

Midwest Safety
Seminar –
February 19,
2005
Madison, WI

Holiday Inn
West



Fall WBG Awards Banquet – Celebrating the Year Ken Walter

The Awards Banquet went very well. There were about 45 people in attendance. Georgene again put on a great event. The Thunder Bay Grille was a very good choice, the food was outstanding and the ambiance in the "Fishing Room" was second to none. There was even entertainment in the main bar area, although I'm not sure if many people stayed because many of us had a flown that Saturday morning and were planning a flight for Sunday morning.

Gary Britton graciously provided the program for the evening. He spoke and showed a 20-minute slide presentation from his trip to Australia for the World Hot Air Balloon Championship as one of the Jury Members. It was very informative and he had some great pictures. I was personally quite surprised of the duties for a Jury Member at an International event.

We also gave out the Landowner Awards as well as the Championships, Pilot and Crew of the Year awards.

The winning landowner was entered by Herb Kohlmann of Kansasville, WI. For having his landowner drawn, Herb receives a free year membership to the WBG as well as \$50.00. All the landowners will receive their letters and the winners will receive their checks in the spring of '05.

For the second year in a row the Wisconsin Championship Series awards went to the same top competitors.

Gary Britton -- Points Champion
Ron Nollen -- First runner up
Dave Lowe -- Second Runner up

A panel of judges including Glen Moyer, BFA Publications Editor, Andy Baird of Cameron Balloons and Tamara Hoffbauer, owner of "In The Air" Balloonists supply catalog chose this years recipients based on the following criteria.

Pilot of the Year - To the WBG pilot member who has made an outstanding contribution to the sport of hot air ballooning, whose extraordinary dedication has benefited the hot air ballooning community in Wisconsin, and whose actions and efforts are not otherwise widely or publicly recognized.

Crew of the Year - To the WBG crewmember who has contributed significantly to hot air ballooning through activities such as crew member, observer, scorer, event volunteer, committee member, and general goodwill ambassador to the community. The award is to the "unsung hero" who has gone the extra mile to promote, expand, and support the sport of ballooning. Nominations accepted by any WBG member.

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**Advertise your business in *The Ventline* and support
The Wisconsin Balloon Group**

Classified Ads - \$10.00 (members free)

Business Card Size Ads - \$7.50

¼ Page Ad - \$10.00

½ Page Ad - \$15.00

Full Page Ad - \$25.00

Upcoming Dates.....

February 19, 2005

July 22-24, 2005

August 12-14, 2005

Midwest Safety Seminar, Madison, WI

**Skyfest Balloon Rally; Waukesha, WI (contact Ken Walter at
Wiwinddancer@cs.com)**

**Hartford Balloon Rally; Hartford, WI (contact Ken Walter at
Wiwinddancer@cs.com)**

**To add your event to this calendar, please contact editor Chris Fitzsimmons at
fitzsimmons@charter.net or call him 608-437-7044.**

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Madison West Holiday Inn

**Additional Information in the November/December
Issue of *The Ventline***

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The Pilot of the Year award was awarded to Peggy Wolfe.

The following nomination was submitted:

Peggy always promotes all the positive stuff about ballooning. As a long time balloonist in Colorado and in Wisconsin, she is an instructor. She provides balloon rides mostly for donations for fundraisers. She single-handedly took over a first year event on the brink of early extinction and created a multiyear event that continues to grow every year. Most recently over the past few years, she has been on staff of National level events. She is a great ambassador to our sport as a balloon pilot and volunteer.

The Crew of the Year award was awarded to Dan Lorenz.

The following nomination was submitted:

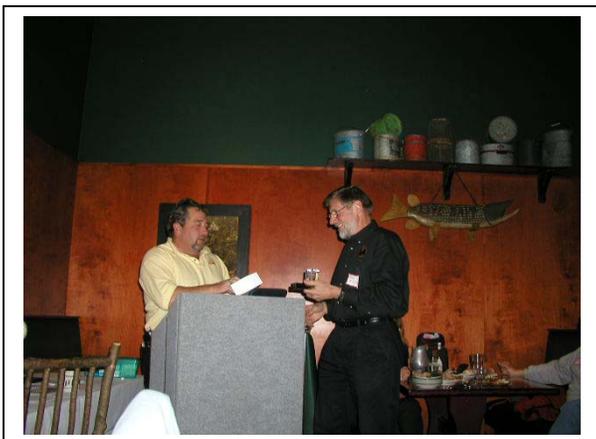
Dan has been crewing for over 15 years. He took to ballooning like a duck to water immediately.

