



AeroStats

May 2024

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

Volume 26, Number 5



*Join us for the
May WAS meeting!*

*Saturday,
May 18, 2024
2:00 PM*

*The Loflin's Home
35392 Gore Drive, Albany, Oregon*

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2024 WAS Officers

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Activities Director:

Open

Web Master:

Jack Loflin

email: webmaster@wasballoon.org

Officers:

email: officers@wasballoon.org



Greetings from the President

Thank you to everyone who attended the meeting on April 27th. We accomplished a lot in the meeting, so I thank all of you for sitting through it!

We have updated the bylaws based on the voting that took place at the meeting. Here is a short summary of the biggest changes we made.

1. Family memberships are now \$30. We will be enforcing the bylaws regarding family memberships on a go-forward basis. Family memberships include the applicant, plus 3 family members all in the same household. The single memberships remain \$20.

2. We will no longer offer the non-resident, out of area membership. We haven't had

anyone with this membership for a long time and the club has members all over the northwest, so it makes sense to remove it.

3. We are going to commemorate all of our Charter members. This will no longer be a separate membership choice on the annual renewals, but we have record of all of you who were Charter members.

In addition to the bylaw changes, we also agreed to use \$1,000 of our coffers to help fund scholarships for the area balloon camps in Boise and in Reno. I will be working with Karalyn Mumm and Ron Cassidy to figure out how those funds will make their way to the most enthusiastic student pilots that will be attending those camps this summer.

As soon as a plan is in place, I will email the membership and let you all know what we will be doing.

If you have meeting topics you want to discuss or have presentation ideas to offer, please feel free to send them to me! I'm still looking for things to fill the agendas with.

Finally, now that the weather is finally getting better, I wish everyone a very fun and very safe summer flying the skies! Please bring your stories to our meetings and gatherings. Feel free to send me your stories and photos so we can share them in the newsletters.

*See you at the next meeting,
May 18th, 2pm at my house!*

Sallie



Spring Into The Flying Season Join WAS Today

Either print out the application on page 11 and mail a check to the club treasurer or join using the handy application on line at <https://wasballoon.org/membership/>



Willamette Aerostat Society

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

WAS April 27, 2024 Meeting

<https://wasballoon.org/>

1. Call to Order: 2:03pm

2. Approval of Minutes (February 17, 2024 – in March newsletter): M/S/C*

3. Treasurer's Report - \$2,826.63

- a. Tim Gale presented a check to WAS for \$602.92, the proceeds of the safety seminar

4. Correspondence

- a. Shari Gale received a letter from Sandy Grove, who has moved from Salem to Texas
 - i. Sandy would like a ride or a tethered ride during the Albany festival, she has previously sent correspondence with the same request
 - 1. Rides are up to Chris

5. News, Regulatory

6. Upcoming Events

- a. Membership meetings
 - i. May 18 at 2pm at Loflin's home
 - 1. Devin not be attending and will need to present another time
 - ii. June 29th meeting at Newberg
- 1. Discuss Summer BBQ and other gatherings
- b. August 10: Chris is reviving Rock of Ages/Valley View Rally in McMinnville. He will be tethering, but other interested pilots are welcome to join him and fly if they so desire.
- c. Reminder to get pilot applications in for the Tigard Festival of Balloons
- d. Reminder to turn in the surveys sent by BFA re Spring 2025 convention in Dayton, OH

7. Old and New Business

- a. Donations to BFA for balloon camps
 - i. WAS will donate \$1,000 directly to the BFA for the BFA Youth Summer Camp Programs: M/S/C*
 - ii. Note Larry Simburger sits on the BFA Board; Sallie Loflin will review financial statements and attend monthly Board meetings
- b. Review and vote on Bylaw changes
 - i. All changes proposed were accepted (noted in redlined Bylaws)
 - ii. New Treasurer duty (September report to Oregon)
- c. Annual Awards
 - i. Crew of the Year: Penny Mehlhorn
 - ii. Aeronaut of the Year: Sallie Loflin
- d. Chris Whitfield's new balloon build
 - i. PowerPoint with 80 slides to present in 30 minutes: done in 35 minutes!

8. Adjourned at 3:35pm

*M/S/C = motion, second, carried

Volunteer Needed
Please offer to lead a discussion at the May 18th WAS meeting. You can pick your own topic. Suggestions on page 5.
Contact: prez@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.

