

The **BIG SHOP** of **HORRORS** HAUNTED HOUSE



NEWSLETTER

MARCH
2025

WE'RE BACK!!!

As we embark on another thrilling season at The Big Shop of Horrors, I want to express my deepest gratitude to all of our volunteers for your unwavering dedication & enthusiasm. Your hard work and passion have transformed what started as a modest basement haunt into a renowned community event!

The Big Shop of Horrors is a non-profit society committed to delivering entertaining and theatrical haunted house experiences for those who relish the thrill of a good scare. Each Halloween season, we transform our space into a 3,000 square-foot labyrinth of 12 spine-chilling rooms with eerie effects, intricate props, and live actors. Our goal is to provide an unforgettable adventure that captivates and terrifies our guests.

Beyond the screams and laughter, our mission is deeply rooted in community support. Since our inception, we have proudly donated over \$80,000 to local charities, including The Full Cupboard, Big Brothers Big Sisters and the MS Society. By combining our love for Halloween with a commitment to philanthropy, we strive to positively impact those in need within our community.

Our success hinges on the dedication of volunteers like you. Over 35 volunteers are needed to manage various roles each night of the event, from actors and decorators to traffic control and greeters. Your contributions ensure the seamless operation of our haunted house, creating a safe and exhilarating environment for attendees. Moreover, your efforts directly translate into funds raised for our charitable partners, amplifying the support we can offer to those they serve.

Volunteering with The Big Shop of Horrors is more than just donating time; it's about fostering community spirit, building lasting friendships, and knowing that your involvement brings joy to visitors while supporting vital local causes. I encourage you to spread the word about our volunteer opportunities as we prepare for the upcoming season. Whether you're a seasoned scare specialist or new to the haunt scene, there's a place for everyone in our haunted house family!

Tara McHugh-Lee
President, The Big Shop of Horrors



BUILDERS WANTED!

It's pretty darned cool watching the big empty barn transform into our maze of haunted rooms and get an "insider" perspective of the construction and ideas integrated during the process. - Lead Builders Rick Swift & Clay Cherneff

WHAT WE DO: We get busy on Day 1 of the build as not much else can be done until we have some walls in place! We typically work Monday to Friday starting around 10am and wrap up about 5ish. Sometimes we'll pull weekend shifts if we're in the groove or feeling behind.

Our first and biggest goal is assembling all the pre-built wall panels into the haunt map provided by our design team. As the haunt takes shape, we install the ceiling (cross boards and black wrap) before moving into the finer details of installing doors, props and gimmicks.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: You do not need to have any construction experience, skills or tools but obviously those can be of help. 95% of what we do is extremely simple and we can train you on site if needed. The biggest thing we need are "packers" – people to bring the wall panels, 2x4s and other materials to where they're needed so the builders can spend more time building and less time getting what they need.

The actual assembly work can go quite quickly and the biggest time sink is going to fetch the things we need for the next stem. So even if the only thing you feel comfortable tackling is bringing stuff to us, you'll be a major help. You also do not need to commit to being there every day of the build. We'll be happy to have you on site for a few hours, days or whatever your schedule permits – every bit helps!



APPLY NOW

CHILLS FOR CHARITY

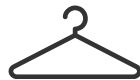
- Big Brothes Big Sisters of the Cowichan Valley
- Chemainus Harvest House Food Bank
- CMS Food Bank
- Cowichan Exhibition
- Cowichan Valley Basket House Food Bank
- Goldstream Food Bank
- Ladysmith Resources Centre Ass. Food Bank
- Lake Cowichan Food Bank
- MS Society
- Nanaimo Loaves & Fishes Food Bank
- Sooke Food Bank
- St. John Ambulance
- Victoria Mustard Seed Food Bank

**MORE
THAN
\$80K
RAISED
TO DATE!**





COSTUME TEAM



WHAT WE DO: We work closely with the Design & Make-up Teams to bring their characters to life. The first goal is to determine what looks are needed for the characters and source the costumes, masks and items needed and present a list and costs to the Board for approval. To reduce costs this may involve working with the actors to utilize items they may already own that would work and fit without alterations.

During operation – the Costume Team starts between 4-4:30pm each night to get the characters ready for their roles. This involves a team effort – working with multiple actors to ensure they are outfitted properly. The costume station is set up in a portable office on site.

At the end of each Haunt night – the Costume Team helps the actors remove their costumes, assist with cleaning and repairs needed and ensure all masks are sanitized each day.

This is a great volunteer opportunity for those that have a creative flair for costume & design, and sewing.

MAKE-UP TEAM



WHAT WE DO: We work closely with the Design Teams to bring their characters to life for the many rooms they have decided on. The first goal is to determine what costume/make-up are the right fit for the character. Some characters can use masks, half masks and make-up combo and some just make-up. Some trial make-up might be needed to test out ideas. *Keep in mind that there is less than 1.5 hours to do all the make-up and costuming on all the actors each night before the haunt begins!

The Make-Up Team sources the items needed for each character and presents the list/costs to the Board for approval to keep within budget. They also work closely with the Costume/Design Teams to ensure a cohesive look for the characters and to help source masks where needed.

During operation – the Make-Up Team starts between 4-4:30pm each night to get the characters ready for their roles. This involves a team effort – working with multiple actors to ensure that the make-up is done properly for each character. The Costume/Make-up station is set up in a portable office on site.