As crew chief for most of those 15 years, Dan knows the balloon system as well as any pilot and can always be counted on to have everything set up in a quick and efficient manner. Dan has become a staple at balloon events throughout WI. During the last ten years, Dan has been the propane "master" at over 80% of the WI balloon rallies. Out of his own pocket, with little reimbursement, he created a manifold system for refueling that is second to none throughout the Midwest. In addition to his crewing ability and propane refueling expertise, there are few pilots in the area that he hasn't been helped out at one time or another.

At one rally, a pilot's trailer main frame was found to have a serious crack. Forgoing a nap, Dan took the trailer and re-welded the frame to better than new. At a different rally, another pilot lost the platform that the balloon rode on. Dan emptied his own trailer for the pilot to use and then fabricated a new platform from just his memory of what the lost one looked like. At another event, an observer fell and received a substantial cut. Dan, also a volunteer firefighter, dropped whatever he was doing, carried the woman to his truck and rushed her to the hospital, and was back in time to refuel the balloons after the flight.

These are only a couple of examples of how Dan has touched the lives of so very many WI balloonists.

The Mid-Winter Post Holiday Dinner is being planned for January or early February. With having the Midwest Safety Seminar planned for the weekend of February 19th, the idea was kicked around about having the Dinner held in conjunction with the Safety Seminar. Your comments and ideas are welcome about this meeting. Please contact Georgene Voutila at jdieball@wi.rr.com.



THINK ABOUT THIS

T.A.F. Sheppard

All of us, sometime during our ballooning careers, carry paying passengers. We carry them for various reasons ranging from covering our ballooning expenses to supplementing our income to making our living doing it. In some areas of the country we can fly regularly all year whereas in others, like Wisconsin, we are somewhat limited by the weather.

The information in this story is taken from an NTSB report and is brought to you to remind you that this can be a dangerous activity if common sense and good safety practices do not prevail.

This is the story of an accident, that took place on May 9, 1999, with a hot air balloon, carrying two paying passengers, that contacted 21,000 volt power lines on take-off, caught fire and crashed into a field. The two passengers died and the pilot was seriously burned.

The pilot was issued his student pilot certificate in March 1992, it was limited to free balloons only. On September 2nd the same year he soloed. Upon completion of the balloon school's course of instruction he was issued a Commercial Pilot Certificate on September 8, 1992. When the certificate was issued his total flight time was 19.6 hours.

This included 14.1 hours of dual and 5.5 hours solo.

The accident balloon was an Aerostar RX-8 manufactured in 1994 with a standard airworthiness certificate. It had dual Aerostar, HP1111 burners having a rated power of 15,000 BTU per hour per burner and a model RWS-454 wicker basket. It was sold to the current registered owner in November 1994.

In February 1997 a new basket, serial number RWS-442 and two fuel tanks, serial numbers V853 and V843, were added to the envelope. The envelope was designed with a parachute top. Pulling on the deflation line allows for rapid discharge of hot air.

The logbook showed that an annual inspection was performed on May 19, 1998; there was a total time of 75.50 hours at that time. No subsequent evidence of any maintenance was observed in the logbook. The last flight listed in the logbook is dated April 25, 1999. On that date, the balloon envelope's recorded total time was 89.40 hours. The basket's total time was approximately 289 hours.

The FAA Approved Flight Manual (AFM) for this balloon states "All time during which the balloon is inflated and buoyant/upright must be recorded in the envelope logbook."

