



Maine Powerchute Association

August, 2001

Bill Grusik, President (797-3636)
Mattie Crane, Treasurer (346-6023)
John Gobel, Secretary (322-7198)

We've never done this before, in fact we make fun of people who do it, but in this issue we're going to get sentimental (within limits, of course). We're going to dedicate this issue to Dunbar Seamans, who recently left our ranks, leaving a large void behind (there's no pun there). No, Dunbar did not fly into something more solid that he was – he went to live in Arizona for an indefinite length of time. As most of us know, his brother was in a serious motorcycle accident, and Dunbar will be helping him through rehabilitation, and will most likely find work and live down there in God's oven. Anyway, we will miss Dunbar, his skills at storytelling, his organizational skills at getting us together, and just his company.

Christmas Party

These silly "Christmas in July" sales reminded us about getting our act together this year and reserving a place for the famous MPA Christmas party well in advance of Christmas. Last year's event turned out to be a surprisingly well attended, fun night, and we still owe Wayne our debt of gratitude for making his restaurant available on short notice.

However, this year, we'll top it. Bob Ellis, our Chairman Emeritus, has already scoped out the place and has made the arrangements (except one detail – the date!). It will be held at the Samoset resort in Rockland, and it will be on a Saturday night in Mid-December (exact date to follow). We'll have a sit-down dinner, live music, flying videos, drinks, and hotel rooms for those who want to spend the night. More to follow, but start planning now!

MPA Election aftershocks

As reported in last month's Newsletter, we had elected Bill Grusik for president for a third term. However, "elected" is probably not quite accurate – we had to talk him into it, as he is doing a superb job as an ambassador of powered parachuting, but he felt we needed new blood in that position. However, after several impassioned speeches from many members, he accepted.

Bill wanted to take this opportunity to thank the MPA members for the confidence we expressed in him, and for our appreciation of his efforts.



Jerry teaching his wife the proper way to push a PPC. "You have to point your toes like this, dammit, that way your legs won't get all tangled up!"

Norridgewock – the MPA Meeting

We had our second (of four) MPA general membership meeting at the fly-in at Norridgewock on August 4 at Bill's trailer and awning. We have a picture of it, but it's basically a bunch of middle-aged guys sprawled out on lawn chairs in their shorts and T-shirts with their pot bellies hanging out. In other words, it's not even up to the very low standards of this Newsletter.

Started the meeting by collectively wishing Dunbar much luck in his new life in Arizona, where he went to assist his brother during his rehabilitation from an

accident. A number of us will keep in touch with him, and will periodically bring updates on his exploits.

Mattie, our treasurer extraordinaire, gave her report – we had donated \$50 to Knox County, Norridgewock, and Bowman as a token of our appreciation for hosting fly-ins that we attend. We have \$590 in our treasury at this time.

Bob E. gave an update on our Christmas party plans. We'll have several tables at a large dinner/dance party at the Samoset Resort, and we'll have a smaller room where we can watch our videos. Since the tables seat 10, we figure we'll reserve 3 tables. Please let Bob know as soon as possible if you're planning on attending, so we don't end up paying for seats we don't use. Unlike last year, if you don't have a reservation, you will not be able to come to this event, as they generally don't have extra places available.

Bill listed the next several upcoming fly-in opportunities – details on these is given later in the Newsletter.

Since there were some new members there, we took this time to introduce everybody again. However, just then, a Pitts Special did his famous fly-over the airfield at about 120, and pull straight up into a hammerhead routine, so we all watched that and we couldn't hear anything anyway, so the introductions were a flop.

We spent some time on safety issues. A number of people had stories about the difficulty of seeing power lines, and nobody had to be convinced of how hitting one of those can ruin your whole day. So once again, the message is "know what you're doing!"

Another major safety issue is having radios. Being able to communicate with air traffic is a HUGE advantage, and one that makes it much much safer to fly anywhere where there are other aircraft, like at fly-ins. In addition to the safety, having radios and

using proper radio procedures marks us as professionals, and we'll be viewed and treated as such, instead of a bunch of yahoo cowboys with no knowledge of aviation protocol, which is how we're treated sometimes.

