

# Bill and Sandra Bios

This is our second time to attend the Heritage balloon festival.

We were planning on coming back sooner, but my life partner had a serious illness Nov 1, 2015. Sandra spent 7 months in the hospital recovering from a major stroke. I was told Sandra would never walk or talk. I told the Drs. They didn't know Sandra. Sandra holds 57 Canadian records and 3 world records in balloon aviation, this was going to be another record setting come back..... I asked Sandra if she wanted to fly again, she loved being in the air pushing herself to endure. Our local news paper called her the extreme balloonist, her last flight she left the ground at -31C, brrrrrrr.

We have been building all the record breaking balloons used in Sandra's attempts. Including the gondolas/ baskets. We set about building her a wheel chair accessible basket, it could be used with two wheel chairs, but only one if Sandra was flying..... watching her take to the air last year was very thrilling, there wasn't a dry eye on the field. My job has been to enable Sandra to achieve new goals. We attended speech and physio rehab 4 days a week. Sandra works extremely hard.

This past summer we were at Dalhousie university in Halifax NS for almost 3 months, intense speech rehab all day for 5 weeks. Sandra was invited back for the second session. I always said during her recovery that I got to see a small miracle every day. After attending the Interact program at Dalhousie University I now say, I get to see and hear a miracle every day. DAL Interact, life changing.

When we arrived home mid summer we started talking about going flying, what Sandra did not like was she could not see the ground.

Sandra told me no wheel chair, so back to the drawing board.

We built another basket so she could walk in, then we constructed a seat.... this worked but took up too much floor space, a little more construction we had a bosun chair with Sandra wearing a fall restraining harness.... this works very well, Sandra passed her aviation medical mid August and is back in the air.....

We have signs on our trucks and trailers that say "Aphasia a loss of words not intellect"

We have been attending many events across Canada with our Gone Whale'n balloon, our biggest and most challenging build....

We look forward to flying in the foot hills of the Rockies

Come on out and go Whale watching in the prairies

Foot note: there is 2200 meters of fabric and 108 km of thread Watch out for the teeth

Hope you like it Bill and Sandra