

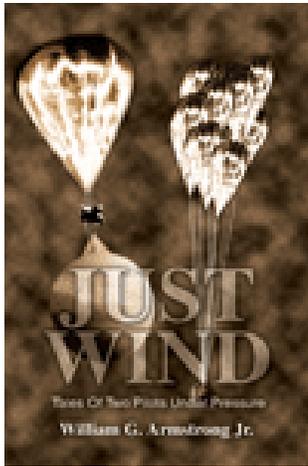


The Scoop

This newsletter is published by The Connecticut Lighter Than Air Society for its members and interested parties. Portions of this newsletter may be reprinted if credit is given to the writer to CLAS. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the organization or members of this organization (but if they are they'd be damn good ones!). For more information contact: Mick Murphy — Minister of Propaganda, PO Box 1528, Litchfield, CT 06759-1528. (860) 567-3448. E-mail Blarney007@aol.com

Volume XVI, Issue 6

August 2003



JUST WIND

History & Biography / Aviation

Trade Paperback

Publication Date: July 2003

Price \$23.96

Author: William G. Armstrong Jr.

The adventures of two dramatic stratospheric balloon expeditions - to be first across the Atlantic, and first around the world - are chronicled with wit by a true insider.



Book Description

Two pioneer balloonists, Tom Gatch in 1974 and Larry Newman in the early 1990s, led widely reported stratospheric expeditions that nearly earned them a place in aviation history. They both used pressurized balloons, a dangerous and sophisticated type of aircraft, and sought the swift wind of the jet stream to carry them forward.

In the first story, a determined, self-financed and self-reliant Tom Gatch in his Light Heart tries to become the first man to conquer the Atlantic Ocean alone by balloon. Ascending under a 10-balloon cluster, he makes it halfway across before disappearing, and the Department of Defense mounts a massive but futile mid-ocean search. What happened to him? Why did he do it?

In the second story, Larry Newman leads an international crew in Earthwinds, the most expensive and heavily marketed balloon expedition ever undertaken, attempting to become the first to fly around the world non-stop. He often said that his 354-foot tall aircraft was more complicated to fly than the Space Shuttle. He makes three ascents, each with a different crew.

With amusing, anguishing and astonishing frankness, the aeronautical adventures of Light Heart and Earthwinds are presented for the first time from a true insider's perspective

Bill Armonstrong will provide a presentation at the September CLAS meeting about the events that lead him to write "Just Wind" and will also have books available for sale and signing. Please make sure to tell as many people as you can to attend and also bring some of your old balloon buddies that no longer attend meetings to come out, listen and remember why we all love ballooning.

Reminder that CLAS meetings are always on the third Thursday evening of the month and they are held at the Plainville Municipal Building in Plainville Connecticut.

An adventurous new book, JUST WIND, recounts the astonishing inside stories of two of the most dangerous and sophisticated long-distance ballooning voyages ever tried: Tom Gatch's trans-Atlantic effort in 1974, and Larry Newman's global attempts in the early 1990s. The early reviews are exciting:

"For any reader awakened to the heady thrill of long-distance ballooning, this book is a must," writes Malcolm W. Browne of The New York Times. "Bill Armstrong's JUST WIND brilliantly chronicles two of ballooning's magnificent failures. His insider's perspective endows this book with rare technical details and insights into the sometimes bitter human conflicts that often characterize big-league ballooning."

CLAS Business Meeting: July 17, 2003

Meeting called to order at 7:45 p.m. Members present: Macarena Parra, Lisa Huck, Bill Armstrong, Sarah Armstrong, Mick Murphy, Mike Bollea, Charlie Perreault, Penny Christy, Jim O'Brien

In Daryl's absence, Penny Christy presided, setting as the agenda discussion of 3 areas: 1) the CLAS safety seminar planned for the spring, 2) the balloon exploratorium planned for the Plainville festival and 3) the possibility of producing new CLAS shirts or other insignia items.

