



Ninety-Nines

Inspiring Women Pilots Since 1929

May/June 2020

FLYING TO HELP STOP COVID-19

Story on Page 26



Ninety-Nines

Inspiring Women Pilots Since 1929

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Pam Phillips grew up with aviation. Her father was an ardent pilot who purchased a failing FBO in Tennessee and started Tri-City Aviation.

Although Pam took flying lessons, she found herself more involved in the business. Twenty years later, she became owner and president of the FBO.



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Although Alaska Airlines Captain Jodi Harskamp never dreamed of parting with a kidney, she donated one of hers to Alaska Airline flight attendant Jenny Stansel — and saved Jenny's life despite the risk to her own.



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Michelle JoAnn, Aloha Chapter, was one of 14 applicants to receive a Spring Fly Now Award. After obtaining her private pilot certificate, Michelle plans on pursuing her instrument rating.

This spring, \$64,500 was awarded to the aspiring pilots.

On The Cover

Cover photo: Aloha Chapter Chair Nobi Buntin, left, with Abigail Dang, Aloha Chapter Secretary, on their flight from Honolulu to Hilo in the Czech Sport to deliver PPE masks and supplies to Hilo Medical Center. Photo is a selfie taken by Nobi.

Photo right: Nobi Buntin, Elizabeth Lonokapu, and Abigail Dang hold boxes of masks created by the Aloha Aviators. Since March, 1,000 masks have been donated to hospitals, critically ill patients, flight attendants and first responders on Oahu.

Story on Page 26

— Cover photo and to right by Michelle JoAnn



Beth White is not only a pilot but also an Education Design Coach at Big Picture Learning. The program encourages schools to support individual education programs that are meaningful to the students. Beth is also a talented artist with a focus on aviation-themed paintings.



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Alyssa Carson is always looking upwards into space, anticipating the day when she will be one of the first humans to land on Mars. At only 19, she has been to six NASA Space Camps and was the youngest person, at 16, to graduate from an intensive astronautics program at Embry Riddle University.

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Betty Thomas never wanted to be a pilot even though she enjoyed flying with her husband. However, after reading about several plane crashes, she realized she needed to know more about flying. Feeling somewhat insecure, she started taking lessons and gradually fell in love with flying.



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The 99s Mission Statement

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

CALENDAR 2020

JULY

- 11** **2020 99s International Business Meeting**, Online 8:30 a.m. PDT. Watch for details to join in.
- 31** **Deadline for submitting Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative (PPLI) Application** for Mentoring Spring Session. For more information go to: www.ninety-nines.org/resources.htm or email mentoring@ninety-nines.org.

AUGUST

- 15** **42nd Annual Okie Derby Proficiency Air Rally**, Sundance Airport, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. For information and/or registration, contact Gail Foote: crbfred@gmail.com or (405) 921-7763. Please leave message.

SEPTEMBER

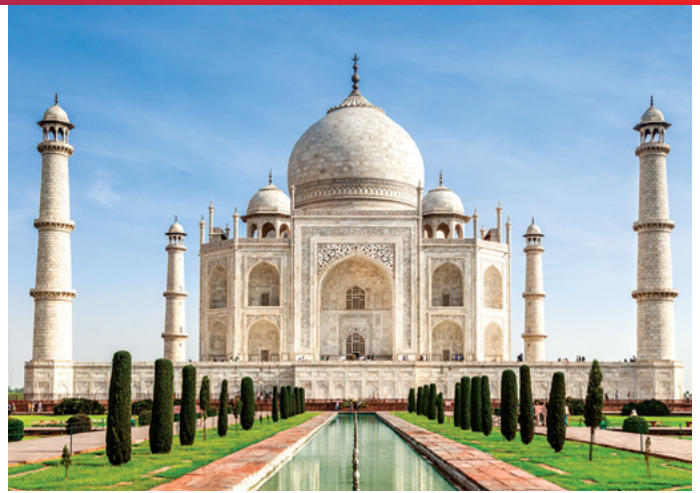
- 11-12** **Northwest Section Annual Meeting**, Billings, Montana. Wild West event sponsored by the Montana, Big Sky and Wyoming Chapters.

OCTOBER

- 2-4** **99s Fly-in, McKeller-Sipes Airport (KMKL)**, Jackson, Tennessee. Registration is free for the weekend of events. There will be both camping under your wing and a block of hotel rooms available for a nightly rate. Enjoy aviation competitions, educational seminars, movie nights, fun, food, camaraderie, rental aircraft available for currency, flight instruction and night currency.
- 10** **New York-New Jersey Fall Section meeting**, Westchester County Airport (KHPN), White Plains, New York.
- 16-18** **Southeast Section Fall Meeting**, Kingsport, Tennessee, hosted by Appalachian Aviatrices.
- 16-18** **South Central Section Fall Meeting**, McKinney, Texas.
- 17** **West Canada Section Fall Meeting** online.
- 20** **Webinar — Navigating NEXRAD**. Join Scott Dennstaedt, Weather Systems Engineer, CFI and former NWS research meteorologist for our next 99s/SiriusXM webinar.
- 23-24** **New England Section Fall Meeting**, Kennebunkport, Maine, Nonantum Resort. Hosted by the Katahdin Wings Chapter.

NOVEMBER

- 6-7** **International Board of Directors Fall Meeting**, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.



The Indian Section Conference in December will include a tour of the historic Taj Mahal in the city of Agra.

DECEMBER

- 5-10** **India Section Conference**, New Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur. Ninety-Nines are invited to experience the sights, sounds, flavours, and history of “Incredible India” through a six-night/seven-day program, beginning and ending at New Delhi. The itinerary includes an exciting tour of the three most fabled cities of India – the capital city of Delhi (where the old culture and architecture coexists with the new), Agra (of its famous Taj Mahal), and Jaipur (popular for its handicrafts and UNESCO World Heritage sites). For those interested, send a message to Governor Nivedita Bhasin to be added to the “India Section 99s Conference” WhatsApp group.

2021

JANUARY

- 31** **Deadline for submitting Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative (PPLI) Application for Mentoring Spring Session**. For more information go to: www.ninety-nines.org/resources.htm or email mentoring@ninety-nines.org.

APRIL

- 1** **Australian Section Annual Meeting**, Broken Hill, New South Wales, Australia.
- 24** **New York-New Jersey Spring Section Meeting**, Oneonta, New York.

JULY

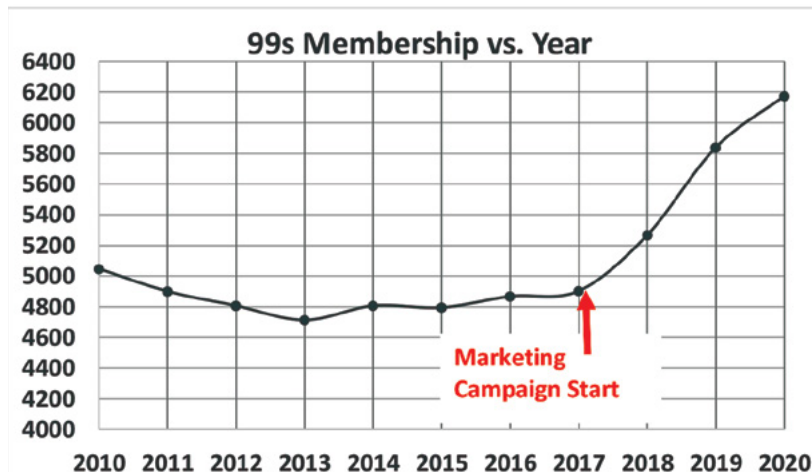
- 7-11** **2021 International Conference and Career Expo** on the Queen Mary (below) in Long Beach, California.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What have we accomplished in the last four years?

We have grown our organization from 4,846 members in July 2016 to over 6,200 members four years later. That is a growth of 33% in four years. With this growth, we have chartered five new Chapters: Sarasota Ladybugs, Big Sky, Nashville, Payson Rim and Maui. We also chartered two new Sections: Italian and African.



Jan McKenzie
International President

Choose to Soar!
Choose to Fly
Your Dreams!

We also:

- Kicked off our first Marketing campaign for The 99s including growing our social media presence.
- Developed a new Membership Brochure for Tradeshows and Airshows.
- Completed our second annual Career Expo in conjunction with the International Conference.
- Grew our Membership Benefits to 23 companies providing discount products and services.
- Established a Career Opportunities website with current job openings.
- Developed an e-brochure that is sent to new members.
- Created digital storage of 90 years of membership records.
- Started "Find an Instructor" on our website for members and Friends.
- Won 2019 NAA Henderson Trophy for significant and lasting contribution to U.S. aviation.
- Created a new Sponsorship program with four Sponsors financially contributing to The 99s.
- Grew our affiliations with other aviation organizations including women.
- Held the first African and China Section meetings with members attending from around the world.
- Celebrated our 90th Anniversary with over 90 members at Headquarters.
- Increased visibility of The 99s within the Aviation Community.
- Were contacted by Microsoft requesting 99s participation in career event.
- Were contacted by NASA looking for two pilots.
- Were contacted by a flight school concerning a Student to CFI Program with financial aid.

It has been an honor to serve you for these last four years. The best part was meeting new sisters at the many 99s and aviation events. I have made new friends from around the world. I cherish every one of you and continue to look forward to this great organization moving forward with the next set of new ideas and projects.

We have challenging times ahead of us, so reach out to your sisters and help us keep this organization growing and going strong!

Ninety-Nines magazine

Published by

The Ninety-Nines, Inc.® International
Organization of Women Pilots®
A Delaware Nonprofit Corporation
Organized November 2, 1929
(ISSN 1548-565X)

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS/ NINETY-NINES magazine.

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

The subscription is included in the annual Ninety-Nines membership dues and Friends of The 99s dues. Periodicals postage paid at Oklahoma City, OK and other additional mailing offices. Neither The Ninety-Nines, Inc. nor the Publisher can accept any responsibility for the correctness or accuracy of the matters printed herein.

