

The pilot of balloon N1623L, Dominic Chemello, had removed one of the burners and hit the gas lever when the fire occurred. He did not know the source of ignition. A passenger had complained about dripping fuel on his head and he was told it was water from condensation. One passenger complained about the smell of propane however the other passengers did not complain and the pilot did not remember the complaint. The burners have been removed and are being sent to the NTSB for testing. The burners were tested at a balloon overhaul shop and found to not have any defects. A leak and functional check were accomplished and no anomalies were noted. The burners were returned to owner. This accident was induced by pilot error, because he took short cuts contrary to the approved POH. He did not shut off the appropriate valves and bleed the system of gas after the pilot light was extinguished.

John P. Schaper
Federal Aviation Administration