

BRUCE COMSTOCK

UNITED STATES BALLOONING HALL OF FAME

Balloon Federation of America

National Balloon Museum, Indianola, Iowa

INDUCTED INTO THE HALL OF FAME JULY 30, 2006



Bruce Comstock has done much of what there is to do in sport ballooning, from winning major championships to setting world records, from serving his fellow balloonists to building a major balloon manufacturing company.

Comstock first saw a balloon fly in 1967. He first flew in a hot air balloon on June 6, 1970. By 1971 he had received his commercial license and was giving pilot instruction. By 1972 he had won his first National Championship. By 1993 he had won more U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championships than anyone else. He had also finished first, second, third, fourth, sixth and seventh in World Championship competition.

In 2001, the International Aeronautic Federation (FAI) named him to the world Ballooning Hall of Fame, an honor which has been given to only a handful of persons over the history of ballooning.

Comstock was the first consistently successful competition balloon pilot, a record for which the FAI awarded him the Montgolfier Diploma - the world's highest award in ballooning. He has won the World Hot Air Balloon Championship, and has finished in the top ten places in World Championships six times. He has also won six U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championships.

Comstock has set world balloon records for duration, distance and altitude. These include the first hot air balloon flight of more than a full day, a hot air balloon flight of one third greater distance than any made up to that time, and a world altitude record for Roziere (temperature controlled gas) balloons.

In 1994, Comstock made what was for almost ten years the longest ever Long Jump hot air balloon flight, in which he flew 645 miles on the 170 pounds of fuel allowed. When this record was finally exceeded, it was with Comstock's encouragement and advice.

Comstock was the second person in the world to earn the highest level of the FAI ballooning achievement program, which requires flights of at least 9,000 meters (29,528 feet) altitude, 500 kilometers (310 miles) distance, 24 hours duration, and one meter pilot-declared-goal scoring accuracy.

Comstock has shared balloon system director and launch director duties for four non-stop round-the-world flight attempts. Two of these ended as the then longest distance balloon flights ever made. Comstock also designed and built the electronic balloon autopilots that made these two solo flights possible, and has provided autopilots, altitude alarms and electrical power systems for many other long distance flights. He built the autopilots, altitude alarms, and electrical system front end used by Steve Fossett in his historic solo round the world balloon flight.

Comstock has also served the ballooning community in a variety of ways. He has been President and a member of the Board of the BFA, and the U.S. delegate to the International Ballooning Committee of the FAI.

He is a past Editor of Ballooning magazine. Comstock has served on the international juries for hot air and gas world championships and other events.

Comstock started flying balloons in 1970. He has made several thousand balloon flights, and has trained many pilots. He has a reputation among ballooning friends as a competent and cautious pilot.

Comstock has served as a Designated Examiner for balloon oral and flight tests for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and has been an FAA Designated Manufacturing Inspection Representative (DMIR) for purposes of inspecting newly manufactured balloons for airworthiness certification.

Before focusing on facilitating epic balloon flights, Comstock owned and managed Cameron Balloons U S, a leading U.S. balloon manufacturing company. He established the first FAA-certificated balloon maintenance facility in the United States, and is an FAA-certificated balloon repairman.

Comstock has a strong, continuing interest in all forms of lighter-than-air flight. He is a long-time enthusiast of gas ballooning, having made flights using hydrogen, helium and anhydrous ammonia, including a flight crossing most of the U.S. He has piloted both gas and hot air airships (blimps), and pioneered hot air balloon night flying.

Comstock now focuses on assisting in planning and accomplishing complex balloon flights, which he terms “epic voyages”, and designing and building electronic equipment to support such flights. The equipment Comstock supplies includes his balloon autopilot, his altitude alarm, and also other equipment custom designed to particular specific needs. Since early 2002 he has been honing his skills at flying paragliders, to which the mountainous territory in Southern Oregon, where he now lives, is well suited.



Comstock's Balloon *Jumpin' Josephat*
The balloon he used to win the World
Championship



A Comstock Altitude Alarm



Comstock's Balloon *Tranquil*



Comstock's Auto Pilot



Comstock at over 30,000 feet May 31, 1995 in Cameron N-105

