Family New Year’s Eve Party!

Thursday, December 31

Join us at our traditional Family New Year’s Eve Party on Thursday, December 31st from 6-10 p.m. at the Domes. This family oriented event, hosted by the Friends of the Domes, will offer interactive skits by Milwaukee’s own Comedy Sportz team, Magic Shows with Rick Allen, live music by the Universal Love Band and lots more! Enjoy the Children’s Holiday Floral Show and experience the high tech lighting displays throughout the evening. What better way to ring in the New Year (party favors included) and support the Conservatory with family and friends!

Concessions and libations will be available for purchase, provided by Zilli’s Hospitality Group. Call 414-649-9830 for additional information.

Special Rates apply: Adults $10, Kids (6-17 yrs.) $5, Kids 5 & under FREE.

Stunningly Beautiful Glass Panel For Sale!

The Friends of the Domes are offering for sale, a 58" x 27" glass panel that was removed from the Tropical Dome for repair. After repairs, the size of the panel is simply too small to fit the existing window and had to be replaced. The original window was one of a collection of five, which were funded by donations to the Friends of the Domes.

This spectacular crystalline glass panel was custom designed by artists at Conrad Schmidt Studios, the largest and most respected purveyors of stained glass in the Midwest. The design features elements of the tropical dome’s eco-system.

The sale of this window will help to pay for the replacement window. The cost is $1,500 plus tax. If you are interested in seeing this item or getting more information please call 414-383-3818 for an appointment. This is available on a “first-come-first-served” basis.

www.milwaukeedomes.org
From the Director’s Chair

By Sandy Folaron

Happy Holidays from the entire Domes staff to all of you and your families. Another year almost done and behind us, and as always, we look to the future and the opportunities it holds. This has been a good year for the Domes. Attendance has tripled, many new visitors have discovered the Domes at night with our dramatic lighting shows, special events and Music Under Glass concert series, and facility improvements continue to offer better amenities to our guests.

We are so appreciative of the Friends Board Members, employees and all of you who support us with your memberships and volunteerism. It re-energizes and inspires us and keeps us moving forward.

This year our 30 foot green spruce for our holiday show was donated on behalf of Rachel Wezek by her father, Robert. Their gift helped make our holiday show even more special and memorable for families and children. Lynn Burke, the parks’ artist, again worked her magic in adding amazing ornaments that take all of us back to our childhood. Larger than life nutcrackers, train cars, building blocks and a rocking horse allow us to revisit the holiday through the eyes of a child. These are great photo opportunities for holiday cards and family memories. So, come on down and bring the camera!

The next few months are busy ones for the Friends of the Domes and their special events committees. Staging New Year’s Eve, Restaurants Under Glass (my personal gastronomical favorite) and Valentines Evening require hours of planning and volunteer work. These events raise the most money for the Friends, which in turn pay for many of the improvements you see and plants that we purchase for our lobby and the botanical collections. These funds help fill the gap in our diminished County Parks budget. Thank you in advance for attending these great events and bringing along your friends.

See you at the Domes!

Wintertime is often described as a season of essential respite in the world of gardeners. We move almost exclusively indoors and hibernate, away from the cold Wisconsin winter, often with little more than thoughts of spring to sustain us. We see a significant lull in activity and we use words like dormant to describe the pace of the winter world around us.

The pace of the winter season at the Domes, however, is anything but dormant – and there is no lull in our activities! This time of year is as exhilarating and busy, if not more so, than the rest of our year.

Planning is underway for a number of exciting and wonderful events throughout the year to bring new visitors to the Domes – and to renew acquaintances with returning visitors and their families who have enjoyed our events in the past.

We are proud to present again this year, events that were successful and well received in years past. We continue to improve upon our past success and make these events even better and more enjoyable. We also look for innovative ways to work with new and existing corporate sponsors who help us to showcase the Domes with creative, new events for you, your families and the community.

Some special upcoming events you won’t want to miss include our New Year’s Eve event which is truly a family party; Restaurants Under Glass on January 29th, a great event for adults and children to try new foods; and Valentines Day for the young and young at heart. Hope to see you there!

