

# Techies

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assigned the most general of all the positions, scene shop technical assistant. His job is silently considered the grunt job of the graduate assistantships compared to the more specific work involved with props or lighting.

"I'm the new kid here so that may be true, but they have more responsibility than I have," Goetz said. "I do need the practice."

Matthews, who has had the pleasure of working Goetz's current position previously, describes his present job as "the building and finding and re-vamping of props." Props are defined generally as



Kiley Timperley/Daily Nebraskan

Graduate students Chip Mahlman (front), Lori Bush and Mike Matthews (back) and Rick Goetz work in different areas of production in the Temple Building to help productions run smoothly.

Bush said. "Otherwise, you might as well forget life."

Last year, some of this fun took the form of a Nintendo video game system in the scene shop office. After a while, it became a major distraction and formed the basis of what has come to be known as "The Scene Shop/Nintendo Scandal."

"Well, by some quirk of fate or nature, a Nintendo system was set up in the last part of a recent school year to be unnamed," Mahlman said. "And I guess it just diverted attention from the task at hand."

"The problem was it was here and it's just one of those things you can't get away from sometimes," said Bush, who contends she didn't play it much.

Mahlman also professes innocence in the scandal, claiming he wasn't good enough at it to be distracted.

"I wasn't that interested in it because I don't have the hand-eye coordination necessary to really become proficient at Mario Brothers," he said.

Goetz is the only one who can truly claim innocence in the scandal.

"This is my first semester here so I wasn't a part of that black spot on the department," Goetz said.

With all kidding about make-believe scandals aside, the GTAs all admit to needing some diversion from the often non-stop work their positions demand.

"I think theater's supposed to be fun. If it's not fun, I don't want to play," he said.

**66**  
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UNL student

anything brought on or offstage by an actor.

The exact title of his position is somewhat of a mystery to Matthews.

"Officially it's listed in the programs as props master and I have no idea of the history of that term," he said. "It sounds Shakespearean to me."

The final position that works primarily out of the scene shop is the master electrician. This assistantship was granted to third year master's candidate, Lori Bush, the only woman among the graduate technical assistants (GTAs).

"I am responsible for the light hangs, telling people where to hang the lights, how to plug them in, where to write the stuff down on the light plot, just to be in charge," she said.

While each of the GTAs is theoretically required to work 20 hours a week in the shop, their actual burdens often far exceed that.

"We usually end up putting in a little more than 20 hours," Matthews said. "It teaches graduate students the responsibility of being in charge and meeting deadlines and being answerable to certain situations. It's not all parties as theater is often portrayed."

The stress of their jobs is compounded by their roles as students who are still taking 12 hours of advanced course work in technical theatre. Most of their homework is done in the building's classrooms so the Temple becomes their home away from home.

"For a while — every once in a while — I get pissed, like just a few seconds ago, I wanted to have a tribal scream in my office," Bush said. "Sometimes, you have those bad days."

After years of this kind of stress, Mahlman is glad to be near graduation.

"I have my finger on the door out of the theatre department," he said. "I'm just anxious to get on with my life."

To cope with this stress, the GTAs have to find extra fun within their jobs. They all admit to a special camaraderie that eases the strains of their grueling work.

"You gotta go out and have a little bit of fun once in a while,"

# Tales

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haven't worked at all for a week. Sure. As long as the weather stays like this."

Mary spoke, trying to face Karen and me at the same time, even though we sat on opposite sides of her.

"We're thinking about trying to reach each other in an hour, to see if three of us can get together mentally. Once we all get home.

We need something for a trigger, something that will bring us together."

"How about the bar?" I ventured.

"Not specific enough. Maybe the door on the left?"

Yeah, she thinks like us, all right. But I still think the bar would have worked.

Peterson is a senior psychology and philosophy major and a Daily Nebraskan reporter and columnist. This is the ninth in a continuing series.

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