

ONCE UPON A TIME by Joan Mish 2/20/17

Once upon a time, when I was just beginning to read I found a great book about helicopters. The first operational helicopter was in 1936. But it was not until 1942 that the single main rotor plane came into use. It was within 5 years of that date, that I must have read about it. I became fascinated by them for whatever reason. And I always wanted to ride one.

On my 60th birthday my husband had to be "wirlybirded, another name for the helicopter, to a hospital for we lived in a small town with a hospital but for some reason, which I don't remember, they had to take him to a larger hospital to Madison the capital of WI. Since it was my 60th birthday I insisted on getting on the helicopter but they told me I was not allowed to accompany my husband on the helicopter. It was so important to go with him BUT also to take my first ride that I had dreamed about most of my life. I let it go and promised myself I would go on a helicopter before my first ride would be on my death bed!

When I was volunteering at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park one of the ranger's husband took visitors in his helicopter to look over the flowing volcanoes. But it was not going to be free. Folks told me just go home and cook a pot of chili and look down and it would very much the same. So that's what I did!

Later that year I took a cruise to Alaska with some friends and the brother of my good friend really loved planes. And he had never been on a helicopter either. So we decided to take the additional trip and fly over the ice glaciers in Alaska. That was a great adventure. Helicopters are very small on the inside. And there is very little passenger room. Now I understood why they would not let me go with my husband to the hospital. This particular pilot in Alaska, who I got to sit next to, was a former Science teacher and could answer all my questions about plate tectonics affecting Alaska as well as Hawaii. It was a great experience.

I now hope I will to live happily ever without being taken on a helicopter at the end of my life!