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Fireworks, festivities on tap for weekend in valley

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GREENFIELD — The night sky over Franklin County will once again be lit by explosions Saturday, during the town's 2016 Independence Day celebration.

Fireworks will be fired from Poet's Seat Tower at 9:35 p.m., about an hour after sunset.

"It's one of our most popular events," said Christy Moore, town recreation director. "It's the largest fireworks display in Franklin County. People can see it everywhere in Greenfield because of the Poet's Seat ridgeline."

The fireworks, which are sponsored by the town's Recreation Department, are free to the public.

Moore said there's limited on-street parking, so anyone who wants to attend should be prepared to walk.

Before the fireworks, festivities will kick off at 4 p.m. on Beacon Field off Sanderson Street, and behind the nearby middle school on Federal Street. Food, face painting, drinks and other novelty items and activities will be offered by third-party vendors.

The event will include musical performances (at Beacon Field only) by Lexi Weege (starting at 5 p.m.), Zydeco Connection (6 p.m.), Fortin Family Award (7:10 p.m.), Sweet Little Bloodhound (7:15 p.m.) and the Greenfield

Military Band (8:30 p.m.).

A grant for music was given by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. The town Department of Public Works and Central Maintenance have also helped make the event possible.

A rain date for Sunday has been set.

Annual Amherst fireworks

AMHERST — A few days after the annual fireworks in Franklin County, McGuirk Alumni Stadium on University Drive at the University of Massachusetts Amherst will be the site of more fireworks on Monday.

The sun will set around 8:30 p.m., and the first firework will explode over the field about an hour later at 9:30 p.m.

A slew of other Independence Day festivities, such as live music, hot air balloon rides and food, will happen throughout the evening, starting at 5 p.m.

Parking for the event is \$5; transportation to the field is also available, offered by the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority.

Cub Scouts collaborate on Independence Day parade

SHELBURNE — The tantalizing smell of barbecue will waft through the town Monday in celebration of Independence Day, when Cub Scouts from Pack 85 once again host a chicken barbecue and parade.

The annual parade will step off at 11:30 a.m. starting on Conway Street, near the former Buckland maintenance building, and ending in front of the Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School, on Mechanic Street.

Steven Finck, who has been helping to organize the parade for more than 20 years, said this year's events will be focused on honoring veterans.

"This year is going to be extra special," he said. "If it wasn't for the veterans, there wouldn't be a Fourth of July."

After the parade, event-goers can enjoy half a barbecued chicken, potato salad, cole slaw, a roll and a

drink for \$12, while they listen to patriotic music performed by a military band.

There will also be a bounce-house and a tent under which people can eat.

The event will be held rain or shine. Parking will be at the elementary school.

Anyone interested in marching in the parade can call 413-522-4585 or 413-625-6856.

Jazz for July 4th

CHARLEMONT — Smooth jazz will mingle with the sounds of summer on Monday, starting at 4 p.m. in the Federated Church on Route 2.

The concert will be one hour long without intermission.

Mark Fraser, executive artistic director at Mohawk Trail Concerts, the organization putting the event together, said there will be lots of variety in the concert.

“It’s our gift to the community for the holiday,” he said, adding that the time was set early in the day so people have a chance to see fireworks later in the evening.

The event is free to the public and is part of the organization’s summer concert series.

Fraser also said the church will be air-conditioned.

The concert will feature local musicians Miro Sprague performing on the piano, and Marty Jaffe on bass. Eric Miller will also be performing on the trombone.

“They’re young and fantastic,” Fraser said. “We’re getting them just at the beginning of their careers — we’re lucky.”

Mohawk Trail Concerts, which has been around for almost 50 years, books the event as a “family jazz concert” on its website.

For more information, visit: mohawktrailconcerts.org

Reading of the Declaration of Independence

GREENFIELD — “When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the

political bands which have connected them with another," begins the Declaration of Independence.

In honor of Independence Day and America's 240th birthday, eight people will read the entire declaration, beginning at 9 a.m. Monday on the Town Common, and ending less than an hour later. Participants in the event will include Greenfield Mayor William Martin and other officials.

Members of the 4D1G Quartet will perform patriotic music, and a special prayer will be given for America.

Free concert at the Old Town Hall

DEERFIELD — The Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association is hosting a free Independence Day concert at 3 p.m. on Monday.

It will take place in the Deerfield Teachers' Center Hall (10 Memorial St. immediately behind the Old Town Hall) where there is seating for 120.

Westmoreland Town Band from New Hampshire will perform patriotic songs in honor of the nation's birthday.
