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The Columbian Way

By Ron Despojado

I always enjoy receiving an invitation to kite festivals. It gives me a chance to travel at very little cost to me plus I get to meet many international kite enthusiasts.

This year I was again invited to Colombia South America. My host again was The Yaripa Organization, a kite and ecological organization



that promotes kiting to kids and puts on exhibitions throughout Colombia. The Colombian way of scheduling is unlike what we are used to in the US. They have a very casual attitude about when things are to happen, and last minute changes are very common, including flights. I was told a couple years ago it was "The Colombian Way".

My invitation came in July and I responded back with a need to know their schedule of events. We exchanged e-mails all the while not really getting a solid schedule. Then the e-mail came that stated "we are so happy you are coming." I guess I was going. I received my airline tickets less than 18 hours before my departure. I had to go to the courier's main office to get them since I missed the delivery at my residence. This late scheduling was again attributed to "the Colombian way."

From San Diego I flew to LAX, then straight to Bogota. Upon arrival I gathered my luggage, went through customs, and walked towards the exit, hoping some familiar face would wave at me. Through the crowd I saw a small paper kite being waved and a sign saying "Yaripa". This must be my contact. The two young men took my luggage and walked me to a van. I was told we would wait for a few more. Soon the van was full of kites, kiters, and kiters' clothes. I was checked in to a high-rise hotel, sharing a suite with two guys from Argentina and one from Holland.

The next day we were scheduled to hold workshops. These workshops were small groups of school kids who were to learn to make kites from various parts of the world, depending on which international guest was teaching it.

Within our group of guests, there were 30 total- the most they

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The President's Message

Hello Kite Flyers,

My name is Daryld, and I am glad to be your new President for 2001. I will do my best for the Club to promote Kiting and increase membership, as I am always down at the field or at Kite County.

As most of you know I am in the Floor Covering Industry. Custom wood floors are my specialty. This is my 28th year in the business. If I had gone into the military at 18 I would be a General by now, but I chose to be my own boss. So in doing this I am able to fly when the wind permits. Just like a surfer surfs

when the surf is up!

Along with flying, I love to camp and fish. My wife Sandy and I have been all over the country camping. Last year we included Alaska to our 'been there done that states. Beautiful country, but far too many trees and rivers to get and serious flying done.

Thank you for your support. And, if there is anything I can do for you don't hesitate to contact me.

Humbly Yours, Daryld Gutierrez

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Editors Note:

Once again this newsletter is out because Ron Despojado bailed me/us out. Thanks Ron!. But... If you are getting tired of the Ron Despojado Newsletter let us know what you have been up to. Surely someone besides Ron is out there having fun.

Don't Forget To Visit The San Diego Kite Club on the Web at:

www.sdkc.net

The V.P. Report:

What's Happenin'

Once again, the Club is sponsoring a set of trophies for the AKA National Convention's competition which will be held in Billings in October. The Experienced Precision Fighter Kite trophies will include the Club name and we'll also be mentioned when the trophies are given out at the Awards Banquet. For only \$125. it's a great way to support fighter kite competition, the AKA, and get a little recognition in the kiting community to boot.

While in Brookings for the 9th Annual So. Oregon Kite Festival in July, I was fortunate enough to chat with Ron and Sandy Gibian. I filled him in on what's been going on down here for the past couple years and even asked if they'd be willing to come our way and put on some sort of event for the Club. They are excited about the possibilities. All we have to do is figure out what we'd like and when and see if it can be worked into their busy schedule. The idea of a kite-making workshop came up as did the idea of a display of Ron's kites and banners at the Park on a meeting day. THAT would certainly attract a LOT of attention! So be thinking about these and any other ideas that occur to you. Come to a meeting and let us know your thoughts or email me if you can't attend.

