

SMOKING IS PERMITTED IN THIS BALLOON

A PEACEFUL NORTHEASTERN VILLAGE HOSTS SOME OLD-FASHIONED FUN WITH A HISTORICAL TWIST

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY WARREN HARDAKER

Late August brought the Oktoberfest weekend and the "Greit Oktoberfest Balloon Rallye" to Upstate New York. About 45 balloons took to the skies over the Labor Day weekend during the Dansville event.

One of the many highlights was the smoke balloon demonstration put on by members of the Flying Allen Family and Peter Krieg.

This spectacular event held everyone in awe, as the large grey canvas balloon was filled with smoke before being cut from its moorings with a hatchet.

Once released the balloon took off at speeds of up to 10 mph, pulling Peter along with it. He was attached with a rope tether, and when he was at proper altitude, he separated from the balloon and deployed his parachute.

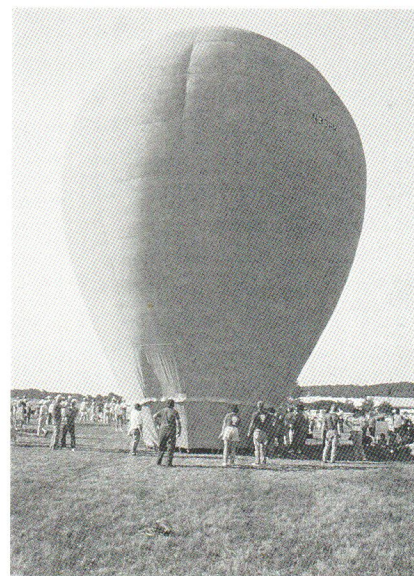
While Peter directed his descent, the canvas belched smoke, deflated and plummeted to earth *wherever it wanted to*. The first day it landed on the airfield, while the next flight found it draped over some phone and power lines a few miles east of the liftoff area.

Most of the conventional balloon flights took place nearly on time, with a few delayed by some gentle breezes from mother nature. With wind shifts from day to day, pilots and crews were treated to a new view of the New York countryside each time, drifting up the valley one day and down the next. There were plenty of opportunities to photograph picturesque farms, red barns,

white silos and green and golden crops.

Along with the hot air balloon meet, there were gliders, food, arts and crafts, antiques and flea markets to please the entire family.

To finish the event, the town of Dansville had a street dedicated in the name of the Allen family, pioneers in modern ballooning in that town and others for many years.



Smoke balloon flight. From top, Smoke balloon is propped up to prepare for inflation fire. The balloon standing, ready to fly. Peter Krieg prepares to launch. The balloon spits out its smoke, just before releasing the pilot.

