. Congratulations, Stearnses! Here's to you!

We are glad to have on our roster the name of EVELYN BURLESON, another newcomer since our Sectional meeting, who with her husband is running the airport at Albany, Oregon. They used to have the field at Jamstown, North Dakota--always a much-looked-forward-to stop on the Brunton's cross-continent cruises. Evelyn has had a Commercial since 'fore I can remember, and has always been much interested in the 99's. For a long time she was North Dakota's only woman pilot. Better make it a point to stop in at Albany some time. Take it from me, that Burleson hospitality is something!

GERALDINE SNOOK of Vancouver, Washington, is also a newcomer since the meeting, and FRANCES SHERLEY, Tacoma, Washington, will soon be with us.

How's that for a starter?! And watch our dust--we're going to keep that list right on climbing! There'll be no stalls after this take-off!

And so, with my sincerest thanks to Betty Gillies, who has devoted a great deal of thought and time to helping us get organized and who has been a perfect peach throughout the whole struggle, to Irma Wallace and Cora Sterling, I'll say Thanks, and Happy Landings!

Laura May Brunton, Acting Reporter.

Jan. 15, 1940