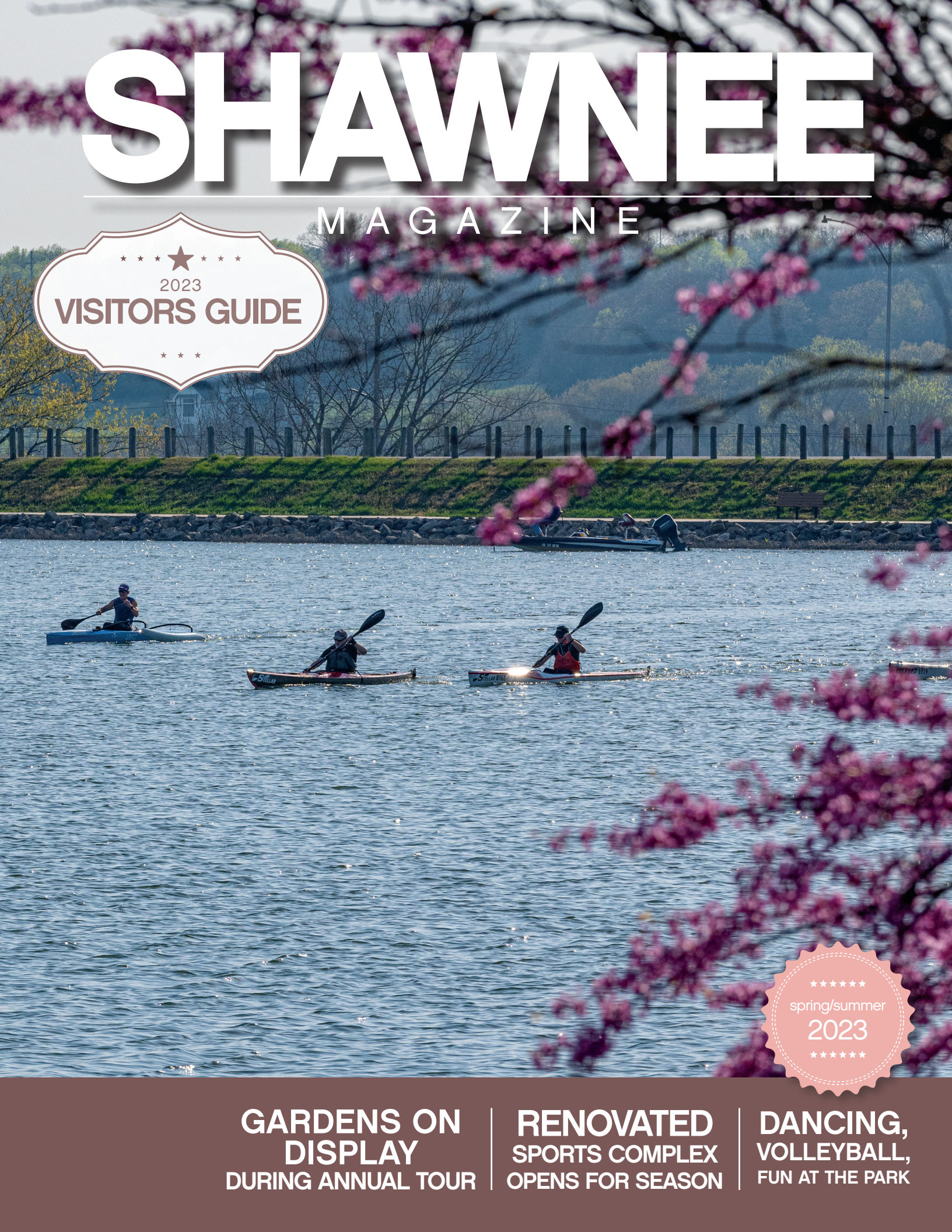


SHAWNEE

MAGAZINE

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2023
VISITORS GUIDE
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spring/summer
2023
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**GARDENS ON
DISPLAY**
DURING ANNUAL TOUR

**RENOVATED
SPORTS COMPLEX**
OPENS FOR SEASON

**DANCING,
VOLLEYBALL,**
FUN AT THE PARK

Glimpses of Gardens

Annual tour takes a closer look at the efforts of five home owners with green thumbs.



