



# Pittsburgh Bonsai Society

...to disseminate knowledge, encourage others and create interest in the art of bonsai



## October 2013 Newsletter



### Boxwood Workshop!

**OCTOBER**



Put September's techniques to work on your own Boxwood. Trees available at modest materials cost. Don't forget to bring your own tools! (A limited number of Society tools will be available.)

Wednesday • October 16, 2013 • 7pm • Phipps Garden Center • Shadyside

### Winterizing Techniques for Beginners Plus Elections!!!



Techniques to help you tuck your trees away for the winter! Get more involved with the Society for 2014! Volunteer to help with the Spring Show, the Welcoming Committee, our Website, Public Relations or (you fill in the blank!)

Wednesday • November 13, 2013 • 7pm • Phipps Garden Center

**NOVEMBER**

Please check our evolving website: <http://pittsburghbonsai.org>  
Also visit us on Face book: [www.facebook.com/PittsburghBonsai](http://www.facebook.com/PittsburghBonsai)



# The Pittsburgh Bonsai Society Newsletter

**Editor:**  
Cindie Bonomi

**Copy Editor:**  
Jay Miller

**Graphic Design:**  
Cindie Bonomi

**Contributors:**  
Dave Metzgar  
Jay Miller  
Jonathan Martin  
Norbert Pietrzak

**Photography:**  
Cindie Bonomi  
Jonathan Martin

**Publishing & Circulation:**  
Jay Miller

Published periodically (10 issues a year) by PBS for members and other bonsai enthusiasts. It's our sixth decade of advancing the art of bonsai in the Tri-State area.

**Deadlines:**  
Generally two months prior to issue date.

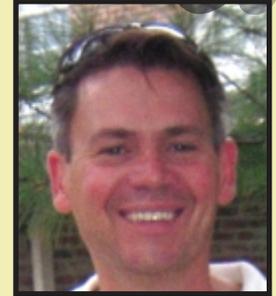
**Submissions:**  
Please submit Photos or Artwork in JPG format and Copy in Microsoft Word.



## A Note From Dave:

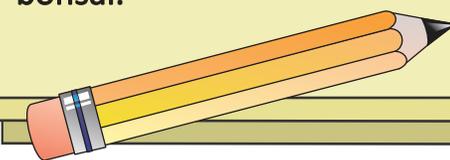


Looking at the treasurer's report at the last meeting made me realize that we are in a situation that is a far cry from where we were several years ago.... we have some money! With the success of the spring



*~photo by Cindie Bonomi*

shows and this summer's auction, we have enough money to spend on some exciting events. We plan on bringing in at least one well known national speaker next year and we should be able to purchase some better quality material for workshops. As mentioned at the last meeting, a trip to the National Arboretum in the fall or next spring can be partially covered by the society. More details on that later. Look for an email questionnaire or online survey about the trip. This month's boxwood workshop with Armand Latour will be partly funded by the society too. As we continue to have successful events, we can provide more for our members and help "to disseminate knowledge, encourage others and create interest in the art of bonsai."



Dave Metzgar



Graphic Design Geeks

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Or: [cindiebonomi@yahoo.com](mailto:cindiebonomi@yahoo.com)

Cindie Bonomi • 335 Newburn Drive • Pittsburgh, PA 15216 • Phone: (412) 561-2057

# A Chat With Norbert

~By Jay Miller



Mrs. Snyder displayed their bonsai each spring at the Pittsburgh Conservatory. This went on for quite a few years and then came the undertaking of an annual bonsai show at the Phipps Garden Center. Being a huge success, the show continues each year, attracting many visitors. Pietrzak was an unusual combination of a scientist with a flair for and appreciation of artistic design. Even now, he is President of the Polish Arts League of Pittsburgh. His collection of bonsai grew with his experience in this art.

In 1975, Norbert took his first tour to Japan. Subsequent bonsai trips, many taken with Frank Mihalic of Wildwood Gardens, increased his knowledge of the subject. Visits included China, Korea and Taiwan.

