

Hot Air Times

Volume 2, Issue 1

April—June 2005

Safety Seminar...Comin' Up!

Upcoming Events:

Annual Spring BBQ
April 15

MBA Safety Seminar
April 16

Great Plains Balloon Race
June 10-12

Great Galena Balloon Race
June 17-19

Mayor's Cup Balloon Race
June 24-26

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For five years now, the MBA has put together a first rate Safety Seminar for its members and the general ballooning public. This year will be no different. The 6th Annual Pilot and Crew Safety Seminar will be held Saturday, April 16th at Camp St. Croix, located near Hudson, WI.

The weekend begins with the Annual Spring BBQ (open to everyone) held at Camp St. Croix Friday evening, April 15th from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

To date, the speakers that are lined up for this year include Walt Devoe on Weather, Gordon Schwontkowski on Crew Essentials, George Hahn on the Anatomy of an Accident, Bills Zangs on Biennial Flight Reviews, Bert Padelt on Pilot Decision Making and Rick Braunig on Twin Cities Airspace.

You can save a little money by pre-registering by April 9th at the price of \$60.00 for Pilots and \$50.00 for Crew. Registration at the door is from

7:00 am to 7:50 am at a cost of \$70.00 for Pilots and \$60.00 for Crew. Included in the price will be lunch and snacks for everyone and BFA Certificates for pilots (for insurance purposes).

There will also be hotel discounts available at the Comfort Inn and Suites in Hudson, WI. The price of a double occupancy is \$55.00 if you mention the MBA. For reservations, call (715) 386-6355.

If you wish to pre-register, visit the MBA website and download one there. If you need any other information you can contact Dave Johnson at 612-781-6174 or Glen Terry at 763-753-6884.

We hope to see you there! Nothing is more important than keeping the skies Minnesota as safe as they have been for many years. The MBA Safety Seminar is one means to that end.

2005 MBA General Election

Due to a lack of participation, the 2005 elections are being extended until Monday April 18th. Nominations that were made at the March 21st meeting are as follows:

Sam Blackburn—President
Mike Lesmeister—Vice President
Kim Dickey—Secretary
Glen Terry—Treasurer

Voting may be accomplished via email to the MBA or by absentee ballots provided at the MBA Safety Seminar on April 16th. Nominations will be accepted until the April 18th meeting opens.

The survival of the MBA depends on participation by its members so please take the time to vote. Thanks!

Got Gas?

By Sam Blackburn

For many of us, myself included, gas ballooning is considered the ultimate LTA experience. We long to see the “Hot Air” limitation removed from our certificates.

For those of you who have experienced the America’s Challenge launches at Albuquerque, you know the thrill and wonderment of watching those graceful orbs slowly disappearing into the night sky without a sound.

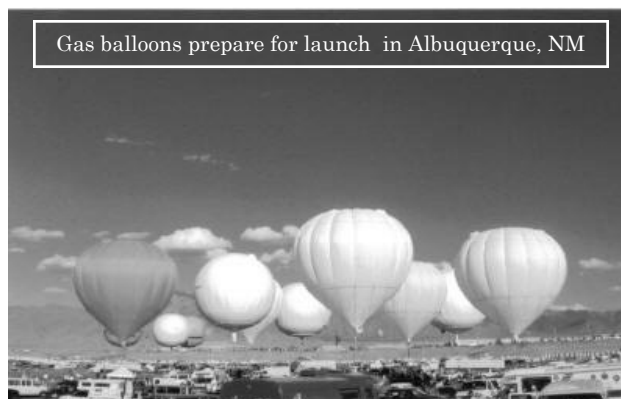
In general, gas ballooning is thought of as a “rich man’s” sport, due to the high price of helium. Well, that’s not necessarily true these days as helium isn’t the only game in town. There are other options such as city gas, ammonia and hydrogen.

Although hydrogen has not been used much since the Hindenburg disaster, it has been “reintroduced” in recent years due to its superior lifting capacity and economic advan-

tage.

There are more choices in envelopes these days too. You’ll still see the traditional netted balloon systems but they are joined by more and more “Quick Fill” systems which do away with the cumbersome nets. The suspension system on these systems are an integral part of the envelope so all the net adjustments during inflation that are required for the traditional system, are eliminated in the quick fills, making them much quicker to inflate. Hence the name.

There are a lot of resources on the web to learn more about gas ballooning. A good place to start is www.gasballooning.net. You can find a lot of links to many more resources there. If you have an interest in flying gas, pursue it! There are a number of flight schools that specialize in gas ballooning. You can usually find ads for them in Ballooning magazine as well as on the web.



