

PBA Clippings

NEWSLETTER OF THE POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION

ISSN 0160-9521



Editor's note: By now some of you may feel that you have bottomed out reading anymore about IBC '96. However, I still think that the following letter contains many interesting facets about IBC '96. It was written by Bonnie Kobert, President of the Brazilian Bonsai Society.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
July 23rd, 1996

Dear Friends at P.B.A.,

Greetings from Rio! Every time I think back on the time spent in Washington, a huge smile appears across my face and a very warm and glowing feeling remains in my heart. And I bet you can understand why. The meeting of so much talent and positive energy radiated by people of good will and integrity makes me realize that with a lot of hard work and persistence, our generation will leave behind the foundation for a better (in this case Bonsai) world for future generations.

I often ask myself, "What can I do, I'm just one person in a world of billions, who could make any kind of difference." I get lots of answers depending on the moment, but basically it's to have an ideal, stand up for what I believe, and have the persistence to stick firmly to the essence of these two beliefs. One of my main ideals in life is to share the art and the culture that lies at the base of Bonsai and to stand very proudly, with and behind people who also believe in that ideal and never lose sight of what that is all about "little trees," and mother nature who so kindly and mysteriously allows us to project ourselves in harmony with her workings.

As you will note in the copy of the letter included which I read to the B.C.I. board, the Brazilian Bonsai Society and I have spent some years now behind the scenes, hours before the convention doors were opened, to gather knowledge on how it all comes together, as we had been planning to host a convention in the year 2001. This year it was my pleasure not only to be an observer, but also, as a speaker, to be a participant. I must say, I feel very proud and honored to have been part of this wonderful P.B.A. family. As we

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Bonsai Bob Retires as Curator

Mary Ann Jarvis of the National Arboretum telephoned in mid-July alerting me to the fact that Robert "Bonsai Bob" Drechsler was about to retire as Curator of the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum.

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PBA OFFICERS:

President	Joe Gutierrez
1st Vice-President	Cindy Blackburn
Educ. Vice-President	
Secretary	Julie Walker
Treasurer	Jerry Antel, Jr.
Membership	Judy Wise (202) 554-3045
Newsletter Editor	Jules Koetsch

PBA CLIPPINGS STAFF:

Editor	Jules Koetsch (703) 569-9378
Assoc. Ed./Art Dir.	Beth Potratz (703) 255-9386 Email: Bonsaist.aol.com
Asst. Editor	Jeff Stephanic
Advertising Editor	Jerry Antel, Jr. (301) 320-5251
Sensei Sam	Steve Pilacik 205 Quick Road Elkview, WV 25071
Calendar Coord	Doug French (703) 502-9426 Email: Dfrench200.aol.com

Why PBA is Leaving BCI???

The President's message in the July '96 issue of *PBA Clippings* must have of left many readers in the dark as to what our PBA President, Dr. Joe, was referring to. It was the matter of PBA withdrawing its membership from Bonsai Clubs International. The editor wishes to sincerely apologize for the oversight in not adding the "pair of letters" mentioned in the July '96 Presidents Message. However, some additional correspondence has been received and this compilation to date.

For the sake of continuity the perentint part of the President Message of July 96 is repeated here:

"Regardless of the type or size of organization you join or belong to, there are certain expectations that you have with regard to the organization and to its leadership. You expect to be treated fairly, and with dignity and respect not only by the organization but by its leaders, who set the tone for the character of the organization. You expect, therefore, that the leaders of the organization are possessed of veracity, honesty, respect for an individual's rights and dignity, compassion and caring, and a true interest in furthering the aims of the organization and each individual member thereof. In the end, however, the two most important characteristics you expect from any organization and its leaders are CARING and INTEGRITY.

Integrity speaks more to the character of the individual and caring is more concerned with the relationship of individuals to each other.

Elsewhere in this issue, you will see printed a pair of letters that have been brought about because of a relationship between an organization and its leaders and an individual gone awry. When the leaders of an organization, by their actions, perpetrate the implication and suggest by innuendo that an individual is unfit to serve as one of its officers, and refuses to state objective facts to support these contentions, then one must begin to question the veracity, honesty, intentions, and integrity of those leaders. There is absolutely no justification for character assassination or for impugning one's reputation and good name, by the meaningless and nebulous term "negative input" from unknown and secret sources. It is a very basic tenet of common human decency, and therefore our legal system, that a person has the right to face his or her detractors. One simply cannot be chastised and castigated for unknown and unspecified accusations or charges.

PBA has properly and rightly spoken out on behalf of principle, propriety, dignity, and the adherence to by-laws and policies and procedures and most importantly of all, basic human decency. You must all be proud of your organization and its leadership. Your organization is YOU! I congratulate you, salute you, and I am humbly proud to be one of you.

Joe Gutierrez, M.D.

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Meeting location and club contact number for additional information is as listed unless otherwise noted in calendar listing. A member of any one club is eligible to participate in any PBA or PBA member club event.

BALTIMORE BONSAI CLUB

Cyburn Arboretum, Baltimore, MD.
3rd Sunday, 1 PM
(410) 668-1868

BOWIE BONSAI CLUB

Bowie Community Center, Bowie, MD
Last Monday, 7 PM
(301) 350-3586
(202) 667-1016

BROOKSIDE BONSAI SOCIETY

North Chevy Chase Recreation Center, Chevy Chase, MD
3rd Thursday, 7:30 PM
(301) 365-7621

CHESAPEAKE BONSAI SOCIETY

Call for meeting time and location
(410) 263-2748

GREATER PHILADELPHIA BONSAI SOCIETY

Pennypack Watershed, Willow Grove, PA
4th Thursday, eve.
(215) 663-1678

KIYOMIZU BONSAI CLUB

Clearwater Nature Center, Clinton, MD
4th Sunday, 2 PM
(301) 839-2471

LANCASTER BONSAI SOCIETY

Manheim Twp. Park, Stauffer Mansion
Lancaster, PA
2nd Thursday, 7 PM
(717) 872-5941

MEI-HWA PENJING SOCIETY

(Chinese language spoken)
Bowie Community Center, Bowie, MD
2nd Sunday, 1 PM
(301) 390-6687

NORTHERN VIRGINIA BONSAI SOCIETY

Greenspring Horticultural Center, Annandale, VA
2nd Saturday, 10 AM
(703) 255-2629

RAPPAHANOCK BONSAI SOCIETY

Call for meeting time and location
(540) 372-2084

RICHMOND BONSAI SOCIETY

Imperial Plaza, 1717 Bellevue Ave., Richmond, VA
4th Monday, 7 PM
(804) 527-4000 Ext. 4621

WASHINGTON BONSAI CLUB

U. S. National Arboretum, Washington, D.C.
3rd Saturday, 2 PM
(202) 543-7433

Organizations sponsoring regular events of interest to PBA members:

U.S. Botanical Gardens
(202) 226-4082

U.S. National Arboretum
(202) 245-2726

October

Richmond Bonsai Society
Saturday 5
Beginner's Workshop 12-3
Intermediate and Advanced Workshop 12-3

Northern Virginia Bonsai Society
Saturday 12
Auction of Mike (Kevin) Campbell's collection

