

**Board of Park Commissioners  
Olbrich Botanical Gardens Quarterly Report  
December 2024**

**Patti Jorenby Retiring**

After 34 years of service with the City of Madison and over 20 years of service at Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Patti Jorenby is retiring. In her tenure, Patti's main duties included management of the rental program including the popular wedding rentals. In addition to managing the rental program, Patti also coordinated the building attendants and building coordinators, processed time sheets, managed photo permits, sorted mail, ordered supplies, and more. She was an expert at juggling a wide variety of tasks. She was the staff go to person for all things city related. She had an amazing ability to remember details of events that came in useful down the road. Patti made sure that events took place but didn't hinder the public's enjoyment of the gardens. Please join us in thanking Patti for her many years of service.

**Holiday Express Model Train & Flower Show**



The holidays are filled with all sugar related items in this year's Holiday Express Model Train and Flower Show. Volunteers from the Wisconsin Model Railroad Association bring their trains to travel through the world of "Sugar Rush". Stops along the way include the giant gingerbread cookies matched perfectly with the life-sized gingerbread house. No train ride is complete without a stop at Gumdrop Mountain. Other stops include Slurpee Hill, Candy Cane Lane, and Ice Cream Point. Of course, there is a greenhouse with a farmer planting gumdrops and other candy favorites. Lake Ridge Bank is the sponsor for this year's show.

News coverage of the Holiday Show:

- Wisconsin State Journal: 12/9/2024:  
[https://madison.com/uploaded\\_photos/olbrich-holiday-express/image\\_403933cd-e60e-5b6d-8132-0d9356ec48f8.html#tncms-source=login](https://madison.com/uploaded_photos/olbrich-holiday-express/image_403933cd-e60e-5b6d-8132-0d9356ec48f8.html#tncms-source=login)
- WMTV 15: 12/19/2024:  
<https://www.wmtv15news.com/2024/12/19/all-aboard-holiday-express-olbrich-botanical-gardens/>
- Wisconsin State Journal: 12/27/2024:  
[https://madison.com/life-entertainment/local/events/madison-entertainment-weekend-music-theater-concerts-shows-holidays/article\\_43ae5bba-c3a7-11ef-9cf0-b37f80abeecb.html](https://madison.com/life-entertainment/local/events/madison-entertainment-weekend-music-theater-concerts-shows-holidays/article_43ae5bba-c3a7-11ef-9cf0-b37f80abeecb.html)



### The Canopy Sessions



The Holiday Train and Flower show has traditionally included music on Sunday afternoons in the Commons. New for this year, the music shifted to a Friday evening and it took place in the Bolz Conservatory. For three consecutive Friday evenings, the Bolz Conservatory came alive with live musicians and singers. In addition to the music, guests could also enjoy the Holiday Flower and Train Show.

### Madison for Monarchs



Madison participates in the [National Wildlife Federation Mayor's Monarch Pledge](#). Every year the City of Madison does multiple actions to improve monarch butterfly habitat in Madison. Olbrich Botanical Gardens commits annually to complete specified actions to benefit monarchs. A few of the actions that Olbrich Botanical Gardens completed this year include:

- Bike for Butterflies event to increase awareness for monarch conservation and increase monarch habitat through seed ball distribution.
- Butterfly Action Day brought together local community groups that work to conserve and benefit butterflies.
- The volunteer Garden Scouts group tagged 54 monarch this past fall.
- Planted various nectar sources for monarch butterflies within the gardens and in the Atwood median.

On December 10, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed listing the monarch butterfly as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Since the 1980s, monarch numbers have plummeted:

🦋 Eastern Monarchs—an 80% decline.

🦋 Western Monarchs—a staggering 95% loss.

The culprits? Habitat destruction, widespread use of insecticides, and the impacts of climate change. But there is hope. By planting milkweed and nectar-rich flowers, even in small spaces, we can provide these iconic creatures with the lifeline they need. The public is invited to provide feedback on the proposed listing until March 12, 2025. Visit [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov), search for docket FWS-R3-ES-2024-0137 to provide feedback.



### Scholarship Funding



The [Green Bay Packers Foundation](#) granted Olbrich Botanical Society with \$4000.00 to support scholarships for school field trips. Busing and field trips are costly, and not all schools and parents are able to fund them. This funding breaks down the funding barrier for schools so that they can offer off-site field trips for their students. Olbrich offers field trip programs for early childhood to high school. Field trips are most common in spring and fall.

### Wreath Central



In December the Frautschi Family Learning Center becomes the hub for making wreaths, table centerpieces, and holiday ornaments. Olbrich horticulturists are the instructors for these very popular classes. They start in November collecting materials to use in the classes. During the program, horticulturists teach the participants how to integrate the plant material to create their holiday decorations. Creativity takes off from there and at the end of the class participants take home their creations. These classes are a favorite each year and they sell out quickly.



### Snow Covered Royal Thai Pavilion



The gold of the Royal Thai Pavilion shines through this months' snow.



*"To plant a garden is to dream of tomorrow."* —Audrey Hepburn