

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE WORLDWIDE KITE COMMUNITY

# KiteLines™

\$3.95 US

SUMMER-FALL 1991, VOL. 8, NO. 4

BONUS!  
POCKET KITE  
CALENDAR



**PIERRE FABRE**  
IN JAPAN—NEW  
EYES ON OLD  
WAYS

**HOW TO**  
FIGHT A  
ROKKAKU  
KITE BATTLE—  
AND WIN!

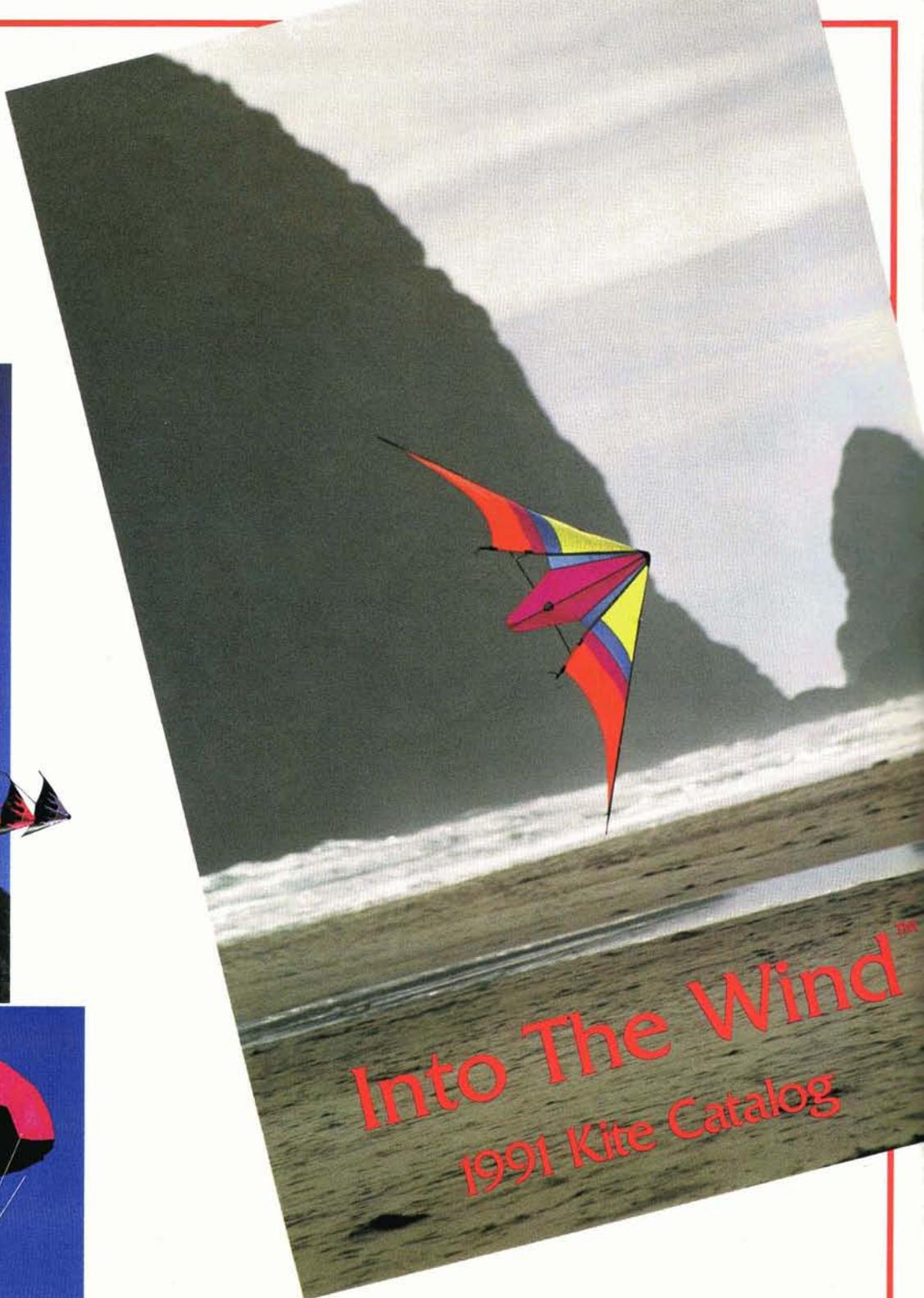
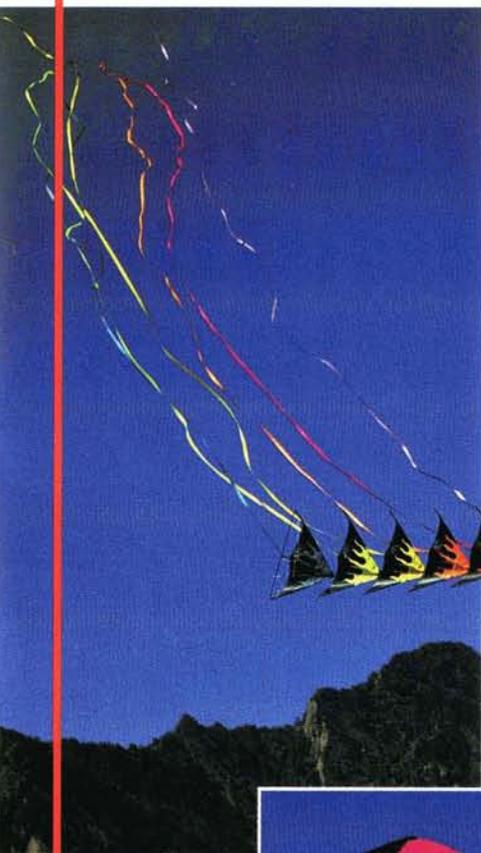
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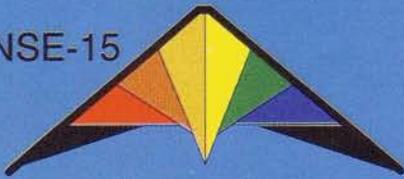
## Wild Thing

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Shore

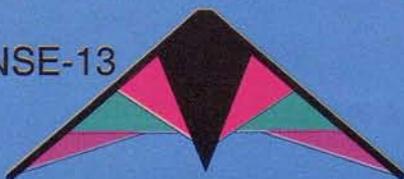
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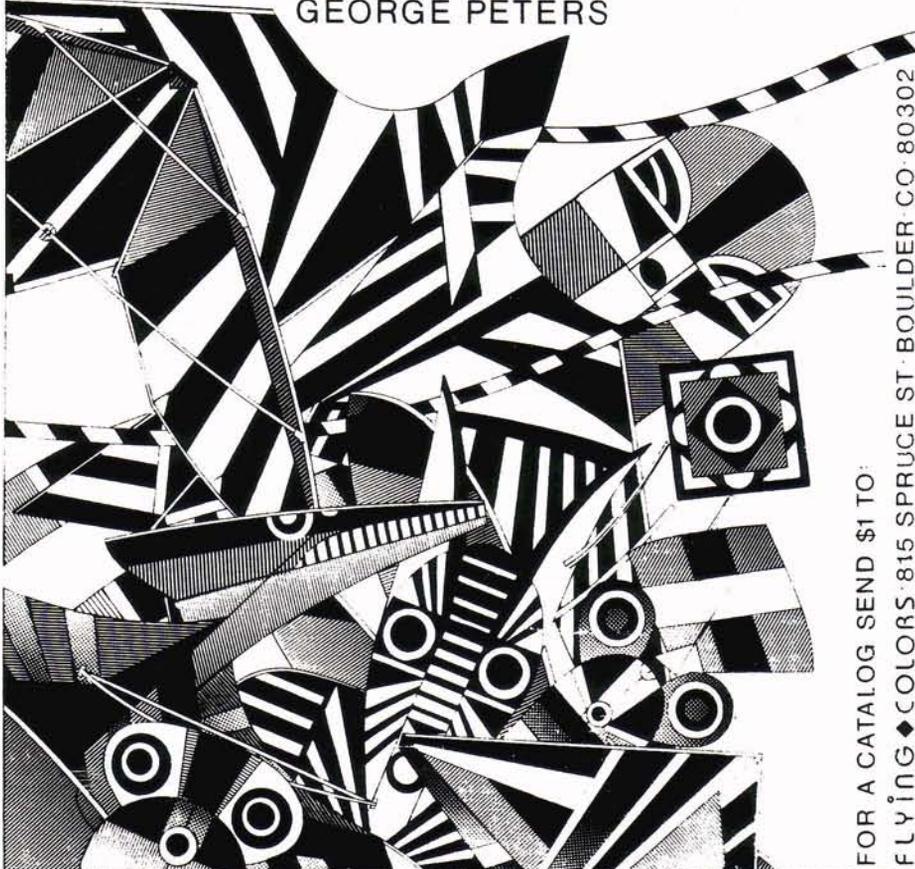
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ISSN 0192-3439

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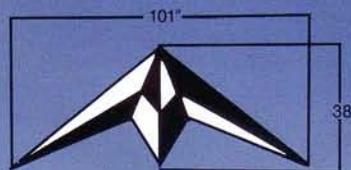
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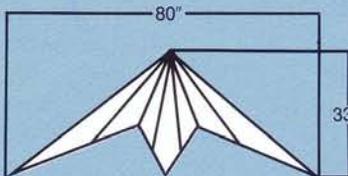
# WHICH IS HOTTEST OF THE HOT? You decide.

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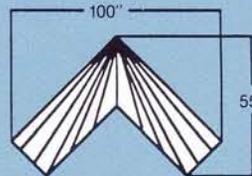
## FIRE DART

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## MOON DART

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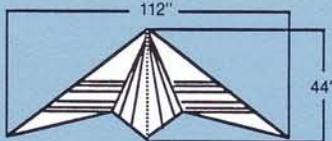


## PHOENIX 20

Why mess with perfection? This mainstay of our company has been in production for years and is still going strong. The award-winning PHOENIX 20 is a real performer in light to moderate winds. Its large size and bold graphics are a sight to behold.

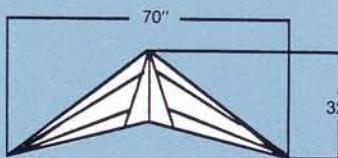
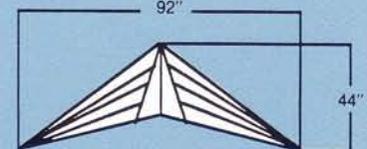
## SUPER SKY DART

This redesign of our standard SKY DART is available in two stunning patterns. Outstanding mobility and fast, sharp turns make this kite an impressive and stylish flier.



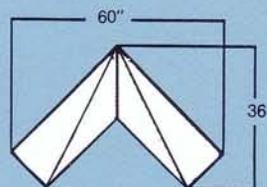
## STAR DART

This kite promises viceless flying. The STAR DART is very sensitive and responsive, but also very forgiving. The STAR DART flies the way you want it to fly.



## NO NA ME

The NO NA ME is a responsive kite, great in moderate to strong winds. It's an excellent high-performance kite for beginners or experienced fliers who want a smaller, faster, lighter-pulling delta wing.



## ACTION 8.2

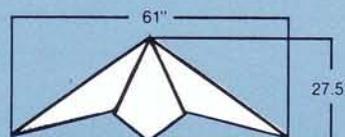
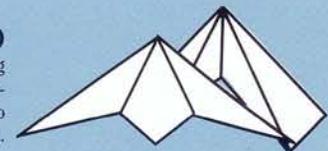
The ACTION 8.2 — imitated but never duplicated. This littler brother of the PHOENIX 20 is popular for its high speed, tight turns and ease of flight. Easy assembly and small storage size make the 8.2 an ideal traveling companion.



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## ACTION COMBO

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# Kitelines

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### Cover

A Japanese rokkaku can be at once classic and new, reliable and exciting, stable and maneuverable. The example on our cover, made by Morihiro Takeda, is of ripstop and graphite. Photographed at launch near the Ara River in Tokyo, Japan, by Pierre Fabre.

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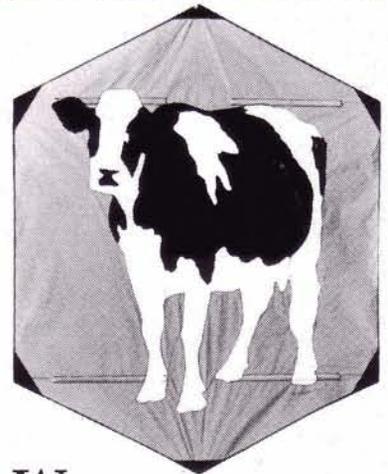


**Sunday, October 13, 1991**

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# Taking a Risk

**W**e realized we were risking something when we ran a survey of stunt kites in the Winter 1990-91 *Kite Lines*.

It was part of the territory, we knew, that if we published ratings of anything, we'd inevitably confer bliss on some people and inflict pain on others. Was it worth it? We weighed this carefully. Would our readers value this survey enough? Would they use it? And certainly, in a small magazine, there's a question that shouldn't be asked, but is: would we lose any advertising because of this report? (Answer: yes, we did lose some.)

No single advertiser "makes" a magazine; the quality of its contents ultimately does. Still, it is certainly harder for a small magazine to keep such ideals in mind while keeping the wolf from the door.

However, *constructive* criticism is a very good thing and we were lucky to get some of that along with the advertiser umbrage. Trouble is, when people like something, they don't generally bother to tell you.

They can be counted on to speak only when they're peeved. That's human nature.

We tried to remember this and to picture the quiet-and-happy readers in counterbalance to the grumpy ones.

This is not a letter to you as a reader asking you to write us more "happy" letters. But we are in the process of redesigning the stunt kite survey, so now is the time for you to give us a yell. Be specific. What do you consider important that we did not include? How much information do you want? Make your thoughts and wishes known.

Sure, we'll do our job whatever happens. But this magazine never has been—and never will be—a one-way street. You readers are, quite simply, our life. That's you I'm talking about. You.

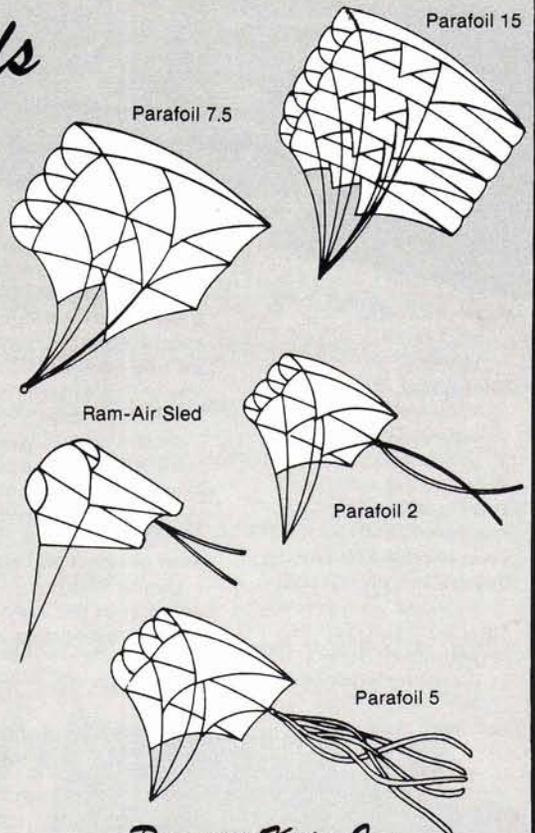


**Kite's eye view of Fort McHenry, Baltimore, Maryland, favorite flying spot. Photograph by Michel Dusariez.**

To contact *Kite Lines*:  
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Fax: 301-922-4262  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 466,  
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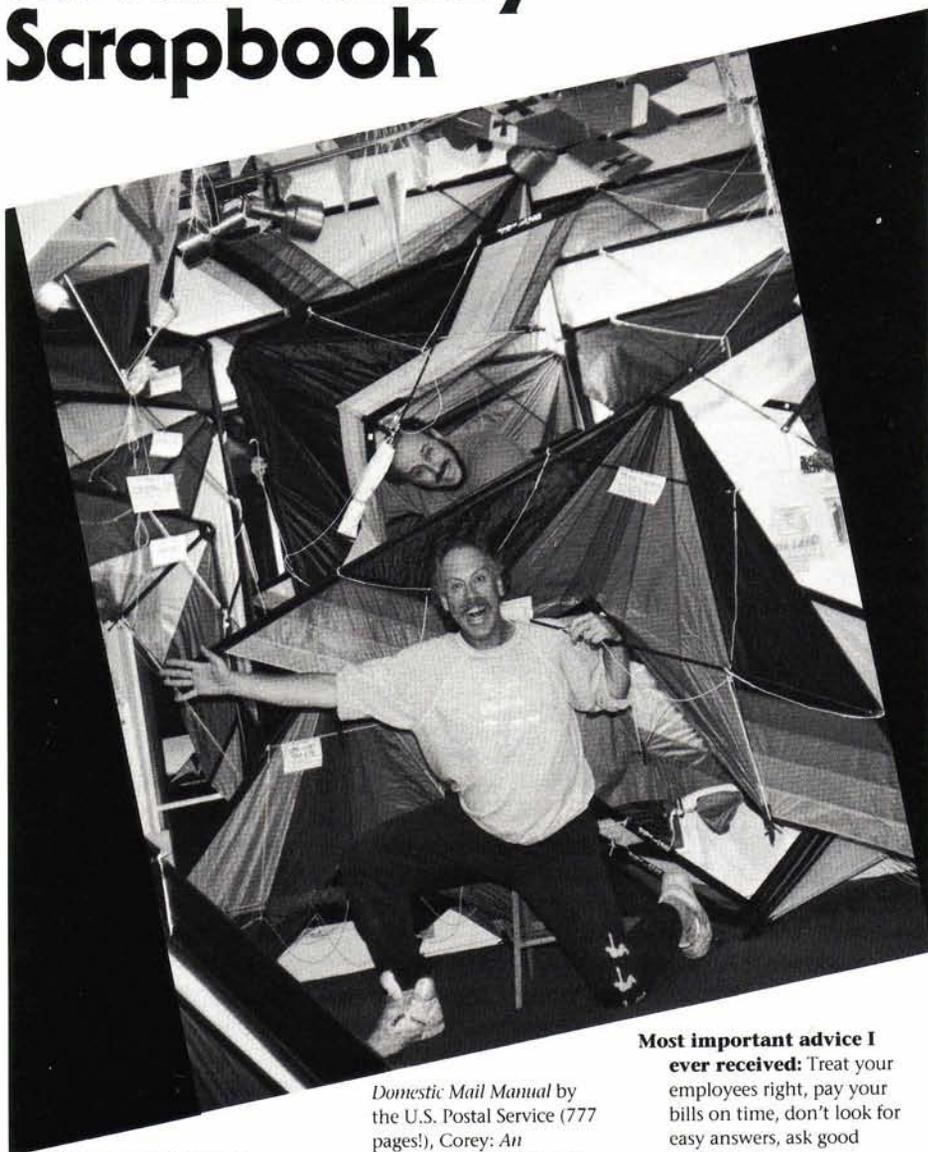
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# Our Retail Family Scrapbook



**Store:** Windborne Kites, 585 Cannery Row #105, Monterey, CA 93940, USA.  
**Floor space:** 27,000 cubic feet of sky sculpture (luckily, our rent is based on 2,700 square feet).  
**Hours:** 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
**Years in business:** 6.  
**Years profitable:** 6.  
**Years carried Kite Lines:** 6.  
**Owner:** Steve Ruben, Head Buckaroo: Corey Jensen.  
**Ages:** Steve: 41, Corey: 40.  
**Favorite food:** Steve: Chocolate dipped strawberries. Corey: Sushi.  
**Last book read:** Steve:

*Domestic Mail Manual* by the U.S. Postal Service (777 pages!), Corey: *An Embarrassment of Riches* by Richard Schama.

**Last kite book read:** Steve: *Stunt Kites!* by David Gomberg. Corey: *Bilder für den Himmel* by Paul Eubel and Ikuko Matsumoto.

**Favorite flying spot:** Steve: Asilomar Beach. Corey: Sandy Beach, Oahu.

**Latest promotional effort:** Kitealog® 1991.

**Specialty of the store:** Service, selection, quality, passion.

**Most important advice I ever received:** Treat your employees right, pay your bills on time, don't look for easy answers, ask good questions.

**Nicest sale I ever made:** To all the people who found more in themselves because of kiting.

**Best fringe benefit of the store:** World-wide travel.

**Favorite issue of Kite Lines:** It isn't an issue—it's a magazine! And it would be too self-serving to name Summer-Fall 1987, with Corey's article on surviving in Baja, Mexico.

Doesn't your store carry Kite Lines? To learn all the benefits of doing it, write for retailers information package to: Kite Lines, P.O. Box 466, Randallstown, MD 21133. Or telephone us at 301/922-1212. Or fax us at 301/922-4262.



## Letters

### Birds & Badges

#### Gull Master

I often fly Grandmaster fighters at the beach, and like to use the kites to chase the seagulls. The Grandmasters are uncanny chasers and are so fast they can easily catch and surprise a gull.

I was packing the car when I was alarmed by a bunch of small stones hitting me and my car. I looked around, but there was nobody there. When I looked up, there were two or three gulls, about 80 feet up and 30 feet upwind. It couldn't be them, could it?

Well it was. The gulls were releasing the stones (they did this three or four times) which were carried downwind to hit me. I'm convinced that the gulls had recognized me—but I'm not sure if this greeting was friendly or unfriendly. I'm just sorry that no one else was there to witness their super accuracy.

—Donald Allen  
Phillipsburg, New Jersey, USA

#### Kites, Not Missiles!

One day after the war in the Persian Gulf was over, we celebrated in Israel a festival called Purim. This holiday is in memory of the miraculous saving, about 2,000 years ago, of the Jews of Ancient Persia, from the enemies which wanted to destroy them—an interesting symbolic coincidence. An important part of the celebration is the wearing of masks and costumes, just like Halloween.

This year a kite competition took place on the beach in Hertzlia, near Tel Aviv. The theme of the competition was masks and kites as masks—each participant had to wear make-up or a mask in the same style as the kite they were flying. And yes, there were gas mask kites!

The holiday, which is usually happy and full of joy, was twice as happy this year, as the war was over, and we could all breathe a sigh of relief from the Scud mis-



Karen Shavit, 13, in make-up to match her family's appliquéd nylon kite, based on a baramon by Tadakazu Funasaki seen in *Kite Lines*.

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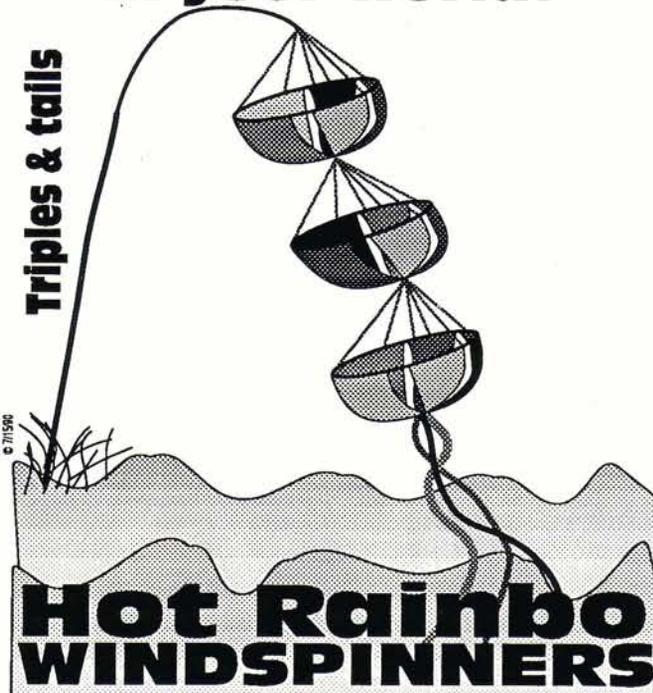
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## Letters . . . Continued

sile nightmare which had accompanied every night.

Here in Israel kiting activities are starting to develop, and even though there are not yet many events or competitions, we are improving each year. For us, kiting is a family hobby. We have been building kites with our three children for five years now, and are glad of every opportunity to participate in kiting events or just fly for the fun of it.

We hope that some day one of your correspondents will be able to come to Israel and write about an event that was held in our beautiful blue sky where it's always better to have kites flying than missiles roaring —*Eli and Shula Shavit*  
*Jerusalem, ISRAEL*

If you look closely you will see one of the men is wearing a leather flying helmet.

The text reads: "9:45 PM Tuesday 3/5/18. Am so busy getting in shape to put power in our Kite Reel that I am just quitting work now to go to room. Do excuse the short line tonight. Dear Mabel, will write tomorrow, Art."

I wish I knew more, and I hope you and your readers enjoy this brief moment of kite history.

—*Rob English*  
*Titusville, Florida, USA*

### If You Need To Rationalize...

Most of my friends think a 71-year-old man is loony!

I try to educate them. I tell them that it's just like fishing, but I already have the fish on the line! —*R.W. "Scotty" Markland*  
*Clermont, Florida, USA*

### Antique Mystery Postcard



A 1918 mystery card shows a train of Conynes. Whose? Why? Any answers?

Enclosed is a postcard I discovered at an antique show purely by chance.

Dated March 5, 1918, it shows a train of Conyne kites attached to a steam powered winch. The postcard was mailed by Arthur Clason and was cancelled by U.S. mail the next day at Rockford, Illinois. He sent it to his wife Mabel in Chicago.

I spoke with Paul Garber last year, and he speculated that the civilian in the photograph could be Silas Conyne, as he was from Illinois. No one knows of any existing photographs of him. Then again, it could be the sender.

The mules and uniforms are U.S. Army.

### Snubbed by Scouts

Last year, the AKA submitted the most recent proposal for a kiting merit badge to the Boy Scouts national office. They responded that "The Boy Scout Advancement Committee has previously considered the subject and determined not to establish a merit badge in kiteflying."

Of course, the AKA does not give up easily. A new effort to submit a proposal will be made in late 1991. Readers of *Kite Lines* can be a big help.

In order for the Scouts to seriously consider our proposal, they require some evidence of broad-based interest. People supporting a new merit badge should address letters to: Mr. T. J. Van Houten, Boy Scout Program Development Services, Boy Scouts of America National Office, P.O. Box 152079, Irving, Texas 75015, USA.

Please help us encourage the Boy Scouts to introduce the joys of kiting to another generation

—*David Gomberg, President*  
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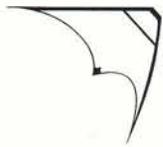
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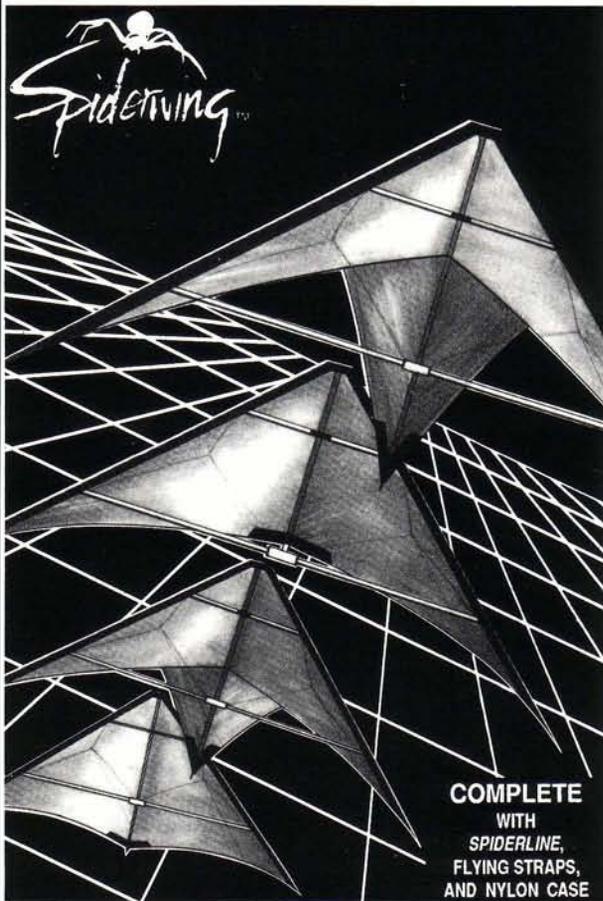
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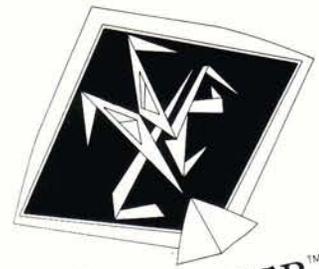


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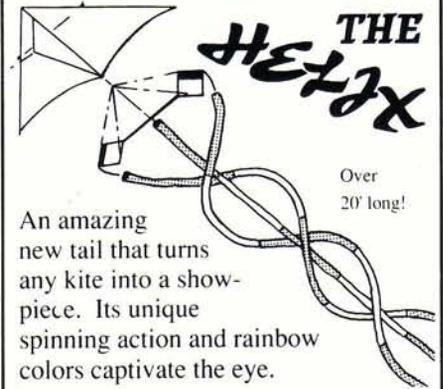
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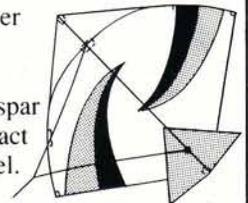
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# Yankees, Smoothies & A Challenge Rokkaku

By Mel and Valerie Govig, assisted by A. Pete Ianuzzi

## The Fight Goes On . . .

Our article on fighter kites in the last *Kite Lines* seems to have pulled new varieties out of the woodwork. Forget all my complaints about having too few fighters to play with. We've got a flood!

Last issue we published our Fighter Kite Lexicon, to keep descriptions consistent. The current batch of fighters has caused me to expand the lexicon. I've found that most fighter kites fall into one of two types:

- Yankees: Kites that respond to hard yanks on the line in order to move, spin right or left, or change direction.
- Smoothies: Kites that respond to fingertip commands to roll to the right or left, change direction, or sweep up or down or side to side.

## Budget Fighter

This kite is not large, and in fighters this is usually good, because it means it will be fast moving and will not abuse the forefinger. Of course, smaller kites call for more exacting precision in manufacture, but at the same time command fewer dollars in a marketplace that isn't always very sophisticated. Carlisle Kiteworks has attempted to meet these tough conditions with a small but affordable design. It works.

The GA ("Good All-around") Fighter is well balanced and easy to assemble. Rather than pass through the top bridle ties, the cross spar goes through a center cloth tube. Properly fitted, the spar is low and taut and doesn't stray beyond the cover.

A flat spine is used in current production models, preventing the shift that I have seen in almost all round spines.

In flight, this is a Smoothie. It rolls easily from right to left; it spins right, spins left; it sustains a dive or a climb; it sustains a left or right sweep. All of this at the touch of a finger. Given line, it goes into a controlled spin of six- to eight-foot diameter without losing altitude. In short, it is a lazy warrior's dream.

One last point: For all its economy the GA Fighter still has a classy-looking contrasting appliqué.

## Indian/Hata

If you are familiar with the work of George Peters, you know that he is a per-

fectionist. His fighter kite shows it. He has created an Indian fighter that speaks of his recent visit to India. What a native craftsman does for pennies, George does for dollars, but it's of sewn nylon with a fiberglass cross spar, a classic Nagasaki hata surface design, tasty colors and exquisite detailing.

This kite is a Smoothie, rolling easily around the sky in any direction. In addition, it flies on very light winds and it sustains a dive or a sweep as well as any kite I have ever flown. It responds to the slightest shift of the line, makes possible repeated figures of eight and suffers a dive to within a foot of the ground and recovers. In short, it did everything I asked with no more than a few feet of line passing through my fingers. It is a little slower than some fighters and doesn't climb as high as some, but it's an excellent training kite for the novice and a superb show-off kite for the proficient.

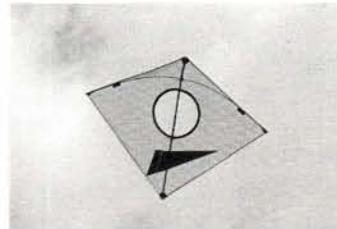
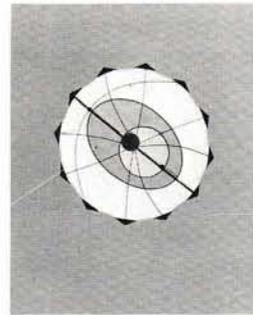
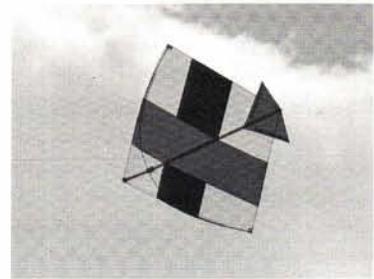
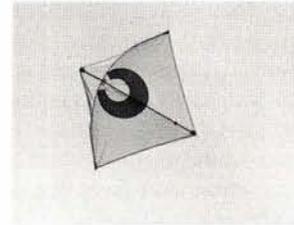
For high winds, the kite comes packed with two extra shorter spars to insert in shoulder pockets. You use one of two different weights or both together. But the kite will already accommodate winds up to 15 mph, so the number of times you need to augment will be few.

