



DIRIGO FLYER

Vol. IV, No. 4 April 1996

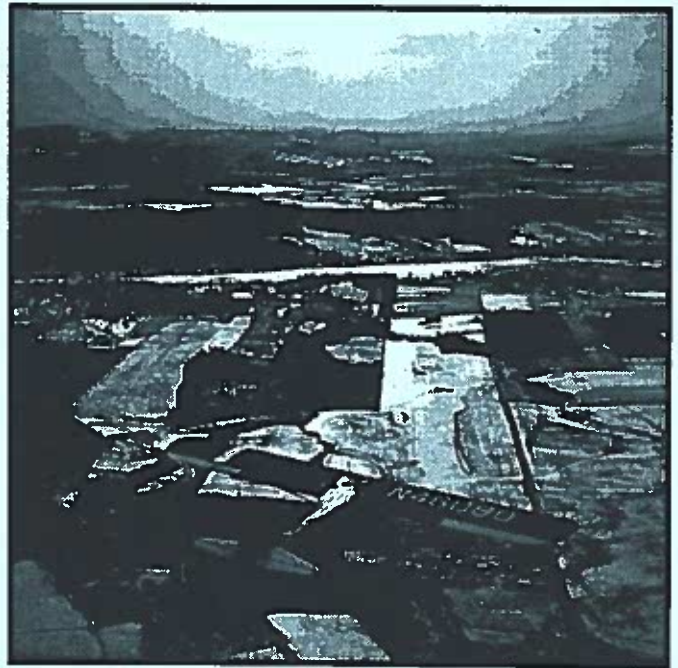
Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society • 101 Monroe Avenue, Westbrook, Maine 04092 • 207-854-9972

The Makeshift Patch

By Jim Chichetto

Author's Note: After World War II, a grateful country discharged hundreds of thousands of G.I.s who had learned aviation skills firsthand during the war. Many brought their love for flying home with them and a new Golden Age of flight was born. Unlike the earlier era after World War I when everyone was barnstorming and showing the country what flying was about, this new age was geared more to light aircraft for the masses. As we know, that dream never took off like the planners thought, but it didn't stop many veterans from looking for that affordable light plane of their dreams. Buying, selling, swapping and trades were made on anything that even looked like it might fly. It was a heady time to run small airports and repair services. Everyone was living on a shoestring budget while waiting for their big break, which was just around the corner. For most, the aircraft fever died out as jobs and family took over their time and money. For others, they got their break and flew into their future. Now years later, these older eagles are starting to talk about those wild times in the late 1940s and early 1950s when young men took to the sky. The following story is true although 45 years of hindsight and insight haven't hurt its telling. The names have been changed to protect the guilty...

In the winter of 1949-1950 there lived in Bangor, Maine a young man named Larry. An employee of a now defunct music store in downtown Bangor, he worked at repairing musical instruments. In his free time he took to the sky in his ex-USAAF L-2 Taylorcraft. At the time of this story, the aircraft sported a red paint job with some white trim. It did not sport a cabin heater and that made for some cold flying. On this day Larry flew up to his father's camp on Caribou Pond to go ice fishing. Caribou Pond is east of Lincoln, Maine and halfway to Lee. It is about a half-hour flight from the Brewer Airport. He landed his aircraft on the clear ice and taxied over to the shore and parked the aircraft. Where he parked the aircraft was a sheltered area by some large evergreen trees. During the day, the sun heated up the top of the wing. As the day progressed, some snow showers came through and the snow landing on the wing melted. As soon as the wing cooled down, the melted snow froze and then other snow started to build up on the wing. By late afternoon, Larry was ready to fly home. While pre-flighting his aircraft, he



brushed the snow away, only to find a thin layer of ice covering his wing and control surfaces. Not having any tools with which to de-ice the aircraft, he broke off a spruce branch and used that to crack the ice and brush it off. Unfortunately, this didn't work well. With a sudden rip, the branch tore into the wing fabric leaving a hole which spread over two wing bays. Larry's dad was at camp and drove him back to Bangor that night.

All the way back to Bangor, Larry pondered his problem. By the time they reached Bangor, he had an idea: he would call his buddy, Pilot X. X would know what to do. He called, and they worked out a plan of action. The next morning Larry and X took off in a Cessna 140 aircraft and flew up to the lake.

