

# Paper planes propel professor's plans

By Jim Berryman

After watching some classmates fly a paper airplane in elementary school, Walter Erbach knew the quest for the perfect hobby was no longer up in the air. Or was it?

More than 50 years ago Erbach, a UNL engineering mechanics professor, was intrigued by that gliding piece of paper. Today at 65, his hobby has grown so big that he is recognized as one of the top model airplane builders and flyers in the world.

"I was so intrigued watching them play with the paper airplane that I asked my mother to buy me one," he said. "It flew the first time I tried it."

Since then, Erbach's planes have become more detailed and complex, requiring just the right materials for flight, he said. Made of hollow cylinders of wood and light paper material, Erbach's creations are lighter than feathers. One plane weighs only 1/30th of an ounce.

Most of the planes are powered by an all-natural strand of tightly wound rubber, similar to a rubber band, he said.

About 50 other Americans build planes like Erbach's, he said, including one of his two sons, who now lives in Canada.

Erbach has filled his trophy case with awards, and set records at national model plane competitions. Because of a lack of time and money, Erbach has not participated in any world competition. However, his travels have taken him to Europe, where he has made a name for himself among his colleagues.

"Once in Austria, I went to the apartment of a colleague," Erbach said. "I identified myself, and practically had my arm pulled off by the man's wife, showing her hospitality," he said.

"There's no one in the United States and damn few people in the world involved with model planes that do not know my name," he said.

But don't try to call him a celebrity. "We're just a group of people who all know each other and respect each other," he said. "It takes a reasonable amount of intelligence and desire to accomplish this, but it's pointless to think that I'm a celebrity."

While other model plane builders may be in the field for a number of reasons, Erbach said, his reason which has kept him flying planes for more than half a century, is the satisfaction he gets from watching his prized planes glide through the air.

"I'm doing this only for the satisfaction of having one something," he said. "There are no financial awards. Just the satisfaction of being able to say that my model was the best at that contest, or I accomplished something, makes it all worthwhile."

Admitting that his hobby does turn heads now and then, Erbach said he may be considered a "nut," but, he said, he loves it.

"Unlike many people, everything interests me," Erbach said. "The world seems so full of things that I would like to know about, but I don't have enough time to explore everything. If I could live to be 200, I couldn't get to know everything I would want to know."

As the final few students exit the Bancroft building this May, Erbach will be making an exit of his own. A UNL associate professor of engineering mechanics for 37 years, Erbach plans to retire at the end of the semester, and devote his time to his life-long loves: planes, photography and his wife, Rowenna.

"I'm over-booked for the summer," he said, referring to the two model plane events he plans to

attend. "I have so much planned that I've got to live to be at least 200," he said.

Erbach said he will miss teaching, but he's off to conquer new horizons.

"People ask me why I do this, and I always say the same answer that somebody said after climbing Mt. Everest: Because it was there. That's why I'm fascinated with model airplanes. Because they're there."

**'World Famous'**  
**P.O. Pears**  
 WHERE IT'S  
**ALL**  
 HAPPENING!  
 322 S. 9th St. LINCOLN, NEB. 476-8551

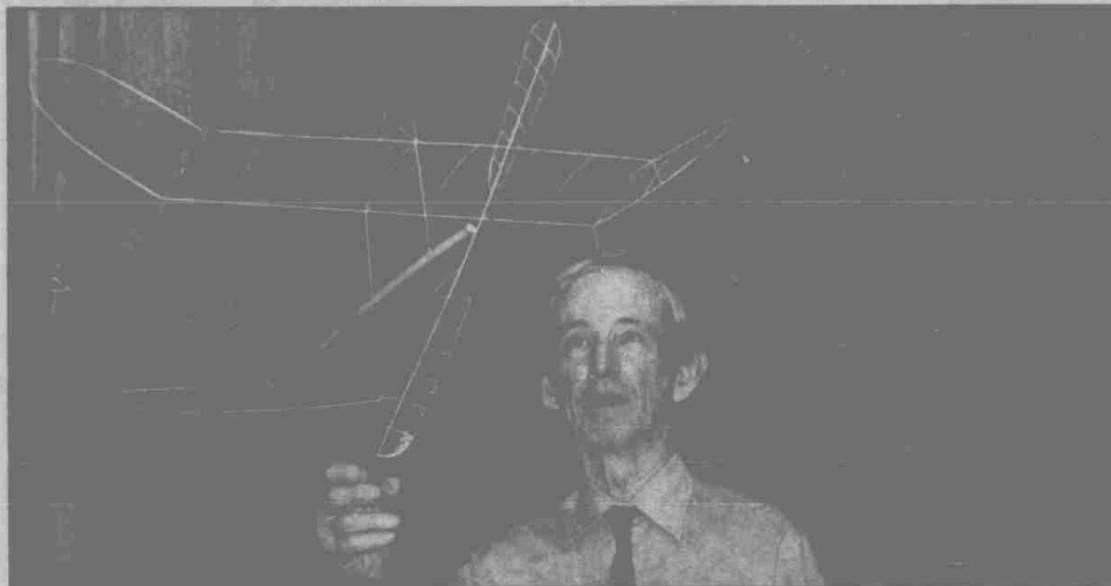
**\$20 a month\***  
 with no interest or  
 carrying charges  
 lets you enjoy  
 the comfort  
 of contact  
 lenses.



