

## Jack Sustic to host BYOT at our April meeting.

A Bring Your Own Tree discussion and work session will be hosted by Jack Sustic at our next meeting Wednesday, April 25th from 6:30-9:00 at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens. This event was enthusiastically received by members last year. Jack is an AABS member and Curator Emeritus of the Bonsai and Penjing Collection at the U.S. National Arboretum.

On May 12-13, 2018, the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Michigan All-State Bonsai Show will be held at the Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park featuring Guest Master – William “Bill” Valavanis (International Bonsai, U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition, newest inductee to the BONSAI HALL OF FAME @ The National Bonsai & Penjink Collection).

## bonsai show MAY 12-13, 2018

Bonsai Displays: Saturday 12-5 pm, Sunday 11 am-5 pm  
Bonsai Sales: Saturday 9 am-5 pm, Sunday 11 am-5 pm



FEATURED BONSAI ARTIST:  
William Valavanis

FREE ADMISSION TO THE  
BONSAI SHOW, FEATURING:

- Stunning bonsai on display
- Free demonstrations all weekend
- Hands-on workshops
- Hard-to-find bonsai supplies



MeijerGardens.org     
1-96 and East Beltline, Grand Rapids, MI

Get all the details with the following links:

Michigan All-State 2018 Entry Form: <http://bit.ly/2GKfZ3p>

Michigan All-State 2018 Flyer: <http://bit.ly/2JvIrnC>

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## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE: Ron Milostan

I just love this time of year. Reading all the Facebook pages and getting emails and seeing everyone excited about spring. Well, no matter how much we desire or wish for it, spring is just not going to get here any faster. Spend your time getting your stands and garden areas cleaned up. Take this time to clean your tools and pots. Let your sleeping trees sleep.

However, now is a good time to send your dues if you haven't already done so. This is the money the club uses to bring you all the programs, workshops and guest speakers. The other way we generate money to support our club's activities is by the fall auction and having raffles at every meeting and at the yearly Bonsai Show. Bill Struhar is the guy who keeps this going so successfully. To help him out we ask for donations of bonsai related articles for these raffles. We thank Bill for all of his work and BUY Raffle tickets!!

At the April meeting we will be raffling off the Bald Cypress worked on by Tyler Sherrod at our last meeting. This is a very desirable tree. Even before being styled by Tyler this collected tree sold for \$500 dollars. BUY Raffle tickets!

Also, at this meeting all attendees will have a chance to be in the drawing to fill the FREE club position in the workshop on Thursday evening with Kurt Smith and Ron

Milostan. This workshop includes 7 trees, plastic planting tray, soil and wire. The trees are Dawn Redwoods of various sizes. This will be an excellent workshop to learn the fine points of building a realistic forest planting. Margaret Lansing won the last free drawing for the Tyler Sherrod workshop which was \$110. Be in attendance and ENTER the FREE drawing.

### **Create a Shohin 'Green Mound Juniper' Workshop**

This meeting we will again take names and draw for the spot reserved by our club for the Meijer's Gardens All State Show workshop in May. Our club is offering this free spot at the workshop to anyone with less than 5 years Bonsai experience. The workshop is on Saturday May 12, at Meijer's Gardens in Grand Rapids at 11am. An experienced club member, Ron Milostan, will be working with you and supplying everything you will need.

Remember to bring in a show and tell and receive a free raffle ticket.

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## **Shaping a Bald Cypress with Tyler Sherrod Chris Kehrig**

Tyler is from North Carolina and trained for 5 years in Japan. He mentioned that the work was hard and he only had 1 day off a month. He lived off of \$500/month. They are welcoming to outsiders that want to learn due to younger Japanese not being as interested in Bonsai.

The Bald Cypress he was presented with was collected a few years ago and came from Wigert's Nursery in Florida. It was potted into a large plastic oval pot. The tree has about an 8" trunk diameter and is 2.5 – 3 foot tall. This tree will be raffled off at April's meeting.

Bald Cypress grow like a weed anywhere within the U.S. and are native to the swampy areas of the south. Tyler does not have one in his collection. This particular tree is not the typical upright single trunk normally seen. It has a fat trunk that tapers up into a large step thus creating somewhat of a twin trunk.

His first step in styling is finding the front. Then he examined the tree and found 2 sets of top trunks. We decided which trunks to remove to make it into a twin trunk. A tree should bow to you with the branches angling

towards you. To simulate this, he placed a block of wood under the pot to tilt towards us. Tyler mentioned that you have to decide if a tree is old or young and fat or skinny. In our case, the tree is old and fat. Being an old tree, he focused on showing the flare and taper. He was not concerned about branch removal as Bald Cypress throw branches out anywhere and vigorously.

Tyler power sawed off the top trunk and removed the branches sticking towards him. He would let the top leader grow for some years to help with the taper and help lower wounds grow over. When carving on a tree, he likes to chalk an outline of what he will remove. He placed a V-notch in the center of the tree which brought out the twin trunks and resembled another tree that may have fallen upon it. He mentioned that he is not a fan of flat top Cypress as you don't see this in nature. On the branches that he did trim back, he left some length for new foliage to grow from the ends.

Even though Bald Cypress grow in ponds and bog areas, he does not recommend placing them into a pond. The reason is that they will grow "knees" that are new trunks from the base looking for oxygen. When placed in a bonsai pot, it should be watered from the top like a normal bonsai. His soil is a lava/acadama/pumice mix with a concentration of acadama for the additional moisture requirements of the cypress.

