

# 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)  
We're on the Internet! Visit our new web site at [www.maineairmuseum.org](http://www.maineairmuseum.org)

## The New Arctic

By James E. McCarthy

*The New Arctic* is the result of a longtime interest in Donald MacMillan's comings and goings. An early exposure, aside from newspaper and radio news, was my attendance at his appearance on a lecture tour at the old Bangor City Hall Auditorium in 1939 or '40.

In the summer of 1952, while in Maine on vacation from my job in Alaska, my wife and I came upon the *Bowdoin* tied up at a dock in Boothbay Harbor. It was being readied for one of the annual MacMillan arctic trips, probably his last or next to last. He was about 78 years of age at the time. He died in 1970 at 95. He wasn't present on the *Bowdoin* that day in Boothbay, but the vessel was tended by his First Mate, a Newfoundlander. After a few words exchanged across the dock, I recognized the accent from my Newfoundland days. He invited us aboard and showed us around, including the below deck areas.

In the '80s I read, in some instances reread, the MacMillan books and tried to keep track of what was happening to the *Bowdoin*. In 2000, it was owned and operated by the Maine Maritime Academy in Castine. I learned that the Academy, on contract to ElderHostel, was to operate a five-day cruise that summer in Penobscot Bay. I signed on. So, I spent five days lending what little help I could to Elliot Rappaport, the skipper, sailing the bay on the *Bowdoin*, and regaling the others on board about its history.

Following that, I spent some time perusing the MacMillan archives at the Peary MacMillan Arctic Museum at Bowdoin College in Brunswick. While writing this piece, I reread *Dangerous Crossings: The First Modern Polar Expedition* by John H. Bryant and Harold N. Cones, published by the Naval Institute Press, to reinforce my memory of the details. In addition, I read, for the first time, MacMillan's and Byrd's accounts of the expedition in the August, September and October 1925 issues of *National Geographic*.

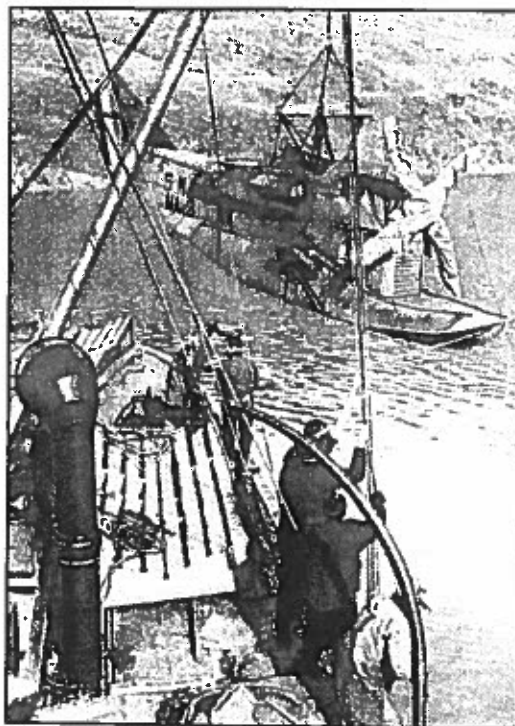
The *Bowdoin* still sails out of Castine as a training vessel for the Maine Maritime Academy.

On June 20th, 1925, one of the most historic and scientifically important explorations of the earth's northern regions departed the United States from Wiscasset, Maine. It was historic because it ushered in a twentieth century examination of a little known area, important because it brought to bear, for the first time, the two most significant advances in man's need to know, effective short-wave radio communication and air transportation. To that time, attempts to communicate from remote locations on the earth, particularly from the North Polar Region using long-wave radio, were problematic. Transportation in the far north had been by boat, where water prevailed, otherwise by dog sled, often by shank's mare.

