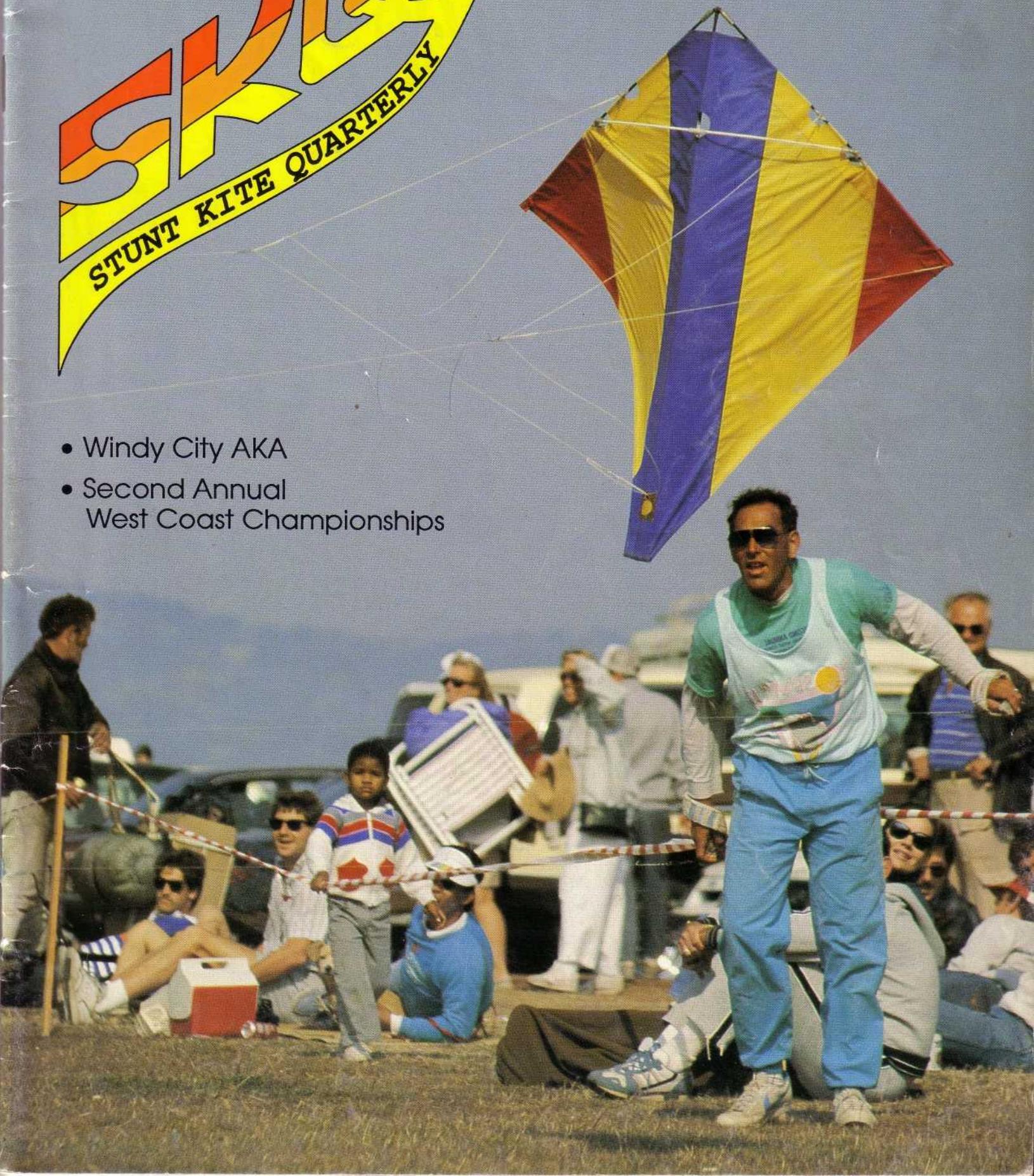


VOL. 1 NO. 2

AUTUMN 1988

\$3.50

- Windy City AKA
 - Second Annual
West Coast Championships



EAST COAST STUNT KITE CHAMPIONSHIPS IV



4th ANNUAL

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ULTRALIGHTS. . .

A WORD OF CAUTION.

By CRIS BATDORFF

OK. So you've just dished out \$150.00 for the newest kite of your dreams, that ultralight that you've been thinking about for a few weeks, is finally safe in the kite bag. Off to the field with the silent hope in mind that today there won't be much wind so you can give it a good trial. The wind, however, isn't being very agreeable, and throws 15 to 20 mph breezes your way. After a couple of disgruntled minutes sitting in your car with your new kite burning a hole through your thoughts, you unsleeve it ... what the heck! A little extra wind won't make much of a difference and everyone knows that these top-name kitemakers always underrate their suggested windspeeds ... why, I've heard of plenty of guys flying these light jobs in fairly heavy winds. Good Lord, top fliers do it all the time, right?

Ten minutes later, you leave the flying field with several broken pieces of fiberglass and a hunk of torn .75 ounce ripstop. Your days flying has just cost you \$15 per minute and you're gonna kill something ...

Before directing your illustrative thoughts of great bodily damage at a hapless manufacturer or an innocent shop-owner, consider the vehicle that you're driving as you head off in his direction. Sure it'll go fast but will it survive a 60 mph crash into a building? Nope. And if you try to test out the proposition to prove the obvious, will you then take it back to the dealer or write a letter of complaint to the manufacturer? Nope.

The plain fact is that most kite manufacturers know exactly what they're talking about when they say "recommended wind speed 8-10mph." Sure you can drive it faster, but at that point the responsibility becomes that of the pilot. The kite, in most cases will fly, and again, in most cases ... well. But it won't necessarily (and won't a lot less as the wind speed goes further up) survive that spectacular, unplanned ground bash that folks have a nasty habit of perpetrating in a high wind situation. No way.

The better the flier, the better chance of avoiding the crash. But even that theory breaks down occasionally. Don't believe it? Ask some of them at the next fly. But don't verbally beat-up on the guy who made the thing or sold it to you ... unless it was one of those "you can fly this kite in a hurricane," salespeople. Those who make absurd pitches like that shouldn't be in the business, anyway. The manufacturer, in a lot of cases has designed the spars to give way under great amounts of pressure like those encountered in high wind situations. The reason? Simple ... it's a lot less costly to replace a broken spar for a couple of bucks than a torn sail for, generally, about \$40. Look, these guys aren't in business to make kites that break. They're in business to make money from increased sales. And when a kite doesn't hold up, that means that the word will get around and the sales stand a good chance of tailing off a bit. The manufacturers are on our side, not on that of planned product destruction.

The best solution? Fly the kite that's both right for the wind and commensurate with the ability of the person doing the flying ... that way no one and nothing gets hurt.

But suppose you take that ultralight out in those bigger than recommended winds and beat the odds ... you're probably getting a smug look on your face as these words file past your eyes. Consider this: most light-wind designed products are made of very light materials ... in most cases, the least obvious one is the sail. Don't be real surprised if next time the wind is down where it should be for these bantamweights, yours doesn't perform quite as well as it used to. The lightweight composition of these sails gets stretched out of shape more easily than conventional materials and the actual price paid for high wind usage may not actually surface until later.

Again, before exercising your kites in the sky, exercise your mind on the ground and that new light-wind kite will be around for a good long time to come.

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ON THE COVER: Robbie Sugarman solo flying in the Innovative — West Coast '88.



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Letters . . .

Dear SKQ,

We got your first issue at the Washington State International Kite Fly. What a great magazine! And just in time to get a few autographed pictures, i.e., Sue Taft. Looking forward to your next issue.

Sincerely,

**Greg and Sue Clark
Naches, WA**

Dear SKQ,

Your mag is terrific! Enclosed is a money order for a subscription. Are you going to have competition tapes available down the road? How about a poster of Sue from your 1st issue! The kite reviews are the best yet, too!!

**Wayne Mastel
Lincoln, ND**

Thanks for the great comments, Wayne. The competition tape idea is interesting ... we'd like to hear more about what you'd like to see! We talked to Sue about the poster idea ... negotiations are still "up in the air."

Dear SKQ,

Love your magazine! Picked up my copy at Jim and Kay Buesing's Long Beach Kites, Long Beach, Washington. We don't get much stunt quality air here in Idaho, so we're depending on you for much more than pleasant reading. How about some in-depth info on quad-line rigging? Lee Sedgwick was the ONLY pilot flying on quads at the WIKF in Long Beach.

**David Bogie
Kite Group of Boise, ID**

Thanks, Dave! I had the pleasure of trying some of those Idaho breezes on the way back from the West Coast Nationals ... didn't think that they were all THAT bad! Lee (who is famous for maybe never having written a real-life letter but using tapes instead) is going to inform us on solo flying this issue but take heart ... the quads are coming! Best regards to the rest of the kite group!

Dear SKQ,

Add my name to your subscription list — the premier issue is great — excellent photos, informative articles — I agree with your stand regarding the organization of a stunt kite association as a separate group from AKA — as popular as stunt kites have and will continue to be — it's a natural progression — it will be an interesting AKA convention in Chicago in October. Perhaps we'll be seeing the "groundwork" for the ideas evolve into something that will benefit for the future American Stunt Kiting Organization.

Keep it up!

**Lee Toy
Scottsdale, AZ**

It was a pleasure to see you again in the Windy City, Lee! Developments there are covered in the Stunter's News section and in the Windy City write-up. You'll also want to check out the nifty banners shown in the West Coast article ... nice workmanship!

Dear SKQ,

I love your new magazine ... it's great. I've always wanted a kite magazine about just stunt kites. I like your stunt kite reviews. I also liked your stunt diary and your selection of rumors. I also liked Al's Short Lines. I guess I just liked the whole magazine!

Your fellow stunt kite flier,
Matt Weiden

Hey, Matt! It's always great to hear from a fellow Michigander. Glad you liked the first issue. We missed seeing you in Chicago. (Matt is one of the younger, and newer members of the Experienced class. After winning the Novice class at the Mackinaw City, MI, fly this summer, he's decided to make the jump up.) Hope that issue two meets with your expectations!

SKQ,

Good for you, good for us. SKQ is just what I am looking for in a kite magazine. I am interested in all areas of kiting, but dual lines is where it's at for me. Being able to read current articles that deal specifically with this area of kiting is great. Your new product selection is a good idea, but too glossy for me. Get out of the middle of the road, let's hear about good points and bad points, not redeeming features. Anyway, I've read the first issue cover to cover and look forward to the next issue.

Good job,

**Henry Meacham, Tako Kichi
Lopez Is., WA**

I appreciate the comments, Henry! Thanks for keeping me on my toes! I guess that I was starting to sound like my old, maternal grandmother ("If you can't say something nice ..."). I'll be happy to slide off to one side of the center line as soon as someone sends me a kite that doesn't belong there!

SKQ,

Congratulations on a great first issue. Especially liked the numerous tips and practical advice — and the flight tests. Nothing like them in any other publication. I appreciate reading honest evaluations of products.

I hope that you plan to cover single-line stunt kites, too. Fighter kites are the original stunters, and the same new technologies that have revolutionized two-line kiting have done the same for the old Asian designs. They've always been challenging to fly and satisfying in a way that no other kite is, but now they're also durable and flyable in a wider range of winds. Lots of us who fly fighters also fly two-line stunters because they complement each other (if it's over 20, up goes my Flexi or Skydart). For folks who live where winds are often too light for two-

Letters Continued . . .

line buzz-bombs, a fighter or two in the trunk of the car can be just the thing.

Keep up the great work,
Ernest Murphy
Honolulu, HI

How about it, folks? I think that Ernest has a real good point here ... after all, the fighters had the controllable field, first. Let's put it to a poll ... let us know what you think, and we'll act accordingly!

SKQ

Gentlefolk:

Zowie! I just got the first issue of SKQ in the mail yesterday and I am impressed. Yesterday morning at work was completely taken up with reading and re-reading the magazine from cover to cover, over and over. Your "massage" about the trade deficit notwithstanding, it's significant that stunting (what an ugly term!) has reached a size and significance where someone else feels they can make an attempt at publishing an honest-to-God magazine. ('ja realize that there's never been — to my knowledge — even a stunt kite newsletter before this?)

So much for the kudos; now for the nits. How about an advertiser's index, so when I think, "Where's the ad for Stanton Hobby?", I can find it easier?

No suggestion on what to replace them with, but after a while the "bun shots" (backsides) of fliers gets tiring. The photos in the ECSKC article are good in this regards — side and front shots mixed in with the rears.

This leads into the photos in general: the color ones are gorgeous, very nice composition in general and striking reproduction. The black-and-whites suffer greatly in comparison — most of them seem muddy. I don't know if this is because they are originally color, or the halftone screen is too fine, or if it's something else.

Being part of the ECSKC team, I was pleased with the article you wrote and the photos. Wow! However, I was disturbed that

there was no mention of the protest that was filed during the Innovative competition. After Phil Castillo had flown his performance, and during Lee Sedgwick's flight, Phil filed a protest regarding the use of multiple kites during a performance: the ECSKC Rules and Procedures booklet specifically states that a flier may not change kites during an event; it also says that for Innovative, anything goes. The Meet Coordinators ruled on the protest, disallowing it. Phil then wrote a petition that was signed by about 10 other fliers (I think) that restated the protest and submitted that to the coordinators. This, too, was disallowed. It's important that the warts in a meet be reported on as well as the pleasant things — if only to alert other organizers to a potential problem spot. Last year the ECSKC put the protest function into place, to isolate the judging staff from non-judging disturbances; it has worked, for which I am pleased, but does point up the need to continually revise and refine our rules and procedures.

It'd be nice for the next installment of "The Book of AI" if you'd include information about ordering the book.

I like the New Product Review section (hell, I like the whole damn magazine!). Please include the names of your testers (a la Kitelines), so we know who to blame — er, thank — and publish the sail area with the "Configuration" data. The side-by-side photos of the NoNaMe and 2200CC show almost the same kite; it's amazing who's "borrowing" whose design. SKQ will certainly point this up over the coming issues, if only by publishing photos of the products — maybe this will bring some accountability to the manufacturing side of stunting.

For the Stunt Library, why not ask the submitters to include rationales for their design decisions? For example, in the Ship's Bottle, why is it "no fair flying it backwards?" Why the extra

climb in the middle? You should also explicitly release (and require the release) of copyright on the figures if you intend that they be used in future competitions.

Well, that's the nits (seems like a lot, doesn't it!). But truthfully, I like SKQ a lot and am excited about the future. One of the problems stunt flying has had as it's grown is that "pockets" or cliques form, and information and techniques don't seem to leave the areas.

A national magazine has the potential to bring both cohesion to the stunt flying community (but never "one happy family" — how white breadish!) and diversification of its ideas. Ideas. That's what it's about right now, and SKQ can spread those around.

Why not national rankings? You have the power to do it (if maybe not the hardware and software); obviously you'll know most — if not all — of the results of competitions, and you have the computers (I think; it looks like SKQ is laser printed). Some ranking system, like American Kite's, could be employed. A published national ranking may be the kick needed to force the formation of a national organization. Better watch out or you'll get the job!

I'm excited! I've never written a letter like this to a magazine before, so you can be sure you've struck a chord. I have edited a newsletter before, and write some lectures for my work, so I have a basic (!) idea of what goes into the publication of something like SKQ; thanks for the effort.

Keep going! I'm already in withdrawal, waiting for the next issue.

Good Winds!

Mike Carroll
Skillman, NJ

Zounds! Now this is a letter! And some darned good ideas, too. Wish I'd thought of them first! O.K. let's see, advertisers' index on page 12, check.

The infamous "bun shots" ... while some of the shots are admittedly tighter than others, by and large, we agree. Solo flying and Innovative routines are able to help us get a new "perspective" on the situation. We'll certainly try to put more of the best side forward in future issues.

We were, fortunately, able to pass along the nit on the black and white photos to a third-party lab. Profuse apologies and all that, we found them below standard as well but with the press of deadlines, weren't able to totally rectify the situation. Hope that this issue's renditions will serve as better examples!

I couldn't agree more about the protest problem. We were never informed of it in an official capacity by either the meet organizers or the protesting parties. We would have, and will be happy to report this type of situation should there be repeats at future events. After all, the ultimate benefactors of these protests are both the fliers and the organizing bodies. To see the situation fairly reported as well as dealt with, lends credibility to both sides of the dispute.

Next, the Book of Al. Ordering information is listed with this issue's installment which, incidentally, has turned into a three-part series instead of a two-part article. Copies will soon be available from SKQ.

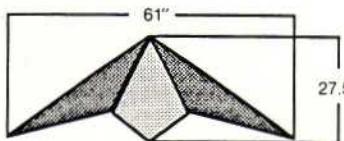
Product tests are an area that is my personal favorite ... let's face facts, I'm a kite junkie. Future tests will bear the initials of the person responsible for the review. In general, either myself, or Al Hargus does the testing. Occasionally, we are in the position to be able to take a kite to an open field. (In many cases, the models tested are released to us in advance of formal production and are flown on a secured field.) In those cases, they may well be flown by several fliers of varying skill levels at which point we will generally include that note in the test write-up.

Another good idea as far as the rationale behind the various figures ... only problem being, that in many cases, there isn't one ... other than the figure presents a challenge to the flier. Where a rationale is provided by the submitter, we will be happy to include it in the description. As far as we're concerned, no release is required for use of the figures in competitions (in fact, we'd be right proud to see them used!).

National rankings are not a subject to which we are opposed ... the thrust here is to suggest the formation of a body from which they should come. That has and is being dealt with, in part, by the AKA. We feel that it is our duty to fairly report the news of this fascinating sport. A good magazine will even go so far as to suggest ways in which the activity may, at the discretion of its participants, be improved. It should act as a forum for those participants. It should not, however, be involved in the process of creating the news which it is honor-bound to report other than, perhaps the lending of its sponsorship.

Thanks, Mike, for the letter! And good winds to you as well!

GOT SOMETHING THAT YOU'D LIKE TO SAY? SOMETHING TO GET OFF YOUR MIND? Let us give you a hand! SKQ welcomes all letters of a salient nature pertaining to the sport of stunt kite flying. Comments on SKQ are also solicited; we'd like to know what we're doing right and wrong as well. Roses will be displayed tastefully ... onions will be used to make soup.

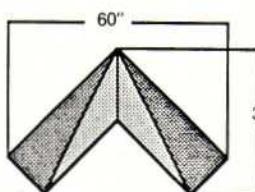
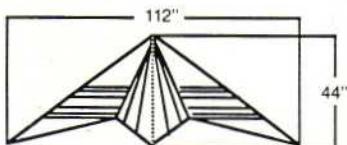


SKY DART

The ACTION KITE SKY DART receives rave reviews wherever it goes. This kite is a real winner! Its high-speed and extremely sharp turning ability should make this kite your choice for competition.

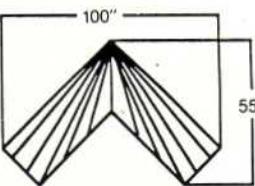
SUPER SKY DART

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The ACTION 8.2 — imitated but never duplicated. This high-performance, little 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.

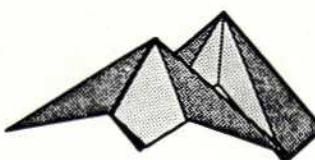


PHOENIX 20

Why mess with perfection? This mainstay of our company has been in production for almost five years now and still going strong. This award winning kite is a real performer in light to moderate winds. Its large size and bold colors in the sky are a sight to behold.

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

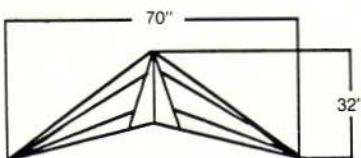


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New!

NoNaMe



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SHORT LINES

by
Al Hargus III

TRAINS, AND BOATS, AND PLANES

In every stunt kite flier's career, they fly (or at least try to fly) a stack or train of stunt kites. More often than not, the train lines break or the connectors and clips used come apart. I'd like to offer a few short lines from two of the best train kite fliers I know.

FROM RAY MERRY ON STACKING 'FOILS

Flexifoils can be linked together by the use of equal length lines with loops tied to each end. Simply pass the loop through the ring on each end and larkshead to the tip of the spar. This method works quite well for up to four six-foot 'foils (Ray says to make the lines 2-3 ft. for the Hot Shot 4ft., 4 ft. for the Stacker six footer and 6ft. for the Super ten footer).

After a certain number of 'foils and in higher winds there is a danger of breaking train lines at the knots or even shearing the tips of the spars off the lower kites in the stack because of the extreme forces at this point.

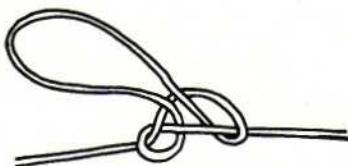
One method to prevent line breakage is to make a continuous set of train lines. Just measure a length of line and form a bow-line loop for the top kite. (See fig. #1) and in-line loops for each 'foil (See fig. #2).

