



The Flypaper



The Official Newsletter of the Alaska 99s
January, 2004

Alaska Chapter 99s Officers

Chairman	Angie Slingluff	337-0253
Vice Chairman	Audrey Cole	696-3580
Secretary	Gloria Kragness	279-1560
Treasurer	Melanie Hancock	694-4571

Committees

Scholarship	Helen Jones	333-8280
Flypaper	Melanie Hancock	694-4571
Sunshine	Louise Gettmann	243-5643
Flying Companion	Melanie Hancock	694-4571
	Gloria Kragness	279-1560
Membership	Mio Johnson	696-3580
Fly-Ins	Audrey Cole	688-3580
Scrapbook		
Airmarking		
Publicity	Sandi Sumner	694-2080

Chapter News

We will not have a regular meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 14. Instead, there will be an open Officers' Meeting at which we will discuss final plans for the Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, Jan. 17, and the proposed budget. Anyone interested is welcome to join us. Please note the meeting will begin at 7 p.m.

More information inside The Flypaper on these and other activities:

Mat-Su Chapter News (page 3)

Alaska Chapter's 50th Anniversary (page 2)

Member Spotlight (pages 4 & 5)

Flypaper Facts



Deadline for the February Flypaper is February 2 2004. If you have an article, ad or information for The Flypaper, please contact Melanie Hancock by phone or FAX at 694-4571 or e-mail at flyquilt@alaskalife.net. (Ads are placed in The Flypaper for members at no charge.)

Subscription Rates:

October -- September = \$15.00 (full year)

February -- September = \$10.00

June -- September = \$5.00

Mailing Address:

P. O. Box 91962, Anchorage, AK 99509-1962

Web site:

<http://geocities.com/ak99s/>

[Website Updates/Additions: Gunilla Pendleton (336-1863) or e-mail: swedeflyer@gci.net]

Next Meeting

7:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 14

Officers' Meeting

(open to any members wishing to attend)

Peggy's Airport Cafe

Across from Merrill Field

Calendar of Events

Wed., Jan. 14	Officer's Meeting (open to any members interested)
Sat., Jan. 17	Alaska Chapter's 50th Anniversary Celebration
Tues., Jan. 20	Mat-Su Chapter Regular Monthly Meeting
Wed., Feb. 11	Regular Monthly Meeting
Tues., Feb. 17	Mat-Su Chapter Regular Monthly Meeting

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR:

It's a New Year and exciting times! Our Chapter is celebrating its 50th Anniversary with a banquet at the Millenium Hotel on Saturday, January 17 at 6:00 p.m. Hopefully you have received your invitation in the mail. Please RSVP to Melanie by January 14.

January 17 - AK Chapter 99s celebrate their 50th Anniversary with a banquet at the Millennium Hotel. 6:00 p.m. No host bar, Dinner \$25 per person. If any retired (over 65) 99 cannot afford to pay, please contact Angie or Melanie. Don't let lack of money keep you from joining us. RSVP to Melanie Hancock by Wed., Jan. 14, 694-4571 or flynquilt@alaskalife.net. We want

our Charter Members and encourage them to share with us some of their hangar flying stories.

February 7 - Girls Scouts Women in Science and Technology at UAA. 10:00 - Noon 3 sessions of 30 minutes each with Girl Scouts in Grades K-3. 1:00-3:45 p.m. 3 session 45 minutes each for GS in Grades 4 through 8. We are looking for some 99s to assist CeCe Bales, FAA Education coordinator with this project.

March 7 - same program will be repeated in Wasilla. Mat Su 99s - any volunteers?

Date to be determined - after the Women in Science conference - a Flying Companions Seminar for Girl Scouts.

Angie

Alaska Chapter 99s 50th Anniversary Celebration

The Alaska Chapter 99s will hold its 50th Anniversary Celebration at the Millennium Hotel on Saturday, January 17, beginning at 6 p.m.

We will have two dinner choices: Raspberry Coulis Salmon (seared Alaska salmon with raspberry coulis) or Chicken Dijon (breaded chicken breast with Dijon sauce) accompanied by:

Mixed Green Salad, Wild Rice Pilaf, Fresh Seasonal Vegetables, Rolls and Butter, German Chocolate Cake, and Colombian Coffee, Dec. Coffee or Tea

The cost for each (including gratuity) is \$25. You may pay at the door with cash or check made payable to "Alaska 99s."

RSVP to Melanie Hancock (694-4571 or flynquilt@alaskalife.net) no later than noon on Wednesday, January 14.

