

THE SCOOP

Connecticut Lighter Than Air Society

Photo by Jack Perry

Summer 2013



CLAS OFFICERS 2013

President

Garry Guertin
860-919-4175
gguertin@cox.net

Vice President

Tony Philpin
860-829-5833
tphilpin@gmail.com

Secretary

Ellen Dressel
203-272-6116
edressel@cox.net

Treasurer

Robert Zirpolo
860-620-3754
robertzirpolo@comcast.net

The Scoop Editor

Libby Richardson
203-988-6577

COMMITTEES

Audit

Mark Sand, 860-389-6778
mdsand@snet.net
Mick Murphy, 203-910-4955
info@aerblarney.com

Competition

Mark Sand, 860-389-6778
mdsand@snet.net
Rick Silva, 860-536-8702
silvrw@sbcglobal.net

Education

Garry Guertin, 860-621-9945
gguertin@cox.net
Ellen Dressel, 203-272-6116
edressel@cox.net
Charlie Perreault, 860-384-0592
bythefireplace@gmail.com
Mick Murphy, 203-910-4955
info@aerblarney.com

FAA Liaison

Santo Galatioto, 203-397-0521
Santo.galatioto@yale.edu
Daryl Smith, 860-742-6402
daryl@cshotair.com

Nominating

Mick Murphy, 203-910-4955
info@aerblarney.com

Safety Seminar

Mark Sand, 860-389-6778
mdsand@snet.net
Daryl Smith, 860-742-6402
daryl@cshotair.com

Sunshine

Tony Roswell, 203-264-5066

Webmaster

Jim O'Brien, 203-795-3598
James.obrien@pobox.com

Winter Dinner

Ellen Dressel, 203-272-6116
edressel@cox.net
Libby Richardson, 203-988-6577
Libby_rich@yahoo.com

CLAS Calendar

Upcoming CLAS Meetings

July 18, August 15, September 19, October 17,
November 21
Plainville Police Department
7:30 p.m.
All are welcome!

Plainville Balloon Festival, August 23-25

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 Jack Perry
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.



"Off we go"

Photo provided by Vlad

via Jim O'Brien

CLAS Meeting, April 18th, 2013

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

Members in attendance: Pam Bogart-Macfarlane, Rick Silva, Mark Sand, Tony Philpin, Tom Whelan, Doug Sherman, Tony Roswell, Erwin & Ellen Dressel, Mick Murphy, Tom Murphy, Penny Christy, Robert Zirpolo, Bruce Cable & Garry Guertin. Total of 15.

Reading of minutes: R. Zirpolo accepted & M. Sand seconded. Motion passed.

Safety Topic: Other pilots attested to the ease of walking the balloon to another location using the top, crown line method, and were amazed at how easy it was.

Treasurer: R. Zirpolo reported a balance of \$4341.77 in the checking account and \$6214.86 in the cd's. Form 990 not filed in the last 3 years. Tax id #1259.

Committee Reports:

Audit: Audit completed

BFA/FAA: Clayton Thomas to be inducted May 11th – 12th into the hall of fame.

Education: Discussion as to having a fan clinic, a champagne tasting event at the Barn or at the Litchfield Inn. No decision was made.

Competition: No meeting

Nominating: The position of VP. Is open with J. Regan resigning. M. Sand nominated with a second from M. Murphy to have Tony Philpin become the V.P. A unanimous vote by members present approved the appointment.

Sunshine: No activity.

Safety Seminar: No report

Old Business: Tax up date, R. Zirpolo stated the last return was filed in 1992. The club has been under the radar and we need to clear up the account. Possible paying the tax due the state.

Mark Sand was presented with the Mike Bollea award. Mark was unable to attend the winter dinner with the change in date due to the blizzard.

New Business: Plainville Festival, G. Guertin working as a liaison with the department with good results. More organization will help all concerned. List of possible pilots to be contacted. Insurance needed to be in line with other festivals (1 million & 100 thousand per individual). Fueling arrangement and time are being worked out and will be advertised.. Sign in packet with all information for pilots to be made available at check in.

E. Dressel spoke to repair to his flight instrument.

URI is looking for pilots for their festival, 3rd weekend in July, 19th-20th. South County, RI.

Letter from FCC for the narrow band radios with approval. All crew members using the radios should (must) be CLAS members to be legal.

