

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

# Maine Powerchute Association

## Newsletter

[www.mainepowerchutes.org](http://www.mainepowerchutes.org)

February 2010

### Your new and improved MPA!!!

#### A look back at 2009

Well, if we could summarize the last year or two in a few words, we would have to say it was a year of transition, which generally translates to confusion. There were many changes in the world of powered parachuting, as well as in the world of aviation in general. The full impact of the FAA's whole light sport aircraft changes finally kicked in, and we experienced both the good parts of them as well as the not so good.



Beautiful scenery to get you in the mood for winter flying (Dirk M)

On the bad side, the time limit on grandfathered experimental aircraft expired, meaning if you did not register it and "N" number it, you could not legally fly it or sell it. So yes, there are a number of two-seater aircraft out there (see Ebay, Craig's List, Uncle Henry's, etc) trying to be sold without an "N" number. The only reason anyone should buy those is for spare parts, or to rebuild as a Part 103 legal (under 254 lbs, single seat, etc.) Of course, there are

always enough stupid people out there who end up buying one, and to their surprise, it can't be registered and flown legally.

Sort of on the bad side is the need to get your Sport Pilot license to fly the same powered parachute you may have been flying for many years. The exemption to transition your BFI or AFI qualification also expired, so now you have to do the same thing as a brand new rookie would have to do – go to a CFI (Certified Flight Instructor) with a powered parachute rating and take 12 hours of instruction, then take a written test and a flight check to get your license.

However, as with everything bad, there are many good things that have come out of the new rules. For example, with every Sport Pilot license issued, you get a brand new Mercedes SL3000, and an all expense paid week in Hawaii with a supermodel of your choice or your wife, all courtesy of your government, the FAA, and President Obama!

In case you don't want to take handouts from our government (yes, there are still people like that!), then you have to do it for the pride of being a real licensed pilot. One of the problems our PPC community always had is that while most of us follow the rules, there are always some who either don't know them or don't care about them, and thereby give ALL of us a bad name in the aviation community as well as in the general public.

Imagine if there were no driver's licenses. So after your 12 year old learns how the controls work on your car and practices in your driveway, he goes out on public roads that you and I share. He doesn't know what a YIELD sign is, which side of the road to drive on, what a red light is for, what NO PASSING means, and hasn't quite figured out the turn signals. A menace to all of us, you'd have to say.

Unfortunately, a similar situation existed with powered parachutes (as well as other experimental aircraft) – you can teach yourself how to fly it, but you won't know the “rules of the road.” So you become the 12 year old driver driving on the wrong side of the road, going through red lights, and turning left with your signals blinking right.

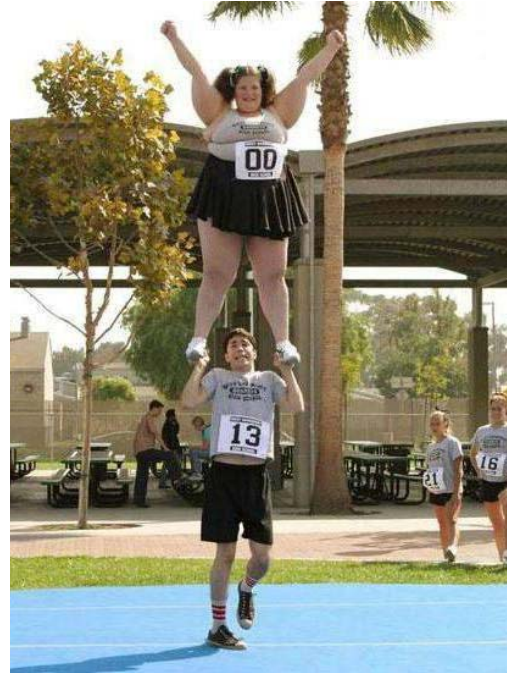
Fortunately, most of our MPA members went through the process and got their licenses. Almost to a man, after they did it, they said “Hey, that wasn't nearly as difficult a process as I thought – in fact, it was damn easy!”

