



Forty-one Years of Bonsai Education and Volunteerism - 1970 - 2011

Vol: 41, Issue 3, August 2011

President's Corner - Chuck Croft

PBA has had an active spring and summer.. Beginning in April, we had Roy Nagatoshi in the area for a week. He was able to visit not only the Northern Virginia Bonsai Society, but also the Brookside Bonsai Society, the Baltimore Bonsai Club and the Washington Bonsai Club. From all reports, everyone had a great time and learned a great deal from Roy. There are several pictures scattered throughout this issue of the PBA Clippings as well as an article written by Ross Campbell of the Washington Bonsai Club.

We will be bringing more bonsai artists into the area and making them available to any PBA member club that wants their time and talent. Those clubs using an artist will be responsible for the artist's time and a shared portion of the travel costs. PBA will also share in the travel costs to bring them down and make any artist more affordable to individual clubs. Roy will be back next year and we are looking at other artists, also for next year.

Our Spring Bonsai Festival at the U.S. National Arboretum went very well. We got Marybel Balendonck from California to assist us when arranging the PBA trees in the Chinese Pavilion. She thought we had a very good selection of trees and I heard third hand that she felt the West Coast had nothing on us. Mixing up the various club's trees yielded a very nice display. We were able to break the display into a series of small vignettes that set off each of the trees to their best advantage. Well done!

It is my pleasure to tell you that the winner of last year's PBA Regional New Talent Competition, Thomas Kodiak, won this year's National Joshua Roth New Talent Competition. This speaks well of our region and the talent we have here. Thomas wrote an article about his experience at my request and that ar-

tle is included here along with a 'before' and 'after' picture of Thomas' work.

The other piece of good news I have to share with you is that the Richmond Bonsai Society and the Charlottesville Bonsai Society have stated their interest in possibly joining PBA. If they do join, this will expand our club membership up from nine to eleven clubs.

Roy Nagatoshi Shows Washington a Thing or Two - Ross Campbell

Members of the Washington Bonsai Club spent a delightful evening with Roy Nagatoshi in April, receiving his cheerful and expert advice on about a dozen trees ranging from a 3-inch mamé ficus to a 3-foot bunjin Virginia pine. Other species included boxwood, bald cypress, hornbeam, yew, Japanese white pine, holly, and juniper.

In each case, Roy helped us see how to emphasize the positive features of the material while minimizing the flaws. He paid particular attention to proportion and taper, and focused on the need to work with the small branches in the canopy. These concepts were particularly prominent as Roy consulted with Charles Murn about how to maintain the lines and create pads of foliage in his Virginia and Japanese white pines.

Roy challenged us to be bold in our decisions, whether it was chopping off most of James Miles' small maple or Lee Jahnke's holly, changing the direction of John Hudson's cascade juniper, or opening up space for the eagles to fly though Renate Hudson's boxwood. We have to keep the trees happy, of course, but sometimes we have to be aggressive to make them into bonsai.

There were also times when we challenged Roy. For example, Shirley Schwarz prevailed upon him to go



Roy Nagatoshi working with Washington Club members

against his bonsai ethic and help her create a Phoenix graft using a small juniper and a gnarly piece of root. The fact that the juniper had ridden all the way from Capitol Hill to Burke on the top of Shirley's car may have played into Roy's decision to comply with her request.

The four-hour session went by quickly, and we wished that we could have spent more time with Roy and our



Roy and John Ruth preparing to style John's tree - Baltimore Bonsai Society

trees. The Washington Club members thank Chuck and Verna Croft for hosting the workshop and especially thank Roy for his help and good company.

Joshua Roth New Talent Competition - Thomas Kodiak



Roy Nagatoshi working with Washington Club members

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John Ruth's tree after styling

The Joshua Roth New Talent Bonsai Competition was held in Louisville, KY on Thursday, June 16, 2011. This year there were 6 contestants from all over the country. The contest started at 8:00 am and we were given until 5:00 pm to style the material given to us in the manner that we chose. The material was *Juniperus chinensis* and roughly 15 years old with trunks about an inch in diameter. We drew random numbers for the trees numbered 1 through 6. I drew number 4. Initially I was not too happy with my pick as I actually thought that I had chosen tree number 2 which was the one that was easiest to see the finished tree's form through the overgrown foliage.

