

Peninsula businessmen among victims

East Palo Alto plane crash kills 6



The wreckage of the twin-engine Beechcraft Baron that crashed just after dawn off Cooley Landing with six people

aboard wasn't visible until the tide went out Saturday afternoon.

Times Tribune staff photo by Vern Fisher

By Ann Gibbons
Times Tribune staff

A twin-engine aircraft plunged into the San Francisco Bay at dawn Saturday, killing all six passengers just moments after taking off from the Palo Alto Airport.

Steven Jacobs, 44, an award-winning graphics designer who owns a firm in Palo Alto, was the pilot and owner of the six-seater Beechcraft Baron.

He was on his way to a vacation in La Paz, Mexico, with friends when the aircraft slammed into the shallow, murky water and broke into pieces, according to his brother, Marc Jacobs of Los Angeles.

The bodies of Jacobs, two other men and three women were recovered about a quarter-mile offshore of Cooley Landing in East Palo Alto where the plane crashed, East Palo Alto police commander William Kelley said.

According to the San Mateo County Coroner's Office, the other victims were: Gilbert H. Bair, a vice-president at Paine Webber Inc. in Palo Alto; George Wright, a vice-president at Paine Webber in Napa; Sharon Pappas of Saratoga; Jan Beinke of San Francisco; and Olga Alonso of Mexico.

Witnesses said the weather was clear but still dark when the plane took off from the airport between 6:10 a.m. and 6:20 a.m.

Moments later, the plane took a sharply banked right turn at about 300 feet and dove into the Bay at a 60- to 70-degree angle, with its nose and right wing hitting first, said John Berschens Sr., a San Jose resi-



Brad Frankel
... witnessed plane crash.

Pilots consider P.A. Airport 'safe' facility

By Craig Quintana
Times Tribune staff

Despite Saturday's crash, pilots and aviation officials said Palo Alto Airport is one of the safest facilities in the area.

Because the airport borders San Francisco Bay and has a flight pattern directing most planes over water, safety is almost guaranteed

Please see PLANE, A-16

Please see SAFETY, A-16