1

Bowline Loop



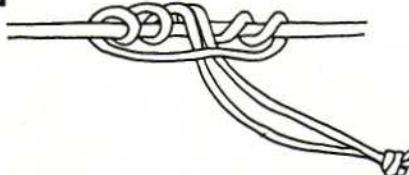
2 In-Line Loop



Take care to make each loop equal size, Ray says about 2" and the distance between the loops should also be equal. These prepared lines can be attached to the kites in the usual manner.

Another method made famous by the world's record "Chicago Hook and Ladder" stunt kite train (85 six foot Flexifoils) is to measure two lengths of line and mark the distance between kites on the line. Then tie a smaller line directly to the main train line. (CSL used a simple overhand knot and applied a drop of super glue to secure the knot.) Attach this smaller line to the kite in the normal manner. Main stress is taken up by the continuous line and none is applied to each individual kite. (CSL tried to fly 15 6ft. 'foils with this method. The lead kite was stock. Unfortunately the 4000# test flying lines broke, no loops broke nor were any kites damaged.)

3



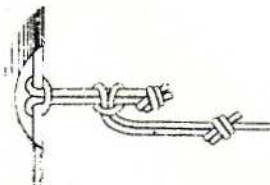
FROM BILL BAKER ON RIGGING PETER POWELL STUNT KITE TRAINS

Make link lines with loops at each end (Similar to the 'foil train

lines). Make sure that the lines are exactly the same length. Make and fit small loops by wrapping around the frame of the kite and pulling the knotted end through the loop. Position in the proper place and tape into position (See fig. #3).

With your fingers, double loop the noose on the end of the link line (See fig. #4)

4



Slip the noose of the link line over the knotted loop attached to the kite frame and pull tight. (Note: To disconnect, just pull back on the double loop.) See fig. #5.

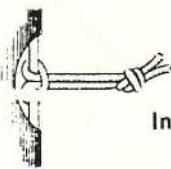
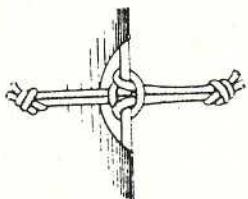
5



Slide up to the stopper knot. Repeat with all lines. Connect lead bridles in the same way. You now have a quick, easy and very strong link line system for your Peter Powell stunt kites. Bill Baker recommends that the link lines for 4ft. be 62" and link lines for 3ft. be 30". (Note: This system can be used for any framed stunt kite. Lee Sedgwick uses it to stack his Spectrum Darts.)

Several general notes that I'd like to add about stacking stunt kites. When you make up the train lines using either of the described methods, remember that the knots are the weakest points. (They reduce the line strength by 35-40%). So make those lines strong. Ray Merry says at least 50# test per kite in the stack (I.E., 6 foot 'foils = 300# test train lines). Bill recommends at least 25# test for each kite in the stack.

Don't forget too that the pull is not only exerted on the train lines, but on the pilot as well. (Might be to your advantage to read the article on Power flying by Lee Sedgwick in SKQ #1.) Also stacks

Last or Back Kite**Intermediate or Lead Kite**

and trains will fly slower than a single kite, so be prepared to deal with that power for longer periods of time. (A stack can slow your kite down for use in Musical kite ballet, to a slower piece of music, too!)

So, Gang, the next time you want greater pulling power or want to create an aerial spectacle, remember Trains (I fibbed about the boats and planes in the title!!)

Many thanks to Ray Merry of Flexifoil Power Kites and Bill Baker of Peter Powell Stunt Kites for their advice and permission to use the diagrams in this article.

Don't forget, if you have a Short Line, interesting or informative that you want to share, send it to me, Al Hargus % SKQ.

Thanks and Good Winds to you all, and may you never suffer the curse of the million wraps.

John McDowell Dies at 57

On October 18, Kitty Hawk Kites lost a very endeared friend and associate, John McDowell. John, a young 57, was out enjoying windsurfing when we believe he suffered from heart failure and collapsed.

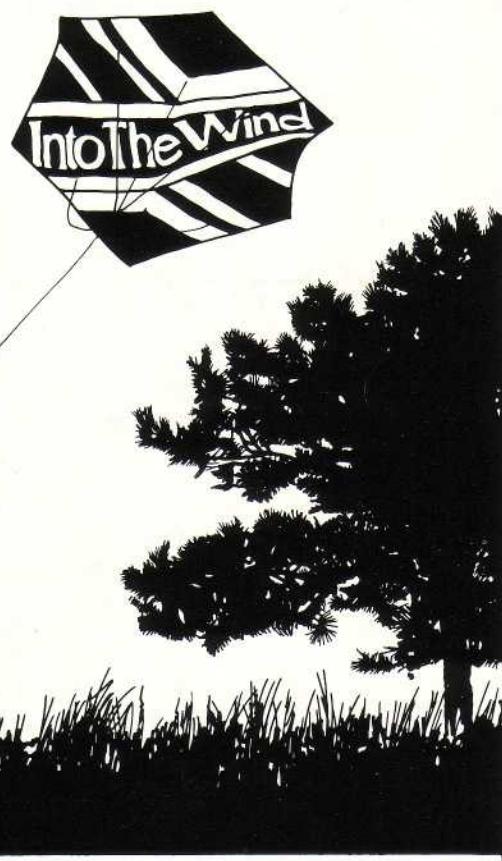
John had a penchant for windsports. He regularly participated in windsurfing, hang gliding, and his true love, kite flying. His enthusiasm for kite flying is what brought John to us three years ago. We discovered him out on Jockey's Ridge flying a train of hyperkites and hired him on the spot to manage our growing kite store.

Under John's guidance, Kitty Hawk Kites prospered and expanded. John, a retired chemist, was a great planner and analyst, in addition to being a wonderful kite enthusiast. Our Nags Head store was enlarged and we opened two more stores in Duck, N.C., and Norfolk, Va. John was very instrumental in supporting the growing kite industry by his efforts and enthusiasm.

John Robert McDowell, as an exemplary example that age has no bearing on what one can accomplish. Active in kite-flying, hang gliding, and windsurfing, no challenge was too large for John, and these sports were very endeared by him. We are fortunate to have known John.

Sincerely,
John M. Harris
President
Kitty Hawk Kites, Inc.

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The Stunters' News

WINDWHEEL MAKERS OBSERVE GAMES

Henry Ringer is 93 years old, and a craftsman of renown in Canton, Ohio. His "Wind Wheels" power carved creatures and objects ranging from a flying Nun to a pair of stunt kites. Henry had never seen stunt kites in action until he was brought, along with his crafting partner Bill Ferree, to the Cleveland Flexi-Fool competition, but his expertise had already won OSEK a First Place trophy for a ground display at the Sixth Annual Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum Kite Festival.

Henry began his intricately designed gearworks systems many years ago, but developed the technique to operate with windwheels just seven years ago, after his wife passed away. Needing a hobby to fill some empty time, his friend Bill Ferree suggested the wonderful wood charmers. Henry says Bill challenges him. Beginning with such moving items as antique autos, hunters and critters being hunted, a model of a working steam engine, and such, he branched out to do custom ideas for others. The largest windwheel he has produced is a covered bridge with carpenters sawing and pounding. It weighs 300 pounds.

The stunt kite windwheel was built at the request of Larry Loutzenheiser, whose persona is the figure flying the kites on the platform. Bill carved Larry, Larry carved the kites, and Henry did the wheel, platform and gearing. It made its first appearance in Canton for the pleasure of folks who turned out to watch a kite demonstration and hot air balloon show at the Football Hall of Fame.



FLEXI'S HAVE THEIR DAY IN CLEVELAND

Four times more competitors and ten times more fun was achieved on September 11th in Cleveland for the 2nd Annual Flexi-Fool & Dale's Birthday Party Competition. Dan Buxton and Dale Shirer put together a day of flying and food that sparked the enthusiasm of some folks who had never thrilled at the pull of a Flexi before, and one who had never held a pair of stunt kite handles in her life!

The Flexis used were Dan's own — a black six-footer and a yellow 10 footer. Competitors had a choice for the first event, but all used the six foot kite for all the other events. By providing the same kite, line and handles for everybody, it was felt that all contenders had an equal chance at

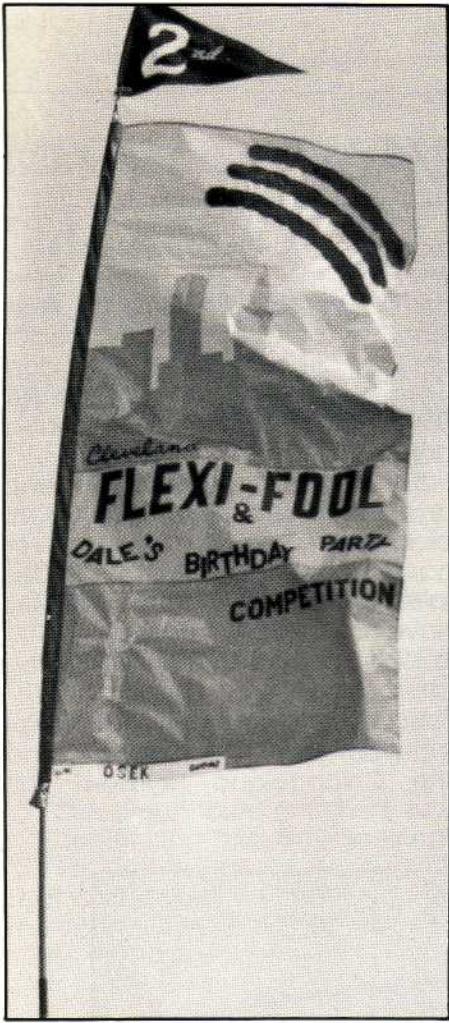
the prizes, given variables in skill, luck and that always present fickle wind stuff.

Anthony Somerville was a clear winner in the overall points system devised for the games. In the Birthday Party Pot-Luck event, Glenna Mattiuz's bean casserole cleaned the bowl. Free-fliers on static lines filled the remaining park skies, some tied to trees and posts so their owners could compete in the Flexi events.

Three games comprised the full competition:

1. Knock the Pumpkin Off the Pole

Poor pole! The plastic pumpkin survived the t-ball effort by the 17 contenders, with Anthony and Ted Karl whacking the target 12 times for a lead in the games.



2. Blind Man Dive

or, so you think you know where the ground is. Just because one had the chance to do it once with eyes-on capability, judging how close you are to the ground before pulling up again was a difficult task for most. Steve Wexberg singed the worms, however for the win in this event. Most others averaged 10 to 35 feet from the ground before pulling out of the dive. Nobody crashed!

3. Cleveland Slide

(no relation to the Ohio right turn) Slipping the six-foot Flexi under the 16 foot high line and whipping it out again without hitting the end poles was the challenger of the day for the novices and the deciding factor for the top contenders. A fickle wind blew with variable intensity, providing an "x" factor to deal with (usually pulling the kite higher than the line). Getting the range and sweep back and forth lacked the windshield wiper consistency one needed to rack up points, but Anthony cleaned up a 13 point total for this event.

Prize donors included the Kite Kompany, Stunt Kite Quarterly, Shanti Kite Lines, Larry Flandera, and numberless members of OSEK who pitched coins into a pot to make up the various 37 cents and other odd cash prizes given out. Anyone interested in knowing how many birthdays Dale Shirer has had can call him at (216) 333-5425, or they can plan to attend the THIRD annual Flexi event next September ... make that the second Sunday.

FINAL RESULTS

1st Place: Anthony Somerville, a 4' glow-in-dark Flexi with line and handles. (Donated by Kite Kompany)

2nd Place: Tom Schickler, stunt line and handles (donated by Shanti Kite Lines)

3rd Place: Steve Wexberg, stained glass Flexi (donated by

Robert Schroyer)

4th Place: Brian Fyfe, Stunt Kite Quarterly subscription (donated by SKQ)

5th Place: Ted Karle, same as 4th (donated by SKQ)

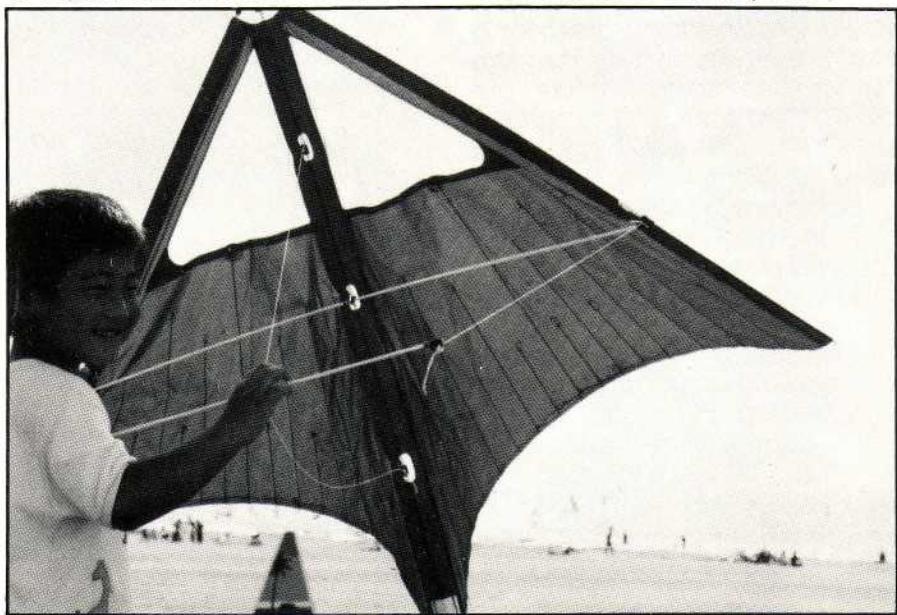
6th Place: Robert Schroyer, same as 4th (donated by SKQ)

7th Place: "Mr. X" (Pete Di Giacomo); 8th Place, Paul Turner; 9th Place, Matt Porter; 10th Place, "Lanky Lou" (Esther Chaney); 11th Place, Bruce Somerville; 12th Place, Bill Kessel; 13th Place, George Wilcox; 14th Place, "Mona Lisa" (Mona Kessel); 15th Place, Harry Gregory (winner of the 1st Annual Flexi event ... didn't practice this year!); 16th Place, "LC Shorebird"; and last in line (she didn't compete in all three events) the Mad Babuska Bomber (otherwise known as Madame Dictator for Life Connie Pederson).

World Kite Museum ANNOUNCES LOGO COMPETITION

The recently formed World Kite Museum and Hall of Fame in Long Beach, Washington, has announced that they will be conducting a competition to design their logo. Those with a bent toward creative and artistic endeavors may express themselves by designing an official symbol for the organization which will appear

at all Society affiliated functions, and on all Society correspondence. Those interested in a list of competition rules and guidelines should write to: Logo Contest Committee, World Kite Museum and Hall of Fame, P.O. Box 964, Long Beach, Washington 98631. The contest closing date is December 31 of this year.



Look interesting? The kite was built by Masato Horikiri and is named LE DELTAFOIL from original plans taken from Le Nouveau Cervoliste Belge, no. 24, dated Mai-Juin, 1986. The rods used are from the Skynasaur Aerobat. Photo taken on Kamakura Beach, Japan, shows Ryoota Horikiri. Original design for the kite is by Rene Wautier.

Photo by Masato Horikiri

"Best non-event of year"

MONSOON REIGNS AT MONTEREY VINEYARD'S KITE FESTIVAL

Saturday, July 16 . . . it seemed like a good day for a kite fly. We were in Schaumburg, Ill., at the famous Ned Brown Woods, one of the favored spots for activities of the Chicagoland Skyliners. The event on this date was the Monterey Vineyard Kite Festival. The sky was significantly overcast, but what the heck, there were some real nice breezes coming in from the west and there was plenty of time for free flying before the "official" opening ceremony at noon. We stuners were allowed demonstration time later in the day and the morning appeared a good time to get in a little practice.

The event organizers, Kite Caravan and Monterey Vineyard, were busying themselves setting up speaker systems and a couple of large striped tents for the afternoon's festivities. Lee Toy placed a number of beautiful banners while Kathy Goodwind and Cherie McFadden were putting their organizational abilities to good use. The Monterey Vineyard folks begin unloading enough wine and assorted goodies to float, at least, a PT boat and feed the crew for a week. It even appeared that the weather was going to turn out nicely ... for a while.

Let's see ... a few things WERE gotten out of the way ... the opening ceremony replete with red, white, and blue kites in the air and appropriate music for the occasion was quite patriotic. The large kites were spectacular, particularly a huge windsock in the shape of (what else?) a champagne bottle. Things were going along, in fact, rather smoothly and then ... "The sky is falling! The sky is falling!"

And fall it did! For the duration of the afternoon the festival was ravaged by a downpour of biblical proportions. Well, what do all good kitefliers do when it starts to rain? They go home, right? Not this group ... read on.

Putting into practice the old adage that when life gives you lemons, you make lemonade, this

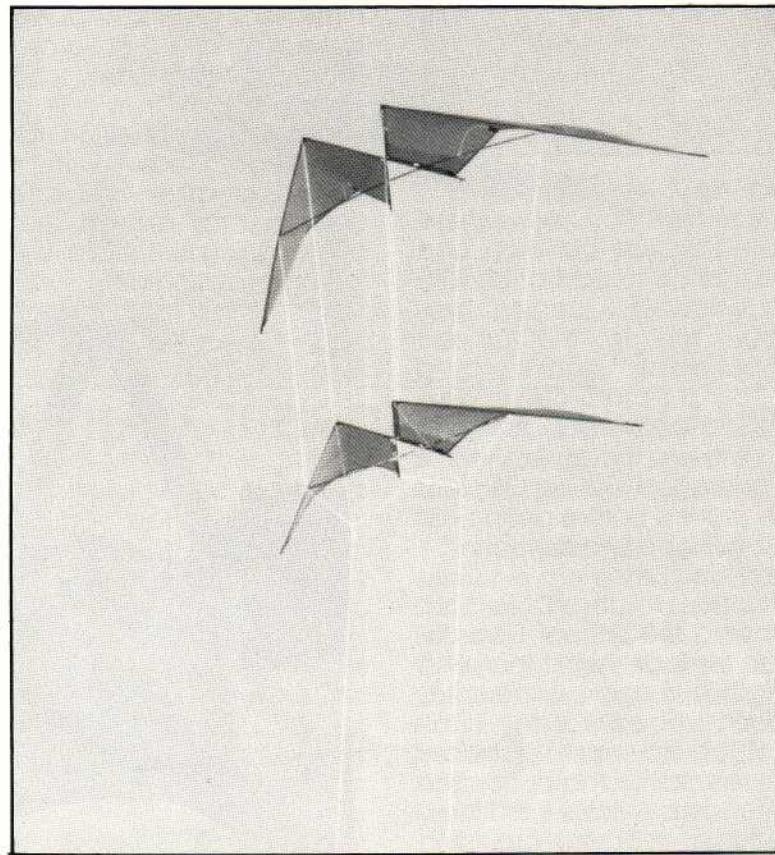
bunch of stalwarts took to the situation like, well ... ducks to water. Credit must be given to the organizers of this event. It takes an extraordinary combination of folks to turn a situation like a (completely) rained-out kite festival into a memorable experience. We seem to recall a line from the past ... "the wind blew, and the drinks flew, and it rained for forty days and forty nights..."

Now, we'd never been to an honest-to-gosh, wine-and-kite party, so we didn't know how to react right off, but some of these folks were apparently old hands at this. Friendships were both made and renewed. Kites, designs for kites, performances with kites, stories about kites, all mixed quite

nicely with discussions of piquancy, the nose of the wine being tasted, color, texture, and lengthy roundtable talks about varietals. As it turns out, kites and wine go very nicely together. We like Chardonnay and Super Darts, personally.

It was an afternoon well spent, and, without the monsoon, probably one that would never have happened. A lot of those rules discussions would probably have wound up being handled in a stuffy annual meeting or some other equally unpleasant setting.

Hats off to the Monterey Vineyard and Kite Caravan and the Chicagoland Skyliners! This was easily the best "non-event" of the year!



Another new kite! Previewed at Long Beach during the Washington State International Kite Festival, this one's called the Cyborg. The word means "half-alive" and, according to Mike Szerling of Cal Skate and Sport, who will make the kite available, that's exactly what it behaves like in the air. The Cyborg will be available in 4, 6, and 8 foot sizes ... sails are being produced by Action Kite of San Diego.

SKQ photo by Dave Gomberg

New high at 253

MIX McGRAW STACKS UP BACK-TO-BACK WORLD RECORDS

Mix McGraw's love affair with very large stacks started back in 1982 when he flew a group of 52 Rainbows for what was then a world's record. Steve Edieken, then president of Rainbow Kites was of the opinion that it couldn't be done. We know now what, perhaps, was not known back then ... Mix is a very determined individual.

