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| **Technical Theatre: Homecoming Float Building Assignment**Step 1: Brainstorm Float Theme IdeasStep 2: Create a plan for your float and draw out a mock up. This should be a very complete drawing and should be colored to show what everything will look like on your actual float.Step 3: Create your float. Using a show box (bottom side up) will probably work best. Your float should be able to move either by attaching small wheels or by attaching a string/handle to pull it.Step 4: “Hire” a celebrity or celebrities to ride your float in the parade. Be sure to make little figures and dress them in outfits or costumes and put them on your float. Be sure to think about what they celebrity will be doing (dancing/singing/waving/do something character related or as himself/herself)Step 4: Present your float in the class “parade”. Each group should be prepared to talk about their design.YOUR GOAL IS TO MAKE YOUR SHOE BOX AS FLOAT LIKE AS POSSIBLE. BELOW ARE SOME TIPS PULLED FROM AN ACTUAL FLOAT BUILDING DOCUMENT ABOUT MAKING FLOATS….These are for large scale floats for actual parades…but the ideas may help you with your planning. |
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| **Creating Your Float**Have a brainstorming session. Kick around the theme and have everyone share their own ideas. Remember: No ideas are thrown out here. That’s the concept of brainstorming. Everyone will feed off the thoughts of everyone else. Before you know it, a great idea will begin to emerge. Be sure that your float concept is in some way consistent with the announced theme of the parade (Theme: Creekside Homecoming). “Appropriateness to Theme” is a major category in judging, as is “Creativity.” Try to design a float concept that will be uniquely yours. Look for variations on shapes, materials, special effects and anything else that will make your float stand out from the pack.**Construction**You are going to need a variety of tools. Here are a few you may want to plan for:* Scissors, Glue, Ruler

Others will certainly be needed if you’re going to add animation or special effects to your float or other more sophisticated features. Floats can be built on a variety of beds: Using a shoe box may work best**Basic Framework**The first step after you have your “wagon” is to build the basic framework. You have to decide just how elaborate your float frame must be based on its use. You will need more floor strength if you plan to have riders on the float them of you do not. Also, floats with large structures of the wagon will also need extra strength. Many floats will require that you build a frame over the existing wagon. Other designs simply use the wagon bed as is and add the superstructure needed for you design. You may decide to build a new floor over the “wagon.” Take note of any areas that seem to need extra support and add any braces you think are necessary. Now you’ll begin to construct the part of your float that is more for show. Depending on the type of design you have planned, you may now add a framework around the side of the wagon to flare out and down. This can help to hide the fact that you are building on a shoebox. **Decorating Techniques**Now that the main float structure is complete, you will start the decorating process.  The traditional technique for final decorating is of the pomps. Pomps are simply pre-cut squared of colored tissue paper. They give a very rich and consistent appearance and come in a wide range of colors. They also lend themselves to very elaborate decorating patterns. **Finishing Touches**There are many products available to help give your float that finished look. These are only a few suggestions. **Festooning**This is a paper product that comes in long rolls and looks much like the Hawaiian lei. It is great to cover seams, flaws, or to blend areas where two colors or surfaces come together. It is especially helpful when using petal paper or applying skirting or fringe to the bottom of your float. Festooning is also available in foil and plastic. This is a product for which you will discover many original uses. Attach it with 3/8” to 5/8” staples. **Fringe and Skirting**These two products are commonly used to decorate the bottom of floats. Skirting comes in 30” lengths while fringe is 15” long. Keep the bottom edge approximately 2” above the street to prevent it from becoming soiled. Attach skirting and fringe through the narrow band at the top using medium length staples. Complete the installation by overlaying the band with a row of festooning. Skirting is available in plastic only while fringe is sold in both paper and plastic. **Spray Paint**One of the greatest tools you can use in the pursuit of a true professional look is spray paint. In the hands of a person with some artistic talent, spray paint can be used to ass shading, shadowing and highlights and to add color that might not be available in other float building products. Note: Be certain the paint is compatible with the materials in your float. Standard aerosol paints will actually melt plastic and Styrofoam. Special paints are available at craft stores. **Lettering**Letters are almost always used in some form on floats. You can choose from ready made letting, or others that must be made from paper, Styrofoam or wood. Some general considerations for lettering include:1. Contrast between the letter color and the background color
2. Size/viewing distance-make all lettering as large as possible. Will a parade specter be able to read it from 20’ away?
3. Font/typeface-keep it simple and legible. Script lettering is rarely used in informational signage for good reason.

Ready-made letters and paper letters are 2-dimensional, but they can be quite effective when used on the proper background. Styrofoam letters are cut from sheets of building insulating materials that can be inexpensively obtained from many lumber yards and building supply centers. It is available in several thicknesses and produces letters that are 3-dimensional and can be mounted on a wide variety of surfaces. In addition, the Styrofoam is light in weight and very easy to cut. Crafts stores carry a number of paints, which are safe for Styrofoam. **Sound**Sound-either music or sound effects-is another great dimension that you should consider for your float. The best source is either a CD (must bring CD player) or MP3. You can shorten or lengthen songs, add sound effects and even narration if you want.  |

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