



ANDRE TEAGUE/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Susan Van Fleet operates a aerial scenic sightseeing tours business.

# *Beauty above and beyond*

BY JOE TENNIS  
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

**ABINGDON** – Susan Van Fleet has her head in the clouds.

But, really, that is where she likes to keep it – in flight, soaring in her Cessna 172.

Van Fleet is the proprietor of Abingdon Aviation, a company that specializes in flight lessons and scenic tours above and beyond its base at Virginia Highlands Airport.

A former resident of Athens, Ga., Van Fleet began flying in 1971 when she was registered dietician. She also once worked as a pharmaceutical

representative in South Carolina and Georgia.

In 1986, she became a professional pilot when she took a job teaching flight lessons at the University of Georgia.

She's flown more than 4,000 hours and is a member of Silver Wings, an aviation association of pilots who have flown for more than 25 years.

Used to be, she loved gliding above the lights of Atlanta.

"But," Van Fleet raved in a deep and raspy southern accent, "it doesn't compare to these rolling hills."

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