



Editor's Note:

We have recently been experiencing some issues with the mailing server for the QR causing some members to not receive their messages. In working through the problem, we realize some of you may have received this newsletter multiple times. We believe we have identified and resolved the issue and do not expect any further problems. This message is one last resend to reach those who did not receive it. We apologize for any inconvenience and thank you for your patience.

What Have You Done For Me Lately?

By Maury Sullivan – BFA At-Large Director/Treasurer

I hear this all the time regarding the BFA or my local balloon club. I follow the Reflector, more as a lurker, and regularly see challenges of what is the BFA doing about this, that and the other. I'm proud to say, the BFA Board of Directors is a very energetic and ambitious group of volunteers. During the BFA election process I was personally contacted and challenged by a long-time BFA member who regularly posts to the Reflector and asked my opinion on matters concerning the BFA safety seminar program.

As a direct result of some personal election challenges, I was able to spearhead a movement that completely rewrote the Continuing Education and Safety Seminar Guidelines, obtain Board approval, posted the new material to the BFA web site and answer many of the criticisms that have plagued the safety seminar process over the years. In addition, the BFA Seminar Webinar© has been restructured to provide the same high standards including testing to ensure proper attendee participation.

In the same two month period, the BFA Board has also tackled the challenges presented by the recently issued “white paper” of an FAA staff calling for all hot air balloon pilots flying passengers for hire to register with their local FSDO. The Balloon Ride Operators Division and the Board are working in concert to try to stop or at least significantly curtail this obtrusive legislation.

Ever go to a weekend balloon event and get challenged by an FAA inspector that you are not permitted to participate because you, as the holder of a private certificate, are not permitted to carry passengers or receive compensation for hire? Balloon events have been using ‘get out of jail free cards’ or letters of FAA personnel and legal counsel that support the fact that, in most events, the perks of a free hotel room, food, show up money, etc. are not considered compensation for hire. This primarily hinges on the fact that pilots are not required to fly in order to receive these benefits. There is currently a movement afoot to cancel all such letters, opinions, legal guidance, etc. that are not included in the FAA’s digital library as part of FSIMS. Members of your Board have written to local FSDO’s to ask that these critical documents get included in the digital library.

Are you a BFA member who is also a member of a division like Hot Air Competition Division, Gas, Balloon Ride Operators or have you donated money for a special purpose or program like Jr Balloonists, Domont Safety Award, etc.? With the recent acquisition of new non-profit accounting software and a Treasurer familiar with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, the BFA financial records and reports will now comply with all fiduciary responsibilities as well as show any funds established by donors or restricted by the Board of Directors for specific purposes.

BFA President Sam Parks is preparing a more comprehensive story on the accomplishments of your Board in its first 100 days. I can assure you, it’s more than is accomplished in Washington DC. Look for this story in the next issue of *Ballooning*.

So, next time someone asks what has the BFA done for me? . . . you’ll know. Maybe now you won’t be afraid to ask a friend to join.

FAA Unofficial Documents

John S. Duncan, Director, Flight Standards Service, AFS-1, issued a memorandum to all flight standards employees indicating that any 'guidance' document (policy memo, e-mails from policy divisions, letters, interpretations) not incorporated into one of the official databases is cancelled effective January 15, 2014.

These documents have provided critical precedents in the past for issues such as Private pilot participation in balloon events

The BFA Board and many other balloonists contacted their local FSDO offices to request they incorporate these essential letters into the electronic database. Based on the responses received from several FSDO offices, we believe that most or all of these letters are now included. Thank you to everyone that contacted their local offices. Below are the documents to reference. Many are included on the FAA website [here](#).

September 8, 1977: letter to Ms. Tucker Comstock from Neil R. Eisner, Acting Assistant Chief Counsel, Regulations and Enforcement Division, Office of Chief Counsel

October 8, 2010: letter to Mr. Mike Sommer from Rebecca B. MacPherson, Assistant Chief Counsel of Regulations, AGC-200

July 11, 2012: letter to Andrew Roberts from Rebecca B. MacPherson, Assistant Chief Counsel for Regulations, AGC-200

December 7, 2012: letter to Gary Bruce Eaton from Rebecca B. MacPherson, Assistant Chief Counsel for International Law, Legislation and Regulations Division, AGC-200.

