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Kiting

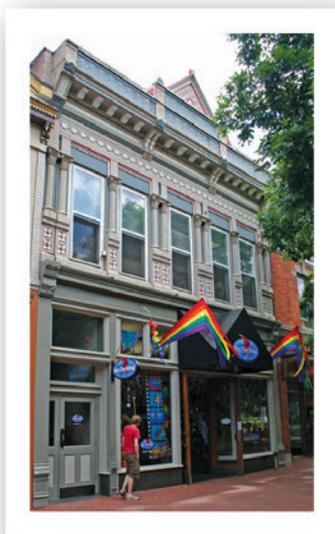
The Journal of the American Kitefliers Association

She Changed the Kiteworld

Valerie Govig

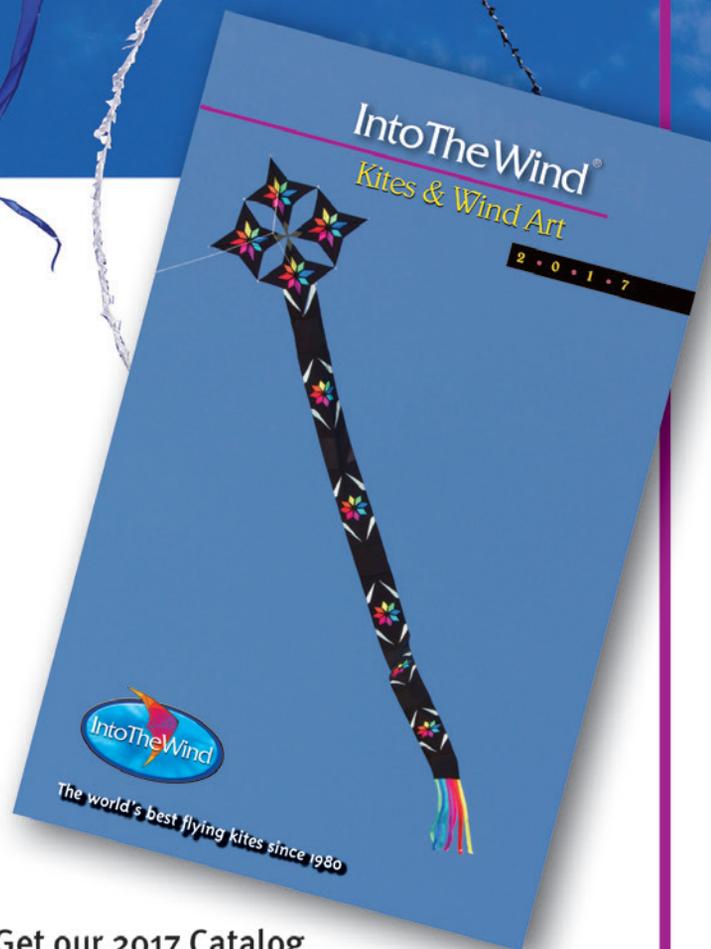


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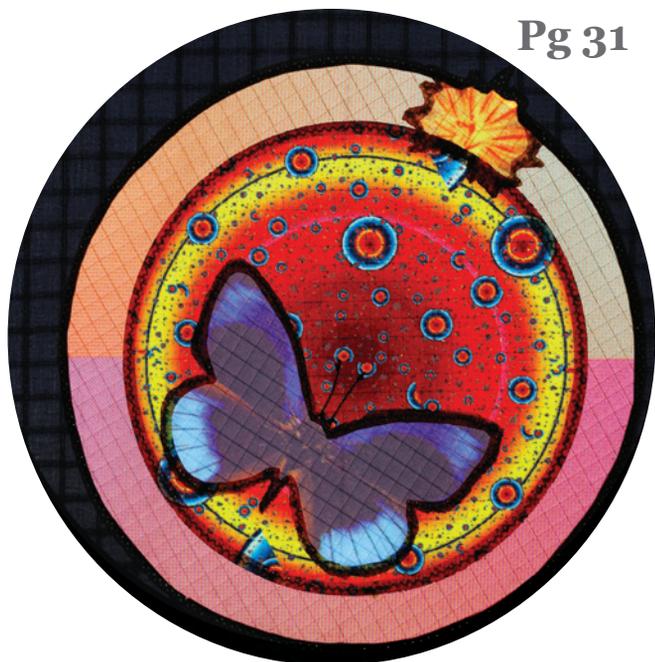
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ON THE COVER: Kite and photo by Trevor Reeves. See page 6 for more information about his "Women of the Wind" project.



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Founded in 1964 by Robert M. Ingraham, the American Kitefliers Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating the public in the art, history, technology and practice of building and flying kites.

Letter from the President



At the time this edition goes to print, the first flowers of spring will be popping through the winter snows, bringing with them the promise of fairer wind and longer days. Each bud brings with it a sense of promise and hope: hope that there will be many days ahead with bluebird skies and perfect wind and hope that we kiteflyers will be finding ourselves firmly ensconced on a beach in the near future with friends, our favorite drink, and a glorious sunset.

For some reason, call it a side effect of hibernating tendencies, we turn inwards during the winter months. The only kites on the mind are nostalgic memories or wishful thinking of summer. Yet, there is a special group of kiteflyers bound and determined to not only make it through the winter months, but to do so with the distinct sound of air passing through Spectra line and the crinkling of rip stop. You know them and perhaps you are one: the stalwart kiteflyers that take to the frozen lakes and the snow fields. These are the true torchbearers of our passion, and while some of us sit planning our next trip to warmer climes, these folks have been embracing the cold temperatures and making a traditionally seasonal sport a year-round activity.

I would be remiss if I didn't say that there are quite a few others who spend their winters keeping the kite spirit alive. There are those building kites or heading south to warm beaches. There are those traveling to other countries and those flying indoors. We know those folks, and most of us ARE those folks. These acts of defiance, doing seasonal things outside of the supposed season, help show the rest of the world how serious we are about this crazy passion of ours. Serious about kites. Serious about getting more people flying kites. Serious about spreading the joy of kites.

As the year goes forward, it is time for us as an organization to get serious about the future. Kiting as a whole in the past decades has seen a serious downturn. The general public is not exposed to kites like they used to be. Kite shops have been closing their brick and mortar storefronts, and competitions have seen dwindling numbers. But there is hope. Some competitions on the east coast are seeing more novice competitors. Some kite stores are expanding, and the public's exposure to kites is growing as we share our journeys online. More people are reaching out to the AKA, and its members, for information about how to get started with kites. Perhaps the AKA is coming out of winter's hibernation and seeing a brighter future ahead. It is something that is only possible if we all pull together and greet the spring sun together.

As you read through this edition, think about how you can share your kiting experience and culture, whether it is by flying where people don't expect you, or by sharing your photos and videos online. Each act grows our community. Each act brings us closer together. Keep your kites high for all to see, and remember, we fly higher together.

Nic O'Neill



Kiting

people+places+things

WOLFGANG BIECK



Women of the Wind

KNOXFIELD, *Victoria, Australia*: The kite on this issue's cover was made by renowned Australian kitemaker, Trevor Reeves. He writes: "Through making kites I have found a way to combine my art training with practical skills to create patchwork and appliqué kites using original work or taking inspiration from images I find interesting. I'm currently working on a series of portraits of people I have met at kite festivals around the world. Valerie Govig's kite is part of my 'Women of the Wind' series to honor the women who have made significant contributions to kiting."

The Kite Trade Oscars go to...

LAS VEGAS, *Nevada*: At the KTAI Convention, this year's recipient of the David Checkley Lifetime Achievement Award—Randy Tom—is no stranger to the AKA community, having won countless awards for his kitemaking. He developed a unique style of appliquéing kites and then led many workshops sharing his techniques with everyone who was interested. Besides his own kites, he has worked with a number of large manufacturers to create commercial designs that look and fly great. When asked recently if he still had time to do his

own work, he responded modestly, "I just finished a white tiger kite a couple of months ago. It's a hobby of mine. I really enjoy designing things."

Other award winners included: Manufacturer of the Year—Skydog Kites; Retailer of the Year—Kites Unlimited of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina; Best Kite of the Year—Frelein Quad Kite by Ocean Shores Kites; Fun and Innovative Product—Feisty Pets by William Mark Corporation; Best New Product at the Show—Sky Shuttle by Brainstorm Products.

Fausto Marrocu of Italy inflating his magnificent jellyfish at the International Kite Festival in Dieppe, France in September 2016.

From Pulling the Strings of Power To the Power of Strings Pulling... Obama Takes to Kites

NECKER ISLAND, *British Virgin Islands*: Growing up in Hawaii, Barack Obama became an accomplished surfer, an activity which he was deemed too dangerous for a president. But less than a month out of office the former president was back on the water in the British Virgin Islands, learning to kite surf from none other than billionaire adventurer, Richard Branson. Photos of him, lines in hand with a huge grin are something all kiteflyers can relate to, regardless of politics.

Making Plans for 2092

AUSTIN, *Texas*: The Zilker Kite Festival, founded in 1929, is America's oldest annual kite festival. "Only criteria for the contest is (that) you have to make your kite," Exchange Club President Dorsey Twidwell

RANDY TOM



Randy Tom's White Tiger.



said. “There are kite building workshops spread across the field.” After 88 years of being the event sponsor, the Exchange Club of Austin has signed a contract with Bobby Jenkins of ABC Home and Commercial Services to become the new sponsor. What caught our attention was that the contract is for 25 years with two 25-year extensions. Now that’s planning ahead.

A Room with a View

OCEAN CITY, Maryland:
We’re celebrating our 40th AKA Convention in Ocean City Maryland October 9-14, 2017. It’s going to be a grand party that you don’t want to miss. Though actual registration for the convention will not begin for several months, it’s not too early to reserve your room at our host hotel: Park

Place Hotel on the Boardwalk. The Park Place is located on the beach, close to the flying fields and has off-street parking for

guests. They are offering the AKA a special discount on room rates, but you must call them directly to get the discount. If you reserve your room through their website, you will not receive the discounted rate. Call today at (410) 289-6440, and tell them you’re with the AKA.

Before the Convention

LONG BEACH ISLAND, New Jersey:
If a week of convention kiteflying is not enough for you, consider heading to Long Beach Island, New Jersey, October 6-9, for the “3rd Annual LBI Kite Festival and Sport Kite Competition.” This event has grown in popularity in recent years, and will feature flyers from Canada, Germany, Australia and England. There will be activities all along the 18-mile island, from show kites to kid’s activities, competition to fun flying, and much more. When this festival ends, it’s only a few hours’ drive down the coast to the AKA Convention. Information and festival updates can be found at the LBI Fly Facebook page, LBIFLY.com, or lt@welcometolbi.com.



Sunset at the 2016 Long Beach Island Kite Festival.



Up, up to the Sky!

What is the best way to show your love?

For Leroy the Kite, it's by flying high above his boy Kyle on Sunday afternoons. Kyle looks forward to spending that day with his mom and dad far from the cramped city; it's the one day a week they can relax amongst the rolling green hills and share a country picnic.

But most of all, Leroy and Kyle both look forward to being free: Leroy sailing up past the birds and the clouds, and Kyle right below imagining he's flying beside him.

Heart Flight
by Christopher Locke
Illustrated by Chris Paniagua

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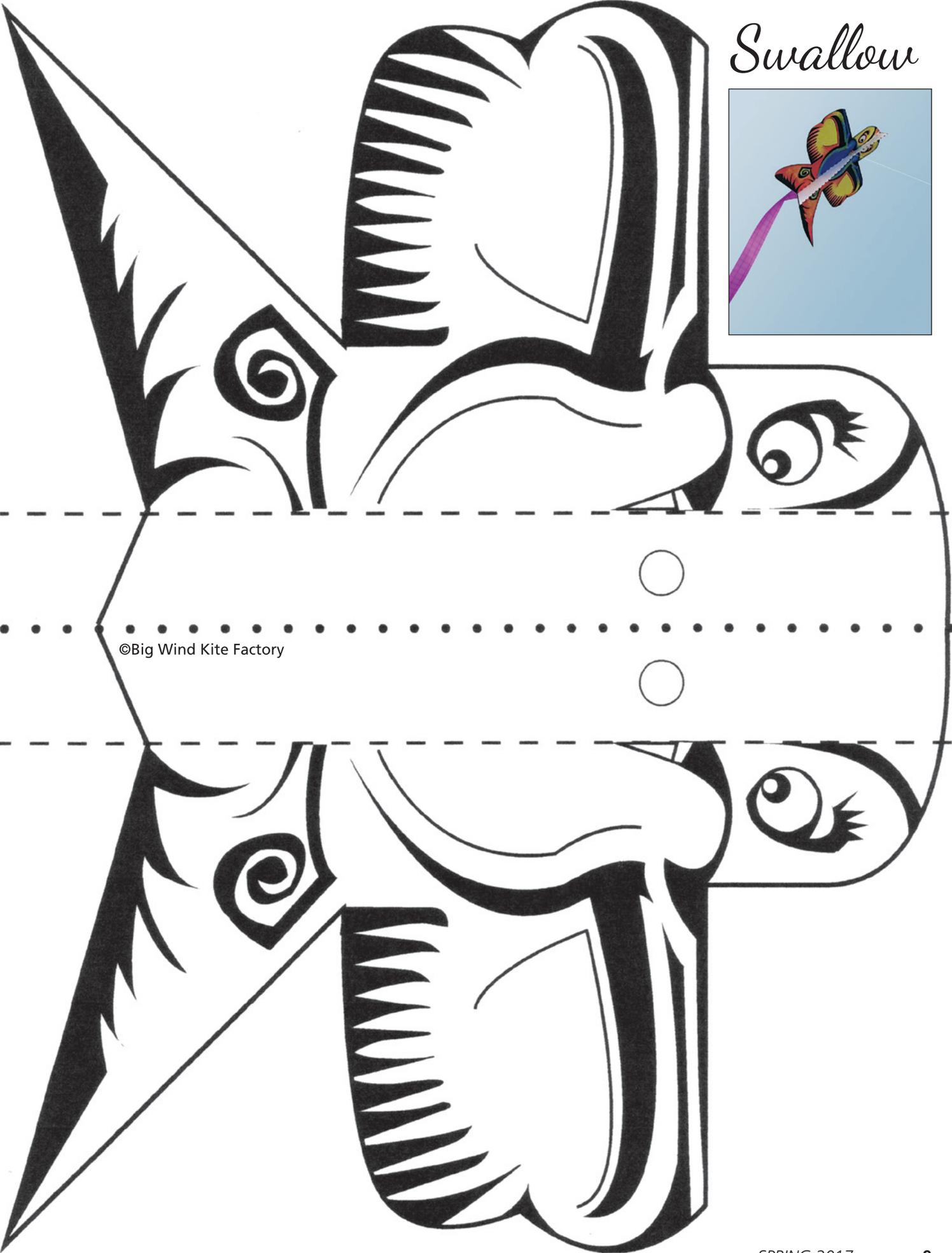


