

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

Maine Powerchute Association

Newsletter

February 2024

Not-so-special New Year's Issue

Preamble

The last time our jolly group was together was at our Christmas party in December. And probably a few months before that was the last time most of us did any flying in our trusty powered parachutes. And it will be another couple of months before we saddle up again. That's a long time without an MPA fix!

So to help get over any possible withdrawal symptoms, here's the Newsletter!

OK, it's not the same as being at a fly-in, but it may take your mind off it for a while. Speaking of "minds," heed this warning – reading this may kill a few more of our remaining brain cells. But it should not affect our flying skills.

Oh, one more thing – you may be wondering what we can say in a club Newsletter since nothing flying related or club event related has happened over the last several months. Yep, I was wondering the same thing. However, as you know, that hasn't stopped us before. So here it goes.

A second "Oh" – if you think this Newsletter contains more than the usual amount of nonsense and funny stuff and girlie pictures, you're right. Like I said, nothing happened since last year!

Christmas party

Great turnout as usual – maybe even better. Had a nice dinner at the High Tide restaurant at Brewer, showed some of the many pictures some of our members took during the past

year, did our annual all-members meeting, and showed our so-called Highlight video.

We also handed out our official MPA polo shirts, so we're ready to fly in style. Or at least go out to town in style, even if our flying may not seem very high fashioned.

We also distributed the MPA business cards. As we have probably all experienced at some time or other, we have spectators ask us a bunch of questions about our sport, and some seem genuinely interested in it.

So the idea is that we can put our phone number on the card which has the link to our web site, so the interested ones can call us as well as visit our site to get a lot more information on our activities.

New members are fun! At our fly-ins, the more the merrier!

Just trying to help

A drunk was crawling around on all fours under a lamp post. I happened to be walking by, so I asked him what he was doing there. He said he lost his Rolex watch and was trying to find it.

I thought I'd help him, and I started searching around with him. After a few minutes with no luck, I asked him if he remembered where he lost it. He said about a half a block back.

Of course, I asked the logical question, "So why the hell are you looking here?"

"The light is much better here," he said.



Biennial flight reviews

As you know, these are mandatory to stay current, and must be done every two years. A good number of our members will be needing these this year.

The oral part of this exercise can be done by attending one of the many webinars offered by the FAA Safety program (FAAST), or by attending an actual safety meeting which is offered by some of the EAA chapters or by others.

The webinars are by far the easiest way to accomplish this since the safety meetings often require long-distance drives. So here is how to do one of the webinars.

Start the session by activating the site listed below and sign up for it. They are generally one to two hours long (it varies on what the course is).

When completed, you'll be issued a certificate (or an email) verifying that you completed the course. Show that to your CFI, and all that's left is the flying portion. Nope, you can't do that online. Then you're legal for another two years. Yippee!

Here's the link:

<https://www.faasafety.gov/spans/events/EventList.aspx>

Click on "Show webinars only" and "Search" then wait a bit and see all the possible courses. Easy peasy.

Life's puzzles

Let's say a guy with multiple personalities threatens to kill himself, would that be considered a hostage situation?

What do you do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?

Can a vegan eat animal crackers?

Event schedule for 2024

We finalized our tentative schedule for the year. Yes, "finalized" and "tentative" sound like an oxymoron. But as we sadly know, the weather plays these evil games with us – we get all ready to go fly and cruel mother nature says "Not so fast!"



Almost spring – it's getting exciting!

Occasionally, we also get cancelled or postponed for other reasons, mostly if the field owner has some unforeseen conflict or if the field becomes unsuitable for some reason (too wet, construction, etc.)

Unfortunately, last year we had several events that had to be postponed or worse, cancelled, due to the above. So we're due

for a smooth, unchanging year of happy fly-ins.

See our schedule for the year on the last page.

Need a joke for your kid?

The teacher asks little Johnny – do you know your numbers? Johnny says – "Yes, my father taught me!"

Teacher asks "OK, what comes after 3?" Johnny proudly says "4." "OK, what comes after 5?" Johnny says "6." "How about 7?" – Johnny says "8."

"How about 10, what's after that?" she asks. Johnny says "Jack."

Annual reminders

First, your plane. Weird things can happen over the winter – dust, corrosion, mice, gremlins, age. So do a real thorough inspection, charge your battery, start her up, and make sure everything is safe and working as it's supposed to.

And don't wait until you get to a fly-in – you may be unpleasantly surprised if you find something that will keep you from flying that day.

