Show Dome and Gift Shop Open

The Show Dome and the Domes Gift Shop both re-opened on April 29! They re-opened at 11:00 AM, and by 10:30 there was already a waiting crowd of people excited to visit. The re-opening also made the front page of the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel.

Garden Impressions Show

The Show Dome re-opened with the Garden Impressions show, featuring both art and floral displays inspired by Impressionism. Usually, the Show Dome closes for 1–2 weeks during a show change, but this June, the Show Dome will not close for the show change. We will transition right into our summer show on June 10.

The Show Dome, gift shop, and main lobby will now be open for normal business hours [Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM; Saturday, Sunday, major holidays, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM].

Brief Scheduled Maintenance Closure: The Domes will be closed September 11 through 15th for scheduled electrical maintenance.

Torii Gate Festival—A Celebration of Japanese Culture

Roger Krawiecki
President, Friends of the Domes

Come celebrate Japanese culture with us at the Torii Gate Festival on Saturday, June 25 and Sunday, June 26, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Named for the traditional Japanese gate that marks the entrance to a shrine or garden, the Torii Gate Festival will use a classic red wooden torii gate as the transition to the display area for ikebana floral arrangements.

Traditionally, sacred objects are placed in the innermost chamber of a shrine. At the festival, the gate will lead to ikebana arrangements that are steeped in the philosophy of developing a closeness between nature and humanity.

Milwaukee County Parks, will exhibit more than 30 floral arrangements with the distinctive qualities of asymmetrical form and empty space as key components. Chapter members will also strive to create harmony between the floral displays and traditional Japanese culture.

Torii Gate, Continued on page 2

Milwaukee Chapter 22 of Ikebana International, in partnership with the Domes’ horticulturist preparing plants in the Show Dome for the Garden Impressions show.

All three domes should be open by early to mid-September.

Until all three Domes are re-opened, general admission will be reduced to $3. Friends of the Domes’ members and children 5 and under are FREE as usual.
Please Renew Your Membership Early!

A warm welcome back to all of our loyal FOD Members! Thank you so much for your support during the Domes closure. During this time, we experienced a significant interruption in revenue and kindly ask everyone to PLEASE renew your membership EARLY to replenish funds as we continue our mission to support the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory.

Three easy ways to renew TODAY: Go to www.milwaukeedomes.org OR call (414) 257-5608 OR renew in person at the Friends of the Domes Gift Shop.

Friends’ Staff Partner with Community for Creative FUNdraisers

By Sally Sullivan
FOD Business Manager

With the closure of the Domes this spring, our fundraising efforts have had to take on new and creative twists. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the popular Very Fairy Princess Day and Hearts Under Glass, along with many events sponsored by the County.

Without the use of the facility, we kept busy with outside events such as the Craft Beer Fundraiser for the Domes at The Sugar Maple in Bay View. Owner Adrienne Pierluissi hosted this event and was pivotal in raising over $14,000 in one afternoon for the Domes.

Many of our members and friends attended. The community and several beer vendors stepped up with amazing auction and raffle items which generated bidding wars! We were heart-warmed by the enthusiastic dedication from the community to invest in the future of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory.

Another great event took place at Blu Cocktail Lounge in the Pfister Hotel. On May 12, a fun crowd turned out for Blutender to test the bartending skills of Parks Director, John Dargle; Domes Director Sandy Folaron; FOD Event MC Michael Johnston; and FOD Gift Shop Associate Jerry Skalmusky. Thanks to their good humor and the generosity of all who attended, we raised over $1,000 while enjoying a two-hour cocktail party.

In addition, donations have very generously poured in through our GoFundMe site and the Friends’ website. We are anxious to regain momentum with memberships, both new and renewals, to make up for three lost months. We are doing all we can to ensure a future for a horticultural conservatory in Milwaukee, and we thank you for your continued support.

Torii Gate, from page 1

materials, the arrangement’s container, and the setting. The chapter’s motto is “Friendship through flowers.” Visitors will also be invited to watch demonstrations of other Japanese arts. Kids of all ages will enjoy origami demonstrations and hands-on folding activities, creating a variety of objects from single sheets of paper. Event goers will also see demonstrations of furoshiki wrapping cloths—the traditional Japanese answer to wrapping and carrying objects sustainably.

When: Saturday, June 25, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Sunday, June 26, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Cost: $3 admission for non-members; Friends’ of the Domes Members free

www.milwaukeedomes.org
Celebrating a Shared History

To continue our celebration of the Domes’ 50th year, we will be featuring stories of members’ special memories at the Domes. Send your stories and pictures to us at friendsofthedomes@gmail.com or mail them to: Friends of the Domes, Att: Sally Sullivan, 524 S. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee, WI 53215

This issue’s “Celebrating A Shared History” comes to us from Denise Radaj...

