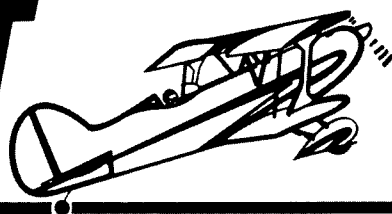


# ACRO SPORT Newsletter



NO. 63

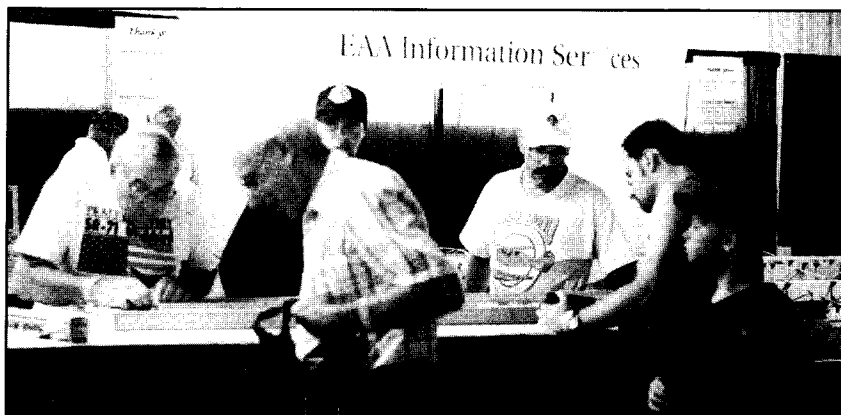
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Edited by: Chris Kinnaman

FALL 1998

## Pober Jr. Ace In EAA Pavilion

**A group of prospective builders try their hands at building Junior Ace wing ribs, including Ken Terrio, far left.**



Ben Owen, EAA's Information Services Staff and volunteers worked on a set of wings for a Pober Jr. Ace in the EAA Pavilion at Oshkosh '98. Participants included Susan Sedlachek (EAA Information Services), Ken Terrio (Pober Jr. Ace builder), George Applebay (Pober Jr. Ace builder and proprietor of Applebay Aviation), Lynn Buckingham (wood and fabric specialist with Applebay Aviation), and Capt. Cam Humphries.

Some of you readers with an interest in soaring may recognize George Applebay. He has designed and produced a series of sailplanes over the years, with one model, the Zuni, being produced from 1976 through 1983.

Ken Terrio, recently retired from Pratt & Whitney, is building a Jr. Ace. After retirement, P&W offered him a position as an archivist for their vast accumulation of historical documentation. What a treasure trove of information for anyone

interested in aviation history - handwritten letters from Amelia Earhart, etc.! Yet Ken turned down the offer in order to devote more time to completing his Jr. Ace.

Captain Cam Humphries is involved in aviation through a taxpayer-subsidized program. He flies something called a B-1B for the USAF. While assigned to the Air Force's public relations and informational presence at Airventure '98, Cam checked out the rib-building activities at the other end of the building, built some ribs and got a feel for the homebuilding experience. He reports that his grandfather built a Pietyenpol some time ago.

Aviation has changed some over time - from Low and Slow (Pietyenpol & Jr. Ace - Treetop level and 60-or-so MPH) to Low and Really, Really Fast (B-1B - Treetop level and just barely Subsonic), and it seems that everyone who's into flying has an interesting story to tell.



**Capt. Cam Humphries, B-1B pilot, far left takes a turn at building a rib. Others facing camera are Susan Sedlachek, EAA, center and Lynn Buckingham.**



**Major components of the Junior Ace near completion with covering the next step. Ben Owen, EAA left, and George Applebay.**

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# Determination - Gets it Done!

By Paul H. Poberezny

Though there are some fine designs that are on the market with materials and performance that have surpassed many of our manufacturer's past designs (with equally impressive costs), there is still that group of airplane lovers who desire cheaper and lower performance airplanes - airplanes with charisma. We see it clearly in the growing light plane ultralight community - lower cost airplanes just to enjoy the pleasures of flight.

This year at the EAA's AirVenture Oshkosh many fine airplanes were displayed by exhibitors; many at prices way beyond what many could afford. However, when one walked through the ultralight area, it was quite busy with us dreamers of flight.

The airplane homebuilders workshops were also busy with those potential builders who were in the learning line. You could see the question in their face - "Can I really build my own airplane?" How many times have I heard this...and yes, you can - and so very many have.

"But I don't know how to weld" is a common response. Actually, welding is not a mystery. It takes some instruction, patience and practice, but I have seen many who might call themselves amateurs do an excellent job...even surpassing many of us with years of experience!

