THE CALGARY BALLOON CLUB

CHAMPAGN-E-VENTS

February 2021

MAILING ADDRESS:
c/o 5639 Maidstone Cres N.E.
Calgary, Alberta,
T2A 4C3

WEBSITE: http://www.calgaryballoonclub.ca/

Live PZ Map: https://goo.gl/maps/Twu821rLYiR2

MEETING HALL ADDRESS:
The Hangar Flight Museum
4629 McCall Way N.E. Calgary, Alberta,
T2E 8A5

MEETINGS:
Second Wednesday of each month, (except July, August & December) @ 7:30 p.m

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS		
President	Brant Leatherdale	403-478-6800
President-Elect	Richard Clark	403-288-2978
Past-President	Shane Lockyer	403-771-3002
Vice President	Linda Then	403-276-6507
Secretary	Cathy Dudgeon	403-603-8774
Treasurer	Dirk Luxen	403-992-2194
Director-At-Large	Emma Lockyer	403-968-4147

COMMITTEE CHAIRS		
Chief Pilot	Linda Then	403-276-6507
Chief Flight Instructor	Del Michaud	403-246-8332
Education	Richard Clark	403-288-2978
Merchandising	Shane Lockyer	403-771-3002
Newsletter Editor	Cathy Dudgeon	403-603-8774
Rural Events Co-ordinator	Brant Leatherdale	403-475-6800

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[Front Cover Design - Thanks to Ralph Dowson]

I am honoured to report to you as the President of the Calgary Balloon Club for 2021. I have said many times that the President's title is not any more important than your title "a member of the Calgary Balloon Club." Your role is essential in the Club!

I want to thank all of the members and YOU that have contributed over the years so much time, effort, and passion for keeping it active! Additionally, thank you, on behalf of the entire membership, to our 2020 executive team, including Shane Lockyer (President), Linda Then (Vice-President), Emma Lockyer (Director-At-Large), and Dirk Luxen (Treasurer), all of whom return in 2021. Also, thank you, Debbie Sobb (Secretary), who passes the position to elected Cathy Dudgeon (welcome) and Del Michaud (Past President), who passes the role to elected Richard Clark as President-Elect (welcome again). Lastly, thank you also to all the committee chairs and volunteers who keep the Club rolling and "work behind the scenes."

Given this is the first report of 2021, I will say Happy New Year! It might sound goofy saying this in February, but after what the world was through in 2020, we like the sounds of "happy and new." 2020 was a year that people collectively wanted over. A New Year brings new optimism; unfortunately, COVID-19 doesn't care about the calendar.

While the last year has been very challenging for the world and not the best flying times for our sport, we can be immensely proud of our Balloon Club and the members. The ballooning community has held several safe balloon gatherings to enjoy the freedom our flying brings. The Club continues to meet and fly (when a group is acceptable).

While COVID-19 has been a challenge for our Club, there are silver linings:

1. They say, "you can't teach an old dog new tricks," but the Club could teach long-tenured members how to ZOOM. It has been a bonus to see many of you (who usually can't logistically attend) online at meetings. It was also fantastic to see a social distance Christmas Party with members from close and far.

2. There have savings from our monthly meeting space, and we have been able to add to the Club's reserve.

3. The Class of 2020/21 pilots is abundant.

The Club is now in its **45th** year, and I am confident we will be stronger when COVID is over and that our Club will continue to grow for the future with your involvement and participation.

Brant

Flying:

Currently we are under province wide restrictions on the number of people that we can gather with outside. The number established on January 18 was for a maximum of 10 people. With proper safety measures, pilots can schedule flights but the after flight meetings will still be quite limited and under proper safety measures as well.

The Calgary Balloon Club would still like to hold their annual first flight of the year for everyone but we will have to wait until the restrictions are lifted even further.
In the meantime, while honoring the current restrictions, some pilots will be flying and it will be good just to get our balloons in the air. Landowner protocol is of course very important and proper safety measures must be upheld.

Long Jump Challenge 2020-2022 is still in full force and January was not great and not just because we were in isolation. The weather was consistently warm and not the best conditions for a long jump. Later in January, it is now quite cold so we will see how the February conditions are for the competitors.

Operating Guidelines:

We briefly looked at the Operating Guidelines at the January meeting and got some feedback from many of the members. The one area tha tstands out at htis time is landowner relations. I would like to ask any of the members who are interested in assisting with this area to please contact a member of the executive.

Other areas are open for further interest, and we will be asking for members to get involved.

Authorized Person:

The Calgary Balloon Club has submitted two applications to Transport Canada for an Authorized Person. Previously, Dennis held this position by he decided to let his designation lapse in 2018. With the current increase in Student Pilots, the club would like to maintain an Authorized Person.

Instructor course:

Transport Canada has given the club the go ahead to present a course for potential instructors. With the current provincial COVID-19 restrictions in place restricting indoor gatherings but planning for the near future, we are preparing for a date as early as March or April.
Even if you do not plan to teach student pilots in the near future, it would be a good course to take at this time.

Costs will be covered by the Calgary Balloon Club for all Club members.
If you are interested in taking this course, please let Linda know.

