



Volume XVI, Issue 5

# The Scoop

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July 2003

## 2003 PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



**Twelve photographs will be featured in the CLAS 2003 Calendar**  
**Deadlines 7:30 pm, Thursday, September 18, 2003.**

- Subject: Any ballooning related subject, pictures of balloons, pictures from balloon, etc. Hint, the judges generally favor pictures of local balloons and events.
- Contest is open to all CLAS members and their family.
- Limit **3** entries per person. Members may submit photographs by non-members, however, those photographs count toward their limit of three entries.
- Submit photographs with your name on the back. 8x10 prints are preferred, please no smaller than 5x7.
- Photographs will be judged by members present at the September 18th meeting.
- All entries will be returned to owner.
- If you cannot attend September 18th meeting send your entries to Jack Perry, 206 Railtree Hill Road, Woodbury, CT 06798.

### PRIZES

1st, 2nd, 3rd Place and 9 Honorable Mention  
Photographs will be featured in the CLAS 2004 Calendar.

**1st Place:** four CLAS 2004 Calendars.

**2nd Place:** three CLAS 2004 Calendars.

**3rd Place:** two CLAS 2004 Calendars.

# Lookie Here



## The Hot Summer Sale!

From June 10 to July 31, the fabulous and popular  
**FireFly 8B with a 4.5 basket**  
and all the goodies is on sale for **\$23,900.**

There is a **FAST START** for any order  
placed by June 24; with a \$4.9 or 4.9 at no charge.  
Replacement **8B envelopes** are priced at **\$15,000.**

*Especially Here*



**Call Your FireFly Dealer for More  
Information on This Great Sale!**

*Here  
Too*



email: [info@fireflyballoons.net](mailto:info@fireflyballoons.net)

**704.878.9501 FAX 704.878.9505**

**810 SALISBURY RD. STATESVILLE, NC 28677**

Disclaimer: We didn't spend a lot of money on this ad so we could pass the savings on to you.

**IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION**  
**for hot air balloon owners and operators**  
**AEROSTAR SERVICE BULLETIN #137**

**DATE OF ISSUE:** July 1, 2003

**SUBJECT:** 10 Gallon Aluminum Fuel Cylinders

**PROBLEM:** There exists the potential for 10 gallon aluminum fuel cylinders to rupture when exposed to high heat in the event an onboard fire occurs. Such a rupture would result in an explosion and large fire due to a BLEVE (Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosion).

**DISCUSSION:** Since the first hot air balloons were Type Certified in late 1967 and early 1968, two types of fuel cylinders have been used almost exclusively: 10 gallon aluminum, and various sizes of stainless steel. During the past 35 years, uncontrollable fires have occurred which have resulted in explosions. All of these explosions have been associated with the 10 gallon aluminum cylinder. As flame impinges on the portion of the tank that is in the vapor region, rapid heating of the metal occurs. Heat applied to the liquid portion of the tank remains cooler as the liquid fuel absorbs heat and offsets it with rapid vaporization of the liquid fuel. No such cooling takes place in the vapor region of the tank. Since aluminum has a relatively low melting temperature and an even lower temperature at which softening occurs, the wall of the cylinder begins to thin as the metal softens. A blister or bulge occurs and as the metal continues to thin, a point is reached where the pressure relief device value (375 PSI opening and 325 PSI closing) is higher than the remaining strength of the cylinder wall. At that point, the bulged area will split or rupture. With a large tear in the wall of the cylinder, the remaining fuel vaporizes rapidly. No stainless steel fuel cylinders, to Aerostar's knowledge, have exhibited this characteristic since their introduction into ballooning in the 1960's.

**CORRECTIVE ACTION:** Remove all 10 gallon aluminum fuel cylinders from service immediately.

**PROCEDURE: (OWNER)** 10 gallon aluminum fuel cylinders may be replaced directly with 15 gallon tanks and in some cases, other combinations of stainless steel fuel cylinders. Initial installation of such fuel cylinders must be accomplished by a repair station or properly FAA certified and qualified individuals.

