

Douglas Morrisson Theatre

Volunteer Handbook

PDF Edition
March 2008

WELCOME!

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of our volunteer team. The Douglas Morrisson Theatre (DMT) is owned and operated by the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District. The mission of the Theatre is to provide active recreation opportunities for the amateur theatre artist, for artistic expression and social participation, while providing the highest quality productions that our budget, time, and combined talents of staff and volunteers can achieve.

Without the help and support of our volunteers we could not hope to produce the vibrant, high-quality theatre our audiences have come to expect. There are many ways to become involved at the Morrisson Theatre.

HOW DO I BECOME A VOLUNTEER?

After notifying us of your interest in volunteering and providing us with your phone number and/or email address, you will be contacted by our Volunteer Coordinator who will arrange a tour of the theatre for you. At that time you will learn about the volunteer opportunities in each of our departments. If we are able to match your interests and availability with our needs you will be asked to complete a "Volunteer Application" and a "Questionnaire" form. Return the completed forms to the theatre or mail to: Morrisson Theatre c/o H.A.R.D., 1099 E Street, Hayward, CA 94541.

- A completed form must be submitted before any volunteer assignment may be undertaken.
- Minors (anyone under the age of 18) must have their form signed by a parent or legal guardian.
- Please note that if you are assigned a position where you have

direct supervisory authority over children under 18, you will be fingerprinted, at District expense, to determine your eligibility to work with children.

After your application has been processed you will be contacted regarding specific opportunities and assignments.

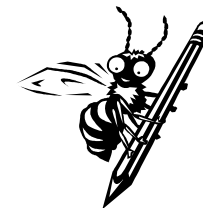
WHAT DO WARDROBE DEPARTMENT VOLUNTEERS DO?

In general, under the supervision of the theatre's Wardrobe Master, volunteers help to construct and maintain the beautiful costumes used in our productions. Typical activities in this department include:

- Machine sewing.
- Hand-sewing trim, buttons, etc.
- Repairing costume stock.
- Labeling.
- Washing, drying and ironing costume stock.

Dressers:

- Dressers assist the actors with costume changes.
- Make emergency costume repairs.
- Collect all costumes at the end of the performance and hang them up for the next performance.
- Gather laundry to be done by the wardrobe department each week.



HOW ARE VOLUNTEERS USED IN THE OFFICE?

Under the supervision of the Box Office Staff, volunteers assist with:

- Assembling/stapling production programs.
- Assembling/stapling/labeling bulk mailings.
- Special events and projects.

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF “THE CREW?”

In general, under the supervision of the Stage Manager:

- Be available for at least 3 technical rehearsals and 8 performances per show.
- Be available at least one hour before all rehearsals and performances.
- Be comfortable in and able to work in a dark environment.
- Be able to create and maintain procedural notes that may be needed.
- Be conscious of and alert for safety issues.
- Be willing to accept any crew tasks requested by the Stage Manager.

THE STAGE CREW:

- Be able to lift or push moderate weight.
- Be able to accept and focus on crew responsibilities that may be requested by the Deck Manager.
- Be prepared to dress appropriately for performances, i.e.: sturdy black shoes, all black clothing (long-sleeved shirts).
- Be able to remain after a performance if clean up or preset is necessary.
- As a Deck Manager or Crew Leader, be able to organize tasks efficiently and communicate them to the crew.

LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR:

- Be comfortable in the use of a computer.
- Be willing to be trained to program the light plot.
- Be able to sit and maintain focus and concentration for extended periods of time while receiving instructions on a headset.

SOUND OPERATOR:

- Be comfortable in the use of sound equipment, i.e.: tape decks, CD players and microphones.

- Be able to sit, focus and possibly multitask, for extended periods of time.
- Be able to focus and maintain concentration, for extended periods, while receiving instructions on a headset.

FOLLOWSPOT OPERATOR:

- Be able to stand for extended periods of time.
- Be able to learn the procedures and techniques of the followspot.
- Be able to maintain focus and concentration while receiving instructions on a headset.
- Be able to work in slightly elevated heat, generated by the followspot.
- Be able to maintain steady control of the followspot.

THE PROP CREW:

The basic responsibility of the prop crew is to insure the cast has what they need for each performance so they can feel confident when they are on stage. Everything else (keeping track of props, making sure things are where they belong, reporting broken or missing items, communicating with the cast and Stage Manager, etc.) stems from this basic responsibility.

- Wear appropriate clothing as directed by the Stage Manager (generally all black: shoes, pants, and long-sleeved shirt).
- Be sure that nothing is on the prop tables except props: no water, personal items, etc.
- Be sure props are either on the prop tables or on stage; they should never be in the dressing rooms, green room, or other areas of the theatre. Keep in mind that props and furniture may have been borrowed or rented and may be valuable. Treat everything with care.
- The Deck Crew members often change from performance to performance. Make sure to keep up a running dialogue with the Stage Manager and other crew members so you can be aware of who is doing what and when. Don't ever *assume* someone else is doing a particular task.