The overall leader of the triumvirate who planned and led this expedition was Donald A. MacMillan, a Lt. Commander in the Naval Reserve, a resident of Freeport, Maine. He had been an organizing member of Peary's successful assault on the North Pole in 1909, and was the only one of the three with Arctic or exploration experience. The other two were Eugene F. McDonald, President of Zenith Radio, and Richard E. Byrd, a young and ambitious naval aviator, both of whom were also Lt. Commanders in the Naval Reserve.

The abandonment of a US Navy plan to launch a flight over the North Pole by the dirigible *USS Shenandoah* in the summer of 1924 opened a

"Arctic," continued on page 4



The first amphibian leaving the "Peary" at Etah.  
(Photos reproduced from "Flying Over the Arctic" by Richard Byrd in the November 1925 *National Geographic Magazine*.)

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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 Maine Air Museum Board of Directors Meeting · August 19, 2004

The meeting was called to order at 1800 hrs by Vice-President Shaw at the Maine Air Museum. Present: Shaw, Townsend, Cormier, Sederquist, Quinn, Johnson, Gopan.  
 Absent: Armstrong, Noddin, Boyle.

1. **Bay One Plans.** How will we direct traffic flow to and through Bay One? No decision was made and it was decided to discuss this via e-mail.
2. **Greenville Fly-in.** Cornett will be present during the event and others plan to stop by and assist.
3. **Staffing.** Armstrong was not present. This Saturday and Sunday are covered but the weekend after is not fully covered.
4. **Duct Work.** The sheet metal representative has looked over the work needed, Cormier will do some diagrams and Downeast Sheet Metal in Brewer will give us a quote.
5. **Luscombe Plans.** Grant reports that new display boards are being made that will cover the history of our aircraft and others. He is planning a Luscombe web site linked to the MAM web site. Sederquist suggested that we should mount our Luscombe on skis.
6. **Elections.** No one is currently on the agenda for official positions. The suggestion, made last month, that we seek out a business-oriented person as president is still being considered. At this time there are no suggestions for nominees for President or Vice-President. Quinn will consider staying on as Treasurer. The role of Secretary is to be debated as we have now a recording secretary, correspondence secretary, and secretary.
7. **Newsletter Editor.** No one has come forward as wanting the position. It was moved "that the museum order an additional 25 copies of Al Cormier's book." Seconded. Passed.
8. **Magazines.** We will drop the price of the used and duplicate magazines to 25 cents each and see if they move.
9. **Can-of-Jet.** No report.
10. **Huey.** No report.
11. **Correspondence Secretary.** We need a correspondence secretary to pick up mail, return phone calls, and work around the office. We will ask Jim Nelligan if he would consider this position.
12. **Membership.** Member lists are now on the new computer. The renewals and other such correspondence needs to be moved to Bangor.
13. **Donation Forms.** Armstrong is handling these.
14. **Stevens Balloon.** Cornett volunteered to take a section of the Stevens Balloon to Belfast. We will also offer a piece of the balloon to the Belfast Historical Society. Moved "that we donate a piece of the Stevens Balloon to the Belfast Historical Society." Seconded. Passed.
15. **General Aviation Display.** Display pictures have been produced and mounted on a solid backing. They are ready to be mounted on the display itself. We will have a small plaque on the display acknowledging the funds donated.
16. **Representation at the Portland Airshow.** Scott Grant and Bob Umberger will be representing the MAM.
17. **Brochures.** The map to the museum has been added and the material turned over to Ed Armstrong for reprinting.
18. **Next Meeting.** The next BOD meeting is scheduled for Sept. 23rd, 6 p.m. at MAM.
19. **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 1926 hours.

*William Townsend, Recording Secretary*

## Autumn Excitement



With the changing seasons comes excitement — not only the great planes coming and going but great new exhibits to enhance the museum for our visitors. There's something for everyone, so sign up now to volunteer. Come join us and catch the excitement!

