

NCF welcomes US Navy and Air Force flight teams

The 79th National Cherry Festival opens July 2 & 3 with the much anticipated air show. The show begins at 12:30 p.m. both days with aerobatics maneuvers and demonstrations over West Bay.

The airshow is presented by Northern Michigan Toyota Dealers, Alltel, Charter Communications, High Point Golf Club and Kodiak Equipment.

An A-10 Thunderbolt II — known as “The Warthog,” will take the skies first. Having been used recently in deployments in the Middle East, the twin-engine Thunderbolt is specifically designed for close support of ground forces. It has excellent maneuverability at low speeds and altitude, with highly accurate weapons delivery systems. The aircraft will perform a series of high and low speed maneuvers, rapid rolls, climbs and descents, with simulated weapons deployment — a vivid demonstration of wartime capabilities.

The Navy will show off with its FA-18 E/F Super Hornet, single ship demonstration. The pilot will amaze spectators with air maneuvers in a plane designed for air-to-air and air-to-ground missions.

The Red Baron Pizza Squadron will per-



F/A-18 Superhornet

form smoke trailing maneuvers in World War II-era, bi-planes. Traverse City is the only site on the 25 stop tour where the open cockpit, upside-down antics will be performed over water.

Built by Boeing in the early 1940s, the Stearman planes were originally designed as training platforms for army and navy pilots. Used as crop dusters after the war, the Red Baron Squadron planes have been modified with new oil and fuel systems — allowing them to fly upside-down. New engines have also been installed that double the original power output.

The Stearman planes have the distinction of being the most widely respected training aircraft in the military. More pilots have trained inside a stearman than any other aircraft — which has an original design that dates back to 1920.

Another vintage aircraft flying will be the



The Red Baron Pizza Squadron will perform smoke trailing in WW II -era bi-planes on July 2 & 3, beginning at 12:30 p.m. both days.

T-6 A II Texan Demo. Piloted by Jim Greeson, the plane will perform maneuvers over West Bay used in various military campaigns of recent eras.

Chris Panzl will also be on hand with his Staudacher 300. A member of the U.S. Aerobatic Team, Panzl will perform award

winning solo moves in the sky above West Bay.

The U.S. Coast Guard will also do a Search and Rescue helicopter demonstration both days.

The airshow can be heard on 101.9 WLDR-FM both days starting at 12:30 p.m.

Kristine Volk soars into air show director position

BY GARRET ELLISON
Record-Eagle staff writer

It happened one fine day in Traverse City, during the Cherry Festival air show. Kristine Volk was admiring the performance, when all of a sudden she was stung by an insect.

And life has never been the same.

The insect in question was the aviation bug, and the sting energized the 36-year-old CPA — and long-time festival volunteer — so much that she began training to become a pilot.

That was last year. Now, Volk is taking over this summer as the director for the National Cherry Festival Air Show.

“It’s so exciting to be a part of the National Cherry Festival,” Volk said. “Especially since I have the opportunity to run the event that inspired me to become a

pilot.”

Volk moved to Traverse City from Buffalo, N.Y., in 1986 after high school, and started regularly volunteering at the Cherry Festival. However, meeting the Blue Angels and attending an International Council of Air Shows conference in December ‘04 set her upon a new course.

“After getting to know the performers of various teams, I realized that I could learn to fly too,” Volk said. “It’s never too late to start training.”

Immersing herself in the air show circuit — a tight community of people around the country who put together the shows, Volk has been able to build mentoring relationships with many of the performers she once admired from afar.

“Lieutenant John Allison, narrator and #7 pilot [of the Blue Angels] has really provid-

ed some valuable insight on what it takes to run a great show,” Volk said, “Command Master Chief Kevin Harris always has words of wisdom to share too.”

As a crew chief at the Toledo air show, she shared a hangar with the Red Baron Pizza Squadron — a scheduled performance for this summer.

“I also had the opportunity to blow things up with Rich’s Incredible Pyro Team,” Volk said. “It was fun to be on the runway, lighting the “wall of fire” with the sponsor. Let me tell you, it was hot!”

Volk has been very involved with two other aviation events in the state. The Oakland County International Airport Air Fair and the Selfridge Air National Guard Base Show. She is eager to make this year’s Cherry Festival show the best it can possibly be and is grateful for the help she is



Kristine Volk, director of the National Cherry Festival Air Show.

receiving along the way.

“Everyone from the National Cherry Festival has been very supportive — especially Ron Hubbard, FAA air traffic manager,” Volk said. “We’ll be working closely together down at show center. He’s got a lot of history with the air show, and has been a great mentor.”

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