

The Crownlines

THE NEWS LETTER OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL
BALLOON CLUB
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Your NCBC 2000 Board

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Gatineau FSS closes effective March 30th.

We have learned from the Canadian Balloon Association that effective March 30, 2000 that Gatineau FSS is closed. The good news, however, is that they have confirmed to Mary Ann Stevens, that they will strive to maintain information for those of us flying in the area and requesting local information from Montreal. It is nice to see that they are respecting our need for current local weather information.

Launch Privileges

1. Carleton University

If you haven't already done so, then please contact Mr. Duncan Watt @ 520-3804 to request launching permission. You will need to fax a letter of request with a copy of your insurance to 520-4474. The contracts will be renewed each October and will be valid for a calendar year. Thank you to everyone who donated balloon rides to the University.

2. N.C.C. Lebreton Flats and Jacques Cartier Park

Commercial balloonists are asked to contact Ms. Maureen Hayes by fax @ 239-5336 for a contract for launching privileges.

The cost will remain the same at \$400 for the first four balloons and \$100 for each additional balloon thereafter.

The NCBC will be purchasing an agreement on behalf of non-commercial sport balloonists (those not carrying fare-paying passengers) The cost to our members for the use of this contract will be \$15.00 per pilot copy. **For a copy please contact Kingsley Glover @ 613-769-7437**

We are scheduling seminars for pilots and crew for the spring of 2000. Interested parties should contact me at their earliest convenience for registration and venue information. Seminar fees will depend on the course material required. Courses will be held pending interest and availability.

- April 25th** *Map marking Session*
- Updating your PZ map so that it is current and correct
- May** *Human Factors in Ballooning*
Tina Daniels-Instructor
- For Pilots and Crew
- May 27th** *Different Balloon Systems*
- Always wanted to know how to hook- up Cameron, Aerostar or Balloon Works systems? Come out and get hand on experience with plenty of time to hook and rehook up systems. Come get hands on experience.
- May** *-Hydro line Safety – What to do for both pilots and crew*
-Propane
- How to handle a potential power line hit from both the pilot in the air and on the crew on the ground
 - Who to call in the event of power line incidents & how to get the power turned off quickly
 - Refueling
 - Potential Dangers
 - What to and not to do
 - Operating a fire extinguisher
- June** *Crop and Agriculture Identification*
Mr. Graham Lighfoot/OFA

- Need to choose between cattle or crop? Which one would the landowner rather that you choose?
- Identifying precious crops and buildings
- What to do if you have landowner problems
- How to handle damage on a land owners property

June

- *Observer Course*

Liz Dowd- Instructor

- Observer Ranking and Map Reading.

Looking for another way to get involved in ballooning? Liz Dowd in association with the Canadian Balloon Association will present the CBA Observer Course.

With the Canadian Championships being held in St. Jean in 2000 and 2001, this would be a great opportunity to use the new talents, which you will receive by attending the full one-day seminar.

Long Jump!

Friday, March 17 turned out to be a great day for a long jump. I would be flying a Cameron N-77 balloon. I had checked the weather and forecast the evening before. The upper winds were forecast at 47 knots at 6000 ft asl. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada is at approximately 2280 ft asl. The 9000 and 12000 ft. winds were considerably less.

When I called Environment Canada at 05:00 on the morning of the 17th. I was informed that the surface winds would pick up to 20kts. by 08:00 hrs. This somewhat concerned me. I knew for sure that a 20 kt. Winds would not be suitable to launch.

I decided to call a couple of crew people and decided to launch from within the City of Edmonton. Luck was on my side. The surface winds remained favorable, but did however start to pick up just before 09:00hrs. Of course this would happen during the inflation.

The inflation with two crew people went well and did manage to get airborne at 08:55hrs. Once airborne, I called ATC and requested to climb to an altitude of 6000 ft. The winds were pretty well as forecast from 290 deg.T. at 90 km. hour. (55mph) I eventually climbed to a higher altitude where the winds had increased to 104 km hour (65 mph)

With two - 15 gal stainless steel cylinders and one - 10 gal Worthington fuel cyl., I managed to fly 458 km (285 miles) in 4 hours and 58 min. I landed my balloon within 18 miles of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Surface winds were 25 mph. I landed with approximately 25% fuel left in the 10 gal cyl.

