

The Lighter~Than~Air Society Newsletter

Issue # 7 August 2011

Hold the Date! October 22, 2011

We've certainly had the "dog days" of summer this year, so it will be great to finally see autumn arrive. As a member of The Lighter-Than-Air Society, I associate autumn with the annual banquet. This year's banquet will be held on Saturday, October 22, 2011 at the Martin University on the campus of the University of Akron.

The Board of Directors of LTAS has decided to try something new and exciting this year at the banquet – we will be having a silent auction to raise money for the Society. Among the items that we have secured at this writing are: blimp girders from the USS Akron, a stay at an Ohio Bed & Breakfast, gift certificates for Abercrombie Fitch, a basket of Lighter-Than-Air memorabilia and a ride for two on the Goodyear blimp. All of these items, plus many more, will be available at our silent auction tables the night of the banquet. We will be sending out a registration form with all of the details to follow prior to banquet with all of the final details of the silent auction fundraiser.

The cost of the banquet will be \$40 for person, which includes dinner. As always, we encourage people to bring their personal artifacts for display as this is always a popular part of the evening.

This year's speaker will be Dr. Jim Maloney. The Maloney family has a history of flying the Goodyear blimp – his father, James C. Maloney

Sr. was a blimp pilot in the 50s and early 60s. Maloney's father wanted his son to get an education before becoming a pilot for the Goodyear blimp, which he did. He got an associate degree at Miami-Dade Community College, then a bachelor's degree for the University of Southern California and then his master's and doctorate from Southern Cal.

After engineering consultant jobs in San Jose, California and Washington D.C., Maloney got his wish to fly the blimp in 1983. Goodyear hired him as a pilot-trainee at the Pompano Beach Base. The rest, as they say, is history and we hope to hear about that history from Dr. Maloney himself that evening. Come along for the ride!

Surprise Visit in Akron. Eureka !

by Ron Syroid



Photo: Dave Wertz

The largest airship in North America sailed into Akron for an unscheduled visit in the afternoon of Saturday, June 25 and moored near the Air-dock. The Eureka had been pinned down about a week in Pittsburgh by major thunderstorms. Early on Sunday morning Society members had an opportunity to see the craft at the Akron Fulton

airfield before lift-off.

Displaying the banner of sponsor Farmers Insurance, the zeppelin was on a promotional tour of the Midwest to sell rides. It had been in the Pennsylvania capital city of Harrisburg and was en route to Columbus for Father's Day weekend, but those plans were abandoned because of the weather.

Brian Hill, President and CEO of Airship Ventures, was on the voyage, and he talked about their unique ship and business plans with the Lighter-Than-Air-Society group. The business, started in 2008, struggled through the economic downturn in the first year. However, the enterprise improved each following year.

He wants people to experience the joy of flying in an airship. That's one of three reasons it was christened Eureka. The name also recognizes their home base in California, which has Eureka as its state motto. And supposedly Archimedes exclaimed, "Eureka!" in the bath when he discovered buoyancy, and airships are buoyant flight.

The 246-ft long ship can seat 12 visitors paying about \$500 for a 45-minute ride. The next ship will be designed with two more seats to increase revenues each trip. They receive many calls for white table service catering, and the additional capacity will help with the business demands.

The newer design of the rigid structured zeppelin has two quiet engines on its sides and a "vector thrust" engine in the aft-center of the craft.

Downtime is scheduled annually in February for routine maintenance. Birds peck at the envelope, but it's cheaper to add helium than repair the holes.

Airship Ventures is headquartered at Moffett Field in the San Francisco area. "The office has grand features," Hill said, "including a marble topped kitchen." It had been the office of the

U.S. Navy air station. Sadly, Hangar #2 is being razed. "It will be a real loss," he said, "and will never be replaced."

Hill would like a second location, maybe in Florida in the future, based on the response of commercial interest from the tour.

