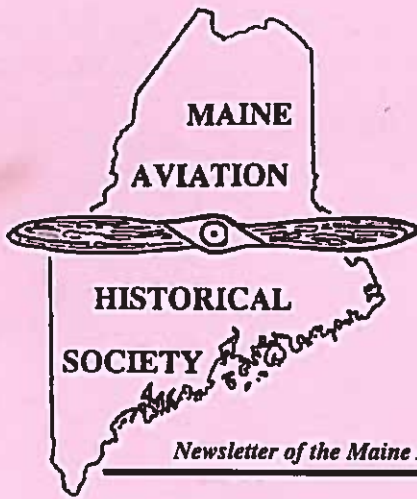


BETTY



# DIRIGO FLYER

Vol. III, No. 11 December 1995

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society • 101 Monroe Avenue, Westbrook, Maine 04092 • 207-854-9972

## A Spirited December Meeting

The spirited December meeting was held at the Conference Room at the Portland Jetport. Among those present were Clay Carkin, Mike Cupka, Scott and Dick Grant, Neal Strange, Frank Powers, Brian Wood, Jack Denison, Norm Houle, Dick Johnson, Cliff Haines, Wayne Briggs, Butch Beaver, Leo Boyle and Jim and James Chichetto.

Non-profit status, election of officers, proposals for meeting places, the Spruce Mountain spring expedition, ad rates for the newsletter and the calendar were discussed. Everyone had stories to tell or pictures to show and a great time was had by all.

## Congratulations! Election Results

The following officers were elected to serve in 1996:

James Chichetto, *President*  
 Clay Carkin, *Vice President*  
 Leo Boyle, *Secretary-Editor*  
 John Miller, *Treasurer*

The above are members of the Board of Directors, but the other three members' election among five candidates is still up in the air. Ballots continue to trickle in and we hope to break the tie and announce the other three at the January meeting.

## 1996 Flying Down East Calendar

Demand continues steady for the 1996 *Flying Down East* calendar which was not produced. Everyone wants to know when the next one will be ready, and the sentiment seems to be for a 16-month calendar running from September 1996 through December 1997, to be out in June 1996 for visitors to the state to purchase through the summer season. Cost figures are being prepared now and I hope to have them by the January meeting.

## Thanks . . . To All

First of all, thanks to all the members who have sent letters, photos and information to me for the newsletter. We'll get to it all eventually and I'll answer you as soon as I can. Special thanks to Dick Jackson for lots of interesting information which will appear in future newsletters.

Emile "Teeno" Gaudin of Portland has donated original issues of the 1937, 1939 and 1940 official programs for the Maine Aero Rendezvous sponsored by the Aero Club of Maine and held in Augusta. "Teeno" hitch-hiked from Rumford to Augusta to view the air show and had his first ride in a Beech Staggerwing at Ranglely. Many thanks for your generosity.

"Butch" Beaver of Pittsfield donated the following

magazines: 2/54 *Flying*; 2/43 and 2/45 *Flying Aces*; and #1, #2 and #3 of *Yankee Pilot*, plus the book German Aircraft and Armament published by Warhawk Publications, 14 Moreau Avenue, Lewiston, Maine. Does anyone know anything about this publishing house?

Scott Grant obtained a great deal of information on the history of Loring AFB and some crashes up there. He also continues to contribute to the treasury regularly. Members Don Brown of Salt Lake City and Wayne Briggs have also made major financial contributions to MAHS and this money helps to defray the cost of our obtaining non-profit status.

Ernest and Billy Kostis continue to improve the WWII Navy control tower at Sanford with a new roof and windows.

## New Year's Dues

Dues are due January 1 for the calendar year 1996. Several of you have already paid, and you should have a 1996 membership card. If you have any questions, let Leo know. Dues are vital to our lifeblood, and as you shall see in the next month's issue, the treasurer's report shows that the majority of your dues goes to the production and mailing of the newsletter. (And don't forget, the writing, articles, compilation and labels are all free.)

Renew now (dues are still \$20 annually) and for \$2.00 more to cover postage costs, receive a free copy of both our 1994 and 1995 *Flying Down East* calendars.

