

# The Leading Edge

Newsletter for the Ambassador Chapter 99s

<http://www.ambassador99s.org>



Dear Ambassador Chapter members,

Enjoy the issue! Have a wonderful February, and Happy Valentine's Day.

Sincerely,  
Sabrina Riffle, Editor



## Contact Us!

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## JOIN OUR MONTHLY ONLINE MEMBERSHIP MEETING!

The Ambassador Chapter conducts **monthly online meetings every 9th day of the month at 9pm Eastern Time.** To join in on the fun, you'll need to download a free copy of Yahoo! Messenger at:

(for a PC) <http://messenger.yahoo.com/win.php>

(for a Mac) <http://messenger.yahoo.com/webmessengerpromo.php>

(from the Web) <http://webmessenger.yahoo.com/>

Each day on the 9th members from all over the world log in for about an hour to chat free over the Internet. Join us! And if you have questions, please contact one of the Chapter Officers for help.



If you're an Ambassador Chapter member who hasn't yet signed up for our Yahoo! Groups site, please consider doing so here. It's free and easy:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Ambassador99s/join>

We use this site to post the meeting minutes, announcements, member bios and photos. Post yours today!

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# HEADQUARTERS DISPATCH

## WOMEN IN AVIATION CONFERENCE

The 20th annual Women in Aviation (WAI) Conference will be held this year in Atlanta, Georgia, USA on **February 26-28, 2009** at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta. The theme is "A New Approach for Your Tomorrow."

If anyone can volunteer to spend a couple of hours at The Ninety-Nines booth please notify Laura at Headquarters (give her your first, second and third choices of dates and times). Two-hour slots are available on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm. We would like to have three volunteers at the booth at all times. You will be given a "briefing" when you arrive. If you have a required uniform for your flying job, please wear it. Five exhibitors badges are provided to us without charge and these will be passed on to the first five members who volunteer for at least four hours.

Also attending will be Susan Larson and Fran Strubeck from the Board of Directors and Southeast Section Governor Corbi Bullock.

Come and join us in the fun. It is a great opportunity to visit with other 99s and to spread the word about our great organization.

## SPRING BOARD MEETING

The Spring Board of Directors meeting will be held at Headquarters in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on **March 20-21, 2009** (travel on the 19th and 22nd). The meeting hotel is the Hilton Garden Inn on Meridian Avenue. To make your reservations call 405-942-1400.

The cost will be \$89 per night (plus taxes). This rate will extend a couple of days before and after if you are planning on spending

some extra time at Headquarters. Please let Headquarters know the dates you will be there.

Board meetings are open to all who wish to attend. If you are not a Board member, Governor, Trustee or International Committee Chairman and would like to attend, please call Headquarters for more information.

Reports for the Board packet need to be in to Headquarters by **March 1, 2009**.

## AWARDS

**By Corbi Bullock, International Awards Chairman**

The Ninety-Nines present three awards at our annual Conference: the Award of Achievement, the Award of Merit and the George Palmer Putnam Award. *More information on these awards was in the November Dispatch.* This is available on our website in the Members Only section.

I am sure you know individuals or groups that deserve special recognition. Recipients may be living or deceased and from any country. The contribution may have occurred at any time in the past or present, as a single action or a series of events.

Send your nominations to International Headquarters:

The Ninety-Nines, Inc.  
Attn: Awards Committee  
4300 Amelia Earhart Rd  
Oklahoma City OK 73159 USA

Nominations must arrive before **January 15, 2009**.

Contact me at [mcbulluck@aol.com](mailto:mcbulluck@aol.com) or 919-387-6664 (email or phone) if you have any questions. Thanks for your help.

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION REQUEST

**By Laura Ohrenberg, 99s Office Manager**

Please remember when helping a new member fill out their application that they need to pay the \$10.00 initiation fee along with the first year's dues.

We have recently received several applications that are not including this amount. This requires a letter to the applicant requesting the additional \$10.00. The failure to include the initiation fee is slowing down the membership application process for the new member.