Safety Seminar

People seem happy that CLAS is having a safety seminar which is going to be a core program. Topics will include weather, maintenance, flight planning, accidents, gas ballooning and airships (the latter two of which should be a nice "draw" as they are less common topics), and student/instructor exam preparation. We would like to use the Pratt ^ Whitney East Hartford facility which has been offered. Currently, 2/28, 3/6 or 3/13 are the target dates. Discussed were such issues as potential attendee geographic area. While people desire the 10-15% insurance discount it's not sufficient to bring them very far afield. We may try to get a Northeast Utilities talk/demo. We also hope that Santo can provide an FAA person for the seminar.

Plainville

We have been given a booth (donated by Plainville Fire Company) for our balloon exploratorium. We need commitment for people to staff the booth, also need a balloon to stay while others fly. Penny and Daryl will do two of those slots, but we need 2 more volunteers. We will organize 3 shifts (6-10, 10-2, 2-6) to man the booth. A preliminary version of the sign-up sheet was circulated.

Shirts

We only have 9 of the old shirts left, and we need to think about replacements. Suggested were such items as embroidered polo shirts and denim shirts in addition to, or instead of, the t-shirts. We could get pre-commitment to purchase from members, then put in order. We will need *some* stock for impulse purchases; we should pre-order for events where we are allowed to sell products. It was suggested that we ask Arlene O'Neill, a CLAS member, for advice and possible a quote for such embroidery work.

Treasurer's Report

Checking account: \$2629.51. CD's: \$5505.91

Membership

Current number: 77 paid up members

Education

The Sept 18 education meeting will feature a book-signing by CLAS member Bill Armstrong of his new book "Just Wind" which tells the stories of Tom Gatch & Larry Newman. We received donations of 2 books from Gloria Koczera's library. We will keep them to raffle for a larger crowd at a future meeting.

Competition

BFA

Polly Lasher was recognized by BFA at Stowe for her years of contribution to BFA education programs. Her support in these areas was acknowledged by CLAS also.

Other Business

None

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim O'Brien, Secretary.

Cheyenne Hot Air Balloon Club

The club is making money all the time on the rule, that we wear balloon articles to all balloon functions. Seems we forget. If you people don't wear some balloon item to all club functions, they are fined a dollar!

Texas Balloon Association

Interesting meeting subject:

Ever wondered how to become a pilot?
Come to the meeting and find out.

The Voice of General Aviation Gets Louder : AOPA membership tops a record 400,000

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association surpassed 400,000 members today, a new record for the world's largest civil aviation organization. That also places AOPA among the top 100 associations of any kind in the nation.

"The significance of 400,000 members is what it really means to general aviation pilots," said AOPA President Phil Boyer. "It means that pilots have an extraordinarily powerful advocate before the regulators and the legislators. They can't ignore 400,000 committed, passionate aviators and voters. And AOPA is their voice."

Today, more than 61 percent of *all* of the nation's pilots – and three-quarters of the general aviation pilots - are AOPA members.

AOPA President Boyer announced the new membership record to AOPA's 210 employees gathered at the association's Frederick, Maryland headquarters and its offices in Washington, D.C., Oklahoma City and Wichita, Kansas. As Boyer unveiled an electronic tote board with a new membership number of 400,156 the announcement was carried live via an intranet to all of AOPA's staff.

The association has enjoyed remarkable growth in the last quarter century, even during periods when the total pilot population was declining. In 1977, AOPA had 200,000 members, about 26 percent of the total pilot population. By 1989, membership grew to 300,000, about 43 percent of all pilots.

Even in the uncertainty following the September 11 attacks, AOPA membership grew by more than 25,000.

"I think that demonstrates two things," said Boyer. "General aviation pilots remain optimistic about the future of aviation in this country. A January survey of AOPA members showed that 67 percent were optimistic about GA's future. And pilots believe that AOPA can help ensure that future."

The secret of AOPA's strength on issues is its large membership of individuals – pilots who care about national and community affairs. And AOPA members are voters – more than 93 percent voted in the last presidential election, compared to 51 percent of the general population.

"Politicians and bureaucrats do pay attention to numbers, validating the old adage that there is strength in numbers," said Boyer. "When we go to Congress, FAA, TSA or any of the regulators, 400,000 has a special ring. Speaking with one voice for so many members – particularly members who vote and contribute to political campaigns – gains AOPA access and special credence. No other organization can match that."

