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AABS MEMBERS' BONSAI AWARDED AT THE ALL-STATE SHOW

Ryan Liu – Corresponding Secretary/Newsletter Editor

Congratulations to Jack Wickle and Eugene Weise! Both of their bonsai were voted as the top 10 most popular bonsai at the 12th Annual Michigan All-State Bonsai Show in Grand Rapids, MI. In addition, Jack Wickle's Chinese Elm was awarded "the Best of the Show" by Michael Hagedorn.



WHY GO TO BONSAI CONVENTION, ANYWAY?

Steven Moore – MABA Vice-President; Warsaw, IN Fort Wayne Bonsai Club

Late last year, I started talking up the MABA 2010 convention, trying to persuade as many as possible of our local members to attend. A question from one lady stopped me in my tracks for a moment. The gist was: *I don't have much bonsai experience; wouldn't things at a convention be over my head? So what point would there be to my going?*

That rocked me a bit! As I considered her question, I realized that I had not mentioned the great difference my own first convention made to me. My first bonsai convention resulted in

a "quantum leap" in my bonsai knowledge, enjoyment, and confidence. (I really don't like clichés, but occasionally a cliché does actually say it best.)

The first convention I attended was the 1992 American Bonsai Society Symposium, hosted by the Susquehanna Bonsai Society and held in Hershey, PA. Even though I had acquired my first tree (a serissa) 2-½ years before, I was still very much a beginner, learning as best I could from books and journals. My work schedule at the time kept me from involvement in any bonsai club.

How did the symposium result in a "quantum leap?" Let me give you some specifics.

First, learning, learning, learning! Opportunities to learn were all around me:

Demonstrations. I saw Bruce Baker, of Ann Arbor, MI, start out with an unkempt-looking collected yew that I, frankly, thought was quite boring, and transform it into a masterpiece. The work took two days, most of it off in a side room; but when Bruce was finished I was very much impressed by the result! I learned how a potter creates an oval pot on a round potter's wheel by watching Max Braverman do it. (He threw a round pot, then cut a leaf-shaped section out of the center and carefully squeezed the sides in to close the gap.) And I grasped some techniques that I had not yet understood from reading, by *seeing* them done.

Workshops are of course an excellent chance to learn, as many of you already know. I didn't take any in Hershey, but I was a silent observer in one or two, and even observing I learned quite a bit.

Exhibit Critiques. I took one critique at ABS '92, and have been convinced of their value ever since! Vaughn Banting, of New Orleans, led a dozen of us thru the convention exhibit, explaining what he found good and not-so-good about each tree. I know I learned more in that one hour than in any other four hours that weekend! Vaughn, by the way, had an encouraging way of referring to a bonsai's "dilemmas" rather than its "problems."

Private conversations. Within half an hour of checking in I found myself welcomed to listen in as a serissa's owner discussed design options with a teacher. Several times during the weekend I stopped one teacher or another in the hall, to ask (politely) if he would mind answering a question. My questions then were kindergarten level, but only one man blew me off.

Vaughn Banting was the most helpful of all. After courteously listening to a design dilemma that had me stumped, Vaughn sat

down with me on a nearby bench. Taking the pad on which I'd sketched out my problem, he in turn sketched a simple, fairly elegant solution, which was well within my abilities at the time. When I protested that his suggestion broke a basic design rule, he explained that this was a valid exception. ("A major branch *may* cross the trunk, if the tree is a windswept.") It has always seemed to me that the best way to show my appreciation for the helpfulness of Vaughn, and others, is by passing it on. Vaughn died in October 2008, and since then it has also seemed the best way to honor his memory.

Second, inspiration! Pictures can be very useful, but nothing compares with being able to see a bonsai directly: you can look at it from different angles, from closer or farther away; you can see more detail, more nuance. I went thru the bonsai exhibit in Hershey at least three times by myself, studying the trees, finding new details, new insights. Several times I bent down to put my eyes about at the level of the nebari, and looked *up* into the branch structure.

