

2019 America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race Team Bio

Team number/Launch Order: _____

Crew Nationality: USA

Balloon Name: *Warsteiner*

Balloon Registration: N395WB

Pilots:

Name	Cheri White	Name	Mark Sullivan
Hometown	Austin, TX	Hometown	Albuquerque
Occupation	COO/lead pilot for Touchstone Energy Cooperatives balloon program; retired attorney	Occupation	Small business owner
Aircraft ratings/flight hours	Began flying hot air balloons in 1976 and gas balloons in 2002; has more than 3,000 hours in balloons	Aircraft ratings/flight hours	Began flying both hot air and gas balloons in the early 1980's. Has more than 3200 hours in gas and hot air balloons
America's Challenge race history	13 (2002-04, 2007-16), won the race in 2008 and 2012	America's Challenge history	19 (1996-8, 2000-04, 2006-16). Won the race in 2008 and 2012. Was event director in 1995 and flew as a non-competitor in '96-'97
Gordon Bennett history	9 (2007, 2009-17), finished third in the 2009 Gordon Bennett and sixth in 2012 and 2015.	Gordon Bennett history	21 (1987, 1994-95, 1997-99, 2001-05, 2007, 2009-17), finished third in the 2009 Gordon Bennett and sixth in 2012 and 2015. Is now tied for second on the list of the number of Gordon Bennett races flown
Other notable flights/records	With Mark Sullivan, set the America's Challenge duration record in 2002 at more than 67 hours; the record stood until 2008. They finished third in the race that year. Is the current President of the Balloon Federation of America.	Other notable flights/records	Has won the U.S. National Gas Balloon Championship twice, the New Mexico hot air state championship several times, and won the U.S. Team Hot Air Championship in 1995. Has competed four times in the World Gas Ballooning Championships, finishing second once and fourth twice.
Awards:	Montgolfier Diplome (2009), three-time Women's national hot air balloon champion (1995, 1999, 2016), Women's North American hot air balloon champion in 1995, U.S. National hot air ballooning Rookie of the Year in 1993. Finished third in the 2016 Women's hot air balloon world championships in Lithuania, and was 10 th in the 2011 hot air balloon national championships.	Awards:	Montgolfier Diplome (1994 and 2004), BFA Shields-Trauger and Al Desmond Awards, AIBF Hall of Fame, AAAA Sid Cutter Award, CIA Gold Badge with Three Diamonds (1996). Currently president of the World Ballooning Federation (CIA) and vice-president of the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale. Founder of the America's Challenge race.

Comments: Mark and Cheri held the duration record for the America's Challenge for many years and beat their record in 2008 in the course of winning the race – another team flew 11 minutes longer to set the new America's Challenge duration record of 68 hours, 46 minutes. Cheri and Mark came very close to winning the Gordon Bennett in 2008 with a spectacular flight from Geneva, Switzerland to the south coast of Portugal, but at the very end of the race were edged out and finished third. Their 2012 America's Challenge-winning flight of more than 1,600 miles was the fourth-longest in the history of the race.

Cheri comes from a three-generation ballooning family; her proud father is Texas balloonist Sam Edwards; her son Gordie is a student pilot. She has flown in almost all US states and in Mexico, Japan, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Austria, the Czech Republic, and Switzerland. Despite having to drop out of the America's Challenge (due to Mark's illness), 2016 was a good year for Cheri; she won the Women's National Hot-Air Balloon Championships which that year was held as part of the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta. She currently sits on the Balloon Federation of America Board of Directors and is the board liaison to the BFA Gas Division.

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Mark, the current chair of the World Ballooning Federation, has flown in more Gordon Bennett races than anyone except Willie Eimers. He's tied with Switzerland's Christian Stoll for the second greatest number of Gordon Bennetts flown. Mark has been a member of the AIBF Board of Directors since 1989 and was President in 1997-98.