KIDS' Kites

Not all kites are created equal. While veteran flyers might eschew the notion of running with their kites, don't tell that to a four-year-old, or to her smiling parent. After owning a kite store in Hawaii for 36 years, Jonathan Socher knows the value of a simple kite that may not last long, but the memory of which may last forever. Several years ago, he developed a collection of kite plans he calls "20 Kids, 20 Kites, 20 Minutes." Here is one of his simple designs that anyone can make and share with a youngster, dying to run around the yard:

- 1) Copy the plans at right on a standard 8.5 x 11 inch paper.
- 2) Fold paper in half along the dotted line.
- 3) With the paper still folded, cut out the outline of the design to create a symmetrical kite.
- 4) Fold paper again along the dashed line to create a center keel (spine).
- 5) Fold back the top sheet of the paper along the dashed line so that the design is facing down. (No stick is needed here because the fold creates a stiff spine.)
- 6) Place a 7- inch piece of masking tape firmly along the vertical fold starting at the top of the back of the kite.
- 7) For the cross-spar, use a bamboo barbecue skewer cut to 8 inches. (Be careful of sharp point with children.) Tape the cross-spar on the back of the kite, perpendicular to the spine, 2.25 inches down from the top.
- 8) Cut off 6-10 feet of plastic ribbon, surveyors tape or similar material for a tail.
- 9) Tape the tail to bottom center of the kite with a 1-inch piece of tape.
- 10) Flip the kite over onto its back and fold the spine back and forth along the dashed line until the spine stands straight up. (Otherwise it acts like a rudder and the kite will spin in circles.)
- 11) Place a piece of tape over the circles on the spine and punch a hole through the circle.
- 12) Tie your string through the hole and go running and laughing through life. ▼

Swallow



©Big Wind Kite Factory

Empty Spaces *in the Sky*



RANDI COMRAS

With wife Randi (left), and son Jared (above).



ALAN CARTER

Rich Comras (1960-2017)

Rich Comras was a son, a brother, a husband, a father, an uncle, and a friend to kiting who can never be replaced. I met Rich on the shores of southern Rhode Island in the '90s, hanging out with his beautiful wife, Randi and their adorable toddler son, Jared. They were flying kites on a lazy summer vacation. That first meeting was like many other first kite-encounters, just sharing my enthusiasm; but many years (and kite sessions) later, Rich and I grew to be like brothers. I can only speak for myself when I say there was a certain escape when flying with Rich. It didn't matter which way the wind blew, we were in it... "Just fly!" he would always say.

What we shared with fellow kite people was always about what was best in life and that included lots of smiles and hugs. People around him always knew he was present because he was so plugged-in to everyone. With his great smile, he would invite and welcome an ensuing positive interaction, whether from the coffee-shop barista or the boat-yard laborer, everywhere. I was always amazed how he would interact with complete strangers.

Passionate is one word that I think could describe his way. We flew shoulder to shoulder listening to music and painting a sky that we all see differently (as individual as we humans can be), always coming together with an elusive dance of kites, nature, and each other. When that led to team flying, Rich surprised me when he told me he was "in" and we started "Team Rev Riders."

Laura Berg joined us from the start, but he was always recruiting and filling the fourth spot like only he could. Rich was the glue for us as a team, always wanting more from me as leader. He was relentless, oh yeah... "Passionate!"

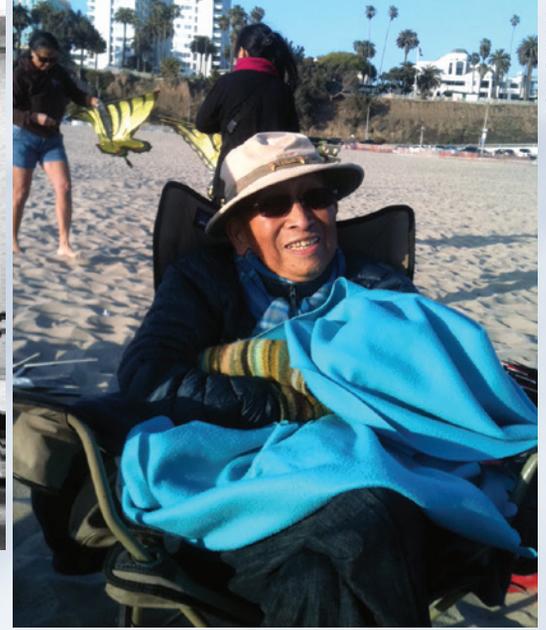
Through it all we lived life for the sake of living, while flying kites. I shared an amazing human journey with Rich as we traveled together in the sky while learning how to be better humans. I'm empowered in the spirit of positivity, having lived some of this life with Rich standing next to me.

*There is a road, no simple highway.
Between the dawn and the dark of night.
And if you go, no one may follow.
That path is for your steps alone.**

We all lost Rich, but he won wings.
Until we meet again...
"Just Fly!"

*Scott Weider
Warwick, Rhode Island*

*From "Ripple" by Jerry Garcia and Robert Hunter



Tyrus Wong (1910 - 2016)

There are few artist/kitemakers who have lived such a full and varied life as that of Tyrus Wong. After hearing about Tyrus and his kites since my earliest kiting days in the mid-70s, I formally met him in 2012 at the first Otis School of Art and Design Kite Festival on Santa Monica Beach. He was celebrating his 102nd year. He and his family were at his favorite kiteflying beach that had been his testing and flying area since the early days of his kite career. I use that term “career” loosely. He was a passionate and active artist his whole life. Tyrus was a man in love with color, with drawing and painting, and had an especially strong fondness for the art and craft of Chinese kitemaking, which he had taken up in his mid years.

He had launched a group of about 20 or 30 small swallow kites on a single line with the help of his family, and had taken a seat on his folding chair, spool and line in hand and was admiring the darting and diving kites flying like a swarm together. Tyrus had the flying bug, and I could tell that he had that peculiar smile on his face that I’ve seen on so many other happy kiteflyers. He liked to say, “It’s like fishing but with fishing you look down. With kites you look up.” Tyrus was what one would call a champion of the optimistic. He talked about his life freely, always peppering even the hard times with his wonderful innate sense of humor and fun.

Tyrus would show up each year at the Otis Kite Festival for the next five years. During that time his incredible life stories unfolded through chats with his family and other gathered friends such as how he came to this country as a young

nine-year-old boy with his father, and landed at the immigration and detention center at Angel Island in the San Francisco Bay. Angel Island is a stone’s throw away from Alcatraz. In the processing of the arriving shiploads of Asian immigrants, he was separated from his father and endured almost a month of intense interrogation. At the time, he was the only child among hundreds of other detainees waiting there in limbo to be either deported or, if he answered all the questions correctly, allowed into the USA. It was a horrendous time for a child who couldn’t understand why he was there and why his race was hated so much.

He was finally reunited with his father and enrolled in school in Sacramento. His father encouraged him in his artistic talents which grew over the years despite his troubles and delinquent attendance records. While in junior high his talents in drawing and painting earned him a summer scholarship to Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles where he had moved with his father to live in Chinatown. Tyrus wanted to continue his studies at Otis rather than return to junior high and his father borrowed \$90 for the first term tuition. Tyrus was awarded subsequent scholarships for the next five years while also helping in the cafeteria and with janitorial work at the school.

A big break came with a job at Disney Animation Studios when he was hired as an “in between” artist/ animator. Those are the artists who fill in the movements of the key animator’s drawings to make the cartoon character’s movements. He hated the job. It was boring with long and tedious hours and it did not match the talents he had developed. He heard that the studio was working on Bambi, read the book by Felix Salten, then presented a series of small background paintings inspired by traditional Chinese Song period brushwork. Both Walt Disney and the art director, Tom Codrick, were impressed. They were very excited

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by the softer and more expressionistic look of the background paintings that Tyrus had worked on at home, and placed him in the lead position of designing the backgrounds for the film.

Tyrus worked there for three-and-a-half years but was then let go from his position at Disney Studios during an especially difficult artist and illustrator strike. He went from there to Warner Brothers Studio where he was hired as a production illustrator and sketch artist on story board illustrations in his extraordinary style. Tyrus worked on films like "Rebel Without A Cause," "Calamity Jane," "Harper," "The Wild Bunch," "Sands of Iwo Jima," "Auntie Mame," "April in Paris" and "PT 109." He was employed there for 28 years until his retirement in 1968.

It was during his retirement years that he turned to making kites, including extraordinary flocks of swallows, owls, butterflies, and 100-foot-plus Chinese centipede kites. His kites were featured in a short film in 1990 called "Flights of Fancy." In 2015 his life story was featured in an independent film by Pamela Tom entitled "Tyrus—A Documentary," that has been shown across the country at prestigious film festivals.

Tyrus received many awards during his life but said that his best day was his wedding day. He met his wife, Ruth Ng Kim in a Chinatown restaurant where they worked as waiter and waitress. They were married in 1937 and spent the next 58 years together until her passing in 1995. They had three daughters: Kay, Tai-Ling, and Kim, all of whom were devoted to their father, often accompanying him to the beach so he could also claim another happiness award—flying kites. Keep looking up and you could live a long and happy life!

Tyrus Wong passed peacefully on December 30, 2016, at the age of 106 years.

*George Peters
Boulder, Colorado*



Trends in the Trade

The KTAI Annual Trade Show

Las Vegas, January 2017

By Daniel Prentice

Too big for the booth, Premier Kites spreads out a new bol in the dining area and Susan Lennon displays her coloring kites.

Since its beginning the Kite Trade Association International (KTAI) has been in a constant state of evolution. As it expanded through the mid-80s, it changed from being a committee of the AKA, to being a separate organization that met in conjunction with the AKA convention and finally to meeting separately by hosting its annual trade show in January of every year.

As the kite-specialty industry has gotten smaller in the last 20 years, so has the KTAI. In an effort to expand its membership, it has begun rebranding itself as “Kites, Toys and Innovation” and its trade show now has a number of non-kite vendors on display. For this story, we focused only on kite suppliers and asked them two questions: What products do they offer that our readers should look for in 2017? What trends do they see in the kite industry as a whole? Their answers are intriguing.

From Premier Kites, Hyattsville, Maryland:

Susan Lennon: Our sea turtles are new for 2017 and come in two sizes. The art on the larger is designed to appeal to adults and the baby sea turtle for kids. They fly in 5-18 mph and I recommend adding a tail for stability. Then there are our coloring kites. Parents can buy these on a rainy day and the kids can color on them until the sun comes out and they can fly. They’re designed with black and white graphics and a pre-colored background so they’re

still attractive if the kids don’t color them. They come with crayons, but you can use colored pencils, Sharpie markers, and watercolor pencils. I like kids to have as much creativity as possible. They’re stable flyers.

I can’t really comment on trends in the kite industry because when I look for trends I look outside the industry. If we just look at our industry and go around knocking-off each other’s work then the consumer misses out and that will kill any industry. I’m a kiteflyer and a child at heart, and I believe strongly in making something that kids of all ages want and love. I want to make something that makes people happy.

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From Into the Wind, Boulder, Colorado:

George Emmons: We're excited about Robert Brasington's Butterfly. It has a wide wind range flying in 3-18 mph. It has Robert's beautiful sense of design and the long organza tails make it very stable. If you're flying at the beach, you can stake it down and let it fly. We've also been very successful with Robert's trains. A lot of people want his kites and that's because he's one of the most creative kite designers in the world right now, particularly in terms of working with completely unique shapes. He's got a system where he invents kite shapes and then, using the organza, he experiments with them until they fly. He's doing amazing work.

We also have two sizes of our "Enif" kites designed by Maurizio Angeletti. They are flat kites with long fringe tails so they tend to be a little active and dance a bit but the tail keeps them stable. Maurizio made kites back in the '80s and '90s and now he's designing kites for us.

There is a lot of discussion about the kites coming from China. Sometimes people will see a fancy kite and go online



George Emmons of Into the Wind with a Brasington Butterfly over his left shoulder, and Enif kites (below).

and see something that looks just like it offered direct from China at a fraction of the price. But when people have ordered them they find the quality is very poor. These companies usually don't even have a kite to copy; they've just seen a picture online and try to make something that looks like the picture. But it doesn't fly. It's not made of the right materials. People think they can get a \$200 kite for \$27 by ordering direct but it's basically a piece of junk.



From Great Winds Kite Company, Seattle, Washington:

Suzanne Sadow and Ken Conrad: With our products well-established, one of the things we've done for this year is to figure out ways to make our products more efficiently so we're not wasting as much material in the manufacturing. It is something that the consumer doesn't necessarily see except that it allows us to hold down our costs but it's also good for the environment. We're also putting string in the package. We have a lot of products that people may not have tried like our intermediate-level kite kits such as the butterfly and the zig-zaggy box. We

introduced them in the last couple of years, but people are still discovering them.

As for the industry, there's been this flood of goods coming from across the Pacific. We see kites getting cheaper and cheaper but when we go to the parks we see kites that don't fly or don't have adequate instructions for people to put them together. We're constantly telling people to push their sticks down in the leading edge of their delta or to turn the spine fittings around so the kite has dihedral instead of anhedral. We see bridles on the back side of kites or are hopelessly misplaced. We see people with absolutely no knowledge of how to fly their kite because a card-carrying member of the AKA has not yet come into their life. We're glad to share and help them get their kites up.

**From Skydog Kites,
Colchester, Connecticut:**

Jim Christianson: We have six new kites for this year. For the last couple of years, I've gone into our local high school system and have hired interns asking them to make some new designs for us. Some new diamonds with butterflies and mermaid themes are two that came from that program. The really nice thing about that is that it gives the students a chance to build their portfolio for college. Diamonds have gotten a bad rap over the

years but these are 40 inches and fly as well as any delta and over a wide wind range.