### NOTAM

**Effective January 1, 2009**

Due to the increased costs of postage and changes to package mailing regulations from the US Postal Service, Headquarters must change its mailing procedures. We will continue to send up to 10 lbs of membership materials to members as needed for recruiting. These packages, however, will now be mailed parcel post. Let us know at least three weeks in advance of the upcoming event to allow adequate time for the Postal Service to deliver. If the materials are needed sooner, the requester will need to pay the difference between the cost of the priority package and a parcel post package. The Headquarters staff would be very appreciative of any donations to offset the cost of mailing these packages.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR 2009

**January 31** – Deadline for submitting Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative (PPLI) application

**February 1** – Due date for *99 News* submissions for the March/April 2009 issue

**February 26-28** – Women in Aviation International Conference, Atlanta, Georgia

**March 1** – Reports due to Headquarters for the Board of Directors meeting

**March 20-21** – International Board of Directors Spring meeting, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

**April 1** – Due date for *99 News* submissions for the May/June 2009 issue

**April 21-26** – Sun 'n Fun, Lakeland, Florida

**June 20-26** – Air Race Classic, Denver, Colorado (Centennial Airport) to Atlantic, Iowa

**July 22-26** – International Conference, Chicago, Illinois, USA

**July 31** – Deadline for submitting Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative (PPLI) application

**August 14-15** – 40th Annual Palms to Pines Air Race

### Future International Conferences

**July 5-9, 2010** – Kona, Hawaii, USA

**July 2011** – Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

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# FLYING IN ROME!

**By Michelle Bassanesi, part-time flight instructor  
at Rome Aeroclub**

7 A.M.: I am at home. The alarm goes off. It is time to get up and get ready and go to Urbe Airport. I get the current weather for a number of airports in my area.

7:30 A.M.: I am ready to go and I put on my helmet. I am on my scooter and drive off to the airport, which is about a 20-minute ride. During the winter it is pretty cold in Rome. More often than not there is fog at the airport when I arrive.

8 A.M.: I stop at the gate. I fill in the DUV-flight authorization papers. I pay landing taxes. I fill in Pass information to get through. I stop at the ARO - ATS Reporting Office - for weather, NOTAMs and flight planning.

I make a quick evaluation of the day's possibilities, put my helmet back on and get on the scooter to ride to the Aero Club.

8.20 A.M.: I am at the hanger. I say hello to the line instructor and mechanic. I help open the hanger doors, pull the planes out, refuel them and check the bookings.

9 A.M.: I am ready to fly with my first student! Fog is still covering the airport, so we wait for it to lift. The fog typically burns off by about 10.30 A.M.

In the meantime, I check the Technical Logbook to see if the plane is on the line, if the daily inspection has been performed by the mechanic and I read any notes about how much fuel and oil is in the plane.

I also fill in the flight log with the instructor's name, student's name, aircraft type and tail number and type of flight. After the flight is completed, I fill in the takeoff and landing times (no hobbs or RPM to go by- we use takeoff and landing times and add 5 minutes before and 5 minutes after for taxiing). I also note how many landings were made.

Next, I walk to the plane. I check the fuel visually, and if necessary refuel. I say hello to the fueler and chat with other instructors, students and club members while the airplane is being fueled.

Now the lesson begins! I complete the walk-around with my student, give a preflight briefing, drink coffee and chat. We walk around the tarmac and look up to see the fog thinning and think it will burn off soon...

10:30 A.M.: The fog is gone! We scramble to the airplane. We diligently work through the engine start procedures and jump on the radio to be one of the first to line up and take off.

“Urbe Ground good morning I-SMAU.”

“I-SMAU, good morning, go ahead.”

“I-SMAU at Aero Club parking with no flight plan, number 1, ready to taxi.”

“I-SMAU taxi to runway 34, wind calm, barometer 1026, temperature 2°C, visibility 5000 meters.”

“Runway 34, 1026, I-SMAU.”

We complete the taxi checks. I give a takeoff briefing and an emergency briefing. While holding short at taxiway sierra for runway 34, we wait for the engine to warm enough for run-up. After the run-up, we change to tower frequency.