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For more information on article submission, visit www.ninety-nines.org or send to news@ninety-nines.org. Contact advertisingmgr@ninety-nines.org for advertising information.

Annual Dues:

U.S. – 65 USD; Canada and the Caribbean – 57 USD; Overseas – 44 USD; Student Member – 35 USD (65 USD after first two years).
Non-member subscription rates: U.S. – 20 USD; Canada and other countries – 30 USD

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

The Ninety-Nines, Inc.®
International Organization of Women Pilots®
4300 Amelia Earhart Dr., Suite A
Oklahoma City, OK 73159-1140 USA

TOUCH & GO

Shirley Render Inducted into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame

By Robin Hadfield, First Canadian Chapter

*A pioneer of women
in aviation, Manitoba
Chapter member
Shirley Render
was inducted into
Canada's Aviation
Hall of Fame in June.*



Shirley Render is being inducted into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame. She is a member of the Manitoba Chapter.

Shirley has accomplished much in her life. She is a pilot, established aviation historian, author, a former elected Manitoba Member of the Legislative Assembly, pioneer of women in aviation and the former Executive Director and Curator of the Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada.

The 47th Induction Dinner, set for June 10, is tentatively on hold until further notice due to the pandemic.

Shirley was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and earned her wings in 1973. In 1983, she received an AEMSF Scholarship for Research. She realized there was little information about early Canadian women pilots.

"There was really no book or anything on the subject. It was at that point I decided I would write a book," she says. "When I asked Transport Canada for information, all they could give me were two pages that listed the names of women pilots, the dates they received their license and the license number — no other identifying information."

Shirley began collecting information, photos and artifacts of Canada's early women pilots and recording their stories.

"In those days, there was no email or computerized data. It was all done by telephone and written letters," she adds.

When her book, *No Place For A Lady: The Story of Canadian Women Pilots, 1928-1992*, was published in 1992, it quickly became a bestseller, Shirley travelled across the country speaking to many different groups. She later became a member of the Manitoba legislature and wrote a second book, *Double-Cross*.

Shirley is a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, a YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg Women of Distinction Award, and a University of Winnipeg Distinguished Alumni Award, among many others.

Other past and present members of The Ninety-Nines who have been inducted to Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame include Rosella Bjornson, West Canada Section; Lorna deBlicquy, East Canada Section; Kathy Fox, East Canada Section; Julie Payette, East Canada Section; Vi Milstead Warren, East Canada Section.

Former U.S. Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson Appointed Chair of Newly-Formed Women in Aviation Advisory Board

Heather Wilson, former U.S. Air Force Secretary, was recently appointed chair of a newly formed 30-member board, Women in Aviation Advisory Board (WIAAB). Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Transportation, recently announced the appointments. Heather is a member of The Ninety-Nines Old Dominion Chapter.

“The Department welcomes Dr. Heather Wilson and these accomplished advisory board members who share a commitment and passion for encouraging women to access opportunities in aviation,” said Elaine Chao.

Heather is the president of The University of Texas at El Paso, one of the top five percent of research universities and one of the nation’s leading Hispanic-serving institutions.

She previously served as the 24th Secretary of the Air Force and represented New Mexico in the U.S. Congress for a decade. She graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in the third class to include women and earned her master’s and doctoral degrees as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University in England. Heather is an instrument rated private pilot and aircraft owner.

“Women are underrepresented in aviation, and I look forward to working with Secretary Chao, the FAA, and the advisory board to develop strategies that will encourage more women to consider careers in the aviation industry,” Heather said.

The WIAAB was established on October 3, 2019, under the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018. The purpose of the WIAAB is to develop strategies and recommendations that would encourage women and girls to enter the field of aviation. The WIAAB will assess education, training, mentorship, outreach, and recruitment of women in the aviation industry.

Board members represent a diverse range of backgrounds and expertise, including those from major airlines and aerospace companies, nonprofit organizations within the aviation industry, aviation and engineering business associations, the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary, Civil Air Patrol, and institutions of higher education and aviation trade schools.

“From Secretary Chao, to the several women on my senior leadership team, and the more than 10,000 women in the FAA, we see the professionalism and contributions that make our aviation industry the gold standard for the world every day,”



Old Dominion Chapter member Heather Wilson, former U.S. Air Force Secretary, was recently appointed chair of the newly formed, 30-member Women in Aviation Advisory Board.

said FAA Administrator Steve Dickson. “We salute the WIAAB’s new board members for their commitment to illuminate this career path for more women.”

Nearly 200 competitive applicant packages were submitted for consideration.

Members will be appointed to the WIAAB for the duration of its existence, which is anticipated to be a minimum of two years, and will meet up to two times per year.

— U.S. Department of Transportation

HOLDING SHORT

Class B Adventures

As a freshly certificated private pilot, I was ready to start adding endorsements, ratings, and cool GA flying experiences. On April 21, while working on my high performance endorsement, I asked my CFI and fellow 99 if we could do a touch and go at Tampa International. She was excited and said let's do it.

After calling Tampa Approach with the request, ATC responded, "Just give me a couple minutes and I'll squeeze you

in." We hung out over the beach until we got the approval, then over Tampa Bay we went. This is where the real excitement began. We were following directions for heading and altitude, then were told we had to hurry up because American was coming in behind us. Good thing I was working on my high performance and had a little extra horsepower.

After a smooth touch and go, tower (a female) contacted us, I responded, she

contacted again, my CFI responded, tower replied, "I only hear your mic click, no voice." Then we both realized we couldn't hear each other either.

We checked the breakers, switched to com two, still nothing, tried turning the avionics off and on, still not working, unplug and plug back in headsets, nothing, all while still listening to Tampa's altitude and heading directions.

They knew where we were going, and my home airport was just a quick flight away. We then squawked 7600. My first real life emergency and actually the first time this had happened to my CFI as well. We landed safely and heard from the FBO that we needed to call Tampa. While we were a little nervous, all they wanted was to make sure we got back okay and to hear what happened.

I gave a shout-out of thanks on the Facebook landline page to whomever was working at Tampa that day and was accommodating and understanding. The woman in the tower actually messaged me back, and now I have a new friend and an invite to Tampa tower when the whole Coronavirus situation is over.

And...at the end of the day, I got my High Performance endorsement added to my logbook. One step closer to my goal of being a commercial seaplane pilot.

— Kelli O'Donnell, Vice Chairman
Florida Suncoast Chapter



Recently-certificated Kelli O'Donnell got more than a touch and go at Tampa Bay International

Regional Airport Restaurants Offer Open Air Dining

What better thing to do on a bright, sunny spring day than to take off and fly to a nearby airport restaurant for lunch?

Following COVID-19 safe plane owners' suggestions, that's just what Houston Chapter Chair Marilyn Wolff and husband Martin did recently. Their "research" provided Chapter members with detailed contact information and lunch suggestions for several regional airport restaurants open for take-out. They ordered ahead of time to be sure lunch would be ready when they landed. Marilyn also suggested packing folding chairs and table. Martin, seated under the wing of their plane, enjoys lunch in the shade safely out in the fresh air and flyable weather — what a deal!

— Lu Hollander, Houston Chapter



Martin Wolff enjoys a Covid-safe spot to enjoy lunch at a local regional airport.

Congratulations Scholarship Winners!

Michelle Drake won a local flight training scholarship from the San Antonio 99s. Michelle intends to use this scholarship to help financially assist her instrument flight training.

— Lacey Law
San Antonio 99s



Carmen Kivisto won the Minnesota Chapter's 2020 Advanced Rating Scholarship. Carmen's scholarship will go towards her work for a CFI rating. We also thank Carmen for her service to our country. She returned in March from a deployment in the Middle East serving as a C-130 crew chief. Great job Carmen, thank you for your dedicated service and hard work!

— Robyn Stoller



Carmen Kivisto, left, with Minnesota Chapter Chair Cheryl Daml.

New York-New Jersey Section Members Help Celebrate Westchester County Airport's 75th Anniversary

Before life as we knew it changed due to COVID-19, members of the New York-New Jersey Section attended Westchester County Airport's 75th Anniversary celebration, at its Main Terminal Observation Room. To our surprise, there were many in attendance, surrounded by a wonderful photograph exhibit

of New York City, was land originally purchased by Westchester County in the late 1930s. With the beginning of WWII, the land was appropriated by the U.S. Army. Fighter planes, initially P-51s, were stationed to protect New York City and its water supply. The airport was returned to Westchester County for public use in 1945, and commercial aviation took hold.

The National Guard was also based at Westchester from 1952 until 1983, when they then moved to Stewart Airport to the northwest. It became very clear Westchester's commercial operations were thriving and expanding. Today, Westchester is one of the most active aviation facilities in the nation.

For more on the airport's history: <http://waa43.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/History-Of-HPN.pdf>

— Susan Loricchio



From left: Cathy Vajtay, New Jersey Chapter; Liz Karpiloff, Greater New York Chapter; Susan Loricchio, New York-New Jersey Section, Air Force Association Air Power Advocate; Shannon Osborne, Greater New York and New York-New Jersey Section Governor; Liz Karpiloff's son Kit Hawkins; Pat Blum, co-founder of Corporate Angel Network, and Westchester Aviation Association.

of the airport in its early days. Westchester County Airport (KHPN), also known as White Plains Airport, 30 miles north



The 99s had a presence at the Westchester Airport in 1947, posing for a group shot before they headed to an air show in Florida.



Sharing Your Spare

A Journey of Kidney Donation

By Capt. "Kidney" Jodi Harskamp
Alaska Chapter

By all outward appearances, Jenny was a happy, healthy and exuberant flight attendant. Although she was suffering the effects of 15 years of kidney failure caused by lupus, she hid it well. She experienced failure and heartbreak, month after month, day after day, as she endured another test tube of blood, another biohazard bottle of urine. She was becoming another renal failure statistic.

Jenny always had a smile on her face for anyone who came in contact with her. In her words, she was "faking it to make it!"

