

New festival will bring fun to “go fly a kite”

BY PATRICK EVANS-HYLTON
THE VIGINIAN-PILOT

OCEANFRONT — Chris Stankus wants the whole city of Virginia Beach to go fly a kite.

But don't be offended.

The vice president of Pungo-based Jackite Inc., a kite-manufacturing company, is a sponsor of the city's first Atlantic Coast Kite Festival.

The fete, put on by Beach Events, will be Saturday at the Beachstreet Starfish Pavilion at 17th Street. Activities will be from 10 a.m. until 5:30 p.m.

“I had been wanting to have a local kite festival for some time now,” said Stankus, who oversees the daily operation of the business. “I was excited when Beachevents approached me about starting something this year.”

The festival coincides with National Kite Month, and, in anticipation of the local happenings, Mayor Meyera E. Oberndorf has also declared April to be Virginia Beach Kite Month.

Mike Hilton, director of marketing for Beachevents, said kiting is already a popular activity in the city, as evidenced by the kite flying at the Oceanfront and Mount Trashmore. He said the festival would bring those enthusiasts together in a fun day of activities.

“Eventually, we'd like to include sport-kite competitions,” Hilton said. “This first time around, we will have workshops and vendors and more. There will be something for everyone to enjoy.”

Activities will include kite demonstrations and ballets, kite building and lessons on flying all sorts of kites.



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Christopher Stankus, vice president of Jackite Inc., is one of the sponsors of The Atlantic Coast Kite Festival, scheduled for April 23 at the Oceanfront. All activities, to be held on the beach and in the park at 17th Street, will be free and open to the public.

Prizes will be awarded for kite building and flying skills.

Workshops for children ages 6 to 14 will be led at 10 a.m. and 2 and 4 p.m. by nationally recognized kite expert Archie Stewart of Chestnut Hill, Mass. Stewart is a member of the American Kiteflyers Association and, as a sport kite competitor, won the 1999-2000 Eastern League Championship in individual precision flights and pairs ballet.

Pre-registration for the workshops are not necessary, but each session is limited to 50 children.

Kite demonstrations and other activities will be presented by the Richmond Air Force kite club. Expert kite fliers from the club will help novices learn the fundamentals of kite flying.

All activities will be free to the public.

“Of course, we invite people to come out and fly their own kite, too,” said Stankus, whose company has been manufacturing kites for 17 years and distributes to 22 countries. Jackite products are also found in 10,000 stores in the United States.

“There is something about kite flying that makes you happy, no matter what kind of day you are having,” Stankus added. “The wind blowing in your face, being out in nature. You kind of get into your own little world.”

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