## The Story Behind the Picture

In Vol. III, No. 7, July 1995 we ran a photo of a Curtiss taken at the Lewiston Fairgrounds. Thanks to members Dana Smith and Ed Maliar plus some legwork, we now have the story behind the picture. The first Curtiss biplane arrived Sunday afternoon but was not working properly. A second machine (No. 13), the one in the picture, arrived Monday morning, September 4, 1911. Beckwith Havens flew the Curtiss Monday afternoon and Tuesday. On Wednesday, however, he had engine trouble and had to make a forced landing on Garcelon Meadow, part of Sam Stewart's farm at Mitchell Hill on the Sabattus Road. On Thursday morning, his mechanics I.L. Crantz and Thomas Simmons repaired the engine and Havens flew back to the fairgrounds. He then drove to Poland Spring that afternoon. Although the *Lewiston Evening Journal* touted his flight as "the first successful exhibition of aviation in Maine," he was preceded by George Schmitt at Waterville on August 30, 1911 and St. Croix Johnstone at Augusta on August 9, 1911 in a Moisant monoplane.

## Hazardous Duty in Maine

by Neal Strange

Anti-aircraft weapons in use during World War I were basically field artillery units modified to aim at higher elevation angles. While moderately effective, they were limited in range and accuracy against aerial attack, and when hostilities finally ended all countries involved were convinced that precise ground to air defense would play a major role in future warfare.

Following the war, anti-aircraft guns specifically engineered were manufactured and issued to selected military installations through the U.S. Also, timed explosive shells that scattered devastating shrapnel against infantry troops in France were further refined to saturate high target areas with jagged steel fragments now known as flak.

Peacetime skies, void of enemy aircraft, presented a problem in training anti-aircraft battery personnel. Surplus barrage balloons and tethered kites were substitute targets during early maneuvers but failed to provide sufficient resemblance to airborne invaders. A system was devised, however (probably by non-flying strategists), whereby a highly visible target cabled behind a tow plane and hauled within range of the gun batteries would present a more formidable challenge.

Each August during the mid-1930s, a unit from the 101st Observation Squadron, Massachusetts National Guard, consisting of two Douglas O-46A observation planes with a complement of two flying officers and six enlisted support personnel camped in tents on the Portland Airport (now the International Jetport). Their mission: To provide aerial targets for anti-aircraft batteries located at Fort Williams and Fort Preble on the South Portland and Cape Elizabeth shores.

The Douglas O-46A was a two-place parasol monoplane, designed primarily for observation and photo reconnaissance, pilot in the front cockpit, observer in the rear. To serve as a tow plane, a winch driven by a small four-bladed propeller exposed to the slip stream was installed forward of the camera hatch in the observer's cockpit. Its function was to apply brake action to the cable upon release of the 40 foot target and to rewind cable at the conclusion of the exercise.

When orders to fly were received, the O-46A, with its two man crew, would take off for the short flight across Portland Harbor to a pre-assigned position over the forts. On command the observer would then deploy the target to trail 300 feet behind the aircraft, conveniently within range of the anti-aircraft batteries.

Pilot and observer of Douglas O-46A (Mass. National Guard), 101st Observation Squadron at Stroudwater Field, 1935. (Neal Strange Photo)



Douglas O-46As of the 101st Observation Squadron, Mass. National Guard at Portland Airport (Stroudwater) in 1935. (Neal Strange Photo)

The pilot was then instructed to fly a series of headings through a literal gauntlet of anti-aircraft fire and though the explosive shells were undoubtedly less lethal than their wartime counterparts, they were sufficiently capable of reaching the target 5000 feet above and, on occasion, severing the tow cable.

One can only speculate on the amount of anxiety endured by the pilot and his observer in the performance of those peacetime training missions. Fortunately, with the development of remote-controlled pilotless drones, the manned target was eventually phased out and the unsung crew and the O-46As assigned to other duties.

*P.S. It was with great interest that I read Neal's story printed above. As a young boy I used to spend part of the summer at my grandparents' cottage on Peaks Island in Portland Harbor. How well I remember those beautiful blue and yellow Douglas O-46As flying over Cushing Island, Fort Preble and Fort Williams. Not only did they tow targets for the anti-aircraft guns, but they spotted for the Big Guns of the 240th Coast Artillery. It was great fun to watch the puff of smoke (and sometimes the shell itself), count the seconds 'til the sound arrived, and watch the splash of the shell when it landed in the water. High above were the O-46As watching the shells land and radioing the corrections to the gunners at the forts. Wow, it would be great to see it all again! Can anyone identify the men in the picture above?*

*Also, for Christmas I received a 28" wingspan laser-cut flying model kit (for gas or electric) of the Douglas O-46A. This kit is by Sciencetech of Connecticut. It looks like it will go together nicely and I hope to do some flying with it this summer.*

*The Editor*



**History and Heroes of New Hampshire Aviation**, Jean Batchelder, Arrow Publishing Company, Spring Hill, Florida 228 pages, many photos.