He persuaded Robert Morris College (at that time) to introduce an adult education course, featuring bonsai, as early as 1971. His present and popular bonsai classes at Phipps Conservatory have been well attended. So Norbert has literally planted thousands of bonsai trees in Pittsburgh.

One of his students who worked on the Pittsburgh Playhouse Productions tipped off visiting actor Jose Ferrer about Norbert's bonsai collection, and several trees took center stage as props in a play featuring Jose titled "The Interview". Norbert then wrote an article titled "Bonsai Broadway Bound" which appeared in the American Bonsai Society Journal.

When he moved to his current home in Moon Township, he tried the polyhouse approach for winter storage, but found it did not work very well. So he built a greenhouse to house his tropical trees. He also uses his garage for winter storage of deciduous trees. The garage will also be the home for display shelves featuring a stunning collection of suiseki. He is particularly proud of his "hut stones". Norbert solved the problem of a sloping backyard with a multi-level deck and pedestals for the 70+ tree collection.

Norbert retired from Robert Morris University in 2000. He was called back several years later when the school started a nursing program. He teaches Nutrition, Microbiology and Environmental Health. His bonsai are displayed every week at a Chinese-Japanese restaurant called "Kiyoshi" in Moon Township.

We will feature another conversation with Norbert devoted to suiseki in the spring of 2014.



~photo by Cindie Bonomi

Over the decades you could have run into all the "Greats" and pioneers of the American bonsai and suiseki movement at Dr. Norbert Pietrzak's kitchen table. When bonsai speakers, in the 1950s, Sixties and Seventies traveled the country, they were hosted in private homes. Thus you might find Mr. Yoshimura, Mr. John Naka, Mr. Okamura, Mr. Ota and a young Bill Valavanis (age 13) breaking bread and discussing bonsai. Norbert learned, made friends and spread the word regarding bonsai.

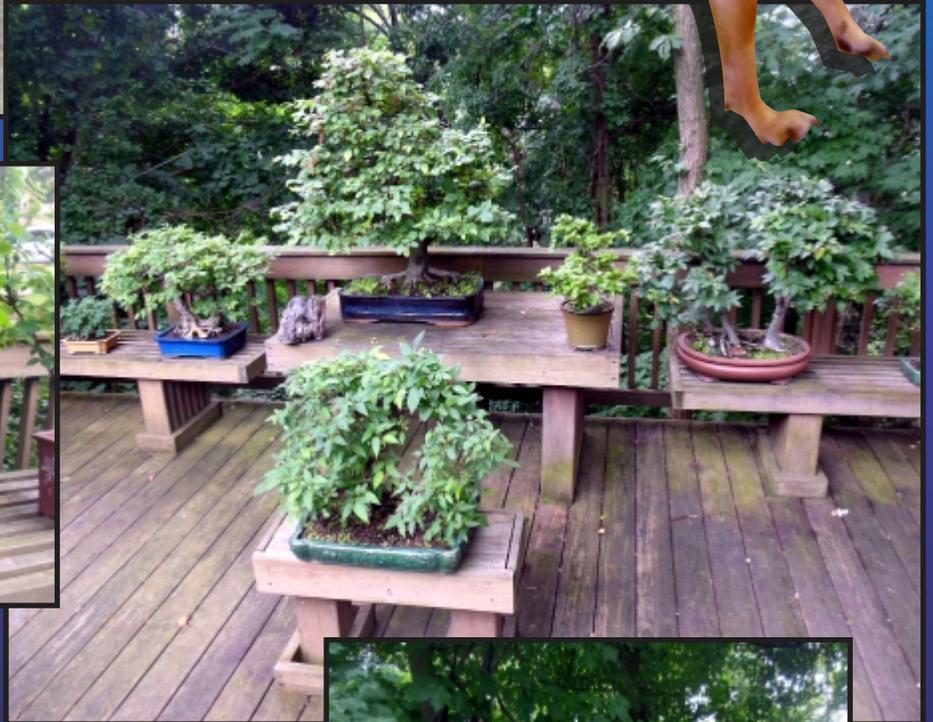
Pietrzak found others in the Pittsburgh area who were fascinated by "little trees" and this led to the organization of the Pittsburgh Bonsai Society in 1957. PBS was the first bonsai group founded by Americans as opposed to Japanese-American communities in the USA. Los Angeles was the second group to be founded. Mrs. Julia Hill, Mrs. Shafer, Mrs. Anna Snyder and Norbert co-founded the PBS. These founders took their trees to be exhibited in Cleveland where club organization was just in its infancy.

