

AeroStats



**The Monthly Newsletter of the
Willamette Aerostat Society**

Volume 22, Number 6

June 2020

Zoom On Over To Meet Your Fellow Balloonists!

The pandemic may be keeping us home, but it is not keeping us from being in contact with each other! Thanks to Zoom and Cory Miller, who has set up the last two virtual meetings.

Even though in person gatherings of up to 10 people has been approved, we want to hear from more of you. Another virtual meeting has been organized on **Saturday, June 13 2020 at 1:00 PM** from the comfort of your home or maybe a park bench.

Once again Cory will be hosting the meeting. A link will be sent to all current WAS members when he issues it.



Stay Safe! Practice virtual handshakes and hugs on June 13th at 1:00 PM.

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2020 WAS Officers

President:
Shari Gale

Vice President:
Marianne LeDoux

Secretary/Treasurer:
Dale Justice

Others:

Newsletter Editor:
Shari Gale

Activities Director:
Pasha Luber

WAS website:
<http://www.wasballoon.info>

Email: ExecComm@wasballoon.info



Willamette Aerostat Society Secretary/Treasurer's Report

Willamette Aerostat Society General Meeting on ZOOM Saturday, May 9, 2020

Present:

Shari Gale, President & Newsletter Editor
Marianne LeDoux, Vice President
Dale Justice, Secretary/Treasurer
Pasha Luber, Activities Director
and approximately 15 additional members.

1. Meeting was called to order at 1:01 p. m. by Shari using ZOOM on the internet, which was set up by Cory Miller.

2. Moved by Dale, seconded by Shari to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2020 meeting as printed in the March, 2020 Aerostats newsletter. Motion passed.

3. **Treasurer's report** — from Dale, as of May 8, 2020.

2020 Members 47 (29 memberships paid)

Checking	\$ 1275.85
Savings	105.00
Cash	7.00
Total	<u>\$1,386.85</u>

Paid in April: \$ 97.50 for web master (2 months) and \$70 for plaques.

4. **Correspondence** – State of Oregon sent the request for 2019 income. We have no liability, but to file the form is \$20.00. It was filed and paid on April 30.

5. The Aeronaut of the Year plaque was hand delivered to John Kent by Dale. The Crew Person of the Year was delivered to Jim Churchill by Shari. Both plaques were given out in March.

6. Regulatory – no news.

7. **Events** – The Winthrop Balloon event in March was held, with many balloons and crews. Most other events until September have been canceled due to the pandemic. The following may or may not be held. An update will be in the newsletter.

Teton Valley Balloon Rally – July 2-5
Spirit of Boise Balloon Classic – Sept 2-6
Great Reno Balloon Race – Sept. 11-13
Alturas, CA Rally – Sept 18-19
Great Prosser Balloon Rally – Sept. 25-27

8. **Old business** – None

9. **New business** –

Dale moved to extent the memberships of those already paid for 2020 to include 2021. Motion seconded by Marianne. Discussion was held. Motion passed.

10. Next meeting may again be by ZOOM, on June 13 at 1:00 p.m. Future meetings will be decided then.

11. Shari adjourned the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

Greg Miller has received a new balloon. He plans to inflate it tomorrow (May 10). Tim and Shari have moved to Albany, and plan to do a stand up of their balloon at the new house on May 23.

*Respectfully submitted,
Dale T. Justice, Secretary*

/signed/dtj/5-25-2020

Happenings

in the Pacific Northwest and beyond



Event information in this newsletter is not to be considered as an endorsement by WAS, its officers, or its members.

June 13, 2020

WAS General Meeting

1:00 PM

Place: the comfort of your own home via Zoom

Canceled!

June 26-28, 2020

Tigard Festival of Balloons

Tigard, OR

<http://www.tigardballoon.org>

Modified, details to come

July 2-5, 2020

Teton Valley Balloon Rally

Driggs, Idaho

<http://tetonvalleyballoonrally.com/index.html>

Canceled!

