



## CBA Happenings

**October 2:** Board Meeting

**October 10-12:** Balloons Over Anderson

**October 17-19:** Carolina BalloonFest

*\*CBA Member Meeting during CBF on Saturday at 1:30p.m. in the Pilot Tent\**

*\*\*CBA Meet-N-Greet during event. See pg.4\*\**

**November 20:** Newsletter Article Submissions Due

**December 1:** Newsletter Published

*\* Each newsletter will contain a "Carolinas Balloon Association Happenings" calendar to inform the members of upcoming events and dates important to the CBA. As we continue to strengthen our roots, the calendar will become more informative.*

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# Chairperson's Corner

Hope this issue of the Cloud Chaser finds you and your family doing well. The CBA Board continues to meet monthly to conduct business of the CBA. We are trying hard to take the CBA into a positive position now and in the future. However, we can't do it alone. We need your help and input.

This brings me to a great point to thank one of our own, Ryan McKellar. Ryan has graciously volunteered to help Marc with the website. He joined us in our last board meeting and details are being worked out to allow him access to the administrative rights to the website so he can refresh and archive content.

Once we get everything running as smooth as possible, we may be forming a few select committees to help the CBA promote ballooning. During the last board meeting there were a couple of ideas thrown around and we discussed another meet and greet for the Carolina BalloonFest. This will be held on the Saturday and Sunday of the event from 2p.m. to 3p.m. Please email or call me to sign up! [pilotrblee@gmail.com](mailto:pilotrblee@gmail.com) 919.625.5533.

Articles submitted from different people are the lifeblood of a newsletter. Please consider submitting a balloon related article for the newsletter. It doesn't have to be a technical article. It could be about a memorable experience at a festival or flight in your local area. Basically, something you wish to share with other balloon enthusiasts within the club. (Let's keep it clean; children are present.) About one half of a page in Microsoft word and a few photos can't be that hard.

Don't forget our Member Spotlight. What a way to bring attention to someone you respect in ballooning, a loyal crew person or a supportive family member! Some photos and about two paragraphs will do.

Send newsletter submissions to Amy Davis [<outdoordogs@gmail.com>](mailto:<outdoordogs@gmail.com>). See the calendar for submission deadlines. Thank you.

Randy Lee, Chairman

Carolinas Balloon Association

## Member Spotlight

### Reporting from Camp

By Duncan Dunavent

Saturday morning, Tyler and I flew up to Philadelphia and got to Millersville Saturday evening. We checked in to Balloon Camp on Sunday at noon and met the campers, pilots and councilors. I met my roommate who crewed for Sally Mazzocchi. We started into classes immediately on Sunday and went through Tuesday; learning everything from the phonetic alphabet to weather. We took it easy on Tuesday and visited the Lancaster Balloon Repair Station. We picked back up on classes on Wednesday and Thursday and left camp on Thursday at 3:00pm. We did multiple tethers throughout the week but had our free flight canceled due to weather. I was able to do multiple weather briefings throughout the week and enjoyed my time at camp. I would love to go back! I would like to thank the ballooning community for all they have done for me. 🎈



# *In the Know*

## NASCARnival at Victory Junction

By Kim McKinney

Tuesday nights, in Randleman, NC, a group of CBA pilots participate in a special event for special kids. It's NASCARnival night at the Victory Junction Gang Camp, and tethered balloon rides are one of the things that create excitement among the campers.

There have been hot air balloons at NASCARnival since the event started ten years ago. Pilot Ruth Ludwick Lind, was involved with Victory Junction from the start. Her family donated the "Fab Shop", where campers can get "makeovers" during the week, sporting creative hair designs using colorful temporary hair dye and gel.

Ruth and her friend Marsha Treacy started organizing balloonists to tether. Ken Draughn has been involved since the beginning of the weekly tethering, and now heads up organizing balloonists for the event each summer. Each week, Draughn asks for two pilots to volunteer to bring balloons so all of the children (about a hundred each week) may get a chance to tether.

If weather is bad, there is still a ballooning experience available for the children. Even in rainy or windy weather, a balloon is cold inflated in the gym, so kids can experience walking inside; or you may just see them doing gymnastics, taking pictures of themselves, or laying on a mat and enjoying the "big tent". Eyes glow as these kids see the balloons, and big smiles appear on their faces. They love getting the opportunity to tether. Well, after the initial shock of how loud and the propane burner is and how hot the flame is that it creates! There are often a few yells and shrieks along the way, usually punctuated with laughter.

