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For immediate release

NOTE:

Media interviews for a behind-the-scenes look are available with the Boerner Botanical Gardens Director and a China Lights representative/translator. Please call ahead.

Moon Festival Weekend Brings Chinese Acrobats to China Lights at Boerner Botanical Gardens, Oct. 14-16

Milwaukee, WI (Oct. 12, 2016) — Acrobats from China will highlight the entertainment of Moon Festival Weekend, Oct. 14-16, at China Lights, a celebration of Asian culture, featuring 40 larger-than-life, brilliantly lit, sculptural lantern displays at Boerner Botanical Gardens.

China Lights: Boerner Brighter Than Ever brings together dramatic displays of color, light, and sound, with stage performances of folk-culture entertainment, Asian-inspired cuisine, and a bustling marketplace. The festival is open from 5:30-10 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday, through Oct. 30. Boerner Botanical Gardens is located in Whitnall Park at 9400 Boerner Drive, Hales Corners, WI.

“China Lights has been more popular than we could have dreamed!” said Shirley Walczak, Director of Boerner Botanical Gardens. “Last Saturday, our attendance was greater than that at any of the previous China Lights festivals in the United States! Rest assured, we’ve added more staff, more parking, and more food!”

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Lantern Displays

Beyond the Welcome Gate, visitors may find that each display is more magical than the last. During the month of September, 28 artisans from China were on-site creating welded metal frames, lighting the frames from within using various types and colors of LED lights, covering the framework in brilliantly colored fabric, and hand-painting finishing touches. Among the components emerging from the process are glowing flowers, peacocks, cranes, and pandas. Display sizes are as large as the impressive 200-foot-long dragon.

Illumination Parade

Each night at about 6:25 p.m. members of the entertainment staff will lead a procession through the zodiac display in the Shrub Mall of the Botanical Gardens. The public is invited to join the fun. The Illumination Parade will conclude at the main stage in time for the first performance of the night.

Moon Festival Weekend Entertainment & Cultural Demonstrations, Oct. 14-16

In China, the Moon Festival celebrates a time when the moon is at its fullest and brightest of the year. Families and friends gather to appreciate the beauty of the moon and to eat moon cakes, sweet pastries that symbolize family reunion. The tasty treats will be available for purchase at China Lights.

Stage performances at 6:30, 8, and 9 p.m. will highlight folk-culture. Known for exuding power, acrobats from China will perform, emphasizing controlled strength, skill, and the art of fluid movement. Additional performances will combine acrobatic skills with jar juggling and balancing, and juggling with bouncing balls. Chinese practitioners will demonstrate the martial art of Kung Fu, and Bian Lian, or face changing, will amaze the audience. Face changing, or mask changing, is the ancient Chinese art form from the Sichuan opera. Performers wear thin masks that change with the passing of a fan. Folk music and dance of various Asian cultures will be presented. Also in the entertainment lineup will be a demonstration of Chinese yo-yo and a Chinese fashion show featuring the Qipao, the classic, form-fitting silk dress.

Cultural displays and demonstrations will be centered in the Garden House. During Moon Festival Weekend, visitors will learn how to make paper lanterns and Hong Bao, or lucky-money envelopes, and will see a demonstration on watermelon lantern carving. Lantern workshops will be offered Friday and Saturday at 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 6 and 8 p.m. A presentation on tea, its history and tea cultures around the world, will be followed by a Gonfu Tea, or tea ceremony—with the opportunity for 10 audience members to participate. The presentation on tea and Gonfu Tea will be offered Friday and Saturday at 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. and Sunday at 7 p.m. Also in the Garden House will be three lantern replicas of the terra cotta warriors and poster displays about the making of China Lights, and continuous streaming video on China's history, culture, and tourism.

Food & Beverage

A varied menu is offered. Lighter fare includes Asian Cucumber Salad, Vegetable Egg Roll with Sweet and Sour Sauce, and Peking Duck Spring Roll with Plum Dipping Sauce. Entree options, which include an egg roll and rice, are Mongolian Beef, and Sweet and Sour Chicken. For dessert, the menu offers a new twist on the egg roll—Homemade Apple Pie Egg Roll, served with homemade caramel sauce. Grill items will also be available.

Variety is also key in the beverage selection. Ten adult beverages are being served. Highlighting the selection of five draft beers is China Lights Red, a red lager from MillerCoors brewed especially for this event. For a beer from China, visitors can enjoy a bottle of Tsingtao, a lager from the nation's largest brewery. Wine is available, including Ozeki Sake, a fresh Japanese sake made from rice. Non-alcoholic beverages offered include bottled citrus green tea, sodas, and bottled water. Hot beverages will also be available.

Admission/Fees

China Lights admission tickets will be valid any night of the regular 2016 schedule. Admission is \$15 for adults (age 18–59) and \$10 for seniors (age 60 and up) and children (age 5-17). Children under age 5 will be admitted free. For \$30, a patron may purchase a one-visit VIP ticket, which includes a behind-the-scenes tour, optional participation in the Illumination Parade, fabric lantern, and mobile guide. Grass-lot parking is included with all admission tickets.

Preferred, close-up paved parking will be limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis for \$5 cash per night. Some spaces in this area will be designated for and are free to people with disabilities who have state-issued disabled parking or disabled Veteran parking license plates, or the state-issued disabled parking identification card.

Due to expected wet conditions in the grass parking areas, a free shuttle bus will run from the nearby Whitnall Park Golf Clubhouse parking lot to the China Lights entrance on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 14–15. The shuttle will run every 30 minutes (traffic dependent), from 5:15–10:15 p.m. The lot is located at 6751 S. 92nd St., Franklin, WI 53132.

Offered exclusively at the Botanical Gardens, at the information desk or the box office, are the season pass with unlimited visits for \$45, and the mobile guide, which requires a cell phone for use, for \$5.

To gain admission to the event more quickly, visitors may purchase tickets in advance on-line at chinalights.org, Boerner Botanical Gardens, and Milwaukee County Parks point-of-sale locations, including Parks Public Services (9480 Watertown Plank Road), regulation golf courses, The Domes, and the Milwaukee County Sports Complex.

While the displays are magical at night, they are beautiful during the day. Displays may be viewed unlit during the day for the cost of regular Botanical Gardens admission. Patrons may purchase an evening ticket for that same day by presenting the daily admission wristband and paying an additional \$10.

Co-presenters of the event are the Park People of Milwaukee County and Travel Wisconsin. Event sponsors are the We Energies Foundation, Miller Lite, and Tri City National Bank.

For more information, visit chinalights.org.

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