

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

Maine Powerchute Association

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News
letter



www.mainepowerchutes.org

You know how it's so hard to take your eyes off tabloids in supermarkets, or how the big commercial websites capture your attention – it's done by asking tantalizing questions.

For example, I saw on a tabloid today, "Alien abduction verified – could you be next?" On the MSN website, "Are you carrying time-delay germs planted by terrorists?" Or "Want to lose 80 pounds in just two days?" Or "Are you satisfied with your sex life?" Of course, now you're hooked.

In the spirit of big time journalism then, let me ask you "Have you paid your MPA dues?" Even more tantalizingly, "Do you know the best way to fly over 6 miles of water?" Or better yet, "Want to lose 80 pounds in just 2 days?" Well, read on, as in this issue we'll address all these heavy issues!

Deblois fly-in finally happens!

After several weather related false starts, we finally got lucky and had an excellent fly-in at one of our favorite venues, Deblois. A few of us got to fly Friday night in spite of some moderate winds. The key component to getting the 3 or 4 of us up in the air was the gentle taunting by one of our long-time members who shall remain nameless but whose name rhymes with "trellis", who said "You guys are a bunch of p...", and used a word that I think means some kind of housecat.

Anyway, we had a great campfire, along with the usual scintillating fire-side conversation, witty repartee, deep philosophical musings, challenging intellectual discourse, and an honest and open exchange of opinions. In case you were there and forgot, here's a sample of it: "Youse guys are friggin' morons for even thinking about flying to Kitty Hawk!" – answered by the sharp comeback "Oh, yeah?"

Saturday was a terrific day for flying, with good conditions until almost noon, and again from mid-afternoon on. Started drizzling towards evening, which then got all the fair-weather (i.e. sensible) pilots heading for home,

but a couple of us stayed around 'til Sunday just in case the weather improved. Taking the lead (which is going to cause him some bodily harm sooner or later), Gobel tested the Sunday morning fog, promptly disappeared in what turned out to be not fog but a very low rain cloud. Naturally, that was the clue the others on the ground needed to stay on the ground. He later reappeared, chute and person drenched, but continued to fly at real low altitudes until the rain started to make his chute unflyable. Other than that, Sunday was great!

We had the usual 4000 calorie MPA breakfast, had our MPA general meeting, and had a couple of interesting incidents – more on these later.

Slick McCabe ages 2 years in 2 minutes!

Joel "Slick" McCabe performed some super pilotage in deadsticking his Six Chuter onto the runway after an engine failure. The stunt was made even more difficult by having his lovely wife Scooter (not her original name) in the back seat – on the second flight of her life.

Joel and his wife were out for their second flight on Saturday morning in Deblois, flying all around the many marshes and woods and swamps and alligators and bears that reside in that area. Everything was wonderful until they were coming back, when a few minutes away from the airport the engine started losing power, and finally quit on final. Joel managed to make a wonderful power-off landing with no damage to the aircraft.

Scooter, of course, this being her second ever flight, thought that it was all part of the “PPC experience!” She couldn’t quite figure out why Joel’s voice was quivering so much on the ground, why he was sweating so profusely in 60 degree weather, and why he had that big dark stain on the front of his pants.

Anyway, the cause of the engine failure is not known for certain, although our initial suspicion was that since the oil level was very low in the reservoir, and he did experience some turbulence, an air bubble might have been introduced into the line which would have stopped the mixing of oil with the gas, which would have destroyed the engine. So of course, being the compassionate bunch we are, Joel was immediately named “Slick.”

Obviously, this turned out rather well (although it was somewhat expensive for Joel’s new engine), since the engine failure could have occurred over the swamps, and we all would have spent the weekend fishing them out, and probably patching

them up. Anyway, we’ll take luck where we can get it, and give credit where it’s due – this time to Joel for his composure under pressure and his piloting skills. Nice work!

Another Herb-ism

Herb is known for his dry wit, Yogi Berra statements, and for seldom using his steering controls during takeoffs. He added one more to his collection at our MPA big breakfast around 11 AM.



