

# The Leading Edge

Newsletter for the Ambassador Chapter 99s

<http://www.ambassador99s.org>



See above photo at [www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/photos/photos.htm](http://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/photos/photos.htm).

Dear Ambassador Chapter members,

Happy New Year! Our new year will pose many new economic changes and challenges. Maybe some of you are facing the hard task of finding that next flying job. Did you know that your 99s are here to help you? There are many Ambassador members who have “been there, done that” and could surely give you advice on how to proceed. Remember, there is ALWAYS a network here to turn to if you need help! Just let me know if you need help, and I will gladly find someone applicable to your situation to help out and give you advice. If you are unsure that you could ever find a flying job in this economic environment, look to Kirsten Brazier’s “Notes From the North” this month. Kirsten proves that finding an aviation job right now is far from impossible. Keep searching and working. Things will turn around!

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 plan-

ning 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 Bulluck, 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 requestor 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 15 – Deadline for nominations for Awards to be received at Headquarters

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

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# NOTES FROM THE NORTH

## Starting Over - Again!

By Kirsten Brazier



Wow, if aviation doesn't make your life challenging and interesting, I don't know what will! Seems like it's all about achieving firsts - first solo, first license, first job, first multi, first ... etc. etc. And in between all those firsts, we try to maintain relationships with friends and family, and eventually start a new family - with or without kids.

How does one do it? Keep mind and heart focused on your next goal and work like heck to achieve it. Draw as much support as you can from those around you, and when you're able; give back that support to others who need it.

Aside from not having as many hours in my logbook as I would like, I can look back through my roster of aircraft, licenses and ratings and be very proud of what I have learned and achieved. And I'd never have gotten here without the support of many wonderful people, including the 99s - both individuals and the organization.

When I started an air taxi business in partnership with another, I thought that was to be my monumental end achievement - the ultimate goal and logical conclusion for those non-airline folk among us who want to be all they can be. Unfortunately our hard work and valiant efforts were ultimately in vain, and our business didn't make it. The final months of our demise were bitter and hard, and again, some kind and empathetic 99s helped me work through it. With their help I was

able to recognize the incredible skills I had developed along the way without my realizing it, and look beyond the setback to future possibilities.

With the 2008 AEMSF award of the BC Forestry Approved Mountain Course, I was able to get current again after 6 years away from my initial helicopter conversion, and put a very marketable certificate in my portfolio. After completing the training in Abbotsford, British Columbia, on Dec. 1, I flew back to Winnipeg to reclaim my car from where it had been damaged by dealership repairs. After a week in Winnipeg hashing out some residual problems with the dealership, my car appeared to be reasonably restored so once again I packed up all my worldly possessions and hit the road to look for my first helicopter job.

My plan was to drive through Manitoba and Saskatchewan and focus on northern Alberta and BC, where helicopter operators abound. At the same time, and at the suggestion of another 99, I put together a brief bio and description of what I was looking for and gave it to Wendy Boyes, governor for West Canada Section, for networking distribution. Then, I contacted all the people I know in the helicopter business asking for advice, leads and general information to aid in my search. Finally, I sat down for hours at the computer and researched every helicopter operator listed on the Transport Canada website as operating in Alberta and BC to refine my search to the most suitable companies. I did this all on the road, and on the fly!

As if this kind of cross country job search on a dwindling shoestring budget wasn't enough, I neglected to mention that we're in the middle of winter here in Canada, and prevailing weather has been  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-30^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and below with snow and ice on the roads. For a little added entertainment, the spot weld on the tongue of my trailer failed, and I suddenly found the trailer end of the tongue dragging on the ground with the trailer resting on it. I was delayed several hours while I sourced out a portable welding truck to come and fix it at the side of the road. Luckily I was in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, at the time, instead of out on the highway!

Because of the delay, I didn't make it to one of my target companies, located just north of Edmonton, Alberta, before close of business on the Friday. The company knew I was doing my best to get there, and kindly offered to put me up in their crew house over the weekend so I could see them on Monday morning. I used the spare time to refine my road trip plans based on my research, and on Monday I had my first real interview, which included a brief check ride in the Bell Jetranger helicopter. Phew! Everything went well, but lots to be learned from that experience - but first and foremost to be very familiar with the specifics of the machine you are applying to fly, particularly if you're already current/checked out on it.



