



The Scoop

The Connecticut Lighter Than Air Society publishes this newsletter for its members and interested parties. Portions of this newsletter may be reprinted if credit is given to the writer and 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 Penny Christy 12 Blue Grass Rd., Middletown, Ct 06457 Phone (860)857-8757 e-mail pmchristy@earthlink.net

Volume XVII, Issue 7

September 2004

Thursday's meeting, SEPT. 16, is the Photo Contest for next years CLAS Calendar!!

Memorable FujiFilm Airship Ride for 6 CLAS Members

By Penny Christy



Last fall, George Spyrou's Airship Management Services (AMS) and FujiFilm donated a "Ride-for-6" on the FujiFilm Skyship 600 to United Technologies to auction for the United Way. 6 of us CLAS members were lucky to win the bid for this ride of a lifetime. It is a unique opportunity to be able to ride in an airship in the United States.

On August 3rd at about 5:30AM (missing the NY commuter traffic) we arrived at historic Floyd Bennett Field south of Manhattan and a couple of miles SW of JFK. Floyd Bennett Field had been used for many historic record-breaking flights but that's another story in itself. Now besides a sparsely appointed historical museum, a bird watching center, a training field for NYC street cleaners, and an RC airfield, it was being used as the launch site of the FujiFilm Airship.

When we arrived, the 200-foot Airship was moored on its mobile boom truck and rested on its tail wheel so it could rotate freely in the breeze. As we looked across the large concrete pad in the early dawn light, we were alone with the egrets, seagulls and the airship. The first person we saw was a crew person who was loading ballast into the doors on the side of the blimp. That didn't make a lot of sense to most of us until he told us that the dew on the blimp was drying and it would make the airship light enough to lift the back end off the ground.

We watched as more crew arrived and they prepared this ship for launch. We eventually counted a crew of at least 20 - all uniformly dressed in red shirts. The check-out included all the instrumentation checks, running the vectored fans on the back sides of the car all the way up to take off power and in all directions vertically down to the ground and up to the sky to lubricate the gearbox. Each fan was powered by a 255 HP turbo Porsche engine usually found in 911 SL sports cars. The crew checked and adjusted the pressure in the fore and aft ballonets and refueled the gasoline engines. I secretly appreciated that I only need a couple of crew to launch my own hot air balloon.

FujiFilm Airship Ride (Cont'd)

The original group of six included Erwin Dressel, Charlie Perreault, Kevin Brielmann, Kevin's wife, Annette, Kevin's son, Christopher, and Penny Christy. As an early Christmas present, Erwin had relinquished his seat to his son, Andy.



Once the airship was released from its mooring, it rose almost vertically to about 1000 feet with the help of the downward thrust of the vectored fans, and then we were free to "walk about the cabin." Mike Fitzpatrick and his co-pilot, Mike Dawson, gave each of us balloon pilots a chance in the right seat to pilot the blimp. Andy had the first opportunity to fly and flew it from south of Floyd Bennett past Coney Island and across the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. The view from the 10-passenger car was breathtaking on this beautiful morning. We had the best photo ops from the big open sliding windows of the airship's car. Traveling at about 35 mph with the fresh breeze in our faces was exhilarating.



Then Kevin Brielmann took the wheel and flew around the Statue of Liberty twice and back across the center of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. I then had my turn as Kevin reluctantly gave up the wheel. I flew past Coney Island back to Floyd Bennett Field. It was like flying a whale and I was determined not to have it "porpoise" as I have seen some of the airships around Hartford do. The ground crew were there waiting and when Mike realized that we all hadn't had a chance to pilot, he had me turn the blimp around, cranking the wheel all the way to the left until my hand hit my knee. I was surprised that this "whale" responded really quickly and turned south again.