Gas balloons prepare for launch in Albuquerque, NM

Today’s FAR — Sec. 91.113

Right-of-way rules: Except water operations.

- (a) **Inapplicability.** This section does not apply to the operation of an aircraft on water.
- (b) **General.** When weather conditions permit, regardless of whether an operation is conducted under instrument flight rules or visual flight rules, vigilance shall be maintained by each person operating an aircraft so as to see and avoid other aircraft. When a rule of this section gives another aircraft the right-of-way, the pilot shall give way to that aircraft and may not pass over, under, or ahead of it unless well clear.
- (c) **In distress.** An aircraft in distress has the right-of-way over all other air traffic.
- (d) **Converging.** When aircraft of the same category are converging at approximately the same altitude (except head-on, or nearly so), the aircraft to the other's right has the right-of-way. If the aircraft are of different categories--
- (1) A balloon has the right-of-way over any other category of aircraft;
 - (2) A glider has the right-of-way over an airship, powered parachute, weight-shift-control aircraft, airplane, or rotorcraft.
 - (3) An airship has the right-of-way over a powered parachute, weight-shift-control aircraft, airplane, or rotorcraft. However, an aircraft towing or refueling other aircraft has the right-of-way over all other engine-driven aircraft.
- (e) **Approaching head-on.** When aircraft are approaching each other head-on, or nearly so, each pilot of each aircraft shall alter course to the right.
- (f) **Overtaking.** Each aircraft that is being overtaken has the right-of-way and each pilot of an overtaking aircraft shall alter course to the right to pass well clear.
- (g) **Landing.** Aircraft, while on final approach to land or while landing, have the right-of-way over other aircraft in flight or operating on the surface, except that they shall not take advantage of this rule to force an aircraft off the runway surface which has already landed and is attempting to make way for an aircraft on final approach. When two or more aircraft are approaching an airport for the purpose of landing, the aircraft at the lower altitude has the right-of-way, but it shall not take advantage of this rule to cut in front of another which is on final approach to land or to overtake that aircraft.

High Adventure in the Badlands

By Sam Blackburn

Last September I was lucky enough to get a call from John Boulger in Fargo inviting Deb and me to a little rally in Medora, ND. Medora is one of the “gateways” into the Theodore Roosevelt National Park, situated on I-94 about 20 miles from the Montana border and right smack in the middle of the North Dakota Badlands.

The ND badlands aren’t quite as forbidding as the SD badlands but it is still very rugged and in a lot of areas, completely inaccessible. So, once you’re out over them, you’re committed to flying until you’re back out of them. Anything in between and you’re going to have to hike out and hire a helicopter to get your balloon back. Sound intimidating? It is, but with some careful planning and John’s experience with the area, the intimidation factor was reduced to pure excitement.

Medora is a tiny little town dotted with small gift shops and restaurants. You can walk from one end to the other in 10 minutes. Be that as it may, our launch site was literally right outside our motel room doors. I could get used to that! There was just enough room for the six of us to lay out and inflate. The little park was well protected, nestled between motel buildings and a large bluff extending upward several hundred feet.

Saturday morning, we awoke to a picture perfect, crystal clear morning. We all rounded up our passengers and set to launching our balloons. As we rose out of our protected site and above the bluff, the full grandeur of the area reached out and smacked us all in the eyeballs. The vastness of these rugged lands is indescribably impressive.



We all flew close together as we dropped into ravines and slipped over peaks. Our crews led by locals in one big caravan. At one point during the flight, Vern Feekes, Duane Waack and I flew along in a clump, all three envelopes touching. After an hour and 20 minutes of the coolest contour flying I’ve ever done, we all landed within a quarter mile of each other along the same road...the ONLY road.

Sunday morning began much like Saturday. The difference being in the wind direction. WE decided to drive 10-12 miles south of Medora to the Iron Cross Ranch, formerly owned by Theodore Roosevelt. We launched out of a large hay field and flew into a very different type of terrain, much more rugged than the day before. This was shaping up to be a real adventure. The wind was a bit more brisk than the day before so we all got spread out quickly. Vern, Duane and I managed to stay in the same “neighborhood” but the crews were nowhere to be seen. Not surprising as there were no roads to be seen either!

After an hour of flight, we exited the ruggedness and entered the oilfields. There were roads all over the place, servicing the many oil rigs. A veritable maze of dirt paths snaking all over. Fortunately for everyone, the local volunteer firemen were along again, guiding the crews where they needed to be and everyone was located and packed up without a hitch.

Flying the ND Badlands was exhilarating, exciting and just plain fun. I can almost hear them beckoning now and there is little doubt that they’ll lure me back again and again. Wild and rugged, yet beautiful and inviting.