Obviously, a bad set of assembly instructions caused this result – why would you put the fender under the wheel?

Herb orders a huge pancake and hash breakfast. When the heaping plate of food arrives, he looks at it and says, “Boy, I’m starving – haven’t eaten since lunch yesterday, so this may just be enough.”

So Bonnie reminds him of the big sandwich he had last evening. “Oh, yeah”, says Herb, “I forgot. Now I don’t think I can eat all this.”

Second MPA general meeting held

We had a good turnout for our general membership meeting at Deblois, and covered the following topics:

1. Thanked Ed Nadeau for all the work he did in setting up the fly-in, including getting the fire permits, the usage permissions, etc.
2. Approved the spending of \$300 for fuel expenses during the MPA trip to Kitty Hawk in August.
3. Gave an update on the Kitty Hawk preparations and plans (see section later on this topic)
4. Decided to eliminate the officer position of “Event Coordinator,” since most of the membership thought it made more sense to have a different person “volunteer” to coordinate any single

event. Dunbar, who was the incumbent in that position noted that the elimination was just in the nick of time, because sooner or later he would have had to do something.

5. Held elections for the four officer positions for the fiscal year July 2003 through June 30, 2004. See results below.
6. Bob Ellis, our safety officer agreed to provide safety briefings at future meetings which then can be used as credits toward our BFI requirements. Bob also talked about the importance of having all our paperwork in order, and not violating any of the FAA or ASC rules and regulations.
7. Agreed on spending MPA funds on the following activities for the coming fiscal year:
 - a. Approximately \$90 for web site registrations and fees
 - b. About \$15 for postage for each mailing of the Newsletter (about \$180 annually)
 - c. Approximately \$150 for porta-potty, equipment, and prizes for the Top Gun fly-in
 - d. Up to \$200 for the annual Christmas party, for room rental, for food subsidy or for prizes
 - e. Other unplanned expenses would have to be approved by the membership as they arise.
8. Upcoming events were reviewed – see sections below.
9. Discussion on dues ended up by keeping our annual dues at \$20 per individual member, and \$30 for family membership. We're not quite sure what family membership means, other than it involves your whole family and it costs \$30.
10. Membership also decided that we would continue to have 4 general meetings a year – 1 in the spring, 2 in the summer, and 1 in the winter.
11. Meeting adjourned about 90 minutes after it started, as people began to drift off to sleep.

Gobel re-elected President – decent folks are outraged!

Of course, there's no connection between the two events, it's just a coincidence. Decent folks are always outraged over something, the results of the MPA election just happened to be a convenient scapegoat. I think.



Two of the many individuals who applied to be assistant crew- chiefs on the MPA trip to Kitty Hawk – Miss Finland and Miss Universe. The selection committee is working hard.

Anyway, after running brilliant campaigns, the four officers for the coming fiscal year are:

Public relations officer – Ed Nadeau. Ed has done a magnificent job keeping the web site up to date, colorful, interesting, and interactive (www.mainepowerchutes.org for all those who have been living under a rock for the last two years). He also has done excellent work in building our sport, in being a good role model and advocating our activities in a positive fashion, as well as coordinating several of our events with local officials, etc. Anyway, in spite of being such a good guy, he was still voted in as club officer.

Safety officer – Bob Ellis. Arguably, Bob knows and practices safety the best of any of us. Although at times he is reluctant to speak up about his vast knowledge of safety (for which we're all thankful), he makes a major contribution by the example he sets and by sharing various aviation facts through which we

all become better pilots. Vote was unanimous after he offered to buy drinks for everybody.

Secretary and Treasurer – Bonnie Micue

Bonnie is the most organized person among all of us (which actually is not saying much), and she has a computer and a purse, so she was a natural for re-election to this position. In spite of her reputation for good judgment, she accepted the position. She will be providing the monthly financial statement in our Newsletter, and will be making our many investments in real estate, cattle futures, South African gold mines, Iraqi oil, and Enron.