Such a large member base also gives AOPA extra buying power when working with AOPA Certified partners. Knowing that they have such a large potential pool of customers in a single place means vendors are willing to cut better deals.

"When AOPA's founders launched the association 64 years ago, they probably could not have foreseen such a large organization," said Boyer. "What they did foresee was a vocal advocate for general aviation, keeping GA fun, safe, and affordable. With 400,000 members backing us up, that's definitely what we've become."

From the AOPA Web Site 7-30-03

BFA Competition Committee

The Committee is streamlining the process for sanctioning club and local events in order to encourage pilots to become eligible for future championships. Applications can be submitted by clubs for an Open Sanction that would allow them to have competitive events at a scheduled time and place throughout the year. This would be ideal for the clubs that gather on monthly basis for flights. With approval and with Open Sanction published in Skylines, only 6 pilots are need to compete for scores to be included in the National Ranking System. If the events are sanctioned, the BFA Non-Owner Aircraft Insurance covers the event officials. An Open Sanction can be moved from the advertised location with approval. A traveling Sanction will also be available/ This Sanction will be issued to an individual to act as a Competition Director, at established events where 10 BFA members desire to fly sanctioned tasks. Additional information can be obtained on the sanctioning process from the BFA Office. A minimum fee of \$25.00 will be charged for an Open or Traveling Sanction to offset a small portion of the insurance cost. Approval for either Open or a Traveling Sanction can be obtained from any BFA Competition Committee member or by submitting the necessary application to the BFA Office.

Quick Chek

We attended the QuickChek Balloon Festival held in New Jersey last month. For a small town boy, that was one heck of an event. Our ride down Friday afternoon was like about the traffic from HELL! Once there, we learned that Solberg Airport had been flooded with monsoon type rain for the previous two weeks and the usual set-up had to be changed. We tried to set up Friday night along a taxi way, but then a small helicopter started using a site about 100 feet away. After judging that to be OK and continuing our set-up, a second larger helicopter came in and blew us off. Between the ride down and the helicopter experience, this pilot was not fit to fly, even after they shut down the Helicopter operation!

Saturday and Sunday proved to be a lot of fun, even though the crew had to push our chase van out of the muddy field. For me the funniest time was flying over

CLAS AUGUST COMPEITION

Competition for August will be held on the morning of the Plainville Balloon Festival, August 23d with the 24th as back up date. Pilot's briefing at 5:45 AM by Mike Bollea's truck.

Route 22. We witnessed one car weaving in and out of the two lane traffic almost causing an accident. When I said wow, look at that! My passenger, a native New Jersey lad said, Oh, that's the JERSEY SLIDE. After asking for an explanation, he stated, the JERSEY SLIDE is when one car cuts in front of another with only the thickness of a sheet of paper to spare. I asked what they call it when he doesn't make it and was told that's the NEW JERSEY CRASH!

Sky-Bound Awards @ URI

Last weekend there was an interesting awards dinner held after the 25th anniversary of the South County Hot-air Balloon Festival in Kingston, RI. After recognition of the organizers and their assistants, the Rotary Club and its beneficence, etc., two others were given notable awards. First, for his bravery and cool-headedness in an incredibly dangerous situation, Mike Bollea was given an award for safely landing his balloon when faced with open ocean. Nobody was hurt, and he got lots of publicity. Last, but certainly not least, Dottie Bachellor was given an award for having built, with others, the only balloon to have been in attendance at all 25 of the rallies held at URI. Topper was there again this year, and 28th anniversary t-shirts sold briskly.
(Get yours while they last; topper28th@aol.com)

These awards were notable, in that they were customized "Sky-Bound" hot-air balloon models. I contacted the Harbour Lights people and was authorized to become a dealer for their products, purchase the models available, and customize them for clients wishing to have a model of their balloon, or as a gift or award for someone special. I am trying to get them to come out with a triangular basket for the BW people like me, but they have many models to choose from, with a variety of stands available, ready-made. If anyone is interested in this service, please contact me. I can also get you any of the hundreds of lighthouse reproductions offered by Harbour Lights, including the Statue of Liberty. Ask me for a free catalog!