Club Meetings via Zoom / Trivia Contest

With the longevity of our requirement for ZOOM meetings instead of in person meetings, the executive is trying to provide a more interesting and sociable meeting for members. The introduction of the Trivia contest has been well received and congratulations to our January 2021 Winner, one of our newest members and newest student pilots, Willy Taillon. Willy chose 2 club calendars for his winnings and now we will have our club calendars on display in Medicine Hat!

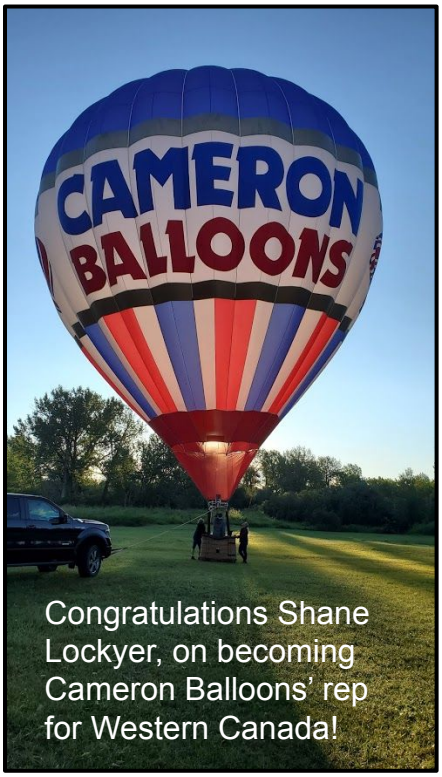
Willy will be the moderator for the upcoming trivia at the February meeting so we encourage all members to join in and support him.

Also, at the January 13 general meeting, we introduced the breakout rooms that we used for the Christmas party. This time they were specifically used to enable better socializing with members.

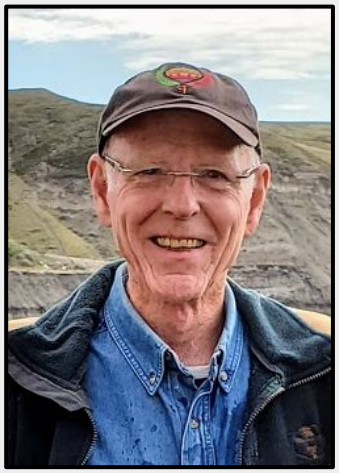
Since it looks like February will be another ZOOM meeting, we have set the start time for 7:15 p.m. with breakout rooms for socializing. With 4 – 5 members in each room, it allows each of us to participate and interact with each other. Just a reminder to our members that we need a decent number of participants to "get on the ZOOM" close to 7:15 p.m. to enable this to work. The meeting will start at 7:30 p.m. sharp but again, after the meeting, we will have social breakout rooms so that you can visit with other club members as well.

We received great feedback on this process at the January meeting so we encourage you to attend the February meeting.

Linda



Time to renew your Calgary Balloon Club membership!



Thank you to Del Michaud and Debbie Sobb for serving on the Club Executive - for all your time, energy, ideas, and hard work. You're appreciated!

A huge thank you to Emma Lockyer and Linda Then for organizing and hosting the annual Christmas Party, for helping us stay connected. It looked a lot different this year, but we still managed to gather over 30 people to have fun together playing games, visiting in breakout rooms, and telling stories. Congratulations to Thomas on winning the Ugly Sweater Contest, and to Brian Hval on winning the raffle.

CBC Christmas 2020

There is always much to think about and preparations to be made, leading up to Christmas each year. For 2020 this was still the case for all of us, but the thoughts and planning had a rather different spin to them. With the presence of Covid restrictions, the big question was, how can we get together and celebrate the season if we can't gather in one place?

So, when it came to organizing the annual Club Christmas party there was considerable discussion in the background to see what might be possible. Creative and technological minds came up with a plan – we could meet via Zoom, have small groups in break-out rooms, play some interactive games, and maybe have time to visit too. Add an 'Ugly Christmas Sweater" theme and you have the makings of a fun virtual gathering!!

Linda Then, our ever-creative game master, devised some activities that could work in the virtual realm. A test run of the format was held in advance and fingers were crossed that it would run smoothly with the larger group. Several Club members stepped up to act as the hosts in the break-out rooms. Emma Lockyer was the overall Zoom host, organizing the break-out rooms with their respective hosts and managing the technology to make it all come together.

The annual Club Christmas party went off as planned on Friday, December 4th, and was a resounding success. We were able to see familiar faces, meet new Club members, share some time together and even learn a thing or two as we interacted during the games. The Ugly Christmas sweaters were a big hit, with great participation from the group. It was a fun evening, keeping us connected, as we all look forward to a New Year.

Heather Clark

A much different Christmas party this year but again, the feedback was positive.

Attendance was good and much appreciation to the club members who "volunteered" to host the breakout rooms and handle the games. Some frustration as members tried to figure out the secret to the Green Glass Door but fun to watch some of the antics displayed for the teams during the Charades. Watching Bert sit serenely in his chair while Inge did her actions well outside of the camera. I think we saw her fingers. Lots of laughs…

And some truths from the Two Truths and a Lie told us that Cathy was a champion Roller Skater and Susan entered university at 16! Wow!

Thanks to all who participated in the Raffle Draw and a special thanks to everyone who found or created an ugly sweater to display!

Congratulations to Brian and Kathy Hval for winning the raffle draw of six Gift cards and congratulations to our guest, Thomas Ooms for winning the vote and gift card for the Ugly Sweater!