President - John Gobel. Inspirational leadership, maturity, organizational skills, responsibility. Those are some of traits we wanted for that position. Instead, we got John. As last year, the vote was 2 for, and 17 abstentions. We can't figure out how he keeps voting twice...

Norridgewock organizational meeting

As mentioned in an earlier Newsletter, the organizing committee of the annual Norridgewock fly-in invited us to their meeting so the PPC community could be represented at that Central Maine Regional Airport event.

We usually have a large turnout there, but had some problems in the past with some of the rules that were set up for powered parachutes. Thanks to Ed Roy and to the President of the flying club, Mike Watson for inviting us this year to be part of the planning, and thereby try to avoid any future problems and to make the event even more fun.



We were told that we were as likely to get to Kitty Hawk as a cow is to swim like a dolphin. Well, here's proof that it can be done. Pictures don't lie!

Anyway, the bottom line is that at any one time, there will be only ONE active runway for ALL traffic, and the powered parachutes will be landing on the grass strip next to the active (or on it, if you like). We will be doing opposite traffic patterns from the rest of the air traffic, i.e. they are doing a left hand pattern and we'll be doing a right hand pattern (or vice versa depending on the runway) – but of course, we'll all be landing in the same direction. Also, our pattern altitude will be about 300 feet, while the other ultralights generally do 700 feet AGL.

We also agreed that you MUST have a PPC FLIGHT BRIEFING **BEFORE** you can fly. Radios are strongly suggested as well, but we all have them anyway already.

The event starts Friday night (August 1st) and continues into Sunday. We can camp where we usually do. Should be a great event!

Again, we want to thank the Norridgewock club for their gracious invitation to us, and their hard work and professionalism in setting up this event year after year. To show our appreciation, we volunteered to help with setting up a few days before, to help with the concession stand if needed, and to help clean up. I realize you won't be answering my calls now, but I'll just keep trying! At all hours!!!

The incredible Lindbergh Museum event

Deep in the back roads of Canaan, ME, about 8 miles from Wayne's field is a museum that houses the crate in which Lindbergh's plane was brought back from Paris about 76 years ago. It also houses other aviation mementos from that flight and from that era.

At the risk of insulting your intelligence about aviation history, Lindbergh made the first trans-Atlantic flight in history, flying his famous

Spirit of St. Louis plane from New York to Paris in 1927, non-stop of course (i.e. he didn't die doing it). They shipped his plane back to the Smithsonian in Washington, DC., and the crate in which it was shipped ended up in Canaan, ME!

Every year, Larry Ross, who is the owner of the museum hosts an airshow on his premises, which consists of his lovely house, the museum building, and a postage stamp backyard. But here's the amazing part – he is able to attract many military aircraft to do a fly-over. Many schools bring their students to this event, where Larry also provides educational information about various aspects of aviation and aviation history.

This year, he had an Air Force A10 (Warthog), several Black Hawk helicopters, a contingent of Marines with their aircraft from North Carolina, a C141, and several other active military aircraft flying over his many guests.

Larry invited the MPA to do the opening act of the show, which consisted of several fly-overs, sharp turns, some showing off, then hopefully landing on the postage stamp sideways-sloping backyard. There is no way to take off from there, so of course we would have to trailer out our PPCs.



Just a few more of the applicants for the Kitty Hawk trip...

Now I'm not implying that it was unsafe to land a PPC in that field, but if you like a large margin of error, this wasn't the place. If you did everything right, you could safely get in. No second chances, no mistakes, no go-arounds were possible. Exciting, in other words.

In a rare show of maturity, no MPA members volunteered for the show. That left Gobel and Sukee to carry the load.

Since Gobel's plane pretty much drops like a rock when you shut the engine down, he dragged it over the trees and landed it OK. Sukee on the other hand, with his souped up everything, pretty much glides forever. Just as Gobel was on the ground trying to contact him to tell him to not try it, Sukee cuts his engine, touches down about 3/4th of the way down the strip, brakes like a son of a bitch, and comes to a breathtaking halt a few feet from the treeline. What a rush! Applause all around.