Baltimore Bonsai Club
Sunday 20
Storage - Winterizing

Kiyomizu Bonsai Club
Sunday 27
Guest Speaker

November

Northern Virginia Bonsai Society
Saturday 9
Martha Meehan - Tropicals

Baltimore Bonsai Club
Sunday 17
Tools for bonsai

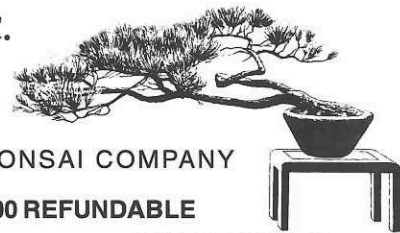
Kiyomizu Bonsai Club
Sunday 24
Winterizing

Please do not forget to give your new calendars to:

Doug French at 703- 502-9426,
E-mail: Dfrench200.aol.com

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October Monthly Care Tips

October is the last month before Winter sets in to fertilize your plants: **Coniferous:** Check old wire and rewire where necessary. Apply new wire. Can repot Hinoki cypress; blue moss or boulevard cypress; black, red and corkbark pines; as well as yew. **Deciduous, Flowering and Fruiting:** Remove wire on azaleas and forsythia. Apply insecticides where needed to cherry, forsythia, quince, cotoneaster, and pyracantha. **Frost protection:** Removal to a greenhouse or indoors, especially for semi-tropicals, should be carried out since there may be an early frost which will kill such plants. Also be ready to winterize slab or root-over/on-rock plantings before there is a freeze. For the latter, either removal to a cold frame or greenhouse, or burial in the ground will suffice. Placement in a pit.

Editorial by Jules Koetsch

The souvenir tote bag given to IBC '96 attendees contained among other things a number of fliers touting the merits of Dyna-Gro plant nutritional products. As you might surmise the fliers would not have been there if there wasn't anyone selling the items in the vendors' area. As with similar fertilizer products, the prices seemed high but the amounts of liquid used per application were low so that offset the cost. The latter consideration coupled with the glowing testimonials in the fliers convinced me to venture some capital. I was told that results would appear in a few weeks. I've been using Dyna-Gro products for one month at this writing and can now fill you in on what I know about them. Dyna-Gro liquid fertilizers were developed from research in the science of hydroponics and have been on the market for a little over 4 years. However their use is not limited in hydroponics but can also be used for potted plants as well as those in the ground. The Dyna-Gro fertilizers are blended to supply complete mineral nutrition - all of the plant's mineral requirements in one, easy to use liquid - calcium, magnesium, sulfur and 10 trace elements, as well as nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. Instructions on the Dyna-Gro fertilizers suggest that a 4 to a 2 teaspoon be mixed per gallon of water whenever one waters. In a phone conversation with Susan Wells, Dyna-Gro Corporation, San Pablo, California, she recommended that 1 teaspoon per gallon be the dosage for bonsai. At first blush this might seem excessive but remember that the Dyna-Gro was developed for hydroponics where the

plants can sit in the solution. Hence using Dyna-Gro is akin to using a slow release fertilizer such as Osmocote or the traditional fertilizer balls where a little fertilizer is taken to the roots with every watering. With a sterile potting mix such as I use - single or varying amounts of granite grits, Turface, bark, and or lava rock the only nourishment for the bonsai must be supplied by external means. I think the above methods for fertilizing bonsai are much preferred to a once a week or every other week one-shot jolt application of a tablespoon or 2 tablespoon per gallon of powdered fertilizer such as Miracle-Grow per gallon of water. There's always the possibility that such applications may be strong enough to burn hair roots. Furthermore the next watering of the bonsai is likely to leech out any residual fertilizer left from the previous application of the fertilizer-water combination. If all the above does not turn you on, there is one of their products that is most worthy of consideration even if you prefer to stay with your old methods for fertilizing your bonsai. This product Pro-TeKt can be used in addition to the fertilizing of your bonsai. This liquid, Pro-TeKt, provides in a soluble form supplemental potassium (3.7%) and most important silicon (7.8%). Research in silicon nutrition for plants has been going on for many years and has shown that the benefits include; improved resistance to wilt, resistance to water stress (heat and drought), enhanced leaf presentation resulting in greater photosynthesis reproductive growth (pollen fertility, flower and fruit

count), and increased tolerance to excessive phosphorous, manganese and aluminum concentrations and zinc deficiencies. MPB Bonsai Studio, Austin, Texas, wrote to Dyna-Gro the following dated 26 January, 1995: "I did not understand the application for Pro-TeKt until our conversation about a year ago. Following that discussion I began using it on a small group of tropical plants that had a chronic infestation of black aphids that defied just about every poison that I could legally treat with. Within three weeks after the first treatment, using Pro-TeKt, at the rate of 2 teaspoon per gal of solution applied lightly once per week on both the foliage and the soil, the aphids disappeared from the entire lot and the plants began to improve in color and vigor. Impressed with those results we began treating nearly all of the bonsai in the nursery with Pro-TeKt at the same rate and frequency. "The results were among the most remarkable in my experience. Texas grows everything big including the size and number of insects. Last year using Pro-TeKt we were able to cut our usage of insecticides by 2/3 vs the untreated plants. Texas summer sun is bright and hot. Most of the treated plants remained in full sun all season without the benefit of shade cloth as in the past years. In the past years even with the benefit of shade during the summer heat, the maples, hornbeams and elm leaves burned and the plants went into heat induced dormancy by mid-July. Last year, our Japanese maples and trident maples survived and thrived without leaf burn and they continued to put out new growth throughout the sum

Why PBA is leaving, continued from page 2

Dr. Gutierrez was the 3rd Vice President of BCI prior to his resignation. He informed the PBA board members of his reasoning at a meeting last spring. Dr. Gutierrez letter of resignation follows:

March 25, 1996

Jack Douthitt, President,
Bonsai Clubs International

Dear Jack,

I hereby submit my resignation as 3rd Vice President of Bonsai Clubs International. I am also enclosing a copy of a letter that I sent to Pedro Morales, Chair of the Nominating Committee. I wish BCI the best of luck and success in the future.

Very Sincerely,
Joseph E. Gutierrez, M.D.

cc:
Mary Bloomer and Solita Tafiur
Rosade

The letter to Mr. Pedro Morales (which can be found on page**) indicates the reason for the above action.

The next in the series was the letter that the Potomac Bonsai Association at its annual meeting on April 27, 1996 and signed by all those attending (40 out of 500 members).

April 28, 1996

To the Officers and Directors of Bonsai Clubs International

The Potomac Bonsai Association wishes to express in the strongest possible terms its extreme outrage and displeasure at the actions of the Officers and Board and the Nominating Committee of Bonsai Clubs International in the matter of the failure to nominate our President Dr. Joseph Gutierrez for the 2nd Vice Presidency of BCI. Dr. Gutierrez was PBA'S nominee for the 3rd Vice President position and it is our belief-that he served in that capacity in an outstanding manner. To our knowledge he performed all his duties in an exemplary and timely fashion and did not have any breaches of his duties or his responsibilities. We did not submit Joe's name in nomination for the 2nd Vice President position because of our expectation that the usual procedures of BCI would be followed and that he would be nominated by the Nominating Committee for that position. The usual selection of the Vice Presidents to ascend to the next higher Vice Presidency slot has been traditional and is referred to in the Policy and Procedures Manual under the duties of the President. Should there have been any serious lapses in Joe's performance of his duties, he should have been so notified instead of having been stabbed in the back in this most insensitive and callous fashion. Chris Cochrane of the Richmond Club received communication from Jack Douthitt that the Nominating Com-

mittee did not intend to hurt or embarrass Joe. All we can say in response to that remark is: how would each or anyone of you have wished to have been treated in similar circumstances?