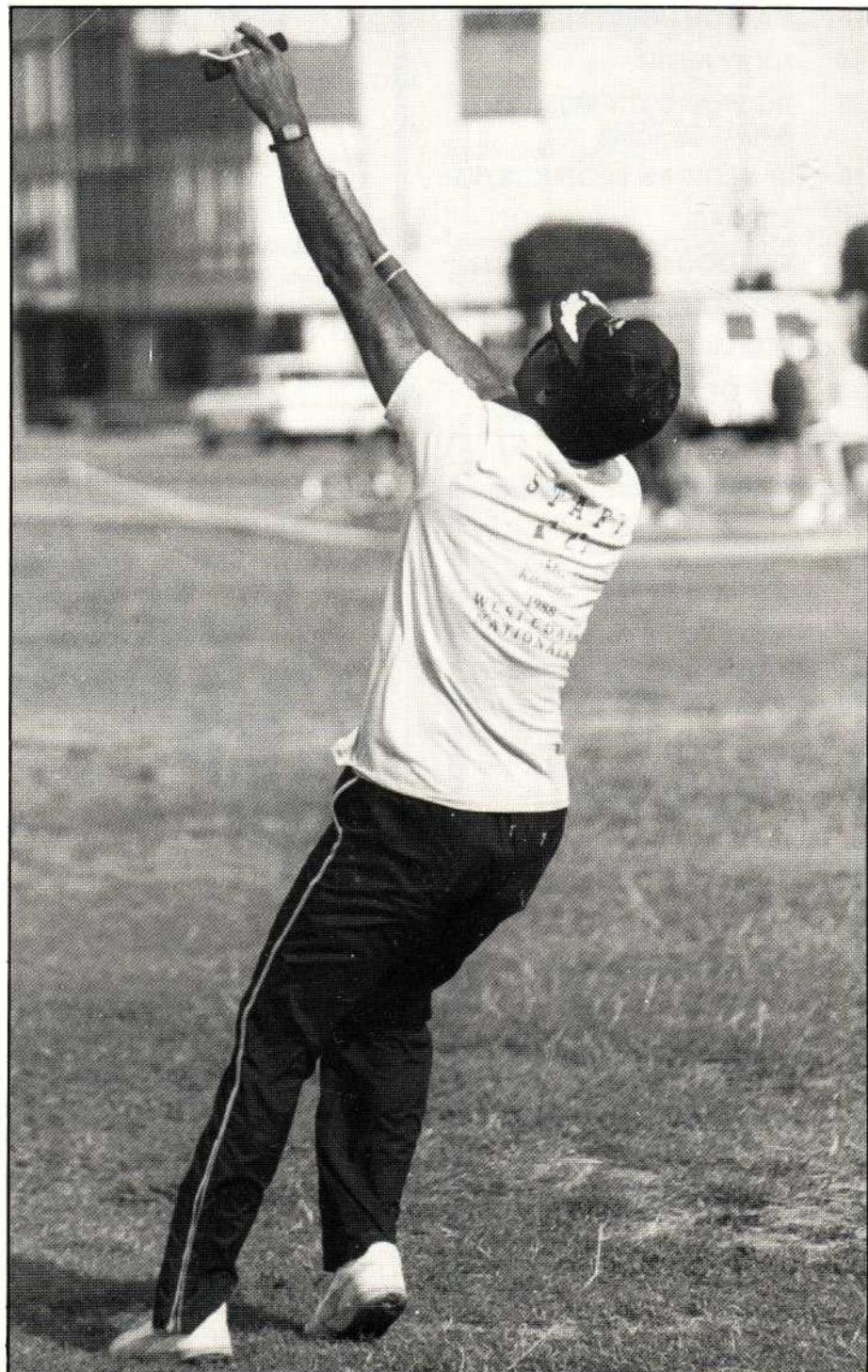
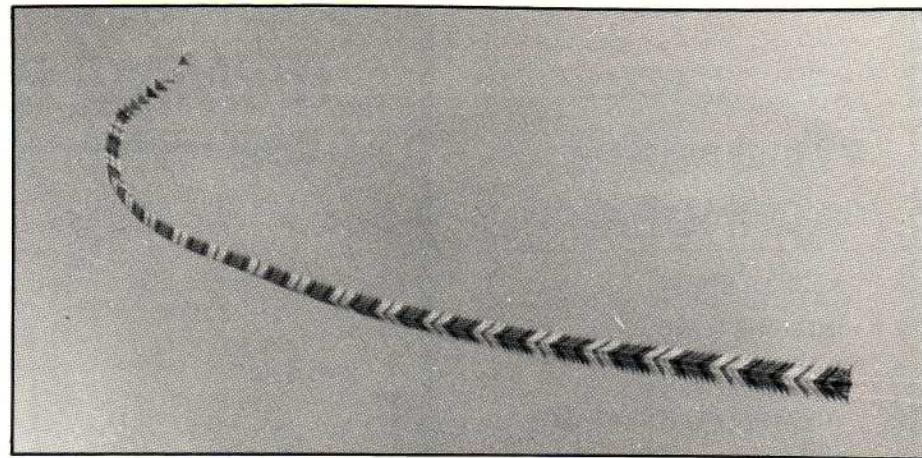
"You've got to have confidence in yourself and faith in your kites," Mix said when interviewed by SKQ. That confidence showed up twice this year: once at the West Coast Nationals when he set a new world's record flying a stack of 224 HyperKites that were custom-built by Randy Tom, and again in Ocean City, Maryland, where, on October 8th, Mix broke his own world's record by flying 253.

"After 150, the biggest problem with these large stacks is the 'snaking,'" Mix explained. "This particular bunch had initial problems with always turning to the left." The problems were obviously solved by the time San Francisco rolled around as Mix made it look easy for the excited crowd. The secret is smooth flying and dealing with all possible circumstances before they happen, according to the world's record holder.

Both stacks were flown on 500lb. Spectra line with matching bridles and link lines and were flown after a month or two to get the stacks set up properly. What's next ... 300? No word yet, but we know that Mix is thinking about it!

Mix makes it look easy ... 224 for his first record of the summer. West Coast Nationals '88.

SKQ Photos by Cris Batdorff





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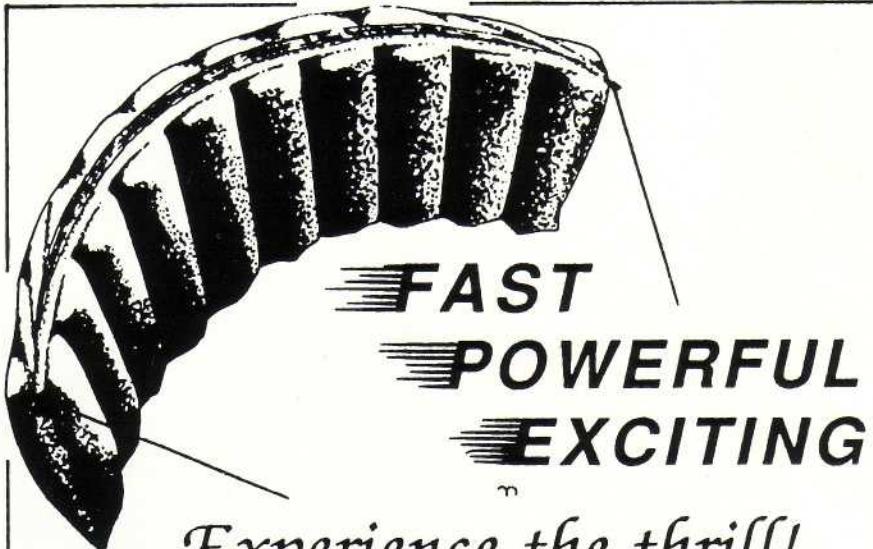
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RESULTS OF MIDWEST NOVICE PRECISION STUNT KITE COMPETITIONS - FALL 1988

(NOTE: The following report on stunt kite competitions took place over a period of four weeks in Region #6&7 of the American Kitefliers Association. The competitions were run in accordance with current National Stunt kite procedure and the 1988 A.K.A. National Competition rules. Four compulsories were flown with a two-minute free style. The events were coordinated by John Karel and Al Hargus. With sponsorship by the Chicagoland Sky Liners, The Central Ohio Kite Association, and the Kite Society of Wisconsin. There were five judges at each event and the scores were calculated according to national procedure. Over fifty novice and experienced stunt kite fliers participated in these events. As a result of these contests, the beginning stunt kite fliers of the Midwest gained much needed experience in the methods, skill, art and fun of stunt kite competitions.)

Novice Precision Stunt kite competitions - Schaumburg, Il. Aug. 27, 1988

JUDGES: Eric and Dorothy Wolff, Jim Miller, Cris Batdorff, and Frank Fieseler

Field Director: John Karel

Pit Boss: Denis Powers

Novice Class (240 possible)

1st Place - Dave Molly; Schaumburg, Il.	176 points
2nd Place - Rick DeYoung; Lynwood, Il.	161 points
3rd Place - Randy Schmidt; Milwaukee, Wi.	155 points

Dayton Precision Stunt kite competitions - Dayton, Ohio Sept. 4, 1988

JUDGES: Fred Bell, Bruce Jarve, Pam Holbrook, Dave Budress and Phil Osgood

Field Director: Al Hargus

Pit Boss: Steve Webber

Novice Class (210 possible)

1st Place - Gary Maynard; Detroit, Mi.	157 points
2nd Place - Mike Steele; Chicago, Il.	140 points
3rd Place - Rich Bashore; Lexington, Ky.	130 points

Experienced Class (210 possible)

1st Place - Duane Deardorff; Chicago, Il.	177 points
2nd Place - Nate Williams; Detroit, Mi.	166 points
3rd Place - Brian Keating; Columbus, Ohio	166 points

Mots Festival Stunt kite competitions - Milwaukee, Wi. Sept. 17, 1988

Judges: John Karel, Vicky Nelson and Chuck McMillin

Field Director: Al Hargus

Pit Boss: Randy Schmidt, Steve Shapson

Novice Class (300 possible)

1st Place - Susan Mayer; Chicago, Il.	228 points
2nd Place - Phil Hudson; Wisconsin	227 points
3rd Place - Mike Steele; Aurora, Il.	222 points

The events were so popular with the contestants, judges, and events' coordinators, that a series of novice precision contests are already being planned for the 1989 flying season by the sponsoring kite clubs.

For further information on how to host a novice type precision stunt kite competition in your area, contact:

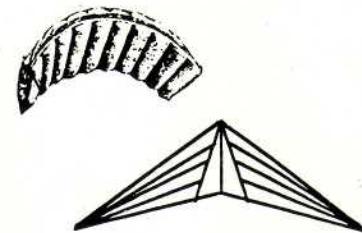
Mike Keating
1988 AKA Stunt Kite
Coordinator
2283 Bristol Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210
or
SKQ Associate Editor
Al Hargus % SKQ

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In this year of the Olympic Games, national point winners, and world's record competition, it seems somehow fitting that the stunt kite circuit has its "games" as well. This year's North Coast Stunt Kite Games, as always, a production of the Black Swamp Air Force and AKA Region 6 and 7, brought together some of the Midwest's finest fliers in what was highly touted as a weekend of fun and "nonserious" competition. Once again, the NCSKG lived up to their reputation ... and then some! In fact, the fliers had such a good time enjoying each other's company and the fantastic weather, that they forgot about the competitions all together!

This is not to say that there wasn't some excellent performances: there were, but they went largely unnoticed if you weren't really looking. Gary Counts of Erie, PA, ran through his entire ballet routine, Lee Sedgwick and Sue Taft, also of Erie, flew their pairs exhibition. Beautiful performances were turned in by Dan and Lorna Buxton, Eric Wolff flew a quad-line exhibition, and Pam Kirk polished a wonderful ballet routine. Jim Poy of Ontario, Canada, flew a stunning two-kite program. The list goes on and on ... Vern and Sue Balodis, Mike Dennis, Al Hargus, Pam Holbrook, Pete Dijacomo, Matt Porter ...

There was one highpoint at which a group of, if we are remembering correctly, eight fliers formed a "megateam" each flying a three-stack of Flexifoils.

by
Cris Batdorff

Team members consisted of, Dorothy and Eric Wolff, Dan and Lorna Buxton, Lee Sedgwick, Gary Counts, Al Hargus, and Cris Batdorff. Everything was going along fairly well until Captain Wolff said, "Let's get fancy," and proceeded to call a team starburst. Of course, each maneuver should have some sort of ending and this one was certainly not the noted exception ... what a mess! No one knew where to go, so we went to the ground ... some in more direct fashion than others.

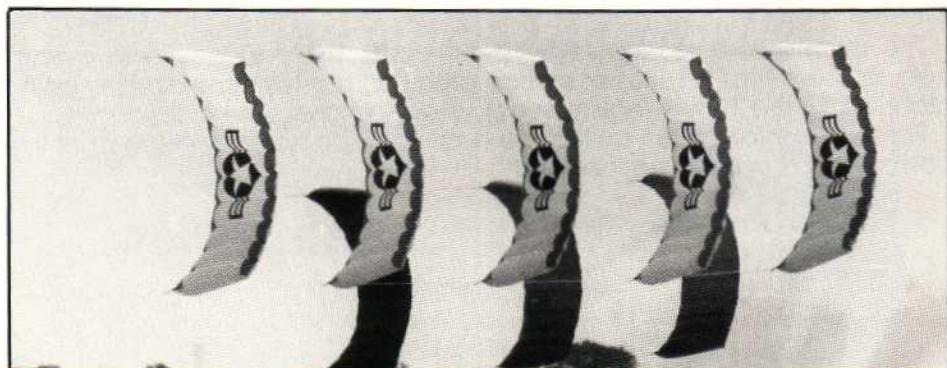
Prizes for the games were distributed on Sunday night by Al Hargus with the winners being determined by having their names

drawn from a hat. Donations ranged from Flexifoils to kazoos. Al commented that because of the ease of running the prize distribution in this fashion, he might consider suggesting it as a possible way to run the nationals in Chicago.

Those who were unable to attend this, the year's most laid-back event, are reminded to be there next year or Godzilla (of "Revenge" fame) may show up to visit his wrath upon the cities of the missing pilots. As usual, a hearty thanks to the Maumee Bay State Park and head Ranger Jim Brown for putting up with this year's batch of 55 Sky Hogs.



Ontario's Jim Poy ... two kites at once.



The start of the mega-team!

THE GAMES PEOPLE PLAY???

Don't like "competitions" but do like to test your skill with a stunt kite? Then the North Coast Stunt Kite Games are for you! Held annually at the beautiful Maumee Bay State Park just east of Toledo, Ohio, over the Fourth of July Weekend, these games are jointly hosted by the Black Swamp Air Force and AKA Regions 6 and 7. The North Coast Games represent the de-evolution of the kite festival at its peak (or, rather, its valley). Participants think up the contests, set the activities, and handle the scheduling. It's Sky Hog Heaven! Competitions are a designated dirty word. "We play games and have fun," state all the campers (*the NCSKG is a three day camp-out event as well*). And what sort of games do these people play? Well, here's a short compilation ...

PARTNERS EVENT: One partner holds the left handle and the other holds the right connected to the stunt kite of their choice. The team must do a loop to the left and to the right. They cannot touch and, furthermore, must remain at least five feet apart. (*Try this one in light winds while you both have to back up!*)

BLIND FLYING: The flier has to perform a set of maneuvers with a paper bag over their head. (*Great for curing hiccups, too!*)

LEMANS KITE RALLY: All of the participants line up at the starting point and at the "GO" signal, race to completely disassembled kites. (*Trilbys are a good choice for this event.*) Kites must be assembled, lines deployed, and left and right loops performed. The first one done is the winner. (*No assistance is allowed.*)

RELAY RACE: All fliers present are divided into two teams. On the "GO" signal, the first flier in each line launches a kite and does a loop left and a loop right. The handles are then passed on to the next person who repeats the maneuvers and so on until one team finishes the winner. (*This game was attempted in Toledo one year ago with NO WIND and ten-foot Flexifoils ... it turned into a ground race as well!*)

By Al Hargus.

LIMBO ELIMINATOR: This one was invented by Ray Merry who says: "Use a six-foot Flexi." Two 15-foot high poles are set up on the field 150 feet apart. Across the top a line is stretched in tightrope fashion. The object is to maneuver your kite under the line as many times as possible in three minutes. Participants stand under the tightrope. Anything goes ... unassisted relaunches, line hits, whatever, as long as you pass the kite under the line. (*World record for this event is 56 passes in three minutes by Eric Wolff of Chicago, but Ray Merry reminds us that Eric used as Spin-off.*)

GODZILLA'S REVENGE: (*At this point, I'd like to give a short history of the big, green, guy.*) The Kite Society of Wisconsin has had an event for years called "William Tell" in which a store mannequin was used with an apple on his head for the target. The Chicago

Sky Liners wanted to duplicate the event in Chicago but couldn't locate a dummy (*the store variety!*). Instead, they substituted an inflatable Godzilla ... he's the one on the right in the photo.

Participants may use a kite of their choice to knock an apple or a hat off the monster with either kite or line in a certain number of passes (*traditionally, ten*). If you knock Godzilla over, you lose that pass, and receive no points. Additionally, Godzilla gets very angry!

Several alternatives to the big, green guy can be used ... a cup on a stick, a balloon on a rod, a tripod with a tennis ball on top. Sounds easy, right? It is fun, but at 150 feet that apple looks like a marble! A word of caution ... give the helper a chance to replace the apple before you make your next pass or you may score a hit on the wrong dummy!

When people get together to fly stunt kites, any one of these games can be played. Or, better still, invent a game of your own and write to SKQ about it.

**AL HARGUS
and friend ...
(Al's the one
on the left)**



An estimated 100,000+ people turned out for this year's annual Washington State International Kite Festival held in Long Beach. The annual event, now in its seventh edition, has become one of the more popular events on the West Coast, this year drawing participants from as far away as Japan and England.

The WSIKF attempted, over the festival, to break their own Western Hemisphere record for 2,009 kites flown simultaneously, but the wind proved to be uncooperative and when the count was tallied the record was some 280 kites short.

In stunt-related activities, the WSIKF played host to the Northwest Regional Stunt Kite Competitions, which were held on August 19. Competition took place in three categories: novice, intermediate, and experienced. The experienced category is similar to the Open class in most national events with the exception that sponsored individual and teams were not included. This was done to retain the amateur status of the class. Professional fliers were not discouraged but invited to perform in demonstration events.

It was Michael Barclay winning the novice Precision from the field of 51 entrants. In the Intermediate,



Jason Loo came out on top. The Experienced title was captured by Darrin Skinner. In the Intermediate Ballet, Robert Riley walked away with the top spot with Darrin Skinner adding another win.

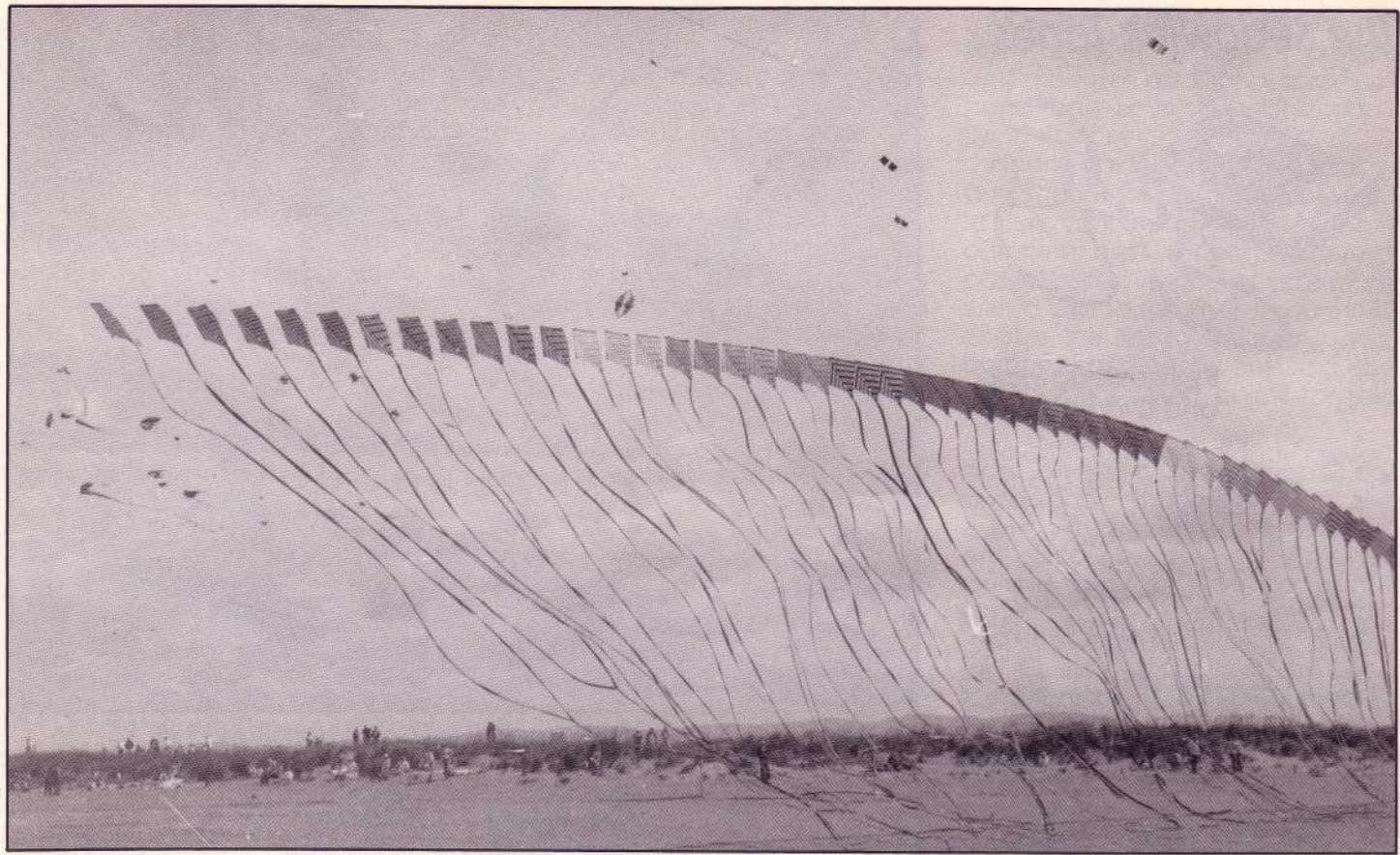
Intermediate Team Precision went to Ron and Missy Romero with the Stunts "R" Us team of Rod Yarger and Roy Willson taking both the Experienced Team Precision and Team Ballet titles.

