



THE CONSERVATORY NEWS

Fall - Winter 2009

A WARM EMBRACE FOR A CHILLY TIME

I first started volunteering with the Friends on a regular basis right after the Gift Shop and Resource Center opened. It was a nice break from my regular job and a way for me to give back in a small way. I had discovered the Conservatory, twenty years before, when I was in college. At the time, I shared a one bedroom apartment with a roommate two blocks west of Broadway. My father became ill and died while I was a junior and the Conservatory became a refuge for me, a quiet, warm place that smelled marvelous and was beautiful too.

In the gift shop I began to hear similar stories from other visitors. The couple who stopped in after

his chemotherapy treatments, the young woman homesick for a tropic homeland, a neighbor taking a break from a hectic day, all found solace amidst the foliage. And I realized that the Conservatory didn't just shelter a collection of plants, but it also shelters our souls.

Times are tough and the weather is gloomy. Need a boost? Come on in. The city budget is stretched but the gardeners are rising to the challenge. If you can, tuck a few dollars into the bin at the door, or send us a check, we'll make sure to make the most of it!

Cathy Wiese - *President*

FOC BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2009

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- CONSERVATORY GARDEN STAFF:
- David Helgeson - Senior Gardener
- Giselle Blythe
- Nile Kurashige
- Kristen Spexarth
- Jeanne Schollmeyer - Production House Senior Gardener



PHOTO: Ann McBurney

MEMBER BENEFIT:
 NEW AND CURRENT FOC MEMBERS CAN ENJOY 20% OFF IN THE GIFT SHOP FOR THE ENTIRE MONTH OF DECEMBER!
 SHOP LOCAL – SHOP GREEN
 SUPPORT THE CONSERVATORY!

IN AND AROUND THE CONSERVATORY

INTRODUCING KRISTEN SPEXARTH!

Kristen Spexarth is the newest member of the Conservatory's team of Gardeners. Her gardening career spans almost twenty-five years. She has experience in a number of horticultural endeavors including: organic farming; residential garden design and installation; collections work at two botanical gardens (UC Berkeley's Blake Garden and Washington Park Arboretum); large scale maintenance and installation as a campus gardener at UW and most recently with the Seattle Parks Department. In the five years she's been with the City, she's had a chance to diversify her skills in three specialty gardens, Freeway Park, Japanese Garden and now the Conservatory.

For nine years Kristen volunteered as a King County Master Gardener and then in 2004, shifted to Hospice work. After witnessing life in Freeway Park in 2005 she started helping weekly in a downtown soup kitchen and has been involved in trauma survivor/grief outreach in our community since 2002. To learn more about this aspect of her work check the link: www.passingreflections.com.

It is a privilege and a pleasure to have Kristen on the Conservatory crew; she is dedicated, knowledgeable and hard working. *Welcome Kristen!*



URBAN SAFARI TO LATIN AMERICA:

In October the Conservatory staff was able to borrow Gretchen Graber, a naturalist at the Environmental Learning Center at Camp Long, to run a trial Urban Safari Program for Seattle Public Schools. The FOC funded the Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) certification for the curriculum. Previously we tested the program with community center summer camp kids.

Six of our docents, Shaw Fitzgerald, Lorna Guthrie, Bob Jenkins, Mary Lamb, Mary Whitmore and Karyl Winn were trained by Gretchen, Gardener Giselle Blythe and Senior Gardener David Helgeson.

Gretchen contacted and arranged for 3rd grade classes from John Rogers Elementary and Thurgood Marshall Elementary to come and experience the program.

We all had a good time presenting this fun "safari" to over 70 kids plus their teachers and several parent chaperones. Each class was divided into three small groups. Each group

went with a docent leader on safari to visit three stations in the Conservatory. In the Fern House, they learned about epiphyte adaptation, and how plants provide food, shelter and more to people and animals. In the Bromeliad House they found the Vanilla orchid and a table full of all kinds of seed pods. They talked more about edible plants, epiphytes and how different plants disperse their seeds. Then a short hike to the lower greenhouse where we had several microscopes set up on low tables. There they looked at vanilla seeds and tillandsia trichomes.