Linda

Barb is a renowned artist whose work with steel, video, photography and paint has been shown across North America. Back in the 1980s, she went for a balloon ride over High River, and was captivated by the experience. The result was a series of beautiful paintings that were shown in Edmonton and Calgary. The Calgary Balloon Club was fortunate to be the recipient of some of those paintings, one of which now hangs in Searle's home. Here she describes how it started….

BLUE SKIES AND COLOUR

Many years ago, just before I turned 30, I moved to Calgary with my partner. We were looking forward to seeing the western Canada. The clear sweet air and wide open horizon lines were unbelievable. We were swept away by the distances that we could see from hilltops and the open highway. It was early summer. It seemed like a fantasy to see the sky was dotted with hot air balloons. Brilliant colours floated serenely above the city, moving gently on the breeze. Intrigued, we hopped into our old car to follow them, to figure out where they would land and who could tell us more. In the days prior to the internet, in a city where we knew no one, this was how we satisfied our curiosity and ended up in aviation ground school.

The course gave us some basic knowledge and brought us into a group of fascinating people and experiences. The balloons and their wicker baskets were moved around in pickup trucks and required a ground crew to move them into location, unfold the fabric, inflate them before the flight and a crew to launch them.

Inflating the balloons was a colorful experience of shifting patterns. The low rays of the early morning sun shone through the translucent fabric. The effect was almost mesmerizing to someone fascinated by color and form. The camera was always close to my side. Nowhere else had I seen such large swaths of vivid reds and yellows, billowing as the fans warmed the air and rising gently, magnificently into the vertical tear drop shape. Then the basket took on a captain and a passenger, fired the burners and rose magnificently above the ground. We would follow the balloon as it floated above us, eventually to an open area where an hour later it would descend. We would help disengage the fabric from the basket and carefully fold it up and place it all back in the truck.

After a number of hours of ground work, a crew member's earned a ride. Eventually it was my turn. We drove to the High River area, and in one of life's most memorable moments, I floated above the High River rodeo grounds, watching the chuck wagons race around the track in the evening sun. The floating silence was profound, occasionally interrupted by the burner that warmed the air and helped to direct the balloon. The sun was low, and the evening light viewed from the floating balloon was filled with magic and beauty. The camera was always by my side. These were days of print and slide film. I was studying imagery, having just

completed my second year at the art college. The abstract art movement was in my studies and overlapped with the geometry and color of the balloons. I sublet a studio in the Neilson block along 8th Ave. It gave me space to work up a series of large paintings, learning about color and form, fascinated by the experience of the hot balloons which became my subject. This resulted in a series of paintings that were shown in Edmonton and Calgary.

My work began with color explorations, inspired by the hot air balloons. My studies and I won awards and residencies that moved me into different materials and explorations. I have completed public art projects, sculptural works in steel, video, as well as paintings that are in many prominent collections. The Alberta landscape is still a focus in my work which I would invite you to see through my website. In 2018 I was invited to participate in a pilot project through the Changemakers Studio at MRU. As an artist whose work has centered around change, I have been partnered with an organization to collaborate in the process of addressing complex social problems through a creative lens.

While floating over the fields around High River, I had little idea of how our future would unfold. We were in Calgary for a year and a half when my husband was transferred to Edmonton and we left the balloon club before we had much chance to get to know people. We returned to Calgary a couple of years later, with a little baby and a totally different lifestyle. However, that first year and half in Calgary, with a fascination for the blue sky and floating colours of the balloons was a wonderful way to see a new province and new possibilities. Thirty seven years later, we are still here and the magic of this introduction is a pleasure to write. There were so many people whom I would like to thank for opening their doors to a young couple who couldn't believe how the blue sky shone and filled with color.

Thanks to all who were involved in the balloon club around 1980. The flight over High River followed by a corn roast and campfire is one of my most memorable moments.

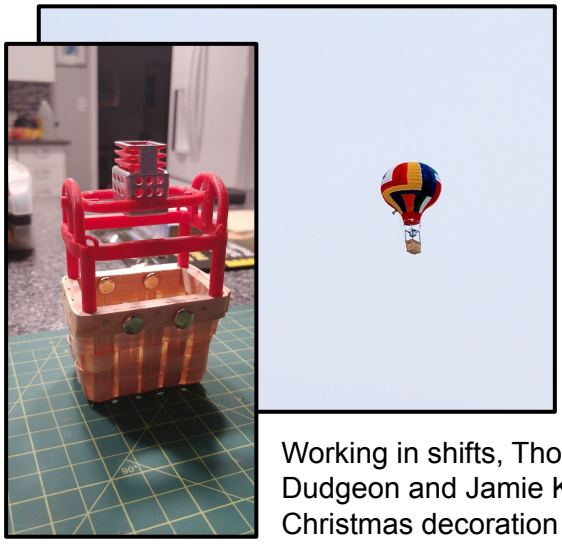
Barbara Amos
www.BarbaraAmos.com
@bamosart

iHunter Alberta app, recommended by Andrea Canfield.

- A great tool for getting permission to land on leased land.
- A $10 yearly subscription allows access to names and contact information for leaseholders of grazing, farm development and other leases.
- Create waypoints and store the landowner contact information.
- Android or Apple
- Available for other provinces and states

If you have some good ballooning pictures for the website, please email them to
Shane Lockyer.
shanelockyer@me.com

Susana, Luka, and Niko recently moved from Alberta to London, Ontario. They'll be missed!