At a time when this organization ought to be striving for cooperation, civility, and treating each other as we would wish to be treated, the apparent apathy and disinterest of this Board and it's Officers (through it's Nominating committee) has not only violated it's traditions and it's policies and procedures, but has by implication impugned the excellent reputation of our President. It silently sends the message to the membership that Joe has seriously and grossly failed in his responsibilities as an officer and that is simply not true! To suddenly deselect Joe as nominee for 2nd Vice President is to defeat him by the votes of three people on your Nominating Committee rather than by defeating him through a fair and honest election.

Other nominees could have been named to run against Joe but his name should have remained on the ballot. Any campaign against him should have been carried out openly (and not behind his back or our backs) which is the usual way that educated, honest, and well-meaning people do.

Your collective action has been most distressing and disappointing to this organization.

Sincerely,
Signed by all those that attended
Annual PBA Meeting

PBA leaving, continued from page 5

The response that PBA received from BCI is as following:

To the Members of the Potomac Bonsai Association:

Thank you for your letter dated April 28, 1996 regarding the nominating process from the 1996 elections of Officers and Directors of Bonsai Clubs International.

The Nominating Committee, according to the By-Laws and the Policies of BCI, holds the key to the future health and life of BCI. This committee is the only committee of which the President of BCI is not a member, in order to insure that the Committee operates completely independently. The Chair of the Nominating Committee is elected by the

full Board of Directors and us entitled to choose the remaining members of his/hers Committee. The 1996 Committee Members were chosen because of their long and dedicated service to BCI and their wide range of knowledge about the organization.

The Nominating Committee arrived at the difficult decision not to nominate Dr. Gutierrez for the position of Second Vice President after a long and exhaustive process of deliberation and debate. There is nothing in the By-Laws, or in the Policies and Procedures Manual, that dictates the automatic succession of any Officer, except at such time as a vacancy occurs. The Committee made its decision only after receiving strong negative input from several BCI Members. Some of those regis-

tering objections to Joe's candidacy have been his peers and have worked closely with him.

The contributions that Joe has made during his tenure on the Board of Directors are recognized and appreciated by BCI.

We thank you for your interest in, and concerns about, the nominating process.

Sincerely,
Bonsai Clubs International
Jack Douthitt President

There is other correspondence relative to the above that can be found in this issue. A letter to BCI from the GSBF president and from the Brazilian Bonsai Society.

Bonnie Kobert's Letter, continued from page 1

all know, not only in a Convention but also in life, no matter how smoothly things were planned and organized, there will always be those last minute details that will pop up (sometimes small, sometimes life size) to terrorize the poor organizers. For example: The Kimura advanced workshop room not being big enough to handle even half of those "big" trees and the hotel not knowing until about 17 minutes before "show time" that the room next door truly was available; and then the enigma of how to get "big trees through a skinny door!!!" Should we have filmed Bob Sitnick and company plus anyone who could lend an arm and a leg (si-

lent observers included). You bet! Hurricane Bertha could have taken some lessons. Did the show go on the road on time? Of course! Then there's this story about not enough annealed copper wire to go around in the advanced Kimura workshop, and wiring coming to a standstill. (Joe, do I hear you moaning?) The vendors were out. Kimura-san had kindly separated from his demo cart all extra wire that could be spared. Joe did some very creative talking. I explained to Kimura-san that if he ever expected to come to places like Brazil, he would have to realize that some adaptations (understatement) would be needed. He entered into the

spirit of the idea by quickly saying that he basically was a "flexible" person. With no hesitation on the part of the P.B.A. team, all the aluminum wire that Kimura-san heart could desire appeared (before he could change his mind)! Speaking of flexible, what a pleasant surprise it was to see Kimura-san's expertise at doing the twist. He actually (for those of you who went home early) only stopped of this unfortunate and unnecessary situation that does not in any way reflect the spirit of Bonsai.

I first met Joe Gutierrez at Australia. It was at the moment of my presentation of bid for the convention in the year 2000. The pertinent

Continued on next page

Bonnie Kobert's Letter continued from previous page

twisting because the band went home. Says a lot about the pleasant atmosphere PBA. promoted at this conference.

The most touching moment came when Ernie Kuo was given back the demo tree that he had cultivated over so many years, by the person who won it. One hears some tears were shed behind a conference room curtain. Says a lot about Ernie, says a lot about the persons Ernie deals with and shows the essence of the Bonsai ideal. For me life and Bonsai are about sharing, not possessing. It's a choice "to have or to be." I feel that the only thing we take with us are the memories of the special moments.

Speaking of sharing, did anyone see the fabulous moss I got for my Saikei workshop? Little did I know that some little lady in Rochester, New York, spent eight hours hunting for it for Bill Valavanis's workshop next day. Thank you, silent friend, for bringing it to me when you realized that my supply would not go around; and thank you, Bill, for not asking for my head on a platter. And, thank you, Joe Gutierrez, for taking precious convention time to go out and find the kind of moss that you knew would keep Bill happy. Who knows, after you retire, Bill may have a job for you!

What I am trying to say with these little stories is that, what went right, went right because that was what was expected. What went wrong, was forgotten; or what went unexpectedly is where the dynamics and charm come in (they make great war stories) and that's where you can measure the essence of a team. No matter how many requests were made, or details were pending, the P.B.A. team was always there willing to help and solve; and no matter how much pressure was on, always

with a smile, letting you know that actions were being taken. Never did one see a temper lost or a word out of line. P.B.A., I take my hat off to you! You are well intentioned, professional in all aspects, and reflect the essence of what Bonsai is all about. Quality, beauty and on the human side, brotherhood! Thank you for such a wonderful convention and for allowing me to be a part of it. My special thanks goes out, of course, to all to you; and in particular to Judy Wise, who was my official hostess. The Brazilian delegation thanks you for helping with the lost luggage (which included some of the stones for my workshop), driving, etc, etc. You're a delightful lady. We won't forget you. Russ Kinerson, you turned out to be quite a buddy. The material you supplied for my workshop was superb, and the ride out into your beautiful countryside to pick up my trees, and your company, worked miracles for me. Outside of calming the nervousness one goes through before one's first international conference, you also helped me weather a personal problem. You didn't know that, did you pal. Thanks for the right words at the right time. Joe Gutierrez, Brazil loves you and is anxiously waiting your presence at our Latin America Convention. At such a busy and tense time for you, showed the P.B.A. spirit at every turn, and one can easily understand why you are their leader. Thank you for the photos and opportunity to be so close to the action. Bob Sitnick and Bill Spencer, can I bribe you to desert P.B.A. and come organize Brazil (I'm not talking about Bonsai, I'm talking about the country)? I'm convinced you can do anything if you have a walkie-talkie in your hands. Chris and Betty Yeapanis, who helped carry a very exhausted Bonnie

through the last hour before everything shut down and was made ready for the Banquet. If you two hadn't adopted me at that point I may still be lost in the halls of the Renaissance today. Hideko says I did more talking than wiring. Maybe so, but I had a hard time lifting my arms at night (from the wiring) to brush my teeth, and lost about 5 pounds just running around trying to see as many of the programs as I could. No one in their right mind could dare say that not enough was offered, or that one didn't get one's money worth. This was truly an international convention and a very, very hard act to follow.