Demonstration flying was done by the Peter Powell Team, Robert Loera, Sue Taft, Lee Sedgwick, and the Top of the Line Team.

One of the more interesting sights was watching Dixon and Jeremy Schwenk of Bellevue, Washington. They flew stacks of Flexifoils while tethered to an anchored ground pole. There was some tremendous amount of lift encountered!

Photos courtesy of David Gomberg ... below, More new kites ... The "Boomers," short for boomerang, from Canada. At right, a tremendous Trilby stack; below right, flying high on the Flexi "rig."





LONG BEACH NORTHWEST REGIONAL August 19, 1988

NOVICE INDIVIDUAL PRECISION (40 pts. possible)

1. Michael Barclay	36.17
2. Rod Guyette	34.73
3. Tom Daniels	33.30

INTERMEDIATE INDIVIDUAL PRECISION (40 pts. possible)

1. Jason Loo	35.27
2. Michael Allen	35.08
3. Don Giovanni	34.87

EXPERIENCED INDIVIDUAL PRECISION (40 pts. possible)

1. Darrin Skinner	34.13
2. Michael Pederson	32.37
3. Ron Romero	31.83

INTERMEDIATE INDIVIDUAL BALLET

1. Robert Riley	50.00
2. Maureen Christensen	49.00
3. Don Giovanni	48.33

EXPERIENCED INDIVIDUAL BALLET

1. Darrin Skinner	67.20
2. Rod Yarger	66.70
3. Roy Willson	51.00

INTERMEDIATE TEAM PRECISION (100 pts. possible)

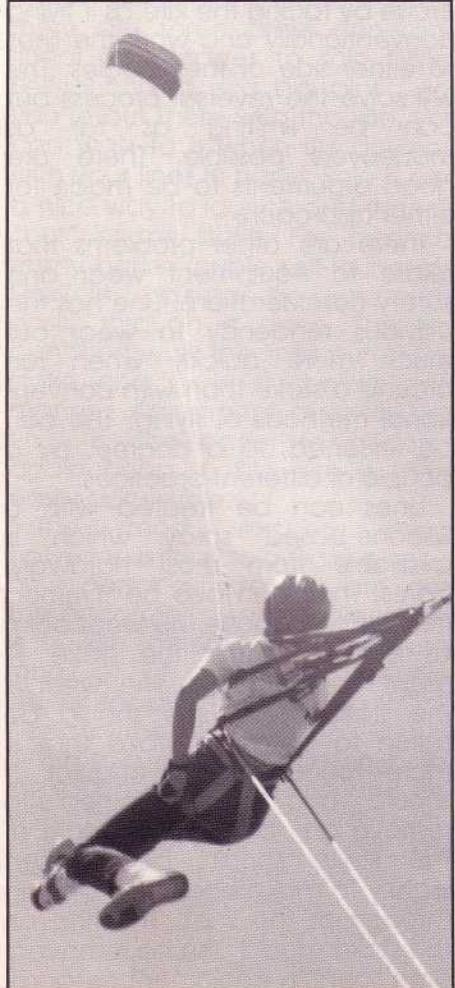
1. Ron & Missy Romero	73.30
2. Robin Ward/Jason Loo	70.00
3. Rod Guyette/Michael Barclay	50.00

EXPERIENCED TEAM PRECISION (100 pts. possible)

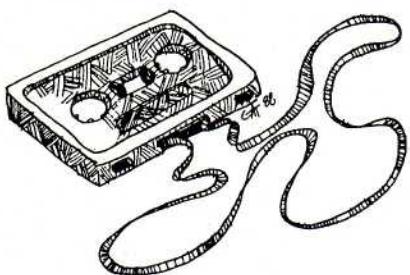
1. Stunts 'R' Us (Rod Yarger/Roy Willson)	90.00
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TEAM BALLET

1. Stunts 'R' Us	79.50
2. Jason & Jim Loo	65.00
3. Ron & Missy Romero	46.25



The Sedgwick Tapes



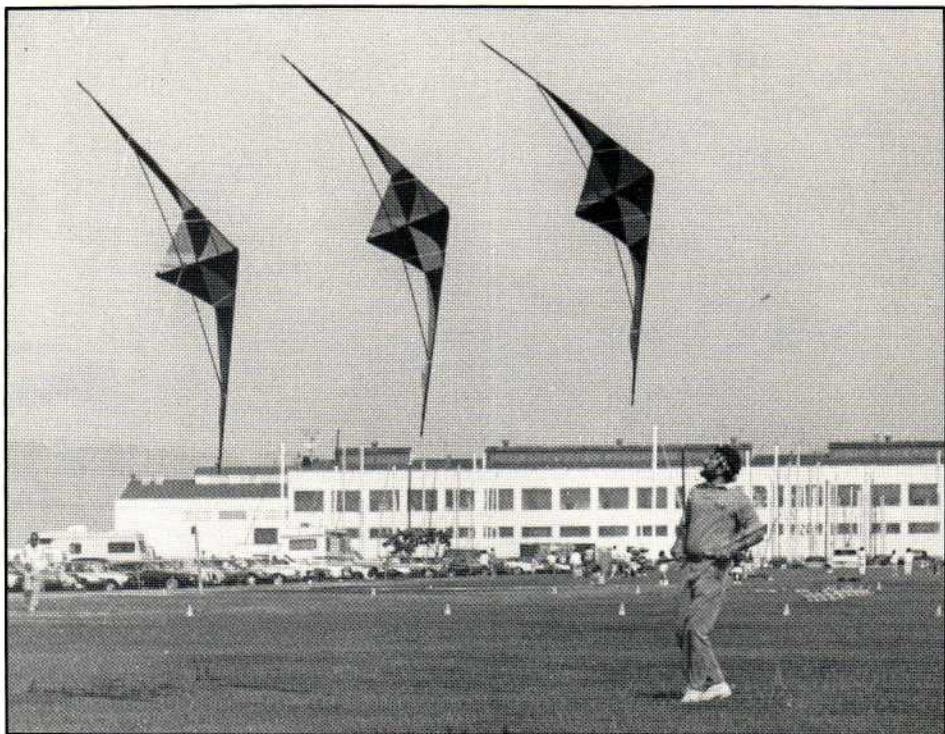
By Lee Sedgwick
and Cris Batdorff

Lee Sedgwick is from Erie, Pa., and flies both individually and as a member of Team High Fly. He is generally credited with being the first to perfect the style termed "solo flying" (i.e., flying through a ground stake). Lee is a highly innovative flier whose credits include: ECSKC II, 1st in Individual Ballet; 1987 AKA National, 2nd Individual Ballet; and most recently, ECSKC III, 1st Innovative Free Flight; 2nd in Individual Ballet; and 1st (along with team member Sue Taft) Open Team Ballet.

Solo flying is the practice of flying a stunt kite with the lines looped around a stake in the ground or, basically, any type of flying in which the lines are looped around an object enabling the flier to remain downfield with his kite(s). It has become an integral part, of late, of many of the more popular innovative flying routines.

This particular method of stunt flying has been in practice for some time with estimates varying as to the technique's origin. Some claim that it began in Hawaii, others claim Australia, while still others point to Southern California as the spot of beginning. Regardless of the precise location of the style, it is generally considered that it began as a way to take off and land within a confined area.

Lee first used the solo technique to take off in a small space, with the idea being then to let out lines, then fly with the lines at full length. Upon completion of the fly, he planned to re-hook the lines through the stake, again being able to land in a small space. In working where large crowds were present, it seemed like it was



Eric Wolff solo flying a three-stack, West Coast Nationals 1988.

SOLO FLYING

going to prove to be an excellent way to be able to launch without having to fly in an unsafe manner. Lee remembers that he got about halfway out with the lines through the stake and the kites began to come towards him. Before the end of the day, he wound up downfield with the kites and his solo flying experience began. It was not much longer before Lee would begin to use the maneuver in national competition events.

There are some inherent difficulties with solo work that the flier must overcome if he is to become proficient at the method. Perhaps at the top of the list is the most obvious ... the flier's position relative to the kite changes substantially. As the lines run from the flier to the stake ... upwind, and then back to the kite, the most popular position is for the flier to face upwind. This perspective will make all of the conventional flying terminology reversed. From this viewpoint, one must pull left to go right, and so on. Some solo fliers claim that the answer to this reversal problem can be solved by switching the handles to reverse the controls.

This is not to say that the flier MUST face upwind to fly in solo

fashion. Others approach the exercise by facing the kite as if flying conventionally and work the lines to either side of their bodies. This will solve the reversal process but can be limiting as far as maneuvers possible. There are good arguments to be made for either approach.

There are other problems that relate to equipment wear and safety considerations. Line has the obvious tendency to wear out much more quickly when run around a stake than with conventional methods of flying. This can be lessened, to a degree, by a couple of different practices.

Lines can be treated with a silicone-based spray which is available from most hardware stores. They can also be trimmed frequently to move the wear point as it rubs against the stake. A great contributor to line wear is the stake itself. Time should be taken to obtain a stake that is more rounded than angular. It should also be smoothed to remove any burrs. The handle of the stake should be opened slightly to make easier the slipping through of the lines. The ring on the stake should also be removed. Time spent in equipment prepara-

tion will pay off later in reduced expense for replacement apparatus.

It is very easy to get turned around when solo flying so when you're making your initial start at learning how, it's best to use an old kite ... chances are that it will crash several times until you get used to the perspective change.

Beginning solo fliers may also wish to stand somewhat off the wind, at least initially. It is very easy to get "attacked" by your kite, and in high wind this can be a painful experience, indeed Lee suggests the wearing of sunglasses if for no other reason than to afford some degree of protection to the eyes. Those spars hold a very damaging potential for the starting solo flier. Don't take unnecessary chances!

There is a lot of practice required to learn this new mode of flying ... estimates have run as high as 20 hours, but for those willing to stick with it, solo flying can prove to be a very rewarding experience. Certainly, it is a totally different method of flying. Although most of the traditional moves can be made (squares, figure 8's, etc.), there are some other non-traditional advantages to solo flying. Self-launching is a big plus ... as you're out there with the kite, you can walk to it when it's downed with your lines in hand. Solo is also a nice way to launch and then fly "out" of the stake. For instance, many have trouble self-launching Flexifoils ... this can be done more easily through a stake. The flier can then walk the lines out of the stake and fly in a conventional manner. Adjustment of bridle settings is also easier to perform, again because the kite is more easily accessible.

The most exciting thing, however, is that solo flight gives a new personality to the kite and the performer as a unit. No longer is the kite tethered at the end of a long set of lines while the flier stands far away controlling it. The flier and the kite become "linked" when solo flying. The potential for interaction between kite and flier will become apparent very quickly after your first flight. Kite and flier seem to fly together.

Although solo flying can be done with any kite and any line, it seems to be holding true that rigid

wing kites flown on Spectra line (usually 135lb.) provide the best combination of kite and line. Line lengths vary from 150 to 70 feet but, generally, longer ones are more often used, and should be the choice of beginning fliers. About 6 to 8 months of use can be gotten from a set of lines.

Larger kites will be found to be slower than smaller ones and therefore, generally preferable for solo flying. Because of the larger turning radius of large kites, longer lines will have to be employed when flying them. Remember, that you're halving the total length of your lines when you fly through a stake. Much the same problem can be experienced in flying stacks, which, while being more impressive, are more difficult to fly, as well.

As a note on possible field repairs, it's a good idea to take a couple of extra spars with you during the first few attempts at

solo flying. These are usually the first casualties of serious crashes and a couple additional spares on hand can save the afternoon's flying session.

Nearly anything can be used as a potential source through which to run your flying lines. A spare carabiner clip will open up several possible sites. A loop of strong line with a clip to run lines through will enable the flier to use railings, car bumpers, and nearly anything else as potential tie-off points for solo routines.

Solo flying is one of the "newer" methods of flying dual or quad-line kites. In addition to being a very enjoyable way to improve the "rapport" with your kite, you will find that it will also sharpen your reflexes when flying in the conventional manner. If you've yet to try this method of stunt flying, give it a shot ... it's well worth the time and effort. Even more ... it's great fun!



Lee Sedgwick, flying solo quad-line, West Coast Nationals 1988.

THE BOOK OF AL

By Al Hargus III

Introduction by Cris Batdorff

Al Hargus has been into flying kites for 11 of his 40 years, stunters for about eight of those. His first stunt kite was a single Trilby. He owns and flies just about every stunt kite on the market (he collects them as well ...). Present kite accumulation is over 1,000. Until recently, Al was a lithographic pressman, but has decided to make kiting a full-time job as well as a full-time hobby, and has plans to open a kite shop in Chicago. His favorite kite is the 10-foot Flexifoil and his single largest project is the building and flying of a train of 280 eddy kites. A Regional Director of the AKA and past-president of the Chicago Skyliners (of which he is a founder, as well), Al was one of the event coordinators of Windy City '88 AKA National Convention. He attended his first stunt kite competition in Dayton, Ohio, in 1985; his first National competition in 1987 at Wildwood, New Jersey; and took third place in Experienced Individual Precision at the 1987 AKA in Washington, D.C. He moved into the Open Class at the 1988 Nationals in Chicago and finished fifth of 55 contestants in Precision. He is also one of the original members of the Chicago Fire Stunt Team. Al, additionally, serves as associate editor of Stunt Kite Quarterly.

Some years ago, shortly after I had taken my first tentative steps into the area of dual-line stunt flying, I was approached by a significantly more advanced flier who thrust into my hand a small booklet, saying, "I think that the Dragon would like you to have this." It was entitled, *The Easy "No Secrets" Handbook for Dual Line Stunt Kites*, by Al Hargus III and dis-

The Easy "No Secrets" Handbook for Dual Line Stunt Kites

by AL HARGUS III

Installment number three in the Book of Al will round out the series after which copies of this nifty guide will be available from SKQ ... inquiries welcome.

NEXT TIME: troubleshooting and high wind modifications.

tributed by Stanton Hobby Shop of Chicago. No, I didn't study it for six months and go on to win a national title ... what I did pick up were a whole bunch of good tips and simple explanations of things that were, at the time .. and are occasionally still, quite befuddling. It was good information back then, and with more and more stunters in the air today, it's better information now.

TUNING

Single kites are more sensitive to changes in wind strength and

direction than are stacks.

PRE-FLIGHT CHECK (General)

- Check to see that the kite is assembled according to the directions supplied.
- Check to see that all spars are firmly attached.
- Check that the bridle is attached correctly, is free of tangles, and is adjusted for the prevailing winds. Most kites have a mark on the bridle lines which should provide a good place to start.

- Clips must be even (the same distance from the nose) or the kite will turn differently left from right.
- Check to see that the fly lines are of the same length. They may stretch unevenly during initial use.
- Check to see that the right fly line is attached to the right side of the kite and the left to the left side as you face the kite. Marking the ends of one line will provide an easy reference point.

ADJUSTMENTS

- Wind speed, flying line used, and personal preference can all affect the kite setting. Experiment in order to find the setting that works best for you.
- Move both clips about $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ " at a time, then fly to observe the effect on the kite's performance. It is not generally wise to move the clips more than $\frac{1}{4}$ " at a time when experimenting, although the total adjustment range may be much longer. Don't be afraid to try adjusting — if it doesn't work, you can always put it back the way it was.

STRONGER WINDS - Adjust back (generally), moving the clips back (i.e., heavier, down, toward the wing tips)

- **INCREASES TURNING PERFORMANCE** - the kite makes sharper turns and is more sensitive to control, but **DECREASES DRIVE** (lift) of the kite and the kite needs more wind to fly effectively.
- Increases the "pull" of the kite (generally).

LIGHTER WINDS - Adjust forward (generally)

- Moving the clips forward (i.e., lighter, up, towards the nose)
- **DECREASES TURNING PERFORMANCE** - the kite makes wider turns and is less sensitive to control, but **INCREASES THE DRIVE** (lift) of the kite — the kite needs less wind to fly and will climb higher and fly farther to the sides of the wind.

BASIC FLIGHT CONTROL

READY POSITION - Pre-flight.

SELF LAUNCH

- Select a site with plenty of room to the front and sides of the pilot (remember that the

kite can fly nearly 90 degrees to each side of the wind).

- Site should be as clear as possible from obstructions upwind (trees, buildings, etc.) as these will disturb the air flow.
- Check the wind speed and direction.
- Connect one end of the flight lines to the kite bridle (Note: left to left and right to right).
- Unroll the flying lines completely, walking up wind until you get to the handles. Lines and kite should form an angle of less than 30 degrees to the wind direction.
- Check to see that **BOTH LINES ARE THE SAME LENGTH AND NOT CROSSED** - adjust as necessary.
- Stake the handles to the ground.
- Stand the kite up on its bottom tips (works for Team Hawaiians, Spinoffs, Super Darts, and other kites of similar wing design). Make sure that the slack is out of the lines and the kite is leaning back about 30 degrees so it will not take off on its own. For Peter Powells, Tribys and other diamond-shaped kites, lean upside-down on one leading edge, so that the kite is pointed into the ground and about 30 degrees back.
- Watch that people don't trip on your lines.

LAUNCH

- With your kite in the ready position, gently pull on both lines (winged kites) as the sail fills, steer the kite off the ground — **DON'T OVERSTEER** — the first few seconds of launch are critical. For diamond-shaped stunters — pull the high flying line first ... that is the line on top of the inverted kite. This will pull the nose into the air and allow the kite to lift off.
- In light winds, stepping backwards a few feet will add wind speed and make the launch easier.

NORMAL FLIGHT

You are in control at all times. Dual line stunt kites are not like traditional kites in that they have no tendency to keep themselves airborne. Left to itself, it will not go "up"

automatically. You must steer it constantly to keep it airborne.

- Start with your hands side-by-side, about chest high.
 - **STRAIGHT LINE** - maintain equal tension on both fly lines (hands even) and the kite will fly in a straight line in whatever direction it is already traveling — straight up, straight down, straight across, or at an angle are all examples of straight line flight.
 - **TURNING** — A hand is brought towards the body. This causes that wing to stall and lose speed. The other wing flies around the stalled wing.
 - Pull harder on the left handle and the kite will turn left (counterclockwise); the kite will continue to turn left as long as you pull to the left. Pull harder on the right to make a right turn.
 - The arc of the turn is maintained as long as your hands remain unequal.
 - As the difference between your hands increases, the arc of the turn increases (the turn becomes sharper).
 - A slight pull will produce a wide turn — a harder pull a sharper one.

