

Express

NEWSLETTER LINK

November, 2001 - No.26



Factory Demonstrator Moves To Winter On East Coast-Features New Legs!

From EXPRESS factory sources

A recent discussion with Larry Olson reveals that EXPRESS Aircraft continues to enjoy strong interest and considerable sales activity. As this is written (November 4th) there are at least two factory completed examples in the test flight mode, and another to follow by the end of November.

The factory demonstrator, N-511EA will be on the East coast by the time this reaches you. After attending the AOPA gathering in Florida, the airplane will be flown to New Jersey, where it will reside in the care of Paul Fagerstrom until further notice.

Larry noted that he has finally bitten the bullet and has ordered the manufacture of aluminum main gear legs. The new legs will be designed to increase the allowable gross weight to 3,400 lbs., will be "gun drilled" for installation of brake lines and be retro-fit to even the earliest CT installations. The new legs will use the mounting brackets being currently furnished for the 'glass gear. (these brackets will fit in CT wings) See picture on page 2.



Above: EXPRESS factory demonstrator stands somewhat higher off the ground on its new aluminum legs

Larry was quick to note that the 3,400 lb rating will only be available for kits delivered after January, 2002, unless the wings have been completed at the factory. For all other aircraft the allowable gross weight will remain at 3,200

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Chasing The Elusive Electron ...Part 27

One of the things which makes flying, particularly on long

trips and when IFR, easier and safer, is the ability to communicate when and where you want or need to. CBROS has experienced some difficulties with radio communication with certain towers and ATC, especially when flying in areas remote from strong signals from the ground. This difficulty was especially evident when using the higher frequencies - 125 and above. Our partner, Peter Becker, noticed the

problem when en-route from LVK to SEA where, in instrument conditions, communication with ATC was particularly weak. Not having strong communication links to ATC in IMC was particularly frustrating, if not downright dangerous. We began investigating the problem by sending the Narco no. 1 and no.2 radios back to Narco for a "tune up". Both radios were returned with a notation that both were operating normally. We also discovered that the marker beacon was not working properly with the volume being very weak and intermittent.

We then turned our attention to the antennas. During construction we had installed a "folded dipole" antenna produced by Bob Archer on the wall of the fuselage just aft of bulkhead 162 on the right side, and a copper strip type for the no.2 comm on the left side of the fuselage, at the post just aft of the pilot's position.

We had not installed a copper strip antenna on the forward

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VISIT THE EXPRESS FACTORY WEB SITE: WWW.express-aircraft.com



Factory Telephone And Fax Numbers

The current factory mailing address, shipping address, telephone and fax numbers are:

Mail: P.O. Box 236,
Olympia, WA 98507-0236
Shipping: 5845 193rd Ave., Bldg. 4
Rochester, WA 98579

Tele: (360)352-0560

Fax: (360)352-0553

E-mail: information@express-aircraft.com

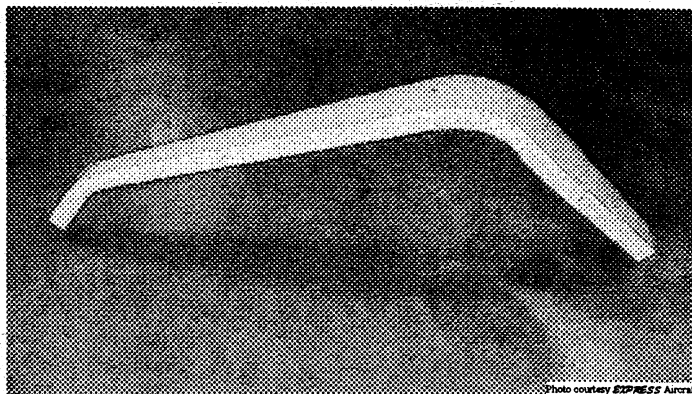
Web page: www.express-aircraft.com

Larry Olson - Operations Manager

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lbs. The factory has also re-designed the nose gear fork to provide more protection of the spindle. See picture below.

