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by Pierre Fabre

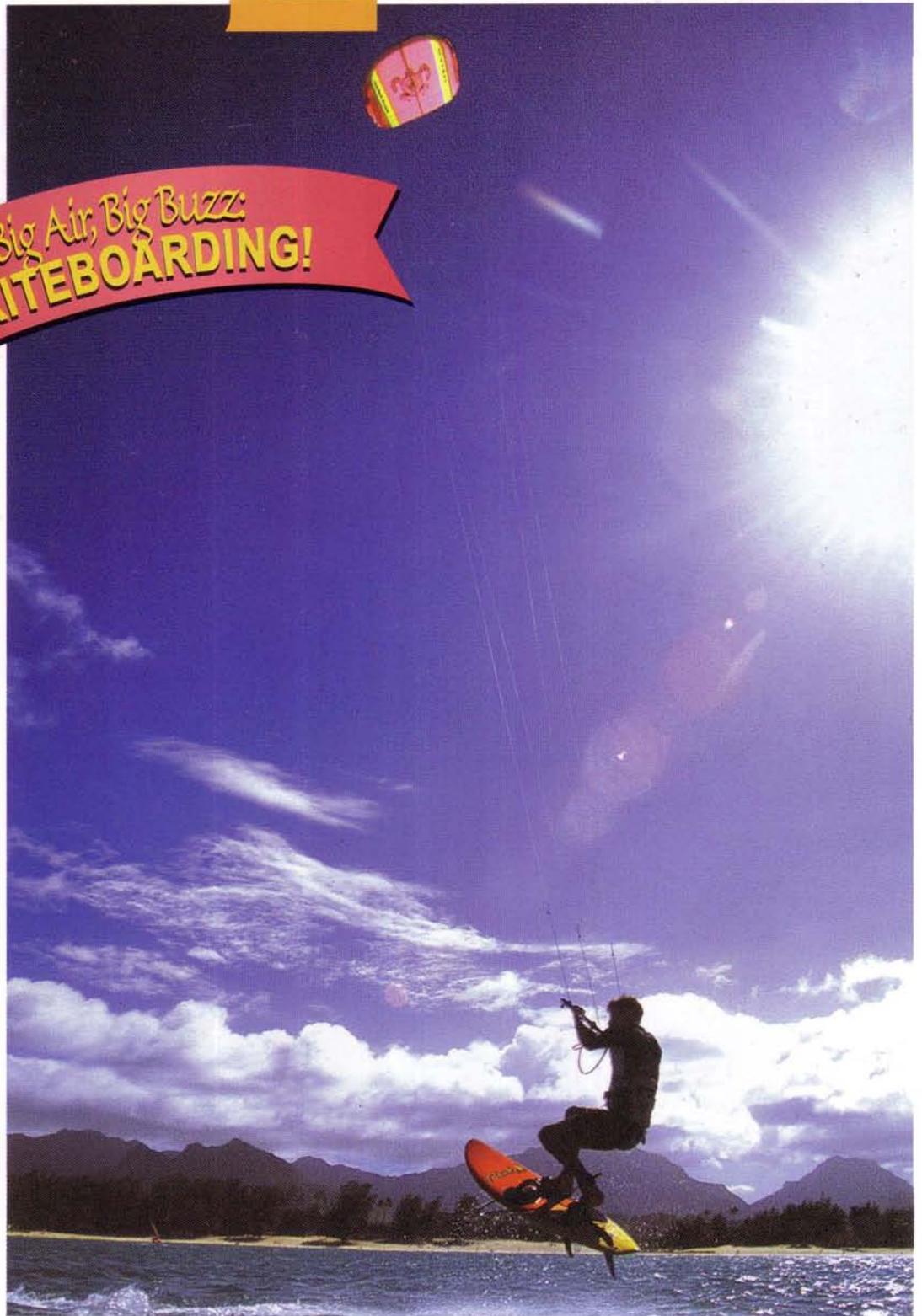
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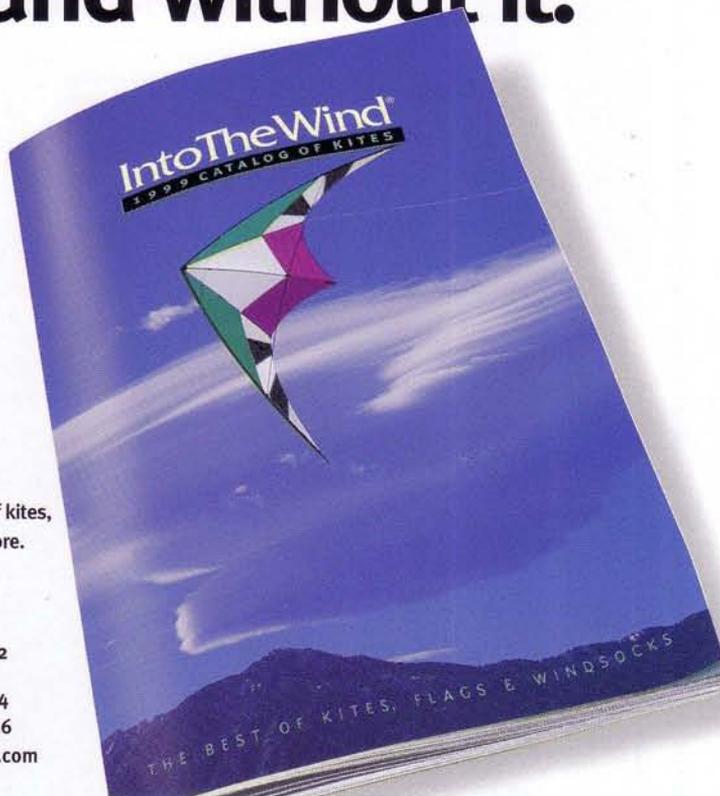
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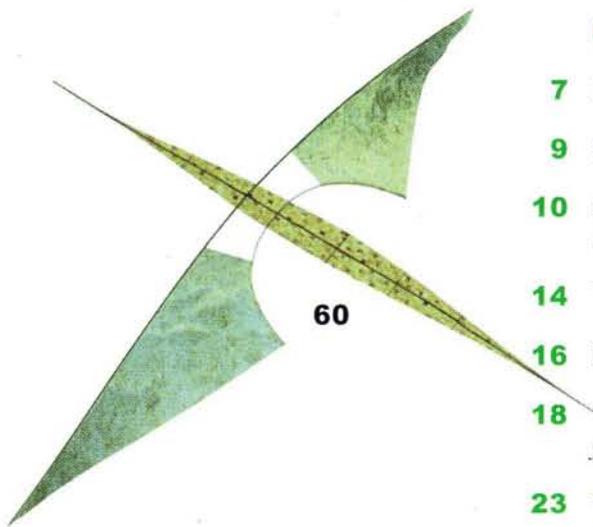
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**COVER:** Desmond Walsh in mid-jump during kiteboarding at Kailua Bay, Hawaii. Photograph by Stephen Whitesell. (See story on page 26.)



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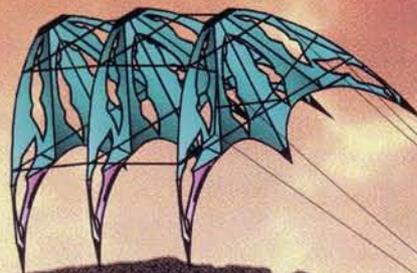
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# When love is not enough?

A LITTLE HAND-WRINGING

**W**hat is it about kites that we love? Many things. They are a real experience, yet ethereal; a solitary pleasure, yet social; an athletic exercise, yet poetic; an intellectual challenge, yet simple. Kites are different things to different people.

But there is one constant, which is the *intensity* of our feelings about kites. We get obsessed about them.

Sadly, many people have been forced into a parting of the ways from the kites that they love. One can't say it's the fault of kites. They do no one wrong. But the kite industry has been flying so low these days that kites are not themselves anymore.

Everyone is looking for answers to the decline. I have spoken to dozens of people in many areas of the business and pastime. No one seems to know why the downturn has happened or what can be done. Some have theories and ideas, but no one really *knows*.

For years, people have been saying, "This will be the year." Well, maybe 2000 will be. Maybe. But here's what I've seen over the past three to four years:

■ **CONSOLIDATION OF MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS:** That's a nice word for bigger companies swallowing up smaller companies. But two or three frail firms combined do not necessarily make one strong firm.

■ **FEWER KITE BUSINESSES OVERALL:** Maybe half as many as we had in the '80s, in both manufacturing and retailing.

■ **DESPERATE FLAILING:** Efforts to "reach new markets" (read: less business from kite stores), to use "new media" (read: cheap but feeble Web sites) and to talk a brave fight (while weeping in private).

■ **DOWNWARD PRESSURE ON PRICES:** Consumers used to buy those big glamorous stunters for \$300 or so, but now fewer people buy them, so fewer people show them, so fewer people even have a chance to buy them.



Your editor steps outdoors.

■ **COPIES-COPIES-COPIES:** Design a good kite in the U.S. today and see a copy (probably a *good* copy) from China tomorrow.

I was talking to Stan Swanson the other day. His voice had a chastened, candid ring. He had seen it all: a fast rise to the top with his Condor Kite Company in 1990, a collaboration with It's a Breeze and Skynasaur within the Mile High Kite Company in 1996, and now a collapse back into Condor Kite

Company again. But he doesn't produce many kites. Mostly he makes instrument packs for hurricane trackers. The packs subsidize his unprofitable hours of kitemaking.

He said, "If it were a healthy industry the copies wouldn't matter. But the pie is getting smaller."

He claimed that kites are not alone, that hobbies in general, especially *outdoor* hobbies, are slumping. We're a nation of cyber-zombies and TV remote

handlers. We'd rather watch a video of kiteflying than fly a kite. It's a shame.

We know our friend David Gomberg, president of the Kite Trade Association International, sees things differently. He contended in the KTAI newsletter that things are better, but from our vantage point it is hard to agree.

Some people think that a magazine about kites has a duty to promote the positives and keep a light touch at all times. I understand that, but I also think it's important to tell the truth. We have to see the need in order to act on it. I wish I knew what action to suggest, but in 23 years of doing this magazine I've never seen it like this, and I have few ideas for what will do any good.

There are some positive signs, such as the dramatic new enthusiasm for kiteboarding (see article on page 35) and the opportunities for spectacular flying displays (see article on page 11). The optimists may say, let's catch these waves and cheer the sport on. But how many of us are optimists anymore?

*Valerie*

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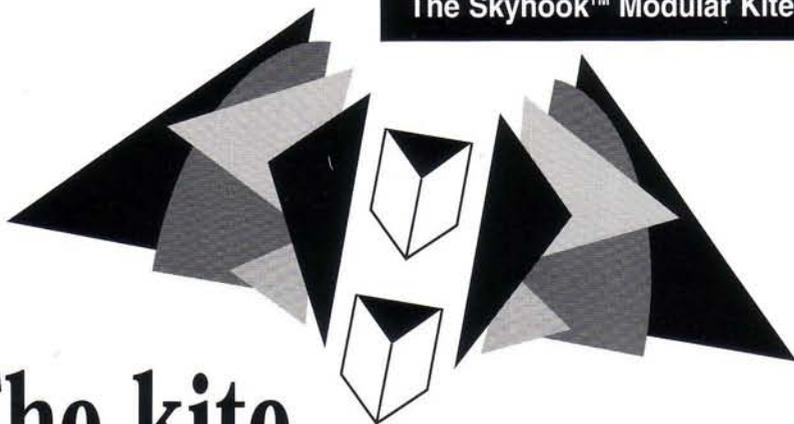
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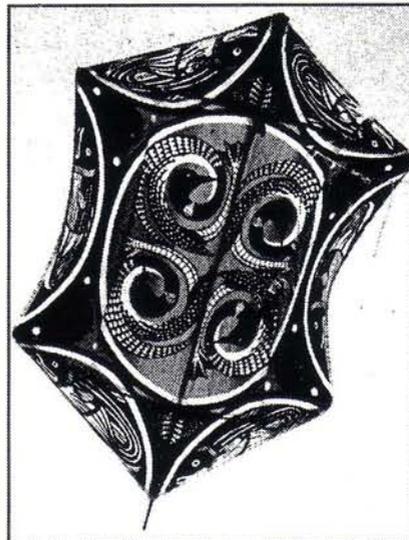
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# Dear Kite Lines...

THE YOUNG, THE BIZARRE & THE BEAUTIFUL

## THE YOUNGEST KITEFLIER?

I have four great-granddaughters. Three of them live here in the Santa Clara Valley, and are well versed in kiteflying and making kites.



Great-granddad watches Madison Ray loft a sled.

The fourth and youngest lives 140-plus miles away, and on a recent visit I decided to introduce her to kiteflying.

Madison Ray had just turned 14 months of age. Her grandfather was on the field with his camera and recorded the event for posterity. Madison at first flew the kite safely beside her great-granddad, and then all by herself. The kite line was wound on a 4-inch square piece of thick plywood, so it would not scoot away if she dropped the line. She did drop it once, but quickly picked it up and held it tight for the rest of the fly.

I hereby declare Madison Ray the youngest *real* kiteflier in the world—and also the cutest.

—Neil Thorburn  
San Jose, California

## KITE FISHING?

I have been a kite nut for over 50 years with some bizarre stories to tell. My favorite was when I was flying my kite along the beach in Massachusetts and it began diving toward the ocean. Nothing I could do prevented it from finally crashing into the water. Upon pulling it in, I noticed that it had hooked onto something. And when I finally got my kite reeled in, I discovered that the “other thing” was in fact another kite that had been floating in the ocean—waiting to be rescued! Spooky.

—Joseph Levesque  
Naples, Florida

## IT PAYS TO BE BEAUTIFUL

My brother, Warren, staged a kite show in Ohio: Kites by Oscar, Sarah and Warren Bailey. Good show—people liked it.

A man seeing one of my Silkspan® and spruce kites (Spirit of Chanute,

SkyGallery, Fall-Winter 1996 *Kite Lines*) said: “He may call it a kite, but it is sculpture.” He asked Warren if I would take \$500 for it. Warren said he would find out—he knew I would but was stalling for effect. When he told the man Yes, the man asked, Could I make one larger? Yes—and at this moment Warren became my agent—he set the price at \$700 for the larger one. When it was done the man asked, Could I make one similar but larger still? I got busy and made three models, photographed them and sent the pics to Warren. The man picked one and I made a kite sculpture 10 x 6 x 3 ft. Warren picked them up and delivered them. After these three white ones were hanging in his space, the man decided he wanted more—but could I make them in different colors?

Yes, I’ll do colors. The man ordered six more—in burgundy, gold, green, cobalt blue and multicolored. I spent the whole month of August making these, then delivered them to Columbus, Ohio. There I discovered where they were going to hang—in a *beauty salon!!* The entry-reception area is 50 feet square with a 40-ft-high ceiling—a huge dome where the kite sculptures hang. The salon, the largest in Ohio, has 200 rooms for all the tanning and beauty stuff.

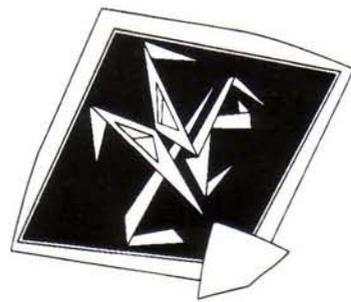
Anyhow, it all came to a few thousand dollars. I gave one half to Warren. Bought myself a couple of toys and this computer. Sculpture pays a lot better than kites.

—Oscar Bailey  
Burnsville, North Carolina

## CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

Regarding Bill Bigge’s “400 days, 400 kites” record (Spring 1999 *Kite Lines*): Only in wet weather is too little wind more of a problem than too much.

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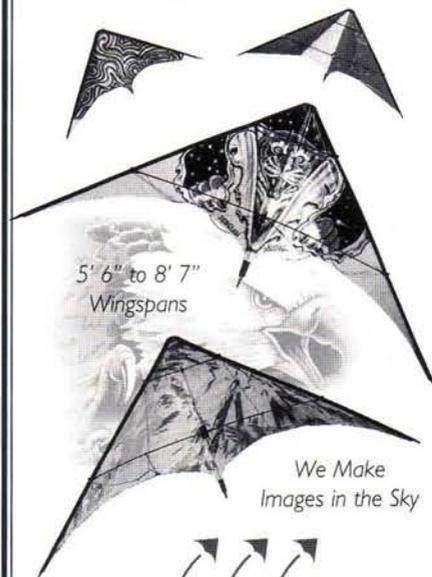
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# Taiwan to Texas

KITES IN MUSEUMS, OVER AUSTIN, AT WILDWOOD,

ON TV AND OVER THE CROWD AT A THEME PARK IN SPAIN

## A museum discovery in Asia

**W**orld traveling kitefliers may wish to add a new destination to their kite culture itineraries, as we learn from a correspondent in Texas:

### A DREAM REALIZED

In November 1998, I had the good fortune to visit the Jiou Fen Kite Museum, located a few miles outside Taipei, the capital city of Taiwan. Located on the coast, Jiou Fen is the home town of Wen-Hsiang Lai, who says it was his lifelong dream to create this museum here, for he loves both kites and this beautiful section of the island of Formosa.

This visit was set up by my friend, Robert Yen, an AKA member who lives in Richardson, Texas and has been instrumental in adding American kites to the collection. I was delighted to see in the museum both a Butterfighter and a colorful parrot from Joel Scholz's Sky Delight Kites of Kingsland, Texas.

This beautiful museum is housed in a five-story building, and is supported by a traveler's hostel located on the third floor. On the bottom two floors, about 5,000 square feet of space is dedicated to kite displays and a classroom. The building also includes a restaurant and a fine Japanese style tea room. In summer, the roof has restaurant seating and an observation deck, where kite flying is sometimes done! The building is on a hillside, so visitors can enter on the bottom or into the tea room at the top.

Through my traveling companion and interpreter, Patrick Chen, I learned that Lai opened the museum in 1995, after spending a decade collecting kites. He had become concerned that kites have been losing popularity in Taiwan, and concluded they would regain prominence through a museum.

Regular visitors include local school children, who sometimes come for kitemaking classes in the building, as well as a good number of tourists.

### A POETIC WELCOME

The spectacular museum begins with several beautiful poems outside the door, carved in wood in the script of the Chinese language.



At the Jiou Fen Museum: Left, Founder Wen-Hsiang Lai—and a fierce Taiwanese lion kite—welcome visitors.

Below, museum secretary Lin Chuan demonstrates the head of an intricate Chinese dragon.



bugs, birds, bats, butterflies and, of course, dragons. The Chinese work with bamboo and silk for the most part, tak-

ing great care in all the details.

They ask that you enjoy the museum and learn enough to fly a kite yourself. Inside the door, visitors are greeted by a Taiwanese lion kite. This fierce animal with a dagger in his teeth and spinning eyes represents the guardian of the home, who will catch any evil that my try to enter.

Lai has attempted to collect museum quality specimens from kite cultures the world over.

Japanese kites, for example, include many of the distinctive regional specialties: Tsugaru kites with spruce frames, and Nagasaki hats, Edos and Sendai dakos of washi (handmade paper) and bamboo. Malaysian examples are crafted of painted silk and bamboo, formed into very realistic three dimensional bodies of butterflies and moths. The kites of India are several types of fighters, complete with spools of manjha (glass-coated line).

Kites of the United States, Europe, and Australia include both single-line kites—boxes, parafoils and stars—and dual- and quad-line stunt kites, all made of modern ripstop fabric with graphite and fiberglass spars.

Not surprisingly, the Chinese kite collection is the most impressive, showing many traditional shapes and themes, including

Lai and the gracious kite folk at his museum would love for you to visit them. For information, write: Win-Hsiang Lai, 86 Lane 372 S.Yuen Road, Sec. 2, Taipei, Taiwan ROC. (Note: You will need to arrange an interpreter, for they do not speak English.)

—Kathleen Nixie

## Austin is awesome!

**I**'m down here for the 71st annual Zilker Park Kite Festival. Imagine that! Seventy-one years. This event is as old as Ray Bethell!

For all of these years, the Exchange Club of Austin has been celebrating children, families, and the arrival of spring to central Texas with a gathering that has changed remarkably little. Back in 1929, the contests included largest, smallest, most unusual, and strongest puller. And although the styles have changed, today those same contests are held and judged by the same rules.

The crowds are fantastic. I'm looking around and seeing families that have obviously been coming for years. Some of these groups are three generations deep. And everyone seems to be having fun. Kids line



**NEXT-TO-THE-OLDEST in the U.S.:** Zilker Park Kite Festival in Austin, Texas goes on and on... and has for 71 years.

**Far left, a family prepares to launch a delta-Conyne—not so different a kite from that of Winfred Gustafson, at right in a 1930s photo, who was a contest winner in the very first Zilker festival in 1929.**

up and make kites with instructors who learned the process by going through the line themselves, years before.

And this year, the festival pays tribute to Richard Robertson, naming him as “Austin’s Foremost Kite Flyer” for spending 37 continuous years working with the festival.

If anyone has doubts about the resiliency of kite festivals, or the enthusiasm of the people who attend them, they need to come down here and see how good a festival can be—and how long it can go on. Put it on your calendar: the second Sunday in March. Come next year...or the year after...or the year after that... —David Gomberg

## Spain’s FiestAventura of kites

**U**niversal Studio’s Port Aventura theme park in Spain—the second largest in Europe, located in Costa Daurada, 60 miles south of Barcelona—presents a spectacular kite show seven nights a week, from March through October. Mounted by Florida-based Kiteman Productions, FiestAventura is the firm’s biggest yet, and its producer tells us how it came together:

### EXPOSING THE MAGIC OF KITES

The park has five “lands,” Mediterranean, Mexico, China, Polynesia, and the Far West (American). Our show takes place in Mediterranean, and is built around the airplane you see in the Universal Studios logo at the movies—in reality a succession of dual-line airplane kites (a modified design by Rolf Sturm of Germany) that “visit” the other four lands during the show.

### SUPER-EFFICIENT:

A Kiteman “automatic launcher,” from which six diamond kites take to the air, shown by Tony Peugh, FiestAventura project manager.



The contract for designing and mounting the show was signed in October, 1998, and the premiere performance was March 19, 1999. My staff included: Tony Peugh, project manager; Steve Casey, operations manager/trainer; Kevin White, technical manager; John Palmer, project assistant; James LaBarre, boat trainer; Pete Foy, consultant, and many, many others. Mounting the show in Spain, these guys worked seven days a week for two months.

We use 16 kites of four types: five of the Rolf Sturm airplanes (built by Stan Swanson of Colorado to carry pyrotechnic effects and strobes); three 11½-foot-wingspan China Bird dual-liners (developed and built by Martin Lester of England); four 6-foot hexagon “Mexico” quad-line kites (developed by Kiteman and built by Swanson with 30-foot tube tails and appliqué graphics sewn by Randy Tom of San Diego and Kathy Goodwind of Seattle), and, for the finale, four six-kite stacks of Kiteman’s own 6-foot diamond dual-liners.

We fly all the kites on 60-foot lines, so their stylized graphics are very visible under the high-powered following spotlights. And we build two backup kites of everything.

The kite trains carry an onboard KiteFX™ computer (developed by Justin Marceau), which controls a variety of special effects, including pyro, strobe lights, halogen

spots and Live Wire™ electroluminescent cable. The latter looks like neon, travels down the length of each tail, and is activated by radio control.

We auditioned 50 candidates from Spain, France and Portugal for kite pilot and driver positions, and Steve Casey spent almost three months training 30 finalists to produce the best show team we have ever had. The team includes: Fernando Fernandez, Jesus Soriano, Javier Hellin, Benoit Espagnol, Jose Alonso, Alberto Lopez, Jorge Cervantes, Rafael Prieto, Caroline Ugarriza and Cesar Uribe.

The drivers steer high-powered SeaDoo watercraft around the course while the fliers sit behind, facing backward to control the kites, and all wear communication helmets and safety glasses. A few of the fliers had never flown a kite before beginning their training.

Most of the kites are launched from Kiteman automatic launchers, and the SeaDoo’s travel down a tree-lined channel, make a 180-degree turn next to a cliff wall, perform in a small lagoon full of obstacles and with fireworks and flames on the water, before turning into a backstage channel to land their kites in a 50’ x 100’ area.

This kind of kiteflying is very hard work, and the kitefliers are true showmen! The result has been standing ovations, “bravos!” and a four-fold increase in attendance at this park. The bottom line for the Kiteman team, and for kiting in general, is that because of this show more than 105,000 people a week are exposed to the magic of kites!

—Bruce Flora

## Wildwood from the bleachers

**T**he smiles are wide when Memorial Day weekend 1999 arrives. The East Coast Stunt Kite Championships, launched on the New Jersey shore 14 years ago, are favored this year with warm, sunny, windy weather. Over the last five years this event has evolved into the Wildwood International Kite Festival, which also includes two sub-festivals: the Wild Wheels Buggy Blast and the World Indoor Competition. This year, the event has again been retitled as the Wildwoods (plural) International Kite Festival, to recognize the support of towns adjacent to Wildwood: North Wildwood, West Wildwood, Wildwood Crest. But everyone just calls it “Wildwood.”

And it’s something of a three-ring circus. Make that 10-ring circus, because it has 10 fields on the huge beach that, instead of eroding, actually grows three feet annually (according to local residents). There’s plen-

## FLYING AROUND

[Continued]

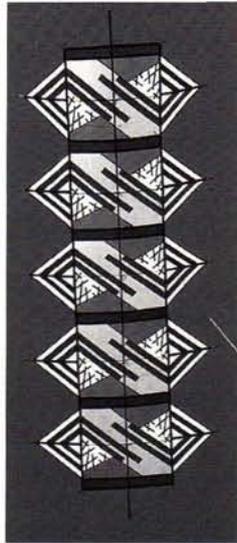
ty of room for the big guest list, which included Robert and Tracy Brasington of Tasmania, Australia; Roberto Guidori of Italy; and Ramlal Tien of France. A special tent shelters the eminent maker of miniature kites, Hirohiko Yoshizumi of Japan. Equally notable stateside fliers include Ron and Sandy Gibian of California and Scott Skinner of Colorado.

Constant color fills the skies. Especially dramatic is the annual effort to fly more 200-sq-ft-or-larger soft kites at one time, a record only Wildwood even attempts. This year's new record number in flight is 43. There's also a kitemaking program for kids, a glowing night fly, a spectacular fireworks show and visit by New Jersey Governor Christine Whitman.

Stunt kiteflying is still the backbone of Wildwood. Competitors prep for it the way college-bound kids do for SATs. This is the place to see top fliers strut their new stuff. The bleachers are lined up for viewing two fields and spectators can watch the action nonstop. Carl Robertshaw of England is here, representing the championship team Airkraft. He performs with the energy of a locomotive, keeping right in step with his rock-and-roll music and incorporating two 360s against the wind.

Yet for all the attractions on the beach, I am especially fascinated by the action inside the Civic Center. The Indoor Competition features eight fliers competing this year, fewer than usual (with nearly as many judges: six), but they prove it's a yeasty time to be an indoor flier. The large room is well suited, and the big mirrored disco ball hanging from the ceiling, a hazard for kiteflying, has been removed. Bleachers give good viewing, the doors are closed and the air conditioning is turned off.

Corey Jensen, commentator extraordinaire from Las Vegas, Nevada takes the microphone, educates the audience ("This is very rich performance art" and "Low and slow is the most elegant part of an indoor routine") and explains the rules and judging: 60 percent of the score is for choreography, 25 percent for execution, 15 percent for entertainment value. There is only one class of fliers. The relative simplicity of this particular competition combined with the insular quiet of the room make for a spellbinding way to spend an hour. I see that the new



**TRUE GEM:** Latest in low-aspect-ratio kite series by Ron and Sandy Gibian.

ideas and techniques of each year become standard the next year, such as mixing more and different kites into one's routine and sliding kites along the wall. Several fliers are from New England, where weekly indoor meets are organized by John Ruggiero at the Marblehead (Massachusetts) High School gym.

The first performer, Lam Hoac of Bradford, Ontario, Canada, sets the scene. He incorporates Tai-Chi-like moves, floating the kite over his head and tumbling under it. Impressive. But more is to come. Drew Davidson of Toronto, Ontario,

Canada, last year's winner, came prepared for another triumph with no less than four sets of kites (two singles, a pair and a train of three). His braggadocio backfires, however, when he gets into trouble and has to drop the handles for two of his segments. Peter McMasters of Lynn, Massachusetts flies in turn a fighter, a Triad and a Synergy Deca. The latter kite's elegant fluidity seems designed for indoors, but Peter stretches its personality, making it shake in response to bells in his musical selection.

Torrey Lindemann of Eastford, Connecticut is next up, and his mother, Bev, sitting next to me, can barely keep her cool at her camcorder. Torrey uses a Synergy and a Prism Vapor in his routine, which is so closely attuned to his "new-age" music that you forget to notice it's kiteflying at all; it is, instead, dance—full of emotion and expression. It turns out that this is no accident. Bev tells me Torrey has studied dance with the specific intent of applying its methodology to kiteflying. I learn that choice of music is a critical component in indoor flying, and Torrey spends hours searching for the right sounds and rhythms.

Torrey is followed by others, such as Steve Karatzas of Brooklyn, New York, noted with pity by Corey as having "just one kite." Yet though it seems to me all the performers are good enough to be winners, I find myself pulling for Torrey. And he wins! The crowd of about 200 applauds, and I applaud—and Bev is beside herself.

The development of indoor as a type of kiting has been evident for several years and the "World Indoor Championship" is neither the first nor the largest event to capitalize on it, but it is named to reflect the ambitions of the organizers. Although many kites are made specifically for indoor, other models adapt well to it. Along with kites, skills are

developing and rules are evolving.

Later in the festival, Roger Chewning, Wildwood's main organizer, tells me the city will have a new convention center in two years. While the present building is adequate, we kites will be dreaming for better seating and lighting, especially spotlights to cast brilliance on these superb fliers. We don't ask for much. We just want to fully enjoy every delicious motion in this beautiful form of kiteflying. —Valerie Govig

## It's the Jon & Martha Show!

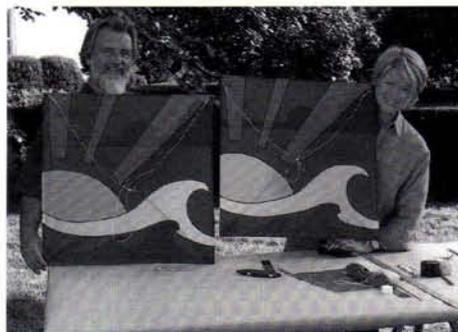
Everyone wants to know: "How was it?" And then they ask: "How was *she*?" Easy questions. It was grand. I had a great time. Martha was warm and wonderful. We had fun shooting a segment on kitemaking for the "Martha Stewart Living" television show in June.

How could I not enjoy a shuttle jet to New York, a limo to the studios at Martha's house in Westport, Connecticut, a wonderful little motel on the beach, and all these twentysomethings with cell phones fussing over me? "We've got the talent with us and the talent's got an 8:30 flight back so we've got to find this road so the talent doesn't miss his flight." (My wife wants me to make a t-shirt that says: "The Talent.")

We're supposed to shoot the kitemaking show at Martha's on Tuesday, but on Monday we rehearse without her. "I am she," says the nice young man who stands in for the star, eliciting giggles from other staffers.

On Tuesday, I try to impress on the staff that we cannot take too long making the kite before going to the beach to fly. "Don't wait until the end of the day because there won't be any wind." Our shoot is scheduled at 1:30 p.m., but Martha runs late. When she arrives, she likes my dark blue shirt and goes to change her clothes to match. We don't start shooting until 4:00.

But we have a marvelous time once we



**JON BURKHARDT AND MARTHA STEWART** on her show, with two stages of his kite, called Sun-Sea-Sky II. The finished kite, signed "With Love, Martha Stewart," brought \$285 at the AKA convention auction in October.

get going. Martha is keenly interested in knowing just how things are done, she loves the ripstop, loves the spray adhesive, loves the stained-glass look of the kites I have provided at several stages of construction. It's all very conversational and I'm having fun.

Finally, the crew has 90 minutes on tape, Martha has to go, and we zip off to the beach...to arrive just as the sun is setting and the wind is nothing. Nada. Not a breath. So we enlist several children, who earlier taped a "how to make lemonade" segment with Martha, to serve as launchers for a high start.

The kite floats like a charm in the sunset, and looks almost as if it is really flying. The camera does not show me hauling in line like mad. A few more launches and it is over, and after hugs and handshakes, we're speeding to The City to catch my plane. I change clothes in the back of the limo—which is what they're for, right?

In July, we meet Martha's production crew at the Newport Kite Festival to get some actual flying footage. And then we wait for showtime!

The episode with my segment is scheduled to air July 23, we are told. There is neat kite information on Martha's Web site, and lots of anticipation among family and friends. Then I discover that in my area (Washington, DC) Martha comes on at 4:10 a.m. Are you kidding? A.M.?

I set the VCR, but wake up anyway and tune in the show. No kites! It turns out our local station buys only the first half-hour of the syndicated show, and I and the kites are in the second half. Major bummer! At least the Baltimore station shows the whole hour, at 9 a.m., and we learn that friends have taped the show.

But the funeral services for John F. Kennedy, Jr. are being covered that day, so many stations all across the country preempt Martha. Parents and pals in the Midwest are seriously disappointed.

When we finally see the tape—our very own copy, courtesy of the studio—the show is great, including almost 11 minutes from the 90 I taped with Martha and six minutes more from Newport. (Dave Gomberg is seen with a "friend" flying his kite. I hope he calls his wife, Susan, by more affectionate names when they are alone.) They have cut out my flubs, Martha looks great and seems very knowledgeable, and Newport gets a fine plug.

