



The Scoop

Volume XVII, Issue 5

June 2004

Connecticut
Lighter
Than Air Society

June 8, 2004

NEXT MEETING
June 17TH
PLAINVIELLE
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
“BUSINESS MEETING”

Inside this issue:

Cameron Balloons	2
Red Zone	3
DPE Letter	4
Hay Fest 2004	6
Balloon Works	7
Newsletter Editor	8

Flight Service was calling for probable IFR conditions with restrictions to visibility. A careful look at all the information available including upper air soundings indicated that VFR flight was not only possible but likely so Charlie Perrault,

Penny Christie, Stu Post and I (Santo Galatioto) gathered at the commuter lot on Route 10 in Southington at 5am. A view of the surrounding area and the launching of two pibals indicated that FSS

was overly cautious in their reporting that morning. So off to the field we all went.

After a flawless inflation, Charlie and Santo were off on what was to be a picture perfect flight. The crew was off in search of a Duncan Donuts. We were fortunate to have all kinds of steerage that morning. Near the surface the direction of flight was to the west at 2-5 knots. At 500' AGL the wind shifted 180 degrees to the east at about 8-12 knots and about 1,000 feet AGL the direction of flight was to the southeast at 16 knots. This type of steerage allowed for a thorough review

of all that was necessary as indicated in the practical test standards for the private pilot certificate. We were able to make several landings from empty fields to a quiet residential street to a newly developed area with smoothly paved cul-de-sacs. Charlie's flying like his inflation was flawless. Charlie is very grateful for all those individuals that have helped him along the way as we are grateful for the many services that he has done for us from crewing to seminar development and presentation. He is always willing to lend a hand. Most recently several pilots have assisted him



Photo Credit : Rob Macfarlane

his quest for the private certificate, most notable of which is Amy Good-year. She concentrated on his training in a very professional manner and made sure that no stone was left unturned. Recently, Jim O'Brien lent a hand in preparing for the exam. Erwin Dressel, for whom Charlie has crewed over the years, has been a constant source of learning and encouragement having given Charlie his final couple of instructional hours just before the exam. Many others have given him encouragement, knowledge and the confidence to become a good pilot. Hats off to Charlie for his perseverance, dedication, and hard work and congratulations to all that have helped him realize his dream. Lets all welcome Charlie to the ranks of Private Pilot. (Not to fear, he'll still crew every now and then!) Santo

Why not give your next balloon your own *signature* design? (without spending an arm and a leg)



Let Cameron's Designers help you make your next balloon distinct - an expression of YOU – while still staying within your budget.

To find out more

Contact **Penny Christy**, at pmchristy@earthlink.net

Or phone 860-857-8757

Balloon friends who are flying in the Farmington, Avon and Simsbury areas, Matt D and I want to report a *red zone*, a site on which one should not consider landing. We did so last Friday, May 21, as sunset was approaching and the wind freshening somewhat out of the ESE. It is a gorgeous spot that seems to be begging for a Balloon, it used to be but it is not now. The pasture, where there were no animals as we approached or landed, is located on the crest of the hill, south side of Rte 167 between Unionville and Avon. There was no one to ask as we past over the treeline, but a decision and commitment was necessary because of the lateness of the day and the fact that there is a lot of forest and tightly settled areas for quite a distance after passing over Rte 167 to the N & NW. So we made a really nice landing in the pasture, walked the Balloon down field towards the gate at Rte 167, one crew person came walking out to help, leaving the vehicle and the rest of the crew along the road. Once we were starting to deflate the landowner approached with a couple of folks and asked what we were doing there and why we had chosen to land. We answered the questions and tried to explain the situation. She had had a Balloon land there previously and had let that pilot know she was not at all happy about it and did not want a repeat occurrence. So there we were and now we are passing on the notice to the rest of the community. She did say that the next time a Balloon shows up on the property she will be calling the police. We were allowed to continue with the deflation and pack up. We did not drive out onto the field but carried the equipment through the gate to the trailer parked by the road.

So *please make note* of this in your books, on your maps and in your minds eye when you are flying in this area and perusing the possible landing sites in your possible path.... THIS INVITING, ROLLING GREEN EXPANSE is not one of those. If you have any questions or need a more specific description please give me a call, 678 7921.

Regards, Kathy Wadsworth, Matt Dutkiewicz

Providing Financial Freedom Through Comprehensive Financial & Insurance Services.

A. Mario Di Stefano

FR, RR, IAR

A Comprehensive Planner

Caring for People & Business

Since 1965

LIFE | HEALTH | RETIREMENT | GROUP | DISABILITY | WEALTH ACCUMULATION

Presently Licensed Insurance Broker MA; Licensed Life & Health in ME, NH, VT, CT, RI, NY, PA, NJ, FL; Securities in MA, VT, FL.

