This to nominate for the 2009 Steve Edeiken Memorial Kiteflier of the Year Award our longtime friend **WILLIAM R. BIGGE.** Though Bill is one of the most reticent kitefliers among us, we hope with this nomination to bring attention to his many fine qualities and

accomplishments.

As a graduate in physics, he went to work for the National Bureau of Standards (now called the National Institute of Standards and Technology), as a physical sciences aide, retiring as a physicist, specializing in measuring temperatures. After approximately 38 years, at his retirement party, his boss said: “There is a saying in the temperature laboratory that it does no good to have a six-dial instrument and a four-dial man. Bigge was an eight-dial man.”

Bill has been interested all his life in model airplanes and kites. He remembers flying kites as a boy with his father and learning to keep a kite up by pulling and relaxing the line. This technique informed his later design, the famous Janus Zero Wind Glider Kite.

Before he started making kites, he bought one for 10 cents and a larger one for 25 cents (years ago, of course!) The sticks had the same cross-section, but the larger kite would bend more and had less change in pull. He learned from this, as he eventually designed a kite that would fly well in every wind, using his brilliant elastic bridle. First there was the Mark I Airplane Kite, with limited wind range. Then came the Mark II with a wider wind range. Finally we had the Mark III (also known as the Janus), which would not require any wind to keep up. Before kites, he had started going to indoor model airplane events, where in 1948 he set his earliest record, for an outdoor ornithopter. Eventually he set records for a rubber-powered model helicopter (8 minutes) and an autogyro.

At the first Smithsonian Kite Festival in 1967, he won first place with a box kite carrying an adjustable over-center lever to allow tension to go down as wind speed goes up. He came back the next year and won first place again--with the same kite! After that, the Smithsonian rules prevented entering a kite that had previously won an award, so the next year Bill made an airplane kite derived from an autogyro which had been modified to become a kite. When he learned that extra points were awarded for color, he changed from transparent or white film and used colored films on his kites. He sometimes made drawings or writing on them too, such as the quotation, “Retreat in Order

to Advance.”

As many know, Bill talks in a slow, deliberate and very technical language that does not reach far into every mind. In spite of this, he attends many kite events, including the AKA conventions, the Maryland Kite Society Retreats and others on an irregular basis. If you are one of the people he can talk to, you can be cornered for hours in a hallway or at a lunch table. Otherwise you

may not even notice him. But now and then he proves himself startlingly original.

He has been known for making small (really small) kites. He is almost as famous for this as Charlie Sotich of Chicago. In 1972, Bill flew 151 one-foot sled kites from one line and it was proclaimed a world record in the Baltimore Sun. At about the same time, Will Yolen, the self-proclaimed

International Kiteflying Champion, flew 57 kites on one line in Sarasota, Florida. Yolen had great public relations talent, and his feat was widely publicized as a world record. The Maryland Kite Society, on behalf of Bill, knew better, and challenged Will, who protested that his kites, standard Hi-Flier diamonds, were big, “real kites.” Bill responded with 261 kites flying on one line, fully witnessed. They were certainly real kites, and that record stood for a long time, until several new flights, in the thousands of kites, were set in Japan in the 1990s.

In 1983, Bill had an idea for a challenge, to be announced through Kite Lines magazine: an International Exposition of Small Kites, to be held in

Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, in August, 1984. Bill worked out the rules, and the announcement drew 53 tiny kites, including some from Belgium, England, Japan and the Netherlands. The entries had to fit within a 3-inch diameter, 3-inch long cylinder. The top scoring kite, a delta made by Charlie Sotich, was slightly wider than 3 inches, but it met the rules: it was set at an angle within the cylinder, allowing for slightly larger size and an advantage in the competition. Each kite was taken for a walk down a long hall, with air conditioning turned off to prevent drafts, and admired by the many kiters in attendance. Some kites flew at a snail’s pace of 32 seconds, others at an athletic 5 seconds. Bigge determined the angles of flight (the minimum was 22 and 1/2 degrees) and the scores. The team of helpers learned that Bill was correct in his admonition that “Strength in flight is not the problem in these kites; handling is the problem.”

This great success was followed by another challenge from Bill, the International Indoor Kite Efficiency Challenge, in 1986. It was to be held in

October 1987 at Bill’s church, but he didn’t have the apparatus ready. Finally in August of 1988, over a three-day period at Pete Ianuzzi’s church, with assorted visitors coming and going, Bill ran 22 kites through his beautiful homemade system and came up with scores for all of them. Hungary and Australia were added to the list of countries represented and the variety was amazing. Top scores went to (who else) Charlie Sotich.

Bill has made many contributions to kiting. He has given many of his kites to the AKA auction. He has made cash donations as well, but he is modest and won’t tell about them. Also he has contributed his wisdom to fellow kiters. For example, Kite Lines magazine published his articles: “Zen and the Art of the Yardstick Balance,” with plans for making a scale for weighing kites; and the humorous “Mixed Blessings: A Succession of Ups and Downs at the 1999 Smithsonian.”

