

# Dirigo Flyer

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society

PO Box 2641, Bangor, Maine 04402 • 207-941-6757 • 1-877-280-MAHS (in state)

[www.maineairmuseum.org](http://www.maineairmuseum.org) [mam@maineairmuseum.org](mailto:mam@maineairmuseum.org)

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This photo was retrieved from a photo album in the Harrison, ME Transfer Station by Mr. Achille Belanger of Harrison. The picture appears to have been taken in 1939 at the Maple Ridge Airport in Harrison, ME. Mr. David Parot owner of the Maple Ridge airport and other pilots were not sure about identifying the make and model of this airplane. The picture went to the Maine Air Museum (MAM) in Bangor, ME and was promptly identified as a **Barkley-Grow T8P-1** by Maine Aviation Historical Society (MAHS) member Dick Jackson of Rochester, NH. Information on this aircraft was found in Vol. 7 of the *U.S. Civil Aircraft* by Joseph P. Juptner and via internet sources.

Only eleven of this aircraft were manufactured. It is assumed that the low number of this aircraft being manufactured was twofold, one they were built in the time of the great depression and competed with two larger and well known manufacturers, Lockheed Model 12 and Beech Model 18. This photo is believed to have been that of the first T8P-1 (Transport, 8 Passenger) built, serial #1. It was originally registered as NX-18388. After being certified and receiving Aircraft Type Certificate #662 on October 30, 1937 the registration was changed to NC-18388. Because the undercarriage was not retractable (fixed-gear) they were well suited to be fitted with floats. Most of these aircraft were fitted with floats or skis and went to Canada and were well received as a bush plane.

Photo courtesy of Norm Houle

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## OPEN HOUSE

On Sunday June 17th the Maine Air Museum held an open house in conjunction with the static show and flying show of the Texas Flying Legends Museum. The aircraft were parked right beside our Museum and created a very large crowd. We opened from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. and had an estimated 400 plus who toured the Museum. There were many positive comments about our displays and many noted that they had no idea we

were here or open. While we charged no admission, we did collect \$70.00 in donations as well as selling \$206.00 from the gift shop. Bob Hirshberg also sold pictures of the Texas Flying Legends Museum aircraft and crew at the Museum and donated \$100, all of his revenue, to us. It was a wonderful day, weather wise and also for the Museum as we now have 400 people who may tell others about us. Many said they would be back again to visit. Thanks go out to the ten members who came in and helped us monitor the crowds and answer questions. The parking lot was full, with overflow cars parking on both sides of Maine Avenue from General Aviation almost to the Hammond Street light.




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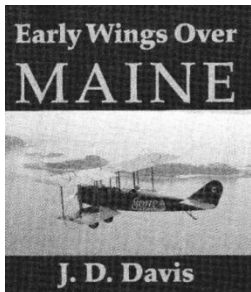
## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This year has been off to a great start, we have started a number of new projects and are putting finishing touches on some others. I want to thank all of the members for all the hard work over the years keeping this museum open to help educate and entertain people. The new SBS Box which is a radar style program for everyone to enjoy will be linked into the web link shortly. Come and visit MAM and see for yourself all the exciting new displays, and if you are interested in helping there are so many ways we could use you. Everyone has something to bring to the museum.

Matt Watkins and I met with the city to go over the loan payment for the roof. The city officials reported that they love having the museum at the airport and would like us to be there for years to come. They were very interested in the ideas we have as we move forward. I still have a meeting with the Board of Directors to come.

More exciting news to come, we are planning different kinds of fund raisers and as soon as we have the official go ahead we will be looking for volunteers so stay tuned. I hope everyone is having a great summer. If you know anyone that enjoys aviation history, send them our way.

.....Scott Grant



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## **EJECTION SEAT**

A Maine Forest Ranger has found an ejection seat from the 1963 crash of a B-52 bomber in western Maine and intends to bring the seat to the permanent memorial site being created to honor the aircrew who died in the mishap, reported the *Bangor Daily News* May 22, 2012. "I had a pretty good idea of what it was and it is kind of eerie finding something like this in the middle of the wilderness, knowing what happened almost 50 years ago", said Range Bruce Reed, who discovered the seat on a logging road on Elephant Mountain last fall according to the newspaper. Reed returned to it on May 19 to log its coordinates for its planned recovery on May 24. On Jan. 24, 1963, the B-52 reportedly left Westover AFB, Mass. on a low-level training mission when a malfunction caused the unarmed bomber to crash, killing seven airmen. Two airmen survived according to the account.

