

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

Maine Powerchute Association

Newsletter

December 2008

www.mainepowerchutes.org

Christmas Party Is Ready!

Our long anticipated annual MPA Christmas Party is all set, and we're looking forward to our usual good time of seeing old friends ("old" as in long time, not like old in age, which none of us is). In addition, we have the annual highlight video of our year of flying, with the usual surprise endings. So, here are the details:

Location: Oriental Jade Restaurant

Address/Phone: 555 Stillwater Ave
Bangor, ME 04401
(207) 947-6969

Directions: Oriental Jade is located next to the Bangor Cinema, Bangor Mall Blvd., Bangor.

Time: 3:00 PM to about 5:00 PM or so

Food: The excellent Oriental Jade buffet – great variety and good quality.

Program: We can start the dinner around 3:30, followed by our generally short annual meeting, then our famous highlight video, and then hanging out if you want.

Other: MPA treasury will subsidize part of the cost of the event, but we'll all have to chip in some amount to be determined by our superb Treasurer Bonnie once we have all the details and we're on site.

A free DVD with the highlight video will be given to each member at the party. The retail value of this DVD is \$7,439.98, so you're getting quite a bargain! Members not in attendance can get this great collector's item for only \$2,500.00. Or a beer.

Adventure trip

Our 2008 MPA Adventure Trip took us across the White Mountains of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. And indeed, it was quite an adventure! Those mountains don't look any smaller from the air than they do from the ground!

We started the trip from Vermont, thinking that with prevailing westerly winds, we'd have the wind behind us most of the way, which proved to be correct most of the time. Also, in the past, we'd start out at some central point in Maine, then after a long week, we'd have to drive back home from wherever we ended up after our trip. This way, we drove while we were all fresh at the beginning, and basically flew home.



A couple of our MPA members at the Brunswick Air Show showing the Blue Angels' F18s what real flying is like...

With most of the pilots and ground crew taking lots of photos and some videos along the entire trip, we collected a pretty incredible set of beautiful pictures. See most of these on our website – www.mainepowerchutes.org under the Pictures tab. Or you can go directly to www.mpapix.blogspot.com to see all the pictures (under the August tab).



Chuting Eagles practice their routine during the Adventure Trip over the White Mountains. While it looks confusing, it really was.

One of the highlights of the trip was the flight across the 6288 foot Mount Washington in New Hampshire. Since the average winds there throughout the year average around 30 mph, it is not often that you can catch a good day with much lower wind speeds, but we got lucky. See pictures of that great experience on the blog also.

Another highlight was the leg from Bethel to Bowman. We started out with some patchy ground fog – no real risk since there was plenty of ground to be seen. This stayed like that most of the trip – we took some real nice photos along the way – until we got within two miles of Bowman airfield. There, the fog turned solid right over the airfield. We couldn't get under it, since the fog layer was touching the trees, and we couldn't go back to Bethel since most of us didn't have enough fuel for a return 25 mile trip. So we talked it over on the radio, and set out to scout around for a suitable field with short grass and near a road. Eventually, we found this nicely mowed backyard.

So in we go, five powered parachutes one after another making some pretty nice short field landings into some stranger's backyard. As it turns out, a lovely lady who owned the house was home, babysitting her two grandchildren. We certainly broke up the monotony of babysitting! She was most gracious, and the kids were quite excited to see these alien

looking contraptions landing right in their playground. Right out of the "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" movie!

Since the field was much too short to take off when the weather cleared, we made some calls, and the ground crew diverted to pick us up, not quite at Bowman, but real close. Overall, we exercised some real good judgment – "aeronautical decision making" is the correct term – and everything turned out well.

By the way, our alternative field was much longer and looked better from the air, but a scouting low pass by Mike showed the grass to be much too tall, and subsequent on the ground inspection proved him right – it was over two feet high, so we would have had a hell of a difficult landing in that stuff!

Money-saving idea

Husband and wife are shopping in Wal-Mart when the man picks up a case of Budweiser and puts them into the shopping cart.

'What do you think you're doing?' asks his wife. 'They're on sale, only \$15 for 24 cans,' he says. 'Put them back. We can't afford it,' says the wife and they carry on shopping...

A few aisles later the woman picks up a \$30 jar of face cream and sticks it into the shopping cart.

'What do you think you're doing?' asks the man. 'It's my face cream. It makes me look beautiful,' she says.

The man replies.....'So does 24 cans of Budweiser, and it's only half the price.'



The half time entertainment squad at our Christmas party is getting ready for the big event. They look nervous – they've never been around a bunch of real pilots before!

New Sport Pilots

Congratulations to three more new Sport Pilots who passed all their tests recently and have joined the flying elite with a real FAA pilot certificate! The three are Mike O'Donnell, Warner McClure, and Dave Smith, all of whom were endorsed by our new CFI, Randy Autrey, and then all passed the FAA practical test and check ride with flying colors. Actually, all three said that after the four hour grilling Randy gave them, the practical itself was easy!

There are still several of our MPA members who need to go through this process. We now have the CFI and the Sport Pilot Examiner all in Maine and part of our group, so we can all be legal without having to travel to Florida or Michigan or other far away and expensive places. I strongly encourage whoever is left to do this as soon as possible so we can have everybody flying legally again and avoid any possible future problems with the FAA.

