

Happy Trails

Notizen von Unterwegs

23. October 2017 Vol 29

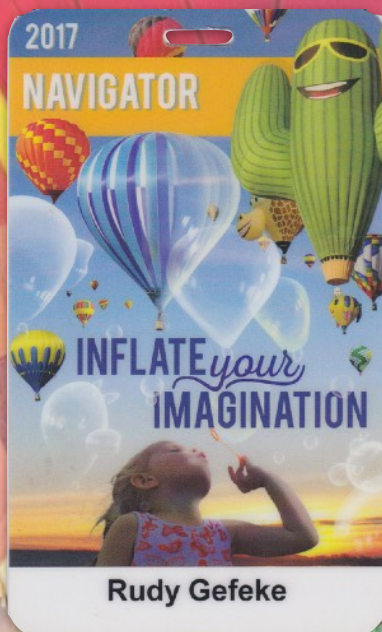
BALLOON FIESTA 2017

THE MOST COLORFUL DAYS OF OUR JOURNEY SO FAR



Once upon a time at the mighty Colorado River near Parker. On our daily walk with Noah through the campground we met Sharon and Dwight. ALFA owner like us. They even own two of those wonderful motorhomes! After a couple of drinks, Sharon tried to convince us to join the Roadrunner chapter of the ALFA Owners Club. I rejected, because signing of a contract under the influence is strictly forbidden in Arizona, I suppose. LoL Her answer: "Bulls.... You are in! I already paid the dues for the next two years!" Wow. You can't beat that! Since then, we got newsletters about all activities of that group but all of them were far away from where we stayed or plan to be in the next coming month. Some members of the group I already know by name and picture, because they are helping other ALFA owners in form of answering questions in special forums on the internet or by their own blog sites. Since we bought the ALFA 5 years ago, I'm always reading those postings to learn tricks of repairing and maintaining this unique beast of motorhome that we call ALFA SeeYa.

While in Custer this summer, we learned, that the group would have a rally (kind of gathering) at the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta 2017. For Beate and me this balloon event was always on our bucket list. This year the timing was perfect, because we were heading south anyway. But we never attended a rally before. What to expect? This rally was special, because we could camp for free at a nearby campground, if we volunteer at the Fiesta. Volunteering at the event means, working for some hours per day in different locations. But no electric, no water, no sewer ==> dry camping for 11 days! Everything was organized by Susan & Dale Prichard, our Wagonmasters. Susan took all our concerns. After a couple of days, we felt in love with that idea and signed up! From that date on, we undergo online training programs for NAVIGATORS, the name for volunteers in Albuquerque. And by the end of September we official became Navigators.





17 RV's crews of the Roadrunner chapter came this year to Albuquerque. Most all of them volunteered in different areas throughout the Fiesta. Some drove curtesy shuttles or helped to sell merchandise. I choose to work in the Pilot Hospitality Tent, what means, serving coffee, doughnuts, chips and fruits to over 500 balloon pilots and their crews ==> every morning from 03:45 until 7:00 am. Oh what fun !!!!



I really enjoyed being part of this great morning crew.

Dawn Patrol



Dawn Patrol pilots take off in the dark and fly until it is light enough to see landing sites. Fellow balloonists appreciate the Dawn Patrol because they can watch the balloons and get an early idea of wind speeds and directions at different altitudes.



Thanks to Dale Prichard, who took some great photos from above, you can see our 16 ALFA's parked tight together at the dry RV parking lot.





R. Gefek





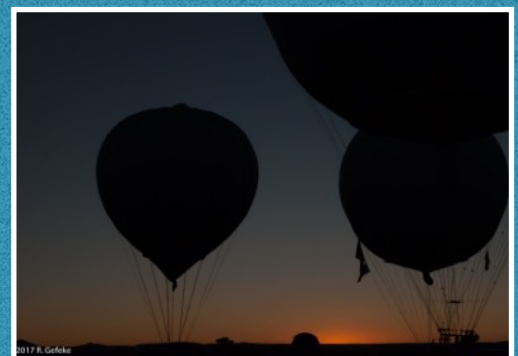
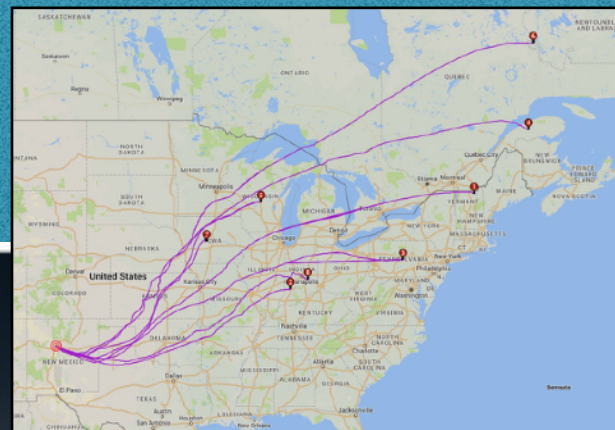
Being a Navigator means hard work – so we had to relax in the evening.



