

KOLB MARK II EXTRA

It is the second time around for John Abbott as a builder. However, this time John Abbott's experimental plane will have a BRS (Ballistic Recovery System – some people call it a parachute) and side by side seating so his wife, Sharron, can fly with him. He smilingly said that in an emergency if having to deploy the chute it would be better to have it overhead rather than looking at her and saying, "I wish I would have..."

He waited a few years after building his first plane, a Challenger, to decide that the tube and fabric Kolb Mark III Extra (for wide) was the plane for him; he wanted the side by side seating, its good resale value when certified as a LSA (Light Sport Aviation), and the possibility of instructing in it some day. He had first seen this plane in a magazine, started checking it out, and was pleased to find out that it had recently been redesigned to have a wider fuselage besides having more power than previous models. He was encouraged after talking with former Chapter Kolb builders Pete Swan and Bob Baringer so he visited the Kolb factory in London, Kentucky. He was pleased with the quality of the product he saw there, the technical people, and the support offered so the order for the kit was put in. The factory was surprised when he said he would pick up the kit himself; his Challenger's fuselage had been sliced through by a forklift in shipping, and he was determined that this wouldn't happen to this kit. Since most the parts (except ribs and fuselage) came in one large tube approximately 24 feet long and 32 inches in diameter he had to devise a special trailer to convey it from London, Kentucky, to Midland. He ended up cutting a round hole in the front and back of the trailer siding large enough to accommodate the tube sliding through it –secured it then hung a flag on the end of the tube and he and his son were ready to transport it back to Midland.

Construction which started in his hangar in April, 2004 has now moved into our EAA hangar; John has approximately 800 hours down and about 100 more to get it flying this spring. Having already built an experimental plane has helped him immensely in this construction and he credits Bob Baringer and Pete Swan with much advice to speed up and make this project technically sound. He benefited greatly by their pictures taken during the construction of their Kolbs. However, he was surprised at how difficult the task was of attaching the boom and tail feathers to the cockpit cage. They had to be exactly in plumb with the wings that weren't yet attached. It took him nearly 8 hours using a laser, levels, and a lot of help (especially from Bob Trent) to get the job done; it was rather traumatic to finally drill those 8 crucial holes to wed the two parts together.

When finished the Kolb will weigh in at approximate 1100 lbs., have a wing span of 30 feet and length of 24 feet. The fuel tanks will carry extra fuel at 12 gallons and burn about 2 ½ to 3 gallons per hour with a cruise of 90-95 mph with a stall of 40–45 mph. The cockpit is 42 inches wide with dual controls and the instrument panel will be standard for VFR flying.

The Jabiru 4 stroke 85 HP engine arrived in a sealed wood box at the EAA hangar on December 18. I happened to be there doing this interview when it arrived and I have never seen so much excitement from John and Chapter members Jim Dobben, Pete Swan, and Joe Maj as they pried the top off the box – something like opening a special present on Christmas Day!

The warpdive prop will be carbon fiber with a nickel leading edge; he hasn't decided yet on a 2 bladed or 3 bladed prop. Unlike most builders, John opted to do his own painting which was accomplished in Jack Hallett's 10 x 30 foot paint shop in his hangar on the field. Since most of the surface required 3 layers of paint (1 more for an extra color) John spent nearly a month accomplishing this task. The first layer was to fill the weave, the second layer for UV protection, and the third layer for the basic white color. The color scheme is Bahama blue on white with yet to be designed decals of red for the fuselage; the N number will be N415SB.

John envisions much local flying with his Kolb and several cross county trips a year especially to Indianapolis where his grandchildren are. Never one to stop dreaming..."I might build a gyrocopter next!