Meeting adjourned @ 9:05, Motion by P. Christy & seconded by E. Dressel

Respectively submitted,
Ellen Dressel
CLAS secretary

CLAS Education Meeting Minutes May 16, 2013

Meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM by Garry Guertin.

Attendees: Garry Guertin, Robert Zirpolo, John Bond, Mark Sand, Rick Silva, Tony Philpin Mick Murphy, & Charlie Perreault.

Safety Discussion Item: Reminder to use check lists every time you fly. iPhones can make check list very handy and easy.

Education Topic: "Low Level Jet" weather. Tony Philpin gave a very good presentation on how low level jets are formed and what to watch for. The subject and presentation will be recommended for the CLAS safety seminar.

Treasurer Report: No change to report. Audit balance information for the last 2-3 years needs to be provided to Robert to reconstruct the tax history for applying for exemption.

Audit Report: Not completed yet. To be completed by next meeting.

BFA Report: Mick reported that Clayton Thomas was inducted into the Balloon Hall of Fame.

Competition: Results of the CLAS competition reported Garry Guertin the closest to the X.

Old Business:

Mark Sand has submitted the transfer of the CLAS radio license to narrow band. Our application is in queue and we will be notified when it is accepted. Mark will send in an application for license renewal in Sept. 2013. Crew members can use the freq. as long as a CLAS member is on the other end.

Plainville Balloon Festival is scheduled for Aug. 23-25. Garry Guertin is working with the Plainville Fire Department to coordinate information. 27 Pilots have responded notifying that they are interested in being invited to the Plainville Balloon Festival. Reminder: Pilots must send in their insurance information to the Fire Department to be accepted on the field during the festival.

New Business:

Mick announced that there was a "make a wish" flight planned for 5/18/2013. All pilots are welcome to come fly to make it a special make a wish flight.

Mick announced that the Family Relations Group with Sandy Hook is planning a Glow or possible Flight to help the families involved. More information to follow as things develop.

Mick discussed that the National Balloon Hall of Fame is in need of replacing windows. The windows will be constructed of stain glass. The cost is \$3K. GEBA is planning to donate \$2K and asked CLAS to consider donating \$1K.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM

Respectfully submitted by Garry Guertin CLAS President

Fun with Facebook Fotos



“Who’s going out in the a.m.?”

--Robert Zirpolo



“Happening now Memorial Blvd
Bristol...come on down for a glowing
good time... — with Garry Guertin at
Memorial Boulevard Middle School.”

--Erik Albrycht

(Mum Festival Balloon Glow)

LIFT GATES AND LIFTING

By Gordon Schwontkowski

The first and last three feet of every flight – vertically in and out of your pick-up, van, or RV – can be the most difficult of all. For those lucky enough to have a lift gate, that electric winching sound as basket or envelope dead weight gracefully arcs up or down is music to your back and ears. It didn't always used to be that way, though, and many teams with trailers or tight budgets still load by hand. Hand loading, however, may be as easy or even easier with the proper technique. Both methods require their own precautions and routines, and being fluent in both makes quick and safe work for any crew.

For all their obvious advantages, lift gates demand extra care and attention for their safe operation:

1. **Loaded gates change vehicle performance.** Lever a fueled basket on a lift gate far behind your truck's back wheels and steering, braking, and handling change. Slow down or shift your load if your front end wants to "float" on bumpy or dippy roads.
2. **Watch the power.** Many gates are wired to your lights; turn them on and the gate's operable. Most crew (including me) have returned to a drained battery after launch or a flight. Run your engine when using your gate; shut the engine off when you're done.
3. **If you've disarmed the beeper...** You must now become the beeper and watch everyone with every use. Sure, they're annoying in hotel parking lots at 5AM, but they serve a purpose: to warn those nearby who don't know what you know about their safety.
4. **Watch your step, slippery when wet!** Dew, rain, snow, spilled drinks, or wet shoes turn most lift gates into skating rinks. Center your body over your feet, avoid fast movements, and always keep a hand on something solid to steady yourself and grab onto in case of a slip or fall.
5. **Don't overload your gate.** Check your gate's weight limit. Many will take a basket and one or two people, but much more than that can cause trouble. Limit "passengers" to crew. Don't lift any person(s) without equipment to steady themselves.
6. **Watch for feet!** Call out "Clear!" or "Down!" before you drop the gate each time and do a quick scan for anyone standing too close or unaware of what's happening. Delicate foot bones are no match for a loaded dropping lift gate.
7. **Watch pinch points.** A gate can pinch fingers, toes, and other body parts when horizontal or vertical. Keep children – and even adults – back as the gate lifts toward your truck bed and as you latch it vertically for driving.
8. **Careful with your tie-off!** Do NOT tie off to a lift gate or any part of it. Tie off to your vehicle frame or trailer hitch with the gate fully latched or on the ground to prevent your line from bending around it or sawing itself on any gate edges.
9. **Protect equipment during loading.** Keep envelope bags, tarps, fans, and other equipment inside the edges of the gate to prevent pinching them between the gate and truck bed.
10. **Firmly secure equipment for transport.** If driving with a basket or envelope on your gate, make sure you secure it firmly with at least two tie-downs to the gate frame or the inside of your truck. Double check – don't assume and get a nasty surprise.
11. **Drive with your gate fully raised.** Driving down the road with a partially raised gate (especially a loaded one) puts tremendous stress on your gate and vehicle. When creeping those few feet during set-up, raise it at least halfway to prevent snag damage.

