



THE SCOOP

Next CLAS Meeting: Thursday, January 21, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.

Plainville Municipal Building, Plainville, CT

Please sign up for CLAS Winter Dinner as soon as possible. See details on page 2.

Join us for the CLAS 2010 BFA Safety Seminar, February 27, 2010

We look forward to welcoming Gordon Schwontkowski as our featured presenter. Gordon, of Cary, IL, has led over 2500 commercial and corporate crews nationwide on everything from 60,000 cubic foot racers to 300,000 cubic foot special shapes – accident- and injury-free – since 1982. His book “Hot Air Balloon Crewing Essentials,” now in its second expanded edition, has become the standard for crew safety and training nationwide. He’s been a contributing editor for *Ballooning Magazine* since 2005, served as the leading contributor on the 2008 release of the FAA’s “Balloon Flying Handbook,” and has helped shape insurance standards and policy regarding crew. In 2009 he established uniform national skill standards for crew chiefs and launched the 48-article training series “Crew Chief’s Corner” in every ballooning newsletter in the country. He’s become the sport’s leading expert on crewing and has spoken nationwide at seminars and conventions on crew safety and accident prevention. “A skilled crew is a virtual co-pilot,” says Gordon. “The days of chasing are over – knowledgeable, precisely skilled, decisive, and proactive crew are a necessity in today’s flying environment.”

His presentations this year will include:

ACCIDENT-PREVENTION CREWING: Of everyone vested with ballooning safety – pilots, instructors, manufacturers, FAA, insurance providers, seminar coordinators – no one is perhaps more valuable in warding off trouble than crew. Who else knows your pilot, equipment, flight area, and local conditions better than you? Take the active steps outlined in this presentation to prevent the most common and deadly mishaps that have plagued ballooning for decades.

WEATHER SAVVY FOR CREW (AND PILOTS): It’s the #1 topic in pilot training/testing and the leading factor cited in accidents, but how much does your crew know about weather and what to do about it? You simply can’t control weather or let it victimize you; acting on it via decisions and techniques is the only safe strategy. Re-visit launchsite weather basics, how to read and understand conditions, and best of all – how to handle your balloon under ANY conditions.

BEING THERE ON LANDING: The days of “chasing” are over. It’s no coincidence that 80% of accidents and injuries occur on landing – as opposed to launch – when crew input is missing or minimal. Any improvement here brings magnified safety. Take a close look at the crew-there-on-landing debate, how crew can safely and routinely be there in landing, and exactly what to do once you’re there.

TIE-OFFS, TETHERS, AND TAKE-OFFS: Tying ropes – crown lines, tie-offs, tethers, drop lines) to your balloon unnaturally restrains hot air, and that changes everything. YOU must now input, manage, and/or dissipate enormous forces naturally balanced in free flight. Re-learn the ropes of ground handling safety in this fresh look at tethering and how the simplest lessons can double or even triple your safety margins on your very next inflation. Packed with real-life examples, lessons instructors don’t teach, and photos you just won’t believe.

Find more CLAS Safety Seminar information on pages 3 and 4 of The Scoop.



When: **Saturday, January 30th**
Cocktails 6:00 ✧ Dinner 7:00 ✧ Additional
Cocktails and Awards Soon Thereafter

Where: **Hawthorne Inn**
2421 Berlin Turnpike, Berlin, CT 06037
(Yes, you've probably landed there)
(860) 828-3571 <http://www.hawthorne-inn.com/>



Buffet Dinner

- Tossed Garden Salad
- Minestrone Soup
- Chicken Marsala
- Maple Glazed Salmon
- Sliced Top Sirloin
- Oven-Roasted Potatoes
- Green Beans Almondine
- Coffee with Dessert

\$ 34 Per Person

Cash Bar



CLAS Business

- 2009 Officer's Appreciation
- 2010 Officer Induction
- CLAS Awards
 - Art Laliberte Perpetual Crew Award
 - Judith Ushchak Perpetual Crew Award
 - Long Jump Award
 - Sh*t Happens! Award
- Land-owner Dinner
- Raffles
- Door Prizes
- Raffles
- Fun and Frolic



Join us for an evening of memories, friendship, collegial bonding, and celebration! Limited to 60 persons – don't be left out!

