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

Maine Powerchute Association Newsletter

www.mainepowerchutes.com

May-June 2016

Special Education issue

Attention to detail!

Flying is a totally unnatural event for humans. To survive, you must pay attention to all the little details that are just waiting to zap you!

As another free benefit of your MPA membership, we are running our annual exercise to improve your observation skills. By being able to notice every little detail, you will become a better pilot.

So, in this issue, we have hidden with great care seven small pictures. Look at each one, observing every detail. You then look to the end of the Newsletter and match the NUMBER on the picture you saw with the corresponding picture's LETTER there. Write down the letter designation of the matching picture.

Since real men never read directions, let's give an example. See a picture with the number "2" on it, and let's say you match it to the letter "F" at the end. So then the answer you write is "2-F." Got it?

But be careful - there is one trick picture in there.

Answers are in the back. Winners will be entered in the drawing for the Grand Prize of an Airbus 380!

Recent MPA events

Knox County - with the usual suspects in attendance, and with the usual cameo appearance by Randy, our first bigger fly-in of the year was fun as usual (had enough of the "usual" yet?). Our flights were shortened by the rather chili temperatures and by the fact that so many of us are pussies in the cold. The local boys of the EAA chapter were great as usual (OK, one more "usual" thrown in) - had the pancake breakfast as usual (this is definitely the last "usual").

Fryeburg - this fairly recent addition to our schedule turned out superb once again - decent weather, some good flights, and lots of laughs. We even had TWO cameo appearances by Randy this time! During the time not flying and not laughing and not eating, we fixed all sorts of little issues with engines, generators, chutes, prostrates, wheels, and FAA regulations. And a special thanks to Dave Calahan, the local FBO host for his great hospitality!

The smoke was turned on for artistic purposes only. Obviously, the sky was too dark and needed a splash of white to balance it. Eat your heart out, Picasso!

Next events

Patten - We'll be traveling to Patten to Craig Morse's field during the weekend of June 11th - this is an excellent venue with two long grass strips, on-field restaurant, and the wonderful hospitality of Craig and his family. It's right off Rt. 11 just past the center of town. With population of 1,024, you can't miss the center of town.

Presque Isle - Our 4th of July long weekend will be spent in Presque Isle with Rob and Darlene hosting the event at Paul Cyr's field. This is definitely one of our best venues - Paul's place and his hospitality is the best. Come early and stay late - with the 5,000 miles some of us have to drive, it takes a while to get back to normal, so a long weekend is in order!

Lawyers and Doctors

ATTORNEY: Doctor, how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?
WITNESS: All of them. The live ones put up too much of a fight.

ATTORNEY: Doctor, do you recall the time that you examined the body?
WITNESS: The autopsy started around 8:30 p.m.
ATTORNEY: And Mr. Denton was dead at the time?
WITNESS: If not, he was by the time I finished.

Margin of error

So often, we ask each other " How do you get to be an old pilot?" OK, maybe it's only asked of us old guys who contrary to appearances, still have a pulse. Newsflash from the old guys - the biggest contributor to accident-free flying is maintaining a margin of error!

We've had several incidents over the years that were clearly caused by not maintaining enough margin for errors. So let's look at this life-saving device.

As we said earlier, flying is totally unnatural for humans - we overcome this evolutionary shortcoming by inventing airplanes, with the powered parachute being the best invention yet.

Unfortunately, machines (as well as humans, hard to believe) will fail at times. During those times, you need to act quickly and make some good and quick decisions. With our machines being so forgiving, we can walk away from most mishaps as we can put the machine down at a very slow speed and into a very little space. But only if you have enough time to make some good choices!

So what is enough time? One second is NOT it. Five seconds is only a hair better. In ten seconds, you can put your PPC down someplace so you can walk away from it, instead of being carried away from it. Sixty seconds is way better - with that much time, you can make a very cool and collected "Mayday" call in your deep big-boy pilot voice instead of the girly shriek you'll utter otherwise.

The time translates into altitude. Flying 5 feet above a river or a lake equates into one second of decision time. From 20 feet, you get the same view, but you get another few of seconds to veer someplace more suitable for rescue. From 100 feet, still a good view, and plenty of time to pick a much better spot.

The above examples are for machine failures. Human failures are more likely, and pretty much inexcusable. Is this really true? Well, think of the usual reaction when we hear of someone ending up in the trees because he thought he could climb out over those trees at the end of the field. It's generally something like this - "That dumb shit deserves it - lucky he didn't get more hurt."

