

If it's in the Newsletter, it must be true...

Maine Powerchute Association

Newsletter

September 2012

www.mainepowerchutes.org

Update on last few events

Bingham – once again, Doug Sukeforth and his lovely and talented wife Rita hosted the rag-tag bunch of MPA fliers in their Taj Mahal of a camp on top of some unnamed hill near Bingham, ME. The hill plays an important role at this event, as the field is not too long, and when you run out of grass, the ground graciously falls away from you so you're flying whether you like it or not. Anyway, we had three wonderful flying days (well, with just a little rain thrown in the middle to make it exciting).

We introduced a new feature at that event – in addition to just flying to breakfast, we flew to lunch on Saturday. Since the wind picked up a good amount by the time we headed back, the extra weight we each put on at lunch helped stabilize the aircraft under those conditions. Really, if you can't fool yourself, who can you fool?

2012 Adventure trip – after several false starts regarding the direction of our annual week-long trip, we finally decided on starting WAY UP NORTH, as in Presque Isle, then after a few days there, head to Millinocket, and after another few days there, wrap it up with a big finish at Lincoln. And, to everyone's surprise, it actually worked that way! As usual, we had super weather most of the time, and most of us got the flying bug out of our systems for at least a week or two.

Paul Cyr was his usual gracious self in hosting us at his field, and taking some of his extraordinary pictures. His skill with a camera is such that even

all of us ugly old guys looked good (if you squint while staring at the pictures...). We did a few cross countries, scared a few locals with our trails of aviation smoke, and did the usual breakfast flights.

Millinocket was the adventure part of the trip. First of all, Jeff Campbell (the airport manager) gave us the best reception we ever had on one of our trips – just a super host. We sent a thank you note to all his bosses – maybe he'll get promoted to take over ALL the airports at which we fly! We paid his hospitality back a little bit by not crashing anywhere, and by putting on a show each night for the nice folks of Millinocket.



Nope, the engine is not on fire – just a fly-by with air-show smoke. Another Paul Cyr masterpiece, although what makes this picture really artistic is the rugged face of the pilot.

At the airfield, a parachute jumping operation was also taking place. Two young, very athletic, and highly skilled jumpers, and a pilot in a Cessna 180 took tandem jumpers up all

day (like 15 to 20 times per day!!!) for \$240 each. When they saw us, being the thrill seekers they were, they wanted to jump out of one of our planes!

We all thought that was crazy – getting tangled up in the lines, in the tubes, in the prop. Except for – who else – Kevin Oliveira, a fellow thrill seeker. So they practiced on the ground – how to sit on the back seat, how to climb out, how to be fast enough to go in between the blades of the spinning prop, how to communicate without a radio, etc.

The other jumper didn't want to be left out, so he was lobbying for someone else from our group to take HIM up too. So of course, we quickly found

one more person with enough dead brain cells to do this – for personal reasons, he does not want his name released – we’ll call him Michelle Notsosharp (not his real name). So he practiced with the other crazy jumper.

The pilot, who is also a video photographer of these jumps didn’t want to be left out, and since that didn’t seem quite as crazy, I agreed to take him up for this coming adventure which we hoped would not be a misadventure.

Now Mr. Voice of Reason (yours truly) figured this just seemed like there would be some FAA rule against this activity, so after several calls to knowledgeable sources and the FAA, nobody could find any rules against it. The consensus was that there are no rules against it now, but we would certainly cause the creation of some if one of those jumpers got chopped up or was dangling from our landing gear all the way to the ground.



Typical fly-in scene where another MPA groupie is praying to be taken up next.

So the final plan was to climb as high as we could, (which turned out to be 3,000 feet), have the jumper tap the pilot on the helmet to tell him he is ready, then the jumper climbs out on the tubes, the pilot shuts the engine off, the guy jumps, and we all float gently back to the ground. What a great plan!

And you know what? It actually worked! The crazy jumpers squatted on the top of the tubes like gargoyles, Kevin and Michelle shut their engine off so the crazies wouldn’t become hamburger, and they leaped, and chutes opened, and our boys could restart their engines eventually, and a good time was had by all!!! And we did NOT cause the FAA to write new rules against skydiving from a PPC!

I forgot to mention that in return for the PPC jumping trip, the skydivers did give a free tandem jump to Kevin and Michelle. Jackie, Jan, Steve, Rachel, and Mike also went although they had to pay the full price.