## Upcoming Events

We have two very special events coming up soon at which we will be present. The International Seaplane Fly-In will be held in Greenville September 9-12. We will be present there on Saturday and Sunday, September 11-12. This is always a very exciting and enjoyable show, so come on up and have fun, and give Mike Cornett a hand representing the MAHS and the museum.

See the announcement on page 5 regarding the First Annual Aviation Past and Present Static Display Show at the Portland International Jetport on September 18-19. This promises to be a great show with lots of wonderful aircraft to view up close and photograph. Show up and help Bob Umberger Jr. and Scott Grant show off the museum and society and give them a hand.

This just in: program schedule for the next three meetings:  
 9/18 Slide show with Rick Alexander. Current South American military aircraft plus 2004 Westover, MA airshow.

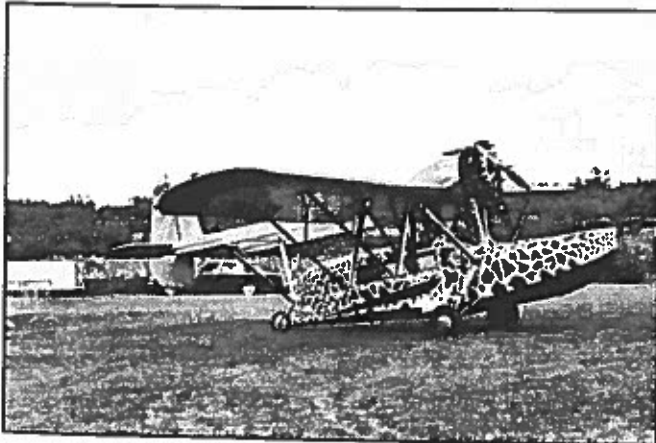
10/4 Tony Caruso, BIA Assistant Manager, talks about current operations and future plans.

11/13 Speaker TBA. Meeting to be held at Maine Military Museum, Augusta, Maine Airport.

### This is No "Plane" Old Giraffe!



Members Dick and Pat Jackson in front of his lovingly restored Sikorsky S-39, serial #912, NC-50V at Owls Head in July. (Photo by Mike Cornett)



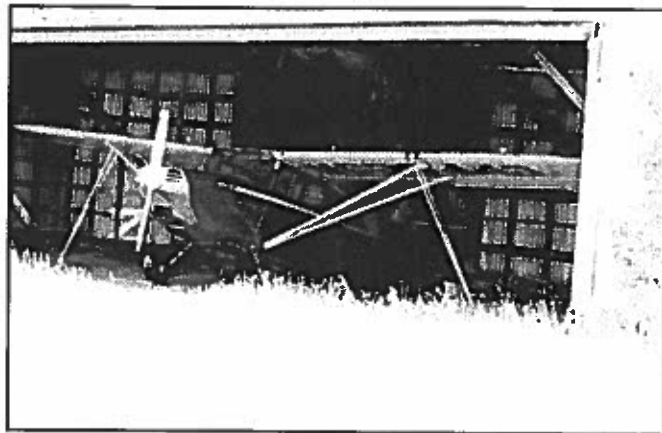
## Upcoming Elections

In December, we will be electing new officers and three board members. Want a bigger say in the running of the Maine Aviation Historical Society and the Maine Air Museum for the next two years?

Now is the time for you to come forward as a candidate and throw your hat in the ring! We always welcome new people to come forward with new ideas and better ways of doing things. Your excitement about the society and our museum and its future growth are all that is needed. Jump in and let's have a spirited election and an exciting slate of new officers and directors. Just tell any board members you want to run.

And don't forget, we're still looking for candidates to be the editor of the *Dirigo Flyer*.

### Stinson Waiting in the Wings



Another Stinson similar to ours at Twitchell's Airport in Turner. (Photo by Scott Grant)

### A Classic Beauty



Member Jim McCarthy sent in this picture of Carol McCarthy taken with Sikorsky S-39 at Juneau, Alaska in the winter of 1952-'53. This aircraft, serial #904, NC-803W, is now on display at the New England Air Museum in Connecticut.