Also in my kite travels this summer, I caught up with Brian Todd, a flyer from the Bay Area who has started talking up the idea of a West Coast Kite Club cook book. He envisions a collection of our favorite pot luck recipes illustrated by a fellow named Boris, who has done a number of illustrations for the likes of Dodd Gross and Jeff Howard. Check out Brian's web site for examples (http://trickthewind.kitelife.com). Joanne M'Clary was going to try and meet up with Brian at WSKIF to compare notes since she had investigated doing something like this, too. Hopefully, we'll be ready for the next step soon. The books, once published, could be used as fund-raisers as well as a great way to get the recipes for all those yummy dishes we enjoy so much at pot lucks.

With the coming of Fall, it's time to start planning for Thanksgiving week at the Oasis in Rosarito, Mexico. Picture this ... sipping your morning coffee on the balcony of your 2-room suite overlooking the beach, watching dolphins frolic in the surf, kite fliers on the beach revelling in the lack of early morning wind until you've had your fill, grab your kite bag and walk down to join them just as the wind picks up. You fly, chat with other flier friends, maybe take a long walk down the beach, come back and have a margarita before it's time to get ready to head into Puerto Nuevo for Maria's famous Baja lobster. It's a wonderfully relaxing way to spend as many days as you can. After our exceedingly warm reception last year, I thought I might be able to negotiate us a better room rate if I knew that a certain number were planning to go this year. The NCKC contingent arrives on the Saturday before the holiday and leaves the following Saturday. The rest of us start showing up later in the week for as many days as we can spare. For the past few years, the rate has been \$75 for a suite that includes a master bedroom with TV, phone, wet bar and small refrigerator, and a second room with a sofa bed, table and chairs, TV, phone, etc. Again, please contact me as soon as you can so I have as much bargaining power as possible.

The Club is involved again this year with the annual Pacific Beach Festival. Unfortunately, it's the same time as the AKA National Convention, the first weekend in October, so not all of us will be able to attend. If you're in town, plan to come out and demo for the crowd or help with the membership booth. Please contact Greg Lawrence (glawren2@san.rr.com) for details on this event

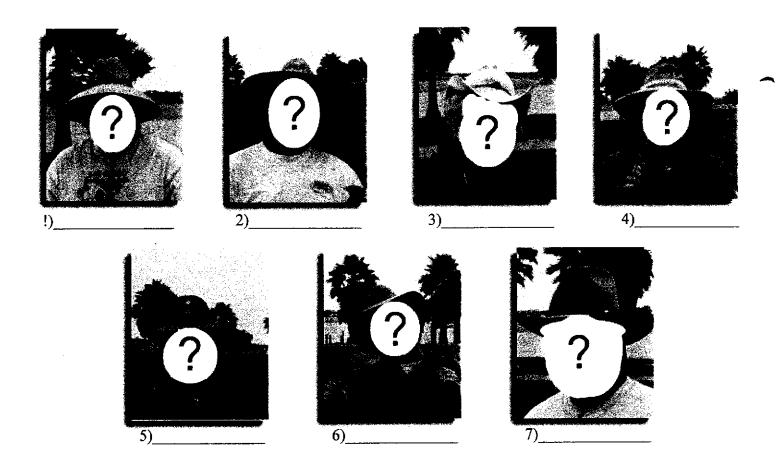
For anyone who hasn't been to a meeting in a while, you're really missing out on some fun. We have a bunch of new members including at least 4 or 5 kiddos and excited, new fliers. The Park will be less crowded and parking easier than during the peak of the summer so come on out, meet our new members and have fun with us next time ... the second Saturday of each month.

See you there! KiteGal

Events are subject to last minute changes.

For more information contact Joanne M'Clary (619) 223-

Do you have a small news article that we should know about? Let your fellow members know by sending it to us for the upcoming newsletter.



Can You Name The Big Hatted Individuals Pictured Above?

All of the people in these pictures are current club members. All have been to recent club meetings.

How many can you identify?

Can't identify all of them? Most of them?