But I learn some lessons: Keep your sense of humor firmly in place whenever you are involved with TV. Go with the pros, they do nice work. And Martha's wonderful—don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

—Jon Burkhardt

# Our Retail Family Scrapbook



PHOTO: JOSHUA MCKERROW

**STORE:** Kites Up & Away, 6 Fleet Street, Annapolis, MD 21401; Tel: 410-263-4628; Fax: 410-263-7848

**FLOOR SPACE:** 725 sq ft

**HOURS:** Wed.–Sun. 11–5

**YEARS IN BUSINESS:** 6 1/2

**YEARS CARRIED KITE LINES:** 6 1/2

**YEARS PROFITABLE:** Define profitable

**OWNER:** Joseph W. Croot

**AGE:** 74

**FAVORITE FOOD:** Seafood, fruit and, of course, Maryland crab cakes

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Point of Origin* by Patricia Cornwell

**LAST KITE BOOK READ:** *The Tao of Kiteflying* by Harm Van Veen

**FAVORITE FLYING SPOT:** Sandy Point State Park, on the Chesapeake Bay

**LATEST PROMOTIONAL EFFORT:** Annual Open House, in March

**STORE SPECIALTY:** Our shop cat, "Nike"  
**MOST IMPORTANT ADVICE EVER RECEIVED:** Think young

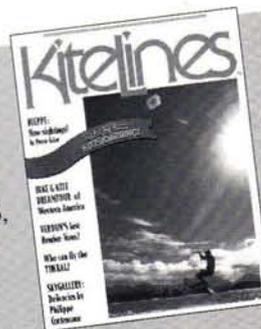
**NICEST SALE EVER MADE:** An annual visit by a Texas couple, who buy lots of things and get down on the floor to play with the cat

**BEST FRINGE BENEFIT OF THE STORE:** Meeting lots of nice people

**FAVORITE ISSUE OF KITE LINES:** The latest one

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# The "Sedgwickube"

A SINGLE CELL WITH A SLIDING

BRIDLE MAKES A FAST, FUN TUMBLER BY THE KITE LINES STAFF

**W**e first saw this kite bobbing over the boardwalk at Ocean City, Maryland during the 1998 Maryland International Kite Expo. Strolling underneath was its genial maker, Lee Sedgwick of Erie, Pennsylvania. The shiny kite had concave spars bowed out of each end and a sliding bridle that enabled him to roll and bounce it over the ground and tumble and flick it around the sky, almost like a fighter kite.

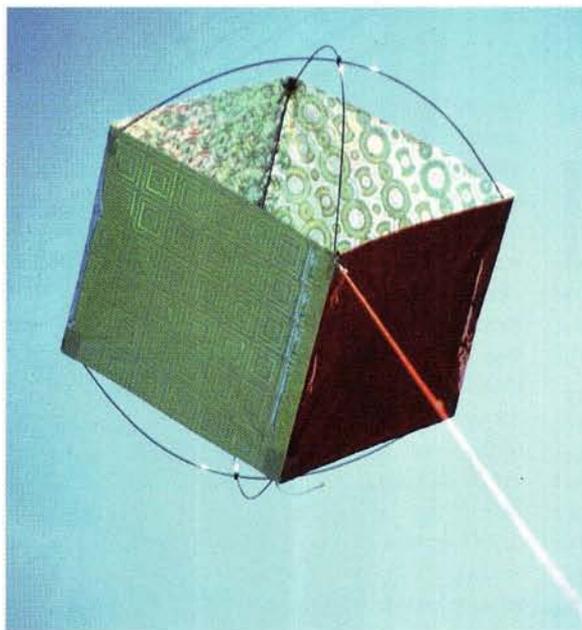
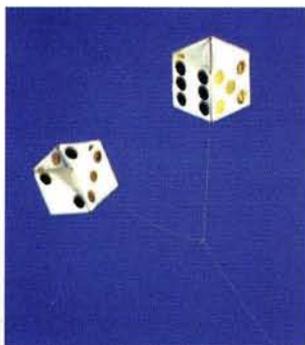
When Sedgwick donated his kite to the auction at the Ocean City event, Mel Govig bought it and was pleased when the maker agreed to permit us to reproduce the plans.

Sedgwick makes no claim to originating the kite. In fact, tracking the trail of the cube kite proves again how good kite ideas bounce around.

Sedgwick traces his knowledge of the cube back to Alix Martin of New York City, who was selling a few similar kites at the 1997 AKA convention in Wildwood, New Jersey. She, however, had scaled up her kites from a two-inch tumbling cube made by Charlie Sotich of Chicago, Illinois. That little kite was auctioned at the 1991 AKA convention in Jacksonville, Florida to David Klein, owner of Big City Kites in New York City, who showed it to Martin.

However, some years ago we published a photo from Gubbio, Italy (Winter, 1991-92) of a much larger cube kite decorated as a gambling die, being shown by Thorsten Schacht of Denmark (who is one-third of the team known as Dr. Hvirvelvind). And plans for a quite similar dice kite, about one meter square, appear in the 1995 book, *Box*

**Variations on the one-cell theme: a pair of dice kites made and flown by Barbara Hall at the AKA convention in Muncie, Indiana.**



**It tumbles, it floats, it zooms, it bounces! The shiny surfaces of Lee Sedgwick's single-cell cube kite also glitter enticingly, reflecting the sun.**

*Kites: Making and Flying*, by Dr. Bill Cochrane. Finally, at the 1999 AKA Convention in Muncie, Indiana, we discovered our friend Barbara Hall flying two small dice kites branching from one line, which she had made in salute to the gambling mecca of Atlantic City, New Jersey, near her home.

The kite "took off" commercially in 1998, after the Shanti Kite Company negotiated with Martin for rights to make her box. The single-cell market niche now also includes the Triad and the PopKan. (See our reviews of the Cube and Triad in *Kite Lines*, Spring 1999, and of the PopKan in this issue.)

Sedgwick was drawn to the design in an ongoing search for a fighter kite that would relaunch from any position on the ground, and guessed that the sliding bridle would be the key. (*Kite Lines* first documented the use of such a system in the "convertible cubics" of Japan's Takaji Kuroda, Fall 1980.)

Sedgwick made his kite from four textures of metallized Mylar®, all silver except for one side in red. But he notes the kite could be made from an array of solid hues, or even just a single sheet of material. And while Mylar works well, "almost anything" can be adapted as sail material (ripstop, Ty-

vek®, tissue). Further, he has seen other makers use wood dowels and even drinking straws as spar material.

## Materials

- one 9" x 42½" strip, or four 9" x 11" pieces of Mylar or other lightweight covering material (Our sample was made of Mylar commonly sold as gift wrap.)
- 0.05"-dia. carbon fiber rod, cut into four 17½" lengths and three 9" lengths (for spars)
- 0.07"-dia. carbon fiber rod, cut to one 9" length (for leading edge)
- 10 vinyl end caps, ⅝" dia., for spar connectors (Plastic tubing of similar diameter may also be used, cut to 10 lengths of approximately ⅝".)
- 13" of 200-lb-test prestretched Spectra® line, for bridle
- one fishing snap swivel ½" long
- glue (For Mylar, contact cement works best.)
- ripstop nylon patching tape, 1" wide.

## Construction

1. If using one long piece of material, lay out horizontally and mark vertical spar positions (Fig. 1). Measuring from one end, mark top and bottom edges every 10½": at 10½", 21", 31½" and 42". (The extra ½" at the end becomes a flap to "close the box" later.)

If using four pieces of material, tape or glue together by overlapping 11" edges by ½". Do not tape or glue the last flap yet, leaving the material lying flat.

2. Cut vertical spars to 9". Pierce eight vinyl end caps, as near to the closed end as possible, and slide two of these tubing connectors onto each spar. Position ½" from ends (Fig. 2).

3. Crease the sail material carefully at each marked position. Lay vertical spars on sail material at each fold, with end cap connectors pointing out. Glue the spars in place at top and bottom, using enough cement to completely surround the spar and base of connectors (Fig. 3).

4. Connect spreaders for top and bottom using two vinyl end caps. Using a needle, pierce two holes in each cap, perpendicular to each other and separated by

## The "Sedgwickube"

(drawings not to scale)



FIG. 2  
spar fittings are made by passing vertical spars through vinyl end caps



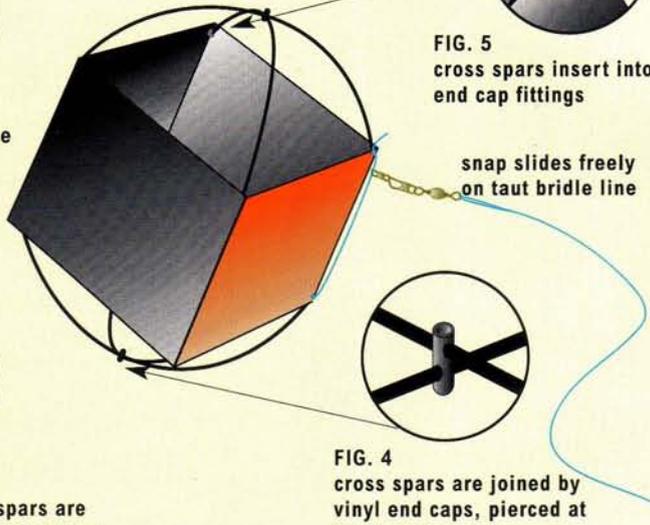
FIG. 3  
fittings and vertical spars are glued into place at each corner



FIG. 5  
cross spars insert into end cap fittings

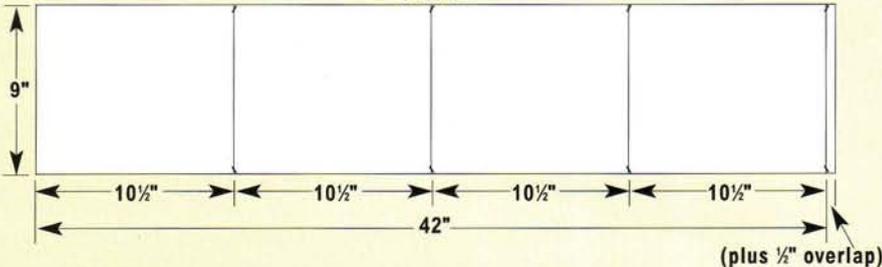


FIG. 4  
cross spars are joined by vinyl end caps, pierced at 90-degree angles



snap slides freely on taut bridle line

FIG. 1



approximately 0.07". Insert two 17½" rods halfway in each cap to form an X pattern, and set aside. Spars should fit snugly in the tubing (Fig. 4).

5. Close the box by gluing the last ½" flap of the material to the first edge, with the spars on the inside forming each corner of the box.

6. Reinforce all eight corners of the box on outside edges with ripstop tape, about 1½"-long pieces.

7. When final seam and reinforcements are dry, assemble the completed cell by inserting the X-shaped cross-spreader assemblies into the tubing connectors of vertical spars (Fig. 5), bowing the spars outward. Slide the spreader spars in connectors as necessary to make the cell "square."

8. To assemble the sliding bridle, carefully punch two holes in sail material at each end of the 0.07" leading edge vertical spar. Thread and securely tie the heavier-weight Spectra line at one end.

Slide the round or closed end of the fishing snap onto the bridle line. Now tie the bridle line to the other end of the same spar, making line as taut as possible without bend-

ing spar. Too much slack prevents the fishing snap from sliding properly.

### Flying

9. Attach flying line directly to the fishing snap, or use another snap swivel on the end of the flying line. When the line goes slack or unusual gusts strike the kite, the sliding fishing snap allows the kite to flip over and fly "upside down."

Sedgwick recommends using 20-lb-test line for the first 10 feet, then 30- to 90-lb-test for the rest of the line. He says the lighter line near the kite makes it float better. He also suggests the kite flies best on only 40 or 50 feet of line, with the line fully extended from the spool. In our experience, gentle pumping of the spool is enough to make the kite do its thing.

The maker also has experimented with tying a line through the center of the box between the junctions of the cross-spars, to increase tension for sharper movement.

Sedgwick says this kite keeps offering him new games to play.

"The kite is awesome," he says. "You can fly it at night, indoors or out, in low wind or high."

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# Day by day in Oklahoma!

## A new streak in progress

**F**ly for 400 days? Then just keep flying? No problem! The newest claimant for the most consecutive days of kiteflying began his streak on January 1, 1998 and, at press time, was still going strong.

E.W. (Kite Gypsy) Redmond has been bannering the skies over Tulsa, Oklahoma, since 1983. Before that, it was the sky over Minneapolis. Redmond decided to go after the record after meeting Texan Bill Mosley at the Junction International Kite Retreat several years ago. Mosley had been recognized for flying 366 consecutive days (*Kite Lines*, Spring, 1985), a record that was only eclipsed last year by Maryland's Bill Bigge, another Junction participant, with 400 days (*Kite Lines*, Spring 1999).

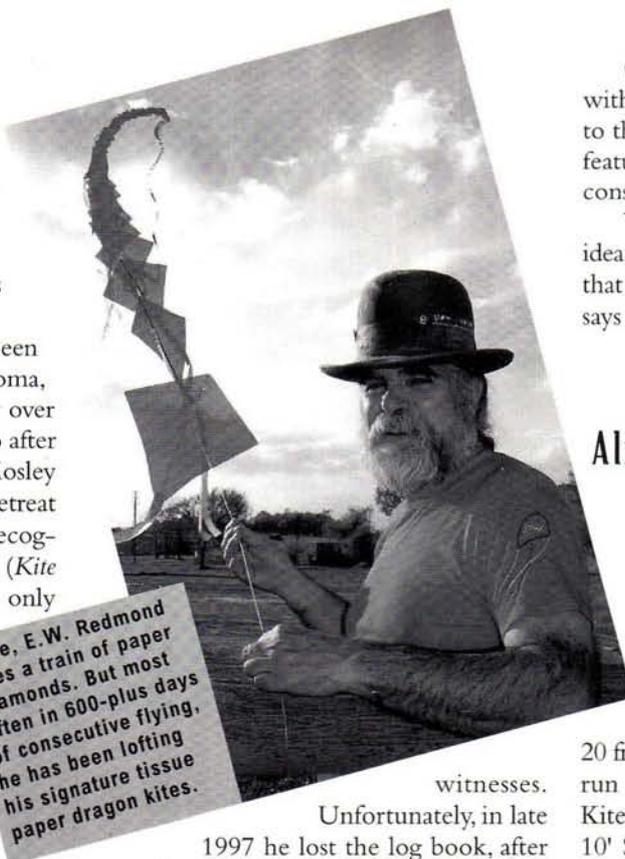
Redmond's "everyday kite" is a tissue paper dragon with a crepe paper tail, which has been his teaching and giveaway model for the last 20 years or so. He buys old bamboo porch shades for spars, gets paper from an art supply or teacher supply store and uses a glue stick and tape from an office supply outlet.

Most of the kites Redmond has been using to advance the record are his tissue paper dragons, more-or-less all the same, but he has also included centipedes, trains and fighters. He made no great effort, as Bill Bigge did, to assure that each kite differed from the others by at least some small increment.

"I've almost never been without some kind of kites and bicycles since I was five," says Redmond, 53. Hi-Flyer Red Ryder paper Eddys were the first he remembers, and varieties of Gayla deltas got him through a number of later years. Eventually, he began building his own kites.

"I found a drug store near where I lived that had some decent cellophane dragons. I developed my simplified version of the dragon kite, eliminating the tapered tails and using long crepe paper streamers instead," he says.

In his record attempt, Redmond began keeping a log book of his flights and obtaining signatures and phone numbers of



Here, E.W. Redmond flies a train of paper diamonds. But most often in 600-plus days of consecutive flying, he has been lofting his signature tissue paper dragon kites.

witnesses.

Unfortunately, in late 1997 he lost the log book, after more than 200 days flying! But Redmond says the loss provided him the opportunity for a fresh start, and with a new idea. Thus since January 1, 1998, he has flown a different handmade kite each day, and given the kite to his witness! A number of these are now owned by AKA members across the Southwest, because Redmond attends many festivals and asks friends on the flying fields to witness his flights. Many more kites, however, have been given to total strangers recruited in or near downtown Tulsa.

"No one has ever refused the kite, but some have offered to pay for it," he says.

He has a simple kite philosophy: "Get as many shapes in the air with as many crepe paper streamers on as many lines as possible—that's the show."

Redmond does make some larger kites for sale, and suspends a lightweight banner from the line proclaiming "\$25," and waits for business.

Like Bigge, Redmond says no-wind days are the toughest on which to maintain the streak. "Some days it requires a long-line launch and either some walking or steady string retrieval, but all of my flights have lasted at least five minutes or so."

On better days, flights last for hours, with streamers on the line calling attention to the kite. A local television station aired a feature story the day he achieved his 500th consecutive daily flight.

When will the streak end? "I have no idea. The daily fly is so much a part of my life that I really haven't given it much thought," says Redmond.

—Richard Dermer  
Stillwater, Oklahoma

## Almost there. . .then snap!

**I** know I can do it now! At least I'm proving my kite designs are solid." That was the optimistic reaction of Oregon kiter Warren O. (Stormy) Weathers, 78, after another tantalizing attempt to set the altitude record for a single kite.

Weathers's attempt, on August 20 from Long Beach, Washington, during the run of the Washington State International Kite Festival, ended when his kite—a 7½ x 10' Swift Victory star based on an Allison polymorphic design—broke away. Stormy had been flying it from his pedal-powered capstan based on an exercycle he had picked up at a yard sale for \$2.

His 1998 attempt upon the oldest record in kiting was hampered by weather, attaining an altitude of just 3,800 feet (*Kite Lines*, Spring 1999). But this time, more than five miles of 50-lb-test Spectra had already been unspooled when the line broke. The kite had been out of sight in thick clouds for nearly an hour, and the weight of the trailing line allowed it to keep flying.

Amazingly, six days later two loggers working in the woods recovered the kite about 23 miles east of the launch point. Having read about the failed attempt in the *Longview Daily News*, the loggers knew what they were seeing when they spotted a glistening length of line draped across a canyon, and tracked it for more than a mile before finding the undamaged international orange kite with U.S. military markings.

The loggers, Rod Smith and Norm Penttila, called the World Kite Museum in Long Beach to report the find. The museum had donated the line (made by Western Filament, of Colorado) for the record attempt.



The Swift Victory star kite seen just before break-away in its altitude effort.

The loggers brought the kite to the museum, where director Kay Buesing says it was noticed that an altimeter attached to the kite—a Casio wristwatch—had continued to register altitudes at 15-minute intervals.

The device showed the kite achieved a maximum height of 12,340 feet—apparently at the moment the line broke—strikingly close to the venerable record of 12,471 feet thought to have been reached by a kite in 1898 at the Blue Hill Weather Station at Milton, Massachusetts.

Weathers thanks Bob Abel of Tacoma, Washington, Hugh Foster of New Orleans, Louisiana and Margaret Greger, of Richland, Washington for their assistance in his effort, and says he plans another attempt next year.

## Most boxes in train—now 161

**R**ichard Dutton is ever improving on his record of most box kites flown in train. Though it's not a primary record, a long string of boxes makes a spectacular show.

Since Dutton first set the mark of 101 in 1995 in Australia, he has ferried his two-foot Buffalo Box Kites from New York state to a number of events, always increasing the count by 10. For tidy shipment in two big Rubbermaid footlockers, he disassembles the kites beforehand, but he keeps the frames fully linked so only the spreaders need to be inserted for flight. Knowing he will depend on volunteers at launch time, he groups the kites in sets of 10, which (even at their two-foot size) make a sizable handful for the people carrying the kites to the field. Double larkshead knots join the kites as they become a train, held down by sand if necessary until the big moment of flight.

The winds have to be just right: 12 to 15 mph or more. But once up they are a novel sight—though barely visible. Spaced three feet apart, the kites use about 800 feet of line. The top kite is a six-footer and flown at a longer interval, to prevent oscillation.

Dutton already has two kite festival invitations lined up for the year 2000 and is planning his itinerary, which can be a challenge in itself, since he has to pick up new sets of kites for each festival he visits. ♦

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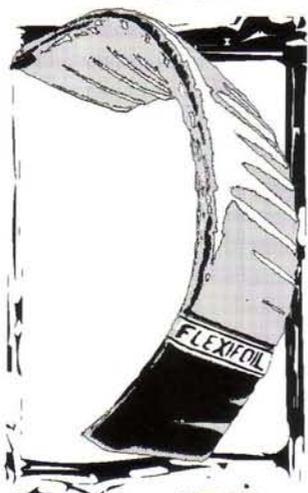
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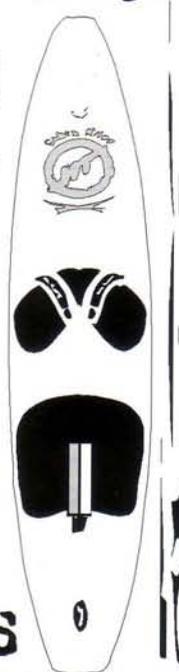
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# Designs for all

NEW POWER KITES, A TRICKSTER, A STACKABLE  
SOFTY, A MODULAR SYSTEM, A SNAPPY FIGHTER, AN IMPULSE KITE & A CLASSIC

## COMPETITION XM BY ACTIVE PEOPLE

### No more fear with this one

**T**he Competition X kites are Active Peoples' replacements for its Competition series of kites. The latter were arguably the fastest and most aggressive traction kites on the market, but were also, for all but the best fliers, the most difficult to handle. We who took the time to know them loved them, but others feared them.

Designed by Alain Hoeffler, the Competition X series may best be described as user-friendly high-performance kites. Built of rip-stop polyester, with sewn polyester bridling and reinforcing in all the important places, their construction is excellent quality.

The Competition X comes in five sizes, from the 24-square-foot (projected area) XS to the XXXL, at 91 square feet. We flew all of them, but chose the 34-square-foot Competition XM as our test kite. Its size and performance make it a good choice for both beginner to intermediate fliers, who need something they can control in moderate winds, and higher-end fliers, who will value its performance in more aggressive conditions.

Our first flights were in moderate winds, and we immediately liked the Competition XM's responsiveness and stability in the air. The quickest turns were produced by medium-length arm movements, coupled with medium wrist rotations. The kite accelerated smoothly and tracked predictably, and we even lent it to a beginner, who had no trouble flying it.

Later, in more wind, we discovered the kite's high performance nature. Toward the top of its wind range, the flying window proved very wide: in extreme gusts extending beyond 180 degrees. We occasionally needed to reel it in with a bit of brake pressure to avoid luffing. Skilled fliers will find this trait an advantage when tacking upwind; less experienced kites might shorten their brake lines a bit to hold the XM back.

The XM does not offer the arm-wrenching acceleration characteristic of most high performance kites. Instead, the power



The Competition XM comes in five sizes. Above, the 34-square-foot model.

curve feels smooth and geometric. As the wind pressure increases, so does the rate of acceleration, making a kite that can be flown relatively safely in very difficult conditions.

The Competition XM seems likely to be well received, for none of the dozen or so kites who test-flew our XM had a single negative comment—a first!

In addition, by the time you read this Active People says some sizes of the Competition X will be available in a water relaunchable model. Kitesurfers take heed!

—James C. Welsh

## C-QUAD BY PETER LYNN

### Performance rewards patience

**P**eter Lynn's C-Quads don't look like any other traction kite, you don't control them like any other traction kite, and putting them away is a pain. But give one a chance and we bet you will like it more every time you fly.

The C-Quads are single-skin traction kites controlled with four lines, and employ thin fiberglass/carbon rods as stays and along the leading edge to maintain their shapes. They are being made in seven sizes, from 1.4 square meters to 10.5 square meters.

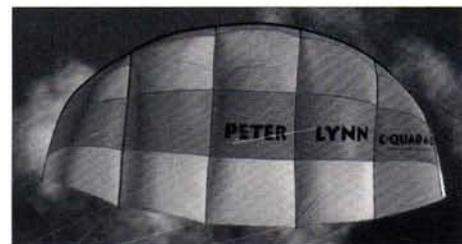
The kites come in odd, round storage bags that are about 38 inches in diameter but only about one inch thick. Get out of the wind the first time you take a C-Quad out of its bag, preferably indoors. The kite simply springs into shape! And after you recover from the shock of that, try to figure out how to get it *back* in the bag. Practice bagging it until you know you will be able to do it in the wind, and be especially careful in gusty conditions or you will break a spar, as we did.

Our next challenge came with adjusting line lengths. Unlike most quads, whose brake lines are often slack while flying, the C-Quad demands positive pressure on the bottom lines to give the kite the shape needed to capture the wind. Thus we learned to set up the lines so that when our wrists were in a customary neutral position, the brake lines applied some pressure. (Tip: hold the handles with all fingers below the power lines, instead of one finger above, as is often done.)

Thus setting up our 4.2-m C-Quad the first time took the better part of an hour, and we ended up extending the top lines by about a foot. This is not a task for a beginner. But our reward was the fun of flying the C-Quad.

Minor warning: The kite provides a significant power surge as it takes shape. And after launching, we discovered the best way to fly it was to pretend it is a Revolution. Very short arm movements and very aggressive wrist rotations rewarded us with quick, unusually tight turns. We judged power and speed were equivalent to most high performance traction kites.

Upwind mobility was very good. But we had to carefully maintain brake pressure



The C-Quad flies something like a Revolution.

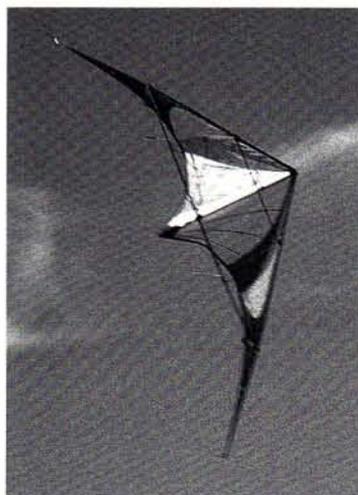
when the C-Quad neared the edges of the wind window. If a gust caught it or it overflew, the kite collapsed irretrievably and fluttered to the ground.

The C-Quad professes to be a water-launchable kite. We won't go that far. Rather, we suggest that if it lands on the water, and you are standing on solid ground, you can *occasionally* make it relaunch. However, because the single surface does not hold water, when you get it out of the water it is

easier to launch again than conventional foils that fill with water. Thus the C-Quad was our kite of choice this summer while learning to kitesurf.

All our experienced test pilots were initially skeptical about the C-Quad, but after flying it did not want to give it back. All agreed this kite should not be sold to beginners, but to experienced fliers with patience to get past its limitations to find impressive performance, especially if they consider its price.

—James C. Welsh



Elixir: Smooth trickster tracks well.

## ELIXIR BY PRISM High-aspect trickster

For the last several years, kites from Prism Design have tended toward a certain appearance, featuring short spines, deep keels, and curved leading edges built upon a low aspect ratio and with sail paneling of fabric and Mylar® laminates.

Prism's new Elixir is a full-sized freestyle kite that takes many of those elements, but stretches them out into a high-aspect-ratio design. In typical Prism fashion, it features bulletproof construction with alternating panels of ripstop polyester and a Mylar laminate. Further, wingtip panels of a Mylar-laminated Dacron® are vented with hot cut holes.

The kite features an "active bridle," originally invented by Andy Wardley of England, and created simply here from just two extra pieces of line between the bridle triangles right and left, with sewn loops at the ends.

The frame is a combination of tapered, wrapped graphite and pultruded graphite,

which provides enough stiffness to react sharply to aggressive maneuvers and sufficient flexibility to stand up to pounding groundwork. The trailing edge is bound with ripstop nylon, which conceals an extra Mylar reinforcement for the standoff fittings.

The Elixir impressed us with its smoothness and trickability through a variety of winds. It handled gusts into the high teens with little trouble. The wingtips looked like they wanted to vibrate a bit, but the kite remained solid and seemed surprisingly light on its lines, given its size.

Smooth through axels and other slack-line moves, the Elixir also tracked and cornered well. The kite performed fairly fast spins, but with little oversteer, a friendly trait that can be attributed to the well-

tuned active bridle. The design improves tracking, turning and freestyle tricking while reducing the need for the flier to adjust for windspeed changes.

We found the Elixir extremely well balanced and were able to easily put it through various tricks that moved the kite between its back and belly. It behaved well on its back, either in a turtle or fade; with no trick line to get in the way, back spins were not a problem. We could even throw the kite into a turtle and have it continue rotating, wrapping itself in its lines, ready to yo-yo back out into flight. Fades were also a snap to achieve and very easy to hold. And given a decent ground wind, the kite was more than happy to launch from the fade position. →

## DATA CHART

Name of Kite	POWER		DUAL-LINE		SINGLE-LINE		
	C-QUAD	COMP. X	ELIXIR	STYLUS	POPKAN	SKYHOOK	BAIT
Manufacturer	Peter Lynn	Cobra	Prism	Prism	Goodwinds	Cloud Catcher	Sky Delight
Suggested Retail Price	\$300	\$400	\$240	\$100	\$19.50	\$145	\$48
Sail Material	RP	RP	RP/Mylar	RN	RP	RN	RP
Leading Edge Material	n/a	n/a	P	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Framing Materials	FG/GR	n/a	CF	n/a	GR	WD	GR
Fittings	MP	n/a	MP	n/a	MP	MP	brass
Dimensions	14' x 5'6"	12'3" x 3'7"	96" x 32"	70" x 28"	12.5' x 12.5'	48" x 48"	26.5 x 20.5"
Sail Depth at stand-offs	n/a	n/a	10"	n/a	n/a	n/a	na
Sail Area	45.2 sq ft	34.2 sq ft	764 sq in	1960 sq in	600 sq in	1881 sq in	543 sq in
Weight (oz.)	n/a	21.8	10.6	n/a	1.4	8.4	0.8
Suggested Wind (mph)	3-22	6-20	3-20	4-20	3-15	3-20	2-15
Suggested Line (lbs)	375/175	300/150	90	150/200	20	30	8
Skill Level Required	I-SK	N-SK	I	I	N	N	I-SK
Assembly (minutes)	5	5	1-21	<1	1 sec	3	<1
Launch/Relaunch	A	E	E	G	E	E	VG
Landing/Ground Work	G	E	E	G	E	VG	VG
Responsiveness	E	VG-E	E	G	G	G	E
Ability to dwell	n/a	n/a	VG	n/a	VG	E	P
Straight Speed	F	F	F	M	M	n/a	F
Speed in Turns	F	F	F	M	n/a	n/a	F
Precision/Tracking	G	VG	VG	G	n/a	n/a	n/a
Amount of Pull	H	H	M	M	L	L-M	L
Amount of Noise	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI
Visual/Graphics	G	G	E	G	G	G	E
Workmanship	VG	E	VG	VG	VG	VG	E
Portability	E	E	G	E	E	VG	VG
Durability	VG	VG	E	E	E	VG	VG

**NOTES:** Retail price (in US dollars) is as "advertised" or "suggested." Wind range (mph) covers minimum and maximum speeds deemed suitable by our evaluators. Dimensions are in the following order: width x height. Measurements and (usually) drawings are made with the kite standing on the floor facing the viewer. Materials: RN-Ripstop Nylon, RP-Ripstop Polyester, DT-Dacron Tape, WD-Wooden Dowels, B-Bamboo, FG-Fiberglass, GR-Graphite, EP-Epoxy, CF-Carbon Fiber, PRF-Prizmafilm, r-Rods, t-Tubes, MP-Molded Plastic, V-Vinyl. Speed: SL-Slow, M-Medium, F-Fast. Skill levels: N-Novice, I-Intermediate, SK-Skilled. Pull: L-Low, M-Medium, H-High. Noise: SI-Silent, L-Low, M-Medium, H-High. Other ratings: P-Poor, A-Acceptable, G-Good, VG-Very Good, E-Excellent, n/a-not applicable.

## WHAT'S NEW: KITES

[Continued]

As one might expect from Prism, the kite performed a dead launch; in fact, we judged it quite as recoverable from the ground as it was in the air. Although the lines occasionally wrapped the wingtips or stand-off fittings, requiring a walk to the kite, this did not happen often enough to make us wish for a trick line.

Overall, the Elixir is a wonderful kite for those who like the more radical side of sport kiting. Its fairly large size makes it a bit slower and more predictable than other kites on the market, but its smoothness, agility and good looks make this a very attractive package. —Jeff Burka

### THE STYLUS BY PRISM

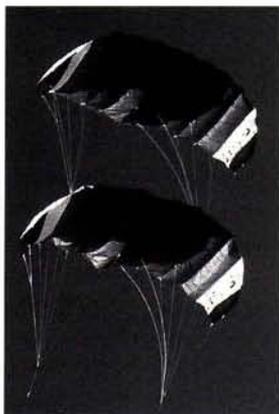
## A stackable soft stunter

Best known for dual-line framed stunt kites, Prism Design has branched off to join in the two-line soft-kite trend with its new Stylus 1.8, designed to fly alone—or in stacks!

A bi-elliptical design, the Stylus features a ¾-oz ripstop nylon canopy with an open leading edge. The outside two cells on each side are sealed at the leading edge, relying on cross-cell venting in the ribs to inflate them. All stress points, including the hot-cut vents, are reinforced extremely well. The vents have a concentric line of stitching around the openings.

The kite is simply bridled on every other cell, rather than cross-bridled like many other soft stunters. Each bridled cell has two lines, and the lines for each half of the kite are brought together at the tow point. Conveniently, Prism has included small rip-stop loops sewn on the trailing edge, which can be used to secure the bridles tangle-free for storage. All loops on the bridle are sewn rather than tied.

Certainly the most interesting feature of the Stylus 1.8 is a mysterious heavy line running from each tow point back to an unbridled cell of the kite. The line runs to and through a strip of heavy webbing sewn on the back of



Photographed from below, a Stylus two-stack shows bridle-to-kite link design.

the kite, where a loop of line is larks-headed to it. This is the secret to stacking multiple Styli—a capability we have never encountered in commercial soft foils.

