

AeroStats



July 2024

 The Monthly Newsletter of the
Willamette Aerostat Society

Volume 26, Number 7

WAS Summer Barbecue! Join Us!



**Saturday, August 17
2:00 PM**

**Loflin's Home outside
of Albany**

Sallie will be sending out an email to all members before the event to give you details, and suggesting what you can bring.

R.S.V.P. by Friday, August 9th
prez@wasballoon.org

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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.

July 13-14, 2024

Sonoma County Hot Air Balloon Classic

Santa Rosa, California

<https://www.schabc.org>

July 13-18, 2024

2024 BFA Youth Camp

Lake Tahoe, Nevada

July 26-28, 2024

Balloons Over Bend

Bend, Oregon

<https://balloonoverbend.com>

August 10, 2024

Valley View Fun Fly,

McMinnville, Oregon

Contact: Chris Whitfield

cdwhitfield73@gmail.com

August 23-25, 2024

Northwest Art & Air Festival

Albany, Oregon

<https://www.albanyoregon.gov/nwaaf>

August 28-September 1, 2024

Spirit of Boise Balloon Classic

Boise, Idaho

by invitation only

Contact: Laurie Spencer

laurie@scottspencer.net

August 31, 2024

2024 BFA Youth Camp

Boise, Idaho

September 6-8, 2024

Great Reno Balloon Race

Reno, Nevada

Information: <https://renoballoon.com>

September 19-22, 2024

Ruby Mountain Balloon Festival

Elko, Nevada

September 27-29, 2024

35th Annual Great Prosser Balloon Rally

Prosser, Washington

<http://www.prosserballoonrally.org>

October 5-13, 2024

Albuquerque Int'l Balloon Fiesta

Albuquerque, NM

<https://balloonfiesta.com>

It's Officially Summer!

Stay in touch with your local ballooning community!

Join WAS right away
so you don't miss a thing!

It's easy to join, just go to: <https://wasballoon.org/membership/>

Or send a check to the club treasurer.

An application can be found on page 10.

40th Annual Tigard Festival of Balloons

By Shari Gale



Forty years? Could it really be 40 years? If you count back to the origins of the rally when it was part of the Portland Rose Festival, yes it has been that long. The first rally, if my memory is correct, launched from Delta Park. We were right under the main fly way for the Portland International Airport. No matter which direction the winds took you, the landing spots proved to be a big challenge. In coming years, the launch site was moved to Sunset High School in Beaverton. There a lot of open fields, especially if you go north. However, a balloonist with a cavalier attitude about crops, ticked off the biggest landowner in that area. That meant another launch site had to be found. Next up was Fanno Creek Park in Beaverton with a challenging entryway — a very narrow bridge that some of the wider chase vehicles (remember Chase Commanders?) could not cross. Plus this area was soon to house Washington Square Mall. All the open land was being eaten up with businesses or housing. At this point, the Rose Festival decided to cut ties with the balloon rally.

Next? The City of Tigard stepped in. They had the perfect launch site, Cook Park, just below Tigard High School. Two big open

fields are down in a bowl which offers shelter from winds (most of the time). There is lots of parking up at the high school, and the various school booster clubs use the shuttle fees to fund everything from the band program to the dance teams. The entrance fees help support many local charities. The traffic control is the best we've ever seen, even when compared to some of the big rallies in other parts of the country.

This year two balloonists, Jack Loflin and Koh Murai, tested the area on Thursday morning. Friday everyone else showed up. The winds were cooperative. The low-level winds took pilots north over the neighborhoods, upper winds took them off to the south at a fairly good speed. Luke Cesnick, David Dunrud and Koh ended up landing back at the launch site. Koh landed there twice. The night glow winds were not so cooperative. The crowd had to be contented with a candle stick display.

Saturday morning the winds were much the same as they had been Friday. Only Luke landed back in the launch field, however. The night glow was also a repeat, but Darren Kling in the ReMax balloon did manage to do a full glow.

