



# 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'll be exceptionally 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 XIX, Issue 6

July 2006



**Next CLAS MEETING: July 20, 2006 at  
7:30 PM Plainville Town Building**  
Educational:  
**“Can YOU sense wind speed accurately?”**

Business/Educational Meeting Thursday, **Aug. 20, 2006**  
Rob Shantz Agency speaker on September 21, 2006

**NJ Event Solberg Airport, Readington, NJ July 28 - 30**  
**CT Event Plainville Balloon Festival August 25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**MA Event Northampton, MA Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**NY Balloon Event Glens Falls, NY Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup>**

## WHO WAS BOB BIRD? RZ

Recently Jim Regan sent an email to us telling of the passing of Bob Bird. Who was Bob Bird you ask? Read on...

In the Spring of 1981 while living in Maine I ventured south with some other airheads to attend our first ever balloon rally, Balloons Over Bristol which at the time was organized by this “eccentric guru” of the sport Brian Boland and his wife Kathy. The venue was the Bristol Nursery, owned by Bob Bird. From what I can remember the Connecticut portion of the trip was a myriad of back roads off Rte 6. Upon seeing us drive into the nursery property on Friday afternoon with balloons in tow Bob came over and introduced himself, but he was on a mission to get things done before the first flight on Saturday morning and off he went.



**Bob Bird in the Announcers booth at the Bristol (England) Balloon Festival**

After I moved to Connecticut in 1982, I would run into Bob now and again at Brian and Kathy's home/museum/ fire station on Lake Garda. (If you've been there you understand the description). Bob's vocation was horticultural but one of his avocations was aeronautical. He knew about airplanes and he knew about balloons. He also knew about marching bands but that's another story. In the mid 80's he lost the nursery because of a bad business partnership but still retained his nurseryman's life doing work on commercial buildings, homes, estates etc. He was the non-pilot who attended the Irish Nationals with some other “lads” in the area and always had a story to tell of people he met along the way. To say he was a people person would be an understatement. When shopping in a local supermarket he would always talk to ladies in the checkout line and share with them that he was “alone” and before you knew it they were helping him with their leftover coupons and such. (What talent!)

## WHO WAS BOB BIRD? (Cont'd)

In 1989 eleven of us with three balloons attended the Irish Nationals in Boyle, Roscommon and Bob was there. ....a real circus group we were!

After every flight a large group of people numbering 50 or more would always end up at a local pub. Sometimes after leaving the pub we would realize that we had left Bob behind because he was off somewhere chatting somebody up, usually ladies. The mantra for that week was "Where's Bob Bird?"

I flew with him twice that week and since he had spent so much time around balloons I let him fly and he performed great both times. The most interesting part of flying with him was at low level where he would give you a running horticultural tour of the area identifying not just the common names of plants, bushes, trees and shrubs but the Latin names as well. I remember he was flying with Clyde Livingston during this trip and as Clyde was attempting to slow down using what he thought was a common shrub, a Hawthorne bush, Bob ducked down into the basket because he knew that this "bush" was strong enough to stop a Hummer. Lots

of leaves and branches in the basket if I remember correctly.

That year our sponsor was a local nursery. Bob would talk shop with the owner and after flights would go back and help the guy do business. In subsequent years on returning to Boyle, the owner of the nursery would track us down and always ask "Where's the Birdman?" When you landed at a farm the person you sent to talk to the landowner was Bob Bird his way with people was a gift.

At both the Bristol (CT) and Plainville Balloon rallies Bob always made a showing, usually crewing/flying with Jim Byron. He also attended balloon rallies in Zimbabwe, England and Newfoundland with Jim's Byron & Chubbuck, Jack Perry, Steve Royes and George York. He would always say, "Not a day goes by that I don't think about flying in Ireland with all of you", and it made you think how lucky we all were to be there flying with him. In the past few years Alzheimer's was his nemesis.

