

THE SCOOP

Spring 2013



Connecticut Lighter Than Air Society

Photo by Carlos Kebe

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CLAS Calendar

April 18 – CLAS Meeting, Plainville Police Department, 7:30 pm

May 7 – Presentation on balloon insurance, Whelan Farms Airport, 7 pm, see more details in this edition of The Scoop

May 16 – CLAS Meeting, Plainville Police Department, 7:30 pm

June 20 – CLAS Meeting, Plainville Police Department, 7:30 pm

About The Scoop

This newsletter is published by The Connecticut Lighter than Air Society for its members and interested parties. Portions of this publication may be reproduced of credit is given to the written and CLAS. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the organization or members of the organization. Submissions for the newsletter are welcome.

Thanks to this month's newsletter contributors!

Ellen Dressel	Carlos Kebe
Charmaine Rohde	Jim Regan
Garry Guertin	Libby Richardson

Have something to share? Email Libby_rich@yahoo.com. Thank you!

Scoop Publishing Schedule

The Scoop is published quarterly, electronically. We encourage you to 'Like Us' on Facebook, keep an active email address on file with the club, and attend club meetings and events to stay up-to-date on club activities. News for The Scoop can be sent to the email address above for publication.

Thank you.

CLAS Meeting, January 17th, 2013

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by President Garry Guertin.

- 15 members present: Garry Guertin, Mark Sand, Erwin & Ellen Dressel, Rick Silva, Mick Murphy, Tom Murphy, Robert Zirpolo, Penny Christy, Jim Regan, Al Theodore, Tony Roswell, Tom Whelan, Tony Philpin & Doug Sherman

Officer's Reports:

Treasurer: Robert reported \$2891.21 in Checking. \$500 paid out for calendar printing.

Committee Reports:

Audit: Plan to meet ½ hour prior to winter dinner. Discussion about #501 tax filling. No resolution about the issue.

BFA/FAA: Changing radio's to narrow band.

Competition: Long jump rules discussion. Time frame within to complete task, Jan. 1st to Dec 31st. Stay within the state & carrying 40 gallons of fuel. Write up criteria for CLAS awards. No action taken on either topic.

Winter Dinner: Manor Inn on Feb 9th.

Safety Seminar: March 2nd. Yale Divinity School with the core subjects. Penny will be in charge.

Old Business:

CLAS transfer to narrow band radio. A BFA member can use their license and piggy back. Discussion to be continued till next month.

New Business:

CLAS has signed to use the room for meeting for the year. \$150.00 was given to the Plainville Police officer's Robert M. Holcomb scholarship fund.

Respectively submitted,

Ellen Dressel

CLAS secretary

CLAS Meeting, Feb. 21, 2013

Call to order: Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by President Garry Guertin.

- 9 members present: Garry Guertin, Erwin & Ellen Dressel, Mick Murphy, Tom Murphy, Penny Christy, Al Theodore, Tony Roswell, & Tony Philpin. No quorum

Safety Topic: Carrying a small cardboard nail file for de-burring the crown ring if it should get abused. Mentioned by Ellen as it has happened to Erwin.

Committee Reports:

BFA/FAA: Mick announced that Clayton Thomas, at the age of 91 will be inducted into the BFA hall of fame. May 11th & 12th there will be recognition at the Pioneer Balloon function in his honor

Education: March meeting to be at Whelan Farms. Topic will be fan maintenance.

Competition: Long jump rules discussion. Time frame within to complete task, Jan. 1st to Dec 31st. Stay within the state & carrying 40 gallons of fuel. No action taken.

Sunshine: Cindy Petrin died of a heart attack at the age of 58. Carlos Zuniga of Miami Beach, FL involved in a murder/ suicide.

Winter Dinner: Manor Inn on Feb 23rd due to the blizzard on the 9th.

Safety Seminar: March 2nd. Yale Divinity School with the core subjects. Penny has things well in hand.

Topics: weather, maintenance (basket, fan, & fabric), FAR's sectional reading, photography as to ballooning, communications, FAA, accidents, ropes & crewing.

Old Business:

CLAS transfer to narrow band radio. A BFA member can use their license and piggy back. Discussion to be continued till next month.

New Business:

Garry plans to work with the Plainville Fire Dept. to assist in a safe festival in August.

Respectively submitted,
Ellen Dressel
CLAS secretary

CLAS Meeting, March 21, 2013

The meeting was called to order by CLAS President, Garry Guertin at the Plainville Police Department Building, at 7:35PM.