Randolph Riley

SKYWARN: BE a Storm Spotter

Granite State Balloon Association Glen Field,
NWS Warning Coordination Meteorologist,

SKYWARN is a nationwide network of volunteer severe weather spotters trained by the National Weather Service (NWS). SKYWARN volunteers support their local community and government by providing the NWS with timely and accurate severe weather reports (and winter weather season). These reports, when integrated with NWS Doppler radar signatures and other severe weather data, are critical to the posting of severe weather warnings. To become an official NWS spotter, you are required to attend a single training session conducted by NWS personnel. What CLAS Calendar events for Training Session.

Balloons Over Iowa History

The club put together a 3-ring binder with a color cover, celebrating 25 years of Balloons Over Iowa. Stories, pictures, articles, event reviews, cartoons. They are selling the 142 pages for \$10.00. Interesting ideas for a fund raiser and a great history lesson for many.

Update Your FAA records Online

Pilots can now open an online account on the FAA Civil Aviation Registry's Web site that will provide access to change of address notification and other registry services. According to the FAA, this online service is an official alternative to providing information that has been traditionally done through the mail, it follows current privacy act provisions. The FAA requires pilots to notify the agency of a change in permanent mailing address within 20 days of moving. To read about the regulation, see <http://registry.faa.gov/amsvcs.asp>.

**Stop. Before You Buy Your Next Balloon,
You Owe It To Yourself To Learn About**

CALIBER™

Caliber™ is the bold improvement in fabric technology specifically designed for hot air balloons.

Why Caliber™? Why now? You spoke and we listened. You asked for heavy-weight fabric performance without the... well, the heavy weight. You asked for longer life and a brighter shine, without losing the things you've come to expect from your Cameron, like DuPont 6,6 High Tenacity nylon, great looks and excellent strength.

So what's so special about Caliber™? In a word EVERYTHING. You see, we've always been big believers that it's how all the features of a product work together that bring real benefit.

And so it is with Caliber™. Not just the new weave design with its extra 'rip-stoppers' to increase tear strength. Not just the new breed of urethane coating that resists Hydrolysis. Not just the enhanced sheen of Caliber™ that makes the colors so bright. Not just the way Caliber holds up over time. It is the way all of these features come together to protect your investment and to make ballooning more enjoyable.

Does Caliber™ contain a biocide? Of course. Caliber™ contains a powerful biocide, effectively repelling the growth of mold and mildew far longer than untreated fabrics can. Caliber™ biocide is essential for damp environments: it stops nasty little microbes from eating away the coating. Keep the coating and you prevent porosity.

What's this I hear about polycarbonate? Caliber™ coating is hydrolysis-resistant urethane combined with polycarbonate technology. It bonds securely to the fabric and

resists chemical breakdown. Once again, porosity is reduced over the lifetime of the balloon.

Why does Caliber™ look so different? The special 'Tartan' ripstop significantly increases the all-important tear strength. And our exclusive new fabric has a distinctive look, so you can tell at a glance that you're getting the real thing. You'll know instantly that your repairs were completed with first quality fabrics rather than the second qualities that often circulate in the "aftermarket" of balloon rebuilds.

Is Caliber™ heavy? No, that's beauty of Caliber™. While some balloons feel like they're more brick than fabric, Caliber™ won't weigh you down. Heavy-weight performance without the heavy weight. And this fabric is still soft and supple, so the size of your envelope bag hasn't grown bigger than your basket.

And does it cost more? Surprise! Not only will your balloon look brighter, be stronger, and last longer, but it won't cost you any more. And as a bonus Caliber™ is backed by Cameron's outstanding warranty: six years and 350 hours of flight time.

So what's stopping you? Go ahead, fly a little longer.

Ask your local Cameron Dealer for details.