Flying in general takes attention, but at very low altitudes, it takes your full attention. You can get away with a mistake at 200 feet, but not at 10 feet. "Look at that eagle!" "Wow, that river is so clear!" "Let me take a quick picture of the fish on the bottom." Et cetera - all distractions that at super low altitudes can have very bad endings.

An actual picture of the MPA's Italian Division reading the latest Newsletter.

So how do we balance the thrill of risk-taking and the thrill of flying another day? The answer is a wonderful device invented by generations of pilots who managed to die of old age instead of a fiery and painful crash - margin of error!

Since this is an Special Education Issue, here's a simple method for calculating your margin for error. Start with "What am I about to do?" and follow it by "What if the engine quits, where do I go?" Then follow that by "Am I skilled and experienced and focused enough to do what I'm about to do at that altitude?" You can't lie about that last one. If you

have a passenger, ask one more "Will he/she sue the pants off me if misjudge my margin of error?"

OK - you've done your quick mental examination of the situation, and decide that your margin needs to be 30 feet. Or 100 feet. Or 15 seconds. Or 40 minutes of flight time so I can get back with the gas I have. Or I must be airborne by that mark - if not, I abort. Or whatever. Now stick to it. And live to fly another day. Preferably in the same aircraft.

Men have feelings too. For example, we feel hungry.

Waivers

A few of our boys have obtained copies of waivers that they make their passengers sign with each flight. The thinking is that if anything goes wrong and your passenger gets hurt, you can point to the fact that he/she signed an understanding that flying is dangerous and you can die from it, etc., etc.

We have taken the 3 or 4 best ones (the ones with the most legalees in them) and combined it into one fairly compact (one page) document that can actually be understood, but is still scary enough to possibly deter or attenuate a law suit. Of course, if there is gross negligence on your part, no waiver will help you. Gross negligence can be running out of fuel, willfully taking a chance with no margin of error, and some other stuff that can be legally described as "just plain stupid."

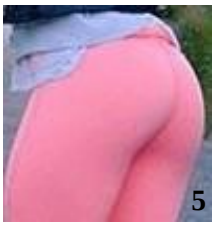
The official MPA Passenger Waiver can be found on our comprehensive web site (www.mainepowerchutes.com) - print it out and make copies. Having passengers sign it is probably a good habit to get into.

Repairman course

All 95 pages of the Repairman Course has been submitted to the FAA about a month ago, and it is currently being reviewed by them. Our tentative date for conducting the class is July 30th & 31st (weekend).

Several of our members have already indicated that they definitely want to participate - once it is approved by the FAA, we will announce the official sign-up mechanism. The class is limited to 14 (actually 16, but the two assistant instructors count as 2). The cost will be $100 for MPA members, and $3,600 for non-members. It is slated to be held at the Bethel Airport.

As you know, once you complete this 16 hour class (8 hours each of the two days) and you pass the final test, you will be issued a Repairman Inspection Rating which authorizes you to perform the annual inspection on your own experimental aircraft (or aircrafts if you have more than one).



New APCO dealer

The APCO chutes have been one of our favorites for a long time, and now one of our members has been designated as a dealer by APCO. Bill Wallace is the expert on these chutes, and he raves about the new high-tech chute they have just introduced - the Cruiser. Allegedly, this baby has a lot more lift, lot more maneuverability, and a much better glide ratio than anything else before (short of an elliptical, which we don't even talk about).

If you're in the market for a new chute, or if your old chute has become a dog over the years, you might want to try these out. Give Bill a call for more info - 603-494-1607.

Hmmm. Must be a PPC pilot...
(with most likely a 912 engine)

More education

Quiz - true or false - the FAR 103 rule specifies among other things that the aircraft must be a single seat machine.

Give up? OK - it's false. It says "single occupant." You can have as many seats in it as you want. They'll have to be really tiny though, as the weight limit for 103 is 254 pounds.

By the way, many of us hate the 103 rule as it is written - some of the people flying under this think there are no rules of the air at all for them, so they violate all sorts of airspace restrictions, altitude restriction, airport protocols, and so on. Of course, we all get blamed for "those idiots in those powered parachutes" when in fact most of us are trying to play nice and act like the professional pilots that we are.

