



WINTER 2004
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Kiting

The Journal of the American Kitefliers Association

FEATURES

**AKA Convention
Wrap-up**

**Zilker Park
Festival**

Chat with
the
**Champion
Lam Hoac**

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KAPTIONS
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The flight home from Dayton started with a smaller plane that was loaded with happy kitefliers. Easily half your Board of Directors were onboard.

Just after take-off, the pilot introduced himself on the intercom. "We're pleased to have so many members of the AKA with us today. And we want you to know that we're going to be extra careful. We've got both the President and the Vice President onboard and we're not going to leave you with Second Vice President Phil Broder in charge ..."

If you missed our convention in Dayton, you missed a good one. From the fantastic welcome party on Monday hosted by Region Five, to the awards banquet Saturday in the Air Force Museum, our annual gathering gave members surprises, fun, good friends, and plenty to be proud of.

A few of the highlights?? 420 registrants — 99 contestants in kitemaking competition — indoor flying among the giant aircraft — a spirited auction that raised nearly \$30,000 in under three hours — incredible contests on the sport kite field that included 11 teams — mass ascensions that filled the sky each day — and our largest fighter kite event in many years.

Lam Hoac and Pete Dolphin actually tied in points for the Grand National Kitemaking Champion. Lam led on craftsmanship and Pete on flight and appearance in the sky. Eventually, with scores extended several decimal points, the trophy went to Lam. And a few minutes later, a ballot count from fliers gave the Members' Choice award to Pete. It doesn't get better than that!

"I'd like to ask you to make an extra effort to promote membership ..."

AKA's most prestigious award, the Steve Edeiken Trophy, was presented to veteran Don Tabor who formed Top of the Line back in 1984. The Ingraham Award for service to the Association was presented to Al Sparling. Gayle Woodul was named Regional Director of the Year and Charles Stewart the Volunteer of the Year for his great work during National Kite Month. And Charlie Sotich was presented with the Lee Toy Award for contributions to Kite Art.

But mostly it was a week of good friendship and good flying. If you missed it, well, there is time to start planning now for Seaside. Dates are set for October 11-16, 2004 on the Oregon coast.

AKA annual election results were announced in Dayton. Todd Little, Brian Champie, and Sharon Musto were re-elected to the Board. Doc Counce will be joining us in Region 9, Marla Miller in 10, and Jim McNulty in Region 12. New to the Executive Committee are Barbara Meyer as the new chair of the Kitemaking Committee, and Rick Iossi, who leads our kiteboarding contingency.

I want to recognize and thank Rod Thrall, Mary Bos, and Glen Rothstein who served their regions well but chose to retire this year. And I particularly want to thank Kevin Shannon, our second Vice President who, after 12 years of service has decided to take a break from the board. Our other transition was Bob Hogan, a wonderful contributor to kiting and the Executive Committee who sadly passed away earlier this year.

We enjoyed record participation in the election and I appreciate all of you who returned ballots. I was re-elected as president, but "Puff Cow" of Washington State ran a spirited write-in campaign earning seven votes. Thanks for your support for another year!

During our annual membership meeting, I announced that we have concluded fiscal year 2003 roughly \$30,000 to the good. This is a result of a strong auction and large convention attendance in Ocean City, and careful financial management by your board. I'm pleased to report that we now have roughly \$50,000 in cash reserves — that's the minimum amount we feel comfortable with to address any future contingencies.

Despite our aggressive efforts, membership growth is stagnant. Bad weather, the economy, and global politics have hampered the kite world over the past 12 months but we look forward to better times. In the meanwhile, I'd like to ask you to make an extra effort to promote membership between now and the end of the year. Tell your friends and flying partners about the benefits of joining the AKA — and remember that a membership makes a wonderful holiday gift!

One other major concern is insurance. Our insurance policy is solid, offering \$2 million coverage to events and \$25,000 to individuals. But two claims this year have us watching premiums for the future. And we remain very mindful of ongoing situations where



parks or municipalities consider flying restrictions for safety reasons.

So far in 2003, your president has logged 117,000 air miles attending about 30 festivals, workshops, and kite meetings. I've covered 12 of our 13 regions and traveled from sunny China to windy France to frigid Canada and back and forth across the USA. In case you worry about who is paying, I hasten to add that I've done it with just \$1,000 committed to a presidential travel account. The rest came from events and, well, the Gombergs. It has been really great seeing all of you and I look forward to doing it again next year!

As I write this, AKA is staffing a booth at the National Recreation & Parks Association Expo. This is a new outreach for us, placing the Association among professional sports organizations and hobbyist groups like the PGA, US Tennis Association, and National Bicycle League. OK, the American Association for Nude Recreation is there too, but we didn't look in their booth ...

Our hope was to network with park districts, recreation media, and potential sponsors. AKA volunteers met with thousands of attendees, distributed magazines and manuals, and in many cases referred them to local kite clubs or their Regional Director.

So don't be surprised if your local parks department calls looking for help with a small kite festival. Or perhaps you can use this opportunity to call them and offer to help with a new kite event. Tell them about Kite Month in April. Sign them up as a new member!!

And remember to have fun out there!

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ON THE COVER: "Skymaster," the AKA Grand Champion kite by Lam Hoac. Photos by Mike Gillard and Susan Shampo.

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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.

AKA 2003 Election Results

by Betty Hirschmann

Once again we had a good response to the election (22% return rate), with a total of 924 ballots being counted. Of the original 974 ballots received, 50 could not be used in the final tally for various reasons; 20 were returned by the post office with addresses that were undeliverable; 15 were sent back to me with the name label removed, thereby making them ineligible; 15 were deemed invalid because the Elections Committee was unable to verify for whom the vote was being cast (not marked clearly, more than one vote cast on the ballot).

These are the results of the election as reported at the convention's General Meeting:

Regional Directors

Region 2	Todd Little	70
	Monica Orso	4
	Alice Hayden	1
Region 9	Don Counce	29
	Cindy Thrall	19
Region 10	Marla Miller	104
	Charley Whitaker	45
Region 11	Brian Champie	75
	Tracy Erzin	3
	Sharon Champie	1
Region 12	Jim McNulty	60
	Ron Despojado	1
Region 13	Sharon Musto	24
	Jose Gabriel Rosas	3

President

David Gomberg	889
Puff Cow	7
Susan Gomberg	5
Larry Stiles	4
James Martin III	3
Sue Moscovitz	1
Jim Cosca	1
Sue Sedgwick	1
Dave Hansen	1
Jon Burkhardt	1
Lawrence T. Levine	1
Christian Cook	1
Arnold Schwanzenager	1
Ted Manekin	1
Rich Dermer	1
Spencer Wikel	1
Corey Jensen	1
Betty Hirschmann	1

The Executive Committee was announced, and approved by the membership. They are: 1st VP Chuck Sigal, 2nd VP Phil Broder (replacing Kevin Shannon who wants to take time off to make some kites), Secretary Betty Hirschmann, Treasurer Al Sparling; Directors at Large are

Susan Skinner, Barb Meyer (replacing Phil Broder), and Rick Iossi (replacing Bob Hogan, who passed away this year).

Be an Angel!

We have been asked recently about the winged AKA angel pins. Yes, we still proudly offer them to sponsors who contribute \$100 or more (cash) to the association. Executive Director Mel Hickman is the keeper of the pins. If you need further information, check with your Regional Director.

WSKC 2004

The World Sport Kite Championships will return to the coast of France in April. And this year, three teams will be representing the AKA in this international showdown.

Based on combined scores in ballet and precision at the Masters class level, invitations have been issued to the following teams:

1st Invitation	Chicago Fire	74.50
2nd Invitation	Cutting Edge	66.10
3rd Invitation	AirZone Flight Team	63.85
1st Alternate	Dogs Playing Cards	59.12
2nd Alternate	MVM	57.95

Net Directory

Most of you are familiar with the NetDirectory, an online membership directory hosted in the Club House section of our Website. We're making a small change.

Previously, if someone didn't want his or her address published, we left them completely out of the AKA directory. Now they will be listed as "Details withheld at member's request." That way, our scorekeepers, events, and merchants who offer the 10% discount will be able to confirm that you are a member.

The directory is updated every two weeks from our primary database. If you have a new email address or other change, please report it to our Executive Director.

Raffle News

Our latest raffle winner is Danny Johnson of Indiana who earned a fantastic set of custom Bokkaks from Kevin Shannon. The current prize is an incredible kite arch donated by New Tech. There are 400 kites in the package and get this — you get to have your own art work printed on each

kite! The complete set is worth \$2,000. Cool!

Our other current prize is a set of three inflatable airplane kites — each about ten by ten feet. Stake them out, stunt them, or put a flying squadron in the air. You even get to choose the colors! We're looking for more auction prizes. If you have a suggestion, or better yet, want to offer a donation, contact Treasurer Al Sparling.

AKA Flies High at Rec Show

What does the AKA have in common with the Professional Golfers Association, US Tennis Association, and the American Youth Soccer Organization, not to mention the American Association for Nude Recreation? They were all exhibitors at the National Recreation and Parks Association's Expo in October at St. Louis. It was the AKA's first-ever appearance at the NRPA event, which drew nearly 10,000 recreation professionals. Phil Broder staffed the AKA booth for the three-day show, and reports talking to hundreds of city and county parks department workers, college recreation faculty, recreation planners, and military MWR (Morale Welfare Recreation) officers, all interested in kiteflying. Phil gave everyone a copy of *Kiting* and referred most of them to their regional directors and local kite clubs, and to the free publications on the AKA Website. The best result, though, may have just been simple name recognition. Most people, says Broder, weren't even aware that there WAS a kitefliers association, although they said that they'd wanted to run some sort of kite fest or kitemaking class. So call your city's rec center, or contact the MWR office at a nearby military base, and ask if they want to fly kites with you.



Phil Broder and Gary Stovall, the Community Center Supervisor in Columbia, TN at NRPA booth

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Jackite and the AKA ...

... A Love Affair

Over a decade ago, we attended our first AKA Convention. I was a little scared with all the "big name" kitemakers looking at my simple bird kite — would they like it? Well, yes they did. Joel Scholz and Martin Lester welcomed us and offered their friendship and assistance. Jon Burkhardt became a long-time telephone friend that I could call on for help designing and flying. And I had with me a prototype of an eagle kite that I cut out and put together for Gene and Dorothy Lewandowski — which began years and years of friendship.

As the years passed, the love between Jackite and the AKA blossomed and grew stronger. As we designed more bird kites, we were able to introduce them at the fly-mart where they were readily critiqued by our kite friends. We learned about the KTAI and how we could make a living selling our bird kites. We were able to purchase special kites from the auctions, which are to this day, dear to our hearts. I remember when the Hadzickis taught Chris to fly a Revolution, and Chris was thrilled. I remember when Charlotte got a heart kite from Dan Klaus, and she was thrilled. And at the recent Liberty Fly in New Jersey, my grandson Alexander got a bat kite at the auction, and he was so thrilled he kissed it.

When the Olympic Committee was searching for a bird kite, Ken Conrad told them, "I think there's a lady in Virginia Beach who may be able to help you." We designed and made the Doves of Peace and Love kites which flew at the Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta. Even thinking about that moment brings a leap to my heart and tears to my eyes. And all of this happened because I met Ken and Suzanne at an AKA Convention. We then went on to fly Jackites for the PanAm games, the Special Olympics, and countless other national events.

Because of our association with the AKA, we were able to attend several international kite events. Let me tell you, the friends you make on those trips last forever. Year after year, we meet many of those friends and reminisce, and always the fun and laughter of those moments is lived again. At the AKA convention in Treasure Island, Dave Gomberg asked Chris if Jackite would consider sponsoring National Kite Month by sending out posters and maybe donating a few kites.

Just for the asking, Jackite mailed several hundred posters and shipped kites and poles to many kite events. Why? Because we believe in what we do. We know that for many families, flying kites is affordable (you can fly the same kite many times), flying kites is healthy (gets you outside and reduces stress), flying kites is fun, and in our case flying kites is educational (teaches children about birds). This is one of the best things in the AKA — kitefliers helping kitefliers, kitemakers teaching children, kite people sharing their talents and knowledge and expertise with each other. Priceless.

Now the AKA convention at Wright Patterson, and it all comes together. From those who loved the sky enough and wanted to fly enough that they did — Wilbur and Orville Wright. And aren't we a lot like them? We see a kite in the air, and we love the sky enough and we want to fly enough that we do. We fly big kites and little kites, kites of all colors and designs, kites that spin and tumble and do acrobatics and dance, kites that battle, and kites that ballet. And when we experience that spectacle of flight, our hearts dance and our spirits soar. What a privilege it is to be a part of the AKA and pass on the knowledge I have learned over the years. And what a delight to stand on the field flying a Jackite and know that I am loved and among friends. Priceless.

Marguerite E. Stankus

Happy Reader

Congratulations on a great kite magazine! I like the new format for *Kiting* with articles that cover all types of kite flying and kite activities. I particularly enjoy the columns on kite history by M. Robinson and the KAPtions articles. Keep up the good work.

James S. Aber

Great Things About Family Reunions

We recently attended one of our yearly family reunions. It's a shame we do not get to go every year but with all of us living so far apart, sometimes life just gets in the way. But we did make it this year.

It was great to see those we've seen in the past and meet the ones we've only heard about from others. The sharing of good times and bad, the gleaning of knowledge from those wiser and more

experienced than ourselves. The finding that we too have knowledge and experiences to share even with those we deem to be wise.

The joy of watching the young ones as they learn and discover new things.

The reliving of good times and sad, of behaving and misbehaving. The foretelling and hopes of things to come, the planning and goals that each of us has made in some fashion.

Though miles may separate us, the family bonds strengthen with all we share, and the addition of new family members brings joy to us all. And the sorrow for those who have moved on.

A family reunion is a gift that we all can appreciate and look forward to.

The reunion this year in Dayton, Ohio of our AKA family, is one that will be remembered for a long time with the fondest of memories. Some people go so far as to call this a national event for competitors, but for many of us it is truly a family gathering.

We hope to see you all again next year.

Steven and Dyana Ploof

Hard-Working Store Owner

The local kite shop owner, Mr. John Lutter, recently attended a Business Expo at Merritt Square Mall in Merritt Island, Florida. John, as well as the owner of *Kitestop.com*, is a kiting enthusiast and an American Kitefliers Association member. John has been flying kites for some 11 years. He started his website, *Kitestop.com* back in 2001. The site was mainly event and festival coverage, as well as a forum for kites. John was a member of the "Wings over Washington" kite club in Washington, D.C. John recently moved down to Brevard County, Florida, where he has pursued his dream of opening up a kite shop. The shop, though small, is a great beginning for John and the kites of Brevard. John has also been instrumental in the forming of the Space Coast Area Kiteflyers, a county-wide club of kite enthusiasts.

With all the day-to-day things a shop owner must do, John still takes the time to promote the AKA as a way of life in our local area!

Great job John, and sign up as many members as you can.

G. W. Brown

First Convention

When we arrived in Dayton, Con and I went to the registration table and got our convention packets, and there it was... my dog tag stating "First Timer" on it. I felt like a kid in kindergarten again. I've been flying kites since I was knee high to a grasshopper, and the grasshopper was my father, Lee Lacher. We flew kites off of our porch on Troy Hill in Pittsburgh, flying over the river and all the way to Arsenal in Lawrenceville. It seemed as if we did this every week in the Springtime before the leaves were on the trees. Now here I was at the largest kite gathering in the US, with fliers traveling from all corners of the US and other parts of the world.

On the second day we were there we were taking a break from flying and stopped in the US Air Force Museum gift shop to pick up some post cards. While coming out of the museum, I heard someone ask... "Could some strong guys come over here and give us a hand". I said "Hey

Con get over there!". And sure enough there it was, to be unloaded from a full size semi-trailer. To our amazement it was a working replica of the Wright Flyer! After 20 people helped unload the sections of the plane, it was assembled right near rocket mounted on concrete outside the museum. The difference between the first flight Wright Flyer and the space age vehicles was hard to comprehend. If the Wright Brother's could only see how far things have come since their flying machine. And to think that their flying experiments started with gliders and kites.

There where so many kites there, some that I already knew, but most were new to me. All were wonderful people. The first day or two, I thought, "Oh what a bunch of nuts!", but Con pointed out that I fit right in with them. The world should all get along as well as the people at AKA convention.

A single line kite that we flew throughout the week that was really nice was a Jim

Rowlands "Humpty Dumpty" that Con had. It flew great in all winds, and even was used to lift a Frog when the winds were kicking! On the last day I flew a vented Skydancer in fairly high winds, but was afraid of embarrassing Con on the flying field, as I have not flown a Skydancer for a while. Con just said you're not gonna hurt the kite, and many fliers try out new kites on the field. We're here to have fun and fly. And fly I did! Later that day we also met up with my lifelong best friend, and her husband, and enjoyed a short time on the field with Con giving a few flying lessons to my friends Peggy and Chuck.

I hope to see everyone at the next convention. I was flying high all week and had a ball. Thanks to Con for dragging his Mom along!

Fair skies, and good winds to all!

Kay Engelsiepen

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Bob Hogan

Bob Hogan was one of those guys with a million stories. He had stories about kites, about kite people, about buggies, about kite workshops, about life. Now, Bob lives on in the stories we tell. I want to share a few of these.

A kiter for about 20 years (the story that starts it all includes Corey Jensen, a Hawaiian Spin-Off and takes place in Monterey,

ing more fun than doing something he'd never done before.

Bob had a way with people. He met and kept in contact with people all over the world. There was a woman, a school teacher, in Romania that he met on a business trip over there to whom he regularly sent kite parts. He was the "pen pal" of Kites Over New England member Marcos, who lives in Brazil and created the Rok that illustrates this article. Bob put together care packages of kite goodies and sent them to Marcos. Bob met people close to home, too. I got a note after Bob passed away from Rich Courmettes, who shared the story of his first Newport kite event. Bob, he recalled, a complete stranger to him at the time, was the guy who came up and asked him to sit with him at the banquet.

Bob liked bugging. I think he liked the science of it — using the wind to power the vehicle — but he liked the camaraderie of it just as much. He took great pride in the SBBB Website (that's Spring Break Buggy Blast, for you non-buggies) and posting daily pictures from the event. One of Bob's favorite stories was of posting SBBB as a boomerang event on a website for that sport, and having a trio of master boomerangers show up for the event. Many kites shared a very special night on the playa, throwing glowstick-lit boomerangs into the darkness because Bob linked up two of his hobbies.

Bob competed in a lot of events. He competed in dual line, all the way up to Masters class, but really enjoyed quad-line kites more. He used to joke that as an engineer (his degree was in structural engineering and he taught surveying for years) he didn't "get" music, but could handle the careful measurements of precision. When quad precision came on the scene, it was something new, so Bob tried it. He took home a maroon Eastern

League champion's jacket that year. It was very important to him that Kites Over New England (he was then president) was included in the embroidery.

Bob had probably a million happy moments either flying kites, bugging, making kites, competing, working with kids or hanging out with kite people, but one sticks in my mind. It was at Soundwinds, a kite festival in Connecticut that aims to entertain the public (and raise money for a hospital). That year there was a team rok battle. I think it was the first time Bob had ever done that. He took the rok he made, also at one of Gary's workshops, and went three heats with 17 other rok teams. The crowd was really into it, cheering madly as teams tried to move around the crowded field. They called out "awww" as kites periodically sailed over the trees as they were cut. The blow by blow from the announcer on the field made it even more exciting. In the end, Bob's team won that rok battle, and all the bragging rights that go along with such a victory.

Bob Hogan died August 25, 2003 of cancer. He was 50 years old.

—Adena Schutzberg

Editor's Note

Bob was an ardent supporter of the AKA and an active member of the executive committee. He prepared monthly emails for members covering fighter kites, sport kites, kitemaking, and traction. He also prepared the E-Affiliate News for the several thousand non-members who signed up to receive it. Additionally, he was an active member of the sport kite committee.

"Bob was the kind of Board member that approached challenges with enthusiasm, an open mind, and a willingness to explore creative solutions," said David Gomberg. "He was a real contributor whose love for kiting and kites was unmistakable. We miss him a lot."



California), Bob's first experience with kitemaking was about four years ago. Gary Engvall was giving one of his now-famous kite workshops here in New England. The project was to make a circóflex. Bob literally learned to sew the day before the workshop and packed up a machine and all the other materials Gary noted and headed up to the workshop in New Hampshire. After about seven hours, the black and red kite and a bag were completed. Bob was elated. He flew it the next day with great pride and couldn't stop talking about how thrilled he was. I didn't know it then, but Bob was one of those people who could think of noth-

Book Review: The Kite Runner

by Sharon Musto

Quoting the blurb on the back cover of the book: *The Kite Runner* "tells the moving and painful story of two boys — one the son of a wealthy man, the other the son of his servant — as they grow to adulthood. It's about friendship; fathers and sons; the power of reading; loyalty and betrayal. And through the story of these two boys, we experience the history of Afghanistan in the past forty years, from the last days of the monarchy to the atrocities of the Taliban" ... It is a "poignant, devastating, yet ultimately hopeful novel about what it means to be human."

