

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

Maine Powerchute Association

Newsletter

April 2024

Ready To Fly Issue

Preamble

"April showers bring May flowers."

Keep that in mind as we immerse ourselves in the typical Maine mud season that we're enjoying right now. However, May is not only the start of flowers blooming, it's also the start of our flying season! Yippee!

Well, technically, the "flying season" itself is all year long, but as we continue to add candles to our birthday cakes, the winter weather flying does not hold the same appeal it did in the yesteryears.

So, with the weekend of our first MPA fly-in on May 3rd, we start another year of flying adventures, laughter, good fellowship, and those cherished moments of adrenaline packed close calls.

Just remember the old aviation adage – "Flying is hours of boredom, punctuated by moments of sheer terror." That should keep us going...

Oh, one more thing. Once again, not much has happened in our club since last year, so we fill this Newsletter with the usual nonsense. Keep smiling!

Upcoming leadership changes

A rare personal message follows:

Back about 25 years ago, our club used to have quarterly meetings (and even monthly for a while). We'd discuss events we wanted to set up, up, make fun of whoever had the latest screw-ups, eat French fries, and occasionally elect "officers" of the club.



Spring is here - Cleared for takeoff!

The "president" of the club would have to handle irate neighbors, deal with the police when they came, and do other things nobody else wanted to do, like clean up afterwards. I believe our long-time member Bill Grusik was the original president.

I missed one of the meetings, and so as punishment, I was elected president.

For several subsequent years, we held elections. Nobody wanted the hassle of that role, so by default, I kept on marching.

Being on the high-end of the OCD spectrum, I formalized the role a little more, so briefly, it now encompasses:



- Coordinating with various field owners,
- Making sure fields are clean after a fly-in
- Set up schedules & notify members of change
- Organizing our annual Christmas party
- Speaking for the MPA to outside groups
- Attending all fly-ins as much as possible
- Some other less exciting activities

The position originally had no term limits, or age restrictions. Even though the President of the US has 2 as the term limit, and the FAA has 65 as age limit for commercial airline pilots.

Therefore, as my first and only executive order, I pronounce myself as having exceeded term limits and being past the maximum age (even though neither of those requirements existed until now).

As it is well known in business and in the military, you need to change leadership of any group periodically, Yes, you may sacrifice experience, but you gain innovation, vibrancy, energy, and a fresh outlook.

So after lengthy discussions with some potential replacements, (discussions filled with bribes, threats, begging, and lies), I finally got enough beer into George Dumond and Ed Walsh so they agreed to take over that role.

Since both of these boys have jobs and many other commitments, it was decided to share the responsibilities for a while until one of them is free enough to do it alone.

I will stay in my current role until the end of the year and work with Ed and George to turn over the huge amount of paperwork we collected over the last 25 years (contacts, membership lists, airfield venues, flight stuff, FAA material, repairmen & safety courses, etc).

We will have a formal Change of Command event at our Christmas Party on Dec. 7th with full military ceremony (cannons, medals, dress blues, swords). Don't miss it!

Regarding our Newsletters, with feedback from George and Ed as well as from anybody in our group, I'll continue putting that together (I can hear the groans!).

Factoid #1

According to a new survey, women say they are more comfortable undressing in front of men than they do in front of other women.

They say that women are too judgmental, whereas men, of course, are just grateful.

Next Events

In just a few weeks, our inaugural fly-in of the year will be held at Bethel during the weekend of May 3rd. While it may be a tad chili at Bethel for some of our girlie-man members this time of year, it was chosen for two reasons – it has enough hard top surfaces so we can avoid the mud, and the FBO station is nice and warm with coffee and sofas and a bathroom.

Three weeks later, we'll be heading to Bowman during the weekend of May 31st.

We have the field pretty much to ourselves, so the huge volume of air traffic during their annual fly-in, which was the reason we stopped going there, will not be a factor.



Factoid #2

There are a number of mechanical devices which seem to increase sexual arousal in women.

Chief among these is the Mercedes-Benz SL500.

New members

For some reason, our recruiting efforts failed us during the winter months, so we only got one new member. He's never flown a powered parachute, but he said "Hey, I can climb the tallest trees with ease, so how hard can this flying stuff be?"



Meet Bobo, our newest MPA member.

Annoying reminders

If anybody actually read the last Newsletter, it had a section on “Annual reminders.” So let’s quickly rehash those.

