

**NORTH JERSEY CHAPTER NINETY-NINES NEWS**  
**August 2007**

**CHAPTER CHAIR**

It was with much sadness that The Chapter Board accepted the resignation of Marion Starer. Marion has been a tireless leader, representing us at many functions, orchestrating our programs and keeping us encouraged and informed. We hope to do the same for her as she faces new challenges in her life.

**THE PULITZER PRIZE**

By Bev Weintraub

Winning a Pulitzer Prize is not something I ever really thought about. It was not a career goal, and when I changed my job at The Daily News from editing to writing four years ago, it never occurred to me that my work would someday be so honored.

I spent much of last year researching and writing a series of editorials exploring the serious health problems experienced by the rescue and recovery workers who labored at the World Trade Center site on and after Sept. 11, 2001. There had been scattered reports during the previous several years that many were sick and some had died. But no one seemed to know how many people had worked down there, what toxins they had been exposed to, what symptoms they were experiencing and how many of them had made the ultimate sacrifice to help the city and the nation recover from the terrorist attack.

After reading 27 medical journal articles – many written by doctors who had treated first-responders – interviewing researchers and recovery workers and poring through medical records, duty rosters and legal papers, my colleagues and I produced 13 editorials that examined in great detail what dangerous substances people had breathed at the site, including asbestos, Jet-A fumes and highly caustic pulverized concrete; what was physically wrong with them – asthma, persistent coughing, chronic sinus

infections, acid reflux, severely reduced lung function – and what troubles they had obtaining medical treatment and workers' compensation and pension benefits. We also documented six cases of formerly healthy people who had been exposed downtown and died of rare lung-scarring diseases.

We estimated that 40,000 cops, firefighters, construction workers and volunteers worked on or near The Pile, and that of those, some 12,000 were likely sick.

It was groundbreaking work because no one before had tried to synthesize all the available information, which was extensive but widely scattered, and explain what was happening to these brave people. Public officials began to pay attention to the dire health problems the recovery workers faced. New York's governor eased the workers' comp laws so responders wouldn't be turned away because the filing deadline had passed. The mayor, who had denied that the problems even existed, named a panel of deputy mayors to explore the scope of the issue (he has since begun funding a treatment program for people who live downtown). Various members of Congress pried loose federal funding to cover medical expenses for responders who worked on The Pile.

We began to think that our editorials might be prize worthy, but the Daily News is a tabloid, and in some quarters tabloids are not considered serious newspapers.

The Pulitzer entry deadline is Feb. 1, and my co-workers and I spent much of January preparing the editorials for submission. We had to choose 10 of the 13, have them mounted and bound in a book and then gather supplementary materials – photos of the three of us, biographies, an introductory letter from the editor of the paper and a \$50 check to cover the entry fee. Because it is important to

the Pulitzer judges that the work has righted a wrong and changed policy for the better, we requested letters of support from some of the doctors and occupational safety experts who had struggled to get help for sick responders. One member of Congress offered to write us a letter – and sent one bearing nine congressional signatures, including those of New York's two senators.

In March, panels of jurors in 14 journalism categories come to Columbia University to read each entry and choose three finalists. In April, the Pulitzer Board reviews the finalists and picks a winner in each category. All this is supposed to be secret, but somehow the names of the finalists leak out within a day after the jurors make their selections. On that day, 11 of the 14 categories leaked – and editorial writing wasn't one of them. A week went by, and then two, and we eventually assumed that the finalists had been informed and we didn't make the cut. We pouted, shrugged and went on with our lives. It wasn't until about a week before the winners were announced that we heard we were probably finalists after all. And though we received an informal phone call on the day of the announcement, we didn't know for sure we had won until the wire services moved the names. We found out at the same time everyone else did.

Once the announcement was made, my life became a bit of a whirl, with congratulatory calls and e-mails, a champagne reception in the newsroom, a celebratory dinner and finally an awards lunch at the university, where I was handed an engraved prism and a certificate with the words, "Pulitzer Prize" and my name on them. It was great. But even now, though my husband drops it into every conversation and my newspaper's publisher now knows who I am, it doesn't feel entirely real.

One of the speakers at the awards lunch said that the only thing the

Pulitzer changes is that from that moment on, everything a winner writes will have been written by a Pulitzer winner. He's probably right, because in many ways it seems the Pulitzer has affected the people around me more than it has affected me. The editorial series was last year's work, and it's over. It was one big project that helped potentially thousands of people, called attention to a serious need and forced government action to address it. That was the real reward. The prize was just the icing on the cake.