This kite is a must for either the collector of Peters kites or the collector of fighter kites. But as we see it, any fighter flier could pick this kite on its performance alone and feel that the price was reasonable. What a bargain! (We only hope George doesn't get worn out with fighter kites and quit making them.)

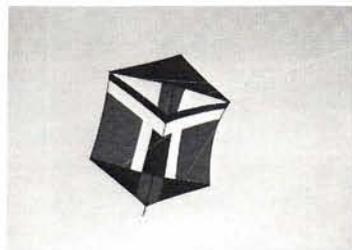
## AstroFighter

A contemporary adaptation of the Star of India kite, the AstroFighter from Goodwinds Kites is definitely a Yankee. Its rapid response, along with the fore-and-aft ambiguity of the graphics on its nearly round (12-sided) shape makes it a challenge to fly. During our tests, I added a low-drag tail just to tell me which way was up on this kite.

It also demands your complete and undivided attention to fly; it gives you a good physical workout on the field just keeping up with it. The AstroFighter does not sustain a dive or sweep except with continuous yanks on the line. Hold the line steady and the kite goes into a tight



From top, the GA Fighter, Indian/Hata, AstroFighter and Righteous Fighter. Below, the Challenge Rokkaku.



spin. At least it does not sustain a dive any better than it does a sweep or climb, so you usually have time to recover before it hits the ground.

The ingenuity that went into the structure of this kite is worth the price of admission. The clever design is a joint project of Kathy Goodwind (all-in-one pocketing, surface patterns), Jim Day (laminated spars) and Todd Hestetter (vinyl tubing connectors). The colors and flash of gold in the kite's "eye" are very attractive.

I have rarely met a fighter kite I didn't like. This one took longer to cotton to. Definitely not a kite for the novice, it's a challenge that will humble those who call themselves masters.

### Righteous Fighter

Due to be introduced in August at Long Beach (the Washington State International Kite Festival), this is a fighter that came to us clothed in secrecy. We almost had to sign a nondisclosure agreement before getting a sample.

After all the secrecy, what was the kite? Voila!—a fighter with a hole in it. Carl Crowell of Factor Kites should know by now that there is (almost) nothing new under the sun or in the wind. Korean kites, Flow Forms, some sleds and various other kites all have holes. Still, to be fair, maybe an Indian fighter with a hole is "new." But does it fly better?

This kite is a definite Yankee. It requires constant attention and insists that you yank it through any extended maneuver. It lofts so fast that it goes by you

in a light wind. The kite is provided with pockets to hold an extra cross spar for high winds, although given the liveliness of the kite with a single fiberglass spar, I can't imagine having to stiffen it.

After I became accustomed to its idiosyncracies, I found that the Righteous fighter was fun to fly. The kite launches easily off your hand, but its tendency to overfly and not drift downwind rapidly make it almost unflyable in winds below 7-8 mph. This might be the fighter to use in those strong beach breezes when most fighters are overpowered. Once up, the kite has no stable flight attitude; you have to constantly tug at the line to keep it flying and above the horizontal. However, a prolonged pull on the line sends the kite into a whip turn to right or left, which is only predictable after many turns in the wrong direction.

The skin of our Righteous sample was appliquéd with a black triangle, but the hole itself was such an interesting visual element that we felt little if any "decoration" was needed.

A combination of slightly more flexible spar and flatter bridling would probably make this a disciplined member of your fighting force. The kite's workmanship is excellent and the design shows an innovative talent. Let's hope that Carl either keeps at it until he gets it right or offers a light-wind version of this "holy" fighter.

### Challenge Rokkaku

This kite will come as a godsend for those who want to go off to battle but haven't

the time to create their own rokkaku.

We reviewed a four-foot rokkaku from Carlisle Kiteworks (Kevin Shannon) in a prior *Kite Lines*, but this 7½-footer is another animal. In our tests, its flight was reliable and steady. Adjustments to change the kite from stable to combat-ready are classic and predictable. At its size, it is all that one person can handle in a rokkaku in winds below 10 mph, but it is ideal for an energetic team to use in competition.

Crafted of .75-ounce ripstop nylon, the kite has a number of well thought-out bowing and bridling features that make it easy for the flier. It took me no more than two minutes to go from bag to sky. It has flat seams and edge bindings for durability, the bridle lines are preset, and the bow lines are in place and marked for proper depth. The four-point bridle is well placed for strength.

On very light winds, the Challenge Rokkaku had a rapid rate of climb and a slow rate of descent that let me put it up in winds of about 5 mph. At 10 mph, it becomes what our friend Curtis Marshall would call a worthy adversary. If you intend to fly this one alone, follow the instructions: wear gloves, tie it off to something strong and plan to retrieve it with help.

The model we tested carried a handsome geometric surface design. For a price, Kevin can make your kite with a team logo. In any case, the kite would not humiliate the team. Only the team might humiliate the kite.

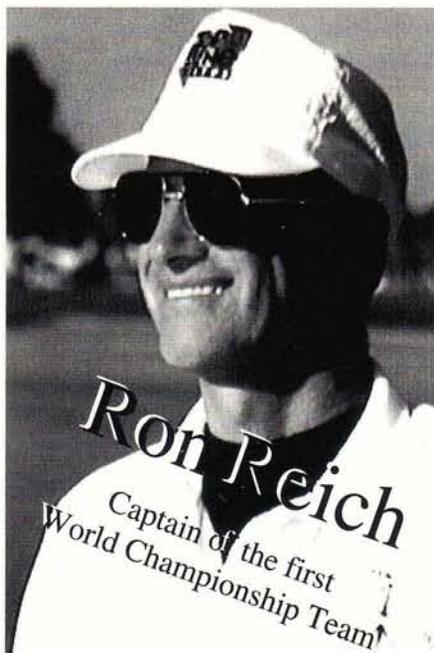
#### DATA CHART

Name and Shape of Kite	Retail Price	Dimensions (inches)	Weight (ounces)	Major Components	Portability	Assembly Time	Durability	Wind Range	Ease of Launch	Skill Level
Carlisle Kiteworks: GA Fighter 	14.00	21.5x26	0.75	ripstop, fiberglass, wood	E	2 min.	E	4-15	G	I-S
Flying Colors: Indian/Hata Fighter 	35.00	23x28	1.00	ripstop, fiberglass, bamboo	E	2 min.	E	3-12	G	I-S
Goodwind's Kites: AstroFighter 	39.95	22 dia.	2.00	ripstop, fiberglass, bamboo	G	0 min.	VG	5-20	G	S
Factor Kites: Righteous Fighter 	30.00	23x30	1.50	ripstop, fiberglass, bamboo	E	2 min.	E	5-25	G	S
Carlisle Kiteworks: Challenge Rokkaku 	250.00	90x76	24	ripstop, graphite rod	E	5 min.	E	5-20	VG	I

NOTE: Retail price (in US Dollars) is "advertised" or "suggested." Wind range (in mph) covers minimum and maximum speeds deemed suitable by our evaluators. Skill levels: N-Novice, I-Intermediate, S-Skilled. Other ratings: P-Poor, F-Fair, G-Good, VG-Very Good, E-Excellent. Dimensions are in the following order: height x width x depth. Measurements and drawings are made with the kite standing up on the floor facing the viewer.

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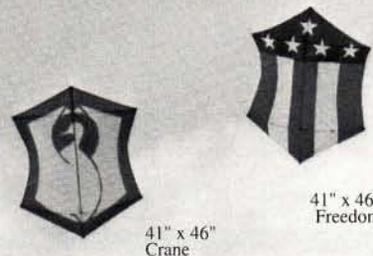
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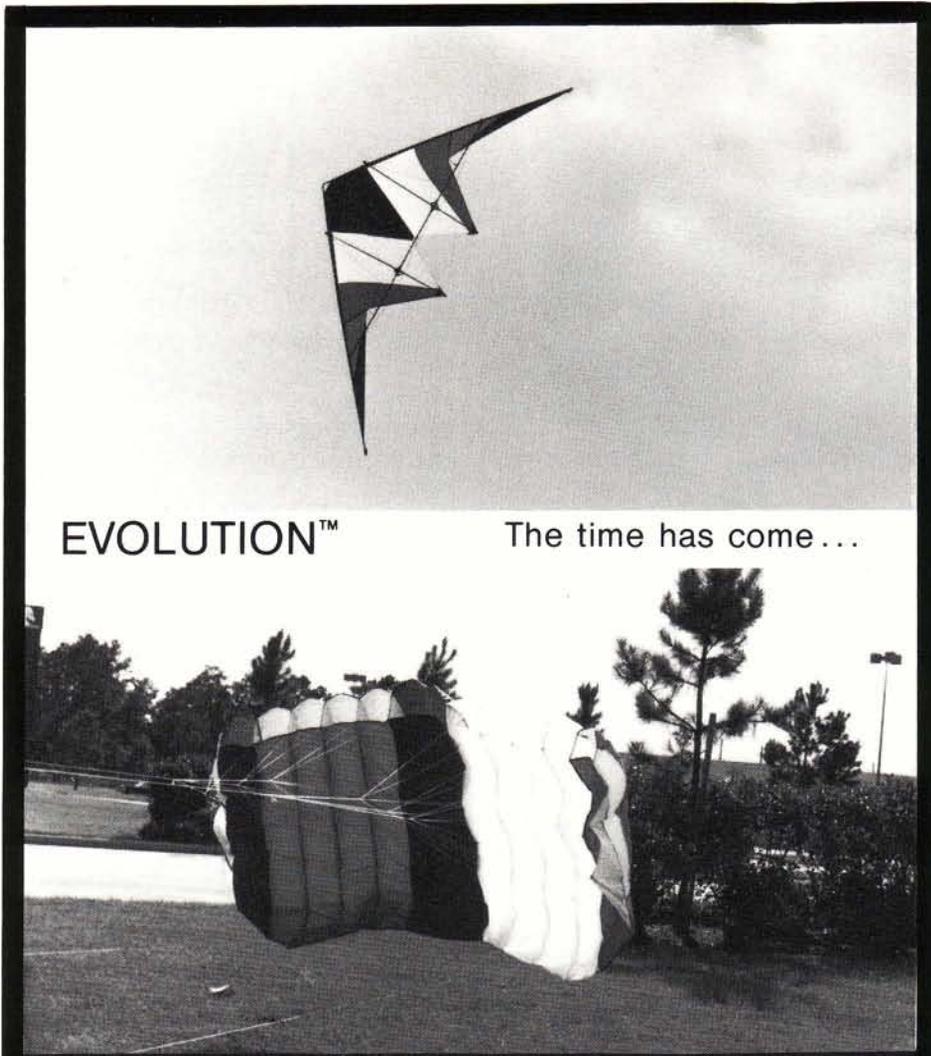
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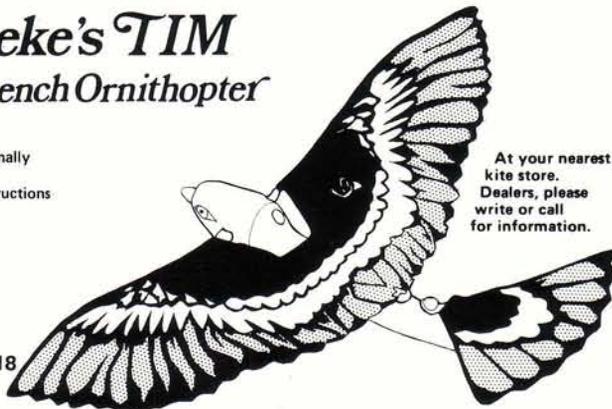


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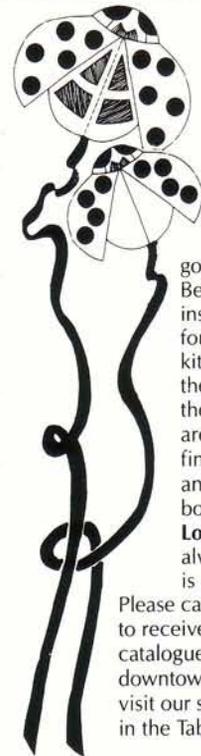
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# Of Art & Stunts & Super Kites...

By Valerie Govig and Leonard M. Conover

## Air Art

*Art That Flies: Curt Asker, Jackie Matisse, Tal Streeter* by Co-Editors Tal Streeter and Pamela Houk (Dayton, Ohio: Dayton Art Institute, 1991), softcover, 139 pages, \$12.95.

This intriguing book began as a "catalog" for an exhibition by the same name, held at the Dayton Art Institute the first three months of 1990. It evolved into an anthology of the work of seven writers, along with interviews and artists' statements. The voices keep changing and the views are fresh for those who read the book (though some will want it mostly for its pictures).

Can the sky be a gallery space for serious art? Of course! The idea is not new, but is still open for exploration. Within these pages we are introduced to three artists who have created some of the first and least conventional of flying art—inspiring for us all.

Curt Asker of Sweden (27 pages, 13 photographs) creates optical illusions, sending up snails, trucks, bicycles and abstract forms for the bizarre visual effects they produce in the sky. Of no little importance is the photography used to preserve his otherwise ephemeral work. The photos capture the kites at their dramatic best on open beaches or fields. (Would anyone photograph an Asker bicyclist over the local landfill?)

Jackie Matisse (23 pages, 14 photographs), granddaughter of *the* Matisse, recently stopped using the name Jacqueline Monnier. But her art is consistent in its theme of oneness with nature, and she typically expresses this in rippling, long-tailed kites. Her work is represented not only by forms that fly but by swimming, bottled and hanging objects that relate to their environments in a similarly transitory manner.

Tal Streeter's work with Flying Red Lines is known to kites mostly from his book *The Art of the Japanese Kite*, but this new volume gives us the total Tal. (Well, almost. He has a mass of new art in the works in Korea.) Nevertheless, it's interesting to have a reference to this artist's nonkite work, in steel; it contrasts sharply with kites.

*Art That Flies*, at times saddled with art-speak, does offer insight into creative minds. *Kite Lines* saw this book in galley form prior to publication, so we cannot comment on the printing, but the layout and photographs are handsome. The bibliography is impudently nonstandard. *Art That Flies* is unusual and rewarding.

—V.G.

## Video Book

*Kite Crazy* by Carol Thomas, illustrations by Ron McCaughan (Toronto, Ontario, Canada: SOMA Film & Video, 1991), 176 pages, \$29.95 US.

This book was produced to accompany the new video series, also called "Kite Crazy," which was a big hit this spring on Toronto's public television.

All the usual topics are covered: history, theory, safety, etc. But the chief value for most people may be the plans, which include the Caribbean Kiskadee, a rokkaku, a 3/4-size stunt kite and a quad-line delta—all sport kites. You can purchase the book alone, the video series alone or both together. Canadians can even buy kits with materials for making any of the four kites. The book has a wire binding, a thoughtful feature for use on a worktable.

The undertaking is ambitious, novel and carefully done. For its purposes, it is right on target. But for a person who does not have the inspiration of the videos to accompany it, the book alone is a bit, well, colorless. It is printed solely in black-and-white (except for the cover) and the design runs the text together in one big soup rather than slicing it up into attractive bites.

The only real problem with this book is its price compared to other kite books. But maybe people made enthusiastic by the videos won't object.

—V.G.

## Go South

*Kites: 24 Designs* by Izak C. Rust, photography and illustrations by the author (Cape Town, South Africa: Delos, 1990), softcover, 48 pages, 19.95 rand (about \$10.00 US). Also published in an Afrikaans language edition with the title *Vlieers*.

This new kite book is not designed to bring ethnic—that is, South African—kites to the rest of the world, but just the opposite: it is supposed to introduce kites of the world to South Africa. In that respect, I suppose the book may be a success.

However, this new kite book is anything but new. Indeed it is a yawner, since it contains plans for two dozen often-repeated kites. The same kites can be found in any number of previous kite books and in back issues of *Kite Lines*. The author has introduced little of his own in this book. Instead he has collected material from other sources and reproduced it in his own style, which is

not necessarily better than the original.

The first eight chapters—on history, materials, construction, flying and safety—fill only 10 pages. The next 27 pages contain plans for the 24 kites, and the plans are skimpy. Consider "The Sode," a Japanese design shaped like a kimono, which receives one simple drawing and only four sentences.

In his favor, the author appears to have made all the kites he describes, as the color photos attest. There are no egregious errors and the appearance is attractive.

If you live in South Africa and know little about kites, this book may be of use to you, especially if no other kite books are available to you at all. If you are fluent only in the Afrikaans language, you will receive a benefit from that edition that is nowhere else available (to our knowledge).

But if you are choosing which kite book in English you will use, you can give this book the limited attention it deserves.

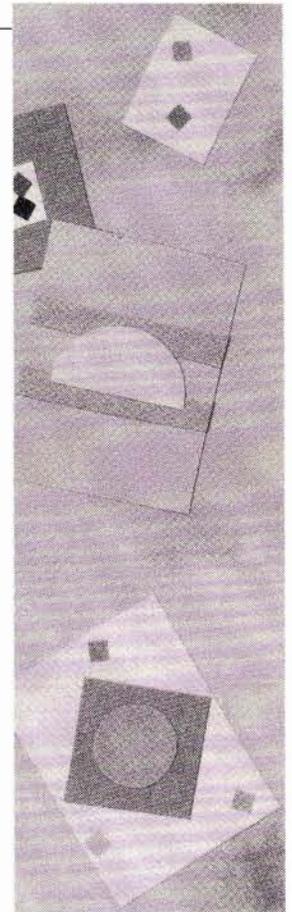
—L.M.C.

## Go Fish

*Fishing for Angels: The Magic of Kites* by David Evans, illustrated by Adele D'Arcy (Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Annick Press Ltd., 1991), softcover, 63 pages, \$14.95 Canadian (\$12.95 US).

This juvenile book is aimed at "readers ages 10 and up" and as such is almost alone among kite books in print.

Color brightens nearly every page and illustrations include a half dozen good photographs by Rainer Pfister of Germany as well as many subtly rendered artworks by Adele D'Arcy. The book design is appropriate and fresh; the printing is first-class. →



"Japanese Picture Kites" as seen in *Fishing for Angels*.

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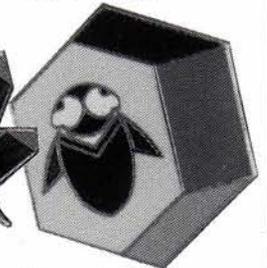
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The contents are unusual because kites are treated selectively, with a few large chunks of information getting emphasis while other areas are bypassed completely. A full chapter each goes to a Balinese and a Hawaiian kite legend, while the rest of the kite lore fills three chapters. An original story, "Tony and Naomi," about young love, seems out of place as fiction in the otherwise nonfiction surroundings. Structural quirks might not matter so much if the writing were distinguished, but it stops short.

Curiously, the book deteriorates into outright errors as it goes on. Reader confidence crumbles. The ending section, "Make Your Own Kite," purports to provide how-to's for three kites. One is a crude "Charlie Brown" diamond labeled "Easy-to-Make" and fitted with the classic Bad Bridle: one leg attached to each fore and aft tip, the tow point set right over the spine's center. (Will this "kite" never die?) The "Japanese Picture Kite," the only design with dimensions specified, suggests spars of bamboo or balsa (yes, *balsa*). The book ends with a chapter on flying (researched from recognizable sources), an idiosyncratic glossary and a meager bibliography.

Nuts. Here was an attractive book with creative touches that I wanted to like. But then it fell on its face. Such a pity. —V.G.

## Dutch Stunts

*StuntVliegers: Bouwen en Besturen (Stunt Kites: To Make and Fly)* by Servaas van der Horst and Nop Velthuisen (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Uitgeverij Thoth, 1991), in Dutch, softcover, 96 pages, \$21.95 US.

In a world full of stunter-hunger, stunt kite books are still playing catch-up. Here's one that helps (as far as we can tell; no one here reads Dutch).

This book emphasizes making your own stunt kites and contains 10 plans, four of them for commercial designs. It slightly resembles Wolfgang Schimmelpfennig's *Lenkdrachen: Bauen und Fliegen (Stunt Kites: Making and Flying)* in size and scope but demonstrates a creative edge with such new designs as the Shuttle (a high-aspect-ratio diamond), the Quad (twin hexagons), the Speedfoil (a thinly disguised Flexifoil shown with charming "Cicadafoil" graphics) and the Sputnik 1 and 2 (soft stunters resembling Wolfgang's Paraflex).

Chapters on history, line, bridling and so on appear to be thorough, and we were impressed that a specific chapter is given to safety. A computer program, bibliography,

list of kite stores (in the Netherlands) and index round out the contents.

Physically, *StuntVliegers* is appealing: well laid out with quality photographs and drawings by Jan Pit. Color photos in judicious quantity do a great deal to appetize. We expect to see this book (and Wolfgang's) come out in English, but in the meantime a determined kitemaker might learn a few words of Dutch and take a flier. —V.G.

## New Editions

*Stunt Kites!* by David Gomberg (Salem, Oregon: Cascade Kites, 1991), softcover, 89 pages, \$8.95.

This third edition, just out, looks exactly like its first and second versions except for the "perfect" binding (squared back) instead of the stapled spine. The cover is unchanged.

But the contents are noticeably different: more contributors (20 vs. 16) are listed, a completely new chapter on competitions is written and many "small" new items have been tucked in (on repairs, safety, line, handles, etc.) Subtle changes appear on about 25% of the pages.

The general format is the same as before—the same layout, the same number of pages, even the same price.

The good points and good humor of this book hold up strongly against the still raggedy home computer graphics. But having control of the whole production means the author can revise again as future needs require—and they will.

So now for the big question: If you have an *old* edition, should you get a *new* edition? Probably not, because the new one contains few vital secrets. But collectors will want it, and novices looking for advice will get the most here.

*Arte en el Cielo (Art Kites)* by Paul Eubel and Ikuko Matsumoto (Seville, Spain: Goethe Institut - Osaka, Japan, 1991), in Spanish and English, softcover, 404 pages.

This incredibly beautiful "catalog," weighing over four pounds, has had many versions since the first volume, of 1988, a 330-pager published in German and Japanese. The 1989 edition, with more kites, went to 404 pages, where it seemed to stabilize somewhat for its many continued printings—except the languages have changed!

The Institut has now published the book in French/Japanese, Portuguese/Japanese, Dutch/Japanese and (at last!) Spanish/English! Later there will be an English/Japanese and an Italian/Japanese edition.

Clearly the reason for this flurry of translation and publishing is that the Art Kites exhibition, making its way from one country to another, requires a catalog for each local language. The entire process is complicated by the fact that the schedule for the show has been changed several times! In fact, the book's cover and a few front pages also vary among editions to reflect a local orientation. (There are *two* French editions, for Paris first and Brussels second.)

The exhibit itself includes about 100 large kites made by collaboration between world-renowned painters and skilled Japanese kitemakers. The results are by turns beautiful, shocking, elegant, outlandish, well adapted to the sky, poorly adapted to the sky, wretched and stunning (my opinion). Whatever anyone thinks of these kites, their imaginative variety is undeniable. I cannot imagine anyone with a real interest in kites not having this volume. It is expensive, but not in relation to its value. The elegant full-color full-page photographs (some on fold-out pages) are dazzling. And now all this with an English text!

I have placed our library copy beside my favorite chair where I may sip it slowly as inspiration over many days. —V.G.

*Super Kites III* by Neil Thorburn (San Jose, California: Neil Thorburn, 1991) 123 pages, softbound, indexed, \$8.95.

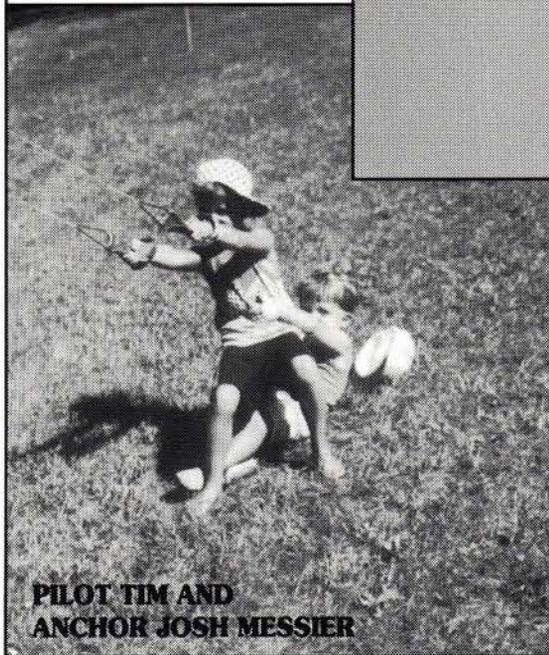
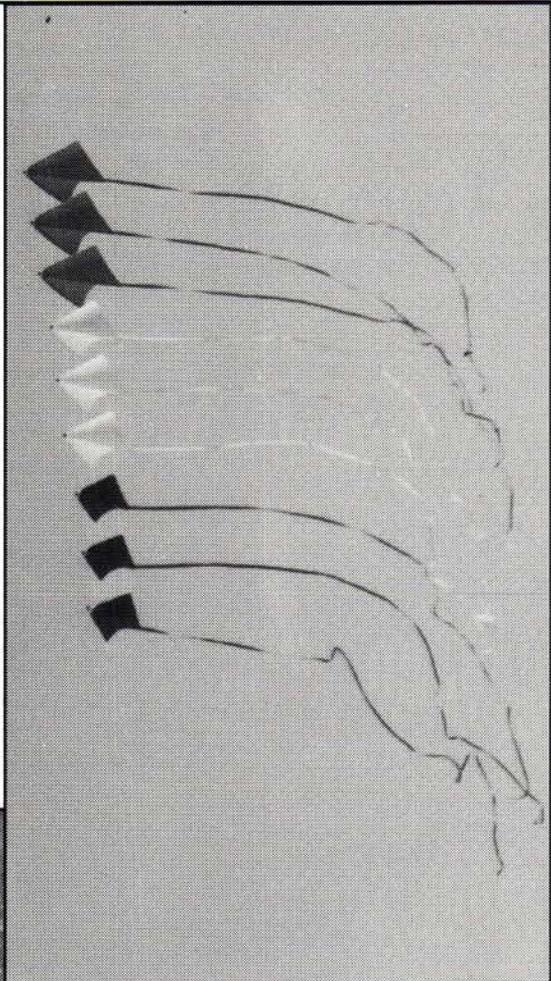
In 1983 the book *Super Kites II* succeeded the 1975 booklet *Super Kites* and now we have the latest revision by 75-year-old Neil Thorburn, as feisty and creative as ever.

The big, bright change is the cover, with a good color photograph. Inside, about six pages of new color photos make the book more interesting. The actual contents are enlarged rather than changed. The second edition has been imported almost whole (hand lettered, spelling corrected).

New plans include the T-Bird-2 and -3 plus a group of "Bristol" box kites from H.C. Alexander via Dan Leigh, who in Bristol, England sketched what may have been a Swept-Wing Box by Mark Cottrell. (Fascinating how designs get around and propagate.) Other inclusions show laminating bamboo and wood (to make "Super Sticks") and a list of words for *kite* in 31 languages.

Although this book is still, as Thorburn proudly says, "completely homemade," its contents are from the kite real-world. Having recently seen too many slick productions with weak substance, I have to hand my respect to Thorburn. —V.G.

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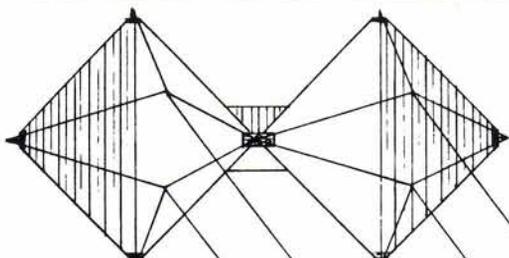
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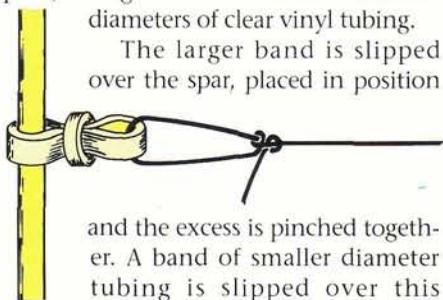
## Variations on Vinyl



### 1 Vinyl Tubing Attachments

From Allan Thompson, Creemore, CANADA: This is a technique I use to attach line to spars, using bands cut from different diameters of clear vinyl tubing.

The larger band is slipped over the spar, placed in position



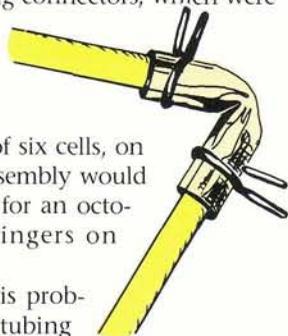
and the excess is pinched together. A band of smaller diameter tubing is slipped over this pinched section. The line is attached to the small loop formed at the pinch.

The large ring needs to be wide enough so there is a friction fit on the spar, and a friction fit in the small loop. If it is too narrow the fitting will slip down the spar.

### 2 Clamping Vinyl Tubing

From A. Pete Ianuzzi, Catonsville, Maryland: I recently built a 10-cell tetrahedral and used vinyl tubing connectors, which were a very tight fit.

When it came time to join the group of four cells to the set of six cells, on the field, the assembly would have been easy for an octopus with six-fingers on each tentacle.



I resolved this problem by getting tubing which was an easy fit on the spars and then clamping the tube tightly to the spar with a simple looped spring-type of hose clamp, available at auto parts stores. These clamps need a special type of pliers (or any slip-joint pliers with deep grooves) to open and adjust the clamps, but they work fine and are not heavy.

For places where I expected extra pull on the structure, I used two clamps about a quarter-inch (6mm) apart.

### 3 Holey Vinyl Tubing!

From Elmo Weeks, West Richland, Washington: Cutting holes through vinyl spar connec-

tors is often messy. An electric drill doesn't give you a clean hole, because twist drill bits chew the edges of the hole.

Here is a quick and cheap way to make a tube drill bit, which cuts a smooth hole through vinyl tubing. I use aluminum alloy arrow shaft of a slightly smaller diameter than the spar which will pass through the hole. I cut off a 3" section, keeping the end as square as possible and sharpen around the edges at one end with a flat file. It cuts neat holes when used as a bit in my electric drill.

*I wasn't sure how well this tip would work until I needed to cut holes in tubing for the Obtuse Tetra (see Design Workshop). My \$2.95 leather punch wasn't accurate enough. So I pulled it to bits, and used one of the punch's six hollow steel tips in an electric drill. It cut perfect holes! I could sharpen the tip by filing it while it was turning in the drill. I had to remove the tip from the drill after every five or six holes to empty out the accumulated vinyl. The six hollow tips cut holes from 1/32" to 3/16". Thanks, Elmo! —S.F.*

### 4 Coloring Vinyl Tubing

From Elmo Weeks, West Richland, Washington: Want to spruce up your kite by having the vinyl connectors match the kite surface? You can color clear vinyl tubing with Tintex, Rit (or similar) dye.

Make a strong solution, bring to a boil, remove from the heat and place the cut-to-length vinyl pieces into the solution. Let sit for 10-15 minutes, then remove the connectors and rinse them in cold water. The dye does not appear to affect the durability of the tubing.

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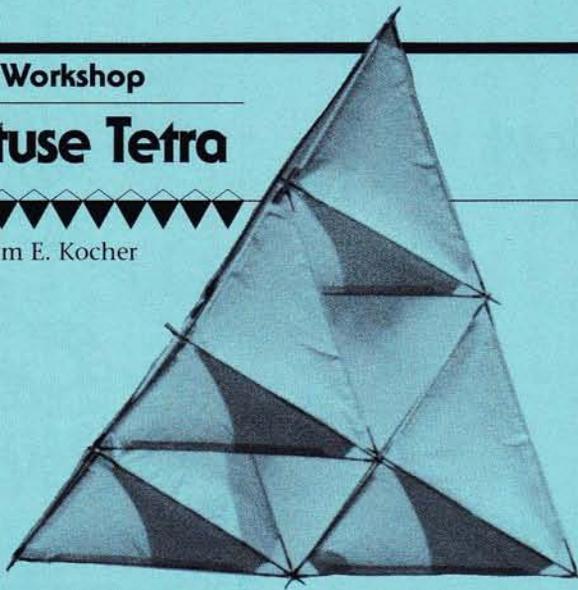
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# The Obtuse Tetra

By William E. Kocher



*Alexander Graham Bell invented the tetrahedral kite, based on the geometric form that has four sides. Bell's kites were equal-sided and most specimens then and now had weight problems. This variation cuts the ounces but retains the spellbinding tetra appearance.*

**A**fter building several tetrahedral kites, I found a fundamental problem in the design. No matter how many cells are used, the kite ends up top heavy.

As a consequence, the kite readily overflies (dives down its nose). To alter the weight distribution, I transform the individual cell design by "squeezing" the cell vertically to make it shorter and broader. This is not as complex as it sounds. It simply means that rather than use six sticks all the same length, I use sticks of three different lengths for each cell.

The obtuse tetrahedral shape lowers the center of gravity of each cell and of the kite. One consequence is that the obtuse tetra flies at a much higher angle to the ground than conventional tetras.