We found the Stylus to be a reasonably good flyer, although slower than other comparably sized foils we have flown, both in forward and turning speed. In tight turns the Stylus showed a strong tendency to luff half the sail. (This is a characteristic which could be solved through use of a cross-bridle.) It was distressingly easy to fold up the kite in midflight, by turning too tightly or merely playing around. But the Stylus also proved to be highly recoverable, and the short, simple bridle helped in this regard. It rarely tangled around the kite, and we found we could always reinflate the foil in the air.

The kite also was fairly easy to launch from awkward positions on the ground, given enough ground wind to help flip it over. (As with all soft kites, you need to weight it down to keep it from taking off on its own.)

We had the opportunity to fly two Styli in a stack, which proved to be great fun. Stacking was achieved simply by larksheading the bridle points of the top kite to the pigtailed sticking out of the back of the bottom kite. The tendency of the kite to stall or fold up was drastically reduced by having two canopies. If one kite had problems, the other would stay inflated and keep the pair aloft. Sometimes this proved to be the top kite, at other times the bottom.

The stack flew somewhat slower, but remained fairly nimble. Ground recoveries were very difficult with the stack, but we also found ourselves on the ground less frequently when flying multiple kites.

The pull of a single Stylus was fairly light for a foil of its size, a detail which might be attributed to its slow forward speed, and we never felt the need to switch from 80-pound-test lines even in winds into the teens, although the manufacturer recommends a higher test. The stack of kites pulled significantly more and provided a fun workout in decent winds.

The soft Stylus comes in a small drawstring stuff sack and, with careful packing, we found we could fit two kites into a single bag for added convenience.

Overall, Prism has come up with a kite which, while not as nimble as some of its competition, is fun to fly and tracks and recovers well. The real novelty is the ability to stack two or more kites together, and Prism has provided a simple, well-engineered technique for doing so.

—Jeff Burka

### SKYHOOK BY CLOUD CATCHER

## Multiplication by module

Skepticism. In a word, that was the reaction in the *Kite Lines* offices when we began to unpack the SkyHook, billed as a “modular” kite capable of being flown in a number of configurations to match varying winds. In particular, we questioned whether Velcro® hook-and-loop seams, the key to linking wings and body together on the single-line SkyHook, could possibly hold the kite together against the breeze.

Yet as we sorted out parts on the floor and began to understand their function, the concept became clearer. (Caution! Do not assemble this kite on carpeting, for you will constantly be unpeeling Velcro parts from the floor.)

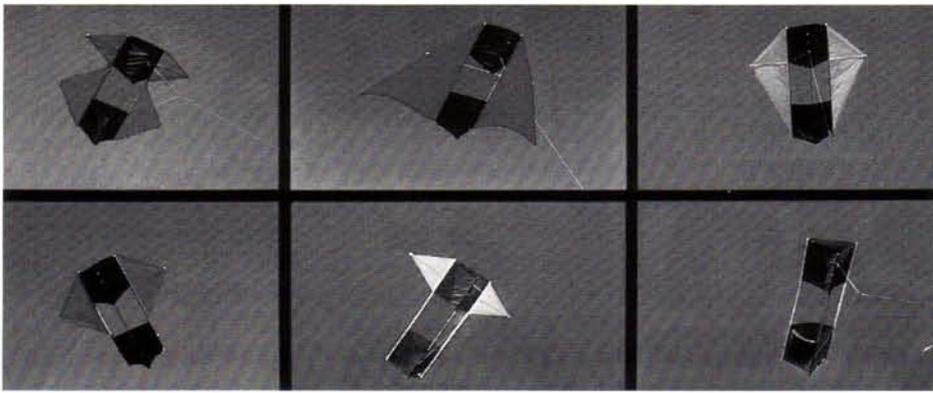
When we went out to fly, our skepticism diminished further. The SkyHook does seem to be something of an all-in-one kite, which can literally be ripped apart on the field and reassembled in short order to fly in a different shape.

The heart of the kite is a two-cell triangular box kite, 48 inches long with rip-stop cells of 13½" x 15" panels. This basic box, which the maker calls the Loge shape, can be flown alone in brisk winds. But the side edges are comprised of ¼-inch-wide Velcro fabric, to which may be attached any of four pairs of wings. More wings are also promised in the future, along with parts to join together two SkyHooks and a separately purchased, inexpensive keel to permit the making of a basic delta to fly along with another shape.

We laid the box kite face down and carefully pressed the Velcro edges of two big delta wings of bright red fabric to those of the blue center box. Then, after some head scratching and rereading of the instructions, we figured out the clever system by which spreaders are affixed.

The SkyHook package includes numerous end caps that fit on wooden dowel spars, precut to suitable lengths. Around each plastic cylinder is glued a ¾" sleeve of Velcro, and sewn at the tips of each wing are mating Velcro tabs. You merely fold these tabs around the spar end caps, press them together and the spar end is attached.

Additional ¾-inch Velcro tab fittings, threaded onto the spar, mate with Velcro patches sewn to the back of the sails. These guide points can be adjusted to help control sail tension. The kite comes with six spreaders, three each in two diameters (¼-inch and ⅝-inch), permitting lighter spars to be used in lighter air.



**Six kites in one!** These are some of the flying shapes possible with the basic SkyHook package, and more options are in the works.

Out on the flying field, we launched the red-and-blue delta-Conyne (called Tranquility Base by the maker) right from the hand, and it lifted smoothly into the sky. But we soon realized the wind was gusting too high for this shape, as it tended to saw back and forth. We brought it down to change shape.

Zip, zip! Off came the spreader tabs and fittings. Zip, zip! Off came the red wings. Zip, zip! On went the smaller Conyne wings. Zip, zip! On went the spreader. By actual stopwatch timing we were launching a classic yellow-and-blue Conyne kite (Donner's Hammer, to the maker) just 3 minutes 20 seconds later! And we accomplished the transformation in place, kneeling on the grass.

This shape proved to be perfect for the prevailing wind. The kite rose like an elevator and settled like any good Conyne into a steady, high-angle flight. Had the wind been stronger, we might have chosen to affix other combinations of smaller wings.

In this and subsequent tests, we saw no indication in flight that the Velcro seams were under any great pressure to separate, and the manufacturer says thousands of flights in testing prototypes did not degrade the "stickiness" of the strips.

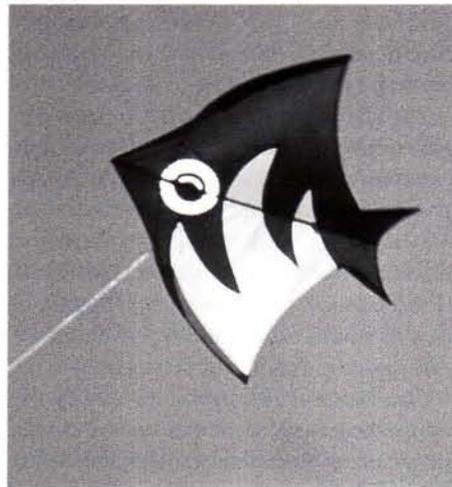
In the instruction booklet, designer David Rowe writes, "sloth was the mother of this invention," and the Velcro fastening straps of his bicycling shoes provided the inspiration. He says the SkyHook modular system will continue to grow, as wings of other sizes and improved fittings are made. For example, our test kite featured conventionally sewn edges and seams, but Cloud Catcher is making new kites with little sewing, using adhesives instead. Rowe says this is stronger and helps prevent fabric puckering.

For single-line kitefliers who want to fly in most wind conditions, without having to tote a bag full of kites, the SkyHook offers an interesting option. —Steve McKerrow

## PIRANHA & BAIT BY SKY DELIGHT Fighters need a gentle hand

**D**id you ever wonder: Why do fighter kites *have* to be boring in the visual adornment department? Modern fighters tend toward solid colors or geometric patterns—not unattractive, exactly, but certainly lacking personality.

Joel Scholz has answered the question with his fighters, including two scrappy part-



**A tasty Bait kite flees across the sky.**

ners in the food chain: ripstop polyester kites built roughly on the shape of the traditional Indian patang, but whose asymmetrical appliques evoke the fearsome fighting fish of the Amazon and its colorful prey.

Given our long affection for the Butterfly and Butterflier, earlier fighters from Sky Delight, we were eager to try our sample Piranha Bait.

The 27-inch-span Piranha and Bait kites are identical structurally. They feature laser-cut sails, graphite spars, a three-point bridle and two distinctive features: a brass tube that sets the dihedral of the spine and a hook-and-loop retaining strip that allows the flier to vary the tension of the cross-spar

along the spine. (This latter feature performs the same function as the ribbon ties found on the Merlin fighters from Martyn Lawrence of Wales.)

Construction quality in our test kite was of a high standard and the fishy graphic appliqué, in black, yellow and sea green, showed brightly in the sky.

Flying characteristics prompted us to put this kite in the category that Mel Govig always called "active"—meaning a kite that demands nearly constant attention and does not "dwell" in a stable position in the sky. (Fighter devotees argue about this quality; Mel liked it, maintaining one could gain a tactical advantage by parking high and swooping down at the right moment.)

Unlike most active kites we know, however, which need relatively rapid line pumps to maintain control, we found the Bait demanded a paradoxically gentle touch. Sharp jerks induced spins rather than the darts in a straight direction we intended. We found that steady application of pressure—through restrained hand-over-hand intake of line or even just a rearward pull of the line hand—produced a smooth track.

Through this gentle line manipulation, we found we could produce rapid spins, swooping loops and quick, straight climbs. The kite also behaved well down near the ground, and could even be made to take off when lying flat on its face, if our timing was right. A tug would pop it into a brief float and when the nose turned upward, more line pressure produced a climb.

The Piranha and Bait should reward fighter fliers who enjoy a challenge—or proposing one to another flier.

—Steve McKerrow

## POPKAN KITE BY GOODWINDS The ultimate impulse kite?

**H**ere is a kite you might not even guess *was* a kite when you see it in its portable form. It looks more like a nylon flying disk of some kind, flat enough to fit into a suitcase or briefcase.

But give the PopKan a twist and—presto!—like Fred Astaire tapping out his top hat you've got a cylindrical, single-cell kite with 100 feet of string already attached, from a hub-like disk that



**The PopKan can be made to tumble and zoom.**

## WHAT'S NEW: KITES

[Continued]

nests at the center when the kite is folded flat. (Be careful! We discovered our string was not tied to the disk when it ran out, and we had to run halfway across a field to catch the dangling end.)

The PopKan flies very much like The Cube and Triad cell kites we tested last issue (*Kite Lines*, Spring 1999), capable of some maneuverability through a push-pull tumbling technique, but also content to park at a high angle in light and stable winds. Because of its cylindrical shape, when on the ground it rolls easily into takeoff position.

"Looks like a lampshade," said one boardwalk kibitzer as we let the kite climb from our fingers at the Maryland International Kite Exposition in April, at Ocean City. It does!

The PopKan utilizes flexible graphite spars, including twin hoops of 12½-inch diameter, sewn into the leading and trailing edges, and four 12-inch vertical spars that untwist to shape the kite.

The polyester sail features four color panels; our test kite was black, blue, green and purple. Colleague Jeff Burka immediately changed the location of the towing point of his PopKan, "so my kite has different colors looking down at me."

If this kite crashes, no harm done. We suspect it is virtually indestructible from impacts, because the construction is really that of a shock absorber. And we found the kite can be snatched back into the air from any position on the ground.

Just for fun, we spaced the PopKan, Cube and Triad on short leaders about four feet apart and flew the trio nicely together off a single line—a geometry class in the sky!

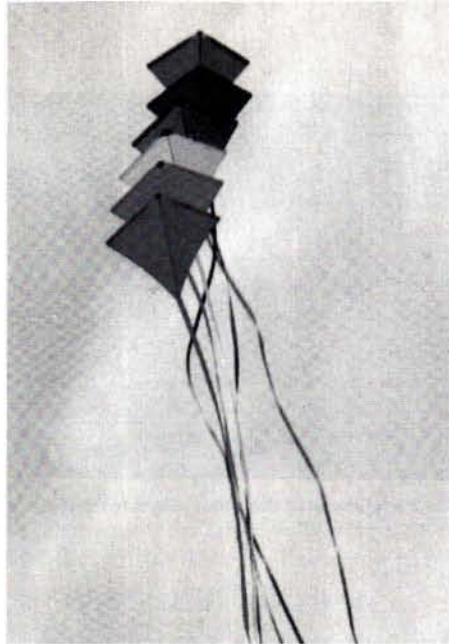
—Steve McKerrow

### RAINBOW TRAIN BY COAST KITES

## A stack for showing off

It doesn't matter how fancy you fly your radical trickster, or how precise you are with that big ol' team kite. If you want to gather a crowd, pop up a stack of long-tailed diamonds. You're a one-person kite festival!

Kitefliers should celebrate the continued availability of a number of well-established, stackable diamond stunters, including the Caribbean Kite Company's Cayman (the latest edition of the original Peter Powell), three sizes of Dyna-Kite, and the venerable Trlby series. (Sadly, the Hyperkites line has suspended business.)



An updated classic, the Rainbow six-pack with matching long tails.

We tested a modified version of the Rainbow Stunt Kite, produced by Coast Kites. The deceased Steve Edeiken introduced the Rainbow 20 years ago as a smaller, faster and more maneuverable flier than other stunters of the time, built especially to be flown in train. Made of ripstop nylon on aluminum spars, the kite featured an aluminum and steel nose that preset the wing dihedral, as well as a 25-foot tail.

On the latest Rainbows, the frame has been redesigned and lightened with pultruded carbon rods, now mounted to a plastic nose piece. Otherwise, the kite looks familiar, with the classic solid-color nylon sail, color-coordinated polyester pockets and folded hems. Since our tests, Coast Kites has also improved the linking of the stack with a continuous line system.

Inside the plastic tube in which the Rainbows are sold come six kites and tails, plus all necessary train lines, heavy-duty bridle and hardware, as well as 80-lb-test Dacron® polyester flying lines.

Construction quality is generally high, but the fabric cutouts for the bridle and train lines are hot-cut, not reinforced, and may fray after some air time. This does not affect performance, but struck us as a little unsightly.

Initial set-up time for the six-stack of Rainbows proved long; plan at least an hour to get your stack together. Fortunately, the included instructions are well written and feature decent illustrations. Once assembled, fliers might want to keep their stack together, because setting up six kites on a windy field is not the easiest task. Acquiring or making a bag capable of carrying the assembled six-pack would be a worthwhile investment.

We found we could launch the stack of

kites solo with relative ease, following the instructions. The technique involves staking out the flying lines to provide tension, then carefully stretching the kites apart to rest angled away from the wind, nose down on one leading edge. (Take care that no tails tangle with link lines, or each other.) Back on the controls, a gentle pull on the upwing side of the lead kite lifts the whole stack with military precision. We also were able to land and relaunch the stack with little difficulty, by flying low out to the edge of the window, where the kites would settle back down in dutiful fashion.

We flew in winds ranging from about 5 mph to 20-plus mph. At the low end, some work was required to keep the stack in the air. We were able to continue flying by keeping them moving, with pumping or "rowing" action on the lines.

Toward the higher end of their range, the Rainbows proved a handful, but still performed with predictable control. We found the stack to be capable of tight turns and almost square angles, and felt no great apprehension flying them on a busy beach.

The kites offered a fast, furious sight—six regimented diamonds with wildly corkscrewing tails, performing a kite show that is still among the most impressive.

—Jeff Burka

## OUR OBJECTIVE? TO BE OBJECTIVE

Our purpose in publishing kite reviews is to offer full and objective information about new kites, along with a touch of vicarious flying experience. To that end, here is what we live by in our reviews:

- *Kite Lines* and its writers have no interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, in any kite manufacturing business of any kind, anywhere.
- No advertising or business agreements with *Kite Lines* are part of any editorial considerations.
- Kite manufacturers are never shown reviews in advance, and we review only production models, not prototypes.
- All *Kite Lines* reviews are signed, denoting the authors' willingness to stand behind them. However, the opinions expressed combine the views of at least two experienced kitefliers, often more.

# A world of fighter kites

BY BOITRELLE/PETIT, PLUS  
NEW VOLUMES BY WRIGHT, OHASHI (5!), KURAHASHI & THE NFKA

## FIGHTERS AROUND THE WORLD Cerfs-Volants Traditionnels de Combat à Travers le Monde

By Karine Boitrelle and Ludovic Petit, (France, self-published, 1998), softcover, 42 pages, \$18.95

Although I love fighter kites, none of the practical books published so far on this subject have appealed to me enough to buy them. Philippe Gallot's book (*Fighter Kites*, now out of print) provides plans of his own design, as does Geoff Crumplin's work (*Not an Indian Fighter Kite*), while David Gomberg's title (*The Fighter Kite Book!*) focuses on flying techniques. But all fail to show the diversity of kite fighting games around the world.

Karine Boitrelle and Ludovic Petit, the latter one of the founders of the Manjha Club International, felt it was time to give a broader view of the fighter's world. Through its hundreds of members, the Manjha Club has been able to gather information from many countries. And although far from perfect, published with minimal means, and suffering from various editorial mistakes, this slim book is worth having on your bookshelf.

It provides accurate enough plans, construction tips and background information about 14 different fighters, principally those flown using glass-coated line, from Afghanistan, Bermuda, Brazil, Brunei, Chile, Korea, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan and Singapore.

Each kite is illustrated with a black and white photograph (the same photo appears on the cover in color) and a small plan, with metric measurements. These allow you to construct the kite to be as close as possible to an original. Text includes information about the materials, as well as flying techniques and local customs.



The making of an Indonesian fighter is described in every detail, with clear illustrations. This will give the beginner a basic training course that should provide the ability to build any other kind of similar diamond fighter kite described in the book.

General flying techniques are not described over more than a couple of pages, but this may be fine. In this matter nothing can replace practice in actual flying.

Even though self-published, the book could have benefitted from better illustrations and more attention to editing. The last sentences of pages 34 and 38 are not complete, the writing style is not wonderful and a few local names are misspelled, such as Pipas instead of pipa and Volantine instead of volantin.

Those who don't read French won't even notice, however, and should be happy enough with the plans.

Apart from the Brazilian fighter, which is dueled with razor blades, this book deals only with kites flown with abrasive line. It is intended for the "knights of the Manjha," and thus, unfortunately, you will not find anything about the many other and interesting forms of kite fighting games and their techniques.

There is nothing, for example, about Cuba, where kite fighting is said to be a much bigger thing than in Bermuda. Nor will you learn about practices in Thailand, the Philippines, or the many kite places in Japan other than Nagasaki. (Beyond the well-known Nagasaki hata and the rokkaku dueling kites, there are no less than five other kinds of fighter kite games performed in Japan.)

Thus this booklet is certainly not the comprehensive volume that many fighter enthusiasts desire. But for the time being it is the only one that attempts a wide presentation of fighters from around the world. Despite imperfections, it offers more data about traditional kites that fly with cutting line than previous publications, and will be of interest to all those who have not had the opportunity to obtain samples of these kites, nor learn the traditions attached to them.

—Pierre Fabre

## FIRST AID MANUAL Kite Flight: Theory & Practice

By Chris Wright (England, Middlesex University Press, 1998), softcover, 71 pages, \$19.95

This book combines stability theory with kiteflying lore. The theory is adequate and the suggestions of "what to do next" appear to be good advice.

The treatment of scaling assumes a constant wind, and correctly concludes that maximum stress is independent of size. The larger kite may be too heavy to fly. A much smaller kite would still be strong enough but is likely not to be sufficiently symmetrical.

The author contemplates—but does not recommend—a kite with two long narrow wings at front and rear, and two fins, also at front and rear. An airplane kite developed from this hint would probably do well.

If you are interested in why kites may not fly well, and what to do about it, you may want to have this book.

Compared to *The Tao of Kiteflying* by Harm van Veen, this work is not as polished. The treatment is more mathematical and is based on aerodynamic theory. It may be less attractive to the average kiteflier.

—Bill Bigge



## FIVE FROM OHASHI Easy Native Japanese Kites:

(Regions: 1. Hokkaido-Tohoku, 2. Kanto-Shinetsu-Hokuriku, 3. Tokai-Kinki, 4. Shikoku-Chugoku-Okinawa and 5. Kyushu) by Eiji Ohashi (Japan, Seibundo Shinkosha, 1998 and 1999), softcovers, 112 pages each, \$29.95 each



Ohashi has long been admired for his innovative kites but in this series of five books he devotes himself to documenting traditional designs from five regions in Japan. Other

## WHAT'S NEW: BOOKS

[Continued]

fine books from this country have tackled this subject, but Ohashi's volumes show that the topic was anything but exhausted. Perhaps even Ohashi is not yet finished! But the pure quantity of kites in these books is dazzling: from 36 to 42 per book, and none is a duplicate! It's amazing how many ways you can work the bones on these kites. The benefits of bamboo were never more apparent.

The craftsmanship in the kites is matched by the craftsmanship in the books themselves. The drawings, apparently done entirely by hand, are fastidious to a fault. Each book opens with a section of color photos which, though small, are sharp and attractive. They are followed by a well-illustrated chapter, the same in each book, on tools and techniques. Last and most are the pages of plans. A good kitemaker could glean nearly everything needed just from the careful illustrations and full metric dimensions.

We hesitate to review a work written in a language in which we are not fluent, and we cannot comment on literary aspects. But the strengths of these books break the language barrier with as much assurance as do kites themselves. —Valerie Govig

### WORKSHOP-INSPIRED HELP

## Japanese Kites: Concepts & Construction



By Dan Kurahashi (Canada, self-published, 1999), softcover, 74 pages, \$14.95

The author of this homemade workbook began leading a class in Japanese kitemaking at the annual Fort Worden Kite Conference near Port Townsend, Washington in 1984. He published the first edition for participants to take home in 1990, and it has been evolving ever since, with improved editions brought out periodically to meet demand.

Anyone interested in making, or just studying, some of the basic traditional kite forms of Japan would do well with this book as a starting point. The kites include the rokkaku, sode, Suruga, buka, and Shirone (in a manageable mini version), plus general instructions on the many rectangular kites, with advice on how to adapt the building techniques.

Especially good is the section on working with bamboo, and the author also offers his own recipe for a starch paste that works well with washi, the traditional Japanese handmade paper.

Bridling details could be much clearer in some cases, some diagrams are confusing (such as the two-page spread on a kite-train kite) and the book offers little direction on painting the kites.

In addition to Japanese kites, the book presents Japanese-inspired designs for an Eddy, two variations of a Leland Toy bird, a shield and a Hornbeam sled, as well as a heat-sealed snowflake (six-pointed facet) kite and a number of mini kites.

Other sections include calculations for scientifically designing kites to specific wind conditions, instructions for making kite trains, and a collection of the folk stories behind many of the often fierce faces seen on traditional kites. —Steve McKerrow

### ENTHUSIASTIC, ENIGMATIC

## Fighters: North American Single Line Sport Kites

The NFKA (Northwest Fighter Kite Association) Journal 2000 Project (USA, self-published, 1999), softcover, 372 pages, \$90.00 "donation" to the NFKA.



Arriving almost at press time, this publication compiled by some of the most avid fighter fliers in the country turns out to challenge convention—and defy description.

In the first place, it was available in small numbers (100 copies) only to readers who submitted prepaid orders at a steep price, so we are not certain our readers will benefit much from a review. In addition, the book was self-published in a bewildering assortment—and wildly varying quality—of graphics, typefaces, and writing styles. Some of its plans appear as good as we have seen anywhere; others seem to have barely progressed past the sketch-on-a-napkin stage. Some of the writing is thoughtful and perceptive; some reads like doodles in the margins.

Divided into sections contributed by 23 individuals, each largely unedited, the book inevitably includes much that is redundant and will plunge grammarians into despair.

But leafing through its non-numbered, non-indexed, and sometimes totally blank pages for even a short time turns up much

practical, obviously practiced advice. And this not only covers making and flying fighters, but also creatively expresses the rich experiences to be had with these tiny scraps of cloth and paper.

The book's bibliography of fighter kite references is unquestionably the most complete we have seen in print: 130 entries (compiled by Gordon Schmidt) that include even obscure mentions in familiar books and articles in periodicals outside the kite field.

On the whole, the book's own statement of purpose, early on, is pretty accurate:

... This is neither a "HOWTO" nor a coffee-table book. We wish this book be read as an anthology; as individual, often serendipitous, unedited presentations of exploration, philosophies, prejudices and errant thought covering many of the elements of flying and building fighter kites....

Does printing such a disclaimer thus lift the usual obligations of publication, such as coherent organization and editing? In the commercial world, certainly not. This is not a volume that would find a market in the book world, even in the small world of kite titles.

Yet it does not seek to do so. Rather, it serves more as a project of shared enthusiasm. As such, we enjoyed it, quirks and all. But we were unhappy with the premise. Shouldn't the goal of publication be to disseminate information as widely as possible, rather than reserving it to a small group?

—Steve McKerrow

## Book News & Forecasts

Joy! The beloved *Penguin Book of Kites* by David Pelham will be republished!

After three years out of print, "The Bible" is coming back, perhaps as soon as January 2000. We hear revisions will be minor. (Of course, we expect to have it in the Kite Lines Bookstore.) ♦ Likewise, Orlando T. D. Ongkingco's booklet, *Kites Asia: Philippine Kites* should be here any day (see comments by Pierre Fabre in his article on page 34). ♦ *Tako Age (Kite Flying)* by Ms. Noriko Baba has just come to our attention. It's a 32-page hardcover of charcoal drawings and a bit of Japanese text, a children's book with artistry. ♦ We rarely speak of children's books, but *Shibumi and the Kitemaker* by Mercer Mayer is an appealing new fable with beautiful illustrations.

♦ On occasion we think it's fair to warn you of "foolers," books with "kite" in the title that are not really about kites. For example, *Kite Strings of the Southern Cross: A Woman's Travel Odyssey* by Laurie Gough. (It's a good book, but...) —Valerie Govig

# “Manjha debate continues: hazard...

OR BLESSING? OUR READERS WEIGH IN

## WHY INTERRUPT THE FUN?

Those of us who get together on a Sunday afternoon for one-to-one “top/bottom” 10-second fights will not dream of cutting the other guy’s line. For one thing it would interrupt the fun. It is bad enough when a kite grounds or the line gets tangled up. It completely disrupts the concentration.

With respect to the exposure to danger and liability, I agree with the article and I could add another half-dozen hazards. I do not need it. I am having more than enough fun with line touching “fights.”

The single line sport kite—traditionally known as fighter kite—is rapidly growing in popularity and versatility all over the country, while there is hardly anybody suggesting the use of cutting line.

—Nelson Borelli  
Chicago, Illinois

## WHY LIMIT THE EXPERIENCE?

Yes, yes, yes! Not only do manjha and international kite festivals mix, they can integrate seamlessly and provide a richer kite experience both for fliers and spectators. This is precisely what we have been doing at the Desert Kite Festival in India for the last three years. We have had fliers from all over the world participate and no one lost a kite yet, nor has anyone been injured. To me, that is the biggest achievement of the festival, the amalgamation of the Indian fighter kite tradition with the more contemporary developments of the sport in the West.

I find this American paranoia about manjha difficult to comprehend. Sure, undisciplined flying with manjha can cause a lot of heartburn at festivals and could even be dangerous. But so could traction! A couple kids got hurt at Dieppe when

some guys doing jumps with parafoils slammed into them, but I don’t see anyone clamoring to ban parafoils or traction kites from festivals.

Manjha and fighter kites have been around for a long, long time in many parts of the world and any kitefliers or festival organizers who seek to ban manjha are only limiting the kite experience for fliers and spectators alike, being unnecessarily parochial in their approach. The answer lies not in banning manjha from festivals but in providing a time and place where it can be demonstrated safely. It is a fine sporting kite tradition and if both fliers and festival organizers exercise discipline and educate the public about the dos and don’ts, there is no reason why manjha and international kite festivals should be mutually exclusive.

—Ajay Prakash  
Mumbai, India

# Chinese Kites

Discover a colorful assortment of lifelike and fantastic flying creatures; from butterflies to dragonflies, birds to frogs... even the rare Chinese dragon kites. Great Winds Kite Company offers Chinese kites carefully chosen for quality as well as design.

All are made of hand painted silk on detailed frames of shaped bamboo – traditional Chinese kitebuilding methods passed down through generations of kitemakers.

Many can be disassembled and come in boxes for easy transport and storage. As fliers, some Chinese kites are stable, others a bit animated – all are decorative and enchanting!

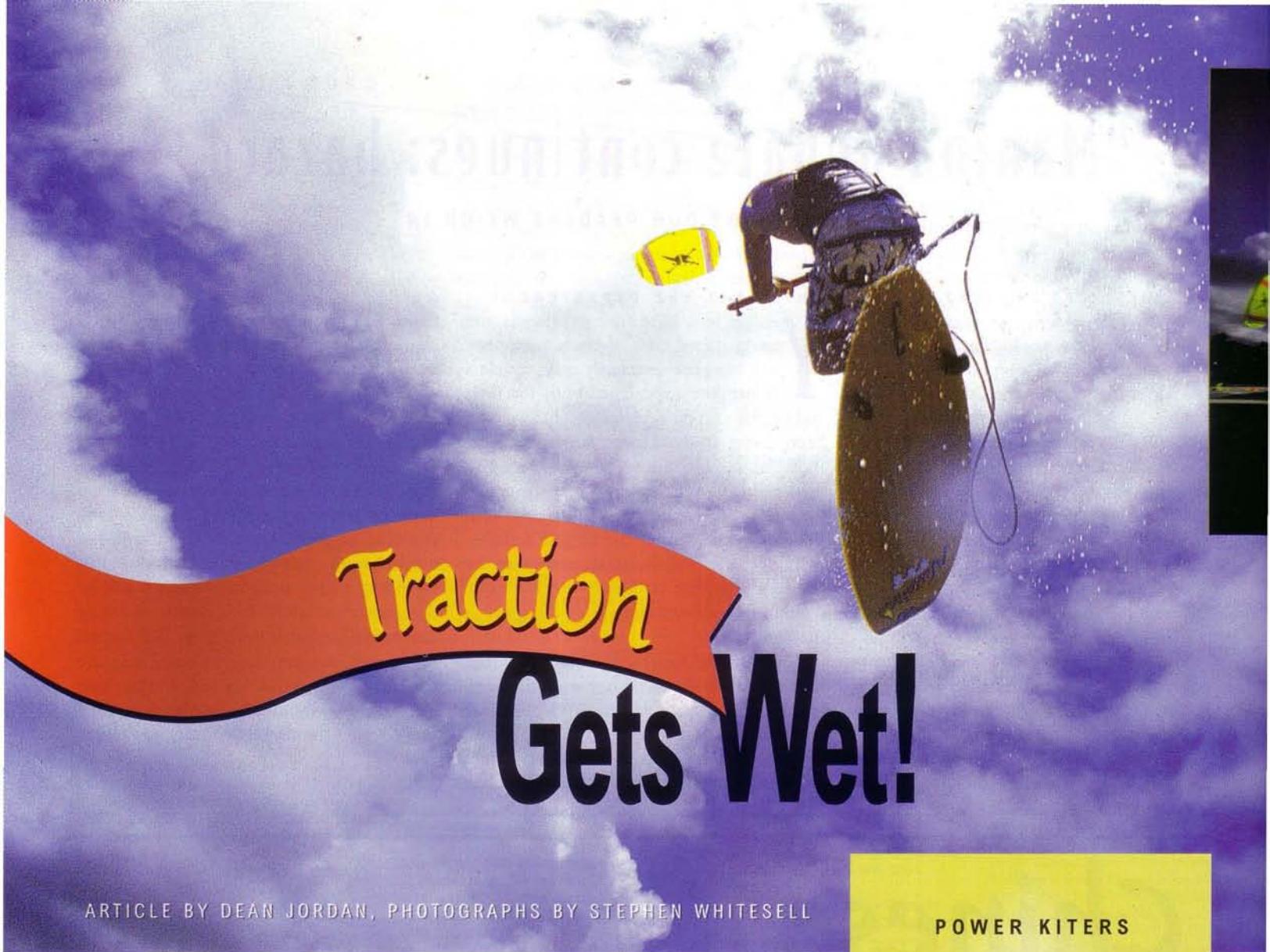
Available at fine kite shops.



**Great Winds Kite Co.**

402 Occidental Avenue South  
Seattle, Washington 98104  
206-624-6886

©1995



# Traction

# Gets Wet!

ARTICLE BY DEAN JORDAN, PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHEN WHITESELL

**P**eople have been playing with kite power on the water for a long time. But at last technology has caught up with the concept, producing a worldwide explosion in the sport known as kiteboarding.

The first time I launched a quad kite and got up on one of the new boards, at the Wildwood International Kite Festival in New Jersey this year, it just blew my mind. You're not being pulled through the water, you're being pulled up and onto the board and accelerating along with your kite. The sense of freedom is thrilling, there is no boat or mast in front of you and you're just cruising across the water!

If you can fly a control line kite and walk, you can learn to kiteboard. Balance skills are required but if you have them the learning curve is not as steep as for windsurfing. And though the consensus is that it's not as easy and may take more wind than buggying, kiteboarding needs less wind than conventional windsurfing. So if the

wind is honking, and the beach is too crowded to risk buggying, you can kiteboard off the beach.

Sophisticated kites with a wider power window and lighter, surfboard-style kiteboards combine to overcome kite sailing's biggest challenge. We can now effectively sail to windward (toward the wind).

Competitions have sprung up all over the world, too. For example, in August at Dunkerque, France, 24 participants competed in Flysurf Dunkerque, although light wind hampered the event. The King of the Air competition in Maui, Hawaii (October 17-23) offered \$10,000 in prize money for events that featured Big Air (highest/ longest), Wavejumping and Long Distance contests.

The sport is also now the subject of a pair of new magazines: *Kiteboarding*, published in Winter Park, Florida, and the French-language *Kitesurf*, published in Paris, France. Each has launched a premiere issue this fall.

