

AeroStats

A vertical line of five hot air balloons is the central focus of the image. The balloons are arranged in a descending staircase pattern from top to bottom. The top balloon has a multi-colored pattern of red, yellow, blue, and purple. The second balloon has a blue and yellow chevron pattern. The third balloon is mostly red and purple. The fourth balloon has a pattern of yellow, blue, and purple. The bottom-most balloon in the line has a yellow and red pattern. The background is a clear blue sky with some light clouds.

October 2023

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

Volume 25, Number 10

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 10.)

If you want to renew via the website just click on this link:
<https://wasballoon.org/membership/>

Table of Contents

- Happenings Page 3
- Montague Rally Page 4
- Montague Photos Page 5
- Prosser Rally Page 6-7
- Prosser Rally Photos Page 8
- Larry Simburger Page 9
- AofY and CofY Page 9
- WAS Application Page 10

2023 WAS Officers

President:

Sallie Loflin
prez@wasballoon.org

Vice President:

Norma Ashley
vp@wasballoon.org

Secretary/Treasurer:

Larry Simburger
sec@wasballoon.org

Others:

Newsletter Editor:
Shari Gale
newsletter@wasballoon.org

Activities Director:

Open

Web Master:

Jack Loflin
webmaster@wasballoon.org

Officers:

officers@wasballoon.org

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.

October 14, 2023, 8:30 AM
WAS Meeting
+ a solar eclipse
Loflin's Home (see below)
Albany, Oregon

October 7-15, 2023
Albuquerque Int'l Balloon Fiesta
Albuquerque, NM
<https://balloonfiesta.com>

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

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

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

Volunteer

Help WAS Continue to
Grow!

Want to become involved in
your local ballooning commu-
nity? A great way to do it is to
volunteer to become a WAS
officer in 2024.

Send an email to
prez@wasballoon.org
and tell Sallie you are willing
to step up to make a
difference.

We can watch the eclipse together!

There's a WAS Meeting + a solar eclipse in your future!

Saturday, October 14 at 8:30 am

The Loflin's Home

35392 Gore Drive, Albany, OR 97322

Please bring a your favorite tailgate goodie to share.

Montague Rotary Balloon Faire, 2023



Hi Gang. Yes, it has been a long time given pandemics, travel and old age.

We learned a bit late that the Montague event would be held this year and that an old friend and crew member would be there celebrating a major birthday. Willie had been one of my first draftees when I started as a regular crew chief back in 2001. We were able to contact the event and get our RV reservations set for the weekend.

A couple of weeks before the event I got an e-mail from the Rotary that they were having to go to Plan B. Seems a Cal Fire camp had taken over the usual camping and launch field and although they had promised to be cleared out, it hadn't happened yet. Everything was going to be at the small Montague airport which would be closed for the weekend. Since the airport is less than ¼ mile from the original site, it wasn't much of a change.

We arrived Thursday afternoon, got set up in a spot and met up with our friend. The weather was warm, winds were light and the

air a bit hazy but all in all it was quite pleasant. The rest of the day was spent catching up and walking the runway...don't get too many opportunities for that.

As it started to darken, we heard a small plane circle the airport before it lined up for a landing. Wait! Isn't the airport closed? Once the plane was parked, a lot of heated discussions followed according to the stories the following morning. Both the airport manager and Rotary personnel associated with the camping on the property were livid. The pilot was adamant that she had to get refueled and leave the next morning. There was a lot of doubt that she would be allowed to leave.

Friday morning was a great day for flying. I had not volunteered for any crewing as I seemed to have tweaked my back working the NWAA event in Albany. I don't remember doing anything different than I had for the past 25 years. Oh, maybe that is it. I was able to walk around and just watch as the 12 balloons all got off the field and floated lazily north for a mile or two. After all the balloons had returned

and refueled the airport manager cleared the runway and walked the interloper aircraft onto the runway and sent her on her way. I do not know the end of this story, but I would be amazed if the incursion is not reported to the FAA.

Friday night was the scheduled glow for 4 balloons. We had gone out for the celebratory dinner and returned as the crowd gathered around the balloons as they laid out for the glow. As the time approached for inflation and standup the light wind reversed direction (upwind inflation anyone?) and continued to strengthen. Finally, it was decided to do a candle burn for the crowd which they seemed to appreciate even it somewhat disappointed.

Saturday was again another light wind day, albeit somewhat hazier. This time all the balloons drifted to the south. Three balloons were able to find a box back to the north with two of them making it back to the airport. As I was walking around the field Mark Trujillo asked if I was attached to any balloon or if I could help. Seemed some of his crew hadn't shown up yet. Because I was protecting my back I said I could help if there wouldn't be any lifting/twisting. I was able to help him tab in the top as the rest of the crew showed up and my work was done for the day.