Also the retractable system has survived a finite analysis test and the system appears ready for prototype installation. According to Larry, the wing has been significantly modi-



Above: New aluminum main gear leg, sans airplane

The "EXPRESS BUILDERS HELP PAGE"

on the internet visit the URL: <http://www.sierratel.com/jerico>
Jerry Sjostrand maintains this web page specifically for EXPRESS builders. A good place to find completed aircraft and major kit parts for sale, as well as some detailed technical building tips.

The "EXPRESS BUILDERS FORUM"

the web site maintained by Tom Hutchison can be found at: <http://www.express-builder.com>
This page is particularly useful for builders who have specific questions or needs. Offers general technical information shared by active builders and detailed building advice.

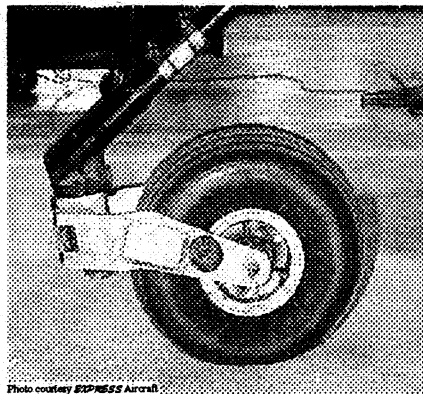
Notice

Readers will find a new feature in this issue of the EXPRESS Link which we think will be a great service in using back issues of the EXPRESS Link - AN INDEX!

Yes, through the courtesy of new builder Ali Moghaddas, readers will now be able to use a ready reference to articles in past issues. You will find the new feature on page 6 of this issue.

Our profound thanks to Ali for investing the time and effort it took to put this document together.

Many thanks also to my wife, Beverley, who edited Ali's original and who suffers through all my writing!

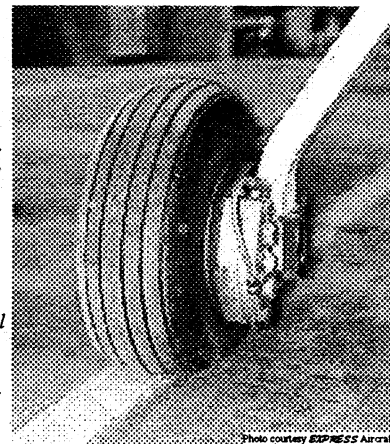


Above: Re-designed nose gear fork

fied and will be somewhat thicker and the chord will be somewhat wider - at least on the inboard portion. The prototype nose gear strut has been inflated for the first time and appears to be in fine shape.

As for the Builder Assist program, Larry reports that three aircraft have been completed and delivered, two additional aircraft have passed FAA inspection and are in test flight mode, and two more aircraft are scheduled for factory completion by the end of the year.

Right: Aluminum leg with Cleveland brake installed. Leg is gun drilled to accommodate brake line installation. Note flexible, braided metal line running from the bottom of the leg to the brake.



Give Me A Brake! ... Now They Tell Me!

Two issues related to the EXPRESS brake system have come to CBROS's attention recently. For those readers who have followed the construction of our EXPRESS, you will no doubt recall the great difficulty we had in bleeding our brake system. We attributed at least part of the problem to our having installed shuttle valves designed to allow the independent use (see "biggest foot wins" Vol. 2, No. 2 - June '95) of the brakes by both pilot and co-pilot. We thought the valves were necessary, as the original Wheeler documentation mentioned that if installed according to their diagram, the movement of any brake pedal which caused a stroke of "1/8 inch", would "lock out" the

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N-404CB Test Flights Continue

Not So Fast There, Bub . . .

We could hardly contain our happiness in the last issue when we thought we had solved the oil leak problem by changing the size of the breather? Well, it turned out that it wasn't quite as easy as that!

Further flights of longer duration showed that, while we had solved some of the leak problem, we had not solved it completely. In fact, we were still finding an unacceptable film of oil on the bottom of the fuselage after flying an hour or so.

Now, totally frustrated, we did what we should have done in the first place - let an expert have a look.

We enjoy the convenience of having a great overhaul facility at the far end of our hangar row. We had exchanged tools and some parts and material for several years and they were very supportive of our efforts to get our EXPRESS flying. So, after checking their schedule, we removed our cowling and taxied our "leaker" to the mechanic's hangar.