- Now you can afford
- The finest contact lenses
  - The finest continuing care
  - Free in-office trial
  - 45-60 day home trials
  - Special 24-hour contact information — 475-4040
- Call today for a FREE in-office contact lens trial & consultation.
- 3200 "O" St. — 475-1030**

\*with minimum down payment and qualified credit

**International Contact Lens**



Walter Erbach shows his award-winning plane.

Dave Truba/Daily Nebraskan

## UNL speakers capture title

The UNL speech team defeated nine other teams to win its fourth consecutive Nebraska Intercollegiate Forensic Association title last weekend.

Roger Aden, a senior from Scottsbluff, took first place in oratory, extemporaneous speaking, rhetorical criticism, informative speaking and pentathlon. He was second in impromptu speaking. Chris Wallace, a junior from Fremont, was second in oratory and pentathlon, third in extemporaneous and teamed with Lynne Olson, a junior from Lisco, to place third in duet act-

ing. Olson also placed third in rhetorical criticism, while Wallace was a finalist in that event. Brad Walker, a freshman from Lincoln, placed third in impromptu and was a finalist in extemporaneous. Jerry Roemer, a freshman from Hooper, was a finalist in both extemporaneous and impromptu. Val Benton, a sophomore from Fairbury, was third in poetry. Mary Truba, a sophomore from Lincoln, was a finalist in rhetorical criticism and Jill Pilkelman, a freshman from Hartington, was a finalist in poetry.

**UPC** Talks and Topics presents

**OUR LIFE IN ART**  
 by Dorothy Lyman  
 All My Children's  
 Opal Gardner

Tuesday, March 6th  
 7:30 PM  
 Union Centennial Room  
 \$2.00 UNL Students  
 \$3.00 General Admission



SPECIAL FACTORY AUTHORIZED  
 SIERRA \$100 TRADE-IN OFFER!

**\$100**  
 TRADE-IN  
 OFFER!

SIERRA Model 3400 Cover-Up Correction Typewriter or new 3500 Lift-Off Correction Typewriter.

Correction Key

**SAME BALL NEW GAME IBM ALTERNATIVE.**

Yes, we'll give you \$100 IN-TRADE for your old, used manual or used electric typewriter when you buy the brand new Sierra 3400 Cover-Up Correction or Sierra 3500 Lift-Off Correction single element typewriter. Your trade-in machine doesn't even have to be in working condition. Don't pass up this opportunity to own your own "IBM SELECTRIC-LIKE" machine and SAVE \$100 with your old trade-in. Trade-in offer expires March 17, 1984.

These new single element typewriters are now priced less than half the cost of a new IBM Selectric... and both the Sierra 3400 and Sierra 3500 include an exclusive dual correction feature. The 3400 provides "cover-up" correction capability, while the 3500 offers clean, convenient "lift-off" correcting... in either case with the correction key your hands never leave the keyboard. Typing balls interchange with IBM. Stationary carriage, only the element moves. 60 CPS keyboard entry speed. Superb print quality. Typists feel immediately at home with the Sierra 3400 or 3500 if they have experience with IBM's SELECTRIC. The Sierra 3400 sells everyday for \$495. The Sierra 3500 sells everyday for \$595.

**WE'LL GIVE YOU \$100 FOR ANY OLD TYPEWRITER TRADED-IN ON THE NEW COVER-UP SIERRA 3400! REG. \$495, NOW WITH TRADE... 395.00**

**WE'LL GIVE YOU \$100 FOR ANY OLD TYPEWRITER TRADED-IN ON THE NEW LIFT-OFF SIERRA 3500! REG. \$595, NOW WITH TRADE... 495.00**

**all makes**  
 office equipment co.

fine office furniture • office machines • office equipment

3333 "O" ST.  
 CALL 477-7131