



The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the U-M-Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Please join us at 6:30 PM to meet friends and members. Program starts at 7:00 PM.

<http://www.annarborbonsaisociety.org>  
[AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com](mailto:AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com)

**August 2016**  
Volume 13 Issue 7

## **NEXT CLUB MEETING:**

**August 24, 2016**

### **Hands on Show Preparation Workshop**

Our program this month is a hands-on show prep workshop. Bring one or two trees that you plan to bring to our 2016 Annual Bonsai Show. Members will be on hand to offer advice and a suggestion on how to make your tree look it's very best.

In addition to your trees, you should bring tools, and wire if you think you will need it. AABS will supply materials such as vinegar, baby oil (for pots), and moss. If you have access to moss, you are encouraged to bring some, as well. Join us at 6:30 PM in the MBG auditorium to catch-up with longtime friends, welcome visitors and talk bonsai.

The meeting starts at 7 PM with the evening program to follow.

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## **AUGUST'S SHOW & TELL:**

Any member who brings this month's Show & Tell focus, Japanese Maple, to the meeting on August 24th will receive one free Raffle ticket!

Show & Tell will begin between 6:30 and 7:00 and each owner will give a short history, or tips on how grow, or tell other tales about their special tree. Every general meeting will feature one special tree that members can bring for Show & Tell.

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## **PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:**

### **Ron Milostan**

I recently visited the Mid-Michigan Alley Show in Lansing on July 24 and the Four Seasons Bonsai show in Rochester on August 7th. Both of these shows gave me an opportunity to have discussions with members from other clubs. Of course, there was also an opportunity to see club member's trees and how they were displayed. I want to encourage our members to visit Bonsai shows whenever possible.

One tree in the Lansing show caught my eye. It was a juniper in literati style with very aged looking dead wood. What I learned later from the artist was that he had hand carved all of the dead wood. The original trunk was just smooth and round with branching. The transformation to aged, weathered wood was amazing. I will make an effort to get before and after pictures from him.

Along with the wonderful display of trees in the Four Seasons show there were several large Penjing displays featured. Most of the bonsai in this show were displayed on stands. The use of stands really caught my eye. It made me stop and to look more closely. The stands themselves were unique and certainly added to the artistic display. Background scrolls were also used. I found myself spending more time viewing instead of just passing through and quickly looking.

On another note, I am encouraging all members to view this year's AABS displays at our show with your 'new eyes'. We have had several lectures on balance, space and direction and companion plants. During our Saturday evening critique, let us use this knowledge and look for these characteristics. Keep in mind that there is a big difference between critiquing and criticizing so listening to critiques with an open mind can be the best way to improve your knowledge of bonsai and possibly refine your tree even more. Spend your day at our show viewing with your new eyes and let's talk bonsai.

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## **JULY'S PROGRAM RE-CAP:**

### **By Paul Kulesa**

Jane DeLancey is a local artist and graphic designer with a connection to the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society, Jane's mother, Mary DeLancey, was a long time member of our club. Jane had the opportunity to watch her mother care for and develop her bonsai. Jane attended the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design, worked at the River Gallery Fine Art in Chelsea and manages her company, DeLancey Design in Ann Arbor. Jane combined her background in bonsai with her formal studies in art and graphic design to present her program, *How To Look At Bonsai As Art*.

Jane sees bonsai as a botanical specimen and as a representation of a tree found in nature. She is not comfortable with the use of bonsai as an abstract representation of a tree. In Jane's *PowerPoint* presentation, she offered an overview of useful concepts for discussing bonsai as art. Art is beauty and is representative of what is found in the world.

There are a number of elements that can be found related to a beautiful bonsai.

- What is your overall impression, your first impressions of the bonsai you're viewing?
- There are elements of the bonsai, the container, the foliage masses, the movement found in the trunk and the overall shape of the bonsai, that, when taken together, form the composition we are to enjoy. How do these elements fit together forming a beautiful bonsai?

