

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

Maine Powerchute Association

Newsletter

December 2007

www.mainepowerchutes.org

Annual MPA Christmas Party

It's finally here! After a year in which we had to cancel several fly-ins due to weather, it'll be nice to catch up and see old friends we haven't seen all year. And we won't care about the winds! (Snow storms may be another matter.)

So, once again, we will be meeting at Jeff's Catering in Bangor (see map on the back side) on Sunday, December 16th at 3:00 PM for Jeff's famous buffet dinner, our annual business meeting, socializing, and of course, our infamous video highlights of the year.

Based on the last several years, we get a good turnout at this event, so we use funds in our MPA treasury to pay for most of it – at worse, it'll cost a couple of bucks per person. What a deal!

Furthermore, price of our MPA Highlight video has been reduced to \$2.00 per copy. This is due to the lowering price of DVDs, as well as to the fact that, hey, it's just not worth more than that! The highlight of the Highlights is to see some of our powered parachutes fly within 100 feet of the six Blue Angels F18 aircraft!

We have reservations for around 25 people, so bring wives, husbands, friends – pretty much anybody with standards low enough to be able to tolerate us for over two hours!

N-numbering your aircraft

We have to compliment the MPA membership – we have done an excellent job in registering (N-numbering) our aircraft. We have even been commended by the Portland office of the FAA – apparently there's no other group in the country that has the success rate that we have



Autumn in the County –another wonderful Cyr picture, busting the myth there's snow on the ground all year around.

had! Special thanks to Jerry Sukeforth for this – he organized a couple of mass inspections where the airworthiness guys from the FAA came out and did a bunch of them at once.

Apparently the FAA is not budging from their January 31st deadline for inspections. If your aircraft (two seaters only, NOT Part 103 legal machines) is not DONE with the registration process by that date, the “transition” period is over, and your pretty powered parachute is now alawn ornament. It cannot be legally flown

ever again, and it cannot be sold since whoever buys it cannot fly it either.

There is a remote possibility that you may still be able to pull off a registration process if you start like 5 minutes after you read this Newsletter. Look on the web site www.jagobel.com – it is set up to explain many of the rules of Sport Pilot, instruction, examinations, and N-numbering your aircraft.



This picture is only here to help you forget the problems you'll have if you haven't registered your PPC

We still have some of the checklist documents that show all the forms and how to fill them out correctly – call John Gobel (207-852-7300) to get a packet, and then cross your fingers!

By the way, remember that “registering” your aircraft means TWO things – sending in and receiving

your registrations forms is one (the easy part), and the second part is to make arrangements with the Portland FSDO (Flight Safety District Office) to have them come out and do an airworthiness inspection of your airplane.

OK, so let's say you missed all the deadlines, but you still want to fly. You can do one of four things:

One, try to take everything off it that weighs anything so you get the total weight under 254 pounds. And no, you can't lose your beer belly and count that – it's only the airplane. Good luck with that one – most people agree it cannot be done with the 582 two seaters.

Two, you can buy a factory made SLSA (Special Light Sport Aircraft) that is already N-number ready. This means the factory had its prototype PPC airworthiness certified, and now the kits they sell are identical to it so you can put it together yourself and get it certified.

Three, you can buy an SLSA (see above), but buy it without the parachute and the engine. Put your old engine and parachute on it – that appears to be legal. Sort of an expensive solution, but possible.

Four, here's the imaginative part – you can convert your old and now useless powered parachute into any of a number of things. Here are some suggestions:

- a real serious leaf blower
- airboat (need boat under it)
- rent it out to people who need to dry out their cellars
- rent it to movie studios who need hurricane special effects
- throw away the metal parts and use the parachute to jump off your roof. The neighborhood kids will love you for the entertainment
- OK, enough – I think you get the drift...



Undaunted by dark storm clouds, our intrepid MPA pilots try to get that last flight in before they need flashlights...

Welcome to a bunch of new members

OK, that doesn't sound very personal, but we need some more information on them, so we'll publish it in the January issue.

Congratulations to one of new guys, Warner McClure, who finished his 12 hours of training for Sport Pilot, did a very successful first solo, and bought a 582 Buckeye Dream Machine from one of our members.