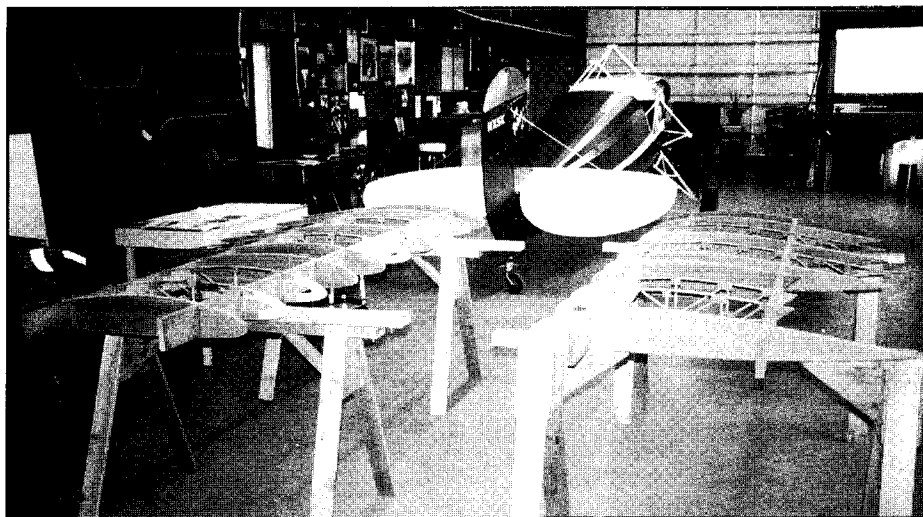
This year at Oshkosh we had a single place Acro Sport biplane on display, completely uncovered and all assembled.

It had been donated to the EAA Aviation Foundation and it was thought it would be a very educational display - which it was. Over in another exhibit building Ben Owen of the EAA staff and his team were very busy building Pober Junior Ace wing ribs which turned out to be an unplanned growing project. EAA staff member, Susan Sedlachek, was busy building ribs. With the help of several Junior Ace builders, Ken Terrio and George Applebay, they decided that since there were so many wing ribs coming out of the wing rib fixtures, why not start assembling wings? Off they went to a local lumber company who handles aircraft spruce here in Oshkosh. Soon they had a set of spars for two wing panels, plus a set for next year's EAA educational project.

Also on display was a Pober Junior Ace fuselage and tail group on the gear. Many prospective builders, along with family or friends, had to try it on for size. Yes, the side by side seating arrangement handles two large people.

In fact, the prototype Junior Ace we built has over 100 hours on it and with its 90 hp Continental engine did well with two large pilots, total weight for both at just about 500 lbs.

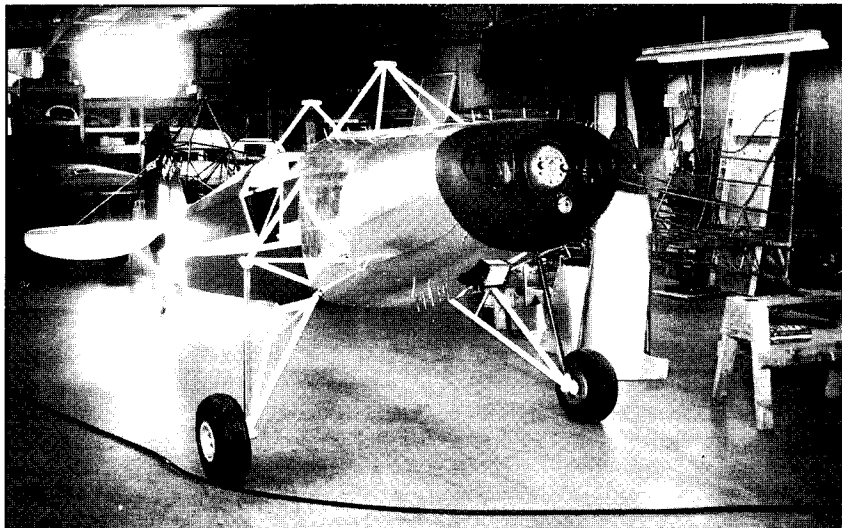
I have Pober Junior Ace No. 2 near completion which will be powered with a 120 hp Lycoming O-235 which will have a complete electrical system and two 12 gallon wing tanks. We will keep you posted on future progress.

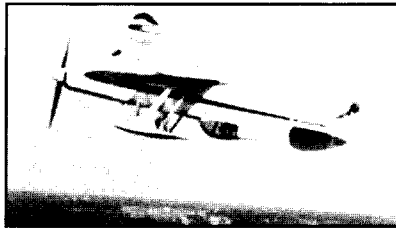


**Left-Lots of activity at Paul's Aeroplane Factory where an amazing number of completed aircraft have rolled out the door.**

**Below Left-Details of Junior Ace dual control assembly and rudder pedal assembly.**

**Below Right-Junior Ace No. 2 is powered with a 120 hp Lycoming O-235 engine. Note fuselage of Art Chester's pre World War II "Jeep" racer to right-another project underway.**





# Fuel System Tid-Bits

by Don E. Baker

## PART TWO

I had a problem with the flop tube not reaching to the top of the tank. When flying inverted for extended times, it was (and still is) necessary to have at least 10 gallons of fuel in the tank. Otherwise, the engine will quit in about a minute or two depending on the power setting. I decided to try to fix this with the simplest approach...by making a more flexible or "floppier" flop tube, the theory being that this would reach further toward the top of the tank and would require less fuel aboard for inverted work. I decided that a smaller diameter hose for the flop tube with the same flop weight would fix the problem. I rigged it up on the bench and it looked promising. I calculated the fuel velocity in the hose and found it to be higher than for the original size hose, but I considered it to be an acceptable value.

However, just to be sure, I called Curtis Pitts (my own idea this time, Ben Owen's advice becoming well-ingrained by now) and he more or less told me I was nuts to consider such a thing. His sage advice was "the flop tube hose sizes have already been developed and well proven with years of experience and it's not a good idea to go be a test pilot for a new solution to a non-problem." His advice made perfect sense to me so I trash-canned the whole idea, on the spot. I use his line of reasoning whenever I entertain a new idea for a modification to proven plans or to a proven procedure. We all should.

