

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

Maine Parachute Association Newsletter

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www.maineparachutes.com

Not a Very Special Issue

Preamble

“Special” generally means different from the usual or the ordinary, and generally something better. If everything is “special,” then of course that becomes the usual.

Read more Newsletters for other deep bits of wisdom and free advice.

So this issue of the Newsletter is not very special. However, keep reading, as it may contain an occasional bit of aviation advice that you may find useful. Also, it has some alluring pictures of pretty ladies, just to remind you of why you spent so much money on them over your life so far. And probably still do...

A FEDEX pilot was asked why they fly through all sorts of bad weather, turbulence, thunderstorms, high winds, etc.

He answered: “Cargo doesn’t scream.”

Past events

Fryeburg – well, this usually popular event was cancelled, not because of weather, but because the airfield was not available to us due to the traffic to the Fryeburg Fair.

So of course, we tried very hard to find suitable alternatives near by, but struck out – nobody would have us! Yep, definitely their loss.

However, thanks to Ed W., we were able to still have a terrific fly-in at Bowman field. Not exactly close to the Fryeburg fair but it turned out to be a real fun event – good weather, good company, good field, good flying.

Bethel – this event was supposed to be their big Fall Fly-in and Sunday River Fall Festival.

But yep, you guessed it, horrible weather stopped all flying. The music and food stuff continued, but instead of the big attendance from the town, it was just a few of us die-hards that hung around. But to help out, we ate a lot of the food that was intended for a hundred people – just being helpful, that’s all....



*Breaking news! Fred has trained his machine to Sit on command!
It took a lot of patience, but he did it.
He is available to give lessons to all of us MPA members.*

A man asked his wife “What would you do if I won the lottery?”

She replied “I’d take half, and then leave you.”

“Great,” he said, “I won \$12 yesterday. Here’s \$6. Stay in touch!”

Not our best flying year

While we usually have one or two weather related cancellations or postponements, this year was much worse. We had very few events with “ideal” conditions, so overall, we didn’t get much flying in.

However, after consulting that proven predictor of weather, the Farmers’ Almanac, next year is guaranteed to be super! So don’t shrink-wrap your machine just yet – there’s hope ahead!

Engine out

That dreaded silence.

It’s time to put to use everything you know about flying. It’s time to make all the right decisions. And you have anywhere from 4 seconds to 2 minutes to do all that.

Yes, proper pre-flight, proper engine maintenance, and using checklists will prevent most engine failures. (Notice: I said **using** checklists, not **having** checklists).

However, even our simple engines have many moving and non-moving parts, all subject to wear, fatigue, need for lubrication, tolerance for heat, et cetera. Most parts are critical, meaning failure of any of them can cascade and stop the whole machinery. Then, the dreaded silence.

Over the last 25 years or so of our clubs’ existence, we’ve had probably 7 or 8 engine outs. No fatalities, just some bruises. (The one fatality was not caused by engine out – just from trying to climb down from the tree into which he flew his machine).

The reasons for us being able to survive forced landings are primarily due to our slow speed and a pretty good glide ratio. We usually have enough time to pick an area without hard objects to hit (like houses). Tops of trees are survivable for us. Not so much for most general aviation aircraft.

So following the old adage that “If you fly long enough, something bad will eventually happen to you,” here are some tips for walking away from an engine out situation.

- Altitude is your friend! When flying over areas where you definitely do NOT want land (large bodies of water, cities, swamps, etc.), keep enough altitude to give you some options.

- If you have enough altitude to give you a little time, see if re-starting the engine is possible. If you can re-start the engine, limp home, or limp to a safe place to do a controlled landing.

- Stay cool! Easier said than done, but clear thinking is even more essential now. Hint from test pilot school – take a really deep breath, relax your jaw muscle, yep, that’s the first thing that tightens up in an emergency (your sphincter is second)) so relaxing it helps relax your whole body (needed for clear thinking!)

- Practice! Very important to do this while everything is working fine. At a grass airfield, go to about 300 feet on the downwind leg, at about the midpoint on the field cut back to idle and glide the rest of the way to touchdown (at idle, you pretty much have zero thrust). Then do it again the same way, but this time shutting the engine down. You’ll get a good idea how your machine performs without power.

- As we all know, running out of fuel makes all forced landings a PILOT ERROR. No excuses, no other finding is possible by the NTSB. So don’t.

- By the way, it’s VERY important to get flying again as soon as possible after an engine out. Getting right back in the saddle really is true – otherwise, you’ll keep coming up with excuses not to fly again.

