

Saga International Balloon Fiesta

Saga City, Japan was recently selected as the site of the 1989 World Hot Air Balloon Championships by the CIA (International Ballooning Committee of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale). The dates will coincide with the annual Saga International Balloon Fiesta held annually in November.

This year the Fiesta will be November 20-25. Overseas teams participating with their own equipment will be offered hotel accommodations for 4 crew members per team, a chase vehicle, LPG and gasoline, local drivers and crew members (on request), Japan's customs clearance fees and all domestic transportation costs from Tokyo or Fukuoka to Saga and return for your equipment, and \$1,000US for general expenses upon your arrival at Saga.

The number of above amenities are limited. Interested parties should contact for more information: Saga International Balloon Fiesta, Sabu Ichiyoshi, 2-30-12-1003 Kamiogi, Suginami-Ku Tokyo, 167 Japan.

New Albuquerque Fiesta Site

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, Inc., has signed an agreement with the City of Albuquerque for the use of the Los Angeles Landfill for the 1986 Fiesta. The site does not belong to the Fiesta, but is rented for a period of six weeks, from mid September to the end of October.

The site was purchased through a bond issue passed last October by the City and is a multi-use park. Parking space will be very limited and the number of parking passes will be greatly reduced. The rest of the site is reported to be a great improvement over Cutter Field. AIBF is working on installing power, water and telephone lines. The new launch area will have 117 launch sites of 100' by 100'.

1986 event applications are expected to be mailed June 1st. For more information contact AIBF, 4804 Hawkins N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87109 or call (505) 344-3501.

Balloon Life, June, 1986

Gordon Bennett Balloon Race

Swiss balloonist Regula Hug-Messner, 68, of Zollikon, Switzerland, followed in her father's foot steps on May 5, 1986 by winning the Gordon Bennett Balloon Race. Emil Messner, won the 1908 race from Paris, France. The event was first founded in 1906 by the publisher of the New York Herald, James Gordon Bennett.

The race was a "photo-finish" when Hug-Messner and her co-pilot Paul Conrad, flying the *Los Angeles Times* balloon landed a scant 8 miles further from their starting point in Palm Springs, California than second place *Benihana* piloted by Ron Clark and J. Eld.

Both balloons featured daring landings in high winds above the

mountains of northwestern Utah. Hug-Messner and Conrad had to walk out several miles after landing the balloon in high winds and mountainous terrain to avoid splashing down in The Great Salt Lake. Once on the highway some 200 cars passed them before being picked up by two men in a rented moving truck who took them to a truck stop. Clark made an emergency landing on a forested mountain near Price, Utah.

Hug-Messner and Conrad traveled 525.6 miles, second place Clark 517.6 miles, third place went to David Levin and Don Davis 491.6 miles, fourth Fred Krieg and Ron Martin 242.7 miles, fifth Gottlieb Blenk, Linda Cannon, and Dave Kelley 225.7 miles, and sixth Jim Jones and Roger Barker 86.1 miles.



Sunrise Balloons, Thermal, CA

Six gas balloons preparing for lift off from Ruth Hardy Park Palm Springs, California for the start of the 1986 Gordon Bennett Balloon Race.

15 Balloons Soar to 24,000 Feet

On January 18, 1986 fifteen balloonists set an unofficial World Record for the most hot air balloons to reach an altitude of 24,000 feet MSL at the same time (*Balloon Life* March 86).

They launched the attempt from the west mesa of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The weather for the attempt was picture perfect with clear skies, mild wind, and springlike temperatures.

Nineteen balloons made the attempt but only fifteen were able to make it to 24,000 feet.

From launch it took 58 minutes for the balloons to reach their goal. They started out with an ascent of 500 feet per minute, but slowed down a little the higher they went. From their launch site on the west mesa the balloonists traveled approximately 45 miles to Los Lunas, New Mexico.

Six different balloon brands were represented in the flight, Adams, Balloon Works, Cameron, National, Raven, and Thunder. There were balloonists from five states that participated, Colorado, Connecticut, Michigan, New Mexico, and Wyoming.

Troy Bradely and Whit Landvater came up with the idea after they read that eleven balloons made it up to 23,000' in St. Louis. They figured that with the number of balloonists and the ideal weather in Albuquerque, they would have no problem beating this record.

Troy and Whit started out by asking balloonists if they were interested, which started an avalanche of requests from balloonists that wanted to be in the attempt. They decided to limit the attempt to twenty balloons on the first try and had the balloonists sign up on a first come first served basis. There was an alternate list that could be used in case anyone dropped out.

A lot of advance preparation went into the attempt because everyone took it seriously, as it should be when planning to break any record. Numerous mandatory briefings were held in the weeks prior to the record try. One meeting covered the physiology of the pilots and what their bodies would go through at altitude. They were told that their bodies were loose enough to allow for this expansion. They were instructed on how to use the oxygen that they were going to need at high altitude. They discussed cold weather gear because the normal temperature at 24,000' feet in January is minus 35 degrees. And they were told what kinds of food to eat prior to the attempt and those not to, like spicy foods or beans, that would cause intestinal distress at high altitude.

At another meeting they discussed the operation of the balloons and the

possible problems that they might encounter. Oxygen starvation and flame-outs were the major problems that concerned the pilots. They discussed whether to heat all of their fuel tanks or leave one un-heated so that it would have less pressure and would be less likely to flame-out, and whether making a modified scoop similar to the Cameron balloons would help get more oxygen to the burners at altitude. They also suggested that all of the pilots try flying at higher altitudes for several weekends prior to the record attempt and that they try out their oxygen systems to familiarize themselves with it before the flight.

Frank Zaccaria from the Albuquerque Route Traffic Control Center attended another meeting so that he could explain the waiver for the flight and what they expected from the balloonists. They were told that they would have clear airspace for the record attempt which would be accomplished by having one of the balloons carry a transponder on board. As a safety factor three balloons carried transponders with two being used in the standby mode in case the main one malfunctioned. They had 2,500' of clearance above and below and a clearance of ten miles around them.

Everyone that participated in this record felt that it was well organized and was a positive experience. They are

planning on doing it bigger and better next year. Troy is currently trying to get this record into the Guinness World Book of Records which will give balloonists in other parts of the country something to shoot at.

The names of the pilots, their state, and altitude attained are listed below.

1. Bill Bird, Whit Landvater, Cheryl Mason, Debra Vallejos, 24,000'
2. George Hahn, 24,000'
3. Troy Bradley, Jim Jordan, 20,600'
4. Mark Sullivan, 24,000'
5. Wayne Bond, 24,000'
6. Darryl Gunter, 24,000'
7. Frank Wechter, 24,000'
8. Scott Appelman, 24,000'
9. Sarah and Ray Lamont, 24,000'
10. Paul Stroich, Matt Guthrie, 24,000'
11. Roeer Hoppe, 24,000'
12. Jim Mitchell, 24,000'
13. Sam Baxter, 24,000'
14. Ed Bukove, 21,500'
15. Tom Zanotti, 24,000'
16. Jerry Elkins, Wyoming, 23,000'
17. Marsha Lambertson, Sanford Neal, Michigan, 24,000'
18. Jim Dutrow, Colorado, Jerry Graff, 24,000'
19. John Outzen, Connecticut, 20,000'



Ron Behrmann

Nineteen balloons prepare to attempt a formation flight to 24,000 feet from the west mesa near Albuquerque, New Mexico January 18, 1986.