Above Eureka in the Sunday morning blue sky was the Goodyear blimp heading northwest. Inside the huge Airdock was Lockheed Martin's HALE-D prototype unmanned airship that was to be tested for 60,000 ft-altitude use for the Army. For a moment in time, three major LTA ships were together in the same location. Hill liked Akron's LTA history and activity.

He knows Goodyear intends to build zeppelins instead of blimps at the Wingfoot hangar starting in 2012. Their new craft will be newer, but similar to the design of the Eureka.

Hill said Airship Ventures would consider Akron for a 3-day destination in the 2012 tour, since there seems to be a keen interest.

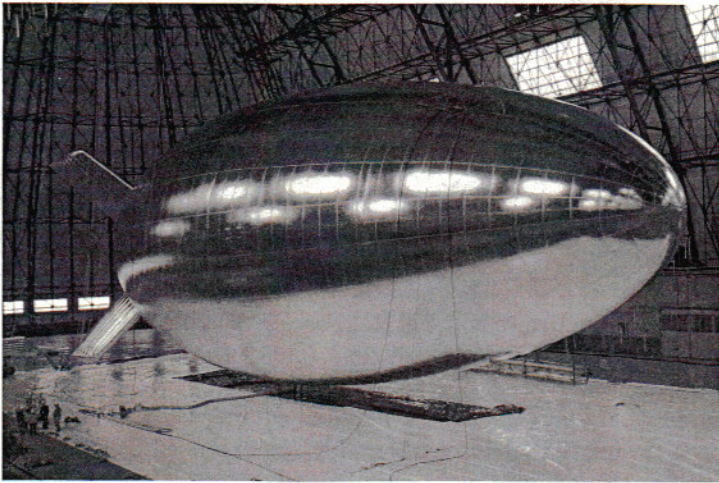
"Look at the big ground crew," Hill said, pointing to the sole individual handling the task. There are three trucks that follow the airship with the support group, including mechanics. Their mechanics have been trained at Friederichshafen, in southern Germany, where the NT (New Technology) zeppelin had been designed.

Then he entered the cabin, and Eureka soared toward the scheduled destination of Detroit.

**Are your dues and
email address current?**

Include your email in all
correspondence and we can
keep you up to date on Soci-
ety news and events.

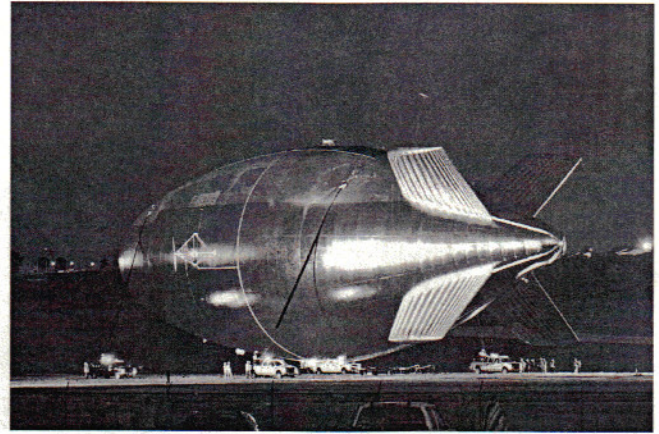
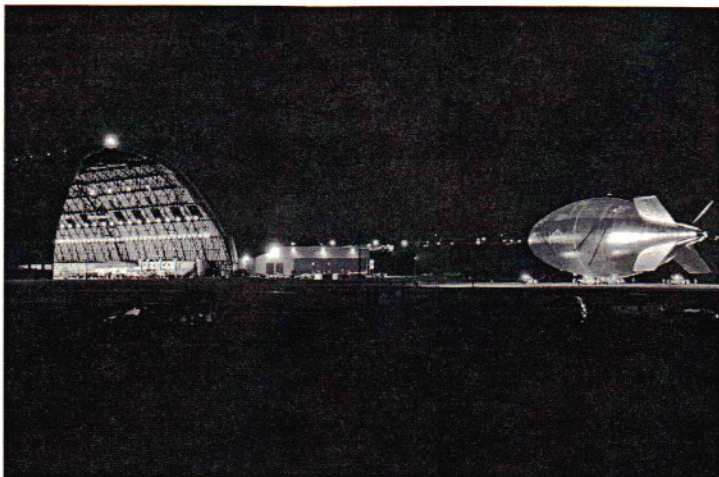
Lockheed Martin High Altitude Airship's Maiden Voyage Aborted