Sometime during ABS '92, I'm sure, is when I started saying to myself, "I didn't know you could *do* that," in mingled surprise and delight. After 18 years, I still say it from time to time.

What sorts of insights can you gain from studying good bonsai?

- *Species.* Would you expect English ivy, or giant sequoia, to make a good bonsai? A convention display is a good place to expand your horizons about species you may not have considered before.
- *Style and color matches.* Sometimes we don't realize that a certain style will work well for a given species, until we see an example. The same is true for pot colors and the foliage, fruit, or bark of different trees.
- *Ways to handle dilemmas.* One of the trees in the Hershey exhibit had a major trunk-chop wound that was far from being completely closed. The artist put the wound to the rear, and grew a new leader directly in front of it, to conceal it. It was the first time I had seen that. Seeing how others have handled design dilemmas can give us ideas for dealing with the challenges our own trees present.

Third, community. This benefit is intangible, but it is very real. Paul Weishaar, President of MABA, approaches this concept from an angle that hadn't occurred to me, in his current "President's Message." Rather than appear to compete with him, I'll just ask you to read his second paragraph, beginning with, "As I write this I cannot help but think of our bonsai community ..." (You'll find this on the MABA website: mababonsai.org.)

Finally, let me leave you with a 9-year-old's perspective. I asked my daughter what she would say on this point, as I was getting ready to write. I'll quote her answer as closely as I can: "*When you go to a convention, you learn a lot about bonsai, and then you find you have a hobby that you will enjoy for the rest of your life!*"

(Note: This article was originally published in the February 2010 Issue of the Fort Wayne Bonsai Club monthly newsletter and it

was permitted by the author to be published here. Thank you, Jack!)

AN INVITATION FROM JACK AND JEANNINE WICKLE TO MICHIGAN AREA BONSAI ENTHUSIASTS AND THEIR FRIENDS
Jack Wickle

In conjunction with a visit to Michigan State University's Hidden Lake Gardens and to our home by the Mid Michigan Bonsai Club, Sunday, October 3, 2010, my wife and I are also inviting anyone else who would like to join us.

I will be in the Bonsai Courtyard (enter through "Temperate House" of the Conservatory complex) at Hidden Lake Gardens, 10:30 until noon, to talk about the bonsai on display there and answer questions. (Hidden Lake Gardens is two miles west of Tipton on Rte. 50.)

After twelve, I will come back to our home in Tecumseh to welcome visitors who would like to also see the bonsai I am growing indoors and outdoors there. For those who need them, I'll have directions to our house available at the Gardens.

Though not absolutely necessary, if you can give us a call before the 3rd to let us know how many people to expect that will be very helpful.

There is a \$3.00 per person entry fee to the Gardens. But there is a lot to enjoy there too. Outstanding among the many indoor and outdoor plant collections are a large hosta display garden and a world-class collection of dwarf and rare conifers. Allow time too to follow some seven miles of paved drive that winds through the Gardens' woods and fields.

A picnic area for public use is located along the drive, but there are also numerous eating opportunities in route from Hidden Lake Gardens to our home (everything from MacDonald's and Wendy's, through a Big Boy, a Chinese buffet, and a sit-down-and-be-served Chinese Restaurant).

Call us at 517-423-7893 if you have questions or to let us know you plan to join us.

UPCOMING AABS EVENTS

Paul Kulesa – Program Chairperson

Azalea workshop with David Kreutz – Thursday, June 24, 4-8 PM. You can bring your own azalea tree or buy one offered at the class. Limited seating is available; contact Paul Kulesa at programs@annarborbonsaisociety.org to reserve your seat. Cost: \$35, plus tree: \$35. Observers: \$10. From 4 to 8 pm.

Mugo Pine Workshop with Vance Woods - Saturday, July 10, 10 AM – 1 PM. Spend a morning styling a mugo pine with expert advice from Vance Wood. Vance will work exclusively with mugo pine during this workshop. To ensure you have the material available you want to work on at the workshop, reserve

a position in the workshop and let Paul Kulesa know if you want Vance to bring a mugo for you. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own tools, stand, wire and supplies. The workshop fee is \$35, observers \$10. You may bring your own mugo pine or select a tree Vance will bring for you (at your request) for \$45. Contact Paul Kulesa at programs@annarborbonsaisociety.org to reserve a seat.

