

President's Corner - Chuck Croft

I am looking forward to the Spring Bonsai Festival this year (I always do). For the first time in a number of years, we will be in the Chinese Pavilion along with some of the trees from the National Collection. This is a rare privilege. Please note that you are not being asked to bring good stands for your trees due to the potential for water damage. Rather, try to find some weathered boards that can be cut up and used as a slab/stand for your trees. These will not be damaged by water and will look rustic.

We will have different labels this year, in an effort to provide a format close to that used by the trees in the museum. The information you will need will be:

Common Name
Scientific Name
Time in Training

We request that you put your name on the back of the label so that an individual can be matched with their tree when cleaning up. We will work with the National Arboretum to identify tree owners during cleanup so that other people in the public areas will not be able to walk off with a tree. Carts will be available to transport trees into and out of the exhibit area.

For the first time, we will have three individuals monitoring trees as they are delivered to the show. Their goal is two-fold. First, they will prevent trees that are diseased or have a lot of insects in them from entering and staying at the museum. Secondly, they will notify individuals that need to further prune or groom their trees. The last few years, we have had several trees that had one or both of these problems exhibited and this does not reflect well on PBA or the member clubs. These "marshals" will be stationed at the entrance to

the Chinese Pavilion. With cooperation and patience we will have a great show.

PBA has purchased a 10 foot by 10 foot sunshade/tent that will be set up near the vendor's tent. We need volunteers to man this tent and work on some of their trees in an ongoing demonstration to attract the attention and interest of Arboretum visitors. There will also be signs to attract visitor's attention so they may get help with their bonsai or plants they just purchased. We will need at least two docents in the Chinese Pavilion at all times. Security will not be quite the issue, this year, that it is in the auditorium because we will have the security rope. These docents will be needed primarily to answer questions. Also, the arboretum staff has suggested that a docent periodically conduct a tour of the PBA trees in the Chinese Pavilion, explaining, in general terms, about the individual trees, and bonsai.

I am looking forward to a good show. I hope you are too.

A Final Good-bye to a Jewel - Jim Sullivan

Family, friends, comrades-in-arms, and comrades in bonsai gathered at Arlington National Cemetery on February 7 to show respect and appreciation for Julius 'Jules' Koetsch. A grand, but poignant ceremony it was, that display of full military honors: caisson, escort platoon of Marines, band, and some of the family and friends slowly marching or walking the two miles to grave side as the band played. A Marine stationed at every intersection, to prevent traffic from interrupting the procession, held a formal salute posture until the procession passed. The grave side ceremonies were formal, but again touching - hymns by the band, rifle volleys and taps. The casket flag was folded, and along with kind words, I am sure, was presented to Jules' wife, Jane. It was over. The Marines had paid respect to a fighter pilot who had served valiantly, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross at the age of 22,

and a Purple Heart from a grateful nation. Friends from several PBA clubs were there and will no doubt remember that day as they recall all the good work Jules did for so long for the art of bonsai.

A Visit With Peter Chan - Steve Miller

I recently had the opportunity to visit Great Britain through my business as a freelance illustrator. Mixing business with pleasure "my love of bonsai," I managed to squeeze in two extra days to visit the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens at Wisley which houses a wonderful bonsai courtyard display maintained by Heron's Bonsai Nursery. Heron's is owned and operated by world renowned bonsai master and author Peter Chan. I had previously contacted Peter, and was pleased and surprised that he had put aside his entire afternoon schedule to spend time with me at his nursery.

Peter greeted me at the entrance gate and took me on a fully guided tour of his 8 acre establishment. From his home, to his greenhouses, to his display areas, we avidly viewed and discussed many of his bonsai. Peter is also very excited that Herons Bonsai Nursery has just finished construction of a massive Student Learning Center where Peter will give lectures and demonstrations, and will teach classes year-around. Walking through the growing fields, Peter answered every question I asked with such a passion for the art explaining, in depth, his methods of growing and maintaining bonsai.

