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MARCH/APRIL 2009

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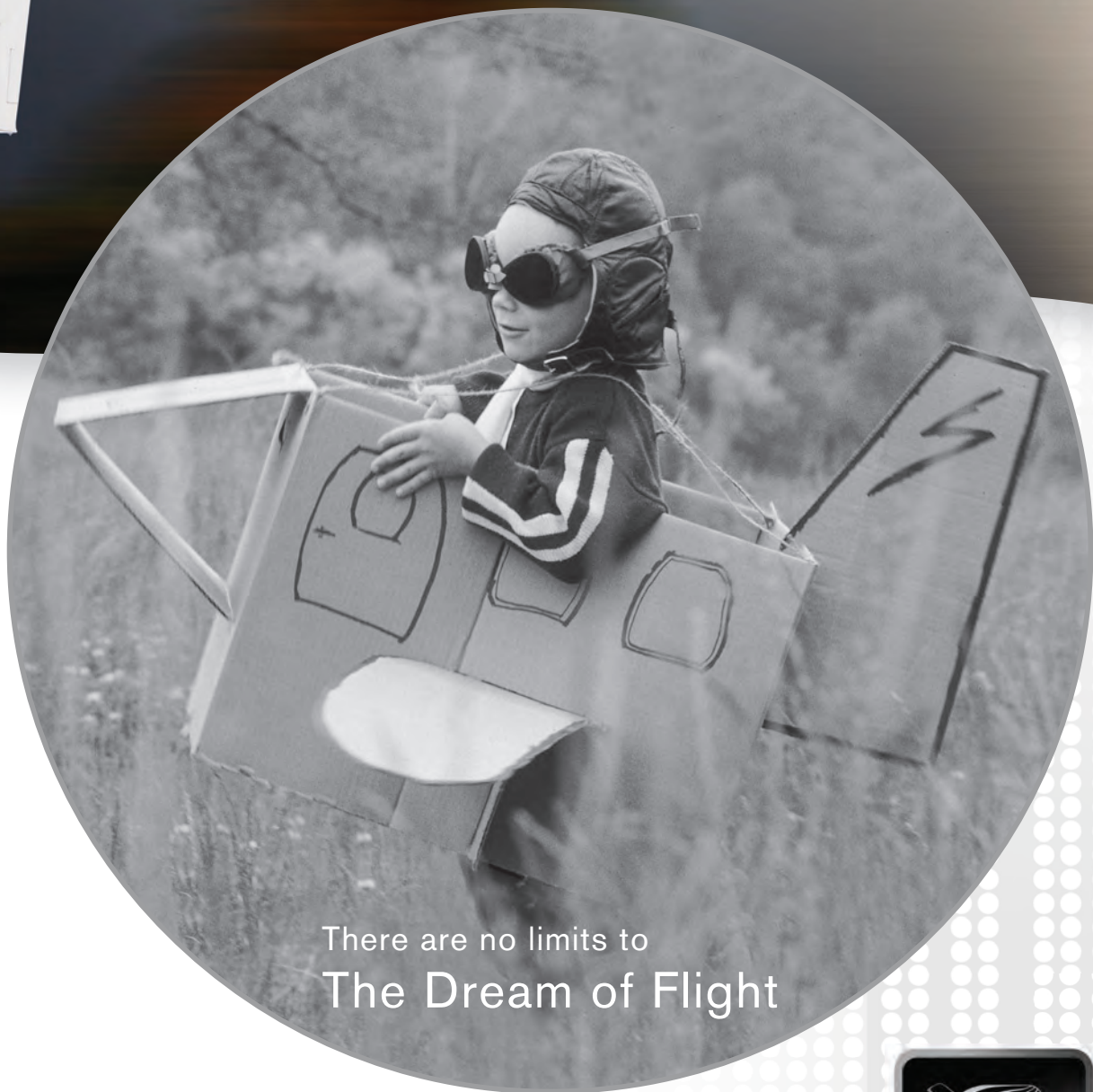
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COVER PHOTO

A&P mechanic Ashley Pepper, hard at work in the Citation Service Center. Cessna photographer Visual Media Group at Cessna Aircraft Company.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



DR. PEGGY
CHABRIAN

MSgt Rodney Hage is one of our hard-working Conference Volunteers of the Year. We worked together again at the AFHRDC conference which he coordinated in Atlanta this past November.

special edition anniversary books, you can order one on our web site, www.wai.org.

Many of you have participated in the current WAI Strategic Planning initiative, by responding to on-line membership surveys, participating in telephone focus group calls or responding to other surveys related to the study. The WAI board and staff will be meeting in mid-March for a two-day workshop to consolidate the findings from your input and those of aviation industry leaders so we can draft a new five year plan for your organization. Once the plan has been finalized we will share the results with you in this publication and on our web site.

Dear Members:

As I write this letter preparations are still underway for the upcoming 20th anniversary International Women in Aviation Conference. This issue will be distributed at the event as well as mailed to the members of WAI. And at this Conference we will be releasing a commemorative 20th Anniversary WAI Conference memory book, complete with photos from all previous 19 Conferences. If you were unable to attend the Conference and would like to purchase one of these

Thank you to all who took the time to answer the surveys or participate in one of the focus groups.

As economic conditions continue to be a factor in our lives, it is particularly important to consider the benefits of your membership in this organization. Since its inception WAI has been a leader in terms of the networking and mentoring among its membership. Perhaps you have not considered this benefit of your membership in the past. This year, with possible job changes looming, I encourage you to take advantage of the member-to-member mentoring available in the Members Only section of the web site. Look at the private Job Posting pages, too. Even more important, plan to attend conferences, WAI Connect breakfasts or volunteer to help at the WAI booth at various aviation trade shows and air shows. Put yourself "out there" while representing WAI and you'll have unprecedented opportunities to network with industry experts, professionals and other WAI members who are willing to help you pursue your aviation goals. Belonging to a WAI Chapter is another excellent opportunity for networking.

To those of you who attending the 20th anniversary WAI Conference in late February, a special thank you to each and every one of you for making it a memorable event!

Sincerely,

Dr. Peggy Chabrian

Dr. Peggy Chabrian
President/Founder

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



MEMPHIS BELLES CHAPTER

Darrius Stafford, nephew of Memphis Belles Chapter vice-president Lisa Slate, tries out the FedEx simulator. **Page 13**



Star Novak catches up on all the latest WAI news at her office at McFarlane Aviation Products. **Page 34**



COURTESY OF ANA ZEPEDA

Ana Zepeda tells the amazing story of her family and her success in becoming an airline pilot. **Page 56**



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BETTY DARST

Stars of the Sky, Legends All was presented to **Jef Jacquelin**, who built the **Wright Replica** he stands in front of, in **Le Mans, France**.

I just finished reading the online WAI Newsletter December 2008. The article about the Korean Airline Pilots (Industry News) was great. I wish you had mentioned that “Pilot” means “Captain” to the Koreans. Those ladies have made it to the left seat—how exciting! Soo Jin did some of her training at my flight school in California. We are so proud of her!

Great job on the publications.

Kristine Rasmussen (WAI #28994)
Austin, Texas

I enjoyed reading Jenny Beatty’s recent article “These Airplanes Won’t Fly Themselves” in the WAI newsletter. I love her positive outlook and message to current and future aviators. Keep the Faith.

Craig R. Washka (WAI #15484)
Director, Pilot Recruitment/Development
AirNet Systems, Inc.
Columbus, Ohio

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to apply for and subsequently receive a 2008 WAI Scholar-

ship. I was the recipient of a very generous scholarship from Airline Ground Schools, Inc., of Florence, Kentucky.

I chose the distance learning option to prepare myself for an intense one-week course held in Kentucky. I took my FAA written exam before I attended the training. I opted to take part in the June 2008 class. There I studied and tested with a group of students from South Korea. It was a great experience. Most important, though, I left the facility as a licensed FAA Dispatcher!

This opportunity has given me just one more option to participate in aviation, a field very dear to my heart. I can now go to almost any country in the world and work as an aircraft dispatcher. Without the support of Women in Aviation, International, and the generous people at Airline Ground Schools, Inc., this would not have been possible. Thank you!

Deborah Abingdon (WAI #15591)
Nogal, New Mexico

ERRATA:

Every now and again we leave something important out of the magazine, quite by mistake. In the January/February 2009 issue of *Aviation for Women*, the photos for the Jessica Cox story (pages 24-27) were taken by several different individuals who were not listed. We’d like to thank **Geoff and Glenn Davis**, and **Melissa Tan** for their wonderful work and generosity.

In the September/October 2008 issue **Walter Protheroe** had his name inadvertently misspelled on page 29. We do regret the error.

.....
We encourage you to submit letters to the editor. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Mail should be addressed to Aviation for Women, 18735 Baseleg Avenue, North Fort Myers, FL 33917. You can fax your letter to (239) 567-2271, or send via E-mail: alaboda@wai.org. ✈

JERRY CHABRIAN



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WAI CONNECT EVENTS

Spring is just around the corner. Women in Aviation, International is getting ready for their big events during the Sun 'n' Fun Fly-In, which will be held from April 21-26, 2009, in Lakeland, Florida. Check the dates and make your reservations today.

Women in Aviation Breakfast

Thursday, April 23

8:00 - 9:00 a.m.

Hilton Garden Inn

Lakeland Linder Field

Lakeland, Florida

Come join us during the Sun 'n' Fun Fly-In for a networking breakfast with WAI members. We promise you'll be well-fed and ready for a busy day on the field! It costs \$25. To sign up call WAI at (937) 839-4647 or email scoon@wai.org by April 16.



Women in Aviation Networking Event

Saturday, April 25

5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

PilotMall.com Showroom

(Former Gifts of Flight Building)

Sun 'n' Fun grounds

The PilotMall.com showroom will be open late for an exclusive Women in Aviation Networking event. Network with other WAI members and shop, too! Snacks and drinks will be provided.



Women in Aviation member and independent producer Heather Taylor is producing a documentary about the first national women's air derby (aka Powder Puff Derby) entitled *Rag Wing Derby*. The web site for the documentary is www.RagWingDerby.com. If anyone has firsthand accounts of the race or is aware of footage (photos, home movies, etc), please contact Heather @RagWingDerby.com. Information regarding sponsorship and/or donations can also be found on the web site or by contacting Heather @RagWingDerby.com

Schedulers and Dispatchers Conference in California

WAI exhibited at the NBAA 20th Annual Schedulers & Dispatchers Conference in Long Beach, California, January 14-16, 2009. **Betty Huck**, Chapter Relations Manager, spoke to attendees from corporate flight departments, FBOs, air charters, maintenance and repair stations, weather services, and other business aviation related areas. She shared information on the upcoming WAI Conference and the terrific opportunities for members with WAI scholarships and WAI Chapters in their area. Airline Ground Schools gave WAI a special scholarship for dispatcher training leading to an FAA Aircraft Dispatcher Certificate and applications were given out to interested attendees in the exhibit hall. WAI had a drawing at the grand prize luncheon for a full registration to the WAI Conference in Atlanta and the winner was **Regina Sorensen**, FOS Supervisor/Scheduler with Executive AirShare in Kansas City, Missouri. If you meet Regina at the Conference be sure to congratulate her on winning the drawing. The photo below is one of the new tabletop displays that WAI has to loan to Chapters for events and activities. ➔



The WAI exhibit booth at the Schedulers and Dispatchers Conference

BETTY HUCK

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THE WAI ANNUAL FUND

Women in Aviation, International would like to thank all of those members who participated in our 2008 "Non-Event" fundraiser for Endowment and Operations. Together we raised more than \$13,000 and helped each other through WAI's outreach and scholarship efforts.

Thank You!

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Sandra **Anderson**
Susan **Arthurs**
Jacquelyn **Balish**
Eileen **Bardolph**
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AMY LABODA

DON'T LAUGH

I'll tell you a secret about myself if you promise not to laugh at me. I'm a born procrastinator. Really! (Okay, you who work with me are laughing and shaking your heads—stop that! I can see you!) Honestly, I have all the traits. I am eager to get started on projects, and I adore the research and development phase of any new undertaking. I always did like going to school.

I find the act of meeting and getting to know new people, some of whom go on to become fast friends with me, to be positively stimulating.

But I don't always jump in right after the meeting and do the work that is required to finish a job. Now, understand, I do finish my projects, just not right away every time, as I believe that I should.

Sometimes the delay is just exhaustion. I work so hard and I'm so pumped up during the research and development phase of a task that it is difficult, sometimes, to gather up the energy to actually put the words to paper and get on with it.

On occasion I discover that I am intimidated by the scope of the project. Really big stories, with lots of voices and plot lines need to be woven, and that weaving is a skill that doesn't lend itself to being pushed. One needs time...but not too much time...to pull the disparate voices into a chorus and truly make that kind of story sing. I can always "see" the story developed in my mind's eye, but it is almost as if I need to wind myself, as one might wind a watch spring, before I can begin.

So how is it that I manage to succeed at being both a writer and an editor if I feel like I'm dragging my feet to the finish line on some projects? My survival tool is that I create, then meet absolute deadlines. It works.

Being in print media, there is always a day on which we must let the printer print, if we are to have this magazine to you in time. And it is always to you in time. That day, (I call it "drop dead day") everything about the magazine must be perfect. The package must be right, finished, and

uploaded to the printer. No exceptions. Anything not perfect at that point is a gaff. Sometimes they are irreparable. Most times we can fix a gaff for some cash, but for the sake of efficiency and efficacy we may choose to believe that we cannot.

Without deadlines I'm not sure I'd succeed—I'm telling you the truth here, and for a reason. I want you, fresh from the latest, greatest Women in Aviation, International Conference, full of dreams and aspirations and the energy to make exciting changes in your life, to set some deadlines to do just that. Change. Expand. Learn. Reach out.

These are all reasons why you spent the time and money to come to Atlanta and hobnob with other WAI members for a few days. You have goals.

Don't procrastinate. Give yourself a reasonable amount of time...but not too much! Start by writing a few thank-you notes to the people who touched you the most at the Conference. In those notes spell out your plan of action for changing your life, your career. It is cathartic. Then photocopy the best of those notes and put it up on your wall, somewhere where you will see it.

Read it like you do your calendar. Every day. Use it as an outline. And every day, make a bit of that change that you want come true. You might have

to delegate (or learn to delegate) a few tasks. And you may find yourself working in parallel or as a team with another person, such as a spouse or loved one, or entity (such as a school) to achieve your dream.

It might take a year (that's okay) or more, but it will work. You'll see change, and for the good. I know. Believe me, I know. ✈

***Start by writing
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your career.
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ST. LOUIS WOMEN WITH WINGS

St. Louis Women With Wings Chapter hosted an “Explore the World of Flying” event at the St. Louis Science Center. Members manned four information centers—one to share flying stories with a continuous aviation photo slide show, a display with some of the unique “Stars of the Sky, Legends All” heroes’ photos (thanks to **Ann Cooper** and **Sharon Rajnus**), one set up to learn about what an airplane cockpit looks like and examine different types of airplanes, and finally one to design a paper airplane and a test flight by trying to land it on an aircraft carrier! There was also a huge holiday card for folks to sign for the group’s adopted deployed Marine, **Sgt. Adam Banks**.

