

Spring 2009
Volume 31, Issue 1



Kiting

The Journal of the American Kitefliers Association

Of Course, You Know...

This Means War!

Global Fighter Kite 101
Japan's Kite Combat
K-Files: Manny Alves' Fighters
Rooftop Smackdown In India
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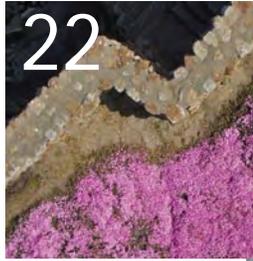
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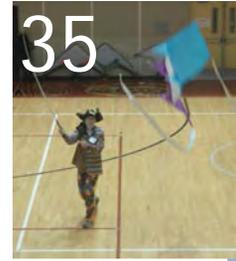
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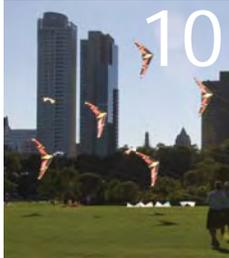
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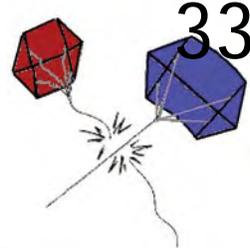
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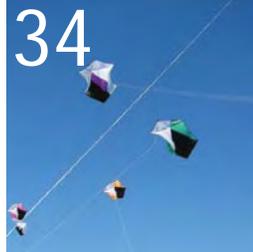


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- > Kitesurfing South Africa
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"Ripped Off" answer: The bottom set of photos are the real thing. The top set are knock-offs.

This logo means you'll find additional content at www.aka.kite.org/Kiting+



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Send address changes to
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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.

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Hi everyone! I hope this finds you warm and wonderful, and able to fly, build, or talk about kites. This issue of *Kiting* comes out during the kitemaking workshop season in the northern hemisphere. I hope you have found one near you that you can attend. It is a great way to visit old friends, meet new people and learn new things. Please visit the Calendar on the AKA website and find a workshop near you if you haven't already.

Being AKA President really is the best job in the world. There are new challenges every day. I came in to this hoping to find answers to questions I had been asking for years. I have gotten most of those answered and there are new ones every day. I remain determined to make the AKA as diverse as its members so that every member feels welcome and that they are an important part of what makes the kiting community what it is. The world is changing around us faster than it ever has before and the AKA must change with it or be left behind.

Board Meetings: What I am about to say next, I may have said too often already, but some postings on the AKA KiteTalk Forum suggest that it is still misunderstood by some folks. AKA Board Meetings, according to AKA Bylaws, are open to all members. In the past, that meant that truly curious and industrious AKA members were welcome to join a Board Meeting if they were willing to phone in to the teleconferenced Board Meeting and to bear the expense. Depending on the length of the call and the meeting, that expense was about a year's dues, and often twice that.

Under the current system, it is possible to join a Board Meeting for just the cost of the phone call. If someone has free long distance calling, they can join for free. If someone has Skype on their computer, they can join in for free from anywhere in the world. With Region 13 growing as fast as it is that is important. Even more importantly, Board Meetings are more open than they have ever been.

In the past, a single Board Meeting teleconference has cost the AKA anywhere from \$1,500 to \$2,500. Teleconferencing ain't cheap. We are

using a new system that costs us \$150 per month for unlimited conferencing. Look at it one way, it costs us \$150 per month whether we use it or not. Look at it from a cost/benefit point of view, and we get a year's worth of unlimited conferencing for about what we once spent on a single meeting. It gives us increased availability, increased accessibility, and less cost. I promise to stop writing about it when people stop asking about it. Please, by all means, come join us who are talking back and forth in the KiteTalk Forum on the AKA website and tell us what you think.



Insurance: Our insurance premium dropped this year. Part of that is the rate, and part of that is that there are fewer of us to insure, but it is \$2,500 less than what it was, and that is good news. The AKA liability insurance is critical to many kite festivals which would not exist without it.

National Kite Month is April 2009. The dates are March 28 to May 3. Plan a kite event, put kites in your local library or school. Do a kitemaking workshop for local Scouts or school. Register your events at www.national-kitemonth.org. There is great information there on how to get a proclamation from your Governor or Mayor declaring April as Kite Month. E-mail Rick Hawkins at nationalkitemonth@aka.kite.org now to find out how to help make this the best National Kite Month ever.

AKA Website: A tip of the hat and a dip of the kite to our AKA Webmaster, Chuck Sigal. Chuck makes changes to the AKA website almost daily. It is a continuous job. Take a good look at this page of this magazine. Now imagine 1,300 pages. Pages that are not in a magazine, not in a book. Pages that

are spread out all over the kite field. Now attach a string to each one of those pages that goes to all the other pages. That is what Chuck's job is like. The AKA website is made up of 1,300 different pages, all connected to make up the site. Chuck is a volunteer. He charges the AKA nothing for all of his efforts. Anyone with a business that pays for a website has an idea of what Chuck's tireless efforts for the AKA are worth. Add to that the bulk e-mailing that he has set up for various AKA entities, and his efforts on the Kite Talk Forum. Well, I just wanted to say, thanks Chuck!

Donations Button on Website: Drop by the AKA website at www.aka.kite.org and notice that there is a new button at the top right of the Welcome Page. It is a marvelous, magic button that enables people to donate to the AKA from the website using Paypal. Don't worry, it takes credit cards too.

Convention at Gettysburg was great! There is a terrific video on DVD that captures something of everything that happened at Convention. It can be obtained from www.livearchives.com for \$25. Experience again the fun that was had there, or see how much fun everyone had, or get one to show your friends just what it is you do on the weekends. If you don't have access to the World Wide Web, ask your Regional Director.

Speaking of Convention, the KTAI (Kite Trade Association International) had its Conference and Trade Show in Florida in January. The KTAI community selected the AKA convention 2008 as the best Kite Festival 2008. If you were there, pat yourself on the back. If you were there and volunteered for some portion of it, pat yourself on your back again. Thanks, everyone! Great job!

Please remember, your Regional Director is your "first line of defense" between you and the AKA bureaucracy. Help them do a great job for all of us by letting them know what you think. All their contact information is in the back of the magazine.

See you out there somewhere.

good heavens,
gary engvall

Totally Tobago

by Barbara Birnman



In late December, Paul LaMasters, Adrienne and Mearl Balmer, Jean and Ralph Gore, and I began our journey to Tobago for the 9th Annual Tobago Flying Colours Kite Festival. The kite festival was held on Sunday, 28 December in the village of Plymouth. This festival was started by an American, Valerie Critten-Stewart, who married a Tobagonian and lives part-time in both the U.S. and in Tobago. Valerie is not a kite flyer, but the residents of Tobago are avid builders and flyers, and Valerie wanted to do something for her new friends.

Until Paul and I introduced them to differing kite styles last year, the folks on the island basically built only one type of kite, a modified barn door. They do build it in a wide range of sizes, and they traditionally use cedar, bamboo, string, glue, and plastic trash bags for the sail. The tail can be ripped up bedsheets, or for smaller kites, cassette recording tape. The kite does not break down, but we are working with the builders to try to build a frame that can be broken down for easy transport. These builders do not have access to the materials we are so lucky to have nor do they have the money to purchase them, so they use what is available. It is rumored that the hotels cannot keep plastic trash bags in stock starting in November when the builders begin their work.

There are prizes in age-defined categories such as artistic, largest, and foreign (Mearl took that prize), but every kite must fly for at least one minute and must be reeled

in by the flyer. Several judges are from the festival committee, and the remainder are selected from the crowd. Groups from the different villages build massive kites which must be transported by pick-up truck or assembled at the festival venue. Some of these massive kites are 12'-14' tall, and they usually explode in the air. But it sure is fun to watch a group of 10-15 young men try to launch and fly these monsters! Many of these "plastic" kites are air brushed with incredible designs. We are amazed by what they produce with their limited materials. They do love their kites! One can see kites resting in power lines, trees, and roof tops all over the island.

The weather for the Sunday festival at Plymouth was not great, but we did get some of the Balmers' single line kites in the air, and Paul was putting on a show and giving lessons on quads. Mearl wowed the crowd with a dual-line with a really long tail. The wind was squirrely, and the skies opened up in the late afternoon, so all of the judging could not be completed. So, a second festival was immediately scheduled for Thursday on the opposite end of the island at Speyside so the judging could be completed and prizes awarded.

The Balmers and the Gores brought some ripstop nylon and Tyvek for some of the builders to incorporate into their designs. Some of the fabric was given to one of the builders, Kerwin Redmond, at the Sunday festival. By Thursday, Kerwin had built a small box kite using both fabric and plastic. Another builder, Calvin, built a modified della porta with the traditional Tobago materials; he rotated it 90°, attached a three-point bridle and a bed sheet tail, and, boy, did that thing fly (none of us thought it would). We named it the Tobago Porta della! So, the builders of Tobago are branching out! Dave Soutar donated ten kites to give away, so there are nine deltas and one dual-line now being flown on the island.

The weather on Thursday was not so good, and we had little wind, but, of course, the Balmers' single line kites were a huge hit. The Gores brought a scuba diver with them, and folks were amazed when Ralph flew it. Unfortunately, there was too little wind to launch the massive kites, but they were there; the groups will be ready for the 10th anniversary of the festival.



Paul LaMasters traumatizes another innocent child.



Paul LaMasters inspects a native kite

We had a great week due to our hosts, Valerie Critten-Stewart (and her wonderful husband, Arthur) and the Tobago Department of Tourism (thank you, Sherma!). The Tobago Department of Tourism provided shuttle bus transportation for us for most of the week; we had a couple of free days to do as we pleased. They treated us like celebrities. We took a bus tour of the island, had tea at Arnos Vale (a bird-watching paradise), wowed the crowd at Pigeon Point beach, did some shopping, ate some good food, especially lunch at Gemma's Kitchen (basically, a tree house), toured the rainforest, and took part in many other activities. But, the best part of the trip was meeting the locals, learning about the island, and making so many new friends. We even "adopted" a family at our hotel that spent most of the week with us. If anyone is interested in taking a kiting vacation (travelers pay their own way) to Tobago for the 10th anniversary of the Tobago Flying Colours Kite Festival, we'll be going back and would like you to join us. K



Mearl Balmer



Adrienne Balmer



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KITE PLAN

EZ FIGHTER BY CARL "GUMBY" ANDERSON

Here what you need to build this neat fighter:

- .05" carbon rod at least 21"
- Bamboo spine at least 18"
- Mylar gift wrap
- Contact cement
- 2" packing tape and some strapping tape
- Bridle line, 10-30# Dacron will work
- Very sharp knife
- Cutting board
- Poster board or cardboard for the template

First let's make the kite template. You can use many things to make your template. Try poster board, cardboard, Masonite or thin aluminum sheet. Look at the diagram for help. I make half plans, so start with one of the straight edges which will be your spine. Mark off the length of spine $16 \frac{7}{8}$ " along this edge. From the nose mark down $5 \frac{15}{16}$ " and draw a line square to the spine. Measure $9 \frac{1}{2}$ " out on this line from the spine and make a mark. Now draw lines from the nose and tail to this point. This is the basic outline of your kite. On the leading edge measure $\frac{3}{8}$ " out for the flap, draw you line parallel to the edge and $2 \frac{1}{2}$ " from the trailing edge; this is your flap to glue over the carbon bow. At this point you can cut the flap back (see diagram) so when folded over it does not extend past the trailing edge. From the tail measure up the spine $5 \frac{3}{4}$ " and place a mark. This is your lower bridle point. Come off the edge about $\frac{1}{8}$ " and make a small hole so you can mark the sail. If yours looks like the diagram, now carefully cut out your template.

Pick your Mylar or favorite material. I think Mylar is the best for this kite. Look in the dollar stores for a roll of nice patterned prismatic or you can also use folded Mylar. It will just have creases. Be careful that you get Mylar, not prismatic paper backed. Cut a piece big enough to fit the pattern, with some leftover space. With a very sharp knife you can cut the sail out. Make sure

not to move the pattern. I use a cutting mat with a piece of sheet metal underneath and magnets to hold it in place

Now prepare the spine. Make sure its straight. You can tweak the bamboo with a little bending to make it straight. You can use a sharp knife to shave it down a little if it's too big.

Now start putting it all together. Open up the sail and lay it front side down. Tape the sail down and lay a narrow coating of contact cement on the center fold and then on the spine. Make sure to put the cement on the smooth side, which is the outside of

the bamboo. After it is tacky, lay the spine down on the sail so the center of the bamboo is centered on the points of the nose and tail. Cut the excess spine off at the nose and tail.

Now we want to put on the leading edge stiffener. This is what I use the strapping tape for. Cut two pieces of tape $9 \frac{1}{4}$ " long and $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide". On the backside put one piece on each side on the leading edge from the spine to just past where the flap starts. Make sure it's close to the leading edge and does not stick off of the sail edge as the glue on the tape would pick up debris.

You're ready to add the bow now. On the sail fold the flaps so they are straight with the leading edge. Put a light layer of contact cement on this flap and an equal area on the sail. Also, put some on the end of the bow the length of the flap. When contact cement is ready lay the bow down on the sail so it is following the leading edge. Fold over the flap and burnish down. Let it set for a little bit. For the other side, bend the bow and see where it sets in the fold keeping the bow inside of the sail. You may have to trim a little of the bow after it is glued down. Mark the bow where it should be and now put the contact cement on the flap and bow. When the contact cement is ready, lay the bow down and fold over the flap and burnish down. Now trim off any of the bow sticking out.

Now cut seven pieces of 2" packing tape about $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide. For the nose, lay a piece along the leading edge (front side) approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ " and then carefully fold over onto the back side, letting the tape bend around the spine, and do the other side. On the tail, start on the back side and lay the tape along the trailing edge. Fold over onto the front. Fold again to the back side. Do the same to the other side. For the wing tips also start on the backside. Lay the tape about 1" along the trailing edge, fold over the bow and onto the front side,

What is left over fold over the back. There is one piece

of tape left. This is to reinforce the holes for the bridle. On the backside of the kite at the bow measure out from the spine $1 \frac{1}{4}$ ", on each side, place a mark where the bow crosses that measurement. Cut two pieces of tape about $\frac{1}{2}$ " square. Place one on each mark so the tape is centered under the bow and on the mark. The one piece ($\frac{1}{2}$ " x 1") left goes over the spine at the lower bridle points. Heat up a nail or some other piece of metal and melt holes on both sides of the spine and at the upper bridle points. Cut two more pieces of packing tape $1 \times \frac{1}{4}$ ". These will be placed half on front and folded over

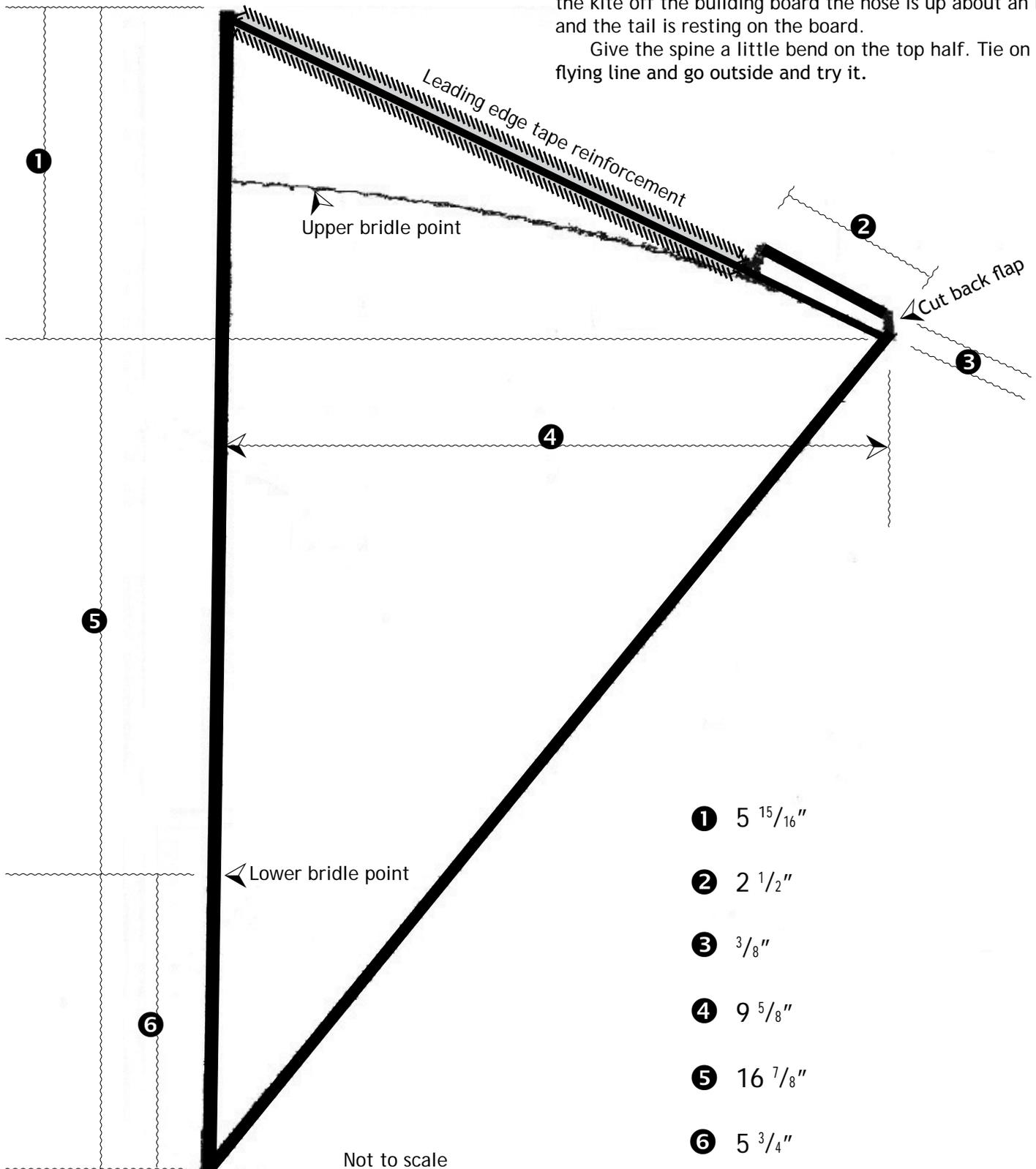


to the front where the bow goes into the Mylar flap.