In March of 2016 she collapsed at work. She had to start dialysis immediately or face death. Her choice of dialysis and/or transplant went from an "if/when" to "now." Her kidneys were operating at six percent. She went in and out of the emergency room with complications, experienced weight gain from steroids, hair loss, edema, pain, and a long list of other complications and indignities.

If she was afraid, she hid it well and never complained. Jenny began dialysis for 10½ hours a day. She had arrived at the end stage of renal disease, the last leg before kidney disease leads to death. The 38-year-old mother of three had a year to live.

Jenny decided not to sign up for the national wait list for a donor kidney — waiting for a cadaver kidney could take over five years. Instead, she became her own advocate. She started a Facebook page for her future kidney, carried donor applications in her purse and sent out a company email asking for an O+ kidney donor.

I answered the call.

Jenny and I met over six years ago under surreal circumstances. In December 2012, my house burned to the ground. Fortunately, I escaped with my three-month-old baby and the dog, but not much else. The incident left my family displaced. My Alaska Airlines flight attendants and pilots quickly responded by helping dig through the rubble and delivered hot meals for myself, husband, and two children.

Jenny was one of the first to deliver food, and it was a delicious lasagna! Jenny didn't know me, but she heard the call to action and

answered. Ultimately, my house fire was what brought me to donate. When you survive such an event, you look at yourself in the mirror and ask, “What am I doing to make the world a better place? Why am I ignoring all the suffering in the world?”

Children and siblings offer the best potential for being a living donor match. I filled out the application, started testing, but the odds were slim that I would be a match. Testing is an important first step in the transplantation process because the donor and recipient need to share several important physical characteristics. We needed the same blood type: O+ people are universal donors, but we can receive only O+ organs. We needed matching antigens (proteins the body produces) indicating that a donor’s kidney is more likely to be compatible.

We also had to have no antibodies (which serve to protect against bacteria and viruses) against one another. I received a crash course on dialysis, I watched informational videos, I went to seminars, there was lots of blood work, CT scans, 24 hours of urine collection, glucose-induced comas for blood sugar tests, multiple trips to Seattle (we both live in Anchorage). The list is exhausting, extensive and each stage can disqualify you from the next step — and it’s expensive.

There was silence from the clinic, lots of nonspecific answers. The transplant team doesn’t want to give you false hope, so they are careful about what they disclose. I approached this process with the same discipline I have for flying. I researched, consulted aeromedical experts and nephrologists, and spoke with over 40 living donors, 6 of whom were pilots. Most had positive stories, some didn’t.

I did a lot of soul searching but never wavered in my decision to donate. In December 2016, we received the news. On paper, I was a perfect match for Jenny.

The news spread that I was Jenny’s potential donor. Then the questions came. Why would I risk my life for a stranger? Why would I risk my career? What if my husband/kids needed a kidney?

Photos opposite page:

Top, March 15, 2017: Taken two days after surgery at Swedish Medical Center in Seattle. Jenny looks 1,000 percent better, and I look like I was hit by a truck! We both had some bloating. I checked out of the hospital after this photo was taken.

Center, April 13, 2017. Our one-month Kidneyversary! Jenny has her glow back, and I’m on the mend. It took about five weeks for me to feel normal again.

Bottom: March 13, 2018. Our one-year Kidneyversary. We are both feeling great and celebrated our anniversary together. We never believed in anything other than a positive outcome!



Jodi Harskamp (left), captain for Alaska Airlines, and Jenny Stansel, flight attendant for Alaska Airlines. Jodi donated her left kidney to Jenny in March 2017.

My job is risk assessment. I determined that the reward was far greater than the risk. The transplant happened at Swedish Medical Center on March 13, 2017. The surgery went as planned and the kidney started working in Jenny immediately. Never once did we believe in anything other than a positive outcome. Three years later Jenny is taking flying lessons, and I’ve summited two of the seven highest mountain peaks and run an Ironman, testing the levels of human endurance on one kidney.

When two people, who don’t even know each other, share an event like this, it’s an event that gives hope. It shows the importance of our common humanity. It’s a reminder that when someone else steps up to help another human being, it demonstrates our civic duty, to have civic virtues that make civilizations possible.

Fast forward to 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic. The act of sheltering in place and limiting interaction will slow the spread of this disease. This collective action is citizenship, this is social responsibility, this is compassion. I don’t face any new challenges with Covid-19. Living with one kidney is the same as living with two, and I’m still flying (I’m essential!). Jenny faces a bigger threat. The normal flu could kill her, and Covid-19 is more deadly.

Jenny is on a regimen of immune suppressants to ensure she doesn’t reject my kidney, making it harder for her to fight off any illness. She is currently on a voluntary leave from work. Collectively we are making a sacrifice to stay at home and shelter in place, but it’s to help those who will be most affected by the virus. There is nothing more fulfilling as a human being than to help another human being live.



Pam Phillips

By Janice Pelletti, Appalachian Aviatrixes Chapter

Photographer Michael Puck captured a spontaneous photo of Pam Phillips with Stinson, her French bulldog, last year when the Air Power History Tour was on the ramp of her family's FBO.

In an era when the majority of regional airport FBOs are owned by large chains, Pam Phillips and her family are celebrating 51 years in business at Tri-Cities Airport (KTRI) in northeast Tennessee. Pam affectionally refers to her FBO as a “mom and pop business.”

Pam’s journey into aviation started long before she decided to take flying lessons or own and manage an FBO. “I grew up with aviation, and it intrigued me. I was always coming out to the airport with my dad.”

Her first memories of aviation are in the flight school classroom. “There was a blackboard, and the room had whiz wheels and other pilot training things. I would go around the room pretending I could teach. Going to the airport was always fun, it never occurred to me to not want to go.”

In 1969, Pam’s father, Don Carter, was an ardent Tennessee pilot. When he heard that one of the two FBOs at KTRI was in bankruptcy and for sale, he bought it. With help of a cousin and

brother-in-law, they started Tri-City Aviation. “It was hard at first,” Pam explains. “He had to keep his job at the Kingsport Press just to make a living.” It was 10 years before Tri-City Aviation began turning a profit.

“Dad got into the FBO business at the right time. Today it would be virtually impossible for someone to just come in and take on an FBO business.”

By the time Pam was 13, she was accompanying her father to the airport every weekend. “I started working the reception desk, and they paid me. I can say it was hard sometimes. All my friends were going to the mall or sitting outside in the sun when the weather was nice. However, this did teach me a strong work ethic.”

After high school, Pam started flight lessons and attended East Tennessee State University (ETSU) as a Public Relations major. She continued working full-time at the FBO on nights and weekends. During her second year of college, in a broadcast media course, Pam was devastated when the professor told her she had

Following a Different Flight Plan

“I always appreciated that Dad taught me to work conservatively, to focus on service, at a fair price. This is the philosophy I grew up with and it works. The goal is to always help aviation grow.”

to lose her east Tennessee accent because it was too distracting. “He wanted me to take speech therapy. That’s when I switched to a general business major.

“After four years I still didn’t have a degree. On the advice of a friend and travel agent, I decided to switch to the Travel Institute of America in Knoxville. After a year of learning things like geography and how to use airline software to make reservations, I had my travel agent certificate.

“I still wasn’t thinking about what I really wanted to do for a career, but I knew I wanted to learn more about the FBO business. I was taking flying lessons and decided I wanted to learn about the airplane

parts. I wanted to identify them and understand them. As a result, I started working in the shop. My goal became how to run the shop.”

During this time, Pam became involved in the company supplemental type certificate (STC) for the installation of the IO-550 Continental engine in the Cessna 206 aircraft. “The conversion appealed to diamond miners in Venezuela. For a time, we considered opening a branch in Bonaire, one of the ABC islands off the coast of Venezuela. The STC experience taught me about working with the FAA and what the government expected of us.”

It was during this time the Tri-City Aviation office manager quit suddenly. “Dad needed a bookkeeper and someone to help run the business.” Pam stepped in, taking bookkeeping classes at



Pam in front of the Stinson in their hangar. The aircraft became her dog’s namesake. Photo by Darren Lowe

nearby Northeast State College and working with the company accountant.

“I never wanted to feel I was wearing blinders when it came to the business. I felt I needed to know I could do everything. Once, against my father’s advice, I insisted on working with the NTSB on a fatal accident at the airport.” It turned out to be a difficult experience for Pam, who was a student pilot. However, she learned from the NTSB investigator that some of her instructor’s advice, like filing a flight plan, was a good idea.

“By now, Dad had come to depend on me, so I just never left. I continued to work and learn all facets of the business.”

Twenty years ago, Pam took over as owner and president of Tri-City Aviation. “Being the head of a mom and pop business is stressful. You feel because you took over a business started by your father, it will fall on your shoulders if you fail. I think this is one of the reasons I have not really encouraged either of my daughters to go into it.”

In the early days, Tri-City Aviation depended on pilots flying for recreation and the flight school for its income. At that time, the corporate flying business was just getting started. Most of the aircraft were smaller, like Navajos and Cheyennes. Today, Tri-City Aviation makes most of their profit from jet fuel sales, not just from corporate jet owners, but the regional jets who fly into the airport.

Over the years, Pam has worked with many airport managers. “For awhile the trend was for airports like KTRI to bring in the big chain FBOs. However, the airports found out that once they brought in the chain, they lost all control of the FBO. With a mom and pop organization, they have the advantage of working with a business they can talk to. They are working with someone who shares their concerns about the community and the support and services they provide.”

Pam also finds working with military pilots on training flights to be rewarding. “The word got out that we provided transportation for the pilots to get take-out meals. They always want to come back to see what the new T-shirt is.”

Like when she was a child, Pam now continues to enjoy coming to the airport. “I love experiencing something new every day. It’s never the same. Looking into the future, I want to be here and continue to work for as long as I can help aviation and be involved.”



Pam with her father Don Carter in front of their oldest hangar, a beautiful domed building built in the late 1930s.