In our more advanced sport kites we've had a request from customers to do some graphics that are a little more sporty and not so much rainbow so we came out with a new Jammin' which is red, white, black, and silver. We offer sport kites at every level but by far our best sellers are the entry-level "Little Wings." We try to offer products for people from entry-level to expert.

I'm trying to think of a positive way to talk about the industry because it's definitely shrinking. We're trying to find better price points for good quality items to hopefully get more people involved.

**From HQ Kites & Designs USA,
Powells Point, North Carolina:**

Chris Shultz: We have a new Joel Scholz Flamingo kite. He used to build one called "Floyd" and this is a smaller model, sparred in fiberglass and flies in 7-18 mph. The kite inflates so he has a 3-D body. Joel has designed several kites for us including his Kitty Hawk Flyer, his bird kites, and his "Triangulation," which was originally an AKA winning design. That's a brilliant kite and what blows people's minds is that the kite flies straight up overhead. We also make a bigger version which is great for lifting line laundry.



Chris Schultz of HQ Kites with a Joel Scholz flamingo.



Skydog's Jim Christianson and the new colors of Jammin'.



Rob Cembalest showing the new graphics on two New Tech kites.

GW Butterfly
kite kit

Frustrationless Flyer
a wind sled kite kit

ZIGZAGGY
box kite kit

FLY me!
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In our Designer Series we have a Hoffman “Canard Delta.” It has about a 10-foot wingspan with a 30-foot tube tail. It comes in one color combination of black, yellow, and grey. The wind range is fairly light at 4-18 mph.

As for trends, we see changes in the way people recreate. Technology is a huge component of what people do now. For example, drones today may take on a mode of entertainment that kites once did. In terms of the kite industry, I think we’re overdue for some retrenchment. The days of shows like this are past. We don’t need to spend our time in a room with a bunch of booths anymore. We can accomplish the same things in a more casual setting and maybe go back to exhibiting to ourselves at the AKA Convention. I think we should try it for a year and get our heads together and decide where we want to go from there. That’s what I would suggest.



Mark Reed, Justin Edwards, and Sandy Streeper celebrate Prism Kites turning 25.

From New Tech Kites, Austin, Texas:

Rob Cembalest: Coming soon we’re going to have our new graphics on our parafoils 2s and 5s. We think it’s more than has traditionally been done. We’ve got a couple of new sport kites which are very much low-end for the beginner. They’re called the “Willa” and the “Besitca” in honor of two of the first women aviatrixes from the dawn of aviation. We have also updated the colors on our Cody designs for a fresher look. Don’t ask me about wind ranges because I think it is a fictitious number. Especially in sport kites, wind range is such a pilot-generated number it doesn’t mean anything. Most sport kite manufacturers give their kites a wind range that covers from expert lift-off to catastrophic-failure. [laughter]

We’ve gone back to focusing on the toy and hobby trade instead of the serious kite market, which doesn’t really exist in

the way that it used to. I’m not sure why that is, but I think a lot of people have just aged out. Where are the people who were me 30 years ago? The baby-boomer generation is past and the population has changed.

What I see coming for the kite industry are two trends: first, communication with China is becoming so easy that people are buying products directly from sources in China. The second is that as prices from Asia keep rising and as the American market keeps homogenizing, I think the market is opening back up for the boutique kite builder. I think that’s an opportunity that’s going to come back around for people who want hand-crafted product.

From Prism Kites, Seattle, Washington:

Mark Reed: Instead of asking what’s new for 2017, I think the bigger question to ask is: what is important? We’re here at the Show, and a lot of people are talking about technology putting kiting into the background compared to the big days of the ‘90s when everything was great, and I think there’s a little bit of a mis-read on all that is going on. Someone asked me what’s the most important thing you’ve accomplished in 25 years and for Prism I have to say it’s the connections

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we've made between people. Kites bring people together around things that we all have in common instead of things that divide us. There's real power in that and I think we're selling ourselves short if we start blaming technology for the decline in kiting. The fact is that we probably have the biggest opportunity we've ever had to do this connecting. We can reach more people for less money than we've ever been able to do before. We can share our message with more people than we ever have before. Why aren't we thinking about this as the time of the greatest

opportunity that we've ever had in the kite industry?

We need to make products that look different than they did in the '90s. We have to communicate differently to talk to a whole new generation of people who are communicating in different ways. But the "thing" that we have, this "connection" is

more pertinent than ever before. I think there are a lot of new directions we could go; I'd just like to see some excitement around it. We have to share it; we can't keep it to ourselves. People complain that everybody is looking at their smart phones, but we should be glad they're looking at their smart phones so we can send them messages.

From Brainstorm Products, Escondido, California:

Rich Brady: We have four styles of new "Wiggle Kites" that range from 67 inches to 176 inches long. When they're in the air, they wiggle from side to side. They're made of ripstop and come complete with the line and the handle. We're also introducing the "Sky Shuttle" which is a line-climber. It took us 18 months to develop it and they come in two styles: a butterfly and a dragon. We're excited about those.

We're coming out with a new carbon dual-control kite made of 40 denier fabric which is extremely light and very responsive. Last year we introduced our "Sport 70" with the umbrella mechanism, and this is an extension of that line. This new kite is an intermediate-level kite which can do tricks. It's new for us and we're excited about it. We also have our line of licensed kites including: Cars, Star-Wars, Batman, Turtles, Minions, and Dory.

We now the largest kite manufacturer in the country and we like to bring our larger kite stores in for previews to find out what's going on and what product they'd like to see us make. A lot of the product development we do comes out of our licensed brands such as Star Wars or it's coming out of product the stores would like to see us develop.

From In the Breeze, Bend, Oregon:

Bill Dual, Debbie Schomberg, and Billy Jones: Most of our line is single line kites for entry level. Our "Wave Deltas" are classic delta format. It's the kind of kite that enthusiasts like because they can put up two or three and let them fly. You



Rich Brady of Brainstorm Products presents the new "Wiggle" kites

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have stability and wide wind range and you've got the pizzazz of a larger show piece because they range from 15 to 23 feet in length. We also have bold graphics on our other deltas and diamonds. We have some of the best values in kitelines. We carry it in various weights, sizes, hoops, spools and Dyneema linesets. We do entry-level for families going to the beach who just want to have fun and take all the kids out to fly at one time. We're some of the last people that do appliqué and a lot of our kites go in bedrooms as wall art.

From Revolution Enterprises, Poway, California:

Lolly Hadzicki-Ryno, President of the KTAI in 2016: In 2016 we brought out the new Reflex Revolution with a 98-inch leading edge and this year we're also making it in a 1.5 size (93-inch). In fact, the Reflex will be on all our models in 2017. Flyers will have the option to switch the vertical rod with the Reflex on it, to a standard rod if they want. It's completely interchangeable, but they will leave our shop with the patented Reflex technology on them. It's a great invention and adds so much to the flying for all levels—the beginners, intermediate, and advanced flyers.

The other big thing we're doing is the Rev Club 38 and that comprises 38 Revolution skills that we made into eight



Billy Jones, Debbie Schomberg and Bill Dual with one of their new kites from In The Breeze.

Below, Lolly Hadzicki-Ryno of Revolution Enterprises displaying their Reflex technology.



levels. You get instructions on how to do skills into a pattern. You get tested on those patterns and move up to level two where we give you the next set of skills. It keeps you progressing. It's free to join. Just go on our website and click on Club 38.

It's true the last couple of years have been a little soft in the kite industry. It's not just kiting, it's many

industries. I do feel there's a resurgence of a movement to get back outside. People feel better when they get out. The feeling at this Trade Show is very upbeat. People are excited to get going again. That outdoor experience and a way to get the family together—that is what the kite industry is all about. ▼

Bridging Cultural Gaps *with Kites*

Story and photos by Nic O'Neill



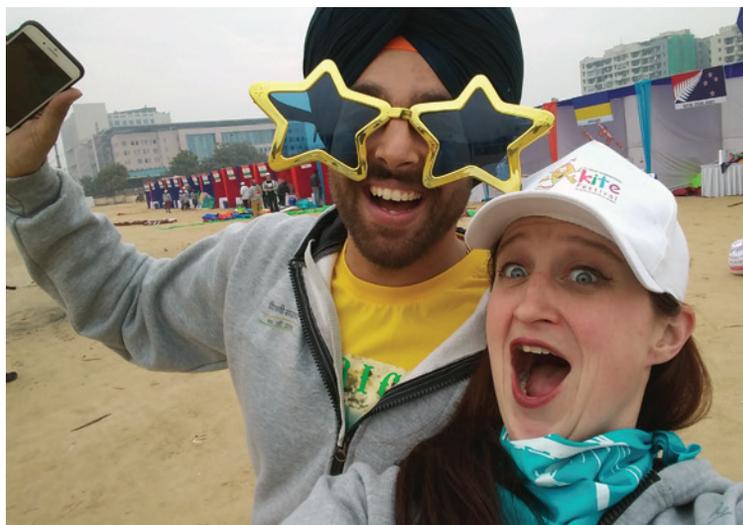
There I was, standing on a dusty field, taking yet another selfie with a group of kite enthusiasts. It was the second day of a three-day long kite festival in Delhi, and the wind had not cooperated at all.

I was one of about 25 kiteflyers from 11 countries and several provinces in India invited by Delhi Tourism to strut our stuff; thanks to countless interviews with newspapers, TV shows, and YouTube celebrities, we were all inundated by the public wanting to take photos with us or get to know us better. People we had never met came walking up to us calling our names and asking to take a photo. Back in the United States, people complain about the selfie-culture of millennials, an ever-present desire to capture photos of oneself in various locations, doing various activities. Truth be told, American kids hardly hold a candle to the Indian selfie culture. Every few

minutes each kiteflyer was asked to take yet another selfie with yet another person they were just meeting for the first time. At one point on Day One, I joked online that by the end of the event, I would have

been in over 500 selfies. It was a comment that turned out to be rather prophetic. There seemed to be a never-ending stream of the general public walking from one kiteflyer to the next with a cell phone poised to take a photo. While it was a touch overwhelming, we knew this was part of our duty as invited flyers.

The photos were a great icebreaker with each person or group of dignitaries that came through. Our conversations would begin with the photo; next would come the same four questions. They wanted to know how I was enjoying myself, where I was from, which kite was mine, and if this was my first time to India. While those



Who knew that taking selfies was such an integral part of the international kite scene?

answers were easy to come by, it was the other questions that caused me to pause and think. One question in particular would end up nagging me in the middle of the night as I tried to fall asleep, and that I found myself contemplating at the bottom of my coffee cup while sitting on the rooftop watching the sunrise early the next morning. The conversation would inevitably go something like this:

“Hi, nice to meet you. How are you liking this kite festival?”

I would reply with something along the lines of, “I am having a great time; this is a unique place to fly.”

“Do you know about Indian kite culture?”

“I had heard about it before coming here, but this is my first time experiencing it.” This was true. What I had heard or read about hardly scratched the surface.

“I hope you like it. I have never seen kites like these.” This was generally said with a sweeping gesture towards the large inflatables in the sky, the quadline kite dancing in the crowd, the bol spinning on the ground.

That is right about the time THE question would be asked—the question that kept me awake at night and plagued my morning rooftop meditation: “How is American kite culture different from Indian kite culture?”

It would seem that the answer would be obvious: “We fly all kinds of kites, not just fighter kites.” But, does this really capture the reality? Does this really explain what American kite culture is? Do we even have one? It was clear as I sat there fumbling over an answer that in the United States we do not have the same approach to

kites. I found myself having difficulty explaining what makes up American kite culture, and how it is different than say French or Dutch kite culture. It was the one time I felt at a loss for words, and admittedly by Day Three I was somewhat thankful to have steady winds that kept us rather busy and unable to chat with as



many people as on the first two days. I didn't know what to say, and when I asked my fellow international flyers, they, too, found themselves wondering what it was that defined our respective kite cultures.

One woman I spoke with from Delhi Tourism was shocked to find that not all of our children grew up flying kites.

Most of our adults don't know how to fly kites, nor do they know how to make one. It seemed unbelievable that there were whole families that went through their lives without ever flying kites or seeing them flown from the rooftop. Admittedly, I felt a little saddened to think that my home country couldn't compare to what

I was witnessing. Saddened to think that for various reasons, kites—which are the simplest and most accessible toy in the world—were not a common thing back home. As an avid kiteflyer standing on the field in Delhi, I shared more in common on some level with the people in this place than I did my peers back home.

Here, it was if every child, teenager, or adult was eager to show me their fighter kite. It wasn't the kite itself that seemed to be the source of pride among the Indian kiteflyers; it was something else. If there was a difference in the fighter kites' shape or size, I was hard pressed to find it. Where they stood out was the color or pattern that was particular to each flyer. When one of the kids that was an invited Indian kiteflyer came over to show me his kite—a pink and yellow square with a turquoise tail accent—I realized something. He had the same level of excitement when talking about the large inflatable Manta and the Nasa Wings as he did about his kite. This kid had

figured out something that perhaps we all know, but don't fully recognize. Our kites, regardless of their shape, size, material, or cost are representations of a deeper part of who we are.

What this kid was expressing with his delight and interest in kites was exactly why kiteflyers from other cultures can

connect with each other so easily. We all recognize in one another that we are flying with our heart and soul on the line. It is the unique art or soul that is native to each kite. It is the expression of the kiteflyer in its most simplified form. It is what allows kiteflyers to travel to locations completely different from their homes, and still find a community of which to become part. It is why kiteflyers can look to their Facebook accounts and see a thousand friends that they may or may not have ever met in person, but because they share a love of kites, they know that those people are valuable friends. It is why, after meeting a fellow kiteflyer once on a field, you find yourself saddened to hear of their passing years later.

“How is American kite culture different from Indian kite culture?”

Here we were, all kiteflyers, all sharing the same thing. Kites were allowing us to bridge a cultural gap. We may not all speak the same language, eat the same food, worship the same god, or put our pants on the same way in the morning, but we all understand the simple language of kites. I looked around the field at Alex Shramko from the Ukraine flying his cat kite, Peter Lynn working a green octopus into the sky, while Mehul Pathak tested out his new custom Ron Bohart portrait rokkaku. It was at a kite festival that American-born Ron Spaulding married his wife Baew, and it was kites that brought them here to Delhi as representatives of Thailand. It was a kite that brought Volker Hosberg and Andreas Fischbacher from Germany through various festivals in Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, and India. It was the kites being made in his Weifang factory that brought Tan Xinbo from China, and countless

others that all arrived on this kite field. It was a quadline kite designed by “some guys” in California that led Chinese flyer Yao Qingshan and Canadian Tristan Underwood to this very field.