Di Stefano Financial & Insurance

382 Boston Turnpike

Shrewsbury, MA 01545

Phone) 508.842.3300 Fax) 508.842.3115

Email) mdclient@onceanddone.com

www.mdfinancialplus.com

Registered Representative and Financial Advisor of Park Avenue Securities LLC (PAS), 110 Cedar Street, Wellesley Hills, MA 02481, 1-781-237-1720. Securities products/services and advisory are offered through PAS, a registered broker/dealer and investment advisor. Field Representative, The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America (Guardian), New York, NY. PAS is an indirect, wholly owned subsidiary of Guardian. Di Stefano Financial and Insurance is not an affiliate or subsidiary of PAS or guardian. PAS is a member of NASD, SIPC.

Hard Work & Integrity Broad Based Products

Santo J. Galatioto
170 Ohman Avenue
Orange, CT 06477
santo.galatioto@yale.edu
day phone 203-432-9873
eve phone 203-397-0521

June 9, 2004

James Gebryel, Operations Manager
FAA – FSDO - 03
Bradley International Airport
Windsor Locks, CT

Re: Designated Pilot Examiner Renewals

Dear Jim:

Per your request I am writing to you to review the state of ballooning activity in Connecticut with respect to DPEs. As you are well aware, one of the requirements for a DPE in ballooning per the manual is that the examiner administers a minimum of five exams annually. The activity in the northeast doesn't seem to support that level of activity but it is essential that DPEs be renewed for safety reasons. Other regions of the country that are geographically/topographically friendly to ballooning attract large numbers of individuals to our sport and thus there are a large number of tests administered by the DPEs in those areas.

In Connecticut and the surrounding area, the topography and congestion both in the air and on the ground is such that a higher skill level is required to safely pilot a balloon. While the PTS is silent on regional differences, it is truly important that the individuals who will regularly fly in this area be tested in this area. The FSDO in and of itself cannot without great expense (in a world of shrinking budget dollars) adequately and I will contend as safely administer the balloon exams in this area as can the DPEs.

Currently there are 2 DPEs in our FSDO area. Clayton Thomas is a long time DPE for whom the FAA paid for his designation training and who is almost 83 years of age. I am the other DPE who is a DPE of 5 years, who under the newer program paid for the designation process myself, and just 50 years old. There has been some discussion about having no DPE in this region since both Clayton and I have not reached the requisite 5 exams this year or in the past several years (Lets not forget that general aviation all but came to a halt due to 911 and is just now slowly recovering.) It would be unfair to eliminate either of us or both of us on the basis of our activity. We each perform a valuable service to the greater ballooning community. In my case I serve the community as an Aviation Safety Counselor striving to uphold safe flying practices and standards in our region as well as serving as the education chairman of the statewide ballooning club that services our pilots in Connecticut as well as surrounding states throughout the year through our safety minded educational programming. Clayton acts as a wonderful resource to the community as well, by sharing both his ballooning and medical knowledge as a guest speaker at our safety seminars. We are an integral part of the ballooning community and best qualified to provided the critical eye of examiner. While Clayton is not likely to continue to serve this community forever, he should be able to continue to provide these services until he is physically unable to

or he voluntarily gives up the responsibility. In my case, it seems to make sense that I be renewed so I can serve the Connecticut and surrounding community and for when Clayton steps aside so there is no interruption in service to the ballooning community. If only one of us were to be renewed and lets for argument sake say it was Clayton and Clayton were to step down in the near future, I do not think I would be willing to submit myself to the loss of money and time in getting re-certified, not to mention the length of the process. It is likely we would go without adequate service for this community for at least 6 months while a new examiner was brought on board. While I mentioned that there are 2 DPE's in this area there has in the past been a third person able to administer exams. One of you very own POI's is balloon certified and that individual recognizing the limitations placed upon her by the budget has opted to no longer give exams from a safety standpoint. So we have effectively gone from 3 to 2 individuals with the potential of going to 0 individuals capable of administering exams in this FSDO area. Where is the sense, safety, and community service in this potential action.

These DPE positions are not the money making propositions that they are in the powered world of aviation, so this letter is not self serving on my part. We believe that this is a labor of love for our sport and fellow pilots. In the five years since my training at OKC, that I fully funded at my own expense, I have yet to regain that initial payment back in exam fees. It is mine and I know that it is Clayton's view that we are providing a community service.