Visit Vance's website at:

<http://www.artofbonsai.org/galleries/wood.php>

Jerry Meislik will visit Ann Arbor in late August, just in time for our Annual Show. He will critique individual trees and the Show on Saturday evening, "An event worth planning to attend".

Ficus Workshop with Jerry Meislik, Tuesday, August 31, 2010, 6 - 9 PM. Jerry will lead a workshop using the material he has "written the book on." You may bring your own ficus or you may purchase ficus from Kurt Smith, The Flower Market – Dundee, or Pria at the Bonsai House – Westland. Plan to acquire you material early and study your ficus over the summer.

UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS

June 25-27, MABA Convention @ Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, Mi. The featured guest is Kathy Shaner. For details go to www.mababonsai.org.

August 20-22, The 23rd Mid-America Bonsai Exhibit hosted by Midwest Bonsai Society @ Chicago Botanic Gardens, Glencoe, IL. Visit www.midwestbonsai.org for details.

September 9-12, 2010 Bonsai Symposium – North American Bonsai, in Rochester, New York. Dial 585.334.2595 for additional information.

NEXT CLUB MEETING: INVITED GUEST-DAVID KREUTZ DEMONSTRATING ON AZALEAS.

Paul Kulesa – Program Chairperson

David Kreutz is a specialist in Satsuki Azalea and owner of Satsuki Bonsai-en, a nursery that specializes in imported Satsuki Azaleas. He attended the first three-year class at El Dorado Bonsai in Placerville, CA and has a certificate as an Instructor in Satsuki Care and Culture. He has performed lecture, demonstrations and workshops at various clubs and conventions around the country.

David Kreutz will demonstrate his skill while working on an azalea at the meeting on June 23. At the end of the demonstration, the tree will be raffled to the membership in attendance. On June 24 evening, 4-8 PM, David will conduct an Azalea Workshop. Much of the information needed to fully participate in the workshop, will be presented at the Wednesday meeting. So, plan to attend the meeting and then the workshop. Observers are welcome.

ESTATE SALE AND AUCTION

Paul Kulesa – Program Chairperson

The private collection and related bonsai items of Robert Cotman will be displayed for sale and auction by 6:45 PM, prior to the June 23rd meeting. The auction of select items will start at 7 PM. Some of the bonsai from the estate include Chinese plum, Chinese elm and juniper.

YOU HELP IS NEEDED!

Paul Kulesa – Program Chairperson

The Society is looking for a member to take over the responsibility of Club Sales. Up until now, Roger Gaede has managed this operation. This responsibility involves sales of AABS shirts, sweatshirts, aprons, hats and pins at club meetings. Included with this activity is the storage of stock, reordering stock as needed and maintaining the necessary accounting records. If you chose to take on this responsibility, Roger and Members of the Board will work with you until you are comfortable with the operation. If you are interested in taking on this responsibility, contact Paul Kulesa at programs@annarborbonsaisociety.org.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January Club Meeting	Jan. 27th
Bonsai Multi-Media Slide Presentation, featuring Don Wild presenting conifer collection.	
February Club Meeting	Feb. 24th
Yew Styling Demo with Guest Speaker Will Heath.	
February Class	Feb 27th
Beginner and Intermediate Classes, Part I with Connie Crancer.	
March Class	Mar. 6th
Beginner and Intermediate Classes, Part II with Cyril Grum.	
March Class	Mar. 13th
Beginner and Intermediate Classes, Part III with Jack Wikle.	
March Club Meeting	Mar. 24th
Pests and Diseases with Jack Wikle.	
April Special Event	Apr. 3rd
Maple Forest Workshop with Jack Wikle.	
April Special Event	Apr. 11th
Yew Workshop with road trip to Ken Huth's Greenhouse in Ohio.	
April Club Meeting	Apr. 28th
Invited Guest – Marco Invernizzi working on a yew tree.	
April Special Even	Apr. 29th
Invited Guest – Marco Invernizzi (BYOT).	
May Club Meeting	May 26th
Deciduous Bonsai Refinement with Bill Heston.	
June Special Event	Jun. 12th

Workshop with Jerry Peters. Create a Watercolor of Your Favorite Bonsai Tree.