What do bored balloonists do during a pandemic?

Thomas Ooms painted a paper balloon decoration to look like "Maryann's Treat" and attached it to his drone for a flight. After getting a 3-d printer from his wife for Christmas, he added a basket.

Working in shifts, Thomas also worked with Cathy Dudgeon and Jamie Kinghorn to create a "Tomten" Christmas decoration from a retired basket.

BALLOON TOYS

These soft Balloon Toys are great to give to landowners, children, friends.

A way to promote the Calgary Balloon Club.

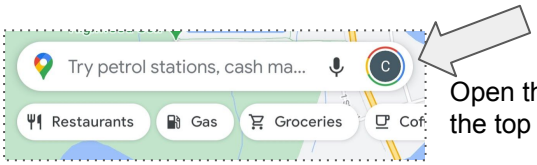
$3/ea 1-11 or $33/dozen

(Balloons are about 3 ¼ inches (8.5cm) high)

Contact Richard or Heather Clark
403-288-2978 clarkrh@telus.net

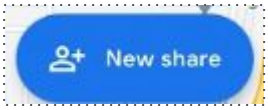
Shane Lockyer has gotten into 3D printing and has created these 3D printed REGO dust plugs and caps. Avaliable in all colours shown here, $10 each and includes a parcord drawstring. Shipping availiable worldwide. Email shanelockyer@me.com with any inquires!

Del recently learned about another way for a chase crew to track the balloon, using Google Maps. *(Cathy and Ken tried it to keep track of family members on long-distance road trips, and liked it.)*

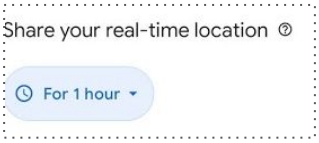


Open the Google Maps app on your phone, and tap the circle in the top right corner.

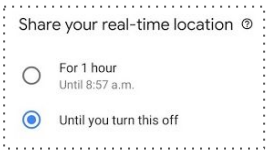
Choose “Location sharing”.....



…. Then “New share”.



Choose to share for either one hour, or until you turn it off.



Your contacts will appear under the time selection, and choose which people will receive the Location.

Tales From the East

By Jonathan Perron-Clow

Let me tell you a tale of a distant land where burners roar and magnificent crafts rise above the earth to enliven those stuck on the ground. Eastern Canadian ballooning is alive and well and in my new column I'll share all the latest news on what's happening on the other side of Thunder Bay.

It took less than 24 hours for balloonists to get fired up last spring when the Government of Quebec announced that all summer 2020 events and festivals were to be cancelled. It created a window for something a little different that had been in dream mode for a long time: the return of competition to the East. Now this story isn't new. It started as a bunch of Easterners chatting at the Heritage Inn in High River which became the 2016 Amicale St-Jean, a friendly competition that was totally rained out. But the process was good and people showed up and kept talking about it.

The 2020 version of the Amicale was much more successful with eight competitors flying ten tasks over four flights. I'm sure CBC members heard all about it with half of those competitors bringing their accents and red wine to Drumheller and High River in the fall. While at the Heritage Inn, a great dialogue between those visitors, the local hosts and the CBA led to an understanding of the importance of collaborating to get more interactions between

The International Balloon Festival of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu is coming back in a different form this year as it plans a summer full of balloon related activities rather than the nine-day format it normally has. As part of that, a bilingual and virtual training and learning symposium is on the docket for balloonists from across the country coming this spring. Then, the Festival submitted a bid to the CBA to host the Canadian championships from June 10-13 (update to come!). This would be the first time the championship comes east in over 15 years.

During the fall, a number of students got burner time and did their ascents to 5000' (well, I didn't do that second part yet!). In fact, there are presently over 15 students in the East. The renewal in ballooning is coming along nicely as we look to sustain and grow our sport.

Since lockdowns and double lockdowns have taken effect over the winter months, the focus has gone back to building balloons with a number of special shapes set to grace the skies in 2021. I can't share too much here, you'll just have to come see!

A big focus in 2021 with both the potential Canadian championships coming East is helping pilots get their balloons across the country to attend events both in the East and West. This will go far in building stronger ties between balloonists everywhere. Facebook is a useful tool, but sharing the sky and some bubbly is even better!

Luka's Spiciness Takes Him to New Heights

By Cathy Dudgeon. Photos by Luka Drganc.

On a cold, clear December morning in St. Mary's, Ontario, the weather was finally just right for Luka Drganc, Sebastian Msuya and Mark O'Neill to try a high altitude flight. They quickly set up the Cameron 77, Luka turned on his supplemental oxygen, and he was away.

Ascending at about 1000 feet per minute, it still took 20-25 minutes to reach 18,000'. Although it was about -15°C on the ground, it was a refreshing -40°C at the higher altitude.

"I wasn't ready for the cold," says Luka. "I was shaking!"

Low clouds to the north and the south prevented him from seeing the Great Lakes. He spent a few minutes getting some pictures, then started his descent back down to warmer temperatures and his waiting crew. He encountered some 38 knot winds at about 10,000', but the rest of the flight was uneventful.

18,000' is a personal best for Luka, but they've already started planning the next high altitude flight.

