



**Thirty-eight Years of Bonsai Education and Volunteerism: 1970 - 2009 Vol. 40 Issue 3 Sept. 09**

### **President's Corner - Chuck Croft**

There are several things I need to discuss with you this month. First, however, I want to pass on my appreciation for the help received from our membership, the U.S. National Arboretum Staff and the National Bonsai Foundation Staff during the Spring Festival this year. I have heard almost nothing but good comments regarding the format and content of the Spring Festival. The workshops were well attended, although a few spots were still available. The demonstrations were well attended, in spite of the weather. Our vendors had a good weekend, again considering the weather. Most of all, everyone had fun. This format seems to be working well, so we will continue to work with it, modifying and fine tuning until we have the best Spring Festival possible. Importantly, we are more closely following our charter by getting back to some of the educational activities we used to have but had to let go.

The Juried Show was a success. This was the first time, in my experience, that PBA has conducted a juried show and we got a good response. We selected 18 trees from a total of 26 submitted and we had submissions from as far away as New York. This next year we will be able to get the word out earlier and hope to have a greater response.

One important thing we need to be cognizant of, as an organization, is the quality of the trees. Quality includes not only the appearance of our trees, but also the health of the trees. PBA membership includes people with a wide variety of background and skills related to bonsai. We strongly encourage peo-

ple of all skill levels to bring trees and display them at the PBA display. However, the trees displayed should have been pruned and should be in good condition. Most importantly, each and every tree displayed (or even brought onto the grounds of the U.S. National Arboretum) should be healthy. It is the responsibility of the individual clubs to select member trees to be shown and to ensure that their club's trees are in good health. This year, we found a couple of trees on display that were not in good health and, in fact, were diseased. We cannot allow this to happen and the U.S. National Arboretum cannot allow it to happen. Therefore, the PBA Board is reviewing ways to prevent this from happening in the future. We will keep you posted as we develop relevant procedures. Also, prior to the Spring Festival we will be publishing an article about how to prepare trees for the show. This is not something we want to do. It is something we have to do.

We were concerned about the venue for the 2010 Spring Festival as the U.S. National Arboretum is due to begin renovation of the Administration Building. The start date for this renovation has been moved back to August of 2010, so we do not have any problem for the next year. However, we will need to explore options for the following year.

The current PBA logo tree is still alive at the U.S. National Arboretum but the top has died out and the tree has been extensively restyled. In addition, we do not have any photographs of the original logo tree, nor do we have a good digital file of the current representation. The digital representation has gone through a number of iterations and is beginning to look 'squared off' on the edges and un-natural. The PBA

Board, therefore, has decided to initiate a search for a new logo tree. This time, we want the logo tree to be a PBA member's tree. Please plan on bringing any tree you would like to have considered for the new logo tree to the PBA Spring Festival in 2010. We are planning to review all PBA members' trees at the PBA Spring Festival and select the new logo tree from those present. We are also considering using a digital photograph of the tree as the logo rather than a digital, black-and-white representation. As we develop details of this plan, we will keep you posted.

Thank you again for your support during the Spring Festival and throughout the year. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. In the meantime, best wishes.

### Death of a Bonsai Friend

-By Peter Jones

This hobby of growing bonsai trees brings us in contact with various people from different walks of life. As we share our interest in bonsai we often find that with some, it goes beyond bonsai. Such is the case with my dear friend Bill Orsinger. Over the years, not only did our interest in bonsai grow, our friendship grew beyond just bonsai.

It was one of those things in life that happens and we just don't have the words to say how or why, but we enjoy every minute of it. In the late 90's, five days before our July program, I was asked if I could fill in because the person scheduled had to cancel. A few days after my lecture on plant selection for bonsai training, I got a very nice email that told me what would happen if I didn't write an article on my lecture.

Bill told me in his email that it was the best lecture he had heard in 25 years, and that if I didn't write an article from my lecture that he would kick my a--. I believe that was the start of us sharing ideas in both past and present experiences. Bill always gave me encouragement on my propagation work, and he found the rare and choice plants most interesting. It was around this time that Bill made a video for Arlington County on bonsai. When this video was aired on cable, Ruth Lamama, (one of our club's founding members) visited us to see Bill's presentation on the Arlington cable channel.



Bill working his magic doing a presentation at one of NVBS' monthly program meetings.

### Autumn OPEN HOUSE & SALE

Saturday, October 17, 2009  
9am-6pm

guest artist David Easterbrook  
of the Montreal Botanic Garden

- free bonsai demonstrations
- 40% off landscape stock
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finest leaf of all the dissectum lace leaf maples. Now these plants are part of the Orsinger collection at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens. I introduced Bill to Keith Tomlinson years ago, when he told me that he wanted to find a home for his bonsai collection.