Exciting as that was, the best part of the show came later. Several medevac Blackhawks attempted to come in and land after us, but they changed their mind after a couple of passes – said the slope was too great and conditions too adverse. Jerry could not contain himself – he mildly pointed out to the Blackhawk pilots after they came back from their alternate landing site that our two powered parachutes had no trouble coming in here – plenty of room! They glared, and sort of smiled, but I think they failed to appreciate the good natured ribbing that we continued for, oh I don't know, maybe two or three hours.



Part of the MPA Kitty Hawk Planning Committee. Sukee is showing the number of functioning brains possessed by this group and the photographer.

Philosophy Corner

Sometimes I lie awake at night, and I ask, 'Where have I gone wrong?' Then a voice says to me, 'This is going to take more than one night.'

"If you're drunk enough, and your teeth are sharp enough, all panties are edible."

Kitty Hawk update

Plans are progressing well for the MPA trip to Kitty Hawk, NC, tentatively set for August 15th. Here are some of the activities:

Mike O'Donnell has been vigorously pursuing sponsors.

Sukee and Jim H. have been working long into every night planning the route (avoiding major airports and large bodies of water and trolls).

Bob E. has been preparing GPS and airport protocol information.

Dunbar is busy applying his vast wisdom and experience to verify the whole planning process (being a pain in the ass, in other words, but a necessary pain!).

Doug Sukeforth is procuring spare parts anticipated for the trip.

Bill Grusik is coordinating with air parks and with ASC to assist in the planning.

John Gobel bought pizza once.

Anyway, we're also in the process of finalizing the details with the Governor's office. We're also purchasing uniform jump suits, with the appropriate MPA and other cool patches. We're also making arrangements for getting a person with lots of GA cross country experience give us the benefits of his knowledge and educate us regarding the right way to talk to the various towers and controlling agencies along the way before they call the Air Force to shoot us down. We're also frequently questioning our sanity.

I think we're all having a good time getting ready for this

adventure, and I think we're all absolutely committed to doing this and doing it right. While it's going to be difficult and will at times demand the best we've got to offer, it definitely can be done, and will be done, and will be done safely. Our estimate for the whole trip is about 10 days, maybe a few days less if we get good weather, and maybe a few months longer if we have some problems.



Another incredulous child after hearing that his Dad did not renew his MPA membership. "How am I going to learn about the birds and bees now" he cried.

MPA dues - not all paid

We still have a few individuals who have not paid their dues for the coming year, so for those of you, regrettably this will be your last Newsletter.

While on one hand, we admire your good judgment in ending your membership in this cool (and questionable) organization, on the other hand, it's such a bargain – only 20 bucks for a year of this real trashy Newsletter, which keeps you up to date on what happened in the Maine PPC community, on upcoming events, on the latest and most creative screw-ups, and on stolen humor.

And most importantly, each issue contains at least one picture with no socially redeeming value at all (our most popular feature).

Upcoming events

MPA Independence Fly-in – July 3 – 6, at Eastport. Ed Nadeau has gone way above and beyond getting this



Just another PPC picture, seeing that this is a powered parachute organization and that its Newsletter should have a working model in it every now and then.

event ready for us. With Joel McCabe helping him get the facility ready, it should be a memorable event. Fireworks, parades, picnics and all. Here are the directions:

- Rt. 1 towards Calais.
- At the town of Perry, take right onto Rt. 190 to Eastport
- At Irving gas station, take hard right
- Follow signs to MPA Fly-in

Yankee Ultralight Fly-in, July 9-14, Greenland, NH. Big event, not a great PPC opportunity, but good camping, and generally a fun time.

MPA Top Gun Fly-in, July 18-20, Wayne's field, Fairfield, at the intersection of Rt. 201 and Rt. 23. PPCs only – great time, plus the Top Gun competition.

