



DIRIGO FLYER

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Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society
P.O. Box 2641, Bangor, Maine 04402 • 207-941-6757 • 1-877-280-MAHS (in state)
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The Maine Air Museum: The Start, Plan, and Future

By Jim Chichetto

The Start

From the time that the MAHS reformed and started to rebuild in 1990, some members have been pushing the idea of a building to house the artifacts and books, which the group would be collecting. For six and one half years this was a thought which was put on hold as we worked to grow the MAHS and to get members from all walks of life and all areas of the state. In 1996 a work group was given the task to see if our members had a real interest in building a museum. By August the answer was in and it was a strong "Yes." We set up a site committee and started to look into areas within Maine that could house such a museum. The old hangar at Sanford was looked at, as was the WW II hangar and land at Lewiston. The NAS at Brunswick was looked into as was Trenton, Loring and Bangor. After months of work, Bangor was chosen as the best site for the museum. A willingness by the city and BIA to work with the MAHS, along with the Maine ANG and local museums made Bangor the best choice at that time. Jules Arel and Don Saunders had done most of the search, and Jules undertook the work needed to get a lease signed. We had been looking at land on the BIA complex and member J.M. McCue drew up a building and floor plan for an 18,000 sq. ft. steel hanger, which we hoped to erect on a suitable site. When no land could be found to match our needs, the airport manager offered us a 6,000 sq. ft. building as a starting point for the museum. The city offered this building to the MAHS for the sum of \$1 a year



The Maine Air Museum today.



The MAHS Luscombe 8A on display at the BNAS Air Show.

for the first five years and then a larger fee for the next five years. After months of work, the lease was signed and the MAHS had a building to house its growing collection.

While the search was going on, Leo Boyle, Jim Chichetto, Ed Armstrong and Jules Arel had been working on costs with Bill Cook and a committee. Using these figures, they interviewed a number of fundraisers and got a better idea of the ways money is raised and what we would need to do in the future. The committee had come up with a five-year plan, a one-year start up plan, and the basic display concepts which we would need to develop. Don Saunders worked to bring the one-year plan up to date and added actual figures and dollar amounts to get a realistic handle on the true costs of this project. Other committees worked to get legal issues settled and the proper forms completed. It was dull, boring work, but we got it done in time for the lease signing.

Once the building was set for release from BIA to the MAHS, Al Cormier was named Physical Plant Manager. He undertook to get the roof patched so we could begin moving in equipment and materials. His building contacts lead to having both Bangor Roofing and Sheet Metal and Roof Systems of Maine each sending crews to Building 98 and getting them to donate the costs of labor and materials to this MAHS project.

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 web site: acadia.net/mahs/
 telephone: 207-941-6757
 1-877-280-MAHS (in state only)

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

President

James P. Chichetto (#5L)
 RR 1, Box 1730, Etna, ME 04434
 207-269-3281
 e-mail: jimF84F@aol.com

Vice President

James McCurdy (#206)
 152 DeWitt Ave., Bangor, ME 04401
 207-990-4480
 e-mail: cessna386@aol.com

Secretary

Leo Boyle (#2L)
 101 Monroe Avenue
 Westbrook, ME 04092-4020
 207-854-9972
 e-mail: pshaw@maine.rr.com

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Charles Brantner (#287)
 1051 North Main Street
 Winterport, ME 04496-3417
 207-223-5335
 e-mail: cbbvjb@javanet.com

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Monthly meetings are held at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month at various locations.

See calendar for details.

Maine Aviation Historical Society January 2001 Meeting

The January 2001 meeting will be held at the museum at 10 a.m. on Saturday, January 13. Members are invited to tour the museum and see how much has been accomplished so far (and how much remains to be done). We're getting into some of the more interesting projects, including making displays and work on aircraft and engines for display, so sign up then to get on the project you want.

We will want to get our traveling displays ready for the summer circuit, which this year will be capped off by the Great State o' Maine Air Show, featuring the Blue Angels at the Brunswick Naval Air Station on September 22 and 23.

Also at the January meeting we will have the installation of the new officers and members of the Board of Directors. If you haven't voted, get it to us before the meeting.

Photos in this issue are all by Mike Cornett and Jim Chichetto.

Unless you are a life member, for most of you January 1 marks your renewal date for your membership. If the date is otherwise, it shows on your label as (month/year). Please renew as early as possible to help the secretary and also the bank account. Thank you for renewing and we all look forward to 2001 being a great year. Be a part of all of this.