We continue to recruit new volunteers to help make the Domes a success. If you love visiting us, and attending our events, you might just find a very special “home away from home” here as a volunteer – and you will meet and work closely with some of the nicest, most interesting and talented people you will ever meet.

So, if you want a break from the lull of wintertime, and you grow weary of the often-dormant nature of the season, join us at the Domes for our year-round warmth and beauty, our fantastic events, our amazing people and a pace that is anything but slow and dreary!
A Children’s Holiday

Visit the Show Dome through January 3, 2010
Our 30 ft. green spruce was donated on behalf of Rachel Wezek by her father, Robert.

Why We Love the Domes

What’s Your Story?
By Gail Schumann

People who belong to the Friends of the Domes know and love the Mitchell Park Domes. Do you ever wonder what young people might be thinking as they wander through the tropical rainforest, desert, and flower displays?

Dr. David H. Lorence grew up in Caledonia, Wisconsin and often visited the Domes. He developed a love of tropical plants and went on to UW Madison and later received his Ph.D. in plant biology at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. He is now the Director of Science and Curator of the Herbarium at the National Tropical Botanical Garden in Kauai, Hawaii.

Bring a child or teenager to the Domes. You never know where it might lead!

If you have a brief story or recollection about the importance of the Domes in your life or the life of your family, please share it with our members. Send it to our newsletter editor, Bridget O’Donnell at bridgetodonnell@me.com.
In 2008, artist Mike Nolte began what he describes as “extreme recycling.” His work takes discarded items and reinvents them, creating different bugs and insects. This process involves collecting the items from local rummage sales and resale shops, and welding them into their new forms. These creations are then given a chemical patina and a coat of wax to protect them from the elements. Nolte thinks the most fun part is figuring out what the critters used to be.

Nolte received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design (MIAD), and has been sculpting since 1984. Today he is part owner of Vanguard Sculpture Services, www.vanguardsculptureservices.com, Milwaukee’s only fine art bronze foundry. There, he and his staff of practicing artists cast the work of other artists in various metals, woods, and other materials. These pieces can be found throughout Wisconsin, including Milwaukee’s Riverwalk. Come search for Nolte’s hidden creature inside of the Tropical Dome!

Visit the Domes’ Gift Shop (Gifts Under Glass) to experience Nolte’s work and, as always, the work of other local artists. Take their art home, while doing your part to support the Friends of the Domes.

Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle ... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl.

The anticipation nurtures our dreams.
~BARBARA WINKLER
Those who attended our Summer in Provence Wine Tasting in the Show Dome on Thursday, September 10th experienced a delightful evening. Guests entered the lobby to wonderful French music and a strolling mime. Inside the Show Dome, dozens of fresh and cheerful sunflowers enhanced the floral display adding to the charming ambiance.

The event itself was set entirely within the Show Dome’s Summer in Provence floral show. Guests were treated to a tasting of 10 delightful French wines – six red and four white. The wines were complemented by a variety of foods artistically and tastefully displayed by our sponsors for the event. The Oilerie Brookfield and Breadsmith teamed up to provide fresh breads and dipping oils. The Wisconsin Cheese Mart supplied a variety of cheeses to pair with the wines. To top off the evening, guests enjoyed a selection of French pastries prepared by Pastry Chef, Molly Sullivan; treats included honey almond croquettes with lavender icing, chocolate-dipped coconut macaroons, and Calvados apple tarts with vanilla sugar crumble.

On display outside the Gift Shop (Gifts Under Glass) was an exhibit of textiles and items furnished by the Alliance Française de Milwaukee. The evening was further enhanced by a fire-juggling act by Mime, “Gypsy Geoff” (Geoff Marsh), followed by our now famous light show in the Show Dome.

We would like to extend our appreciation to our Sponsors, Oilerie Brookfield, Breadsmith, The Wisconsin Cheese Mart, and Pastry Chef Molly Sullivan, for their generous participation in this event.