The MPA poster on display at the Brunswick Air Show

Sport Pilot dilemma

Again, serious congratulations to the many MPA members who went through the process to get their Sport Pilot licenses. As a group, we are one of the top clubs in the nation for the number of people we had qualify!

OK, so at this point, you don't have your Sport Pilot license. There is no deadline for that now – other than your old BFI exemption is no longer valid, you can still get it the long way. But here's the problem.

To get your Sport Pilot certificate issued, you have to do four things:

- take the FAA written test (OK, you have to pass it, not just take it...),
- show evidence of dual training,
- get an endorsement from a CFI that you're ready for the check ride,
- take a checkride (which is an oral test and a flight test) from and FAA Sport Pilot Examiner (SPE).

At this time, there is only one powered parachute CFI and one SPE in the Northeast.

That would be fine, except it is the same person. So he cannot give the endorsement as a CFI and then give the checkride as an SPE – it has to be a different person. See the problem?

So now, you'd have to go to Florida or Pennsylvania to the next closest CFI to get endorsed, then you could come back to Maine for the checkride. Hopefully that will change in a few months, as there are one or two more people getting ready to get their CFI rating. Stay tuned.

In the meanwhile, to fly your N-numbered aircraft legally, you need some kind of FAA license. Since the Sport Pilot route is difficult for now, the alternative is the Student Pilot certificate, which is MUCH easier to get. Go to the web page www.jagobel.com, and it is all explained there.

So, in a nutshell, here's the Student Pilot certificate option. The Sport Pilot Examiner will get some information from you and issue you the certificate. The CFI has to endorse it after he gives you a 20 question, open book, on-line little quiz – he will be your official instructor. If you get any questions wrong, he has to instruct you on that question until you get it right, so, you cannot fail the test.

With the student pilot certificate, you can only fly solo – no passengers. Also, the CFI has to re-endorse your log book every 3 months. The whole thing is good for two years. So, it's nice and simple to get you through until you get your Sport Pilot license.

Super Bowl is coming – a true story

A man had 50 yard line tickets for the Super Bowl. As he sits down, a man comes down and asks if anyone is sitting in the seat next to him.

"No," he says, "The seat is empty."

"This is incredible," said the man. "Who in their right mind would have a seat like this for the Super Bowl, the biggest sporting event in the world, and not use it?"

He says, "Well, actually, the seat belongs to me. I was supposed to come with my wife, but she passed away. This is the first Super bowl

we haven't been to together since we got married in 1967."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. That's terrible. But couldn't you find someone else -- a friend or relative, or even a neighbor to take the seat?"

The man shakes his head. "No, they're all at the funeral."

The MPA Chuting Eagles

We have talked about putting together a PPC flight demonstration team for a long time, and we finally did it!

The idea was to put together a 20 minute show that demonstrates how much fun Paces are to fly, and to show how precisely they can be flown. Once it was designed and the maneuvers practiced and perfected (OK, that's a stretch...), we could take it to various public events and promote our sport.

About the time we started putting the ideas into reality, we contacted the Great State of Maine Air Show, which is held every few years at the Brunswick Naval Air station. The Navy's Blue Angels are of course the star attraction, but it has dozens of other incredible aerial acts, along with the Army's Golden Knight precision parachuting team, a bunch of war planes, aerobatic biplanes, etc.

Oh yeah! And one more act – The MPA Chuting Eagles Powered Parachute Flight Demonstration team. Yep, they added us to the program!

So now the team (Jerry Sukeforth, Mike O'Donnell, Robin Paradis, John Gobel, Jim Holloway, Scott Adair) started really working. We designed the 7 maneuvers that comprise the show, and took every opportunity to practice them. The show consisted of a solo demo by

Jerry while the other three chutes were being set up, then the flight by Mike, Robin, and John. Jim and Scott were helping out with the administrative details and were the backup team in case one of the pilots got sick (or realized what he was getting into and thought better of it).