**POWER KITERS  
AROUND THE WORLD  
ARE SAILING AWAY  
FROM THE BEACH  
IN A RAPIDLY  
DEVELOPING SPORT**

## Is the mainstream kite community paying attention?

We kilters may be behind the curve. Although some prominent kite people are enthusiastic about the activity—including Andy Preston of England, Jeff Howard of Oklahoma, Lee Sedgwick of Pennsylvania, and Fritz Gramkowski and Steve Bateman of California—the real pump is coming from outside the kiting community. Participants in sailboarding, surfing and water skiing



A board, a kite, and wind—the essential elements of kiteboarding. The Naish Sails system employs a water launchable two-line kite with control bar—as seen, above, with Don Montaque and, left and below, Robby Naish, both ripping the waters of Kailua Bay in Hawaii. Other kiteboarders use quad-line kites, too.

## Kiteboarding FAQ (frequently asked questions)

**WHAT IS IT?** — Also called kitesurfing, kiteskiing, and flysurfing, the rapidly evolving sport employs kites to pull the participant over the water aboard any of several styles of boards or water skis.

**WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?** — Confident kiteflying is paramount, plus balance, strength and swimming ability. It helps to have experience in other balance sports, such as windsurfing, wakeboarding, snowboarding and even skateboarding.

**WHAT KIND OF KITES ARE USED?** — Kitefliers experienced in buggying, skiing and skating have adapted their power kites, usually quad-line soft foils. But others coming into the sport from sailboarding and other established on-the-water activities are using specially-designed kites with inflated sections, designed for

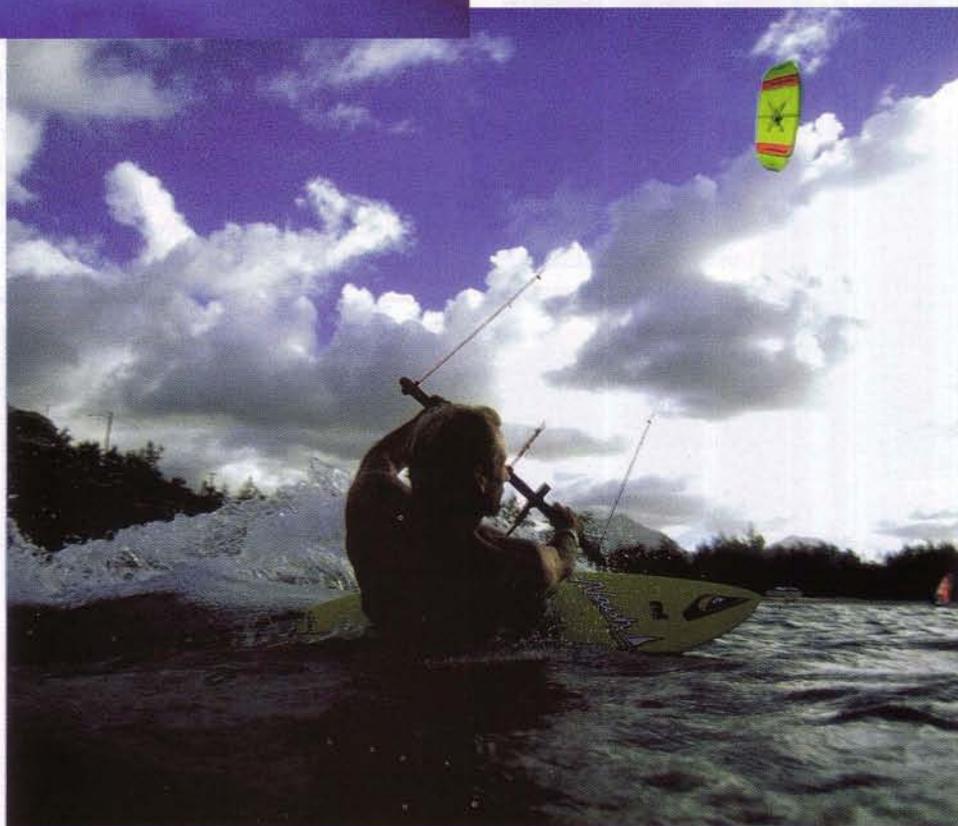
launching or recovering from the water.

**IS IT DANGEROUS?** — Minimum safety requirements include a flotation device, a harness and a helmet. If you collapse your kite on the water far from shore, you face a long swim. If you seek to leave the surface of the water temporarily—"getting big air"—you could slam back down and get hit in the head by your board.

**WHAT DOES IT COST?** — From scratch, an entry level kiteboarder will need to spend \$1,000 to \$1,500. Power kiters who have flying gear can add a board and assorted accessories for perhaps \$500.

**WHERE DO I GET GEAR?** — Check your nearest windsurfing shop, for these have been the first places to market equipment. Few kite shops have done so, but activity is increasing. The Internet also is a good resource. (See our list of Web sites elsewhere.)

**WHERE CAN I DO IT?** — Any open expanse of water where one could go windsurfing. But stay away from beaches crowded with swimmers.



have discovered the thrill of kite power. In fact, the biggest buzz at the leading water sports trade show, the Surf Expo in Orlando, Florida (September 24-26) was about kiteboarding.

Among these crossover enthusiasts are champion wakeboarder Lou Wainman, originally from Winter Park, Florida, and well-known board sailors Robby Naish and Marcus "Flash" Austin, both in Hawaii, who have learned they can go higher and faster with kites.

Naish says he was drawn in the new direction at least in part through flying kites.

"I used to fly Skynasours and then moved on to Flexis [Flexifoils] and SkyTigers when the winds were too light for windsurfing. It's a good training aid," says the 36-year-old windsurfer. But he really got interested when he saw a friend surfing with a Wipicat, one of the earliest kites designed for water traction. (Originally used with an inflatable catamaran, the kite is now called the Wipika kite, and *Kite Lines* profiled inventors Bruno and Dominique Legaignoux in Spring-Summer, 1994.) →

"Once the boards started working well and we could see it was not a one-way trip, I became pretty excited," says Naish. "This is the most complementary sport, bringing the performance level of windsurfing in high wind to flat water, and also to wakeboarding, which is easily blown out by wind."

Naish Sails Hawaii, based in Maui, is among the aggressive firms that have joined such longer-established enterprises as Kiteski of Hood River, Oregon, Wipika of France and Peter Lynn in New Zealand at the forefront of the fast-developing field.

Lynn, known for his huge festival kites as well as buggies and power kites, has pursued kite sailing as his true passion for the last 20 years. He has been experimenting with boats, boards, hulls, trimarans, catamarans, hydrofoils, and, at the moment, a kiteboard that you ride seated, like a go-cart!

Other top established power kite manufacturers, such as Active People, Cobra Kites, Concept Air, Flexifoil and JoJo, are also targeting the water crowd. But most are not yet marketing to kite shops, selling instead to established surf shops and windsurfing shops.

## Hit the water!

For me, the strongest attraction of kiteboarding is the learning curve. Trying to master windsurfing on a long board was one of the hardest things I ever learned. Working that mast and sail seemed completely counterintuitive. But I got up the first time I tried a kiteboard.

Kiteboarding is cheaper than windsurfing, way cheaper than wakeboarding or waterskiing—you need a boat for those sports!—and about the same cost as kite bugging.

Expect to pay from \$350 to \$950 for a board. For varying wind conditions, you will also end up needing several kites, which range in price from

\$180 to \$1,200. Additional accessories include a quick-release harness, personal flotation device, helmet and (for colder waters) a wetsuit.

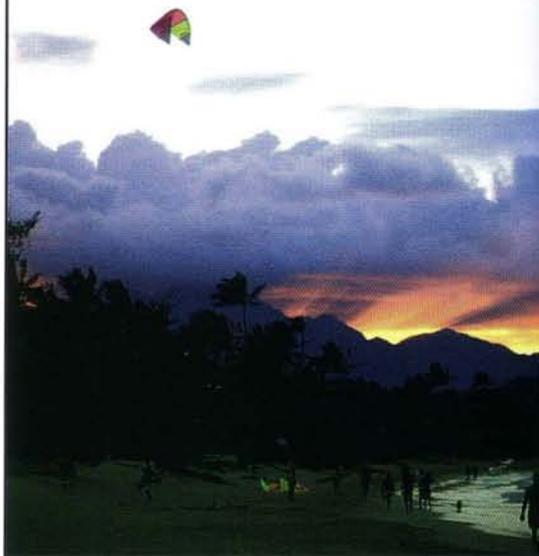
### KITE BOARDS

In theory, any board you could stay on top of will work, such as an old surfboard or sailboard. But specifically designed kitesurf boards are somewhat larger than wakeboards and considerably smaller than sailboards. You also need footstraps.

A second category of board now being used with kites is an adaptation of the wakeboard—shorter than the surfboard style and designed to reverse

**ACCOMPLISHED  
JUMPERS MAY  
REACH 20 TO 30  
FEET HIGH OR MORE  
AND COVER AS MUCH  
AS 100 FEET HORIZONTALLY.**

## In the beginning...



**H**ow old is the use of kites to provide power to move across the water? For many years *Kite Lines* has followed the development of kite traction on both land and water. (See our Winter, 1992-93 issue, for a chronology.) Like most things involving kite pursuits, it only seems new.

For example, anthropologists theorize the ancient Maoris and Polynesians traveled downwind in boats using leaf kites. In Samoa, kites were documented being used to propel canoes in the 1700s. And in the 17th century, kites were sometimes used to help maneuver large sailing ships out of wind-obstructed harbors (as noted in the 1992 publication, *Buggies Boats & Peels*, by Peter Lynn of New Zealand).



Above, Chris Gilbert shows how to deep water start. Note quad-line handles. Right, Andy Preston's quick release rig.



PHOTOS AT LEFT: COURTESY DEAN JORDAN

In addition to his electrical kite experiments, Benjamin Franklin once pulled himself across a pond with a kite, lying on his back. George Pocock, who in 1826 patented the legendary kite-powered carriage, the *char volant*, also used kites to sail a two-masted boat back and forth across the Mersey River at Liverpool, England. And kite pioneer Samuel Franklin Cody crossed the English Channel in 1903 in a canoe drawn by kites.

Jump ahead to the modern era, before the boom in kiteboarding, and we find:

■ Gordon Gillett sailing around Florida's Biscayne Bay in 1975 behind four 10-foot delta kites.

■ Keith Stewart duplicating the across-the-English-Channel feat in 1977 in a catamaran pulled by six Gillett deltas.

■ Ian Day using a 15-stack of Flexifoil Super 10s (dubbed Jacob's Ladder) to set successive speed records in England in a 20-foot catamaran in the 1980s.

■ Dan Eisaman crossing four of the five Great Lakes (Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario) in an eight-foot inflatable raft pulled by a 16-square-foot Flow Form kite, in 1987 and 1988.

■ Cory Roeseler entering the Weymouth Speed Trials in England in 1988, going 19.89 knots (about 23 mph), then in 1989 beating Robby Naish in the Columbia River Blowout Race and, with his father Billy, starting the Kiteski company.

■ Bruno and Dominique Legaignoux playing with the idea of high-speed sailing in the 1980s, culminating in the invention of the Wipicat wing and inflatable catamaran system in 1989, beginning production in 1993

Now in the late 1990s, they are calling it kiteboarding. But the impulse to skim the waves with kites has been around a long, long time.

direction, like a snowboard on the slopes or skateboard on a ramp.

In addition, one of the older kite power-on-water systems is the Kiteski, pioneered by Billy and Cory Roeseler with a kite modeled after the Skip Parks-designed Banshee. On the Kiteski, one rides with one foot in front of the other, as on a single slalom ski, but the board is wider than a waterski and cut differently. The system also makes use of an ingenious control bar with a line reel assembly.

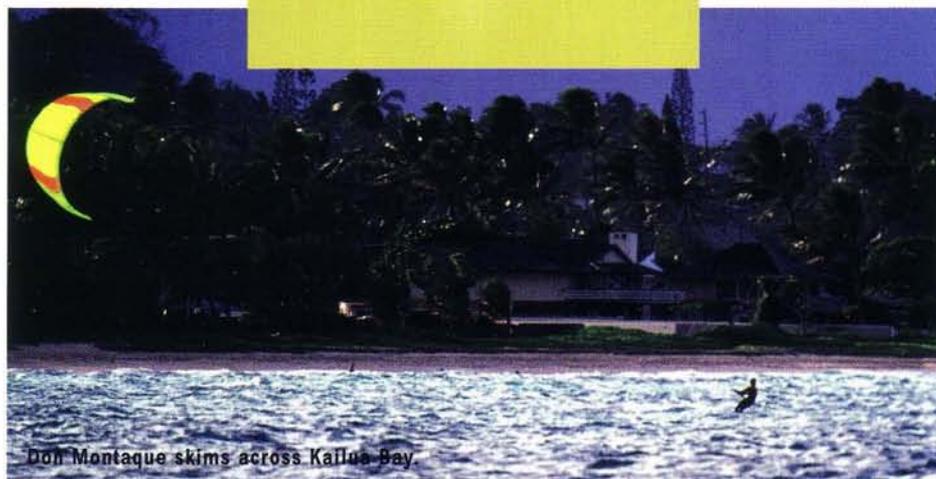
Kiteboards always have footstraps or booties, giving not only steering control through edging of the boards, but also enabling one of the spectacular attractions of

kite power: getting "big air" by leaving the surface. Accomplished jumpers may reach 20 to 30 feet high or more and cover as much as 100 feet horizontally.

"In windsurfing, the most radical jumpers can only do three flips, at the most. With kiteboarding, they are already doing five!" says Chris Gilbert, of Naish Hawaii. He predicts, "This is going to be a huge spectator sport. It's a high tech sport in a high tech world, and it's only going to get better."

Among the manufacturers of kite boards are longtime sailboard leader Bic in France, as well as Flexifoil in England, F-One of France, Cabrinha in Hawaii, Naish Sails Hawaii, Peter Lynn in New

**EXPERIENCED  
KITEFLIERS PUT UP  
THEIR KITES ON THE  
BEACH, PARK THEM  
AT THE TOP OF THE  
WINDOW, STEP ONTO  
THEIR BOARDS IN  
SHALLOW WATER  
AND GO!**



Don Montague skims across Kailua Bay.

Zealand, Active People of Canada, and Jimmy Lewis of Hawaii.

#### KITES & LINES

Kites used in kiteboarding are generally larger than we use for buggying, and lines should be at least twice as strong: a minimum of 300-lb-test. Kitesurfers also tend to use longer lines, up to about 100 feet with quad-line kites and 130 to 150 feet with dual-line kites.

Quad-line kites give superior performance, although many kiteboarders in high-wind areas use dual-line. Control systems include conventional handles and harness systems—quick-release harnesses are vital in this sport—and may include control bars. At least one maker, Kiteski, includes a built-in line retrieval device.

Kites need to be matched to the board being used and the wind strength. If underpowered, you don't go anywhere. If overpowered, the kite drags you downwind or, worse yet, snatches you off the board.

Until very recently, kites used for kiteboard activities have broken down into two general styles:

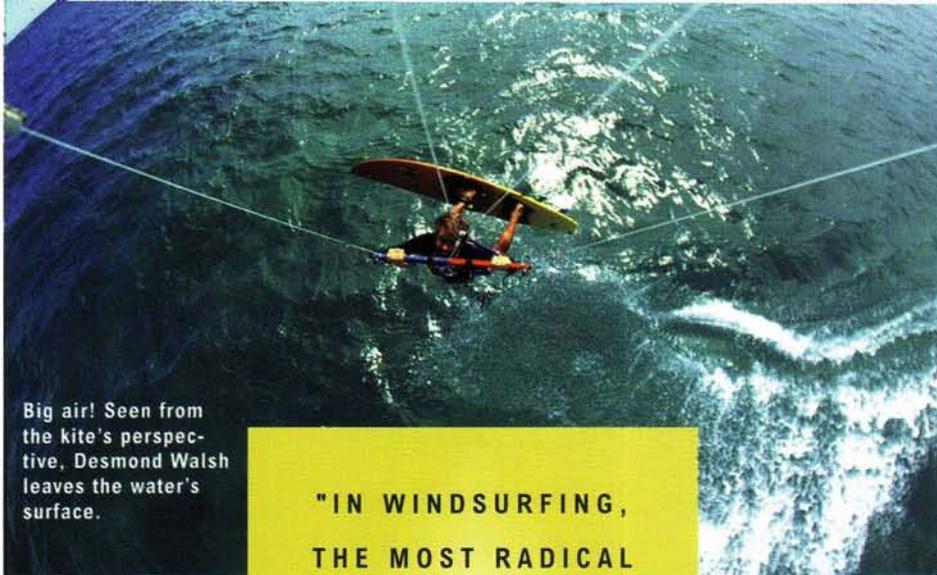
■ Traditional ram-air foils, which generally cannot be relaunched if they crash into the water. Traction kites in this category that are familiar to buggiers, inline skaters and skiers include the Quadrifoil, Peel, SkyTiger, Concept Air, Flexifoil and JoJo lines. New marine-oriented designs include those from F-One in France and

the KiteSurfer X and KiteSurfer Aqua X kites from Active People.

■ Inflatable-spar wings, designed to float on the surface long enough to permit a relaunch. In these kites, an inflatable tube comprises the leading edge and air-filled "struts" provide stiffness. Brand names include the Wipika, Naish and Seasmik kites (the latter made in France).

Those who come into this sport from the windsurfing realm tend to favor the inflatable style. But buggiers and other experienced kitefliers are adept at keeping their foils aloft and thus less concerned about water launches. They put up their kites on the beach, park them at the top of the window, step onto their boards in shallow water and go!

Now a new family of hybrid style kites has also begun to emerge:



Big air! Seen from the kite's perspective, Desmond Walsh leaves the water's surface.

**"IN WINDSURFING,  
THE MOST RADICAL  
JUMPERS CAN ONLY  
DO THREE FLIPS, AT  
THE MOST. WITH  
KITEBOARDING,  
THEY ARE ALREADY  
DOING FIVE!"  
—CHRIS GILBERT.**

■ The Peter Lynn C-Quad is neither soft nor framed, but features a single skin with flexible stiffeners. It goes very high upwind and can be launched from the water with some practice. (See our review, page 18.)

■ Flexifoil International, whose sparred foils were among the first used for traction activities, has developed a prototype Aqua-Blade, which was showcased at the Orlando Surf Expo under a cloak of secrecy inside a closed booth.

#### ACCESSORIES & SAFETY GEAR

A personal flotation device is a vital precaution, and so is a harness and a helmet. In cooler water, a wetsuit is a wise investment.

Also essential is a surf leash, such as wave surfers use to remain loosely connected to their boards. It should be at least 5/16-inch-thick and slightly longer than a leash used for surfing, say about eight feet.

## Issues & challenges

As with other physical sports, kiteboarding faces the challenge of establishing an image in the public mind that will allow it to grow.

"We certainly want to avoid the label of 'extreme' with this sport. Look at how that label killed the growth in windsurfing and snowboarding. Once you slap that label on it, it's hard to change the image," says Rick Naish of Naish Sails Hawaii, the father of kiteboarding promoter Robby.

While it is true this is a sport that many

people can undertake successfully, labeling it "extreme" because of the radical potential could have far-reaching consequences. Self-policing is important to prevent kooks from taking the sport away. Already some kitesurfers have caused problems by charging through the surf line in Hawaii. This is not good. We

must look out for ourselves and promote the perception of safety and fun.

Here are some final tips for the non-extreme pursuit of kiteboarding

■ Be aware of where you are at all times, and don't go out without someone knowing where you are.

■ Stay close to shore when learning, and do not try to learn in a wind that will carry you offshore. (In any case, take the kite bag with you. If you do need to swim in, it is easier with the kite in the bag than ballooned around you in the water.)

■ Avoid areas where fishermen, swimmers and other water lovers are pursuing their favorite activities.

■ Talk to other kitesurfers positively about safety and public image.

Kiteboarding is developing so fast it is hard to keep up. Writing an article like this itself is an exercise in chasing moving targets. No doubt by the time you read this there will be new equipment, new techniques, new people and new sources.

So while the urge to be pulled along by a kite has been with us for a while, the use of high-tech materials and techniques makes kiteboarding a sport for the new millennium. Today should be a fantastic time for kiting in general, as more people

## Surfing the Web

To keep up with kiteboarding, the Internet offers a variety of resources. We have compiled a list of useful web sites, many of which have links to new or additional sites not here. Where the site's name does not obviously identify it, we offer a brief summary.

#### PRODUCT MANUFACTURERS / DISTRIBUTORS

- [www.axelair.com](http://www.axelair.com)—an online shop in France
- [www.cobrakite.com](http://www.cobrakite.com)—distributors of Flexifoil and SkyTiger kites
- [www.cabrinha.com](http://www.cabrinha.com)—board maker
- [www.conceptair.com](http://www.conceptair.com)
- [www.flexifoil.com](http://www.flexifoil.com)
- [www.flugsysteme.de](http://www.flugsysteme.de)—maker of JoJo kites; site in German language
- [www.kiteskiworld.com](http://www.kiteskiworld.com)
- [www.kitesurf.com](http://www.kitesurf.com)—F-One kites & boards
- [www.hawaiianproline.com](http://www.hawaiianproline.com)—Wipika kites and other boards and accessories
- [www.kitesurfing.com](http://www.kitesurfing.com)
- [www.naishsails.com](http://www.naishsails.com)
- [www.obrien.com](http://www.obrien.com)—wakeboard maker
- [www.peterlynnkites.co.nz](http://www.peterlynnkites.co.nz)
- [www.seasmik.com](http://www.seasmik.com)
- [www.quadrifoil.com](http://www.quadrifoil.com)
- [www.wipika.com](http://www.wipika.com)

#### INTEREST GROUPS, INDIVIDUALS, ETC.

- [dmoz.org/Sports/Kitesailing](http://dmoz.org/Sports/Kitesailing)—the most extensive list of links we have found
- [www.worldwindsurf.com](http://www.worldwindsurf.com)—a wide-ranging site, with many links and a search engine, maintained by the Gorge Wind Guide Service in Oregon
- [www.fdujardin.claranet.fr/flyit.htm](http://www.fdujardin.claranet.fr/flyit.htm)—homemade introductory site in France, with some English
- [godset.dk/kiteski/index.htm](http://godset.dk/kiteski/index.htm)—a friendly, helpful site by Rolf Østergaard
- [www.kitesurfer.8m.com](http://www.kitesurfer.8m.com)—French language site
- [torpw1.netcom.ca/~hungvu/kiteboarding.htm](http://torpw1.netcom.ca/~hungvu/kiteboarding.htm)—an online kiteboarding school, a great introduction
- [www.swisskitesailingnews.home.dhs.org](http://www.swisskitesailingnews.home.dhs.org)—wide-ranging site with links

than ever look at kites in a completely different light. Everyone in kiting stands to gain indirectly. And many individuals will experience directly that it's a good time to get your feet wet.

*DEAN JORDAN has been manufacturing well-regarded dual-line sport kites in Florida as Jordan Air Kites since 1987. He has been chairman of the AKA traction committee and is sponsored by Quadrifoil, Barz Sunglasses, Gath Helmets, and Gul Wetsuits.*

The team from Yokaichi, Japan here successfully flies a smaller version of its 40' x 43' kite (the full-size kite was seized by unfor-giving winds). Inset: Yokaichi team members assemble their giant. It is a tradition for the children of Yokaichi to write their wishes on labels, called *negafuda*, which are pasted to the back of the kite and carried aloft to the gods. Children from schools in and around Dieppe were invited to do the same.



## New sightings at Dieppe '98

THE FAMILY REUNION HAD WIND & RAIN—& MUCH TO SEE

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY PIERRE FABRE

Despite less funding and less sunshine than the previous edition, the biennial Dieppe International Kite Festival for 1998 (September 5–13) had so many participants from so many different countries that even the most well-traveled kitesflier could find many new things to see and great people from whom to learn.

In fact, the mad wind and showers of the final weekend presented the opportunity to take a closer look at the kites exhibited in the long line of display booths, one for each country represented.

Dieppe may not be the festival of everyone's dreams, because each kitesflier has different expectations. But it succeeds as a great family gathering—and for a very, very large family, indeed.

### ACCLAIM FOR JAPAN

Following the observance of Japan Year celebrations in France (March 1997 to March 1998), the Dieppe organization arranged for the arrival of a giant kite from the Land of the Rising Sun: a Yokaichi o-dako, measuring no less than 43 feet x 40 feet! Special transport by sea and trailer was planned long in advance to assure safe transport to

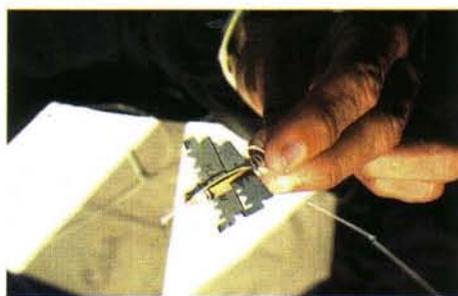
Normandy of the four-story-high kite. To my knowledge, this was the first time so large a traditional kite was given the opportunity to fly outside Japan.

Sadly, the winds were still wild when the big kite was supposed to fly, on the final weekend. Threatening showers also made it

difficult to judge when to unroll and assemble the kite, made entirely of washi hand-made paper and bamboo spars.

The Yokaichi team tried three times to fly the monster. The kite did not really get airborne the first two attempts, but broke a few bamboo bones, which the team repaired





Left, Policarpo Lopez Perez from Cuba holds his *papaguapo* (Cuban fighter kite). The kind of lethal weapon used by Cuban kite fighters is called *cuchilla*, a razor blade device, and up to five of them can be attached along the tail of the kite. Although this form of combat is common in the Antilles, it is more popular in Cuba than anywhere else.

on the spot. The third attempt started well, with much applause as the kite quickly gained altitude. Yet the previous repairs had left the kite slightly unevenly bowed, and unforgiving winds seized the imperfection to send the kite down for a final spectacular crash dive.

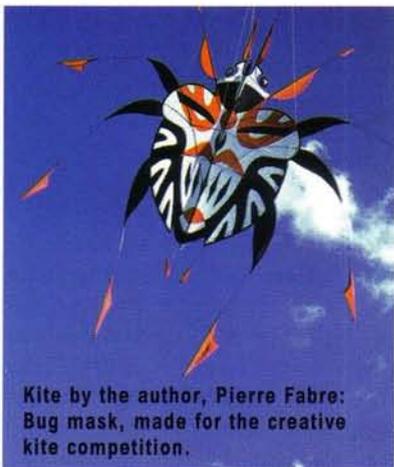
Thus the Japanese achieved a half-success. They kept apologizing, yet honor was saved for making an impressive performance. They also had to contend with dozens of foreign, non-Japanese-speaking helpers—all true kitefliers, to be sure, yet none having ever handled such a monster.

Another Japanese team, Aftershock from Nagoya, competed in the contemporary kite realm, winning much notice for narrowly defeating the *Kéops* and *Lung Ta* teams from France in the World Cup stunt kite championships, held on the southern end of the long Dieppe sea front.

Festival organizers included more sport kiting this year, seeking to widen the Dieppe audience and draw more attention from the media. In addition to this major competition, the festival included demonstrations of kite surfing, performed on a furious sea by Flexifoil's best fliers.

#### CROSSING LINES

Another World Cup competition took place at the other end of the sea front, closer to Dieppe's ferry harbor,



Kite by the author, Pierre Fabre: Bug mask, made for the creative kite competition.

but with far less attention: the kite fighting tournament, organized by Manjha Club International.

About 80 sharp adepts of the glass-coated line came from 15 different countries, using their kite cultures' specific gear, thus affording comparative evaluation of combat techniques and the strength of cutting lines.

In the end, Lie Fie Kiat of Indonesia, better known as Akiat from Bandung, won the last cut over Frenchman Philippe Revel. Ludovic Petit, president of Manjha Club, said that Akiat's skills surpassed those of any flier he knows. The Indonesian did not lose a single fight. Yet with so many keen specialists from Korea, India and Hong Kong, it was certainly unexpected to also see a Westerner (Revel) hoist himself to the final level of the contest.

After the official fighter kite competition, Herman Benjamins, a well-known competitor from Holland, demonstrated an electric-powered rewinding system that he claimed allowed him to run his line faster than any opponent—a humorous response to the superfast reels of the Hong Kong fliers (see *Kite Lines*, Fall-Winter 1996). It was quite well designed and looked impressive, but did not do so well!

Luis Santibane Reyes and Guido Ubilla, newcomers to the Dieppe scene, brought their own reel design from Chile. Called a *charetta*, the design of the cylindrical wooden reel has unique characteristics.

The handle carrying a ball bearing is set on an axis inside the barrel itself, in order to provide the best balance.

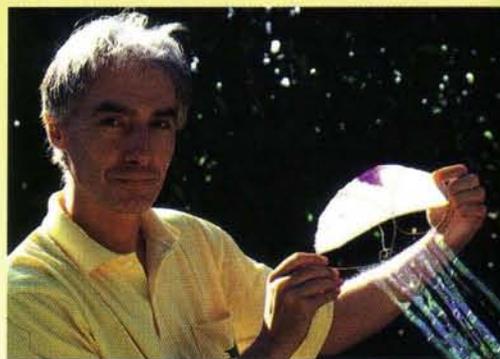
## Balance without symmetry

A kite artist has to be much more than a painter who uses a kite as one would a canvas. A true kite artist should be very aware of all the potential creative means which a kite can offer—shape, design, color, graphics, painting, kinetics—and use them in an original way, while never forgetting this artwork will be an airborne object.

Certainly Frenchman Philippe Revel belongs to this category for his refined creative kites, creations that do not look like anything we have seen before.

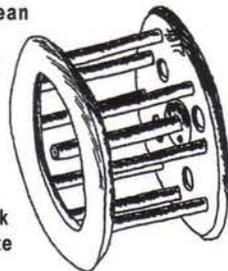
Revel cleverly plays with texture effects, drawing rhythms from contrasts, such as balance and asymmetry, or roughness and precision. He makes the framework of his kites an expressive part of the design, running finely carved bones of Japanese smoked bamboo asymmetrically on both sides of a translucent paper sail.

What a simple yet mind-blowing idea!



Philippe Revel holds one of his translucent dyed washi kites.

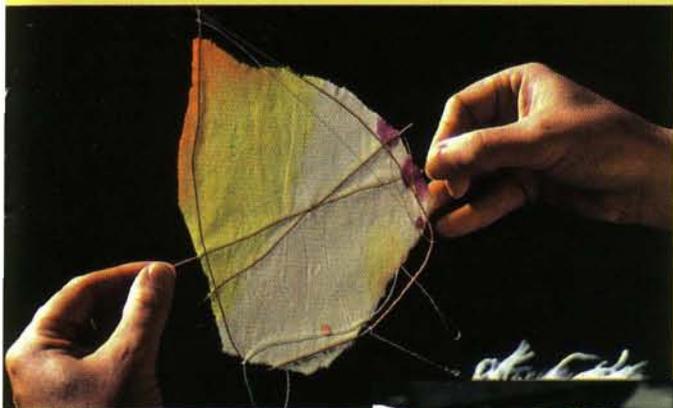
This sketch of the Chilean *charetta*, minus flying line, shows the central handle inside the reel, with a ball bearing system at the hub. The flier grasps the reel here, and rotates it using a finger or stick in the holes on the plate on the right side.



Thus the left hand holds the handle entirely inside the reel. On the right side, the flier inserts an index finger or a wooden stick about four inches long into a plate with a series of large holes to rotate the reel.

When using cutting line, it seemed apparent that it is best to use the stick—not only to attain a faster rotation, but to prevent

## —the creative kites of Philippe Revel



Revel holds his paper-and-bamboo kites to let the light pass through and show the bone structure—balanced, yet without any symmetry!

The bamboo frame becomes a sort of free-hand abstract drawing, a composition of lines and rhythms. As if to keep it clearly readable, the paper sails of his kites are painted in a minimalist attitude, with graded smears of light colors.

Revel, an airline pilot by profession and a great fan and expert flier of fighter kites, has chosen materials in a way that reveals their best qualities: the transparency of paper and dyes, the flexibility of fine bamboo, the fibrous nature of washi (handmade paper). The fine cords which act as tails for some kites are also



dyed to match the color of the bamboo, to appear as a natural prolongation of the sticks.

Perfect balance is achieved for the eye and the mind—yet without any symmetry!

Revel's kites are just masterpieces, the kind of work that clearly sets the kite as a great medium in abstract art. If only more kites could be as intelligent! —P.F

a to-the-bone cut if the line were to accidentally slip off the reel and wrap around the finger. (Serious Chilean kitefighters never forget to protect their right hand index finger, as well as their left wrist exposed to the same danger, with thick rubber padding cut from old bicycle tubes.)

### DRACHEN FOUNDATION SYMPOSIUM

Next to the Yokaichi o-dako, the heaviest kite luggage shipment to Dieppe was certainly that of the Drachen Foundation, based in Seattle in the United States. Several heavy-duty wooden boxes sat for days in the large dining hall, their contents to be revealed later at Dieppe's Centre D'Action Culturelle Jean Renoir (cultural center), where a series of conferences was organized.

The boxes contained fragile and rare historical kite relics, including rare pieces, files and photographs from the Cody archives purchased by the Drachen Foundation at a 1997 auction by Sotheby's in London. Some of the deteriorated sails of these old cellular kites had been analyzed and carefully patched by experts in restoration.

The most striking design was an undocumented, compact version of Cody's winged box kite, a kite most certainly designed to lead kite trains in very strong wind conditions. Further investigations have to be done, but expert Jan Desimpelaere of Belgium said he believes this kite could date from before 1901, because its construction details are identical to the early Codys.

The absence of any decorative patterns on all these kites strongly contrasted with the

colorful designs of today. This clearly shows these kites, although elegant, were designed for performance, for military purposes or for other applications such as meteorology and aerial photography.

Professor Ben Balsley, of the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Science at the University of Colorado at Boulder, made a most interesting presentation about the use of kites for science over the past centuries. He also demonstrated how kites are still, even today, a cost-effective and efficient means to make continuous vertical profiling of the atmosphere.

