

# ***FLOATS***

Floats can be assembled several ways, starting with a pick-up, flatbed trailer or flatbed truck. The vehicle needs to be in good running condition as there is a tendency to overheat because of the slow speed of travel. The vehicle will travel slowly in first gear throughout the parade route so there is not the normal air flow around the engine for cooling. Choose a driver with lots of patience and smooth driving skills. The parade moves very slowly and drivers find they start and stop again, and again, and again.....

## **Decorating**

There are many ways of decorating floats. Go for a look that is simple and direct. Small details will be lost. The audience will usually see the float for about 10 seconds. A presentation that is easy to grasp will communicate quickly and effectively. Inexpensive materials like cardboard, PVC pipe, duct tape, chicken wire and cloth can give your float shape. Poster paint on cardboard can create images with strong colors, turning your pick-up or trailer into a rocket ship, ant farm or the White House.

## **Safety**

The safety of those in your entry and the parade audience is very important. Common sense and careful inspections will help you see problems before they occur. If you're unsure if it's safe, get help or change the design or set-up.

1. Follow all the rules for floats. Read the Parade Policies and Float Entry sections carefully. Floats not meeting the requirements will be removed from the parade.
2. You must carry a fire extinguisher
3. Provide support for riders, a leaning brace for those standing and hand-holds for those sitting. If the float stops quickly can everyone maintain their positions?
4. Tow vehicles must have the load capacity for trailer being towed
5. Vehicles must have good brakes
6. Trailers must be safety chained to the tow vehicle
7. Keep fabric away from wheel wells. Check your turning radius. Do the decorations hinder turning? Does the driver have sufficient visibility to legally drive to the parade site?

Transporting your float to the parade staging area may be challenging. Normal traffic speeds may cause your float to fall apart. Plan ahead so that your float arrives in good shape at the start of the parade. Some assembly may be required on site.

Plan ahead for coverings should the weather turn before, during or after the parade.

Resources: Building supply stores (Jerry's, Home Depot, Eugene Hardware, etc.) and craft stores (Craft World, Michaels, etc.).

## Using Sound in your parade entry

### Parade PA System:

Having a PA system for your parade entry can enhance your interaction with the audience and improve your chances of winning an award. Portability of the system is required along with flexibility of speaker and amplifier placement. Below is an overview of the components

### Speakers:

1. Small speakers with horns for the tweeters and 12" or 15" speakers for the woofers are a good size for floats. Floor monitors (also known as wedges) work well as they are small and full range. This gives flexibility of placement (front, sides or back of vehicle or trailer).
2. Horns by themselves work although they don't have the fidelity for music (think of the tinny ice cream truck).
3. Car stereo speakers can work although they are not designed to project very far.

### Amplification:

1. PA mixer/amplifier: This will be a all-in-one unit combining microphone inputs, CD or tape player inputs, and an amplifier. Speakers are connected directly to the output. These are easy as you only need to power one item. They often have tone controls which allow you to tune the system.
2. Car Stereo Amplifier: These will work if you only need to play a CD or tape. They are typically not set-up to accept microphones or other components.

### Power:

1. 12 volt car or truck system: This requires a voltage converter from 12 V dc to 110 V ac to operate a standard PA
2. Generator: A small portable generator available at rental stores works well for trailers or pickups. Don't use this inside the vehicle. Homelite makes a small unit that is quiet. Reserve yours early as these rent out quickly on the Celebration weekend.
3. Batteries: Some small rental PA's are battery operated. Some street musicians use these for amplifying their guitars and voices. These may not have the power or dispersion needed to project sound to both sides of the street. Whatever system you use keep in mind that it needs to be operated safely. Have a plan for covering components if it rains, and place speakers so that your driver or marchers aren't deaf by the end of the parade.

### Very Important Note:

Start testing your system a week ahead of the parade (if you're renting equipment this may be difficult, maybe go to the rental store and check it out). Listen to your tape, voice or instruments to that you know ahead of time how it will sound. Friday night or Saturday morning will be too late to make adjustments if you need other equipment.