Gloria Bahn (WAI #1434) hosted the annual flying ornament exchange and potluck dinner—good food, great company (with lots of flying stories!), and a run of antique airplane decorations. There was even some live entertainment provided by members **Teresa Camp** (WAI #6879), **Bill Camp** (WAI #14869), and **Eve Cascella** (WAI #29490). ➔



WOMEN WITH WINGS CHAPTER

Member **Jen Moore** (WAI #15221) works the paper airplane aircraft carrier at the St. Louis Science Center.

MILE HIGH CHAPTER

Mile High Chapter members President **Carolyn Landron** (WAI #9630) and Scholarship Chair **Gail Steger-Mock** (WAI #4020) met with **Mark Van Tine**, President and COO of Jeppesen, in November to accept a generous donation of \$9,500 which included \$2,000 for operating costs and \$7,500 to establish a scholarship fund.

Jeppesen continues to support the Mile High Chapter and Women in Aviation by donating products and sponsoring members to attend the Conference each year.



MILE HIGH CHAPTER

SOUTHERN WINGS CHAPTER

Provisional Chapter Southern Wings located in Savannah, Georgia, decided that their vision as a chapter is to not only serve the aviation community, but to serve their local community as well. During the annual Savannah Youth Jazz Festival, Southern Wings teamed up with the local campus of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University to sponsor its first annual Paper Airplane Contest for kids. There were a total of 49 entrants, and the local Zonta Club donated the trophies for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. Honorable Mention prizes were awarded to the “2 years old and under” entrants.

Southern Wings chapter members also participated in the Light the Night Walk for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS). This event included a two-mile walk through scenic downtown Savannah as well as entertainment and food for all participants, and Southern Wings members raised just under \$1,000 for LLS.



Jen Furlong, Dawn Wingfield and Vice President Diana Smith working hard to tally up the results of the Paper Airplane Contest.

In December, Southern Wings partnered with SAFE Shelter, a local shelter for victims of domestic violence, in their Adopt a Family program. Southern Wings adopted a mother and her four children, who arrived at the shelter with not much more than the clothes on their backs. The family was asked to provide a “wish list” of items that they needed or would like to have. Southern Wings responded with quite an outpouring of gifts. Southern Wings President **Carrie Goodwin** (WAI #13362) and Treasurer **Dawn Wingfield** (WAI #39180) delivered the gifts to the shelter and they filled the entire back and back seat of an SUV with wrapped gifts and stockings. Southern Wings plans to continue their community involvement throughout the year with both aviation related and non-aviation related events. ➔



SOUTHERN WINGS CHAPTER

Carrie Goodwin (center) and Shelter volunteers Cynthia Bush (left) and Natalie Leggette (right) shown with some of the gifts provided by Southern Wings.

SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

The San Diego Chapter held a "Girl Scout Day" at Palomar Airport (CRQ) in Carlsbad, California, where Girl Scouts, ranging from 8 to 12 years of age, earned their aviation badges. Four aviation station topics which included how to fly planes, a cockpit tour, a video on a shuttle launch and careers in aviation gave the Girl Scouts some exposure to the aviation world.

It was such a great success that the San Diego WAI chapter will conduct more "Girl Scout Days" in 2009 at different airports around San Diego County. Chapter Secretary **Paulette Mello** (WAI #30402), who is a Girl Scouts of America employee, coordinated this event. Thanks go to **Diane Hager** (WAI #5400), 2007-08 Chapter President and CFII at Palomar Airport, for arranging the event at Grey Eagle Aviation's hangar with all their aircraft, and thanks to all of the volunteers! ➔



SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

SPACE CITY CHAPTER

This past fall WAI Space City Chapter members were invited to tour the Hobby Air Traffic Control tower and get a chance to see how busy controllers are and how they direct aircraft in and out of Hobby Airport. Even though the tour was scheduled on the week of the Thanksgiving holiday, the RSVP list was too large and a second tour of the control

tower had to be scheduled for November 25th. **Daniel Baker**, **Mark Duell** and **Collin White**, executives from www.FlightAware.com, the popular live flight tracking web site, were among the 38 WAI Space City members and guests to attend the tours. Special thanks to **Philip Edgar** and **Shawna Brownhill** (WAI #17626) for making this tour successful.




Congratulations to Amanda Steele (above), winner of the Telex Scholarship at the 2008 Women in Aviation Show.



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WAI CHAPTERS FROM HOUSTON, TEXAS, WORK TOGETHER AT WINGS OVER HOUSTON AIRSHOW

The WAI Houston and Space City Chapters again combined efforts for the 2008 Wings Over Houston (WOH) Airshow. Attendance at this fantastic show topped 80,000! The Houston-based WAI Chapters together had 30 volunteers working and enjoying the airshow over the two days. Volunteers rolled up thousands of posters while others placed wristbands on the VIPs. Eager drivers used special vehicles (fun golf carts) to transport WWII veterans as well as provide support for airshow performers and the approximately 1,800 VIPs.

Vickie Croston and **Shawna Brownhill**, along with WOH representative **Cindy Weaver** successfully ran the Eagle Squadron Hospitality Area. There was great food and drink, a huge tent for shelter, great seating and immaculate restrooms. 2008 was WAI's sixth year to be involved. Vickie and husband **Wyn Croston**, as well as both WAI chapters, were requested back for 2009. ✈

POLARIS CHAPTER

The Polaris Chapter in Edmonton is planning the 10th Biennial Canadian Women in Aviation Conference 2009, set for June 3-6. It was only in 1973 that the first female was hired to fly for an airline in North America. Now four percent of airline transport pilots are women! The Canadian Women in Aviation Conference has grown steadily over the years, and there are approximately 200 delegates expected. Women or men who are interested in aviation, or people who are supportive of women who have chosen careers in aviation, are welcome to attend. Air Traffic Controllers, military load masters, navigators, airport and airline management, and people new to aviation can take advantage of the networking, learning, sharing and job opportunities they'll find at this biannual conference.

The CWIA Conference 2009 planning committee has tentatively secured some amazing speakers for the conference: **Rosella Bjornson**—part of the planning committee, and the first female hired to fly for an airline in North America; **Maryse Carmichael**—the first female pilot of the Canadian precision flying team The Snowbirds; **Dee Brasseur**—the first female pilot of the CF-18 Hornet; **Cathy Fraser**—Air Canada pilot, and her husband **Dave Williams**—former Canadian astronaut. For more information on attending the conference in June, the conference schedule, the registration forms, and list of events are available at www.cwia.ca/conference.htm. ✈



Polaris Chapter CWIA Conference Committee includes (left to right) Jane Slywka, Dorothy Williams, Laura Denis, Rosella Bjornson, Barb Henderson, Audrey Kahovec

POLARIS CHAPTER

AIR RACE CLASSIC JUNE 23-26, 2009

80 YEARS OF ALL-WOMEN TRANSCONTINENTAL AIR RACING!

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MEMPHIS BELLES CHAPTER

In January, the Memphis Belles met at the FedEx Express Air Operations Training Center in Memphis for their annual Scholarship Meeting. Three scholarships were awarded to WAI members, totaling \$3,000.

The WAI Conference Scholarship for \$500 was awarded to **Lisa Ehn** (WAI #41337), a student at Lewis University in Illinois.



Ehn

Her award includes a full WAI Conference registration, with additional funds to help with transportation and hotel. She is working on her Instrument Rating.

The Aviation Education Scholarship for \$1,250 was awarded to **Paul Kloehn** (WAI #41567) who is a WAI and Memphis Belles

member, a member of the Civil Air Patrol, and a CAP Mission Pilot. He is involved in many community events at the Olive Branch Airport in Mississippi, and is a leader in his son's Cub Scout Pack. He will be using his scholarship to attend school to get his dispatcher's license.

The Colleen Platt-Walker Memorial Flight Training Scholarship for \$1,250 was awarded to **Lauren Lipe** (WAI #40174), who is a student at Middle Tennessee State University, and currently completing an internship at FedEx Express in Flight Coordination. She will be using her



Kloehn and Lipe

award for flight training. She is a member of the MTSU flight team and the WAI MTSU Air Raiders Chapter, and volunteered at the Midsouth Airshow in 2007.

After the awards ceremony, 21 members and guests got an opportunity to fly the MD-11 simulator, courtesy of FedEx. This was a first-time experience for some guests and aviation enthusiasts, including two local high school students hoping to pursue careers as pilots someday. In between sim sessions, everyone toured the FedEx Maintenance Operations Control Center, and got an inside peek of how FedEx manages and maintains over 360 mainline aircraft, including the MD-11, B-727, B-757, DC-10, A-300, and the soon to be delivered B-777. Many attendees also bid on several silent auction items, including an MD-11 model signed by FedEx founder Frederick W. Smith. All proceeds of the auction went to the scholarship fund. ➔



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CAREERS

Congratulations to **Dora Amoah** (WAI #39702) from the Garden State Chapter, on her first solo flight.

Trish Beckman (WAI #17) of Renton, Washington, was elected as an Upper Freeman of the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators.

Jodi Cessna (WAI #40541)

passed her private pilot check ride in December.

Heather Gregory (WAI #28619) from the Northern Spirit Chapter, is now a First Officer on a Metro II for Perimeter Aviation, flying in Northern Manitoba, Canada.



Tribbett

Congratulations to **Kelly Herlihy** (WAI #40609) from the Garden State Chapter, who gave birth to her beautiful daughter Jasmine Nicole in December.

UPS Captain **Karen Lee** (WAI #2630) was awarded the Katharine Wright Award at the National Aerobatic Association Fall Awards Banquet held in Arlington, Virginia.

Congratulations to **Laura MacCallister** (WAI #1726) from the Garden State Chapter, on passing her instrument check ride.

Jelica Matic (WAI # 4170) of Kaneohe, Hawaii, recently earned her Master CFI accreditation. Matic is a flight and ground instructor with Flight School Hawaii (www.Flight-SchoolHawaii.com), a Cessna Pilot Center at Honolulu International Airport (HNL). She is also active in The Ninety-Nines and serves as a FAAS Team representative in the FAA's Honolulu FSDO area.

Mitchell Garrett Shubat was born in November, to Ava (WAI #215) and Matt Shubat. He was two weeks early and was 8 lbs 4 oz and 20 inches. Mom and son are both doing well.

The Garden State Angels would like to wish **Kristina (Kris) Sofchak** (WAI #39965) good luck as she leaves for Afghanistan with the 150th Aviation Brigade, New Jersey Army National Guard.

Karen F. Tribbett (WAI #11392) received an award for a record flight in the Gulfstream G550, for Speed Over a Recognized Course, from Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, to San Diego, California: 498.50 mph; by the National Aerobatic Association during its Fall Awards Banquet held in Arlington, Virginia.

Allicia Waite (WAI #21267), a flight instructor at Flight-Safety Academy in Vero Beach, Florida, recently earned her Multiengine Instructor rating (MEI).

OTHERS MAKE THEIR MARK

Aero Law Group PLLC, an aviation law practice focusing on commercial airlines, corporate and private aircraft, as well as emerging-growth companies, appointed **Cheryl Kringle** as the newest attorney to join the team. Kringle will be responsible for representing clients in sales, leasing and the exchange of business and commercial aircraft.

Pamela Elaine Stafford of Olathe, Kansas, recently earned her Master CFI and Master GI accreditations. Stafford is the founder and owner of Stafford Executive Pilot Training where she provides flight and ground instruction at several Olathe-area airports. She also offers primary and advanced ground training through Johnson County Community College.

PASSAGES

One of Australia's most famous aviators, **Nancy Bird-Walton**, has died aged 93. Born in the New South Wales north coast town of Kew in 1915, Bird-Walton became the first female pilot to get her commercial pilot's certificate at the age of 19. She wanted to fly from the age of four and she was taught to take the controls when she was just 17 by Charles Kingsford Smith. She went on to pioneer an air ambulance service for outback New South Wales and was commandant of the Women's Air Training Corps during World War II. Bird-Walton also founded the Australian Women Pilots' Association and went on to be president for about 40 years. In 1997, Bird-Walton was named a Living National Treasure by the National Trust. Last year Qantas named its first A380 jet in her honor. She is survived by her daughter, her son, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

It is with sadness and a sense of loss that we announce the passing of **Betty Jane (BJ) Williams** (WAI #2637). Williams passed away from complications related to a massive stroke suffered in November. She was a friend, a confidant, a "sister," a peer and a patriot. Her contributions to the WASP, the community, civic organizations, educational institutions, the U.S. Military and to her nation will be remembered and sorely missed. ✈



Nancy Bird-Walton



MEG GODLEWSKI

I have a student who is a bit of a bully. He's 17 and wants to make a career of flying, but he's managed to offend most everyone here at the flight school because he wants something and he wants it NOW. How do I handle him?

Talk to the student about his behavior. He may not realize how he comes across. Suggest he fly with another CFI and then ask that CFI for his/her observations. You may have a personality conflict with the student that manifests with his behavior.

Part of the issue may be a lack of maturity on his part, or his parents could be part of the problem, if they cater to his every whim. And finally refer back to your FOI. If he is overly aggressive he could be having a reaction to the stress of flying. If he concerns you that much you may want to fire him until he grows up a bit and learns to keep himself in check.

I'm a little on the short side and I am having trouble seeing over the nose of the aircraft. I keep trying different combinations of pillows and cushions but nothing works. Can you help me?

I recommend making the investment in a cushion that is de-

signed for aviation use. Oregon Aero carries them. The cushions are not cheap, but are very well made and worth the investment. And if you amortize the cost of the cushion out over the life of your aviation career it is not terribly expensive.

Taller pilots have challenges as well. For them, the usual answer is fly a larger airplane. I have one client who is six foot nine and we had to put him in a C-172 right off the bat because of his long legs.

I recently flew with a client for a biennial flight review and he did so poorly I did not sign him off. I explained that I could not sign him off because in my opinion he was not a safe pilot. I recommended more training. He became very angry and refused to pay me, then stormed off. Did I handle this correctly?

CFIs are like lifeguards. If we see something unsafe or potentially dangerous, we have to correct it. If you honestly felt that this guy is unsafe then you did the right thing. How would you feel if you signed him off and then he had an accident? If you are concerned that he will continue to fly illegally then you should contact your local FAA and ask to speak to a FAA Safety Team representative and express your concerns. ✈

.....
Meg Godlewski (WAI #8165) is a NAFI Master Instructor and writes for General Aviation News.



Global Aviation



Captain Julie Clark and Chevron Global Aviation. Ready for takeoff.

Chevron Global Aviation proudly presents aviation legend Julie Clark of American Aerobatics. Look for Julie, flying in her Chevron Mentor T-34, at air shows all across the country. To learn more about Chevron Global Aviation and where you can see Julie Clark fly, visit www.totalga.com



PROFILE

NEW AIRPORTS COMPANY SOUTH AFRICA LIMITED (ACSA)

Airports Company South Africa Limited (ACSA) was formed in 1993 to own and operate South Africa's nine principal airports, including the three international gateways of O.R. Tambo, Cape Town and Durban. Since inception its 15 years ago, it has transformed a fragmented, infrastructural parastatal into a profitable commercial enterprise that is market-driven and customer-oriented.

ACSA's network of 10 airports continues to play a dominant role in the South African aviation industry, handling over 98% of the country's commercial air traffic. In the 2008 financial year, this network processed more than 36 million departing and arriving passengers and 291 thousand aircraft landings from nearly 50 international destinations, connecting Africa with all other continents.