According to Balsley, a payload of several kilograms (five or six pounds) of instrumentation can be lifted as high as 19,000 meters (about 93,000 feet), given optimum technique and equipment and a suitable location with appropriate winds. This implies that, in theory, the current kite train altitude record set in 1919 from Lindenberg observatory in Germany (9,740m/31,955 feet) could easily be topped.

Over the past 10 years, Balsley and his team have developed and tested a system of



Above, Jan Desimpelaere of Belgium describes construction techniques in a turn-of-the-century cellular kite used by Belgian aerial photographer René Desclée. Right, Ben Balsley demonstrates a small WindTram that climbs a kite line. A larger version, radio-controlled, lofts scientific instruments for atmospheric measurements.



their own, using reinforced Mylar® parafoils jointly designed by Adrian Conn of Canada and Joe Williams and Bill Tyrrell of Pennsylvania. They used Kevlar line and the WindTram, a radio-controlled line climber that carries instrumentation up and down the kite's flying line. It has been successfully used during several projects in various locations around the globe.

Among the experiments undertaken with the assistance of kites: sampling insects to determine if they could produce interference on cloud radar images; measuring ozone concentrations, relative humidity percentages, temperatures and air pressures; and even studying the diet of bats.

such as the miniatures from China displayed in the Pan family shop, or the beautiful Indian fighters born in the expert hands of Babu Khan.

Along with other Filipino kites, Orlando Ongkingco brought uncovered frames of *guri*on fighters. These unique kites, which belong to the Malay family of elliptical wing kites (such as the Indian tukkal, the Pakistani fighter or the Thai chula), do not use glass-coated lines. Rather, each kite has sharp bamboo spurs protruding from the wingtips and nose, meant to rip through an opponent's sail rather than cut the line. As on Thai fighter kites, the paper sails are reinforced by a grid of lines attached to the frame, which prevents tears from spreading.

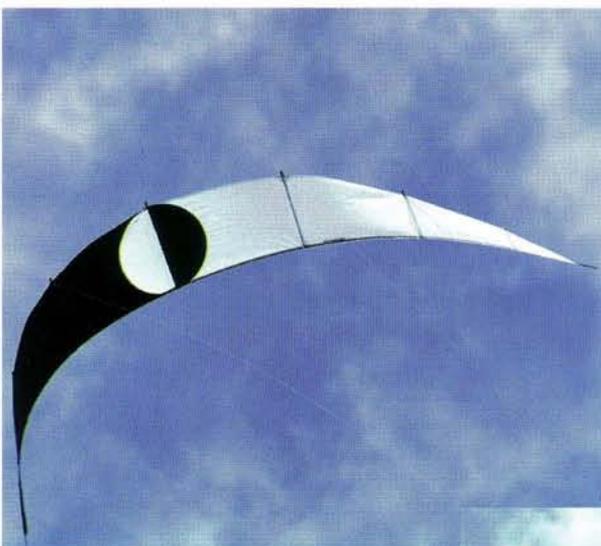
Ongkingco had done some research about the kites of the Philippines, and it is worth reading the small booklet he wrote and published: *Kites Asia: Kites of the Philippines*. It shows the mixed influences of the

Many kite artists also showed the creative use of unusual materials in making miniature kites, whose construction imposes mainly the technical constraints of lightness and precision. Frank Schwiemann of Germany used strips of slide film integrated into the white sails of his miniature kites, and Ton Geers from Holland had a beautiful collection of paper kites kept in a portfolio, as did Philippe Revel.

#### WIND MUSIC

An event called the *Couloir du Vent* (Wind Corridor) featured pleasure for the ears in addition to the eyes—and deserved a better organized and more artistic setting.

Hummers, bamboo flutes, Chinese style kite whistles, musical windmills, æolian harps and a number of other kinds of vibrating strings and ribbons produced a variety of sounds closely related to the kite world. The group of great devotees of wind music who produced the noisy installation includ-



Left, an arch-shaped kite picturing an eclipse, a great design by a friend of Étienne Veyres. Below, an elegant techno-style eye kite, a single-liner made by former Aircraft leader Carl Robertshaw of England, who won the World Cup individual quad-line competition.



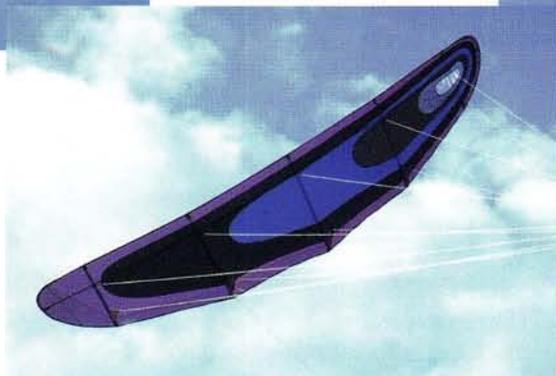
Top, the first four kites in a flock of more than 20 large bats arise and flap above the kite field—a great sight!—flown by Werner Steinmetzer and friends from Germany.

#### CREATIVITY IN COMPETITION

The bad weather of the last weekend of Dieppe also affected the great contest for creative kites. Most kites could not withstand the strong wind so were shown to the jury inside a crowded tent. The 1998 theme of “demons and marvels” excluded purely abstract representations, and so did not initiate as many clever and daring designs as the “color and transparency” theme of two years earlier.

As usual, the jury was criticized by some for not being objective and for excluding “politically involved” creations. Some critics were probably justified, but it was by no means an easy task to select just a few kites among the large number entered. And in any case, each of the winners—none had been previously awarded at Dieppe—did deserve to receive something, if not for the kites entered in this competition then certainly for some of their other remarkable creations.

Inside the rain-sheltered booths were to be found treasures too fragile to be taken out,



unusual kites, including Malay origins, Spanish Christian traits and Western designs, which appeared during the U.S. occupation of the islands in World War II.

Desiré Cyril Chapin, from Martinique, displayed several leaf kites from his native island, including a very large leaf of *gros raisin* (10 inches in diameter) and the elegant leaf of *bois canoe*.

The Yariipa group from Medellin, Colombia, showed their adaptation of a traditional technique of weaving strips of dry banana tree leaves to make all kinds of mats and baskets. Their varnished kite sails and tails showed the nice texture and color of this natural material.

## Winners at Dieppe

#### CREATIVE KITE COMPETITION:

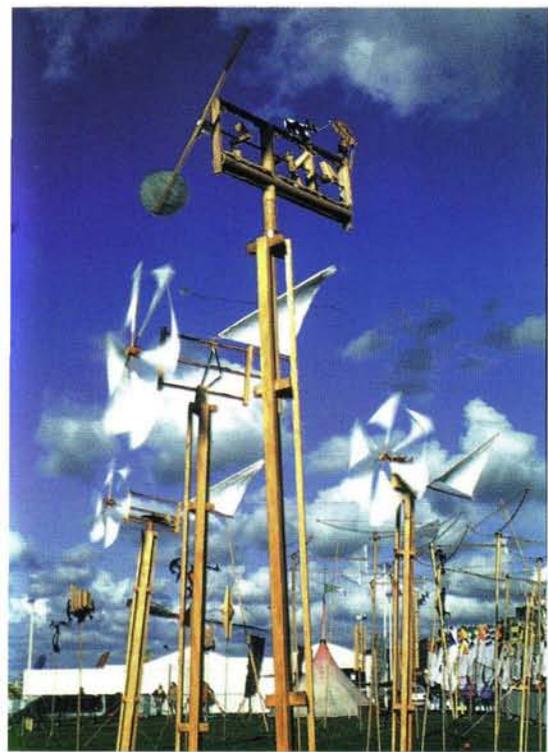
- Professional category: Didier Ferment (France), Robert Trépanier (Canada)
- Amateur category: Les Ailes du Désir (France), Nick James (United Kingdom), Jean Marie Lejosne (France), Colin Mortimer (Republic of South Africa), William Kerzavo (France)

#### STUNT KITE WORLD CUP

- Team category: Aftershock (Japan), Kéops (France), Lung Ta (France)
- Individual quad-line: Carl Robertshaw (United Kingdom), Shuji Yamada (Japan), Alan Micquiaux (France)

#### FIGHTER KITE WORLD CUP

- Akiat (Indonesia), Philippe Revel (France), Allan Lim (Singapore), Masrur Ali Sayed (India)



The Wind Corridor features a variety of wind-activated sound makers, including sculptures by six artists plus an Indonesian windmill found in many Balinese tourist shops.

ed Didier Ferment, Bruno Tondellier and Jean-Paul Richon from France, Uli Walh from Germany, Robert Valkenburgh from Holland and myself. (Incidentally, Walh has a great Web site about kite musical instruments: <<http://user.aol.com/woeinem1/index/index.htm>>)

#### SEE YOU IN 2000

At the end of the festival, Peter Lynn of New Zealand sermonized all the kitefliers for not putting enough kites into the air during the last Sunday afternoon. He contended bad weather should not be an excuse for not flying anything, when the public expects a great show. He is certainly right, but unlike his own kites, many fragile traditional kites cannot withstand the rain.

Regardless, none of the large international kite festivals around the world quite offers as much as Dieppe. It represents the occasion for every participant to spend some time with other enthusiasts, learn about distant kite traditions or discuss all kinds of artistic or technical matters.

While flying kites on a festival field usually kept everyone busy, the large dining hall where the guests had their meals, as well as the beach restaurant which served as the late evening gathering spot, provided several daily occasions for sharing ideas and making new friends. ◆

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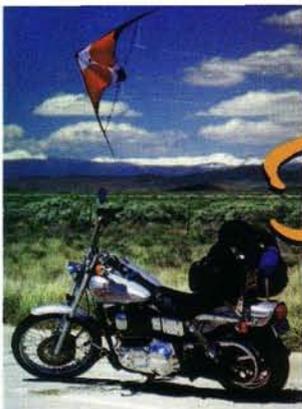
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# Flying THE AMERICAN DREAM

*Kites, Motorcycles & Easy Riders Tour the Sprawling West*

BY J. J. TOEPFER



**I** imagine the feeling: You are riding down Santa Monica Boulevard, kite bags packed behind you, the vibration of the motorcycle engine throbbing through your body. Down the road lies a 5,000-mile kite/bike tour of the American West. That's heaven on Earth!

And that's exactly where I and my brother, Jan, find ourselves one day in June, 1999.

We are in Los Angeles, picking up two beautiful, brand new Harley-Davidson machines, a Dyna Wide Glide and a Softail, from Bruce Chubbuck, fleet manager of the Harley-Davidson Motor Company here. The legendary manufacturer has signed on for our Kite & Bike Dreamtour II, and the California sun shines in our faces as we get the formalities done, pack the kites and start the Harleys.

## A DREAM TAKES SHAPE

So many people don't live their dreams any more. For a long time I had the idea of combining kites, cycles and the American road.

Seven years ago, after buying Windspieler, my kite store in Hamburg, Germany, I began writing letters to Harley-Davidson, seeking sponsorship. People said it was impossible, and at first the cycle company said the idea did not meet their promotional needs.

It is my belief, however, that you can succeed at what you want if you're really positive about it. And in 1998 Harley-Davidson gave up! Do what you want to do, they said, and they provided wheels for Kite & Bike Dream Tour I. So in the summer of 1998 I traveled across California to the Grand Canyon in Arizona, flying kites and talking to people about my quest to forge a kite and bike lifestyle.

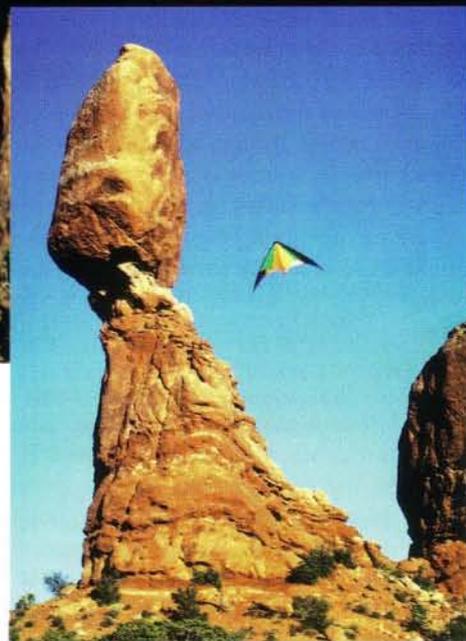
This year, pleased by publicity from the first trip, Harley-Davidson agreed to provide two cycles for a wider tour of the western U.S. and Canada, and our other sponsors included *Sport und Design Drachen* magazine in Germany, Flying Wings, Active People, Innovasian and Cyclone Lines.



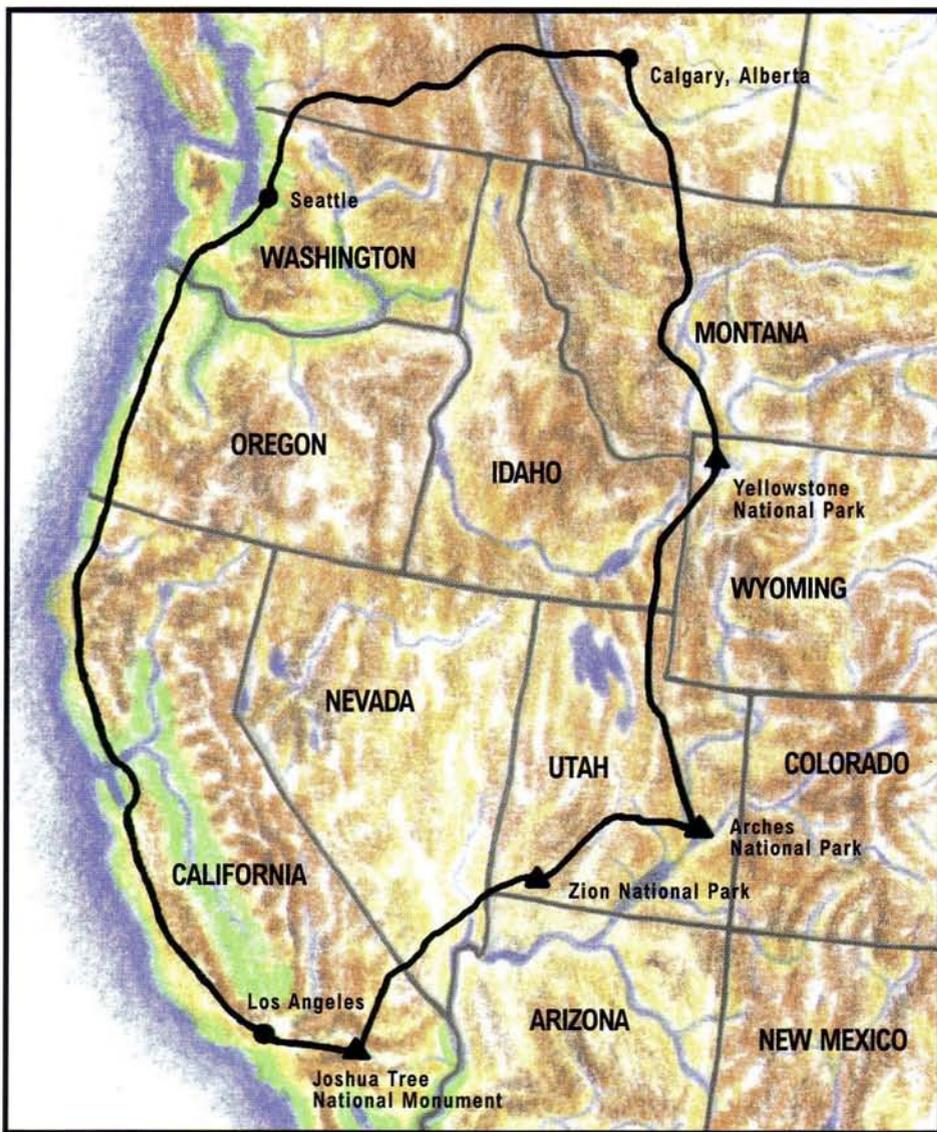
The wind currents swirling around the namesake stone formations of Arches National Park in Utah made kiteflying a challenge. Above, the author struggles to keep the Dreamtour's 6'5" Harley logo rokkaku aloft. At right, a stunter briefly finds good air. But at left, a Utopia kite has settled into the branches of a dead tree. The best flying was often found during roadside stops, as in photo at top of page.

## ESCAPE FROM L.A.

Next morning, Jan climbs aboard the Softail, I mount the Dyna Wide and we escape the highway chaos of the City of Angels, final-



ly cruising out onto the open road. We are headed east, bound for Joshua Tree National Monument, a vast expanse of land beyond the desert oasis of Palm Springs. About two



hours down the road, we are met by fellow travelers Martin and Claudia Schob, in their camper. Martin is the inventor of the Trick Tail and the Utopia, stunt kites made by Flying Wings.

We settle into the Jumble Rocks Campground shortly before sunset, early enough to get the new Harley-Davidson rokkaku into the air. This is a 6'5"-tall black rokkaku we made bearing the Harley-Davidson logo in orange and white appliqué—completed just in time for our departure, over two night shifts with the help of kite shop employees.

With a good old Western chili cooking as we sit around a blazing fire, I think: what a wonderful world! We are in the desert, surrounded by stark Joshua trees, privileged to fly our kites above beautiful scenery, enjoying pure nature. At night we look up into the universe, with clear sight to the stars—but also keep an eye on the coyotes that venture surprisingly close to our fire.

For a city slicker like me, it feels as if my soul has been set free.

We spend the next three days here, flying and photographing the rokkaku, and exercising the stunt kites we have brought.

#### ON TO ARCHES

Although reluctant to leave, we must hit the road again, heading northeast for Zion National Park, more than 200 miles away in the southwest corner of Utah. We do some hiking in the famous red stone canyons of Zion, which must be the most beautiful park in the West, but are unable to loft any kites for long. The narrow confines offer poor flying space. We make this only a one-night stop, however, before heading on to Arches National Park, lying northeast nearly to the far border of the state.

Back on the bike next day, I reflect upon how good it feels to be one of those “Easy Riders” again, eating miles.

At Arches National Park, famous for its red rock formations, it seems as if we have gone back to the days of the land rush! We find you have to be at the visitor center at 5 a.m. to get a ticket, then drive to the

campground to claim a site. The first arrivals thus get the best places, and our speedy bikes give us an advantage. We stake claim to one of the most outstanding sites, setting up camp with a view looking out over miles and miles, toward snow-covered mountains on the horizon.

Flying the rokkaku and the stunt kites in this scenery is a breathtaking experience. The intense colors of the red rock of the park’s namesake arch formations underline the blue skies and the bright contrasting colors of our kites.

But here the soul of the land tells us: “Go away. Don’t fly kites here.” In contrast

### Linking kites to community needs

The Seattle Kite Festival, whose 11th annual edition was held on Father’s Day at

Golden Gardens State Park in the Washington city, is an example of a kite festival that has joined with a local charity to share fun—and funding benefits. “Cause-related marketing,” is how Kathy Goodwind, the festival director and proprietor of Gasworks Park Kite Shop and Goodwind’s Kites, describes the concept.

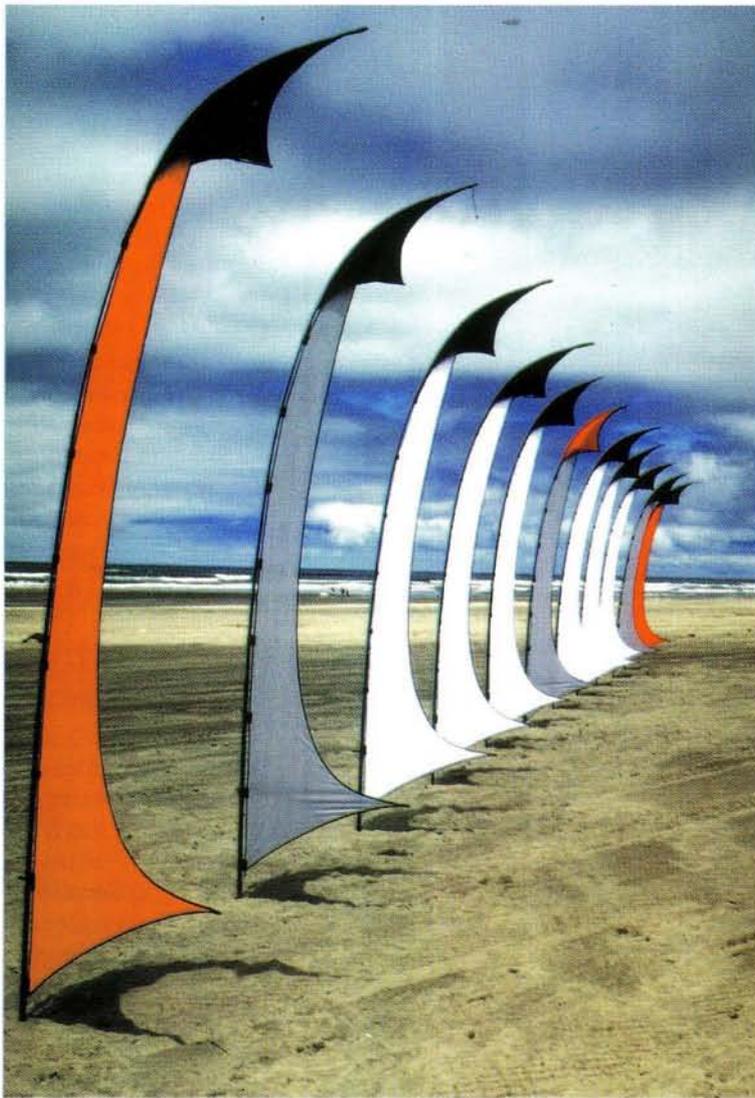
This year, for example, the Northwest Kite Merchants (kite manufacturers and retailers in and around Seattle) commingled their efforts to make a special festival octopus kite to be sold to and flown by visitors. The kite materials were acquired through donations from J.J. Toepfer and his Dreamtour II sponsors and a grant from the Kite Trade Association International. The kite and line could be obtained for a \$7 donation, made at the festival or earlier at kite shops, and proceeds went to the benefit of the Boyer Children’s Clinic, a non-profit therapy and early childhood education facility.

Goodwind says that reaching beyond the kite community to involve the many people interested in a charity widens the network of people who may then become interested in kites.

Other festivals noted recently in *Kite Lines* as benefiting charitable organizations include the Cape Town International Kite Festival in South Africa and the Miami International Kite Festival in Florida.

—Editor

A line of extremely sculpted banners by Martin Schob stands tall at Long Beach, Washington, pointing the way to the 11th Annual Seattle Kite Festival.



to Joshua Tree, where we enjoyed perfect steady winds over flat land, the arches produce very turbulent breezes. We must take our time to find flying locations, to sit below and amid the arches, to at least briefly put the kites in the air as spots of color, and to mentally just let go.

One evening, other travelers join us in the camper, and as they learn of our dream tour, they produce musical instruments and perform a kite concert. We put up our kites to the sound of an Indian sitar and drums. Thank you, Crissie and Oak.

#### YELLOWSTONE, HERE WE COME

We plan our next stop to be Yellowstone National Park, in the northwestern corner of Wyoming. We face a 14-hour ride north through Utah and Idaho, and Jan and I separate from our slower camper companions to attempt the trek in a single day. We worry about snow in the weather forecast, endure dusty dirt surfaces on U.S. Highway 89 near Yellowstone and finally arrive at the park at 11 p.m.—two exhausted cyclists with no advance accommodations.

Fortunately, we find a hotel close to the Snake River, where the manager feeds us for free and reminisces about his own days riding Harleys. This is not the first time we are overwhelmed by the friendly people we meet along our way. Every trucker, car driver, fast-food server and gas station owner seems excited to encounter some guys riding Harleys, living the American dream. We see a spark in their eyes, and motorists blow horns and wave.

At Yellowstone, where our camper support vehicle arrives a day later, Martin finds some time to do trick flying sessions. The environment here is famously rough—the earth boils with hot fountains steaming out of the ground—but many tourists stand around and gape at the sight of a kitesurfer performing axels, cascades and pancakes!

#### THE TOUR SPLITS

By now we have been on the road together for 14 days, and our team decides to separate for a few days. Unprepared for the physical demands of high altitudes, my brother chooses to accompany Martin and Claudia's camper in a straight run to Seattle.

But I set out alone, to cover in a single day the 700 miles to Calgary, in Alberta, Canada. As I ride out of Yellowstone, through rainy Hayden Valley, I find a temporary road-block: a herd of at least 50 buffalo, crossing the highway!

After a short visit with friends in Calgary, I make my way back southwest, cruising through the Rocky Mountains, along wild rivers where I feel salmon might jump any minute. I feel myself to be an integral part of the environment.

Ah, Seattle! Here I find a beautiful city on the Pacific Ocean, and am also reunited with a soulmate, Kathy Goodwind from the Gasworks Park Kite Shop and Goodwind's Kites.

We discovered instant karma when we first met, in January at the Kite Trade Association International convention in Clearwater, Florida, and at that time she invited the Kite & Bike Dreamtour to be guests at the 11th Annual Seattle Kite Festival.

Everyone is happy to be flying kites on Father's Day (June 20). I have been to many kite festivals, but none so easygoing and happy as this one.

#### BACK TO CALIFORNIA

Seattle marks the official end of our tour. From here on, Jan and I are free to do what we want, without any schedule. So we just enjoy, riding the Pacific Coast Highway south for a few days through Washington and Oregon, hanging loose at the beaches, flying our kites here and there, finally making our way to L.A.

After three-and-a-half weeks with kites and bikes, enjoying nature in purity, I realize how much we kites—and bikers—participate in nature, and how much effort we should put into it, to preserve the beauty of Mother Earth.

*J.J. TOEPFER has been in the kite business in Hamburg, Germany for 13 years. He runs a store, Windspiele, as well as a distributing company, Innovation. He also works as Caribbean Kite Company (German branch). You can recognize J.J. as a big, tall friendly guy with a bandanna on his head.*



# Verdun's last Rendez-Vous?

OLDER BUT WISER—HAPPIER BUT SADDER  
(FOR IT MAY NOT BE HAPPENING AGAIN)

BY ANNE SLOBODA

**T**he Rendez-Vous Mondial du Cerf-Volant returned to Verdun this year after a one-year hiatus. (Ice storms in the previous year demolished the budget). Over the previous five editions (1993-1997), this Canadian festival had established itself as one of the premier North American events, definitely the biggest kite festival in Canada.

The first festival (1993), flush with the energy and enthusiasm of novice organizers, featured 80 guest fliers from 16 countries, including delegates from the Far East and China, and a schedule set to a killer rock-and-roll pace.

The 1999 version, older, wiser and on a tighter budget, was able to showcase about half that number of fliers, mostly from Europe and the U.S. and Canada, to a somewhat more sedate, disco-ish rhythm.

The Rendez-Vous was still a four-day event, but the dates were now stayed by

almost three weeks, to late June (the 24th through 27th). This made a huge difference in weather (less rain, more sunshine), and this year the festival coincided with St. Jean Baptiste Day, Quebec's "national holiday." After flying ended on Thursday, the more adventurous could head downtown to enjoy the parade and the outdoor cafés for which Montreal is famous.

## A BALANCED GUEST LIST

Guests represented most aspects of kiteflying, from Indian fighters (Stafford Wallace from England) to modern mega-kites (Peter Lynn from New Zealand and Art Ross of Vancouver, B.C., Canada), to individual single-line kitemakers (Robert Trépanier, Montréal, Québec, Canada; Tanna Haynes, USA; Michelle Bougard, France), to dual-line teams (Chicago Fire, USA; Team No Limit, Germany; Aerial Assault, Canada).

The only noticeable gap in the repertoire was the absence of any older kitemakers from China or Japan. Most of the international guests were new faces, with only a few returning from previous years.

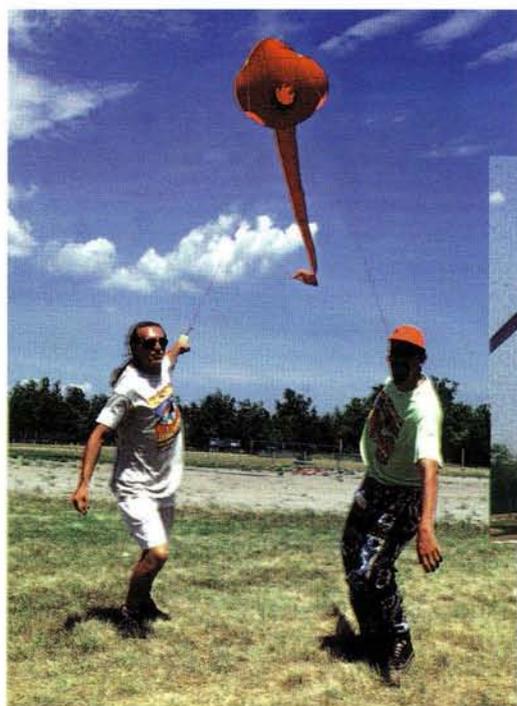
## A THOUGHTFUL SCHEDULE

It seemed also as if a more careful attitude was applied to the programming. A first glance at the daily schedule made the head spin. What were the Circus of Clowns and a Spice Girl look-alike doing at a kite festival? Turned out, on closer examination, that these were activities and performances at the children's tent, a huge space that had continuous presentations and activities for the under-10's.

There was also a main stage where nighttime concerts were held and stilt-walkers wandered through the crowd doing magic tricks. The organizers seemed to be trying for an event that would draw spectators in with kites, but then keep them there with a variety of musical and entertainment acts.

There are other festivals that use a similar strategy, such as the Washington International Festival of the Air in northern England, where the frequent downpours often drive fliers and spectators to seek cover and amuse themselves until the skies clear.

Verdun, however, had originally patterned itself after France's Dieppe International Kite Festival, whose organizers mentored Verdun in the early days. Dieppe is exclusively focused on kites and draws enormous numbers of



Kites by Ramlal Tien of France:  
Top, an elegant fantasy named Furax.  
Left, Le Buzuc in the hands of Tien (left)  
and Christophe Chénet. Above, a kite  
called Raymond, which seems to be  
walking on stilts.

PHOTOS: TOP, MICHAEL GRAVES; FAR LEFT, CARL BIGRAS; NEAR LEFT, ANNE SLOBODA



Many kitemakers have learned that kites that look superb in the daytime can disappear at night and are starting to make kites specifically for night flies. Robert Trepanier's clear plastic ghost kite was definitely a night kite. Rippling in the wind, the light plastic moved constantly, catching the light with a million little sparkles. Plain white, boring in daytime, it dominated the sky at night. Bridle lines became unexpected design elements, shiny spider webs when the laser lights danced up them. In the night sky, a kite's motion was its signature as much as its form was in the daylight.

#### NEW & WHIMSICAL KITES

A collection of "alien creatures" was brought to Verdun by Ramlal Tien of Bessy-sur-Cure, France, for the Zoone Collective. The creatures floated, bobbed, lurked and stumped their way around the flying field,

fliers from all over Europe. These self-invited guests fill two big flying fields and create the backdrop for the Festival.

Verdun's smaller scale and broader focus seemed to take the pressure off the main flying field, where events were scheduled at one-hour intervals, rather than every half-hour as formerly. Fliers had more time to put up kites and get them settled into position without having to worry about what was happening next.

#### SOME THOUGHTLESS POLICIES

Verdun's policy of charging kitefliers for access to the flying field (\$35 Canadian), unique among kite festivals, seemed to exemplify the lack of esteem in which the average kiteflier was held by the Festival, and the organizers' disinterest in kiteflying as anything other than a spectator event. As one European guest flier commented, "They (the organizers) try, but it is obvious that they are not kite people."

No one who had ever spent the day flying kites in 85-degree heat would ever set up a flying field that did not even include access to cold water for the participants. Fortunately for everyone, Yves Laforest of St.-Eustache, Quebec turned his cabana into the unofficial hospitality tent, dispensing sport drinks and cold water freely to all who dropped by.

#### DICEY WIND & WEATHER

The winds in the Parc Therrien site have always been a bit tricky, given Montreal's

**Above, a fine bol or ring kite by Jos and Kaatje Valcke of Belgium catches the sun. Right, the animated character inflatables by Team No Limit of Germany bring smiles to the children.**

location on an island surrounded on all sides by the St. Lawrence River. Trying to put up and pull down kites according to schedule has never worked well at Verdun, despite the best efforts of the field announcers and commentators to move things along. The winds normally have a choice of following the valley (crossfield) or coming over Mt. Royal and blowing the kites downwind from the viewing stands. The latter is preferable for the audience, but makes for more turbulence and is definitely more hazardous for the kites. In 1997, a series of sudden rain squalls coming over the "mountain" turned a field full of kitefliers into very drenched impromptu Megabyte babysitters, as we used our bodies to hold down the world's largest kite.

This year's weather was, thankfully, less exciting. The only rain was on Friday and it didn't prevent the night fly from happening.

#### THE GREAT NIGHT FLY

Verdun is justly famous for its after-dark fly, for the small field, the festival's high energy, and an elaborate lighting system work together to create an amazing spectacle. Again, borrowing from rock concert techniques, the use of searchlights from the ground was far more effective than putting lights on the kites themselves.



catching one's eye not with elaborate structure or flashy graphics, but with their quality of movement. The organic motions of the creatures spoke volumes about their personalities, even before their handler could introduce and explain them.