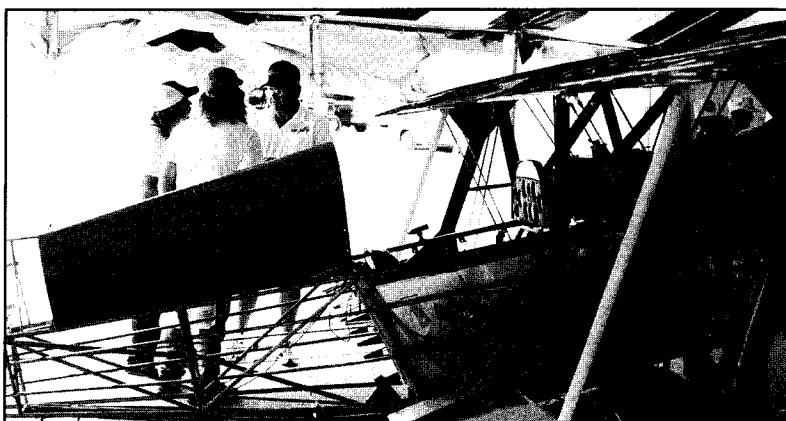
Back when I was building the Acro and did not have any good info on the engine mounted fuel pump, I called the factory to get some help. It was an AC brand pump and the folks at the factory were very helpful. Specifically, I was not sure how to handle the vent port for the pump. I had seen many homebuilts with the "vent" vented overboard. The factory told me that this is not really a pressure or overflow vent, but instead it is a means for failure detection. The pump has redundant (2) diaphragms, i.e. if one fails the pump will still function on the other one. The problem with anything redundant is that if one fails, it is generally not obvious, and essential corrective action is not taken. However, a port located between the two diaphragms will show fuel when the first one fails. If this port is drained overboard you may never notice the "leak". You are supposed to (according to the AC factory) catch the leaking fuel in a closed container. Boats generally use a small glass bowl, similar to a sediment bowl, which can be visually inspected for fuel presence (also according to the AC factory). However, they do not recommend a glass bowl for aircraft and instead recommend a short length of hose, terminated in a Curtis valve. The Curtis valve should then be opened periodically to check for fuel presence. If any is found, the fuel pump must be replaced. Note that an orifice fitting must be used at the pump port. The hose connects to this fitting then to the Curtis valve.

Also I have found that it is a good idea to carry an extra fuel cap for the tank. I learned this the hard way. I lost one on a cross country once. Aerobatics on a cross country are very hard to avoid. Somehow the cap came off during an otherwise "perfect" hammerhead.

While building my Acro II, I saw a "clever" arrangement on the fuel system which I implemented, but later found it was not as clever as I had originally thought. On the line at

Oshkosh I found an Acro Sport where the Christen wobble pump had been plumbed with two feeds. The first feed was per normal, i.e. it came from the fuel pickup in the fuel tank and entered the wobble pump at fuel selector position number 1. Fuel selector position number 2 was connected to the bottom side of the sight gauge fuel level indicator. This arrangement is good for draining any water which may accumulate in the fuel level indicator by switching to selector position number 2 and opening the Curtis drain valve at the bottom of the wobble pump. Fuel selector position number 1 will similarly drain water accumulation from the main path of the fuel system. The problem with this arrangement is being lulled into the misconception that the position 2 could also serve as an alternate fuel feed in the event of a failure of the main path. Be warned, however, that it does not work for this purpose. If you switch to the fuel selector position which feeds from the bottom of the fuel level sight gauge, while the engine is running, it will quickly empty the sight gauge and suck fumes. Do not count on this arrangement to provide an alternate fuel feed!

I have found various treatments for the tank vent. However, my experience is that the vent tube routed down and out the gear leg, per the plans, works satisfactorily. There is no need to aim the vent forward or backward. I have had no problems with clogging from debris or insects. I do carry a pocket knife with me and if I ever detect problems, in flight, with a blocked tank vent, then the plan is to poke a hole in the sight gauge tube to serve as a temporary air inlet (vent). Successful implementation of this scenario, of course, depends upon the ability to actually and correctly identify the problem and then have sufficient time to carry it out. Probably not in the cards at my typical cruising altitude of 1500 to 2000 ft. AGL with the engine sputtering or windmilling. Oh well, it's a plan. If you can fly...Then fly...If not, then think about flying. It will keep you a'grinnin' either way.



**Jon R. Shimer, right, of Fort Pierce, Florida, spent much of his time at Oshkosh answering questions about the internal details of the uncovered Acro Sport on display in the Acro Sport Poly-Fiber tent. Thanks from Acro Sport, Jon, for your time and efforts!**

## Letters

### A Solution to a Covering Problem

The Acro Sport Fly In this past June provided my family and me with a very enjoyable weekend. Becky and Laura really enjoyed their ride in the Ford Tri-Motor, and even got some time in the right seat. Debbie and I mostly enjoyed meeting the people who have up until now just been names in the newsletter. Shaking hands and hearing voices (Ya'll sure do talk funny up there,) gives the newsletter a more family like sensation when reading.

The most fun is getting to look at other airplanes and asking questions and even getting to answer a few. One topic of conversation, and oftentimes point of frustration deals with a problem area in the fabric and paint near the aft end of the turtle deck. Fighting the lines and dimples that show up here can really try your patience.

