



# Pittsburgh Bonsai Society

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

## September 2014 Newsletter

### SEPTEMBER THIS MONTH (A Twofer!!)

Sean Smith brings 40 years of passion for Bonsai, Suiseki and Diaza carving to PBS with insights gathered from studying with Japanese masters in various traditional display and aesthetic disciplines. Members who wish to bring their own suiseki for an informal critique will be welcomed, and Sean will be bringing Bonsai-related material for sale. See Page 5 for more detail on Sean's career.

Wednesday, September 17, 2014, 7:00pm at Phipps Garden Center in Shadyside

### Going, Going, Gone!

The Great Bonsai Auction – All Bonsai-related items: pre- and finished bonsai, pots, books, tools, pins, jewelry, etc. See Page 6 for details.

Saturday, September 20, 2014 from 10:00am to 3:00pm at Michael Bros. Nursery, Cheswick

### Bob Grealish on Carving: A Demonstration and Slide Presentation



Carving is an effective way to transform an average tree to a dramatic style, enhancing the illusion of age and survival. Bob reveals the fascinating world of jins, shari and shows the hand and power tools to achieve the best results.



Wednesday, October 15, 2014, 7pm at Phipps Garden Center, Shadyside

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



## The Pittsburgh Bonsai Society Newsletter

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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 one month prior to issue date.

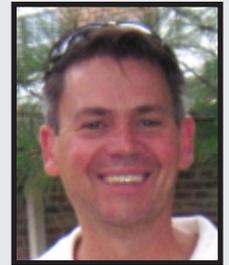
**Submissions:**  
Please submit Photos or Artwork in JPG format and Copy in Microsoft Word.



## A Note From Dave:



Seems like almost everyone I speak to about bonsai has had a rough start to the year regarding their collections. Old Man Winter was especially vengeful, culling many a tree. Unless you were so frustrated and tossed your bonsai tools onto the fire with all of the lifeless limbs that succumbed to his cruel breath, that only means space for more trees.



~photo by Cindie Bonomi

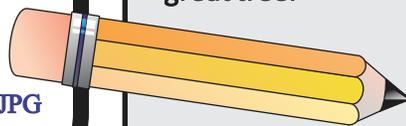
With many opportunities this year of trying something new, from the spring show, to the picnic, to the auction, one or two trees could take up the empty spaces of the ones you lost. Now is the time to scour garden centers for the left-overs and cast-offs that are discounted just to get them out of the door. Try planting some seeds in the fall for spring germination. I recently bought a pine from another member who started it from seed several years ago. He had control over the shape of the tree from the start. Look around now for plants that can be air layered next year. Consider taking cuttings for new material. Look online for the best time to take hard and soft wood cuttings. Plant some seedlings in the ground and let them grow a few years.

I grab the little red-leaved maples that grow under a local mature tree when they are the last plants with leaves and stand out like little flags.

If you don't want to start with the small stuff, then you can sell some of the newly empty bonsai pots you have and buy a really great tree.

Dave Metzgar

[bannerdave@aol](mailto:bannerdave@aol) 412-956-2482



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## Haiku Corner

Peace and quiet:  
Leaning on a stick,  
Roaming round the garden.

- Shiki

# The PBS Annual Picnic

We asked 8 of our members to write a paragraph or two about this year's show. This is the first time we have ever done this. We thought this would be a great way to get some unbiased and diverse input. Here is what each of them had to say:



## Gilda Arroyo

It is hard to talk about our bonsai society's annual picnic without first setting the scene. The Grealish homestead includes a lovely house with plenty of acreage including ample parking, a pool, a wood shop, lots of storage, dog agility course, and the reason for everyone's visit: a plethora of bonsai!

A gorgeous array of edibles was awaiting everyone just inside the Grealish home. There were generous amounts of fried chicken, plenty of sides, fruit salad, and a variety of sweets to please everyone's sweet tooth.

The main attraction was a lovely display of bonsai trees at various stages of training. There were saikeis, formal and informal uprights, windswept, cascade, slanting style, root over rock—you name it! There were also a few trees that were recently harvested from the woods. Seeing trees at various stages was both beneficial and overwhelming. As a beginner bonsai practitioner it was helpful to see what trees look like right after they've been collected from the woods. However, it was also a bit overwhelming to someone with a small collection of lesser developed trees. At the end of the day, the Grealish collection offered me something to aspire to. Moreover, after seeing hundreds of pots of all shapes and sizes in storage, each patiently waiting for just the right tree to come around, I no longer feel guilty about the 6 or so empty bonsai pots I have lying around.