Peter is an Acerologist and avid collector and fan of the Japanese Maple, as am I. I had drawn a picture of Peter's famous split trunk Japanese Maple as a gift for Peter, and was surprised to find that the tree was being stored for the winter at his nursery as he had sold it about five years before. He had his staff bring the tree out of storage so we could take pictures with the artwork I had given him.

Ever the humble host, he invited me to return in the fall when the maples would be in full color so we could work on more trees and I could stay and see the completed learning center. I felt as though we were old army buddies rather than bonsai master and student. Free with his wisdom and knowledge, Peter is a very down-to-earth kind of guy with a most impressive bonsai collection. If you get the chance to visit the UK,

visit Heron's Nursery in Surrey and tell Peter I said "Hello."

A New Project - The Conifer Garden At Arlington - Pete Jones

On June 16, 1999, I attended the first meeting about the new community center that would be built to serve residents of Arlington County, Virginia. This new center would replace a 1960's building which was outdated and no longer able to meet the needs of the community. The County employed an architectural firm to design a "green building" with a multi-use purpose. This building would be six times larger than the old community center. The concept of multi-use was new and would even offer facilities for all age groups, including daycare for seniors who needed supervision.

The idea of a new community center appealed to most residents. The size of the new building and its required parking lot, the proposed playground and basketball court posed new and interesting possibilities. I asked if there would be input with regard to landscap-

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ing. The location of the new center afforded a lot of land for green space and some gardens.

Over the next 18 months, the County's staff, the architectural firm and interested residents met monthly to work out details for the building and the programs to be affiliated with it. At each meeting I asked about landscaping and was told that a landscaping committee would be formed once the building design had been agreed upon. At the last meeting, when the County was presenting the building design which the residents had approved, I asked this time about the landscaping committee. I was told that a landscaping plan had already been formulated. Needless to say, I felt that the County did not want input on landscaping.

Throughout the process, I had stressed that we should use some of the land for educational gardens. We could develop display gardens so that visiting residents could learn about various types of plants which they could use for landscaping around their homes. This idea was presented to the County Board of Supervisors which then directed staff to include this concept.

The garden area measures 125 feet by 25 feet and is divided into 4 plots. One plot is intended for dwarf conifers; one for a butterfly garden which a 4th grade class would tend. The third plot would be a vegetable garden for after school students and senior citizens to work. The last plot would show ground cover alterna-



Arlington Garden Photo 1



Arlington Garden Center and Playground

tives to ivy. County staff stressed that volunteers would have to maintain these plots; that staffing and funding from the county would not be available.

In February 2005, County staff introduced the new center director to me. We discussed plans for the grand opening, which was scheduled for May 13, 2005. I succeeded in convincing our bonsai club to display some of their plants and to provide a demonstration during the grand opening on how the plants are worked on. Since then, the bonsai club has been conducting monthly programs at Walter Reed Center here in Arlington.

In order to show my own personal commitment to developing a well-landscaped park in Arlington, I drew up a list of landscaping-size plants which we wished to donate. We had a fifteen year old *Picea pungens* 'Thomsen' on the list that caught the landscaping supervisor's eye. He had expressed a desire to start a conifer garden on the grounds of the community center. He arranged for his staff to dig this *Picea pungens* and move it to the grounds in April 2006. On the morning the tree was moved, we were happy to see this spruce moved to a location where everyone could see it. I agreed to care for it until it was well established. Arlington has 192 small parks which keep the staff quite busy. Several times I had walked through the grounds with the grounds' maintenance supervisor, discussing possibilities for some of the other plants which were on our donation list. Although I thought we could work together, such was not the case.

