



Connecticut
Lighter
Than Air Society

The Scoop

Volume XVII, Issue 4

May, 2004

NEXT MEETING
May 20TH
PLAINVIELLE
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
“BUSINESS MEETING”

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The Longest Jump

A Semi-Controlled Ascent into the World of Hot Air Ballooning

By Mark Sand

I couldn't believe I really did it! What was I thinking? Here I was, getting off the plane in Albuquerque last July at 11 PM and waiting to be picked up by Dave, my flight instructor. I had been talking to him for months but had never met him. My first flight lesson was less than 8 hours away!

I had my second look ever at a hot air balloon in Goshen in June 2002. My friend Martin Booda made the long drive up from Mississippi with his Head / Lindstrand hybrid and I volunteered to crew for him. The first time Gravity's Rainbow left the ground, I was hooked. Martin's passenger load was light that Sunday and he flew me. The hook worked its way deeper into my gut and there was no turning back.

A few months later, I heard that there was a small balloon festival in Kingstown, RI. It was only a short ride from our home in Mystic, so I showed up at 5 AM hoping to get some

more crewing experience. I hooked up with Amy, Steve and Lark Good-

year and crewed for them that weekend. Mike Bollea was there, too. I had remembered him from Goshen. You can't ever forget meeting Mike!

I was faced with some decisions to make. Come hell, high water, or disappearing bank account, I was going to own and fly a hot air balloon. What should I do first? Buy first or learn to fly first. Buy new or buy used? Who would teach me? Help! I did some extensive "Googling" on the Internet and came across the name of a Designated Pilot Examiner, whose last name is easier to spell than pronounce. I spent a few hours with Santo and the hook now assumed the proportions of an anchor attached to my spleen. If my bosses had ever seen my Internet browsing history at work, I probably would have been fired!

The die was cast. Santo issued me a student pilot certificate and we agreed on a home-study program leading to the knowledge test. Do I learn to fly locally, or go out to Balloon Mecca on the Rio Grande, Albuquerque? All the ads out of ABQ seemed great. "Learn to fly in 10 days," "100% success rate," "Ten landings per flight,"

"Free lodging and vehicle," and so on. The potential to get my certificate in a few weeks appealed to me. Santo and Amy counseled that the flying out there is much different than here in Connecticut, and as long as I understand that and don't come back with a cocky attitude, and realize that I'll have a LOT more to learn, I'll be OK. Out there, you have to worry about hitting "the tree," unlike flying over the forest with diminishing fuel here in the East. I ultimately found out that the mesas and arroyos have their own bags of tricks they can throw at you to ruin your day. More about that later.

After weeks of reading and re-reading all the ads, I finally gave Dave a call. I liked his voice and what he said. We agreed on lessons starting in May 2003.

I studied and studied and studied. I had dreams (or nightmares) about blue and magenta lines, cumulonimbus clouds, -44 degrees, 4.23 pounds/gallon, AGL, MSL, 1000 ft, radii of 2000 ft, and on and on and on. I couldn't study any more. I was reaching the point of diminishing returns. It was time to put the pencil to the paper. I took my knowledge test at Goodspeed Airport, and passed!

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

New or used? Fly first, buy later? With Santo's sage advice I decided to buy first. My wife, Robyn, was incredibly supportive. She got me through my self-imposed guilt trip for committing so much toward this foolish dream. She said, "What have you worked all your life for? Now it's time for you." Santo's philosophy is "Buy the newest you can." Martin had a Head envelope and a Lindstrand bottom end. I surfed all the manufacturers' web sites and decided on Head Balloons. The price for a new Head balloon was less than the going prices for many used systems from the "Big Guys." I decided to buy the newest I could. I called Tarp Head and placed an order for a 90 he had built as a "spec balloon." My cousin Sheila lives

