

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

Maine Powerchute Association

Newsletter

www.mainepowerchutes.org

March 2008

Winter is finally here

Of course, by that I mean all the lakes are frozen solid enough so we can fly off them. The old standard for seeing if the ice is thick enough for us is the truck test – if you see trucks on the ice, it's good enough for us. Of course, if the truck is partially submerged, it doesn't count. Same for snowmobiles.

Some of us use the presence of ice fishing shacks as indicator of ice conditions. The problem with that approach is that the shacks are used by ice fishermen, whose sanity is questionable to begin with, so relying on them may not be the smartest thing to do.



Since the temperatures were up to 10 degrees, we decided to have our meeting outside at Greenville.

Greenville winter fly-in a big hit!

Our first winter fly-in was at Greenville this year. In spite of really cold temperatures and brisk wind, most of our members showed up – see pictures above and to the right. Some of the real tough ones wore only shorts...

We did not try to set a “shortest takeoff of the year” record like we did last year – see the 2007 MPA highlight video DVD, or look on our web site www.mainepowerchutes.org for a brief clip of the record setting event. It may look like the winds were pretty high (which is true) but it was so steady that you could stay in one spot with the chute over you and pretend you're flying. Which often may be the smarter thing to do anyway.



Cold and snow could not deter our PPG hero Scott from practicing his kiting on Moosehead Lake.

Winthrop (Maranacook Lake) fly-in

OK, we could give you some more bogus photo-shopped pictures to show you what a good time we had there too, but it's time to 'fess up – it was much too windy for even MPA members to fly. It was fun, however to be out there shivering and making flying noises.

In the past, we had many of the nearby residents come out to watch and wave and take lots of pictures, and generally treat us like we just liberated France or something. They were all set to do it again, but unfortunately we had to wimp out. Next year!

China Lake next!

It's looking like the last scheduled winter fly-in at China Lake (Rt. 202, northeast end) may be our last on skis, so we hope many of you can make it out there. Then we can take some real videos and enjoy the icy splendor of the winter scenery. That's why



we're in Maine, remember? Oh, OK, - that's why you want to be in Florida?

Anyway, at this point we're targeting Saturday, March 15th as the date, starting as early as you can get there. You can also

stay over Friday night in the parking lot by the church – or if you're a sissy (or sane), you can stay at some nearby motel. If the weather is truly unflyable, we'll reschedule it for the next day, Sunday. Hope to see you there!

Congratulations to all the new leaf-blower owners

Apparently there were still quite a few owners of powered parachutes throughout the country who did not register them with the FAA, so their powered parachutes can never be legally flown again. And it can't be sold either.

On the bright side, there are a number of things that can be done with them besides having the biggest leaf blower in the neighborhood. Use them for air boats, drying out your cellar, cooling off on a hot summer day, renting to movie sets for hurricane scenes, speeding up

cement drying, and of course it makes a wonderful salad shredder just by flinging heads of lettuce into the prop at about 4200 rpm.

We're hoping none of us smart, diligent and conscientious MPA members fall into that category – we had PLENTY of warning and PLENTY of opportunities to do the right thing. For anyone who did not register it, the only recourse seems to be to buy a new unit but use the engine and the parachute from your old one, which appears to be legal, from what some of the magazines are saying.

Good news for almost-Sport-Pilots

We now have another CFI (Certified Flight Instructor) in the region – Carroll Werren from Concord, NH. He is available to perform the endorsement proficiency examination you need before you can take the Sport Pilot examination and check ride. Check out our web site for information on contacting him.



Obviously she misspelled "parachute," but we elected her "Miss MPA 08" anyway.

We are thinking of having Carroll come up to Bethel on a weekend in early April so he can take several of our MPA members, and do it at the MPA discount price as well. That way we can get quite a few signed off all at once rather than each person trying to make separate arrangements with Carroll as the CFI and Gobel as the FAA Sport Pilot Examiner. Up to 6 people can be done legally during the Friday through Sunday time period.