Victory Junction's mission is to provide a first class camping experience for kids aged six to sixteen, who are experiencing, or have experienced, severe illnesses. There also is a week of camp for the siblings of these kids. The estimated cost of sending one child to this camp is \$2,500, but no child ever pays to come to Victory Junction. Donations cover the cost for all. The camp was started in 2004 by the racing family the Pettys, in honor of Kyle Petty's son Adam, a driver who was killed in a racing accident while still a teenager. The camp sits on 84 acres in Randleman, donated by Adam's grandparents Richard and Lynda Petty.

You definitely notice the racing theme as soon as you

arrive on camp property. A replica of Adam's green #45 car is seen prominently on top of one of the buildings, "Adam's Race Shop". Here kids can put on a race car and sit in a race car. They can learn to change tires, or play video games. The camp has a water park, putt-putt course, fishing lake, horseback riding, movie theater, gymnasium, bowling alley.....almost any activity that you can imagine. There's even a hot-air-balloon water tower that is a focal point of the camp. Another #45 car replica serves as the demo car that various racing team pit crews (often sporting feathered boas) use at NASCARnival, as they compete against each other to show campers how very fast they can change tires. There's also music, tattoos, and fun food like icees, popcorn and a doughnut dunking station operated by Krispy Kreme.

Because of the medical needs of its campers, Victory Junction has a summer medical staff that includes a pediatrician, nurse practitioner, and four registered nurses. A volunteer medical professional also joins the staff each week. The medical team passes out all of the medications for the campers each week, but also staffs the Body Shop, which is the camp infirmary. The summer staff-to-camper ratio is high and supplemented by many volunteers who come from around the country to help with each camp.

Draughn says that he is inspired with the determination shown by some of the most severely handicapped children as they conquer any obstacle that stands in the way of them riding in a balloon. Still, he said he thinks what has impressed him most over the years are the counselors (mostly college students) he gets to watch in action every week over the course of the summer. "It's amazing, at their age, the dedication they put into these kids. I have never run across one yet that didn't thoroughly enjoy what they were doing," Draughn says.

Most of the kids who attend a session at the Victory Junction Gang camps have already had many rough days in their life as they have battled illness or accidents. The balloonists who volunteer usually come back, often traveling from several hours away. Most find it's a special place with joy that is infectious, and a great reminder that not only is ballooning an opportunity to put smiles on faces, but it is a way to celebrate life and health.

*If you would like to volunteer your balloon or your time to help with tether operations at Victory Junction, email Ken Draughn at*

*[KenDraughn@aol.com](mailto:KenDraughn@aol.com)* 

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# *It's A Gas*

## From Fields to Deserts

By Clarke Harbold

Aero Club of America-NC Chapter's gas balloon is headed to Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta in October.

The competing balloons are all 1000 cubic meters, or 35,300 cubic feet of hydrogen, which is used because helium is no longer accessible. The club balloon is 680 cubic meters, or 24,000 cubic feet, therefore we are not competing but were invited to fly. Members Bert Padelt of Bally, PA and Mike Emich of Akron, OH are piloting. Bert Padelt, owner operator of Best Aviation Services, with his wife, Joanie, built four of the balloons flying this year. He has flown in all but three of the America's Challenge races.

The longest flight from Balloon Fiesta Park in Albuquerque, NM was 2,112 miles in 2005 to Southeastern Quebec Canada and the record for time aloft in an America's Cup race was 70 hours. Founded in 1995, the America's Challenge race is a distance race to see who can go the furthest. It is modeled after the Gordon Bennett race which was started in 1906. This will be the 19<sup>th</sup> running of the race.

Several Carolina Balloon Association members are or have been part of the America's challenge race. Andy Cayton Sam Parks, Ken Draughn, and Rob Mullis are all multiple year race participants and each can tell adventure tales from their participation. 

### **Attention All Members!**

CBA Meet-N-Greet

At Carolina BalloonFest

Saturday and Sunday 2p.m. – 3p.m.

Open to Everyone!

*Contact Randy Lee to participate!*

*[pilotrblee@gmail.com](mailto:pilotrblee@gmail.com) 919.625.5533*

# *Hot Air / High Tales*

## Why I Became a Pilot

By Jayme Nelson

Like many other pilots, I was born into this balloon life. I have ballooning family and we have annual events that are more important to us than most holidays. The ballooning culture was instilled in me from the very beginning. That is why there is no way that I would ever give it up and that is why getting my pilot's license was never a matter of "if", it was always a matter of "when."

