



Kongetsu

West Michigan Bonsai Club Newsletter

Vol. 11 No. 1

February 2006

Mollie Hollar, Editor

2007 Schedule

- Thurs, Feb. 15:** Season Opener,
Tools 101, books
- Sat, March 17:** Air layering,
BYOT
- Sat, April 14:** Fieldtrip to Gee
Farms
- Sat, April 21:** Repotting, BYOT,
afternoon
- Fri, May 11:** All-State Show set-
Up
- Sat & Sun, May 12 & 13:**
Michigan All-State Bonsai Show
- Sat, June 16:** Dwarf
rhododendron workshop
- Sat, July 21:** Fieldtrip to Jack
Wikle's home & Hidden Lake
Gardens bonsai exhibit
- Sat & Sun, Aug 18 & 19:** Club
trip to Chicago Show
- Thurs, Sept 20:** Pines with Frank
Mihalic
- Fri, Oct 12:** Set-up for fall Club
Show
- Sat & Sun, Oct 13 & 14:** Fall
Club Show
- Thurs, Oct. 18:** 2008 Planning
Meeting
- Sat, Nov 17:** Training pots

All events are held at Frederik Meijer
Gardens unless otherwise noted.
Thursday meetings are from 6:30 to
9:00 PM, and Saturday
meetings/workshops will be from 9:00
AM to 12:30 PM unless otherwise
noted.

There will be notices at the front door
of the Gardens telling which room
we'll be in.

**Dues are due.
See page 4 Membership Form.**

It's 2007!!!

But then I suppose you already knew that! It's winter here in Greenville, and from what I've heard, it's an even more exciting winter west of here. It sounds as though you folks near the Lake Michigan shoreline won't need to worry about watering your bonsai until late spring or so. At least the snow adds much needed protection from the sub-zero temperatures we're supposed to get this weekend. Good luck to all of you getting through that successfully and warmly!

We have a great schedule for 2007, one of the best in recent years. We'll be having some outside talent come in for workshops, and the fieldtrips we have planned should be outstanding. The schedule was set up with input from several Club members. If you were not able to make the meeting but have something else you'd really like to have us do, just let me know and we'll see if we can squeeze it in somewhere.

There's a *lot* of really important information in this newsletter, so please take time to read it all. Some applies to possible extra workshops with Masters and decisions we'll need to make very soon.

2007 Officers

At our October 2007 planning meeting Club officers were re-elected to be the same as for 2006:

- President, newsletter editor: Mollie Hollar (contact info below)
Treasurer: Ed Spaans (contact info on membership form, page 4)
All-State Show Coordinator: Anita Buckowing
Librarian: Lorena Chambers
Web Master: Mary Lou Calvin

2007 Michigan All-State Bonsai Show

Jack Sustic, former curator of the national bonsai collection in Washington, D.C., will be the headliner for the show. I'll be finding out more information about workshops, etc. before the next newsletter and will include it so you can get signed up early!

One change for the show this year is that the exhibit won't open until Noon on Saturday. This gives much needed extra time for clubs from the east side of the state to drive to Grand Rapids and get set up, not needing to spend another night in GR. *The vendors will be open at 9:00 Saturday morning, and workshops will begin then as well.*



Shows to Watch for In 2007

Consider attending these shows this year. They'll all be well worth your time!

Mid-Atlantic Spring Bonsai Festival: April 20-22, Ramada Hotel, E. Hanover, NJ, www.midatlanticbonsai.freeservers.com.

Midwest Bonsai Society Spring Exhibit, May 19 & 20, Chicago Botanic Garden, www.midwestbonsai.org/show.htm.

Rendezvous: May 25-27, Brussel's Bonsai, Olive Branch, MS www.brusselsbonsai.com/about_us/rendezvous07.shtml.

27th Ohio Regional Bonsai Show: June 9 & 10, Dawes Arboretum, Newark, OH, www.dawesarb.org/events/special-events-public.asp.

ABS Learning Seminars: June 21-24, Virginia Beach, VA, www.absbonsai.org.

Mid-America Bonsai Show & Exhibit: August 17-19, Chicago, IL, www.midwestbonsai.org/show.htm.

Ann Arbor Bonsai Society: August 25 & 26, Matthei Botanical Gardens, Ann Arbor MI.