Tyler mentioned there is either good or bad bonsai. He does not see American, Japanese, or European style of bonsai. Good bonsai has taper, strong branch structure, and foliage. He said the Japanese are never satisfied with their trees and are constantly styling and trimming. A bonsai starts out looking man made and evolves into a natural looking tree over time. He focuses on the bonsai down the road as opposed to the instant gratification. Never pinch on trees except for new growth on a spruce or the 2<sup>nd</sup> flush of leaves on a maple.

For ramification, branches should be left to grow out and pruned back. He likes to prune Conifers in the fall.

He said that every tree has a story to tell. A juniper may have deadwood to show where it was against a rock ledge. In our case, the v-notch simulates a tree that may have fallen upon it. He uses min-wax wood hardener on wounds after the tree is dry to help it penetrate in.

Tyler sees this tree as being very presentable in about 5 years.

A few photos from the March meeting, provided by Michael Field:



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### ***Up For Debate*** ***Aaron Binns***

It's all About the Attitude

Spring is the busiest time of year in the bonsai calendar. At the time of writing I am just a few days away from removing all of my trees from winter storage. Considering that we live in Michigan I'm sure that I will spend many a hurried night after work moving the trees back to the garage for the occasional cold night. Repotting can also begin in earnest and it is time to tidy up many of the trees to ensure they spend their energy pushing out foliage in the right spots.

There is a lot to do.

Every year I tire myself out in the first month or so of the growing season tending to all of the spring chores in the

time that Mother Nature gives us. This leads to an inevitable slow down over the next several weeks. I call it spring burn out. To this point in my bonsai carrier this slowdown has really not been an issue. I have spent most of my time developing trees from a rough state to something that is ready to be refined. If you try to refine a tree when you should be developing trunk or branching you will only be rewarded with slower overall progress. Given that this was the state of the bulk of my collection it was acceptable to allow my trees to grow unchecked for a while during the summer months. It is a completely different story when you are trying to build good ramification; developing small leaflets with short internodes and tight foliage pads. This work cannot be accomplished with lackluster care.

They say that it's all about your attitude in life, which is usually true. This year as my trees advance I have decided to add one simple step to my daily regimen. When I walk out to water my trees I will have a pair of scissors in hand. The best defense to avoid getting behind in pruning is to not get behind in the first place... make sense? Kind of like the best offense is a good defense. It will always take longer to get an unkempt tree back to shape than to keep on top of pruning chores in the first place. This, for me at least, will require an attitude change. It is better to spend 30 minutes watering and pruning daily than to spend 15 minutes a day watering and spend a weekend dealing with overgrown trees at the end of each month. I know that a lot of you have already developed that discipline which is why we have so many wonderful artists and trees in the club. If you, like me, are not one of the more disciplined members of the club don't worry; there is still hope for all of us. It just takes a little attitude adjustment and the discipline to keep your scissors close. Good pruning everyone!

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### **FOR SALE OR WANTED:**

**Ads in the Newsletter:** All members can offer for sale any bonsai and bonsai related materials in the newsletter or at the monthly meeting with no sales fee. AABS Society Members' ads are free to publish in the Newsletter. Deadline for submissions to the Newsletter is the 5th of the month.

**Prizes for the Raffle:** We are soliciting donations suitable for prizes to be raffled during each general meeting, and, for the Annual Bonsai Show Raffle. If you have a tree,

bonsai pot, tool or anything else bonsai related, that you do not use anymore and is still in good condition, consider donating it to the Society. Please see Bill Struhar at any meeting, email Bill at [wm.struhar@mail.com](mailto:wm.struhar@mail.com) or call (586) 468-7169.

**Club Logo Now Available:** we will embroider the club logo on your garment for \$12 (plus modest additional charge for lined garments).

The logo comes in two forms; light green tree on dark green background, or dark green tree on light green background, with a border on both combinations and AABS lettering and Chinese characters with appropriate contrasting color depending upon the garment color.

Bring your garment in a clear plastic bag to a meeting, select your colors, pre-pay Bill Struhar, and your garment will be ready one or two meetings later. (The vendor may require a minimum of five garments per order)

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### **2018 EXECUTIVE BOARD**

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### **AABS AD-HOC COMMITTEES**

The AABS President is an ex-officio member of all committees with the exception of the Nomination Committee.

**Fund Raising:** William Struhar

**Web Administration:** Bob Bauer

**Nomination Committee:**

**Show Committee:** Ron Milostan and Paul Kulesa

**Annual Auction:** Paul Kulesa

Membership dues are \$25. Please pay by check, written to Ann Arbor Bonsai Society or bring your credit card to the meeting and pay! AABS now accepts credit cards for membership fees and other AABS activities. Please talk with the Treasurer at the next meeting.

Tamara Milostan – Treasurer AABS  
4228 Highcrest Dr.  
Brighton, Michigan 48116

[AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com](mailto:AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com)

The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society is affiliated with the American Bonsai Society: <http://absbonsai.org> and the Mid-American Bonsai Alliance: <http://mababonsai.org>

## Visit us on the Web:

<http://www.annarborbonsaisociety.org>

## Support Local Bonsai Vendors

Hours: Wed., Thurs. & Fri.; 11:00 am to 6:00 pm Sat., 1:30pm to 5:00pm  
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