

Chapman Cultural Center - Kites

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by Chapman Cultural Center. In 2013, he and his wife Karen approached the Center with a proposal to exhibit his collection of over 100 kites. What ensued was more than just an exhibit, and planning began for Spartanburg Soaring! - a community-wide initiative to celebrate Spartanburg's sky-high successes using the kite as its theme.

"When Chuck first approached us, I saw more than just a passionate enthusiast with a unique art form, I saw a symbol," Chapman Cultural Center President and CEO Jennifer Evins said. "These kites represent the playfulness, the brilliant diversity, and the skyward growth that are so characteristic of Spartanburg."

Holmes' collection features three-dimensional cellular kites, compound kites, bowed kites, and, his specialty, the della Porta - an Italian kite that reminds Holmes of framed artwork whipping through the skies. Originally intended for either lifting fireworks and lanterns at night or the development of manned flight, the della Porta is one of the oldest recorded Western kites. "The della Porta is rectangular with the height one and a half times the width so it's like a portrait," said Holmes. "I also like that the kite is very easy to assemble and flies beautifully."

Within his extensive collection of kites, around 40 of them are handcrafted by Holmes himself. One such kite is a *Bermudian*, an octagonal kite he built over 10 years ago using only red, white, and blue. "I like the colors, but I also like the neatness of the frame and the fittings I made that allow it to be easily adjusted and flown."



around age 12 when his father returned home from a business trip with a simple, plastic kite. Years later, while dating his now-wife Karen, he discovered his soon-to-be father-in-law was a fellow enthusiast. Eventually, he passed down his passion to daughters Allison and Lauren, and hopes to keep the tradition with his grandchildren.

"I would like them to realize that this is something that they can do together," Holmes said. It may be a daytime family activity, but, as with Holmes, it can turn into a life-long hobby and tradition. "Although my kites look intricate today, the first kites I made and flew were very simple. We have to start simple and then we progress."

Kiting is more than just about playfulness and togetherness, it also engages students in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). STEM is a national movement to engage young people in fields of study where workers and innovators are needed, developing the world's next generation of scientific pioneers.

"I just read the book *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv. In it, the author talks about how being in nature is good for health, allows children to have unstructured play that leads to creativity, provides a calming effect, and more," Holmes said. "I suggest that all of these are important for artists, scientists, businesspeople, all of us." Flying also provides a free, practical course in aerodynamics, and building kites requires a hefty amount of mathematical calculation. "What diameter spar does one need to support a certain surface area? What weight will support that surface area? What angles give stability?"

Holmes also notes that scientist Benjamin Franklin, inventor of the radio Guglielmo Marconi, the Wright Brothers, telephone creator Alexander Graham Bell, and many other historical figures utilized kites for experiments, designs, and inspiration.

In addition to STEM is the movement to incorporate Art/Design into the mix-STEAM. "Since I have started to incorporate art into my designs, I have felt even more motivated. I am sure that STEAM can only strengthen the sciences."

Holmes' kite exhibit, although the original catalyst for Spartanburg Soaring!, is one of two major components for the initiative, the other being the International Kite Festival, which was held on Mar. 29, 2014. Other events and activities are planned for Spartanburg Soaring!, with over two dozen local partners collaborating on this community-wide celebration of what's good about the city. Spartanburg Soaring!'s purpose as a whole is to build civic pride, engage cultural curiosity, and promote active play - something kite fliers know all about.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings or call 864/542-2787.



Having flown and competed internationally, Holmes has more than just handmade kites, he has compiled many from kite-makers around the world. Holmes boasts approximately four kites made by Bobby Stanfield, a national kite-making champion who is well-known for his impressive cellular kites of the '80s and '90s. "He uses black borders to accent the other colors," said Holmes. "And his framing and his machined fittings are amazing."

Several of the kites in the exhibit at Chapman Cultural Center were crafted by members of his family. They hang side-by-side with those made by world-class kites - and you'd never know the difference. One kite in the exhibit was crafted by his youngest daughter Allison Holmes Hoffman. It is a rokkaku kite - one used for battles - with a cat's face in black and purple. "She used a drawing from a pumpkin carving kit," recalled Holmes. "It is one of the best kites for showing contrast. The black stops almost all of the light, but the purple glows with intensity."

Kiting is a multi-generational hobby, inciting pure joy in youngsters with plenty of energy to spare and fond memories in more experienced fliers. For Holmes, this is more than true. His passion for flying began

Artists' Guild of Spartanburg in Spartanburg, SC, Features Retrospective by Edythe S. Wise

The Artists' Guild of Spartanburg in Spartanburg, SC, will present *A Life In Paintings*, featuring works by Edythe S. Wise, on view in the Guild Gallery, located at the Chapman Cultural Center, from Apr. 1 - 27, 2014. A reception will be held on Apr. 3, from 5-9pm.

A Life In Paintings is a retrospective show focused on Wise's life and work, unique in the way that it sheds light on her membership in a wider web of creativity - one that reaches across four known generations. Page 44 - Carolina Arts, April 2014

tions.

Wise is a talented and prolific artist who has been contributing to the Spartanburg community for more than 50 years. Throughout her career as an artist, Wise used her work to highlight the people and places that knit Spartanburg together. She published *Color Historic Spartanburg* with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Later, she published *Color the Church of the Advent* to help celebrate its

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