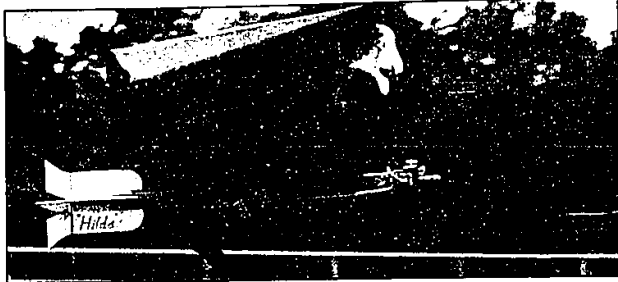


Home built: Ken Widerstedt and son, Keith, Bloomfield Hills residents, check out a Fisher ultralite FP-303 plane owned by Don Krzyzysk of Wixom. Krzyzysk built the plane with its 28-foot wing span in his second floor apartment, taking up both the living and dining room.



Lost her head: Hilda the Witch is always a hit at The Ribcrackers air shows. She usually sustains some damage after every flight. Saturday, she completely lost her head in an air collision.

STAFF PHOTOS BY GUY WARREN

# Ribcrackers take to skies over the Founders Festival

More festival coverage, 13A and 15A.

By GUY BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

Air traffic was high above North Farmington High School last weekend as the Ribcrackers, a radio control plane group, took over the sky in celebration of the Farmington Founders Festival.

Members of the group are frequently kidded about their club name and asked whether the club is made up of retired chiropractors.

Not so, say members. A club member's 9-year old daughter coined the group's name during the 1950s after watching and taking note of the amount of ribs in the plane's airfoil that were broken as a result of flying.

The Ribcrackers were originally organized as a non-profit model airplane club under the auspices of the Livonia Department of Parks and Recreation. The group numbers 130 and emphasizes safe sports flying.

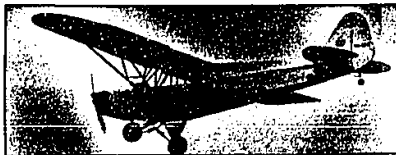
Watching a show is addicting. "I came and watched a show," said Dan Wamboldt, the club's current club president and West Bloomfield resident, as he explained how he got started.

Ribcrackers members host several events throughout the year including pylon races, limbo contests, balloon bursts and fun flying.

Hilda, the witch, a plane dressed up as a witch atop a broom, is a hit at every air show. Wamboldt said, "Harry Killick, a club member, built the witch seven or eight years ago," Wamboldt said.

Hilda usually sustains some damage after flight but Saturday she completely lost her head when she collided with another plane.

"When she gets near the ground, her legs actually drag on



Cruisin' high: A one-third scale Cub Piper, owned by Lary Dalrymple, cruises the sky over North Farmington High school Saturday.

the ground like she's walking," said Jac Mosler, club treasurer, who lives in South Lyon.

Dr. Keith Shaw, of Ann Arbor, who Wamboldt termed a "top electric modeler in the world" was on hand to fly his electric planes (electric motor and battery). One achieved a speed of 140 mph.

"Blink and it's in the next county," said the announcer when Shaw's plane buzzed by.

Shaw helped John Buck, 14, of Redford, a first-time flyer, learn to fly a plane via a buddy box training system, which consists of a cord and two transmitters so that the expert can step in whenever there is an error or mistake.

Don Krzyzysk's Fisher Flying Products 303, an ultralite plane, was displayed but not flown at the airshow, sponsored by the Farmington Area Jaycees. "I plan to take the plane to Fowlerville for its maiden flight this summer," said Krzyzysk, a Wixom resident.

It took Krzyzysk six years to finish building the plane, which was constructed in his second floor apartment. "The 28 foot wing span took part of the living room and part of the dining room," Krzyzysk said.

Model aircraft kits suitable for beginners are available in hobby shops starting at about \$350 and will take about 50-60 hours or "a month of spare time" to build, according to club infor-

mation. The club also owns an ICOM scanner to check for potential radio interference at flying sites and a library of aircraft videotapes.

Club officers say that learning to fly varies with the student's proficiency — some require several years, others take one flying season. The club has two flying sites: Russell Field, just south of 10 Mile, between Taft and Novi roads, in Novi, and Ray Field, on Grand River, one mile east of New Hudson.

