# ACRO SPORT Newsletter

NO. 53

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## Another Acro Sport II Flies

# with a canopy you can build!

By Bill Freckman 1813 Quail Hollow Drive Grapevine, TX 76051 (817) 329-1190 N169BF was completed and flown for the first time on September 2nd, 1995. I'm currently flying off the 25 hour test time and making rigging adjustments. 69BF started life in Casey, IL by Cleone Markwell in April 1988. I was fortunate to purchase his mostly welded frame and his pickled O-320 E2A in November of 1992. I took over the garage of our new house and got to work! Over 2000 hours and lotsa help from friends like Nick Nickle, (Acro Sport N6N), have resulted in a fine aircraft.

I built the fuselage pretty much straight to the plans, adding only the spring gear struts, fabricating aluminum gear leg covers, and the two-place canopy. The desire for the two-place canopy really had me scratching my head until I realized that the Acro's fuselage is literally the same as an S-2 Pitts. A few phone calls later and I had located a broken, but otherwise fine

Pitts canopy frame, a smoke colored 2place canopy from Aircraft Plastics in Dayton was glued and screwed on the repaired frame, and the addition of standard Pitts Delrin hinges and locking block finished the installation.

The wings were also built as per the plans, although I did epoxy countersunk brass screws in place of the nails that hold on the leading edges. The covering is Poly-Fiber HD-2x2 with PPG-Del-Star acrylic enamel with flex agent, (colors: Brite white and red).

At this time I only have basic VFR instruments in the rear cockpit and I'm using an ICOM A-21 hand held radio with 2-place intercom. Engine: Lycoming O-320 E2A with Skytec Super Fly Weight Starter. Prop: Sensenich 74/56; Empty Weight: 1025 lbs.

Some 40 years ago I would lie on my back in our yard and dream I was the pilot of the DC-3 that slowly cruised

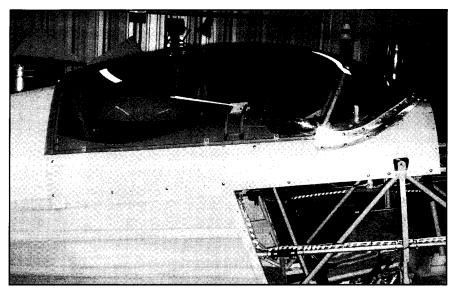
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from horizon to horizon. Little did that pilot know that he ignited the flame that has resulted in my Acro Sport II! I thank him and everyone that helped me with their sweat or just the encouragement that kept me going.

We all love flying in an open cockpit biplane, but plenty of times most of us would sure like a canopy to extend our cold weather flying time. There have been many single cockpit installations, but the 2-place canopies have always been a challenge. Here's a fairly straightforward solution that I thought I'd pass on.

If you built your Acro Sport II reasonably close to the plans, there is an unsuspecting parts benefactor that will drastically reduce your headaches. After a couple of trips to several local hangers that are equipped with 2-place Pitts, my measurements proved that our Acros are literally copies. (dimensionally) of the Pitts. Boy these canopies looked great! (Wonder if I could swipe one?), well, at least buy one. At over \$2500 a copy from Pitts, I had to figure another way. A few calls to Aviat and I came away with a list of people who had recently purchased replacement canopies in my area. It wasn't long and I had a somewhat rusty and broken canopy frame, but none-



A beautiful canopy at a bargain price!

the-less gladly sold to me for a small sum, as it had been collecting dust in the corner of the Harvey-Rhin hangar in LaPorte, TX. Seems they break a canopy every so often and they simply buy a new one, discarding the old frame.

A careful inspection revealed a solution to the broken pieces of metal as indicated in the drawing, (I think it's stronger than new). Carefully remove all the small sheet metal screws and several other small screws and nuts. The small sheet metal screws are buried in Scotch Weld adhesive all along the horizontal steel tubing; they are basically holding the canopy to the frame. (Save them, you'll re-use them later). Wear safety glasses and chip off all the broken plexiglas and old adhe-

### EDITORIAL/ by Bill Berrick, Editor

I stand corrected on a note about Static Pitot Calibration – here is the straight stuff from Don Baker! –Ed.

