A.C.'s annual airshow soars back to the shore for a 15th year

By RYAN LOUGHLIN

Who doesn’t love death-defying acts? Seemingly no one, because for the last 14 years folks from all around have packed the beaches of Atlantic City for the annual Atlantic City Airshow, known as “Thunder Over The Boardwalk.”

This year is the big 15th anniversary of the event, and anticipation is already building. After all, fighter planes and historic aircraft of many varieties zipping high over the sand and sea while performing incredible aerial maneuvers can be just what the doctor ordered on a late summer morning. This year the event returns 11 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 23, on the beach in Atlantic City, and you won’t want to miss it.

One of the demonstrations that will be sure to dazzle the crowd this year is the GEICO Skytypers.

Steve Kapur is a pilot with the high flying group, which combines World War II era fighter planes with death defying maneuvers and occasional puffs of smoke.

“What we do is typing in the sky as opposed to skywriting. Skywriting twists and turns to spell out individual letters with its smoke trail, but what we do is fly our aircrafts in a formation, and we have a computer that controls the smoke system in each aircraft. We put out puffs of smoke at just the right time to form dot matrix style letters,” Kapur says.

“But we tend to do the skytyping before the actual show.”

Like many of the skytypers, Kapur has a commercial pilots license, which means he would be as comfortable in a jumbo jet as he would in the historic planes that the Skytypers fly.

“When you fly commercially there are significant rules that govern that. When we are flying (for GEICO) we fly in very close formation. You wouldn’t do that (commercially).”

So what can airshow enthusiasts expect from the Skytypers? Kapur assures us that the crowds will be in for a real treat.

“We fly a terrific routine! It’s about 20 minutes in length and you will see us fly over the crowd as a delta, then break into a diamond. You will see some really cool maneuvers. These are the maneuvers that have been taught to pilots learning to fly back in the second world war, Korea and even today. What its doing is giving you a perspective on what it is like to be a military aviator.”

Also appearing is Miss GIECO, an offshore powerboat racer that will actually race two of the planes. So, of course, that begs the question, is there a rivalry between the pilots and the guys manning the boat?

“You think?!” Kapur says with a laugh. “Holy mackeral is there ever a friendly rivalry! We love those guys (in the boat), they are part of the GEICO family, but, of course, each side wants to win.”
Fun fact: The letters that are typed by the Skytypers are each taller than the Empire State Building.