

POPS NATIONALS Meet

12-14 Nov 1970

Oxford, Michigan

PARACUTISTS OVER PHORTY SOCIETY

POPS NATIONS 1970

NOV 12- PRACTICE - NOV. 12-13 - EITHER DAY -
ACCURACY - 3 JUMPS INCLUDING HIT + ROCK

OXFORD, MICHIGAN AIRPORT - 30 mi. No. of Detroit

SOCIAL AND DINNER SAT. P.M. RECORDS,

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ALSO IDEAS FOR A CLOSER SOCIETY - HOST:

LOU SCHROEDER - 399

DIRECTORS: ALL POPS

John McManaman #21
TOP POP

Detroit Free Press

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

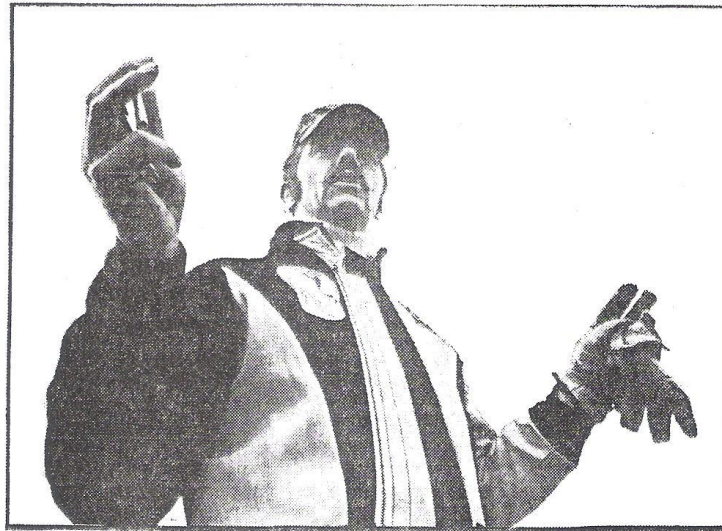
Page 3, Section A

Saturday, November 14, 1970

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Bob Rhyne: The Clark Gable of the over-40 chutists?

CHUTISTS OVER PHORTY

Oldsters Are Up in Air

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BY TOM NUGENT
Free Press Staff Writer

Approximately 30 middle-aged and elderly people gathered in a vacant field in Oxford Township Friday. They studied the gray, chilly skies, and they tested the cold wind



studied the gray, chilly skies, and they tested the cold wind and then after a while most of them went up in airplanes and jumped out.

THAT'S THE kind of day it was Friday, on the grass-covered field at Baldwin and Seymour Lake roads in northern Oakland County, where approximately 30 members of the Parachutists Over Phorty club (POPs) gathered for the opening day of the 1970 national championships.

POPs is a sky-diving club composed of people over 40 who have made at least one free-fall jump.

POPs claims more than 500 members around the world, maybe 20 of them women, and this year members decided to hold the American championships on the Oxford Sky Diving Club airfield.

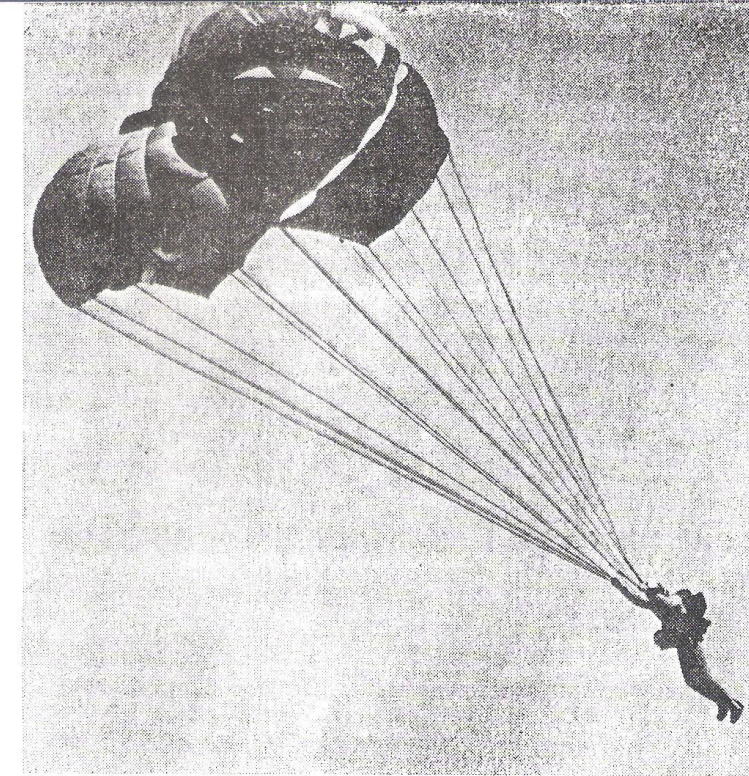
THE CONTESTANTS, who are being judged for accuracy and timing in the two-day meet, came from all over the United States. Many are former Air Force and Army Air Corps paratroopers. Two had jumped with the 82d Airborne Division in the Normandy invasion.

There was a 60-year-old diver, Seth Whitcomb from Eton Falls. There was a sky diver with a glass eye (he tapes it in place with Band-Aids before jumping); a sky diver with a wooden leg; a sky diver with only one arm.

And then there was Bob Rhyne, auto worker from Flint. Rhyne wears a black and gold jump suit with a "Fearless POPs" arm patch.

HE WEARS a burgundy baseball cap with silver flying wings, oily black boots, and a waxy handlebar mustache.

Rhyne leaned on his heels, squinted at the sky, nibbled his I&M, and suddenly he



Free Press Photos by STEVE THOMPSON

A jumper drifts in for a landing at the POPs meet

was—Clark Gable. Same shifting slouch. Same rolling cadences. Same droopy mustache sliding over every word.

"Yeah," he said, "I did me a cutaway one time. (A cutaway is when you are forced to dump your main chute.) Got the main chute all tangled up, and finally I had to throw her away. Hit the clamps and dumped her."

He snickered. "Guess what Reserve chute came out fouled. When that baby opened she had two busted lines and a hole in her you could a thrown a chair through. But I rode her down ..."

Competitive sky divers jump from small airplanes—mostly Cessnas and Piper Cubs—at an altitude of approximately 3,000 feet.

THEY ARE judged on how close they come to a small plastic disc, about the size of a Frisbee, planted in the center of the jumping field.

The sky diver must fight wind currents and a natural tendency to drift and roll as he descends. He does this by holding a variety of positions, like the "arch," in which the diver bends backward and extends his arms to control his flight.

"It's not really that dangerous," said 60-year-old Whitcomb.

"I've made 185 jumps. Sure, I've sprained my ankle a few times, but that's all."

The POPs members say 35 of the 60,000 people who sky dive every year wind up as fatalities.