

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

# Maine Powerchute Association

## Newsletter

June 2015

[www.mainepowerchutes.com](http://www.mainepowerchutes.com)

### Special politically incorrect issue

In this issue, we are continuing our ongoing efforts to try to make the world a better place. Since most of our members have a hard time with the current trend toward political correctness, we are dedicating this issue to making yourself feel better by showing you how to be REALLY politically incorrect. You can recognize them, as they're labeled as "true stories." No pulling punches in the MPA! Of course, if there's room left, we also throw in some flying stuff since that's what we all do.

### Fuel safety

Our resident expert on all things that use gasoline in some form to make noise and to move, has some valuable information regarding the fuel in our PPCs. Scott Royal (A&P mechanic plus a bunch of other qualifications) offers these tips:

- The standard gas you get from the gas station only has a shelf life of about two months. After that, you start losing octane and power.
- It's even worse with the ethanol added fuels - the alcohol attracts water, which causes other problems as well besides the deterioration of power after it sits around for a while.
- Adding Stabil (or similar additives) reduces the rate at which the fuel deteriorates (volatiles escape from it), so it helps longevity but it does not help with the other issues.
- Leaving gas in the carburetor over an extended time (like winter) can gum up the jets, as after the volatiles escape, the gunk that remains stays in the various parts of the carb.

- Using Avgas in our Rotax engines is approved. Avgas (LL100) has a much longer shelf life (well over a year) so the higher price may be worth it.
- So, if you've let your plane sit around all winter and you're just now starting it, empty the fuel from the tanks and the carb (if any is left in there) and put in a bunch of new gas (preferably ethanol free, or Avgas) and run it for a while to make sure your jets are clean and functioning.



*Just doing the MPA Smoke Salute for the beautiful mountains of Bethel, and killing a few mosquitoes as a bonus...*

- If you will not use your PPC for several months, put in fresh fuel and try to start the engine at least every two weeks to keep thing from gumming up. Doing this also helps by circulating the coolant, and by charging your battery a little.

### A true but sad pet story

A man goes to the vet with his goldfish.

"I think it's got epilepsy," he tells the vet. The vet takes a look and says, "It seems calm enough to me."

The man says, "Wait, I haven't taken it out of the bowl yet."

## Complacency

I would be cooler if the word "complacency" was spelled with a "K" instead of a "C" - than we could have a slick slogan like "Komplacency Kills!"

Most of us have scared ourselves at least a few times when things that you've done many times before all of a sudden just fails. Then when you pay attention again, it works again. Amazing.



*I've done this a hundred times before without a problem! What the hell just happened?*

Since we're so subject to winds, our PPCs have even more variables than most other aircraft. So even if you follow your checklist (and actually USE it...) and everything is in order and your engine performs like it's supposed to, you still have an uncontrollable variable, the wind!

So think ahead - what's my cut-off point - if I'm not flying by this point, what do I do? Do I have a cross wind, and how will I correct for it? Even more basic - should I even fly in this wind? Most of us are pretty good about that, but maybe not so good about thinking ahead, like what happens an hour from now when I'll be flying into an increasingly strong head wind.

I had a wake-up call along these lines a few weeks ago. On the ground, winds were squirrely but quite light. So I roll ahead, the chute inflates like always, I give it full power, lift off the ground, and steer heavily into the cross wind which was much stronger in the air than on the ground. Then the squirrely gust goes to zero, so my heavy turn into it puts me at a severe angle to the ground. I correct heavily to the opposite side, lose even more lift, and now am headed into the ground the opposite way. Luckily, I was able to cut the power and make

enough of a steering correction to land without flipping it.

Since I was already flying (even though it was never more than about 10 feet), it was tempting to just give it all the power it had and try to fly out of it. If I had done that, the angle at which I was flying at that point would have surely caused me to crash into the ground, just with more power.

From recognizing that I had a problem to touching down in one piece took about 4 seconds. Not much time to do serious analysis of options.

So the lesson I got out of that little episode was not matter how routine the takeoff seems, be ready for something weird to happen and STOP doing whatever you're doing, get back on the ground quickly, and try again.

By the way, I re-packed the chute, drove it back to the starting point, and took off again, this time without an incident. But I sure was paying attention to everything at that point!