The first thing they did was to completely clean the engine compartment. Next, the airplane was taxied out to the nearby run-up area and, after a suitable warm up, the engine was run at the highest power setting the brakes would allow for an extended period - perhaps 5 minutes. (keeping track of the temps)

After taxiing back, the engine was shut down and immediately closely inspected. It didn't take trained eyes long to discover the source of the leak. The offending oil was coming out of the base of the housing of the intake valve on the number 2 cylinder. There can be only two reasons for a leak at this juncture: 1) a defective O-ring or, (and this is something one would only know after working on a Lycoming valve train) 2) a weak or broken spring clip. Since our problem turned out to be the spring clip I will only describe the solution of that defect.

Removal of the rocker box cover revealed that the spring steel clip that pre-loads both of the push rod housings had broken on the intake side, allowing the housing to move away from its seat on the crankcase far enough to allow oil to leak out.

A replacement clip was quickly located and the broken clip removed and replaced.

That did it! Since, we have flown for several periods of an hour or more and found only the oily residue one might reasonably expect from a breather, on the bottom of the fuselage.

The moral to the story:

**IF YOU DON'T KNOW
WHAT YOU'RE DOING,
GET SOMEONE WHO DOES!**

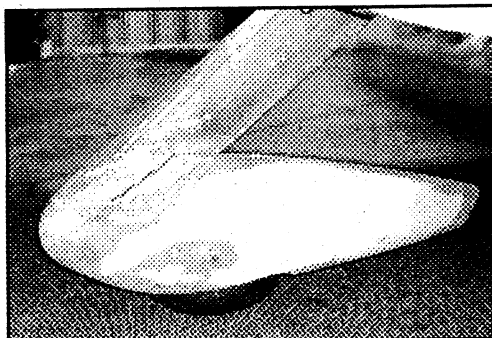
Not As Simple As It Looks!

We noticed that Louie Lacy posted a message on the EXPRESS Builders Forum asking for help constructing his nose wheel fairing. We have all but just finished ours and can tell you that it was one of the most challenging procedures we faced in the construction of our EXPRESS.

The reason we did not respond to Louie's request is that we don't think we can adequately explain it. While the EDI documentation does have some pictures, and Jerry Sjostrand is correct in his reference to the Glassair instructions, the information is not a lot of help.

Having said that we include below a picture of our nose gear fairing in its final shape, but waiting for finishing.

We intend to publish additional detailed pictures of the NG fairing as well as some in progress shots of the main gear fairing(s) and the main gear to wing intersection fairing for which we made a female mold some time ago.



Strings Too Short To Save!

...real and unconfirmed news and rumors which may possibly be of interest to EXPRESS voyeurs!

. . . Benny Thordarson had scheduled a visit to CBROS and Jerry Sjostrand was prepared to fly down to get together, but that went out the window when the airport was closed to Part 91 traffic. Instead Benny got to San Francisco, rented a car, drove to Jerry's place on Monday and visited CBROS on Tuesday, the 31st.



. . . Did have a visit from Wayne Norris who flies for Emory Freight. Wayne hails from Liberty, IN and is building a Millennium Express in his large shop at his home on an airport. From Wayne's description and the pictures he brought along it appears that he is moving quite quickly on his project.



. . . Local Series 90 builder Shawn Kelly has taken a "sabbatical" from his work in the fiber optic industry to concentrate on the completion of his project. The latest procedure has been to mate the wings to the fuselage. He, and fellow CT builder, Jim Ward, have acquired zero time Lycoming IO-540 C4B5 engines and Shawn has his out of the box and on an engine stand where he will set up elements to be placed on the engine side of the firewall. All control surfaces have been closed out and final fit of the horizontal stabilizer is awaiting modifications of the aft brackets.



. . . Your editor had been encouraged by his wife (read nagged) to submit some of his writings to magazines to see if there was interest in their using our material. So I did what she suggested and E-mailed a draft of the article "So you want to build a kit plane?" which appeared in Ex Link No. 24, to Custom Planes editor Norm Goyer. He immediately shot back that he liked the material and if I could make it more generic he would publish it

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...Strings Too Short To Save!