To make the three-point bridle you need the yolk, the bridle and the tow loop. The yolk is 8", the bridle is 25" and the tow loop is about 6" to 8" according to your fingers (big or small). Fold over and tie a knot to make a 3" loop. Take this and the yolk and run them through beeswax a few times. If you don't have beeswax you will have to do a double larkshead. With the yolk waxed tie a knot as close to each end as possible. Wrap it around the bow and tie a slip

knot and tighten. Slide over to one of the holes you burnt through the sail. Go through the hole and back through the other and tie a slip knot around the bow. Larkshead the bridle if you waxed or double larkshead if not to the yolk. Try and get the larkshead as close to center of the kite as you can. Run the loose end over to about 1" from the wing tip then through the lower bridle point and back to the front. Tie a knot of your choice. Get it to the center of the spine. Larks head or double larks head the tow loop onto the bridle and slide it up towards the nose so when holding the kite off the building board the nose is up about an inch and the tail is resting on the board.

Give the spine a little bend on the top half. Tie on your flying line and go outside and try it. k



Kite Trade Association International



Revolution www.revkites.com

As we spring into a new year, we come out swinging with a new Blast for you to enjoy. This year we have added new graphics by Bazzar and we redesigned the structure. This new 1/4" structure is both light and strong; designed along the lines of the immensely popular Race rods.

Your new Blast kite will come built with the standard SLE (7/16") 3-piece leading edge. Great for your power flying days. You will also receive FREE our new 1/4" UL 3 piece leading edge. This structure will greatly enhance your light wind flying capabilities.

This Rev kite is really taking off in team flying worldwide, as can be seen on youtube/ revolution blast kites. Also, look for the introduction of the new Blast being flown by Team iQuad at a festival near you. Rev flyers- get a lesson on the Blast. You'll love this kite, and it's so versatile with the two structures.

Into The Wind www.intothewind.com

Into The Wind was pleased to showcase our new ITW Kites, available in spring 2009, at this year's KTAI in Florida. Our Flash Wing, inspired by Sri Lankan bird kites, was our most popular new kite with other retailers. Its active flying style and vibrantly colorful, yet traditional design will really set it apart from the rest of the kites in the sky. And our new progressive stunt kite stack, Fleet, gives power kite flying a whole new look and feel for 2009.

Call us at 800/541-0314 for your copy of our new 2009 catalog.

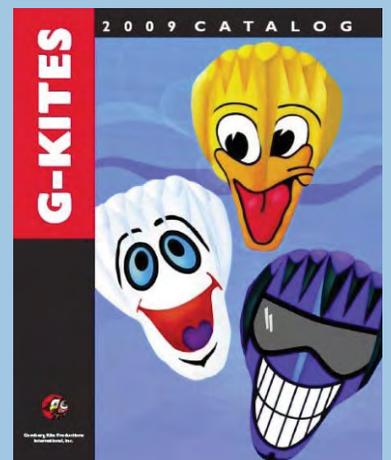


Gomberg Kites www.gombergkites.com

Gomberg Kites introduced our mass-market G-Kite product line in 2003. One thing that sets G-Kites apart from other manufacturers is that our beginner kites come packaged in reusable eco-friendly fabric bags instead of heavy plastic throw-away displays. Popular new products for 2009 included Beach Balloons, Fabric Feathers, and several high performance soaring kites like the Zenith and Fled. We special-

ize in entry-level Deltas (like the 7' Radian delta shown here) and Kite Tails.

Visit us online for the complete G-Kite catalog, as well as weekly specials and great Factory Outlet bargains.



2009 New Product Showcase



HQ Kites www.hq-kites-usa.com

Winner of Best New Kite in 2009 by the KTAI, the Magic Giant Star is designed by Ralf Dietrich. An amazing piece of work, this cellular is a steady flier with significant pull in higher winds. The star's key data: 25m² spinnaker cloth, 15m of 8mm carbon rods, 600m edging, 1400m thread and 892 individual parts. A large kite measuring 3.3m by 3.3m (nearly 11' x 11'). Recommended line 150 - 200#. Wind Range: 8 - 24 mph.

Over 70% of the earth's surface is covered by water – now you can train

on it. HQ Powerkites proudly introduces the Hydra, the world's first and only water relauchable trainerfoil. Extremely stable and easy to fly, this closed cell ram-air foil has no bladders to inflate or replace, yet it floats on water. A third line provides the safety system and reverse launch, making it perfect for use with absolute beginners. The Hydra flies great in low winds and generates plenty of pull for bodydrags when the wind is strong. Available in two sizes: 3m and 3.5m wingspan. MSRP \$280 & \$340.



Skydog Kites

www.skydogkites.com

Skydog Kites, is a new name in the kite manufacturing world with very familiar faces! Skydog's team has over 100 years of experience in the specialty kite market and is focusing our passion and knowledge to create the worlds best flying, highest quality, affordable kites.

Each kite is packed in a reusable nylon carry case with a fold over pocket to hold flight line and instructions.

The Puppy Best Flyer, a 48" wide flying version of mans best friend!

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THE SPORTING LIFE

The Importance of Teams by Eric Wolff

I've been a member of the Chicago Fire Kite Team since its inception in 1986. So, I'm biased towards the importance of having a robust group of sport kite teams here in the US. Also, what follows are my opinions and not necessarily those of my teammates.

There has, of course, been a lot of discussion lately about the declining number of sport kite competitors in the U.S. There are many reasons for the decline; the multitude of other leisure activities available in the 21st century and the sharp decline in kite retailers and sport kite manufacturers come to mind as two big causes. In thinking more about this though, I have come to believe that the rise (and relative fall) of competitive sport kite flying in the U.S. is directly correlated to the number, and relative health of our sport kite teams. Further, any potential resurgence of interest in the number and overall quality of sport kite competitors is, in part, dependent on a resurgence of interest in team flying.

While this may be obvious to some, others may view my theory as nothing more than the ramblings of a crusty old team flyer. To try to help illustrate my point of view, I've done a bit of research. I consider the history of competitive sport kiting as beginning in the mid-1980's and continuing to the present. In 1985, at my first AKA convention, there were five teams competing; three "masters" and two "experienced" (although we didn't use

those skill level terms back then). Of those, three out of five were actually pairs, not teams. By the 1988 convention there were, combining Masters and Experienced classes, ten teams at Nationals. From the AKA website I collected the following statistics reflecting the total number of teams competing in Masters Team Ballet and Experienced Team Ballet at Nationals from 1995 (the earliest year that the data is available) forward:

- 1995 - 7 teams - Tulsa, OK
- 1996 - 13 teams - Santa Monica, CA
- 1997 - 17 teams - Wildwood, NJ
- 1998 - 8 teams - Ocean Shores, WA
- 1999 - 11 teams - Muncie, IN
- 2000 - 10 teams - Treasure Island, FL
- 2001 - 3 teams - Billings, MT
- 2002 - 6 teams - Ocean City, MD
- 2003 - 12 teams - Dayton, OH
- 2004 - 8 teams - Seaside, OR
- 2005 - 4 teams - Ocean City, MD
- 2006 - 4 teams - Des Moines, IA
- 2007 - 3 teams (0 Experienced teams) - Ocean Shores, WA
- 2008 - 5 teams - Gettysburg, PA

In contrast, the number of individual ballet flyers competing in MIB and EIB at Nationals over the same time period looks like this:

- 1995 - 26
- 1996 - 38
- 1997 - 27
- 1998 - 26
- 1999 - 30
- 2000 - 24
- 2001 - 21
- 2002 - 26

- 2003 - 23
- 2004 - 24
- 2005 - 26
- 2006 - 19
- 2007 - 22
- 2008 - 25

There are certainly a number of methods for determining average rates of decline, but I came up with this: over time individual ballet

competitors are down 15 - 20%, while teams competing are down 65 - 70%. Not pretty. Clearly the decline in teams is profound.

About now you may be thinking "OK Eric, I get the point, but why do you think this decline is so scary?" Well, there are two principal reasons why I think this so important to the community. First, teams often provide the critical mass for making regional competitions succeed. Using our team as an example, over the last three or four years we have been at a number of competitions where the individuals on (or directly associated with) the Chicago Fire made up both the majority of competitors and the majority of the judges. While I don't know for sure, I suspect that this is true of other teams in other regions. Further, at the 2008 Nationals, if the team flyers hadn't been there to judge and help with administration of the event, it would have compromised the AKA's ability to run the competition at all. Second, if you ask spectators at kite festivals and competitions what was most memorable about the event, the vast majority will mention two things; the big kites, and the sport kite teams. Now, it is certainly true that competition is not required for the development of a sport kite team; however, I believe that it is equally valid that the truly memorable routines come from teams that compete (or have extensive competition experience). Competition inspires the development of routines that are more polished and have more content. If there were no competitive sport kite teams out there, even non-competition festivals would suffer.

The causes of the steep decline in team flying are similar to those of the reduction of competitive flying overall, but there are a few things particularly worth noting. From 1988 through 1998 the *American Kite Magazine* "circuit" (along with the All American Championship and its connection to the World Cup) provided significant incentives for the development and maintenance of quality teams. If you competed, you

John Cosby





John Cosby

could regularly see your name (and sometimes your picture!) in print. To be sure the World Sport Kite Championships are out there, but the first two (2000 & 2001) were cancelled, and all but one has been in France in April (logistically difficult for young people in school and parents with school age children). In addition, while both *Kiting* magazine, and *Kitelife.com* add significant value to the kiting community at large, neither does anything impacting in terms of promoting and supporting sport kite competition in general or teams in particular. Also, long gone are the days when sport kite manufacturers provided financial support and free equipment to teams.

So, what can we do to turn the tide here and create more incentive for the development and maintenance of teams? While there is no magic bullet, I think that we can all contribute to turning the corner. Here are a few thoughts:

- **Flyers:** If you're not on a team, think about creating one. Reach out to other flyers in your area. Team flying is one of the most enjoyable things you can do in kiting. Once a team gets at all proficient it will be a thrill for all involved. If there is a team (or ex-team) in your area, ask them for help. Most team flyers I know are more than willing to provide assistance to you. And remember: keep it fun. Too much

pressure has killed a significant number of teams in the past.

- **Existing Teams:** First and foremost, stay together. Next, keep competing; you are needed more than ever at sport kite events. Then, go out of your way to help encourage new teams. "Downstream" your old equipment to them if they need it. Share the "secrets" of your maneuvers; give away diagrams, even if it's just your older stuff. Remember, if there are more teams competing, we'll all get better. Also, remember to keep it fun (see above).

- **AKA:** Start thinking of sport kiting in general (and sport kite teams in particular) as an asset for promoting kiting. It seems to me that in the last few years AKA has viewed sport kite competitions at Nationals as more of a burden than anything else. Make

sure the sport kite competitions, the Chief Judge and crew have everything they need and that all important field logistics are sorted out before the event starts. The scheduling of events at Nationals needs to be re-thought (for example: the recent change moving half of Kite Making Competition judging indoors has killed the ability of many to watch the sport kites).

- **AKA Regional Directors:** You all write columns for *Kiting*, go out of your way to report on the sport kite teams in your region. Talk to regional sport kite event coordinators and find out what you and/or AKA can do to help them with their events.

- **Organizers of Events:** If your event is primarily a competition, hang in there, we need you more than ever. If your event is primarily a festival, find additional ways to showcase the teams, and where possible provide compensation for them for the work they do at your event. Sport kite demos by individuals are OK, but teams will bring, and keep, the crowds.

At the end of the day, the future of sport kite teams depends on us all. Go out and hug a team flyer today. As for me, I'll give \$100 to each and every Experienced Class team that competes at this year's Nationals; I know that won't cover much of your expenses at the convention, but it might make a good dent in the bar tab. K

K-MAIL

Some of the results of the recent AKA survey suggest discontent and uneasiness within the membership about the state of affairs in the organization.

The state of Indoor Kite Flying may serve as an example of such a mood and the AKA's alleged dysfunction.

Whereas Indoor Kite Flying has become a major kiting activity in the US and in the world, it is still on the AKA's backburner. One would not find it in the AKA's website table of contents. Information about Indoor Kite Flying is buried under "Grand National Sport Kite Competition." For the AKA it is still an "also ran" activity.

Here are some opinions and suggestions:

- Indoor Kite Flying does not belong to Sports Kites, not only because Indoor Kite Flying need not be multiple line but because it has its own artistic quality.

- The AKA should acknowledge Indoor Kite Flying as a separate section in the AKA, including kite making competition, flying demonstrations, workshops and open competitions at the annual conventions.

- Indoor Kite Flying should have its own committee whose chair should also be a member of the AKA Board.

- Competition judges should have personal experience in Indoor Flying.

- Since Indoor Kite Flying is done in a more intimate setting, the emphasis should be on art rather than just dry flying technique. Thus the pilot's dressing and bodily movements should be taken into account together with the music and choreography.

- The physical setting and the sound system for Indoor Kite Flying has to be taken more seriously if for no other reason than to honor the large public attendance to events such as the AKA Convention.

- The AKA should have an Indoor Kite Flying contingency plan of activities at the annual conventions in case of bad weather.

- The AKA should officially recognize Indoor Kite Flying as a respectable, self-standing kiting entity.

Nelson Borelli
Woodstock, IL

Bear Droppings by Arthur Dibble

I had a great time at the convention and the response to my presentation was very gratifying. While there were a lot of similarities between groups parachuting bears on either side of the water, my electric winch system seems to have elicited some interest and hence I have been asked to explain it.

In the UK winds can be very variable and bears seem to be a bit on the light side. From what I saw in the US there must be good winds and bears are normally about the two pound mark.

In the UK with the more unreliable winds we use bears of about eight ounces. These are brought to the event by the children and we fit them up with a parachute. For the sum of about \$1 per drop we hoist these up to the kite and release them so that the children can run after them. Very often it's the only physical exercise they get having got them away from their computers and game consoles. Once they have retrieved their bears they return to us so that



longer do this alone and needed mechanical assistance. During the following winter months I worked on developing the system I use now.

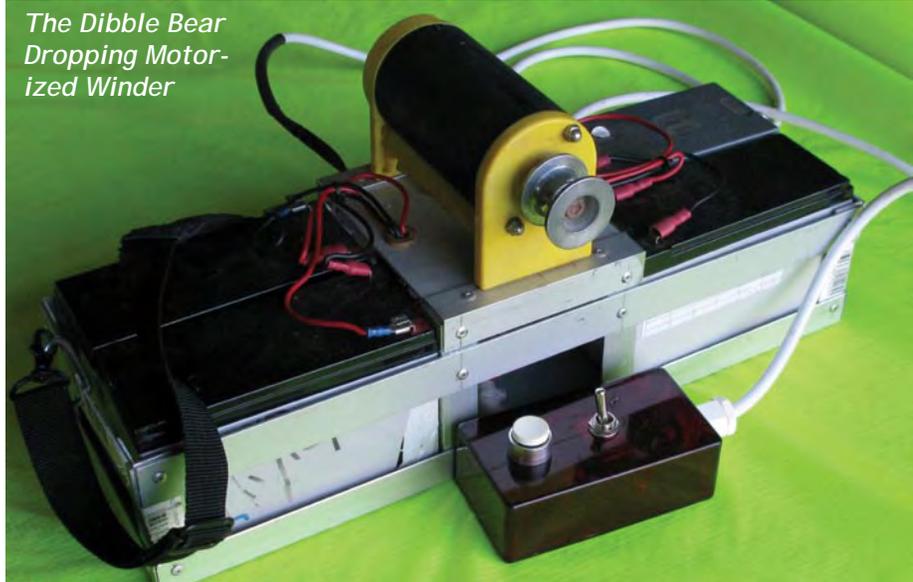
This is of the closed loop type where I have one pulley on the line some distance below the kite and two more at ground level. A line passes round all three of these to form a triangle. By pulling down on one side a "drop rig" attached to the other side is raised and will eventually reach the top pulley. This contact is used to operate the push rod and release the payload. Another "drop-rig" can be attached to this side of the line and then bears can be dropped from alternate sides. What was required was some form of winch to do the pulling for me.

