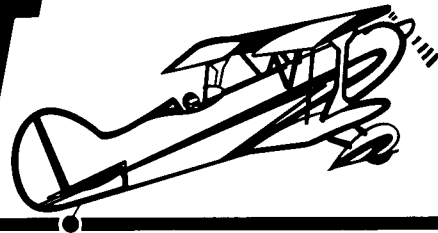


# ACRO SPORT Newsletter



NO. 23

MARCH 1988



John Willkomm hails from Kenosha, Wisconsin.

## JOHN WILLKOMM'S COMPETITION ACRO SPORT I

By John Willkomm, EAA No. 152262, IAC No. 7388

I originally found out about the aircraft at an EAA Chapter meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1982. The aircraft was in storage at WAG-AERO, and was for sale.

I was looking for an aerobatic aircraft at that time, but couldn't afford a Pitts. A friend of mine and I ended up going in partnership to buy the aircraft. He flew it a couple of years, and then lost interest. I ended up buying him out in December 1986.

The aircraft is an Acro Sport I built in 1974, in about 10 months. It was built by William Shatt, for James Inmann of Stamford, Connecticut. It is powered by an IO-360, 180 HP, fuel injected Lycoming engine. It has inverted fuel and oil systems, and is equipped with a smoke system.

I have flown it and competed with it in numerous contests in the last four years: Fond du Lac IAC Championships

1984, 85, 86, 87; Great Lakes Regional in Hartford, Wisconsin 1984, 85, 86, 87; CJ McDonald Classic in Marengo, Illinois 1984, 85; Belvidere, Illinois Regional 1986 and 1987; Princeton, Minnesota Regional 1986; Salem, Illinois Regional 1987; and Galt, Illinois Contest 1986.

The airplane was photographed at Fond du Lac, 1987 on the Competition Line.



In all of these contests, I flew in the SPORTSMAN category. One of the contests I flew in the BASIC category to get and qualify for the patch. This year, I am moving up to the INTERMEDIATE category. I finished fairly decently in SPORTSMAN the last two years. Overall average this year was about 83%. I really don't think there is any other ACRO SPORT I actively competing around here.

The aircraft flies very well. (Even though it is on the heavy side at 955 lbs.) It has a full electric system in it. I don't think it would be very competitive any higher than INTERMEDIATE category, because of the weight and straight upper wing.

It cruises at 130 MPH. I use 165 MPH indicated for Hammerheads, Loops and Cubans. It Snaps nicely at 105 MPH.

EDITOR'S NOTE: John reports he also did two airshows at an open house held at the Kenosha airport in this airplane. He says, "I am enjoying the heck out of it!" He also says it snaps nicely, and he has been able to get very good scores on that. He does have spades on the aileron, but doesn't use stall strips. This aircraft has the earlier M-6 airfoil rather than the late Super Acro Sport 23012 airfoil. He does add a caution to be sure to put the gussets on the landing gear, as recommended for all Acro Sport I and II aircraft, as he had one gear break

in that area, but it did not collapse. He gusseted both sides to repair it. He has about 400 hours in the aircraft since 1983. If you are interested in further information on competition in the Acro Sport I, contact John at (414) 694-7355.



## EDITORIAL

By Ben Owen, Editor

I have been with EAA for 15 years and was fortunate to have seen the test flight of the first Super Acro Sport N5AC on March 21, 1973 (the original Acro Sport I flew on January 11, 1972 — before my time!) I have been in on the necessary minor plans corrections to all the aircraft and have done some drafting — sketching of parts and pieces, etc. I have seen the Acro Sport II fly, and have flown it myself. Now we are seeing Acro Sport, Inc., move on to plans sales of the old time Cougar, Super Ace and Jr. Ace.

Acro Sport, Inc., is a separate corporation from the EAA, and the EAA Aviation Foundation, and rightfully so. This helps limit liability and separates what is basically a plans sales operation from our membership operation, our museum, and its activities. With Acro Sport, Inc. donating charitable gifts to schools and education promotions that you rarely hear about, it is just barely profit making, and I think you would describe it primarily as a philanthropic organization. Without the support of the active homebuilder — that is you! — we would be nowhere. Acro Sport, Inc., exists because we all want it to, and certainly not as a way for great profits to be realized.