Speaking of money, we acknowledge that there is an expense associated with maintaining the DPEs but would contend that there is very little incremental cost associated with maintaining both Clayton and myself. We report to one POI who processes our paperwork. If all of the tests were administered by one DPE the POI would still have the same workload in processing applications. In consideration of tight budgets at the FAA, Clayton and I collaborated on our renewal last year where we were examined on the one visit from the inspector from the Portland office, thus saving the FAA the dollars that would be required for two trips. All in all, we are a bargain. If the FAA had to conduct even a few as 3 exams a year the cost would far exceed the cost of renewing the DPE's and the community would be poorly served from a timing/scheduling standpoint and a competency standpoint. Lets face it, the few FAA inspectors that are balloon rated in this area don't/can't maintain the currency that makes sense in the administration of exams. Off the record, your inspectors will admit that they are uncomfortable giving primary exams since the applicant may not be up to safety standards and flight safety could be compromised if the non-current/limited experience inspector had to intervene.

My recollection of the manual concerning DPEs is that it is the FSDO Manager's choice as to whether or not to renew the DPE's. In consideration of the items that I have mentioned above and other factors, Mr. Roach has wisely and graciously renewed us in past years. I believe that the rapport that our ballooning community has established with this FSDO through the efforts of Mr. Roach, yourself and many others in your office as well as the active pilots in then area could serve as a model for improving the relationship between the community and the FAA in other

(Continued on page 5)

areas of the country. I understand that the Regional Office has a hand in making the final decision if the Manager is inclined to affect the renewals. In deference to you and Ken, I have not copied the Regional Office on this memo. I sent it to you in the hopes so you can share it with them so they will better understand the needs of our community and the common sense that these renewals make.

On a brighter note, activity in the community seems to be bouncing back from the lows in the past years. I have conducted two tests in as many weeks and have 2 more scheduled over the next two weeks. That gives me 4 before my designation expires on June 30 of this year. There are waiting in the wings in CT alone another 4-6 pilots during this current season that will be ready after June 30. If we are not renewed, who will give them the exams in a timely and most safe manner. I have attached my activity log for this year in draft form since I will submit the final one as I close out the year on June 30th. One look at the number of student certificates issued is an indication of interest in the next one to two years.

I know that you are supportive of our mission to serve our community in the safest manner possible. I hope that you are successful in securing our renewal for this year and in future years to come. If I can be of any assistance please don't hesitate to call upon me. If a meeting would be of value, I would be pleased to participate. Stay well.

Sincerely yours,

Santo GalatiotoCc: Kenneth Roach, Susan Fraher, CLAS

Dear fellow CLAS members, as you are all aware, The Designated Examiner in this area may not be renewed due to low activity. Please read the letter below that I sent to the FAA. It is important that you contact them directly if you agree with the positions that I took in the letter. Letters from individuals go a lot farther than from groups. Some of you have already contacted them in person and well as by calling, but a letter is the best form of communication. Time is running out (June 30 of this year).
Thanks.
Santo

Bristol Sunday..... was a great day for Chris Johanson (student of Daryl Smith). Chris has joined the ranks of Hot Air Balloon pilots. He originally learned to fly more than a decade ago in airplanes having obtained instrument, single and multi engine ratings. Chris had a great flight from the school field during the newly revived "no frills" Bristol festival. He made a very gentle landing on the west side of the ridge in Southington at the rear of an orchard. His first act as a balloon rated pilot was to have his examiner (Santo) walk the balloon from the back of the Orchard to the road some 1500 feet away. Santo got his revenge by watching the pack-up from the car as he prepared Chris' new certificate. Lets all congratulate Chris on his latest accomplishment.



COMPETITION SCHEDULE 2004

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.

FAA report on Mass. incident

On May 23, 2004, about 1900 eastern daylight time, a Cameron Balloons N90, N6123U, sustained minor damage while landing in Whately, Massachusetts. The certificated commercial pilot and three passengers were not injured, while one passenger sustained a serious injury. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the flight that departed Conway, Massachusetts, about 1800. No flight plan was filed for the sightseeing flight conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

The pilot reported that the surface winds were very light during takeoff; however, the wind velocity increased during the flight. Due to the increased wind velocity, the pilot located an open field to land the balloon. During the approach, windshear drove the balloon into trees. The balloon then became entangled in trees about 10 feet agl. A tree limb subsequently broke, and the balloon fell to the ground. During the fall, a passenger suffered a fractured leg.

The reported weather at an airport approximately 20 miles south of the accident site, at 1853, was: wind variable at 4 knots; ceiling 4,900 feet overcast; temperature 73 degrees F; dew point 66 degrees F; altimeter 29.83 inches Hg; remark lightning in the distance to the south and southwest.

The reported weather at an airport approximately 20 miles northeast of the accident site, at 1852, was: wind variable at 6 knots; ceiling 11,000 feet overcast; temperature 68 degrees F; dew point 60 degrees F; altimeter 29.88 inches Hg.