The overall weight is critical, so to give the obtuse tetra a fighting chance I keep the weight to a minimum. The design is extralight for its sail area, each cell weighing approximately 2¼ ounces (63 grams).

The high area-to-weight ratio really helps because this kite needs only light to medium winds. You will be pleasantly surprised at how little wind is required to get it into the air. A common remark from experienced kitefliers seeing the obtuse tetra for the first time is: "I thought tetras were only heavy-wind kites! What have you done?"

## Materials (per cell)

- $\frac{3}{16}$ " hardwood dowels: three dowels 24" long (trailing edges and spine), two dowels 18" long (leading edges), one dowel 30" long (spreader)
- paint for sealing the dowels
- candle or other wax or spray lubricant

- vinyl tubing (to stop frame corners sliding on spine and spreader),  $\frac{3}{16}$ " internal diameter: four pieces  $\frac{1}{2}$ " long

- vinyl tubing (for frame corners),  $\frac{3}{16}$ " internal diameter: four pieces 2½" long with a  $\frac{1}{8}$ " hole punched in the middle

- neoprene fuel hose or thick-walled vinyl tubing for cell joiners,  $\frac{1}{4}$ " internal diameter, three pieces 1¼" long, with four  $\frac{1}{8}$ " holes, the first two holes at right angles to the second two

- plastic trash bags or Mylar film in your choice of colors, minimum of 20" x 32" per cell, cut to shape

- tapes: double-sided; and low-tack

## Tools

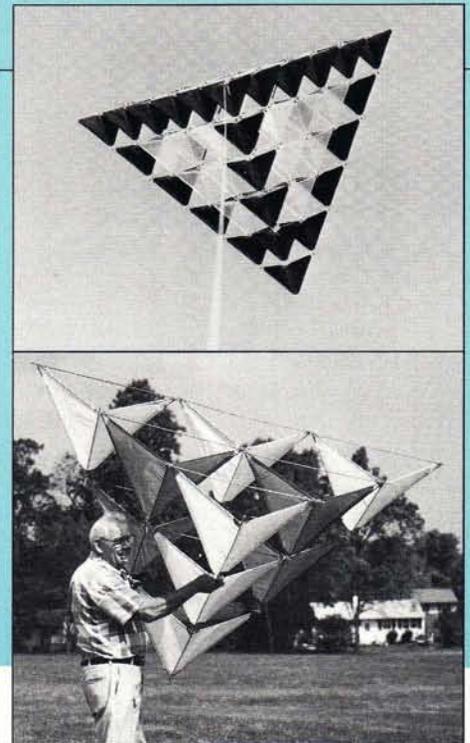
Small saw for cutting dowels, knife for cutting tubing, leather or paper punch, tweezers, pencil sharpener, small paint brush, sandpaper, scissors.

## The Spars

Roll each dowel on a flat surface to check for warp.

Reject any dowel with external knots. I have found that lighter colored dowels tend to have straighter grain, which is preferable. In any case, any dowel which is going to fail will do so when the kite is flying. Always carry spare dowels in all three lengths to the field (the long spreader is the most liable to break, so carry more of these).

Use a pencil sharpener to put a blunt point on the end of each dowel. This will make it easier to insert the dowels into the vinyl and neoprene hosing. Lightly sand, then paint the wooden dowels to protect them from moisture. Spray paint-



Top left, basic 4-cell obtuse tetra; top right, startling multiple 56-cell model by Australian Simon Freidin; lower right, Bill Kocher and a handsome 10-cell craft.

ing works well for a few dowels.

If you are working on a large number of dowels, try rolling about 60 at a time in a little thinned paint in a shallow container, such as a plastic-lined cardboard box. Roll until all the dowels have an even coating. Wear disposable gloves and work in a well ventilated area. Before rolling, stand each end of the bundle of dowels in the paint so the ends are coated too.

When dry, lubricate the end of each dowel for about one inch, to make it easier to insert it into the vinyl tubing. For speed with larger quantities, lay all the dowels alongside each other and treat all the ends at once with spray lubricant.

## The Frame

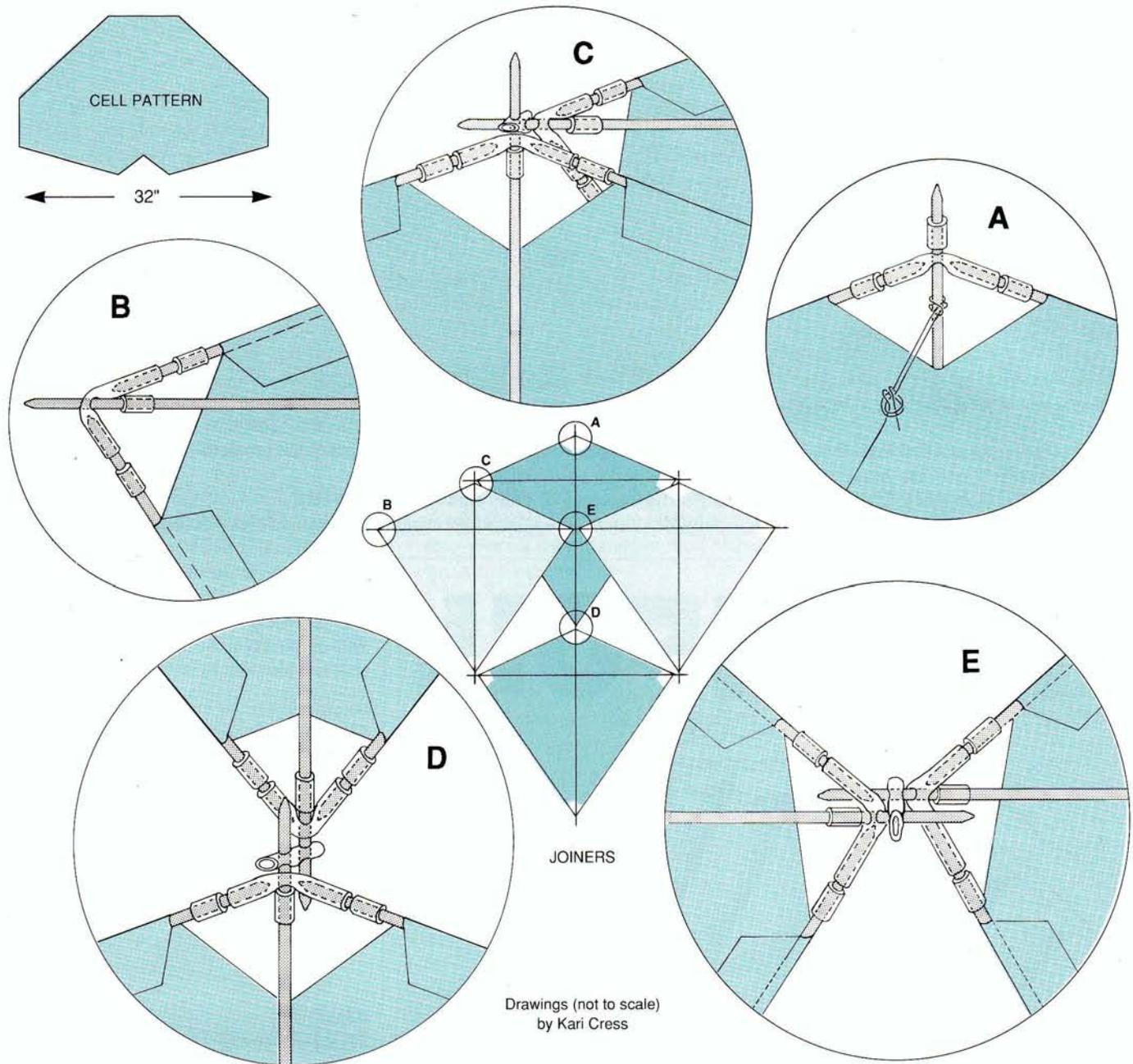
Two pieces of vinyl tubing are placed at each end of the 30" dowel (the spreader). Also two pieces are placed at each end of one of the 24" pieces (the spine). One piece is the frame corner and the other piece serves as a "stopper" to prevent the frame corner from sliding down the dowel.

For the "stoppers," slide a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " length of  $\frac{3}{16}$ " tubing onto the dowel, leaving one inch. This inch is the clearance for connecting the cells together. Because the vinyl should be a tight fit on the dowel, immerse it in hot water to soften it. Use tweezers to extract the pieces of tubing from the water. You may use a drop of

## THE OBTUSE TETRA MULTIPLICATION TABLE

number of cells in kite	layer configuration	18" dowels	24" dowels	30" dowels	total dowels	D/S tape (yds)	frame corners	tubing (yds)	cell joiners	neoprene (feet)	approx wt (lb)
4	1,3	8	12	4	24	8	16	2	6	1	0.6
10	1,3,6	20	30	10	60	19	40	4	16	2	1.4
20	1,3,6,10	40	60	20	120	37	80	7	31	4	3
35	1,3,6,10,15	70	105	35	210	64	140	12	52	6	5
56	1,3,6,10,15,21	112	168	56	336	102	224	19	80	9	8

Note: Numbers of cells, sticks, corners and joiners are exact. Equivalent lengths of tubing and tape are approximate.



Drawings (not to scale)  
by Kari Cress

instant glue to hold the stoppers in place.

To make the four frame corners, cut the  $\frac{3}{8}$ " vinyl tubing into  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " lengths. Fold the tube in half, then unfold and punch a  $\frac{1}{8}$ " hole at the halfway mark with a paper or leather punch.

Use hot water to soften the frame corners. Push the sharpened ends of the dowels (which already have "stoppers") through these holes, and slide the frame corners down until they meet the stop-

pers. Insert the two 18" dowels into the frame corner on one end of the 24" dowel, and the other two 24" dowels into the frame corner on the other end. Insert the free ends of these four dowels into the frame corners on the 30" spreader to complete the cell frame.

### The Skins

Make a template from a stiff material such as cardboard or particle board. Use a sharp

utility knife to cut the skins. Fold the cover in half and crease it to mark the eventual position of the spine. Apply double-sided tape to the four longest sides.

### Cell Assembly

Lay the cover tape-side-up on a flat work surface. Using low-tack tape, stick the cover to the work surface at the top and bottom of the spine crease. Take one end of the spreader out of its frame corner so

the cell can lay flat. Position the flat cell on top of the skin so the spine lies along the spine crease, and the top and bottom dowels are evenly spaced within the flaps. Tape the top and bottom of the spine to the work surface.

Remove the paper backing from the double-stick tape and fold the four flaps over the top and bottom dowels. Stick the flaps down on the skin so that the skin is evenly tensioned.

Carefully remove the tape holding the spine to the work surface, then those holding the skin. Reinsert the spreader to complete the cell.

### Joining the Cells

There are two ways the cells can meet: at right angles or parallel. I use a universal joiner made from neoprene fuel hose. (This is an adaptation of Bill's cell connecting system.—Editor)

Two holes are punched alongside each other, and another two are punched at right angles. (See illustration. Also see Tips and Techniques, this issue, for an easy way

to drill these holes.) For four- or ten-cell kites, only two or three of these holes will be used. If 20 or more cells are assembled, all four holes are used at some of the connections.

### Bridling

My ultralight obtuse tetra uses a single-leg bridle attached to the nose.

### Portability

One nice feature of this design is that, by removing one end of the spine and spreader from the frame corners, and folding the skin along the spine line, each cell can be rolled into a bundle. So you can carry the kite in your kite bag. Or you can just remove one end of the spreader, and carry the cells flat.

### Durability

The chart gives you some options and approximate material quantities in determining how large to make your obtuse tetra. As the number of cells increases, handling the kite on the ground becomes

more difficult, and the chance of breaking the thin dowels increases. Twenty cells is the maximum that an adult can launch alone. Of course, you can choose how many cells to assemble on the flying day.

The kite's durability is improved by making a stronger frame for the bottom-most cell (which is likely to strike the ground on launch) and the topmost cell (which absorbs the forces from the bridle) by substituting graphite or larger dowels.

For kites of 10 or more cells, pre-stress the cell the bridle attaches to by running a piece of line from the bridle point to the cell which lies behind it (see illustration). This overcomes the problem of this topmost cell pulling apart in midair.

The 35- and 56-cell models are only suitable for light, steady winds. Use two helpers to launch the kite (one on each side). Tell them to hold the kite by the joiners and be sure that the bottom-most cell is clear of the ground before launch.

### Flying

Like any tetra (or any box), the kite depends on laminar wind flow to maintain its lift. If the wind contains disturbances, the kite is very reactive. This tests the skill of your kiteflying, because you will need to play out line and take it in so that the kite's flight is maintained. ◇

Below, Bill Kocher on the field takes out his punch and a length of vinyl tubing to make up joiners on the spot, as needed.



WILLIAM E. (BILL) KOCHER of Lutherville, Maryland retired from the photographic business in 1990. He makes and sells bird kites, and is a regular at kite happenings in and around Maryland, USA.

# BY FLEXIFOIL



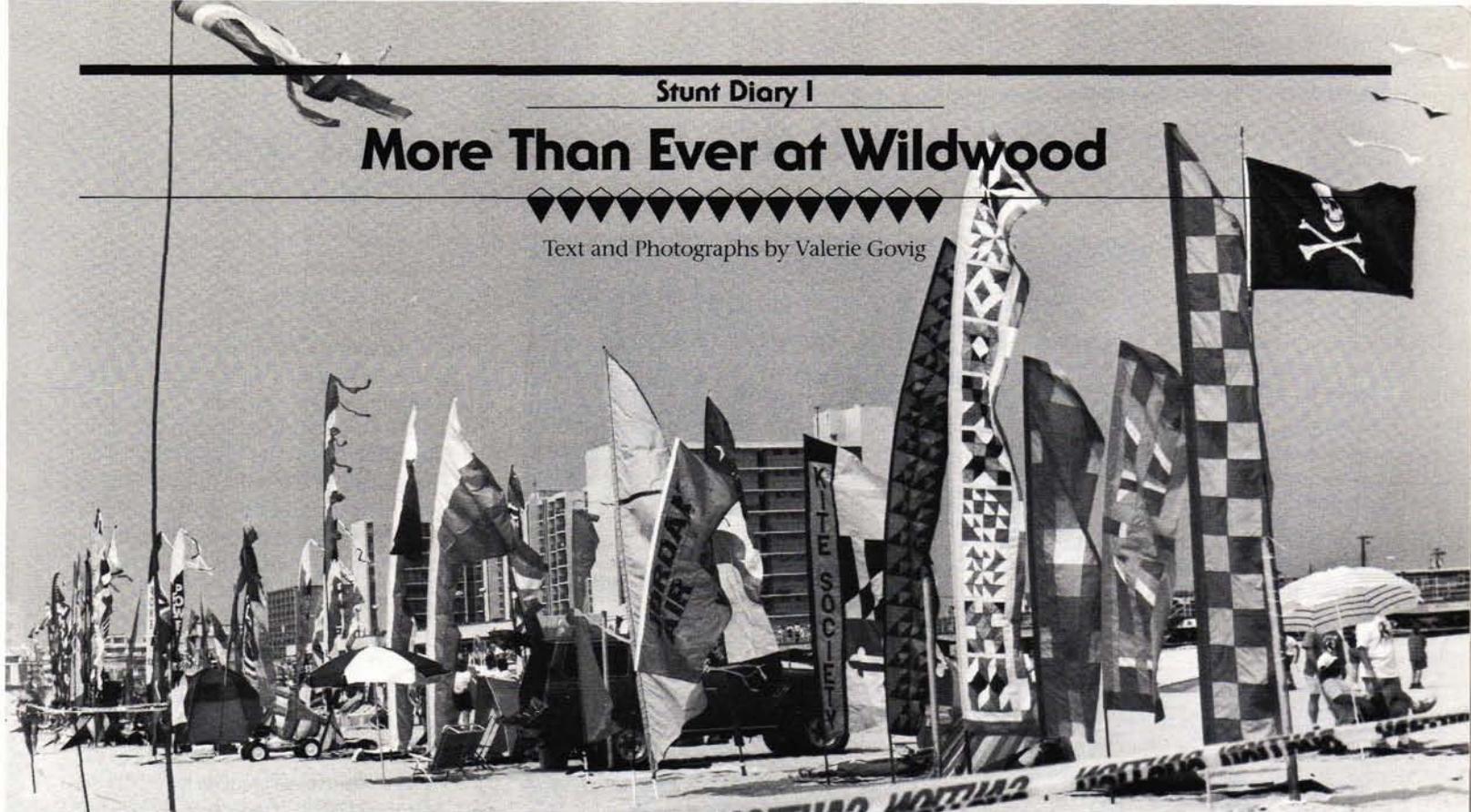
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# More Than Ever at Wildwood

Text and Photographs by Valerie Govig



Big splash on the Wildwood beach: A forest of flags and banners interspersed with cabanas and bedecked with kites.

**M**ORE BEACH, MORE PEOPLE, MORE KITES, MORE IDEAS, MORE SKILL, MORE SUNSHINE, MORE COLOR . . .

This year's East Coast Stunt Kite Competition had it all. Had too much, almost.

Coordinators Fran Gramkowski and Roger Chewning were saying "Never again!"—because 194 competitors were a strain even to this best-organized granddaddy (at 6 years old) of sport kite competitions. For the next ECSKC, regional meets will prequalify the contestants.

This year the event was moved to the south part of Wildwood (New Jersey), an altogether different kind of beach—an even bigger one, at 2,000 feet of shoreline compared to 1,000 feet in its previous midway-enclosed location. Also, it was closer to the boardwalk this year, more inviting to spectators. All this was topped off with ideal wind and weather.

Wildwood is a kite show for certain, but it's a people show too. It starts with 100-some volunteers judging, computing, marshalling, scoring, scurrying and worrying over every detail throughout the weekend. The core committee works on next year's competition as soon as this year's is over.

But the main event is the contestants themselves. Most are still self-supporting in their enthusiasm, digging into their own pockets to attend these events rather than being sponsored by a manufacturer. Yet, there is not always a great difference between the professional performances and the newer players. As the top teams relax (or become

busy elsewhere), the new pilots are getting more serious, putting in more hours.

And *what* are they doing out there? Here are just a few highlights:

- Team High Performance from Hawaii flies a demonstration of four Revolution quad-line kites to "In the Mood." Suddenly the tape stops. The kites stop: they hold still, perfectly, until the music starts again. Later, in competition, the team stirs the crowd with close crossing and accurate mirroring using four North Shore Radical kites.

- The new Quadrifoil, a totally soft four-line kite by Kite Innovations (Ted Dougherty, Spring, Texas), swoops around the sky near the contest area and attracts attention as it bounces like a cloud on the sand.

- Lee Sedgwick of Erie, Pennsylvania flies six Revolutions like they were one, showing his characteristic ease and grace.

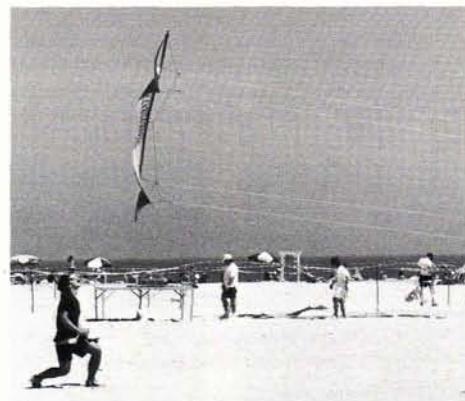
- The top-scoring team Prevailing Winds (California) come so close together you're sure they'll crash—but they don't!

- Miguel Rodriguez of Richmond, California starts his routine by flipping his kite from an upside down position, and ends in an elevator-straight two-point sit-down.

- Alan Nagao (High Performance) ends his routine by making a deliberate and perfect nose dive into the sand.

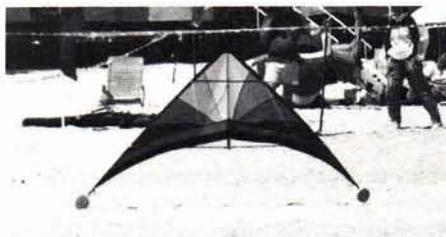
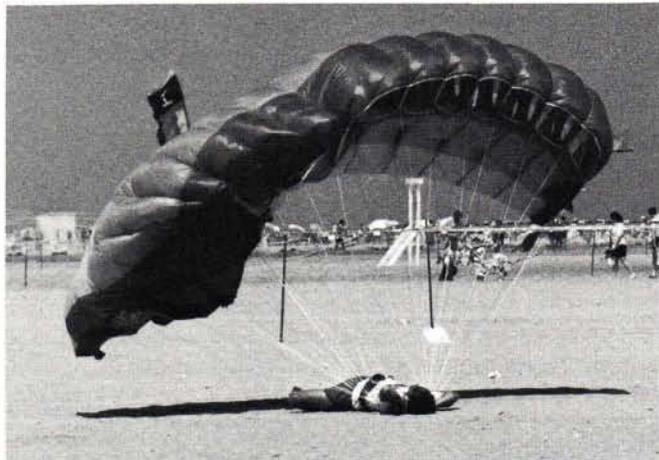
- Vince Bobrosky of Normal, Illinois flies a witty, wiggly dance that echoes the motor sounds in "Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines."

- Fast starbursts, exploding and imploding like a fireworks display, are put on by the



Which is harder to do? Fly in reverse through a stake, alternating quad-line and dual-line?—Bob Hanson (top, Edison, New Jersey) does that in his salty dance-story ("You Can Keep Your Hat On")—or fly four lines in your hands and two from your waist at the same time—as does Scott Augenbaugh (bottom, Honolulu, Hawaii).

Right, winner in the innovative category, Lee Sedgwick of Erie, Pennsylvania flies three kites in his routine: a Revolution, a Quadrifoil and a modified monster parafoil. At the end of his "battle" with the monster, he brings the kite down over himself, "swallowing" him.



Alan Nagao (Hawaii) gets cheers for his smooth "Rollin', Rollin', Rollin'" kites: (above) dual-line fitted with wheels; (right) quad-line encircled in a hoop.



Above, Lee Sedgwick is only the first to *throw* his kite and then recover it like a tethered boomerang. Right, Calvin Mills of Allison Park, Pennsylvania flies lovely pastel kites of his own make—one with dual lines, one with quad.



High Flyers team of Rhode Island.

- Funny hats top the pilots of the primo team, Top of the Line (San Diego, California) in their "Peter Pan" routine ("I'm Flying").

- You get to see some fliers twice, once in the semifinals and again in the finals (sometimes better in the semis). Example: Pam Kirk (Top of the Line) doing a beautiful routine ("Bless the Beasts and the Children")

- Joe Perron of Lincoln, Rhode Island flies two kites connected by one long tail (a legacy from Ron Reich, Top of the Line) in a lovely dance to "That's All I Ask of You" from "Phantom of the Opera."

- Line reversals through a stake (pioneered by Lee Sedgwick) are almost common now, but still exciting: among others, Billy Jones of Ocean City, Maryland does it with three Bees; Brian Vanderslice of Croton-on-Hudson, New York tries with a big Force 10.

- Fliers from other countries are here to compete and observe. Included are Austria, Belgium, Canada, France and Germany.

- Glimmering new kites flash by: Bees by Chicago Fire, Speedwings from Europe, iridescent Flexifoils, custom kites of all kinds.

- A tour de force of single-line beauties by Kevin Shannon (Carlisle, Pennsylvania), Stretch Tucker of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, the Spencer family of Marlton, New Jersey, and others brings drama to the boardwalk.

Such an event as this one cannot exist without its minor glitches and annoyances: the stoppage of the sound system for part of Saturday, the lapses in commentary, the typical few contestants grumbling about rules and judging. The organizers had to move the banquet to a larger hall this year, but it was catered by (you guessed it) Uncle Lou's Pancake House, assuring that the bad-food tradition would survive (although it's in danger of slipping to the level of fair).

The only real down-note in the weekend was the accident on Saturday of Dean Jordan of Gainesville, Florida. While being hauled sidewise by a dozen 10-foot Flexifoils, his oversize helmet came down over his eyes, blocking his vision. He crashed to the ground and shattered his pelvis. He was rushed to the hospital for immediate care and was expected to be incapacitated for several months. (He's doing well as we go to press.)

An impromptu auction of quickly donated items raised over \$10,000 that evening for Dean's benefit. Terrible as the accident was, it surely demonstrated that the people in the kite community are generous and caring.

Wildwood keeps showing us the best in stunt kiting. But more than that, it treats the sport with the respect it deserves.

# Less than Advertised at Huntington Beach

By Roger E. Hyde

**S**TORIES, ALLEGATIONS, CLAIMS, COUNTERCLAIMS, ACCUSATION, SUSPICION—AND FACADE.

I had never been so close to so much rumor in my life. If I had covered a really slimy congressional race I might have felt it to be a little familiar; but in the arts, in kiting, it was terra incognita.

Last March, *Kite Lines* sent me to Huntington Beach (California) to cover the "Power Flying Games" ("Power Flying" is done with "Power Gliders"—stunt kites to you, me and the rest of the universe—but we'll get to that).

Even while I was there I had come to the conclusion that it would be a terribly apt metaphor to compare the whole thing to a production of "The Music Man." However, this was not something that was "produced" and that a bunch of us witnessed. Instead, a lot of people were gathered together and then this thing was done to us, exploded before us so that we carried away not just the image in our minds but the shrapnel in our hearts.

Hold on to the "Music Man" concept, though. It allows you to cast the characters vividly in place. Professor Harold Hill is Sheilagh Lérand, an itinerant entrepreneur. She was the manufacturer of the Victoria Hawke stunt kite (rechristened California Hawke for the occasion). Unconfirmed and apparently unconfirmable reports are that she was based in Arizona, incorporated in Nevada at the address of a lawyer who never returns

**... A contingency plan for everything from hangnails to Armageddon. Dazzling.**

calls, was at one time promoting time-share condos for kitefliers in Hawaii (your week or weeks were seasonally wind-rated and the condos were supposedly selected for kiteflying suitability)—did I mention "itinerant"? All rumors.

Not rumor is that I was invited to stay at the new, breathtaking Huntington Beach Hilton across from the beach. Upon confirming my intent to attend the event I was informed that Sheilagh's allocated space at the Hilton was filled and I would be in the motel next door where she was staying herself with all the "fun people" because it was "more casual." The motel

was literally being operated on a temporary basis at cut rates until the Hilton corporation could raze the flea-trap and put up a second high-rise resort.

I arrived on Saturday, midday. No reservation was on file for me at the motel but I talked my way onto the event tab. I checked in to a colorless little room, but it was clean (the positive description ends there). I never found anybody who had been at the Hilton.

I was invited to a "Press Pancake Breakfast" on Sunday morning. I had the

**Is it such a terrible mistake to be gullible that one conceals it with the real sin of covering up?**

only press credential there. Breakfast consisted of two pancakes on a paper plate cooked in the hot dog stand and passed out to me through the little window. Most of the events were like this—absent or a pale, unrecognizable shadow of the plan.

It is not that I was so disappointed or injured by the accommodations but this seems to have been the general experience of dealing with "Flash" (her "pilot" handle). My first and longest conversation with her (38 minutes according to the phone company) was a stunner. She was good—very good. It was nearly a monologue on her part and I was thoroughly entertained. Terribly charming. Bright, enthusiastic—a contingency plan for everything from hangnails to Armageddon. Dazzling. One can see that the Conference and Visitors Bureau never stood a chance.

The festival, as described in the "Oh, you got trouble" number by Sheilagh, was a tour de force. Everybody in the city would be involved—people would come from all over southern California to suddenly fill the quiet winter beaches of Huntington Beach. She would mount massive publicity: newsprint, glossy print, electronic media, etc. "Power Gliding" would be done to copyright-free music for the media's convenience and to guarantee the widest possible coverage. A very sharp idea but legally irrelevant for news purposes. (The only potential benefit would be in the marketing of videos afterward.) Local groups—Jaycees, Scouts, Rotary, everybody—would form teams, get lessons, a pilot's license, and a pilot nickname in a

\$50 package. She would sell you her famous California Hawke Power Glider for a mere \$350 (plus lines and accessories... it's a high-tech game, you know). Then everybody comes together for the festival. Prizes for best costumes and best cheerleaders, too (wind and flying skill are not the make-or-break element in Power Gliding).

You begin to see how extreme the Music Man parallel gets. She persuades the civic leaders that they need this activity, new people, a new season of tourists: good, clean community fun. She sells them her expertise as an organizer (supported really only by her manifest salesmanship). They need her in charge, only her, because she has developed this as a whole new sport.

"We don't use the word 'kite'," she emphasizes. We are leaving behind Charlie Brown and generations of disposable drug-store kites. We will flush away all that old frustration and confusion. We are reborn as Power Glider Pilots. We join a squadron, are baptized with a new name and Sheilagh is essential for every step because she is the priestess who alone knows the

**Misrepresentation of who her sponsors were was widespread and blatant.**

holy mysteries. We don't even have to wait for the Wells Fargo wagon to bring the band instruments: Sheilagh makes the Power Gliders with her own hands in her motel room.

We will not have time to go into the kite itself but she sold them all up and down the California coast a couple of years ago and the grapevine lit up like a string of Christmas lights. It looked interesting, novel, with a double keel. But it was too expensive, flew like an ugly truck, and fell out of the sky in the corners. She showed up in kite shops with two or three kites, was on her way out of town on her sales trip, but if you paid cash on the spot you could get her samples now—orders to be shipped would take a while... Most of the kite dealers wrote it off as a sting when they couldn't find her to return the kites. A couple of dealers tried to catch up to her in Huntington Beach when it fell in place that it was the same person. Most

just sent along their testimonials and bad wishes. The kite had not improved by becoming an even more expensive Power Glider.

Just as all the experienced kite people feared before, during, and after, the whole mess hit the fan with a pyrotechnic

**There were more people just passing on the bike path than had come for the festival.**

vengeance. She delivered the event but barely, minimally. There were more people just passing on the bike path than had come for the festival. Maybe 150 attended each of the two days. Many of the contests and performances never materialized. Those that did were universally sad and slight. The Visitors Bureau stopped payment on the heroic sum they had budgeted her (\$13,000) when the first \$8,000 disappeared within a month and there was no accounting. I was told she left a \$3,000 motel bill after living there all spring, then left town without leaving forwarding information.

Harold Hill fell in love with the local librarian (Marian) when he tried to distract her; Sheilagh had no method, sexual or otherwise, to misdirect the attention of the local kite shops and enthusiasts. She just pretended they approved of her when speaking to civic authorities and refused to acknowledge them when they themselves called. The nearest and most prominent kite shop mounted a counter-event of kites flown a hundred yards down the beach—just silently there and much more dramatic than anything at the Power Games.

The bottom line is that I am not the person to accuse Sheilagh Lerand of legal infractions. The local newspaper editor, local kite shop owner, and civic boosters she worked with did eventually press her for documents, books, records, references, etc. Nothing was presented. I cannot say she had none of the 15-20 city, county, and state permits, licenses, and tax documents she needed to do what she was doing. But legally these documents must be displayed. No one saw them.

Misrepresentation of who her sponsors were was widespread and blatant. People and companies who were advertised to be contributing, donating and sponsoring took great pains to find me and go on record denying any form of official sup-

port. She even characterized the counter-demonstration as participation in her event by the kite store owner. Crimes of social decency are certain.

I will emphasize the official disclaimer: I cannot prove any law was broken in Sheilagh Lerand's Power Flying Games. Suspicion is rampant in every quarter but I have no personal access to solid evidence. Maybe it is legal to do light manufacturing in motels in Huntington Beach. Maybe some law enforcement officer inspected her documents and permits and saw they were correctly displayed in some obscure place she would not name. I don't know. I hope she will never promote Power Flying again and no city (nor anyone at all, for that matter) will fall under her spell again. But I don't require revenge. Some may yet come forward to require justice.

As in "The Music Man," the ultimate value of the experience is in the *potential* of the populace to learn something about their own social psychology. Why does a local booster network suddenly launch a major project that actively excludes local companies that are in the business of the project? Why do people spend so much time, energy, and money after doubts become clear? Is it such a terrible mistake to be gullible that one conceals it with the real sin of covering up? Is it so important for local bureaucrats to be the first "power glider pilots" in town that they need to

**Ah, Vanity, thy name is Competition.**

bury "stunt kite fliers" to do it? Ah, Vanity, thy name is Competition.

We don't know whether Huntington Beach has learned a lesson or not. What we know is that they are smarting mightily from the bruises they got last March. Everyone involved keeps a low profile and blushes and hems and haws. As an initial reaction, that is perfectly appropriate. Most of them did not do their jobs or their homework—and they got led down the garden path in their self-blinded optimism. But I hope they will make their apologies and pull their reddened faces out of the sand again. An official who has learned a lesson is more useful than one who hasn't.

Flash got by with what she did because she rode the wave of some powerful

truths: Huntington Beach is truly one of the handful of places on this planet that would score 100% on any evaluation of year-round perfect kite locations. Their winter conditions are ideal, summery, and deserve to be a worldwide destination for all kites. Huntington Beach is a beautiful, pleasant place—a great base for a general vacation in the Los Angeles area.