**CAMERON
BALLOONS**

P.O. Box 3672 Ann Arbor, MI 48106
Ph: 734 426 5525 Fax: 734 426 5026



WEAVE MADE SOME CHANGES

Logbook Copying

SouthEastern Michigan Balloon Assoc. This would be a GREAT time to get out your balloon log book and make a copy to keep in safe place.....just in case. Do you think you could re-create the data from memory, think again?....It would be really hard to re-create the dates flight time, etc.

CLAS SAFETY SEMINAR

CT Lighter Than Air Society is excited to announce that we will be presenting a CLAS 1-Day Hot Air Balloon Safety Seminar this winter!

Mark this date on your calendar!!! Saturday, February 28th, 2004! We will be having associated social events and activities around that date as well, so keep the whole weekend open.

This will be a BFA Core Seminar. We will have traditional core topics and add a Gas Ballooning aspect to pique our interest and expand our knowledge in that area. Andy Baird of Cameron Balloons US is one of our speakers. He has one presentation of the science of ballooning and another on technology that drives the Cameron Balloon design decisions.

Pratt & Whitney has generously donated their Training Facility in East Hartford, CT for the site of CLAS Safety Seminar 2004.

Keep posted for more updates!

--- Penelope Christy

Blanchard and Jeffries – First Aerial Crossing of the Channel

Jean Pierre Blanchard came from a poor non-academic background in Normandy but he became involved in many early attempts at flight, claimed to have made the first parachute descent in Britain and must be considered the first professional aeronaut in history. Dr. John Jeffries was, by contrast a wealthy American and a Balloon enthusiast.

This unlikely partnership was formed to attempt the first aerial crossing of the English Channel with Blanchard providing the expertise and Jeffries the funding. Blanchard appears to have made many attempts to leave his benefactor behind in order to claim the honor of a solo crossing but the benign American foiled these wily tricks and insisted on participating in the flight.

The 7th January 1785 was a clear bright day with a favorable slight north-north westerly wind and the Blanchard / Jeffries hydrogen balloon “weighed off” from Dover Castle at 1 p.m. They immediately had problems with their rate of climb and Blanchard had to admit, with some embarrassment, that he was wearing a lead belt; this was discarded overboard but had little effect on their ascent so it was followed by everything that was non-essential including oars, biscuits, brandy, cork lifejackets, and mail. Still their lack of height placed them in a precarious position and by the time the coast was of France was reached they presented to the unsuspecting French the bizarre spectacle of two half naked men suspended in a basket below an inflated bag.

The French coast was crossed at 3 p.m. and they landed in the midst of the Felmores forest near Calais, any further progress being abruptly halted by a tree. The basket from the balloon is, today exhibited in the Calais museum and marble monument stands on the place where they landed.

Tips to Crewing, by Southern Illinois Balloon Club,

- Remember that you are the representative of ballooning and be courteous.
- Stay out of the path of the balloon on launch and landing. Insure spectators do likewise.
- Know the location of crew maps, emergency phone numbers and spare chase vehicle keys.
- Respect and protect the landowner’s property. Keep Spectators out and do not cut fences or locks.
- Always park the chase vehicle out of traffic and with doors shut.
- Always, always ask permission before entering private property if possible.
- Think. Don’t pretend to understand instructions. Assumptions are accidents waiting to happen. IF you don’t understand, ASK! Think Safety.

Cheyenne Hot Air Balloon Club

CHABC had an information booth at their local mall for a day. They had a video of Albuquerque that played on a TV. There was a basket and helium for toy balloons for the kids. The club discovered that people knew that there were balloons in Cheyenne, but didn’t know there was a club to join.

Ballooning Poker with Kevin Brielmann

by Penny Christy

Kevin Brielmann suggested a new kind of fun balloon flight as we discussed the next morning's flight for June 7. This was to be Ballooning Poker and the pilot (PIC) was to have control of the burner as long as the task presented by the other pilot was accomplished. If the task wasn't completed as called out and accepted by the PIC, the other pilot took control of the burner and became the new PIC.

I see this as a solution to the "too many pilots in the basket" and an exact way to know which pilot is PIC. This is also a great game to hone one's piloting skills.