Charlie flew it to Coney Island and Annette flew it back to Floyd Bennett Field. Charlie's description was that it was like flying a school bus with four flat tires. Christopher took the right seat for pictures only and Mike landed the airship into the waiting hands of their 20-person crew. The crew held the handling lines until the airship was moored on its mast. We were all extremely appreciative of our good fortune to have this opportunity to experience the flight and be able to log almost a half an hour of airship time into our pilot logbooks.



Airship Pilots Mike Fitzpatrick and Mike Dawson, Penny Christy, Charlie Perreault, Kevin Brielmann, Christopher Brielmann, Annette Hockeler-Brielmann, and Andy Dressel

Minutes of the CLAS Meeting of August 19, 2004

Hi, Folks,
Due to a lack of a quorum, the CLAS meeting scheduled for August 19, 2004 was not held. Those members present spent about an hour informally discussing, of all things, ballooning!

Those members in attendance were: Mark Sand, Stuart Post, Al Theodore, Mike Bollea, Tony Roswell, Terri Rollinson, Erwin Dressel, and Ellen Dressel.

Hope to see y'all in Plainville this weekend!

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Sand,
CLAS Secretary.

Report sent in by Charlie Perreault before he left for Canada:

Treasurer's

\$3,610.03 in the checking account.

\$5560.95 in CDs.

Membership: We have 111 memberships listed on our books. That's every type of membership: Family, single, lifers and Scoop only. 63 are paid up and 43 are unpaid. Since Canada, we have some more paid.

Next CLAS Fly-Out, to be held at a place selected by Tony Roswell on Saturday, September 25, 2004, with a rain date the next day. Tony will send an email to the members with details.

New Hot Air Balloon Pilot!!! Andy Dressel

Santo Galatioto, FAA Flight Examiner, certified another new Hot Air Balloon pilot!

Andy Dressel, son of Ellen and Erwin Dressel, earned his Private Pilot Certificate during his check ride on Sept. 3.

Andy already has his fixed wing certificate.

CONGRATULATIONS!! ANDY DRESSEL!!

PLAINVILLE, CT BALLOON EVENT August 27-29

We had a great weekend for the Plainville Balloon event this August 27-29. Dale Martin and his Plainville Fire Department did a wonderful job producing the event for us balloonists and for the public as well.

The Friday night balloon glow was a success with thousands of visitors that stayed to watch the awesome fireworks. Chris Mooney and the RE/MAX balloon team raised \$430 for the Fire Department charities during their tether on Friday night, and repeated that same amount on Saturday night. Saturday morning saw 27 balloons launch of the 32 who showed up and of the 37 that had registered. Saturday there was a great breakfast for pilots and crew at the firehouse. Saturday night had some threats of thunderstorms and only a couple of balloons took off in the brisk winds. Sunday morning was a little foggy and several balloons flew north toward Farmington.

Thanks, Dale and crew for an outstanding weekend!



Have something to say about what goes into the 2005 calendar!

PHOTO CONTEST PHOTO CONTEST PHOTO CONTEST

Here's your chance to have your pictures on our CLAS calendar!!

Don't forget to print your pictures (preferably into 8 ½ x 11)
for all of us to judge at this **September 16th meeting!**

Jim Regan's Numb Butt River Run during Plainville Event

As many of you know, a bunch of us go tubing on the Farmington River between the Saturday flights of the **Plainville Balloon Rally**. There has always been an open invitation to anyone interested in going and this year **26 people participated**. Pat Anderson really prepared herself by buying a wetsuit for the event. Don't know if that helped her slide off any rocks, but she was the first to flip over to test it. There was a bruise or two with the water being so high and swift. Mike Kirkwood didn't follow instructions and tried to stand up when he flipped. He contacted a rock. They repeated one set of rapids three times and twice they made a human chain as they went through laughing all the way. Hope to see you all on the river next year!!

Some More Scenes from Plainville



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More Balloon Events**

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Charlie Perreault is looking for some good stories for the SH*T-HAPPENS AWARD.

You know the silly or stupid sounding things that normally happen before or after a flight.