The sustained growth in traffic over the years, coupled with a creative and performance-focused management and leadership team, have contributed to the Company's excellent financial performance over time. This has enabled the Company to transform South Africa's airports into world-class airports, delivering value for customers, stakeholders, shareholders and employees.

In the last five years, ACSA paid dividends in excess of R2 billion to its shareholders, 74.6 percent of which went to the main shareholder, the South African government, the government also received an additional R1,3 billion in taxes from ACSA in the period.

The remarkable growth of commercial revenues as a proportion of total revenues has contributed significantly to ACSA's financial success over the years. In the financial year ended March 31, 2008, commercial revenue grew by 23 percent to R1,342 billion.

Apart from providing world-class, secure and safe airport infrastructure, ACSA promotes tourism and facilitates socio-economic growth. The Company is committed to promoting a healthy environment and to preserving it for the benefit of present and future generations. Improving service levels is a key focus area for ACSA.



Based on the fundamental principle of "moving people, changing lives," all ACSA's CSI programmes are strongly linked to its business purpose—that of facilitating the movement of people in and out of South Africa.

Fundamentally, ACSA seeks to empower and sustain South African communities by making a vital contribution to socio-economic development and the fight against poverty.

In 2006, ACSA and a consortium comprising the Indian company GVK and South African listed company, Bidvest, won a concession to manage Mumbai International Airport (MIAL). ACSA has an airport operations agreement with the consortium, effectively becoming the airport operator for MIAL. ACSA considers MIAL an exciting and valuable investment.

ACSA strives to create a work environment where top-quality employees feel valued, cared for, challenged and enabled to reach their full potential. ACSA believes that the key to its success is in appointing, developing and retaining the right people with the right skills in the right jobs. For more information go to www.airports.co.za. ➔

Women in Aviation, International Welcomes New Corporate Members

Airline Transport Professionals, Inc.
Department of Interior NBC Aviation Management
Falcon Aviation Academy
Midcoast Aviation, Inc.
Miss Aerial
Wealth Educators For Aviators, LLC
Wings of Eagles Discovery Center

TECH TIPS



DENISE WATERS

We're just pulling an aircraft out of winter storage as it didn't fly this past season. What are the basics for getting a stored airplane ready to take to this fresh spring air again?

Restoring an aircraft from intermediate (over 30-45 days) or long-term (over 90-180 days) storage to the flight line requires a systematic approach. First, refer to all manufacturers' instructions. Second, create/revise a checklist of what needs to be accomplished. It keeps focus, allowing you not to overlook anything. It also saves time and money. Review it with another mechanic. Four basic steps: 1. Visual Inspection, 2. Depreservation, 3. Re-Inspection & Maintenance and 4. Ops Check, will restore an aircraft to flight.

1. Visual Inspection provides an overview. Learn what you are dealing with. Notice anything happened during storage? Corrosion status? Visits from any furry or multi-legged friends? Unblock inlets. Remove red-flagged plugs and desiccant bags. Update checklist with visual findings. 2. Depreserve following manufacturer instructions. Include de-pickling the engine, exchanging out dehydrator plugs, changing oil and more visual work. Inspect fuel tanks which may have been drained. Was everything preserved correctly? 3. Open

up all areas to re-inspect with flashlight and mirror like an annual inspection. Service as needed. Confirm paperwork. Review all logbooks and AD's to make sure everything is current. 4. Perform Ops Check to verify all systems, including avionics. Upon satisfactory completion the aircraft should be ready to spring into action.

Why recommend completing an aircraft Annual Inspection in the spring instead of during a season with a minimal amount of flying, like winter?

Spring is a great time for Annual Inspections for a number of reasons. An aircraft flown less in winter, with no one inspecting it daily, can ultimately demand attention that only an Annual Inspection can address. A part's condition and life expectancy sometimes follows a quicker tempo during inactivity. If an aircraft is recovering from long-term storage, an Annual addresses the work needed. Ever drive past an airfield in winter? It is sad to see an aircraft tied down outside, tires frozen to the tarmac, with flight surfaces buried in snow. A few days later, with a temporary thaw, that airplane appears ready for flight. But looks can be deceiving. Ice, snow and wind damage aircraft. As the days become better for flying, the aircraft must be dependable and operate without surprises. Finally, it's a lot more fun working on an airplane in the hangar than the usual household spring cleaning chores! ➔

Denise Waters (WAI #221) is an FAA-certified A&P mechanic and pilot. She enjoys air racing as a passion.

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- Weather Graphics
- Individual State NEXRAD Doppler Graphics
- Multiple Stored Pilot Profiles
- Multiple Stored Aircraft Profiles
- Multiple Stored Routes
- Route Overlays
- Graphical TFRs
- Computer Generated Routes
- Preferred Routes
- Flight Plan Filing
- Flight Planner
- Stored Request Management
- Airport Diagrams
- QICP Approved
- Interactive Overlays
- Airport Photos
- Reverse Route
- Approach Plates
- Sectional Charts
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Polar First
by Jennifer Murray
Review by Lee Wedlake

This coffee table-sized book has a wonderful shot of a huge iceberg surrounded by crashing waves with a helicopter parked atop it on the only available flat area, seemingly dwarfed by the size of it. The subtitle reads “The incredible story of two Poles, one helicopter and a world record.”

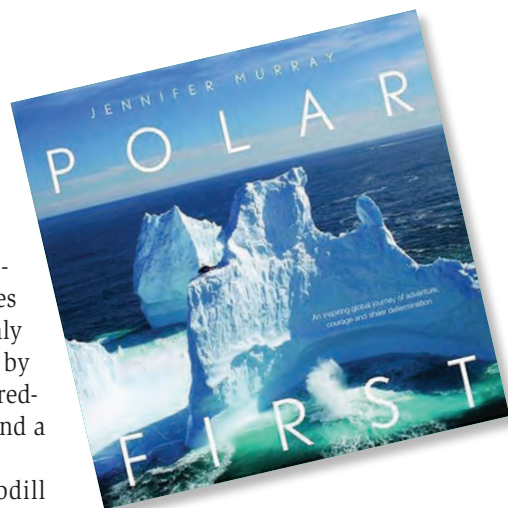
Author Jennifer Murray and Colin Bodill were the first to fly a Bell 407 helicopter around the world via the North and South Poles. *Polar First* is loaded with fantastic, excellent quality photographs of people and places, some covering two pages. The descriptions of the trek are easy to read, informative and inspiring. Murray tells us not only what they experienced but how it, their second attempt, was accomplished. The layout makes it flow as well, with detail touches such as the page numbers being marked with degree symbols (page 95 is 95°). I really enjoyed this and I think you will, too.

ISBN 978-988-17831-1-0

Published by PPPCompany Limited, Hong Kong, China; 2008.

217 pages; \$49.99

www.Amazon.com



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THEM KNOW**

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AmSafe® for Aftermarket

When it comes to safety in the air, I'm onboard. That's why I was excited to hear that AmSafe®, Inc., the leading provider of safety and securement products to the aviation, defense and ground transportation markets, was making its inflatable airbag restraint system available to aftermarket installations.

The AmSafe Aviation Inflatable Restraint is a self-contained, modular airbag restraint system. It was specifically designed to improve occupant protection from serious head-impact injury during an otherwise survivable aircraft accident, thus enhancing the occupant's ability to exit the aircraft. When the AAIR system's sensors detect a crash, an airbag built into the restraint deploys up and away from the seat occupant, and has been tested for people from women in the 5th percentile of size to men in the 95th percentile. The airbag system adds just 1.5 lbs per passenger placement and meets the FAA 16g rule.

The recent addition of the Cessna Aircraft Service Center Network greatly expands AmSafe's reach. As part of the agreement with Cessna, each authorized service center will be able to install the AmSafe Airbag system on a wide range of aircraft models manufactured by Cessna and by other OEMs. Along with Cessna Aircraft Company (a Textron, Inc. company, NYSE: TXT), AmSafe has also authorized service centers to install and support the AmSafe Airbag system for OEMs such as Cirrus Design Corporation, Diamond Aircraft Industries Incorporated and Mooney Airplane Company. —A.L.



Adventures in Flying **by Jack Elliott**

Review by Lee Wedlake

Jack Elliot wrote aviation columns for a New Jersey newspaper for 38 years. This book is a compilation of those articles on the varied aspects of aviation. New airplanes, old airplanes, blimps, gliders, rotorcraft, balloons, mercy flights, movers and shakers, youth programs, business aviation; you name it, it's in here. And it's enjoyable, easy reading.

Women involved in aviation have their own chapter, and so do his favorite stories. There is even a foreword by former Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) president Phil Boyer. Barry Schiff and Bob Hoover endorsed it, too. It's a big book, over 500 pages, with a nice cover and hours of enjoyment inside.



ISBN 978-0-615-13294-5

Published by Alexander & Ray LLC, New Jersey 2006
516 pages; \$29.95

Garmin 696/695 Checkout DVD

Review by Lee Wedlake

This video has the same good production quality and graphics that have come to be expected of the Sporty's products. Rob Reider, the host, explains that the only difference between the 695 and 696 is that the 696 offers XM weather while the 695 does not. The product itself has gotten good reviews. The odd thing I noticed on the video was that they show it being installed on the yoke of a G-1000 equipped airplane. Belt and suspenders, I guess.

Seven sections starting with an introduction include familiarization with the unit and its pages, flight planning, navigation, IFR and VFR tools, and utilities are covered in a logical sequence. Reider points out that the learning curve is shallow if you have used the G-1000 and I agree. Even without, I don't think it would take too long to get proficient with the unit with the aid of this video.



Garmin 696/695 Checkout, DVD
51 minutes.

Produced by Sporty's Pilot Shop.
\$29.95.

Available at www.sportys.com
1-800-SPORTYS



Crunch Time

They say that earning your Instrument Rating for your pilot certificate is truly your initiation into the national airspace system. It is also the toughest rating you'll probably ever strive for. That's why it is imperative that you get solid IFR training. Accelerated Flight & Instrument Training (AFIT) is not a flight school. AFIT's CFIs come to you, or you come to them—either way you can expect an intensive experience while you learn everything you need to safely and competently fly IFR in about 10 days.

Courses provided by AFIT include the IFR, Finish up, Commercial and Multiengine. Cost ranges from \$595 (plus round-trip airfare for your instructor and hotel) per day up to \$650 a day for Cabin Class aircraft training in aircraft such as the Piper Meridian, Pilatus PC-12, Cessna 400 series and Beech King Airs.

The gimmick? You finish faster, you don't pay for the additional days. If you are still training at 10 days for your IFR, AFIT's adamant that it will not charge you more for the additional training. The catch for you is that you must have a concentrated (though short) amount of time in which to train uninterrupted, and you must provide the aircraft or make arrangements for one, and for lodging and transport for your instructor.

The accolades are as high as the convenience factor for AFIT, however, the key to the company's success is definitely in the high quality of flight instructors that they keep on the roster (the minimum IFR time logged for an AFIT CFI is 2,000 hours). For more information on courses or to contact AFIT go to www.afit-info.com or call (866) 270-8224. —A.L.



WASP

LEGENDS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

It was the busiest booth at the 2007 Women in Aviation, International Conference, at *Disney's Coronado Springs Resort*—the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) corner of the exhibit hall.

At an eight-foot table six or seven women were seated at any one time and signed poster after poster, book after book, and shared stories and moments with mostly younger women,

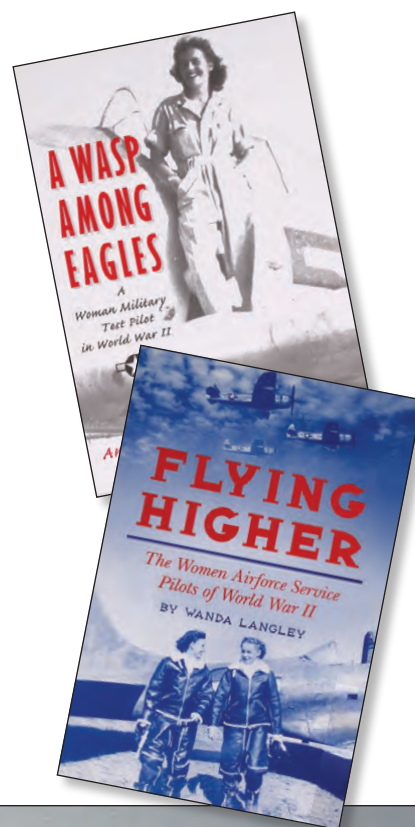
many of whom wore the modern uniforms of active military services from around the world.

That year, these women, mostly in their 70s and 80s, sold Women in Aviation, International, all of their remaining stores of books and videotapes, which are now available (until they run out) in the WAI Online Store on the WAI web site, www.waistore.com, and at the WAI Exhibition Store during the International Women in Aviation Conferences held yearly.

If you haven't had the opportunity to peruse the web site and see what's

there, you are missing a veritable gold mine of historical information, pictures and one-of-a-kind intimate interviews with these women who, at tender ages, volunteered their skills to the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II.

Discover the steely nature these women needed to put up with the discrimination that was, in their moment, ram-



2007 CONFERENCE PHOTOS BY JOHN RIEDEL



pant through the military ranks, and learn how they triumphed, even under the most discouraging conditions. And study what it took for them to persevere and finally receive, in the late 1970s, some 30 years after their service, the military benefits that they deserved.

The stories are all there in the Books

and Videos section of the WAI Store: more than a dozen different interpretations, some memoirs, some video interviews, some highly scripted documentaries and even fictionalized accounts made for the younger set. They are pieces of history you can savor for yourself, just a phone call or click away. ➔



Canada's second largest airline, Air Canada Jazz, currently serves 85 destinations in Canada and the United States with a fleet of regional jet and turboprop aircraft. We operate over 848 flights a day and carry approximately 9 million passengers each year. Headquartered in Halifax with an employee base of close to 5,000 people, Jazz offers a professional working environment and opportunities for individual career growth.

Air Canada Jazz is an Employment Equity employer. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply.

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www.flyjazz.ca/careers.



We would like to thank in advance everyone who applies, as only candidates to be interviewed will be contacted. No telephone inquiries please.



JULIA REINERS

FROM SCHOLARSHIP WINNER TO FIRST OFFICER

In March 2005 I was awarded a generous scholarship from the Mesa Pilot Development Program (MPD), offered through Women in Aviation, International. It offset the cost of my first semester of private pilot training at MPD in Farmington, New Mexico. Three years after being awarded this scholarship, I have nearly 2,000 hours as a first officer in the Canadair Regional Jet (CRJ).

I first learned about WAI when I was working as a flight attendant and taking flight lessons in Philadelphia. Several women pilots I worked with encouraged me to become a WAI member and seek out scholarship opportunities. I was apprehensive but optimistic, and I applied for the one scholarship that stood out to me.

I had heard of MPD before. It had a good reputation amongst fellow crewmembers, but it sounded too good to be true. The *ab initio* (from the beginning) program was designed to take students with little or no flight time to the right seat of a commercial jet or turboprop in about a year and a half. Students earn an associate's degree in aviation science, and complete all the necessary ground school and flight training during that time. Furthermore, the program had a 95% job placement rate. Skepticism aside, I dutifully assembled my application and pestered coworkers for letters of recommendation.

When the program coordinator announced that I was the scholarship winner at the annual WAI Conference in Dallas, I remember my overwhelming excitement for the adventure ahead. Looking back on my experience at MPD, I couldn't be happier with my choice in flight schools. I received a quality education, all my ratings, an associate's degree, and was hired by Mesa Airlines in the span of 17 months.