Jessica Geib, the mother of



Jessica Geib and her son Brendan were ready to greet the crowds of balloon enthusiasts at Tigard Festival of Balloons..

her darling three-month-old son, Brendan, decided to not free fly all weekend. Instead she set up her balloon on the field, and did a static display. She allowed people to climb into the basket for photo opportunities. She also let them fire off the burner. She had a long line of people waiting for their turn. They all walked away with giant smiles on their faces. On Saturday morning, Dale Justice, joined her by also doing a static display. More smiles were created.

On the west side of the park four balloons tethered. 850 people got to go up for a tethered ride. that's an amazing number! Almost all of them posed for photos. They will have treasured memories from their time in a real hot air balloon basket.

Sunday Mother Nature said, "Remember me? I'm in charge here." The launch was canceled and everyone got an early start home. It was a good weekend. More smiles were created just by thinking about all the good times, good friends, and good memories.

Tigard Festival of Balloons — Photos by Tim & Shari Gale



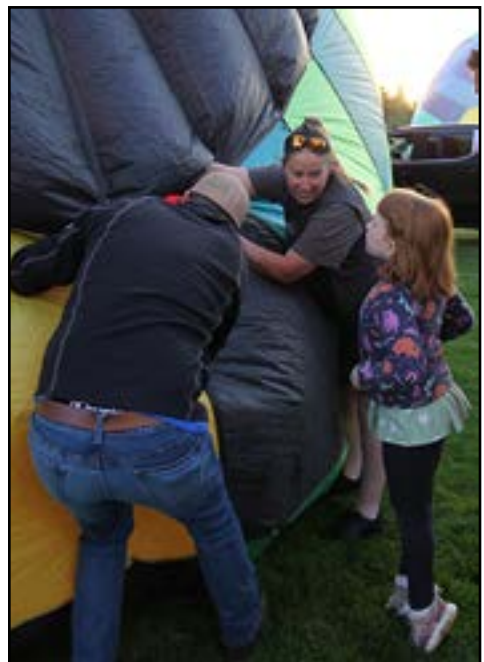
TV coverage got started Friday morning.



Dee, from our local FAA office, came out all weekend to crew and learn about ballooning. Her participation was greatly appreciated on many levels.



Jessica Geib encourage hands on experiences for anyone and everyone.



The sign up process for the tethered rides went well. Edie Stoaks and Mary Heath worked hard to keep the line moving. (Please note how far back that line went when this photo was taken.)



Cory Miller, crew chief to an **unnamed pilot**, made sure he had the keys to the chase truck on the second day, yet more than one person double checked that the keys were not in the pilot's pocket!

A Heartfelt Thank You From Kristin

Thank you for making our 40th anniversary a wonderful celebration! We had two beautiful morning flights and thrilled hundreds of people with tether rides. It is always a joy to spend very early mornings and late nights with our balloon family.

Thank you Sallie and Jack for your constant support and availability throughout the year so our event is a success for our pilots.

Thank you Tim for ensuring the safety of our pilots and the community around us.

Thank you Koh for your eyes on the weather so we can have the best flights.

Thank you Marilyn and Edie for corralling hundreds of excited tether guests onto the thrill of a lifetime.

Thank you Joy for matching our pilots with their crew each morning.

Thank you Chris, Eric, John and Ricky for the hundreds of ups and downs, and the smiles and joy you brought to our guests.

Thank you Luke for carrying the American Flag and creating a beautiful sight during the National Anthem.

Thank you Kearney, David, Bob, Jack, Kimberly, Dale, Koh, Darren and Alan for beautiful launches that hovered over Tigard giving our community a great reason to get up early.

Thank you Jessica for sharing your balloon with our guests and giving the kids (little and big) an up close experience of your balloon.

Thank you John, David, Ricky, Kimberly and Jessica for entertaining our evening guests with a candlestick glow. Kimberly even got to watch a proposal in front of her basket!