Jean Batchelder has done a fine job of getting some of New Hampshire's aviation heritage together in a book and helping to preserve this information for future generations. The first quarter of the book sketches New Hampshire's aviation history. It begins with ballooning, and tells of early flights and local people in World War I.

A brief history of airline service follows, with an interesting section on New Hampshire airports and the pioneering people involved. The state's participation in World War II plus the stories of air bases such as Grenier Field and Pease AFB are most interesting. A section on the state's "involvement" in aviation and aviation education leads us to the story of the Aviation Association of New Hampshire. The majority of the book consists of 31 biographies of important people in the state's aviation growth. Interesting reading and a valuable addition to your library.

Available for \$16.00 plus \$1.70 postage from Jean Batchelder c/o Aero Publishing, 2142 Meadow Lark Road, Spring Hill, Florida 34608.

## Fate of the Flying Lobster

compiled by Richard Frangella

From the start there were 2 or 3 surplus Navy PBMs purchased by an entrepreneur from Trenton, Maine. They were stationed at Puget Sound in Washington and flown across the states to the East Coast. The original intent in 1948 and 1949 was to transport live lobsters from Newfoundland fishing ports to the markets of Maine, New York and points south, possibly to Florida and even Havana.

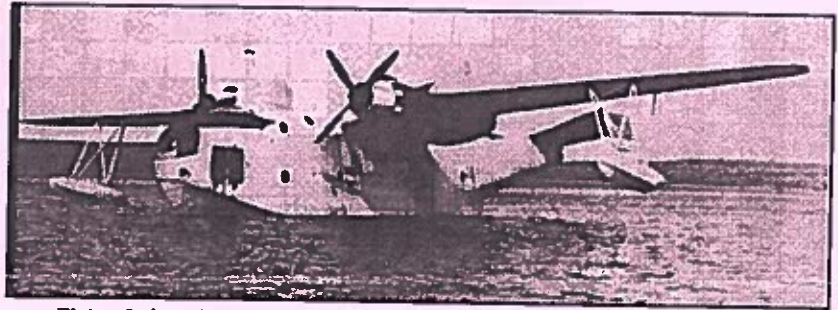
Eventually, the enterprise may not have even gotten off the ground as two of the PBMs were scrapped. The survivor, NC67904, with engines and wiring removed was grounded at Bar Harbor Airport during 1953 and 1954. While at Trenton, the plane had the words "SIGHT SEEING FLIGHTS" crudely spray painted in large letters along the starboard fuselage. The name "FLYING LOBSTER" was stenciled on the port bow. The seaplane was all white and trimmed in black with the American flag markings on the rudders.

In the mid-'50s, the Pan Air Corporation from New Orleans bought the lone PBM on a contract for the Argentina Navy. About three months were required to overhaul and recondition the plane while at Trenton.

Unfortunately, while undergoing taxi trials, it ran into an unseen object in the bay ripping open a section of the hull. Water was taken on but the flying boat was successfully beached. The horizontal stabilizers were torn open to drain the water! Sometime afterwards, the tail was replaced. A local man placed a concrete and poultry wire mesh patch on the torn hull. Then the PBM was flown to New Orleans, landing with patch in place.

The Flying Lobster underwent about a six month overhaul in New Orleans. During this time, the Argentinean Navy kept stalling on accepting the plane. The delivery delays and late payments caused Pan Air financial difficulties. However, the Argentine Navy finally accepted delivery and according to later newspaper articles, this PBM was claimed to be the first aircraft to bomb Juan Peron's government mansion during his overthrow.

The Argentines later used the plane to transport supplies to their new polar stations in Antarctica. While anchored during a storm, it was blown ashore, ending upside down. It was abandoned and the wreckage is believed to still be there. A photo exists somewhere showing the inverted PBM on the Antarctic Peninsula. It is doubtful there is much left of the plane as the Argentines most likely cannibalized or salvaged parts for their stations.



