

News and Events at the Parlin Field Airport in Newport, New Hampshire

December 2013



Pictured above (back row l-r: Whit Smith, Cliff Henderson, Terry Callum, Jim Callum, Russ Kelsea, Tom Thomas front row l-r: Harold Yanofsky, John Merriman, Rocky Cusanelli, Heath Marsden. Missing from photo: Rick Kloeppel, Jake Veroneau, Scott McCoy, Bob Davis, Lou Edmonds)

The bonds that tie us

With this issue of our monthly newsletter falling between Thanksgiving and Christmas, it is appropriate that we reflect upon relationships formed through a shared passion for aviation. Many of the volunteers that make our airport a place of reverence are pictured in the photo above. They represent countless hours of volunteerism and dedication. We are grateful for their talents, their time, and most of all, their friendship. They are the reason so many first flights into Parlin turn into the first of many more flights.

One of the great pleasures of operating an airport such as Parlin is the opportunity to meet a wide variety of people. Several years ago we were introduced to a couple from Anchorage, Alaska that had flown their Maule into Parlin. Scott Christy and wife Jean intended to overnight at Parlin before continuing on to a family event in Maine. From there they would head back home to Alaska. Well, as is often the case at Parlin, friendships were formed and they returned to Parlin after the family event and spent the next week camping under the wing of their Maule. We have remained in contact through the years. The flying in their neck of the woods is simply amazing.

Scott is forever tempting us to experience the beauty and challenges of flying Alaska. Scott notes that the best time to fly up is in July (most mellow weather). By late August freezing rain, rain mixed with snow, or snow can occur in higher mountain passes (same for May and the first part of June). He provided an account of a trip made last September to Big Johnstone Lake in his float equipped Maule. His return home was delayed a day due to an ice blockage along his departure taxi route. What follows are excerpts of his correspondence (reprinted with his permission) and several pictures of the trip along with additional photos of the beauty that await aviators of small GA aircraft.

“You can’t roller skate through a buffalo herd”



When speaking of preparing for departure from Big Johnstone Lake after several days of wilderness camping, Scott says “I knew from talking with the National Weather Service Aviation desk on my satellite telephone that a strong northeast wind was coming (which would ultimately move many icebergs towards the southern shoreline of Big Johnstone Lake where they were camped), but there was no other shallow-water place to safely tie up the plane.”



Scott and Jeans approximate escape route through the bergs shown with the blue dotted line

“Having established a rock-filled super sack just off shore last year was really important. With the bow of one float tied to the submerged super sack the plane was not driven onto the beach during the strong winds. We arrived after very high rains had temporarily raised the lake level about 4.5 feet. I knew the lake level would drop overnight and tried to guess how far out to tie the plane from the shore. I tied the plane facing the beach.

The next morning I found the plane sitting on the beach with only the very ends of the rear floats in water. I had stocked my tool supply with several small hydraulic jacks just for such a problem years ago. I was able to jack up the front spreader bars of the floats a short distance and then the entire plane fell off backwards and slid down slope towards the water a bit. It took about 20 minutes of repeat jacking to re-float the plane. After that I turned the plane to face north and continually moved the plane further out as the water level dropped. I needed to keep the plane in the shallow water near shore so large ice blocks would not be floated into it and damage it, but far enough to not be beached. All the time, more and more ice bergs were becoming grounded as the lake level slowly dropped.”



“After the plane sat in ice water for four days, I wanted to make sure it actually started once we hand paddled it out of the ice jam area. I ‘baby’ my engine and avoid any cold starts for its health. So about two hours before we made our break for freedom, I set up my 1,000 watt Honda generator to run my Tanis engine pre-heat system.”



“In the winter I always fly with the little Honda so I am able to either pre-heat the engine or charge the planes’ battery. I carry about 60 lb. of survival gear on winter flights here since you have to be able to take care of yourself in the wilderness. I consider my Iridium Satellite telephone my most important safety item when flying. Cell phones only work near civilization.”

“I tie a rope to the generator in case a big ice berg rolled or broke up and sent big waves to shore (it happens). Also note the can of bear spray tied on the bow of the floats. I put them on the plane when it is tied up in the wilderness. Many times a bear will explore a canister first before it rips into the plane. When the very hot pepper spray explodes in a

bear's mouth, I think they leave the area. I had one bitten thru once that I tied near one of my small buildings."



"The canoe was most important since we used it to scout for open water and the route for departure. We also used it to circle free floating bergs we wanted to move to break up the new overnight thin ice that held them fast."

"I would climb onto flat topped bergs and use a 10.5 foot pole (cut to match the floats' width) with three inch wood screws in the end for gripping and pushing bergs to create an open channel. After I, and the berg I was standing on, had moved, Jean would paddle over in the canoe to carry me to the next berg that needed to be moved out of the way."



From the canoe I would first push down on the edge of a berg to see if it was a free floater. If it was grounded and didn't move at all, I had to find another way around. I only climbed on the relatively flat topped bergs since they were relatively stable and I could push from them. The bergs with more ice above the surface and more rounded were usually grounded. Down on

the water it was hard to see a route so after we found a passageway in the canoe, we marked it with spruce cuttings we carried so when we hand paddled the plane we would be able to see which way to go."

"We spent about three hours scouting and pushing icebergs from the canoe. Then in early afternoon we spent another hour-plus hand paddling the plane to freedom. I had a dry change of clothes set aside in the plane just in case I slipped or a berg rolled over. Since the water temperature is just above 32 F this time of year, I am glad I didn't go for a swim. We were lucky not to have a slight breeze during our efforts, so the bergs we pushed out of the way for the most part stayed put. Some drifted back in behind us after we finished with the canoe pre-work, but they were mobile enough to push clear from the plane on our final drive out."



"So we ended up staying one extra day longer than planned and saw the benefits of daily exercise in action. We will try not to fly down too soon after any big rain events on the outer coast (as best we can guess) in the future. We had a good supply of food stocks and could have stayed weeks longer if needed. A pilot friend in Seward was monitoring our situation and had offered to fly in any supplies we might need. Using my satellite telephone was a real plus. My only real worry was the plane and getting him out. Jean was great help paddling, pushing, & keeping spirits up."

Scott encourages people to fly up and see Alaska from a small plane. We thank Scott and Jean for their continued friendship and great flying adventures from way up north!

**Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year to All!**



Upcoming Events

Visit the Parlin Field website for more information on events at:

<http://www.newportnh.net/index.php?nav=228>

Dec 17 Airport Advisory Board – 6:30pm,
Airport Operations building

Dec 18 Chill and Grill – 6:00pm, at the Lil' Red
Baron

About Parlin Field

The Parlin Field Airport is located about 2 miles north of town at 14 Airport Road. The Airport is owned and operated by the Town of Newport, New Hampshire.

Parlin Field is a community airport that serves the entire Lake Sunapee Region. The airport enjoys support from pilots, tenants, stakeholders, and the community at large. It does not receive Federal funds.

Contact Information

Airport Advisory Board

Rick Kloeppel, Chair
Russ Kelsea
John Merriman
Harold Yanofsky
Townsend Thomas
Jeff Kessler, Board of Selectmen

Airport Manager

Heath Marsden
Town of Newport
15 Sunapee Street
Newport, NH 03773

Phone: 603-863-1220

Email: parlinfield@newportnh.net

Website: <http://www.newportnh.net/index.php?nav=147>

Weather: <http://www.newportnh.net/weather/wx.htm>