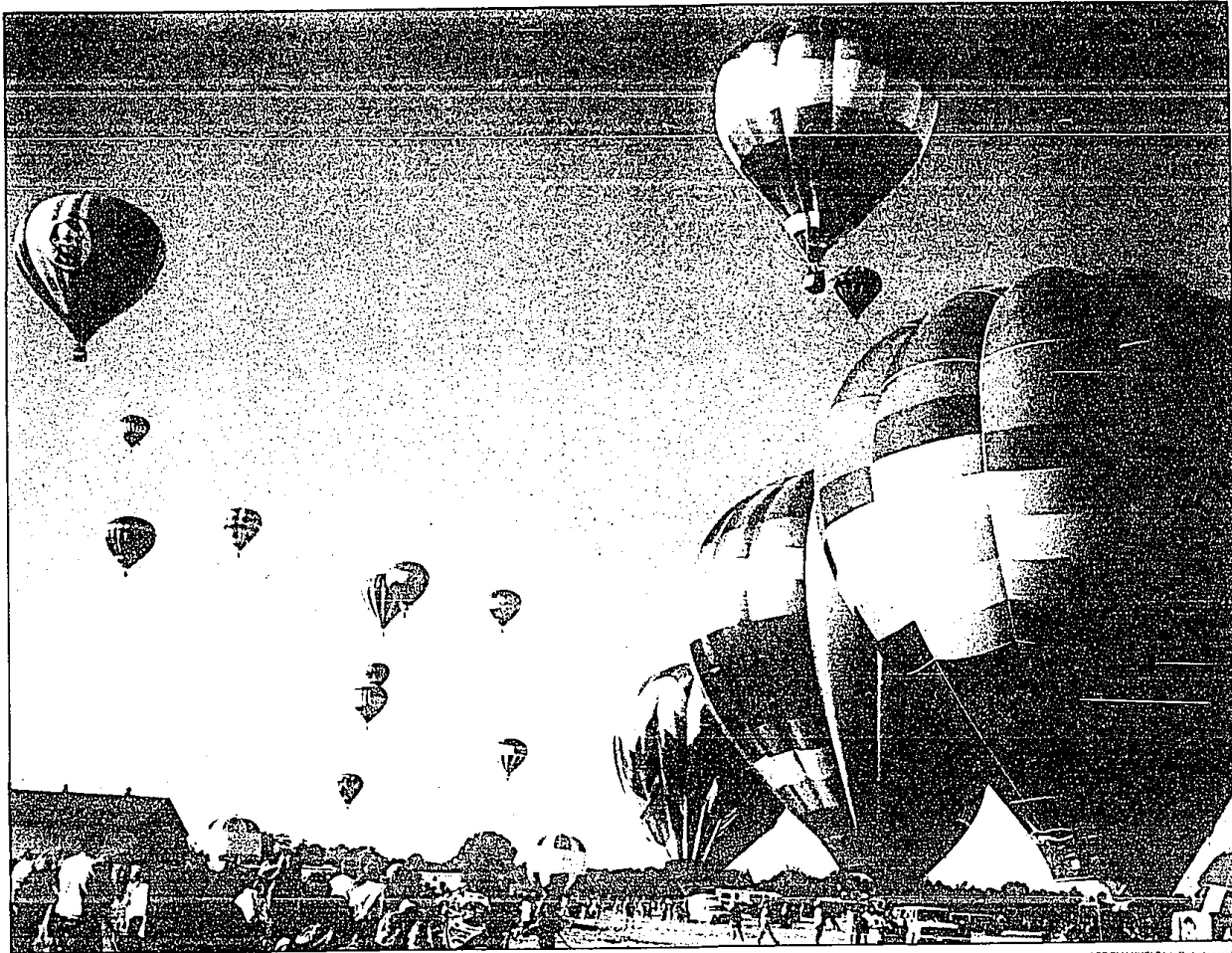


## Over the air waves

It used to be pretty much a male domain, but more and more, the voice coming over the radio during prime time is that of a woman. Meet three female DJs who have become on air personalities throughout the metropolitan area on Page 6D.

The Observer &amp; Eccentric Newspapers

★ 1D



ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

During recent races held in Livingston County, the hot air balloons took to the skies in pursuit of the X left by the "hare." In the "hunt" was Phil Glebe in his distinctive Pontiac Excitement II balloon.

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

A man and his balloon. Phil Glebe savors the height he attains, but only for a fleeting moment.

The open air is his lanes, the horizon his finish line. Glebe, 38, is simply not along for the ride.

"People see balloon flying as a light-hearted thing," said Glebe, who operates Renaissance Balloons in Brighton. "The other side of that is the serious competition in the sport. There is money to be won."

"People with a competitive heart — such as myself — like to win."

As he commands the Pontiac "Excitement II," a 70-foot high, 55-foot wide balloon that serves as his racing machine, Glebe seldom seems at ease.

His eyes scan the horizon, looking at the tree-lined suburbs tinted orange from the setting sun. From there, his orbs dart to the altimeter, which gives an indication of the height of the balloon.

Glebe then hits the double propane burners that kick out 30 mil-

## Chasing the hare in the air

lion BTUs an hour (the equivalent to the output of 250 home furnaces) to fill the 77,500 cubic feet capacity of the balloon.

The flame from the burner reflects in Glebe's eyes.

The competitive nature of balloon racing belies what would be a serene moment for most. After 10 minutes, one can begin to appreciate the skill involved.

GLEBE MUST navigate the craft to a predestined spot. The race is not so much of a chase but

rather tantamount to a temperamental dance with nature.

Wind is the main partner. As it shifts and swirls, the balloon racer follows and rides the current. Nature always leads in this encounter.

Glebe perhaps respects this more than anything, which is why he's ranked as the No. 1 pilot in balloon competition, according to the Balloon Federation of America.

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### Warp Factor

Karlos Barney



photo courtesy of Benmiller Inn

There are only a few houses, one general store and the Benmiller Inn in the village of Benmiller, once a busy industrial center and now a vacation spot, thanks to the foresight of a man called Ivy.

## Benmiller Inn: Rustic retreat

This is the last of a series of articles about nearby inns, but I welcome reader reports about places you have visited and things you have done that might interest other readers. For example, help me find reasonably priced accommodations in London, England. Send your letters to Iris Sanderson Jones, Travel Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

By Iris Sanderson Jones  
contributing travel editor

Some things don't change. Sharpes Creek still flows downhill from the Woolen Mill on Upper Pond to the Gledhill House on Lower Pond, rushing under the grist mill to the Maitland River.

The river flows downstream to the modern town of Goderich, and

on to Lake Huron, but that is a 20th century setting and Benmiller is firmly stuck by history and choice in the 19th century.

If you look at the old photographic mural on the wall at the swimming pool you see the village of Benmiller as it was in the 1840s when the Canada Company sold the original land grants in the then Huron Tract of Upper Canada and what is now Ontario.

The mural shows the wide shallow river winding away between treed hills. A horse-drawn cart clip-clops down the road that runs parallel to the river. Between the river and the road are a dozen wooden buildings that held the old mill complex and its workers.

There are only a few houses, one general store and the Benmiller Inn in the village of Benmiller now.

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