The first thing I do when I get a raw tree with overgrown foliage is to cut back the excess foliage. The key here is to make sure that you are only removing excess foliage and not something that you will need in the finished form. Cutting back roughly 25% though is generally pretty safe as this allows you to see into the tree a bit which is necessary in order to start determining the best front. I never place too much emphasis on the front at this point so if I find two fronts, I try to trim the foliage so that both of those fronts will work. When looking for the front I always tip and turn the tree in all angles and all sides taking in the following traits in order of importance; 1: Base, 2: Trunk Movement, 3: Taper (and reverse taper of trunk), 4: Branch Structure and Positioning, 5: Branch Foliage. The order of preference isn't firm or fixed and it really depends upon the tree.

For my tree, I quickly identified a possible front and back side to the tree in the first two pictures. As I was given 9 hours, I had plenty of time and was not in any rush. For the first hour I trimmed and then moved to wiring for the next hour and a half. Copper wire was provided to all participants which was very useful as copper holds coniferous branches in position better with significantly smaller diameter wire than comparable aluminum wire. I generally try to wire almost every branch except the extremely fine branches, of which I only wire a few of those depending upon the final styling.

After wiring was finished I analyzed the tree from all sides and all angles once again. Here is when I could really see some faults with tree number 4. Looking at this tree from my proposed front and the angle that I like, it looks exactly like a reverse F. Although the bottom of the trunk has some nice form, the first and second branches, shoot out straight as does the trunk in-between these two branches forming a very parallel pair of branches that look like an F. In addition to this problem there are actually two very noticeable reverse tapers in the tree. The most pronounced reverse taper occurs on the lowest branch. There is also a less noticeable reverse taper on the main trunk right above the main branch. I consider these two faults, particularly the straight branches and lower reverse tapers to be potential downfalls of this tree. However, the key in this situation is to direct the eye away from the trees faults by enticing the eye towards the nice characteristics of the tree. This tree does have some nice characteristics that can entice the eye and



Front of Thomas Kodiak's New Talent Competition Tree Before Styling

this is the tree's deadwood. The trunk itself has two large portions which can be deadwood, the lower part of which was already all dead and needs very little work. The lower trunk also has a great amount of area which can be used for deadwood which will take the eye away from the reverse taper of that branch.

For the next hour and a half I worked on deadwood. I did very little carving and worked more on sanding with a little carving to add some movement. I took the wood off of all excess branches to make them into jin. After working on all of this I realized that it actually had too much deadwood and then spent 20 minutes slowly pushing the deadwood back cutting off jin and scaling back some of the deadwood on the main trunk and branch. Most of this work was complete by 1:00, after which I took a long lunch and spent some time looking at the other participants' trees and relaxing.

The atmosphere in the room was very friendly. I was able to borrow others tools (I did need to borrow a wire brush to clean the trunk as I forgot mine!) and offered my tools to others including my electric dremel tool I used for carving and sanding. To finish off the work on my tree I just did the final branch positioning and cleaned up the trunk with the wire brush. Some others were using lime sulfur and flame on the deadwood but I decided to pass on these treatments. For me the real key to the finish was the fine branch positioning and finding the correct angle of the tree.

Although we did not have to pay to enter the contest we did have to pay \$100 to buy the tree if we chose to



Front of Thomas Kodiak's New Talent Competition Tree After Styling

do so. We were however given until right before the Saturday dinner banquet when the decisions were to be announced to give notice of whether or not we intended to purchase the tree because the winners were to be announced after the dinner.

The styling of the tree was a lot of fun although I must admit that I liked the Potomac Bonsai Association's venue better because as it was outside, there was plenty of light. This venue was in a conference room so the lighting was rather poor and nobody was keen on using raffia as we were afraid to get everything too messy with the water and all. Throughout the show many people would ask me which tree was mine as it was written on my badge that I was a contestant in the new talent contest. Entering into the contest is thus a great way to start a conversation and meet people as they can immediately begin telling you what they liked or disliked about the tree.

When they announced the winner I was rather surprised that I took both the Judges Choice and the People's Choice vote in the competition. Typically in these types of contests I generally think that the favorite between the Judges and the general public is rather different so I was quite honored to take home the win in both categories.

