

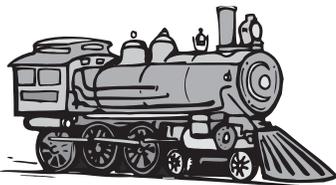
Friends of the Domes

Current and Upcoming Events

Gulliver's Travels Train Show.

January 19th –March 2, 2008

Travel with Gulliver and see your favorite scale train, featuring business logos on them. Find Gulliver napping among the flowers and trains.



Z-scale Trains

February 21 thru the 24 2008

The Domes will be showing the Z-scale Trains. These little Trains are fun to see. Come in, take pictures, and spend some time at the Domes

Chinese New Year's Celebration

February 2, 2008

Time: 9:00 am - 8:00 pm

Celebrate Chinese New Year at the Domes. There will be a Chinese Dragon, Chinese food, and even more surprises. Learn more about our Asian friends, and how they spend their New Years.



3 Season Show

Opens March 15, 2008

View some spectacular plants and flowers. Come in and take the time to smell the flowers.

St. Patrick's Day Event

March 16, 2008

Noon – 5:00 pm

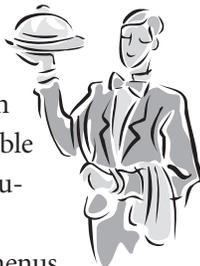
Bring your family to our annual St Patrick's Day event. Food will be served and you will be entertained by a variety of musical groups who were all involved in Irish Fest.



Restaurants Under Glass

Friday, January 25th
2008, 6pm – 9pm

The evening will include music 6-9 pm and a Cash Bar. Notable Milwaukee area restaurants will be serving samples from their menus between 6:00 pm & 8:00 pm. See details on page 3.



Valentines Evening

Special Event Admission Rate

February 14th, 6-10 pm

Adults \$10, Friends of the Domes \$5,

Children (6-17 years) \$5

Enjoy a candle lit stroll through the Tropical Dome and enhance the evening with chocolate, wine, canapés and specialty cakes from Rich's House of Cakes. Listen to the romantic overtures by our harpist and love songs. We provide the ambiance and setting, you take it from there! Nominal fee for food and drink.



Equatorial Milwaukee

by Patrick Kehoe and Candi Mestayer

A cold snowy winter may be upon us, but a stroll in the Tropical Dome will make you feel like you're on vacation in a far away land. Here you'll feel warm- coats, hats and mittens are banished and snow boots aren't required. Come to relax with beautiful orchids in bloom (thanks to Bill Nelson, our in-house expert) and birds flitting through the trees.

Though short days have slowed them down, our tropical trees are still growing. This past October they got their annual pruning, letting light filter onto the jungle floor. The Friends of the Domes made the pruning possible by providing the platform lift needed to reach up into these towering canopies.

Speaking of trees, the sausage tree (Kigelia) has finished flowering, and for the first time that anyone can remember, it has developed some fruit. Let's see if they can develop to mature size. We're hoping for a 15 pound and 2 foot long fruit that looks just like a summer sausage! Now you know why it's called a sausage tree! (Hold the cheese and crackers, they're not edible!)

Of the edible plants we do have, the Ae Variegated Banana is showing signs of producing a flower within the next few months. This is the rarest of bananas, and not only has beautiful variegated foliage but also produces variegated fruit. These larger bananas have dark green, medium green and white stripes running down the skin, but the fruit is yummy and looks like a regular store bought banana. It was once the sacred and exclusive fruit of Hawaii's royal family, no one else was

allowed to grow or eat them.

With the use of the platform lift, the waterfall was cleared of overgrown philodendron to expose the hidden three tiers. We even found unknown spotlights in each tier, and hope that they will be replaced soon. Won't that be great at night?

While you stop at the bridge for your photo shoot by the waterfall, check out the beautiful koi fish swimming in the lagoon. There's an assortment of sizes and colors, from babies to a near 2 footer named Gilda. Gilda was a donation from the family of our FOD greeter Tim Neumann, and is an appreciated addition. Although jumbo, her gentle nature makes her a nice fit with our other finned friends.

Regular visitors will notice that the aged epiphyte tree was removed. With the help of Lynn Burke, our graphic artist, new ideas are in the works - so don't worry if your self-guided tour

shows the letter 'E' and the tree is gone. Look for a new and improved version in the future.

