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‘That was insane’

By CHRIS CURTIS

Recorder Staff

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GREENFIELD — Some were expecting a bigger bang than in years past, others were surprised to hear past shows weren't what they were supposed to be. But everyone wanted to see fireworks Sunday in Greenfield.

“It's supposed to be the best ever, we'll see,” said 42-year Beacon Street resident Carla Bernier before the show, waiting for the fireworks on her front steps with friends and family gathered in the yard.

The town last year learned it had not been getting the show it paid for between 2011 and 2014. In fact, the display was short-changed to the tune of half in 2014. Sunday's show was the first Independence Day display since the town and Atlas PyroVision Entertainment Group settled their dispute out of court and town officials and the company promised a big show at a discount.

Brothers Don and Ed Creek faced Poet's Seat Tower off to the left of the field Sunday evening. The two said they have watched fireworks displays for untold years, always from the same spot. The brothers are Greenfield natives, Ed Creek visiting from Chicopee, and both were aware of the story around this year's show.

“The mayor says we're going to be surprised,” Don Creek said. “He said it's supposed to be spectacular, so we'll see.”

“Poof, over,” Ed Creek interjected, laughing and pantomiming a different kind of surprise: a single rocket.

Like many in the field at 5 p.m., both agreed recent years' fireworks were nice. “It would have been even better if we got the other half,” Don Creek added.

Jeffrey and Juline Decker of Chicopee staked out a spot in the shade at the rear of Beacon Field at 5 p.m. with children Laura and Nathan, 8 and 6, back for a second year after enjoying last year's show and the setting. They were surprised to hear the 2014 fireworks were anything less than expected.

“Last year was really nice,” Juline Decker said.

“Beautiful, I was very impressed by last year’s,” Jeffrey Decker said.

The family was ready to be impressed again by Greenfield, having found Amherst’s display Saturday a little anemic.

And they weren’t disappointed.

“That was insane, I think that was the most I’ve seen in one show,” Jeffrey Decker said after the show. The first rocket shot up over Poet’s Seat Tower at 9:37 p.m. and 27 minutes later, spectators cheered and clapped after a frenzied finale with rockets firing from three locations, from the tower top, the tower parking lot and the ridge to the north.

The Creeks agreed. “Very good. Excellent, twice as good as last year,” Don Creek said.

After the show, one small spectator in Bernier’s Beacon Street front yard was fast asleep, but the adults used words like “best.”

“The ending was unbelievable,” Bernier said.

Greenfield paid \$4,500 for 1,338 shells this year, less than half the \$11,000 to \$12,000 paid in past years and roughly the number of shells spectators were supposed to see last year.

Sunday’s was the town’s second discounted show since the agreement, with fireworks at the February Winter Carnival at a fifth the cost. With the price tag lowered, the town has not collected fireworks donations this year.



The Greenfield fireworks display at Beacon Field in front of Poet Seat Tower on Sunday night. Recorder/Matt Burkhart



Mary Lou Manica, 73, was festively dressed for the Greenfield fireworks display at Beacon Field in front of Poet Seat Tower Sunday, as she said she is every year. Recorder/Matt Burkhart