— Photo by Tina Wilson

fly now Winners!



High Fives for 14 Spring Fly Now Recipients!

By Jacque Boyd, Chair, Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund

The Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund Trustees are pleased to announce the winners of the 2020 Spring Fly Now Awards. This year, the Trustees received 38 applications from 33 different Chapters representing 10 Sections. Those 38 applicants requested \$191,500 in funding. We were able to award funding to 14 members for a total of \$64,500.

Congratulations to those 14 members, their Chapters, and their Mentors. The Fly Now Awards are specifically dependent on the work at the Chapter level, and we know the evaluation and selection process can be difficult. This year, three of the winners had previously applied, but continued to train and re-submitted stronger applications that paid off this year.

We would also like to thank the Mentors. Their participation is what makes this part of the AEMSF scholarship program such a success. Each mentor plays a significant role in following and maintaining contact with each winner and helps them stay on track. Along with these Mentors, each group of Fly Now winners works with one specific Trustee who serves as their “shepherd” or “Mama-Bird” with their reporting to the Trustees and filing claims with the AEMSF Treasurer. Maintaining contact is important to each winner’s success in achieving their milestones.



MICHAELA CHROUSTOVA

British Columbia Coast Chapter, West Canada Section
Mentor – Colette Morin

Flying began for me in Summer 2019 after being introduced to small aircraft by other female pilots. During my first flight, I instantly knew that I had found a new passion. My goal is to finish my private license this coming summer and to continue towards my commercial license along with the float rating. I would like to fly floats and bush planes around British Columbia and get involved with Search and Rescue. I look forward to continued involvement in The Ninety-Nines and inspiring the next generation of female pilots. Thank you for supporting me along my aviation journey!



SAMANTHA CLAYPOOL

Iowa Chapter, North Central Section
Mentor – Jeneanne Visser

Aviation has always been a part of my life, thanks to my aircraft mechanic dad. After graduating with a Bachelor’s degree, going out, experiencing the world, and trying different career paths, I realized that my passion belongs to aviation. I’m so thankful for this scholarship because it’s going to accelerate my learning to where I’ll be able to give back. I plan to continue this passion after finishing my private certificate and obtain my instrument rating, commercial, tailwheel endorsement, and become an instructor. I hope to continue learning, become a mentor, and eventually fly commercial or something to be discovered.

MELODY COSGROVE

Phoenix Chapter, Southwest Section
Mentor – Courtney Smith

Upon completion of my private pilot certificate, I will immediately work on building cross-country time in anticipation of continuing on to earn my instrument rating. I will strive for my commercial certificate, concluding with my CFI. As a CFI, I will build time until I am able to apply for a regional airline. In conjunction with my training, I will take the opportunity to volunteer my time with “Wings of Hope” and other charitable foundations. I’m incredibly eager to embark on my journey and to pursue my aviation dreams.



MICHELLE JOANN

Aloha Chapter, Southwest Section
Mentor – Nobi Buntin

I am completely humbled to receive such a huge help and honor from The 99s! Once I finish my private pilot certificate, I plan to proceed on to pursue my instrument rating. I will continue to be involved with the Aloha Chapter throughout my journey; the support I receive from the community of fellow female aviators keeps me going. I currently work in the film industry, hold two degrees in the arts, and consider it a privilege to learn to fly in beautiful Hawaii. I’m looking forward to being able to share the skies with my friends and family soon!



BRENDA JOLLY

Maple Leaf Chapter, East Canada Section
Mentor – Summer Papple

As a mother of three teenagers and executive director of a gymnastics club in rural Ontario, I’ve learned that anything is possible with faith and hard work. Flying has always been a dream of mine, and during my first introductory flight, when I felt the plane leave the ground and climb into the air, I knew I wanted to become a commercial pilot. I am so thankful to be chosen for the Fly Now Award and for the support from my sister 99s. I encourage women everywhere to keep reaching for the sky and never give up on your dreams.



fly now Winners!



MAKI HONDA

Santa Clara Valley Chapter, Southwest Section

Mentor – Nobu Buntin

Learning to fly was a dream I had as a teenager, and it recently started to come true. A few introductory flights that I took last year got me instantly hooked, and from there I joined The 99s. I'm currently working on my private pilot certificate. My goal is to be CFI-rated and become a connection for young women to help them realize their dreams in aviation!



OLIVIA LEWIS

San Luis Obispo County Chapter, Southwest Section

Mentor – Elizabeth Ruth

I am so grateful to The 99s for this award, as well as the support of its incredible community of women. I have been working on my certificate at Travis Aero Club for the past year and have plans to join the Air Force Reserve after graduating from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo this June. I have been inspired by my incredible mentor, Liz Ruth, a previous Air Force and current NASA pilot, and also all the women of the San Luis Obispo County Chapter who are such role models and inspirations to me.



ZINEB LOURIQATE

Finger Lakes Chapter, New York-New Jersey Section

Mentor – Jill Browning

I am an engineering master's student at Cornell University, and I am expected to graduate in May 2020. Upon completing my degree, I plan to work in the aerospace industry with my engineering background and aviation skills. My goal is to be involved with aircraft design, and earning my private pilot certificate is the beginning to achieving my goals in aerospace. It wouldn't be possible without the support of The Ninety-Nines and receiving the Fly Now Award. I am very grateful for the assistance to complete my private pilot certificate.

SHAHD MAJEED

Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter, Mid-Atlantic Section

Mentor – Lori Bednarik

I was raised in a time and a place that objected to my dream of earning my wings. They called me a “Tomboy.” Aviation has been my dream since I was 14, but war, society and lots of relocating made my dream seem impossible. Because I don’t take no for an answer, I will continue to fight for my wings. As a future pilot, I dream to spread my wings to help with rescue, emergency, and healthcare services. I am eternally thankful for The 99s and the Amelia Earhart Scholarship Fund for bringing me a step closer to my dream.



ANDREA MCDONALD

Mississippi Chapter, Southeast Section

Mentor – Maryke Houben

Ever since I can remember, I have always had a passion for aviation but never thought it was in the cards for me to fly. Shortly after I graduated college in 2019, a friend gave me an introductory flight, and I knew that was exactly where I was supposed to be. So far, this has been the most challenging, yet rewarding, thing I have done, and I am looking forward to learning much more. I am extremely grateful to The 99s for choosing me as a recipient for a Fly Now Award as it will help me finish my private pilot training.



RACHEL MEITLER

Antelope Valley Chapter, Southwest Section

Mentor – Lynne Hsia

After my discovery flight last year, I knew this was the career for me! I am currently a senior in high school and working on my private pilot certificate, which I hope to complete this summer. I plan to attend California Baptist University this fall to major in aviation science, commercial flight. My goal is to be a pilot for a major airline. I hope one day to inspire, encourage, and support future pilots, especially women, just as so many have done for me on my journey. Thank you 99s and the Antelope Valley Chapter for helping make my aviation dreams come true!



fly now Winners!



AMANDA SCHMIDT

Columbia Cascade Chapter, Northwest Section

Mentor – Elizabeth Harris

Last year, on a whim, I became a flight attendant. I met some amazing women pilots and second career airline pilots. I had a new goal: to become an airline pilot. I started my private pilot training in May 2019. To deepen my aeronautical understanding, I became a full-time aviation science student at Portland Community College. I'm thankful for my supportive family, my Twin Oaks Airpark CFIs, and my Columbia Cascade 99s sisters. As a grateful Fly Now recipient, I look forward to encouraging others in their aviation journey when I become a CFI and eventually an airline pilot.



SHAKAR SOLTANI

Florida Goldcoast Chapter, Southeast Section

Mentor – Myra Bugbee

As a former marketing intern for Southwest Airlines and a current Spirit Airlines flight attendant, it's safe to say that I have fallen hopelessly in love with aviation. I owe so much gratitude to my 99s family for their continuous love and support. I enjoy every second in the air, and with the gracious help of the Fly Now, I am able to accelerate the pace of my training and get one step closer to my dream of being an airline pilot. Thank you so much 99s! I can't wait to pay it forward.



KAYOKO STEWART

Kitty Hawk Chapter, Southeast Section

Mentor – Jan Squillace

Growing up in Japan, it was unheard of for females to become pilots. Then, as a young international student in the U.S., I had an opportunity to meet the first Japanese female ATP. I was so impressed and became very interested in flying myself. Being a poor young student, I put my ambitions on hold but never gave up my dream. Since meeting my 99s sisters, I have gained the confidence to overcome any obstacles I face. I want to show other international women they too can follow their dream of flying. Thank you so much for your support and encouragement.



BY DONNA
MILLER

*International
Careers
Committee*

Give Thanks

It's scholarship season, and aspiring pilots have been pulling their packets together, trying to get all of the requisite documentation organized before the dreaded deadlines. This scholarship wants this. That scholarship wants that, and the clock is ticking.

One of the things that most scholarships ask for are letters of recommendation. In your frantic multitasking mode of getting your logbook together and writing your "Why-I-need-this-scholarship" letter, you ask your friends to write a letter, and while those are cooking, you finish the checklist of documents to complete the package.

Whew! And, of course, in the meantime you're tending to your already busy life and job and family. Take a deep breath for a moment and think about this: As part of the process, you have selected the people you value the most to ask them for the most precious thing they have to offer: their time.

It's hard to ask for help, but none of us get very far alone. We need each other. We can't always pay back those who have made such a difference in our lives and in our careers, but we can pay it forward, and most of us do.

As I reflect on this topic, I'd like to share a heart-felt perspective. I have a friend who spent over six hours one weekend writing letters of recommendation for just a few of her aspiring pilot friends. She, like many of us who have willingly written letters of recommendation, is thoughtful and insightful and not a fan of cut-and-paste. She is an industry-respected airline captain, and to have a letter from her in your package is a significant enhancement

to your important scholarship request.

As she thoughtfully wrote her letters of recommendation, she confided that she never really knows how much she has helped anyone or if her letters made even a whit of difference. Sometimes the applicant isn't selected for the scholarship; after all, there is only so much money to go around, and one scholarship can have hundreds of applicants.