### SPRING DINNER

A great big thank you is extended to all of you who either contributed items to the Spring Dinner Auction and those who bid on them. It was a fun time and I think most of you walked away with an unusual trinket and fond memory.

Thank you, Nancy Ahlers for those wonderful "goodie bags".

### EMBRY-RIDDLE 99 PINS

Many of you were interested in purchasing an Embry-Riddle Ninety-Nine Pin like the one Caitlin Burns auctioned at the Spring Dinner. The pins are \$20 each. If you are interested in owning one, please contact Marilyn Patierno by email: [angelace@msn.com](mailto:angelace@msn.com)

### THE PERFECT USE OF AN AIRPLANE

By Lynn O'Donnell

When Candie Oldham asked me if I would come and speak at the Cape Air Pilots Association meeting in Hyannis, MA, I agreed right away. Any chance to visit Rae and Candie at the beautiful Falmouth Airpark is not to be turned down – even if it means speaking in front of a bunch of strangers. Falmouth Airpark is a fly-in community but it looks more like a park than an airport. The houses are surrounded by trees and the very wide taxiways are grass giving it a lovely, park like setting. Rae and Candie chose Falmouth as

their retirement home a couple of years ago. (Candie was our Membership Chair for years and sold TYVEK products for NY/NJ Section.) They are wonderful hosts and love to have visitors from the North Jersey Chapter drop in. Be warned, however. They will make you a great margarita, thereby forcing you into an overnight stay!

The original plan was for me to fly the Stinson from Morristown (MMU) to Falmouth (5B6), a trip of 181 nm. But that was very weather-dependent – and slow at 90 kts. By chance, Marilyn Patierno who lives in The Spruce Creek Fly-in in Florida said she also wanted to visit Candie and Rae. We hatched a plan and combined our trips, planning to fly in Marilyn's beautiful A36 Bonanza which she had temporarily based at MMU while staying in NJ.

The weather that day in mid-May did not disappoint us. It was clear the whole way with tailwinds as a bonus. We clocked 220 kts ground speed at one point. Marilyn's GPS and traffic alerting system were great aids in the busy NYC area. The only fly in the ointment was the runway length at Falmouth: 2298 x 40 ft and surrounded by trees. This isn't really short at all – it just looks short because we are used to longer, wider pieces of concrete and the Bonanza is a fairly fast airplane. Most of us are used to 3000 – 5000 ft. runways; CDW is 4553 x 80, MMU is almost 6000 x 176, even N07 is 2942 ft. We checked the Bonanza's flight manual for landing distances and appropriate speeds for a short field landing. Marilyn flew a picture-perfect short field approach and used only HALF of the available runway. Now I know why her email name is Angel Ace. Candie and Rae watched us land. They later said they wished more of the airpark residents were there to see Marilyn's landing so they could see how it should really be done.

Rae drove us on a sight seeing tour of Falmouth and Woods Hole. Both are wonderful towns, unique and picturesque. Our tour included shopping and lunch by the water. For the CAPA meeting, we drove to a community college in Hyannis. Because they have 2 speakers and free pizza, they get fairly good attendance.

I gave my talk about ferrying across the Atlantic before the days of GPS to about 60 people. The second speaker talked about "Nightmare Annuals" which was very informative – and scary.

After the meeting, back at Candie and Rae's, the famed margaritas appeared and a gab session ensued that lasted till past midnight. Marilyn and I flew back to MMU in the morning, again in favorable weather.

So why was this perfect use of an airplane? One pilot got proficient in skills she doesn't routinely use. One pilot learned about a different airplane and its capabilities. And best of all: this use of an airplane helped keep old friendships alive and strong.

### THE AIR RACE CLASSIC

By Bev Weintraub

Flying the Air Race Classic is perhaps the most fun you can have in an airplane – and a tremendous learning experience. Participants see parts of the country they might never otherwise see, meet fascinating people and hone their piloting skills. This year's course began in Oklahoma City and ended in St. John, New Brunswick, Canada, with 2,236 NM in between.

The festivities began June 16 as teams gathered at Wiley Post Airport after several days of flying through inclement weather and dodging the largest "tower farm" I've ever seen – seven or eight enormous electrical towers, as much as 1,600 feet AGL (2750 MSL) in height and just eight miles east of the field. While some of the 46 teams watched as their airplanes were inspected and certified as race-ready, others traveled to the Omniplex Science Museum for a presentation before a pack of plane-crazy Girl Scouts (and their equally aviation-minded brothers).