...from *Air Force Magazine* May 23, 2012

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## **Ken DeWitt Central Maine Flying Service (continued)**

When the war ended in 1945 Ken was back home celebrating VJ Day by flying a J-5 Cub Coupe with another man around Old Town performing aerobatics, maneuvers he taught to his students in the flight schools. Apparently a wing strut broke during one of these gyrations causing the wing to begin to fold upwards and the plane became nearly uncontrollable. Ken inverted the plane after the 'snap' to put a load on the wing in the opposite direction and by then was headed for the middle of town. Ken turned it around and landed in a tree by the Milford Cemetery. He exited the plane but his passenger did not, so Ken began climbing the tree to free him. The passenger came to and exited the plane "in a hurry" and in the process the entire tree collapsed and everything fell to the ground, with Ken trapped underneath it all. After working his way out, he carried his passenger three or four hundred feet toward the road. By then folks were arriving at the spot and took Ken's passenger. Ken then found he couldn't walk as a piece of the seat had penetrated his groin, which required several stitches to close. He stated he didn't feel a thing until he was relieved of carrying his friend.

The University of Maine in the early forties had CAA flight programs and later several Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs. These involved training civil pilots in ground classes and flight training. Graduates would proceed into military positions. Additional training became available under the G.I. Bill. It provided funds for educating returning military personnel in various vocations, including flight training. Many persons took advantage of the G.I. Bill to take advanced training in flying, such as obtaining a commercial pilot's license, an instrument rating, multi-engine rating, seaplane rating and flight instructor certificates. There was much aviation activity in that period.

It appears that Airways, Inc. asked Ken if he would help out with training some of the University's flight cadets. He was assigned five primary students to start. There was a Waco aircraft on the field that Ken made known he wished to fly; it was larger than the one he had owned. He was 'checked out' in it after 90 minutes by another pilot familiar with it, and the next day Ken took it up solo. Prior to that flight Ken preflighted the airplane and checked the oil as always. Once airborne, Ken inverted the airplane and was rewarded with the result of not locking the oil cap; a couple of gallons of oil came out and was blown about by the propeller wash. He immediately rolled to normal flight and landed, but the cleanup took far longer than that flight did. Ken was later given secondary students to train, and gave some of them their final check ride. He had a nickname of "Maytag DeWitt", because he would 'wash you out' of the program if you didn't meet his standards. This name probably followed Ken from his work in Virginia and Fort Bragg, while the war was still on.

In the fall of 1944 Ken started Central Maine Flying Service, was President of the company and located it in a 14 foot by 17 foot building at Old Town's airport. Norm Doliber remained with Ken as a mechanic, and some others in the early organization are believed to be George Gary, Percy Billings and Burt Gilman (P-47 Test

pilot; Burt soloed Dick Martin in 1944 or so). Each of these individuals is worthy of a story too. Later Joe LaFrance and Ivan Marshall joined the staff as A & P mechanics. By 1952 CMFS had two hangars, an office building, five T hangars and fifteen airplanes in service. There were three pilots, two mechanics and a bookkeeper – Ken’s wife Dot. Others in those times were Instructor Grady Sharpe, Francis Bouchard, Ralph Moore (went to Northeast Airlines – NEA, Ralph’s father won a Piper J-3 in a cigarette contest), Archie Ricker, Norman Houle (1950 to 1952, later NEA & Delta Captain), Dick Martin (1952 to August 1965, then to Great Northern Paper), (Norman gave Dick his commercial check ride), George Tinker 1954 and on, Frank Manzer, Manning Hobbs (ground school instructor), Randy Maharon, Ken Mitchell, Howard Brush and yours truly. The office staff in ‘62 included Dick Kelley and Marge Tinker (George Tinker’s wife). He was affectionately known as “Father DeWitt.” Ken did have a habit of saying everything twice, everything twice.