The highlight of the meeting was a discussion led by Jerry Sukeforth on engine overhauls and engine de-carbonization. Apparently, the Rotax engines we fly need to have the carbon deposits removed after about 100 hours, and the engine needs to be overhauled around 300 hours. Jerry has done several, and will be certified by Rotax later this year. He has volunteered

to work with any of us to do these jobs. He estimates costs of about \$500-600 for carbon, and \$1,200-1,500 for an overhaul.

Bill adjourned the meeting at 11:00. He has gotten real good at sensing when adjournment is appropriate. And the members have gotten real good at giving subtle signals that adjournment should be forthcoming by casually strolling away.



Since we only had *close calls* with power lines and don't know for sure, this is what it's like to actually hit some.

Norridgewock – the Fly-In

We've had good times at that "Anything that Flies" event in the past, but this year was a major disappointment. The fly-in management had appointed an individual as the powered parachute coordinator, and unfortunately, we were treated like second-class citizens. Among other things, we were given restrictions about take-offs and landings which were downright unsafe. In the meanwhile, general aviation aircraft were doing whatever they pleased, using crossing runways, not communicating, and in general creating confusion about which is the active runway.

A number of our members, as well as the New Hampshire contingent vowed not to come back again, which may be an appropriate response if things aren't changed. Bill Grusik had spoken with the management after the fly-in, and they apologized, as

apparently they weren't aware of the mismanagement by their powered parachute coordinator. We will write a letter outlining the numerous negative incidents, and formalize this process. More to follow.

While the airport management was poor, we had some good flying weather, and the area around Norridgewock is excellent, and of course the company is great whenever we all get together.

True story (I hear some skeptical growls!!!)

During taxi, the crew of a US Air departure flight to Ft. Lauderdale, made a wrong turn and came nose to nose with a United 727.

The irate ground controller (a female) lashed out at the US Air crew screaming, "US Air 2771, where are you going? I told you to turn right on 'Charlie' taxi way; you turned right on 'Delta'. Stop right there. I know it's difficult to tell the difference between C's and D's but get it right."

Continuing her lashing to the embarrassed crew, she was now shouting hysterically, "God, you've screwed everything up; it'll take forever to sort this out. You stay right there and don't move until I tell you to. You can expect progressive taxi instructions in about a half hour and I want you to go exactly where I tell you, when I tell you, and how I tell you. You got that, US Air 2771??"

The humbled crew responded: "Yes Ma'am". Naturally, the "ground control" frequency went terribly silent after the verbal bashing of US Air Flight 2771. No one wanted to engage the irate ground controller in her current state. Tension in every cockpit at LGA was running high.

Shortly after the controller finished her admonishment of the U.S. Air crew, an unknown male pilot broke the silence and asked, "Wasn't I married to you once?"

Norridgewock – the Flying Stories

We had several exciting little episodes at the last fly-in – some humorous, some scary, or both.

Flying along the Kennebec at low levels, like most of us did, is scenic and fun. However, there is a single power line stung across the river pretty close to one of the turns, and a number of us were surprised by it. Bill G. and Scott G. had to do some incredible flying, however, to avoid a serious mishap – both had to

execute full power, full rudder evasive maneuvers. We have one of them on tape – you'll see it at the Christmas party. Scott had to grab the steering line to give him a tighter turning radius, and still ended up with twigs in his wheels. While lines should be marked, we need to make sure we communicate to others about the existence of such hazards as soon as we learn about them. We also need to always give ourselves an out, in other words to expect the unexpected.



Great Grusik photo of typical a slow-speed formation flying along the Kennebec at the Norridgewock fly-in.

