

Maine Powerchute Association

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Newsletter



After a year and a half of the same old format for the Newsletter, we finally took the initiative to change it to our spanking brand new format, with the plagiarized logo and weird angles. When you lack content, you have to try to dazzle them with form – that's an old newspaper axiom.

This month's issue has a lot of winter stuff in it, covering some of our past flying activities and upcoming events. We're also going to discuss Wes Daggett's unfortunate accident, which landed him in the hospital for some fairly serious hip surgery. However, true to form, we'll offset that somber event with some lighter material that we'll steal from some publication or other.

Accident at Moosehead

An unfortunate set of events during our fly-in at Moosehead Lake resulted in a serious injury to Wes Daggett. While not life-threatening, the injury did require major surgery on Wes' hip.

All 5 PPCs who attended the event were in the parking lot of Currier's Flying Service, warming up the machines. Wes was standing next to his machine, facing the seat as we usually do. Since he was carrying fairly high RPMs, the machine started moving. He had his hands on the throttle, and took a few steps backwards to keep up with the machine. In attempting to move the throttle to idle, he moved it the wrong way, which of course accelerated it.

Having skis on makes it somewhat clumsy to walk next to the machine, and when the machine picked up speed, Wes lost control and threw the throttle wide open. The machine of course really picked up speed then, and sort of dragged Wes along.

He was headed right for two other machines warming up on the other side of the parking lot. After about 20 feet, however, he veered off slightly and hit the hangar door at about a 30 degree angle. Wes' body was caught between the door and the CG tube of his plane. He shattered the plastic door and bent the steel frame of the door. The impact shattered part of his hip, and caused numerous cuts on his face from the broken plastic.

After the impact, the throttle went back to idle, however the plane ricocheted off the door and continued heading toward Jerry's and Bob's planes warming up. It hit the tailgate of Jerry Parlin's truck, which further slowed it down, and finally came to rest just barely touching Bob Ellis' plane (which he shut down by this time). Only minor damage to the truck and Bob's plane. The two other planes (Dunbar's & John's) were back where Wes' plane started, so they were not in danger.

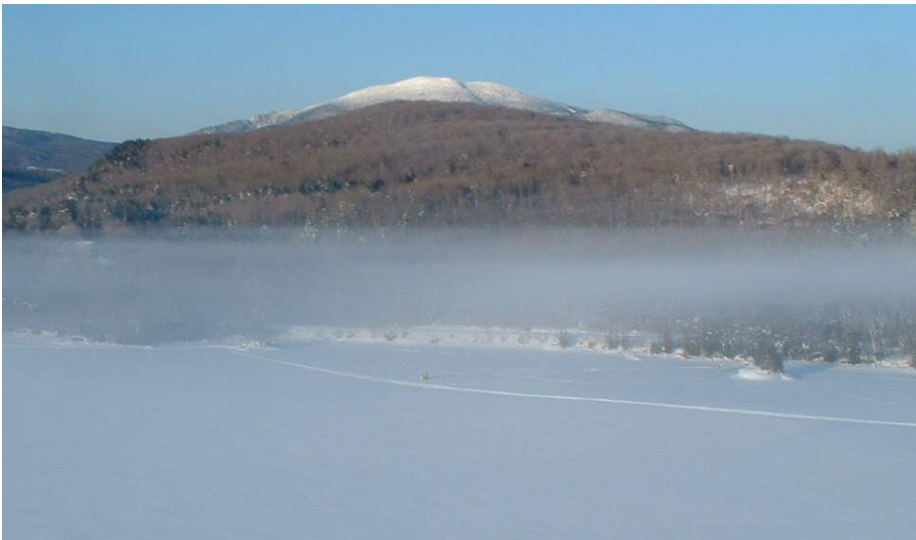
We called 911, and the ambulance came to take him to the local hospital. After X-rays, they decided to take him to Bangor to EMMC. After two days at Bangor, they decided to move him to MMC at Portland, where his surgery was completed.

Wes' wife Phyllis was there, and was able to stay with him throughout his ordeal, and notify the rest of his family. The rest of us packed up his pretty badly damaged plane into his trailer, and made sure Phyllis had anything else she needed.

