

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

# Maine Powerchute Association

## Newsletter

April 2025

[www.maine-powerchutes.com](http://www.maine-powerchutes.com)

## Special "Macho" issue

### Preamble

Wow – spring is finally here – not just on the calendar (3/22/25) but also outside – worked in my T-shirt yesterday. It's also the time when we have to be reminded of this very sad aviation adage -

### *Flying is a perishable skill!*

It's sad because simply put, you're not as good as you were when you hung up your cleats last fall (bad metaphor). That, of course, applies to your physical skills – in your mind, you're just as good, maybe even better since you're a year older and much wiser, right?

So to regain your superb flying expertise again, here are a few hints from those aviators who have lived long enough to earn the privilege of giving us advice for your first flight or two.

- Solo only – no passengers!
- Good flying conditions – light winds, very little cross wind, plenty of daylight left
- Lots of runway
- Sit in your machine for a while before starting the engine, and re-orient yourself with the switches, instruments, engine gauges, navigation aids, etc.

- After first takeoff, get some altitude and do some basics – climbs, descents, turns around a point, simulated flairs
- When done with basics, do a few touch and go-s
- Come back and think about your flight and review the mental notes you made about what to work on next time.

Besides getting the "rust" off your flying skills, this cautious approach to your first few flights is also a good opportunity to make sure your machine is performing up to standard.

***Last night the Internet went out, so I spent a few hours with my family. They seem like nice people.***

### First event of the year

It's finally here – our first scheduled fly-in of the year. Weekend of May 9<sup>th</sup> – Bethel airfield.

Listed below are some of the reasons we generally hold our first event there.

I HAVE A HAMMER!



I CAN PUT THINGS TOGETHER!  
I CAN KNOCK THINGS APART!  
I CAN ALTER MY ENVIRONMENT  
AT WILL AND MAKE AN INCREDIBLE  
DIN ALL THE WHILE!



AH, IT'S GREAT  
TO BE MALE!





- 2 -

- There is good parking for our rigs on a hard surface – it's probably still muddy at most of our other grass field venues.
- Lots of runway.
- Not much GA traffic (although some, so it's a good opportunity to practice our communications protocol.
- An excellent FBO station to get warm if it gets chilly, and to just "hang out."
- For some reason, the Airport Manager loves us!

As usual, we'll start out with a flight Friday afternoon, stay overnight Friday and Saturday, generally fly two or three flights on Saturday, and depart after a Sunday morning flight.

A message from our CEO George and our President Ed: "Hope to see you there!"

### ***Pilots. Looking down on people since 1903.***

#### **First flight of the year**



*Hmmm. Looks a little familiar...*

### **Personal limits**

Since we're on the topics of safety, here is a topic that all CFI-s must teach their students, according to the CFI standards published by the FAA.

*"Know, and adhere to, your personal limits."*

The key word here is "personal." For all us pilots and macho guys that we are, there is

always actual or implied pressure to do what the others are doing. Yep, your basic peer pressure.

There have been several instances at flying events when I have been most impressed by a pilot who mildly passes up a flight when others are going flying. The pilot is generally a newly certified individual or student pilot who realizes that the weather conditions (or other factors) are somewhat beyond his experience.

I have also seen the opposite – a rookie getting into a hairy situation – nobody wants to be called a "sissy" (we actually use a similar term).

Most recently, a shout out to one of our newer pilots James D., who decided to just practice his touch and go-s locally instead of doing a planned cross country to a location where he wasn't sure he could accomplish the approach and landing there.

And yes, your personal limits could include physical limitations such as the size of your bladder, pain tolerance of your bad knees, and being just plain old tired after a long day. Oh to be young again!

***Hello, is this the help line for alcoholics?***

***Yes it is. How may I help you?***

***How do you make a mojito?***

### **Congratulations**

To our newest Certified Flight Instructor, Ed Walsh. He has successfully managed to go through the pretty incredible labyrinth of obtaining a LODA (Letter Of Deviation Authority) from the FAA.

The LODA is needed to use an "Experimental" designated aircraft for instruction. The current rule is that only the "Special" designated aircraft may be used by a CFI if he or she is to get paid for the instruction and to have it recognized as dual in-flight time for the student.

So now Ed can use his "Experimental" 912 Infinity machine to instruct students legally. Congratulations, Ed!

In case you're not clear on the "Experimental" vs. "Special" designations, the "Special" simply means that the manufacturer of the aircraft has had the FAA monitor and approve every step of



the manufacturing process, such as they do with all other FAA approved aircraft for certification.

The "Experimental" version of the same aircraft may be identical, but the manufacturer did not go through the process of FAA certification. Also, the "Special" designation will cost a little more.

***If I had to describe myself in one word, it would be "Not very good at following instructions."***

### **More on radio protocol**

If anybody has read the last Newsletter (long shot), the section on "Pilot Communications" addressed basic aviation radio protocol and procedures. Let's add a few more items to that.

