



The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the U-M-Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Please join us at 6:30 PM to meet friends and members. Program starts at 7:00 PM.

<http://www.annarborbonsaisociety.org>  
[AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com](mailto:AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com)

**August 2018**  
Volume 15 Issue 6

## **Are you getting your trees ready?**

**Our Annual Show is Saturday, August 25<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, August 26<sup>th</sup>**

**August monthly meeting (Wednesday, August 22, 6:30 - 9 PM) with Mark Fields**

At our August 22<sup>nd</sup> monthly meeting, Mark Fields will be styling a Rocky Mountain Juniper, *Juniperus scopulorum*, and demonstrating deadwood creation techniques. On Thursday, August 23, Mark will conduct a workshop featuring Sekka Dwarf Hinoki Cypress, Itoigawa juniper and Kishu juniper. These cultivars have compact foliage and will be styled into a shohin size bonsai. This workshop is suitable for beginning or experienced bonsai growers and is limited to 10 participants.

**Our Annual Show Setup  
Friday, August 24, 2018  
10 AM – 3 PM**

I am looking for members to help with show setup on Friday before the show. Please join me to transform the auditorium at Matthaei Botanical Garden into a *Bonsai Show*. This is light work involving some lifting, toting and sprinkling a bit of *magic dust* around the auditorium. The transformation process should wrap-up about 3 PM. If you are available, meet me in the auditorium on Friday morning, 10 AM.

Questions/concerns? Contact me at [aabonsaisociety@gmail.com](mailto:aabonsaisociety@gmail.com)

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## **PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE: Ron Milostan**

So, everybody knows the adage “do as I say not as I do”. For years I have been telling my kids, “do not run on dock, do not jump off dock”.

Well, my 3-year-old granddaughter was here recently and I was going to show her how to do a cannon ball into the lake. I jumped off the dock and hit the bottom with MY bottom, landing with my foot tucked under me. Walla!! Pain!! An ankle fracture of the Tibia and Fibula. So, you say, “hey stupid” to a kid, but what do you say to a 72-year-old... HEY STUPID!!!!

So, let me apply this lesson to bonsai techniques. For instance, if you ask me how I do wire I will show and tell you how. This does not mean you have to do it that way. I will tell you several ways to apply a technique and you must learn which way works best for you. There is no good way to jump off a dock but there are several good ways to do bonsai. Many ways work, some do not. Keep an open mind and you will find your way to master each technique presented to you. If bonsai was easy to master everyone would be doing it.

The AABS show is coming up. This is the biggest way that our club raises money. That money brings in all the wonderful speakers we have every year. It also helps fund some of the workshops that are not covered completely by the workshop fees. So, tell everyone you know about

this great event, put up flyers, use social media or make an old-fashioned phone call. Let's make this the biggest show ever.

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## **Mark Fields – Speaker at our August meeting**

**Paul Kulesa**



Bonsai has been Mark's passion since age nine. Mark received his early training from a nurseryman near his home. Early on, Mark was loaned two bonsai books, The Brooklyn Botanic Garden, "*Handbook on Bonsai: Special Techniques*" and "*Handbook on Dwarfed Potted Trees, The Bonsai of Japan*" and was told to read them. Mr. Line, the nurseryman who gave him the books, taught Mark basic horticulture, showed him how to start and grow plants from cuttings, how to prune and told him to practice.

Mark's father fed his early passion with salvaged shrubs from job sites. When Mark came across an interesting looking trunk or shape he would pot it up. Most would die

within days, but some would survive that growing season. It was great practice and Mark learned plenty.

Mark's second mentor was Max Mendel, another nurseryman. Max provided starter trees, supplies, offered advice and critiqued his trees when asked. Mark called him *the father of bonsai in Indiana*. He spent many weekends wandering around his nursery. Mark was introduced to the Indianapolis Bonsai Club and has been a member since 1979 serving as president from 2009 - 2012.