Response to our newsletter has been good, and there are about 200 of us who subscribe. If you know of any builders who are not subscribing, would you



John Nation's Acro Sport II climbing out on its first test flight on July 3, 1987 in Boca Raton, Florida.

encourage them to do so? Due to the changes in plans and aircraft, etc., the newsletters are considered MANDATORY for the active builder, as this is the only way we have of notifying them of these changes.

We will keep the newsletter going with your help. I would like to thank all those builders who have contributed articles and pictures to us — keep it up! Thanks also to our newsletter staff — Paul, Ann, Mike and Tony. Thanks to the staff at TIMES Publishing, and a BIG vote of thanks to Ray Scholler for underwriting this newsletter.

Like Bill Clouse of the Starduster News, we are dedicated to the **active homebuilder**. Our reward is seeing you succeed!

Happy Building!

## THOMAS ARTHUR'S ACRO SPORT I

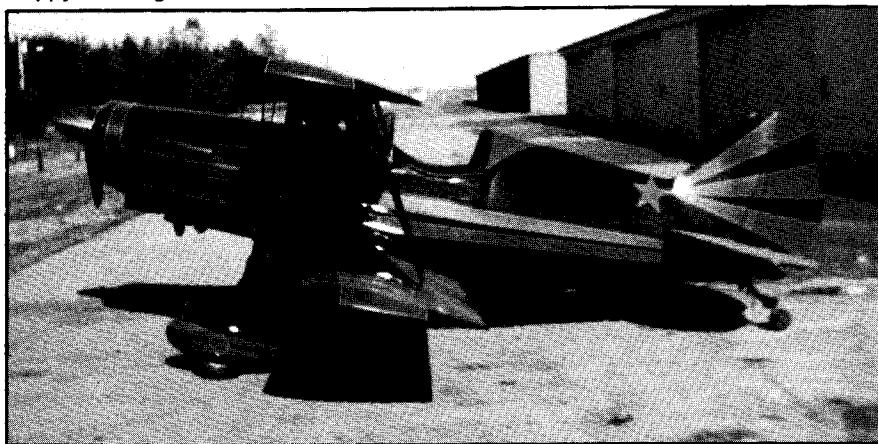
From Thomas Arthur, 535 Wilson St., Danville, VA 24541

Ben;

Enclosed is a picture of N47TA. I started it October 15, 1980 and finished December 22, 1987. It is powered by 0320E2D. Radio is RST 720 channel Com and 200 channel NAV, which I built myself.

FAA airworthiness inspection due the third week of January. Empty weight 890 lbs. with full electric and smoke. CC was perfect; based on the envelope which I got from you. I built the unit as close to plans as I could.

Thank you for your assistance in the past.



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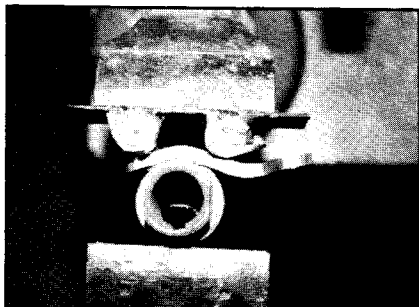
Ben Owen - Editor  
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## ACRO SPORT WING WORK

By Thomas DeWinter of Colona, Illinois

These photos show how I accomplished some of the tasks in the wing. I have gotten a lot of tips out of the newsletters and feel they have been worth the investment. Maybe I can repay by helping someone else, even if it is to give them a good laugh (at my Rube Goldberg methods)!

I'll start with the aileron interconnect horns. These were among the first pieces I cut, meticulously finished the surface, bent, and threw into the scrap box. I tried bending them in a vise using a radiused backing plate and a heavy rawhide mallet, but the creases left by the backing plate were not acceptable. I didn't have much luck with a large crescent wrench, as detailed in a back newsletter, either. Photos 1 and 2 show the bending dies I made that turned out to work well. The piece against the back of the vise consists of two short (1-3/4") lengths of half inch water pipe (approximately 7/8" o.d.), set parallel to each other and welded to a backing plate. Eyeball engineering dictated the 1-13/16" on center spacing. The pipes started to collapse on the first use, so I filled them with molten lead. I used a third pipe to do the original bending, but found it less than ideal. The scrap box came through again with an old pulley drive flange, measuring 1-3/4" o.d. The three surfaces were covered with fresh duct tape for each use and made perfect bends. By noting the position of the vise handle when a bend worked out, I was able to repeat the angle of bend on the remaining three parts easily.