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make it more generic he would publish it and pay for the privilege! No sooner said than done. You can see the result in the November issue of Custom Planes. This activity has been a lot of fun. I've found that publishing sort of gets one into a "writers club" where you get encouragement and pats on the back from other contributors. On the other hand, I still haven't seen the check - it must be in the mail, meanwhile I have an idea for an article on..... hummmm!



... A visit to the CBROS facility by **Chuck Stephenson**, a builder based in Napa, CA, confirmed that he is planning to install a Chevy V-8 in his **WHEELER EXPRESS**, CT. We will try to get more information for the next issue.



... Long time **EXPRESS** builder and supporter **Dick Lind**, picked up the phone to report that he is doing well, staying busy on projects outside aviation. He reported that he is in the process of making a new engine cowling for his CT example, based on the EDI configuration - with the round inlets. He is using Carbon Fiber and reports that the new version is much, much lighter and stiffer. He indicated that he may offer the carbon version for sale, after completing fit and finish on his installation.



... Virginia based builder **Jim Lewis** has once again convinced your editor to spend a week with him, working on his Auriga. The visit is currently scheduled for next February. We will furnish additional details as we get closer to travel.



... The Swissair airline financial problem(s) continue to be a concern for recent Millenium kit purchaser, **Hans Georg Schmid**. Even as a captain with some seniority, Hans is not certain of his employment future. This has caused him to put his **EXPRESS** project on hold until his future becomes more clear.

N-36NV - "Tail Dragger" No. 3 Takes Off!

After what must have seemed like interminable delays for various reasons, the conventional gear version of the Series 90 **EXPRESS** completed by **Bruce Newlan**, et. al., completed a successful test flight on Saturday October, 20th, 2001.

Piloted by C.J. Stephens, a well-known test pilot with the CAFÉ foundation, the flight was essentially uneventful. Stephens reported after the flight that the rudder lacked the proper amount of authority so that take offs needed to be carefully made using the right brake "a bit". This tendency was reportedly a characteristic of the original factory conventionally geared demonstrator. In fact, a number of parts of the factory airplane live on in Newlan's example.

the trim system to increase the "up" trim, and further work on the rudder system. These modifications are being made and he expects to be back in the air very soon.

In addition to the original factory demonstrator, John Kee presently has about 200 hours on his version and there is at least one more example yet to be completed by Dave Smith here in CA.

Bruce has promised additional flight performance numbers further into the test flight period. Bruce says that if anyone has further interest in **EXPRESS** "Tail Dragers", he can be contacted at: bnewlan@kovesnewlanwine.com.

We did learn that we will need to be careful with material furnished by Bruce in the future, as he tried to pass off an electronically altered photo of the current



Above: Bruce Newlan's N-36V rests between test flights

Bruce reported that things worked better after re-tensioning the rudder cables and adjusting the added bell crank, but he suspects the modifications he made to accommodate a steerable tail wheel may have something to do with the problem.

The first flight lasted approximately 1 hour and by the fourth flight more than 3 hours of flight had been accumulated. Bruce noted his excitement when he found that he "had" to go along on the third flight, as essential crew, to monitor the rudder position. Bruce further reported that landings and ground handling were benign. The early flights revealed a need for a heavier spring on

factory demonstrator, with his N number imposed on the side, as a picture of his airplane in flight.

Nice try Bruce! - and nice going on your **EXPRESS**.

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...Chasing Electrons

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vertical shear web of the vertical stabilizer for reasons which are not clear looking back on it, as this procedure was recommended by the documentation we had at the time. We have come to regret that decision as conversations with several builders indicated that such an installation has produced uniformly excellent results.

Not having the option of installing such an antenna at this juncture, without major reconstruction, we turned our attention to discovering the cause of our problem. The first thing we did was to replace an aluminum clad balsa cored shelf which had been installed from bulkhead 162 aft about 40 inches. We originally thought that this shelf would make a good ground plane for the marker beacon and transponder antennas. We found, after replacing the aluminum clad shelf with a plywood model, things improved, but were still not up to par. On a local flight to nearby Modesto we could not pick up the ATIS until we were about 10 miles out, and even at that distance the tower frequency was weak.