HAY FEST JUNE 13, 2004

Sunday June 13, 2004 was probably the best weather, we ever had while bailing hay at the Ushchak's Aerodrome. Mother Nature provided cool temperatures, low humidity and above all else no bugs! It was a perfect afternoon / evening for bailing hay.

The event started with our local (Hay Meister) Steve Ushchak presiding over opening ceremonies. Steve provided his volunteer crew the spring refresher on proper haying techniques. This years crew consisted of the following (**Penny Christy, Stu Post, Erwin Dressel, Mick Murphy, Charles Perreault, Mike Kirkwood, and the rest of the Ushchaks**).

This season our team was introduced to fields that were fertilized for the first time in their history and the result produced over 850 bails of hay for the team to get stored in the barn before days end. This proved to be a challenge for the arriving teams but they endured and completed the last task at 11:00 PM in the evening.

There was no prize for first place but unlike most festivals that you attended the Hay Meister took care of all participating bailers without favoritism. There were plenty bails of hay for all involved and people could throw as many as they wanted or until their hearts content.

Photo credit Charlie Perreault



Hay Meister looking for the lost bails by drop light!

No one was left on the field empty handed. (how many events can you the same?).

The Hay Meister hosted the survivors banquet and it was attended by all the bailers. There was plenty of food and stories shared by all along the way. We were all very excited to mark this special day with achieving of the most bails thrown in one evening.

Now I know what your thinking??? How do I get invited to attend this special festival? Well the answer is very simple.....just provide the Hay Meister with your contact numbers and he will call you the day of the event. So please don't be shy and place your name on the distinguished list of bailers by calling Steve Ushchak and letting him know that you want to participate in the bailing games.



ALL NEW 2004 FireFly Clothing



Caps - Mango, Beige, Red – embroidered logo \$15



Jackets - New Embroidered Logos \$75
 • Navy/Red
 • Red/Navy
 • Beige/Black



Golf shirts Embroidered logos \$40

- Red/ Black stripes on collar and cuffs
- Yellow/Black pattern collar and cuffs
- Royal/Black stripes on collar and cuffs

Old style – Black/Gray with old logo \$60



T-shirts – Royal Blue, Yellow, Dark Red
 Embroidered logo \$15

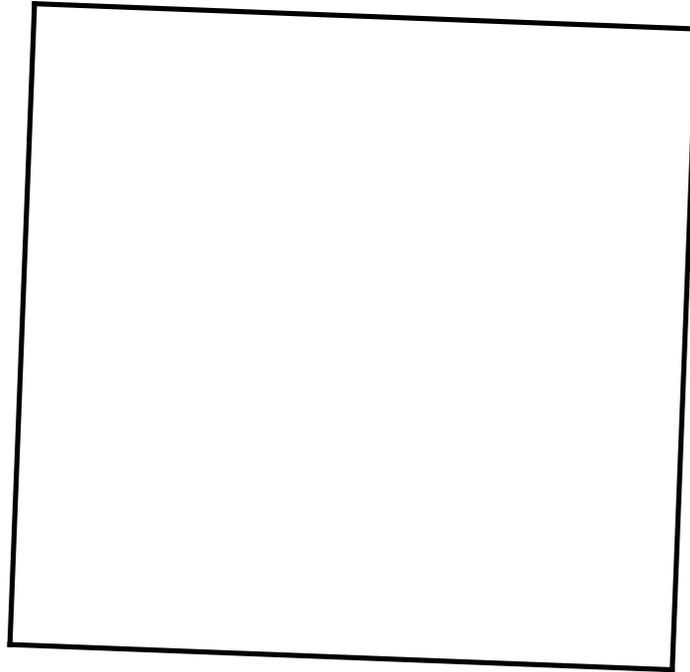


704.878.9501 FAX 878.9505
 810 SALISBURY RD. STATESVILLE, NC 28677

To Order Call 704.878.9501
 or Email Us sales@fireflyballoons.net



Connecticut Lighter Than Air Society
P.O. Box 53
Southbury, CT 06488
(860) 567-3448
info@lighterthanair.org
www.lighterthanair.org



WANTED NEWSLETTER EDITOR No experience required!

This is my last issue as Minister of Propaganda / newsletter editor. Putting together the newsletter together for the past four years has been fun. At present the job is still up for grabs. Yes, it's a commitment but it's very rewarding just the same.

Remember that CLAS does not run by itself. The members must give it the direction. The whole point of this explanation is the NEWSLETTER desperately needs an editor to run the newsletter but you shouldn't feel that you have to write every article if you step up and take over as editor. We have many people in the club that love to write and also who take beautiful pictures, you just need them to send you the content.

Many thanks to all of you who have contributed with articles, information, cartoons, etc. I took this position to try something new , which is the same reason why I' am giving it up!

Thanks for the everything,