

‘Wassail’ returns to Tibbits on Friday

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Coldwater Daily Reporter | USA TODAY NETWORK

BRANCH COUNTY — Local talent fills the stage of Tibbits Opera House Friday night for a revived Christmas “Wassail” holiday variety show from the Branch County Community Theater.

“I’m a Hallmark movie lover, I’m not going to lie. So, watching all the Hallmark Christmas movies, I asked why we don’t have this here,” said co-director Charlene Searing.

As for her co-director, Tom Wright, she said, “He’s a variety show lover. Between the ideas of a variety of show and a big old-fashioned Christmas pageant for the community, that’s just how the show developed.”

The event brings back the memory of Sooji Bradshaw, who died in 2019.

Searing said Bradshaw was actively involved with Branch County Community Theater, directing the annual “Wassail.”

“Every Christmas, she did a community show, where she brought in different people to sing and to entertain to bring in a Christmas spirit,” Searing said.

Coldwater High Balladeers perform Friday night, with the Funkles rock band, Sweet Adelines, and Branch County Community Chorus each adding to the Holiday music.

There will also be Christmas readings and dancing from Dance Factory students, and local favorite Delbert Walling will perform with Cate Haberl and Hailey Houtz.

Quincy Elvis Bill Hefner also plans on making an appearance. “He’s the older Elvis now. So, I’m excited to see what that looks like,” Searing said.

Most of the groups perform individually around the community for the holidays.

Searing said, “We don’t ever get together for one big event. So that’s pretty much what this is. It’s taking all their favorite songs and mash them all together with a little bit of humor.”

Dueling MCs Don Hicks and Tim Kingsbury try to steal the spotlight.

There are even opportunities for the audience to join in.

Walling and Haberl will perform in the downstairs Ghost Light Bar an hour before the 7 p.m. show.

Tickets are \$12, box office fees included. They are available at the Tibbits box office and website or at the door.

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