Of course, all is not lost if that happens – you can still enjoy the magnificent company of your

fellow MPA members. Come to think of it, that's actually a good motivator to get your machine in flying shape!



Second, you. We may not experience dust and mice and gremlins, but sadly, we do experience age and corrosion. And as we say, flying is a perishable skill, so don't think you can just pick up where you left off last year (or even before in some cases) and continue your top-gun-like superb flying.

So for your first flight of the year, do everything easy and slow – make some nice easy turns, some touch and go-s, get used to your instruments and navigation aids, and in general, bond with your machine again.

Third, don't forget the annual condition inspection. If you have the authorization to do it yourself, sign it off in your logbook. If you don't have it, make arrangements with our A&P-IA Scott to have your machine inspected and signed off.

Now you're all legal and ready to enjoy the many adventures of our upcoming flying season! Nice going!

I went to a bookstore and asked the clerk "Where is the self-help section?" She said, "If I told you, it would defeat the purpose."

Flying versus driving

After a little research into FAA, NTSB, AOPA, and EAA statistics (you should really know those acronyms), here's some interesting data. BTW, the FAA and the NTSB are two acronyms with which we should have VERY LITTLE contact – it's seldom good news when we do.

It's sort of a cute thing you often hear – driving to the airport is the most dangerous part of flying. Well, that's actually true if you're on your way for flight on a Delta or United or other commercial airlines, but not so much in general aviation (which is all non-commercial and unscheduled flights).

So, using per mile, per hours, and some other somewhat relevant comparisons, it's estimated that flying in small aircraft (non-commercial) is about 19 times more dangerous than driving.

How about powered parachutes?

Our aircraft are grouped in with paramotors and other ultralight vehicles for statistics. The accident rates for that whole group are even worse than general aviation.

However, powered parachutes do a little better within that group. Flying PPCs is less dangerous than driving a motorcycle, but more dangerous than driving a car.

In a period of 10 years that were reported for PPCs, there were 71 incidents/accidents involving 117 people. Of these, there were 14 fatalities. Since we fly much fewer hours than other light general aviation aircraft, the accident rate itself becomes worse.

So why these accidents, incidents, and fatalities?



Only a few chances for skis this winter – too many lakes not frozen

As we all probably know, it is pilot error – over 90%. Equipment failures are not that rare, but by itself, they generally do not cause injuries or fatalities – good pilotage will get you on the ground in one piece most of the time.

Another interesting statistic – of the 117 people involved in these accidents, only 7% continued flying any small aircraft. Not us, the intrepid

MPA guys, of course – we’re not bright enough to know when to quit.

So what are the lessons here?

Within the PPC group, most accidents are caused by pilots misjudging three things – wind, distance needed for takeoff, and distance needed for landing.

As we’ve often said before, when you say to yourself “This may be a little hairy, but I think I should be able to clear those trees at the end,” think again. OK, you’ve cleared those trees easily before, but how about the wind today. A little tailwind? A little unusual cross wind? A heavier than usual passenger? Weather more humid or the temperature way up there?

Within our group, we’ve been quite good as far as avoiding accidents and even incidents. I think part of our success is due to the fact that most of us most of the time only fly at fly-ins. We have others with us, and as a group, we can make these fly-no-fly decisions a little better than when you’re all alone in the wilderness.

And we stress safety. Awareness of what COULD go wrong is pretty much how you define experience and professionalism. Once you’re aware, you’re in a good position to mitigate the downside and greatly improve your odds of a safe and fun flight.



What?
Why isn't this a suitable flying attire?

Next events

We’re opening our flying schedule with a rousing fist fly-in on Friday, May 3rd at Bethel. We figure it should

be warm enough by then, and the hard top surfaces at Bethel will avoid the wet fields elsewhere.

Following that is one of our favorites, as we have all of the field to ourselves pretty much at Bowman during the weekend of May 31st.

So it’s not too soon to visit your machine, say a few pretty things to it, and get your wife or girlfriend(s) used to the idea that you’ll be gone during the events listed on our schedule below.

Of course, she’s welcome to attend any or all of them, you will add. This advance information will give her ample time to come up with excuses not to attend. Very considerate of you.

2024 MPA Event Schedule

- May 4 Bethel
- Jun 1 Bowman
- Jun 22 Dover Foxcroft
- Jul 13 Presque Isle
- Aug 3 Bowdoinham
- Aug 24 Ft. Kent
- Sep 14 Fryeburg
- Oct 5 Deblois
- Dec 7 Christmas party

The End