July 3-5, 2020

Freedom Aloft Hot Air Balloon Rally

Prineville, OR

Canceled!

August 28-30, 2020

Northwest Art & Air Festival

Albany, OR

<http://nwartandair.org>

September 2-6, 2020

Spirit of Boise Balloon Classic

Boise, ID

<https://spiritofboise.com>

September 11-13, 2020

Great Reno Balloon Race

Reno, NV

<https://renoballoon.com>

September 18-19, 2020

Alturas Balloon Festival

Alturas, CA

<https://alturaschamber.org/balloonfest>

September 25-27, 2020

Great Prosser Balloon Rally

Prosser, WA

<https://www.tourprosser.com/the-great-prosser-balloon-rally.html>

Postponed until October

Stay tuned for dates

Walla Walla Balloon Stampede

Walla Walla, WA

Windy Winter Weather Wallops Wonderful Walla Walla Wrally

By Dick Hughes (*who later in life became a reporter then editor for the Statesman Journal newspaper*)

Reprinted from the 45th Parallel Aerostat Squadron Flyer, May 1981

We came, we saw, and we didn't really conquer, but we had a good time at the Seventh Annual Walla Walla Balloon Stampede that brought 40 some balloons and scores of people together to start the lovely month of May. The 45th Parallel was well represented, with probably more people there — counting pilots and crews — than from any other hotspot of hot air.

A lot of the weekend was spent getting up early, looking at the wind, eating/drinking breakfast, and going back to sleep before getting up in time to reminisce about the time...

There were some low points, like the windy weather and

thunderstorms that kept us mostly grounded until Sunday morning (after the wind blew a shed into a woman's house, she told the local newspaper that she thought the resulting loud noise was "the Artestians"), not to mention the powdered eggs Sunday morning and lousy movies on TV (we started cheering for the commercials).

High points were the good times talking with people — plenty of hot air at ground level — champagning around the pool, a top place by Rob Green in the 20-minute hare and hound flight Sunday morning, second place by Spencer and Connie Etzel's crew in the basket race

around the Wa-Hi infield Saturday afternoon. (along with valiant efforts by the other Oregon reps especially Uncle Rod's crew), and a "moving" rendition (wallowing in Walla Walla?) of a Village People performance by Bill Lloyd, Harry Wilcox, et al. And there was being stuck in the Red Apple Cafe's bar when the lights went out during a hail, thunder and lightning storm Thursday night.

...and, finally, the Sunday morning "See you at the rally in..."

FYI: For those of you were not around Oregon in 1981, the 45th Parallel Aerostat Squadron was the first balloon club organized in the state. It was later replaced by the Willamette Aerostat Society (WAS).

Ted, You Flew High and Well

Memories of our friend and fellow balloonist, Ted Wirch

It is with great sadness I must report on the passing of one of the Pacific Northwest's most colorful balloonists. Ted Wirch passed away on Tuesday, May 12th.

Ted had a long and storied career in hot air ballooning. (The emphasis in this sentence is the word "storied.") According to Kelly Carlson, "In 1989 Ted and three other pilots held the first unofficial Great Prosser Balloon Rally. Ted got together with a couple of Prosser residents and talked them into having an "official" rally the next year. Ted helped with the organizing, recruited pilots, drew up advertising flyers and posted them around town in places like the local laundromat and bars. Thanks to Ted and the folks he recruited there were 11 balloons in the air for the first official Great Prosser Balloon Rally." Ted was not the first



Ted loved to demonstrate Wind Pacer's pop top.

balloonmeister, but held the duties for at least five years.