Contact Jude Russell via email: jude@powerlines.com
or phone (860) 357-3124

Mail checks, made out to CLAS, to:
PowerLines, P.O. Box 330025, West Hartford, CT 06133-0025

Remember to forward your nominations for:

- Crew Awards to Ellen Dressel (edressel@cox.net)
- Shit Happens Award to Robert Zirpolo (robertzirpolo@comcast.net)

Connecticut Lighter than Air Society



2010 BFA Safety Seminar

Registration Form

NON-CLAS MEMBERS WILL BE ON A WAITING LIST UNTIL JANUARY 15, 2010.

SEATS ARE LIMITED

This year the club has organized its 7th annual 1-day Safety Seminar on Saturday, February 27, 2010. This will be held at the Yale Divinity School in New Haven, CT. (Take I-91 South to Exit 6 (for Willow St toward US-5, Blatchley Ave). Take right onto Willow St. for 0.2 mi. Take left onto Whitney Ave for approximately 0.3 mi. Take right onto Edwards Ave for 0.2 mi. Take right onto Prospect St for 0.2 mi. Turn right into the Divinity School entrance at 409 Prospect Street. Travel up the driveway to the large parking lot on the left. The main entrance to the building is directly across the driveway from the parking lot.) The sessions start at 8AM and end at/before 6:30PM. Breakfast and Check-In at 7:30AM, lunch, mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks, meeting the presenters after, and informal dinner out with those who are interested.

To qualify for this BFA Safety Seminar you must attend the following classes:

- Pilot and Crew Safety –** Gordon Schwontkowski – Accident Prevention Crewing
- Aeronautical/Pilot Decision-Making –** Mark Schilling - Back again this year!
- Weather –** Gordon Schwontkowski – “Weather Savvy for Crew (For Pilots too!)”
- Federal Aviation Regulations –** Santo Galatioto – (Another one who can make us chuckle in this topic).
- Open – #1** Jim O'Brien – His famous Propane presentation by popular demand
- Open – #2** Gordon Schwontkowski Tie-Offs/Tethers/Take-offs -Ground Handing
- Maintenance and Equipment Repair –** Keith Sproul – Building, Maintaining and Repairing
- Balloon Accidents –** Daryl Smith (Fixed Wing, Glider and LTA Pilot)
- WINGS Update** Jim Adams - FAA

DATE	
NAME	
Address	
City, State, Zip	
Phone	
E-mail	
BFA Member Number	
Balloon N#	
Insurance Company	
CLAS Member?	Current? Yes_____ No_____ New_____
Pilot Certificate Number	
Rating or Crew Designation (Circle only one)	CP - Commercial Pilot PP – Private Pilot SP – Student Pilot CR – Crew Person O - Observer

Continued on next page →

NOTES:

**BECAUSE OF THE POPULARITY OF GORDON SCHWONTSKI
AND THE SIZE OF THE YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL ROOM at 409 Prospect St, New Haven, CT,
NON-CLAS MEMBERS WILL BE ON A WAITING LIST UNTIL JANUARY 15, 2009.
First Come First Served**

If you miss any of these classes you will not meet the BFA's education requirements to qualify as a safety seminar. Make-up classes may, or may not be available. If you have any questions please contact Penny Christy, CLAS Safety Seminar Chairperson, at 860-857-8757 or by e-mail at pmchristy@comcast.net

Your BFA #, Balloon N#, and Pilot Certificate # are required information that must be submitted with your application. Without this information your application can not be processed by the BFA. Please, look them up NOW and insert them above.

The cost of the club's BFA Safety seminar is \$60 Pilots (\$70 for non-members of CLAS) \$20 Crew (\$40 for non-members) Your seat will not be reserved until payment has been received.

2010 CLAS membership is \$20, Become a NEW first time member for an additional \$10 to the non-member price of the CLAS Safety Seminar registration.

Registration Fee Options

\$60 = Pilot CLAS Member

\$80 = Pilot CLAS Member \$60 + 2010 Individual Membership \$20
or Pilot Non-Member \$70 + NEW 2010 Individual Membership \$10

\$70 = Pilot Non-Member

\$20 = Crew CLAS Member

\$40 = Crew CLAS Member \$20 + 2010 Individual Membership \$20 unless you're a new member

\$30 = Crew Non-member

Invited Traveling Presenters are Guests

Make Checks payable to CLAS and return them with this application to:

**CLAS
C/O Penny Christy
12 Blue Grass Dr.
Middletown CT 06457**

This application will also be accepted at the Jan. 21 and the Feb 18 CLAS meetings. This registration form must be received by the education committee before the start of the FAA Safety Seminar on February 27, 2010.