The Mayor’s “Cup” to Celebrate its 20th Birthday!

From its beginnings, the Mayor’s Cup Balloon Race, held each year in Rochester, has maintained its integrity as a small, fun, yet competitive event. It has enjoyed a faithful following by a number of Minnesota pilots, some of whom have attended every single year. It has also been host to pilots from South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois and Missouri.

The first race was held in 1980 with 10 balloons launching from the junior college. It was originally associated with Rochester’s “Aviation Days”, a short lived event. Soon after the demise of Aviation Days, the race

became associated with a new, annual city event called “Rochesterfest” and is now the oldest event in the celebration.

The race was renamed “The Mayor’s Cup” and has grown to a 20-25 balloon competition. The Mayor’s Cup took a 7 year hiatus from 1988 to 1995 and returned to be as popular as ever. George Ibach is in the process of developing a website for the event where pilots may download and fill out an entry form to be faxed or mailed back to the appropriate committee member. Keep your eye out for the address to the site, coming soon.

The Demonstration of a Novel New Device

It all began on September 19th 1783 at the Palace of Versailles, near Paris, with the demonstration of a “novel new device, an aerostat”. Paper manufacturer Etienne Montgolfier launched a small balloon made of cotton and canvas carrying a cock, a duck and a sheep, setting in motion man’s quest for the stars.

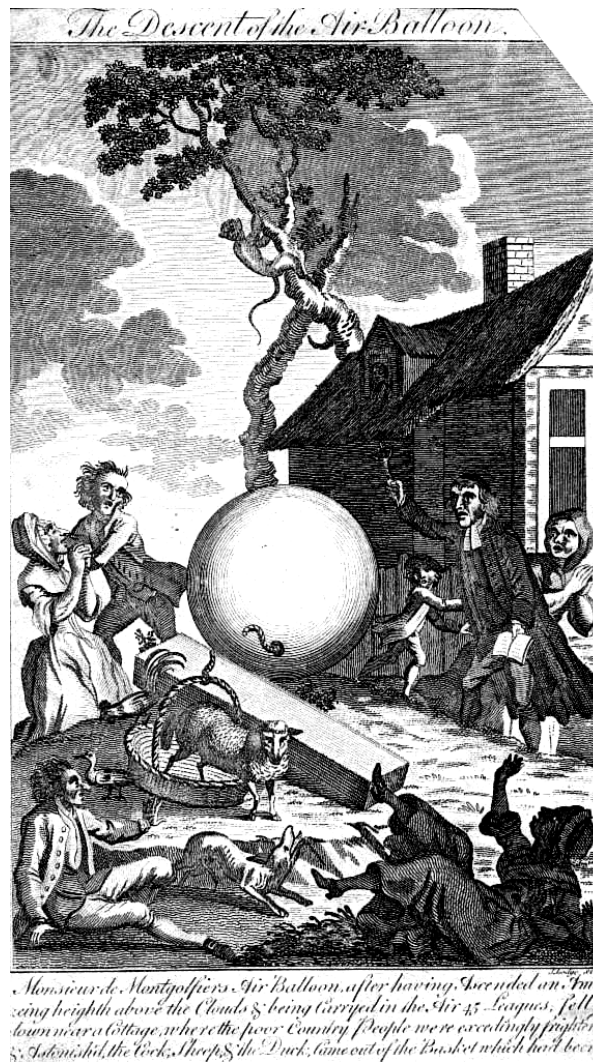
Almost round but somewhat cylindrical, the balloon stood 58 feet tall and 42 feet in diameter. It was suspended from two tall masts on a raised platform while underneath, smoke and soot was produced by throwing wool, chopped straw, old shoes and rotten meat on a grate suspended over a wood fire. It was believed at the time that the special smoke was what made the balloon rise.

After about 7 minutes the balloon was filled with the sooty, smoky, hot air mixture. The round wicker basket was attached by a rope and the whole contraption was released. The balloon then climbed to 1500 feet with the world’s first live passengers!

The balloon flew on for about 8 minutes before starting its uncontrolled descent. As beautiful and majestic as this first flight was, the landing was equally as ugly and clumsy. As the balloon neared the ground, the basket hit a pile of logs, throwing the animals around and breaking the rope attaching the basket to the envelope. The balloon continued on for a bit and landed in the top of an oak tree.

The cock’s beak was broken but the animals all survived. The sheep had even eaten the hay provided for the first “in-flight meal”. King Louis declared the flight a success but became concerned about the safety of flight in general and promptly released 2 criminals, already sentenced to death to “volunteer” to be the first humans to ascend in one of these aerostats. This was nixed as too important for common criminals, and the rest is history.