Lockheed Martin launched its prototype High Altitude Long Endurance Demonstrator (HALE-D) Airship before dawn the morning of July 27th from the Airdock located at the Akron Fulton Airport. After attaining an altitude of 32,000 feet, due to an anomaly, the company decided to abort the mission. The airship made a controlled descent in an unpopulated area of southwest Pennsylvania.

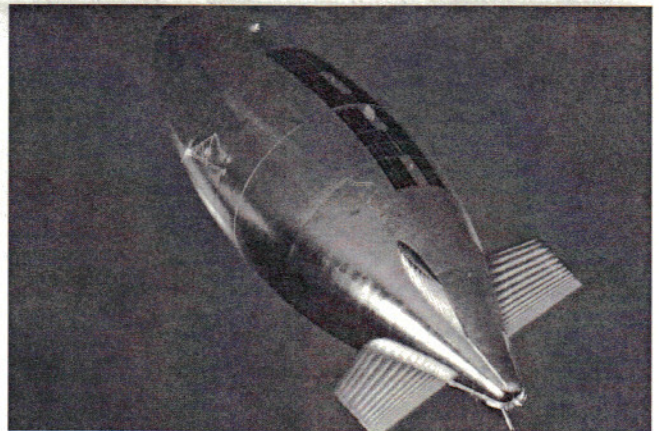
The solar-powered demonstrator blimp is 240 feet long and 70 feet in diameter, compared to Goodyear blimp which is 192 feet long and 55 feet in diameter.

During its test flight the airship was to fly over central Ohio at an altitude of approximately 60,000 feet (18300 meters), in the stratosphere,



above the jet stream and above commercial air traffic. The length of this planned flight was not announced, but the airship was designed to remain aloft several weeks at a time.

Go to our website (www.blimpinfo.com) to see Lockheed Martin's press release regarding the abbreviated flight, including a video and pictures of the launch. For further details



on the project, visit the Lockheed Martin website at <http://www.lockheedmartin.com/products/HighAltitudeAirship/index.html>

More pictures of the HALE-D are available on Lockheed Martin's flicker page: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/lockheedmartin/sets/72157606037992447/show/>

(All Photos Courtesy of Lockheed Martin)

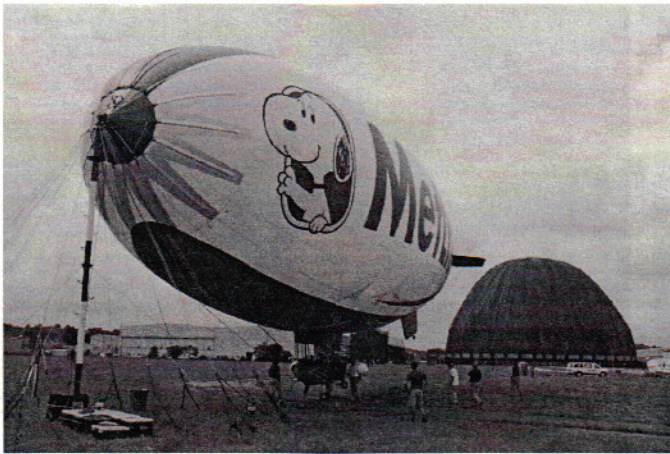


Photo: Dave Werrz

Another visiting blimp, the *MetLife Snoopy Two*, came to town to cover the Bridgestone Invitational Golf Tournament in August.. Arrangements were made for our local members to get an up close tour of the ship which was moored at the Akron Fulton Airport.



