



Dirigo Flyer

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society

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Volume XIX No. 5

Sep - Oct 2011

Welcome to the fall issue of the Flyer. It has been a busy and successful summer at the museum and for members of the Maine Aviation Historical Society. Talks were given to various historical groups while others visited the museum itself. New displays were set up and activities held. New members came on board while some older members, especially those of the WWII era passed on. The museum is now closed for the winter months but the historical society continues with an active slate of meetings on tap.

When Pan-Am Flew to Rockland

The first regularly scheduled airline service in Maine opened August 1, 1931, with Rockland as a stop on a route between Boston and Halifax, Nova Scotia.

These were the days before there was an airfield at Owls Head, and at first the new air service used Rockland Airport. This was on Holmes Street at a spot now occupied by South School. Unfortunately there seem to be no photographs of the Rockland Airport.

The service was organized by the Boston and Maine Railroad Company and Maine Central Railroad in association with Pan-American. It was a seasonal route.

Pan-Am used airplanes that it operated on its winter routes between Miami, the Caribbean, and South America. The new route was from Boston, via Portland, Rockland, Bangor, Calais, and thence to Halifax and back in a Fokker F-10 airplane. This machine had wheels and was therefore rigged to operate from a conventional airfield. But the landing field at Holmes Street proved unsuitable for this heavy machine and it looked as though the service might end after only a few days.

The Rockland Chamber of Commerce was unwilling to see the city cut out of the route because of this difficulty. Members held a meeting and promised to rebuild the runway if necessary.

But such a large project, although desirable, was not even slightly practical in the short space of time allotted. The air service was only supposed to run for two or three months.

Instead, Pan-Am switched to a Sikorsky S-41 seaplane and abandoned the Rockland Airport which does not seem to have been used again for anything other than light airplanes.

The seaplane base was established at Tillson Avenue on a float owned by Maine Air Transport, a local flying service.

The MAT manager was Kermit White and among his duties was the responsibility of sending off a telegram to Bangor or Portland as soon as the Pan-Am flight departed Rockland, to advise the next base of the likely time of arrival.

Among the passengers who flew via Rockland for that short season of scheduled airline trips was one Franklin D. Roosevelt, governor of New York.

According to the Maine Aviation Historical Society, one of the airplanes used on Pan-Am's Maine route that summer came to grief.

A Sikorsky S-41B seaplane airliner crashed into the Gulf of Maine off Gloucester, Mass. August 27, 1931. One passenger died in this wreck.

There is a postscript to this story that underlines the facts of competition in the transportation industry. It is not surprising that a railroad company should get involved in the airline business. The Maine route was said to be probably the first such arrangement in this country, possibly in the world.

But the railroads had a tradition of diversifying in order to get the maximum amount of income from the travel business.

For example, the Maine Central Railroad once owned a steamship wharf on Mechanic Street in Rockland, and in 1925 set up a subsidiary to own the Samoset and other resorts as well as trucks and buses.

But in the end it all ended. In January 1947, Maine Central Railroad ran a large advertisement in newspapers complaining bitterly about how the government subsidized airports to the railroad's disadvantage.

By then Owls Head airfield, built as a military air base, was operating as a civilian airport.

Finally it should be noted that, by coincidence, the Pan-Am service at Rockland began the day after the Rockland-Thomaston and Camden Streetcar Company ceased operating in the midcoast area. As one mode of transportation folded, another opened up.

This Was a Buzz Job

From early 1942 to early 1943, the United States Navy had a small detachment of patrol aircraft based at the Auburn/Lewiston (A & L), Maine airport. In early 1943, the airport was turned over to the British for their use as a Royal Navy Flight Training Facility.

When the U.S. Navy operated out of the A&L Airport, they referred to this base as the "United States Naval Auxiliary Air Facility Auburn Maine." The US Navy established their operation in what had been a tavern called "The Landing." *The Landing* was located across the street from the airport. My mother and father operated *The Airport Store* next to *The Landing*. The building that housed the store had three floors; the store was located on the main floor and the living quarters on the second and third floors. There was an oil furnace in the back of the store, an oil operated kitchen stove on the second floor but there was no heating facilities for the two bedrooms on the third floor. In addition to running the store, my father also worked the night shift at the Ship Yard in South Portland, Maine. It was customary for my father to sleep from 4 pm to 9 pm and then leave for work at 10 pm. My father's habit was to sleep in his one piece Long Johns during the winter months because of the lack of heat on the third floor.

