

Summer Opportunities '88

Theme parks provide exciting summer work

By LAURA FRANCIS
Staff Writer

Glass blowing, wagon building, dancing, acting and caring for retired Anheuser-Busch Clydesdales may look like a weird list, but for an avid job hunter, any of these positions are available for the summer.

For at least \$4 an hour, students can work as apprentices in wood carving, glass blowing, glass cutting, candy and candle making, pottery and wagon building at Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

"Two students traveled from the Northeast last summer to get wagon building experience at Dollywood because it's one of the few places in the U.S. where wagons are still made by hand," said Helen Cooper, personnel employment coordinator.

Of the 1,500 total seasonal employees, 20 percent are college age. For \$3.75 an hour, students can work in fast food or seated restaurants, in gift shops, operate rides, take tickets or park cars.

Personnel may hire students who call for an interview throughout the summer, Cooper said.

At Opryland in Nashville, Tenn., 1,500 of the 2,300 seasonal employees are college students. Edward Carter, employment manager, said internships are available in accounting, public relations, hospitality, security, landscaping and zoology. "I tell students they can buy some experience because they only earn enough to break even," Carter said.

Opryland also has jobs available in the park as an admissions cashier, show host, parking attendant, cash controller and waiter or waitress. Beginning wages are \$3.50 an hour.

Employees get free admission to the park and five free passes for friends after five weeks of employment. Carter said there are also parties for the employees: a 1950s party in the '50s area of the park; a day at a local wave pool; and a midnight cruise, dance and dinner on the park's riverboat, the General Jackson.

Jobs usually fill up before the summer begins with personal interviews going on now and for the next four weeks. The personnel office is open Monday through Friday 1 p.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Carter said.

In November, Opryland holds auditions for park show performers for the following summer.

In Williamsburg, Va., Busch

Gardens offers a starting minimum pay of \$3.75 for work in operations (rides), transportation, food service or the petting zoo. Milly Hudgins, publicity representative, said employees of college age get good experience for their majors.

Auditions for musicians and actors for Busch Gardens shows are held from October to December, Hudgins said.

Kelly Williams, a senior from Newport News, Va., is a four-year employee of Busch Gardens.

"For two and a half years, I worked in the petting zoo and cared for retired Budweiser Clydesdales. Then I switched to grounds maintenance because it requires fewer hours and (offers) higher pay. I work from 5:30-11:30 a.m., and will be a supervisor this summer."

In North Carolina, Carowinds in Charlotte provides several employee benefits for its college-age employees. Carowinds is hiring for admissions, merchandise, food, games and rides jobs, said Dean Locke, employment services interviewer/coordinator at Carowinds. Beginning pay for first-time employees is \$3.75 an hour plus a 25 cent bonus for each hour worked until the end of the operating season.

Carowinds offers higher pay to "posted position" employees, including maintenance, clerical, cash control, security and first aid positions. Carowinds does its own training and supplies uniforms, Locke said.

In addition, five \$1,000 scholarships for college student employees are available, said Chris Burges, personnel manager.

"(Carowinds) has openings in food services and rides. We are flexible to employees' hours. It's hard work but has many benefits," Burges said. Employees get discounts on meals and merchandise and can participate on softball teams.

Carowinds also helps employees without transportation find car pools.

To apply to Carowinds, students should go to the employment service office for an application and on-the-spot interview. Personnel will hire throughout the summer. Office hours are 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Thursday through Saturday.

Chris Hance, a sophomore from Lincolnton, has worked at Carowinds for two years. He began as a ride operator and is now a ride supervisor of the Wild Bull and the Swings.



The General Jackson: one of Opryland's big attractions

"As a supervisor, I have more responsibility and higher pay," Hance said. "I love working there. I wouldn't travel an hour each way every day if I didn't enjoy my job."

King's Dominion in Doswell, Va., is another alternative. Dick Corrada, director of personnel, said pay is on a tiered scale: \$5 an hour on weekends and \$4 an hour on weekdays. The park needs employees for rides, games, restaurants, souvenir shops, admissions and parking. Other jobs including warehouse, security, landscape and cash control pay higher wages.

"We can provide very valuable job experience, teach you a skill to use later and give you opportunities to deal with people. Over 1,400 of our 3,000 employees from last year are returning this season. It's hard but fun work, and you make a lot of friends," Corrada said.

Further north, the Baltimore Aquarium pays \$3.50 an hour for

cashiers and admissions receptionists. "We need a lot of employees because we have increased our summer hours and will have larger crowds. Few summer positions for marine biology are available, but they pop up from time to time," said Mary Binko, personnel secretary.

Six Flags over Georgia in Atlanta hires 3,000 seasonal employees starting at \$3.75 an hour. To apply, go to the personnel office with a driver's license and social security card for an on-the-spot interview.

Melanie Walters, personnel staff assistant, said "of the 1,000 rehires this season, many received a promo-

tion and a raise." Six Flags employees receive free admission to Opryland, located four hours away, just as Opryland employees can enter Six Flags free.

For an experience in southern culture, South of the Border offers pay of up to \$5 an hour. Gerald Moody, general manager, said "of the 150 seasonal employees, about 25 percent are high school and college students. We're hiring waitresses, cashiers, housekeepers and gas station attendants. However, employees must pay half of the cost of their uniforms and do not get any free discounts."

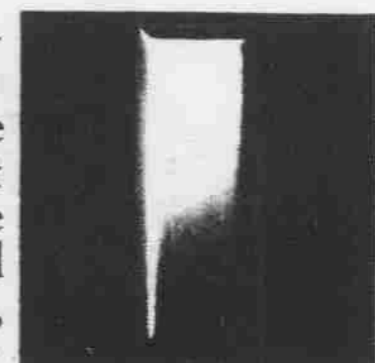
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