12. **Latch your gate before driving.** Lift gates double as tail gates, and there's no mistaking the sound they make as a few hundred pounds of steel falls into the open position. The gate may also be the only thing holding your equipment inside your truck bed.

13. **Check your gate cables often.** Resist the temptation to use your gate with only one cable intact. Replace any cable that's fraying, partially cut, or showing damage of any kind. Inspect your cables each time you use your gate.

Even without a lift gate, you can cut loading/unloading efforts and time in many ways. Count on non-Olympian crews, hot and humid days, and larger balloons or shapes being in your future when working smarter is your only real option. Don't fight forces; use them, especially when you're already exhausted after a long festival or string of flights. Some simple tips can save an eternity of hard labor:

1. **Save your back – lift with your legs** and only when holding equipment close to your body. Save your toes and checkbook – don't drop equipment off a vehicle.
2. **Roll your envelope off your vehicle.** Be careful not to snag or rip the bag on door hinges, trailer frames, or trailer hitches.
3. **“Drive” your envelope out.** After connecting load cables to a horizontal basket, some crew will drive forward and feed fabric onto the field with the bag still inside the vehicle. Use extreme caution and a walk-along spotter here; one snag or snafu here can end your day.
4. **Minimize drag-out effort** on any size envelope by unloading the bag half the balloon's height from the basket. Walk the lighter lower half with load cables to your basket, then pull the now-much-lighter bag forward to streamer out the rest.
5. **Tilt and twist your fan in and out.** Back your fan up to your trailer, tilt it toward you, rest the frame/wheels on the floor, and push and twist it in to avoid dead-lifting or needing extra hands. Doing this immediately after hot inflation cleans up your tie-off area and speeds pack-up and drive-away times.
6. **Basket too far away from your vehicle?** Drag it to a more accessible or loadable spot using a tether line or other line of sufficient strength tied to your vehicle. Or remove tanks from one end of the basket, lift this end, and “sleigh” it forward; this is surprisingly easy even over long distances.
7. **Cut envelope pack-up time and effort in half** or more. Pack the top 5' of fabric in the bag, hold it tight, walk alongside the streamer to the equator, stuff what's behind you in, carry the 50-75# bag to the throat, and stuff the remainder. You never carry the full bag weight, and work gets easier as you pack lower fabric. Can it get any better?
8. **Roll your envelope to your trailer and push it up and forward** to avoid a full dead lift. Use caution when loading this way to avoid snagging the bag or its rope/webbing.
9. **Tilt and roll your basket on.** Tip your basket backward, back your vehicle to its floor, and lift the back side. Before sliding it in, place a flexi-pole-type nylon rod or wood broom handle near the front edge and roll the basket forward. Remove the roller before transport to prevent back-and-forth sloshing and secure your basket with tie-downs.
10. For the largest ride baskets, some ride operators **mount a steel roller on the back edge of their trailer frame.** By lifting one short end slightly and backing beneath it, a few adults can roll and load these baskets with surprising ease. Others use a winch to pull their basket forward. In this case, keep everyone clear to prevent injury should the cable or connector let go.

There's no way around it – even a sport balloon demands some degree of heavy lifting whether you have a lift gate or not. Savvy loading and unloading techniques are no sweat – literally and figuratively. Save yourself the backache, headache, sore muscles, and equipment repairs associated with not knowing. Ease and safety of moving heavy equipment is a weighty matter; brain storm and review ideas with your crew to make this part of flying as simple as possible.

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