Oh yes – one more thing at Millinocket – we set out on a 17 mile trip to climb over Mt. Katahdin. We almost made it, but since the direction from which

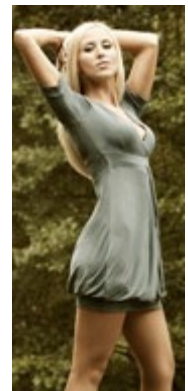
we approached the mountain was not the best and the winds kept us from going any farther than about half way up the mountain. Our intrepid flier Ray Godbout did make it to the top – he came in from a different direction (we’re sure he was lost, but he says he did it on purpose!). An excellent 35 mile cross country flight though!

We went on to Mattawankeag, where one of our long-time members, Leon Markie, has a nice field behind his house. Leon and his boys all fly PPCs, so they joined us on some of our flights. They were terrific hosts as well. By this time, most of us were flied-out, as we say, so heading home after a few days around Lincoln looked pretty good. Good adventure trip overall – thanks to all the attendees. Looking forward to an even better event next year!

West Appleton (a.k.a. Lili’s field) – this is the venue for our annual Top Gun contest, where all us macho guys try to prove we’re better pilots than the next guy. The 4 events are actually designed to reward control of the aircraft, although two of them are bomb drops (OK, they’re bean bags, not actual bombs in case you were wondering) which reward... well... dropping skills, I guess.

We had our usual large turnout for this event, as it’s centrally located, has a nice grass field (thanks to Billy Grusik, who prepares the field for us and who hosted us), and is rather remote so we don’t have to deal with general aviation traffic. The only down side is that a few of the neighbors are not very neighborly, so we did have to watch where we were flying at times. Of course, during the actual competition, it’s tough to focus on the flight path, the other contestants, and the neighbors, so we’ll probably relocate the Top Gun venue to another location next year.

As it turned out, the winds were too high on Saturday evening for the contest, so we had to scratch it. We did so some local flying that evening and overall had an excellent weekend with some more cross country events – yes, fly to breakfast again!



July 4th event at West Farmington – Wow! We found a great new place for an MPA PPC-only fly-in. Actually, Kevin Oliveira found it and made all the arrangements, proving that you can be a crazy thrill-seeker and still

have administrative and coordination abilities! Nice job, Kevin! And a special thanks to the nice lady who owns the field, Carol Young. We really appreciate her hospitality, but since she seems to be good friends with Kevin, we do question her judgment...

Our original plan was to do what we did last year and camp out at the site of the fireworks and all the other activities. But since we attracted so many people last year with our wonderful and mysterious flying machines, we could not reserve the nice large section of the field we had last year. So we punished the organizers by moving several miles away, and having a good time anyway. So there!

Our star mechanic and recent Flight Demo Team member Scott Royal set the standard for mountain flying common sense. Our field was surrounded on three sides by small mountains (more like large hills). So when you take off towards one of these large hills, and have full power and a decent climb rate yet you're not getting farther away from the ground like it always happened before, you figure something is not right. Yep, the damn hill is keeping right up with your climb!

Scott knows when he is going to lose a fight, so did the right thing and instead of fighting it, he outsmarted the hill by making a sharp turn so he once again could see the ground falling away from him like it's supposed to. Yes, all of us learned from Scott, so now we take pride in the fact that all of us MPA-ers are smarter than a hill! OK, just barely...

We watched the fireworks that night from a distance. We could have had a much better view if we climbed up on a nearby little hill, but we added up our ages (came to 19,782 years) and decided that we have seen enough fireworks in our lives so the climb is not worth it. Also, we would have had to carry down the first guy to have a heart attack, and nobody was up for all that extra work...

So to wrap it up, our next 4th of July celebration fly-in in 2013 (it's on a Thursday, so it could be a nice long weekend event) will be scheduled for the same spot, if our hero Kevin can do his magic again and get us set up there one more time.

Congratulations section

In our never-ending quest to elevate this Newsletter out of the lower bowels of a sewage treatment plant, we are continuing this feature again this month and recognize significant achievements by some of our

members. Since it's pretty slim pickings, we are once again pretty liberal with what we consider "achievements."

Congratulations to Steve Goulet for caring enough about his lovely and talented wife Rachel by not trying to take off with her in the back seat from Doug's relatively short field with a cross-wind. He waited until there was a tail-wind.



As promised last Newsletter, here is the rest of her. Told you you'd be disappointed

Congratulations to John Gobel for taking off from Doug's short field just as it started raining, and thereby showing all the others who were about to fly how stupid it would be to do that. We rank that right up there with throwing yourself on a grenade to save your buddies, although his real motivation was that he was already all strapped in with the engine running and was way too lazy to get out and do it all over again later.

