

Children's Literature Reviews

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Flying franks, floating fish : the odd October skies of Albuquerque : a loving tribute to photographing twenty years of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta special shaped balloons*by Kim Alaburda.*

Albuquerque, NM : Flying Franks Pub., 2006.

45 p. : ill. ; 21 cm.

Reviews:**Gwynne Spencer (Children's Literature)**

The annual Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta features hundreds of hot air balloons in competitions during the first full week of October and the two weekends on either side. Along with the ordinary-shaped balloons that range from tiny one-person backpack models to gargantuan crafts that can carry twenty passengers, there are an increasing number of spectacular “shapes” in hot-air balloons. Originally, many were advertising gimmicks--cigarettes, liquor bottles, and a flying cow to advertise a dairy--but many now are for the pure delight of the audiences who come in the dark of the morning to watch them rise into the sky. The 100+ color photos in this 46-page volume are “a loving tribute to photographing twenty years of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta” special shaped balloons including hot dogs, Chiquita Banana, t-rex, Smoky the Bear, the Statue of Liberty, footballs, golfballs, Cinderella’s flying castle, and hundreds more. Each page has a large-print, easy-to-read caption, and there are two pages at the end filled with children’s drawings of special shape balloons they would like to see. The huge scale of these balloons is well illustrated by the inclusion of humans on the ground and in the gondolas in most of the photos. A frontispiece lists owners and the home base/city of each balloon. Perhaps the only thing more breathtaking than perusing this well-produced self-published tribute is enjoying the actual balloon field experience itself. Information on the balloon fiesta, while not included in the book, is readily available on the internet. Teachers may be inclined to have kids write poems or stories about this “zoo in the sky.” The author has even thoughtfully included her email address for children to correspond with her. 2006, Flying Franks Publishing, \$14.95. Ages 4 to adult.

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