"Arctic," continued from page 1

door for MacMillan. President Calvin Coolidge had scuttled the Navy project in the summer of 1924, reportedly when Congress refused to appropriate the required \$50,000. MacMillan had been favorably impressed by the Navy efforts. He conveyed his sorrow about its cancellation to Rear Admiral William A. Moffett, chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, who had been promoting the project. Thus, began the relationship of MacMillan and Moffett resulting in the 1925 MacMillan Arctic Expedition. Decisions followed on the aircraft to be used, coordination with McDonald on radio gear and selection of a vessel capable of carrying the aircraft to the far north. MacMillan's earlier Arctic experience and the availability of his 88-foot schooner *Bowdoin*, built in 1921, to his specifications for Arctic service, by the Hodgdon Brother's Shipyard in East Boothbay, Maine, must have been significant influences in the U.S. Navy and National Geographic support for the mission.

Early in their planning, MacMillan and McDonald were considering dirigibles, but a new development in American aviation caught their attention, the amphibian, a fixed-wing airplane that could land on water or land, or snow if so demanded. That airplane appeared to be the *Loening Amphibian*. Although there had been some earlier development of the amphibian in Europe, its true worth was not fully realized until Grover Loening, the first aeronautical engineering graduate from Columbia University, conceived inverting the V-12 *Liberty* engine as the amphibian powerplant. This innovation moved the crankshaft, and therefore the propeller, to the top of an installed engine for additional clearance from the hull and the water, resulting in improved pilot visibility. Three *Loening Amphibians*, some of the first products of the fledgling Loening Aircraft Company, were eventually allocated to the expedition.

It had become clear that the aircraft, the spare engines and other parts and equipment that must be carried north required a second vessel of much greater capacity than the *Bowdoin*. The search resulted in McDonald's purchase of the *Rowena*, a French minesweeper, at his own expense. It was refitted at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, rechristened the *SS Peary* by Admiral Peary's daughter, and then proceeded to the Boston Navy Yard for loading of the expedition's aircraft and equipment. The *Bowdoin* was ready and waiting in Wiscasset, with newly designed short-wave radio equipment installed by Zenith engineers. The *Peary*, similarly equipped, but with a much more powerful transmitter, arrived in Wiscasset on June 18th, after a tumultuous departure celebration from Boston. Except for perishable supplies and last minute details, they were ready to sail.

Wiscasset was in a festive mood. Many from the faculty of Bowdoin College, MacMillan's *alma mater* located in Brunswick, Maine, were there. Maine's Governor Brewster was there, as were thousands of others. The dock was roped off to protect the expedition participants from being mobbed by the crowd. The last speeches were delivered and final farewells offered. At 2:00 p.m., on June 20th, the *Peary* weighed anchor from its recently assumed position in the harbor and the *Bowdoin's* lines were loosed from dock pilings. Except for stops in Boothbay Harbor to take on water and one at Monhegan Island to unload the few influential guests who had accompa-



The "NA-2," the first of the Navy planes to be launched from the beach at Etah, in the shelter of Provision Point.

nied the *Bowdoin* on its departure, the vessels had left U.S. waters. The 1925 MacMillan Arctic Expedition was underway.

The first stop was North Sidney, Nova Scotia, where they remained for four days while steel plates were welded over the *Peary* portholes as protection from the ice it would later encounter. They struggled through heavy fog, first from Wiscasset, and then out of Sidney, most of the way to Battle Harbor, Labrador, where they arrived on July 4th. That stop was intended just to drop off Gilbert Grosvenor, president of the National Geographic and Dr. Wilford Grenfell, who conducted a medical mission at that location, but solid ice at the entrance to Davis Strait prevented immediate passage. The few days spent at Battle Harbor provided an opportunity for some necessary preparatory work on the aircraft and other equipment. In spite of continuing ice, MacMillan decided to move on, bucking ice to Hopedale, the most southern Inuit settlement on the Labrador coast, arriving on July 8th. The expedition vessels were the first that had arrived at Hopedale since October of the previous year.