I had the same problem so many others have had and until you understand what is going on, you don't have much chance of getting rid of it.

The first error lies in following the directions in the Poly Fiber covering manual. It says to coat all surfaces to be covered by fabric with Poly Brush. It should say to coat all surfaces except the turtle deck on Acro Sport, Pitts, Eagle and similar aircraft before covering.

The line that shows up when the fabric transitions from the turtle deck to the free area of the fabric is caused by the fabric bonding to the turtle deck skin in the transition area. The dimples are formed when you try to sand this area. (I know Poly Fiber says you don't have to sand their products, but I'm not that good.) Irregularities on the metal or wood that almost touch the fabric telegraph into the paint when you push the fabric down while sanding. The harder you sand, the worse it gets.

The first step toward the cure is to make a strip of 1mm plywood about an inch wide and about 16 to 18 inches long with the end rounded and the edges sanded very thin. This is used to reach in between the fabric and the turtle deck and sever the bond between the fabric and the deck up to a point ahead of the transition area.

Once this is done, make another



**Dimples and wrinkles when covering the turtle deck can be eliminated.**

stick with a little hook shape in the end and use it to clean out any coating debris that is making bumps in the fabric. Once this is done, spray a wet coat of slow (hot weather) reducer right onto the affected area. This will soften the remaining Poly Brush and allow any remaining roughness to lay down. Don't try to smooth bumps with an iron. That would simply bond the fabric back to the deck. Once you have gotten everything to lay down, (It may take several applications of thinner) you will still have some areas that must be sanded smooth. The problem here is you can't put any pressure on the fabric or it will make new dimples in the finish. A new method of sanding must be used. First, use a very soft lead pencil and draw a line around the spots you want to sand out. Now, using #320 or #400 paper with water, wet the area and lay the paper on it and get it to stick. The water provides a seal and causes the atmosphere to hold the paper against the painted surface. Pick up just one corner of the paper as Becky has done in the photo, and wiggle it back and fourth to do the sanding. You are actually pulling up on the fabric while you sand. Do this until the pencil marks are gone. Allow everything to dry and look to see if the dimples remain. They will show up as shiny spots in the sanded areas. If they do, draw a line around them and repeat the process. If you work your way down to the silver, shoot a couple of coats of colour on to the area and continue the process. Yes, it is a very long time consuming process.

I have found that cool, dry days are your best friend when using Poly Tone finishes. Last winter here in Louisiana was very mild with nights around 35°F. warming into the 60s during the day. I would shoot Poly Tone in the morning at 40° to 45° mixed 3 to 1 with reducer sold for hot weather. This gave good flow out without any dry lines. On the

last coat, I mixed the paint 1 to 1 for a high gloss. no buffing finish. (As high a gloss as vinyl based paint will give.)

In looking back through the newsletters, I noticed that John Flannigan of Elmira, New York had what appeared to be a really smooth job in this area. I called and talked to him to see what he had done.

John used an old school method and got very pleasing results. He covered the turtle deck with what he called pool table felt and used a sewn seam down the spine of the fuselage. Check out his Acro Sport in newsletter #60 and give him a call. I'm sure he would be glad to help.

The old Stits covering manual as well as Ray Stits covering video outlines a process using polyester flannel to achieve similar results.

When Curtis Pitts designed and built his new Model-12 (Macho Stinker) he eliminated the fabric in this area and used an aluminum panel making all the workings and fittings for the tail group more easily accessed. Ben Owen is building a Model-12 and perhaps with Curtis' permission, he will share the details of this with us. Maybe it could be adapted to our Acro Sports.

If any one else has a different cure or remedy and would like to share it, our newsletter is the place to do it. If you have any questions about my method, or any other areas of construction and think I might be of some help, please call.

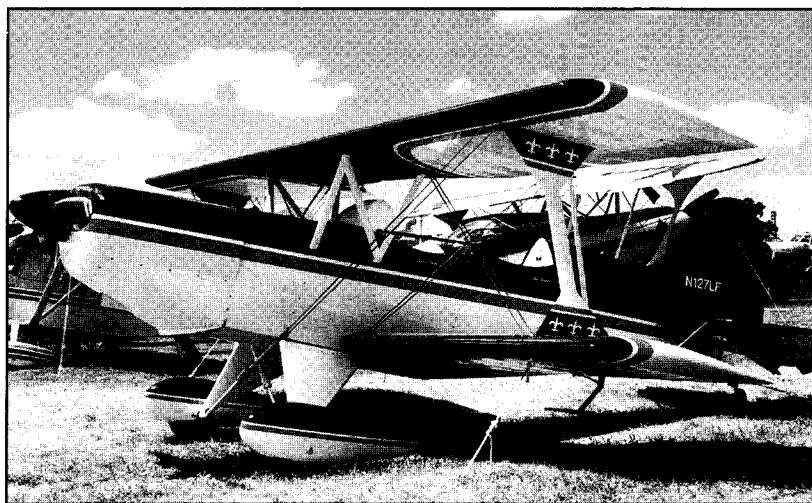
A special thanks goes out to the fabric finishing technician at Poly Fiber for some of the tips I used in correcting my "PROBLEM AREA" on my Acro II.