Less visible were his occasional reviews and editorial comments as a longtime Editorial Advisory Panelist to Kite Lines. In 1996, he spent several days in the Kite Lines office helping edit the book by Harm van Veen, “The Tao of Kiteflying: The Dynamics of Tethered Flight.”

His most recent accomplishment, announced in June of 1998, was to fly kites for an unprecedented 400 consecutive days, flying 400 slightly different self-made kites. His designs were a mixture of sled kites and Eddy-hata types, all made of plastic bag and sparred with thinly sliced basswood or bamboo or piano wire. Bill kept a meticulous logbook with charts from all 400 days and took five bags of photos showing the kites flying for the required two minutes each. All who witnessed the results agreed that no one else would ever make and fly a different kite every day for 400 days.

As we make this nomination, it is Bill Bigge’s 81st year. We who know and love him would be especially happy to see him recognized at long last as the unmatched “eight-dial man” of kiteflying. We highly recommend Bill Bigge for the 2009 Steve Edeiken Memorial Kiteflier of the Year Award.

(Dated signatures of Valerie Govig, Ted Manekin and Jewell Price)

It’s a great pleasure and honor to nominate **Steve Ferrel** for AKA’s 2009 Edeiken Award. Steve Ferrel is a highly active and dedicated member of the American Kitefliers Association who untiringly supports kiting and kitemaking, making inspiring contributions to the enjoyment and skills of others in a highly impressive continuation of the spirit of Steve Edeiken.

Steve Ferrel has been a great friend and supporter of the kite community for almost two decades now. In this time, he has offered tremendous assistance to all kitefliers and kitemakers of both single-line and multi-line kites.

One criterion for the Edeiken Award is "…showing friendly, loving, fair, and even-handed concern for . . . people . . . kiteflying . . . craftsmanship and technical developments in particular . . ." It is hard to imagine someone who better meets these criteria than Steve Ferrel. Steve has been part of the kitemakers' competition judging staff since 1994, is once again chairing the AKA Kitemakers' Competitions Committee, and has been head judge of AKA's kitemakers' competitions since 1997.
In this time, he has made substantial improvements to the judging process for both competitors and judges.
His wry humor spices up the awards ceremony and he provides a superior method of giving feedback on scores to all competitors over the Internet.
His fair-handed, friendly manner has soothed many a novice kitemaker and encouraged them to keep increasing their building skills.
The way he structures the competitions keeps most everyone happy nearly all the time, even while they are engaged in the somewhat anxiety-producing competition.
After spending long days on the field with kitemakers and judges, his job has just begun. He spends more time creating wonderful slideshows of the kites and kitemakers to be enjoyed by all AKA members at the Convention's banquet and on his web site.

Steve has served on AKA's Board of Directors, has been active in kite-making retreats and competitions in many states, and has provided judging services for kite festivals all over the country, including AKA's national competitions, the Smithsonian kite festival, the Newport kite festival, Wildwood, the Maryland International Kite Exposition, and events sponsored by the Keystone Kiters, the Connectikiters, and the New York Kite Enthusiasts.

As well as sharing his skills, Steve builds highly crafted, beautiful, and innovative kites. Some of his kites have been graciously donated to the AKA and auctioned at the AKA's annual banquet. His innovative "Tern into Dolphin" compound kite brought $1,300 at the 1994 AKA Convention in Wildwood.
His kites have also been featured in the Lewis and Clark exhibition at the Billings, Montana airport, and he has helped to create stage sets for musicians and displays for convention centers around the country.

Another criterion of the Edeiken Award is for providing "…communication in general, and leading and participating in kite events in particular." It is hard to think of anyone else who does this better! His website is a treasure trove of information about and supplies for kitemaking and kiteflying. He has created a fully searchable, interactive dictionary created by, and existing for, the kitebuilder community. It is basically a kitebuilders' encyclopedia that archives information on all things related to kitebuilding, including Kite Plans and Reference Information.
His Internet forums give flyers and builders world wide a great place to interact and share information with others. The forums have had more than 79,000 posts from more than 2,200 registered users.

Steve Ferrel epitomizes the best attributes of Steve Edeiken and the highest ideals of AKA members. He is a truly unique person and an inspiration to other kitefliers. Steve has made quantum steps forward in educating people and distributing information to flyers, builders, and the general public. He has made it possible for many, many others to experience the joys of kiteflying.
He is a fantastic friend to many widely (and wildly!) assorted people, and a credit to the name of Steve Edeiken.

Respectfully submitted,

Cliff and Joyce Quinn

Glen and Tanna Haynes

Scott Skinner

John and Diana Pollack

Jose Sainz

Brooks Leffler

Mearl and Adrianne Balmer

Harold Ames

Kevin and Cinda Shannon

John Freeman

Jon and Karen Burkhardt

Charlie and Joan Dunton

Marla Miller

Bob Lockhart

Bevan and Margo Brown

Bob and Karen Kelly

Scott Skinner offered these additional comments –

Steve Ferrel has been an indispensable asset to the American kite community. In providing kite-making materials, innovative plans, and informed service through the Kite Studio, he has lifted the community's knowledge and know-how. For over ten years he has been an integral part of the Committee.