So, the net effect of the new rules is that while we have fewer pilots now, they are safer, more skilled, and certainly more knowledgeable about aviation. Also, we now share the same rights and privileges as the big boy airplanes (well, close...)

### **Aviation wisdom**

- It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over the area you just bombed.
- The three most useless things in aviation are: Fuel in the fuel truck, runway behind you, and air above you.
- The only time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.

- Never trade luck for skill.
- Airspeed, altitude, and brains. At least two of those are always needed to successfully complete a flight.
- Mankind has a perfect record in aviation – we have never left one up there!



The MPA “Inspiration of the Month” picture. **Yes you can!**

### **Selling / Buying PPCs?**

To clear up any confusion over buying or selling aircraft that are FAA registered (i.e. “N” numbered), here's the straight scoop. By the way, to sell a PPC that is a two-seater and is NOT “N: numbered, you have to find a really, really stupid or gullible buyer, since he/she won't be able to ever fly it legally. And of course, don't you even think about buying one for the same reason. With a few exceptions, to which we'll get in a minute.

So back to buying or selling. The good news is that there are two FAA forms, and only two! They are named FAA Form 8050-1 (Aircraft Registration Form) and 8050-2 (Aircraft Bill of Sale). When you sell your aircraft, you fill out the Bill of Sale – one copy to the buyer, one to the FAA, one to you. When you buy it, you fill out the Aircraft Registration form, attach the Bill of Sale, and send it to the FAA along with \$5 in unmarked bills. That's it!

If you don't do these things, some bad stuff can happen to you. Until they receive these forms, the FAA thinks you still own the plane even after you sold it (maybe for years!), so if anything happens to it, it goes on your record, not the buyer's. And if you don't register it and something happens, you're flying an unregistered aircraft (was it stolen??), and now you're in for some more pain-in-the-butt explanations and government paperwork. As usual, much easier just to do it right in the first place.

And now for the exceptions. You can buy an unregistered (experimental) two seater if you intend to use it for parts in another aircraft. Or, if you think you can convert it to a single seater, Part 103 legal plane – you know, less than 254 pounds, 5 gallons of gas, single seat, etc. The good news on that is that it can be done – our intrepid superior tinkerer, Jerry S. has done it several times now!

### **Priceless observations**

- The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible. (George Burns)
- I was married by a judge. I should have asked for a jury. (Groucho Marx)
- My wife has a slight impediment in her speech. Every now and then she stops to breathe. (Jimmy Durante)
- Money can't buy happiness. But it does bring you a more pleasant form of misery. (Spike Mulligan)
- I don't feel old. I don't feel anything until noon. Then it's time for my nap. (Bob Hope)

### **Winter fly-ins**

OK, so the first thing that comes to mind is: WHY would you want to do that? Well, for one thing, because it feels SO good when you stop! For another thing, because you can! For a third thing, you can feel superior to all the wussies that are too chicken to fly in the snow and frozen lakes and sub-zero temperatures. By the way, these wussies are sometimes referred to as "bright ones!"

Anyway, those of us who do get a kick out of the beautiful winter scenery from the air, and who enjoy the ability to fly off Maine's many huge lakes, and who have a lot of warm winter gear that the moths would otherwise just eat, we have scheduled two winter events.

Our first one is our annual trip to Moosehead Lake, flying from Kelly's Landing motel and restaurant in Greenville. Some years we get a good crowd of PPC fliers with 6 to 8 chutes, while some other years, you have the lake all to yourself. So mark your calendar for the first MPA formal event of the year on the weekend of February 26-27-28. We usually stay at Kelly's Landing (they have 7 or 8 rooms, or the Moosehead Chalet just a half mile away. Or you can stay in your camper in the big parking lot by the bay. Bring extra sox.