Bill had a unique method of getting help on styling his trees. He would place the tree on his patio table, with pruning tools next to the tree. After dinner he and his wife Viola would have a glass of wine on their patio. Bill would ask Viola “what do you think of this tree”? She would tell him what needed to come off. Bill would always find some reason to leave, to check on something, and sure enough, Viola would pick up a tool and cut off what she didn’t like. Bill always felt that she did a better job in finding the bonsai in a tree.

As we visited each other our friendship grew. We found so many things that we both liked and enjoyed. Our love for nature, gardening and life experiences were greatly different but in so many ways similar. Every year in

February, we would discuss the vegetables that he would start from seed and which tomato plants I wanted to try. This year the tomatoes that Bill gave me are really producing. I will save seeds from each of the heirloom tomatoes that Bill gave me to start tomatoes next year as Bill had done for years. He had so much joy growing his vegetable garden each year.

Bill’s approach to bonsai was quite unique. He loved collecting seeds to see if he could grow the plant first and then start the bonsai training. We both shared the belief that one must understand the plant before one can train it as a bonsai. Because of his interest in starting plants from seeds years ago, I gave him one of the first pinecones that my pinus parviflora ‘Zuisho’ produced. Bill told me that he got 9 seeds out of that cone, and 2 came up.

Since this was a new experience for both of us, we often discussed how we were growing our pinus parviflora ‘Zuisho’ seedlings. In our experience and research on parviflora seedlings we found that not all seeds are viable and some seeds would take 2 years before they would germinate. Many years ago, I had also given Bill a pinus parviflora “Burke’s Bonsai” and an acer palmatum dissectum ‘Red Filigree Lace’ that I had grafted. He grew these plants in the ground for a few years and then potted them. Bill found it fascinating how these pines would back bud with proper care. Every time I would visit Bill he would show me both plants. He was captivated by the fineness of the leaf of ‘Red Filigree Lace’; it is the



Bill taking the time to explain the fundamentals of bonsai to younger members.

We have suffered a great loss of knowledge on heirloom vegetables. As Bill had shared his tomatoes with me, I will share tomatoes that I start with others and also share Bill's story with the people who receive these tomatoes.

Although Bill is gone, I have such great memories of the good times we had. His love of history and life experiences that he shared with me gave me a lasting memory of our shared friendship. We are here but a short time and having someone of Bill's character as a friend, makes that short time most enjoyable.

We developed a love and respect for each other that one doesn't find often in life, and although Bill has made the big step, I shall cherish the times that we had together. I have many memories of Bill and the things we shared that will stay with me for the rest of my life. Well done Bill, until we meet again.



Twin trunk with saw & beginning of cut.



Cut through roots.

donated by Richard Meszler, a member of PBA and the Baltimore Bonsai Club. That beautiful bonsai was the result of much effort and attention to detail over time, but also initially visualizing the eventual product in a possibly confusing web of wild growth on a 15 - 20 foot tree in the field. The main issue however, was multiple (seven!) trunks with a common base. He used a splitting wedge and hammer to separate the clump into individual trees. That was radical surgery, but the end result bears witness to his knowledge and skill (and perhaps a little luck).

Almost two years ago to the day, I had the opportunity to collect some very old azaleas from the yard of a home in Bethesda, Maryland slated for demolition. (See *Beating the Bulldozer, Clippings*, Aug. 2007). Barry Figard of the Baltimore Bonsai Club joined in the fun of digging in a yard where some areas had not been weeded for what seemed like de-



A new beginning, creating two fine trees from one.

## Commune with Sensei Sam

by Jim Sullivan (Baltimore)

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



### *Sensei, the Samurai Siamese Surgeon*

Most enthusiasts new to bonsai are surprised to see the large material, especially collected stock, of fellow club members. One such piece is now part of the collection at the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum at the National Arboretum. It is a large crab apple, collected in Maryland in 1978, styled and

cados. We were just days ahead of the bulldozer, so that dry, hot July day was it. Despite the conditions, all the plants survived. When I arrived home, I washed away the native soil and trimmed dead or damaged roots. Too tired to prepare five large containers, I planted the azaleas in my vegetable garden. The last step was a mistake. The veggie garden is in full sun, and those old azaleas had been in the shade for decades. The homeowner told me she had planted some of them 60+ years before. Generally in-ground planting is a good idea, but in this case, in full sun, a bad choice. The side of the plants facing the summer sun suffered because of the stress of being collected, thin, delicate bark, and because of not being acclimated to intense sunlight. Apparent sun scald killed areas of the cambium. The following spring, I transplanted them all into shallow nursery containers and moved them to semi-shade. The largest of the azaleas, in addition to dead areas, had a basic design problem. The plant, about 9" across at the base, consisted of two trunks of about equal diameter, but diverging at about 30°, sort of Siamese twins, joined at the bottoms.. It reminded me of the problem with Richard's



