

Readers' choice awards

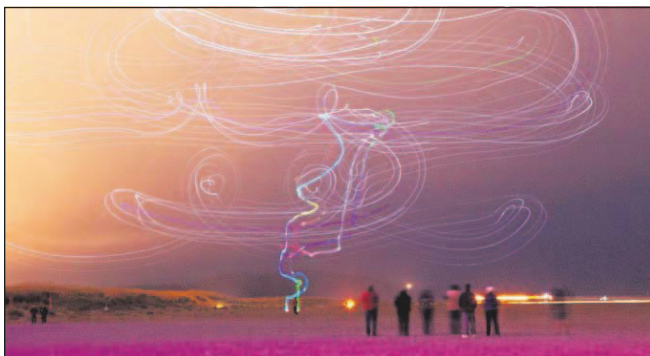


Photo by Natalie St. John

A 25-second exposure shows the path of four lighted kites that dipped and swooped in time to the music during a synchronized performance at last year's Kite Festival.



Photo by Natalie St. John

From left, Rae Bohn, Kelly Bruland, Andy Tauber attempt to attach a set of rainbow-colored tentacles to an enormous kite at last year's festival.

BEST FESTIVAL

Washington State International Kite Festival

Long Beach, Washington

Runner-up: Astoria-Warrenton Crab, Seafood & Wine Festival

Honorable Mention: Pacific Northwest Brew Cup, Astoria

By LYNETTE RAE McADAMS

Each year during the third week of August, almost 100,000 people take to the broad and breezy shores of Long Beach, Washington, and, in perfect unison, lift happy faces to the sky.

For a full seven days, kite enthusiasts of every age gather to build, fly, or simply watch in amazement as competitors harness the wind in colorful creations of every shape and size.

Festival favorites include synchronized kite ballet, fighter kites, lighted night flies, a brilliant fireworks display, rows of food and merchandise vendors,

and multiple "mass ascensions," which each boast almost 300 fabulous kites soaring at once in the air.

A far fly from its modest beginnings in 1981 (which hosted nine participants), the Kite Festival now enjoys world renown, and is one of the largest kite gatherings in North America.

But all that popularity hasn't gone to its head: Whether you're a member of a professional kite team from across the sea, a first-time flyer from the local grammar school, or just dropping in for a look-see and a snow cone, Kite Fest is a welcome place for everyone.

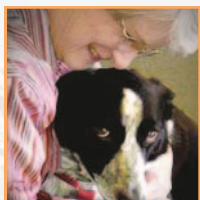


Photo by Lynette Rae McAdams

The Washington State International Kite Festival takes place the third week of August each year.

The 35th Annual Washington State International Kite Festival takes place August 17-23, 2015, and is free of charge for all spectators; entry fees for competitions are required. Visit www.kitefestival.com.

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