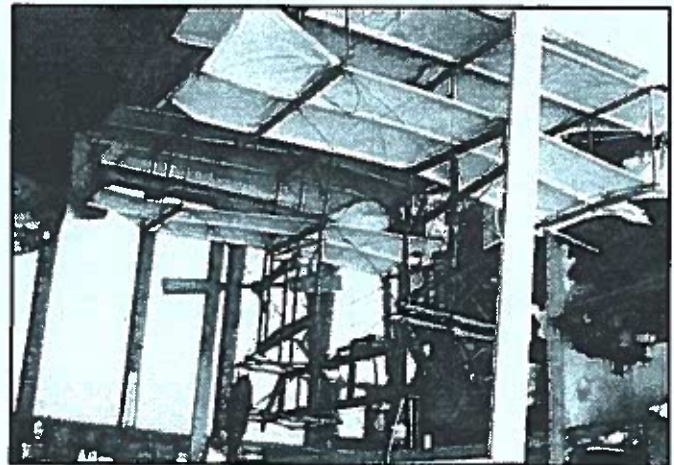
Join the fun!

Note: "Old Orchard Beach: The Dawn" by Fred Hamlen will continue in the February *Dirigo Flyer* and future issues.

Leo Boyle, Editor

Oscar Blue's Flying Contraption Picture

Regarding Oscar Blue's article on the Searsport Flying Contraption in the December issue of the *Dirigo Flyer*: at right is a model of the contraption. Whether the model preceded or post-dated the real plane is unknown.



JOIN US

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MAM, continued from page 1

In October of 1999, the city turned the building over to the MAHS. We held a one-day open house and had a number of aircraft on display. Members flew in a WW II vintage SNJ, a restored Chipmunk, and restored T-28 and the Maine ANG towed down a KC-135 for us to have as the backdrop for the smaller aircraft. Over 100 guests and members came in and enjoyed the exhibits set up by the MAHS and to view part of John Miller's collection. Interviews and short speeches were the order of the day before a buffet was served. Many members had worked hard to get the building clean and ready, and for that one day the public and members could see what the MAHS had planned for the future Maine Air Museum.

As winter closed in, a new heater was put in the main display bay for winter heat, but the costs were higher than expected to heat that much space. The building was closed until spring to save money.

While the work on the building was on hold, work to raise awareness and funding was moving forward at a steady pace. In the winter of 1999 and spring of 2000 members pledged money to get a professional fundraiser to work with the MAHS Fundraising Committee to teach us how we could accomplish our goals. To raise money for a museum, you need to create the public awareness of the idea and to get them involved with it. Training and planning sessions educated MAHS members and helped us better determine our goals and what they would cost. Plans were made to make Building 98 more attractive and functional, as well as providing safety and making sure we complied with our lease. As the weather improved, members began the physical tasks that could be done to make the much-needed improvements. A lot of work cost only manpower and labor, not much money was spent but many tasks were done.

It was decided that we needed to paint the building and bring it back to its 1958 color, which was a white building with gray doors. Led by Mike Cornett, Jim Chichetto and Les Shaw, volunteers painted the entire building. It took three coats of paint after the outside had been cleaned and sealed. Al worked with member Bob Day to make a new sign for the building and mount it on the long wall. Inside Al worked to get electric sockets back on line and run down the wiring. Bulbs were changed

and lights came back on line in all the bays and rooms. The old boiler was taken apart and removed for junk. At night and on rainy days, the old steam pipes were removed and rooms were cleaned up and made safe for visitors. Slowly the work changed the building from an old rundown closed off building to a new looking building with clean rooms and working equipment. By August the painting was almost done and the outside corner wall was repaired by the volunteer crews. By October of 2000, the MAHS had the building painted and watertight, the old furnace system and pipes cleaned up and moved out and the fence erected and we were ready to work on the inside display areas. Total costs for the work done was under \$1,000. The major factor was the volunteer labor: it allowed us to do a lot for very little cash outlay.

As I write this article, the work inside is progressing well. The inside wall of the office that had suffered water damage years ago has been repaired. A new moisture barrier was installed, then insulating board and a new stud wall, insulation and sheet rock. This has been taped and the room will be painted prior to dropping the ceiling down. A new heater has been installed to keep this room warm and with the new insulation and lower ceiling, the costs of heating will be greatly reduced. Besides the office area, the bathroom has been worked on to bring it in compliance with handicap regulations. That ceiling will also be lowered to save heating costs and make the room more user friendly. The break room will also be painted and have the ceilings lowered. A new heater was put in replacing the old unit. This unit provides the heat for the bathroom and the water pipes in the break room. These projects are expected to be done by the middle of February and then we will repaint the entry room and set up the gift shop display area.

