



President's Page

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The Leading Edge

We all move forward on their wings

It might have been that time when your uncle flew his 172 to town for Thanksgiving and let you take the yoke as you flew over your house.

It might have been that spring afternoon you spent sitting in the field watching the returning mallards and Canada geese set their wings...twist and turn and work the wind...then drop, soft as feathers, onto the farm pond.

Maybe it was that Saturday the Little League game was rained out, and you spent the morning watching *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines* on television.

No one can say for sure where dreams of flying are conceived. They are as distinct and varied as the people who hold them, and they are as old as history itself.

From the days of the first pilots, there have been those who have dreamed of being the best pilots. Those who have strived to excel in piloting have benefited all of us. By pushing themselves and their machines to the edge of their respective performance envelopes and back again, they have led us to improved aircraft designs, safer flying practices, and lifesaving recovery techniques.

This leading edge form of piloting has evolved into the international sport of competitive aerobatics—a sport that pays continuous dividends to aviation's growth, progress, and safety for all of us. It is the mission of the United States Aerobatic Foundation (USAF) to raise the required funding for the flying teams that represent our nation in international competition. Quite frankly, the foundation needs all of our help.

This year, for only the third time in history, the World Aerobatic Championships will be held in the United States. It is a time of both celebration and challenges for aviation. This year we celebrate the centennial anniversary of the invention of powered flight. It was December 17, 1903, when Wilbur and Orville Wright turned their dreams into the gift of wings to the world. At the same time, it is a time of challenge: The security issues

raised by September 11, the tragic loss of the space shuttle Columbia, and the economic issues facing the transportation and aerospace industries have fostered a climate of uncertainty and, in some cases, discouragement about aviation's future.

Help us deliver a positive message on aviation's behalf by supporting the U.S. Aerobatic Teams as they host the world in 2003!

The United States is exactly where the message should emanate from. Powered flight was invented here. We've trained more pilots in the United States than all of the other nations on earth combined. Pick a category of aircraft development and production—commercial, military, general, experimental—and for 100 years, America has led the world. We are the only nation to leave a human footprint on another celestial body. From June 25 to July 4, 2003, the world will be watching the skies above Lakeland, Florida. The skies will be filled with those living—and flying—their dreams. We need to give the U.S. team every possible opportunity to be victorious.

In our nation, the support of the U.S. Aerobatic Team is not a story of government or large corporation spon-

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PRESENTED BY



JUNE 25 TO JULY 4, 2003
LAKELAND LINDER REGIONAL AIRPORT
WWW.WAC2003.ORG

The Championships begin on Wednesday, June 25, with opening ceremonies and a nighttime airshow. Competition will begin on Thursday, June 26, and last through Friday, July 4, ending with the spectacular 4-minute Freestyle competition. Award presentation

and closing ceremonies to be held July 4 in conjunction with a 4th of July celebration. Special events are being planned throughout the week. For contest information, contact the IAC at iac@eaa.org or 920-426-6881.



sorship. It is a story that has been written contest by contest, competitor by competitor, and individual donor by individual donor. Each year, USAF must undertake the raising of needed funds in an effort to keep America's teams competitive on the world stage. The challenges, and the opportunity, have never been greater in our history.

There is an immediate need to raise \$100,000. Unlike many of the countries our teams will compete against, there is no system in our country that allows our pilots to devote themselves full time to their aerobatic training. Each U.S. competitor must supply his or her own world-class aerobatic airplane and invest limitless hours in punishing practice and physical training in order to win qualifying spots on the team. All that the team members receive and all that they ask is the chance to represent their country—to follow their dreams of being the best of the best.

No one can say for sure where dreams of flying are conceived. But we do know that where dreams are nurtured and supported, we all move forward on their wings. The IAC's job is to create the atmosphere for pilots to learn the art of aerobatics. Of those who learn through our building block system, we select the best. The United States Aerobatic Foundation is an autonomous organization working in concert with the IAC to raise funds for our best—the U.S. team. Along with one paid administrative staff person, they are made up of hard working and generous volunteers. Please consider whatever you can as soon as you can to help this year's team to victory, and come on down to Lakeland to cheer them on. Thanks, and fly safely! ✈