New Continuing Education Safety Seminar Guidelines

The BFA Board has approved a new Continuing Education Safety Seminar Guidelines effective December 1, 2013. The changes are designed to provide organizers more flexibility and

creativity in the design of the seminar. The old Back to Basics and Enrichment categories have been replaced with three Tiers of topic categories.

A total of seven hours of instruction are required for a BFA sanctioned safety seminar. Half-day or mini seminars, while not discouraged, will not qualify for full sanction. In order for a pilot to achieve sanctioned seminar credit for inclusion and reporting to the insurance companies, they must accumulate a total of seven hours of instruction at an all-day sanctioned seminar or accumulate a total of eight (8) Continuing Education (CE) credits through any combination of acceptable alternatives enumerated in the Guidelines. A full credit sanctioned seminar must include topics as defined from the 3-Tier levels.

The new Guidelines now also include specifications for the BFA Seminar Webinar© and that includes seven hours of instruction and mandatory testing. Review the new Guidelines on the BFA [website](#) now!

Questions concerning the new Guidelines can be forwarded to the Continuing Education Safety Seminar Chairman, Ken Walter, widdancerballoons@gmail.com.

BFA Online Seminar Webinar©

Mark Saturday, March 8, 2014 on your calendars now for the 2014 BFA Online Continuing Education Seminar Webinar© presented in cooperation with the LTA Colorado Safety Seminar.

For the second year, the event will be streamed live with production services presented by [Aero-News.Net](#).

The seminar will be held at the Aurora Public Schools Professional Learning and Conference Center in Aurora, CO. In accordance with the new BFA Seminar Guidelines the session will run from approximately 7:45A.M to 6P.M. Mountain Time. The rundown of speakers/subjects includes...

Stephen Blucher - FARs

Toby Brown and Don Day - Weather

Chris Mattes - Pilot and Crew Safety

Sam Parks - Balloon Accidents

Andy Richardson - Maintenance and Repair

Scott Spencer - Pilot Decision Making

Registration fees for the BFA Seminar Webinar© are as follows:

BFA Pilot member	\$ 50
BFA Crew member	\$ 35
Non-BFA Pilot Member	\$ 100
Non-BFA Crew Member	\$ 75

The Seminar Webinar© will be counted as a sanctioned safety seminar, but please remember to check with your insurance carrier for their policy regarding discounts for online seminars.

Registration will open in January so watch www.bfa.net and the monthly BFA eblast *The Quick Release* for more details in the near future!

Western Region Director

The Board would like to officially welcome its newest member, Katie Griggs of Dayton, Nevada as the Western Region Director. Katie will serve the remainder of the current term (October 2014).

Katie's experience in many facets of the sport ensures she will do an excellent job representing the region.

The Board was very pleased with the amount of interest received from the Western region in serving this position and would like to thank each of those that volunteered. Many excellent candidates were considered and Katie was selected by vote of the Board according to our bylaws during the December meeting.

Family Membership

In last month's issue we highlighted the non-voting Crew Membership as a great option for crew members to join the BFA. Another membership opportunity we have been pleased to offer for a number of years is the Family Membership. For only \$20/year, additional members of a regular annual member's family may join the BFA.

Family members receive all of the benefits of a traditional membership excluding a printed copy of BALLOONING magazine and are also eligible for joining our other Divisions. This is a great way to get your other family members more involved in the sport! Consider [joining](#) today!

2013-2014 BFA Long Jump Update

By Mark Caviezel

Hello Long Jumpers,

Here at the Long Jump bunker, we've received a number of comments regarding the verbiage of the prior announcement, "40 Gallons of Propane, Fly as far as you can." To clarify; we'll never suggest that you actually fly your balloon until you're completely out of fuel. Reference our long standing recommendation in the rules document: "Special care is needed in cold weather and high altitude flights. Fly with your head, not over it." So be sure to start your descent from cruising altitude when you still have enough fuel remaining to safely round out and land.

In other news, here is the coolest web-based wind depiction I've ever seen: <http://earth.nullschool.net/> . It shows current and forecast winds over the entire world! Note that in the hectopascals unit of pressure

altitude, 850 hPa is about 5000 feet MSL, 700 hPa is about 10,000 feet MSL, and 500 hPa is about 18,000 feet MSL.