Some of us just cannot understand why the FAA doesn't put in a requirement for the 103 rule to have at least 2 or 3 hours of training, so the boys flying under this rule can at least understand the rules of the air that we share with all other aircraft.

Flying skills - is it perishable?

OK - you learned to ride a bicycle at age 6 (or 5 or 4 for you precocious show-offs who made the rest of us look like pansies), and even not having ridden for 50 years, you can still do it! Flying must be just like it. True or false?

That's an easy one - it is FALSE in capital letters. Unfortunately, flying skills are very perishable - stay away from if for a few years or even a few months, and your skills diminish. Guaranteed.

That is the reason commercial pilots and military pilots have minimum number of hours they must fly each month - if they're away from it for some reason, they must take flight reviews with an instructor before they can fly again. Yes, the skills come back, but you have to work at it.

Unfortunately, quite a few of our members only get to fly once or twice a year (or every two or three years). When you get back in the saddle after that long a layoff, remember that even if you were the hottest pilot around at one time, your skills have degraded significantly. So take it easy, use your checklist, bore some holes in the sky until you get the old relaxed feeling back, do some touch and go-s, and then try the stuff that you could do once.

The older I get, the better I was.

Even more education

Flaring on landing increases your angle of attack - true or false? Part two - increasing your angle of attack in a PPC is a good thing or a bad thing?

Part one - true. Part two - good thing on landing - it slows the aircraft, and provides more lift; not so good if it is excessive during flight as eventually the wing will stall if the angle of attack is so great that it creates non-laminar air flow over the wing.

How many Class "B" airports are there in the U.S.? As you know, Class "B" airspace is highly restricted - you must be under air traffic control at all times while in there.

There are 37 Class "B" airports in the U.S.

How many members has the Maine Powerchute Association had over the 20 plus years of existence?

Hard to believe, but it's 130. Current membership is 36. No, the rest did not die of old age or accidents (we're pretty sure...) - they just fade away after they scare themselves or find other hobbies. Of the 36, about half actually fly occasionally, and about a third fairly frequently.

A question many of you have been wondering - why do scuba divers always fall backwards off their boats?
This one is easy - if they fell forward, they'd still be in the boat!

The children had all been photographed, and the teacher was trying to persuade them to buy a copy of the group picture.

"Just think how nice it will be to look at it when you are all grown up and say 'There's Jennifer - she's a lawyer now' or 'That's Michael - he's a doctor now.'

A small voice at the back of the room rang out, "And there's the teacher - she's dead now."

Disclaimer

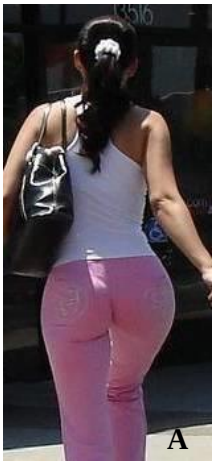
As usual, this Newsletter is almost totally free of trans-fats, caffeine, gluten, calories, red dye #9, Zika virus, carbon monoxide, ethanol, and totally free of intelligent content.

WARNING! - It does contain trace elements of Uranium 239 and even smaller amounts of soft porn and humor, so do not feed to children under 45 years of age without parental supervision.

Answers to the "Attention to Detail" quiz

OK - the moment you've been waiting for - the answers to your observational abilities. First, look at full size pictures, and then write down your answers on a $20 bill and send it to:

Editorial Staff
Maine Powerchute Association
Buzzard Breath, Idaho.


A


B


C


D


E


F

1 - B

2 - A

3 - F

4 - C

5 - D

6 - E

7 - ↄ

And here's the rating sheet:

7 out of 7 - You're the best. Your observation skills are beyond great - there's no better pilot than you.

6 out of 7 - Pretty good. Your eyes are good, and you're paying attention. No accidents for you.

5 out of 7 - Well, you missed some important details, but you just might survive the flying game.

4 out of 7 - You're close to being dangerous. Wake up and look at the details more carefully.

3 out of 7 - Really? You missed all those details? Who dresses you in the morning?

2 out of 7 - You are a dead man walking. No one should fly while you're flying anywhere in the area.

1 out of 7 - Clearly, you shouldn't be flying at all. Or driving a car. Or be let anywhere near any machinery. But, you might do better with pictures of farm animals instead - see next month's Newsletter.

0 out of 7 - OK - you didn't play the exercise. The directions were too confusing. We get it.