

## A Not-So-Happy Kite Story

by Kern Hagg

(#19 in a Series)

One of my previous memories, *When Peace was a Priority*, was a story about the most perfect day anyone could imagine to fly a kite. Probably because of the successful flight on that day, my good friend, Dewey, and I took it upon ourselves to reach for higher heights. We used the engineering evident with a normal kite bought at S.S. Kresge's to up-scale a much larger flying device. We built a kite that was 16' tall, 10' wide, and we constructed it with pine 2x2's bought at Heller Lumber. We used a fair amount of wood bracing the four connecting joints, and we bought 250' of clothesline to use as kite string. For a tail, we used 10' of additional rope and three house bricks. The house bricks were easy to attach because they had three holes molded through them at the brick factory. As I recall, we were about 13 or 14 years old, so that would have made it 1961-1962. The vacant lot at 111 S. Brighton was our Kitty Hawk. We bought cheesecloth from Joann Fabrics which, at the time, was just west of Randhurst. We cut the cheesecloth to fit our wood frame, and we used a staple gun to secure it all the way around. It took a week or so for a sufficient breeze, but it happened on a Saturday when the weather was obviously changing. Dewey came to our home on Derbyshire, and we walked our monstrous kite back to the vacant lot behind our house. We let out all of the rope and laid it in a serpentine fashion on the grass so that the kite could have all the rope it wanted and quickly as it ascended into the sky. I was holding the rope while Dewey held the kite. The breeze came from the west, and it pulled the kite skyward and very quickly. I was (and still am) a big person, but I had all I could handle trying to keep the kite from pulling me eastward into our backyard and its waiting Elm trees. After the kite attained a height of about 100', it suddenly turned sideways and then completely upside down. The three house bricks were above the kite as it dove straight into the ground. Fortunately, Dewey had come back to an area closer to me, so when the kite slammed into the earth and the bricks followed right behind, no one was hurt. However, the kite was totally destroyed. The 2x2 framing was splintered, and the bricks tore through the cheesecloth effortlessly. All that work in our garage and the expense of the materials - it was all gone in two seconds! But Dewey and I learned an important lesson about kites that day - too much kite and too few bricks.