They didn't have an immediate job, but did say I would have a good chance in the spring if they took on a low time helicopter pilot. Armed with the encouragement, I continued my road trip. The forecast was pretty glum though, almost everyone I talked to spoke of massive layoffs, slow winter season, downturn in the oilfield and resource exploration fields... still, I needed a job and wasn't about to quit looking.

200 km from Edmonton, my next stop was the small oilfield town of Edson, Alberta. I didn't really book an appointment, instead I showed up early the following morning hoping I would get lucky and find the owner willing to speak with me.

Not only was the owner willing to speak with me, he didn't usher me out the door, even after several hours! Pretty soon I started to wonder if there might be a job in it for me, so I spent the night just in case. Like most operators, the company isn't flying much over the winter months, but it turns out all my hard won experience over the years is attractive to the company, and even though rotors aren't turning, the business must carry on. So by the end of the second day, I had a job offer!

The pay isn't great compared to what I have made as a pilot, but is very fair for what I will be doing, and considering the company isn't generating much in the way of revenue at the moment, the fact I got a job is very lucky! To start the company needs someone to design a workable safety program that meets the framework required by some of their customers. To date that program has been fairly informal. This will be a new experience for me as I have gone to great lengths to speak out on safety issues, but have also come to see much hypocrisy in various safety programs that lean towards creating paper and do nothing in the way of fostering real safety. As a firm believer in operating safely and responsibly, it will be an interesting challenge to see if a workable system can actually be defined on paper.

I'll be able to work in the hangar as well, and credit the time towards my AME license which I am chipping away at very slowly. It will be interesting to learn from this company as to how they run their business, and eventually I will develop my skills as a helicopter pilot as jobs come up where they can place a low time helicopter pilot. There is another low timer ahead of me that was hired on a year ago as an engineer, but part of the benefit in hiring me is to free up the owner in order to cut the other pilot loose.

It seems like a good company, and certainly was a lucky break considering my present financial situation. There is no doubt I will learn a lot here, and hopefully I will be learning to improve my skills as a new helicopter pilot in short order!

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# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PILOT

By Erin Recke

So we're in the taxi cab tonight in Syracuse, NY, going to the hotel. It's 1:30 in the morning. I've been on duty continuously since 9:30 the previous morning and all I want to do is nap in the cab. I was supposed to be home by that point, but I got extended for another 24 hours while I was inches away from the bus that would take me to my car in the employee parking lot in ATL. (But no, I'm not bitter....)

The cabbie is a nice old fella, very talkative and friendly. With one eye open I notice he keeps looking at me in the rearview mirror. All three of us are sitting in the back. The flight attendant is a man, as is the captain. We're all exhausted and just want to nap on the way to the hotel.

Finally the cabbie says, "Uh.... s'cuse me, Miss, are you the pilot?"

"No, I'm the co-pilot."

"Hah hah.... Oh...", he laughs, not sure if I'm pulling his leg or not.

A few more minutes go by before he says, "No really, you're the stewardess, right?" Somehow he can't reconcile my pilot hat, my flight bag, my wings and all those stripes on my shoulders with the fact that I'm a "lady."

"No, I'm really one of the pilots. He's the flight attendant," I point at Dave, our flight attendant.

"Dang, in all my 70-some years I ain't never met a lady pilot!" How long did it take you to be a pilot and does it take girls longer than it takes us?"

"Nah, it's easy -- I called an 800 number and had my pilot's license in about a month."

Silence.

About 5 minutes later as we're getting out of the cab and he's doling out our stuff, he looks at me again, all cock-eyed and says, "Now really, I'm serious. Tell me the truth -- are you really a pilot? Like in an airplane?"

"Seriously -- look at my stripes, my hat, my flight bag, my wings! I swear I'm for real." The guys affirm it -- "She's for real!"

And then he looks at our flaming gay male flight attendant as says quizzically, "And YOU'RE the stewardess?!"

And this is Syracuse, New York, for crying out loud! Can you imagine what it's like in Monroe, Louisiana, and Meridian, Mississippi?!

Ahh, a day in the life of a regional airline pilot.....