(NOTE: If you have already RSVP'd, please confirm that again with your dinner choice.) Please plan to be there and invite a friend to celebrate with us. -





Mat-Su Chapter Ninety-Nines
January Meeting

Tuesday, January 20, at 6:00 p.m.

After the reveling and eating at our annual holiday meeting last month (year) it's time once again to get down to business. January's meeting will include both a business meeting and preparation for our upcoming 49 1/2 installation. Bring your portable sewing machine if you have one, thread and scissors in order to mass produce (no telling here for you spouses that don't know).

Meeting to be held at the Mat-Su Evangelical Church, mile 7.1 Palmer Wasilla Hwy. Call Denise (745-5867) if you have not been there before - it's where we held the spring flying companion seminar.

Remember to bring a sack dinner, we'll eat and chat then get down to business.

Gayle Kase

Mat-Su Valley Chapter Officers:

Chair: Holly Sheldon (733-3866)

Vice-Chair: Judith Foster (746-0991)

Secretary: Denise Koehrer (745-5867)

Treasurer: Toni Merrigan (373-6569)

Newsletter

Gayle Kase (746-5273)

Christmas



Dinner/Party

Thirty-two 99s, spouses and guests attended the December Christmas dinner held at the Millennium Hotel.

Everyone enjoyed themselves and the Chinese Auction was, as usual, lots of fun. The highlights of the gifts were a pen and ink drawing by Ellen Paneok, a special commemorative White House Christmas ornament and a small gold clock. This year we sang two special "aviation-oriented" Christmas carols courtesy of Roberta Degenhardt.

Corporate Mergers We'd Love to See:

Zippo Manufacturing, Audi, Dofasco, and Dakota Mining: New company to be named Zip Audi Do-Da



For more information on other 99s chapter activities, contact the following ladies:

Mat-Su: Holly Sheldon, 733-3866

Cook Inlet: Cleo Webb, 235-7414

Midnight Sun: Phyllis Tate, 458-8283



Something Different

Story Courtesy of Sandi Sumner

Margo completed the primary training, followed by basic training in a Vultee Vibrator, a popular nickname for a plane that shook a lot. A few days before Margo's class was to be transferred to Sweetwater, Texas, where they would be housed at a military base, Margo and her classmates engaged in a softball game. The ball came flying across the field. Margo and a friend both chased it, ready to clutch it in their mitt. Instead of catching the ball, the women collided, head to head. Unfortunately, this ended Margo's career in the WASP. Her left ear had to be reattached and she lost her hearing in that ear. Although disappointed, with no severance or disability pay, or benefits, Margo considers this event a turning point for the good.

A friend who owned a Taylorcraft that she called, "Private Willis" asked her to fly with her to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. "Ever time we touched down, the men would yell that WACS and WAVES were winning the war. . .they resented women pilots."

"We flew on to Wayne, Michigan and my friend asked me to look after a Stinson, which I gladly did," Margo said. "The people at Stinson were impressed with my knowledge and gave me a job as a Compass Compensator.

One day when I was sitting in the cockpit, making the compass adjustments, a young man named Boots came to help me. Before long, they advanced me to a better position. . .A & E Mechanic and that was fine. Eventually, I became the Assistant Crew Chief."

Margo laughs as she recalls an incident while she was working at Stinson. "I am deathly afraid of bees. I had climbed into the plane and closed the windows, unaware there was a bee inside. As soon as he made his presence known, I shut the engine off and jumped out!"

Margo's reaction surprised me. As we sat across from each other at her dining room table, I felt the presence of a competent pilot not afraid to fly war planes, yet I remembered my own dislike of the buzzing yellow menace that I try to avoid.

Margo didn't dwell on her fear of bees, explaining that she obtained her commercial license in Private Willis and continued to fly to Detroit City Airport where Stinson Aircraft asked her to become a test pilot in their L-5. A civilian, she not only flew test runs right off the factory line for the military, Margo gave demonstrations and taught herself to do aerobatics. "I loved to fly upside down," Margo said. "The belly of the plane would be streaked with oil and the crew was not happy about cleaning up the mess. They threatened to make me clean it, and met me with solvent and rags one time when I landed, but I refused.

"If the WACS and WAVES are winning the war, what the hell are we fighting for." This was the cry from men during WWII when women were recruited to ferry planes and relieve male pilots for combat missions overseas. Margaret Anne Cook, known to her friends in Alaska as "Margo", was teaching school in Downey, California in 1941 when she read about female flying ace, Jackie Cochran. "I wanted to do something different," Margo said. "I liked to be the first to try new things, so I quit my teaching job and signed up for the Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) program." (This was a step towards becoming a Womens Air Service Pilot, or WASP.)