And most of all, half the budget, half the enthusiasm, and half the local involvement seen last March would still have resulted in a word-class kite event. That is, if run responsibly, building on the current of the existing kite movement and not against it. Many of us in L.A., San Diego, and other California beach cities could steer them straight and have hungered for support like theirs.

Put it behind you, Huntington Beach, and do it again. Just remember: you don't need to reinvent stunt kites—or even rename them—just fly them.

See you on the beach next year.

## EPILOGUE

Sheilagh Lerand made a presentation in June to the city officials of Port Hueneme, California. In spite of eyes filled with stardust, a couple of skeptics reached for the yellow pages and called local kite shops for general advice on kite festival planning.

Almost coincidentally, they also discovered that Sheilagh's name and method were recognized by these kite people. The officials were alarmed to find that opinions differed as to degree of triumph Sheilagh could rightly claim in her Huntington Beach festival. The Port Hueneme organizers are now actively exploring alternative approaches to mounting their kite festival.

Watch for the Sheilagh Lerand Road Show in your town. But remember, it's a repertory company—the play may change.

*ROGER HYDE was cofounder with Steve Edeiken of the original Rainbow Aerial Ballet, chief designer of the Crystal Kite Co., and teacher of History and Design of Kites for UCLA Extension.*

**WASHOI! WASHOI! WASHOI!**

# *How to Fight—and Survive— a Rokkaku Kite Battle*

ARTICLE BY RICHARD F. KINNAIRD, JR. AND THE STAFF OF *KITE LINES* WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY GEORGE PETERS

If kiting is a bastion for the Renaissance person, then rokkaku kite team fighting represents it best because it combines art, knowledge and athletics.

You need teamwork and athletic prowess to survive a long fight. You also need the knowledge to build, fly and fight these kites. And you want the kite to be beautiful. If any one of these things gets out of balance, you don't have a really successful and satisfied team.

To examine all the aspects of a team battle would really take a book. Here I am looking at basic strategies.

## **Flying Basics**

The first principle of fighter kites is that they fly in the direction the nose is pointed when the line is pulled.

With fighters, you "control" the direction of flight by releasing the line, allowing the kite to spin, and then pulling on the line when the kite is pointing in the desired direction. Most large rokkakus are not this responsive (but be prepared to fight one that is!)

There are subtleties which determine the ratio of stability to instability in your kite's behavior—or make it easier to spin on a slack line. You can adjust your kite's proportions, the stiffness of spars and spine, the bridle length, the tow point and/or the depth of the bow in its rear or forward spars—any or all of these according to the particular wind conditions. There are many variables to master, but on the field, your two simplest adjustments for decreasing the kite's stability are to flatten the bow or move the tow point forward.

Even if your kite is too stable to spin easily, when you are fighting with it the fundamental principle applies: you must control the movements of your kite with the movements of your kite line.

You can change the flight direction of most rokkakus by creating a pendulum-like oscillation. Release the line rapidly until the spine points off to one side. Then pull on the line and release. This should make the spine swing back in the other

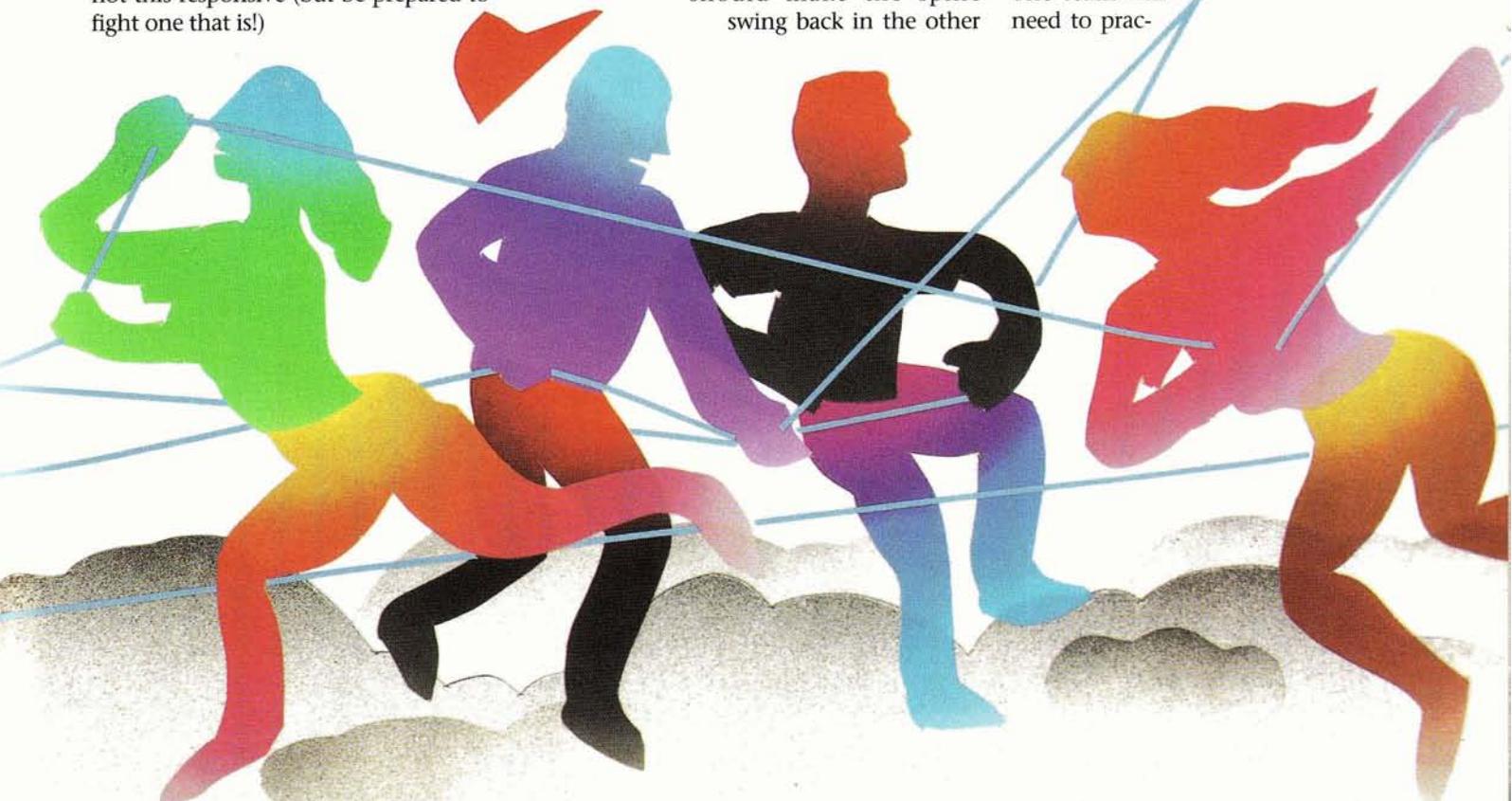
direction. By a series of pulls and releases on the line, timed to the extremities of the swing, you should be able to create a back-and-forth motion. Eventually the spine will be pointing in the direction you want, and a sustained pull will cause it to fly in that direction. Slackening the line again will allow the kite to reorient itself. Be careful not to pull on the kite until it has reached the edge of its swing or you'll dampen, rather than exaggerate, the pendulum motion.

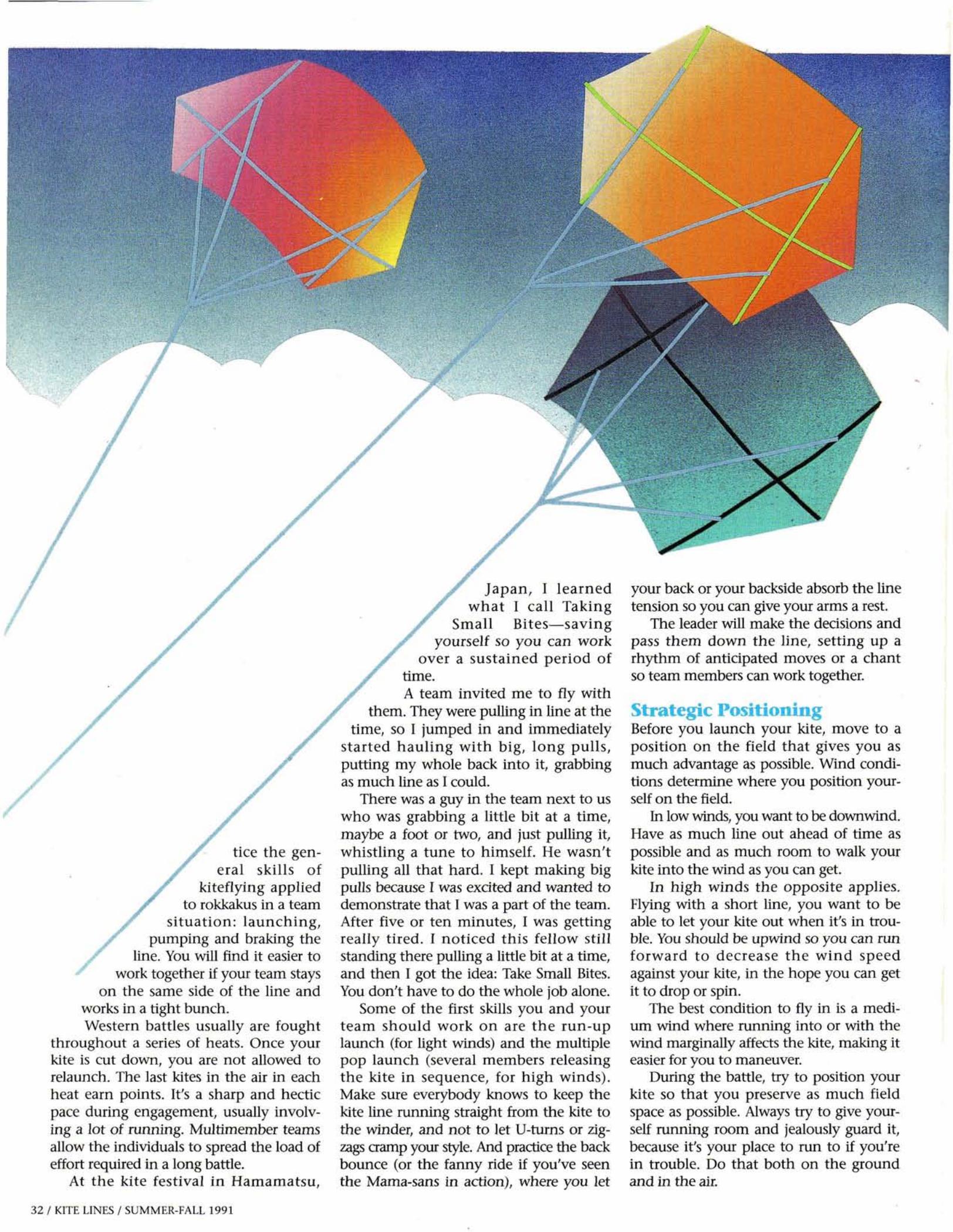
You can maneuver your kite vertically by releasing the line (the kite drops), or pulling the line (the kite rises).

Run to the left or right while maintaining tension on the line and the kite will drag slowly across the sky in the same direction.

## **Teamwork**

The team will need to prac-





tice the general skills of kiteflying applied to rokkakus in a team situation: launching, pumping and braking the line. You will find it easier to work together if your team stays on the same side of the line and works in a tight bunch.

Western battles usually are fought throughout a series of heats. Once your kite is cut down, you are not allowed to relaunch. The last kites in the air in each heat earn points. It's a sharp and hectic pace during engagement, usually involving a lot of running. Multimember teams allow the individuals to spread the load of effort required in a long battle.

At the kite festival in Hamamatsu,

Japan, I learned what I call Taking Small Bites—saving yourself so you can work over a sustained period of time.

A team invited me to fly with them. They were pulling in line at the time, so I jumped in and immediately started hauling with big, long pulls, putting my whole back into it, grabbing as much line as I could.

There was a guy in the team next to us who was grabbing a little bit at a time, maybe a foot or two, and just pulling it, whistling a tune to himself. He wasn't pulling all that hard. I kept making big pulls because I was excited and wanted to demonstrate that I was a part of the team. After five or ten minutes, I was getting really tired. I noticed this fellow still standing there pulling a little bit at a time, and then I got the idea: Take Small Bites. You don't have to do the whole job alone.

Some of the first skills you and your team should work on are the run-up launch (for light winds) and the multiple pop launch (several members releasing the kite in sequence, for high winds). Make sure everybody knows to keep the kite line running straight from the kite to the winder, and not to let U-turns or zig-zags cramp your style. And practice the back bounce (or the fanny ride if you've seen the Mama-sans in action), where you let

your back or your backside absorb the line tension so you can give your arms a rest.

The leader will make the decisions and pass them down the line, setting up a rhythm of anticipated moves or a chant so team members can work together.

### Strategic Positioning

Before you launch your kite, move to a position on the field that gives you as much advantage as possible. Wind conditions determine where you position yourself on the field.

In low winds, you want to be downwind. Have as much line out ahead of time as possible and as much room to walk your kite into the wind as you can get.

In high winds the opposite applies. Flying with a short line, you want to be able to let your kite out when it's in trouble. You should be upwind so you can run forward to decrease the wind speed against your kite, in the hope you can get it to drop or spin.

The best condition to fly in is a medium wind where running into or with the wind marginally affects the kite, making it easier for you to maneuver.

During the battle, try to position your kite so that you preserve as much field space as possible. Always try to give yourself running room and jealously guard it, because it's your place to run to if you're in trouble. Do that both on the ground and in the air.

Overhead, try to keep a vertical strip where no kites are above or below you. This prevents your getting pinched by kites sweeping from the left and the right, above and below your line.

### Maneuvering and Cutting

My advice for beginners is stay low and climb up to cut the competition. The lower kite, with its line underneath an opponent's lines, generally has the advantage in a cutting run.

As a general rule, the line that moves fastest during contact is the line that cuts.

The usual technique for cutting is to take in line—as smoothly and quickly as you can, usually by running into the wind. It is important to have a smooth line with no knots. At any obstruction, your line will stop moving (relatively), giving the opponent an advantage.

Try to avoid a wide angle between the two kite lines. The closer you are to parallel, the better your chances of making the winning cut. The wider the angle, the more the two lines pull against each other, which reduces the speed advantage and makes cutting a 50/50 proposition.

There are several ways to accomplish a cut. There is a technique that I call Buddy Running where part of the team runs the kite line while the other team members jog alongside them. When the group pulling the line gets tired, the other members take the line. Or you can have a relay run where half the team goes part way along the field, then waits for the other half to run up to them with the kite line to relieve them.

There is also a Japanese technique, which I have not directly observed, called a circle run. You put a pulley on the line (the Japanese call it a *tegi*) which holds a specific point on the field. Taking turns, a team member grabs the line just behind the pulley and runs downwind with it a little, releases the line to the next member and runs back to

### The Core Rules of the Rokkaku Challenge as currently practiced in the U.K. and generally observed elsewhere

In part, the current U.K. Challenge rules are:

- Minimum kite height: 2 meters
- No Kevlar or wire line
- Minimum team size: 2 people
- 3 rounds per festival
- 15 minute time limit per round
- 10 minutes of repair and recuperation between rounds
- The last five kites down are awarded points as follows:

last kite up	6 points
second last kite up	4 points
third last kite up	3 points
fourth last kite up	2 points
fifth last kite up	1 point

The team's best scores from any two festivals in a region are totalled to determine an overall trophy winner. —Martin Lester

grab it again near the pulley. In essence the team members run in a circle, doing short bursts of strenuous work.

I have heard of, but not seen, the technique of bringing your kite down in a power dive to meet an opponent who's rising to meet you, and then, at the last minute, releasing your kite so it rights itself and letting it run at a very high speed. I think the secret of that technique is to have enough speed to run quickly over their line.

### Tipping Them Out of the Sky

Using your line to brush the tips of the spars or spine on an opponent's kite forces their kite to spin. If your adversaries are not good at recovering their kite or

if they are close to the ground, you may force their kite to touch the ground.

If you can maneuver your kite quickly, you can tip the other kite back and forth several times. Let's say you tip it once and they spin off to the left and you move your kite down and to the right. If they try to come back up, you're in position to tip them again.

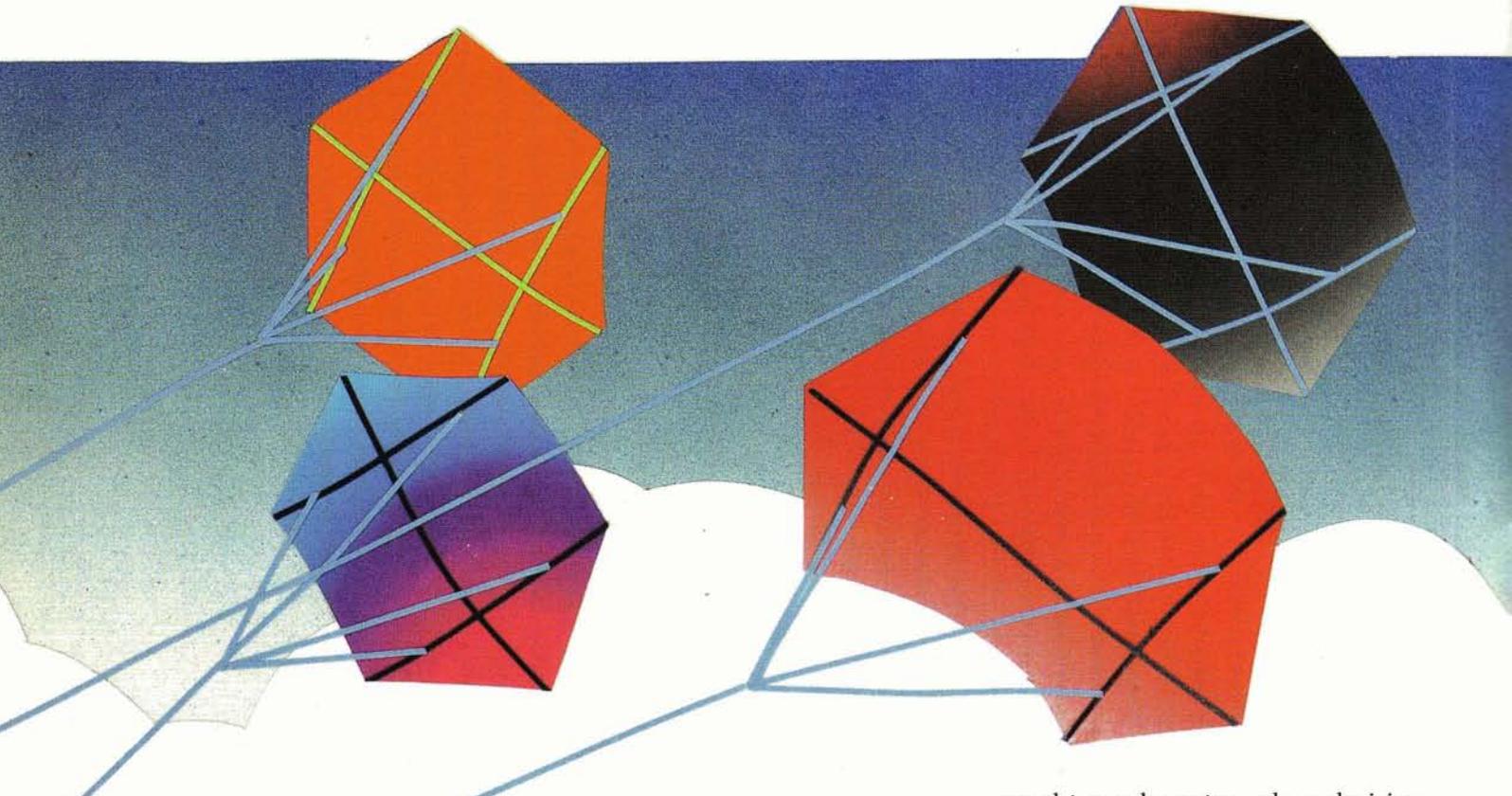
You can force an opponent to lose control by a strategic positioning technique, using your ground position to block the other team from recovering. If their kite is spinning and they have to get by you, your team can just stand and hold its ground. Then your opponents have to run behind your last team member or underneath your line. Either way is going to cause a big problem for them. Avoid the temptation to engage the team members. Remember, you're fighting kites, not wrestling.

Another technique that can be used, especially if your kite is very unresponsive, is *Sitting On Them*. If you're above and farther out than they are, and they try to come up underneath you, you can move your kite right on top of their kite and just let your line relax a little. They'll have to move quickly to avoid your kite just sitting on them.

### Tangling and Untangling

Avoid letting your kite touch their line. Sometimes in your haste to try to cut a kite line by running downfield, your kite will come in contact with their line. This typically leads to your kite wrapping around their line or being tipped in an unplanned direction. An even worse





scenario, which typically results from climbing to meet an opponent, is when one kite flies into another's bridle lines. I call this the Spin of Death. There's no real way out of it that I've ever seen. The two kites wrap around each other and spin to the ground. (We deliberately used this tactic in one of the challenges between the Mama-sans and Rainbow Warriors to make sure we ended with a no-win situation.)

Engaging their kite on your line, however, is to your advantage. Try to get their kite to spin around your line, then you can take in line and pull their kite down to the ground. Or you can slide your line up their line until you hit the bridle, tripping their kite and forcing it down into the ground. Try to avoid entangling on their line—or they will do the same to you!

Sometimes you will get into a situation where you can no longer run or get your line free, and your only choice is to try to cut their line. Hold your ground and saw the line by pulling back and forth on it. This is very risky (your opponent is just as likely to cut you first) and is only done as a last resort.

Even worse is getting your kite line caught in a clump of crossed lines. Your line may get locked up completely, and you can't maneuver at all. Sometimes another team comes along, wraps its line around the whole bunch and cuts everybody down with a quick run across the

field. You must avoid this situation. Actively maneuver your kite out of the way if it looks like a big tangle is about to happen. Don't be passive.

### Defensive Tactics

Watch out for kites that are making low level sweeps. Avoid getting pinched. If you do get pinched, let the line run. As long as you can feel the line free in your hands, you're all right. Once it gets

caught you have to make a decision whether you are going to let the others fight out the battle or whether you are going to try to run with your kite and bring them down. Once you start running with your kite, trying to bring them in, you must avoid running out of line or getting your line cut quickly.

To defend against a cut, let your line run out. Keep your kite under control with a minimum amount of tension.

Watch out for the Blood Lust Run. The minute that two kites come in contact, somebody invariably grabs the head of the line and takes off across the field for reasons that I don't really understand. Avoid that temptation by practicing with your team members—as a team.

### Safety and Etiquette or Rick's Rules to Live By

- Remember, you are trying to make the kites fight, not the people.
- Hold a meeting and/or issue written rules before the battle. Stress safety.
- Ban all but incidental bodily contact.
- Prohibit tripping, pushing, fighting, wrestling, running line around persons to ensnare, and "dirty tricks" of any kind. Recruit someone to police this rule.
- Ban use of all cutting implements other than kite line.
- Ban Kevlar, wire or glass-coated line.
- Wear gloves.
- Set a good example.
- Always Claim Victory.
- Have fun!

I'm reminded of something I saw in Hamamatsu: two teams stood face to face with one another on the field, both of them flying their kites, both of them trying to bring down the other kite, like they were observing some kind of kiting Geneva Convention rules in the frenzy of battle.

### Team Spirit

Let each team member take the lead and the line so that everybody has a chance to experience the battle. If you think you are the only person who knows how to fly your kite, then your job should be to make sure that others learn how. Tell them what to expect and what to do in a situation.

What I've often found is that inexperienced people love to wade into the thick of battle, and then in the middle turn around and say, "Now what do we do?"

That's when to put your knowledge to good use. That's when to direct their efforts in a way that will improve their skills. That's when to claim victory!

### Remember

Always Claim Victory. (Never let the facts get in the way.)

## How the International Rokkaku Challenge Has Evolved

An Interview with Martin Lester by Valerie Govig

VG: You started something in 1986, an International Rokkaku Challenge. That was after the Rokkaku Team Challenge posed by Bevan Brown in the States, and the exploits of the Mama-sans that came to your attention in 1985.

ML: Yes, they made an impression on me. The York Kite Festival in England in 1986 drew seven teams, which may have been the first official rokkaku challenge in Europe. I wanted to put something back into the kite community which had brought me so much pleasure, so I proposed an International Rokkaku Challenge (IRC) and a United Kingdom Rokkaku Challenge (UKRC).

VG: What happened to them?

ML: The International Challenge never really got off the ground. We tried it at Scheveningen twice and essentially ran out of beach. After that, we saw difficulty in finding a place to collect enough international fliers. So any later international challenges have happened informally, if not spontaneously.

VG: You've had some, though?

ML: Oh yes, Tasmania and New Zealand\* were effectively international challenges, and the recent AKA conventions that I've attended. It is harder with a new group and various levels of experience. But if you have what might be called a "critical mass" you can do it. Of course, even with an inexperienced group, people who are tentative in the first round will get better in the second, and then by the third round everyone's really going for it.

VG: Are three rounds the standard?

ML: Yes, and a simple scoring system. [See rules.] It works rather well.

VG: Do the rules vary? You adapt to the situation?

ML: Yes, for example if fliers bring out a wide range of sizes, you loosen the rules to permit them.

VG: But the U.K. Challenge is quite organized, right?

ML: That has gone exceedingly well. We have run it to the original rules. We've had a maximum of 25 teams at one event, usually 12 to 16 the average number. Last year we ran it at six festivals. The fliers, the festival organizers and the public have enjoyed it. And I don't think we've ever lost a kite!

VG: What has changed about these challenges since the start of them?

ML: We've limited line length to 200 feet. It sharpens up the competition because it stops people from letting out a long line and then hanging off to the side, not competing.

VG: What other elements are evolving?

ML: We're having individual challenges using kites up to one meter [39.37"] tall. Teams are developing a style and starting to win consistently.

VG: Do you award a trophy at any of the events?

ML: Yes, of course. With regard to the UKRC, a kite trader presents a trophy to each event winner, which is kept, however, at the last event. At Bristol, trophies are awarded for Team Fighting and Team Spirit. These trophies are kept for a year and then returned. The team's name is added on a small plaque. The trophies themselves are etched glass (Team Fighting) and mirror (Team Spirit) in a wooden frame. The design is of a rokkaku interpreted from an illustration in Tal Streeter's book *The Art of the Japanese Kite*. One thing I must add—none of the events could take place without the help and support of the festival organizers, or of Jon and Gill Bloom of the Kite Society who actually run the UKRC with my undying thanks.

VG: What do you foresee, or plan, for the future? Any changes?

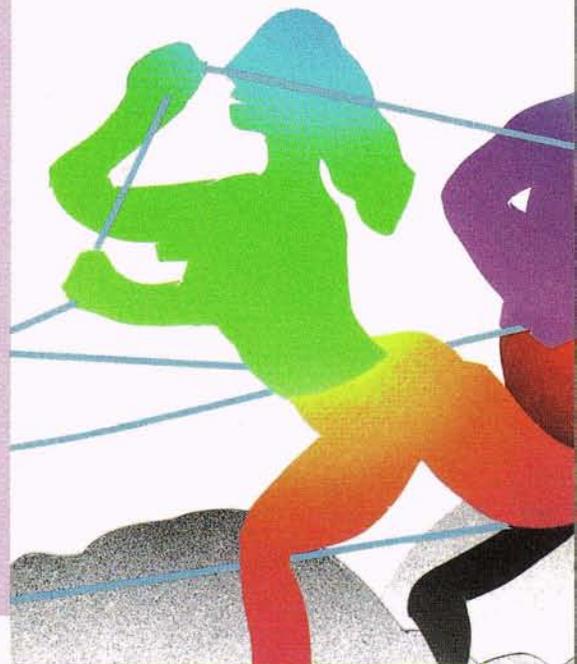
ML: I've been pleased that the Rokkaku Challenges have grown and improved over the four years since I've been involved. I hope to keep going with it.

MARTIN LESTER of Bristol, England, is well-known for his inflatable kites, including the imaginative Legs. He travels widely and is a key organizer of the Bristol International Kite Festival.

## Thanks

I'd like to thank Len Conover, Simon Freidin, Mel and Val Govig for their redirecting of my errant ramblings. I'd like to thank Bevan Brown for implementing the plan to get rokkaku fighting going as a sport in America. And I must thank Judy Neuger, whose inspirational challenge to me led to the founding of the Mama-sans and Rainbow Warriors.

RICK KINNAIRD is a certified kite zany with a recognized talent for herding unprepared fellow enthusiasts. Examples: the Kinnaird Cody Kite Crew of 1978-80, the massive spontaneous asymmetric kite of 1980, the Big Silver Thing of 1981-84. The above article was extracted and enhanced from field notes for his "rokkaku boot camp" workshop presentations.



## Further Reading On Rokkakus

Bodóczy, István. *Papírsárkány* (Budapest: 1988), pp. 76-77. In Hungarian. Excellent drawings of a rokkaku using unit measurements.

Eden, Maxwell. *Kiteworks: Explorations in Kite Building and Flying* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1989), pp. 220-226. A fairly standard rokkaku plan and a variation by Lincoln Chang.

Gallot, Philippe. *Fighter Kites: 29 Original Designs to Make and Fly* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 61-62. A small rokkaku, not useful for battle.

Govig, Mel. "Kite Plans: The Sanjo Rokkaku Kite," Packet No. 1 (Baltimore: Aeolus Press, Inc., 1983), 4 pp., out of print. Two pages of good plans for a typical challenge-size kite.

Pelham, David. *The Penguin Book of Kites* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1976), p. 163. An outline plan, not detailed.

Rowlands, Jim. *One-Hour Kites* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 70-73. A simple rokkaku, not suited to fighting.

Schimmelpfennig, Wolfgang. *Making & Flying Kites* (English translation, Secaucus, New Jersey: Castle, 1989), pp. 43-45, out of print. Full drawings and instructions, well detailed.

Streeter, Tal. *The Art of the Japanese Kite* (New York: Weatherhill, 1974), Chapter 1, "Giant Kite Fighting in Shirone," and Chapter 2, "The Sanjo Kite Maker Toranosuke Watanabe." Essential reading for full appreciation of the rokkaku. No plans.

Thomas, Carol. *Kite Crazy* (Toronto, Ontario, Canada: SOMA Film & Video, 1991), pp.77-91. Basic plans for a medium-size Tyvek rokkaku.

**Kite Lines has published milestone reports on the rokkaku romance. In chronological order:**

Hartsook, John H. "The Craftsmanship of Lincoln Chang." Shows two rokkaku variations in plan form. (Spring-Summer 1978 *Kite Lines*, p. 15.)

Brown, Bevan. The original rokkaku kite team challenge, defining the physical and spiritual elements of the game. "A Few Things to Know about the Sanjo Rokkaku," by Valerie Govig, explains bridling and history. (Winter-Spring 1983 *Kite Lines*, pp. 24-25.)

Govig, Valerie. "Mama-sans!" The women's kite team meets the Rainbow Warriors. Complete with organi-

zational chart. (Spring 1985 *Kite Lines*, pp. 38-40.)

Govig, Valerie. "The Mama-sans Take Europe." How the Mama-sans met the challenge of the men's Tangram team in Italy in 1985. (Summer-Fall 1985 *Kite Lines*, pp. 42-43.)

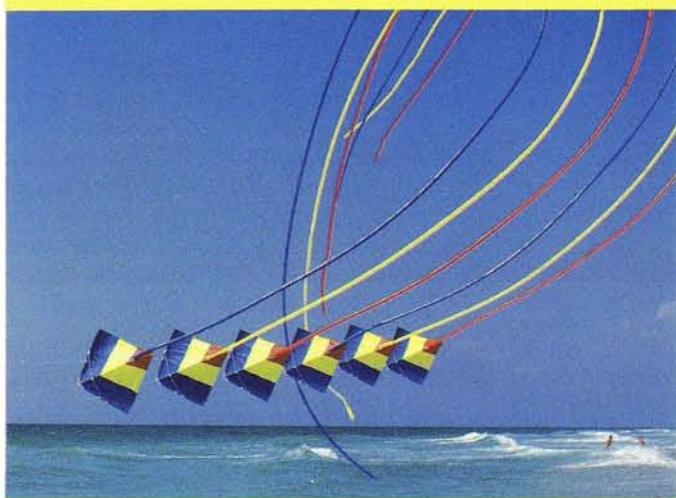
Hyde, Roger E. "On the Criteria for the Adjudication of Absolute and/or Relative Success and Failure in the Combat of Team-Flown Battle Kites." (Summer 1986 *Kite Lines*, pp. 54-55.)

Lester, Martin. "Announcing the International Rokkaku Kite Challenge Trophy." (Summer 1986 *Kite Lines*, p. 55.)

## Announcement

In support of the continuing rokkaku challenges, *Kite Lines* has reprinted all the articles about rokkakus from its past issues in one compact 20-page booklet. Also included are "Kite Plans: The Sanjo Rokkaku Kite" by Mel Govig and this issue's article by Rick Kinnaird. The book is titled *The Compleat Rokkaku Kite Chronicles and Training Manual*, and is available at selected kite stores or direct from *Kite Lines* at \$7.95.

