

Maine Powerchute Association

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Newsletter

Don't you hate it when magazines, or newspapers, or your favorite TV shows change formats? There was nothing wrong with the old print or the old layout, but some limp-wristed creative type in the design department decides that the old format was too boring and changes it. Well, we're not going to do that, even though it is getting pretty boring, since once we fliers find something that works, we'll stick with it. Oh, all right, you guessed it – I can't think of anything new. Maybe next month. Anyway, in this pre-spring issue, we'll cover our first official MPA Winter Fly-in, our first official bi-annual BFI refresher course, our first Board meeting of the year, and the usual mish-mash of other loosely related flying stuff and some excellent pictures by Bill Grusik.

The First Official MPA Winter Fly-in

It was the weekend of Feb. 17th. The weather was near perfect for flying. In spite of the fact that Roger Englehardt actually knew that we were coming to his house on Round Pond in Plymouth, he and his lovely wife Dolly still stayed home and hosted the event.

Four parachutes flew on Saturday morning, but what we lacked in numbers was made up by the amount of weird things that happened. It started with Jerry Sukeforth and his souped-up, one-of-a-kind super Popemobile.

On his way to the lake, Jerry crossed a set of railroad tracks at a pretty good clip, and managed to break the ball on his trailer hitch. Because he lives right, there was practically no damage to his trailer which was kept from going to a different fly-in by the safety chains. Those things actually work! Anyway, there happened to be a mom & pop store just past the railroad tracks, so Jerry went in to see if by a long shot the owner had a 2 inch ball. Yes sir, the owner said, this happens a lot by those tracks. He had an ample supply of balls and other hitch accessories, in fact, he said, those things were his biggest sellers. So Jerry plunked down his \$54.99

plus tax, and walked away with a shiny new ball and was on his way to the fly-in once again.



This scene is either at Sebago Lake or at the South Pole.

Jerry Parlin and Wayne Kenney then proceeded to put on a flying show which may be the start of something big, I mean worthy of a spot at the Brunswick airshow this summer. Simultaneous take-offs and landings, low-high passes, and a veritable ballet of flying right over the ice. For the climax of the event, they bumped parachutes! Of course, they were taxiing

at the time, but still, it was an excellent display of aircraft control. The flying, although staying well within the safety envelope showed what precision maneuvering these planes are capable of in the right hands.

For comic relief, John Gobel pretended to take off and fly with his seat belts unbuckled, and then pretended to freak out when he realized that he was up 700 feet in the air just sitting on a damn chair barely bigger than his butt with nothing but gravity keeping him in the seat. He then slowly pretended to reach back and find the shoulder strap and the seat belt and buckle himself in real tightly. What some guys will do for a laugh!

Not to be outdone, Wayne went on a pretty good trip away from the lake, and realized on the way back that his temperature gauge was acting screwy. He had sprung a leak in his radiator, and was losing fluid at a pretty good rate. He managed to make it back without overheating, and even managed to entertain the folks on the ground with some choice words and colorful adjectives to describe all those drunks who designed and manufactured that particular portion of the engine.

By late morning, everyone had enough adventures, so we retired to Roger's house where Dolly had made a batch of chocolate-chip pancakes. Now, as a condition for having the fly-in at their house, we had assured Roger and Dolly that anyone even remotely associated with the MPA was a gentleman, so they need to have no worries about muddy feet, foul language, carelessly strewn beer bottles, disgusting noises, or any of dozens of other typically male things that inexplicably seem to be so offensive to non-males. Indeed, things seemed to be going smoothly all through breakfast, until coffee was served in a set of matching heirloom mugs. At that point, Jerry P. delicately picked up his cup in his huge hands, and somehow separated the

handle from the mug. Always cool and always resourceful, he whipped out his roll of duct tape, and even before we could revive Dolly, Jerry had the mug fixed as good as new.

E-Mail Alert

Since more and more of our members are joining the twenty first century and having e-mail, we'd like to ask anyone who does have an e-mail address to send it to me. The purpose is to have a quick way to notify members of events, etc. I'm Gobelj@earthlink.net.

ASC BFI refresher course a big success!

We had 23 people attend the first-ever BFI refresher course, presented by our own AFIs Wayne Kenney and Dunbar Seamans on March 3rd. The program was very well organized, covered all the material it had intended to cover, and even ended on time. Pizza, sodas, nice ambiance at Wayne's Belanger's restaurant – it just doesn't get any better than that!



Wayne is explaining to his wife the possible ways his sheet could have gotten those weird stains on it

As you know, to fly legally in the US in a two place ultralight, you must have your BFI certification. To maintain your BFI, you must either certify a good number of students, or attend the bi-annual refresher course (by the way, bi-annual means once every TWO years; semi-annual means TWICE a year – I just thought I'd get that in there, since so many people screw that up).

Professor Seamans covered the FARs and Part 103 information, as well as radio communications and airport protocol – flawless, as usual. Jerry Parlin, Rotax engine savant extraordinaire, covered a number of engine safety issues, with many useful engine repair tips.

