



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

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August 2004

Images and Memories from Goshen, 2004

Top and bottom Photos by Charlie Perreault and center pictures by one of Mike Bollea's passengers.

Tether challenge in daytime winds



CLAS display



In this issue:

They're going all different directions!!

CLAS Minutes Pg.2
 ATC Tom Callahan Pg.3
 Jim Regan Downriver Pg 3
 Diane Tomassetti West Pg.5
 Don Palen South to North Pg.6
 Mario DiStefano Overseas Pg. 7
 Women in Ballooning Pg 9



Flying from Goshen to Torrington, Goshen Nightglow (below)



Minutes of the CLAS Meeting of July 15, 2004

The meeting was called to order by CLAS President Daryl Smith at 7:35 PM at the Plainville, CT Municipal Building. Members and guests in attendance were: Daryl Smith, Cindy Smith, Mark Sand, Santo Galatioto, Ellen Dressel, Tom Callahan, Al Theodore, Terri Rollinson, Tony Roswell, Andy Dressel, Penny Christy and Charlie Perreault.

The meeting was a combined **business and educational meeting**.

The minutes for the June 17, 2004 were read and approved with no changes.

Committee Reports:**Treasurer's Report:** \$3,460.03 in the checking account. \$5560.95 in CDs. **Sunshine:** No Report **Products:** No Report

Flight Manual: Two new Red Zones were identified. One is in Middletown just north of the Aetna Insurance Complex (unwilling landowner). The other red zone is the Preston Veteran's School, Preston, CT (proximity to cattle farm – the sight of the balloon scares the cows).

BFA/FAA Liaison: Santo distributed FAA Level I Pilot Proficiency Awards to Charlie Perreault, Cindy Smith and Chris Johannsen. The 3 hours required to complete the next level of the Pilot Proficiency (Wings) Program also meet the requirements for a BFR (Biennial Flight Review). The award requires two flights with a commercial pilot and one hour of ground training.

Congratulations to Charlie, Cindy and Chris!



Membership: Approximately 50 members have not yet paid their dues for 2004. In past years many members have forwarded their dues in July. Hopefully, this will be the case again. If you are in arrears, please pay up. Twenty dollars is a very reasonable amount for dues.

Winter Dinner: It is not too soon to begin planning for the winter dinner. We will probably hold the dinner at the same location as last year. Tony and Terri will again spearhead efforts. They will soon come up with a proposed date for the dinner.

Old Business: None

New Business: Daryl reminded us of the next CLAS Fly-Out, to be held at Steve Ushchak's property on July 31, 2004, with a rain date the next day. Daryl will send an email to the members with details.

The rest of the meeting was an educational presentation by Tom Callahan, Air Traffic Controller at Bradley Field in Windsor Locks.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM. The next meeting is Thursday, August 19, 2004.

We had talked about having the meeting at Kathy Wadsworth's place, with an accompanying barbecue. Daryl will follow up and inform the membership if this will be the case.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Sand,
CLAS Secretary.

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

This CLAS Photo Contest award-winning picture taken by Cindy Smith was taken at the Northampton event that is coming up the week after Labor Day.

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

Air Traffic Control at Bradley Field as told by Tom Callahan

Tom is an Air Traffic Controller working at Bradley Approach. Tom's presentation was very informative and generated many questions and discussions among the members. Tom stressed that safety was the preeminent factor in ATC operations. He encouraged all balloon pilots to become familiar with communicating with ATC, and the members took part in mock radio transmissions with him.

Tom impressed upon us the value in declaring an emergency, if conditions warrant. When you declare an emergency, you immediately become "Number 1" on ATC's priority list. ATC is uniquely able to alert all rescue agencies to come to your aid.

Please understand that not all ATC controllers understand the limits and needs of a balloon – for example, the need to change altitude to change direction or need to change altitude if you come becalmed at the altitude you are asked to go or hold. If you have problems, inform ATC in as few words as possible long before you become an emergency. Inform them that you need to take action.

The ATC radio frequency can be a busy channel. And you are not the only one trying to talk to them. Keep your radio transmissions brief and to the point.

Contrary to popular belief, ATC can often track balloons via radar even if they do not have a transponder or a radar reflector. When identifying yourself to ATC it is most important to give your call sign (N-number), position (radial and distance out relative to the airport or use a well-known landmark), direction of travel and altitude.

