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

Maine Powerchute Association Newsletter

www.mainepowerchutes.com

May 2026

"Spring is in the air" issue

Prologue

In spite of the occasional chilly days and nights we're experiencing, spring is really here. And, of course, that means it's flying time again! If you're one of our rugged members who have been flying through the winter, disregard the word "again" and substitute "still."

Spring, as we all know, is a time of rebirth! Dormant trees come to life, baby birds are hatching, grass is growing (the kind on your lawn), all sorts of bugs are emerging from nowhere somehow, and the stuff you left outside last fall appear as the snow melts.

And the best part of spring is that all the girls start wearing short skirts, tight jeans, yoga pants, and halter tops. To pay tribute to this great feature of spring, we're dedicating this Newsletter to giving you a whole bunch of illustrations. You're welcome!

Oh yeah – the second best part of spring is that we can get up in the air again in our trusty and slightly neglected powered parachutes. More on that topic later.

Pie can't compete with cake. Put candles on a cake, and it's a birthday cake. Put candles on a pie, and somebody is drunk in the kitchen.

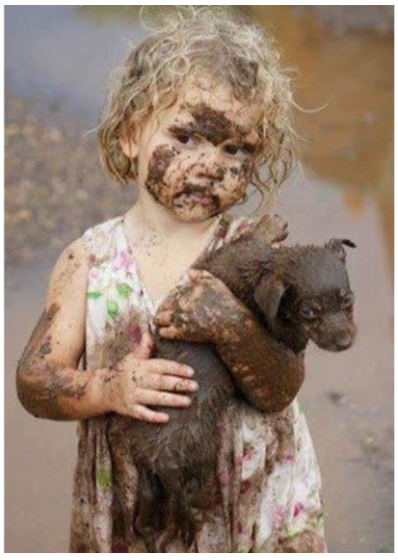
Terrific advice

In my successful effort to avoid doing much useful stuff, I play on the Internet a little ("little" has different definitions). While engaged in this wasteful endeavor, I came across this great quote from a very, very senior person.

"Be sure to be optimistic at all times, and not to shut out humor from your life. The more positive vibes you exhibit, the more of a youthful, lively impression you will leave on others. Whoever you are with, never miss the opportunity of giving someone a good chuckle!"

So this Newsletter, as always, follows this sage advice. And to be truthful and to create a side benefit, the "humor" we inject in the issue also takes up space, since there really isn't much aviation stuff to report – nothing club related has happened since last fall. Except, of course, our annual Christmas party in December.

Whan I was kid, my parents moved a lot. But I always found them.



Never wash your dog in an outdoor pond

Fuel issues

Since a number of us have had occasional or sometimes frequent issues with engine performance, from engine stoppage to serious loss of power, here's some advice from Scott.

Some of us, and definitely me, got in the habit of keeping gas in our machines until it runs low, then filling it from a portable tank that may have been around for many months or even years.

That gas is fine when we put it in lawn mowers and leaf blowers and such, so the thinking is that it should be fine in a Rotax 582 or 912, especially since I put in Stabil – the garden equipment starts right up in the spring.

So back to Scott's advice – the octane rating of gasoline diminishes with age, even with stabilizers. So while the low-compression engines of our garden equipment is fine with a lower octane rated gas, the high compression engines of Rotax may run, but will do so with significantly less power output.

So the two solutions most of our members generally do or should do is, one, not keep gas more than 4 to 6 weeks, and two, use 100LL Avgas, same as most small general aviation aircraft use.

100LL Avgas has the long-shelf-life advantage because it is a highly stable, refined petroleum product with low volatility and few additives that degrade over time. So good for years.

Avgas costs quite a bit more that high-octane automobile gas, but hey, we follow the age-old male practice that money is no object when it comes to our toys (or women).

I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn't it.

Cognitive Appraisal

Say what?

After winning the Masters golf tournament this year, Rory McIlroy was asked what approach he uses to the game that allows him to have the high level of success that he has had over the years.

Simply put, he said before each hole, he thinks of the worst-case scenario that can happen while playing this hole. He does that so he can make adjustments or plan actions to mitigate that worst-case scenario. So after he does that, and things do go south, he is not surprised or upset.