May 10-12, 2024
Walla Walla Balloon Stampede
Walla Walla, Washington
by invitation only
Contact: Laurie Spencer
laurie@scottspencer.net

Saturday, May 18, 2024, 2:00 PM
WAS Meeting
Loflin's Albany Home
35392 Gore Drive, Albany, Oregon

May 17-19, 2024
Winnemucca Balloon Festival
Winnemucca, Nevada

June 18-23, 2024
2024 BFA Youth Camp
Cordele, Georgia

June 21-23, 2024
Tigard Festival of Balloons
Tigard, Oregon
Contact: Kristin Romelhardt
kristin@murcoproductions.com

June 22-23, 2024
Kongregation of Balloons
Pendleton, Oregon
Contact: Mandy Johnson
kindaducky@gmail.com

Saturday, June 29, 2024, 2:00 PM
WAS Meeting
Nut Tree Ranch Activity Building
2902 E. 2nd Street,
Newberg, Oregon

July 4-7, 2024
The Teton Valley Balloon Rally
Driggs, Idaho
www.tetonvalleyballoonrally.com

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://balloonsoverbend.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

Congratulations Sallie & Penny!

Sallie Loflin was named Aeronaut of the Year. She was nominated by Shari Gale for her work as president of WAS.

Penny Mehlhorn was named Crew Person of the year. She was nominated by Chris Whitfield. Penny has been loyal, dependable crew for Chris for years, and if he's not flying she readily volunteers her efforts to other local pilots.

Both women have truly earned this award. Our ballooning community is better thanks to their efforts.



Volunteers Needed — Pick Your Topic!

A volunteer is needed to spearhead a discussion topic at the May 18th meeting as well as future meetings. The discussion does not need to be long. It doesn't need to be an involved PowerPoint presentation like Chris Whitfield shared at the last meeting. It can just be a few opening remarks that will get a discussion going within the group.

Listed below are some topic ideas Jack Loflin suggested a while ago. If you want to volunteer to help make our meetings even better than they already are, please contact our club president, Sallie Loflin, prez@wasballoon.org

Topic Ideas:

- How my recent check ride went
- Things I like/don't like about my balloon system
- Things I like/don't like about my trailer setup
- It was all going well, until....
- I learned a lot when....
- Things I wish my instructor would have told me...
- I went to xxx balloon rally and saw yyy which I thought was really cool/scary/interesting
- Flying my R/C Balloon
- Building my own balloon envelope (R/C or full scale)
- Unusual things that happened during my annual inspection
- How my biannual flight review went
- Things that are helpful/not helpful from pilots when crewing for a new pilot
- Things I pay attention to when crewing / Things people should pay attention to when crewing
- Different balloon competitions and how to fly them
- Flying dawn patrol
- Flying long flights (over the cascades, etc.)
- Different methods of managing crew/pilots/chase coordination - advantages/disadvantages - useful mobile apps, etc.
- Landowner relations/stories/ good/bad ways to handle things that come up
- Landing site selection, powerline avoidance, etc.
- Launch selection, navigation
- Weather interpretation/sourcing
- Things I see in annual inspections that are problematic/ good/annoying/etc.
- My path to private pilot went like....
- This is how I provide instruction to someone for their private rating
- Things required to start a ride business



On the last day of March Cheryl Isaacs (left), Joe Mollahan, our local FAA Safety Team Program Manager (center) and Norma Ashley (right) set up Dale Justice's balloon in order to get three pilots current before the new flying season begins. Joe has expressed an interest in learning more about our lighter than air world. He could not have found better tutors.

Not All Competition Was Serious

by Shari Gale

The Pacific Northwest ballooning community has never been a hotbed for serious competition flying. Maybe this goes back to the early days of flying around here. We enjoyed more than one event that included non-traditional competitions that were set up purely for fun.

Gliders vs Moving Targets:

Years ago, probably back in the 80's, Brick Morgan devised a competition that embodied his sense of fun. (He always had a sparkle in his eye.) He bought balsa wood glider kits and then laboriously painted them to match the color scheme of each balloon that would be flying in a local gathering. He then painted a target on the roof of his brown Chevy van using yellow paint. His wife, Joyce, then drove the van around on the winding country roads, positioning herself up wind of on-coming balloons. She'd then park the van and see if anyone could get his glider to land on the target. She'd then move it again to offer other pilots a chance to hit the target. I have no memory of the outcome of this contest. I do know that Tim did not throw his glider. We had it kicking around the house for years and years afterwards. It always made me smile whenever I ran across it.