—Celina Spiegel, Vice-President and Co-Editorial Director of Riverhead Books

Her synopsis just about says it all. Not only is this the first novel written in English by an Afghan author, it is also Khaled Hosseini's debut novel. Hard to believe. It's very well-written and a worthwhile read on multiple levels. Its initial appeal to me, however, was the title and the prospect of reading an adult novel in which fighter kites might be a significant element. Little did I know the treat that was in store for me ... for all of us!

The author offers a rare and intimate glimpse into Afghan language, culture and traditions, against a changing political backdrop; he carries the reader through the years of human injustices suffered under the Taliban, and into the present day, which is where the story opens: California, near Golden Gate Park. The reader is then whisked back to 1975, to northern Kabul, Afghanistan. Amir and Hassan were 12 and 11 years old respectively. One was an affluent Pashtun, the other an underprivileged and oppressed Hazara; one a Sunni Muslim, the other, Shi'a. Despite their many differences, there were numerous elements that bound these boys together. One of them was kites:

"By the time the snow melted and the rains of spring swept in, every boy in Kabul bore tell-tale horizontal gashes on his fingers from a whole winter of fighting kites. I remember how my classmates and I used to

huddle, compare our battle scars on the first day of school. The cuts stung and didn't heal for a couple of weeks, but I didn't mind. They were reminders of a beloved season that had once again passed too quickly." (p.45)

Those among us who fly fighter kites will certainly be able to identify with that short excerpt and many others. And perhaps to a greater extent than most, kite enthusiasts will appreciate Hosseini's use of fighter kites and cutting line as the common thread that winds its way through this unforgettable story, a powerful metaphor for pleasure and pain, freedom and oppression, innocence and corruption, bravery and cowardice, hope and despair, sin and atonement, bloodshed and healing. I predict this novel will be a best seller and, perhaps, even make it to the big screen. Thank you, Mr. Hosseini. ☺



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KAPtions



Flirting with Disaster

This summer I was vacationing in Kansas City, "the city of fountains," and I couldn't resist the idea of hovering my camera above the fountains. They are an ideal KAP subject because they reveal intriguing shapes and patterns that you may not notice at ground level. Plus, the streams of shooting water look interesting when viewed from above. Kansas City has more fountains than any other city in the world, besides Rome, so I had plenty to choose from.

Despite my persistence, I had been unable to get my kite aloft at any of the city's numerous fountains. On my next-to-last day in Kansas City, I got out of bed at 6:30 AM to KAP in the early morning light when shadows are longest and lighting is less harsh. Before heading out I checked the current wind map on *intellicast.com*. I discovered moderate wind conditions — about ten MPH — that would be strong enough to lift my kite and camera. Finally!

Several tall buildings surround the fountain that I chose, which is near downtown. Shortly after I attached the camera to the kite, and just as it floated over the fountain, turbulence from the buildings caused the kite to rapidly lose altitude.. As the camera fell out of the sky, I managed to narrowly avoid hitting the firefighter sculpture in the center of the fountain. Unfortunately, this meant that my camera landed in a two-foot deep pool of water. The camera and rig were submerged for three to four seconds before the wind lifted the kite, pulling the camera out of the water and back into the sky.

Water was literally pouring off the camera as I quickly reeled in the kite line to assess the damage. When I finally got my hands on the camera, it was dead and I heard a dreadful whining noise emanating from it. I found water in the memory card slot, the lens, and the battery compartment. Trying not to panic, I removed the battery and packed everything up before heading home.

In a desperate and slightly comical attempt to dry the camera out, I held it outside my car window as I drove down Interstate 35. It was still soaked when I returned home. So I promptly placed it in a conventional oven at the lowest setting, 140 degrees F, a technique I learned in an online discussion group. After "baking" it for two hours, I removed the camera and tested it — still dead. After two more hours, I tested it again. This time, it turned on and things seemed to be working; however, when I took a picture, the image was completely fogged, obscuring any details. I placed the camera back in the oven for another two hours. Finally, after baking for six hours, I removed the camera, placed the battery inside, and everything worked flawlessly. Amazing!

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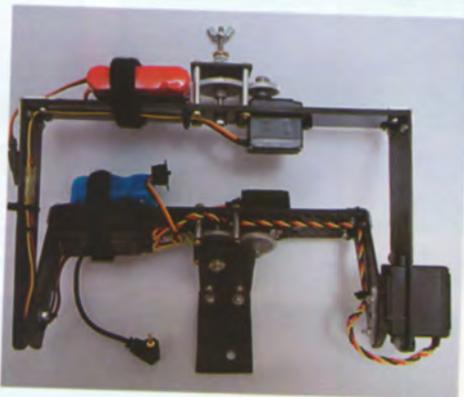
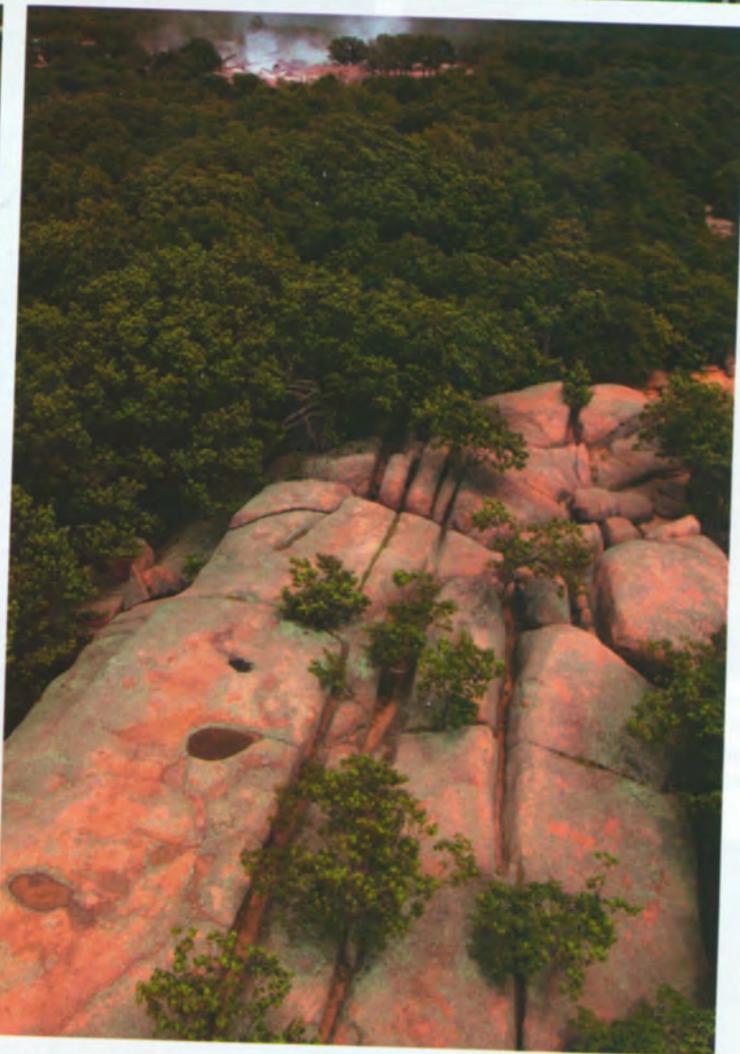
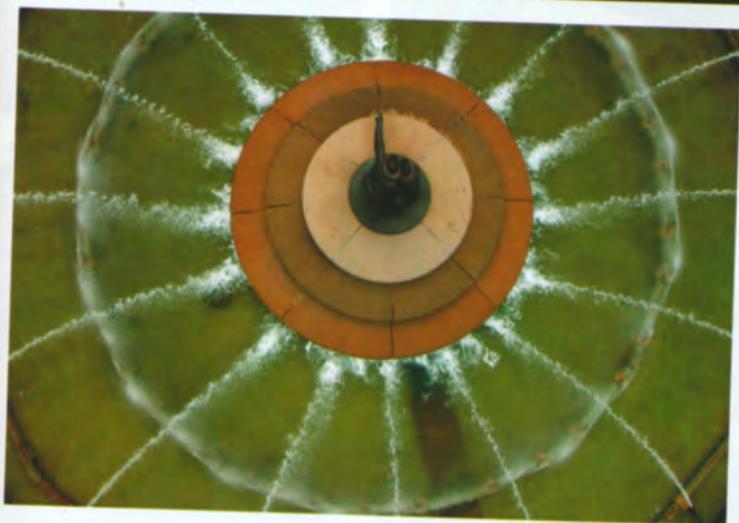
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By the next day, the rig had also recovered, and I was out taking KAPictures again ... of the same fountain, of course. This time I got the kite above the buildings before attaching the camera, and everything went smoothly. Three months later, I am still shooting pictures with my dunked and baked camera.

I suppose that every time I suspend my \$800 Nikon Coolpix 5000 camera from a kite, I am flirting with disaster to some extent. Perhaps this is part of the excitement for me. Mostly though, it's getting unique images that would be difficult, or impossible, to shoot any other way.

More photos are available on <http://scotthaefner.com/kap>. 🌐

Clockwise from top left: Portrait of Amelia Earhart, an "Earthworks" image made from stone, earth, and evergreens by Stan Herd; Pool in Shawnee, KS, which I decided to photograph after the blue and yellow umbrellas caught my eye at ground level; An array of vertical cracks forming in the large granite outcrops at Elephant Rocks State Park in Missouri. Dust from an old quarry is rising in the background; My new, carbon-based rig that I built by drawing on consultation with other KAPers and insights gained at KAPiCA '02 in Monterey, CA; a Cris Benton photo of Scott on a KAP adventure; Firefighter's Memorial Fountain in Kansas City, where I dunked my camera in the pool. The fountain commemorates firefighters killed in the line of duty.

2003 Convention Wrap-up



Ohio Surprise

Kitefliers can be both lovers and fighters. Not necessarily, however, at the same time. Take Bruce Jarvie and Carol Wheeler. Before the first mass ascension of the '03 Convention — of fighter kites, coincidentally — the Michigan pair tied the knot. While a good parkhead is knot enough for most of us, Bruce and Carol used rings and formal vows. Alas, it couldn't last. By the following morning, Carol had cut the wedding night short and was up early, headed to the day's first workshop.

"I have my priorities," said the bride. "I want to build a fighter."

"Already, we're fighting," sighed the groom. And Dayton was on.

One surprise followed another at the Air Force Museum. Richard Dermer was surprised when he stepped knee-deep into a groundhog hole; seems the woodchucks had taken to the field before the buggies. Peter Lynn was surprised when his new foil cut loose and took an unscheduled flight over the Museum and towards the active runways; it eventually snagged on a phone line and continued to fly perfectly. A bicycle was surprised when a giant kite swooped down, wrapped it up in the bridles, and carried it aloft; the bike later landed uneventfully.

Rick and Robyne Gardner were surprised when rocks rained down upon their ground crew; an attempt at holding down tails went dangerously awry. The indoor fliers were surprised to find a thermonuclear bomb just outside of their arena; all boundaries were declared



Photo: Rick Hawkins



Photo: Rick Hawkins

by Phil Broder

"hard" just in case. The kitemaking judges were surprised when two kites tied for the Grand Champion prize; it took three decimal places to give Lam Hoac the edge over Pete Dolphin. And everyone was surprised by the strong winds blowing through Ohio; most people familiar with Wright-Patterson flying expected light breezes and even lighter kites.

But the final surprise, the biggest surprise, the surprise that even shut Corey Jensen up, that surprise was found in the Hope Hotel's room 132. There, Dean Jordan and his co-conspirators had hijacked Jensen's infamously tacky suit. As Corey held court in the bar, a string of kites slipped into 132, donned the suit, and had their picture taken. Ron Gibian, Susan Gomberg, Curtiss Mitchell, Kay Buesing, Sam Ritter, John and Elaine Cosby's dog, and more than 40 others got into Corey's pants. And the delightfully oblivious Corey-lama had no inkling of the plot until he was called in from his mid-banquet smoke break to view the big screen slide show.

That's just kitefliers being kitefliers: lovers, fighters, merry pranksters. Put 400 of them together and it's no surprise that Dayton was a great convention. ☸

Top: Pete Dolphin flies what would become the People's Choice kite in front of the Museum and a very impressive missile; Above: Friday night's highly successful auction; Below left: arches and banners stretch in the hearty wind while a ground display of funky birds keep watch; Below right: Bruce and Carol Jarvie exchange vows in a ceremony conducted by the Reverend Gayle Woodul.



Photo: Susan Shampo



Photo: Cat Gabriel

Below: Arnold Stellema on the other side of a very pretty bol; Center: an impressive kite display inside the Museum; Lee and Debbie Park performed during Saturday's awards banquet in the museum



Photo: Sam Ritter



Photo: Rick Hawkins



Photo: John Barresi



Photo: Rick Hawkins



Photo: Susan Shampo



Photo: Mike Gillard

Above: Lee and Debbie Park admire items in the Fly Market; Below left: there was ample space for buggying on the Air Base's runways and adjacent open fields.



Photo: Susan Shampo

Above: Pete Dolphin and Lam Hoac as the tie for Grand Champion was broken in this, the Year of the Lam; Below: surrounded by historic aircraft, Curtiss Mitchell flies the Plasma during Thursday's indoor competition.



Photo: Jeff Fisher



Photo: Jeff Fisher

2003 Convention Wrap-up

Kitemaking Competition

by Steve Ferrell



Photo: Mike Gillard

Dayton was my 10th convention — but it was my first convention where I was able to witness a wedding ceremony on the kite field. As Mr. And Mrs. Jarvie shared their vows and tied the knot on Wednesday afternoon, little did I know that I would be untying a knot three days later. For the first time in AKA Convention history, there was a TIE in the overall score for Grand National Champion.

It was a battle between the highest scores in the air and the highest scores on the ground. Lam Hoac earned the trophy for best score in Craftsmanship (8.92) and Structural Design (9.03), while Pete Dolphin earned the highest score for Visual Appeal (8.95) and Flight (8.92). After all the numbers were averaged and totaled, both kite-builders scored an even 34.13. For the first time, I had to re-run the numbers and extend the decimal to three places. The end result was a difference of a mere 0.008 of a point. Lam scored 34.133 against Pete's 34.125. This year's Grand National title went to Lam Hoac and his kite: "Skymaster." It was also the first time in AKA history that a stunt kite earned the overall top score.

continued on page 38

Top to bottom: Pete Dolphin, Jose Sainz and Karen Burkhardt inspecting Pete's popular kite; John Gabby adjusting the tail of his Vanilla Elegance; Comprehensive judging panel.



Photo: Jeff Fisher



Photo: Mike Gillard

2003 AKA Sport Kite Grand Nationals TEEMING WITH TEAMS!

by Mike Gillard

The weeks leading up to the Grand Nationals provided indicators that this was going to be a special event. Conference commissioners reported in August that they were receiving lots of RSVP's for the competition; and lots of calls from alternates hoping that they would be invited to compete. All year, the conference scoreboards had reflected an uptick in the number of individual competitors; and a huge expansion of the numbers of teams.



Photo: Sam Ritter

Sport kite committee chairman David Hansen, capably assisted by his wife Ginny and Stephanie Hiebert had everything ready to roll when the competitors arrived in Dayton; the level of pre-event organization was high.

Would this event live up to its promise?



Photo: Jeff Fisher



Photo: John Barresi

Tuesday, September 30

Under partly cloudy skies with a cool breeze, we were ready to start with Novice, Open, and Experienced class disciplines. In Novice ballet, eleven competitors joined the shootout; precision had ten competitors. The ballet finishing order saw Doug Charleville best



Photo: John Barresi

Top to bottom: a precision judging panel; pairs team J & J warming up; pilots' meeting; Windjammers jammin'; Darrin Skinner, Aaron Champie, Uly Villanueva and Wayne Fu of AirZone Flight Team.



Photo: Mike Gillard



Photo: Mike Gillard



Photo: Sam Ritter

Paul Koepke and Gordon Fry. Koepke prevented Charleville from a sweep, as he won precision, with Lee Kanzler in third.

Seven competitors took on the challenge of Open individual Freestyle, with Lam Hoac starting his incredible week with a win over Vickie Proudfoot and Shawn Tinkham.

The Experienced dual-line events featured nine competitors each; Zachary Gordon scored a convincing victory over Wayne Fu and Rosanna Rosanova in ballet. Precision results had Matt Epstein beating up on Gordon and Fu.

Open team train saw six teams take the field, with That's My Line (Joel Brown, Deb Heid) topping the Windjammers and Pushin' 6. This event saw a humorous situation, presented by the Wind Stars. Team captain Vern Balodis had all of the tails on the team's kites

continued on page 38

CHICAGO FIRE: A Decade of Dominance

No team has had a larger effect on US competition over the last ten years than the Chicago Fire. Led by veteran Eric Wolff, the Fire has won twelve of a possible eighteen team disciplines at the Grand Nationals during the years 1994-2003.

At this year's convention, the team used vented Killer Bees from Blue Moon Kites, with 275# line in precision, and heavy 400# stuff to slow the kites for ballet. Their smooth, somewhat conservative style really shines in challenging conditions, such as the chilly winds that ruled the skies in Dayton. As usual, they managed to avoid the costly mistakes that have plagued their competitors at event after event.

The long-time core lineup of Eric, Dan Brinnehl, Kathy Brinnehl, and Russ Faulk was supplemented this year by the addition of Joshua Gordon, the teen phenomenon who has been the talk of the sport for the last two years. "Probie" Josh held up his end of the log very well.

In the last ten years, the Fire has won about everything except the Pillsbury Bakeoff — will they finally return to international competition in 2004 and accept their invitation to the World Sport Kite Championship?



Photo: Ann Vondriska

Top to bottom: SKC Chairman David Hansen; his "right-hand person" and field director extraordinaire Stephanie Hiebert; Lee Park among the flying machines in a museum hanger during the indoor competition.



Photo: Rick Hawkins

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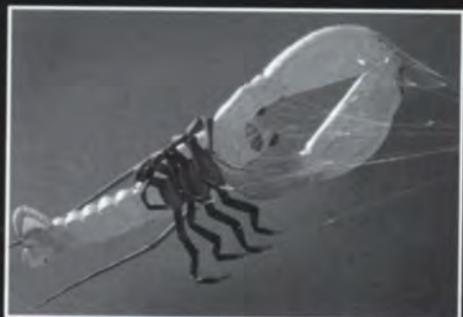


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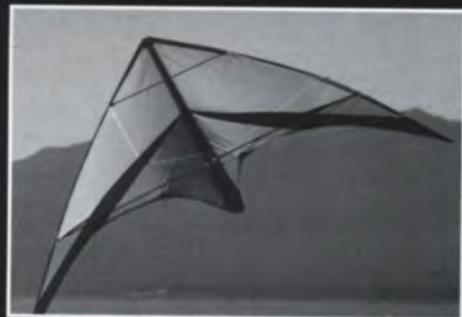
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2003 Convention Wrap-up

Edeiken Award

Don Tabor, founder of Top of the Line Kites, was awarded this year's Steve Edeiken Award, given to the AKA's most outstanding flier. Following is the letter nominating Don for this award:

To the Edeiken Award Committee: Stunt kiting did not spring, fully formed, as the sport, art, or science that we currently take for granted. It evolved from experimentation and play. It improved through trial and practice. It became a driving force in our kiting world, in large part because of the vision and efforts of a quite, unassuming man often found sitting in the back of our convention hall with his wife, Pat.

We are pleased to nominate for the Steve Edeiken Award, Don Tabor.

Don and his company, Top of the Line, brought their innovative big-wing stunt kites to the market in 1984. Stores refused to buy the huge \$100 contraptions and some actually laughed at the outrageous price tag. So Tabor began a campaign. He began traveling to festivals, he formed a demonstration team, he put kites in the hands of fliers. And soon, demand at the small San Diego company was exceeding production supply.

Top of the Line didn't simply dominate the sport; they defined it. Tabor's kites and fliers created a process, and then the rules and competitions adapted to accommodate them. Everyone who flew sport kites flew a Hawaiian or a Spin-off.

Top of the Line continued to innovate. "Tabor was the one of the first to organize a precision and ballet performance team. "Tabor was one of the first to demonstrate the potential of ballet with his still-remarkable Peter and the Wolf routine.

"Tabor was one of the first to travel the country with an informal "learn to fly" marketing program. "Tabor was one of the first to fine-tune (some say "perfect") three- and then four-person competitive flying.

And as a result, Top of the Line took more first place trophies than any other team in the annals of our sport. In 1990, TOTL made history as the winner of the first World Cup in Seaside Oregon. Their score was 93.67.

Certainly some credit goes to team mates Ron Reich, Eric Streed, and Pam Kirk. But throughout it all, Don Tabor was a constant, patiently explaining that "It's the pointy end that goes into the wind ..."



Clockwise from top left: Don Tabor accepts the Steve Edeiken award from last year's recipient, Chuck Sigal; RD of the Year Gayle Woodul, Volunteer of the Year Charles Stewart, Bob Ingraham award winner Al Sparling. Photos by Mike Gillard.

Don Tabor is still a constant in the kiting world. He attends our convention when most of the fliers that competed with and emulated him, have moved on. Many of our best contemporary performers learned from the people who learned from the people, that Don Tabor inspired. In that way, Tabor taught us all ...

For his vision, his ground-breaking example, and the fun he shared with us all, we find Don Tabor well deserving of AKA's highest honor.