Annual club dues are \$30 with a one-time initiation fee of \$10. Junior members (younger than 18) may join the club at no cost. A youth group is currently being formed. Members are also urged to join the Academy of Model Aeronautics, which provides insurance coverage. An AMA membership is required for flying radio control aircraft at club fields.

The club meets the first and third Mondays during the school year at Holmes Middle school in Livonia. During the summer, business meetings are held at the Livonia Senior Center with the second meeting of the month held at Ray Field, on Grand River, one mile east of New Hudson.

"We look for 20 flat acres with an area we can overflow," Wamboldt said describing flying sites. For more information, contact Wamboldt, 360-4023 or Mosler, 437-1629.

# Searchlight rates Briggs top candidate in 11th

By GUY BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

Democrat Walter O. Briggs was the only candidate rated "preferred and well qualified" by the Oakland Citizens League affiliate of Civic Searchlight for the 11th District U.S. House race.

Briggs received the highest rating the League lists.

"I'm extremely pleased," said Briggs. "It demonstrates again I have a message that can carry to all the voters in the district."

"They (Civic Searchlight) represent a cross section of the community, and this will be a boost for our campaign," said Christine Neville, of the Briggs campaign staff.

Race front-runner, Republican Dave Honigman received the second highest rating, "well qualified."

"I'm happy to be rated more highly than Alice (Gilbert) and Joe (Knollenberg)," Honigman said. Gilbert and Knollenberg are the other Republican candidates in the House race.

"I think they (Civic Searchlight) do an important function. They seem to be well-informed."

Gilbert and Democrat Michael Meyer were rated "qualified," a step below Honigman. Neither Gilbert, a former Oakland County Circuit Court judge, nor Meyer, director of

religious education at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Plymouth, could be reached for comment.

However, Gilbert did get a boost from the Birmingham-Bloomfield Board of Realtors, which endorsed her: "She best represents the thinking of the realtors covered in her district," said board vice president Warren Gould.

The endorsement could entitle her to Political Action Committee donations from the Michigan Association of Realtors.

Knollenberg's campaign staff was disappointed with the "not evaluated" rating. Because of a scheduling mix-up, Knollenberg did not meet with the Civic Searchlight Committee for a personal interview.

Campaign manager Carol Morlan said, "We had the wrong address and time. We're working with them to see if we can still meet with them."

"We're absolutely disappointed," she said. She said Knollenberg had sent in the prepared questionnaires and background information.

William O'Brien, executive director of the Oakland Citizens League of Civic Searchlight, said, "It was very unfortunate. We sent a letter out confirming the appointment. But somehow they got the message it was at a different time."

O'Brien said it is unlikely another meeting can be scheduled because of the review committee's schedule.

But, he said, "This is no reflection on Mr. Knollenberg."

Civic Searchlight is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that has a 12-member committee of citizens who send questionnaires to candidates and meet with them at a panel forum.

The members come from different occupations and age groups, although most are retirees who can devote the time to meet with nearly 300 candidates for various offices in Wayne, Macomb and Oakland Counties.

Candidates are rated on scale of decreasing preference: "Preferred and well qualified," "well qualified," "qualified," "no rating," and "not evaluated."

No rating is the lowest grade. Not evaluated means the candidate did not meet with the committee.

Other organizations also rate candidates, such as the Oakland County Bar Association and the Police Officers Association of Michigan.

However, the bar association probably will not release its endorsements until next week. And the POAM is not endorsing any candidates in the House race.

"We took a neutral stance. We're satisfied with all of them. We couldn't make a decision," said Kenneth Grabowski, POAM business agent.

The new 11th House district extends from Highland east to Birmingham, south to Redford and west to South Lyon. It includes Bloomfield Hills, West Bloomfield, Farmington, Farmington Hills and most of Southfield and Livonia.

# Hills council won't endorse candidates

By GUY BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

As a body, the Farmington Hills City Council cannot endorse any candidate or nominee for public office. But individual council members may support candidates or nominees of their choice.

That's the gist of a paragraph that the council added Monday to its council rules and procedures document adopted in March 1992.

The additional language was requested by council-

woman Nancy Bates following a request by William Ortmann for endorsement of appointment to the 6th Circuit Court judgeship.

"He wanted council to write a letter of recommendation to the Governor," said Mayor Jon Grant. "I get asked, personally, for an endorsement."

For example, Gerald Surowick, 47th District court candidate wrote each council member for his endorsement April 13. The council did not, as a body, endorse him.

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