We took off with a SSE wind from Erwin's yard in Cheshire and my first task was the triangle between Route 10 (complete with power lines), a commercial building and driving range tees. I bounced it in and out of there quickly and then missed the next target at the end of a cart path in the middle of the field by 100 feet. The winds behind a tree line didn't do anything that I expected (like be the same as they were on the surface at the driving range).

I relinquished the burner to Kevin. The next task was the golf course across from the Southington Recreational Park. Instead, Kevin suggested the Aqua Turf park-launch. I accepted the change in task and he headed for the long parking lot. Well we tracked just to the east.

I took the burner again and phalt road to the north of all the cemetery in our path. I "only tree" between me and the tree and dumping in just down about a foot before tracks on the asphalt, and other side to evaluate my considered that a "pass"!

We ascended to scope which became an intersec-hay in a field. From about

SW wind and the tree line to head east and landed within about 10 feet of this target.

At altitude again, as Kevin was thinking up my next task, I looked for an obvious one. I was keeping quiet and hoping that he wouldn't say splash and dash in the reservoirs. Well, that was it, and since he suggested it, there must be a way to do it. The winds were from the SW and I needed a left to make the reservoir. I hoped the wind curled around the back side of the hill to the south of the reservoir and then north down the valley to the water. I was in luck and on the way, we picked beautiful tulips from the trees just covered in these lovely flowers.

I dropped down over the water and skimmed it at 1 inch for a few feet and tried again thinking this time was it. No dunking allowed... just touch the water! NO! There were trees in front of me and I had to burn to avoid them. Like a dummy I acknowledged that I didn't hit the water that time, relinquished the burner. I also learned a trick after the fact that would have had me touch the water from one inch. Little did I know my competitor wouldn't show me how to do it before he had the burner.

That was the last time I saw the burner on that flight and Kevin then had splash and dash practice forever. Kevin touched first reservoir a few times, and at the second reservoir flew over the peninsula picking tulip tree flowers, dropped back onto the water a few times, curled around in a complete circle. On a burn to fly out of there, dropped onto the water again to pick up "that feather I wanted". Wow, he has long arms!

Kevin landed us in a tree farm at a Kensington home whose owner had albums of photos of CT balloonists from 25 years ago. What a treat!

Keep the fun in flying! Continuous challenges and skill building can only help us to all be better pilots.



the task was an as-

the grave stones in was heading for the that road. Brushing after it, I touched the road, left my stopped on the success or failure. I

out my next task tion of wind rows of 10 feet, I used the

The Scoop



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WWW.LIGHTERTHANAIR.ORG

The Barnum Museum

P.T. Barnum was one of the great characters to come out of Connecticut. He grew up in Bethel and later lived in Bridgeport, where he established his museum. Located at 820 Main Street, Bridgeport, it contains exhibits related to the creator of "The Greatest Show on Earth," which evolved into Ringling Bros. Barnum and Bailey Circus of today. P.T. Barnum was renowned for the extraordinary characters who displayed themselves in his shows, from Bridgeport's own Tom Thumb and his wife, Lavinia Warren, to the original Siamese Twins, Chang and Eng, to the fat lady. The museum also recounts the colorful life of P.T. Barnum, who traveled the world with his performers and always knew how to charm the crowd. The museum is open Tuesdays through Saturdays 10 to 4:30, and Sundays noon to 4:30. Admission is \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children and only \$4.00 for seniors.

Helicopter Museum

Located in the old Stratford railroad stations is the National Helicopter Museum. Founded in 1983, this volunteer-run museum chronicles the development of the helicopter and the life of aviation pioneer Igor Sikorsky. Russian émigré and founder of Stratford based Sikorsky Aircraft. The museum features the cockpit of the V-22 Osprey, an airplane that hovers like a helicopter, various helicopter engines, a display of drawings of the various prototypes of the modern helicopter including Leonardo da Vinci's "Helix," and a boomerang, "man's first rotary wing." There are additional photo displays of the helicopters in World War II, Germany World War II helicopters, and photographs and miniature models of the Sikorsky helicopters. There is a photo chronicle of Sikorsky's Russian years (1889-1019), showing the aircraft he helped develop. The museum is open from Memorial Day through mid October, Wednesday – Saturday, 1 to 4. A donation is requested.