in Atlanta, so I combined a visit to her with a trip to Helen, GA to meet Tarp and Ronnie. Ronnie used to work in the Cabbage Patch Doll factory just a piece down the road. She wanted more of a challenge for her sewing skills, so she went to work for Tarp as his lead seamstress. Ronnie had sewn N3094F, soon to be "Mystical Flyer." Tarp turned to me and said "here's your balloon," and we spread it out on the floor of his shop. It wasn't a hook or even an anchor any more. It was a series of 24 strands of aircraft cables attached to my spine with carabineers! Tarp would ship the balloon out to Albuquerque when it was finished and Dave said he would pick it up at the freight terminal, prep it, and we'd be ready to fly as soon as I got out there. In the meantime, I crewed some more for Amy and Steve and

July, and Tarp was still not finished with the balloon. His welder had moved his shop and couldn't finish the burner frame on time. I wanted stainless steel fuel tanks and Tarp had trouble finding them since his suppliers had finished their production runs. I found two used tanks in Louisville, KY and Bob Boswell at the Kentucky Balloon Loft shipped them to Tarp. "Mystical Flyer" was finally headed out to New Mexico via Overnight Freight Lines. "Flyer" got to Dave on a Friday and I flew out the following Monday. Thunderstorms delayed our departure out of Detroit and we landed in Albuquerque 4 hours late. I remember looking out the window as we came in for a landing and seeing Sandia Peak to the east. To the west was nothing, just flat mesa. At least it looked flat. I met Dave and his wife, Donna, and we were off to the motel. My first flight lesson, and only my second flight ever, was hours away.

The 2004 Northwest Connecticut Balloon Festival June 25, 26 and 27th.

If you can attend at least all the afternoon flights and would like to participate in the festivities please contact me right away. Frank Bart 860-584-1300 or events@adventureballoon.com.

Things are starting to come together but we are finding it harder to find sponsorships this year. If any club members have any leads we would appreciate hearing from you. Rooms are limited but there will be free propane and paid passengers as usual. If you have not attended in the last 2 years we will need an application and all the usual paperwork.

Friday evening opening ceremonies and flight, there will be a pilot reception at stage side. Prizes for best island look, so bring the Hawaiian shirt. Saturday it's Balloons, Blues and BBQ with Hot cookin, Hot air, and the Hot Riffs of Blues bands Sunday, a classic car show, more music and 2 more launches. All we need is good weather. We have again, (at great expense) secured the use of the Russian built miniature weather modification devise this year and will be hooking it up to the amusement ride operator's 100 kilowatt generator a day earlier than last year. For those of you who were not in attendance the last 2 years, the

field generator assures us of fair weather for the weekend by creating a weak dome of high pressure in the immediate area of the festival. (the exact extent of which is classified information) Suffice it to say, it will not rain on the balloon festival. So, see you there! Buoyant Regards,

Frank Bart Festival Director NW CT Balloon Festival
PO Box 55
Plymouth, CT 06782
860-582-1004
www.nwballoonfest.com

helped Martin again at Goshen.

May turned to June, which turned to

I couldn't believe I really did it! What was I thinking?

-To be continued...

