



AeroStats

December 2014

**The Monthly Newsletter of the
Willamette Aerostat Society
Volume 16, Number 12**

WAS President's Letter



We're at the end of another year and it's time to consider club leadership. I came in at the beginning of 2012 with Koh and Les. We've gotten some things done and I

hope the members agree with our tenor and direction. That said, the same leadership in any organization over too long a period leads to complacency and loss of interest within the membership. A change is healthy and brings in new approaches and a fresh attitude. Change is good for us.

As for the duties of the office, they have not been very taxing. Showing up is important, as is communication with the board and membership. The newsletter has filled much of the dissemination needs within the membership. Occasional emails to the membership have served for solicitation of group opinions. With the changes agreed to in the by-laws last year, the club is managed through an executive board. I've had the pleasure of sharing the position on the board with Les and Koh. Needless to say, the newsletter has been a pleasure as well, thank you Shari.

Decisions have been run through the board before any dispersal of funds. There is also a bit of writing needed, such as President's letters, such as this and agendas for the meetings. Since we've gone to off-season meetings only, the agendas have been less challenging. Most of the challenge is coming up with topics. Many times, the group offers a good path for discussion so the meeting is more of moderation for

the topic du jour. I have had multiple topics ready for some meetings and left the second untouched. There are also a few minor issues such as rules of order to navigate.

Leslie as Secretary/Treasurer has done well with her duties as Secretary Treasurer, which include writing up meeting minutes, banking, collection of dues, and keeping us honest in the adherence of the procedures prescribed by state law. Thank you, Les.

Koh as Vice President has helped with decisions and being available as a back up for meetings. In a few meetings, he's been able to work with hands-on such as the famous bowline exercise. Thank you, Koh.

All in all, once the initial wrin-

kles were smoothed out, the rest has been fairly easy.

Now, the pitch: Clubs need officers to set the stage and keep life on track. The executive structure has proved to be effective as long as we communicate with the membership. I'm willing to run through 2015, presuming I get re-elected. Les and Koh have had enough and want to pass the honor on to others. After 2015, we'll need another change. Without a fresh candidate at the end of 2015, we'll need to ask ourselves if we as WAS have a future or are willing to pass from neglect. I hope I see a hand up to run.

*Gentle Breezes,
Tim Gale, WAS Prez*

Remember:

- 1.) *Make a nomination for Aeronaut of the Year and/or Crew Person of the Year (see page 6)*
- 2.) *Vote for the 2015 Executive Committee Members (see page 4)*
- 3.) *Come to the WAS Christmas Party (see page 5)*

2014 WAS Officers

President

Tim Gale

Vice President

Koh Murai

Secretary / Treasurer

Leslie Berning

Community Relations

Jim Smith

Newsletter Editor

Shari Gale

Past President

Mark Trujillo

Activities Directors

Pasha & Justin Luber

FAA Liaison

Mark Trujillo & Jim Smith

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

Willamette Aerostat Society General Meeting Saturday November 8, 2014, 10:00 a.m. SLE FAO

In attendance: Tim Gale, President; Leslie Berning, Secretary, Treasurer; 14 WAS members, and one guest.

10:03 call to order by Tim G

Minutes Approval

October 2014 General Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously as published in November 2014 *Aerostats* by members present.

Treasurer's report – Leslie B

\$1,279.33 balance as of 10/11/14
\$1,279.33 balance as of 11/8/2014
no deposits or debits

President's Comments

Tim expressed his appreciation for the support from Koh, Leslie, and the members of WAS.

WAS Elections

Please send your nominations to Dale Justice or Carmen Blakely. A ballot will be emailed next week. Please either send your ballot to Dale, or bring it to the Christmas Party. Leslie and Tim each offered to help the next Officers with any questions they may have. Tim reminded us that this is a social group. Shari has volunteered to continue working on the newsletter.

Aeronaut of the Year and Crew Member of the Year Awards

Please email nominations to Leslie by November 30th. Please include a brief description of why you nominated the person.

WAS Membership

Please remember to renew your membership before the end of January. There was general discussion as to how to get more crew involved with WAS. Pilots are asked to encourage their crew members to come to meetings.

Events and Happenings

WAS Christmas Party will be on Sunday December 7, 2014 at the home of Ron and Sandy Grove. There will be an optional gift exchange and an optional seasonal sock competition.