Chris Whitfield had offered to do tethering on the field as an additional fund raiser for the event. He was going up and down a lot, but the line never seemed to get shorter. At one point after going for another cup of coffee I noticed that the propane truck had moved over near *Heaven Bound* and was refilling the tanks. Chris had shut everything down in order to refuel safely, but had kept the balloon upright. Seems that someone toward the back of the line was worried (rightly) that Chris would run out of fuel. Knowing

Continued on page 5

Montague

Continued from page 4

someone at the propane supplier he made a call and got the driver to bring the truck over. As far as I know everyone in the line got a ride. Chris and his crew did a heck of a job...great work.

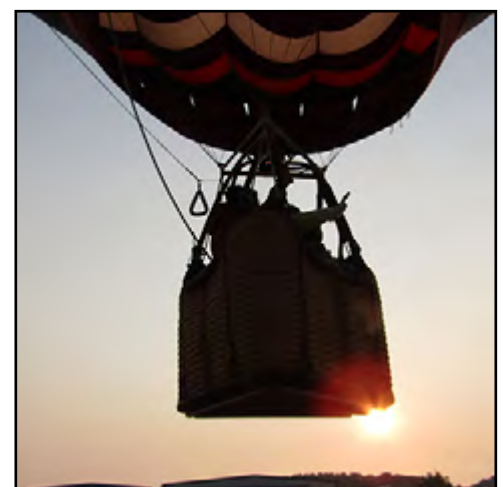
We had tickets for the community dinner Saturday evening so we spent the afternoon relaxing under the awning watching the mountains around us disappear into ever thickening/chewy air. The dinner was a sellout and we enjoyed the food with some of our friends from the California days. I must say that the folks from Montague/Yreka really support their local functions. Besides selling out the dinner, they had a dessert auction with some amazing bidding. The last dessert went for an astounding \$200. Great support for the community. Sorry, I do not know what the dessert was. We did not stay around for the band and dancing so I can't review the band...maybe next time.

The weather Sunday was always going to be questionable, but I got up a balloon o'clock and found we had heavy mist/light rain and very thick air. A check of the air quality on-line showed an AQI of 315! We had planned on spending Sunday in Yreka heading home on Monday. Not wanting to spend the day not being able to breathe, we packed up and headed home as quickly as possible.

My congratulations to the Montague Rotary, other service groups and volunteers for a great event despite all the curve balls sent their way.

Thanks to all.
Alan Brandt

All photos in this article by Linda Brandt



Making Memories

By Shari Gale

Oh, the people we meet and the impact we have. Never underestimate it!

That's the take away I got from the 2023 Great Prosser Balloon Rally. This is one of our favorite events of the year. This year may be more memorable than all the others.

First, this is sadly, the last appearance for pilots Cheryl Isaacs and Laura Hancock. Carmen Blakely won't be back either, but she had to miss this rally due to a broken/repared femur. It just won't seem right to not have Cheryl and Michael, Laura and Bales, and Carmen there next year.

While we missed Carmen greatly, we did benefit from her absence. Our usual loyal crew also had medical challenges of their own, so we highjacked Carmen's crew. What a blessing! Dan, Denise, Mike and Gayle were wonderful helpers.

Friday, we met up with the Miss Prosser Court as usual. We unfortunately could not take them up. The weather was just too unpredictable. The general consensus was to close the field to free flight but encourage pilots to inflate their balloons for a static display. For a Friday, there were a lot of spectators out on the field.



Dale Justice and his crew visited one of the elementary schools in the area. Here's their super cute crew. Photo by Dale Justice.

Five generous pilots and their crew did just that. Tim Gale, Koh Murai, Larry Simburger, Devin White and Sherry White all entertained the grateful crowd.

Dale Justice, Cheryl Isaacs and Laura and Bales went out to local schools to set up their balloons for the students. This has always been very popular with the kids and teachers alike.

The Prosser event is growing each and every year. This year there were even tour buses unloading their passengers early in the morning. The Yakima River was loaded with kayakers who were just waiting for the balloons to dip down into the water. There was also a Corvette owners group who joined the fun. For a small-town with limited hotels/motels and restaurants, this rally just packs in the spectators. The combination of balloon flights in the morning followed by wine tasting in the afternoon seems to be irresistible.

Saturday the field was packed with spectators. We launch fairly close to the entrance of the field, and it was impossible to move around the trailer without saying, "Excuse me, excuse me" with each step. (I wonder how many photos I ruined by walking into the frame at the wrong moment.)

