



Forty-one Years of Bonsai Education and Volunteerism - 1970 - 2010 V: 42, Issue 3, Dec. 2010

## President's Corner - Chuck Croft

During the Potomac Bonsai Association's (PBA) Spring Festival the past couple of years, we have tried to enhance the experience and foster the growth of our bonsai skills by sponsoring a Regional Juried Show and have begun sponsoring a New Talent Competition. The latter is also sponsored by the Joshua Roth New Talent Competition in that our regional winner is provided an automatic berth in the National New Talent Competition.

In addition to these newer efforts, PBA has continued to publish the *PBA Clippings* in order to keep members apprised of activities within the various member clubs and around the bonsai world. Even though the frequency of publication has decreased from a monthly to a quarterly publication, I believe that the *PBA Clippings* has fulfilled its purpose quite well during the 17 years I have been privileged to be a PBA member, in spite of the false starts and perturbations experienced during the transition from publishing a mailed hard-copy newsletter to publishing a primarily electronic publication.

Finally, PBA has the charter to educate its membership and the public about the care, horticulture, styling, and aesthetics of bonsai and bonsai related activities. At one time, we had a program that members took to some of our high schools to teach students. Currently, a number of our members routinely give talks and workshops at a variety of venues throughout the year, including during our PBA Spring Festival. At each of our activities, we dispense a brochure to participants explaining what PBA is and what the organization does.

Each of the activities presented above has, over the years, enticed new members to join one or another of our member clubs and to participate in our activities. Also, as time goes on, our membership is changing. Some members drop out because of other time constraints, some move out of the area and join other organizations, and some retire from bonsai for health reasons, etc. First and foremost, the Potomac Bonsai Association is an organization of volunteers who are members of the member clubs. Thus, it is the Potomac Bonsai Association's membership that should be served first.

Therefore, I will be making arrangements over the next few months to try to attend a meeting of each member

club. My goal is to get feedback from each of you on what you think PBA should be doing or trying to do for you and for your individual member clubs. You do not need to wait for my visit, though. My email address and phone number are listed in this newsletter. Please feel free to either email me or call me to discuss your ideas. I cannot guarantee that each of your ideas will be adopted, but I can guarantee that each of your ideas will be considered by the PBA Board. Some ideas may be adopted at the local club level while others may be adopted at the PBA level. I look forward to hearing your ideas and to discussing them with you and with your Board Members.

## PBA Clippings - New Editorial Committee

The PBA Clippings newsletter has had a changing of the guard. The task of organizing, editing and sending out Clippings has now been taken over by a three person committee. Our goal is to publish a quarterly newsletter with quality informative articles, members stories (of success and failures), pictures of members trees and just about anything bonsai related. Having three people on this committee will help us to produce the best possible newsletter and expand on the current format, but we need your support! Organizing, editing and sending the information out to the masses is the easy part (well kinda). We need submissions from you, the members of the PBA. You don't have to be a professional writer, or a bonsai master to submit an article. The more submissions we get from you, the better clippings will be. We will still have our regular favorites like Sensei Sam and Chuck Croft's president's notes, but we are looking to take things to a higher level. Listed below are ideas of things you can submit to support the PBA Clippings newsletter. Please be an active member, share your experiences and support the PBA clippings newsletter.

We are soliciting articles on bonsai related topics (for example):

- 1) Styling techniques, soil composition, Seasonal topics, Pest management.
- 2) Links to interesting web sites and bonsai forums
- 3) Local/National bonsai events, workshops
- 4) Book reviews
- 5) Good nurseries to find material

6) Pictures of tree progressions over several years  
Please submit all items for *PBA Clippings* to Chris Baker at [rekab15@hotmail.com](mailto:rekab15@hotmail.com) or to Steve Miller at [neogenesis515@yahoo.com](mailto:neogenesis515@yahoo.com). Thank you.