**PROCEDURE: (REPAIR STATION or FAA certified personnel)** This change is from one approved fuel configuration to another approved fuel configuration. The change must ensure that the new fuel configuration meets the aircraft type design. Contact Aerostar customer service (phone 605-331-3500, fax 605-331-3520 or mail@aerostar.com) with the system information and the proposed fuel configuration to obtain copies of type design drawings that illustrate the approved configurations. Additionally, the change in the weight and balance information should be properly noted in the flight manual weight and balance (page 4-3).

**COMPLIANCE:** This service bulletin must be complied with within the next 10 hours of flight time or next annual inspection, whichever ever occurs first. During any flights that are conducted prior to compliance, extreme care must be exercised to ensure that, as always, power line contact is avoided as well as the potential for in flight or ground onboard fire. Refueling procedures to eliminate the fire hazard must also be exercised. In the event that the pilot in command feels that such conditions are unavoidable, the service bulletin should be complied with prior to flights under those conditions. Failure to comply with this service bulletin could result in severe injury or death.

### Competition Update

Saturday, July 10th started off with questionable weather at 4:00 AM unless one stuck their head outside their door. With Bradley located just off the Connecticut river and Meriden down in the low lands, the visibility looked bad. As it turned out, visibility at 6:00 AM was better than the Connecticut norm. Flying out of the Ushchak Aerodrome, 185 Blacks road in Cheshire, Dressel was the Hare and placed the Target in the center of a large field on Ives Farm. Jim O'Brian took first place right on target just beating out Randy Riley by five feet. Randy took second place and Mike Bollea came in third. As the story goes, Mike was right on target but couldn't find his bean bag. When he did find another bag he was already past the target but luckily still in the same field. Most of us landed in the Meriden Square area, but long jump Mike went over to the Aetna complex area. Breakfast at Paul's Restaurant was fun. Penny came along and told us about her new Balloon on order but still six weeks away. The economy may be terrible but Cameron is working 10 hour days and weekends. It's good to here the Balloon build business is thriving. Erwin

### Tewksbury

Tewksbury was a fun day, however it rained at flight time. We received a nice thank you note for our participation and donations. They raised over \$14,000.

The weather hardly treated us much better at Goshen. We did fly three out of five flights, the accommodations we're great and we all had a bunch of fun anyhow.

Erwin Dressel

## CLAS "Balloon Exploration Area" at Goshen

Thanks to Frank & Barbara Bart and the Northwest Connecticut Balloon Festival in Goshen, CLAS had a 12-foot by 12-foot exhibit booth in a very prominent area during the June 27-28 event. Club members set up a Balloon Exploration Area in the main hall and answered questions about hot air balloons, the equipment and CLAS. We had a complete basket, burner, envelope and fan in the booth along with club products and handout information about CLAS and ballooning.

Visitors to the Balloon Exploration Area were allowed to climb in the basket, look around and talk about flying in a balloon, some even made noises like they were flying. Cindy Smith brought in her Aurora basket, Mike Bollea loaned us his walk in balloon envelope, Erwin Dressel brought in his cut-a-way fuel tank and Mark Sand loaned us his fan between launches. We used all of this equipment to go through mock set-ups of a balloon system and as hands on props for spectators to touch and look at.

Cindy Smith spread out the envelope on the floor and did several "Children's Story Times" with the children sitting on the fabric and listening to stories. While the 15-25 kids that attended each story time were listening to "Hot Air Henry" and "Curious George", we were able to talk to mom and dad about ballooning, promoting the club and selling T-shirts. After story time, and through out the day, Cindy and Ellen had crayons and coloring pages for kids to work on.

Mike Bollea had his TV and VCR running ballooning tapes all day and showed off his impressive collection of ballooning pictures. Mike even had video from each previous launch at the festival to show attendees what they had missed. This was a big attraction and ice breaker for getting people into the booth, thank you Mike.