The pictures below were scanned from original newspaper clippings provided by Becky Pope.



Editorial by Sam Blackburn

Where Does The MBA's Future Lie?

This is a question that is beginning to loom large within the organization. What do we want to accomplish? What are our goals?

Any organization is only as good as its participating members. It either moves forward or backward. There is no middle ground. That being said, how does an organization foster participation by its members?

I believe that the answer lies in the formation of common goals. The membership needs to decide on specific goals for the organization. Whether it is to form a ground school or create a formal state championship event or just to put together an annual social event,

we have to decide on a core goal. We then must be willing to work toward that end.

Financial support is only one factor in the equation. If we all just pay our dues and wait for something to happen, it never will. Someone has to actually do the work. This takes commitment. A commitment of time, energy and action.

Since its inception, the membership has relied heavily upon only a few of its members. These dedicated balloonists have taken it upon themselves to balance the account, organize the Safety Seminar, round up volunteers for one project or another, make the phone calls,

answer the emails. The list goes on.

This editorial is not meant to offend or accuse. This writer is as guilty of complacency as any other MBA member. However, I believe the time has come to ask ourselves the questions: Do I want a Minnesota Ballooning Association? What goals do I want the MBA to accomplish? What can I do to help the MBA accomplish them?

In the coming months, ask yourselves these questions and then answer them. One thing is for sure. Apathy will kill the MBA. If we are to survive, we must have more participation. I believe the MBA is worth keeping and plan to become more proactive among its ranks.

Gondola Maintenance

Wicker has been the material of choice for gondolas since the beginning of flight. It is strong, supple and resilient. I for one truly appreciate this as some of the landings I've made over the years probably would have bent and twisted aluminum and shattered fiberglass!

One of the keys to its resiliency is moisture content. The drier it gets, the more brittle it becomes. To make sure that my wicker re-

mains supple, I moisturize it at least once a year by removing everything from the inside and wetting it down with a garden hose. I know some people who take their baskets to the carwash but the water at the carwash is simply filtered and recycled so it's not the cleanest water around. Another substance (harder to find) is glycerin, which is a

"some of the landings I've made over the years probably would have bent and twisted aluminum or shattered fiberglass!"

better lubricant and lasts longer than simple water treatment.

Either method will increase the life of your gondola and at the same time, will make it look almost like new.

Try it, you might even find those gloves you lost last year!

Newsletter Format

In preparing this newsletter, I started to wonder about its format and whether or not it's what the membership wants to see. Here are some questions for you to ponder. (1) Would you prefer the Sunrise-Sunset chart listed in civilian or military time (12 or 24 hour format)? (2) Would you like more (shorter) articles or fewer (longer)

articles? (3) Do we need a "For Sale/Wanted" section just for MBA members? (4) What type of articles would you like to see?

I'd be interested to hear any feedback, be it positive or negative, so we can continue to improve the look and feel of our newsletter. If it's worth doing, it's worth doing it

right! Drop me a line, give me a call or grab me at an event to let me hear your ideas.

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Sunrise-Sunset Tables For April, May, June

Day	April		May		June	
	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set
1	0554	1839	0602	2017	0529	2052
2	0552	1841	0601	2019	0529	2052
3	0650	1942	0559	2020	0528	2053
4	0648	1943	0558	2021	0528	2054
5	0646	1945	0557	2022	0527	2055
6	0645	1946	0555	2023	0527	2056
7	0643	1947	0554	2025	0527	2056
8	0641	1948	0553	2026	0526	2057
9	0639	1950	0551	2027	0526	2058
10	0637	1951	0550	2028	0526	2058
11	0636	1952	0549	2029	0526	2059
12	0634	1953	0547	2031	0526	2059
13	0632	1955	0546	2032	0525	2100
14	0630	1956	0545	0833	0525	2100
15	0628	1957	0544	2034	0525	2101

Day	April		May		June	
	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set
16	0627	1958	0543	2035	0525	2101
17	0625	2000	0542	2036	0525	2102
18	0623	2001	0541	2038	0525	2102
19	0622	2002	0540	2039	0526	2102
20	0620	2003	0539	2040	0526	2103
21	0618	2005	0538	2041	0526	2103
22	0617	2006	0537	2042	0526	2103
23	0615	2007	0536	2043	0526	2103
24	0613	2009	0535	2044	0527	2103
25	0612	2010	0534	2045	0527	2104
26	0610	2011	0533	2046	0527	2104
27	0608	2012	0533	2047	0528	2104
28	0607	2014	0532	2048	0528	2104
29	0605	2015	0531	2049	0529	2103
30	0604	2016	0531	2050	0529	2103
31			0530	2051		