Respectfully Submitted by Susan Gomberg
Seconded by Kite Trade Association, Pete Dolphin, Mike Gillard

Bob Ingraham Award

Here is the nominating letter for this award: The Ingraham award is intended for service to the AKA and I can think of no more deserving recipient than the steward of our finances, Treasurer Al Sparling.

When Al became chief financial officer three years ago, the Association faced a significant monetary shortfall. We were spending more than we were earning and reserves were quickly evaporating. Under Al's leadership, expenditures were revised and new income programs developed. His attention to budget matters at Board meetings became legendary and as the crisis abated, Al became fondly known as the "AKA Grinch."

One program in particular deserves special note. Al became the driving force behind the

innovative AKA raffle. He recruited prizes, submitted promotions to the web page, and then personally entered each credit card purchase. This required nightly attention since records need to be regularly updated. With more than \$50,000 in sales since it started, Al Sparling has entered over 10,000 computerized transactions. He has also taken care to get the physical tickets to each regional drawing in now famous, hermetically sealed security envelopes.

Al has been an active member of the AKA executive committee and recently retired after eight years as the region 6 director. He traversed the three state area each week to attend a record number of festivals and workshops during his term.

The AKA has benefited from Al Sparling's commitment, contribution, and conscientious attention to detail. He would be the first to

say that others have been as involved and as dedicated. We say he's the best and should have his name added to the prestigious awarded named for our founder.

Volunteer of the Year

In a year when so many people made so many contributions to AKA, Charles Stewart stood out for his consistent support of kiting and for spreading the joy of what we do to the next generation of kite enthusiasts. Working through National Kite Month, Charles organized an extensive series of workshops and programs for schools and kids. It isn't always easy work but he makes it look easy and more important, makes it look fun.

Regional Director of the Year

Anyone who encounters Gayle Woodul is immediately engulfed in her enthusiasm for kiting. While all directors work hard, Gayle set a standard this year for attending events, communicating with members, and waving the AKA flag. And she did it all with an infectious smile. She also headed up the AKA recruitment effort this year which included free flags, prizes, and AKA signs for local events. So when we say she was waving the AKA flag, we meant it literally.

Convention Manager's Report

by Maggie Vohs

AKA Members who attended the 26th Annual National Convention and Competition of the American Kitefliers Association can attest to the fabulous time had by all.

The flying fields at the Wright Patterson Air Force Base Museum were open and expansive, green and inviting. Each night the temperatures dipped down to near freezing and each day



Photo: Susan Shampo



Photo: Susan Shampo



Photo: Rick Hawkins

around noon, the sun would begin to shine and the wind would begin to blow — sometimes too much wind! Members flew objects as diverse as Disney cartoon characters to works of art that belonged in the Smithsonian — there was even a phone booth in the air!

Each morning the convention center was abuzz with attendees traveling to and from over 30 workshops. Each evening the halls would again come alive as members attended meetings, receptions, the Kite Gallery, The Fly Market, the day-long bag raffle and the wildly popular auction. The silent auction preceded the loud auction, which was held to an organized 100 items, and the night became a huge success, both for the AKA and for those in the audience.

On Saturday night the capstone event, the awards banquet, was held in the shadow of a B-52 in the beautiful Hall of Modern Flight at the US Air Force Base Museum. Fabulous works of art had been entered into the Members Choice awards and were nestled under the wings of this magnificent aircraft while a raised projection screen played out the week's events.

By Sunday morning, old friends and new acquaintances were claiming the week's events a total success, and I heard more than one participant ask; "do ya think we might be able to come back in 2006?"

See all of you in Seaside, Oregon for the 27th Annual event. Dates are October 11-16, 2004!



Photo: Donna Houchins

Clockwise from top: a bird's-eye view of the spacious flying fields at the air base; Fighter workshop; Donna Houchins' mini kite entry; Member's Choice Award entries assembled beneath the Wright Brothers' plane in the banquet hall.

Miniature Kite Challenge by Charlie Sotich

Donna Houchins, a newcomer to AKA conventions, dominated the miniature kite competition. She only brought one kite to the event, and she got first place in three of four categories. Her entry was a three dimensional horse with wings. The tissue covering was nicely decorated by hand. The short tail of her horse was all that was needed to provide the stability for smooth flight.

The fourth event, for smallest size, was won by Marshall Harris with a 33mm mylar edy.

Jim Martin and Mervin Cooper each had four entries. Jim's entries included an arch of ten

small diamonds while Mervin had two trains, one with five ladybugs of varying sizes, the other was made up of ten rokkakus 123mm high. His other two kites were made from "I survived 60" birthday party napkins. Newlywed Bruce Jarvie had one entry, a simple clear plastic diamond that placed 2nd in Flight.

Trophies were awarded to 1st through 3rd in each event. The bases of the trophies were 2002 Ohio quarters with the Wright flier and

astronaut John Glenn on them. Holographic edy kites were supported by a wire stem, the first place being 1 1/8 inches, second 1 1/2 and third 2 inches high.

Special thanks go to Angie Chau and Margery Hawley, who worked as judges.

Convention Workshops by Barbara Meyer

Whether it was to make a kite, discuss rules of competition, or improve your local festival, there was a workshop to do it in. How could you choose only two of the six workshops offered daily?

Every presenter approached their session with a little trepidation, but enthusiasm soon took over, as each shared their knowledge and passion. Kites as art, bird kites, fund raising, building tips, novice competition, 3-D slide shows, club officers, newsletters, history, and more. Nine make-and-take sessions, including two conducted via cell phone, let many try out new ideas and complete new kites. Each unique, each wonderful, all presented by volunteers sharing what they love about this great sport.

Special thanks go out to all our presenters (over 40 in all); you were great, the crowds loved you! Thanks also go out to all the clubs and individuals who donated supplies used in these sessions.

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Pacific Conference

Unable to attend convention this year, I have noticed a lot of people from our area did amazing things. Mix Mcgraw went out to set a world record with 230 mini hyperkites. He made three attempts; the first two were under two minutes and the third was for four minutes and two seconds, which is believed to be sufficient to break the world record for the most stunt kites flown simultaneously by one person. Mix has sent all the information to the Guinness World Book and is waiting confirmation. Mix's wife Pat and Achilles Gagliano are always there to assist with the setup and at times holding Mix down on the ground from all the pull. Good luck Mix, we hope there is confirmation soon!

As for the sportkiting portion of convention, it seems Wayne Fu had a great time placing in all four of his individual events, taking two 1st places, one 2nd and one 3rd — well done Wayne! Ron Despodajo and Ulysses Villanueva found themselves bringing home trophies as well. And last but not least, our newest team on the West Coast, AirZone, had their first convention win; 3rd place in MTP.

Things coming up: the Bay Area Sport Kite League is hosting a few events this winter that are sure to be of interest. We will hold an indoor fly in February, and it looks like Charlie Sotich will be giving an all-day seminar in the bay area in February as well. Check the BASKL calendar for further details at www.baskl.org.

I have heard rumors that the Southern California Sport Kite League is thinking about starting up again? Is this true, anyone have details? If so please email me and let me know all about it.

Late breaking news is that Lam Hoac will be in southern California doing an indoor flying workshop and possibly a competition with the San Diego Kite Club the weekend of January 9-11th. Check their Website for more information as the date draws nearer; www.sdkc.net.

Northeast Conference

Ahh, autumn in the northeast. The change in season brings us a new crop of talent. So far, we have seen competitions at Liberty State Park (NJSKC), Naragansett and Rock-Rock-Rock-away Beach (NYSKC); all successful at drawing new fliers and spectators alike. New to competition are Elaine Edelman, Rory Pearce, James Stuhler, Chuck Larcom, and Vincent Sefanelli. Welcome! The buffet's open, folks, grab a fork.

The lukewarm Jacuzzi that is the northeast Experienced class has some new faces, mostly former Novice fliers who have been kicked upstairs. We welcome Andrew Albosta and Edna Bertholf who are currently at the top of the pack. Remember this, Andrew: youth and enthusiasm shall always be defeated by age and treachery. And don't make us run, 'kay? Perennial dark horse Art Cross, continues to lurk in the shadows, improving his game every time he hits the field.

Masters? You bet, finest in the land. The triumvirate of Ron "The G" Graziano, Ari "Legs" Contzius and Shawn "The Tinkhamator" Tinkham currently rule the top positions in MIP and MIB, but the season is still early and the likes of Patty "P of the T" Tinkham and Malika "Too Cool for You" Jones could make for some tough competition.

Despite the challenging conditions presented at Dayton, the northeast showed its teeth and came home with some impressive wood (well, stone): starting with Experienced class, Rosanna Rosanova grabbed 3rd place in EIB, and some hack from Westchester County got 1st in EIP. We saw Doug "Connecticut Thunder" Coates and Kari Berg take 2nd and 3rd respectively in EMP. New Jersey queens, the "Shiva Divas," Monica Orso and Lisa Willoughby, grabbed 1st for EPB AND EPP. Nice! You go girls (snap-snap-snap)! The ETB 1st place trophy went to "Smitty and the Girls" who left everyone breathless (ha-ha) while a close 2nd went to "Jones Beach 4" who also nabbed 1st for ETP. Ari beat out 12 other

competitors to take 2nd in MIB and Shawn schooled 13 others in MIP, walking away with 2nd. Speaking of Shawn, he also nabbed 3rd in MMB, 3rd in OIF and 2nd in Indoor Unlimited followed by Scott Weider who took 3rd. For Pairs we saw "The Wright Brothers" continue to reinvent flight, taking 1st in MPP and 2nd in MPB. "Air Therapy" was close on their heels, taking 2nd in MPP and 3rd in MPB. We don't want to miss the train, "That's My Line" took 1st in Open Team Train ballet besting five other teams.

Total: six 3rd places, seven 2nd places and seven 1st places. Pretty decent, I'd say. That's all I have to report, hope to see all of you on the fields or beach real soon.

Northwest Conference

If you missed going to Nationals in Dayton this year, you missed a great convention. A big thanks goes to Region 5 for one of the best we have attended. The Northwest was well represented. Gordie Fry who, at 75 was probably the oldest dual line competitor at Nationals, took 3rd in NIB and 4th in NIP. Willy Hendrickson took 4th in EIP and Fly By Nite (Daniel Haigh and Bill Rogers) placed 2nd in both EPP and EPB. In MIB, Reid Wolcott was 3rd, Jerry Cannon 6th and Scott Davis 8th. In MIP, Reid Wolcott was 1st, Jerry Cannon 6th and Scott Davis 9th. R.A.W. Power (Rick and Reid Wolcott) defended their 1st place win from 2002 in MPB and placed 3rd in MPP. Both of our teams flew great with Team Cutting Edge (Jim Barber, Jerry Cannon and Rick Wolcott) placing 2nd in both MTP and MTB and MVM (Mary Bos, Vicki Casal and Marcia Cannon) placing 3rd in MTB and 7th in MTP. We all had a great time and look forward to next year's convention which will be held in beautiful Seaside, OR.

We've already had three competitions for the 2004 season with a record number of competitors in each event. Everyone wants to place in

the top three for Nationals which will be held in our own back yard. Brian Davis and Alan Cunningham are vying for 1st in both NIP and NIB with Ray Underwood from Canada challenging them in 3rd. Don Ostey holds 1st in both EIP and EIB. Andrew Cimburek and Willy Hendrickson are tied for 2nd in EIP and Jim Landers is 2nd in EIB with Willy Hendrickson close behind in 3rd. In EMP and EMB, Alan Cunningham, Jamie Landers, Jim Landers and Wayne Turner are competing for the top three positions. We welcomed back Larry Clark who has been absent from competing for a few years and is 1st in MMB. Scott Davis is in 1st place in MIP with Daniel Haigh. Wayne Turner and Reid Wolcott are tied for 2nd. In MIB, Reid Wolcott holds 1st with Jim Soellner and Bill Rogers close behind. Chaos Effect is 1st in EPB and R.A.W. Power is 1st in both MPP and MPB with Fly By Nite 2nd and Wing 'N It 3rd in both. Team Snowbirds is 1st in ETB and in Masters team competition, Team Cutting Edge is 1st in MTP with MVM 2nd and MVM is 1st in MTB with Team Cutting Edge 2nd.

While we take time off from competing this winter, we look forward to our annual meeting the end of March where we set our schedule for the rest of the year. This also gets everyone reacquainted and geared up for our first competition in May.

Midwest Conference

Well, the weather's finally closing in on us and we are out of events until spring. Convention is over and I'm sure it will be remembered by all for a very long time. I now need to make a report of competition results from the AKA Grand Nationals Competition. Here goes ...

In individual competition, many competitors performed well and many placed, too. Congratulations to Paul Koepke (1st NIP, 2nd NIB), John E. Arnold (7th NIP, 8th NIB), and Jeff Friend (6th NIP, 9th NIB) in Novice. Zachary Gordon (1st EIB, 2nd EIP), Vickie Proudfoot (2nd OIF, 7th EIB, 8th EIP), Bill Schumacher (9th EIB, 9th EIP, 8th EQB, 7th EQP), George Wright (2nd EQB, 5th EQP), Vern Balodis (4th EQB, 8th EQP), and Andy Becker (7th OIF, 9th EQP, 11th EQB) performed well in Experienced class competition.

The Masters class fliers represented the mid-west well with respectable finishes in their competitions. Lam Hoac (1st MIB, 1st MQP, 1st MQB, 1st OIF, 1st Indoor), Russ Faulk (3rd MIP), Joshua Gordon (4th MIB, 7th MIP), Dan Brinnehl (11th EIP), and Jon Trennepohl (14th MIB) impressed everyone with their unforgettable performances. Zachary Gordon (2nd MQP, 7th MQB) also did well in Masters competition. Craig Wilson also placed 10th in Indoor competition.

In pairs competition, the Midwest once again "showed its stuff." Eos (3rd EPB, 3rd EPP), J & J



Northeast Conference National Trophy Winners



Northwest Conference



Pacific Conference



Midwest Conference National Trophy Winners

(4th EPB, 7th EPP), and Sky Jesters (6th EPB, 4th EPP) did well at the Experienced level. Both Pegasus (7th MPB, 7th MPP) and Pyro (5th MPP) had a good time competing in Masters pairs, although Pyro had some difficulty presented by their choice of kites in ballet.

Team competition was a highlight of the week. Team Showdown (2nd ETP, 3rd ETB) took trophies home for their places at the Experienced level. Chicago Fire (1st MTP, 1st MTB) and Dogs Playing Cards (4th MTP, 5th MTB) also entertained the crowds with their performances. Team Train was truly an interesting event this year. Congratulations to the Windjammers (2nd OTT), Pushin' 6 (3rd OTT), and Windstars (6th OTT) for their fun and inspired performances. The only comment to be heard after the Windstars left the field was that their performance "ROCKED." (I'm sure anyone at convention will be happy to explain this one if asked.)

Well, it's time for me to wrap this article up. If I forgot to mention anyone who competed at Nationals, it was not intentional so please let me know. I hope to bring more information about upcoming events in the next column. Until then, enjoy the holidays and see you at Kites on Ice in Madison, Wisconsin this February.

Southeast Conference

The Southeast Conference is fortunate in that it is geographically close to the Northeast Conference and fliers from both conferences participate in the Eastern League Sport Kite Association. In early September, southeast conference members, Doug Charleville, Marc Conklin, Mike Mosman, Laura Stonestreet, Stoney, and Lisa Willoughby

traveled to Liberty State Park to take part in the New Jersey Stunt Kite Championships. Marc and Laura brought home first place trophies in NIB and NIP respectively and Stoney took first place in OIF.

In mid-October, northeast fliers Andrew Albosta, Ron Graziano, Monica Orso, Dennis Smith, and Stephanie Hiebert returned the favor and traveled to Jockeys Ridge to join us for the Outer Banks Stunt Kite Competition. Each competitor from the Northeast took first place in at least one discipline and Stephanie added to her reputation as the best field director in the country, if not the world.

Five new competitors from the Southeast competed at OBSKC. Four of the new competitors, Andy Burchfield, Jerry Conway, Terry Cornell, and Todd Haymans competed in the Novice disciplines, and one, David Ashworth competed in EMB. We welcome them and look forward to seeing them at future competitions. There is also a new pairs team in the southeast, Wing Nuts, comprised of Will Smoot and Laura Stonestreet.

Spacious flying fields, parking on the grass, the Air Force Museum, sunny days, and WIND welcomed us to the AKA convention in Dayton. The Southeast was well represented by eleven fliers. Taking home trophies were Doug Charleville, 1st in NIP, Air Therapy (Rich Hawthorne and Rich Javens), 2nd in MPP and 3rd in MPB, and Paul LaMasters, 3rd in EMB. Paul prefers flying in very light wind, so major modifications were made to his kite on the day of the competition.

Preparations are being made to travel to Tybee Island for the Georgia International Sport Kite Championships (and Judges Swim Meet). A wider beach is promised so that judges and competitors may not need their goggles and swim fins!

Scientific Kites of the Industrial Revolution

by M. Robinson

Meteorological kites may not have had the flash and glamour of the other Industrial Revolution kites, but they were good, loyal, and dependable workers. They first reported for work in 1749, and did so consistently and competently until 1933, and are occasionally getting called back into active duty to this day.

Other kite research of this era: the pre-motorized manned flights by Hargrave, the Wrights, Cody, Bell and many others; the many military kites, and Marconi's and Franklin's atmospheric kite experiments; had better public relations. They had more interesting and polarizing roles in history than the under-estimated and under-valued weather kites.

The first recorded weather experiments with kites were conducted in Scotland in 1749 by two University of Glasgow students. Wondering if the air above the ground was colder or warmer than the air on the ground, Alexander Wilson and Thomas Melville put kites on a career path that would last for two centuries. The Scottish scientists required a controllable flying machine for their experiments, and since it was 30 years before the first balloon flight, and 150 years before the aeroplane, a kite flew to the rescue.

Wilson and Melville made six paper kites and tied a small thermometer to each kite. Each thermometer was bundled in strips of cloth to prevent the delicate instruments from breaking when they hit the ground. Each bundle had a slow burning fuse and a white ribbon attached. As the fuse burned through the string that bound the bundle to the kite, the white ribbons would surf the wind on a downward descent and signal to the experimenters. This was the first recorded attempt at obtaining scientific data using kites as well as the first recorded use of kites in a train.

The experiments of Wilson and Melville were successful. They published their research. However, their work went overlooked for over 70 years until Professor Wilson's memoirs were published in England in 1825 and reprinted two years later in America. The prominent meteorologist, James Espy, read Wilson and Melville's work in the USA while doing his own weather experiments with kites.

At about the same time (1822-1823), during Captain Sir William Edward Parry and Reverend George Fisher's second voyage, they took weather readings from a kite while in Igloodik, an island off the northeast coast of North America. The ground temperature at the time was minus 24 F.

In 1835, the Franklin Kite Club was formed. It consisted of several gentlemen who met once a week for the purpose of flying their kites for scientific experiments.



A Hargrave weather kite

Espy, author of *The Philosophy of Storms*, was a member of the Franklin Kite Club. Sir Francis Reynolds and W. R. Birt of the Kew Gardens Observatory in England developed a six-sided meteorological kite in 1847 that allowed meteorologist to raise and lower weather instruments using a pulley system.

The works of Espy, the Franklin Club, and other meteorologists excited scientists around the world for the next decade. Unfortunately, the invention and use of the weather balloon overshadowed any kite research for the next 40 years.

Then, just as quickly as the kite fell out of favor, it regained its perfect solution status. It was determined that the weather balloon had several shortcomings: a free floating balloon might be carried by high altitude winds to useless locations where the instruments could not be recovered, a tethered balloon could not be adequately controlled; lateral winds could whip it around in a large arc, or bring it down

instead of up. Kites were much less expensive, and provided better exposure of the instruments.

British Meteorologist, E. D. Archibald introduced the use of high-tensile piano wire lines to replace kite string in 1887. The piano wire had twice the strength, one-fourth the weight, and one half the cost of the previously used flax string. Wire lines had been used before, but Archibald used steel when he attached an anemometer (a wind meter) to his kites to measure the wind's velocity 1,200 feet above the earth. Archibald was also credited with being the first to hang a camera from a kite.

It was becoming increasingly evident that most kites of the time; those developed by the British meteorologists, or the hexagonal variation kite design (1892) by America's Alexander McAdie, were relatively unstable and not able to meet the increasing needs of weather forecasting. Two closely-timed developments; the bowed Eddy kite (1894) and the Hargrave cellular kite (1893), soon made kites practical and common for scientific experiments. From then on, until the middle of the twentieth century, kite flying for meteorological purposes was pursued with vim, vigor, and a single-minded dedication.

William Eddy began by using trains of "ordinary" hexagonal kites to lift thermometers in 1890. However, he was soon frustrated with their limitations. As the story goes, Eddy had heard of a bowed kite used for hundreds of years by natives of the South Pacific. He experimented with various configurations, trying to build one, even though he had never yet seen one. He hit upon two big breaks in 1893. Eddy saw a native Javanese kite at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago. He also received correspondence from a man in South Africa who described bowed kites that he had obtained from a merchant returning from Indonesia. Armed with this new information, William Eddy took a Malay kite, modified it to equal dimensions, and bowed the cross stick. With better kite designs and simple, light, and efficient self-recording instruments developed in France, meteorological kite research flourished.