Happy building,  
Neil Sidders  
Tech Counselor #1784  
(318) 343-3885  
235 Rowland Rd.  
Monroe, LA 71203-8502

# 1998 Builders' Awards

This year's Acro Sport awards dinner, held at Robins' Restaurant, had its ups and downs. Poor planning on the part of the restaurant staff resulted in the dinner beginning 45 minutes late, (only after some nudging by Skip Egdorf - or it could have been even longer) and the failure to announce that our party could finally occupy the banquet room left Tom and Peggy Plodzein and their guests to sit at the "kids' table" apart from everyone else. When it came time to settle up, the servers were nowhere to be found. If Acro people were a different sort, we could have all skipped! Even with these annoyances, the restaurant staff served up an excellent, satisfying meal to one and all. Special thanks go to Paul Poberezny for hosting a round for the house.

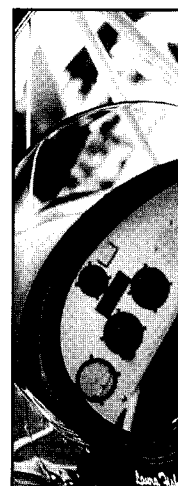
Two newly-completed Acro II's were brought to Oshkosh by Lester Fisher of Ponchatoula, Louisiana (N127LF) and Dick Merkel of Pecatonica, Illinois (N796DM). Lester's airplane barely edged Dick Merkel's for first place with the judges, and also won Paul Poberezny's Designer Award. See the accompanying photos for some details of these two beautiful airplanes. Congratulations to both of these builders!



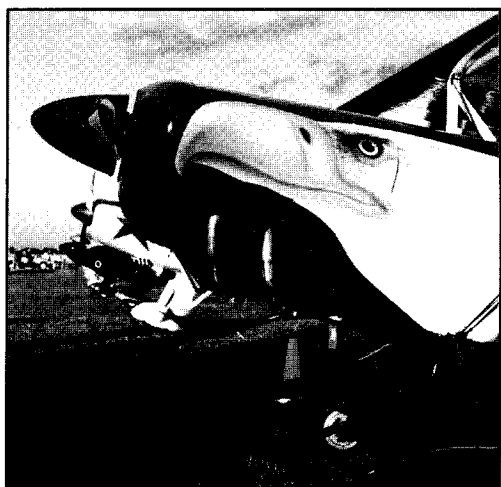
Lester Fisher's Acro II. Note logos on I-struts—a legacy of his Louisiana heritage.



Fisher receives award and congratulations from L. Jean Kinnaman. A Major award, Outstanding Workmanship for Custom Built (Plans), was also earned by Fisher at AirVenture '98.



Lester Fisher's outstanding ta



Colorful eagle's head highlights Dick Merkel's Acro II. Note "zoomie" exhaust stacks.



Dick receives his award from L. Jean Kinnaman. With all the fabulous aircraft on display judging was very difficult. Plaudits to all winners of awards.

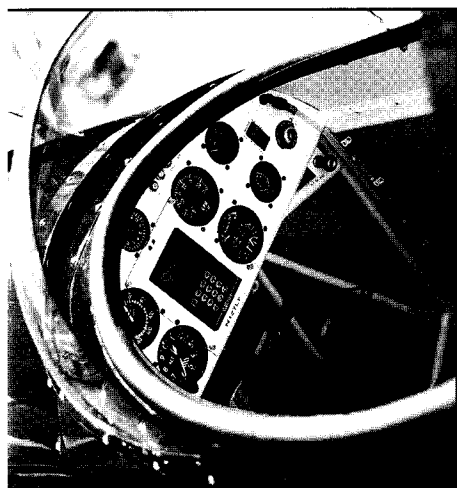
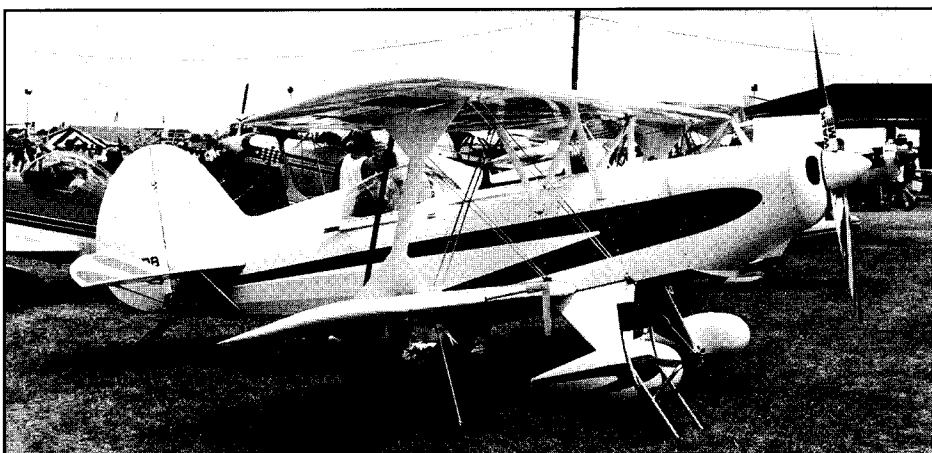


Throughout AirVenture '98 people dro seen the one with the eagle?" a stand

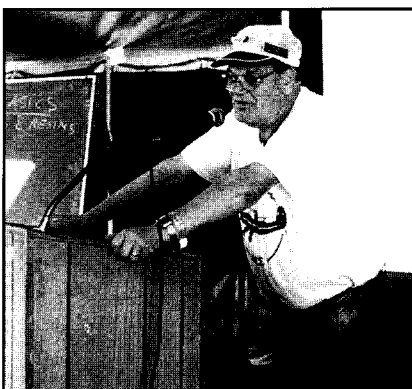




Left—Past and present Acro II award winners on display are, left to right, Richard Henry, Paul Felkner and Dick Merkel. Above—Paul Felkner flew to Oshkosh with Lloyd Shepherd. Their wives drove together via interstate. Below—Don Baker's air show Acro II. (See his article on page 3).