You may also notice a bit more light in that area. Years ago, when the dome was still a baby, many trees were planted close together in order to give the plantings a fuller look. Forty years later, these trees have grown and now are crowding each other out. In order to thin the area, the collection was assessed and each individual tree was critiqued for its value. Due to being a fast growing tree whose location caused its canopy to crowd out several other valuable trees, and because it has never flowered or produced fruit, it was decided that the Ecuador Laurel (Cordia) would be the one to go. Viola! Sunshine!

Bring your friends and family, and spread the word about the beautiful Mitchell Park Domes, we have a whole world of plants that everyone can enjoy.



Now we know where the Gecko "gecko" representative hangs out during the winter months...in our very own Tropical Dome in a banana tree! One of our horticulturists took this picture while during a routine trimming and was amazed to come across him seeing that we haven't had gecko's in the Dome for almost ten years!

Restaurants Under Glass



Join in the Festivities!

Friday, January 25th

6pm - 9pm

Enjoy our 2008 Winter Show Dome Opening.
The theme for The Train Show, "Gulliver's Travels",
Will feature working G-Scale Trains.
The evening will include music 6-9 pm and a Cash Bar.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Notable Milwaukee area restaurants will be serving samples
from their menus between 6:00 pm & 8:00 pm.

Quantities are limited so get there early!

Top off your night with delicious cake from
Rich's House of Cakes.

AT THE DOOR:

For this Special Event, regular admission rates apply.

Adults \$5, Children (6-17 years) \$3.50, under 5 free

Tickets for food samples can be purchased at the Door for \$1.00 each.

The Domes are located at 524 S. Layton Blvd. Milwaukee WI

For further information, call 414-383-7769

FOD Holiday Party – 11/29/07

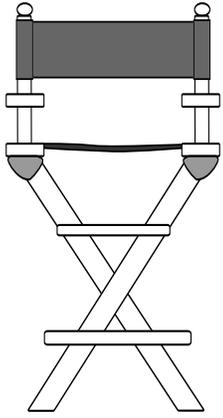
Our annual holiday party had an attendance of 119 friends and guests. We started at 6:00 p.m. with music on the Celtic harp by Mary Ann Miller, hand passed hors d'oeuvres, and a cash bar. While guests were mingling there were opportunities to participate in a silent auction table that had something for everyone as well as raffle items.

The first 60 reservations were seated in the Show Dome. This year's theme had Christmas trees decorated by various ethnic groups plus a great display of poinsettias and plants that were arranged by the horticulturalists. The decorated trees brought a touch of home and pride to the

dome. Red poinsettias were the centerpiece at each table and added to the festive feeling of the night.

The buffet dinner began at 7:00 p.m. and was prepared and served by Ellen Zilli's Catering. The evening wound down with the close of the silent auction bidding and distribution of raffle items. Guests wandered through the domes and stopped in at the FOD Gift Shoppe to start the Christmas shopping and giving season.

We missed you if you didn't come and hope that you will join us for the 2008 Holiday Party.



DIRECT FROM THE DIRECTOR

Sandy Folaron

Brrrrrrr...it looks like a Currier and Ives scene from my office window! Winter came fast and hard this year and caught us a bit off guard! We had barely enough time to pull out the flowerbeds, install boughs in the planters, clean and do some winter maintenance on our equipment and start up the snow blowers for another season. Before you know it, we were knee-deep in poinsettias and holiday music. Our holiday show showcased seven different ethnic trees all decorated by some of Milwaukee's finest cultural heritage groups. Polish,

Norwegian, Hispanic, Irish, German, Italian, Native American and Asian volunteers all pitched in and shared wonderful ornaments and homemade decorations to trim their own trees symbolizing the history and customs of their countries. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet and work with people that are truly dedicated to celebrating Milwaukee's heritage. It also gave me the opportunity to line up others that might be interested in staging an ethnic mini-festival during the winter here at the Domes. All in all, it certainly brought many people here to our facility that hadn't been here in years.