During August of 1894, William Eddy brought his kites to the Blue Hill Observa-

tory in Boston to demonstrate their effectiveness. A. Lawrence Rotch privately ran the Blue Hill Observatory near Harvard. On August 4th, Eddy made the earliest automatic record of air temperature using kites. On that day, five bowed Eddy kites, with a total area of nine square meters, lifted a two and a half pound instrument to a height of 1,400 feet. During the next year, trains of Eddy kites were used at Blue Hill for raising instruments.

However, it became apparent that the 'workhorse' Hargrave box kite was even more perfectly suited for the study of weather. So obvious was it, in fact, that William Eddy himself wrote to Lawrence Hargrave, in December of 1893, asking for permission to use the box kite in his weather experiments. The box kite was implemented by both

"... scientists required a controllable flying machine ... and since it was 30 years before the first balloon flight, and 150 years before the aeroplane, a kite flew to the rescue."

Blue Hill and the U.S Weather Bureau in 1895 and would continue to be employed for meteorological work for over thirty years.

As of 1899, the Weather Bureau's kiting system, which consisted of box kites attached to a main line at 2,000-foot intervals, developed to a point where the measuring equipment was consistently lifted to altitudes exceeding 10,000 feet. The land power to control the powerful kite system had been available since 1896 by means of a sturdy steam-driven windlass, a modification of an apparatus developed by Sir William Thompson for deep-sea sounding. The windlass' reel could hold up to 40,000 feet of 14-gauge (0.03 inch) wire, which was spliced together at 8,000-foot intervals. A

dynamometer was attached to the winch-driven reel to measure the pull on the kite line. The pull in pounds told the men operating the kite station when to add secondary kites as well as when to begin reeling in kites.

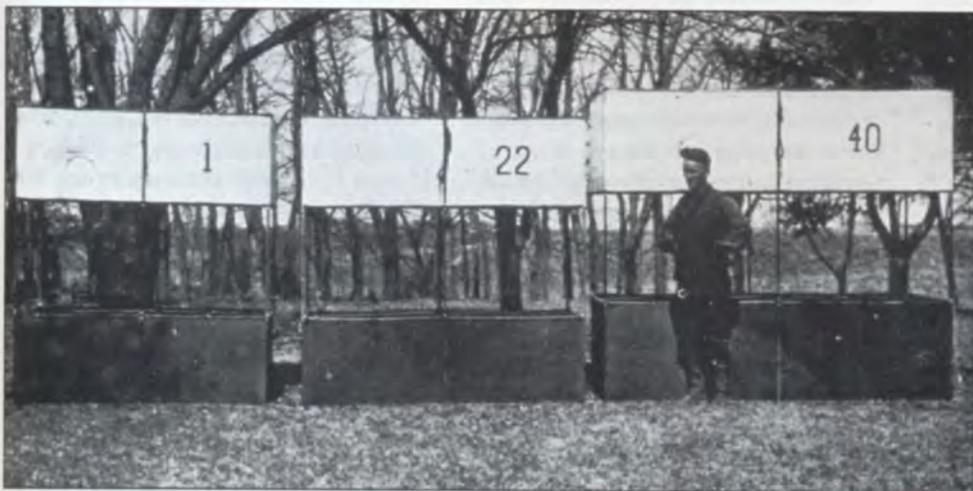
The zeal in which kites were used in meteorological research was ignited by the vision and passion of two top officials at the U.S Weather Service of that time: Charles F. Marvin, who directed the opening of 17 kite stations around the country to be used for regular weather observation, and Willis L. Moore, who promoted the use of kite trains in the early 1890's.

Both of these men championed the use of kites to be used for exploring the atmosphere. Marvin also designed the meteorograph; the basic instrument carried on kites used

for the testing of temperature, wind velocity, humidity at increasing altitudes, and barometric pressure.

During Marvin's 21 years as chief of the U.S. Weather Bureau, the use of kites for weather observation was perfected to an exact science. Each and every detail pertaining to the kite design, materials used, launching and landing, sites for launching, and countless other aspects of the operation were spelled out in the reams of government specifications. Nothing was left to chance. For example, the launch site was specified as a 40-acre square tract of land with open country to the east but with a small town approximately one kilometer to the west. The site had to be level,

continued on page 35



Weather kites for three different wind ranges

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and it is simpler." The kite version of Rogallo's innovation comes with "instructions on how to fly them on one line and on two lines." Although dual line control is not unique to the Rogallo kite, his version is said to have spurred the creation of many modern dual line kites.

Inspiration to develop a flexible wing hit Rogallo in 1945, but Francis' idea fell on deaf ears with his colleagues in Virginia. "So Gertrude and I just did it as a home project and we made small kites and gliders for a few years until in 1958 after Sputnik was launched that the United States decided to get into the space business." Fueled by the space race's momentum, Francis convinced the government officials "... that the flexible wing might be a useful thing in landing capsules and boosters, and so they allowed me to start testing in a wind tunnel that I was in charge of there." What started as a small kite, grew through the experimental trials to about "4,000 square feet of cloth area and we carried or tested them with payloads of 4,000 and 6,000 pounds." His experiments on the soft wing recovery device continued until 1970, "when space shuttles started being operated and they decided that, that would be more desirable than landing things with a flexible wing."

During his years of design development, Rogallo's flexible wing caught the attention of others outside Langley. The US Army looked into his glider "for landing cargo ... they did a lot of tests ... and showed that was feasible" but they did not adopt the wing on a large scale. The Ryan Aircraft Company also experimented with the Rogallo wing. They incorporated the flexible wing into their Fleep — a not too successful military-style cargo plane, its name a contraction of Flying Jeep. Developed in 1961, it was a "platform with a pilot seat on the front end of it and an engine with a push propeller on the rear back edge of it, and a space for quite a bit of cargo on this platform in between, and the whole thing was mounted on wheels for take off and landing. It was hung below a

flexible wing, with stiffener tubes at the leading edges and the keel." Not too many Fleeps rolled off the assembly line, but Gertrude and Francis trekked to the San Diego area to see the Fleeps fly, and, if you are wondering, "it flew very well."

With Army brass and aircraft companies investigating uses for Rogallo's brainchild, it isn't surprising that creative thinkers from other fields soon got interested in adapting the design for their uses, too. The Golden Knights parachute team "invited me to go down to Fort Bragg ... and give a talk and demonstration and they dropped some of the flexible wings of the size that would then open up and glide instead of just opening up and coming straight down like a parachute." Shortly after, the Pioneer Parachute Company and the Urban Parachute Company caught wind of this innovation and "started making paragliders suitable for people to jump out of airplanes and open up and glide with, and of course people have been doing that sort of thing ever since."

In the 1950s, before the aeronautic research community took Rogallo's design seriously, Rogallo tested his designs at home and took his kite to the commercial world to generate a profit to support his home-based research. "We thought, well, maybe the kites that we made in the development might be salable and we might make a little money to keep on with the work ... and also to publicize the idea of them as kites, so we went to New York and we sold them" to B. Altman department store in Manhattan, FAO Schwarz toy company, and gift shops in a nearby hotel. Marketing his design as a kite opened the door to the commercial world and helped him gain exposure to other helpful people.

At about the same time, a coworker at Langley introduced the Rogallos to his relative, Will Yolen, who was the publicity man for the American Toy Manufacturer's Association in hopes of fostering a partnership that would promote the Rogallo kite to the mass commercial market. Many now regard

Yolen's book *The Complete Book of Kites and Kiteflying*, as essential kite reading, but back then, Yolen "had never flown a kite." The Rogallos "went to his house and took him out to Central Park and taught him how to fly a kite ... and he got interested in it and thought he could help publicize it. I think he did."

Following Yolen's arrival came a brief venture with a businessman from New Haven, Connecticut. The man that "had made a business of selling Silly Putty put up in plastic eggs" was now courting the Rogallos. He wanted to put the Rogallo kite in the hands of every dollar-spending baby boomer in America. The Rogallos were eager and "we made a contract with him" but the venture floundered. "We really want to get into business, but I had a job as a research scientist that I didn't want to leave and ... Gertrude didn't want to run a business either on her own ... so we broke the contract." The timing couldn't have been better, shortly after the great space race "went great guns" and Francis bowed out of the world of retail, as you know, to test his engineering creations at Langley.

Although his design idea eventually saw the NASA's cutting room floor, all that time at the drawing board was not in vain. Rogallo's work pioneered a new dimension in the world of kite flying and gave rise to the sport of hang gliding. "Well I don't know whether I revolutionized [leisure flying sports] or not, but I guess we did make a dent in it or have some influence on it, and I think it is a satisfaction to know that you helped to create something new that many people find of value for one reason or another." 🌀

Several chatty kitefliers let the tape spin and recorded their memories and thoughts about kites, kitefliers, and the great big sky for the World Kite Museum's oral history archive project. Interested in telling your stories? Would you like to hear what other fliers say? Got time to interview special people in your local club or friends in far away places? Feel free to contact the Museum if you'd like to learn more about the oral history tapes. Contact us at info@worldkitemuseum.com.

The Father of the Winged Kite

by Patti Gibbons

When I look around my kitchen, often, I see chores. There are dishes to wash, meals to cook, a teapot to clean, and plants begging for water. It isn't exactly the place I turn to for rest and inspiration. Actually, it is a place I would rather avoid. Thankfully, not everyone runs screaming from the kitchen. Back in the day, pioneering aeronautic researcher Francis Rogallo looked around his kitchen, and convinced his wife Gertrude to let him cut up their curtains to make his first flexible wing prototype. Nosey neighbors may have snickered at the naked window in the Rogallo house, but his handiwork got the attention of the US government, future gliding and kite enthusiasts, along with the promoter of Silly Putty.

Sounds stranger than fiction? It isn't. Like many inventors, Rogallo's sparks of inspiration and life's work made an impact on several, seemingly unrelated, segments of modern culture. In 1995, kiteflier and kite book author Wayne Hoskings met up with Francis and Gertrude Rogallo to talk to them about the flexible wing, scientific research at NASA (then known as NACA), and some interesting people they met along the way for the Kite Museum's Oral History Archive Project.

Francis Rogallo, born in his parent's hotel in Sanger, California in 1912, was one of four sons born to Polish and French immigrants. The young couple, new to America, met in San Francisco, married, and ran a bustling hotel just outside of Fresno. Francis' father passed away while he was in grammar school and his mother later married a veterinary doctor with two children. The family of eight believed in education, and sent the four eldest children to boarding schools. Francis journeyed to a military academy in San Marcos, Texas, and later returned to Sanger. After high school Francis was encouraged to continue his studies. He dove head-first into engineering and for two

years he commuted twenty miles a day to attend Fresno State College, before transferring to Stanford University to complete his degree in mechanical engineering. Sheepskin in hand, but still curious, Francis stayed at Stanford to receive a graduate degree in 1935 from its Guggenheim School of Aeronautics.

Francis was ready for work, but the economic effects of the Great Depression limited his career choices. Rogallo remembers "the only job I could find ... was as a mechanical engineer with the Shell Chemical Company in Pittsburgh, California." Although grateful to find work as an engineer, this position wasn't really what flight-lusting Rogallo was after. As a shot in the dark, he took the civil service exam-



ination along with thousands of other engineers, hoping to be selected for a research position at the Langley Research Center to pursue a career in aeronautic research. "There were so many [exam] papers that it took [the government] eight months to get the papers corrected." Rogallo's dream of joining this top aeronautic research team seemed like a long shot, so the aspiring engineer turned practical and took a job that opened up with the Douglas Aircraft Company and decided to dig in there. "About four months after that ... I got an offer to come to Langley ... they were going to hire seven people from the whole United States, and I was lucky enough to be one of those, the top seven that took this examination." Lady luck did indeed smile, and in the middle of 1936 Francis headed

east to work in this elite hands-on think tank. Rogallo tinkered and toiled, logging countless hours of tests in government's research wind tunnels until he finally retired in 1970 and relocated with his wife to their summer home in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

Reflecting back on childhood influences, interests, and hobbies, Francis recalls, "Well, I liked anything that flew." Although kites were about as common as white elephants when and where he grew up, Rogallo remembers flying hand-made Eddys and three-stick kites in the spring while away at school. "In my hometown, I never saw a kite fly until I flew one there myself." Even with empty skies, his playful wings were not clipped. Young Francis found fun with "little propellers mounted on a spool" that sprung up into the air when he yanked its tightly wound cord. He remembers that, "if you killed it, it would fly a long distance." Rogallo also remembers heated glider contests with classmates. His schoolyard was wedged into a hilly mountain crag, a perfect location for long-distance glider competitions. One of his top performing designs was his paper glider "... with the flex wing. It was pointed in the front and had two lobes in it, and the keel was the same length as the leading edges." And who said childhood games weren't valuable learning experiences?

Throughout the years, Rogallo's lifelong interest in aviation research survived his many experiments for work and for pleasure. Rogallo's flexible wing kite is perhaps his best-known invention (at least in the kite world), yet it is only one of his twenty-one patent-winning creations. Known by many names — the "Rogallo wing" or the "flexikite" or the "flexible wing" — it is a stickless flying device that can use two lines for directional flight control. Rogallo also toyed with a three-line version where you "could do both directional and pitch control, but we decided that two lines was really all you need

by Jeremy Johannessen

I designed this banner wanting a patriotic design that offered the most bang for the buck. I ended up with this design that yields four 60" banner out of under four yards of material.

Materials — makes 4 banners

- 1 yard Red
- 1/2 yard Blue
- 1.5 yards White
- 1 yard 200 denier flag cloth — White

Cut List

- 6 Strips White — 6" X 54"
- 5 Strips Red — 6" X 54"
- 2 Squares Blue — 16" X 16"
- 4 Strips White Flag Cloth — 6"X60"
- All 1.5 ounce ripstop nylon

Construction

Begin by joining all eleven 6" X 54" strips using a straight-stitch 3/8" seam, starting and ending with white (don't flat fell seam yet.) (Fig. 1)

Cut this panel in half, resulting in two panels 26" X 66"

Measure in 16" from opposite sides on the short ends of each panel. Connect points and hot cut along line. (Fig. 2)

Remove the smallest white strip from each section using a seam ripper.

Flat fell seams using a zig-zag stitch, downward starting at the widest white strip. Stripped panels are complete.

Cut 16" blue squares in half diagonally.

Appliqué a white star onto each of the four triangles. (We used a 5" star. Stars can easily be made using MS Word, insert symbol, wingdings, there is a star, resize as needed.)

Join triangle to the top white section using a straight stitch 3/8" seam. (Be careful to keep the seam on the same side.)

Hem the outside edge of banner with a 3/8" double-rolled hem, using a zig-zag stitch.

Fold 6" flag cloth sleeve in half and place it on the good side of the banner. Attach using a straight stitch 3/8" seam. If desired fold a halved 3" piece of tab stock into seam at bottom of banner to attach a banner pole tie line.

Open banner away from sleeve and flat fell seam using a 3/8" zig-zag stitch.

Banner is complete. Fig. 3

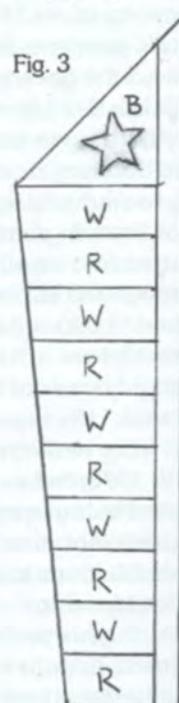
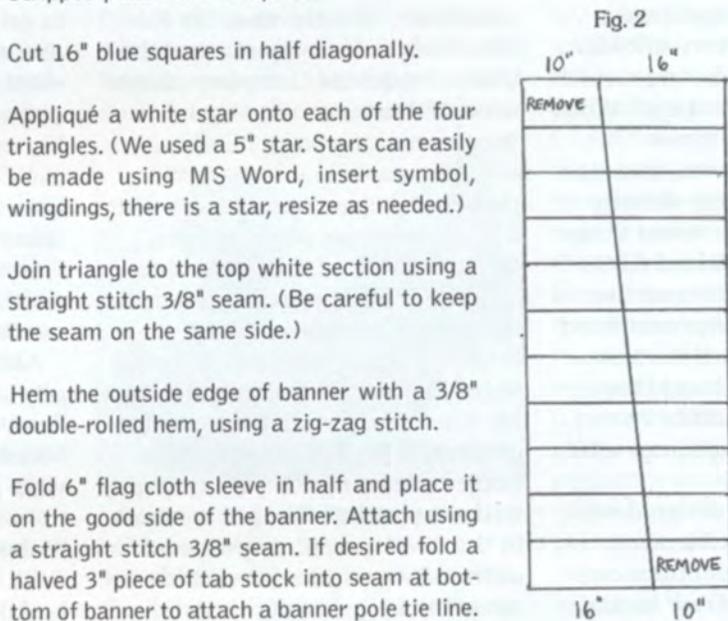
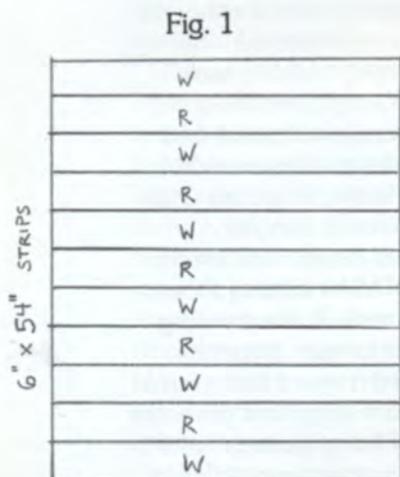
Accessories

30" X 3/8" diameter rebar is recommended.

Banner pole can be made from 1/2" CPVC or PVC pipe, cut into two 30" piece for easy transport. Connect using a straight coupler.

8/02 - 3/03 ©

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AKA Member Honored by the Women's Sports Foundation

The Women's Sports Foundation held their annual fundraising dinner, A Salute to Women in Sports, at the beautiful Waldorf-Astoria in New York City last weekend. 100 athletes from all sports are invited to the dinner where tickets go for over \$1,000

For the first time in history, a kiteboarding athlete was included in the champion line-up. Laurel Eastman (USA - Wipika/Da Kine) was invited by the foundation to help in raising over one million dollars for women in sports.

This event was massive for the sport of kiteboarding. At the national press conference, WSF president and first woman to captain an America's Cup yacht, Dawn Riley introduced the event to the press by saying:

The Women's Sports Foundation is for all sports, even new ones, like kiteboarding, we even have a kiteboarder here today.

Ms. Eastman, who has recently started her first kiteboarding school at the Caracol Kiteboarding Center in Cabarete, spent the weekend introducing our sport to some of the most powerful women athletes of all time. Many sparks were lit last weekend, look



out for women's kiteboarding, windsurfing, and surfing camps in Cabarete this March and April (check out laureleastmankiteboarding.com for details)

Having an organization like the Women's Sports Foundation on the kiteboarding team is an amazing blessing. The foundation (started 30 years

ago by tennis legend Billie Jean King) provides grants for girls and women to train and travel, and distributes educational material, provides motivational speakers and reaches millions of women each year with the mission to ensure equal access to sports and leadership for women.

The WSF also is producing the book *Superwomen: 100 Women, 100 Sports* by Jodi Buren which features Laurel Eastman.

The book's release will coincide with the opening of the 2004 Olympic Games. Check it out on womenssportsfoundation.org

Editor's note: Laurel Eastman was featured in Volume 25, Issue 3 of Kiting; in the "Women in Kiteboarding" article. We offer our congratulations to Laurel for this well-deserved recognition.

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There are many Austin traditions that make this city such a desirable place to live and work and rear our families. One of these is a 75 year tradition that our family has held dear for the last 41 years. It is the annual Zilker Kite Festival held in March each year at Zilker Park.



Winifred Gustavson, 3/10/1929

In 1929, Ed St. John, the head of the Exchange Club of Austin, was looking for an activity in which the youth of Austin could participate. He remembered flying kites in Zilker Park as he roamed near his father's brick-making plant. He also wanted an activity where the youth could be creative and make their own. So on March 10, 1929 the first annual kite tournament (now called a festival) was inaugurated. It was held at old Lamar Park and continued there until 1936, when it was moved to Zilker Park. The tradition has continued ever since at Zilker, and this year celebrated its 75th year. No other American city of any size has had such a long standing and continuous festival. And participants have always been required to fly homemade or handcrafted kites.

Our family joined that tradition by participating in the 1963 festival and has been represented at every one since. I, too, have flown kites along with my kids and grandkids. The festival was restricted to youth until 1960 when all ages were allowed to participate. As our five kids were growing up, we had a lot of kites to make. A differ-

An Austin Tradition ...

ent homemade kite had to be flown if a person entered more than one event. The two boys helped with construction and the three girls did a lot of decorating. Needless to say, our family's stash of homemade kites has now reached overwhelming proportions.

In 1967, I joined the American Kitefliers Association, newly formed in 1964 for adult kite enthusiasts. There were 180 of us around the country; now there are over 4,000 members world-wide. In the early days of the organization, I corresponded with the other members and exchanged kite plans with them. As a result, we introduced Sled Kites, Parafoils, Seven-Sisters, and Stunt kites to the Austin festival. Our kids won many prizes during their growing-up years. Now, our ten grandchildren participate whenever they can.

