

It's not a bird, or a plane—it's a blimp!

From time to time, this column will highlight products that in some way assist adults in their parenting role, assist youngsters in their childhood role, or help parents and children to have fun together.

Two sights follow the onset of spring as surely as B follows A in the alphabet. The first is the sight of a child running valiantly down a hillside, a ball of string in one hand, while the other hand gingerly grasps a diamond-shaped bit of cloth or paper at the end of an outstretched arm. The second sight is that same child, still clutching that bit of material, sitting forlornly on the curb—no wind.

An Italian company has come out with the answer to a kite flyers nemesis. Called UFO Solar, it is a non-kite requiring no wind at all. This airship regards wind as a rival.

Actually a non-rigid dirigible, or blimp, this airship resembles a very lightweight, large, black, garbage bag. When closed at one end, it can be inflated by holding it open and running. Once the blimp is filled



Pat Bordman

with air, tie off the other end, attach the accompanying cable, stand it in the sunlight, and wait.

AFTER A FEW MOMENTS, the airship will begin to rise. Simply let out the cable as the ship goes up. Keep careful hold of the cable, for the company warns that the blimp is capable of "reaching extraordinary altitudes (30,000 feet)." However, only a 60-foot cord is enclosed.

After testing this product on a less than favorable day, we discovered that it truly is intended for use on windless days. The cable grip is too flimsy to be trusted on

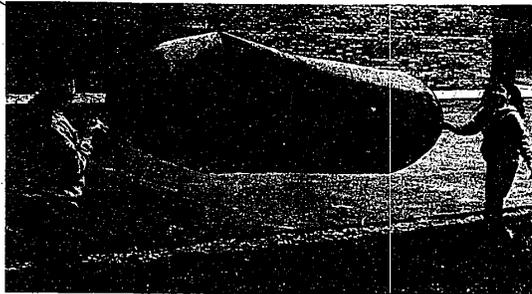
gusty days. Also, the airship is so light, wind causes it to whip about. However, the children had such a good time trying to stay out of it's way.

Unlike kites that are usually ruined when torn, the non-kite was fun. We discovered that this airship can be easily repaired with transparent tape.

Properly used, this blimp should provide a lot of fun, with the added benefit of changing the perception of what a kite is, and what the proper conditions are for it's use.

BY THE WAY, the blimp works on the principle of convection heating. The sunlight heats the air inside the bag, causing the air to expand.

Patricia Bordman has taught elementary school and conducted workshops and lectures on education. While attending Oakland University graduate school, she became interested in photography. She and her husband have two daughters and live in Farmington Hills. ©Patricia Bordman



Kites may be synonymous with kids and spring, but what do you do on a day without wind? Try a blimp, which can be inflated as a child runs along the ground. (Photo by Patricia Bordman)

Quakertown has a birthday

Quakertown Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) meets at noon Tuesday, May 13, in Farmington Hills Community Library to celebrate its ninth birthday.

Among the celebrations will be Mrs. Eugene Albright, representing the General Richardson DAR Chapter in Rochester; Mrs. Robert Stigmund, from Livonia's John Sackett Chapter; Mrs. Robert Kirsten, from Three Flags Chapter in Farmington Hills; Mrs. F.

Davis from General Josiah Harmar Chapter and Mrs. Donald Baumhart from Sara Ann Cochran Chapter, both in Livonia.

Mrs. Harold Dolph of the host chapter served as a delegate to the DAR's 89th Continental Congress, in Washington, D.C. and attended the Michigan meeting and reception during her stay there.

She will report on those events during the birthday-meeting.

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Academy plans social evening

Academy of the Sacred Heart parents are planning an Evening at Meadow Brook Hall on May 2 at the former Wilson estate on the Oakland University campus in Rochester.

The evening includes cocktails at 6:30 p.m., followed by dinner and a tour of the hall. The party, sponsored by the academy's parents club, is a social

event, not a fund-raiser, according to Mrs. Gerald Bartush, chairwoman.

Also assisting for the event are Dr. Filomeno Almeida, Mrs. William Hazell, Mrs. Donald Centro, Harry Nichols, Mrs. Ronald Balousek, Dr. Theodore Kilar, Mrs. Charles Becker, Dr. Stan Majewski, Mrs. Armando Ortiz, Dennis Yurk, Arthur Elliot and Regis Bowers.

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