***Before each flight, make sure that your bladder is empty and your fuel tanks are full.***

## Recent MPA events

Our MPA membership must be getting older or wussier (or smarter?) since we didn't have much participation in our invigorating winter fly-ins. We ended up with just a couple of impromptu ski events. I guess we have to promote them a little better, or use force like gunpoint, or offer incentives like money, or maybe just lie about how much fun it is. Actually, it does seem like fun once you're back on the ground, you're warm, and you reminisce about the adventure you just had.

We had a nice turnout for our first non-winter event at Twitchell's airport in Turner. It was good to get the cobwebs off the plane and off your skills. A little windy and cold, but as always, the company was good.

We had an excellent fly-in at the Fryeburg airport, with our local host Dave being just super-welcoming to our group. We had some new fliers join us there as well, and a bunch of people from the local area came to chat with us and watch us do our thing. Also had some of the more technologically advanced drones put on a show for us - see the video from that event on our web site.

Our most recent event was at Doug's camp at Bingham. The weather was somewhat iffy, but as usual, we were able to have several good flights, even though on one of them, getting back was questionable since the headwinds increased a lot more than expected. The landings were an adventure too - see our videos on that on our web site as well - they were certainly nothing to write home about. However, the location of the event, and Doug and Rita's superb hospitality makes this one of our favorite venues of the year.

*Advice for men*



*You can tell a lot about a woman's mood just by her hands. For example, if they're pointing a gun at you, she's probably angry.*

we've been invited. If any of you can make that, we will be welcomed there. This is the old "Anything

that flies" fly-in that used to be held at Norridgewock before that place went crazy and turned into one of the few truly unfriendly airports in Maine.

**A true serious medical story**

A man calls his doctor and shouts frantically into the phone, "My wife is pregnant and her contractions are only two minutes apart!"

"Is this her first child?" asks the Doctor. "No!" he shouts, "this is her husband!"

**Next events**

During the weekend of June 13th, we have fly-in scheduled for the Millinocket airport. We were only there once before, but had such a good time, and the local airport staff and the town folks were so hospitable that we wanted go back there again. The venue gives our more northerly members a chance to reduce travel time, and gives our more southerly members a chance to see what endless highways look like and to spend mucho money at gas stations. Of course, to be fair, that's what our northern boys do when they came to many of our events.

Two weeks after that during the July 4th weekend, we will be at Paul Cyr's field in Presque Isle. This is certainly one of our premier events, with a great airfield, great hospitality, and lots of fields and places to fly. Also, being in July, we won't need our full winter regalia just to stay alive. By the way, we know that for most of us it's only two weeks after the long trip to Millinocket, but really, if you can't recover from that drive in two weeks, you need to see a doctor (and ask him if he wants to drive to Presque Isle in exchange for a free PPC ride).

A late addition to our fly-in schedule is the EAA event at the Pittsfield airport on July 18th to which

Three weeks after Presque Isle, we have our infamous Adventure Trip, which for you uninitiated is a week-long trip to one or several places where hopefully we have not been before (or been there so long ago that to our aging memories, it seems like we haven't been there before). We will be leaving on Saturday, July 25th and ending a week later. Where we going, you ask? Good question - don't quite know yet, but it will be exciting. We'll decide by the Presque Isle event.

*The aircraft limits are only there if there must be another flight by that particular aircraft. If subsequent flights do not appear likely, there are no limits.*

**Checklists**

No real pilot would ever think of making a flight without using a checklist, no matter how much experience he/she has. So we're real pilots, so why don't we use them?

Well, the obvious answer is that the more complex the plane is the more you need to make sure all systems have been verified to be working. And our machines are simple. So certainly, we can remember the 2 or 3 things we need to check, like yes, there is an engine; yes, there is a parachute; and yes, there's some gas in the tank. What if there were 8 things to check? Or 12? Or 20? Could you remember them all? Probably most of them, but definitely not all of them every time.

Well, surprisingly, there are a lot of things to check before a PPC flight. And I'm not talking about an annual condition inspection, or even a periodic "let's get dirty and crawl under the plane and check everything thoroughly" event.

