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NEWS: Hudson Hot Air Affair - For Immediate Release

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Hot Air Affair is sharing a series of press releases leading up to the Hudson Hot Air Affair (Feb. 3-5). Each press release will highlight a different aspect of this popular winter event.

Attachments: text file and photo file (jpg)

Photo Caption: Balloon artist Charly Markert with his daughters Collee (left) and Loreen (right). In the background is Charly's Amadeus balloon which took over a year to complete and he relied heavily on the support of his family who modeled as nymphs and cherubs for the piece.

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Hudson Hot Air Affair: The Magic of Charly Markert

This year Hudson Hot Air Affair is celebrating the theme of "Experience the Magic" and what better way to highlight the magic of hot air ballooning than by honoring world-famous balloon artist Charly Markert. Join us on the weekend of February 3 - 5 for Hudson's popular hot air balloon rally and winter festival presented by WESTconsin Credit Union. In addition to the 30 hot air balloons at the annual Hudson Hot Air Affair, there will be vintage Charly Markert hand-painted balloons on display.

Charly Markert became interested in balloon art after seeing hot air balloons at the Minneapolis Aquatennial many years ago. An artist since childhood, Charly attended the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles, California. He served as a paratrooper and while on base in Germany, Charly studied with German artists. After his military service, he worked for Pacific Outdoor Advertising where he trained to paint intricate billboards.

Charly came to Minneapolis to work for Naegele, painting backdrops for the theater for ballet companies. His billboard and backdrops training lead him to painting hot air balloons. Charly's first balloon artwork was the Golden Grahams balloon for Matt Wiederkehr at Matt's balloon port in Lakeland in 1979. He moved to Chanhassen, MN where he refurbished a barn to use as his art studio and painted 50 balloons during his career.

The Markert balloons coming to Hot Air Affair include Le Grande Carousel which was inspired by the hand carved carousels that he would ride as a child growing up near Coney Island in New York. Charly's King Tut balloon was commissioned by an archaeologist and is inspired by King Tutankhamun and Nefertiti. Amadeus is an amazing celebration of the Baroque era of art and is Charly's crowning achievement which took over a year to complete. Charly's son Tim is bringing the balloons to Hudson for this year's theme.

Another special balloon coming this year is the Montgolfier, a 1983 replica of the historic 1783 Montgolfier brothers' balloon. It was hand made by Dave and Sue Johnson of Minneapolis and has appeared in Hudson several times over the years.

Other Hot Air Affair weekend activities include the Torchlight Parade and fireworks on Friday evening. Saturday starts with a pancake breakfast followed by the marketplace craft fair, a food drive, smooch board competition, a bean bag tournament, the St. Croix River Dunk and a Moonlight Cabaret. Some Sunday events include a fat bike race and kids' ice fishing. The weekend highlight is the balloon launches on Saturday at 7:35am and 3pm and on Sunday morning at 7:35am plus the moonglow on Saturday evening.

The Hudson Hot Air Affair is coordinated by a non-profit community volunteer organization. Look for brochures with money saving coupons throughout the Hudson community. A complete schedule and event details are available at HudsonHotAirAffair.com or visit us on Facebook or Instagram for the latest announcements and details.

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For more information or interviews, please contact Evy Nerbonne at 715-222-5375 or Carla Timmerman at 715-220-9550. Media interested in balloon flights during the 2023 Hudson Hot Air Affair should contact Nerbonne as soon as possible to reserve a spot during a flight.