Blast From the Past: Power Lines and Thermals

By Ralph Dowson

July 24, 1980 – Canadian Championship at Grande Prairie, AB. – My first competitive event.

Setting: I was flying the "Magic Dragon", AX7-77 (yellow, orange, and red horizontal bands with a large Velcro Rip-Top, not a parachute top like today's newer balloons) owned by the Calgary Balloon Club. Evening launch from Bear Creek Park within City of Grande Prairie, about 8:30 PM (in case you were wondering why so late for launch, Grande Prairie is much farther north than Calgary, so the farther north you go at this time of year the daylight hours are longer - almost 1 hr.), wind was from the east, taking all balloons west of the City.

Launch was fairly fast with moderate wind gusts (and that was before anyone used tie-offs, so it was the crews duties to 'Hang-On'). Once in the air and some time had passed, the winds calmed down. Not a cloud in the sky, the sun was getting lower in the western skies, with a brilliant orange red glow of the setting sun (you know when you are driving in the evening and the sun is setting – you can't see much through the glare - this was the situation), and it was time to start looking for a landing site.

There was a balloon about ¾ mile west of myself, he was landing as there were very few landing sites ahead as it appeared to be solid forest beyond. I was approaching an open grassed area between this old farmhouse and the barn about 100 yds. north of the house. There was a row of planted trees running north to south, 35' to 40' tall for maybe 300 to 400 yards, and maybe 75 ft. east of the old dilapidated house.

I had asked my passenger to watch for power lines and I surveyed the area as well, but could not see any signs of power lines, no poles, no single line. The grassed area looked very inviting, like an ideal spot to land. It was an old farmyard, so I knew it would have good access…. I let the balloon cool off and descended slowly approaching the landing area. Then, the basket stopped in mid air, envelop kept going, now bending over at 45° angle to the ground, I could feel basket moving, then suddenly it broke free, penduluming (go to "Urban Dictionary" for definition), then PLUNK, basket had contacted the ground and was laying on it's side, passengers face was about 8" from the grass, I was on top of him…. ***What the hell was that! ! !***

It was that **power line** that neither myself nor my passenger had seen hidden behind the trees. YES, WE FOUND IT! ! ! No excuses, I should have known that an old farmyard would have had a power line somewhere.

Here is what happened: The single line power line had stretched and stretched from the force of the basket with the envelope still moving and it finally snapped, allowing the basket to swing freely and then strike the ground. Both ends of the power line were lying about 18' to 20' on either side of the basket.

If you remember, back in the late '50's (am I dating myself?), cars went from 0 to 60 mph in 8 or 10 seconds, - I can tell you my normal heart rate went from 60 to over 300+ in a split second as did my thoughts – What an Adrenaline Rush….

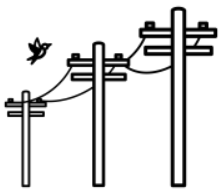
Everything is OK, my passenger was OK, I was OK…. My mind was rushing…. you say to yourself, STOP!! Be CALM!! Think about the situation!! …. Then I remembered a ground school lesson by Brian Hval, who was Chief Pilot of the Calgary Balloon Club back then. His lesson was on ***"What to do in case of a Power line Encounter"….*** Here was Brian's explanation: "If you ever hit a power line and it lies broken and is touching the ground it would energize the ground for a radius of 20' to 30' or more and this could Electrocute You". His instructions were "Carefully climb out of basket and up onto the top side". He went on to say, "With your feet together, jump as far away from the basket as you can, land with your feet together, then hop, hop, hop, with your feet together until you are 50' to 60' from the grounded power line ends".

I followed these instructions. All OK so far. I was still safe. My passenger was still in the basket & he was safe.

Now this was long before we had cell phones – most of us 'flew by the seat of our pants', as it was called then, and it was also common then when flying as a group, the 1st Pilot off the ground and the Last Pilot off the ground carried a radio. Some Pilots had very large (like 2' high x 8" x 10" box), these were bulky portable Aircraft Radios, not everyone had one of these. We all depended on our Chase Driver to follow us closely and keep in touch. Sure enough, within minutes our Chase Crew showed up to find us in this predicament. Now What???? As the crew and I were contemplating our next move, a ½ ton truck pulled up, he asked "is everyone OK, I saw the balloon go down and I thought you crashed". I told him we were both OK, but we hit the power line and broke the wire. He said to me "I work for Alberta Power; this power line was disconnected about 10 years ago…. **WHAT!!!** GULP! GULP! Pheeeeeew…. Really!!! It was our 'Lucky Day'…. The Champagne & O.J. really tasted good that evening as did the Cold Beer….

What mistakes were made here:

- Approached a farmyard surrounded by trees at an unsafe altitude.
- Did not prove to myself that there were definitely NO power lines.
- I just assumed, because we could not see any power lines or power poles, that there were no power lines and that it was OK to land. Never make assumptions when flying, they will cause you a lot of grief.



A few pointers and Balloon Rules when flying: ALWAYS, ALWAYS look for Power Lines signs when flying (not the kind that say "BEWARE: Overhead Power Lines"), but for "signs" that hide Power Lines – namely:

- **A few other Rules:** If you are contour flying you always should say to yourself, "There definitely is a Power Line in that area ahead". As you get closer, watch for tell tale signs, power poles, maybe a glint of sunshine on the power line or there is a large grove or row of trees. If in doubt, stay at a safe altitude.