Remembering the basic 4 or 5 things to check will allow you to get by most of the time because our

machines are so forgiving. However, forgetting some non-critical items can be at best annoying once you're in the air (like forgetting your camera, or goggles), or sometimes dangerous (like forgetting your seatbelt, or having loose stuff in the back seat).

We have all done it, even though most of us have flown for many years. I got tired of forgetting some of the little things (as well as the occasional big things), so I developed a comprehensive checklist for myself based on all the annoying things that I have missed over the years at one time or another. Do the same for yourself - here's mine - use as much or as little of it as makes sense for you. It definitely works for me. Surprisingly, it has 40 items!

There are 5 parts to the checklist:

- \* preliminary (walk-around)
- \* engine warm-up (in the seat)
- \* chute layout (walk-around)
- \* ready to fly (in the seat)
- \* stow the aircraft (walk-around)

#### **PRELIMINARY (Walk-around)**

- \_\_\_ Head set(s) - ON SEAT
- \_\_\_ Camera (hand held) - ON SEAT
- \_\_\_ GoPro camera - SECURED
- \_\_\_ Battery shut-off switch - ON
- \_\_\_ Fuel level - CHECKED
- \_\_\_ Fuel cap - ON & SECURE
- \_\_\_ Oil reservoir level - CHECKED
- \_\_\_ Oil cap - ON & SECURE
- \_\_\_ Smoke reservoir valve - ON
- \_\_\_ Antenna - IN POSITION
- \_\_\_ Goggles - ON SEAT
- \_\_\_ Key - REMOVED/INSERTED
- \_\_\_ Strobe lights - ON

#### **WARM-UP (In seat)**

- \_\_\_ Radiator cover - SET CLOSE
- \_\_\_ Start engine - STARTED
- \_\_\_ GPS on & set - ON & SET
- \_\_\_ Radio to local freq - SET
- \_\_\_ Position lights - ON
- \_\_\_ Mag check @ 2700 - CHECK
- \_\_\_ Radio check - CHECK
- \_\_\_ Engine off - OFF
- \_\_\_ Radiator cover - OPEN

#### **CHUTE LAYOUT (walk around)**

- \_\_\_ Lay out & check chute - DONE
- \_\_\_ Rear seat-belt - STOWED/ OPEN
- \_\_\_ Passenger secure - DONE
- \_\_\_ Passenger briefing - DONE
- \_\_\_ GoPro camera on - ON

#### **READY TO FLY (in seat)**

- \_\_\_ Headset on - ON
- \_\_\_ Intercom check - WORKING

- \_\_\_ Passenger check - ALL SET
- \_\_\_ Seat belt on - SECURE
- \_\_\_ Radiator cover - SET
- \_\_\_ GPS on & set - SET
- \_\_\_ Radio on & set - ON & SET
- \_\_\_ Position lights - ON
- \_\_\_ Start engine - STARTED

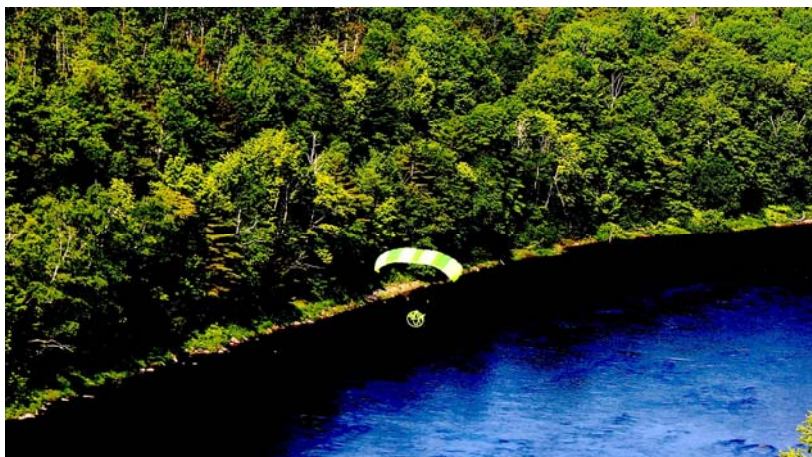
#### **STOW PLANE (walk around)**

- \_\_\_ Antenna down - DOWN
- \_\_\_ Smoke reservoir valve - OFF
- \_\_\_ Battery shut-off switch - OFF
- \_\_\_ Key removed - REMOVED

#### **House in the Woods**

One of our members (Doug Sukeforth) engages in quite a bit of community and charity work, and at the Bingham fly-in he brought a good cause to our attention. It is called "House in the Woods," and its mission is to establish and maintain an outdoor retreat program for veterans and their families to help them heal the mental and physical pain of a loss they endured. In addition, it is also honoring the men and women who answered the call.

