



WindWriters



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SJKF'S COLOMBIAN CONNECTION

Earlier this year, SJKF Co-President Scott E. Spencer had an opportunity to visit Colombia, South America with a group of kite flyers from around the world. Here's his summary of that trip, and there's more pictures on pages 6 & 7. Enjoy! -dcj2



The secret club hand signal can be traced back to pre-Colombian ancestry.

The tour was from Aug. 6 through Aug. 19. It was organized by "Yaripa" a group that teaches kids to get high on kites, not drugs. Four cities were visited: Medellin, Bogota, Tunga and Villa de Leyva. Our hosts in Yaripa, Ines Elvira "Moma Bear" Uribe and Jairo "Popa Bear" Montoya made all the arrangements for things like travel, lodging, food, side trips, interpreters, money exchange and all the details for the National competition in Villa de Leyva.

The other participants included: Derek Kuhn from Great Britain, a Single line flyer and a great schmoozer (2nd tour); Don Eccleston, Great Britain, Single line flyer; Stafford Wallace, Great Britain, Indian Fighter kite flyer extraordinaire; Melvin Govig, USA, Kitelines magazine; Jon Trennepolle, USA, Sportkite manufacturer and master class flyer; Carmella Pallota, USA, Single line flyer and the "token female" (2nd tour); Peter Lee, USA, Fighter kite and Sportkite flyer (2nd tour); Jason Robbins, USA, Sportkite flyer (2nd tour); James Low, China (USA), Single line flyer and wowed the crowds with Goosie Lousie; Peter Betancourt, USA, Sportkite manufacturer and Master class flyer; Joe "Photo" Perron, USA, Flies 2 or 3 sportkites at once; Jeff Howard, USA, Manufacturer of all types of kites; Scott E. Spencer, USA, Single line master kite maker;

and the WASP Team, master sportkite flyers: Miguel Rodriguez, Mexico (USA, 2nd tour), Kobi Eshun, Gana (USA), Brian Champie, (USA), Norman Vincent Awill, Hondouras, (USA).

There was some grumbling due to the lack of hot showers at some places, mediocre food, lack of in-

formation, transportation vehicles too small and the urban flying fields. But those problems were cultural, not logistical. I think it's fair to say we all had a great time and would do it again.

Highlights for me included: Bogota - flying for 20,000 enthusiastic Colombians with a sound system suitable for a rock concert (you could feel the music in your lines!); Medellin & Tunga - flying indoors to crowds of 10,000 people and 5,000 screaming kids; flying in the town square of Villa de Leyva (the town took on a personality like Wildwood, NJ partying kids, families enjoying the competitions and the nationals giving it their all. The large kite competition looked like a Rok battle. 20+ super big kites launched at the same time, what confusion!); Kitemaking workshops with the kids; the small parks we visited to fly for thousands of school kids; comradeship of the group; the friendliness of the Colombians; the beauty of the country (I love mountains!); and so much more.

If you ever have a chance to travel, you should do so. You'll have fun and appreciate your own country even more.