After a troublesome passage across the Davis Strait from Hopedale in Labrador to Greenland (need for a replacement propeller on the *Bowdoin* and a mix-up about planned coal replenishment for the *Peary*) the expedition proceeded up the Greenland coast. Only the ability to communicate with Washington by short-wave radio enabled procurement of the necessary fuel for the *Peary*, and the continuation of the expedition. Political arrangements made, the *Peary* steamed up the coast to Umanak, where coal was loaded directly from the seaside mine. MacMillan moved the *Bowdoin* on into Buffin Bay, knowing that the superior speed of the *Peary* would soon overtake them. He was extremely anxious to reach Etah by August 1st, to take full advantage of the very limited three-week "summer season" at Etah and in adjoining Smith Sound. They would have to move out in that time frame or they might well be frozen in until the next year. Etah, on the north Greenland coast, just across from Elsmere Island and the unexplored area west of the Pole, was to be their home base for further exploration by aircraft.

— To be continued ...

**Come to the 1st Annual  
Aviation Past and Present  
Aircraft Static Display  
Portland International Jetport  
September 18-19, 2004**

The Portland International Jetport will be hosting the First Annual Aviation Past and Present Aircraft Static Display on September 18 and 19, 2004. We will have many vintage aircraft represented at this event. Some of the aircraft include the following:

**B-17G Flying Fortress and B-24 Liberator.** These two warbirds are truly remarkable planes. The combat records of both the B-17 and the B-24 speak for themselves.

**F4U-SNL.** Known for its ability to out-fly enemy fighters and pound ground targets, the Corsair is one of the most versatile piston-engine fighters ever produced.

**B-25J Mitchell.** Legendary events such as the Doolittle Raid and the countless bombing missions during WWII are brought to life through the B-25. Whether looking up at the Norden Bombsight in the nose of the Mitchell, or watching this famed warrior roar past the crowd line, people love to see the B-25. **TBM-3 E Avenger.** Whether discussing the Battle of Midway, or the sinking of Japan's two largest battleships, the TBM was a key player in the battle of the Pacific during WWII.

Also represented at the event will be modern day military aircraft from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force. Attached is a copy of "DD Form 2535" which has been submitted to each military installation public affairs office. The event has been approved.

Many other weekend activities have been planned for event participants. Shipyard Brewery will be hosting an arrival social on Friday September 17th at 6:00 p.m. that will include a lobster bake. On Saturday night, event participants will be treated to a sunset cruise of Portland Harbor followed by an old-fashioned hanger dance open to the public. Hotel rooms will be available at the Double Tree Hotel in Portland, Maine at a discounted rate. Please call 207-774-5611 to make your reservation. A very limited number of complimentary rooms are available, please call me at 207-756-8027 to inquire. Transportation to and from the hotel will be provided.

The airport is in the process of making many infrastructure improvements and facility upgrades. By September 17th runway 11/29 will have 7200 ft. available for arrivals and departures. It is currently 6800 ft. The airport will provide security at the event both during the show and after hours. For more details please contact me directly.

Gregory T. Hughes, Marketing Manager  
Portland International Jetport  
Tel: 207-756-8035 Fax: 207-791-8955