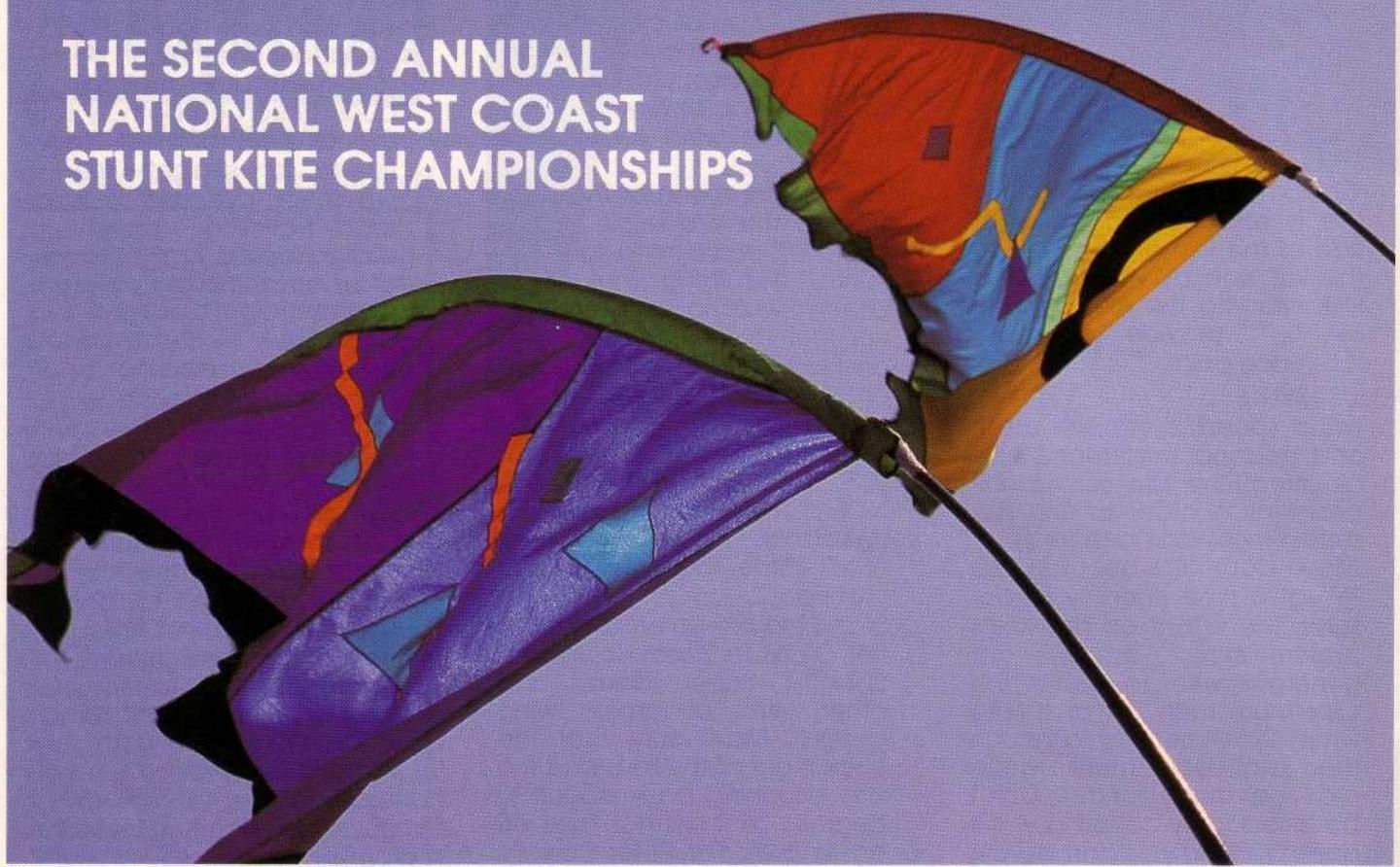
NOTE: A 360-degree turn or loop will make a twist in the flying line. The kite will continue to fly and control exactly the same way since the line will slide through the twist. About 15-20 twists can be made (depending upon the type of line used) before control is seriously affected. To remove the twists, loop in the opposite direction.

LANDING

- Fly your kite to the edge of the wind until it stops. This is a hover and it can be done at any height. When the kite is about one foot off the ground, quickly walk towards the kite and it will settle to a graceful landing.

- **ADVANCED LANDNG TECHNIQUE** - When your kite is about one foot off the ground, start a downwind turn. As the tip of the kite's wing clears the ground, step forward. This will take the wind pressure off the kite, allowing it to land in the ready position.

THE SECOND ANNUAL NATIONAL WEST COAST STUNT KITE CHAMPIONSHIPS



The banners of Lee Toy



West Coast Team Precision Champs; the Chicago Fire; Eric Wolff, Dorothy Wolff, and Frank Fieseler.



Brian Fyfe, Team What's Up.

San Francisco ... the Marina Green ... the preliminaries are over ... the final round of competition has begun ... next up, Cris Batdorff (!?). Who? What's this putz doing out there with the Tabors, Wolffs, Sedgwicks, Tafts, Buxtons, Reichs, Sugarmans, and all other world kiting luminaries? The performance is swift and the answer obvious ... losing, that's what! But what a thrill! After traipsing around to different events for a year or so with camera and tape machine in hand, it was worth the price extracted by a last place finish to stand on the same field of competition with these folks.

In all, 64 entries were received for this, the second running of the West Coast Nationals. The Marina Green, a narrow strip of grass at the north end of San Francisco which looks out on Alcatraz to the right and the Golden Gate to the left is reminiscent of a Medieval jousting field. This appearance was enhanced over the Labor Day weekend as the assembled fliers set up their ground displays and the competition got into full swing. The prize ... \$10,000 ... not exactly

By CRIS BATDORFF

a king's ransom, but in the fledgling sport of stunt flying, the next best thing.

The West Coast Nationals became, last year, the first event in the United States to offer cash awards and the effect has been obvious: the best of the best were there. The performances were excellent and, on occasion, brilliant. In many cases, there were repeats of great Wildwood or Hawaii Challenge routines; in others, totally new.

Actual competition began on Saturday, September 3rd, with preliminary heats in both the Individual Precision and the Individual Ballet categories. This was the "elimination" round for many of the hopefules. Winners and second place finishers advanced into the final rounds for a shot at the bucks. Scores for the advanced fliers were erased so all competitors went into the finals on an equal level. At the end of round



Genny Forsberg, official nice person!!

one, however, Pam Kirk had carried the high score in Precision, with Sue Taft heading up the field in Choreographed. There were some stellar performances in the individual heats which did not show up as such in the overall standings because there were some judging changes between heats. I was particularly impressed with Vern Balodis' choreographed routine flown to the music of Frankenstein. It was gorgeous musically and aesthetically as well. Dan Buxton, who "Left his Heart in San Francisco" (but took some prize money home), flew superbly. Who could not have enjoyed the performance of Missy Romero, who, at age 12 is already going toe-to-toe with the heavy hitters in the open class? Or how about Jason Loo, at age 13? (Jason, incidentally, made it to the final round in the Individual Precision.) Both of these young, but seasoned competitors fly for Team Rome.

There have been comments, of late, that precision events are "dull." After attending several events around the country, I can

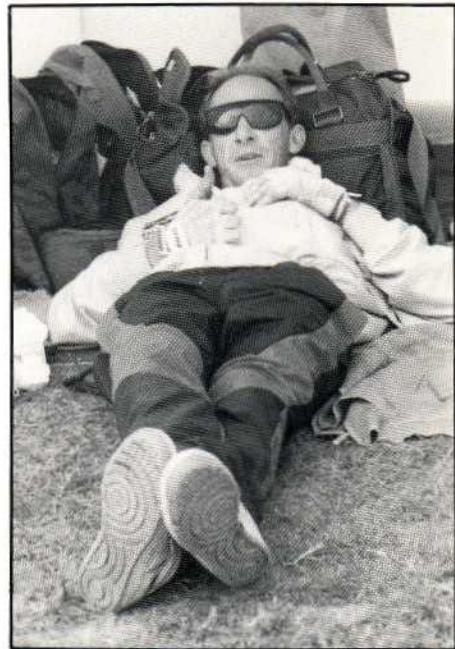
conclude only that such remarks are made by those who lack the mental discipline to handle the precise rendering of figures in the sky. The precision event at the West Coast Nationals was one of the more difficult that I have encountered. Not only were the figures difficult, but the degree of finesse needed to fly them was heightened by a number of variables. In the first case, there were pylons used as ground markers to give the judges a set of reference points by which the figure's precision could be monitored flier by flier. Secondly, the flying space at Marina Green is very narrow, necessitating, in many cases the use of noticeably shorter lines than usual. Thirdly, although the event was generally blessed by good winds, they were erratic, very powerful, and "dirty" at various points in the competitions. All of that notwithstanding, there was some very nice figures flown. The freestyle portions of some performances could have easily been set to music comprising short ballet routines.

Sunday saw the conclusion of the Individual events and the running of the Team events. As was the case on each day, the winds began around noon and built during the afternoon. Big wind equipment became a necessity to compete on even ground. Individual precision was won by Top of the Line's Don Tabor in a close battle. Less than 3 points separated first and fifth places. Individual Choreographed was won by Ron Reich with, once again, a little over three points separating first and fifth.

Then came the Team Precision event ... I remember that the afternoon had become unusually chilly as the fog began to roll in off the Pacific. The judges were fighting to keep warm as the order of competition wore on. The Top of the Line team of Don Tabor, Ron Reich, and Eric Streed had flown another beautifully precise routine ... it was beginning to look like another carbon-copy win. The video crew, feeling the effects of many hours spent looking through the viewfinder, was anxious to be on their way ... "Better stick around for a while," was the overhead comment from one official-

turned-temporary-spectator. "this team from Chicago is supposed to be pretty hot." Prophetic words ... the Chicago Fire team of Eric and Dorothy Wolff, and Frank Fieseler had been practicing overtime. When they took the field, they flew nearly impeccably. After the final results had been tabulated, they had become the first team ever to unseat the Top of Line team in competition. As TOL team member Ron Reich was to put it some weeks later at the Windy City AKA Nationals, "For years we thought we were going to be a dynasty — for at least five or six years.... But look what happened to us in San Francisco ... we're not invincible.... That pumped up a lot of other guys to say: 'These guys are beatable,' and that's what we want. We're not that good ... with practice, any given team can win on any given day." Ever the gentlemen, team TOL was among the first to extend congratulations to the new winners, amid a throng of well-wishers.

Monday, Labor Day, saw the running of the Individual Innovative and Team Ballet. Top of the Line, with Ron Reich and Don Tabor at the controls flew to a narrow victory over Team High Fly (Lee Sedgwick and Sue Taft). The winning margin was .74 points. In the innovative, it was Mal Moore with a repeat of his brilliant Hawaii



Gary Counts takin' five.

Challenge performance; a routine which involved flying four kites to tell a love story of Olympic defection. The performance was a love story in more ways than one, however: the crowd was plainly overwhelmed by the routine.

The awards banquet, held Sunday night was an event in itself. The theme was "A Night in Morocco," complete with mid-eastern food (is baklava really Moroccan?) and real live belly-dancers as after-dinner entertainment. The usual kiting high-jinx



Watching the competitions!

prevailed as the awards were passed out to the victors. A special award was presented to TOL team member, Eric Streed for his instrumental help with the organizational work in the creation of the West Coast Championships.

What was particularly impressive about the West Coast Championships was the high degree of competitiveness. There are, doubtless those who will point to the rather substantial prize money and say, "well, sure, and that's why," but it doesn't really seem to be the whole story. The scores in all events were exceedingly close, a phenomena that has been observable for some time ... and they're getting closer. The races in each area of competition are beginning to tighten. There were, even in the preliminaries, very few performances that could be described as under par for an open-classed event. This points to even better competitions down the road.

Events which encompass the scope of the West Coast Championships are similarly hard to appraise with an overview ... there

seem to be a great number of things happening at the same time. The thought of trying to stage a large event of this type is enough to boggle the minds of many. If one chooses to listen to all the voices, there are usually as many things that happen wrong as those that happen right. That the Marina Green is a difficult field on which to fly is fact ... but only if you're accustomed to flying long lines. the use of pylons as markers in the precision was a new wrinkle for many of the fliers and judges as well ... and was a problem for some of each ... but in the interests of consistency in judging seemed to be a step in the right direction. There were those who felt that the two scores of the preliminary and final heats should have been averaged for the final tally instead of wiping the slate clean between the performances. As always, some felt that a "hometown advantage" favored the "local" fliers. That some, or all of the comments are justifiable on an individual circumstance situation is, perhaps, arguable. To be objective, however, many of the

comments are those that have been heard before about other competitions. The harder one tries to define problems, the less important in relation to the event they seem to become.

What is important, in the eyes of this occasionally less-than-casual observer, is that a group of people decided that there should be a national-class event here and have made good on their dream. In a situation where, as yet, there are no hard-and-fast rules, there are bound to be exceptions taken to decisions, that, for the sake of expediency, must be made quickly by meet organizers. The producers of the West Coast Championships, Kite Caravan (Mike and Cherie McFadden, Lee Toy, Kathy Goodwind, and Robert Loera) have every reason to be proud of their event.

All of the fliers that should have been there, were. The flying, after all, is what the people came to see ... and they sure got plenty of that! The trip from this reporter's front door was 5700 miles ... all driven. I would not have missed it ... I'll be back.

1988 WEST COAST NATIONALS

A total of 64 entries were received. Several entered as teams only and not as individual flyers. This accounts for less individual entrants than total entrants.

INDIVIDUAL CHOREOGRAPHED 45 Entrants

	Points
1st — Ron Reich	93.38
2nd — Sue Taft	93.06
3rd — Robbie Sugarman	91.81
4th — Don Tabor	91.33
5th — Dan Buxton	90.33

INDIVIDUAL PRECISION 50 Entrants

1st — Don Tabor	89.67
2nd — Pam Kirk	88.33
3rd — Robbie Sugarman	87.67
4th — Randy Tom	87.53
5th — Frank Feiseler	86.71

TEAM CHOREOGRAPHED 11 Teams Entered

1st — Top of The Line	92.77
2nd — Team High Fly	92.03
3rd — Chicago Fire	91.33

TEAM PRECISION 8 Teams Entered

1st — Chicago Fire	85.47
2nd — Top of The Line	84.77
3rd — Team Rome I	83.47

INNOVATIVE DIVISION 10 Entrants

1st — Malcolm Moore	91.91
2nd — Eric Wolff	82.77
3rd — Lee Sedgwick	81.43



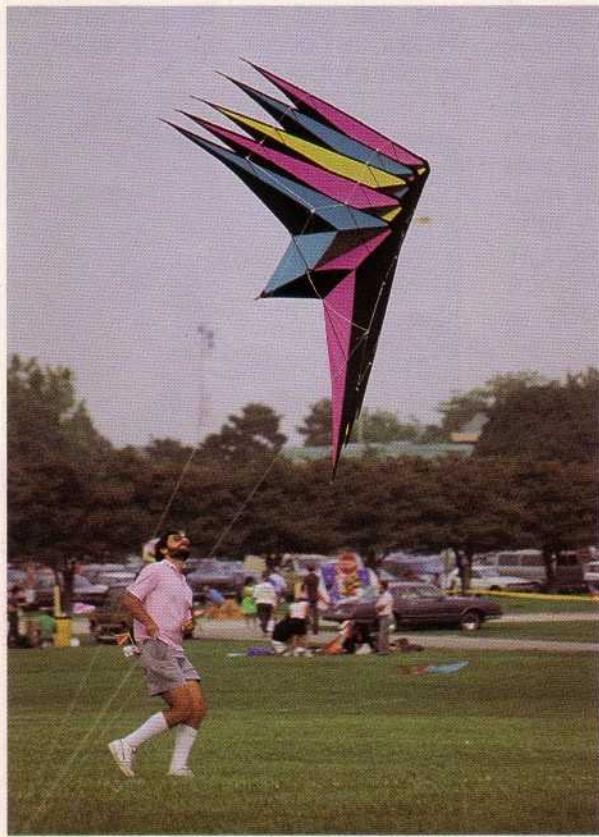
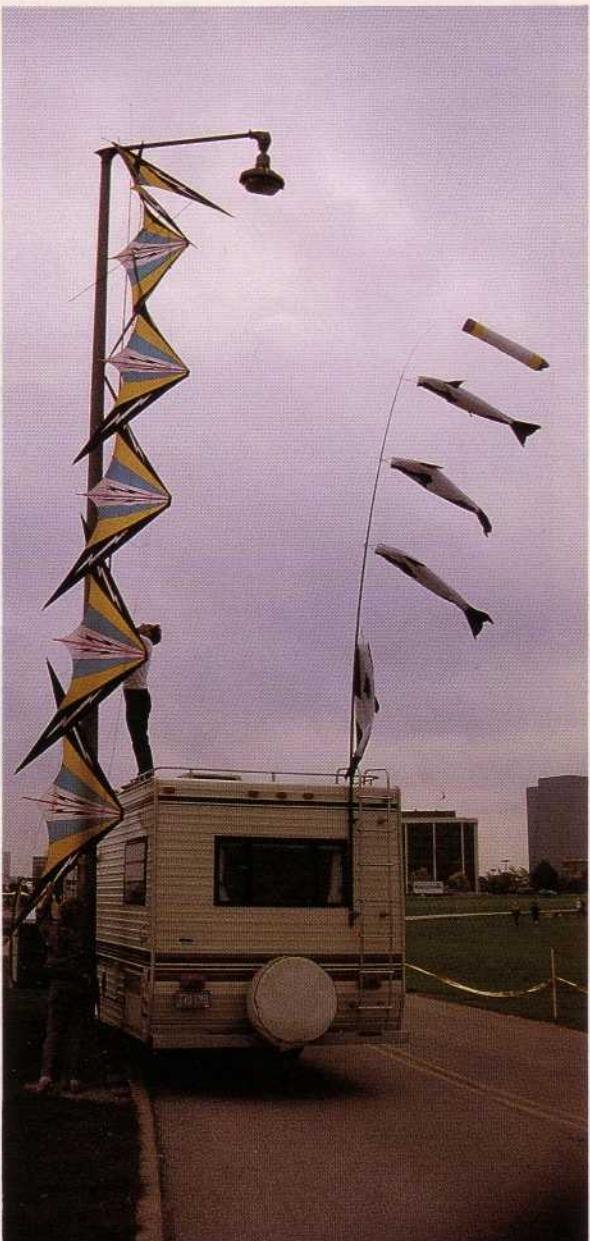
THE NYLON JUNGLE



THE HAWAIIAN DOUBLE THREAT ... Standing, the Elite Team, Hawaii, (l-r) Rick Roberts, Ray Miller, Malcolm Moore, and Romeo Collado. Kneeling, The High Performance Team (l-r) Brian Hirose, Scott Augenbaugh, Kenny Fredricks, and Alan Nagao.

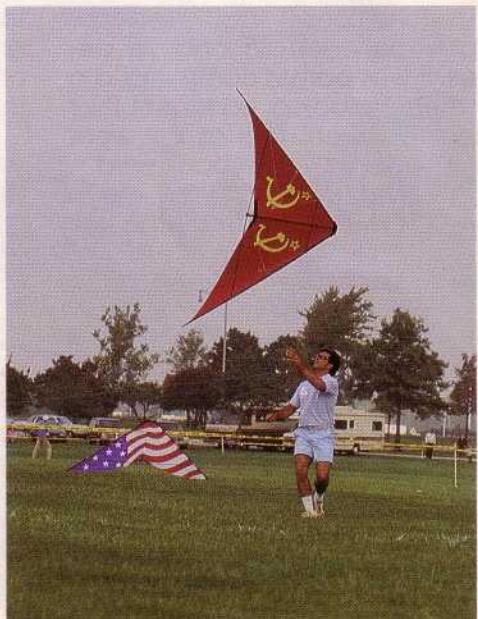


RON REICH in the innovative.



Clockwise
from upper left:
The Blitz from England:
Martin Lester,
Tony Cartwright,
Andy King, and
Paul Jobin. Lee Sedgwick
in the "Innovative"??
Malcolm Moore in the
Innovative. Eric Wolff in
the Innovative.

By CRIS BATDORFF





Gary Counts ... man in motion.

Shaumburg, IL ... Another AKA National Convention is in the record books! What a competition! What a festival! What a party! This, the 11th official gathering of Kite Krazys (in the modern era) will truly be one for the memory banks. The weather was alternately beautiful and terrible, changing with a quickness that only those from the Midwest can truly understand. There's an old saying hereabouts: "Don't like the weather? Wait five minutes." From the vantage point of one who has spent 40+ years enduring autumnal conditions that see-saw roughly between 35 and 75 degrees, it was both a comfort and a wry meteorological comment that made this event feel as if it were being held in my own back yard.

As Al Hargus was to tell me a week later when he made the trek north to hole up for a couple of days to help with the production of this particular edition: "Everyone took home something ... most, at least, caught colds ..." This is not to say that Mother Nature was uncooperative, quite the opposite: it's just that she was being predictably unpredictable ... all of which served to make the dual-line competitions even more of a challenge. Wind conditions varied from event to event and, in

many cases from flier to flier. But this group was no ordinary batch of Sunday afternoon sky pilots ... At some point in every flier's competitive career, he is met with the realization that there are some things that can be changed and others that can not. It is precisely that element of unpredictability that throws the one necessary joker into the deck. Seems you can always tell the class of the field on days like that. They're the ones who walk out onto a windless field, give it all that they can muster, perhaps knowing even then that it's not going to be enough, and shrug the entire performance off if it happens to go badly ... there'll be another day.

There were a lot of such performances during the three days of stunt competition ... class performances by classier people. Through it all, event coordinator Mike Keating kept things flowing. "One of the most well-organized events I've been to," were the words from Sue Taft who walked onto the field on Thursday and flew away with the Open Class Individual Precision title. Ron Reich, the perennial favorite in the precision countered by sweeping both other Open Class individual events, the Ballet and the Innovative. Keating and crew were lar-

gely responsible, in fact, for the comments from every flier to whom I talked. This was certainly one of the better-organized events of the last couple of years.