I, at this moment, would also like to make a few comments on an issue that was handled primarily behind the scenes and that was very delicate and painful, I believe, to the entire Bonsai Community. This started at the opening of the convention with your President, Dr. Joseph Gutierrez, announcing P.B.A.'s intent to withdraw from BCI at the conclusion of this convention and ending with Hideko Metaxas' very brave resignation from the Board of Directors because she could not get an answer to a very simple and direct question. What was it that Dr. Joseph Gutierrez did wrong to deserve the treatment and such disrespect from B.C.I.? She did not get an answer. She was the only one in B.C.I. who not only stood up, made her position clear and understood what was behind all this, and then consequently resigned. It is an honor and pleasure to know you, Hideko. Between these two moments, Dan Barton (and others from the international and national Bonsai community who prefer not to be mentioned) tried very hard to negotiate a way out

IBC'96 Tree Exhibit - Arschel J. Morell

Chapter I - The Work

The exhibit of 26 masterpiece bonsai displayed at the IBC'96 convention was hailed a hit by the many who attended. The trees, 12 from PBA, 1 from New York, 1 - Georgia, 1 - Pennsylvania, 4 specimen trees along with a stunning mame group of six trees came to us from Canada. The trees were assembled from a group of 35 responses to 52 letters which were sent out at various times starting in March of this year. When the responses were assembled, the committee (Janet Lanman and Fred Mies, Brookside; Richard Meszler, and yours truly, Baltimore) met to choose the trees we wanted to see in the exhibit. The task was not difficult. The outstanding trees stood out from the rest. Letters were sent to the selectees, and we were all set—so we thought. A week before the convention, one tree had to drop out. At the same time, I found out that through an oversight (mine), one selectee was not notified and it was too late to ready the tree for the show. Luckily, the program had not been printed and substitutions could be made locally. All set to go, you think. No such luck. (But that's another story.) The real story is that the ex-

hibit was a success, awards were given to two exhibitors in the show, and a good time was had by all.

Many thanks to Janet, Fred, and Richard who helped select the trees and helped with the staging. To Richard, a special thanks for scheduling the volunteers that made up the setup crew, the maintenance crew, and the monitors. Finally, many thanks to the volunteers—without you, there would have been no exhibit.

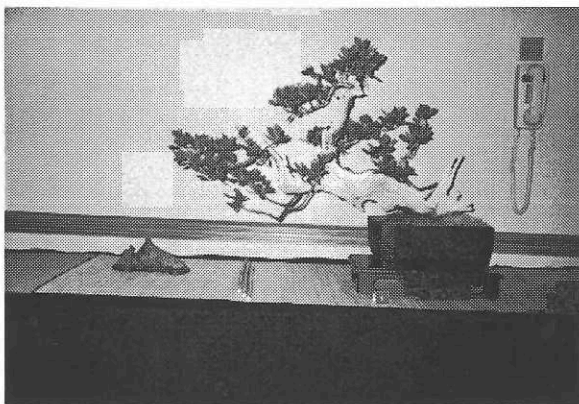
Chapter II - The Trees, The Trees, Exhibit Scores Hit at IBC'96

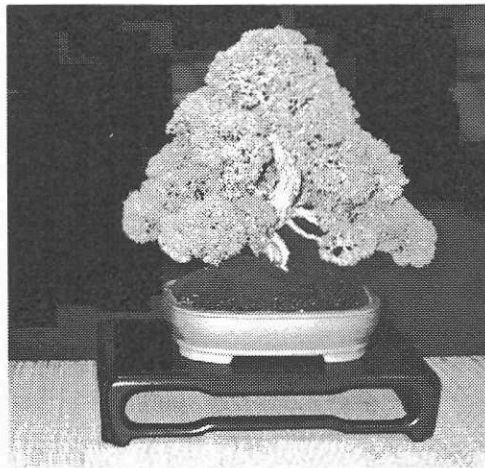
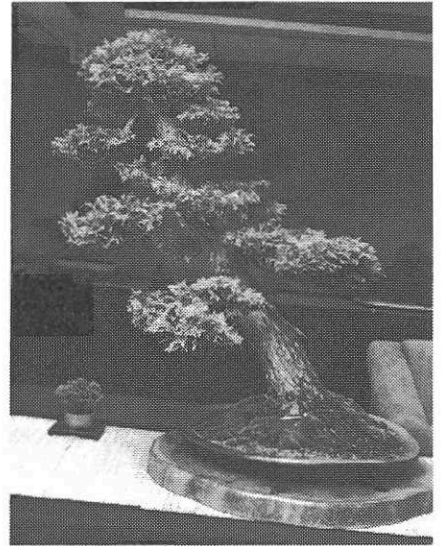
Twenty-six masterpiece bonsai displayed at IBC'96 were examples of what many of us would want in our own collections, headlined by the outstanding loans from north of the border. The Arborvitae, a collected tree, standing almost 4 feet tall, estimated to be 150 years old; that stunning group of mame; an 18-year-old Hinoki Cypress; a 10-year-old Dwarf Hinoki; a 25-year-old Exo Spruce, along with three others, all Junipers, none more than 11 inches tall, so exquisite that they were awarded for artistic excellence by the Rosade Bonsai Studio. Other trees from Canada were another Arborvitae, es-

timated to be 100 years old, 28 inches tall with a 6-inch base; a collected American Larch, 50 years old, 32" tall; and last, the Sergeant Juniper styled by Mr. Kimura in Memphis (IBC'92)

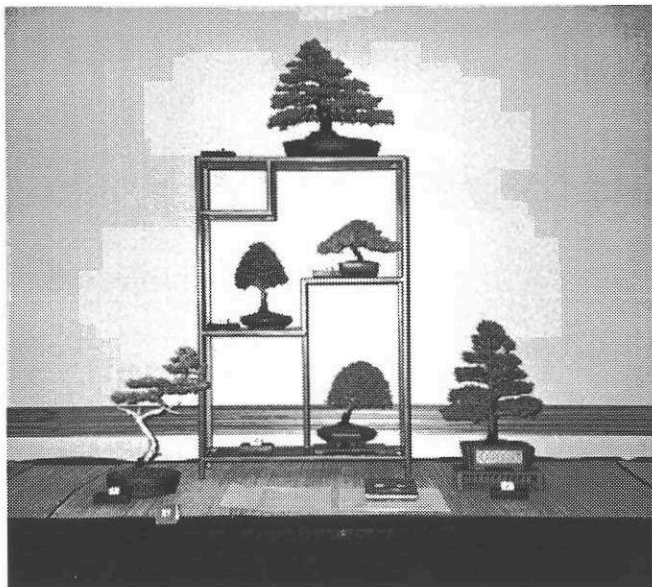
Other trees of note: The rock penjing on a marble slab which won the BCI award for artistic excellence, Janet's Trident Maple grove, Richard's Crabapple, Fred's collected American Beech, and other wonderful bonsai that we have seen before. Jim's Sullivan's (Bowie) excellent cascading Deodora Cedar; Dr. Joe's (Gutierrez, NoVa) great Kingsville Boxwood; the Dwarf Chinese Elm that we have seen in International Bonsai.