Once they landed, X had Larry chop a hole in the ice so they could draw water. Then they built a fire in the outdoor fireplace and placed a bucket of water on it. Once the water was hot, X took it and carefully used it to wipe off the ice and snow on the wing. Care was taken to keep the water from freezing and

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The Makeshift Patch, Continued from Page 1

adding to the problem. Once X had de-iced the wing, he could check it for damage. The damage was limited to the two small bays on the top of the left-hand wing. Not having the time or place to do recovering of the damaged fabric outside, X went to plan B. X carefully undid the sides of a burlap grain bag he had brought with him. He then carefully tucked one end over the leading edge of the wing and wet it. Holding it in place until it froze, he then placed the rest of the burlap on the top of the wing surface and ran it back toward the trailing edge surface, trimming it and then tucking it down so as not to interfere with the flight controls. Once in place, X had Larry bring his water with which to "glue" it in place. Layer by layer, the water was added to the burlap to create an ice patch. After repeated layers had been added, X deemed it flight worthy.

A careful pre-flight was done to ensure all controls were working, then X told Larry to hop in and warm it up. Larry was not completely sold on the ice patch being airworthy and wanted X to fly the repaired aircraft. X agreed to, but told Larry to warm it up while he (X) picked up the tools and put out the fire, etc. After X had picked up everything he walked over and told Larry he was going to start the 140 so it would be warmed up and ready to go. About this time X noticed Larry was getting cold and remembered that the L-2 had no cabin heater. As X was warming up the 140, with a cabin heater, he started to think maybe he didn't want to give up his warm cabin for a cold ride in an L-2.

Pilot X decided to fly the 140 back instead of the L-2. It was a cold day and that cabin heater worked real good. As Larry watched, the 140 started to taxi and then took off from the lake. X made a wide sweeping turn and came back toward the L-2 as it sat on the ice. As the 140 buzzed the L-2 and then kept going toward Brewer, Larry realized he had been snookered. He moved the throttle open and took off. X was waiting for him as he cleared the lake and they flew in wordless formation back to the Brewer Airport. The ice patch held nicely, and the L-2 landed safely. X shot a few photos on the trip back. In the photo here, the patch on the wing is clearly seen. While it may not have been quite legal, it was a great example of Yankee ingenuity at its best. Larry sold his aircraft a short time later, and Pilot X flew on to bigger and better adventures in the aviation world.

★ SUPPORT THE MECAA ★

MECAA, Maine Education Council for Aviation and Aerospace, is a two-year-old non-profit organization whose mission is to promote aviation education to the youth of Maine. We also provide numerous services and resources to teachers in all schools and organizations. One of our many projects is ACE Camp. ACE (Aviation Career Education) is an FAA-sponsored camp for students ages 13-17. Last year, ACE Camp was held at the Brunswick NAS and was very successful. We are proud to announce the Air National Guard's 101st Air Refueling Wing at Bangor will sponsor ACE Camp '96. For more information on MECAA or ACE Camps, contact Alice Gommoll (207-878-2931) or Malcolm Brydon (207-947-3349). Dues are only \$10.00 annually. MECAA, P.O. Box 66857, Falmouth, Maine 04105.

April Meeting Highlights

The April meeting was held on Saturday the 13th at the Portland International Jetport. A good turnout of lively souls kept the tall tales flying and the questions coming. The non-profit status is just awaiting the IRS approval after the changes required in the by-laws. The Treasurer's report shows a balance of \$693.25 as of that date. We continue to add about four new members a month, so let's do some recruiting and keep the society growing. Special thanks are due to Don Strout and Norm Houle for their efforts in this direction.

Airshow Plans Progressing

The Great State O' Maine Airshow is progressing well and we're looking forward to a good turnout of members. Anyone with any ideas for exhibits for this (and other) shows should contact Scott Grant at 207-774-4438 or 761-9288 (bus.). We hope to have 1996-'97 *Flying Down East* calendars, T-shirts and possibly hats and decals for sale there.

White Bird / Mt. Success Updates

Bill Nungesser called me from New York on the *White Bird* situation. The people in France are running a little behind, but they promised Bill that they would have a video available about the time you receive this newsletter. We are on hold on our expedition until we hear if they are going to join us. We will keep you posted.

Brian Wood is planning a hike to the site of the Northeast Airlines DC-3 crash on Mt. Success (near Berlin, NH) on July 27. Quite a bit of wreckage remains and it should be a lot of fun. Call Brian at 207-985-6479 for details.

Watch for MAHS June Meeting

The June meeting will be in the Bangor area, so watch the next newsletter for details.

Hampton Airport Flea Market

Don't forget the Flea Market at Hampton, NH Airport on May 18th and 19th. We'll be looking for you there.