## ***Makeup Hints for Parade Entrants***

**Remember that being in a Parade is just a little STREET THEATER.**

1. **Use Makeup** – *use makeup as part of your costuming. Each gesture needs to be a little larger than life hence the description of theatrical makeup.*
2. **Have someone design the look for your group.** *Come up with a consensus within your group for the look you want to portray. Be creative but consider having everyone made up the same for a larger impact.*
3. **Have only a couple of people in charge of makeup** – *this is to control cross contamination. Use separate sponges, cotton balls, Q-tips etc for each person.*
4. **Keep it simple.** *You have about 20 seconds to make an impact. Bigger gestures will register with viewers. Fine details will be lost in the short time frame.*
5. **Keep it clean.** *Wash your face and hands to remove dirt and oils before applying makeup. Makeup adheres to a clean and dry face.*
6. **Use Powder** – *a light dusting of powder will further prevent the makeup from sliding off as you begin to perspire.*
7. **Remove thoroughly** – *Use baby wipes and warm water and soap. Do not scrub. Be gentle. Warm washcloths will open your pores and let makeup wipe off gently.*

## ***MARCHING IN A PARADE***

Yes, Virginia, there is a difference between a parade and a procession.

A procession is a lot of people walking, waving, and perhaps meandering across the street as they travel, hopefully forward. You'll see this in the Pet Parade, First Night, and the Country Fair. In contrast, a parade is a highly organized gathering of forward marching people interspersed with motorized and non-motorized vehicles. This combination of events requires a uniform forward movement to avoid gaps. Many parades, such as the Rose Parade, eject entries which do not adhere to the spacing and forward movement rules of the parade.

We do not expect everyone to fall into rank and file and perform like a fine tuned military band. What makes a winning entry, however, is often linked to whether the entry is what we might call choreographed, or simply, marching in formation with a few extra moves.

Sure, there are tempos and paces that require calculators to figure, but what we want to promote for our parade is the simple act of marching, as opposed to walking.

No matter how large or small your group might be, marching—and not necessarily the kind where your knee has to lift up to your chin, mind you—is actually easy to do if you know where your left foot is, and you can see the person in front of you and the person to your left or to your right.

Take a look at your group, and find the people who have some leadership qualities, and might have some experience in marching, or in dancing or music. Make them your column leaders. Typically you can put about five columns of people across the street and as deep in rows as your group will allow.

Now, line up your first row with your column leaders. Have them stand at arms length to one another. Then choose your next row to line up directly behind the leaders, again at arms length. Have one person in the next row be the row leader and position that person at the far left or far right side of that row. This row leader will be responsible for alignment of the row. He/she will review the row as you march forward by glancing at the rest of the row. The rest of the row will align by all looking at the row leader, not at each other.

If everyone in the column maintains their position with the marcher ahead of them, and your row leaders review alignment as you march forward, you'll start to see the beginnings of a marching unit. If you have a person in your group with a good set of lungs who likes to be in control, make him/her your captain who can call the beat, or shout a Left, Left, Left, occasionally. The captain will dress the rows and columns as he/she travels around the marching unit.

We have mainly left turns in our parade (you might have a right turn coming out of staging). This means that the marchers on the inside of the turn must take tiny steps while the outer marchers in the rows must take long strides to stay in alignment while turning. It just takes a few practice times to master the turns.

When you've got the forward motion down, with confident rows and columns, and a turn or two, now you can try some fancy stuff. Maybe add a prop that is handled in formation (like a briefcase, hat or baton). Consider using arm movements to tell your story. Or something as simple as a child's clapping game can keep the beat, and be fun to watch.

