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

Maine Powerchute Association Newsletter

www.mainepowerchutes.com

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Actual aviation-stuff issue

Preamble

For some reason, a number of powered parachute and other aviation related material came to my attention lately, So since any of our pilots who read this (what is wrong with you?) is still alive after flying for anywhere from 1 year to 54 years, it seemed like you might be interested in this stuff.

Of course, I've been wrong before (the actual score ratio is 14 wrongs to 1 right). But I'm soldiering on anyway with this Newsletter.

To alleviate all this heavy aviation stuff, we're throwing in more than the usual amount of nonsense (or lame humor?) – that's why this Newsletter is so damn long!.

Recent fly-in events

The only event we've had since our last Newsletter is the annual Bethel fly-in. As has been the case several times this year, the original date we set got weathered out (that may not be a real word, but we know what it means), so we moved it back a week which then turned out very nice all around.

It also coincided with the Maine Aeronautical Association's monthly Coffee and Donuts event, so that made our fly-in even more fun than usual. Thanks to Steve and Lisa of the MAA and Randy for making all the logistical arrangements!

After the super windy and rainy days before, Saturday turned out to be a near perfect flying day – fairly warm temperatures and very low winds pretty much all day. The foliage, though somewhat past the peak, was still colorful, so we got some nice pictures and some nice videos, besides some nice flying too.

Can't stall a powered parachute – right?

Well, it's almost impossible, but definitely can be done. You have to try pretty hard though.

Some interesting experiments were done by the Quantum parachute manufacturing people a while back. Their conclusion was that all powered parachute wings are capable of stalling, given the correct conditions.

As a reminder, a stall occurs when a wing (any wing, rigid or inflatable) no longer has enough air flowing smoothly over it to maintain lift. The result is that your aircraft is no longer a "flying" machine – it's just a machine up in the air where it no longer belongs.

Stalls are easily achieved in fixed wing aircraft simply by raising the nose high enough to stop the air from smoothly flowing over it. This is part of training as well as part of check rides. It is easy to recover from it (given enough altitude) – the nose will drop, and smooth airflow resumes over the wing.

We cannot raise the nose of our aircraft high enough to achieve the same effect (I suppose if you had a monster engine and a very light pilot you could do it…). So our option to induce a stall is to pull the tail of the chute low enough so no ram air is coming into the cells, and it becomes a fluttering piece of material. No longer a wing.

If you keep pulling on the steering line, you will eventually induce a stall. A steady-state stall if done slowly, and a dynamic stall if you do it quickly.

In a steady-state stall, you will feel the chute rock slightly aft, then forward. If you release the steering line slowly, you will not go into a stall. If you keep it in that position without releasing it, the wing will fall aft and stall.

A dynamic stall is induced by pulling the steering lines quickly until the wing stalls. When this is done, the wing will rapidly drop behind the vehicle, and you will be falling just slightly slower than a rock. To recover, you need to release the steering lines, and cross your fingers. The chute will re-inflate given enough altitude and enough luck.

New use for PPCs – suppressing (or starting?) forest fires.

There is a third kind of stall, which you may experience even if you're not suicidal. It's called an unexpected stall, which is caused by weather, more specifically, winds, wind shear or severe turbulence.

Wind shear is a rapid change in wind speed or direction over a very short distance. It can be horizontal or vertical. It is generally associated with squall lines or approaching cold fronts, and microbursts or downbursts. It is invisible. And it has been the cause of many aircraft accidents.

To avoid the unexpected stalls, stay out of bad weather. Simple enough. Although wind shear has been experienced in clear skies as well, so if your chute collapses in a wind shear under those conditions, it is probably just punishment for something really bad you did in your past.

I have two personal experiences with stalls in a powered parachute.

One was in foggy but calm conditions. Stayed under the fog, until I was about to run into a suddenly appearing low bank. I turned very sharply to avoid it, not knowing what's hiding in the fog (max pedal plus a little manual pull on the steering line).

At that severe bank angle, vertical component of lift was near zero and the aircraft dropped, sideways, although the cells were still inflated. Scary, but luckily I had enough altitude and airspeed so just releasing the severe bank allowed the machine to fly again.

In the second episode, I was just a witness. We had a "land closest to a line" contest. One of our pilots was flying a machine that had significantly more tail than normal (he liked it that way for teaching others).

When he got near the target line, he was still too high at about 15 feet of altitude, so he maxed both pedals and also grabbed the lines. The result was a stall – the machine just stopped in the air, the chute dropped behind, then fell straight down. Unfortunately, the impact did some damage to his spine, and he was in a brace for many months.

So the conclusion is, as was stated in the first sentence, you have to try pretty hard to stall a powered parachute. So don't.

Officer said "You drinking?"

I said "You buying?"

We laughed and laughed. I need bail money.