*Flying Lobster's war surplus Martin PBM Patrol Bomber. This plane was one of three used for a short period after World War II to fly lobsters from Labrador to the former NAAF at Trenton. One was parted out and the other two sold. More details wanted. (Norm Houle Photo)*

### Welcome, New Members!

128. **Richard Grant** (*Maine Aviation*)  
1182 Shore Road  
Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107  
207-767-0878
129. **Mike Cupka** (*Aircraft - Outdoors*)  
P.O. Box 509, Middle Road  
No. Waterboro, ME 04061  
(207) 247-3537 • 247-3437 (summer)
130. **Lin Lawrence** (*Maine Aviation History*)  
1100 S.W. Shoreline Drive, #306  
Palm City, FL 34990-4524  
(407) 221-7707
131. **David W. Lawrence** (*ME AV. History*)  
Phoenix Farm, Salem Road  
Rochester, MN 55902-6655
132. **Phil Grant** (*Aviation - Computers*)  
46 Pine Street  
Portland, ME 04102  
(207) 761-9485

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If you are not yet a member, join today  
and help preserve Maine's aviation heritage.  
Enjoy the *Dirigo Flyer!*

# Maine Aviation Historical Society

## Treasurer's Report

12/1/94 — 12/1/95

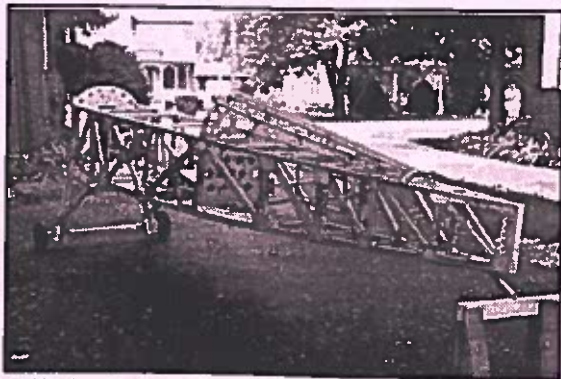
Balance 12/1/94 .....	\$ 307.27
<b>Income</b>	
• Dues .....	\$2100.00
• Miscellaneous <sup>1</sup> .....	645.95
<b>Total Income .....</b>	<b>\$2745.95</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
• Postage <sup>2</sup> .....	\$599.47
• Print Newsletters .....	879.42
• Photostats .....	22.86
• Newsletter Set-up .....	682.93
• Misc. Set-up and Typing .....	53.77
• Miscellaneous <sup>3</sup> .....	150.28
• T-shirts <sup>4</sup> .....	195.00
• Raffle Tickets and Framing <sup>5</sup> .....	28.26
<b>Total Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$2612.01</b>
Balance 12/1/95 .....	\$ 441.21

**NOTE:** Two complete sets of newsletters from Vol. 1, No. 1 to current are preserved. Varying numbers of different issues are on hand to fill needs. Approximately 50 1994 and 200 1995 *Flying Down East* calendars, donated by Leo Boyle and Brian Wood, are on hand.

Complete set-up for 1997 *Flying Down East* calendar (less 1997 calendar date pages) plus \$1000.00 toward production of a 1997 calendar by the Society is available, donated by Leo Boyle and Brian Wood, if money can be raised for production.

- <sup>1</sup> — Includes T-shirt sales, raffle ticket sales, donated calendar sales.
- <sup>2</sup> — Mailing newsletters, calendars, miscellaneous postage.
- <sup>3</sup> — Includes supplies, projector rental.
- <sup>4</sup> — On hand Dec. 1, 1995: 4 extra large, 4 large and 1 medium T-shirt.
- <sup>5</sup> — Raffle ticket printing donated by Brown Fox Printing; miscellaneous services donated by Prototype; miscellaneous postage and supplies donated by Leo Boyle.

