

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

Maine Powerchute Association

Newsletter

February 2016

www.mainepowerchutes.com

2015 Christmas party

We had another nice turnout for our annual get-together in Augusta this year. We did not get raided by the DEA or the ATF or the FBI this year for a change. Our members must be getting older.

Some of our "regulars" (i.e. the frequent fly-in attendees) did not make it in spite of ALL the work that goes into setting up this event (hundred of hours and thousands of dollars by dozens of people (OK - 20 hours and 10 dollars and 2 people). However, some of our northern members did - it's great to spend some time with those guys & their families whom we only get to see only once or twice a year.

Our lovely and very talented Treasurer Bonnie gave her financial report, and once again, due to her astute management of our vast finances (triple figures, not counting leading zeroes) we were able to pay for the dinner and event from our funds.



and there, nothing bad happened all year. Again, our members must be getting older and more careful. Or getting better???

We conducted our annual members' meeting as well, and told some flying anecdotes from the preceding year. We were happy to report that once again, we had no serious incidents or accidents, no one was hurt, and other than a ding here



We also showed our annual MPA Highlight video, which captured most of our events and most of our flying members. Unfortunately this year, with Jerry switching to a rectangular chute, we did not have any videos of hair-raising take-offs either. The entire exciting video can be now seen on our very cool MPA web site (www.mainepowerchutes.com), accompanied by a music track from last year since Youtube decided to ban all the music on it for copyright violations. However, the original music is still on the DVDs which we gave out to everybody present.

Anyway, thanks to all who attended, and looking forward to 2016 flying year and more highlights!

New members

We welcome Bill Rancourt from China village as our only new member this month. Remember - it's quality and not quantity that matters. Bill bought a big Airwolf PPC, so the quality must be there!

Bill attended one or two of our events last year as a guest, and he thought we were a fun bunch of good guys. Obviously, his standards must be pretty low, so he'll fit right in with our group!!!

Days are getting longer!

In case you don't keep up with our astrological events, we have passed winter solstice about 6 weeks ago. So I'm happy to report, every day that passes, we add 2 or 3 minutes of daylight to our flying day. And every week, a degree or two to our average temperatures for you wussies who only fly in warm weather (which is 99% of our membership). The 1% are having their head examined.

A tribute to Rodney Dangerfield

Last night my wife met me at the front door. She was wearing a sexy negligee. The only trouble was, she was coming home.

A girl phoned me and said, 'Come on over. There's nobody home.' I went over. Nobody was home!

When I was born, the doctor came into the waiting room and said to my father, "I'm sorry. We did everything we could, but he pulled through anyway."

I was such an ugly baby that my mother never breast fed me. She told me that she only liked me as a friend.

Dues!

Our dues are due on Jan. 1st of each year for the calendar year. So, all you deadbeats who have not paid for 2016, send in your measly 20 bucks to Bonnie - her address is Bonnie Davis Micue, P.O.Box 13, Warren, ME 04864.

So this brings up the annual question - why am I wasting my hard-earned \$20 on this stuff. Good question! Wish I had a good answer!

OK, but here's a list of some not-so-good answers.

- You can put on your resume that you actually belong to an organization,
- You get this trashy Newsletter every month or two with near-soft-porn in it,
- You get a free meal and dazzling company every year at our Christmas party,
- Our paid-up members don't make fun of you as a cheap bastard behind your back (and in front of your back too)
- You get a reminder the week before any MPA event in case your brain is getting like the rest of ours (like a sieve)
- You get notified about any changes in our schedule (we HATE changes)

- We pay interest on your \$20 investment at the same rate as the Federal Reserve (0%)
- And lastly, Bonnie will not send Al Capone's great grandson (Luigi the Slug) to break your legs (yes, Luigi is a member).

So, avoid the embarrassment of admitting to your friends, and neighbors, and loved ones, and hated ones that this is your last Newsletter. Pay your lousy 20 bucks and bring the smile back to their faces!

Batteries

Many of us have the Odyssey batteries in our PPCs, and many of us are pretty disgusted with their fickleness. According to the manufacturer, they can only be charged with a special charger which goes



Nothing goes as well with a beautiful, serene sunset scene as black aviation smoke and engine noise! (Paul Cyr photo)

through these various up and down cycles to do it right. The things still seem to fail quite often. So, after the recent failure of my third one, I did some research with some of our resident experts.

