Milpitas Camera Club Field Trip

Field Trip: **Berkeley Kite Festival**
Trip Date: **July 30, 2005**
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About six or seven club members and a couple of associates attended our impromptu field trip to the Berkeley Kite Festival for Saturday, July 30—the day before the Goldsmith Seed Company field trip.

This year's festival was the 20th annual event and was sponsored by Highline Kites of Berkeley. The event is held at Cesar E. Chavez Park at the Berkeley Marina on the very western end of University Avenue.

An organization called the Berkeley Kite Wranglers established its presence early in the morning by putting up one after another giant octopus kites in an attempt to raise nine of the giant creature kites and break their last year's record of eight—a world record. The most picturesque member of the Wranglers, of course, is John Kahn, the big man with the white beard. (If you were there, I'm sure John shows up in more than a few of your photos.)

The kite festival is a great place to get people pictures and some interesting views of colorful kites hanging In the air. The festival drew a large crowd of children and their parents, as usual, and the usual contingent of food vendors and other kite-related booths offers an occasional grab-shot for the roving photographer. The activity in the fringe

areas include demonstrations of kite-powered buggies, kite flying competitions and kite fighting demonstrations. The event is topped off every day with a mass kite ascension and, at the very end of the day, the big boys have a final battle with the giant kites. According to one of the members of the Berkeley Kite Wranglers, the cords for the large kites have a fiberglass component and will often cut the other kite cords when the big kites do battle. We, however, did not stay long enough to witness the battle of the big kites.

Next year's event is to be held on Saturday, July 25 and Sunday, July 26, 2006 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event is free, but parking costs $10 and parking tickets cost $55 (if you park in the No Parking zones). The Berkeley boys in blue are more than happy to issue you a notice of parking tax due!

A word of warning for those who choose to go to this event next year—do not fool around near the lines for the giant kites. Although you may not get lifted off the ground, if you get caught in the lines you could suffer severe injuries if one of the cords wraps around your clothing or an appendage and the wind manages to twist it around. There is so much force exerted by the wind on the large kites that a twisted cord could amputate part of your anatomy. That is why the Wranglers group puts up that rope barricade around their flying field. There is a lot of fabric in one of those big kites and a lot of wind resistance on the bottom surfaces. The octopus kites cost between $2,000 and $3,000 apiece and some of the other, larger "lifting kites" cost more than that.

After we had our fill of kites we went to the Everett & Jones rib joint on San Pablo Avenue, near University, in Berkeley and had our fill of soul food barbecue. As usual it was delicious and just a tad pricey.

After we ate we crossed the Bay Bridge and went to see some of the tall sailing ships that were docked on the waterfront near Pier 30. There were two large sailing vessels from Russia and Mexico moored near the ballpark. They were absolutely huge—especially the Russian ship—and both were built in the 1980s. The major structural components were steel rather than wood. The tall ships come to San Francisco periodically and if you watch the newspapers for notices you'll be rewarded with good photo opportunities of big ships and interesting people. Furthermore, if you want to test the capacity of your wide-angle lens bring it up to one of these ships. Unless you have a fisheye lens you'll never be able to capture a wide shot of all the rigging from the deck!

Thanks to those who came to see the kites and ships!

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