Separated trunk 2.

new designs. I am happy to report that both patients are doing well, with vigorous, independent growth. The bad part of the procedure is that there is deadwood at the cut extending into the ground which may cause some deterioration, and that deadwood will have to be carved to mask the cut if any of that area is part of the viewed side. In any case, view the accompanying photos and judge whether I made the wise choice to operate, or if you would have done things differently. - Sensei Sam



Separated trunk 1.

crab apple. But in the case of my azalea, if one trunk were removed, the resulting root base would appear much too wide, and since the cambium was dead between the trunks, the scar would never be covered by new cambial growth. So I decided to cleave the trunks through the entire root pad. I lacked the nerve to try the splitting wedge, so I used a reciprocating saw. It is really a two person job, one to hold and one to cut, but no other fools were in the area, so I managed it myself. I did the surgery on May 6 of this year after removing all flowers and all growth not needed for the

#### PBA Officers

President: Chuck Croft  
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**Calendar of Events** *Compiled*

*by Arschel Morell (BBC)*

Send your club's input to Arschel at  
ajmorellsr514@aol.com; or snail  
mail to: 9 Six Notches Ct., Balti-  
more, MD 21228

**Third Quarter 2009**

**Brookside Bonsai Society**

Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month.

September: Guest: Jack Sustic

October: Annual Auction

November: Regular Meeting

Location: North Chevy Chase Recre-  
ational Center @ 7:30

**Northern Virginia Bonsai Society**

September 12: Annual Picnic

October 3: Collected Rocky Mountain Trees  
– Larry Jackel

November 14: Evaluating Trees – Chuck  
Croft , Winter Preparation of Trees – Panel  
Discussion

December 4: Holiday Party @ China Garden

**Kiyomizu Bonsai Club**

Sept. 26, 2009, (Sat.): Annual Clearwater  
Nature Center Fair – details t/b/a

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October 25, 2009, (Sun.): Winter project  
(t/b/d)

November 2009: Thanksgiving Holiday – No  
meeting

December 5, 2009, (Sat.): Potluck Dinner -  
3:00 p.m. – Dues collection and 2010 Calen-  
dar Planning

**Washington Bonsai Club**

September 19: Working on and redistributing  
club trees

October 17: Regular Meeting

November 21: Regular Meeting



December 12: Regular Meeting

Location: National Arboretum: Bonsai and  
Penjing Museum

Time: 2pm – 4pm

### **2009 ABFF Convention**

Thai Bonsai - Country of Amazing Attractions

01 - 04 December 2009 - The Rose Garden, Bangkok, Thailand

For more details search online at:

[http://blogs.knowledgeofbonsai.org/robert\\_steven/news/](http://blogs.knowledgeofbonsai.org/robert_steven/news/)

## Potomac Bonsai Association Membership Application

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., Silver Spring, MD., 20901-3218.

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### 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)

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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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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Nation \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Home: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Office: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out about PBA? \_\_\_\_\_

## 2009 PBA Board Meeting Schedule

The schedule of PBA Board Meetings is listed here. Please note that these meetings are **not** closed meetings and that every PBA member is invited to attend. Normally, each member club is represented by the club President or their designated representative. The schedule for 2009 then, is:

13 September

15 November

## PBA Member Clubs

**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, North Chevy Chase Rec Ctr, Bethesda, MD, Jim Hughes, (301) 779-2891, jim6909@msn.com

**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, wilsone@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, Jack FitzSimons, jfitzsimons@verizon.net

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

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### *PBA Clippings*

#### Newsletter of the Potomac Bonsai Association

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**Subscriptions:** PBA member Clubs/Societies: Annual subscription is included in the membership dues paid to the PBA club or society of your choice. Telephone numbers of points of contact for information about any member club or society and its annual dues are listed above.

**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., Silver Spring, MD., 20901-3218.

**Advertising Rates:** Annual rates: 1/4 page, \$100.00; Larger than 1/4 page are accepted. Direct inquiries/payment (make checks payable to Potomac Bonsai Association) to Thomas Kodiak, see below. Please send paper ad copy or articles to the editor: Thomaskodiak@gmail.com  
Thomas Kodiak. E-mail contributions are preferred and can be sent in Word, WordPerfect, or text documents to Thomas Kodiak. Pictures need to be in jpg format.