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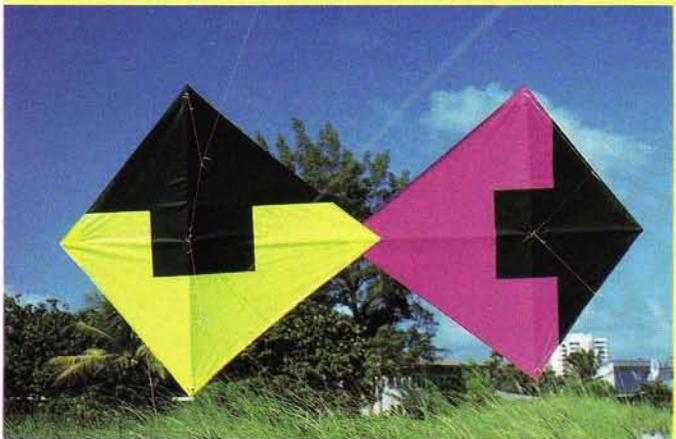
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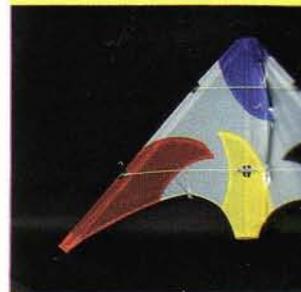


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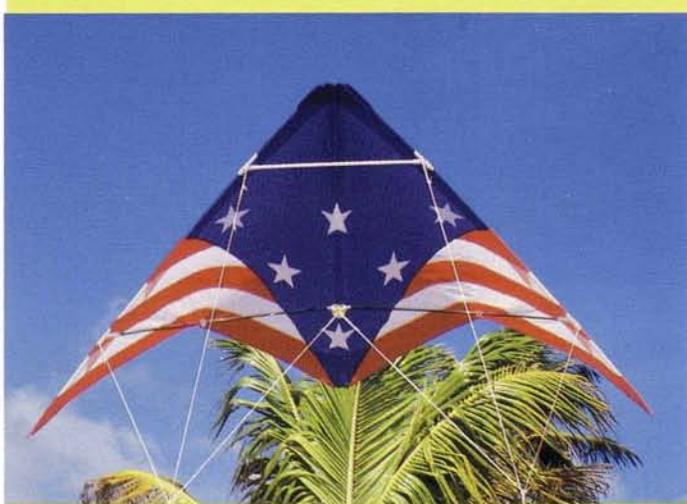
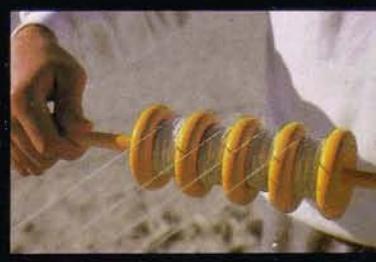
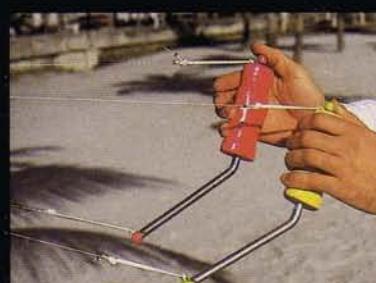
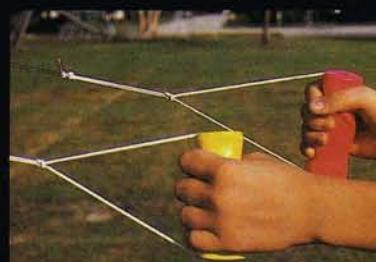
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IN JAPAN  
*Pierre Fabre*

A FRENCH KITE ARTIST WRITES AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Last May in Paris, I met many Japanese kitemakers who had come to the opening of the Goethe Institute's *Kunstdrachen* (Art Kites) exhibition. One of them, 65-year-old Masayuki Yamaguchi, who had built an unusual figure kite from a design by Niki de Saint Phalle, offered to drive me to out-of-the-way kite places when I came to Japan. I accepted with pleasure.

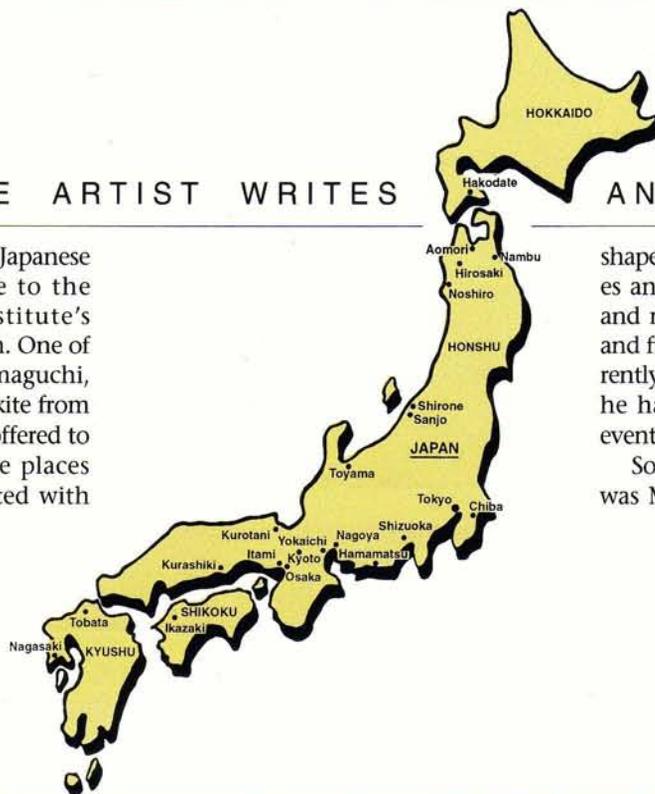
For ten days he drove me around and introduced me to his kitemaking friends. The funny thing was that he couldn't speak or understand English (or French) and I only understood ten words of Japanese! But we managed.

I travelled through Japan when the kite festival season was over. So, though I saw hundreds, even thousands of different kites during the five weeks of my trip, most of them were not in the sky. They were displayed in museums, hanging on the walls of kitemakers' workshops or stacked in huge boxes by collectors who didn't have enough room to put them elsewhere!

### HAMAMATSU

Yamaguchi first drove me to Hamamatsu. On the way from Itami we stopped in the small town of Iga-Ueno where we met Sadamasa Motonaga. He works in a large modern house and workshop. He is not a kitemaker but a contemporary artist, who designed some striking kites at the *Kunstdrachen* exhibition. His abstract paintings often show shapes that seem to be flying in the sky. The kites that were made for the exhibit are actually three of the

Opposite: detail of "Yoshitsune Hasutobi" by Teizo Hashimoto.



### FINDINGS & COMMENTS

#### on kites as archetypal of Japan's struggle with change

Many people had told me that very few Japanese kitemakers are creating new or original designs. But I was reluctant to believe this because Japan has such strong and creative designers in so many fields.

Well, I'm afraid the kite field is consumed with tradition. The Japanese treat traditional activities with respect and reverence, an odd but reassuring reference point for a country which is rushing into the high-tech 21st century and has been experiencing vast change over the past decades. They believe traditional activities should be preserved without alteration or change.

The impression one gets is that the older a design, the more valuable and respected it is. These kites are a testimony to Japan's history. For Japanese kitemakers, the pleasure that Western kitemakers experience in the process of creation is replaced by the pleasure of perpetuating an old and famous tradition, of being the link in a long chain that keeps the past alive.

I discovered that only a few artists and designers have experimented with kites. None of them are young. I met only two of them:

- **Tsutomu Hiroi**, who has made many explorations with cellular kites and is now experimenting with solar-heated hot-

shapes that regularly appear on his canvases and they became wonderfully original and minimalist kites! I liked his paintings and furniture very much, but he is not currently involved in kites. In his long career he has participated in several "sky art" events.

So the first real kite workshop I visited was Miabi, Kazuo Ota's brand name and one of five kite manufacturers in Hamamatsu. Actually the whole family works together to produce 10,000 kites a year, mainly small versions of the square shape called *Machijirushi*. Each is painted with one of the 137 emblems of the city districts that compete in the May festival. (Hamamatsu is composed of 300 of these districts though some of them are only a few city blocks in size).

Ota's elder son, Masataka, who will run the shop after his father, confessed that as he enjoys painting, he regrets not being able to make kites such as the *Edo*, *rokkaku* and *Tsugaru* that allow more skilled and expressive painting. Because he lives in Hamamatsu he has to make Hamamatsu kites.

This is typical of the professional kitemakers. They normally produce no more than the two or three shapes, ones that originate in their local region. Only some amateurs are free to build any style of Japanese kite or even a foreign kite. (I saw the most beautiful Malaysian-style *wau bulan* in Tokyo, made by Tatsuro Kashima.)

The next day was spent flying kites with the Ota family on the deserted festival grounds very close to the beach on the Pacific Ocean. We

Right, this page, Matsataka Ota gets ready to launch a Hamamatsu square kite. A long doubled coarse string, about 10 times the kite's size, is always attached along the central bamboo spar and gives the necessary balance to the kite.

also visited the festival museum, where one can observe, besides kites and sculpted wooden carts (which are paraded through the town at night during the festival), the fascinating process of traditional hemp rope making. This line, made in only a single diameter, is used for all the fighting kites of the festival.

We met Heizo Itoh, famous leader of the Yokoten team, while he was building a series of large square kites, *nijō* size (about 6 x 6 feet). He pasted together several sheets of paper on the floor. On these he and an assistant laid a completed bamboo grid brushed with glue. The final step would be the decoration of the kite with its team emblem.

That evening we had dinner with the leaders of the Sōde Cho team. During the discussion, I realized how important, serious and honorific was their engagement in kiting and the festival. They were among the toughest teams of the city and their discipline recalled the spirit of the samurai or *sumotori*.

Ten to fifteen years ago women did not participate in the Hamamatsu kite fight. Nowadays they represent 10 to 20 percent of most teams.

## YOKAICHI

We travelled west to Yokaichi, where the city's large party hall serves as a kite construction hall for four senior members of the Yokaichi Giant Kite Preservation Association. It was amazing to see these very old men (average age 75) quietly build and paint three large kites lying on the floor. On one side

air balloons. Unfortunately I did not visit his workshop or see any of his kites.

- **Kisaburo Ono**, a textile designer, painter and ceramicist. He recently exhibited in Osaka a series of paintings on kites, mostly rokkakus and also a few of original shapes. The sacred *o-sanchuō* (giant salamander), his fetish animal, is often his source of inspiration.

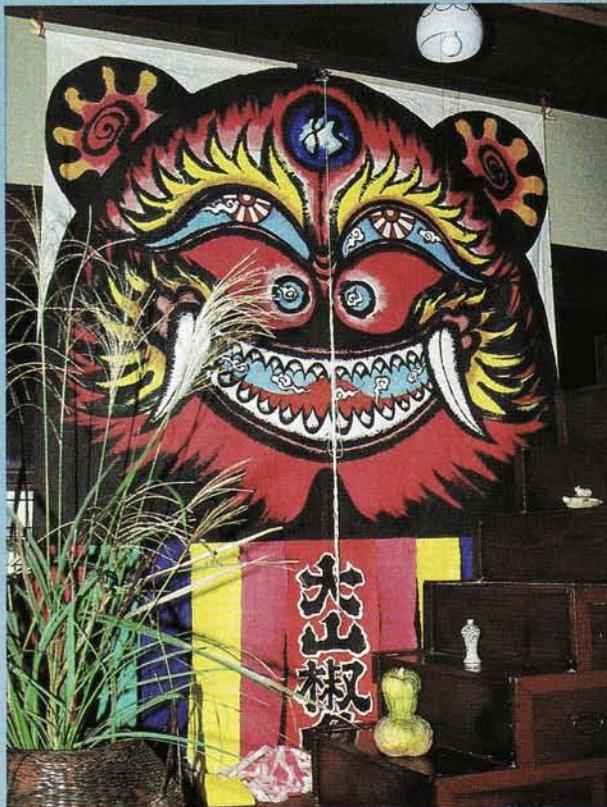
I know of the works of at least four other original kitemakers:

- **Toshiharu Umetani**, in Hakodate. Formerly an art teacher, he makes decorative kites, some of which are quite interesting. He flies three-dimensional sheep in small flocks.
- **Shuhei Goto**, who is well-known for his realistic bird kites (eagles, seagulls, cranes). But I don't think these can be called modern artistic creations.
- **Takeshi Nishibayashi**, whose creative designs in the lightest plastics and thinnest fiberglass are much esteemed.
- **Eiji Ohashi**, famous for his trains, especially his arch trains; his *Expansible Box Kite* is one of the most beautiful cellular forms ever created.

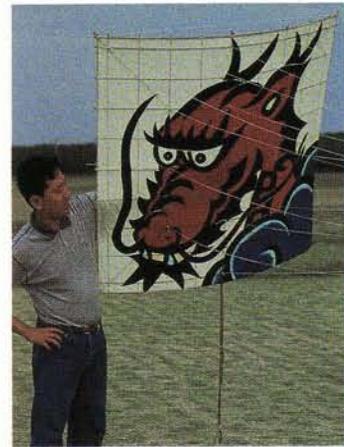
Otherwise, all the professional kitemakers I met were making kites that replicated kites designed between 200 and 400 years ago.

But Japan has changed. Traditional professional lineage is disappearing. As recently as the early 1960s, most Japanese would still adopt a son to perpetuate the family business, but now the western bent for individual achievement has strongly affected the family as the basic entity of Japanese society. Children often view kitemaking as a repetitive and financially unrewarding job. Most old and famous kitemakers will disappear without successors, and the number of professionals may soon drop below 40 for the whole of Japan. (The current number of professionals ranges from 50 to 150 according to different estimates).

But whatever happens, the kitemaking tradition will survive, and perhaps even expand. Many highly skilled amateurs are deeply involved in kitemaking and are extremely active. —P.F.



An original kite by Kisaburo Ono hangs indoors.



of the hall was a giant kite (40 by 43 feet) rolled up and waiting for its flight next May. The kites are usually flown in two consecutive festivals and then destroyed. But this one was expected to end up in the new kite museum, financed by the city, that was to open in May 1991.

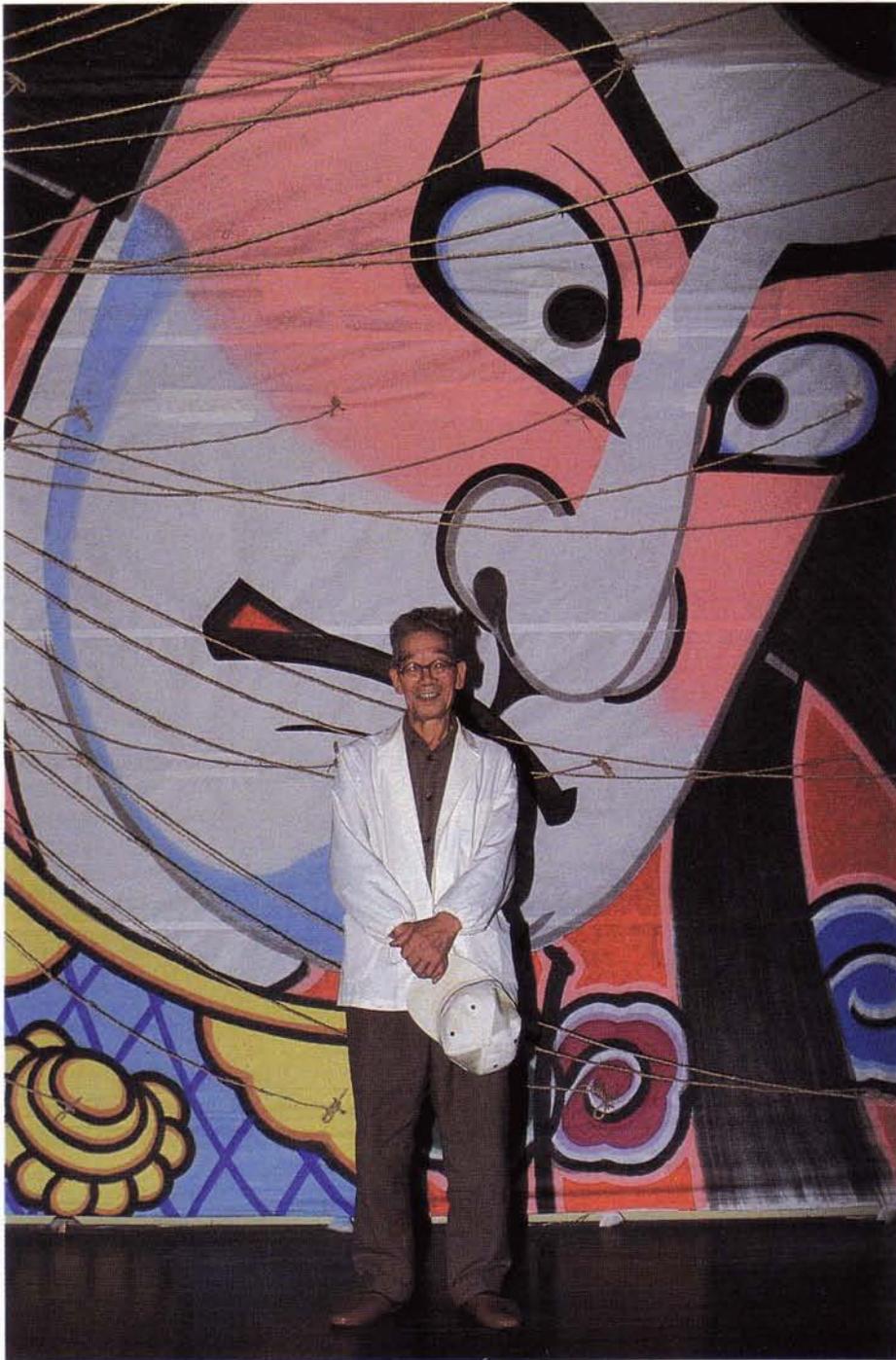
## DAIMON

Our next stop was in Daimon (Toyama Prefecture) where kites featuring the famous Daruma are part of the image of the city. Daruma was a Buddhist monk and is often represented on a variety of Japanese kites, but more traditionally as a papier-maché doll. Several members of the Echu Daimon Kite Association, led by Kazuo Nakamura, were completing big rectangular kites in a sports hall for participation in the Ikazaki kite festival coming up on Shikoku Island.

Daimon, and all other cities which organize and finance kite festivals, heavily rely on their "kite fame" as a communication emblem and use it for tourism-promoting purposes. Kites do not escape from commercial applications and merchandising. Kite logos appear on t-shirts, caps, *hachimaki* (headbands), badges, even telephone charge cards! and cookies! When we drove on the freeway, past "festival" towns, we saw signs picturing the local kite.

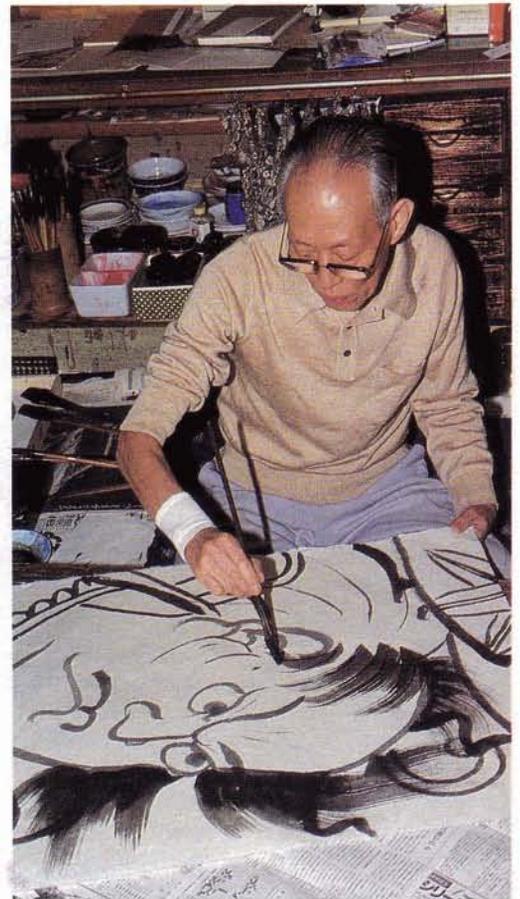
## SHIRONE

In Shirone, our guide was Kazuo Tamura, head of the Shirone Kite Battle Association. Shirone is famous for its *o-dako*



I had the strangest feeling. I was standing at the exact same place where Tal Streeter had stood 18 years before.

I was probably asking the same questions, watching the same man paint the same figures...

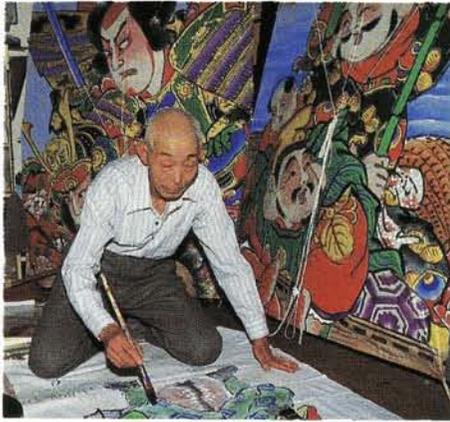


kite fighting over the Nakanokuchi canal. Despite the lack of wind, we tried to fly a large rectangular kite, strikingly flexible, with the help of Shohei Ogasawara (whom I had met in Paris) and Saburo Imai, famous painter of these big Shirone kites.

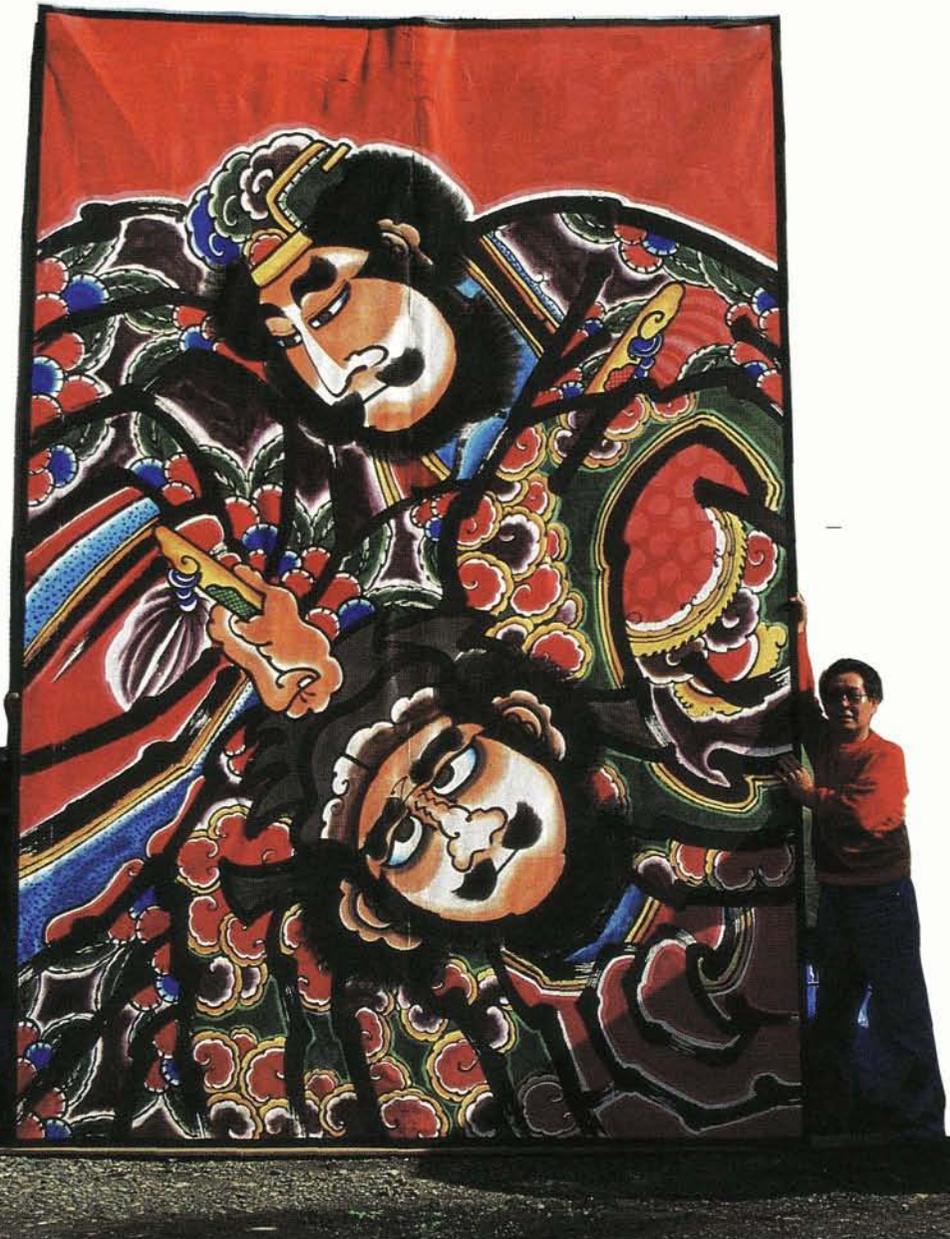
When I met Toranosuke Watanabe, most renowned *makiika* (Shirone rokkaku) painter, I had the strangest feeling. I was standing at the exact same place where Tal Streeter had stood 18 years before. I was probably asking the same questions, watching the same man paint the same beautiful warrior figures in bright colors. Now he is 70 years old. He has slowed down his production pace



Top left: Saburo Imai stands in front of a Shirone *o-dako* he painted; above, Toranosuke Watanabe skillfully paints a warrior's face; below, seniors of Yokaichi attach thin bamboo struts to a kite: later, all blank paper surfaces, between painted areas, will be cut away and the finished kite will have many openings on its surface.



Above, Shin-ichiro Kabasawa paints in his workshop; right, Yoshizo Sakuraba's giant *Tsugaru* kite is fitted with hinges to allow it to fold for storage and transport; lower right, Teizo Hashimoto paints his famous *tsukinami* or moon-and-wave design in his Tokyo home-workshop.



because he feels the aches of a lifetime devoted to kitemaking. Though his voice quavers, his hand still paints with perfect mastery. When I told him he had reached perfection, he answered, "The day I'll paint one kite perfectly, I will keep it for myself. But this has not happened yet."

Tamura took us to Muramatsu, a small town in the valley next to Shirone. There we visited Shin-ichiro Kabasawa, an 81-year-old kitemaker. Keeping his eyelids almost closed all the time, he still has a very keen eye, brisk mind and skilled hands.

His rectangular kites, called *Muramatsumachi-dako*, show his painting talents inherited from his father and grandfather.

Sadly neither Watanabe nor Kabasawa will have successors or apprentices . . .

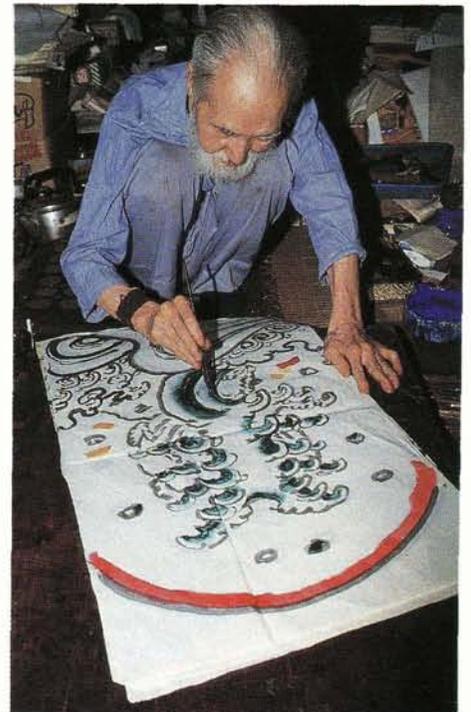
## HIROSAKI

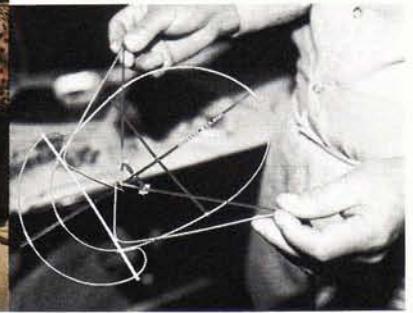
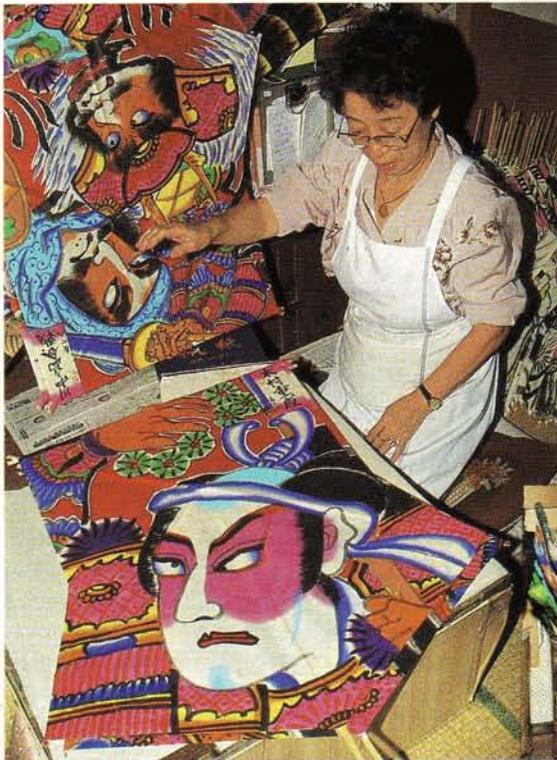
Yamaguchi, full of energy and enjoying the drive, had decided to take me up to the northern part of Honshu, the region of the *Tsugaru* kites. On the way we made

a brief stop at Nochiro and visited, late at night, Kitamura Chosaburo, 72, who was still at work, painting the striking *otogoberabo* kite which can easily be identified, for it portrays a man's face with its tongue poking out. (There is a stylistically similar female face kite called *onaberabo*.)

Like several other kitemakers, he also builds and decorates lanterns, which are used on many occasions in Japanese traditional life. Very famous *nebuta* (giant lantern) festivals are held in this region, at the cities of Aomori and Hirosaki.

From my visits to Setsuo Sato and Yoshizo Sakuraba in Hirosaki, I learned much about *Tsugaru* kites. Sakuraba does not make kites professionally, but after 20 years of active practice he shows the mastery and has the reputation that often only professionals can claim. From his kites and documents I could see the evolution of the painting style although the subjects remained exactly the same. From the same region, the *Nambu* kites of Norimitsu





Top left, Asako Kato presents her *suruga* kites, using a 450-year-old design; inset, her colorful brushes, each color kept separate to prevent mixing hues; center, Masaaki Sato sets the bridle of his *hachi-dako* kite with hammer, its wings flecked with real gold; right, the absolutely symmetrical frame of a Sato *abu-dako*.

Himamura show a graphic style strangely close to some Western cartoons.

In common between *Tsugaru* and *Nambu* kites is the use of flat sections of *hiba* (cypress) wood for frames, since bamboo does not grow this far north.

## TOKYO

Using the 'fast and convenient *Shinkansen* (bullet trains), I wended my own way the 1000 miles south to Nagasaki. I stopped first in Tokyo, and was welcomed by Masaaki Modegi, president of the Japan Kite Association, who continues the work of his father as a restaurateur, kite collector and "kite ambassador of Japan." One of the most interesting things he made clear was that it is the collective and cohesive nature of Japanese society which makes possible the kite festivals on the giant scale which amazes every visitor.

In Tokyo I met the oldest and most celebrated professional kitemaker in Japan. Teizo Hashimoto is 87. Unfortunately he can no longer paint the breathtaking Edo kites he used to make. He and his wife still work in their small, overcrowded workshop. His quivering brushstrokes still allow him to paint rather large simple designs. Even so, in each of the brushstrokes was the strength and expression that comes only after years and years of practice. I watched him, his head perched on top of his knees, painting in a room filled to overflowing with paper, bamboo struts, brushes of all kinds, rolls of already painted kites and laundry hung to dry

from the ceiling. I felt sad that no one would succeed him. There would no longer be the production of the wonderful kites that collectors all over the world consider real treasures.

I visited with Tatsuro Kashima (builder of most of the Edo kites used as canvases in the *Kunstrachen* exhibition), who taught me about the hummers which are attached to many Japanese kites. The use of different materials, sizes and attachment systems gives rise to a variety of sounds, which can be matched to the style of the kite.

It was in Tokyo I first saw modern Western materials (ripstop nylon and graphite tubing) applied to Japanese kites. They appeared in 15 large rokkakus of rather traditional design by Morihiro Takeda. (See *example on cover*.) But these were a rarity. Bamboo and paper, with the wonderful qualities they have as natural materials, hopefully remain by far the most used in Japan. But I saw interesting hybrids of the East and West, such as the stunt kites decorated with traditional graphics from *abu* and *semi* (horse fly and cicada) kites, skillfully made by Satoshi Hashimoto, president of the All-Japan Sports Kite Association.