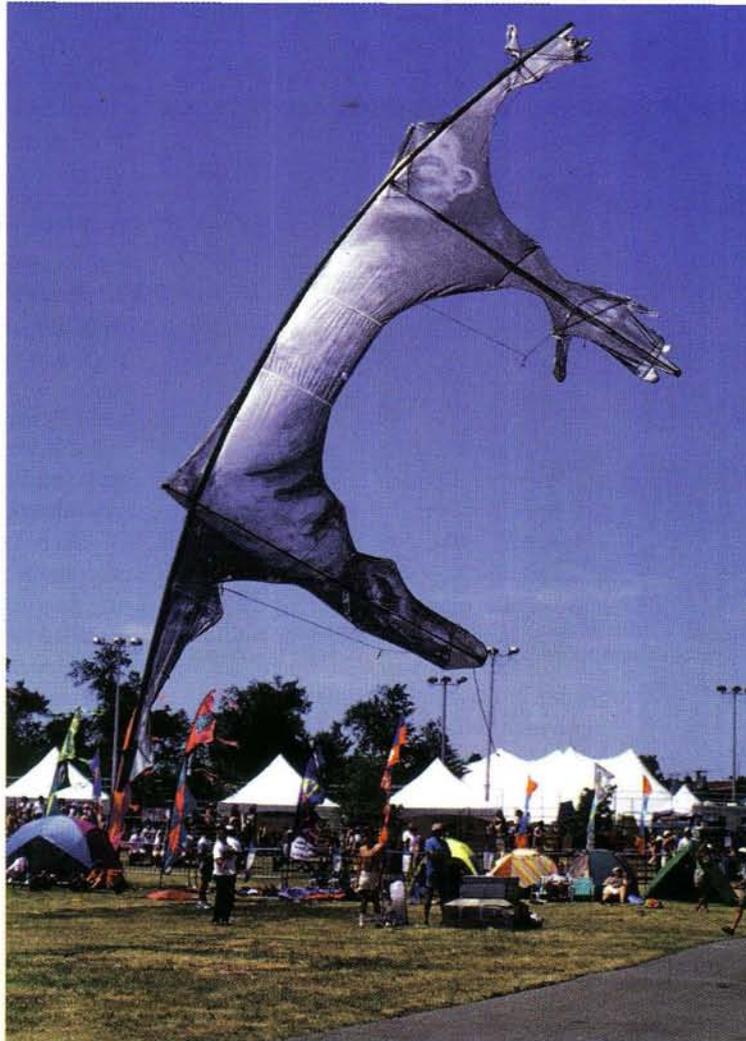
"Les sentinelles," plain white pod shapes, bobbed up and down in a tentative fashion as if in a more aqueous atmosphere, like the interior of a gigantic lava lamp. "Le Buzuc," who had an obviously nasty personality, required two handlers to restrain him, one on each side. Looking like the result of a rash meeting between a playsail and a lamprey eel, Le Buzuc enjoyed the stronger, gustier winds. Raymond, on the other hand, didn't fly

very high or very often, preferring to stomp around like an Imperial Walker sans lasers. Am I in love? Yes! Honest, mom they followed me home...

Carpe Diem, a troupe from Switzerland (seen in *Kite Lines* Winter 1997-98), shared some of this spirit of whimsy, spending part of Sunday afternoon patiently attempting to fly their rokkakus grouped, like a jigsaw puzzle, into a spider pattern. Their efforts were hindered by light winds and extreme heat. They would maneuver the kites closer and closer until the spider was almost complete and then, a leg or two would fall off and drift away, and the process would start all over again.

#### ROKKAKUS BY THE LOCAL RULES

The rokkaku battle, also on Sunday afternoon, was settled in three fairly short heats that didn't last anywhere near the full ten minutes allotted for



Quad-line kite person by Robert Trépanier dances en pointe.

each. Irving Reid of the Toronto Kitefliers emerged as the victor, winning two heats out of three. Again, light wind and high temperature made the fighting hard work, especially with the rigorous Montreal rules. Line length was carefully measured and limited, and body contact was (supposedly) prohibited, much to the disappointment of many competitors, including Sharon Musto of Winnipeg, who along with Michele (Mimi) Forget of Repentigny, Québec (the deadly pink panther) and yours truly were the only female fliers on the field. Mama-sans, where are you when we need you?

#### ADIEU, VERDUN

As the afternoon grew late, winds and kitefliers were beginning to wind down in preparation for the closing ceremonies. Suddenly, urgent announcements were made

that heavy rain and lightning were heading our way. Everyone was encouraged to bring kites down quickly and get under cover before the skies opened. In the ensuing rush, the usual rituals were short-changed and many farewells left unsaid.

The lack of a proper closing to the 1999 festival now seems even more of a shame, as we have since learned that the Rendez-Vous will not be happening again.

The Rendez-Vous frustrated many of us because it came so close to being the kind of festival that could involve both kitefliers and kite-watchers in a grand combination of pageantry and festivity. Sometimes, however, it seemed that the organizers simply did not realize that kites worldwide are a community of friends—friends who share a mutual passion that they would happily share with everyone. Verdun could have been part of that community, rather than a place we just came to visit briefly before leaving again.

There are other Canadian festivals that will perhaps grow to the same size as the Rendez-Vous, but it was the first truly international festival in Canada and will be sadly missed. "Adieu, Verdun." We wish it were "Au revoir." ♦

## The adventures of Radar the Bear

Some days are good days to jump from a kite. Some days it pays to have friends. Radar the young teddy bear discovered this the hard way, in making his maiden jump in Verdun this year. Dropping from the kite of his friend, Gary Mark of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Radar soon discovered that miscalculations of the size of the parachute, the strength of the wind, and his weight were sending him much higher and much farther downwind than was safe.

Panic broke out among the ground crew when it became obvious Radar was heading over the trees at the end of the flying field and would land in the St. Lawrence River! People scrambled down the steep riverbank only to stand helplessly as Radar landed in a large patch of weed, several hundred feet offshore. He was safe for the moment, nose above water and not moving downstream because his 'chute was tangled in the weeds—but what to do?

Debate was hot and furious. Did anyone have a fishing rod? Could a dual-line kite lift him out? Swimming was not an option—the current was too fast.

Suddenly, around the point—a boat! It was the Verdun Fire Department, patrolling the river in a Zodiac inflatable with a huge motor, as part of their duties during the festival. They steered surely toward Radar. Strong arms lifted the soggy bear from the water and brought him safely to shore.

The firemen graciously accepted everyone's thanks and explained that it was all part of the job. Radar was their first rescue that day, but on previous days they had pulled several large kites from the river, and would stand by for the duration of the festival.

Will Radar jump again? He's not saying. —A.S.

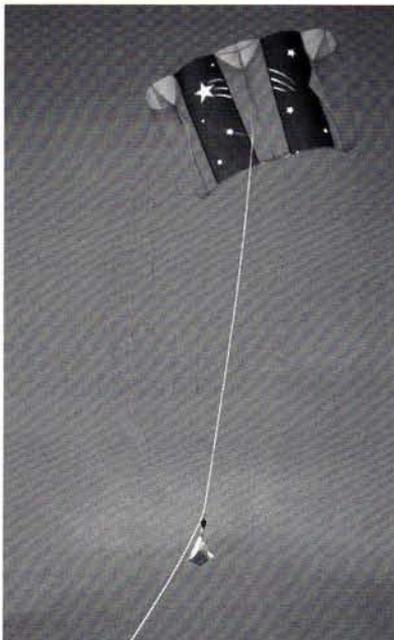


Wet but wiser, Radar the parachuting bear is reunited with his friend and kite pilot, Gary Mark, after rescue.

# Last goodbyes

HE WOULD HAVE LOVED THIS! HOW DO YOU

SCATTER ASHES FROM A KITE? ANSWER: TEAM EFFORT BY VALERIE GOVIG



A 20' double parasol lifts the bag with Mel Govig's ashes before dropping them over the sea at Ocean City, Maryland.

**M**el always said that when he died he would like to have his ashes dispersed over the sea by kite. My husband, who died March 10, 1999, had made no absolute written directive, but I felt it would be appropriate and worth trying.

However, I knew nothing about how to do it. I had heard that kitefliers had succeeded in Hawaii, so I made a phone call to our friend Robert Loera, in Honolulu. No luck. He referred me to his father, Richard Loera, in California, but Richard hadn't done it either. It seemed more people had talked about doing it than had done it.

OK, it would have to be done Mel-style: without experience—but with utter confidence.

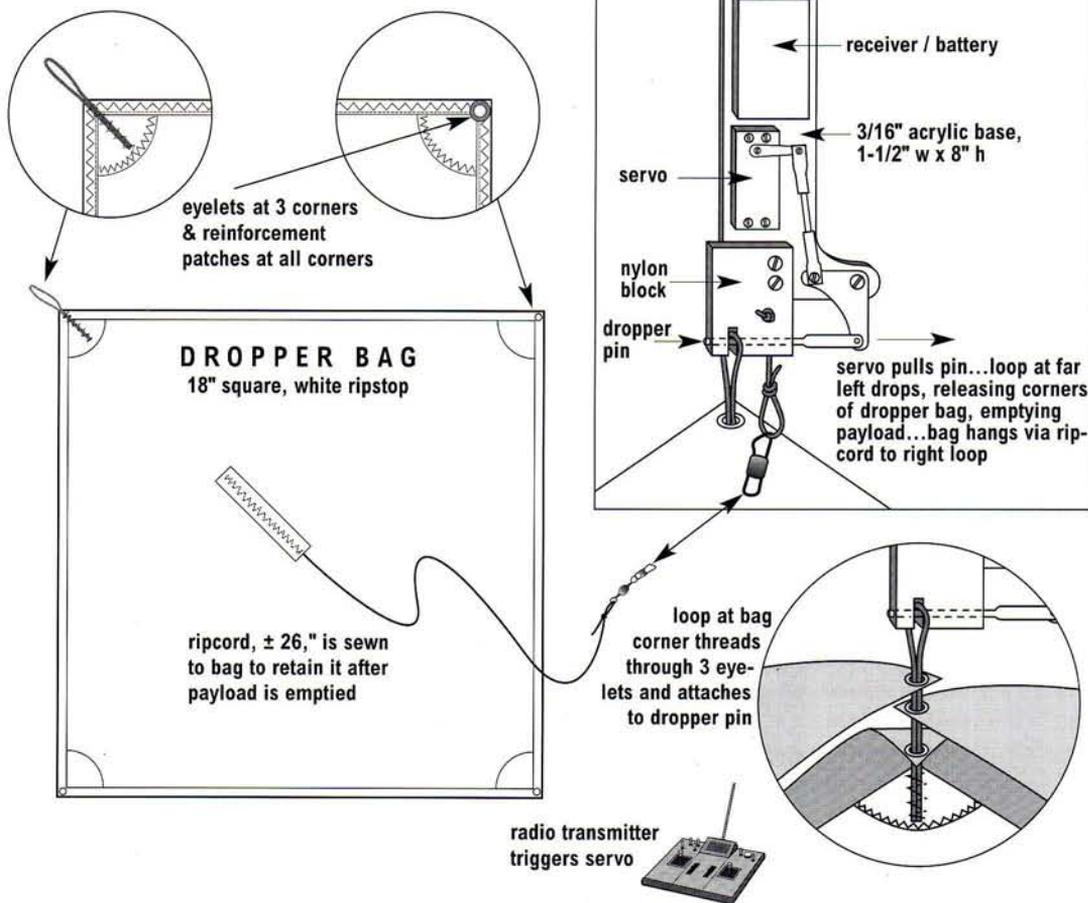
To be on the safe side, I asked the funeral director if he knew of any laws governing the disposition of "cremains" (popularly called ashes). To my surprise, he said there were none, at least not in the state of Maryland. So it was a Go. But now for the execution: How to do it?

Luckily, I have wonderful friends in Mike and Cecilia Dallmer and their son, Mike Jr., of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This family has dropped candy and teddy bears

from kites by radio control over festival crowds countless times. (Mike is the leader of the Philadelphia Area Wannabe Skydivers—PAWS—and a recognized expert on kite parachuting fauna.) Not only were they experienced, they were sympathetic and willing to do something a bit unusual.

They remained eager even after my description of what we had to drop. Mel's container, a simple cardboard canister marked "Temporary Container" on the side, with the name and date on the top, was rather heavy, weighing eight pounds. (After cremation, only bones are left, which are then pulverized, leaving a gray, sand-like material.) But Mike said that would be no problem; he had a kite that would easily lift that in reasonable wind.

We wanted to scatter the ashes at the Maryland International Kite Exposition at Ocean City at the end of April. The site was next to the sea, with good chances for favorable



DRAWINGS BY JAN GILBERT HURST

weather, and it was a place Mel had loved. Furthermore, Bill Ochse of The Kite Loft was not only in favor of our potentially disruptive activity, he said he would be “honored” to have it there.

We confided to him our concern for the wind direction, that we would not want to scatter ashes over the beach but only over the water. Could the breeze be counted on to be offshore? Bill admitted the winds were unreliable, but suggested that, if necessary, we could walk down to the inlet, where a jetty stretching far out into the ocean provides multiple vantage points for kiteflying. We were reassured.

That Saturday morning, my daughters, sons-in-law, grandchildren and I trod the Ocean City boardwalk behind the parade of kites that kicked off the weekend, carrying Mel’s ashes. Mike greeted us at a midpoint on the beach, where he, Cecilia and Mike Jr. were already positioned and ready. The wind was good, just enough offshore, and the waves flashed in the brilliant sunlight. This was the ideal place and time.

The kite, a handsome red, white and blue 10' x 20' double parasled, was up and pulling strong. Mike had hooked on the line a dropper rig designed and built by Jack Rogers of Westboro, Massachusetts. To this mechanism Mike attached an empty white nylon bag that, after being filled with the ashes, would release its contents to the earth with the flick of a switch on the radio control transmitter. My son-in-law David Derry emptied the canister of cremains from a plastic bag inside the container into the nylon bag.

And it was that simple. Up the ashes went, smoothly and easily. About a dozen friends had quietly gathered with us. There was a stillness as our eyes focused skyward.

When the kite was well out over the water, Cecilia asked me to push the lever on the radio. I did so—but nothing happened! However, Cecilia moved further down the beach with the transmitter and tried again. It worked.

The bag opened up and a load of gray ash fell down, at first as a solid column, but then dispersed into a thin, dusty cloud, floating away as if intending to spread itself over the entire earth.

Murmurs went up—“Wasn’t that beautiful?”—everyone hugged and wept and smiled. One more goodbye to Mel. Many thank-yous. Much picture-taking.

Mike gave me the emptied bag. I will keep it safe among my other memorabilia of Mel. It will always bring back a rare image of floating ashes—and a life that was remarked all over the world.



Kites fly in memory of Mel Govig: left, foam kite by Ken Martinez of New York; right, Tyvek Eddy kite by Phil Broder of Iowa.

## Later, some special kites...

**W**hen UPS delivered a large flat package to our office in May, we could tell it was a kite—but we were unprepared for *this* kite. It was a two-foot-tall, flat Bermuda-style kite made of stiff foam. It was fringed in black crepe paper and decorated “IN MEMORY MEL.”

The instructions said the line was to be cut after flight, releasing the kite in what the kitemaker, Ken Martinez of Riverhead, New York, called “the tradition of my family.” His father and grandfather were from the Dominican Republic. Ken grew up flying and fighting kites on the rooftops of New York City, which they called “Tar Beach.” When Ken’s father died at age 96 in 1996, Ken flew a kite over a lake in Florida to about 300 feet in the sky, then cut it loose with a prayer.

The kite Ken made for Mel was different. It was fitted with four envelopes on the back, labeled “ashes,” intended to be used to disperse the ashes through holes to be pierced in the envelopes.

When we at *Kite Lines* saw this kite, we were amazed, choked up and giggly all at once. As it happened, we had already accomplished our mission of scattering Mel’s ashes, but we decided it would be almost as meaningful to simply fly this kite and appreciate the intention and character of it. So as soon as we could, we headed to our nearest field to fly Ken Martinez’s kite.

To be honest, we were a bit skeptical and worried—skeptical that a truly flat kite of stiff  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch foam would fly stably, and worried that it would break apart if it hit the ground. As often happens with kites, we learned something new.

The kite flew! We attached a four-foot tubular cloth kite bag as a tail, at the midpoint of the trailing loop, and this helped stabilize the kite, perhaps assisted by the fringes on the kite’s edges. The wind was erratic, but in its smoother moments the kite rose and held its place like a sentinel. The flying line vibrated, possibly caused by the flaps along the forward bridle legs. On descent it kissed the ground like a friend.

(Of course, we wanted to keep the kite, so we didn’t snip the line and release it.)

As we left the field, our delight was moderated by the thought that we would have been happier if Mel had been there. We imagined him saying: “Who’d a thunk it? A solid flat foam kite that flies!”

## THEN, SEVEN MONTHS LATER...

It’s the AKA convention in Muncie, Indiana in October. Everyone who enters the registration room sees a group of Eddy kites of white Tyvek along the wall, each carrying the name of a kiter who had died in the previous year. What a heart-seizing sight! Mel was one of 14.

Phil Broder, of Burlington, Iowa, had generously spent many hours building these kites. Registrants were invited to sign them, and in a short time all the kites were covered with signatures and farewell messages. They would be flown on Friday in memory of the deceased.

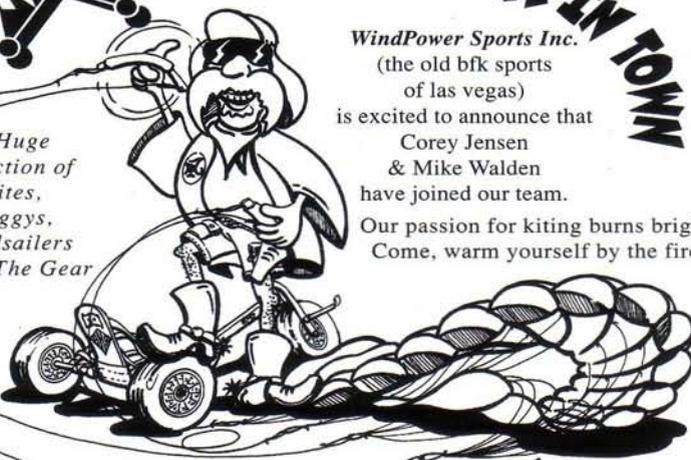
But after two bright, sunny days on Wednesday and Thursday, it rained heavily on Friday and Saturday. The memorial fly was called off. This may have been a disappointment for Phil, but for me, having been forced to accept an unacceptable death, the loss of a memorial kite fly was a relatively mild disappointment.

Furthermore, Phil crowned his generosity in making the kites by giving them to family members, so I was blessed with another kite to fly for Mel, which I did a few days after the convention. It was a sunny, windy afternoon on the home field, and Mel’s kite flew well. I felt it could hardly have done otherwise.

My thanks to all the thoughtful friends who signed the kite, and especially to Phil Broder for his kindness in making it. ♦

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**Registration:** \$75 per person before Jan. 15 (after 1/15 pay \$20 more). Includes all workshops, limited edition pin, pizza party and banquet

**Banquet** open to nonregistered for \$25/person

**Auction** open to public, no charge

**Hotel:** Rooms: \$62+tax per night, payable to the Holiday Inn by Jan. 15 (call 301-937-4422)

**For registration information, contact:** Maryland Kite Retreat, 327 North Hanover Street, Carlisle, PA 17013, or call Kevin Shannon, 717-243-7913 or Drake Smith, 703-690-2795 or E-mail: [mksretreat2000@yahoo.com](mailto:mksretreat2000@yahoo.com)

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# Mixed blessings

A SUCCESSION OF UPS AND DOWNS

AT THE 1999 SMITHSONIAN BY BILL BIGGE

**H**ere I am at the 1999 Smithsonian Kite Festival, celebrating 30 years of airplane kites at the Washington, DC event by flying one of my standard designs. *That's good!*

Not so good. It is not eligible for an award, as it is a copy of a previous winner. *That's bad!*

Not so bad. I do have most of the airplane kite trophies awarded here, today is a demonstration, and I am being interviewed by the media. *That's good!*

Not so good. Another kite line wraps around mine. I fail to go toward the other kiteflier and my line is cut. *That's bad!*

Not so bad. The kite is rescued and returned to me. *That's good!*

Not so good. The front spar is broken near

the body stick. *That's bad!*

Not so bad. I tape the broken ends together and the bracing allows the kite to fly again. *That's good!*

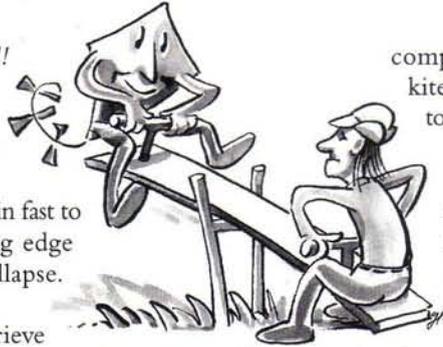
Not so good. I pull it in fast to show off and the leading edge tucks under. Midair collapse. *That's bad!*

Not so bad. I can retrieve it to hand. Though it is not flying, it comes in much faster than it falls. *That's good!*

Not so good. Now the rear spar is also broken. *That's bad!*

Not so bad. More tape and it is flying again. *That's good!*

Not so good. Flown after another makeshift repair in strong gusts, against a



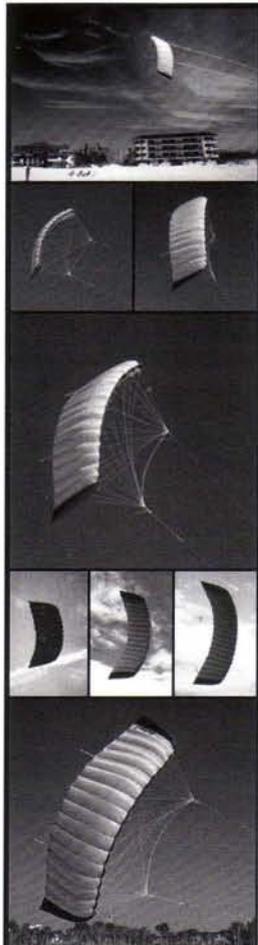
competing airplane/box kite, it collapses and falls to the ground. *That's bad!*

Not so bad. On the next outing my new kite does its thing in calm. The other kite looks as if it would need, say, 10 mph

wind to fly hands-off and 2 mph to be kept up by climb-and-glide. But it could be improved. *That's good!*

Yes, that is good.

*William R. Bigge of Germantown, Maryland is a physicist retired from the U.S. Bureau of Standards, a recognized maker of lightweight kites, and a noted student of kite dynamics.*



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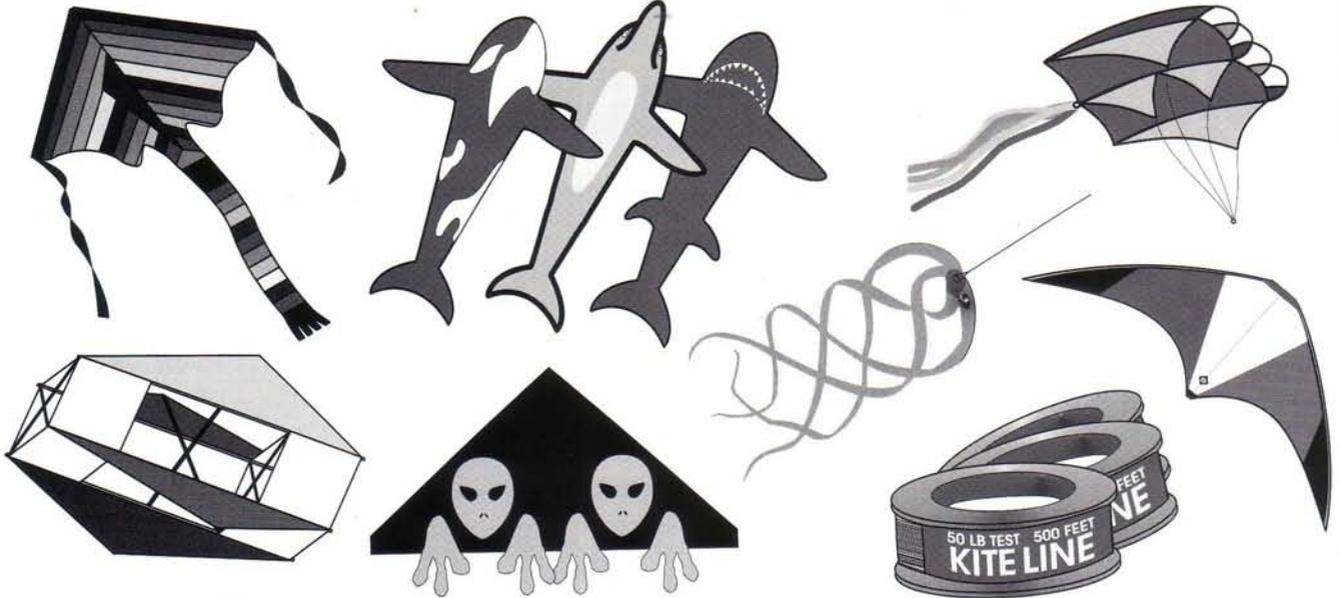
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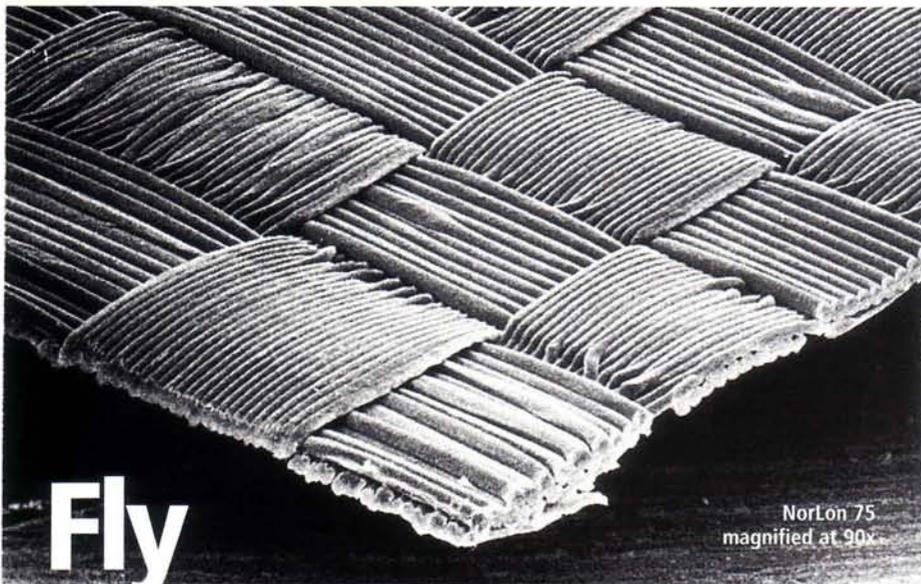
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# Graphite spar repair

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## ONE HI-TECH KITES, LOW-TECH FIX

*From Steve McKerrow, Annapolis, Maryland:* When expensive graphite spars break—and they do!—call humble bamboo to the rescue until you can get a proper replacement.

To join a relatively clean break, such as in a spreader, choose a length of unsplit bamboo that has a flexibility roughly similar to that of the spar (judge by flexing between your fingers), and is of a diameter that will just fit inside the spar. Those green bamboo stakes sold to gardeners can work fine. Cut about a six-inch length, and wrap enough clear plastic tape at both ends and center to make it fit snugly inside the bro-



ken spar. Insert halfway into one end of the broken spar, then push the other piece of broken spar onto the end until the pieces meet. Wrap several turns of tape to secure the joint.

I have used this method successfully on spreaders and spines of several stunts and even the leading edge spar of a Revolution SuperSonic. I suspect I lose some crispness in performance, but not enough to make a serious difference in casual flying.

Split bamboo can also be used to make nifty replacement standoffs and sail battens. I fly a favorite precision team kite, for example, whose wingtip extensions are now spread with lengths of bamboo, which I carved and notched to fit the leading edge spar and elastic O-ring fittings. I don't intend to get graphite replacements for the lost originals, for the traditional touch seems a nice link to the heritage of kiteflying.

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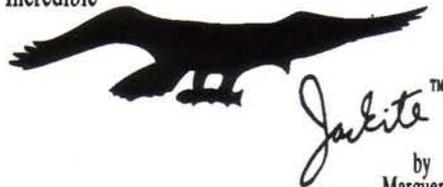
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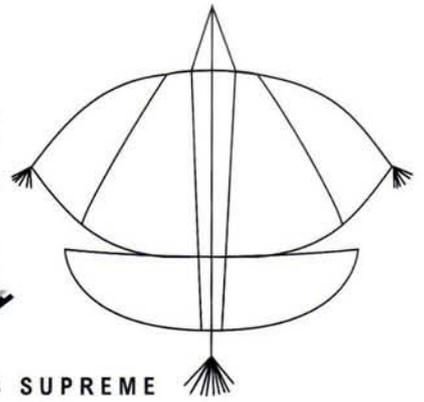
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# On the trail of the tukkal



IN INDIA'S PUNJAB REGION, A SPECIAL KITE REIGNS SUPREME

BY TANIA BERGER

I had to wait for my first Indian kite quite a long time. Four months after arriving in the country known for its ancient kite culture, I had not seen a single one!

I was spending a half year in India in 1998, working as an architect for a development aid organization. Tal Streeter's *A Kite Journey Through India* had raised my hopes for finding many fascinating kites. I asked everybody about kites in Andhra Pradesh, the southeastern state where I worked. But the reaction was always the same: "You came in the wrong season!"

In January and February, they said, the sky would be full of kites. But in May and June, when I was there, nobody thinks about kites when temperatures climb toward 50 degrees (Centigrade; 120 degrees Fahrenheit). So I decided to travel north, not only to see kites but to view some of the most interesting examples of Mughal architecture.

In September, I boarded a train bound for Amritsar, a city in the state of Punjab that is internationally famous for its Golden Temple—but is known among kite fanciers as home to a distinctive form of fighting kite: the tukkal.

## UP THERE, IN THE SKY!

Early in my railroad journey, from my moving window, I finally saw kites, flying in the evening sky over the state of Maharashtra. My eyes followed the airy dance of these *gali patamu*, which I was told in Andhra Pradesh is the local word for kite. *Gali* means "wind" and *patamu* means "sheet of paper," a combination that perfectly catches the essence of a kite.

These kites rose from some of India's omnipresent squatter settlements. But I was somehow relieved to find that the pleasure of kiteflying is not restricted to the wealthy here, as are so many other pastimes in India.

Before departing, I had contacted by mail one of the more colorful characters in Streeter's book, Jaswanth Giani Singh, a kitemaker whose correspondence with the author comprised a whole chapter. And upon reaching Amritsar, I was pleased to receive a very enthusiastic and charming welcome—and a lengthy indoctrination in the unique traditions of the tukkal kite.

Unlike the familiar patang and its many variants, in which a single crossbow and spine make the skeleton, the tukkal features a spine and three bent spars, which form a double-body kite with a pointed nose piece and a tuft of tail. Twin crossbows

daughters accepted me with generous hospitality. There the kitemaker showed me, with detailed explanations, how this unusual dueling kite is built.

And when the kite was finished, we climbed to the rooftop terrace of his house, located on the campus of Khalsa College, where he works as a secretary. A light breeze moved the leaves of the many trees. It was past six o'clock, the day's heat was fading away and the sun was about to set—the best time for kiteflying in India!

Singh does not need a lot of space to get his kites flying. Holding his medium-sized tukkal (60–70 cm, or 23–25 inches) at the height of his hip, he pushed it horizontally into the wide open air beyond his rooftop. With a few jerking movements of the flying line, he immediately maneuvered it to several meters of height. Catching the breeze, the kite then began to rise and soon sailed calmly more than 100 meters (330 feet) above our heads.

"How come this completely different type of kite is flown in Punjab only?" I asked.

"An important question," he agreed. But he conceded, "I have no answer to it, either!"

Some years ago, Singh said, he published an article about kites in a Bombay-based magazine, *Dharamyug*, and asked readers to contact him if they knew anything about the origin of the tukkal. The result? "Not a single answer to this very day."

## THE FIGHT IS ALL

"For us, kiteflying means kite fighting in the first place," Singh explained. But he noted another regional difference. "In other Indian states, manjha, the powdered glass paste which enables us to cut our competitor's lines, is applied to the thread only on the

**D**uring prolonged fights, one's hands often start to bleed, but a real kite enthusiast cares not a damn for it!

—Jaswanth Giani Singh

join at their tips to make the top half and a third crossbow bends upward to form the lower section.

"Those [patang] kites are for kids. The true experts are flying the tukkal kite," proclaimed Singh.

## A KITE TAKES FLIGHT

Over the course of my 10-day stay in Amritsar, I was a frequent guest in the Singh household, where his mother, wife and three

## Tussles with tukkals: Who can fly this kite?

**Y**ou'd better believe it when you read the boasts by kite-fliers in the Punjab region of India (and neighboring Pakistan) that mastery over their tukkal fighters represents a pinnacle of skill. This is a kite that can humble the cockiest Western fighter flier—at least judging from personal experience.

How the heck does one fly it?!

I have had the opportunity to fly many authentic Asian dueling kites, including many Indian patangs, rectangular Koreans, quick little Hong Kong diamonds and Nagasaki hasas. Some kites required a difficult learning period, such as my first genuine tissue Indian fighter, which I first flew with a long crepe paper tail that was gradually shortened as I gained reflexes.

Over a number of years, eager to expand my range, I acquired several tukkals imported into the U.S. But in short order two of them ended up smashed beyond saving and the third I managed to repair to serve only as a decoration on my office wall. The kites seemed to want to spin madly to earth, and because their tissue paper skin is so taut their first contact with the ground was usually their last. They made a “pop” when the paper ripped!

Yet these kites are very pretty and would make a distinctive spot in the sky at any Western festival or club fly. So for the purposes of this article, I set out once again to conquer the troublesome tukkal.

The first problem was finding one. Our call to International Connections in Santa Barbara, California, major supplier of Indian kites to U.S. shops, brought the news that the man who had previously made their tukkals had died, and there was little call for more kites. But proprietor Rakesh Bahadur promised to look around, and soon called to say he had found a pair of kites. The brightly colored tukkals arrived within a few days, both small kites about 18 inches across.

