

## BALLOON FIESTA 2009 – A WONDERFUL SUCCESS!!!

David and Kay Piper, Wagon Masters  
John and Bettie Collins, Co-Wagon Masters



Wednesday was arrival day for the 2009 Monaco International Balloon Fiesta Rally. We parked our coaches in the VIP parking area at the south end of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta launch field. It rained in the morning but cleared nicely for us to have our social hour in the afternoon. We had 78 coaches in attendance and with guests had 160 people. These coaches came from New York and New Jersey, Florida and Louisiana to Texas and Oklahoma, Arizona to California and Washington and many states in between!

Thursday turned out to be a gorgeous day with perfect flying weather in the morning and a perfect Balloon Glow and fireworks in the evening. At noon we all enjoyed a tasty lunch at the Tanoan Country Club where the view of Albuquerque was a sight to behold.

Friday was a repeat of Thursday with wonderful weather for the special shapes balloons and the flying competitions. There were 550 special and regular shape balloons. Eighty seven of them were the special shapes, examples of which were Airabelle the Cow, the Wells Fargo Stagecoach, two Kissing bees, a soccer ball and a football, the Marine Bull Dog, Smokey the Bear and a Pink Elephant among many others. It is a spectacular sight to see 550 balloons flying over our motor homes. Some of them were so close to us that we could talk to the pilots and passengers from where we were standing.

Also on Friday we were treated to a Mexican buffet at El Pinto Restaurant. That afternoon we enjoyed another social hour, Balloon Glow and a fantastic fireworks display.

How lucky we were to have another perfect, but cooler morning on Saturday. The balloons flew in mass and again were spectacular and the “Albuquerque Box” was really working. Saturday lunch was on our own, and we had time for shopping and sightseeing before another social hour and fireworks display that evening.

Sunday morning, the balloons did not fly because it was too windy. We had sweet rolls and coffee while telling everyone goodbye and wishing them safe travels. A few of us stayed behind and braved the tram ride up the mountain that evening to the High Finance Restaurant for a night time view of Albuquerque and a tasty supper.

We would like to express our appreciation to those hardy souls that helped us park the coaches on Wednesday in the rain. Also, thanks to the energetic men and women who helped set up and prepare the food for the social hour each afternoon.

We also would like to extend a very special thank you to John and Bettie Collins who were valuable co-hosts for this rally.

The 38<sup>th</sup> annual Balloon Fiesta has now concluded, and we are busy preparing for the 39<sup>th</sup> Fiesta. We would like to encourage everyone who is interested in having this unforgettable experience to send in their registration forms for October 6-10, 2010. These registration forms can be found on the Monaco International Web Site or by contacting David and Kay Piper at [dfpiper@aol.com](mailto:dfpiper@aol.com) or Rocky and Peggy Rahkola at [rahkola@yahoo.com](mailto:rahkola@yahoo.com).