We sold off a large amount of club products over the 2-½ days the exhibit was set up. We handed out 20+ club applications, but were unsuccessful getting the money on the spot. I talked to 4 people through out the weekend that were serious about joining the club and becoming a crewmember. I recommended they attend the next fly-out. So if you see new faces at the club fly outs introduce yourself to them. They will be looking for pilots to crew for. First come first serve.

There were many club members that contributed to the Balloon Exploration Area, either in person or in helping to get things set up, Cindy Smith, Erwin and Ellen Dressel, Mark Sand, Thad Burr, Jeff and Christine Ratcliffe, Mike Bollea, Penny Christy, Frank and Barbara Bart and I'm sure I'm missing other names in here too so thank you everyone who helped out.

Daryl Smith

## Plainville "Balloon Exploration Area"

Mick Murphy has worked with the Plainville Fire department to let CLAS have a "Balloon Exploration Area" at the Plainville Festival in August. The Plainville Festival will be a wonderful opportunity to promote the club through a Balloon Exploration Area exhibit. But it will take effort and we need more club members to participate. Manning this



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kind of exhibit is exhausting if you have to be there all day, but if everyone could donate one hour a day we would have enough help to spread the work load around.

As a preliminary plan and schedule for the Plainville "Balloon Exploration Area", I would recommend we organize 3 shifts with members working only 1 or 2 hours each day:

Morning - 6:00 to 10:00 – On field exhibit of a standard balloon system with 2-4 members staying on the field to talk about ballooning, hand out club applications and keep a balloon standing up or tethering as long as possible. This would let members be close to and involved with the AM launch activities, and give the audience more time to find out about us after everyone flies away. What's needed? 2-4 members and one balloon system and crew.

Afternoon - 11:00 to 3:00 – Set up and man a "Balloon Exploration Area" in an area assigned to us by the Plainville Fire Department. Activities - information about CLAS and general ballooning information, BFA and Jr. Balloonist program, ballooning equipment to look at, Mike Bollea has already offered his dead envelope again, children's story time and coloring. What's Needed? 2-4 members an hour at a time and one lower end balloon system (with no fuel tanks) This exhibit would be packed up and off the field before the PM launch.

Evening - 3:00 to 5:00 - On field exhibit of a standard balloon system with 2-4 members staying on the field to talk about ballooning, hand out club applications and keep a balloon standing up or tethering as long as possible. This would let members be close to and involved with the PM launch activities, and give the audience more time to find out about us after everyone flies away. What's needed? 2-4 members and one balloon system and crew.



We can work with the event announcer to call attention to the activities we have going on at the Balloon Exploration Area and on the launch field and, maybe give us a little commercial announcement too.

Many times the same members show up when it's time to work, and I'm sure you'll see all of them there again too. But we need to get everyone to help out on this one. This could be the biggest and best time of the year to get new club members. CLAS is your Club. Help make it better for you and for ballooning by helping out at Plainville.

If you have balloon equipment we can use, suggestions, or you want to sign up for your 1-hour time slots for the Plainville Festival now, call or e-mail Cindy or I.

Daryl Smith

**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](mailto:pmchristy@earthlink.net)  
Or phone 860-638-3803

### Northwest Connecticut Balloon Festival

Well here it is a few weeks later and the dust has finally settled on this year's Northwest Connecticut Balloon Festival. The last two weeks have really been a blur for Barb and I. The 10th year of the festival turned out pretty well for an event that was headed for oblivion just a few short months ago. Thanks to the professionalism of our balloon teams and our dedicated staff there were very few complaints and many, many compliments from attendees and the local community. Special thanks go out to Barry and Teri for bringing out the US Flag balloon and the brand new Space Shuttle Patriot. I'm sure they played a big part in attracting all 4 of the State's largest TV stations to the event. That kind of coverage can't be bought. The local Lions club raised close to \$10,000. and the Civil Air Patrol, 2 food banks and other non-profit's also benefited. We're last in line for the checks but I'm confident we earned enough start up funds for next year. Our thanks go out to all who attended and especially to Jon Radowski who earned our private little MVPilot award.