Create Your Own Marker:

Also back in the 80's Charlie Sundquist, during the Balloons Over Boise event told pilots they had to create their own markers. He would then judge the creativity of the markers. It didn't matter how close they got to the center of the target.

They just needed to be close enough the scoring judges could find them. The most creative marker would be declared the winner. Someone dropped a remote-controlled car using a small parachute. His passenger then tried to drive the car to the center of the target, but it got high centered on a clump of grass. Eddie Clements, of Colorado, took a diaper, filled it with peanut butter and used that as a marker. Someone else, dropped a can of Bud Light using a small parachute. At that time the beer company was using an advertising slogan of "This Bud's for You." The pilot put a sign on the can of beer that said, "This bribe is for you." As creative as those markers were no one came close to the winner. It was a pilot who had a prosthetic leg. He always traveled with a spare leg. He threw that spare at the target. Can you imagine the judges as they watched an actual leg coming down towards the target? No one disputed he was the winner!

Phone Number Poker:

At the long-gone McMinnville Turkey Rama rally the pilots were asked to get landowner phone numbers. The numbers were then converted to poker hands. The number one was an ace. A zero was a king. The best poker hand would win. Tim was flying over a house when a sweet young thing came out to see what that strange noise was – it was the burner, of course. She was wearing a short night shirt and slippers. When Tim called down to her and asked her number, she was busy pulling down the sides of her night shirt and refused to give it to him. He had no time to explain why he wanted her number.

Tumbleweed Drop:

There again, back in the 80's, the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta had a for-fun-only competition where pilots would launch off the field with a tumbleweed tied to their baskets and then drop it on a target. Of course, the bigger the tumble weed, the greater the bragging rights. One year there had been a lot of rain right before the fiesta. The tumble weeds were heavy and huge that year. Some of those tumbleweeds were as big as the basket! If I'm right, that was the last year of that competition. It did not go well.

Tube Sock Markers:

Speaking of markers that were questionable from the start, many years ago in the little town of Burns, Oregon the local committee was asked to supply markers for a competition flight. Someone came up with the idea of filling athletic tube socks with dry dog food. They filled them up as far as they could go. The markers ended up being very large and very, very heavy. The pilots quickly decided they might cause a concussion if they hit someone on the head. I don't remember that anyone actually threw one of them.

Bowling For Porta-Potties:

In more recent times, Scott Spencer came up with the idea of setting up a V-shaped formation of empty porta-potties in an area of the park away from the launch field during the Spirit of Boise Rally. The potties were decorated with the logos of all the radio stations owned by one of the major rally sponsors.

Fun Competition

Continued from page 7

The idea was to hit the side of the porta-pottie with the balloon basket in order to knock the pottie over. Tim actually did it one year. He said it was harder than it sounded. He had to hit the box square on. Otherwise, he just would bounce off.

Competition Trophies:

Back in the 80's a local fast-food restaurant, Big Al's, in Medford sponsored a competition. I don't remember what the competition rules were; I don't remember if there was a cash prize; but I vividly remember the trophy. The employees took fast-food containers

and made a rather tall, creative structure of Styrofoam boxes and plastic forks and spoons. It was hideous and glorious all at the same time.

I've enjoyed my journey down this particular memory lane. I hope you have, too.

Explore the WAS Website

Hey! Have you taken the time to really look at the WAS website? Jack Loffin, our web master, has been doing an excellent job of adding content. You might want to take some time to explore beyond the home page.

Members Only

You will need the password to get into the Members Only tab. Once you get in you'll find the current and past issues of the newsletter. The past issues go all the way back to 2010.

Under Instructor Resources you will find a step-by-step guide for students and instructors to use to ultimately obtain a private pilot certificate with a lighter-than-air hot air balloon rating; links to study guides; a video giving instructions on how to apply online for student pilot certificate; a list of necessary instruction needed before the student can solo; a link to a pre-solo written test example; wording for the required solo endorsements; guidelines for solo experience; check ride preparation list; links and a video to walk the student through the written test scheduling; guidelines for the instructor's endorsement for the check ride; and more.