Surround yourself with people who make you hungry for life, touch your heart, and nourish your soul.



Not as colorful as hot air balloons, these gas balloons started one evening for the America's Challenge Race. This race took the winner (Switzerland) after 2 ½ days 3666 km / 2300 miles wide into New Foundland Kanada! Wow!





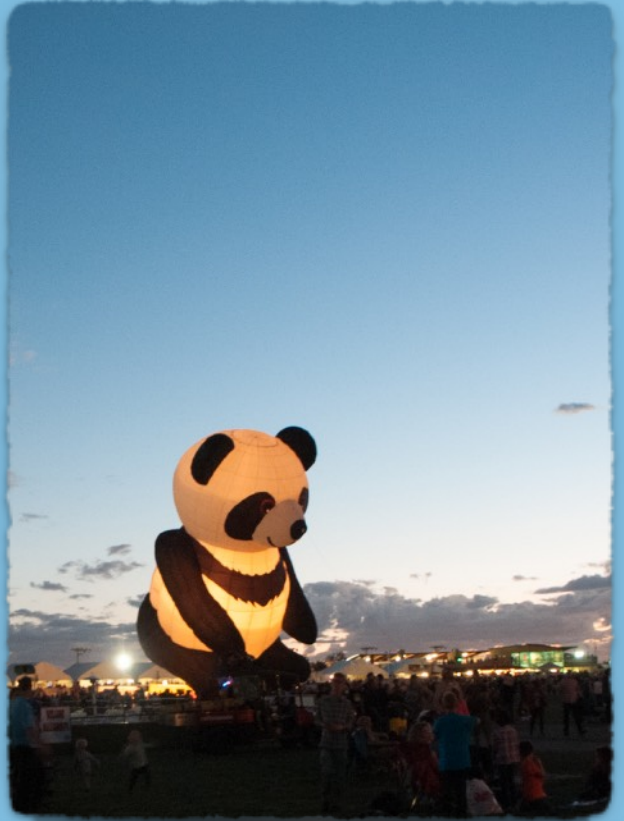
Camping just 1 mile south from the launch field means you got close encounters from some of the balloons on a daily basis. Here Little Bee LILLY from Arizona just landed behind our ALFA row! The Roadrunner hospitality team took good care of the crew: coffee, doughnuts and German beer. As a thank you ==> we got the coveted Lilly pin! And my first grandchild name is LILLY !!! Love it!



© DaGirls Dale M Prichard









Everywhere smiling faces. We were treated like royalty in this volunteer family of 1094! Free meals, several all inclusive party's, a big raffle event and a t-shirt, vest and jacket with nice colorful embroidery. Many pilots, crew members and visitors showed us there appreciation by thanking us for what we were doing! What a great gesture!





Night Glow



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The sight of balloons lit from within at night like giant holiday ornaments is breathtaking. The sound of the propane burners - the heat that comes from all the flames - the “ahhh” and “ohhh” from the thousands of spectators ==> no picture or video can capture this. You have to be on the field!



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So many different ALFA's and so much knowledge in this Roadrunner group. Beth and I are very thankful for all the great tips, ideas and help. Special thanks to Dale who fixed my loose generator belt in no time and showed me how to connect my batterie bank's! Your advise is priceless (beside the case of German Beer I will provide next time). Thank you.



Jane, thank you for the delicious rhubarb marmalade! What a treat.



Even a rain shower couldn't stop our fun!





11 days of fun! What a great experience for Beth and me. This Balloon Fiesta is a MUST on everybody's bucket list. Try to be volunteer. Then you are part of this world famous colorful event. We already have plans for next year, because we like to return. Hopefully with a lot Roadrunner's. You guys are awesome. We really love being part of such a great group of RV enthusiasts. Thank you all. Last but not least a special thank you to our Wagon-MEISTER Susan Prichard. You made it very easy for us to participate in this event and you organized the rally in a fantastic way. D A N K E

btw: All of my gazillion pictures of this event are online, a.s.a.p. I got a good WiFi spot. You find them here: [Rudys DROPBOX](#)

Next stop ==> Las Vegas, Nevada



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That's it for today. We are now
820 days on the road.

Until next time

See Ya

Rudy, Beth and Noah