The transponder antenna had been relocated to extend out the bottom of the fuselage about 18 inches aft of bulkhead 162 when the airplane was at the factory having the Sandel HSI installed, as Ted felt that the signal was impinging on the remote compass and gyro related to the Sandel. In this location the transponder was working appropriately and had no apparent effect on the HSI.

After checking all antenna connections, which were found to be OK, our next move was to relocate the marker beacon antenna temporarily on the floor of the baggage compartment. Another test flight confirmed that the antenna was working properly, at last. Two down, two to go.

A conversation with Archer, which seemed to confirm that the folded dipole we had installed would probably not be totally effective unless it was moved somewhere in the vertical stabilizer - again not possible. The no. 2 comm strip was installed without using ferrite beads as there

were two schools of thought as to their effectiveness. We have not yet exposed this installation so that beads can be installed, but it seems to be working somewhat better after we did the dirty deed of installing a standard bent wire comm antenna with an 18 by 18 inch ground plane outside the bottom of the airplane in the baggage compartment (the ground plane is inside). Suddenly communication on all frequencies improved markedly. A test flight confirmed that we could easily pick up the ATIS and tower transmissions from as far away as 60 to 70 miles on the no. 2 comm, which is where the external antenna was connected, figuring navigation was the most import mode. Three down, one to go. Now at least we can be seen on radar, use the no. 2 comm for distant communication, and the marker beacon is working.

During all this experimenting we enjoyed a visit from electronic guru, Reinhart Metz, who checked out the comm antenna problem with our hand held and a field strength meter and suggested that the primer we used might be effecting the antenna production. We checked with Dow, the manufacturer, who said that the amount of metal in the paint "should not be a problem". We are not sure.

Our next move will be to uncover the junction of the strip antenna which is buried in the cabin sidewall, enough to allow the addition of three ferrite beads, to see if the efficiency of the antenna can be improved. We also plan on taking the airplane to a major avionics shop in San Jose to run VSWR tests. Hopefully this will tell us if the original no. 1 antenna is working and to verify the output of the no. 2 strip antenna.

We are still trying to get used to having antennas protruding outside the fuselage and are hoping to find a solution short of that. We may learn to just live with it, as it has no apparent effect on the speed of the airplane. It's just the principal of the thing!!

... Gimmie A Brake!

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brake from the other position. Builder Jack Volkamer installed his system using the shuttle valves and has spent the better part of two weeks trying to bleed his system. Jack called CBROS to see if we had any updated ideas as to what he might do to solve his problem. After reviewing everything we could think of, most of which Jack had already tried, somewhat desperately we suggested that he call George Happ who works at MATCO, the manufacturer of the brakes used on most early Wheeler and EDI examples. We suggested calling George as he had been associated with Wheeler Technology Inc. in the early days.

Turns out that George could not be of specific help with Jack's problem, but did say that the "lockout" problem had been addressed some time ago by MATCO who had modified the original master cylinder design to include a check valve which solved the problem. Later model master cylinders furnished by MATCO can be identified by being gold or black in color, and an actuating arm diameter of 0.375 inches WILL allow independent operation. MATCO master cylinders with an actuating arm diameter of 0.250 inches will NOT allow independent operation. We do not plan to change our master cylinders as our system is now working properly, but thought this information may be of help to builders who have not yet fully installed their brake systems.

In addition, after CBROS had to replace O-rings on our left brake, George also let us know that the original three piston brakes had also been modified to strengthen the major "mounting plate" part. According to George the mod makes the brake work much better. Jim Ward, who is building a CT in our shop, has ordered the "new" parts. We will report the result in a later issue.

Thank you, George Happ!



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EXPRESS STUFF FOR SALE:

COMPLETE WHEELER EXPRESS CT KIT FEATURING TIO-540 LYCOMING WITH 3HRS SMOH ON A TEST STAND - MAJOR PART OF FIBERGLASS WORK COMPLETED

Doug McMillan's partially complete CT EXPRESS is being offered for sale by his estate.

CBROS is familiar with this particular example, as we worked with Doug on the completion and installation of the empennage. We have made a short video tape of the aircraft in Doug's workshop and will loan either an 8mm or VHS copy to anyone seriously interested in purchasing this project.