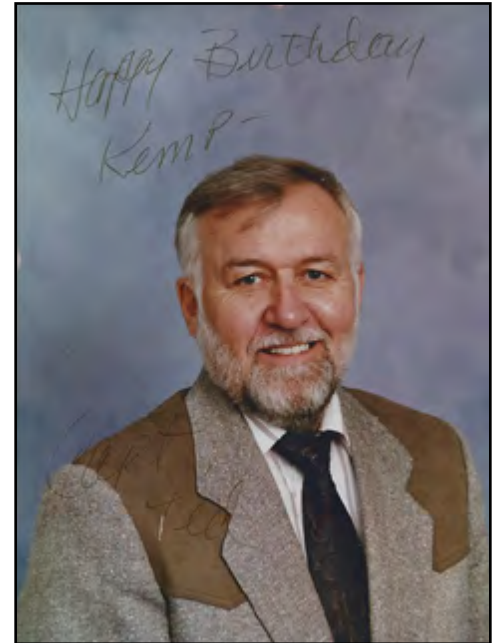
He loved taking his balloon, Wind Pacer, to schools for presentations. "It was a lot of fun to watch him interact with the kids as he patiently answered their questions," said Kelly.

She also mentioned, "Ted was a generous guy. There were a couple of years that the Prosser Rally was struggling financially. I was chairman and Ted was the Balloonmeister. For two years in a row Ted donated back his Balloonmeister pay to the rally. One year I saw him buying a stack of rally shirts and then watched as he inconspicuously dropped those shirts back onto the table to be sold again. I caught his eye as he was leaving the table. He just held his finger to his lips and winked."

Ted earned several nicknames during his balloon career. One was the "What Me Worry Pilot." Like the time Cheryl Isaacs watched Ted drive off from the Prosser Hotel without disconnecting his tank heaters. He drove all the way to the launch field with the electrical cord dangling behind him. Of course, no damage was done to his system or the motel outlet. He just gave his extension cord an extra ride to the field.

In truth, Ted took flying very seriously. He flew for several airlines in "real" life. He told me once that he made more decisions during the course of a balloon flight than he ever did flying a Boeing 727. He said flying a balloon was real flying. Flying a passenger jet was just a glorified bus driving job.

Kemp and Georgia Lindsey recently met some people who flew with Ted during his air transport career. Kemp said, "While we were



Ted gave this photo to Kemp Lindsey several years ago. On the back he wrote, "Happy Birthday, Kemp. Place this picture in a convenient spot to remind you of my assistance for any questions you may have about the art of hot air ballooning." It wasn't actually Kemp's birthday. Not even close. That didn't matter to Ted. Kemp has always treasured this photo along with Ted's friendship. Photo courtesy Kemp Lindsey.

in Pender Harbour in Canada. "We met three people who knew Ted from his airline days. We were telling Ted stories. One of the ex-pilots did not seem too enthused about Ted. I asked if they had a problem, and he told me 'Never take tax advice from Ted.' Apparently, you can't just declare yourself to be a Church with the IRS."

Stories always followed in Ted's wake. I vividly remember when he wanted to demonstrate how fast his Adams envelope could deflate. It turned out to be the most memorable deflation I've ever witnessed. It happened during the Fly Inside at the blimp hanger in Tillamook, Oregon back in 1996. Ted popped the top and all the hot air just gushed

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Ted Wirch

continued from page 5

out. The stream of air hit the rafters of the hanger where several owls happily lived year-round. The stream of air dislodged a vast collection of old feathers, regurgitated owl pellets, along with a lot of dirt. It all drifted down to the hanger floor, except for the bits and pieces that landed in Gifford Hawn's cup of Pepsi. He suddenly decided he was not so thirsty after all.

Ted was not constricted by popular inflation techniques. Cheryl Isaacs mentioned "a group of local balloonists went to Maupin, Oregon one time with Denny Wright and Ted to fly in a new area. One night they were going to do a night glow at the golf course so we volunteered to help Ted. We had never helped him before so we asked what we could do. He had us pulling out fabric and one person did the crown line. I asked him if he wanted anyone on the throat but he said no he would use his stick. (????) So he went back to his van and pulled out a very large, thick stick and placed it in the middle of the throat to keep it open during inflation. I had never seen that before, but he assured us that was what he would use when he was flying alone and it allowed him to inflate the balloon on his own. He was quite a guy and a real pioneer in flying."