Please send any stories to Charlie Perreault email: bythefireplace@earthlink.net
Or mail to him at 130 Blatchley Ave, Southington, CT 06489.

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International Balloon Festival of Saint-Jean-Sur-Richelieu (August 14-22)

You Never Really Know ----

Submitted by Gene Burnstein

We've all seen how balloons have the ability to bring a neighborhood together, lend smiles to the many faces, and make grown-ups feel like kids again. But once in a while there is a real special touch that goes a step beyond.

Flying at the St. Jean-sur-Richelieu, Canada - International Festival de Montgolfieres in mid-August, it was our 5th flight, and I managed to find a nice cut lawn amongst the farm fields to land in. The landowner, Jacqueline, came out in her bathrobe, smiling and crying at the same time. With my French being VERY poor, I thought she was just very happy to see a balloon landing there. It wasn't until we finished packing up the balloon, presenting her with the festival bottle, and sharing our crew/passenger bottle, did I find out the real story from Dominique, my local bi-lingual crew chief.

A few years ago Jacqueline lost her 2 daughters in a car accident. No balloons had landed here prior to that. It's not hard to imagine why – the yard is long and narrow nestled in amongst crop fields, with a few cut fields offering easier landing opportunities nearby. When the balloon festival occurred months later, she saw her first balloon land in the back yard. Since then, she cuts the lawn at festival time, and each year a balloon has landed. On the day I landed, it would have been the birthday of one of her daughters. A couple days later, I took advantage of the winds to land once again in the same spot, this time, no tears, just a very happy landowner :-). Did I mention that the fresh blueberries she picked for us went well with the champagne?!

Was it fate that drew me and the other balloons in the past? I know this is one memory that will stay with me for a long time.

Does this sound familiar, Mike?

Hi Jim (Regan),

Not sure what address to e-mail an article for the CLAS newsletter, so I'm passing it on to you.

I'm hoping my truck's transmission is fixed before this weekend so I can make it to Plainville. (Just after I got home from the festival in Canada, and went to gas up the truck, the automatic transmission decided to stay in low gear, which allowed me to limp back to the house at < 25 mph --- glad it happened here and not in Canada or upstate NY).

Gene (Burnstein) (:>)
ClipAway Ballooning

More of the International Balloon Festival of Saint-Jean-Sur-Richelieu

This was a very successful year for this very well organized balloon festival. There were 12 of 18 possible flights and 2 of 3 glows. One of the flights was cancelled because the winds were too calm. Most people did a tether on the field anyway as seen in the picture to the right.

Penny Christy is in the foreground. Jim Regan has his homebuilt ready to tether with Bill Colyer and Pat Anderson as crew. Bill Volk is up in the air in the background on his drop line.



International Balloon Festival (Cont'd)

The festival set attendance records for the 10 days with the high quality entertainers at the adjacent fairgrounds. We English speaking people couldn't see the humor in the wonderful French speaking comedians but all the locals really laughed. Grant Aiello and Kenny Shumate were uncharacteristically tame this year. They only pulled off one pie in Kenny's face.

Matt Dutkiewicz and Jim Regan went with their friends and crew for an afternoon of Laser Tag. They also went jet boating on the St. Lawrence up in Montreal. Many of us went on a sedate cruise boat from Old Montreal around the island to the amusement park by the World's Fair grounds and some of us sampled some bison burgers.

Many of us ate at Mannekin Pis in St. Jean more than once. This is as close to Belgium as you'll be for a while. Starched aprons and lace adorned the waitresses and the aroma of fresh coffees wafted through the restaurant. While we look out over the Richelieu River and watch the boats going down the canal on the way to the locks, we sipped rich coffee with whipped cream until our breakfast arrived. On the first visit we ordered piles of fruit on crepes with chocolate on the side. On the next visits, we ordered smaller just as delicious meals.

Jim Regan took some of the The Barn's local crew on his last flight and saw that indescribable look on the face of someone who was experiencing his or her first balloon ride. That was worth the whole festival for him.