Photo: Alvaro Bellon

Another local visitor was the *Hangar 1 Vodka* blimp that was on a promotional tour. It was moored at Cleveland's Burke Lakefront Airport, and one of our members was able to tour this ship.

The ship left Cleveland for Don Scott Airfield in Columbus Ohio. As you may have read in the news this ship broke loose of it's mooring during a late night storm there and ended up in the backyard of a 94 year old woman not far from the airfield. Luckily no injuries and little property damage resulted. Coincidentally LTAS member Janet Wertz saw homeowner Lillian Bernhagen on the TV news and recognized her as her former school nurse at Worthington High School.



Ren Brown with Sig Geist on a visit to the LTAS Workshop in June of 2003. (photo: Dave Wertz)

Sig was a longtime member of the LTAS, friend to many in the Society and frequent contributor to the *Buoyant Flight* in his articles *News from Friedrichshafen*. The following appeared in the *Zeppelin Brief* and we felt it was a fitting memory of Sig.

Sigi Geist Passes Away

By Manfred Sauter

An Ambassador in the USA for Zeppelin and his hometown – Friedrichshafen

Sigi Geist was born in Friedrichshafen in 1935 and grew up on Eugen Street.

Having been born in the same year, we went to kindergarten together at Saint Peter Canisius, and then went on to the Pestalozzi School (back then known as the Horst-Wessel School). After suffering through the upheaval of war, air raids and temporary evacuations to Immenstaad, Bodensee, and Beuron/Donautal, finishing high school and completing a technical apprenticeship in Friedrichshafen with Apparate und Kamerabau GmbH. This company operated in a building damaged by air raids, with only the most pressing repairs having been made. It was eventually replaced by the new buildings of the Zeppelin University. He was also an athlete belonging to the Friedrichshafen Athletic Club, and was an actor with the Friedrichshafen Seehasenfest since its founding in 1949. He even had the honor of

representing the symbolic figure of the Seehasen (a lumpfish). In 1954, just as he turned 19, Sigi emigrated to the United States. It came to be the most difficult time of his life – earning a living, starting a family and at the same time getting a degree in Engineering, but he succeeded. Deep inside he always was a “Häfler” (native of Friedrichshafen) and an admirer of the Zeppelin achievements and ingenuity. From this, and as a longstanding member of the Friends of Zeppelin Museum, Sigi Geist became the ambassador in the US for our organization as well as for the Zeppelin Museum.. especially for all his friends at The Lighter-Than-Air Society. He translated many of the articles of the Zeppelin Brief (Newsletter) and made them available to the LTAS. Religiously, every two years, Sigi would return to his hometown for a visit. His schedule always included visits to all his friends, the Zeppelin Museum, Zeppelin NT, and to Wolfgang von Zeppelin. And, how could it not be, a visit to the Seehasen Festival. One of the high points of these visits was in 1996 he brought along a large contingent of his American friends from the LTAS. They visited Friedrichshafen and he showed them everything that had anything to do with Zeppelins.

I remember vividly the evening when the Graf Zeppelin Haus served a special dinner for Sigi and all his LTAS friends, followed by a celebration of the Zeppelin Village, ending with a toast with Zeppelin Champagne in my gardens. During last year's visit, the Häfler visited the surroundings of his hometown, Friedrichshafen by bicycle. Sadly, this was his last visit.

After a short, but severe illness, Sigi Geist passed away on the 27th of April, 2011 in Mendenhal PA, USA. He is survived by his wife, three adult daughters and his extended family of LTAS friends in the United States. We, at the Friends of the Zeppelin Museum, mourn his passing along with all his old friends. He is specially mourned by his sister Ingrid Kästle, in Markdorf, where he, during all his visits always found a piece of his past, and where he was always made to feel at home.