Denise and her husband Bill were married August 31, 1985 and had their wedding photos taken at the Mitchell Park Domes.

“Bill and I dated for 10 years before we got married. We went to the Domes regularly because, as Milwaukee residents, we got in for free! “As flower lovers we wanted to have our wedding photos taken at the Mitchell Park Domes. As luck would have it, the Japanese exhibit was running during that time—perfect as I was a big fan of Asian culture, even back then! It was a beautiful setting for our photos.”

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From the Director’s Chair Crane

By Sandy Foloran
Director, Mitchell Park Domes

Well, it goes without saying that the past few months have been full of challenges and changes for the Conservatory! As most of you know, the Domes were closed to the public on February 6th in order for the County to further inspect the structure and develop a plan of action to secure concrete areas where spalling had occurred resulting in some distressed areas. That remediation plan included further inspections and the installation of a stainless steel netting over the interior surfaces. It will catch anything that might fall and ensure the safety of our visitors. The stainless steel mesh blends in so well with the frame, it visually almost disappears! The Show Dome was the first phase of that installation and has already reopened. The other two domes will soon follow with the hope that we will be fully accessible again by early to mid-September. With that and the Garden Impressions spring show open, we finally feel that we are back and on a solid pathway to the next step.....

The next step? Public dialogue, community engagement and a working plan to secure the future of the Conservatory to start! A steering committee has been put in place under the guidance of a consultant to look at all options for the facility’s future. This committee reflects a variety of different interests in what the Domes does and could provide—education, tourism, neighborhood services, preservation, business development, history, and philanthropy. The Friends of the Domes also has an important voice on this committee and in discussions moving forward.

Regarding plans for the future, all options are on the table: restoration, repair, full replacement, or a combination of these. Research on costs, feasibility of plans, and public input will be key to the final decision on the future of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory. We will keep you informed and updated and encourage you to come to public sessions and share your thoughts and vision for the next generation of use!

The staff, along with myself, heartily thank you for your patience and support. We feel gifted to work here and provide the services we do to all those who visit, volunteer and encourage us. Have a great summer and see you at the Domes!

Save the Date: October 1, 2016
Mystery Chef’s Dinner

Join us for a very special dinner at one of the area’s finest restaurants. This new fundraiser for the Domes will feature a cocktail and appetizer hour along with a silent auction at the Domes before you are sent off to one of the participating restaurants.

More details to come… Check the FOD website and the Fall Newsletter.

When: October 1, starting at 6:00 PM
Cost: $125 per person, includes a drink and appetizers at the Domes and covers the gratuity for the restaurant. The restaurants have graciously donated the meal and table wine.
Friends of the Domes Volunteer Orientation Sessions

For ALL Volunteer Opportunities—Required General Orientation

We are very busy and always looking for volunteers to assist with events, fundraising, greeting, and other activities. In addition to supporting the Friends, volunteers have the opportunity to learn more about the Domes and meet great people. Any current volunteers who have never attended a Friends Volunteer training session are required to attend as well. The training will end with an exclusive Greenhouse Complex Tour!

Length: One 2 hour session (includes refreshments)
Date: Tuesday, June 28, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Registration is required. Please contact Darlene Winter at domesvolunteer@gmail.com to register.
Co-facilitators: Liz Fehring, Paula Zamiatowski, and Darlene Winter

Music Under Glass Ends for the Season

Despite the challenges associated with the Domes closure and relocating the popular Music Under Glass winter concerts to the Annex, 2,500 people still found their way in for this season’s concert series! The Annex offered excellent seating arrangements and acoustics for the players, not to mention a wonderful sky view of the stars and the moon through the greenhouse glass ceiling and walls. The row seating provided ample room for all those who wanted to sit. It was a great way to test this unique space for other special events and nighttime venues.

The musical variety—from funk to country to polka—offered something for everyone. The season ended with an Elvis Hawaii show. Some of the audience even got into the act and got on stage to learn the Hula.

During intermission, Gift of Wings’ staff delighted attendees with a remote controlled Friends of the Domes’ airship

A big thank you to the Friends of the Domes for being one of the event sponsors and to the staff and volunteers who were there every Thursday night to answer questions and assist attendees.

We look forward to another MUG season next winter!