**You will be missed Bob! Godspeed!**



### August CLAS Fly-out from Plainville Balloon Festival in Norton Park

Meeting time is 5:30am Saturday August 26, 2006 (Sunday morning if Saturday is cancelled)  
Please RSVP to Mike Bollea at 860-985-6508 if you plan to attend. Thanks.

## Dick Giusto loses a son.

SOUTH DEERFIELD, MA — Michael Giusto, 24, of 72 Boynton Road, son of Carole and Richard Giusto, died Saturday (7-15-06) at home.

On Saturday, July 15, 2006, Michael Christopher Giusto, 24, of 72 Boynton Road, passed from this earth at home into the awaiting arms of his beloved brother and angel, Rick. Michael was born on June 8, 1982 in New Haven, CT, and moved with his family to Deerfield in 1985. He graduated from Frontier Regional School in 2000 and attended Greenfield Community College.

Michael will be missed more than words can say by all those whose lives he touched daily; his parents, Richard and Carole Giusto of South Deerfield; his sisters and brother, nieces and nephews, who will truly miss the love and devotion he showered on them. He will be lovingly remembered by his aunt and godmother and many cousins. He will also be dearly missed by his good friends. His beloved brother, Richard Scott, predeceased him, as well as his maternal and paternal grandparents.

Michael had five great loves in his life: his family, his friends, his animals, the Red Sox and the Patriots. His favorite pastimes centered around holidays and family gatherings. Those who know and love him know that he was an untraditional traditionalist.

**Continued on Page 4**

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## Steve Fossett receives the Cabot Award on June 9 at the Seaport Hotel in Boston.

Harvey Hubbell flew up from Florida as did blimp pilot, Laura Sheft, to see Steve Fossett receive this prestigious award. Jim Ellis and Susan Sparks, Clayton and Peggy Thomas, Kevin Brielmann, Penny Christy and Rob and Beth St. Clair completed the only table of 10 aeronauts at this event. There had to be at least 400 people at the Aero Club of New England (ACONE) sponsored event.

Many famous aviation heroes including Yost, Jones, Piccard, Yaeger, among others sent e-mails with congratulations and regrets that they could not be there. Steve narrated his story as the movie played on a large screen. Steve does not have the privilege of taking the 60-pound trophy home, so instead, he received a full sized picture of it, plus a smaller replica, and other smaller awards. After the lunch and awards, Steve generously posed and signed the programs of the people who crowded around him and then posed for pictures with us aeronauts.



Fossett receives a picture of his trophy



Fossett and Kevin Brielmann



Harvey Hubbell, Blimp Pilot-Laura Sheft, Kevin Brielmann, Jim Ellis Susan Sparks, Penny Christy

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## Notes from Beth Miller's IMC Insurance Agency – Qualifying for Policy Discount

The rumor was going around that Beth had condoned an evening hour and a half FAA Safety Seminar to qualify for insurance discount. This certainly reduces the incentive to present a high quality day-long event. Let's see what Beth has to say.

### **Beth says NO to that!!!**

**“For full 15% policy discount**, you have to have a full day (8-hr) balloon safety seminar. Although IMC recommends that it is a BFA approved seminar, IMC does not require it to be BFA approved. IMC will scrutinize the seminar as Polly Lasher, the BFA Safety Seminar Chair, did for ours and will determine whether it qualifies depending on the agenda, presenters, and material.”

**“For 10% policy discount**, you can submit your current WINGS program.”



Aqua Turf scenes – One with that good looking balloon of Mark Sand's!

## Driveway Designs

Interesting photo of a house in Cheshire/Wallingford area with the lower NYC skyline, including the World Trade Center Towers, in mosaic in the driveway. Notice the Statue of Liberty porch light.



Photo by Chris Constantine from Mark's balloon.

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## Dick Giusto loses a son. (Cont'd from Page 2)

He was devoted to his nieces and nephews and never missed an opportunity to be in their company. And whether with family or friends, his trips to Rhode Island beaches and New Hampshire lakes were always treasured moments in his life, possibly surpassed only by the Patriots winning the Super Bowl and the Red Sox the World Series. His love of animals was not limited to his pets which included three cats, two ferrets, two geckos and tropical fish. His beloved Labrador retriever of 15 years, Harley, predeceased him in February. This love of animals of all types was leading him to a career in the veterinary field.

