Holly, Jolly Holidays Show!

“Santas” from around the world have come together at the Holly, Jolly Holidays Show. Meanwhile, elves are busy making toys in the workshop for all good girls and boys. Thousands of poinsettias fill the Show Dome with vibrant holiday colors. This amazing show runs through January 1. Bring your family and friends. Don’t miss it!

Gift Shop Art Fair

Sunday, December 4

The Domes Gift Shop will be holding an Art Fair on Sunday, December 4. The show will feature over 15 local artists. You are invited to come and explore the pottery, ceramics, photography, jewelry and many other items, visit one-on-one with the artists, and have your books signed! Local chocolate and coffee will be available for sale. This is the perfect opportunity to shop for the holidays while enjoying the Holly, Jolly Holidays Show. The fair will be held in the lobby of the Domes from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Regular Domes admission applies. For more information, visit www.milwaukeedomes.org.

New Year’s Eve Under Glass
A Family Celebration

Saturday, December 31, 6:00 – 10:00 pm

Join us at the Domes for one of the only indoor family New Year’s Eve events in the area. Enjoy roaming children’s entertainers, crafts, face painting, balloons, “Pocket Lady” and much more. Food and beverages will be available for purchase. Tickets available at the door for $12 for adults and $5 for children. Children, ages five and under, are free. (This fundraising fee applies to all attendees, including FOD members.) To order discount tickets in advance for just $10 for adults, go online to www.milwaukeedomes.org.

No strollers, please.

2012 Floral Shows

Fantasy Garden Train Show
January 14 – March 18

Tulip Mania (Spring Show)
March 31 – May 28 (Memorial Day)

Summer Winds (Summer Show)
June 9 – September 9

Don Quixote (Fall Mum) Show
September 22 – November 4

Let it Snow! (Holiday) Show
November 17 – January 6, 2013

www.milwaukeedomes.org

Image Courtesy of Bridget O’Donnell
From the Friends of the Domes

By Phil Rozga, Acting President

What do the Domes mean to you? The Mitchell Park Domes continue the traditions that were started years ago at the Mitchell Park Conservatory. I remember faithfully attending the Christmas and Easter Shows with my grandmother. Our children remember Domes holiday visits with great delight. These shows are still a must, and the Train Show has become a new tradition that my grandchildren would not miss. That is four generations of participation. I believe that anyone who comes to the Domes will leave with pleasant memories.

A number of people have expressed affection for the Domes by listing it as a beneficiary in their wills. I think this is remarkable since we have never specifically requested this type of donation. We, however, gratefully accept them. While monetary contributions are much appreciated, contributions of time and talent by the Domes Board and committee members are indications of the Domes’ importance to them.

I began thinking of the importance of the Domes after a friend recently told me that she had taken her elderly mother to see the flowers and plants in the Show Dome. Her mother was in the early stages of Alzheimer’s, and the visit brought back pleasant memories for both of them. I think that the Domes are a special “memory” place, and I believe that many others do, too.

Ask the Horticulturist

Mushrooms growing in our backyard tree fascinate my young son. Are they dangerous to him or the tree?

When mushrooms appear in a hollow hole of a tree, they are living on the rotting wood in the hole. Most trees adapt after naturally losing their lower branches or when branches are pruned off. Over time, the wood left in the branch stub may decay by fungi that only eat dead organic matter, but do not harm the rest of the tree. I don’t think you have anything to worry about with regard to your tree. It has been a wet year. When it rains, the fungus (which is composed of living white filaments called hyphae) produces mushrooms to send spores out into the world to start growing in other places. A fungus on a dead part of a tree is just living on the dead organic matter. If mushrooms or other “fruiting bodies” are growing from the main trunk or a dying branch, then it’s likely to be a wood decay fungus that will kill the tree. And sometimes mushrooms will sprout up at the base of a tree after a rain. These are likely to be mycorrhizal fungi that grow around the tree roots and benefit the tree. If you remain concerned about the health of your tree, you could contact a tree doctor.

Mushrooms are endlessly fascinating to look at – and all have the same purpose – to send spores out into the world to new homes. In all cases, wild mushrooms should never ever be eaten. The “cure” for some mushroom poisoning is a liver transplant.

(Answered by Dr. Gail Schumann, Friends of the Domes member and Adjunct Professor of Biological Sciences at Marquette University.)

Photo by Bridget O’Donnell
We’re kicking off our busy season with the Music Under Glass concert series on Thursdays this winter through March 22. Check out the calendar of performers and bring your family and friends to enjoy live music and good food, not to mention our popular LED Light Shows that bring everyone to their feet!

From here on out, it’s traditionally a hectic time for the Domes. Holidays, ethnic festivals, the Train Show and some amazing wintertime Friends of the Domes fund-raisers are all set to go. We’d love to have your help and support by donating some volunteer time to these endeavors. Over the next three months the Friends raise most of their funding that is used to continue all the good work and improvements that you have seen over the last five years. Be part of that effort and donate a couple of hours to the cause. We’d love to have you on the team!

