

Lafayette Pilot's Life in the Sky

By Jade Shojaee



Steve Neighbor smiles from in his office in the sky.

Photo provided

Steve Neighbor has been defying gravity since he first took flight at age 9 during a Fleet Week tour on board the USS Hornet with his father. "I had the opportunity to sit in the pilot's seat of a UH-1 Huey helicopter.

I wanted to flip every switch and turn every dial. Needless to say, they wouldn't let me," he reminisces of the adventure that inevitably changed his life.

By night Neighbor fronts as an

upstanding resident of Lafayette, but by day he paints the sky red as an aerobatic/tail-wheel instructor pilot at Livermore-based Attitude Aviation. If you think that sounds adventurous then get this: he also flies test flights

for Department of Defense contractors. "One national DoD contractor chooses to use one of our airplanes (a Marchetti SF-260) as a platform to test their equipment in a real world, air combat environment," Neighbor says. "My job is to do my best to scramble their equipment by maneuvering the aircraft aerobatically. Each time I break one of their gadgets, they go back to the drawing board to figure out why it broke and how to improve it. They've gotten very good at it, but I've gotten good at it, too."

Becoming a pilot is no easy feat says Neighbor, who has poured countless hours of training and studying into what now seems effortless for him. The process is "comparable to earning a master's or a doctoral degree," he says, "in that you have to be able to understand and teach on the correlative level, with the added difficulty of being required to perform certain maneuvers."

Neighbor gives new meaning to the concept of a 9 to 5 by flying figure eights through an empty sky. "I am fortunate to have the opportunity to teach my clients how to fly upside down and literally end over end," he

says. "I instruct in a wide array of aircraft (12 in total), so there's a lot of variety. Every day is a little bit different, and there's always something to learn."

Neighbor generously offered to take this reporter on a mini-adventure up in his turf and even let me steer the plane. Since I was new to the sky (and quite the scaredy-cat) he went easy on me, but the views are absolutely spectacular and there was nothing more humbling than experiencing reality as a speck in that massive expanse of blue.

Long-term, Neighbor would like to network his way into a corporate airline and be an instructor pilot on the side. For kids aspiring to break into the industry, Neighbor offers this advice: "Work hard, save your money, and stay out of trouble. A great way to break into the industry when you're young is to work at a flight school by helping with dispatch or working as 'Line Service.' Flight schools like hiring young adults to help move, wash, and service airplanes for their pilots."

For information about Attitude Aviation, visit attitudeaviation.com.

Troop 212 Takes Bike Trek to Germany

Submitted by Richard Terry



Photo provided

Thirty members of Moraga Boy Scout Troop 212 (16 Scouts, 14 dads) recently returned from a 14-day bicycle trek to Germany, their sixth trip in the past 20 years. Arriving in Munich, they cycled to Donauworth, then Dinkelsbuhl, Schwabish Hall, and finally to Rothenberg. Taking a train to Salzburg, they then went to Berchtesgaden with a trip to the local Salt Mine and Hitler's Eagle

Nest, before biking over the Alps to Traunstein. The last day, cycling back to Munich, was a long 65 miles. The total trip was over 275 miles with a total elevation gain of over 15,000 feet. Bike treks are part of the troop's high adventure program and occur every three years. Other destinations include the Oregon Coast ride and the Canadian Rockies ride from Calgary to Jasper.

Orinda Academy Announces 2015 Graduates

Submitted by Miriam Schaffer



Orinda Academy 2015 graduates (listed in alphabetical order): Raina Arberry, Torin Bakos, William Burkhalter, Miranda Gill, Matthew Hildreth, Ben Jaffin, Jae Sub Lee, Michael Livanos, Alex McSpadden, Colin Mooney, Sairena Ramirez, Tyra Rensch, David Rios, Micah Sherman-Raz, Wilson Wan, and Vicky Wang

Photo provided

Orinda Academy, a private day school for students in grades 8-12, celebrated its 33rd commencement exercise June 12 as 16 seniors received their diplomas before a crowd of proud parents, family and friends. Leading the Class of 2015 was valedictorian, Michael Livanos, who will attend the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. He was the recipient of the \$30,000 Gold National Academic Scholarship by the University of Minnesota. In addition, Livanos received a memorial scholarship at the Greek Orthodox Folk Dance Festival and the Nativity of

Christ Greek Orthodox Church Philoptochos scholarship.

Orinda Academy's graduates represent an international community. They will be heading off to the following public and private colleges and universities throughout the nation: California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; Diablo Valley College; Hampshire College; Landmark College; Linfield College; Pasadena City College; San Francisco State University; University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; University of Minnesota, Twin Cities; Willamette University; and Univer-

sity of Redlands.

Along with Orinda Academy's graduation ceremonies, the following students received academic achievement awards: Most Outstanding Student Award – graduating senior David Rios; The Monte Melnick Community Service Award – graduating senior Raina Arberry; Colin Pugh Award for the student having the most positive impact on the Orinda Academy Community – graduating senior Michael Livanos, who also received this award in 2014; and The Zeke Nierenberg Award for Social Activism – 11th grade student Dylan Seidler.

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Lectures are Tuesdays from 7pm-8pm

July 28th – Gait & Balance Issues Affecting Your Life
with Valerie Watase, PT, Owner of Lafayette PT

Aug 25th – Annual Sports Readiness Screens
with Travis Moore, PT, Wellness Coordinator

Sept 29th – Feng Shui & Wellness
with Michele Duffy, BTB, MFS

Oct 27th – Bone Health: How to Protect Your Bones
with Osteopenia or Osteoporosis
with Valerie Watase, PT, Owner of Lafayette PT

Seating for lectures is limited:
Please call 925-284-6150 or visit
LafayettePT.eventbrite.com to RSVP & reserve your seat!

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