

A Legacy to the World Kite Museum John Freeman's 12 Workshops

For a marvelous dozen years, John Freeman filled February's President's Day Weekend with a three day kite making workshop. The product of each one of them was a unique kite that John planned for each event, using quilting and appliqué for decoration.

To follow is this newsletter's 1999 article about the first class. It shows the spirit and enthusiasm that engulfed all of his classes.

Flying Quilts

Flying carpets are "common knowledge" but flying quilts are just coming into their own. On February 14 & 15, John Freeman guided 19 kite makers plus hangers-on totaling 39 people through the mysteries of Bargello quilting, then on to making a 3' x 5' wow-the-spectators kite.

Freeman, a foundry worker, has been making kites for 7 years. He came across the Bargello pattern in one of his "scoping out quilting books" excursions in fabric shops. He has used Bargello on a variety of kite styles in controlled designs like the heart on a Mockform to more free-form pieces. One you may have seen at the AKA Auction, the kite that went for over \$1,000.00.

Upon entering the Long Beach School gym during the two day, 9-5ish class days, one's ears are overwhelmed. There's the long-tong of fabric tubes hitting the floor, the high buzz of the fiberglass cutter, the vibrations of Marzlie Freeman's cording foot preparing every 540-inch tail. The background sewing machines sound like a room full of Volkswagens.

Weights to hold fabric come in creative styles; lead filled pipe caps with sexy pink felt pads, cans of black olives, and grungy scuba belt weights. "Enough lead in this room to poison a wildlife sanctuary," commented one observer.

The intensity of the project sometimes brought cries of frustration from perfectionists. John Freeman, wanting success for all, instituted the "100 foot rule". In the air, it won't be seen. Another response to a person bemoaning a mistake came from Janet Nydegger, "No, no - though it changes the pattern, think of it as 'how very clever!'"

To honor the instructor, Charmayne Umbower presented Freeman with a Styrofoam box filled with red Jell-O labeled 'Bar Jell-O', to be served with Beer and Wine.

Workshop participants included 3 brand new kite makers. The ages of folks involved in the process ranged from 9 years to the young 70's. The proof of all this activity is in the photo!



1999 & 2000 Bargello della Porta

Because of the popularity of this first class, John repeated it again in February 2000. Then the absolute marvelous assortment of kite making workshops began. Since words can't describe these masterpieces of flight, we've used collected pictures, identified the year, type of kit.



2001 Mock Form Parafoil

Don Mock presented his parafoil design while John led the group to use the bargello design for visual excitement.



2002 Freeman's Ghenki

A nine-foot long curve of Seminole Indian Design filled the sky with colorful curves.



John Freeman's Legacy

2003 Bargello Butterfly

John persisted over a year perfecting this kite. The makers were ecstatic.



2004 Double Conyne Delta

Lynn Lary & John Freeman combine skills for a steady flying winner.



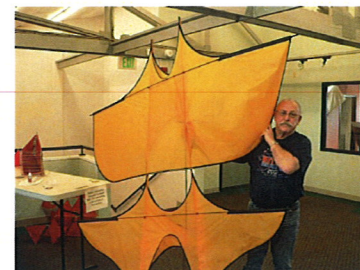
2005 Five Foot Square Diamond

Designed with "Twisted Log Cabin" artwork, the square presents a unique shape.



2006 Lepidoptera

This moth shaped kite designed by John is new and different.



2007 Not a Peter Lynn

A double diamond adaptation of another creation looks great with geometric color swaths.



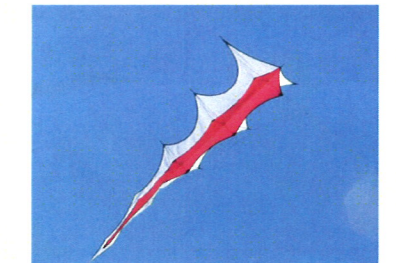
2008 Brogden Kite

Here, John produced the modern tools version of a six winged bird kite, which won first place in a 1908 competition.



2009 Tic Tac Toe

3 X's in a row. It's five feet wide and fifteen feet long and quickly rolls up into a six-foot roll.



2010 Rokkaku Bargello Swirl

Teaching a bargello swirl to honor Margaret Greger's earlier use magnified John Freeman's ability to make people into proud kite makers.



Thank you, thank you, John.