Walla Walla Sneak Attack happened in October, organized by Scott Spenser. Please see the November 2014 *Aerostats* for more information. The Walla Walla Stampede has been moved to the fall. It will be an invitational event.

Accidents and Incidents – none discussed

Manufacturing issues – none discussed

FAA Issues – none discussed

Good of the Order

It appears that Jim Desch is organizing a balloon event in Brooks, Oregon. A new world record was set for altitude jumping out of a balloon.

Next meeting:

December 7, 2014 at the WAS Christmas Party.

Adjourned

*Submitted by
Leslie Berning,
Secretary/Treasurer*

Such Sad News

The Ballooning Community Loses One Of Our Own



Chris is shown here with his wife, Shauna, and their two children, Spencer and Emily.

Christopher Stonehocker was as healthy as your average 35 year old. One day he went to the hospital suffering from a headache and was gone within just a few short days. No one expected him to slip away so quickly. It was way too soon. Chris leaves behind his wife Shauna (Scott Spencer's daughter), and their two young children, Spencer (age 4) and Emily (age 2).

Chris was very close to his family. He delighted in spending as much time with them as possible. All the photos on Facebook show Chris with an enormous smile, especially when he was hanging out with his kids.

He was an organ donor, so his

passing has offered a chance of renewed life to complete strangers. Chris was the kind of man who would want to help others.

The funeral was held in Boise on Saturday, November 22.

Please consider donating to an education fund set up for his children. The fund is through the Idaho Central Credit Union. You can reach the credit union at: 208-846-7000.

The account number for the fund is: 709756852,

You can find Chris' obituary at the following Idaho Statesman link: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/idahostatesman/obituary.aspx?n=christopher-thomas-stonehocker&pid=173220395&fhid=6414>

Willamette Aerostat Society 2015 Executive Committee Elections

President: Tim Gale

Write-In:

Vice President: Carmen Blakely

Write-In:

Secretary/Treasurer: Dale Justice

Write-In:

You can vote by filling in a ballot at the WAS Christmas Party or by sending an e-mail no later than Friday, December 5th to Leslie Berning at: balloonistlab@yahoo.com Results will be announced at the WAS Christmas Party on December 7, 2014.



Sunday, December 7th
2:00 - 5:00 PM
Ron & Sandy Grove's Home,
4723 San Diego Drive NE, Salem, Oregon

Heading to the WAS Christmas Party?

Here's a few things you might need to know:

1.) Food! (Food should always be number one in a list.) WAS will supply a turkey and a ham, plus non-alcoholic drinks. Please bring a dish to share with everyone else. If your last name starts with A-K bring a dessert; L-N bring a salad or veggie dish; and O-Z bring a main dish.

2.) The Gift Exchange. You have the option of participating or not. It's strictly up to you.

If you want to participate, bring a wrapped present, one per person or one per family, with a value of around \$10.00. After dinner, numbers will be given to everyone who is participating. One gift = one number. The person holding #1 will pick a wrapped gift. The person holding #2 has the choice of taking

person #1's gift or opening a new one. If a gift is taken from someone that person may take a new gift or take a gift from someone else. A gift is only allowed to be taken three times. After that it is "frozen." Still confused? Don't worry. You won't be able to break the rules. There's always someone around who will catch you if you try to take a gift that's been frozen. That's part of the fun!

3.) The Festive Sock Contest. Be prepared to sport your best seasonal socks to compete against the WAS gang for a fun prize. Sequins, colorful images, 3-D, or even socks that light up are possibilities. Will you have the most splendid socks of the bunch? You'll find out at the party!

See you Sunday, December 7th!

Directions:

- ★ From I-5 take the Market Street Exit. Turn East.
- ★ Market Street to Lancaster Intersection (middle lane).
- ★ Left on Lancaster one block to Sunnyview.
- ★ Right on Sunnyview past the stop light one block to Brown Road.
- ★ Left on Brown Road.
- ★ Continue on Brown Road approx. ½ mile to the San Francisco intersection.
- ★ Turn right and proceed 2 blocks until it makes a "T" with 47th Street.
- ★ Turn left on 47th Street. As the street makes a bend to the right, it becomes San Diego Drive.
- ★ 4723 is on the left at this bend.
- ★ If lost call: 503-363-4200

2014 Aeronaut/Crew of the Year Awards

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 consider nominees for the WAS 2014 awards.

Please consider accomplishments of your fellow Aeronauts (Pilots and Crew) made during the year 2014 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, or e-mailed, to Leslie Berning at balloonistlab@yahoo.com no later than December 5, 2014 in order to be considered.