Welcome New Members

145. **Henry Babcock**
RR 1, Box 1030
Carmel, ME 04419 (207) 848-5118
777. **Capt. Morgan S. Barbour (Historical Aviation)**
6432 129th Avenue, SE
Bellevue, WA 98006-4024
146. **Maurice Cloutier**
P.O. Box 681480
Park City, UT 84068 (801) 645-7716
147. **Jules J. Arel**
RR 2, Box 3090
Bangor, ME 04401 (207) 848-2275

Correction:

140. **Paul G. Davis** Tel.: (352) 625-3555

May Meeting Features Special Guest

The May meeting will be held at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 11 in the Pilot's Lounge at the Lewiston-Auburn Municipal Airport Terminal Building. Call Leo (207-854-9972, eves.) if you need directions. Our featured guest will be Roland Maheu, that well-known pilot from the Lewiston-Auburn area. A pilot for over 60 years, Roland has a home-built and a Maule at his airstrip in Minot. Come hear Roland for an enjoyable Saturday morning.

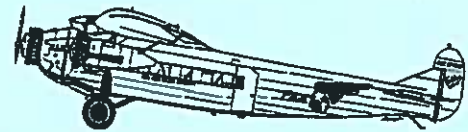
Roland Maheu

If you had been around in 1940 and had attended the New England Air Acrobatic Championships, you would have seen Roland Maheu of Minot, ME at age 27 walk away with top honors. From that day on, until 1956, he thrilled and delighted huge spectator crowds with his death-defying air antics. His antics include wing walking, low level acrobatics, landing on a moving car, and starting his J3 by hand while standing on the landing gear at 1000'. This is the list which made him famous nationally and internationally. This list also gives a composite of the man. Adventure, precision, and dedication have led Roland Maheu through life.

Aviation has been important to Roland as long as he can remember. He's been flying for over 60 years. His strongest efforts on behalf of aviation have been in the area of instruction. Since his infamous experience when he was taught, Roland has dedicated himself to producing safe, knowledgeable pilots. He was a captain in the Civil Air Patrol. During WW2 he trained Navy pilots in submarine observation. They would graduate from his training to become junior officers in the Navy. He trained them at his own airfield in Minot, ME. This was the only airstrip open during the war due to the defense line. Since that time he has produced thousands of qualified pilots. He, at one time, had 27 flight instructors working for him.

His own instruction experience was not as favorable. Roland, somewhat impetuous then, decided he wanted to fly so he bought a plane. The folks at the Waterville airport were quick to sell the plane but slow on providing instruction. One entire summer, Roland would travel to Waterville for instruction; more often than not, the instructor would say it was too windy. Finally Roland insisted on some instruction and, to this day, still wonders why he didn't kill himself. "I soloed with only 3 hours and 45 minutes of flight time. I am embarrassed to say that when the instructor told me I could go alone, I had to ask which rudder turned the plane right and which one turned the plane left. It was like pulling teeth to get any answers out of my instructor. On top of this, when I landed, I still don't understand how, he said I could take my plane home. I was shocked. I asked the guy, 'How do I get there?' The answer was, 'Follow the road.' So that's what I did. I landed in a field about 800' long." That is the experience which dedicated Roland to providing sound, dependable instruction to all his students.

One student in particular is thankful to have been under his instruction. Roland and his student were practicing a power out stall. The student pulled the stick and the engine went dead. They were directly over Sabattus Lake and looking for a field was difficult. Roland climbed out onto the landing gear, pulled the prop once or twice and got back into the cockpit. This was, of course, a throw-back to his stunt days when he would perform this trick for thousands of anxious spectators. There was only one anxious spectator on this day, a very thankful one at that. "Always explore those things which might happen and prepare for them. You can never be too ready."



Captain Ayres R. Chaves, 1913-1996

We regret the passing of airline pioneer Ayres R. Chaves recently. He was related to members Neal and Keith Strange, having married Neal's sister Beth, who was the daughter of Dr. Clifford Strange, founder of Stroudwater Field, now Portland International Jetport.

Ayres R. Chaves, age 83, a retired Delta Airlines Captain residing in Newmarket, NH, died on March 22, 1996.

Chaves started his flying career at age nineteen upon graduation from the Dallas Aviation School and Air College at Love Field in Dallas, Texas.

In the early 1930s he operated Bay State Airways at Muller Field in Revere, MA and flew a Fokker flying boat from Revere Beach.