My highest altitude was 8800 ft. msl. Skies were clear and temperature at altitude was 15 deg. C. (59 F) for the entire flight. Not bad for the Great White Canadian North. My chase crew drove 1100 km (700 miles) round trip.

What a great flight.

*Stan Wereschuk
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
email: sweresch@accessweb.com*

Looking For Good Balloon Insurance Rates

The company of Willis Corroon Aerospace Canada welcomes the opportunity to quote on NCBC members balloon insurance needs! They offer very competitive rates as they underwrite for a British Aviation competitor, AIM Underwriting.

For quote information, please contact Peter Sifakis @ ph 514-842-9752 Watts 800-561-3852 & fax 514-842-7834

www.intheair.on.ca/ncbc

The Board of Directors is very pleased to announce the NCBC W00eb site. You can visit it at <http://www.intheair.on.ca/ncbc/>. The site is still being developed and you will notice that some items are still under construction. Keep visiting the site for new updates.

In a couple of weeks, you will find on the Web site the minutes of the AGM meeting that was held on January 17, 2000. For those of you who would like a hard copy, please contact Diane Casault at

A real bear of a polar adventure:

By Richard Starnes, The Ottawa Citizen
-Thu Mar 30, 2000

Seeing the sparkle in his piercing blue eyes and captivated by his boyish enthusiasm, you would think that John Davidson had just returned from the most excellent adventure.

Truth is, the Ottawa balloonist's journey through Canada's frigid North consisted of chapter upon chapter of accidents.

Three weeks or so ago, Mr. Davidson and Skyview Ballooning crew chief Matt Ferry set out for Hudson Bay intent on proving that a low-flying balloon is the most thrilling way to capture close-up images of polar bears.

Things did not go quite as planned.

Before the trip was a day old, the duo were shut down by the weather north of Chisasibi on the east coast of James Bay. They were holed up for 48 hours in a hut the locals call The White House. That made them so late arriving in Great Whale (also known as Kuujjuaripik or Whapmagoost depending on whether you are Cree or Inuit) that alerts had

gone out and an official search was only hours away.

The sled they had bought in Ottawa looked sturdy until it faced the rugged ice of James Bay. It lasted maybe two hours before collapsing. An unsophisticated \$100 Cree replacement worked wonderfully.

They had not realized how tough the trip would be across the icy wastes of Hudson Bay from Great Whale to Sanikiluaq on the remote Belcher Islands. Besides, they now had no time to try it and were forced to charter a plane to carry them and their Corel balloon.

They were even misled over the whereabouts of the polar bears they were looking for. "It was clear they did not want us there," Mr. Davidson said. "These bears are worth at least \$3,000 each to these guys, and their quota had not yet been filled. They were worried we were a Green peace-type mission and, knowing what film did to the seal hunt, imagine what it would do to the hunting of polar bears, big beautiful polar bears. I saw two dead bears and blood all over the ice where they had dragged them."

As a consequence of the misinformation, Mr. Davidson took off from Sanikiluaq and immediately lifted high in the clear Arctic sky to catch faster winds to take him to the spot he had been led to believe he would find bears. From 1,000 metres, he saw what he had been looking for, not 10 kilometres outside the village. But he was too far up to capture anything on film. The opportunity was lost.

Now it was time to concentrate on landing and retrieval. Judging by the forecast, Mr. Davidson had estimated his landing spot, north of Umuijaq on the Hudson Bay coast. But the weather turned nasty. He couldn't see anything below 300 metres and above it he was flying blind in snow. At least 100 kilometres north of town, he radioed back with his new estimated touch down spot. Here's how he describes what happened next.

“As I approached the coast I was traveling due north. I wasted some valuable landing time shooting off a couple of flares with the hope the guide (coming north to pick him up) might still see them in the sky now filled with snow.