My parents, Jim and Donna Hendershot, had a rule when I was little, they wouldn't let me fly until I could see over the basket. So being the shorty that I am, this amazing flight didn't get to happen until I was five years old at a festival in Abingdon, VA. My dad put me in the basket, flew over to the next field and switched me out with another passenger. My mother had to deal with the heinous consequences of a VERY irate child for the rest of that chase. They knew from that point on that I was not going to make their job easy when it came to who would get to fly. I was hooked and I was going to get myself in that basket every chance I got!

Twenty years later, finally done with college and settling into married life, I decided it was time for me to really focus on becoming a pilot. Spring 2013 came around and my dad and I began my training flights. It took a flight or two but when he FINALLY gave me full control of a landing and quit saying "burn" every five seconds, I had my "a-ha" moment. It all started to click and from that moment on I really knew I could do it. After a good few months of training with my dad we figured it was time for some instruction from a non-family member. After a few training flights with Dan Stukas, it was time for my solo flight!

The solo flight is such a surreal feeling. I was doing something so familiar yet foreign at same time. It was fun and a little scary, but finally two hours, and one hysterical mom later, I had a safe landing and a fun celebration with some ballooning family. After that day I was really feeling the addiction I see in other pilots. The winter slowed me down a little and I knew that my written was going to expire soon, but I did not want to rush myself. I knew I would be ready by spring so I made a decision to retake my written exam and take the check ride in April 2014.

I decided to take my check ride in Tampa, Florida. I made the trip with my parents, Mark Powers, Jeff Simmons and my husband Brandon Nelson. Dan and Susan Stukas caught a flight from California to make it there for the big event. I spent every spare minute in the days leading up to it studying, which apparently paid off! The next challenge would be the check ride itself which would be the following morning.

When we arrived I had no clue where we were or what this supposed “great launch field” looked like because of the crazy amount of thick fog that did not want to leave! Eventually, about an hour after sunrise, the fog was burning off enough that we began to set up the balloon. I looked around my basket at everyone there to support me and I felt really confident that I could do this. We launched with calm winds on the surface and about 5 to 6 knots a few hundred feet up. The flight itself was relatively short. We didn’t go far but the examiner felt confident he had seen what I could do. We had a lot of direction to play with so we ended up almost going back to where we launched. Aside from my nerves, it turned out to be a really fun flight! Afterward, we went back to the hotel where I was issued my private pilot’s license and everyone around me had a sigh of relief. It was an amazing day already and it was only 10am.

I have been fortunate to have grown up in this sport around some really amazing and talented pilots and crew. I am especially grateful for my three primary instructors: Dan Stukas, Jimmy Hood and my dad Jim Hendershot. I am so thankful to be surrounded by great people in ballooning and I look forward to my next adventure! 

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## *You’ve Got This*

### Speed Packing

(An Old Dog’s Tricks)

By Tom Roush and Drew Egerton

Before the 1980’s but shortly after balloons were made of stone and rolled off of hills, many of the balloons being flown did not have support poles to hold up the burners. Although light on power, the burners did not feel so light after a good knock on the noggin!

Everything from the burner, cables, thermistor wires, fuel lines, deflation line, etc. just hung suspended by the envelope cables and burner frame. Assembly required a lot of time and a lot of crew! The most common vehicle to replace the Flintstone sedan was a car or truck pulling a trailer. The low trailer bed facilitated loading and freed space in the vehicle for pilot and crew.

To save time and effort, pilots began leaving parts and pieces connected such as the burner and hoses and some enlightened Neanderthals even left the envelope attached. With the discovery of hydraulic lift gates, many began loading the envelope into the basket and using pickup trucks and later vans. This led to “Race packing” or “Speed packing”, which has evolved throughout the years.

Why race pack? A smaller balloon, with experienced crew, can be unloaded, inflated and launched in five minutes or less. Side benefits include less crew and easier work for all.

Race packing is not for everyone. Those without a lift gate or a low, open trailer would struggle. It is also not ONLY for competitors! Race packing is truly an evolved effort to take some of the hard work and time out of the process. If you like to use lots of crew, you don’t have to cut back, everyone just gets to work a little bit less!

One of the most important aspects of this packing, or really any style, is to do everything the same way every time you fly. Everything has its place in the basket, the truck, or toolbox and it goes back in its place when finished. Another generally good idea is to do as much preparation as possible for the next flight immediately after the current flight. A few extra minutes packing up can save much time and heartache on inflation. It is important to follow the same routine every time. This not only saves time and effort, but crew end up not tripping over one another, and 'stuff' is less likely to get lost. Some of these tips can be applied to your current packing style even if you choose not to adopt the entire process. Ultimately, you should do what works best for you and your crew for safe and enjoyable flight.