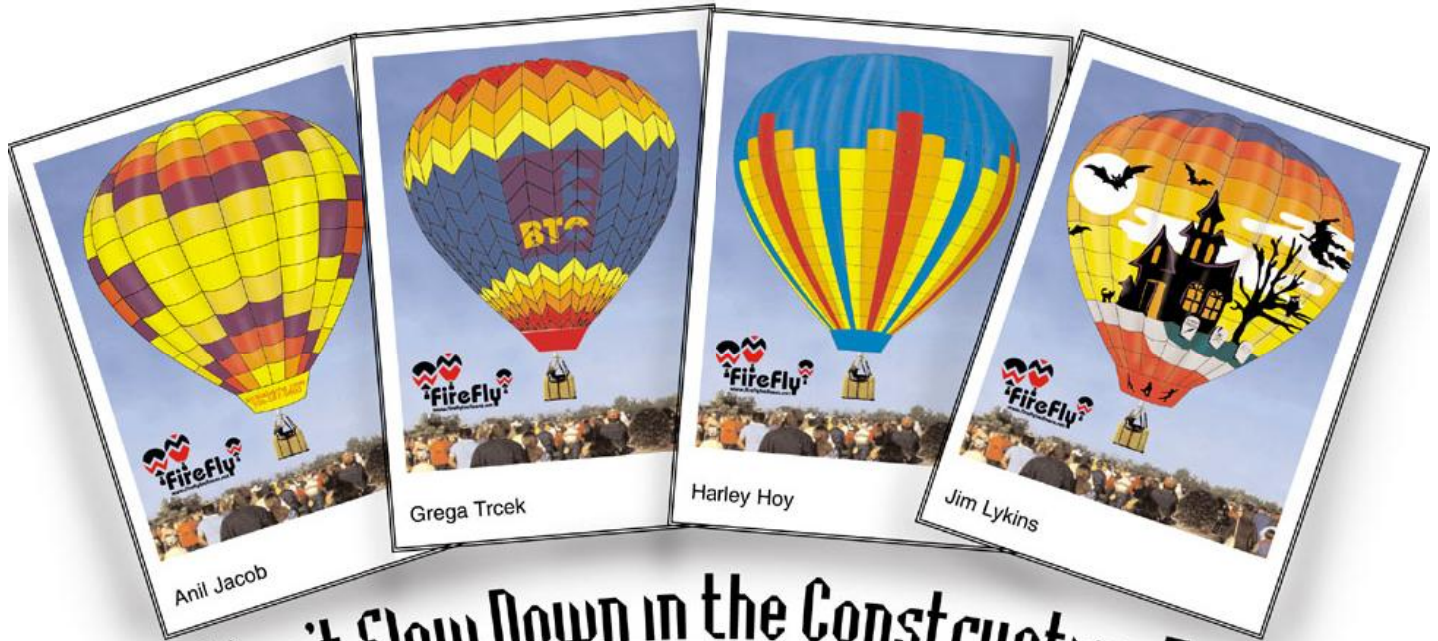
MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Saturday, May 15, SAFETY FEST/ MAINTENANCE FEST 2004

8:30 am-3:30 pm

"Visions Of The Future"

Featuring an Open Forum "The Future of Aviation Safety" moderated by The Hartford Courant's Rinker Buck with Air Safety Foundation's Bruce Landsberg and FAA's Bob Wright, AOPA's "Maneuvering Flight" seminar, EAA's "learn a skill" area, static display aircraft, maintenance training, pilot workshops, aviation vendors, maintenance olympics and more!

**Pratt & Whitney's Customer Training Center, East Hartford, CT
Transportation Available For Fly Ins-Atlantic Aviation (HFD)**



Anil Jacob

Grega Trcek

Harley Hoy

Jim Lykins

We Won't Slow Down in the Construction Zone!



Baxer Schenk

Sam Racina

Mario Bilodeau

Grega Trcek

Firefly is Speeding Up!

Here are a few new balloons to look for in May

Own a quality built American balloon that can take the cold, and even more important...

THE HEAT!



704.878.9501 FAX 878.9505
810 SALISBURY RD. STATESVILLE, NC 28677
email: info@fireflyballoons.net

Picture yourself in a

Convertible



While you might not be able to *'put the top down and feel the call of the open road'*, you can certainly feel the thrill and performance of a new Cameron. In fact, when it comes to stepping into a new Cameron, you're already half way there. No matter what brand of balloon you currently fly, there's no need to give up the basket, burners, and tanks you already own, you can simply upgrade the envelope. We'll provide the necessary

paperwork, so all you have to do is connect the envelope and go. And with our easy carabiner-connections, even hooking up the envelope is a snap. You'll soon be on your way to enjoying the benefits of Hyperlast™ and Caliber™ fabrics and the quality and performance of a Cameron. So if your current envelope is getting a little tired...

