



The Crownlines

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Important Transborder Information

NCBC President Dave Lopushinsky and club member Bryan Tepper are working together to deal with both Canadian and American border authorities to ensure that pilots can easily cross the border to and from festivals this summer.

After a Canadian pilot was denied entry to the United States for accepting compensation in the form of hotel rooms and propane, Dave and Bryan have begun verifying procedures with both sides to clarify the rules and regulations regarding attending festivals.

When the pilot tried crossing the border to visit a friend and attend a balloon festival, he was asked if he would be paid. Although he said "no," the fact that he would have his hotel room and propane provided, he was, indeed, receiving compensation. As a result of being turned away, he is now under a five-year ban. Whenever someone is denied entry, there is an automatic five-year penalty attached.

Although this rule has always existed, it seems it is now being enforced due to the economic crisis. Canadian pilots attending festivals may be taking work away from American pilots. There was little regard for the fact that the pilot would be adding to the economy through gas, food, and incidental purchases.

Apparently a similar rule exists for Canadian Customs, so David is currently investigating that side. Thus far, it has been learned that, if you are travelling to the U.S. on a B1 status (temporary business) and your incidentals are paid by the festival, you are in compliance of the law. Otherwise, if you are just a participant and on a B2 status (pleasure) then incidentals, such as hotel and propane, are considered compensation, and you are in violation of the law.

Dealing with both immigration sources is not easy, and answers are not forthcoming. In the meantime, a letter is being drafted that may help pilots cross their respective border with ease.

Pilots should be aware of this potential problem and are advised to check the Club web site (www.ncballoonclub.ca) for updates.

Altitude Record Set

On Tuesday, February 17, Sandra Rolfe attempted and completed an altitude record attempt for AX5 balloons. With a beautiful winter blue sky and light winds, Sandra could not bear to miss another day of flying and announced she was going to make her altitude attempt that morning.

After she cleared her work schedule, she began calling crew and observers, unpacking all the stowed equipment from the preceding day's flight, and calling Montreal Flight Planning to set up the logistics for the flight.

Crew Chief, Bill Whelan, set about prepping the balloon equipment and chase vehicle for another flight. Eric and Sue Jaring, along with Emily and Makayla (who were allowed to stay home from school to crew for the record attempt) came to crew and brought along one of their neighbours. Mary Lalonde cleared her work schedule and came as official observer.

Lift off was at approximately 11:50 and, less than an hour later, Sandra had completed her ascent to a new unofficial record altitude of 12,393 feet.

Landing was in the vicinity of Herb's Restaurant on the 417 where the post-flight lunch was held. Sandra took Eric up on his offer to buy lunch if she headed for Herb's Restaurant!

As with the previous flight, Sandra would especially like to recognize and thank the many people who contributed to the flight, a few of whom are listed below:

Crew Chief and Chief Technical Support - Bill Whelan

Official Observer - Mary Lalonde

Crew - Sue, Eric, Emily, Makayla Jaring & Dan

Equipment - Bill Whelan, Stan Werschuck, Bernard Gervais, Montreal & Ottawa ATC

As you know, balloon flying is a team event, and this flight was successful due to the team efforts of everyone involved along the way!

While this flight stands as an unofficial record, Sandra and her team hope to see it officially accepted by the CBA as a Canadian Record.

Very Honourable Mentions

Sandra Rolfe

Despite the fact that my name is on the altitude record, one must recognize the team effort that goes into balloon flying. From the original team who helped sew the AX-5 Patriotic All-Sew, to the crew of the day - there have been many people along the way who have touched the project.

Bill Whelan, pilot, switches easily to supporting the efforts of other pilots. He has been crew chief on several record attempts. Bill assisted Leopold Richier in 1995 to set three records, one of which still stands today - the distance record for AX-8. Later Bill assisted Ron Eades in setting the duration record (which was subsequently broken by Steve Raffaele).