June Club Meeting.....**Jun 23rd**
Invited Guest – David Kreutz Demonstrating on Azaleas.

June Special Event.....**Jun 24th**
Invited Guest – David Kreutz Azalea Workshop.

July Workshop.....**Jul. 10th**
Mugo Pine Workshop with Vance Wood "Mr. Mugo"

July Club Meeting.....**Jul.28th**
Working Review and Critique – Expert advice from Cyril Grum, Bill Heston & Jack Wikle (BYOT).

August Special Event.....**Aug. 14th**
Annual Pot Luck – Lary Howard's Home.

August Club Meeting.....**Aug. 25th**
Tropical bonsai – Repotting techniques with Dustin Mann.

AABS Bonsai Show 2010..... **Aug. 28th-29th**

September Club Meeting.....**Sep. 22nd**
2010 AABS Club Auction.

October Special Event.....**Oct. 9th**
Prospecting Field Trip to Plymouth Nursery and Landscaping led by Jack Wikle.

October Club Meeting.....**Oct. 27th**
Winterizing your Bonsai – Expert advice from Cyril Grum and Bill Heston.

November Special Event.....**Nov. 8th**
Annual Banquet and Mini-Exhibit.

2010 AABS EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Alfonso Tercero (734) 216-2708

Vice-President: Paul Kulesa (313) 930-1305

Program Chairperson: Paul Kulesa

Corresponding Secretary: Ryan Liu

Recording Secretary: Almudena Veiga-Lopez

Publicity Chair: Lary Howard (313) 812-5702

Treasurer: Joan Wheeler (734) 485-6306

Librarian: Vicki Norfleet

Past President: Bill Heston (734) 662-8699

Director 2010 & 2011: Dustin Mann

Show Chairperson: Jay Sinclair (734) 439-2982

AABS AD-HOC COMMITTEES

The AABS President is exofficio member of all committees with the exception of the Nomination Committee.

Auction Chair: TBD

Membership Chair: TBD

Show Staging: Paul Kulesa

Demonstrations: John Parks

Ways and Means Chair: John Parks

Web Administration: R. Vega

FOR SALE OR WANTED

10% of all sales go to the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society. AABS Society Members' ads are free to publish in the Newsletter.

Send the information of your items for sale or wanted to newsletter@annarborbonsaisociety.org include a small digital file if available.

Wanted. If you have a tree, bonsai pot, tool or anything else bonsai related that you don't need anymore and that is still in good condition, consider donating it to the Society. Donations to the Society are always accepted. In most cases many donated trees or other materials have been raffled among the attending members during our monthly meetings.

Please note: All Society members are required to give 10% of the total sales for any items that are sold at AABS monthly meetings to the Society. The 10% fee will apply to all sales at AABS Meetings or through the AABS Newsletter. Deadline for submissions to the Newsletter is the 5th of the month.

Please send your comments or documents to newsletter@annarborbonsaisociety.org.

The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society is affiliated with the American Bonsai Society (www.absbonsai.org) and the Mid American Bonsai Alliance (www.mababonsai.org).

Contact AABS at: newsletter@annarborbonsaisociety.org.

MEMBERSHIP

Society Membership is for the calendar year. Use the membership form on the Web and bring it to the next AABS meeting or mail it to:

Joan Wheeler
2295 North Harris
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
(734) 485-6306

Email: treasurer@annarborbonsaisociety.org

Please make your check payable to AABS for \$25.00.



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The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society is affiliated with the American Bonsai Society and the Mid-American Bonsai Alliance.

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<http://www.annarborbonsaisociety.org>

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Hector DeBrabant
Bonsai Instructor