- What is the overall shape of the bonsai and foliage masses that makeup the bonsai? Is this shape dramatic, pleasing or inventive? The movement found in the trunk is important to the total vision of the bonsai.
- When viewing the bonsai, there are positive and negative spaces forming the composition. Positive spaces are those elements made up of the container, the foliage mass, trunk and branches. The negative spaces are the open areas surrounding the bonsai and found between the trunk and branches.
- Proportion and the relationship among and between the elements of a bonsai are critical to developing an appealing composition. Remember, variety between these elements is important and necessary for a beautiful bonsai.
  - What is the relation between the height of the container to the overall height of the bonsai?
  - What are the relationships among the elements of the bonsai and the overall composition of the bonsai?
- There is an appealing relationship between elements within the bonsai. This relationship can be distilled to the Rule of Thirds.

The rule of thirds is a principal in art and useful for designing bonsai. This rule stems from the theory that the human eye naturally gravitates to intersection points that occur when an image is split into thirds.

In the rule of thirds, the bonsai and its container are divided into thirds with two imaginary lines vertically and two lines horizontally making three columns, three rows and nine sections in the composition. Important compositional elements and leading lines are placed on or near the imaginary lines and where the lines intersect.

- Balance and stability, these ideas are critical for the appearance of the bonsai. The container is the base of the overall image. A vertical line, dividing the left and right sides of the image, balancing the visual weight either side of that imaginary line. Balance of the visual weight can be achieved by controlling the foliage mass.

- Movement of the composition is intended to lead the viewer up the trunk and along branch lines.
- Finally, there are those exterior/surface elements that will impact your bonsai. Color and texture of the bonsai and the container should compliment each other and not upstage other elements.



(L-R) Ron Milostan, Jane Delancey, Jay Sinclair



Jack Wikle explains his display while Jane comments on the set up

## **UP FOR DEBATE:**

### ***No, I am not Mr. Miyagi***

**Aaron J. Binns**

I admit it, every once in a while, I enjoy a good complaining session. I try to hold it in, I really do... but on occasion people get the best of me and if I don't vent there may be an explosion. There are certain things that people should know not to do in a civilized society.

For instance, never ask when a lady is due, unless she has already told you she is pregnant or the baby is in the process of coming out. You take on way too much risk in any other scenario. Having said that, you would be amazed at how many people don't have the sense enough to hold their tongue. (By the way, unsolicited speculation on any reproductive topic should be treated with the same amount of trepidation.) There is also that guy. You know, the one that goes to the Michigan vs. Ohio State game in Ann Arbor and chooses to wear his Ohio State jersey. Don't do this. Everyone around you will be congenial and say things like "It's all in good fun", but the truth is everyone around you would like to pour their overpriced drinks on your head. Not to say that the Ohio State fan doesn't have the right to go to the game, please do, we need all the help we can get paying Harbaugh's salary; but for heaven sakes come in disguise.

I know what you're thinking, "These are all good and true points Aaron but what do they have to do with Bonsai?" Well, when people come to my home for the first time and see my trees why do they feel they need to make a Karate Kid reference? Not everyone does this of course but the sad fact is about half of the people do. My previous neighbor called me Mr. Miyagi. I allowed this only because I genuinely liked the guy. We all spend hours working on our trees and it can be a little insulting when the only comment a visitor has is a throwback to a corny 80's movie. Do you remember when you're mom told you, "If you have nothing nice to say, don't say anything at all?" Why then do people have such a hard time when they find out you own Bonsai? I have created a litmus test of sorts that I use when hiring contractors to work on or around my home.

If when providing a quote good things are said about my trees the contractor is rewarded with brownie points and extra consideration, if nothing is said about my trees no brownie points are awarded but the contractor is still considered, if a Mr. Miyagi comment is made the dude just lost the job. (I apply the same kind of test when my wife brings new friends over, but don't tell her that.)

How does one handle this situation? As an avid Bonsai artist, I try to advertise the virtues of the hobby and insist that old Japanese guys are in fact not the only people who own and take care of Bonsai trees. The truth is that Bonsai is still an obscure art in the U.S. and people don't know how to react when presented with a collection of private trees. I am left wondering what the cure could be.

How do we change the paradigm so that Bonsai is appreciated by a wider audience?

