



# The Eagle's Scream



Spring 2025

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The Florida Wing of the Commemorative Airforce Newsletter

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T-34 N88RM on approach to KDED Photo Credit: Sam Knutson

# Wing Leader Comments

-by Col Joel Lonky



Photo Credit: Jay Selman

As another year has come to its end and 2025 is just getting started, I pause to reflect upon the many successes of our Florida CAF Wing.

First and foremost, thank you to our members and staff! It truly is a team effort to keep the Wing active, and I appreciate each and every one of you.

Currently, the Wing is in a very strong financial position. As always, we are indebted to Col. Pat Foley's Thornedge Foundation and to Diane Bauman for their very generous annual donations! Thank you, Pat, and thank you, Diane! Many thanks also going out to the Wing staff involved in the preparation and presentation of the Volusia County Grant application! Our pilot sponsors also deserve mention for their support of our T34 with their flying hours. All of these individuals contribute to our ongoing success.

2024 was not without its trials and tribulations in regards to the annual inspection of N8S8RM. Our aircraft was out of service for 5 months due to very important airworthiness directives involving testing of the wing spars and a propeller overhaul. This was made even more time-consuming by also

needing a sample “coupon” for the non-destructive testing technicians to use as a benchmark for their tests. Many thanks to Col. Curtis Boulware and Col. Doug Scabilia for sourcing a manufacturer to produce the needed test samples when none were available. I am very happy to say that N88RM is back and flying again better than ever!

The Florida Wing is happy to host our hangar tenants and the Daytona 99’s who are using our space for their monthly meetings. An article follows introducing this great organization for anyone who is not familiar.

Looking forward into the New Year, I am hopeful for a renewed vitality of the Florida Wing with upcoming events and projects that will stimulate membership growth and participation in the Florida Wing of the CAF.

As your Wing Leader, please accept my heartfelt gratitude for YOUR contribution to our success!



# The Ninety-Nines: Amazing Women with a Proud History

With a long-ago established name that gives no clue as to what it stands for, the Ninety-Nines (99s) organization offers an interesting history and a fascinating story.

Created on November 2, 1929, at Curtiss Field, Long Island, New York. the Ninety-Nines organization was founded by a spirited group of female pilots. Over the years, they have maintained their mandate of accepting only licensed female pilots for membership. The exception today is acceptance of female student pilots.

Early organizers and founding members invited all lady pilots to assemble under the principles of mutual support and advancement of aviation, as well as creating a central office for maintaining files on women in aviation.

But what united these ladies was their passion for flying.

In the beginning, it was hard to get the group started. Louise Thaden, winner of the first all-women's air derby, was elected secretary and worked to keep the group together as they established the organization. Women pilots were few at that time and were spread out across the country. Contact among the lady fliers was difficult.

However, their foundation already had a prior starting point with the first Women's National Air Derby in August 1929. Flown from the starting line in Santa Monica, California, to the finish line in Cleveland, Ohio, the ladies kicked off the 1929 National Air Races (races traditionally for male pilots only). The eyes of the country watched as these brave women made history flying cross-country completing 17 required landings in 9 days.



Humorist and newspaper reporter Will Rogers covered the event for the newspaper on opening day of the race. The lady racers – intelligent, courageous pioneers yet feminine and ladylike – were seen powdering their faces in preparation for their photo shoots. It was here that Will Rogers endearingly coined the phrase “powder puff derby”. After it went into print, the phrase stuck.

But setting up this race wasn't without struggle. Back during the planning stage, the ladies argued with race commissioners to have this race steered by some of their own rules. This meant total control of all flying and maintenance without any male mechanics flying along in the aircraft with the lady fliers during the race – something that the race commission had initially stood firm to not allow these ladies to do. The commission insisted it wasn't safe.

Keep in mind this was the dawn of the women's rights movement with women gaining the right to vote, while having previously attained the right to keep their earnings and hold property. These determined lady pilots were not about to let a mechanic fly with them, losing credit for flying the race totally by themselves.

Boldly winning their argument, off they went. Nineteen women started the race and fifteen finished. Those who had to drop out for various reasons showed up at the finish line to celebrate the achievements with their fellow lady fliers. Camaraderie and friendship were just as important as competition.

Tired and worn out after flying all day, the ladies wanted only a steak, bath, and a bed. But every evening involved a command performance in a ball gown participating in the local townships' formal banquet galas put together for the lady competitors (a practice abandoned on all future air races).