Thank you,

*Your WAS Executive
Committee*



<i>Gen Sanderson</i>	<i>12/5</i>
<i>Jennifer Whitfield</i>	<i>12/6</i>
<i>Ed Gouldsmith</i>	<i>12/9</i>
<i>Dale Justice</i>	<i>12/23</i>

*Thank you to
Dale Justice & Pasha Luber
for proofreading this news-
letter. Their help is
greatly appreciated!*

STOP!



**Don't let your WAS membership drift away!
There's a 2015 renewal form at the end of this newsletter.
Fill it out and mail it in today.**

WHAMOBASS Turns 50



The 50th annual WHAMOBASS Balloon event was held the last week-end of October, 2014 in Coalinga, Ca. WHAMOBASS (Whiskey Hill Atherton Menlo Oaks Ballooning and Sporting Society) is the longest continuing operating hot air balloon event in the world at least until someone can prove otherwise. Although now run by the Pacific Coast Aeronautes, we were still honored to have the founder of WHAMOBASS, Deke Sonnichsen, as our Balloonmeister (and chief anvil launcher).

The first WHAMOBASS event

was held on November 21, 1965 in Whiskey Hill (now Woodside), Ca. It was announced to the crowd at Stanford stadium the day before when Deke flew his balloon (1 of 23 in the world) out of the stadium during half time of the Cal-Stanford football game. Although the sites of the event have changed over the years somewhat, Coalinga has been the location since the mid 80's. The original date was set to celebrate the Montgolfier flight in Paris but has been moved a bit earlier to help with weather concerns late in November.

We arrived Thursday afternoon to find a couple of early pilots and crew ready for the weekend to start. The forecast for the weekend was quite good with temperatures expected in the 70's and 80's and light winds in the mornings. We had learned on Thursday morning that Alan Sanderson would be able to make the trip down from Oregon (we were going anyway) so we prepared to have to actually work harder than taking pictures and eating.

Friday was a free fly day from our launch field at West Hills Community College. Eight balloons made the trek to Coalinga early enough to enjoy the warm morning with just light southerly winds. When Alan arrived we found that he had brought his smaller Aerostar balloon as both

of the Firefly envelopes were out of annual...something like the painter's house needing painting? I had only crewed on one flight with that system (about 4 years ago), so all of the crew, regular and local volunteers, got a lot of training each morning. The flight was nice and slow and Alan was able to avoid all the new pistachio orchards that are springing up in the area. Recovery and pack up went easily and it was time for an afternoon of rest before a nice crew dinner at a favorite local Chinese restaurant... we'll have the family meal for eight please.

Saturday morning was another great day for flying. Of course it started off by Deke launching the anvil...a big boom...to call the pilots to briefing. The only problem being that no one could hear at the briefing after being called. Once the weather and safety briefings were held the three chief judges reminded everyone of the tasks for the day. Clues were provided for the locations of cards for the poker run, table setting decorations would be judged at 4 pm before the dinner, and the costume contest would be judged at dinner. It was also announced that the airport was closed for any landings due to some automotive time trials being held on the runways. Of course, there was the

Continued on page 6



WHAMOBASS 50

Continued from page 5

call to “Aerostation” before the pilots and crews began preparing for the morning’s flight.

Alan’s flight path took him over the local arroyo which has very few paved crossings. We found an unpaved crossing...liking the 4 WD... only to discover they had crossed back over to the north. I think we’ll head to the paved road as going back up would be much more of a challenge and I wasn’t driving the Jeep. We received a call that they were headed for the airport (I hoped they remembered it was closed) so we headed off in that direction. When we got close to the airport we were stopped by the traffic control folks who wanted to know if we were “crew” or spectators. I told them we were crew, but pointed at the balloon beginning to pass over the runways with cars “flying” beneath them. We were finally able to find a road that followed along the airport security fence and made our way to the now deflated balloon. We spent some time trying to get the springs reinserted in the top...I really prefer Velcro...before we packed up and headed back to the field for the group tailgate.