This was obviously a serious event, however it could have been much worse. If the plane continued on its original path without hitting the hangar door, it would have crashed at a high speed into the other two planes warming up and probably the other two people standing there. If Wes was still being dragged with it with the prop running wide open, the incident could have been much worse.

We were trying to see what lessons learned we could get out of this bad event, but there was nothing new. Just reinforcing what we all already know – do not run up your plane without blocking it somehow (which is more difficult with skis, but can be done – a snowbank is generally adequate). As far as moving the throttle the wrong way, we've all done that – Wes just had some bad luck by losing his footing before he could recover from it.

At the time of this writing, Wes is doing as well as could be expected after major surgery. He will be recuperating for several more days in the hospital, then doing a bunch of rehabilitation work for several months after that. We all wish him a speedy recovery, and hope to have him flying with us again real soon.



Scene from the Moosehead winter fly-in, taken at 5 below zero at 200 feet. Notice the conspicuous absence of human life forms in the area.

The Rest of the Fly-in...

After that shaky start on Saturday morning, the rest of the weekend was great. The weather was beautiful – cold but extremely calm, and we could have flown pretty much all day (if you can take the near zero temperatures). Did get some nice flights in that morning and that afternoon as well. Some of the guys flew up to Mt. Kineo, and raved about the incredible sight of seeing that huge rock face head on and up close.

The next morning, the temperature was 5 below zero, so some of our fearless yet comfort-loving MPA fliers decided to watch the show from Kelly's Landing restaurant instead of being part of the show. But some did fly, and the bright sun and the calm air and some morning ground fog combined to create a wonderful flying and viewing experience.

Kelly's Landing is an excellent choice for a winter fly-in, as the room rates were very reasonable, the view is excellent, the restaurant food and service were also very good, and we could launch from right near the place. Of course, we got very lucky with the calm winds, but we do deserve a little luck every now and then. Thanks to Dunbar for making the arrangements for this event.

River Flying Alert

The Bangor Daily had an article recently about the policy of Bangor Hydro (and presumably other electric power companies) regarding the placement of new power lines across bodies of water. In addressing the concerns of environmentalists' about spoiling the landscape and waterways with powerlines, the company said it uses "great care in siting the new lines so they will cross streams at their narrowest points and at bends, so it will not be visible to those on the water."

Well, that policy has some merit, but it does result in having to be extra vigilant when flying along rivers and streams, as many of us like to do. A well hidden powerline popping up at a bend can ruin your whole day.

Also, just because a stretch of river was clear yesterday, it doesn't mean that you can fly blindly into curves forever – it takes very short time for the power companies to put up a couple of poles and string some wire across it. So check out your intended route from a safe altitude first, or at least be ready to gain some altitude before you go into any blind curve.

A Near-Incident and a Lesson Learned

At the Moosehead fly-in, we had another situation that while it did not result in any damage to equipment or personnel, had the potential to do so. The pilot was sitting in the seat, taxiing towards the lake when he realized the turn onto the ramp was too sharp for him to steer around it. So he cut back to idle, unbuckled, and while his helmet was still plugged into the radio (and the engine was running), walked around to the front of the plane to lift the nose around.

The cord from his helmet just barely missed getting hung up on the throttle stick, and with him being in front of the plane and out of reach of the throttle, a real bad scene could have occurred if the radio cable had moved that throttle.

Obviously, the pilot knew better, and just realized his mistake in the last second and avoided a potentially serious mishap. The proper thing to do of course is to shut the engine down and then perform the nose-move maneuver. Especially on snow and with skis, where your footing is precarious anyway.

A Winter Tale

This allegedly is a true report of an incident in Michigan a few weeks ago, as described on radio.

A guy buys a brand new Lincoln Navigator for \$42,500 and has \$560 monthly payments. He and a friend go duck hunting in winter, and of course all the lakes are frozen.

These two guys go out on the lake with the guns, the dog, and of course the new vehicle. They drive out onto the lake ice and get ready.

Now, they want to make some kind of a natural landing area for the ducks, something for the decoys to float on. In order to make a hole large enough to look like something a wandering duck would fly down and land on, it is going to take a little more effort than an ice auger.