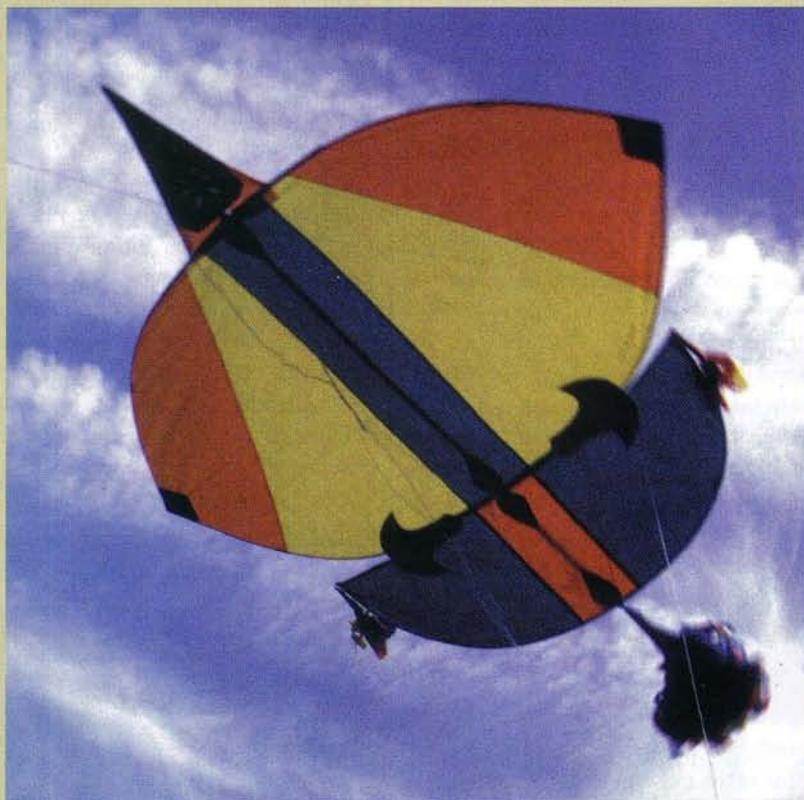
Did they fly? The answer is, well, *kind of*...

I picked a light air day and, wary of previous disappointments, was ridiculously careful. I went to a field with good, soft grass and prepared the first tukkal by tying on about six feet of triple-strand Mylar® tail material, to dangle below the kite's own tuft of bundled tissue tail. Gingerly, I held the kite aloft and, as I felt the wind across my ear, released it and stepped backward, gently applying line tension.

Snap! The top crossbow broke at its junction with the spine. Evidently, this was an old kite with brittle bamboo. (I was able later to repair the break with a taped-on splint.)

I repeated the process with the second kite. It began to lift from my hand, the absurd tail streamed behind...and the kite went into an immediate spiral. I let out line quickly to keep it from contacting the ground too hard.

**Confession:** To photograph these two tukkal kites as if they were flying, we resorted to hanging them from a line and lying beneath. But they are pretty in the sky, aren't they?



Hmmm. *More* tail? I tied an 18-inch length of thick twine to the bottom of the Mylar tail. With the next puff of wind, the kite lifted off, nosed ominously right, then left and then...it climbed! Before the wind died completely a few minutes later, the kite actually flew at a moderate angle, though looking distinctly dispirited, like a dog chained to a tree. And that tail! Embarrassing.

I have since been trying to refine the tail system, using scrap ripstop to make bundled tail tassels for each kite, tied to line hung from the bottom of the spine. But achieving stable flight requires so much drag, via a long tail and thick twine, that the kites do not remotely resemble nimble fighters.

Readers will note that kitemaker Jaswanth Giani Singh crafts a significantly larger kite and larger kites generally fly easier than small ones. It is therefore possible the smaller models sent to us were designed for decoration and not flying, as is true with many souvenir kites from other parts of Asia. Still, I have a favorite Indian patang that is smaller than the tukkals but flies sharp and true.

Frustration still reigns!

—Steve McKerrow

first 20 to 30 meters (60 to 90 feet) directly beneath the kite. Here in Punjab we paste it to the entire length of the thread."

He handed over his line for me to feel its roughness, and the tension which the hovering kite applied to it.

"During prolonged fights, one's hands often start to bleed, but a real kite enthusiast cares not a damn for it!" he said.

In a kind of kiteflier's curriculum vitae that Singh shared with me, he recorded that when he was five or six years old he was already known as a locally famous kiteflier. When he was 14, Singh was admitted to permanent membership of the Qila Kite Club of Amritsar, where he learned the art of kitemaking from several senior members, his "masters."

In 1981 and 1982, he won the championship of Punjab Province, and estimates that he has participated in weekly kite club competitions for 38 years!

According to generally accepted rules, only kites of approximately the same weight and size fight against one another. Otherwise, in uneven fights the lighter kites are bound to be defeated. For light breezes, tukkals of at least 75 centimeters' (about 34 inches') spread are required.

#### SINGH'S TUKKAL-MAKING TECHNIQUE:

**TOP LEFT:** Twin crossbows are joined at their tips and laid upon the sail paper. Note equal bend of top and bottom spars, which are tapered at their ends; the top, or "male" stick is slightly thicker than the bottom, "female" spar.

**TOP RIGHT:** The spine, tapered in its bottom section, is lashed to crossbows & the top wing assembly is glued to paper. The shape is cut out, leaving a "hem" to fold over the spars.



**BOTTOM LEFT:** The bottom crossbow is lashed to the spine and bent upward at each end. Note the string leading from the tips to the spine where the middle crossbow is joined. The paper is bent over this string and the crossbow.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** The nose of the kite is formed by a string from the top crossbow to the end of the spine, and a piece of contrasting paper is folded over the string and glued in place. Note the paper traditionally is applied in "reverse," exposing the bare spine at the top of the kite.



"After two or three victories, a kite is endangered to be lost, even against a technically inferior competitor, as by that point of time all the glass powder on the thread is exhausted," Singh pointed out.

Once every five to seven years, he visits Bareilly, in the neighboring state of Uttar Pradesh, to acquire a supply of that city's famously high-quality manjha. He orders up to 10,000 meters (about 3,300 feet) of thread to be wound on his reels. "With this I am well equipped for many years of kite fighting. I don't need more, as my lines are seldom cut," he told me with a smile.

But his ability has caused problems in the Qila Kite Club, for "our gurus don't fight against me any more," he said, using the Sikh word for the aged and wise men who enjoy a high estimation in this society.

Their authority and adherence to kite tradition also was shown to me when Singh decided against letting me join the weekly fly of his club, fearing too many curious people gathering to see a foreign woman flying a kite in public! In this part of India, kite fighting is usually a hobby for men only.

However, Singh has for the first time begun letting one of his daughters play the role of handling the line spool while he

duels. And some of his kiteflier friends did join us flying from his rooftop.

At this gathering I also began to realize how central the idea of kite fighting is in India, for one of Singh's friends bought a nylon stunt kite that his sister had sent him from the United States. It could not be flown because it was missing some sticks, but I tried to explain the popularity of Western dual-line stunt kites.

"If these kites fly in circles, their two lines cross. Don't they cut one another?" Singh asked.

After my return to Europe, I sent Singh a two-line kite, and he confirmed it had arrived. But he made no further comment, leading me to suspect he had not yet managed to fly it.

#### NOT "FOR SERIOUS"

Before departing, I asked Singh why I had not seen kites in Andhra Pradesh.

"In the villages, people don't have sense for this kind of pleasure, and no time. They are too much occupied with the daily struggle for survival," he said. But he added, "Even in Amritsar, a city of 700,000 inhabitants, people don't take the hobby for serious. When I cross the campus, carrying one of my tukkals, people smile about me."

I came to remember this statement when leaving Amritsar. At the airport, security checks were painstakingly exact and the faces of the guards were frozen, for my flight to Delhi was aboard a plane arriving from Srinagar, capital of India's violence-stricken state of Kashmir.

Doubtfully, an officer looked at the huge parcel wrapped in newspaper which I carried. "Patang!" I said. A big and very amused smile flashed on his face. "Ah, patang," he informed a colleague, who smiled in the same obviously amused way.

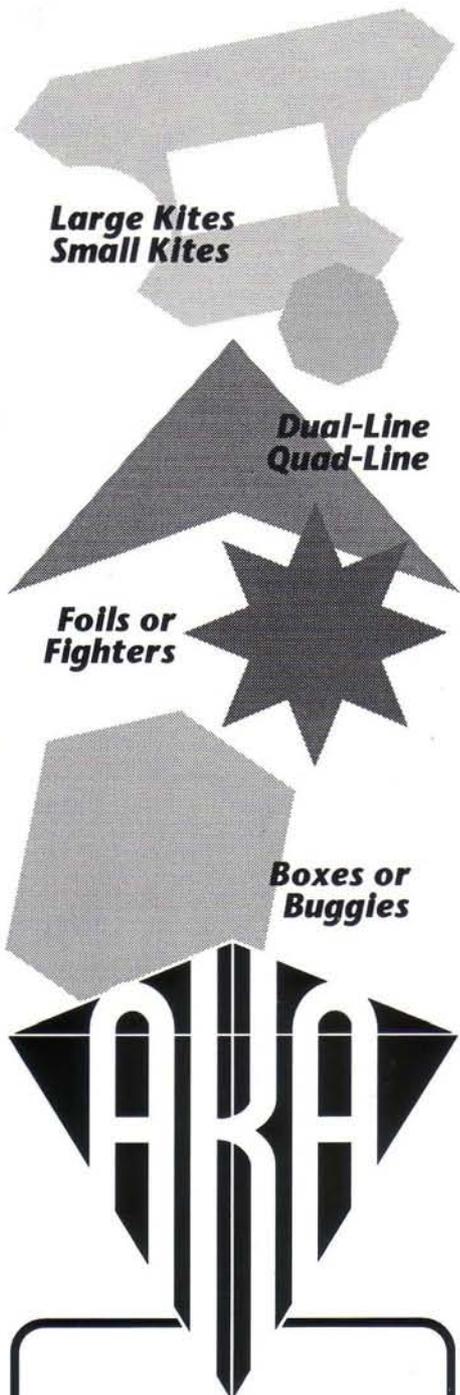
But when the plane finally took off, allowing a last glance at the Golden Temple of Amritsar in the evening's twilight, I was thinking about the story Singh had told me about the invention of the kite:

"Three thousand years ago a scientist was wrongly accused and imprisoned in China. In custody, he constructed a kite out of the few materials within his reach. In the darkness of the night this kite carried him over the wall of his prison and he let himself drop down—to be free again."

*TANIA BERGER lives in Vienna, Austria. Before leaving Andhra Pradesh, she designed a small booklet illustrating the making of kites, for use by young people in a center that teaches technical skills and crafts to children and teenagers of poor economic background.*

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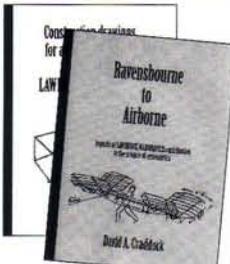
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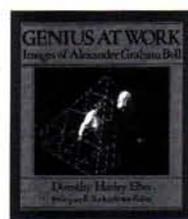
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Book and video as package, \$39.95



*Fishing for Angels: The Magic of Kites* by David Evans. A very pretty book with color illustrations throughout. Great kite

lore, in the form of narrative tales. The book offers good flying tips, too (just avoid the three easy kite plans at the back). Softcover, 63 pp., \$12.95



**NEW!** *Japanese Kites: Concepts & Construction* by Dan Kurahashi, in English. Home-made book with detailed, knowledgeable contents. Shows

techniques for working with bamboo plus plans for 6 traditional kites and 6 Western kites. Sections on trains, mini kites and figure kites. Softcover, 74 pp., \$14.95

## From China . . .

*Chinese Kites: Their Arts and Crafts* by Wang Xiaoyu, in English. Although rife with typos and translation oddities, this book offers a fascinating study of painstaking Chinese techniques. Extensive details on making and flying Asian-style kites, including bamboo framing and covering. Excellent plan drawings of about 25 kites are carefully proportioned. Some color photos. (Temporarily out of stock.) Hardcover, 300 pp., \$29.95



## From Denmark . . .

*Drager der Flyer (Kites to Fly)* by Dr. Hvirvelvind, in Danish. This 1986 classic, out of print for several years, is back by popular demand. Plans for about 10 kites range from the simple sled and kiskee-dee to a roller, flare and even an unusual raincoat kite, plus variations of each; materials, accessories, flying, resources. Charming cartoons, excellent drawings and lovely full-color photos. (Temporarily out of stock.) Softcover, 80 pp., \$29.95

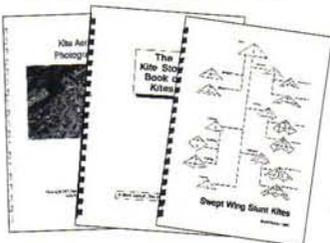


## From England . . .

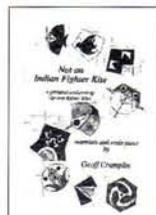
*Kite Cookery: How to Design Your Own Kite...* by Squadron Leader Don Dunford MBE (of the Dunford Flying Machine). Plans for 4 kites, building methods and materials, plus idiosyncratic aerodynamics ("the wind is like...giant sausages"). Softcover, 47 pp., \$5.95



## England continued . . .

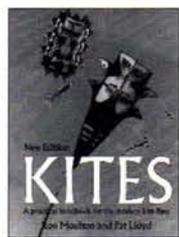


Mark Cottrell's self-published books, although homely in appearance, are honest, entertaining and useful. *Last stock available!*  
*Kite Aerial Photography*. Three kite plans and a comparison study of trade-offs in rigs, with source lists. Softcover, 44 pp., \$10.95  
*Swept Wing Stunt Kites*. Knowledgeable analysis of design elements (shapes, frames, sails, etc.); 4 plans. Softcover, 43 pp., \$11.95  
*The Kite Store Book of Kites*. 10 original Cottrell plans (such as the Swept Wing Box, Ramfoil, MultiJib) plus materials and techniques. Includes a 5.25" diskette (IBM) for computer design. Softcover, 48 pp., \$13.95



*Not an Indian Fighter Kite: a personal evolution of rip-stop fighter kites* by Geoff Crumplin. Although editorially rough, this book still contains jewels: about 20 good scaled kite plans (including an Afghan star, fugu, rokkaku, Brazilian, Korean, Martyn Lawrence Hornet) plus building tips, best for experienced makers. Also includes flying techniques and a set of proposed rules for combat. Softcover, 70 pp., \$18.95

**England continued . . .**

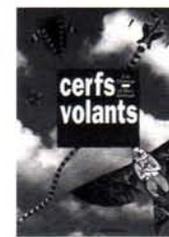


**Kites: A Practical Handbook** by Ron Moulton and Pat Lloyd. Extensively improved over 1992 first edition; offers 8 new designs, including 2 Codys, the Circoflex and the Brogden; also has the Hewitt Flexkite, Pearson Roller and several stunt kites. Excellent drawings, many pages of color, good sections on knots, flying techniques and parachuting teddy bears. Updated appendixes. Softcover, 240 pp., **\$31.95**



**NEW! Kite Flight: Theory and Practice** by Chris Wright. Clear and with useful illustrations, this book is in two parts: a thorough discussion of aerodynamics that may lose non-technical readers, and practical advice for making kites fly better. The author is nicely non-dogmatic, concluding, "...no one really understands kite behaviour." Softcover, 71 pp., **\$19.95**

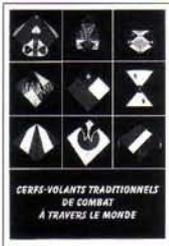
**From France . . .**



**Cerfs-volants, L'art en ciel (Kites, Art in the Sky)** by Eric Dommage & Marc Dommage, in French. Lavish in size and color, this book treats kitemaking as a legitimate art form. Profiles of Streeter, Matisse, Asker, Fabre, Brockett, Bodóczy, Cottenceau, Peters and Gressier, including beautiful examples of their work. Softcover, 126 pages, **\$46.95**

**France continued . . .**

**NEW! Cerfs-Volants Traditionnels de Combat à Travers le Monde (Traditional Fighter Kites Around the World)** by Karine Boitrelle and Ludovic Petit, in French. A nearly complete exhibit of fighter diversity includes kites of Afghanistan, Bermuda, Brazil, Brunei, Chile, Korea, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore. Has 14 plans; covers materials, winders, flying styles. Self-published, color cover, black-and-white interior illustrations. Softcover, 42 pp., **\$18.95**



*Les cerfs-volants, les connaître, les piloter, les construire (Kites, knowing them, flying them, making them)* by Yan Williams, in



French. This pretty introduction covers a lot of territory in compressed style. Color throughout, with many photos and clear drawings. Three basic kite plans. Softcover, 96 pp., **\$19.95**

**From Germany . . .**

**NEW! Skywork 3 Experience** by Rolf Wohlerl and Christine Lienau, in German. Latest volume in the useful Skywork series. Clear plan drawings for ten new stunter kites (including an indoor model and a trick kite) plus one dramatic single-liner, the famous Octopus by Peter Lynn. Color photographs of each kite. Softcover, 52 pp., **\$19.95**



**Germany continued . . .**



**NEW! Rund um den Drachen (Kite Peripherals)** by Walter Diem, in German. Over a dozen accessories, including windsocks, line climbers, banners, bols and a kite aerial photography system. A section on George Lawrence has his famed San Francisco photos. Excellent black-and-white drawings. Hardcover, 94 pp., **\$23.95**



Books by Hans Snoek, in German offer fascinating early Western kite lore: ... *und sie fliegen heute noch—Geschichte und Geschichten um den Drachen (and They Still Fly Today—History and Tales About Kites)*. Poems, songs, tales, drawings, photos, plans. Hardcover, 156 pp., **\$34.95** Band II (Vol. II). Another scrapbook of early days. Hardcover, 156 pp., **\$34.95** Both books as package, **\$66.95**

**From Italy . . .**



**Aquiloni Acrobatici (Acrobatic Kites)** by Cristina Sarvito and Giancarlo Galli, in Italian. First Italian stunt kite book. Clear

drawings, brief history, safety tips, techniques and maneuvers for individuals and teams. Includes book list and glossario translating standard English terms into Italian. Softcover, 141 pp., **\$19.95**

**From Japan . . .**

**NEW! Yasashii Wa-dako (Easy Native Japanese Kites)** by Eiji Ohashi, in Japanese. Stunning collection of plans, in 5 volumes, showing regional varieties of traditional kites. Titles clockwise from top left: Hokkaido/Tohoku, Kanto/Hokoriku, Tokai/Kinki, Kyushu and Shikoku/Chugoku/Okinawa. Each book features a section of crisp color photos, an identical chapter on building (well illustrated to show tools and techniques) and 36 to 42 kite plans, none of which are duplicates, all meticulously drawn. Clear metric measurements could be followed by experienced kitemakers who do not know Japanese. Softcover, each 112 pp., **\$29.95** Entire set of 5 books, **\$139.95**



**Tezukurri Omoshiro Dako Nyumon (A Primer of Interesting Handmade Kites)** by Eiji Ohashi, in Japanese. Traditional Asian and modern designs are among 29 easy-to-make figure and box kites. Includes Ohashi's famous arch train. Each kite represented with fine color photos and detailed drawings. Softcover, 100 pp., **\$29.95**



**From Switzerland . . .**

**Drachenreise (Kite Journey)** by Ruedi Epple-Gass, in German. Countries visited and researched in this interesting B&W book include Turkey, Vietnam, Dominican Republic, spots in the South Pacific, Latin America and Europe. With some political overtones, it is kiting's only gloomy book. Softcover, 125 pp., **\$42.95**



**Switzerland continued . . .**



**Drachen: Spiele mit dem Wind (Kites: Playing with the Wind)** by Rainer Neuner, in German. Attractive introductory book with

many color photos. Good sections on knots and line, tools and construction materials, plus plans for 8 single-line kites—including genki variants, a yakko, an Edo and a swallow. Also contains instructions for five wind toys geared to Swiss conditions (light winds). Minimal appendixes. Hardcover, 131 pp., **\$39.95**

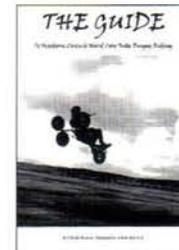
**From The Netherlands . . .**



Two popular stunt kite books by Servaas van der Horst and Nop Velthuizen, in English, cover many aspects of the sport in up-to-date high-tech style. Well organized and printed, the books contain excellent drawings and photographs, some in color: **Stunt Kites to Make and Fly**. The first book includes clear plans for 10 stunters, including one quad-line and two soft kites. Section on basic setup and flying techniques is especially good on line selection and management, and also includes team flying. Softcover, 96 pp., **\$21.95**

**Stunt Kites II: New Designs, Buggies and Boats**. Plans for 8 kites, both sparred and sparless, including the unusual "Quadriphant" pink elephant—plus advice on designing your own kites. Good chapter on aerobatics. Emphasizes traction kites, offering introductions to buggying and boating under kite power. Includes plans for handgrips, a harness and even a buggy. Worthwhile appendix material. Softcover, 96 pp., **\$22.95**

**From New Zealand . . .**

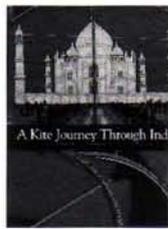


**NEW! The Guide to Western Circuit Hard Core Kite Buggy Riding**, by Charlie Watson. This homebrew compendium from the land where buggying began includes knowledgeable presentation of radical—even insane—tricks. They're do-able

by the fearless skilled, and offer vicarious thrills to the more sedate. Attractive black-and-white photos demonstrate that *somebody* did these tricks. Innovative diagrams are simple and clear, and the book includes safety information and a welcome glossary of New Zealand buggy-speak. Softcover, 32 pages, **\$10.95**

**From the United States . . .**

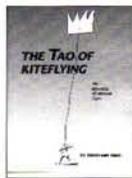
*A Kite Journey Through India* by Tal Streeter. A rich and absorbing kite travelogue mixes engaging stories about Indian life with excellent photos in color and black-and-white. A Portfolio of Show Kites presents a surprising variety of graphics and even structure. Streeter shares a store of information about fighter kites: how they are made, collected and fought. Has a chapter on Dinesh Bahadur, notorious entrepreneur of the '70s. Softcover, 182 pp., **\$39.95**



*Kites: Paper Wings Over Japan* by Tal Streeter, Scott Skinner, Masaaki Modegi and Tsutomu Hiroi. This lovely, colorful survey of Japanese kites covers a wide swath, including history, many photos and kitemaker profiles—plus information on where to view and buy Japanese kites. Appendixes. *Last stock available!* Softcover, 96 pp., **\$18.95**



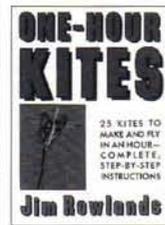
Books by Margaret Greger are clear and trustworthy, ideal for beginning or expert kites: *Kites for Everyone*. Over 40 well-selected plans plus accessories; straightforward style. Second edition, softcover, 136 pp., **\$12.95**  
*More Kites for Everyone*. Some old, some new. Plans for 17 kites, from simple to complex. Softcover, 59 pp., **\$9.95**



*The Tao of Kiteflying: The Dynamics of Tethered Flight*, by Harm van Veen, in English. Tough questions tackled by one of Holland's most respected kites. Clear writing and diagrams explain stability, scaling, the subtlety of the fighter kite and how to make two simple kites. Charming cartoons. Softcover, 56 pp., **\$12.95**

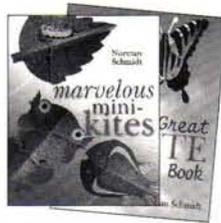


**NEW EDITION!** *The Magnificent Book of Kites* by Maxwell Eden. A hefty but little updated reworking of Eden's earlier *Kiteworks*. Contents based on material from leading designers. New Internet chapter (thin), approximately 50 plans, sewing tips, aerodynamics, accessories and (un)related stories. Kite paintings + a few photos in color. Appendixes & index. *Last stock available!* Hardcover, 464 pp., **\$17.95**

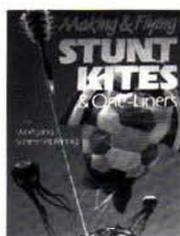


Books by Jim Rowlands have a few color photos and many black-and-white line drawings: *Soft Kites and Windssocks*. (Same as British *Kites and Windssocks*.) The best, most popular Rowlands work. Plans for 11 soft kites, plus five windssocks, five drogues and two bags. Softcover, 104 pp., **\$14.95**  
*One-Hour Kites*. (Same as British *Kites to Make and Fly*.) In a hurry to make a kite? Choose from plans for 25 kites including the Facet and three stunt kites. Softcover, 95 pp., **\$14.95**

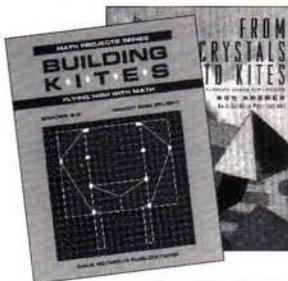
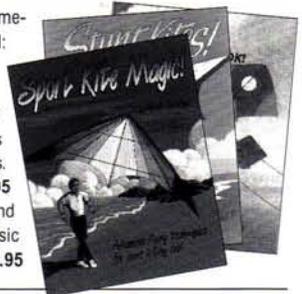
Colorful books with clear plans by Norman Schmidt: **NEW!** *Marvelous Mini-Kites*. A pretty book with 17 designs made from 8 1/2" x 11" paper. Hardcover, 96 pp., **\$19.95**  
*The Great Kite Book*. A collection of 19 unusual designs (mostly insects and birds), all made from painted Tyvek. Short histories interspersed with the plans. Softcover, 96 pp., **\$12.95**



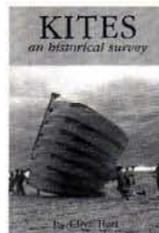
*Making & Flying Stunt Kites & One-Liners* by Wolfgang Schimmelpfennig, in English. Wide-ranging and up-to-date, with superb color plans for six stunts and three one-liners. Some translation oddities. Softcover, 80 pp., **\$12.95**



Books by David Gomberg are "home-made," lacking photos, but useful: *Sport Kite Magic!* His best yet covers the newer tricks and indoor flying. Softcover, 126 pp., **\$13.95**  
*Stunt Kites!* All the basics plus tips from 20 top fliers. No plans. Softcover, 88 pp., **\$10.95**  
*The Fighter Kite Book!* How to fly and battle them plus plans for a basic fighter. Softcover, 74 pp., **\$8.95**



Teacher's workbooks of use for kites: **NEW!** *Building Kites* by Nancy Ann Belsky. Lessons in measuring and enlarging combined with good instructions for making sled, box and tetrahedral kites. Softcover, 65 pp., **\$11.95**  
*From Crystals to Kites* by Ron Kremer. Teaches solid geometry. Inspiring shapes, good terminology. Plans for building a tetrahedral and other cellular kites. Softcover, 102 pp., **\$11.95**

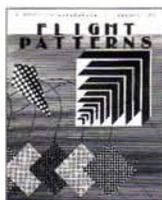


*Kites: An Historical Survey* by Clive Hart. Revised, second edition (1982). Respected, in-depth reference work has many black-and-white pictures and the most extensive kite bibliography in print. Good index, no plans. Now in hardcover only, 210 pp., **\$29.95**



**NEW COVER!** *25 Kites that Fly* by Leslie Hunt. This popular volume has a bright new cover. The content, however, is still the interesting reprint of the 1929 original. Has plans for some good old-fashioned kites of paper and wood: two-sticks, three-sticks, stars, a Malay, a tetra, yacht, etc. Also gives plans for a reel, a clinometer and line messengers; historical data and photos. Hunt was a kitemaker for the U.S. Weather Bureau. Softcover, 110 pp., **\$3.95**

*Flight Patterns* by Leland Toy. A modest book from a well-remembered kiteer. Solid tips and easy, well-illustrated plans for eight kites—including a rotor made from foam meat trays. A portion of this book's proceeds go to the Leland Toy fund. Softcover, 36 pp., **\$11.95**



*Kite Precision* by Ron Reich. A celebrated stunt flier teaches basic dual-line techniques plus the Revolution. Includes rudiments of team flying, choreography, music selection and three complete ballet programs. Good diagrams of maneuvers; touches of humor. Self-published; many low-grade photos. Softcover, 182 pp., **\$14.95**



*The Usborne Book of Kites* by Susan Mayes. A cute, practical collection for kids (or adults working with them). Six easy kites, with well-illustrated instructions. Nice introduction to materials and flying. Many helpful tips and lively color drawings. Softcover, 32 pp., **\$6.95**



**NEW!** *On Bats, Birds and Planes* by W. J. Brick. This simple homemade book, with black-and-white drawings but no photos, includes clear design discussions and plans for 4 kites based on fighters and deltas, using wooden spars and plastic bags. Includes an Egyptian vulture. Also plans for 4 winders. Softcover, 36 pp., **\$4.95**



*Make Your Own Kite (new Kites)* by John W. Jordan. Clear plans for nine original kites made of unusual materials, such as plastic foam and computer cards. Amusing reading from a genuine

enthusiast. All in black-and-white with some photographs. *Now in hardcover only; limited supplies*, 90 pp., **\$14.95**



*Super Kites III* by Neil Thorburn. Wonderfully quirky and personalized, with many designs for making delta-sled-box inventions. Tested, creative techniques use easily available materials, mostly plastic bags and wooden dowels. Also includes "kite gear." Written by

an octogenarian who sounds like a teenager. Some color photos brighten this "completely handmade" book. Softcover, 123 pp., **\$8.95**

**BARGAIN CORNER!** (books not shown)

■ *Fighter Kites* by Philippe Gallot, in English. This was the first good book in English on dueling kites, with plans for 29 designs plus tips and games. Enthusiastic, with clear illustrations, but suspect metric conversions. *Last stock available! Get it now!* Softcover, 96 pp. **\$12.95**

■ *Ski the Beach* by Stan Rogers. This homemade book is all about sand skiing with kites, on "boards" adapted from water

skis, the only title on this topic. The author emphasizes safety and illustrates his experiences with loads of charts and black-and-white photos. Softcover, 100 pp., **\$13.95**

■ Books by Wayne Hosking are uneven in style and presentation:  
*Kites*. Lavish color; good research on Asia. Softcover, 120 pp., now only **\$11.95**  
*Kites to Touch the Sky*. "Homemade" book of 32 plans for plastic kites is good for workshops. No photos. Softcover, 96 pp., **\$9.95**

## Multimedia kite products!



**Australian Kiting**, edited by Peter Batchelor, a CD-ROM for PC or Macintosh computers. Includes the collected newsletters and other materials of the Australian Kite Association, dating back to 1978, plus easy access to the organization's interesting website. Has loads of plans, tips, classroom uses for kitemaking and more than 100 color photos of Australian kites and kites, **\$19.95**



### CLOSEOUT PRICE SPECIAL!

Last stocks of Dodd Gross videos: **Flight School 1.5 "The Basics"** (23 min.), **Flight School III "Tricks"** (30 min.), & **Flight School IV "More Tricks"** (28 min.). Instruction from beginning setup through advanced tricks shown by a master of the sport, each tape, **\$9.95** or all three for only **\$24.95**

## Fun kite stuff!

**The Compleat Rokkaku Kite Chronicles & Training Manual.** Rokkaku battles are a fixture at kite festivals in this country. Here is everything about their evolution since their impromptu start in 1983. Includes reprinted historic material from *Kite Lines*, plus plans for a 7½-foot rokkaku and two smaller variations, using modern materials. Appendix of resources. Softcover, 20 pp., **\$6.95**

**Buggies, Boats & Peels: State of the Art Kite Traction and Owner's Manual** by Peter Lynn. How to get started in kite buggying and kitesailing, including history, theory, basic techniques, racing tactics, kite selection, maintenance. Boat traction treated with similar thoroughness. Includes complete data on the Peter Lynn Peel. Second edition, softcover, 12 pages, **\$6.95**

**Handsome pins in limited supply!** From left, the newest, our classic Eddy kite pin in trendy color, lime parfait; 1½", **\$6.00** Center, our 20th Anniversary pin etched with our Æolus (Greek god of the winds) logo; in elegant gold-tone and black; 1½", **\$7.00** Right, back by popular demand, our original Eddy kite pin in rich forest green, 1½", **\$6.00 Super deal!**—any 2 for **\$11.00**—or all 3 for **\$16.00** plus **\$1.00** shipping per order



# ARE YOU MISSING SOMETHING?

## BACK ISSUES OF KITE LINES

**BACK ISSUES** of *Kite Lines* offer a wealth of information and ideas: plans, tips, techniques (for both single- and multiline fliers), personalities, world records, festivals, reviews—an essential living history of today's kiting, saturated with inspiring stories and designs.

No wonder back issues are avidly collected by so many enthusiasts. You can start now with the 22 issues available while supplies last in original paper form...

### ■ SUMMER 1989 (VOL. 7, NO. 3)

India's kite frenzy by George Peters and Philip Morrison; Bali by Simon Freidin; major stunt kite survey; kite capitals of the world; Sotich's flying wedge; Ohashi's arch train.

### ■ WINTER 1989-90 (VOL. 7, NO. 4)

China by Tal Streeter and Skye Morrison; Sloboda on Dyeing Ripstop; Bill Green, inventor of the delta; modifying a parachute; stunting a Flow Form; Nishibayashi's bat.

### ■ SUMMER 1990 (Vol. 8, No. 1)

Festivals in New Zealand, Berlin, Washington (England) and Australia; parachute stunter plans; Peter Lynn's future tech; Bobby Stanfield climbs Stone Mountain.

### ■ WINTER 1990-91 (Vol. 8, No. 2)

European spectacular: Dieppe, Montpellier, Bristol, Berlin;

Stunt Kite Survey; D'Alto on Whitehead (1901); largest Eddy record; butterfly plans; power flight on suspended wire.

### ■ SPRING 1991 (Vol. 8, No. 3)

Whistling kites of Nantong, China by Tal Streeter; Gomberg's kite pin confessions; quick & easy angle estimating; Wind Shot stunter plans; record for longest kite.