Original sponsors of the event were the Exchange Club, Parks and Recreation Department, and the Austin American Statesman. The Exchange Club and Parks and Recreation con-

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tinue to be the major sponsors. Spectators come out in droves to watch or fly their store-bought kites outside the flying field. Beautiful weather has brought as many as 10,000 spectators. Kite enthusiasts from around Texas and adjoining states come to partici-

the Zilker Festival

by Richard Robertson

pate and for the last few years, the President of the American Kitefliers Association has brought huge demonstrator kites to entertain the crowd. Kite enthusiasts and experts Bunnie and Dorsey Twidwell, who are also members of the Exchange club have managed the festival in recent years and are responsible for expanding it to even greater levels of community participation.

Along with the Parks and Recreation Department, some of us have conducted kitemaking workshops for many years to promote the annual event. Beginning in 1983, we have held an annual city-wide workshop at Northwest Recreation Center the last Saturday in February. We fill the gymnasium with kites and have five workstations for different simple kites. After a show and tell we send kids and parents to make as many as five kites. Some of us have also been to the schools for many years promoting kite activities. Summitt Elementary School

has held "Summitt Soaring Skyward Day" for the past thirteen years. I have decorated their 16-ft high hallway with big kites each year and do "show and tell" kite classes on the appointed day.

Ed St. John started a good Austin tradition 75 years ago. And thanks to his Exchange Club and the Austin Parks and Recreation Department, that tradition has been carried out since. It's been great that our family has been able to participate in it for these last 41 years. ☼



Jeannie and Linda Robertson, 1970



Ed St. John introducing fighter kites to the author



The Big, Bad Bug



Brothers Bev and Charles Gorin, 1936



A scene from an early festival, year unknown



A festival winner by the author



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The Story of Bertha & the Guppies

by Betty Hirschmann

Some of you may know the story of Cel Dallmer, wife of past Region 2 director Mike Dallmer. In August of 2002, Cel was hospitalized, and for the next 359 days she remained hospitalized. For the first month she was kept in a drug-induced coma as she suffered from kidney and pancreas problems. She underwent many operations, received in excess of 25 blood transfusions, and fought fevers reaching as high as 104.9 degrees.

Well, on August 22, 2003, at 1:30 PM, after a small going home party, Cel was released. She spent 23 hours at home in which time she had numerous bouts of nausea, and by 12:30 the next day she was back in the hospital. All this being said, I am happy to report that Cel is once again home with her family.

A few days before Scott Spencer and I were to leave for the convention, we went to see Cel at home and to collect the items that Mike was holding for the AKA auction; Mike was one of the organizers. When we got there, Cel told us of an item that she wanted, and asked me to bid on Bertha & the Guppies (a large bouncing fish and 12 guppies), which was made and donated by The Kansas City Kite Club; she authorized me to spend up to \$300, but could not afford to pay more.

When I arrived at the convention, I was told that Region 8 director Gayle Woodul was interested in bidding high on Bertha. I caught up with Gayle out on the kite flying field, and explained the situation with Cel. She told me that she wasn't planning to bid on them, that she had assisted in their delivery since the donor was not able to attend; whew, we dodged the bullet.

Gayle and I spread the word about what Cel wanted, but when it came time to bid on Bertha someone was bidding right along with me. When it got to \$240, Gayle hollered across the room at them and told them to cease bidding. At this point I made a \$250 bid and was able to secure Bertha & the Kids for Cel; Gayle and I were elated with the outcome, and Gayle immediately went to the other bidder and explained the situation.

Well, Gayle was not content to let it end this way, Cel being out \$250, so she sent a note to David Gomberg (the auctioneer) asking him to announce that we would love to send the items to Cel as a present from the AKA membership so that she would have no out of pocket expense. She asked for donations of any size from those in attendance.

As soon as the announcement was made, we were rushed by at least 30 people who wanted to help send Bertha & the Guppies to Cel. I couldn't look at Gayle, who was crying on Mel Hickman's shoulder, because when I did I would cry right along with her.

When Scott and I returned home we called Mike to see when we could come over to the house and bring Bertha home, Mike advised that Cel had a relapse and was once again hospitalized. We made arrangements to go to the hospital the next day. When we got there, we surprised Cel with a bouquet of flowers, a scented candle with a stopper with a cute little bear on it (Cel loves bears), and Bertha & the Guppies (your donations went past the cost of Bertha).

Before Mike came to the hospital, he went to the bank to get the \$250 he owed me, but when he tried to give it to me I handed him a copy of an email that I



had received from Gayle. She had written to the Kansas City Kite Club thanking them for their donation, and explaining to them why the item did not bring as much money for the AKA as it might have. She assured them that their gift provided a much more expansive donation to the AKA and its members — the opportunity to give a true gift of love to one of our own ... from all of us. It was all Mike could do to read the email to Cel; we were all a little teary-eyed. When he finished reading, Cel was almost speechless, but she did manage to wish a sincere thank you to all.

I personally want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who were touched by Cel's story and gave so generously, and to all of you who continue to keep her in your thought and prayers. If you wish to drop a card to the Dallmers, they can be reached at 7204 Oakley Street Philadelphia, PA 19111. ☀



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Club Profile

Kite Society of Wisconsin & Illinois

by Scott Fisher

What a year! The Kite Society of Wisconsin & Illinois pulled off another very successful kite flying season with seven large kite festivals, dozens of smaller events and workshops, over 65,000 in attendance, and more fun than human beings should be allowed to have. The success, says Jeff Kataoka, President of the Kite Society, "is due to a dedicated core of members, great sponsors (the Gift of Wings kite store and others), a very loyal and dedicated group of performers, and years of planning and experience. The simple truth is that we just know how to make it work, and it is still fun."

The year of major kite festivals started off with the Cool Fool Kite Festival on New Years Day. Twenty-five hundred people had a great day flying kites on Milwaukee's lakefront.

The second event was Wings on Strings, held in conjunction with the EAA Airventure Museum in April and held mostly in the rain and inside the museum. Despite the rainy day, more than 2,000 folks showed up and participated.

The Family Kite Festival was held in Milwaukee's Veterans Park in late May under ideal flying conditions. The day was outstanding, with over 15,000 people showing up for the event. The Outta Sight Kite Flight was held next in Kennedy Park in June, in conjunction with the City of Kenosha. Over 9,000 folks enjoyed some of the best winds known to Lake Michigan fliers, right off the lake at around 10 mph all day long. The giant kites of Yves LaForest and Mr. Kite (Craig Christensen) just hung in the sky all day long.

On the heels of that festival, KSWI teamed up with seven radio stations and the largest bank in the state of Wisconsin to put on a show in Veterans Park for the Fireworks Fly-in. There were nearly 300,000 folks that showed up to watch the fireworks and of course, the giant kites of Yves LaForest.

The 25th annual Frank Mots Kite Festival rounded out the year with two days of fun, flying and just a bit more rain and fog than we would have liked. Now under most rainy, foggy conditions, you would think that kites would stay on the ground and the

crowds would stay away. While the crowds were down from the normal of around 15,000-18,000 people, the kites and spirits were flying higher than ever. We got wet and we had mud on our shoes, and yeah, I was doing dozens of interviews on local TV holding an umbrella, but we all had a lot of fun. The club opened a Frank Mots Museum on the grounds, new Frank Mots t-shirts and pins were sold, Chicago Fire was hotter than ever, and the Johnsonville Brats were sizzling on the grill. There was even an actor hired to play the role of Frank Mots, the long time Kite King of Milwaukee, and some Klingons were rumored to be walking around the crowd. Just wait until next year. Speaking of next year, watch out for all of these same great festivals, and watch out Chicago, because you may have a new festival coming your way before you can say "Windy City." Also plans are underway to sponsor festivals in Janesville, Green Bay, and Beaver Dam, Wisconsin.

The Kite Society is a club on the move helping to spread the word about kites flying and still having fun along the way. I would be remiss, however, if I did not thank our family of dedicated performers, who are key to the success of our festivals. Eric Wolff and the whole Chicago Fire team; Kathy, Russ, Dan, Josh; Josh and Zach Gordon and their wonderful Super Mom, Ann, Bob and Karen Rouhle, Bob and Elaine Cosby, "Mr. Kite" Craig Christensen, Mike Delfar, Jim Wirt, Lolly Hadzicki, Craig Wilson, Paul Fieber, Paula Schenk, Andy Becker, and our most honored guests from Montreal, Canada, Yves LaForest and Anne Clement and their giant kites. When it comes to the best large kites in North America, and classy folks, both are on top of the world.

The Kite Society of Wisconsin & Illinois is a club consisting of over 200 dedicated members, mostly in Wisconsin and Illinois; and covering Iowa, Minnesota, and Michigan. For more information on the club, contact Jeff Kataoka at (414) 277-9121 or Scott Fisher at (414) 425-9993. ☺

Chat with the Champion

An interview with grand national champion kitemaker lam hoac

For most of the last ten years, Lam Hoac has been a dominant force on the sport kite competition field, winning numerous championships in dual-line, multi-line, and indoor competition. Several years ago, Lam got serious about kitemaking competition as well, and won several categories at the previous few conventions. This year, Lam raised his game yet again, and was awarded the Grand National Champion award for best kite at the convention. *Kiting* editor Mike Gillard talked with Lam just hours before the awards were announced.

Kiting: Lam, "Skymaster" is simply a stunning kite. Can you tell us a little about the design of the kite?

Lam: For the Skymaster, I put a lot of time into the design, trying to get a kite that would do all of the new tricks that the European fliers have been doing for the last two years, the ones that we didn't really know anything about! I wanted to catch up, to update my skill

level, and move up further from what I know now.

Kiting: Let's talk a little about the graphic design of the kite. It has some really unusual and beautiful characters on it.

Lam: When I design a kite, I try to visualize it traveling through the sky, I try to make graphics that make the kite look powerful and cool. I put the dragon on the left panel, with fire coming out of it's mouth; on the right side is the name of the dragon, "Skymaster," in Chinese symbols, sitting on the clouds. All of the characters are to prove that this really IS the Skymaster.

Kiting: What are the symbols beside your signature?

Lam: That is my name in Chinese. I put a signature on every kite.

Kiting: Any new or different construction techniques used on this kite?

Lam: This kite is totally different than the last one. It's reinforced in different areas than my others, to allow tricks like yo-yos and backspins and all kinds of other cool tricks without

tearing up the sail. Every time I do one of those cool tricks with this kite I just love it — I know I am getting further skills.

Kiting: Is this a "flying" kite, or a "wall" kite?

Lam: (laughs) Before the convention, it was a "flying" kite; now, I will probably only fly it in light wind, in nice weather, on soft grass. I'll probably put less mileage on it!

Kiting: Sort of like that beautiful classic car that you keep in the garage and only take out on Sundays

Lam: Lots of them! (laughs) Some of them fly, some of them don't — but, you know, you learn something every time you make one. My specialty is to improve my technique and



for a short drive in perfect weather ...

Lam: That's right! (laughs)

Kiting: How long have you been designing and building kites, Lam?

Lam: I built my first stunt kite in 1987. Every couple of years I make a new one, trying to improve on the last one, and catch up with what people are doing out there.

Kiting: Do you have any idea how many kites you have built?

design every time. I may make a kite that may seem to be perfect — but there is always a better one somewhere down the road.

Kiting: Myself and many other AKA members have had a lot of fun watching you progress in your abilities over the years; thanks for all of your great work.

Lam: I thank all of the people who have offered me encouragement, it's been a lot of fun! ☼



Tales of a Convention First-Timer

Six Days of Big Smiles and Sore Feet

by Rick Hawkins

I have attended quite a few trade shows and hobby gatherings over the years, but nothing has ever compared to the AKA national convention. To add to the excitement, this year it was held in the home town of the Wright Brothers at the US Air Force Museum. I had the opportunity to meet many new friends and to sometimes just stand back and take it all in. The who's who of the kiting world was sitting across the table from me at dinner or standing on the other side of the giant kite I was helping to get back into the air. I had my official badge, so as far as they were concerned, I was one of the gang.

As I drove from Houston, I had only one thing on my mind ... well, actually two. I checked *Kiting* and Yellow Page listings for kite shops along the way, and second, I thought about the articles that I had read about past conventions that were all in my head. I had a mental image of what I would find at the end of my 1,200 mile drive, but it turned out to be more than I could have imagined! I was so excited to get there that I took a few naps, but forgot to stop and spend the night along the way, so I was a day early!

Sunday evening was spent playing tourist. I visited the Wright Brothers Cycle Shop and the museum at the spot where they flew their kites. I heard about how as brothers they were forced to listen to each other. People speculate that a simple partnership would have fallen apart long before their goal was reached. One would have an idea and the other would give the input that was needed to fully develop it. They spent many a day arguing but in the end, they worked out their problems and differences.

Both were dreamers with their feet firmly planted on earth, at least for the time being. They spent endless hours researching and figuring out other's mistakes and then putting the ideas in motion to reach their goal. I felt that I was able to understand a little better than most how people reacted to grown men playing with kites.

Monday found me helping to set up the bag raffle for the welcome get-together. Lots of people jumped in and did what needed to be done to get months of work to the final few hours. The tables were filled with goodies and the tickets were filling the bags. As table numbers were called the groups lined up to fill their plates. Being almost last was part of my table's plan. We figured we would save our luck for the raffle. As the last bites of food were consumed, my dinner companions began to hear their numbers called and to collect their share of the goodies. The last number was called, and after thanking those involved, the guests retired to their rooms or gathered in the lounge.

The rest of the week was a blur. Get up and grab breakfast, then attend a class or two. As you walked between sessions, Marla and her associates assisted you in trading cash for tickets to be used in the bag raffle. Next on the agenda was to grab a bite on the way to the field to join the mass ascension of the kite of the day. The rest of the day was spent looking and learning. For those that were taking part in the competitions, it was off to the practice fields. In the evening, it was time to visit with new friends and contemplate the day's activities and all that you learned, along with planning out your next day's

schedule. Add the Fly Market, a night fly, the auctions and banquets and you get an idea of how full the schedule can be. At the end of the week you find yourself tired but it's a great feeling.

Before attending the Dayton convention, reading *Kiting* magazine, I was the guy looking in from the outside. But now I feel like I'm a full-fledged member of the gang. I asked questions and got lots of answers. My aching legs tell me that it was a long week of walking from field to field, not to mention the large hangers filled with planes right out of the history books. Every night I was like a kid at Christmas who can't wait to wake up the next morning to see what the day will bring. Then, Sunday morning I woke up and it was time to go back home. The drive back seemed to take forever. In fact, I stretched it into two and a half days.

I'm back at work now, but my mind is on the next convention in Oregon. I will be able to fill part of the time with my local group (S.H.A.R.K.) at our home field and attend as many local and not-so-local festivals in the coming year. Needless to say, I will be gathering up a group to join the fun! ☼

cleared of trees and stumps, and surrounded by a strong fence to keep out livestock. In addition, the surrounding country needed to be free of forested tracts, lakes, marshes, rivers, streams and electric railways, as well as high-tension power lines.

The government weather observers used three different sized kites. They were classified as high-wind kites, moderate-wind kite for 12–30 miles per hour winds, and light-wind kites for 8–10 mph winds. The moderate wind kite used by the U.S. Weather Bureau up until 1933 was made as follows: length 6 feet 8.5 inches (204 cm), width 6 feet 5.5 inches (197 cm), depth of cell 2 feet 8.5 inches (83 cm), lifting surface was 68 square feet (6.3 sq. meters), weight is 8.5 pounds (3.8 kilograms), the framework consisted of 41 pieces of straight-grained spruce. Weather bureau carpenters used 78 metal angles to fasten joints, coarse waxed linen thread and 175 feet of fine piano wire were used for supplementing the reinforcing of metal angles and for bracing. The fabric surface was 13 yards of 26.5 inch wide Lonsdale cambric cloth, although sometimes the rear cell and occasionally both front and rear cells were made of silk which was less likely to become waterlogged in rain. The one change that Marvin made to the Hargrave box kite was that, while the outside dimensions of both the front and rear cells remained the same, the front cell was subdivided so that it consisted of two cells, providing a stronger structure to carry instruments. A common problem for the Weather Bureau kite fliers was when the surface fabric absorbed moisture and dried, it shrank, the contraction of the surface fibers during shrinkage was powerful enough to distort and even crush parts of the wooden frame.

As far as I am concerned, the greatest development to come out of 200 years of weather research involving kites was the kite reel house! It was, bar none, the most ingenious contribution to kiting. A kite reel house looks like a round garage that is mounted on a turntable so that it can turn to face any direction desired according to the prevailing wind.

As the U.S. Weather Bureau matured, they turned their attention from altitude records and static electricity experiments

to obtaining regular accurate reports. That meant almost daily flights in every kind of weather imaginable. During the



Kite reel house

winter months the kite line (cold hard piano wire) had to be wiped free of ice and frost before it could be reeled in. The piano wire kite line also had to be oiled regularly to avoid rusting. Constant maintenance like this certainly would have taken the romantic notion of kite flying out of one's head rather quickly.

The dawn of the twentieth century saw many European and American meteorological bureaus using kites in their research regularly. In England in 1902, W. H. Dines collaborated with W. N. Shaw in a series of private kite experiments for which they received some financial support from the government. The first British kite station was set up in Crinan, off the west coast of Scotland. Deciding it would make them less dependent on the strength of the wind, Dines and Shaw used a steam-powered tug boat to take readings at sea. Later, a naval vessel was put at their disposal. They also took readings at Oxshott and Pyrton Hill.

In America, the kite of choice to be used by the U.S. Weather Service and privately run research stations such as Blue Hill, was the Hargrave box kite. In Russia, instead of the rectangular sectioned box kite, the scientists created one with a semicircular section and curved part to face the wind. England's was a diamond shape, and in most cases the kites had 30–80 square feet of sail area.

Other kite stations to observe and monitor weather were set up at Jutland (1902), Scottish National Antarctic Expe-

dition (1903), India (1905), Egypt (1907), as well as other large posts across Europe and America. The first permanent government-established station for kite flying in Europe was at Viborg, at the extreme north of Denmark. The governments of Denmark, Sweden, and France cooperated in constructing and manning the facility.

Today, only occasional weather experiments are performed. Kites at the weather station at Colorado State University are one example. Fortunately, however, the strong and stoic meteorological kites of yesterday may be currently enjoying a resurgence. They have begun to appear at kite festivals across Europe and America as beautiful historical reproductions.

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Avoiding Kite Bans

by Rick Iossi

Kiteboarding can be a very liberating, extreme sport. You throw yourself into it, after adequate preparation and safety considerations, to drive hard, fly high and long. The stoke of this sport is beyond compare and even addictive for many of us. In society though, with most great freedoms often comes responsibility to preserve that freedom. If you want the incredible stoke flung out in great bouts by this sport you have to take some care to protect your ability to ride. Kiteboarding, sad to say, is NOT a God-given constitutional right and can be easily lost.

Just like not landing your airplane on the highway, or respecting climbing rules in National Parks or waverunner operating restrictions in swimmer zones, if you wanna play you need to follow some reasonable practices and guidelines. If you don't, you may well be shut down at some point.

Some kiteboarding restrictions have appeared in various areas. A few of these restrictions on access and riding are logical, such as in the case of excessive beach crowding, and should have been undertaken by riders, VOLUNTARILY before Big Brother stepped in. No one likes being overwhelmed by laws, if we use our head and fly at our sport responsibly, government should stay out of our way in most cases. Things like staying out of guarded swim areas while kiteboarding, for instance, when more thinly-populated unguarded areas are present not so far away.

DISTANCE in kiteboarding can be a very good thing. It protects you the rider, bystanders and your ability to ride in many cases. If you don't use distance you may be shredding more than just water, you may be shredding your ability to ride there in the long term. Being hooked on showing off to the

crowd near the shoreline may well show you to the door and out of kiteboarding at your launch. Working things out with windsurfers in long term riding areas is a very good thing. Figuring out how to coexist is a more productive goal than promoting problems and rivalry through poor communication and indifference.

Consciously avoiding complaints and official concern are essential steps in protecting kiteboarding access in lots of areas. Many current restrictions started with complaints and repeated behaviors that gave substance to the complaints. Unfortunately, people often require to be "burned" to take a threat seriously as opposed to using the old noggin to dodge an obvious and avoidable threat in the first place. This trait has caused humanity a lot of heartache through the ages but there it is.

Are you concerned about kiteboarding FREE and at will for the long haul?

