

## ***Kusamono & Accent Plants with Young Choe at our May meeting.***

There will be a talk and a demonstration of techniques with attention to selection and display at our next Ann Arbor Bonsai Society meeting, Wednesday, May 23 from 6:30-9:00 at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Young studied traditional art-ink painting and calligraphy-in her native Korea before she moved to the United States. She obtained her BS in Horticulture from the University of Maryland. While volunteering at the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum, she was able to bring her artistic talent together with her knowledge of horticulture to create Kusamono. She traveled to Japan to study this unique art form with the master Kusamono artist, Keiko Yamane, a former student of Saburo Kato. In the world outside the Museum, she worked with native plants at the USDA, NRCS, National Plant Materials Center in Beltsville, Maryland. Also, she was a propagation horticulturist at the US National Arboretum. Young currently works at the US National Arboretum.

Her workshop will be May 24th, 5:30 – 9 pm. Participants may bring their own pots and plants, or purchase pots and plants which will be available at the workshop. Wire and soil will be provided. Participants can expect to make 2 or 3 plantings. This workshop is at capacity.

The Bald Cypress won by Aaron Binns at April's meeting.



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## ***PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:*** ***Ron Milostan***

I have only a short note this month. As President of your club I oversee most operations that need to be done. My position is one of the least busy or demanding. I have 10+ peoples doing most of the organizing and running of this club. Without these volunteer's giving a couple hours of their time each month this club would not function as is. I say a couple hours but this time is spent in short dashes. Communicating with club members, writing short articles, contacting other clubs, speakers, maintaining web sites, etc. When someone is temporarily off, other members of the board take their place. Hopefully less pressure on all.

My main concern is out of 80 members we have only 10-15 helping to organize this club. What I am looking for is other members to join in and take board positions to learn what makes this club tick. Having past board members available really makes everything easier. We cannot have past board members if there are no new board members. I am asking all members to think about helping within our club. Do not wait to be asked or wait for an opening. Volunteer now and a post will be made available to you. You will have lots of help learning your new responsibilities.

At the end of our newsletter is a listing of all current Board Members. You can contact and talk to any one of them to see where you might fit into our club program.

## April meeting review

Peggy Kubitz

Our April 25<sup>th</sup> meeting was an engaging one! Members brought their trees to be evaluated by Jack Sustic. Jack is one of our members, but he recently retired as the curator of the United States National Arboretum. While there, he tended the 400 year old Yamaki white pine that survived Hiroshima, and John Naka's Goshin, considered by many to be the world's most famous bonsai. Trust me, it was a privilege and honor to have him share his insightful advice with our club members! Even if you weren't able to bring a tree, it is so informative to listen to Jack's tactful assessments! He has a warm and peaceful personality that probably has been nurtured by his proximity to bonsai all these years! Well, maybe he was born with a pleasant manner and good temperament!

Jay Sinclair was brave enough to go up first. He had a beautiful tree and seemed pleased with the suggestions given. He had been on the right track all along! I think it is so fun to observe the tree and formulate your own thoughts just before our expert gives advice. It can be rewarding if you notice the same things or an insightful, "ah ha" moment when you are lead to a new conclusion. Tom McCue also shared some interesting observations with the spectators. We had new members who brought some great trees they have nurtured for many years. We welcome them and hope they enjoyed the feedback they received. Jack Wikle, curator of the bonsai collection at Hidden Lake Gardens, also spent time with some of the members. In particular, I saw him working on a quince. Some of our members had already formed ideas about what they wanted to do with their bonsai, but just needed confirmation to make the leap. Everyone loved their time with Jack and he followed up with many one on one sessions where he did some hands on assistance, sometimes with scissors. One of the great tips he demonstrated it to take a white plastic bag to block off an area you are considering cutting to see if your intentions will actually play out the way you are envisioning. This can be quite helpful, and prevent losing a valuable limb that you wish you had never thought about cutting off! Our gratitude to Jack for sharing his incredible knowledge with us!

Our meeting included Kurt Smith raffling off a nice cypress he has kindly been caring for. Tamara Milostan was busy and patient all night collecting for tickets to win workshops and trees. Aaron Binns won the Bald Cypress

bonsai, and I know he will be a good custodian for it, as he has many nice trees, including the autumn olive he purchased a couple of years ago at Hidden Lake Gardens. I was hoping to bid on that one, but got there too late! I was glad he got it, and I knew he would be a worthy caretaker. The free workshops were sponsored by our club. In addition, there was Bill Struhar's special monthly raffle that everyone always enjoys. In addition, there were some beautiful bonsai shared by our members. I know our winter weary participants were happy to see some greenery and blooms. Good luck to everyone as we all proceed to get our bonsai up and running for the season. I know the Hidden Lake Gardens bonsai court opened this week, and it is always a joy to welcome those winter sleepers back again! Think spring! It's finally working!

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







Here's the white plastic bag in action.

## Up For Debate

Aaron Binns

Just Jump

Spring is in full bloom, so to speak, and by this time we should all have our trees out of winter storage. It is also a good time to take inventory and make appraisals of your trees. Every spring I start to re-familiarize myself with the trees that I haven't seen in many months and after I have determined how my trees fared over the winter it is time to make plans for the growing season. This process can be straining. I begin to see anew all the positives and negatives about the trees that I have been designing and

the desire to get as much from the development of a tree in the few months of growth that we have can lead to an internal struggle. The struggle comes from two competing desires. First, all bonsai enthusiasts are aware of the passage of time in a way that most others aren't. We measure life by growing seasons, which we recognize as opportunities to improve our trees. After just a few seasons spent struggling to improve our trees we also recognize how precious and fleeting these seasons are; how few springs we have to make progress. Therefore every bonsai enthusiasts wants to make the best decisions for their trees to get the most out of them in the least amount of time. Second, after having invested several years in a tree, we are frightened to make large changes because we may end up with a tree that is less attractive and therefore affectively throw away the work and growing seasons that we have already invested.

So if you have a tree that you have had for several years and you aren't happy with some feature what should you do? Play it safe or risk a total or partial redesign? Before you finish reading this take a moment to think about the tree you are struggling with and decide, if you can, what you think should be done. Should you risk the tree in a redesign or maintain the tree as is? Take the risk or play it safe? I believe there is only one correct answer and in the next few lines I will argue my point.

The only right answer, in my opinion, is to take the risk and alter the tree. I don't believe doing nothing is a valid choice and here is why. We have already decided that a growing season is a precious thing to waste. Time is not on our side. Then why would you spend another growing season maintaining and caring for a tree that you aren't happy with? If you have an idea that could make the tree better what is there really to lose? I have heard people say that if you cut away the things you don't like about the tree then you must like what is left. That isn't exactly true but taking a chance has more often than not worked out for me. There is another choice, you could trade the tree in for another but I am convinced not doing anything is the wrong decision. There is another argument for making changes. We all get better. Trees I style today look better than trees I styled a few years ago. With this in mind trust yourself today to make a better styling choice then you did 5 years ago.

Whatever you decide is right for you, have fun. Don't waste too much of the season stressing!



April Dawn Redwood workshop results in forests and smiling faces.

## 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)

## 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

## 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  
CLOSED: Sunday, Monday & Tuesday  
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