I looked at various systems such as two large drums, one winding in as the other released, but eventually settled on a capstan system. To drive this I tried using various motors taking in to consideration such things as speed, torque, reversibility and power requirements. As a fire alarm engineer I had a good source of 12-volt SLA batteries as they have to be changed every 4 years and most still have plenty of life remaining. I eventually settled on the motor used by model engineers to start aircraft, boats and

we can repossess the parachute and give them a certificate. We frequently find that parents are so impressed with their offspring getting exercise that they are prepared to part with more money to see their little darlings move some more. If you take about 20% for printing the certificates and wear and tear on the rig the remainder can go to charity.

It is easy to do 100 in a day and on one notable occasion my son Martin and I hoisted 600+ with the support of a team of four fitting and retrieving parachutes, taking money and issuing certificates. On the journey home both Martin and I noticed our hands were sore and on closer inspection found they were actually bleeding. He was starting college the following year so I realised that I could no

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cars. This has a pulley on the shaft with a very narrow groove for a "V" belt to start model boats. This has to be replaced with a more suitable capstan. Here I was fortunate to be able to call on the services of my bother-in-law who had a lathe. He asked "What sort of capstan?" My answer was "About the same diameter as the original pulley but with straight ends and a curved center." With this very accurate design specification he produce the one I am still using 10 years later. It was the usual engineering solution: "If it looks right it will probably work."

The layout of the components is up to the individual but I have found the most convenient is an aluminium frame to hold four 12volt 6Ahr batteries with the motor mounted above them. This configuration means that the weight of the batteries will hold the unit down without need for pegging and gets the capstan to a suitable height for the line. The batteries are wired in parallel and taken



to a hand-held reversing switch unit, preferably with an off position to stop unwanted interference. Other useful refinements are to fit the controller with plugs and sockets so that it can be removed for transportation; a shoulder strap is useful for carrying it; and an additional connection for running off a car battery if the others start to get tired.

The unit I brought to Gettysburg was a reduced weight version for transportation and was pegged to the ground, powered by a battery kindly supplied by Tom Kear. I would not normally use this type of wet acid battery for safety reasons but it all worked very well for the convention.

For anyone wanting more information it can be found on my web site at www.tedberets.co.uk

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VOICES FROM THE VAULT

George Ham

by Patti Gibbons

photos courtesy of the World Kite Museum

It was an idyllic sun-kissed breezy day in 1995. I stepped into what easily could have passed as a post-card scene of the Marina Green park in San Francisco. To my left towered the Golden Gate Bridge; down and out to my right Alcatraz glimmered in the Pacific Ocean. But it was head-on that I quickly spotted the California icon I'd journeyed down the coast to meet, legendary kiteflier George Ham. All smiles, accented with jade jewelry, and radiating goodwill, George met me, a stranger with her tape recorder, and quickly calmed any awkward first meeting nervousness with his personal brand of frank friendliness. Easy to talk to, open like a book at the public library, George and I spent the afternoon chatting about kite making, his true blue addiction to parafoils, and the glory he finds in showing off for tourists at his home away from home, the Marina Green.

"A product of the Midwest" and an eternal child at heart, George Ham moved from St. Joseph, Missouri to California in 1939. Growing up during the Great Depression, George enjoyed kiting as a frugal hobby that lifted his spirits and gave him a chance to create stuff from his imagination. Collected snippets of grocery twine, recycled sheets of newspaper, and sticks splintered from orange crate slats all held together with flour paste donated from his grandmother's cupboard, George's homemade childhood toys danced in the sky and kept his morale aloft during tight times. Although George outgrew kiting as he matured

into adulthood, after careers in the shipyards and flooring installation he eventually returned to kiting in the autumn of his life.

It was around the US bicentennial that George tired of previous hobbies, such as jewelry making and fishing, found himself on the lookout for a new leisure pursuit. One fateful day George was out and about and happened to be looking up. He saw a Jalbert parafoil squatting in the sky. Friendly and outgoing, George followed the string down to the hands of a soon-to-be friend, a labor compensation lawyer recharging his nerves with his favorite kite. George knew at first sight that, "I gotta have one." He had found his new hobby and set out on search for this parafoil. He quickly learned that he "couldn't find a Jalbert parafoil right off the shelf" so he "ended up dealing with Dom myself and he became one of my friends." George was smitten. Over the years, he never really took to other types of kites and basically stuck with parafoils. He says he likes them so dearly because, "They've got no sticks to break" and unlike zippy stunt kites, parafoils allow him to "lay down and watch the clouds go by and see the kite dance around up there."

In the early days of kiting George might not have had access to an unlimited inventory of store-bought parafoils, but he certainly had the skills to figure out how to make his

own. No stranger to bobbins and thread, under the expert instruction of his grandmother, George learned to sew at about the same time he learned his ABCs. The two stitched together colorful snippets of material and kept the family cozy with patchwork quilts. These early throws inspired George's later kites. A natural with color theory, George looked closely at other kites to learn how to clad solid structures that fly high and steady. George likes to study others' kite designs and build from there. "I'm a mechanic, not an artist." Although George adores the stability and omnipresence of the parafoil, he also enjoys creating geodesic shaped kite toys such as bouncing balls. Since making his first sphere, George shamelessly admits, "I can't quit."

Over the years George crafted countless kites and "if my wife ever



found out just how many, I'd have to leave home." But his closets, garage, basement, and attic must be spacious because George rarely parts with his kites. "I don't sell my kites...a few got away for money and I regret it." George doesn't like to "face" his kites, just as he didn't like to see others wearing his jewelry. "I don't conform. The things that I have are not the things you go down to the store and buy. They're different."

Although an avid kiter, George didn't don his allegiance through membership. "I don't join clubs as a rule. Clubs get to be too much of a clique...I want to be my own self... [and clubs] just are not my bag." George says, "My problem is I'm not a joiner. I like to help...you pick your spots if you help, but if you join, well you end up with a job."

At about the same time George discovered kiting he discovered the joys of flying in the Marina Green. His devotion to the coastal park grew and he became active in civic matters to keep the park clean and free of riff raff. Locals dubbed him the Mayor of Marina Green and this

pleased George greatly. "I just love it here." Back in the day, George would fly and entertain passersby seven days a week. Over time, George scaled back his flying schedule to just Sundays, leaving the rest of the week for kitemaking at home. For George, kiting was "numero uno. I live the whole week for Sundays." He declared that he "plays to tourists, not a kite crowd" and that he satisfied himself by amusing others. For him, "the fire under the whole thing...is trying to do something different." K

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 clubs 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.



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Fightin' Words

Asking “What’s the best fighter?” is like asking “What’s the best car?” There are a lot of variables that affect the answer. We gathered a pair of experts — Bandana Gang member and kitemaking champion Carl Anderson, and Bruce Lambert, co-founder of the North American Fighter Kite Association — for a debate.

For a typical American line-touch battle, what do you prefer to fly?

Bruce: When flying in a line touch competition, I prefer flying a kite design based on my “slogdog” shape and proportion. A full sized template and details about this design are at www.fighterkitecentral.com on the ‘full sized templates’ page. This shape has proven to be a kite that is fast enough to be competitive, yet is within my ability to control it... well, most of the time.

The wind speed at the time of the competition will determine what size of fighter I select; larger surface area kites for lighter winds, smaller for stronger winds. For me the trick is to select a kite that is fast enough to meet or beat the competitor’s kite’s speed and yet provide easy control of the kite, including its ability to instantly change directions and to be able to float for long periods.

When making these kites, I use a carbon fiber rod for the bow and either flat carbon fiber or bamboo for the spine. I prefer bamboo because it is so easy to control where along its length it can be either flexible or stiff. For the skins of most of my kites I prefer a 0.8mil thick polypropylene film, which is plastic gift wrapping film. Three-point or four-point bridles are what I usually attach to kites I fly in competitions, this bridling arrangement provides quite a wide range of adjustments to accommodate making subtle changes in the kite’s performance while out on the flying field.

Carl: I think each individual flier has his own best kite. I designed my Gumby a few years ago and thought it was the best. Then I redesigned it to make it the Gumby 2, which I flew in competition for about 5-6 years now. It served me well, placing in AKA conventions and local festivals. Now my favorite is the EZ I just designed this last year. It tracks straighter and longer than my other designs. Will have to see how how it flies in competition this year.

Bruce talked about speed and control. Since speed kills, when you want to go fast, what do you fly?

Carl: When in competition I want the kite to go fast when the opponent makes a mistake and if my kite is going in the direction to get the point. For fun you do all the moves that you would do in competition. Fun flying is just practice. Flying fighters is the most fun I ever had in any sport/hobby. And you meet some neat people.

Bruce: For me, if I want sheer speed, and control isn’t all that critical, then I assess the speed of a fighter kite this way... I’ve found a

fighter kite’s speed is directly related to two primary aspects of the kite: the surface area of the kite (a smaller kite is faster), and the stiffness of its bow (the stiffer the bow the faster). Both of those qualities have to be considered in relation to the existing wind speed. And based on your experience, you determine what combination will be fast enough for whatever you’re objective is.

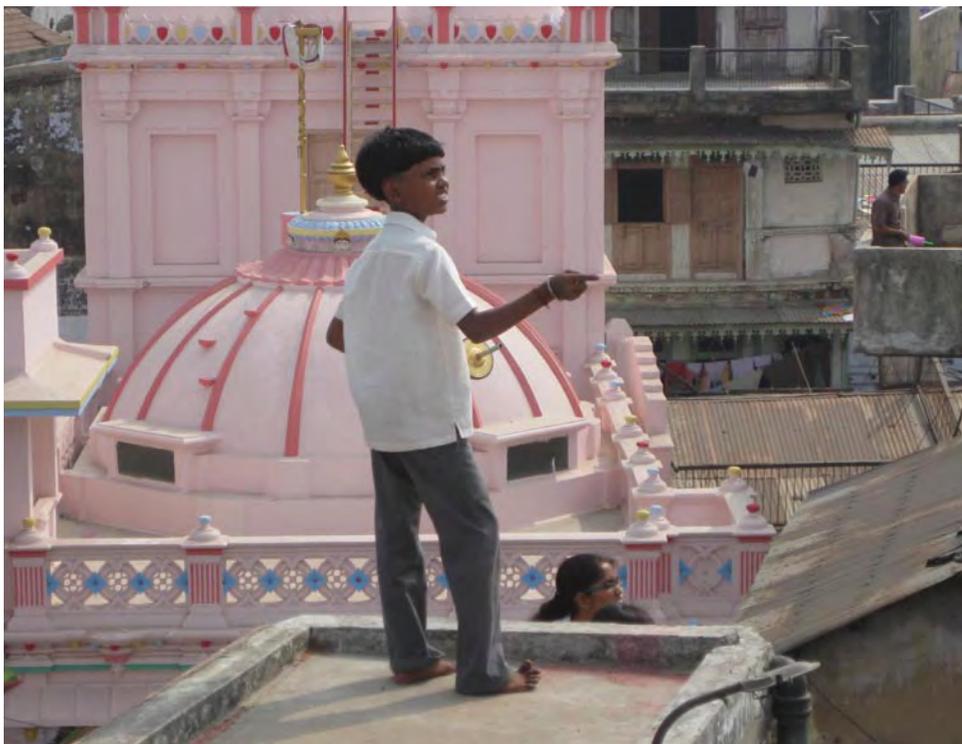
When I select a kite that is larger than is appropriate for the speed I want in the wind speed at hand, the result is often a very hard pulling kite; more surface area means more pull. Often it will pull so hard that I can’t effectively grip the flying line and therefore get many cuts in my hands as the line that I’m desperately trying to grip slips through my fingers, cutting me as it slips. And unless the larger kite has an unusually stiff bow, it will be a slower kite than I would need. That’s the way with making poor decisions; you always seem to pay in more than one way for your error in judgement.

Although the above description is how I go about selecting the fastest kite for a particular wind speed, speed can, and often is, the demise of a fighter kite competition flier. As competitive fliers, we often misjudge our reaction time as being about three times quicker than it actually is...so the high speed kite simply crashes more quickly than other kites would!

Okay, then if speed really does kill, what do you fly when control counts?

Bruce: Actually, in any fighter kite competition I enter, control is always a major consideration in selecting a fighter kite to fly in that competition. This is especially true for Precision or Skills competitions. Typically, a fighter kite that offers greater control is also a slightly slower kite than one identified as a speedy kite.

In fact if I had to make a choice of speed or control, for me control is slightly more important than speed. The reason is my eye/hand reaction time isn’t as quick as it used





to be. Slightly slower kites are easier for me to control and be successful with.

My shift to slightly slower fighters has caused me to change my line touch tactics. I used to be on the attack all the time. Now I'm much more often being patient and defensive.

Both strategies are equally effective.

Americans fly on relatively short lines. A lot of Asian battles are flown with hundreds or thousands of feet of line out. How does that change the kite?

Carl: On a shorter line the kite goes faster whereas the kites on long line have to drag all that line and go slower.

Bruce: I find basically two aspects of a fighter kite's behavior that are affected by the length of flying line used. One is kite speed and the other is the delay in time from when the flier manipulates the flying line and when the kite actually responds.

When flying with short lines, lines 100' or shorter, the kite is dragging a relatively small amount of line weight and similarly small amount of wind resistance drag of that line. Because of this, the size of the kite can be smaller and still be fast and very quick to respond to flying line manipulations compared with much larger fighter kites flown with thousands of feet of flying line. With long lines, the kite has to pull the weight and wind drag of all that line, so the kite must be quite large to carry the weight. When you look at the flying line of kites thousands of feet away, there is a large downward curved droop in the shape of the flying line between the kite and the flyer. In order for the flyer to manipulate the kite's behavior, it takes a relatively long time for any change to travel from the flyer to the kite.

So let's say that the Olympics add two new events: line-touch kite fighting on short lines, and unlimited length kite fighting with manjha. What countries do you put your money on?

Carl: Line-touch kite fighting on short lines, I'd have to say the USA wins. For long line fights, you would think that India would be the choice. But I heard from some USA fighters who went to Taiwan that the Japanese were the tops.

Bruce: With line touch, I'd think the USA would be the clear winner because very few other countries know about line touch well enough to have competitions. With manjha it is more difficult to guess the winner; I think Indonesia, Hong Kong and India are all top contenders.

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EMPTY SPACES IN THE SKY



Scott Spencer

1959-2008

Scott was a dear and trusted friend, not only to me but to kiting as a whole. He was also an innovator and a teacher of the hobby. Scott was opinionated and wasn't afraid of telling you what he thought.

Scott had a rough past couple of years with the loss of Betty Hirschmann in 2005; she was the love of his life and partner. Both his parents, Ed and Nancy Spencer, also passed away and then he had his own health issues to deal with.

Scott touched many lives with his creativity and artistry. He came up with many unique and interesting



designs: the Facet Kite, Transition Tail, Weaving, Mini Banner, SJKF Personal Banner, SJKF Mother Banner and Kite. He was a founding member of the South Jersey Kite Flyers and a long time member of the AKA. As a matter of fact, the 2008 Convention was the 24th he'd attended. He may have upset you at times with his views, but he was always looking at the big picture and representing what he thought was good for whatever organization he was speaking of. Scott was a long time supporter of the Drachen Foundation and the World Kite Museum.

In the months before he died, Scott gave a workshop at the AKA Convention and insisted that he be the auctioneer at SJKF's Anniversary Bash. I know these must have been exhausting for him, because at the Bash, Scott had to take a few naps and slept all the way home. At this year's AKA Convention, if you bumped into Scott, you most likely walked away with a temporary tattoo of the AKA logo, which he made himself.

Scott held many positions in the kiting world. He was an AKA Regional Director, and briefly, its treasurer. He was also at one time or the other, President, Vice President and Director at Large of SJKF.

At SJKF parties, Scott always liked to cook. He then found his niche organizing the clean up after the parties. He hardly ever missed a SJKF meeting and had this uncanny knack of knowing what was going on behind the scenes in the AKA.

Scott gave many workshops to the AKA, SJKF and on Kitebuilder.com. If I or anyone had a question about a kite, Scott would always have an answer, sometimes even improving on the original way of doing things. Scott was a Boy Scout and traveled the world with them. He did service work in Bogotá, Columbia for kids.

May he finally rest in peace be-

cause when all was said and done, he was such a gentle soul. Go fly a kite for Scott; I know he would want you to.

Mike Dallmer

Scott taught his Modified Rok at MAKR 2005. One thing he said in class stuck with me. He was insistent that we sign the kite on the front when we were done. He told us, "If you sign it on the front, it's a piece of art. If you sign it on the back, then it's just a craft."

Grant Lovett

Sam Foertemyer

Sam Foertemyer, of Philadelphia, passed away on December 30th. Sam contracted a rare brain infection and passed a month after being diagnosed.