Terry Von Thaden, a professor of aviation safety and human factors, a Ninety-Nine and granddaughter of famed flier Louise Thaden, delivered an intriguing slide show about aviation history and her grandmother's part in it. Not only was Louise Thaden a

founding member of the Ninety-Nines, she won the very first Women's Air Derby (nicknamed the Powder Puff Derby by Will Rogers) in 1929, beating Amelia Earhart, among others. She also, that same year, became the first pilot to hold the women's altitude, endurance and speed records in light planes simultaneously – a record that has never been broken.

After the slide show, the racers explained, one by one, where they were from, how and why they had started flying and why they race. The Girl Scouts were an extremely enthusiastic group, though unfortunately the program was held at the museum and not at the airport, so they were unable to see the planes up close.

That evening, the racers returned to the Omnplex for a talk by Bill Thaden, Louise Thaden's son and a longtime pilot for Eastern Airlines. He spoke at length about what it was like growing up with a daredevil mom who set aviation records and flew everything from a prototype biplane to (much later) a modern jet. The audience hung on every word. The museum contains an impressive collection, including a 1929 Beech Travel-Air flown by Louise Thaden and a display telling the story of the Women's Air Derby, later renamed the Air Race Classic.

Racers also had an opportunity to visit the Ninety-Nines Museum of Women Pilots, located, fittingly enough, on Amelia Earhart Road at Will Rogers World Airport. The museum is a marvelous chronicle of women in aviation, from early flight to the present day, and is jam-packed with historic artifacts.

One surprising thing about Oklahoma City: Not only do cowboys wear hats, but some of them wear spurs on their boots, indoors, even when there are no horses in sight. They really do jingle jingle, and we could hear them coming a mile away.

After three days, it was time to race. The morning of June 19, all 46 planes lined up and took off, one right after another, heading northwest. The course took us from Oklahoma City to McCook, Neb.; Denison, Iowa; Jefferson City, Mo. (the FBO's freezer

was stuffed with great ice cream from a local creamery!); Bowling Green, Ky.; Lewisburg, W.Va. (where my partner and I crashed the famed Greenbriar resort and were allowed to wander the grounds, stroll through the manicured gardens and rock at our leisure on the verandah – but not enter the main dining room), Elmira, N.Y.; Burlington, Vt.; Bangor, Maine (which has the most accommodating FBO and Customs people anywhere) and St. John.

At each airport, we had to fly a timing line – most of the flybys were at 200 or 300 feet AGL – and then make a beeline for the next stop on the route, where we would fly another timing line, circle back to land and then stretch our legs, eat and refuel. When we were ready to leave, we flew the timing line again and headed for the next stop. Some of the timing lines were over active runways, some ran perpendicular to them and some were over grass strips not marked on the charts. The teams – and the race officials – kept track of each team's time for each leg of the race; the team that eventually beat its handicap by the greatest amount of time would win.

The route provided a variety of airport environments, from non-towered to Class D to Class C, but the airport at St. John was very different than what most racers were accustomed to. It is a Control Zone, which in Canada means that the airport is towered, but the people act only in an advisory capacity. So we had to talk to the tower to state our intentions and receive advisories, including which was the active runway, but the tower personnel were not authorized to clear us to land. It was more than a Unicom but less than ATC, a strange hybrid of towered and non-towered field.

My partner and I arrived in St. John on June 22, the last day of the race. We taxied to the FBO, shut down the engine, climbed out of the plane – and discovered that a TV news crew was pointing its camera at us. The Canadian Broadcasting Co.'s local affiliate was doing a story about the race, and we happened to be at the right place at the right time. Our comments about why, as women, we find flying so satisfying were featured on that evening's 6 o'clock news.

(And yes, I was wearing my North Jersey 99s hat!)

St. John is a lovely coastal city, with a beautiful historic uptown (not downtown, because it's up from the oceanfront), natural attractions including a reversing waterfall with impressive tides and a defensive tower built around the War of 1812 to keep us Yanks out. (One of the Southern racers objected strenuously to being called a Yank.) It was interesting to learn that many British loyalists had fled to New Brunswick after the new nation of the United States was declared.