When it came to actually flying the kites at the festival, it was not necessarily about flying your own kite, but simply about flying. The Minister of Tourism arrived to meet all of the kiteflyers about mid-afternoon on the second day, and there was a flurry of activity to try to put on a good show. The kiteflyers laughed and smiled as they explained that no, the kite being flown did not necessarily belong to them. They pointed to some other scrap of fabric on the field and tried to show that it was “over there flying.” With such light winds at the time of the minister’s arrival, we all pitched in to help get things airborne. The Germans were seen flying their kites and flying Peter Lynn’s octopus. The Americans and the Chinese were having races with Chinese bols across the field for the amusement of the crowd. Roger Martin of Australia was helping untangle a German foil from a kite by Jan Grutterink of Holland, and the Malaysians were helping an Indian 100-kite train get airborne.

This “cross-country” kiteflying is second nature to kiteflyers. We hardly debate about helping others fly their kites if the need arises, even if we can’t speak the same language. We all understand the universal signs of someone standing downwind flapping their arms about. It is a game of downwind charades played by kiteflyers that has ended



The contrast in show kites was dramatic as demonstrated by Germany’s Andreas Fischbacher (above) flying a manta ray, and a local flyer flying his beautiful stack.

up in some comical and frustrating situations. But come the time when we all gathered on the rooftop of the hotel in the evening for a nightcap, we laughed off how one person caused a 60-square meter kite to go from airborne to resting on the ground, or how a large spinning bol was dragged across the field over the top of resting kites, miraculously not snagging them in its bridle lines.

We raised a glass to the sky toasting the other kiteflyers standing on distant rooftops, and thanked our fellow kiteflyers for making kite events interesting. There may have been some cross faces when there was yet another tangle, or a kite ended up with tears because of some rough handling. However, the group was rather forgiving

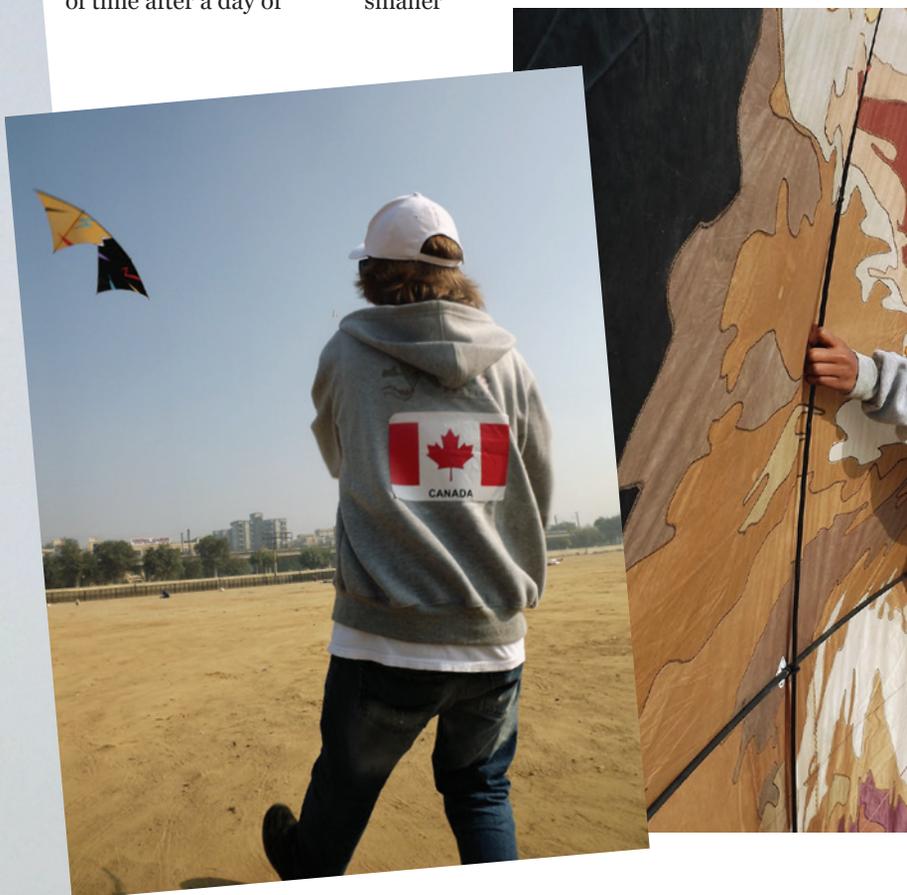
of one another, and it was as if the wind and time blew away the frustration. Apologies were given, a joke was told, and the laughter resounding through the group was a good sign that order had been restored. It doesn't matter what culture you come from; there is some excitement in a sky of kites that don't fly perfectly. Either from the desires of the flyer, or from something within the kite itself, the situation disrupts ideal flying. It may be frustrating at times, but we don't gather to tell stories about that three hours on the beach where everything flew perfectly and nothing went wrong. The best stories are about how nothing went right and yet we found a way to laugh about it in the end. Every kiteflyer, regardless of where

he or she is from, tells these stories. The gathered kiteflyers eagerly listen and laugh.

As the second day came to a close, the flyers were antsy to see something fly for an extended period of time after a day of

running, shaking off dust, grounded kites, and winds that were light and shifting. A well-appointed open-top Jeep had been on the festival grounds for use as a kite anchor, hauler, and show piece. Earlier in the day, we had tied a large spiked bol to the back of the jeep and drove around in circles in the kite field. It spun and bounced, nearly rolled into the row of tents set up for the kiteflyers, and—much to the delight of the crowd—kicked up clouds of dust. As the sun set, the flyers decided to kick it up a notch. A local flyer got behind the steering wheel, and Volker Hosberg and Roger Martin hopped in the back of the Jeep with line in hand. On the other end of that line was a large pink Peter Lynn octopus. A few passes around the kite field, and the kite had taken a real beating as it drifted from airborne to the side and hit the ground, and did so repeatedly.

Roger replaced the kite with a quadline foil that looked like Spongebob Squarepants. This was followed by Yao Qingshan with his Rev, and then two smaller



Cat kite from Ukraine's Alex Shramko. Canada's Tristan Underwood flying quad. Oregon's Ron Bohart gets a helping hand.



All kiteflyers share the same pride of their creation from the local Indian kitemaker to New Zealand's Peter Lynn (above).

and weary kiteflyers quickly stuffed their kites in bags

and climbed on the bus, eager for the rest.

bols. All the while near the crowd, the other kiteflyers were blowing bubbles, flying smaller single lines,

playing with ribbon banners, or walking their kites up to the crowd along the fence. As night fell on the kite field, the dusty

Perhaps it is okay that American kite culture is relatively hard to define. Perhaps the essence of our kite culture is our diversity—there is not a single kite or style of flying that defines what we do. Perhaps our culture is that we can put on a show no matter where we go and incorporate a part of the local kite culture, hearkening back to our roots as a nation being the cultural “melting pot.” American kite culture is hard to define, but it is also diverse, innovative, unique, bold, subtle, and so much more. It is about single-lines,

dual-lines, quadlines, whether they are the size of a postage stamp or acres of fabric in the sky. It is about joining together and taking the best of each of our experiences and melding it into one quiver of kites that represents who we are on the field, and then joining others and sharing their quivers. It is up to each of us to find what our own definition is of our kite culture, and to share that with others. No matter the difference we might find, one thing is for sure, it is through kites that we are able to bridge cultural gaps and come together as one. ▼



At the 2016 AKA Convention, Kite Aerial Photographer Jim Powers took top honors in two categories. The Members' Choice "Brooks Leffler Award" was for photos with a kite in the shot. This photograph of a novel kite by French kitemaker Loik Lamalle was captured early in the week during a brief break in the rain. Lamalle had just made the whimsical kite the week before and it not only flew well but seems to have enticed the sun to shine for about ten minutes, long enough to get the shot. Powers titled this photograph "Soul Healer."



From a Kite's Eye

This photo was the winner of the "George R. Lawrence Award" for KAP photographs without a kite in the picture. The Pinos Lighthouse, seen here, is the oldest continuously operating lighthouse on the west coast of the United States. First lit in 1855, it is located in Pacific Grove, California.



A Life



A mixed media portrait of Valerie Govig made by her grandson, Grant Cress.

time

Dedicated to Kiting Valerie Govig, Kite Lines, and the AKA

When did you first hear of the AKA?

Valerie Govig: I first heard of the AKA in 1967 or so. A copy of *Kite Tales* was my introduction. But I had already been involved with kites.

In what ways?

VG: It began—this is going way back—in 1960 when my husband Mel and I lived in Monterey, California, next door to Carmel, which had a kite festival. We thought, “Fun! Let’s go!” So we took our two little girls and were absolutely amazed. So many different kinds of kites, not all just “Charlie Browns.” We said to ourselves then that every community should have a kite festival. But Mel was in the Navy at that time, and we moved every two years.

Then, in 1965, Mel resigned from the Navy and found a job in Baltimore and we moved there. We got involved with the local recreation council where we suggested a kite festival. It took hold and we worked hard on it and we also went to the Smithsonian Kite Festival that year, on the National Mall in Washington, DC. We were inspired! And I say “we” because it was definitely a family affair. My two daughters, and Mel and I, went deep into it. We started from near-zero, reading anything we could find about kites.

There wasn’t much—David Pelham’s classic *Penguin Book of Kites* came later—but we did have Will Yolen’s first book, *The Young Sportsman’s Guide to Kites and Kiteflying*. It was helpful not because of its instructions but because of its attitude: very adult and very humorous. Also in the back of the book was a list of Yolen’s compatriots, from literally all over the world, which included Ed Hanrahan, of Baltimore.

We looked up Ed and he was a great help, especially because he made his own patented Falcon kite, based on the Brazilian papagaio, and used it for kite fighting. He would be coming to our first kite festival and fighting a duel with Maryland State Representative Clarence Long! That, and my own public relations enterprise, got *The Baltimore Sun* and other media interested.

Consider though: we were way behind in knowledge about kites and we rushed to learn. We started making kites ourselves; our daughter Dana won a prize at the Smithsonian [Kite Festival], but had it taken away because she had been mistakenly entered in the boys’ division and they couldn’t seem to re-enter her in the girls’ division. Those divisions no longer exist at the Smithsonian. But we made most of our kites in workshops for kids. They were very popular; in fact, they were more popular than the kite festival itself which they were meant to publicize. But the end result of our work was one of the most perfect—still, in my memory—kite events in my personal history. We were euphoric!

Were kites part of your childhood?

VG: I did not fly kites as a child myself. I was born an only child and raised in Portland, Oregon. My mother was a professional musician and teacher of piano and organ and my father owned a wholesale food distributorship. Little did I know that kites would become almost everything in my adult life. I went to the University of Oregon where I graduated in English in 1956, then took an extra year as a graduate assistant

ANNEKE DAVIS



1977, the year Govig bought *Kite Tales Magazine*.



DANIEL PRENTICE

teaching remedial English in 1957. I won a poetry contest in my last undergraduate year.

Mel and I met in high school, but we didn't date until later. Soon after, we knew we wanted to marry and did so halfway through college, working while we studied. My desire to work reactivated after my daughters were older, in Baltimore. I checked the classifieds for jobs and saw an ad for copywriter at Hutzler's department store and I thought: "I could do that!" I got the job and enjoyed it for about three years. It was educational. It taught me about fonts and writing to space, for example. These were helpful to know in promoting the kite festival. I always knew I could write.

What motivated you to take on Kite Tales?

VG: I knew that *Kite Tales* could be improved, and I'm afraid I let that show in my relations with the sensitive Bob Ingraham [founder of AKA and *Kite Tales*]. He excommunicated me! Gradually I got back in his good graces. By then, I had not only started a kite festival—it began as the Liberty Road Kite Festival, but later became the Maryland Kite Festival—but I started the Maryland Kite Society in 1968, for which I wrote a newsletter, "The Windy Notice." It was small, but indeed noticed.

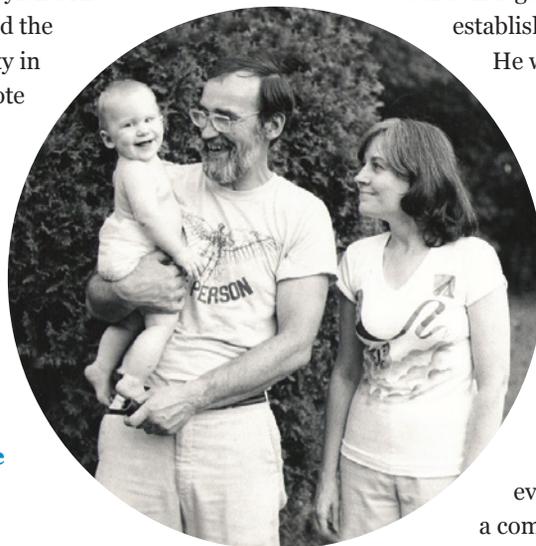
At that time, being a member of the AKA simply meant that you subscribed to Kite Tales magazine. Did you envision that you were buying an association as well as a magazine?

VG: It became obvious to me that there was no real substance to the AKA. It was more-or-less a fiction maintained by *Kite Tales*. There were no meetings, no officers, no minutes, no reports—and that disturbed me. However, I began to think about buying Bob out, and after suggesting it to him and exchanging back-and-forth letters, we made an agreement in 1977. I would pay Bob \$10,000, with \$2,000 down and \$2,000 a year for four years. My first issue of *Kite Lines* [changing the name from *Kite Tales*] was published in March, 1978. The magazine was well received, almost universally. I remember my friend Pete Ianuzzi seeing it the first time and saying, simply, "Wow!"

Well, but what about the Association? I hadn't felt right about "buying" an association. I bought it because I wanted a magazine, not an association, and I had from the start the idea that as soon as possible I would call an organizational meeting for the AKA. It was simply and absolutely the right thing to do.

Can you tell us about that? And your goals for the AKA?

VG: The first convention was organized in Ocean City, Maryland, in 1978, with the help of many people, especially Bill Ochse of The Kite Loft. He wanted to start a "Grand National" kite festival in Ocean City, and thought it would offer good synergy with the establishment of the association. He was right.