Thank you Darren for battling the winds to give us a Night Glow Saturday night (as well as Jack, Mike and Garret on the crown lines).

Thank you Mellissa for another amazing VIP dinner. Your passion for the event shines by the way you showcase our pilots in your décor.

Thank you Cindy for making the Tigard Festival of Balloons possible. Your dedication and passion for our community is inspiring.

We couldn't celebrate our community without you and we look forward to seeing you next year!

Thank you,
Kristin Romelhardt | Balloon Director
Tigard Festival of Balloons | June 21-23, 2024 | Cook Family Park
www.tigardballoon.org

FSDO Came To Learn

By Sallie Loflin

This year, the Tigard Festival of Balloons welcomed four inspectors from the Portland Flight Safety Standards Office (aka FSDO). The four visitors were there to learn anything and everything hot air balloon. Most FAA inspectors spend their careers in every other type of aviation but balloons, so having the FAA at the event was a great teaching opportunity for all of us. Jack and I took the four under our wings (see what I did there?) and taught them everything we know about our sport. We were able to show them everything from the setup, launch, to the chase and the eventual landing and pack up. We even had the opportunity to show one of the inspectors what happens when we land in a school yard and the entire neighborhood comes out of seemingly nowhere. Thank you to all of the pilots at the festival that took the time to answer their questions or show them their systems. Thank you to the FAA for taking the time to show up and allow us to share our little corner of aviation.



Jack and Sallie recently received this certificate from the local FSDO. Please note the pin showing in the left hand corner that also came in the package.

2024 KONGgregation of Balloons

This article and all the photos were taken from the KONGgregation of Balloons Facebook page with the approval of Mandy Johnson.



It's been three years since Kong (Jeff) Shields suddenly passed away. This loss continues to be deeply felt by many. His friends and family get together annually to honor his love and devotion to ballooning. This year the gathering was set for June 22 and 23 in Pendleton, Oregon. On Saturday morning 19 balloons showed up. Mandy Johnson stated, "Unfortunately so did some fickle winds and enough uncertainty not everyone flew. Most who did were met with some sporty landings which created an opportunity for those who wanted to practice in a very wide open area to go for it. Some doubled up efforts and others stayed on the ground. There were many learning opportunities. A perfect mix of decision making that supported everyone's individual needs. Just the way KONGgregation is intended — to embrace all levels and interests and meet them right where they're at." She said the balloonists that helped other balloons and crew were the "rock

stars of the day."

Sunday the winds were even stronger. Some people headed home Saturday afternoon, others slept in, but some stepped in to help with early envelope inspections and to break up the temporary camp that had been set up. The Favichio/Hansen clan along with "master chef" Tyler Adams put out a spread for everyone helping with the ranch clean up.

"While we didn't get every flight off we were able to come together as a community, spend time with our Ohana and make many more ballooning memories. Kong would have loved it. And we love honoring his memory by continuing to set aside the time, no matter how busy life gets, and take the time to connect doing something we love in places we miss going to or have always wanted to go to fly while sharing with the next generations. That is Kongregations stated purpose and we were once again successful," declared Mandy at the

end of the weekend. Justin Anderson stated, "This is what makes any gathering of Balloons successful: the people. So many friends and family out to not only celebrate Kong and all the things he has done for the ballooning community and the sport but to have fun and be able to yet again catch up. This was my first year finally being able to attend the KONGgregation of Balloons, and I am so happy we did! Had a great time, got so many hugs and there was never a moment we weren't smiling and having fun.

A huge thanks to Vic and Mandy Johnson for knocking out the details and putting the hard work into a no host event. Carolyn Deschaine and Lee did a lot of landowner relations to make sure we had the community's support to fly. There wouldn't have been an amazing weekend without everything all of you (and the others not mentioned) did!"

Plans for 2025 are underway. Notice of when and where the next KONGgregation will be held will be announced on their Facebook page soon.



