

# FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

At Kaua'i's Historic County Building





# Welcome to the FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS, Kauai's Holiday Extravaganza at the Historic County Building!



The Opening Ceremony of the Festival of Lights is the the 1st Friday in December. It features the Kauai Chorale and a spectacular Lighting Countdown led by Santa followed by the Lights on Rice Parade. Throughout December the display can be seen every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 6-8PM including Xmas Eve. And it's all FREE!



# First, a bit of history...



Josie Chansky Commended For  
Christmas Decorations -1975



For 18 years **Auntie Josie Chansky** turned her Kapa'a home into a Holiday Wonderland. What made her house so special was that Josie knew how to turn "trash into treasure", creating her glorious Folk Art out of what most people throw away...toothpicks, styrofoam cups, flash cubes, bottle caps, egg cartons and more. Lovingly known as "**The Christmas House**", it became a Holiday tradition for generations of families.





# THE TORCH IS PASSED

Joe Chansky died in 1996. In grief from her husband's passing, Auntie Josie did not have the spirit to continue putting up her display. She planned to sell all her creations at a garage sale...

*Elizabeth Freeman* had visited the Christmas House many times with her young son. She was saddened that Kauai might lose such a special tradition. Freeman went to the sale. Spending \$3000 she bought everything she could.



She next called former Mayor Maryanne Kusaka to donate Auntie Josie's decorations to the County. Knowing that Freeman was an artist and designer the Mayor asked, "If we find a special building, will you put them up?" Kauai's Historic County Building was chosen. Freeman founded the event in 1997 christening it "THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS". She has art-directed it and produced the event ever since.





## FROM THE CHRISTMAS HOUSE TO THE COUNTY BUILDING

**But how do you transport the old and fragile decoration? Who do you get to help? How do you mount decorations in a historical building that doesn't allow nails or tape? How to store Auntie Josie's decorations so that they wouldn't be crushed or damaged in some way?**

Freeman's first task was to design a way to showcase Auntie Josie's unique decorations. Another task was to organize a "Santa's Workshop" where Josie's creations (some nearly 40 years old) could be carefully repaired, a task that is continued to this day!



# Auntie Josie's Folk Art Treasures Restored!

Josie's pieces hadn't been moved in decades. Some were almost falling apart. Lights were out. Garland was faded. Many had to be taken down to their metal coat-hanger frame and rebuilt. Each piece was lovingly restored!





# Auntie Josie loved the Festival of Lights!

Until her death in 2009, she was there every evening we were open greeting old friends and making new ones.



*Wanting Josie's contribution to the community to be recognized, in 2006 Freeman arranged for her to be honored with Proclamations from the State Legislature and the County of Kauai.*





# The Architecture of Light and Aloha



Freeman calls her vision for the Festival of Lights “**The Architecture of Light and Aloha**”. Trained in art and design, her passion is working with light and space both big and small from the entire two story interior to the tiniest detail on a tree. She sees her art as creating a transformative experience for those who step within the cocoon of magical light.





Since founding the event in 1997, she has been intent on creating a world of magical beauty for children and families just as Auntie Josie did so many years ago. Freeman notes, "For many it takes them back to childhood, reconnecting them with their earliest memories of looking at twinkling Holiday lights. For others, particularly the children, it is creating new special memories of beauty, warmth and Aloha! My "canvas" is people's memory of the experience."



# Freeman's Festival of Lights has become an award-winning Kauai Tradition!



Although Freeman's work has been shown through the Smithsonian and the Museum of Art and Design in New York, it is her annual installation at Kauai's Historic County Building of which she is most proud. As founder and art director of the Festival of Lights she has showcased Auntie Josie's wonderful Folk Art as well as designed and overseen the creation of remarkable "Kauai-style" displays and decorations crafted with the help of volunteers to fashion a Holiday Tradition for Kauai uniquely her own.



# "Trash to Treasure" Lives On"



Freeman has continued the tradition of using recyclables as the raw material for the new Festival of Lights decorations she creates such as those for the "If Can, Can" Tree with every ornament made from recycled aluminum cans. Creating "something from nothing" and turning "trash into treasure" is an empowering experience that she loves to share with students and other volunteers.

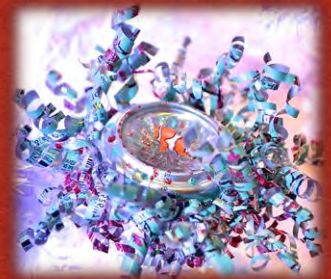
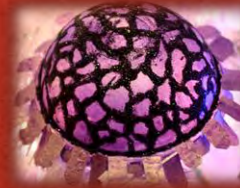
*(Below) Some of Freeman's explorations with recycled aluminum which she then teaches to the volunteers.*





# LURE OF THE SEA

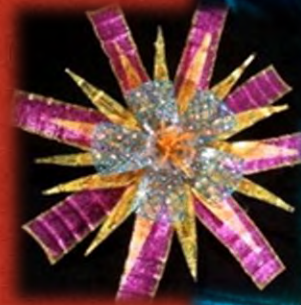
One of the newest trees, 'Lure of the Sea', features "upcycled" sea creatures: sea urchins from Slurpie lids, crabs from the bottom of plastic water bottles, turtles and fish embossed on aluminum cans, water bottle jellyfish and Arizona Tea can sea anemones!