Chaves joined Boston and Maine-Central Vermont Airways in 1939, qualifying as captain the following year. Boston and Maine Airways became Northeast Airlines in 1941. When the U.S. entered World War II, Chaves served with the Army Air Transport Command in the A.T.C. Atlantic Division, flying the North Atlantic route to Scotland and Britain.

He married Northeast flight attendant Beth Strange of Portland, Maine in 1943. The couple resided in Danvers, MA until his retirement in 1972, shortly after Northeast merged with Delta Airlines.

Captain Chaves is survived by his wife Beth, son Neal and a granddaughter, Amanda.

Up-to-Date

In the March 1996 *Dirigo Flyer* on page 4 we published a photo of a PBV-5A of the U.S. Navy at Dow Field, Bangor. Your editor did not check far enough and Larry Webster of the Quonset Air Museum has sent us the correct ID. The plane is a U.S. Army Air Force OA-10A-VI (PBV-1A built by Canadian Vickers for the USAAF and used by their Air-Sea Rescue Service). Thanks, Larry.

In the January 1996 *Dirigo Flyer* on page 5 we ran a picture of a plane with registration number 717Y contributed by Charlie Gabelman. Thanks to Bill Deane of the Massachusetts Aviation Historical Society. The information was courtesy of Harold Cranshaw and Tom Cuddy. The plane is a Thomas A-2, a 2 place low wing monoplane of wood construction with a stabilator and "air" wheels. It was powered by a Michigan Aero Engine Co. 4-cylinder air cooled "Rover" in-line inverted engine of 75 hp (or 55 hp by some sources). The photo shows serial #1, registration 717Y piloted by Danny Duggan of Boston. It was built in 1931 at Lowell, MA by Walter Frederick Thomas, P.O. Box 1027, Lowell, MA. If anyone has more information on this aircraft, Thomas or Duggan, please let your editor know. Our thanks to Harold, Tom and Bill.

Do you have a mystery plane or pilot, Maine-related? Send it in and put our members to work.

65th Anniversary

August 1, 1996 marks the 65th anniversary of Boston-Maine Airways scheduled passenger and mail airline service from Boston to the state of Maine. We think this is cause for celebration, so let us know your ideas. The first northbound flight was flown from Boston to Portland and Bangor by a Pan American Airways Fokker F10A tri-motor piloted by PAA Captain George Snow of Rockport, ME. The first southbound flight left Bangor on August 3, 1931. They waited for Pan American's Sikorsky S-41B to fly from Bangor to Halifax and return.

All ideas for how we should do this should be sent to member Norm Houle, P.O. Box 563, Rochester, NH 03825-0563 (Tel.: 603-664-5631).

CATCH THE MAHS EXCITEMENT!

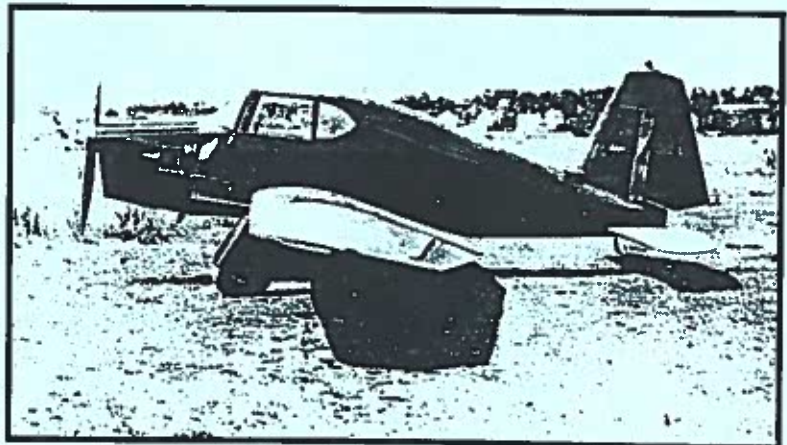
Need help? Have ideas? Want to get involved?

