

Mill complex lights up for Magic

By K. Williams Brown

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You've probably already noticed elevated festivity levels along 12th Street. For the past few weeks, Willamette Heritage Center at the Mill has been gearing up for this year's Magic at the Mill. The event requires miles of Christmas lights and tens of thousands of bulbs for the thousands of visitors who will stream through the door.

"Oh, boy. We're asked this every year — I would say there is between 80,000 and 100,000 Christmas lights," said Linda Langham, the office director for WHC.

The five-day event includes just about everything one could ask for from a museum's holiday celebration.

"We have Santa. We have lights. We have kids' activities. We have music and entertainment, and it's all within a wonderful heritage setting," said Peter Booth, WHC's executive director. He added that visitors often cite the historic ambience as their favorite aspect.

"The whole place is lit up with all kinds of lights, and even some animated light — we're building on those each year," Langham said, adding that they have sheep jumping over the millrace, and ducks that swim in the water.

Santa will set up shop for the duration of the festivities, in his own — well, depending on who you ask, it is sort of a barn or a toolshed.

"We call it his workshop; it's all decorated," Langham said. "It's going to be on the west end where the columns are, facing 12th Street."

There is also live music each night; the only thing the acts have in common is that most of them will perform at least one or two holiday tunes. To wit, various nights will include pioneer



Thousands of lights will illuminate Willamette Heritage Center at the Mill for the Magic at the Mill celebration Monday through Friday.

Magic at the Mill

When: 5:30 to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday

Where: Willamette Heritage Center at the Mill, 1313 Mill St. SE

Cost: \$5, \$3 for youths ages 4 to 12 and free for ages 3 and younger, and members

For more information: (503) 585-7012 or www.willametteheritage.org

Night Before Magic Big Band Dance

When: 8 to 10 p.m. Sunday

Where: WHC

Cost: \$13, \$10 for members

The lowdown: Dance includes waltz, fox-trot and swing music courtesy of the Salem Big Band.

Dance lessons from Mz. Jitterbug 7:30 p.m. include with ticket. Snacks and drinks are available for purchase.

tunes from Heartstrings, rockabilly Christmas music from Tory McPherson, strolling carolers, a 15-member female barbershop quartet, brass bands, jazz bands and more.

There are plenty of activities and crafts for kids, but the event also holds appeal for the older crowd, Langham said.

"I've heard in years past (from visitors) that this is their tradition, that they fell in love here, or that they got married here, so they come back at Christmas time," Langham said.

If you're hoping for a more immersive historical experience, be sure to sign up for a tour of the various homes — the tours are free, but because there are so many visitors, they are scheduled in advance. Look for a small ticket booth on the grounds.

For his part, Booth didn't hesitate when asked his favorite bit of the event.

"We have a Pacific Crossing Model Railroad Club that comes and sets up a miniature train," he said, "and last year they introduced Thomas the Tank Engine, but beyond that, it's very much the community aspect of it. We have 400 people who volunteer for this event every year, and make it a beautiful community celebration."

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Entertainment Lineup

5:30 p.m.

- Dick Hohmbaum, schoolmaster, Church
- Salem Community Choir, Dye House
- City Dance, Spinning Room
- Passin' Notes, strolling carolers, Courtyard

7 p.m.

- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints choir, Church
- SoundWaves, barbershop ensemble, Dye House
- City Dance, Spinning Room
- Passin' Notes, Courtyard

Tuesday
5:30 p.m.

- Figs & Thistles, hammered dulcimer and strings, Teaselwick Wools
- Louie Hubbard, storyteller, Church
- Salvation Army brass band, Dye House

-14th Street Jazz from North Salem High School, Spinning Room

7 p.m.

-Figs & Thistles, Teaselwick Wools

-Tory McPherson, rockabilly Christmas music, Church

-Capital Brass, Dye House

-14th Street Jazz, Spinning Room

Wednesday

5:30 p.m.

-Heartstrings, bluegrass and holiday tunes, Teaselwick Wools

-Harpstrings, Church

-Luanne Ritts, guitar and vocals, Dye House

7 p.m.

-Heartstrings, Teaselwick Wools

-Harpstrings, Church

-Luanne Ritts, Dye House

Dec. 22

5:30 p.m.

-Andrew Kendall, violin, Teaselwick Wools

-Dick Hohmbaum, Church

-Luanne Ritts, guitar and vocals, Dye House

-Fizziwig Fete, Spinning Room

7 p.m.

-Andrew Kendall, Teaselwick Wools

-Madrigal Singers, Church

-Luanne Ritts, Dye House

-Fizziwig Fete, Spinning Room

Dec. 23

5:30 p.m.

-Golden Flute, Teaselwick Wools

-Dick Hohmbaum, Church

-Severin Sisters, bluegrass, Dye House

-Swing band, Spinning Room

7 p.m.

-Golden Flute, Teaselwick Wools

-Claire Fuller as Chloe Clark Willson, Church

-Severin Sisters, bluegrass, Dye House

-Swing band, Spinning Room