Mark owned and operated his own landscape business, Fields Landscape Concepts, LLC, founded in 1983 and closed in 2006. In 2006 Mark opened a new business, Bonsai by Fields, LLC. He performed demonstrations, lectures and workshops using a wide variety of trees and sells bonsai at major exhibitions throughout the US.

In the fall of 2013, Mark visited Kyoto, Japan, several bonsai nurseries and the Taikan-ten. In January 2015, Mark traveled to Osaka, Japan to study at the Kouka-en nursery for a month. This third generation bonsai nursery owned by Keichi Fujikawa is the nursery where Bjorn apprenticed and is now a resident artist.

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## **Bonsai Pot Making with Mark Hanner Chris Kehrig**

Many cultures have their own take on pottery. Pottery was being created in Japan prior to Bonsai. 706 A.D. marks the earliest existence of bonsai with Chinese graphic showing a woman with Penjing.

Some pots are created in molds which can produce multiple shapes, but lack the artistic human element such as those created by Pablo Peetypots Gonzalez who Mark highly admires.

What makes for a durable bonsai pot is called Vitrification = the turning of clay into a glass like state for winter durability. This is done by firing the pot to cone 6 = 2200 – 2500 degs. There is ~15% shrinkage of the clay after firing.

Mark first showed a video of a wheel turned pot. The turning takes ~30 mins and the trimming an additional 30mins. This produces a smoothly turned pot, but it's not his favorite method.

Hand building or slab building creates more unique one off pots. Mark proceeded to create two different pots in front of the group using this method.

The first formed pot, he took a slab of potting clay and formed a bowl shape. Next, he used a rough texture roller on the outer walls to give the pot a rugged look / feel. After that, he brushed on Sodium Silica to give the pot a rough gritty feel. The heat gun came out with Mark slowly spinning the pot to dry up the Sodium Silica mixture. Once dry, he stretched the pot out which caused the exterior fissures and cracks to grow. Mark mentioned that you reach a point where enough is enough and you need to stop playing with clay. The pot wound up being ~10 inch wide oval.

For the second pot, Mark wanted to show how different hand built pots can be. It consisted of thicker / shallower walls. He pulled out homemade forms to create patterns on the exterior. He mentioned that he likes to put the patterns on fairly quick and randomly.

There are three main clay types:

- Earthen
- Stoneware
- Porcelain

After Mark was done creating the two pots, he offered them for the raffle and provided the winners with a choice of what finish they wanted.

Here are a few photos from the July meeting, provided by Michael Field:



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## **AABS Annual Auction – Coming Soon**

**Paul Kulesa**

Time to remind you our annual auction is approaching, Wednesday, September 26, 2018. In the past, our auctions have required three elements to succeed - buyers, sellers and auction administrators. So, . . .

- Buyers - you know who you are. Figure out what you may need to further your bonsai skills (books, magazines, containers, materials and supplies).
- Sellers - find those bonsai and bonsai related items that you want to sell at auction
- Auction Administrators – Any member can help make this auction a success. I can use your assistance. Think about helping.

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## **Up For Debate**

**Aaron Binns**

Three Show Mistakes

Our show is approaching quickly, which makes my head spin... wasn't it the first day of spring yesterday? Sigh... At any rate I think there are three main mistakes that people make when getting ready to enter a tree into our show. I have put them in reverse order of severity, kind of like the count downs on all the late night shows. At least I think the late night shows still do top ten count downs; it's been a while since I was able to stay awake past 11:00PM. Sigh again...

Top Show Preparation Mistakes: Number 3

Don't wait too long to get prepared. People begin the process of preparing their trees too late. Start the process of getting your tree ready early. You should really have already selected a tree or three as candidates for the show at the beginning of the season. That way you can put enough effort into the tree to ensure it is at it's best when show time comes around. Selecting more than one means you don't have to worry too much if one selection just has a weaker growing season or Japanese beetles take a bite out of each leaf. Selecting at the beginning of the season

really isn't what I'm referring to here. What I mean is don't discount how much time it will take to put finishing touches on a tree. You need to clean the pot, add new top dressing, moss the tree, do last minute trimming, choose and prepare stands, choose companion plantings, tidy up wire, etc. I usually spend better than 4 hours doing this work.