But does that make my friend's time any less valuable? In your busyness, have you taken just a few minutes to thank your references for their time and talent, regardless of the outcome? It would be a great act of gratitude to thank your sponsors even before the selection. Additionally, when you are selected, another "thank you" would be appropriate and greatly appreciated. Remember, in our very tightly knitted fabric of women pilots, our network is small but powerful.

I say this because kindness is crucial, and professionalism goes far beyond your next job and another stripe on your uniform. Acknowledging those who have held your ladder to the stars steady is essential. A handwritten note to say "thank you for your time" is really the least you can do for someone who has responded to your request for something that is so precious to us all.

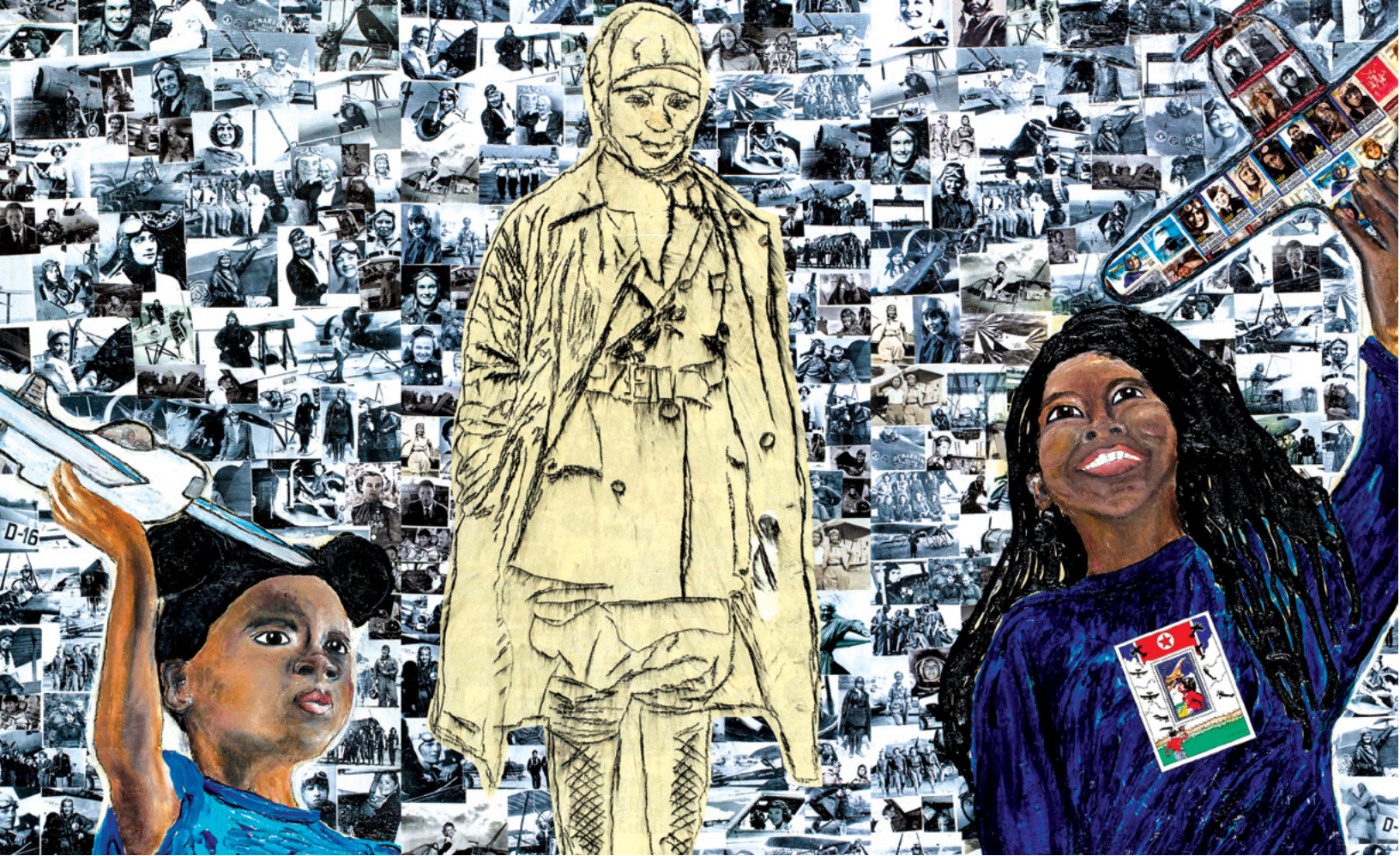
I am a huge proponent of gratitude and kindness and am often moved to tears when I see it expressed. I am still haunted by times I have lost the name of someone who has gone out of their way to be kind and I am unable to say "thank you" properly. But I can be better in the future and pay it forward the best I can. We all can. Let's try.

MILESTONES

Ashley Adelson, Private, Los Angeles
Vonda Benson, Commercial CFI, Wisconsin
Karissa Davan, Seaplane, Katahdin Wings
Elizabeth (Liz) Dicus, Private, San Antonio
Joanne De Lessio, Private, Florida Suncoast
Katie Dembowski, Solo, Treasure Coast
Ashlynn Higdon, Private, Florida Suncoast
Susan Loricchio, AGI, New York-New Jersey Section
Karen Mitchell, Solo, Eastern New England
Kelli O'Donnell, Private, Florida Suncoast
Monica Randolph-Graham, Instrument, Fort Worth



*Joanne De Lessio,
Florida Suncoast
Chapter, with
her father after
receiving her
private pilot
certificate.*



Beth White: Living Your Dreams

By Jann Clark, Eastern New England Chapter

Joy and enthusiasm — there's not a whole lot of that going around in this Covid-19 restricted world. But talking to Beth White and Julie Torres reminds us that such emotions are possible — and they live them every day.

There are many paths to becoming a pilot. For high school senior Julie Torres, the path began with an internship at Julie's local airport to learn aviation mechanics. Julie saw herself as an average student with no clear direction when her high school counselor referred her to Beth White, an Eastern New England Chapter Ninety-Nine and Education Design Coach at Big Picture Learning. The program encourages and supports schools to design individual education programs that are deeply meaningful to each student.

Julie's long-range goal is to become an airline pilot and mechanic. To feel safe flying, Julie wants to know all the nuts and bolts and parts of an airplane. Beth helped

"There is just something incredible to be the member of a group founded by the most brave, bold, badass women who came before me. I try to capture these incredible women in my paintings because they inspire me to continue their legacy."

Julie apply for and receive a Harbor Freight Fellowship, a program that supports young people who want to learn a trade, such as airplane mechanics. Julie is now interning with airframe and powerplant mechanic George Coy at Franklin County Airport in Swanton, Vermont.

She loves every minute of her apprenticeship and devotes as many hours as she can to hands-on learning with George. She fills in her own logbook to keep track of her hours and what she is learning. Beth also logs hours towards her AMT (Aviation Maintenance Technician), learning alongside George.

"I've always kind of been an average student when I'm in a school environment, but since I've participated in Harbor Freight, my vision of how my education should look has changed significantly," Julie said. "I love being in the hangar. Like the saying, if you love what you do, you never work a day in your life."

When Covid-19 shut down Julie's high school indefinitely and the hangar at the airport temporarily, Beth reached out to King Schools and arranged for Julie to study their online course for Airframe and Powerplant Mechanics. It kept her moving in the right direction until the hangar reopened, and Julie spends Thursdays through Sundays learning from her mentor. Julie and Beth have calls several times a week.

Currently, Beth is mentoring 10 young people who are learning to become pilots. Beth solicited and received assistance from Sporty's Pilot Shop for her young aviators, including access to Sporty's ground school and discounted materials for the students to plan their cross-country flights online together.

Beth's experiences led her to mentor young aspiring pilots. "Breaking barriers and finding paths to achieve my ambitions is not new to me. As someone who was once told by my high school guidance counselor I would never get into college because I came from a farming family, I learned how to overcome adversity."

She not only went to college, she eventually earned her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. She spent time teaching in conventional schools and volunteering in her community. From these experiences, she realized the value of having advocates and pathways to opportunities for young people. Conventional classroom education does not work for many students, while alternative ways to recognize and foster their interests can turn any student into a passionate learner.

Sometime after Beth earned her Ph.D., she read Beryl Markham's autobiography and realized she too could learn to fly. She joined her local EAA chapter early into her journey to become a private pilot.

Although she has been a private pilot for just over a year, Beth plans to become a CFI and instruct young student pilots who would not otherwise have access to such an opportunity. She has no interest in moving on to the airlines — teaching and inspiring young people is her passion.

After about 100 hours of flying, Beth was asked by a friend to deliver a plane he had just sold in Vermont to the buyer in Oklahoma. Flying solo for 20 hours over three days, Beth racked



up challenging experiences along the way, such as thunderstorms and tying down the plane between two picnic tables. Sharing stories like this helps her inspire young people who need constant encouragement to work towards and fulfill their dreams.

Along with the work she does at Big Picture Learning, Beth is the scholarship chairwoman of EAA Chapter 613 and supports youth in applying for aviation scholarships. She herself has received scholarships from the Eastern New England Ninety-Nines and the Aero Club of New England to continue her training.

She is also an accomplished artist, and her aviation-themed paintings have been featured at her EAA Chapter's annual Wings and Wheels Fly-In and at the Burlington, Vermont, International Airport.

A member of The 99s since January 2019, Beth finds her association with other women pilots to be a source of inspiration. "Many speak of the importance of seeing yourself reflected in the types of jobs or work you want to do in the world, which resonates especially deep for me," said Beth. In her travels across the country, whenever she sees a pilot who is a woman, she can't help but approach her and ask if she's a 99.



Opposite page: In addition to being a pilot and mentor, Beth White is also an artist. The piece, On Bessie's Shoulders, is "dedicated to the women aviators who broke incredible barriers so that generations of girls can dream of someday becoming pilots," says Beth.

