



# *AeroStats*

**November 2023**    **The Monthly Newsletter of the  
Willamette Aerostat Society**  
Volume 25, Number 11



Set Your Calendar For The WAS  
**Montgolfier Day Party/  
Retirement Party**  
**Saturday, November 18**  
**at 2:00 PM**

To be held at:  
Tim & Shari Gale's home  
1300 39th Ave SW, Albany, OR

Please RSVP: [prez@wasballoon.org](mailto:prez@wasballoon.org)

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## 2023 WAS Officers

**President:**

Sallie Loflin  
[prez@wasballoon.org](mailto:prez@wasballoon.org)

**Vice President:**

Norma Ashley  
[vp@wasballoon.org](mailto:vp@wasballoon.org)

**Secretary/Treasurer:**

Larry Simburger  
[sec@wasballoon.org](mailto:sec@wasballoon.org)

**Others:**

**Newsletter Editor:**  
Shari Gale  
[newsletter@wasballoon.org](mailto:newsletter@wasballoon.org)

**Activities Director:**

Open

**Web Master:**

Jack Loflin  
[webmaster@wasballoon.org](mailto:webmaster@wasballoon.org)

**Officers:**

[officers@wasballoon.org](mailto:officers@wasballoon.org)

**WAS website:**

<http://www.wasballoon.org>



# Willamette Aerostat Society

## Secretary/Treasurer's Report

### WAS October 14, 2023 Meeting

<https://wasballoon.org/>

#### Present:

Sallie Loflin, President  
Norma Ashley, Vice President (via Zoom)  
Shari Gale, Newsletter Editor and Past President  
and 9 additional members

The October 14, 2023 meeting was called to order by WAS president, Sallie Loflin

It was moved and seconded to approve the September minutes as they were printed in the October 2023 WAS newsletter. Motion passed.

#### The Treasurer's Report:

Current balance is \$2,087.99

#### Correspondence:

None

#### Regulatory News:

None

#### News:

Albert Brienens recently passed away. A funeral is planned for November 25 at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Beaverton.

#### Upcoming Events:

Tim provided an update on potentially holding a **safety seminar** in the spring again. More information will be forth coming.

There will be a **Montgolfier Day Party** combined with a Retirement Celebration and WAS meeting to be held **Saturday, November 18 at 2:00 PM**. The event will be held at Tim and Shari's home in Albany.

The **WAS Christmas Party** will be held at 1:30 PM on December 9 at Sallie and Jack Loflin's home in Albany.

#### Old Business:

None

#### New Business:

**Dues are due!** Please renew on the website soon. The automatic renewal feature on the website was disconnected. To renew members must go into the website and fill out the forms and set up payment.

**Nominations for Crew of the Year and Pilot of the Year** — please send your nominations in soon.

**Next year officer nominations** — Nominations for president, vice president and secretary/treasurer are open. Please send in nominations soon.

#### Brainstorming ideas:

Membership — Should we put the newsletter behind a password on the website? There are 259 members on the WAS Facebook page, most of them are not WAS members

Adjourn



**WAS Dues Are Due!**

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

# 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.

**Saturday, November 18**  
**2:00 PM**  
**Montgolfier Day Party + WAS**  
**Meeting + Retirement Party**  
**Gale's Home**

Albany, Oregon  
Please RSVP to [prez@wasballoon.org](mailto:prez@wasballoon.org)

**November 20, 2023**  
**Renew your WAS membership!**

**December 1-3, 2023**  
**Red Rock Balloon Rally**  
Gallup, NM  
<http://redrockballoonrally.com>

**Saturday, December 9, 2023**  
**1:30 PM**  
**WAS Annual Christmas Party**  
**Loflin's Home**  
Albany, Oregon  
Please RSVP to [prez@wasballoon.org](mailto:prez@wasballoon.org)

## 2024 Dates:

**September 6-8, 2024**  
**The Great Reno Balloon Race**  
Reno, Nevada

**September 27-29, 2024**  
**35th Annual Great Prosser Balloon Rally**  
Prosser, Washington

## ***Watch OUT!***

### ***It's Time to Renew Your Membership!***

It is time to renew your membership in the Willamette Aerostat Society (WAS) for 2024. You can do it electronically by going on line and charging it to your credit card. It's as simple as clicking a few buttons on your computer!

You can still write a check and mail it to the treasurer along with your application if you choose. (A copy of the application is on page 11.)