Members in attendance were: Garry Guertin, Penny Christy, Tom Murphy, Tom Whelan, Doug Shevman, Charlie Perreault, Mark Sand, Rick Silva, Mick Murphy, Jack Perry (Guest), Robert Zirpolo, Tony Roswell, and Tony Philpin.

Safety Topic: It was pointed out that an unusual amount of power line strikes has been happening, lessons learned to come. Power line awareness a top priority.

The minutes of the last meeting were not available and will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Treasurer Report:

- Account expenses are still being balanced from the Safety seminar. YTD date ~\$4,900 deposits have been received.

Committee Reports:

Audit: The 2012 audit has not yet been completed. Target date to be complete by next month's meeting

BFA/FAA:

- Mick reported that the FAA is closing down a number of towers. Pilots should be inquired if towers in their flight area will be closing down.
- Clayton Thomas is being inducted into the BFA Hall of Fame

Competition:

- Mark and Penny are planning to meet before the next CLAS meeting to review the revised guidelines provided by Jim Regan and present at the next meeting.

Education:

- Fan Clinic, Gas Balloons, and Plainville Firehouse were identified as potential future education topics for 2013. Mick will contact the Plainville Fire Department to see if they would welcome hands on Balloon equipment review.

Winter Dinner: A big thank you goes out to Ellen & Libby for all of their hard work to arrange another very successful CLAS Winter Dinner.

Safety Seminar: Many Thanks to Penny, Lisa, Libby, Santo and all of the presenters on a very interesting and successful CLAS safety seminar.

Old Business:**CLAS Narrow Band Radio:**

- Mark reported that the request to transfer the CLAS license to narrow band has been submitted and now needs only to submit one additional form with signature.
- In addition, the CLAS license will need to be renewed before 11/6/2013.

- Note to all pilots that fines up to \$8K could be applied to anyone caught using the wide band. That fine can apply to the misc. holder and the license owner.

New Business

- Discussion on the frequency of the New Letter current being on a quarterly basis does not provide enough communication for important information to get sent out to the members. A suggestion was made to look into using link on the web site. Garry to investigate and report ant the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM

Respectfully submitted by
Garry Guertin
CLAS President
Acting CLAS Secretary

Balloon Insurance Seminar

On May 7th, 2013 at 7:00 PM at Whelan Farms Airport, John Griffin from Schantz Insurance Agency will provide a 1 hour presentation on balloon insurance in the main hanger. The Schantz Agency provides hot air balloon insurance and aviation insurance to balloonists, aviators, festival organizers and they also offer balloon club insurance They are located in Jacksonville Beach, FL and Atlanta, GA.

This message is going out early so everyone can mark their calendars and come out and meet John and learn more about balloon insurance in general and the Schantz Agency. John will be in CT visiting his mom and would like to meet and say hello to balloonists while he is in the area!

If you are planning on attending, can you please let me know in advance and forward to anyone else who might be interested. We will be taking John out to dinner if anyone is interested in joining us, please let me know so we make necessary arrangements and provide those interested with details.

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CLAS Winter Dinner, February 23rd, 2013

By Ellen Dressel

The dinner was moved to this date due to a blizzard on the original date. Manor Inn was very understanding and things worked with the change. 56 members and friends were in attendance.

Awards: Mike Bollea Spirit Award went to Mark Sand
Long Jump went to Matt Dutkiewicz for 39.4 miles on Jan 6th, 2013
Crew: Libby Richardson & Tony Philpin.
Sh*t Happens: to Jim O'Brien.

Raffle: 50/50 went to Polly Lasher with a nice sum of \$100.
A CLAS shirt went to a crew member of Bill Colyer.
Admission to the safety seminar went to Erik Albrycht.

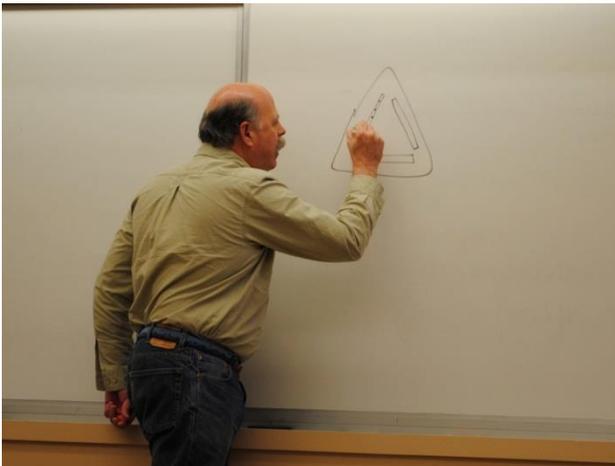
Landowner cards were drawn, 27 total returned.