The obstacles that they overcame to fly in this air derby, and the subsequent everlasting friendships made among the lady fliers, became the impetus to form a non-profit organization of women pilots. There are some conflicting details about how the club was initially started, but the one thing for sure is the organization's name “Ninety-Nines” was selected for the 99 charter members.

Today the Ninety-Nines are a strong international organization that still ardently sticks to the principles of only licensed female pilots – and the recently included female student pilots -- being allowed to join. However, they now have a separate non-profit organization called Friends of The Ninety-Nines for individuals, businesses, and organizations of all backgrounds who share an enthusiasm for aviation and a desire to support the lady fliers.

The structure of the Ninety-Nines organization divides the membership into chapters that are part of geographical "sections" covering the United States and provinces in Canada. There are many other countries with chapters: Australia, France, Brazil, China, Israel, etc. The central international headquarters is located in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, which oversees the high-level organizational processes. Procedural and leadership decisions are made at the chapter level.

The Ninety-Nines Museum of Women Pilots is located at the Will Rogers World Airport, which is also the location of the Ninety-Nines headquarters. Housing a huge repository for resource materials on women in aviation and aerospace, this facility continues to grow in size. Contained at the facility are archived records, personal memorabilia, oral histories, books, art, films, photographs and biographical files.



Close to home here in Florida, the Daytona 99s chapter is the nearest to Spruce Creek Fly-in. Chapter meetings are held quarterly in Deland and monthly social events are scheduled throughout the area.

Author: Laura Kelly

Find the 99's on-line National <https://www.ninety-nines.org/> Local <http://spaceport99s.org/>

# Adjutant Report

-by Col. Trevor Simoneau

In December, the CAF Florida Wing hosted the Volusia County Boys and Girls Club at the Wing's Hangar for a special holiday themed event. Each student had the opportunity to sit in our T-34 Mentor aircraft, construct and fly a foam glider, and learned about the North

American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD).

Also in December, the Wing hosted the 8th Grade class from St. Barnabas Episcopal School in DeLand, Florida, for an aviation education workshop, which included an engaging discussion about the fundamentals of flight, a pre-flight walkaround inspection of our T-34 Mentor, and traffic pattern flying in our flight simulator.



# Development Report

-by Col. Patrick Foley

The CAF Florida Wing considers to open its doors to other non-profit 501C(3) organizations who do not have a facility to hold their meetings. Currently we host the Daytona 99s. Their use at the CAF hangar is limited to the meeting room and certain areas in the hangar.

As a side note, for those who may not be familiar with who the Ninety-Nines are, included in this issue of the newsletter is an article by Laura Kelly that was recently printed in the Spruce Creek Fly-in Update Magazine.

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# Education & Stem Report

-by Col. Eileen Simoneau

In addition to working with local scout troops to schedule STEM programming and possible summer camp field trips - grant writing is in full swing here. Steve Simoneau volunteered to attend the mandatory Volusia County Cultural Workshop in March. Without his attendance, we would not qualify for the grant funding. Thank you Steve. We are currently seeking photos from any event in Central Florida with our planes or in the hangar. This does not have to include youth. Any outreach is needed. The grant also includes a 2025 calendar, so list your activities and events for the forthcoming year. If anyone wants to update their biography or photo, send in your updates. Please email [EMSimoneau@gmail.com](mailto:EMSimoneau@gmail.com) with your contributions. Deadline for contributions is 25 April 2024. Thanks in advance for your participation and representation. Grant funding success depends on a village of content.



Col. Dave Lloyd gives one of many cockpit orientations during a rain delay for Young Eagles flights at our KDED neighbors [EAA Chapter 635](#) photo credit: Sam Knutson



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# Operations Report

-by Col. Zach Woeller

Florida Wing Aviators, from an operational perspective it has been a really strong year! Rallypoint compliance has been consistently very good and based on trends it seems that our pilot group has done a really great job at applying the changes we've recommended to extend the life of our airplane.

I am happy to report that 88RM is back in service with a clean bill of health after a thorough annual. We are coming up on that time of year where flying weather is just about as perfect as can be, so the wing staff is glad to have the airplane ready to go for this time of year. As you all know from my emails it has been determined by the wing staff that an increase in the hourly rate for 88RM was required. It is \$125 an hour until January 1 2025, when it will then increase to \$150 an hour. This was not a decision we made lightly, however as I am sure you have all noticed the price of nearly everything has increased, and airplane parts are no exception (Especially Beechcraft!). This decision will ensure that our airplane has the funds it needs to stay in fighting shape when the inevitable maintenance squawks come up, and will help insulate us if (knock on wood) we have a larger issue we find during an inspection. In closing I would like to say that I have really enjoyed working with and meeting you all, through ground school or new pilot onboarding. I would like to personally extend a thank you to every pilot in our unit, both for your continued support of our unit and our mission to educate, inspire, and honor the history of the men and women who flew and maintained these airplanes in service of our nation, but also for your commitment to safety and prolonging the life of our airplane. Operationally we are right on track. Thank you for your continued support. In 2025 Operations will be transitioning to Mike Meyer.