**Please note: All Auto renewals have been shut off. You must renew either on line or by check. Dues need to be paid by March 31, 2024.**

If you want to renew via the website just click on this link:

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

# Their Legacy is Enduring Friendship

The end of this flying season was the end of the road for several pilots/balloon owners in our area. Pilots Carmen Blakely, Cheryl Isaacs and Laura Hancock all stepped back this fall. Gerald Bales, co-owner of Morning Glory along with Laura, also stepped back. Bales and Laura decided to give their balloon to Brittney Biddescombet from Walla Walla, Washington. Justin Anderson, also from Walla Walla, is now the proud owner of Cheryl's balloon. Carmen is working on passing hers on to one of her long-time crew members, Nick Gunther.

While everyone here will be missed in the Pacific Northwest skies, they brought so much more to our ballooning community. Back in the early 2000's when they got their commercial pilot certificates they decided to fly in every western state. That meant they put a lot of miles on their vehicles considering some rallies are more than a two-day drive away.

They caravanned together to many of the rallies. They'd pick a rendezvous point, like Biggs Junction, and go the rest of the way together. Which was very helpful if anyone had chase vehicle challenges. More importantly, they usually stayed in the same hotel, or in recent years they rented big houses and set up communal meals. Each pilot and their crew would cook for everyone else for one meal during the weekend. One year there were more than 30 people crammed into the dining, living room, kitchen area of the house they had rented in Winthrop, Washington.

There were always puzzles, usually of balloons, to be assembled over the weekend. There were card and dice games to be played. As Carmen said, "It helped to solidify our friendships. We were one large family by this point."

They traveled to the Alvord Desert in Eastern Oregon to fly eight to ten times. It's probably safe to say they were the only balloonists to ever fly in that desolate area. But they didn't stop there. One year, after not being able to fly in March in Winthrop they went back over Labor Day weekend. Fun was the center piece of each of these excursions.

During regular rally weekends they would often add adventures such as wine tasting, sleigh rides, float trips, and rock hunting. Both Carmen and Laura have extensive rock collections in their yards. Many of those rocks "mysteriously" appeared in their chase trucks while on a ballooning trip. Those rocks now serve as permanent reminders of the wonderful times they've spent with their ballooning family.

While ballooning is a naturally gregarious sport, Carmen, Cheryl, Laura and Bales built up the friendships to the point, those of us who are left will not let them disappear completely. We will be encouraging them to join us in weekend adventures in the years to come. They are part of the balloon family they helped create, plus they add a huge fun factor to any gathering.



*Cheryl Isaacs and Carmen Blakely in 2016.*



*Gerald Bales and Laura Hancock inside Morning Glory in 2017.*



# Great Memories were Generated



Laura and Carmen enjoyed bowling in Winnemucca, NV in 2019.

The first time flying in the Alvord Desert 2002 created lot of memories for everyone. Above right: Dale Justice chased Marianne LeDoux in I-Sew-Bar on his bike. Below left: Laura Hancock created her own oasis in the desert.



True friends help you with your annual inspection.



The Oregon contingent regularly rented a large house (this one was in Winthrop, WA) in order to enjoy communal meals, and games together.



Gerald Bales and Susan Hall were laughing over something good in Walla Walla in 2011.



What do you do in Winnemucca, NV to entertain each other after a flight? You go to the Dollar Store to try on hats in support of a friend going through chemotherapy.



While in Winthrop, WA in 2019 everyone drove up to Sun Mountain Lodge to go for a sleigh ride. We had enough people to fill two big sleighs.

Photos on this page by Dale Justice and Shari Gale.

# Chasing the Winds

By Cheryl Isaacs



I took my first flight as a passenger in Napa Valley at early dawn when the fog was still drifting down the hills to the grapevines down below. My friend and I met the pilot where he had his balloon all laid out and the 2-crew people were preparing everything for our adventure. As the pilot turned on the burner and heated the balloon, I stood in awe at how easy it looked and yet scary to some degree. Once the balloon lifted up and leveled in its place, we climbed in. The lift off I can still remember, was the softest and most exciting thing I had ever done in my life. Going up so smoothly and seeing the light fog below on the rolling vineyards. We headed straight for the vineyard and the pilot told us he was going to set down between the vines for a close up to the grapes. I was doubtful that would be possible but he proved me wrong and set the basket as gentle as possible right between the staked vines. We sat for only a moment or two and lifted off for our full flight. This was truly the most adventurous thing I had done so far in my life and was thrilled to be there.

