

# Waikato Whispers



Waikato Hot Air Balloon Club: [www.waikatoballoonclub.co.nz](http://www.waikatoballoonclub.co.nz) Tel:07 856 0060

**CLUB NIGHT** Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December Social night at The Cook. Meet from 6:30pm for tea. Note the change to the second Wednesday night.

**CLUB DAY** Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December Flying. Meeting time and place to be posted on facebook

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Aircraft Instrument Maintenance

A reminder to all pilots – CAA Rule 91.605 requires the following equipment to be tested every 24 months. This applies to our handheld equipment that we have to have when flying:

- 91.605 (e)(1) refers to our aircraft radios
- 91.605 (e)(2) refers to our altimeters (includes our altimeter/GPS)
- 91.605 (e)(3) refers to transponders (for those who have a transponder)

Because these instruments are not fitted to the balloon, they are not checked as part of the annual inspection process. As pilots, responsible for our aircrafts, we are responsible under CAA Rule 91.605 to have them checked every 24 months.

Items such as our first aid kits and fire extinguishers which are 'filled' to the basket are checked every 12 months as required by CAA Rule 91.605 (e)(6) and 91.605 (e)(7).

### For our Junior Balloonists: Crewing Safety

#### Clothing Suggestions

- **DO** wear sturdy, flat shoes with good traction. Ground conditions can often be damp or wet.
- **DO** wear long sleeve cotton or wool jackets or shirts;
- **DO** wear layers of clothing so you can remove layers and remain comfortable as the day warms up;
- **DO** wear gloves ideally leather. There are some crew tasks that require leather gloves to be worn so as to protect YOU;
- **DO NOT** wear synthetic (Nylon) outer clothing. Synthetic outer clothing can create static electricity and, if ignited, can cause serious burns;
- **DO NOT** wear scarves, other types of loose clothing, or clothing with draw strings that could get tangled in ropes, inflator fans, etc.

#### On The Field

- **DO** keep an eye out for pilot and /or crew chief at all times; be prepared for things and conditions to change;
- **DO** wait for the pilot or crew chief to tell you what they want you to do, **DO NOT** take it upon your self to make that decision;
- **DO** keep an eye out for spectators who are not watching where they are going or what's going on around the;
- **DO NOT** grasp or step on the balloon fabric. Handle the envelope only by the load tapes, which are more durable than the fabric;
- **DO NOT** let anyone walk on the balloon fabric;
- **DO NOT** wrap ropes around your hands or any part of your body. **DO NOT** allow anyone else to do so;
- **DO NOT** tilt or move the fan when it's running;

## 7) What is so great about hot-air ballooning?

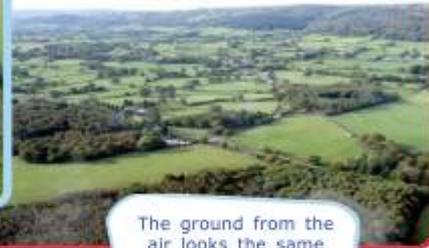
### So many things...

The feeling of moving in the air but of no breeze.

Balloons float along with the breeze.



Seeing such great distances from a magical vantage point.



The ground from the air looks the same as on a map, once you get used to comparing the two.

Aerial map-reading, is always great fun especially flying over places you know from the ground.



Seeing places you have never seen before. Which, is great if you like being a little bit noseey!



Waving hello to people you know and to friends in other balloons



Having a tasty brunch after a morning flight is my favourite. (Brunch is half breakfast and half lunch)



Being out in the countryside with friends, seeing wildlife and new places.

Splashing 'n' dashing



How funny, it is like they are sailing - don't worry though they just turned the burner on, heated up the balloon and took off again



I meant **real** wildlife!



Having a tasty breakfast after flying is something every member of the team looks forward to.

## Weight On means Weight On:

Up, Up, and, Away-EEEE

by Jacquelyn R. Paul

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It was a beautiful day in the neighborhood and just right for an afternoon tether. This one would put megabucks in the coffers for a children's school. Three balloons were inflated and doing just fine, taking all the little ones for rides at a buck a whack (adults, \$2). Each balloon had an experienced pilot and at least one crew member familiar with tethers along with several volunteers from the school, who were new to tethering. The balloons were anchored securely by three tether ropes each.

With all that expertise around, you would think nothing could go wrong, right? Wrong!!!! One of the older balloons had the basket loaded with five small children. The four adults assisting let go for weight off at the pilot's command. The balloon ascended slowly to the top of the 80 foot ropes which pleased the young passengers immensely. The pilot held the balloon at that peak so all the small ones could get a good look around. A few moments later, with a slow and calculated descent, the gondola touched down like a feather, with the assistance of the ground crew.