In addition to being secretary of SJKF, he helped organize kite related activities in association with the Franklin Institute, Temple University and the Japan America Society of Philadelphia, having kiting displays and demonstrations at their Sakura Sunday events in Fairmount Park.

Sam's enthusiasm for kiting extended beyond SJKF. He helped design and build kites, including our 200 ft² Pilot Parafoil that we first flew last summer. He will be greatly missed by us and SJKF.

Mike Petty and Don Pignolet





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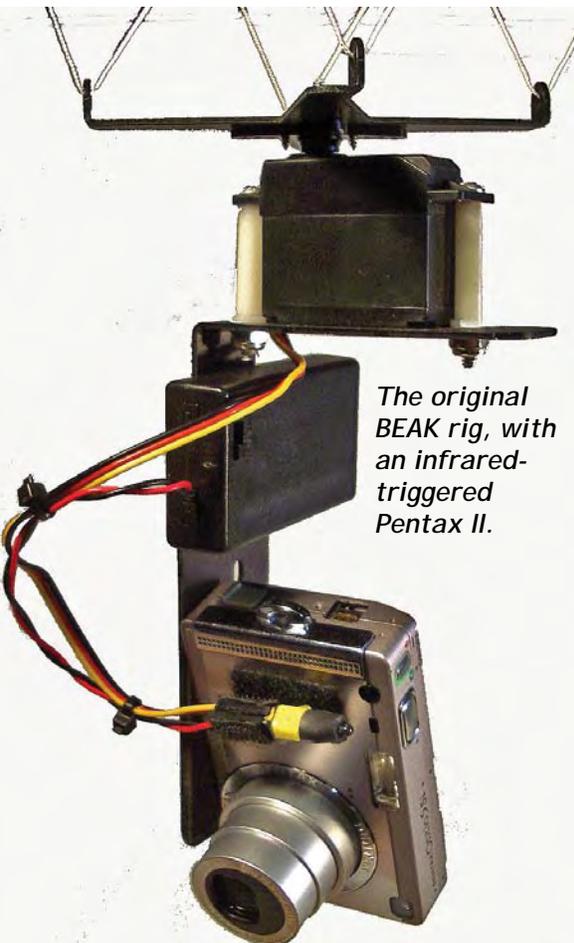
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A frequently asked question about KAP is “How do I get started?” The answer depends on who you ask since there are a wide variety of techniques being practiced and equipment employed. One thing everyone can agree on, though, is that it has never been easier to get started in KAP. Today’s lightweight digital cameras are ideal for aerial photography. The key pieces of equipment for Kite Aerial Photography are a kite, a camera and a rig. There are a few other necessities too, like kite line, gloves and an anchor point. This article will introduce each piece of equipment and recommend specific models that are suitable for getting started with KAP.

KAP Kites

The most important features of a KAP kite are stability and reliability. Commonly used designs for KAP include the Rokkaku, Delta, Flow Form, Fled and Dopero. Experienced KAPers typically have kites of several designs and sizes to allow them to work in a variety of wind conditions. But a beginner will want to use just one kite initially. If you are fortunate enough to live where winds are strong and steady, a Flow Form 16 might be your best choice. On the other hand, if your winds are always light, a Fled will work well. But if I have to recommend one kite for anyone, it would be a 9’ delta, like the Levitation Delta from Into the Wind. This kite works in a good range of winds, is easy to set up and fly and is fairly affordable.

Brooks Leffler



The original BEAK rig, with an infrared-triggered Pentax II.

KAP Cameras

Any type of camera can be used for KAP. But the lighter the camera, the easier it is to lift and the more fun it is for the person flying it. So the best choice for a beginning KAPer is a small point and shoot digital camera. There are many suitable models available but most any one will do. The biggest difference between various camera models, when it comes to KAP, is how they are triggered.

There are four common techniques for triggering

a camera on a KAP rig. The first technique is to place a small device called a servo motor above the shutter button. Whenever the motor moves, it presses the button and takes a picture. The second is to use the camera’s infrared remote trigger feature. A KAP rig can have an LED-based device called a GentLED that sends out the trigger code to snap a picture. This is lighter than the servo technique and easier to build but not all cameras support it. The third technique is to apply a signal to the USB port of a camera running modified software called CHDK. (This technique only applies to Canon point and shoot models.) And finally, a fourth method is to use a camera with a built-in intervalometer.

So which approach should you use? It depends on your camera. If it is a Canon point and shoot that supports CHDK, you should probably use the USB port technique. Or if it supports an infrared remote, that will be your preferred trigger method.

(Check www.brooxes.com for a list of cameras with IR trigger support.)

If all else fails, it’s always possible to mount a servo to press the shutter button.



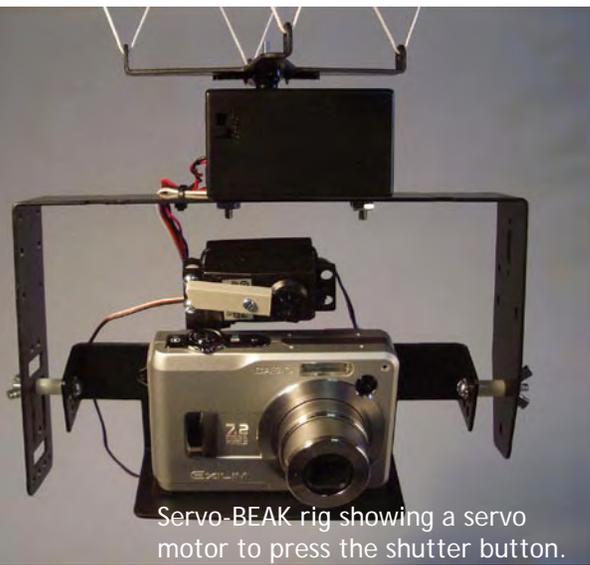
Horizontal BEAK rig with Canon S70 triggered by infrared.

KAP Rig

A KAP rig is the device that attaches the camera to the kite line and triggers it to take pictures. For many KAPers, inventing and building custom rigs is part of the fun. But if you want a trouble-free entry into the world of KAP, you can’t beat the kit rigs offered by Brooks Leffler. His Basic KAP Kit has been the most popular KAP rig in the world for the past 10 years. But the most recent KAP rig from Brooks, the BEAK, offers a simpler, lighter design that operates automatically. This is the kit I would recommend to anyone getting started in KAP.

BEAK stands for Brooxes Electric AutoKAP Kit. The rig in this kit shoots pictures automatically. A timer device called a Gent360 triggers the camera every 5 or 10 seconds then rotates the camera about 30 degrees before taking the next shot. The camera’s tilt angle is set before launch and doesn’t change. Using the BEAK couldn’t be simpler. Just turn it on and send it up. Bring it down later and see what it captured. It may seem unlikely that this would catch any interesting images but the results are often surprising and compelling.

Brooks Leffler



Servo-BEAK rig showing a servo motor to press the shutter button.

There are actually three variations of the BEAK rig designed for different cameras and different camera orientations.

The standard BEAK mounts the camera

vertically and works with an infrared or CHDK triggered camera. The HoBEAK is similar but mounts the camera horizontally. Finally, the Servo-BEAK is designed to accommodate a trigger servo for cameras that need it. The kits include everything necessary to make a KAP rig except a camera and batteries. Check www.brooxes.com and www.kapshop.com to purchase these rigs.

Other Equipment

There are a few other items that are necessary to practice the art of KAP. First and foremost are gloves. Hands and fingers are easily cut or burned by a kite line. And, oh yes, we'll need some kite line and a winder. Most KAPers

use 500' of 200# dacron line but smaller kites and lighter rigs may permit the use of 100# or 150# dacron. Other types of line like Spectra or Dyneema aren't recommended for KAP because they are too slippery and not as durable. One final piece of equipment useful for KAP is some type of anchor. A carabiner and a loop of rope or strapping make a very handy anchor. The loop can be attached to an object on the ground and the kite line can be fastened to the carabiner. When flying alone, it is often necessary to anchor the kite to free up one's hands when attaching and detaching the rig. The anchor is also useful when you want to walk down the kite. If you're fortunate enough to have a dependable partner when doing KAP, the anchor may be unnecessary.

Putting It All Together

A typical KAP flight works like this. First you establish an anchor point near the launch area, then prepare all the gear. Get the KAP rig ready to attach to the kite line but don't attach it yet. Then launch the kite and get it flying on at least 100 feet of line. Watch it there for a few minutes to make sure the kite and wind are stable enough to trust the camera to it. Once the kite earns your trust, attach the camera rig to the line and turn it on. (It may be necessary to anchor the kite during this operation.) Once attached, you can let out line to send the kite and camera higher. Then you're free to walk around a bit to let the camera shoot various subjects in the vicinity. When done shooting, return to the anchor and haul in line to retrieve the camera. Once the camera and rig are removed from the line, simply land the kite then go check out the pictures! k

Worldwide KAP Week

2008 saw the birth of a new annual tradition in the KAP community: Worldwide KAP Week. The idea behind the event was for KAPers worldwide to practice their craft during an agreed upon week and then share their stories and photos. Participation wasn't limited to taking KAP photos. People were encouraged to submit stories of any type of activity related to KAP. Afterward, stories and photos were collected by Peter Neville into a book offered on Blurb.com. (See www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/290845)

This year's event has been set for April 24 through May 4. Check Cris Benton's KAP Forum for details on how to participate: <http://steel.ced.berkeley.edu/cris/kap/discuss/comments.php?DiscussionID=1845>. Send in your photos by May 4 for inclusion in the next issue of *Kiting*.

Kelly Harman

All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten by Robert Fulghum is a popular poem. I must admit that being a fighter kite fanatic I relate my learning/life experience to both the fighter kite field and the basic lessons learned in kindergarten.

Fighter kite pilots **SHARE**. Share knowledge, share strategy, they share their passion for these little (or big) maneuverable kites. It's amazing.

Fighter kite pilots **PLAY FAIR**. Although some may question this

statement, it is my firm belief that die-hard fighter kite fanatics play fair. Integrity (which is learned much later than kindergarten) is a trait that draws us together. Integrity leads to character building, and character is what you do when you think no one else is looking.

Fighter kite pilots **"LOOK."** We are aware of wonder; the wonder of a little kite that can be built in all different shapes and sizes. It leads a kite builder to wonder. What is that perfect combination of size and ingenuity to give it that right amount of spin and speed to win that last and final touch? What type of material do we make the skin out of? What about the make up of the spine or the bow? There are so many options, so many ideas to try, so many outcomes. Some have been failures and some have become inspirations for the next innovative idea in fighter kites.

I've been into kiting and kitemaking since I was a kid. My dad and I would search for branches that would make good spars for kites and we'd take the newspaper's comic section to give it color. What started with sticks, paper



and string soon became plastic garbage bags, in all colors, turned into stunt kites and kite trains. Always wanting to be resourceful with funds we took advantage of the free, scrap, ripstop nylon from a local sailmaker and created flow forms and other styles of kites. While at the Newport Kite

By venting the nose I was able to understand its importance to the fighter kite's flight. Vents placed in the right configuration can give the kite better control and speed.



Vents were inspired by Woody Woods but it took a while to find the right location. Here is my first attempt. This kite flew well in high winds, but the kite was difficult to get to spin.

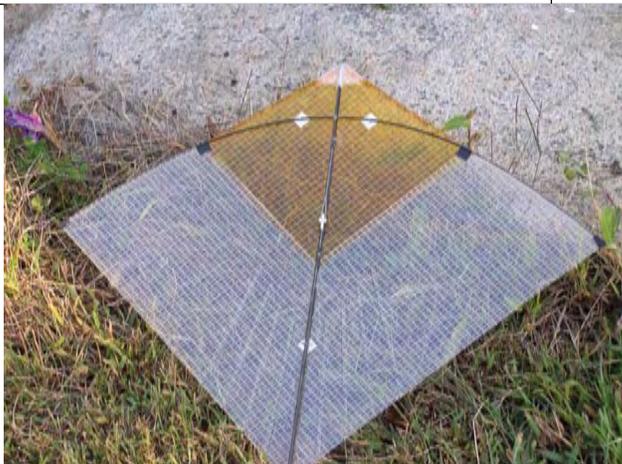
Festival one year, my son Jacob noticed these little maneuverable kites and wanted to check it out. Carl Anderson sold us our first fighter kite and from there I was hooked. Being the resourceful person I am (okay, I'm cheap) and using my experience as a machinist I used the information from Bruce Lambert's *North American Fighter Kites* CD to begin my journey into fighter kite making.

Conversations shared on the fighter kite fields and on online forums have inspired all of my ideas. Someone may mention something and an idea would click in my head and I would think, "what if?" Some kites have ideas from multiple kite makers; one kite with many inspirations.

Some would say that it's already all been done before, but as many have found out in my workshop any inspiration I think of needs to be tried. Not once, but many times with multiple combinations.

On these pages are some of the kites that have been inspired from these conversations. Although I cannot share all of my experiments at this time, if you see me on the fighter kite field, don't hesitate to come on over and I will share my knowledge and passion for these little fighters. k

Recognizing how much the nose controls the flight of the kite, I started to experiment with stiffer materials in the nose area.



This kite has a round nose that is completely separate from the main sail. It is joined along the spine. The combination of vents, placement of the various skin materials and separate nose panel creates a fast kite with an immediate stopping action which allows for an instant spin.



Using different stiffness of materials in the various areas of the kite sail effects the kite's speed, spin and how far it reaches into the wind window.



Although it is difficult to see, this kite has two sails. The vents take in the air which then "funnels" through to the bottom edge, creating a 3-D effect. The added sail makes it a very quiet kite. It gave the kite more speed and is very responsive.



The three kites at right were created while testing my theories of sail placement and venting.



Global Fighters 101

Hitting⁺

by Gina Hsiung

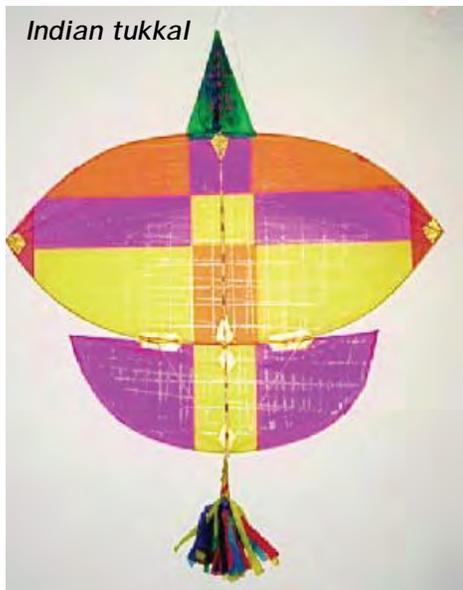
Can't tell a buka from a hata? Ever made the embarrassing slip-up of mixing up a chula and a bulan? Relax, we've got you covered....



Indian patang

The Indian Fighter Kite, made in India and Pakistan, is called a "Patang" or "Guda". It is still the most beloved of all the fighter kites available. In India, where these kites were invented, they are flown daily from rooftops and during the "Kite" season at large festivals.

The Tukkal (or Tuqal), found in both India and Pakistan, is favored more in Pakistan, and can be used for nighttime flying as well. The tukkal has a distinctive rounded shape. It can be plain, or fancy, but the plainer versions are faster as there is less drag on the face of the kite. This kite's wing span is 22" (56 cm), and the spine continues through the frame to the point. The semicircular bottom section adds stability to the kite.



Indian tukkal

There are larger versions of this kite, made with a wing span of up to 32" (81 cm). The tukkal is usually flown with manjha. It is much heavier than the traditional paper patangs which are light and fast. As an unwritten rule, most patang fliers will not fight against the tukkal. If a match does occur, the tukkal will almost always take the fight.

Afghan fighter kites are similar to the Indian fighters in that they are made from tissue paper and bamboo. The biggest difference is that they are much larger than the typical Indian fighters. The wing span on an average Afghan fighter kite is 3½' long, some even up to a 5' wing span, where most Indian kites run around 1½' on the small kites to 2½' on the large ones.

The Afghan kites are always flown on glass coated "cutting" line called Tar in the Afghan language. Most of the flyers make their own Tar, each with his own secret recipe of glue and ground glass. They think nothing of using all 1000' when fighting, sometimes they even tie on more line while they are flying.

The rules in an Afghan fighter competition: THERE ARE NO RULES! Everyone puts up his kite (this is strictly a male-dominated event), and the fighter usually has an assistant to help with the line and spool. There can be over 25 kites in the air at any time, all fighting. These large kites have quite a pull to them, but most of the fighting is done with release cutting which requires a lot of patience. The young kids on the ground have a great time trying to capture the cut kites, and can compile quite a collection by the end of the day.