My next balloon adventure was with Vista Balloons, Roger and Catherine, at the Tigard Balloon Festival in 1996. That again was so magnificent I was hooked. Michael

and I both signed up to be crew and began traveling to Albuquerque with them and crewing in Newberg. It was the best time ever for the two of us.

During one of the Albuquerque trips Carmen and I went for a flight and decided this was something we could do and wanted to do. When we got home, we decided to get lessons and buy a balloon and added another person to our group, Brian Forness.

That was when our two most favorite people Bob and Mary Ann LeDoux offered to help us get trained and even helped find our first balloon, Outer Limits. They became our instructors and got us through the book study and our test on line. Then we got many flight training hours in their balloons and Outer Limits. It was the best part of my life, besides being married.

Licensed and ready to go on our own, we shared Outer Limits between the three of us. It was hard at first to get time between all of us by doing short hops and trading out but we made it through.

In 2003 Carmen and I decided we needed another balloon so we could both fly at the same time so we had Tierra Madre built thru Ultra Magic. Michael came up with the design and colors so we ordered it.

In time we grew out of Outer Limits so we sold that and I got another balloon from a longtime friend and pilot Denny Wright. This allowed the opportunity to carry passengers and fly at the same rallies with both of us in the air at the same time.

We wanted to do some rallies so we started looking around and found several so we applied for them. We went to California, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Wyoming, Washington, Colorado, New Mexico and of course Oregon. We were very lucky



to have many balloon friends who came as crew for us and we loved having them with us. They knew what to do and had things ready by the time we came back from pilot briefing. This is how I got so involved and along with all the friends and people we have made and met along the way it has been a dream come true that I never knew I would ever have.

My years around and in balloons has been the most fun, whether I fly or not and has given me a chance to make lots of friends. Ballooning is a community and we look out for each other and help when and how we can. It has allowed me to make some of the strongest friendships I have ever had and I truly cherish that.

I will miss that as a pilot but I hope to stay involved at least as a crew person for some years to come. Watching and helping new pilots come up the ranks is what it is all about. Keeping the sport alive and well, my hope is that I have helped with that even just a bit. I am retiring from flying but not the sport.

Soft Landings Always,  
(except when you want fast and hard)

*Cheryl Isaacs*

*Commercial Hot Air Balloon Pilot*

# Flying in Cappadocia, Turkey

by Mack Gardner

*Editor's Note: We first met Mack and Susan Gardner back in the 1990's when the Collage of Culture balloon rally was held in Madras, Oregon. Mack was in charge of the Junior ROTC program at the high school. The kids came out to crew for all the balloons the weekend the rally was held. Tim was lucky enough to get the Jr. ROTC as our sponsor, so we got to spend extra time with the Gardners. We formed a friendship that has lasted through the years. Once when the Oregon Contingent was driving over to Madras to fly (after the rally had died), Mack and Susan offered us the use of their home even though they were going to be out of town. We took full advantage of their generosity, and held communal meals at the house.*

*Fast forward to a few weeks ago: It was 4:00 am and I heard my phone go ding, ding, ding, ding with even more dings. It was Mack enthusiastically sending me photos from their balloon adventure in Turkey. Once I was up, I shamelessly begged him for a story about the experience for this newsletter. He, of course, obliged, and even received permission for me to use photos taken by another member of his group.*

*In ballooning, we meet the most positive people, who become lifelong friends. That is the best part of this sport!*

In early October, my wife Susan and I along with a few other friends, launched with Voyager Balloons for a one-hour flight over Cappadocia, Turkey. Susan and I were the only ones who had ever flown in a hot air balloon before. Three of us were former career pilots. I was an Army aviator, fixed and rotary wing, another friend was a USAF long haul heavy lift pilot, and the third was a civilian long haul heavy lift cargo pilot. All three of us were, in our own way, a little unsure of this upcoming experience. Let me put you to rest — we all had a wonderful, professional and safe flight. The pilot, ground and chase crew were all excellent. There were a total of 15 passengers in the basket. Shortly after loading, the pilot, a Turkish man, gave his safety briefing in English which included hard or moving landing procedures. He, also, made us demonstrate we had the physical ability to follow through on his instructions. The full balloon was well maintained and looked to be in excellent condition. Before the pilot performed any maneuvers, he informed us of his intentions. And several times during

the flight he inquired about how we were doing. From skimming along near the earth, low altitude to 3000 feet and explaining the geography and history of the area, during sunrise. The flight was very pleasant. As we were approaching landing, there was a slight breeze and in an abundance of caution, the pilot told us all to “assume the position.” As soon as we touched down, two of his ground crew were on the basket to bring it to an immediate stop.

