

'Paper Airplane Guy' Soars Through Unique STEAM Demo at LL&LC

By Cathy Dausman



John Collins prepares his paper airplanes for flight. Photo Cathy Dausman



Photo Cathy Dausman

Imagine sitting in a lecture and actually being encouraged to fly paper airplanes.

That's what happened during John Collins' recent Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math-

ematics (STEAM) presentation at Lafayette Library and Learning Center. When it comes to paper airplanes, Collins, a.k.a. the Paper Airplane Guy, folds a dose of origami and a healthy swoosh of aero-

dynamics into every paper airplane design and presentation. The graceful arc of his gliders contrasted with his rapid-fire delivery on just how to fold the perfect plane.

He didn't waste precious time building the planes — he gets them flying. "He came in an hour ahead of the presentation to test the room's air conditioning for drafts," said LLLC youth services librarian Dena Hollowood, who marveled at Collins' ability to coax a fist-sized paper glider to fly completely around the room by holding a book inches beneath its wings.

It was difficult to tell just who had more fun at the demo — the school-aged children who couldn't wait to fly their sometimes unfinished folded planes, or the fleet of parents determined to follow the directions and master the art of folding better and faster.

Four years ago Collins tapped former Cal football player Joe Ayoob for his throwing arm; Ayoob helped Collins set a Guinness world record for distance throwing (226 feet, 10 inches) on a paper airplane Collins designed.

Collins says he'll offer a \$1,000 reward to anyone who breaks his record using his airplane design. Naturally, the presentation ended in a flurry of paper airplanes — the first volley released by Collins and second by the audience, big and little, who launched their planes in a friendly all-out aeronautical dog-fight.

Aviation fans who missed Collins' presentation can still learn about the magic of paper airplane design by going online to www.thepaperairplane.com/. For more STEAM events at LLLC, visit www.lafayette.lib.org/program-category/science-technology/.

In Memory

Edward Robert Smith

Edward Robert "Ted" Smith, formerly of Orinda, passed away after a long illness on Sept. 25 at his home in Nevada City.

He was born October 25, 1937, in Oakland, California, the only child of Edward Raymond and Audrey Ella Lee Smith, and spent his early years in San Leandro. His family then moved to Santa Rosa where he graduated from high school and junior college. In 1960 he received a BS degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Colorado and started his manufacturing career at Republic Steel in Cleveland, Ohio. Wanting to return to California, he took a job with Bethlehem Steel at its Pinole plant in 1966. This facility became Marwais Pinole Point Steel where Ted retired as general manager in 1987.

As the son of a Brown Shoe sales representative, Ted often spent summers with his parents driving through the small towns of Northern California and Nevada. These car trips fostered his love of traveling on country back roads. Throughout his life, enjoying the journey was always his goal rather than arriving at a destination.

Following his retirement, Ted pursued diverse

interests including travel abroad, California history and water issues. He volunteered with Friends of the San Francisco Estuary for over 25 years, serving for a time as president. He was an avid reader of several newspapers, his latest book selection, the Economist and the Atlantic Monthly.

Ted will be dearly missed and long remembered for his gentle spirit, dry sense of humor, love of intellectual debate, scientific curiosity, maintenance of statistics, keen interest in economics and non-judgmental attitude.

He is survived by his wife Susan Wiesner, son Edward Mark Smith and his wife Anne, daughter Kirsten Towne Smith, grandsons Edward Raymond Smith and Robert Alexander Smith, and former wife and mother of his children Winifred Clegg Smith.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Santa Rosa High School Foundation (P.O. Box 11006, Santa Rosa, CA 95406), Friends of the San Francisco Estuary (P.O. Box 791, Oakland, CA 94604) or the East Bay Regional Park Foundation (P.O. Box 21074, Crestmont Station, Oakland, CA 94620).

In Memory

Dwight Thomas Swobe

Dwight Thomas Swobe, 73, of Berkeley, passed away peacefully in his sleep on Sept. 30 after a long battle with cancer.

Dwight was born in Berkeley on September 19, 1943, to Thomas Wallace Swobe and Ardath Busby Swobe. He graduated from Oakland Technical High School and earned a Bachelor degree in business administration from UC Berkeley. Known for his strong work ethic and gregarious personality, Dwight became a highly successful senior representative of Grubb & Ellis, commercial real estate division. He specialized in industrial real estate and received many awards for his outstanding performance.

In 1970, he moved his young family to Lafayette, where he spent much of his adult life devoted to providing a good life for his children. Dwight loved to sing and play the trumpet. He was quite proud of the jazz band he created, the East Bay Bear Cats, which played

together for many years. He was a loyal fan of the Cal Bears. Dwight also loved golf and loved to sail. He once sailed down the coast of California with his sons. Dwight Swobe was a successful, talented, brave, kind, and loving man.

He is survived by Gloria Gee, his loving companion of 21 years, and by his four sons and five grandchildren: Gordon Swobe; Scott Swobe and his wife Keri and their children Tyler, Breanna, and Caydon; Jason Swobe and his devoted girlfriend Timie; Mitchell Swobe and his wife Darby and their children Dylan and Colin; by his sister Connie Got and her husband Randy and their children; and by the son of his late sister Ardie Lynn Swobe.

A memorial will be held at 1 p.m. at Sunset View Cemetery in El Cerrito on Saturday, Nov. 26. For more information, please go to www.sunsetviewcemetery.com.

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