If you have any questions please contact Penny Christy, CLAS Safety Seminar Chairperson, at 860-857-8757 (cell) or 860-638-3803 (home) or by e-mail at pmchristy@comcast.net

More notes about the seminar:

- Contact me if you plan to stay overnight. We will look for economy accommodations for you near the university.
- **Bring your pilot logbooks for endorsement for the ground school portion of the Wings Program.**
- More to follow.....

From The Scoop Editor, Libby Richardson

Happy New Year!! CLAS has gone green. This is our first electronic-only edition of the Scoop, saving the club nearly \$40 each month. What do you want to spend our savings on? Contact club president Mark Sand at mdsand@snet.net with ideas!

Dues for 2010 are now due. Use the form on the back page of the Scoop to send in your due now. Thank you!

Thanks for your contributions for this month's Scoop: Mark Sand, Ellen Dressel, Robert Zirpolo, Garry Guertin, Penny Christy, Lisa Huck, and Jim O'Brien

Publishing Information

The Scoop is published on a monthly basis prior to the club's monthly meeting on the third Thursday of each month. Submissions for *The Scoop* are preferred by email to Editor Libby Richardson at libby_rich@yahoo.com. Photos, articles, and ideas are always welcome. Information may be mailed to 380 Hitchcock Road #258, Waterbury, CT 06705 or can be brought to any CLAS meeting. All materials should be to the Editor at least two weeks prior to the club meeting for inclusion.

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. For more information contact Libby Richardson, CLAS, PO Box 53, Southbury, CT 06488-0053. Email: libby_rich@yahoo.com; Phone: 203-988-6577

Hot air balloon proposal deflates when man drops the ring

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk>

A vicar's romantic proposal to his girlfriend in a hot air balloon fell flat when he dropped the engagement ring, leaving it to fall 500 feet below into the woods.

James Ng, 27, had hidden the 1-carat diamond ring in his camera case. As the pair floated above Ohio in late October, the case slipped from his hand. "My first thought was don't tell her, and buy another ring – [but] it took me forever to afford the one I had," Mr Ng said.

But his girlfriend, Sonya Bostic, a 27-year-old teacher, caught on, so Mr Ng dropped to one knee and proposed using a plastic tie twist. She said yes.

Unable to believe the ring was lost for good, the vicar started mapping the co-ordinates of the balloon's journey from the sky. Over the following week, as his fiancée proudly wore a \$9 (£5.50) Wal-Mart ring on her engagement finger, Mr Ng and a friend cut through brambles with machetes, searching for the camera bag.

"We had maps and a very clear plan of all the ground we needed to cover," said Mr Ng.

After seven arduous days of searching the three-mile-square area, they found the camera bag. The only thing still inside it was the £2,000 ring.

"I think the first thing I said was holy cow," said Mr Ng. "Then I called Sonya right away." The couple are now preparing for their wedding in June

Frozen Buns 2010

By Mark Sand

After a wind-out on Saturday, five balloons braved the six-degree chill on Sunday, January 10, to participate in the annual Frozen Buns flyout. Mick Murphy, Mark Sand, Jimmy Regan, Carlos Keebe, and Ron and Carol Thornton lifted their aerostats from the Aqua Turf shortly after sunrise. The air was crystal clear and cloudless, with a gentle push from the NNE. Mick and Mark pretty much flew formation during the entire flight, making intermediate landings along the way, and finally setting down at Steve Ushchak's aerodrome/farm. The other balloons landed without incident in the beautiful, snow-capped Farmington Valley. Other CLAS members showed up to crew, take pics, and kibbutz. We all met at the truck stop in Southington post-flight for a welcome breakfast.



Photos above and to left provided by Mark Sand.



Photos above provided by Carlos Kebe from his Facebook page.

Pilot Error and Responsibility

By Gene Burnstein

The last few years have not been very friendly to ballooning as can be seen by the bad press (TV/internet/newsprint) given to balloon accidents. The items below have already received a positive response on the balloon reflector (if you've read my post, I feel this is still worth reading again).

I take full responsibility for voicing my personal views, which you are about to read below:

- The pilot is responsible for ensuring they have the latest weather data don't just rely on the festival's weather show).
- The pilot is responsible for ensuring they are flying within their own capabilities.
- The pilot is responsible for handling fuel management.
- The pilot is responsible for ensuring they are not launching, when they know it is too late.
- The pilot is responsible for (on, and on, and on...)
- Yes, the festival may give incomplete or glossed over weather.
- Yes, the festival may open the field to those that are not capable of flying in some of the conditions.
- Yes the festival may dangle competition \$\$ in front of the pilot's eyes.
- Yes, the festival has its own agenda, which can cause late launches.
- Yes, the festival may not invite the pilot back if they do not fly.
- Yes the festival (on, and on, and on...)
- BUT when the pilot got their license, the FAA charged them with the RESPONSIBILITY of making the GO/NOGO and flight operation decisions.