Submitted by Leo Boyle, President

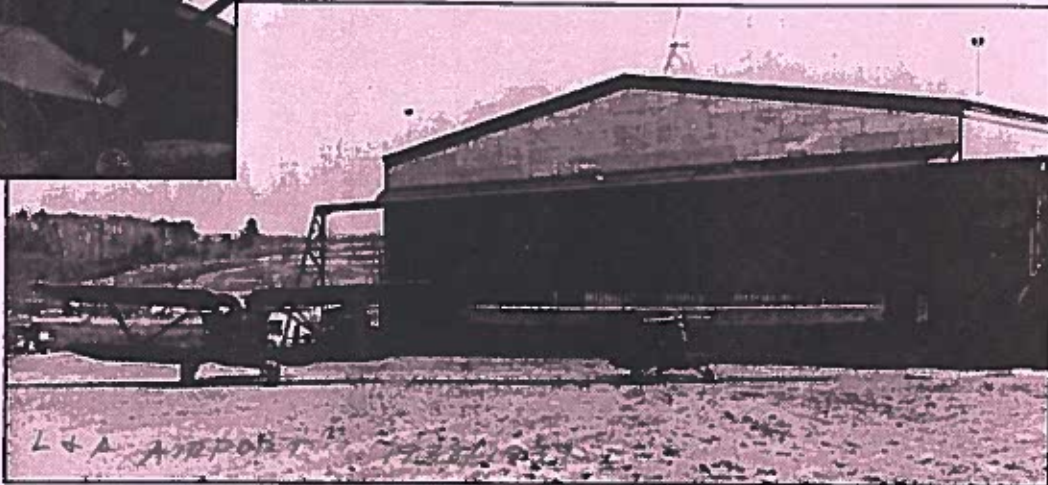


Member Charles Smith (86) of Plainfield, IL sent these pictures. Above is the fuselage of his current Camel project. On the right is his 1929 Fleet Model I. He has owned this for over 30 years and spent eight years rebuilding it. He has rebuilt 13 antiques and still owns nine.





Arthur Shute and Dick Jackson with the Heath Parasol they built in Kennebunkport in 1946. 45 HP 3-cycle Szekeley with 4 inches cut from propeller for ground clearance.



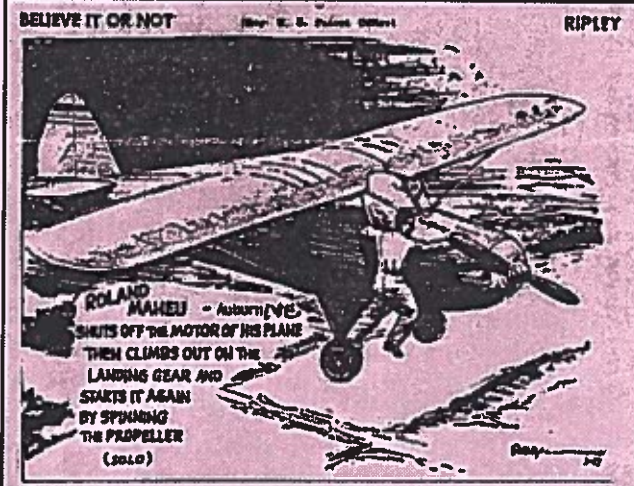
A beautiful Waco and Cub NC-20276 in front of the hangar. Does anyone know where it is and when? Could be Maine or New Hampshire.



Taylorcraft, Cub and Cessna 140 at the old Kennebunk Airport off Route 1, west side, just north of water works in 1946 or 1947. It is now a housing development. (Dick Jackson Photo)



Member Brian Wood took this photo of Ed Hawkins, AMC this summer on Fort Mountain standing by the tail of the C-54A that crashed on 6/19/44. Seven were killed in the accident, which took 8 days to find.



Roland Maheu - Auburn, ME, shuts off the motor of his planes, then climbs out on the landing gear and starts it again by spinning the propeller (solo). — Ripley's Believe It Or Not



Carmen Onofrio and his J-3 Cub in the parking lot of Mt. Washington, where he made 43 landings in March 1947. Born in Canton, ME, he built his own plane and flew in the Bethel area before moving to the Berlin, NH area.

Sample Issues  
\$4.00 each



1 year subscription \$25  
Overseas \$30

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*As of this issue, ads are now available in the Dirigo Flyer. Rates are \$5.00 for three issues per column inch, \$18.00 per year. A full page (2 columns, 8 inches) is \$80.00 for three issues. Call Leo Boyle at 207-854-9972 for annual rates.*

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Norman Houle  
P.O. Box 563  
Barrington, NH 03825

**PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE!**

Next Meeting:  
**Conference Room  
Portland International  
Jetport  
January 20, 1996  
9 a.m.**