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Next CLAS Meeting
Thursday, June 18th at 7:30PM
Plainville Municipal Building



**American
Red Cross**

The need is constant.
The gratification is instant.
Give blood.™

Blood Drive in Memory of Mike Bollea
Saturday, June 13, 2009
8:45 am to 11:45 am
209 Farmington Avenue, Farmington

For those of you who attended the CLAS celebration of Mike's life, you heard about the blood drive that was being organized in his honor. We all know how much Mike gave of himself to others and this included donating blood countless times. I don't recall the total number but it was truly astonishing. I HATE needles but plan on donating if I'm able to - if not that day, then at a later time.

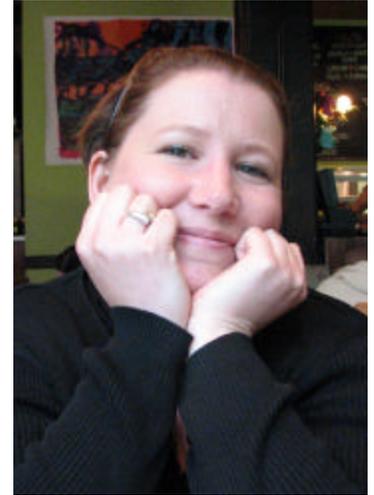
- Jim Regan

To schedule an appointment, call Erik Albrycht at 860-637-2180 or email ealbrycht1079@cox.net.

From The Scoop Editor, Libby Richardson

NEW RED ZONE!

Erwin Dressel reports a new Red Zone, located at 553 Laning Street in Southington, the CIRCLE G STABLES INC. From the air the Stables are located just South of Hawks Landing Golf Course. (Once called Patton Brook Country Club.) It's bordered on the East side by an apple orchard, on the West side by one house and Pleasant Street. The barns and house are red and pretty ram shackled. There is not much for wood fencing so if the horses were in the barn a pilot may not realize horses were there. They have had problems in the past and are pretty upset at this point. Word to the wise, STAY CLEAR!



PICNIC TIME

Anyone interested in a July picnic instead of a monthly meeting? If you'd be interested in getting together one weekend in July, instead of having a meeting, please email Garry Guertin at gguertin@cox.net no later than June 17th. Yes, we know the date will make a difference, we're just trying to gather interest levels. Thanks!

Thanks for your contributions for this month's Scoop: Erwin Dressel, Jim Regan, Mark Sand, Erik Albrycht, and Penny Christy.

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

Top scientist dies in balloon crash

The Press Association

http://www.google.com/hostednews/ukpress/article/ALeqM5ibpqc7_XbangmgtyXBGaMbAaeQEg

A leading British scientist has been killed and 10 others injured in a hot air balloon crash in Turkey. The sightseeing balloon was carrying the pilot and 10 holidaymakers, nine British and one French, when it came down in the spectacular Cappadocia region. It is believed it collided with another balloon shortly after taking off at 6.30am local time on Friday.

One British tourist, named by the Turkish authorities as Dr Kevin Beurle, died and a second was "critically" hurt in the crash. The other passengers suffered less serious injuries, including some broken bones, and are being treated at a private hospital, said tour operator Explore Worldwide.

Reports suggested the balloon was between 50m (164ft) and 250m (820ft) off the ground when it came crashing down. Possible causes of the tragedy being considered by investigators include a freak wind and pilot error, Turkey's Hurriyet newspaper reported.

Dr Beurle, from Brixton, south London, was a computer programmer in the astronomy department of Queen Mary University of London and a qualified scuba diving instructor. He was involved in the Cassini mission to study Saturn and its moons with an orbiting spacecraft.

Freedom Weekend Aloft – The Journey By Mark Sand

Rick Silva, Peter Coope and I, along with *Mystical Flyer* safely tucked away in her trailer, left for Simpsonville, SC and Freedom Weekend Aloft (FWA), on Wednesday, May 20. This was to be my fifth trip down to FWA, but my first without my dear friend Mike Bollea. Mike had flown at all 27 prior FWAs and as most of you know, won a new balloon and car in his rookie year during the inaugural year of the festival.

After spending the night in Harrisonburg, VA, in the heart of the beautiful Shenandoah Valley, and a brief stop at the Firefly factory in Statesville, SC, where Rick scored a great deal on a slightly used 3.9 basket, we arrived at the Drury Inn in Greenville, SC early Thursday afternoon. A media flight is always scheduled for Friday morning and we were anxious to take part. Unlike the past two years we did not fly a reporter, as there were not many at the launch field this year. The flight was a good one, but short, as flights down there tend to be. The wind came up after about a half hour and we landed uneventfully in a large field adjacent to a subdivision.



Friday evening's flight was a Hare and Hound, with two waves of balloons launching and two Hares. We missed Glen Moyer's expert announcing to the large crowd, but the economy did not allow FWA to hire Glen for this year's festival. By the time we got up the Hare had already landed about 1.5 miles ahead of us, about 50 feet from a major road and near a shopping center. We were heading in the general direction of the "X" but a little to the left. I looked up and saw a balloon about 800 ft above me drawing to the right. I went up about 500 ft and sure enough, we moved over to the right. We were about a half mile out at this point. I came back down and we headed straight for the "X!" I was at about 200 ft AGL and didn't want to change altitude, since we were on a pretty much perfect course to intersect the target. I let the baggie go when I judged we were just short of the "X," and we were, since the baggie fell 19 ft short of the target. That was good enough for 3rd place, however, and \$300 in prize money. The winner missed by less than a foot and 2nd place was 2 ft better than we were. It was a great thrill hearing the spectators at the shopping center yell and cheer when our baggie hit the ground. We landed shortly thereafter in a subdivision about a mile from the target.

