

Using a Party Balloon Tank?

A November 2004 article by Bob Angel, Editor of the Coastal Flyer newsletter of the Central Coast Chapter of SAM, California

One of my ships uses a balloon tank. Just a regular party balloon. I should replace it before every contest. But I didn't. If it's ever going to fail, it will be at a contest. And it did. I carry a spare, so I hastily installed it. The engine suddenly became hard to start, but ran OK when it finally got going. It finally occurred to me that I'd also neglected to flush the new balloon after installation, and that balloons contain a fine powder. Before the EPA, that powder was probably talcum. Sure enough, I back flushed the fuel filter into a clear glass vial and found just enough crud to semi-stop it up. Now you anti-fuel-filter folks might say I wouldn't have had a problem had I not had the filter. But the engine might not have started at all, and I'm glad I didn't have all of that unknown, possibly abrasive stuff, going through the works.