

# AeroStats



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

**Volume 23, Number 6**

**June 2021**

# Where will you be on June 16th at 7:00 PM?

**No matter where you are,  
please join us for the next  
WAS Zoom Meeting on  
that day/time.**

**A link will be sent out to all current WAS members before the meeting day.**

## Table of Contents

- Sec/Treasurer's Report Page 3
- Happenings Page 4
- Meet Bob LeDoux Page 5-7
- Fly Inside Page 8
- Angela's Flight Page 9
- WAS application Page 10

## 2021 WAS Officers

**President:**  
Shari Gale

**Vice President:**  
Marianne LeDoux

**Secretary/Treasurer:**  
Dale Justice

**Others:**

**Newsletter Editor:**  
Shari Gale

**Activities Director:**  
Pasha Luber

**Web Master:**  
Cory Miller

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

**Email:** [ExecComm@wasballoon.info](mailto:ExecComm@wasballoon.info)



# Willamette Aerostat Society Secretary/Treasurer's Report

## Willamette Aerostat Society General Meeting on ZOOM

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

### Present:

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p. m. by Shari using Zoom on the internet.

2. Moved by Pasha, seconded by Marilyn Barnhart, to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2021 meeting as printed in the May 2021 newsletter. Motion passed.

3. **Treasurer's report** — from Dale, as of May 12, 2021.

2020-2021 Members	71 (41 memberships paid)
Checking	\$ 432.47
Savings	105.00
Cash	7.00
Total	<u>\$ 544.47</u>

A check was sent to the BFA to support the High Sierra Balloon Camp.

4. Correspondence – none.

5. Events –

- Virtual BFA safety seminar is still available on the internet.

- The memorial for Charitie Faith Lansing in Madras is delayed until May 22, 2021.

- Grants Pass, OR, Wild Rogue HAB Rally – has been canceled for this year.

- Dirggs, ID, Teton Valley Balloon Rally – July 1-4.

- Elko, NV, Ruby Mountain Balloon Festival – July 16-18.

- Albany, OR Art and Air Festival is set for August 27-29.

- Walla Walla Balloon Stampede has been set for October 14-17.

Other updates and rally information will be in the next newsletter and on wasballoon.info website.

6. Old Business –

1. PayPal for memberships is on hold.

2. The decision to create a members only section and its content on the website has not been made.

7. New Business –

1. None

8. **The next meeting will be on June 16, 2021 at 7:00 p. m. using Zoom.** The information to attend will be sent by email.

9. Shari adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.. m. The Zoom meeting was continued for open discussions.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Dale T. Justice*  
/signed/dtj/5-18-2021

# 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.

**Wednesday, June 16, 2021**  
**WAS General Meeting via Zoom**  
7:00 PM  
A link will be sent out to all current WAS members

**July 23-25, 2021**  
**Big Sky International Balloon Rendezvous**  
Billings, Montana  
<https://www.facebook.com/bigskyballoonrally/>

**July 23-25, 2021**  
**Ruby Mountain Balloon Festival**  
Elko, Nevada  
<http://rubymountainballoonfestival.com>

**July 23-25, 2021**  
**2021 Balloons Over Bend Balloon Festival**  
Bend, OR  
<http://www.balloonsoverbend.com/>  
*This is a tentative date. Stay tuned.*

**August 27-29, 2021**  
**Northwest Art & Air Festival**  
Albany, OR  
<http://nwartandair.org>

**September 1-5, 2021**  
**Spirit of Boise Balloon Classic**  
Boise, Idaho  
<https://spiritofboise.com/>

**September 10-12, 2021**  
**The Great Reno Balloon Race**  
Reno, NV  
For more information:  
<http://www.renoballoon.com>

**September 24-26, 2021**  
**The Great Prosser Balloon Rally**  
Prosser, WA  
For more information:  
<http://www.prosserballoonrally.org>

**September 24-26, 2021**  
**Winnemucca Balloon Festival**  
Winnemucca, NV  
<https://winnemuccaballoonswixsite.com/winnemuccaballoon>

**Summer is the perfect time to get involved with your local balloon club.**

**Join WAS today!**

*There is a handy application on page 10.*



# Meet Bob LeDoux

By Shari Gale with generous help from Bob

Bob LeDoux has been a fixture in the ballooning community here in Oregon for decades. He didn't grow up here however. He was born in Bakersfield, California in 1947. His father manufactured farm produce machinery during World War II. His mother was a nurse at a local German prisoner of war camp when she met his dad. After the war his father moved his family and his shop to Sunnyside, Washington, and later to Mt. Angel, Oregon.

Bob graduated from Oregon State University in 1969 with a degree in statistics. He then went into the Peace Corps from 1969 to 1971. He was stationed in Jamaica.

As a graduate student at Penn State in 1971-1973, Bob joined the Nittany Soaring Club and learned to fly. Upon returning to Oregon, he helped set up the Salem Glider Club which operated out of the Independence Airport. He purchased a sailplane and built a wooden one.

Bob worked for the State of



*This pastel portrait of Bob LeDoux was painted by his wife, Marianne, in March 2021.*

Oregon as a budget analyst. He was on a team which prepared billion-dollar budgets for the Governor.