After the manufacture of Patriotic All-Sew, Bill assisted me to my first two records - distance and duration in 2001. That weekend, he was instrumental in my attempt to reset my duration record and set a new altitude record in AX-5.

Stan Werschuck also supports the record attempts of his many friends in the balloon community. In previous record attempts, both in Canada and abroad, Stan has graciously loaned equipment on the good faith that it will be put to good use and returned in good order.

For my flights, Stan also loaned his high altitude clothing from his gas balloon adventures. Thankfully the weather was mild, and I could wear my own clothes! Many thanks to Stan for all the assistance.

Bernard Gervais and the Gatineau Balloon Festival are to be thanked for the use of the transponder, without which flights into controlled airspace would not be possible.

So, please join me in thanking these people for their outstanding contribution to the ballooning community.





At the last board meeting, it was suggested that the Crownlines include the balloon autobiographies of our members. This is the first installment.

Brian Kirk & Lina Vermette

It all started in a 5,000 watt radio station in Fresno, California... Oh wait; wrong bio.....

We've been members of the NCBC for almost two years. Our interest in ballooning was sparked by our friends, Leslie and Dave's many stories and adventures. Their interest in hot air balloons goes back more than 20 years, and they have been crewing for balloons for many years. Four years ago, we volunteered to man (person?) the NCBC tent at the Gatineau Balloon Festival. It turned out to be a rain-soaked weekend, but we still very much enjoyed meeting balloon pilots, crews, and other balloon fanatics.

Three years ago, Dave, with Leslie's able supervision, designed and sewed his own envelope. With a borrowed basket, he began training to become a pilot. Because Lina and I had both recently retired, we were available to crew during the week and on weekends. What a great experience (even with the 4:00 a.m. phone calls)! With Wild Bill Whelan as his tutor and mentor, Dave was an eager student. Wild Bill also provided us, Dave's "Ace Crew," (...ahem...) with valuable knowledge on the proper handling and safety requirements of balloons.

Lina and I became familiar with assembling a basket, setting up the burners, rolling out the envelope, handling crownlines, etc. We learned how to chase and how to anticipate the balloon's direction and ultimate landing area (okay, we're still working on that one). We learned how to plot a balloon's course on maps, and we definitely learned what NLZ means (and that's another story). We learned how to safely walk an inflated balloon across a field. And, we learned a lot about the rural areas around Ottawa - the many small communities, the quaint towns, the picturesque farms, the secondary roads, and the many narrow, dusty farm lanes.

Last year, we followed Captain Dave and Leslie to five balloon festivals where we met more balloonists and crews - we enjoyed talking with all of them and listening to their stories. This was a great experience. For us, ballooning is as much a social (and eating) event as the actual ballooning itself.

Lynne O'Flaherty

I have been involved with hot air balloons for the past seven years. I was a member of the Kinsmen Cornwall Lift Off committee for three years when a conflict forced me to leave the committee so that I could continue to crew with the balloons. I am now an ambassador of the festival.

When I started volunteering with the Lift Off, I met up with Wendell Purvis and Bob Bush. I crewed with Wendell for two years then the festival was moved to July from August at which time Wendell and Bob stopped attending. I crewed with other pilots in Cornwall: Scott McRitchie, Eugene Sperber, John Ousten, and Sebastien Poupart. I recently met up with Bill Whelan and Sandra Rolfe and have been to Bill's at least a dozen times to help sew her balloon for the record-breaking attempts. As well, I crewed when she broke the record for the two duration records.

Dale Pelky

Seven years ago I was invited by Rick & Sue Smith to go to a Christmas get together at the Brigadoon restaurant in Oxford Mills in Canada. There I met Bill Whelan whom Sue and Rick were crewing for. I started crewing for Bill last year. There isn't much I dislike about flying and crewing. At least I can't think of anything right now. There is nothing in the air prettier than a balloon. I like the chase, and I'm very proud to be a member of Bill's EH! Team.