In October 2006, the Center Director asked me if I had a tree which could be planted as part of the playground's ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of the children's playground. We showed him the *Acer palmatum dissectum* 'Red River' that I had been growing for 25 years. This tree was offered as a donation to the playground. The director could not believe that we would donate such a beautiful, old tree. He arranged to have the tree picked up the morning of the ceremony and to then be planted later after the ceremony. Sadly, one week after the tree was planted, it was stolen. Beyond that, the staff had not planted nor staked the tree after the ceremony.

After many more meetings and countless emails, during the first week of 2007, I was informed that the conifer garden could be planted. Over the years, I had been growing *Chamaecyparis obtusa* from seeds and had several flats of four-year old seedlings to start the dwarf conifer plot. To fill out the remainder of the plot, we planted other conifers that I had propagated and was growing for bonsai training. These trees needed to be removed in order to make space for slower growing evergreens and conifers.

Although there is still space for the plants, I would like to get a variety of other small conifer seedlings or root cuttings and some grafted plants to show variations which dwarf evergreens and conifers can offer. Presently *Chamaecyparis obtusa* plants make up the bulk of this garden. What I envision, are plants which will not grow more than 6 feet in 20 years. This is a requirement I believe will give this garden some interest. It is also a requirement for landscaping plants around our home.

In September 2009, pictures were taken of each plant with a number assigned. Now each plant will be located with a number so that, as they are moved, we can maintain a good inventory. If enough local members help with this long-term project, we should be able to provide pictures and write-ups quarterly on the progress this conifer garden is making. Who knows, we may just find some *Chamaecyparis* that warrant propagation.

Attending the ACS Southeastern Region Meeting in September 2009, I showed a flat of *Chamaecyparis obtusa*. Many attendees were interested in seeing how small these first year seedlings were. I also had some three-year old seedlings so that members could see how these seedlings could develop. It was a great ex-



Close-up of *Chamaecyparis obtusa* with cones

perience, sharing my accomplishment with so many interested people. I do hope that those living in the Washington, D.C. area will join me in my effort to develop this educational Dwarf Evergreen and Conifer Garden. The goal is to promote and educate the public about dwarf evergreens and conifers. Working on such a project alone is difficult, but as a small group, all of us will benefit.

Although each of us has our own little conifer garden, this garden, of which I write, gives us the opportunity to grow and develop new conifers. As we evaluate those that show special characteristics, we can propagate them to share with others. Many conifers do not produce true from seeds, which, in turn makes them all the more interesting when they are grown from seed. Each day, when walking our dog, we walk by the conifer garden to see the changes. It is so rewarding to see the variations of *Chamaecyparis obtusa*. All are the same age and the seeds all came from one plant. There are all shapes, sizes, and colors. These plants are growing with a great deal of care. The ground is mulched to keep weeds down and to show off the plants.

This is the first installment of two. The rest of this article will appear in the next issue of the PBA Clip-pings.



Commune with Sensei Sam by Jim Sullivan (Bowie)

This column invites questions, or contrary experiences, methods, or information. Send your thoughts to Sensei Sam at jvsullivan@aol.com. Your questions or responses can appear in *Clippings* anonymously if you prefer.

Have you ever worked on a bonsai for months, or even years, and suddenly come to the realization that it looks like c---? The realization may not be so sudden. You may see a similar, but much nicer composition in a magazine, on the Internet, or at a show. It may come as a gentle suggestion from a fellow club member or a mild criticism from a viewer at a public display. Hopefully it did not, or does not, come in the form of group pointing and laughing; or as in my case, a public rebuke by the icon John Naka.

Thinking through the composition, viewing similar examples before beginning, and seeking a second opinion, should certainly help in avoiding a redo. Not only is time lost, but materials are wasted and the tree is often stressed in the rewiring and/or repotting process. Worst of all, you may agonize over your mistakes as your bonsai lies hidden, awaiting repotting season or delivery of another several hundred feet of wire.