1. Do you see the basis for problems or complaints at your riding area?
2. Tactfully ask lifeguards, park rangers, bystanders if they see any problems or have complaints about kiteboarding on a periodic basis. Consider putting on kiting orientations for these public authorities, it may help them to manage and understand our sport a bit better.
3. If you see or hear about problems, figure out some reasonable solutions, gather the local kiteboarders including leading riders, shop owners, instructors, etc. and talk about what you folks have to lose and some means of keeping the good times flying. Once you decide on solutions, present them to the authorities and effectively promote them to local riders.
4. Promote kiteboarders to use DISTANCE. That is avoid guarded public beaches unless by prior agreement with the authorities in designated launch corridors. Also avoid annoying private homeowners in launch areas. Problems usually start with complaints.
5. Make sure that ALL kiteboarders use tested, functioning KITE depowering leashes. "Put a leash on that thing before it bites someone!"
6. Promote the Safe Kiteboarding Guidelines** and other appropriate practices at your launch. This collection of ideas is intended to try to improve rider and bystander safety and minimize complaints and threats to access. Add in your own local guidelines as necessary.
7. Consider having get-togethers or KiteNites to bring riders together, create a sense of "community" and spread ideas on how to keep the good times flying at your local launch.
8. Contact your local kiteboarding association for help. If you don't have one or need one, think about starting one yourself. It all starts with putting two or more concerned riders together with a mind to protect access to ride. It doesn't have to be complicated or fancy, just effective!
9. Don't let just one or two guys fall into the role of "kite cop." These leaders are looking out for your access as well. There is strength in numbers, so when a rider needs to be set straight on what his riding practices are putting at risk, take your friends for best effect.
10. Many areas don't have problems but quite a few others do. Securing your access starts with identifying the problem in the first place and before things fly off too far south. So check out things out at your local launches.
11. More ideas on preserving access appear at the AKA Website at www.aka.kite.org/KiteBoarding.shtml with more ideas available at www.kiteforum.com/phpbb/viewtopic.php?t=6098

AKA Kiteboarding Committee
transcribed by Rick Iossi

** Safe Kiteboarding Guidelines at www.kiteforum.com/phpbb/viewtopic.php?t=11313

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A Wonderful Japanese Tradition

by Tom Goetz, Sapporo, Japan

New Years in Japan is more of a time of ritual than revelry. It is also a time of reflection and relaxation. In our neighborhood we hear the various Buddhist temples ringing their clapperless bells 108 times on New Year's Eve to help us forget the evil thoughts we needlessly carried about.

Last year on New Year's Day we went to a local hot springs. In the parking lot, my mother-in-law took a kind of vengeful delight in seeing that her handmade Matsukasari was better than all the others.

A Matsukasari is a miniature decoration



that adorns the fronts of cars during the New Year. Together with our children we enjoyed "Tako-age," or kite flying. The winter winds of Hokkaido were perfect for lifting our small but colorful store-bought kites off the ground. My daughter flew her "Hello Kitty" rokkaku. Such kites are seasonally available in most home improvement stores. Then the snow came wetting the paper kites, reminding us once again that years, like kites, endure for only a limited time.

So, Happy New Year from Hokkaido! 🌸

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Convention Kitemaking Competition, continued from page 14

Congratulations also to the rest of the 2003 winners. We had 99 kites entered into competition and we were able to hand out awards in every category. I wish I had room to list them all but space limitations force me to direct you online to the AKA Website.

We also give out several "Special Awards." These are trophies that are given at the discretion of the judges. The Mixed Media award is given to the kitebuilder who has altered the surface design of their kite by the use of

paint, dye, paper, or other materials to enhance the visual appeal. This year the winner used sequins, flowers, feathers, and lace. She also dressed the part with an outrageous purple dress and red hat. Barb Hall was the winner with the kite she called "The Red Hat."

Best Use of Traditional Materials went to the kitemaker whose kite most closely adhered to the original techniques and materials in use when the kites of the style were first built. This year's award went to John Gabby and the kite he called "Vanilla Elegance." It was a small Edo made from washi paper and northern Japanese spruce.

Most Innovative Kite was awarded to the kitebuilder with uniqueness or innovation in design of the frame, use of graphics, or flight characteristics. Year after year, after year, this kitebuilder continuously improved upon his design of the stunt kite. Just when the judges thought he could go no further, Lam Hoac did it again. His kite, "Sky-master" was filled with innovation and special design attributes. Lam's attention to detail was astounding and his workmanship was something we have never seen before in a dual line kite. It was obvious that Lam needed to win this award.

The Special Recognition Award is given totally at the discretion of the judges. It is not based on winning a category, nor does it have anything at all to do with the score. It is awarded to the kitemaker who takes an extra step and shows the true spirit of kite building. This year the judges awarded it to a cooperatively built fighter kite. One builder made a portion of the sail a long time ago and another appliquéd the old sail onto a new kite and used similar construction techniques that were used by the original designer. It was my honor to present the 2003 Special Recognition award to both Arnold Stellema and Lee Toy. I never met Lee, but I am sure he would have been pleased to see his work as part of Arnold's entry into this year's competition.

The last Special Award went to the top three scoring Novice kitebuilders. This year I was delighted to award first place to Mearl Balmer and his cellular kite "Tricoflex" (picture on p. 42), second place to Jim and Robin Johannesen for their Rokkaku "Celtic Braided Rok," and third place to Donna Schenk and her "Bitty Butterfly Delta." It feels great to see well-earned scores go to kitebuilders that are now classified as Masters. Congratulations to all of you.

Dayton was indeed a wonderful convention. I wish the entire AKA membership could have been there to witness the ties and the skies that were full of the amazing color and spirit. Through better and worse, good times and bad, the American Kitefliers Association continues to keep my knot tied. I will be at Seaside next year and again the year after. And I look forward to participating in the next Kitemaking competition. I hope to see you there! 🌟



Photo: Jeff Fisher

Convention Sport Kite Competition, continued from page 14

individually rolled up, inserted into small plastic bags, and secured with rubber bands. He added rocks to each bag to keep them on the ground as the tails unfurled with the launch of the kites. On Vern's signal, the ground crew cut the rubber bands, and shortly afterward the team launched. Many of the bags did not separate from the furled tails; the team was wobbling the kites around in an effort to free the bags. Well, free them they did— showering their crew with rocks! Leave 'em laughing, that's my motto.

By the numbers:

3 days
21 disciplines
184 performances
157 volunteer assignments

Wednesday, October 1

The remainder of the Experienced disciplines and Masters dual-line individual events ruled the day. In the Experienced team events, Smitty and the Girls (Dennis Smith, Rosanna Rosanova, Patty Tinkham) won out over Jones Beach 4 and Team Showdown in ballet, with Jones Beach 4 topping Showdown in precision.

Experienced multi-line ballet saw Wayne Fu topping George Wright and Paul LaMasters. The precision discipline saw Fu make it a sweep, with Doug Coates and Karl Berg taking second and third. In Experienced pairs, we saw three "sweeps" — Shiva Divas (Monica Orso, Lisa Willoughby) took firsts in both precision and ballet, with Fly By Nite and EOS taking two seconds and two thirds, respectively.

Capping the day were the Masters individual dual line events. In Masters individual ballet, fourteen of North America's best slugged it out, with Lam Hoac taking the crown over Ari Contzius and Reid Wolcott. Precision saw Reid Wolcott taking a convincing victory over Shawn Tinkham and Russ Faulk.



Photo: Mike Gillard

Ginny Hansen helped out with everything from lollipops and pencils to extra wind pants to loan!

Thursday, October 2

Outdoor competition took a break for the day, with the sport kite symposium and numerous workshops filling the morning and early afternoon. The highlight of the day was the indoor competition, held in the Hall of Modern Aircraft in the Museum.

This event was truly special. The twelve competitors went all-out to create a spectacle, performing in the shadows thrown by some of the most exotic aircraft on earth. When the two hours of showmanship and stagecraft were finished, Lam Hoac was judged the winner, with Shawn Tinkham and Scott Weider placing second and third. Future indoor events will have a hard time finding a more dramatic venue!

Friday, October 3

The remainder of the Masters events were concluded on this final day of the Grand Nationals. The multi-line disciplines were dominated by (guess who!) Lam Hoac, topping Ron Despojado and Shawn Tinkham in ballet, and super-kid Zachary Gordon and Uly Villanueva in precision.

As in the last several conventions, the Masters pairs disciplines were exciting and competitive. Nine pairs teams turned in impressive performances, with R.A.W. Power (Reid Wolcott, Rick Wolcott), Wright Brothers (Ron Graziano, Ari Contzius), and Air Therapy (Rich Javens,

continued on page 40

by Tom Brailey

The dust has settled and this years AKA National Convention is in the history books. I'll try to let you in on the fighter kite group's contribution to the festivities in Dayton

The first order of business is a huge thank you to the 34 pilots and their support that made this week one to remember. Things were done with a great deal of cooperation. The field of 16 Novices and 18 Experienced pilots worked together to make all the events run as smoothly as possible. The way everyone stepped forward to offer their help shows that fighters are not only great competitors, but classy people to boot.

One event that was long overdue was the Fighter Kite Symposium. This was the first time in four years that the people directly involved in fighter kites were asked to express their concerns for what has become the most rapidly expanding portion of kiting in general. The participants were asked to introduce themselves, and then express their number one

magazine ranking system. Due to time constraints we didn't resolve all the major problems that face us, but we did force open the door to further dialog.

The one area that has caused a great deal of confusion is the AKA ranking system. With the addition of new people to help promote fighter kiting, the AKA fighter kite regional directors were encouraged to gather the results of events in their area, and pass them on to Sharon Champie to be published in *Kiting*. This was originally set up to give those fliers who can only make an occasional regional event a chance to see their name in print. It's used solely as a promotional tool, and not to format any event into an invitational type of system. It was never intended to be used to exclude anyone from flying in any events, not now, or in the future. If we had a hundred fliers showing up at each major event we might need to use that type system someday, but we can't foresee that happening in the near-term.



Top to bottom: Terry McPherson, the whole gang, guess who placed first, second, and third (Jeremy Johannesen, Larry Stiles, Cat Gabriel)

concern about the direction fighter kites are heading. The comments covered everything from defining what a Novice is, to a possible name change. The major points were judging, line visibility, what's a neutral position, cutting line, and the AKA *Kiting*

The fighter kite building workshop was overflowing with new and old fighter kite builders again this year. The Bandanna Gang showed us how you can build a quality fighter in less than two hours. This year 34 people gathered to build their very own com-

petition-worthy fighter kite. When you looked around the room you saw Experienced and Novice builders sitting side by side, lending that needed extra hand here and there. When you take an experienced pilot like Nelson Borelli, and see him flying his newly-made kite in competition, you know you've done it right. Thank you Bandanna Gang, a super job well done.

The competition was held in winds that could be overwhelming one minute and calm the next. The



Photo: Mike Gillard



Photo: Tom Brailey

first two days were filled with the lighter side of fighter flying. A non-Indian battle royal featuring Bukas and Brazilians was held on Tuesday, and then a "king of the hill" style battle raged on Wednesday. Those events were held just for bragging rights. Thursday, the large group of Novice fliers took to the field in both line touch and skills. They gave the Experienced fliers some cause to worry about who may be lurking in their future. The results are posted on the AKA website and other areas of this magazine, but I'm proud to say they all looked good, maybe too good. Friday, the field was filled with some of the best in the land, oops, make that the world. To say we saw some of the best flying ever would be an understatement. The battles were heated, but everyone showed remarkable class even in the face of defeat. We would love to have flown the line touch events in the

round robin format, but time was our worst enemy. The competition did have some minor glitches, but everyone seemed to move beyond them, then we all sat back and said, "Who let those Canadians slip over the border?"

Just some food for thought. We all need to really look at how we select the judging staff for major events. Do we need to make adjustments in line types and colors to give the judges a better view of points scored? What is a neutral position? Is it when the kites are at 11 o'clock and 1 o'clock in a non aggressive stance, regardless of line length? We all have a stake in the future of fighter kiting. Let's think of what would be best for everyone, and I really mean everyone, Novice and Experienced fliers alike. I hope to see you on the fields soon, grinning of course. ☺

Convention Sport Kite Competition, continued from page 38



Photo: Mike Gillard

Rich Hawthorne) mixing it up in the top three places. In ballet, it was R.A.W. Power taking the top of the podium, with the Wright Brothers and Air Therapy closely behind. Precision saw the Wright Brothers come out on top, with Air Therapy and R.A.W. Power taking the other trophy spots.

The last several years had seen a serious drop in the number of Masters teams from the peak of participation in the early 90's, to

only two teams participating in both disciplines in the 2001 and 2002 Grand Nationals. That scenario was blown out of the water at this year's event as nine serious teams tossed their hats into the competition arena at Dayton. Some observers chalk up the increased number

of teams to the two successful World Sport Kite Championships that were staged in 2002 and 2003 (and are due to be run again in 2004). Indeed, discussions with several team members revealed that an invite to the world championships was a primary motivation to put teams together and travel to Dayton.

After a long day of teamflying excellence, Chicago Fire (Dan Brinnehl, Kathy Brinnehl, Russ Faulk, Joshua Gordon, Eric Wolff) swept both disciplines. Those who know



Photo: Susan Shampa

teamflying were very impressed with team Cutting Edge (Jim Barber, Jerry Cannon, Rick Wolcott) — the team placed second in both disciplines, and may well have won one or both if not for some penalty points picked up by mistakes in the high, choppy winds. Third place in ballet was taken by new team MVM (Mary Bos, Marcia Cannon, Vicki Casal); with AirZone (Aaron Champie, Wayne Fu, Darrin Skinner, Uly Villanueva) taking the third spot in precision. What a great day!



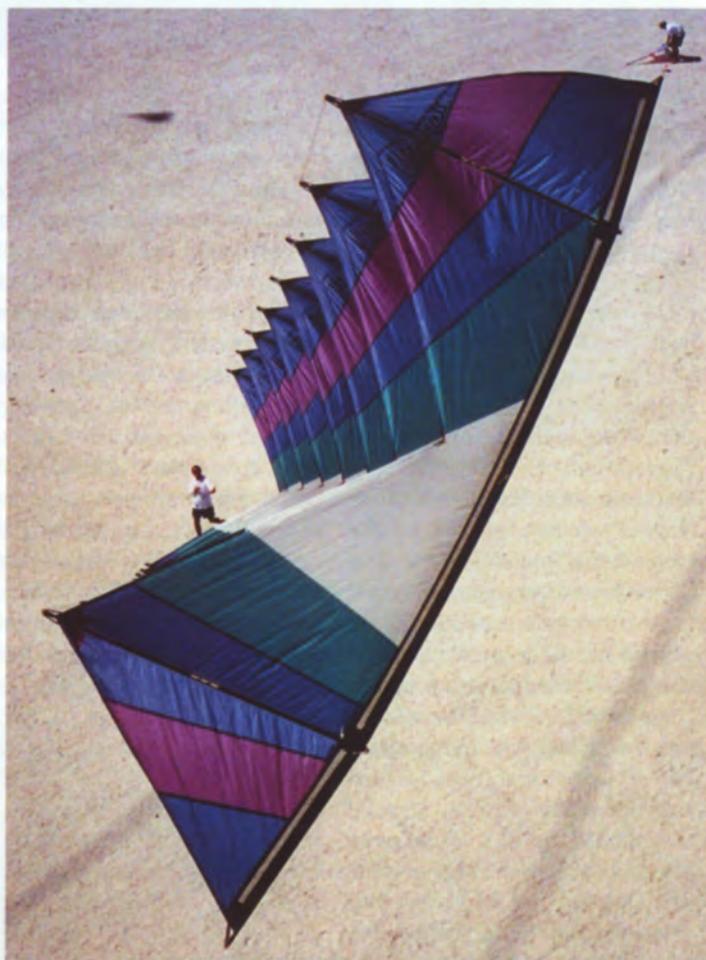
Photo: John Barresi

Top to bottom, sport kites: Air Therapy (Rich Javens and Rich Hawthorne); fellow quadline competitors Tye Harrison and Ron Despojado; Dennis Smith flies his TC Ultra.

The Future

The Dayton Grand Nationals seem to indicate that the late-90's trend of declining interest in sport kite competitions is indeed over. For three years now, convention participation has increased; and this year's great leap in the number of teams bodes well for creating a spectacle that local events can sell to the public and sponsors. (It should be noted that the total number of teams, including team train and experienced class, was a stunning eighteen!).

Congratulations go out to all of the competitors and volunteer workers who made this truly an event to remember. 🌟



Top: Dan Brinnehl's People's Choice KAP winner displays true mastery of kite aerial photography (the spec flying the stack is Lee Sedgwick); Above: Unique photo illustration by Sam Ritter, donated to the convention auction. Below: The Crew, another composite by Sam that includes Jose Sainz, Ron Gibian, Peter Lynn and his bike-lifting kite, Dave Kennedy, Dean Jordan, Merv Cooper and Corey Jensen.





Photo: Mike Gillard



Photo: Mike Gillard

Convention Photo Gallery



Photo: Mike Gillard



Photo: Mike Gillard



Photo: Susan Shampo



Photo: Susan Shampo



Photo: Mike Gillard

Left-Right, Top-Bottom: George Wright; Ann Ritter; rowdy Rok captains, Hoosier Kitefliers Socitey banner motors along; Drake Smith with his really neat cellular kite; Bob Price; Dan Brinnehl, Elizabeth, and her mom Ann Vondriska enjoy a quiet moment; buggier Glenn Pedro gets ready to roll; a Rok team ready to rock.



Photo: Susan Shampo



Photo: Mike Gillard



Photo: Susan Shampo



Photo: Rick Hawkins

Six AKA Firsts with LaserPro !

Congratulations to Lam Hoac, winner of an unprecedented six 1st places at AKA 1999 using LaserPro™ flyline.

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Convention Gallery Overflow

Thanks to all who submitted convention photos, but special thanks go to Jeff Fisher, Audio-Visual Technician of the Air Force Museum, not only for his photo contributions, but for taking John Barresi and me onto the Museum roof to get those great panoramic shots from on high.

— Susan Shampo, Kiting



Photo: Mike Gillard



Photos: Mike Gillard

Clockwise from top: Outrageously cool monster quadline. His maker, Dan Klos could even make him walk! Mearl Balmer's award winning cellular, Tricoflex; a very happy Danny Johnson leading his kite to the field; first time convention competitor Andy Becker of Wisconsin wowwed us by flying with his feet in both directions in Open Freestyle and Hot Tricks.

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I am sure glad we took the 12-hour drive from Rhode Island to Dayton, Ohio. The convention was extra special this year with the flying fields and indoor venues wrapped around and within the US Air Force Museum. The indoor venue, which was used for the awards banquet, was awesome! And the museum staff was very cooperative. The weather could have been a bit warmer but we didn't get much rain. Variable winds seemed to be the norm but we did have wind all week. Many of our region's members made the trip and we did quite well as a group!

Sport Kite Competitors Ron Graziano and Ari Contzius placed in Masters Pairs Ballet and Precision. Ari also placed top three in

Masters Individual Ballet with a great routine. Shawn Tinkham placed in three out of four events he entered. Patty Tinkham placed first in Pairs. In the indoor competition, Scott Weider joined Shawn in placing with Lam Hoac for top three honors. Region members Mike Coons took 1st place in the Rokaku Battle while Robert Woods "Woody" placed top three in the Fighter events. I am sure there were others as well. Overall, our group amassed a table full of trophies! Congratulations to you all for your hard-earned awards. You deserve it!

Did you catch Pete Dolphin's beautiful Red, White and Blue Kite? His kite won Members' Choice award and was prominently displayed at the awards banquet. The final

Grand Champion award went to Lam Hoac for a superlatively-built sport kite. The scores were within a tenth of a point. I'm told they had to take it to the decimal and finally Lam won out. Both kites were extreme. That's extreme kitemaking! The result is an extreme kite; breath-taking, stunning, you know what I mean. These are some of the things you see at a national convention.

Start planning now for next year's event in Seaside, Oregon. It would probably be a flight for most of us in region one. However, if you are ever going to take a flight out to a convention, this is the place you want to see! The drive from Portland to Seaside is awe-inspiring! I suggest you take the Columbia River out to the

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End of term: 2004



coast. At least do this once! Take a camera because you'll be taking snapshots all along the way. Personally, I can't wait for this trip!

I'd like to thank all of our region members who came and enjoyed this year's convention. You know who you are and so do I! Too bad I can't name everyone but you all played a part to make the convention a truly great event!

Regarding upcoming events, please check with your local club newsletters,

Websites and of course the AKA website calendar. New Year's Eve events are probable in Boston, Providence and other locations throughout New England. Please look at your local New Year's Eve celebrations and try to become involved. Everyone loves kites, especially kids. And you can do all of this indoors! If you need help getting started just send me an email.

Best winds to you all and see you on the fields!



Students at the Armenian Sisters Academy display the results of their first creative and technical attempt in kitebuilding.

Hi all! I certainly enjoyed myself at the convention this year and I enjoyed seeing some of you there, too. I'd like to congratulate the following individuals and teams who took home awards from the convention: Rosanna Rosanova, Matt Epstein, Shiva Divas, Smitty

and the Girls, Jones Beach 4, Ari Contzius, Wright Brothers, That's My Line, Jeremy Johnson, Jim and Robin Johannesen, Pete Dolphin, Scott E. Spencer, and Andy Selzer. I also managed to take home wood. If I missed anyone, please let me know and I'll include you in

the next report.

Betty Hirschmann will fill AKA's secretarial position for a ninth year, making her the longest standing Board member. Thanks to Betty for her continuing commitment. Also, kudos to outgoing board member Kevin Shannon for his many consecutive years

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NJ-PA-(lower) NY

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End of term: 2004



in various board positions.

The kite club activity is slowing down for the winter, but is by no means stopped. Here is some information on various clubs:

South Jersey was prevalent at the Dayton convention. They sponsored one of the mass ascension pins again this year. At least four members placed in the kitemaking competition. They also sponsored a Fighter Kite battle trophy. Scott E. Spencer's donations to the bag raffle brought in much appreciated revenue to the AKA, too. I know the bag under the green butterfly kite was awfully full!

