

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

Maine Powerchute Association

Newsletter

June 2023

www.mainepowerchutes.com

Useful Stuff Issue

Preamble

It's a conspiracy. One or more of our members have REALLY annoyed Mother Nature, and she has conspired with these evil people to punish us by creating a weather pattern that forced us to postpone or cancel some of our scheduled fly-ins.

Obviously, we have initiated our seldom used but very thorough MPA investigation to find the culprit(s). We have access to all our members' fingerprints, DNAs, family history, hygienic habits, and facial images. Thank you, NSA.

So far, we have uncovered that the suspect(s) have committed one or more acts against nature.. Unfortunately, that reduced our suspect pool by only about 10%.

We will have a ceremonial apology-event where we will sacrifice a chicken to appease Mother Nature. Actually, it's been quite successful whenever we did it in the past.

Well, not so successful for the chickens.

Past events

Bethel - Weather was still a little dreary, but still had nice attendance for our opening event of the year. Had about 5 or 6 people flying, and several more who just came to hang out. We cut the event a little short – nothing on Sunday, but still had a good time as usual.

Bowman – weather again was not ideal, but at least flyable. We had the field and facility all to ourselves – in the past, we attended at their annual fly-in which always drew a big crowd with many fixed wing aircraft, so we had a hard time getting off that field due to heavy traffic.

We'll continue trying to schedule this venue in the future – it's a terrific grass field with lots of room for us all.

Dover – This became a major disappointment, as we had great times there in the past. First, it was postponed a week by the organizers due to weather. Then postponed two weeks, and when it was still weathered out, cancelled altogether. High hopes for next year.

Public Service announcements

Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet this Thursday at 7pm. Please use the back door.

Weight Watchers will meet at Wednesdays at 7pm at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double doors at the side entrance.



*Yep, PPCs can do skywriting.
Demonstrating it with the letter "I"
shown sideways*

Next events

Bowdoinham – coming up weekend of July 7th is one of our favorite events at Merry meeting field. Again, we have the field all to ourselves – a couple of nice grass strips available. And we have a terrific host Mark Bowker, who along with some of his neighbors provides a super welcoming atmosphere. Good family event.

Presque Isle / Ft. Kent – several weeks later, we’re headed to our annual trek up north for a whole week – from August 5 through the 12th. We’ll spend a few days at Presque Isle, which is another terrific field, with Paul Cyr always welcoming us.

Then we’ll drive to Ft. Kent (about an hour and a half) to spend the rest of the week there, with George Dumond being our super cordial host. Super cordial so far – he may sober up.

Remaining schedule – here are the dates for the rest of the season (subject to change, which we always hate...)

Weekend of Sep. 8 – Deblois

Weekend of Sep. 29 – Fryeburg

Saturday, Dec, 9th - MPA Christmas party

As usual, we’ll probably have some impromptu, unscheduled local get-togethers as well – this is done via phone calls or emails.

Technology update

My teacher told me not to worry about spelling because in the future, Autocorrect will take care of it. For that, I am eternally grapefruit.

However, now that I am using it all the time, Autocorrect has become my enema.

Aviation education stuff

1. What is a transponder?

It’s a fun little electronic device that transmits a 4 digit code when interrogated by a radio signal, That code then shows up on the air

traffic controller’s radar screen, so he/she can associate your blip on the radar screen with you.

It is used by pretty much all aircraft bigger than a powered parachute. It greatly aids in maintaining order in the skies.

There are very few powered parachutes that have these installed. Since we generally don’t fly into airspace that’s controlled by a tower, there’s really no need. And they cost a nice sum.

There are certain codes that are assigned for the purpose of specifying a situation that air traffic control recognizes without having assigned you that code. Some of these are:

- 1200 – I’m flying VFR
- 7500 – I’m being hijacked
- 7600 – I lost radio communications
- 7700 – I have an emergency

So if you want a lot of people to pay attention to you real quick, set your transponder to 7500.

Then be ready to tell your very clever and fanciful story to the FAA about how and why your powered parachute was the target of the evil terrorists. And while you’re entertaining the FAA boys, just remember our motto: **“Bad decisions make great stories!”**

On the upside, you’ll be the star of our MPA Christmas party, and of all our subsequent fly-ins.

2. Ethanol in the fuel

As we all know, ethanol of 10% (or 15% some places) is present in automotive gas from your gas station. And we also all know that ethanol (a type of alcohol) is very corrosive to small engine fuel lines, like in your

lawn mower, weed whacker, etc. Also your 582 or 912 Rotax engines. So some of use ethanol-free gas whenever possible, either automotive or Avgas.