# RECYCLED TREASURES

Freeman began experimenting with transforming recycled plastic water bottles into flowers for a new feature tree. She taught the technique to the teens from Kauai High. The results were so beautiful that a delegation of Kauai High students used them to decorate the late Senator Inouye's tree in his Washington DC office!





# READY, SET, CREATE!

Each year beginning in May Freeman visions the new trees and displays creating about a dozen decorations based on her explorations of both recycled and other materials. She assembles all the raw materials and art supplies and hosts a “Santa’s Workshop” in November. It’s held at their County storage space which she turns into a fully functioning art department.

Freeman says, “I had the vision to preserve Auntie Josie’s decorations and develop the “Kauai-style” theme but it’s the talent, generosity and commitment of the community that has kept the FOL going, growing and glowing.”





# VOL POWER!

She gives detailed tutorials to the volunteers from Kauai High Academy of Hospitality & Tourism & the Kapa'a Interact Club & to volunteers from the Kauai Community Correctional Facility inviting them to collaborate with her on creating a special tree or display.

Her goal is not to have them imitate her pieces but rather to use them as springboards for their own creativity.

The results are just amazing!





## *Our Theme:* Santa's Gone Kauaiian!

Auntie Josie's Folk Art decorations fill about 1/4 of the interior of the Historic County Building. In the remainder of the space Freeman has designed large displays and feature trees with the theme "Santa's Gone Kauaiian". These are all created with help from an





What would Santa like to see or do on Kauai?  
Find out at the Festival of Lights!



*Outrigger Santa: our largest "light" mural...10 feet x 7 feet.*



# Santa's Definitely Gone Kauaiian!



The Festival of Lights is not just about the beauty of the lights, and the experience of the space, for Freeman it is also about conveying the humor, whimsy, fun and joy of living on the Garden Island.



And Nutcrackers on Kauai have “gone native”...



*Fisherman Nutcracker*



*Warrior Nutcracker*



# Mahalo Park Magicians!



Every year the Historic County Building Park is filled with dazzling lights.

It would not be possible without the oversight of Park Installation Coordinator Tevita “Manu” Fonua (above left) and the support of the Kauai Fire Department, Oceanic Time Warner Cable, Hawaiian Telcom and Kauai Island Utility Company putting up the lights in the trees and to Service Rentals and Toolmaster for loaning 3 Genies for the Fire Department to use.





# Sharing Holiday Aloha

In the Fall Freeman lines up all the volunteers that participate once the event opens: Santas, Elves to hand out Candy Canes, Docents to help share the story...all the details that give our visitors a memorable experience..





# The Best Place for Photos with Santa & Mrs. Claus



...and it's all FREE!



# STEP INSIDE AND LET THE MAGIC BEGIN!





# Mahalo Nui Loa For Your Generous Support!

**Sponsored by the County of Kauai, the HTA, HouseMart Ace & The Friends of the of Lights**

## PARK

Tevita "Manu" Fonua  
The Fire Department  
Oceanic Time Warner Cable  
Hawaiaan TelCom  
KIUC  
Service Rentals  
Toomaster

## INTERIOR

Pam Hoffman  
Skip Forrest  
Kauai High AOHT  
Kapa'a High Interact Club  
Ibaan Table Rentals  
KCCC  
Jaime Arreola / Duke's  
Linda Dietrich  
Rizalyn Ogata  
Kauai High Japanese Club

## SPECIAL THANKS

Mayor Bernard Carvalho  
Jill Kosen  
Charles Roessler  
Maryanne Kusaka  
Lori Michimoto  
Don and Laura McConnell  
Bali Hai Reality  
Chris and Kriss Ann Mann  
John and Catherine Gillen  
Trent George

## OPENING NIGHT

The Kauai Chora  
Katie Beer  
AV Kauai  
Eric Torgeson, ET Services  
The Guerra Family  
Mary Lardizabal,  
*The Kapaa Middle School  
Choir and Ukulele Band*  
Warren Koga / County Electricians

## DOCENTS AND ELVES

The Lihue Business Association  
The Kapa'a High Key Club  
The Kauai High AOHT  
The Kapa'a High Interact Club  
Jonah Stein and Family  
Jacob Lester

## PHOTO CREDITS

Tim DeLaVega  
Ron Kosen / Photospectrum  
Jim Shae  
Danny Hashimoto  
Elizabeth Freeman

## SPECIAL THANKS

Cheryl Tsutsumi  
*(Excerpts from her 2011 Honolulu  
Star Advertiser article "Festival Keeps  
Auntie Josie's Memory Alive" were used  
in this presentation)*

## SANTA AND MRS. CLAUS

Alana and Bill Bodestaad  
Norm and Julie Schuler  
Ron Horoshko  
Michael Patton  
Rick and Carolyn Gerding  
Jewells Tidwell

## FOOD FOR VOLUNTEERS

Mark's Place  
Pepsico  
Duke's Canoe Club  
Keoki's Paradise  
The Fish Express  
The Grand Hyatt Kauai  
The Marriott  
Po's Kitchen  
The Kauai Beach Resort  
The St. Regis  
Subway Lihue  
Aston Aloha Beach Resort  
Times Market  
Safeway Market  
Cost-U-Less  
Big Save  
Costco  
Kmart  
Bobby V's  
Jan and Peter Sterne

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