The vast open space around the Unocal Corporation provided more than enough flying space for any number of fliers. There was absolutely no lack of room. There were, by and large no delays that were not weather-related. A number of fliers told me on several different occasions that they had made inquiries as to what help they might be to the event's organizers, only to be told that "things were under control." Considering the tremendous amount of manpower needed to host an event of this size, that statement is a mouthful. This group of Chicagoland Skyliners is definitely going to be a hard act to follow in future events. Lest anyone be unaware of the signs of the times, let me be quick to add that Coordinator Keating didn't do the job alone, or even solely with the help of several male friends ... these are liberated times! This is not made as a tongue-in-cheek comment ... not only were there a good number of women acting as judges but the nationals also marked what I believe is the first time that we've seen a woman in the role of pit boss. Thus the Nationals chalk up still another applaudable first.



Pit Boss, Pam Holbrook.

While on the subject of firsts, the Windy City Competitions also marked the first time that I'd gotten to see the full routine flown by Ron Reich in the innovative. Ron's routine, which met with failure at the West Coast Nationals a few weeks ago, went off without a hitch in Chicago. For those who have not had the opportunity to see it, it is indeed something to behold. Ron initially launches two kites, which are connected by a long tail. With Tchaikovsky's Arabian Dance providing the musical background, these two weave patterns in the sky ... they are the "snake charmers" in the song. At about the midpoint of the routine, a third kite, which is tethered to the ground, is launched ... this kite represents the "snake" in the story. The simultaneous flying of all three is something which requires intense concentration and it's a pleasure to see it done with such finesse. The effect was hypnotic and quite enough to garner a first place finish.

In the Experienced Class, Brian Fye of the What's Up Team, was an easy winner in the Precision event. Brian is one of the many up-and-coming fliers that is going to be a force to be reckoned with in the next couple of years. Flying in his second national event, Brian also took second in the Ballet event. Winner in the Experienced Ballet was Jim Henry, of Coon Rapids, MN, who carded very good numbers with a 91.3.

Grand Haven, Michigan's Roaring Flamingos (Steve Negen, Rod Tanis, and Steve Blanchard) took home wins in both sections of the Experienced Team division. The number of experienced teams was one of the disappointments of the Windy City Nationals, however. There were only four teams registered for the precision event and the ballet was a walkover with only one team participating. "A lot of people are trying to compete in the open class when they really should be in the experienced," said

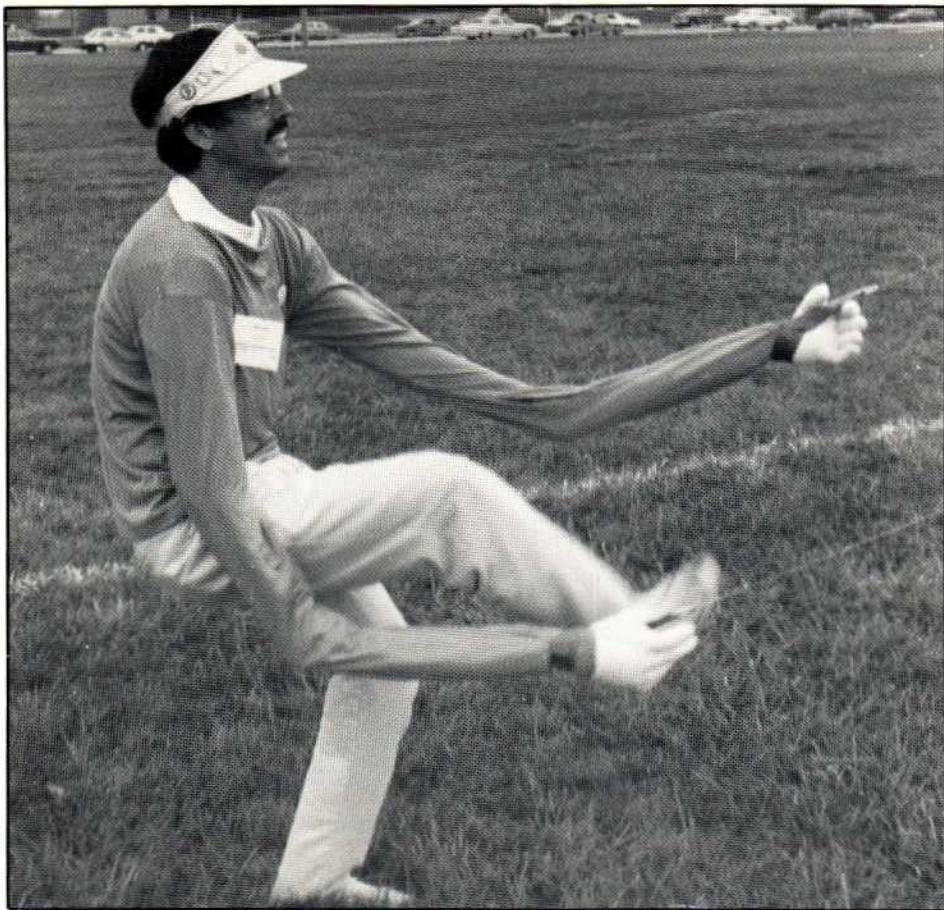
Coordinator Keating. "It's not to say that they're not good, but the level is so high in the open, they would be much more competitive in the experienced."

Team Ballet in the Open division saw the renewal of a rivalry that has been ongoing since this last summer's East Coast Nationals where Team High Fly (Lee Sedgwick and Sue Taft) beat out the Top of the Line Team of Ron Reich and Don Tabor. TOL evened the score last month in San Francisco and the showdown was set for the Nationals. Both teams flew brilliant performances, and when the smoke cleared ... identical scores of 93.3. An appropriate ending for two fine seasons.

In the Open Team Precision, the Chicago Fire Team of Eric and Dorothy Wolff and Frank Fieseler, fresh from a first place finish in San Francisco, looked for a repeated performance before a hometown audience. It was not to be, however, as they were one of the teams frustrated by a wind lull.



The Hawaiian Punch Team in the Precision ... Mike Dennis, Sue Balodis, Pam Kirk, Vern Balodis.



Oh, the perils of flying too many Flexi's! Dennis "Long Arms" Kucmerowski of Boca Raton, Florida.

Conditions looked ripe for the Top of the Line Team, flying with third team member, Eric Steed, to regain their recently lost number one position.... Then came the Hawaiians. The High Performance Team flew a spectacular and intense routine which included, at one point, a maneuver called a "radical wrap." If I am remembering correctly the four-man team first executes a wrap maneuver, then, in the middle, it splits into two parts. These two pairs then do wraps on their own and rejoin to complete the team wrap. Untwisting this braid is a reversal of the process. Very nice flying, indeed. There must have been a lot of heavy-duty line untangling done in perfecting this move! It was a well-deserved first place finish. The Elite Flight Team of Hawaii was the second of the 50th state teams and they turned in still another nifty routine which netted them a second place finish in the event to add to their third place showing in the Ballet. With the 12th Annual AKA Convention scheduled in Hawaii next Fall, the stage is already set for the next round of competition.

First place in the Fighter Kite competitions went to still another Hawaiian resident, Robert Loera. Richard Roberts of San Diego finished in second, with Richard (ZZ) Van Mechelen also of San Diego, showing third.

At this point in stunt kiting's relatively youthful competitive state, the AKA Nationals still stand like something of a beacon. When all is said and done, it is still the most prestigious event of the year and to be a part of the competition is a noteworthy experience. It is one of the few places where one can, with some sense of realism, expect to see a total gathering of all of the "names" in the sport, both foreign and American. Hopefully, this is an anchor that will remain a familiar site as other "circuit" events pursue the lure of ever-increasing monetary prizes needed to attract the larger name fliers. To volunteer to host such an event is a true commitment ... not only to the sport of stunt kiting, but to the love of kite flying at its very base. The nationals aren't just another group of competitions, they are that which the sport/hobby is all about. The Chicagoland Skyliners

are to be commended in keeping this event on that level to which the fliers, themselves, have elevated it ... no great prizes, no cash awards; just the recognition of a bunch of folks that you consider friends and from whom acknowledgement becomes a truly meaningful expression. It's precisely what the Nationals should be ... fellowship and fun.

PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE 1988 A.K.A. STUNT KITE COMPETITIONS AT WINDY CITY '88 9/28-9/30 FROM THE BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE

By Field Director - Al Hargus

I was very pleased and honored this year to be asked to be Field Director for most of the team events in Experienced and Open class. I also had the best seat in the house as F.D. in the Individual Innovative competitions.

The Field Director's job is primarily to direct the teams and individuals on and off the field, to time the entire flight, and to time any crashes for the judges. The F.D. also has to help the fliers to be aware of the limits of the flying field in case they get into a jam with low winds or other problems. For the experienced classes and the novices this is a very important job, but with this year's Open class my job was mainly to direct field set-up and take down between routines.

Open class Team Ballet was a beautiful sight to behold. Elite Flight Team from Hawaii came in third place with 92.0 pts. with an incredible flying display with four fliers and four stacks of custom kites. Thursday winds were light (5-8 mph) and constantly shifting, but the battle for first came between the Top of the Line team of Don Tabor and Ron Reich from San Diego and Team High Fly, Lee Sedgwick and Sue Taft. The Battle was so tight that equal scores of 93.3 resulted. An amazing note from my view from ten feet away was that both top teams never said much of anything to each other in the way of vocal commands during the entire five minutes of flight only an occasional "now" or "break" was spoken. Testament to the long hours of practice by these teams.

Because of light winds and pressing schedules the Team Experienced Precision competitions were announced with most teams

not ready. The Windjammers' Aron Harris, Nate Williams, and Gary Maynard of Detroit came to the field with Hawaiian Team kites with



The roaring flamingos!

no sunglasses and little pre-flight practice. The WindJammers made a great showing despite the conditions and most importantly these guys had a great time on the field. It's nice to be on the field and watch a group of fliers smile and laugh in the face of adversity. The WindJammers finished with 37.8 pts. and a third place.

Dan and Lorna Buxton, and Brian Fye of the What's Up team flew an outstanding Display with three ten-foot flexiflois, despite the light winds coming in second with 43.3 pts. Winners in the event went to the Roaring Flamingos Team from Michigan Steve Negen, Steve Blanchard and Rod Tannis flew the precision compulsories and free flight with a flair and finesse that gave them 61.8 pts. I know these three fellows well and I know that they started the team just for fun about a year ago. They do have a great time flying together and now the scores show that fun and skill can go hand in hand.

One word of note on the last team in Experienced Precision the Flexers were formed the day of the event with Brian Keating of Ohio joining the team of Dave Barresi and George Baskette. Precision must be practiced so the Flexers and their ten foot flexi foils didn't score high, but they scored VERY high in excitement when at the end of their free flight they flew three counter opposed 360 degree circles. George and Dave going Clockwise, and Brian going counter clockwise. (This was the one time the Field Director was NOT happy about his ten foot away view, lines and 'foils were everywhere — what a show!)

They always say that the best should be saved for last and this year's Nationals was no exception. Individual innovative open class is fairly new in national competitions, being only about a year old. Twelve contestants flew some of the most exciting and innovative stunt kite routines I have ever seen. The judges' criteria for this event is the new or innovative styles of flying, ground dancing and theatrics of the flier are judged and props, hardware and changing of kites are allowed. Literally anything goes and it did. Eric Wolff of Chicago flew three



The requisite crowd shot ... let's see, isn't that Uncle Ed way over there? ...

different stacks of kites both normally and through a dog stake to pieces excellently blended from Mussorgsky's — Pictures at an Exhibition. I had the pleasure of watching Eric practice this routine for several weeks before the nationals, though I never heard the music (Eric would practice with a personal walkman tapeplayer). I really enjoyed the combination of flight and music and so did the judges who awarded Eric 86.8 pts. and third place.

Second place in innovative went to Lee Sedgwick with 92.2 pts. Lee is from Erie, Pa., and is one of the fliers most responsible for the inventing of the innovative class of competition. Lee flew several different kinds and stacks of kites. His routine was entitled "Evolution" and referred to his personal evolution in stunt kite flying. He started his routine and flying career with Flexifoils. Flew a single Spectrum Dart through a dog stake. (A technique he invented and calls Solo flying) and flew both single and stacks of kites with

a method employing four lines or quadline flying. Four lines allow Lee to change the angle of attack of the kite(s) to suit the music and the conditions.

Any discussion about innovative kite flying must include the name of Ron Reich from San Diego, Ca., and member of the Top of the Line stunt kite team. Ron amazed everyone on the field with a display that incorporated three separate stunt kites. The routine flown to Tchaikovsky's "Arabian Nights." Two Spin-off stunt kites flown from his hands and waist were connected to a common 60 ft. tail. The control and concentration were amazing. (Take it from me, at 10 ft. I saw the trance Ron seemed to enter into during the flight.) At one point in the routine Ron then launched a third spin-off flown from his hips, which was connected to the ground by a 40 ft. tail. The first two kites seemed to capture the third "snake" as Ron called the third kite. Amazing, beautiful, and innovative. Ron received 93.6 pts. and first place.

Two other contestants I want to mention because they were outstanding to me were Malcolm Moore of Honolulu, Hawaii, who flew a beautiful routine which told the story of love between a Russian and an American (Mal used spin-offs with American and Russian designs.) The grace of the routine and Neil Diamond's music brought a tear to my eye. Truly a lovely routine. When you talk of the joy of victory, you also must mention the agony of defeat. Phil Costello of Florida had pulled a leg muscle weeks prior to the nationals. His desire was so great to compete that Phil flew a dance routine and again damaged his leg during the performance. You must give the man points for desire and effort. Phil finished sixth out of twelve.

Being Field Director is a lot of work (seven hours a day on the field) but I want to thank event coordinator Mike Keating for giving me the opportunity to help with the event and especially for Mike giving me the best seat in the house.

WINDY CITY '88

NATIONAL COMPETITION RESULTS

Dual Line Winners

Individual Precision

Experienced

1. Brian Fyfe	73.6
2. Cris Batdorff	67.47
3. Mark Glick	67.0
4. George Basketti	66.33
5. Jim Poy	63.93
6. Brian Keating	63.4

Open

1. Sue Taft	83.43
2. Ron Reich	82.5
3. Vern Balodis	80.93
4. Don Tabor	79.57
5. Al Hargus	79.4
6. Randy Tom	79.37

Individual Ballet

Experienced

1. Jim Henry	91.3
2. Brian Fyfe	82.
3. Lorna Buxton	79.3
4. Suzanne Edison	78.6
5. Vince Bobrosky	78.
6. Sue Gindlesperger	75.3

Open

1. Ron Reich	95.3
2. Don Tabor	92.6
3. Vern Balodis	88.6
4. Richard Gareau Frank Fieseler	87.3
5. Sue Taft	87.3
6. Sue Balodis and Mix McGraw	86.6

Fighter Kites:

1. Robert Loera
2. Richard Roberts
3. Richard VanMechelen

Team Precision

Experienced

1. Roaring Flamingos	61.8
2. What's Up	43.3
3. Wind Jammers	37.8
4. Flexers	33.8

Open

1. High Performance	75
2. Elite Flight Team	74.8
3. Top Of The Line	73.1
4. Chicago Fire	68.1
5. Hawaiian Punch	67.1
6. Team Rome	66.8

Team Ballet

Experienced

1. Roaring Flamingos	68
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Open

1. Team High Fly and Top'Of The Line	93.3
3. Elite Flight Team Hawii	92.0
4. Chicago Fire	88.0
5. Elite Flight Team San Diego	82.
6. High Performance	80.6

Individual Innovative

1. Ron Reich	93.6
2. Lee Sedgwick	92.2
3. Eric Wolff	86.8
4. Gary Counts	86.25
5. Sue Taft	85.5
6. Phil Costello	85.4

OUTER BANKS STUNT KITE COMPETITION TAKES OFF AT JOCKEY'S RIDGE

The first annual Outer Banks Stunt Kite Competition, held Saturday, Sept. 17 at Jockey's Ridge State Park, could be described as no less than a high-flying success. Hosted by Kitty Hawk Kites, the event attracted kite fliers from across North Carolina, as well as neighboring South Carolina, Virginia and Maryland. Over 27 kite fliers, 150+ spectators, and quite a number of kite stores convened at Jockey's Ridge State Park on the Outer Banks for the event.

Kitty Hawk Kites combined the official format sanctioned by the American Kite Association (AKA) with the beauty and excellent wind conditions of North Carolina's coast.

The scene of the event was Jockey's Ridge State Park, the largest sand dune on the East Coast. For ten days prior to the competition, the winds were northeast at a steady 18-25 m.p.h. But as luck would have it, the morning's wind left something to be desired.

The competitors, however, were not discouraged. They unpacked their light wind kites and took the breeze to its greatest potential. From novice to open, the performances were of such high caliber that scoring the competition was no easy task. John Harris, president of Kitty Hawk Kites, and one of the judges, commented, "The degree of expertise was extraordinary considering it was a first event for us. But you could also observe that even though they were here for a serious competition, they were here to have a lot of fun."

In addition to Harris, judging for the competition were Kelly Ryan, Valerie McDaniel, and Marc Conklin. Mary Ames of "Kite Kingdom" in Nag's Head, also lent her expertise as a judge. And emceeing the event was Mike Storm, with Melissa Kroetsch acting as Field Director, both of Kitty Hawk Kites.

The wind was blowing southeasterly up to 10 m.p.h., light for this time of year. A temporary delay in the schedule did occur, with the lightest wind flown in at 5 m.p.h. And among the kites used were Spin-off's, Mirages, Hawaiians, Ultra-Light's, and a new up and coming design, by Robert Crowell, known as the "Accelerator," which looks promising for competition. The Accelerator is a small delta design which may be flown singularly or in stacks. It performs extremely well in winds as light as 3-5 m.p.h., with a range up to 40 m.p.h.

Anne McCarter manager of the Kite store at Kitty Hawk Kites was optimistic about the day's events. "We're open to suggestions as ways to make the competition a part of the currently forming circuit. We'd like to hear from anyone interested in promoting the sport in the Southeast. This was a tremendous learning experience as well as a lot of fun for everyone involved. This will definitely become an annual event." And with the help of its supporters, including the Richmond Air Force, the competition will become an anxiously awaited East Coast event as well.

Novice Precision winners of the competition were: (1) Carter Stickney, (2) Laura Stonestreet, and (3) Aughtley Ayers. Experienced Precision winners included: (1) Charles Stonestreet, (2) Gregory Johnson, and (3) Christie Seigler. Awards from the Team Precision division went to: (1) Dave Stanton and Stan Ramsey, (2) Mike Jones and Erik Adamusko, and (3) Chris Schultz and Carter Stickney. Winners of the Precision Open division were: (1) Mike Jones, and (2) Robert Crowell.

In the Experienced Ballet division, winners included: (1) Charles Stonestreet, (2) Christie Seigler, and (3) Pat Parker. And in the

Open Ballet division, (1) Mike Jones, and (2) Robert Crowell walked away with prizes.

The trophies and prizes were awarded at the day's end. Culminating the festivities was a deck party across the street at Kitty Hawk Kites, complete with 60 pounds of Nag's Head spiced shrimp.

Kiting enthusiasts can look forward to the annual September Outer Banks Stunt Kite Competition on North Carolina's Outer Banks.

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BLACK SHIPS FESTIVAL '88

Stunt kites shared the air on the weekend of July 30-31 with single line kites at the 1988 version of the Black Ships Festival in Newport, RI. Sponsored by the Japan-America Society of Rhode Island, the festival annually draws thousands of viewers to the area to witness the spectacle of kiting along with the numerous workshops held in conjunction with this week-long celebration.

"It was stunt kite heaven!" said Dan Wheeler of Outermost Kites, and member of the Outermost Flight Team. "There's never really any bad winds at Newport ... we've got ultralights, but rarely get a chance to fly them. This weekend, with winds running from 12-15 (mph) was no exception." In what was described by Dan as a "fairly close competition," it was

John Tavolacci coming out on top in the Beginner Individual Precision and Ron Lapointe in the Experienced division. Individual Ballet was won by Suzanne Edison. In the team events, it was Suzanne flying with husband Bill as the "Windborne" team sweeping both the Precision and the Ballet.

In all, stunters competed for \$1750 worth of prizes donated by several East Coast kite shops. Demonstrations were flown by Lee Sedgwick and Sue Taft of Erie, PA, as well as by the Outermost Flight Team of Dan Wheeler, Tom McCabe, and Ron LaPointe. Judging for the events was done by Fran Gramkowski of High Fly Kites, Lee Sedgwick and Sue Taft of Team High Fly, Dan Wheeler of Outermost Kites, Tom McCabe, and Dan Fraser.