Speaking about mini-festivals, our first Asian Festival went unbelievably well! We brought in almost 700 visitors. Food, dance, cultural and artistic booths, holistic health treatments are just some of the venues that were staged. It made us even more excited to look to our **Chinese New Year's Event** on February 2nd. Mark your calendar and join us in this authentic

Chinese celebration put on by the Chinese Community Center.

Choo, Choo...hard to believe, but it's that time again. The train show is chugging into the Domes station on January 19th. **Gulliver's Travels** will delight young and old and because of the Easter Holiday coming early this year, will only be open until March 2nd. So make your plans now to come down and bring your family and friends.

This next year at the Conservatory will be one of transition and change. Glass replacement, special effects lighting initiative, site development and research for our new Greenhouse and the MMSD project will all have an impact on our visitor count and event planning. Please bear with us and be patient. The end result will take the Domes into a new era of service and value to our residents and visitors. It is a big step in the right direction. Best wishes for a great New Year!

Dear Roger,

My wife, daughter, and I attended this week's Domes Holiday Party. We were lucky enough to get seated in the Show Dome and the evening was absolutely wonderful! This was our first Holiday party and evening event and we were very impressed by the food, service, and the beautiful displays of Christmas trees and poinsettias. Plus, a TV was thoughtfully provided for the Packer game and we won several silent auction items! We could not have asked for anything more.

Thanks to you, all of the staff, and the wonderful volunteers that put this event together. We are very blessed to have a jewel like the Domes in Milwaukee and we honored to be Friends members.

Happy Holidays,

The Hecker Family

FOD Mailbag

Welcome New FOD Members!

We welcome all the new Friends members who have joined since the last newsletter was published. We appreciate your support and hope you enjoy frequent visits to the Domes!

Remember, your membership allows you to visit the Domes as often as you like during business hours, and free admission to many special evening events as well.

Tom & Kay Benning
Lisa & Stephen Berman
Heather & Tim Borchardt
Cindy Carlson
David & Jennifer Chevalier
Chris & Nicole Cichy
Sharon Dane
Eric Oquist & Heather Deaton
Ellen & Paul Dodd
Metz & Eberhardy
Elizabeth & Anthony Garza
George Jenkins
Cindy Krauge
Rakesh Lajwaghray
Tom & Kathryn LaLasz

Richard & Christine Marcoux
Brother D McCormick
Gloriann Meer
Pam Mehnert
Milli Merike
Harley & Kathrine Meyer
Nancy & Andrew Porter
Andrea & Michael Reynolds
Scott & Erica Roth
Heather & Michael Theile
Dean Lansing & Maureen Vasallo
Christina & Nicholas Walters
Cheryl & Brian Wagner
Roy & Jenny Wetzal



Congratulations Tim Neumann, 1,000 Hour Volunteer

All of the Domes staff would like to congratulate Tim Neumann for surpassing 1,000 volunteer hours as greeter at the Mitchell Park Domes and Education Center. Rain or shine, Tim can always be found in the lobby ready to welcome all new and returning visitors as well as staff with enthusiasm, Domes knowledge and good-hearted conversation. He is a year round fisherman and gardener that takes him all over the state. Tim enjoys weekly Friday night dinners with his family at local restaurants, especially fish fries.

Many visitors have been known to visit the Domes after Tim's glowing recommendation. Mr. Neumann's dedication to the Domes is incredible! During the latest ice storm, Tim needed to be strongly persuaded by his family and Domes staff to not attempt to travel in the storm. He jumps at the chance to help with event preparation, crowd control, animal care, and any other task we send his way including each year's Orchid Show and Rainforest Night events.

Way to go Tim! Your contributions have made the Domes a better place!

Pick 'N Save Wee Care



Do you or your family or friends shop at any Pick 'N Save? If so, you could help contribute to the Friends of the Domes while you shop. Here's all there is to it. Go to the service desk at the front of the store and ask them to designate our charity code number (#243900) on your Advantage Card. You only have to register once. From then on, whenever you shop, a percentage of your grocery total will be automatically accumulated for the Friends. The more you use your card, the more "Wee Care" dollars the Friends. This is a great and simple way to contribute towards our educational and cultural programs offered here at the Domes.

Women in Horticulture Conference 2007

by *Candida Mestayer, Horticulturist*

I'd like to thank the Friends for their support in sending me to the **Women in Horticulture Conference**, held in Milwaukee in early November 2007. The conference was presented by Melinda Meyers, Wisconsin's own horticulturist extraordinaire, and included a panel discussion group of female horticulturists (each with over 20 years in the trade!).