10:52 A.M.: “I-SMAU, cleared for takeoff.”

Urbe is a Class G airspace airport with a tower: [www.aeroclublucce.it/gite/dati\\_ad\\_urbe.pdf](http://www.aeroclublucce.it/gite/dati_ad_urbe.pdf)

Since our flight does not have a flight plan and it is a local flight, there is no ELT on board. Sometimes we use the airport just for circuits (flying in the traffic pattern). In this case, you must ask for circuits on start up and coordinate the availability of the airspace above the airport. It can happen that ATC asks you to wait! At times ATC doesn't allow more than three planes in the circuit!



During this flight we fly a touch-and-go at Ciampino Airport. Our alternate is Ciampino LIRA. Before soloing, students must have flown and know the procedures for Ciampino Airport: Fidene. Ring Service Area. Settecami. Change of frequency. Tor Bella Monaca. Torrenova. Ciampino. At this time of morning a touch and go is possible. When we are done, we fly back the same way we came.

[www.vatita.net/download/planning/files/vfr/ciampino\\_vfr.pdf](http://www.vatita.net/download/planning/files/vfr/ciampino_vfr.pdf)

During the flight back, we keep your eyes and ears open. There is traffic in both directions at the same altitude!

We land on runway 34.

"I-SMAU, on the ground at :26, vacate at C and proceed to parking on this frequency."

We get to log 10:53 (-5) to 11:26 (+5)!

We taxi back to parking. 10:48 to 11:31 = 43 minutes flight! I sign the Technical Logbook and write the flight time, sign the line flight log, debrief the student, fill in the syllabus, book the student's next flight and get ready for my next student.

A Cessna172 for instruction flights costs € 3.77 per minute, plus instructor.

And remember: In Europe flight instructors are paid for air time only!

AND ... MY OFFICE VIEW IS PRICELESS !!



# DO YOU SMILE AT WORK?

By Sabrina Riffle

During my trip this week I flew with a very competent and respectable captain. He was standard- he did everything by our company's operating requirements. He was light-hearted and never micromanaged my tasks in the airplane. Since I am a very senior first officer and have been preparing for upgrade for quite some time, he allowed me to make all of the decisions during the flights when it was my turn to fly. Through conversations we had in the air, I discovered his wife is a pilot for the state of Utah. I could tell he had a healthy respect for female pilots and didn't object to me being in the cockpit at all.

So it surprised me when, at 36,000 feet over the midwestern United States, he said that most of the female pilots at our airline seem to have a chip on their shoulder.

In situations like these, I usually laugh off the jokes and comments since they are meant to tease me or make light of my minority status in aviation. Comments like, "you know your two places: on the right side of the airplane and the kitchen," and "aren't you worried you'll break a nail on the walk-around?" are commonplace and easily blown-off. Luckily, all of the comments I have received during my airline career have been in jest. I have yet to experience a truly biting and serious remark.

The tone of my captain's voice meant the comment was not a joke or an insult. It was simply a neutral observation. His words caught my attention and I decided to engage him in conversation about it rather than simply laughing away his comment.

I asked him what he meant by that, and whether he could give me some examples. He said that most of the women he flies with have an air of superiority about them because they were one of the few that "made it in a man's world." I was shocked to hear that these female pilots also tended to treat the flight attendants with short words, a lack of eye contact and a general attitude of superiority.

When I heard this, I smiled and almost laughed. "Are you serious?"

"Yeah," he said, "Next time you are in the crew room or pass by one of our female pilots in the terminal, pay attention and you'll see what I mean. They don't smile or look at you and they are pretty much the same way in the airplane."

At first I became a little defensive, since I always make a point to treat the entire crew with respect, service and a smile on each and every flight. I always smiled at my coworkers when passing them in the terminal or in the crew rooms, and would even stop to chat if time allowed. I truly didn't understand what my captain was talking about.

“So, do I have a chip on my shoulder? Do you think I act superior?”

I really wanted to know if I too had this air about me because if I did, I intended to quash it right then and there.

“No, not you,” he said. “You are competent and personable. The exception to the rule. Don’t get me wrong- there are some cool female pilots here, but they are the exception to the rule.”