New members

Welcome to another new member to our jolly group – Gary Everett from Aurora, Maine.

Gary used to skydive (yes, apparently sane people do that!), so I think he'll welcome being able to go not only down but also up with a parachute.

Anyway, please extend a hearty welcome to Gary (glepc1@rivah.net). Since this is Gary's first Newsletter, we hope he doesn't want his $20 back after reading our usual irreverent stuff.

I think that the worst time to have a heart attack is during a game of charades.

Videos

Question – why do people who take flying videos with their phones hold their phones vertically?

The resulting videos are equivalent to looking at the world with blinders on. Hold your open hands at your temples – that's the view you get. Now remove your hands – see how much more of the world you can see and enjoy.

So simply turn your phone camera sideways – now you get a panoramic view of the world and the scenery, the way you see it in real life.

OK, this is a pet peeve of mine. But really, why miss out on seeing much of the wonderful scenery and colors we enjoy while flying?

A fishing story

Earl and Bubba were out fishing, chewing tobacco, and drinking beer. After a while, Earl says, "I'm thinking of divorcing my wife. She ain't spoke to me in over two months."

Bubba, takes a slow sip of beer and says, "You might want to think that over. Women like that are hard to find."

More lawyer stories

Attorney: What was the first thing your husband said to you that morning?
Witness: He said, 'Where am I, Cathy?'
Attorney: And why did that upset you?
Witness: My name is Susan!

Attorney: What is your date of birth?
Witness: July 18th.
Attorney: Which year?
Witness: Every year.

Attorney: Are you sexually active?
Witness: No, I just lie there.

Attorney: So the date of conception (of the baby) was August 8th?
Witness: Yes.
Attorney: And what were you doing at that time?
Witness: Getting laid

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: Do you recall the time that you examined the body?
Witness: The autopsy started around 8:30 PM
Attorney: And Mr. Denton was dead at the time?
Witness: If not, he was by the time I finished.

Flying is NOT for everybody

OK, why not?

So first, let's look at what type of people generally engage in risky activities, such as flying, skydiving, motorcycle racing, rock climbing, et cetera. What makes some drawn to adventure sports and others shy away?

Apparently, there's' been quite a bit of research on that topic.

Some of that research (as reported by the *Journal of Personality and Psychology,* (which I obviously read daily) point to some of the most common reasons people continue an extreme sport are the feeling of being trapped or stressed out.

Motivation to take risks or do an extreme sport can be as simple as needing to get away, to carve your own path. Risk takers push their physical, emotional, and intellectual limits to escape the tensionless state associated with everyday life.

Now here comes the good part. Research, as reported in the journal *Kinesiology* (another I read daily) found that high-risk athletes scored the highest in emotional stability, energy, and conscientiousness compared with non-risk athletes and non-athletes.

Some more good stuff. People engaging in extreme sports are the "…most extraverted, and are generally dynamic, pervasive, social, and communicative. They have a need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences, and are willing to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experiences."

But what about the people who may share some of those personality traits but either don't engage in these activities or stop after trying it? Apparently they add one more trait – caution. The generally high level of fearlessness that risk takers have is not shared by them, or is sometimes erased by an experience that may have been emotionally or physically traumatic.

We have seen that within our group. Over the years, we've had several very nice and fun people try flying our machines and quit after some hairy episode they experienced. That was the right thing for them – it's definitely not for everybody.

So congratulations to all of you extreme-sport powered parachute pilots for being part of that elite group of people who take risks just for the hell of it. With apologies to all the smart academic PHDs and researchers, obviously I'm simplifying all their work with that statement. But hey, it's our Newsletter!

Oh, one more thing. People who engage in extreme sports tend to live shorter lives. Whoda thought???

Crowded elevator smells different to a midget.

MPA annual Christmas party

More details will follow in emails, but it will be held on Saturday, December 3rd at 3:00 PM, at the High Tide restaurant in Brewer, Maine, Fairly central to most of our members.

This is the same place we held our event last year, which turned out rather well – good food, good location, nice room, and excellent and courteous service. So we're counting on a repeat for this year.

As usual, we'll have our membership meeting to bring everybody up to date on our past and future activities, introduce new members, view our highlight video, and generally have a relaxed and fun time with lots of laughs for a few hours. And we should have enough money in our funds to pay for the whole thing.

You come from dust and you will return to dust. That's why I don't dust. It could be someone I know.

The true story of Pinocchio

Pinocchio never actually turned into a living boy – he just grew up to be a wooden man. One day, he went to Geppetto for advice.

"My girlfriend says that every time we make love, she gets splinters. What should I do?"

Geppetto says "That's easy, my boy. Sandpaper! But be careful, don't sand too hard or you'll hurt yourself."

A few weeks later Geppetto asks how it all went with his girlfriend. Pinocchio replied "Girlfriend? Who needs girls!"