“As I did this, brisk winds had carried me too close to shore and the intimidating rocky coast north of the tree line. My landing, about 20 metres inland, was wild. It felt like 40 knots, but afterward I guessed the wind at about 20 knots.



“I rode it for a while looking for the best place to land. I was probably 18 metres up. I saw an area a little lower with snow in and I didn't want to land on bare, hard rock so I went for it. I think I missed the rock by about six inches. In fact I jumped up in the basket as I went over it. If I had hit, I could have been thrown out. I was 76 nautical miles north of town.

“I had a couple of hours before sunset, and it took 90 minutes to set up my tent. I knew it would be cold. I had brought minimal supplies and a super small tent (four feet, six inches for his 6-foot, 4-inch body). I managed to sleep that night but was cold, even in my arctic sleeping bag. The sun shone brightly all the next day and, with clear skies, I knew the night would be really cold. I was hoping someone would find me before dark ... but by late afternoon I had set my mind to the night. I built a

snow wall all around my tent, using my boots and hands. I got into my tent around 4 that afternoon and got out the next day at about 8. “Wearing everything I had, including my boot liners and mitts, I never fell asleep. It was the coldest 16 hours of my life. I went through periods when my back would shiver. The inside of the tent became encrusted with snow. I would later find out that the outside temperature dipped below -38.

“That morning, I heard a plane low overhead. It turned out to be Air Inuit. I contacted the pilot. All I had to do was tell him I was 76 miles north of town. But he said: ‘What's your lat. and long. and hurry because I'm losing you.’ I grabbed my map. ‘OK, I'm north 57 whatever and 78 whatever.’ I did it really quick. But I put myself 15 miles inland when I was on the coast. He wrote that down and gave it to FSS station. So they gave the guide my position, pinned at 15 miles inland.

“The pilot did raise my spirits because he told me there was a shack on the shore just south of where I was. After about three miles, I found the shack and crawled in through the window. Although there was no way to heat the room, there were two thin mattresses. This was the Ritz Carleton. So I left one radio bag I had brought with me and started back for my sleeping bag. About a mile along the way I heard a Ski-Doo. I turned. The snow mobile was racing toward me at very high speed. The guide's name was Billy, and we shook hands without saying a word.”

Mr. Davidson, along with Mr. Ferry, who had been following with another guide, spent that night in Billy's home in Umiujaq before they started south. By the time they reached Chisasibi, the two men had minor frostbite, had had to pull their snow machine out of ice cracks countless times, had trekked their cargo up a 200-metre ice mountain and had listened as a screeching, probably rabid, fox went through the final throes of death outside the cabin in which they were sheltering. Back in Ottawa, in the warmth of his Skyview office, Mr.

Davidson recounts his tale with relish. Far from being depressed, he is full of enthusiasm. He may not have photographed a single polar bear, but he is now more convinced than ever his dream of a documentary on bears is a real possibility. Maybe even an Imax film: "I have absolutely no doubt in my mind I have proved it can be done."

He talks of discussions he already has had with Canadian Geographic and continues to have with the Canadian Wildlife Federation.

He talks of using power parachutes -- motorized flying machines that could be maneuvered close to the bears and could fly close to amazing rock faces with open water "which is teeming with marine life."

He talks of expanding business to include adventure holidays for intrepid tourists. And he talks of next year. John Davidson is going back and he will carry a sackful of new experience.

Spirit Of Winterlude Trophy

This years spectacular pecan balloon carving was awarded to Leslie Manion for her outstanding efforts in persuading the NCC to allow us back on the ice for launches during our annual Winterlude Balloon Fiesta! *Congratulations!*

BALLOON JUMPING ???

It was in August of 1981 at the Presque Isle (Maine) Airport, myself and a few friends (best man and ushers at my wedding the next day) were jumping out of a rented Cessna 172. That afternoon my soon to be wife came up to me and said "There is a hot air balloon on a trailer in the parking lot, I wonder if I can get him to take us up". She offers the pilot some cash, and he says "sure, I've never dropped jumpers before, but how tough can it be".

