

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

Maine Powerchute Association

Newsletter

December 2004

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www.mainepowerchutes.org

Happy Holidays! We're getting ready for our famous or infamous Christmas party on Dec. 12th – more details on that below. We're busily dredging up old humor, old video clips, and anything else we can find to get back into the flying mode for the winter. We have just passed that sort of dead-time when summer is over yet the ground is not frozen or snow covered yet, so flying is spotty at best.

So in this last issue of the year, we're going to wrap up the last couple of organized flying events we had, set the stage for a few winter fly-ins we've organized, and throw in the usual irreverent humor, titillating pictures, some flying stuff, and other Internet junk we dig up and pass off as news. So, let the show begin!

Another great fly-in at Bingham

With mostly decent weather and low winds, the fly-in at Doug Sukeforth's beautiful Eagle Nest camp was another flying and social success. As usual, Doug and his lovely and talented wife Rita were superb hosts, serving up a great evening meal with camp fire, wine, almost-clean jokes, and good camaraderie.

Jerry Sukeforth, always willing to entertain the crowds with his never-dull takeoffs, outdid himself by not only doing the death defying swings of his chute, but actually had his prop eat it – what a horrible and expensive noise that is! Other than that, we had a few exciting moments as the wind picked up Sunday morning – more on that below in our potpourri of "Scenes from Bingham."

Flashback – Sukee's new puppy Mac (very undignified name for a regal killer German Shepherd!) was busily chewing on one of Jerry's shoes. Being a professional dog trainer, Jerry quickly corrected him in his sternest

voice, "Hey, I told you, NO CHEWING my shoes! You chew OTHER people's shoes!"

Flashback - evening fire. Seems like the several ladies present decided that the only way they could tolerate all the male machismo and testosterone around them was to drink as much wine as was available. With chairs all around the fire, the smoke was blowing towards the ladies' section, so Rita in her sweetest voice said "Doug my dear, can you rotate that fire some so the smoke blows the other way?" So of course, Doug tried – we're still not sure if she was serious.

Flashback – Sukee taking off in the wind, when - oh, wait, we already covered that...

Flashback – Doug trying to fly over the top of Sugarloaf mountain. Now almost nothing scares Doug – but glad to say he thought of his kids, grandkids, wife, etc. and decided to chicken out before the rotors made him part of upcoming winter skiing wonderland!

Flashback – Sunday morning, plan was to fly to Sugarloaf airport. It is too far to go there and come back on one tank of fuel, so everybody had an extra tank strapped on. Most of the boys left early enough when the winds were calm. However, by the time Herb got ready, it was definitely too windy to go. But – here’s the catch – Herb’s job was to bring the siphon and the funnel which all the others had to use to transfer fuel! So, in the true MPA spirit of a good trooper, Herb just strapped on his World War I flying helmet and went on to save the rest of the boys. Luckily, most of them decided to turn back soon thereafter, and made some spectacular 20 MPH wind landings.

Two more Bingham stories, then we’ll call it quits ‘till next year.

John G. loaded on his Kitty Hawk spare gas tank for the trip. This is an engineering marvel, with a fuel pump that transfers fuel when you throw a switch from the spare tank to the main tank. A quick disconnect valve attaches it to the main tank. Since the contraption hasn’t been used for a year since Kitty Hawk, he tested it by disconnecting the line, throwing the switch, as seeing gas come out of the fuel line. Then he connected it to the main tank via the quick disconnect linkage.

After about a half hour flight, he decided to turn back to home base since the winds were pretty heavy by then. He was going transfer fuel about that time, but since it was a relatively short flight, he decided to wait until he got back. That decision probably saved his life.

After landing with the chute packed, he turned on the switch to transfer the fuel and top off his main tank. When he did that, fuel spewed out at the quick disconnect valve – the O-ring has deteriorated so it was not making a good seal any longer. Since the line was only about 6 inches from the exhaust pipe, the vaporized fuel in flight would have blown right onto the 800

or 900 degree exhaust pipe, and the gas tank probably would have exploded.

Lesson learned – TEST EVERYTHING that could kill you. Then use good judgment, and cross your fingers for good luck. Can’t hurt!

Second story – heading back from Bingham, in sort of a caravan. The Hinkley Good Will school was having their annual celebration and festivities, and had asked us to do a flying demo around 2 PM. It was definitely too windy to fly, so a few of us thought we’d just set up a static display so the kids could see what a powered parachute looked like.



The official MPA banner was hung at Doug’s place in Bingham, along with most of the pilots.

But, there was this green and empty soccer field, and the temptation was too much for Doug S. and for Mike O’Donnell, our Top Gun winner this year. So they set up, take off, barely clear the trees, get thrown all over the sky, straight up, straight down – the crowd very impressed – wow, these things look

like fun! Finally getting up enough nerve to try to land, over the crowds and parked cars, they actually pull it off without crashing. Some very impressive flying skills. The rest of us were rooting for them, but from the ground, which was a lot more sensible place to be. But we did bow down in front of them and kissed their feet – see pictures.

Christmas party scheduled

The long-awaited (a year long, to be precise) official MPA Christmas Party and General Meeting is scheduled for December 12th at Miller’s Restaurant in Bangor for 2:30 PM. This new location should make it a little easier for our brethren on the east and north side of the state, while still being convenient for the rest of the group.

