



DIRIGO FLYER

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Attending the December 11th meeting at the Jetport were Clay Carkin, Rob Rohr, Larry Joy, Cliff Haines, Neal Strange, Norm Bishop, Norm Houle, Ira Milliken, Lin Dall, James, Jim and Wanda Chichetto, Philip Kemp and Leo Boyle.

Plans were made for 1994. A schedule of meetings follows subject to the usual changes. All meetings will be on the second Saturday of each month at 9 a.m. In case of a bad storm, the meeting is postponed to the third Saturday.

January 15	9 a.m.	Conference Room, Portland Jetport
February 12	9 a.m.	Conference Room, Portland Jetport
March 12	9 a.m.	Freeport Middle School
April 9	2 p.m.	Barnstomer Restaurant, Pease AFB, NH. This will be a joint meeting with the Massachusetts AHS. We will all have dinner there after the meeting.
May 14	TBA	Wiscasset Airport, Wiscasset
June 11	TBA	Sanford Airport, Sanford. Visit Lou Furnas' Field in Berwick after tour of tower.
July 2, 3	9 a.m.	Military Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum. We hope to have a table and display there.
August 13	TBA	Bangor Airport, Bangor
Sept. 10, 11	9 a.m.	Greenville Fly-In, Greenville. (Jim, host) We hope to have a table and display there.
October 8	9 a.m.	Oxford Aviation, Oxford. (Rob & Lloyd, hosts) Tour of Oxford Aviation.
November 12	9 a.m.	Lewiston/Auburn Airport. Possible tour of 1649s.
December 10	9 a.m.	Conference Room, Portland Jetport

Many members have paid their 1994 dues, and as a result we have almost \$500 in the bank. For those who haven't renewed, now is the time. More and better meetings and more interesting newsletters are coming your way in 1994.

As you will see, this issue contains an historical article. We need you, the members, to send in your interesting stories for inclusion in future newsletters. We can use 3 - 5 double-spaced typewritten pages. Can't type? Think you can't write? Get the information on paper and we'll handle the editing and typing.

We are also looking for speakers for some of our meetings. They don't have to be members, but members are also welcome. Tales of their experiences, remembrances, slide shows, what have you . . .

The *Flying Down East* calendar sold very well during the Christmas season. Everyone who ordered by mail will receive a copy of this newsletter and hopefully we'll get a few new members. We still have calendars, so if you need some contact Brian or Leo. Plans are underway for the 1995 calendar and we're looking for good pictures. Hopefully, we've learned some lessons and know how to sell more in '95.

Philip Kemp is still working on *Adventures of a Yellowbird* reprint, and we should have more details at the January meeting.

NAS Brunswick will not have a show this year as they were not on Blue Angels schedule - possibly 1995. If you would like a tour of Brunswick NAS, let Rob or Ed know at the January meeting so they can arrange it with Capt. Rachor, Commanding Officer.

The tentative schedule for our hikes for 1994 is as follows:

April, May	Great Spruce Mountain (<i>White Bird</i>)	Time TBA
August 13	Bald Mountain (<i>F-101</i>)	After meeting
September 10	Elephant Mountain (<i>B-52</i>)	After meeting
TBA	Chamberlain Lake (<i>F-89</i>)	Time TBA
TBA	Levant (<i>F-86</i>)	Time TBA

CALENDAR of UPCOMING EVENTS

April 8-10	TICO, Titusville, Florida
April 10-16	Sun 'n Fun, Lakeland, Florida
May 29	Ford Meet and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
June 19	Transportation and Technology Auction, Owls Head Transportation Museum
June 2, 3	Military Aviation and Aerobatic Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
July 10	50s and 60s Meet and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
July 23, 24	Truck and Tractor Meet and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
July 28-Aug. 3	Oshkosh, Wisconsin
Aug. 6, 7	Annual Rally and Aerobatic Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
August 21	Antique, Classic Auto Auction, Owls Head Transportation Museum
Sept. 4	Motorcycle Meet and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
Sept. 10, 11	Seaplane Fly-In, Greenville, Maine
Sept. 11	Convertible Meet and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
October 2	Foreign Festival and Fall Flying Finale, Owls Head Transportation Museum
October 23	Great Fall Auction, Owls Head Transportation Museum

New Members (since September '93 newsletter)

50. John S. Craig Jr.	Rt. 4, Box 1085, Bangor, ME 04401	
51. Lee and Dee Trenholm	P.O. Box 78, East Vassalboro, ME 04935	207-872-5555 (B)
52. Linwood G. Dall	RR 1, Box 2521, Shapleigh, ME 04076	207-636-3057
53. Don Bishop	57 Jackson Street, Portland, ME 04103	207-878-5563
	Aviation Services, Inc., Sanford Airport 04073	207-324-5504
54. John Miller	RR 2, Box 4190, North Road, Newburgh, ME 04419	207-234-2777
55. Allyn Caruso	RR 2, Box 3895, Carmel, ME 04419	207-848-7227
56. S.P. Ted Brady	3 Sea Spray Drive, Biddeford, ME 04005	
57. Owls Head Transportation Museum (Charles Chiarchiarro, Director)	Box 277, Owls Head, ME 04854	207-594-4418
	P.O. Box 67, Bernard, ME 04612-0067	207-204-3553
58. Lawrence Closson		

MAINE AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Special Interests _____ Phone _____

1994 Membership Dues are \$20.00, includes balance of 1993.
Please mail payment to: **Maine Aviation Historical Society**
101 Monroe Avenue
Westbrook, ME 04092-4020

New
 Renewal

For more information, call 207-854-9972.