I mentioned at the 1995 Acro Sport Forum that there is an easy way to check the calibration of your static pitot system. Bill Berrick mentioned this in the last Newsletter, but it contained a slight error, and I would like to correct it.

First, while sitting on the ground, set your altimeter to a known value, for example zero feet AGL. Now crank up the engine and go fly directly over the runway



Don Baker with his Acro II and Bronze Lindys from Oshkosh '89 and '95!

right down on the deck at full speed. Note the altimeter reading while flying down the runway. It should read the same as the sitting-on-the-ground set point, (zero). If not, you are either not flying at the same altitude as where you set the altimeter on the ground, or your static system is not correctly calibrated, I will assume, for this discussion, that it is an error in the static system.

If it reads an altitude below the original set point, then the static system is getting too much air pressure. If it reads too high, then it is getting too little air pressure. It can be adjusted by experimenting with the airflow around the pitot static ports. This can be done by adding a small bump just ahead of the static sense ports. I used a rubber O-ring of various sizes, tried one at a time, until I got the right size, Each size change will require another flight down the runway to see if it is correct, (yet another good reason to go fly!). After I determined the right size, I measured it and then machined one out of aluminum and installed it permanently on the pitot tube. Now my airspeed is actually right on!

By the way, the test can be run at other than full speed just to see how the static system performs at various speeds. If it is perfect, it will indicate the same altitude for any speed as it indicated for the ground setting.

Don Baker 10222 Springborough Dr. Rockford, IL 61107 sive, (it's tough). Your frame will probably be broken in two places, one break, (or at least a good bend), on both horizental tubes. I completely replaced the right side, (hinge side), and on both sides a solid steel plug was made and rosette welded into both tubes at the weakest point just behind the crossover bars. I sandblasted, primed and painted the cross-over bars the final paint color as it would be very difficult to paint after the new plexiglass is installed.

All during the frame repair, I was making sure the back bow and the cross-over bars were in proper alignment with the fuselage. At this point I ordered, (through a Pitts owner), the special Delrin hinges, the Delrin locking

Take your time! Draw a line to cut on first and keep your vacuum cleaner handy, using it often, as there is a terrible amount of cutting dust. After the bottom horizontal edges and back bow are cut flush to the metal frame, block sand, (60 or 80 grit), then proceed to about 320 grit. Make sure you don't sand too far up, remember the plexiglass is supposed to be clear. Vacuum up the dust.

Set the frame on your fuselage in approximately the right position. The back bow will fit fine, the front will need to be fitted next. Copy the fuselage

mounted to the frame and the windscreen will spring apart when cut. After you've drilled, (remember to use "plastic" drill bits), and mounted the windscreen fairing to the canopy, remove the canopy and frame and carefully cut the canopy and windscreen apart with your Dremel cutting wheel. Dress the plexiglass edges.

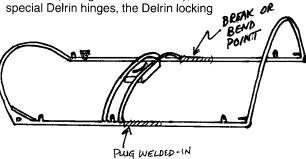
You can now glue the plexiglass canopy to the frame with the Scotch Weld. Take your time, doing a section at a time. (Note: the Scotch Weld is mixed with Micro balloons to a very thick medium so it can be worked and eventually sanded smooth). Wet your finger and smooth the Scotch Weld as you go. Do the inner part of the frame first, as the Scotch Weld will migrate, (run).

You're almost done. . .

Once this is completed, reinstall the windscreen on the fuselage. You should now be able to replace the canopy on it's hinges, roll it over and slide it to its closed position. Pretty good job! I added a piece of .020 aluminum, approximately 2" wide to the edge of the windscreen to help seal the canopy/windscreen joint. All that's left is to do a small amount of finish sanding, then tape off and paint the canopy frame.