Milwaukee Domes Art Festival Now Online

By Steven Libbey

The first annual Milwaukee Domes Art Festival, featuring a juried art show, live music, live Plein Air painters, an art auction, food, drink and a variety of family friendly entertainment is coming to the Mitchell Park in August 2010. Sign up now to volunteer and be a part of this historic cultural event.

There is only one inaugural Milwaukee Domes Art Festival and this is it! Go to the Art Festival website at www.milwaukeeartsfestival.com to learn more. While you are there, please consider making a contribution to the Domes Art Festival. We need your support to get this event off the ground.

The Milwaukee Domes Art Festival is also an excellent sponsorship opportunity for Milwaukee area businesses. Make sure the corporate giving program at your place of employment is aware of this chance to be associated with one of the most important cultural events in Milwaukee.

There are big things planned for the Milwaukee Domes Art Festival. The more help we get, the bigger and better this event will be. The Milwaukee Domes Art Festival is an event you will be proud to be a part of. Get on board now to be able to say YOU helped bring this unprecedented event to life Milwaukee.

Milwaukeeans are famous for our support of the arts and artists. If you are, or know, an artist who would like to apply to be juried into the Milwaukee Domes Art Festival please apply on line or send them a link to the website, www.milwaukeeartsfestival.com.
Why is it often so quiet after a snowfall?
The muffling effect of a fresh snowfall adds to the “magic” of a wintertime walk. Dry, fluffy snow traps air and absorbs sound. The more it snows, the more air is trapped and the quieter it gets. After snow settles and becomes more packed together, it loses its ability to trap sound. So, hurry outside during the next fluffy snowfall and listen to the quiet.

Why does snow sometimes squeak when you walk on it?
Snow becomes squeaky when you walk on it when temperatures are below 14 degrees Fahrenheit. When you walk on snow above 14 F, your weight causes the snow to melt a little and slide silently under your boots. But, below 14 degrees Fahrenheit snow no longer melts. Instead, its ice crystals are crushed together, and they “squeak” as they collide. The next time you are out for a winter walk, try to guess the temperature based on what you hear.

What is a blizzard?
A blizzard is characterized by low temperatures (usually below 20 degrees Fahrenheit) and winds that are at least 35 miles per hour or greater. Blizzards also have plenty of falling and/or blowing snow that reduces visibility to 1/4 mile or less for at least three hours.

Why is snow white?
Snow is made of many crystals of frozen water – or ice. The crystals have many surfaces so light hitting them bounces all around them – and a large amount of light is reflected back at you – which is why snow looks white.

When the snow melts, becoming water again, light can pass straight through, without much reflection, and so the whiteness disappears.

A nice way to demonstrate this principle is to make some soap bubbles. An individual bubble – much like glass - is transparent. But make lots of small bubbles, put them together and they look white because the light hitting them is being bounced about between them (like the ice crystals in snow) making the bubbles look white.

Did You Know?
Winter is great for stargazing!

Cold winter nights might not seem like a very good time to explore the stars, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Cold, clear, winter air masses tend to be free from dust and haze that is more common in the summer, making it easier to see many more stars this time of year. Clearly visible in the southern sky on a winter night is Orion, the mighty hunter – one of the brightest groups of stars this time of year. Learn more about a blue star, a red star and how Orion got its name according to Greek Mythology!

These facts come from the book entitled, Nature Smart, A Family Guide to Nature, one of many wonderful books and educational materials available in our gift shop (Gifts Under Glass).
The curare plant (Chondrodendron tomentosum) grows as a large vine in the canopy of the South American rainforest. The curare plant produces alkaloids (called curarines) that are neurotoxins, probably as defense compounds. Curarines are paralytic agents that interfere with nerve transmissions to the muscles. The muscles do not get the signal to contract, and a limp or flaccid paralysis results (unlike the rigid type of paralysis in botulism or lockjaw). If the respiratory muscles are affected, the victim eventually suffocates, but remains conscious until then, just unable to move. As early as 1811, it was noted that the heart keeps beating in paralyzed victims, so curarines were studied in the 1940s for use in anesthesia to temporarily paralyze surgery patients. As long as breathing was maintained, they would recover with no ill effects. The curare vine in the Tropical Dome was originally a gift from Abbott Laboratories. They had collected curare plants in Peru for research. Today other medical compounds are used instead.