The best option (source - Scott Royal, our own A&P and truly a genius, and Jerry Sukeforth our own mechanical wizard and all-around stud) is a lithium ion battery, which is a tad hard to find and a tad more expensive, but probably the way to go (since all the big boy airplanes and airlines seem to be using them).

The AGM (Absorbent Glass Mat) batteries seem to be the next best option for PPCs - these are less expensive, and widely available (on-line or at NAPA also - about \$80).

Both these batteries types are designed to operate under high vibration conditions and not spill if turned upside down (when we fly inverted, etc). They seem to hold the charge better under less and shorter re-charging operating conditions, such as we experience with our machines.

Contact Page permissions

Our web site has a page for "Contacts" where we list the name and phone number of those MPA members

who wish to show it. The purpose is to provide a mechanism for those individuals who might have seen us flying around to contact somebody near them to get more information about our sport.

If you wish to add your name to that contact list, just email me at gobelj@gmail.com, and I'll put it on the web page.

An old married couple were watching TV. He had the remote as he was switching between a porn channel and a fishing channel.

She finally got sick of the switching and said "For God's sake, Harry - leave it on the porn channel - you already know how to fish!"

Coolant

Temperature control is pretty critical on our machines, and there are several factor affecting it.

The mixture of antifreeze to water is one of them - it can change your running temperatures by up to 20 degrees in either direction. By altering the mix ratio, you can get the engine temperature to the desired level (which in Rotax 582 is between 145 and 160, according to the engine manual. See the following article for more details, or look on our web site under "Maintenance Tips."

<http://www.challengers101.com/CoolantMix.html>

Another true story

The children were lined up in the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school for lunch. At the head of the table was a large pile of apples. The nun made a note, and posted on the apple tray: 'Take only ONE . God is watching.'

Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies. A child had written a note, 'Take all you want. God is watching the apples...'

2016 Fly-in Schedule

The scheduling committee of the MPA met in January for their annual grueling, exhausting, emotional, and lengthy meeting to finalize our event schedule for the coming year. After being locked in smoke-filled rooms for 3 days with no food (beer only, and that's not real food, is it?), we came out bloody (several fistfights broke out) but successful - we have a schedule. White smoke rose from the chimney! (All you Catholic boys will get that one).

We added several new venues this year along with our usual steady events - some one-day events with no overnight camping. We also moved our Christmas Party to Saturday (rather than on Sunday, as it has always been). Many felt that it's less hectic for those having to drive a good distance by not having to get back Sunday night late.

See the last page for the full schedule for 2016. Remember, always check the web site for any last minute changes before you leave for any event!

Winter flying

So far, this has been an incredible winter. Most lakes from Bangor down are not frozen. Sebago does not have an inch of ice on it at this time. On the lakes where there is some ice, it is so thin that you cannot place a fishing shack on it or take a snow mobile on it. So, our winter flying is a tad limited. Good! - you say?



Well, for us real men, we will still do some flying with skis, although we will not land (intentionally) on any lakes. Maybe just a touch and go on the ones with real thin ice so we can make some tracks in the snow and leave all the land lubbers wondering how those tracks got there. If that sounds a bit stupid, it's only because it is. But fun.

My missus packed my bags, and as I walked out the front door, she screamed, "I wish you a slow and painful death, you bastard!"

"Oh, I replied, "so now you want me to stay!"

Rule clarification

As we all know, the MPA membership consists of a bunch of guys who are super smart, seriously mature, really good looking, extremely fit, highly skilled, hugely talented, and just all around studs. There's just one little chink in our Superman costume - some of us (no names at this time) do some dumb things. Really dumb.

Part of the dumbness comes from not understanding the FAA rules under which we operate. Really! There are rules! And if violate those, we can get in trouble, lose our planes, pay fines, and just reflect very badly on the rest of our stellar MPA membership. Not to mention the potential for accidents, which we'll cover in the next section.

So, as a continuing public service, let's clarify the altitude rules.

The FAA rules regarding minimum altitudes for all aircraft are in Section 91.119 of the FARs. It has three sub-sections specifying the rules. We (powered parachutes) are exempted from only one of them (para. (c)). Here are the remaining two:

§91.119 Except when necessary for takeoff or landing, no person may operate an aircraft below the following altitudes:

(a) *Anywhere*. An altitude allowing, if a power unit fails, an emergency landing without undue hazard to persons or property on the surface.

