Polk museum hosts pageant display

By Emily Mentzer

The Itemizer-Observer

RICKREALL — The spirit of the Rickreall Christmas Pageant is back — or at least the costumes — at the Polk County History Museum through the end of Decem-

When the pageant discontinued after 75 years of performances, organizers approached the museum to discuss donating the extensive collection of props and costumes to preserve them as part of Polk County history, said David Moellenberndt, president of the Polk County Historical Society.

"This year, the group approached the museum with the offer to develop an ephemeral Christmas display using the pageant materials," he said.

Past pageant participants Pam Scharf and Sharon Watson decided to set up the manger scene.

"It just seemed to come together beautifully," Scharf said. "It was kind of bittersweet to be handling the costumes again, but it brought back so many beautiful memories. We were just pleased to do it."

With so many costumes and props, Scharf and Watson agreed that they could set up a different scene from the pageant each year, but



DAVID MOELLENBERNDT/for the Itemizer-Observer

Costumes from the Rickreall Pageant are carefully hung to show the story of the birth of Jesus Christ.

was an easy choice.

"It was just kind of automatic," Watson said. "When

starting with the manger for so long, what you want to portray the first year is the birth of the Christ child."

The costumes were careyou work with the pageant fully unrolled, ironed and

hung, complete with backdrops and props formerly used in the pageant.

"We put one little angel costume behind the dark curtain of stars," Watson said. "It just shows God is there, observing."

Watson started with the pageant as a singing slave

See the display

What: Rickreall Christmas Pageant display.

Where: Polk County History Museum, 560 S. Pacific Highway W., Rick-

When: The museum is open 1 to 5 p.m., Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Closed Christmas

Admission: General, \$5; seniors, \$4; students with ID, \$1; children younger than 6, free; centenarians, free.

For more information: 503-623-6251.

girl for 27 years, and got reinvolved in the tradition when they asked her to help with the costumes.

Now, both Scharf and Watson are happy to see the costumes and props being used again to keep the memory of the pageant — and, more importantly the story of the birth of Jesus — alive.

"I was honored to be asked to help," Watson said. "Because we knew we were at the end of a line of wonderful people who have given time and money and made this happen for 75 years. It took a lot of people."



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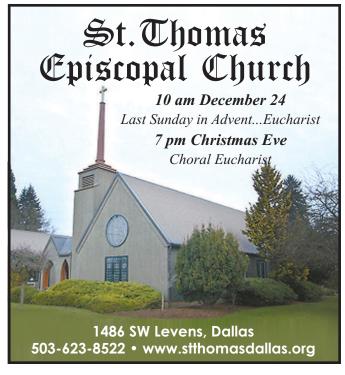
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