At each station the students had time to make sketches and answer questions in their Safari Journals that we provided.

Because a school bus costs \$200 or more to take kids on a field trip like this, many classes are unable to come up with the funding. The Thurgood Marshall class took two Metro busses to get here, which was a very long and complicated journey. The FOC Education Committee has started a campaign to raise some funds to provide busses to schools.

Your generous donation will help another class of inner-city kids experience a tropical jungle and unseen worlds through a microscope! By: Giselle Blythe

A heartfelt thanks to Lyn Sauter & Giselle Blythe for their donation of a microscope for the Resource Center.



The Urban Safari Gang!



Vanilla Planifolia

DON'T LET THE KIDS HAVE ALL THE FUN! COME ALONG ON A REAL SAFARI TO PANAMA MARCH 23 TO APRIL 5, 2010. CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

WWW.VOLUNTEERPARKCONSERVATORY.ORG

AFTER HOURS



PHOTO: Kathy Admire

JOIN US FOR AN EVENING VISIT OF THE CONSERVATORY!

This is the only chance all year for you to enjoy an "after dark" visit to the Volunteer Park Conservatory!

December 4th from 5:00 to 8:00 pm.

Live music and refreshments

As a special benefit, new and current members of The Friends of the Conservatory will get a **25% discount** on any purchase made in the Gift Shop that night.

Please bring your family and friends to this special viewing of the Conservatory and plan to do your Holiday shopping too!

The Holidays are Quickly Approaching:

Give the Thoughtful Gift of an FOC Membership!

HOLIDAY HARP

LIVE HARP MUSIC SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER

Need a retreat and refuge from the busy holiday time? Two Sundays in December let the restful and contemplative sounds of harp music sweep you away.

Harpist Bill McJohn will be performing in the Seasonal House:

December 6th and 13th , 1 - 2 p.m.

NORTHWEST FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW: VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Friends of the Conservatory will once again have a booth at the NWF&G show

February 3-7, 2010 at the Convention Center in downtown Seattle. The show runs from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm, except for an earlier closing at 6:00 pm on Sunday. We are looking for volunteers to work in our booth greeting people and offering printed information about the Conservatory.

Pair up with a friend or FOC member and then take turns walking around the show.

A three-hour shift entitles you to free admission to the show that day. Call or e-mail the FOC office to sign up.

(206) 322-4112 or foc@volunteerparkconservatory.org

Join the Friends of the Conservatory!

Your membership in the Friends helps to support the Conservatory and its programs. Join us!

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

New Member

Renewal

\$40 Individual

\$25 Senior/Student

\$50 Supporting

\$100 Sustaining

\$500 Patron

\$1000 Conservator

Other \$ _____

Method of payment:

Check enclosed (payable to FOC) Visa MasterCard

Card # _____

Exp. date _____

Mail to: FOC, 1402 E. Galer St., Seattle, WA 98112



1402 E. Galer St.
Seattle, WA 98112
www.volunteerparkconservatory.org

Non-Profit Org.
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Permit No. 12720

CALENDAR

- Nov 7, 14, 21, 28 **Plant Talk: Ant Plants** Short talk in Conservatory 1 p.m.
- Dec 3 **First Thursday:** Docents available in Conservatory 11 am - 3 p.m.
- Dec 4 **Members Night!** Conservatory After Dark Event 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. **(page 3)**
- Dec 5 **First Saturday:** Docents available in Conservatory 11 am - 3 p.m.
- Dec 5, 12, 19, 26 **Plant Talk: Poinsettias** Short talk in Conservatory 1 p.m.
- Dec 6, 13 **Holiday Harp Music:** 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. In the Seasonal House **(page 3)**
- Feb 3-7, 2010 **Northwest Flower & Garden Show:** Volunteers Needed! **(page 3)**
- Mar 23 -Apr 5, 2010 **Panama Trip:** For more info - www.volunteerparkconservatory.org