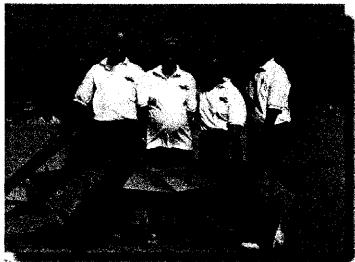
Any of them?

Why Not? Missed A Few Meetings Lately?
Come on out and fly and meet your fellow club
members!



The Birth Of A Team

by Ron Despojado



It an started with the unsuccessful availays a world operative. Championships. In 2000 I was invited as an individual competitor. Since the AKA does not have the discipline of Quadline Pairs, Susan Shampo was suggested to be a partner. Sounded great, Susan is one of those phenomenal dual line fliers and at the time a vastly improving quad flier. Our pairs name was humorously suggested by AKA President Richard Dermer as "DespoShampo", we kind of liked it so it stuck. As luck would have it, the 2000 Malaysia event was never held.

This year, Malaysia again was a scheduled event. DespoShampo was again an obvious choice for quad pairs, since Susan and I were already invited as individual fliers. I was then approached by the AKA to organize a quadline team. UK transplants Mark & Jeannette Lummas were going to Malaysia also as a quad pairs entry, so it was only logical to combine the two pairs. In the limited amount of time we had, we were simply "Team Revolution" for obvious reasons. We practiced precision figures in the weeks preceding the event as well as a ballet. Our ballet selection was the Lummi ("Lummi"- the correct plural of Lummas) already established pairs routine to "The Entertainer". Mark simply modified the program from two to four kites. We were excited, we were confident, we were having fun.

We were not going. The Malaysia event again was cancelled / postponed indefinitely due to sponsorship availability. Déjà vu.

A few months later we were invited to the San Ramon Wind & Art Festival on Memorial Day Weekend. This event typically

kicks off the kiting summer season. We flew as individuals, two pairs, and as a team. We scrambled for another name and someone said "Too Much Fun". For about 8 hours my modified suggestion of "Team 2 Much 4 Fun" was our name. Since we flew two and four line kites I wanted the numbers somehow in the name. But I was outvoted. It didn't make sense I was told... I replied as to why must it make sense? All this time Jeannette wanted to expand the team. Jeanette was a couple months from delivering and adding another to the total number of Lummi.

A few weeks earlier there was a call for a professional kite flying team to fly in Venice beach in June. I suggested that we apply for it, since it was to be a paying performance. I sent our qualifications to Heal The Bay (HTB) organization in Santa Monica. They we duly impressed and wanted to talk compensation. I gave an initial figure of 4 team members with a possible 6 (Bert Tanaka and Alan Stroh were potential replacements / team members) to fly as individuals, 2 pairs, and a single team. I gave a dollar figure per person plus expenses. I was asked what expenses were and said "gas money and lunch". They countered with having the expenses included. I agreed. Then they gave a lower figure, which I felt was our bottom line. I said okay, but anything lower and I have to talk to the team. She agreed.

Soon I was off to Japan by invitation and all team activity was on hold. When I returned I spoke to the HTB representative to finalize our agreement. Her recollection was an even lower figure. I told her that was NOT what we agreed on. She thought we would do it just for gas money and lunch. Whoaaa!!!! We were at an impasse, but that quickly was resolved.



Jeannette then informed us she had a routine choreographed to "Oliver!" which includes two and four line kites. We only

Continued Page 10

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have ever had. They were from a lot of South American countries including Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Guatemala; European countries France, Italy, Germany, The Ukraine; also Canada, China, Malaysia, and technically only one from the USA but officially none.

I was the lone invitee from the United States, however I was never introduced as such. In years past when there were other Americans I was presented as someone coming from my ethnic background in order to appear there were more international guests. But this year, I was never an American. Some speculated that it was safer for me to not be known as an American traveling to Colombia in light of the political environment. Kidnapping, I was told, was a lucrative business. All I knew was that I was a gringo no matter where I was from.