Kaufmann's Department Store featured PBS bonsai in their 1962 main floor display of oriental merchandise called "Oriental Fantasy". The members of PBS had a display on Kaufmann's 11th floor auditorium at the same time. This exhibit continued annually for three years. Norbert was the principal lecturer at this display. It was advertised throughout the store by posters in key places, and drew large crowds.

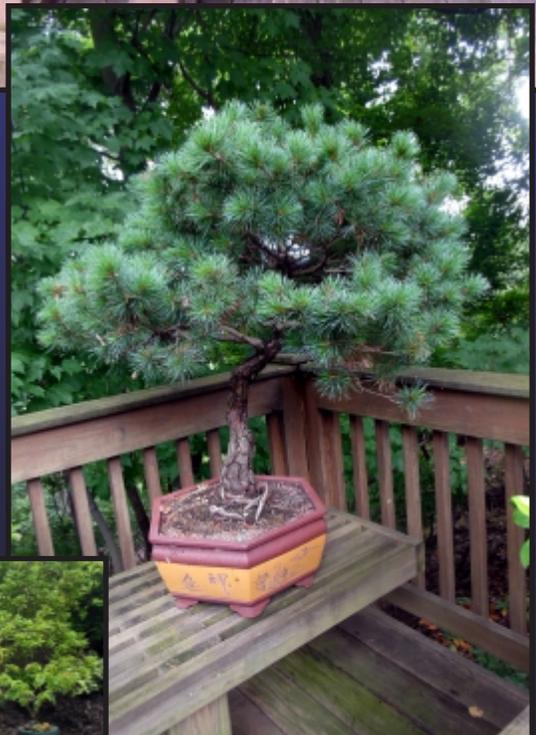
Gradually, awareness was building about this fascinating hobby. Mr. Okamura, curator of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden presented several talks and workshops at the Pittsburgh Garden Center. Mr. Naka, Lynn Perry Alstadt, Doris Froning, Ernesta Ballard and Jerry Stowell followed. Information on bonsai was gradually growing and so were our trees. It was time for a bonsai show. Prior to this undertaking, Norbert and

