

David T. Chuljian, DDS, PS
1303 Washington Street
Port Townsend, WA 98368

www.chuljiandds.com

May 29, 2015

Rumors of my Deification Have Been Greatly Exaggerated

There's nothing like seeing your name in print to get your attention. I noticed two glowing references to my pyrotechnics expertise in last week's paper--they were so glowing, in fact, that I expected to find ATF agents at my door before the week was out. (So far, nothing--the NSA must not follow the Leader.) At any rate, I would like to set the record straight about what to expect on July 4th. First, some history of PT fireworks shows. For quite a few years, we have had what is known as "canned" shows: a truck shows up on July 4th with all the mortars, shells, fused finales, shovels, rakes, and everything required to hand fire a show. In return, the town writes a check for about \$15,000 at today's prices. Typically 15% of this goes to pay the folks who do the physical work setting up and firing the show. This gives a beautiful display of 20-30 minutes, depending on the taste of who's lighting it. After the show, the crew picks up the mess, stows it in the truck, drives it to the staging point, and it's over: no muss, no fuss.

I have nothing against canned shows, but face it, we don't have \$15,000. For \$8000 (\$3000 me, \$5000 PTPC), we can do almost the same show. We have to provide the mortars (firing tubes), wires, electric firing system, electric igniters, plywood, shovels, personal protective equipment, and all incidentals. My crew will not get paid, although I may throw in a free RRRRoooootttttt!!!!!! Canal if anyone wants one. We are buying all the product from a well known supplier, Wolverine Fireworks--ATF frowns heavily on people building their own. I spent several hours last month with an Excel spreadsheet seeing what we could get for our budget. I bought the 3" and 4" mortars long ago--we've done a July 3rd show at Discovery Bay off and on since 2005. (The Broders family provided the site and leaned on spectators for donations.) We significantly upgraded the firing system we use on New Year's Eve, but we're just renting the 5" mortars--I was unwilling to buy \$1000 worth of tubes for what may be a one-time event. The *hope* is this will jump-restart local fireworks. I'm not the only person in town with a pyro license, and I will be glad to lend my gear to future shows. But my \$3000 was a one-time donation.

Those of you who have seen our Discovery Bay shows may be a little disappointed. We can't do that show for a huge crowd--there's no way to get folks close enough. (It resembled the finale at the end of most shows, except it was 8 - 10 minutes long with a final 2 minutes of absolute insanity. Budget me \$16,000 plus pay my crew and we'll be happy to do it.) This show will be 16-17 minutes, something going off all the time, and lots of fun to watch. I couldn't do it without my crew, some of whom have worked a dozen or more shows with me (Disco Bay,

Port Angeles, Westport, and other locations). There's something like 10 man-hours of work for each minute of the show--ya gotta love doing it, there's clearly no money to be made. Come on out on the 4th, stay behind the barricades, oooh and ahhh at the explosions, and no, I will NOT sell you one of the shells for a hundred bucks . . . But I'll give ATF your phone number!