The following day we were scheduled to go to the main park and pass out kites to maybe 2,000 or more school children. All during the week there were rumors of taxi and bus strikes. Unfortunately the strike affected the children and we were at the park with our own toys. Some of us flew our kites. but the wind was very light and many tried our hand at boomerangs. There was a makeshift camp for us surrounded by crowd control barriers. The camp included two porta-pots that became the practical joke for a number of days. Whenever someone entered, a bamboo pole was propped against the door to lock that person it. Most forced their way out, some just screamed something in their native language but eventually was let out. It was like a college fraternity party wherever we went. Practical

jokes
abounded
and
laughter
was always
the result.
Even
though
many could
not speak
to another,
we were all
having fun.

Page 6



Inere was nothing scheduled for us the next day so we split into several groups and toured the city. I strolled through downtown where there also happened to be a marathon going on. Food vendors on the street had very appetizing items for sale. Some had pastry, a lot had fresh tropical fruit, corn on the cob, but I had my eye on the pork! I saw a roasted pig on a cart. Upon a closer look, the pig was just the head and the exterior skin. From the backside of the pig was filled with roasted pork, rice, and vegetables. The pig itself held all the food inside. I bought a serving that was just fantastic. Later I saw a cart with "chicharones." For those unfamiliar, chicharones is the Spanish word or term for what we know as fried pork rinds. But this was the real deal- the seller just pulled out a piece from the deep fat fryer. There was a layer of pork skin, a layer of pork fat, and a layer of pork meat-think about it-deep fried pork fat. I ordered up a serving and she threw it in a bag, sprinkled some salt into it, shook it and handed to me. OH MAN!!! All I needed was some tortillas and salsa, but by itself it was one of those genuine "guy foods."

The day finally arrived when we would present a festival in the big arena. The weather started off questionable with dark clouds and high winds coupled with light rain. But that soon ended and we were blessed with blue skies and puffy white clouds. The wind was the best it had been in my three years there. It ranged from 5 to at times 12 miles per hour. The direction changed only 90 degrees at the most. The single line fliers were scheduled to come onto the arena floor by country. Stunt kite performers were presented individually. The night before I listened to a piece of music from a fellow stunt kiter and I knew I wanted to fly to it. Even though I never practiced it, I decided to go for

it. There were no judges, no points, no penalties, no trophies- just a crowd anxiously awaiting. The music started and it was going well. I got accustomed to the tempo rather quickly and was satisfied with what I was doing. The wind did die and change direction in the middle, leaving my kite flat for a few seconds, but a ground crew quickly got me back into the sky. I finished and was rewarded with resounding applause. This was cool.

In the middle of the day I was asked to do my "Pretty Woman" routine and that too went well. though my kites did partially get tangled near the end. Still, the crowd was always appreciative. Near the end of the day I asked if I could do just one more performance. There was time and I needed to get ready right away. I handed my music to the sound crew and took to the floor. This would be unlike anything I had experienced in a The wind, though bumpy, was long time. reasonably constant. The music was clear due to their totally superior sound system. My kite took off and I did my best to present a smooth program. During the performance the crowd would applaud as the kite interpreted the music at various passages. Near the end of the music I could just feel the crowd's impending applause. There comes a time once in a very great while that you feel you have the crowd in the palm of your hand- this was that time. Everything is just going the right way,

so much so that you feel as if you are not the one controlling the kite but rather just making sure the kite doesn't fly away as it conducting the music. The music finished and I landed on a wingtip then had the kite take a slow bow. The crowd was ecstatic. I couldn't believe it- it was like I was a hero! If I could only bottle-up that feeling and share it.