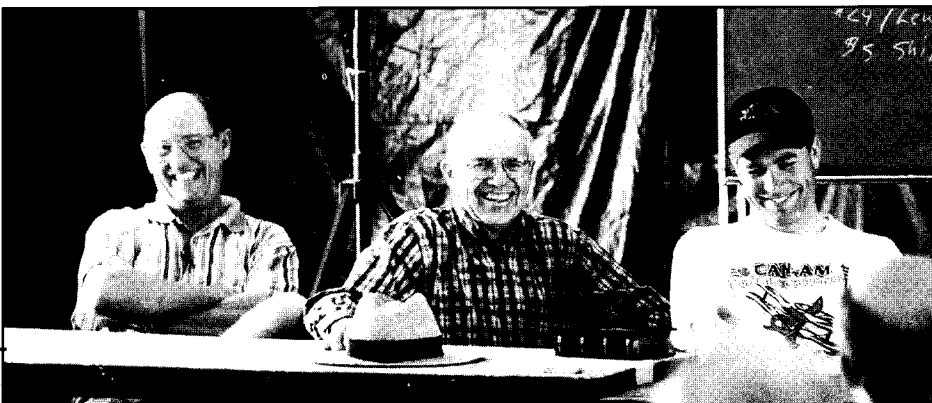
Outstanding aircraft displays its equally dem cockpits.



Above—John Leitis addresses the audience at the Pixie forum held Sunday August 2. Above right—Dr. Richard Henry at the podium for the Acro Sport I and II forums held Saturday August 1. Below—on the panel for the Acro Sport forum were left to right, Lloyd Shepherd, Paul Felkner and Brian Scheible.



ed by Acro Sport tent with "Have you out aircraft that turned heads all week!





## Super Acro I at AirVenture '98

Aircraft was built in 1973 with a 200 hp engine and wings with a different airfoil from the prototype Acro. At time of this photo wing panels were being recovered in the Acro Sport Poly-Fiber workshop tent.

## Letters

### "I've Got to Have One of These!"

Dear Jean;

First of all, I would like to thank you for answering all calls and letters that are sent your way. Your cooperation is very much appreciated. Secondly, I am finally getting this letter and photos sent out as I told you "way back when".

I have been interested in aviation from the word "GO". I went through all the model building as a boy, and then my father read an article in Popular Mechanics about a contest to build a folding wing aircraft. The winner was Pete Bowers' Fly Baby and second was Tony Spezio's Tu-Holer. It was an open-cockpit, tandem monoplane reminiscent of the Golden Age aircraft. I remember Dad saying, "I've got to have one of these!" So, off we went to Rockford in 1963. What an experience! Dad got his ride in the Tu-Holer, and I fell for the Biplanes. Dad built the Tu-Holer while I was in High School ('63-'66) and this was the best learning experience in aviation that a kid could ever hope for. I ordered, and still have, plans for the EAA Biplane that never got started with school and a new family. Later, Dad and his brother got together and built a pair of Thorp T-18's ("it seems that Dad always had a busy asement").

Then a few years ago, after being away from aviation for some time, some friends invited my wife and I to Marion, Ohio for the MERFI regional fly-in. I



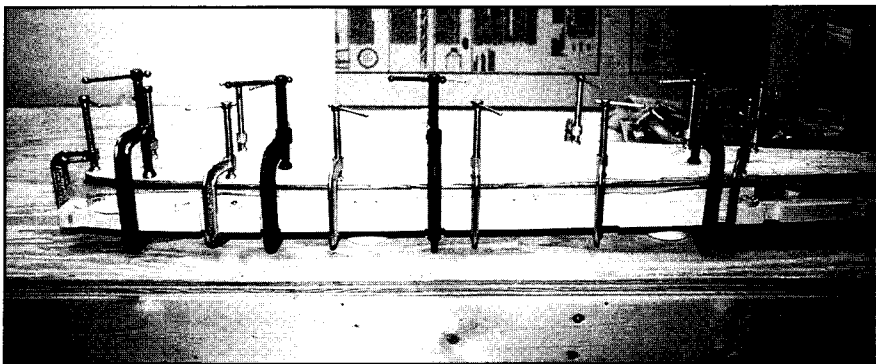
Above—Ken Patsch proudly holding granddaughter Shelby (a future Young Eagle), and a lot of wing rib components ready for assembly.



Left—Ken's tackle box serves as a well organized container for the many small items that comprise a wing rib assembly.

looked at a couple of Acro II's that were there and really got the bug again. We went back to Marion the following year and met Mike Finney and his Acro. After a lot of questions, which Mike so graciously answered, and more discussion, I decided this is what I would build. Later, my father and I drove to Finney Airpark to get a ride in Mike's

Acro. WOW!!! The airplane flew absolutely great, and this was my first ride in a biplane. It also felt good to get into an open cockpit again, since the Tu-Holer had been sold some years before. Mike and Sherry were very hospitable to us. We looked over his photo album of the airplane's construction, looked over the Bipe again, and we



Ken's unique double-jig method for clamping rib gussets.

were on our way home. Like Dad said before, "I've got to have one of these!"

