

Community Comment
Tuesday, October 11, 2016

This is Erin Dunn of the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

Many of you know, I'm a theater nut. I've always loved theater and was lucky enough to work in the field as a Press Agent for 20 years before coming to Humboldt County.

Since moving here in 2003, I've supported theater as best I can. Our local theater community offers varied productions with a lot of heart.

One of our gems is the oldest theater company in Humboldt County—Ferndale Rep.

This past weekend I had a chance to perform as the Guest Narrator for their production of Rocky Horror Show. They had this great idea to bring in various community members and real actors for one performance each. If you have seen the show live or even watched it on YouTube, you know that the Narrator reads from a book on stage—so it's a brilliant concept. And, it's the kind of show that you can't even mess up--anything goes.

A few upcoming guests during the run through October 30, include Fortuna Mayor Sue Long and County Supervisor Estelle Fennell. They are going to have so much fun!

I had a rehearsal last Thursday, and then ran through the musical numbers at Noon before the matinee on Sunday.

I was a Press Agent though, not an actor. Those two roles take totally different approaches to getting the job done.

Here are a few of my observations.

First, is the marketing of the performance. As a theatrical press agent, I successfully promoted more than 250 productions, both in Washington, D.C. and New York City. My own performance in the show? I struggled to even mention it. Very difficult to promote myself in a way that I promoted every conceivable type of production.

Second, interacting with the cast was somewhat awkward. But not for any reason that might seem obvious on the surface. 20 years of working with Actors Equity rules and I absolutely stick with “no talking to a cast member after half-hour is called.” Meaning, once its 30 minutes before curtain time, it’s against the rules to interact with the cast. The same when rehearsals have started. I had a hard time remembering I was the cast too!

Third, I rehearsed, I watched YouTube productions, I felt confident. Then when I was on stage during the performance, I felt dizzy and light headed. I was afraid I was going to start talking gibberish. At one point in the second act, I totally missed my musical cue--and there is nothing quite like having the entire cast looking back at me waiting for my line, then having to watch them go forward with their song without it. Fortunately, as I mentioned before, this is a very forgiving show!

And finally—a huge thank you to those of you who attended the Sunday matinee—or any theatrical performance in Humboldt County. It’s important for all of us to have opportunity to experience the arts—theater, music, and visual arts. Buying tickets and attending a performance is a great way to show you care.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment.