

HISTORICAL KITE SYMPOSIUM #1

Saturday, February 6, 2010 1:00pm - 5:00pm

Discovery Landing 1340 Lakeshore Road Burlington, Ontario

This historical kite symposium marks a new phase for the KiteMuseum.com (Canada) as it facilitates the opportunity for three of North America's most authoritative kite historians to further the interests of kiting. Free to the public but due to limited space, you must register by visiting: www.KiteMuseum.com

A Kite Out Of Time Presenter - Thom Shanken

The Unfolding Story of an 18th Century Dutch Pear-Kite

An exploration of kites in the "Age of Reason" through the examination of period writings and art set against the hands on experience of building an 18th Century paper pear-kite using period correct tools and materials.

The presentation will include:

- A 'hands on' construction activity to build a reproduction of an 18th Century pear-kite similar to the one dated 1773, discovered in Leiden, The Netherlands in 1985.
- A recounting of the discovery and the methodology of ongoing research and documentation of the Dutch Pear-Kite and what it has revealed so far.
- An examination of primary source 18th Century writing and art used as documentation for the activity kite's construction with an explanation of the materials used.

Thom Shanken is a County Coroner in Upstate New York and the Board of Trustees Education Chair of the Friends of Fort Ontario State Historic Site. He enjoys sharing his lifelong passion for history and all things related to kiting.

The Alexander Graham Bell Kite History Project Presenter - Bob White

The Bell Kite History Project will compile the complete story of Alexander Graham Bell's work with kites ensuring that his work with tethered flying devices is factually and completely chronicled for kite enthusiasts and others interested in early aeronautical studies.

The Symposium Presentation will outline:

- the search for detailed and accurate primary resources;
- some of the unique resources being catalogued and referenced and samples of preliminary findings;
- some of the processes and tools being used to gather and organize the massive amount of available information;
- a glimpse of the emerging timeline of Bell's work with kites;
- the challenges presented by a project of this scope: -including a view of the stumbling blocks on the road to tracking down the facts and compiling a comprehensive history of Bell's work with kites;
- images of some unique kites designed by Bell that are not well known to many people;

Bob White is a dedicated amateur kite historian who has been actively researching and writing about kite pioneers and their famous kites for the past twenty-five years. Bob was trained in historical methodology at Wilfred Laurier University in Ontario. His writing has appeared in journals and on Internet sites around the world.

A Tapestry of Kite Through the Ages Presenter Meg Albers

Kites have been intricately woven throughout history in every culture; from weapons of war, scientific tools, to the soothing image of a child's poem. Kites have been in our progress, while simultaneously demonstrating the vast diversity of the people who fly them.

- The Industrial Revolution had made its way to the Niagara Gorge. Profound cultural and economic changes would soon follow. A young man named Homan Walsh and his kite named 'The Union' were instrumental in these changes. Homan's contribution to the building of the area's first suspension bridge had a profound impact on the two countries. Newly uncovered information will be shared from this eternal work in progress.
- Humans have found the need to defend themselves, their property, and their belongings since the beginning of time. This self defense quickly took the form of organized military. Throughout history kites have been a standard part of the military's equipment all over the world. Two specific examples of kite use in the military will be presented at the symposium; memos from the American Civil War circa 1865, plus 'The 1917 International Military Digest Annual'.
- 'Kites in Mass Media & Popular Culture Through-out the Ages' is a presentation of a diverse assortment of historic kite images, as they were used in various forms of popular media of the day. There will be examples of kites used in science, literature, education, and more, spanning the centuries.

Meg Albers believes kites are the ideal educational tool that can break through socio-economic barriers, encourage cultural diversity, while simultaneously combining art, science, physical activity and encourages social bonding.

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THE KITE.

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