Tom showed a radar map of the area around Bradley and described how the area is broken up into sectors, each controlled by an individual controller during busy times. Tom stated that the Boston-DC corridor is probably the most congested airspace in the country. He peppered his presentation with numerous "war stories" of his experiences – some funny, some scary. Tom also stressed that we should be aware of all TFRs in our potential flight areas. Entering a TFR without proper authorization is an easy way to lose your certificate, and worse if it is an area associated with a VIP visit. Tom invited us to visit his operation. He suggested we come in small groups. Unfortunately, with the times as they are, only US Citizens can tour the facilities. Tours can be arranged by calling 860-386-3500, and talking to Mark Guild, Air Traffic Manager.

Jim Regan heads downstream 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 invite to anyone interested in going, but every year we find out someone wasn't aware of it and would've gone. To hopefully avoid that this year, I have attached the "official" announcement. My address book is not complete, so if you know anyone who might be interested and I did not email them directly, would you please forward it. As I mentioned, everyone is welcome and it's always a fun time. Hope to see you on the river next month!! Soft Landings, Jim Regan

6th annual "Numb Butt River Run"

Join us on our annual pilgrimage, tubing down the Farmington River.
Saturday, August 28th

Meet in Norton Park at 10:30am or at Satan's Kingdom on Rte 44 in New Hartford at 11:15am.
Entertainment provided by Bill Colyer and his "back flipping banana hammock".

No RSVP's required. For more information contact

Jim Regan at (860) 209-0351 or visit www.farmingtonrivertubing.com



Paul Petrehn wins Nationals in
Cameron's new Racer....

Stay tuned.....



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Diane Tomassetti heads West

I shall miss everyone and have missed flying in the CT valley with all of you!! I will be looking to buy another balloon come next year and then hope to be flying again at various festivals as well as in California. I am heading out to San Francisco for a job in the stone importing industry (granite, marble, limestone etc.). I will be working as an outside architectural sales rep for a company that imports stone from numerous countries; India; Italy; Brazil; etc.. (see www.asnstone.com). I would love to orchestrate ASN Stone Co. advertising from the heights of a great hot-air balloon and will be working on this as one way for me to get back in the air sooner!

My previous balloon was purchased by a woman from Costa Rica so who knows where ballooning will take me in the future. My daughter owns land and vacation homes in Costa Rica so come on out and vacation as well!

Although I am heading out to CA (driving cross country with my golden retriever Ecco and leaving Friday, 7/23/04) I am renting out my home in Fairhaven, not selling as....I WILL be back!

Both of my daughters, Radha & Nari, live in San Francisco. I have an apartment in the building that my daughter, Radha, owns. Nari lives on the first floor so we're calling this 'Tomassetti Towers' with me on the second floor and Radha on the third floor. We're all excited and think it'll be grand fun.

My e-mail address will be the same and my cell phone (508 326-2567).

If anyone wants to come out and fly, you always have a place to stay and I do remember how to crew and chase so....come on out to the West Coast!!!

I hope everyone has a super season, gentle breezes and soft landings - I will look forward to receiving the Scoop and reading about what is happening at the festivals and will look for those great 'stories' pilots tell so well (The landing is always great, the flight is always the best and every flight is another adventure with a story to tell over and over again!) with only a wee bit of embellishment I'm sure!

Arlene, Bev and Al came to Fairhaven last Saturday for a great little party as a send-off and we sat around and told pilot/balloon tales. Seems that when you have more than one pilot and/or crew in one place the stories begin to unfold and next thing you know you're telling of super flights from the last 17 years....and can you believe that we all remembered each place, person and weather condition as if it were yesterday - such a great sport, can't wait to get another balloon in the air - I miss flying incredibly and can't really watch a lift-off without tears in my eyes and wishing more than anything that I was flying as well. Soon, soon, soon.

I'll be at all the festivals with you and the others, look up and maybe you'll see me from your lofty flights! Thanks for asking about what I'm up to next, seems that I have another adventure coming up!

Ciao, Diane



Another view of the Northampton, MA event in 2003.

Photo courtesy of Mike Bollea. Photographer unknown.

The Florida Gang heads back North – see them at the northern events! Don Palen tells us about his adventures

After a winter flying in Florida, primarily in the Tampa area but also at several balloon festivals (Lakeland; Miami; Delray Beach; Jacksonville), I returned home to Middletown, RI at the end of May, hoping the last snow had fallen on New England, always questionable.

Three weeks ago I flew a 2.3-hour flight with Wendy Thomas, completing the 10 under-instruction hours now required for commercial pilot (I took the written in Florida and have almost 100 hours as PIC). The following week I flew my FAA check ride with my original private license instructor and mentor, Clayton Thomas.

It was light and variable and we flew only 2 miles in about 50 minutes and squeaked into a very small park to complete my qualification. With almost no steering it was quite a trick.