- When approaching any object when flying: A pumping jack ("Donkey") in an open field…. OR an old building or shack in an open field…. OR an old Farmyard surrounded by trees…. OR a Highway or R.R. tracks and do not forget, Power Lines sometimes run diagonally across fields…. And be extremely careful when flying down into a valley (Poles and Power Lines blend into terrain) or when following a river. Single Power Lines are hard to see and they often cross rivers in a single span…. Watch for the large red or white balls that are attached to the power lines at mid-span (not always there) …. Always be alert and avoid passenger or NO CELL PHONE distractions.

- Until you can **absolutely prove** to yourself that there are no Power Line, you must assume there **IS** a Power Line and keep flying at a safe altitude.

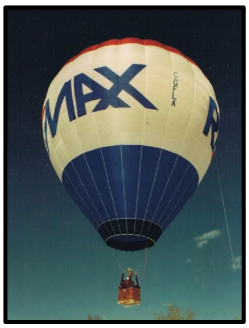
- One other tip, when launching upwind of power lines: When you think you are a safe distance back from a power line, without a doubt, **double** your distance back or more, too many things can go wrong…. Wind gusts, tie-off problem, not enough crew, burner problem, low tank pressure, and the list goes on….

- Power Lines are Balloonists most **dangerous obstacles**.

I was extremely lucky in this case, many other Pilots over the years have not been as Lucky.
P.S.: I'm not trying to preach here…. Take Power Lines seriously, I know, I have been there….

Fast forward almost two years …..

Setting: March 27, 1982. Flight from Chestermere Community Playground - First Re/Max Balloon (C-GFLA) in the Calgary area (Spring 1982). Passengers: Gentleman from Re/Max with whom I had negotiated this contract and his 10-year-old daughter. The following action took place about one mile east of Heather Glen Golf Course.



The previous evening, a wind and snow storm blew through the area and left snow packed on the north side of all fixed obstacles, power poles, fence posts, trees and north face of buildings, etc. It was nice on the surface, with light upper winds. Should be a nice morning for flying...

Rigged up the balloon, launched with very light winds drifting to the south southwest, great morning for contour flying, very slow. As we approached the north-south Range Road 283, couple of short burns, up and over the power line, and back down to contour flying. We were now nearing a couple of spring filled 'snow melt' sloughs and were turning in a southerly direction. We started an ascent as we were about to cross Highway 560 (Glenmore Trail S.E.) which had a multi-wire power line just to the south side of the highway. A couple of short burns should have given us lots of clearance, but we just kept on ascending. I could feel the balloon rotating, continuing upwards. I could see that we were now moving in an easterly direction very quickly (a total directional change), I kept burning in short bursts to keep the air inside the envelope hot and pressurized. We just kept going up and up and up and the balloon was still rotating. Within a few short minutes we had moved eastward about 1 mile.... across a blackened summer fallow field that was partially covered with snow from the previous night's snowstorm. We were near 3000' AGL. (See Note 1: *** at end).

Somewhere between 3000' and 3500' above ground level, we had lost the effects of the thermal and I could feel the envelope stabilizing. I was back in control now. What does this mean? When Mother Nature catches you in a thermal, there is not much you can do except ride-it-out, but you must continue to make regular burns. If you don't, the envelope will become very limp, and you lose the effect of the ascent very quickly. You will know when the effects of the thermal subside.

Now, looking down, I was directly over a huge cattle feedlot, maybe 2500 to 3000 head of cattle eating and walking around in the mud, and the snow and the doing things cows do.... Eeeewee, Yuc-keee*y*.... A nice place to make an emergency landing. NOT....

Our problems were NOT over yet.... we still had to land. We had passed over a summer fallow field which was black and white. Fresh snow on the north side of the furrows from the previous night's snowstorm, and on the south side of the furrow, the snow had already melted from the direct sunshine. It was muddy, and wet from the snow melt....I let the envelope cool off and started to descend, slowly down to about 3000' AGL, then 2500', still over the feedlot, then down 2000', and at about 1500' we started to move very slowly in a westerly direction out back over the summer fallow field. Looking much better now. Continued descending down to 500' AGL, we had now stalled out again, virtually no directional movement. Continued descending down to 100', still no directional movement. I had a decision to make now, burn and go back up till I got into a band of air that had some directional movement, but I certainly did not want to get caught in another uncontrolled updraft thermal, or to land and accept the consequences. I decided to land, NOW. I vented hard for the last 35' or so, PLUNK, splash, the basket stood erect, envelope collapsing gently to the south over the muddy field.

Now another problem, my chase driver had located the landowner to ask permission to retrieve the balloon from his property. He was not happy that we were over his feedlot animals and he let my driver know, (although at 3500' down to 1500' the cattle did not move and by then we had moved back out over the open muddy field). At this point, do not argue with the landowner, no matter what you say in your defense, you are GOING TO LOSE. It is his property and his livelihood. And he certainly did not want anybody driving into his field either (that was not even an option when one looked at the condition of the field - It was MUDDY). So, I am sure all you balloonists know what happened next, RIGHT....