Top Show Preparation Mistakes: Number 2

Don't modify a tree for short term esthetics if it will compromise the long term look of the tree. I have been tempted to remove a small branch on my chosen tree to improve the immediate look but realized that it would not be the right decision long term. Let's face it, all of our trees are in development and that is perfectly fine. When you realize that no tree is perfect and all of them are under construction in one way or the other, it takes the pressure off of entering a "perfect" tree; whatever that means. Remember, there is a reason why it is universally acceptable to show a tree with wire.

And the Number 1 Preparation Mistake: Number 1

Don't sit on the sideline. For heaven sake, if you have a tree that you have put time and energy into growing, a tree that has brought you pleasure then enter it. It doesn't matter if it is perfect. Don't compare yourself to anyone else and don't compare your tree to other trees. That isn't the point of the club. We are here to encourage people to like and participate in the art of bonsai. It doesn't matter if you have a national treasure or not, as long as you treasure the tree you are entering.

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Here's a photo of Bill Struthur, the lucky raffle winner of the Colorado Blue Spruce Bjorn Bjorholm styled at our June meeting.



## FOR SALE OR WANTED:

**Ads in the Newsletter:** All members can offer for sale any bonsai and bonsai related materials in the newsletter or at the monthly meeting with no sales fee. AABS Society Members' ads are free to publish in the Newsletter. Deadline for submissions to the Newsletter is the 5th of the month.

**Prizes for the Raffle:** We are soliciting donations suitable for prizes to be raffled during each general meeting, and, for the Annual Bonsai Show Raffle. If you have a tree, bonsai pot, tool or anything else bonsai related, that you do not use anymore and is still in good condition, consider donating it to the Society. Please see Bill Struhar at any meeting, email Bill at [wm.struhar@mail.com](mailto:wm.struhar@mail.com) or call (586) 468-7169.

**Club Logo Now Available:** we will embroider the club logo on your garment for \$12 (plus modest additional charge for lined garments).

The logo comes in two forms; light green tree on dark green background, or dark green tree on light green background, with a border on both combinations and AABS lettering and Chinese characters with appropriate contrasting color depending upon the garment color.

Bring your garment in a clear plastic bag to a meeting, select your colors, pre-pay Bill Struhar, and your garment will be ready one or two meetings later. (The vendor may require a minimum of five garments per order)

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## 2018 EXECUTIVE BOARD

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## AABS AD-HOC COMMITTEES

The AABS President is an ex-officio member of all committees with the exception of the Nomination Committee.

**Fund Raising:** William Struhar

**Web Administration:** Bob Bauer

**Nomination Committee:**

**Show Committee:** Ron Milostan and Paul Kulesa

**Annual Auction:** Paul Kulesa

Membership dues are \$25. Please pay by check, written to Ann Arbor Bonsai Society or bring your credit card to the meeting and pay! AABS now accepts credit cards for

membership fees and other AABS activities. Please talk with the Treasurer at the next meeting.

Tamara Milostan – Treasurer AABS  
4228 Highcrest Dr.  
Brighton, Michigan 48116

[AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com](mailto:AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com)


The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society is affiliated with the American Bonsai Society: <http://absbonsai.org> and the Mid-American Bonsai Alliance: <http://mababonsai.org>

<http://www.annarborbonsaisociety.org>

## Support Local Bonsai Vendors

Hours: Wed., Thurs. & Fri.; 11:00 am to 6:00 pm Sat., 1:30pm to 5:00pm  
CLOSED: Sunday, Monday & Tuesday

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