My lovely wife, Judy, got plans for me for Christmas '96 and I poured over them for weeks. I then started making plans to start building. I decided to first go to Oshkosh to see what their workshops were all about. I hadn't been to a convention since Rockford '65. Even with what I had been told and read about Oshkosh over the years, I was absolutely amazed! I camped with some folks from Lagrange, Ohio for four days before we had to return home. I would leave camp in the morning and get back at dark. In those four days, I crammed in every forum and seminar

that I could - welding, wood, fabric, etc. When I got home, I was ready and ordered wood to build the wing ribs.

I decided to make all of the components first (nose blocks, gussets, and panels) and to cut and fit the capstrip while building each individual rib. The first step was to lay out all of the full sized panels for the compression ribs on the 1/16 plywood sheets. This would save on scrap as smaller gussets could be cut out of the pieces that remained. Next I laid out, cut, and edge sanded the rest of the gussets, filling a large double-sided tackle box. There are a lot of these little pieces in a biplane!

I then built jigs for the nose blocks to

use with a router. The one for the ailerons was used first to make false ribs, then was trimmed to make the rest of the blocks. The jig for the rib nose blocks was shortened as needed for different ribs (different spar sizes and various sizes of plywood doublers). When finished, all blocks are identical.

Along with the gussets, I made two sets of 1/4", 5 ply blocks just slightly smaller than the gussets themselves for clamping pressure. These blocks would apply pressure evenly across the entire face of the gusset, while preventing the wood from being marred by the clamps. The decision was made early on to build the ribs with no nail or staple holes, to use clamps while the glue dried. This process takes a lot longer to complete a rib since the glue first has to set up well (6-8 hours) before taking the rib out of the jig. The rib should then cure for a few days before sanding the back side to get any spots of glue off and get back to clear wood. The rib can then be completed with gussets on the opposite side. I feel that the results are very much worth the extra time and effort. I made one jig for construction and another for clamping gussets to the rib taken out of the first jig. With these two jigs and the aileron jig, I was finally beginning to see some real progress.



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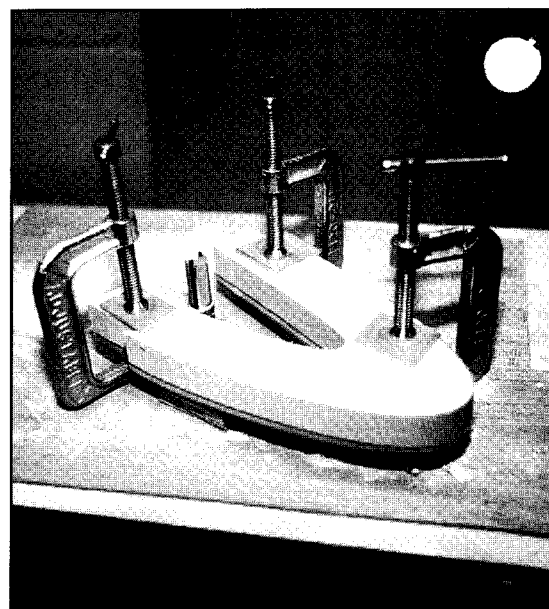
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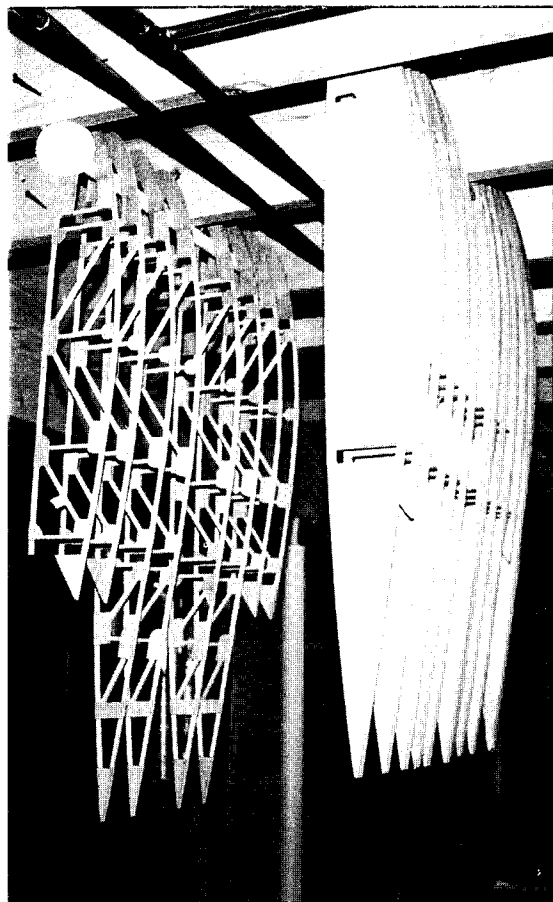


Using a router and jig to shape nose block.

When I got to the plated and compression ribs, the 1/16" plywood panels were all cut slightly oversized. This gave a real good glue line and allowed trimming on a router, giving a nicely finished rib.