The WAI Conference left a lasting impression on me and I think that having been exposed to WAI early on in my career was a noteworthy advantage. I came into contact with amazing women from all walks of the industry: women like me, forging their way on new career paths, and others that had already achieved tremendous success in their fields. I was inspired and empowered by them.

I am currently employed by Mesa Airlines flying CRJ's for United Express out of Washington's Dulles International Airport. Flying for an airline is one of the most dynamic ca-

reers I can think of. The schedules, layovers, weather, aircraft and crews are always changing. Weekly, if not daily, we will switch between the CRJ 200 and 700, and we are occasionally sent to cover flying in other bases, for our other codeshare partners, such as US Airways Express. It's often difficult to



Reiners in 2005 with Richard Castle and Rae Lynn Shropshire of San Juan/Mesa

JOHN RIEDEL

remember what city I am in, and even what day it is, when I wake up in yet another anonymous hotel room. For a workforce that generally loves their jobs, most pilots love going home even more. I especially appreciate the time I have with my loved ones after living out of a suitcase for five days.

An old adage warns that nothing worth getting comes easily and that holds true for my own experience. I suffered a major setback in my training when the terms of my student loans were changed halfway through my commercial semester. I was forced to pay back the money I had already borrowed, nearly \$30,000, and secure money to continue with the program, while completing my checkride by the deadline. The situation was a terrible source of stress, and became much worse before it got better. There were many days when it looked like I would be forced to leave school, defeated, but through the help of some incredible people I got another loan, won several more scholarships, and was able to complete my

flying. To make ends meet, I worked three part-part time jobs while juggling the intense academic and flying schedule. I would have done anything to make it work and am so thankful that everything worked out in the end.

While there have been other difficult times and setbacks, certain achievements dwarf them all. The satisfaction after passing a difficult checkride, the "I can't believe this is my job" feeling when looking out the window at an awe inspiring scene, and the glimpse of approach lights 200 feet above the ground make all the hard work worth it. Recently, I had my mother as a non-rev passenger on one of my flights. It was a thrill to share one little snapshot of my life with someone so instrumental, who has supported me through so much.

I've learned important lessons from my involvement with different aviation organizations such as WAI. Regardless of whether you're a student or a seasoned pilot, everyone has something valuable to offer. As a student, your passion and enthusiasm is contagious. Even if you are talking to someone with zero interest in airplanes, you can help them recognize the commitment it takes to achieve your goals, and inspire them to take a risk and pursue their dreams.

There are many unique opportunities and resources avail-

***To make ends meet,
I worked three
part-part time jobs
while juggling the
intense academic
and flying schedule.
I would have done any-
thing to make it work.***

able through WAI, The Ninety-Nines, and other organizations to give back to the aviation community around you while continuing to develop as an aviator. I am currently involved with the Ninety-Nines Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative (PPLI) which is a mentoring partnership designed to help women in various stages of their careers achieve their ultimate career goals. It is helping me prepare for the next steps: upgrading to captain, and eventually moving on to a major airline.

While learning to fly and getting hired at an airline was certainly challenging, I have had the time of my life. I am beyond grateful to WAI and MPD

for granting the scholarship that started it all. I truly love my job and consider myself very lucky to do what I enjoy everyday. I've flown hundreds of hours all across the country, pushed myself in ways I never knew possible, and met amazing friends. Finally, a flying career isn't all that the scholarship brought into my life—I met my husband on our first day of flight school. I encourage everyone to go after their dreams, whatever they may be. ✈

.....
Julia Reiners (WAI # 16940) was Julia McElroy when she won her scholarship in 2005. She's a First Officer on a Bombardier CRJ.

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Peggy Whitson

NASA's Most Experienced Astronaut



One of Peggy Whitson's clearest memories is being awakened by her parents to watch Neil Armstrong's moon walk on July 21, 1969. "It was very unusual for my folks to let us be up that late, so I knew it was something special," she says. Is that when she decided to be an astronaut? "Not really. When you're nine, you want to be a lot of things," she says. No one in the Whitson home that summer night could imagine that the young girl watching television would grow up to be the first female commander of the International Space Station.

Commander Whitson grew up in rural Iowa—the nearest town had a population of 32. She remembers herself as a tomboy, somewhat shy with a few close friends. "It wasn't easy for me to socialize," she remembers, "but I enjoyed reading, water-skiing, and fishing and playing basketball with my brother."

Her high school drew students from a wide geographic area; there were 68 students in her graduating class. It was in high school, however, that her love of science developed. She breezed through all the biology courses her high school offered and had such a passion for study that her teachers allowed her to create her own advanced courses on topics that interested her.

Her primary interest was physiology of the human body, and she became a research scientist early, even conducting a study of the blood pressures of the teachers at her high school. She recalls, "I was in an environment that allowed me to pursue those things that interested me. I also had a great physics teacher, and I enjoyed all the sciences."

During her senior year in high school, in 1978, NASA had its

first female astronaut, and that planted the seed of desire in Commander Whitson. She knew that she wanted to be an astronaut, but says, "I didn't tell a whole lot of people, mostly because I was a private and quiet person, but my parents told me that I could do whatever I set my mind to doing and so they were supportive."

In college, she majored in biology and chemistry, but adds that she had enough math courses that math could have been her major as well. "I went through college in three years and it's where I fell in love with biochemistry." That was the course of study she pursued for both her Master's degree and her PhD at Rice University.

Commander Whitson's first space mission was in 2002, with 184 days aboard the International Space Station (ISS) as a member of Expedition 5. Her second mission launched on October 10, 2007, as the first female commander of the ISS with Expedition 16.

She currently holds two NASA records: She is NASA's most experienced astronaut having logged 376 days in space. Further, she has the most Extra Vehicular Activity (EVA) time of any female astronaut. EVA is time outside the spacecraft and Whitson has 39 hours and 46 minutes of it. About her records, she says, "I feel honored to hold them," but adds, "We're always breaking records. That's part of what we do, so I feel privileged to hold these records temporarily."

In terms of advice for aspiring astronauts, Commander Whitson says, "Astronauts are such a diverse group of peo-





ple that we encourage young people to pick math, science or engineering.” The important thing, she says, is to enjoy the study and to be really good at it. She says, “You’ve got to enjoy the path along the way. My goal was to become an astronaut and it took ten years of applying for that to happen.” Right now, she is chairing the selection board to pick the next group of International Space Station astronauts. She says, “That’s somewhat unusual, but I was asked to do it because they want a long duration crewmember who knows about the personality requirements such as flexibility and the ability to get along with folks.”

Commander Whitson sums up her advice for WAI members: “If a farmer’s daughter can grow up to be an astronaut, anyone can do just about anything.”

Learn more about Commander Whitson by reading her International Space Station journals online at NASA’s web site at www.nasa.gov. ➔

.....
Patricia Luebke was home on July 21, 1969, and vividly remembers staring up at the moon that night and saying, “Wow.”



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NASA

Cessna

In

Through The
Ground Floor
and

Up

From There

A good blue-collar manufacturing job is not the stuff of most little girls' dreams, but the women employed at Textron's Cessna Aircraft Company, located in Wichita, Kansas, Independence, Kansas, Columbus, Georgia, and Bend, Oregon, will tell you that starting on the production line, or even in the mailroom or secretarial pool at this company is still a great way to get a foot in the door on a long and productive career in aviation.

by Amy Laboda

Whether you stopped your education at a high school diploma, a hands-on technical degree (such as an A&P or avionics tech), a B.A. in Liberal Arts or an engineering degree, Cessna has a place for you, it seems, from talking to the women who work for the company.

Christy Ballinger had just graduated from high school and taken a job in a local machine shop when her opportunity came to work at Cessna's Independence, Kansas, facility. "I needed a shift-work job so that I could go to school during

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CESSNA AIRCRAFT COMPANY

Women



Tracey Robinson

the day,” she says. Through Cessna she earned a Bachelor’s in Business Administration and Human Resources, and now works as the quality manager of the Quality Engineers at the Independence plant. “Our main function is to make sure that we have aircraft that leave the facility with in type design. We take care of FAA compliance,” she explains.

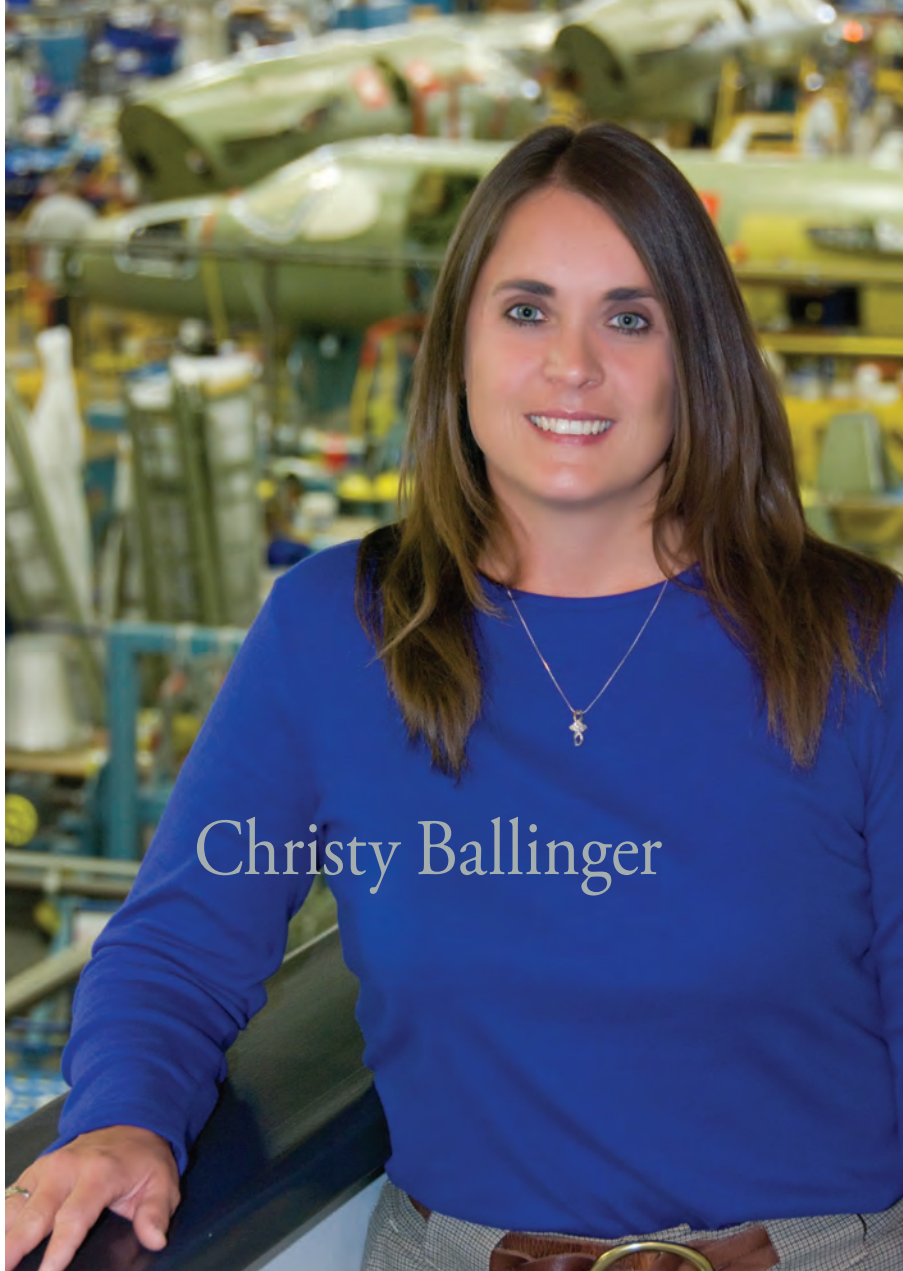
Laura Hilboldt was fascinated by airplanes in her youth, and even worked as a line girl at the airport to finance flying lessons. She went to Parks College, in Cahokia, Illinois, near St. Louis, Missouri, but chose to major in engineering because it was more economical. After years with Boeing as an engineer, though, she changed her mind.

“I’m 46. I kind of had a mid-life crisis at 41 and realized that I really wanted to fly for a living. A flight instructor friend told me it was not too late. I soloed at 17 but did not fly between 1980 and 2003. That’s when I got my commercial and multiengine ratings. Cessna has a program that transitions lower time pilots into its production test flight program and I took advantage of that,” she says.

But it wasn’t all that easy. “It was a good year and a half before I got a call to interview at Cessna after applying,” she recalls. “Turns out that I didn’t get hired for the first job I interviewed for, however, they looked for a place for me to fit in,” she says. “Even when I interviewed they asked me why I was leaving Boeing and I said I wanted to work as a pilot, and they said, that’s okay. The HR person did say, though, ‘don’t be disappointed if you aren’t hired as a pilot.’ But they did eventually let me go there. At Cessna they are willing to help you get there,” she says. And “get there” she did. With Cessna’s new Associate Test Pilot Program Hilboldt was able to transition from a production position into a Test Pilot position with a little more than 500 hours of flying under her belt. She was the only female test pilot at the Independence, Kansas, plant at the time of this writing.

In Wichita, Kansas, at Cessna Aircraft’s Corporate headquar-

ters and the site of several more of the company’s production lines, Tracey Robinson, a Six Sigma Black Belt, whose job it is to examine and determine process improvements throughout the production lines, remembers how she started at the company with just an Associate’s degree in Business. “My first job here was as a general clerk,” she says. But Cessna’s generous education stipend (up to \$5200 a year) allowed her to go back to school for her Bachelor’s degree in business. “I went from a general clerk up through all the quality engineering ranks and I dealt primarily with the FAA and helped write some of our orders. I thought that would be my life, until I was offered director of Interiors and then, electrics. I was so pleased,” she



Avionics is a constant churn because we are constantly upgrading. That’s the challenging part of the job, to keep up with the technology.



Laura Hilboldt



Susan Bair

smiles. “It was odd at first to go from being the one in compliance saying “no, you can’t do this” to being the one trying to figure out the best way to do a project. I had to back up from my “black and white” quality engineering background mindset,” she recalls.

Susan Bair is now an A&P mechanic, one of only three female mechanics (out of 300) at the Citation Service Center, on the main corporate campus in Wichita. Bair got her start on the Cessna Sovereign production line in 2000, and used her Cessna education stipend to go to school at Cowley County Aviation Technical Center (now Wichita Area Technical College) to earn her airframe and powerplant certificates. “At the point where I was getting my powerplant rating I interviewed at the Service Center and was hired as soon as I had the full license” she recalls. “I was fortunate that I had the production job first, though. It put a solid foundation underneath my knowledge.”

Sherry Skinner, program manager for the 525 series airplanes (Citation), started with 15 years in the interiors and electrical departments helping to design and install lights

and stereos as a design engineer. “My background is in electronics as an electrical engineer. I worked my way over to avionics, then worked as a section supervisor, group lead, and as a DER in Avionics for the FAA. My current supervisor made me go look for other things to do, to expand my horizons. I went to work for the special interests group (military). Then worked with the Citation jet (CJ), then processes and procedures, refining paperwork, then as an assistant, and now fully in charge of the CJ line,” she smiles. It sounds easy when she says it, but in fact, the process was one of learning every detail of the airplanes that were being produced, so that she can assist her engineers and production workers on the floor whenever issues arise that could slow down the line.