A New Project - The Conifer Garden At Arlington - Pete Jones (Continued from the April Issue)

I wish to thank several ACS members for their encouraging words and for sharing cuttings with me, specifically, Tom Cox and Richard Larson, both of whom supplied me with cuttings of *Cupressus nootkatensis*. Such generosity on their part presented me with the challenge of rooting the cuttings they had sent. Having had success with rooting these plants, I wanted to share some with Scot Burrell as a gift for the September 2009 Southeastern Region Symposium. The 12 rooted *Cupressus nootkatensis* were used as gifts to those members who helped arrange the meeting.

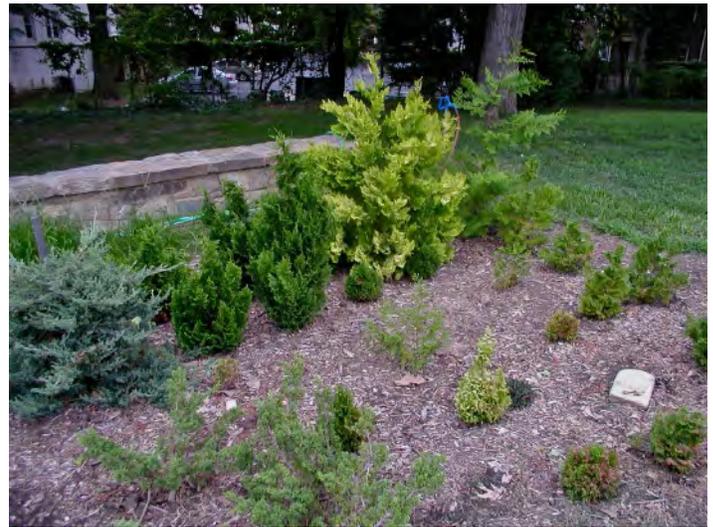
After the Richmond Symposium, Bruce Appledorn, of Appledorn Landscape Nursery, gave me the plants: *Juniperus chinensis* 'Angelica Blue', *Thuja occidentalis* 'Linesville' and *Chamaecyparis thyoides* 'Top Point' to add to the conifer garden I started in Arlington. John Wise of *A Wise Gardner* gave the conifer

garden *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Lemonade'. With such donations, this conifer garden is starting to show more conifer and evergreen diversity.

A few years ago, Dennis Dodge of Bethlehem Nursery and I swapped scion wood of various *Pinus parviflora*. Now some of those plants will also be planted in the conifer garden. Over the years, Dennis has also been most helpful in assisting me with the correct names of plants. In addition, there was a discussion in the "Conifer Obsession" group about propagating *Ginkgo biloba*. Since, in the past, I had success with grafting pines and maples, I wanted to try my hand at grafting ginkgo. Bill Barger was kind enough to send me scion wood of various cultivars of ginkos. Although I had some root stock, I was not successful in grafting them. Nevertheless, I plan to try again.

The generosity of these members demonstrates their willingness to help others promote dwarf conifers and evergreens. Their kindness has given me the desire to further promote dwarf conifers and evergreens in Arlington. To this end, if members in the local area are interested, I would like to schedule a meeting to see if local members wish to participate in promoting dwarf conifers and evergreens in the Washington Metropolitan area. I am certain that we could present programs for Arlington County's Parks and Recreation Department about dwarf conifers.

Although the Gotelli collection is at the National Arboretum, there are many people in the DC area who are more interested in local gardens. To start a new conifer and evergreen garden with plants that are true dwarfs would provide members with a new source of



Arlington Garden Center Mature Plants

information. As I work this garden, I want to keep in mind the requirement I have for our own personal yard, which is "Not more than 6 feet in twenty years." Arlington County is small with a dense population, with most homes having 50' x 100' lots. It would be beneficial for residents to see landscaping with true dwarf conifers and evergreen plants.

With the help of ACS members, we can accomplish a great deal with this dwarf conifer/evergreen garden project which I have initiated. This garden will be a source to make residents aware of the American Conifer Society as well. Messages from you to the Arlington County Board of Supervisors (County-Board@Arlingtonva.us) might go a long way in eliciting support from the County's Parks staff.

Can we start a local conifer group? I believe we can. Please let me know if you are willing to assist in developing a local conifer group.

This article was originally published in the Conifer Quarterly, Vol. 27 No. 4

Peter Jones may be contacted at pcjones3@frontier.com



Pete Jones at the Center's Conifer Garden



Roy Nagatoshi works on a tree for the BBC



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.

