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The Ventura County Ninety-Nines have a monthly business meeting and speaker on the evening of the third Tuesday of the month. Check this publication for the next meeting, or at our website for locations.

We also meet socially for breakfast at 8:30 AM on the first Sunday of the month at Flight 126 at Santa Paula Airport.

If you are reading a paper copy of this newsletter, it is printed from an electronic file and can be found--in color--at our website. You can register to get an email reminder of The Flyer via email at this site.



VC99s' Holiday Celebration

Angelee Conroy

The VC99s Holiday Awards Dinner was held on December 6th at the Saticoy Country Club in Somis, CA, with sixty-one VC99 members and guests attending. This year the chapter supported our local high school by inviting the Oxnard High School Jazz Band to perform before and after our awards program. With a total of seventeen musicians as well as singers, they played holiday music, with a few members up and dancing at the end of the evening. Thank you to PizzaMan Dan's for providing the band members with pizzas during their break. Thank you to Judy McCarthy for providing the delicious chocolate truffles for dessert. The club was festively decorated, holiday cheer was in the air, and a good time was had by all.

More photos on page 4



NEXT
MEETING
JANUARY 19



need to be an inspiration to those young girls by being the pilot of their flight!

The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) is looking for women pilots.

Last but not least, the VC99s need you!

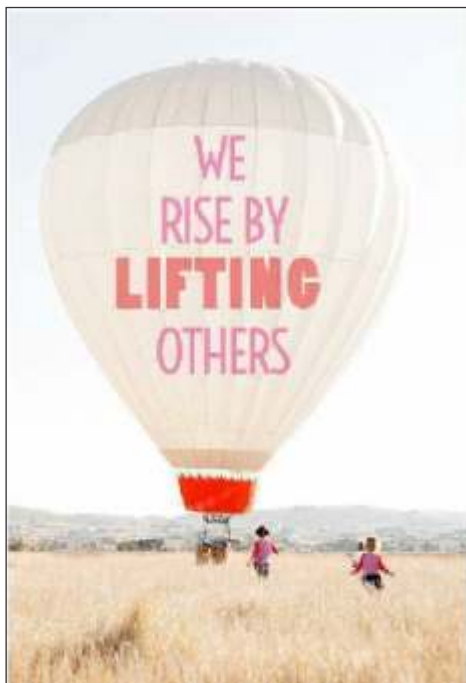
The Chapter is in real need for volunteers to step up for next year's High School Aviation Career

Happy New Year!

As we look forward to the New Year 2016, I would like to challenge you all to "Rise by Lifting Others." How might you do that? Step out of your comfort zone and reach out. While you are at it, apply it to aviation and to our Chapter! Here are some ideas:

The Women in Aviation organization is looking for women to participate in their program giving flights to other women and young girls.

EAA is looking for women pilots to take up Young Eagles for flights. Pete mentioned that about 40% of the Young Eagles taking flights are girls! We



to women to pursue their flying passion!

Consider helping someone "Dream Bigger" It will help you, too!



There's Always Someone to Congratulate in the VC99s

Michelle Carter earned her Tail Wheel Endorsement on December 16. Michelle writes: "I want to thank the Ventura County 99s for providing an Endorsement Challenge Scholarship this year. I was so thrilled when I found out I had won, because I had been very eager to get my Tail Wheel Endorsement. I did my training at Olmstead Aviation in a beautiful little yellow J-3 Piper Cub at Santa Paula Airport. Being able to shoot landings with the door open was a real treat and I couldn't have asked for a better airplane to learn in. The rudder is very important in a tail-dragger and staying quick on your toes during landing was quite exciting and challenging. I encourage everyone to take a lesson in a tail-dragger. It is a whole different kind of flying and a lot of fun!"



VC99s Winter Scholarships

Lori Parker

Four VC99 scholarship winners were announced at the Holiday Recruitment event. Through a generous donation from Ceci Stratford and matching funds from an anonymous donor, we were able to present two "Get Back in the Air" Awards. Sunni Gibbons of the Santa Maria chapter and Maureen Kenney of San Fernando Valley were the very happy winners. Maureen was thrilled when she received the good news. "This is the first time I have won! I look forward to working with a new instructor as they don't know what I know, and therefore challenge me!" She is eager to get current and fly for Pilots and Paws and perhaps fly in the Air Race Classic again.