## CHIBA

From Tokyo, Takeda drove me out to Chiba prefecture to see Teizo Okamoto demonstrate the making of a *sode dako*, which took a whole afternoon. Most striking was his use of a small electric iron to flatten and dry freshly pasted paper sheets, and a

special wooden tool that allows him to straighten irregularly bent bamboo struts over the heat of a small stove.

## SHIZUOKA

On the Tokaido road I made a brief stop at Shizuoka to meet one of the few women professional kitemakers. Asako Kato was taught by her father when none of her brothers wanted to take up the profession. She makes *suruga* kites with the assistance of her daughter Yuki Fukushima. She showed me her beautiful catalog: 52 paintings of Kabuki actors and samurai that appear on her kites.

While I was in their shop, Tako Hachi, a group of school children came in for a lesson on kites and their history. Kites are still in the toy category for Japanese children, and are often given on traditional occasions such as Children's Day (May 5) and New Years Day. Nowadays, though, the cost of a handmade kite is more than most consumable toys.

## NAGOYA

I was quite proud to find my own way to Masaaki Sato's house in Nagoya. Most Japanese streets have no signposts or numbers, and even the Japanese get lost regularly.

Sato is one of the very best makers of *semi* (cicada), *abu* (horse fly) and *hachi* (bee) kites. Each of the kites is derived from the same form, so together they appear to be a large family, each member having an individual personality. The

Akihiro Ogawa bends a bamboo cross spar for a hata fighter to check curvature: only after years of practice can this shaping be done as fast and accurately as needed, using fresh bamboo (dried before assembly).



Semi (cicada) frames and completed kite by Yoshiro and Hideko Takeuchi.



fine, complex bamboo frames are unique in the kiting world. Each is made with very dark old smoked bamboo, *susdake*, sliced and assembled with extreme precision. We flew three of Sato's kites on a nearby riverbank, often the preferred flying place in Japan as one of the few open spaces without overhead power lines.

#### KYOTO

Near Kyoto, I spent the night in the beautiful house of my friend Kisaburo Ono. I had met him in Paris with Yamaguchi. All the rooms of his old, traditional country

home are decorated with kites from Japan and China, delicately lit and displayed. Kisaburo is an artist (his wife also), and creates kites. A kindred soul.

#### KUROTANI

My friends drove me across this splendid mountainous region to Kurotani, a famed paper-making village, to explore the secrets of *washi*. Another astounding tradition in Japan! The process is long, painful and done by hand, but the paper is an essential component of Japanese kites. About 35 important *washi* manufacturers

scattered throughout Japan (except for the Northern regions) allow each kitemaker to have a local supplier, from whom to choose a few papers out of hundreds of varieties. Superior papers are those made from the very strong *kozo* (mulberry) fiber.

#### NAGASAKI

In Nagasaki, Akihiro Ogawa has exclusive paper made specially for him, from a secret recipe created for his grandfather. Ogawa, 41 years old, works really hard with the help of his family, seven days a week, the last professional Nagasaki hata

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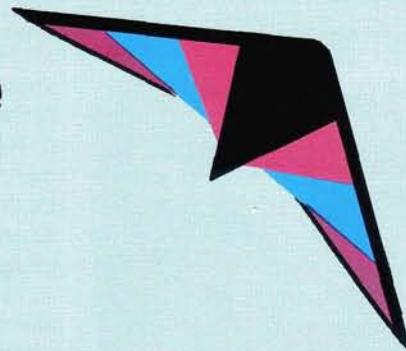
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maker. The family produces around 25,000 kites a year, including miniatures which are sold as souvenirs. Only the pride of maintaining the tradition can give him the energy to keep up such a crazy pace! Although he claimed that there were many kitefliers who were better than he, I was impressed with his ability to totally control the kite and fly it even when there was practically no wind. This is far more difficult than with an Indian fighter, as the hata is much heavier.

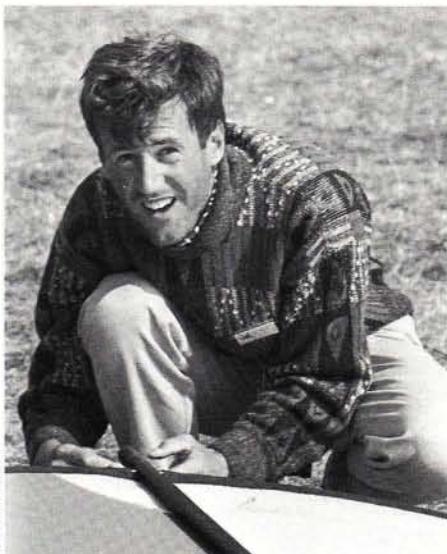
### TOBATA

The last workshop I visited was the *Magogi* kite house in Tobata. Yoshiro Takeuchi learned from his grandfather, for his father was a schoolteacher. Yoshiro took up the brand name his grandfather had created 70 years ago, but since he works full-time in a bank, his kitemaking is restricted to evenings and weekends. His wife, Hideko, is in charge of their modern shop, and she paints all the kites. They produce ten varieties, the most famous being a bold, colorful *semi* kite which is the emblem of the shop.

### au revoir

I could easily have spent far more time travelling through Japan, but commitments inevitably brought my sojourn to an end.

Japanese kitemaking continues to fascinate me. There is no doubt that the richness of the kite tradition in Japan deserves years of study. ◇

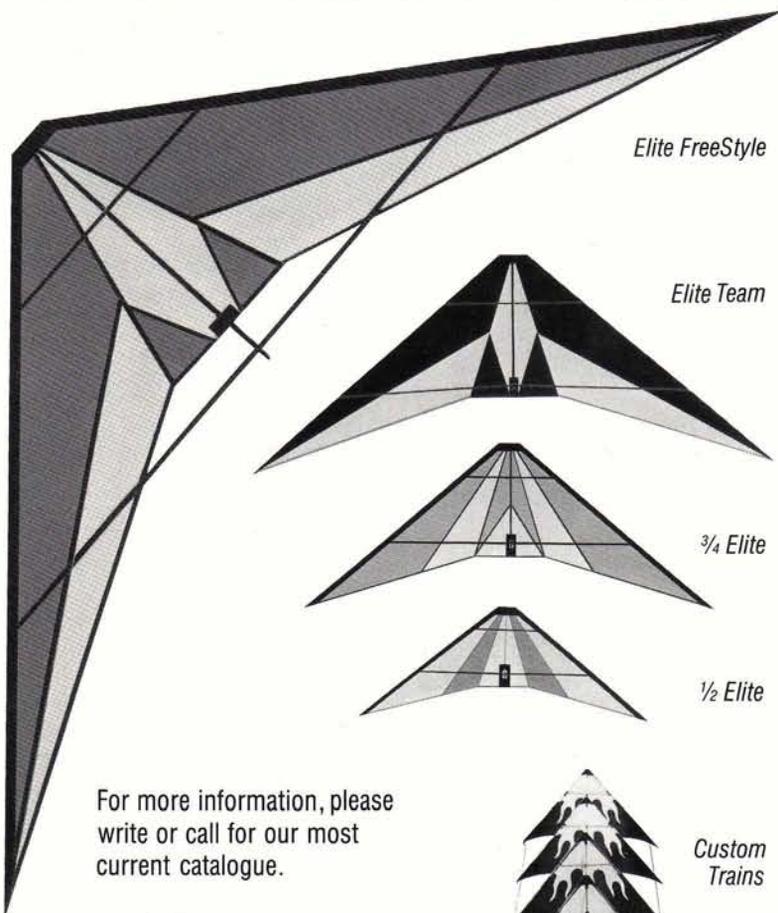


Simon Freidin

Pierre Fabre assembles his Cycl-Hop kite at the Dieppe International Kite Festival, 1990.

PIERRE FABRE is a graphic artist whose outstanding kites have graced the skies of France and the pages of Kite Lines. His trip to Japan was made possible by a grant from the Association de Presse France-Japon, Air France and Japan Railways Group.

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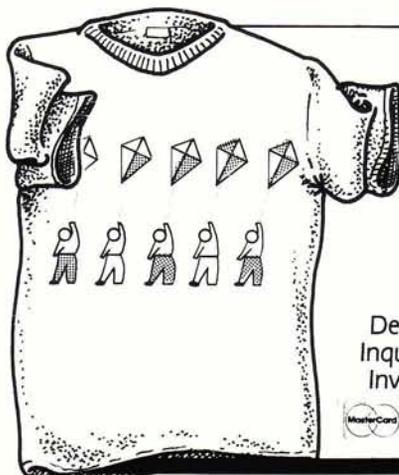


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# News, Rumors & Miscellany



**D**oes the Beaufort scale for wind velocities seem hard to grasp? Dave Gomberg is at work refining his Bouffant Scale, based on the wind's effects on the hair.

If the wind slightly stirs a strand or two, that's Bouffant Force 2. If it tosses a head of locks it's Bouffant Force 6. If it really flattens a fully-sprayed do, it's Bouffant Force 25. And so forth. Absolutely scientific.

**T**wo big new kite books are coming: one is titled *Fantastic KiteWorld* by our friend Wolfgang Schimmelpfennig and is due in September (full of kites and kites on the international circuit); the other is by Ron Moulton and is due later in the fall '91.

**C**liff-hanger with a happy ending: For six good years, One Sky One World has been co-spon-

sored by Hi-Flier Mfg. in Penrose, Colorado, the oldest (since 1922) mass market kite manufacturer in the U.S. New manager Barry Tunick, 15 weeks before the big October 13 date, backed out cold. No money in it for them, he said.

Jane and Larry Ambrose, OSOW organizers, gulped. Well, would Hi-Flier print the kites at least?—the logo kites they'd already advertised? Yes, for 53% more than last year, cash in advance and 10 weeks for delivery! (They'd get the kites *after* the event.) Jane and Larry asked Tunick to check his delivery time and talk again after the weekend. On Monday Larry called and Tunick said he hadn't received their check yet, and they could take their business elsewhere.

Jane and Larry went to Gayla Industries, Houston, Texas, and asked if they could produce

**W**ord to the wise kite memorabilia collector: Australia's \$20 bill, which features Lawrence Hargrave's glider models on one side, is likely to be phased out in favor of new plastic notes with different artwork. Australia has been testing a plastic \$10 bill for the past two years.



10,000 kites with the OSOW logo in a hurry. They could, and at a better price, said Tom Fleming, who strangely enough used to work for Hi-Flier when it was a family business in Decatur, Illinois. "Gayla has been real sweet to us," Larry said, "and they're interested in promoting One Sky One World here and in Europe."

**T**hey said it couldn't be done. "I cleared an entire field of stunt kites with one single-line kite," boasted Jon Burkhardt in June. It was simple. He put up a spectacular centipede from Tim Benson of England and all the stunt pilots around the Washington Monument (D.C.) put down their kites and came for a look-see.

**M**ates aboard the carrier USS Guadalcanal off the coast of Turkey were b-o-r-e-d. Seaman Arnold Caduff of Ohio thought of kites. His mother Nancy Caduff of OSEK (Ohio Society for the Elevation of Kites) sent him materials and Arnie asked the captain for permission to make and fly cobra-style kites with the crew on the flight deck. It was such a success (wind was never a problem) that Arnie next wrote off for a stunt kite. Nancy sent one covered with messages from the folks back home, but Arnie crashed it on the beach in Israel before he could teach his buddies and work up some competition.

**I**t's a "shattered dream." The kiteophiles of Lincoln City, Oregon, once a top U.S. contender for Kite Capital of the World, due in large part to the

dedication of David Gomberg, recently saw Dave removed from office as head of the town's Chamber of Commerce. Dave was falsely accused of using the Chamber telephone to sell his book *Stunt Kites!* The vision of Lincoln City as a sister city to Weifang, China may be lost forever.

**J**ust as we went to press, a hot fax rolled in from Italy's Centro Italiano Aquilonisti/Cervia Volante announcing their "Grand Prix of Speed" for acrobatic kites on September 6, 7 and 8, 1991—presumably on Cervia's beach.

Pilots will fly on 40m (131 ft) of line in a downwind sweep between two posts fitted with photocells to time the maneuvers.

Big name Toshiba is attached to this "International Kite Sprint" and the committee says it "will award the sum of 10 million Italian lire (about \$7,600 US) to the winner." Biggest prize for any one kite award we've heard of yet. Too bad advance word came so late.



**H**aving conquered underwater kiteflying (*Kite Lines*, Summer 1990), Katsutaka Murooka of Japan has found the perfect place to relax out of the sun when he is kiteflying above water.

It's under his Tent Kite, a modified delta of ripstop nylon and fiberglass poles measuring 3.7 meters (12 feet) square, which can be rigged as an awning or rainshelter. Murooka says it flies without a tail, but with one "stability is greatly increased, as is aesthetic value."

It's not the first tent kite ever but it does polish Murooka's reputation for the weird and wacko. (Remember his S-E-X-Y kite train?)

**G**reat plans have been brewing since 1989 to fly an Ohashi-style arch train of kites (a "rainbow bridge") across Niagara Falls as a symbol of friendship.

The Japan Kite Association, the Toronto Kite Fliers and the Great Lakes Kitefliers Society are working on it. Bill Albers of Buffalo, New York, had been asked for a proposal by the Niagara Falls Centennial Committee, which

agreed to a reenactment of Homan Walsh's famous 1849 flight that made possible the building of the original Rainbow Bridge over the Falls.

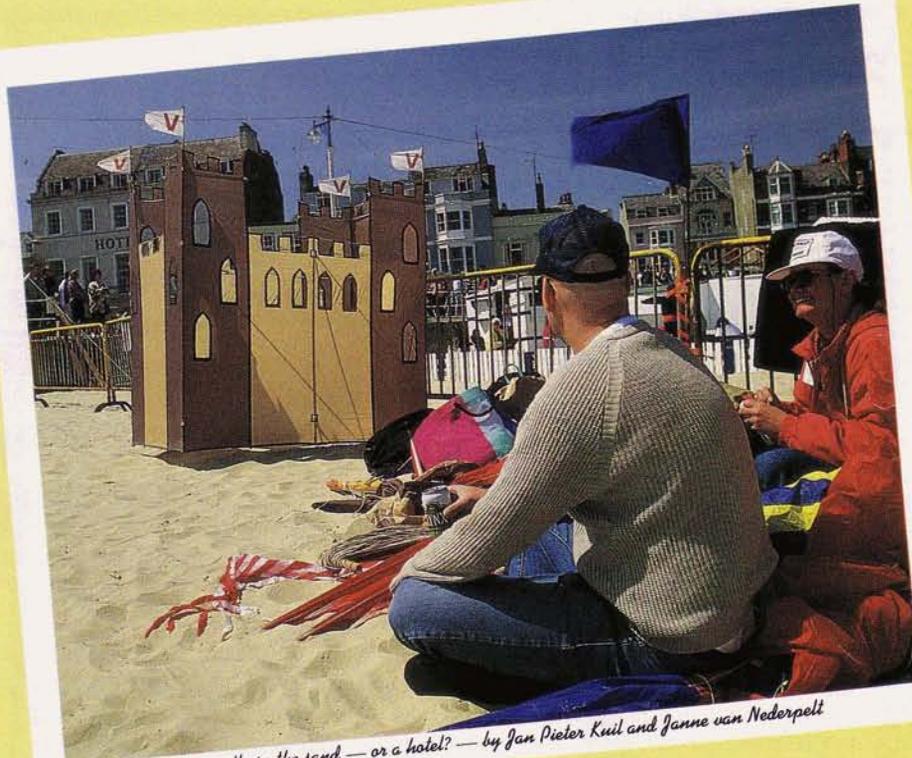
Skye Morrison of Toronto, Canada, obtained approval from the city of Niagara Falls and help from Masaaki Modegi for the JKA, which assured the presence of kites and expertise on the desired late weekend in May, 1992.



**M**ost Whimsical Kite at Junction, Texas, kite retreat weekend in May was *Mary Poppins* by Richard Robertson, with wife Marian launching.

Simon Freidin

*A Journal with Photographs  
by  
Simon Freidin*



*At Weymouth, a castle in the sand — or a hotel? — by Jan Pieter Kuil and Janne van Norderpell*

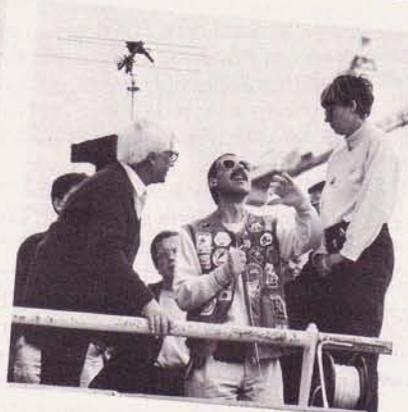
## *FOOTLOOSE in France & England*

*KAPWA, STACK and Cervoling Kite  
Festival,  
Le Touquet, France,  
April 27-28, 1991*

*Kite Society of Great Britain Convention  
and Weymouth International Kite  
Festival, Weymouth, England,  
May 4-6, 1991*

*Thamesdown Kite Festival, Swindon,  
England,  
May 11-12, 1991*

*Below, kite aerial photography on show at Le Touquet: top, Pompeii amphitheater seen  
from the camera of Katsunaka Muroaka; lower left, Muroaka's camera rig; lower right,  
crowd gathers as a video camera takes pictures from a kite (monitor, not visible, is behind)*



*"Le Touquet beach is one of the best kite-flying sites in the world." So declared Peter Lynn of New Zealand as we headed down the seaside to the flying site.*

The white sand beach at Le Touquet was nearly 60 yards wide, and it stretched alongside the township for several miles. But the sea held a surprise for us. The tide came in quite rapidly until the beach was at times only 15 yards across.

Nevertheless, Le Touquet offered good weather, enthusiastic crowds and skilled kitefliers representing all disciplines and many countries. Their participation was primed by the conjunction of meetings of the Kite Aerial Photography Worldwide Association (KAPWA); Stunt, Team and Competitive Kiting (STACK, organizers of the European stunt kite circuit); and the well-organized Opale Kite Club of France. But it was the kite aerial photography which most



*At Weymouth, Steve Brockett's newest cloth kite with separate, forward-projecting face.*

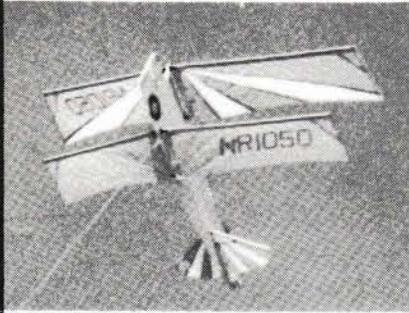


*At Swindon, the very creative kites of Denis Hawkes are flying. Denis has been making kites for 14 years, including dozens of trains and centipedes. The formal, funny Commuter Train is of sprayed Tyvek and bamboo (only the neckties vary) and the two-line train of suruga kites uses screen-printed poster paper fitted with bamboo spars and buzzers. Denis also launches his 11-foot robkachu of Tyvek, spray-painted with a picture of the author William Golding—"a suitably Godlike figure to keep an eye on us from above," as Denis says.*



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*FOOTLOOSE*

*...continued*

fascinated me.

Katsutaka Murooka (President of the Japan Kite Photography Association), described his aerial work for a Japanese team doing investigative study since 1989 on the city of Pompeii in Italy.

He has been using kite aerial photographic techniques for the past ten years, and the team decided to use a combination of remote sensing by satellite (LANDSAT and SPOT), aerial photography by plane (from 3,200 to 9,800 feet) and kite aerial photography from 16 to 650 feet. Among other things, he hopes to integrate aerial photographs into computer models to provide contour line conversions, then import them into a Computer Aided Drawing package to give a view of the city from any perspective.

Katsutaka gave me a detailed paper which demonstrated that the amphitheater in Pompeii followed a geometrically perfect ellipse. He photographed the amphitheater using kite photography, scanned the image



*At the Cerveling Kite Festival, Peter Lynn of New Zealand demonstrates improved skill with his stunt-kite-driven buggy. He can now place himself with precision anywhere. Here he pops a wheelie, throwing up showers of partially hardened sand. Later he takes on all comers in the local speed sailing set, over a triangular course at the end of the beach. He consistently beats even the most experienced of them.*

into a computer and digitally mapped the circumference. He then applied mathematical corrections for the fact that the film plane was not horizontal. This technical use of kite photography will expand, he said, where expense or terrain prohibits the use of planes and helicopters.

Katsutaka also showed me one of his aerial photography rigs, which after a one-

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minute delay shoots an entire roll of film as the camera is slowly rotated. The equipment was all miniaturized to minimize weight. One of his shots was an aerial view of Peter Lynn's giant inflatable blue octopus (Tako Tako) suspended over the beach.

The fluky winds created difficult flying conditions for all the fliers. Michel Dusariez, president of KAPWA, was alternately flying a delta in the light winds, then a rokkaku in the strong gusts. As he commented, "This wind cannot make up its mind." Still, he managed to loft a video camera and transmitter, and beamed aerial pictures of the festival back to a small monitor on the boardwalk. The crowd ducked and weaved in an effort to see the pictures.

I spent some time talking to Claude Gonin, grandson of Emile Wenz, a pioneer of early kite aerial photography. In fact, the KAPWA members were celebrating the 100th anniversary of the taking of the first aerial photograph in Le Touquet by Emile. He was a close collaborator with Arthur Batut of Labrugière (the first practitioner of kite aerial photography just over 100 years ago), and experimented with techniques and exposures which became the foundation of modern systems. Unfortunately, none of his equipment survived the passage of time, though the photographs, shot on 7" by 9.5" glass plates, remain as testimony.

The STACK stunt kite competition was also made difficult by the winds. Ten teams competed, representing France, the U.K. and Holland. All but one of the major teams from the previous season had disbanded and reformed. The Decorators were still together and top-scored in precision on Saturday. The Team with No Name (headed by Paul Jobin, ex-Blitz) won in Open Ballet on Sunday.

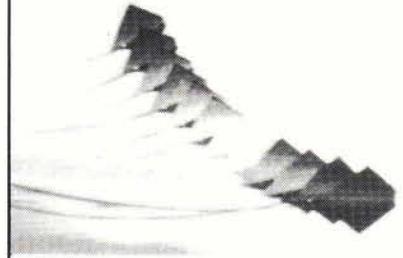
On Monday morning, Alan Nagao presented a workshop on team stunt flying. It was a cumulation of his knowledge of the practice techniques used by teams throughout the USA, especially those which have put team High Performance of Hawaii at the top of the rankings. Topics included maneuvers to hone individual skills, making use of the wind beyond the edges of the envelope, the execution of calls, how to follow the path of the leading kite and its dependence on the maneuver being executed, the importance of accurate visualization techniques such as stick or light-beam practice, the uses of nonflying team meetings, and how to set about tuning team kites to one another. What came through was Alan's extraordinary dedication to the sport.

Although Le Touquet had drawn me to Europe, other events held me for a longer time. I did not regret my stay in Weymouth, site of this year's convention of the Kite

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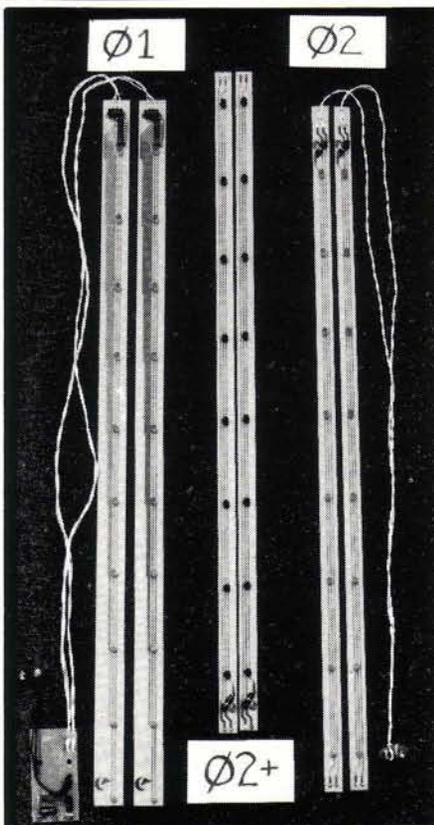
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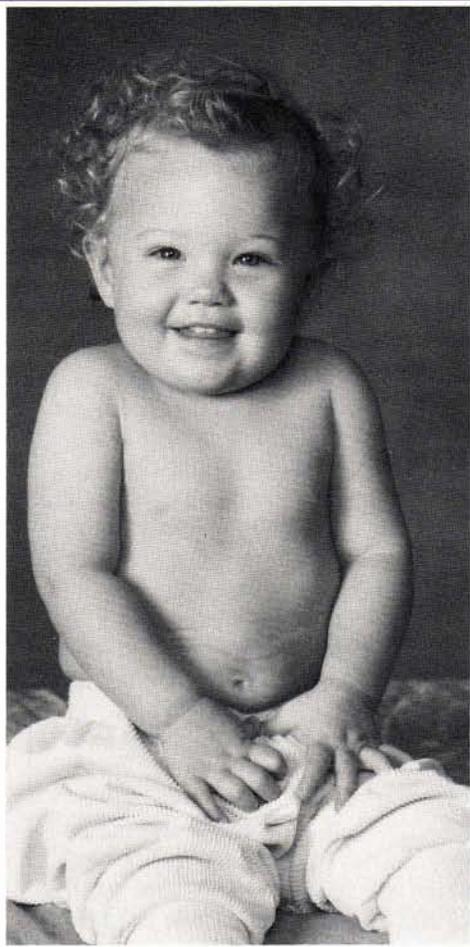
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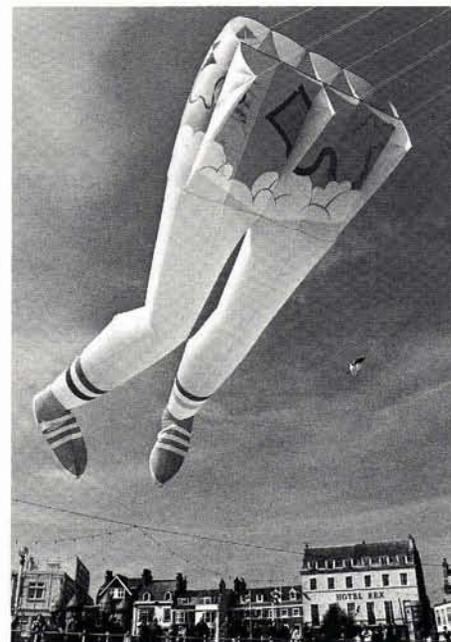
Society of Great Britain and of the first Weymouth International Kite Festival (to be held annually).

This colorful seaside town was host to hundreds of kitefliers from many countries, and a crowd of 60,000 spectators over three days. Many of the kites would be well-known to readers of *Kite Lines* (the list includes Steve Brockett, Pierre Fabre, Fran Gramkowski, Michel Gressier, Doug Hagaman, Jan Pieter Kuil, Martyn Lawrence, Martin Lester, Peter Lynn, Peter Malinski, Janne van Nederpelt, Stan Swanson and Peter Waldron). They contributed grandly, despite unseasonably cold and strong spring winds. Many kites brought by the guests could not be flown. Giant inflatables were an exception.

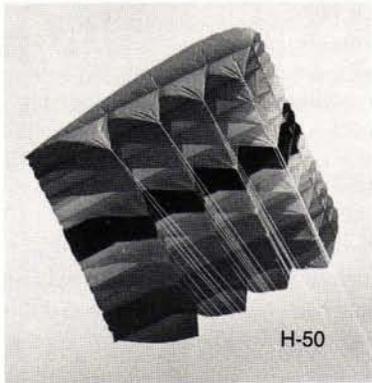
Of special note were Martin Lester's latest versions of his Legs kite. Martin flew a dual set of the female version (Natalie's Legs) which kicked in chorus line fashion, and his new largest-ever set of Legs, 65 feet long, containing 250 yards of fabric.

I was particularly taken with the work of Jan Pieter Kuil and Janne Van Nederpelt. They have built a Disneyworld of flying rip-stop castles, a steam train complete with coal car and carriage, and windsocks in the

*Martin Lester at Weymouth: Natalie's Legs (above) and giant 65-foot Legs (below).*



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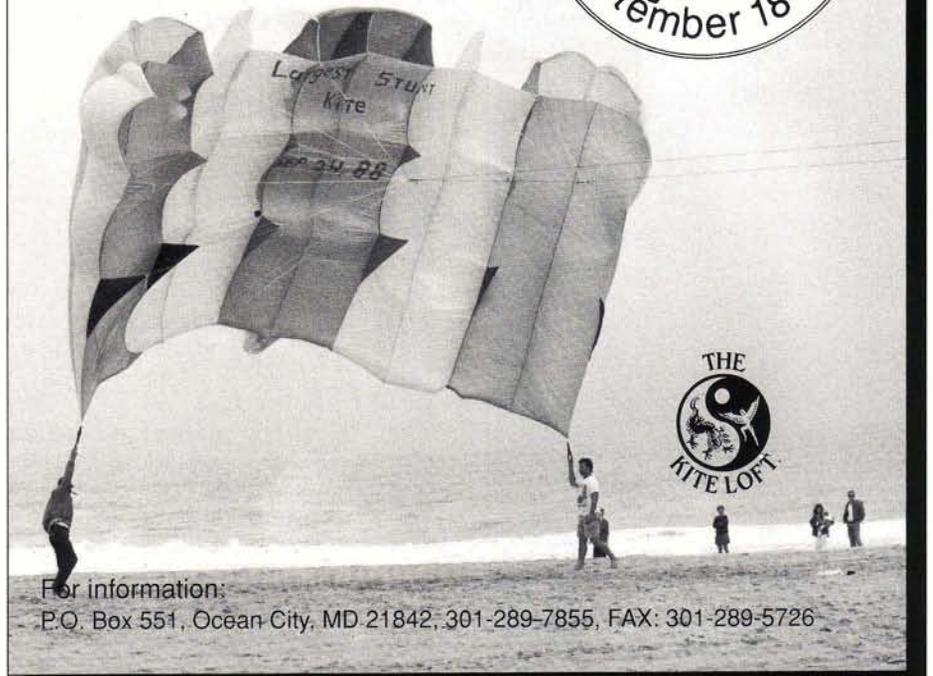
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...Continued

form of cows, dolphins and pigs. Janne told me that they do not build giant kites. If they cannot hold the line themselves, then they consider that the pleasure of flying the kites is gone.

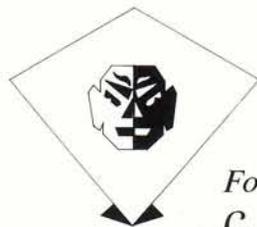
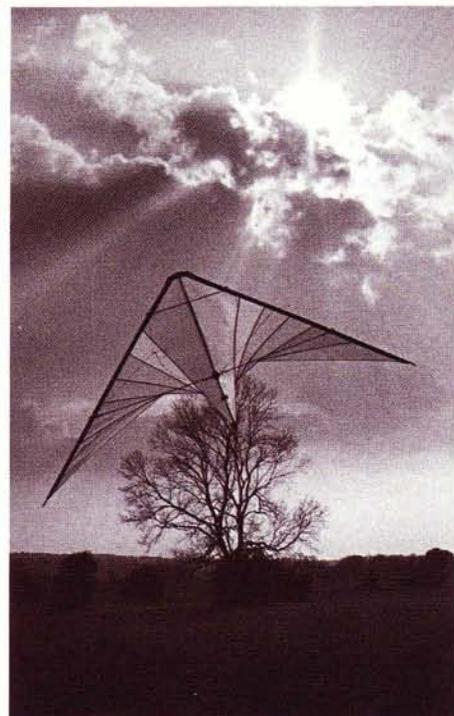
I was also pleased to meet Steve Brockett, from Cardiff, Wales. He was flying a new creation, "Where the Wind Blows," colored with silk screen paints on cotton/polyester. It drew a great deal of attention with its three-dimensional moon face projecting forward of the kite surface.

The Weymouth sand is a hazard: incredibly fine, it blew into cameras, spar joiners and kite bags. But the kitefliers won through, putting on a world-class event despite the conditions.

My last stop was Swindon, for the inaugural Thamesdown Kite Festival. This was a reminder of how much fun a local kite event can be, for in the green fields of southern England, the public flying field was a more amazing display than the giant kites brought by Doug Hagaman, Martin Lester, Jan Pieter Kuil and Janne van Nederpelt.