Due to the expert managing of our finances by our Treasurer Bonnie Micue, we have funds to subsidize part of the cost, so each of us will

only pay \$10 per person for the spectacular Miller buffet dinner.

The agenda is dinner around 2:45 or 3:00 PM, then the general membership meeting, then coffee and dessert, then the 2004 MPA season highlights video presentation. This year's video includes footage from the camera of Darlene and Robin Paradis, who seem to catch some stuff we'd rather hide. So, have a late Sunday breakfast (light!), then be ready and hungry for the afternoon event. See you there!

Treasurer's report

Bonnie has provided the following figures for 2004 (year to date):

<i>Beginning balance 2004:</i>	\$812
<i>Income:</i>	
Dues paid:	\$760
Fee from Phoenix (web)	\$45
TOTAL:	\$805
<i>Expenses:</i>	
Web site registration	\$99
Gift to Art Willard	\$50
Last year's Christmas dinner	\$150
Frames for awards	\$70
BFI refresher supplies	\$99
Top Gun fly-in	\$275
Perham fly-in	\$125
TOTAL:	\$868
<i>Ending balance:</i>	\$749

The only other expense we should incur this year is the partial subsidy for the Christmas dinner on Dec. 12th – that's expected to be under \$150.

Inaugural Perham fly-in a big success

Robin Paradis and his lovely wife Darlene hosted the first seriously organized MPA fly-in at Perham (near Presque Isle). Their efforts were rewarded with a larger than expected turnout, good flying weather, and generally an enjoyable time for all.

Unfortunately, no inquisitive MPA reporters had a chance to attend the event, so we can't give you eye witness accounts (with the usual MPA "coloring" of the story). But, the anecdotal feedback was all positive, and we'll

put it on our regular MPA schedule for next year.



Although she's pretty, she suffers from the dreaded disease where the extra hand growing out of her side tickles her endlessly

Thanks again to Robin and Darlene for being excellent hosts again, and going above and beyond in welcoming this unruly horde of MPA fliers.

Fly-in schedule prepared for 2005

We're in the process of getting the official 2005 event calendar ready for our MPA members. If you have any suggestions, let me know as soon as possible. It will follow this year's schedule pretty closely, as most of the major events are generally held at the same time from year to year, as we try to work our own fly-ins around those.

So, if you see some significant schedule conflict, or if you have some great idea regarding an event the MPA could sponsor, speak up now. Another Kitty Hawk trip would be tough to replicate, but let's try!

Mark Rideout lives to ride another day

One of our newer members and a new pilot, Mark Rideout had a scary episode recently – he actually hit a power line and was lucky enough to walk away from it with damage only to his aircraft.

Mark took off without being certain that he could clear the power lines at the end of his field. Since the climbing and the flying

characteristics of your wing depend on many factors (temperature, wind direction, load, humidity, pilot experience, etc), you have to know your machine and its limitations, and you have to know yourself and your limitations. As you get more experience and gain more in both these areas, you can safely take a few more chances. But unfortunately, Mark did not have the experience to do that, and he paid the price.

To his credit, Mark's quick thinking under pressure saved him, as once he realized he wouldn't make it, he cut power, and positioned himself in a defensive posture thereby hitting the power line with his cables instead of his body.

Mark is also to be commended for his comments to the press after the incident. An event like this can set back our sport considerably, and draw a lot of negative attention. But Mark made it very clear that the sport and equipment is very safe, and that it was only his mistake that caused the accident, and that he intends to get right back in as soon as his machine is repaired. Nice work Mark! (except for that little thing about flying into a power line)

Finally! Winter fly-ins scheduled!

All right, so not everybody is jumping up and down at the prospect of flying in 10 degree weather, but a good handful of us just can't wait. Not so much because of the temperature, but because all these great lakes around Maine are frozen, and become instant playgrounds for powered parachutes. So, dust off your skis, long underwear, and goggles, and get ready.

We have two event scheduled at this time – the first on the weekend of January 22nd on Moosehead Lake in Greenville. We usually fly from Kelly's Landing, which has an excellent access to the lake, has a great restaurant, and has rooms. Alternatively, we can stay at Chalet Moosehead, which has the same access and is just a few hundred yards from Kelly's Landing. Call now at either place for reservations.

The second of our scheduled fly-ins is a new one for us – Doug Sukeforth has made

arrangements to hold a fly-in at the golf club in China, which should work out well since we can stay inside the clubhouse and restaurant to watch the flying and get warm in between flights. And, of course, golf courses are great places to fly. We don't have a date for this yet – Doug is still working on it – expect it be in the second half of February.



As a public service announcement, Ms. Powerchute is demonstrating what NOT to wear while winter flying.

We're also going to set up an event at Bethel again this year – they have an excellent facility and beautiful mountains. Randy Autrey usually hosts this. More on that to follow.



John G. bowing in front of current Top Gun and undisputed "Crazier Than A Bedbug" title holder Mike O'Donnell after he and Doug S. put on a flight demo in horrible winds for the Hinkley School homecoming event.

Disclaimer

This Newsletter is late because my dog ate it after I finished the first draft, and I had to recreate the whole thing. The first draft was much better, really! And funnier!