I recently gave a presentation on building wing ribs at our EAA chapter meeting which went very well. I took ribs and fixtures in various stages of construction and got plenty of comments on the craftsmanship of the





**Completed wing ribs and compression ribs stored from overhead rafters awaiting assembly of wing panels.**

parts - a good confidence booster. As of today, I have all ribs built except the four butt ribs on the upper wing and am now learning to weld. I will send in more as the project progresses.

In closing, I would like to thank all of the builders who gave their time, especially Mike Finney and Paul Muhle (I must have bent his ear for hours at Oshkosh). Special thanks to my father for his advice, encouragement, and help when needed, but also for instilling many years ago that a man should build his own airplane, and the sense of pride that goes along with that accomplishment.

Ken Patsch  
8607 State Route #61  
Berlin Heights, Ohio 44814  
(419) 588-2554

Dear Ben,

I wrote to you last November regarding changes that I had made to my Acro II, and said that I would follow up when I have some more information. Could you pass this on to the Acro Sport Newsletter when you have finished with it.

I have been slowly increasing the incidence of the tailplane to try to get

## T-Shirts

T-Shirts featuring 2 different Acro II styles and the Pober Junior Ace are available from Acro Sport, Inc. Price: \$10.00 plus \$2.50 shipping. Sizes XXL, XL, L, and some M, not all sizes in all styles, and limited numbers of each! Write for availability.  
Acro Sport Inc., P.O. Box 462, Hales Corners, WI 53132

Style #1 - Acro Sport II  
Style #2 - Acro Sport II W/Sun  
Style #3 - Pober Jr, Ace

the elevator faired in cruise. I've reached the stage where the elevator is faired with the tailplane, or slightly down, depending on c of g and weight in cruise. The elevator has been adjusted to give the required  $\pm 30$  degrees. The tailplane incidence is approx 3 degrees relative to the top longeron, its' front spar being 1 inch higher than the rear. The aircraft handles normally through the full speed range - no differences that I can detect.

Going back over my records, I see that I increased the mainplane incidence by 1 degree, not  $1/2$  degree as I said in my last letter, so I guess a 'plans built' Acro might only need 2 degrees on the tailplane to be equivalent to mine.

I have fitted aileron gap seals similar to those mentioned in a Newsletter last year, the only difference being that the trailing edge is bent 135 degrees to give some rigidity to the .025" 2024T3. The gap is now  $1/4$ " when the aileron is at its closest. I can't pick any significant change in the roll response, at high or low speeds.

The effects of the above changes has been a speed increase of a few knots, and better climb performance.

See you at Oshkosh.

Regards,  
Lloyd Shepherd #190354  
Sydney, Australia



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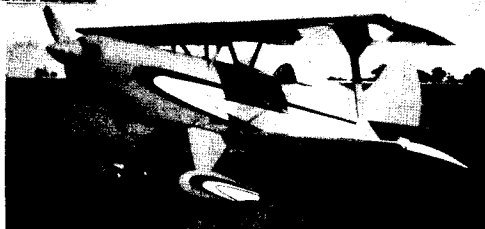
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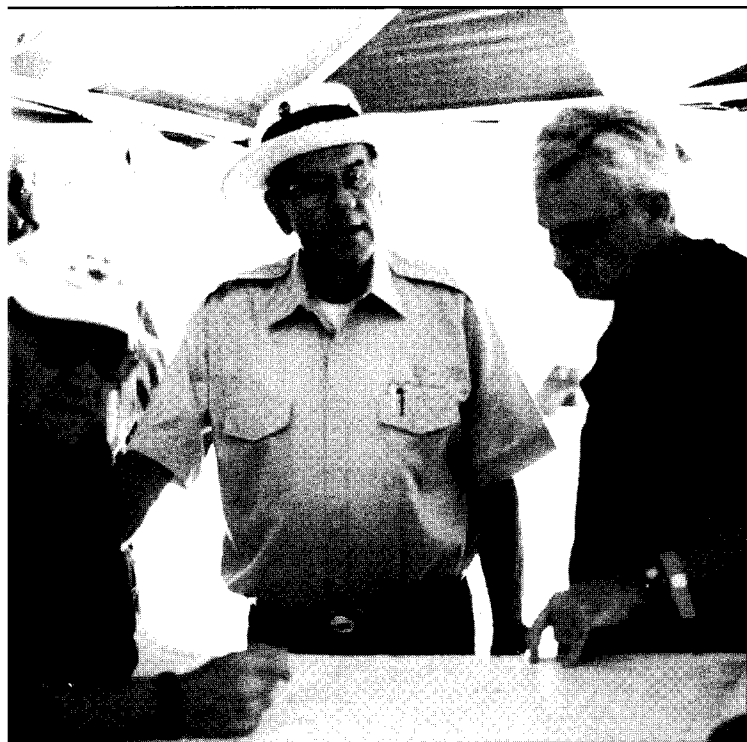


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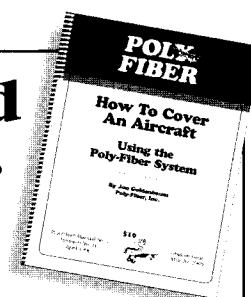


Paul Poberezny, center, discusses a point with Junior Ace builder, Bruce Kirk, right. Bruce informs us that he can supply aluminum rudder pedals for the Junior Ace. For details contact him at: Kirks Menagerie, P.O. Box 3, Smartsville, CA 95977. Phone (916) 639-2464

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