The rules for 2013-2014 are unchanged from last year. The competition window opens November 1st and runs through the end of March. The complete rules are now posted on the BFA website. All interested pilots are invited to register and fly.

For more information, please [contact](#) Mark Caviezel , BFA Long Jump Manager.

BALLOONING Magazine

Good news! We are happy to announce that beginning with the January issue, BALLOONING magazine will again be delivered in polybags! This enhancement would not be possible without our many advertising partners and our printing partner – Modern Litho Print Co. of Jefferson City, MO. We thank them for the continued support.

We also would like to thank you for your continued patience as we work on getting the online magazine reader working again. Software compatibility issues have kept us from uploading the most recent issues but we expect those to be resolved in the near future.

New BFA Members!

The BFA is proud to welcome these new members. *Welcome!*

George Oesterreicher CA

Will Parker OH

If you are not currently a member, please consider joining today! We would also ask that all members take the time to share the benefits of their membership with their ballooning communities and encourage any non-members or lapsed members to become a part of the organization. The BFA is your one and only national representation of the ballooning community and we need member support!

*Reminder, the [Quick Release](#) can be signed up for by non-members as well so please [SHARE!](#)

Corporate Member of the Month

The BFA is proud to promote its Corporate Members. We showcase a member each month as the Corporate Member of the Month.

December's featured Corporate Member of the Month is Cameron Balloons, US!

Cameron Balloons is one of the world's largest manufacturers of hot air balloons producing a wide variety of sizes and shapes to fit pilots' various needs. Cameron is also a long-time advertiser and supporter of the BFA.

For more info on Cameron Balloons US, please visit their website [here](#). The BFA would like to thank Cameron Balloons for their continued support!

For a complete list and more information on all of our Corporate Members, [click here!](#)

New Achievements!

The BFA congratulates the following crew and pilots on their recent accomplishments!

Larry Kirkbride, OH – Commercial LTA Certificate

Ben Miller, OH – Commercial LTA Certificate

Jacob Molnar, CA – Commercial LTA Certificate

Greg Weber, NM – Private LTA Certificate

Joe Chapman, MN – Private LTA Certificate

If you know of other new ratings or achievements, please [let us know!](#) We rely on notices from examiners, Facebook and emails.

US National Championships

Dates have been confirmed for the 2014 BFA US National Hot Air Balloon Championships in Longview, Texas. Slightly later than the two prior years, the event will begin July 28th and run through August 3rd.

Additionally the BFA Hot Air Competition Division is pleased to announce that it has accepted a letter of intent and sanction fee deposit from the Great Texas Balloon Race to extend their hosting of the US National Championships to 2015! The BFA is excited about this extended partnership with GTBR and Longview!

HACD Free Memberships!

On the heels of the success of the 2013 program offering a limited number of free HACD memberships in each region, the Division has decided to continue and expand the program for 2014.

In addition to the limited number of memberships available from each Regional Director, the HACD At-Large Directors will have a limited amount to distribute as well.

To be eligible, you must be a current member of the BFA who has not held a HACD task card in any of the previous 5 years. This program encourages new membership and invites those who may be new to competition and/or the BFA to give it a try. [Contact](#) your HACD Board for more info!

Tweet All About It!

The BFA will soon be launching an official Twitter account to keep you up to date and share our sport and organization with the tweeting world. Beginning in the Spring 2014, we intend to host monthly "twitter chats" with followers around the world about ballooning. More info to come soon!

Don't forget to 'Like' us on [Facebook](#)!

If we have overlooked a name or story, please let us know and we will be happy to include you in the next issue! If you have something you would like us to include next month, please email the Quick Release at eblast@bfa.net or degerton@bfa.net. In addition to news directly from the BFA, we encourage readers to share content with the ballooning community and we welcome non-members to receive the QR! Each issue will be released shortly after the monthly Board meeting, so please submit content prior to the 15th. Thank you.

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Quick Release

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Balloon Federation of America
P.O. Box 400
1601 N Jefferson
Indianola, IA 50125
Voice: 515-961-8809
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