

Community Voices

LEARNING TO FLY — PART I

Florence Aviation Academy shows students what it takes to pilot planes

BY RAMIRO RAMIREZ JR.
Special to the Siuslaw News

(Editor's Note: From Aug. 14 to 25, Florence pilots Sam Spayd and Terry Tomeny opened the Florence Aviation Academy to 13 Boys and Girls of Western Lane County teens. Here, one of those students gives a first-hand account of class time, lessons learned and the preparation involved before students could fly. Read Part II in Saturday's edition of Siuslaw News.)

One day I'm in a classroom learning to fly; a weekend and four days later, I'm airborne.

Florence Aviation Academy was more than just learning how airplanes fly. I learned about the history of planes, airshows, the U.S. Air Force, commercial airlines, radio-controlled (RC) planes and drones. The speakers were great, and the teachers were great as well. I also learned that this experience is something many should try, whether young or old.

When I came in for the first day of the academy, I thought we were going to learn too much. Buttons buttons and more buttons that do only one thing.

The good news was, the instructors, Sam Spayd and Terry Tomeny, notified us we are just scraping the surface of aviation. But the bad news? We had to take a test the next week to show how well we paid attention. So it put pressure on me that I had to pay attention as much as possible to ace the test.

I told the instructors I attended the academy to be an emergency pilot, but I did not trust planes at all, mostly because of the news stories. However, after the first day, I decided that maybe I could lose the fear, especially as we were told that we would be in the sky the very next week.

When we came back to class, we



Ramiro Ramirez sits in the cockpit of a U.S. Coast Guard MH-65 Dolpin Helicopter at Florence Events Center during the Florence Aviation Academy.

CHANTELLE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS

learned about making radio calls, the anatomy of a runway and choosing a runway in weather conditions.

On the third day, the academy became more exciting, as we got a speech from a person at the local RC flying club.

The speaker said that RC planes are "real" planes. When comparing an RC plane to a real life size plane, you will find the RC plane has the same parts and pieces as a life-size plane. We then were given the chance to fly them.

I was all in for the opportunity.

At first, it looked easy. I have an airplane simulator on my phone that I had mastered, making me think I had an advantage. After flying the RC plane, I found a huge difference. It was frustrating for me to try and turn

the plane, as the plane would immediately plummet down. Luckily, the RC club member was able to regain control of my plane and keep it flying.

The fourth day of the class fell on Aug. 21, a special day. We would kick off the week with a 97.6 percent totality eclipse. It was beautiful.

We sat on the field of the airport, watching airplanes fly north for totality, including Mr. Tomeny in the Aero Legends Stearman Biplane.

As the moon's shadow moved past us, the north sky looked space blue, temperatures dropped and colors turned warmer, as if our eyes were fitted with Instagram filters.

This week was even better than the first one.

The next time we met, we learned

about drones, such as that drones came in all shapes and sizes, and some drones can be custom built to the customer's choice.

"Drone" is actually an acronym that stands for: Dynamic Remotely Operated Navigation Equipment. Some think that all drones do is fly, but they can do more than just that. Drones have been used as filming equipment, news recorders and are even capable of following a person.

Just like with the RC planes, we got to fly them. I had a blast flying the drone. It was so much easier for me than flying the RC plane. It was a great unit to learn about, and I would like to take another chance to fly one again.

In addition, at the end of the unit, we got the whole class together to get

a picture from the drone.

For the sixth class, we had a guest speaker from the U.S. Air Force, which started as a spinoff from the U.S. Army, and grew into its own branch.

We also heard from an active commercial pilot from Delta Airlines. It was fascinating knowing that he preferred the longer international flights instead of the in-country flights. His reason was because he could take two days of long flights, and then have the rest of the month off.

As a souvenir, he gave us each a Delta Airlines pin, and two collectable cards that contained information on the Boeing 757-300 and the Boeing 767-300ER, two airplanes they use at Delta. I loved the souvenirs so much, I may have started a brand loyalty to Delta.

Next were speakers from former employees of United, Continental and Pan-American airlines, and the U.S. Coast Guard. The Continental flight mechanic told us that a flight mechanic is a very important job since they have to check and fix any problems on the planes.

The former Coast Guard member told us her experience with the U.S. Coast Guard was a rewarding career, but it came to a close when she had children. It was nice to hear about the amount she has served in the Coast Guard.

The last two speakers showed pictures of United Airlines employees in their uniforms, and in front of one of their planes.

When the speakers finished, we had a test to take. I tried my hardest on the test. Some were easy while others I got a little stumped on.

After that day, I knew there was one last thing to do before I completed the class — it was to fly.

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ASK A MASTER RECYCLER

GUTHRIE KUSHNER, MASTER RECYCLER

A MONTHLY COLUMN OF RECYCLING INFORMATION PROVIDED BY FLORENCE MASTER RECYCLERS
For the Siuslaw News

Master Recyclers behind the scenes in the Florence area are responsible for things that they have felt a need to do.

They have a commitment to reduce, reuse and recycle those items that would otherwise end up in a landfill.

For example, the drop boxes for used ink cartridges and electronics set up at the Siuslaw Public Library and businesses around the community.

The Siuslaw Genealogy Society (SGS) has been an outstanding organization utilizing recycling by collecting ink cartridges, old cell

phones and electronic devices. The money received for recycling is used by SGS to help pay for online family research sites.

There are three online sites free to the public at the library, as well as call helpers and family research helpers two days a week.

Pat Ronney is a fundraising member available at the library on Tuesdays and Sundays to help with family research or electronics

Master Recyclers



recycling.

Over the years, the SGS has collected 423 pounds of toners, 73 pounds of ink cartridges, 1 pound of aluminum and 1 pound of copper.

According to Eco-Impact, the amount of CO2 emissions saved would be equal to 512 gallons of gas.

Next month, Master Recyclers will be at Oktoberfest with its reusable dishware program to reduce the use of throw-away utensils.

Florence Master Recyclers (MR) are part of the Lane County Master Recycler Program, a service of the county's Public Works Waste Management Division since 2002.

The mission of the MR program is to bridge the gap between awareness and action by motivating people to reduce solid waste at home, work and play.

This monthly column, written for The Siuslaw News, answers commonly asked recycling questions. For more recycling information, visit www.ci.florence.or.us/building/recycling or www.lanecounty.org/Departments/PW/WMD/Recycle or follow Master Recyclers of Florence on Facebook.

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Thursday 9/7	Raymond Bray Chuck Waide Jr.	Florence Florence	Dunes Café Best Thai Cuisine
Friday 9/8	Thelma Hale Thelma Hale	Deadwood Deadwood	Safeway/Florence Safeway/Florence
Saturday 9/9	Donna Price Ken Wallstrom	Florence Veneta	Safeway/Florence Safeway/Florence
Sunday 9/10	Raymond Bray Joe McKean	Florence Florence	Safeway/Florence Safeway/Florence
Monday 9/11	Stephanie Brown Bear McDaniel	Florence Westlake	Three Rivers Casino Resort Safeway/Florence

Each winner receives \$50.00 in Community Cash!
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Thank you to all the Residents from Shorewood Senior Living, and a big THANK YOU to all who attended. But most of all, thank you to all the kids from Boys and Girls Club, who gave us a reason to have so much fun!

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