Photo above: Beth White working in the hangar.

Left, Julie Torres gets hands-on advice from her mentor, George Coy, an airframe and powerplant mechanic.



Alyssa Carson *Reaching For Mars*

By Rebecca Burghy, Intermountain Chapter

When you read an action-packed resume of notable aviation and aerospace accomplishments, you expect the owner to have ample years to match the experience. At 19 years old, Alyssa Carson blasts that expectation right out of the galaxy.

The Florida Tech astrobiology major is passionate about space exploration, determined to be an astronaut on NASA's first planned human mission to Mars in 2030. She is eager to research the Martian landscape firsthand, find water and gather data that will help pave the way for future human habitation of the Red Planet, along with other planets in our Solar System.

Alyssa developed an early fascination with space, astronauts and the planet Mars, attending her first NASA Space Camp at

the age of seven and winning the Right Stuff Award, a special recognition given for an outstanding camper with great attitude, team spirit and skills.

She went on to attend six more NASA Space Camps in three different countries, witness three Space Shuttle launches, attend Sally Ride Camps and the Space Academy multiple times, and become the first person to complete the NASA Passport Program by visiting all 14 NASA Visitor Centers in the United States.

NASA took notice and invited 12-year-old Alyssa to join four space experts on the MER10 panel to discuss future missions to Mars on live NASA TV.

While on the panel, she met Mary Voytek, NASA's Astrobiology Program Director, who convinced Alyssa to shift her future collegiate focus from astrophysics to astrobiology, advice she has gratefully followed.

"Majoring in Astrobiology at Florida Tech requires taking every chemistry, physics, biology and mathematics class, which gives me a well-rounded base in all of the sciences, not just one," explains Alyssa.

She is keen to do experiments on Mars, studying the soil, growing plants, and finding ways to allow humans to one day survive and thrive on the planet.

"I really do believe Mars is our next step," she says. "Our population keeps expanding, and while we're not ready to pack up and move tomorrow, we need to look to the future and take steps to prepare for life on another planet."

Her intense focus, vivid intelligence and dogged determination to pursue an unusual and seemingly unattainable goal have given her tremendous opportunities to gain a wide range of experience and training invaluable to a future space scientist and traveler, and she has made the most of every opportunity. At 16, Alyssa became the youngest person to graduate from Advanced PoSSUM (Project Polar Suborbital Science in the Upper Mesosphere) Academy, an immersive astronautics program for advanced high school and college students held at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

These students receive academic instruction, high-altitude mission training in a hyperbaric facility, full scientist-astronaut spacesuit training and their own PoSSUM spacesuit. Her graduation certificate in Applied Astronautics means she is qualified to do suborbital research flights and venture into

space. "Technically, I'm allowed to fly into space, and just being able to say that, especially in my teens, feels amazing," Alyssa said.

Project PoSSUM is a non-profit, private citizen science organization working on the development of the Final Frontier Spacesuit design, EVA. "We're studying the earth's upper atmosphere, and the ultimate goal is to have a suborbital flight into the mesosphere — the highest layer of the atmosphere," Alyssa said.

"We've done microgravity flights with spacesuits, learned about different G-forces by simulating them in airplanes, decompression training, and water survival training with spacesuits to help with their development."

She understands the critical need for spacesuits able to endure such a lengthy journey and is well aware of the risks of the proposed Mars missions. The round-trip flight alone could easily take two to three years through the great expanse of space, not to mention time on the planet.

"When you're applying to become an astronaut, you accept any circumstances. I accept the risks," she states.

With assistance from a 99s scholarship, Alyssa earned her private pilot certificate last summer. While enthused to start flight training, the initial flights didn't go well, and she had doubts about continuing.

"I told my dad I really don't think I want to fly. I don't know that we should put the time and money into it if I'm not sure. My dad said okay, go to one more lesson and then we'll decide what to do," Alyssa recalls.

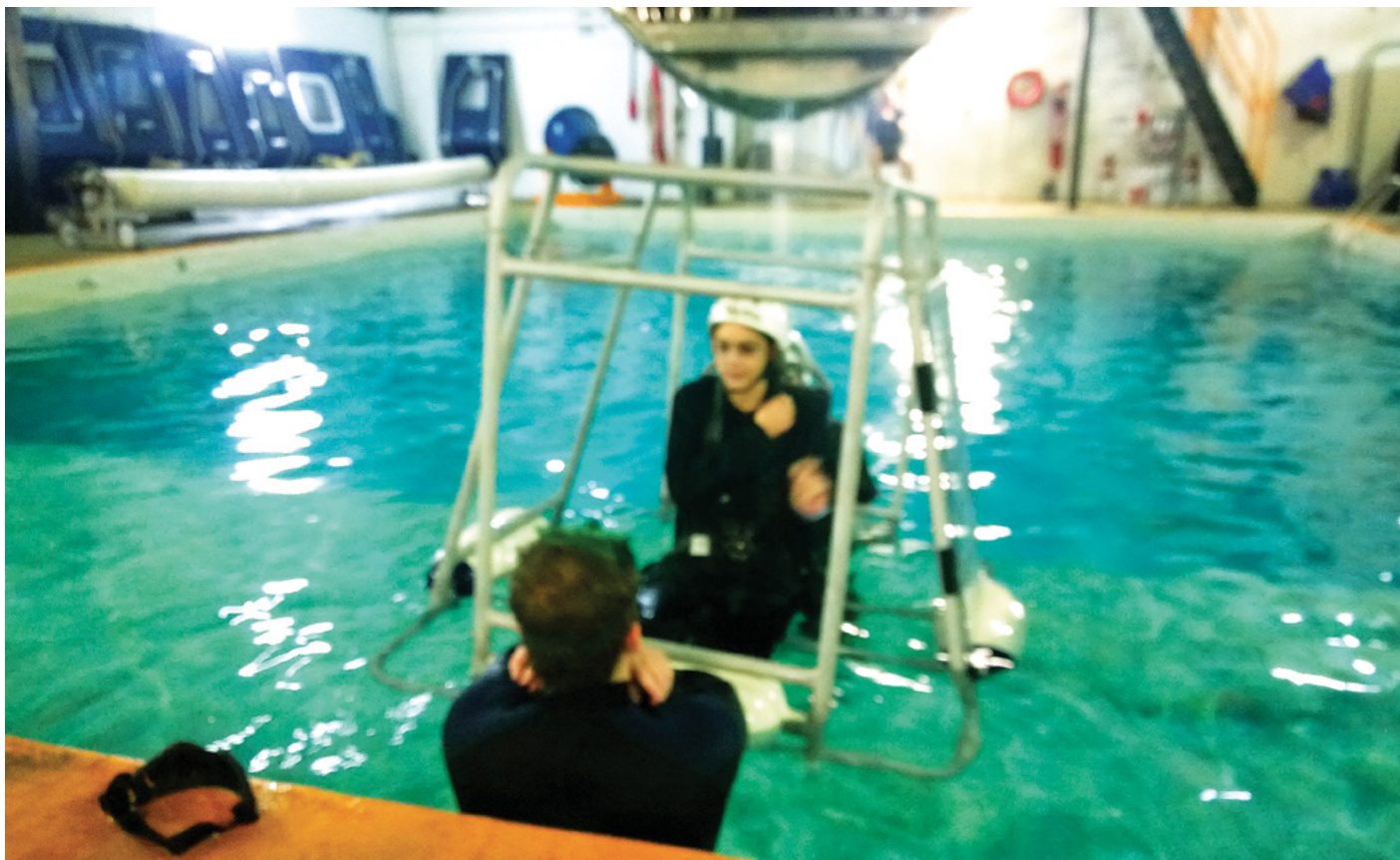
"So I went to the next lesson, and it all clicked. I came home and told my dad, "Oh my gosh, it was so great, we did different



*Photo opposite page:
Alyssa experiences the feel
of skydiving in an indoor
facility before going on
her first jump.*



*Photo left:
Alyssa in a simulator
wearing a Final Frontier
space suit worn for
Project PoSSUM research.*

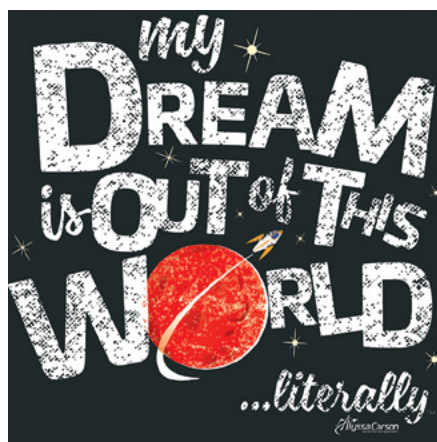


Alyssa continues her training with Project PoSSUM, learning water survival at Survival Systems in Groton, Connecticut.

things, and it was really fun,” she laughs. “It was cool to experience the progression from being nervous just being in the airplane to controlling what the airplane is doing.”

Earning an instrument rating is Alyssa’s next flying goal, followed by a commercial certificate. “While I plan for astrobiology work and experiments to be my main focus on Mars, I want to be capable of doing many different things in the challenging environment of the planet and space itself,” she explains. “What if something goes wrong, and we have to figure out an alternate plan? I want to be as capable as I can be.” It sounds like the skillsets and basic mechanical aptitude inherent to flight training will be valuable tools in space. In addition to more flying experience, Alyssa wants to pursue skydiving training and certification, not only for the enjoyment, but as one more unique system and environment she’ll know how to handle.

With all these accomplishments under her belt, Alyssa knows that while she’s enjoying her college time and studies at Florida Tech, she still has much to do in her quest to be chosen for NASA astronaut training and that first Mars mission. Over



the next ten years, she will be finishing her astrobiology undergraduate degree, building her resume with internships, continued collaboration in spacesuit development, working in the astrobiology field, and earning more pilot ratings and certificates, as well as actually applying for NASA astronaut training.