First, make sure you’re legal, so get your biennial flight reviews out of the way if you’re due.

Second, inspect as well as do a run-up of your machine. You want to make sure it is operating now, rather than be surprised at the fly-in that your battery is dead, etc.

Third, more legal stuff, verify the date when the annual condition inspection of your machine is due. Do it yourself if you have the repairman certificate, or schedule something with Scott.

Fourth, and most importantly, you! You probably haven’t flown for 6 months or more. Remember, flying is a perishable skill – your first flight this year should be very mild – some easy turns at altitude, touch and go-s, etc. And of course, use your checklist, especially before your first flight.



Typical scene at an MPA fly-in

Factoid #3

When I was a kid, I wanted to be older. This is NOT what I expected.



Just a few more months...

Fun event (not an MPA one)

The Maine Aeronautical Association, headed up by Lisa Reece is once again sponsoring their monthly Coffee and Donut event.

The MAA is a group formed to promote flying activities in Maine for all types of aircraft. It’s membership is open to all pilots.

Each month, a different location and a different group stages the event. Most pilots fly in for a couple of hours. Lot of fun talking with these wimpy general aviation pilots, who have a windshield in front of them and have a heater in their cockpit.

Our group flew into one of them last year (Brunswick), had coffee and 7 or 8 donuts each, and we even flew out. We were at a fly-in at Bowdoinham - really fun!

The first of these monthly events is happening at Waterville A/P on April 20th. A little too far for most of us to fly, but driving there is OK too.

“Bigamy” is having one too many wives. So is “monogamy”.

“Light Sport” redefined

The FAA is considering changing the definition of Light Sport Aircraft. Currently, it’s 1,320 pounds, stall speed of 54 knots maximum, no night flights, etc.

The AOPA and EAA are advocating increasing the stall speed, the weight limit, allowing night flying, etc. What that would mean is that many of the current GA aircraft, like Cessna 172-s, 182-s, etc. would fall under this category, so a Sport Pilot license is all that would be required. Still would need different training requirements and would need instructor endorsements.

Another significant part of the proposed changes is the medical requirements. As we know, to fly at the Sport Pilot level, all you need is a valid driver's license, not an FAA medical. This would allow the old pilots who can't get a Class 2 or Class 3 medical to fly again.

So what does this mean for our many powered parachute Sport Pilots? When approved, the new rules would allow you to hop into a fixed wing general aviation aircraft, get some additional instruction, get a sign off, and into the wild blue yonder you go at 120 miles an hour.

Of course, why? Hitting treetops at 120 mph is a little different than hitting them at 28 mph. At 28, it would ruin your day. At 120, it would ruin your week which, by the way, may be your last week...



Factoid #4

When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane and going the wrong way.

Maintenance tips

The following is from Scott, our A&P-IA - all those letters mean that he knows pretty much everything there is to know. Well, I should say everything about aircraft maintenance – he may not know how to build an atomic bomb. Hmmmm, – that's not a challenge, Scott!

One of the most important things to do when getting your machine ready for the first flight is to put fresh gas in your tank.

Drain the old gas – either put a pan under it, or if you don't have a suitable pan, push the plane onto your neighbor's lawn when he/she/it is not home, and forget the pan. And then fill it with fresh gas.

For the sake of your fuel lines, use either avgas or ethanol-free gas, which is available at a

number of gas stations now (Shell stations often). The ethanol eventually erodes the fuel lines on most small engines – lawn mowers, snow blowers, etc. Also Rotax 582-s.

More useful tips from Scott coming in the next Newsletter. So at least now you have a reason to read it!

Last rites

Harry is on his deathbed in a hospital, with wires and tubes connecting him to many life sustaining devices. The family calls their parish priest to provide some spiritual comfort and possibly last rites to the very ill man.

Harry is gasping for breath and cannot speak, so he takes a piece of paper and writes a note to the priest. In his haste to administer last rites, the priest puts the note in his pocket as the man draws his last breath.

At the funeral service, the priest praises Harry about what a great family man he was, and what an inspiration he was to the whole community.

"In fact," says the priest, "in his last moments, he took time to write what I'm sure was an uplifting message to us all." He continued, "I have not read his note, but will now read to you what his last message was." He carefully opens the note, and reads aloud:

"Hey, you're standing on my oxygen tube!"

The End (s)