We had one interesting evening flight where there was a mass ascension, so to speak. We were having a small competition with all balloons flying from the airport. We had taken off in quite dense layers of balloons. There was one pilot who had yo-yo'd his way up and down hitting a balloon on the way down, then a car, and the same balloon on the way up. Not the way to fly in a crowd. (The balloonmeister at the next pilot briefing warned us of climbing or dropping too fast in a crowd.) There was more excitement that evening. Some had drop-lined into neighborhoods. Some had flown high to get further east and back toward the airport. 12 had landed in a corn field along the same road and didn't get out of the field until 10 or 11PM. One of the bumblebees spent the night in another part of the same field.

Besides the special shapes, one of the more unusual balloons is the Dutch up-side-down Festo balloon. His field of view is quite limited and on occasion, uses communication from his companion balloon that is right side up.



Jim Regan flies the Barn sometimes and it is shown here as Jim is in his balloon on the left of the center picture. Sunny Boy and Miss Daisy delighted the crowds again this year. There was a pair of bumblebees that were well orchestrated. They launched together, danced together, held hands, and kissed.



Connecticut Lighter Than Air Society - 2004 CLAS Officers

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|--|
| President: | Daryl Smith | 860-428-6769 | daryl@kbz.com |
| Vice President: | Penny Christy | 860-857-8757 | pmchristy@earthlink.net |
| Secretary: | Mark Sand | 860-536-7393 | mdsand@snet.net |
| Treasurer: | Charlie Perreault | 860-384-9232 | bythefireplace@earthlink.net |

Spiedie Fest in BINGHAMTON, NY (August 6-8)

This is another well-run event. Ron Rogers has this tuned so that everything is orchestrated. There's that barn again!



Group Trip to Sicily - This is not your usual tour.

Mario already has 2 groups of 16 for his group tours including, food, lodging, transportation and a hot air balloon to fly while we visit Sicily, Italy. The **two-week** tour would be for sixteen interested friends, fellow balloonist and Mario, for **this coming winter, February to March 2005**

The price is less than the original \$1500 we heard so contact him if you are interested.

See last issue of the Scoop for more of the details and specifics. Call (508 853 6101) or E-mail Amedeo (Mario) Di Stefano at bellavia63@charter.net for a brochure.

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Northampton, MA weekend of Sept. 10-12...



Northampton, MA event in 2003 Photo courtesy of Mike Bollea. **Photographer found!**

The photo Mike Bollea submitted to the newsletter was taken at last year's rally in Northampton, MA, by Doug Thayer; a sixteen year old from Hadley, whose yard Randy Riley landed in the night before. Here's a copy of a recent e-mail from his mom.

"Hi Randy and Diana, We're looking forward to seeing you next weekend! Please give us a call (we'll also get over to the airport). Doug entered the photo he took from your balloon last year in the three-county fair, which is running this weekend. The photo is of the airport and lots of balloons taking off. He not only won the category he entered it into, but also the photo was picked for the youth photography award! He'll get a ribbon and a trophy for it. We all entered photos, it was fun to go and see what ribbons we won. Summer's winding down, the boys start school soon. It's always an adjustment to shift gears... Looking forward to seeing you soon, Mary (Rick, Dan and Doug)

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Contact Penny Christy at 860-857-8757 for any of your Cameron Balloon needs.

CONNECTICUT LIGHTER THAN AIR SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Connecticut Lighter Than Air Society is a club for anyone interested in learning about, participating in, and improving the sport of ballooning. Pilots, crew, and enthusiasts alike are welcome and ALL can contribute to the safety, enjoyment and education of the sport. Meetings are scheduled monthly on the 3rd Thursday of the month at the Plainfield Municipal Building at 7:30 PM. For more information, contact any of the officers listed in this newsletter.

CLAS DUES \$20 include membership privileges and newsletter.

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