Summer Show: Summer on Olympus

In honor of this summer’s Olympic Games, the summer show in the Show Dome will feature a Greek theme with artwork, statues, and plants bringing visitors straight to Athens! As mentioned in our cover article, the Show Dome will not close between the spring and summer shows.

Parks’ Artist Burt Gross creating a mural for the show

Winter Farmers Market Wraps-up Fantastic 22-Week Season

By Sandy Falaran, Mitchell Park Domes Director

The 7th season of the Milwaukee County Winter Farmers Market wrapped up on Saturday April 9th to a large and lively crowd. The third season at the Domes, and first full season in the Greenhouse Annex, had over 36,000 visitors in the 22-week season. We worked with over 60 vendors throughout the season, with about 45 vendors selling their delicious and local foods each week. It was the Fondy Food Center’s first season as the managing organization, and we are very pleased with how that merger went, offering staffing and resources to help the market find more pathways to success.
From the President

By Roger Krawiecki
President, Friends of the Domes

Thank you to all of the members who provided continued support during the Domes closure. Your support is more important now than ever. We extended all membership renewal dates by 4 months. We have also reissued all membership cards. Because of the closure, we have gone three months without membership income to cover our day to day operational costs. We are counting on our members to renew!

The Domes have gotten a great deal of news media attention recently. Please do not believe everything that you read, hear, or see. Seeing the news use only bits and pieces of much larger discussions has been very eye-opening. The general public is not getting the whole picture. It is our goal to help educate Friends’ members and the public so the right decisions are eventually made regarding the future of the Domes.

The Domes are not falling down. They were closed as a safety precaution. A plan was already in the works to install safety netting. The term “netting” has also caused confusion. “Screening” is a better term for what has been installed. It is barely noticeable. The glass has metal screening in it. This is very similar. It wraps the entire inside structure. This solution to the safety issue will allow the Domes to remain open until a long term decision can be made.

Discussions about a long term decision are already underway. The Friends of the Domes participates on the advisory committee. The County Executive and the County Board have discussed having just one committee. A consulting firm has been retained to get public feedback. The first session was held at the Domes on Saturday April 30th. I was unable to attend, but the feedback I received was that it was very informative and the public shared opinions. There is still a great deal of emotion around the structure itself. It is difficult for me to believe that people come to the Domes for the structure. I feel the real reason they come is to escape. People want to escape to the tropics or the desert or an ever changing garden. More focus needs to be placed on the plants and the experience that the Domes offers.

All options need to be reviewed and the math needs to be done. Do we extend the life of the Domes—if so, for how long? Do we rebuild from the ground up? Do we replace with something new that is energy efficient and costs half as much to heat on a yearly basis? The Domes are 50 years old. How efficient is a 50-year-old refrigerator? Does the public want more? Space is limited at the Domes. It would be great if we could offer up a larger plant collection. We will not know the future until all options have been reviewed.

Then we need to figure out who will provide funding. If a large donor came to us today and agreed to cover the entire expense, would we take it? We really need to figure out what direction to take and the best option available. Let’s say it is determined that it would cost $75 million to rebuild the 3 domes versus $50 million to build a larger energy efficient horticultural conservatory. Is it worth $25 million to retain the iconic structure and the higher yearly operating expenses? I do not have an answer. And I cannot tell you how long this will take. It did take 10 years from the closure of the original conservatory to the opening of the Domes. I really do not want to see that happening again.

Speaking of “the Domes”... When the new conservatory opened it was the “Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory”. The name focused on the structure being a place to conserve plants from around the world. Sometime in the 80s the nickname the “Domes” was more commonly used. We are trying to find out when that occurred. We know the original sign on 27th street was changed in the 80s. If anyone has information on the name change please share it with us. If you have pictures of the original sign please reach out to me. It would be very helpful.

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding the Friends or the Domes please reach out to me by phone at 414-384-0161 or email at rjkrawiecki@gmail.com.

Welcome Darlene Winter

The Friends of the Domes is excited to welcome Darlene Winter as our new Volunteer Coordinator! Darlene comes to the Domes with 12 years’ experience as a Docent at the Milwaukee County Zoo. She has written two books, “I Remember Samson” and “The History of the Milwaukee County Zoo.” She has a B.A. from Alverno College in Professional Communications. Darlene began volunteering for the different events at the Domes and loved the farmers’ market and the Music Under Glass. She appreciates that the Domes offer visitors a place to come in the winter to enjoy beautiful flowers and plants. When you see her around the Domes, be sure to introduce yourself and welcome her to the Domes family!

If you are a volunteer for the Friends of the Domes, you will now receive communications about volunteer opportunities from Darlene.