I hear that SJKF's Birth-

day Bash was a blast, with many people contributing food and auction items. SJKF's Holiday party will be held on December 14th with great food at a club-subsidized price. This year's party game will be Nicknames.

LVKS will be having their Holiday party on December 6th. I also see by their newsletter that they have accomplished a lot of promotion of our fine hobby in their area. Keep up the great work! Also, hats off to Julie Gelinis on the production of her play and to Joyce Quinn's grandson, Patrick, who was inducted in the

continued on p. 45



REGION 3 ~ MID-ATLANTIC
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End of term: 2004

Sorry, no Region 3 report is available at this time.



The Wright Flyer replica was assembled in front of the US Air Force Museum.
Mike Gillard photos.



REGION 4 ~ SOUTHEAST
AL-FL-GA-KY-MS-PR-NC-SC-TN

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A shout out and major props to my peeps from Region 4 who made the trip to the Convention. If you talked to anybody who was there, you know we had a great time; and if you read the previous sentence, you know I have a teenage daughter.

Thanks Jim and Laura Podlasek who drove back almost to Cincinnati to rescue me when my fuel pump expired, and to Harold Ames who offered.

I have some "winners" from the competitions. (If I missed anybody, it's through ignorance rather than malice. Let me know and I'll make it up to you next time.)

Elly Groover's "Elly-plants" won first place in Line Art in the kitemaking competition, and her fellow SAKEite Steve Cseplo snared second in Deltas. Barb Hall and her red hat picked up the prize for Mixed Media, Martin Blais's flying guitar took first in Figure Kites and yours truly took a third in Arches.

Some WACKOS attempted to sneak into the trophy ranks by joining Team Moe for the rok battle, but we didn't count on Chuck Jones and Team Baka Tako Kichi, which is Japanese for "bump the WACKOS out of trophy contention." Chuck piloted his

team to an impressive second place in his first battle!

On the buggy course, Claxton Thompson of TISKK took first in pursuit and third in circuit races. And okra aficionado Jerry Conway claimed a third in Novice Skills in Fighters. (He's since picked up some wood at OBSKC flying dual-line.)

Our own Rick Iossi was appointed to the Board of Directors: good news for kiteboarding, for Region 4 and for the Association. Congratulations Rick!

At the business meeting, I was reminded that Allison Holmes of SC has won blue ribbon in her age group at Smithsonian for three of the last four years. Congratula-

tions, Allison; your Grandfather Henderson is proud of you, as are your fellow kitters in Region 4.

Thanks Charlie Sotich for a great afternoon building miniature kites. Thanks Grady and everybody from SCAK for the fellowship and the pork rinds, and next time choose an acronym FIRST! And thanks to all the Region 4 kites who flew, competed, volunteered and just generally made this a great convention.

Stu in Charlotte reports on the Carolina Kite Fest: "Saturday there was light rain, but good winds and all the real kitefliers flew anyway! Saturday night there was a brief night fly, but the winds died down. Strangely,

about an hour after everybody left, the winds picked back up and I flew with lights on my stunt kite into the night. WACKOS in attendance were me, Joe, Linda, and Doug, along with his wife who I guess is a club member by marriage! Sunday the Sundowners flew, Randy Tom was able to launch his ribbon arch and Al Sparling added to the show, and the festival was enjoyed by all. Don Dixon is a great host for a kite event."

Looking ahead, we have events coming up at Treasure Island January 17-18, Georgetown, KY, April 17-18 and in Chattanooga on DATE TO COME.

Finally, I need to take one more column inch to tell you all that I've accepted a business opportunity working with David and Susan Gomberg. I don't want to use this space to promote that, but I do want to let you all know and tell you that I'll keep the duties of R.D. separate from this — and I hope you all know me well enough to know that my vote and support on the AKA Board will remain independent. I'll continue voting and working for the best interests of the AKA and Region 4 as I see them, even when David and I disagree.

That's the news for now. Drop me a line or give me a call if I can be of help to you, and Keep 'Em Flying.



Above: Barb Hall and both of her "red hats." Photo by Rob Pratt; Right: Jim Martin flying among the arches. Photo by Mike Gillard.



Region 2, continued from page 43
National Honor Society!

Fly Pittsburgh has had another great year despite less-than-perfect conditions at many events this season, because of rain. Thirteen Fly Pittsburgh members attended the AKA convention. As for 2004, their monthly flies will continue to take place on the 1st Sunday of each month from March–December. January and February meetings will be held indoors on dates when they can obtain facilities. The New Year's Kick Off Party is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, January 24, 2004. As for the February meeting, along with impromptu flies and promotional events, feel free to check out their Website: <http://windstarkites.com/FlyPghKiteClub.htm>. They have also recently added a new FAQ feature to the website, answering questions about the club and about flying locally in the Pittsburgh area. Cool!

The Keystone Kitters will be having their holiday party December 12. As usual, a fun time will be had by all. Also, don't miss their annual Superbowl Retreat. Keystone members will be assembling not one, but TWO long-tailed, serpent-type kites in club colors. You can contact me for more information on this event.

And here's some exciting news: it looks like we might have a new club forming in Radnor, PA. Conni McDonnell is moderating a group at the Armenian Sisters Academy. Students ranging from ages 6 through 9 are participating in kitebuilding (see picture on p. 43). They constructed a very simple and basic delta kite from paper and plastic. They did get a few off the ground, but as you all know, flying them inland can be a little tricky. By this time they should have their next kite made. They are also planning to participate in an AKA spring event!

Finally, here is something to look forward to next year. The South Jersey Kite Flyers and Wetlands Institute will be running the East Coast Kite Fighting Championship September 18-19, 2004 in Stone Harbor, NJ. While there'll be room for fun flying, sport kites, etc., the main focus will be two days of rokkaku battles and fighter wars. This will be in conjunction with their Wings 'n Water Festival, a wildlife arts festival that draws about 10,000 people. Some dormitory space will be available to house



Todd Little (right) displays his hand-crafted entry. Photo by Rob Pratt.

kites. Mark it on the calendar now! It would be fun to have a massive club versus club rokkaku battle for regional bragging rights, and they're also looking at pairing up kitefliers with locals for some battles pitting police departments, fire departments, local governments, etc. against each other.

Hello again. Well the holidays are just around the corner, and it's time to wish you all the best of season's greetings from Bette and me. This past year has been one big roller coaster ride here at the Brailey house. Travel played a large part in our lives, and most of it was kiting related. The trip to China had to be the crown jewel in a crowded itinerary filled with names like Vegas, South Padre, Grand Haven, The Black Swamp, Long Beach, Erie Metro, Quincy, Cleveland, and of course, Dayton. The pocketbook may be a lot thinner but we love spending the kid's inheritance. There were days when health issues muddled the waters just a bit, but Bette and I bounced back like that old green tennis ball the dog plays with. Your kind words and prayers made that journey much easier to travel.

I'm going to try to be brief in my mention of the AKA National Convention in Dayton. That may be a problem, but I'll try. The words wonderful, terrific, fantastic, and so many others bounced off my ears all week during the convention. They were all in response to your efforts and dedication to make it happen. The kindest words came from a 14-year-old at his first convention. When I asked him how he liked things so far, he said, "You guys rock." To all the mem-



Kites lined the walls awaiting the auction. Photo by John Barresi.

REGION 5 ~ GREAT LAKES
MI-OH

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End of term: 2005



bers of Region Five "You guys rock." I watched as many of you that were unable to attend still gave us your support in several other ways: the big bag raffle gifts, buying raffle tickets, donations for the giveaway bags, and on and on. There were the dedicated volunteers that worked countless hours both at and before the convention even started: Vickie, Dean, Betty, Terry, Al, Nancy, Bob, Phil, Bill, the list is endless. One of the brightest moments was when the Region Five kitebuilders took to the stage during the loud auction. The crowd was stunned by the beauty and workmanship that filled the stage from one end to the other. They opened their billfolds to the tune of almost three thousand dollars in the bidding wars. We also raised all the funds needed for the early bird reception and were able to donate a thousand dollars back into the AKA general fund. A number of people have said we've set a very high standard for others to follow. I smile because it

wasn't done for the bragging rights; we just do it that way around here. All the little problems that popped up were handled, and the entire AKA deserves a giant pat on the back for making Dayton one of the best conventions ever. Thank you for all your hard work and for making my job a lot easier.

Now that we have all started our winter projects, it's time to take a look at the upcoming year. I'm hoping that we are still able to fill the calendar with the events we've all enjoyed in the past, and maybe even a few new ones. The Board of Directors has voted to extend National Kite Month to include a few more weekends this year. This may be the opportune time to get that club kite fly you've been thinking about off the drawing board. I think those crazy fighter kite guys (Yes, I'm proud to be one) are thinking about some stand-alone fighter events for the coming year, how about you? There seems to be a new wave of competition fliers coming up, and maybe a new sport kite event would be just the ticket this year. We were all busy with thoughts of a national convention last year; now it's time get back into the regional frame of mind. Hey, it's time for me to remind you to look at your membership card. Are you ready for renewal? Let's all sign up one new kiteflier this year. See ya on the field somewhere, just a grinning.

—Tom.



REGION 6 ~ MIDWEST
IA-IL-IN-MN-WI

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Well, the little goblins have come and gone again. Although there were great evening winds and what I thought was a sufficiently scary ghost face added to my aging Frank Schwiemann ghost delta, it turns out I may have again stirred up more anxiety with the neighborhood dogs than with the kids. One little kid walked by and courageously declared, "You didn't scare me." Older kids said, "Nice kite, man." I guess I have more work to do. Would love to hear from anyone who has put together a really scary kite for trick-or-treat night.

Dayton: The convention was another super event this year with quite a few kites from Region 6 in attendance. There will be lots of

coverage in this issue, but wanted to quickly congratulate those from our region who brought home some of that Ohio bacon for their efforts. The following competitors were called up for awards: For kitemaking, Barb Meyer, Art Haas, Donna Schenk and Jerry Houk, individually and with his cooperative seven-sisters kite gang (Russ Faulk, Danna Korak, Barb Meyer, JoAnn Weber, Craig Wilson and Eric Wolff). In sport kites, George Wright from Indiana and Paul Koepke from Wisconsin did it up right. And our Windy City pals, the Chicago Fire (Faulk, K. Brinnehl, D. Brinnehl and Wolff) and Josh and Zack Gordon took more than a few trips to the stage. Dan Brinnehl also

captured the first ever Kite Aerial Photo award with a great top-down look at a Lee Sedgewick stack. Other Region 6 folks competed strongly in several categories. Congrats to all!

And, two of our Chicago-area Region 6 stalwarts were selected for prestigious AKA awards. The Art Kite Committee presented Charlie Sotich with the Lee Toy Circle of Friends award. For Charlie, it has been simply about making small kites that fly well. Those of us affected by him know it really has to do with "big magic"! Thanks, Charlie. Al Sparling, AKA Treasurer and past Regional Director known affectionately as the grinch, was chosen for the Robert Ingraham award for his many contributions to AKA life, particularly with keeping us financially strong. We are very proud of both you guys!!

Speaking of pride, one of our own Midwest art kite stars was featured at convention. JoAnn Weber of Minnesota put on a dazzling

display of her lush imagination and creative kitemaking skills. After stepping into this wonderfully adorned room, it was really hard to leave, although the way Ron Gibian and the Art Kite Committee takes care of its visitors probably had something to do with the urge to hang out. Vive le cerf-volant d'art!!

What's up: On February 7th & 8th, the wildly popular Madison winter festival Kites on Ice returns for its 6th year. This year, the event moves across the isthmus to Lake Mendota. The festival, with about 70,000 spectators last year, will be run from the Memorial Union on the UW-Madison campus. A substantial U.S. and international contingent of kites will reconvene in Madison to fly on the largest of Madison's frozen lakes. Organizers are also making a special invite to bring in regional kites with cool kites to fly or interesting classes to teach. Find out more by emailing organizers at globalcelebrations@tds.net or by checking their Website at www.madfest.org.

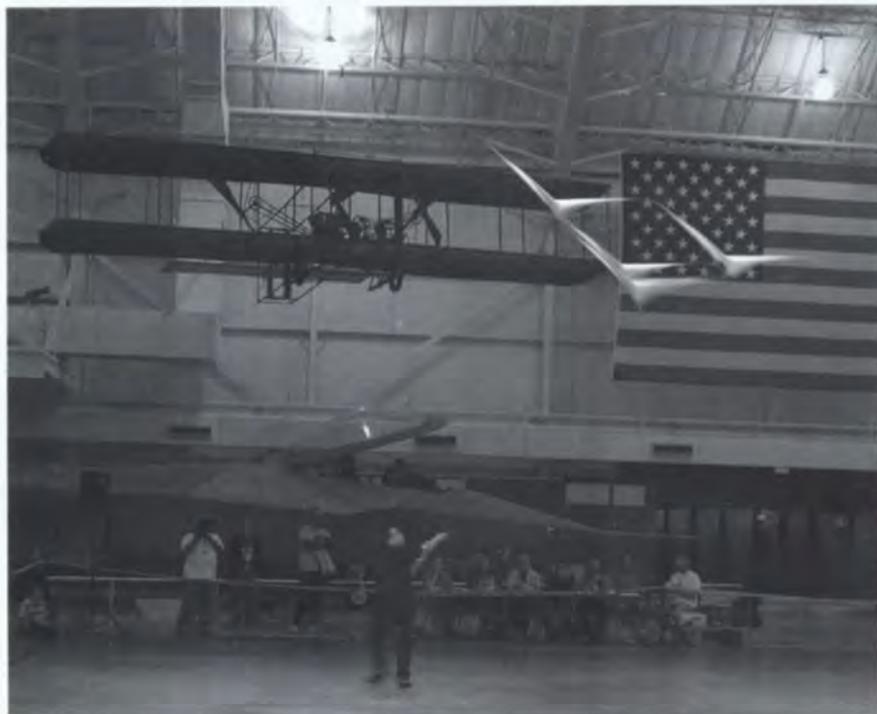
The Midwest Area Kite Makers retreat returns for its 16th year. MAKR is set for March 12-14, 2004 at the NIU Taft Campus at Oregon, Illinois. Again recruiting great instructors, MAKR organizers are bringing in Robert Brasington from Tasmania, Glenn Davidson and Gary Engvall from New England and award winning kitemaker Kevin Shannon from Pennsylvania who will hook up with a talented group of kitemakers from the Midwest. You owe it to yourself to take in this remarkable weekend of kitebuilding, camaraderie and great food. To get on the mailing list for this event, contact Barbara Meyer at (763) 424-2571 or

email bfmeyer@attbi.com.

On a recent trip to Door County, Wisconsin, I had a chance to visit with Toby Schlick, who has been running the Fish Creek Kite Company for over 27 years. Toby, an extremely generous kite supporter who brings in more new AKA members than anyone in the region, says that kite surfing is a growing phenomena on his peninsula heaven jutting out into Lake Michigan. Apparently, this is also the source of many of his recruitments to AKA. One normally doesn't associate the Midwest with power kiting, but Marc Ricketts of Guildworks in Madison also reports that kite surfers on Madison lakes had the best September ever with all but a few days making city lakes a kite surfing hot spot. Bob Cook of Kiteriders in Madison is a key organizer of local surf riders.

One Sky One World events captured some of our common wind here in Region 6. An event was held in the Twin Cities, and Dennis Woelfel in New Holstein reports that a large group of kites and spectators attended their fly. In the Madison area, we also had a great group of fliers who lifted their hopes for peace into the wind. A kite-line drop of 75 peace dove gliders for kids emphasized our yearnings for peace and harmony.

Have a warm holiday season. Remember there is a special magic in wintertime kite flying so bundle up and find a piece of sky to color. Please keep in touch on events and happenings in your neck of the woods. And remember, AKA membership makes a wonderful and amazingly hip holiday present, even for your mean Aunt Sue.



Craig Wilson performs during the indoor competition at Dayton. Photo: Jeff Fisher

As winter approaches, it's hard to believe that just a month ago we were arriving in Dayton for the National AKA Convention. Even though it was colder than normal, it was a great convention. It was wonderful to see old friends and make some new ones. The week sped by and I was excited to see the great turnout of all the members that attended. Region 7 was well represented by several members in attendance.

Several members from Region 7 entered the kite building competitions. The talent displayed was awesome! Among the members that won awards were:

Mary and John Gabby of CO won 1st place in Arch, Trains, & Ribbons (Mary), 2nd place in Soft and Flexible (Mary), 3rd place in Co-operative kite (Mary and John), Best use of Traditional materials (John).

Deb Lenzen of ND won 1st place in Trains & Centipedes, 3rd place in Flat kites.

Congratulations! Way to go all of you! These were some of the most well designed and beautiful entries of the competition!

Looking forward to next year's convention in Seaside, OR. Get those ideas formulating and get busy on your designs for next year.

This has been a very

active year in our Region. Many flies have been held with large attendance. Several clubs have been very active in support of flies in the AKA. Donald Nash with the Denver, CO club reports that they are already booking flights for next spring. They have been busy holding workshops in the area and working on a club project. Blake Pelton would like to point out the increased popularity of snow boarding in the CO and WY areas. He reports: "Have everyone keep an eye on the AKA Website for kite-snowboarding competitions in Colorado and Wyoming. We have started organizing an

REGION 7 ~ GREAT PLAINS
CO-KS-MO-ND-NE-SD-UT-WY

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End of term: 2005



event and it WILL be AKA-sanctioned. Immediately following the events I will send you a report on how they went. This side of kiting is untapped by the AKA and there is enormous potential with the current riders." I'm sure the AKA has several benefits that we can offer these new kiting enthusiasts.

Ryan Larkey reports:

"The Kansas City Kite Club has been winding down its fall flying season. Members participated in several demonstration flies, one at Alldredge Orchards, and another at Faulkner's Pumpkin Farm. We also managed to have a picnic at Belton for One Sky One World, as well as our normal flies. Six KCKC mem-

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Above L-R: Mary and John Gabby, Don Murphy, and Deb Lenzen; Everyone loves spikey balls at "One Sky, One World." Photos courtesy of Betty Suhr.

As has been the case throughout the country this year, weather has created definite challenges to kite festivals this season! It seems like when we have any wind at all; it's accompanied by rain and even full-blown thunderstorms. But, being an optimistic group, we didn't let it slow us down too much!

I'm happy to say that the premier Albuquerque New Mexico kiting event "Traditions!" looks like it WILL become a tradition in the region! Promoter Jim Long, along with organizers John and Mary Gabby and Scott Skinner, did an incredible job of pulling at all together! Kites came from all over the country to participate and to perform.

Despite the erratic — sometimes absent — wind, team "Too Much Fun" and many other dual, multi, and single line fliers made sure that there was always aerial entertainment. The varied types of kites and kite art kept both the kites and the spectators fascinated throughout the weekend. Plus, Glen Davison provided everyone with miniature workshops and a parade of dedicated kites kept the "Kites For Kids" gazebo a busy spot all weekend. "The Hillside Stompers" marching band from Los Alamos joined us at the festival and brought a whole new level of fun and enthusiasm to "Traditions!". They contributed with both audio and visual entertain-

ment for everyone! In case you're wondering ... yes, they played "The Time Warp" ... yes, I danced to "The Time Warp" ... five or six times ... daily ... including an ensemble performance with team "Too Much Fun" and John Gabby poolside while we were at Rebecca and Jim Long's beautiful home for a dinner party! Okay kids; I KNOW it's fun to watch an old lady jump around like a maniac, but I MAY be getting too old for this "Time Warp" craziness! ... old? ... NA! Maybe it was just that Albuquerque altitude that wore me out! Thanks again to Rebecca and Jim, Mary and John, Scott, and ALL of the wonderful folks at "Traditions!"

REGION 8 ~ SOUTH CENTRAL
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End of term: 2005



who made this dream a reality! We look forward to returning next fall!

Although our friends Sandra and Warren Harris at Eden Kites in DeSoto (just South of Dallas) have done a multitude of fun flies, they went out on a limb to host "The Lone Star Kite Competition" on Labor Day weekend. As a region with a relatively small number of judging staff and competi-

tors, I put out a plea for to my dear friends known as "The Oklahoma Crew" for staffing assistance. Generally, we have the problem of abusing competitors by asking them to judge all day in addition to prepare for their own competition. But with the invaluable assistance of "The Oklahoma Crew", who drove down to help fill those staff positions and to over-

continued on page 49

REGION 9 ~ INTERMOUNTAIN
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Hello Region 9 from your new Director. I would like to give the outgoing Director, Rod Thrall, a large THANKS for all his hard work. I know a lot of you know him and his Blue Bear.

I'm looking forward to meeting many new friends from the Intermountain area. Hope to be going to Idaho and Montana to some flys and meet you.

Please write or call me with fly and festival dates.

We're having the Oregon Kitemakers Retreat (OKR) On January 15-18, 2004. It will be held at Rockaway Beach, Oregon in the Twin

Rocks Friends Camp. By all accounts last year was great and will be better this year. Instructors will be Roy Broadly, Gary Engvall, Mary Bos, Gerry Pennell, Barbara Meyer, Arnold Stellema, Kay Woodring, Gary Goode-nough, Ronda Brewer, Jer-imy Colbert, Greg Clark, Bary Crites, Deb Cooley. WOW, what a crew. Tickets going fast and hard to get. Email orkitemkrs@aol.com.