An examination of the balloon's logbook indicated, that at the time of the accident flight, the balloon had been operated for 13:50 hrs since its last inspection. In particular, between February 15, and April 25, 1999, the balloon had been operated for a total of 9:20 hours during eight flights, according to its logbook record. No record was observed in the balloon's logbook for the pilot's two, one hour-long flights in the balloon on March 9 and 16.

The AFM contains a listing of items that must be carried on board during flight. In pertinent part, the equipment list states that "helmets for all occupants" must be carried as required equipment. When the Safety Board Investigator interviewed the Operator and inquired if helmets were available for use by the occupants in the accident balloon, the operator stated that his company had helmets, but that they were kept "in the office" and were not used.

The balloon records indicate that upon delivery, the balloon was equipped with two, 15-gallon vertical stainless steel propane storage fuel, serial numbers V868 and V880.tanks. This was confirmed by Aerostar personnel. Aerostar reported that its tanks are especially manufactured by the company for use in its hot air balloons.

According to the Type Certificate, the accident balloon's fuel capacity was limited to two or three or four V-10 (10 gallon capacity) or V-15 (15 gallon capacity) vertical tanks. No authorization was issued for utilizing a combination of both 10 and 15-gallon tanks in the basket. In February 1997 two new stainless steel fuel tanks (serial # V853 and V843) were installed to replace the original tanks.

The pilot reported that prior to the day on which the accident occurred, he had placed the extra 10-gallon aluminum fuel tank in the basket. The pilot stated that the balloon's owner had informed him that it was permissible to use the extra fuel tank in the balloon. No evidence of a Major Alteration and Repair, FAA Form 337, or other logbook entry was found for the addition of the third fuel tank in the balloon's basket. No weight and balance amendment was found for its added weight.

The weather at the closest aviation weather observation station to the accident site (which is about 15 miles away) was reporting its surface wind was 310 degrees at 5 knots at 0745. According to the operator, balloon pilots flying in the area frequently obtain their local winds from a "Weather Robot" which is located approximately 2.5 miles away. The data is automatically downloaded for retrieval via telephone. The operator reported that following the accident he contacted the robot by telephone and he made a written record of its wind history information. Between 0735 and 0750, the wind was from the north at 5 mph, with 9 mph gusts.

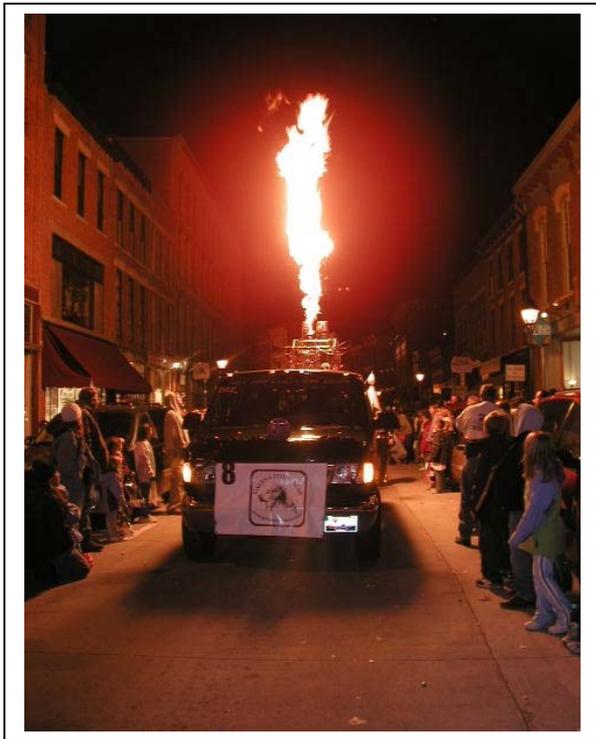
The ground crewmember and the pilot reported that upon arrival at the launch site field the surface wind was calm. The ground crewmember stated that no pibals were utilized at the site to determine the wind velocity aloft. The pilot reported that he was uncertain whether a pibal had been launched; however, he recalled throwing a wad of dirt and grass into the air. The wind was initially calm. Minutes later, during the envelope inflation process, the wind speed increased. The envelope started rolling from side to side and the pilot entered the basket. By the time the passengers entered the basket, the balloon was being dragged by the wind over the ground. The ground crewmember indicated that because of the wind, during the takeoff and initial climb, the balloon ascended diagonally.

