

CBA Happenings

April 7: Board of Directors Meeting

May 5: Board of Directors Meeting

May 20: Newsletter Article Submissions Due

May 23-26: Aloft – Balloon Festival - Simpsonville, SC

June 1: Newsletter Published

June 2: Board of Directors Meeting

July 7: Board of Directors Meeting

July 20: Newsletter Article Submissions Due

August 1: Newsletter Published

** Each newsletter will contain a “Carolinas Balloon Association Happenings” calendar to inform the members of upcoming events and dates important to the CBA. As we continue to strengthen our roots, the calendar will become more informative.*

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Chairperson's Corner

It is an honor to serve as your Chairman of the Carolinas Balloon Association (CBA). I will strive to perform the duties of Chairman to everyone's expectations. While it is impossible to meet everyone's expectations, my goal is to look at the big picture and do whatever I can to assist the board to make the CBA a respected and sustainable organization. I am committed to this challenge.

In the past couple of months, a core group of CBA members sat through several hours of conference calls and gave their suggestions to revitalize the CBA. It was quickly determined that the first order of business was to elect an official Board of Directors, which was voted on at the safety seminar. The theme of "Let's Get the Band Back Together," became the slogan for the campaign. Being selected 'conductor' of this fine group of 'musicians', I am going to approach this task understanding that some of our 'ticket holders' or dues-paying members, may not always like every song or arrangement we decide to perform. However, my desire is that at the end of the concert, the band will bring applause from our crowd of CBA Members and the public.

There is one thing we will be looking for from *you* and that is, help us develop the playlist and sing along with us by making suggestions and participating. We would like you to become involved with the CBA and support the efforts to fulfill our newly adopted Mission Statement.

Currently, we are looking at bringing the CBA back to the forefront with a focus on safety, community involvement, obtaining more positive coverage by the media and developing the best landowner relations. We wish to accomplish this through good communication with a regularly published E-Newsletter and a redesign of our website. These informative communication tools will be full of useful information with a few regularly published sections in each issue of the bi-monthly newsletter. If you would like to submit an article for consideration or have a suggestion concerning the website, we would love to speak with you.

CBA Mission Statement: "The Carolinas Balloon Association is dedicated to promoting the sport of ballooning through education, community involvement and our ballooning activities. We intend to accomplish this while maintaining the highest level of safety and professionalism, and in a manner that promotes an enjoyable and positive experience for our members and the general public."

As Chairman, I encourage you to renew your membership, invite others to join and get involved! Everyone in the ballooning community, pilots, crew and balloon enthusiasts have something that could benefit fellow members and the community.

Elwood couldn't make it so I promise to do the best I can! Randy B. Lee, Chairman, Carolinas Balloon Association. 📢



Member Spotlight

In each issue of Cloud Chasers, we will be spotlighting one of our outstanding members, submitted by YOU. This person may be any member of the CBA that has done a lot for ballooning or shared the love of the sport in a way that has benefitted the community. If you would like to nominate someone, please prepare a brief biography and submit it, along with a photo, to Amy Davis at outdoordogs@gmail.com. (Submit files and pictures in jpeg or doc format.)

In the Know

Continuing Education 2104

The Back Story

By Marc Klinger

From all accounts the 2014 CBA Safety Seminar, LTA Ground School and Gas Ballooning Seminar was a wonderful success. I thought I would share the ‘back story’ about how this great educational weekend came to be.

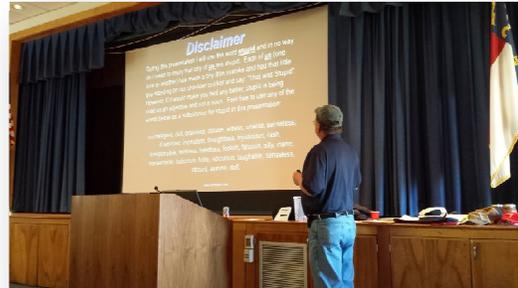
At Balloons Over Anderson last October, Roger Clark and I had a chat about balloon stuff. The conversation migrated to a discussion about the ground school Roger put on earlier in the year and the various benefits of hosting a ground school in our region. As we were talking, a thought crossed my mind, “What would happen if we melded a safety seminar and a ground school in the same weekend?” I quickly dismissed the thought, having chaired four safety seminars back in the mid 2000’s and hearing the little voices say, “No, you don’t really want to do that again”.

