

A MARYLAND VALENTINE

BY MIKE MOSMAN



Janneke Groen with Wayne Brooks and his sode.

The Maryland Kite Society Kite Building Retreat fell on St. Valentine's Day weekend, which coincided with President's Day weekend this year. So when we once again assembled to build interesting kites and learn some new tricks there was more than one reason to expect a romantic weekend. This year the retreat was in a first class resort at Turf Valley in Ellicott City. It was love at first sight.

The program this year had three great kites. From Holland, Janneke Groen joined us to show off her Sode Dako kites done in a patchwork technique. Drake Smith presented his special version of a keeled Yakko kite. And I was honored to teach my latest invention, a star-shaped single-celled kite called "GoogleFlex."

The blizzard that President Obama dubbed "Snowmageddon" came to town just before our retreat, and it brought with it memories of being snowed in at a retreat some years back.



Gary Engvall and his sode.

The airports were closed on the day Janneke was due to arrive and we began to worry. Connections were made just in time and the program went off with nary a hitch. In a hall with plenty of power and adequate lighting, an 8' long table for every person, and several cutting stations, we kitemakers were living in the lap of luxury. We had so much room we were able to bring the ever-trusty

Steve Ferrel of the Kite Studio into the room to enjoy the company of the participants as they worked (in previous years, Steve's mobile store was set up in the hallway while everyone else was busy sewing in a different room).



Barbara Meyer with a beach ball.



Merl and Adrienne Balmer and their GoogleFlex.

At dinner I looked around and counted at least six present and past AKA presidents. That's rubbing elbows with big cheese! It was a wonderful evening. The deep snow outside was a definite contrast to the warm feelings inside. By unanimous consent this MKS retreat was one of the best. We are looking forward to next year, which will again occur on St. Valentine's Day weekend, when we will continue our love affair with Turf Valley Resort and our kite building friends. K