Their web site explains their set-up and goals very nicely - check it out at [www.Houseinthewoods.org](http://www.Houseinthewoods.org) and if you can swing it, donate a few dollars to this worthy cause. The MPA will check its reserves and will do the same.



*This picture speaks for itself!  
(this is what you say when you can't think of a clever caption...)*

#### **A true and touching child story**

A little girl asked her mother, "Can I go outside and play with the boys?"

Her mother replied, "No, you can't play with the boys, they're too rough."

The little girl thought about it for a few moments and asked "If I can find a smooth one, can I play with him?"

**The usual reminders**

Biennial flight reviews (BFR) - yes, it means every two years, you must have a flight with a CFI rated in your aircraft. Otherwise, you are not current and are not allowed to fly any aircraft. It is like your driver's license expired - yes, your driving skills are still the same, but if you get stopped or have an accident (or if you're one of the few who actually gets carded in a liquor store!) your expired license will cause you a heap of trouble.

So, check out our site that explains all the details of doing your BFR - go to [www.ppc-instruction.com](http://www.ppc-instruction.com), click on the "BIENNIALS" tab, or just click here [www.flyinggobel.com/WebPages/BFRInfo.html](http://www.flyinggobel.com/WebPages/BFRInfo.html).

It is cheap and simple, and it's only done once every two years!

Annual condition inspection - this is done to your plane, not to you (although your wife probably does this to you more than once a year...). If you've passed the 16 hour course, you can do this yourself and log it in your maintenance log book. If not, you have to have an A&P (Airframe & Powerplant) mechanic do this for you once a year.

Luckily, one of our members (Scott Royal) is a highly qualified A&P, and he will do this for members at a very reasonable price (like half of what you'd pay elsewhere). He can do this at most of our MPA events (except the Christmas party - although we never tried it there).

Again, if your annual inspection is out of date, you are not allowed to fly that aircraft. Back to our car example - your inspection sticker is out of date, and if you get stopped, the fine in Maine was \$60 (I know that personally), although it may be much higher now.

**A true wedding night story**

A young Chinese couple gets married. She's a virgin. He is a virgin too, but she doesn't know that.

On their wedding night, she covers naked under the sheets as her husband undresses in the darkness..

He climbs into bed next to her and tries to be reassuring. 'My darring,' he whispers, 'I know dis you firrs time and you berry flighten. I promise you, I give you anything you want, I do anything - juss

anything you want. You juss axe. Whatchu want?' he says, trying to sound experienced and worldly, which he hopes will impress her.

A thoughtful silence follows and he waits patiently (and eagerly) for her request. She eventually shyly whispers back, 'I want to try something I have hear about from odda girls . . . Numbaa 69.'

More thoughtful silence from him. Eventually, in a puzzled tone he asks her . . .

You want "Garlic chicken with snow peas?"

**MPA web site**

We keep our web site [www.mainepowerchutes.com](http://www.mainepowerchutes.com) updated at least weekly, so check it out for updates to our many events, and for a bunch of other PPC type information. It also has links to other sites, such [www.ppc-instruction.com](http://www.ppc-instruction.com), our instruction site.



**WHAT!!! You don't have a smoker on your plane???**

Definitely check out the site before you go to any of our events, as any changes will be posted the night before or at latest, the morning of the event.

**Another true child story**

A little girl goes to the barber shop with her father. She stands next to the barber chair eating a blueberry muffin, while her dad gets his hair cut.

The barber wants her to move back a little, so he says to her, "Sweetheart, you're gonna get hair on your muffin."

She replied, 'Yes, I know, and I'm gonna get boobs too.'

**The End. The End.**



Credits: Pictures by Randy Autrey. (Not the one above - the PPCs only.)