But I can’t stand the thought of throwing out good ideas. What happened next, since I couldn’t keep it to myself, was sharing the ‘good idea’ with Sam Parks. Naturally, Sam thought it was a ‘really great idea’. What now squad leader?

I needed to find someone to bring the ‘really great idea’ to life. Someone who had done it before, with good organizational skills, lives for ballooning, likes stress, etc. What I quickly realized is that I just volunteered myself. I hate when that happens, but here we are, so let’s go.

As the safety seminar and ground school were coming to life, I received an email from the Aero Club (gas balloon club of which I am a member) concerning our required annual meeting. My new thought was, “What if, for the sake of convenience, we had the meeting the same weekend as the seminar?” I ran this by Sam, who again thought it was a ‘really great idea’, but he added a new twist. Could we host a gas ballooning seminar at the same time? You bet we can!

To the best of my knowledge, this had never been done. We created an immersive, educational weekend for balloonists and enthusiasts that spanned three days. We covered gas, hot air and LTA training for students and pilots and we had a great time doing it.



Thanks to all our speakers - Sam, Bert, Randy, Roger, Tom, Andy and Buddy - for jumping in and contributing to this year’s event. Thank you to my helpers behind the scenes – Marsha, Kevin, Ursula, Allie, Kim, Kristie, and Jean – for taking care of the details. Thanks to Mitchell College for allowing us to use their facilities. Thank you to all who attended and participated.

I kicked off the seminar with a thought:

*“Don't ever let your balloon take you
someplace where your brain hasn't arrived
at least a couple of minutes earlier.”*

I thought it was sage advice worthy of sharing and remembering. Please keep it with you as you further your ballooning endeavors throughout the year and beyond. It was great to see everyone and I will be looking forward to next year’s event. 💡

*Carolina Balloon Fest needs your help!
They're deciding on a new logo and
would love your vote. Go to their website:
www.carolinaballoonfest.com and give
them your opinion.*

(We all know you have one.)

It's a Gas

Gas Ballooning Returns to North Carolina via The Aero Club of America-NC Chapter

By Clarke Harbold

Silently surfing the skies above North Carolina is an unexpected sight that has locals scratching their heads in amazement. This wondrous spectacle is The Aero Club of America-NC Chapter's new Padelts 24,000 cubic foot gas balloon. Bert Padelts newest design, the balloon is not as large as those flown in the Coupe Aeronautique Gordon Bennett or the America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race and is collectively owned by the club's twenty members.

The first flight occurred in June 2013, in Meadville, PA, at the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Thurston Classic Hot Air Balloon Festival. Based in Statesville, NC, the balloon has brought nostalgia back to the skies on two occasions, November 30, 2013 and February 23, 2014. The first flight landed in Burlington, NC and the flight in February landed in Danville, VA. Typical flights take off several hours before dawn and land late morning. The club's aim is not the maximum distance flying of these events but rather to enable gas ballooning to occur with the club model. Flights will taper off during the thunderstorm season but will be scheduled when the weather window presents itself.

Flights are announced and can be tracked on the club's Facebook page, Aero Club of America. The balloon carries a SPOT tracker and you can follow the flight on your computer or mobile device, via a link on the website.