The second one is on China lake in Warren, right near Herb and Bonnie's place. They'll let you park your rig in their big yard, but room service is out of the question. The date for that event is Saturday, February 20<sup>th</sup>. It may run into Sunday (especially if you get stuck in their yard – then it may run into April...)

### **An important safety message**



Always check your chute before packing it up to make sure no butterflies are trapped in it, otherwise you could be badly surprised when one of these comes flying out at you!

On February 20<sup>th</sup>, there is also the annual Ice Fishing Derby at Sebago Lake (Jordan Bay, near Raymond beach) to which we are invited to add a festive air to what is otherwise just a boring fishing event. We can go there any time

Saturday, and they'll treat us like rock stars allegedly. They're plowing a runway, and look forward to having us spread some two-cycle oil exhaust fumes to cover up all the fish smell. If only it were that easy!



No caption necessary.

**2010 fly-in schedule**

We usually have about 20 to 25 events scheduled for the year, and we need to contact the organizers for most of them (except the MPA sponsored events, of course). Here's where the problem comes in – finding the organizers, and then pinning them down to a date. We're more than half way done at this point, and should be finalized in a few weeks. As soon as it's done, it will be put on our web site, and will be published as an attachment to the next Newsletter the first part of March.

A few dates you can lock in – our annual adventure trip will be the week of August 14<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup>. The adventure trip has become an MPA tradition, and always proves to be a true flying adventure with lots of fun, good camaraderie, lots of stories and lots of laughs. A hard-core group of 5 or 6 of us go for the whole trip, but of course we also welcome those members who can only do a few days of the trip. Try it, you'll like it! The other event is our annual Top Gun event – put down the weekend of July 10<sup>th</sup> for that one.

**Excellent Christmas party again**

We had one of our biggest turnouts of the year for our annual Christmas Party this

year. The central location (in Bangor) helps, but seeing our flying friends (OK, friends who also fly?) is the primary attraction. The annual highlight video was again pretty good this year – if you want a copy, just send an e-mail to [gobelj@gmail.com](mailto:gobelj@gmail.com) and we'll send you one.

We also had our annual general membership meeting at that time – here are some of the items we discussed:

- We need to revitalize the MPA – talked about ways to get more of our members flying again and participating (see more on that later in this Newsletter)
- Biennials – quite a few members have had their licenses for 2 years – don't forget that you need a biennial check ride every two years to be legal.
- SLSA exemptions – all our aircraft are in the “Experimental” category – you cannot use these for teaching or for any activity involving getting paid after 1/31/10. So to do that, you must have a SLSA category aircraft – Special Light Sport Aircraft, which means it was factory built and certified. EAA and others are hoping for a change to this rule so all the existing instructors don't go out of business.
- Treasurer's report – Bonnie reported that we had over \$800 in our treasury, so the club picked up the tab for the entire Christmas party.
  - We reviewed the flying year and some of our fly-ins. Congratulated Mike O. for winning the Top Gun contest this year, and Robin P. for showing us how fast Jerry really is.
  - Adventure trip 2010 – we solicited ideas for where to go this year – still open to suggestions!
  - Chuting Eagles flight demo team – we talked about how that group has helped promote the whole PPC flying activity, and



what good reception we have received at every one of our shows.

- More student pilots – we are finally getting more and more inquiries about getting lessons in PPC flying – I think some new people are getting into the sport and want to do it safely, apparently.
- Winter fly-ins – this is always a popular topic, as most of us have not flown for several months by now, so it’s fun to talk about getting out in the snow. In fact, it’s more fun to talk about it than to actually do it. We all agreed on that.

### Thought for the day...



Handle every stressful situation like a dog. If you can't eat it or hump it, piss on it and walk away.

### MPA revitalization

One of the many fun things about flying a powered parachute is hanging out with others who also do it. I mean flying by yourself is fine and often breathtaking (the views, I mean – not the realization that you screwed up something, which can also be breathtaking). However, sharing your experiences with others who actually know what you're talking about (and who also know when you are telling a really tall tale...) just adds a lot to the whole flying adventure.