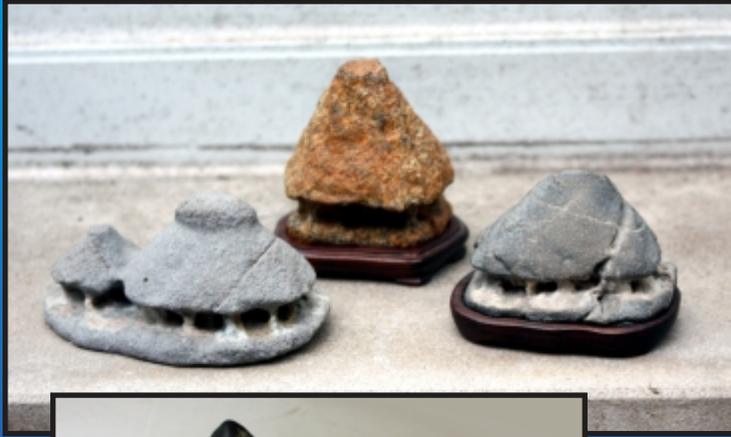


Tina



Norbert's  
Back Deck and Trees

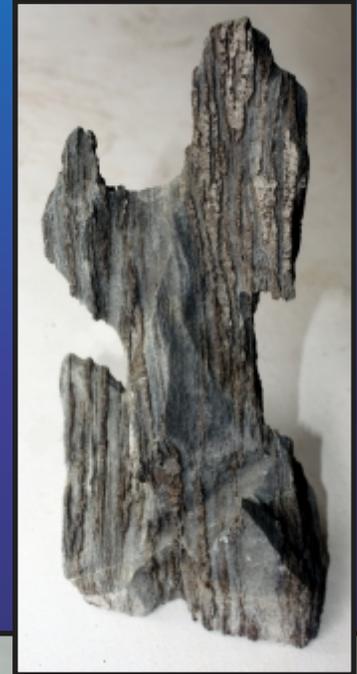




Norbert explained to us that his stone huts were not hand carved they were naturally carved by water erosion, the water washed under them for years and years making them into these hut type structures.



Norb has some of the only true water carved huts in his collection.



Norb has many beautiful viewing stones and Chrysanthemum stones in his collection.



Norb's  
Suiseki

# The Columbus Bonsai Show

~by Jonathan Martin



~photo by Cindie Bonomi

July 20, 2013 started off cloudy with light rain sprinkles. But that was nothing to hold me back from the 2.5 hour drive to the Franklin Park Conservatory in Columbus Ohio for their summer bonsai show. Upon entry to the conservatory, I was greeted by a few members of the Columbus Bonsai Society and given a brief history of their group.

After chatting a little bit about their group and our group, I headed straight for the vendors to snatch up any unique trees or other items I might find! Although there were only a couple of vendors, I was still able to find a few nice things including a small Fukien Tea, a weeping willow, a baby ginkgo, and a hand molded pot.

What the show lacked by way of vendors, it made up for with the variety and quality of display trees. Species of all ages and sizes were represented, along with an abundance of complimentary accent plants and rocks to complete each individual "art" setting. The wood framed backdrops for the trees added a nice organic feel to the room as well. And while most of the flowering species seemed to have finished blooming by this time, there were still plenty of impressive trunks to be seen with gnarly root systems. After browsing the showroom for a while, it was time to partake in the Azalea Workshop for the last hour of the day. Some informative instructions and information on azaleas, a snip here, a wire there, and there you have it... I'll be ready for repotting in the spring!



Some Columbus Bonsai Show Trees



Jon's Azalea that he worked on at the show workshop

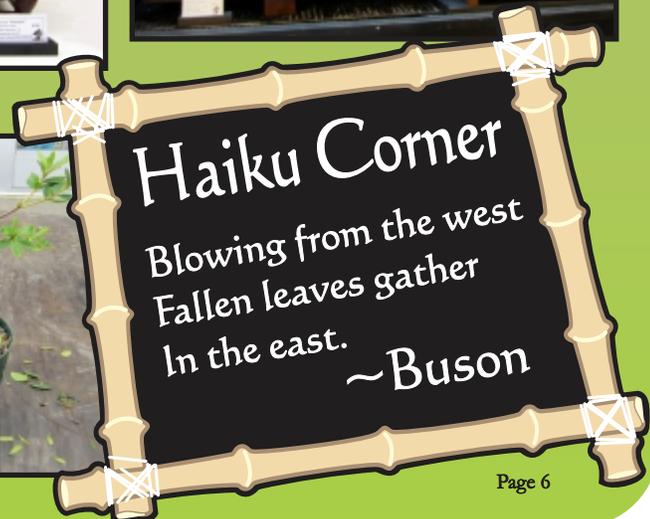


Before



After

~photography by Jonathan Martin



Haiku Corner

Blowing from the west  
Fallen leaves gather  
In the east.

~Buson

# Mid-Autumn Plant Care Tips

~By Jay Miller (with help from GSBS...)



Here in Zone 5, it's about time to begin hardening-off your trees for the cold months ahead and preparing a safe place to keep them. For the most part you should not attempt collecting, repotting, air-layering or drastic pruning at this time of year. Most reference books refer to a single autumn feeding. Deciduous trees may benefit from a low-nitrogen (IE., higher in potassium and phosphorus) feeding after the leaves have fallen, but prior to November 1; this can promote bud formation and strengthen the trunk and root system for winter. Evergreens may also be fed a low-nitrogen fertilizer until the end of October.