All the PowerPoint presentation slides for the 2024 Safety Seminar can also be found in the Members

Only tab.

Last, but far from least, is a green zone map for our local area. It was just updated at the end of March. Future updates will be coming regularly – especially if club members send happy landowner information to Jack at webmaster@wasballoon.org

Membership

You will find a handy membership application under this tab. Tell your friends about it.

Pilot/Crew Info

Under a General heading you will find a downloadable Word document titled "Ground and Crew Safety." It covers everything on what to wear, to lifting, to operating the fan and all other crew positions, to crew safety once the balloon is upright, chasing, and to landing/recovery.

There are two red zone maps in this section. One is for the area near the Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm. The other is a KMZ map that is usable with Google Earth. Both these maps were updated in March.

Events

There is a list of upcoming hot air balloon events. You can just click on the name of the event to get more

information such as the name and email information for the organizer, the location of the rally, and more. It's very handy.

Resources

The Resources tab is divided into four sections: Learn to Crew; Learn to Fly; External Links and Educational Outreach

FAQs

There are 21 commonly asked questions listed here. Each one has a well thought out answer. This section is mostly in place for people who are just starting to explore our sport.

About

Finally, there is a tab for information about WAS. There are links to the current Executive Committee, the mission statement, and a few short disclaimers.

Please take some time and explore this great website. If you have information to add or suggestions on other things that can be added, please contact Jack. webmaster@wasballoon.org

Balloon Building 101 (or 105)

By Shari Gale (Title blantly stolen from Chris Whitfield)



Chris Whitfield gave an interesting presentation at the April WAS meeting on building his new 105,000 cubic foot envelope. To create your own balloon envelope you need to determine what size of balloon you want, how many panels and gores it will have, choose the colors and the design, and then order the fabric. Chris did all this, but in reverse order. When he learned the fabric he prefers was being discontinued, he ordered some right away.

Chris used the Balloon Gore Layout guide from the Balloon Builders Journal, written and published by our own Bob LeDoux.

On December 5, 2023 he cut the first of 360 panels. By the time he was done cutting the panels on December 29 he had logged 70 hours.

Then came the task of sewing all the panels into gores. He started at the bottom, piecing together 15 panels in each gore. He started on December 31 and completed the last gore on February 5. During that process, Chris was meticulous in making sure he was following the layout guide precisely. He logged a total of 80 hours during this building phase.

At this point, Chris needed to create the N number and a sign saying Experimental to be attached to the envelope. Chris and Lisa bought a Cricut cutter. What the bleep is that? It's a cartridge-

based electronic machine designed to cut out letters or shapes. There is no need to use stencils these days. The machine made creating the numbers and letters easier, Chris still had to attach the individual letters and numbers to a fabric panel by using silicon adhesive to hold them in place. Then in order to make sure they stayed in place, he had to sew around each cutout. Finally, he sewed the special panels to the gores. Time involved? That took another 15 hours.

Now that all the gores were finished, it was time to sew the gores together, adding load tapes at the same time. The envelope at this point is being put together inside out. Twenty-four gores is a lot of gores. The pile of fabric "just grows and grows." On March 8 Chris stated on a Facebook post, "Finally, the entire main balloon, all 360 panels, is all in one piece, as I just finished sewing the last

gore on. However, now comes the hardest part of the whole project. Finding the first gore and the last gore in that mess, and getting them lined up to sew the balloon into a circle. If I'm not careful, I could sew the balloon into a Mobius strip! Or permanently attached to the sewing machine!"

By the time the gores were sewn together, another 60 hours of labor was added to the total.

Done? No. There was a giant hole at the top. Chris needed to build the parachute top. He had 48 pie shaped panels to cut along with the round top cap, and create the girdle, attach points and the Velcro. Time? Another 30 hours.

Done? No. Now all the miscellaneous "stuff" had to be dealt with. Chris had to sew on the horizontal load tapes, the top and bottom girdle, the Velcro, parachute attachments, attach an identification plate, and a whole lot more. All the "little stuff" took another 60 hours to complete. He was done with this phase by April 2.

Now he was done. Right? No.



