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## SOAR THROUGH THE DECADES AS THE BLOSSOM KITE FESTIVAL CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF KITE FLYING ON THE NATIONAL MALL

**Washington, DC** [March 2, 2016] – The National Cherry Blossom Festival will celebrate the favorite tradition of 50 years of kite flying on the National Mall at the Blossom Kite Festival on Saturday, April 2 on the grounds of the Washington Monument (Constitution Avenue and 17th Street, NW) from 10a.m. to 4:30p.m. The event is known as the kick-off to kite season and includes five areas to explore and enjoy: the Competition & Demonstration Field, Public Field, Kite Club Display Area, Family Field, and Activity Tents. A mini-parade steps off at 10:00 a.m. to launch the day.

*The Blossom Kite Festival includes the following:*

- **Kites of the Decades:** Celebrate 50 years of kite flying on the National Mall with a special showcase of kites from the '70s, '80s, '90s and the 21st century.
- **Competition & Demonstration Field:** experienced and first-time kite makers enter the adult **Kite Makers Competition**.
- **Kite Ballets:** master kite fliers synchronize their kites to music.
- **Rokkaku Battle:** hexagonal-shaped fighter kites commonly flown in Japan are flown by teams in a competition to “cut” or “ground” opposing kites
- **Hot Tricks Showdown:** multi-line kite fliers engage in a series of one-on-one competitions and maneuver their sport kites in amazing flight patterns during 30 seconds of music. Winners are selected by audience applause.

All attendees are welcome to fly their own kites on the **Public Field** (no registration is required). In the **Kite Club Display Area**, master kite fliers and kite makers showcase their prized kites. This area is limited to invited individuals and clubs. Throughout the event, the **Capital Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association** will display hang gliders and demonstrate kiting paragliders. Youth competitions take place on the **Family Field**. Families can also get expert advice and practice new skills. Throughout the **Activity Tents**, children can create their own simple kite with the National Cherry Blossom Festival Goodwill Ambassadors, or a more advanced sled kite with the West Indian-American Kite Association. At the **Jumpstart at George Washington University tent**, author Alicia Z. Klepeis will read her children’s story “Francisco’s Kites”. Visit the John Oxenham Memorial Kite Hospital for repairs to damaged or broken kites.

The Blossom Kite Festival is produced by the Festival with the assistance of a Kite Advisory Committee. The event is supported by media partners Washington Parent Magazine and BIG 100.3. After opening at 10:00 a.m., the schedule is as follows (schedule subject to change based on wind and weather):

<b>Competition Field</b>		<b>Family Field</b>	
Opening Remarks & 50 Years of Kite Flying Kick-Off Parade	10am	Youth Kite Makers Practice Fly	10:30-11am
Kite Ballets & Demos	10:30-11am	Youth Kite Makers Competition	11-noon
Adult Kite Makers Competition	11am-1pm	Youth Kite Makers Awards	noon-12:30pm
Demo: Kites of the Decades	1-2pm	Mini Rokkaku Practice	12:30-1pm
Hot Tricks Showdown	2-3pm	Mini Rokkaku Challenge (ages 5-9)	1-1:30pm
Rokkaku Battle	3-4pm	Mini Rokkaku Challenge (ages 10-15)	1:30-2pm
Puzzle Rokkaku	4-4:15pm	Bol Races	2-3 pm
Awards	4:15-4:30pm	Family Open Fly	3:00-4:30pm

The National Cherry Blossom Festival is the nation’s greatest springtime celebration. The 2016 Festival, March 20 – April 17, includes three spectacular weeks and four weekends of events featuring diverse and creative programming promoting traditional and contemporary arts and culture, natural beauty, and community spirit. Visit [nationalcherryblossomfestival.org](http://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org) or call 877.44.BLOOM for more information and find us on Facebook (CherryBlossomFestival), Twitter (@CherryBlossFest), and Instagram (@CherryBlossFest).

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