The day was packed with interesting and humorous speakers. Topics ranged from "Positive Possibilities" to mental and physical health issues, and my favorite, "What do Do When..." After we fed our brains, we had a great lunch with interesting conversation. Many of us started to talk about our

aches and pains. One issue in common among these various skilled women (arborists, nursery workers, greenhouse, grounds maintenance, designers, educators and students) was that horticulture could be physically hard on the body. In the long run it can break you down, male or female. We all had to laugh when we realized how many women were comparing their ailments. There are a lot of bad knees, backs and shoulders in this group of workers.

I was pleased that so many expressed interest in the Conservatory, wondering what was going on and how we survived the county budget. (Sometimes you think no one else cares, but it's not true.) Many of the

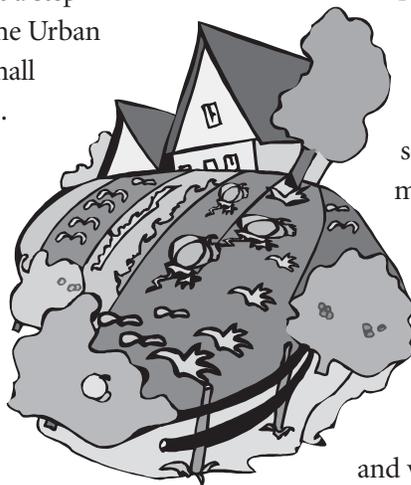
women knew our Conservatory Director, Sandy Folaron. It was impressive that so many nice things were said about her and her "can-do" attitude. More and more ideas flew. Business cards were exchanged. Contacts and skills were noted. The networking alone was worth my time, and I'm happy to have met new people and renew old acquaintances.

It was a great feeling to leave the conference full of hope and "Positive Possibilities." Thank you Friends, for sending me. The conference provided information that I will try to use to benefit our wonderful Mitchell Park Domes.

"Looking to the Future" SPIN FARMING: WHERE WE LIVE

Sandy Folaron, Domes Director

On February 28th and 29th 2008 the Mitchell Park Domes will host a step-by-step workshop as part of the Urban Agriculture Conference on Small Lot Intensive Farming (SPIN). This hands-on workshop will showcase the non-technical and sub-acre farming system that makes it feasible to grow food in less than an acre, utilize existing water sources to meet irrigation needs, keep overhead costs low and maximize significant income by locating farm sites near markets as in our own urban park environment!



Our staff looks to the future in connecting with programs such as these to regenerate and reuse our Mitchell Park in a way that serves its community. Ethnic gardens, children's learning gardens and farmers markets all enhance the use and value of this land.

The Mitchell Park Domes will also host a welcoming reception for this national convention. Participants will come from all over the nation to learn about "green" initiatives and urban agriculture as it also applies to positive social and economic outcomes. We are honored to be part of this Convention and welcome all of our visitors to the Domes.

For more information on the conference details and registration, go to: <http://growurban.org>

Sponsor an Animal at Mitchell Park Domes!

Your one-year sponsorship will provide your chosen animal(s) a higher quality of life. Our resident animals live in the education center and our birds live in the tropical and arid domes. The fish tank is located in the lobby. Some of the items you will help provide include full spectrum lighting, basking lamps, specialty foods, supplements, veterinarian care and more. Your sponsorship is vital to continue the best care for these animal educators.

In return, you will receive a recognition certificate acknowledging your donation and a natural history profile of your sponsored animal(s).

HERE IS YOUR CHOICE LIST:

Education Center

- Spiny-tailed Lizard20.00/yr.
- Three-toed Box Turtle15.00/yr.
- North American Bullfrog15.00/yr.
- Red-eyed Tree Frog10.00/yr.
- White's Tree Frog10.00/yr.