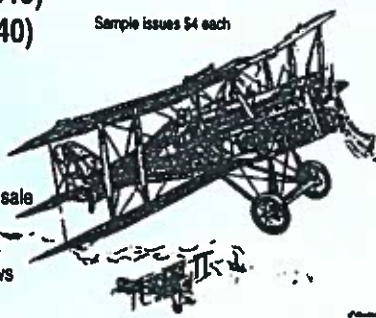
While this work is being undertaken by a group of volunteers, Bill and Kathy Cook have begun working the final display designs into working plans for the volunteers to build and set up. We have a number of interesting displays and artifacts to showcase and we want them to be set up and ready for viewing in late May of 2001. We are also working on having a Huey set up on site and a second fuselage brought into the building for a hands-on display. We are continuing to set up working committees and want to have one to start cleaning and working on the Stinson.

Anyone wishing to do volunteer work is welcome to call, write or stop by. Workdays are Tuesday from 1600 until 1900 or later and Saturday morning from 0800 until early afternoon. We also work on Thursday evenings from 1600 to whenever, but that is not a set date at this time. There are jobs for everyone. No skills are needed to help out, we will train you as needed or let you teach us. We do have a warm place to sit and eat and take a break in, plus we get to go outside and watch interesting aircraft take off and land. Building a museum takes time and effort, but it is both interesting and rewarding to be part of this effort. Take time to stop by and see what's new and hopefully join in the fun.

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MAM, continued on page 4

The Plan

Every idea, no matter how great it is, can not grow and flourish without direct action. To make this action happen, someone has to put some time in planning this course of action. MAHS has been very lucky to have members who have been involved with other air museums and non-profit groups. These people worked with the officers and volunteers to come up with a plan of action to make the Maine Air Museum project become a living, breathing thing. Even while the search committee was doing their work, another committee was set up to study finances, fundraising and building costs. Budgets were considered and linked to the developing one- and five-year plans being put together. Much of this work was done by one or two people who would bring these parts in to the meetings and work to fit them into the overall plan. We knew where we were heading and what we wanted it to be like when the work was done, but it was a lot like making a puzzle, each part had to be moved and shaped to fit the plan. It took a lot of work and many of the folks who started this process burned out before we got it all done. Volunteering is always like that, good ideas and more work than workers to do it. This leads to frustration and early burnout of volunteers.

After much work and struggle, a solid one-year budget was in place. A five-year operating plan was unveiled and accepted by the membership. Floor plans for the current building were laid out and tasks were given priorities. The growth was linked to our ability to raise funds for the project costs. We would work within our means and push forward as we raised money for the materials and equipment.

Under our one-year plan, getting the building cleaned out and under our control was the first task. Next came the work to make it secure and get a fence up. Painting and minor repairs to the outside were done as the weather got warmer. Our progress was slower than we had hoped for a number of reasons, the biggest being lack of funds to buy materials, followed by the lack of able bodies willing to work. A number of people worked during the spring and summer, giving up their vacation time to get the building painted. Part of the fundraising plan was to raise the general public's level of awareness about the MAHS and the Maine Air Museum. The idea of painting the building a bright white was the first major task for the volunteer workers doing the building work. People noticed the



Building Manager Al Cormier presenting a plaque to Bangor Roofing for their donation of repair of our roof.



Bangor International Airport Manager Bob Ziegelaar speaks at the dedication as MAHS Secretary Leo Boyle and President Jim Chichetto look on.

painting and then the new sign. It got them talking and the museum location got to be known by those folks who drove by and watched our progress. On workdays we often had visitors for whom we gave tours and answered questions.

The general plan for Building 98 calls for the 11 rooms in the building to be in full use by the end of the first year of operation. The old 12' x 20' office will be cleaned, painted and updated and used as our office. The current bathroom will be updated to being handicap accessible and used until a new building is erected. The old break room will be used for the same function in the museum. The entryway will be updated with a second door, a glass entrance that will allow the public to enter into the museum and also lighten up this area of the building. The roll up door will be retained for security reasons when the museum is closed. This entryway will house the gift shop and be the starting point for the museum tours.



Members Al Cormier and Ed Armstrong finish the fence, 7/27/2000.