We actually have about 40 members in our club, but only about 8 or 10 fly regularly, so we'd like to get the rest of the boys over to our many fly-ins and other events. How can we do that?

Well, let's see. Some of the ideas involve bribery, violence, nudity, and blackmail, so we're going to dismiss those ideas right off the

bat. “But wait” – you say – “tell me more about this nudity stuff...” - OK, it involved giving the coordinates for the secret nudist camps in Maine with every membership renewal, but the idea fizzled when the few who actually had the coordinates wouldn't tell us.

### Typical day at an MPA fly-in



Can any of you superstud pilots give us a ride in your magnificent flying machines? Oh please! Oh please!

Anyway, we settled on much more frequent Newsletters to let all our members know what's happening, and an even more frequent updates to our web site – like weekly at least. We will definitely do those things. The rest is up to all of us to welcome new members at our fly-ins, to share your experiences with the others, and to make each event relaxing, laugh-filled, friendly, and exciting. Easy task, since those of us who attend most events do all those things anyway already.



Looking ahead – just a few more months, we'll be in short shorts again like the pilot in this picture...

### **Fly-in cancellations**

We had numerous weather-related cancellations this past year, only to realize during the weekend that the weather was flyable! In fact, we only had one weekend when we couldn't have flown at all.

Based on vast experience of our membership, there are seldom any days when you really can't find any flying opportunity. Some days it may be limited to a short window, or it may be cold or windy or rainy – ideal conditions for **real** men. But in any case, hanging out, cooking out, BS-ing out, waiting for that just right few minutes when the wind subsides, sleeping, doing our 5 mile runs, and other bonding experiences is often just as much fun as actually being in the air. Especially when it's cold, windy, and rainy...

So, we resolve to only cancel fly-ins when we have proof positive that the entire weekend is useless for flying. Just weather reports won't do – they are often wrong as conditions change rapidly in Maine. We need proof like birds falling out of the sky, polar bears roaming the streets, airline cancellations, and house roofs flying by.

### **Pictures and the Web**

A couple of our lady members have been doing a wonderful job of keeping a pictorial record of each of our flying events. They take many of the pictures, and they compile the ones sent by others in the club into a superb collage of interesting stuff. Nice work, Darlene and Aimee!

A link to the pictures-stories is on our web site, [www.maine-powerchutes.org](http://www.maine-powerchutes.org) right on the Home page – just click on it and be prepared to be mesmerized by the stunning good looks of our male members, by the sultry yet elegant beauty of our lady attendees, by the magnificent spectacle of our powerful machines piercing the sky, and by the casual ease and warm camaraderie of our members as they enjoy the

deep and witty verbal exchanges that are so much a part of every one of our events. Hint - you have to look **really** carefully to see those things. Also, it helps if you're having a few beers, and if you squint.

### **Final reminders**

Don't forget to check your Sport Pilot license for the issue date – you need to have a biennial flight review within 2 years of your last one. This is not a test – you can't fail it – it is a 2 hour instruction period (one hour ground, one hour air) given by a CFI (Autrey and Gobel are in the state) – and it costs about \$60.

Also, don't forget that your aircraft must be inspected every year by a certified inspector. That can be yourself if you took the course, or an A&P mechanic. Luckily, we have one as a member – Scott Royal will do your annual for a very reasonable fee (if you're an MPA member) – better than you can get anywhere else.

Look for the 2010 fly-in schedule on our web site and in the next Newsletter – should be coming before March.

Get your room soon at Kelly's landing or at some other motel in Greenville for our first winter fly-in of the year on Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>!

### **Disclaimer**

This Newsletter will not be recalled, no matter how many defects the NTSB finds in it.



The instructor at one of our MPA Safety Seminars demonstrating the importance of having clean boots while flying...



**The End**

(Usually the highlight of the Newsletter)