



R-E file photo /John L. Russell

The Cherry Festival Souvenir Pavilion is open daily from 10 a.m.-11 p.m.

Festival Souvenir Pavilion

GARRET ELLISON
Record-Eagle staff writer

No visit to the Cherry Festival is complete without a memento to remember it by.

For over 25 years, those mementos have come from the only place to get official festival merchandise — the National Cherry Festival Souvenir Pavilion.

“Everything we sell in the tent is promoting the industry or has the Cherry Festival logo on it somewhere,” said Mark Jensen, owner of JenTees Custom Screen Printing in Traverse City, which has run the souvenir tent for eight years.

The tent sells popular items like shot glasses, cordials, key-chains, stickers, toys, and clothing—ladies, men’s and children’s. They also sell some in-demand yearly items like the 2005 commemorative print and collectable bear — Blossom Bear is the 2005 version.

“It’s a beautiful pink bear,” Jensen said. “Our fifth and final edition.” Only 1,000 are available of the limited run stuffed animal which JenTees designs each year. Air Bear was the 2004 collectable bear, Cherry Beary was 2003, Libearty was 2002, and Grand Paw was the must have for 2001.

Each day, Jensen’s employees and volunteers open the 40 foot by 60 foot tent at 10 a.m. The pavilion

operated in cooperation with the Community Share Program, which sends volunteers from civic organizations in town. The tent is also staffed by festival ambassadors. A large portion of the proceeds from souvenir sales are donated back into the Community Share Program.

After managing the tent for almost a decade, Jensen has come to really enjoy the people he sees down there.

“We see some of the same faces year after year,” Jensen said. “It’s kind of like a reunion each year.”

The tent is open daily from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. during the festival. There are gifts to give away during Special Kids Day on Wednesday—when the tent opens early at 8:30 a.m. to allow the young ones to dash in for their gift before moving on to other activities.

“I like seeing kids and families come through the tent,” Jensen said. “The excitement on the kids faces — it reminds you of being young.”



“Ultimate” hockey tournament at NCF

GARRET ELLISON
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Calling all hockey players! Get your skates out — Puck Whacker Inc., will host it’s first ever National Cherry Festival roller hockey tournament this year.

Puck Whacker is presented by Mountain Dew and is for all ages. Teams are three on three plus a goalie.

“It’s pretty much the Gus Macker of in-line hockey,” said Anthony Pratley, president of Puck Whacker. “We’re so excited to be part of the Cherry Festival this year.”

Being local, Pratley and his friends grew up with the Cherry Festival. They are excited about the exposure the event will generate in the community.

Pratley started Puck Whacker three years ago with his brother in Frankfort, MI. With some equipment purchased from the YMCA, the tournament series has blossomed across the country with 18 tournaments this year in 8 states and Canada.

The Cherry Festival’s tournament will take place over three days. The adult division will begin on Sunday, July 3, at 9 a.m., with the championship round at 6 p.m. The teen division will go on Wednesday, July 6, at 9 a.m. Children are encouraged to participate on Friday, July 8, at 9 a.m.

Trophies will be awarded in each division for the Most Valuable Player and Championship team.

The tentative location for the events is the Grand Traverse Civic Center. The cost is \$30 per person to register — which includes an event T-shirt. Registration deadline is July 1. Teams must be paid in full by the deadline, or players can be added to the roster on tournament day for a \$40 fee. Team registration is available online at www.puckwhacker.com, or 1-866-400-PUCK.

2005 Very Cherry Award

National Cherry Festival officials presented the Very Cherry Promotion Award to Herb and Liz Teichman of Tree-Mendus Fruit in Eau Claire, MI. Festival President Ed Nadeau presented the award during Cherry Marketing Institute’s annual luncheon meeting Jan. 19, 2005 at the Grand Traverse Resort.

The award is presented each year on behalf of the Festival’s cherry promotion committee, to honor individuals or business for outstanding contributions to the cherry promotion effort both regionally and nationally.

The Teichman family farm in Eau Claire is home to many varieties of cherries, homemade baked goods, and handcrafted cherry delights. The Teichman’s have been active in the operation of their 500-acre farm for many years. They have promoted cherries both nationally and internationally by hosting the International Cherry Pit Spit contest each year in Eau Claire. The event began in 1974 and has grown to such magnitude that several cherry pit spitting champions have been regular guests on the the Late Show with Dave Letterman and the Tonight Show with Jay Leno.

Cherry Angels offer help

BY LINDSAY VANHULLE
Record-Eagle staff writer

One group of volunteers at this year’s National Cherry Festival wants to make it easier for festivalgoers to get the services they need.

The Cherry Angels, based out of the Central United Methodist Church in downtown Traverse City, aim to provide people with water, parking spaces, a place to rest and an overall pleasant festival experience, said Faith Linsenmayer, co-chair of the group.

“One time, the group was running water back and forth to parade-goers, and we saw an opportunity to have our doors open,” Linsenmayer said.

The church will indeed open its doors to provide water, restrooms and an area for nursing mothers throughout the week, she said.

In addition, a group of Cherry Angels will clean up after the Heritage Parade on July 5. That same day will be a church open house, featuring a luncheon, a tour of the facility and a bake sale, Linsenmayer said.

“I didn’t want it to be in-your-face,” she said. “Just doing something positive. And if people want to talk religion, they can talk, but if not, we did a good thing.”

“The Cherry Angels formed as a way to extend the mission of the church and provide services to people,” said Donna Johnston, co-chair of the group. “The idea to me was to just make it reach the people, and it certainly did. Here’s Cherry Festival, we’ve got people downtown from all over the world.”

“The idea is to always be of service,” she said. “There’s a lot of mission work that can be done right here at home.”

The brothers of Byte

GARRET ELLISON
Record-Eagle staff writer

Each year, countless people log on to the National Cherry Festival website.

“During cherry festival week, the site literally has millions of visitors,” said Tim Barrons, co-owner of Byte Productions, a Traverse City based web development service that developed the festival’s website in 1997.

The site is designed to be easily navigable to all, from finding weather updates to event schedules. It can be accessed at www.cherryfestival.org.

Byte Productions LLC began in 1991 as the brainchild of Tom & Tim Barrons. Today the team designs, produces and manages websites, builds computer graphics for print and web and multimedia applications for CDs.

Chuck O’Connor, director of sales and marketing for the National Cherry Festival feels the professionalism of Byte has been an invaluable resource to the festival.

“When you’ve got a small staff like ours and nobody’s an expert at maintaining websites, it’s just been great to have the people at Byte around to handle it,” he said.

Each year, Byte helps out with various festival activities. They have provided live-audio streams from the entertainment stage and offered E-Postcards, where festivalgoers could email superimposed photo of themselves in a cartoon drawing from the open space.