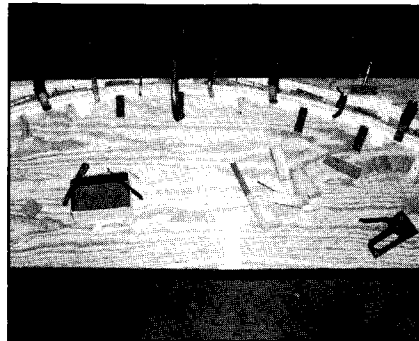


Bending die to bend the aileron interconnect horns.

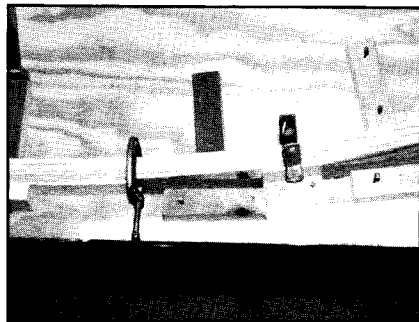


Another shot of the bending die. The small pipes were filled with molten lead to keep them from collapsing.

The center section bow is an interesting piece, with probably as many ways of building as there are builders. I first drew the radius on plywood. Then I nailed jig blocks perpendicular to the radius on the inside of the curve. The spruce slats were coated with T-88 epoxy and clamped in the center only (large C-clamp shown in photos 3 and 4). Note the black line on the edge of the slats to mark the center line. This was used to make sure that one didn't slide excessively out of position. The stack was then bent around the jig blocks, one station at a time, alternating left to right. As it was pulled into position, another block was nailed to the plywood base at an appropriate angle for a wedge to be tapped in, tightly clamping the slats together. Once all wedges were in place, I used all clamps on hand in between the jig blocks to further assure the laminations were in good contact.



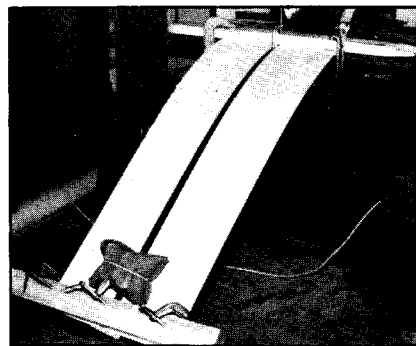
Center bow jig with the laminated wood clamped in place.



Further detail shots of the center section bow jig.

I bolted the wings to the center section and leveled for zero dihedral. The bow was blocked into position and riblet template made. Riblets were cut, fit and glued to the spar. First the center and ends, then the remaining ones. Temporarily install the drag wires to square the center section before gluing the riblets.

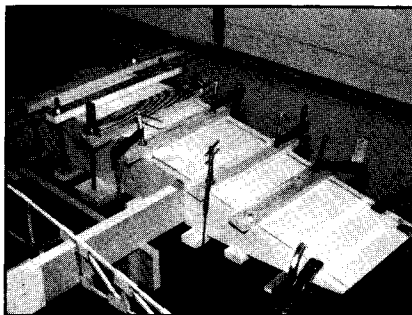
I don't like the riblets being butt-glued to the spar and I wish I had let the capstrips extend aft of the spar. The bow was glued on in one piece and when dry, the section between the wing panels and center section was cut out. This allowed perfect alignment and continuity of the radius.



Pre-bending the wing walk sheeting before gluing.

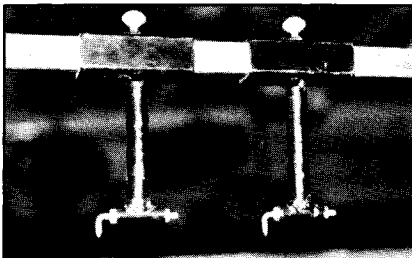
Photo 5 shows the wing walk sheeting being pre-bent. After cutting to width, the sheets were soaked in a laundry tub for one hour. Only the first twenty inches or so was in the water. The wet ends were clamped to a table as shown. A 2x4 was clamped to the other end to keep the parts from twisting and a sand bag set on for weight. I trimmed the first inch off of the end that was clamped to the table to get rid of the crease left by the sharp table edge. The trailing edges were trimmed and beveled. They fit in place with only slight clamping force needed to maintain contact with the supports.