Sometime in late October or early November, one of the patrol aircraft was returning to base in the late afternoon and decided to do a Buzz Job on the Navy Operation next to *The Airport Store*. In order to do a good Buzz Job, I was informed that the pilots should not fly directly over the intended target but to one side, in a slight bank, so as to get a good view of your target. It is also good to fly over the target as low and fast as possible in order to create as much noise as possible. A good pilot flying a good airplane might also do a slow roll on climb out. On this afternoon, the pilot (using good judgment) did not do a slow roll nor did he reel-in his trailing antenna. Trailing antenna – what's that? Aircraft at that time were equipped with radios that used trailing antennas to improve the range of their radios. These antennas trailed out the lower aft part of the aircraft with a small cone or lead weight at the end to reduce the whipping action of the antenna. It was necessary, of course, to reel in the antenna before landing – like a fisherman would reel in his fishing line – so as not to damage the antenna.

Well you guessed it! The airplane went right over the store and the lead weight hit right in the center of the roof. Had there been a target painted on the roof, the pilot would have received a perfect score.

The lead weight went through the roof smashing through the attic and ceiling slats eventually coming to a rest on a dresser three feet from my father's bed. Needless to say, this was the end of my

father's nap! Dad came out of the bed three feet in the air. He hit the floor running with his bare feet dressed only in his Long Johns. Not realizing what exactly happened, he ran down the two flights of stairs and out the back door into the back yard. As he stood in the back yard bare foot and dressed only in his Long Johns, he was trying to comprehend what had just happened. Dad thought that this must have been a bad dream. After all he did not see any fire trucks, police officers or ambulances and there was no airplane sticking out of the roof.

Dad walked into the back of the store. My mother looked at him and asked him what he was doing in the store dressed in his Long Johns. Dad asked Mom, "What happened?" She told him that an airplane just flown over the store and to go back to bed. He told her that he was not going back to bed and that she should come upstairs and see what had just come through the bedroom ceiling.

Later that night, the men that my father commuted to the Ship Yard with came to pick him up. Dad was very quick to tell them about the Buzz Job but of course Dad left out the part about standing in the back yard bare foot in his Long Johns.

Norm Houle



Northeast Airlines
Operated 1931-1972

Cause and result of demise: Merged with Delta on August 1, 1972. Northeast perhaps most famous for its dramatic "Yellowbird" campaign where its new delivery of Boeing 727-200 in 1967 were painted white and yellow. Its humble beginnings were as Boston-Maine Airways, which operated out of Boston and was a joint venture between Boston and Maine Railroad and Maine Central Railroad.

Dues Change

Earlier this year the Board voted to move the dues expiration date to become a single month, rather than staggered throughout the year. The month chosen was 6/30. In order to accomplish this I will prorate all dues during this year so that your dues will extent until 6/30/12. I will send out a notice to every member when your dues have expired and let you know how much your payment will be for the year. However, I have gotten a few people who have sent in the normal dues for a full year. The amount due is computed by dividing the annual dues by 12 and then multiplying the result by the number of months left until 6/30/2012, then round the results up or down to the nearest dollar. For instance regular dues that expire on 11/30/2011 would be

(\$25.00 / 12 = 2.08333 * 7 = 14.58 rounded to \$15.00. The easiest way may be to wait until you receive your dues notice. After 6/30/12, all dues will return to the normal annual amount. Thank you for your help with this change.

Now available:

Memoirs: With an Angel By My Side by member Alfred Cormier.

His flying life as told by Al and available exclusively from the Maine Air Museum.

\$16.00 at the museum, \$20.00 via mail. To order, call or email the museum.

"...a great story by a member of the Greatest Generation.

The United States Air Force in Maine, Progeny of the Cold War

by John Garbinski.

Another exclusive book from the Maine Aviation Historical Society. Softbound, 134 pages, 151 illustrations.

\$20.00 (plus \$4.00 postage and handling). To order, call or email the museum.



