



Cast members from the 2014 production Krista Watson as Mary (left) and Nathan Woods as Joseph (right) beg for a place to stay from Gary Schilling as the innkeeper (center). AARON YOST/for the Itemizer-ObsERVER

TELLING THE STORY

Rickreall Christmas Pageant celebrates 75 years re-enacting nativity

By **Jolene Guzman**
The Itemizer-ObsERVER

RICKREALL — Milt Serafin has never seen the Rickreall Christmas Pageant.

For 32 years, he's performed various roles in it and even joined the board about five years ago, but has yet to be just a spectator.

He was planning to attend with his wife 32 years ago.

"That's when they called and asked me to be part of the cast," he said.

He accepted and has experienced the performance from onstage or backstage since.

Serafin's family made performing in the pageant a family tradition over the years, with all four of his children joining the cast or choir in some capacity.

He will once again play the role of Zechariah in the 2015 edition, which kicks off Thursday at Rickreall Event Hall.

This is the 75th year it will be staged.

"It's just fellowship and a community effort," Serafin said, explaining why he's been part of the pageant for nearly half of its existence.

While the cast, crew and loyal audience are celebrat-

You can help

The Rickreall Christmas Pageant needs a new director for the 2016 season.

In addition to coordinating the production and overseeing rehearsals in October and November, the director is responsible for communication, advertising and organizing the annual potluck, and the Summerfest parade float. The position is volunteer and the candidate must be able to work with the nonprofit's board of directors.

More information can be found about the pageant at www.RickreallChristmasPageant.com. If you are interested, contact Mary McCarron at info@RickreallChristmasPageant.com or 503-851-2683.

ing 75 years of the musical telling the Nativity story in nine acts, there's a concern for the future of the pageant.

Mary McCarron, who has been director for 11 years, is stepping down after the anniversary performances.

"I've heard from a lot of people that this starts the Christmas season for them and reminds them what the season is about," McCarron said.

Pageant organizers still haven't found someone to take on the volunteer role. "It's been probably the biggest and most rewarding accomplishment," McCarron said of leading the pageant. "It's helped me grow in my leadership skills and my faith, too."

McCarron said she's con-

tinuingly amazed at seeing it come together each year. Sometimes that took minor miracles.

Last year, the cast was short one wise man, and two just wasn't going to cut it. She spread the word and at the last minute they found a third wise man.

This year, the cry went out for a Roman soldier that was filled.

The all-important call for a new director thus far has gone unanswered, but the board is not giving up yet.

Neither are the cast members.

Aaron Kuns, a Dallas resident, is one of the newer choir members. After seeing the pageant several times, he decided to sing two years ago.

"I can sing and I thought



The choir in the 2014 Rickreall Christmas Pageant fills the room with sound during scene changes. The pageant will take the stage for the 75th time with three performances Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Rickreall Event Hall. AARON YOST/for the Itemizer-ObsERVER

it would be fun," he said. "I know they are always looking for people."

All three of his sons are now part of the cast, too. Kuns said he would like to see that tradition carry on.

"I'm disappointed if it doesn't continue," he said. "It's a longtime family tradition for some people."

McCarron said if the pageant can't find her replacement for the 2016 production, she hopes a local church will take on at least part of the show.

She said her final project is to post as many pieces of pageant history on its Facebook page, including photos and old programs.

Nativity story

What: The Rickreall Christmas Pageant.

When: Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m.

Where: Rickreall Event Hall, 300 Main St. (Highway 99W), Rickreall

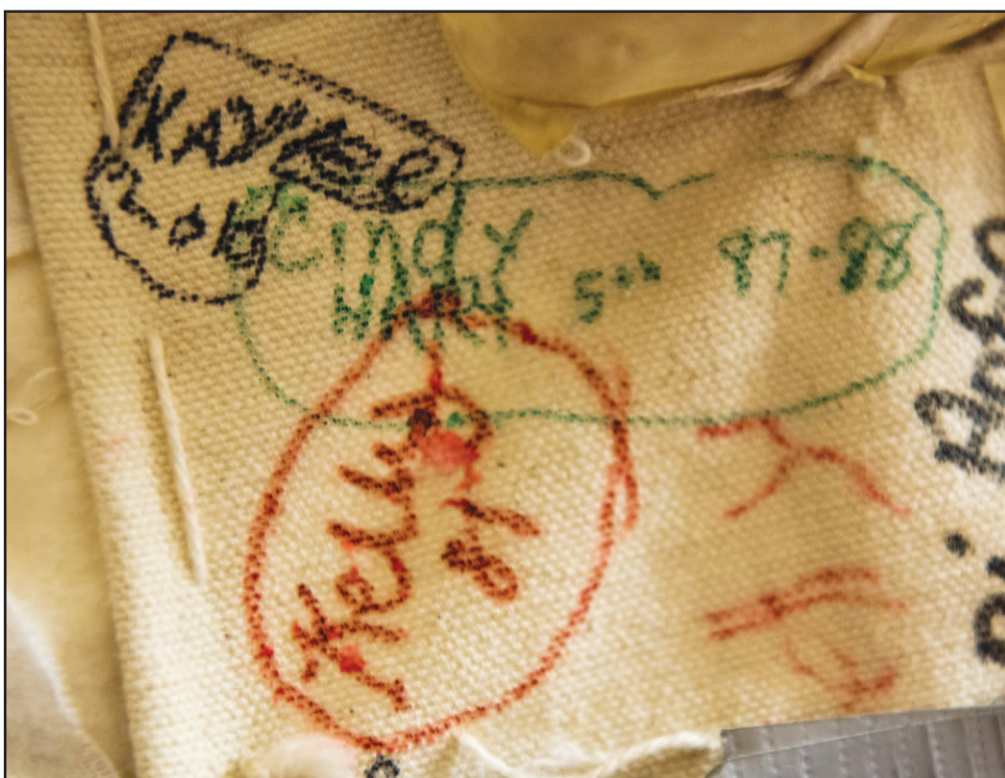
Admission: Free, but tickets are required. Go to www.RickreallChristmasPageant.com for ordering information and directions. Donations are gladly accepted.

"At least there is a way we can still capture it and people can look stuff up and find pictures of someone," she said.

Serafin is hoping that it doesn't come to that, noting that the pageant is the only production of the Christmas story with multiple performances in the area.

Fittingly, he has faith the tradition that has become so much a part of his life, and many others, will find a way to continue for years to come.

"I trust that people will faithfully attend this year and that someone will step up and be willing to be the director," he said.



Those who have played angels over the years have written their names and years of appearance on the wings they have worn during pageant performances. AARON YOST/for the Itemizer-ObsERVER



Angels in the 2014 pageant cast fill the night sky above the shepherds in the field in one of the nine scenes in the dramatic retelling of the traditional Christmas story. AARON YOST/for the Itemizer-ObsERVER