

# Herb Kothe's Removable Landing Gear

*By George White*

At the recent Pensacola "Gathering of the Turkeys" competition, your friendly editor was impressed by the various ingenious methods used by the "old timers" in this game to make their models "packable." Obviously when you've got landing gear hanging out of every model you plan to take on a cross country trip, especially if you plan on flying commercially, things get a bit tedious. With gear, wing and tail feathers removed, a model can be packaged in a reasonably small container.

Herb Kothe, the man from Denver who won the SAM Rubber Championship, brought his Jimmy Allen Bluebird to the 2002 Turkey meet, along with several other models, in a case which was checked as baggage on the airline. He built the model with detachable landing gear, using a method which struck me as simple and light.

He simply epoxied a 1/2" long piece of 3/32" OD brass tube to the inside of the upright where the LG would be installed, braced the upright with fillets and slipped the landing gear leg into the tube. He secured the gear onto the airplane with a small 1/4" orthodontic rubber band (available from FAI Model Supply) on each side, wrapped around bent pin hooks epoxied to the outside of the upright. The lighter weight wire connecting the two sides of the gear, which also provides a degree of torsional support when one gear takes more stress than the other, is soldered to the gear with acid core solder. A slot must be made on the fuselage bottom to let the connecting wire to pass through.

On Herb's Bluebird, he glued a 1/8"X1/4" soft wood fairing to the wire strut. Also, since the plans call for a trailing drag strut, he made a fake one from 1/16"X1/4" balsa, glued it to the fairing of the main strut at the axle point and angled it back to let it slide freely up and down on the outside of the fuselage as the main gear flexed. He could have made a wire drag strut using the same brass tube arrangement as the main strut, but with the fake drag strut he saved several grams of weight and it looks like a real one.

By the way, Herb's Bluebird bettered 4 minutes on his opening flight and all other flights exceeded 3 minutes. Not bad for a Jimmy Allen — which after all, "everybody knows they don't fly worth a damn!" Herb is a tough guy with whom to compete!!

BLUEBIRD

LANDING GEAR

