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# **Great Park balloon's first wedding is Friday**

## **Couple is the first to exchange vows in largest tethered balloon in U.S.**

By ELYSSE JAMES  
STAFF WRITER

Suspended from the orange balloon overlooking what one day will be Orange County's Great Park, Lauren Lowe and Carl Schmid will marry.

The small ceremony with about 25 people attending will begin around 10 a.m. Friday if weather permits.

Lowe and Schmid will be the first to wed in the balloon, which is the largest tethered balloon in the United States, according to Laura Kirchner, program specialist for the Great Park Corp. Lowe, who used to be a wedding planner, has planned the wedding herself, down to the individual desserts.

This also will be the first wedding in the world performed on a balloon built by the French company Aerophile.

The 25 people in the gondola will include friends and family, the minister, a guitarist and a wedding photographer.

### **How did you meet?**

Lowe: "We met online. We're very happy together and very much in love. We didn't expect to find this type of high school, mushy romance at this time in our lives. We already had done the hard part of raising kids and dealing with household chores and we take our relationship seriously. We want our wedding to be light."

### **How did the proposal happen?**

Lowe: "At the same place as our first date – by the carousel in the Irvine Spectrum. Two other couples ran up to us afterward and said it was neat for them to see that."

## **Why did you decide to get married in the balloon?**

Schmid: We were looking for something unconventional and unique. We tossed out a lot of things, like the park, the beach, things like that. I threw out the balloon and she went along with it.

Lowe: "I was very persistent to get approval for the balloon from the Great Park Corp. We were able to get exclusive use of the balloon during what would be regular hours. Depending on the weather (the balloon won't fly in winds or rain) plan B is to marry in the hangar. If they didn't allow it we were going to all show up anyway as members of the public."

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Lauren Lowe and Carl Schmid will be the first to marry in the Great Park's orange balloon.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHUCK SCHMID., PHOTO COURTESY OF CHUCK SCHMID.

## **Biography**

### **Lauren Lowe**

Age: 46

Hometown: Rancho Santa Margarita

Children: Cameron Lowe, 13, and Miranda Lowe, 9

### **Carl Schmid**

Age: 48

Hometown: Irvine until recent move to Rancho Santa Margarita

Children: Brittany Schmid, 21, and Victoria Schmid, 16