



# *AeroStats*

**August 2023**

**The Monthly Newsletter of the  
Willamette Aerostat Society  
Volume 25, Number 8**



Photo of Eric Reid touching down on Freeway Lakes. Photo by Jim McDaniel who was flying with Chris Whitfield.

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**WAS website:**

<http://www.wasballoon.org>

# 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.

**August 24-25, 2023**  
**DinahSOAR BFA Youth Camp\***  
Vernal, Utah

**August 25-27, 2023**  
**Northwest Art & Air Festival**  
Albany, OR  
<https://www.cityofalbany.net/parks/events/nwaaf>

**August 30-September 3, 2023**  
**Spirit of Boise Balloon Classic**  
Boise, ID  
by invitation only  
Contact: Laurie Spencer  
[laurie@scottspencer.net](mailto:laurie@scottspencer.net)

**September 1-2, 2023**  
**Boise BFA Youth Camp\***  
Boise, ID

**September 7-10, 2023**  
**Great Reno Balloon Race**  
Reno, NV  
Contact: [admin@renoballoon.com](mailto:admin@renoballoon.com)

**September 15-17, 2023**  
**Alturas CofC Balloon Festival**  
Alturas, CA  
Contact: Dianna,  
[di\\_dino\\_6@yahoo.com](mailto:di_dino_6@yahoo.com)

**September 22-24, 2023**  
**Great Prosser Balloon Rally**  
Prosser, WA  
Contact: Morgan Everett  
[morgan@prosserballoonrally.org](mailto:morgan@prosserballoonrally.org)

\*For more information on BFA Youth Camps go to: <https://www.bfa.net/divisions/junior-balloonists>



**Here is your chance to join the  
Willamette Aerostat Society.**

**It is a great way to stay in touch with your local  
ballooning community.**

**You can find an application on page 7,  
or join online at:**

**<https://wasballoon.org/membership/>**

# KONGregation

## A gathering to honor long time aeronaut Jeff “Kong” Shields

By Shari Gale

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual KONGregation of Balloons took place in Ferndale, Washington July 28 through 30th several balloons from Washington and Oregon participated. Eight of them chose to set up for the night glow on Friday night. The winds were “sporty,” but the pilots all managed to get their balloons inflated. Staying inflated was a bit of a challenge, however. The winds just did not cooperate. We had experienced crew, but other pilots and their crew also pitched in to help us. Their efforts were really appreciated!

Once the glow was over, getting

packed up in a hurry was a priority. The balloons had an exclusive entrance into the launch area, but the spectators did not realize that was OUR exit. Getting out of the launch area proved to be more challenging, finding the propane station was even more challenging. We had to travel about two miles from the park, but the station was not set up for night time use. There were no lighted signs, we breezed right by it. After a quick U-turn we found it. One other balloon had gotten there before us. Without their vehicle parked in the totally dark parking lot, we would have driven by the place a second

time. With two of us there, the other six balloon vehicles found the station a little more easily.

The rest of the weekend, as far as flying goes, was a bust. The wind was steadily blowing hard. There was no debating the fly-or-no-fly question, the answer was obvious the moment you looked at a flag pole.

There was a chance for camaraderie. That alone would have pleased Kong to no end. So the event was definitely not a bust. It was a fitting tribute to Kong who loved to hang out with other balloonists more than anything.



*Time to inflate!*



*Bob Blunk, Tim Gale, Juline and her mom, Tevera Hesslink, helped hold the basket in place. Juline has been crewing since she was still in diapers. She is a great helper.*



*Dave Wiser, in Fruit Flies, smashed into Knight-N-Gale. The winds were “a little” too brisk to keep the envelopes seperated.*

# KONGregation Photos



*Mother Nature decided everyone should stay on the ground both Saturday and Sunday. The winds were too strong and the landing sites were too small. Just look at that flag!*