True story. Just correcting history.

Being popular on Facebook is like sitting at the cool table in the cafeteria of a mental hospital.

Good PPC procedures

Warming up the engine, whether a 582 or a 912 is obviously a good practice. Doing the proper length of engine warm ups can help with avoiding cold seizures, as well as significantly increasing your engine's lifespan.

The generally recommended method is to either be sitting in the pilot seat while the engine is warming up, or to position the aircraft against a solid object (car, building, etc). This is to avoid inadvertent movement of the aircraft, which has happened several times within our group, always with unhappy endings.

However, a method that achieves the same results, and also gains you another safety advantage is as follows.

After starting the engine and making sure it responds smoothly to the throttle (usually about 30 seconds), start taxiing to your takeoff point, keeping it at idle RPM or slightly higher. So here's the safety portion.

It is generally good practice to make sure the runway on which you'll be taking off is clear. This is especially true for grass strips. So while taxiing, you can make sure there are no holes, branches, or other obstacles on the surface. Just because it was clear yesterday, doesn't mean it will be so today.

So by the time you clear the runway (and make a few detours if necessary), your engine will be at the correct running temperature, and you'll be ready to move to your takeoff position.

Another benefit of this practice is saving time. Instead of warming up and then taxiing to your takeoff position, you will achieve both goals by warming up while taxiing. And the time saved is extra time in the air!

Next great MPA adventure

The last time our group undertook a truly great adventure was in 2003, with our 8 pilots and 6 support personnel flying from Augusta to Kitty Hawk, NC. We participated in what was a nationwide event to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first controlled flight by the Wright brothers.

Doing some math, in 2023 we will see the 20th anniversary of that trip by our group. Being the sentimental type (been compared to a rock in that regard), I think it appropriate to attempt a reasonable facsimile of that adventure next year.

Here's the general outline. Since we generally reserve one week in August for our Adventure trip, we'll use that time to do a Chute Across Maine trip, visiting 5 or 6 airfields along the way, and staying a day or so at each. A slightly smaller version of the 2003 trip.

So the planning process has begun.

Step One - glue together the three sectionals that comprise the aviation map of Maine – **done**.

Step Two - identify locations suitable for our goal, i.e. will welcome us (or at least tolerate us), and are within 30 or 40 miles(or less) from each other – **in progress.**

Step Three – contact owners of the respective fields to verify we can stay there overnight and to make other local arrangements – **not done** until our membership agrees on proposed locations (to be done at general membership meeting at our Christmas party).

Steps Four to Fifteen – lots of other stuff, but most important part is to recruit 3 to 10 of our members who are intrepid and who have a quest for flying adventures to undertake this fun little event next year - **not done.**

Laying out your chute

We have all had occasions where the damn chute just didn't come up like it always has in the past. And you wonder "What the hell just happened?"

There are many reasons – gust of wind at the wrong time, insufficient or too much initial power, crossed lines, or the chute is just having a bad day.

However, we recently witnessed another takeoff where the chute just inverted on the takeoff roll, and the pilot looked back and saw the chute up, so started to apply full power. Luckily, he noticed it in time (with some help from onlookers), so he aborted the takeoff – had he not done that, it could have resulted in an ugly situation.

Upon examining the video of that event, it brought to light another "bad chute" reason.

When you lay out your chute, either use the stack method or the inverted method. In the situation above, the layout was a "hybrid"- sort of half way between stacked and inverted.

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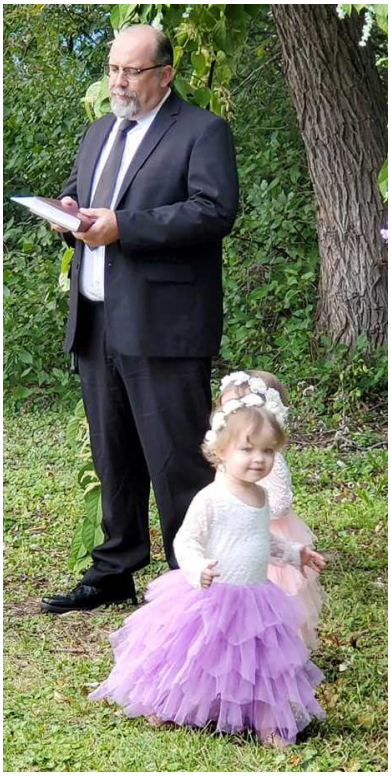
In that scenario, the end cell lines were taut, and the A line middle lines were slack. So on the takeoff roll, one of the end cells jumped up first and crossed to the other side, then the entire chute came up, but now the end cells were on the wrong side.

So the lesson here is make sure that you take the time to use either of the proven methods, and NOT anything in between.

Some MPA Members In The News

Latest in men’s headgear fashion…



A clue that your speech is too long…

Latest in braking technology – feet!