It was also quite a treat to see the three junipers that were given to three lucky members to style. Each member had their own vision. While the trees looked similar when they were first handed out, the similarities evaporated once the members artfully wired each tree.



I always look forward to attending the annual bonsai picnic at the Grealish homestead. This affair did not disappoint. Bob and Rose are wonderful hosts. It was well attended by members, some spouses, and children. It's always good to see and visit with friends. Fabulous trays of food and desserts created a wonderful spread for everyone to enjoy. Cold refreshments were available and plentiful. A beautiful sunny day with temperatures remaining pleasant welcomed the guests. It was warm enough for people to swim but not too hot to force you out of the sun.

## Mike Stern



Bob's trees were on display for all to enjoy. The variety of wonderfully trained trees and different styles were a delight for the eyes. The bench accommodations appeared more spacious than previous years. I had thought Bob built more benches. He reminded me that this viciously cold winter led to a number of his trees being part of the bonfire. I was reminded how most of us if not all experienced the loss of some long trained specimens. The picnic offered an opportunity for the members who had trees which had succumbed to the subfreezing temperatures an opportunity to share, grieve, and support each other. I am reminded that "misery loves company" is not exactly accurate. A more accurate statement is "misery loves miserable company".

I was unable to stay for the planned bonfire and returned home. The next day I took my trees that either partially budded or did not bud in the spring and started the recycling process. The empty pots are being considered for trees that are in the garden waiting to be created into bonsai. Hope springs eternal.



## Dave Metzgar

As a new member of the Bonsai Society, one of the first outside-the-meeting events that I attended was the picnic at Bob and Rose Grealish's house many years ago. Very shortly after arriving, I was greeted by a long time friend of the group who knew that I was a new member. He enthusiastically talked about the group that he loved and how knowledgeable and willing to share their experiences many of the members were.

The man who greeted me was Don Gould who unfortunately passed away later that year. But I found that Don's enthusiasm for bonsai and for helping others was shared by many other members in the group and to this day, one of my favorite events of the year is the picnic. It must be the gathering of old and new members together, the casual atmosphere, and the great collection of trees, which for some

reason I always seem to see something new even though I've been to Bob's many times before. And with

## Don Gould From 2005 Picnic

the risk of jinxing next year's picnic, the weather has been great for as many years as I can remember on those Saturdays of August.





## Larry Lamonde



Oscar

Let's see where do I start. I think it's wonderful that Rose and Bob Grealish open their home to a bunch of odd ball bonsai enthusiasts every year. An abundant variety of food and beverage. Don't forget the dessert! And of course who could not mention Oscar. I think he puts on a few pounds that afternoon as well. I find myself strolling through the benches of Bob's bonsai garden forgetting where I am. I do not know of a place that I have been that has such a diverse and beautiful collection of trees. All kinds of material in different stages of development. It's a good time to pick the brains of some of the more experienced members of our club without any time restraints. I seem to learn as much there as any meeting I've attended. I've made a few friends there too. More than just a "hello how are you", we have the chance to discuss different successes and failures of our individual trees. Finally I never leave without adding to my collection. This year I added what Mike called a "Slippery Elm" and a beautiful "Tsukumo" false cypress. I really enjoy our annual picnic and look forward to it every year. Thanks Bob!

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I enjoy going to the Bonsai Club picnic for the chance to talk with other members for longer periods of time that is possible at our meetings. We can talk about things other than bonsai like family, sports, work, or new houses. There is also the good food. The weather has been great at every picnic I have been to.

## Jim Schulz



## Barb & Charles Lim

As new members, we enjoy all the friendly people and are always impressed with all the knowledge that is shared. It is a never ending learning experience. Also, the annual picnic has a great location, great food, allows for further information sharing and allows folks to meet other members in a relaxed environment. In summary, a great group of folks to enjoy, improve skills and develop bonsai plus lasting friendships.



## Chris Treloar



My wife and I attended the annual Bonsai Picnic at the Grealish farm this past weekend. While the weatherman called for rain the day was very pleasant. This was our second picnic, having missed last years affair, and the Grealish house just gets more beautiful every time we visit. Bob does amazing woodwork in, I presume, his spare time. (Where he gets that I don't know) But even more impressive is his

collection of bonsai. Like many of us, this winter's extreme cold took a toll on his plants, but his collection is still amazing. Everything from tiny plants, to huge specimens are thriving in his backyard. My wife especially loves the "forests" and mixed plantings.

There were several kids (including Mark) playing in the pool when we got there. Next year we may have to bring our suits! And did I mention the food? Tons of different salads, sandwiches, fried chicken, even sushi were available, plus all the desserts! If you are on a diet, like I should be, avoid the pool table!