While my wife and I are very comfortable with all this, not all first timers are. So the pilot and his crew were all very cautious and considerate of the full passenger load. That morning there were at least 100 other hot air balloon launches. That is pretty standard for this place.

My take away is that this was a full up well done and very professional, safe operation and event. Voyager Balloons had several other balloons participating. There were multiple balloon companies and operators. With your own due diligence and research, you too can have a wonderful balloon experience over Cappadocia just as we did.



Part of the Oregon Contingent sitting on the deck of Mack and Susan Gardner's home in Madras, Oregon.

Turkey, in the view of some, may look like a back water place. Yes, in some places, it is, but the Cappadocia balloon experience has been ongoing for many years and is a major regional and Turkish national tourist marketing effort. Look up Cappadocia and you will also see an emphasis on seeing it from a hot air balloon. I was there nine years ago and it was a big deal then.

Prior to the balloon flight an opportunity presented itself to paraglide. Very different from flying an airplane or riding in a balloon. I decided to give it a try. I encountered no problems and had a wonderful experience. Flying in tandem with a Turkish instructor, a strong English speaker, I took off a mountain slope at 6,000 feet. It was all very professional and safely done, just like our ballooning experience.

I would recommend either of these adventures to anyone visiting Turkey.



# Flying in Cappadocia Photos by Susan Gardner & Ann Brunet



*Mack and Susan Gardner*



*The post flight photo includes the co-pilot, man in grey jacket to the far left, Mack and Susan in blue jackets, the pilot in black standing behind Susan and on the far right their five friends from Texas.*

## Time for Executive Committee Elections

It's the time of year when Willamette Aerostat Society is seeking new executive committee members. Do you know someone who will work to keep WAS strong? Please submit their name — *or your own name* — to Sallie Loflin at [prez@wasballoon.org](mailto:prez@wasballoon.org).

Are you willing to run for office? (It's that time of year across the entire country. We shouldn't be left out.) The slate needs to be set soon, so please contact Sallie right away.

Ballots need to go out to all current members by **Friday, November 17th**.

## Dues are due!

Your 2024 membership dues are due now. Yes, 2024 is that close. It doesn't seem possible, but 2023 is rapidly coming to a close.

In years past, if you were a current member and had joined using the electronic link on the website, your dues were automatically renewed. This feature caused all kinds of confusion. It was decided to shut down the automatic renewals. That means you can't sit back and expect the money to be deducted from your bank account. You need to go back to the web site: <https://wasballoon.org/membership/> to renew your membership. You can include more than one family member. Just keep scrolling down the form.

Of course, you can always mail a check to our treasurer. There is a form at the end of this newsletter.

Dues for 2024 should be in no later than March 31, 2024.

See you at the  
Montgolfier Day Party,  
2:00 PM November 18th at  
Tim and Shari's home.



## Grab Your Phone!

Be sure to put the WAS Christmas Party on your calendar.

Saturday, December 9, 2023  
1:30 PM

at Jack and Sallie Loflin's Home

It is a potluck, with the club supplying the meat course and non-alcoholic drinks.

There will be a gift exchange.

More details will be published next month.  
For now just save the date.

## Who Do You Think Made a Difference in 2023?

It's time to let *that special* pilot or crew person know their actions this last flying season are appreciated.

The Willamette Aeronaut Society's Aeronaut Of The Year Award and Crew Of The Year are annual awards presented to individuals who have made a significant contribution to the Sport of Ballooning during the past year. The award process is as follows:

- Nominations, complete with a description of why the Award should be given, are received from the General Club Membership by the Executive Committee;
- Nominations are reviewed for appropriateness as defined in the Aeronaut/Crew Of The Year Procedures.
- The Award is presented during a

General Meeting, or other appropriate occasion.

It is time to make nominations for the WAS 2023 awards.

Please consider accomplishments of your fellow Aeronauts (Pilots and Crew) made during the year 2023 and nominate those you feel have made a significant contribution to the sport of ballooning. Any WAS Member is eligible for nomination. In addition, when significant contributions by others have been made, they may also be considered.

Nominations should include a description of the Nominee's accomplishments. Nominations should be sent to Sallie Loflin at [prez@wasballoon.org](mailto:prez@wasballoon.org) no later than Tuesday, December 5, 2023 in order to be considered.

# 2024 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:

Knight-N-Gale takes off from the park in Tangent, Oregon on a recent week-end after waiting for the fog to disapeate. Photo by Patti McCarter.

## 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.**