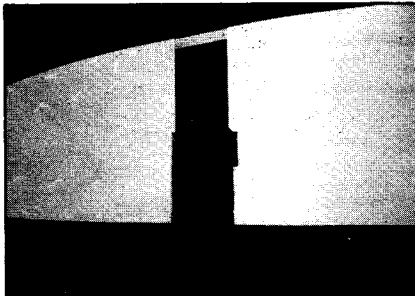
Photo 6 shows the wing walk glued and clamped. Ten inch, 3/8" carriage bolts and scrap 1x2's make inexpensive clamps.



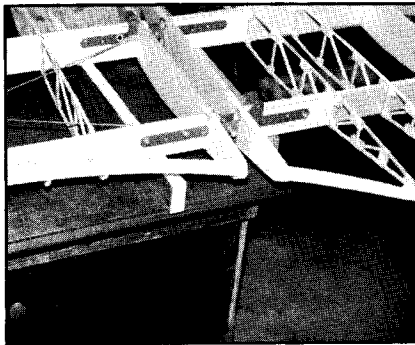
Wing walk clamped and glued in place.

Photo 7 shows how the jig used to drill for drag wires can double as a trammel. Another builder called me the other day wanting to know if you really had to cut the rib capstrip on the center section. The plans could be clearer on this. Photo 8 shows the cutouts in my center section, outboard rib. I hope you can find something of value in this to pass along in the newsletter!

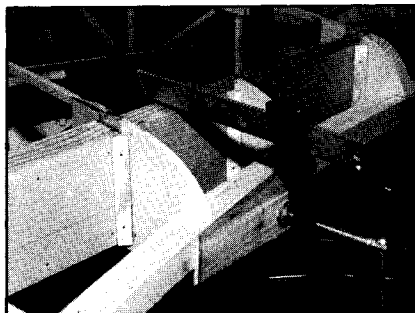




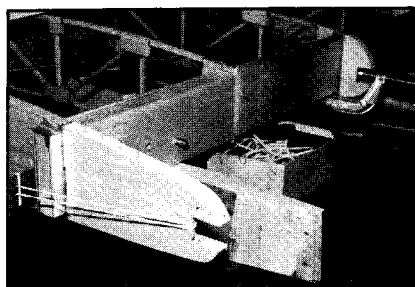
This shows where they cut through the lower rib capstrip on the center section.



This shows the bow and the riblets in place and faired.



This shows the wing tip bow and riblets clamped and glued in position.



Various methods, including strong rubber band, can be used to hold the riblets in position while they dry.



This excellent Acro Sport I model was built by Ray Care, EAA No. 38525, of Spokane, Washington.



John Leitis has been a fixture in the Pixie workshop a number of years. For those Pixie builders who would like to contact John, they can reach him at 817 Roosevelt Avenue, Roaring Springs, PA 16673.

### ACRO SPORT RECOGNIZES VOLUNTEERS AT OSHKOSH

Information supplied by Robert E. Stagner, Chairman, of Poplar Bluff, Missouri.

Acro Sport, Inc., would like to recognize those volunteers in the Education Workshop at Oshkosh 1987. These people are Acro Sport builders and others who have assisted in the Acro Sport and other Educational Workshops. Their names follow:

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Our thanks to all of you volunteers, and in particular, to Acro Sport II builder and Workshop Chairman, Bob Stagner, and his wife Louise!

## ACRO SPORT II MODIFICATIONS

By Neil Sidders of Monroe, Louisiana,  
Contributing Editor

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Neil Sidders, Bruce Owens and Robert Owens are building three Acro Sport IIs. The photos that follow were not taken from just one aircraft.

I don't know how common 7/8" tubes are on this type of aircraft, but I think they are probably about standard. At first, we welded the hinge blocks in place. This caused a great deal of warpage. So we began using silver solder to attach the blocks. We are still welding the bushing stock in place. It should be noted that the collars on either side of the hinge bushing should be the last thing to weld on the rudder and elevator spars. The elevator should be bolted together at the control horn and be on the airplane, then work from the center out. Otherwise, shrinkage from welding may cause the hangar to bind.

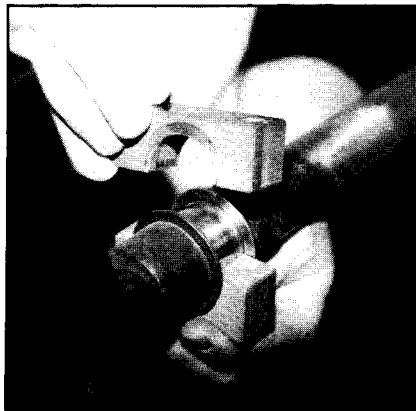


This shows how we are building our elevator carry thru spars.