The most popular Korean kite, a "shield" kite, called pangp'aeyon, looks simple, but is the toughest of all kites in Korea. This rectangular kite is

made from five bamboo sticks and covered with traditional Korean mulberry paper. It is always in the strict proportion of 2 by 3. It has a circular hole in the center, with a diameter half the width of the kite, and functions as an efficient air control device. Four of the five bamboo sticks are placed: one top to bottom (centered), one side to side (centered), and two from corner to



Fighting in Afghanistan

corner; all crossing each other at the center of the kite to form a rectangular frame. The fifth stick is placed along the top of the kite and connects to the ends of the three sticks there. These sticks are tied with string at four points: the two at the top corners, the center, and midway between the center and the bottom of the vertical stick. From these four points the strings are gathered to make a bridle. This kite can move freely up and down, to the left and to the right within a scope of 45 degrees in both directions. The kite is large and fast, and is flown tailless when used in combat flying.

In *The Penguin Book of Kites*, David Pelham writes, "It is fairly certain that the



Korean pangp'aeyon



Japanese hatas

Nagasaki fighting kite is a derivation of the Indian Fighter. Considering that the first Westerners who set foot in Japan in 1543 were restricted to Nagasaki alone, it seems likely that these early Portuguese, Dutch and English traders introduced the kite from India."

This conjecture is strongly supported by the fact that the Nagasaki hata (hata is the Japanese word for flag) is traditionally colored red, white and blue, in the manner of the Dutch ensign. The Nagasaki fighting kite, however, bears little resemblance to other traditional Japanese kite forms. It is highly balanced, extremely light, virtually square and flown diagonally, as opposed to the traditional Japanese configuration which is basically rectangular and flown longitudinally. It bears a close resemblance to the classic Indian fighter, differing only in the absence of the Indian support fin at the tail, and in having its two leading edges supported by a guideline of string, while the Indian version has its leading edges unsupported. "

Brazil's Piao fighters, nicknamed "top kite" because of the resemblance to spinning tops, are usually flown using string tails with ribbons attached. The bridle for these kites is very simple — a single line connected



Brazilian piao

to the top and bottom of the main spar, with appropriate slack, maybe 7" from the plane of the kite out towards the pilot. Then connect your line to this "bridle" about a little less than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way up. Tuning is necessary for correct flight. Flying tends to be tricky at first as these kites are meant to be unstable, to permit better control.

Thailand's sport of kite fighting has been played and favored by the Kings of Thailand for centuries. These kites have been enjoyed since the 13th and 14th century, and the sport was probably most popular during the reign of King Rama IV (1851-1868), when people were granted royal permission to fly kites at Bangkok's Phra Men Ground next to the Grand Palace. The rules used today were formulated in 1905 under the auspices of King Chulalongkorn. The fighting competition is between two fighter kites, the male Chula (Star-tail) and the female Pak-



Thai chulas

pao (Tail-kite). The chula is, of course, large, stronger and has a thicker string. It is star-shaped, measuring about five feet across. The pak-pao is much smaller, square, with a long tail. It has barbs to catch the chula and a loop to lasso over the points of the star-shaped kite. The object of the game is for the pak-pao to snare the chula and force it to the ground. The chula can win by causing the pak-pao to lose control, perhaps by tangling the string and pulling it into chula territory. The fighting maneuvers require physical strength, lightning reactions, and much practice. Winches are set up on either side of a dividing line. On one side are the chulas, and the pak-paos fly from the other side of the



Thai pak-pao

line. The male kites try to ensnare the female and pull her across the line, while the female uses greater speed and maneuverability to escape her opponent and force him into the ground.

In Malaysia, kites are called wau, because the shape of its wing is similar to an Arabic letter (pronounced "wow"). There are various types of wau such as wau kuching (cat kite), wau merak (peacock kite), and wau bulan (moon kite). Each wau also comes with different design and size. The Wau Bulan shape has been adopted by Malaysian Airlines as its logo. Kelantan is home to the giant kites and kite flying is an art form there. The waus have intricate patterns which take weeks to construct and decorate. Kites can come in various shapes and sizes but the designs of Kelantan kites stay close to traditional patterns. Kites are normally hand-drawn and decorated with colorful paper and strands of thread. Sometimes a bow-shaped device is attached to the kite to give a high-pitched humming sound when flown.

k



Malaysian wau bulan



Gujarat Combat

by Cliff Quinn

It was my first time to India and of course Ahmedabad, in the State of Gujarat. The day of the national holiday we were taken to the roof top of a prominent man, the “Speaker of the House” in the Gujarat Parliament (wearing a white robe in the photo at right). I never expected to see kites so strong a part of the culture. Flying kites starts very early in a youngster’s life and becomes an important pastime as they grow old. The fighter kite industry in India has grown to 500 billion rupees annually, a large part of the gross national product. The bundles of kites I saw contain 1,000 fighter kites each. I saw hundreds of bundles in just one kite marketplace, and there many marketplaces. Millions of kites are in the air during the holiday.

I have judged comprehensive fighter kitemaking at conventions and thought I had some knowledge of the

sport. After this trip I now know we here in the States have no clue what fighter kites are all about. We use modern materials such as ripstop nylon, mylar, orcon, micro carbon, super adhesives, and a list of many more items we think make better kites. Bottom line, simple kites of paper and bamboo get the job done. I smile when judging fighter kites here because each kitemaker uses different materials, and has what they think are unique design features to improve tracking, spinning and speed. But in India the kite in the air still flying is the winner and that kite can be paper and bamboo. I saw 10-year-old kids fighting who would whip the pants off most of our fighter kite flyers here in the States, and they do it with simple kites whose designs haven’t changed for hundreds of years. I have a whole new appreciation for fighters now.

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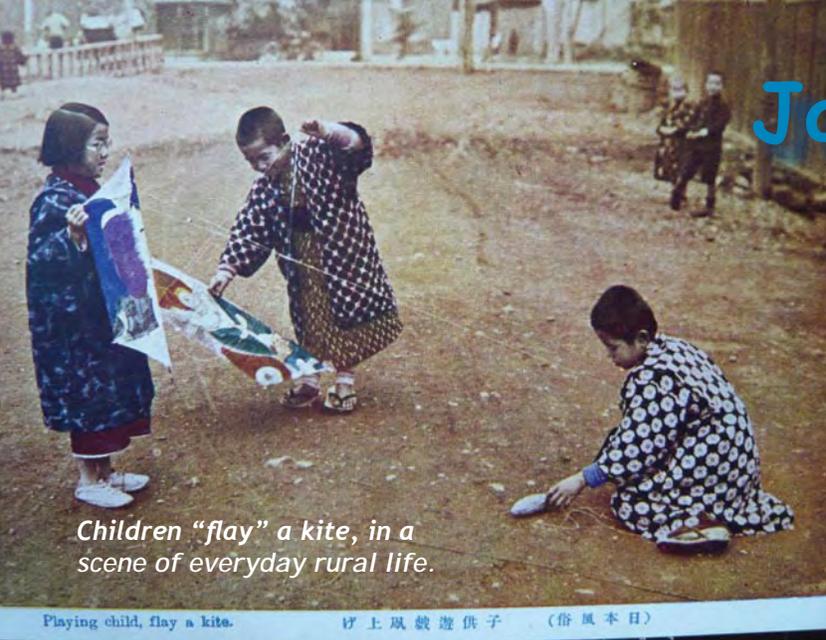
photos by Cliff Quinn
and Daryl "Dazzz" Smith



Japan's Kite Battles

by Scott Skinner

postcards from the Scott Skinner Collection



Children "flay" a kite, in a scene of everyday rural life.

Playing child, flay a kite.

子供上風戲遊供子 (俗風本日)

These show the special events and festivals that make Japan so remarkable. These are the cards that have captured the magic of several of the great kite battles: Nagasaki, Hammamatsu, and Shirone.

It has been 20 years since I visited Hammamatsu and saw, first hand, the kite battles there. It was my first trip to Japan and I probably have a romanticized recollection, but Hammamatsu was a feast for all the senses. The noise, the color, the dust, the potential for bodily injury, the kites!, all contributed to one of my most memorable kite experiences. This is a place for action: babies hoisted up into the middle of a team to celebrate his or her birth in the previous year, full bands playing "fight songs," teen-aged boys sprinting with kite lines to gain strategic advantage, old men quietly supervising the bridling of new kites, and dozens of kites flying, seemingly serenely, in the stiff breeze.

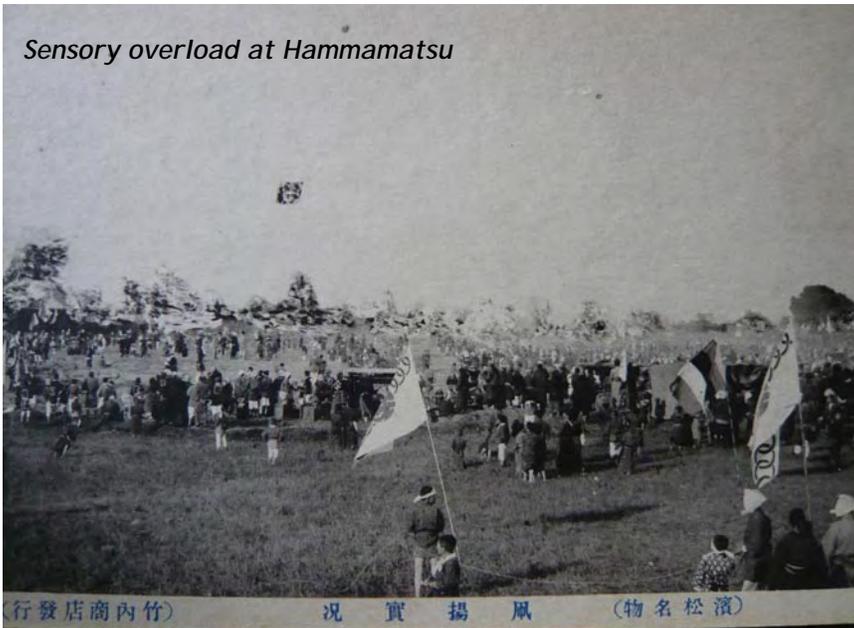


Flying and watching Nagasaki hatas.

TE OF JUNDEI KANON AT NAGASAKI.

長崎名物準観音揚揚實況

Sensory overload at Hammamatsu



(竹内商店發行)

風揚實況

(濱松名物)

On the other hand, I look at the historic post cards depicting the kite fighting at Kasagashira Hill in Nagasaki. This is an area that is now overgrown with housing and a bustling neighborhood. There is still a tiny park at the top of the hill that commemorates the kite flying tradition here, but it is a place for one or two to quietly fly kites, not for the crowds of flyers and picnickers shown 100 years ago. Nagasaki still celebrates its kite fighting tradition and flying the hata today must be very much like it was; a basket with flying line, a portion of flying line coated with roughly ground glass, and the elegant two-stick hata, all used together to defeat an aerial opponent. But this formal competition seems to be a far cry from what we see in the old cards.

From what I see in the early post cards, the kite fighting festival least changed may well be the one in Shirone and Ajikata. Here is another

Hatas above Nagasaki's Kasagashira Hill.



Flaging Kite on Kasagashira, Nagasaki.

揚たはノ頭風崎長

example of environment driving the development of a kite and its use. In this rural area of Western Japan, a sizable river (at least by Western US standards) runs between the agricultural towns of Shirone and Ajikata. The kite battles used the only land available for the recreation; the tops of the levees protecting both towns.

So, while there may be modernization all around, on the tops of the two levees, not much has changed. Flying the giant kites still has to be done along the banks of the river; the large kites have to be arranged at the downwind end of the levee so they can be launched up into the prevailing wind. Teams have to lay out flying line, manage the kite launch, and then fly their kite without disrupting the efforts of other teams on the levee. There is a wonderful ballet of movement along the levee-top; groups of men sprinting to launch a giant, ropes snapping into the air, whistles and shouts to manage the kite's flight, and, finally engaging the

opposite side's kite by looping your own over the line.

The kites are little changed, too. They are paraded through each town with accompanying bands, politicians, and sponsors. The largest are rolled for the parades and carried on flatbed trucks, too tall to squeeze under telephone lines and too heavy for all but the largest groups to carry. Kite groups gather each evening for "fellowship" (that means lots of food, sake and beer) and to thank the sponsors that pay for the kites.

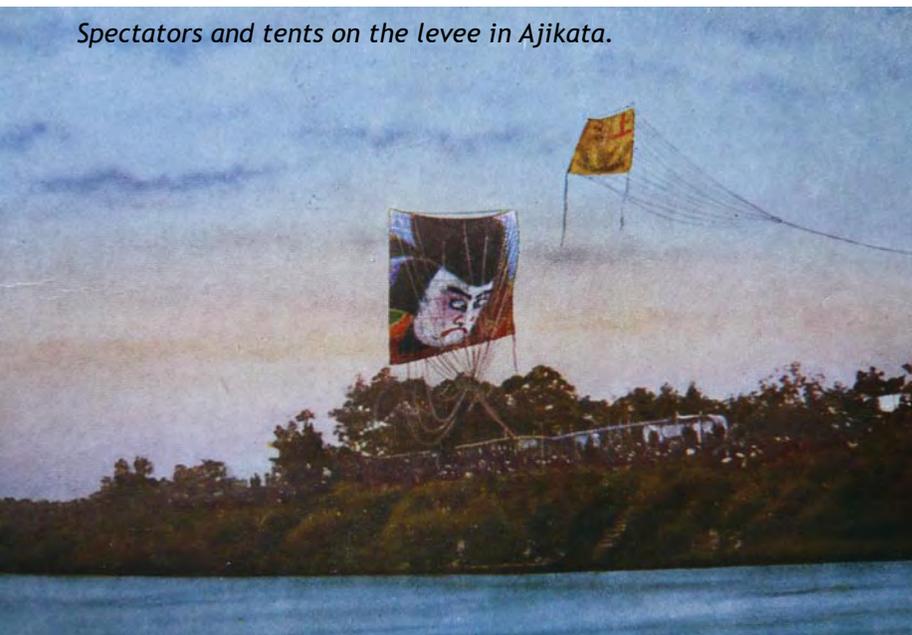
It's interesting to see the Shirone giant kites fly. They are structurally 'soft', in that their bridles dictate their final flying form. One corner is left slightly less supported by the bridle and this causes the kite to turn toward the opposite bank when really pulled. It's this characteristic that allows the teams on opposite sides of the river to overfly and then dive and catch the other's kite. Both kites have an extension of the flying rope that comes right through the sail and is at-

Two kites engaged; note the 'soft corner' of the yellow kite.



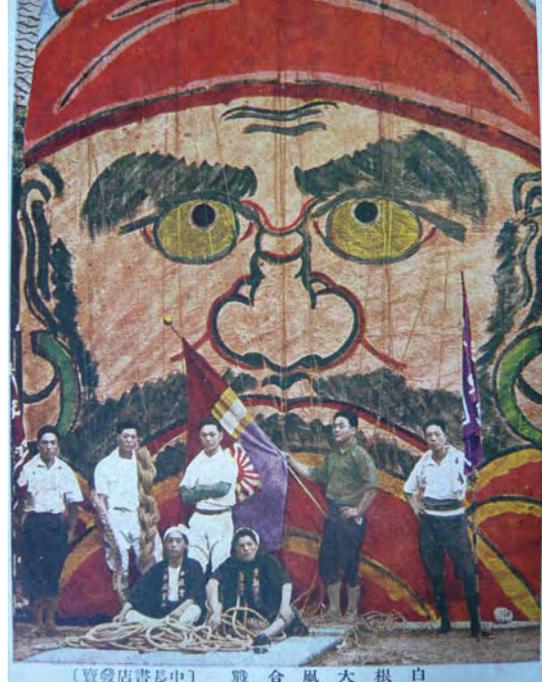
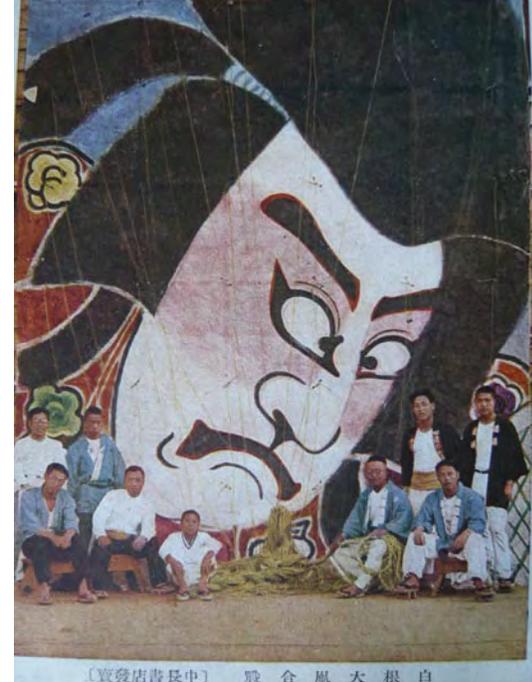
(町根白國後越) 戦合風大一第界世

Spectators and tents on the levee in Ajikata.



tached to a large piece of wood, secured behind the kite frame. This beefy piece of wood ensures that the two kites will not become disentangled when kite teams from both sides pull the lines tight, crush the kites, and begin the cross-river tug-of-war. It's this tug-of-war that determines the winner of each individual kite battle. Everything up to this point has been preparation.