Already a veteran of public speaking, she is equally passionate about continuing to share her excitement and enthusiasm for space and Mars with young people, hoping to inspire them to follow her in the future exploration of space.

“When I was three and dreamt of being an astronaut and going to Mars, it was probably the most ridiculous dream I could have picked. But the more I work towards it, the more of a reality it’s becoming,” she says.

Alyssa’s most important message: “Never give up. If you have a dream, no matter how unlikely, put in the hard work, make the sacrifices and don’t let anyone stop you. You can do it.” Spoken like a pilot, and a future astronaut.

Learn more about Alyssa Carson:
<https://www.instagram.com/nasablueberry/?hl=en>.



Betty Thomas

A Pilot Who Never Intended To Fly

By Betty Thomas with Janice Pelletti

When I took my first flight lesson, I had no intention of becoming a pilot. I only wanted to learn to land the airplane in case of an emergency. I often flew with my husband Jerry. I enjoyed it but had no desire to fly myself.

After reading two separate accounts of plane crashes where a husband became incapacitated, with a wife on board who knew little about flying, I thought, "That could be you, Old Girl!" Maybe I was being naive flying around the sky with no idea of how to land or operate the radios.

I had no interest to learn more about flying than was necessary. Plus, my career as a teacher of homebound students was challenging and time consuming. However, when I decided I needed to make time to learn more, Jerry was delighted.

The flying took back seat to my work. Homebound students are individuals who, for a medical reason, must be out of school for an extended period. My responsibility was to see each student in their home and keep them up to date with their classes so they wouldn't be behind when they returned. Often, I had to come up with ways to help work around their injuries, simple things like holding a book.

It was a job that gave me a chance to know these students better than most teachers. I was able to see those who were extremely ill or recovering from accidents get well. I helped them return to school without having to worry about tests and papers they'd have to make up. I shared their grief, worries, and even their great joy. I loved it!

When it came to the flight lessons, I decided ahead of time

just how much I needed to know and was not planning to learn anything more.

When my instructor began the preflight on the first lesson and asked me to do it, I told him I did not need to know that since I only wanted to learn to land. He replied that one had to take off before one could land and proceeded with my lesson.

I kept going back for lessons, and it finally dawned on me that if I could land the plane, I could fly it. My husband Jerry encouraged me when I eventually announced my plans to get a pilot certificate.

Plagued by insecurity, I dragged my feet on getting the physical and the written test completed. I delayed enough that my instructor told me not to come back until I had accomplished both.

I didn't want to take time to go to ground school. I just got the manual and flipped through it. Aerobatics, I am not going to do that! I didn't study it. Engines, I fly 'em, I don't work on them. Weather, you just call flight service and ask how the weather is out there. If it's raining, don't go. When I failed the written, with a score in the 60s, Jerry was flabbergasted and asked what I had done. I got my act together and passed the next time.

I did not want to solo and kept insisting I wasn't ready. One day, after a couple of landings, my instructor just got out and said, "I'll be with you on the radio."

I told myself I was prepared; I knew what I was doing. I took off and that little Cessna 150 climbed out, it was so much easier to handle without the extra weight. It was exhilarating and exciting. I could fly! It was fun! Later my instructor told me that when he left the plane, he did not look back for fear I would be taxiing right behind him. I became a pilot on the eve of my 50th birthday.

Sharing our thrill of flying, my oldest son Kirk never wanted to do anything else. After graduating from Texas A&M, he was commissioned in the Navy, becoming a helicopter pilot. He later flew for Petroleum Helicopters, Inc. (PHI). Retired, he flies for fun, with Honor Flights and Pilots and Paws. My youngest son was commissioned in the Army, becoming an Airborne Ranger.

Today, at 85, I fill my days caring for Jerry and our black lab, Demi. Our lives haven't changed that much, but since everything you do when you are 85 takes a lot longer than it used to, it fills the day!

**Betty Thomas with
her husband Jerry.**



“Mission Not Impossible” Completed!

The Aloha Aviators, a group of amateur female pilots (many are members of the Aloha Chapter) and Delta Flight Attendants, have been sewing masks non-stop since late March. Since then, 1,000 masks have been donated to countless hospitals, critically ill patients, flight attendants and first responders on Oahu.

In April, multiple flights were made in a single-engine airplane to transport masks and cat supplies to the outer islands of Maui and Lanai. Due to the high number of evacuees, stray cats are on the rise. Coupled with barges being delayed, this has resulted in a shortage of cat food and cat litter at the sanctuaries.

Recently, over 100 handmade masks and supplies were flown to Hilo by 17-year-old pilot Abigail Dang and her mentor Nobi



Abigail Dang, left, and her mentor Nobi Buntin prepare for their mission.

Buntin. While maintaining social distancing and complying with Covid-19 guidelines, the masks will be delivered to the Hilo Medical Center where they are in dire need.

One of the co-founders of the South Pacific Flying Club, Annie Domko, caught wind of the mission and generously made the club's Czech Sport Aircraft SportCruiser available to make the five-hour mission to Hilo possible.

Another mission to Molokai to donate items requested by the local community has also been completed. It is an honor to have a community that is selfless and so eager to pay it forward. If you would like to participate or donate to this cause, contact 808FlyGirls@gmail.com.

— by Michelle JoAnn, Aloha Chapter

Volunteering Takes a Different Track

It was March 30, 2020, and I found myself laid off, along with countless others throughout the world. The Covid-19 crisis had taken hold, and we all found ourselves with too much time on our hands.

After a round of “therapy” baking (and eating), I knew I had to find something to fill my now vacant hours. Volunteering is a wonderful go-to plan for times like these — but it wasn't going to be in the realm of aviation. As international, national and local aviation events were being cancelled, it was time for a Plan B.

My life companion and honorary 49½ has been very involved with the American Red Cross Association blood drives, and he encouraged me to also consider becoming a volunteer. Blood drives, of course, had to take a different track, but given the immense need for a regular blood supply, blood drives could not simply be put on hold until the virus situation had passed. As an added measure of protecting the Red Cross blood technicians, volunteers and blood donors, donors would be carefully screened at the door. A new position was now about to evolve for the typical blood drive to continue. I enrolled in the Red Cross Blood Screener Program and began a new way of volunteering to give back to my community and the region.

Blood donor screeners make sure the incoming donor is healthy, has not been in contact with a Covid-19 patient or traveled out of the country. They take temperatures, and anyone above 99.5F cannot donate. Blood drives are no longer conducted on a walk-in basis. All donors must make an appointment, and no more than three donors can be waiting in the reception area.

Everyone is wearing masks, and all the Red Cross workers and volunteers wear gloves. Blood screeners and technicians change gloves between each donor. All surfaces, tables, chairs and reading materials are wiped with anti-virus wipes after each use.

Besides being a blood donor screener, I also used my free time to become a blood donor for the first time. I was looking forward to one more way to give back something important to the community. After a “mini-physical” (pulse, blood pressure, etc.), it was time to lie back and offer my arm to the blood technician Ed, who did a great job of explaining what was going to happen. As an added benefit (to me), he was also a private pilot! He wasn't current, due to a busy life with family, etc., but I encouraged him to come back soon.



Volunteer Katahdin Wings Chapter member Lori Plourd checks the temperature of a potential blood donor.

After a few minutes, my pint of blood was donated. Ed thanked me and reminded me that each pint of blood can save three lives. Donors may leave with less blood, but the feeling of making a huge difference in the world more than replaces that.

— Lori Plourd, Katahdin Wings Chapter

99s Use Their Talents to Help Others

New England Section members have been doing what they can to help out during the Covid-19 crisis. One activity has been making and donating face masks. Here are two members' stories of that activity.



Jessie Zuberek sews masks for health care professionals.

Jessie Zuberek *Eastern New England Chapter*

My office shut down around March 14. Suddenly, I was at home full time and wasn't prepared to work from home yet. As more news stories reported that there wasn't enough PPE for doctors and nurses, friends started contacting me with Facebook posts about how people were making fabric masks,

with instructions about how to do so. I started making a few right away to see if I could.

Other friends sent me links to videos and groups on Facebook. In late March someone sent me to a new group, North Shore Fabric Masks for Health Professionals, started by volunteers on the North Shore. It was just a few people at first. Today there are over 1,200 members and seven drop off locations in North Shore towns. The volunteers pass supplies between each other.

There have been days where I have paper bags with materials in them with names on the outside lined up on my porch waiting for people to pick up. Other days, I'll drop piles of materials in the drop boxes at people's houses.

Thousands and thousands of masks have been made at this point. We are now making surgical caps and ear savers.

As things got worse, and the grocery store lines started and everything else shut down, many, many people started to reach out asking for masks so they could leave their homes. In many cases, they tried to get them elsewhere and just couldn't. I was

happy to make them and send them along. I even put a few out for my mailman, since he keeps picking up so many poorly-wrapped packages and envelopes with random postage attached.

Shadow Gorrill *Katahdin Wings Chapter*

The Wolfeboro (New Hampshire) Area Mask Makers started on March 22, 2020, as a Facebook group to coordinate the sewing of masks for our frontline employees in our area. All the fabric, elastic, etc. is donated.

Our members are all volunteers. If they can't sew, they wash, iron, cut, and stuff the bags for distribution. We have three material pickup points. A sewer can grab a kit with pre-cut fabric and elastic. They can add a nose stay and/or interfacing if they want.

As part of this group, I make masks and I also use some quilting materials. I have made approximately 100 masks. Some are deaconess masks and others are Olsen type. There are many other types that are also being made. The deaconess style is the one we mostly use.

We have donated over 5,000 masks to over 350 organizations. We also have donation boxes in the local markets where the public can grab a mask if they need one. All masks are complimentary.

The Wolfeboro Area Mask Makers are showing an incredible outpouring of support for our little community.



Shadow Gorrill has made 100-plus masks.