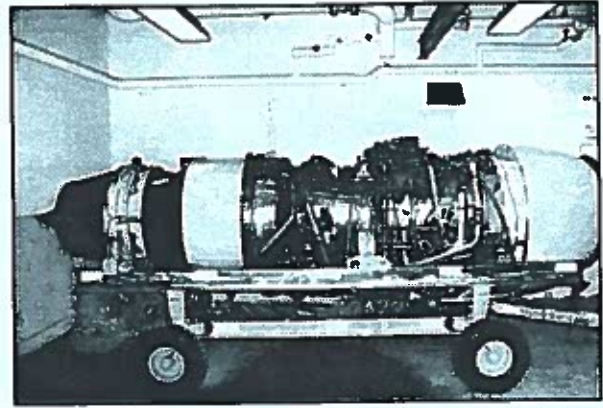
On the right side of the entryway the two blast doors will be kept and they open into the main display area. This area is called Display Area 1 and it was used by the USAF to assemble air to air missiles and warheads during the late 1950s and 1960s. Part of the room will be left stock to show what the room looked like during its Cold War use. Lettering and blast proof fixtures will be retained in this area. The rest of this bay will be used to house the various engine exhibits, artifacts and displays about Maine's flying past. A number of interactive computers will be set up in this bay to allow adults and kids to learn more about flight and special events in Maine's flying history. At the far end of Display Area 1 is the smaller Display Area 2. This bay was used by the USAF to load and unload the missiles that were assembled onto dollies that were hauled by tractors to the ready hangers. In the case of the Genie missiles, the warheads were mated to the missiles for 15 days before they were removed and the warhead returned to the bunkers for storage and updating. As Display Area 1 is filled with displays, Display Area 2 will be used to display other artifacts. Behind Display Area 2 is the library. In this room the MAHS collection of books, magazines, papers and photos will be on display and open for the public to use in research work. Computers will be set up in this area to help with the work and allow people to check other resources.

A major part of the five-year plan is to start and develop a hands-on program for children at the museum. Interactive displays, aircraft cockpits, computers and lectures will all be part of this effort. It is our hope that schools will tour the museum and we have an Education Committee working on ideas and programs for use both in the museum and as traveling exhibits which would travel around Maine and visit schools. This outreach program would allow schools to have a series of lectures and displays in their schools and via computers, both before and after they visit the museum. These visits would be free and it is our goal to have every one of the children in Maine visit the museum and learn about Maine's great aviation history. Joint tours with school groups visiting both the Air Museum and the Cole's Museum may be possible as we grow.

We have enough artifacts and display materials at this time to fill both Display Areas. Once that happens we are converting Bay 1 into Display Area 3. The building has three of these bays. They have double doors on each end and high ceilings. We plan on having the larger displays in these areas. Aircraft cockpits and small aircraft can fit inside this area. We have some artifacts already in place in this bay.

The next bay, Bay 2, will be used for storage until Bay 1 is full. Then it will become Display Area 4. If we get some of the artifacts that have been offered to the museum, we can fill this bay with quality displays before the start of our second year of operation (2002). Right now we have not gathered in all that has been offered because we don't have the secure space and temperature controlled storage set up.

The last bay, Bay 3, is currently being used for storage and as our workshop. Plans call for a wood working shop, metal working shop and other aircraft and building related work projects. This area will be used by the volunteers to do the actual work of making displays and repairing equipment and



The J-57 jet engine donated to the museum in refurbished condition by the Maine Air National Guard.

artifacts.

The boiler room houses the master electric panels and the heating unit for the museum. We have cleaned that out and are working to update both of these areas. We will be reusing this space when we install the new heating system.

While some folks worked to get the building ready, others were working hard to make the museum better known within the state of Maine and beyond. To accomplish this task, a professional fundraiser was hired to help us come up with a case statement that would put our best ideas forward. Many working meetings were held and a training session was used to help prepare members to go out and work on fundraising.

This past spring and summer, flyers were placed in the airport, Chamber of Commerce, and information booths to educate the public about our project. Newspaper editorials, stories and photos helped us spread the word and we sent out flyers in the *Bangor Daily News* and in the newsletter of the Maine State Society. We also had information at the Maine Air National Guard air show in May along with our display and aircraft. Later we had people attending almost every flying event in Maine with displays and information about the MAHS and the museum. Part of this display effort was made up of a trailer with the museum's 1940's Luscombe aircraft on it. This aircraft was donated and is being restored. It spent much of the 2000 season traveling around Maine to raise awareness for the MAHS and the museum. In 2001 it will be trucked around Maine as a display in between the repair sessions. A fund has been set up and a timetable has been drawn up to bring this aircraft back to perfect condition. It is a two-seat light aircraft that was popular after WW III along with Piper Cubs, Cessnas and other light aircraft. The GI Bill could be used to teach people to fly and many of the people who learned to fly back then flew these types of aircraft all over Maine and by adding floats, opened up the great northern Maine lakes to fishing as we know it today. This aircraft draws people to it and is the best traveling display we have at this time.