Aircraft Plastics sells the 2-place canopy for \$375 + shipping. Make whatever deal you can for the Pitts frame, and the Scotch Weld is about \$50 for the 2-part adhesive, (1/2 pint of each part).

Sorry I'm so wordy, but I thought the details were worth it, and the finished product is well worth the words and the effort! Good Luck!



Bill Freckman brings new life to a damaged Pitts canopy frame!

block and several pieces of blank Delrin for other mounting pieces. After they came in I fitted the frame and all the hardware onto the fuselage.

Early on in the project I contacted the fine folks at Airplane Plastics Co. in Fairborn, Ohio and ordered a Light Smoke Grey 2-place, (Pitts, Skybolt), canopy. It arrived and with great anticipation I sat it on the frame. It fit like it was made for it, (it was!).

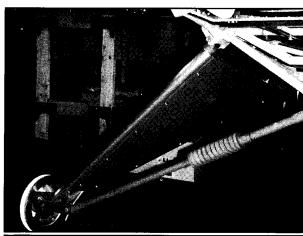
This is where the fun starts!! Pitts as it turns out, breaks most of the canopy mounting rules. The plexiglass canopy is screwed "tightly" against the metal frame and then it's glued in place with Scotch Weld #2216 Structural Adhesive, covering the small flush screws, making a smooth molded-in look that's then taped off and painted to look like an apron around all the edges.

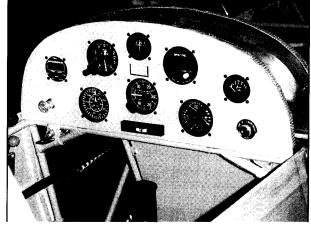
I pulled the protective covering off the canopy and then replaced it with a clear plastic 2" wide tape, (hardware store), on both inside and outside. I set the canopy on the frame and after adjusting to get it as straight as possible, I clamped it in place. I then drilled, counter sunk and installed all the small sheet metal screws, making sure they were just below flush. Now you have to be even more brave, (just remember the 1/2 cost replacement guarantee), and cut off the excess along the bottom and the back bow. I used a Dremel tool with the small cut-off wheels. They are much better than the typical 3" diameter die-grinder cut-off wheels as they are only about 1/16" thick and because they're small they don't do as much damage!

shape onto the front windscreen plexiglass and start taking off small increments of plexiglass until the frame will fit on the hinges and the windscreen just clears the fuselage, (don't worry if it's slightly irregular as it's covered by a fairing/attach apron). Resist the temptation to cut the windscreen away from the canopy until the fairing has been made and the windscreen is securely attached to the fuselage. The canopy sides are squeezed in slightly when

Bill's spring gear shock struts.







### Acro Sport II Plans Corrections – Tan Cover Set Dated 3/93

1. Sheet 8	Zone D3	Inner strut, cut slot 7" long to facilitate welding both slide stops in place.	3. Sheet 13	Zone A5	Location of Drag-Anti-Drag holes – Use <u>Chord Line</u> , not spar centerline
2. Sheet 11	Zone B1	Balance tab/trim tabs skin thickness			as locator.
		.032	4. Sheet 16	Zone 2D	Aileron hinge cut out – Change 2" dimension to 3". Also Plate does <u>not</u>

Aileron hinge cut out – Change 2" dimension to 3". Also Plate does <u>not</u> butt against the second rib, but is <u>centered on the hinge</u>. It is about 11/16" away from the second rib.