The airport manager, Quintin Wright, approached Tim during the static display on Friday to ask a lot of questions about LTA flying. Saturday, he went up with Tim, along with one of the Port commissioners, Christy Rasmussen.



Since 2007 Tim Gale has been engaging with the Miss Prosser Court members. These two girls represented the 2023 Court.

Quintin was out each morning with lighted wand in hand to help park cars. When his duty was done for Sunday, he came over to ask if he could crew for us. Of course, I gave him an enthusiastic "Yes!" So where did Tim land? Port of Benton property. I asked Quintin permission to land and to drive on the field. That's the easiest "ask" we've had in years.

Quintin sent us an email, along with photos. His last comment was, "It truly was as if I was being introduced to flight all over again!" He wants to join our crew next year. I hope he does.

Another amazing take away from the weekend was our landowner on Saturday. She has cattle, but had moved them out of the field in hopes that balloons would land there. The cows did leave "calling cards" so we were very aware we were walking and working in a cow pasture. While folding up our tarp the landowner actually used her bare hand to scrape off some poo. I'd say she was one of the most accommodating landowners we've ever had... anywhere.

I also learned that in a recent high school program recruiting girls for next year's Miss Prosser Court one of the former court members mentioned getting a balloon ride as

Continued on page 7

Prosser

Continued from page 6

the highlight. It was touching that we left such positive memories for her.

In addition to those interactions, Tim and Jim Churchill our trusted crew member, approached a “random” kayaker in the motel parking lot. They asked if they had gotten any photos of our balloon during the Saturday splash ‘n’ dash. They did. You can see the results on this page. They had a really great time out on the river watching the balloons come down. Tim had been the first one in the water.

Tim and I ended our time in Prosser surrounded by positive vibes. It was, and will continue to be, one of our favorite rallies in the Pacific Northwest.



Stephanie Hughes flew her homebuilt balloon, named “Chairlift One.”



Firenze and Knight-N-Gale were caught kissing in public! (Florence, Italy is actually Firenze, so when these two fly together they are Florence Nightingale.)



Laura and Bales go up for their last flight in their balloon Morning Glory Sunday morning.



Dan Keeton stepped in to help us crew all weekend along with his wife, Denise.



“Some random kayaker,” to use his words, shared this photo with us.



A lot of spectators turn out for this very small town rally.



The Port of Benton hosted our landing site on Sunday. Photo by Quintin Wright.

Photos of the Great Prosser Balloon Rally by Cory Miller



Congratulations, Larry!



Our own Larry Simburger has been elected as the Balloon Federation of America (BFA) Western

Region Director. Larry is currently serving as the Secretary/Treasurer for WAS. His efforts and talents will now be shared with a much wider area. He especially wants to help the BFA Board focus their energies on the most urgent problems facing the LTA community, including pressure from the FAA “concerning Class 2 Medical and Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B), the business of autonomous drones,” which will impact flying near urban areas. Here is a list of Larry’s

achievements in our sport over the years. (Stolen from the BFA website.)

Ballooning Biography:

- 1976 Began crewing
- 1979 First flight in a Hot Air Balloon
- 1983 Private LTA
- 2000 Commercial LTA
- 2002 First flight over Mt. Rainier (Washington state) along with Victor Johnson, 2002 winners of the Montgolfier Diploma.
- 2003 Flight over the Cascade Mountains from Sultan, Washington to George Washington; duration 3 hours, distance 80 miles, max altitude 8200 msl, max ground speed 90 mph.
- 2005 Removed limitation of Air

Borne Heater

- 2011-2013 Co-Owner and operator of a Hot Air Balloon Ride business in Eastern Washington (focusing on Prosser and Walla Walla, WA)
- 2018 Received City of Arlington Mayor’s Volunteer Award for the many hours of volunteer service as Hot Air Balloon Director for the Arlington, WA Fly-In
- 2022 accepted as the Lighter Than Air FAAST Representative for the Seattle, Washington region.
- Over the years have contributed, as a speaker for various local Safety Seminars, Balloon Meister, and Weather and Safety Officers.

We are confident that Larry will be a wonderful advocate for ballooning.

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 no later than Tuesday, December 5, 2023 in order to be considered.

If you are looking at selling your older, **AIRWORTHY**, system (a 90 or smaller), please contact Jack Loflin first (loflinj@gmail.com).

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

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:

Several WAS members took off together at The Great Prosser Balloon Rally during the last weekend of September. Photo by Shari Gale.

Waiver

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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.