At the end of the day I walked near the edge of the crowd and shook a lot of hands. Spanish was spoken to me of which I could not understand but their smiles and tracing figures in the sky with their index fingers sent the message. I could not resist these three beautiful Colombian girls wanting to take a picture with me. I couldn't figure out who was enjoying this more. I put my kite away and saw the three girls again. I got a few trading cards (I still have a few hundred more) and handed one to each. Soon a few more hands reached out, so I passed them out- then faster and faster as the number of hands multiplied. Within seconds I was totally surrounded and could not pass out any cards, I felt hands grabbing at mine and I knew I had made a mistake. Was this the kidnapping of the gringo American that some feared? Soon I heard yelling and two security guards pull me out and then across the crowd barrier (which I WASN'T supposed to cross). From there I still passed out cards and signed them, only this time I had a guard next to me, and I stayed on the secure side of the barriers. It's nice to be liked, but not to where personal safety is involved. Later I found out that a

The International Guests





securely guarded tent- specifically a camera, wallet, and passport.

The day after the festival we held another workshop, and this time the children showed up in masses. There must have been 5,000 children, all with different colored uniforms depending on their school. They played some games in the park until it was time to pass out the kites. Each school's group leader received enough kites for their school and helped to assemble them. The assembly consisted of opening the wrapper, removing the kite, and attaching the flying line to the bridle. Soon kids were running all over the place, flying, dragging, and tangling their kites. The wind ranged for nothing to maybe 10 mph.

As guests we exchanged many items from our countries. There were the usual pins, coins, cards, buttons, t-shirts, and hats. But I received something that has got to be a first. From Argentina I received a pair of socks that had their kite club logo woven into the sock, not silkscreened or a sewn on patch, but woven in, much like a pattern in a high quality ski sweater.

Each of the last two days I got off the elevator to see about 6 military uniformed guards. As I walked down the hall they whispered to each other. They had a watchful eye on the staircase and corridor window as well. The guards appeared to be securing one half of the floor. We come to find out

on our floor and was there for a conference. These were his bodyguards. I didn't know whether to feel safer because of the guards or in danger because there needed to be guards.

The following day was to be my time to leave. As was intended, my tickets were revised to a 7 day stay instead of 11. I said my emotional good-byes to many that I may never see again, but will always seek out. I was driven to the airport and checked-in at the airline. While waiting in line there were two men who recognized me from the festival. I was asked to open my kite travel case because something that appeared strange on the x-ray. When opened, the guard pointed to a small white box. "Tarjetas" I said. I opened it up and in it were my trading cards. She smiled and asked for one. The two guys who recognized me also asked for one. Upon check-in I find since the ticket had been changed, there was a penalty that had not been paid. I had no choice but to pay at that time. Then come to find the plane would be leaving almost two hours late. "The Colombian Way" I thought. No real problem until I realize I would miss my flight from LAX to San Diego that evening. Since it was the last flight to San Diego from LA, the airline had my ticket switched at the other airline counter and told me they would pay for a hotel and transportation in Los Angeles. They typed a letter and e-mailed them, all I had to do was present the letter to the supervisor in LA.

When I arrived in LA, about midnight, I struggled with my luggage and proceeded to find the airline supervisor. I had a bad feeling... all the airline counters were closed. Where do I sleep? I wondered if in Bogota they had any clue this would happen. I call a nearby motel and they send a shuttle. I needed only to sleep maybe 5 hours before getting on my connecting flight so I tell the motel front desk that I have a 7:00 flight and need the shuttle. The next morning I wake up on time, and check-out. I asked for the shuttle and was informed the next one out was 7:00. I reminded them that I requested a shuttle the night before. They looked at their log and saw 7:00 for a shuttle and NOT for a flight time. Time to call a cab. The cab ride was short in distance but long on time and money. I was dropped off at the correct airline counter to find a vecerrry long line. I knew I would miss my flight and accepted the potential hassles. I was rescheduled on a flight later that morning and finally made it back to San Diego.

So nice to be home. This was a very enjoyable trip with the exception of the departure day events. All the international guests exchanged different ways to say "I don't speak Spanish" in their native language. The diverse backgrounds of all of us had a common bond of a love of kites. The camaraderie, laughter, hugs, smiles, and generosity of our hosts: Jairo and Ines, made us all feel as if we had been together for more than a mere week. They made us feel special- this definitely was "The Colombian Way".