INDIVIDUAL PRECISION - Beginner: 1 - John Tavolacci; 2 - Malcolm Thurlo; 3 - Clyde Pratt (10 entrants)

INDIVIDUAL PRECISION - Experienced: 1 - Ron Lapointe; 2 - George Baskette; 3 - Brad Ruud. (20 entrants)

INDIVIDUAL BALLET: 1 - Suzanne Edison; 2 - Terry Fenton; 3 - Ron Lapointe. (12 entrants)

TEAM PRECISION: 1 - "Windborne" - Bill and Suzanne Edison; 2 - "Sue and Steve" - Sue and Steve Santos; 3 - "Breeze Boys" - David Barresi, George Baskette and Carter Cobb. (5 teams entered)

TEAM BALLET: 1 - "Windborne" - Bill and Suzanne Edison; 2 - "Valley Wind Socks" - Terry Fenton and Jonathan Wotrich; 3 - "Sue and Steve" - Sue and Steve Santos. (5 teams entered)

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NOVICE PRECISION COMPETITIONS

As large national scope events continue to grow in both size and popularity, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to maintain the novice class as a category of competition. Because the group, nationwide, is by far the largest class of competitors, it would not seem unusual to see 150 fliers register in this category alone; something that would over-tax even the most competent event organizer. Yet, the novice category flier cannot be overlooked or passed over for a couple of very good reasons: first, they are the backbone of the sport, and second; they are the open class fliers of the future.

The solution to the problem of these great numbers of novice class fliers seems to lie in regional events hosted by local fliers and run exclusively for the novice and intermediate stunt kite flier. From the experience gained at the local or regional level, the participants should acquire the necessary skills to make the move into the larger circuits.

From the experience gained in the running of recently-held novice competitions in the Midwest, we have compiled a list of procedures and suggestions to help the local stunt kite fliers host small events in their own areas. True, at this point in stuntkiting there are no set rules, but the procedures have become somewhat standard. We would not risk the uproar that publishing rules would cause, but we

don't think that anyone will have cause for alarm if we suggest to event hosts some basic methods that have proven helpful in the running of a precision stunt kite competition. Please note that these are procedural guidelines only, in keeping

with current national procedures but not "written in stone." They are simple, easy, and require minimum manpower to run while, providing maximum satisfaction to both the event organizers and the novice fliers involved.

NOVICE PRECISION STUNT KITE COMPETITIONS (SUGGESTED) RULES AND PROCEDURES

Obviously the first thing you need to host a stunt kite event is a flying field. (You ultimately need three of them, stunt kites do consume space.) You'll need a **Stage-in Field** this is the field where the contestant will prepare for his competition, set up his kite(s), make final adjustments, and be ready to launch. **The Pit Boss** is in charge here. His job is to see that there are several competitors ready and waiting to compete. He should have the next contestant ready to fly in the competition field when called. The Pit Boss' primary job is to make sure that the judges never have to wait for a contestant. Stunt competitions are time consuming so BE READY (With 4-5 compulsories and a two minute free style, it takes on the average 10-15 minutes per contestant, with good winds).

The **Competition Field** should be at a minimum 300 ft. x 300 ft. oriented so that the largest part of the field is down wind. (This is difficult when winds are shifting or gusting.) In the center of this field and in charge here is the **Field Director**. He is in charge of the operation of the contest. His job is to call to the Pit Boss and give approximately two minutes warning so that the Pit Boss can ready the next contestant. The Field Director will tell the contestant when the judges are ready for each of the compulsory figures or free style. He will show the contestant a copy of each figure. He will keep track of the time that is left during the free style, and will give any time notification that the contestant requests. After the free flight, the Field Director will ask the competitor to move to the **Stage-out area**. This area should be adjacent to the competition field, but on the opposite side of the stage-in area. This area need not be very large. It is where the contestant will land and wrap up line and kite. (This should not be done on the competition field, for the sake of time efficiency.)

You will need at least three **Judges** (five is better). Judges should be chosen with great care, as their stunt flying experience is what will determine how fairly, efficiently, and competently the contestants feel the contest is being run. The judges should be at least of one level of experience higher than the contestants they are judging. (For example, Novice competitions should have at least Experienced class fliers as judges.) The judges need not have previously been competitors, but it helps. A judge should have well-rounded experience in several types of stunt kites and know what the flying characteristics of several types are. When the contestant is ready to fly, the head judge will inform the Field Director that they are ready to observe the maneuver. They should have the courtesy to pay strict attention to each flight (I.E., Difficult after observing 25-30 of the same figure). The judges should not comment on the figure so loudly that the contestant can hear. The judges should be fully aware of the penalty system that is incorporated into each competition. (This is one of the items that can, and has, been varied from event to event nationally, this will be discussed later in the article.) The judges

should have a copy of the compulsory maneuvers so they can compare them to the actual flight. Each judge should have a score sheet. (This will also be discussed later in the article.) After the compulsory maneuvers have been performed, the head judge will inform the Field Director that the Free flight can begin. After the free flight, the individual judges should take the time to add the scores up. This will make final score tabulation easier for the scorekeeper or event coordinator.

A **Scorekeeper** is not absolutely essential for a small event, but for the sake of speed and efficiency it is helpful. (We used no scorekeeper at either Chicago or Dayton. The Event coordinator tabulated the scores at the end of the event. This process did take an extra $\frac{1}{2}$ hour or so at the end of the event.) If a scorekeeper is available, they can add the judges' scores after one or several contestants have flown. They can then post the score on a main score sheet for the contestants to view.

Scoring Methods vary from event to event. The method that was used in the Midwest competitions was relatively simple. Each judge awards a point spread of 0-10 for each compulsory maneuver. A set amount of points is then awarded for the free flight. Mike Keating of the AKA competition committee suggests that the free flight score be divided into two parts, $\frac{1}{2}$ for Maneuvers-(variety and difficulty) and $\frac{1}{2}$ for Execution-(precision and timing). The judges record each score on the score sheet for the sake of fairness, the high and low judges' scores are thrown out. All the remaining scores are then added together to give the total for each contestant. Again, several methods have been used. For example, the high and low judges' scores for each compulsory were thrown out. Or the high and the low of the totals can be thrown out. (Both methods arrive at the same winners, so use the easiest method.)

Judging Criteria are the most difficult aspects of competitions to keep consistent from event to event. Each judge may feel a square is more or less square than another judge and will arbitrarily award a different number of points for each. (This problem will eventually be resolved nationally by the use of judges' seminars and workshops.) To give the beginning Novice Precision judges something to start with, we will quote directly from the AKA 1988 Nationals Guidelines for Judging Criteria: "Compulsory figures are designed to test the contestants' technical flying ability. Their score should depend on how closely their figure matches the ideal figure. The size of the maneuvers should be as large as possible without touching the ground. More credit should be given to those that exhibit technical skill by making full use of the 'wind window.' The speed of each maneuver should remain constant throughout the figure. In the free style the contestant demonstrates their ability in precision flying of a stunt kite. Their choice and use of maneuvers is entirely at their discretion and they should program this time to impress the judges with their expertise. Judges will look at the variety and difficulty of the maneuvers, and the perfection with which they are executed." A point to add is that the free flight is a performance and as such should have a definite pattern or "flow." It should have a beginning and an ending. Not just a group of disjointed maneuvers.

Penalties can and do vary from event to event nationally. For the sake of simplicity and efficiency of running a Novice event we will explain the penalty system used at the Midwest competitions. If the contestant crashes during a compulsory, (whether they can relaunch or not) they get a zero for that figure. If they crash before the minimum time set for the free style (contestants at Midwest had to fly more than one minute, but not longer than two minutes) they will receive a zero for the free flight score.

Ground touches are one of the areas that has been a matter of great discussion in national stunt kite circles. By a ground touch we mean a landing, walking the kite, or wing tip touch. If these types of maneuvers are allowed in the free flight, a larger and more complicated set of penalties will apply. These types of maneuvers truly show the class and

expertise of the competitor. We allowed touches at the Midwest Novice competitions. As Novices, and with that skill level, none of the contestants called any touches. (Most were not capable of them.) For ease and simplicity of running a novice event, these types of maneuvers should be excluded. This does not mean that they are or will be in national events. Simplicity in hosting an event is the purpose of this article and procedures are the primary discussion. The subject of penalties, ground touches, landings and judging criteria enters the realm of rules and we have no wish to open that Pandora's box at this time.

As was stated in the beginning of this article, we do not wish to make or enforce any rules, regulations or criteria. The thrust of this article is to give the Novice Coordinators of events a general procedure that is consistent with all nationally-run stunt kite competitions. This procedure will allow a novice to gain experience in "What they will have to do" at any stunt kite event, be it East, West, or the Nationals competitions. Efficient and informed novices make the best fliers. The most difficult thing for national coordinators to deal with is a novice that wanders about the field, ignorant of the general procedures of the event, both for the sake of efficiency and also for safety.

If you are interested in the process that is at this very moment taking place in the country: if you have suggestions, ideas or input for the standardization of stunt kite rules or if you want to learn more about what the current rules are for any of the national stunt kite competitions, we have listed below names and addresses of the head coordinators of the largest of these competitions. Any and all of these individuals and committees will be glad (anxious) for your input, and will be glad to share their information with you. Just remember that we are on the threshold of the beginnings of a true "sport," the sport of Stunt Kites.

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New Product Review

A WORD ABOUT OUR TESTING PROCEDURES ...

Each kite test is performed in three stages. In consideration of the manufacturers' suggested wind ranges, the kites are first flown at a middle-of-the-road setting: one that is within the range. They are then evaluated over two other sets of conditions, test flyability at or beyond the two extremes of high and low wind velocity. Our attempt is to establish realistic limits beyond which the kite either becomes unstable or unflyable.

In all cases, testing is done on stock kites as they come from the manufacturers. In the event that modifications are made to compensate for various conditions, they will be explained. If line is normally provided by the manufacturer as part of the retail package, it is used. In the event that line is not provided, we have followed the manufacturers' recommendations in selecting our test line.

We've been waiting for a commercially-made Fire Dart ever since we had the chance to fly one of the Chicago Fire's team kites. We were impressed with its abilities then but we were unsure about the subtle changes that might be made as the hand-made original underwent the transformation to production kite. Happily, this joint venture between the Chicago Fire Stunt Kite Team and Action Kites has gone very well. The kite is a beautiful flier and a faithful rendering of the originals.

Those familiar with the flying characteristics of Action's Super Sky Dart will find much that is familiar with this new model. The most startling difference, however, is in the amount of pull generated.

MODEL: FIRE DART

FABRIC WEIGHT: .75 oz. ripstop nylon

KITE WEIGHT: 340 GR.

COLORS AVAILABLE: varied

WIND RANGE: 3 to 15 mph

CONFIGURATION: delta-type 99 inches (wingtip to wingtip)

MFG.'S SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$150.00

MANUFACTURER: ACTION KITES

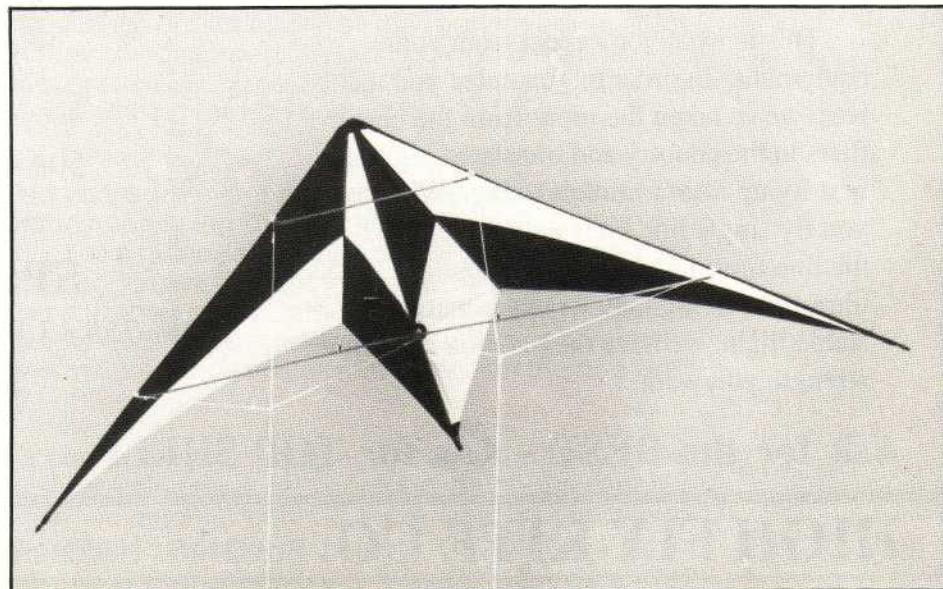
The Fire Dart is more precise in many maneuvers with much less arm being needed to produce the end result.

The Fire Dart flies well at all speeds within the wind range but it seems to really get on target in the 7-12 mph zone. Not to take anything away from the really low wind performances. The Fire Dart handled 3-5 mph with ease. I suspect that, without a lot of manipulation, it could fly in less. On the high end, the kite's performance is exceptional.

We tried to put the Fire Dart through everything that we could think of ... and it handled it all. In-place spins, decreasing squares, acute angle turns, stalls, floats, wing-tip landings, and yes even crashes ... this is one very nice kite. There was no bridle adjustment needed at any point.

When the wind crept up to 16mph or so, we found ourselves not wanting to put the kite back into the bag but, thankfully, our sense of reason finally prevailed. The Fire Dart is an ultra-light designed for winds of a less than strong nature. Flying in high wind can do irreparable damage to these lightweights from either a crash or sail-stretching standpoint.

There was an ever-so-slight bit of over-steer experienced during the first few minutes of flying, particularly as we were not used to flying a little higher aspect than unusual kite. We found that this was our getting used to the kite rather than something that was experienced by everyone who took the lines for a trial flight. In fact, when we took our test model off the field for the day, we had several offers from those who



wanted to buy it out of our hands.

The design of the kite is very much like the rest of Actions Sky Dart series. The departure is in the use of "standoffs" (the small spars which connect from the lower spreader spars to the sail). Although these small spars have shown up on nearly every brand of delta-shaped stunter around, they have been generally, home modified. Exactly what these small spars do is keep the sail taut and

help create an airfoil effect of the trailing edge of the kite ... both of which are very helpful in low-wind situations. The other, less technical thing that they do is make relaunching a breeze! The kite can be launched from a laying-on-its-back position virtually every time.

Sails, as we understand at this time, will be in the three-dimensional checkerboard pattern. They will be available in a variety of

colors. This should make the Fire Dart a strong contender in the team kite market.

Action Kites and the Chicago Fire Stunt Kite Team have come up with a real contender here. We don't have a favorite kite in our old kite bag. For years we've gone along with the old adage that our favorite kite was the last one that we acquired. The Fire Dart might just be able to alter our opinion.

C.B.

MODEL: HOT SHOT

FABRIC WEIGHT: .75 oz. ripstop nylon

KITE WEIGHT: 145 GR.

COLORS AVAILABLE: varied

WIND RANGE: 5 mph and up

CONFIGURATION: ram-air aerofoil

MFG's SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$75.00

MANUFACTURER: FLEXFOIL POWER KITES

After looking at a number of imitators, we finally had our chance to pick up a genuine, honest-to-gosh, four-foot Flexi last spring at Wildwood. After all is said and done, there's nothing like the genuine article. This kite flies beautifully ... like all of the other Flexifoils.

The new four-foot "Hot Shot" is the latest and smallest size in the line which now includes 4, 6, 10, and 16 foot widths. The Hot Shot is something quite apart from all of the others. It has been designed to fly on short lines (75 feet are recommended) and produce a relatively small amount of pull. This is a departure from the stacked sixes, multiple 10's, and the not-for-the-faint-of-heart 16. Here is a Flexifoil that one can feel very comfortable about handing to a youngster without having to worry about what country he may end up in when the ride is over.

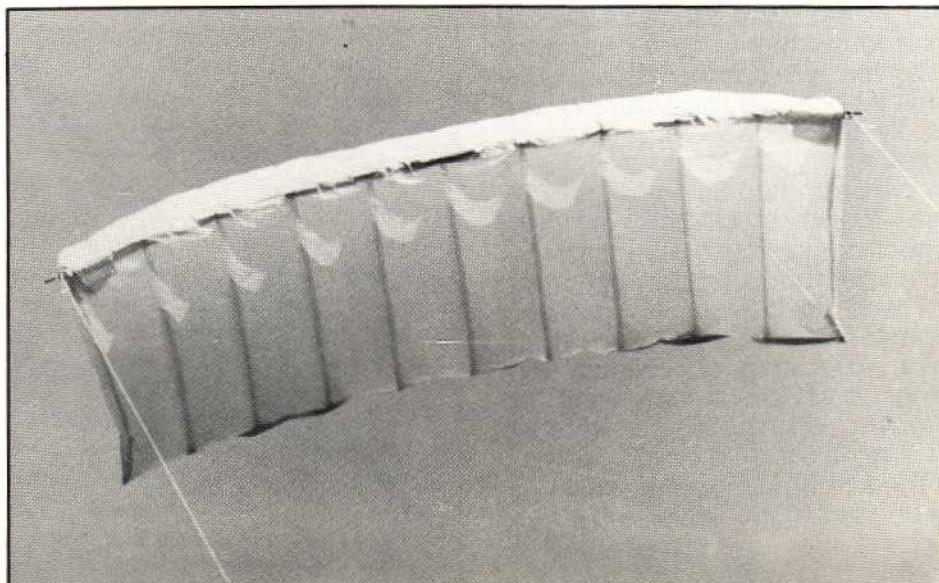
We were able to fly the Hot Shot comfortably down to the low 4 mph range and noticed very little change, other than the speed of the kite, when we took it out in 20+ mph. The kite's performing abilities are a mirror of its bigger brothers ... very smooth. And for those who might wish a little better test of their abilities, take this little guy out in about 25 mph with an old set of line ends. That's right, ends ... about 35 feet long. Be prepared to have your reaction time put to

the test because the kite will be nothing but a blur. It's fun and with the kite's ability to survive crashes, usually safe fun. In heavy wind situations, or if you like to jerk the kite around in the sky in attempting to get even more from it, the only "modification" that we might suggest is to tape the spar ends into the ferrule.

The Hot Shot is fun to fly by itself, and it's even more so to fly in stacks. We tested out three with super results. We were able to land right-side up and relaunch offwind nearly at will. We found, as well, with a little practice, that we could accomplish wing-tip touches and even stands with fair

accuracy. In the larger size Flexifoils, while definitely able to be accomplished, the maneuver is considerably more difficult. We also found that we could launch the stack from the usual upside-down position using the flip maneuver described in the owner's manual.

The more that one flies Flexifoils, the more one is made aware of the tether points that can be used on the spar. This is very important if you want optimum performance from your kite. Be careful not to attach your flying lines too near the end of the spar. This will pull the "envelope" too taut on the spar and not allow it to inflate properly.



We find it advantageous, once again, to carry a roll of electrician's tape to make our own "stops" on the spar for varying wind conditions.

As the Flexifoil is the current holder of the world's record for kite speed, we were not about to try testing this kite beyond its limits. We are sure that at some point it would give up the ghost, but not

in any sort of wind that we'd wish to be out in!

We encountered no problems with the new Hot Shot. It is a delight to fly, as are all of the Flexifoil products that we own. Inventor Ray Merry, has set out to make a kite that can be flown by the flier that likes the feel and performance characteristics of the Flexifoil design but may wish a tad

less in the muscle category.

He has done precisely that and in the bargain come up with a product that is purely fun to fly. We're going to see a lot of these little Hot Shots in the air and we'll bet that it won't be long before they, like their big brothers, start showing up in competitions, as well.

C.B.

MODEL: WINDJAMMER #5

FABRIC WEIGHT: .75 oz. ripstop nylon

KITE WEIGHT: 215 GR.

COLORS AVAILABLE: 15 (two color sail)

WIND RANGE: 5 to 35

CONFIGURATION: delta-type, 61 inches (wingtip to wingtip)

MFG'S SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$69.95

MANUFACTURER: TURNING POINT KITES

With all of the new kite manufacturers cropping up in the last year we initially viewed the Windjammer #5 with the eye of a trained skeptic. That, after all, is supposed to be our job ... separating the good from the bad in an objective fashion. Happily, the #5 winds up decidedly in the good column. So good, in fact, that it may well be at the head of the class.

The Windjammer #5 has been primarily available on the West Coast. This is something that is bound to change ... the kite is too good to be kept a regional secret. There are a number of small, delta-configuration kites on the market and we found the #5 to be as good as any of them and better than most.

In our first experience with the kite, we flew it at the low end of the stated wind range (4-7 mph) and found that in spite of its small size, the #5 handled things very well. At one point, we were invited to fly the squeeze position in a three-man team and slipped right in between two Spinoff Ultralights. We found ourselves constantly checking to make sure that our little kite hadn't "grown up" while it was airborne. It certainly handled like a larger one. There was no slurring on takeoff, landings and relaunches were no problem, and the #5 proves to be nothing less than a delight to fly.

