



# Ollie Taylor's New Years Extravaganza!

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## LIFESTYLE

### Carlisle native embraces Christmas with tree decoration

By Charles Mattox  
 News Editor  
 charles@thecarlislemercury.com

Christmas trees bring a special decorative ambience to the holiday season and one Carlisle lady who has decorated her home with dozens of beautifully adorned trees this year opened her home for the entire community.

Kay Shankland, of 109 West Chestnut Street, Carlisle, is gaining local legendary status for her abundance

of beautifully decorated Christmas trees she prepares each year in her home for the Christmas season.

This year Shankland had 37 trees decorated throughout her home, which she opened to the public earlier this month during Carlisle's first Victorian Christmas Festival.

Over 200 guests flocked into Shankland's home during the Dec. 1 event and passing motorists and houseguests continue to

marvel at the Christmas tree decorations that emanate from Shankland's home.

"I didn't expect that many people to visit me during the festival," Shankland said. "There were a lot of children to come through and they were all so well behaved." Their good behavior could probably be attributed to their fascination at Shankland's attention to detail and decorating styles she used to make each single tree in her home appear so

independently special.

There is the "Miss Priss" tree upstairs that is decorated in the shape of a woman dressed in Victorian era clothing.

"Mary Faul helped make Miss Priss," Shankland said. "Miss Priss has received lots of comments and I believe she has been the crowd favorite this year. My grandson helped make her mouth and nose."

Other trees are easily singled out due to their lighting

or type of ornamentation.

One upstairs tree is decorated with past and present Christmas cards.

"I use artificial trees and try to decorate with a little bit of everything," Shankland said.

Another tree upstairs is a beautiful white tree over a half-century old.

"This is one of the first artificial Christmas trees produced," Shankland said. The tree is unique in that it has a color wheel for its base that turns and illuminates the tree with various colors.

As a native of Nicholas County and a graduate of NCHS, Shankland found the hometown appeal unmistakable and therefore after living in Lexington for nearly two decades, she retired from working for the federal government and returned to Carlisle eight years ago.

"I fell in love with this house as soon as I walked in," she said of her home.

The house is believed to have been built prior to 1860 and with Shankland's delicate touch, has retained all of its original splendor and then some.

"I returned to Carlisle in 1996 and just had one Christmas tree the first year," she said. "The next year I added another tree for one of the windows downstairs, and after that I decided to put a tree in each window. It grew from there."

Shankland said it was almost as if the house spoke to her and compelled her to erect and decorate more trees in the years to follow.

"When I was growing up we had a single Christmas tree like most homes then and now, but when I put a single tree in the house here on Chestnut Street, well it just didn't seem like it was enough."

"It's hard to explain. With one tree it was a good house, but now it's not just a good house, it's a happier house."

as well."

The beautiful trees take a while to complete with the decoration process and Shankland said she estimated that she put a week's worth of work into this year's tree decoration, with each tree taking at least one hour to decorate.

She said her job was made easier this year because she had lots of help.

"Ticky Hughes helped me decorate seven of the trees," she said. "Beth and Jimmy Willoughby helped me with two others. My daughter Tammy Hardwick always helps. This is the most help I've ever had and I really appreciate it."

Community leaders and other members, particularly children of all ages, appreciate the effort that Shankland puts into beautifying Carlisle and adding special warmth to the community each Christmas season.

Many local citizens have given Shankland special ornaments to use with her decorations, and she collects teapots, one of her favorite ornaments is an antique teapot ornament given to her by Elizabeth Ellington.

Shankland said after Christmas most of the trees will go back into their original boxes and be stored together for next year. And she only does decorating at this scale once a year.

"It's strictly for Christmas," she said with a smile.

As one of the community's consummate hostesses, Shankland said she is considering her annual decoration to a new level next Christmas if the community celebrates a second Victorian Christmas.

"Maybe next year I'll have a contest for different individuals or groups to decorate a tree in the home, until then I hope everyone has a merry Christmas and a happy new year."



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