Central Maine Fly-in, August 1-3, Norridgewock. Lots of different kinds of ultralights, excellent facility, and an all-around good outing and camping. Go into Norridgewock, and follow the signs.

Balloon Festival, August 15-17, Lewiston. More on this in the next Newsletter.



A good landing is one that you can walk away from, and a great landing is one where you can use your plane again. To illustrate this to our membership, Jerry made a good landing.

MPA trip to Kitty Hawk, NC, August 15th through September, or October, or December. See the MPA web-site for continuous reporting of progress (if any).

Bowman Fly-in, August 22-24, Livermore Falls. Again, more later on this, but it's one of the best non-MPA events, and we usually have a large turn-out.

Health tips – Exercise!!!

Here're some quotes from our MPA members who decided that a healthier lifestyle is for them:

“I joined a health club last year for about 400 bucks. I haven't lost a pound. Apparently, you have to go there.”

“The only reason I would take up exercising is so that I could hear heavy breathing again.”

“I have to exercise early in the morning before my brain figures out what I'm doing.”

“I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.”

Safety, courtesy, and common sense – clear the runway!

Anyone who has had military or general aviation training has had this drilled into them – the active runway is sacred! You are to spend the minimum amount of time on it, i.e. take off and land, but then get off it immediately so others can use it.

We have had a number of incidents where some of our PPC pilots land on the runway and then proceed to pack their chute, or get ready for the next flight, or do something other than GET OFF THE RUNWAY! Or, they set up the chute in the middle of the runway, blocking traffic for all others in the area, or causing others to try to go around them which often is not safe.

This stuff really pisses off other pilots, and makes us very unpopular at fly-ins. So, make sure you do what most of us PPC pilots do – set

up just off the runway, so when you're ready to go, just a slight turn will get you onto the active. After landing, taxi to the edge and drop your chute so it is out of way of other traffic. But, whatever you have to do, CLEAR THE DAMN RUNWAY!!!

A fun thing to do is to stop either at the top or the bottom of an escalator at an airport or a department store. You get the same kind of reaction there as you do when you do your PPC set-up or take-down procedure on the runway that others are trying to use.

Since we're preaching safety already, let's throw in the best safety feature of all – an acute awareness of what is all around you. Keep your head swiveling – know what other traffic is in the area, and where they are. Also, be very aware of where you'd land if you had an engine failure. If possible, make course deviations so you have fields under you most of the way.

- After 15 minutes, baste it with one cup of 10 year old rye whiskey
- After about 1 hour in the oven, baste it again with one cup of Kentucky bourbon
- After 3 hours and 20 minutes, take it out of the oven, and slowly pour a two cups of Napoleon brandy over it to give it that deep brown color
- Throw away the duck, and serve the juices in elegant 12 ounce mugs.

GPS – our lifeline

For those of us who are directionally challenged (i.e. we're lost most of the time), the GPS is a gift from heaven! (Or maybe from your wife and kids on Fathers' day.) Anyway, Bob Ellis has put together a little program to help us use these magnificent devices better, and he will be delivering it to the Kitty Hawk adventurers. Call him if you're interested in getting some lessons!



A few odds and ends pictures from the MPA archives. On the left, "Still available". Middle, "Do you ever wonder if anyone is taking pictures of you while you're sleeping on an airplane". On the right, well, it needs no caption.

MPA recipe corner

Some of our female readers pointed out that we do not have any features for them. While this is incorrect, as we have the periodic "male-bashing" serial, nevertheless we will include a favorite MPA recipe in each issue. This month's recipe is for Roasted Duck O'Brien.

- Get one plump, 8 to 10 pound duck
- Marinade it overnight in 2 cups of single-malt scotch
- Put duck and marinade in a covered pan, and place it in oven at 350 degrees.

Disclaimer

The content of the material in this Newsletter comes from 80% recycled material, 10% from common household trash, 10% from non-hazardous chemical waste, and 5% from material in a never-opened math book.