Saturday afternoon was time for completing the poker run...one clue was: “You may only spend one, but it doesn’t grow on “Tree’s.” Yep, the Dollar Tree store in town. Linda, Corky and some of our crew had brought items to help decorate our table at the dinner. Besides lots of GOLD (it was for 50 years), we had a slide show of WHAMOs past, pictures of Mr. Sonnichsen over the years along

with some of his history and accomplishments in ballooning and other endeavors. Who knew he had edited a book on “Historic Trees of California?” We also included pictures of many of the Coalinga artifacts and mementos we have borrowed/collected over the years. Our three 10’s didn’t win the poker hand, but we did get first place for the table decorating. The award, a nice bottle of champagne signed by the man himself (in gold) will be a cherished keepsake for years to come although we may drink the contents.

After a wonderful meal provided by the Elks Club, we got a short history of Deke’s start in ballooning up to the first WHAMOBASS event. From what I can remember, he was in Paris in 1964 being involved in international parachute competitions. He noticed a display on the early hot air balloons and decided he had to try that. In early ’65 he got some time in a balloon and almost immediately sat down at the dining room table to design a balloon with an early manufacturer (Barnes, I think.) The balloon took about six months to be assembled which just about brings us back to the flight out of Stanford stadium. Afterwards the PCA held an auction of donated items which provided some very spirited bidding.

The most desired (and expensive) item was a signed (by Deke in gold, of course) commemorative poster for the event. I believe it went for \$300...well done everyone, as about \$750 was raised to help fund WHAMOBASS LI (51.)

Sunday was a very interesting morning. The planned dawn patrol flights were can-

celled. Even though the winds at the launch field were light, out along I-5 about 15 miles east they were blowing at 15-20. After the briefing and more pibals most of the pilots elected to stay on the ground and have an early breakfast at the Elks. Eight pilots (including Alan) determined that if they could stay low, a safe flight was doable. Of course to have that flight one must inflate and stand up the balloon. That was not quite so easy this morning. When we first started to inflate we discovered that somehow we had gotten some of the springs twisted around the top girdle...Oh well, guess we’ll start over...bring back the Velcro. Once we got the top straightened out and the balloon inflated Alan started to go hot. The cold pack was much softer than we anticipated and as the balloon stood up a small gust of wind caved it in and Alan had to shut down the burners as the crew rushed to keep the envelope clear of the burners, fan and truck. No harm, no foul and on our third try we had success and a fully inflated balloon. The winds on the field continued to be very light with the other balloons already launched floating lazily around or over the field. Alan launched with a crew member and local volunteer and found along with a couple of other pilots an almost perfect box. They were able to transit back and forth across the field at will. Alan was able to make multiple passes with both his hops landing back on the field. Dana Thornton, of course, made three (or was it four, I lost count) returns to the field. Looking at the GPS trace of the flight, if Alan had been figure skating and they still did compulsory figures he might have scored a perfect 10. You couldn’t detect one pass from another on the screen. We had a quick first flight ceremony for our new crew before getting Alan packed up for his journey home. A few of us stayed for another night to have our annual closing of the field dinner in town. Oh, yes, the wind did come

Continued on page 7



WHAMOBASS 50

Continued from page 5

up Sunday with some breezes by 11 AM and a full blown gale late in the afternoon.

It was the most successful WHAMOBASS in many years. Nearly 100 people joined in the dinner and the auction. Great fun was had by all. My thanks go out to everyone involved in the weekend. Especially to Pat Moore (chairman) and his family for all the great work a very big THANK YOU. Let us not forget all the other PCA volunteers, West Hills College, Elks Lodge, the City of Coalinga, pilots, crew, volunteers... EVERYONE...THANK YOU and see you in 2015 as we start the second half century.

As Deke would suggest let's end with..."1...2...3...AEROSTATION!"

Alan Brandt



Photos by Linda Brandt

See You at the WAS Christmas Party

Sunday, December 7th

2:00 PM to 5:00 PM

**Ron & Sandy Grove's Home
4723 San Diego Drive NE, Salem, OR
(see page 4 for directions)**

Please Bring a Dish to Share:

Last Name:

A-K = Dessert

L-N = Salad/Veggie Dish

O-Z = Main Dish

**There's an optional gift exchange
and a holiday sock competition**

Let The Merry Times Begin!

We're Utterly Amazed

by Shari Gale

As most of you know already, Tim and I sent Checkmate off to the Firefly factory in Statesville, North Carolina in October to be rebuilt. Once the rebuild was completed Firefly sent it back via a truck transport service. We were told it would arrive in Portland on Wednesday, November 19, 2014. Sunday evening Tim decided to check the tracking number. **Amazingly** Tim found that it was already in Portland three days early.