Once again, it was a thrilling "first." I will never forget that first convention in Ocean City. We were praying for 100 people. We got 105. As for all the people who helped, I wish I could list everyone who came. You would not believe it but everyone wanted to be on a committee! I had prepared an outline of bylaws as well as a schedule of events for the weekend. I still can't believe how well it all worked. Of

Enjoying the 2016 Convention in Seaside, Oregon.

Mel and Valerie with their grandson, David, in 1980.

particular note were my friends, including Judy Faecher a longtime office volunteer; Ted Manekin who was a photographer, among other things; and such outstanding attendees as the three Peters—Peter Powell and Peter Waldron of England and Peter Lynn of New Zealand; Francis Rogallo, Bill Tyrrell, Bevan and Margo Brown; Tal Streeter, Wyatt Brummitt, and Welca D. (Red) Braswell, who became the first elected AKA president; Paul Garber, Steve Edeiken, Jack Van Gilder and Rick Kinnaird; as well as Bob Ingraham himself. So many people—and they all loved kites! Mel, my close confidante and assistant in all our kite endeavors, and who had been leader of many

kite workshops, was the auctioneer at that first AKA auction. He was so good he could sell the worst kites in the collection. Looking forward now to another convention in 2017 in Ocean City, it feels like a homecoming kind of celebration to me.

For so many years, Kite Lines, was the only professional kite publication in the world. You set the standard. Every time an issue came out, we would all rush to read every word. How did you do it?

VG: Well, I had help, including mostly volunteer and some paid positions. But I was running out of money. I did not disguise this

A Daughter's Perspective:

My mom lived and breathed *Kite Lines* magazine from 10 AM to 10 PM seven days a week, because she loved kites and the people of the kiting world. She loved to uncover and share the stories behind the world's greatest kite-related achievements, innovations and events.

Favorite moments of her day were when the phone rang and the mail arrived—Italy, France, Singapore, Bali, Japan, Colombia, the Netherlands, all around the world and the United States, coast to coast and sky to sky. Her "Brief Guide to Safe and Sure Kiting" was handed out free in kite shops around the world, helping to make that first kite-flying experience a successful start to a lifetime of fun flying—no running, no tangled lines, and especially no injuries.

She reported on milestone moments such as the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, celebrated with kiteflying, Guinness World Record attempts and achievements, and the horrendous loss of Steve Edeiken during one of those attempts. She profiled scientists such as Paul Garber, Rogallo, and Cody, and artists too numerous to name. She was the petri dish for novel challenges such as asymmetrical, indoor, lightest, and smallest kite contests.

It was an adventure to grow up amidst such creativity and then to work alongside her for eight years. On the Campfield Elementary School Facebook page some of the most fond memories are of the Maryland Kite Festival that she and my dad kicked off there. Mom and Dad silk-screened the posters for those 1960s festivals. The après kite festival parties afterward led to the creation of the Maryland Kite Society and friendships that grew from those early days.

If only all of life could be as idyllic as a fresh issue of *Kite Lines* hot off the press!

*Kari Honeycutt
Rocky Point, NC*



DANA MICELI

*With her daughters,
Kari Honeycutt (left)
and Dana Miceli.*



Sunfest 1984, Mel and Valerie re-enact a famous photo of Alexander Graham Bell from 1903.

and it caused a rift—pretty much gone now—between *Kite Lines* and the AKA. No use trying to explain it now. I can only say there was misunderstanding on both sides.

Somehow, I kept picking up the phone every day. I survived, and *Kite Lines* came

back from the dead. I had particular help from a fellow publisher, Fishergate, in Annapolis, who told me how to talk to the printer. I am grateful to him and many others who I knew were pulling for me. Mel and I carried on and published many more issues of *Kite Lines*.

Kite Lines was quite international in its scope. How did you accomplish that?

VG: We were invited to kite events around the world. At the risk of leaving some out, I can name a few of the more spectacular: Scheveningen (Holland), Cervia (Italy), Japan, Singapore, Denmark.

In Malaysia we saw one of their distinctive paper kites being carved, literally carved, on the floor and later flown in the altitude competition, where sticks in the ground were marked for height levels. Also, I had help from my friends and “international editors” Simon Freidin of Australia and Maurizio Angeletti of Italy.

You must have done a lot of traveling. Any favorite festival memories?

VG: At two festivals, I was part of the Mama-Sans rokkaku battle team, flying Jon Burkhardt’s dramatic Lady kite and winning against the men’s team. People often ask me what was

the largest kite event I’ve seen, but that’s not the right question. Size is not a standard in my book. Quality is. But I have to mention the Washington State International Kite Festival in Long Beach as an especially good combination of size and quality.

The great blessing of all our travels is the kite friends we have made everywhere. They have enlarged the riches of my world exponentially. Issues of *Kite Lines* tell many of my stories. I would like to think that *Kite Lines* in turn had an impact on the art, sport, and science of kites on this globe.

There is no doubt that is true. It was a fantastic publication. Do you miss it?

VG: Well, eventually, *Kite Lines* folded. There is no simple answer why. Kiting itself was fading and the advertising it engendered fell away. I had to stop publishing in 1999, the same year that Mel died. The two deaths were not related but they combined emotionally. I was in pain, of course, feeling lost in every way. My daughters were great support. But I will miss Mel and *Kite Lines* forever. Still, looking back now, I feel mostly happiness. Kites still make me happy. And memories of Mel do, too. ▣

Daniel Prentice interviewed Valerie Govig in December, 2016.



The first and last copies of Kite Lines.

Lee Toy Kite Artists of 2016

Ken Conrad
and
Suzanne Sadow

By Patti Gibbons



Suzanne and Ken flying at the Seaside Convention in 2016.

As a long-time face on the kite trade scene, Seattle's Ken Conrad has filled his days with kites since the 1970s. By the close of that decade, he met his future wife Suzanne Sadow, and cast the kiting spell over her. Together they experienced the salad days of organized kiting, met the changing retail needs of generations of customers at their store Great Winds, and have continuously made kiting accessible through their kitemaking and classes.

In college, Ken initially prepared for a left-brain career somewhere in the hard sciences, but despite his natural aptitude, he found that the scientific path “didn’t click with me.” As the out-of-synch Ken flew kites for fun between classes, people stopped and asked him where they could buy a kite like his. Having fun, and unknowingly listening to his budding entrepreneurial voice, he noticed the attention kites brought and had his first business idea: why not leave science and sell kites?

A self-described “proficient” sewer, Ken made a hundred or so fabric deltas to sell at street fairs. His stockpile didn’t move, so Ken decided to hitchhike with two partners down the west coast to hawk his wares. Their first stop was Long Beach, Washington. Eventually Long Beach would become a kite town, but in 1975 sales were slow going, and they slept on the beach because their profit margin didn’t cover lodging expenses. Wanting \$10 a kite, they ultimately took “whatever we could get,” and when sales flattened, the guys headed down to Cannon Beach, Oregon to sell another handful of kites before reaching San Francisco. There, luck changed when they walked into the wildly popular Come Fly a Kite store. Owner Dinesh Bahadur had trouble keeping enough kites on hand and snapped up their lot for



Suzanne with her "Wind Snapper" train from the late 1990s.

\$3.95 each. Their first big sale was at rock bottom wholesale prices, and the measly deal discouraged Ken's partners. As he said, "Try hitchhiking with three people" and a pile of kites. The equation didn't work well. About a month later his partners said, "We're out," but Ken scratched his head and just kept going.

Shortly after making his way back home, a local junior-high art teacher got a plum grant and asked Ken to teach kitemaking at her school. Ken assembled 800 individual kite kits for the kids and launched the Good Heavens Kite Company for the project. Selling the kits at a dollar a unit showed him that he could

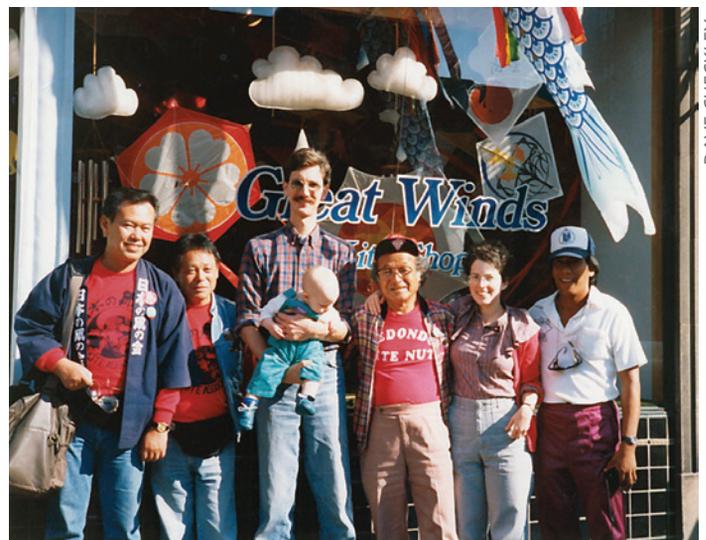
earn his rent for a stretch through kitemaking. He was encouraged, and after the gig he began selling his kits to a kite shop in Seattle.

Seattle's Air Force Kite Store opened in 1973 as an urban outpost of the original store in Bellingham. The owners, tired of commuting to their city store, sold the shop to a medical supply salesman who was losing his eyesight and looking to downshift into a slower-paced, zero-travel job. But, shortly after successful eye surgery, the clear-sighted salesman questioned the need for a kite store, and approached Ken about bringing his kite experience to the other side of the counter. For the price of the inventory on hand, Ken could have the business. At the time, Ken remembers, "I didn't have two nickels to rub together" but borrowed money and "hit the ground." Great Winds kite store opened in the fall of 1976, and grew to be a leader in kite retail and a

beloved institution in Seattle.

Early on, Ken crossed paths with the right folks and "these people enabled me to develop a successful business." His initial partners didn't love kites, and came and went, but each brought skills that nurtured the budding business. One early partner, a former DJ, introduced Ken to radio PR and helped him tap into the inexpensive and ever-growing FM radio market. In the evenings, Ken was going to business school and crafting an advertising strategy that dovetailed nicely with his marketing and business lessons. Great Winds was pitched to adults and asked them to remember how it felt to fly a kite as kids. The time was right to reintroduce kites to grownups. "We got lucky; there was a renaissance of kiting going on," and Ken built a business for adults.

Right at the critical time when business plans were coming together, Suzanne



With Japanese kitemasters: Modegi-San, Hashimoto-San, Nishibayashi-San, and a store customer (in hat).

entered the store—literally. She just walked in off the street and struck up a conversation with Ken. Sparks building, the two stepped out for a cider, kept talking, and time nearly escaped Ken until he realized he needed to leave for a very important class. He was in a bind because none of his employees could work that night and he had invested in radio ads promoting evening hours. Explaining this to his new acquaintance, Suzanne offered a simple solution. She could watch the store. It was impulsive and a gamble, since they had only known each other for an afternoon. Yet as Ken recalled, “it just seemed right” and he showed Suzanne the ropes. Four decades later, the couple continues working together to get things done.

That chance stop into a kite store and spontaneous evening shift unknowingly moored Suzanne to Seattle. Suzanne grew up in New York and went to art school. Looking back, she said, “I was always a creative person.” Her undergraduate work focused on textiles, but she received exposure to all visual arts, and when she graduated she wasn’t entirely sure what would come next. Suzanne worked briefly in the children’s department of the public library doing programs, but had an itch



BETTY CONRAD



to go to Seattle. She heard it rained frequently and thought that it would be a lovely place where she could retreat to do studio work. Knowing only one person, a friend in Seattle, in 1978 she switched coasts and set out to try something new. Landing a job at a museum gift shop during the run of the blockbuster King Tut exhibit, Suzanne learned her way around the cash register and picked up incidental retail skills. Perhaps, in some part, Suzanne can credit Tut for preparing her for Great Winds and her life with Ken in the kite trade.

In the tradition of classic mom-and-pop shops, Great Winds was more than a commercial enterprise; it was a headquarters for its customers and the place where Ken and Suzanne made friends as they offered a full-service



JACK VAN GILDER

kite experience. Great Winds stocked a library of kite books, windsocks, and every imaginable type of raw material

for kitemaking. These tools stood alongside a line of kites they manufactured in-house, kites from independent kitemakers across the country, and eye-catching kites from China, Japan, Sri Lanka, and Bali. Great Winds had it all. Looking back, Ken pinpoints the products that propelled the business, and the larger kite trade industry, to the next level. Around 1984, Japanese kiting legend Masaaki Modegi and his entourage stopped into Great Winds looking for the latest and the greatest kites. At the time, their trophy stock was limited to \$25 Peter Powells and Rainbow Stunt Kites, but these kite-crazed folks convinced them to stock \$200 sport kites. Tako kichi aside, a skeptical Ken didn’t think anyone would buy such extravagant kites until he tried one himself. At first pull, he

Seven-year-old Ken remaking a broken box kite into a diamond.

Giving kite workshops to elementary school kids in the 1970s.



From a 1996 workshop, Suzanne flies a train of kites each hand-painted by underprivileged children.

exclaimed, “Oh yeah, jeez, these are kites for grownups!” Ken read the writing on the wall, and instantly knew that sport kiting “was the new chapter.” Great Winds came out early to offer a thirsty market these spellbindingly fun kites.

In addition to offering novel sport kites, Great Winds fed a growing interest in international kites. Ken and Suzanne traveled with David and Dorothea Checkley to China and Japan, and established connections with traditional Asian kitemakers who kept Great Winds flush with beautiful and uncommon kites. Remembering back to her first trip in 1984, newlywed Suzanne joined the Checkleys in Weifang and set up meetings with traditional Chinese kitemakers, while Ken stayed in Seattle to run the store. Making connections, she got samples, met business associates, and began importing kites made from traditional workshops.

Joking that the trip was her solo honeymoon, as business grew, later Ken and Suzanne traveled together frequently and expanded their supply network. The import arm of their business lasted through the late 1990s, with their last trip in 1997, but the adventures enriched their appreciation and understanding of traditional Asian kites.

Recognizing that many kites don’t fly well, and that customers often need flying advice, Ken and Suzanne strive to design reliable flyers suitable for even the non-specialist. Tapping into the growing DIY movement, Ken developed the Frustrationless Flyer. This 24” sled is a foolproof kit with a blank skin, ready to customize with any artwork. Perfect for a classroom, or for someone who is all thumbs but wants some flying time, the Frustrationless Flyer “became our life” and continues to sell steadily online.