CLAS Safety Seminar

By Libby Richardson

Thank to everyone who attended the CLAS Safety Seminar. It was a great day of learning attended by 70 pilots and crew members from around the northeast.

Thanks to all who helped plan the day, and thanks to Charmaine Rohde for these pictures of Erwin Dressel (top right), Kevin Brielmann (bottom right), and Robert Zirpolo (below).



Caption this photo! Send your caption to:

Libby_rich@yahoo.com



News You May Have Missed

Local man's crazy crab hot-air balloon to fly over New Zealand

http://www.myrecordjournal.com/berlincitizen/article_54fbe982-9704-11e2-83f6-001a4bcf887a.html

Students Recreate 100-Year-Old Hot Air Balloon Experiment

<http://www.laboratoryequipment.com/news/2013/04/students-recreate-100-year-old-hot-air-balloon-experiment>

Plane has near-miss with hot air balloon

<http://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/local-news/plane-near-miss-hot-air-balloon-1375372>

Trailer carrying hot air balloon basket explodes

<http://www.myfoxphoenix.com/story/20036421/2012/11/07/trailer-carrying-hot-air-balloon-basket-explodes>

Easton man's hot air balloon hits three cars on I-78

http://articles.mcall.com/2013-02-17/news/mc-c-hot-air-balloon-crash-on-78-20130217_1_hot-air-balloon-hits-state-police-jd-malone

In Paris, a hot air balloon to boost air quality awareness

<http://www.smartplanet.com/blog/global-observer/in-paris-a-hot-air-balloon-to-boost-air-quality-awareness/9068>

Aircraft hits four buildings, story at 11!



HEALTHY CREW DYNAMICS

By Gordon Schwontkowski, 2013 CLAS Safety Seminar Presenter

Chemistry, teamwork, small group dynamics – whatever you call it, how your crew interacts, cooperates, and achieves can trump a world championship, the latest equipment, and decades of experience when it comes to flight safety and ballooning enjoyment. Whether your crew is open source (new faces every time) or task force (familiar faces) matters less than the culture your crew chief creates. Both peak performances and civil wars are created and nurtured from within. This isn't feel-good pop psychology; it's essential every pilot and crew chief understands how this works and how to troubleshoot glitches that come up during a flight or season.

We've all seen it and been there. The Peak Performance Crew is short on hands, faces high winds, smiles and laughs, acts decisively with minimal direction, and somehow launches their balloon perfectly as if there's no wind at all. The Civil War Crew is 15 eager faces out of sync, yelling at and over each other, in conflict (pouting and meltdowns), and struggles to hot inflate safely in dead calm conditions. The former bonds and achieves with no apparent effort, the latter implodes after super-human efforts. We'd all like our crews to hum like a Swiss watch, but is this really necessary? And what can you really do when your crew lurches erratically like a cold diesel?

Yes, healthy crew dynamics are absolutely essential to safety for every crew. The smallest trigger can begin a spiraling cycle of more stress and less safety and fun. A single bored, frustrated, angry, or disenfranchised crew member can distract or derail an entire crew. Distrust, dislike, misunderstanding, and confusion compromise safety via poor communication, judgment, and decision-making. Discord among spouses, family members, friends, and colleagues who crew together can continue long after a flight and may ruin an entire event, season, or even relationship. Good luck putting a replacement cost on that!

There's no magic bullet or formula to turn a Civil War Crew into a Peak Performance Crew, and sometimes the dynamics just don't work. In many ways, the crew chief has an impossible task: leading a team (whose cast, number, skill level, motive, and commitment change throughout the flight) to precisely perform complex tasks in a highly dynamic yet unstructured environment quickly and safely, often with little or no planning. When clearly visualizing results is difficult, the quality of the experience more largely determines the nature of your results. Thus, your crew's software becomes as or even more important than its hardware.

Not every Civil War Crew can fully evolve into a Peak Performance Crew, but there are steps which clearly improve your crew's dynamics. You'll recognize many of these from your own experience; others will only ring true with time. Some seem trivial, others not even worth mentioning. All, however, can make a drastic impact on the quality of your flight safety and crewing experience. Among the most notable in several categories are:

EQUIPMENT

- **Simplify:** streamline everything you do and carry, keep nonessential gear to a minimum, make checklists so nothing's left behind
- **Keep it clean:** pick up after yourself (maintain order, value, and pride)
- **Assign everything a place:** make sure everyone knows where things go, then put them there
- **Fix it:** replace what doesn't work NOW whether it's an inflation technique, fan cage clip, or shoelace - failure can cost many times more than replacement parts
- **Put it back in its place:** the next time you need it, you'll need it NOW with no time to search
- **Ready it for next time:** fill it with gas/helium, coil/bag it correctly, strap it down, etc.