The first year from October 1999 to October 2000 saw a lot of progress on all fronts. The plans are in place and we are moving forward. In the next section I will explain the vision we have for the future of the Maine Air Museum.

MAM, continued on page 6

MAM, continued from page 5

The Future

In the first two parts of this article I have shown you how a small group of volunteers have taken an idea and made it a real growing, living thing. When you speak to people about air museums, they each have their own ideas of what it should look like, have for displays and what its main focus should be and the directions it should grow in. Ask a dozen people and you will have a dozen different ideas. To build a working museum, you have to listen to everyone's ideas and then group the main ideas that are held by the group as a whole. The Board of Directors of the MAHS has done just that using the input of the MAHS members, business and civic leaders and other museums. We have studied the costs, given priorities to ideas and tied them to a timeline that is driven by the amount of funds we have available.

We chose to start with a 42-year-old historic building as our first home. The building itself has a strong local history serving the USAF during the Cold War and the Maine ANG in later years. By taking this first step, we have given our members a focal point from which to start their work and dreams. As with all real life dreams, it takes time and money to make each step a reality. We have taken a number of positive steps in these last few months and each work session brings us closer to opening the doors of the Maine Air Museum in 2001.

As a starting point, we have a great location. The main taxiway for BIA runs behind our building and every day we work, we see interesting aircraft as they arrive and leave BIA. We are within a mile of the Cole's Museum and adjacent to I-95, Rt. 1 and Rt. 2. We also have lodging, fuel and restaurants within a half a mile of our location. With the 10-year lease we currently have and the extensions we have in our lease for additional years, this location is the best to be found in Maine.

Even as we open the display areas in the current museum, we will be planning how best to expand our efforts. As I noted earlier, we have an 18,000 sq. ft. building drawn out and the projected costs for that building is \$ 500,000 to build it. As we looked at ways to increase our size, a number of ideas have been brought forth. Adding another bay to the current building and then another wing to the main building have been proposed. The idea is to start small with our current building and then build a new building large enough to house aircraft indoors and allow us to increase the size of our static displays.



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To this end, a two million dollar fundraising goal has been set. This goal is to cover the design, construction and upgrading of the current and future building, and to cover the operating costs as we begin to grow and expand our museum.

Our timeline is tied to the cash flow. The faster we gather funding, the quicker we can grow the museum and meet the ideas outlined in our five-year plan. Each aircraft we acquire requires a yearly maintenance cost. These can be reduced by housing them inside a hangar, but some of the aircraft we hope to acquire will not fit into a hangar easily. How fast we reach our fundraising goal is up to you and to the membership of the MAHS. We will need everyone working hard to sell this idea to the public and to be spokespersons for the museum. We will be working with area businesses and other museums to get our message out and open channels of communication within the business and private sectors of Maine. We have had excellent support from local, state and our federal legislative office holders. The economic impact on the Greater Bangor area is large and coupled with other museums, represents a flow of people into the Bangor area. These people will be eating, sleeping, shopping and spending time and money in the Greater Bangor Area. Once again Bangor will be the hub of northern Maine, a place to visit and explore, not just a waypoint on the road to the coast or Canada. It is projected that the museum will draw at least 20,000 people per year to visit. The impact of these visitors will be felt by many area business people and because of that, we expect their support in behalf of our efforts.



Member Carleton Willey with the WWII Ranger V-12 engine which he delivered to the museum.

As our Educational Outreach Program becomes well known in schools, we expect an even wider area of support within Maine. From a small Cold War building, we expect to build a large, well-designed and functional museum that will be second to none when it has reached the end of its first five-year plan. As with aircraft, the sky is the limit. Right now we have pre-flighted the museum, warmed it up and are on the taxiway. In 2001 we will be taking this museum for its first flight. The Maine Air Museum will become a place we can all enjoy and share with others. There is still much to be done, but with everyone's help, we will reach our goals and have a great museum to help us save and exhibit Maine's wonderful aviation history.

Upcoming MAHS Meetings

2001 — 2001 — 2001 — 2001

January 13 10 a.m. MAHS Meeting at the
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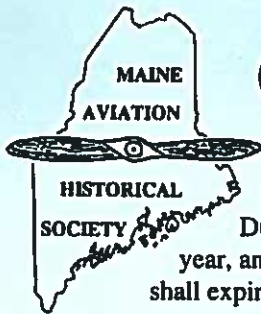
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* (2 annual \$250 payments)		

Maine Aviation Historical Society
P.O. Box 2641
Bangor, ME 04402

January Meeting

Saturday, January 13, 2001
10 a.m.
Maine Air Museum Building
Bangor, Maine