



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'll be exceptionally 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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January 2006

HAPPY NEW YEAR, EVERYONE!! **CLAS MEETING January 19, 2006**

(Mark Sand is bringing the refreshments)

Let's celebrate another successful year together!!!

We have lots of fun to anticipate in 2006.

Winter Dinner on Jan. 28th,

2006 Officer Elections

3rd Annual CLAS Safety Seminar on Feb 25th

Balloons over Bristol May 19th – 21st

Come to the Plainville Municipal building (Rte 372) on
Thursday, Jan. 19, 2006 at 7:30PM

Your 2005 CLAS Calendars:

We have about 50 calendars left.

Give your orders to Garry Guertin (gguertin@cox.net)

The calendar prices are as follows: 1-4 \$9ea. 5-9 \$8ea., 10 or more \$7ea.

Minutes – CLAS “Meeting” of December 15, 2005

The holiday spirit was high as we feasted on everyone's specialty dishes and favorite foods. This was a social event with the usual pictures being passed around and recounting the most memorable stories of the flying season.

We had another new member show up...Cindy Smith's new Labrador puppy in training for Guide Dog Service to the Blind. That puppy couldn't find enough laps or arms to cuddle. I don't think her feet ever touched the floor. She was solid black silky and shiny and well behaved.

“The one person frozen bun rally”! (On Saturday, January 7th)



Snowy Aquaturf from the air...



Matt and Sweetheart Diane

Frozen Buns Rally (On Saturday)

By: Matthew Dutkiewicz
January 7, 2006

I showed up at the Aqua Turf at 8:30 am, a little later than the 7:15 sunrise. It is winter and snow covered with little chance of thermals. My sweetheart, Diane, and chase crew, Kathy Wadsworth Delano, were there only to find an empty parking lot. That's correct! Kathy did come out for the festivities. It seems as if every year the temperature has be warmer and warmer for Kathy to come out and fly. (Why is that?)

I called a fellow pilot, Jim Regan. He had informed me that the event was postponed to the next morning when the winds aloft were more favorable from a better direction. Well needless to say, some folks went by the soundings charts and not by the analog wind finder like a pibal. Some of you may remember that's all we used instead of those computer-generated charts.

The weather was just turning spectacular with clear, blue skies and calming winds. The flags at the "turf" were hanging straight down and a slight breeze was in the air. The forecast was calling for calming winds after 9am. So my crew took their time helping me inflate. Diane hopped in and off we went. We were moving slowly. I do mean slowly! We moved along in Southington and then climbing to 1200ft and drifted over the ridge into South Kensington. We then headed south into Meriden at a snail's pace. Ascending to 1600ft to catch any kind of a wind we to moved along to the parking lot at the Medical Center in Meriden. Three firefighters from the Meriden Fire Department and one gent on his way in to visit a family member greeted us. They all helped pack up and asked loads of questions.

This was the same direction as last year's Frozen Buns rally. The whole flight took an hour and ten minutes.

You couldn't have asked for a better time and visibility. This has to the best flight I had this year. What a way for the flying season to begin!



The “Real” Freeze Your Buns Day on Sunday (Who had more fun – Matt or We?)



Cassie, Jim and Lisa
Regan's new crew.



I drove to the Aquaturf that Sunday morning and couldn't see the top of the hills to the West of the Southington valley. I called the Briefer who said that it was both clouds and snow and the snow had come in earlier than originally forecast. Many had pulled out their envelope bags in preparation to fly. The snow squall came and didn't leave us alone until we were at Gene's for breakfast. Someone was already half inflated and then generated what looked like a long Chinese dragon with people as the balloon was going back in the bag.

In hindsight, we all wished we had flown on Saturday!

Breakfast sounded really good at Gene's!!!!

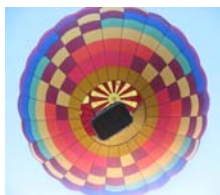


Sicily in the Spring

First, I want to make the dates and cost of the trips clear. The first group will go from **March 23rd, 2006 to April 3rd, 2006**, (cost \$2100). The second group is set for **April 6th, 2006 to April 18th, 2006**, (cost \$2400). Hotel Accommodations, Local Food, Airline Tickets, Chase/Travel Vehicles and Hot Air Balloon with pilot and interpreter are all included. I will leave with the first group to go and return April 24th, 2006 after I have sent back the second group. If there is anyone who wants to stay some or all of the in-between dates, (some people are asking for help on visiting other parts of Italy around our trips), I am sure I can accommodate you.

