

# 2021 America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race

## Team Bio

Team 2

Crew Nationality: USA

Balloon Name: *Warsteiner*

Balloon Registration: N395WB

Pilots:

Name	Cheri White	Mark Sullivan
Hometown	Austin, TX	Albuquerque
Occupation	COO/lead pilot for Touchstone Energy Cooperatives balloon program; retired attorney	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	Began flying both hot air and gas balloons in the early 1980's. Has more than 3,300 hours in gas and hot air balloons, more than 2,000 of those in gas balloons, with more than 100 gas balloon flights.
America's Challenge race history	15 (2002-04, 2007-17, 2019), won the race in 2008 and 2012	19 (1996-8, 2000-04, 2006-17, 2019). Won the race in 2008 and 2012. Was event director in 1995 and flew as a non-competitor in '96-'97
Gordon Bennett history	13 (2007, 2009-19, 2021), finished third in the 2009 Gordon Bennett and sixth in 2010, 2012 and 2015. She has flown more Gordon Bennett races than any woman in the history of the race.	24 (1987, 1994-95, 1997-99, 2001-05, 2007, 2009-19, 2021), finished 2 <sup>nd</sup> in 1997 and third in 2014 and 2019. Is now tied for second for greatest 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. Past-President of the Balloon Federation of America.	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 <sup>th</sup> in the 2011 hot air balloon national championships.	Montgolfier Diplome (1994 and 2004), BFA Shields-Trauger and Al Desmond Awards, AIBF Hall of Fame, AIBF Heritage Award, 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 (World Air Sports Federation). Founder of the America's Challenge race.

Comments: Cheri White comes from a three-generation ballooning family; her father is Texas balloonist Sam Edwards; her son Gordie also flies balloons. She has flown in almost all US states and in Mexico, Japan, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Switzerland. Cheri won the US Women's National Hot-Air Balloon Championships in 2016 and finished third in 2019 and 2021. Given her combined record in both hot air and gas ballooning, Cheri is perhaps the premier female competitive balloonist in the world today, and one of the top competitive pilots regardless of gender.

Mark Sullivan, the current President of the World Ballooning Federation, has flown more distance gas balloon events than any balloonist in history, a combined 45 Gordon Bennett and America's Challenge races. He has won the America's Challenge twice, and placed as high as second in the Gordon Bennett. Mark's combined competitive record in hot air and gas balloons puts him among the top competitive pilots in the world. Mark has been a member of the AIBF Board of Directors since 1989 and was President in 1997-98.