

# NCF is fun for kids of all ages

By SARAH CHUBY  
Record-Eagle staff writer

They may have to go to bed early and they may not be able to watch "R"-rated movies, but the National Cherry Festival is trying to make it up to kids by creating kids-only events. The festival offers children's events for nearly every age all week long, and most of them are free, said Children's Events Director Lani Bathje.

The fun begins on Saturday, July 6, with a Big Wheel race at 10:30 a.m. at the Horizon Outlet Center. Registration is at 9:30 a.m. On Sunday, June 7, F&M Park will be the site for the Junior Arts and Crafts program from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

"We will bring everything that the kids will need," Bathje said. "It is strictly hands-on. They shouldn't bring anything. We want them to come and create different things."

Four children's events are scheduled for Monday, July 8, beginning with The Putt n' Pizza from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Pebblebrook Fun Park. Up to 80 children can participate in each of four sessions open to kids ages 5-14. Prizes are awarded through random drawings. Sign-up for the event begins at 8:30 a.m.

# Duck race fills bill for fun Thursday, July 11

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Rub-a-dub-dub time to put the ducks in the...Boardman River. Quackers and Waddles have an opportunity to go bill-to-bill in the 15th Annual American Lung Association of Michigan's Rubber Duck Race at 4 p.m. July 11.

The race will begin at Union Street Bridge and the ducks will end their voyage in the vicinity of the Chamber of Commerce building, Sandy Piotrowski, American Lung Association programs specialist said.

Pre-race activities begin at 3:30 p.m. with the judging of the ducks, she said.

There are 13 areas that ducks are judged upon. "The 'Ducker'ation categories include: Jock Duck, Festive Feathered Friend, Best Dressed Duck, Wackiest Quaker, Disco Duck and Dorkiest Duck," she said.

Ducks can be purchased at Northwestern Banks in Downtown Traverse City, Acme, 5300 US 31; the branch on Garfield Street, 465 S. Garfield; and the Chum's Corners branch, which is inside Prevo's, for \$5 each or three for \$12.

And during the festival week, they will be available in front of the American Lung Association of Michigan office, 153 1/2 E. Front St.

Ribbons, prizes or trophies

Next up are a Bubble Gum Blow contest from 10 a.m. to noon (registration begins at 9:30 a.m.) and Turtle Races at 1 p.m. Both events are at F&M Park.

Bathje said the turtles are placed in the middle of a circle, and whichever turtle crosses the line first is the winner. There are three heats to the event, with prizes awarded for each.

"Kids need to bring their turtles, or they can use a loaners that we borrowed from Clinch Park Zoo," she said.

One of the festival's favorite events — The Sara Lee Bakery Pie Eating Contest — also takes place on Monday, July 8, at 10 a.m. The contest repeats at 1 p.m. Wednesday, July 10, and from 1 to 3 p.m. Friday, July 12.

On Tuesday, July 9, F&M Park hosts the Pet Show from 10 a.m. until noon.

Bathje said the event is unlike traditional pet shows.

"We have different categories, like most unusual pet, which could be anything from snakes to guinea pigs to ferrets," she said. Other categories are best dressed, pet and owner look-alike, and ugliest mutt. There's even a fat-test cat category, where felines are weighed, and a "famous pair" contest in which two dogs or cats are dressed up as a bride and



groom or other "couple." New this year is the Grandparents Picnic from noon to 2 p.m. Tuesday, July 9.

Bathje said grandparents can bring their grandchildren, ages 12 and under, to the Civic Center for a picnic-style lunch and games.

On Wednesday, July 10, from 10 a.m. until noon, kids ages 5 to 10 can test out their bicycle skills on the Bicycle Rodeo obstacle course.

Participants should bring their own bikes and helmets. Registrations is at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday.

Cherry Kids Town Fun Night is Wednesday, July 10, from 4 to 8 p.m. at F&M Park.

"We'll have entertainers of every sort," Bathje said. "There will be magicians, jugglers, the Puppet Adventures traveling pup-

pet show, face painting, an organ grinder from the Music House and Moomers ice cream.

"The old fire truck will be there to give rides and there will be lots of clowns," she added.

For just \$5, kids also can make their own 2002 National Cherry Festival souvenir T-shirt.

On Thursday, July 11, kids can make their own cherry dessert, play games or have their faces painted during Fun and Games for Children. The event takes place from 9 a.m. until noon at

Kid's activities begin on Saturday, July 6, with the Big Wheel race at 10:30 a.m.

F&M Park. Another favorite event, the Sand Sculpture Contest, will be held Friday, July 12, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

In the individual category, 3- to 5-year-olds build from 9 to 9:45 a.m., 6- to 8-year-olds build from 9:15 to 10 a.m., and 9- to 12-year-olds build from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.

In the groups category, 3- to 12-year-olds build from 10:30 a.m. until noon, and family groups and individuals ages 13 and up build from 12:30 to 4 p.m.

Registration is 15 minutes before every category and only items found on the beach — with the exception of food coloring — may be used in the contest.

Children's events wrap up with a Youth Chalk Art Contest Friday, July 12, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Festival Open Space. Kids ages 5 to 12 are eligible to participate in the event; chalk is provided.

Big Boy Restaurant sponsors the children's events.

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