A wall of kites, from tiny to medium-sized, that turned the sky into a never-still ocean, fascinated every viewer and beckoned them to join in. The kitemaking workshops ran out of materials as hundreds of visitors to Lydiard Country Park joined in. Teddy bears dropped from the sky, tiny sleds danced and kites of every shape and color flew. I'll long cherish the memory of the blue English sky awash with kites. ◇

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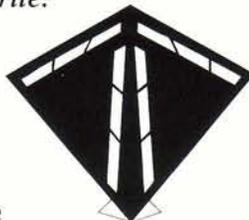
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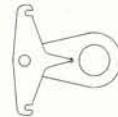
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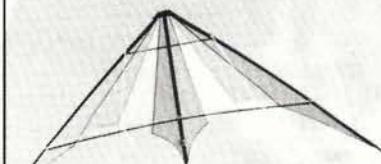
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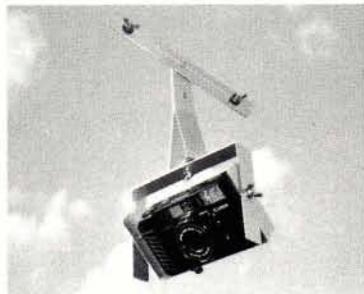
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## Empty Spaces in the Sky

# Cris Batdorff



Cris Batdorff, 1946-1991

Cris Howard Batdorff, the founder and publisher-editor of *Stunt Kite Quarterly*, died suddenly on July 7, 1991 after a flying demonstration at the Cherry Stunt Kite Fly in Traverse City, Michigan. He

was 45. He had undergone heart bypass surgery several years earlier and had pre-selected the music for his funeral. Services on July 11 were attended by kites from as far away as Florida and Texas. Kites and banners were flown in his memory.

Cris was born in Manistee, Michigan and was a fully involved citizen there throughout his life. Until 1985 he was publisher of the *Manistee News Advocate*. He was instrumental in establishing the newspaper's honor roll track meet for young local athletes. He also owned The Sand Castle in Manistee, a retail shop filled primarily with stunt kites. He was a former member of the local downtown development authority and was active in revitalization projects in the community. His wide interests included collecting antiques and bitters bottles, and for a time he published *The Bitters Report* for fellow collectors.

His strong interest in stunt kites began in 1985 when he started to carry them in his shop. The first issue of *SKQ* was published in midsummer 1988. Besides covering events and general news, Cris wrote long reviews of many of the new stunt kites as they came on the market. He helped kites such as Mike Simmons and Terry Crumpler get started in the kite business.

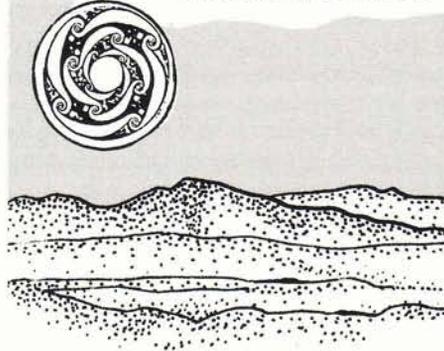
Cris was a well-respected, helpful, energetic member of the kite community, "involved in all the little details," as his friend Roger Chewing put it. He went to an average of 24 kite events per year, covering them in detail for *SKQ*. His wife Susan, who had flown with Cris as the *Deja Vu* pairs stunt team since their marriage last October, had assisted him at *SKQ* and is planning to continue the magazine.

A Cris Batdorff "Happy Feet Award" will be presented at the New York Stunt Kite Championships by Bill and Suzanne Edison to a person who exemplifies as Cris did the spirit of service to stunt kites. —V.G.

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# Don Dunford, MBE



**Don Dunford and his Flying Machine, at Truro, Cornwall, England, 1977.**  
Photograph by Ron Moulton

Don Dunford, MBE, designer of one of the first commercial stunt kites, died in England on June 1, 1991. A remembrance of him written by his friend John Cochrane appeared in "The Kiteflier" (publication of the Kite Society of Great Britain) and is excerpted here with permission.

To some Don was a friend, to others a legend, but to the whole kite community he was a mentor, for it was Don's work in the early 1960s that led to the design of his stunt kite. He always referred to it as a control-line kite, called the Cotton Flying Machine, but renamed it in the 1970s as the Dunford Flying Machine (known in the U.S. through Edmond's Scientific catalog).

Born on a farm in 1920, one of several brothers and sisters, Don entered the Royal Air Force and ended as a Squadron Leader in the engineering branch. After retiring from the RAF, Don worked in Canada and then in England, where he developed and perfected the Flying Machine. Fifteen years in the design stage and over 90 prototypes later, in the end it was a piece of engineered fabric set on a wooden frame that could knock the hat off a lady at 100 paces—as he demonstrated with his wife Kathy as victim in the celebrated "Newsnight" television segment.

Don once lectured on the basic aerody-

namics of the Flying Machine to the scientists at Farnborough, who were then engaged in the design of the Concorde. The meeting concluded that there was more literature on the flow of air over aerofoils at Mach 2 than at Mach .02 (about 15 mph).

Don worked at Cochranes of Oxford for over 10 years. He had his own workshop and the ideas came tumbling out of it. He would test kites even in freezing conditions just to check the effects of temperatures on different materials.

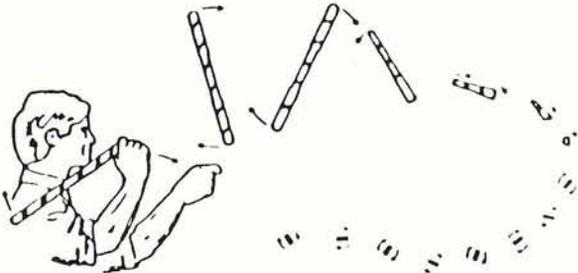
Don was loyal to his friends and generous with his time. Through his work and his book *Kite Cookery: How to Design Your Own Kite and Get It Right!*, he promulgated ideas that he hoped would help others. Often quoted from *Kite Cookery* was the following passage: "Wind is like a large number of giant sausages that move along at different heights and at different speeds."

Don's wife Kathy died a few years ago. He is survived by two sons.

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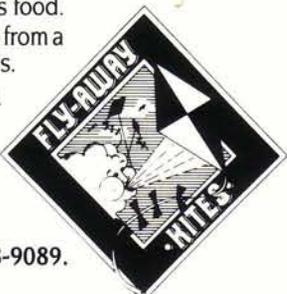
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# Bill Everett



Bill Everett flying a dual-line stunt cobra.  
Photograph by Chan Bush

William Robert Everett, a "godfather" among southern California's kites, died of a heart attack on May 4, 1991 in Lancaster, California. He was 69 years old.

With his good friend Eva Creek, Bill had made and flown numerous spectacular kites

that became famous at local festivals, on television and in print during the 1970s. Among them were his 110-kite train, a giant Statue of Liberty Eddy and a dual-line cobra kite appliquéd with a fire-breathing dragon.

Eva recalled for *Kite Lines* that Bill had worked in the aircraft industry until 1980, but he had flown kites all his life. "He could make any kind of kite," she said.

His collaboration with Eva began in 1970, when they agreed that she would do the art on the kites and he would do the frames (because Bill said he wasn't "artistic"). The pair traveled to events and did workshops. Bill's camper was a fully equipped kite factory.

A pragmatic rather than craftsmanlike builder, Bill often tested kites and consulted kite manufacturers, such as Steve Edeiken and Spectra Star Kites. Steve asked to name his Rainbow Kite Company after Bill's train, the "Rainbow Stairway to Heaven."

Bill seemed to attract good press without trying. He, Eva and kites did a seven-minute

television show for the Mickey Mouse Club and a segment on *Real People*. Articles on the southern California kite scene always included pictures of the Bill and Eva team. Their Statue of Liberty Eddy was commended during the Bicentennial by the City of Los Angeles. Bill was the featured figure on a colorful kite safety poster distributed by the local power company.

The day before his death, Bill and Eva had practiced their new stunt kite routine at the park and taught a teenager to fly. "He (Bill) was always so positive, so full of life," Eva said.

Roger Hyde said, "He was the only person I know who had a sort of wind tunnel in his head—the ability to see the air and how it will work on a kite."

There were no formal services for Bill, but on May 25th a large group of people gathered to fly kites for him. A rainbow kite with matching tails was released in his memory. Eva said, "The sky was full and the wind was beautiful all day long." —V.G.

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*Bessatsu Bijutsu Techo (Fine Arts Journal)*, in Japanese. The Winter 1982 issue of a quarterly art magazine. This issue, devoted entirely to kites, is now published as a book. It contains more than 300 excellent color

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*Nihon-no Tako (Kites of Japan)*, first edition (1978), by Kazuo Niisaka (deceased), in Japanese. One of the most beautiful pieces of kite literature ever: 10 x 14 in., 315 pages (253 in color). Rare find from publisher's limited supply. Availability uncertain. Double-boxed hardcover, \$249 (no airmail shipping).



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## AUSTRALIA . . .

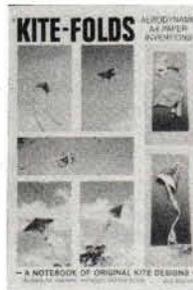
*Make Mine Fly* by Helen Bushell. New 1988 edition has a far-ranging collection of tips, techniques, hints and advice (gathered since 1977) for beginners or experts, groups or individuals. Includes plans for the patented Trefoil Delta with folded keel, plus numerous paper kites. Softcover, 90 pp., \$11.95



*Kites for Crowds of Kids* by Ed Baxter and Richard Davey. Clear plans for 11 workable kites plus accessories. Good advice for workshops despite outdated references and regional (Australian) materials and resources. Nice drawings, no photos. Softcover, 24 pp., \$3.95



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# The Kite Lines Bookstore . . . Continued

## CANADA continued . . .

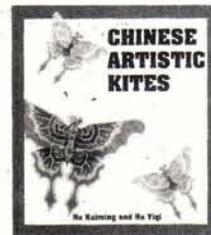


**Go Fly a Kite: The Kite Builder's Manual** by John C. Bostel. Novel plans include Ship, Windmill, Eagle. Line drawings are pleasing, but lack dimensions. Out-of-date materials, techniques. Softcover, 80 pp., \$12.95

## CHINA . . .



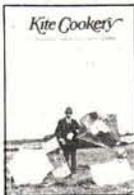
**Feng Zheng Ji Yi Yu Chuangxin (Kite Artistry and Innovation)** by Wang Qian, in Chinese. Classic Chinese kites oddly mixed with modern Western ones. Many drawings, eight pages of color photos. Softcover, 80 pp., \$7.95



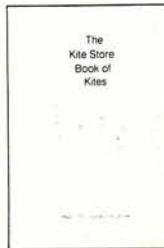
**Chinese Artistic Kites** by Ha Kuiming and Ha Yiqi. Detailed description of the celebrated kites of the Ha family of Beijing. Covers history, evolution, structure, decoration and flying. Over 80 kites plus accessories. Richly printed color. Good English translation. Softcover, 160 pp., \$16.95

## ENGLAND . . .

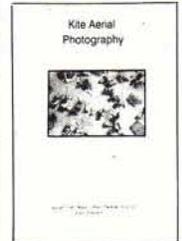
**Kite Cookery** by Don Dunford (deceased). Revised edition of 1979. Contains plans for four simple kites (box, delta, hexagon and dual-line diamond). Includes theories, construction tips, technical material and aerodynamics. Softcover, 47 pp., \$3.95



**The Kite Store Book of Kites** by Mark W. Cottrell. Not fancy, but one of the most refreshing and honest kite books in years. Plans for ten somewhat original and fully tested kites plus the author's philosophy and a 5.25" floppy disk of computer programs (in BASIC) for kites. Softcover, 48 pp., \$13.95



**Kite Aerial Photography** by Mark W. Cottrell. Most of everything you need to know about the subject to get started or improve your technique, including kite plans. Good combination of technical data and common sense. System for selecting elements in a rig. Self-published with computer. Softcover, 44 pp., \$10.95



## FRANCE . . .

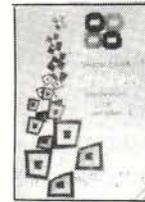


**Le Cerf-Volant en Chine (The Kite in China)** by Dominique Baillon-Lalande, in French. Beautiful photos (half in color) of ancient and modern Chinese kites. No plans, but some construction details. Hardcover, 88 pp., \$48.95 (no airmail)

## GERMANY . . .



**Drachen aus aller Welt (Kites from Everywhere)** by Werner Backes, in German. Detailed illustrations and clear photographs of a 40-kite international sampler. Plans include the Cloud Seeker, rhombus, parafoil, multicell boxes, Roloplan and rokkaku. Also shows trains, reels, knots and aerial photography. Softcover, 128 pp., \$16.95



**Drachen kombinieren und verketten (Kite Combinations and Trains)** by Werner Backes, in German. Very complete collection, full of good ideas, instructions and minute details. Clear illustrations and many color photos. Softcover, 128 pp., \$16.95

## GERMANY continued . . .

**Lenkdrachen bauen und fliegen (Making and Flying Stunt Kites)** by Wolfgang Schimmelpfennig, in German. Colorful and detailed plans to build eight dual-liners (four diamonds, three deltas and a foil). Softcover, 64 pp., \$13.95



**Windspiele (Windplay)** by Achim Kälein and Jens Jancke, in German. Large colorful pictorial of kites in action on and off the field. Some historical photos, few technical details, little identification. No construction plans. Hardcover, 112 pp., \$36.95 (no airmail)



## HUNGARY . . .

**Papir Sarkany (Paper Kites)** by Istvan Bodoczky, in Hungarian. How to make a wide selection of kites in paper—in all sizes. Standard kites plus some very original designs. Lovely illustrations, photos and drawings, lots of detail. Two paper kites included. Softcover, 80 pp., \$14.95



## ITALY . . .



**Aquiloni (Kites)** by Guido Accascina, in Italian. A mini encyclopedia of information: theory, plans, tips, techniques, sources and resources. Small but thick, with 16 pages of color photos. Comes with 12 color

postcards in unusual die-cut box. Pocket-size. Softcover, 256 pp., \$17.95

## MALAYSIA . . .



**Kites of Malaysia: Kites to make and fly** by Wayne Hosking, in English. The only source of plans and construction techniques for ten different Malaysian wau. Great full-page photographs. Reasonable description of traditional methods. Softcover, 39 pp., \$7.95

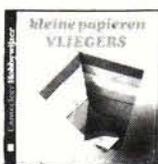
## The NETHERLANDS . . .



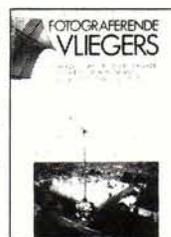
**NEW! Stuntvliegers Bouwen en Besturen (Stunt Kites to Make and Fly)** by Servaas van der Horst and Nop Velthuizen, in Dutch. Covers all aspects of the sport thoroughly (dual-line, quad-line, soft kites, individual and team flying) and includes detailed plans for 10 high-tech maneuverable kites, some of them novel. Excellent drawings and photos, some in color. Softcover, 96 pp., \$21.95

## The NETHERLANDS continued . . .

**Kleine Papier Vliegers (Small Paper Kites)** by Harm van Veen, in Dutch. An expertly assembled, very original little book. Includes detailed plans for 10 miniature fliers plus construction and flying techniques. Color photos. Softcover, 32 pp., \$5.95



**Fotograferende Vliegers (Picturetaking Kites)** by Nop Velthuizen and Gerard van der Loo, in Dutch. Nice thorough treatment of kite aerial photography from earliest days to the present. Photos and technical drawings are exceptional—non-Dutch-speakers could benefit. Hardcover, 120 pp., \$20.95



## SOUTH AFRICA . . .

**Kites: 24 Designs** by Izak C. Rust, in English. The first kite book we have seen from South Africa. Contains a variety of basic plans, illustrated with scale drawings and color photographs, along with tips on frames, tails, sails and bridles. Softcover, 48 pp., \$8.95



# The Kite Lines Bookstore . . . Continued

## The UNITED STATES . . .

*The Penguin Book of Kites* by David Pelham. Called "The Bible," first published in 1976 and still recommended for all kitefliers. Plans for more than 100 kites plus lots of solid reference data, aerodynamics and history. Color. (Hard users: buy two; the binding dies.) Softcover, 228 pp., \$12.95



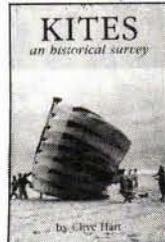
*The Stunt Kite Book* by Alison Fujino and Benjamin Ruhe. Covers background, personalities and introduction well; treats nuts-and-bolts somewhat sketchily. Many black-and-white photos and drawings and a useful chart of 80 brands of stunt kites listed by skill level. Softcover, 110 pp., \$8.95



**NEW EDITION!** *Stunt Kites!* by David Gomborg. The first book on the subject. Thorough coverage of the basics plus advanced techniques. Tips and information from 22 well-known pilots; lots of safety pointers. "Home-made" publishing with computer drawings, no photographs. Softcover, 88 pp., \$8.95



**NEW!** *Art That Flies* by Tal Streeter and Pamela Houk. A beautiful anthology of unusual kites from the Dayton (Ohio) Art Institute exhibition by artists Curt Asker (Sweden), Jackie Matisse (France) and Tal Streeter (USA). Intriguing work with optical illusions, environmental objects and Flying Red Lines. Interviews, artists' statements and an interesting bibliography. Many handsome photographs, some in full color. No kite construction plans. Softcover, 139 pp., \$12.95



210 pp., \$14.95. Hardcover, 210 pp., \$31.95

*Kites: An Historical Survey* by Clive Hart. Revised, second edition (1982). Invaluable reference work with many illustrations and photographs. Fascinating, readable in-depth research in early kiting. The most extensive kite bibliography in print. No kite construction plans. Softcover,



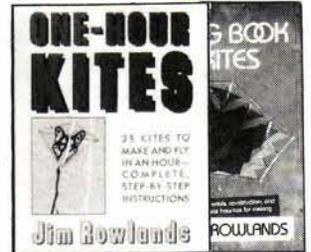
*The Art of the Japanese Kite* by Tal Streeter. Rare up-close and personal profiles of Japan's master kite artists sensitively interviewed in 1971-72. Includes 130 outstanding photos (52 in color). Richly informative contemporary history. No plans, but a joy to read and read again. Softcover, 181 pp., \$24.95

*Kites for Everyone* by Margaret Greger. Good kite plans, variations and accessories, plus knowledgeable tips and techniques for beginner, expert or classroom. Second edition. Softcover, 136 pp., \$12.95

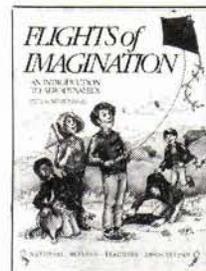


*More Kites for Everyone* by Margaret Greger. Some old kites, some new kites, plus tips and techniques based on years of experience. Plans for 17 kites from simple to complex. Softcover, 59 pp., \$9.95

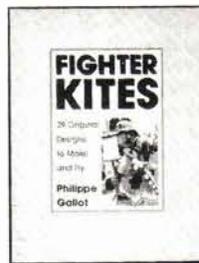
*One-Hour Kites* by Jim Rowlands. Same as *British Kites to Make and Fly*. Standard kites for beginners, plus a few new ones, but directions are skimpy. Softcover, 95 pp., \$12.95



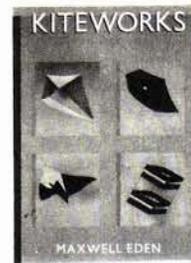
*The Big Book of Kites* by Jim Rowlands. Same as *British Making and Flying Modern Kites*. Uneven instructions and drawings for 36 kites. Softcover, 127 pp., \$12.95



*Flights of Imagination* by Wayne Hosking. Plans for simple flying objects plus questions, answers and definitions about kites for teaching aerodynamics to science students. Softcover, 56 pp., \$9.95



*Fighter Kites* by Philippe Gallot. Plans for 29 kites, plus tips on flying, tools, materials, games and accessories. Illustrations are large and clear. Photos are good. Instructions are adequate. Measurements converted from metric may total incorrectly. Softcover, 96 pp., \$12.95



**NOW IN PAPERBACK!** *Kiteworks* by Maxwell Eden. Collection of 50 kite plans from respected designers. Up-to-date on materials. Detailed drawings plus tips, techniques, accessories, historic chapters and (un)related stories. Big, colorful, ambitious—but unclear in some places. Softcover, 287 pp., \$14.95. Hardcover, 287 pp., \$24.95 (no airmail shipping for hardcover)

*Chinese Kites* by David Jue. A little classic: brief history and legends, tips, tools, designs, techniques and construction details for 10 relatively simple Chinese kites using rice paper and bamboo. Colorful paintings. Hardcover, 56 pp., \$10.95



*25 Kites that Fly* by Leslie Hunt. Reprint of 1929 original. Contains good old plans for kites not seen much anymore. Also historical data, photos and details. Hunt was a kitemaker for the U.S. Weather Bureau. Softcover, 110 pp., \$2.95



*Make Your Own Kite* by John W. Jordan. Plans for nine kites from unusual but easy-to-get materials such as plastic foam. Clear instructions, amusing reading from a genuine enthusiast. Out of print, quantity limited. Softcover, 90 pp., \$6.95

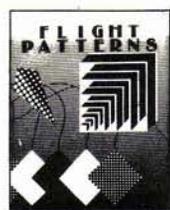


**NEW EDITION!** *Super Kites III* by Neil Thorburn. Good designs and tested, creative construction techniques using plastic bags and wooden dowels. New plans for T-Bird-2 and -3 and Bristol boxes. New color photos. Softcover, 123 pp., \$8.95



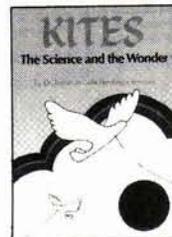
Now in limited supply. Softcover, 56 pp., \$4.95

*Come Fight a Kite* by Dinesh Bahadur. Out of print, this 1978 classic is the first book about fighter kites. Includes history, construction and flying tips, but no plans. Many black-and-white photos and drawings.



easy to understand. Softcover, 36 pp., \$4.95

*Flight Patterns* by Leland Toy (from a television kitemaking series, 1984), 2nd edition. Good fundamental tips and easy plans for eight basic kites. Plans include a rotor made of foam meat trays and a Mylar fighter, plus fighting strategies. User-friendly,



*Kites: The Science and the Wonder* by Toshio Ito and Hirotsugu Komura. Full of aerodynamics, theories and observations. Many diagrams and charts, plus plans for the "original" butterfly kite. First published in Japanese (1979), the English translation (1983) is not smooth. Softcover, 160 pp., \$11.95

# REPRINTS of popular articles from Kite Lines

## New American Tradition: KITE FESTIVALS!

By Valerie Govig. Thorough guidance in festival organizing, standards, scheduling, location, budgeting, formats (competitive vs. non-competitive), judging, field events, awards. Includes "Figure Kiting" by Red Braswell. \$3 ppd.



## mastering nylon

By G. William Tyrrell, Jr. Fabric types, tools, "hot/cold" cutting, coloring methods, seams, hems, edge binding, reinforcing, multi-color piecing, design transferring, washing/ironing nylon; with a complete source list. \$1.75 ppd.



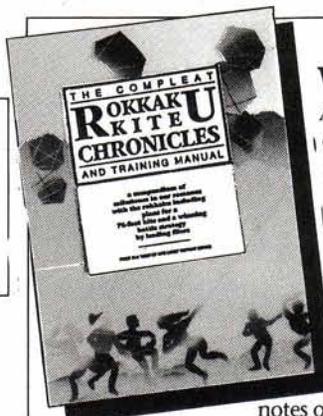
## Hundreds of Sleds Hundreds of Smiles

By Shirley B. Osborne and Mel Govig. Groups of 500 kids are no problem if you use this success formula. How to prepare for and make sled kites indoors or out; plus tips on how to get the most educational value from it. \$1 ppd.



## WORLD RECORDS IN KITING: QUESTIONS, ANSWERS &

By Valerie Govig. Complete discussion of kite records—how to document one, definitions and rules to observe in seeking a record, list of currently recognized records, new categories, (more than Guinness). \$1 ppd.



## WASHOI!

At last!—everything about the kite community's romance with the rokkaku since 1982 is now together in one place. Reprinted from past issues of *Kite Lines* are all the milestone reports, stories and people that put it all in context:

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- Martin Lester's International Rokkaku Challenge.
- "Mama-Sans!"—their first battle with the Rainbow Warriors in 1984 and their challenge to the men's team in Italy in 1985.
- Plans for a Sanjo Rokkaku by Mel Govig, distributed in 1983 and out of print until now: Instructions, dimensions and complete detail drawings show how to make an inexpensive 7½-foot challenge-size kite of nylon or Tyvek.
- Drawings of two rokkaku variations by Lincoln Chang.

Softcover, 20 pages, \$7.95 postpaid



## KITE TALES ON MICROFILM

The complete set of *Kite Tales* (the original AKA newsletter) on microfiche—more than 1,600 pages—all 40 issues from October 1964 to November 1976. Here are 12 years of plans, profiles, commentary, news and resource material available nowhere else. A must for researchers, collectors or libraries.

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Many readers regard *Kite Lines* as more an educational reference source than a magazine because of the timeless and hard-to-find nature of its contents. And because new information keeps popping up in kiting we don't expect to repeat ourselves editorially.

No wonder back issues of *Kite Lines* are avidly collected by so many enthusiasts. You can start now with the six issues available in original paper form. (All back issues can be had on microfiche—see following.) Back issues in paper, while supplies last, \$4.00 each plus shipping.



### SPRING 1988 (Vol. 7, No. 1)

Japan's Mt. Aso Festival, Goble Starbox, Comics Kite, Budapest, San Francisco, Poster-Calendar-Almanac and more.

### SUMMER 1989 (Vol. 7, No. 3)

India's Annual Frenzy, Stunt Kite Survey, Kite Capitals, Bali's New Creations, Flying Wedge, Arch Trains, Sleds and more.

### WINTER 1989-90 (Vol. 7, No. 4)

China by Tal Streeter and Skye Morrison, Dyeing Ripstop, Delta Origins, Nishibayashi's Bats, Stunting Flow Form, Modified Parachute, more.

### SUMMER 1990 (Vol. 8, No. 1)

New Zealand's Festival, Stunting Parachute, Flag Waving, Peter Lynn on Technology, One Sky Over Berlin, Washington (England), more.

### WINTER 1990-91 (Vol. 8, No. 2)

Spectacular Dieppe, Montpellier, Bristol and Berlin, Butterfly plans, Stunt Kite Survey, suspended stunt traction, more.

### SPRING 1991 (Vol. 8, No. 3)

Whistling Kites of Nantong (China), Kite Pins, Angle Estimating, Wind Shot Stunter, World's Longest Kite and more.

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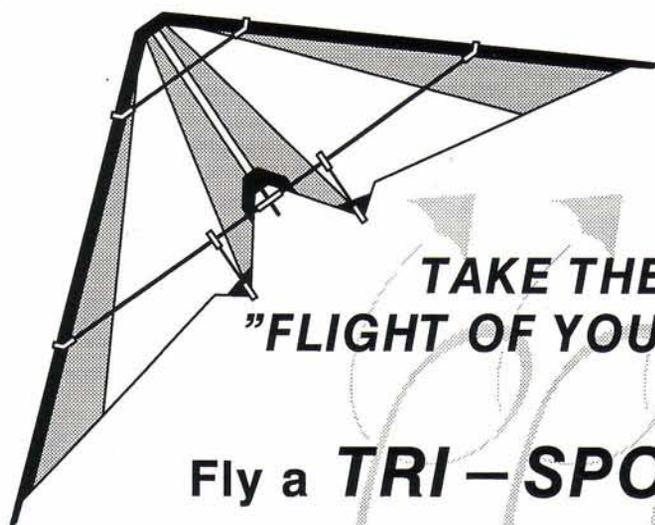
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# Domina C. Jalbert: 1904-1991



By Hugh R. D. (Stretch) Tucker

**T**he inventor of the Parafoil and one of kiting's great father figures died on June 26, 1991 in Boca Raton, Florida. He is survived by his wife Emma (Billie), a daughter Dorothy, a son Paul and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Though his life story has been told often, his achievements never fail to be astonishing.

Domina Cleophase Jalbert was born into a Catholic family on December 15, 1904 on a hay farm in Saint Michel des Saintes, in Quebec, Canada. He was the 17th of 21 children and the youngest of the 10 who survived past childhood.

He could recall his mother making him kites out of paper and sticks with tails of rags when he was five years old. He was fascinated with the kites' behavior. This fascination was to continue all through his life.

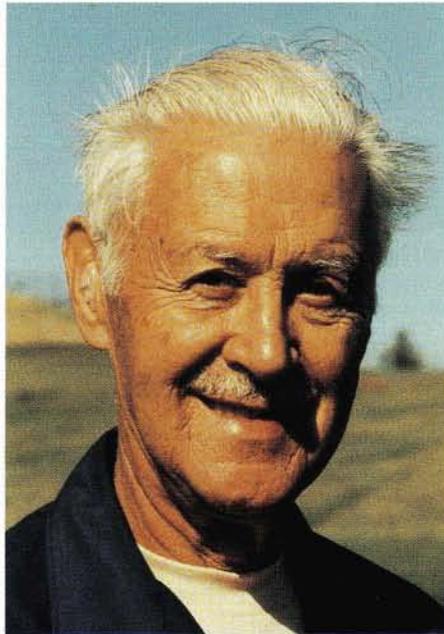
Dom did go to school through sixth grade, but as he would proudly show, his report card did not give him a passing grade in many subjects. He moved with his family to Woonsocket, Rhode Island around this time (age 12), and not speaking English he was unable to continue with school. He worked at a number of jobs such as delivering groceries. He still flew kites and from

***If it is shaped like a wing,  
looks like a wing, and flies like a  
wing, then it is a wing.***  
—DOM JALBERT

the grocers and housewives gathered paper and string to create more kites.

As he grew older he became active in athletics, and joined the American Athletic Union in order to compete in track events. He was successful in the sprint, but his favorite event was the long-distance walk. In both areas he was of national championship caliber, and could have received scholarships to several colleges, but his lack of education prevented this. He also acted as a lifeguard and swimming instructor.

At a track meet in Joliet, Quebec in 1927, Dom met a barnstormer pilot, Claude Sterling, who befriended him. Dom was fascinated by the airplane. He sold tickets for joyrides with the proviso that Claude, instead of paying him, was to teach him to fly. A few months later, in Marshall, Missouri, Dom was soloing a Curtiss Jenny after six hours of instruction. He obtained a pilot's license (number 626) and was later to



Dom Jalbert in Detroit, 1982.  
Photograph by Val Deale.

become the first civilian to land at the Boca Raton and West Palm Beach airfields after the war.

In the early 1930s, the Depression forced Dom out of general aviation, and once again he worked at various jobs. His love of the sky and flying brought him back to kites, and he constructed new ones, of the Conyne or French Military type, with wingspans of 10 to 18 feet.

During a Woonsocket election, Dom approached one candidate and asked him if he would pay \$15 a day to see his name suspended above the city. "Vote for Dupré" was hoisted on a banner daily and resulted in the victory of the only Republican alderman elected that year.

A few years later, to the amazement of bystanders, he linked four of his 12-foot

***What has always attracted me  
to Jalbert's parafoils was the  
beauty of them, the result of his  
ability to achieve a perfect  
marriage of form and function.  
Here was real cloth  
"pottery for the wind."***  
—TAL STREETER

kites in train, and lifted his 12-year-old daughter Dorothy in a boatswain's chair while she was holding a camera.

In the mid-1930s, Dom joined the U.S. Rubber Company, Naugatuck, Connecticut, and started to learn how to fabricate barrage balloons. He worked his way up to chief

***When the Parafoil flight is over,  
it leaves the sky unaltered, but in  
its ascent it has changed our spirit  
and attitude, to be renewed every time  
we unfold it, to give it freedom  
to be filled not only with the  
immense handfuls of wind, but  
the joy, spirit and soul of mankind.***  
—DOM JALBERT

rigger with the company, while continuing to learn about suspension bands and distribution of loads. All this was to come in handy 25 years later when he developed the Parafoil.

Just before the Second World War, working in his kitchen at home in the evenings, Dom developed his first Kytoon—part barrage balloon, part kite—which would fly in a wide wind range. A balloon would be pushed downwind and would lose altitude on windy days, when a kite would fly. Domina came up with a system to attach both horizontal and vertical tailfins to a smaller version of a barrage balloon. Once bridled at the correct angle, these would cause the unit to face into the wind and also climb upwards, rather than be blown sideways and lower. This was in spite of the fact that engineers at M.I.T. had told Dom that it could not be done.

After working for the Dewey and Almy Chemical Company in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dom was sufficiently independent by 1949 to set up his own business in Bedford, Massachusetts. It became very successful and in 1951 Dom moved to Boca Raton to set up the Jalbert Aerology Laboratory.

Kytoons assumed many important roles. The U.S. Navy saw the importance of putting collapsible Kytoons in life rafts, where they could be used to lift radio aerials to send rescue signals. The Canadian logging industry used Kytoons to lift timber from forests inaccessible to wheeled vehicles. The Rockefeller Foundation used Kytoons to suspend aerial mosquito traps in its study of the spread of malaria in South America. Admiral Richard Byrd used them to hoist radio antennas during his mission into the Antarctic. In



the Korean War, Kytoons on barges with radar reflectors simulated whole carrier task forces. Crop dusting, aerial surveying—the list goes on.

In his studies and tests for the military, Dom developed an interest in parachutes. Finding that a normal parachute was, to some degree, inefficient and at the whim of the wind, Dom set about redesigning it to create one which held more air and had a softer rate of descent. The fact that it became directionally controllable did not hurt either. In the early 1960s, during a visit to Langley Field, he learned that the military was interested in and needed a canopy with a glide ratio of 3 to 1 or better—that is, moving three feet forward for every one foot of descent. This started Dom on a trend which led to his most important innovation.

