

# 2021 America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race

## Team Bio

Team 4

Crew Nationality: USA

Balloon Name: *Across the Universe*

Balloon Registration: N6395V

Pilots:

Name	Noah Forden	Bert Padelt
Hometown	Saunderstown, RI	Barto, PA
Occupation	Mechanical engineer, works for the U.S. Navy	Owner, Best Aviation Services, with wife Joanie operates a full-time hot air and gas balloon repair station, manufactures hot air and gas balloons
Aircraft ratings/flight hours	More than 2,000 hours in all forms of aviation, including more than 500 hours in hot air balloons and 114 hours in gas balloons.	Involved in ballooning since 1972 and has hundreds of hours flight time in hot air and gas balloons.
America's Challenge race history	3 (2016, 2017, 2019) with Bert Padelt, Best finish: 3 <sup>rd</sup> (2016).	16 (1995-98, 2000-02, 2004-07, 2009-11, 2013, 2016-2017); Best finish: 2 <sup>nd</sup> (2002)
Gordon Bennett history	None.	2 (2003 and 2008)
Other notable flights/records	In college, designed and built radio controlled balloons; designed the balloon "Cosmos" which broke Malcolm Forbes trans-American hot air balloon record. Has been rated in hot air balloons for more than 25 years and participated in a number of Balloon Fiestas. Formerly a balloon repairman who worked for the Stumpf repair station. Noah is currently the secretary of the BFA Gas Division Board of Directors.	Designed and built Two Eagles, the gigantic (350,000 cu. ft.) balloon envelope used by Troy Bradley and Leonid Tiukhtyaev during their record-setting flight across the Pacific. Was the systems director for Steve Fossett's round-the-world attempts including the successful 2002 solo round-the-world flight. Padelt-built balloons hold the world distance and duration records for 1000-meter straight gas balloons as well as the absolute world gas balloon distance and duration records set by Two Eagles.
Awards:	FAI Group Diploma for contributions to the sport of gas ballooning, Anthony Fairbanks Sportsmanship Award recognizing significant and ongoing contributions to the sport of gas ballooning in the U.S.	Montgolfier Diplome (2010) Balloon Federation of America Gas Division Anthony Fairbanks Award, Shields-Trauger Award (with wife Joanie), which is the BFA's premier award. FAI Group Diploma for contributions to the sport of gas ballooning.

Comments: Noah Forden has a distinguished record in both balloons and airplanes, but is relatively new to gas ballooning. He got his gas balloon rating in February 2016 through the Aero Club of America's program, and later that year flew in his first America's Challenge with Bert Padelt as a last-minute replacement. He so enjoyed the experience that he bought a larger gas balloon and is well on his way to being a leader in the gas ballooning community. At the 2019 America's Challenge, Forden was awarded the Balloon Federation of America Gas Division's Anthony Fairbanks Sportsmanship Award for his work in developing an affordable source of hydrogen for U.S. gas balloonists.

Bert Padelt is one of the world's major manufacturers of gas balloons and is responsible for building many of the balloons that have competed over the years in the America's Challenge. Most recently, Bert has been instrumental in the development of American-built hydrogen balloon systems; there is growing interest in Padelt systems among European pilots who have seen American teams fly them in the Gordon Bennett. In addition to 1,000-meter competition balloons, Padelt builds a smaller hydrogen system designed for shorter-distance flights. The first of these small, relatively economical systems is owned and operated by the North Carolina chapter of the Aero Club of America, an organization working to involve more people in the sport. On the other extreme, Padelt has been involved in several significant world-record-setting flights. He built *Two Eagles*, the gigantic (350,000 cu. ft.) balloon envelope used by Troy Bradley and Leonid Tiukhtyaev during their record-setting flight across the Pacific, and was the systems director for Steve Fossett's round-the-world attempts including the successful 2002 solo round-the-world flight.