On the other hand, some pilots are not as diligent in their GO/NOGO decision, and in-flight operations of the balloon (which is why the NTSB reports "Pilot Error" on so many of the accident/incident reports). We (collectively pilots as a whole) look to point the finger at someone or something else as the root cause and disregard the fact it is the 'PILOT' who controls the operation of the balloon.

I make my own decision to fly certain festivals and not others, and stay on the ground at times when others decide to fly in questionable conditions. I also subscribe to attending safety seminars, and being involved with groups that work with festivals for a better environment.

With that said, I think the festivals CAN HELP make us better pilots, by making some changes to their mode of operation. Is it their responsibility? NO, the pilot cannot subrogate the responsibility.

I'll end by asking a simple question: What are you doing to make a difference?

Connecticut Lighter Than Air Society, PO Box 53, Southbury, CT 06488-0053

Mooney Christmas Party

A good time was had by all at the Mooney Family Christmas Party in December. Ellen Dressel provided the pictures below featuring some of the guests attending the party. Looks like fun and a great way to celebrate the holidays with friends from the ballooning community.



Jumping From A Balloon. On A Motorcycle.

BASE jumpers are a bit crazy. You'd have to be to leap from, say, Petronas Towers. But even by that measure, Bernie Williams stands apart. He's jumped 5,000 feet from a hot air balloon — while sitting on a motorcycle.

Williams, who lives in Cardiff, Wales, made the jump to set a world record. For what, we're not sure. Anyway, he had a guy named Todd Ames design and build a rig to suspend a Yamaha motorcycle from a hot air balloon. That task done, Williams went to Chesaning, Michigan to pull the stunt. The pilot ascended to 5,000 feet and... oh hell, just watch the video.

The bike, by the way, has now spent more time in the air than on the road. It will be auctioned for charity.

To anyone who might think, "What's the big deal?", remember what Evel Knievel once said: Anyone can jump a motorcycle. It's landing that's tough.

View the video by going to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dA9VdDHsCis&feature=player_embedded

Want to Join the Mile High Club? Here's Your Chance... in a Hot Air Balloon

www.laist.com

(From the Scoop Editor—I'm not making this up!! Libby)

Thanks to the fun daily e-mail newsletter, The Rundown, we were treated yesterday to a bounty of naughty activity ideas--you know, doing it at Leo Carrillo State Park or on Mulholland Drive--but one especially caught our eye and made us giggle. It was doing it in the air:

If a fear of heights and a two-hour car ride don't concern you, prepare to cross off "join mile-high club" from your bucket list. Located in Temecula, D&D Ballooning offers hot air balloons for couples. Even if the journey is on the short side, the view from above the trees will be worth it.

And the good folks at The Rundown aren't asking you to sneak around, either, as this is a real service (and possibly the best Valentine's gift for your adventurous boy or girlfriend). From D&D's website:

For those who belong to or have ever wanted to join the "Mile High" club, we offer a flight in a private balloon at a mile high (5280 feet). This is the ultimate ecstasy. We offer comfort and discretion. This flight is honored with "mile high" pins for him and her. Call today to reserve because this flight takes considerable scheduling considerations.

To make your trip even better, Temecula is wine country. Drink up!

Update: D&D has informed us of more details. The experience is currently \$750 on a weekday and \$1500 on a weekend. You get one hour in the sky followed by a champagne-style picnic breakfast.



Mark Pacan, the creator of the above painting kindly allowed *Western Currents* newsletter editor Jeanne Anson to reprint this print in her newsletter. He is a UK balloon artist, has created posters for the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, Fiestas in Europe, Brian Jones and many others. He has just completed the 2000 Balloons project. Check out his website for more info on his paintings and projects at www.pacan.com.

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 Plainville Police Department, 19 Neal Court, Plainville, 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 CLAS Member Pins \$5 (\$3 members)

Decals \$2 (\$1 members) Landowner Pins \$4 (\$3 members – limited quantity)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (Cell) _____

E-Mail _____

(Default will be electronic newsletter 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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www.lighterthanair.org

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