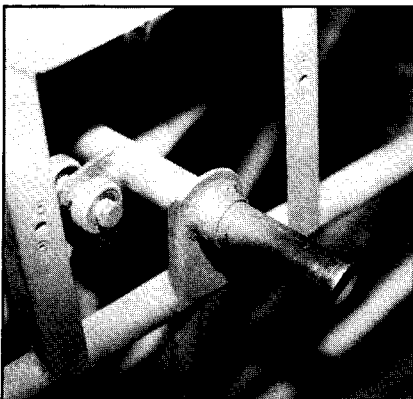
In the building of our Acro Sport biplanes, we discovered what we felt were some serious shortcomings in the control system. As it turns out, this is the way things have been done for years and it seems to have been sufficient. With the new wave of competitiveness, we are now flying our airplanes harder than ever. What was once "good enough" may not cut it anymore, and with safety being an ever present and growing concern, it is time we take a good, hard look at how we build things.



In the Acro Sport plans, all the idler fittings in the elevator push pull tube assembly swing on a 1/4" AN bolt that is pushed through a short length of bushing stock that is welded into the airframe. If these bolts are torqued to their proper values, it will lock the system. What it should have is a bushing within the welded bushing stock with the inner bushing about .020" longer than the welded bushing material. We used heat treated steel bushing stock in the idlers, and the system is very smooth and has no slack at all.

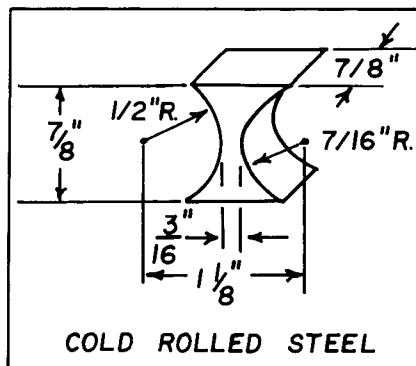
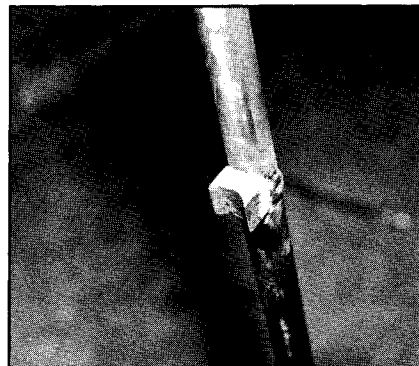


The second point of concern was the control torque tube thrust area. The drawing calls for a .058 x 1-5/8" tube collar on either side of the torque tube pillow block. We felt that the thrust area provided by the edge of this collar was inadequate and our fix was to make thrust faces for the collars from .090" 4130 flat stock. The inside diameter is 1.505" and the outside is 2". This provides 1.373 square inches per side, vs. .292 square inches. These "thrust washers" were silver soldered in place to minimize warpage.



The third improvement was on the stabilizer spar carry through tube assembly. As designed, the stabilizer slides on over the carry through tube and is held in place by a bolt passing through both tubes. The problem here is when the tail brace wires are tightened, the bolt is placed in double shear. To eliminate the shear condition, we enlarged the holes in the uprights of the carry through assembly to 7/8". We then cut a length of 7/8 x .058" 4130 tubing the proper length to span the gap in the stabilizer

spars. The carry through spar tube passes through the 7/8 tube. (Do this before you weld.) When assembled, the stabilizer spar seats against the 7/8 tube, rather than the bolt. The only function the bolt has now is to prevent the stabilizer from falling off when the brace wires are removed.

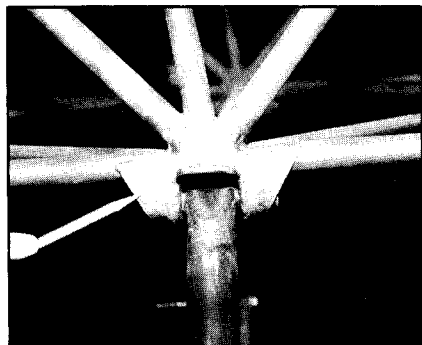


The fourth area of concern was with the elevator and rudder hinges. Most designs use a small piece of flat stock bent in a "V" shape for a seat for the hinge bushing. This provides only two small areas of contact for the bushing. In anticipation of a bunch of blown maneuvers, we wanted a little more security in these areas. Solid steel blocks were machined to accept the stabilizer spar in front and the hinge bushing out back. These were silver soldered to the stabilizer spar and they provide a very strong and secure seat for the hinge.