Congratulations to Doug Sukeforth for missing all the trees near his field - although he did scare a few of them (which is not easy - they've been around him for quite a while...). Doug and his lovely and talented wife Rita also deserve a special round of applause for putting up with all the MPA fliers and hosting a wonderful event.

Congratulations to Mike Caruso for passing his practical exam and earning his real big-boy FAA Sport Pilot license. And he did it by flying one of the best check rides in the last 5 years and also doing well on the oral part of the exam (after a slightly rough start where he got the first three questions wrong before realizing his sectional map was upside down...).

Congratulations to Jerry Sukeforth on his new super duper camping van with shower, toilet, stove, heater, refrigerator, and a wonderful bed. We think it's a wonderful bed, but we're not sure since he slept in his brother Doug's camp.

Congratulations to the talented and lovely wives and near-wives (they shall remain nameless to protect

their innocent kids) who had the nerves of steel and the wanton disregard for good taste that it took to accompany the rag-tag MPA group on our annual adventure trip. And congratulations to the same group for writing a new episode in the long annals of MPA history by finishing off two bottles of wine along with a box of wine one evening – their increasing laughter and hooting and hollering kept the coyotes away all night!

Congratulations to Kevin Oliveira for raising his hand without hesitation when the two crazy skydivers came over to our camp and asked, “Who here is dumb enough to take us up for a jump?” OK, we do have to give him credit for the adventure and for the fact that he actually did calculate all the details and worked it out so it would be a safe event.

Congratulations to Phil Cyr and Larry Rokes for their first time solo – I understand they were so excited they left common sense behind and are about to join our club.

Congratulations to Rob & Darlene Paradis for setting the standard for sanity when the “let’s jump out of the perfectly good airplane” craziness swept the camp. Without Rob’s leadership, some of the rest of us may have been peer-pressured into doing it. His actual inspirational words were “You f...g retards have to be out of your f...g minds to be even f...g thinking about doing this!” Thanks, Rob!

What is “currency?”

There seems to be some confusion on this issue, so to demonstrate that you indeed get some value out of your \$20 annual membership fee, here it is:

First, it is an aviation term, not financial. So far so good. We’re presuming here that your aircraft is properly registered and you have your necessary paperwork on the plane, and that you have a Sport Pilot license.

So, to fly a two-seater legally, your aircraft must have the annual inspection done within the last 12 months. You must have had your biennial flight review done within the last 24 months. And you must have a current driver’s license (or a medical). If you’re flying by yourself, that’s all you need to be “current.” If however, you want to take a passenger, you must also have had three take-offs and landings (by yourself or with a CFI) within the last 90 days to be considered “current.” Of course, if you’re on a student license, don’t even THINK about taking a passenger!

If you are not current, you cannot fly legally. And as we said before many times, if you can guarantee that that nothing bad will happen to you during flight you probably don’t need to worry about doing things legally. However, if you have an engine failure, a bad landing, a tree strike, a roll-over on taxiing, or anything where you hurt yourself or someone else, very bad things will happen to you if you are not legal. It’s just not worth it, guys – let’s do it right – it really is pretty damn easy.

Treasurer’s report

Once again, our super-bright, lovely, and talented treasurer Bonnie managed our funds astutely so we have enough for all the things we spend money on (which is mostly our Christmas party and an occasional porta-potty). She only takes out an occasional half a million or so for some badly needed vacations she and Herb and the Obama family take, but it’s well hidden with creative accounting. So here is our current status:

Total funds after paying last year’s party and gift shirts; \$1,354. Only upcoming expenses are some postage and mailing stuff for the Newsletter, and of course our annual Christmas party and whatever we decide to do there. What a great organization!

New members

The collective intelligence of the population of the Northeast is apparently improving, as we had no new members this month. We had a couple of inquiries, but just before signing they sobered up and ran. We need to get stronger liquor.

Last minute updates

Congrats to Scott Royal on soloing a big-boy airplane! Also for doing a one-wheel touch-and-go with a PPC on a ten-foot target of questionable hardness surrounded by some questionable liquid!

Reserve Sunday, Dec. 9th for our annual Christmas Party. Details to follow – it’ll be in Augusta this year.



Disclaimer

Reader assumes any and all risk for possible brain damage caused by this Newsletter.

The End

Due to popular requests, our usual ending section shows the front this time and leaves the end to the imagination