After four years, the Garden Sampler Tour is back! Hosted by The Garden Club of Shawnee (gardenclubofshawnee.org), the tour will encompass five unique Shawnee neighborhood gardens. The gardens will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, June 10.

A wonderful way of gathering ideas for a backyard garden in the planning stages or suggestions for enhancing the current plot, the tour will feature ways to extend a family's living space into the outdoors, add child-friendly play areas, and specialize in organic gardening. The Garden Club encourages participants to bring cameras to capture plants and techniques, all while enjoying a walk through woodlands and along water features.



Two Special Gardens

One of the gardens on the tour is at the home of Chris and Erica Thowe. “We have a beautiful jasmine vine that crawls on the fence. The smell is outstanding and draws the hummingbirds,” Chris says. “I’m a baseball fan, so we planted Boston ivy, like that on the Wrigley field fence, that has crept from one side to the other of the garage, covering the entire exterior.” The garden also includes peonies, hostas, junipers, buckthorn, and more.

After growing up in the country, Chris says he likes getting his hands dirty. “I’ve really enjoyed the process of gardening over the years, I’m a graphic designer by trade. I enjoy the process of working with my hands.”

A neighbor recommended that the garden club take a look at the Thowes’ garden and add it to the tour.

“As a family, each season we get to change. ... It’s been a labor of love. It’s been fun to be able to see how things are thriving in the garden from year to year. It’s a work in the progress and it’s never done, and that’s the fun part for me too,” Chris says.

Another garden on the tour belongs to Nick and Susan Geib. Susan says one of the first things people notice in the backyard is the water feature. “There’s a long streamway between the two ponds, a little pond on top and another pond with a stream between them. It’s a pretty large water system.”

Her front garden is full of vegetables, fruits, and herbs, including a miniature mulberry, grapes, blueberries, lavender, peonies, sage, daffodils, and more. “People ask me about the walking onion. ... They look pretty funky in the middle of summer. ... It’s beautiful. It’s fragrant. And you can use it too,” she says. “I have many beds and gardens throughout. It’s over the top. Too much. I just can’t help myself.”

Susan’s the gardener in the family, and her green thumb comes naturally. “I studied landscape architecture. My parents, grandfather, great-grandfather were gardeners. I can’t help being me, I have to do it. Just love the beauty that it brings, and my family loves the beauty.”

Being on the garden tour is a dream come true, she says. “I grew up going on garden tours. To be invited is such a big deal. It’s really great to be part of it. It’s special to me and to my parents. I’m kind of honoring them.”



Erica and Chris Thowe expanded their living space with a delightful seating area in their backyard garden; above, hostas are just a few of the plants found in Susan and Nick Geib’s garden.

Tour Supports Projects

A raffle will be part of the fun, with prizes donated by local businesses. Proceeds from both the tour and the raffle go to the club’s grant program, which supports projects for schools, churches, and other nonprofits, as well as individual scholarships. Raffle tickets will be available the day of the tour at each of the gardens; tickets are \$2 each or three for \$5.

Tour tickets cost \$15 each and can be purchased at the website, at each of the participating gardens, and at gardening outlets around Shawnee. Advance tickets can be purchased, with a small additional charge, at EventBrite.com.

Founded in 1990, The Garden Club welcomes gardeners of all levels, talents, and abilities. Members help each other improve individual gardens and encourage community members to help beautify Shawnee green spaces. The club meets at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month at Shawnee Town’s Town Hall. Meetings feature programs on a variety of topics, including gardening techniques and caring for backyard wildlife. Visitors and new members are welcome.

For more information, visit the website or go to Facebook and search for The Garden Club of Shawnee. ●