Great Winds had a great run, but around 2000, when their landlord needed to make building improvements that would close the shop for a stretch, Ken and Suzanne realized the gentrified post-rehab rents, along with the fading glory days of kiting, weren’t a good combination. Having a sixth sense, the couple decided, “It was time to hang up the retail” business and make a go at the manufacturing arm of their company. Relocating to a basement workspace, they

have skillfully grown their off-season, back-of-the-shop kitemaking division and found another way for kiting to support their interests and livelihood. Keeping a college-age business dream alive, Ken and Suzanne continue to make their career in the sky, but now



Flying a 150-foot Dragon kite from Weifang, China.

with flexible hours.

With his finger on the budding kite explosion in the Pacific Northwest, Ken got involved with the Fort Worden Kitemakers Conference very early in its history. At the second retreat, organizers invited Ken to open a little

store. “Frankly I was skeptical when I heard about the first one,” but with glowing reports and endorsements from those he trusted, he got on board. Over the years, Ken and Suzanne got involved in programming and kick-started the curriculum committee. Getting things to run like clockwork, they rolled up their sleeves and tackled nitty-gritty logistical work. As Ken noted, “Our payback is a smooth running conference” where people share knowledge and teach each other to create kites.

Kitemaking draws, in part, on artistic skills that come naturally to Suzanne, but looking back she recalled, “I’m sure I was far too grownup to fly kites as a kid.” It wasn’t until freshman year art class that she tried her hand at kitemaking for a course assignment. Unknowing of the role kites would eventually play in her life, she designed an ethereal tissue paper kite that semi-self-destructed on the way to the field. Pretty but dented, Suzanne’s maiden kitemaking project was a fun experiment and gave her a glimpse at the creative potential of kitemaking. Many kites later, she developed an expertise and perfected her Nishi sled—a playful variant of Takeshi Nishibayashi’s double-layer sled that she personalizes with a peephole to give viewers a glimpse of interior design work. These canopied kites are fun and a favorite for her to break down and teach to others: “I like coming up with original stuff,” and showing

people the steps to building things helps her share the magic and amusement.

In the 1990s, Ken became increasingly interested in kite aerial photography (KAP). Thinking back to pleasant reoccurring dreams of flight he had in his youth, KAP allows



KEVIN FRANCIS



GEORGE PETERS



KEN CONRAD

Ken “to be a kite” and see things from above. Ace KAP flyer, rig-developer, and Great Winds customer Brooks Leffler helped Ken master the craft. Originally from Seattle, Brooks regularly stopped into the store on trips to visit family. Forming a friendship with

Each in their element, Ken with his KAP gear and Suzanne painting a goldfish kite.



MARK REED

Ken's 10-foot Post Genki (above) and some of Suzanne's art detail on sleds.



KEN CONRAD



Ken and Suzanne, as Brooks approached retirement, he asked them if they would like to take over Brooks.com, his online KAP rig business. Initially they didn't move on the offer, but months later when Brooks hadn't found a taker elsewhere and repitched the offer, Ken and Suzanne gave it a go and ventured into online retailing for KAP specialty parts. Now in an era where KAP shares the skies with drones, Ken knows "KAP still has a place" and that serious photographers will use both. Pointing out that "drones are bricks" when their batteries die, and low-tech kites can outshine drones in their flight performance, Ken sees the kite's enduring commercial potential and understands that people will always explore KAP in pursuit of better aerial photography.

With a slogan of "Rained on but never rained out," Suzanne and Ken uphold the Seattle tradition of ringing in the new year with the Washington Kitefliers Association's beloved New Year's Day Fly, also known as the Protest the Bowls Fly. Flyers meet in Golden Gardens on the Puget Sound, sharing the waterfront with polar bear swimmers who weather the elements to cheer in the new year. Even without active advertising, the event draws an interested crowd. Someone usually sets up a heat source to retreat to, others makes chili, and Suzanne shares homemade cookies with friends and newcomers. Ken and Suzanne's daughter, Nina,

once caught the ear of a reporter covering the event and was quoted saying the cookies were her favorite part of

kiteflying. Perhaps the kiting gene skipped a generation, but Ken and Suzanne view their extended kite family as kin, too.

As part of that family, Ken and Suzanne fondly remember the beloved Bay Area kitemaker, Lee Toy. Meeting Lee through their store and sharing a love of kiting, Lee stayed at their house for weeks while on his "Faster than a Speeding Snail" cross-country motorcycle tour. While unpacking and spreading out, Lee wrote his newsletter from their home chronicling his trip. In doing so, he deepened a cherished friendship that impressed Ken and Suzanne long after he packed up and motored away. Lee's creative thinking, the love and affection he gave freely, and his innate knack for sharing endlessly inspired Ken and Suzanne and deepened their sense of purpose in kiting.

Shortly after Lee passed away in December, 1992, his sister Sunny traveled to Fort Worden. Ken, Suzanne, and Sunny became fast friends. Later Ken and Suzanne met the Toy matriarch Mary Jane, and the four have stayed in close contact over the years. In some ways, their friendships with Sunny and Mary Jane



DANIEL PRENTICE

Lee Toy's mother, Mary Jane (left) and sister, Sunny, present the Kite Artists of the Year Award.

have helped recapture a little part of their lost friend. These long and tight ties to the Toy family are precious to Suzanne and Ken, and became even more meaningful after they won the Lee Toy Award at the 2016 AKA convention. For Ken, winning the award, "brought back these great memories of Lee" and it helped Suzanne "feel like part of Lee's bigger family." As people who "do what we do in our bubble" and don't actively compete in organized kite competitions, accolades generally elude them and it was "shocking to receive recognition" because, as Suzanne continued, "we tend to maintain a low profile." Mary Jane and Sunny were in attendance at the AKA convention, making the moment sweeter. For Ken, the award is "truly a great honor" that "gives us another reason to do what we love."

This article is based, in part, on an oral history interview recorded for the World Kite Museum's Oral History Project, info@worldkitemuseum.com. ▼

Regional Reports

Region 1: New England

(CT-NH-MA-ME-RI-VT-NY)

Maggie Engvall, Cranston, RI

401-942-3603

RD1@aka.kite.org

End of term: 2019



The sky in Region 1 is filled with kites built by area kiteflyers from winter kitemaking workshops and sponsored by several kite clubs. Look for the diamond appliquéd kites, Hornbeam sleds, and new banners made at the workshops. The workshops are a great place to learn new techniques, share old ones, and make new friends.

The Newport Kite festival will take place July 8-9, the weekend after Independence Day. The Ralph J. Pecchia Kite Day is also in Newport sometime during the summer. Please check the AKA calendar for the dates of these and other events. The Region 1 Facebook page is also a great place to keep up on what's happening and when, and I invite you to "like" or "friend" the Region 1 page, for real-time information of things going on in the area.

The AKA does lots of children's programs for libraries, schools, scouts, and other clubs including kitemaking. These programs receive some funding from your

membership dues, but depend on additional donations to reach more kids. The AKA has a "Thank You Charlie" program that offers free kite-kits for kids involved in qualified non-profit organizations, and focuses on exposing new people to kitemaking. Please consider making a make a donation to the Thank you Charlie program.

Thoughts, pictures, and articles from Clubs and kites are always welcome as a contribution to these quarterly reports. The next Region 1 report is due to the editor on April 15. Please e-mail me with any questions or comments.

Region 3: Mid-Atlantic

(DC-DE-MD-VA-WV)

Donald Jacobs, Copper Hill, VA

540-293-1325 or

email RD3@aka.kite.org

End of term: 2019



As I am writing this in January for the spring issue, I hope the thoughts of cold weather, snow, and ice are all a distant memory by now. It's time to pull out the kites, clean out the kite bags and start planning our schedule of kite events to attend. Here are a few upcoming events that I am aware of around our region:

The Indoor Kite Fly is held at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum with Paul LaMasters. The Richmond Air Force (RAF) has their First Sunday Fly starting March 5 at Dorey Park Football Fields in Henrico, VA.

There's the always grand Blossom festival on April 1, in front of the Washington Monument in DC. If you have never attended this event, it is awe inspiring, with large crowds and hundreds of kites in the air. Contact any WOW member to find out details.

On April 9, the Rockfish Valley Foundation Kite Festival will be held in Nellysford, VA, with Peter Agelasto. From April 15-19, the Annual Blue Ridge Kite Festival is always a highlight of our springtime in Region 3. Upwards to 10,000 people normally attend this event, with kites from up and down the East Coast coming to show their skills and enjoy the hospitality of the folks in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Contact Will Smoot for further details.

April 28-30 will be the Maryland International Kite Expo in Ocean City, MD. This will also be the time for the Mid Atlantic Sport Kite Championships as well. Contact Jack Wilson.

May 6-7 is the Atlantic Coast Kite Festival in Virginia Beach and Portsmouth, VA. Contact Chris Stankus. On May 13, there's the Quetzal Kite Festival in Fluvanna, VA. Contact Lawrence Levine.

As you can see, this is our busy time of the year on the east coast. Please come out to support these local festivals and meet other kites. Contact the event coordinator or myself to get involved. Remember as an AKA member you are encouraged to attend any of these festivals as a kiteflyer. Most should be posted on the AKA Calendar and on the Region 3 Facebook page.

To further your kiteflying skills consider getting involved in sport kite competitions. It's a great way to learn and have fun. Contact Jack Wilson for more information or visit www.easternleague.net.

Don't forget to book your hotel for the AKA Convention in Ocean City, MD, October 9-14. Our host hotel is the Park Place Hotel on the Boardwalk, close to the flying fields. Call them at 888-212-7275, and tell them you are with the AKA to get a special discounted rate. I look forward to see everyone on the field. Come meet some new family and friends!

JOHN LAYTON



A beautiful ending of the first day at the Treasure Island Sport Kite Festival in Florida.



Rafael Santana's new X-wing Conyne at TISKC.

Region 4: Southeast

(AL-FL-GA-KY-MS-PR-NC-SC-TN)

John Layton, Ft. Walton Bch., FL
850-803-7513 or
email RD4@aka.kite.org
End of term: 2019

I have some sad news: Rich Comras, a beloved kiter in the kiting world left us on January 19, 2017 for the winds in the sky. He will be missed.



The past few months have been a little slow as the weather has not been so cooperative, but Kiting Tampa Bay and the Emerald Coast Kite Flyer both had club flies on New Year's Day.

I just returned from the 20th Annual Treasure Island Sport Kite Competition in Treasure Island, FL, and had a great time meeting old friends and making new ones. The competition was fantastic, with several younger flyers in the novice categories and even some veterans returning to the masters and experienced classes. The winds were light but everyone still had a good time.

From Chris Barker of Kewl Kites:
Kiteflyers on the north side of the Gulf have been regularly flying their kites on the

second Saturday of each month in Long Beach, MS. The event is attended by representatives of the Emerald Coast Kite Flyers and many others who travel several hours to participate. Winds this month were interesting, but made for perfect single line kiteflying with clear sunny skies and amazingly warm January temperatures. The wind on the beach was minimal, but the winds aloft

were steady and the kites looked as if they were nailed to the sky. Several first-time kiteflyers attended. We are happy to be beginning the new year, and have lots of plans for attending and hosting various kiteflying events. Our first trip is to the KTAI convention in Las Vegas where we will see and learn about all the great new products available for selling during the year. Kewl Kites also plans to continue with our classes in kite making, flying, feather-making, and our usual full service kite repairs.

Rafael Santana and I were busy building new kites over the holidays. Rafael gave his new X-wing Conyne a test fly while at the TISKC. Rafael had a few words to say on his kite design: "My favorite kite is the Delta Conyne but I wanted to do something awesome with it and give it more character. That is how this kite, which I refer to the X-Wing Conyne [see photo], came about. I got into kiting when I was very young, making kites out of paper, trash bags, or just about anything I could find. I have always been fascinated by flight and kiting allows me to experience that with friends!"

Check out the Region 4 Facebook page to find a list of upcoming events.

Region 5: Great Lakes (MI-OH)

John Graves, West Chester, OH
513-777-2228
or email RD5@aka.kite.org
End of term: 2017



It has been a busy winter in Region 5. In November, I was approached about the possibility of reviving the (once thought dead) Kites 'N MPX here in West Chester, OH, just north of Cincinnati. Great! We may just be getting something happening in the Great Midwest. A meeting time was set up and planning commenced. After getting home from a planning meeting, my phone rang. This time it wasn't a robo-call or a telemarketer, but was from someone interested in starting a kite festival in Springfield, OH, within 25 miles of Dayton. A time and place was set for the initial meeting, and on a chilly Wednesday afternoon in January, I was off to find my way around Springfield.

The Springfield meeting went well and we are hoping for a few thousand people to show up so that we can show off what we do, and why we do it. The date and times were set for Saturday, April 15, 2017 beginning at 10 AM and ending at 4 PM. The location is the Eagle City Road Soccer Complex at 500 Eagle City Road, Springfield, OH, 45504. This is a large open complex and, as of January 18, had plenty of wind.

But back to where I began...the week before the new Springfield event is the resurrected Kites 'N MPX. It is the successor to the Airwaves Kite Festival, and will be held on Saturday, April 8, 12 noon to 5 PM. The location for this event is the VOA Park off Tylersville Rd in West Chester, OH, 45069. This event is co-sponsored by PIGS Aloft and the Butler County Metroparks. All kites are invited to join the PIGS for our monthly kite fly on Sunday from 12 noon to 4 PM.

Other upcoming events:

May 13-14: 29th Annual Great Lakes Kite Festival in Grand Haven, MI

July 14-16: Kite Days @ Maumee Bay State Park, Oregon, OH (just East of Toledo)

July 16: Belle Isle Kite Festival, Detroit, MI

Remember that it is important to support your local clubs and kite vendors. Please keep in touch with me by sending information, events, good stories, and pictures.

Region 6: Midwest

(IA-IL-IN-MN-WI)

Ed Grys, Shawano, WI

715-526-9399

or email RD6@aka.kite.org

End of term: 2017



As I sit down to write this article, I am in Treasure Island, FL, enjoying the 20th Annual Treasure Island Sport Kite Competition and Festival. I am joined by a seven or more Wisconsin Kiterers and several other Region 6 folks who come down to enjoy the big beach and warm weather.