### - Pober Pixie Plans Corrections -Red Cover Dated 7/15/87

Sheet #002	Fuselage bottom truss station 6: vertical tube is callout #2.	Sheet #006	Detail D. Drill 1/4" and rosette weld the strap to the bearing.		
Sheet #003-1	Detail G: platenut MK1000-3 or K2000-3 or 10/32" Rivnuts.		Detail D: Use plate nut MK1000-3 or K2000-3, or 10-32 Rivnuts.		
Sheet #004	Detail E: change 18 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " overall dimension of shock strut assembly to 23 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> ". Dimension of 18 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " is from the bushing at the left to the hole	Sheet #007	Detail B: Nail leading edge to filler straps. Nail leading edge to compression ribs only using 4 nails on top of rib, 3 nails on bottom.		
	in the center of the cross tube. Also a 6" slot can be cut from the bottom of the strut all the	Sheet #008	Detail A: Bracket .049/4130, sheet 16 required, not 12.		
	way to the top. making it easier to weld.  Front view shock strut assembly: landing gear	Sheet #009	At rear spar: 1/16" plywood gussets on both sides of the 3/4" spruce block are unnecessary.		
	cabane reference detail E, sheet 003: and detail G, sheet 003-1:		Isometric drawings showing compression ribs: plate both sides of compression ribs, and also		
	Quote at bottom: Use Cleveland or equivalent wheel and brake assembly 5.00 X5.		plate nose gusset and regular gussets on both sides of the standard rib.		
		Sheet #011	Detail B: Do not wrap plywood around leading edge as shown, but use 2 pieces, one top and one bottom as shown in detail E.		

# **Letters To The Editor**

February 6, 1996

Dear Bill:

After several years of enjoyment, I have decided to do one of two things with my Acro II project; either sell it, or hang it up in the basement till time will permit to rejoin the effort.

To date I have the following done: center section; upper and lower wing panels including drag and anti-drag wires, wing tips and fittings, (by Ken Brock). Still remaining on the wings are a few 1/4" filler strips between ribs, trailing edges, and varnishing. Material for ailerons, (except plywood), cut and ready to build. Most flat 4130 bracket fittings cut and ready for final machining. With only a few more hours, the wings will be ready for attachment to a fuselage.

Mike Finney, (Lindy winner in 1994), has inspected my project and says it's

very well done. I have taken quite a bit of time and effort to build this project to this point and believe it is of high quality construction.

Also available are plans (yellow cover - 1989), with corrections, all newsletters, purchase receipts and construction notes, most AN hardware sorted and labeled, and a few pieces of 4130 tubing for the tail feathers.

If anyone is interested, the price is \$3800 and is available for pick up in the Atlanta, (Stone Mountain), Georgia area. For questions, I can be reached at work: (770) 925-2915 or Home: (770) 564-8214.

Thank you, Phil Collins

Dear Jean:

Thank you for the photographs of my Acro II. Although I recognize the setting, OSHKOSH/94, I have no idea who the photographer was.

I was disappointed not to be at /95 OSHKOSH, but fate intervened in the form of a crack in the Gypsy crank case. Six weeks after the discovery, we, the Acro and I, were flying again but a significant part of the summer was lost.

Now we are having very poor flying weather, typical in these northern climes.

Bill Berrick's observation on wheel landings agrees with mine; much more pleasant to see the runway ahead than to guess where it is. We have very narrow runways at Brampton, my home base. Until recently, I have avoided wheel landings because the aircraft was very "squirrelly" in the tail-high position, but after some major re-aligning, including die-spring struts replacing the original bungees, the aeroplane is quite docile.

For those who are interested, I would recommend the die springs as the way to go – no oil or ultra violet to worry about, smaller frontal area, and neater looking. However, there is always a downside; they weigh two pounds more for the pair. The springs can be bought direct from most tool and die supply companies at a considerable savings. I used "PRODUCTO" XHP-812 die springs.

As most of us are loathe to admit, sometimes our workmanship, no matter how hard we strive, is below par. My indiscretion was brought to light with a

bang! That is the noise or feeling one perceives when a flying wire breaks at 3000 feet! Needless to say it got my immediate attention and also it is unnecessary to point out that the other wire carried the load until we landed 15 minutes later.