CREW

- **Clarify expectations:** both what to expect and what is expected
- **Consider motives:** volunteer crew show up for very different reasons than paid crew
- **Assign clear roles early:** who's the crew chief, who drives, who fills the cooler, who charges and works the radio, who navigates, etc.
- **Delegate:** ballooning is a team sport, not an individual event
- **Trust:** give every crew member a job and let them do it. How well they perform reflects on you and your training

- **Keep your crew fed and watered:** they'll be more productive, loyal, and agreeable

COMMUNICATION

- **Relax:** deep breaths and clear thinking can get you through any situation
- **Stay close or in touch:** stay together, near your vehicle, or within reach at all times
- **Let it go:** focus on the present and not events at home, office, elsewhere
- **Praise and reward achievement publicly:** handle all other matters privately, especially if you must offer criticism
- **Share credit with your entire crew:** pilot and crew chief accept responsibility when results fall short
- **Ask questions:** admitting you don't know can make you feel silly while not knowing can prove deadly
- **Listen:** even if you are the most experienced, hear everyone out
- **Focus on what goes right:** more will go right, and there's more of it anyway
- **Manage issues and behavior, not personalities:** "Let's try this" gets you further than "Man, was THAT stupid or what..."
- **Watch more, talk less:** signals, cues, and events often send messages more quickly and accurately – tune in and create your own codes
- **Stop, think, then talk:** there's always time to take a moment for reflection – don't make matters worse with knee-jerk charging in
- **Nip it in the bud:** clear up misunderstandings as they occur and before they escalate
- **Deal with it:** resolve conflicts before the flight's over or live with differences

STRATEGIES

- **Leave it behind/for later:** pets, babies, smoking, and alcohol distract you and expose you to risk
- **Plan ahead:** one minute of planning saves 15 minutes of doing, undoing, or redoing – act promptly but refuse to be rushed
- **Mind details:** that dime of gas, last helium balloon, or dead battery can cancel a flight and cost lots of time, money, and headache
- **Set meetings times and places:** be crystal clear on when and where
- **Write it down:** don't rely only on memory or electronics. Keep paper and pen nearby for weather conditions, phone numbers, directions, etc.
- **Arrive early or start earlier:** lateness forces rushing and mistakes – allow enough time
- **Follow directions and the rules:** they're usually there for good reason
- **Replace chaos with order:** develop habits, systems, routines, and checklists for consistency. Adventure and surprise are exciting, but predictability is reassuring
- **Do one thing at a time:** it's the only way to do three things at once. Human multi-tasking was disproven years ago in the corporate world
- **Do it right the first time:** a little care now means less problem-fixing later
- **Be efficient:** don't hurry but be quick and do it well
- **Learn from mistakes:** stay calm, contain damage, fix it, get help if needed, and go easy on yourself

Results with these will range from drastic now to long-term subtle and can make or break a flight. Many shifts happen at once. Admitting errors and fixing problems (instead of people) replaces blaming and dwelling on mistakes. Gossip, sarcasm and ridicule diminish or disappear. Turnover drops sharply. Yelling softens to calmer tones, and laughter is heard more often. Results, constant improvement, and solution-thinking feed an "up" outlook of focus and fun. Crew participation, initiative, loyalty, and ownership all rise. Predictive thinking quickens action and eliminates constant prompting or waiting for direction. Learning, speaking up, and delivering results becomes the new norm. Always remember that performance climbs or falls to expectations, and behavior moves toward things that are pleasant and non-coercive.

The stakes are high. A pilot's safety often depends on the efforts of unpaid volunteers. Crew who feel unappreciated or slighted won't give their best effort or race to add weight or grab that drop line. Tongue-lashed crew often quit when pressure is high and fun has disappeared. At worst they'll just go through the motions of crewing and wait for prompting or verbal instructions which forces a pilot into multi-tasking and micro-managing (both carry high risk/prices and low effectiveness). Crew retention is far easier than recruiting and training new crew. And there's absolutely no room for doubt, hesitation, or mistrust in flying. All of these clearly translate into safety or anything less.

While it's not always easy and learning curves takes time, energy, and commitment, the results range from incredible to miraculous. Each pilot and crew chief simply must have these strategies in place or ready to go. Set the social stage for safety with these basic steps. Solid performances come from healthy morale; keep your crew's outlook and dynamics positive, focused, and fun!

*Based on the book "**Hot Air Balloon Crewing Essentials**" available through the author (see the end of the "Welcome" article for more information).*