(b) *Over congested areas*. Over any congested area of a city, town, or settlement, or over any open air assembly of persons, an altitude of 1,000 feet above the highest obstacle within a horizontal radius of 2,000 feet of the aircraft.

Paragraph (a) is pretty simple and obvious. So let's look at paragraph (b).

"Congested area" of a town means lots of houses (or trailers, or shanties, or tents, etc.) all close to each other. So we CANNOT fly at less than 1000 feet over these places. It's not only the rule for which we can get in trouble if we violate it, it is also bad if we had an engine failure at low altitude and had to land on top of a house. Ugly scene.

Strangely enough, following some rules and not doing dumb things does not diminish the fun we have with our machines. Flying is a risky business, and that's part of the fun of it. We can continue doing all that we do now, and still follow the FAA rules, as well as our own common sense rules.

OK, to summarize. We are FAA registered aircraft, and we are licensed pilots, so we are bound by the FAA rules. Any questions?

Safety culture

There is great term used in aviation when dealing with accidents - a "chain of events." Just about 100% of the time, there are a series of events that lead to an accident - very seldom is there just a single cause. Think back to any close call you've had (and we've all had them). If you examine the event closely, you'll see that the "chain" is really true.

Similarly, there is a great term the FAA is promoting - a "safety culture." Simply put, we stay aware of the safety aspects of ALL our activities.

This does not mean we stop at every step and say "is this safe?" What it DOES mean is that we form safety habits!

What is "culture?" The best definition I've ever heard is this - "Culture is the way we do things around here." So for us powered parachutists, we need to form habits that in turn become our culture.

For example, it's a habit to place your plane against something solid while warming up the engine (if you're not sitting in the seat). It's a habit to move off to the side of landing area after landing. It's a habit to fold your chute so others can get by you. It's a habit to look around in the pattern so you don't cut somebody off on final. Et cetera.

From what I've seen within our merry group is that we have a pretty good safety culture. Not perfect, but quite good. As a result, we have had very few incidents, and even fewer accidents. We talk about it, we attend safety seminars, we learn from each other, and we put peer pressure on those of us who do things that jeopardize the rest of us.

So boys, keep up the good work, and improve on it wherever possible. Don't hesitate to bring it up if you see something that could hurt us - while we're pretty good, we can always get better and improve our safety culture.

Disclaimer

No animals or human brain cells were used in the creation of this Newsletter. It is also gluten free.

The End



Warning - There is a 10 minute viewing limit on this ending. Bad things will happen to you after that. Blindness, etc.

2016 Fly-in Schedule

MPA events

Date	Event	Host
Feb. 13	Bowman - Skis only - 1 day only (no overnight) event	Oliveira
Mar. 5	Greenville - Kelly's Landing (skis only)	Gobel
Apr. 9	Limington A/P - 1 day only (no overnight) event	Gobel
Apr. 23	Knox Co. - Owls Head	Sukeforth
May 14	Twitchell's (Turner)	Oliveira
May 28	Fryeburg A/P	Theriault
Jun. 11	Patten	Gobel
Jul. 2	Presque Isle (Paul C. field)	Paradis
Jul. 23	Bowman (MPA event - no GA aircraft)	Oliveira
Aug. 6	Bowdoinham & pig roast (Mark B. field)	Gobel
Aug 20	Deblois	Keene
Sep. 3	Bar Harbor	Keene
Sep. 24	Bingham (Doug S. field)	Sukeforth
Oct. 15	Gorham, NH or Bethel (location to be determined)	Godbout/Autrey
Oct. 29	Brunswick A/P - 1 day only (no overnight) event	Royal
Dec. 12	MPA Christmas party - 2:30 PM - Augusta	Gobel

Other events

Feb. 27&28	Sebago Lake fishing derby fly-over	
Mar. 12	Wiscasset A/P - Chili cookoff & Safety Meeting	
Apr. 5-10	Sun 'n Fun (Lakeland, FL)	
Jul 7-11	Yankee fly-in (Greenland, NH)	
Jul. 25-31	EAA Airventure (Oshkosh, WI)	
Aug. 20	Biddeford Open House	