

DIRIGO FLYER

Vol. II, No. 5 May-June 1994

May Meeting Notes

The May meeting was held at the Conference Room of the Portland International Jetport. About a dozen members were in attendance, including Cliff Haines, Ed and Rob Rohr, Neal Strange, Ed Goldman, Jim and James Chichetto, Norm Houle, Brian Wood, Ruth Owen Jones and Leo Boyle. Many exciting upcoming events were discussed and plans were made for our display at Owls Head on July 2-3. Many members attended the Hampton, NH, Flea Market and the Lindbergh Crate event the following weekend.

The Flea Market was a great success with record crowds and the weather was perfect. Early birds were able to pick up some bargains, and it was the day to wander around and see the great antiques on display. A Stinson SM-8A of 1931, Fairchild 24, Waco, and many others were there for close-up viewing. It reminded you of the old days when airports were open and accessible. Of course, many of us thought the hit of the show was our own Sofia Byrne's L-17, which also will be at Owls Head on July 2.

The Lindbergh Crate Fly-By was another exciting event. Present was a gentleman who witnessed Lindbergh's take-off in 1927 from Roosevelt Field in New York. Also present was Austin Williams from Augusta, ME, who was in Paris and saw Lindbergh land. It was a great pleasure to meet and talk with these gentlemen.

The June meeting scheduled for Sanford and Lou Furnas' airstrip in Berwick was postponed to a future date. Your editor's trip to Minnesota combined with the reconstruction of Lou's road and the unfortunate accident at his place combined to cause this delay. We will try to reschedule this meeting at the July meeting at Owls Head.

..... Next Meeting

July 2 and 3, 1994

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Owls Head Transportation Museum, ME

We will be having a display and table there. Please introduce yourself if we haven't met. Volunteers are still needed to man our table. Great fun for all!

FYI • FYI • FYI • FYI • FYI • FYI

- Brian Wood is still editing the videotape made at SMTC by Neal Strange, with Clay Carkin doing the interviewing. We'll let you know when it's finished.
- The Maine Education Council for Aviation and Aerospace is moving ahead rapidly. Membership is only \$10 a year and you can help the future of air-minded young people by joining — a worthy cause. Their next meeting will be in September with further details in the next issue.
- Jim Chichetto took a group of 8 CAP people to visit the F-101 and F-84 sites and apparently a good time was had by all. Let's do more of this.
- The National Convention of the American Aviation Historical Society will be held at Scottsdale, Arizona, from September 8-11. Fees are very reasonable and a great program has been scheduled. Plan now to attend.
- The 1995 *Flying Down East* calendar should go to the printer next week with a great collection of Maine photographs. The price is still tentatively \$6.95, so plan to order yours now.
- Leo Boyle and Oscar Blue surveyed the *White Bird* site by air recently, and Oscar has made two trips by 4WD on the ground. CAP members did a short ground search as well. We hope to head up there again when the foliage (and the black flies!) are not as thick.
- We are still looking for historically significant aviation-related buildings, etc. for the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. Please tell Leo Boyle if you know of any by note or at Owls Head.

New Member News

We welcome another new member:

68. Paul G. Strout (Interested in old aircraft)
RR1, Box 229 • W. Milton Rd. • Farmington, NH 03835-9717
603-755-2406

Research . . . and Interesting Developments

The following article was written by David Grima and appeared in the *Rockland Courier Gazette* on April 10, 1993. Many thanks to them for allowing us to reprint this interesting piece. It's little things like this that add to our aviation history and make sure we don't forget the local people who did so much for aviation.

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Memories of Fisettes's Flying Machines

ROCKLAND — Ralph Stone has some clear memories of Chester Fisettes and his airplanes on New County Road, back in the 1930s. His memories were raked up by the March 25 'Now & Then' feature about George Hall's place on that street.

According to Stone, the place that Hall now uses as a base for his general contracting work was built by Chester Fisettes, and run as an auto showroom and body shop. Fisettes also worked on airplanes, especially recovering their flimsy hides with fabric. Fisettes had the place built with an apartment above, where he lived with his wife, Hazel, and son, Tim.