## In Memory

It is my very sad duty to inform you that during the past six weeks PBA has lost three of our long-time members, two of whom were PBA and member club founding members. **Jim Rieden** passed away from cancer on 2 September 2010. Jim was a member of the Brookside Bonsai Society and could always be counted on for help when needed. He was 74 years young.

**Jules Koetsch** passed away from pneumonia and its complications on 11 November 2010. Jules was a founding member of PBA and the 25+ year editor of the *PBA Clippings*. Jules was also a founding and long-time member of the Northern Virginia Bonsai Society. The funeral will be held on 7 February 2011 at the Arlington National Cemetery.

**Jack Cardon** passed away from a stroke on 13 November 2010. Jack was a founding member of PBA as well as the Brookside Bonsai Society. Jack was also deeply involved with PBA's educational efforts for a long time. His funeral was held at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, located at 5450 Massachusetts Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland on 3 December at 1100.

We will be following these short notices with longer articles about each of these individuals and their contributions to PBA in the next issue of the *PBA Clippings*. If you have information about Jules Koetsch that you would like included please forward that information to Pete Jones ([pcjones3@verizon.com](mailto:pcjones3@verizon.com)). Pete is collecting information and putting together an article.. Comments and information regarding Jim Rieden and Jack Cardon may be sent to Steve Miller ([neogenesis515@yahoo.com](mailto:neogenesis515@yahoo.com)).

## Circle The Wagons: Support Thee American Bonsai Society - John Ruth

I had the bittersweet pleasure of attending Bill Valavanis' annual Fall Symposium last month. It was indeed a pleasure, getting to see Mary Madison, the "Buttonwood Queen", talk about collecting in Florida amongst alligators, water moccasins, and drug smugglers; David Easterbrook, who, while styling an ancient larch, regaled us about collecting in the arctic circle, in sight of whales and Inuit fishing villages in the St. Lawrence river; and not least having the impressive Ryan Neil do wonderful work on a Rocky Mountain juniper and a Black Hills spruce while deftly answering probing questions from the audience about life with his "Master", Masahiko Kimura. The vendors were of the highest quality, and the sense of camaraderie, the product of core attendees having returned for most (and for a few, all) of the thirty yearly symposia, was almost palpa-



**Jim Rieden**



**Jules Koetsch (Right) with Pete Jones**



**Jack Cardon**

ble, even during critical discussions of the excellent show trees.

What made the gathering bittersweet was Bill's announcement at the Saturday banquet that this meeting would be the last of the symposia. He cited his commitment to building the biannual National Exhibitions, which he sponsors, but note was made in the hallways and meeting rooms of a steady decline in attendance over the last several years, of vendors not meeting sales expectations, and the aging of the core supporters of the meeting.

This phenomenon, though, has not been limited to the Rochester show. Mid-Atlantic and MABA in the Midwest have had smaller crowds recently. In my town, Baltimore, we not too long ago had two nurseries dedicated to bonsai. Now there are none, with the closest being 75 minutes away, in Harrisburg. (That said, it's worth the drive). And many in PBA remember when the member list was almost twice what it is now.

Is it all "gloom and doom" for our art form? Of course not. The fact that you are reading this speaks to your own enthusiasm. The Baltimore Bonsai Club is probably the largest it has been in ten years, with many young, enthusiastic members. Perusal of Clippings shows that the Northern Virginia and Brookside clubs, in particular, have vital, active schedules. PBA itself, in collaboration with the National Bonsai Foundation and the National Arboretum, has delivered a much better product in its spring festival than was the case several years ago.

But there are things that PBA cannot at present pull off, and for that reason I think that it is important to participate also in our national organization, the American Bonsai Society. ABS strives to promote the art of bonsai throughout North America. It has the breadth, and the budget, to sponsor large meetings, with dozens of lectures, workshops, and demonstrations. Membership in ABS delivers on many fronts. The excellent journal features regional experts discussing the care of various species and subjects relevant to us. There are reviews of shows, courses of bonsai study, and a schedule of upcoming events. Another advantage of membership is access to the ABS Forum, an internet-based discussion group that allows one to ask questions on any bonsai-related topic. Multiple responses, sometimes lively, ensue. (A regular contributor, always thoughtful, is our own "Sensei Sam", Jim Sullivan). ABS also sponsors a variety of contests designed to help grow awareness of bonsai in the general public, and promotes a sense of community amongst those of us who are already involved.