Please send your balloon autobiography to Leslie at skyman@travel-net.com

Winter Frolicking in Vermont

Dave Brien

Every year a few balloon pilots get together sometime in January or February and take a weekend trip to Mary and Rich Tousignants' house in East Montpelier, Vermont. Last year there were six balloons; this year only three - me, Gary Morgan, and Tom Stodolski.

This year's dates were March 13-15, and we enjoyed much milder temperatures than last year's -25 degrees below zero!!! (at that number F or C doesn't really matter)

Rich and Mary put us up in their house, and we fly from their front yard if the weather permits. This year, we had two perfect morning flights. The first morning I saw 21 deer from the air.

During the day, we go sledding on a nearby hill, watch balloon slide shows, eat, play games, or go down the road for a Vermont maple ice cream cone!

It's always relaxing for me to fly here because of the plentiful fields, unlike my home site of New Hampshire.



Pilots Tom Stodolski, Dave Brien, Gary Morgan with their crews after a successful Vermont flight

Communication Reminders

Please check your e-mail system or junk mail folder to ensure that e-mails from the board at info@ncballoonclub.ca are getting through.

The club address receives several bounce backs on group e-mails and QuickReleases, so it is possible your spam filters or e-mail providers are blocking these legitimate e-mails from reaching you.

Also, please read the messages in full as several ask that you **do not reply** to the e-mail but send an answer elsewhere.

As well, only members in good standing are receiving this issue. Please remind your friends to renew their memberships.

Th  nks!

Yet Another Record Broken

Bill Whelan

At the end of February, we were on weather alert for another Canadian record attempt.

The weather was changing daily from mild rainy days to very windy, and then very cold nights with light winds, exactly what we were looking for.

We put our observers and crew on alert, and picked Sunday, March 1 as the day,

For those of you who don't know, I live, to put it as some of my good friends say, just "beyond the boonies." I like to tell them that my closest neighbors are the moose that live in my back yard...and there are plenty there (... Right Bryan?)

So flying from my back yard means that the crew has to leave their respective places very early. The launch was scheduled before 7:00 a.m., so it was still dark as everyone arrived and hustled to get ready on a cold winter night.

We launched at 6:59 a.m. with Sandra's Aurora 54. The winds were light - about 4 knots out of the northeast. Once she was off the ground, we headed back to my place to take off some of our winter clothes as the day would be long.

The flight path for the day took us back towards Ottawa, heading in a south westerly direction. The weather office had told us that the winds would shift during late morning to a more westerly flow which would bring us back towards my place and open farm lands.

Unfortunately, the weather change never happened, and Sandra got to fly towards Kemptville and still in a south westerly direction. The only problem with that direction is a lot of marshes and no fields.

When Sandra reached the six-hour mark in her flight, flying at 3000+ feet, she could tell she was running out of options as fuel was getting low - not critical, but low enough so as not to leave her anything for maneuvering when the time came to land. After weighing the options, Sandra wanted to take the next available landing site.

Congratulations, Sandra, on your successful flight of 6 hours and 35 minutes to break the old record of 4 hours and 58 minutes. That's an extra 1.5 hours, and still 8 gallons of fuel.

I have already heard her say, "Give me a better line and we shall see what that balloon can do..."

You go girl, GO!



Desperately Seeking Ideas

This newsletter can't happen without membership involvement. I have now officially run out of ideas and really need YOU, the members, to provide some input. Although I can cajole quite well (ask Dave Brien who has been browbeaten numerous times), others are not so easily persuaded - I am still waiting for a report on Albuquerque, a tribute to Andre Charpentier, and an Ottawa reminiscence. And, questions for the *Ask Jean* column would also be welcome. I can't believe that, with all the balloon adventures and stories out there, I have to beg. I am more than willing to edit or rewrite what is submitted (again, ask Dave Brien) but I NEED material. So, write your balloon bio, tell us about a festival you've been to, report on a balloon experience, or send along a photo, and be a part of the *Crownlines* and the club.

Meanwhile, thanks to those of you who do and have contributed. It is greatly appreciated!