The kite has surprisingly little pull, even in high winds, but we suspect that a stack of three or more could give a real wrestling

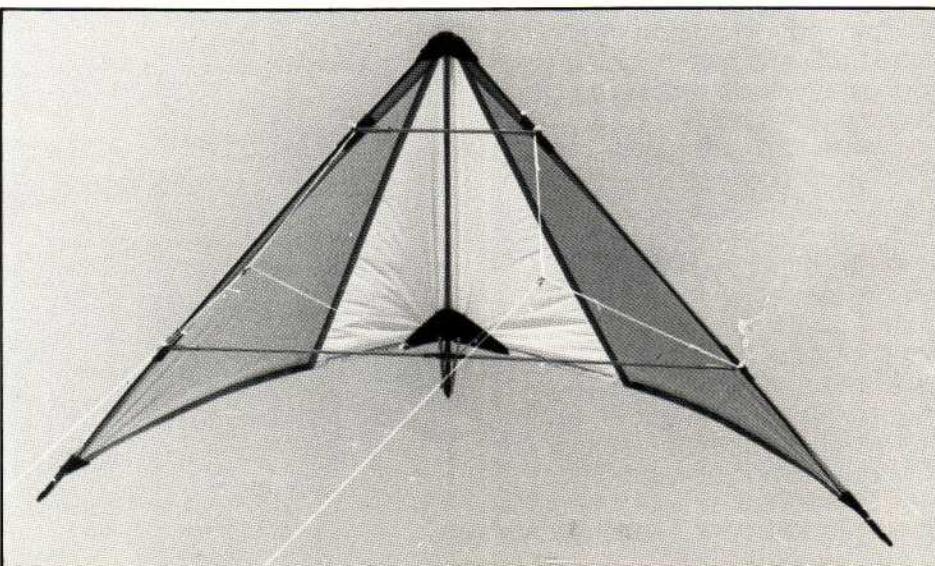
match. Although our tests were run on 135 lb. lines, lighter ones could have obviously been used, probably to greater advantage.

True to company promises, the #5 flew right out of the bag, with no bridle adjustments having to be made at any point during any test. It was when the wind picked up on the second day of testing to 13.5 to 17.8 mph that the kite really began to show its true potential. It had performed so well at lower speeds that we wondered if the inverse might be true ... the #5 makes use of the usual lighter sparring in the spreaders that we have been accustomed to seeing in light wind kites ... maybe this was a small ultralight. Nevertheless, the company literature said the high wind range was 35 mph so out we went with the #5 in hand.



As if to complement its earlier performance, the kite turned in more great numbers. It was tremendously fast but very controllable by just finger movement. Particularly impressive was the precision of which this little fellow was capable. There were no wobbles, no oversteering on the turns (no matter how sharp), no unannounced stalls, and no dumping of air at the edges of the wind. The sense of confidence that occasionally is lost when flying a small kite never leaves the flier with the #5. And, yes, it does make noise ... lots of it. If that's your particular gauge for a stunter, you won't be disappointed with the #5 ... it roars!

As in a number of other tests with kites of small sail areas and adaptable to higher winds, we were unable to test the kite at



and beyond its highest advertised speed. Winds of 30 mph plus are something of a rarity in these parts. We believe, however, that in this setting it might be helpful to substitute heavier spars for the spreaders. This, however, is sup-

position on our part and should not be construed as manufacturer's advice.

We found the workmanship on the #5 to be very good. After a total or nearly six hours in the air in the hands of at least a dozen fliers

of varying skill levels, there is little evidence that the kite has ever been taken out of the bag.

We found the #5 to be a consistently precise flier and, at a suggested retail of \$69.95, this kite should be a hot item.

C.B.

MODEL: RAVEN

FABRIC WEIGHT: .75 ripstop nylon

KITE WEIGHT: 430 GR.

COLORS AVAILABLE: BLACK

WIND RANGE: 10 to 35

CONFIGURATION: delta-type, cut-away nose,

99 inches (wingtip to wingtip)

MFG'S SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$110.

MANUFACTURER: CRYSTAL KITE CO.

The Crystal Kite Company makes some neat kites. Readers will remember the "Caution men-at-play" kite that appeared in the Wildwood section of SKQ #1. One of their newer models is an 8 foot somewhat abbreviated delta-type stunter called the Raven. At first glance this is an unusual kite ... the sail area just behind the nose has been cut away on each side and the trailing edge is moderately scalloped.

Additionally, the Raven sports a special heavy duty nose-piece. It is covered in a leather-like material giving it the appearance of a boxer's glove ... really quite sturdy. It was that particular part of the kite that we tested first during the low-wind tests ... and we gave it a real work out.

Attempting to fly the Raven in low winds is somewhat like trying to parallel-park a very large truck ... it can be done but not without effort and practice. We were really stretching it down further than we had a right to in 5 mph.

The Raven is designed as a moderate-to-high wind kite and once we managed to hit the low end of the manufacturer's operating wind range, performance picked up nicely. The best situation showed up, as expected, in the 13-18 mph section. The sail was a bit too tight for our personal preferences but the kite did prove to be airworthy and performed as advertised. Turning ability was a bit sharper than we had anticipated which is always a nice plus. There was a bit of oversteer coming out of tight spins.

The Raven is a heavy-duty kite in all respects. Weightwise, it has the

highest kite weight of any that we have in the bag compared to overall size. While this weight is noticeable in the air, it does not seem to greatly impair the Raven's flying ability. In higher wind situations, in fact (20 mph +), the additional heftiness provided a very nice stabilizing factor.

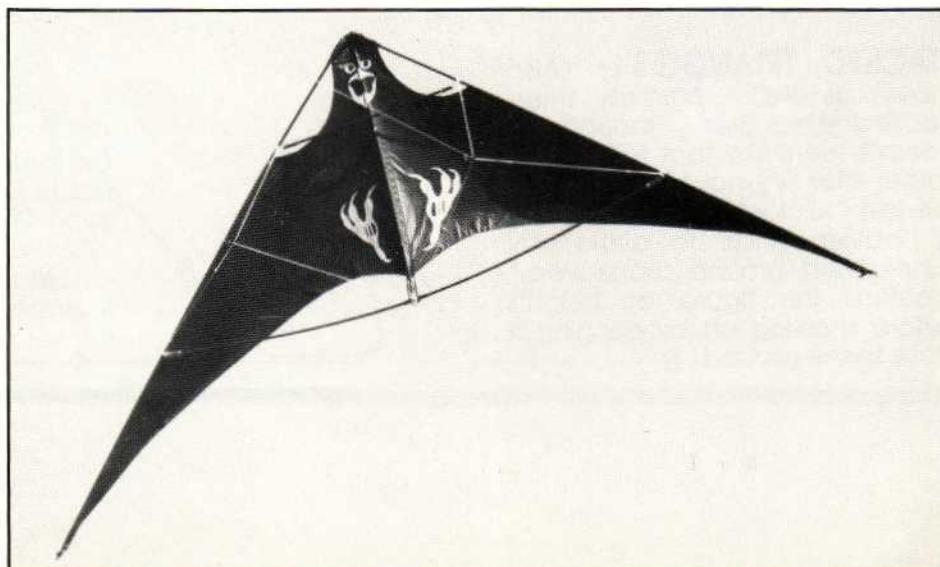
Whatever the aerodynamics of the design do for the Raven, it cannot be more than they do for it aesthetically. The applique work notwithstanding, for those fliers who don't have a particular interest in birds of prey, Crystal Kite has produced a product that is unique in appearance. Personally, we feel that the outline of the kite is enough to carry it without the graphics, but that is largely a personal preference. We'd also like to see models in other plain colors, and, perhaps a lighter version.

We found the Raven to be indestructable by our standards. This was due to, in large aegree, the

C.B.

nosepiece. We crashed it time after time in an attempt to wear it out ... and couldn't. This is not to say that it will absorb a direct hit from, say, a large-bore hunting rifle, but it sure can take a punch!

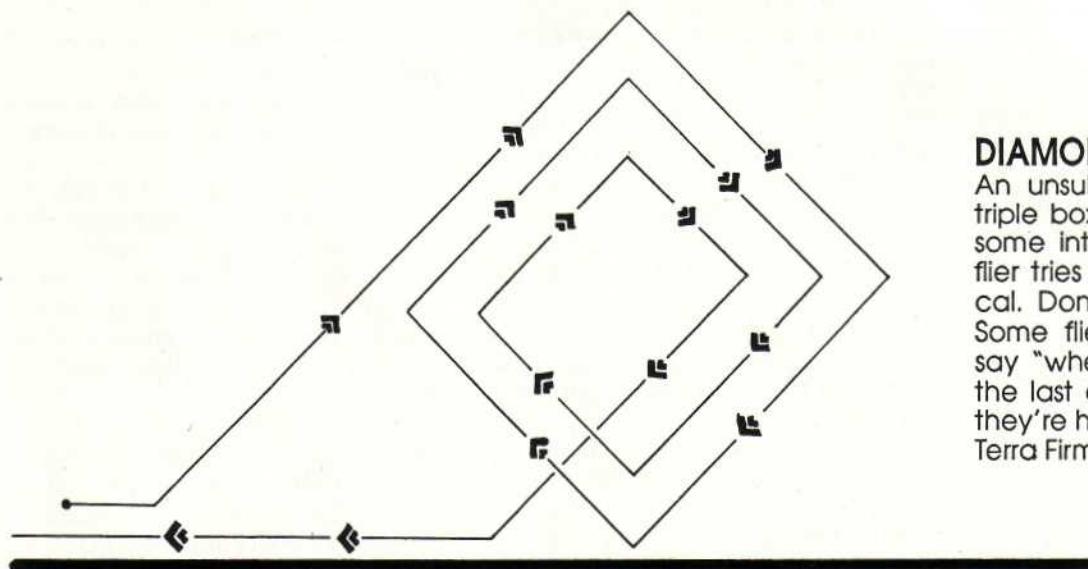
When all is said and done, the Raven is a visually attractive kite that flies well, particularly in moderate-to-high wind conditions. We would not call it a beginner's kite, for there is an amount of skill required to fly a flatter-sailed kite than one with more billow. It is a heavy kite, which holds advantages of stability for those who will take the time to learn them. It will take a "grounding," perhaps better than any kite that we have yet flown and that's got to be a big plus in anyone's book. If you're looking for that particular kite which will be noticed in the sky among all of the familiar-looking delta-type stunters, the Raven is definitely the kite to go into the air!



Stunt Library

Well, you should all have mastered the group of kite benders from last issue and just when you thought it was safe to go back to the old flying field ... here's another batch. Thanks to Darrin Skinner of San Jose, CA, for the Heartsclamation figure: it's tough!

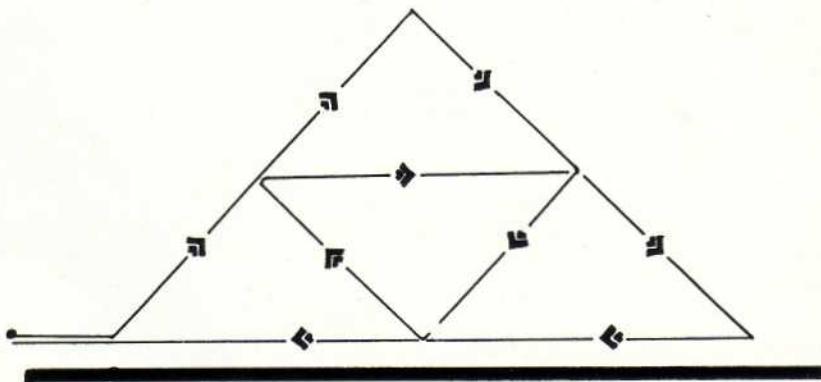
Just a word to all the rest of you line twisters: send us your moves and be a part of this little bit of history. You may even become a legend in your own time!



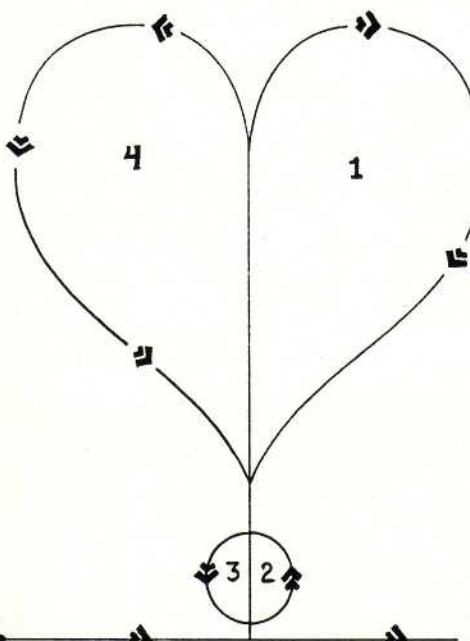
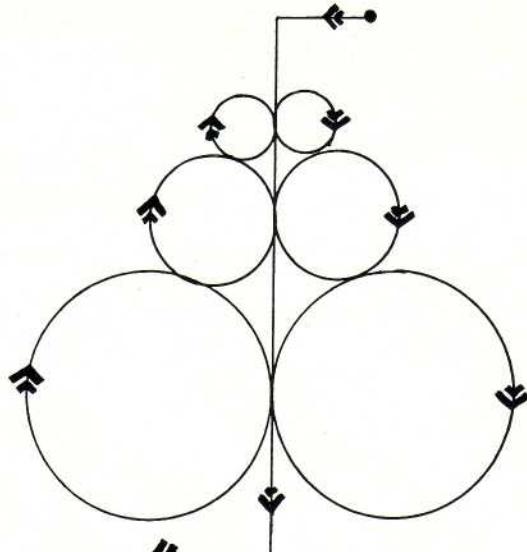
DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER -

An unsubtle variation of the old triple box figure, this one presents some interesting problems as the flier tries to keep things symmetrical. Don't discount the exit turn! Some fliers have a tendency to say "whew!" after coming out of the last diamond and forget that they're heading towards good old Terra Firma!

STACKED TRIANGLES - (Also known as 495) - Basically three stacked triangles, though it doesn't seem like that to the flier. Larger kites will have trouble with the last "suicide" turn, particularly in heavier winds. To avoid any "unplanned ground maneuvers," practice this figure at heights before showing off by bringing it close to the ground.

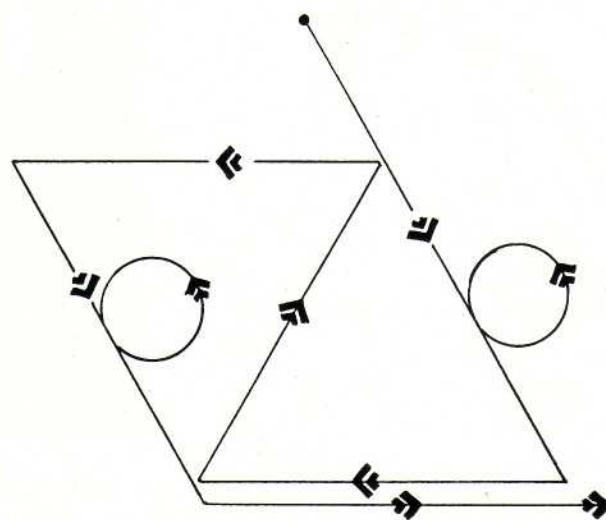


MORE OR LESS - Either increasingly large or small linked circles. This figure is able to be flown either top to bottom or the reverse. Whatever the choice, there's a penalty to pay: Too little wind to complete the snap circles at the top, or too little space to complete the large ones at the bottom. Bear in mind that the figure is symmetrical and that each succeeding pair of circles is one-half the diameter (or twice if being flown backwards) of the pair before it. Good luck!



HEARTSCLAMATION - This is one of the more difficult moves that we've ever flown. It is basically an increasing radius turn in phase one, a pivot (or at least a very tight radius circle) to reverse direction in phase two, and a decreasing radius turn in phase three. Very hard to keep symmetrical! Submitted by: Darrin Skinner of San Jose, CA.

DOUBLE TRIANGLES - (Move #3 - 2nd West Coast Nationals) - This one was such a bear to fly that we couldn't help but include it in the old library. Larger wings will have trouble with the first and last turns. Again, a figure well worth practicing at heights before bringing it down close to the ground for the judges.





Calendar Of Events

JANUARY 11-14, KTA Convention and Trade Show, San Diego, CA. Kona Kai Beach and Tennis Resort. Contact: Mike McFadden, 590 Chestnut Street, San Francisco, CA 94133. Telephone: 415-956-3181.

2nd weekend in FEBRUARY, 4th Annual Ice & Snow Fly, Erie, PA. Stunt Kite Flying on Presque Isle Bay. Kites, cold, and plenty of fun with Spectrum flight. Contact: Lee Sedgwick at 814-864-3261 or Sue Taft at 814-864-0511.

MARCH 11-12-13, 6th Annual Hawaii Challenge, Kapiolani Park, Honolulu, HI. All classes, single and dual line ... 3-day carnival. Contact: Robert Loera, % Kite Fantasy, 2863 Kalakaua Ave., Honolulu, HI 96815. Telephone: 808-922-5483.

MARCH 18-19, Reno International Kite Festival. Single & Dual line competitions. \$1,000 prize for best stunt kite team ballet. Workshops and demonstrations.

Telephone: 702-827-7636.

MAY, Great Lakes Stunt Kite Championships. All classes. Location to be announced. Contact: Mackinaw Kite Co., 301 N. Harbor, Grand Haven, MI. 49417, 616-846-7501; Sandcastle, 356 River St., Manistee, MI 49660, 616-723-4344; Grand Bay Kite Co., 121 E. Front St., Traverse City, MI 49684, 616-929-0607.

JULY 1-2, The North Coast Stunt Kite Games, Toledo, OH. Campout and stunt kite fun fly hosted by the Black Swamp Air Force. Contact: Uncle Wilbert, 1951 Potomac Drive, Toledo, OH 43607. Telephone: 419-537-7036.

JUNE 24-25, Midwest Novice Stunt Kite Competitions, Schaumburg, IL. Novice and Experienced Class Precision Competition. Contact: Al Hargus: 312-545-9572.

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND, 4th Annual East Coast Stunt Kite Championships, Wildwood, NJ. Pre-registration required. Contact: Fran Gramkowski, 80 West End Ave., Haddon Field, NJ 08033. Telephone: 609-429-6260.

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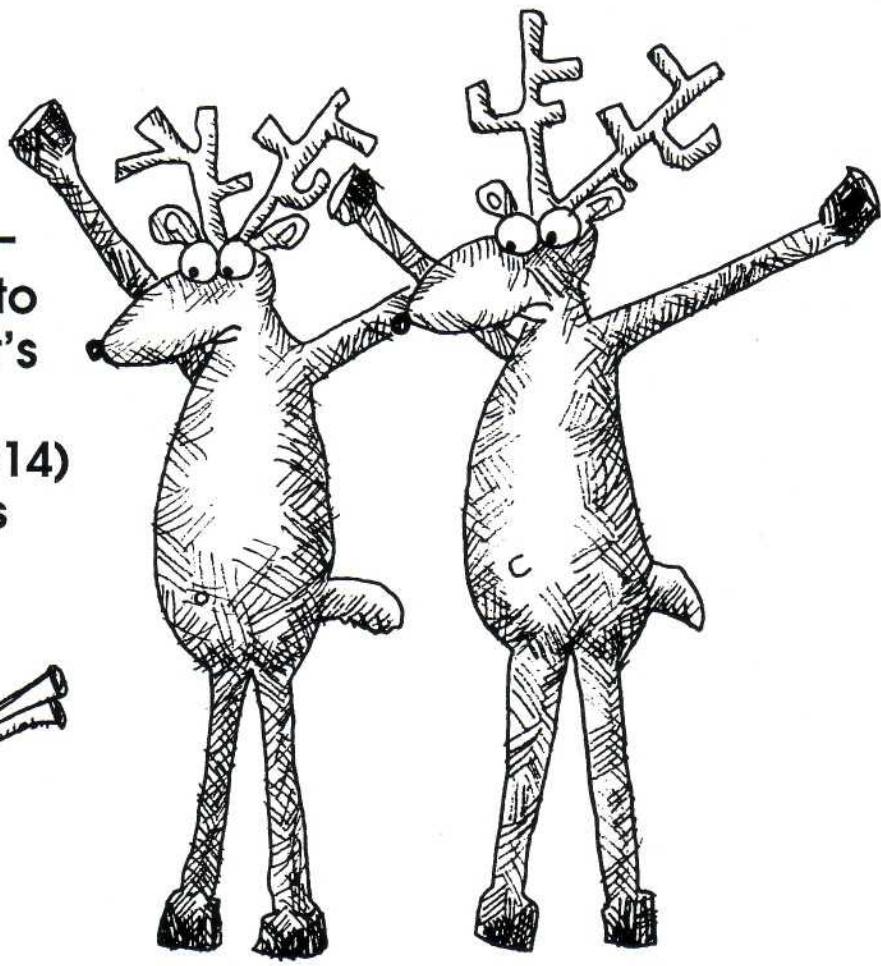


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