**-NEW-BOOK-NOW-AVAILABLE-AT-THE-MUSEUM-**

**Memoirs: With An Angel By My Side**

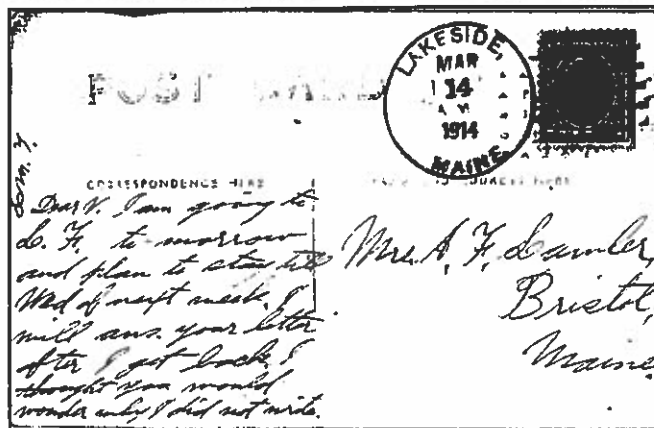
by Alfred Cormier

*His flying life as told by Al, member of MAHS/MAM  
and member of the Board of Directors.*

\$16.00 at the museum

\$20.00 by mail

**A Mysterious Postcard**



Member Rodney Laughton recently bought this old postcard mailed in 1914. So far we have been unable to identify this intrepid airman and his monoplane flyer. Does anyone have any clues to help us solve this mystery? If so, please let your editor know as soon as possible.

**OCTOBER 22-24, 2004**



**USS SARATOGA MUSEUM**

**QUONSET AIR MUSEUM**

**North Kingstown, Rhode Island**

**NORTHEAST AERO HISTORIANS MEETING**

Registration and program begins Friday evening.

Speeches, lunch and banquet on Saturday.

Tour on Sunday.

Program and registration forms will be available by September. For more information, call the Saratoga Museum at 401-831-8696.

fax: 401-831-8707 e-mail: savesara@aol.com

## Buy a Brick and Support the Maine Air Museum

*The Maine Air Museum is proud to announce the new Memorial Pathway Program. Here's how it works:*

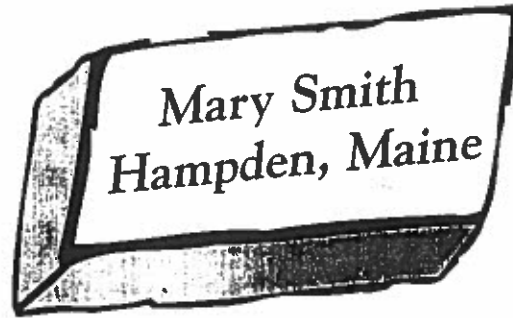
To successfully carry out and reach the museum vision, and to refurbish building 98, the Maine Air Museum needs the financial support of business and public community leaders and individual private citizens. Your interest in preserving the rich Maine aviation history will require funding presently not available to the museum effort. To this end, the museum board has established the following contribution plan for receiving your monetary donation and recognizing your gift permanently in the museum pathway and wall of honor. Remember: your donation is fully deductible.

### ★ Stratocumulus Member (Sc) — \$100 Donation

Entitles the gift giver to a one-year membership and two-year museum pass and a benefactor's engraved 4"x8"x2.5" red clay brick with up to two lines (14 characters/line, .65" high) of commemorative text in the name of the gift giver or his/her memorial to others. Brick to be installed on the museum grounds, walkway or building facade.

### ★ Altostratus Member (As) — \$150 Donation

Entitles the gift giver to a two-year membership and three-year museum pass, copy of The United States Air Force in Maine, and a benefactor's engraved 4"x8"x2.5" red clay brick with up to two lines (14 characters/line, .65" high) of commemorative text in the name of the gift giver or his/her memorial to others. Brick to be installed on the museum grounds, walkway or building facade.



*See Order Form on Page 7*

### ★ Altocumulus Member (Ac) — \$250 Donation

Entitles the gift giver to a five-year membership and five-year museum pass and a benefactor's engraved 4"x8"x2.5" pearl gray marble brick with up to two lines (14 characters/line, .65" high) of commemorative text in the name of the gift giver or his/her memorial to others. Brick to be installed on the museum grounds, walkway or building facade.