As he worked with and developed the round canopy, the cross-section was gradually flattened out to become more ellipsoid, and Dom started experimenting with putting vertical slits in the trailing gores, so that apparent wind entering the bottom by the jumper's descent would escape out the back sections, giving the jumper forward direction.

In early 1964, while flying back to Boca Raton from Patrick Air Base, Dom took a good look at the wings of the Beechcraft he was flying and realized that in order to travel from one place to another, with a mini-

**What Dom Jalbert has done is add to the workload of the wind.**

**He made use of its energy to force fabric into an airfoil, never adding an ounce of weight, but creating tremendous lift.**

**—BOB INGRAHAM**

mum glide ratio of 3 to 1, one must do so with airfoil wings. Birds do not have round canopies for wings. Airplanes do not either, so why not make a wing out of fabric? Upon landing at Boca Raton, Dom took a yardstick, opened the gas tank cap, and measured the depth and chord length of his Beechcraft wing—then went to the drawing board.

By cutting wing ribs out of fabric and sewing them in even parallel spacings to a back panel and a face panel, Dom created a fabric wing. (It is probable that Jeannette Sciarappa did the actual sewing; as his assistant until her death in 1985, she sewed most of Dom's prototypes.) An open leading

edge allowed air to enter and give the wing shape. Dom used his knowledge of balloon construction to make fabric triangles, or flares, to attach bridle lines to. The flares would spread the load more evenly.

Finally, on March 4, 1964 the Parafoil as we now know it made its first successful flight. (The kite was later donated to the Smithsonian kite collection.) *Life* magazine, in September, 1968 said, "the Parafoil, once

***I'll never forget Dom driving me to the airport in 1988. Dodging traffic, diving in and out of lanes, he looked like he was flying again—in his Turbo Saab—at 75 mph!***

**—BILL TYRRELL**

mockingly written off as the flying mattress, is the most radical departure in parachute design since Leonardo da Vinci sketched the original in 1495."

As a kite, bridled slightly differently than a parachute, the Parafoil was recognized as the most powerful lifting device for its size, weight and pack volume.

Dom never stopped in his work or his generation of ideas, many of which have been documented elsewhere. Just two of them were: a different type of spinnaker (adopted for the America's Cup sailing race); and a multidirectional windscoop for sailboats. He also found the time to become one of the early members of the American Kitefliers Association and actively helpful to Bob Ingraham.

Dom was known for his sharp reactions to copyists and patent infringers, and spent much time, anguish and money defending

"Friends of Jalbert & the Parafoil" is a newly formed committee planning to present an annual trophy, the Jalbert Kite Innovation Award. Chairman pro tem is Bill Tyrrell. Persons interested are welcome to write to Bill at 51 Layle Lane, Doylestown, PA 18901, USA.

his ram-air design. He also suffered a disastrous fire in 1967. The entire plant—machines, supplies, drawings—went up in a blaze. Dom rebuilt.

Many prestigious awards were presented to Dom over time. In 1986 he was given the Aerodynamic Decelerator and Balloon Technology Award by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. The same year he was one of only five Americans ever, and the only one to be chosen unanimously, to receive the gold medal of the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale.

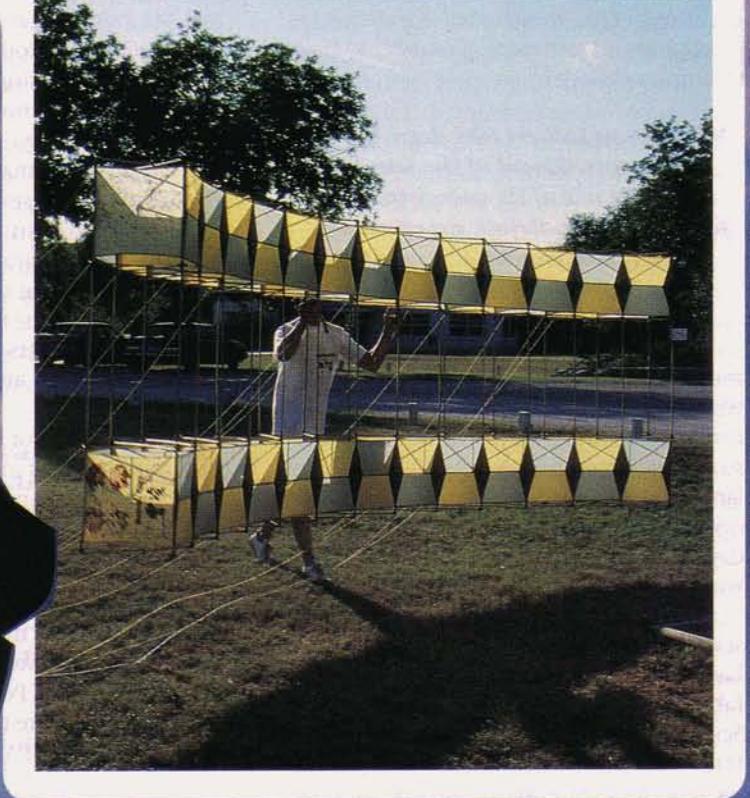
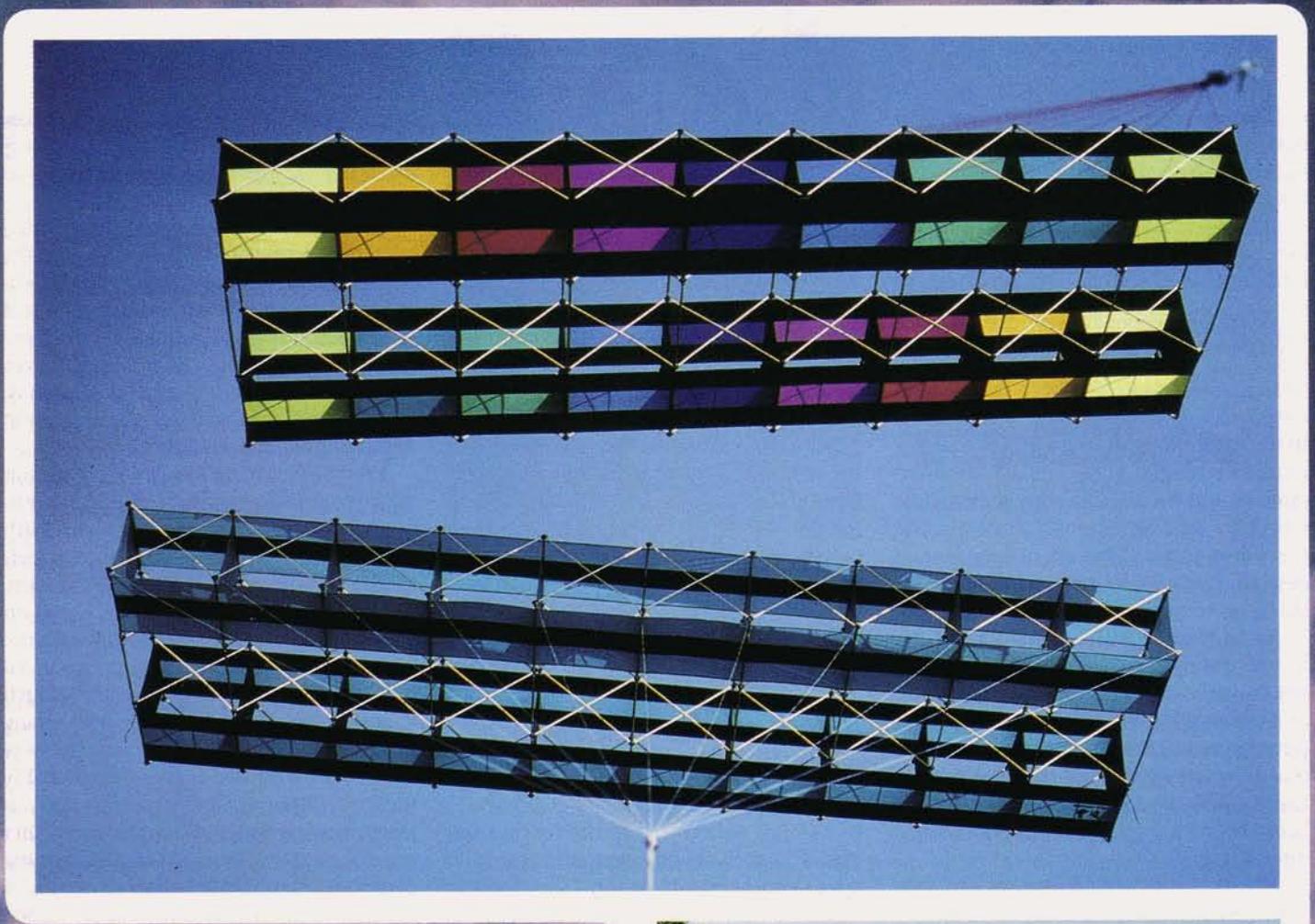
When I first met Dom, in 1988, he was trying to develop the Parafoil along another angle. Together we experimented with changing the number of horizontal panels through the rib depth to produce more lift. We built one kite with no airfoil shape on top at all—just a flat form parallel with the bottom panel. We tried a very pronounced nose curve. All were part of an endless search to answer the many questions which sprang from Dom's mind. Sometimes there were failures, sometimes successes, but probably the most important and most effective was Dom's development of ailerons for parachutes by relocating the bending point for turning corners. Dom was granted a patent (one of his many) for the design, and he hoped that skydivers would realize that it provided more efficiency and safety, and that they would start to use it.

I guess what impressed me most of all about Domina Jalbert was that, at 86 years of age, with only a sixth grade education, he continued to question what we "know." Instead of accepting everything as it was, he had with almost childlike purity continued to ask Why? and Why Not? We can only hope to live up to his example.

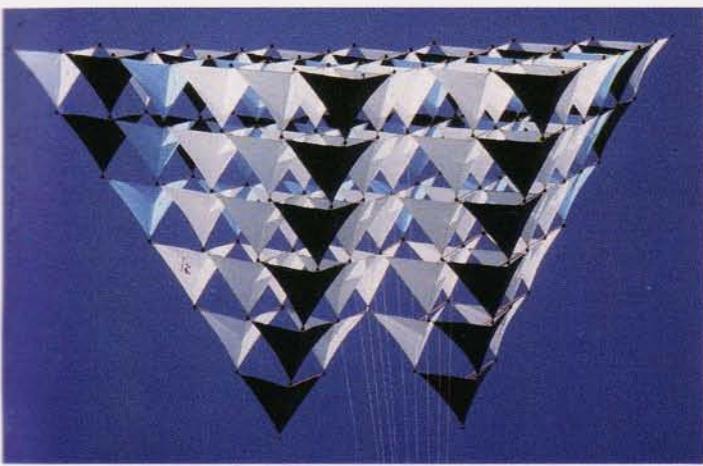
Dom was given to aphorisms, some of them apt, but the best one hung on a wall behind his desk: "Minds are like parachutes: they only function when open."

*Hugh (Stretch) Tucker, a sailor, yacht-rigger and kitemaker in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, visited Jalbert weekly over the past three years. Stretch said, "We had many discussions of different theories concerning Parafoils and kites in general. He also told me of his childhood and youth and how he developed the Parafoil." Portions of information for this article were contributed by Tal Streeter from his manuscript in progress, Great Kites of the Western World and their Inventors.*

S K Y G A L L E R Y  
*Peter Malinski*



## Peter Malinski



*Kitemaker:* Peter Malinski, age 41, graphic arts teacher, Bremen, Germany.

*Kite experience:* 11 years  
*Inspiration:* "All the German and international kitefliers, especially André Cassagnes and Nico Laan."

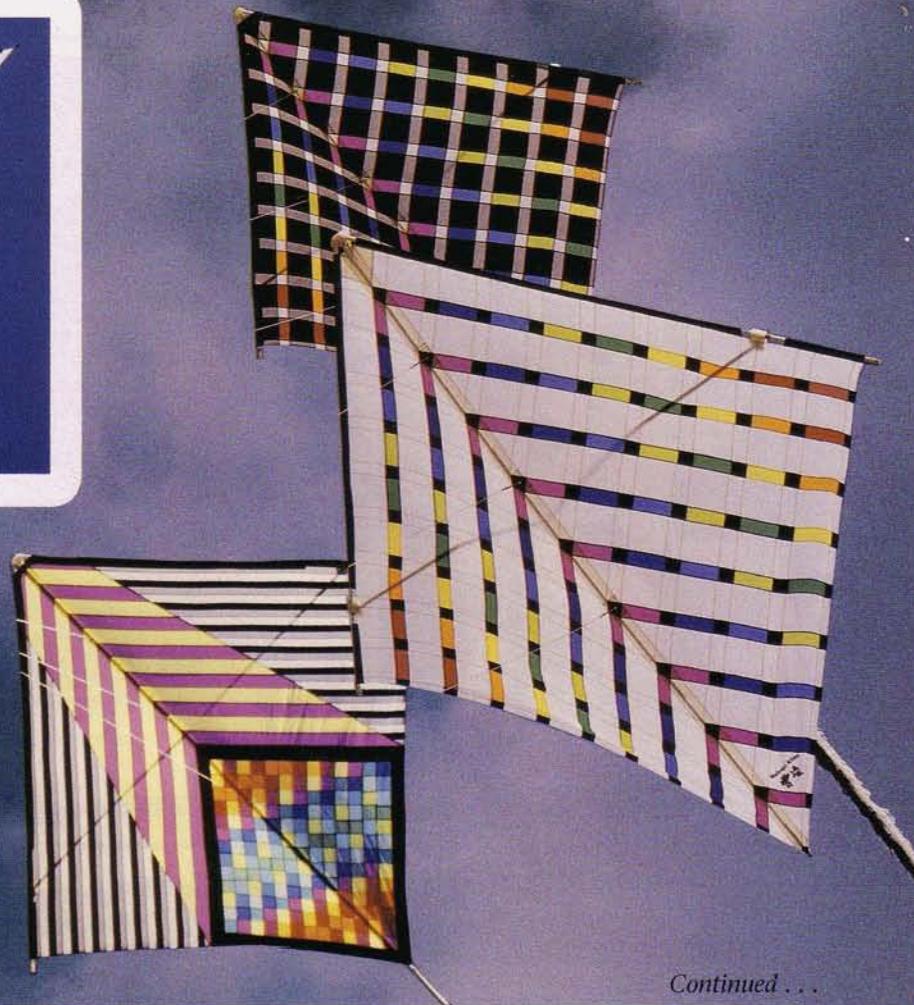
*Average number of hours spent making a kite:* "In the beginning 1-10 hours, nowadays 50-100 or more."

*Honors:* First Place Award of 10,000DM for most beautiful German kite in 1985; awards in Weifang, China; Long Beach, Washington; Miho, Japan "and some others, but I'm not really interested in that."

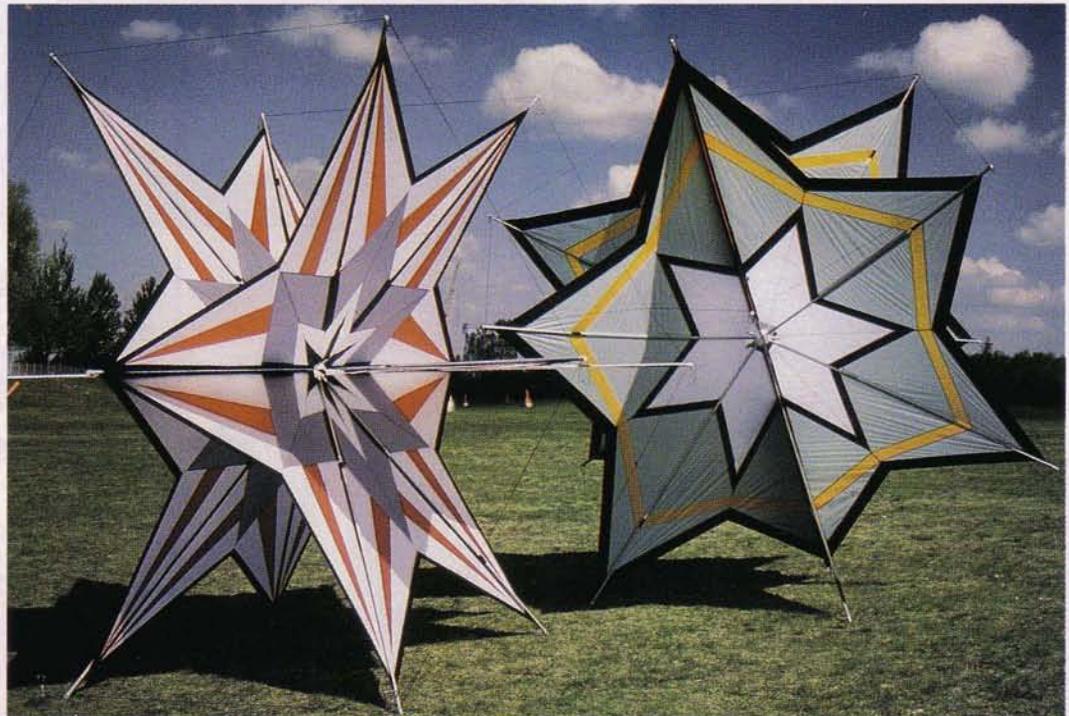
*Favorite flying spot:* "Fanø, Fanø, Fanø."

*Kite Lines* comments: Though early Malinski designs were derived from others, the details and graphics were always his own: the "lace" tails of pieced fabric, the subtle colors, the exacting craftsmanship, the large scale. His latest kites are assembled from modular units and connectors that allow novelty and variety of shape. His long, curving boxes would astonish Lawrence Hargrave.

*Photographs by:* Birgit Sower and Peter Malinski.

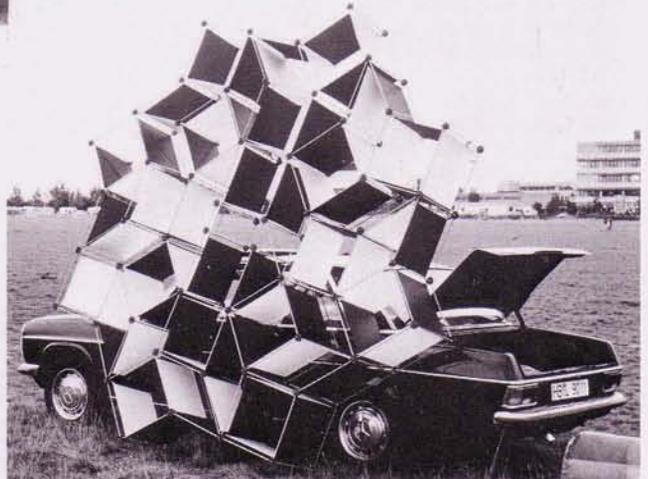
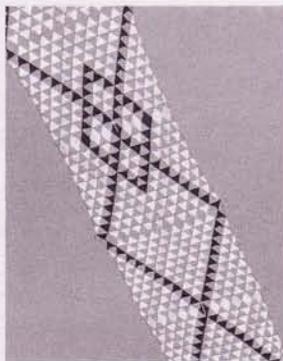
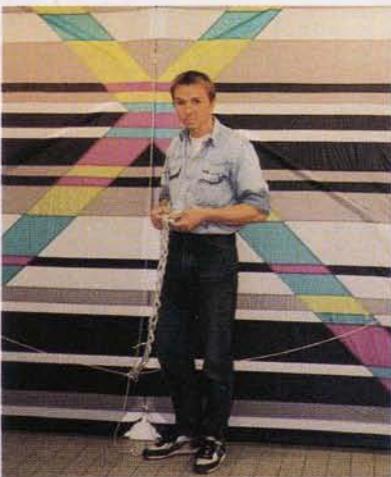
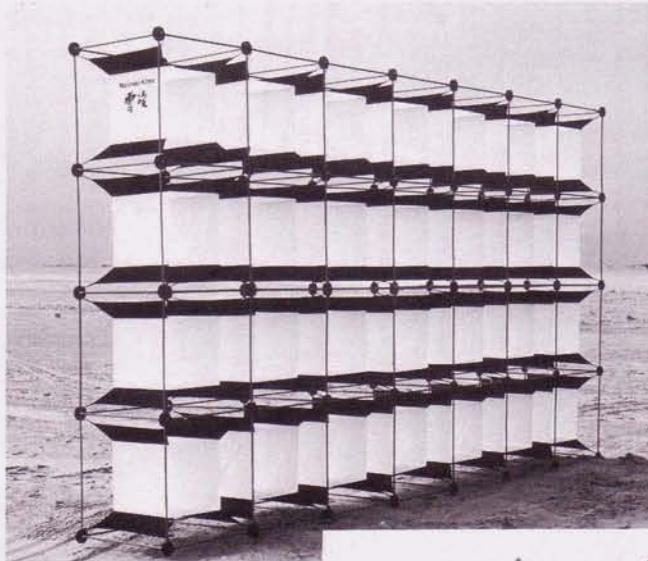
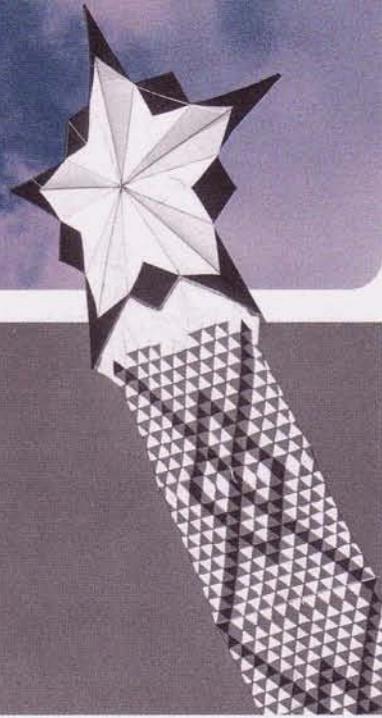
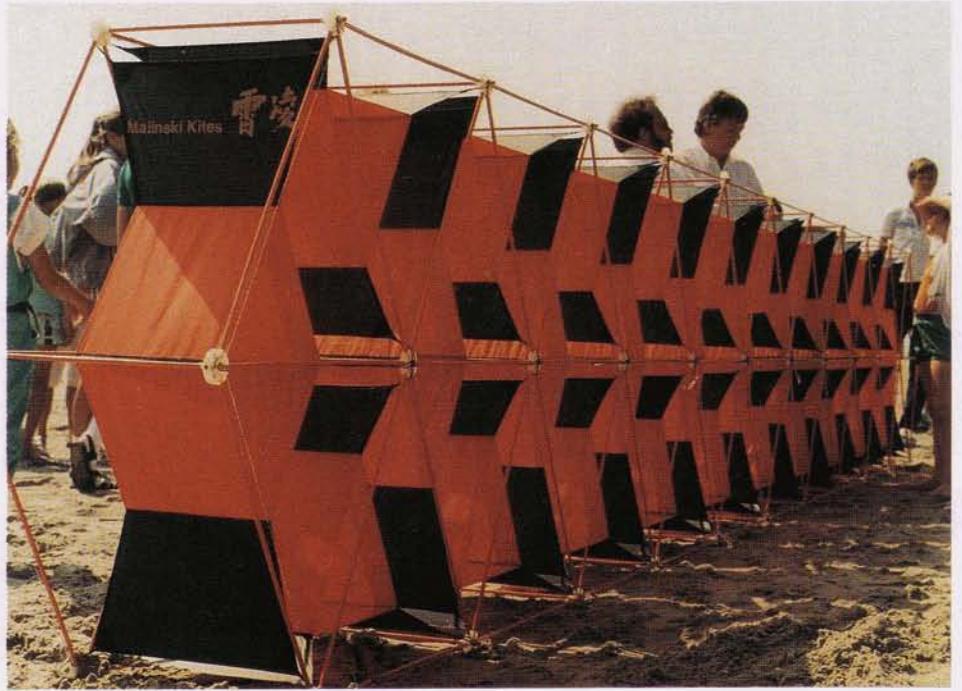


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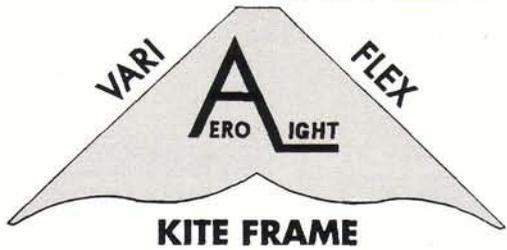


Peter Malinski

Continued



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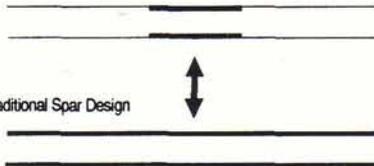


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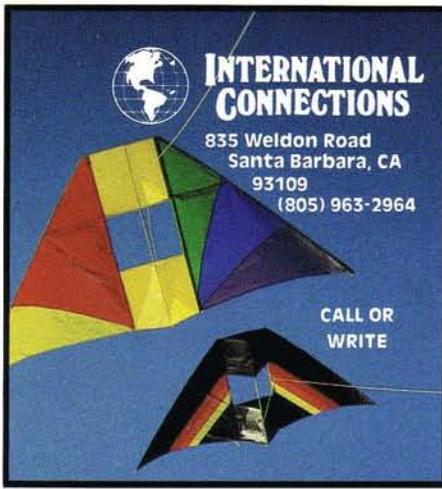
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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

AND THE WINNERS ARE . . . **John P. Taylor** of Mifflinburg, Pennsylvania was the lucky one on April 16, 1991, when his Renewal Order Form was pulled out of the big cardboard box, making him the third winner in the Great Kite Lines Renewal Raffle. The fourth—and last—winner was **Thomas Albro** of Westminster, Maryland. His winning entry was selected July 15.

To recap the Great Kite Lines Renewal Raffle: during the past year, *Kite Lines* gave away four brand new 10-foot Cody kites made by Dan Flintjer of the Buffalo Cody Kite Company. Each kite had a suggested retail value of \$1,000 (US). The kites were awarded to subscribers who responded to our regular renewal notices—one winner from each of the last four renewal cycles. The first winner was **Robert C. Brannen** of Harvard, Massachusetts. The second was **Stan Barnes** of Visalia, California.

At the suggestion of Kathy Nixie, kiteflier and librarian in Port Lavaca, Texas, *Kite Lines* is pleased to announce a new service to our readers. It is a program designed to build collections of kite books in libraries, introduce more people to kiting and serve as a lasting memorial to a deceased kiteflier.

You can participate by donating one or more kite books, as follows. Send us (1) your paid order for the book(s), (2) the name and address of the library to receive the gift, and (3) the name of the person in whose memory you are making the gift. *Kite Lines* will send the book with a card naming you as the memorial contributor and the deceased kiteflier you are honoring.

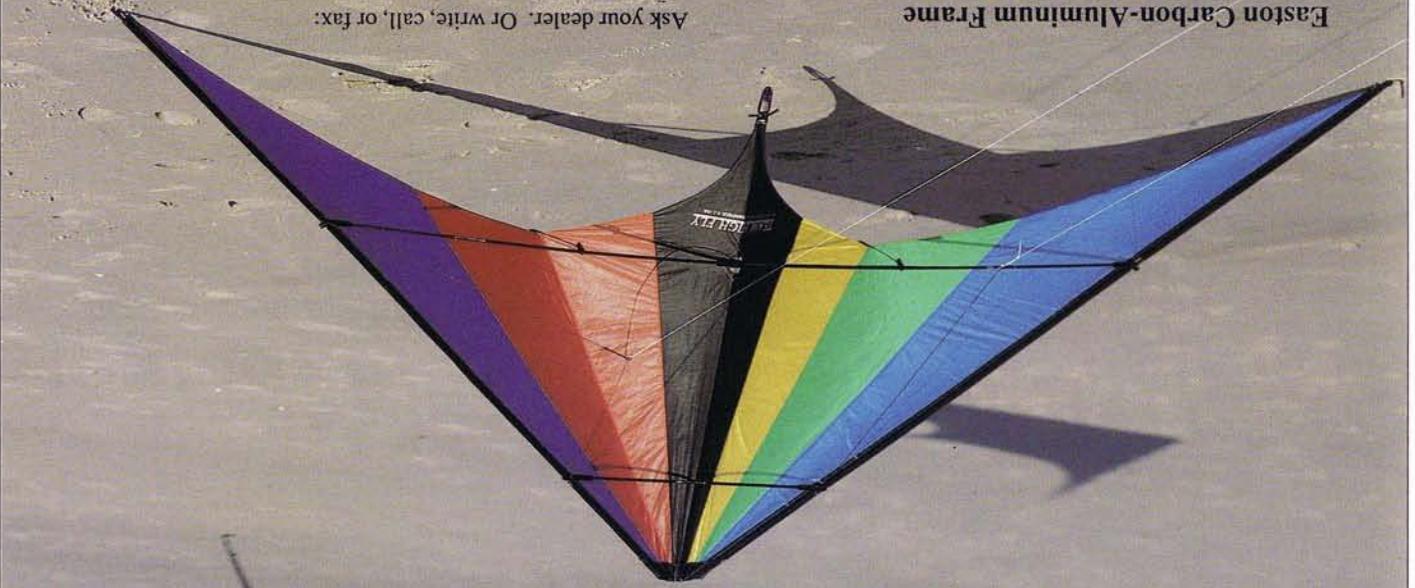
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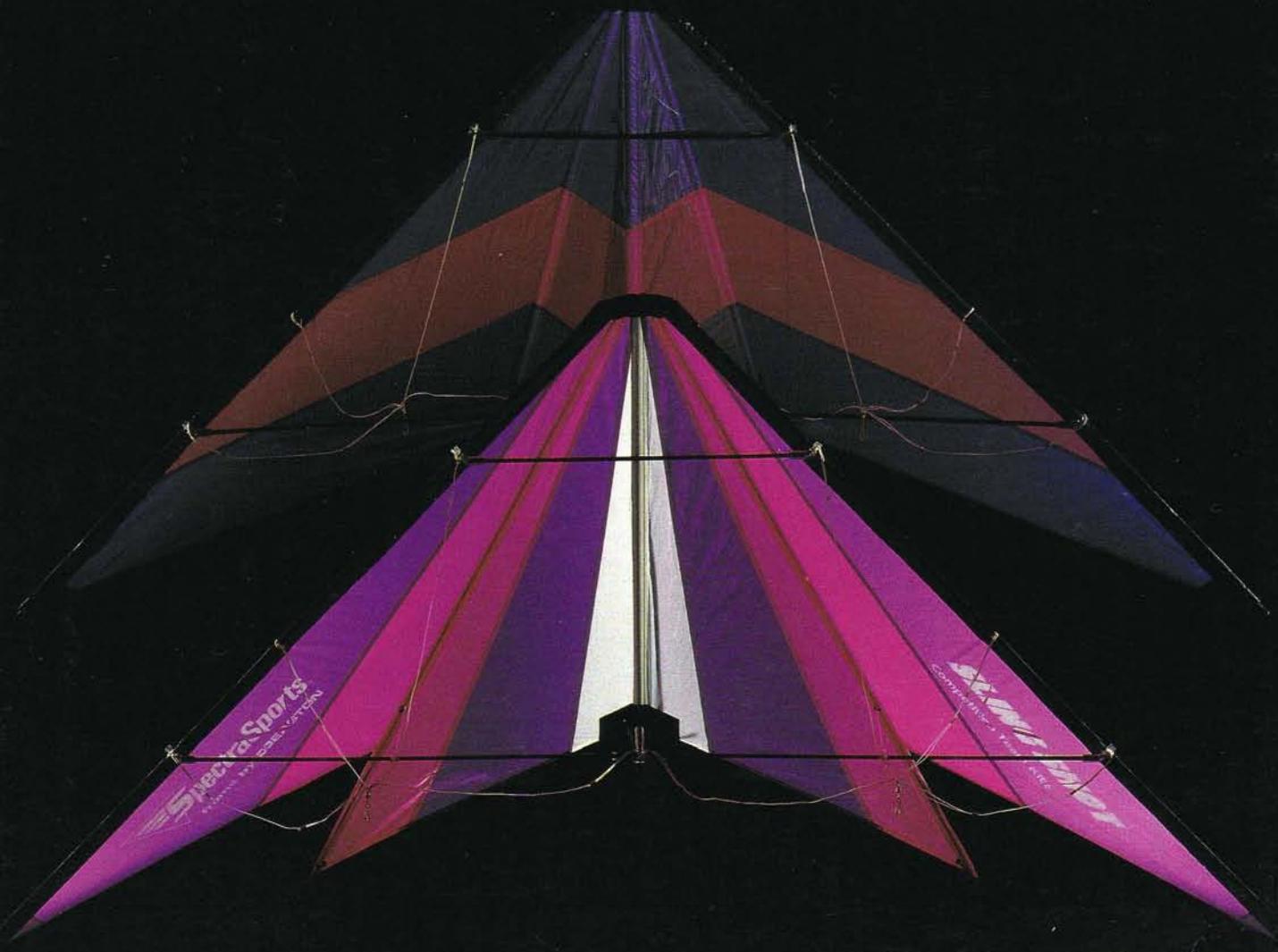
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