Some years ago, my brother-in-law, a good ol' boy from near the Oklahoma/Arkansas border, told me about noodling. My concept of noodles involved Italian or Chinese, in either red or white sauce. I am not exactly a city slicker, but I had never heard of noodling for catfish. In "noodling" for catfish, one reaches under the often muddy water into perhaps a hole in the mud bank, log, abandoned refrigerator or washing machine, feels around for the fishes mouth, gets a firm grasp, and lifts the thrashing "cat" to the surface. These fish often weigh in the tens of pounds. Often the fisherman/fisherwoman is completely submerged in the pursuit. Apparently this bizarre method of capturing these whiskered creatures has been practiced in rural areas for some time, and only recently has made its way to TV reality shows.

I recently saw the technique put into practice on a rock collecting trip with the Potomac Viewing Stone Group, one of the member clubs of PBA. This turned out to be a tough group of guys and gals: Ked and her twin teenage children, also Nan, Glenn, Chris, Ponder, Ralph, and sensei (not so tough). The teenagers were doing what teenagers do, fooling around and having fun. But the rest were serious mineral hunters, some towing homemade styrofoam rafts to transport their often heavy stones. The technique involved wading

the river, looking for candidates if the water was shallow and clear, or feeling with hands or feet if it were too deep or clouded by silt from the collector's feet or the feet of others. This blind probing in unfamiliar water reminded me of the noodling described by my brother-in-law. It seemed as if Ponder spent most of the day Cousteau like, submerged or nearly so. He would probably have taken scuba gear, but that would have limited the room on his raft for all the great stones his efforts yielded. He (and others, including Sensei) often dug around promising stones for quite some time before concluding that the object of their lust was firmly attached to several tons of bedrock. Chris, along with his raft, faded into the distance as if he were looking for the source of the river (or perhaps unmined riches). And after several hours of wading, stumbling, digging, and lifting, we returned to our cars with our treasures, for, in some cases, the long drive home. I drove 80 + miles each way; but to show you how dedicated these viewing stone people are, Nan drove that day from West Virginia and Ralph from New Jersey, and would be returning that day!

I had always thought of viewing stones as an adjunct of bonsai; and I expect collectors of viewing stones think of bonsai the same way. But these accidents of nature, shaped and polished by wind or water for perhaps millions of years are portable reminders of the beauty of landscape or figures and should be represented in every bonsai enthusiast's collection.

Stone collecting trips are for members of the Potomac Viewing Stone Group (I went as a reporter); but if you are interested in this wonderful art and hobby, you are welcome to attend meetings, and if still interested, to join. Contact Glenn Reusch, president of the group, at Ghreusch@aol.com for meeting information. And if you think stone collecting is in your future, start an exercise program; you will need it!

Sensei Sam

Please join us for our... **Third Annual Kiln Opening - Sale,
Bonsai and Ceramic Workshops**

Friday, September 30th thru Sunday, October 2nd 2011



- **Friday, September 30th –**
7 PM to 9:30 PM– Reception and Lectures
Styling Bonsai– Jim Doyle
Bonsai Pottery – Ron Lang
- **Saturday, October 1st –**
9:00 AM to Noon – Kiln Opening
1:00 PM to 5 PM- Doyle Bonsai Workshop
- **Sunday, October 2nd -**
9:00 AM to Noon – Pottery workshop



Details, Events Schedule and Registration form are available at:



<http://www.langbonsai.com/OpenHouse.html>

or



ronlangpots@comcast.net



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

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

November 12 - Bonsai Design and Aesthetics
December 9 - Holiday Dinner and Party

Washington Bonsai Club

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

Upcoming Meetings- Call for schedule

Potomac Bonsai Society Club Schedules

Baltimore Bonsai Club

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

Brookside Bonsai Society

7901 Meadowbrook Lane, Chevy Chase, MD
Jim Hughes (301) 779-2891 jim6909@msn.com
Upcoming Meetings- Call for schedule
20 October 7:30 pm - Bonsai Auction

Chesapeake Bonsai Society

Please contact Sharon Katz
(410) 263-3307
sharonkatz@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
jfitzsimons@verizon.net

August 13 - Junipers Lecture and Workshop
September 10 - Picnic
October 8 - Bonsai Evaluation and Styling Workshop



Roy Nagatoshi works on BBC member's tree

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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.

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	

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, 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

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, j_fitzsimons@verizon.net

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

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

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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.

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, Stephen Miller. E-mail contributions are preferred and can be sent in Word, WordPerfect, or text documents to Stephen Miller. Pictures need to be in jpg format.