So what's the lesson that we can take from that approach to benefit our flying careers?

Where do I go if the engine stops as I'm flying low over a lake or a river?

Where and how do I land if there's a serious crosswind at my target airstrip?

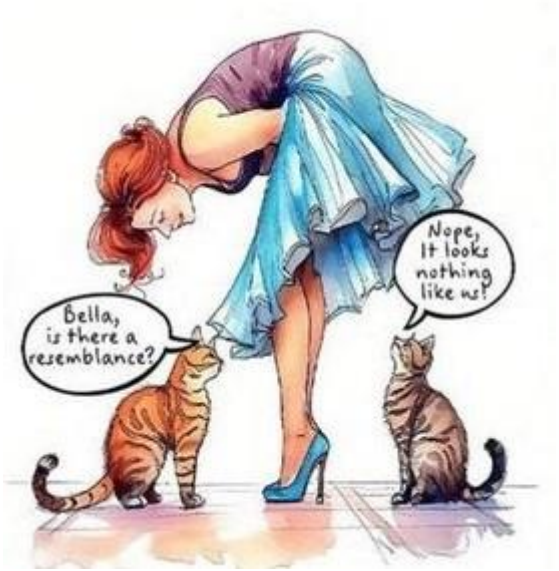
What do I do if I encounter a strong headwind and I won't make it back to my destination?

Did I check how much fuel I have, and how much flying time does that allow me?

Do I have enough power to climb over that set of trees with the passenger I'm carrying?

These are just some examples of the real-life "worst-case scenarios" that we'll definitely encounter. So the point is to think about your actions **before** these situation actually occur. You may still be surprised or upset, but at least you'll probably react properly since you figured out your reactive actions already.

Oh, by the way, Rory didn't come up with the term "Cognitive appraisal" to describe his approach to the game. That was the term applied to his philosophy by some very smart psychologists. So I used it to make you think I'm pretty smart also – yep, I know it's going to take a lot more than that…

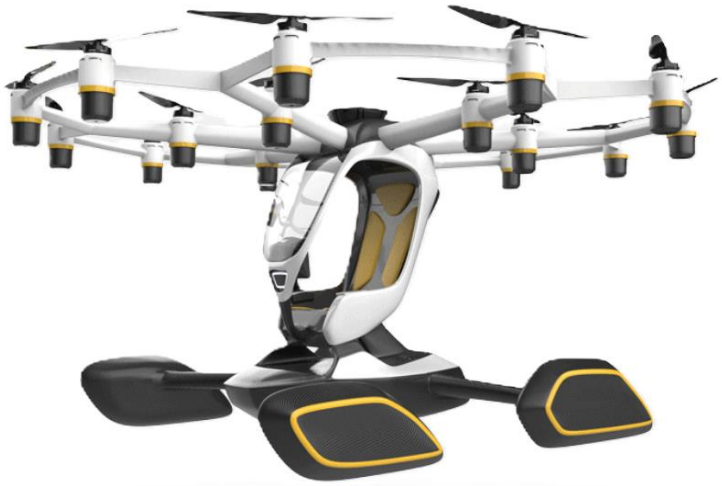


Let's throw in some aviation stuff…

Retire your powered parachute – here's a new way to spend lots of money while still being able to hurt yourself!

Many of us have flown our toy quadcopter drones, and it's certainly a lot fun. And it takes incredibly high resolution pictures and videos.

If you crash it into a tree, or lose it somewhere over the horizon, well, you're out a few hundred bucks. And you get to use a lot of your favorite curse words.



LIFT Aircraft company's HEXA

So here's the latest people-carrying quadcopter with the claim that anybody can fly it. It is legal without a pilot's license, as it qualifies under the FAR 103 rule.

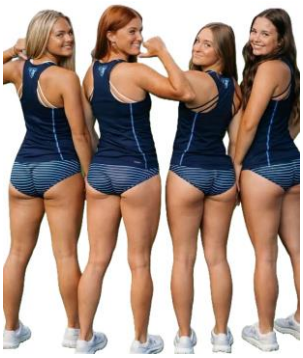
With 18 independent rotors, each with its own battery, and with a single 2 axis joystick as the only control device, hey, how hard could it be to fly? And it's less than $200,000. I want one!