Lobby

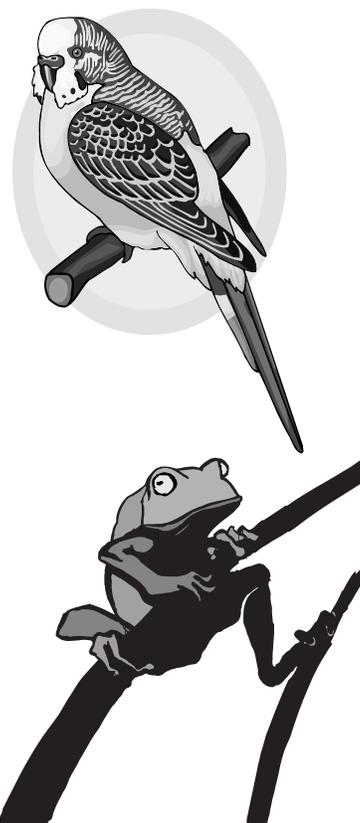
- African and Madagascan Ciclid Tank ..10.00/yr.

Arid Dome

- Bourke's Parrot15.00/yr.
- Collared Dove15.00/yr.
- Cockateil10.00/yr.
- Parakeet (Budgie)10.00/yr.
- Yellow Canary10.00/yr.
- Zebra Finch10.00/yr.

Tropical Dome

- Bishop's Weaver10.00/yr.
- Black-headed Nun10.00/yr.
- Green Singing Finch10.00/yr.
- Pekin Robin10.00/yr.
- Red-crested Finch10.00/yr.
- Spice Finch10.00/yr.



Please cut at dotted line and mail to:
 Mitchell Park Domes,
 Attn: Gift Shop/Animal Sponsor
 524 S Layton Blvd,
 Milwaukee WI 53215

ADOPT AN ANIMAL REGISTRATION

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Animal Choice(s)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Total Payment Enclosed \$ _____

Check _____

Charge# _____

Exp Date: _____

New in the Gift Shop:

Check out the trivets made from Botticino Marble from Italy and Turkey, designed with a map taken from an old original of the Milwaukee Harbor, made in New England.

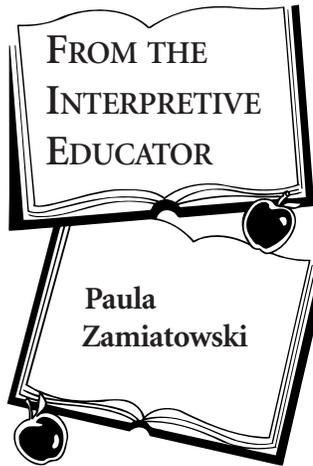
Enjoy the story of the Milwaukee Parks with many old photographs in Laurie Muench Albano's book titled Milwaukee County Parks.

We are getting ready for the big train show with a variety of children's train books, cast iron engines, posters, and a few other fun train souvenirs.

Please visit us between the Tropical and the Arid Domes.

AAA Membership Discount!

As a member of the Friends of the Domes, you are eligible to receive a 15% discount off the cost of AAA membership. Call AAA at 414-423-2180 ext 224 or note this when you send in your AAA membership renewal. Mention group number 4026.



Our Animal Educators

The Animal Sponsorship program continues to be an integral part of the Domes birds, fish and education center animals. All our animals are under the care of several experts as well as the caring eye of our Domes staff, volunteers and me! Everyone is well. Uri (our spiny-tailed lizard) has gained another inch and seems to be thriving even more in his new location against the rock wall in the education center. Tera (three-toed box turtle) continues to teach kids each week and is a great ambassador for rescued animals. Herman (named by our favorite greeter, Tim Neumann) scared us this fall when he stopped eating, but his appetite has returned and is getting along great. He seems to favor Tim's feedings over anyone else. Our White's tree frog has a new cage mate, a Day Gecko that traveled to the United States via a vacationing patron's suitcase from Puerto Rico. Frog and Gecko seem to be getting along great since one is awake during the day, the other at night. Both like crickets and the gecko likes his daily fruit that I serve to him on a Romaine lettuce leaf. Our lobby fish tank continues to soothe the cranky infant tethers that toddles on over to the tank while Mom or Dad

looks on. We also have fish in the tropical pond that the horticulturists care for as their own. In fact, each is named!

Eventful 2007!

