

Family of performers

Events

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Contributed

"Those Magical Musical Memories" by the Santa Cruz Follies opens Wednesday.

Santa Cruz Follies return with 'Those Magical Musical Memories'

By ERIK CHALHOUB

OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

SANTA CRUZ — For the performers in the Santa Cruz Follies, they consider themselves not just colleagues or friends.

Instead, they are a family.

"We literally become a family," said Kris Wheeler, costume director and performer.

Music technician and fellow performer Jim Idleman agreed.

"I think the term 'family' comes to mind," he said.

That family will get together from Wednesday through Sept. 14 when "Those Magical Musical Memories: Remember-

ing moments that time can't erase" is performed at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, 307 Church St. in Santa Cruz.

While Idleman said the closeness comes partly due to the industry itself, most of the members have been a part of the senior theater group for a number of years, some a decade or more.

Among the cast of 27 who are all over 50 years old, Wheeler has been with the Follies for 21 years, director Bari Miller for 16, Idleman for 15 and performer Dee Sargent for five.

The all-volunteer cast perform for something else instead of money.

"The only way we get paid is with

applause," said Sargent, a Watsonville resident. "We just love it when they hoot and holler."

Wheeler said performing with the Follies allows the cast to develop whatever skills they may have.

"What we would like to convey to the public is that there is life after 50 years old," she said.

For Watsonville resident Idleman, being with the Follies allows him to continue his lifelong passion.

"I think you've heard the old adage, 'there's no business like show business,'"

See FOLLIES, page B4

FOLLIES

From page B1

he said. "I've had performing in my blood since grade school."

This year's show is about reminiscing on the past, Miller said. The show opens in a diner from the 1950s, complete with the era's music and the dances (the twist and jitterbug will make a comeback).

The audience is then taken forward in time to the 1960s and 1970s.

"The audiences like to reminisce, and so do we," Miller said.

The Santa Cruz Follies were formed 58 years ago as "Seniorama." "Follies" are a spinoff

of vaudeville, a popular form of theater in the United States during the early 20th century.

With the Follies, it's all about singing and dancing, with little to no dialogue. An overarching theme connects each performance.

The popular performances draw tour busses from all over the state every year, Wheeler said, with about 30,000 people attending the show's four-day run last year.

Rehearsals started for this year's show in May, with cast members working two days a week for three hours, sometimes more, Sargent said.

"It's a big commitment," she said.

Preparations are already

underway for next year's performance, with Wheeler taking the helm as director. The theme will be "Moments in time: Music and people that have touched generations."

The show, which will run from Sept. 10-13, 2014, will touch on music from the past 100 years, from Al Jolson to Barbra Streisand.

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"Those Magical Musical Memories: Remembering moments that time can't erase" is performed at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, 307 Church St. in Santa Cruz, at 1 p.m. from Wednesday through Sept. 14. In addition to the regular time, a 7:30 p.m. show will also be performed on Sept. 13.

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$5 for children 10 and under, and can be purchased at the door, by calling 423-6640 or at Senior Citizens Opportunities, 222 Market St., Santa Cruz.