Biennial flight reviews

Since many of our pilots received their certificate just a year or two ago, we need to remind everyone that every FAA certificate holder at all levels (private, commercial, etc.) must have a flight review every two years to stay legal. The flight review (or biennial, as it is known) consists of one hour of ground instruction and one hour of flight instruction. You cannot FAIL a biennial, although if the CFI thinks you don't know the stuff you should know, he can refuse to endorse you until you do know your stuff.

Anyway, the event is instructional – it is not a test. You must have your log book endorsed by the reviewing CFI two calendar years from the time you received your Sport Pilot certificate, or from the time of your last biennial. So check

your dates, and contact Randy or me if you need your biennial.

Treasury report

Our esteemed Treasurer Bonnie Micue reports that we have \$609 in our account after membership dues for the year were collected. We'll use some of it for our Christmas party, so we should be all set until next June financially. We're definitely a low maintenance and low cost organization! See how much fun you can have for hardly any money? Well, OK, there is that little issue of the plane and trailer and truck and gas and repairs and accessories which does cost a few bucks...

Brunswick Air Show

Our own MPA powered parachute flight demonstration team, the Chuting Eagles performed at the Great State of Maine Airshow for the second year in a row at the Brunswick Naval Air Station. The show featured the world famous Blue Angels, the U.S. Navy's flight demonstration team, as well as a host of other incredible and world famous aerial performances. Among them was Patti Wagstaff, who holds the World Champion Aerobatic title.



Our newest MPA member claims wings like that are better than parachutes. Many of our members volunteered to do the pre-flight.

Then there was us. OK, we were definitely the slowest aircraft in the air, probably the least noisy, and probably (OK, definitely) could do the least maneuvers in the air – no stalls, no spins, no inverted flight, no loops, no hammerheads – you get the picture.

But! Once again, the weather on one of the days was unflyable for all aircraft EXCEPT us. The clouds were down to about 100 feet, which of course is plenty for us, so we put on an impromptu show for the restless crowd. The show director was very grateful that they had

something in the air instead of just the announcer talking and talking.

On the previous day, we were able to do our full routine of close maneuvers and engine out landings – the whole thing looked pretty sharp, so all the practice and planning paid off. Some of the show and most of our maneuvers are on the highlight video.

Safety Corner

From our safety officer, our own all around mechanical genius Jerry Sukeforth comes the following tip. OK, two tips, since we missed a few issues.

As we all know, or should know, spark plugs do not come with the correct gap setting out of the box. You need to set that yourself at .018 for the Rotax 582 engine. The manual says .020, but Jerry’s technical directives and his experience says that they run better and start better when gapped at .018.

The second tip is just as good. Even though we all do a pretty thorough pre-flight, it is easy to miss something on your own plane since you see it all the time. Have someone else take a look every now and then, and chances are pretty good that the other person will find something that you may have overlooked. You know, it’s the temporary fix syndrome, where you jerry rig some household problem just to get past it temporarily, but soon you stop seeing it and it becomes a permanent fix without you having to do anything!

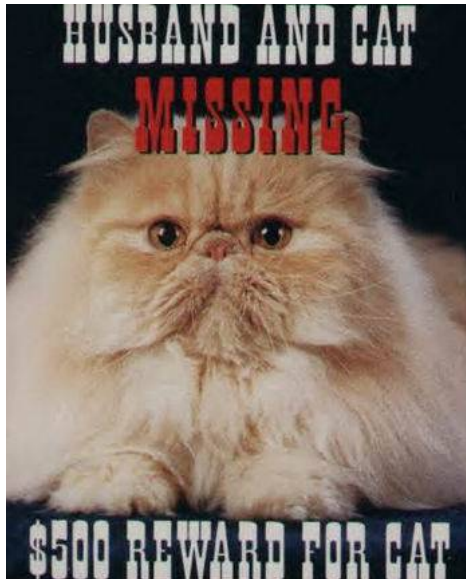
Next events

After the Christmas party, we have about a month or so before any more flying is likely, since the lakes haven’t quite frozen, and there’s probably not enough snow for skis. So that’s an excellent time to psych yourself up for winter flying!

So what does that mean? Well, it’s cold outside. And it’s warm inside. By repeating the mantra “I am NOT cold when I fly, but I

may be insane” over and over, you are readying your mind to look forward to the ice-cram-headaches from zero degree temperatures. But it feels so good when you stop.

Anyway, the beauty of winter flying is worth any slight discomfort you may experience for the first few minutes of your trip. With all the lakes around Maine, you can land anywhere. So get your winter gear all sorted out, find the right gloves, buy extra chemical heating pads for hands and feet, and take pictures of your face so you remember what it looked like BEFORE the frostbites.



In the January issue of the Newsletter, we’ll run a bunch of winter flying tips. We’ll also specify the dates for our two (or maybe three this year) winter fly-ins at that time. Tentatively, we’re planning a trip to Presque Isle area to visit Robin and Darlene and do some flying off their camp lake and staying in their cabin and drinking all their bourbon (sorry Robin, forgot to tell you!). In addition, we

usually go to Moosehead Lake in February, and maybe China Lake to visit Doug Sukeforth (sorry, Doug!) Dates and details to follow!

Health tip – careful what you eat

Jake was dying. His wife sat at the bedside. He looked up and said weakly: "I have something I must confess."

"There's no need to," his wife replied.

"No," he insisted, "I want to die in peace. I slept with your sister, your best friend, her best friend, and your mother!"

"I know," she whispered, "now just rest and let the poison do its work."

The End