As I get information about other shows, I'll add it here. I have fliers or e-mails about many of these. If you'd like more information, let me know.

2008 Michigan All-State Bonsai Show

I'll start now recruiting for an All-State Show coordinator. This is a very important position in our Club. According to our Club Bylaws, the coordinator's term is one year, with a previous year as Assistant Coordinator. Anita Buckowing has very successfully planned this year's show, and we should have had an assistant training with her this year. Consequently, we'll need to rely on Anita to assist a new coordinator for the 2008 All-State Show. So *if you are interested in becoming coordinator for the 2008 show, please let me know ASAP*. While the job really isn't difficult, it does require time to do the job well. If you would like to know more about what you would be doing, I can send you a list of responsibilities.

Bonsai 101

This idea came from another club in Michigan, and I think it's a wonderful thing for us to start. We always have new members who don't know all the words, techniques and secrets that some of us do, and of course everyone can stand to review and pick up new tricks.

So for one-half hour before each event (except Season Opener and fieldtrips) this year, we will be offering Bonsai 101. This will be just what it says. We'll go back to the very beginning, talking about such things as bonsai history, appropriate types of plants, styles, tools, books, repotting, and anything else we deem important to our less experienced members.

I will not be leading this half-hour session alone. I need the help of any members who know they have something to share, which is all of our core group. I may call on someone specially to talk about something specific. Generally, I'd like for everyone to be at each meeting a half-hour early to add whatever you can, or to learn what we haven't been very good about covering at regular meetings and workshops.

So be there to help or to learn; come to our new Bonsai 101.

Visiting Masters

We have the opportunity to have two Masters visit our Club this year for unscheduled demos and workshops.

First, Suthin Sukosolvisit from the Royal Bonsai Garden in Stoughton, Mass, can be available on Friday, May 25. Unfortunately, this is also the weekend of Rendezvous at Brussel's, so I wouldn't be available to help organize or be at this. If anyone is interested I can check with the Kalamazoo and Traverse City clubs to see if one or both of them decide to have him for their club(s) and let you know.

Second, Pauline Muth, current president of the American Bonsai Society, could be available all day on Thursday, June 28. Again, daytime isn't the best for most of you. She could do a variety of things – it would be pretty much up to us to choose – and the expense for each of us would be a bit less than for Suthin.

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ABS Learning Seminars

The ABS Learning Seminars promises to be an outstanding event this year. The location alone is enough reason to go! It'll be at the Cavalier Hotel in Virginia Beach – on or very close to the beach as I remember.

Presenters, all experts or Masters, are as follows:

Michael Hagedorn
Dorie Froning
Julian Adams
Mary Miller
Suthin Sukosolvisit
Marty Schmalenberg
Bill Valavanis
Pauline Muth

This event is well worth the time and money you would put into it. The seminars approach is fairly new for ABS, and the ones they've had so far have been enormously successful.

I'm planning to vend that weekend, so could possibly take along someone else with me in my truck if anyone's interested.

Things to Occupy Your Time

Here are some suggestions of activities you can do while staying warm for the rest of this loooooonnnnggg cold winter:

1. Clean and organize your pots. If they have white deposits from your water, soak them in undiluted white vinegar for several hours or overnight, depending on the extent of the deposits. Then scrub with an old toothbrush to remove any leftovers and rinse with water.

And third, Ben Oki could be available to us sometime during the first weekend in June. He'll be in Kalamazoo for his annual visit with the club there. We could either join the club members there for an event, or have Ben come to the Gardens for something specifically for us. If the Gardens doesn't have space for us, I offer my home and/or yard.

Personally, given a choice of the three, I'd much prefer to have Ben come to us or us to go him in Kalamazoo than either of the other two, but I just happen to be a big fan of Ben's. And there really isn't a need for us to choose just one.

This is not an either/or situation. Any of these events would be *in addition to* our regular schedule, so they are just extra opportunities for us to be able to work with experts or Masters. We don't need to make a choice of only one of the three, but I do need to know ASAP if anyone is interested in having any of them come here. ***If you are interested, contact me by February 10.*** I'll keep working on details.



Bonsai Postage Stamp

I received the following press release in an e-mail. The "we" in the information refers to Eunice Corp. I will have the petition at every meeting this season so we can all have a hand in supporting the issue of this beautiful stamp.