Crew went to work putting the envelope back into the envelope bag taking their time and as carefully as possible by 3 or 4 crew members lifting the envelope off the muddy furrows and gently stuffing it back into the bag.... Not nice, as you can imagine. Then, to dismantle the contents in the basket, 4 tanks out, then a trek of about 400 yards to the chase vehicle, then back and forth for the tanks and another trip for the envelope. Yes, it was a muddy walk back and forth, and as the snow continued to melt, it got muddier, and it got even worse. You know that sticky topsoil gumbo that builds up on your boots every step you take a step? Well, that was it. Our legs were tired and throbbing, our boots were heavy. We were all a MUDDY mess, head to boots.

The day that started out nice and sunny and calm, then an up, an up, an up-thrill rotating, out-of-control balloon flight, with a slow descent, and then a not so welcoming landowner, and a muddy mess. *Y*ou would think that was enough for one day.... The rest of the day was also memorable, our gracious Re/Max owner took us all out for a late afternoon brunch - mud and all. He thought that was the least he could do.

The next weekend, the envelope was stretched out on a grassy area, and a bucket of clean water (no soap), and a light scrub and most of the mud came off. It did leave a shadow where the mud was, but throughout the spring flying when there was dew on the grass, it continued to clean off the traces of that memorable day back in late March. The old van was pretty muddy, so it got a good wash down, also. As for myself and the crew, we all went home to have a nice warm shower. Muddy clothes into washer and dryer and we now were ready for another adventure....

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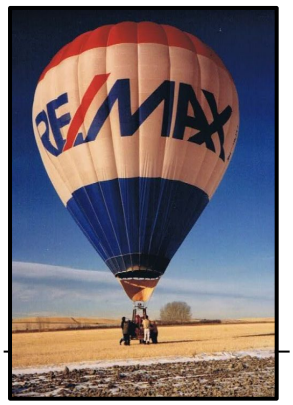

A few pointers and suggestions

Be prepared: If you haven't experienced a thermal yet, you will sometime. It certainly is unnerving the first time. You don't burn in your regular burning cycle, but you are still going UP! As well, you could be in gentle rotation, or it might be more severe. You could move a fair distance in a short period of time. You know those little, short bursts of swirling dust you see in spring and summer across fields - these are more advanced thermals. If you ever see these little 'dust devils' when you are flying, get on the ground as quickly as you can safely. Don't dilly dally around, or you might experience the ride of your life.

In my experiences - Springtime Flying is subject to Weather changing very quickly. If you are planning a flight, fly early, short - one hour to four hours maximum, and land before the ground surfaces heat up and cause thermals.

Black fields cause thermals as the ground in these areas heats up more quickly. You know colour rules: white deflects, black absorbs. Avoid if possible

Thermals cause distress to Pilots due to being out-of-control. Stay Calm - Think - Relax. Do not let your passengers know you are experiencing a stressful situation. Avoid saying exciting words such as "S_ _t", or "D__n", or "H__C__P" or other exciting words that come into mind... BE CALM.

Note: 1: *** At this point, after we had landed, the crew reported that the red top of the Re/Max balloon (approx. top 25% of the balloon) was not visible. The top was caved in by the outside air pressure forcing the top down as we ascended at a high rate. They also observed the balloon rotating and the basket flaring outward a few degrees off vertical as we rotated. These actions were not observed by the Pilot nor passengers during flight.

Ralph Dowson

An example of a balloon distorted by a fast rate of climb, provided by Ralph. The Re/Max balloon would have looked similar to this when it was caught in the thermal.

In the early 1980s, balloons were allowed to launch from the Stampede Infield. They were told to “go out hot” to avoid the Grandstand overhang and any unusual wind conditions that might pull the balloon back towards the building.

In both cases, the people in the basket were unaware of what was being seen from the ground.

History of CBC Pins

By Ralph Dowson

Ballooning in the Calgary area got its start in the early 1970's, when a few people started the Alberta Free Balloonist Society (AFBS). In 1976, the Calgary Balloon Club (CBC) was officially registered. Ralph Dowson began designing the CBC's pins in 1981. Each pin has a unique story to tell and like most stories, the first few years set the tone for traditional features. The words "Calgary Balloon Club" appear on all the pins, along with the word "Member" and the year. Calgary's traditional White Cowboy Hat is included, and each year a balloon belonging to one Club member is honoured by "wearing" the white hat. Many personal balloons are featured, and the Club's own balloon, when it still had one. A maple leaf is included to indicate that it's Canadian. Other features generally show Calgary's relationship and proximity to our beautiful Rocky Mountains, prairie scenes, lakes, and the Drumheller Valley.

This is the first in a series to showcase 40 years' worth of CBC pins, beginning with the pins from 1981 through 1990.