Aero Club of America-NC Chapter founding members are Sam Parks, Statesville, NC; Bert Padelts Barto, PA; Mike Emich Akron, OH; Ken Draughn Burlington, NC; Andy Baird Stockbridge, MI; Ted Watts Saegertown, PA; Al Nels Beavercreek, OH; Fred Grotenhuis Phillipsburg, NJ; Louis Vitanza Hillsborough, NJ; and Clarke Harbold, Charlotte, NC. Ten associate members are James Duncan Columbus, NJ; John Piper Pearl River, NY; Herman Schwalbe Cherry Hill, NJ; Mark MacSkimming Harrisburg, PA; Marc Klinger Troutman, NC; Trevor Blount, Chesapeake, VA; Andrew Nels Atlanta, GA; Joan Padelts Barto, PA; David Gidzinski Cedarville, NJ and James McKnight Richmond, VA. 

Chase Junction

By Daniel Sasser

As the weather starts to warm, pilots are anxious to get back in the warmer air and, hopefully, equally excited are their trusted chase crew. Just as it may take pilots a flight or two to resituate their gear and setup for another great flying season, it is important that crew dust off their gloves and re-familiarize themselves with the tasks they so routinely did in the previous season, while continuing to learn new tasks with safety at the forefront. Here are a couple of tips for crew as we break out our gear for another fun season of safe flying:

- ❖ Every pilot does everything a little different: *Different procedures accompany different systems and it's a matter of personal preference. Be patient, listen and ask questions!*
- ❖ If you see something unusual, tell the pilot: *Be diligent and observant in setup for anything unusual. Always err on the side of caution!*
- ❖ Be aware of your surroundings: *Situational awareness is one of the largest factors in our sport and dictates a safe flight!*
- ❖ Communication: *Before your pilot leaves the ground, ensure a method of communication for during and after the landing!*
- ❖ Landowner Relations: *Initiating communication and establishing permission at the landing site is crucial. Communicate landowner wishes to your pilot and follow his/her directions for a safe retrieval!*

While this isn't a comprehensive list of items to consider while crewing, hopefully these tips help you start to think about what you can do to contribute to the success of a safe flight. Here's to a great flying season! 

You've Got This

How to Set Up a Balloon Truck

By Tom Roush

Just as pilots have very specific techniques for setting up their balloons, the customization of the delivery vehicle is just as specialized. The preferred method is determined on what kind of ballooning is participated in most frequently. For example, a commercial ride operator may choose a van with a covered trailer to maximize space in the vehicle for passengers while a competitive pilot may prefer limited crew and a more compact method of transportation.

My personal preference is a truck with a lift gate and while I have seen many variations on this concept, I will outline my adopted methods. My objectives are always to make the process simpler, easier and quicker, thus here are my specifics:

Vehicle: A four-door cab with a short bed. The extra room in the cab is more comfortable for adults and gear, and a long bed is more difficult to maneuver. The three-quarter ton chassis is my chosen size as the weight and rigors of ballooning are harder on a half-ton chassis. I don't find four-wheel drive to be necessary.

Lift Gate: Regarding brand, I suggest shopping around for the best price. A gate with one-thousand pound capacity is enough but consider a tail-gate extension to accommodate the basket.

Truck Bed: A bed liner is a necessity. The plastic ones will allow your basket to slide in with ease whereas the spray-in type will make loading and unloading much more difficult.

For the plastic bed liner, you'll want to make a lip to bridge between the liner and the lift gate, so the basket doesn't catch on the plastic when you slide it into the bed.



Secure tie-down points are a must. I use forged eye-bolts certified for lifting. They go through the bed liner and bed and are secured to one-eighth inch plates below the bed. Ratchet straps are attached to the eye-bolts and then to a fabricated belt that straps around the basket's 'waist', under the top leather.

Bed Space Arrangement: The fan is stored in front of the balloon, as it is seldom needed unless the balloon is unloaded. To secure the balloon, fan and a cooler in place, I fabricated a platform out of three-fourth inch pressure-treated plywood and two-inch lumber.



I use strong tie-down devices that are permanently attached to the vehicle, so they don't get lost. Old metal seatbelt latches are strong and available.

A side-mounted tool box allows me to conserve valuable bed space and have accessible storage. I prefer to have the tool box, fire extinguisher and helium tank on the driver's side so it is accessible to me, while the cooler is on the passenger side for crew.