One of the most unique features of this project is the adaptation of a turbo charged Lycoming 540 C1A, which was overhauled and test run by Larry Olson at EXPRESS Aircraft Technology. The engine is available separately, including engine mount, log books and all accessories.

For details contact CBROS Inc, directly at:

(925)455-1036

E-mail: bnbent@pacbell.net

Fax: 925-606-7534

FOR SALE

1995 S-90 EDI EXPRESS

320TT

290hp IO540 Lycoming

Complete, certified IFR panel

Leather/wool interior

Damage history due to failed inboard gear bracket.

Professionally repaired!

Recently painted in Malibu/Mirage paint

scheme white over blue with red stripes.

Previously known in *Express* circles as

"Desert Storm"

Contact Bob Gisburne for complete details and digital pictures or see

message in the *EXPRESS* Builders

Forum at: <http://www.express-builder.com>

com

FOR SALE

Two wings. For Details call Dawson Burton @ 812-358-2453 or 812-523-2133

**New Listing!
For Sale**

Wheeler EXPRESS CT complete kit. Only minor work done on one wing
Package includes all molded parts - including CT empennage, engine cowling, IO-540 engine mount, fiberglass landing gear, all windows and all hardware originally furnished by the factory in sub Kits 1 thru 5.

Business keeps me too busy to block the time to finish in this millennium.

Asking \$17,500 for the complete package

Call Del DeLatore at (408)683-2373 or E-mail deldlt@prodigy.net

FOR SALE:

IO-540 Engine mount. Manufactured by EDI. Will not fit certain IO-540 models. Call to find out if yours will fit.
John Kee (803)328-3286

EXPRESS PARTS FOR SALE:

Wheeler EXPRESS lower fuselage kit, complete and still in the original crate. This kit component, at the bargain price of \$3,500 F.O.B. Bentonville, AR can easily be combined with other kits to complete acquisition of all five component kits.

Talk to: Charlie Scott

Days: (501)273-2471

Eves: (501)273-1232

E-mail: exp159cs@nwa.quik.com

FOR SALE:

Two each, Wheeler IO-360 (Lycoming) engine mounts. One is fabricated for use with the larger diameter pucks and one requires the use of the smaller pucks.

Wanted:

Engine mount to fit a Lycoming

IO-540-C4B5

Call Ralph Kenner at (509)838-6807

WANTED:

Need an exhaust system for a Lycoming, IO-360. Stainless steel preferred. Call Jack Volkamer at: (501)443-9191

FOR SALE

Matched set of original Wheeler EXPRESS wings. The left is closed out, with complete documentation. The right is still in the crate.

I am unable to complete the project due to financial limitations.

New asking price: \$100!

Contact Jim Phelps

(volunteer builder on Factory No. 3)

12015 246th Street N.E.,

Arlington, WA 98223.

Tele: (360)435-6845

WANTED:

EXPRESS builder Don Adamson needs an engine mount and exhaust system for an IO-360 CONTINENTAL. He is also is looking for a set of windows for his EXPRESS CT.

If you have what he needs, call Don direct at: (501)676-7529

FOR SALE

Two wings. For details contact Alan Cranmer, 525 El Camino, White Salmon, WA 98672, or E-mail to: cranmer@george.net

FOR SALE

Matched set of original Wheeler EXPRESS wings. Almost no work has been completed (less than 5%) on either wing. Asking \$5,000. Located in Edinburg, Indiana.

Contact Dick Burton at:

dolphus@compugate.com

Rt. 1, P.O. Box 210.A

Edinburg, IN 46124

NOTICE!

Unless otherwise noted CBROS, Inc. cannot verify the quality, usefulness or completeness of items offered for sale or trade.

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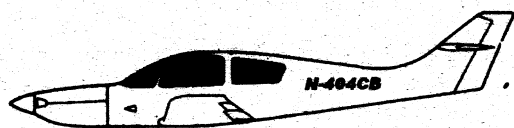
Documentation: CBROS, Inc. has retained an extensive file of patterns and templates for most procedures. We will be happy to share them with any builder for the cost of copying and postage. If you have a particular need, give us a call at (925) 455-1036 or Fax to (925) 606-7534. E-mail to bnbent@pacbell.net.

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