

Turn back the Christmas Clock with holiday activities at Hillary House

Turn back the Christmas clock to holidays of yore as the Aurora Historical Society hosts Victorian-themed activities at Hillary House National Historic Site this season.

Visitors who stopped by the Hillary House verandah on Saturday night for a warming cup of hot chocolate as they waited for the Santa Under the Stars parade to get underway got a sneak preview of some of the evergreen Christmas ornaments created by Garden Aurora (The Aurora Garden & Horticultural Society) that gave Aurora's only National Historic Site a yuletide feel ? and this Saturday, November 29, you can get in on the action.

On Saturday, the two groups are coming together for a pair of Holiday Wreath Workshops.

With tickets set at \$50, which includes all materials, crafty residents can make the most out of boughs from either 10 a.m. to 12 noon or 2 ? 4 p.m.

?Garden Aurora is very generous with their time and they do all the natural decorations on the exterior of Hillary House for the holidays and, through the process, I thought about a wreath-making workshop as it ties into the Victorian decorating style ? using all-natural products like cedar, pine, pinecones and berries and they jumped right on board with helping,? says Aurora Historical Society Executive Director Kathleen Vahey. ?We really appreciate this partnership and it is completely guided by Garden Aurora. They also supply most of the natural materials as well and all of the proceeds go back to Hillary House.

?It's really a blast and every year I want to try it, but we always sell out!?

The Victorian theme continues on Saturday, December 6, with the Society's inaugural Victorian Christmas Afternoon Tea, which will have two seatings at 12 noon and 2.30 p.m. Featuring an array of teas, sandwiches, scones, seasonal desserts, warm apple cider and more, the tea is \$35 per person and sponsored by Hurst Bakery.

?This is the first time we've done a Christmas-themed afternoon tea, building on the afternoon teas we host at Hillary House,? says Vahey. ?Victorian Christmas is such fun with all these old decorations and we're changing the menu up to do some seasonal desserts. This is sponsored by Hurst Bakery and we also partner with other local caterers for the sandwiches.

?We want to see people celebrating the holidays. Maybe they are looking for something new to do [and] they just want a quiet, intimate activity to do with their family or their friends for an afternoon ? come and enjoy a themed Christmas Afternoon Tea in a decorated Victorian and Edwardian house. It's the perfect setting to host and, once all the decorations are up, it will be even better!?

For more information on these and other upcoming Aurora Historical Society and Hillary House events, including tickets, visit aurorahs.com or call Hillary House at 905-727-8991.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter