

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

Maine Powerchute Association

Newsletter

October 2017

www.mainepowerchutes.com

How time flies!

Wow - summer is over! Seems like only yesterday the snows were melting, and now the leaves are turning and snow could come any day again. On the up side, each one of us studley PPC pilots got a year wiser. And although technically we all got a year older too, you can't tell since our dashing good looks stayed the same. Feel better? I mean if you can't fool yourself, who can you fool?

2018

Yep, 2018 is just around the corner. Which of course means that it is the 15th anniversary of the biggest and best adventure trip ever undertaken by the MPA - the 900 mile powered parachute trip to Kitty Hawk, NC in 2003 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of man's first flight by the Wright brothers.

For those of you who are not familiar with the details of the trip, here's a summary.

The National Park Service (who is in charge of the Wright Brothers National Memorial) authorized each of the 50 states to designate one pilot who would fly the state flag to Kitty Hawk to be displayed at the park for the 100th anniversary celebration on Dec. 17th.

Just for fun, I sent in an application to Augusta, with the proviso that instead of one pilot flying the flag, it would be our powered parachute club,

passing the flag from one person to the next after each of the 30 to 40 mile legs. Since there are so many accomplished and noteworthy pilots in Maine, I estimated our chance of being selected at about, oh, say zero.

Surprise Surprise! The selection committee thought it would be cool and different to do what I proposed, and chose us!

Holy Cow! Now what? We actually have to do this? Can it be actually done? So I recruited some of our more foolhardy members, and ended up with nine of us, with fingers crossed.

Jerry and Jim plotted 19 legs for the trip, avoiding congested areas. So after a fun ceremonial

sendoff from Augusta, where the then-Governor Baldacci presented us with the State flag, we were off!

We always had two or three of us flying (with the flag tucked in our saddle bags), while the rest of the group drove ahead to the next destination. There we passed the flag to the next group, and drove ahead of them to the next stop.

Lots of fun and lots of adventures along the way, and only 11 days later, we actually landed at First Flight airport in Kitty Hawk, NC. What a thrill!

Had a little ceremony with the National Park Service staff to raise the Maine flag along side with all the others who arrived before us. Pretty neat.



The crew (L to R): Dunbar, Doug, Ken, Mike, Robin, John, Jim, Bill, Jerry. They're happy either because they actually made it, or because Jerry pulled his childish prank of "go ahead, pull my finger." In the background is the Wright Brothers' monument.



Governor Baldacci posing for the press. He said all the right things during the ceremony, but privately he thought we were all crazy. We pretty much agreed.

Five of the original nine pilots are still flying, so at Doug's fly-in a few weeks ago, we talked about somehow celebrating this great MPA accomplishment on its 15th anniversary. That's as far as we got.

Since we still have some of the old group, and we have a fresh bunch of new foolhardy members, we thought it might be fun to do a trip across Maine, or something like that next year. So, we're open to suggestions, and to volunteers!

Kitchen tip for men

- How to prepare Tofu in two easy steps:
- A. Throw it in the trash.
 - B. Grill some meat.

Planning to fail

Why would you plan to fail? That's what I asked when I saw that article in "Sport Flying" magazine.

So here's the essence. Engine failures in PPCs turn out to be a pretty significant cause of carnage. And yes, we have a number of examples of that in our own club as well - mostly water events, and tree landings as we euphemistically call them.

So we don't plan to fail, but we need to plan for it anyway. So here are several hints.

The worst time for an engine failure is on climb-out. Presuming there are obstacles at the end of the runway (the usual case) you need to clear them, usually at full power, i.e. at maximum climb rate. Failure at that point can be disastrous, as your only option usually is to accept your fate. However, with a little better planning, you can improve your odds.

Start as far back as possible. Look for the lowest spot ahead of you, and aim for that. Or do an "angled" take-off, which means upon lift-off, turn about 20 degrees in the direction the cross wind is blowing. If you have an engine out, you may be able to make a turn in the opposite direction (i.e. into the wind) and get back to the airfield.

Flying low over water is fun, plain and simple. But an engine out there is pretty bad, and can easily be fatal if you get tangled up in the lines under water. So first, flying at 15 feet over water is just as good as flying 3 feet over the water - the 12 feet gives you one more second to do something, which may be all you need to make the right decision. Secondly, stay close enough to shore so when the silence hits you, you can instinctly turn to shore and land in water from where can walk out.



Engine failure at altitude (500 feet and above) is not big a deal for powered parachutes (although heart rate and blood pressure will increase proportionately with the volume of the silence). Unless, of course, there is nothing but trees below you.

So here's the plan. Head towards the lowest trees/shrubbery you can see. About 10 feet over the trees, apply maximum rudder (both sides), and grab some lines to actually stall the wing right over the trees. The idea is that what will hurt you is hitting a solid branch, so if you can come straight down with almost no forward motion, you will get caught in the trees after which you can wait for help, or climb down if possible. But you'll be alive and conscious so you can decide what to do next.