Our First Berkeley Pilgrimage

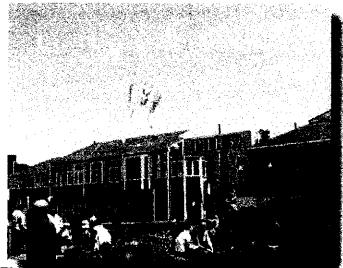
by Rick Spurgeon

My family and I traveled to our first big kite festival this summer, Berkeley 2001. I have dragged them to several local events but nothing that required hotel reservations.

The price I had to pay was arriving several days early and playing tourist in and around San Francisco. Trying to make the best of a bad situation I decided to try and get pictures of a homemade sled kite at variours landmarks. This kite had the name of the company I work for on it and I could show off the pictures to my workmates. Making the jealous was the goal but it was probably a long shot at best.

It didnt work out.

The first morning at Pier 39 was the beginning and end of the project. The sun was out but it was very windy and gusty. I managed to loop the bridle over a lamp post and had to cut it and then retie it. After several tries my wife did get the picture though.



The Tollowing days were cloudy, cold, an dreary. Throw in a bout of the stomach flu and I lost interest entirely. We did mange to have a good time and saw all the sights we planned on. Just no more kite pictures.

By the weekend and the festival the skies were clear, my stomach had settled down, and the wind was blowing. Following what turned out to be good advice, we arrived at the field way early and were able to park in close. As the family pack mule I was very gratelful.

Continued Page 11

had 4 weekends to learn it. The first day we went through about three and one half minutes of the ballet. That was pretty tough. Jeannette meticulously assembled the ballet, which was rich in content and variety, and worked subtly with the melody. Then I found out that the entire ballet was almost nine minutes long! I thought there was NO WAY we would learn it in time. I felt the near four minutes we had polished would be enough. During the weekends of practice at Belmont Shore we were always eager for an audience. At times we would just be standing around when a crowd would gather and we would quickly say to them-"hold on a minute- do you want to watch us perform?" We persevered and were ready for the HTB event in Venice. A few days prior Mark asks me to verify that we will have a CD player and sound system. I was sure we would but asked anyway. Their reply was "I did not know you flew to music" and there was no way they could get a sound system out to our location. We didn't know what to think. We decided the show will go on, since we had put so much work into it. We got fresh batteries for the boom box and we had our music for anyone behind us.

HTB had scheduled us for three performances throughout the day. However, since we were so far away from the Venice boardwalk, it was questionable whether anyone would actually make a special trip to see us. So- as any performer would dowe flew our ballet maybe 25-30 times to anyone that would watch us. We were very happy with our day of flying. Our only disappointment was we felt we really did not have a full and appreciative audience at any one time. We knew that our time together was growing short since Jeannette was growing big. There would be one more potential performance- the SCSKL event in Belmont Shores in July.

It was mid morning at Belmont Shores when we were given the field to set-up. All the while I at least was very excited to show our hard work to people that would really appreciate it. We had our team gear on and kites lined up and music cued. The





Wind Was satisfactory for Jeanneue to my ner thurium cual inte kite. In higher winds the Lithiums were abandoned due to the heavier pull and Rev's flown in their place. But not today, today would be the pinnacle of many hours of concentrated practice. With a hearty shake of the leg, the music started. We were off! Shortly into the program Susan I think, turned the wrong way. When I saw this my concentration was off for about 8 seconds and I totally blanked. But soon I got back into sync. Everything was going well, it was a feeling of inner excitement yet you did not want it to take control of you. I felt we were riding a fine line and was hitting everything as rehearsed. The transitions from kite to kite, and from passage to passage had no hitch. Oh man- it was sooooo cool!

