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Some Assembly Required for Starlight Village Players

Cathy Dausman



To see...or not to see? Charlie Guitron hangs spotlights for the Starlight Village Players evening performances Photos Cathy Dausman

Shakespeare said "The play's the thing," but first the stage needs assembling. Literally. And so on a sunny Saturday with light winds, various Starlight Village Players assemble at the Orinda Community Park amphitheater to put the pieces together. The stage is constructed each May and taken down in October, as it has been for the past twenty nine years.

David Dierks, Bill Chessman, Shawn Bonnington, Mark Barry, David Weiner, Geotty Chappel, and Ken Sollazzo pull pieces out of nearby storage and lay out the vertical elements on the cement stage. Four or five twelve-foot 4 x 4's outline the supports for backstage walls. Jim Fritz and Charlie Guitron hoist twenty-five pound spotlights up a ladder and affix them to light poles pointed toward the stage. Six twenty-foot steel poles are guided into post holes on stage. Later, a cross beam will be raised and secured in place with metal hooks and duct tape. "It's kind of like Stonehenge, only completely different," jokes Chessman.

Jill Gelster keeps a close watch from the seating area. "The Mousetrap" is Starlight Village Players' opening performance this June and she is directing. She says their goal today is to erect the poles and outer wall, hang the lights and empty the shed, but you can tell, in the back of her mind, she's already seeing elaborate sets, costumed actors and a full house.

In addition to "The Mousetrap," Starlight Village Players summer offerings include "Send Me No Flowers" and "The Imaginary Invalid." Single play admission is \$8-\$16; season tickets are \$21-\$35. Call the box office at (925) 253.1191 for reservations or group discounts, or get information online at <http://www.orsvp.org/>. Orinda Community Park is at 26 Orinda Way.



left to right: Bill Chessman, David Weiner, Shawn Bonnington, Ken Sollazzo, Jim Fritz and one other sink a support pole on the Starlight Village Players stage.

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