We are pleased to announce that after a year of research and study, we have submitted a proposal to the United States Postal Service (USPS) to issue a stamp featuring bonsai trees.

A USPS American bonsai stamp? Yes! Yes! We can have it, but every one of us needs to let the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee know we want it. The postal service receives about 50,000 proposals a year, and only issues twenty-five stamps a year. When a proposal is received it goes before a reviewing committee to see that it meets the criteria set by the postal service; one of these criteria is that it is 'American mainstream' - hence my efforts needed a lot of research to convince the screening committee that an oriental art, with a Japanese name, is American mainstream!

But YEA! We did it! The screening committee approved the proposal to be forwarded to the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee! (CSAC), an elite group of fifteen members, including people such as Joan Mondale (wife of Walter), actors, congressmen, history professors, noted artists, etc. This group may or may not recommend it to the postmaster general, who makes the final decision. We are optimistic that it will make it. When we started the proposal we sent it to bonsai people to edit, but they were not answering the questions we needed answered; they were too much into bonsai. So then we formed a committee of "lay" people: an English teacher, a proposal writer, a physician, an attorney and two architects. They quickly alerted me what they needed to know about bonsai that was American. The proposal has ten footnotes, mostly authentic websites. (A special thank you to Judith King of Washington DC and Tim Liu of Honolulu, Hawaii for the magnificent final editing!)

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Wherever you keep your pots, try to have shelf space enough to be able to organize them according to size and shape. They can be nested, but it's best to put a piece of paper towel or cardboard between them so they don't scratch.

2. Read, read, read. For those of you who have Internet access, I'll be getting back to suggesting good websites for you to check out. Meanwhile, I don't think I've given you this address: www.artofbonsai.org, especially if you want to read about aesthetics and philosophy of bonsai. It's a great site to get lost on for a while.

And if you don't have Internet at home, go to your local library for their computers, or just get a new bonsai book. Check out my website at www.basicallybonsai.com. I've got lots of books for sale there.

3. Start preparing your soil for spring. Once repotting season gets here, it's hard to get everything done. So the farther ahead you can get now, the better off you'll be then. Do a five-gallon bucket for conifers and one for deciduous.

We use just Turface and aged pine bark for all our trees, 2:1 for conifers, and 1:2 for other evergreens and deciduous. There are literally hundreds of bonsai soil mixes out there, but we seem to do just fine with what's simple. To mix a large amount, pour both ingredients into a big bucket, then pour it into another bucket. Go back and forth until it is well mixed.

4. Check the rest of your supplies, especially fertilizer and superTHRIVE, to be sure you'll be ready when spring comes. Enjoy your time off from working on your trees, but get ready for spring!

Fifteen booklets were created, one for each member of CSAC, the booklet includes; the proposal, some pictures of bonsai, photos of stamps from other countries, John Naka biography (because we referred to the John Naka pavilion in Washington D.C.) written by Marybelle Balendock (printed by kind permission from her), a map showing the density of bonsai clubs in the US and its territories, and a short biography of me – just to validate that I have credible bonsai knowledge.

My club's web master (Deb Kennedy) wants to work on our Sakura Bonsai Society of Northern Michigan web site, so that people can download the proposal and petitions on the site, and receive the latest information about the stamp. However, Deb is having carpal tunnel surgery and cannot work on the site right now, in meantime we are sending out this news release.

We will not have any input about the design of the stamp; the postal service graphic arts department will create that. Nor will we (Eunice Corp) receive any honors or notification from them or anyone else. We will not even be notified if it is accepted, we will just have to read it on the post office web site to learn about it at the same time the rest of the world learns about it. This is to honor all of our trees and bonsai in general and not an individual!

For those of you who are not familiar with Eunice, she is the person who donated the original bonsai to Meijer Gardens for their collection.

Good, Bad or Indifferent?

Remember last year's discussion about SUPERthrive? After a discussion with a retired botanist at our fall show, I will continue to use it. Plants *do* use B vitamins, which is a lot of what SUPERthrive is made up of – thus the castor oil smell!

2007 Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phones: Home _____ Work: _____

E-mail: _____

(Check one)

Active membership (\$25.00) Inactive membership (\$6.00)

Please make check out to:

WMBC

and mail to:

Ed Spaans

947 Orchard SE

East Grand Rapids MI 49506

Or bring to any meeting or workshop.