In all, the most important aspect is to set up your chase vehicle in the manner that best suits your needs! 💡

Gadgets

What's on Your Radarscope?

By Tom Lattin

At the CBA safety seminar we had a question asked, “What distance from a thunderstorm do you think is safe to fly?” The answer is, it’s not just a matter of distance but also time. A thunderstorm can produce outflow winds that can last for several hours after the storm disappears from radar and these winds can travel well over 100 miles if the right conditions are in place. So often I have seen pilots look at their radar, see a storm dissipating, and think they are good to go. In reality that’s when things are possibly getting worse. All that energy from the storm has to go somewhere. The average individual thunderstorm only lasts 15 to 30 minutes. The storm you see coming across your area is actually a series of thunderstorms in different states of building and dissipating. If you see one dissipating, a new one could be building right next to it. The storm only shows up when the rain is falling. How many radar sources do you look at when you go to fly? Depending on the vendor that is supplying your radar, you can have very different pictures.

Since we are getting into the severe weather time of the year, I thought I would talk about an app I use to get the most information about what’s happening on the radar. The app is called Radarscope and it can be purchased for a one-time fee of \$9.99. It’s available for both the iPhone and Android platforms.

Most of us use a radar source that compiles many radar stations into one composite picture. But do you know how many of the radar sites might not be operating? If the site that is closest to you is off line for maintenance then you might not be getting an accurate view. In Figure 1, you can see that at

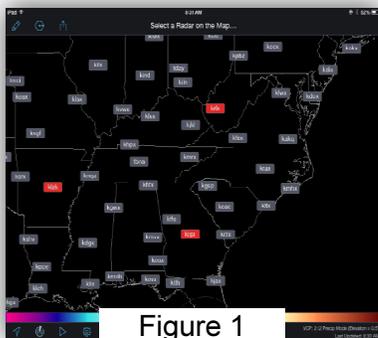


Figure 1

the time of this image, three radar sites are red (offline). Radarscope can let you look at all the National Weather Service radars as well as the airport terminal radars at most large airports (Raleigh, Charlotte, Atlanta, Nashville, etc.) Keep in mind that those radars are not as powerful and don’t see out as far as the NWS radars.

Radarscope lets you look at only the data from one radar site at a time. This allows you to look at your area from several angles which can let you see things that might be filtered out on many radar images. Radarscope gives you access to most of the data that the radar produces. When you tap the bottom center of the screen it brings up a menu of all the data you can access (Figure 2). You can scroll through twenty different products that the radar can display (precipitation, wind velocity, estimated rainfall, cloud tops, etc.)

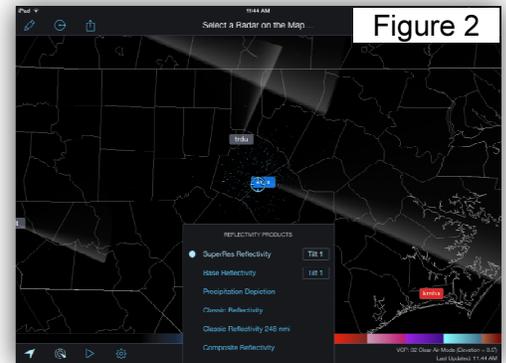


Figure 2

In the upper left corner is the tool bar. The first tool is the drawing tool which allows you to make notes, draw reference points, etc. which will remain on the screen as you change the display of data or animate the data. Next to the drawing tool is a distance tool that can be used in a couple different ways. One way is to measure distance from a specific location (see Figure 3).

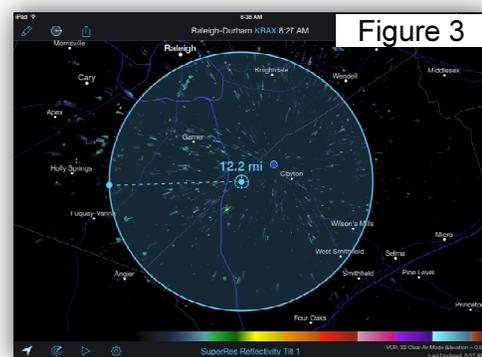


Figure 3

The second way is to find out the beam height of the radar. The further you are from the radar site, the higher in the atmosphere the beam will read what's going on (Figure 4). To see the beam height, start the measurement on the center of the radar site (look for the blue dot).