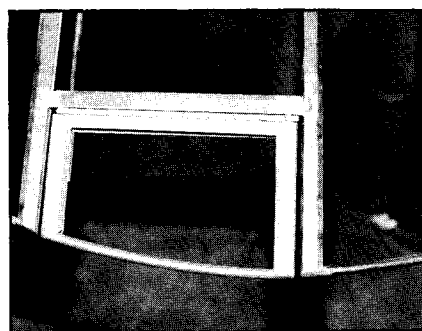
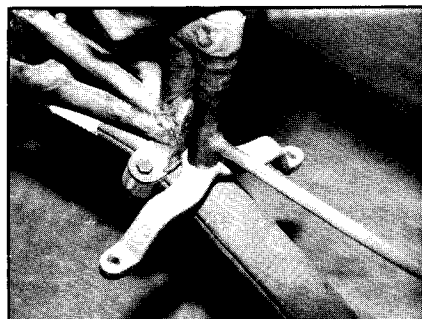
The last change we made was to the front landing gear attach fitting. The fitting was designed with a sharp 90 degree bend, which makes it very weak at this point. The Acro Sport Newsletter brought this out some time ago, but re-



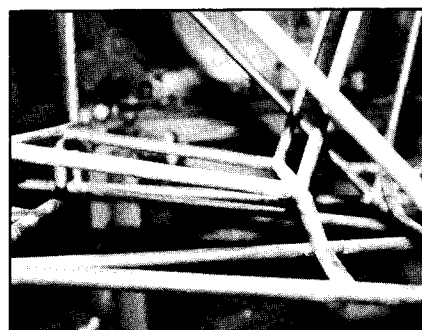
cently I was looking at a Skybolt with the same problem, so I felt that it was worth mentioning again. The Acro Sport Newsletter shows a small, triangular gusset. This is good, but we went one step further and made a wrap around type gusset that gives even more support. The rear attach point serves only to stabilize the gear and does not require the modification.



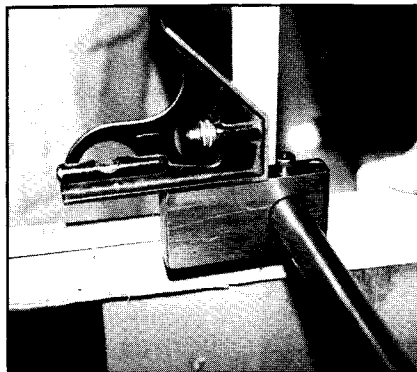
We spliced the rudder post so that the bottom of the tube was 7/8 x .058 to accept a J-3 steering arm. It looks a bit more professional and provides more clearance for turning.



We built our trim tabs like this to maintain a more fluid contour on the elevator.



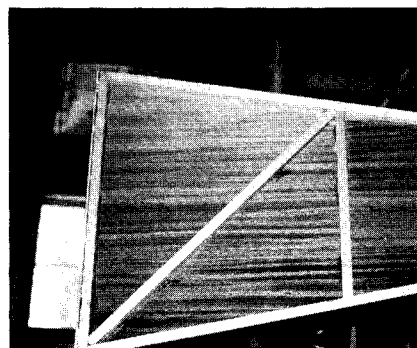
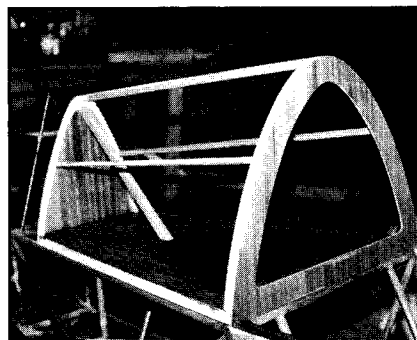
This shows a modification to the front seat to increase comfort for Debbie on cross country trips.



This is a drill fixture we made to be sure all the spars were drilled on CL for the hinges. Just level the airplane or part, then level the drill fixture and drill the hole.



