

The Kites Are Rising!

By JOHN DASH

Why is it so surely Spring when a kite is seen dancing against a clear blue sky? Why, on the sight, does the hand ache for the tug of the thin line?

Something within responds to rising things: Resurrection, Ascension, after a buried down Winter.

And what should come across the desk that very day but a neat summary of kite flying hints from the local power company.

Perhaps not curiously, kites, from the very beginning have risen in the air as symbols of man's religious aspirations.

According to Wyatt Brummitt, a former Eastman Kodak executive and the author of the splendid paperbound handbook *Kites*, the first known instances of kite flying were in Malayan religious observances 3,000 years ago. Assuming that kites had been known for a long time before they became a part of legend, folklore, or religion, it seems reasonable to believe that kites date to the beginnings of human culture.

He observes: "Even today, in our matter-of-fact culture, there is something just a little beyond simple fun in the way a kite extends your hand's reach into the sky."

Some celebrated kites and kiting events include the Festival of Ascending on High held each Sept. 9 in pre-Maoist China; the ceremony of Driving away the Devil, also in China, held on the occasion of a boy's seventh birthday, in which a kite was played out to the end of its line and released (a modern Japanese poet wrote these lines: "Like a kite/Cut from the string/ Lightly the soul of my youth/ Has taken flight.")

Legends in which kiting figures also circle the world with themes of military acumen, theft and deception. Brummitt speculates that perhaps even the legend of Icarus who flew on wax wings too near the sun and plunged into the Aegean Sea may have its roots in a kiting event.

A scientific function of kites was demonstrated by Benjamin Franklin in 1752 when he showed the electrical nature of lightning. Kites have since been used to gather a

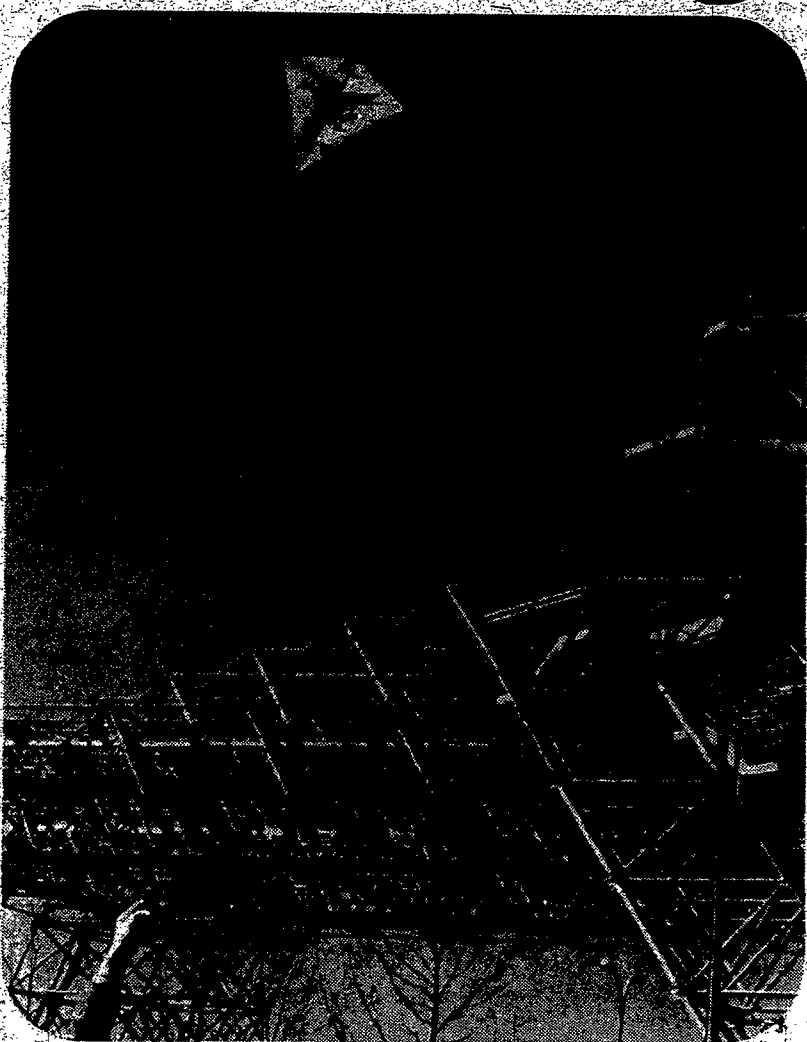


Photo by Ben Susso

The ancient and the new: two symbols of man's reach for the "higher things" are Manhattan Square's Space Frame and an old-fashioned kite.

variety of meteorological and other scientific data.

Their military usefulness dates from ancient China and continues into our own day.

The variety of kites being built today seems limited only by the imaginations of the builders. Some recent shapes seen in the skies include the parawing, the parafoil, the sled, a revolving wing contraption. And of course the glider and the most recent rage, the hang-glider, are really kites, tethered or not.

Our friends at Rochester Gas and Electric offer the following suggestions:

* Always use wood and paper in your kite, not wire or metal.

* Always use dry string, not wire or anything metallic.

* Always fly your kite on days when there is no rain.

* Always fly your kite far from electric power lines; and use the same caution when flying your model airplane, too.

* Always avoid busy streets and highways while flying your kite.

* Always keep away from fallen wires.

* Always fly your kite far from TV and radio antennas.

* Always call your power company if your kite gets snagged in a power line. Do not pull the string or climb power poles.

VIET GROUP

The Catholic Family Center is organizing a cultural and social group for the Vietnamese in the diocese. A meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 30 at 7:30 p.m. in the Manhattan Square building in

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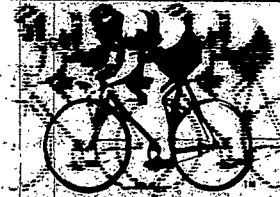
downtown Rochester. Further information can be obtained from Ron Reid, at the Catholic Family Center, 746-7220.

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Area Prexies to Discuss Bundy Aid to Colleges

The St. Thomas More Lawyer's Guild Panel Discussion to be held at 8 p.m., Tuesday, May 4 at Basil Hall, St. John Fisher College, will feature the presidents of several local colleges or universities.

Participating will be Dr. Paul L. Adams, president of Roberts Wesleyan College; Father Charles J. Lavery, president of St. John Fisher College; Dr. Robert McCambridge, vice president for Planning and Development of Nazareth College; and Father Kenneth F. Slattery, president of Niagara University.

St. Helen's Sets Anointing Rite

A special Mass with Anointing of the Sick will be celebrated at St. Helen's Church in Gates on Sunday, May 2, at 4 p.m. Any Catholic who is seriously ill or growing weak from old age is welcome to receive the sacrament, accompanied by relatives or friends. A ramp allows easy access for persons using wheelchairs or walkers. Refreshments will be served after the ceremony.

EXPOSITION

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place each month on the first Thursday, at Blessed Sacrament Church from noon until 5 p.m.

The subject will deal with the conditions required by New York State for the acceptance of state government assistance called Bundy Monies, and the effect upon the religious identification and teachings of the institution of higher learning.

"Since the high quality speakers are representative of colleges or universities which have accepted Bundy Monies and colleges or universities which have rejected these funds, the discussion promises to be a full presentation of the various points of view on a topic of vital interest to our community," said Robert Edelman, president of the Lawyer's Guild.

There will be no charge for admission and the public is invited.

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