That evening the winds dropped off and my future wife, her brother (best man), and myself were

headed for 6000 feet over northern Maine. Since she had only 12 jumps at that time it was suggested that she stay in the balloon with the pilot. Two of us left once the balloon was descending at 500 fpm, my fiancée hanging over the edge watching and the pilot sitting on the floor just in case the balloon did something weird. Upon landing we were met by the ushers who were now chase crew, and went on to retrieve the balloon, pilot, and fiancée.

It was now a mad dash to the church as the bride, groom, best man, and ushers show up nearly 2 hours late for the wedding rehearsal. We had to explain, and also said it was our wedding, we were allowed to be a little late....

A year later on our 1st anniversary we met the same balloon pilot in southern Maine at a balloon festival for another jump with my wife. One of the ushers (Dave) was now enlisted into the ranks of freefall photographer to take pictures of the event. The jump went off with just a few hitches (will not go into the comical details here). After we landed my wife said, "let's go again tomorrow, and this time lets leave the parachutes on the ground and land with the balloon". Awww, ok, was my answer. The morning flight with about 30 balloons was wonderful.

The years go by and in the fall of 1996 I was talking to Dave (usher and one time freefall photographer) who now lives in Texas and he said he was going to Albuquerque to visit his girlfriend's relatives, and it just happened to be during the Fiesta. I thought it might be a nice time to take a vacation, so off to New Mexico we went. We went to several dawn patrol launches, helped a few inflations, watched the mass ascensions, and had a wonderful time. My wife even got to go on a dawn patrol flight with Bill Brogan and his wife from England/Austria. (Hi Bill and wife if you are reading this, and thanks).

After the Fiesta we decided that the balloonists were have way too much fun, so we went to the used balloon lot and bought one for ourselves. We used

up the old balloon and then went on to get a new one. So now we are having too much fun also.

So my opinion is that jumping out of balloons is fun, but not as much fun as flying them. And if you start your marriage with a balloon flight, you might just stay married for a looong time.

Soft Landings,

Mike & Tammie

THE TETHER SPOT

- Lorraine & Guy - Baby boy on March 10th 7 lbs 3 Oz Troy Armand LaFrance
- Sandra Shannon buys a new balloon and sell Jelly Bean
- Diane Casault passed her PSTAR exam and just needs to do her solo!
- Sundance buys the Maple Leaf and Flag balloons!
- Ross & Korinne McAlpine of Sundance had a baby boy - Devon Ross McAlpine on Dec 24th an early delivery!

Playing By the Seat of our Pants

Despite the fact the 2000 Winterlude Balloon Fiesta was a bit of a FOBAR* operation, Winterlude can be deemed a success.

Because we did not have a major sponsor, this year's edition was not an official event. But, thanks to Barry McGonigle of Sundance, our NCC entrance fee was paid, making us official collaborators. We still couldn't get the ice, but the NCC had agreed to let us use the Arboretum - which seemed like a good idea at the time.

Friday was weathered out but breakfast at Louis' was fun, and Saturday dawned beautifully. After

surmounting the problems of the locked Arboretum gate, we got to the launch area only to discover it wasn't plowed. Uh-oh. Luckily, Leslie had schmoozed with the NCC the night before and had the presence of mind to find a real live NCC director and invite her to fly on Saturday. As a result, a real-live decision-making NCC person was on hand to see balloon vehicles back up and try to maneuver on a narrow one-way piece of roadway. Unfortunately, even having three NCC types on hand was not enough to get us onto the ice that morning. So, after a discussion with Bill Whelan, and our three NCC people, we rallied up the troops and moved to Carleton for a launch.

The delay meant the last balloon was off was at 10:00, and it was something of a marathon flight. Bill flew for three hours (Diane for 1.5 and Bill for 1.5) and landed on fumes. Had we had the long distance race, he would have been the winner since he landed in Masson, Quebec.

The afternoon launch was also interesting. Although there was still no ice permission, the NCC agreed to plow the Arboretum area. However, it still wasn't suitable, and a few vehicles got stuck. The Arboretum problems were compounded by the fact that the entire area was now overrun with children and dogs. The children were sliding down the adjacent toboggan run which often resulted in toboggans running into the road and practically under the vehicles! Lovely. The dogs were running around unleashed, and it appeared it was just a matter of time before someone/something was either bitten or peed on. Due to the lateness of the morning flight and the plowing problems, a few pilots flew, a few chose to tether, and a few opted for home. Sunday found us back at Carleton but with a grayer, colder morning. Another marathon flight ensued with direction toward Hull/Gatineau.