Among the activities in St. John was a program with the Girl Guides, the Canadian equivalent of the Girl Scouts. This time, the presentation was at the airport, so after a bit of aviation book work and discussions of the parts of the airplane and basic aerodynamics, the girls went outside and examined the planes inside and out. Some also got to pretend they were airplanes, circling an airport drawn in chalk on the ramp and taking instructions from a professional air traffic controller. We got a hugely enthusiastic reception from a large group of future women pilots in the making.

Crossing the border into Canada required some additional preparations, but they were easily done. The plane must have a radio station license, and at least one pilot must have a radio operator permit. It took the FCC about four days to send mine in the mail after I paid a \$60 fee. The plane also must have a Customs sticker. We had applied for Customs check-ins when we filed our flight plans, so they were expecting us. We cleared Customs at St. John right at the FBO, and on the way back the Customs officials at Bangor met us at the plane. We maintained the squawk code we were given at St. John and called Boston Center after we crossed the border, so the inspectors were waiting for us. We zoomed right through after assuring them we didn't have any fruit in the plane – and they didn't care at all that we had dried seaweed, a commonly enjoyed snack food in St. John.

Along the way, we learned a valuable lesson: There's nothing better than

local knowledge. We didn't know, for example, that in the morning Lewisburg's airport can get completely fogged in. Two college teams who stayed at our motel insisted on leaving for the airport at 5:30 a.m. to get an early start. But the race is VFR only, and the fog was so thick that we couldn't see 15 feet ahead of us. It was also 48 degrees outside, and the FBO didn't open until 8 a.m., so the poor girls sat there and froze. My partner and I were adopted by an older couple who insisted we go out to breakfast and promised that by the time we finished, the fog would burn off. They were exactly right. But if we had known about the fog, we probably would have continued on to the next stop.

The most fun part of the race is the other pilots. Participants came from all over the country, plus New Zealand, so it was truly an international affair. We were competitors, but we were also

watching out for one another. It was extremely comforting, especially for new teams, that there was constant chatter among the racers on the air-to-air frequency and that teams at the front of the pack sent back a steady stream of information about weather conditions ahead.

Unfortunately, 11 teams were unable to make it to the terminus by deadline, some because of mechanical problems and some because of the weather. Conditions turned somewhat dicey as the race progressed, especially from Elmira to Burlington and from Bangor to St. John. Dealing with rain showers, low visibility, even thunderstorms is part of what every pilot needs to be able to do, and this year's race was a real learning experience. At Bangor, 20 teams pulled together to make weather decisions and organize the flyby to maximize safety. Everyone was looking out for everyone else, and everybody stayed safe and legal.

At the awards banquet at the hotel in St. John, medals were given to the top 10 finishers. The next 10 teams received leg prizes for posting the best times for particular segments of the race. But all the teams who flew the 2,336 nautical miles to St. John, whether they arrived by the deadline or not, were winners for having completed a challenging course.

**TETERBORO WINGS & WHEELS**  
 Wings and Wheels is a two-day aviation experience, full of WWII aircraft and aviators who love to talk about flying. There is an opportunity for someone to represent the 99s at this event. If available, you can call Shay Oakley at the Teterboro Hall of Fame Museum at (201) 288-6344.

Date	Function	Location
August 15, 2007 7:30 pm	Open Board Meeting	Teterboro Hall of Fame Museum 400 Fred Wehran Drive; Teterboro 201-288-6344
September 8, 2007 11:00 am	Annual Picnic Meeting	Warwick Airport (N72) – Warwick, NY R.S.V.P Phyllis Kollar: 201-321-9350
September 12-16, 2007	2007 International Conference	Mile High Boulder/Denver, Colorado
September 28-29, 2007	NY-NJ Section Meeting	Albany, NY
October 1, 2007 7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting Discuss Pennies-a -Pound	Best in Flight Aviation Academy – Morristown Airport (MMU) 9 Airport Road; Morristown, NJ (973) 683-9002
October 6-7, 2007	Pennies-a-Pound Volunteers Needed	Jeanne Kent and Sue Westervelt
October 29, 2007	Deadline for Scholarship Applications	
November 12, 2007 7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting	Aero Safety Training – Lincoln Park Airport (N07) 425 Beaverbrook Road; Lincoln Park, NJ (973) 872-6213
December 5, 2007 6:00 pm	Annual Holiday Dinner	The San Carlo 620 Stuyvesant Ave; Lyndhurst, NJ (201) 933-3400
August 7-8, 2008	2008 International Conference	Anchorage, Alaska