Since the last issue, there have been a number of activities, including the Wisconsin Kiterers Halloween Fly in Appleton, WI, and the club's Holiday Party on January 7 with over 85 members in attendance.

There was also the Cool Fool kite fly, held each year on January 1. The cool fools gather at Veterans Park in Milwaukee to kick off the new year, every year.

Though the weather may be frigid now, Chicago Kite Company is gearing up for a full and exciting festival season beginning in the spring. The Chicago Kid and Kite

annual festival kicks off its 19th season on May 6, 2017 at Montrose Harbor from 10 AM to 4 PM. This festival has attracted large crowds of families and friends spending the day relaxing and flying kites. Kids can enjoy free paper kite kits to decorate and fly, as well as participate in a candy drop.

Glenview Park District and Chicago Kite team up for the Glenview Kite Day which will take place on May 20, 2017, from 10 AM to 4 PM. And finally, the City of Naperville's Kite Fly at the Frontier Sports Complex will be on June 4, 2017. Demonstrations from the Chicago Kite team will include single-line, dual-line, and kites over 90-feet long soaring through the skies. For more information on upcoming events or any kiting needs, please visit chicagokite.com or call 773.467.1428 to speak with one of our team members.

At the Wisconsin Kiterers Holiday Party on January 7, a prayer was given before the meal and several members have suggested it be shared with others. I have included it below.

Creator of our world and everything in it, we gather this day to celebrate your unseen gift of wind. It is our common bond. It is our playground. Through it, you bring us clean air, rain, cooling in the summer heat, and a wonderful medium to play in. The wind allows each of us, in our own way, to spiritually connect with you. In turn we bring joy to others as they see the wind colored and dancing with our kites.

Today we ask that you be with us as we break bread together and enjoy each other's company and reminisce about the joy we experience playing in your wind. We remember those we have lost over the years. We ask that you be with those of our members who could not be with us today, as well as those who may be



LeAnn and Dennis Lauer's skull and crossbones being flown at the Halloween Fun Fly in Appleton, Wisconsin.

suffering or recovering; help them with their healing.

Thank you for the bounties we enjoy and bless this meal we are about to enjoy. Amen.

Region 7: Great Plains

(CO-KS-MO-ND-NE-SD-UT-WY)

Roger Kenkel, Gibbon, NE

308-240-9266

or email RD7@aka.kite.org

End of term: 2017



After an icy and periodically harsh winter season, it is finally time to dust off the kite bags and get ready for another season of coloring the sky with kites both old and new. For those members who acquire new pieces every season, I invite you to share experiences with the kites with your kiting friends and on the AKA Facebook page, so others may benefit from your "kite review."

It would be interesting to hear how some of you decide on kite purchases for any given year. Do you get recommendations from kiting friends, utilize Facebook or other social media? However you make your purchase decisions, other people could benefit from your experience and process. Share your thoughts on a recent kite purchase with people from your kite club,



J.P. Honeywell and David Piotrowski stay warm at the Cool Fool Kite Fest in Milwaukee on New Year's Day.

a festival friend, or with someone across the globe who reads your posts on social media. Tell people of your experience! It's amazing how many people can share a post and how far it travels when it benefits so many people.

Back in the early 1990s, I used word of mouth and friends' recommendations exclusively. I didn't know of the AKA's existence, and My Space didn't have anything about kites that I could find. Back then, the Internet in general was a pretty sparse source for anything kiting related. I had to reach out to the handful of people I knew and ask around. Times have certainly advanced, and now a few posts on your favorite social media site can yield numerous results in short order. I invite you to drop me a line at the e-mail address above. I'll share them in the next issue of *Kiting*.

Early events this spring for Region 7 include three events on April 15: The Arvada Kite Festival in Arvada, CO, the Wind and Wheels festival in Leoti, KS, and, across the state, the ever-popular and ever-growing Flights of Fancy at the MCC Longview campus just outside of Kansas City. John Farrell will once again host Kites in the Park in Fort Collins, CO, on May 21. Please contact me with all your event listings, questions, or comments.

Region 8: South Central

(AR-LA-NM-OK-TX)

Jason McCaleb, Tulsa, OK

785-383-5157

or email RD8@aka.kite.org

End of term: 2017



Welcome to 2017 everyone! I am so excited for all of the wonderful things I have on the calendar for this year already. Region 8 has many amazing festivals to choose from, and it is also one of the largest regions, geographically, making it hard to get to all the places you want to go. I look forward to getting to the ones I can, and I want to thank all of you who work so hard to make all these festivals happen in our region.

I recently sat down with Tulsa Wind Riders President, Larry Stiles and asked him about his recent trip to Dead Bird Buggy Bash in Galveston, TX. Larry has been going to Dead Bird every year for about 15 years. According to him, the winds are perfect to tack your buggy up and down the beach. While Thanksgiving dinner on the beach with all the AKAers may be awesome, Larry told me his most fond memory

of Dead Bird was a tandem para-motor flight with Blake Pelton several years ago. It has been a few years since I have made it to Dead Bird, but I encourage you all to mark it on your calendar for this year.

South Houston Area Recreation Kites members Gary and Deb Morey made a trip to Surfside this past November for the Treasures by the Sea Kite Fest to support the Save Our Beach Association. As I mentioned, Region 8 is very large, and I want to thank all of you who travel great distances to show your love of kites and support for the American Kitefliers Association.

Ever since I first began flying kites, I have always admired the simplicity of the Brazilian pipa. It is one of my favorite kites. I recently had an opportunity to get a one-of-a-kind piece of art by Canadian artist and kitemaker, Jacques Letourneau. I wanted to share it with you all [see photo]. I hope you all will find me on the field flying it somewhere this year.

One of my favorite kite festivals in Region 8 is the Art with an Altitude Kite Festival in Eureka Springs, AR; it is one of the most unique locations I have ever flown a kite. Set on top of a hill in the Arkansas woods, this festival takes place at the Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge. As if flying your kite above thousands of acres of woods isn't scary enough, a few hundred yards away you will find a sanctuary for a

whole bunch of tigers! That's right—tigers! This festival raises money to feed the animals at this wildlife refuge and make sure they are given the care they need to have a good life. It is the second week of March. You can find it on the American Kitefliers Association calendar. Give it a visit this year!

For those of you who use social media, please reach out to any of our clubs on Facebook. In the Facebook search bar, just type in any kite club in Region 8: Tulsa Wind Riders, South Houston Area Recreational Kites, Surfside Flyers, Coastal Bend Sky Pirates, OKC Kitefliers, and AKA Region 8. If you do not use social media, please take a moment to visit the AKA website to make sure your current email is on file with us. Until next time, fly high!



Treasures by the sea in Surfside, Texas.

GARY MOREY



McCaleb with Letourneau hand-painted pipa.

featured in the magazine *Montana Quarterly* and on the web magazine "Last Best News." Terry is currently booking kite building classes for April and May; if anyone would like more information on the classes or Buffalo Jump events, give Terry a call at 406-698-9369.

Have you ever wondered who puts on kite festivals these days? In the past it used to be the neighborhood kite stores, but now more and more kite festivals

are organized by the city chambers or tourism centers. I am seeing more interest lately in events such as balloon festivals adding kiteflying to the mix. We even had a local vineyard in Jacksonville, OR invite the Rogue Valley Windchasers to have their Fun Fly weekend at the vineyard's annual open house. So next time you attend an outdoor festival, art fair, or street fair, ask if they have given thought about adding kiteflying to their event. You may end up having a great deal of fun while exposing people to kiteflying they've never seen before. Isn't that what it's all about?

As always, please check the AKA Event Calendar for kite festivals and fun flies when and wherever you may travel. April is National Kite Month. Last year we had decals, pins, and lots of shout-outs on social media. Stay tuned on the web and Facebook for events going on this year.

Dean Turnblom said Rigby, ID will again be having their Kite Festival/Fun Fly on May 6 at the Rigby High School from 12-5 PM. Contact Dean at 208-524-5552. Chip Njaa, Livingston Kite Company, in Livingston, MT, is sponsoring a monthly community kite gathering from May through September on the first Sunday of the month at 4 PM. The location is Northside Park and Soccer Fields. For information call Chip at 406-222-KITE (5483). We have a new kite event June 2-4 in Grants Pass, OR. The city has brought back their Balloon Festival, but this time the festival will include kites. More information later or contact me.

I hope you plan on attending the Lincoln City Summer Kite Festival, June 24-25,

Lincoln City, OR. It is always a really cool event. Which way will the "D" River be headed?

This year will be the 25th anniversary for Southern Oregon Kite Festival (SOKF), in Brookings, OR. The postage stamp grass field surrounded by the spectators makes this a unique spectator-driven kite event. The date is always on the third full weekend in July; this year it is July 14-16, 2017. For a complete rundown of the SOKF festival, see your Fall 2016 *Kiting* magazine.

It is time to start making plans for the AKA Annual Convention and Grand Nationals October 9-14, 2017, being held in Ocean City, MD. This is where it all started 40 years ago. The AKA held its first convention on the same beach in 1978, so you don't want to miss this one. AKA is a great way to meet new kite-minded people.

I want to thank all of you who have kept up with your memberships. If you are reading this and your membership has lapsed, or you are thinking of joining but haven't, take a moment to join us today. You can join online at www.kite.org or contact me directly at the e-mail address above.

Region 9: Intermountain (ID-MT-OR)

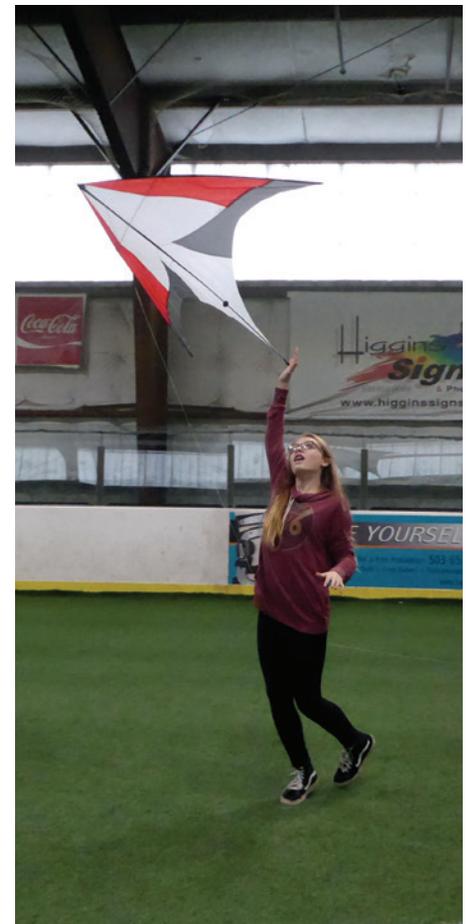
Brett Morris, Medford, OR
541-944-5588
or email RD9@aka.kite.org
End of term: 2018



While winter was still knocking on our region's door, we did a little indoor flying on Black Friday at the Clackamas Indoor Soccer Center in Portland. For several years now, Wayne Dowler has secured this facility for the Friday after Thanksgiving. The attendance gets larger every year. A few of us came back the next week to be interviewed by a local TV station on indoor kiteflying. (They always think we use big fans.)

John Barresi again organized the New Year's Day fun fly at Delta Park in Portland, OR. Many gathered to fly even though it was cold and snowing. Everyone had a great time and John Barresi was available for tips on both quad and dual line.

Terry Zee Lee told me that she and Drake Smith have a very busy schedule again this year. They are going to Native American Days in Browning, MT on July 7-8 and will teach kite building and fly the buffalo kites for the Blackfeet Nation. On June 17, they will be attending the 5th Annual Madison Buffalo Jump State Park kiteflying day, located 23 miles west of Bozeman, MT. The couple was recently



Molly Miller flying the Skate indoors.

Region 10: Northwest (AK-WA)

Pete Zweifel, Federal Way, WA
206-718-3301
or email RD10@aka.kite.org
End of term: 2018



Historically-speaking, Alaska is known as a place that has attracted those fed up with conventionality. Kiteflying in Alaska, especially in the winter, is far from conventional.

Thinking about all the whining and complaining kitefliers do about the weather, I decided to put together some information about our fellow kitefliers in the great state of Alaska, with the help of Tim Tullis of the Alaskiters Kite Club.

1990: The first festival, aptly named “Farthest North Kite Festival”

1992: Anchorage Alaskiters was formed

1993: Statewide Proclamation by Governor Wally Hickle for Kite Day, driven by Alaskakiters

1994-1999: Homer Alaska Shorebird Festival. This is still an on-going event and one the current club will investigate about rejoining. Homer, 225 miles south of Anchorage has a wonderful 4.5-mile spit jutting out into Kachemak Bay with beautiful scenery and great winds. It’s a favorite place to fly.

1994-1998: Seward Days. Seward, Alaska is 127 miles south of Anchorage sitting on Resurrection Bay, and also offers the combination of fantastic scenery and great winds off Lowell Point.

2005: Alaskiters assumed its current form under the leadership of Tak Omega, who worked hard on public relations for all of our events.

Alaska kiting came into its own in the mid 1980s according to Pat Jensen, owner of Northwind Kites, and who is considered the godmother of Alaskiters. At one point, under the sponsorship of Northwind Kites, Anchorage was on the dual line competition circuit in the 1990s. The annual Kite Day was a summer event sponsored by a local radio station that saw hundreds of people—families, children, and dogs—all

joining in for an afternoon of flying fun during those years.

In the ensuing years, kiting in Anchorage waned as far as participation, but in the mid-2000s, Alaskiters sprang from the few flyers still around. Today’s cadre of Alaskiters, ranging in age from 16 to 76, is a mixture of kite enthusiasts featuring a hard-core group of 4-7 dedicated flyers (and up to 15 others that join as life allows). They fly a mixture of quadlines and single-lines, but they really shine when it comes to their big show kites including: a 32-square meter Trilobite, a Peter Lynn 48-foot Octopus, numerous Suttons up to 256-square feet, as well as large old school HQs, Pro-Forms, and Flow forms including many from Dave Gomberg. Their smallest kite so far is a post-it note flown on a thread.

Kiting in Anchorage, AK presents challenges besides the weather, yet several kites have flown every month of the year since 2008, with the coldest temperature recorded at -5 F. The farthest northern flight was on January 1st of this year on the North Slope at Deadhorse, Alaska.

