Progress, slow but sure, is taking place in the reconstruction of my Osprey 2. I shudder to contemplate the number of completion estimates that I have missed so far, however, "flying by summer" seems reasonable enough right now. The left wing is about ready for the dacron, the right wing is ready to assemble with the spars and ribs completed, then the refinishing of the fuselage surface, upholstering, etc.

A number of innovations have taken additional time but are deemed to be worth the expenditure in hours and material. The wings are being extended twelve inches and George has referred to this change in a previous newsletter. His calculations indicate that the takeoff distance, especially on the water, will be appreciably shortened, with an increase in the rate of climb with little or no lessening of level flight speed.

My original aileron connections were made up at the bellcrank in the outer wing section when the wings were being installed. Removing the wings required pulling the cables out of the wing thru the nose rib cable run holes. When the wings were to be remounted, the cable ends were taped to a pole and inserted thru the leading edge space until visible at the bellcrank access opening. Roughly the reverse operation is used on the prototype by disconnecting the cables at the turnbuckle in the cockpit and pulling the cables out thru the wing center section.

George has designed a new arrangement which should reduce attachment or detachment time over either of the other hookups. The key to this system is cutting the cables at the wing attachment point and with thimbles and sleeves placing small steel coupler plates at the cable ends. These couplers are made from .065" - 4130 steel and are one half inch wide by one and one quarter inches long. The couplers can be manipulated thru the one and five eighth inch wide space between the center section and outer wing. The two couplers are joined by an AN3-4 bolt. In order to preclude any tangling of the cables between the wing root and the bellcrank, a micarta block with slide holes for the cables is provided. This micarta block is supported on a bracket made from light weight aluminum angle and held in place under the heads of one top and one bottom thru the spar bolt. In order to provide cable slack in which to hook up the couplers, the cable shackle at the lower end of the control stick in the cockpit is unbolted. After the couplers are bolted together, the cable is then tightened by forcing the stick laterally, then the bolt inserted thru the shackle. This latter and final aileron cable hookup eliminates the placing of clevis pins and cotter pins at the bellcrank location or the unsafetying, disassembly, reassembly and resafetying of the turnbuckle in the cockpit.

In the reconstruction of My Osprey 2, every effort is being made to save weight wherever possible. This, of course, is the all important factor in the performance of any airplane. The old equation is just as true today as it ever was, and that is, if the empty weight comes out to be over the design weight, the flight performance figures will suffer in inverse proportion. My original empty weight turned out to be ninety pounds over that specified in the plans and sure enough, it took extra power and fuel to keep up with the prototype in all phases of flight. All specified dimensions have been scrupulously adhered to, all lightening holes made, all excess resin squeegied out of the fibreglass, etc. The dacron covering which I will use is the lightweight Stits HS90X. This material required less finishing material but also fewer process steps.

Osprey 2's are sometimes seen equipped with large instrument panels and enough instruments and radios to qualify the aircraft for enroute IFR operations. Such an array, although possibly a source of satisfaction to the owner, can result in a penalty in the performance of the aircraft due to the excess weight. As a result of spending a flying lifetime in an IFR airline operation in alot of the world's airspace, and thru countless episodes of unforecast and unanticipated violent flying conditions, the conclusion is inescapable that small sport planes should be flown strictly VFR. The instrument requirements for this type of flying are adequately met by the instrument panel presented in the Osprey 2 plans. The standard panel also provides for the very useful facility of being able to step out of cockpit high and dry when nosing upon a beach or tieing up to a float or pier. In the light of new developments it now appears that a small Loran C and a Terra type 720 channel communications set would be all that an Osprey would need in the way of radios.

Summertime flying operations in California often present ambient airport temperatures of 114 degrees F or more. The possibility of vapor lock, boiling of the fuel and other fuel system problems suggest the need for a fuel pressure gauge. Since the standard Osprey panel does not provide space for an additional instrument without adding on a bracket or additional width to the panel, I have decided on a push to test red light to be located in the center of the upper part of the panel. A pressure sensor, set at about two psi or less will be located between the engine driven fuel pump and the gascolator. This device seems to be worth the weight penalty.

As for news of other Northern California Osprey builders, Doug Sisemore of Woodland, states that he is about to recommence work on his project. The work thus far is of such high quality it has to be seen to be believed. It would be the shame of the century if he failed to finish the bird, and we are all leaving no stone unturned in prodding him into action.