This year has been very exciting in terms of firsts and record-breaking attendance for the Education Center! Our Center taught more kids and adults than ever before as well as generating the most dollars! Classes with MATC, Cardinal Stritch, Mount Mary, Concordia, and UW-system have doubled along with the topics covered during their visit. The record for number of students that have ever been taught at the Mitchell Park Domes Education Center has now been surpassed as well as bringing in over \$30,000 to Milwaukee County Parks!

Our low-cost program continues to flourish among schools and senior centers that do not have the resources to visit the Domes and Education Center. Hopefully, more individuals will donate dollars to the low-cost program so more students and senior citizens can benefit from this worthwhile endeavor. If you are interested in sponsoring an education program, please call us!

In partnership with KGMB and UW-Extension, our public educational programming has exploded with increased attendance. It is designed to educate individuals on the quantity, quality, and availability of our fresh water supply. We offer workshops on rain barrel installation, downspout disconnect, rain garden design, green roofs, and more. Hopefully in 2008, we will add social change issues and more environmental sustainability classes.

I am very proud of the things we have accomplished in 2007. I believe it is due in-part by our dynamic director, Sandy, and our growing partnerships! I invite you to visit our upcoming photo exhibit of great moments in the Education Center during January 2008! Until then, here are some highlights from 2007...

JANUARY

Many thanks go to the Friends of the Domes for making it possible for me to receive my official certification from the National Association for Interpreters. This was work I completed in a week-long workshop at UW-Milwaukee with colleagues from Wisconsin and Illinois. A national certification is now required by all National Parks and is becoming the gold standard for education centers like ours throughout the nation! Also, many partnerships were formed with local museums, nature centers and schools throughout WI during this workshop!

FEBRUARY

Herman (our bullfrog) and Tera (our turtle) participated in Wehr Nature Center's Reptile Day. This generated renewed interest in the Domes by many of the patrons that attended this event. Our green Iguana (Morrison) that was found starving in the tropical dome a year ago was adopted. Thanks to Katie Zylka, Morrison lives a comfortable life in Hales Corners with a custom-made enclosure that her father and Katie built.

MARCH

Education Center continues to go green by participating in Milwaukee's

first Swap-O-Rama at Future Green in Bay View. As a volunteer, I helped jazz-up clothes that other people donated to be transformed into works of art that were then purchased by others (recycle and reuse). Everyone had fun swapping out their clothes for jazzed up “renewed” clothes. While working on the clothes I would share Domes happenings with participants and low and behold I found nine out of ten people I spoke with requesting Domes information (luckily, I had info with me).

APRIL

Community Reading Day was a successful first where every child under the age of 12 received a book to take home. All family members enjoyed the numerous on-going activities that occurred throughout all the domes, lobby area and education center. This is an event that we will revisit in 2008 but with different partnerships.

MAY

Cinco de Mayo – another first! It was a passive display of information in the front lobby that tied into the Arid and Tropical domes with emphasis on the culture and diversity of our neighborhoods as we commemorate Mexico's victory over the invading French Army--an army that was about 50% larger than Mexico's militia!

In order for the Education Center to progress into more environmental sustainability activities, I attended the Green Festival in Chicago. The event was a wonderfully vast informational resource that I have incorporated materials into my programming. Also, it was a great place to network with

organizations that could benefit the Domes and Education Center.

JUNE

Everyone was invited to the first ever “Desert Night at the Domes”. This family-focused event celebrated the foods, medicines, music, art, plants and animals of the desert regions of the world offer. Indian Summer Festival partnered with us to share Native American traditions with patrons. Local artists displayed their art and wares. Sheboygan Herpetology Society showed scorpions, tarantulas, lizards and tortoises and CARE exhibited birds of the desert, as well. Future Green offered fair trade crafts and other sustainable products from desert co-op as well as information. I'm happy to report there will be a second annual Desert Night at the Domes!

JULY

The Central Milwaukee County Library invited me to create a Herbology 101 laboratory for “A Night with Harry Potter” to kick-off the final book release of the septology. My colleagues from Retzer Nature Center (Catherine Hubbard), Riverbend (Christa Marlowe) and Wehr Nature Center (Howard Aprill) jumped at the chance to help me out. This was a great opportunity for us to use Domes resources and our imagination to display everyday plants like daisies along with cleverly created Mandrakes, Dragon Dung, talking plants (Thanks to John Folaron) and more! Our laboratory was so well received that we kept some of the plants in the education center throughout the summer. We hope to work with the Central library folks again.