The more we come together to promote bonsai, the more people become intrigued by bonsai. When that happens, it becomes more economically viable for merchants who provide bonsai-specific services and materials, and we all end up with a richer experience.

So do yourself, and our art, a favor. Please let me know if you are interested in joining ABS.

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## 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](mailto:jvsullivan@aol.com). Your questions or responses can appear in *Clippings* anonymously if you prefer.

### ABOUT FACE

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 one bonsai composition (another will be presented in the next issue). The Japanese Maple was trained from a collected seedling given me by Jim Rieden of the Brookside club. Jim was a kind and generous man and I can still see him walking among the trees at the PBA spring show, anointing them with his sprayer as if bestowing a special blessing on each one.

Despite the tree's special place in my heart, it apparently held no such status for my dog. While chasing a

chipmunk, she turned a triple trunk into a twin trunk. The loss of that trunk, the largest of the three, dramatically changed the composition. Because it was the largest, it occupied more area than the other two trunks and branches, and it also leaned towards the other end of the pot. With it gone, it appeared as if the tree were planted in the wrong position. So, I repotted the maple and did some minor wiring in an attempt to harmonize the direction of some new growth with the established trunks.

After the loss of Jim, it is even more important to me now to keep the maple from harm's way, on a display bench with the status it deserves.

Sensei Sam



Figure B. Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*) reworked



Figure A. Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*) before reworking it



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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

#### **PBA Officers**

President: Chuck Croft  
crcroft@mindspring.com

President Elect: **Vacant**

Educational VP: John Ruth  
Entdr@verizon.net

Secretary: Steve Miller  
Neogenesis515@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Ross Campbell  
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: Arschel Morell  
Ajmorell514@aol.com

## **Potomac Bonsai Society Club Schedules**

### **Baltimore Bonsai Club**

Dale Lehman (410) 686-7827 delehman@verizon.net  
Upcoming Meetings - Call for Schedule

### **Brookside Bonsai Society**

North Chevy Chase Rec Center  
Jim Hughes (301) 779-2891 jim6909@msn.com  
Upcoming Meetings  
July and August no meetings

12.12.2010 6:00 PM 9:30 PM Holiday  
Dinner

### **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  
wilsone@howrey.com

Upcoming Meetings

11/28/2010 2:00 PM 4:00 PM  
ing - Thanksgiving Holiday Weekend  
12/11/2010 4:00 PM 7:00 PM  
Pot Luck Dinner

## Potomac Viewing Stone Group

US National Arboretum  
Glenn Reusch (540) 672-5699  
Ghreusch@aol.com

Upcoming Meeting - Call for Schedule

## Northern Virginia Bonsai Societ

Walter Reed Community Center  
Arlington, Va  
Jack FitzSimons (703) 938 2272  
jfitsimons@verizon.net

No meeting in December. There will be a Christmas dinner on 10 December. Planning for 2011 has not been completed yet.

## Washington Bonsai Club

US National Arboretum

Ross Campbell (301) 587-6898  
campbellr@gao.gov  
Upcoming Meetings

Saturday, November 20, 2010; from 2 to 4 pm in the National Arboretum Administration Building. Jim Sullivan of the Baltimore Bonsai Society will demonstrate root-over-rock techniques.

Saturday, December 18, 2010, from 2 to 4 pm in the National Arboretum Administration Building. Bring your own trees and club trees for styling.

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## SPRING OPEN HOUSE & SALE

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## 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., Washington, D.C., 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? \_\_\_\_\_

## 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, 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, 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, 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

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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., Washington, D.C., 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:

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.