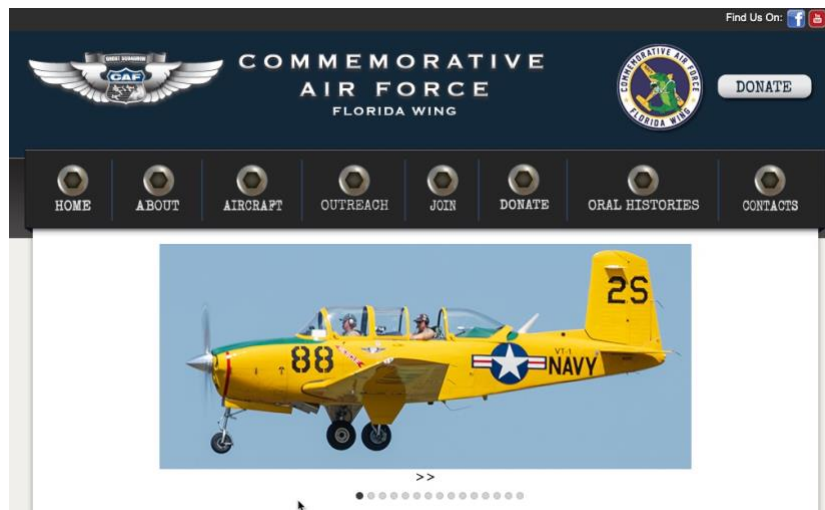
# Public Information Officer Report

-by Col. Sam Knutson

Our Facebook page is being regularly updated please visit and like at <https://www.facebook.com/TheYellowT34/>



Our web site <http://www.caffl.org> has been updated with more work to follow.



The plan is in 2025 to publish the newsletter at least twice and to become active on Instagram again.

Please share information, photos, and suggestions to [sam@knutson.org](mailto:sam@knutson.org)

# Finance Update

-By Col. Shannon Rubin

If anyone wants to Zelle money to the wing they can do so with the following instructions:

1. Send money to [cafflwing@gmail.com](mailto:cafflwing@gmail.com) NOT my cell phone number
2. In the memo/description of the transaction state the allocation (ie. T6 insurance, T34 Flight time, General Donation)
3. Either email me a donation form (attached) OR email me the name, address and colonel number of the donor.

For those who don't know, Zelle is a payment system offered by our bank (PNC) and many others. The monies are **immediately** direct deposited into our Operating Account. If the funds received are for the aircraft accounts I can easily transfer the monies over to that account. Zelle just became a free service to us.

Now folks can't say "I forgot my checkbook...." Try it out with a donation to the wing! You can specify where the money goes as well, such as STEM programs, the T34, the T6 or general operations. Remember your donations are of course tax deductible as we are a 501(c3)

## What's Zelle<sup>®</sup>? Glad you asked!

Zelle<sup>®</sup> is a great way to send money to friends and family, even if they bank somewhere different than you do<sup>1</sup>. That means it's super easy to get paid back, or split the costs of things like dinner. With Zelle<sup>®</sup>, the money goes directly into your bank account. And when money goes into your bank account directly, you can live delightfully. Zelle<sup>®</sup> is already in lots of banking apps, so look for it in yours today.

# Wing Staff Officers

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## Maintenance Officer Report

-by Col. Ian MacMahon

As always, I'm happy to be involved in the continuing support of the CAF and their aircraft. It's great to have the T-34 returned to service in good standing in a condition fit for continued reliable service. Now go fly and enjoy her! That what all the work is for! Col. Ian MacMahon

## Wing Information:

Address:

**1570 Old NDB Road  
Deland, FL 32724**

Website:

**CAFFL.Org**

Hours of Operation:

**Bob Robbins Library  
Butch Stevens Education  
Hanger**

**Open selected Saturdays 10-2  
please reach out before arriving  
when meetings are not  
scheduled**

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| Education Officer   | CAF Col. Eileen Simoneau |  |              |