I hope the accompanying pictures help illustrate, in my opinion, improvements made to a bonsai



Figure A. Virginia Pine (*Pinus virginiana*) before reworking it

composition. The Virginia Pine, *Pinus virginiana*, and the stone (bog iron) were collected near Baltimore, MD about five years ago. Inspired by trees I had seen while hiking in Virginia and Maryland, I decided on a root-over-rock composition. I spent considerable time attaching the tree to the stone, waiting a year, and then wiring the tree in a windswept style. Over time, I became dissatisfied with my work. The main issue for me was that the roots were on the lee side of the composition and made the tree appear unstable. So I completely rewired the tree, doing an about face. But now, with the branches in the opposite direction, the planting was at the wrong end of the pot. So, in September, I repotted the composition. Because I did not remove any roots, I feel confident I did no harm to the tree. (I have successfully repotted several bonsai "out of season". Perhaps more about that in a future installment). I am pleased with the transformation.

In this case, better planning and more time spent up front would have resulted in a more pleasing and more believable composition (and perhaps fewer snickers from my bonsai buddies).

Sensei Sam



Figure B. Virginia Pine (*Pinus virginiana*) reworked



Calendar of Events *Compiled by Steve Miller(BBC)*

Send your club's input to Steve at
Neogenesis515@yahoo.com;

Potomac Bonsai Society Club Schedules

Baltimore Bonsai Club

Dale Lehman (410) 686-7827 delehman@verizon.net
February 26 Patuxent Nursey Open House
February 27 Club Meeting -Catonville Library
March 11-13 Maryland Home and Garden Show
Timonium Fairgrounds
March 27 Club Meeting Catonville Library -Pete Jones Workshop
April 12 Carroll County Garden Club Presentation
April 22 Roy Nagatoshi Workshop

Brookside Bonsai Society

North Chevy Chase Rec Center
Jim Hughes (301) 779-2891 jim6909@msn.com
Upcoming Meetings- Call for schedule

Chesapeake Bonsai Society

Please contact Sharon Katz
(410) 263-3307
sharonlkatz@gmail.com

Call for Schedule

Kiyomizu Bonsai Club

Clearwater Nature Center
Essie Wilson (301) 839-2471
wilson@howrey.com

Upcoming Meetings- Call for schedule

Potomac Viewing Stone Group

US National Arboretum
Glenn Reusch (540) 672-5699
Ghreusch@aol.com
Upcoming Meeting - Call for Schedule

Northern Virginia Bonsai Society

Walter Reed Community Center

Arlington, Va
Jack FitzSimons (703) 938 2272
jfitzsmons@verizon.net

February 12 Wiring and Repotting- Fitzsimmons & Gutierrez
March 12 Carving and Woodworking tools -Gutierrez
April 9-10 NVBS Spring Show
April 23-24 Roy Nagatoshi Workshop
May 6-8 Potomac Bonsai Association Spring Show

Washington Bonsai Club

US National Arboretum
Ross Campbell (301) 587-6898
campbellr@gao.gov

Upcoming Meetings- Call for schedule

SPRING OPEN HOUSE & SALE

Friday, Saturday, May 6-7, 2011
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Entdr@verizon.net

Secretary: Steve Miller
Neogenesis515@yahoo.com

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Campbellr@gao.gov

Additional

Webmaster: **Vacant**

Newsletter Editor: Steve Miller
Neogenesis515@yahoo.com

Membership Sec.: **Vacant**

Contributing Author: Jim Sullivan
Jvsullivan@aol.com

Calendar Coordinator: Steve Miller
Neogenesis515@yahoo.com

Potomac Bonsai Association Membership Application

PBA Member Clubs

Welcome! PBA is composed of the clubs listed to the right. Join one and be eligible to attend any club's meeting in addition to receiving the *PBA Clippings* on a quarterly basis. We present a Spring Bonsai Festival and an annual auction, as well as other events. Residents of club communities are expected to join a club to receive all membership benefits, including *PBA Clippings*.

