

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

Maine Powerchute Association

Newsletter

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Special Humility Issue

What is humility?

Let's start with a premise – *we all make mistakes.*

With the small ones, we laugh, maybe spend some money to rectify the mistake, maybe blush at the dumbass move that caused it. With the big ones, we get hurt, we spend a lot of money, maybe get in deep trouble with the law or the FAA, and we probably laugh less.

The upside of mistakes, or close calls, or equipment failures is that you gain experience! Now, if you can share that experience with your fellow pilots, the smart ones will learn from it so they probably won't make that mistake themselves. As been said many times, learn from the mistakes of others because you won't have enough time to make them all yourself.

But if you're too arrogant to admit you made a mistake even if you get away with it, you're denying the rest of us the opportunity to learn and to become a better and safer pilots from your experience. And more importantly, you're denying yourself the benefit of gaining some wisdom of more experienced pilots who may have some hints about how to avoid similar mistakes in the future.

The military and many airlines have a policy of placing no blame or taking punitive or other actions against pilots who admit their mistakes and discuss them in front of their peers.

The reason is simple – let everyone learn, thereby aiding everyone in becoming a safer and better pilot.

So this is where humility comes in. Yes, you'll take some razzing from your friends (not friends as well), and maybe even gain a new nickname. It's all a part and tradition of the community of aviators, and it helps greatly to form the bonds that makes it so enjoyable to be part of that community.

As another public service, we will demonstrate how humble we are here at the MPA. In this issue, we'll show some embarrassing pictures and stories just to prove our lack of arrogance, and to cement our commitment to humility.

By the way, hint – if you have never admitted making a mistake, we know you're lying. Or you have never been near an aircraft.

Event wrap-up

Still not much to report. Our first scheduled fly-in was at Knox County airport, but winds and rain cancelled that event.

We also had to postpone our second event at Twitchells in Auburn (Turner, technically) for weather. But we finally did make it there a week later, and had a wonderful time with a good number of our members showing up. Got to fly Friday evening, Saturday evening, and Sunday morning – missed Saturday morning due some serious winds.

Exercises in humility – who would show these pictures?



From left to right: Kevin and his grandfather; George fighting athlete's foot; Rob bragging about his manhood; Steve with his favorite doll; John practicing smoking while sleeping.

Good opportunity to perform some annuals as well, and since Scott was there, a few of our guys took advantage of that.

Just an observation – some of our members stayed away as the forecast was far from ideal. But, if we wait for ideal weather for a whole weekend, we'll practically never fly. Over the last 20 years or so, I remember maybe three of four perfect weather weekends. So even if part of the weekend is a wash-out, or part of it is too windy, we'll almost always find some opportunity to fly.

Oh, and also - the non-flying time is almost as much fun - lots of fun discussions, puttering with the machines, cooking out, taking naps, and hanging out and BS-ing.



Next events

OK, so now we're getting into the good weather parts of the year, starting on the weekend of June 1 at Patten (Craig Morse's field). This is a wonderful venue – two large grass strips, and almost no other traffic, with lots of camping areas. With the right winds, we can fly all the way to Baxter State part and Mt. Katahdin. And back, hopefully.

Two weeks after that, we'll be back more southern at Fryeburg. Great and friendly hosts, and nice runways – some more GA traffic here, but certainly doesn't interfere with our usual flying times. Always have a good time there.

Three weeks after that, we go to our annual family outing at Bowdoinham. Terrific venue, with lots of neat topography in the area, and many places to go in the air as well as on the ground. Nice camping areas as well.



Just wondering...

Do infants enjoy infancy as much as adults enjoy adultery?

Why is there an expiration date on sour cream?

What was the best thing before sliced bread?

If you ate both pasta and antipasto, would you still be hungry?

How do they get deer to cross the road only at those yellow road signs?

Why does "fat chance" and "slim chance"mean the same thing?

Why do we drive on a parkway and park on a driveway?

Safety

What do all old pilots have in common?

OK, age. True, but not the answer we're looking for. I should be more specific – old live pilots who are still flying.

Here are some wrong answers.

- Luck.
- Loss of hearing (although that's not too bad).
- Scars.
- Endless stories

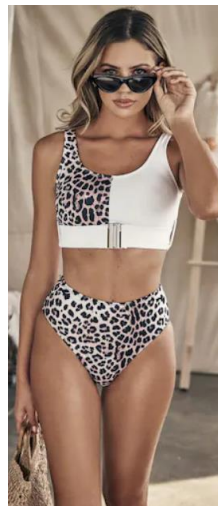
So here's the right answer; PLAN "B."

As every military pilot, every business leader, every social organizer, every coach, every soldier, sailor, marine, and airman knows, things often don't work out as planned, that is according to Plan "A." So what do you do when that happens? Go to Plan "B" of course. The maybe to "C" or "D" – then go back home.

It is of paramount importance that in the back of your mind, you always have a backup plan. Crossing water, what happens if the engine quits? What if the wind picks up and I can't get to my destination? Rate of climb much worse than expected? Cross country trip over woods, and fuel burn rate way greater than before – am I going to make it back? And so on, and so on and so on.

So always have a Plan "B" and live to fly another day!

More personal safety



Your eyesight is, of course, critical to your flying. Goggles or glasses are a must, to keep the bugs out of your eyes, to keep the wind from giving you bloodshot eyes, and most importantly for this paragraph to make sense, sunglasses to keep your retina from burning up. So here, as a public service again, is a simple demonstration of how to properly wear sunglasses. Notice how the eyes can still see over the frame when looking at dark areas. You're welcome.