Imagine looking down at the Greek temples in the valley of Agrigento. Floating over the Norman Castle of Musimelo at 4,000ft MSL. Seeing Mount Aetna, the Nebrodie and Madonie Mountains as we float over the countryside. Places such as Piazza Armerina, Morgantina, Segesta, Sciacca, Selinunte, Casella and many other names that ring enchantingly in the explorer's curious ear.

To those of you who may wonder about the make up of the trips, let me explain a little bit more about what I am trying to do. The idea is to use my six-passenger hot air balloon to fly various places on the Island. We will rotate six people flying, six people chasing with our driver and other guest, (Possibly cousins and local friends). YOU WILL NOT BE GOING THERE AS ONE MORE TOURIST. THAT IS NEITHER THE DESIGN NOR MY INTENTION FOR THESE TRIPS. I am bringing you there to share with you my Beautiful Sicily just as if you were part of my family who has never been there before.



Connecticut Lighter Than Air Society - 2005 CLAS Officers

President:	Penny Christy	860-857-8757	pmchristy@earthlink.net
Vice President:	Charlie Perreault	860-637-4017	bythefireplace@earthlink.net
Secretary:	Mark Sand	860-426-0814	mdsand@snet.net
Treasurer (Acting)	Charlie Perreault	860-637-4017	bythefireplace@earthlink.net

Save these dates!!!

Jan. 28, 2006 CLAS Winter Dinner at Gene's in Plantsville, CT

Contact: Ellen Dressel 860-272-6116

February 25, 2006 3rd Annual CLAS BFA Safety Seminar

Pratt & Whitney Customer Training Center in East Hartford, CT

Contact Penny Christy at 860-857-8757

GAS BALLOONING RESULTS FROM ALBUQUERQUE

From: info@balloonfiesta.com
[\[mailto:info@balloonfiesta.com\]](mailto:info@balloonfiesta.com)
Gordon Bennett Trip The Flight Of A Lifetime

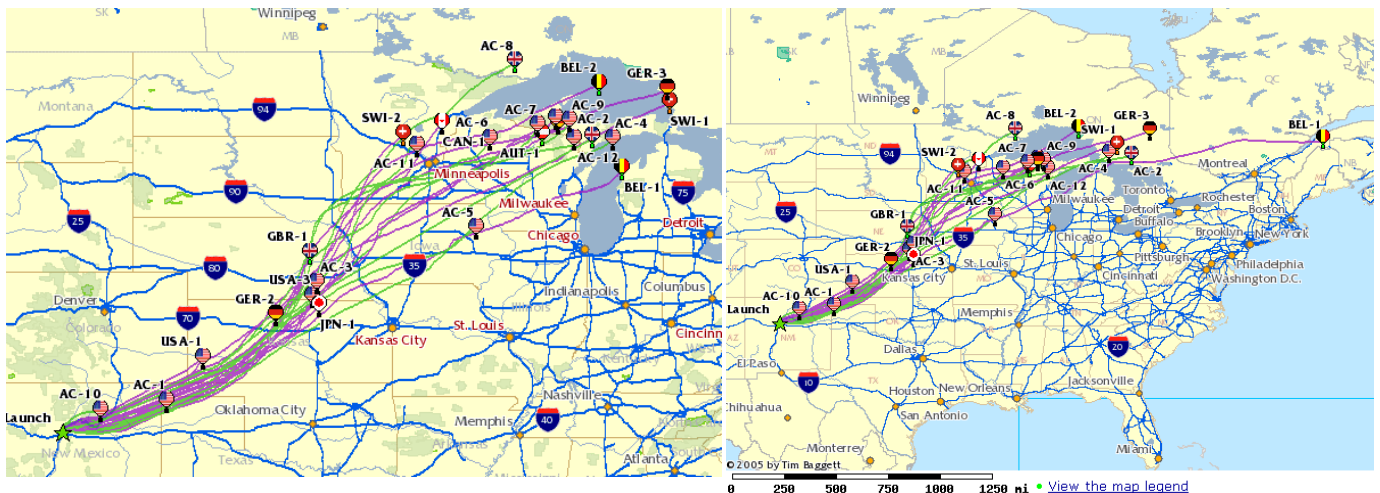


Calling it a great adventure and the flight of a lifetime, Team Belgium I pilots arrived back in Albuquerque this afternoon after their record-setting Gordon Bennett flight.