Maine Aviation Historical Society

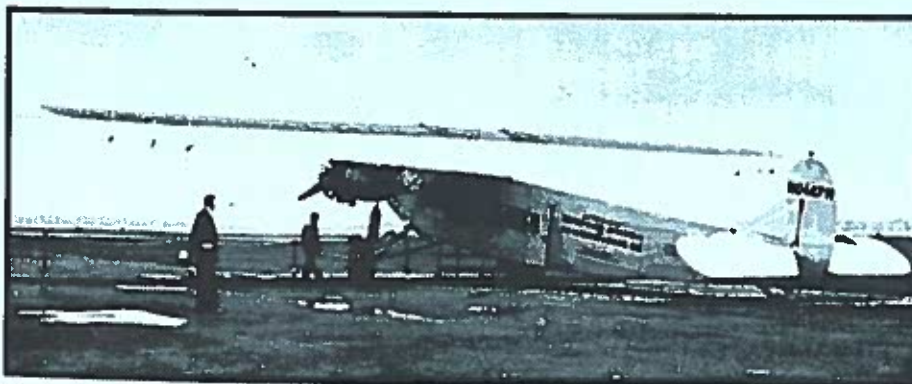
101 Monroe Avenue
Westbrook, ME 04092-4020
or call (207) 854-9972

If you are not yet a member, join today
and help preserve Maine's aviation heritage.

Enjoy the *Dirigo Flyer*!



Thomas A-2, 717Y. Pilot: Danny Duggan. (See Up-to-Date above.)



Pan American Airways Fokker F10A at East Boston, MA, which they operated in 1931 for Boston-Maine Airways from there to Portland and Bangor.

Upcoming MAHS Meetings and Calendar of Events

May 11	9 a.m.	Lewiston-Auburn Airport Terminal
May 18-19	early a.m.	Hampton, NH 20th Aviation Flea Market (603-964-6749)
May 26	10 a.m.	Ford vs. Chevy Meet and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
June 8	9 a.m.	Bangor or Lincoln Area
June 9	10 a.m.	Cruising Motorcycles and WWI Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
June 20-23		World War I Seminar, Smithsonian Institute (413-247-9840, days)
June 23	10 a.m.	'70s Auto and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
July 6-7	10 a.m.	Military Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
July 14	10 a.m.	'50s and '60s Auto and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
July 19-21	10 a.m.	Brunswick Naval Air Station Air Show
July 27-28	10 a.m.	Truck/Tractor and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
August 1-7		Oshkosh '96 EAA Fly-In and Convention, Wisconsin (414-426-4800)
August 10.....	9 a.m.	Sanford Area
August 11	10 a.m.	Transportation Spectacular and Aerobatic Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
September 14	9 a.m.	Miller Field, Newburgh, Maine
September 15	10 a.m.	Annual Transportation Flea Market, Owls Head Transportation Museum
October 6	10 a.m.	Foreign Auto and Air Show, Owls Head Transportation Museum
October 12	9 a.m.	Biddeford Municipal Airport
October 27	10 a.m.	Great Fall Auction
November 9	9 a.m.	Open
December 14.....	9 a.m.	Conference Room, Portland International Jetport Terminal

Hikes to be announced will include Big Spruce Mountain (*White Bird*), F-101 crash site, Elephant Mountain (B-52) and others.

The meeting sites can be flexible. We are looking for suggestions on locations for many of these meetings. Call Leo or Jim if you can help. The same goes for suggestions on the weekend hikes — let us know. We are also looking for guest speakers, slide shows, etc. Scott Grant has volunteered to handle the scheduling of our meetings and arranging for speakers and slide shows., etc. Please contact him at 207-774-4438 (207-761-9288 business) or 225 York Street, #3, Portland, ME 04102 if you have any ideas or can be of help.



Walt Humphrey and an Aeronca Champ in Florida this spring.

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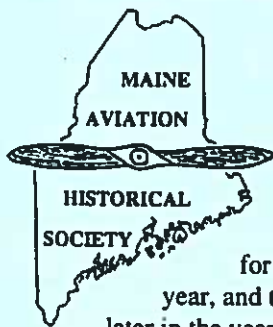
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WE'LL HELP GET YOUR WORD OUT!

Ad space is now available in the *Dirigo Flyer*. Rates are \$5.00 for three issues per column inch, or \$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.



JOIN THE MAINE AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY TODAY AND HELP ENSURE OUR LEGACY FOR TOMORROW

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Dues will be for the calendar year, and those joining later in the year will receive

all newsletters retroactive to January of that year. All renewal of dues shall be due on January 1st.

Annual membership includes *12 monthly newsletters!* Mail payment to: MAHS
101 Monroe Avenue, Westbrook, ME
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Membership	Dues	Benefits
Regular	\$20 annual	Newsletter
Corporate	\$50 annual	Newsletter, Calendar
Supporting	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Calendar, Journal
Lifetime	\$500	Newsletter, Calendar, Journal, Lifetime Membership No. (2 annual \$250 payments)

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

Next Meeting:
Terminal Lounge
Auburn-Lewiston Airport
Roland Maheu, Speaker
May 11, 1996
9 a.m.