Whether you're new to airfield operations and the associated radio transmissions or if you're a grizzled veteran of that process, it is very important to mentally rehearse what you're going to say **before** you depress that mike button.

Why?

An essential component of aviation radio communications is BREVITY and CLARITY.

Again, why?

The frequency on which you are talking is SHARED by every other aircraft in the general vicinity. When you press the "talk" button, you have that frequency all to yourself, and nobody else can talk.

So obviously, if you're stumbling around for words and correcting yourself, you're tying up that frequency. Very annoying and very unprofessional, especially when there are numerous other aircraft in the vicinity.

Also for that same reason, CLARITY in your transmissions is very important. You don't want to make a transmission that leaves other aircraft thinking "What the hell was that? What does he mean?" Or just plain "WTF???"

So think of what you're going to say BEFORE you say it! Hmmm, now that I think about it, that's good advice in general...



One last thing – The "chat" frequency (usually 122.85) is just for that, chat. If you want to point out to the rest of us in the air a moose you see or a flock of eagles to your right, or any other observation or comment you want to share, go ahead, but use the chat channel. Don't tie up the airport frequency while other pilots are waiting for the channel to clear, since they're trying to communicate with airport traffic.

***There a very few problems that cannot be solved by the suitable application of high explosives.*** (Army motto)

### **Business opportunity**

It is with a heavy heart that I report the bankruptcy filing by that great American institution, Hooters restaurants.

Especially popular around military installations, Hooters has specialized in their world-renown Hooters Style chicken wings, which was always served by smiling, competent, and anatomically gifted waitresses in highly functional uniforms. See picture below.

The good news is that they are reorganizing and will come out of bankruptcy under new owners. Go Hooters!

So here's the business opportunity. Currently, Hooters have restaurants in 42 states and 29 countries. However, there are none in Maine or in New Hampshire! What an opportunity for our alert and entrepreneurial MPA members!



Oh, just a note of caution. While they serve great food with terrific service, it may not be the best place to take your wife for your 25th wedding anniversary. For some reason, wives just don't have the same appreciation for Hooters' unique ambiance that we do. Heard that from a friend...

### **A touching story**

A sweet little girl walks not a pet store, and with a slight lisp asks the attendant,

"Excuse me Mither, do you have any wittle wabbits?"

The attendant smiles, and says "Sure, dear – do you want that little white rabbit, or that fuzzy little black one, or that cute brown one?"

The little girl leans over and whispers to him "I don't fink my pyfon giveth a thit."

### **Inadvertent IMC**

What is that? IMC stands for Instrument Meteorological Conditions. It means that the weather has deteriorated to a point where you no longer have visual reference to the ground and must revert to instruments to continue flying safely.

These conditions can include such things as low cloud cover, fog, heavy rain, darkness, etc. Flying into these conditions is one of the major causes of aviation accidents and fatalities.

Obviously, we in the powered parachute world do not have the instruments needed to fly under those conditions. However, we do occasionally inadvertently encounter IMC. Scary.

Over the years, we have had several instances where one or more of our group has left the home base with good or possibly marginal conditions, only to find that on the way back an hour later, things have changed drastically.

Now what?

I can't see the ground. I know I'm near my airfield, but I can't see it. And I know damn well that I can't do an instrument approach and landing – besides not having the skills and training to do that, I also don't have the instruments needed on board.

Here's the worst solution:

I'm above a layer of clouds that moved in while I was away. So if I just keep flying lower and lower, eventually I'll break out and see the ground.

You may. But you may also hit a water tower, a telephone pole, a mountain, a radio tower, or a

tall building. Do NOT fly into a cloud cover or fog and do NOT keep flying lower if you don't know exactly what is underneath you.

So here's some solutions that unfortunately we had to do a few times over the years.

Climb higher, and if the cloud layer is broken (which mostly is under these scenarios), look for an opening. Use it to get under the cloud cover and regain ground visibility. Then head home at whatever altitude keeps you under the clouds, even if it means skimming the trees.

If finding a hole is not possible, here's an alternative.

Using your GPS, fly over what that device tells you is the airfield. Do fairly tight circles over the field. Contact someone on the ground. Have them go to the middle of the field, and by listening to your engine noise, have them let you know when you are directly over the field. Then slowly descend while you're still circling.

This is definitely an emergency solution. But it has worked the three times we had to use it. And it's better than the alternative.

Obviously, the best thing to do is avoid getting into these situations. Think ahead and live to fly another day!

***Violence is not always the best solution.***

***For example, a mosquito lands on your testicles.***

### **Next events**

We already mentioned Bethel on weekend of May 9<sup>th</sup>. The two events after that are Bowman on May 30<sup>th</sup>, and Dover-Foxcroft on June 20<sup>th</sup>. Both of these are on great grass fields, with lots of room for our rigs. Hope to see you there!

### **The End**