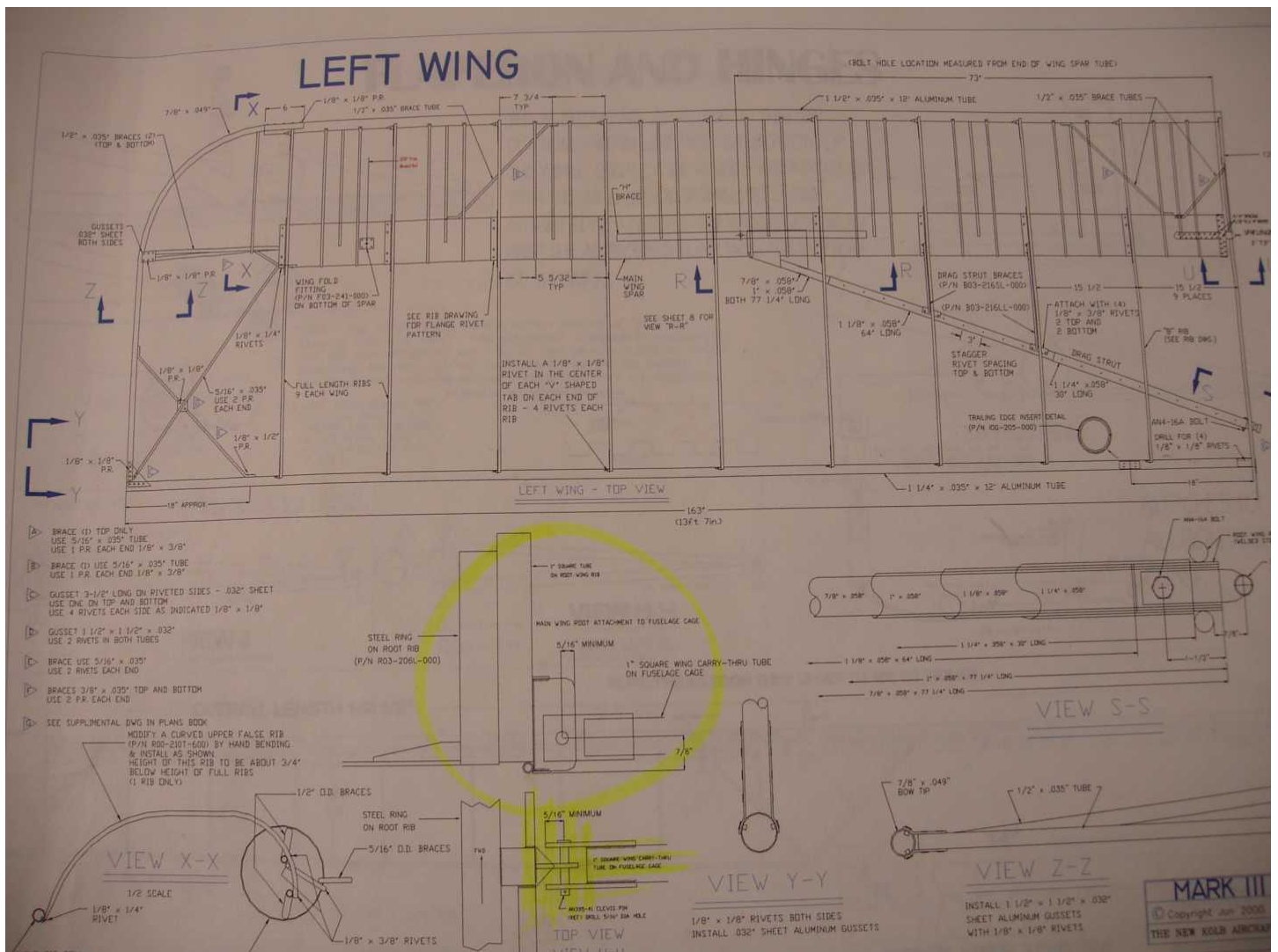




FLAPERON DETAIL



Special tank vent System allows filling the Fuel Tank completely full which adds approximately 3/4 gallons of fuel



UPDATE – October, 2007

If you drop in at the EAA hangar you will immediately notice the progress that John Abbott has made on his Kolb Mark II Extra (for wide) since his builder's article in our February newsletter.

He has put the wing and tail feathers on and mounted the prop. He has finished the interior of the cockpit which features an interesting instrument pod. John also has all attachments on his Jabiru 4 stroke 85 HP engine and has the mountings now for his BRS (Ballistic Recovery System – a parachute!).

John has taxied the plane several times already and is very happy that everything seems to work. He knows that winter is coming fast so it might have to be early spring before he takes his first flight.