Most teams use hand-made hemp rope for their flying lines (and tug-of-war rope). Made in a time-consuming traditional way in which eleven strands of hemp are braided into each of three parts of the rope, the rope-maker's job starts the day after the festival to provide new rope for the next year. When stretched tight over the river, with hundreds of "pullers" on each side, the line finally breaks and is claimed by the other side. It's this lost line



Three large Shirone kites and their teams; note the bridle lines and flying rope.

that determines the winner for the week; the team that has claimed the most line from its winning tug-of-wars is the winner.

The Shirone festival occurs in early June, so is more accessible than the many that occur during Golden week (early May) when travel in Japan is not easy. Near the city of Niigata, Shirone is a small town, so some Japanese language skill is helpful but not necessary. Niigata can be

reached by train from any city in Japan and flights from Tokyo and Osaka are convenient. Travel from Niigata to Shirone is best done by a hired car (our hotel had one) or taxi, both expensive but well worth it. Bus service is infrequent but can work if you're patient. The Shirone Kite Museum, founded by Kazuo Tamura is a must-see and there is usually someone on staff who speaks English. Also check the "Niigata Guide" on the web, with its links to the festival. K

The total destruction of two kites, and now the fun begins.



The Art of Cutting

by Harold Ames



Kite lines are cut when one line induces enough heat into the other line to melt it. This comes from rapidly moving your line across one spot in the other line to give it a rope burn. There is no other way to cut a line, short of using a knife.

Knowing the science of how an opponent's line is cut is very different from being able to know *when* you can to cut, which is an art. I was originally exposed to this art by one of the masters, Dave Gomberg, at the Grand Nationals in Muncie. I convinced Dave that he

should fight in the team battle instead of going back to the hotel to get ready to be the auctioneer at that evening's banquet. This was not the first lesson I got from Dave, and I hope it won't be the last.

The skills required are only honed by practice. Either you have to feel when the lines cross, and the other line is taut or you have to see it when the lines cross. This can only be learned through practice, so either you must enter

a fair number of rokkaku battles or you have to have to stage a practice battle at your local kite field with some friends. Be prepared to supply several kites and spools of line to make a good battle. You could also volunteer your equipment at a local kite festival and invite the public to participate (make sure you coordinate it with the event sponsor ahead of time and have the participants sign a waiver for your insurance policy). This is a great way to spread the joy of kites and rokkaku battling!

It is important to examine your opponents' line to look for knots, as it is an easy target for you to cut. Your line cannot get past the knot easily, so all that is left is for you to move your line rapidly. If your opponent was not kind enough to have some knots in their line you must tactically position your line on your opponents' line so your line will not travel up or down the other line, but stay in one place to compete the cut. The way to learn this is through practice.

In my experience, lines are usually easier to cut from the bottom than the top, meaning that your line is under your opponents' line. When you pull on your line your kite rises and the line becomes more taut than when you let out line. This helps you as you bring in line, or move your body on the field, or better yet, a combination of them to bring in line a rapidly as possible.

Please practice this art, and I hope to see you on a rokkaku battle field soon and often. ENGAGE!!!!!!

K

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Women Who Rok (Then)

by Rick Kinnaird

The art of rokkaku kite fighting got started in the western world in Pat Gillgallon's basement. It was the Sunday afternoon following the Detroit AKA Convention in 1982. I was showing pictures of my trip to Hammamatsu and describing their kite festival and how they fought with kites.

The Mama-san kite team was started on the Friday night of the 6th AKA convention, in Ohio. We had just had our first rokkaku kite battle which my team, the Rainbow Warriors, decisively won. Judy Nueger of What's Up wanted to form a women's team and challenge my team to a battle. She took the microphone at the Friday night banquet and said the women's team wanted to challenge my team to a "Ko-ko-chu Battle."

Would I accept? I said we'd be glad to accept and in a moment of inspiration I added, "Of course, we know women don't know how to fly kites." I could hear the mock boos and I do feel that my tongue in cheek statement did a lot to galvanize their team.

On the way out of the room that evening the women were already getting organized. Mary Ochse, Mary Ames, Judy Neuger, Val Govig, Mary Gramkowski, Cindy Edeiken (now Roberts), Eileen Kinnaird (now Mitchard), and Gloria Burkhardt were the core group.

We agreed to have a battle the next day. I don't remember much about the actual fight. I know we each practiced Will Yolen's famous dictum, "Keep your competitors at bay and keep sending releases to the press." We changed it to "Always claim victory, don't let the facts get in the way."

Certainly, one of the biggest concerns was safety. There were several young men on my team who were ready to practice some of their football blocking techniques who had to be instructed that this was not the purpose of the event. The purpose was to have fun and boast.

There was a large contingent of kitefliers from Japan

that year who brought over a regular-sized Hammamatsu style kite and reel. They became the assistants to the women's team and Fran Gramkowski was their coach. I'm not sure which team if any won that day. But I can assure you we both claimed victory.

This started a tradition of having a Mama-San/Rainbow Warrior kite battle at each convention. By the next year the ladies had commissioned Jon Burkhardt to build them a kite. Mary Ochse's mom made Hapi coats with their logo on them. Much time seemed to be spent on accessorizing and make-up. The Rainbow Warriors stuck to their dictum of meeting ten minutes ahead of time at the beer cooler. We also had headbands (hatchi makis) typically torn from cloth I bought and Corey Jensen had a large ink hand stamp of a Samurai warrior that we used to press on the cloth.

I tried, as best I could, to make sure both kites came down together in a death spiral. This sometime took some tricky flying. One year at Rhode Island the Warriors got cut out of the sky. It was a clean decisive cut. Jerry Sinote started to chase it down. In one of the moments of brilliance I yelled at him, "Jerry, come here." He stopped dead in his tracks and came back as the kite fluttered off. I told him, "We're warriors. We don't chase kites. Come on let's go have a beer," which we did. Soon some kids brought us our kite.

It was only a year or so ago that Mary Gramkowski told me what really happened that day. There was a woman who had to use hand crutches to get around. Mary had told her to go over and saw part way through our line. And Mary told her if she was about to get caught to fall down on the ground. Oh, the treachery!

But even a little treachery is certainly in the spirit of the rokkaku fighting as it has developed in the western world.

Women Who Rok (Now)

Lisa Willoughby

2004 AKA Team Rokkaku Champion

2005 AKA Individual Rokkaku Champion

Don't be fooled by the bright smile and pretty face; this Jersey girl is deadly in combat and will cut you down without a second thought.



Lisa Willoughby

Ronda Brewer

2008 AKA Team Rokkaku Champion

2008 AKA Individual Rokkaku Champion

The Oregon phenom shocked the world by sweeping the Gettysburg battlefield.

Adrienne Balmer

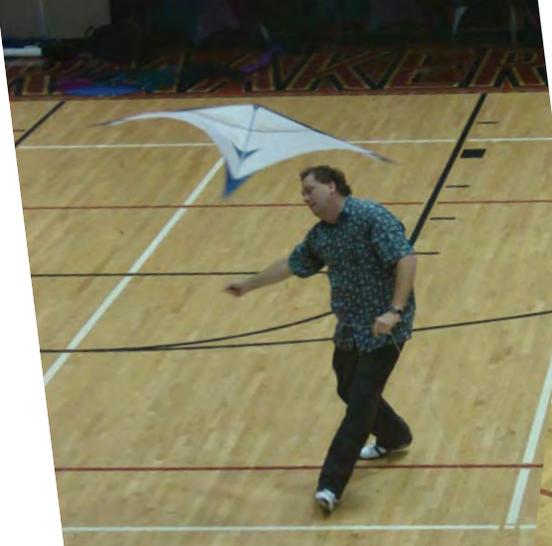
Brewer admirably described this Virginia belle by saying, "...You really need to watch your back when she's around. She cheats. She screams, pushes, grabs lines, and laughs a lot.... She really is a brat. I can't wait to play with her again."



Ronda Brewer



Adrienne Balmer



David Bradley



Bud Hayes



Alan Cunningham



Tristan Underwood



Spence Watson



Jerry Cannon



Toby Arndt



Camas Indoor Competition

Camas, WA
November 8-9, 2008



Paul DeBakker



Amy Doran



Dick Curran

Ripped Off!



You've spent months creating, testing, and perfecting a new kite design. It wins praise and awards at the national competition. And then six months later, without asking you, a manufacturer has copied and produced the same kite and it is for sale in stores around the world. How would you feel?

Or perhaps someone has prepared plans for the kite, published them on the Internet, or taught classes at workshops so others can build the same design.

Possibly you are a professional kitemaker, or have simply licensed a design for production, only to see the same kite pirated with no recognition or compensation.

These are the issues raised by a group of well-known kite designers in a letter circulated in January.

We are kite designers and builders. Some of us develop our new designs professionally to support our income, and some of us make kites for fun. All of us love what

we do and to share creations with our friends in the kite world. We are proud of our designs and work very hard to make them.

We are surprised, disappointed, and offended that (a) manufacturer has copied our work and is selling them commercially. They do this without our permission, without compensation, and without even giving us credit for the many hours needed to make a new kite fly.

This is a complex and controversial issue which has been around the kite world a long time. It involves question we have all heard before. "Can I make a copy as long as I don't sell it?" "Can I assume all online plans are authorized?" "Can I make a copy or buy a counterfeit kite with no harm or risk?"

In each case, the answer appears to be "no." And remember that when the music industry went after Napster, they also sued people who had downloaded music! But the rest of the answer is that cases are hardly ever

The photo at far left was taken by David Gomberg and originally appeared on the Gomberg Kite Productions website. The other photo appears on a Chinese website.

pursued because it is too expensive for kites to protect commercial designs.

I asked Peter Lynn what costs would be involved to patent a new kite. He told me there is no such thing as a global patent. You have to do countries individually. Costs for attorneys, searches, translations, and filings would be roughly \$100,000 for five countries. That would cover just the first five years. But you would still be vulnerable anywhere you didn't file. If you really wanted to do every country, it would be a million plus.

Patents involve protecting an original invention and must be applied for and paid for. A copyright is automatic for all original works of art. Copyrights are very broad, cost nothing, and automatically belong to the originator without any filing requirement. Both allow an owner to take action against parties that make, sell, or purchase infringements.

Peter went on to add, "I really only have two choices in these situations; either I don't defend my rights, in which case I may as well change careers or I make an example of someone. I'm very reluctant to do this because it's hugely expensive, but periodically it seems to be necessary.

It is impossibly expensive to patent each new kite design and lawyers take time and money with uncertain results, especially when dealing on a global basis. We prefer to address this in the Court of Kites rather than a Court of Law.

Fake Revolutions sold on a Chinese website.





One set of photos shows kites and line laundry made by Robert VanWeers, Martin Lester, and Peter Lynn. The other set shows copies sold by German manufacturer Kewo. Can you spot the fakes? See page 1 for the answer.



My own sense is that the copy problem is getting worse. Competition within the industry for viable commercial designs is increasing. Retail stores are struggling and looking for less costly products. A poor economy encourages fliers to look at lower-cost knock-offs. And direct sales from small producers in China adds a completely new element to the situation.

Recently, we've seen a plethora of e-mail, web pages, and eBay ads for low cost Asian copies of popular kite designs. If Gucci and Coach can't stop fakes, how can kite makers? But buying counterfeits, no matter how tempting, further weakens the industry and eventually hurts everyone.

This problem affects all kites. If we are copied now, you may be copied in the future. And of course, there is less encouragement for any of us to work on new designs knowing that a manufacturer with no sense of honesty or honor can simply steal them.

As a manufacturer, we work hard to support our designers, promote new products, and keep prices affordable.

And we spend time and money to popularize new designs. Finding counterfeits online for a fraction of our price is a serious problem that undermines the vitality and profitability of legitimate manufacturers. And I should note that the designers signing the public letter have licensed products with Premier and New Tech as well as GKPI.

For many of us, this issue is not about money, but about the simple idea that stealing our designs for commercial gain is wrong and should not be tolerated by the kite community.

The consistent answer when I talk to kite designers is to ask before you try to emulate their creations. That seems simple, straightforward, and polite. Don't presume that online plans or even books are authorized. Make sure that manufacturers offering products have permission to do so.

Do it because you respect your friends in the kite community that labored to create these wonderful designs. Do it because you have a stake in the health of the kite industry and community. And do it because you are a good person doing the right thing. K

Ladybugs designed by Geoff Campbell and licensed for production (right) and unauthorized copies sold in Europe (left)





Dave Ellis



Martin Lester demonstrates the fine points of building a Spirit Man.



A Cari King banner



Grant Lovett



A miniature by Dave Butler.



Bob Matteo

Oregon Kitemakers Retreat

Rockaway Beach, OR
January 8-11, 2009



Ronda Brewer unpacks.



Logo kite by Bary Crites



Grant Lovett



Ronda Brewer and Arnold Stellema



Deb Cooley's flare.

photos by
Grant Lovett
and Bob Matteo

National Kite Month 2009

by Rick Hawkins



Once again it's time to start spreading the word about how much fun you can have with kites. We've been telling people for years that April is National Kite Month. The National Kite Month program is a joint effort of the American Kitefliers Association and the Kite Trade Association International to promote kiting around the world. This year we've expanded it to give you more opportunity to take part. From March 28 to May 3 we're registering events at www.nationalkitemonth.org. The definition of an event is quite simply anything that makes the public aware of kiting. You can put up a display at the local library of a few posters and kites hanging from the ceiling and expand that to kite making workshops and fun flies. Each activity can be registered as an event and at the end of the month we will let you know which club and individuals were the most active. Last year we had a total of 438 events registered around the world during the celebration. One person registered 43 events! Region Eight took top honors with 110 events. The S.H.A.R.K. club chewed up the competition with 61. The top finishers in each category received a kite package from NewTech Kites one of our supporters in 2008. Eighteen drawings were held with a winner each week picking up a kite bag full of kites from Go Fly A Kite and also a 2nd place win-

ner receiving a complete kite making workshop in a box featuring Frustrationless Flyers from Into The Wind.

Taking part is simple. Print a few pictures and use the kiting safety brochure to create a safety display for use in public and school libraries. You can liven up the display by adding a few kites. If you really want to see kids smiling and having a great time help put on a kitemaking program and then have them fly their new creations after the workshop.

You can also invite the public to the park the next time you or your club flies. My club has grown over the years from people seeing us flying and remembering how much fun it was and wanting to join us. If you're a little more ambitious you can join in on activities that are going on in your area that could involve kiting. If they are doing an Earth Day festival or evening music series in the park you can fly your kites for the crowd's entertainment and register it as part of the international celebration. Last but not least you can register a festival. From a simple little fun fly to a well-organized festival all of the activities promote kiting as the family-friendly activity that is earth-friendly and most of all fun.

Don't forget to get a proclamation from your local government. The proclamations are easy to request and they are a good way to make your city leaders aware of the needs of kilters in the area. The complete how-to kit can be downloaded at the NKM website or by following the link at the top of the AKA website. It's simple to fill in the blanks and print and drop it off or e-mail it to your city secretary. You can request to pick it up after it's signed or to receive it in a formal presentation. You would show up at the scheduled council meeting and have a few pictures taken of the kite club mem-

bers and the mayor presenting the proclamation. Ask your local paper to take pictures or you can provide them with one to publish along with a brief note on how to find your club and join in on the fun.

The NKM Committee will file the request for you on the state level. If you would like to help it's as simple as providing your name and address as a state contact. We file the paperwork and all you have to do is open your mail to find a certificate from your Governor.

Information on how to make kites and how to include them in school classroom activities can be found at the NKM website along with proclamation packets and finding links to kitemaking supplies. We are looking forward to helping you with your projects for 2009. Check out the site then use the contact option if you have additional questions or need help with a project. This year we hope to again have a significant increase in the number of events registered. With our total membership working on this once a year project we should have several thousand events registered which translates to exposing hundreds of thousands of new kilters to our hobby. As the President reminds us, don't forget to sign a few up as new members too.



REGIONAL REPORTS



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Greetings fellow kites. Region One has been very active during Fall 2008 and early Winter 2009. Some highlights for our region were indoor kite shows, kite making workshops, and kiting to celebrate the holiday season.

As we New Englanders hunker down for the winter months, our kiting community still likes to fly kites. So we move indoors to have fun and showcase our flying skills. This past fall, our friends at Crochet Mountain, NH, hosted their second indoor event. New Year's Eve 2009 celebrations started with an indoor kite performance in Worcester, MA, for their First Night Celebration. Glenn Davison and several other AKA members presented an indoor performance that "... was a terrific event! Our audiences had never seen the magic of indoor kite flying before and we really 'wowed them' ...and we had fun too! We delivered the performances right on time and everything worked well... our kites, the sound system, the performances, the audience participation section, the announcing, everything!"

One of the traditions in the Northeast is to fly on New Year's Day. These events are called "It's too cold to fly" and it was (18F°, 25+ mph winds)! Folks flew at Nahant Beach, MA, Newport, RI, Bug Light, ME and many other locations.