Since as we all know, you cannot control the speed of a PPC (for all practical purposes), the maneuvers relied on precision turning and spacing. We practiced all that until we got pretty good. We put on several practice shows for whoever was around to watch. It was overall pretty impressive, we were told. Not that the Blue Angels had anything to worry about. Yet.



So, we're ready for the BIG SHOW in Brunswick. We get to rub elbows with the best pilots in the world. Our little rigs are next to these incredible fighting machines, these 20 million dollar aircraft, these World War

Two aircraft. It was a great time!

Thursday evening was practice time for the various acts. The Blues flew late afternoon, and we were next.

The winds were pretty strong, but we ran through our show – not the best we've done, but not bad considering the conditions. A lot of spectators, and a lot of Navy pilots. So, we're ready for game day.

Game day started with a light drizzle, then continued into some serious rain. The bad thing was that it was foggy and wet. The good thing was that nobody else could fly, except of course, the powered parachutes! So we volunteered to fill in and to give the spectators at least something to see.

Due to the bad conditions, only two of us could take off, so we put on an improvised air show – not what we’ve been practicing for the last 4 months. But it was fun, and since many people have never seen a parachute that flies up as well as comes down, it was well received.

After the first impromptu show, we were asked to stand by for another one. The chutes were drenched by this time, but we were game to try again. This time, only Robin’s chute could actually lift off the ground – the others tried but the chute was just too heavy to come overhead. So, as a true trooper, Robin went on to put on a one man show. He is still grinning from that experience!

So we hung around some more. Later some of the other acts did their thing. Sunday was nice, and all the people that were cancelled got to fly, and we were done! Overall, it was a success, and best of all, we were invited back for the 2008 show!

Revitalizing the MPA

2007 was a strange year for the MPA. We had too many flying cancellations, too much turmoil with the Sport Pilot requirements, too much decision making by our members regarding the registering of the aircraft, and the author of the Newsletter got wrapped in too many things to keep that flow of information (and irreverent nonsense) going.

But, there is hope on the horizon! There is the light at the end of the tunnel! There’s a rebirth brewing! A new day is dawning! OK, you get the idea, and I ran out of metaphors.

We have a good group of new people coming into our sport, and we had a turnover of some of our old timers who did not want to play the game with the new FAA rules. So we’re set for a new chapter in our MPA history – the post-Sport-Pilot era.

We’ll be publishing the Newsletter just about every month again to keep everybody up to date on events and to have few laughs. We’ll be publishing the new fly-in and event schedule in

January, and we’ll be doing some winter flying too. We’ll be getting more publicity as a group and as a sport with the various performances by the Chuting Eagles all through next year. And we’ll be having our fly-ins regardless of the winds – we have found that almost always, there’s some opportunity to fly over a weekend.



Instead of a wind sock, the MPA will be using this new innovation.

So I for one, am really looking forward to the coming year, looking forward to meeting some of our new members, looking forward to more flying adventures with a bunch of fun guys and gals. And doing it all with a bunch of legal and real pilots who know aviation, and who in spite of that, don’t take themselves too seriously.

Next summer adventure

We’re working out the details for our 2008 annual flight adventure. The plan is to fly across our beautiful western mountains – start in Augusta and end up in Barre, Vermont across the White Mountains and into the Green Mountains. Or maybe start there and fly east to Augusta. The trip is about 160 miles, and should take about a week. Reserve your vacation now – it’ll be around August 15th.



Mistletoe, anyone?

Disclaimer

Absolutely no laboratory animals, no artificial preservatives, no chemical additives, and no human brain cells were used in the creation of this Newsletter.

Directions to Jeff's Catering, MPA Christmas Party

From 95 North or South, take Exit 182-A onto 395 East.

Travel to Exit #5 (Parkway South) and turn left at end of exit.

Go 1/10 of a mile over railroad tracks, and take the very next right into the East/West Industrial Park.

Travel approximately 100 yards and turn left onto Coffin Avenue. Jeff's Catering is located at 15 Littlefield Avenue.

From Ellsworth take 395 West. Travel to Exit #5 (Parkway South) and turn left at end of exit.

Go 1/10 of a mile over railroad tracks and take the very next right into the East/West Industrial Park..

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