Bob Berben and Benoit Simeons arrived at the Albuquerque International Sunport at about 3:30 PM MDT (2130Z) this afternoon. They were met by an enthusiastic group of fellow pilots, balloon enthusiasts, ground crew, and press. Among the greeters were their Belgian counterparts, Ronny Van Havere and Luc Van Geyte (the apparent 4th place finishers in the Gordon Bennett), runners-up Wilhelm Eimers and Ullrich Seel, and America's Challenge runners-up-apparent Barbara Fricke and Peter Cuneo. Jury President and FAI Ballooning Commission President Jean-Claude Weber and Jury Member Martine Besnainou were also on hand to welcome the provisional winners.

When asked what led to their incredible success - a 2,111 (3,397 km) flight that beat the old Coupe Gordon Bennett record by more than 700 miles (1,127 km); Berben and Simeons were quick to credit their support team. "If I try to list them all, I'd probably leave somebody out" Berben said, and Simeons added that many of the flight's crucial decisions were made by the pilots with a great deal of input from those on the ground. They especially credited their meteorological team for guiding them across the country. Several members of their ground crew stood with them during the press conference, along with Albuquerque balloonist Troy Bradley, who loaned the Belgians his balloon for the flight.

Standing in a gas balloon gondola that is part of an airport exhibit on the Gordon Bennett, Berben and Simeons described a stressful flight beset by weather worries, mechanical glitches, and a touch of dehydration. Early in the flight, their transponder broke, threatening to end the flight early. Berben, an airline pilot, was able to fix it. A larger problem is that early on they had to ballast off some of their water, leaving them short on drinking water for the remainder of the flight. As they crossed Lake Michigan, Simeons was concerned about lightning he could see ahead. It was probably further away than it looked, he acknowledged, again crediting the weather team.



Berben said that the team had plenty of sand ballast when they landed, but that they were concerned about water; both the Atlantic Ocean, which they were rapidly approaching, and the lack of drinking water. ("You can't

drink sand," Berben noted. "We tried.") They landed in a remote area in southern Quebec, taking their time to assure a safe descent. The first two people they met were local hunters who offered them a much-appreciated beer.

Berben and Simeons were especially enthusiastic about the great international spirit of the Coupe Gordon Bennett - pilots from many countries competing in friendship and working together to assure the flights are as safe as possible. Berben embraced his teacher and mentor, three-time Gordon Bennett victor Willie Eimers, noting that Eimers has contributed to the sport of gas ballooning by unselfishly sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm with him and many others. Eimers and his co-pilot, Ullrich Seel, are the apparent runners-up with a 1,604-mile (2,581 km) flight that in any other year might well have won the Gordon Bennett.

Berben has one other small problem coming out of this flight. He noted that in his garage at home, he has a brand new BMW. Before the flight, he promised his wife that if he won the Gordon Bennett, he'd buy her one. "I guess I'd better keep my promise," he grinned.

Berben and Simeons brought their tracker back with them, and their tracking data is currently being downloaded and scored. The results of the competition will be official tomorrow and will be announced at tomorrow evening's Awards Banquet.

**From: info@balloonfiesta.com [mailto:info@balloonfiesta.com]
Sent: Sunday, October 09, 2005 2:11 AM
Subject: Pilots Celebrate Gordon Bennett, America S Challenge Victories**

The scoring is complete, the official results announced, and on Saturday night October 8, pilots, crews, and officials gathered to celebrate a Coupe Aeronautique Gordon Bennett that will be remembered for a long time.

Belgium's Bob Berben and Benoit Simeons got a standing ovation from their fellow competitors as the winners of the 49th Coupe Gordon Bennett. Their 3,400 km (2,112 mile) flight from Albuquerque to southeastern Quebec Province in Canada bested the old Gordon Bennett record by 751 miles (1,209 km).

Berben and Simeons, and runners-up Wilhelm Eimers and Ullrich Seel of Germany and Christian Stoll and Walter Mattenberger of Switzerland, received beautiful cut-glass trophies from Competition Director Pat Brake and FAI medals from CIA president Jean-Claude Weber. The top ten teams were honored with FAI diplomas.

The traveling Gordon Bennett trophy was presented to the winners by last year's victor Carol Rymer Davis and Benny Abruzzo, representing his brother Richard. Richard is hospitalized and slowly recovering from injuries he received when he fell from his balloon during the competition. Benny Abruzzo delivered a message from his brother congratulating all of the competitors and the winners, and assuring them he will be back in a balloon as soon as doctors clear him to fly.

Berben and Simeons again thanked all of those who supported their flight, saying it was a dream come true. "Every gas balloon pilot dreams of winning the Gordon Bennett," they said. Berben thanked the international audience for their spirit of camaraderie and cooperation, urging them to continue their efforts to sustain gas ballooning as a sport.