Another romantic evening PPC picture from our next event at Bethel. The mirror on the plane gives you that warm & fuzzy feeling of knowing your chute is still there. Also good for adjusting your make-up in flight.

So the common denominator in all flying is this. Have a Plan "B!" For example, if I'm not airborne by this point, I will abort. Or, if the winds pick up, and I won't be able to get back home, I will land somewhere under power and under control, rather than crossing my fingers and hope I can make it back on fumes. Or, I've always had no trouble getting out of this field, but I never had two people in the plane from here, so does this make sense today? Plan "B" may keep you alive to fly another day!

I was addicted to the Hokey-Pokey, but then I eventually turned myself around...

Another free MPA public service

It is hurricane season. Although we don't see much of that in Maine, it is still a dangerous event, so you can't be too prepared. Here are some precautionary hints in a picture format (in case you're sick of reading).



More reminiscing

Remember back when we were kids, and every time it was below zero outside, they closed school? Me neither.

I remember my first sexual encounter. We were in a cow pasture. It was remote, and it was dark. I was sure no one could see us. Had a great time, but when I looked up, there's her mother standing not ten feet from us. Do you know what she said?

Mooooooooo!

Christmas party

What! It's only October! But yes, folks, it's only about 49 days until we have our annual Christmas party on Saturday, December 9th at 3:00 PM at the Great Wall restaurant in Augusta. So knowing how popular you are, and how busy your social calendar is, it is not too early to pencil in that date - hey, make that with a pen!

We have a great turn-out just about every year for this event, as it is good opportunity to see your friends you may not have seen in a long time, to talk flying, to watch our video highlights of our year, to have a real nice meal, to discuss club issue and events for next year, and most importantly, to take your wife and/or girlfriend to an evening out so she can't nag you about the fact that "you never take me anywhere any more!"

By the way, the "and/or" above was a joke. Pick one. Please. We don't want a scene.

Event wrap-up

Unfortunately, one of our favorite venues at Bar Harbor had to be postponed and then cancelled due to a combination of weather and a too busy a schedule for some our regular attendees. As the NFL and MLB teams with a losing record always say, "Wait 'til next year!"



Typical reaction from people when they find out that you haven't made plans to go to the MPA Christmas party this year. Or when you open your camper door in your underwear.

The Bingham event on the weekend of 9/16 was great! Doug S. hosted it at his spectacular camp on top of the hill, and we had our usual nice turn-out. Doug had a super cook-out with lots of hamburgers, ribs, etc., and beer of course. We had great weather, and got lots of flying in. Only one close call on take-off, but our quick-thinking pilot (no names mentioned, but his initials are SG - could be anybody) wisely aborted the take-off before bad

things happened, and he walked away with only some bruises on his leg from the sudden stoppage. Luckily, our resident near-doctor (KO) was on the scene to administer band-aids. (OK, a little more...)

I don't do drugs anymore. I get the same effect just standing up fast.

Next events

The last event on our schedule is the Bethel event on the weekend of Oct. 20th. Great mountain flying (Ok, there are lots of fields too), beautiful scenery, and a super FBO station to get warm in after those invigorating October early flights. Hosted by our own extraordinary raconteur (look that one up) Randy A., so there's never a dull moment.

We did have a one-day event scheduled for Brunswick on Oct. 28th, but we have to cancel that as we no longer have access to the HUGE hangar on the airfield, and we can longer get on the field since our host there (Scott R.) discontinued his affiliation with the owner, who did not pay his bills and seems to have been evicted.

After that on our schedule is the Christmas party - see section on that earlier in the Newsletter.

Urgent Safety alert!

The picture below shows the devastatingly heartbreaking event that can happen from carelessness! This innocent bystander at one of fly-ins backed into the hot muffler of a plane that landed a few minutes ago. So please follow procedure! After you land, put out safety cones around your aircraft, stand next to the muffler, and keep blowing on it until it cools off. Do not let somebody else be emotionally scarred for life and ruin a pretty party dress!



I got a sweater for Christmas. I really wanted a screamer or a moaner.

Bad accident at Bethel, ME

NEWS FLASH! - Bethel, Maine----- Maine's worst air disaster occurred when a small two-seater Cessna 150 plane, piloted by two local Maine college students, crashed into a cemetery earlier today in Bethel.

Bethel search and rescue workers have recovered 300 bodies so far and expect the number to climb as digging continues into the evening.

The pilot and copilot survived and are helping in the recovery efforts.

Advice for men



It's true that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than the men who mention it!

True story (Newsletter style)

A Maine businessman received an invoice for \$20,000, but he could reduce it by 14% if he paid within a week. He was a little confused by the math, so he decided to ask his secretary for some help.

He called her into his office and said, "You graduated from the University of Maine, and I need some help. If I were to give you \$20,000, minus 14%, how much would you take off?"

The secretary thought a moment, then replied, "Everything but my earrings."

The End

