

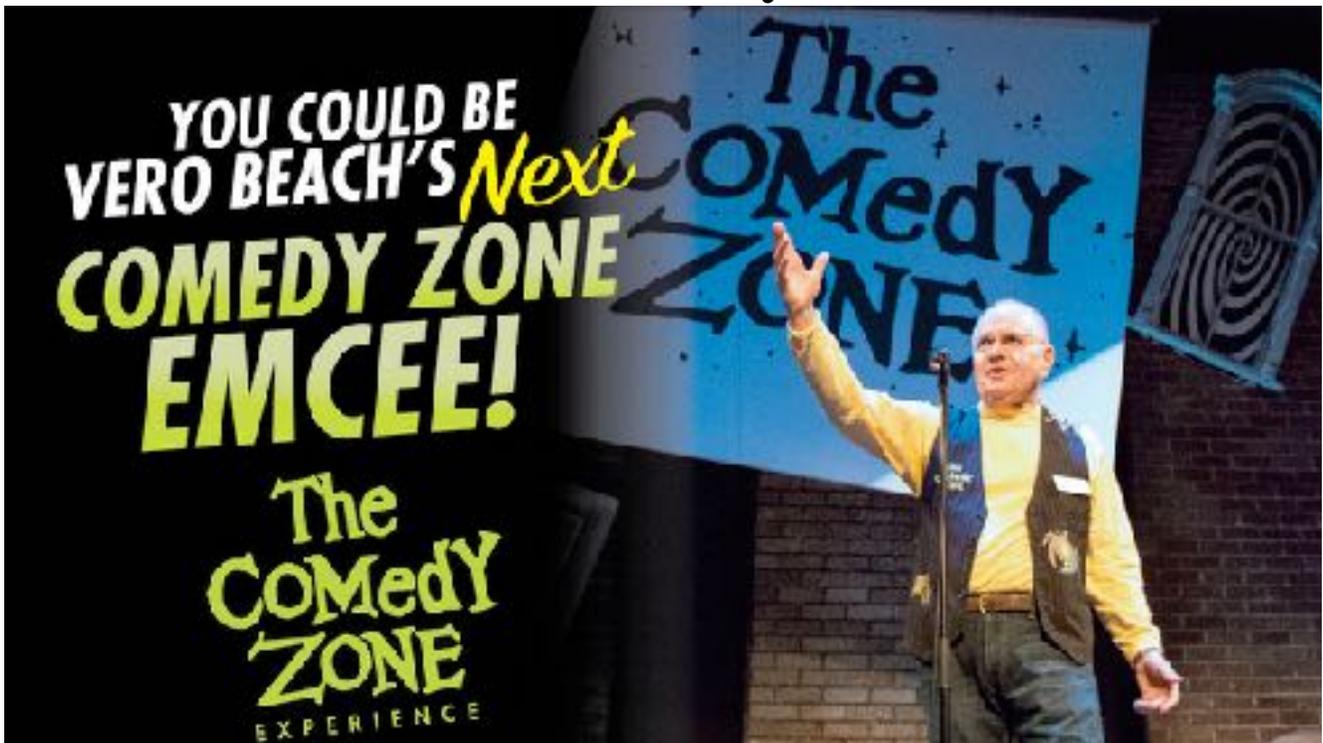
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Riverside Theatre Seeks the next Comedy Zone Emcee!



Vero Beach, FL – After for more than 400 performances, Gary Parker, Riverside Theatre’s volunteer Comedy Zone emcee, is leaving. The search for the Comedy Zone’s next emcee is on!

In August 2014, Gary Parker approached Jon Moses, COO / Managing Director of Riverside Theatre to offer his services as the emcee for the Comedy Zone. Mr. Moses and various staff members had served as emcees the prior 8 years Riverside has presented The Comedy Zone.

“He was so passionate about emceeing, I decided to give him a try,” said Mr. Moses. “Turns out our audiences loved him as much as he enjoyed doing them.”

“I started as an audience member,” says Mr. Parker. “Watching the shows renewed my interest in the art of making people laugh. One night I talked with comedian Gid Pool. He said they needed an emcee and I should apply for the job. So I found Jon Moses and asked to be given the chance to emcee.”

A Comedy Zone emcee is not just a master of ceremonies, they are an important part of the show! They warm up the crowd, set the tone for the night, introduce the comedians, and do a small segment each night showcasing their comedic prowess.

“I had some related work experience,” says Mr. Parker. “In the early 80's, I joined a group attempting Stand-Up Comedy in Omaha. From my last performance in Omaha until my first night at Riverside Theatre spans 30 years. I learned Stand-Up is not like riding a bicycle. You forget.”

Riverside Theatre is looking for a few seasonal volunteers interested in stand-up comedy - people who love to entertain.

Two open mic nights have been created for people to showcase their comedic talents. On Thursday, August 8th and Thursday, 22nd from 7:30 to 9pm, 12 people will be given five-minute segments to delight the judges, which include Gary Parker.

From those “auditioning”, a few people will be selected to become the next Comedy Zone emcees in rotation!

To sign up for one of the limited comedy slots, go to <https://www.riversidetheatre.com/comedy-zone-auditions>.

FREE tickets for open mic nights will be made available the week of each of those nights and are open for the family, friends, and the public to show their support. Refreshments will be available for purchase each evening.

For more information, call the Box Office at 772-231-6990.

Riverside Theatre is located at 3250 Riverside Park Drive, Vero Beach, FL 32963. Riverside Theatre programs are sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Riverside Theatre is a member of the Cultural Council of Indian River County, the Indian River Chamber of Commerce, and the Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce.

Q&A with Gary Parker

When did you start emceeing the Comedy Zone?

“My first frightful night hosting the Comedy Zone was August 22, 2014. Next month I'll have survived five years. I'm leaving this job September 21st. That's my 100th weekend which includes 400 shows and 200 nights way past my bedtime.”

Did you have experience in live performing?

“It was a long time ago. In high school I worked weekends on air at our local radio station in Fremont, Nebraska. I worked stations in Lincoln, Nebraska, San Diego, and Los Angeles. Radio was good to me. Paid for college. Found my wife. And was fun when I was young.”

What do you do as an emcee?

“My opening is limited to about 5 minutes. Announcements and the introduction takes 3 minutes. That leaves under 2 minutes for my own stuff. It doesn't seem like much, but over time it adds up to a lot of material. I made it my mission to write a new bit for most every weekend. Some of it worked. Some of it didn't. Either way, you learn.”

Any interesting moments?

“For me, every Comedy Zone weekend is one big interesting moment. I've had the opportunity to meet and have conversations with over 100 comedians. Talented people. Good people. Most have at least 10 years experience, some over 20 years, and a few at 30. I have great appreciation and respect for these performers. It's a tough job. They do it for the art. Ben Stiller was asked if he ever wanted a career as a Stand-Up comic like his dad. He said, "Never!" To me, Stand-Up Comedy, standing in front of people and trying to make them laugh is probably the hardest thing you can do in show business.”