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For immediate release

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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.

Lantern Festival Recommends Weekday Visits to Avoid Crowds Good Fortune Week: Oct. 25-30

MILWAUKEE (Oct. 25, 2016) — With last Saturday’s attendance of China Lights approaching a total of 10,000, Boerner Botanical Gardens is recommending that the public visit the popular lantern festival Tuesdays through Thursdays. All tickets with the end date of Oct. 30 will be honored through Nov. 6.

“Each weekend has been busier than the last,” said Shirley Walczak, Director of Boerner Botanical Gardens. “We’ve added shuttle busses, additional parking, and larger food tents, but weekend crowds keep increasing for this event—which is the first of its kind in the Midwest.”

China Lights: Boerner Brighter Than Ever celebrates Asian culture and features 40 larger-than-life, brilliantly lit, sculptural lantern displays. In addition to the dramatic displays of color, light, and sound, the festival offers stage performances of folk-culture entertainment, Asian-inspired cuisine, and a bustling marketplace. Boerner Botanical Gardens is located in Whitnall Park at 9400 Boerner Drive, Hales Corners, WI.

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To create a better experience for visitors on days when admission nears capacity, staff will admit people only as others exit the event. Attendance is generally lower Tuesday through Thursday. Hours are 5:30–10 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday.

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 brightly colored fabric, and hand-painting finishing touches. Among the components emerging from the process were 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 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 concludes at the main stage in time for the first performance of the night.

Stage Performances

Professional stage performances at 6:30 and 8 p.m. highlight folk-culture. Known for exuding power, acrobats from China will perform, emphasizing controlled strength, skill, and the art of fluid movement. Acrobatic skills will also be combined with jar juggling and balancing, and juggling with bouncing balls. A bonus performance is added Friday through Sunday at 9 p.m.

Cultural Displays

Cultural displays are centered in the Garden House including three lantern replicas of the terra cotta warriors and poster displays about the making of China Lights. In addition, visitors can view a 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. Adult beverages feature MillerCoors products and Tsingtao, a lager from China'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.

China Lights admission tickets are valid any night through the end of the extended 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. Parking is included with all admission tickets.

Free close-up paved parking is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Some spaces in this area are designated for people with disabilities who have state-issued disabled parking or disabled Veteran parking license plates, or the state-issued disabled parking identification card.

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Due to expected wet conditions in the grass parking areas, a free shuttle bus will run from the nearby Whitnall Park Golf Clubhouse paved parking lot to the China Lights entrance on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 28–29. 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. Additional overflow lots will be opened as needed.

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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