Besides advocating for Adams balloons and unique inflation techniques, Ted was always willing to mentor new pilots. Kelly Haverkate wrote: "Ted along with Jack and Carol Whitney took me under their wing when I needed time and instruction to get ready for my commercial check ride about 23 years ago! Ted was the D.E. who gave me the oral and practical commercial tests. He was the best! He spent much of the time 'instructing.' I learned a lot from Ted and will always have great memories of him."



The sparkle in his eye and that radiant smile were Ted's trademarks.



Carmen Blakely proudly recalls when she pulled one over on Ted during her check ride. She was flying Outer Limits, an Aurora 54K, at the time. Ted told her to descend fast and pull out at the last minute. Carmen knew very well that Outer Limits was a very responsive balloon, so she dropped like a rock and kept dropping. She watched Ted bend his knees expecting a very hard landing, only to pull up at the last moment. She was just a foot or so off the ground when she leveled out. Ted was amazed.

The very best story I ever heard came from Ted himself. He told of flying a man and his five or six-year old son during the Albuquerque Fiesta. They were flying low over town when the little boy told his dad he really, really needed to pee. The dad told his son to "hold it until we



Ted Wirch organized a balloon rally in Battleground, Washington for a few years. He kept it low-key. That was his style. He was also the force behind The Great Prosser Balloon Rally which celebrated its 30th year in 2019.

Photo left was taken at a Halloween party in 1997. Ted dug out his Arab headgear for the occasion. Ted's flying career included a span of time flying for Saudi Arabian Airlines. The headdress was a souvenir from those days. (Some great stories came from those experiences.)

land." Ted thought, he can just pee through the step hole in the basket instead of waiting. He did not think a little kid like that could possibly have much volume. Ted said when that kid started to pee it was like a fire hose had been turned on. When he noticed that cars down below him had turned on their windshield wipers Ted decided he'd better gain some altitude and not land until he was far outside the city limits.

I'm sure that was a pilot decision he never had to make while flying a Boeing 727.

Ballooning wasn't his only passion. Ted also loved raising bees and making honey. He gifted more than one jar of honey to his ballooning friends and to landowners. He, also, taught bee keeping to school kids in the Vancouver area. He was just that kind of guy.

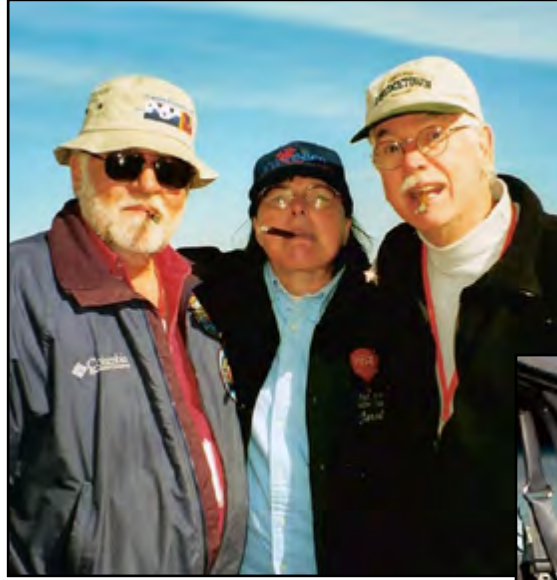
He will be greatly missed. Fly high and well, Ted.

Ted Wirch, Loved By So Many

I asked Jerry and Mary Gobet if they had any photos of Ted that I could use in the newsletter. I received a treasure trove of pictures. Mary used them originally for Ted's retirement party. These photos capture the true essence of Ted's personality.



Left to right: Steve Hays, Carmen Blakely, Cheryl and Michale Isaacs, Carol and Ted Wirch in Gallup, NM.



Denny Wright (right) joined Ted and Carol for an after flight cigar.



Ted enjoyed a tiny bit of attention when it came his way.