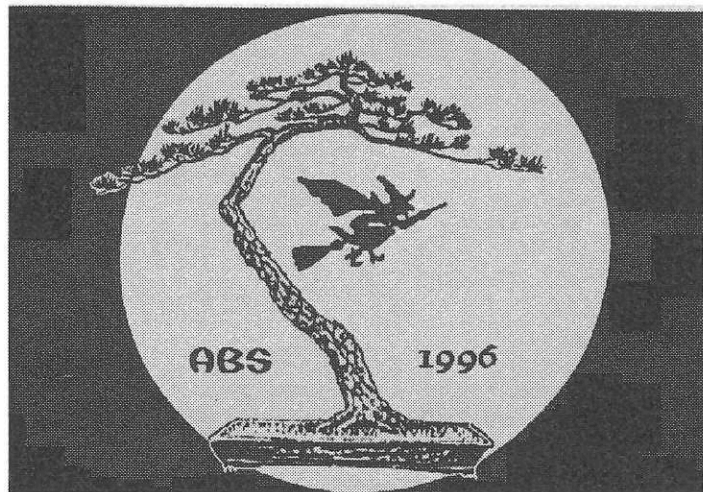
Other trees of note: That striking Robusta Green Juniper with the lightning struck apex from Richmond club, and Mike's (Kling) Bush Cherry in the antique reproduction container. Trees not seen often: the Buttonwood, outstanding with its driftwood; and the strange Brazilian Rain tree with its leaves which were closed if you got there early enough in the morning. In the short space allotted, it's not possible to describe all of the trees in detail. You just had to be there.





Photographs by
Jimmie "D" Ford (RBS)
and
Sooja Kim, (BBS)





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BONSAI BOB RETIRES:

Robert Drechsler Keeper of Our 'National' Bonsai by Marilyn L. Dye

From the editor: What with IBC'96 coming along, I almost overlooked a very, very important event for those of us who treasure the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum. Mary Ann Jarvis of the National Arboretum telephoned in mid-July alerting me to the fact that Robert "Bonsai Bob" Drechsler was about to retire as Curator of the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum. Mary Ann referred me to Elizabeth Ley who, in turn, solicited the following response:

Dear Mr. Koetsch, I understand from Elizabeth Ley, Director of the Gardens Unit, that you are interested in doing an article on Robert Drechsler. Enclosed please find an article from the American Horticulturist which provides Bob's background. Liz asked me to give you the official date of his retirement, 2 August 1996, and his new title, Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, of the District of Columbia.

Please let me know if you need any other information.

Sincerely yours, Johanll F. Klodzen Thanks to the people mentioned above, the following was extracted from the article in the October 1990 issue of American Horticulture titled, "Robert Drechsler Keeper of Our 'National' Bonsai" by Marilyn L. Dye. I think everyone in bonsai knows and appreciates what Bonsai Bob has accomplished, bringing the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum to fruition.

From the bonsai world: A VERY, VERY, HEARTFELT THANKS, BONSAI BOB!!!

Robert Drechsler received his introduction to horticulture working the grounds of the Washington, D.C., orphanage where he grew up; his quest for a graduate degree in horticulture was cut short by grades that he describes in retrospect as "not the best."

Today, he is curator of the nation's most varied and distinctive bonsai collection—the National Bon-

sai and Penjing Museum of the U.S. National Arboretum. How did this local boy with the German name get such a prestigious job caring for oriental plants? "Luck—being in the right place at the right time—that's how I got here!" he says.

The museum's curator was one of ten children. Orphaned at age two, Drechsler was raised at the German Orphan Home for Children in the Anacostia area of Washington, D.C. "Mom and Pop Christman (the superintendents) raised us as if we were their own," Drechsler recalls, "even though there were thirty of us."

Drechsler's job was to help keep up the grounds and farm, and he worked in the formal rose garden and iris beds encircling the home. He's sure now that "all the weeding was intended to keep us kids busy and out of trouble," but it piqued his interest in flowers and gardening. A Mrs. Kolb, member of the home's board of directors, taught him to cut and arrange flowers, so that eventually, "we had flowers on every table in the home."

Drechsler calls himself one of the fortunate ones because he was able to attend college. He worked his way to a bachelor's degree in floriculture from the nearby University of Maryland and earned room and board by working at Mealy and Woods Florists and then as a busboy at the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity house, the agricultural society to which he belonged. At the same time, he learned more about the craft of flower arranging through his job at the florist shop which was across the street from the orphan home. As a memento of those days, he keeps the first check he ever



Bonsai Bob and Mary Mrose

Continued on page 12

Bonsai Bob retires, continued from previous page

wrote, one for \$80 made out to the university. It covered his entire tuition for a regular twelve-hour course.

After serving in the Army, Drechsler returned to the University of Maryland to attend graduate school, this time with an emphasis on horticulture, but not for long. "My grades really were not the best," he admits, "so one day the dean sat me down and told me, "Your time would be better spent elsewhere.""

Thus urged none too subtly to seek other opportunities, Drechsler opted for more on-the-job training in the field he had come to love. "I decided to stay in the Washington area, but aimed high." He applied for a position at the U.S. National Arboretum. He was hired, and was fortunate enough to spend the next 17 years working in the Arboretum's shrub breeding program under Dr. Donald Egolf, developing new viburnums, crape myrtles, and pyracantha. Egolf has been called one of the best shrub breeders in the country. (See the October 1989 American Horticulturist). "I couldn't have received better practical experience in working with woody plants," says Drechsler.

In 1975, in recognition of the U.S. Bicentennial celebration, the arboretum received its first bonsai collection from the Nippon Bonsai Association; the collection would need a curator. For a time, another staff member seemed to have the job sewed up, Drechsler says. "But he didn't like the idea of giving up riding the tractor around the grounds, getting his hands in the dirt, and working directly with plants, and he wasn't comfortable with a lot of public contact. He knew I'd had some bonsai classes, so he recommended me for the post. And here I am."

The gift that would become the basis for the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum included both 53 bonsai and 6 viewing stones. Just as the plants made into bonsai are miniatures of trees in their natural state, stones are natural stones of any type selected for shapes that resemble miniature mountains, islands, houses, animals, or other landscape features.

"I was there when they first came off the plane at Baltimore-Washington International Airport," recalls Drechsler, who immediately moved with the bonsai to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Plant Introduction Station in Glenn Dale, Maryland, where he took charge of the valuable trees while a display area was being built. During the bonsai's 1-year quarantine at Glenn Dale, he learned from Ruth Lamanna and other volunteers the special needs of different bonsai.

Although he knew bonsai basics, "every species is different in when and how it should be pruned, the same as large trees. You have to know which buds to leave for new growth, and you have to be very precise."

He had heard that the best way to learn to appreciate bonsai is to see the same species growing in their natural settings. In 1977, he traveled through Japan for 35 days to learn more about caring for the bonsai, and to gain a better understanding of the philosophy of tray plantings, one of the most revered art forms among the Japanese.

"The bonsai were treated with great respect by everyone, even the men who packed and loaded the trees on the planes. They worked with their shirts on, despite the heat, because to do otherwise would have

been disrespectful. I don't know that you'd find that attitude here in the States."

Before the trip, he had been a bit leery of being perceived as "the big, ugly American," but everywhere he traveled his hosts treated him with high regard, presenting him with gifts and ceremonial dinners.