THE FIRST FATALITIES

by Leo Boyle

The dubious honor of becoming the first aviation fatality in the state of Maine was to fall to Charles Oliver Jones of New York. Originally from Cincinnati, he came to Hammondsport, New York to join Alexander Graham Bell and Glenn Curtiss of the Aerial Experiment Association. They built various aeroplanes to the designs of the different members with varying degrees of success. Among the most successful was the *June Bug*, usually flown by Glenn Curtiss. Evolved from Jones' ideas, it made record flights of short distances, finally winning the Scientific American prize for the first plane to fly 30 miles per hour into the wind.

Jones was also interested in lighter-than-air flight and built a Strobel airship which he named *Boomerang*. On June 16, 1908, he made his first ascension at Hammondsport. This airship was 95 feet long and 20 feet in diameter. A second bag in the rear was designed to carry refill hydrogen gas. Hanging beneath the bag was a bamboo frame designed to carry up to three people and a 40 h.p. motor driving a propellor. It was claimed that it could make 75 miles per hour.

On his first flight, he flew over the County Farm to Watkins, 26 miles away. He circled to Monterey and flew to Savanna, six miles from Bath. Here the flight ended when he hit a tree and tore a six foot gash in the gas bag. In July, he moved to Palisades Park to give exhibitions near New York City. Scarcely a week went by in which he did not have some new hair-raising adventure. In one trip this daring sky pilot fell into the Hudson River from his airship and had to be rescued. His friends cautioned him about his utter fearlessness, but he was determined to continue.

Once he landed his airship on highly charged electric wires but escaped without injury. On another occasion he was attempting a flight from Palisades Park and his air bag broke away prematurely. Narrowly escaping being dashed to pieces, he rode his airship back across country toward Long Island Sound, finally making a safe landing at Throgg's Neck. Four days later, he made a successful flight to Hackensack, New Jersey. Adventures continued, for on July 26th, in the evening, he hit the trees again, punctured his gas bag and broke the frame.

In August, he loaded his airship on the Portland boat and arrived here to fulfill an engagement at the Central Maine Fair in Waterville. He called on the newspaper offices and explained how his airship, unlike others that had fallen, was perfectly safe. He was at the fairgrounds on Monday, August 31st, the opening day of the fair. On Wednesday, September 2nd, he planned to make a flight at 3 p.m. High winds prevented this flight, but by 4:30 p.m. the wind had moderated and he was ready. A very cold night Monday night had caused his air bag to contract and a number of leaks had developed. These were repaired on Tuesday, but high winds had prevented his ascension.

Twenty-five thousand spectators at the fair thrilled when the airship rose slowly into the air and climbed to 500 feet. The airship had just passed out of the fairgrounds when a gasp arose from the crowd as a small tongue of flame issued from under the gas bag in front of the motor. Many in the crowd tried to warn Jones of the danger but it was some time before he noticed the flames. He immediately pulled the rip cord on the gas bag to let the gas escape and enable him to get to earth. Too late, a burst of flame separated the frame from the gas bag.

Jones fell to the earth, the frame and motor landing on top of him, about a quarter mile from the fairgrounds. Among the first to reach him were his wife and child who were at the fair with him. Doctors at the scene were sure he could not live for he had a fractured spine and internal injuries, and he died an hour and a half later. He had planned to go on to Buddeck, Nova Scotia with Lt. Thomas Selfridge to work on a new aeroplane with Dr. Bell. Lt. Selfridge himself was to be killed only two weeks later on September 17, 1908 in an aeroplane crash at Fort Myers, Virginia. He was flying with Orville Wright who was demonstrating his plane for the U.S. Army.

Less than a year later, Maine was to record its second aviation fatality in Portland. A favorite sport at celebrations in those days was to ascend in a balloon and drop from it in a parachute. Professor Joseph LaRoux of Portland, a well-known aeronaut, had been hired to give two parachute drops on the Eastern Promenade to celebrate the Fourth of July in 1909. (The Fourth was on a Sunday, so the celebration was held on Monday, the fifth.)

LaRoux in turn had hired James Corcoran, 28, of New Bedford, Massachusetts to make the afternoon jump. A huge crowd had gathered on the Promenade and some young fellows had been firing off revolvers to frighten the girls. Since the arranged signal for Corcoran to jump was to be LaRoux's firing of two shots, the professor asked the young men to please refrain from firing their guns after the ascension of the balloon. One of the young men seemed to resent the infringement on his rights, especially on the Fourth.

Shortly after Corcoran ascended, and while at a height of only 300 feet, the young man fired off his six-shooter. Corcoran was seen to look down in surprise at the crowd, and then he released his parachute. Needless to say, because of the low height, the parachute did not have time to deploy and Corcoran fell in a heap to the ground. A horse-drawn ambulance rushed him to the Maine General Hospital where he was dead on arrival. It would have been his fifteenth parachute jump. The pistol shooter was never apprehended.

Undeterred by this catastrophe, Professor LaRoux attempted an ascension later in the day. Almost as unlucky, his balloon drifted low over the trees and houses of Munjoy Hill, hit a tree and fell to the ground. LaRoux was injured, but he recovered. He was well-known in the area, he and his wife making many successful jumps from Riverton Park as early as 1896.

Maine Aviation Historical Society
101 Monroe Avenue
Westbrook, ME 04092-4020

NEXT MEETING:
Saturday, January 15, 1994
Portland Jetport