As we were finishing the program, which included a dive towards the ground, slide, and twist by all of us, I snagged a line from one of the parked Lithiums. I held steady while Mark, Jeannette, and Susan slid and twisted to the final beats. We simultaneously hit the ground and we call "OUT!" I heard enthusiastic applause from the crowd. What a feeling!! It was our debut to the kiting community as well as temporary swan song.

And now that there has been another debut-Benjamin Stephen Lummas-born July 20, 2001, we are anxiously awaiting the time we can fly again.

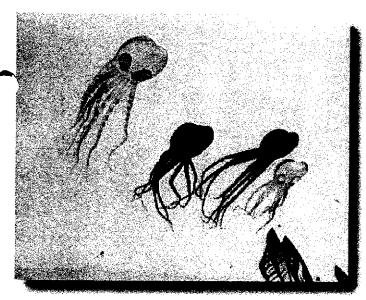
If you want to see us fly, just ask us.

Photos By Neil Tuthill

Mystery Photo Answers:

- 1) Alan Watson 2) Bill Haebler
 - 3) Charlie M'Clary

- 4) Jim Burke
- 5) Mike Dooley 6) Paul Eschelman
- 7) Neil Tuthill



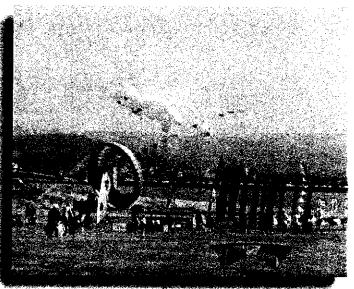
A Herd Of Octopi

We didn't do a lot of flying at the Festival. A little two lining before and after the competition. If you arent a competitor the airspace gets a little crowded. I had carefully collected four of each kite needed for the mass ascensions. The rest of the family disappeared for two of them but I collected a complete set. Its not quite the same as getting a trophy as a competitor but I felt as though I had a small part in the festival.

One of the mass ascensions the whole family did participate in was the cellular. Make a note - putting together four tetrahedrons (even small 7-cell ones), herding the wife and kids through the crowd and trying to get three not so experienced flyers in the air in very windy gusty conditions is not for the faint of heart. But we got our pins.



Comtemplating the impending Tetra-cide

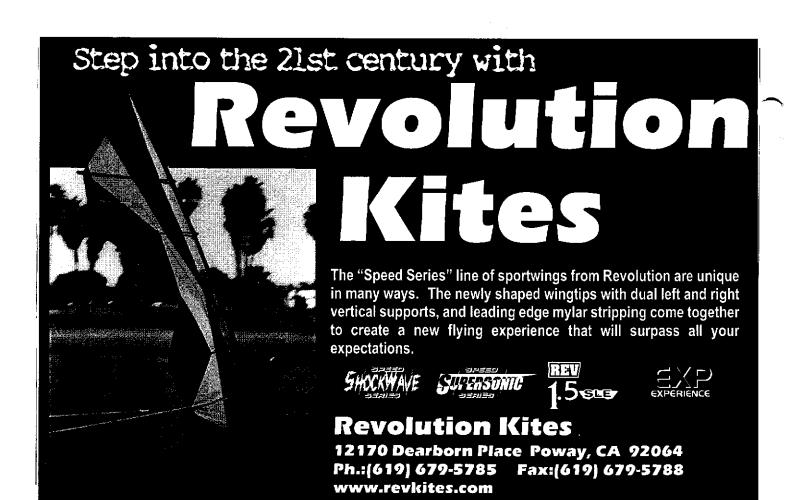


A Beary Good Day At Bearkeley (sorry but I had to do it)



After the festival we went to the awards banquet/dinner cruise. The moon, stars, and city lights were awesome. None of us got seasick. A perfect ending. While at the dinner my wife learned about WSKIF. I may have created a monster. Anyone know what there is to sightsee between San Diego and Long Beach, Wa.?

All Photos By Rick Spurgeon Except 'Tetra-cide' By Ron Despojado





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