Calling hours at the Wisley Funeral Home, 90 Sugarloaf St., will be Wednesday from 5 to 8 p.m. A Mass of Christian Burial and celebration of his life will be Thursday at 10:30 a.m. at St. James Church, South Deerfield. Burial will follow in Brookside Cemetery.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Pioneer Valley Humane Society, P.O. Box 76, Greenfield, MA 01302, or the American Lung Association of Western Mass., 393 Maple St., Springfield, MA 01105.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Giusto family.

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## “CAIN'T TOUCH THIS” (per CL&P)!!! (Southington)



## Next CLAS MEETING: July 20, 2006 Mark Sand to conduct the experiment!

I will bring my inflation fan and a wind meter to the next meeting on July 20, weather permitting, of course. We'll convene the meeting out in the parking lot. I'll start up the fan and the members will position themselves where they think they are experiencing winds of 5, 10, 15 mph, etc. We'll get the true values from the wind meter. I believe there will be significant differences between perceived and measured wind speeds, but we'll see!

Ellen has made a chart of Beaufort Wind Speeds with the characteristics of each. She will distribute hand-outs to the members. I estimate about 1/2 hr outside before we reconvene inside the building.



Mark Sand's balloon leaving the Aqua Turf



Mark himself!

### 2006 EVENT PLACE CONTACT PHONE

Jul 9	Hillsborough Balloon Fest, Hillsborough, NH <a href="mailto:hillsboroughballoonfest@tds.net">hillsboroughballoonfest@tds.net</a> <a href="http://www.balloonfestival.org">www.balloonfestival.org</a>
Jul 9	Stoweflake Hot Air Balloon Festival Scott Baraw (802) 760-1049 <b>INVITATION ONLY</b>
Jul 14-15	19th Green River Festival, Greenfield, MA <a href="http://www.greenriverfestival.com/about.html">http://www.greenriverfestival.com/about.html</a> filled
Jul 28-30	Quick Chek New Jersey Balloon & Music Festival, Readington, NJ Sally Mazzocchi, Caldwell, NJ (973) 882-5464 <a href="mailto:smazzocchi@balloonfestival.com">smazzocchi@balloonfestival.com</a> <a href="http://balloonfestival.com">http://balloonfestival.com</a>
Aug 4-6	SpiedieFest Balloon Festival Binghamton NY Dave Passagno <b>INVITATION ONLY</b> (filled)
Aug 11-20	Montgolfieres (International Balloon Festival of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu), Quebec Canada <a href="mailto:festival@ballooncanada.com">festival@ballooncanada.com</a> Marie-Claude Gagne <a href="mailto:mc@ballooncanada.com">mc@ballooncanada.com</a> 450-347-9555
Aug 14	Great Falls Balloon Festival, Auburn, ME (800) 639-6331 <a href="http://www.greatfallsballoonfestival.com">www.greatfallsballoonfestival.com</a>
Aug 25-27	Plainville Balloon Festival, Plainville, CT Dale Martin 860-747-2521, 860-747-9801
Sep 15-17	Northampton, MA Lisa Fusco 413-584-7980 <a href="mailto:info@northamptonairport.com">info@northamptonairport.com</a>
Sep 16	Hollis Old Home Days, Honi Glover 603-465-2262
Sep 21-24	Adirondack Balloon Festival, Glens Falls, NY 518-792-2600
Sep 22-24	1st Annual High Hopes Fun Festival, Merrimack Dale Riley 603-673-4036

**CREDITS: THE GRANITE STATE BALLOON ASSOCIATION and the BFA Website.**



Steve Ushchak's hay field.



Daryl Smith in his balloon



Mark Sand in his balloon.

Photos in this newsletter by Mark Sand, Mike Bollea, Charlie Perreault, Penny Christy, passengers....