Canada Transport Safety Board concluded the wires were within specs and that the failure resulted from a misalignment of the wire. On observation, the misalignment was miniscule, barely noticeable, but it was there. I solved the problem by enlarging the holes through the pins slightly and making self-aligning washers to fit between the nut and the pin. I also determined that the fork ends had enough clearance on the fuselage brackets to self align. The amount of misalignment was very, very small so check carefully. The "fix" seems to have solved the problem, I now have 125 hours flown since the repair for a total of approximately 200

In all, I am very pleased with the aircraft; it flies well and from what I read, it is a very capable aerobatic aeroplane. I am unable to comment on its aerobatic performance because the aircraft is not authorized in Canada for aerobatics. However, it does spin well and recovers quickly and accurately after 3 or 4 turns.

If more information is required for the die spring struts, which incidentally I made adjustable for length; or the flying wire problem and "fix", write to me and I would be pleased to oblige.

Good Flying! See you at OSHKOSH.

Frank Langdon 26 Jill Crescent Etobicoke, Ontario M9B 6B3

### **Historic Cougar!**

August 29, 1995

Dear Paul,

Enclosed is an account of my personal experiences in the early days of home building, days you will remember as well as I do. It was very different then, and you may have other letters on this subject to document that era of EAA's history as well as that of the homebuilders. There's a very big warm spot in my heart for you, Paul, for all the work you've put in on helping homebuilders and building EAA the right way.

As I approached the finish of the Cougar in 1959 I felt, and still feel, much thanks to Dick Cavin and his wife Lyndell. They gave me the only chance I had to feel a Cougar before test-flying mine. They invited Emalou and me to visit them in Texas; Leonard and Rita Eaves were also there for the purpose of riding in Bob Nesmith's Cougar. We

only flew it in the air for a few minutes, but it helped.

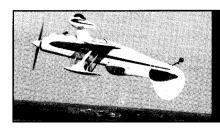
As for more current happenings, between September 28, 1994 and June 3 of 1995 I built the basic fuselage, tail group, and landing gear for a 1928-1932 Overland Sport Trainer. Debbie (Furstenberg) Rhin, granddaughter of the original builder of this airplane in Omaha, is having it finished by her airport personnel in Houston, Texas. Deb is second pilot for Southwest Airlines as well as part of the International Aerobatic team.

I spent four years drawing up plans for this airplane; there were none left in existence. In the 1930's when I was 16 years old I had pieced together an Overland Sport from parts left over after the factory was closed, supplying what was missing by using salvage parts from other airplanes; it was the airplane I learned to fly in, and there was always a soft spot in my heart for it.

People from around the country still call me now and then to ask airplane questions of various kinds about building, and I enjoy helping every way I know how; information is about all I have to give now. I don't belong to as many groups as I used to; Social Security changes things, but I will maintain my EAA status in National, Experimental and in Antique and Classic. I'm also promoting ultralight flying and how to do it properly

In my garage here at home I still have a 1930 Waco RNF and a 1943 Funk stored. A person has to keep a few old ones for petting now and then. I donated my refurbished 1928 Mono Coupe to the Quad Cities Airport Commission in Moline, Illinois where it originally came from; it's on display in the concourse where a million arriving airline passengers see it every year. There is even a plaque on the wall telling about it and me, (and most of the information is correct).

Sincerely, Paul Laible, (EAA 219) 5503 NW Fox Run Drive Parkville, MO 64152



# Ground Loops in the Acro Sport II

by Don E. Baker

Yes, it's true, I ground looped N122DB. You are probably asking yourself, "Ground loop?, how can anyone ground loop the Acro II!?" Like I have said many times before, with enough practice, you can do anything in the Acro! I have been working on the ground loop for some time now, but I didn't realize it at the time. Actually, it turned out pretty good, and I learned a lot in the process, so I thought I would share the information with you to use as you see fit.