	1981 - The balloon pin idea started out just to be a suggestion to the "Club", as many members were interested in Balloon Memorabilia, not ever expecting to be a permanent addition to the Exclusive C.B.C. Members Lapel Pin each year. Thus, no year designation on this pin. This pin featured the following 3 Club balloons in 1981: - "P.T. Toole & Coty Real Estate Ltd" balloon (Cameron, AX7-77, C-GXWK). - The "Magic Dragon" balloon (Thunder, AX7-77, 12 gore C-GXSV). - "Phoenix Data Centres", commonly known as the "Phoenix" balloon with the large 'Red Phoenix' bird logo on one side and the sponsor name on the opposite side as "Phoenix Data Centres" (Cameron, AX6-65, 12 gore, C-FLAG).
	1982 – This balloon pin has similar balloon characteristics as the 1981 version except a half round banner with C.B.C. embedded inside and a large green half Maple Leaf, also, the balloon had a large "Magic Dragon" logo implanted on the balloon pin (the implanted "Magic Dragon" was not on the actual balloon). This pin was the 1st to have 'Member' and 'Year' added.
	1983 – 2 new balloons were added to the C.B.C. lapel pin and 2 deducted. Balloons added: - "Aurora" was added to the Club's Team in 1982 (Thunder-Colt, AX7-77, 12 gore, C-GUTF). - "Red Knight" also joined the Club's Team in 1982 (Cameron, AX7-77, 12 gore, C-GVJR).

	1984 – The C.B.C. added another balloon to the team, commonly known as ‘C-FREE’ in 1984 joining the Aurora, Red Knight, & the Phoenix balloons flying over the Rocky Mountains of Alberta. (Cameron, Viva 8 gore, AX7-77, C-FREE).
	1985 - A new idea was conceived as Champagne is (was & and will be) an integral part of ballooning, it was only natural to honour such a tasty delight with “shooting corks” of Three Club Balloons C-FREE, Red Knight and Phoenix and the foaming champagne bubbles.
	1986 – The Aurora, Red Knight and C-Free flying in the Foothills of Alberta with a big grey cloud overhead. Note: F.Y.I. – Sometime between 1985 and 1986, the C.B.C. sold the rights to the Registration Letters to balloon C-FREE, its new registration letters are C-FHNI, but it is still generally referred to as C-Free.
	1987 – A pre-Olympic Balloon Race featured over downtown Calgary high-rise offices and apartments, and the Rocky Mountains in the background with Aurora, Red Knight, & C-Free and other balloons off in the distance.
	1988 – Three C.B.C. balloons flying over Canada Olympic Park with the Ski Jumps to the upper left, and the Bobsled and Luge tracks to the right with the Rocky Mountains off in background, prior to the Winter Olympic Games held in Calgary in Feb. 1988. The three balloons are Aurora, C-Free and Red Knight.
	1989 – The same three balloons flying over the Saddledome Ice Arena and the Calgary Tower and the Rocky Mountains.
	1990 – Aurora, C-Free, and Red Knight balloons flying over the City of Calgary and Calgary Tower, with the Rocky Mountains and the Foothill beyond and the within the Outline of the Province of Alberta formed with a Capital “C.

Montgolfier Day 2020

Scott Gordon celebrated Montgolfier Day with a training flight, launching from the same spot where he first saw balloons up close in August! His fellow student pilot and crew that day also happens to be his dad, Brent Gordon.

Cathy Dudgeon and Shane Lockyer's mini racer in High River's George Lane Park.

Recent flights

Dana Zielke

Dana Zielke

After roughly three months of pandemic and weather delays, Shane Lockyer, Jenn Podruski, and Cathy Dudgeon with Del Michaud were finally able to fly again.

Kelsi McKeage

Dana Zielke

Cathy Dudgeon

2021 CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Dates and locations will be confirmed by email.
All events are subject to Alberta Health Services' pandemic guidelines.

CBC Monthly Meetings will be held through Zoom videoconference until further notice. Please watch your email for the link each month.

DATES	EVENT	LOCATION
Feb 10	CBC Monthly Meeting	Wherever your computer is. Maybe your living room.
Feb 13	Saturday after meeting flight	
Feb 13	Sylvan Lake Winterfest	Sylvan Lake, Alberta
March 10	CBC Monthly Meeting	Wherever your computer is. Possibly the den.
March 13	Saturday after meeting flight	
April 14	CBC Monthly Meeting	Wherever your computer is. Mars, if you want to use a virtual background.
April 17	Saturday after meeting flight	
April 30-May 2	Spring Drumheller Happening	Drumheller, Alberta
May 12	CBC Monthly Meeting	Wherever your computer is Maybe your deck, if it's warm enough.
May 15	Saturday after meeting flight	
June 9	CBC Monthly Meeting	Wherever your computer is. Possibly outdoors!
June 12	Saturday after meeting flight	

Please send submissions for the May newsletter
to Sharon sjelliott@sasktel.net or Cathy cathycdn@gmail.com by April 30.

Calgary Balloon Club Membership Application

Membership Year is from January 1 to December 31

Name: _____
Surname First

Address: _____

_____ Postal Code:_____

Email Address:_____

Phone - Home:_____ Phone - Cell:_____

It is the intention of the Club

- to use the information to contact you about Club activities
- to provide a Membership Roster and email list for Club members
- to use the information for Club purposes
- for you to have access to your information
- to respect your privacy

***I give permission to have my contact information included on the Membership Roster and/or email list to be distributed to the members of the Calgary Balloon Club.**

Circle One YES NO

Membership Class	Rate	Amount Enclosed
Active	$45/year	$
Family of Active Member	$15/year	$
Name(s) of Family Members applied for		
Family member's email address, phone		
Total Enclosed		$_____

Please make **cheque** payable to:
'The Calgary Balloon Club
c/o 5639 Maidstone Cres NE
Calgary, Alberta T2A 4C3

For **e-transfer**, please send to Dirk, Club Treasurer at luxen@shaw.ca