...why not try a new Cameron Convertible, and get rid of your old rag-top.



The Choice of Experienced Pilots

P.O. Box 3672 Ann Arbor, MI 48106 phone: (734) 426 5525 fax (734) 426 5026 www.cameronballoons.com

Hot Air Balloon Catches on Fire; 3

Man para-glides from hot air balloon

An Austrian is hoping to make the record books after jumping out of a hot air balloon more than six miles high and paragliding to earth.

Mike Kueng, 32, from Schruns in Tirol, braved buffeting thermals and freezing temperatures during his 124 mph descent.

Kueng, a three-time world champion in paraglide aerobatics, used a special hot-air balloon to take him up to 6.2 miles from where he then jumped in temperatures of minus 60C.

He used an oxygen mask to enable him to breathe in the high altitude and landed at Chiemsee in Bavaria, Germany, 25 minutes later. He said: "I am over the moon - a new world record! I did my very best. Thank God I am

Friday April 23, 2004 5:16 PM

MADRID, Spain (AP) - Three people jumped to their deaths Friday after their hot air balloon they were in hit a smokestack and caught fire, an official said.

The accident occurred in the northwestern city of Santiago de Compostela, said Nieves Bernal, a spokeswoman for the Culture Department of the Galicia region.

A girl identified only as Monica told Cadena Ser radio that students at an elementary school saw the three jump from balloon's basket.

"The bell for recess sounded and we saw the first and third graders crying because they saw it all," she said. "One of the bodies hit the roof and fell to the ground."

The three killed were the balloon's pilot and two employees of the company that owned the balloon.

The balloon bore a logo advertising the annual Way of St. James procession, a yearly Catholic pilgrimage to the cathedral of Santiago, where St. James the apostle is believed to be buried.

Bernal said the government did not hire the balloon to advertise the pilgrimage, which takes place in Galicia



A hot-air balloon is framed by a statue in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican (news - web sites), Sunday, April 25, 2004. Tourists and visitors can have a different sight-seeing tour of the city of Rome and the Vatican from the sky. (AP Photo/Massimo Sambucetti)

COMPETITION SCHEDULE 2004

May 22 Marlborough (judge declared target, or whatever Daryl Smith wants to do)

June 12 Aqua Turf (45 min. Long Jump) Based on wind direction and speed we may need to shorten the flying time.

July 31 Mick Murphy's area (whatever Mick wants to do)

Aug.21 Ushack's Aerodrome (competition to be decided)

Sept 25 Tony Roswell's area (whatever Tony wants to do) Tony's baby

The month of November will be held for a back-up month

We will skip the month of October altogether since that is prime ride business time.

Minutes CLAS Meeting April 15, 2004

President Daryl Smith called the meeting to order at the Plainville, CT Municipal Building at 7:35 PM. Members in attendance were: Mick Murphy, Mark Sand, Cindy Smith, Erwin Dressel, Ellen Dressel, Daryl Smith, Penny Christy, Charlie Perreault, Pat Johannesen, Robert Zirpolo, Kristen Brighenti, Kevin Brielmann, Al Theodore and Mike Bollea.

The minutes from the meeting of March 18, 2004 were discussed and approved with no changes.

Treasurer's Report: The treasury consists of \$3778.19 in the checking account and \$5524.17 in CDs.

Charlie sent a check for \$200.00 as a donation to the Plainville Food Pantry. We usually donate \$100/year. This check covers last year as well as this year.

Penny released the final financial report for our recent Safety Seminar held on February 28, 2004. Our net profit was \$803.24.

We plan on holding the next safety seminar the same time of the year in 2005 (last weekend in February), again at Pratt and Whitney. Since planning for the 2004 seminar was somewhat hurried, we should begin planning for the 2005 seminar soon, which will give us lots of lead-time. We are projecting an attendance of 100, which would yield a profit of approximately \$900.00. Our motive for holding the seminar should not be profit only. The seminar is very important for safety concerns, CLAS recognition, and socially. A number of recommendations as to content have already been submitted.