### ★ Cirrus Member (Cj) — \$2500 Donation

Entitles the gift giver to life membership status and a benefactor's engraved three foot white marble setting bench with one line (27 characters/line, 2" high) of commemorative text in the name of the gift giver or his/her memorial to others. Bench to be installed in the museum building or on the museum grounds.

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**Join the MAHS Today and Catch the Excitement !!**

## Upcoming MAHS Meetings and Events

✈ ✈ ✈ 2004 — 2004 — 2004 — 2004 — 2004 ✈ ✈ ✈

- September 9-12 ..... All Day ..... International Seaplane Fly-In, Greenville, Maine.
- September 18-19 ..... All Day ..... PWM Aircraft Display Show, Portland International Jetport.
- September 18 ..... 10 a.m. .... MAHS Meeting, Maine Air Museum, Bangor, Maine.
- October 9 ..... 10 a.m. .... MAHS Meeting, Maine Air Museum, Bangor, Maine.
- October 22-24 ..... All Day ..... Northeast Aero Historians Meeting, USS Saratoga Museum, North Kingstown, RI.

### We Welcome Our Newest Member

468. **Frank M. Stefanek**  
 8605 SE Causey Avenue, Apt. #413  
 Portland, Oregon 97266

#### Got E-Mail?

Don't forget to send us your e-mail address if you want it listed in the *Dirigo Flyer*. It's a great way to keep in touch with other members, share information quickly and stay current on aviation issues and happenings.

### We Still Need Volunteers

We still need volunteers to work in the museum!

We need people to work on our engine displays, touch up and production of historical displays, office work, computer filing, and, of course, yard work. We also need a serious model builder to assist in repairing, cleaning and constructing models, dioramas and other displays.

To volunteer, call 1-877-280-MAHS. To check the dates on which we need help, link to:

**[MaineAirMuseumvolunteerschedule.org](http://MaineAirMuseumvolunteerschedule.org)**

✈ ✈ ✈ **COME JOIN US and CATCH THE EXCITEMENT** ✈ ✈ ✈

*Join the Maine Aviation Historical Society Today  
 Help Preserve Maine's Aviation History for Tomorrow  
 For more information, call 207-941-6757 or 1-877-280-MAHS (in state)  
 or check out our **NEW** web site at [www.maineairmuseum.org](http://www.maineairmuseum.org)*

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I am interested in a  grant or  matching grant contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Please submit this information with your tax-deductible 501(c)3 contribution to MAM Memorial Brick Fund c/o Carl Sederquist, 19 Lincoln Lane, Surry, Maine (ME) 04684. You will be mailed an acknowledgement and a copy of the engraving text proof.*

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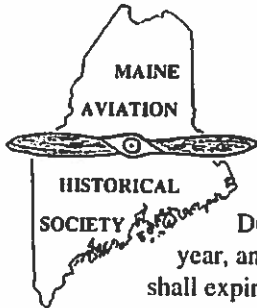
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12/04

### MAINE AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY MAINE AIR MUSEUM • MEMBERSHIP FORM



Dues are for one year, and membership shall expire in the month you joined.

Annual membership includes  
*12 monthly newsletters!*

Mail payment to:  
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Membership	Dues	Benefits
Regular	\$25 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission
Family	\$35 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission
Corporate	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission
Supporting	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission, 4 Free Passes
Lifetime	\$500*	Newsletter, Decal, Lifetime Membership Number, Museum Admission, 10 Free Passes
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Membership	Dues	Benefits
Regular	\$25 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission
Family	\$35 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission
Corporate	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission
Supporting	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Decal, Museum Admission, 4 Free Passes
Lifetime	\$500*	Newsletter, Decal, Lifetime Membership Number, Museum Admission, 10 Free Passes
* (2 annual \$250 payments)		

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

### September Meeting

September 18, 2004

10 a.m.

Maine Air Museum

Bangor, Maine

See you at Greenville, Sept. 11-12  
and Portland, Sept. 18-19