When we called Sunni she said, "I am so appreciative of the 99s support and vote of confidence for this award. I am ready to recapture the zest and joy of flight that drove me to work for the privilege of flying in the first place. I will get 'back on that horse' and get my BFR in February in a Warrior or Dakota."

The winter female student pilot scholarship went to Elspeth Craig. She has an avid interest in aviation and aerospace, from inspecting engines in vintage aircraft to flying them. When Elspeth was six, she even sat in the co-pilot seat of a commercial aircraft in Australia, back in the day where you could actually accomplish that with a smile. With a background of project management, Elspeth is interested in helping the VC99s with their outreach program.

The winner of the Karen Johnson advanced scholarship award was Michelle Carter. She said, "I

was in complete shock when I won the Advanced Training Scholarship. I was so happy I couldn't hold it in, I just started crying! I have dreamed about getting my Instrument Rating and now I can finally make it come true. Currently I am working on my Tail Wheel Endorsement in a J-3 Piper Cub at Santa Paula Airport with the Endorsement Challenge



scholarship I had won last summer through the Ventura County 99s. This winter break I plan on soloing the Cub,

passing the Instrument written, and do a bit of cross country flying in my Cessna-150 (Cream Puff). Currently I am an undergraduate at the University of California, Santa Barbara studying Geology.



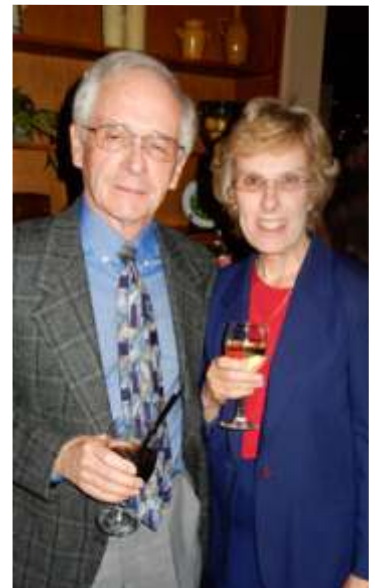
With my busy schedule at school, I have decided to devote my 2016 summer to getting my Instrument Rating. That way I can fly every day and stay consistent throughout training. The 99s have continuously been my mentor and support in reaching my aviation goals and growing as

a pilot. I am so grateful and can't wait to begin this next journey in my flying career." Since our conversation, she has completed her tailwheel endorsement and is ready to accomplish her next goal.

Congratulations ladies! The Ventura County Ninety-Nines are honored to support your aviation goals!



More Photos of the VC99s' Holiday Celebration



Balloon Adventures in Mexico

Peggy Watson-Meineke



December 10 – 13th Gary and I participated in the first San Luis Rio Colorado Balloon event in Mexico. San Luis is about 25 miles south of Yuma, Arizona just across the border into Mexico. Fifteen balloons were invited, three from California and the rest from Arizona and other states. Maria, from Simi Valley, and I were the only women pilots. We were all welcomed Thursday night to a dinner with the President of the Sonora region. He personally shook our hands and provided us with gifts of dates, date liquor, and a city pin to wear.

We flew Friday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings, and did night glows on Friday and Saturday nights. Each morning we had to drive about 5 miles through town to the launch site. It seemed that every 25 ft there was a Stop Sign or Stop light. It would have taken much longer to get to the launch site but for the city police who escorted the caravan of 15 balloon trucks each morning with lights and sirens. We felt pretty special driving straight through the stop signs and lights. The city also provided us with wonderful local people to crew. They didn't speak much English

(none really), but that didn't seem to matter. They were just so happy and so very eager to help. The crew quickly bonded with the pilots and stayed with that balloon for the entire weekend. The winds were pretty brisk at sunrise both Friday and Saturday and

we were afraid we were not going to be able to pull off a flight. At 300ft AGL the wind was going about 40 mph. On the surface it barely calmed down enough to inflate the balloons. Most of the pilots hesitated to take off as the winds aloft were out of our comfort zone. Fast winds at 300ft can come down to the surface as the sun rises, and we certainly don't want to be landing the balloons at that speed. But what was comforting,

was knowing that the strong wind would take us out to the wide open desert where there is lots of space to do a high-wind landing if we had to. There was not going to be ANY landing in town with all the power lines crisscrossing like a spider web in every direction.

