

# Wood planes soar for Sauger

By GREG TAVAILRE

Steve Sauger has traveled across the United States and to Europe by airplane.

Not an unusual statement until one learns that Sauger's planes are made of wood and stand roughly one foot in height and are 36 inches in length.

Sauger, a Oakland County resident, has successfully entered two such model airplanes in national and world competitions. They have been his passport to weekends in Las Vegas, Nev., Sweden and France.

He is building a third plane, a replica of 1934 Lockheed Orion, which he will enter in 1979 competitions.

"I'M JUST a typical guy who always liked to build model airplanes as a kid," said 47-year-old Sauger. "I built them until I was 21 when I entered the Air Force. After that, I didn't touch one until seven or eight years ago."

When his interest was rekindled, he turned from plastic planes to more challenging wood models. What makes wood models more difficult to construct is that each part has to be designed by hand, down to the most minute detail.

"Usually the nose and the landing gear are the hardest to build because you have to get them down to exact detail," he explained. "They are the first things a judge looks at because they're so close to the eye. It's just like on a car where the most important thing is the grill—who ever looks at the tailights?"

An automobile stylist for the Chrysler Corp. and a part-time flight instructor at Detroit City Airport, Sauger began working two to three hours a night in his basement workshop in early 1972 on a model of a 1948 Stinson. The first thing he did was acquire all the pictures and data on the Stinson that he could find. Then he slowly molded the wood frame to simulate the prototype. Next, small engine parts, controls and door handles had to be specially ordered.

When it was complete, he entered the plane in 1975 regional competition in Toledo. To his delight, his plane finished in second place. From then on, he had the bug.

As a result of his finish in Toledo, he was eligible to enter the national competition at Lake Charles, La. A finalist there, he qualified for the world competition in Sweden. Although he encountered radio problems, he was undaunted by his 14th-place finish.

"It was just a hobby, and I never thought it would get that big," he said. "It's become something I really shoot for."

IN COMPETITION, Sauger said the first thing judges look at is fidelity. He said, "They like to see attention paid to the exact details of the prototype."

"They crash all the time," Sauger

said. "That's part of the game."

Another important factor is maneuvering—the ability to demonstrate smoothness during flying. The planes fly a distance up to one-half mile away. They are controlled by radio and have all the functions of a full-size airplane, Sauger said.

While building the Stinson, Sauger saw an idea for a second plane while surfing through a magazine. A photograph of a 1946 Fairchild, which is housed in a hanger in Toledo, caught his eye. It was love at first sight.

"It's my favorite," Sauger admitted. "To enjoy building a plane, you have to have an airplane appealing to you and, hopefully, the judges. They have to be excited by the color and the design."

"After I saw it in the magazine, I was able to locate the owner in Toledo. I called him long distance and later went down to see it."

After a year of construction in his basement workshop, Sauger took first prize at the Toledo regional and second at the nationals at Riverside, Calif. The Fairchild also finished seventh during the Invitational Tournament of Champions held in Las Vegas. He is awaiting the world competition scheduled to be held in England next August.

While he waits, he is busy building the Lockheed Orion, one of a series of airplanes built by Lockheed and named after constellations.

"I hope to go to the same route with this one as I did with the others," Sauger said.

## Hospital sets convention

Do you know if you have high blood pressure, diabetes, or a hearing impairment... Or have you wanted to learn about cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).....

These and other questions will be answered through screenings, demonstrations, and displays at the Henry Ford Hospital West Bloomfield Center's (6777 Maple, west of Drake Rd.) free health convention, to be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Feb. 25 and 26.

Tests and screenings will include lung function, cholesterol, dental, vision as well as hypertension, diabetes and hearing. Records will be kept and sent to personal physicians. For those without physicians, referrals can be suggested.

Visitors will learn how to identify scoliosis, or curvature of the spine, in adolescents and how to check for breast cancer.



Steve Sauger works on one of his miniature crafts. Airplanes like this one have taken him around the United States—to compete, that is. (Staff photo by Charlie Kidd)

## Officials oppose payment of jail fees to county

(Continued from Page 1A)

ing facility, are harder hit by the expense, Byrnes says.

THE PUBLIC SAFETY director suggests 47th District Court Judges Michael Hand and Margaret Schaeffer cooperate with the city to curtail expenses, which Hand denies.

"We know the city is sensitive on this issue," Hand said, adding that neither he nor Judge Schaeffer sentence or set bond at lower rates to keep in line with city budgets.

Lower bonds are a result of a state Supreme Court ruling last September, he said, which has had the effect of cutting out bondsmen.

Hand does sentence prisoners to

"weekend" terms, which allows time to be served from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays, rather than serving a straight sentence in the county jail.

Hand, however, doesn't see that as a subversion of the system.

Whether the city or the county pays for the lodging of prisoners, the taxpayers put out in the end, Hand adds.

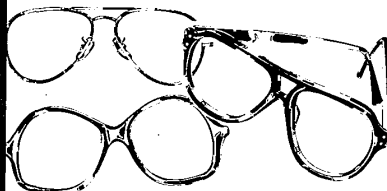
The cities of Grand Rapids, Grandville, Kentwood, Walker and Wyoming have instituted a court suit in Kent County to test the validity of the jail fees.

Local officials appear to be neutral on the subject. Both Farmington and Farmington Hills City Councils have refrained from passing resolutions supporting the House Bill.

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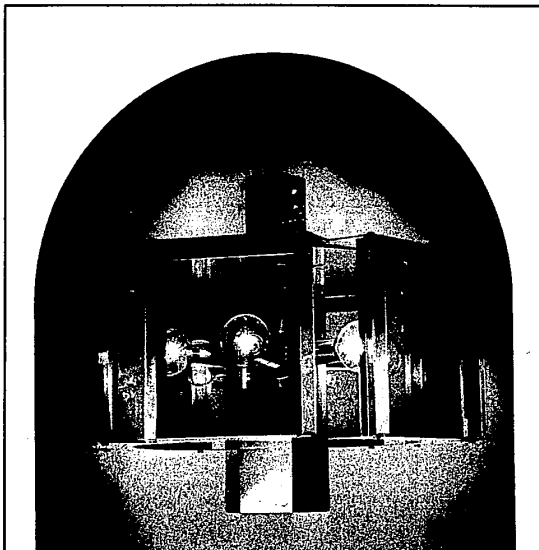


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