“Being a pilot and having installed avionics does help me a lot in my position. And avionics is a constant churn because we are constantly upgrading. That’s the challenging part of the job, to keep up with the technology. Our marketing department helps define what the customer wants and brings that to our design department,” she says.

Lisa Mashnouk, director of Interior Operations, where the

interiors are fabricated and installed, began her engineering career before she ever left college at San Diego State University in San Diego, California. She was a sheet metal worker for Boeing, and ended up on pylons and nacelles before graduation. “My very first job at Cessna was as a supervisor for the industrial and mechanical engineers. Got my business advanced degrees. Went into the factory and managed the CJ line, and then finally Tracey’s position opened and I went to director of Interior, and, at the time, Paint,” she remembers. Today Mashnouk is working on a Doctorate in Leadership and Organizational Change, and yes, Cessna is helping to pay her tuition.

Laura Chitwood, the engineering supervisor who hired Hilboldt, owned a cleaning business and readily admits to floundering around for a while in her early years before settling on engineering as a career. A desire to work for Cessna and be closer to her Wichita-based family brought her to the company, first to work on the Citation X production line. But when the opportunity to work on the Cessna Mustang surfaced, Chitwood headed to Independence, Kansas, where that production line was built.

Young, wispy and fair, A&P mechanic Ashley Pepper doesn’t strike you as a mechanic or a pioneer at first, until you learn that at hardly more than 20 years old, she was the first female A&P hired by the Citation Service Center (the company’s largest). Another Cowley County Technical Center graduate, Pepper had started with experience at another manufacturer, Spirit Aerosystems, on its Boeing 777 pylon production line.

In the two years that she’s been working for the Citation Service Center the bosses there have hired two more women mechanics, which means that Pepper has served as a strong model for the company. And that’s even though she’s recently delivered her first child.

“When I knew I was pregnant I went to my manager and

told him, and he had no idea what to do,” she laughs, remembering the day. “But everyone took care of me. They all got too scared to let me work on the shop floor once I was pregnant. I was touching up paint with a respirator on and gloves!” Shortly thereafter the manager found her a position on a desk updating maintenance manuals and performing logbook surveys for the duration of her pregnancy. It was felt to be the safest tack for both Pepper and her baby.

“We have good benefits for time off,” says Pepper, who recently returned from her maternity leave. “I’m glad to be back in a routine though, working each afternoon through 2 a.m., coming home and waking with the baby at 7 a.m. But I get to take naps when she does to catch up on sleep,” she smiles.



Sherry Skinner

They don’t even look at gender today. They truly care here about the worklife balance and they want you to have a life outside of work.



Lisa Mashnouk



Laura Chitwood

Pepper is back on the shop floor now, with the rest of the Service Center mechanics, where her job definitely entails heavy lifting and some serious climbing. Susan Bair knows that the guys are watching to see what you will do, at first. "You have to earn a level of respect from them," she says. "You will get the typical new person initiation, such as, working outside in the winter. Sometimes they do test the thickness of your skin, but that's more about being a new mechanic than being a girl. Once they see that you are there to work, and you can lift a 90 lb battery by yourself...and work on the equipment...they are fine. Don't let it intimidate you. You can do it," she says.

Sherry Skinner says, "The dinosaur attitude that women should not be in charge is eroding here. When hiring at Cessna we think, you need to be the right person with the right attitude for the job. They don't even look at gender today. They truly care here about the worklife balance and they want you to have a life outside of work," says this mother of three.

It is clear to see from the camaraderie of the women that they have learned, even if they are not seeing each other every day at work, to seek out each other for networking and men-

toring. Cessna also has a formal mentoring program which is encouraged for employee growth.

"You have to be willing to be a team player and make it work," says Lisa Mashnouk. "The crew I worked with told me how wonderful it was to see Sherry go out there and get her hands dirty with the avionics installers. And they know that Tracey is out there trying to make their job safer and easier, and they respect that, too."

Sherry Skinner laughs at that. "I encourage the black belts to go out and talk to the people on the assembly line. The biggest adrenaline rush for me is working with the people and knowing they are doing their best job."

"I always tell the employees that I interview and hire, they are never pigeonholed here," says Laura Chitwood. "It is one of the things I really love about Cessna. We are motivated to keep them here and keep them growing." And as for the gender issue? "The men don't cut you any slack, but they don't hamper your job, either," she laughs. "Women at Cessna can go as far as they want to. It is a wide open door, and a big change since I was hired, back in 1990."

Change, it seems, for the good.



Body of KNOWLEDGE

AT MCFARLANE AVIATION, IT'S A TEAM EFFORT

Text and photography by Scott M. Spangler

Call McFarlane Aviation Products Inc. between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Central time to order PMA parts for a Cessna, Piper, Grumman, Beechcraft, Ag Cat, or a custom project, and a real person answers the phone without delay. In all but the rarest instance, the voice belongs to a member of the sales team: Holly Anderson, Haylie Cool, Autumn Eckman, Toni Hunter, or Star Novak.

"Line One is pretty much continuously on the phone helping customers," says Novak, a trim, energetic woman with a hair-trigger smile. "After a week you're ready for a breather," so the team long ago decided to rotate the line assignments. It's one way they maintain good customer service, which is dedicated to efficiently fulfilling needs with small-town friendliness. With a combined six decades of aviation experience, no question goes unanswered. Faced with a unique inquiry, they turn first to Novak, and then to production technicians and engineers.

Located on a bucolic 3,300-foot grass strip four miles north of Baldwin City, Kansas, and 10 miles southeast of Lawrence, the company has added to its facility four times. From the outside, their white metal skins show their respective ages. Inside more than 30 employees are spread evenly across 18,000 square feet subdivided into manufacturing, warehouses, and office spaces.

Located in different offices, identifying the sales team is easy. Each of them wears a headset connected to a wireless phone. That this team is all female is hap-

penstance, Novak says. What matters to the founders of this family business, Dave and Phyllis McFarlane, is doing the job. This applies companywide, she says, introducing Kellie Westgate, a 14-year McFarlane veteran who supervises the nine-person production and fabrication team.

"Krista has been here 20 years," says Novak. When she started, Krista, wife of co-founder Fred McClenahan, sewed Kevlar steering rod boots in her basement. She stitches them still, when she's not working on Safe Heat oil warmers or compiling installation kits. Nearby, Kristi Evilsizor builds engine controls, and many throttle, prop, and mixture cables with black, blue, and red knobs go to original equipment manufacturers. Driving a CNC router named Christine ("She has a mind of her own, especially during a thunderstorm.") Diane Weege turns extruded aluminum into seat rails, the parts that launched McFarlane's PMA business. Pipers, from the PA-28 to the PA-34, use the same rail, Novak says, but there are more than 100 Cessna rails, which are make and model year specific.

Office and airport manager Cheryl McFarlane Kurtz grew up with the company and oversees the sales and shipping team. Her father, an ag pilot and mechanic who fixed airplanes in the off season, bought the Vinland Valley Aerodrome (K64) in 1979. Unable to tell customers why expensive parts needed frequent replacement, in 1986 he started making affordable, more durable FAA-approved parts using new materials and improved engineering. Today,



*Faced with a unique inquiry,
they turn first to Star Novak, and then to
production technicians and engineers.*



A spur of the moment road trip suggested by another Mustang owner captured Star Novak's two passions in one place at the annual Planes, Manes & Automobiles event at the EAA Air-Venture Museum in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Because she has the most diverse aviation background, Star Novak is the first person visitors meet at McFarlane and the Vinland Valley Aerodrome. (below) McFarlane's Sales & Shipping Team, from left, Toni Hunter, Cheryl Kurtz, Holly Anderson, Autumn Eckman, and Trudi Chavez. Kneeling, Star Novak and Haylie Cool.



McFarlane sells 2,802 FAA-approved parts and holds the parts manufacturing authority for more than half of them. Beech control cables and corrugated Cessna flap and control surface skins are the newest PMA parts it produces.

With the exception of Novak, the sales team acquired its aviation knowledge on the job, just as its newest member, Sales and Shipping Assistant Trudi Chavez, is doing. And everyone at McFarlane has more than one job. Anderson is head of shipping. Cool handles custom-made engine controls, receiving, and returns. Eckman's marketing duties include updating **www.McFarlane-Aviation.com**. On the job for 12 years, Hunter tracks inventory, manages distributors and purchasing, and does research related to new PMA approvals.

With two decades of previous aviation experience, Novak joined the company in 2006. With an unquenchable curiosity about all things aviation, she handles custom cable orders, product photos, airport operations, and airplanes the sales team doesn't often deal with, like a World War II German fighter or a Russian aerobat.

Holding a short piece of cable, Novak nods at the small spring-loaded clip. "This is the only one in the world," she says with a whisper of awe. It connects the antenna wire to the tail of a Focke-Wulf 190. On loan from the Royal Norwegian Air Force Museum, McFarlane is duplicating it for *White 1*, an Fw 190 a Florida foundation is restoring to flying condition.

"I can't fix 'em or build 'em," Novak says, but she gets satisfaction in helping customers complete their projects, "in knowing that I'm part of that airplane" whether it's a home-built Fly Baby or a Sukhoi. Working the booth at EAA AirVenture 2008, she got a day off during the 10-day marathon. "So what did I do? I wandered around Wittman Field looking at the all airplanes and watched the air show," in which that Sukhoi performed.

Aviation made its initial imprint on Novak in August 1958, when she was six months old. With her mother, Bernadette, Star (short for Istareh) boarded a TWA Super G Constellation in Paris to join her father, Hans Ziller, who'd emigrated to the United States. Without a seat, Novak says, "My mom likes to tell the story [how] I was passed around from waiting arms to waiting arms."

Settling in Overland Park, Kansas, watching the airliners at Kansas City Downtown Airport was a Sunday afternoon treat

for Novak and her two younger brothers. After high school, a friend gave her the first airplane ride she remembers. "We flew over the Plaza!" she says, her blue eyes sparkling with the memory. "I realized this was cool! That's when I got my first aviation job. I was a line rummy at KC Piper (now the Kansas City Aviation Center) at OJC [Johnson County Executive Airport]."

The only woman, she worked the night shift. Seeing her insatiable curiosity, the shop supervisor asked if she'd like to work there. "It was starting to get cold outside, so I thought, yeah, sure!" Novak started running parts and helping mechanics with grunt work like removing inspection panels (something she still does for her old boss). She ended up running the parts department and becoming the warranty administrator for Piper, Mooney, Cessna, Lycoming, Continental, and Hartzell. "If you bought a new airplane from KCAC and had warranty issues, I was your liaison with the factory."

Snagging rides at every opportunity, a pilot suggested that she take the written, "and I asked written what?" Passing a weekend ground school, Novak started learning to fly, which is why her office is next to McFarlane's front door. With Chavez at her side, Novak is there to help walk-

ins get the parts or flying lessons they seek. After she soloed, life—marriage, finishing her commercial art/photography degree, and, in 1985, birth of her daughter, Katie—postponed her training. She plans to finish one day, and sport pilot has her attention.

With general aviation going bust in the 1980s, Novak went to work for JC Air, "a mom-and-pop company that made avionics test equipment for the airlines; I was there for almost 10 years, until BF Goodrich bought the company in 1996." It was not a good year. Besides losing her job, Novak was diagnosed with malignant melanoma. "I was fortunate that they were able to get it all without chemo." She remains cancer-free.

But 1996 wasn't all bad. The Novaks moved to Baldwin City and, needing a new car, she bought a new Ford Mustang GT, a car she's always loved. It cost the same as a Taurus, she says. "Cancer really changed my perspective. I was a Girl Scout leader at the time and I thought, yeah, mom with a Mustang, that will clarify my image." So did competing in autocross and at local drag strips.

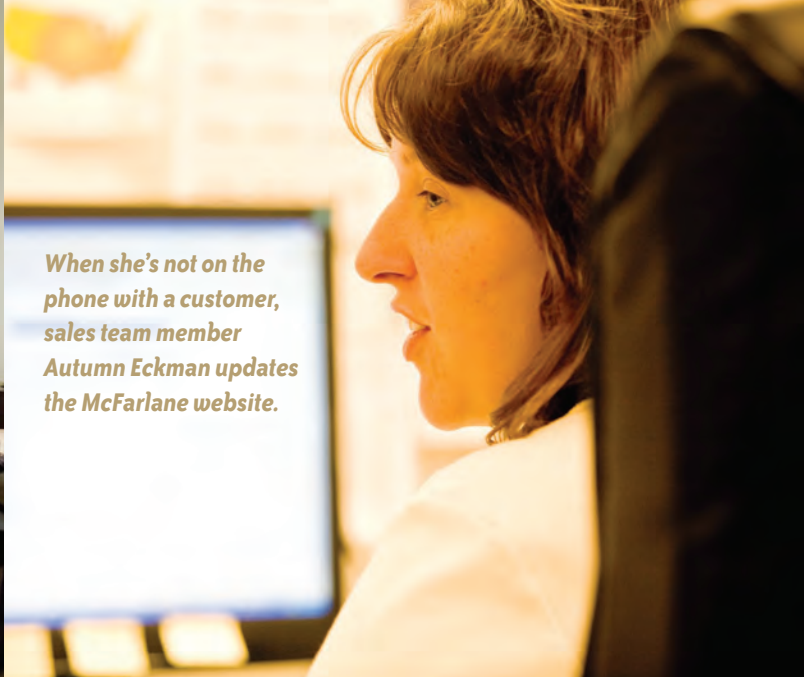
Novak joined the Mustang Club of America (MCA) and started competing in the most challenging category, Con-

Star Novak holds the sole surviving Fw 190 snap swivel McFarlane duplicated right down to its serial number, Ln28612. Aging it to remove its manufacturing luster is the last step.





Ready to back up the people on Line 1 and 2, sales team member Toni Hunter works on inventory.



When she's not on the phone with a customer, sales team member Autumn Eckman updates the McFarlane website.



When she's not on the phone, Holly Anderson feeds a big brown truck full of meals of cardboard and wrapping paper.



Plugged into the phone and computer, sales team member Haylie Cool helps a customer.



Diane Weege holds one of 100 different Cessna seat rails and its red master that ensures conformity.



Kristi Evilsizor adds springs to the push-button control for a stack of engine controls.

Star Novak's 1996 Mustang GT earned gold in the Concourse Driven category at the 2007 MCA National Roundup in Illinois.



course Driven. Whether she drove it 10 miles or 1,000, to score well it has to be original and spotless inside and out. As they do in aviation, details count, Novak says, and her attention to them earned a nickname, “Q-tip Queen.”

To be a better competitor she became a certified national judge (and has the gold watch awarded for judging 15 national contests). Daughter Katie soon became her judging assistant, which made the road trips special. In 2008, after a decade of competition, her Mustang GT's cumulative points after the Pensacola, Florida, contest earned the coveted MCA grill medallion. It may also have been the last mother-daughter road trip for awhile; Katie married in September.

After moving in 1996, Novak applied for positions at McFarlane and Baker University, a liberal arts school in Baldwin City. The university called first. An assistant to the professors in the communications and theater department, she fed her aviation desires as an Amelia Earhart impersonator, presenting Earhart's story at local schools and libraries. With an opportunity to direct student productions, she chose *Defying Gravity*, about the Challenger accident, as her debut effort.

As they do in aviation, details count, Novak says, and her attention to them earned a nickname, “Q-tip Queen.”