Wayne Kenney then had a session on general safety, and I think some of his points deserve repetition.

In flying, safety to a large extent is a matter of having specific, repeatable procedures, i.e. **checklists**. Even simple aircraft like powered parachutes have too

many things to check to leave it to memory – create and use checklists!

Accidents are almost always a **chain of events**, rather than a single factor – break the chain anywhere and the accident probably won't happen. After an accident or incident of any sort, you can inevitably review the events and say if only I had done this, or I hadn't done that, if I double checked, than it wouldn't have happened. Same for pilot errors while flying – don't take chances – know your limits and that of the aircraft. Ask yourself, if I do that, what's the likely outcome?

Near the end of the meeting, Dunbar presented the coveted "Ball Buster" award, to who else – Jerry Sukeforth! Since he was the only one that anyone ever knew that actually broke a 2" solid steel trailer hitch ball, he was a clear favorite and uncontested winner. I'm not sure where he got it, or why he had it, but Dunbar gave a knitted "ball protector" in anatomically correct shape to Jerry, so he wouldn't have this kind of accident happen to him again.

Signs seen at a veterinarian's office:

"Parking for customers only. All others will be neutered"

"We'll be back in 5 minutes. Sit! Stay!"

"All unattended children will be given a free kitten"

Board of Directors finally meet

Last year, when we decided to stop having general membership meetings every month (it wasn't a difficult



Just kidding on the previous page – Wayne is actually delivering his safety talk at the BFI Refresher course. Dunbar (left) really could have fit into that booth, just didn't want to.

decision, since hardly anybody showed up at the meetings), we had intended for the officers to meet a few times to provide material for the Newsletter, and to organize future meetings and events. Well, it finally happened, Bill, Bob, Mattie, Jerry, and John met on Feb. 21st. We had discussed a number of things that we'd like to put on the agenda for the next general membership meeting. We had also discussed putting together a complete 2001 organized fly-in event list (BobE. had volunteered); setting up a network for impromptu get-togethers for weekend flying; and even talked about getting next year's Christmas party planning done much earlier so we can get a place that has rooms, etc.

The "sport pilot" rating now being considered by the FAA was discussed. The concept is to eliminate all the **exemptions**, and create a recognized **rating** which will allow a pilot to give rides to people in an ultralight without the charade of pretending that he is giving a lesson. Those who actually do give lessons then can become even more qualified, and actually help the sport by making the participants more qualified to teach, or to fly. Several attendees brought up the fact that this requirement will cause many people to stop participating, and the ASC and the FAA both recognize that this is true. However, those who remain will enjoy a safer, better organized, and more professional environment. This should also result in having fewer of the cowboys, and fewer of those whose reckless behavior and disregard for others give our sport a bad name.



Next Meeting

The first general meeting of 2001 will be on April 28th (Saturday) at 1 PM at the Knox County Flying Club (Owl's Head). We have a large number of items to discuss, including setting the membership rates, future meetings, and the format of the club elections, which will be held at the meeting after that one in late May or early June. The general mood was to make everything simpler, and still maintain our status as a sanctioned ASC organization, which I think we all agreed was important. Directions to the location will be included in the next Newsletter.

SkySail Safety Seminar

Our friends at SkySail flight school are sponsoring the New England Ultralight and Lightplane Safety Seminar. Unfortunately, it was on March 10th, so our newsletter missed the date, but it should be noted that these kinds of events are available. The MPA would certainly like to participate in, or sponsor such future events. From the agenda that Dave handed out, it seemed extremely valuable, so we're hoping there'll be another one and that we can notify our members well ahead of time.

Big events this summer

As mentioned earlier, we'll be putting together a comprehensive schedule of fly-ins by the next Newsletter. But here are some dates for your early planning:

Wiscasset Fly-in: June 30th – July 1st.

Greenland (NH) Fly-in: July 14th – 21st

Norridgewock Fly-in: August 4th – 5th

Bowman Fly-in: August 25th – 26th

Greenville Fly-in: Sept. 6th – 9th

Oh, one more thing

Since I still have some room to kill on this page, there was a true story told by Wayne during his safety session at the BFI refresher course that I think very well illustrated his points about "doing the right thing."



Bill is out of the picture off to the side, explaining to curious and envious on-lookers that it is a parachute, not a colorful giant used condom.

It is very important that we do not rush through our pre-flights, or be pressured into flying when the conditions are not right. Wayne had a student drive up from Mexico (Maine, that is), for three weekends in a row, but the conditions were not right for student flying, so Wayne declined.

Rather than take chances by flying in unsuitable conditions in order not to disappoint the student, Wayne instead used the occasion to create a lesson for the student – "Do not fly if the weather conditions exceed your skill level." I'm not sure if he charged him the \$50 for the advice before he sent him home.

Life lessons it took me 50 years to learn

(stolen from Dave Barry)

"Never under any circumstances take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night"

"There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness"

"No matter what happens, someone will find a way to take it too seriously"

"You should never say anything to a woman that even remotely suggests that you think she's pregnant unless you can see an actual baby emerging from her at that moment"