

Wheelchair athletics is strenuous sport



LEANING BACK
Mike Scoggins leans back for a javelin toss.

By DAN McCOSH

Try sitting flat in a chair and throw a 12-pound shot as far as you can.

Without the use of your legs, athletic events like the shot put, javelin throwing and even tossing a softball are extraordinarily demanding.

When someone like Warren Townsend throws the shot put, the force kicks back against the chair, and a helper is needed to keep it from falling over backward.

Townsend, like the other members of the Farmington Phantoms, regularly works out at the strenuous sport of "wheelchair athletics."

The "Phantoms" is a team formed recently to allow people without the use of their legs to compete in regular athletic competition.

ALTHOUGH not all the members use wheelchairs regularly in daily life, all the events are conducted in wheelchairs.

While the Farmington team is two years old, the beginning of competitive wheelchair sports in Michigan can be traced back to 1961, when the Wheelchair Athletic Conference was founded.

"The growth of wheelchair sports, on a world-

wide level, is spirited by the desire of the disabled to achieve physiological and psychological satisfaction in their pursuit of life," William Griggs, president of the WAC said.

Competition in swimming, archery, bowling, track and field, table tennis are among those available.

THE PHANTOMS are the only team from Oakland County entered in the Michigan games, which will be May 11 at Wayne State University.

The local group, with 10 members, is also one of the youngest in the competition. The majority of the members attend Harrison High.

The age spans 16-22, according to Mrs. Carole Solar, secretary of the team, compared to other teams with entrants from 25 to 40.

They are supported financially by the Farmington Optimist Club, Greg Capling, Roger Cote and Pete Solar coach the team.

They practice at Cloverdale Elementary and at Warner Junior High.

Currently, the team is looking for more adult members, as well as another wheelchair, according to Mrs. Solar.

photos by
Ralph Evert



MRS. CAROLE SOLAR
The secretary of the Farmington Phantoms at practice.



SHOT PUT
Warren Townsend lets fly.

Star bright, star light . . .

Where is that star I want to see tonight?

By CARL STODDARD

About a dozen years ago, after he had retired, LeRoy Fleming decided to take up astronomy. He had no sooner gotten into it than he discovered a problem.

Astronomers had no easy way to determine where in the sky a star would be on any given day.

Fleming decided forthwith to invent a device capable of charting the skies — and he did, although neither an astronomer nor a mathematician.

The device, called Fleming's Accustar, is a 10 by 12 inch plastic card with two smaller rotating plastic discs.

On the inner disc is a chart of the constellations in the northern hemisphere.

By rotating the disc to match the correct longitude with the latitude and the date with the time, one can discover what the sky will look like at any given time and place. He said he took the device to an astronomy "big shot" and got an immediate reaction.

"**HE SAID,** 'hell's bells, they've been working on this for 18 centuries, and here I go and do it without even knowing what I was doing,' Fleming said.

Fleming, 77, of 22587 Gill Road, Farmington, said that using his

device, a person could quickly and accurately determine the location of stars, planets and constellations by sight or with a telescope.

Without using his device, he said, the best expert would need about 10 minutes to figure out what Fleming's Accustar can determine in less than a minute.

"When I first started it you wouldn't find one astronomy professor in 100 that believed me. I was even threatened with prison," he said.

One astronomy professor, after seeing an advertisement Fleming had placed in an astronomy maga-

zine, sent him a letter charging Fleming with violating federal mailing laws.

Later, that same professor sent him a letter apologizing and congratulating him on his discovery.

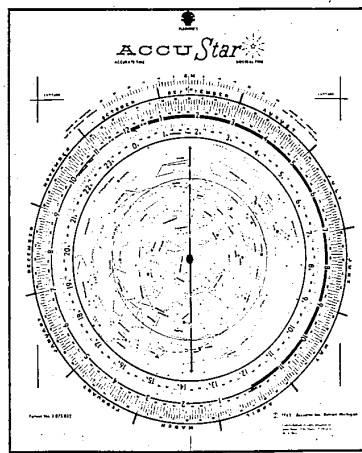
THE DEVICE, Fleming admitted, is largely for amateur or school use, although he said it has professional applications as well.

The tall, talkative Fleming got into the astronomy business after spending years as an independent businessman.

He seems to enjoy his venture into the scientific world, and talks with obvious pleasure about his meetings with government officials and members of the National Geographic Society.

But Fleming refuses to rest on success, and is currently working on a device that would replace the age old ship's sextant, an instrument used to plot a ship's position. He hasn't worked out all the details yet, but the new instrument would be a decided departure from past devices.

Fleming's new sextant would incorporate, of all things, a Polaroid camera.



Service provided by FAAC reviewed by the county

Continued from 1A
Damiani must give a quarterly report to DAC in order to receive operating funds.

"In the year 1973, the FAAC facility saw 325 individuals on a face to face basis for counseling.

"That was done by Damiani and his assistant and it doesn't include family counseling, fund raising or just plain information," said St. Souver.

"We consider that a very heavy load. Those 325 individuals represent a lot more than 325 hours. Some of them may have been seen 10 times or more."

"Besides the face to face treatment, Rapline had 2,800 calls in 1973."

St. Souver explained, "A free

clinic in an affluent community like Farmington or Farmington Hills sometimes seems unnecessary to the people who live there.

"They don't realize that without parental approval for treatment, their children are medically indigent. Whether it's information about venereal disease or help in kicking the drug habit, there are a lot of kids who need a free clinic."

Asked why a teen would be willing to see a doctor at the Rapline clinic but not in his own office, St. Souver said, "The kids feel safe with Rapline. They trust Rapline so they trust Rapline's doctor."

The same doctor in his private office represents a threat to these kids. There he's the establishment, but here he's safe and he's free."

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Fashions and Flowers

Women of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church Altar Society will get together for their annual spring luncheon on Wednesday, May 1, in Meadowbrook Country Club. Heading up the "Fashions and Flowers" affair are from left, Carol Cotter, Mary Ann

Greenwell and Mary Lannen. Mrs. Greenwell is general chairman of the event, and Mrs. Cotter will supply tickets, at \$6.50 each, by calling her at 476-1563. (Evert photo)