So here’s how you can be sure your gas is ethanol free.



Typical reaction when finding out either:

“I’m getting a ride in a PPC with one of you sexy pilots!”

- or

“The strip shows negative!”



- get an empty olive bottle (**hint** – eat olives first to make it empty)
- make a line on it with a permanent marker about 2 inches from the bottom (**hint: on the outside of the bottle**)
- fill it with water up to the line
- fill the rest of the bottle with gasoline to near the top (**hint: the top is the other end from the bottom**)
- Shake the mixture thoroughly and let it rest for a few minutes (**hint: put the lid back on the bottle before shaking**)
- Ethanol mixes with water and the two will separate out together. Therefore, after mixing the water and the gasoline, if the water level is above the line you made, then the fuel contains ethanol.
- If the water level stays right at the line you made, you have ethanol-free gas.



We pilots just love little challenges!

TLAR

As we old time aviators know, that stands for That Looks About Right.

That method saves time and is quite effective when adjusting the cutting level on your lawn mower, or positioning a picture on the wall, or selecting a wife (substitute “She” for “That”).

However, not so much for doing the pre-flight on your aircraft. You can’t just walk around the machine real quick-like and pronounce it TLAR.

Checklists. For example, your average Cessna 172 has about 38 items on its pre-flight checklist. A Lear jet about 52. A commercial airliner about 78. Our lowly powered parachutes pre-flight checklist about eight. But NOT zero.

And that’s just the Pre-flight checklist. A full one for an airliner has about 220 items (not counting all the different “Unusual situations” checklists).

As bright as we are (all of us range from “Truly incredible” to “Einstein-like”), we can very easily forget one or two items from our meager pre-flight checklist. Like fuel cap on, oil reservoir cap on, rear-seat seat belts secured, etc. Been there, done that.

So here’s a technique I use and recommend. Do your pre-flight from memory – really not that hard. But then, just before you sit into your machine, dig out your trusty checklist, and quickly read each one, and say “Yep” to each item about which you are certain. Like “Yes, I checked fuel level.” “Yes, I set radiator cover.” And so on.

You may be surprised how often you’ll say “Damn, not sure about this – let me double check.” Then say “Thank you checklist!”

Age-old question

Is it better to be lucky or good?

After many exhaustive studies by the NTSB, it was determined that being good only gets you so far. After that, you need luck. Keep in mind that just about all the cases the NTSB studies, bad luck was involved

I think we can all look back at some events in our adventure-filled lives where you said to yourself (or to others as well) – “Whew, that was lucky – I could have gotten really hurt just then!”

However, as we say in the military, “Hope is not a strategy.” Similarly, luck

is not a strategy. If you ever have to say “With any luck, I should be able to clear those trees at the end of the runway,” something is drastically wrong. DON’T DO IT!

That’s the real bad thing about luck. You can’t count on it.

Skill, on the other hand is always there. It won’t let you down. But it’s a perishable commodity. Work on it. And keep it fresh.



Good-to-know stuff...

The Airmen Registry is a division of the FAA which keeps track of all your licensing information. Here are some of the services you might find useful:

- Changing your address
- Order a replacement certificate
- Request verification of your privileges
- Et cetera...

Here's the link to the Registry:

<https://amsrvs.registry.faa.gov/amsrvs/>

If you see me talking to myself, I'm having a staff meeting.

Despite the high cost of living, have you noticed how popular it remains?

Why left seat for the pilot in command

Mostly, because most people are right handed, so most of the controls (throttle, mixture, flaps, etc.) can be in the middle so both the pilot and copilot can access them easily.

Also in this configuration, the copilot is in a better position to shoo off seagulls and other birds. And the pilot, being right handed, can more easily slap the copilot when he does something wrong.

NOTE: I believe slapping was outlawed by the FAA in 1963. But the pilot is now allowed to give a wedgie to the copilot after landing.

Safety stuff

Early morning fog and scud.

Many of us have fallen for this deceiving phenomenon. After being ready to fly, you realize that you can't really see the end of the runway, so you wait just a little longer. OK, now I can see it – let's go!

Here's where the danger creeps in. After you take off, all of a sudden the world looks much different. As you get just under the fog or scud, you lose sight of the runway. Whoa – let's get lower!

And at times, the scud itself starts to lower, so now you're under IMC (Instrument Meteorological Conditions). Very dangerous, as your only response is to fly lower and lower. You tend to get disoriented quickly, and there's a good chance your new low altitude will lead you right into the trees. Or worse, a building.