DO YOU USE VOLUNTEER USHERS?

Under the supervision of our Staff House Manager, or a Volunteer House Manager, we use a minimum of six volunteer ushers for each performance. The DMT Usher, as the first person in the theatre that many of our patrons encounter, is a very important position. Ushers contribute significantly to a positive experience for our audience members. A complete usher orientation will be provided by one of our House Managers. Listed below is some basic information:

- Ushers are requested to check in and out with the House Manager at each performance.
- Arrival time is usually one hour before the start of a performance.
- Departure time is when all patrons have exited and all programs have been cleared from the theatre aisles and seats.
- Acceptable attire for ushers includes: a solid black skirt or slacks, a solid white or black blouse or shirt (with sleeves - no T's please), and comfortable shoes in a dark color.
- Ushers will be expected to learn the numbering system for theatre seats and the location of restrooms, drinking fountains, exits, telephones, and fire extinguishers. Emergency procedures and disaster preparedness will be covered in an usher orientation.
- Ushers should be able to stand for at least one hour and should be able to go up and down stairs. Ushers also need to be comfortable working in a darkened theatre setting.

DO YOU NEED HELP BUILDING SCENERY?

Under the supervision of the DMT Technical Director volunteers may:

- Build (carpentry)
- Paint
- Weld
- Install scenery and chorus risers

- Rig scenery
- Strike scenery

Please note: most of our building and painting is done Monday thru Friday from 9:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Weekend and evening volunteer hours, in this Department, are very limited.

CREW TERMS

Here are just a few of the terms you will encounter while working on a crew. If you hear a term that isn't listed or that you don't understand **do not hesitate to ask**. Nobody starts out knowing it all!

CYCLORAMA OR CYC – A circular curtain that surrounds the back of the set to help hide the backstage area. The cyc is usually white or pale blue.

DIRECTOR – The person who oversees the entire production and practices the art and techniques of bringing the elements of theatre together to make a play.

DOWNSTAGE – The stage area moving toward the audience.

GLOW TAPE - Tape used to make spike marks for scenery or props that must be placed during blackouts (no light).

GRID - Catwalks above the set (scenery) where instruments are hung.

HOUSE RIGHT – HOUSE LEFT- The right or left side of the house from the perspective of the audience facing the stage.

INSTRUMENTS-Lights in grid used to light the set.

LEGS & BORDERS, MASKING-The black drapes hanging vertically to the stage floor are called legs, borders or teasers. These drapes are set in place or "dressed" to mask (hide) the backstage area from the view of the audience. The black drapes hanging horizontally to the stage floor are used to mask the lighting equipment or top of the scenery from the audience's view.

Administrative Staff

Rita Bedoya-Shue, General Manager
Larry Lepore, Superintendent of Parks
Rick Silva, Manager of Golf Operations
John Gouveia, Business Manager

Douglas Morrisson Theatre Staff

Nancy McCullough Engle, Managing and Artistic Director
Terry Sullivan, Technical Director/Master Electrician
John Lewis, Resident Costume Designer/Wardrobe
Master
George Ledo, Resident Prop Master
Aida Hood and Larry Jeane, Wardrobe Assistants
Donald Tieck, Resident Composer
Carol Mietz, Resident Stage Manager
Pauly Langguth, Box Office Manager/Development
Director
Gene Szasz, House Manager
Sally Hanson, Subscription Services Manager
Box Office Staff: Claire Burnett, Sally Hanson, Mary Lou
Pelland, Christine Plowright, Lisa Saaz, Deb Brothers
Gail Hansen, Theatre Historian

Box Office Hours: Tuesday – Friday, 12:30 – 5:30 and
one hour prior to performances. Phone 510/881-6777

Visit us at www.dmtonline.org

PRE-SET-To prepare set or props in advance of a performance or a scene.

PROSCENIUM-The enlarged hole cut through a wall to allow the audience to view the stage. It is also called the proscenium arch. The archway is, in a sense, the frame for the action on the stage.

SCRIM- A large translucent curtain that when lighted from the front appears to be solid but when lighted from behind disappears.

SET (verb)-to place props or set pieces on stage.

SET (noun)-Scenery

SPIKE- Marking, usually with small pieces of tape, the position of scenery or props so they are always positioned in the same place at each performance.

STAGE MANAGER-The director's liaison backstage during rehearsals. The Stage Manager is responsible for the running of each performance.

STAGE RIGHT- STAGE LEFT- The right or left side of the stage from the perspective of an actor facing the audience.

STRIKE- To remove props or set pieces from the stage.

UPSTAGE- Used as a noun, the stage area moving away from the audience; used as a verb, to steal the focus of a scene.

Hayward Area Recreation and Park District

Board of Directors

Louis Andrade, President
Carol A. Pereira, Vice President
Paul W. Hodges. Jr., Secretary
Minane Jameson, Director
Richard Sheridan, Director