A wood turtle deck on an Acro II! Lighter than aluminum and easier to make. The diagonal brace in the rear is a constant reminder against loading too far aft and helps keep things square. The skin is not glued to the side stringers. They help protect the skin from "airshow leaners". The Acro II Deck is shorter than the Acro I and shouldn't need the third bulkhead.



## PLEXIGLASS HINTS

We have some additional plexiglass hints from Tony Hohenwalde that we didn't have room for in the last issue.

Taken from "The Airplane Factory, Inc.," Dayton, Ohio.

1. **CUTTING:** An abrasive disc powered by a high speed drill, a Dremel tool, or a hand held circular saw is recommended. We have found that abrasive cut-off wheels of aluminum oxide or silicon carbide provide excellent cutting results. A six inch disc is available at most hardware stores for around \$3.50. A small grinding disc or Demel saw disc will also give good results. Reciprocating saws, like saber saws, are NOT RECOMMENDED and will probably break your canopy. A tool that progresses slow and hot to grind through the canopy is best. Tape a poly plastic cover on the canopy and mark your outline with masking tape. Never cut a cold canopy. Allow the canopy to warm to 70 degrees or more for at least an hour. Don't allow the canopy to vibrate or chatter during the cutting or it may chip and crack. Support your canopy on a flat surface so it will not twist or spread during the trimming. Duct tape is handy to hold things in place. Remember, cut slowly, don't push the cutter. Let the tool do the work. Be sure to use eye protection. Plexiglas chips can be a problem in your eyes since they are clear and difficult to see.

2. **DRILLING:** The drill should be ground off to a zero rake angle to prevent digging in, chipping and cracking the plexiglas. A standard drill bit, ground with no cutting edge pitch, is a safe method of making holes. Be sure to make the holes oversize to allow for motion caused by thermal expansion and contraction. The drill bit should not be allowed to chatter or it will chip and break the plexiglas.

3. **CLEANING:** A damp, soft cloth or an air blast will clean the saw dust away. The damp cloth will also dissipate static electricity. To clean dirty plexiglas, use plenty of water and a non abrasive soap or detergent. Dry with a clean chamois or soft cotton. NEVER use acetone, benzene, carbon tetrachloride, lighter fluid, lacquer thinners, leaded gasoline, window sprays or scouring compounds. Grease or oil may be removed with kerosene, white gasoline, naphtha or isopropyl alcohol. Small scratches can be rubbed out with "Mirror Glaze" HGH-17 and a lot of rubbing. Hard, automobile paste wax should be applied as a protective coating and buffed with a soft cotton flannel cloth. Do not use cheesecloth, muslin or shop cloths, as they scratch. For deep scratch removal, procure a hand polishing kit from a plexiglas dealer or your canopy supplier.

## ATTACHING COWLING TO NOSEBOWL

By Tony Hohenwalde, Contributing Editor

asked Ben Owen (EAA Headquarters) a while back if there was any one preferred way to attach the upper and lower cowl to the nosebowl. Turns out there are several methods that have been used by builders of Acro's, as well as other aircraft; namely, PK screws, machine screws with locknuts, machine screws with nut-plates riveted to the flange of the nosebowl - in other words, builder's choice.

I liked the idea of machine screws and nut-plates, but did not relish the thought of riveting the plates to the fiberglass flange. Instead, I did the following:

I cut two strips of 2024-T3, .020" aluminum, approximately 1" wide; length to suit the upper and lower cowl pieces. (This is an excellent way to make use of all those scrap pieces you've had lying around - you are saving them, aren't you?) I then riveted the nut-plates to the aluminum strips (nut-plate No. MS21069-L3, accepts a 10-32 machine screw; rivet with a 3/32" rivet).

The screw holes in the nosebowl and the aluminum strips had been match-drilled and after the nut-plates had been installed, I attached the strips to the nosebowl. Draw the screws up snug in order that the strips lie flat against the inside of the bowl. Leave some space (1/4" to 3/8") between the strip and the edge of the bowl flange.

The next step is to place a piece of fiberglass cloth over the aluminum strip and epoxy it in place. Make a small slit in the cloth and press it down around the nut-plates (Yes, it is messy and sticky). Brush the epoxy into the cloth thoroughly to completely fill the fabric, and when it begins to set up and become tacky, epoxy on a second layer of cloth. I used a medium weight cloth and "PIC" coating epoxy obtained at a local hobby shop. It has a working time of about 30 minutes, sets up in 90 minutes, full cure in about 5 hours. It can be "force cured" with a heat lamp, if desired.

