Kite Plan

This trapezoidal variation of the dellaporta was taught by Deb Cooley at the 2006 Fort Warden Kite-makers Retreat. She credits John Gabby with the design. The kite is a steady flyer in light to medium winds, but prefers to rise under its own power without having its line tugged.

Cut out a sail from 1/2 ounce nylon with an upper edge 15”, a trailing edge 45”, and a top-to-bottom vertical length of 54”. Decorate the sail as you will. Next, cut out a pie-wedge-shaped reinforcement for each corner, out of the same color fabric as the sail. Match the reinforcement to the sail and sew along the curved edge only. Cut a dacron triangle for each corner. Both are 3.25” on a side, but with different angles. Cut another set like the first, only slightly larger. Sew the smaller set of triangles onto the corners, along the top edge (hypotenuse) only. Then line up the bottom edge of the larger triangle to the kite. Sew along one side to the corner of the kite. The extra fabric leaves enough to make the pocket edge, and finish sewing. Do not sew across the top edge. Repeat this for all four corners.

Once the corners are sewn in, you can edge bind the kite. Use 1 slit tape, folded in half. A progressive zig-zag or any kind of decorative stitch will work.

Using a long ruler, mark from the top corners to the opposite corners. Draw a line on the pockets. Sew a seam 1/2” to either side of it, making sure that you gather the extra fabric so that the spars will fit into the pocket. On the bottom corners only, burn a small hole on either side to stitch the pocket seam for the bridles.

Also mark where the two long lines cross (approximately 1/4” from the top corners) and cut out a small square of fabric, two layers thick, the same color as where the X marks the spot. Sew the square onto the back of the sail.

You should add tail attachments. A small loop of grosgrain ribbon or a short piece of line with a knot at the end will work. Sew them onto the trailing edge at the tips of the spars.

With the spars in, you can burn a small hole for the upper bridle attachment, at the reinforced point where the spars cross. You also need a 1/4” fiberglass or carbon rod for the arched spar on the trailing edge. This should be about 48” long with end caps. Fit it right into the lower pockets, alongside the main spars. Cut two pieces of line – 86” and 94” – for the bridle. Take the shorter piece and tie it through the holes on the bottom corners. Tie a loop in the longer piece, put it through the upper bridle hole, and larkhead it around the spar. Tie the opposite end to the lower leg to complete the three-point bridle. Attach a split ring to the upper leg to make an adjustable bow point.

Don’t forget a tail! You can use two separate tails, a loop, or a Y.

While the AKA is all about bringing the joy and value of kite flying to the world, we are still subject to the forces of that world. After eight years of no dues increase, it’s time to adjust for the effects of inflation. Membership dues will rise to $35 a year on January 1. Renew now for up to three years in advance at the old rate.

Spring and National Kite Month are just around the corner. Bringing kites to the world is a tall order, but National Kite Month is up to the challenge. Along with the Kite Trade Association International, brings you NKM each year. For 2007, NKM will be March 31st - April 30th. Join in the fun and share your knowledge of kite flying with others. If you are one of our many members who regularly go out to our schools to teach kite making, Ronda would like to hear about your experiences, your successes and your tribulations, so that we can share your knowledge with others. If you are one of our younger kite fliers, Ronda would especially like to hear from you. What do you like most about kite flying and how can we make kite flying more accessible to you?

The regional directors of our association have a hard job. These people are truly super heroes who go to extreme lengths to give the AKA a presence and a personal face at as many festivals as possible. With my day job, I will not be able to travel extensively to help them in this task; but we have thousands of members, like you, who could. We are building teams of regional assistants, who can help the regional directors bring this personal touch to more events and members, without expecting our regional directors to do all this themselves.

Kite flying is a passion best shared; invite someone to join you and your kites on your next adventure. It is a great way to contribute to the success of your regional association and to help with all these things. You can have fun helping other kite fliers and at the same time help the AKA better serve our members and the kite flying community at large. Please contact your regional director to get involved.

Membership continues to be an important issue for us. In the early 1990s, sport kite flying was a novelty, and the mere appearance of one could stop traffic in every direction. Kiting as a whole rode the wave of curiosity created by kiting as a sport. Kite enthusiasts, like the group at the University of Minnesota, are developing and promoting a new regional style of kite flying. In the 1980s, taking a close look at the kite flying community at large. Please contact your regional director to get involved.

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