## Big Y 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Balloon Wind-Fest at the Big E in West Springfield

June 9-11<sup>th</sup>: Daryl & Cindy Smith, Penny Christy, Charlie Perreault, Bill Colyer & Pat Anderson, Mario DiStefano, Jim Regan, Mike Wallace, Chris Mooney, Jeffrey & Christine Ratcliffe, Paul Sena, Bob Sommer, Clayton Thomas, and Bill Volk were trying to fly in the Big Y 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Balloon Event at the Big E in West Springfield.

The winds were the topic of conversation all weekend and Friday night was the only night that allowed a lift off. The SE winds shifted to N winds during the flight and as sundown approached, all the balloons were approximately south of the launch field. One made it to 6-Flags! There were a few tethers (as Chris Mooney demonstrates below) and some static tethers throughout the weekend. Saturday evening was a twinkle glow with rhythmic glow patterns along the fence in front of the passengers. Clayton Thomas also claimed to be a “born again coward” as we watched the tough ones inflate in the wind. The Bees, Eagle and US Flag special shapes stand up in anything!



Chris Mooney  
Tethers and Bill  
Colyer challenges  
the wind as the  
Bees' pilots look on.



The Eagle  
Spinnakers in  
the wind (left)  
and the  
Twinkle glow  
entertained  
the crowd as  
the sun set on  
Saturday  
night.



### Notes from Beth Miller's IMC Insurance Agency – Qualifying for Policy Discount

The rumor was going around that Beth had condoned an evening hour and a half FAA Safety Seminar to qualify for insurance discount. This certainly reduces the incentive to present a high quality day-long event. Let's see what Beth has to say.

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“For 10% policy discount, you can submit your current WINGS program.”

# Lightning kills man camping at NJ state park

## Allen Emer at Glens Falls



Monday, June 26, 2006

When Allen Emer hung his hammock tent at Round Valley State Park Friday, he chose a spot 50 yards away from the 15 other campers in his kayaking group, seeking a spot overlooking the reservoir. But sometime during the night, lightning struck one of the trees from which his covered hammock hung. The electricity coursed through the tree, electrocuting the 59-year-old outdoorsman, said his wife and authorities yesterday. "He died doing what he loved, that's what counts," said Pamela Emer, who goes by her middle name of Sue. Deputy Chief Sam DeBella of the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office could not pinpoint the time of death, but said Emer was found by fellow campers between 4 and 5 p.m. Saturday. Round Valley does not issue severe weather warnings to campers on the premises, Parks and Forestry Officer Brian Todaro said. Campers are trusted to make their own decisions about weather safety, he said.

Allen Emer was a freelance lighting cameraman and an experienced outdoorsman who loved the water and the sky. A licensed hot-air balloonist, he met his wife while working as a whitewater rafting guide on the Lehigh River in Pennsylvania. "I knew I wanted to know him," she said. "I think it was the quality of his presence. You knew when he was around." Sue Emer said her husband was the first licensed hot-air balloonist in New Jersey, and was inspired to become a cameraman after flying a camera crew in his hot-air balloon in the early 1980s.

She said she and her husband built a business together, Eastern Video Productions, creating videos for clients including Johnson & Johnson and MTV, as well as a documentary on astronauts for the Discovery Channel. "Always had a story, always looking for adventure and fun," Sue Emer said, describing her husband. "An avid reader, wanted to learn anything and everything in the world."

Allen Emer attended the graduation of his only child, Sean, from Holmdel High School on the day before the accident. Sean, 18, a member of the National Honor Society, will attend Hofstra University in the fall. "His father was so proud," Sue Emer said. Emer grew up in northern New Jersey, spent his summers at the beach in Ocean Grove, and graduated from the University of Tennessee.

Although lightning deaths are uncommon in New Jersey, lightning is the second biggest weather-related killer in the U.S., surpassed only by flooding, according to the National Weather Service. Lightning kills an average of 67 people in the U.S. annually. The National Weather Service estimates a person has a 1-in-5,000 chance of being struck in his or her lifetime, and a 1-in-700,000 chance of being hit in a given year. Claire Heininger contributed to this report.