From Spirits to Hand Sanitizer

I own Motospirits, a distillery in Brooklyn. Pre-pandemic, we made whiskey and jabuka (an apple and rice based spirit). Now we've converted operations to hand sanitizer, which, with our partnership with NYCMakesPPE and Hack Manhattan, we donate to hospitals, NYPD, churches, firefighters, organizations like Hungry Monk, who are going out daily and feeding the homeless, and the Sisters of Life, who are serving pregnant women who are financially burdened.

We're now offering it for sale on food delivery sites along with our bottled pre-mixed cocktails, and we've also started selling and shipping nationwide.

— Marie Estrada, Greater New York Chapter



Maria Estrada

GRASS ROOTS

Los Angeles Chapter

Given that many of us are heeding the “stay at home” orders, our Los Angeles Chapter 99 Fly-in Chair, Erika Jancso, arranged a virtual fly-in for our Chapter via Zoom.

The destination was set as French Valley (F70) as we all prepared to depart from our home base of Santa Monica (KSMO) at 11 a.m. We pretended to be flying in a Cherokee and were advised to have the Cherokee checklist, Class Bravo transition routes, the KSMO and F70 taxi diagrams, and the KSMO pilot guide for noise abatement procedures. We talked through the preflight, the weather briefing, and the fact that we would be using the Special Flight Rules Area (SFRA) through Los Angeles airspace.

Student pilot Jen Butler was the first to practice her radio skills and request a ‘taxi’ to the run up. Our Chairman, Kate Scott, played the role of ground control, and our Vice Chair Janie Thomas played the role of tower controller. All went well, and soon enough we were virtually flying along our route, all working together as a team.

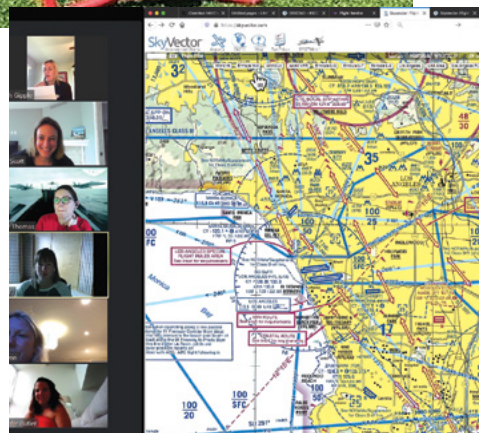
Our ‘flight time’ was approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes, and it was a great review for many of us while also giving some an opportunity to brush up on crucial flying components. For the pilots who normally fly separately in our fly-ins, it was nice to work as an ‘aircrew’ and discuss different styles of flight. We hope to continue these virtual fly-in discussions after the pandemic to help members stay current when weather prevents VFR fly-ins.

— Jen Butler



Above, Los Angeles Chapter members enjoy a sunny pre-Covid-19 “flyout.”

Right, their recent Chapter meeting featured a virtual non-contact fly-in via Zoom.



Chicago Area Chapter

A recent Chapter business meeting was held at northwest suburban Schaumburg Airport. There was a lot to discuss as we made plans to host the North Central Section Meeting in the spring and selected our nominees for upcoming North Central Section Governor’s Service Award, Spinning Prop Award and 49½ of the year.

Since we were working so hard, Chapter Chair Eva Kozlowski hosted a Bocce Ball tournament and lunch the following Saturday at Pinstripes in west suburban Oakbrook Mall. We had four competitive teams, became better acquainted with some of our new members, and shared a delicious lunch afterwards. Great idea!

— Diane M. Cozzi



Chicago Area Chapter members mixed some fun into their lunch with a Bocce Ball Tournament hosted by Chapter Chair Eva Kozlowski.

Aloha Chapter

The 99s Aloha Chapter partnered with Women in Aviation Hawaii Chapter to throw a fundraising and community service event back in February.

We gathered at Dillingham Airfield on the North Shore of Oahu. About 70 folks gathered to support the efforts of female pilots. We enjoyed the food, were able to meet a number of new community members and even gained four new Chapter members.

As we enjoyed the buzz of planes taking off and landing, we got to work repainting the compass rose that was in need of a facelift.

The Aloha Chapter first painted the compass rose a few decades ago. In 2020, as we spread the white and blue paint, it was very encouraging that multiple people who operate a business or store their personal aircraft at the airfield came over to say “thank you.” It offered us an opportunity to discuss The 99s and Women in Aviation with folks and grow our community. We also got to talk about our next event, a trivia night, now happening once the shelter-in-place orders are lifted.

At the end of the day, we raffled off a few donated items like a plane rental, glider lesson, aviation-themed jewelry, and more. The team was able to raise money towards scholarships to be awarded later this year, and fun was had by all.

— Michelle JoAnn



Above: Ninety-Nines and friends repaint the compass rose at Dillingham Airfield. The Chapter painted the rose several decades ago, and it was time for a makeover.



San Antonio Chapter Chair Cheryl Mora introduces the wonders of flight to two participants of the Let's Fly Now! event.

San Antonio Chapter

The San Antonio Chapter of The Ninety-Nines has been buzzing with new membership and participation after hosting our first Let's Fly Now! event in February. The event took place on February 29 at Stinson Municipal Airport. A total of 26 passengers were flown, including 15 young women.

The Chapter partnered with a local organization, Girls Inc., to locate interested participants for the event, and the San Geronimo EAA chapter to obtain additional volunteer pilots. Our own members worked together to pack goody bags, seamlessly manage registration, provide both a safety briefing and a pilot/controller communications briefing (from member and local SAT controller Ellen Albers and pilot Debbie Bertram), direct participants safely to and from the airplanes, and, of course, fly the girls.

A raffle for a second free introductory flight was held throughout the event as a fundraiser for our Chapter's local scholarship.

New member Michelle Drake was awarded the 2020 local Chapter scholarship. Michelle intends to use the scholarship to help with the completion of her instrument rating.

— Lacey Law

GRASS ROOTS

Mississippi Chapter

Ninety-Nines Chapter members recently painted a 40-foot compass rose at the airport in Tylertown, Mississippi.

We were welcomed by our member Mary 'Jerry' Garner, who has been a 99 since 1977. Jerry has worked at and flies out of the Tylertown airport ever since she learned how to fly. She was instrumental in helping to renovate and decorate the terminal and always dreamed of having a compass rose just outside of the entrance.

Upon request, the Chapter's Board of Directors agreed to help make her dream a reality. As the tarmac had just been repaved, our compass rose stood out even more!

Our members enjoyed the food, drinks and Southern hospitality extended to us by Jerry and other members of the airport staff. We would like to thank Claudia who volunteered to help us, as we certainly appreciated the extra help.

We look forward to painting additional compass roses in the future.

— Maryke Houben



Members of The Mississippi Chapter proudly observe their work of painting a compass rose at the airport in Tylertown.



The Meadows Field (KBFL) Air Traffic Controllers joined Bakersfield Chapter members honoring ATC Michael Gottfried, who is moving to a new location. Michael worked closely with the Bakersfield Chapter and provided private tours of the tower.

Bakersfield Chapter

The past few months before quarantine, the members of Bakersfield Chapter have co-hosted monthly Fly-In lunches with neighboring 99s Chapters. More than five Chapters participated and about 30 attended for each of the events.

California Aeronautical University of Bakersfield has been working with our Chapter to build rapport with the cadets. The Chapter recently merged with Fresno Chapter, making it one big, happy sisterhood.

The members said goodbye to ATC Michael Gottfried, who had been an important supporter of Bakersfield Chapter by providing tours of the tower at Meadows Field.

Dea Payette participated in flying the "flight challenge with Willow Willpower" during a Young Eagles flight. She was recently awarded the Ladies Love Taildraggers Tailwheel Endorsement Scholarship which she will complete this summer.

— Dea "Cooper" Payette

LETTERS

Uplifting Issue

Wow. The March/April issue was so uplifting with lots of upbeat and positive stories that we all need right now.


— Penny Hamilton, Colorado Chapter

Paying It Forward

I just received my student membership in March, and although my school is closed for now, I'm excited to be a part of The 99s.

I would like to help other women who may need assistance with membership fees. I'm blessed to be working and want to pay it forward for others who may be having a hard time to continue being a part of this organization.

— Kris Johnson
Greater Kansas City



Editor's note: Due to restrictions essential to helping control Covid-19, many of the summer activities we usually cover are cancelled. We'll have extra pages to devote to interesting members and creative activities related to The 99s. If you have an idea for a submission, please contact Publications Chair Lori Plourd, 99spubschair@gmail.com, or Danielle Clarneaux, Editor, danclar@comcast.net. We look forward to hearing from you and wish you all good health.

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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 their contributions to our organization. Our members who recently flew to New Horizons were:

Marian Baltzer, Life Member, April 10, 2020
NOLA Chapter

Mary Ann Bellafiore, March 4, 2020
Indiana Dunes

Eloise 'Ellie' Compardo, May 10, 2020
Reno High Sierra Chapter

Dorothy 'Dottie' Davis, April 25, 2020
San Diego Chapter

Lois Erickson, February 28, 2020
Mt. Shasta Chapter

Evelyn Farnham, December 4, 2019
Life Member Iowa Chapter

Kay Hilbrandt, WASP, May 20, 2020
New Jersey Chapter

Janet Keith, August 22, 2019
All-Ohio Chapter

Alexis Montague-Fortune, March 14, 2020
Spaceport Chapter

Elizabeth 'Betty' Nunn, April 30, 2020
Montana Chapter

Zoe Nutter, April 22, 2020
Monterey Bay Chapter

Sarah Rately, Mercury 13, March 16, 2020
Greater Kansas City

Senja Robey, April 14, 2020
Australian Section

Jean 'Sunny' Schiffmann, March 1, 2020
Columbia Cascade Chapter

Gladys 'Glad' Strean, May 4, 2020
Lake Charles Chapter



Friends of The 99s

Kassy Avilez, Salinas, CA
Lisa Bailey, Belton, TX
Sarah Dean, Richmond, BC CANADA
Mary Holsenbeck, Alba, TX
Edward Tietjen, Bakersfield, CA

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