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VINTAGE WINGS

MILLERS FIELD

- Flight Instruction - Basic, Tailwheel, Skis, Aerobatics
- Photography - Aerial Oblique, Air to Air
- Aircraft and Parts - Bought and Sold
- Aviation Art, Books, Artifacts



An An-12 belonging to the SRX Transcontinental Airline coming into Bangor International Airport in Sept. SRX was established in 1992 and is the first private airline in Uzbekistan. This particular aircraft is leased to Avialeasing, a freight airline which is 61% owned by SRX Transcontinental and 39% owned by Igor Smirnov. Smirnov is the president of the Pridnestrovian Moldovan Republic. **Photo by member Scott Grant**

Bits & Pieces by Len Harlow

When a WWII volunteer guide at the Cole Land Transportation Museum, I saw the World War II "Crash Truck" there as one of Galen Cole's exhibits. It is nice to see it back "home" on the former Dow Army Air Field (aka BIA) grounds in Bay 2 of our Museum. In July 2009, the Cole Museum contributed the 1944

International 4x4, once used for fighting airplane fires and other emergency chores to our Air Museum where it is having its "last hurrah" as a part of Dow AAF history for our visitors to see. Airports are, of course, where air transportation and land transportation meet. Anyone who has seen the current pickup truck advertisement on TV and the aircraft's broken nose landing gear on the truck's body knows that to be a historical reality.

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MS Lisa Eldridge of the Bangor International Airport staff is busy planning and preparing BGR's Educational Youth Program for Grades 2-4 with 11 activity sessions from March to May. Needless to say, one highlight of the observational and experiential learning program is a tour of the Bangor International Airport. Of interest to our members is MAHS and the Maine Air Museum involvement and museum resources demonstrations. MS Eldridge has left program pamphlets at the Museum that are available to MAHS members and Museum visitors. Lisa Eldridge can be reached at 945-3607 or by e-mail at l Eldridge@flybangor.com.

* * * * *

Since becoming a MAHS member and Museum volunteer I have been trying to recall the name of the tour flight pilot at Old Orchard Beach when I was an elementary school child and we'd returned to New Hampshire from a couple of years on Codman St. overlooking Portland Harbor. Many years after WWII, one of my friends was an auto mechanic whose last name, I believe, was Kemp. He had been the aviation mechanic for the tour flight pilot whose name I don't remember. At age 85, one does occasionally forget. If a member remembers the name of the pilot I'd sure appreciate a call at 207-848-2225 in Carmel.

October Business:

Lisa Eldridge spoke on Bangor Airport Youth Program that will begin in March.
Marois reported that the airport qualifies for aircraft acquisition and he is working with them
It was approved that \$50 be given to Eugene McKay to finish a floatplane display.
It was approved that \$80 be used to finish the wind tunnel display.
The helicopter raffle was won by Marilyn Rocelle from LaGrange.
Officers for next year will remain the same and Scott Grant has agreed to run for President. We also have five board members to vote into office.
There was a discussion of next year's raffle item and options for selling tickets.

VOTE

Please vote via the attached ballot and mail it to the MAHS/Maine Air Museum at **PO Box 2641, Bangor, Maine 04402.**

Upcoming

November meeting, 11/12/2011 at Maine Instrument Flight at the Augusta Airport.
December meeting, 12/10/2011 at Curtis Air at the Pittsfield Airport.
January meeting, 1/14/2011 at the General Aviation Conference Room at Bangor International Airport.
February and March meetings are cancelled due to travel concerns.

Maine Air Museum staffing

As always, volunteers are needed. Can you spare a few hours to help us out? If so, drop me a note via email mam@maineairmuseum.org or call the museum and leave a message. We do need your help.

Association Officers

President: open
Vice President: John Miller, Newburgh, ME vintagewings@cs.com
Recording Secretary: Les Shaw les989@yahoo.com
Corresponding Secretary: Al Cormier acormier3@roadrunner.com
Treasurer: Joe Quinn, Levant, ME, 1966corvair@gmail.com

. The Maine Air Museum is located at the 98 Maine Avenue adjacent to the Bangor International Airport
44° 48' 2.10" North 68° 48' 36.02" West



Maine Aviation Historical Society Maine Air Museum * Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Special Interests: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Dues are for one year, and membership will expire in the month you joined.

Annual membership includes six newsletters!

Mail payment to:
Maine Aviation
Historical Society
PO Box 2641
Bangor, ME 04402-2641

Membership	Dues	Benefits
Regular	\$25 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission
Family	\$35 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission
Corporate	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission
Supporting	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission, .
Lifetime	\$500*	Newsletter, Lifetime Membership Number, Museum Admission,
	* 2 annual \$250 payments	

We need volunteers-docents, mechanics, maintenance, librarians and exhibit specialists, etc.

Please call me. I want to be active in the organization.

I cannot join now, but would like to help. I am enclosing a check for \$_____.

Contributions over \$20 are tax deductible within the limits of the law.

I wish to support and obtain membership by purchasing a memorial brick.

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