Welcome Darlene Winter
Animal Life in the Domes: Focus on the Coqui

By Paula Zamiatowski
Conservatory Educator

Mitchell Park Domes’ staff received many questions about the health and well-being of the animals in the Tropical Dome. We are happy to report that all birds, fish, frogs, insects, and toads are doing well!

Early in the morning our staff are greeted by the beautiful songs of the tropical finch and weaver. If it’s quiet, we might even find birds foraging on the paved pathway of the Tropical Dome and Koi swimming around the bridge hoping for an extra hand-out. Though we do not see or hear them during the daytime, there are also frogs calling out once the sun goes down.

More about the frogs in the Tropical Dome.

The Puerto Rican Coqui (pronounced ko-kee), scientific genus name *Eleutherodactylus coqui*, live everywhere within the Tropical Dome. The name means “free toes” because these loud frogs do not have webbed feet. Instead, all 153 Coquis species have special disks or toe pads that allow them to climb up vertical structures and cling to trees and leaves. Coquis thrive in the Tropical Dome because of their versatility to adapt to even tropical gardens and greenhouses. Most of them spend their nights in the tropical canopy and retreat to shelter on the ground at dawn, under rocks and logs. Choruses of male coquis can be heard from dusk until dawn all over the dome, especially in April through October.

Victory Gardens

By Paula Zamiatowski
Conservatory Educator

Victory Garden Food Leader, Hallie Tagliavia; Paula Zamiatowski; and teaching volunteers are working with local children and their families to grow food in two Domes’ Victory Gardens.

The Friends of the Domes supplied two beds of soil next to the multicolored bench near the circular driveway. Each Wednesday afternoon, from June through harvest time, Hallie and crew will work with 12-24 children tending to the gardens. During the program, children will take plants home to learn to care for them. The group planted seedlings on June 1st and look forward to weeding, making signs, sampling fresh vegetables and herbs, and taking pride in their gardens.
The Colors of Summer

By Marian French
Horticulturist—Desert Dome

Before visitors even enter the Domes, their journey into the world of botanical beauty begins with the perennial gardens bordering the front entrance. These plantings have a graceful flow, where flowering plants intermix with drifts of grasses and sedges to create a tapestry of colors and textures—a style made popular by Roy Diblik. The renowned plantsman designed the Domes plaza beds to be hardy, low-maintenance, and visually appealing in every season.

Most of the year, the beds are so full of plant life that the ground beneath can scarcely be seen. Combined with the composted leaf mulch that is used every year, the thick planting shades out many opportunistic weeds. The wide variety of perennials and bulbs used in the design ensure that there is year-round interest, from early spring with purple glory-of-the-snow (Chionodoxa) all the way into winter with many different seed heads and grasses, and plenty of blooms in between. The season-long presence of flowers in these beds is also helpful to pollinators that live in our area, including native bees and butterflies.

Mid-summer in the plaza beds is particularly colorful, full of drifts of pink and purple. One of the stars of the show is a type of salvia called ‘East Friesland.’ Starting in June, it has spikes of rich purple for several weeks, and after which the remaining flower stalk is also purple. Much of the pink color comes from ‘Summer Beauty’ ornamental onion, which not only flowers most of the summer but holds onto its orbs of seed well into winter, looking like little magic wands poking out of the ground. And these seeds are sterile, so it won’t spread out of control in the garden.

If you walk through the front plaza and see a plant that intrigues you, don’t hesitate to ask the helpful staff members at the fee booth to look it up. They have a full list of all the species and cultivars in the design. Maybe these plantings will inspire a few new projects in your backyard once you get home.

Get Some Fresh Air—and help Mitchell Park!

By Paula Zamiatowski
Conservatory Educator

Litter Patrol Walk: Join Paula and volunteers in front of the Domes’ entrance at 9:00 AM the first and third Mondays of June and August to clean up Mitchell Park (as well as the area around the Domes and greenhouses).

Mitchell Tree Walk: Join Paula and volunteers to photograph, measure, and catalog select trees in Mitchell Park. We will meet in front of the Domes’ entrance the first and third Tuesdays of June and August from 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM.

Join the Litter Patrol the First and Third Mondays of June and August
Upcoming Events

June 25-26 ........................................ Torii Gate Festival
September 17-18 .............................. Orchid Show and Sale
October 1 ............................................ Mystery Chef’s Table*
October 15 ............................................ Cupcake Fest MKE
October 28 ............................................ Ghosts Under Glass*
November 27 ..................................... Buy Local Holiday Gift Fair

*Sponsored by Friends of the Domes; special admission rates apply