This device and the thousands of the new 103 pilots is just what we need! More near-pilots flying the skies without any knowledge of airport rules, airspace controls, and all the stuff you had to learn to get your FAA Sport Pilot license – no need for all that crap.

Just push the ON button, push the joystick thingie forward, and you can do anything! You arrogant licensed pilots are so overrated! Oh, and screw the FAA and those overweight bureaucrats who run it!

I don't always go the extra mile. When I do, it's because I've missed my exit.

First fly-in of the year



Just weeks away! Our first scheduled event of the year, at **Bethel airfield**. Originally, this was scheduled for the weekend of May 23rd, but since it seems to conflict with the Memorial Day activities that many of us may have planned, we moved it to the weekend of May 30th.

So you still have a few weeks to find your machine, which should be somewhere in the garage, clean it up, refuel it with fresh gas, charge the battery, and start the engine.

Then comes the fun part. Sit in the front seat, re-familiarize yourself with the controls and buttons, try to remember how to operate your GPS, and get back that old warm feeling you once had about being up in the skies again.

The event after Bethel is one of our most popular venues, the Chase Memorial field at **Dover-Foxcroft** on the weekend of **June 13th**. Always a fun event.

Following Dover-Foxcroft is our annual trek to **Ft. Kent** which is usually a 4 day event, and we start it on Thursday. This will during the weekend of **July 11th**. More on that as we get closer to that date.

By the way, in case you haven't seen our full schedule of our events for the year, it is available on our Facebook page and our MPA website (http://www.mainepowerchutes.com).

Hope to see you there!

Grace under pressure

From the time we decided to walk upright and quit living in the trees (aah, the good old days – I remember them well), I'm sure history is full of cases of people being subjected to extremely stressful situations.

So those who survived those situations got to reproduce and pass on those "cool under pressure" genes to some of us. And the end result of those millions of years of selective evolution is – drum roll please – us pilots!

One of the many truisms in aviation is that if you fly long enough, you will be faced with some very stressful situations. No exceptions.

Which brings me to a fascinating event which actually happened in our lifetime, Apollo 13. I think most of us were alive in 1970 (and some of us also in 1870).

So as you remember, Apollo 11 was the first to land on the moon, with Armstrong and Aldrin taking the first steps. A few months later, Apollo 12 did the same.

Then came Apollo 13. The mission was the same - land on the moon.

About two thirds of the way there, very bad things started to happen. One of their two oxygen tanks exploded, severely damaging the command module in which the three astronauts were.

With almost no ability to control the vehicle, and with the remaining oxygen not enough to sustain them for the rest of the trip, they faced the very embarrassing prospect of zooming into space and suffocating while the world watched.

So forget landing on the moon, try to turn this thing around and get back to earth somehow. But with the damage the explosion caused, they didn't have enough fuel to do that. So they continued toward the moon, hoping to circle it and use its gravity to "slingshot" them back towards home.

That maneuver worked, and gave them enough speed to be able to make it back using only the minimal amount of fuel they had for some position adjustments.

Oh, and one more thing. They had leave the command module since it would not sustain them long enough to make the trip back.

So the three of them climbed into the lunar landing module. This vehicle, designed for two people, had enough oxygen for two people for two days. The trip back would take almost four days. And there were three of them.

So after addressing a multitude of other problems, and taking very shallow breaths in their extremely crowded abode, they tried to hit the earth's atmosphere at just the right angle so they wouldn't become fireballs.

Just before hitting the atmosphere, they climbed back into the command module which had the heat shield, and against all odds, the parachutes deployed and they landed in the ocean.

Oh, unbeknownst to them, the staff at ground control gave them a 5% chance of actually making it. Smartly, they kept that to themselves though.

The mission commander on that trip was Jim Lovell, who was given most of the credit for his quick thinking, courage, and grace under pressure that saved the crew.

So what's the lesson from all that for us lowly powered parachute pilots?.

As Jim Lovell said after they were back, what saved them was training, and preparing for every possible event and equipment that could go wrong. However, there is no way to prepare for everything, such as that explosion. So then it comes down to clear thinking, not panicking, and making the best choice from a set of not-so-good alternatives.

When I was young, I was poor. But after many years of hard work, I'm no longer young.