There is hope. I have also been approached by several people who have asked how to get started in Bonsai. This means that there are a lot of people out there that are aware of the hobby and have taken enough notice to consider trying it themselves. So how do we close the deal and get these individuals to pick of a pair of scissors?

I pose two questions for debate this month. First, what is the appropriate way to react when you are Mr. Miyagi'd? Second, how do we let people know what a wonderful hobby this is and get them interested enough to try it themselves. I'm not sure I have great answers for either of these questions so I will rely on group debate to find the way. Look to the Facebook page late this month or early next for the discussion.

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## BEGINNER'S MIND

**J.Brian Byrd & Carmen Leskoviansky**

Our Facebook page recently featured the question:

*Is it your intent to surprise the viewer? Or to call to mind the long history of bonsai?*

Here are a few thoughts...

**Ron Milostan:** I do not want to surprise the viewer. I want the viewer to see a memory. An illusion of a sort. The eye will see a small tree in a pot. Relatively small. The mind will see an older, larger tree it has seen before. It will look very real to them but confusing since it is here in front of them. If I were to want them to call to mind the history of bonsai, they would want to see a 200 yr. old tree in a pot. This is what they know as bonsai.

**Chuck Lama:** I suspect 99% of Bonsai Gardeners create for their own personal satisfaction and gratification, not to surprise the viewer or teach them anything...

**Mark Hanner:** Not to be too much a smart aleck, I think the viewer of a bonsai of mine is surprised, to see I have not killed it. Seriously, as a beginner, I think Chuck nails it, though Ron's response is more apropos to viewers of larger of older trees.

**Dave Tucker:** I don't claim either of your choices.

I admit I'd like to impress the viewer, but that's secondary to feeling pleased with my own work. While I respect the long history of bonsai, I also see the popular hobby today as building from rigid tradition using new types of trees and a more casual approach to styling.

**Summary:** It appears that most artists strive to create a tree that pleases their personal tastes rather than to surprise the viewer. Artists also try to create realistic looking trees that call to mind a feeling or memory within the viewer.

Follow us on Face book and get involved in the conversation!

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2016

### Aug 24 - Monthly Meeting

A Discussion of Seasonal Topics.

### Saturday & Sunday, August 27 & 28

Our Annual Bonsai Show at Matthaei Botanical Gardens

### September 28 - Monthly Meeting

Our Annual Auction of Bonsai.

### October 26 - Monthly Meeting

Aaron Wiley will discuss the reasons, goals and objectives of fertilizing, timing fertilizer application and fertilizers.

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## FUTURE WORKSHOPS- 2016

You can reserve a position in these workshops by paying the workshop fee. Your check, covering the cost of the workshop, should be made out to *Ann Arbor Bonsai Society*. If you are interested, you can contact Jay Sinclair at [aabonsaisociety@gmail.com](mailto:aabonsaisociety@gmail.com) (put **WORKSHOP** in the subject line) and I will provide you with mailing instructions OR you can reserve a spot in the workshop by paying the fee at the monthly meetings.

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## REGIONAL BONSAI EVENTS - 2016

### Mid-August 39th Annual Mid-America Bonsai Exhibit

Held in Glencole, Illinois

### August 28 & 29 Ann Arbor Bonsai Society - Annual Show

Held at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, Ann Arbor, Michigan

### September 10-11 5th US National Bonsai Exhibit

Held in Rochester, New York

### Sunday, September 18, 2016 Art of Bonsai

Held at Hidden Lake Gardens, Tipton, Michigan

### October (time and date to be announced) Mid-Michigan Bonsai Club - Annual Show

Held at VanAtta's Greenhouse, 9008 Old M-78, Haslett, Michigan

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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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## 2016 EXECUTIVE BOARD

President .....	<b>Ron Milostan</b>
Immediate Past President .....	<b>Jay Sinclair</b>
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Directors 2016 .....	<b>Peggy &amp; Barry Kubitz</b>
Director 2016-2017 .....	<b>Aaron Binns</b>

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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:** Don Wenzel

**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)

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



Ann Arbor Bonsai Society  
 1800 North Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-9741

*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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