Her calling to aviation has never diminished. “I’d find myself driving around the airport, looking at airplanes, and talking to Dave [McFarlane],” Novak says, so she applied again, and McFarlane promised to call when a position opened. Until then, Novak moved to the front desk at Executive Beechcraft, the FBO at the New Century Air Center. “That introduced me to a whole different aspect of aviation, and I loved talking with the corporate pilots.”

A return to single life introduced Novak to another realm. She recently met a pilot with a Cessna 150 and a pig-shaped hot air balloon named *Oink!* “So what did Star do? I got [the 150’s] N-number and ran an AD check before I went flying with Ed,” she says, laughing. A member of *Oink’s* crew, she’s building points toward—and eagerly anticipating—her first flight.

McFarlane called in early 2006, and Novak says she found her place. It’s an extended family that holds a companywide Easter egg hunt every year and celebrates milestones from birthdays and grandparenthood to Novak’s U.S. citizenship, proudly earned last year. It’s also involved in the community, the aviation component of Baldwin City’s annual Planes,

Trains, and Automobiles festival. Novak organizes the Young Eagle flights with a nearby EAA chapter, and she makes a special effort for girls who express an interest in flying.

The sales and shipping team is a nuclear family. “We’re a good group of self-govern-



Star Novak discusses a custom order with Dan Wilcox as Joe Duncan pulls cable onto the bench.



When she's not sewing steering rod boots or assembling oil pan heaters, the resolutely camera shy Krista McClenahan compiles rivet kits for baffle seal kits.



Production & Fabrication Supervisor Kellie Westgate, right, checks Kristi Evilsizor's progress on a batch of engine controls.

ing gals." Each member takes a two-month turn as team leader, whose responsibilities include the schedule that ensures the phones are always covered. "No one is more important than the other," Novak says, the others nodding in agreement as they help Anderson fill boxes before the big brown truck arrives. Each contributes all they know to the collective body of knowledge and each one takes a turn as the "top dog, so we don't take the position for granted," says Anderson.

"We take care of each other..." Novak says, stopping mid-sentence when her phone rings. On Line One this week, she fires another smile and cheerfully answers the call before the second ring. ✈

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A freelance writer, editor, and photographer who likes to fly when he gets the chance, Scott Spangler covers fly-over country from his home base in Omro, Wisconsin.



Cheryl McFarlane Kurtz sports many titles on her business card: from director of human resources and office manager to airport manager.

ANYTHING BUT BORING

At Aircraft Spruce,
Nanci Irwin
gets things done

To others, Nanci Irwin often describes what she does as “the boring stuff.” To some, perhaps it is. Articulate with a vocabulary free of business buzz words, she talks about her responsibilities as the vice president of Aircraft Spruce & Specialty. It is clear that to her, accounting, IT and human resources are anything but boring. There are two components to a successful business: an efficient, productive “engine,” and the “fuel” that makes it run: market expertise clearly communicated to customers. Her husband, Aircraft Spruce President Jim Irwin, is “very gifted in writing and communicating, and has a natural talent for marketing; my expertise is finance and information technology.”

by Scott M. Spangler

These traits, and a gift for math and science are not surprising when dad is an electrical engineer and a Navy submarine officer, they run in the family, she says. The third of Bob and Jane Arrington’s 10 children; Nanci was born in New Orleans and grew up in Anaheim, California. When she was in elementary school, her father transferred to the reserves, earned Master’s degrees in engineering and business at USC, and went to work with the space program. It was a happy 1960s childhood; the moms stayed home and all the kids played in the cul-de-sac and roller skated on the corner, Nanci remembers. “We lived fairly close to Disneyland...and when the fireworks came on at nine o’clock we knew it was time to come in.”

Always a good student, in the third grade Nanci won the spelling bee at her Catholic school and went on to win the county bee, and the trophy is still on display in her home. Following her father to USC, she soon switched her major from social work to accounting, earning her degree in 1977. “I basically put myself through college, so I had some student loans that I was going to have to pay off,” Nanci says. With her talent for numbers, and knowing she could

Top: Mail order efficiency was the design goal of Aircraft Spruce & Specialty’s purpose-built 62,000 square foot facility. Nanci and Jim Irwin (left) with now retired AOPA President Phil Boyer. The facility’s reception area. Nanci and the youngest Irwin, Rob.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE IRWIN FAMILY

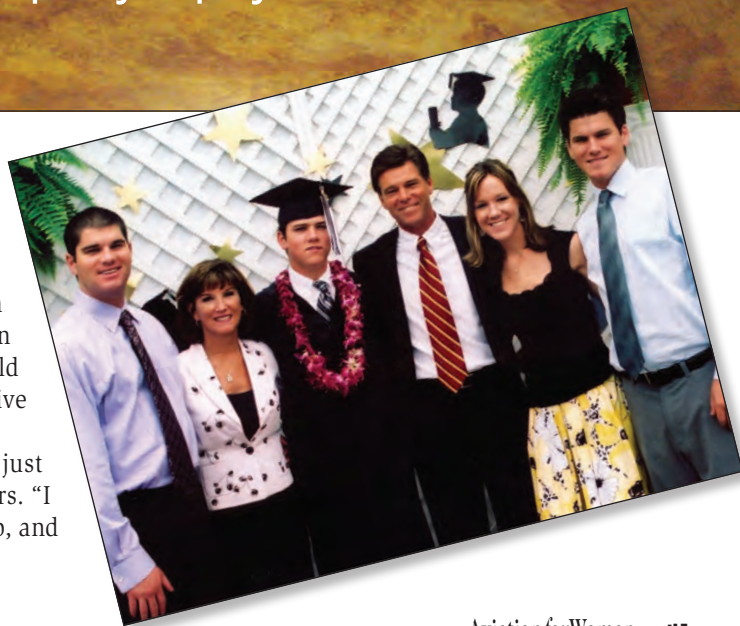


Nanci discovered her talent for business while working summers at Aircraft Spruce, where she started doing the small company's payroll in 1973.

always get a job and make good money to support herself, accounting was a natural choice, "and I was good at it."

Nanci discovered her talent by working summers at Aircraft Spruce. Several years before her 1973 graduation from Marywood, an all-girl high school in Orange, she met Jim Irwin at a function with Servite, an all-boy high school in Fullerton. "We continued dating through college... I would come home for the summer, and [Jim's mom] Flo would give me a job."

Doing the payroll for the company's 25 employees was just one part of her job. Most of the time she hand-priced orders. "I would manually price out each item on the order, total it up, and





Mail order is the bigger part of Aircraft Spruce & Specialty's business, but in the showroom customers can get hands on with everything from building supplies, instruments and tools, to how-to books and hard-to-find fittings.

then give it to the girl who sat in front of me. She would type up the invoices and send them out," Nanci remembers. "Everything was done by hand back then."

Jim and Nanci married in 1978, the year he graduated from Cal State-Fullerton with a degree in marketing. They bought the business in 1980, and automating the handwork was their first big decision. "Computers were just coming of age," Nanci says. Their first computer, a Microdata, was as big as a refrigerator and cost \$60,000. It used big reels of tape and a small amount of additional disk space cost \$10,000. And it "broke down" a lot, giving her a hands-on education. A freelance programmer wrote the code, Nanci says, and "I spent many, many nights, all night long, working on the computer when it froze; we'd have to fix the disk errors or free up disk space, then reboot the system." On those nights, Jim was "trying to hold down the fort" at home with their toddlers.

Despite the all-nighters, the computer was more efficient than handwork, and the investment helped the company grow. Credit cards, which became popular at the same time, and toll-free 800 numbers helped too, Nanci says. These things were economic growth hormones in the mail order industry. Nanci evaluated each advancement, the company invested in those that made the business machine more efficient and productive, and the company grew.

The mid-1990s were an interesting time for the Irwins, says Nanci. "We built a new facility in Corona, bought the Alexander Aeroplane Co., which gave us a presence on the East Coast...and were raising four children. We were very worried about over-extending ourselves at the time. We knew it was something we had to do, but how were we going to pay the bills?"

Guided by her mantra of "Get it done and have it work out," they designed the new 62,000-square-foot structure specifically for their business. Instead of running back and forth, up-

stairs and down, orders and inventory now come in one door and out another in an efficient one-way flow. The new facility worked so well that in 2004 they built it again, minus the 10,000-square-foot office space, for Aircraft Spruce East in Peachtree City, south of Atlanta.

The resulting efficiencies offset the cost, Nanci says, and "we were able to serve customers better and stock more inventory." This included avionics and traditional pilot supplies.

Nanci became a pilot because of her four children. "Jim got his license when he was 17," and before the kids, Nanci says, "I flew with him a lot." And then Mike joined the family. Now 27, he's the company's purchasing manager—and a student pilot. "Something happens after you've had your first baby... you start to worry about your life in relation to your child's, and I just started getting really nervous flying. All of the sudden it came over me...before we'd fly I couldn't sleep, that kind of thing."

Just before Christmas Nanci told Jim that she just couldn't fly with him any more. "He said, 'Well, that's not going to work'....He got me a Pinch Hitter course for Christmas and said, 'Just do this, and maybe if you learn more about it you'll feel better up there.' So I started...and I just decided, hey, I really like this, and decided to get my license, which shocked everybody, including myself."

Nanci had her second baby, Krissy, now 25, who works for Roxy, an action sportswear company, just before her memorable solo cross-country flight from Fullerton to Fresno. "I was flying a [Cessna] 152...I got up to 8,500 feet and forgot to pull the carb heat out," Nanci remembers, laughing, "Of course, this had to happen to me." When the engine lost power she sent her mayday to the nearest airport—Van Nuys, one of the busiest in the LA Basin.

"In retrospect I can't believe I did this. I glided down [to the airport], and then at 3,000 feet I got my power back, and I was able to make a safe landing. But the camera crews were there, just in case I crashed. So I called my flight instructor, Andrea Gladson, and she came and picked me up. Of course I was a wreck."

Nanci got back in the airplane the next day and flew her cross-country. She passed her private pilot checkride on April 2, 1983. Since the Irwins traded their Cessna 210 for their first

Cessna twin in 1992, Nanci flies as Jim's copilot, and their current mount is a Cessna Conquest. Her third baby, Jeff, the company's 24-year-old operations manager, is the family's third pilot and now working on his instrument rating. The youngest, Rob, will likely become a pilot after he graduates from the University of Arizona, Nanci says.

The third generation of Irwin aviators is flying the Navion Rangemaster that Jim borrowed from his father to court Nanci. Grandfather Bob recently retired after 50 years as a

pilot, and the airplane stayed in the family. Oshkosh is an annual destination for the third generation as well; Aircraft Spruce & Specialty has exhibited at every EAA convention since 1965 Nanci says. "I stay here to manage the office." Making sure it is secure, operating efficiently, and looking to the future is more like it. ✈

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Scott Spangler is an editor and freelance writer who focuses on aviation and travel.

FLO IRWIN: A LOT TO LIVE UP TO



Aircraft Spruce was Flo Irwin's business, and her husband and partner, Bob, was its inspiration, says Nanci Irwin. A chemical engineer for AeroJet, Bob loved to fly (they honeymooned in La Paz, Mexico, flying there in his BT-13), so they spent a lot of time at the airport. A gregarious, engaging person, Flo wanted to do something, Nanci says, so in 1956 she started a pilot shop, Fullerton Air Parts. She sold that in 1965 and then started Aircraft Spruce.

Creating the catalog was Bob's main responsibility. Now more than 750 pages, the catalog "is basically an encyclopedia...and he's responsible for all that information," Nanci says. "The first one had four pages of just wood; it's kinda funny if you ever get a chance to look at it."

Bob had to keep adding pages because Flo was dedicated to her customers. They "were like family to her, and that's why this business has succeeded." When they called looking for more than wood, Flo would do anything to find the parts they needed. It wasn't long before the company's name grew to Aircraft Spruce & Specialty.

Adding products is always a risk, Nanci says, but none was bigger than composite materials. In the 1970s, Burt Rutan asked Flo to carry the foam, cloth, and resins builders would need to create his VariEze. It would be a significant investment for the small company, and Flo agonized over it, Nanci says, remembering several conversations at the Irwin dinner table.

No one could foretell its success, but Flo "respected Burt Rutan and knew he was a very smart man...so she decided to go ahead with it. [The risk] paid off—it really put Aircraft Spruce's name out there."

Flo passed away in 1989, but she still inspires. "She was a dynamo, she never ran out of energy," says Nanci, adding that Jim has the same energy. "Her relationships with customers, suppliers, and employees were very important to her. She was never too busy for anybody, never. She worked long hours, but she always went home and made dinner for the family, ran the house and ran the company. It's a lot to live up to."

Since taking over the company, Jim and Nanci have built on Flo's legacy of relationships by giving back to aviation, sponsoring everything from high school aviation projects and Reno air racers to the work of aviation's leading associations. This includes a scholarship for WAI members in Flo's name. "Aviation has been very good to us," Nanci says, "Jim and I are very passionate about it and we just want to further it."—SMS





DR. PHIL
PARKER

LOSING SLEEP OVER YOUR NEXT MEDICAL?

I understand there were some changes made to the FAA medical questionnaire. How do those affect

what items can be listed on the medical questionnaire as previously reported? Surgeries, illness, etc?

You are correct. A new version of the FAA 8500-8, Application for Airman Medical Certificate, was released and started to be distributed to the local Aviation Medical Examiners in late Fall 2008. One of the big changes includes the requirement now to report history of any “arrests” for suspected alcohol or drug offenses rather than just “convictions,” as was previously required. This will likely cause airman to have to report some previously undisclosed situations. The FAA will review the circumstances on a case by case basis to determine if additional information is required before certification. An airman should be able to minimize delays if she provides sufficient details of the event at the time of the physical. Typically the FAA is interested in seeing a personal statement regarding the event including the levels of any alcohol testing administered and outlining personal alcohol or substance use history. The FAA may also ask for driving, arrest, and/or court records to determine if the event signals a possible diagnosis of abuse or dependence.

There is also a requirement to report any disability benefit or rating received even those such as minor disability ratings when separating a military service. Note this “reportable” is not the same thing as “disqualifying,” but these new requirements are sure to impose an increased administrative burden on busy airmen trying to clearly communicate their circumstances to the FAA.

All visits to healthcare providers in the last three years are required to be listed on the bottom of the application even if previously reported. If there are a large number of visits, we recommend typing on a blank sheet in advance and then writing “see attached” on the medical application. Make sure the AME does attach the documentation. This method makes it much easier to remember what was reported previously and to simply delete visits after three years.

You could fill an entire forum on how to properly report items to the FAA. One rule of thumb is to “report completely, and succinctly.” A useful method is to think of the medical application

as your communication directly with the FAA to let them know you are still safe to fly. Just as with ATC communication, timely, succinct communication with all the pertinent facts will minimize the FAA’s need to ask for more information.

I often fly on the back side of the clock. Are there any medications that I am allowed to use if I have difficulty getting to sleep?

None of the over the counter (OTC) sleep preparations, including Sominex, Tylenol PM, and Excedrin PM, are allowed for flight deck use and require doubling the dosing period (e.g. typically waiting 12-24 hours from last dose) before return to aviation duty. Prescription medications such as Halcion and Restoril are not approved for airmen. Those pilots taking Ambien (zolpidem), another prescription medication, must wait

24 hours after the last dose before flying and the Federal Air Surgeon’s Medical Bulletin states that Ambien may be used no more than twice weekly.