Some interesting news for our

region was a situation to ban traction kiting. Last spring the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) placed a ban on traction kiting at a favorite local north shore area, Nahant Beach. This ban was imposed due to a misunderstanding by the Environmental Police. A request was made by the several local traction kites for support from their AKA Regional Director. After several months and many meetings with the DCR, and working with the local traction group, we were able to research the rules and regulations. After many e-mails, phone calls and meetings with the DCR, there was an agreement that the ban should not have been imposed and the ban has since been rescinded. Going forward, I will help the local traction kiting group assist the DCR with creating appropriate guidelines and policies that will become the standard for Nahant Beach and all statewide DCR controlled beaches.

Looking forward to Spring, many events have been placed on the AKA calendar. Several of our local kite clubs are planning workshops for the winter and early spring. A popular workshop is the Papillion Workshop. One was held by our friends from the Toronto Kite Flyers (TKF), in Canada. Two additional workshops are scheduled: one by NYKE in Albany, and another at Nantasket Beach, Hull, MA. The Papillion workshops will be led by Thom Shanken. An earlier Bol workshop was hosted by the Blue Hills Observatory and organized and led by Gary Quinton.

Many of our regional clubs are

planning events for Spring 2009. The Great Lakes Kitefliers Society will host several spring events including their Annual Kite Auction. In Maine, the Nor'easters are holding a kite making workshop and the ConnectiKITERS have scheduled a workshop for this spring.

If you are planning to attend the 32nd AKA National Convention 2009, all available information is on the AKA website. For details visit the AKA website and click on Table of Contents, Annual Convention.

National Kite Month is April 2009. If you are planning a spring event, post your event onto the National Kite month website www.nationalkite-month.org. Remember to let the world know about your events by posting to the AKA website too.

We would like to acknowledge the support from Tony and Petra Hesschen, John Ruggiero, Dan Delpappa, Glenn Davison, Don Tuff and Gary Quinton.

Greetings and salutations! By the time this hits the presses, spring will be upon us. Today, snow and cold have slowed many outside activities, but kites continue to fly or move to work indoors.

Pocono Kite Symphony had its 2009 New Year kick-off party in January and has building and repair workshops scheduled throughout the early months of the year. In the coming weeks they will be bringing their ground display up to speed for the spring. Also planned are kid's kite building classes and their "Kite Day in the Park" as usual the first Saturday of May. This will be the 19th Annual at Louise Moore Park in Easton,

John Kish

Greetings from Fly Pittsburgh!





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 End of term: 2010

PA. If you are nearby this is a nice festival, so plan to come and enjoy a day in a beautiful park.

SJKF had a rough year last year losing three valuable members, Scott Spencer, Sam Foertemyer and Catherine Dallmer. Look for something special dealing with Scott at Wildwood this year. On a more pleasant note, SJKF had a fabulous holiday

Cliff Quinn



Cliff Quinn's circular box kite won 3rd prize at the Pennsylvania Farm Show, beating out other handmade crafts like quilts and butter sculptures.

party where attendees that had pre-registered got an early holiday present – their money back!! Also, there were about 13 baskets that you had to buy tickets for chances to win but 10 of those baskets, in addition to having fabulous stuff, also came with a \$50 bill! *[Ed. note: I bought my tickets, and once again, won nothing. Sigh.]*

The Keystone Kite Club held their annual winter retreat making club banners and transition tails, warming up their sewing machines in expectation of their summer retreat. This year, Cliff Quinn will again be presenting. The project will be a "Poster Genki," a large, light wind kite with plenty of room for expression. Sign up information will be available soon. For details, see their website for contact information.

Fly Pittsburgh Kite Club is now in its 17th year as a club. They also had a New Year's Kick Off Party which 23 members attended on January 3rd. The kite skiers in their group are now taking advantage of the frozen lakes to get in some kite skiing. Fly Pittsburgh will hold its indoor fly at Slippery Rock University in March, and for National Kite Month club members plan on attending many events including flies at the Treesdale Community Center, Cooper's Lake Campground, the Earth Day Celebration at Slippery Rock U's Macoskey Center, and will join OSEK to support a very important event to help raise funds for the Jessica Moorehead Foundation for Hope to give support to families of kids with cancer. Their big Spring fly will then follow the first full weekend in May.

Hello Region Three. By the time you get this we will be about to embark on National Kite Month. I hope you have planned an event in your area. It isn't too late to start one. Check with your local library, Boys & Girls Club, Senior Center, etc., and set up a display, give a 15 - 20 minute presentation, offer a class on making simple paper kites. And please list it on the NKM website so everyone will have a way to find out about your event.

WOW and RAF both have continued to hold First Sunday flying activities despite the weather. In addition they hosted New Years day events with names like Silly Hat fly, or "It's too



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darn cold to fly a kite-kite fly (ITDCT-FAKKF). WOW elected new officers and their President, Jeff King has been excellent about communicating. Vice Presidents are Dennis Hawley and Dave Soutar, Barbara Birnman is Treasurer and Dave Ashworth is Secretary. RAF held its annual gift exchange after the holidays, and WOW held theirs a couple of days later. These are great social gatherings and even if you can't fly you get to be with your kite flying friends. WOW held a Kite Repair workshop and all of its members were encouraged to bring in a project, or learn by watching some of the others making repairs. In February the Maryland Kite Society holds an annual sewing workshop with multiple presenters. All the projects are done in one large room so everyone can see what everyone else is doing, and besides the kite building there is almost always a project for the "Kite Widows."

April events are available almost every weekend, so check the AKA website for information. The last weekend of April is the MIKE festival at Ocean City, MD. Unfortunately the sport kite competition has been cancelled, but there are demonstrations planned. Some of the best kite builders, best sport kite fliers, and best kite displays are found at this event every year. I encourage you to come to the beach and enjoy some off-season rates plus some great kite flying. May brings

several more festivals and the ECSKC, or Wildwood as it is better known, just to the north of Region Three. In late June Richmond will host the Old Dominion Sport Kite Competition and this year will probably see the return of fighter kites and rok battles. July is rather hot for kite activities in our region but many fliers still enjoy an afternoon outdoors. There is also a competition in New Jersey at Liberty State Park which is where some of the final points for the season are earned by the sport kites, and it is a last chance for kite builders to be judged before Convention.

Discussions by the members of the Board of Directors are carried on through e-mail and it is often lively. If you have something you need brought before the board please feel free to contact me by e-mail. If you are asked your opinion please respond quickly as the Board is sometimes working on a short deadline.

Challenge the wind!



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 End of Term: 2010

Hello again. Here is hoping that you all had an enjoyable holiday season and that it brought much joy. Winter brings down time for many but several of us have been active since the last report.

Jeff Rector dropped me a line about a fun fly that happened in



Circoflexes from the Treasure Island workshop get ready for their first flight.

November in central Florida and he posted a few pictures of the event to the Yahoo group (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/aka_region4_kitefliers/). A small gathering, but all are good no matter the size and it seems everybody who attended had a great time. Thanks to Jeff for letting me know about the fly. While I'm at it, if you would like some mention of what you've been up to, drop me an e-mail and let me know about it. One can only do so much and there is far more happening than I could possibly hope to experience first hand.

Thanks to Karen Mault for posting some pictures of the Carolina Kite Festival in Atlantic Beach, NC, at the Yahoo group. It certainly looks like the weather cooperated and the flying was good. She also sent me a short write-up on the annual Carolina Kite Club New Year's Day Fly. Karen writes, "The weather was cold and the wind chill was colder. Some of the brave souls were out early in the morning despite the cold to catch the wind. A couple of larger deltas, a Cody and a large Sutton made it into the sky.

A Blue Meanie, a crab and a spotted dog made it up as line laundry. As we got there to join in the show, the wind began to die and become gusty. All we managed to put up were a couple of smaller dragons. And then they didn't stay up for long." In all, eight to ten fliers braved the cold for the day and though it was a modest gathering, they did get a spot on one of the local TV channels which included interviews with Don Dixon of Kites Unlimited and Bob Snow, one of the club members.

Personally we journeyed to Treasure Island, FL, for the 12th annual TI Kite Fly and what an event it was. You couldn't ask for better weather. Dawn broke Saturday morning to clear skies and brisk steady winds. The sky was full of both large and small kites all day and demonstrations abounded. As is becoming customary, a Revolution megafly happened reaching an ultimate total of 15 fliers participating at once. As the day drew to a close, the winds abated but were still quite flyable and found me flying a rokkaku in one hand with refreshment in the other. Saturday night's auction was



Rev flyers team up in T.I.

well attended with all offerings finding new homes and helping to defray the event expenses. Thanks to all who contributed items and placed bids. Sunday morning picked up where Saturday afternoon left off with light and steady winds which continued to build throughout the day. Many fliers opted to attend a circoflex workshop in the morning and in all, ten plastic red, white and blue circoflexes were made and appeared on the beach around lunch. Quite a sight to see. Sherri and Steve Pigeon are to be commended for being able to put together such an outstanding event given the state of the economy and the turbulent year they experienced in 2008. Be sure to congratulate them when you see them.

There are a few spring events coming up: the city of Jacksonville's 84th Kite Festival at Hanna Park on March 27; the annual Lions and Lambs Kite Day on Saturday April 4 at the Tennessee River Park in Chattanooga, TN; the Callaway Gardens Fly on April 18-19 in southwest GA. Of course more events get announced all the time so be sure so be sure to check the calendar on the AKA website, especially with National Kite Month coming up in April.

As always, get out there and enjoy the wind. And e-mail me what been going on around your part of the region. Gentle breezes.



**Region 5 ~ Great Lakes
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End of term: 2011

I'm glad the worst of winter has passed (crossing fingers) but I did have fun visiting with new friends at the Black Swamp Air Force Christmas Party. I talked of kites and other things that make me smile. I ate loads of delicious food and generally had a wonderful time. We all missed seeing Dean and Vickie Proudfoot, our very own Skyjesters. Not only were there food and gifts at the party but Nancy Lockwood from O.S.E.K. was there to make beautiful Japanese-style kites and Carl "Gumby" Anderson was on hand to teach a class on making some very cool-looking fighter kites. (They flew them too.) Thanks, Kevin Kilgoar and B.S.A.F. folks, for making me feel like an old friend.

On New Year's Day many Region Five flyers took to the skies in both Michigan and Ohio. Black Swamp folks flew a little but ate a lot. Kyle Hoyt and I braved the cold and wind and flew for 3½ hours, only stopping when we couldn't feel our fingers and toes. Bud Gibson flew a kite in Arizona and ex-Fivers John and Elaine Cosby even flew in Puerto Rico.

Looking ahead, springtime is just around the corner and it's time to start thinking about where we put all of our kites, chairs, banners, wind-socks and everything else that we carry around in our cars all summer long. It's also time to start planning for upcoming Spring events in our region.

On April 4th & 5th is the Airwaves Kite Fest in Cincinnati sponsored by P.I.G.S. Aloft Kite Club. April 18th is Kids Kite Day in Coldwater, MI, sponsored by the Tri-State Wind Riders. May 2nd is the Lyon Township, MI, Fun Kite Festival. May 16th & 17th is the Great Lakes Kite Festival in Grand Haven, MI. May 30th & 31st is the Breeze on the Bay Kite Festival in East Tawas, MI. On the 13th & 14th of June is the



Carl Anderson, Kevin Kilgoar, and Nancy Lockwood helped Black Swamp Air Force celebrate the holidays.

Michigan Kitefest in Richland, and on the 27th & 28th is Warren Dunes Kitefest at Warren Dunes State Park, MI, both events sponsored by Back 2 the Wind Kite Club.

That should be enough to satisfy even the most diehard of kite flyers. Please log on to the AKA website for more information on the events listed or visit my website at www.back-2thewind.com. Now get your back to the wind and fly a kite!

While most people bemoan the ice and snow that covers the land during the winter, kites in Region Six celebrate by having festivals on the ice. Many of these are held in urban areas that otherwise are not kite friendly.

The year got off to a great start in Milwaukee. Scott Fischer reports, "The 22nd Cool Fool Kite Festival was very successful with a Sheriff's count of around 2000 folks showing up to play. The temps were in the upper 20°'s and winds were a steady 12 miles per hour all day long. So really a perfect day for flying kites. I estimate that we had 40 kites in the air at the high point including the giant Octopus and Bear. The ice carvers made nine sculptures and the horse and buggy guy gave around 100 rides. We gave out over 600 cups of free hot chocolate and coffee, 350 free donuts, six large bags of chips and 200 or so chocolate chip cookies. Gift of Wings also sold a bunch of kites. It was so popular that instead of closing at 5 PM, we didn't leave until 7:30 PM because folks just

Dave Bush



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kept flying kites. All three TV stations covered the event, so we received a lot of publicity. We try to publicize this event as a fun family event for New Years Day. I always say that in Milwaukee on New Year's Day, there are only two things to do, 'Go jump in the lake' and 'Go fly a kite.'"

The following week, the Minnesota Kite Society also had a great time at Lake Harriet. Craig Christensen reported the turnout to be in excess of 6000, with lots of color in the sky. Thanks to Larry Day and Mike Gee for putting big kites up to impress the crowds.

Looking at the calendar, almost every weekend has at least one event scheduled. After writing this, it's back to planning on what to pack — both clothes and kites — as we head off to Two Rivers WI for the 2nd annual Kites over the River festival. Here's hoping for above zero weather as we venture out onto the ice! Right after that comes Kites on the Bay in Door County, WI, and then Color the Wind in Clear Lake, IA. Then, a short break at home to get organized for the Midwest Area Kitemakers Retreat, always a highlight of the year.

Alex and I hope to see many of you out on the ice enjoying the smooth winds, and filling the skies with color.

Here we go. Another busy kite season. It has been a long and cold winter in the Midwest. The members in North Dakota won't thaw until the end of May, about when Sky Dance is held in Garrison on Memorial Day weekend.

We plan to attend Color the Wind festival in Clear Lake, IA, on February 21. At the time this article was written, it was -31° on the lake. We are grateful for the ice, but hope it warms up a little. Larry and Kay Day have hosted this event and, believe me, this is always a great, fun, and beautiful festival.

The first weekend in April, I will be flying in Rawlins, WY. I hope all the snow will be out of system by then. In the middle of the month, the KCKC will hold the Flights of Fancy Festival in Lee's Summit, MO. This is a great fly and KCKC President Sean Beavers promises great weather every year. On the same weekend an event is being held in Fort Collins, CO. John Farrell has worked on this event to promote a great event for the kids.

Our local club, Midwest Winds Kitefliers, will hold their annual Spring Festival on April 26th. We haven't had very good weather the last two years, maybe we can get lucky this year. We attend a fly that is out of our region, "Kites over Grinnell" in Iowa. Sis and Dick Vogel put on a great fly with nice fields and awesome hospitality.

The AKA is feeling the same effects as the national economy. Members are losing their jobs and money is tight. Your Board of Directors is working to keep costs down and hope to keep benefits up. If anyone has any ideas to make the AKA better please let your regional director know.

On January 17, we took a quick day trip to Kansas City to crash the KCKC's annual holiday party. We were welcomed with warmth, hugs, and food. At the event, there was a special award presented. It is an annual tradition for the club to honor a member in the memory of Chuck Blackwell. He was an awesome kiteflier and supporter of the club. The member who has exemplified the spirit of Chuck was chosen to be Linda Larkey. Linda has worked very hard for the KCKC as well as the AKA. The club compiled a memory book of kiting pictures of the 2008 events and presented it to Linda. She was also given a beautiful banner



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End of term: 2011

that was built and designed by Don Larkey of the KCKC group. It pictured symbols of the bouncy balls that Linda designs and sews. It was great to be there are share this wonderful honor with Linda her and her family. Way to go Linda!

I'm looking forward to new events this year and meeting new members in the region.

Enjoy the sky.

Hello kilters! As we skid into spring, you all KNOW how busy the kite festival calendar will be! For that reason, we're fortunate to have multiple calendars, but the burden of reporting accurately is also increased by this redundancy! For example, if an organizer has to relocate an event, or make ANY changes, please be sure to not only tell me, but also to make changes on the AKA calendar. Plus, Troy Gunn has again generously created a Regional calendar (thanks, Troy!). I think it's a great idea to check the web listings occasionally for your event to verify everything. Remember that people make their travel plans, work schedules, and hotel reservations based on the information that YOU'VE got posted! Troy's calendar is <http://members.tripod.com/tkogunn1/kitecalender.htm>. As I mentioned, don't get too comfortable with just checking the local reports. In Region Eight, everyone knows that I routinely send out monthly overviews,



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 End of term: 2011

and that I increase it to weekly notices of upcoming events during our busy months. Troy offers the convenience of not only being able to see everything, but also to print out the entire schedule of Regional events for the year. This is wonderful, but remember to review the website for changes! What was scheduled in January might have changed by the time June rolls around! Within the Region, we have these assets, but someone in... say, the Los Angeles area is coming for a business trip. They want to hang with some of the local kites, so they cruise on over to the AKA Event Calendar on the AKA website. Organizers need to ensure that info for their events is posted correctly, or our friend from California

Troy and Paula Gunn



might plan the business meeting for the wrong weekend!