AUGUST

I completed a few bird catches in the arid dome, focusing on trapping the house sparrows that have found their way into the domes (birds were released in Jackson Park). More catches will be carried out to reduce some of the bird populations in the arid and tropical dome. Other bird-safe techniques will be tried to eliminate the sparrows in 2008.

August was a time for summer camps, tour groups and a few off-site presentations to generate increased attendance at the Domes. When I wasn't teaching or catching sparrows I spent many days meeting with teachers and principals about the upcoming school year.

SEPTEMBER

How do you teach an entire school of 300 students at once? It was an exciting challenge that had a successful outcome because I had a team of great people helping me. The students ranged from K5 through 5th grade from Royce Elementary School in Beloit. Jenn Callaghan (Domes animal care volunteer), Michelle Thurner (office manager) and Howard Aprill (Wehr Nature Center) helped teach a portion of the program at their station while Tim Neumann (our greeter) monitored the students while they ate lunch. My station was in the education center. Six hours later, all 300 students rotated through each dome and station.

OCTOBER

Record breaking - Rainforest Night! Guests sampled fresh tropical treats, *continued on page 10*

Eventful 2007

continued from page 9

exotic juices, ice cream, chicle (chewing gum), nuts and chocolate along with demonstrations and music.

Reptile expert, Terry Cullen, and avian expert, Lori Drew, showcased their animals from their centers. Future Green, Milwaukee Biodiesel and Tirimbina shared ways to be green with environmentally sustainable practices, alternative fuels and fair-trade products. Best attended RFN event ever!

NOVEMBER

A team of students from Heritage Christian Academy asked if they could

perform an energy audit of the Domes for their Lego League national competition. The theme this year is "Energy Resources – Meeting the Global Demand." Each team competed in one regional tournament where they were judged in areas of project presentation, programming and design execution, teamwork, problem solving, project management, creativity, attitude and persistence. Our team, Team 360 – Full Revolution took regional and is competing on the state level as I write this! I will have their project on display throughout 2008 so please stop-in and learn more about this worthwhile competition!

Asian Culture Fest – another first for

the Domes and Education Center! Patrons were treated to authentic traditional Asian food, music, crafts, demonstrations and hands-on activities. A Domes passbook gave each family an opportunity to have their names signed in each language as they toured Asia and got a jump on their holiday shopping! What a exciting party!

DECEMBER

Bil Nelson (horticulturist and orchid specialist extraordinaire) and I attended a two-day course paid by Milwaukee County to increase our grant writing skills. We found it very helpful and are looking at new ways to receive funding for our future projects.

PLANTS OF THE SEASON

Christmas Cactus

The poinsettia may be the most popular holiday plant, but Christmas cactus - in full bloom during the holidays - creates its own show. Although it's a member of the cactus family, it's native area is Brazil's humid forests. Its requirements are slightly different from the needs of a desert cactus plant.

Some confusion exists, because there are several types of cactus sold during the holiday season. Thanksgiving cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*) blooms near Thanksgiving, about a month before Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgesii*). The Easter cactus (*Rhipsalidopsis gaertneri*) is Spring flowering and blooms near Easter time. These cacti are differentiated by the leaflet and stem. Christmas

and Thanksgiving cacti have sharp teeth along the leaf margin; where as the Easter cactus has smooth undulations.

PLANT NEEDS

- These cacti like well-drained soil, consisting of two parts potting soil and one part clean sand. Allow soil to dry slightly between waterings, because the plant does not tolerate heavy wet mixes.
- Fertilizing should take place after flowering and as plants start new growth in spring.
- The plants adapt to low light in the home, but produce more blooms if exposed to increased light intensity. Keep the plant in a sunny, indoor location during winter months. Plants can be moved outdoors in the summer and used as hanging baskets, but should be kept in shady or semi-shady locations. The leaves turn reddish if exposed to too much sunlight.

To produce buds, the plant must have nighttime temperatures in the high 50's to low 60's. This initiates buds and eliminates the need for a dark period. If you cannot provide cooler nighttime temperatures, place the plant in total darkness each night for six - eight weeks or until buds form. A critical period for the Christmas cactus is during bud formation. The plant does not like to be moved or have its environment changed once buds begin forming. It aborts newly formed buds if placed in a drafty location, or the plant's lighting is changed.