At the end of each night – the Make-up Team helps the actors remove their make-up. The committee is also responsible for cleaning, organizing and restocking the makeup area before the next haunt night.

You do not have to be an 'expert' to assist with the make-up team and you do not have to commit to working all eleven nights of the haunt. You should have a basic understanding of how to apply make-up and prosthetics. There is lots of opportunity to learn and practice before the event starts.

[APPLY NOW](#)

DESIGNERS WANTED!

WHAT WE DO: Magic happens here! Before the walls go up, we bring the Haunted House to life on paper and then to reality. Our team handles the spooky aesthetics, from eerie room layouts and unsettling lighting to creepy props and terrifying details that make the haunt unforgettable.

We start by working together on the look and feel of the Haunted House each year, ensuring every room tells a chilling story. Once the build team has created the walls and structure, we dive in with set dressing, painting, lighting, and staging props to create those spine-tingling moments that haunt visitors long after they leave.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: You don't need to be a professional artist or designer—just someone with creativity, enthusiasm, and a love for Halloween fun! Whether you can sketch, paint, arrange or source props, hang cobwebs, or just want to lend a hand, there's a place for you on the design team.

We're flexible with timing—whether you are up for designing an entire room, collaborating with a small team, giving a few days, or just dropping by when you can, every little bit helps. Plus, you'll get an insider's view of how the haunt takes shape and the fear sets in!

Team Lead, Sara Dawn



[APPLY NOW](#)

A VOLUNTEER POSITION TO SUIT EVERYONE! 🦇

Without volunteers there would not be a Haunted House. I cannot stress how incredibly grateful the Directors of the Big Shop of Horrors are to the many people who come forward each year to share their time, creativity & skills with us and the community. Whether you can donate a limited amount of time or a lot, every hour helps! We need more than 35 volunteers each night to operate effectively, and typically have more than 100 different volunteers helping out for any given year. If you are reading this, it means you are interested, so please reach out!



By joining the BSOH Family you will be joining a group of people committed to creating a fun and scary theatrical experience to delight fright seekers while raising funds to benefit many charities within the Cowichan Valley. This blend of excitement and altruism creates a rewarding experience that resonates long after our event concludes!

WHERE YOU CAN HELP: In addition to the many Committees and their volunteer positions mentioned in this newsletter, there are many, many other volunteer roles that need filling!

ACTORS: The ghouls and creepy characters that inhabit our House help deliver its many scares! Actors work closely with the design team who have created each room's look, feel & characters. Actors need to be able to stay in character, have good improvisation skills to react to guests dynamically, and understand pacing so they know when to build tension and when to strike! Staying hydrated and knowing how to rest your voice (so you don't lose it) are also important. Training is provided and we welcome newcomers as well as seasoned thespians!



CASHIERS: Help with confirming advance tickets sales as well as collecting cash/debit/credit & making change. POS machine training is provided. Good people and problem solving skills is an asset for this role.

GREETERS: Help to welcome everyone to the Haunt, and guide them to the appropriate line (limiting to groups of 4 per entry) They answer questions and remind guests of our rules to keep everybody safe.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: Each year we host a fun display at the end of the Haunt complete with props, where guests can have their photo taken as a keepsake. Our event photographers take these photos which are later uploaded to our social media for guests to view & share.

SECURITY & TRAFFIC CONTROL: Help to ensure traffic flow in and out of the haunt runs smoothly and event rules are being followed. They patrol & monitor the crowds throughout the venue and ensure guests are polite & respectful to each other and our teams, as well as property & displays. Security also assists in managing and de-escalating any unruly behaviour.

Don't see something that matches your skill set or interest. Drop me a line and let's talk! I will do my best to get you connected!



APPLY NOW

- Volunteer Coordinator, Anne Sharpe

LEND A HAND

JOIN OUR SCARE SQUAD!



Come Learn about all of the Volunteer Opportunities you can get involved in right now for our upcoming Haunt in October!



INFO SESSION

SUNDAY, MARCH 23,

1:00 - 3:00 pm

Stratford Room,

Cowichan Exhibition Grounds

7380 Trans Canada Hwy

Duncan

The **BIG SHOP** of
HORRORS
HAUNTED HOUSE

RSVP: thebigshopofhorrors@gmail.com

Or Call: 250-252-9445 for more info!

KEY DATES FOR 2025 🦇

RIGHT NOW: Our Design, Build and Costume/Makeup & Marketing Teams are working hard on creating ideas and sourcing materials to make this year's haunt incredible.

BUILD BEGINS: We move into our temporary space **Saturday, Sept 20th** at the Cow X and the build begins! With only 26 days and 12 rooms to create it's all hands on deck!

HOUSE DATES: This year we Open **Thursday Oct 16th** and run for 11 Amazing Nights in October include the **17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29** and **30!**

TEAR DOWN: We take Halloween off, and then get to work on deconstructing the house **Saturday, Nov 1st**. This involves tearing down the walls, and carefully packing up all of the set pieces, props, lighting, costumes & makeup and burying it all away until next year. We have until November 9th to get this done and need as many hands as possible.

WRAP PARTY: On **Sunday, Nov 9th** we will gather to celebrate and recognize all of our wonderful volunteers, for their efforts in supporting the Haunted House.