The ceremony also honored the teams competing in the Balloon Fiesta's 10th America's Challenge gas balloon race. This race launched from the same site and just after the Gordon Bennett. The winners, with a flight of 1,496 miles (2,407 km) are Janet Folkes of the UK and Bill Arras of the USA. Finishing second were Barbara Fricke and Peter Cuneo of the USA, and in third place were the British team of David Hempleman-Adams and Jonathan Mason.

Some other highlights:

--The competitors congratulated Greg Winker of the USA on his distance Roziere (combination gas and hot air) flight launched from Albuquerque on the morning of October 1. Pending ratification, Winker's flight to southeastern Kansas set a new distance record for AM-3 Roziere balloons of 922 km (573 mi.). Winker frequently flies with Willie Eimers in the America's Challenge

Gas Ballooning (Cont'd)--America's Challenge runners-up Barbara Fricke and Peter Cuneo accepted their trophies wearing sashes made of plastic yellow crime scene tape, "courtesy of the Canadian police," said announcer, Tom Rutherford. Cuneo later explained that the police officers who assisted them and their crew in retrieving their balloon used the tape to mark the route into the remote landing site. "This isn't too over the top, is it?" he asked wryly.

-- Next year marks the 50th Coupe Gordon Bennett and the 100th anniversary of the founding of the race by James Gordon Bennett, Jr. By virtue of the Belgium I team's win (the 10th for a Belgian team in the 49-year history of the race), the race would normally be held next year in Belgium. However, Jean-Claude Weber noted there are discussions underway about the possibility of instead holding the race in Paris to commemorate the centennial. The very first Gordon Bennett was launched in 1906 from the Tuileries Gardens in Paris. The discussions continue, and no decision has been made yet.

Note about Richard Abruzzo:

According to Ray Baer from Albuquerque, **Richard Abruzzo** is back on his feet, skiing, hiking, and flew his own hot air balloon. What an amazing recovery from his gas balloon accident during this year's Gordon Bennett.



Wrist reconstruction and pelvic damage repair was the result of a fall from his balloon.

Keep up the great work. Our thoughts and prayers are with you!!!

On Monday morning, Nov. 21st, I chased for Erwin's Balloon. By Mike Bollea

In one of my photos his Balloon looks like a weather vane over his workshop. Then Ellen and I chased them down to Meriden Square. I took two photos of the old man face on Meriden Mt. Penny you saw it yesterday. Cindy look at the top of the Mt. you see a face with one black eye, a big ear on the right, his nose and some of his white and brown beard. To the right of his head look for a bear and cat head. There are 3 faces on the rocks. You have to look for them. The old man has 4 trees on his head and the bear only one and the cat only one. See if you can find them.

Then we chased over to the Aetna in Middletown. Penny we drove right by where you landed Sunday. They flew over Aetna, and landed in the Wal-Mart parking lot. Garry flew all the way. Made a nice landing, not as fast as your flight Saturday. I grabbed the drop line and stopped them in that nice big parking lot. You just have to watch out for the light poles. They flew about the same track, as Penny's. At 3,000ft it was 20 mph and he landed at 3 mph.



Erwin's Barn Ornament



The old man in Meriden Mountain



Mark Sand's cat for a sample?

Santo notes: Penny's BFR: We (Penny and I) enjoyed a beautiful flight from the east on Rt. 15 back into the Cheshire valley this morning. (Nov. 9th) The variability in steerage made navigating an enjoyable task. We came within 100 yards of our predetermined destination. Flight time was just over an hour in which we traveled 8 miles. We were hot for about 1hour and 20 minutes due to ground handling and repositioning for a dry pack up. I am curious as to what the fuel burn was this morning. I noticed that we were flying at a very cool 145 degrees. Thanks for the great time. Lets do it again.



Photos by Charlie Perreault and Mike Bollea

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CLAS Winter Dinner



Gene's Corner House Restaurant
1219 South Main St. Plantsville, CT



Saturday, January 28th 2006 @ 6:00 p.m.

BUFFET DINNER to include:

Appetizers

Garden salad & Fruit salad

Sirloin Beef tips with mushroom and wine sauce

Chicken Francaise

Baked Lemon Buttered Scrod

Also included will be potato and assorted vegetables

\$30 per person Cash Bar

Come One! Come All! Enjoy a Great Evening!

PLEASE!! RSVP TO:

Lisa Huck or Ellen Dressel

by Jan. 21st 2006,



Make checks payable to CLAS.



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 Plainville Municipal Building (Route 372 at Whiting St.) 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)

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FAA Wings Level Completed _____

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