The process begins with the vehicle setup. In general, you need a way of getting the basket, with envelope inside, into the vehicle and securely strapped down along with fan, cooler, toolbox, etc.

We will start with having just made a safe landing in an easily accessible site (as we always do...) and the balloon deflated. You will want to pull the parachute top

back into place and set the Velcro tabs. You won't believe how much time this saves on inflation. Additionally, the envelope is protected from abrasion by the loop portion of the Velcro.

Pull the top of the tabbed envelope all the way down to the basket so the balloon folds in half. Then bring the middle down between the two so it forms a snake. Pull some slack in the basket cables and stand the basket upright. Gather the cables and wrap them up neatly in the fabric of the scoop. Next, use an extra length of rope, secure the scoop and cables to an upright. Remember, the cables are still connected. Do this neatly and securely so there is no extra fabric flapping in the wind while traveling.

Using bungee cords (I like the adjustable length kind), suspend the envelope bag by looping around the envelope bag handles and the upright poles. Do this on all four, or three, corners so the bag stays open. Place the flap of the bag on the side you are stuffing in from, generally the scoop side.

Stuff the envelope in, starting with the scoop end and continue until the crown ring and crown rope sits on top. Both the bottom AND the top of the balloon are on top. It helps to have an agile crew member jump on the envelope to get the extra air out. Release the bungee cords and tighten the bag draw string.

The next time you fly, pull the basket off the vehicle and orient downwind. Open the envelope bag and grab the crown ring. Have one crew member pull the crown ring and line out downwind while another helps feed the fabric out of the bag. If you have extra crew, they can grab part way down and keep pulling. Remove the rope that you used to secure the cables and scoop to the upright, and have someone pull the slack out of the envelope as you tip the basket over. All your cables and ropes are right there in place and ready to go! Attach the inflation restraint, start the fan and you are off. Remember, your top is already tabbed in, so the balloon can be inflated immediately without the need to spread fabric and blow air all the way through.

Next issue, we will go into more detail, and provide some pictures.....maybe even a video.💡

# *Safety First, Kids!*

## Anatomy of a Power Line Strike

By Steve Davis

### **Event Summary:**

During a recent event, a balloon contacted a relatively small power line approximately mid equator while attempting to land. The pilot had performed a previous landing in an acceptable field, however due to access and communication issues, he elected to fly on. Flying into the morning sun, he did not recognize the line as the poles were obscured by trees. One of the passengers was the first to recognize the line and alert the pilot. The balloon was immediately vented (correct decision), resulting in a hard landing while the envelope contacted the line. No energy was transmitted to the basket. There were no injuries.

### **Why is this significant?**

Similar to this pilot, several of the other power line strikes have involved high-hour, experienced pilots. Experience is not a predictor of safe performance. One may even go as far to say experience is a risk factor. We are not as good as we think we are.

### **Event Contributors**

*Visibility* – Flying into the sun with obscured power line

*Stress* – During previous landing, the pilot had been in an argument with crew who were frustrated with his landing location (ever done that?)

*Time Pressure* – While communicating with crew, the balloon became soft. The decision was made to fly on however the mouth was burned while heating. This did not affect the performance of the balloon however it did affect the emotional state of the pilot (who was already frustrated) creating an urgency to land and evaluate his equipment in the first field he found.

### **What is the lesson learned?**

When an event happens, it is rarely the result of a single contributor or one bad decision. Recognize when multiple factors are changing the things you always do and never do. Not only do you have to recognize these contributors, you have to STOP. #Always&Never 💡

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## Editor's Note

Over the past few months, we have mentioned that we are updating our data base and culling the names of paid members. We have officially completed that process and this will be the *LAST* newsletter you will receive if you haven't submitted your application and paid your dues. I know you *ALL* want to be kept up on current events in the area and are in *DIRE NEED* of the informative articles we are providing! Thus, I'm sure that pesky little bit about actually *becoming a member* may have slipped your mind. *HOWEVER*, we have now hit the stage where if you aren't a member, we must remove your name.

Basically, go [HERE](#), download the application and pay \$30 for a 2014/2015 membership! See?! Easy-peasy. (If you can't figure out how to download it, email Tom Roush. He loves technical questions! Heh.)

No go do it, or I'll shoot this dog:



\*No dogs were harmed or children scarred in the making of this photo.

## CBA Board of Directors' Email Directory

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Email</i>
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Randy Lee	Chair	pilotrblee@gmail.com
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This page unintentionally left blank.  
Microsoft Word refuses to allow me to delete it.  
(Just for you, Drew...)