Friday morning I had a grandmother and teenage grandson as passengers. CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



They understood English pretty well and I really briefed the grandson hard on how to brace, and to help brace grandma, for a high-wind landing. As it turned out we just bounced a few times and I was able to keep the balloon standing on the ground close to the outskirts of a very poor neighborhood. Soon the whole neighborhood was out and the kids had a blast jumping in and out of the basket.

Saturday morning I had a cute young couple as passengers. I was relieved that they were young and agile for another possible high-wind landing. Again the winds were fast at 500 ft AGL, and we got out to the desert in just 30 minutes. I had picked out my landing spot close to a dirt



road (for easy access for Gary to get to me in the chase truck) and was descending at about 300 ft per minute. At about 100 ft I advised the passengers to brace for landing. At that time the young man quietly got my attention and pulled out a box. He motioned he had a ring and wanted to propose to his girlfriend before we landed! Ugh! I leveled off quickly, and made up an excuse to the young lady that I changed my mind on that landing spot. I motioned to hurry up and get on with it! LOL. He actually got down on his knee. I managed to take pictures with one hand and fly with the other hand, keeping the balloon at about 20 ft above the ground for another mile, while he gave a seemingly looooong speech (in Spanish) and proposed. In the meantime we were getting further and further away from any roads! We had a pretty quick and rather sporty landing. There was no keeping the balloon up this time. We had a knock down-drag out landing at about 12 mph and the wind deflated the balloon quickly. Now we were out in middle of the desert with no civilization or roads anywhere in sight. But the city had thought of everything. They had engaged the off-road Sport Club with their

dune-buggies, off-road trucks, and ATVs, to come to our rescue should any balloon land way out in the desert. Before the balloon was completely deflated a big off-road truck was speeding right up to us.

Anticipating that we might land where it would take Gary time to get to me, I had packed up the envelope bag and hung it on the outside of the basket. So the two big guys in the truck and I packed up the balloon. We loaded the basket and envelope bag in the back of the off-road truck and we all piled in for a rather sporty drive back through the desert. Gary was waiting for us on the paved road where we moved the balloon to the trailer.

Sunday morning's flight was almost normal. I had three young women as passengers. The winds

were much slower and steerable. I didn't trust the winds and high-tailed it to the desert again and was able to nail that landing spot close to the road where Gary could get to me.

The President met us at the Hotel after the Sunday flight for a farewell breakfast on the patio. He had even gotten a flight in with Steve Wilkinson (I was wondering why three police cars were a part of Steve's chase crew!). He was so grateful for the efforts we made to fly and pull off a great first annual event. Now we were dreading the reported 2½ hour wait to cross the border to head back home. But the city came to our rescue again! The police again escorted the caravan of 15 balloon rigs past the miles of lined up cars and straight up to the border! We all got across in about 20 minutes.

What an adventure! The local crew was wonderful, the police were wonderful, the President was involved and pleased, and the city loved the balloons. It can't get much better than that. There are lots of pictures on my Facebook page if you are interested. We look forward to going to the event again next year in what the President said would become an annual event.



Calendar of Events

NO GENERAL MEETING IN DECEMBER

- Jan 3 First Sunday Breakfast – 8:30 AM Flight 126,
Santa Paula, Open House – Santa Paula
Airport
- Jan 7 Board Meeting – 5:30pm, DOA, Camarillo
- Jan 19 General Meeting – 5:30pm, DOA, Camarillo
- Feb 6 First Sunday Breakfast – 8:30 AM Flight 126,
Santa Paula, Open House – Santa Paula
Airport
- Feb 4 Board Meeting – 5:30pm, DOA, Camarillo
- Feb 16 General Meeting – 5:30pm

SPECIAL EVENTS:

- Apr 22-24 Southwest Section Spring Meeting –
Flabob Airport, Riverside, CA
- July 2016 International – Ottawa, Canada; July 6-10
- July 2017 International – San Antonio, Texas

OTHER AVIATION THINGS:

- EVERY First Sunday of the Month 10am-2pm
Aviation Museum of Santa Paula Open House
and antique aircraft on display and EAA Young
Eagles flights at Santa Paula Airport
- EVERY First Saturday of the Month at 9am
EAA Young Eagles Flights at EAA Hangar, CMA
- EVERY First Monday at 7PM, Camarillo City Hall
Aviation Advisory Commission meets
- EVERY Second Thursday at 7PM, Camarillo City Hall
The Aviation Authority meets
- EVERY Second Saturday (except December)
The Camarillo Chapter of the Experimental
Aircraft Association (EAA) meets at the EAA
Hangar, CMA

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