Now I am embarked on a series of balloon festivals stretching from Poughkeepsie, NY (last week) to Quick Check in NJ to western NY, NJ again, St. Jean, Plainville, Northampton, MA, Lake George, NY and then Albuquerque, so it should be a busy summer/fall...whew!

Of interest is the system used by the Tampa gang, led by David Justice of Celebration Aviation (my instructor down there): there are about 20 active balloonists in the Tampa area so rather than calling ahead to arrange to fly in company with someone, you just show up at the parking lot next to McDonalds on Dale Mabry Street (at 6 or 6:15 as Tampa is on the western edge of our time zone so the sun is an hour later...nice!) and see who is there.

A joint decision is then made as to go/no-go and the launch site. Then everyone is on their merry way. There is a limited supply of good landing sites because of the housing explosion surrounding Tampa, so it's usually "fly to target", normally to a site they call "hayfields". This was great training in honing my steering skills on what were normally 5-8 mile flights of an hour or so duration.

As a result I took 3rd in one of the Hare and Hounds at the JAX festival against some of the best pilots in the country (and out, as Bill Whalen, Canadian national champ, was also there). This made me very proud, although I didn't win any of the \$10,000 in prize money.

For the media flight in JAX, I flew a reporter from the Jacksonville Times-Union who miked me up and video'd the whole flight, resulting in about a 2 minute TV cameo, my 120 seconds of fame I guess.

You can see it at

<http://www.jacksonville.com/community/fccvideoarchive.shtml> (scroll down past all the "Straight Talk PSA Contest" stuff to "Jacksonville Hot Air Balloon Festival").



The above picture has two of my Naval Academy classmates with me. They live in JAX and crewed for me.

As you can see, I am having a great time flying. I didn't burn my balloon once this winter, and I'm looking forward to seeing the Plainville gang again this summer!

Cheerz, Don Palen

Note from the Editor:

I can vouch for the pilots being trained to "fly to target" in Florida. I was based in West Palm and with each flight, I saw our landing sites being consumed by new home construction or malls. We flew mostly flew between West Palm and Wellington and watched the housing explosion there.

The Ft Lauderdale pilots also gather at one spot and depart for the agreed upon launch site. ...Penny.

Mario DiStefano heads Overseas to Sicily with 16 lucky others

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

I am putting together plans for a group tour 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 me, for **this coming winter, February to March 2005** (the temperature ranges between 50 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit that time of the year). Should there be **more than sixteen** people, I will set up another trip package for **the two weeks following** this one. Any friends who are interested in joining us, but **do not wish to participate in the ballooning**, would be welcome and **we will accommodate them too**.



The Whole Island of Sicily is endowed with historic and nature attractions. Etruscans, Greeks, Romans, Normans, Spanish, Saracens and other civilizations have all left their mark on this beautiful island. Mountains, valleys, caves, calderas, farms, ranches, vineyards, orchards, beaches, Volcano Islands, Seaports, etc. Nature has blessed Sicily with an abundance to see and experience. Check out the links provided down below, as it is impossible to explain it in this introduction. The links are directed to certain places that we may like to visit. However, since we are going to choose where we will go, while we are there, you may want to really study all of the link's pages. Some links provide information and pictures of the Whole Island. I am open to your questions and suggestions. This trip is not going to be completely prestructured as there are certain factors that will determine our choices such as weather and distance from point to point on a given day. Exciting, isn't it?

As part of the arrangements, I am shipping my seven-passenger hot air balloon to our hotel in

Ralcamuto to fly from the hotel grounds and various other points in the Provinces of Agrigento and Caltanissetta. A twelve-passenger van and a five-passenger pickup truck are going to be used to handle the traveling and other logistics. We will lease another van if we have enough people who do not wish to participate in the balloon excursions but want to join us on the rest of our adventure.

Because I was born in Grotte and raised by my grandmother, I am able to speak the dialect and regular Italian to an acceptable degree and have many relatives there. I have previously visited Grotte and many other parts of Sicily in September 1979, March 1995 and April 2004 in which time I have made needed contacts and researched the area. It is my opinion that this trip will be the first of many more future trips. My goal is to establish a permanent ballooning and tour business in the Grotte area by the end of the year 2007.



The town of Grotte (caves) is built on a large hill (collina). It is called Grotte because it is built over many caves that are also common throughout the surrounding area. It is an ancient town with about 8,300 very friendly and welcoming people. Grotte has become very much up to-date in many ways, cell phones, great looking cars, beautiful new homes and the like, however it still offers many rustic attractions, Fontanas, traditional shops, cafes, marketplace, Piazza and old churches and buildings. There may still be two or three mules around. It has a spectacular countryside to fly balloons over and virtually open to launching and landing a balloon anywhere. (See Photos at Website www.bellaviaballoon.com).