Before the epoxy cures completely, back the screws out. Make sure, however, that the cure is far enough along so that the aluminum strips won't move out of line.

The job can be finished up by smoothing out any rough spots and spraying the inside of the nosebowl with a heat resistant paint.

## HELP WANTED — ALL YOU BUILDERS OUT THERE!!

We need questions, answers, tips, photos, articles, etc. This is your forum for the exchange of ideas and information. Let us hear from you! Addresses to submit to follow:

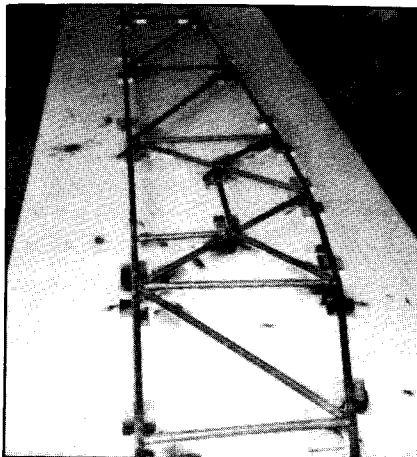
Ben Owen  
EAA Wittman Airfield  
Oshkosh, WI 54903-3086  
(414) 426-4800

Tony Hohenwalde  
3550 Jackson Way  
Thornton, CO 80233  
(303) 452-4180

### POBER JUNIOR ACE SERIAL NO. 19

from Herbert Glasscock, Plainfield, Illinois

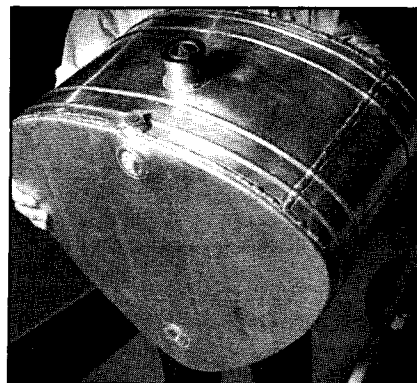
Herbert is well started on his fuselage, as the photograph will show, and in fact, came up to visit Paul's project in the mini-museum here at the site.



Glasscock Pober Junior Ace right side fuselage.



Paul Poberezny's Junior Ace, jugged up. Note the braces on the side of the fuselage clamped to the longeron and the 2 x 4's clamped to the spars with blocks to protect the wood. Get the proper size for the struts.



### CUSTOM FUEL TANK SERVICE

Have your fuel tank built to your custom specifications for approximately \$250.00 per tank. Builder is experienced in the construction of tanks for amateur built aircraft over several years. The weight of the tank is 8 lbs., 12 oz. Contact Benny Davis, Route No. 2, Corydon, IA 50060; telephone (515) 872-2032.

Photograph of Benny's tank by Carl Schuppel, EAA Staff Photographer.

### PROJECTS FOR SALE

ACRO SPORT II, 80% complete, for sale for \$6,000.00 from Jody Taylor, Box 272, Kaycee, WY 82639; telephone (307) 738-2581.

ACRO SPORT II, complete, for sale. This project is covered, painted yellow, white and green. It has two parachutes of the old military style, a disassembled O-290 B-4 of 140 HP, no prop, some instruments and an extra case, a PS5C carburetor, Cleveland wheels and brakes. Contact Dan Massopust, Rt. 3, Box 544, Menomonee, Wisconsin 54751; home telephone (715) 235-8186, and work (715) 839-8484. He has \$15,000.00 invested in it and is asking \$10,000.00.

ACRO SPORT II, completed and flying, for sale. N35DQ from Daniel Quebedeaux, Jr. Rt. 1, Box 501, Arnaudville, LA 70512. The story on this aircraft appeared in Newsletter #10. He has 43 hours total time on the aircraft and has lost his airstrip. He has \$25,000.00 invested and this is his "bottom" price.

### ACRO SPORT I OR II WANTED

A gentleman in Ireland, Mr. Hugh Costello, would like to purchase either a flying Acro Sport I or II, or one in close to finished condition. Interested builders may contact Mr. Hugh Costello, Bruff Cross, Aghamore, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo, IRELAND.

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### ACRO SPORT II KITS



### POBER PIXIE BASIC KITS



### ACRO SPORT KITS

FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT..



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