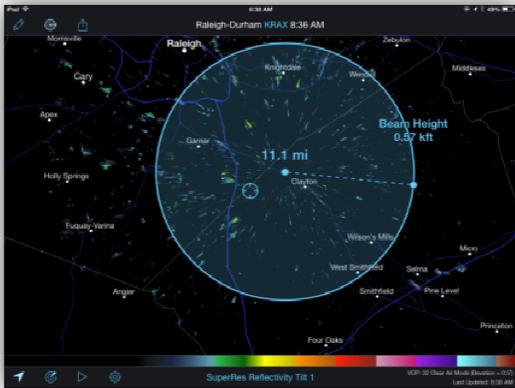


Figure 4

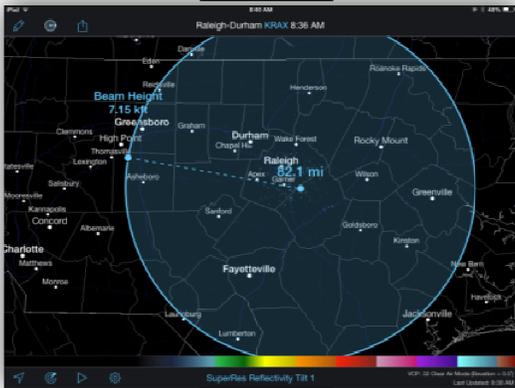
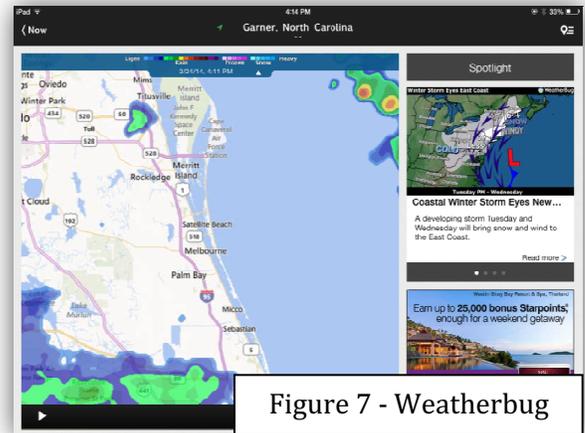
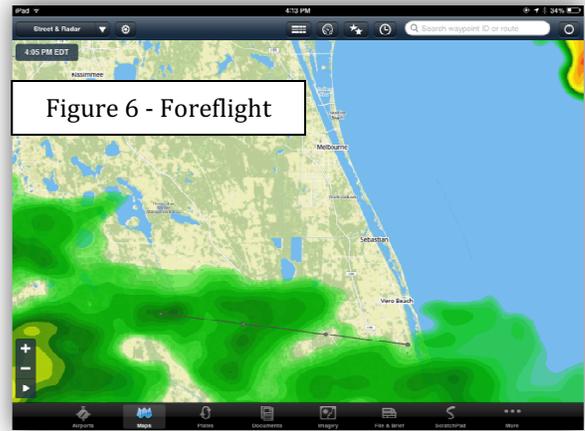
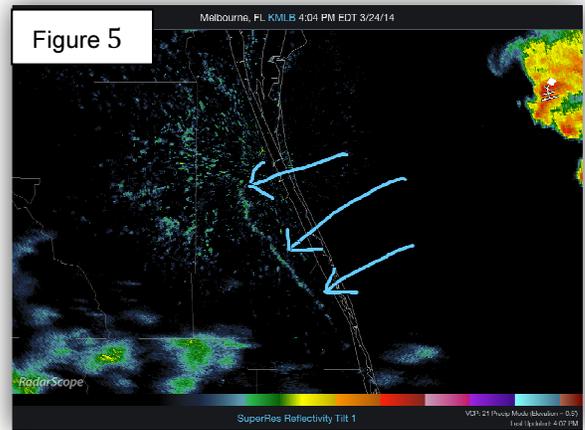