At the time the government offered this free program, only one in ten trainees could be women. Margo acquired her private pilot's license in June of 1941, but without a minimum of 100 hours in the air, she couldn't follow in Jackie Cochran's steps and become a WASP. She went to the desert in Blythe, California where she flew every waking minute to accumulate the required hours.

Margo, or "Cookie" as her classmates nicknamed her, became a WASP in 1943 based in Houston, Texas where the women had to be housed off base in motels and eat in fast-food restaurants. Margo recalls the attire they wore. "We called them Zoot suits. They came in three sizes: large, larger and extra-large. They were basically jumpsuits. They also gave us heavier fleece lined pants and jackets to wear because we flew open cockpit PT-17s and when the wind blew. . .which it always did around Houston. . .it was very cold. The wind sock always stood out straight."

As a test pilot I did what's called, 'squawking'. . . putting the aircraft through various maneuvers to be sure it was airworthy and didn't have any problems with the wings or the mags, and would flight straight and level.

Margo was employed and considered herself lucky in December of 1944 when the WASP program ended and her classmates couldn't find a job flying. Her fiancé was killed in WWII and Margo didn't pursue marriage again. From the pictures I saw, it was clear that Margo was very striking and personable. No doubt she had many young men turning their heads.

Margo talked of stunt flying for a Hop Harrigan movie in the Stinson filmed at Thunderbird Field in Phoenix, Arizona. "I had to fly around wearing Hop's huge hat and when I landed, fall on the floor of the plane and he'd put on the hat and take credit for my efforts. I really thought I was the hero, not him. There were two other pilots, men, and when I found out they were being paid more, I placed a phone call in the middle of the night and demanded equal pay. And I got it!" Margo said. "I also acted as technical advisor on the movie because I had more knowledge than the other pilots." She could have continued to do movie stunts, but Margo noticed a lot of pilots had ulcers and weren't having much fun flying for other people. She opted for one movie and quit.

"Following the movie work, I was asked to take a Stinson back to Dreyfus, New York for interior design changes," Margo said. "I'll never forget it. The workers couldn't believe I was flying the bigwigs around, the administrators. When we'd take off, they'd stand on the ground, their fists raised in the air to protest."

Margo said, "I've been very independent all my life. I had two masters degrees, one in science, the other in guidance counseling, and my commercial flight instructor's license. When Stinson merged with another company, a former roommate suggested that Margo should come and teach in the last frontier. Margo did some flying for local flight services after she arrived in Alaska, such as Spemak at Merrill Field in Anchorage then she taught high school and became a counselor. In 1954 when the Alaska Ninety-Nines were chartered, Margo became a charter member. She is still an active member today.

Flying is what she did that made Margo happiest. "I liked to do dangerous stuff like fly just above the trees and buzz farmhouses. The farmers would get mad, but it never stopped me. It was fun. On one flight, Margo was determined to find a small field where she could land the Stinson L-5, but it seemed to be unrecognizable. She landed at an unknown field and since she was in a military plane without proper identification, she had to wait to be cleared to take off. Stinson received a call and confirmed that yes, Margo "Cookie" Cook was the pilot authorized to fly the L-5. "When I returned to base, the crew came running outside and hung a big sign around my neck that read: Property of Stinson Aircraft. If found please return to Wayne, Michigan."

Margo retired from Anchorage School District in 1982 and has enjoyed traveling around the world. "The thing I like to do most is travel." No wonder, of course, for a lady with a passion for new and interesting experiences.



Margo on the wing of a T6

WWII WARBIIRD RIDES IN ALASKA

(A TESTIMONIAL FROM 99 PATTI EICHHOLZ)

Just a note concerning an ad that has been running in the Daily News about WWII Warbird Rides. They were in Idaho this last summer when my husband and I were there and I had the pleasure of getting some dual in the T6—what a wonderful experience it was!

They will do whatever you want on the flight from just flightseeing to loops and rolls! We encouraged them to come to Alaska and were pleased to see that they have the trip planned. We talked to them last evening and they are going to be here the end of June and first couple of weeks in July. They will be operating out of ACE Hangar at Merrill. I just thought it might be good to let you know that we were impressed with their safety and professionalism and would recommend them to anyone—pilot or not. I'm sure that my husband and I will

buy some time again when they are here! If anyone would like to call me for a reference (262-3872 or 398-1539),

I would be glad to speak with them. I'd love for Kevin and his Warbird to have a great Alaskan experience while he is here.