"In one small town, I was greeted by the mayor at the railroad station and given a lovely music box; that is a gift of great importance. Later, at dinner, they had gone to special trouble to set up a 'big' table for me, instead of the low tables the Japanese sit at, so I would be more comfortable."

It is the Japanese custom to make brief speeches before formal meals. One night, after such a presentation by an elderly gentleman, another dinner guest told Drechsler it was the first time the older man had spoken English since World War II. "I was very honored," the curator says.

The Nippon Bonsai Association arranged for Drechsler to meet with many of its members during his visit. He was able to sit and discuss horticulture and American politics with venerated bonsai masters throughout the country. In one of Kyoto's many gardens, he was greeted by the high priest and honored with a tea ceremony in the garden's temple. He also toured the Imperial Grounds in Tokyo from which one bonsai, a 180-year-old red pine (*Pinus densiflora*, or Aka-matsu) had been donated by the imperial family as part of the Arboretum's first collection. It was the first from the imperial collection ever to leave Japan.

"This was a particular honor," he said, "since tours of the grounds is are limited to only 600 Japanese a

Letter From GOLDEN STATE BONSAI FEDERATION

June 18, 1996

Jack Douthitt,
President Bonsai Clubs International

Dear Jack,

This letter is written to you in two parts: First, in my capacity as President of the Golden State Bonsai Federation (a member Association of BCI) and secondly, simply as an individual in the bonsai community.

The Golden State Bonsai Federation Board of Trustees and Officers have considerable concern about the coming BCI elections to be carried out at the Convention in Washington, D.C. in July. I took the liberty of making copies often pages of correspondence made available to me by Hideko Metaxas and sending them to my Officers and Trustees. Virtually everyone of my Trustees and Officers (the GSBF Board of Directors) shares my concerns and several have voiced the opinion that GSBF should withdraw its membership in BCI. (This opinion will require an open and considered discussion by the entire Board in a future scheduled meeting) Additionally, I have been traveling to many of our member Clubs in California and this topic has been discussed at many of them at their request.

Several of my responding Trustees and officers remarked that Dr. Joseph Gutierrez put the matter of "HOW ELECTIONS OUGHT TO BE CARRIED OUT" in fundamental terms on page 2 in his letter dated March 25th to Mr. Pedro Morales. Most felt that unless new informa-

tion surfaces which would indicate that Dr. Gutierrez did something which would approach incompetence, negligence or malfeasance in office, the removal of his name from the ballot would appear to be an inside vendetta inconsistent with the purposes and gentle nature of bonsai and BCI. Also, many voiced the opinion that the simple removal of his name from the ballot without any explanation raises questions concerning duties normally assigned a Nominating Committee and also brings into question how 25 years of historical procedure in the succession of Officers could so easily be negated.

While the above is written as President of GSBF, what follows are my personal thoughts. First, when more than one person knows a secret, it is no longer a secret. Second, I do not believe that the purposes of BCI are well served when decisions of this nature are made by two or three persons independent of consideration by the entire Board of Directors of BCI and probably also by the general membership. The lack of any explanation except that a few members voiced individual opinions about Dr. Gutierrez was indeed a mistake. At the very least, his name should appear on the election ballot along with any other nominated individuals. If the General Membership agrees with the few who voiced opinions about his removal from office, then the alternate nominee would be elected. Without this, a fair and above-board election will NOT have been held. You must be aware that the word on the street is that Dr. Gutierrez made several comments to

your Board (although honest and for the good of BCI) which were not taken so well by a few individuals. The very nature of Board of Directors meetings is that sometimes an individual voices unpopular comments which need to be openly discussed and resolved for the good of the organization. To chastise or criticize anyone for this is unconscionable. This fact seems to have escaped a few on the BCI Executive Committee.

Jack, please be aware that my personal thoughts are for your consideration since I believe that you may not be aware of how many know of this matter and are every bit as upset as those who voiced their opinions about Dr. Gutierrez to the Nominating Committee. When matters of this nature are dealt with openly and with due consideration, they are generally resolved to the satisfaction of everyone. At a time when major changes are in progress in BCI and harmony is absolutely necessary, this appalling action can only bring contempt on your organization. I wish that this matter could have been handled in such a manner that a resolution of it would be considered reasonable and be accepted by the entire bonsai community. This matter certainly will not stop in Washington with the election, but will be a cross which BCI will bear for years to come.

Very Sincerely,
William K. Hutchinson, President
cc: BCI Executive Committee, BCI Officers & Trustees, Dr. Joseph Gutierrez

Brazil says NO to IBC'2001

Rio de Janeiro, June 1996

To The Executive Board and Directors of B.C.I.

As you all well know, putting on an International Convention is a big responsibility. It requires much thought, planning and dedication on the part of the host club. Its members must be well aware of the many long hours (at absolutely, no profit to themselves), that will be put in by each and every one of them in the organization of hotel space, demonstrators, material, banquets, workshops, tours, etc. The list is long and so is the list of the obligations. One would imagine that when such a group of people is found who willingly perform such a task in the name of an ideal such as the "Art of Bonsai," that group would be respected for its altruistic attitude.

The Brazilian Bonsai Society plans for a convention began in 1994 at the convention in San Jose. A year after Jean Smith planted the seed of our considering to host a convention in Rio de Janeiro. We were very worried about not having enough experience to host such a gathering and were reassured after San Jose by Ed Smith (that after five or six years of observing we would have the experience necessary).

To start this maturing process, we carefully observed and became friends with the Californians who passed on valuable information on

their planning procedures. In Sydney, Australia, Georgina Kretschmar in a very warm and friendly way opened the doors, enabling us to observe all the angles of their work. The same was done by the wonderful people at P.B.A. Joe Gutierrez and Bob Sitnick who allowed me to sit in on an executive board meeting early this year and everyone in the planning group offered to make space for the Brazilians, not only to observe but to actually help at putting their final plans into action, moments before convention time.

I felt that we were really doing our part. After having gone all the way to Australia to put a bid for the year 2000 - 2001, we very warmly received by B.C.I. which invited us back to present a bid at I.B.C. 1996.

On March 4th, 1996 at which point the Brazilian Bonsai Society had not received any convention information, I sent a letter by fax to the B.C.I. President with copies via mail to everyone on the executive committee (except Elaine White and Harold Harvey, whose addresses we did not have) officially announcing our intent to extend a bid for the year 2001, and once again asking to be sent a copy of the contract. After months of silence, I finally sent another copy via registered mail to Solita Rosade, who sent me a fax on May 23rd, say-

ing that she knew nothing about this letter and would send a copy of the contract via mail. This contract arrived only nine days before my departure for the US not enabling us to submit the contract to a legal advisor or the time to gather information to make a proposal. June for the Brazilian Bonsai Society was a very busy time as our annual Bonsai exhibit and workshops were held at Botanical Gardens June 1st through 16th.

The Brazilian Bonsai Society, the Rio Convention Bureau and our Corporate Sponsors are very disillusioned by the B.C.I. President and Second Vice-President for not extending the courtesy of a timely response.

We do not understand why it took almost two years before a contract was finally sent. We did not get a contract last year before making the bid (after having asked for it in 1994 in San Jose). Why was this contract held back from us until it was too late?

Unfortunately, due to these facts the Brazilian Bonsai Society will not be putting in a bid at this time for a convention in the year 2001 and would prefer to observe B.C.I. a bit longer.

[This letter was signed by President Bonnie Kobert, Vice President Norma Tostes, and General Secretary Lycia Sester de Araujo, of the Sociedade Brasileira de Bonsai.]