You'll hear about winter protection at the November meeting. Watering continues to be the most important task during the Autumn. Did you take hardwood cuttings in September? Check your wired pines for thickening branches and trunks; adjust if necessary. Think about your Christmas list from Bonsai in The Burgh.

# Wear Your Pride!



Now you can proudly show your enthusiasm for Bonsai and the Pittsburgh Bonsai Society with golf shirts from members Anna and Cliff Domasky. Available in white, tan and taupe. \$25 each, including three color embroidery.

You can also supply your own quality shirt; have it embroidered for a modest \$10 charge.

For more details contact Cliff or Anna at: [annaclaus55@hotmail.com](mailto:annaclaus55@hotmail.com)

For your Bonsai supplies support  
the store that exists for the society



## Bonsai In The Burgh

724-348-4771  
Pots, wire, tools, soil, plants

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Coming Events:

05-06 October 2013 Cleveland, OH Cleveland Bonsai Club "Fall Show 2013", Cleveland Botanical Gardens Center Sat: 10-5; Sun: Noon-5. They expect at least 7 vendors, tree raffles, silent auction tables, and at least 100 of the finest trees in NE Ohio. 11030 East Boulevard Cleveland, Ohio 44106 USA Phone 216.721.1600 Fax: 216.721.2056 [info@cbgarden.org](mailto:info@cbgarden.org) CBGC admission fees: \$9.50-Adults, Children under 3 - \$4.00. It allows one to see the entire Garden Center, 7 Theme Gardens, the enclosed Glass house and the show. Underground parking is also available for \$5.00.

12-13 October 2013 Asheville NC, The North Carolina Arboretum "18th Annual Carolina Bonsai Expo" Sat 9:00AM-5:00PM; Sun 9:00AM-4:00PM. Juried exhibits from a six-state region, a renowned bonsai marketplace, workshops free demos. Visit the Bonsai Exhibition Garden. Details <http://ncarboretum.org> Phone 828 665-2492

## Mark your 2014 Calendars:

A switch from Spring to Fall for the 4th U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition, 13-14 September 2014 in Rochester, NY. Details next spring.

## Newsletter Information:

It's easy to make an announcement or contribute to the PBS Newsletter. If it is text only, call or email Jay Miller at: 412 481-4540 [suisekifan@yahoo.com](mailto:suisekifan@yahoo.com) If it is a sketch or photo, email Cindie Bonomi at: [cindiebonomi@yahoo.com](mailto:cindiebonomi@yahoo.com)

## November 2013 Issue Deadline:

Submissions for the November 2013 Newsletter are due no later than October 16, 2013. The December issue deadline is November 15, 2013.

Compiled by Jay Miller  
[suisekifan@yahoo.com](mailto:suisekifan@yahoo.com)





Pittsburgh Bonsai Society  
c/o Cindie Bonomi (Editor)  
335 Newburn Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15216

## PBS • 2013-2014 Calendar of Events

Oct 16 .....	Wed 7pm .....	Boxwood Workshop
Nov 13.....	Wed 7pm .....	TBA plus Elections
Dec 11 .....	Wed 6:30pm .....	Annual Holiday Party
Jan. & Feb 2014 .....		No Meetings
Mar 19.....	Wed 7pm.....	TBA
Apr 16.....	Wed 7pm.....	TBA
June 2014 .....	TBA .....	Spring Show



All events, unless otherwise noted, will be held at the Phipps Garden Center, starting at 7:00pm

Phipps Garden Center is located at the edge of Mellon Park in the Shadyside section of Pittsburgh. At the Phipps Garden Center sign on Shady Avenue, just south of the intersection of Fifth and Shady Avenues, turn into the cobblestone driveway. Park in the metered lot. Walk 50 yards farther down the cobblestone lane. The Garden Center is the red brick building on your left

### Severe Weather & Emergency Information

PBS Meetings and Special Events at Phipps Garden Center will take place as scheduled except in the event of severe weather or emergency. Unsure? Call their Emergency Phone Number: 412 441-4442 for updates.