Buoyant Regards,

Frank Bart  
Festival Director  
NW CT Balloon Festival

### Charlie Manning

We just received news from Bill Plummer, a friend of Charlie's and one of his last crewpeople, that Charlie Manning was found dead this last in his house in Pepperell, Mass. Apparently he fell and hit his head. He was sharing his house with a couple of guys who paid him rent. They were with him when he fell, and he told them he was OK and went to bed. But they checked on him later and found him dead.

For Susan Sparks and me, and for others like Tom Stodolski and Russ Kimball and Dick Murphy, Charlie was our Balloon Instructor, and we felt that he was perhaps the finest balloon instructor in New England back in those days. He had a way with words in the balloon... When early in my ballooning career I descended too quickly over a Route 2 interchange, he accused me of "trying to brick it into the top of a Volkswagen".

Charlie started flying balloons with Ralph Hall when he was living with Ralph's daughter Sue Hall. He was one of our local pioneers, and he knew about flap inflations and flying Ravens with grossly underpowered burner cans and aluminum gondolas and Piccards with the cable-suspended burner plates that would hit you in the head on a hard landing.

He was a hell of a pilot, and not just in balloons. Fixed wing and helicopters too. Many of us will also remember him as the very informal balloonmeister (and propane refueling station operator) for the once wonderful Acton-Boxboro Balloon Rally from the high school in Acton, Massachusetts.

Charlie was at his best back in 1983, when a handful of American balloonists flew from Annonay, France in the Bicentennial of Manned Flight. Susan and I were crew for Ralph Hall... Charlie flew over the red roofs of Annonay with Mike LaFoley in the distinctive Raven "Black Magic".

At his peak, Charlie was a near-genius RF hardware and computer software design engineer. At Frequency Sources (before it was purchased by Lockheed Martin), Charlie controlled their computer system. Of course those of us who knew Charlie knew him as the guy with the perpetual long hair, long

beard, long mustache. Skinny as a rail. The guy who would wear a heavy sweater everywhere, even on a 90 degree afternoon at a rally.

Unfortunately, Charlie also fought a losing battle with alcoholism, losing his driver's license and even spending time incarcerated for it. It took away many of his skills and talents.

We last saw Charlie about a month ago. You could always count on him to help out, and he came over to check out our faulty propane pump when we asked and went over to pick him up. I'm glad that after we finished I took him up for a flight over the North Shore in my Cherokee 180.

We don't know if there will be any kind of a memorial service or anything for Charlie.

Charlie was a month or two older than me, which would mean he was 57 when he died. He was more than my balloon instructor. He was more like the older brother Susan and I never had.

We sure miss him.

Jim Ellis



## The Scoop



PO Box 53  
Southbury, CT 06488-0053  
WWW.LIGHTERTHANAIR.ORG

### Product News

June was a good month for the sale of CLAS T-shirts. The combined individual and festival sales have reduced our inventory by two thirds. Returning from the North West CT. Balloon Festival in Goshen, I have 11 shirts remaining. With inventory of shirts so low the club has some decisions to make.

1. Should we sell off the remaining shirts? Or, Should we keep the remaining shirts to use as Thank You gifts, hand outs, a contribution to the Bradley Air Museum (the balloon exhibit) etc.?
2. Our next club decision is do we want to continue to keep money invested in T-shirt inventory?
3. Would it be a better use of CLAS funds to invest in a set up fee at a printing company and then let the members order what they want on an individual basis. This reduces our club investment and does not tie up funds in merchandise for long periods of time.

I had the opportunity to ask the Granite State club president what they do about merchandise and I was surprised to find that they only had club pins and decals. They did not invest club funds to purchase t-shirts and other items.

Our next meeting in July is a business meeting. I will be looking for club input on the questions I have asked. If you have any suggestions attend the meeting on Thursday so the club can discuss options. See you then.

Cindy Smith  
Products Chair Women