Committee Reports:

Education: Daryl, Mark and Penny volunteered as a subcommittee to address Safety Seminar Planning for next year.

The annual Safety Fest will be held at Pratt and Whitney on May 15, 2004. CLAS will participate by standing up a balloon in the early morning (Mark's balloon), provide a static display/booth (Daryl and Cindy's small balloon, CLAS

members manning the booth), participation in the "Sharing the Airspace" seminar (Santo), and conducting a "Introduction to Hot Air Ballooning" seminar (Mark's equipment, CLAS members briefing).

It is very important for members to sign in at the Safety Fest. This will tell the FAA that we are vital members of the aviation community and support their efforts in promoting all aspects of flight safety.

Penny passed out BFA Continuing Education Organizer pins to Charley, Ellen and Tony Roswell (in absentia).

Sunshine: No report.

Products: Cindy reported we are sold out of shirts. We have in inventory of about 85 mugs, and a supply of CLAS pins, landowner pins and decals.

We will look into getting an appropriate logo digitized for use on embroidered products. Members would most likely order individually and we would submit a bulk order composed of the individual orders, probably on a quarterly basis. Robert suggested a source he deals with.

Membership: We will send out pins and decals to the new members who signed up at the Safety Seminar.

Flight Manual: We will determine the landing status of the 4H camp near the Salmon River Airport in Marlboro. It is now a yellow zone, but past experience suggests it should possibly be changed to red.

Competition: The next club fly-out is April 24 (rain date of April 25) at Skylark Airport. Members should bring proof of insurance. The competition will be a coffee walk and a hare and hound.

BFA/FAA Liaison: Penny reported that Ruth Lind, BFA Northeast Representative, left her a supply of BFA materials to present to new BFA members. The material includes cups, low altitude study applications, photo contest applications, product order forms, pilot achievement award nomination forms, and other assorted forms and applications.

Winter Dinner: No report

Audit: No report

Nominating: Daryl will aid Santo in this effort.

Old Business: None

New Business: Robert reported that the Bristol Balloon Rally has been revived for this year. It will be held at the Boulevard School on Memorial Day weekend. Flights are anticipated for Saturday and Sunday (both AM and PM). This activity will be a simple balloon meet. No vendors will attend and other balloon festival-type "circus" activities will not occur. Participants will be responsible for their own fueling.

Cindy brought a supply of Landowner Appreciation Cards for members to carry with them in their baskets.

Daryl stated that CLAS members should consider joining the New England Air Museum. If we join in significant numbers we can influence how the museum represents LTA activities.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM. The next meeting will be held on May 20, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Sand
CLAS Secretary

Hot air balloons, representing the 25 European states, wait to take off over the Brussels Jubilee Park during a celebration to mark the



expansion of the European Union to 25 from 15 states on April 30, 2004. Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia will join the European Union on May 1

SAFETY FEST 2004

Safety Fest at Pratt and Whitney on Saturday May 15 registration begins at 8:30. We will have a booth and a tethered balloon as we have in the past. There will be one session called Introduction to Ballooning geared toward the non-ballooningist in the interest of getting new folks interested in ballooning and a larger group presentation called Sharing the Air where a speaker from all segments of aviation will speak about the special needs of their category of aircraft and how we interact with others.

A PAINTING IN YOUR BALLOON COLORS

A PAINTING in your BALLOON COLORS

Sharon Wilson resides in Manchester, CT. Several of her paintings are on display at historic Cheney Hall (Manchester Little Theatre), The Gallery at Manchester Hospital and recently at American Eagle Credit Union.

Her work was also chosen to be on display at The Salt Box Gallery in West Hartford. Her paintings are abstract and also brilliant in color and design. The paintings make a wonderful gift and are great for home or office. The photo is a brilliant and uplifting 24" x 30" custom made painting on stretch canvas, ready to display or U-Frame-It. * Artwork is abstract, which non-representational. For more information please contact Sharon Wilson, 860-643-0766.