One of the adults took charge of removing all paid passengers while the other three adults kept weight on. Here's where the fun begins. It seems once the basket was empty of passengers - all the crew let go of the gondola except for one - who was conversing with the pilot! Suddenly that crew member - me! - found herself an unwilling passenger for a fast and furious flight - on the outside of the basket!

Since this was an older balloon, the sides of the gondola were much taller than the newer streamlined styles. The lady crew member was leaning on the leather rail, arms crossed, with her torso leaning fully on the basket. When everyone else let go - up went the balloon before anyone could react. As we all know, during a tether the pilot keeps the balloon hot so it is more buoyant.

How in "Hades" does this happen and what happened? You've all heard the expression about one's life flashing before their eyes? Well, here's what flashed before mine - for it was me hanging onto the basket - in the mere two or three minutes of that incident:

I felt the basket lift me under my arms like a bolt, looked down immediately to see the precious ground leaving my feet all too fast, and thought I had better not let go now!! If I did, I figured I would break something for sure! I tried to climb into the basket right away - but couldn't. The pilot tried to pull me in by my belt loops, but couldn't. I literally yelled at the pilot to fly the balloon and try not to catapult me off when we reached the top of the ropes. I reached in the basket (still on the way up) and grabbed one propane tank with my right hand, and another with my left hand (criss-cross style). The pilot grabbed me around the chest and held on after I yelled "I don't care where you grab me, just get a tight hold on - and NOW!" We sprang to the top of the ropes and bounced a bit. He let the balloon cool and gave the burner a little blast to control the descent. Then I begged that he tell me how close we were getting as we approached the ground for touch down. He gave me a foot by foot report and told me when to bend my knees so I would not hit too hard. As I felt the basket settle and the grass beneath my feet - I let my death grip go and collapsed. My legs felt like jell-o.

A whole bunch of people rushed over (I guess they heard me screaming) and put weight on. I staggered across the field and sat down, still shaking. The pilot was so shaken that he asked another to take over for the next few rides. After checking up on me, he took a rest to calm his nerves.

**What was learned?** Was it pilot error? Remember that the crew member who took the fateful ride was also a balloon pilot! Who was at fault? Was anyone at fault? Will you learn something from reading this to prevent a similar accident if you participate in a tether - be you pilot or crew?

I learned a simple lesson! Next time I worked a tether - I was going to pay attention to every - AND I MEAN EVERY - little detail of what was going on!! I would never again divert my attentions believing that everyone around me was as responsible as the next one, NO MATTER WHAT! I would put weight on, but be ready in an instant to let go and never, never again lean on the gondola with my entire upper body.

I was wearing sturdy leather gloves the entire time - otherwise I might have cut my hands on the edges of the old tanks. I was also dressed appropriately - long pants and heavy boots. Any kind of good boot or tennis shoe works

great. Even though I was wearing a leather belt - the pilot could not pull my "dead weight" over the side and into the gondola. There was no way I could boost myself or get a foot hold to help the pilot pull me in. It took less time for this to happen than it takes you to read this article!!

My husband (who was tethering our balloon across the field) had seen a pair of boots hanging below the basket of the center balloon as he descended from one of his rides. He had wondered just what fool was playing around and riding on the outside of that basket. He was ready to protest those antics just about the time he found out what happened.

Later, I called a close friend and confidante of mine to tell her of my harrowing tale. I wanted a little sympathy. All during my lengthy and detailed account she was snickering and at the end she was laughing out loud! When I finished, I asked her what she thought was so blasted funny. She replied: "The same thing happened to me just a few days ago! Except it was a new Raven basket, so I was able to climb in before we hit the top! Scared the H--- out of me! Wish I had been there to see you hanging on!"

Ed note: The seasoned Goodyear Blimp team lets three of the six passengers get out, then puts three in, before letting the next three get out. Then they immediately put in the final three. There is no time when the Blimp is permitted to be too lightly loaded, no matter how many men are available to hang on the outside of the gondola. With novices providing weight on, the only truly safe procedure is to have enough weight in the basket at all times.

Copied from Balloon Life February 1998

### Important Dates:

SGM: Club Night Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February. Details to be sent out in January

AGM: Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February. Details to be sent out late January.

Riverlodge Balloon Meet: 28-30 January

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Chief Pilot	Dave Norris	021 351 957	<a href="mailto:nenya@ihug.co.nz">nenya@ihug.co.nz</a>
	Mark Brown	021 912 679	
Secretary - temp	Linda Norris		<a href="mailto:bellan@vodafone.co.nz">bellan@vodafone.co.nz</a>
Treasurer - temp	Dave Norris	021 351 957	
Whispers	Dave Norris		<a href="mailto:nenya@ihug.co.nz">nenya@ihug.co.nz</a>