Recently, we confirmed that the FAA also authorizes use of Sonata (zaleplon) and Lunesta (eszopiclone) as long as 12 hours passes before aviation or controlling duty. These medications also are not to be used more than twice weekly. Rozerem (ramelteon) is not allowed.

Dietary supplements, such as melatonin, can also assist you in falling asleep. The FAA generally allows airmen to use these supplements if airmen do not suffer side effects from them. However, claims about these dietary supplements’ benefits in treating insomnia and “jet lag” often are overstated. Some individuals have significant side effects from these “natural” supplements and as with any new substance, you should ground test them before trying to fly or control after taking them the night before. ➔

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Dr. Phil Parker (WAI #29733) is the Vice President for military and general aviation safety for Virtual Flight Surgeons Inc. Dr. Parker is also a private pilot. Additional information regarding these topics and others can be found at www.AviationMedicine.com.

One of the big changes includes the history of any “arrests” for suspected alcohol or drug offenses rather than just “convictions,” as was previously required.

Please send your questions about FAA medical issues to Aviation for Women at: alaboda@wai.org



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JENNY T. BEATTY

CHANGING DIAPERS CHANGING DIRECTIONS

As a young flight instructor, I watched two role models who were several steps ahead of me on the professional pilot career ladder while their paths diverged dramatically in motherhood. One was among the first women hired by a cargo airline, and mere weeks after the birth of each of her three children, she would return to work. She is now a senior captain there. The other became

the first woman pilot hired at a national jet airline, and upon the birth of her first and only child, found that she just couldn't leave him. She left her airline instead, and never looked back.

I myself chose not to have children, but this question of combining motherhood with a pilot career is being raised more and more frequently by women in aviation. What pilots do at home as parents in order to make it work at work is the topic of past and future columns. Here, we look at how changing diapers may mean changing career directions as pilots.

Although they are not inherently incompatible, a pilot career can certainly make parenthood more challenging and vice versa. Let's start with the basics of the job: Flying equals travel, which equals being gone from home. How long a pilot is away depends on the particular job and aircraft flown. Generally speaking, the smaller the aircraft, the shorter the trip, and the more likely a mom can tuck her little one in at night. Large airline and corporate jets are designed to fly for many hours across continents and oceans, meaning longer trips.

Whether it's for one night or several at a stretch, being away from a child doesn't work for every pilot parent. A friend jolted me with this cold hard fact when, as a new mother, she left her dream job flying jumbo jets around the world to become a simulator instructor—home every night. So I turned to pilot friends and mentees who are mothers, including several with twins and some married to pilots, and asked them to share their insights.

They say the first thing to change is... "Everything!" according to a major airline pilot and mother of three. "As much as you think your feelings won't change after you have a baby, they will," agrees a cargo airline pilot and new mom. "I was a hard-core career gal and now I am a complete sap for my baby. If I can change like that, you will, too."

Another major airline pilot and mother of three says, "Unless you have children, you really do not know all the chal-

lenges ahead." She helpfully outlines the typical strategies of an airline pilot parent: "Before, I would have taken the bigger piece of equipment or faster upgrade, even though I would not have a decent schedule. Now I treasure seniority and will put off upgrading to captain until I have a good schedule and vacation slot."

Another major airline pilot and mother of two chooses to fly domestic trips instead of taking international overseas flights, because she figures that she can get back home quickly from a U.S. city in the event of a family emergency.

A jet charter pilot tells how her career plans changed when she got pregnant and continued to evolve after the birth of her child. "I knew I could not keep on the schedule I was on, hauling passengers by day and organs by night with very little time off," she says. "It was an unsustainable and exhausting schedule for someone who was pregnant."

She was grounded only one month into her pregnancy, and her company wanted her back when her baby was six months old. That's not what she had in mind. "After my baby was born, I didn't think I'd ever want to return to flying and didn't think I could be a good parent if I was frequently away from home," she says. And then: "After about a year, I did want to return to flying."

Even so, she waited until her child was two and a half before returning to work, flying part-time on contract. "I choose the days I want to work or not," she says. "I fly a lot less but I'm home more, which is what my daughter and family need right now. And my boss bought me a webcam so I can keep in touch with my daughter when I'm on the road."

Another airline pilot has an evolving, somewhat unplanned career path. When her national jet airline asked pilots to take leaves of absence in order to offset furloughs, she had four good reasons to volunteer: a toddler, infant twins, and a Navy reservist job.

"I view it as a detour," she says of the pause in her airline pilot career. "I want to be an airline captain someday, but

"As much as you think your feelings won't change after you have a baby, they will," agrees a cargo airline pilot and new mom.

Patty Wagstaff

Patty Wagstaff AirShows Inc.

National Aviation Hall
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Aerobatic Champion

Typical Pilot

FLYING® Reader

Photography: Jim Barrett

“If I can do it, anyone can do it.”

Anyone can do what? Win the U.S. National Aerobatic Championship three times? Have their airplane enshrined in the Air & Space Museum? Be inducted into the Aviation Hall of Fame? Actually, Patty Wagstaff is talking about something more basic and far more important as far as she is concerned. It's a theme she constantly repeats, especially to other women. “Aviation changed my life dramatically from the day I first soloed. It gave me the confidence in myself that I needed to face life's challenges and helped me attain my personal and professional goals.”

Learning To Fly Is Learning To Live

Most people who don't fly believe it's something that only a select few can do. Superhumans with laser vision, Einstein

brains and blinding white teeth. She says, “When I tell people, ‘If I can do it, you can do it,’ it's true. I'm not any different than a lot of people. People will ask me if it's too late to learn to fly. No it's not. You'll be a lot better at it.”

What Sets Her Apart Brings Us All Together

You may look at Patty and think she's one in a million, but the point is that all women in aviation are like Patty. You don't have to fly for a living to be crazy about it. You don't have to be well-known to feel that aviation makes you different from the rest of the world. “What's so neat about it is there's room for everyone to create her own niche. It attracts women with energy and drive, all winners like you.”

She reads FLYING every month

There's something else that Patty has in common with most women in aviation. She reads *FLYING* every month, so should you. “I always tell people to read *FLYING*. I've learned a ton from it over the years and I still learn from every issue.”



FLYING®

SETS YOU APART

having the reserve job makes all the difference in my current situation. The pay is great and the schedule is flexible and I still get to fly. It may not be in a jet, but it sure is fun teaching aerobatics and doing it on a schedule I pretty much determine."

More than a few airline pilot moms start their families while on a convenient leave of absence or furlough. You can't count on your biological clock being in synch with industry cycles, however, because when you're ready for children, sometimes your airline or company is not.

Three days after informing her chief pilot that she was pregnant, a jet charter pilot was called in and asked to resign, with strong indications that the only other option was to get fired. "I was blindsided—I never saw that coming," she says now. "But I never indicated to them that we were thinking about starting a family, so I guess I kind of blindsided them, too."

After much angst, networking, and a legal consultation, she learned that the company's actions were perfectly legal, due to the particulars of federal law and of the situation, including the small size of the company and the fact that she was grounded due to a high-risk pregnancy with twins.

Rather than letting it end there, however, she approached her chief pilot with a mutually beneficial plan. Today she is mom to

toddler twins and a small infant, and she flies four different aircraft part-time on contract for that company and for another one.

"Looking back on it, things probably worked out for the best," she says. "I thought at the time that I wanted to go back to work full-time, but found that after the twins were born, my career just didn't matter that much compared to the importance of raising my children."

Another woman started her family at a good time for her, but not for her company. Several years ago she was a highly accomplished regional airline pilot who went to job interviews while visibly pregnant and got offers from two major cargo and passenger airlines. Before those jobs materialized, her current employer wanted her back at work

three months after the birth of her baby. "I anticipated that it would be almost impossible to return to commuting to four-day trips," she says. "I was hoping to get an extended leave of absence for breastfeeding, with no luck." So she quit.

Then a dream came true. She started training at her hometown national airline when her baby was seven months old. "I remember crying in the cold shower room, while pumping on my first day," she says. "I was so excited to be at my dream job and determined to make it work, but wondering, 'what the heck am I doing here?'"

*Three days after
a jet charter pilot
informed her
chief pilot that she
was pregnant,
she was called in
and asked to resign.*



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Commuting to another city to be on reserve duty (on call to fly) was even more difficult. She was away from home for 20 days a month, and had planned to be done with breastfeeding. Her baby had different ideas.

"I was miserable! I wanted desperately to be home with my baby, but I did not want to give up on my dream," she says now. "It was killing me to think about ending my career, but it was even more heart-wrenching for me to think about missing out on my daughter's childhood. I was literally ill from all of the stress."

So she quit her dream job. "Once I made my decision to quit, a huge weight was lifted from my shoulders," she says.

As the airline industry moves through its cyclical ups and downs, that airline is now offering leaves of absence and even furloughing pilots. "I think about what would have happened if the timing would have been different for the pregnancy, the job offers, and so on," she says. "In the end, I know that I would not have been happy to continue to juggle airline flying with motherhood, no matter the situation." Looking ahead, she says, "I see myself flight instructing or contract flying once our children are in school. Luckily, I still have the opportunity to fly a small airplane. I think I would feel worse if I were totally grounded."

Another pilot mom is grounded, at least temporarily. A major cargo airline pilot whose fiancé is a regional airline pilot, she had carefully planned how everything would work with a baby and two pilot schedules. But she never planned on postpartum depression.

Returning to flying after the birth of her child, she felt fine for awhile and then suddenly hated her job. "I began to think, 'This sucks, why couldn't I be a nurse? Why do I have to be gone so much?' Which is very strange because I wanted to be a pilot since age five and love my job."

Now she is on an extended leave of absence, under the care of a doctor, and feeling much better. "Now it's me thinking, not the hormones," she says. "When hormones were raging, that freaked me out, but now I realize everything's going to be fine."

This episode has also opened her eyes to the advantages of working for a major cargo airline, in part because she is drawing disability pay that would not be available to her regional airline pilot fiancé, for example. "This is too good a job—I'd be nuts to quit," she says. "I could do other jobs, including nursing, but that wouldn't pay for my son's college—this job will." She is looking forward to returning to work in a few months.

Even when you plan for the many changes that a baby brings, including changes to your pilot career, you can't necessarily anticipate everything that might happen. I leave you with the words of the woman who "retired" as an airline pilot to become a full-time mom: "My dream since I was a little girl was to fly for a major airline. Once I got there, it wasn't as impressive or nearly so important in my life. My best advice is to follow your heart and realize that it is okay to change your dreams."



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Jenny Beatty (WAI #144) is a first officer for a major U.S. airline and a columnist for Aviation for Women.

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JACQUE BOYD PH.D.

EMBRACING THE CHAOS

If you've read many of my columns through the years you know that I am an advocate of choosing change before changes choose you! That attitude can also add more to any situation than you might have originally bargained for. So, along with choosing change, I've also learned to embrace the chaos that seems to accompany it.

A very good friend of mine has found a niche in aviation doing what she's best at. I'm going to be purposely vague about the details here as it serves no purpose to point in her direction. After some struggles from an earlier aviation "down-turn" she finally realized that she needed to go back to what she loved, start her own business and roll with it. When the aviation industry is in full-swing her life is fantastic. As the industry's stability begins to swing wildly, so does her income. But we both know that she loves what she does. So, when the times are good she enjoys it and when the times aren't as good she rolls with it and plans a little extra padding in the savings account. In my estimation she's learned to embrace the chaos.

I have a t-shirt with that phrase embroidered on it. I have note paper with the phrase printed on it. I have a sign on my front door with the phrase painted on it. And I believe it.

This is my second year as the director of a charter high school in northern rural New Mexico. We were ranked 51st in the U.S. by the *Newsweek/Washington Post* Challenge Index based on our participation and excellence with the College Board Advanced Placement program and our graduation rate.

This is a good gig. I get to work at 6 a.m. and it's a rare day if I'm home before 7 p.m. No day is ever completely placid, although my problems are far more 'innocent' than most high school principal's problems could be. I'm trying to get a new building built while working within the political system in New Mexico and juggling the politics of a small town.

Last year left me frazzled and feeling guilty about the "other work" that I wasn't getting done. I neglected things that I'd never neglected before. I wrote in this column that I'd become the "world's worst friend" and I meant it. I screwed up commitments and for the first time in a long time I made excuses for why I wasn't doing what I should have been doing. Although I loved my work, I felt terrible about my life.

When I made the choice to take the position of director I had also made the choice to give up teaching my two aviation classes. Last spring I once again chose change before it chose me. I made my life busier—but busier with something that was going to help me stay in focus. I went back to teaching in addition to my director-duties. My class is a combination of the former Aviation I and Aviation II, but there's a familiarity to it. It

also serves to get me out of my office for at least 71 minutes every day. I have to walk across the courtyard and be out in the elements. Those elements include the possibility of elk in the morning, wind, rain, snow and raucous teenagers. Aside from making the decision to take this job, the choice to make my life busier with teaching again is one of the best things I've done in a long time. I've embraced the chaos.

There's a fine line in making a busy life a busier life. The first thing I've learned—and it's been a difficult lesson—I ask for help. For better or not, my brothers and I have carried the credo "Don't Be a Quitter" emblazoned on our brains. And we were taught not to ask for help. The outcome wasn't always pretty, but by golly we didn't quit and we did it on our own. Don't judge my parents harshly. I know they were tap-dancing just as hard as they could and we have turned out to be respectable citizens. But, stubborn and independent is not always attractive.

I had to learn that just because I can doesn't mean I do. I have a guy who plows my driveway pad instead of shoveling it myself. I instituted some committees at school so I share the workload where I can. I put all my reports on a memory stick and email my budgets to my Governing Council instead of printing out and copying the reports for them each week. I don't always go into the office on the weekend. And sometimes I let my answering machine do what it was made to do.

Whatever your position in the work environment the first thing you need to do is to be honest with yourself about the state of "you-and-your-job." I recently read one of Jenny Beatty's columns concerning making choices and deciding what you really have to do to be where you want to be. Jenny and I have been very good friends for a lot of years and have traveled some tough roads together. Having a friend to help you be honest about what you want and where you're going is a basic necessity. You need to know what you want, but I firmly believe you also need to know what you don't want. I also believe that you should try not to make excuses for either one. That's embracing the chaos. ➔

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Jacquie Boyd, Ph.D. (WAI #32) is the director of a Charter High School and a freelance writer living in Angel Fire, New Mexico.

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SHERRY
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RETIREMENT PLANNING CHARTING A NEW COURSE

With recent developments in the financial markets and economy, we are certainly experiencing some financial turbulence when it comes to saving for retirement. Handle

financial turbulence just like turbulence encountered in flight—slow down and do not panic. The basics of retirement planning have not changed. The biggest mis-

takes people make when it comes to retirement planning are: 1) they start too late; 2) they put away too little; and 3) they invest too conservatively. It is imperative to start early, even if the contributions are small; for example: if you start contributing \$2,000 a year from age 25 to age 65 and earn on average 8 percent, you will have just over a half million dollars. Start at age 35, and the amount is closer to \$350,000. Wait until 55 years old to begin saving and you will have less than \$30,000. The difference? Compound interest (interest earned on interest).

The two most common types of employer pension plans are the defined contribution plan and the defined benefits plan. A defined contribution plan consists of an individual account to which the employer contributes a specific amount annually for each employee. This type of plan does not guarantee any particular benefit.