Saturday morning's competition was a minimum one mile fly-in to the "X" on the launch field. Pilots had the option of throwing at the "X" or trying to throw the baggie into one of two kiddie pools located on either side of the "X." A baggie in the pool was worth \$1000 but did not count for the overall championship. It didn't matter because the ceiling dropped drastically to about 1000 ft after most of us had launched and the competition was cancelled. We passed about 200 yds to the west of the launch field and did not throw the baggie. Only one pilot scored, but it was to no avail. We landed on a road just west of the Heritage Park FWA site.

That flight was to be the last for FWA this year. Rain and/or wind cancelled the remainder of the flights, so the standings after the one and only competition flight became the final standings. Unlike years past there was no additional prize money for the top three finishers overall, dang it! The awards banquet was held at noon on Monday. We observed a moment of silence for Mike and Mary Bollea prior to the meal. After the meal and awards those of us that chose to write remembrances of Mike on pieces of paper which were placed into a giant 2 foot pipe which was launched into the South Carolina skies, a fitting tribute to Mike's memory.



We hit the road for home early on Tuesday morning. We again stopped at Firefly so Rick could pay for his "new" basket and arrange for its shipping. At about noon we stopped at Luray Caverns, VA and thoroughly enjoyed touring the extensive caverns and the antique car museum. We stopped for the night in Winchester, VA, the apple capital of the region, and arrived back home in Mystic late morning on Wednesday. A great time was had by all and we look forward to doing it again next year.

'Up,' up and away go cluster balloonists

By Zachary Pincus-Roth

Los Angeles Times, <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/la-et-up1-2009jun01,0,6604279.story>

When audiences for the new animated Pixar movie "Up" watch a 78-year-old man tie helium balloons to his house to fly away to South America, many might assume the tale is a whimsical bit of fantasy, like a rat who cooks gourmet meals or a trash compactor who falls in love. What moviegoers might not know is that some people have actually tried such a stunt. Sort of.

Cluster ballooning, as it's called, is one of the world's loneliest adventure sports, and isn't for the faint of heart. These brave souls take flight by inflating a large number of helium balloons and tying them not to a house, of course, but to a chair (or sometimes to just a harness). "People don't believe you when they say you're going to fly your chair," says [Jonathan Trappe](#), 36, a cluster balloonist in Raleigh, N.C. "They don't understand what you're saying."

One day Trappe was sitting in his Steelcase Uno office chair at Accenture, where he works as a technical project manager, and decided to make it fly. After a year of planning, he sneaked the chair out of the office, attached it to 54 large balloons and ascended to an altitude of 14,783 feet before landing in a field 50 miles away. Trappe still sits in the same chair, and its wheels remain caked in mud from the landing. "It's not my chair," he says, explaining why he returned it to the office.

John Ninomiya, a 48-year-old health care consultant in Solana Beach, is probably the most prolific cluster balloonist, racking up 65 flights as part of his quest to do it in all 50 states (he's at 41) and as many countries as

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possible. "It's really wonderful," Ninomiya says of the experience. " You're completely still and the whole world is moving beneath you. Unlike a hot-air balloon, there's no burner sound. It's completely silent. You can hear dogs barking and talk to people below." What goes up obviously must come down, and cluster balloonists often control their descents by releasing a few balloons at a time.

While Ninomiya and Trappe use their hot-air balloon training, Kent Couch, a 49-year-old cluster balloonist in Bend, Ore., is self-taught. "I take more of a redneck approach," he says. "Everything I have is things I have around my yard." His first flight required a sky dive out of his seat, but his third flight went 242 miles.

The cluster culture

Cluster balloonists date the sport to 1937, when an engineer named Jean Piccard took off from Rochester, Minn., let some balloons go, shot others with a pistol and finally landed in a tree in Lansing, Iowa. Others have not been so lucky. In 2008, a priest in Brazil named Adelir Antonio de Carli took off from the coastal city of Paranaguá and was never heard from again.

The most famous cluster balloonist is Larry Walters, the Studio City native who in 1982 tied 42 weather balloons to a Sears lawn chair and flew from San Pedro to Long Beach, startling airplane pilots and causing a blackout when he hit a power line. Though the stunt led to motivational speeches and an appearance on "The Tonight Show," Walters died in 1993 from suicide. "He put a smile on the face of America," says Hazel Dunham, Walters' mother, who now lives in Simi Valley. "He was proud of it, and I was proud of that too. "

A floating fixation

So why the heck would someone do this?

In "Up," Carl Fredricksen (voiced by Ed Asner) has a few reasons: to fulfill a dream to travel to an exotic place, to defy the real-estate developers forcing him to give up his house, and to escape from other people, since the recent death of his wife has made him something of a misanthrope. "It's every childhood dream -- 'How many would it take?' " Trappe says. "Part of it is fun to hear people say, 'You can't do that, it's not going to work.' "

Cluster ballooning inspired fictions before "Up," including the film "Danny Deckchair" and the one-act musical "Flight of the Lawnchair Man," which ran at the Ahmanson Theatre in 2001 as part of the show "3hree." Ninomiya was inspired by "The Red Balloon," the 1956 French film in which balloons lift a little boy into the sky. Many cluster balloonists are excited about "Up," and Trappe has even helped Disney market the film. He created balloon clusters to attach to two replicas of Fredricksen's easy chair, which have been touring the country for media VIPs to ride.

Will "Up" lead to a rash of tykes tying balloons to their car seats? Perhaps, but taking flight is another story, as it takes a unique individual to actually go through with it. "I've asked myself if I was missing something that makes me want to do something like this is -- is it a deficiency of self-worth, or a need for gratification?" says Couch, who owns several small businesses and lives with his wife and five kids. "I think about it a lot, because I don't want to be doing it for the wrong reasons."

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.

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