To become a member, call the contact person of the club convenient to your location for the current rate and where to send this application and the dues (Please make the check payable to the club you are joining). Individual clubs set their own dues. Check for Beginner's hour and other functions. Meeting locations, times and club contact numbers (for additional information) are subject to change. We suggest that you call before sending in your membership application.

Individuals residing beyond commuting distance of a club are invited to subscribe to *PBA Clippings*. For a subscription only (does not include entitlement to participate in club events), complete this application and mail with a check payable to PBA to Ross Campbell, 728 Guilford Ct., Washington, D.C., 20901-3218.

Type of Membership:

- Individual club membership (includes *PBS Clippings*)
- Family club membership (One *PBA Clippings* subscription per household)
- PBA Clippings* only, US \$20.00 (does not include club activities)
- PBS Clippings*, International subscription, US \$35.00 (E-mail version, \$15)

Circle one of the following Association activities with which you can help:

- | | | | |
|------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Membership | Club Library | Exhibit Planning | Newsletter Staff |
| Publicity | Raffle Table | Exhibit Construction | Hospitality |
| Web Page | Meeting Clean-up | OTHER | |

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Telephone: Home: ()

Office: ()

How did you find out about PBA?

Baltimore Bonsai Club, 4th Sunday, 1 pm, Towson Branch of Baltimore Public Library; Arschel Morell, (410)744-6478, ajmorellsr14@aol.com

Bonsai Society of the Eastern Shore, 1st Wednesday, 7 pm, Talbot Hospice, Easton, Susan Jones-Armari, (410)943-9886, susanja@bcctv.com

Brookside Bonsai Society, 3rd Thursday, 7:30 pm, 7901 Meadowbrook Lane, Chevy Chase, MD, Stephen Moran, (202)722-7191, framor@starpower.net

Chesapeake Bonsai Society, Call for meeting time and location, Sharon Katz, (410)263-3307, sharonkatz@excite.com

Kiyomizu Bonsai Club, 4th Sunday, 2 pm, Clearwater Nature Center, 11000 Thrift Rd, Clinton, MD, Essie Wilson, (301)839-2471, wilson@howrey.com

Lancaster Bonsai Society, 2nd Wednesday, 7 pm, Conestoga House, 1608 Marietta Pike, Lancaster, PA, Bob Ulrich, (717)468-6458, LancasterBonsai@yahoo.com

Mid-Shore Bonsai Society, Saturday meetings TBA, Adkins Arboretum, Ridgley, MD, Kris Doherty, (410)778-6662

Northern Virginia Bonsai Society, 2nd Saturday, 9 am, Walter Reed Community Center, 2909 16th St South, Arlington, VA, Judith Schwartz, (703)751-3768,

jmschwartz@comcast.net

Potomac Viewing Stone Group, Meets irregularly (~ 6 times per year), Glenn Reusch, (540)672-5699, Ghreusch@aol.com,

Rappahanock Bonsai Society, Call for meeting time and location, Todd Stewart, (804)448-4499

Washington Bonsai Club, 3rd Saturday, 2 pm, Call first (no July or August meetings), U.S. National Arboretum, Washington, D.C., Ross Campbell, (301)587-6898

PBA Clippings

Newsletter of the Potomac Bonsai Association

The PBA Clippings (ISSN 0160-9521) is published by the Potomac Bonsai Association, Inc. (PBA), a nonprofit organization, in the interests of its affiliate member clubs and societies. Copyright 1996 PBA. The views/opinions herein do not necessarily represent those of the Association or its governing board.

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Non-member Subscriptions: Individuals residing within the metropolitan areas of our clubs are encouraged to become members of a club to receive the newsletter. Annual subscription for 4 Quarterly issues of the PBA Clippings only is US \$20.00 (US \$35.00 for international mail) which should be made payable to the Potomac Bonsai Association and sent to Ross Campbell, 728 Guilford Ct., Washington, D.C., 20901-3218.

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