- Lastly, here are some common sense things. Preventive maintenance is so important with any machinery, but especially with your aircraft. You know, things like changing spark plugs as needed, monitoring your engine performance instruments, making sure the fuel you put into your tank is clean (use Mr. Filter every time!), coolant and oil levels are correct, etc.

But here are the good parts of engine outs (provided you don’t get hurt or worse – most of the following probably doesn’t apply then)...

- What an adrenaline rush!

- You’ll have stories to tell for the next several years!

- You’ll be viewed with a lot more respect by your fellow pilots!

- The little annoyances in life won’t bother you much at all – “I’ve been through worse” is your new attitude!



- You'll look down at your fellow pilots with condescension, and view them as virgins.
- After a while (maybe a few weeks or a few years) you'll laugh at the whole episode.
- But here's the best part. Sometimes we get bored while flying - all trees look the same. But when you hear the Silence, you will be bored no longer.

EPILOGUE

In my 54 years of military and civilian flying, I've had 5 engine outs.

Three of them were pilot initiated, where I had no choice but to shut the engine down to prevent an escalation of problems. Two of them were unintentional – one during a check ride where a cold seizure occurred, and the other one where the electrical system grounded out under a snow/sleet/ice flying conditions. Fun times!

Do you ever wake up, kiss the person sleeping beside you, and feel glad that you're alive?

I just did, and apparently will not be allowed on this airline again...

What is ADS-B?

Simply, it's an instrument in the aircraft that tells air traffic control and other aircraft where you are, what your speed is, what your altitude is, and a few other minor goodies.

Yes, radar can tell you most of that. But radar has limitations – it uses radio signals which is line of sight, so weather, your altitude, dead spots, mountains, etc. can interfere with it. ADS-B uses satellites (GPS), so is not affected by those factors.

Furthermore, radar scans once every 5 to 12 seconds, whereas the ADS-B equipment scans and transmits once per second.

All commercial and most general aviation aircraft must have this installed now (since 2020). Also, any aircraft flying into Class A, B, or C airspace must have it also, unless otherwise authorized by air traffic control.



With apologies to that all time classic, this is our version of the "Magnificent Seven" at the Bowman event.. We called it the Not-So-Magnificent Seven.

So the powered parachutes are OK, since this equipment in Class E airspace is only mandatory above 10,000 feet MSL. However, we do have a couple of our PPCs that actually have it.

The normal ADS-B is **Out**, meaning it transmits its data once every second. Air traffic control now knows everything about you, so it can direct traffic efficiently. If other aircraft have AAS-B **In**, they can also see the same thing air traffic control sees, so now they also know everything about you. So look pretty. No more in-flight relieving yourself.



What altitudes can I fly legally

This question comes up occasionally. If it's been a while since you took your FAA Knowledge Test, here's a refresher.

This refers to Powered Parachutes only – some more stringent rules apply to other aircraft.

Anywhere:

Fly at an altitude from which you can safely land without undue hazard to people or property on the surface.

Over congested areas:

That means towns, cities, open air assembly of people – 1,000 feet above highest obstacle on ground.

Other areas

That means over water, fields, forests, etc. - can fly at any altitude.

However:

Do not buzz people, houses, boats, etc. unless you know them personally and are sure they won't throw things at you or shoot at you. This becomes even more important during hunting season – the buzzee carries a rifle!

Along those lines, here's a simple rule: Don't annoy people! Remember, your bad behavior reflects on all of us!

My kid: "I feel you're always making up rules and stuff."

Me: "Like what?"

My kid: "Like if I don't clean my room, a portal will open and take me to another dimension."

Me: "Well, that's what happened to your older brother."

My kid: "What older brother???"

Me: "Exactly."

Christmas party

It's just around the corner – Saturday, December 9th at 3:00 PM, at the High Tide restaurant in Brewer. Had very good events there the last two years, so we'll go there again.

More details to follow in an email as we get closer.

Uniform for the event – MPA polo shirts. See below.

MPA polo shirts

Some of the 15 people ordering these very nice off-white monogrammed shirts have already picked them up (or had them mailed), but the majority has not.

We will have them at the Christmas party – you can pay for them there (\$20). We ordered two extras in case you're overcome with jealousy after seeing them, and want to become part of the "in" crowd. I see some eyes rolling!!!

The End



Public service announcements

Danger! – Do NOT put your wallet into your rear pocket before making sure that there are no holes in it, as demonstrated below by Sharon, our current Employee of the Month.



Danger! It's hunting season! Wear an orange vest! Our Employee of the Year, Bambi, is illustrating the hunting attire that is NOT suitable for this time of the year.

