

## 6 tour days offered

By Rachel E. Sheeley • Staff Writer • December 4, 2010

Whimsical trees and formal trees are among the holiday decorations filling the Gaar Mansion and Farm Museum during the [Christmas season](#) and guests can see those trees and more during several special tour dates.

The three-story, tower-topped Victorian home is part of the holiday tour of historic [homes](#) and buildings organized by the Cottage Industry Coalition for Historic Buildings. As part of that 11-site tour, it will open today and also be open Dec. 14 and 21.

The mansion museum also is having its own special tour times starting Sunday and continuing Dec. 12 and 19.

The house has been decorated for [Christmas](#) tours by Jack Daggy Flowers. Many of the holiday decorations may be purchased with a portion of the proceeds benefiting HELP the Animals shelter. The HELP the Animals 2011 calendar also is available, as are other gifts, including Christmas cards that feature the mansion.

Margaret Wotherspoon, whose husband Bob and son Ryan are included in the HELP calendar, is one of the tour guides for the [house](#).

"It's amazing," she said. "Every time we're there, people will come through and they've lived here their entire life and they've never been to the Gaar House. This will be a good time to see it and they get a personal tour through every room on the Sunday tours."

During the 45-minute Sunday tours, visitors can explore and learn about the residence of Agnes and Abram Gaar, whose family was among the city's early industrialists. The [home](#) was built in 1876 at an original cost of \$20,000 using plans drawn by a architect John Hasecoster. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

It celebrates Richmond's art, cultural, industrial and architectural heritage through original furnishings and displays.

Abram Gaar, his brother John Milton Gaar, his father Jonas Gaar and his brother-in-law William G. Scott,

were founders of Gaar-Scott and Co. in Richmond, which was the leading manufacturer of threshing machines and steam engines from 1842 to 1911.

The house also celebrates the heritage of the Hill family who created the international award-winning Hill's Roses and greenhouses in Richmond, leading to the community's longtime nickname, the City of Roses. The Gaar and Hill families merged through the marriage of Lucile Gaar and Joseph H. Hill in 1905.

The Hills' daughter, the late Joanna Hill Mikesell, began restoring the mansion in 1974 and it has been open for tours for about 20 years. In addition to the mansion, the barn-garage offers an opportunity to see Joseph H. Hill's antique [car](#), a Gaar-Scott steam engine and other farm equipment.

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The Gaar Mansion and Farm Museum, 2593 Pleasant View Road, Richmond, is one stop on the holiday tour of historic homes and buildings of Richmond organized by the Cottage Industry Coalition for Historic Buildings. The Victorian home opens today and also Dec. 14 and 21. The mansion is decorated by Jack Daggy Flowers. (Supplied photo)

#### If You Go

- What: Gaar Mansion and Farm Museum holiday tours  
n When: Offered on the hour from 1-4 p.m. Sundays, Dec. 5, 12 and 19
- Where: Gaar Mansion and Farm Museum, 2593 Pleasant View Road, Richmond
- Cost: \$5 adults, \$2 children age 18 and younger.
- Info: (-765) 966-1262
- Also open: As part of the holiday tour of historic homes and buildings, offered noon-4 p.m. today (Dec. 4) and 5:30-8:30 p.m. Dec. 14 and Dec. 21, with ticket cost for all 11 sites on the tour \$10 for adults, \$5 for ages 6-18, and free ages 5 and younger. Tickets are sold at the tour locations on tour days and in advance at Richmond Furniture Gallery and Foster's E Street Gallery. Each building can be toured once per ticket. Info: (765) 966-8972

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