*Tim Breedon flew on Friday morning, but his one was the only free flight that weekend, and he had to keep it short since all he saw in front of him was trees, trees, and more trees.*

*Photos were either taken by Shari Gale or liberated from the KONGregation Facebook page.*

## The WAS Website now has Green Zone maps!

If you are a WAS member and would like the link and password to the green zone maps, please email [prez@wasballoon.org](mailto:prez@wasballoon.org). Red Zone maps are available to everyone at [wasballoon.org/flying/](http://wasballoon.org/flying/)

# Aviation History – July 2, 1982 — Lawn Chair Larry

Reprinted from the Colorado Balloon Club Newsletter, Hot Air Flyer, August 2023

On this day in aviation history; July 2nd, 1982; Larry Walters (April 19, 1949 – October 6, 1993) whom had often dreamed of flying, but was unable to become a pilot in the United States Air Force because of his poor eyesight, fashioned a makeshift lighter than air craft, by attaching 43 balloons to a simple lawn chair, filled them with helium, strapped on a parachute, then strapped himself into the lawnchair in the backyard of a home at 1633 West 7th Street in San Pedro. Taking his pellet gun, a CB radio, sandwiches, beer, water jugs for ballast, and a camera...

When his friends cut the cord that tied his lawn chair to his Jeep, Lawnchair Larry climbed like a homesick angel to an altitude of approximately 16,000 feet where he was sighted by two separate but equally surprised commercial airliner crews.

Larry slowly drifted over Long Beach and subsequently entered controlled airspace as he crossed the primary approach for Long Beach Airport.

Citizens Band Monitoring Sta-

tion (REACT): What information do you wish me to tell [the airport] at this time as to your location and your difficulty?

Lawnchair Larry: Ah, the difficulty is, ah, this was an unauthorized balloon launch, and, uh, I know I'm in a federal airspace, and, uh, I'm sure my ground crew has alerted the proper authority. But, uh, just call them and tell them I'm okay.

After 45 minutes of flinging himself through the footless halls of air in his lawn chair, in preparation for his descent, Larry shot several balloons, then accidentally dropped his pellet gun overboard. None the less, Lawnchair Larry descended slowly, until the balloons' got caught in a power line at 423 E 44th Way in Long Beach. The power line broke, causing a blackout for the local community. Thankfully, Lawnchair Larry was returned to Earth unharmed

Just after landing, Walters spoke to the press, saying: "It was something I had to do. I had this dream for twenty years, and if I hadn't done it, I think I would have ended



The actual lawn chair Larry Walters used for his makeshift aircraft resides in the National Air and Space Museum. [https://airandspace.si.edu/collection-objects/chair-lawn-larry-walters/nasm\\_A20181388000](https://airandspace.si.edu/collection-objects/chair-lawn-larry-walters/nasm_A20181388000)

up in the funny farm."

"I couldn't just sit around."

You can laugh at Larry, but he completed his mission, and his lawn chair attached to some of the original tethers and water jugs now sits proudly on display amongst aviation greats at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington DC.

If you are looking at selling your older, AIRWORTHY, system (a 90 or smaller), please contact Jack Loflin first

[\(loflinj@gmail.com\)](mailto:loflinj@gmail.com).

He and Sallie are interested in buying another system that can be used for flight instruction.

# Balloon Federation of America – Attention Shape Pilots



Shape pilots: As the new rule regarding the application of the second-class medical settles itself, we are hearing that not all Flight Standards Offices are interpreting this new rule in the same manner. Some question whether commercial pilots without a medical may accept a fee for participation for displaying

a special shape balloon at a festival, even though the contract for this service states that the pilot is not being required to fly the balloon.

These Flight Standards Offices may be of the opinion that the second-class medical is required because the balloon is inflated and is capable of flight, so the medical is required. Special shape balloons are covered under a footnote in the new rule, which allows them to inflate and show the balloon as long as their agreement with the organizer states that they are not being required to fly while at the event, but are there to display on the ground only.