So, out of the back of the new Navigator comes a stick of dynamite with a short, 40- second fuse. Now these two Rocket Scientists do take into consideration that they want to place the stick of dynamite on the ice at a location far from where they are standing (and the new Navigator), because they don't want to take the risk of slipping on the ice

when they run from the burning fuse and possibly go up in smoke with the resulting blast.

They light the 40-second fuse and throw the dynamite.

Remember a couple of paragraphs back when I mentioned the vehicle, the guns and the dog? Let's talk about the dog: A highly trained Black Lab used for RETRIEVING. Especially things thrown by the owner.

You guessed it, the dog takes off at a high rate of doggy speed on the ice and captures the stick of



Another winter wonderland scene from the first MPA fly-in at Moosehead. Only a total of 7 appendages were lost to frost bite. At least 6 of them seemed to be fingers.

dynamite with the burning 40-second fuse about the time it hits the ice. The two men yell, scream, wave their arms and wonder what to do now. The dog, cheered on, keeps coming. One of the guys grabs the shotgun and shoots the dog. The shotgun is loaded with # 8 bird shot, hardly big enough to stop a Black Lab. The dog stops for a moment, slightly confused, but continues on. Another shot and this time the dog, still standing, becomes really confused and of course terrified, thinking these two geniuses have gone insane.

The dog takes off to find cover, under the brand new Navigator. ----BOOM!---- Dog and Navigator are blown to bits and sink to the bottom of the lake in a

very large hole, leaving the two idiots standing there with this "I can't believe this happened" look on their faces.

The insurance company says that sinking a vehicle in a lake by illegal use of explosives is not covered. He still had yet to make the first of those \$560 a month payments.

Invitation to Pleasant Lake

There is an ice-fishing derby every year at Pleasant Lake (just east of Newport), and this year they invited any and all MPA powered parachutists to liven up the event by joining them at the lake. We can stage at a field near the lake, take off from that field, fly around the area, land on the lake, and stay warm inside a nice cabin where the event is being hosted. A number of their attendees for some reason are quite interested in these “flying contraptions”, and a few are quite anxious to go up in one.



Not the first choice for a landing spot. Luckily, no one was hurt, and only very minor damage to the aircraft. Tip - always carry a ladder.

So if any of you can make it, it is on Saturday, February 16th, obviously starting in the morning. Directions are below.

Pleasant Lake is in Stetson, which is about 10 miles north east of Newport. It is on Delorme's map #22. The camp's number is 296-2929, or 223-5420.

From I-95, exit at Exit 42 (Etna). Go North on Rt. 143. Stay on Rt. 143 for about 5 miles to a 4-way intersection – go right on Mt. Pleasant Rd.

Go 1.2 miles until the road forks – stay on the left on the LaPoint Rd.. Go 2.3 miles on LaPoint; past Mt. Pleasant Cemetary, go left on Herb's Lane.

About .5 mile on Herb's Lane there'll be signs – the camp is to the left, and airplane parking and staging area will be to the right. A field is supposed to be plowed so we can park there, and take off from there to fly to the lake (which is only about a half a mile).

Maintenance Tip

Jerry Sukeforth had an excellent suggestion regarding finding out everything there is to know about your specific engine. There are two websites which you can access to get all the tech bulletins and other Rotax engine information by the serial number of your engine.

These sites are: www.rotax-owner.com, and www.kodiakbs.com. Follow the directions, and see if there are issues with your engine that you need to address before they become serious.

Jerry had graciously volunteered to give more details to anyone interested, or even advice if you need to perform some maintenance action. I think that's what you said during our phone conversation, didn't you, Jerry? (273-3800)

Sport Pilot news

According to the weekly Avweb's Avflash, the new pilot rating of Sports Pilot, and some other rules regarding light planes (presumably ultralights) is very much alive. It just left the Office of Management and Budget (one of the many federal agencies that has to approve everything), and is back at the FAA. It will now be published in the NPRM (Notice of Proposed Rule Making), where the public will have 90 days to comment on it. The EAA is the primary force behind this effort, with the support of our ASC as well.

The NPRM will contain the complete proposed technical language for both the Sport Pilot and for new light aircraft categories. The new Sport Pilot will be big, “one of the most significant measures in the last 50 years”, according to Tom Poberezny, president of EAA.



**Fly
Safe!!!**