OK, bonus points for me, I thought. At least I wasn’t considered socially inept by this captain. But why would a captain who seems to have no prejudice against female pilots adopt this attitude?

I decided to conduct an entirely unscientific study of the female pilots at my company. Anytime I passed by one in the terminal or in the crew room, I would smile and say hello. I also decided to call a few of my male friends who are pilots at my company and ask them what they thought about my Captain’s comments.

Going into this experiment, I was expecting my captain to be wrong. Sadly, he was right. Most of the female pilots never smiled back at me or said hello. Most of the male pilots would at the very least smile or nod in acknowledgement. Most of the female pilots didn’t even make eye contact with me when I passed by them in the jet ways or near the crew room doors. Almost all of the men made eye contact. After conducting my phone survey, I found that my friends felt the same way as my captain. I couldn’t believe it. Were most female pilots at my company feeling superior to the point of complete unfriendliness at work?

I put these ideas into perspective. I myself have experienced isolation as a woman in aviation, and sometimes these feelings made me less than outgoing and friendly at work. I have had such bad days that I didn’t talk to anyone or make eye contact with anyone at work. I understand that people have times in their lives that aren’t great. But for 10+ random women to all act this way in one day? Isolation and a bad day are unlikely causes for their behavior.

And what about superiority? As a female pilot, I know first-hand the obstacles we face from family, friends and society when trying to get our ratings. We have to develop a thick skin to survive the process of going all the way to the airline level. In some locales, women are openly discriminated against when taking lessons or check rides. The jokes and comments over time, no matter how benign, start to create an impermeable shell around you that can be used to bounce away future sexist comments. I can understand a female pilot who is proud about making it to the airline level, because she had to have incredibly tenacity, patience and soul to get there. Anyone should be proud of that.

I don’t think we should discredit or diminish our efforts or our successes. But I do think that we women sometimes tend to think that the boys had it much easier than we did. I am sure that some did, and some didn’t. Everyone’s situation is unique. What we need to remember is that everyone, no matter what sex or color or nationality, had to bust some serious butt to become an airline pilot. As women, we need to remember that the boys worked hard, too.

What else could explain this air of superiority? Could it be insecurity in the job? Could these women have acted this way because they don't feel completely comfortable in the role of Pilot?

We have all heard of that infamous female pilot who got hired with a ridiculously low number of hours at (insert name of airline here), and how she is so incompetent. Affirmative action is not the scope of this article, so the merits of it will not be dealt with here. However, could it be that the air of superiority my captain has perceived is simply a woman's psychological guard against a general assumption that we are not qualified to do our job? Is it a weariness of constantly having to defend ourselves? Are we even sure if we are totally qualified?

The best cure for all these questions is to study. Know your FOM or FAR/AIM and try to fly to standard each and every flight. Know your airplane systems and know your limitations cold. Know the emergency procedures and how to fix the emergency indications your aircraft is giving you. When you have a checkride, a proficiency check or a biennial flight review, study hard and fly hard beforehand to make sure you do a good job and pass. Always keep learning- in fact, go back to your early textbooks on weather or instrument flying and brush up on basic concepts. Attend seminars sponsored by your airline or local FBO to stay current and informed. Ask questions and keep searching for the answers until you get them.

Having sharp knowledge of your operations, flying to the best of your ability and seeking continuing education ensures that you will not be under-qualified. By knowing deep down that you are doing everything possible to be professional and a master of your craft, you can roll the "unqualified" comments off of you like water off of a duck's back and seize every new opportunity that awaits you with confidence.

So ladies, evaluate yourselves: what is your attitude at work? Are you cordial? How do you treat your crew members? Do you view them as people to serve you, or people to be served? If you are feeling insecure about your job, why? If you are hurt by the "unqualified" comments, make sure you are as qualified as possible in your current position so as to be a living contradiction to the stereotype.

By looking inward, we can all make positive changes within us that can have big effects for us at work and in the flying community as a whole. We are the only ones that can work to change this perception of us. And remember, smile once in a while!