

Dutch Magazine Ending Glorious Run

Because it is in Dutch, the slim, elegantly laid out bimonthly magazine *Vlieger* (Kite) is hardly known in the global kite world. But within the Netherlands the publication has been the cement holding together a dedicated pool of Dutch kites.

Now in its 25th year, *Vlieger* ceases publishing at the end of this year. The volunteer editorial board---Harm van Veen, John Verheij, Theo Beerends, Nop Velthuisen, Wim Tichelaar, and designer Nico Laan are calling it a career and going on to other pursuits. The board hopes others in Dutch kite ranks will pick up the challenge and issue a new publication of some sort, maybe an Internet journal.

“We are at the end of our journey,” says Verheij. “We are very proud.” A retired Dutch royal air force communications expert, Verheij is credited by the others with the unusual punctuality enjoyed by the magazine. In a quarter century, no issue was ever put out late. “Verheij supplied the push,” says Velthuisen, “but gently.”

The 24-page magazine went to 1,400 members of the national kite association, as a major membership benefit. Other copies went to kite stores. Although issues from the last few years are notable for their sleek quality, the board is of one voice in saying it was not always so. In the early days there were no computers so magazine copy and graphics had to be laboriously processed.

The nucleus editorial board for the 25 years, abetted by significant contributions, not only conceived, wrote, edited, and distributed the magazine but worked as a team on other projects. Notable among them was the design, commissioning, and flying of what was then the world’s largest kite. Starting with a Sled that didn’t fly well, and was dangerous into the bargain, the team got a student to design a huge Parafoil with 550 square meters of lifting area. The monster required 80 people to fly it. Conceived as a promotion for the annual Scheveningen beach festival, it proved such a crowd pleaser the team took it on tour---all over Europe, the U.S., and Asia.

Beerends points out that the magazine was well known for its graphics. The board is perhaps proudest of a successful joke cover it issued, done by designer Laan, a photography professional. As Europe was waiting for the European Union to begin functioning, the board thought: why not create an imaginary European postage stamp? The cover showed a sheet of such Euro stamps with kite motif. The magazine received more than 100 pre-orders from collectors and others for this nonexistent stamp, but duly announced processing would have to wait until March 31. The next issue came out April 1 and revealed the whole thing was an April Fool’s joke. “Nobody got angry, everyone took it in good humor,” says van Veen.

Even though *Vlieger* ceases publication at the end of this year, the board retains its interest in editorial work. It is examining the possibility of issuing a book, possibly with English supplementing the Dutch, of the best articles and images from the 25 year span. “We’ll use a lot of our detailed kite plans,” says Velthuisen. “That was what the magazine was particularly renowned for.



*Theo Beerends, Harm van Veen, and John Verheij weigh stories for another issue of the distinguished small kite magazine they edit called *Vlieger* (Kite). Along with Nop Velthuisen, Wim Tichelaar, and designer Nico Laan, as well as other volunteers over the years, they have been publishing it for almost 25 years now.*