Monday morning we drove into Portland to pick it up. (We would have driven in on Sunday night if the trucking company had been open!)

When we'd deflated Checkmate for the last time in Prosser, Washington, we handed the balloon off to Scott and Laurie Spencer. They took it to Boise. From there Greg Ashton took it to Albuquerque, where he handed the envelope off to the Firefly Balloons factory representatives. During this entire journey an impromptu sign made by our crewmember, Jenise Connerly, went with the envelope. (The sign said: "Hot Air Balloon Medevac / We ♥ u Checkmate") To our utter **amazement** the sign was still with it when we picked it up at the trucking terminal.

I've been saying all along that we would receive the rebuilt envelope the

weather was cold and clear. The day we picked up the envelope the wind did not pick up at our house until about noon. Jumping at the chance to do a test inflation, we asked our friends to drive all the way out to St. Helens the next morning. I would have been happy with three or four extra helpers. We got five volunteers. Gerald Bales, Jim Churchill, Janice and Jason Fast, and Dale Justice got up early in order to be at our house by 8:00 AM.

The wind was a little more brisk Tuesday morning, but Tim felt it was still possible to do an inflation in our front yard. (It's a big front yard.) He was right! **Amazingly**, Mother Nature treated us well.

As we started to do the cold pack it looked like the parachute top cords were in a hopeless tangle. Tim chose to continue the cold pack to see if the tangle would just shake itself out. **Amazingly**, it did! The envelope came up effortlessly. In fact, it inflated a whole lot faster than I was expecting. Zoom. It was in a standing position before I was in position to take the photos I wanted. (Do I dare say I was **amazed** at how little Tim had to burn to get the balloon upright?)

The winds did pick up shortly after the balloon was standing, so we didn't tether it, and I didn't get the photo I wanted from our deck looking down at the balloon. We're OK with that.

We had good weather; we were surrounded by good friends; and the balloon is as **amazingly** beautiful as we had envisioned. What more could we ask for?

The name of the new balloon still has not been decided. There are so many good candidates. The leaders are: 4th Knight, Knight's Spirit, Knight's Fire and Knight's Disguise. All refer back to Checkmate's legacy.

The knight logo is gone but the factory people took some of Check-



Dale Justice helped Tim put in the top. The centering cords inside looked like a tangled mess at first glance, but they worked themselves free.



Checkmate is still at the heart of 4th Knight. The logo above was created by Firefly Balloons using Checkmate's original fabric.

The two photos above by Shari Gale

mate's old fabric and created a Firefly logo on one of the lower panels. Checkmate will continue to fly.

After the inflation and pack up

— it did not want to go back in the bag — we had a simple brunch here at the house. It was a good morning.

Now I am hoping we will have another **amazing**

surprise, when Mother Nature grants us a flyable weekend this winter. There are way too many months between now and next spring.



Photo by Dale Justice



Photo by Shari Gale

moment the monsoon season started in Western Oregon. Instead, we had another **amazing** thing happen. The

2015 WAS Membership Application



Name: _____
Birthday: Month _____ Day _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Date Submitted: _____
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: _____ Birthday: Month _____ Day _____ JB Yes No
Name: _____ Birthday: Month _____ Day _____ JB Yes No
Name: _____ Birthday: Month _____ Day _____ JB Yes No
Name: _____ Birthday: Month _____ Day _____ JB Yes No
Name: _____ Birthday: Month _____ Day _____ JB Yes No

Membership Type

Charter (\$15) Individual (\$15) Family (\$20) Junior Balloonist (\$15 per JB)

We will forward new Junior Balloonists to the BFA Office. Be sure to include JB's name above.

Membership

The Willamette Aerostat Squadron publishes an annual membership directory, acknowledges member's birthdays in the club newsletter, and communicates via e-mail and the website. We recognize and respect our member's privacy. If you do not wish personal information about you published, please indicate below. Information published on our website is public domain and subject to retrieval via Internet connection. Unless otherwise indicated below, it is assumed it is OK to publish this data in our annual directory:

- Do Not publish name
- Do Not publish address
- Do Not publish phone number
- Do Not publish cell phone number
- Do Not publish e-mail
- Do Not publish birthday

Mail completed form with fees to:

**Willamette Aerostat Society
c/o Leslie Berning
P. O. Box 3784
Salem, OR 97302**



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 Photo:

50th Annual WHAMOBASS Rally in Coalinga, CA. Photo by Linda Brandt.

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.**

**Comercial 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.**