Figure 4

Since we have not had many thunderstorms occurring at the time I'm writing this, I couldn't show examples of thunderstorm outflow on the radar. However, a sea breeze front looks nearly identical to outflow. It is normally a thin line showing up in front of a thunderstorm or coming out of a storm. These are echoes of dust and debris and can be a reflection of a temperature change. They show up best when they are close to the radar site since the outflow wind is in the lower level of the atmosphere and the radar beam is closest to the ground. In Figure 5, I show a sea breeze moving inland near Melbourne Florida. In Figure 6 and 7, I show two other radars that filtered that out. Having these little details can really help in your flight decision making.



If you want more information you can go to www.radarscope.tv/products. If you have any questions about Radarscope, feel free to send me an email to tomlatten@nc.rr.com and I'll do the best I can to answer them. 💡



In Memoriam

Robert Dodds Meddock, Jr. passed away peacefully Monday, March 10, 2014 from complications with Parkinson's. A memorial will be held Sunday, April 13 at 2 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Hillsborough, 1710 Old NC 10, Hillsborough, NC 27278. In regards to donations, his daughter, Adrienne Meddock posted on facebook, "He was enthusiastic about Michael J. Fox's Foundation, so if you want to remember him with a donation there, he'd like that."



You can make your donation [here](#).



*The June edition of Cloud Chasers will feature a memorial story written by Ken Draughn.



CBA Board of Directors' Email Directory

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Email</i>
<i>Board of Directors</i>		
Randy Lee	Chair	pilotrblee@gmail.com
Marc Klingler	Vice-Chair	mklinger@piedmontplastics.com
Jean Lee	Secretary	majeanlee@gmail.com
Kevin Reavis	Treasurer	kreavis14@gmail.com
Henry Rosenbaum	Safety Officer	ros08@co.henrico.va.us
Amy Davis	Communication and Public Relations	outdoordogs@gmail.com
Clarke Harbold	Membership	charbold@hotmail.com
<i>Regional Directors</i>		
Tom Roush	Northwest TN	mtntom2@aol.com
Daniel Sasser	Piedmont NC	daniel.sasser410@gmail.com
Ken Draughn	Central NC and Central VA	kendraughn@aol.com
Steve Davis	Southwest SC	steve.davis@bhienergy.com
David Bristol	Southeast SC and GA	N969DB@yahoo.com
Tom Lattin	Eastern NC and Eastern VA	tomlattin@remax.net

Why Join the CBA?

By Kevin Reavis

- ❖ *Digital Newsletters*
- ❖ *Connect through the Club's Facebook Page*
- ❖ *Access to the Club Roster*
- ❖ *Club Website (redesign planned and access to future "member's only" area)*
- ❖ *Association-Sponsored Annual Safety Seminar*
- ❖ *Fun Flights and Social Gatherings*
- ❖ *Participation in All Association-Sponsored Activities*
- ❖ *Regional Directors Serving as Local Liaisons*

Editor's Note

I hope you enjoyed the premier edition of Cloud Chasers! (You made it this far, so I guess that's saying something.) Actually, I was so confident that you would read our newsletter; I put my note at the bottom!

Now that we've accomplished our goal of 'getting the band back together', we will be working to reestablish our newsletter as a communication tool to enable you to stay connected. I anticipate that with each edition, we will provide you with more variety, educational articles, a robust calendar and possibly even a little bit of humor. My goal is for you to be feverishly checking your email on the first of every other month in anticipation!

If you have any suggestions or submissions, please send them on. I'd love to hear from each of you. If you have complaints, you can forward them to my assistant, Gracie:



Happy Spring! 

Amy Davis
outdoordogs@gmail.com