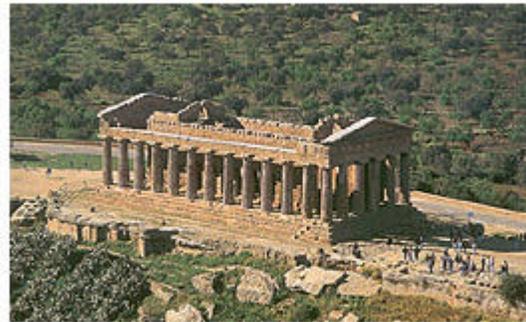
Group Trip to Sicily (Cont'd)

Surrounding it is some of the most natural and fertile agriculture in Europe. The Vineyards are boasted to grow the best eating and wine grapes in the world and are interspersed with citrus groves of Oranges, Lemons, Kiwi and even edible, Prickly Pear Cactus. In addition, many other varieties of fruit are grown there including almonds and olives. Greens, vegetables and diverse produce from local farms, meat from nearby Ranges and fish from the Mediterranean Seaports are brought in **fresh** daily. All very delicious, natural and nutritious for our daily consumption along with the locally produced wines cheeses breads and pastries.

Our hotel is called the Hamilton (named after Hamilton Ontario) in Ralcamuto, (bordering Grotte) right off the main highway O yeah! Great Pizza too (See link). The people who own it are paesani, (fellow townspeople) of mine and have given me a very good discount on lodging and meals, (breakfast and supper). O yeah! Great Pizza too. They are making other needed services available for us including a launch site from the hotel grounds and an English-speaking driver and guide. South of the hotel, (approx. 20kms away) are the world-renowned ruins and sites of Agrigento.

There are at least a dozen other important points of interest within an hour's drive in any direction. I have

hotel brochures if you need one. Just call (508 853 6101) or E-mail me at bellavia63@charter.net to get one.



Temple of Concord, Agrigento

I am currently negotiating shipping, pricing and flight arrangements with travel agencies and freight forwarding companies. Once I have a determination, I will inform all that are interested what the final arrangements and cost will be. If you have anything you can recommend and/or know that can help me with this project, I would appreciate the help. I am particularly interested in weather forecasting resources and aviation support. In any event, you are all welcome to join me in creating and participating in this adventure. Amedeo (Mario) Di Stefano

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Women in Ballooning Information Form

National Balloon Museum

1601 North Jefferson, P.O. Box 149, Indianola, Iowa 50125-0149
<http://www.nationalballoonmuseum.com> – 515 961 3714

*The museum is collecting information about women balloon pilots to add to its exhibit on women balloonists.
 Please fill out this form and return it to the museum or simply use it as a guide and email your reply.
 Please attach a photo of yourself and your balloon(s) if possible. Thank you for your help!*

Name _____ Phone(s) _____
 Address _____ Email address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Website _____

How did you get started in ballooning? Who was your mentor and/or instructor? _____
 How old were you when you received your first pilot's license? _____
 How many years have you been in ballooning? _____
 Type of balloon(s) you fly: Hot air Gas Airship Other: _____

YOUR BALLOON(S)				
Make	Model/Year	Size	Balloon Name/Description	Type

What was your most interesting flight? Write a brief description of it. _____
 Have you won any championships or awards or set any records? If so, please list them below.

Name of Award/Record or Championship	Location	Date

Write below or on an additional page anything else of interest about your ballooning career:
 If you want to email your reply send it to Becky Wigeland, Curator at: flamingbecky@aol.com

Ponder this!

When opening a can of Carnation evaporated milk for your recipes just smile and think of this.
 A little old lady from North Carolina had worked in and around her family dairy farms since she was old enough to walk... with hours of hard work and little compensation ... and when canned Carnation Milk became available in grocery stores, she read an advertisement offering \$5,000 for the best slogan/rhyme beginning with: "Carnation Milk is best of all because...." and she said, "I know all about milk and dairy farms...I can do this!"

She sent in her entry, and about a week later, a black limo drove up in front of her house. A man got out and said, "Carnation LOVED your entry so much, we are here to award you \$1000, even though we will not be able to! Use it". Here is her entry:

Carnation milk is best of all.
 no tits to pull, no hay to haul,
 no buckets to wash, no shit to pitch,
 just poke a hole in the son-of-a-bitch!

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

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.

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 _____ Will accept newsletter electronically? Yes ___ No ___
(Default will be electronically unless notified otherwise.)

CLAS Membership:

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



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