According to the operator and the pilot's sole ground crewmember, the pilot did not have a communication transceiver with him in the balloon. The ground crewmember indicated that he had no method of communicating with the pilot during the planned flight.

From an examination of the accident site and balloon wreckage, and from witness statements, the balloon was found to have collided with energized power lines. The elevation of the grass field from which the takeoff commenced is about 400 feet MSL.

The launch site field's total size is about 922 feet long by 368 feet wide. The field's usable size is about 798 feet long by 368 feet wide, with the long axis of the field oriented approximately parallel to the balloon's easterly flight path. Based on physical evidence in the field and the ground crewmember's statements, the balloon was setup for takeoff about 298 feet upwind (west) of the power lines. The ground scar evidence was consistent with the size of the basket throughout its ground travel (drag length) over an approximate 84-foot long distance (at which point the basket became airborne). The ground scar ended about 214 feet upwind (west) of the power lines.

Fall Ballooning Picture Including Albuquerque and the Halloween Rally in Galena, Illinois.....





From The Directors Desk

Wisconsin Balloon Group Director – Ken Walter

This time of year also brings about lots of change. Changing of the colors from green to red and amber and then to no color at all. Before we know it, it will be snowing again. Isn't Wisconsin great? Well, maybe not always but it is home.

More changes include the changing of the guard in the WBG leadership members. Soon you may be notified to call to serve the WBG. The nominating committee is currently searching out members who are willing to step up and lead the organization. The Executive Director, Membership Coordinator and the Ventline editor positions will be changing by next spring.

Another event is just around the corner as well. Planning is well underway for the Midwest Safety Seminar. This year's seminar will be held in Madison on the weekend of February 19th, so mark your calendars now. We are working on a great lineup of speakers and topics. If you are interested in helping the planning committee, feel free to contact myself, Chris Fitzsimmons or Jeff Trzebiatowski.

Remember this is YOUR Wisconsin Balloon Group. Each member is a vital part of making our group successful. Volunteer, help out and get involved.

Ken

Wisconsin Balloon Group – Membership Application

() Renewal () New Member

- ___ Pilot - \$20.00
- ___ Crew - \$15.00
- ___ Family – add \$10.00 (one newsletter/household)
- ___ Business/Corporate Member – add \$50.00
- ___ Life Membership - \$200.00

Street Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
E-Mail address: _____
Home Phone: _____ **Business Phone:** _____

[] Please check box if you would like your information withheld from a printed membership roster.

BFA Member Yes / No Membership # _____
NABA Member Yes / No Membership # _____

Please complete all appropriate information

[] Pilot	[] Crew	[] Observer
Student () Private () Commercial () [] Sport [] Competition [] Ride / Promo [] Instruction (will take new students) BFA Pilot Achievement level: _____ Balloon Owner N# _____	Primary Pilot you crew for: _____ - _____ - _____ BFA Crew Achievement level: _____	BFA Observer Achievement level: _____ _____

Please mark any areas you would consider volunteering for based on specific needs of the WBG:

- [] *Ventline Reporter* [] **Special Events** [] **Social events**
 [] **Membership** [] **Land Owner Relations / Drawing**

Mail Application to:
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Wisconsin balloonists dedicated to safety and education in the sport of ballooning, who encourage communications and fellowship among the ballooning community

The Ventline (A publication of the Wisconsin Balloon Group)
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The Ventline

September - October 2004

The Ventline is the official newsletter of the Wisconsin Balloon Group.

The Ventline welcomes the sharing of its contents when permission to reprint is sought and WBG authorship is acknowledged.

The deadline for the next issue of *The Ventline* is **December 10, 2004**.

WBG MAILING LIST POLICY

By policy, the Wisconsin Balloon Group will not publish the names and addresses of its members. If an officer of another established balloon group requests the WBG's mailing list for safety seminar use, mailing labels will be provided. However, any other persons requesting mailing lists will be encouraged to place their information in *The Ventline*.