MICHAEL NERANDZIC

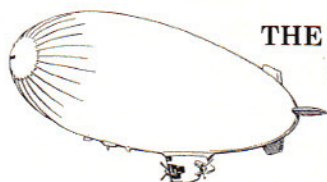
There are few true heroes on earth these days, but Mike "Nazzar" Nerandzic, age 52, epitomized what defines a real modern-day hero.

In the face of grave danger, the airship pilot thought first of his passengers and left his own fate in the hands of God. Mike is the airship pilot who perished on June 12 flying passengers over Germany. He had logged more than 17,000 total flight hours, with more than 12,000 hours flown as an airship pilot (as of 2009).

Although born in Worcester, England, Nerandzic made his home in Australia, where in 1977 he became a multi-engine, fixed-wing charter air transport pilot and flight instructor. In 1986, he joined the fledgling Airship Industries in the UK and quickly became a pilot on the Skyship SKS-500 and later SKS-600 non-rigid airships. He joined the Lightship Group (TLG) in 1990 where he held the positions of Director of Operations Europe, Asia and Australia; Chief Pilot - AOC, Pilot In Charge and Check & Training Pilot. Over a span of 21 years, Nerandzic had been Pilot-in-Charge of A-60, A-150 and A-170 Lightship blimps operating in 23 countries around the globe. Nerandzic had flown over five Olympic Games in airships and had clocked more than 7,500 pilot hours in the Lightship A-60 model (as of 2009), the type of aircraft in which he lost his life.

Initial reports indicate there was a gasoline fuel leak that caught fire on board the airship's control car. Nerandzic's first duty was the safety of his passengers, a TV camera crew and reporter, whom he saw evacuated from the cabin as he maneuvered the airship close to the ground. With the passengers discharged, the crippled airship was now hundreds of pounds lighter, and with its doomed pilot still aboard, the airship ascended uncontrollably. Nerandzic knew he would not survive. Fire engulfed the control car as the airship rose several hundred feet into the air before the flames ruptured its inert helium-filled envelope and the airship plummeted earthward.

Nerandzic's quick actions saved the lives of his passengers. His loss is heartfelt throughout the airship community. We offer our condolences to his wife, family and many friends. May his sacrifice be remembered always and his legacy be the happy memories he created for all whose lives he touched. - *The L-T-A Society*



THE LIGHTER-THAN-AIR SOCIETY
526 SOUTH MAIN ST STE 406
AKRON, OHIO 44311
U.S.A.



PRESORT STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
AKRON, OH
PERMIT NO. 1113

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PURPOSE: *To further knowledge pertaining to the history, science and techniques of buoyant flight; to encourage the use of lighter-than-air transportation; and to establish and maintain a library and museum on lighter than air.*

Everyone is welcome to join

The LTA Society Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Email address _____

Types of membership available:

- ☐ Active Membership, U.S. & Canada: \$25 per year
- ☐ Active Membership, **all other countries:** \$35 per year
- ☐ Benefactor Membership: \$100 per year

☐ Life Active Membership: (NEW! Senior rates!)

- ☐ \$425 - Up to Age 55
- ☐ \$325 - Age 55 to 70
- ☐ \$225 - Age 70+

- ☐ New Membership Please mark your envelope ATTN NEW MEMBERSHIP or
- ☐ Renewal ATTN RENEWAL to speed processing.
- ☐ **Please note:** My address has changed to the one written above

Be sure to look at
our *newly designed*
website at

www.blimpinfo.com

for the latest on Soci-
ety meetings and ac-
tivities, news, color
photos of our latest
events, and links to
other Lighter-Than-
Air sites!

Make checks or money-orders in U.S. funds payable to **The Lighter-Than-Air Society** and mail to:
THE LIGHTER-THAN-AIR SOCIETY, 526 S. MAIN ST., STE. 406, AKRON, OH 44311 U.S.A.