One more safety tip

We'll often turn the propeller on our machines to check it for dings and other possible damage. When you do that, make sure the magneto is OFF! Why?

Simple – sometimes just a single turn of the prop can start the engine if the mags are on. Which could then ruin your whole day. It's just not the same walking around with a mangled arm.



Why you should travel while you're young.

Romance advice

Here's some things you need to teach your sons about women before they get married.

A man has five items in his bathroom: a toothbrush, shaving cream, razor, a bar of soap, and a towel from the Marriott. The average number of items in the typical woman's bathroom is 337. A man would not be able to identify most of these items.

A woman has the last word in any argument. Anything a man says after that is the beginning of a new argument.

A woman marries a man expecting he will change, but he doesn't. A man marries a woman expecting that she won't change but she does.

A woman knows all about her children. She knows about dentist appointments and romances, best friends, favorite foods, secret fears and hopes and dreams. A man is vaguely aware of some short people living in the house.

Flying tips

We warm up our engines usually for 4 or 5 minutes. Which often seems like a long time seeing as we're anxious to get going. It really isn't that long since it takes two or three times that long to warm up your wife or girlfriend, but here's a good technique for making that time go faster (the plane's warm up time, of course).

Taxi your aircraft up and down the runway of your intended takeoff while the engine is warming up.

Several benefits to this. It is a very good practice to make sure there are no obstacles on the runway, like gopher holes, stick, bottles, or other debris, especially on the grass runways we usually use. You can also vary the RPMs on your engine while it's warming up in this fashion.

So by the time you get back to your takeoff point and maneuver into takeoff position, your engine is just at the right temperature. And the boring warm up time just flew by!

Here's one more tip. After landing and after shutting the engine off, we grab the steering lines to

collapse the chute. To improve your odds of the chute actually landing behind your plane instead of on top of it (or even worse, in front of it), here's technique that works pretty well.

Just before hitting the mag switch to the off position, goose the throttle to almost full RPM position quickly just once. This lurches the carriage forward, leaving the chute somewhat behind, so when the engine is turned off immediately after the "goose," it is positioned well behind so it increases your odds of having it land behind you.

More advice...

A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.

If you must choose between two evils, pick the one you've never tried before.

Money can't buy love. But it CAN rent a very close imitation.

If at first you don't succeed, destroy all evidence that you tried.

Never do card tricks for the group you play poker with.

Death is Nature's way of telling you to slow down.

Hard work pays off in the future. Laziness pays off now.



Night flying

As we all know, we are not allowed to fly a powered parachute at night, i.e. 30 minutes after sunset. Unless two things are in place.

You have to have a Private pilots license with PPC privileges added. In other words, your Sport Pilot

license can never be used for night flying. So how do we get the Private license with PPC privileges?

If you already have a Private (or higher) license, it's pretty easy. You just have to have 3 hours of night flight training administered by a CFI who has the Private with PPC privileges rating. Luckily, we now have 2 CFI-s in the area with that qualification, and will be adding a third one shortly.

After that, you have to have a Practical test with a DPE with that rating, and again luckily, we have one of those now in the area – before you had to go to Florida for that. (I recently qualified for that rating during my trip to Florida.)

If you don't already have a Private license, you have to get one, which is more complicated – 20 hours of training, cross country of 25 miles, work at an airfield with a control tower, and several other criteria. Still not too bad. Still will have to have a Practical check ride with a DPE.

Oh, by the way, your aircraft also has to be equipped for night flying. Which simply means position lights and strobes.



So now you logically would ask “Why the hell would I want to fly at night? It's dark!”

Good question. Wish I had a good answer. However, it is actually pretty neat. And it's also fun when the police arrive while responding to several

calls from the local population who reported a UFO sighting to the police station and to the FAA and to the U.S. Air Force.

Cooking lesson

How to prepare Tofu in two easy steps:

- A. Throw it in the trash.
- B. Grill some meat.

I went to the Air and Space museum. But there was nothing there.

History lesson

The powered parachute has an interesting history, so in case you haven't researched it, here's a brief summary.

After World War II, some of the soldiers who actually liked jumping out of non-burning aircraft continued parachuting as a sport and a hobby – it

became somewhat popular. They were using the Army round chute models – not much control over those.



About 1965, the parafoil was developed, which is the multi-cell parachutes we have today. This of course increased the distance it could “fly” and added a lot more control.

In 1981, Steve Snyder (an aeronautical engineer) started experimenting with adding a carriage and a motor to the parafoil. Similar to the Wright brothers, it took many tries and many failures – controlling it was the main problem. The parafoil

was flat, but when they made it anhedral shaped (curved, as it is today), it became much more stable.

A couple of years later in 1983, the P3 model was introduced at Sun & Fun, and the Paraplane corporation was formed. The rest is history.

Another interesting tidbit – the first powered parachutes (Paraplanes) were single seaters, so your first flight was also your first solo. Exciting. The two seaters did not come into production until about 1993. I started flying PPCs in 1992. Exciting.



The FAA finally passes rule 14 CFR 61.97 (d)(7) – what to do about pilots who fly without their biennial flight reviews or without a current annual on their aircraft.

The End

Once again, the best part of the Newsletter...

