

Unique Adventure

By Suzy Hopkins

After my son Mac finally graduated from college with a criminal justice degree he changed his mind. Kids! Consequently he borrowed \$36,000 and went to helicopter school which is extremely time consuming. After graduating, he became a teacher to the new students to accumulate flying time at no charge to him. The value of a helicopter pilot is the total of hours he has flown.

He took me for a ride, at his expense, to get in some flight hours. The helicopter was the size of a watermelon. Well maybe, a VW Beetle. I could see daylight around the closed door. We had to wear headphones to communicate since the airports and planes would constantly be requesting and giving their locations. Mac had to get permission to fly anywhere.

Even though we had to fly at least 600 feet above the ground he took me over my condo, over a building where I used to work in downtown Sacramento, over Folsom Lake where I had been a park ranger and over Folsom Prison where I currently worked. I said, "You can't fly over the prison. They will shoot at you." We zipped out of there.

We flew back to the airport since he had only paid for an hour. As we were landing something went wrong. The airport said he couldn't land but we had descended too far to take off again. Mac was frantically manipulating the controls. Finally we touched down. He looked over at me and said, "Your face is so white." I was terrified.

Was it a unique experience? You bet!