A favorite place to fly is on what is now named the Park Strip. Built on the outskirts of town in the 1920s, it was the original landing strip for planes for the newly established city of Anchorage. These days it is surrounded by high-rise office buildings and homes that affect the winds, but it offers a perfect venue for flying for the thousands of tourists that visit Anchorage every summer, as well as providing some eye candy for those working in the offices.

The Alaskiters Facebook page, founded in 2011, was originally just for the local flyers as a way to arrange get-togethers, but has since grown to embrace fellow kites from around the world as we add links and pictures of flyers around the globe.

The group has helped organize kitemaking class-

es in local schools, held events including in One World One Sky, Summer Solstice fly-ins, 4th of July fly-ins, Mother’s Day fly-ins, Tax Day fly-ins, and just about any excuse they can think of to fly. They have been featured as entertainers at The Alaska State Fair for 10+ years, and participated yearly in the Valdez Kite Festival until it met its demise.

They write: “We hope to extend our addiction of kiteflying to the state’s towns and villages that are mostly off the road system, using demonstrations and kitemaking classes, and share our joy of flying. Flying in Alaska, while presenting challenges, has some of the most scenic backgrounds that inspire us every time we feel the wind at our backs.”

Some final thoughts on Alaska: it is the only state that you can type on only one row of the keyboard and if New York City had the same population density as Alaska, only 16 people would be living in Manhattan.

Events coming to our region:

Ft. Worden Kite Makers Retreat, March 10-12,



Northside Park in Livingston, Montana.

Spring Fling, April 7-9, Pacific Beach, WA
 Kites and Hugs, April 29-30, Ocean Shores, WA
 Flyers Day Fun Fly, April 29-30, Long Beach, WA
 Rockaway Beach Kite Festival, May 26-29, Rockaway, OR
 Festival of Colors, June 2-4, Ocean Shores, WA
 Pacific Rim Kite Festival, June 10-11, Vancouver, B.C.
 Summer Kite Festival, June 24-25, Lincoln City OR
 Westport Windriders Kite Festival, July 7-9
 The grand-daddy of them all: WSIKF, August 21-27, Long Beach, WA
 25th Annual Up your Wind Kite Festival, September 8-10, Pacific Beach, WA
 Whidbey Island Kite Festival, September 16-17

As Jimmy Dean said, "I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination."
 We hope to see you at one of the above festivals soon.



ROBERT HOWELL

Region 12: Southwest
 (Southern CA-AZ-HI)
 Glen Rothstein, San Pedro, CA
 213-407-3515
 or email RD12@aka.kite.org
 End of term: 2018



Spring is in the air, and hopefully, so are your kites. I know National Kite Month is on many people's mind so let's get right to the events coming up in our region:

- Kite Party 15, March 11-12, Huntington Beach, CA
- 43rd Annual Festival of the Kite, March 12, Redondo Beach, CA
- 6th Annual Otis College Kite Festival, TBA, Santa Monica, CA
- 32nd Annual Santa Barbara Kite Festival, April 9, SB City College
- Chinese Kite Festival, April 14-15, Lahaina, HI
- 8th Annual Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum Family Kite Festival, April 16, Rotary Centennial Park, Santa Maria, CA
- 11th Annual Morro Bay Kite Festival, April 29-30, Morro Bay, CA
- 69th Annual Ocean Beach Kite Festival, May 13, Dusty Rhodes Park

Let me know if you need more information regarding any of the above. I'll be happy to use two lines and steer you in the right direction.

The array of these events as well as the diversity of sites and programs is a testament to the passion we all hold for kiting. I am happy to inform you that there are more events that are being created as I type this article. Longtime flyers and new AKA members Amy, Jeffry, and Brandon Tello recently took me on a site survey of an area near their home where they plan to work with their local parks department to put on a small event in the near future. This is one of those grass roots efforts that can have a huge, positive effect on a community for years to come. I look forward to hearing about something you may have brewing in your neighborhood.

Speaking of new members, Sheryl Johnson continues to add kites to her collection

so that she has something different to fly at each of the events she attends. When and if you have the pleasure of meeting her, you will smile from ear to ear as you experience the joyful energy she exudes while staking out her kites as they lift skyward.

With the rains clearing out, our kite fields will be showing off the colors of their natural surroundings. What colors will you put into the sky? Please keep me posted on where you go and what you fly. I receive requests for updates on where to fly and also appreciate it when you alert me to the local faire, so that newcomers can show up early and enjoy a community breakfast spot or feast afterwards and reflect on the day.

As I look into my kite room (which has a secondary purpose as my kitchen), I see bags of kites longing to be in the air. I hope to have the pleasure of flying with you sooner than later. Best wishes and winds...

Region 13: International
 (The rest of the world)
 Linda Sanders,
 Willunga, SA Australia
 +618-8556-2681
 or email RD13@aka.kite.org
 End of term: 2018



Region 13 is home to 93.5% of kilters in the world. Who has news this issue?

CANADA – Gerard Piette, Ontario won't let winter stop him. He successfully converted a snowman yard-decoration into line laundry, adding it to his growing collection of creations. Flying snowmen... what's next?!

Across the country in Calgary, Wayne Marshall wonders where sport kiteflyers have gone, and is seeking other dual-line flyers to share flying skills as the weather improves. Wondering if 75' or 100' line length offers better trickability?

Brigitte Bussièrès invites all to the Kite Festival Saint-Honoré dans l'Vent on June 16-17 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the local airport (built during World War II as a training base and backup). The 2017 theme is "airplane kites." Learn more at <https://www.facebook.com/Sthodanslvent>.

It's just a 34-hour drive cross-country to



TONY RICE

Australia's Tony Rice with his new creation—hand painted and framed in bamboo.

Swift Current for SaskPower Windscape Kite Festival June 24-25. See kites from Germany, France, England, the Philippines, USA, and Canada. Free admission. Saskatchewan is a bucket-list destination! For information see <https://www.facebook.com/WindscapeKiteFest/>

Andrei Chichak's focus is on 2017 as Canada's 150th anniversary, and following the plans from Bernhard Dingwerth, built himself a three-meter, maple leaf kite. Sadly, it is too cold yet to fly and photograph, but apparently bananas help in the cut-out stage, as can be seen at http://www.drachenbernhard.de/dra_maple_leaf.html

Ray Bethell of Vancouver is relieved his AKA membership is current, as he'd hate to miss reading about his friends and their kiting fun. Ray reminisced, "At the 1995 World Cup at Lakes Entrance, Australia, Dan Buxton made 10 special kites: four with Australian emblems, three with American Emblems, and three with Canadian Emblems. Dan said, "Ray, we want you to open the World Cup flying these. Can you do this?" I said, "I don't know, but I will give it a go." I flew the four Australian kites off my waist, three American kites off my left hand, and three Canadian off my right hand. It was a huge success. I can still see Daniel Prentice [the event organizer]

somersaulting up and down the main arena. All the kites then sold for \$400+ each, and the money was for the festival." Happy memories, Ray.

AUSTRALIA – Environmentally-focused renowned artist, Tony Rice, previewed his newest creation in January. Working with natural components, Tony is known for stunning creations, both real and mythical. See them at <http://www.tonyriceartist.com/festival-kites.html>

ENGLAND – White Horse Kite Fliers will host the 20th annual kite event, "Jolly Up," on April 22-23. It's called "Jolly Up" for a reason. Weather in April could feature anything, so the focus is on the "jolly" and having the kites "up." Watch their Facebook Page for details at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/120683024610977/> or ask Arthur Dibble directly at arthur.dibble@ntlworld.com

INDIA – January was THE month for kites. Hyderabad held the successful Telangana International Kite Festival for the second year running, and with Kevin Sanders participating as Team Australia. Glowing reports from the organizers and flyers alike, with winds a little on the light side. Farther north, AKA President, Nic O'Neill, enjoyed Delhi's International Kite Festival. Houses

with flat roofs are a MUST for night-time kite fighting.

ISTANBUL – Join kites in Turkey for the 5th Istanbul International Kite Festival, May 20-21. Mehmet Naci Aköz and team at Istanbul Kite Museum invite kiteflyers to register interest to participate in competitions: most beautiful kite, best performance (sportkite and fighters), highest altitude, biggest kite, miniature kite. Contact IKKF for details at mehmetnaciakoz@ucurtmadunyasi.com

FRANCE – Courtesy of Bernard Fournière is this link of a yachtsman using KAP to record his solo race-around-the-globe, non-stop, and without assistance. While the text uses the word "drone," kites will recognise there's a kite involved... <http://dai.ly/x5700t3> Location was "somewhere in the middle of the Pacific Ocean!"

Remember, for AKA Sanctioning, apply when you list your event at <http://kite.org/activities/events/event-calendar/>

Until next time, *less talk...more fly!* ▼

ARIZONA

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ARKANSAS

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www.candyandkites.com

Highline Kites Of Berkeley
6809 Del Monte Avenue
Richmond View, CA 94805
510/235-5483
www.HighLineKites.com

Kite Flite Of San Diego
Seaport Village
San Diego, CA 92101
619/234-KITE
www.kiteflitesd.com

San Francisco Kite Company
Pier 41, Fisherman's Wharf
San Francisco, CA 94133
415/291-8770
www.sfkites.com

Second Wind
1805 N. Highway 1
Bodega Bay, CA, 94923
707/875-WIND
www.secondwindfun.com

Up Up And Away Kites
139½ Main Street
Seal Beach, CA 90740
562/596-7661
www.upupandawaykites.com

COLORADO

into The Wind
1408 Pearl Street
Boulder, CO 80302
800/541-0314
www.intothewind.com

CONNECTICUT

Sky Dog Kites
220 Westchester Road
Colchester, CT 06415
860/365-0600
www.skydogkites.com

DELAWARE

Rehoboth Toy and Kite Company
1 Virginia Avenue
Rehoboth, DE 19971
302/226-KITE
www.rehobothkite.com

Rehoboth Toy and Kite Company
70 Rehoboth Avenue
Rehoboth, DE 19971
302/227-6996

FLORIDA

Flyer Kites
3436 E. Atlantic Blvd.
Pompano Beach, FL 33062
954/248-9139
www.flyerkites.com

Kite Stop
224 Cheney Hwy.
Titusville, FL 32780
321/613-8697
www.kitestop.com

Kite World
115 S. Miramar Avenue
Indialantic, FL 32903
321/725-8336

Kitty Hawk Kites
Harbour Walk Village
34 Harbour Blvd.
Destin, FL 32541
850/837-2800
www.kittyhawk.com

Kitty Hawk Kites
1450 Miracle Strip Pkwy.
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548
850/796-0102
www.kittyhawk.com

Windworks Inc.
13009 Village Blvd.
Madeira Beach, FL 33708
727/320-9463
www.floridawindworks.com

Zephyr Kites
www.zephyrkites.com

GEORGIA

Piedmont Kites
1451 Piedmont Avenue, Suite B
Atlanta, GA 30309
404/815-4271
www.piedmontkites.com

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10 Maunaloa Hwy.
Maunaloa, Molokai, HI 96770
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www.bigwindkites.com

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Chicago Kite/Kite Harbor
5445 N. Harlem
Chicago, IL 60656
773/467-1428
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Smooth Winds
847/606-0086
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The Kite Site
105 W. Main
Cabery, IL 60919
815/953-8303
www.thekitesite.net

KANSAS

Kansas Kite Connection
1806 16th Street
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316/793-6164

Wings Of The Wind Kites
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MAINE

Cricket's Corner
41 Shore Road
Ogunquit, ME 03907
207/646-2261
www.cricketscornertoys.com

MARYLAND

The Kite Loft
511 Boardwalk
Ocean City, MD 21842
410/289-7855
www.kiteloft.com

MASSACHUSETTS

Blue Hill Observatory
Top of Great Blue Hill
Observatory Road
Milton, MA 02186
617/696-0562
www.bluehill.org

Sea Side Kites
1 Pleasant Street
Cohasset, MA 02025
781/925-3277
www.SeaSideKites.com

MICHIGAN

Kites & Fun Things
40522 E. Ann Arbor Trail
Plymouth, MI 48170
734/454-3760
www.skyburner.com

MISSISSIPPI

Kewl Kites
206 Jeff Davis Avenue
Long Beach, MS 39506
228/206-0322
www.kewlkites.com

MISSOURI

Flying High With Charon
5633 Carlton Drive
St. Louis, MO 63049
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MONTANA

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NEBRASKA

Breeze Catchers
5428 S. 185th Street
Omaha, NE 68135
402/895-2331
www.breezecatchers.net

Show Stopper Kites
600 Pine Avenue
Gibbon, NE 68840
308/240-9266
roger.sskites@gmail.com

NEW JERSEY

Air Circus Kite Shop
1114-1116 Boardwalk
Ocean City, NJ 08226
609/399-9343

Cobra Kites
2608 Route 37 East
Toms River, NJ 08753
www.cobrakites.com

NORTH CAROLINA

Flying Smiles Kites
Corolla Light Town Center
Corolla, NC 27927
252/453-8442
www.flyingsmileskites.com

Kites Unlimited - Atlantic Bch
Atlantic Station Shopping Ctr.
PO Box 2278
Atlantic Beach, NC 28512
252/247-7011
www.kitesandbirds.com

Kitty Hawk Kites
419 Front Street
Beaufort, NC 28516
252/728-6670
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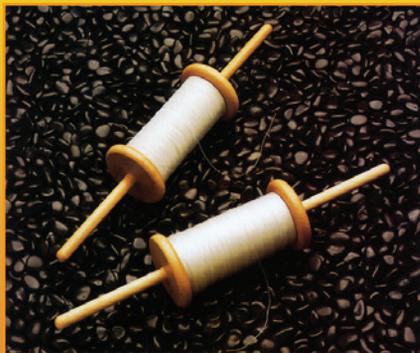
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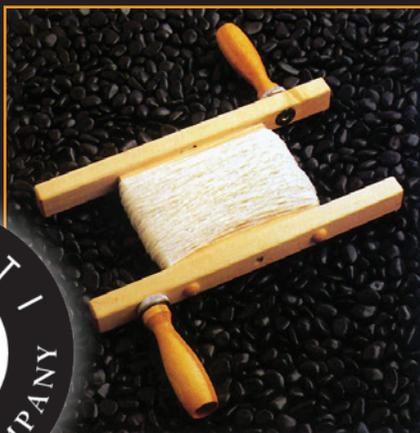


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