Continued on page 10

Balloon Building

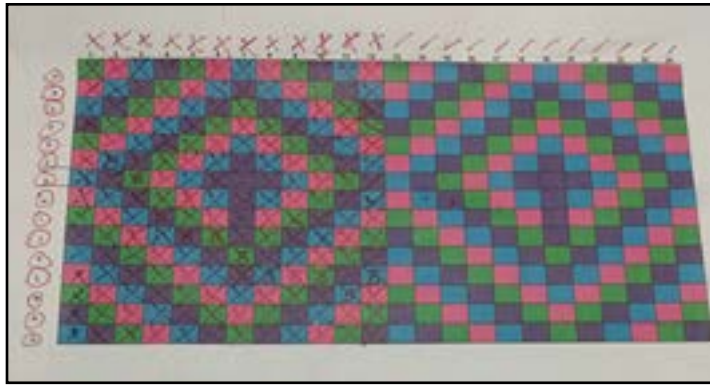
Continued from page 9

Chris needed to make the envelope's Nomex skirt. He had to cut fabric, sew it, make connection points, make a border sleeve for the band, add toggle loops, insert the band, and then finally attach the skirt to the envelope. The skirt took 25 hours to complete.

On April 20 it was time to stand this 105 up for the first time. However, there was one big task left. The envelope was sewn inside out. Remember? Luckily, Chris has a lot of loyal and enthusiastic helpers willing to take on even a job like turning a 105 cubic foot envelope right side out. Once that was done, they needed to attach the parachute top, the red line, and the crown line. Finally, Chris got to inflate his new "baby" to "make sure it is in the shape of a balloon." This final stage took 2 hours, but the excitement level made it seem a lot shorter than that.

The entire project took a total of 340 hours over a span of four months. It was an exhausting project to undertake, but it was extremely satisfying as well. Oh, and he saved a lot of money in building his own balloon.

Everyone thanked Chris for putting in even more time to create an entertaining PowerPoint.



Here's the matrix that helped Chris Whitfield keep every panel in the correct location. He would mark them off as he sewed the gores together.



Organizing the panels before they are sewn into gores.



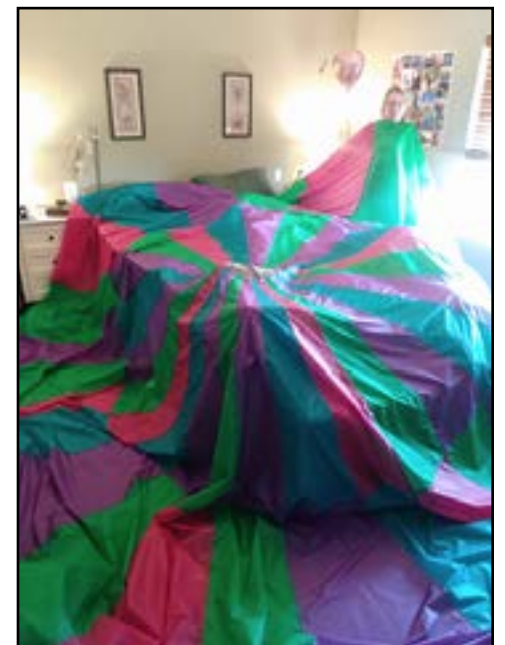
The name plate.



Cutting the panels.



Towards the end of the project the pile of fabric on the floor became massive.



Here's the parachute top. Even it dwarfed the sewing room.

Congratulations, Jessica & Ryan Geib! Welcome Brendan!

On March 7th at 4:04 AM, WAS members, Jessica and Ryan Geib welcomed their son, **Brendan Matthew Geib** into their family.

He is now almost two months old and has already been introduced to ballooning on a recent outing in Prosser, Washington. Word has it that Brendan will be accompanying his parents at the Tigard Festival of Balloons. It will be a treat to meet him on the launch field.



Photo from Jessica's Facebook page.



Photo by Mandy Johnson

More Balloon Building Photos



Turning the envelope inside out was no easy task. The first inflation was a lot of work.



Attaching the parachute top had to be done while the envelope was cold inflated.



Introducing Heaven Bound Too.

All photos were stolen with permission from Chris Whitfield's Facebook page, except the first photo of Chris making his presentation at the April WAS meeting. Shari Gale took that photo.

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:

April 20, 2024 Chris Whitfield, his wife, Lisa, and his friends inflated Heaven Bound Too for the first time. Chris spent hours building this 105.

Photo by Penny Mehlhorn.

Waiver

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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.