Bonsai Estate Sale

October 12, 1996

10:00 AM

Green Springs Park, Annandale, VA

Beautiful Buttonwood, Chinese Serissa, Pines, Junipers, pots, tools, etc.

Due to the death of NoVa member Mike (Kevin) Campbell, 20 to 25 well-trained trees with good potential will be auctioned at NoVa Club meeting.

A percentage of sale will go to NBF and to NoVa Club.

Letter to PBA From Bonnie Kobert, continued from page 7

questions asked at that time all came from Joe, who in turn, gave me a feeling of security because of the feeling of firm leadership that was passed. Mind you, I was presenting a bid for a convention for which a contract had not been given. B.C.I. was very pleased with the proposal Brazil presented and quick to invite us back for a bid for 2001. I started having some doubts after talking to some of the board and also seeing certain attitudes. My point of reference within B.C.I. became more and more Joe Gutierrez and a sense of security in knowing that he would be the B.C.I. President if the convention was held in Rio in 2001. With his resignation from B.C.I., I quickly became aware that the navigation of B.C.I. was adrift. It's again obvious when one receives a contract at such an impossibly late date (see June letter to Exec Board and Directors of BCI). There are two reasons why a bid was not submitted. First, because I could not [in good conscience] submit my society into such "uncharted waters." It would definitively have been a feather in my cap to bring in an "International Bonsai Convention." The first in South America! You must realize that I run the risk of losing my corporate sponsors if they, by chance, are unable to grasp the ideal behind this decision. They could come up with the argument that in 5 years a lot could change. On a short range, I could have come back glorious. My term as President of the Brazilian Bonsai Society runs out in 2 years. Who knows if I'll be re-elected or even if I'll still be alive in the year of 2001. But here I think I must go back to the beginning of my letter. Fighting for one's ideals and

standing up for that, even at personal loss. Secondly, if B.C.I. was capable of putting down on the name of someone with the impeccable reputation of a man like Dr. Joseph Gutierrez (I'm sure I was not the only one impressed with his C.V. printed by B.C.I. at the time of the last elections), what are they capable of doing to the rest of us?

Dan Barton spent most of his time in Washington running back and forth between Joe and B.C.I. I personally talked to Jack, to Mary, to Pedro, to Mary Turner, etc. None of them were allowed to talk [by BCI lawyer] and after all was said and done, I don't think they were allowed to listen either. On the other hand with Joe, there was a very strong will for a negotiated peace. At the final moments, the last proposal in hand, Dan could not hold back the tears when reading it to B.C.I. because he knew how much Joe had given and still B.C.I. would not budge.

The Convention is over and the busy bees of the working force behind the Bonsai World are all back home making their contributions. Joe, however, is out there doing something for all of us. He's out there with the very difficult task ahead of putting the Bonsai World of America back on it's tracks. There is no more room for negotiating and a lawsuit is at hand. Now, we must all be concerned to know what is behind all this, and question how this non-profit organization called B.C.I. is run, and why Joe was such a discomfort to them.

Joe, the Brazilian Bonsai Society, as Hideko and P.B.A., stand firmly behind you. We also will not rest until Hideko's question is an-

swered. Dealing with Bonsai, art, quality, goodness and brotherhood, I now insist on adding the word transparency.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Kobert

Obs: The Executive Board of The Brazilian Bonsai Society agrees with the position stated by its President.

Vice-President: Norma Tostes
General Secretary: Lycia Sester de Araujo
Secretary: Maria Elvira Lopes Dias

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Letter to Pedro Morales from Dr. Joe Gutierrez

Mr. Pedro Morales Chair, Nominating Committee
Bonsai Clubs International
March 25, 1996

Dear Pedro,

A couple of weeks ago you telephoned me to inquire as to whether or not I would be willing to be nominated for the position of 2nd Vice President of BCI and I responded in the affirmative. I did not seek this nomination, nor did I call you to request that you put my name up for nomination. You posed the question to me, as raised by your Committee, as to whether or not I would be willing to continue on to the Presidency of BCI in the future, and I again responded in the affirmative. You then informed me that you were putting my name up for nomination for 2nd Vice President. This past weekend, you again called me urgently informing me that your Committee did not wish to put my name up for nomination. You also informed me that you had received telephone calls from 2 members of the Executive Committee opposing my nomination. While you did not elucidate the exact reasons for this opposition, you made it quite clear that you were under considerable pressure from your Committee to have me withdraw my nomination. You made it quite clear that my withdrawal would ease the pressure on you, and I therefore immediately volunteered to withdraw my name from nomination.

While I understand that nomination from one Vice Presidency to the next level upward is not automatic, it has been traditional that unless there has been some gross failure and incompetence on the part of a Vice President that he or she would at least have their name placed in nomination. I had no expectation that you

would automatically place my name in nomination for the 2nd Vice Presidency; however, after your telephone call of several weeks ago the complete turnabout came as quite a surprise. It at least gave me the feeling that the original proffer was not completely sincere on the part of your Committee.

I have serious concerns about how you and your Committee see your function. While the by-laws are silent on this matter, it has always been my understanding that the intent with regards to the primary function of the Nominating Committee is to collate and collect and solicit nominations. I do not believe it is or was the intent of BCI that elections would be carried out at the Nominating Committee level. Elections must and should be carried out at the ballot box and not by the few people on the Nominating Committee and particularly not influenced by other members of the Executive Committee. As I see it, there are two ways to unseat or remove any officer or director from office. In the event of gross incompetence or failure to perform the by-laws explicitly state that such an individual may be removed for cause. Absent such cause, the way to remove an officer or director from office is to let his or her term run out, or, if re-nominated, to let the decision be made at the ballot box. I do not think it is inappropriate for any officer or director to actively campaign against any individual they want to see removed from office but that campaign must be waged among the voting clubs and not within the Nominating Committee. Nominations must be respected and honored and be forwarded to the voting clubs when the nominations come from among the clubs. When the nominations are originated by the Nominating Committee ample time is avail-

able to that Committee for appropriate deliberation and consideration and I think it is highly embarrassing to the Committee to proffer a nomination and then subsequently request its withdrawal.

I believe the basic underlying principle that has been violated is that elections must be conducted at the ballot box and not by the Nominating Committee. For this Committee to act as if it should control elections preferentially over the votes of the various clubs gives the appearance of over-presumptuousness and arrogance which I do not believe is the image that BCI wishes to project.

Having expressed my opinions as above, I also wish to tell you that I can separate actions from personalities. While I disagree with the actions your Committee and certain members of the Executive Committee have taken, I hold no personal animosity towards anyone, and I take the position that hopefully none of this was done for personal reasons. You know that I have always considered you my friend and will continue to do so, and that applies to those who would oppose my nomination as well.

I would hope that when you submit your final Nominating Committee report, that you would also request that the entire Board revisit the question of exactly how the Nominating Committee should function with particular attention to the principle I have mentioned above.

I have also submitted my resignation to the President of BCI. I wish you good luck and Godspeed.

Very sincerely,

Joseph E. Gutierrez, M.D.

cc: Jack Douthitt, Mary Bloomer Solita Tafiur Rosade, Harold Harvey Elaine White, Jean Smith, Michael Hansen, BCI Board

Workshops by Russ Kinerson

Workshops – Well, did you think the fairies did all the work while we all slept!