We are looking ahead to a bright new year of opportunities: the connection to the Hank Aaron Trail running through the Menomonee River Valley right to our back door; the use of our new permeable paver pond and fountain areas for our guests; a new digital signboard that will help us promote our events and connect to the thousands of people who drive by our facility weekly; and with a little luck, the ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the construction of our new Greenhouse facility behind the Domes in Mitchell Park (an addition that has been long in the planning). All these amazing projects keep the Domes front and center as an important Milwaukee destination.

Join us, join the Friends of the Domes organization, get involved and share in the successes we have all seen this year. Next year can only get better! Happy Holidays!

Engraved Pavers a Great Gift!

Purchase a paver to honor a loved one or celebrate a special event. A wonderful, lasting gift for the upcoming holidays!

Your donation of $125 for an 8” x 4” paver includes 3 lines, 13 characters per line.

Go to milwaukeedomes.org for an order form.

Donation is tax deductible.

Garden Wisdom

“Nature gives to every time and season some beauties of its own.”
– CHARLES DICKENS
**What Do You Think?**

*By Paula Zamiatowski, Interpretive Educator*

Greetings! I need your help to serve you better. I would appreciate hearing from you on several topics. First, I coordinate *Rainforest Night* and *Green Living Festival*. If you attended these events, please let me know about your experience. Second, I have four two-hour Saturday workshops a year in the Education Center. The topics we have covered are Beekeeping, Biodiesel 101, Buying Local, Composting at Home, Fair Trade Products, Green Roof 101, Healthy Home Products, Healthy Personal Care Products, Rain Barrels and Gardens, Saving Money Living Green, Soap Making, Plant a Harry Potter Garden, Tree Care, Vermiculture, Victory Gardens and Wine Making. What new workshop topics would interest you? Third, there are quick response (QR) signs in the Show Dome and Tropical Dome that give additional information on each featured plant. QR codes are those funky digital squares with squiggles inside that you need a smartphone to access. If you have used your smartphone at the Domes, what did you think of this new use of technology? All feedback is welcome! The easiest way to reach me is through email, paula.zamiatowski@milwcnty.com or call, 414-257-5603.

**Upcoming Event**

Our 5th Annual *Green Living Festival* is Saturday, April 7, 2012, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Stay tuned to the Friends of the Domes and Milwaukee County Parks websites for more information! Remember, FOD members get in free!

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**Half Price Gift Memberships!**

As a member of the Friends of the Domes, you can buy a gift membership (at your membership level or lower) for a new member at half price! Family, friends, co-workers, employees and neighbors will love all the wonderful sights, sounds, shows and events! Go to milwaukeedomes.org for details.

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**Valentine’s Day**

Our popular Friends of the Domes Valentine’s Day event will be held on Tuesday, February 14. Join us for this heart-warming, mid-winter celebration. Spend a special evening with someone you love! Enjoy sweet things to eat and wonderful music, all in a romantic atmosphere. Check our website www.milwaukeedomes.org for more details as the date approaches.

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**Gifts Under Glass**

**What’s New in the Gift Shop?**

*By Sarah Philipp and James Steeno*

James Steeno, a native of Wisconsin, is an independent artist/illustrator in Milwaukee. Born and raised in Green Bay, he began art classes at a young age. With an emphasis in graphic design and illustration from the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, he graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in 1995. While at the University, he studied illustration under Li Hu and graphic design under Mee Wha Lee, and was the editorial cartoonist for the *Advanced Titan* newspaper. An award-winning illustrator, his work has been featured in the *Wisconsin Review*. James has participated in art shows and plein air painting competitions around the state and hosts his own annual gallery event with other Wisconsin artists. Currently, working as a freelance artist/illustrator, he resides in the Washington Heights neighborhood with his wife and daughter.

Visit the Domes’ Gift Shop to experience James’ paintings and illustrations, as well as the works of many local artists. Take their art home, while doing your part to support the Friends of the Domes. We have amazing gifts for everyone on your holiday list!
Mark your calendars! When it is cold and dark in January, the Domes will be warm and beautiful with colored lights and delicious food from a variety of Milwaukee’s best restaurants. Also enjoy the very popular train show. This year’s theme is “Fantasy Garden.” The new pavers complete a comfortable walking surface around the entire Show Dome.

Join us Friday, January 27, from 6:30-9:30 p.m. Admission is $15 for adults, $5 per child (This fundraising fee applies to all attendees, including FOD members). Food tickets are $1. Raffle tickets are $1. Each restaurant donates a gift certificate for the raffle. Restaurants, menus, and gift certificates will be listed on the website soon!

Save money and get into the event more quickly when you buy your tickets in advance at the Gift Shop or online at www.milwaukeedomes.org!

No early entry allowed while the restaurants are setting up. No strollers, please.
**Did You Know?**

**Chipmunks Hibernate in Winter.**

Chipmunks do hibernate, but they do not store fat for the winter. Instead, they slowly feed on insects, nuts, berries, seeds, fruit and grain. During warmer months, they stuff food into their cheek pouches and carry it back to a nest, storing it for the long winter.