As I cheerlead for “packing up the van,” “taking off work,” “driving to the kite fest,” “making hotel reservations,” and everything else that we know accompanies our travels, I want to let everyone know that I am aware of the elephant in the room - the economy. For that reason, please don’t be hesitant to contact me to initiate the option of carpooling to an event or sharing a hotel room with someone else. I’ll be happy to run a “message board” with the individual events in order to facilitate as full an attendance slate as is possible! We’re kites – we’ll MAKE it work!

“Okay, Gayle; what’s happening?”, you ask! Here’s an overview. In March, plan on going to Zilker Park in Austin; Cane Hill in Arkansas; Arlington, TX; San Antonio, TX; Spiro Mounds, OK; Eureka Springs, AR; then to the Dallas area for a festival in Mineola. Check the oil and air on the van, make an appearance at work, then get repacked for April! The Perrin, TX, Cloud Buster (again!) the same weekend as Kite Fest Louisiana in West Baton Rouge (my fantasy is to do both!); that same weekend you could go to Siloam Springs, AR, or the Whitewater Mesa fly in NM; the Portland, TX, Windfest, the Highland Bayou Park Kite Fest in LaMarque, TX, Live Green in Plano, TX, and the Cannon, NM, Kite Karnival share a weekend. On the following weekend, you can elect to go to Ruidoso, NM; Temple, TX; Hulbert, OK; or Harlingen, TX to attend an event. As I always say - just pick a direction and you’ll find a kite fest in April! Make an appearance in the garage, check the oil and air at work, and get back into the van for more weekenders! Here comes May:

Waco, TX, Cedar Hill, TX, White Rock Lake in Dallas, Wind Festival in Edgewood NM - all on the same weekend! Go to Tulsa, OK next; then on to Los Alamos, NM; and of course the Junction Kitemakers Retreat rounds it out! In recent years, I’ve been too pooped by this time in the schedule to do the complete Junction experience. THIS year,

look out – I’ll be there with bells on (Really! You can check!).

There are more events later in the summer and throughout the year, but I won’t rattle them off here! Please, remember to double check on the events that YOU want to attend! Change happens! I can’t even imagine showing up at an out-of-town kite festival to learn that it’s been cancelled! Don’t let it happen!

As always, my friends, remember that it’s about the joy, the art, the sharing, the experience, the support, the fellowship, and the fun! Kiting is tremendous, but it’s the people who bring life to the sport and to our festivals. Celebrate what truly matters; you know what that is! See ya in the sand – or the grass – or the back of the van – maybe dancing in the parking lot – wherever!

Keep looking up!



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 End of Term: 2009

Hopefully by the time this reaches you, we will have dug out of the snow on this side of the Cascades. This winter has pushed me to fly indoors a lot more which is probably a good thing as my son has decided his goal this year is to give me a run for my money.

Honestly I have to say we have



Connor Doran goes for a three-pointer in Camas.

kite makers will be teaching a great variety of classes. I attended this last year, and it is a fantastic conference. Next year we just need to make sure these two great events are not on the same weekend as I have not figured out how to be in two places at once yet!

Idaho will be a busy place this spring. In February, Chinese New Year was celebrated with kite making and flies at both Portneuf and Marshall Libraries in Chubbuck and Pocatello respectively. April is National Kite Month and you can enjoy making kites at the Community Environmental Fair in Pocatello. The annual Kiting Just For Fun will take place in Idaho Falls, in connection with the Eastern Washington Race for the Cure in Spokane. The Third Annual Hayden Idaho Kite Festival will be stirring up the skies on Saturday, April 18th. Both indoor and outdoor demonstrations as well as kite making are just some of the events scheduled.

That brings us right up to the Lincoln City Summer Kite Festival on June 27-28. Always a great festival, and usually in the summer there is plenty of beach! For more information go to www.oregoncoast.org/kite-festival/kites-summer.php.

I am looking forward to seeing you all this spring and summer. In the meantime, start getting the kites primed and ready... we have a lot of kite time ahead!

Once upon a time the White Horse Kite Flyers (UK) taught me how to make a child's sled kite. They also taught me how to do a "stopper knot" several times. Then whilst (they also taught proper English) visiting with them, they taught me how to volunteer to work in "kid's kite making." Needless to say we did several kites with children, some days were busier than others. The workshop I really remember was the one in Cleethorpes, England. Those two days we made over 1000 kites. I did not think that I would ever stand straight again. There was one boy who wanted to make his kite with the lady that talked funny.

He and I had a great time and managed to get the kite done, stopper knots and all. When he was finished he smiled and ran outside the tent to fly his new kite. Soon after he came back and said "thank you," the kite really flies great and I will see you next year. I froze in place. He most likely thought I lived just around the corner in the next country. We both smiled and that was that. Not! For months I thought about the boy and his words about his kite and the big smile on his face. The next year we met again and we made another kite together. I don't think that I would have recognized him (he had grown so much), but he stood in line and when it was his turn he said, "Do you remember me"? Of course I did. I do know from the first meeting to the last we made four kites together. The last time, I asked what he had done with his other kites. He said, "I have them all. I just wanted to come and make another kite with you." Where is he now? Who knows? Will he always be a part of my "kite memory?" You bet.

Then there is my new friend Melanie. I met her with her father in Dieppe, France, while working the



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Melanie with her Westport Windriders kite in France.

Give them the gift of kite flying.

It's all about volunteering (there is that special word again) and if you haven't done so, you just might want to try it and make a new friend like Melanie and her family.

You never know where the kite you give will fly!

Make sure to check the calendar and list any and all up and coming events. Start thinking about checking your kites and line and be ready for the festival and fun flies that are ahead.

In January we enjoyed a great time at the Windless Kite Festival at Long Beach. Scott Davis did an

excellent job of putting this together for the last eight years. Thanks to Bob and Donna Wendt for announcing and playing the music, Theresa Norelius, Kay Buesing, Mary Yoshimi, and Sharon Absher. All the adults that participated were wonderful, but lets hear it for the kids in the arena: Kristian Slater, Connor Doran, Toby Arndt, Jennifer Brown (the old timer) and Zach Colbert. This group is movin' on in. What a fantastic show by all.

A big "Way to GO" to Kay Buesing for getting the mortgage on the Kite Museum paid off in just four years. WOW! If you have not been to the museum lately, check it out; they always are doing new displays.

Start thinking about the festivals in our region and hope to see you there.

Where is your kite going to fly?

The BASKL season is about to get under way. The traditional kick-off event will be held at Caesar Chavez Park in Berkeley, CA on March 21. Check www.baskl.org for additional details. Fliers of all skill levels are welcome. If you would like to learn to fly dual- or quad-line kites, this is your chance to be come test your skills in a friendly environment.

National Kite Month (NKM) is just around the corner. This annual event

is a great opportunity to participate in a kite-related event near you. If you cannot locate an event near you, start one yourself! In either case, the organizers have answers to your questions at www.nationalkitemonth.org.

One of our local merchant members, Candy and Kites in Bodega Bay, sponsors an ongoing Friday Afternoon Fun Fly at Doran Park Beach. This is your chance to fly your own kites, or try some new ones. If you want to learn how to fly two- or four-line kites, this is an excellent, no pressure way of getting your hands on a steerable kite.

There's a new kite festival sponsored by the North Las Vegas Kiwanis on May 2 at Deer Springs Park. Local fliers are encouraged to come out and fly. Check the AKA calendar for details.

I am getting requests from local groups outside the AKA for assistance in putting on kite festivals. If you want to help spread the fun of kite flying, participate in an event near you.

I've heard of events coming up in Petaluma, Sonoma County, Morro Bay, San Ramon, North Las Vegas, Martinez, Berkeley, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Bodega Bay, Elk Grove and Roseville. Check the AKA calendar and the Region Eleven KiteTalk forum for more information.



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AKA tent. They came to visit us three times over the weeklong festival. I gave her one of the Westport Windriders club kites (a sled kite copied after the White Horse club, with permission) and there was that wonderful smile again. The smile that I had seen on other children's faces and, I might add, a few adult faces. Some of these people just click and there is a special bond. I have now received a special Thanksgiving card (beautifully made by the family) and a special Christmas picture, along with two very special books with pictures of the Normandy coast, the special kite stamp from Dieppe and a poster from the Berck festival. Even without the lovely gifts and the special cards, we made a kite bond. Will I see Melanie again? I am sure I will. I would not be surprised if some day they will be here at our home and we will go kite flying.

The picture of Melanie was sent to me from her father. On the Windriders kite it asks you to send us a picture and show us where you flew your kite. This picture was taken near her home close to Dieppe, France.

Now are you starting to get the picture?

Make a kite with a kid and make a new friend. Put a kids workshop together and teach them something new.



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The last few months have been sort of quiet for me. Travel was down and I was able to heal up some from my injury in Japan. The big thing for me was the New Years Day fly here in San Diego. It was a great day for all that were there, and the winds were really good. There was lots of eye candy for all to see as the San Diego Kite Club really painted the sky. As always at most every event you go to these days the Rev fliers were out in force, and as this is home for the Revolution Kite Company you would not expect

New Years Day in San Diego.



any less. Then the fighter kite fly was a blast. Those guys were really going at it, with Steve Bateman taking the first place prize in masters and Bill Bollenbacher taking first in novice class. What really got me was how many people got involved and just flew.

As we get into 2009 I am once again asking all of the members to get more involved and to keep me updated on what's going on in your area, because without all of you none of this is possible. Also as a reminder the San Diego Kite Club meets the second Saturday of each month and they would love to have you over.



San Diego fighter flyers flank Steve Bateman and his dragon trophy.

Region Thirteen, first, a reminder! AKA's kite festival calendar can help you plan your vacation to somewhere sunny and windy. Go to www.aka.kite.org, Event Calendar, find the month, or the map for where a festival is. Then write and tell us about your travels. Anyone want to list a kite event? It's FREE.

NETHERLANDS - Discovered in 1985, (recently verified as the oldest known kite in existence) a pear-shaped kite made in 1773, in the attic of a house being demolished. Peter Lynn (NZ) recognised its significance, and I luckily saw this kite at Drachen Foundation, Seattle, where it arrived, October 2007. And a festival? 26-27 September at Scheveningen, the biggest and oldest kite event in the Netherlands, with 2009 being 31 years.

FRANCE - Bernard Fournière has his AKA Volunteer of the Year Award proudly displayed. This is "my very first trophy with my name on it." Anyone can be nominated as Volunteer of the Year, even from Region 13! What about his Christmas luck? He wrote "for Xmas I have found in a shop a flowform 100' x 65'. The price was mislabeled at €12.40 instead of €69.99." Bargain!

DENMARK - Ralf Dietrich suggested that Region Thirteen start a Forum section on AKA Kite Talk. Done! But, am I biting off more than I can chew? Let's try "kiting for world peace", and keep the skies (and Forums) friendly!

ITALY - Carlo Sitzia's favourite place for sport kite-flying is Tamburello in the S.Giuliano Park, Venice. Giacomo Borghi can't wait for March 28-29 and his kite festival, "Levant'e Vento" in glorious Tuscany. Ciao! www.dracovolanspt.org There's a map on the AKA Event Calendar too.

SOUTH AFRICA - Cape Town kites possibly hit a world first? It's true;



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the Wall Street Journal (not known for frivolous, fun antics reporting) featured an image from Cape Town's Kite Festival, October 2008. See it here http://blogs.wsj.com/photojournal/2008/10/23/pictures-of-the-day-43/?mod=googlenews_wsj

NEW ZEALAND - Anne and Peter Whitehead's New Year tradition is the annual Ruapehu kite fly on the golf course by the Chateau at Tongariro National Park. Yep, it's summer there on January 1st! This year marked their sixth event, with glazed ham, chicken and Pavlova on the menu, and kite jigsaws as a side activity along with kite repairs.

CANADA - Andrei Chichak's family celebrated New Year in -26°C. "We dressed up in our insulated pants, sweaters, winter coats, toques, gloves, scarves, hoods, thick socks, and winter boots" for 20 minutes of flying. That's stamina. Anyone getting ready for Dieppe? Mark your calendar for 12-16 August and expect ideal weather. 2009's theme celebrates the Acadian National Day on 15th. The first prize in the kite-making competition is a trip to France! Magnifique! Look at www.dieppe.ca for details. Shann Gowan reminded me about the Windscape Kite Festival, Saskatchewan, 20-21 June. Anyone going? Would love photos to share.

INDIA - Ahmedabad in January is a fighter kite feast! AKA members Bob Cruikshanks (UK), Chris Chambers (Sweden), and Cliff Quinn (USA) all attended, just part of 82 delegates from 27 countries. In Cliff's words, "I never saw so many fighter kites in all my travels." He saw kites being flown from rooftops as far as the

eye can see, non-stop battles, and participants buying their kites in **BUNDLES!** Of the five million people in Gujarat, Cliff said 90% were out flying. We won't mention power cuts, injuries from mahnja, or flocks of very annoyed birds.

INDONESIA - Willa Eckersley, USA, wanted to learn more about kite hummers, and James A. Kekenusa of Jakarta Kite Flyers helped her. Now, pass it on Willa! Region Thirteen has a wealth of collective information, we can share it.

UK - 16 October 2008 marked the centenary of S.F. Cody's first powered flight in England at Farnborough. Has it only been 100 years? Time flies! Pun intended. Also heard from Wigsley Wings who boast the largest collection of inflatable kites in the UK and maybe Europe. (Is that a Region 13 challenge?) Their puffin flies at Fanø.

Want to hear from another kite flyer? Ask me how. Until next time, *less talk... more fly!*



This page: more from the Gujarat International Kite Festival, including kites by Team Mangalore and Pierre Fabre. Photos by Daryl Smith.





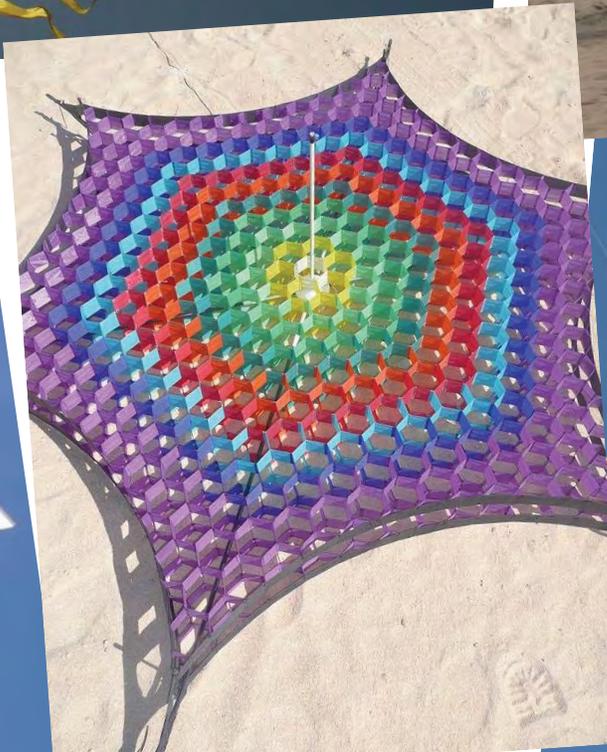
Fuerteventura Kite Festival

Canary Islands, Spain
November 9-11, 2008





photos by
Bernhard Dingwerth





Kitting

people+places+things

Way Way Off-Road Vehicle

It's not exactly the George Jetson-style commuter vehicle we always thought we'd have someday, but the Parajet Skycar has the advantage of being real. The combination paraglider/roadster uses a parafoil-type wing to support a fan-powered vehicle. The prototype — a modified dune buggy, shown at right — is currently being flown and driven 3700 miles from England to Timbuktu, including flights over the Strait of Gibraltar and

the Sahara Desert. It can take off from any road or field bigger

than 600 feet. The 430 ft² wing is stored in the trunk; the pilot lays it out, then steps on the gas. Once airborne, the pilot steers with footpedals, and uses the steering wheel to control retractable winglets that adjust pitch. The dashboard includes all the usual gauges, as well as an altimeter and variometer. And if the wing should fail, there's an emergency parachute in the roof. The 880-pound consumer version — powered by a 140hp Yamaha ethanol-fueled engine, the Skycar can hit 120 mph on the ground or 85 mph in the air, with a 200 mile range — should be available later this year to anyone with \$80,000 and a special microlight pilot's license. Sorry, your AKA membership card doesn't count.



Ludicrous Speed!

How fast can the wind propel you? A British engineer was in Montana this winter trying to find out. Richard Jenkins will need big winds and snow-free ice on Helena's Canyon Ferry Reservoir to break the wind-powered speed record. On ice, the record stands at 84 mph; the wheeled land version of his carbon fiber *Greenbird* has unofficially clocked 120 mph. Inexplicably, ice boats are slower than comparable land craft.

The *Greenbird's* solid carbon fiber sail acts like a vertical wing, so it's fastest when pointed directly across the breeze, allowing airflow to push it forward at speeds up to five times the actual wind speed. The pilot sits in a cramped Kevlar cage, too small for an airbag, prompting Jenkins to say, "You would want to avoid hitting something." Outside, the *Greenbird* rests on 5' steel blades. *Kitting* went to press before *Greenbird's* February record attempt, but if they had a 20-30 mph wind, it might have already sailed into hyperspace.





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