For some time now, (many years, actually), I have been doing wheel landings with the tail up all the way from touchdown to a complete stop. It is a lot of fun, and helps to polish your ground handling skills, not to mention less wear and tear on the tailwheel. I first saw this maneuver performed by Jimmy Franklin in his Waco, and was impressed to the point that I thought some day I would try it.

My first attempt was in N122DB on grass and all went well. Gradually, I worked up to asphalt and then crosswinds. Finally, I aspired(?) to full 360 degree pivots, (intentional), upon reaching a full stop before letting the tail down.

Typically, I have not had any problems with any of this maneuvering, which is added testimony for the Acro's excellent ground handling characteristics. I will point out, however, that it is a little hard on brakes, but really not all that bad, I replace the pads every year to year and a half, but never for wear. I do a tail high roll out on nearly every landing, probably between 60 to 100 per year.

I think it is fairly obvious that you need to carefully coordinate throttle, brakes and rudder simultaneously. No wind days are easiest, and you need about 1800 or more RPM in conjunction with elevator to keep the tail up as you approach the stop. The faster you decelerate, the less throttle/elevator it takes, but the instant you reach the stop, no matter how slowly you approach it, the tail will immediately drop unless you quickly add down elevator. The prop blast alone, over the elevator, is now keeping the tail up. At this point you may find that you do not have enough prop blast, (RPM), to support the tail because the component of tail lift due to deceleration is really quite significant. It may be necessary to add throttle just prior to reaching full stop,

carefully but quickly, while coordinating the elevator to keep the fuselage level. Do this final transition, (to full stop), applying more elevator and/or power smoooothly! With a little practice, you will get the feel for it and have a lot of fun with it.

This can be a somewhat risky situation, even on a calm day. Bear in mind that a prop strike is to be avoided at all costs, so be careful! It is better to have too much throttle than not enough, especially near the end of the roll out. This is because the elevator becomes less effective with less airspeed, and loss of airspeed must be replaced with increased prop blast. The relative mix of the two will come with practice. The aircraft can be held in the level position with full throttle at standstill. However, decelerating with full throttle is way too hard on the brakes, engine, etc.! You will find that adding throttle gradually during the decelerating rollout gives the best results.

Ironically, this tail high rollout maneuver, which led to the ground loop, is also what helped me to bring it to a successful, (painless), completion. I had a weak right brake but thought it was OK, at least for a few more landings. I have found that my brakes need bleeding about once every two months. They seem to accumulate air bubbles during negative G aerobatic maneuvers and become spongy.

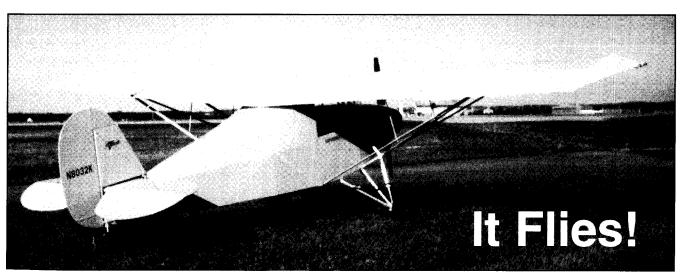
On this day, there was a hefty crosswind from the left. In a crosswind, it is necessary to add differential braking on top of all the other things you are coordinating. As the airspeed slows, this helps to offset the diminishing rudder control. However, this time I used too much rudder to offset the spongy brakes, then both bottomed out. I needed more of either to fight the crosswind, but no more was available. The tail was still up, and I was going about 20 to 25 mph and beginning to swerve, I had a handful! It was time for quick thinking, and all I could think of was don't chop throttle because I'll lose all rudder effect and aggravate the swerve, so I didn't change a thing. As I veered off the runway, tires squealing, I realized that it was staying flat, that is both mains stayed firmly on the ground. This saved the day on the ground loop for me!