If any of you are interested in attending this weekend event (date to be determined) call John G. at 207-852-7300, or send an e-mail at gobelj@gmail.com. I'll be working with Carroll to set it up.

Student Pilot certificate updates

For those of you flying with Student Pilot certificates (solo, of course), remember that those have to be re-endorsed by your CFI every 90 days for it to stay legal. Contact John Gobel if yours is coming up for renewal. Of course, you should be seeking to get your Sport Pilot license done as soon as possible so you can fly dual.

Repairman course getting closer

As we all know, all "N" numbered aircraft (including our powered parachutes) have to have an annual inspection. This can be performed by an A & P (Airframe and Powerplant) FAA certified mechanic which will cost you anywhere from \$150 to \$300 every year depending on how persuasive you are. Or you can do it yourself if you get the FAA certification after attending a 16 hour course. Seems much easier.

We are applying for approval from the FAA for a course that we can hold right here in Maine (probably the Bethel airport) and which will probably only cost \$50 (one time cost). The standards are pretty rigorous for approval, but we think we're almost ready with all the paperwork and preparations. Stand by for an announcement on this in about a month.

Typical Sunday morning

Mary Clancy goes up to Father O'Grady after his Sunday morning service, and she's in tears. He says, "So what's bothering you, Mary my dear?"

She says, "Oh, Father, I've got terrible news. My husband passed away last night."

The priest says, "Oh, Mary, that's terrible. Tell me, Mary, did he have any last requests?"

She says, "That he did, Father." The priest says, "What did he ask, Mary?"

She says, "He said, 'Please Mary, put down that damn gun...'"

New members

We had no new members in the month of February. Maybe the tight economic conditions. Maybe people are raising their standards. Yes, maybe there's hope for humanity yet!



For our new and future members, here's a typical scene from one of our fly-ins as an MPA pilot tries to decide who is next to fly.

Check out our new web site format

Among other things, we created a "landing page" – that's a page with just a couple of things on it, like teasers, and then from there you go into our regular home page (which is also being remodeled).

On the landing page, we're putting a big picture of one of our members and changing it every week or so. Just think – the whole world will see you in your PPC all by yourself. The first three of our featured heroes have been Randy Autrey, Carroll Werren, and Steve Goulet, who was photographed on his virgin flight with skis.



When we find a bump on an airfield, we go into action to fix it.

When we created the new landing page, we had to reset our web visit counter to zero. Our counter was up to almost 20,000 on the old site, Pretty good!

By the way, in case you've been asleep for the last 5 years, the web address for our web site is www.mainepowerchutes.org.

Risk is relative

Believe it or not, our beloved sport of powered parachuting is considered an "extreme sport!" That term means an activity that's perceived as having a high level of inherent danger. And the people who engage in them are considered risk takers.

Along with flying, extreme sports are mountain climbing, some types of motorcycling, skydiving, scuba diving, hang gliding, storm chasing (what the hell is that?), bungi jumping, snow boarding, and a bunch of others.

Now we all know that powered parachuting is the safest form of flying. But, the key word there is "flying." Yep, it's in the air. Humans are not supposed to be off the ground – it's unnatural. So any kind of flying is risky. Bad things can happen when you turn over control to gravity. Yep, all that is true.

So why do so many people engage in risky activities? Why do we fly?

One theory is that while engaged in such activities, there is a release of adrenaline, which



releases dopamine and other chemicals in our brain, generally causing pleasure. However, many psychologists studying this phenomenon think there is more to it than that.

I think that most of us who enjoy powered parachuting would agree with the majority of "extreme sport" activists who do not view themselves as "adrenaline junkies." Rather, we view ourselves as people who enjoy pushing our mental and physical skills a little bit, who like to see and experience different sites and places, and who like to occasionally shake up the ordinary routine of our lives.

Another way of saying all that may be that we do these things not to escape life but to make sure that life doesn't escape us.



Some other "extreme" sports besides powered parachuting – motorcycling and water skiing.



The End