A common defined contribution plan is the 401(k) plan, also known as a salary-reduction plan, where you set aside a portion of your salary from each paycheck to be deducted from your gross pay. Federal employees are covered by a Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Your employer will often match your contribution up to a dollar amount or percentage of your salary.

There are several tax advantages to investing in a defined contribution plan, i.e. 401(k), 403(b). The money you invest in the plan is taken out of your paycheck before taxes, so reduces your taxable income. In addition, the money that accumulates in your retirement account is tax-deferred, meaning that you do not have to pay taxes on it until you withdraw it. Another benefit of contributing is that you are dollar-cost averaging. This approach means your purchases are taking advantage of high and low points in the market and on average this approach will be more advantageous than if you tried to time the market to purchase at the low points.

One of the most important aspects of the defined contribution plans is vesting, which is the right to receive the employer's pension plan contributions that you have gained, even if you leave the company before retiring. Some plans vest after a period of years, usually five years. Other plans vest in stages, typically 20 percent per year.

The life cycle fund is a mutual fund based on the year that you plan to retire so automatically allocates your investments into safer securities as you get closer to retirement age.

A defined benefit plan specifies the benefits you will receive in retirement age, based on your total earnings and years on the job. These plans are becoming less common as companies move to defined contribution plans, which are less expensive. In addition, companies in bankruptcy may terminate the plans and turn them over to the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC), as United Airlines and U.S. Airways have done in the past. The PBGC is a federal agency that provides insurance protection for defined benefit plan recipients. However, there are limits on the payments. In 2008, the highest payment per year was just over \$50,000, which may be substantially less than the benefit earned by more highly compensated employees (such as senior pilots).

In addition to company pension plans, you can save on your own through a traditional or Roth IRA (individual retirement account). An IRA is a special account in

which a person sets aside a portion of income for retirement. A traditional IRA lets you make annual contributions until age 70 1/2. The contribution limit is \$5,000 per year. Depending on your tax filing status and income, the contributions may be tax-deductible. The tax deductibility of a traditional IRA also depends on whether you belong to an employer-provided retirement plan. Annual contributions to a Roth IRA are not tax deductible, but the earnings accumulate tax-free.

As for how much will you need to save for retirement, the answer depends on the age you plan to retire, your life expectancy and your anticipated expenses in retirement, taking

into consideration the state of Social Security and that medical expenses may be higher in retirement. Several web sites such as **MoneyCentral.com** and **CNNMoney.com** provide retirement savings calculators to help you.

What is the best way to invest the funds? The answer depends on how many years you have until retirement. Historically, the stock market has provided the highest returns over the long run (ten years or more). It is always best to have diversification in your investments so you should invest in a combination of stocks, bonds and safe securities such as Treasury securities, which are backed by the U.S. government. Never invest more than 10 percent in the stock of your own employer. Most funds provide investment options such as stock and bond mutual funds. As you get closer to retirement, begin moving more of your funds into safer investments, such as bonds and money market funds or Treasury securities. If you want to make a relatively safe choice and not think about managing your investments, a good alternative may be the life cycle fund. This mutual fund is based on the year that you plan to retire so automatically allocates your investments into safer securities as you get closer to retirement age.

Lastly, this point cannot be emphasized enough: once you have some retirement savings, do NOT touch that money. With the recent financial crisis, many are tempted to cash out their retirement savings or borrow from the funds. Most plans allow you to borrow money from your retirement account with the understanding that you will pay it back with interest within a period of years, usually five years.

This is never a good idea for the following reasons:

1) If you are laid off or decide to take a new job, you typically have to repay the loan within a few months. If you do not pay it off when due, the loan will be considered a distribution, which means you will owe a 10 percent penalty and have to pay taxes on the distribution.

2) If you pay back the loan, you will be paying taxes twice on the money that you withdrew. When you invested in your plan, you used pretax dollars (dollars that were not yet taxed). However, when you take that money out as a loan, the dollars that you use to pay back the loan will come from money that has already been taxed. Then, when you take distributions from the account when you retire, you will pay taxes again.

The bottom line is that we all may be working longer than we had planned. The best approach may be to create now the life you envision in retirement. If you plan to build that home-built airplane, do not wait until you retire—start working on it. By retirement, you will have a nice plane to fly. If you want to live in a warmer climate, plan your next relocation to an area where you may want to retire. Most importantly, find your passion in life and pursue it. There is no time like today. ✈

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Dr. Sherry Parshley is a financial consultant and associate professor of accounting, finance and economics. She is a Certified Management Accountant and Certified Fraud Examiner. Parshley is a commercial pilot, certified flight instructor and co-builder of an RV-8 homebuilt aircraft. She resides in Phoenix, Arizona. Questions for her? Email her at: c462c@aol.com.

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AVIATION CALENDAR



The Calendar of Events is a source of information about industry/organization events. *Italicized calendar items are events at which Women in Aviation, International will be an exhibitor.* As dates or locations can change and errors can occur, verify the information before making final plans to attend any of the events. Calendar items should be sent to: Aviation for Women Calendar, 18735 Baseleg Avenue, North Fort Myers, FL 33917; Fax: (239) 567-2271; Email: alaboda@wai.org. Events will be considered on a space available basis. ➔

April 1-4

Aircraft Electronics
Association Convention
Dallas, Texas
www.aea.net

April 21-26

Sun 'n' Fun Fly-In
Lakeland Linder Field
Lakeland, Florida
www.sun-n-fun.org



April 23

WAI Breakfast
Sun 'n' Fun Fly-In
8:00 - 9:00 a.m.
Hilton Garden Inn
Lakeland, Florida
RSVP by April 16
scoon@wai.org
www.wai.org

April 25

WAI Reception
Sun 'n' Fun Fly-In
5:00 - 6:30 p.m.
Gifts of Flight Building
Lakeland, Florida
www.wai.org

June 3-9

Canadian Women In
Aviation 10th Biennial
Conference
Edmonton, Alberta,
Canada
www.cwia.ca

July 22-August 2

EAA AirVenture
Wittman Field
Oshkosh, Wisconsin
www.airventure.org

July 22

Women Soar
EAA AirVenture Museum
Oshkosh, Wisconsin
www.airventure.org

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finished my Flight Attendant duties and went to the flight deck to talk to the pilots. On that flight the Captain was a female, and I asked her about how to become a pilot. She turned out to be a mentor for pilots at United Airlines and the perfect person to ask about flying. She guided me and gave me an idea of what to expect financially.

As soon as I returned from that trip I went to a local flight school and I signed up. My first discovery flight in a Cessna 172 over San Diego harbor sealed it—I had discovered my passion.

I was able to obtain a six-month leave from United Airlines and find financial help with loans as well as help from my family. I also enrolled into Pacific Western University to obtain my bachelor's degree. My daughter inspired me in a great way. I thought, if my daughter has beaten the odds and made it through life, I can make it and have my career as a pilot.

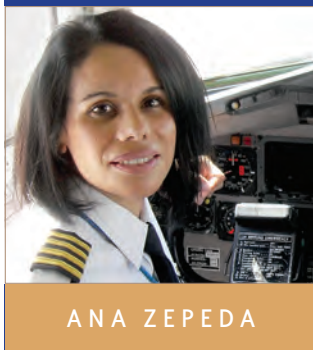
My marriage did not survive the changes. So I was a full-time single mom, in aviation school, working on my bachelor's and attending to my daughter's special needs. I finished my ratings: Private, Instrument, Commercial, Multiengine, CFI, CFII and MEI in six months. I was offered a position as a Flight Instructor with American Flyers, and earned my bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a 3.7 GPA. Then I went back full time to my flight attendant job with United Airlines, simultaneously caring for my disabled daughter and raising my family all on my own.

After two years as a flight instructor and a full-time flight attendant, I was hired as a First Officer flying Grand Canyon tours for Air Vegas Airlines, based in Las Vegas. It was just after 9/11 and I was offered a voluntary furlough from United. That worked for me. I moved to Las Vegas with my two kids, and started all over again.

After one year I was hired at Mesa Airlines as a First Officer. I was assigned Phoenix as a base. I hired a nanny to help me out. I upgraded to Captain in the Dash 8 a year later. In 2006 I was recalled back to United Airlines as a flight attendant, and I was also hired at Allegiant Air as a First Officer flying the MD80. I resigned my United position. After 11 months I upgraded to Captain in the MD80 and reached my goal.

The opportunity that Allegiant Air offered me has been truly wonderful. I am able to attend to my family and continue with my passion of flying. Currently I am engaged to a wonderful man, my son José is attending high school with great grades, and my daughter Josana is a strong happy girl showing us every day the real meaning of life.

I take great pride in my duties as a captain for Allegiant Air. The challenges in my career as well as in my life have only made me a better person and stronger woman. Overall I thank God for my success and achievements. I always remember, "No matter how steep the mountain is, the Lord is going to climb it with you." ➔



ANA ZEPEDA

DREAM-CATCHING

My life time dream was to be a Flight Attendant. I was born in San Diego, California. Both of my parents are Hispanic, my mother from Mexico and my father from Guatemala. When I was 10 years old my father retired, and decided to move the family to Ensenada, Mexico, where I finished high school and lived for 10 years. I had my first child, José, and married at only 18.

In 1993 my husband and I moved to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, where I worked two jobs, one as a time-share seller, and the other as a reservation and ticket agent for Aero California Airlines, a Mexican airline with 10 DC-9 jets based in La Paz, Baja California, Mexico.

After one year I decided to transfer to Tijuana International Airport working for the same airline as a ticket and gate agent. There I worked for another year, following my dream to be a flight attendant; I started applying for all the major airlines in the United States. In 1996 I was fortunate to interview with Southwest Airlines, American Airlines and United Airlines. American Airlines and United Airlines offered me a job. I decided to work for United Airlines because there was a better chance to get based on the west coast.

Flight attendant training was the most amazing experience! From exploring different international cultures to evacuating 10 different aircraft to serving caviar, wines and desserts I'd never seen.

I was assigned Los Angeles, California, as a base, and we moved to San Diego. I was extremely happy. I loved my job, I had the opportunity to visit many cities and countries and I was doing what I loved—flying.

October 16, 1997, my life changed completely—my daughter Josana was born with a rare condition called holoprosencephaly. Josana was born with a severe mid line cleft lip and palate, associated with her condition she was also diagnosed with diabetes insipidus, a rare chronic hormonal imbalance, that will cause her to dehydrate easily. She also was diagnosed severely mentally disabled and with a seizure disorder. We were told she only had a 10 percent chance of making it to six months, and was not going to live past one.

I am happy to say Josana today is 11 years old, she has beat the odds, and continues to bring happiness to our home day

after day. We have been through many ups and downs with her, and our first years of her life were spent more inside the hospital than at home. She has had a total of five reconstructive surgeries to repair her cleft lip and palate. She has tak-



Zepeda at work (above) and daughter Josana (left)

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANA ZEPEDA

en medication since birth, and to date she takes 26 pills a day to control her seizures and diabetes. We do not know what Josana's life expectancy is. She is seen by many specialists frequently, including a research program at Stanford University. Her case is a day-by-day situation. She is mentally about a two-year-old, does not speak, still wears diapers, and we transport her in a wheelchair. She has about four to six seizures daily. At home we configured an indoor playground for her safety with padded floors and walls. Josana attends school, and the state provides a therapist that comes to our house to help her and teach her different independent skills. She has been my motivation in life.

I went back to United Airlines full time as a Flight Attendant when she was eight months old; shortly thereafter I flew a transcontinental flight on a Boeing 777. I remember that I

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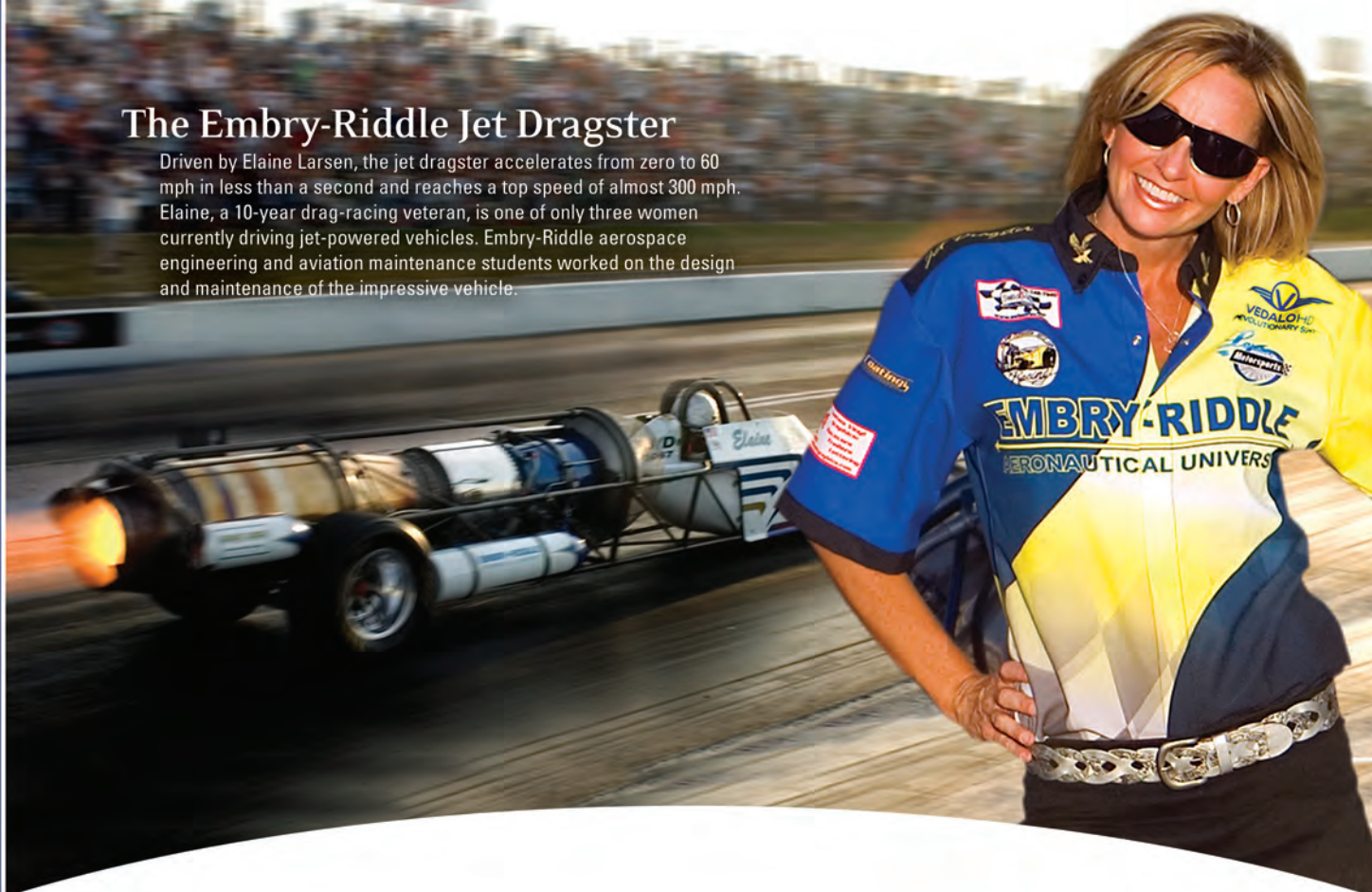
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