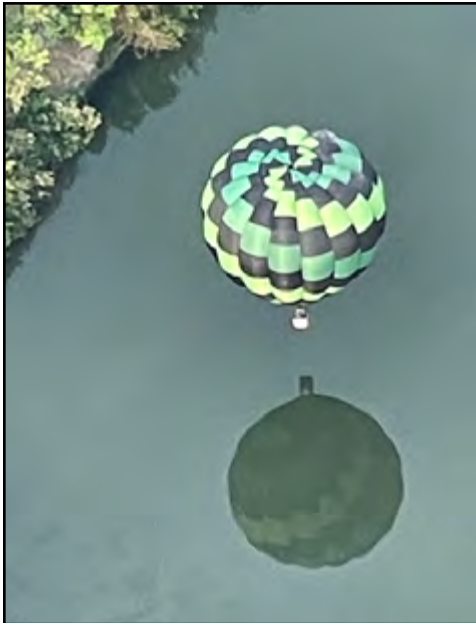
This footnote and its meaning have been clarified to the BFA and it does allow for special shape pilots

to receive a fee for participation as long as the organizer specifies in their contract that flight is not required for their participation and fee.

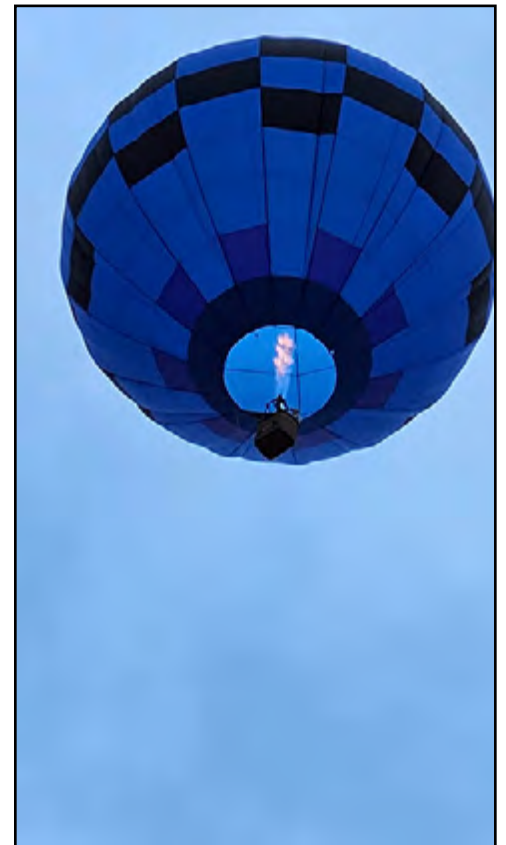
If you are a shape pilot or event organizer, we encourage you to reach out to the FSDO where the event will happen to get their view point on this. We also encourage you to clarify with your insurance company their position on paid appearances without a 2nd class medical.

While BFA has clarified the meaning of the rule directly with FAA in Washington, that does not guarantee that every FSDO, event organizer or insurance underwriter will agree. We continue to work with all to at least make them aware of that interpretation.

## There Are Balloons In The Air Over Albany!



*Photo above by Tim Gale. The photos on the right by Penny Mehlhorn.*



# 2023 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 Larry Simburger  
24900 SE 416th St  
Emumclaw, WA 98022

**Electronic Payment Option:**  
<https://wasballoon.org/membership/>





# 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:

*Chris Whitfield is ready to take off just as the sun starts to peak out over the horizon.  
Photo by Lisa Reid.*

## Waiver

**AeroStats is a monthly publication of the Willamette Aerostat Society.**

**WAS welcomes you to reprint material from this newsletter by individuals or balloon club organizations for their personal or organization use.**

**We ask that you credit WAS, AeroStats and the author in any reuse of newsletter material.**

**Commercial use of material (articles or images) for any reason is prohibited without the express written consent from the Willamette Aerostat Society.**

**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.**