I don't see the humor in this next one, but I'm forced by my so-called friends to tell it. Coming in for the night, the wind all of a sudden picked up and blew right across the runway while I was on a long final. Being a long final gave me time to curse real pretty, instead of being on short final where you only have time to focus on landing and for only a few common four letter curses. Anyway, when I was able to finally bring it back somewhere near the runway, and actually touch down on the runway, the wind did the old "let's tip him over just for laughs" trick. That not being a good option, I went with it and recovered the tip, but to do it, I had to steer into the real tall grass next to the runway. Spent quite a bit of time there, but eventually got it under control and got back OK. Some observers claimed my prop had done a nice job mowing all that unsightly long grass.

I then watched the next several planes come in, struggling with 90 degree crabs into the wind, but nobody else followed me into the grass. Not very polite, after all the work I did cutting a path for them.

As mentioned earlier, the ridiculous rules they placed on us had us take off down-wind on a relatively short runway. Buzz and Mattie had some trepidations, but did finally take off during a lull in the wind which lasted maybe 5 seconds before blowing the wrong way again. Buzz had lifted off, but quickly realized he was not going to clear the trees ahead. He had a split second decision to make whether to cut power and land in the swamp just before the trees, or to try to make a 180 at low altitude. He chose the turn, and showed some brilliant flying skills in making the turn and bringing the plane, his passenger, and himself back without any damage.

Mattie in the backseat, as calm and collected as always, wasn't even breathing hard from the near-disaster. In fact, while Buzz was deciding their fate during those couple of seconds after takeoff, Mattie sweetly asked him "Buzz, are we going down?" And he actually answered her! I don't know what the answer was, but I imagine it was something like "I don't know, my dearest, but why don't we discuss it a little bit later. In the meanwhile, why don't I try to make a split second decision that will decide whether we live or die. Is that OK, sweetheart?"

Next Fly-ins

Coming up is the Great Falls Balloon festival in Lewiston on August 17 through 19. We would fly from Mahue's airfield, which was arranged by Mattie & Buzz. Directions follow. This has been a fun event in the past, and we're welcome as long as we don't fly too close to any of the balloons. We can camp at the airfield, but you have to let Mattie know if you're planning on doing that. Her number is 207-346-6023, cell # 207-576-5187.

Bowman fly-in is on August 25 & 26, in East Livermore – you can't miss it if you have a map. That's generally a fun event, and powered parachutes are welcome.

Greenville fly-in is September 6-9. That's quite a community event, however flying is generally pretty poor due to the frequent high winds off Moosehead Lake. Good opportunity to do some thorough aircraft inspections and cleaning.

Dues!

Once again, dues are due. They're still \$20 cheap. According to Mattie's list, only about half our members have paid up, and due to our strict constitution, we cannot send Newsletters to non-

paying members. What's the down side of that, you ask? There're tons, for example, well OK, I can't think of any. Wait, I got it - yes, you'll miss the Miss MPA swimsuit issue sometime down the road!

Anyway, please contact Mattie to pay your dues, otherwise we'll have to add you to our list of half-members, and this will be your last Newsletter. Her number is on the letterhead.



Maheu Directions

Directions from Farmington and Livermore Falls: Rt 4 South into Auburn and thru Auburn on Rt 4 & 202 until you come to Rt 11 & 121 towards Mechanic Falls. Follow rts 11 & 121 until you get to rt 119 (approx 5 miles) take rt 119 North about 3.5 miles to Maheu Airport on the left.

Directions from Augusta:

Follow rt 202 into Auburn. Rt 202 will take you directly to Rt 11 & 121. Take 11 & 121 toward Mechanic Falls (approx 5 miles) until you get to rt 119 North on the right. Take Rt 119 North 3.5 miles to Maheu Airport on the left.

Directions from Exit 12 - Maine Turnpike.

Take a left onto rt 4 & 202 North until you come into Auburn. Take left onto rt 11 & 121 towards Mechanic Falls (approx 5 Miles) until you get to Rt 119 North. Take Rt 119 North on the right - 3.5 miles to Maheu Airport on the left.

Next Meeting

Don't know yet. In the fall.

Hope to see you all at the fly-ins. Be careful out there!