People native to the South American rainforest discovered that they could cook curare roots and stems into a sticky syrup to coat arrow tips and blowgun darts to aid in hunting. Paralysis of the prey made it easier to catch. Curare kills birds in about two minutes, but larger animals might take as long as 20 minutes. Luckily, the curare neurotoxin has to be in the bloodstream and is not absorbed in the stomach, so it was still safe to eat the meat of animals hunted in this way. The native people use the curare vine for many medical applications.

Curare vines may get as thick as four inches at the base. As shown in the image, the leaves are large and heart-shaped and produced alternately along the vine. The lower side of the leaf is covered with numerous tiny hairs that make them look white. The flowers are small and greenish-white. Some flowers are male and provide pollen; other flowers are female and produce seeds after pollination. The fruit are fleshy but very tiny. They are said to be edible, but bitter. Many poisonous plants taste bitter - a good warning for those who had to figure out which plants were safe to eat in olden days.

Photo credit: Peter S. Goltra for the National Tropical Botanical Garden. Used with Permission.

Sponsor a Train Car!

Do you work for, or know of, a company that would be interested in sponsoring their own corporate train car for the 2010 Westward Ho Train Show? Each train car is specifically designed to display the company logo, or any graphics provided, to market the business. The train cars run on the tracks throughout the three-month show daily so these “ad” cars potentially reach almost 90,000 visitors. The cost is $500 per car and the proceeds will go to fund a permanent pathway in the Show Dome itself. The cars are a fun way to advertise a business and add to the great collectible cars that run on all three tracks. Join Usinger’s Sausage, George Webb Restaurants, Time Warner Cable and Leon’s Custard in our corporate lineup and get great exposure at nominal cost! Contact Sandy Folaron, Domes Director at 414-649-9830 for more information.

Milwaukee County Park System Wins National Gold Medal

Milwaukee County Parks System recently received a National Gold Medal for Excellence. Every state in the country submitted entries, with Milwaukee taking the top prize for excellence in park and recreation management. Sue Black, Parks Director, accepted the award at a conference in Salt Lake City.

Read more about this award in an article by Steve Schultz in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published on October 15 at www.jsonline.com.
Membership Application

Name _____________________________________________________
Address ___________________________________________________
City ______________________________________________________
Phone _____________________________ Date _____________________

☑ $20 Student ☑ $25 Student & One Guest
☑ $30 Individual ☑ $40 Individual & 3 Guests
☑ $40 Family ☑ $100 Contributing

Make your check payable and mail to:
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

2009/2010 Calendar of Events

December 31 ......................................New Years Eve Family Celebration (FOD*)
January 3 ........................................A Children’s Holiday Floral Show CLOSES
January 16 – March 14 .......................... “Westward Ho” Annual Train Show
February 6 ..............................................Chinese New Year Celebration
January 29 ...........................................Restaurants Under Glass (FOD*)
February 14 ...........................................Valentines Evening (FOD*)
February 20 ..............................................Turkish Festival
March 14 ...................................................St. Pat’s Family Day Celebration
March 20 ...................................................Dare to be Aware Holistic Health Fair
March 27 ...................................................Green Living Festival
March 27 – June 5 ................................... “Jung at Heart” Spring Show
June 19 – September 12 ............................... “Riverboat Tales Summer Show”
September 18 & 19 ..................................Orchid Show
September 25 – November 7 ............... “American Ghost Stories Fall Mum Show”
October 8 ..................................................Rainforest Night
October 16 & 17 .......................................Ikebana Show (Japanese Floral Arranging)
November 20 - January 7, 2011 ............... “Frosty Fable Holiday Show”

Music Under Glass Concert Series - Enjoy live music and concessions!
January – March 2010, Tuesday & Thursday evenings, 6:30-8:30 p.m.,
Show Dome Stage. Call or see website for details.

*Friends of the Domes

DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Friends of the Domes
524 S. Layton Blvd.
Milwaukee, WI 53215