Ted is undoubtedly saluting the ballooning community from the heavens these days.

Flying HABits by Marianne LeDoux



We Couldn't Free Fly, But We Could Tether in Our Own Front Yard!

Tim and I needed to stretch out the fabric of our balloon Knight-N-Gale. It had been in the bag since March! Plus we just moved to a new house in Albany, Oregon. We were pretty sure KNG would fit in our front yard, but we needed to test it out. Happily we were right.

Best of all the neighbors, along with their kids and grandkids, came over to get a close look at the balloon. It turned into a win-win morning adventure.

Shari Gale



The math is in your favor!



Join WAS today and get next year for free!
Yes, free. You can't beat that deal.

Joining is easy. Just print out the application on the next page, write a check to WAS, and mail it along with the application to the club treasurer, Dale Justice. His contact information is printed at the bottom of the application.



WAS Membership Application



Name: _____

Pilot Crew Interested in hot air ballooning

Birthday: Month _____ Day _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Date Submitted: _____

Home Phone #: (____) _____

Cell Phone #: (____) _____

E-Mail Address: _____ @ _____

BFA Membership #: _____

Pilot/Crew Achievement Awards

BFA Crew Level: _____ BFA Pilot Level: _____

FAA Wings Level: _____ Other: _____

Family Member Information

Name: _____ Pilot Crew

Name: _____ Pilot Crew

Name: _____ Pilot Crew

Name: _____ Pilot Crew

Name: _____ Pilot Crew

Membership Type

Charter (\$20) Single or Family (\$20) Newsletter Only (\$10 outside Oregon & SW Washington)

Membership

The Willamette Aerostat Society communicates via e-mail, the WAS Facebook page and the website. We recognize and respect our member's privacy. If you do not wish personal information about you shared with other members, please indicate below. Your personal information will *never* be published on our website. It might be shared with other club members if a request is made unless you prefer to opt out.

- Do Not share name
- Do Not share address
- Do Not share phone number
- Do Not share cell phone number
- Do Not share e-mail

Please use a 2nd page if there are two pilots in the family, or if you have family members with additional information such as cell phone # and/or BFA #'s.

Mail completed form with fees to:
Willamette Aerostat Society
c/o Dale Justice
2902 E. 2nd St. Unit 76
Newberg, OR 97132



Willamette Aerostat Society

Willamette Aerostat Society Mission Statement

- ➔ To promote the sport of Hot Air Ballooning
- ➔ To educate new balloonists and the public
- ➔ To embody safety in all aspects of Ballooning
- ➔ To do all we can to support and encourage land owner relations
- ➔ To support our fellow balloonists and crews personally and in our sport

To obtain Member Contact information, send an e-mail to the Secretary/Treasurer.

For Privacy reasons, *AeroStats* will not publish member contact information without their express permission.

Contact and Submissions

Submissions of articles and photographs are encouraged and welcome! The editorial staff reserves the right to determine the suitability of a submission for inclusion in the newsletter.

Please email your pictures, articles, and comments to:

sharigaleOR@gmail.com

Advertising Policy

Club member's ballooning related or event information is published on a space available basis at no charge.

Business Advertising by Club members is considered Commercial Advertising, subject to fees shown below.

Material must be submitted in computer word processing format with pictures in JPG format.

AeroStats reserves the right to decline publishing submitted information.

Commercial Advertisement Space Rates

Full Page — \$30	1/2 Page — \$20
1/4 Page — \$15	Business Card — \$10

Ads will be published for 3 consecutive months, or until withdrawn, for the fee shown above.

The publishing of advertising in *AeroStats* does not imply an endorsement of the ad or its contents.

Text and images will be printed as submitted by advertisers.

Front Cover Photo:

Tim and Shari Gale's balloon, Knight-N-Gale had been held captive for months. It was time to get it out of the trailer and stand it up on the lawn of their new home in Albany, Oregon. The rhododendrons were in full bloom to add flare to the event. Photo by Shari Gale.

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