Bob met his wife Marianne in 1978. She was operating a Jaycee food booth at the Lebanon airport during an Experimental Aircraft Association meeting. Bob bought the last hot dog she had to sell. She sat beside him on the trailer tongue while he ate the hot dog. "I proceeded to show her the aircraft. We left the event with no further plans. I came back the next day, and she had stood up her date in the hopes I would return."

They got married in 1980. He spent his weekends flying his glider. "Mari became concerned my weekends away were leaving "household" duties undone. So I agreed to think about other aviation endeavors. One morning we saw Spencer Etzel inflating a balloon at Antique Powerland in Brooks. We stopped to ask questions. Moving to balloons from gliders seemed reasonable."

"I decided to trade the glider for a balloon — an idea Mari thought was crazy." Following a lead from an ad in Trade-A-Plane they met Lance Sundown, a salvage operator in Oakland, California. The negotiations for a trade began.

"We towed the sailplane to Oakland, went into a bar parking lot, and dialed a telephone number from the nearby pay phone. Soon two doors opened up in an adjacent, razor wire topped concrete compound, and out comes a short tubby guy with an eye patch. He was followed by a bunch of bronze tanned young men wearing speedos. Mari noticed the speedos."

"A tour of the training facility, with its water tower and old cast iron cannon was followed by a walk



*Castaway was the first balloon they built.*

down to his yacht on the waterfront, about a mile South of the old Oakland Bay bridge. We finished title transfers, hooked up the balloon trailer and drove out the front gates. The doors closed behind us as Mari and I stopped to think about what had happened."

They had just become the owners of a Raven Rally RX-7 named Sundance. Bob took flight lessons from Brick Morgan. Mari had no flying interests but crewed on instructional flights in Woodburn.

"In 1982 I completed my Commercial certificate and still remember the fateful day that followed: Mari was my passenger when I uttered the long since regretted question, "Would you like to take the burner?" She went straight to a Commercial certificate, no Private. We were then tasked with sharing the balloon. We would each take our turn. But my log shows seven hours as PIC during one season.

*Continued on page 6*

# Meet Bob LeDoux

Continued from page 5



“In my defense I decided to build a single place balloon. *Castaway* was a blue colored envelope over our home-built

basket.”

From 1992 to 1996 Bob published the Balloon Builder’s Journal. It is still available at <http://www.apexballoons.com/balloon-builders-journal/>

Bob started the journal because he found little information for a builder. “The Journal was a sounding board to allow me to share my knowledge and generate contributions from others. The four years were intense, allowing little time for other endeavors. I stopped publishing when I felt it qualified as a basic textbook for the budding builder.”

Over the years, Bob and Marianne have built seven balloons. Counting the years Bob was flying gliders, he has been a pilot for 50 years!

Bob’s favorite rallies have been the Albany Art and Air Festival (and all the previous names that rally has had), and the Walla Walla Balloon Stampede. They flew the Stampede from 1984 through 2019. They had the same sponsor every year. They eventually transitioned from mere sponsor to honorary family members.

In both events, it has been the people who have made the rally memorable. In fact, his favorite aspect of our sport is the people they meet.

Bob has had a long and storied tenure in ballooning. We are a richer sport due to his involvement.



Bob LeDoux, Sr holding Bob LeDoux, Jr in 1948 at their home in Shafter, CA.



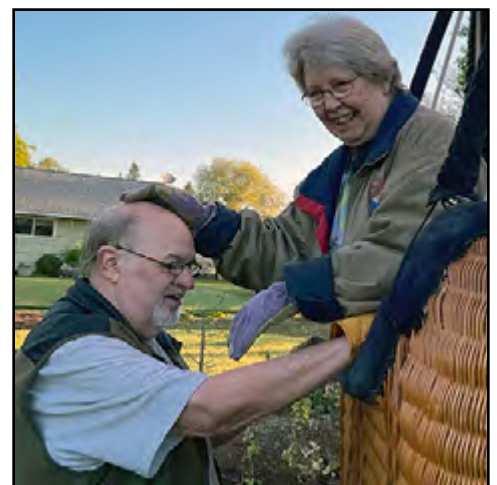
Bob and Marianne’s first balloon, *Sundance*, was a Raven Rally RX-7.



Bob lifting off in *SewLight* in 2007.



*SewEZ* touched down in the lake at Timber Linn Park in 2005.

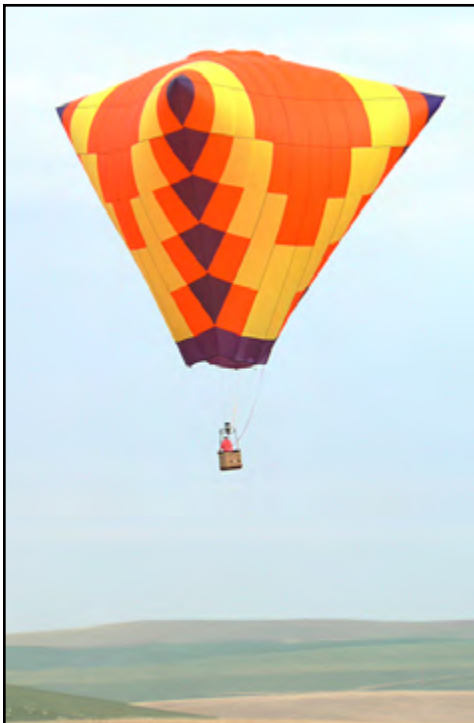


Bob and Marianne have always approached ballooning as a team.

