

Chicago Fire Festival falls flat

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To celebrate the 143rd anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire, the Redmoon Theatre, contracted by the City of Chicago, scheduled the inaugural Great Chicago Fire Festival. The purpose of the event was to bring together all the neighborhoods and celebrate the grit and resilience of Chicago. This event was hyped quite a bit, but even after tons of money and planning, the event fell flat.

During the day, there were a few smaller events including some vendors, food trucks, and entertainment. However, these

events were not the main part of the celebration. What most people came for was the burning of Victorian-style model houses floating on rafts on the Chicago River. This is when the problems started.

The crowds that came for the spectacle started lining the river and bridges, but there was not enough room for everyone to get a good view. This made traveling along the river next to impossible, and finding a good vantage point even worse. There were some odd locations eventually taken including the railings of bridges, in nearby buildings, and even a few people sitting on top of the Porta-Potties.

The burning of the floating houses, which was supposed to start at 8 p.m. did not

start until after 9 p.m. This delay, along with the chilly weather, was enough to make the crowds start complaining. Left and right, people were commenting about how poorly the thing was running and how it was a waste of time. The crowds starting thinning.

After many delays and electrical problems, there were finally some successful attempts to set the houses on fire. However, due to the wet weather earlier in the week, the flames quickly died down, leaving the homes mostly intact. At this point, most people had just given up and left. Even though fireworks were promised afterward, nobody wanted to wait around in the increasingly colder weather, especially after standing in a large crowd for

hours.

The one thing that did go well was the fireworks show. With multiple launch points along the river, the fireworks were amazing. It was not a long show, but quite the spectacle as the lights reflected off the nearby buildings. Those who were patient enough to stick around finally got a good show, but it was not worth waiting in the cold sea of people for 2 hours.

A six year old in the crowd managed to summarize the entire show in a game of I spy: "I spy Chicago, I spy something not on fire."