The best news was that the nattering and schmoozing of the NCC paid off. By the end of the weekend, they had revoked their no-flying-from-the-ice rule and invited the Club back to Winterlude

for the last weekend to tether and fly. Yipee! Looks like we are on the ice for 2001.

Leslie Manion

Winterlude Socials

This year's socials were held at Kelsey's on Friday (well attended) and Rick's Cantina on Saturday (not so well attended). The Rock 'n Bowl was fun with about 20 people. However, it started late (9:30pm) and wasn't entirely conducive to socializing. Sunday's brunch had people coming in as others were going out.

It seems that Saturday night needs to be in a private area where everyone can mix and mingle. Restaurants tend to limit movement and also worry about space reserved and no one coming. There is discussion that perhaps we should look at a private room or house party pot luck - anyone want to offer a space? A formal brunch also seems to be a problem. The out-of-towners want to head out, some are still flying, and there's hotel check out to worry about. Sunday brunch places also hate keeping seats empty. Another consideration is to do away with brunch and just go to Louis' back room for a more relaxed informal brunch/breakfast thing.

Other Lessons Learned

While the event was something of a cooperative mish-mash, we recognize it definitely needs more structure and direction. We need a chair, 000 and people need to be assigned specific tasks - sponsorship, registration, socials, propane/champagne, invitations to both pilots and crew, coffee, and crew management (Saturday morning we had crew tripping over themselves; Sunday, we had no one). We need a major sponsor

to be able to provide amenities such as hotel rooms, pilot packs, coffee, donuts, etc. We also need a central hotel base for everyone - visitors and locals. The more we can centralize activities and people, the more fun it will be for everyone.

Thanks to the board members for tying it all together. We missed our president whom we never saw as she was on the verge of pneumonia. Thanks to our out-of-town pilots and crew who came up - Tammy and Mike Lavoie and John Adams. A special thanks also goes to John Adams in the Ericsson balloon that flew our NCC folk and helped smooth the those waters (they tell us the flight had nothing to do with granting us ice privileges, but it couldn't have hurt).

To make this event work, we need to start now with a strong Winterlude committee. If you would like to get involved in any aspect of planning or execution, please call Kingsley Glover at 722-5093. As well, if you have any suggestions of organizations that could be approached as a potential sponsor, call King. We want Winterlude 2001 to be something to look forward to.

Leslie Manion

Advertising & Article Submission

For advertising information or to submit an article to the Crownlines please forward to:
NCBC
P.O. Box 78081, Meriline RPO,
Nepean, ON K2E 1B1
Or via e-mail to [REDACTED]



'I was hanging by my fingertips'

Firefighter receives medal for rescue of man dangling from window

Lynn Ball, The Ottawa Citizen / Gatineau firefighters Gilles Tremblay, Lieut. Gilles Vekeman, Francois Audette and Charles Lefebvres, left to right, staged a daring rescue Friday. Mr. Lefebvres received a medal of bravery from the Gatineau Fire Department.

Firefighter Charles Lefebvres was awarded a medal of bravery by the Gatineau Fire Department yesterday for his heroic efforts in rescuing a man from an inferno.

Johann Montpetit, 22, was dangling from a fourth-floor apartment window on Friday afternoon as a fire raged inside the apartment he shared with his mother. Because the firefighters' ladder was too short, Lieut. Gilles Vekeman and Mr. Lefebvres had to break the door down and force their way into the apartment. Once inside, they battled intense smoke and flames.

Mr. Lefebvres reached Mr. Montpetit at the window and was able to hand him to firefighter Francois Audette, who was waiting on the ladder. Mr. Montpetit suffered second-degree burns on his arms and shoulder, but he was released from hospital last night.