The Olympics without medals, baseball games without hotdogs, bonsai conventions without workshops ... some things are just unimaginable! As plans developed for IBC'96, it was decided that lots of workshops and lots of great material were the orders of the day. Several individuals, each with his own 'insider' information on sources of great material, contributed to the process of finding the trees.

The largest of these workshop trees were the Junipers with 6" diameter trunks. Chase Rosade had been growing them in the ground for 25 years. They were the magnificent trees used in the Kimura workshop. Chase also provided some Black Hills Spruce for forest plantings on manmade slabs which he also cast. Bill Valavanis had been growing some very nice Japanese Black Pines, enough for his workshop and Dan Barton's workshop. Participants in Pius Notter's workshop were treated to some really fine 4" diameter Scot's Pines from Lee Hopkins. The mature plates of bark on those trees were something to see. Hugh and Martha Meehan had the Kingsville box-

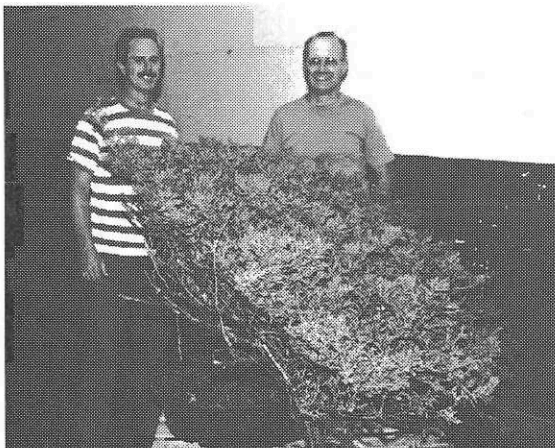
woods we needed for Bonnie Kobert's saikei workshop. Brussel Martin came through for us with some really nice Azaleas for Maria Elena Duran, Shimpaku for Ernie Kuo, and Dawn Redwood for Chase.

We bought some of these trees from Brussel immediately after he returned from a buying trip in China; so soon after his return, in fact, that some of these trees never showed up on his computer inventory. Masaru Ishii sent the material from California (Junipers, Pines, Willow) for his grafting workshops.

Remember that children's story about the little engine that could? Well, did you hear the story about the little truck engine that couldn't? It was the second trip of the weekend. Godfrey and I had brought in the trees from Lee Hopkins on Saturday. Now, it was 7:30 Sunday morning. Rich and I had stopped for coffee and switched drivers a few miles back; the Susquehanna River was miles behind us. We were making good time on our way to the Chase Rosade's to bring back another load of workshop trees. I was relaxing in the right seat and nursing my coffee when all hell broke loose under the hood. I'd never heard a truck engine blow before, and

I hope I never hear a truck engine blow again. . .all that loose metal flying around inside those cylinders! But I had a "Plan B." I was prepared with a cellular phone in my briefcase and a bunch of 800 numbers from the truck rental company. However, when the 800 numbers weren't answered by 'a real person', I began to think maybe it was time for "Plan C." Trouble was, there wasn't any "Plan C." Buy me a beer sometime, and I'll fill you in on all the gruesome details. Thanks to Jay and Bill Spencer, I did get home by 2:30 that afternoon. Rich and I got another truck and brought the trees back from Chase's the following weekend. There is another great story there too, but I'll save it for another time. I just want everyone to know that Chase and Solita are gracious hosts!

The workshops were a big success. I don't think many people saw the rough spots behind the scenes, and that's the way it's supposed to be. I had some great volunteer helpers. Thanks, Godfrey Trammell (KBC), Rich Davis (KBC), Carl Pregenzer, Bill Byrne, and Russ Bradley (all NoVa). I couldn't have done it without you!



Russ Kinerson and Rich Davis (Kiyomizu) standing in front of a master class tree



Russ Kinerson using a flat bed cart to unload trees

Editorial continued from page 4

mer. Our Chinese elms and Korean hornbeams likewise continued to thrive in the heat showing almost no effects of expected heat stress. I can attest to the most of the above for my bonsai after using Pro-TeKt for a month. I'm using 4 teaspoon of Dyna-Grow fertilizer with a 4 teaspoon of Pro-TeKt per gallon of water every watering which is daily unless it has rained. The proportions I use agree with what's on the containers. One must be careful to not premix each 4 tsp but should put one 4 tsp in a full gallon of water, mix it in thoroughly and then mix in the other - tsp. Admittedly this is time consuming using a one gallon sprinkling can but I don't own an automated watering system for each pot.

It appears that other people have worked out their own application rate. Bob Sitnick follows MPB Bonsai Studio's approach of applying Pro-TeKt As for a source of Dyna-Gro products possibly near you it is best to call them on their California number 1-800 DYNAGRO. Through them I located the closest distributor to me, one carrying the complete line of Dyna-Gro, in Woodbridge, VA. Woodbridge Home Harvest Garden Supply, 1-800-348-4769. Phone them for directions on how to get there. Of course there's always the possibility of everything not being perfect like: When I mentioned to my wife how some of my bonsai had broken summer dormancy and were

throwing new growth, she noted that maybe all that may be too stressful for those plants. I'm putting this in the back of my mind, not too far though, for there are too many times when a wife's suggestions prove to be correct. Take for instance John Y. Naka's tale about his wife, Alice, who has studied ikebana. Ikebana has many precepts akin to those in bonsai. John may be styling a tree and Alice will suggest removing a branch. Like many a true male, John thinks lightly of the suggestion at first, but after a few days of viewing the bonsai and the suggestion beginning to weigh more on his subconscious, John finally removes the branch.

Bonsai Bob, continued from page 12

Drechsler explains that bonsai are composed entirely of plant material—soil, trees, and perhaps moss—and are designed to appear as though something has been left out so that the viewer will be pulled into the scene. In penjing, on the other hand, the artist makes use of such things as rocks and figurines, and paints a more fully balanced picture that is complete in itself.

Bonsai was introduced into this country shortly after World War II, and has become increasingly popular in recent years. Drechsler explains the Japanese fondness for bonsai in terms of their generally living in small spaces, and he believes that its growing attraction for Americans may likewise be a function of our decreasing space for gardening and

living in general. "More people live in apartments now, and the bonsai fit into confined spaces. And bonsai also give the individual total control. Their care can be worked into someone's schedule whenever they find themselves with leisure time."

The art form is still very new here, of course, compared to its centuries of practice in the Orient, and Americans are still seeking their own unique style. As is the case with their outdoor gardens, the result will likely be many different styles. Drechsler advocates artistic individuality.

"Bonsai hold a certain fascination for our visitors, but I've found that the very young and the very old show the greatest appreciation," says Drechsler. "The young can relate to their size, the old to their age. Sixty

and seventy-year-olds are delighted to find something three or four times older than they are."

Does he have a favorite among the collection? "No," he says, "each tree needs attention at different times. We nurse the sick and then bask in their recovery, or get excited about a certain plant coming into bloom." In some ways, the individual pieces can better be appreciated when they can stand on their own, for instance, when one is taken to the Arboretum's auditorium for a special lecture or presentation.

Drechsler's outlook on life and bonsai is reflected in a 'Peanuts' scroll that hangs in his office. "The planting of a tree," it says, "shows faith in the future." He has been at the Arboretum for 32 years, he notes. "I can retire if I want . . . but I love my job!"