To purchase a custom print of your balloon colors please send:

- Bank check for \$475.00 (personal checks not accepted) to:
Sharon Wilson
104 Homestead Street
Manchester, CT 06040
860-643-0766
- Non-returnable photo of your balloon and paint swatches from your local paint store
- Address and phone number

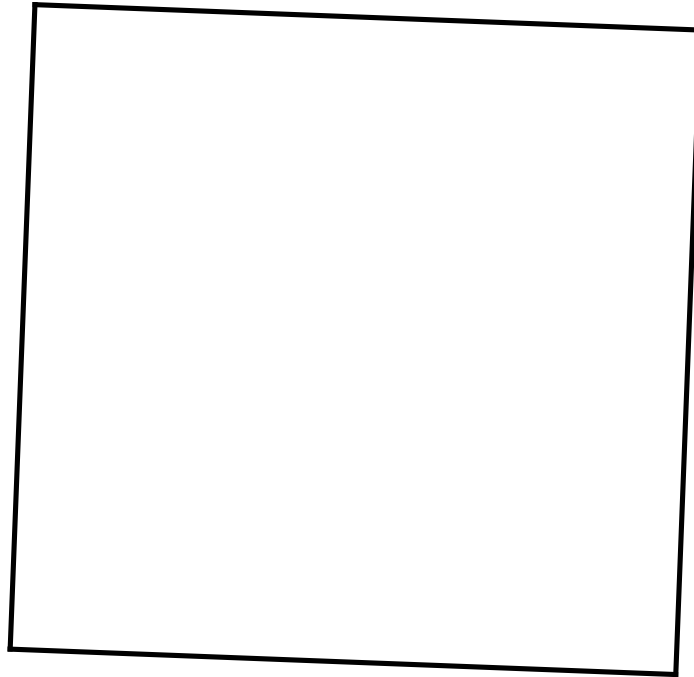
To receive color sample of artwork please e-mail info@aerblarney.com or for members please log onto <http://www.lighterthanair.org/> to view newsletter and artwork.





Connecticut Lighter Than Air Society

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info@AerBlarney.com
www.lighterthanair.org



**Balloons Over Bristol Balloon Festival
Memorial Day Weekend**

Memorial Day Weekend but on a much smaller scale. I've received permission from the Town of Bristol to use the Boulevard School for four launches over the weekend; Sat and Sun May 29 & 30th 6a.m. and 6 p.m. There will be no amenities at this event i.e. no fuel, or for that matter anything else supplied by the organizer, just a field to use for launching. There will also be nothing happening at the field between launches. When I say no amenities it also means there will be no one picking up trash on the field after we leave, no one to show you where to set up, no one asking you to take sponsors for a flight. So please, if you plan on attending also plan on doing your part after you return to the field from a flight to leave this field in the same condition as we found it. If everyone brought one large trash bag and policed some of the field before you left it might actually work. The key words here are voluntary ballooning community cooperation!

My goal is to encourage a civic organization or CLAS to assist with or take over the event in the future and keep it as a small(er) local balloon rally and not have it turn back into the large event it was before the Jaycees gave it up. I have been asked to limit the amount of balloons to 15, for this year anyway. So if you're interested email me back asap and follow up with mailing me a copy of your insurance policy showing a third party liability amount of at least \$500,000. I'm not asking for an additional insured, just a certificate of insurance made out to The Bristol Balloon Festival / The Town of Bristol, CT. First fifteen people that get back to me are in. I'm hoping we don't draw a tremendous crowd of public this year because I don't want a huge mess made of the field. Any suggestions you have are welcome. With any luck the weather may even cooperate.

Thanks much.
Robert Zirpolo
PO Box 706
Southington, CT 06489
(203) 250-8441
