

Maine Powerchute Association

August, 2000

Bill Grusik, President (797-3636)
Lisa Townsend, V.P. (897-6549)
John Gobel, Secretary (990-6468)

Mattie Crane, Treasurer (346-6023)
Bob Ellis, Safety Officer (354-8740)
Ross Clair, ASC Contact (645-9510)
Lisa Townsend, Event Coordinator

Newsletter

Welcome to the August edition of the Maine Powerchute Association's Newsletter. In this issue, we'll recap the events of the July membership meeting, look at the Greenland fly-in, and provide some pilot tips, maintenance tips, and safety tips. We'll also list the upcoming fly-ins, quote some more plagiarized aviation humor in "Short Final", bring you up to date on our membership status, and include other miscellaneous newsletter stuff.

Summary of the July meeting

The July 9th meeting was held at the Knox County Airport (Owl's Head) at 11 AM. We shared the venue with an antique car show, and antique airplane show, so of course we antique pilots fit right in. Jerry Sukeforth flew in, the rest of us fought the traffic, but several members managed to do some flying before the meeting.

The Secretary's report included a reminder to register your aircraft with ASC – it is very important to have all your paperwork in order as we attend some of the larger fly-ins, where FAA presence is not uncommon. Also, there will be letter sent to our non-paying members to inform them that their status has been changed to inactive. Now most will get over this trauma in time, but they will miss out on news about fly-ins and other club activities, as well as lots of little tips and interesting stories.

Mattie Crane gave the treasurer's report. With dues from several new members and from existing members, our current balance is \$541. We had no expenses this month.

Bill Grusik thanked Lisa Townsend for running last month's meeting in his absence – unfortunately, Lisa wasn't present, and therefore could not accept the gold and diamond bracelet Bill brought her as a gift for doing a good job, so he had to return it.



Some beautiful flying in Plymouth, NH.

Bill said that he will make an attempt to get in touch with ASC, and will keep them informed of our activities. We are an ASC sanctioned club. A number of our members were interested in the training programs available and the training and safety

materials that ASC provides. Stay tuned.

On the safety front, Bill mentioned that a thorough pre-flight paid off, as he found a cracked muffler bracket that might have come off in flight. Some of the members mentioned that the CPS catalog has a wealth of technical and maintenance data for the Rotax engine. John G. had his instrument

panel on his Buckeye 582 go blank in mid-flight. Luckily he was flying VFR, so he was able to return to the airfield to re-attach the plug inside the console that had vibrated loose due to the Velcro retaining strap slipping off the plug assembly.

A number of our pilots were able to fly in the VFW July 4th parade (Scott, Jerry P., Dick Thayer, and the Cranes). We also had some chutes on a float as a static display – and yes, due to the presence of Lisa Townsend and Ross Clair on the float – we brought home another first place trophy! Best of Show, no less! (The other first place, bringing glory to the MPA was won by Dunbar in a spot-landing contest at another fly-in show. Apparently, there were no second or third places in that event.)



The Maine contingent flying at Greenland. The huge head and the chickenlegs are an optical illusion.

The Greenland, NH fly-in, in its ninth year is a model for well-organized events. Besides having the runways, camping areas, latrines, aircraft tie-down areas, and spectator areas all roped off very clearly, each pilot registering was provided with a comprehensive set of instructions about flight patterns, maps, frequencies, and pretty much everything you need to know to fly safely during the week long event. Unfortunately, there were still several non-organization related accidents and incidents – see article later in the Newsletter.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20.



An accident waiting to happen didn't wait too long...

Here's the scene. You have a 2000 foot runway. One end is 60 feet higher than the middle. There are tall trees and houses and electric cables on the high end. 10 knot wind blowing. You weigh 300 pounds. You're a student pilot with about 20 hours. You have an old fixed wing ultralight with a small engine. You have an "N" numbered aircraft. You decide to take a passenger weighing 250 pounds. You take off downwind, from the middle of the runway. Towards the 60 foot high end with the trees and houses and cables. You are violating a handful of FARs. Here comes the punchline. OF COURSE YOU'RE GOING TO CRASH INTO THE %\$@#%\$!@# POWER LINE! WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? That's exactly what happened at Greenland. He stalled the plane trying to climb over the trees, landed in the

power line, which slowed his fall enough so both he and his passenger walked away from it. The event blacked out the neighborhood for a couple of hours, brought in the newspapers, and got a lot of bad press for our sport. We're hoping the FAA grounds this individual for a long time and fines him enough so he'll remember not to do stupid and dangerous things again.