BY CARLY ROTHMAN **Star-Ledger Staff**, Trenton, NJ

From the Emer family: The Celebration of Al Emer's life – The family and friends spread his ashes at Spermaceti Cove. Al's love of sailing and nature brought him to this location almost every weekend. He enjoyed anchoring their sailboat, Galatea, off Skelton Island. He would then spend his time kayaking around the island and Spermaceti Cove watching the turtles, fiddler crabs and the seals, always looking for new discoveries. But of course he would always be back on Galatea for sunset, sitting on the bow-pulpit drinking his martini. Al's family welcomed anybody who wanted to join them for a tailgate party afterwards to celebrate the way Al would have wanted at the Sea Gull Nest in Sandy Hook National Park.



## Connecticut Lighter Than Air Society - 2006 CLAS Officers

President:	Penny Christy	860-857-8757	<a href="mailto:pmchristy@earthlink.net">pmchristy@earthlink.net</a>
Vice President:	Charlie Perreault	860-637-4017	<a href="mailto:bythefireplace@earthlink.net">bythefireplace@earthlink.net</a>
Secretary:	Ellen Dressel	203-272-6116	<a href="mailto:edressel@cox.net">edressel@cox.net</a>
Treasurer:	Mark Sand	860-536-7393	<a href="mailto:mdsand@snet.net">mdsand@snet.net</a>



Aqua Turf scenes - One including that good looking balloon of Mark Sand's.

## CLAS fly-out, July 8<sup>th</sup> by Jim Regan

My apologies for using the dark colored target on the pavement. I didn't tell Lisa that the white X was in the bag. Lisa was looking for a red/orange X (the color she's used to seeing) and wasn't aware there was a white one. She put out the first one she found as we started coming over the tree line.

After 3 straight months of bad weather, we were finally granted nice conditions for the CLAS July fly-out. After meeting in Cheshire, we decided to launch at the Aqua Turf with light northerly surface winds, and easterly winds aloft. Given that this would be the first successful competition of the year, two tasks were called for the flight. The first would be a JDG (Judged Declared Goal), with the black X-target in the parking lot at the south edge of Recreation Park. The second task was a Minimum Distance Task – landing the shortest from Mulberry St. (the street in front of the Aqua Turf.)

6 pilots signed in, and 4 took part in the competition flight. Everyone who flew, reported having great flights into the Cheshire/Wallingford area and returned for breakfast at Gene's Kitchen in Southington. The results are as follows:

### Judge Declared Goal

Jim Regan 48'  
 Charlie Perreault 91'  
 Mike Bollea 123'  
 Mark Sand 125'  
 Jim O'Brien - no score  
 Penny Christy - no score

### Minimum Distance Task

Charlie Perreault 0.5 mi.  
 Mark Sand 1.75 mi.  
 Jim Regan 2.5 mi.  
 Mike Bollea 5.0mi.  
 Jim O'Brien - no score  
 Penny Christy – no score

### July Points Awarded

Charlie Perreault – 10  
 Jim Regan – 9  
 Mark Sand – 6  
 Mike Bollea – 5  
 Penny Christy – 1  
 Jim O'Brien – 1

### 2006 Points – So Far.

Charlie Perreault – 12, Jim Regan – 10, Mike Bollea – 8, Mark Sand – 7, Penny Christy, Cindy Smith and Daryl Smith – 2, Jim O'Brien and Kevin Brielmann – 1

## CLAS 2006 Competition Schedule

We will send at least 2 e-mail reminders out each month, as well as publishing it in the newsletter.

We're going to vary the tasks this year, so it's not the same thing every time. We may even score multiple tasks on the same day if the weather will allow it. And I'll try to get you the standings each month for the newsletter.