Chipmunks generally gather food from the ground around underbrush, rocks and logs, where they can hide from predators like hawks, foxes, coyotes, weasels and snakes. Their shrill, birdlike chirp is usually heard, repeated again and again, upon sensing a threat.

Chipmunks are mammals with an average life span of two to three years. They weigh one to five ounces, and are about four to seven inches long, with tails three to five inches long. Chipmunks can be gray to reddish-brown with contrasting stripes on the sides of their face and across the back and tail.

Chipmunks are small members of the squirrel family. Of the 25 species of chipmunks, all but one is found in North America. From Canada to Mexico, they are generally seen scampering through the undergrowth of a variety of environments from alpine forests to shrubby deserts. Some dig a burrow to live in while others make their homes in nests, bushes, or logs.

Source: National Geographic

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**Winter Treats for Birds!**

Birds can be seen in backyards all winter. They eat lots of berries, and their feathers and fat reserves keep them warm, as long as they find food. During snowstorms, they often “lay low” to conserve energy until they can resume their search for food. Birds don’t need us to provide food during the winter, but do enjoy it!

A heated birdbath is also a good idea, since other water sources can be frozen. Winter bathing is safe, with no risk of freezing. The feathers of a healthy bird shed most of the water, preventing it from leaking through to the insulating down and skin below. Most obvious in ducks that paddle around in freezing water, this is also true of land birds that shake and shed water from their feathers.

**Pine Cone Feeder**

You need wax paper, pine cones, string, scissors, peanut butter and bird seed. Measure and cut the string to hang from the branch of a tree or bush. Tie it to the top of the pine cone. Spread peanut butter around the pine cone, filling all the open spaces. Spread bird seed on the wax paper. Roll the pine cone in the seeds, which will stick to the peanut butter. Tie your pinecone to a tree branch.

**Dried Fruit Garland**

You need dried fruit (cranberries, apricots, raisins, prunes, etc.) thread or dental floss, and a large tapestry needle. The fruit is soft, so the needle passes easily through. Multiple short lengths of garland are easiest to handle. Leave enough thread on either side of your garland, so you can tie it to the branches.

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Watch and enjoy the birds that visit your backyard for treats this winter!
Spanish moss (Tillandsia usneoides) is actually a flowering plant in the bromeliad family, which includes the pineapple. The long, hairlike greenish-gray growths (up to 25 feet long) that hang from tree branches are familiar to anyone who has visited the southeastern United States. The plant can be found throughout the Western Hemisphere wherever the climate is warm and humid. It has been introduced to other areas such as Hawaii and Australia.

Spanish moss is an epiphyte, so it grows on other plants, typically bald cypress, oaks, and many other trees. It does not grow on telephone lines, fences, or other nonliving structures. Although the growths can become heavy over time, they take nothing from the trees and do not harm them. The plant is not a parasite. As a flowering plant, Spanish moss produces its own food from sunlight. It absorbs minerals that leach from tree leaves or from accumulations of organic matter that wash out of the atmosphere or collect on tree branches. The plant has no roots, so water is absorbed directly through the leaves.

The slender leaves are covered with many scales that give it a bluish-gray look. The scales help prevent water loss. Spanish moss produces tiny flowers that are rarely noticed. Eventually small seeds are produced. New plants also can grow from pieces of the plant that are torn off in storms or by birds making nests. The scientific name, Tillandsia usneoides, was made up by Linnaeus, the Swedish biologist who gave us our modern system of naming species. Tilland was an earlier Swedish scientist, and “usneoides” means “looks like a moss.” Over the years, people have used dried Spanish moss for stuffing and padding. It also is very useful as mulch. Today, it is sold in craft stores or is used by florists to cover the surface of potting material.

Spanish moss is home to many insects, birds, bats, and small mammals in tropical and subtropical environments. See how many clumps of Spanish moss you can find in the Tropical Dome.

Photo credit: U.S. Geological Survey/photo by Tracy Enright
2011 –2012 Calendar of Events

Through March ........................................................Music Under Glass Concert Series**
Through January 1, 2012 ........................................Holly, Jolly Holidays (Holiday Show)
December 4 ........................................................................Gifts Under Glass Art Fair
December 31 ......................................................................New Year’s Eve Family Celebration*
January 14 – March 18, 2012 .............................................Fantasy Garden Train Show
January 14 ................................................................................Poland Under Glass
January 21 ...........................................................................Chinese New Year’s Celebration
January 27 ...............................................................................Restaurants Under Glass*
February 11 .........................................................................Turkey Under Glass
February 14 .............................................................................Valentines Event*
February 25-26 ..........................................................Collectible All-Scale Train Exhibit
March 3 ....................................................................................Germany Under Glass
March 11 ..............................................................................Irish Family Day
March 24 ................................................................................Dare to be Aware Fair
April 7 .....................................................................................Green Living Festival

* Sponsored by the “Friends of the Domes.” Special admission rates apply.
** New Extended Hours! Thursday Evenings from 6:30 – 9 p.m.

DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE Visit our website www.milwaukedomes.org for more information and events scheduled after publication of this newsletter.