### ■ SUMMER-FALL 1991 (Vol. 8, No. 4)

Pierre Fabre in Japan; Kinnaird's rokkaku strategies; Bill Kocher's obtuse tetra; Huntington Beach scandal; Wildwood at its best; Jalbert obituary; Sky Gallery; Peter Malinski.

### ■ WINTER 1991-92 (Vol. 9, No. 1)

Gubbio (Italy) is GaGa; Sprint stunter contest in Italy; Richard Synergy in Poland; Tucker's Painless Parafoil plans; Sloboda on painting ripstop; SG: Roberto Guidori.

### ■ SPRING-SUMMER 1992 (Vol. 9, No. 2)

André Cassagnes, father of French kiting; world class Thailand; natural fibers festival; Bill Tyrrell flies high at Christmas Island; stunter survey; Heart kite; SG: George Peters.

### ■ FALL 1992 (Vol. 9, No. 3)

Castiglione (Italy) + Le Touquet, Barcelona, Ostia; the Arch Ribbon—historic notes, tips; kites over Niagara Falls; handling tangles; Ianuzzi's Featherlight; SG: Kim Petersen.

### ■ WINTER 1992-93 (Vol. 9, No. 4)

Kite power by Nop Velthuisen, with traction chronology; fighter kite survey; Dieppe; Hamamatsu by George Peters; the GX-3 stunter; spray-painting nylon; SG: the Gibians.

### ■ SPRING 1993 (Vol. 10, No. 1)

Soul-lifting kites of Guatemala; Java festival; Ed Alden's family of fighter kites; celeb rokkakus; travel tips; Rameaux aerials; quad-line Propeller; SG: Jørgen Møller Hansen.

### ■ SUMMER-FALL 1993 (Vol. 10, No. 2)

Adrenaline tour of India; István Bodóczy's asymmetry; Crowell's Cross Deck; Sac City, Iowa festival classic; kites at the Pyramids; power on ice; SG: Tony Wolfenden.

### ■ WINTER 1993 (Vol. 10, No. 3)

North Sea events (Terschelling, Fanø, Scheveningen); kite camp caravan; Rendez-Vous Mondial, Canada; AKA at Seaside;

Sheragy's butterflies; SG: Wolfgang Schimmelpfennig.

### ■ SPRING-SUMMER 1994 (Vol. 10, No. 4)

Kite sailing; South America: Colombia & Brazil; buggy events + Scoot Buggy & Wheels of Doom plans; Kevin Shannon delta; Australia's Bondi Beach festival; SG: Reza Ragheb.

### ■ FALL 1994 (Vol. 11, No. 1)

Shirone's great museum; Korean fighters and who's who; art & ideas of Joan Montcada; the Thailand International; aerial photographer George Lawrence; SG: Jimmy Sampson.

### ■ WINTER-SPRING 1995 (Vol. 11, No. 2)

Dieppe; Hargrave commemoration; Stockholm event; spar study; new buggies; Streeter on Hiroshima; Shannon's Baby Cicada fighter; Alex Mason; Roger Maddy; SG: Scott Skinner.

### ■ SUMMER-FALL 1995 (Vol. 11, No. 3)

Great festivals: New Zealand, Curaçao, Israel, Italy, Canada; artist Steve Brockett; the Smithsonian; Playsail & Windbow by George Peters; What is a Kite?; SG: Pierre Fabre.

### ■ WINTER-SPRING 1996 (Vol. 11, No. 4)

Kites of Nepal; Mallorca roundtable; skiting the Greenland ice cap; kite patents by Ed Grauel; Düsseldorf, Peter Rieleit; Stan Rogers; Gomberg on Fanø; SG: Tom McAlister.

### ■ SUMMER 1996 (Vol. 12, No. 1)

Kite fishing Indonesian style; festival at Berck-sur-Mer; St. Elmo's fire; Norway's Isegran Dragefestival; special report on power kites; Is Pin Collecting Dead?; SG: Michael Goddard.

### ■ FALL-WINTER 1996 (Vol. 12, No. 2)

Kites in museums; Gibson Girl box rescue; a blessed Dieppe; Why Kites Fly; the Korea International Kite Festival; fighter kites of Hong Kong; SG: Oscar & Sarah Bailey.

### ■ SPRING-SUMMER 1997 (Vol. 12, No. 3)

The Tosa Dako of Japan; touring India with Tal Streeter; buggying at Berrow, England; George Lawrence kite photography controversy; the Cartagena bubble machine; SG: Jon Burkhardt.

### ■ SPRING 1999 (Vol. 13, No. 1)

Glorious Japan festivals; the Flow Form story; "Skiting" on ice and snow; George Peters in India; Dave Gomberg in Dubai; color from a spray can. SG: Michel Gressier.

■ **BACK ISSUES:** \$4.50 each + \$1.00 each shipping; 4 or more copies: \$4.50 each, free shipping

■ **REGISTER:** Two years ago we compiled a booklet that provides more detail about the major content of every issue of *Kite Lines* (through Fall-Winter 1996), to help readers decide what editions would be of interest. The guide is free. Send self-addressed stamped envelope to *Kite Lines*, P.O. Box 466, Randallstown, MD 21133-0466, USA.

■ **NOTE:** Extinct issues are not listed on this page, but are detailed in the Register. They are also available in bound photocopies printed to order: \$20 each, free shipping



# Marvin, Felker, Bui, Edlund, Yuncker, Sisson

## TOM MARVIN

The owner of Hang-em High Fabrics, Sheldon Thomas (Tom) Marvin, died at his home in Richmond, Virginia on May 28 at age 60. He was devoted to supplying every possible need for kitemakers from the day he started business in 1989. "He went out of his way to help the customer, even to research things," said his wife Bonnie.

But in a tribute in the Wings Over Washington (DC) club newsletter, his friend Les Duty, noted that Tom also made many kites. "Some of these were utterly outstanding. He took ideas from all the greats, past and present and designed new things to amaze himself...[although] he never showed them off or bragged to anyone very much about them," praised Duty.

Tom's wife, Bonnie, is carrying forward with the business. —Valerie Govig

## BARBARA FELKER

One of kiting's benefactors, Barbara Lee Felker, died in Clinton Township, Michigan on June 27 at the age of 59. She was a member of the 5/20 Kite Group, Detroit, and a dear friend to many kitefliers. She owned a large collection of kites and displayed them while giving kitemaking workshops in the local area.

She had been diagnosed with ovarian cancer in October 1998 and had undergone numerous treatments since then, but was hoping to live to go to her first AKA convention, in Muncie, Indiana.

Her husband, Phillip Felker, prepared to distribute her ashes by kite over Lake St. Clair but was unsuccessful in four attempts because of unsuitable wind. He plans to try again in the spring of 2000. —Valerie Govig

## DAVID BUI

Outstanding kiteflier David Bui of Overland Park, Kansas was killed in an automobile accident in Mexico on July 17. He was an aerospace engineering graduate of Kansas University and a core member of the Kansas City Kite Club, which he supported as club treasurer from 1992 to 1994 and as host of many kite workshops.

He had first become fascinated with kites after visiting the Wind Wizards kite

store in Kansas City. He helped so often at the store that he was finally hired there.

Chris Moore, of Wind Wizards, said, "His thirst for knowledge kept driving him to higher levels" and he was eventually persuaded to compete. He traveled extensively to competitions, usually flying his own design, the Phoenix. In 1995 he won all the top awards and swept the national AKA competitions for both stunt kiteflying and single-line kitemaking. With his versatility and enthusiasm, his loss will be broadly felt in the kite community. —Valerie Govig

## MEL EDLUND

The president of the British Columbia Kitefliers Association in 1997 and 1998, Mel Edlund, died suddenly on August 31 from a heart attack. He was 58 years old.

Edlund started kiteflying regularly in the summer of 1993, and progressed quickly from dual-line to multiple-line kites. With his wife, Minky, he built kites and won trophies for them, especially his rokkakus. He was known, too, for his innovative routines, including dressing as Pavarotti and flying to "O Sole Mio."

With Wayne Pattison (current BCKA president) he was invited to China and Japan last spring. He described his trip to China in the Summer 1999 issue of "Windsox," the BCKA newsletter, ending "...for now, so long, and I will be there again next year."

—Valerie Govig

## TERRY YUNCKER

Well-known former owner of Ocean Kites in Long Beach, Washington and Windborne Kites in Monterey, California, Terry J. Yuncker, died suddenly of a heart attack on October 5 coming in to Los Angeles International Airport on his way to the AKA convention in Muncie, Indiana. He was 51 years old.

He started in kites in the 1980s with the Hi-Flier Mfg. company in Colorado. He managed Ocean Kites in 1995, then partnered in owning it with Roger Holeman. In 1996 the partners purchased Windborne Kites as well as the World Cup stunt kite competition, which they mounted in Long Beach, but could not continue for lack of sponsors. Yuncker was remembered with a

memorial kite, quickly built by Phil Broder at the convention. His widow, Jan, survives him in Colorado. —Valerie Govig

## TOM SISSON

The kiting community lost yet another of its longtime stalwarts December 2, 1999. Thomas Jack (Tom) Sisson, 75, one of the patriarchs of kiting in the Pacific Northwest, had been seriously ill for some time with pancreatic cancer, but had recently bounced back a bit. He even managed to make an appearance at the Everett (Washington) kite festival in August, where he was honored for his many accomplishments and contributions over the years.

Tom was a winner of the Steve Edeiken trophy (AKA's person-of-the-year award), was one of the founders of the Washington Kitefliers Association, held the still-standing record (with Carl Brewer and Bob McCort) for longest duration of indoor kite flight (39 hours 53 minutes in 1981 at the Kingdome in Seattle), and most importantly introduced many, many youngsters to kiteflying over the years.\* He was the backbone, the spirit, the shining light of the WKA since its inception.

He created opportunities for public displays of kites at places like the Pacific Science Center, the Washington State Convention Center, various malls and other sites. He traveled to countless schools holding kitemaking workshops for kids of all ages. Last year, just for the heck of it, he decided to count how many kites he made in a 365-day period, and came up with over 2,200, March to March.

We should all take an opportunity to fly a kite in his honor some day soon, and especially to take the time to help a kid learn the joys of kiteflying, because I think that was his primary legacy.

...Tom was a true inspiration to us in kiting and in life. He will be sorely missed.

—Steve & Judy Millspaugh

\*For several years, Tom directed a crew in his system of making "Sisson Sleds" at a festival for handicapped children. A total of 2,700 kites were made in three days and documented by Margaret Holzbauer and John FVan Gilder in the Summer-Fall 1987 *Kite Lines*. ◆

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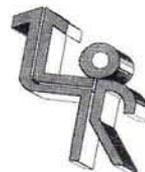
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### FOR SALE

**KITE PATENTS:** Every kite-related patent issued in the U.S. is available in capsule form to those sending \$50 to Ed Grauel, 799 Elmwood Terrace, Rochester, NY 14620. Included are patent numbers, filing and issuance dates, inventors' names and a brief description for each of the 836 patents.

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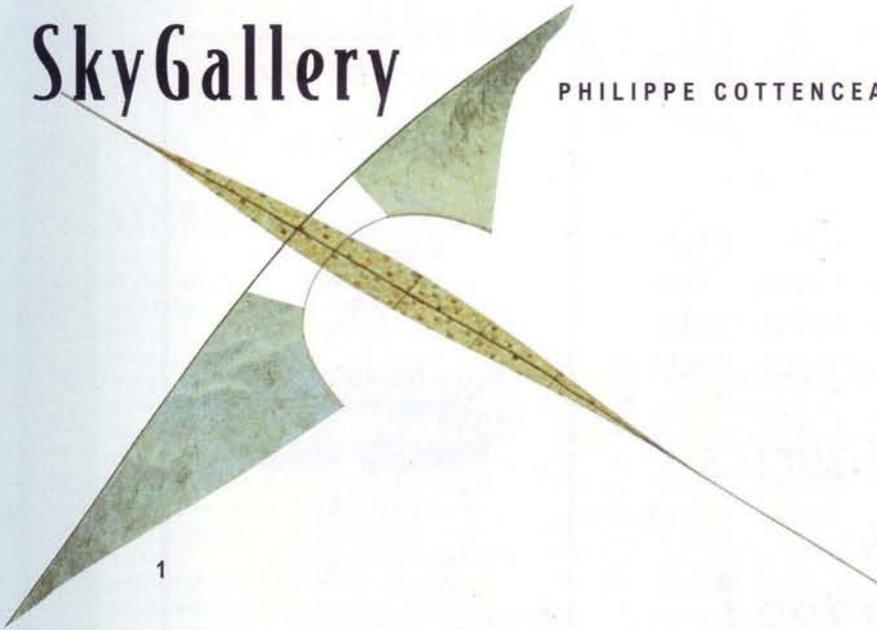
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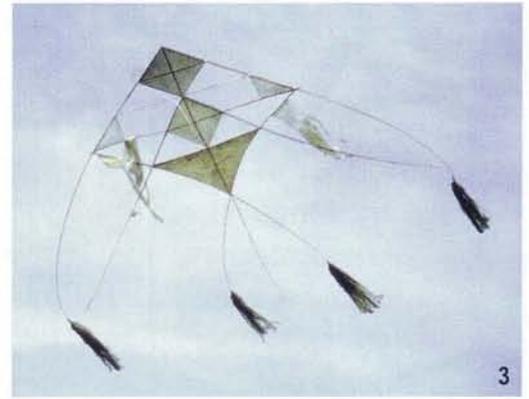
# SkyGallery

PHILIPPE COTTENCEAU

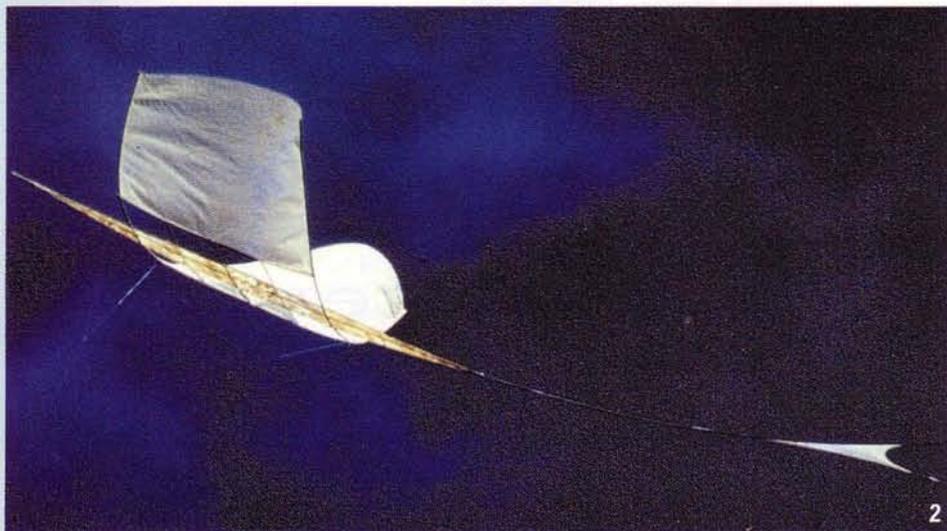


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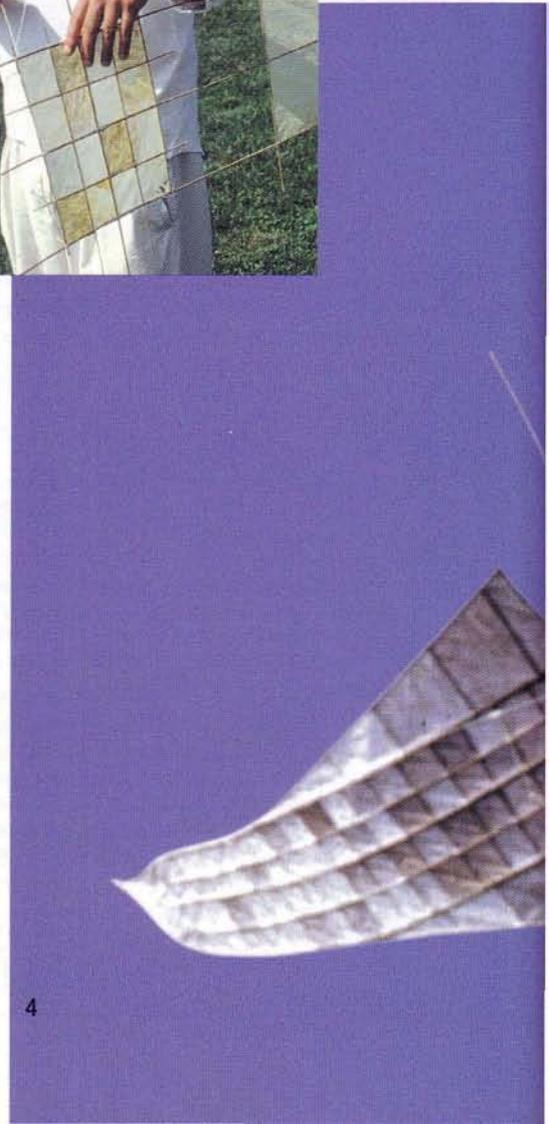
**KITEMAKER:** Philippe Cottenceau, 42, Reillanne, France  
**OCCUPATION:** Kitemaker and director of the association *Au fil des Vents*  
**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in literature, Faculty of Humanities of Angers, France  
**KITEFLYING EXPERIENCE:** I began to make kites 21 years ago.  
**INSPIRATION:** Writings (cuneiform, Chinese, African, etc.), tools, work instruments, costume jewelry, women's finery  
**AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT ON KITES:** Sometimes just a few hours, sometimes a great number of years  
**AWARDS/HONORS:** First place in the professional category, artistic creation category, Dieppe, 1996  
**FAVORITE FLYING SPOT:** On the high plateaus of my country  
**PHILOSOPHY / INTENT IN KITEMAING:** To lighten, to make the sky, the Earth be lighter  
**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:** I founded in 1996 the association *Au Fil des Vents* to encourage kite enthusiasts to find inspiration in the spirit and techniques of traditional kitemaking.  
**PHOTOGRAPHS:** Guillaume Nisin (1, 3, 4, 5, portrait), Maxime Fellion (2, 6), & Pierre Lieutaghi (8)



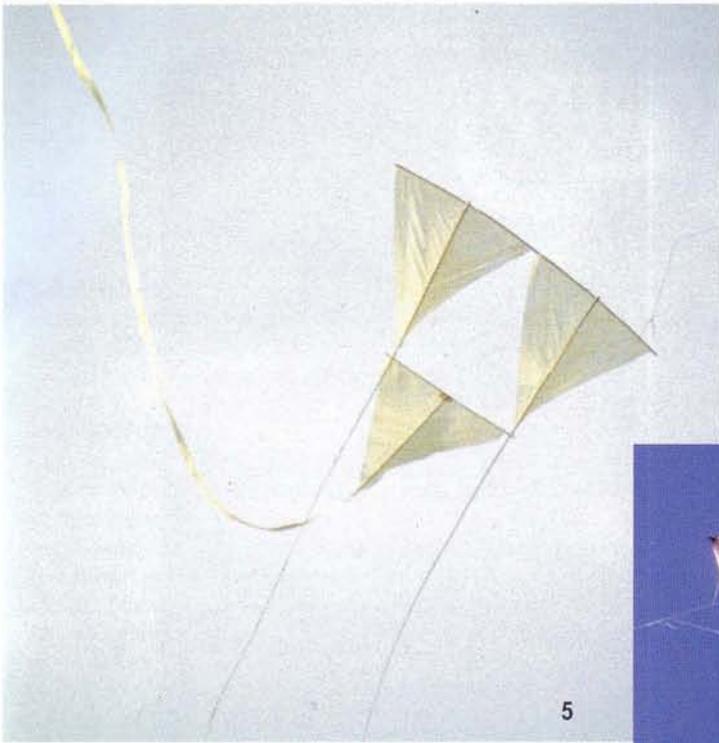
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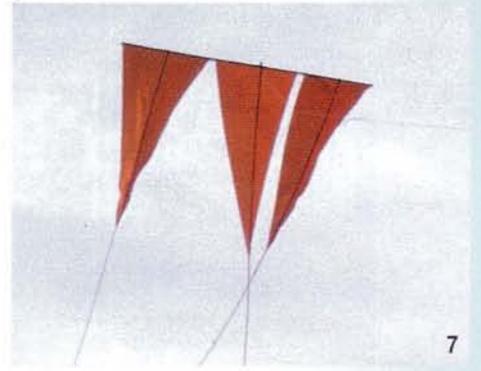
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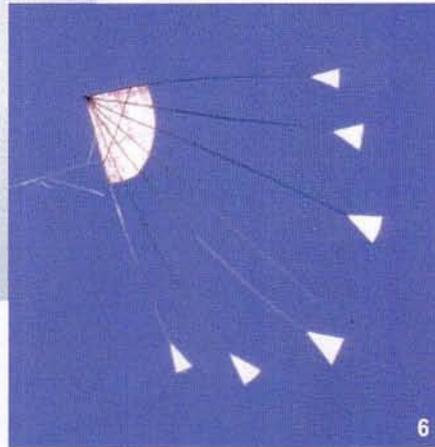
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6

**KITES BY PHILIPPE COTTENCEAU**

**1. NOCK:** 150 cm x 140 cm, bamboo and Nepalese & Japanese paper, dyed

**2. TWO PAGES FOR THE SKY:** 200 cm x 140 cm, bamboo & Japanese paper

**3. ONE KITE "DE TROP":** 140 cm x 140 cm, central *nervure* (vein) of coconut palm leaf & Japanese paper, dyed

**4. FLINTS:** 150 cm x 150 cm, bamboo & Japanese paper

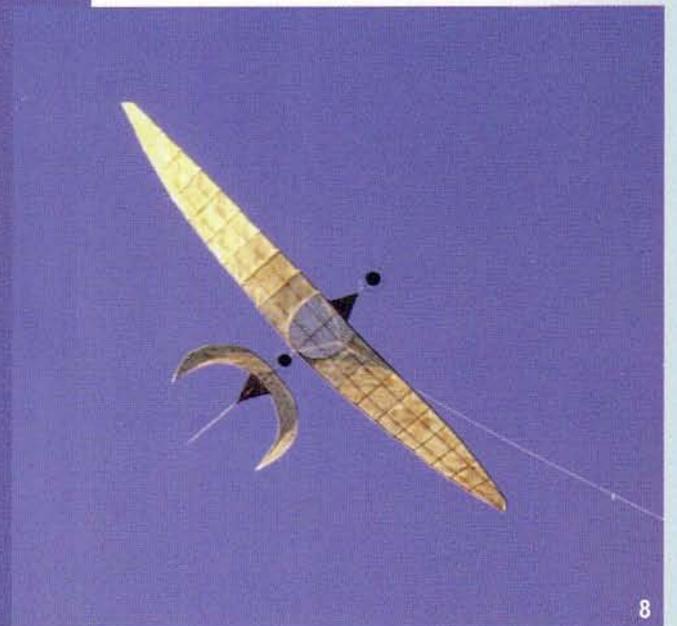
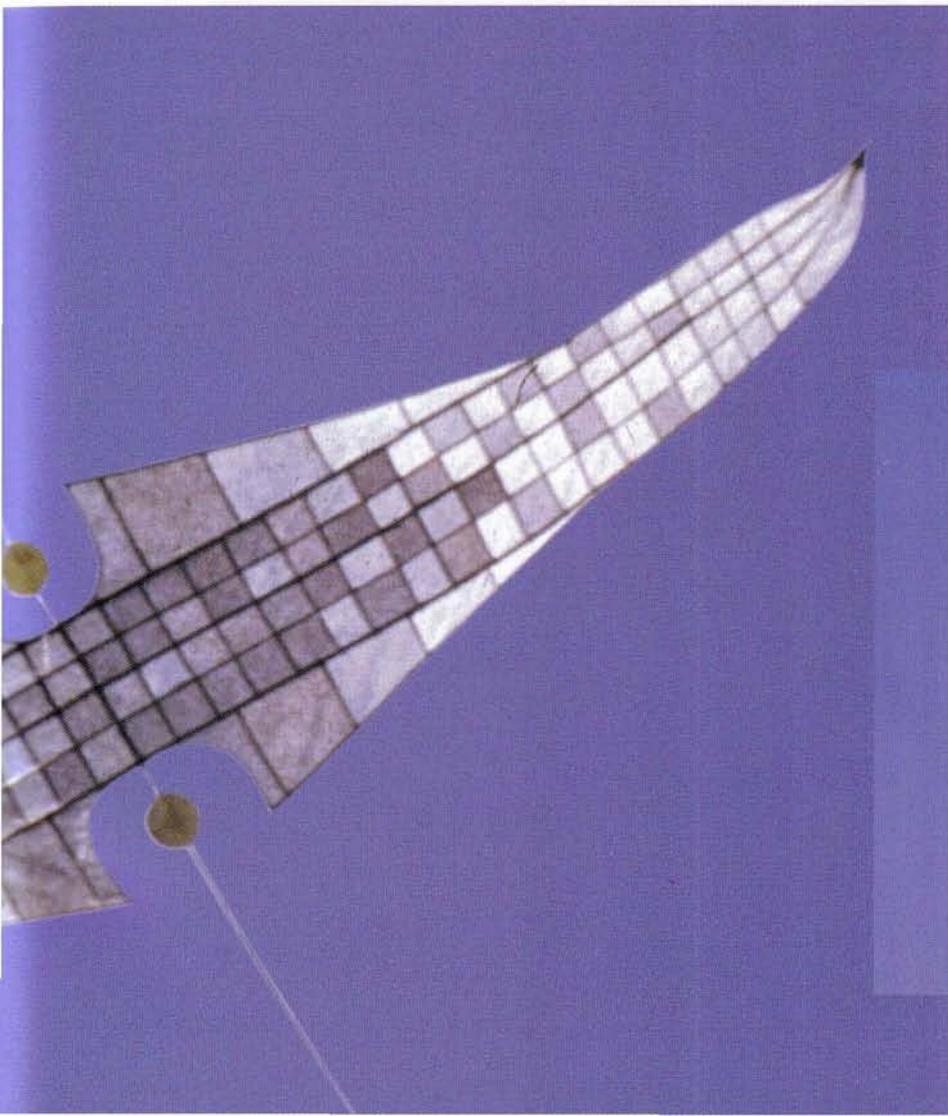
**5. SCARCELY ANYTHING:**

120 cm x 80 cm, central *nervure* of coconut palm leaf & Japanese paper, dyed

**6. HARROW:** 100 cm x 100 cm, central *nervure* of coconut palm leaf & Japanese paper, dyed

**7. JUST A SIGN:** 120 cm x 90 cm, central *nervure* of coconut palm leaf & Japanese paper, dyed

**8. TO FLY SWIFTLY AWAY:** 200 cm x 200 cm, central *nervure* of coconut palm leaf & Japanese paper, dyed



8

# News, Rumors & Miscellany

BY THE KITE LINES STAFF

## STARS OF THE CONVENTION

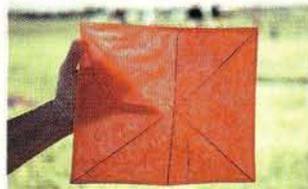
How do you define excellence in a convention? If by its kites alone, the 1999 AKA gathering in Muncie, Indiana made the cut. Take a look at only a few...



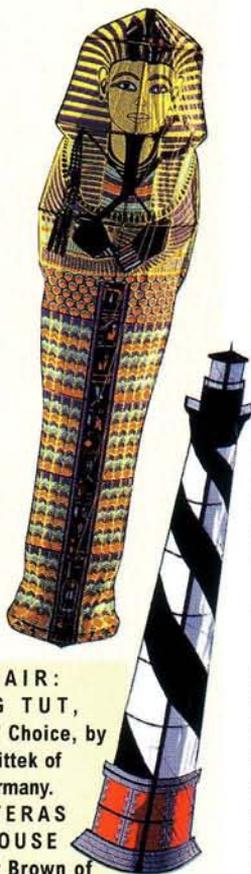
★ **"RENAISSANCE,"**  
Grand National Champion, jointly built by Richard Jacobson and Bobby Stanfield of Visalia, California and Jug Buckles (seen here) of Shawnee, Kansas.



★ **TETRAHEDRALS** were abundant and superb at the convention. One above is by Scott Skinner of Monument, Colorado. It took Skinner six years to get it right: "Fittings are the key," he says, and his are from the late Peter Malinski, made by Till Krapp of Germany.



★ **BUKA MADNESS!** Bruce Lambert of Olympia, Washington led a workshop in making a fighter version of the *buka*. Traditionally a stable Japanese kite of some antiquity, it usually bears paintings, often of a carp. Fighter fanciers have become infatuated with the *buka*. Above example is by Karen Gustavson of Solvang, California.



**TALL PAIR:**  
★ **KING TUT,** Members' Choice, by Peter Schittek of Berlin, Germany.  
★ **HATTERAS LIGHTHOUSE** by Hunter Brown of Wilmington, North Carolina, commanded \$3,500 at auction.



**TRAINS:**  
★ **Felix the Cat** with revolving eyes, by Charmayne Umbowers of Gig Harbor, Washington.

The historic Blue Hill Observatory of East Milton, Massachusetts has completed a major renovation, including a Kite Shed Visitors Center. Exhibits and school-based programs are in progress. All is of much interest to kitefliers who want to know more about the great box kites that measured weather at the turn of the century.

Is this the world's most expensive kite? A tiny Mylar® kite by Glenn Davison of Dunstable, Massachusetts, was auctioned in Marblehead for \$95. That works out to \$3 million per pound! Glenn curated an amazing exhibit of 800 miniature kites (10" or smaller) borrowed from all over for the AKA convention.

Retiree Barbara Hall of Absecon, New Jersey, a kiteflier for 10 years, finally hit North Dakota in June, and has now flown kites in every state in the Union. She wears a U.S. map on the back of her jacket, with a pin on each state. "So I'm starting on the Canadian provinces now," she says. "I've done B.C. and Ontario."

**KITE QUOTE OF THE YEAR?**  
"People were saving their money for things like water and food. Go figure."  
—Dodd Gross, on the lackluster response to kite displays and demos at Woodstock '99

The Art Kite Exhibition has landed. After travels to more than 25 museums around the world since 1988, this amazing collection of approximately 100 kites will be permanently mounted in a museum, a remodeled airport hangar in Detmold, Germany. The kites were collaborations: frames made by Japanese masters and surface paintings by renowned artists. The official opening is April 1, 2000; an international festival and competition will be held in September with prizes up to 1,000 Euro. For further information, contact the Art Kite Foundation, B.P. 1013, L-1010

Luxembourg; tel: 352-49-04-43; fax: 352-49-06-43; www.art-kite.de or e-mail: info@artkite.de or ArtKite@Detmold.de

Stamp explosion! At least three countries have new postage stamps featuring kites. France used a very conventional design to show stunt kites at Dieppe, Japan printed a pair of stamps devoted to the big kites of Shirone, and Canada produced an unusual set of four peelable stamps of nonstandard shape (triangle, ellipse, trapezoid).

The Canadian stamps are sold in a booklet of eight (two of each kite stamp), with a total of 14 kites, not all Canadian, illustrated. First-day sales were October 1 in Baddeck, Nova Scotia—where Alexander Graham Bell lived. The stamps are available from Canada Post until September 30, 2000 for \$3.68 (Canadian), including shipping (VISA, MC or AmEx). Phone: 800-565-4362. Mail: National Philatelic Centre, 75 St. Ninian Street, Antigonish, NS B2G 2R8, Canada.

A true kite park—designated specifically for kiteflying—is a flier's dream. And it has come true in central Maryland.

Park officials in Howard County (between Washington, DC and Baltimore) and the Maryland Kite Society have signed a two-year contract making the club principal user of a big open space (name yet to be chosen). It is "really, really nice," with a paved road and grass mowing provided by the County, says Adam Grow, outgoing head of the MKS (and incoming AKA President).

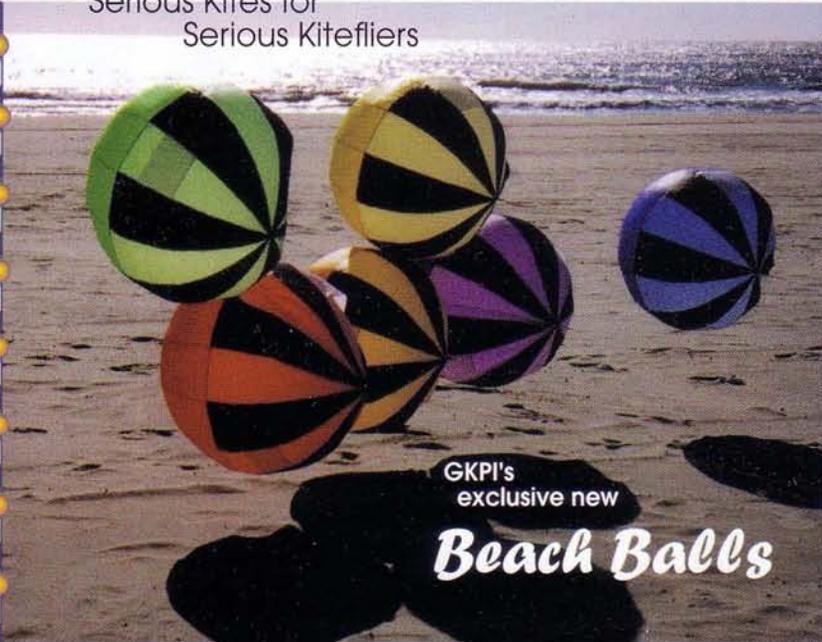
The Maryland kite park is not the first in the U.S., however. Kitefliers in Seattle, Washington fly from "Kite Hill," where they volunteer many hours clearing brush and tending the lawn.



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| Douglas Allan Fales        | Peter Lynn                         | <i>John F. Van Gilder</i>      | <i>names here approximately</i>       |
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