# Here's Some of the LeDoux's Balloons



*Isewbar was built in 1999. It was an S-50 design with 16 load tapes and 32 half gores. It was 54,000 cubic feet and weighed 154 pounds.*



*SewPointee is quite distinctive! It's a tetrahedron. They wanted to expand their building skill set. The photo on the right shows the design of the parachute top.*



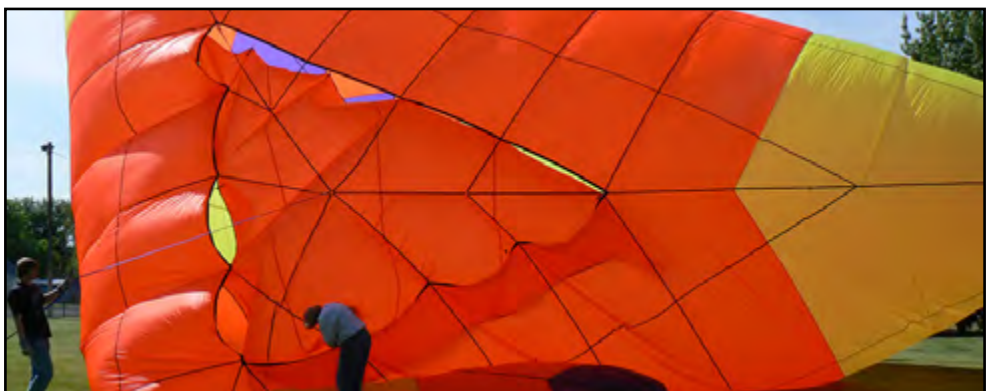
*SewHappy is pictured here flying over Boise, ID in 1994.*



*This is SewHappy II.*



*During 2020 they flew SewLight II often.*



# Fly Inside? Why Not?

by Shari Gale

While searching for photos of the balloons Bob and Marianne LeDoux have built I ran into a photo taken in 1995 at the Tillamook blimp hanger. At that time the hanger was home to an airplane museum. Rod Purdum came up with the idea of flying balloons inside the hanger. He obtained permission and a memorable event was created. The official name was Tillamook Air Museum Balloon Fest. It was popularly known as the Fly Inside.

It was held in January, which is traditionally cold, wet and yucky in Western Oregon, especially on the Oregon coast. It was marvelous to be flying inside a nice, warm, dry hanger while the rain was pounding down just feet away. More than a dozen balloons were there. The rally was held for two consecutive years.



Rod's favorite story from the event occurred the first year at the very end of the day. Almost everyone had departed with the exception of one local balloonist. His balloon was on the hanger floor, still tied off with tether lines, when his passenger got out of the basket without permission. The balloon, of course, shot straight up. The pilot immediately started to vent. Luckily, it was in the middle of the structure, so it had further to travel before it hit the rafters. Hit them it did. It turned into a mushroom shape before it started to descend. There were ripples from the impact along the length of the envelope. Amazingly, there was no damage to the envelope.

My favorite story revolved around Ted Wirsch who flew an Adams balloon. Ted was always bragging about how fast his envelope would deflate when he activated the pop-top. In true Ted fashion, he shouted out, "Hey, watch this!" Then he opened the top vent completely. A fast, hot gush of air broke free and zoomed up to the rafters. Those rafters were the home to more than one owl over the years. The gust of air dislodged a great many feathers, owl pellets, as well as lots of dust. Gifford Hawn was sitting on an envelope right beside Ted's balloon. He had just started to drink an open cup of Pepsi when all the debris from the rafters suddenly splashed into his cup. He quickly decided he wasn't so thirsty after all.

Looking at these photos brought back lots of fun memories. I'm glad we were able to be part of this unforgettable event.



*Bob LeDoux flew SewLite inside the Tillamook blimp hanger in 1995.*





# Angela Miller had an adventure for her birthday!

For her birthday Angela's husband, Cory Miller, set up a flight with the first hot air balloon pilot she had ever met — Kent Barnes. It all happened in mid-April in Utah.

Now that's a birthday present to remember!



# 2021 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:

SewHappy II, built by Bob and Marianne LeDoux glowed early one morning in Prineville, Oregon. Photo by Shari Gale.

## Waiver

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**Material to be considered for publication should be mailed or e-mailed to the Newsletter Editor at sharigaleOR@gmail.com**

**Publication deadline is the 2nd Saturday of each month.**

**AeroStats reserves the right to deny publication of submitted material for any reason.**

**Material published in AeroStats does not imply endorsement by WAS, its officers, newsletter editor, or its members of an event.**

**Nor does it imply agreement with opinions, comments, or endorsement of any product.**