After blooming is finished, prune by pinching or using a sharp knife to cut off several sections. This encourages the plant to branch out, creating a fuller looking plant and more blossoms.

From the University of Minnesota Extension

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/info-u/plants/BG872.html>

Featured PLANT

The Resurrection Plant

by Gail Schumann



Some plants have evolved amazing mechanisms for survival under very dry conditions. The Arid Dome is filled with many successful examples. The “resurrection” plant has an unusual approach. In dry conditions, it becomes a dried up ball of scaly leaves. When water is available, it quickly greens up and resumes normal plant

activities. This can be repeated numerous times. Named for this dramatic recovery, the plant is often given as a symbolic gift of hope and renewal, especially at Christmas or Easter. The pictures show the plant in its dried state and when it is green and growing (*images by Stephen Shirley of Victoriana Nursery Gardens, UK, by permission*).

There are actually several unrelated plants that have been dubbed “resurrection” plants. This article is about *Selaginella lepidophylla* which is found in desert regions of the Southwest U.S. and Central America. It can be found in rocky outcrops in the Chihuahuan Desert on either side of the U.S.-Mexican border. The plant cannot store water like a succulent, so it curls up into a ball to reduce its surface area and, therefore, water loss.

When green, its leaves (which are really scaly stems) look fernlike because it is a lycopod. Lycopods are commonly known as ground pines or club mosses. Like ferns and mosses, they reproduce with spores instead of seeds. All of these plants are more commonly found in moist environments, so the resurrection plant is quite unusual. Lycopods evolved long before flowering plants and were alive at least 400 million years ago. During the Carboniferous Era (345-280 million years ago), lycopods grew as big as trees, to 100 feet tall with trunks 6 feet in diameter. They lived in swamps and, over time, contributed to our coal deposits. Today, lycopods are small ground plants.

The resurrection plant grows best in alkaline (high pH) soils and cannot tolerate a hard freeze. It can grow only to 6 to 12 inches. The root ball can be divided into several new plants as it enlarges. Resurrection plants are available for sale in the Domes Gift Shop if you want to give a message of hope to someone or amaze your children with an interesting winter project.

Illinois Orchid Society Awards



by Sandy Folaron, Director

I am pleased to announce that the Mitchell Park Domes, represented by Bil Nelson, participated in the Orchid Fall Show on October 13th and the 14th at the Chicago Botanic Gardens. The display received a First and Best in Class award along with a Certificate of Cultural Merit from the American Orchid Society for our *Cattleya labiata*, for receiving the highest amount of points awarded by the show’s judges! And if that isn’t amazing in itself, the orchids also captured 4 more First Place showings, 2 Second Place showings and 1 Third Place showing. You may have met Bil or one of our other horticulturists at the Friends Holiday Dinner last month. Be sure to say hi and congratulate them on their work and participation in this show. They are a big part of what makes the Domes unique and so very special.





Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

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Phone _____ Date _____

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Student | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Student & One Guest |
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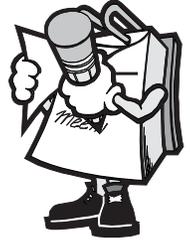
Friends of the Domes
524 S. Layton Blvd.
Milwaukee, WI 53215

Please contact me about volunteering!

A Friends Membership makes a great gift!
If interested in a gift membership call 414-383-3818

Calendar of Events

January 19Train Show "Gulliver's Travels"
 January 25Restaurants Under Glass
 February 2Chinese New Year's Celebration
 February 14.....Valentines Evening
 February 21-24Z-Scale Train Collection Display
 March 2.....Train Show Closes
 March 153 Seasons Show Opens
 March 16.....St Patrick's Family Day Celebration
 May 11.....Mother's Day
 May 27-June 6.....Show Dome closed for plant exchange



Admission Rates: Adults \$5.00, Seniors \$3.50, Children 6-17 \$3.50, Free 5 and under. Milwaukee County Residents free on Mondays (excluding major holidays) 9am-11:30am.

Mitchell Park Domes: 414-649-9830 · Friends of the Domes: 414-383-3818
E-mail: domesgs@sbcglobal.net

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