Remember to have a fun flying and to help the next person who's having trouble or says "It'll fly straighter if you put a tail on it".

"See You in The Sky"

Region 9 is excited to be hosting the 2004 convention in Seaside Oregon from October 11 to 16. That may seem late but really offers the best beach weather of the season. And what a beach!! Workshops, banquets, meeting and the flying fields are all within walking distance. The last time AKA came, we had our biggest convention ever!

The main hotels will be the Shilo and Ocean View right on the Promenade. But there are plenty of other hotels and guest houses in the area. And if you are planning ahead, don't forget the Lincoln City Fall Festival the weekend before convention starts on Monday. It's just 90 minutes south down a spectacular beach. And rumor has it there will be a big Sunday Night Party at the Gomers.

Region 7, continued

Members trekked to Dayton for Convention. They have some neat pictures, and neater stories to tell. Workshop Coordinator Dave Ellis also had the pleasure of helping judge the Kitemaking Competition. It was a fun experience, Dave says. Unfortunately, shortly after returning from Dayton, Dave was diagnosed with cancer. Many of the kiting community know Dave Ellis, alias 'Kiteguy.' Prayers and well wishes can reach Dave at kiteguy@everestkc.net as he battles cancer. Our annual Holiday Party and Auction will be held the afternoon of December 13, 2003. If any kites are in the KC area that weekend please drop in and attend. We would love to have you. More information can be found on our Website, www.kckiteclub.org.

Our local club, Midwest Winds Kitefliers, recently

hosted an excellent "One Sky, One World" weekend. Our weather was great and the number of visitors that attended was very impressive. The wind was great and the number of kites we had in the air was awesome. Some of the crowd's favorites were the giant Manta Ray and the Red Spiky Balls. But the kids really loved the candy drops! Check our club link for several pictures of this event, www.midwestwind-skitefliers.org.

Now it's time to repair all those broken and torn kites and watch the snow fly. Soon we'll be back out there. Hope to attend Kites on Ice in February 2004.

Start thinking about getting your events planned for National Kite Month. It will be here before you know it.

Enjoy the Sky!
Don

REGION 10 ~ NORTHWEST
AK-WA



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This is where I start. First I would like to thank Charly Whitaker for a good run for this position and am looking forward to working with him as the WKA president. A big thanks to my predecessor, Mary Bos (she owes me one).

What a fantastic time at the AKA convention in Dayton, what a treat to see and meet kite friends. I was also fortunate to teach a class on how to run a raffle. Ron and I ran the bag raffle, along with our good friends David and Janet Robinson from

England (who are AKA members). For those of you who have never gone to the convention, you might start thinking about it for next year at Seaside, Oregon. It is more convenient for us in the Northwest and might just be the place to get hooked. Bring a friend. Qh heck, bring lots of friends.

Everyone thinks that kiting is kind of over for the winter. Wrong they are. First there is the drawing November 3rd to pick the winners of the Fort Worden Kitemakers Conference. So

check with me to see who the lucky winners are. There are two drawings; one for The US/Canada side and one for the European side. My answer to Mary Bos' question (in the last issue) what will I do when we raise \$10,000? I think I will let Mary run the raffle.

The memorial fly for Doug Hagaman, who passed away ten years ago this December, will be at Magnusson Park (Seattle) December 14th, for those of you who can attend. There will also be one at Barbury Castle in England on that same day. Doug was a good friend to the White Horse Kite Flyers.

The Anti-Bowl Fly is Jan. 1, 10 am to 4 pm at Golden Gardens Park in Seattle.

Our friends to the south, OKR, have scheduled the Oregon Kitemakers Retreat, Jan. 15-17th. Contact Barb

Wright, orkitemkrs@aol.com.

The 2nd annual "Windless Kites" will be January 14-16 in Long Beach, WA, sponsored by The World Kite Museum and the Northwest Stunt Kite League.

The John Freeman Workshop will be Feb. 14-16th featuring the Double Delta Conyne. Take your valentine and build a kite at Long Beach. Contact the kite museum.

And think about attending Fort Worden Kitemakers Conference in March, www.kitemakers.org.

You know there is just always something we can do for kiting. Visit the Kite Museum, check out what else they have going on, www.worldkitemuseum.com.

Have you ever gone to the Drachen Foundation, www.drachen.org? Visit a kite shop. Make a kite. Help

a child learn to make a kite and fly it. Think about attending Fort Worden Kite Markers Conference in March. Introduce new people to AKA and this great magazine. If you really can't find anything to do, give Ron and me a call to make sure we are here and come on by to see the Charlie Sotich Kite Museum right here in our home.

We would like to wish our kite friends the Best of Your Holidays Season. What an opening to remember that AKA membership for that gift, a raffle ticket for the stocking stuffer or an AKA shirt! I just don't quit on that sale thing, but what great gifts. Sincerely, we wish you all the best for Hanukkah, Christmas and of course the for the New Year 2004.

Until next time, I'll leave the computer on.

The Convention in Dayton was good! Everything was good ... but NOT the wind!! ;-) Man it can blow out there in Ohio! No more jokes about Berkeley, eh!

I really enjoyed the Air Force Museum, and recommend it to anyone visiting the area. The stuff on display boggles the mind!! Be sure and allow plenty of time!

Congratulations to Region 11's trophy winners; Wayne Fu, who really brought home the wood! Wayne garnered a 2nd in EIB, a 3rd in EIP, a 1st in EMB and his team took 3rd overall!

Ulysses Villaneueva brought home a 3rd in MMP. New team, AirZone, consisting of Darrin Skinner, Aaron Champie, Uly Villaneueva and Wayne Fu Made us all proud with a 3rd place overall for an invitation to compete in France this spring!! Way to go guys!

We cant leave out Arnold Stellema for his special recognition in kitemaking

for his Lee Toy fighter kite. Another notable Region 11 accomplishment in Dayton was Mix McGraws new world record (and Guinness). Mix and his crew managed to fly 265 (number may be wrong, sorry) kites for the required time and maneuvers.

The Bay Area Sport Kite League announced its new board members for the 2004 season; Susan Skinner, Sharon Champie, Aaron Champie, Tracy Erin, Jeff Erzin, John Gelespie, Francisco Navaro,



and for his second time on the board, Dan Burnham. Hats off to this great group of people. Without them kiting in this region would be quit a different animal ... thanks you guys!

By the time you read this, BASKL will have produced its second indoor event. These indoor events are proof again of BASKL's commitment to kiting in the Bay Area.

There are TWO new kite stores in town!! In the Stockton area is Mariah kites. Owner Glen Kell would love to help you select a



Mix McGraw and helper set up a bazillion little kites and Mix attempts to break his own world record at the convention.

REGION 11 ~ N. CALIFORNIA Monterey County N-NV

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(End of Term: 2006)



kite. His number is (209) 465-4572.

Second Wind Kites is in the Windsor area and owned by Elaine Leitner, phone (707) 575-9707 or email secondwindkites@earthlink.net.

Elaine has lots of experience in kite retail as former manager of Candy and Kites in Bodega Bay.

There are a couple new events that need mentioning, too. Look for a new event up in the foothills of Angels Camp on April 3rd. For more information, contact Denis Churchill at (209) 785-2250. These guys are working hard to make their first event as good as any!

Another new event will be

at the Point Arena Lighthouse on the 4th of July weekend. This will be a big kite wrangler weekend if there ever was one. Contact me for all the info.

I'd like to thank those of you that voted for me to continue as your Regional director. For the most part it's a fun and interesting job but I can't be at every event or know all the gossip. If you have any or you would like me to include any Region 11 info on your event, club or anything kite-related, please send it to me and I'll be glad to add it here!

I hope everyone has a great Holiday season and an exceptional new year!!

Region 8, continued

see the other venues, "The Lone Star Kite Competition" was a success! In addition to judging and field directing for sport kite comps, "The Oklahoma Crew" handled Fighter battles and buggy races. It was an incredibly hot and humid Saturday, but they always jumped into action and volunteered to help at every opportunity! Sunday wasn't as hot, but the lower temperature brought with it some sprinkles of rain. Rain? HA! We laugh at rain ... unless we see lightning! Eddie Zihlman broke out his beautiful DynaKite stack, but soon realized that Oklahoma's "Fighter Dave" Young was buzzing him ... with a Fighter! The gauntlet had been thrown and Eddie cir-

cled that tremendous stack around to engage Dave's Fighter kite in a serious battle! It was great! The Zihlman stack suddenly had the little Fighter on the run! Although it was a gallant effort, "Fighter Dave" was outgunned! Eddie won the battle, but I have the feeling that it was just the first heat of on-going competition! Team SPI (South Padre Island) added their stacks to the skies and we were all treated to a gorgeous ballet of the magnificent stacks! Thanks for the show — it was spectacular! And a HUGE thanks to everyone who contributed to making the new "Lone Star Competition" a success!

It was great to see so many region 8 folks at the AKA convention this year!

... and yes ... I'm going to tell you all who made it to convention from the region! The Oklahoma contingent was represented by Marti and Richard Dermer, Cat Gabrel, Jay Maas, and Larry Stiles. It was wonderful to see Sandra and Marshall Harris from Louisiana in Dayton, too! As always, those Texans did it up right! Chris Belmarez, Cathy Belmarez and David Elizondo made the trip from Chaneyview; Keith Anderson from Pearland was there; Jean and Ralph Gore from Baytown came up; along with my dear friend Walt Mitchell, it was great to meet Lubbock delegate Brad Martin; I also finally met Don Teeter of Rio Hondo and Rick Hawkins of Houston; the Southern tip of

Texas was represented by Claudia Steen, Guy Blatnik, and Donna and Jeff McCown; Central Texas convention attendees included: Michael, T.J. and Gary Boswell, Dyana and Steven Ploof, Jim Cox, Eddie Zihlman, Tye Harrison, Rob Cembalest, and Chris Shultz. Region 8 folks were everywhere! Plus, I HAVE to mention my friend Linda Larkey, who was there in spirit! Each one of you have a part in making this convention so memorable — whether you were a competitor, a judge, ground crew, a flier, or a spectator! To all of my kite friends within and outside of the region, I always wish for more time to just sit and visit! But it was wonderful to have the opportunity to see everyone again! Thanks

to ALL who contributed to the planning and execution of such a tremendous convention and to Region 5 personnel for the wonderful Early Bird Reception!

Please keep me posted on activities throughout the region so I can sound like I know what I'm talking about! If you don't tell me what you're up to, I can't tell everyone else about it! Seriously, my deepest gratitude goes to everyone in the field whether it be individuals, local clubs, or organizers who keep the wheels turning. YOU'RE the backbone of the kiting community; I'm just the mouthpiece!

Spread some color in the world!

— Gayle —

REGION 12 ~ SOUTHWEST Southern CA-AZ-HI

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Greetings and happy holidays to everyone. First of all, allow me to introduce myself. I am Jim McNulty and I've been an avid flier since 1998. Like many of us, I began with a cool dual-line stunt kite and was immediately hooked. Things quickly progressed from there, and I've taken up flying quad-line and single-line stuff, including my new 252 Flowform with really cool snake tails and line laundry.

I have to admit that I am completely hooked on kiting and really look forward to serving the members in Region 12. Let me extend a big thank you to all who voted for me. I am sure will get to meet at a kite field near you, sooner or later.

You can always find me at the San Diego Kite Club's monthly meeting (2nd Sat. of each month, Mission Bay Park).

Without a doubt, the greatest event this fall was the annual Seal Beach Kite Festival. The Japan-America Society never misses this event and always adds an international flavor to the day. Mikio Toki was in attendance once again with some incredibly beautiful hand-crafted Japanese kites. Early in the day, the wind was summoned by the Taiko Drummers. One performance was not enough for this group, so they performed again in the afternoon.

Hats off to J. R. Tolman who did a fantastic job of

coordinating the kid's kite-making tent. It seemed like everywhere you looked, someone had their very own new kite in the sky.

Also in attendance from Region 11 was the Skyart kite display team, as well as team Too Much Fun.

The day would not be complete without some fighter kite action. Steve LaPorte, Alex Herzog, Chris Thompson, Steve Bateman and others treated the crowd to a slick round-robin competition that ended up with a three-way tie for first place.

Giant kites were also on order for the day, and as usual were a big crowd pleaser. By far, the largest and coolest display was provided by Jim Crane of Signal

Hill, CA. The lifeguard jeep brought Jim's kite trailer to a front-row spot on the beach. Among the giants in the sky were a pair of 550 Flowforms, a 110' Octopus, and a massive PL Gecko. Alongside the giants were some 252's and giant bols provided by Ben D'antonio and myself. The fun didn't stop there! On hand to document the day was Huell Howser from PBS television. He had never witnessed kite-flying on such a scale and was amazed at what was taking place. Here's a big thanks to Monty at Up, Up, and Away Kites for putting together a fine day of flying.

It's time to mention some upcoming events that are not to be missed. On Decem-

ber 5, the Seal Beach Kite Club will feature a float in the Seal Beach Christmas parade. December 14, a Holiday kite fly will take place at the normal SDKC monthly meeting. On February 9, the Up, Up, and Away folks will host a Valentine kite fly. All southern California fliers are invited to participate in the SDKC's New Year's Day fly, featuring special guests David and Susan Gomberg. This is an all-day event that includes a raffle, auction, and really great t-shirts designed by Ron Despojado.

That's all for this issue, please drop me a line or give me a call to keep me abreast of what's up!



Left: Tokyo-based kite master, Mikio Toki (seated right). Mikio is internationally renowned for his Edo Kite designs and craftsmanship; Right: the crowd-pleasing LA Taiko Center Drummers



Region 13, continued

There's still so much to tell you about Region 13

happenings from August through October but I've exceeded my space limits again! Thanks to all who sent me information and photos. I'll appreciate stories, pics and info about upcoming events

that you wish to share in the next issue — by mid-January. I enjoy hearing from you even if you don't have anything to report!

Thanks again for your collective vote of confidence. I hope to connect with each of you in some form or another during my term: notes via

email to those with internet access, a postcard or phone call to those without, or perhaps we'll enjoy the same wind at a fun fly somewhere. Until then, may your new year be filled with peace,

good health, special friends, clean winds and a little extra time to enjoy it all.



Claudio Capelli at WISKF



Masaaki Modegi with a Japan Kite Association delta at WISKF



L-R: Lam Hoac, Robert Walker, Vaino Raun, Pierre Gregoire, Merv Cooper, Normand Girard. Photo courtesy of Vaino Raun

Hello! A few short months ago I had some doubts as to whether I'd be writing this report again but here I am. You're stuck with me for another three years. A sincere "thank you" to all AKA members who took the time to consider the candidates and sent in their ballots. An extra "thank a you" and a hug goes out to Jose Gabriel Rosas of Colombia, South America, my running mate. Jose, your commitment to the association and members in this expansive and diverse region is much appreciated.

A hearty thumbs-up to everyone who attended and participated the AKA convention in Dayton, Ohio, especially those who volunteered their time and efforts to make the event a success. I wasn't there but I learned that Canadians did Region 13 proud! Vaino Raun earned 1st place in Novice Fighter Skills while Robert Walker earned a respectable 2nd. Pierre Gregoire and Normand Girard took 1st and 2nd place awards respectively in Experienced Line Touch, while Merv

Cooper placed a commendable 3rd in the Individual Rokkaku battle. Merv also tied for 2nd in Mini-kite Beauty and tied for 3rd in Mini-kite Originality with his train of Canadian flag rokkaku. And last, but by far not least, congratulations to Lam Hoac, Grand Champion! This is the very first time a sport kite took the top award. Lam's Sky Master won 1st place in the Sport Kite category and he also won special awards for Most Innovative Kite, Highest Score in Craftsmanship, and Highest Score in Design in the Comprehensive Kite Making Competitions. But wait, there's more: First in Open Individual Freestyle, Masters Individual Multi-line Precision, Masters Individual Dual-line Ballet, Masters Individual Multi-line Ballet, Open Individual Indoor Unlimited and Hot Tricks! I hope I got those all right. Wow! Way to go, guys! I have to wonder though ... where were all the talented women of Region 13? Seaside, Oregon, 2004 — bring it on!

But I'm jumping ahead too far. Let's backtrack to August when The Washington State International Kite

Festival welcomed Gérard Clément of France, Claudio Capelli of Italy, Masaaki and Sachiko Modegi of Japan, and Robert and Tracey Brasington of Tasmania, and numerous other participants from afar. Awesome kites, inspiring designs, jovial personalities, shared ideas, new (and renewed) friendships, fabulous weather, a most memorable week! Do consider attending this event if you ever have the opportunity.

Australia's Bondi Beach was alive with kites at the 25th Festival of the Winds, held Sept. 12-14. This year's featured guests were Rolf, Claudia and Achim Zimmerman of Germany, who filled the sky with their wonderful collection of inflatable kites such as Rolf's 15 M lobster, Sebastian. Others in the menagerie included owls with incredibly life-like flapping wings, cartoon characters, snails, starfish, and sea horses. Adding to the spectacle was Rob van Weers' 10 M long inflatable Garfield, and numerous other award winning kites and ground displays. Adelaide's roving reporter and kite personality extraordinaire, Linda Sanders, was delighted by the Waverley Council's greater cooperation this

REGION 13 ~ INTERNATIONAL

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year. She wrote: "We were encouraged to fly all 3 days, and even had the beach marked off early! It still didn't stop the die-hards who insisted on ducking under barriers to run their ritual jog across the sand, but sadly, no streakers this year." Any exhibitionists among us? I think that just might be an invitation!

September in this part of the world was one of the coldest ever, and it marked the end of a glorious summer. It also saw friends from near and far expressing their sympathies to Ray Bethell, whose wife, Lesley, passed away in the late evening hours of September 22. It has been a difficult year for Ray, having lost his daughter, Sonia, just five months earlier. Our heartfelt condolences to Ray and his family.

October saw kitefliers around the world unite again in celebration of the One Sky One World fly for peace. A dozen or so of Winnipeg's tako-kichi gathered on the grounds of The Royal Canadian Mint, a lovely park-like setting that the migrating geese enjoy too. The event made the early evening news on television, the late news and then again the next morning. The "bad news" stuck to the soles of our shoes, and oozed into one unfortunate flier's power kite when it lost what little wind there was and dropped into the goose pond. Oops! Wouldn't that make an interesting detergent com-

mercial?

Over in Mumbai (Bombay), the skies were filled with fighter kites. "More than 300 children who'd participated in the workshops turned up to fly their kites. Plus we had kites, only Indian fighters and lines (only sadda, no manjha!) available at the venue for people who wanted to fly," writes Ajay Prakash. (Sadda is plain cotton line, as opposed to the glass coated cutting line.) He continues, "We had two live student bands who played through the fly, including stuff for us older folks like 'Born to be Wild' and 'Roadhouse Blues' with a slight difference — the singer suddenly had everyone chanting: 'Well I woke up in the morning and I got myself a kite!'" Sounds like a new remake on the horizon!

While we're on the subject, I'd like to mention an article that appeared in a Toronto area newspaper. The front-page story reported that a seven-year-old girl riding her bike was cut on the neck by kite line and that the wound required stitches to close. Her father noticed that the kite, which was still attached to the string, was about a few hundred feet in the air and was caught on a fence in the school yard. "It could have been a lot worse," he said. "It's a good thing she was only going slow." Whether you fly with manjha or not, please fly safely and responsibly at all times.

continued on page 50



Both front and back of Italy's Claudio Capelli and friend relaxing and having fun at WISKF in August.



Kiting

people • places • things

With These 410 Kitters, I Thee Wed.....

In what we believe to be a FIRST for an AKA convention, Carol Wheeler and Bruce Jarvie of Michigan held their wedding ceremony at the 26th National Convention in Dayton! It was a private service, attended by 410 of their close friends in the kiting community who came from all over the world to witness the event. The wedding took place at the mass ascension field, while the "witnesses" held their Fighter and Rok kites poised for a celebratory launch after the formal service. At the conclusion of the vow exchanges, all of the waiting mass ascension kites were launched for a dramatic finale to the ceremony. Being the true romantics that they are, Carol and Bruce stayed for a few wedding photos but quickly ran off to join the mass ascension participants on the kite field! The wedding was officiated by Dr. Rev. and RD of Region 8 Gayle Woodul.



Last Flight Outta Dayton

It wasn't really the last flight, but this particular one was unusually full of west coast AKA members returning from the convention. How many can you find? There are 11, but Darrin Skinner is behind the camera and Miguel Rodriguez is just a sliver of head behind Sharon Champie. Also present are the Gombergs, Chuck Sigal, Mike Walsh, Susan Shampo, Brian Champie, Aaron Champie and Susan Skinner. What a load! Errr ... I mean, what valuable cargo!



Convention Hijinks, 2003 Edition

For many, many years, former AKA pres Corey Jensen has been wearing his famous "kite suit" to the awards banquet at AKA conventions. In this year's best practical joke, Dean Jordan commandeered Corey's suit and had many convention attendees pose for a portrait while wearing it. Corey was unaware of the stunt, until he arrived back from a smoke break at the awards banquet to see a huge picture on the screen of someone else wearing his suit!! He then had to endure the laughter that ensued from the following slideshow.



Photos: Bill Albers

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