<b>April 8 (Called for Wind)</b>	Ellington, CT	Rt. 83 Ellington Supermarket parking Lot
<b>May 20 (Called for Wind)</b>	East Windsor CT	Balloons over Skylark Airport
<b>June 10 (Called for Wind)</b>	Cheshire, CT	Rte 10 Commuter lot
<b>July 8 (Successful event)</b>	Cheshire, CT	Rte 10 Commuter lot <b>Charlie cleaned up!</b>
<b>August 26</b>	Plainville, CT	Plainville Balloon Festival Aug. 25-27
<b>September 16</b>	TBA	
<b>October 14</b>	Cheshire, CT	Rte 10 commuter lot
<b>November 18</b>	TBA	
<b>December 9</b>	TBA	
<b>January 6, 2007</b>	Southington, CT	Frozen Buns fly-out

Competition flights are scheduled for Saturday mornings. The next morning (Sunday) is the back-up date.  
Meeting times are typically ½ hour before sunrise.

**YOUR PICTURES MAKE OUR 2007 CLAS Calendar!**  
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Gather or start taking your pictures for the  
September's Photo Contest and next year's calendar.



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**New!**

**The Third Annual Season of Two Trips  
Ballooning In Sicily, Italy 2007**

**Experience The Beauty, The History, The Art,  
The Tastes (absolutely the best food in the world)  
and The Wondrousness of  
Sunny Sicily, Italy**

(Based out of my home town, Grotte, Agrigento)

End of March and beginning of April trips.  
Six person groups. (Max eight under the right circumstances.)

**Take a break from our winters, just when you need it most!**

Hotel Accommodations, Local Food, Airline Tickets,  
Chase/Travel Vehicles and  
**Hot Air Balloon with pilot and interpreter. Inclusive.**

March 20<sup>th</sup> to March 29<sup>th</sup> 2007 - \$2500.

April 3<sup>rd</sup> to April 12<sup>th</sup> 2007 - \$2500 (wraps around the Easter holiday)

**Contact Amedeo (Mario) Di Stefano**

At 508 853 6101 or 508 842 3300,

E-mail [bellavia63@charter.net](mailto:bellavia63@charter.net)

Go to [www.bellaviaballoon.com](http://www.bellaviaballoon.com),

Check out the details and use the links to see what to visit.

References

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Penny Christy, [pmchristy@earthlink.net](mailto:pmchristy@earthlink.net) 1 860 857 8757

Ron & Sherry Gilmore, [smouse@frontiernet.net](mailto:smouse@frontiernet.net) 1 585 335 9294,

Ken Tadolini & Patsy Buchwald, [outlaw@rockymountainhotair.com](mailto:outlaw@rockymountainhotair.com) 1 303 936 0292

# 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at the Plainville Municipal Building (Route 372 at Whiting St.) at 7:30 PM. For more information, contact any of the officers listed in this newsletter.

**CLAS DUES \$20** include membership privileges and newsletter.

Extra voting family member add \$5

Newsletter Subscription Only \$15

Decals \$2 (\$1 members)

CLAS Member Pins \$5 (\$3 members)

Landowner Pins \$4 (\$3 members – limited quantity)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Will accept newsletter electronically? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**(Default will be electronically unless notified otherwise.)**

**CLAS Membership Info:**

Single (\$20) \_\_\_ Family (\$20) \_\_\_ Extra Vote (\$5) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter Only (\$15) \_\_\_

New \_\_\_ Renewing \_\_\_

Crew \_\_\_ Student Pilot \_\_\_ Private Pilot \_\_\_ Commercial Pilot \_\_\_ N# \_\_\_\_\_

BFA # \_\_\_\_\_ BFA CAAP Level \_\_\_\_\_ BFA PAAP Level \_\_\_\_\_

FAA Wings Level Completed \_\_\_\_\_

Pilot Certificate # \_\_\_\_\_ Type(s) of Certificate(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**Make Checks payable to CLAS and mail to: CLAS PO Box 53, Southbury, CT 06488-0053**



**The Scoop/ CLAS**

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