Vic Johnson was eager to fly the hosts at the ranch, Marilyn and Robin. It was their first exposure to hot air ballooning and balloonists!

KONGgregation of Balloons

Photos from KoB Facebook page



Justin Anderson brought along one of his RC balloons. This one is a small version of Kong's balloon, Columbia. It was a fitting tribute.



Tyler Adams, one of the newer pilots in the Pacific Northwest, showed he has more than one skill that will make him welcome at ballooning events. On top of being a good pilot, he is also a great cook!



Flying in a Grass Seed Growing Area

What You Need to Know

In the mid-Willamette Valley there are hundreds of acres of grass seed farms. Once those fields are harvested, they make the perfect landing site. What do you know about grass seed farming?

Is the seed ready to be harvested? The farmer randomly pulls off some seed heads. If there is any green color, then the seed is not ready. If it is tan, but soft to the touch it is not ready. It needs to be tan and firm.

What are the harvesting steps? Cutting the grass and laying it in rows begins the process. This is called swathing. The farmers cut late at night or very early in the morning. They rely upon the wetness from dew to keep the seeds attached to the stem. If they try to cut it in the heat of the day the seeds just fly off. Then it is lost. There is no way to pick it up after that happens. The rows of cut grass are called windrows.

How long does it sit in the windrows? Depending on the weather, it lays in the rows for 10 days to dry out.

What is next? The combines then come into the fields to pick

up the rows in order to separate the seed from the straw. The seed is collected in a big bin while the straw is discarded out the back of the combine. The seed gets trucked to a seed cleaning plant. There the weed seeds and non-viable grass seeds get removed. After that it is bagged and sold to consumers.

What about the straw? To maintain high seed yields the farmer wants to remove the straw (harvest residue) soon after the harvest — before full regrowth starts.

What do they do with the straw? It is baled into large bales. It is usually used to feed cattle or horses. In years gone by, burning the grass seed fields was the preferred method. However, Oregon now has severe restrictions on that practice. It's rarely done. (Landing in a burned field was not good for balloons, so we benefit from that rule.)

The big take away from this article? If you knock the seed off the stalk, the farmer cannot harvest it at all. **Stay out of unharvested or windrowed grass seed fields!**



*This is what an unharvested grass seed field looks like from the air. There have been out of town pilots who tried to insist this is a fallow field. It is not. **Stay out!***



*This is a windrowed grass seed field. If you land on it, walk on it, or drive on it you will knock the seed off the stalk. **Stay out!***



*The valley has a wide variety of crops growing in it. If you don't recognize what is growing in a field, but it all looks the same, assume it is a crop. **Stay out!***

2024 WAS Membership Application



Single \$20 Family (\$30 — applicant plus 3 family members, all in the same household)

Name: _____

Pilot Crew Interested in hot air ballooning

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

BFA Membership #: _____

BFA Crew Level: _____ BFA Pilot Level: _____ FAA Wings Level: _____

Family #1

Name: _____

Pilot Crew Interested in hot air ballooning

Phone: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

BFA Membership #: _____

BFA Crew Level: _____ BFA Pilot Level: _____ FAA Wings Level: _____

Family #2

Name: _____

Pilot Crew Interested in hot air ballooning

Phone: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

BFA Membership #: _____

BFA Crew Level: _____ BFA Pilot Level: _____ FAA Wings Level: _____

Family #3

Name: _____

Pilot Crew Interested in hot air ballooning

Phone: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

BFA Membership #: _____

BFA Crew Level: _____ BFA Pilot Level: _____ FAA Wings Level: _____

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 e-mail

Mail completed form with fees to:

Willamette Aerostat Society

c/o Joy Sibayan

22834 SW Forest Crk Dr, Unit 202

Sherwood OR 97140

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:

During the Tigard Festival of Balloons the MIA/POW balloon launched first each morning in order to carry the U.S. flag.

Photo by Tim Gale

Waiver

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Publication deadline is the 2nd Saturday of each month.

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