Ken took on a distributorship in 1948 for the Piper Aircraft Corporation based in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, and was one of their top performers over 25 years. His territory was Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. Mr. Piper visited Mr. DeWitt many times. Those were great years for General Aviation. Max Conrad, legendary ferry pilot, and Ken were good friends, and Max ferried Piper airplanes all over the world, many trips departing from Old Town to cross the Atlantic. He has flown solo at least 33 times between the US and Australia, and made one trip from Capetown, South Africa to St. Petersburg, Florida in 57 hours nonstop in a Piper Twin Comanche. The fuel load was three times the plane’s empty weight! A tribute to Piper. *(to be continued)*

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## OBITUARIES

**Robert C. Umberger** Sr. 91, formally of W. Rockport and Bangor passed away June 18, 2012 at HOPE Hospice in Ft. Myers. He was born May 23, 1921, in Pittsburgh, PA. He grew up in Salem, OH. Knowing it was his patriotic duty he enlisted the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor and flew 30 combat missions, lead crew, with the renowned 8th AF, 303rd Bomb Group :Hells Angels”, receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross. Later in life he was active with the 8th AF Association, the 303rd Group reunions, and was a member of DAV, American legion, and the Maine Aviation Historical Society.

While stationed at Dow Field, Bangor ME before heading to the war front he met Jaye Sleight who volunteered at the Bangor USO. In 1945 they married in Salem at St. Paul’s Catholic Church. They chose to make their home in Maine. Robert graduated from the University of Maine with a B.S. in Forestry and served 36 years as a professional forester with the Maine Forest Service, retiring in 1987. In retirement he enjoyed family and travel.

Robert was predeceased by his wife Jaye Sleight Umberger. He is survived by his three sons, a daughter, and their families. Robert was laid to rest with his wife at the Veteran’s Memorial Cemetery in Augusta.

**Benjamin J. Butera**, 85, passed away June 2, 2012 in Bangor ME. He grew up and was educated in Bangor. Enlisted in the U.S. Navy during WW II, Learned to fly on the GI Bill. Ben owned and operated Butera’s Sunoco Station, Million Mile Muffler and a fuel oil business in Brewer. Ben loved to fly and some of his airplanes were based in Brewer. He was a member of the Maine Aviation Historical Society, Quiet Birdmen, and VFW Post 4633.

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## STEM



The Maine Air Museum is proud to announce the completion of the first phase of its Scientific, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) educational demonstrations with the introduction of its new Wind Tunnel to the three other STEM exhibits previously on display. Not only do these demonstrations entertain and inform but they stimulate scientific reasoning in children of all ages. Key components of the Wind Tunnel display originated at the Museum of Science and Industry in Tampa, Florida. Mr. David Conley, vice President of Exhibits, was replacing the exhibit and it was offered to the Maine Air Museum where has been given a second “career”. The new Wind Tunnel was redesigned and constructed by museum volunteers Bob Littlefield a retired science teacher from the Orono schools system and Hank Marois, a University of Phoenix faculty member. It took the two over a year to complete the project.

The two previously designed and constructed the first exhibit of the STEM series, BERNOULLI’S 3-RING CIRCUS. Mr. Littlefield then designed and constructed the VENTURI EFFECT display and the most recently constructed “BERNOULLI in SPACE”.

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A French Air Force Mirage 2000-5 taxiing behind the Maine Air Museum. Photo courtesy Scott Grant.

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## **EVENTS**

**Aug. 4...** Wings & Wheels at Owls Head Transportation Museum

**Aug. 4-5...** The Great New England Airshow at Westover, MA

**Aug. 11...** MAHS Monthly meeting 10 a.m. at the Maine Air Museum, Bangor

**Aug. 25-26...** The Great State of Maine Airshow at Brunswick.

**Aug. 25-26...** Bowman Field Fly-in.

**Sep. 6-9...** Greenville Seaplane Fly-in.

**Sep. 6-9...** Horizon Hobby Air Meet at Sanford Municipal Airport with six model venues, RC planes, helicopters, cars, trucks, boats, and tethered aircraft. This is a nationally sponsored show.

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## **Association Officers**

President: Scott Grant [targete2007@yahoo.com](mailto:targete2007@yahoo.com)

Vice President: John Miller, Newburgh, ME [vintagewings@cs.com](mailto:vintagewings@cs.com)

Recording Secretary: Les Shaw [les989@yahoo.com](mailto:les989@yahoo.com)

Corresponding Secretary: Al Cormier [acormier3@roadrunner.com](mailto:acormier3@roadrunner.com)

Treasurer: Joe Quinn, Levant, ME, [1966corvair@gmail.com](mailto:1966corvair@gmail.com)

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. 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**

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## Maine Aviation Historical Society Maine Air Museum \* Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**All dues expire on  
June 30th of each year.  
If joining mid-year,  
pay \$2.00 for each  
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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* * 2 annual \$250 payments	Newsletter, Lifetime Membership Number, Museum Admission,

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.

**DIRIGO FLYER  
MAINE AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PO BOX 2641  
BANGOR, ME 04402-2641**