Stone remembers playing with Tim after moving to the neighborhood in 1934. He recalls watching the whole process

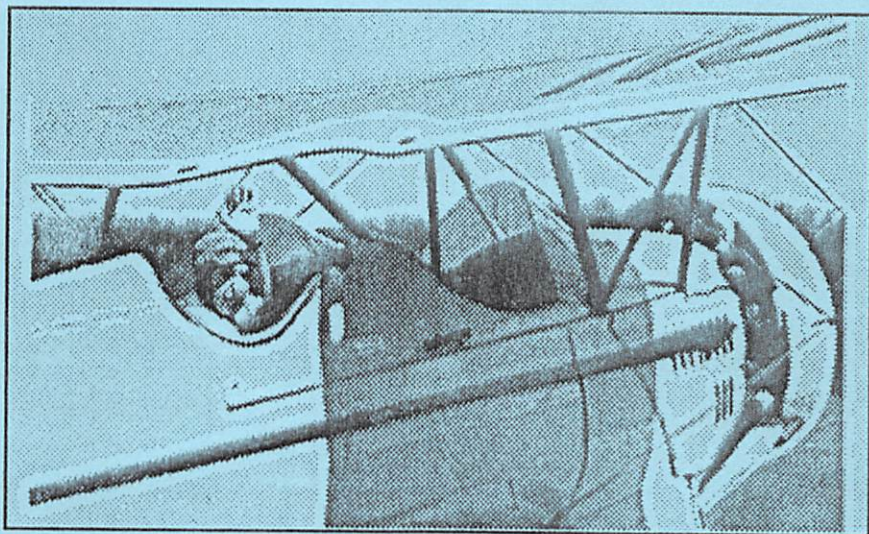
of covering airplane wings and fuselages with linen, which was then painted with dope to make it taut as a drum.

Fisettes had a grass airstrip on Pleasant Street, mowed to just about where the city highway garage is today. He used to taxi his airplanes from the New County Road building along Belvidere to fly from the strip.

One day, Stone says, Fisettes had neglected to mow the strip properly. Taking off was no problem. Landing was another thing. Down came the machine, tangling its undercarriage in the long grass, and over went the tail, flipping the whole thing upside down.

Fearing the worst, Stone and his father, Ralph Sr., went over with fire extinguishers. But all was well. Stone is not sure what kind of machine Fisettes used to hop around in. He remembers a beige monoplane, with a low wing and two open cockpits. Aviation arrived in Rockland in the late 1920s, and there were several airstrips and a seaplane base here by the time things got going. South School on Holmes Street was the site of an airstrip associated with Capt. Wincapaw. Dave's Restaurant in Thomaston is adjacent to the site of another airstrip. Rockland Public Landing once had a seaplane base. Stone's valuable memories are another piece of the picture.

There is a postscript to this story. Gladys Horton of Warren is Fisettes's daughter, although she only knew her dad shortly before he died. Horton says that her father used to build his own airplanes. This may explain why Stone could not place the model he remembers.



Bob St. Jock of Maine, New England Aerobatic Champion, 1938-1939, with his Waco Stunt Plane.

Upcoming MAHS Meetings

July 2, 3	9 a.m.	Military Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum. We will 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 15	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

Calendar of Events

July 2, 3	Military Aviation and Aerobatic Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
July 11, 12	NAS, So. Weymouth, MA - Thunderbirds
July 10	50s and 60s Meet and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
July 16	Auburn-Lewiston Airport Open House (rain date: July 17)
July 23, 24	Truck and Tractor Meet and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
July 28-Aug. 3	Oshkosh, Wisconsin
August 6, 7	Annual Rally and Aerobatic Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
August 6, 7	Mt. Washington Regional Air Show, Waynefield, NH
Aug. 19-21	Batavia, NY - Year of the "Cat"
August 21	Antique, Classic Auto Auction, Owls Head Transportation Museum
August 27, 28	Bowman Field Fly-In, East Livermore, ME
Aug. 27, 28	Westover AFB Snowbirds
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
Sept. 17, 18	Shearwater, Nova Scotia, International Air Show
Sept. 24, 25	New England Escadrille Air Show, Pease AFB, New Hampshire
Sept. 24, 25	25th Annual Gadabout Gaddis Air Show, Bingham, ME
October 2	Foreign Festival and Fall Flying Finale, Owls Head Transportation Museum
October 7, 8, 9	30th Northeast Aero Historians meeting, New England Air Museum, Bradley Field, CT
October 23	Great Fall Auction, Owls Head Transportation Museum

MAINE AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Special Interests _____ Phone _____

Annual Membership Dues are \$20.00. (\$10.00 for balance of 1994)

Please mail payment to: **Maine Aviation Historical Society**
101 Monroe Avenue
Westbrook, ME 04092-4020

New

Renewal

For more information, call 207-854-9972.

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

NEXT MEETING:
Sat. & Sun., July 2-3
Owls Head Trans. Museum
Military Air Show