Naturally, we're all affected by events like this, as the public looks at these accidents as a reflection on the dangers of ultralights, not as the dangers of stupid people. Things like this bring more regulations, more close scrutiny, and generally restrict the freedoms we now enjoy in the ultralight community.

More mishaps at Greenland

Besides the fixed wing flying into the wires, there were also two engine-outs during the week – one trike and one fixed wing. Both pilots showed some good skills (and some luck, which often is as valuable as skill), and deadsticked it back to the field. One was caused by a crack in the fuel line, the other one is undetermined.



Dunbar pulling his plane uphill as part of his exercise program, while an onlooker is wiping the tears from his eyes.

Also had one powered parachute incident, which happened to one of our New Hampshire friends. (By the way, they had about 4 or 5 chutes there, and except for this little excitement, represented the powered parachute activity very nicely.) Anyway, it was evening, with lots of people watching, and he took off from our staging area about the middle of the field (plenty of room). As we often have to do, he started at an angle, with the intent of straightening out once he's on the runway and the chute is pretty much up. The problem was that he kept the initial angle, and straight as an arrow flew into the trees on the far side of the runway. Hit them about 30 feet up, fell through the trees into a ditch (another 15 feet down), and came out cursing (definitely excusable). He had full right pedal in, but apparently the left steering line was caught on something so full right steering only straightened out the flight path. Amazingly, the Buckeye single seater only

broke off the right landing gear, broke one blade of the prop, cut two chute lines, and bent one of the cage support tubes. Even more amazingly, they had the aircraft back in the air the next night as Art Willard had the necessary parts and the tools. The only lesson to be learned here is besides doing a good preflight to make sure your lines are laid out straight, you should also pump the steering pedals on your roll-out to make sure they move freely.

Short Final....

(Stolen from AVflash, a weekly on-line newsletter)

Shortly after boarding a United Airlines flight from Denver to Phoenix, I listened to the following exchange over the ATC channel of the plane's audio system after pushing back from the gate:

Denver Ground: "United 724, the good news is you are clear to taxi to Runway 16."

United 724: "Uhh, thanks ... but what's the bad news?"

Denver Ground: "I don't have any bad news right now but the sooner you get going the less chance there will be of my finding any."

Upcoming events

Lisa Townsend, in her Event Coordinator role, is happy to report on the following events:

The "Great Central Maine Anything That Flies Fly-in" is happening on August 5th and 6th at the Norridgewock airport. Camping, food, demonstrations, and all that fly-in stuff will be available.

On August 11th through the 13th, the Bowdoinham fly-in takes place – that is always an excellent event, and worth the trip.

The Bowman field fly-in at Livermore Falls takes place August 19th and 20th. There are many interesting displays and shows at this event, and it usually draws a big crowd.

Unfortunately, the Great Falls Balloon Festival is also held August 18th through the 20th at the Lewiston Auburn airport. We are invited to attend, as long as we don't scare those weird balloonists by circling around them too closely.

Next Meeting

The club will have its next official meeting at the Bowman fly-in on August 19th, at 2 PM. We will find a place that is away from all the action, so only us members and guests attend. See, we do learn from our mistakes!

Pilot tips

(Stolen from Fly For Fun, by Paul Hefner)

Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make all of them yourself.

If you're faced with a forced landing at night, turn on the landing lights to see the landing area. If you don't like what you see, turn them back off.

The only time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.

The definition of a good landing is one you can walk away from. A great landing is one after which you can use the aircraft another time.

Annual social meeting

The suggestion was made that we ought to get together in the off-season (like around November) on a Friday night for a social gathering with dinner, and some program like videos, or some famous aviator guest speaker, or dancing girls (and dancing boys – this is a non-sexist newsletter!), or some other activity of interest. This would be a good opportunity to keep in touch with fellow pilots (and wives and girlfriends) during a time when it is difficult to fly. And, as usual, we can swap scary flying stories and other lies. Our Event Coordinator person will pursue this idea – let her know what you think, or if you have any ideas for some fun program.



This is really a boring picture, but we're including it to entice you to send in some more interesting ones.

Our Membership update

We have sent letters to our non-dues-paying members that they have been placed into an inactive status, which means they will not be getting this newsletter. But we still love them, and would like fly with them and all, but unfortunately they may miss out on some of our activities. A rash of suicides should follow the receipt of those letters.

See you next month!

We should be sending out the September newsletter in about a month or so – until then, to quote Bill G. – fly safely! Oh, and one more thing – send pictures, or notices of other events of interest, or I'll continue to put more boring stuff in these letters!