The main goal in changing our entry rules to Marching Units instead of Walking Units is to make the parade more visually exciting for the audience. So step up, take charge, and don't be afraid to march. Marching in formation gives everyone in your entry a job they can do, and a place they can be. And your impact will be much more visually appealing to the audience, and to the judges. Even if all you can muster is a sprightly gait in formation (another way to say walking, but in formation), at least you will embody the spirit of parade, and not procession.

Forward, March!

## *Mask Making*

Mask making techniques are many and varied. An heirloom quality mask embodies an attention to the details of timeless characterization and enduring materials intended to last for generations. Such masks become more precious with use as the soul of the mask is enhanced by the care it is given over the years. Ancient wood, metal and stone masks are the faces of long forgotten rituals from the past. The beautiful wooden parade masks of southern Germany are a 300-year-old tradition preserved by the labors of the Mask Guilds.

For the purpose of parade art, where the impact of the mask is registered in the moment it passes by, bigger is better, and quick and easy take precedence over longevity. Emphasize humor and creativity over artistic detail. A beautiful, heirloom quality giant can be commissioned from a professional. It can create a focus of attention around which smaller or simpler versions of the personified idea meander.

A mask is anything that alters the identity of the wearer. The wearer can become a new face or a whole new shape or form by covering some or all of the body. A cardboard box large enough to climb into and carry becomes a mask. There is a local outlet for white boxes (The Box Maker, 3285 -A West 1st Ave., Eugene, 484-7233) available in bundles of 24, any size you want. They can be altered sculpturally and painted. Also available at Box Maker is corrugated paper (18 inches wide) on a roll, which is an incredibly easy material to form with nips and tucks using a scissors and a hot glue gun.

Simplicity of design and an attitude of largesse will serve you well when considering masks for parade. Disposable is okay! Think recycled materials. Consider a framework, which represents an investment of time and materials, around which a character can be created that is altered every year. When you think big, you must think light weight. The Mask Guild has constructed beautiful giants out of rattan and paper, but they're very labor intensive. You can use foam core (in sheets) to create angular giants, and thin sheets of foam (by the yard) to create softer more rounded forms. Hot glue is fast and easy, but some foam requires foam specific glues (3M Spray 74).

Begin to look at the sculptural potential of everything you see! Milk jugs become snouts, a garbage can becomes a suit of armor and the lid is a shield. Be outrageous.

The most humorous parade art is often affected by an unexpected use given to familiar objects. In fact, the theme of the parade entry can be focused on the visual effect of the outrageous use of everyday materials.

## **Top 10 Ways to Win in the Eugene Celebration Parade**

“As revealed by the Rickies”

10. Never let anyone know who you are. Ever.
9. Remember, size counts. Create something bigger than life, but smaller than afterlife.
8. Be visually stimulating. But, no strippers please.
7. Keep it simple. Think Sesame Street, not Masterpiece Theatre.
6. March, dance, strut. It's a parade, not a funeral.
5. Wear costumes. No, we mean great costumes, not t-shirts and boxer shorts.
4. Duct tape is your friend. So is cardboard, foamcore and cheap paint.
3. Wear a mask. You're parading in front of the whole town, for crying out loud.
2. Bribe the judges. NOT.
1. Leave 'em laughing. Be bizarre, silly, out of context, or politically incorrect, and make them laugh.

## Resources:

These are some equipment rental stores in Eugene

Action Rent All	4340 Franklin Blvd 121 River Rd	726-6517 689-9260
Bee-hive Rental	2nd & Chambers	683-4088
Oregon Sound & Lights	136 S 6th St, Spfld	747-5660
Pro Sound & Video	439 W 11 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	485-5252
Eye Beam Event Services	4455 Franklin Blvd	726-8803
Power Rents	3735 W 11th	465-1235
Doug Wilson Sound	2125 Fairmount Blvd	342-5249
Waddell Todd Sound Reinforcement		343-3704
Smeed Systems and Equipment	790 W 8 <sup>th</sup>	686-1654
AGI, Inc		683-8809
George Relles Sound, Inc		686-9325

## *Costuming Bibliography*

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