I attribute the "flat" swerve to the fact that lift by the wings was effectively

canceled due to the tail high attitude. In a tail low attitude, the wing incidence is high, adding lift to the situation. Lift, combined with centrifugal force from the arcing, (veering), ground track, would have lifted a main wheel and probably dragged a wing tip. Instead, we went around about 90 degrees, wings level, and as soon as we turned into the wind, the ground loop was virtually done, and the airplane was again fully controllable. I let the tail down, turned back onto the runway and proceeded to my destination.

All that was hurt was my pride. I gained a healthy respect for how important it is to have good brakes for this maneuver, The point to remember is that if it is taking a lot of rudder to offset crosswind while still carrying a lot of ground speed, be ready to gracefully let the tail down and do a normal rollout before any evidence of swerving begins. Train yourself to use virtually no rudder for this maneuver, with brakes only to control steering. Then the rudder is your backup in case you need it for some other reason.

Meanwhile, have fun, keep flying and keep on a grinnin'.



Lee Thomas' Pober Junior Ace ready for first flight on December 2, 1995

January 10, 1996

Dear Ben,

Enclosed please find photos of my Pober Junior Ace completed in September 1995 after six years of steady building. The photos were taken at the EAA East Coast Regional Fly-In at Wilmington, DE in October. Two other Junior Aces showed up. As we were positioning all three together, Paul came over for a look. We had a quick photo session. From right to left in front of my Corben: Bruce Barret, Stuart Natof, Paul Poberezny, and myself.

In the photo my plane has a Corvair engine installed; it did fly twice on September 30, 1995, but I was not satisfied with the marginal power. I replaced the engine with a Continental O-200A and propeller removed from a Cessna 150J. I had it flying again in two months.

It flies great! Very stable; ground handling is easy. It cruises at 100 mph, climbs at 1000 fpm, and stalls at 43 mph. The stall is straight ahead and gentle, with all controls up to the break. I have 20 hours on it so far, with no

complaints, except that the temperature has not been above freezing yet! Good thing I built a cabin version. I have made no trim changes, It has been tested for all conditions, (no aerobatics), with no problems.

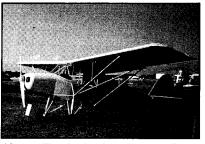
The ailerons are a little heavy. I did seal the hinge gaps, as Paul suggested. I installed a vinyl "curtain" three inches wide, folded and screwed into both spars. This did lighten them up some. There is one photo included that was taken on the first flight day with the Continental installed which was

## **SUN'N FUN FORUM**

Acro Sport I and II – Sunday April 14, 1996 – 11:00 a.m. Be sure to attend at the Forum Tents

Moderator - Don Baker





Above—The Junior Ace sits proudly on the flight line — an airplane that puts the "fun" in flying.

Left – Bruce Barret, Stuart Natof, Paul Poberezny, and builder Lee Thomas with his Junior Ace at East Coast Regional Fly-in.

December 2, 1995. Many thanks to Jim Craig for making the first flight for me. Jim owns and flies a beautiful Whitman Tailwind built by Jim Clemente.

Finished and flying, Lee H. Thomas 29 Stevens Ave. Rambleton Acres New Castle, DE 19720 (302) 322-8162

### **Kudos for Your Editor!**

Acro Sport Newsletter editor Bill Berrick, a member of Chapter 80 — Eastern Nebraska/Western Iowa — was recognized recently with an award presented by the Nebraska Department of Aeronautics. The award recognizes Bill's accomplishment of flying the most Young Eagles in that state during 1995. Joe Rookstool, a fellow member in Chapter 80, received a similar award. Congratulations to both Bill and Joe for a job well done!

#### OSHKOSH FORUMS

Monday – August 5, 1996 – 10:00 to 11:15 a.m.–Tent No. 8 Acro Sport I and II Moderators – Don Baker, Steve Manweiler, Paul Felkner, Mike Finney

Tuesday – August 6, 1996 – 10:00 to 11:15 a.m.– Tent No. 8 Pober Junior Ace, Pober Super Ace and Pober Pixie Moderator – John Lietis





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