Mr. Montpetit said Friday's events happened so fast he was outside hanging from the windowsill before he knew what happened. "The fire started quickly in my room and the living room. I couldn't leave through the door -- there were too many flames. I had to punch through the window with my bare hands to get out."

With the flames closing in and his hands in agony, he said his first temptation was to risk jumping, but he knew he was high enough up to seriously injure himself.

"I was hanging from the window sill by the tips of my fingers, and a nail was pushing into my palm. My legs were just dangling -- I had nothing to support them. I was tempted to jump because the heat was burning my hands. But I was hanging from a fourth-storey window, and it would've broken my neck.

"The firefighter on the ladder kept on yelling, 'Don't move, don't jump' all the time -- he didn't stop.

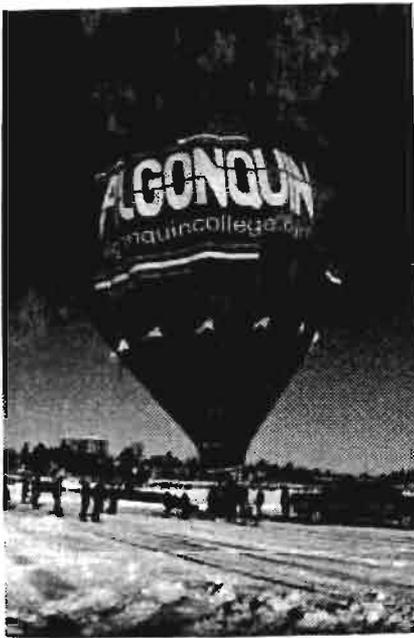
"I was hanging there for about 10 minutes or more -- I don't know. Normally I wouldn't be able to do that. The adrenaline was pumping through me."

Mr. Lefebvres said when the firefighters realized the ladder was too short, he and Lieut. Vekeman quickly ran up to the apartment. Once inside, Mr. Lefebvres was able to find a frightened Mr. Montpetit quickly.

"We smashed the door down. There was smoke everywhere. When I grabbed him he was very happy. He was getting hit in the back of his neck from the embers coming down from the ceiling and I said, 'You're going to go down.' He was very afraid, and he said, 'No, no, I'm going to jump.' So I came around and I took him in my hands and handed him down."

Mr. Lefebvres then said he knew he would not be able to get out of the apartment the way he came. "I had about

10 seconds to get out, because it was too hot inside, so I broke the window with my elbow and got out on the window ledge and hung there until Francois and Gilles got back."



Canadian Champion Bill Whelan piloted the Algonquin balloon over the Woodroffe campus on its maiden voyage January 19, 2000. Balloon Advertising triumphs again.! Congratulations Wild Bill.

FLY DAYS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Event</u>
Sunday, May 7	Afternoon	Carleton	Clean-up Garbage Day
Saturday, May 27	Afternoon		Flyday and Seminar (Bob Godin)
Saturday, June 10	Afternoon	Manotick Station	Flyday - Waupoos
Saturday, June 17	Afternoon	Navan	Corner Store Celebration
June 23-25		London, Ontario	London Air Show
Saturday, July 1	Afternoon	Carleton University (or other location)	CANADA DAY FLY DAY
Saturday, July 8	Afternoon	St. Andrews	Flyday/BBQ (Chris Savard)
Sunday, July 29	Morning	Carleton University	Flyday
July 13 - 15		Magog-Orford, Quebec	Recontre Amicale
July 21-23		Bécancour, Quebec	Festival de Montgolfieres de Bécancour
August 2-6		St-Jean-Chrysostome, Quebec	Festivent
August 4 - 7		London, Ontario	London Balloon Festival
August 12 - 20		St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec	Festival de Montgolfieres de St-Jean-sur-Richelieu
Saturday, August 26	Afternoon	Shawville	Flyday (Ron Eades)
September 1 - 4		Gatineau, Quebec	Festival de Montgolfieres de Gatineau
September 8-10		Sussex, New Brunswick	Annual Atlantic Balloon Fiesta
Sunday, Sept 24	Morning	Pineview	Flyday
Saturday, October 21	Afternoon	Navan	Flyday (Stephanie & Todd's)