## David Wolf

....as usual the picnic at the Grealish home was one in which hospitality and generosity abound. A wonderful time at a wonderful place hosted by wonderful people. Thank you Bob and Rose!



# Introducing Sean Smith!

*~Bio by Sean Smith*

Mr. Sean Smith lives in the United States in Marysville Pennsylvania, where he owns and operates Custom Oriental Wood-craft. Sean took his 20 year passion for Bonsai and Suiseki along with his extensive background in carpentry and put all them together to start his own business in 1994. He currently creates Bonsai display tables, and carves Daiza for renowned Bonsai and Suiseki enthusiasts all over the world. As a result of this work many awards have been bestowed upon him for his craftsmanship as well as his strict adherence to these ancient Japanese art forms.

In 2001, Mr. Arishige Matsuura, President of the Japanese Suiseki Association, proclaimed Sean the number one Daiza carver outside of Japan.

In 2003, Sean was the first American to exhibit an American Suiseki in the Japanese National Suiseki Show at the Meji Shrine in Tokyo, Japan.

In 2008 Sean was given recognition by the World Bonsai Friendship Federation for the promoting and expanding the Japanese art of Suiseki.

In 2004, Sean was asked by Senji Morimae to come to Japan to study Bonsai and Suiseki at his nursery outside of Tokyo. With a passion for constantly learning, Sean accepted the invitation. As a result he was able to hone his skills as well as broaden his knowledge of Japanese related antiques. Sean continues to make this trip every year and has been fortunate to have studied the following art forms. He is highly recognized as one of the leading authorities of formal Tokonoma display in the West.

In 2005, he was invited to study Zen in Daitokuji-in, at the sub temple of Hoshyu-in in Kyoto, Japan, Sean also studied daiza carving in Hamamatsu Japan, with Japan's leading daiza carver, Mr. Koji

Suzuki. Sean was his 1st and only student.

In 2007, Sean Studied Kiri Bako making with Japan's top box maker, Mr. Akira Shiraishi in Tokyo.

In 2009, Sean got the opportunity to study scroll making,

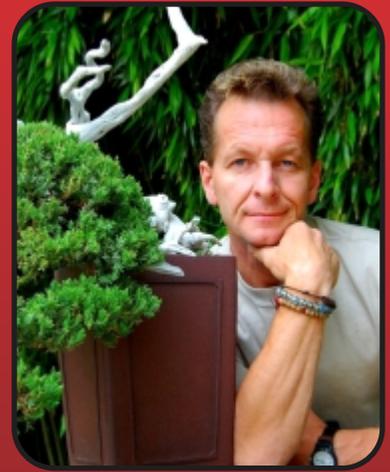
with Mr. Seizi Maruoka, one of Japan's leading scroll makers.

In 2010, he studied the art of pot repair with Mr. Nakada Tomohide, in Tokyo.

In 2011, Sean studied the art of Display with Mr. Negishi in Hanyu City, Japan.

In 2014 Sean was one of few westerners invited to exhibit a Suiseki in the 1st major suiseki exhibit at the Tokyo National Museum .

Currently, Sean lectures all over the United and Europe on Bonsai, Suiseki and Daiza carving. He is also a contributing editor of many international Bonsai and Suiseki magazines as well as the North American Viewing Stone Society, and the International Stone Appreciation Society. He is also a former director of the National Bonsai Federation in Washington DC., as well as a member of the Nippon Suiseki Association, European Suiseki, and past president of the Susquehanna Bonsai Club, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. In addition, he is the head organizer for the International Stone Appreciation Symposium held every 2 years since 2002, in Harrisburg, PA.



*~Photography by Sean Smith*

# The Great Bonsai Auction!!!

When:..... Saturday, September 20, 2014 from 10:00am to 3:00pm

Where:..... Michael Bros. Nursery, 47 Michael Road, Cheswick PA 15025

Phone:..... 724 265-1222

Website:..... [www.michaelbrosnursery.com](http://www.michaelbrosnursery.com)

What:..... All Bonsai related items: pre- and finished bonsai, pots, books, tools, pins, jewelry, etc.

Who:..... Free & open to the public; but only paid members can sell material.

How:..... Bring your trees, etc., between 10:00 and 11:00am; the auction starts shortly thereafter, and we will conclude by 3:00pm

More:..... Plenty of free parking ..... Light refreshments will be served.



If you're considering upsizing or downsizing your collection, this fast-paced event is for you! Be sure to look around at what the Nursery has to offer! It's recommended by Phipps, as part of their Project Green Heart effort.

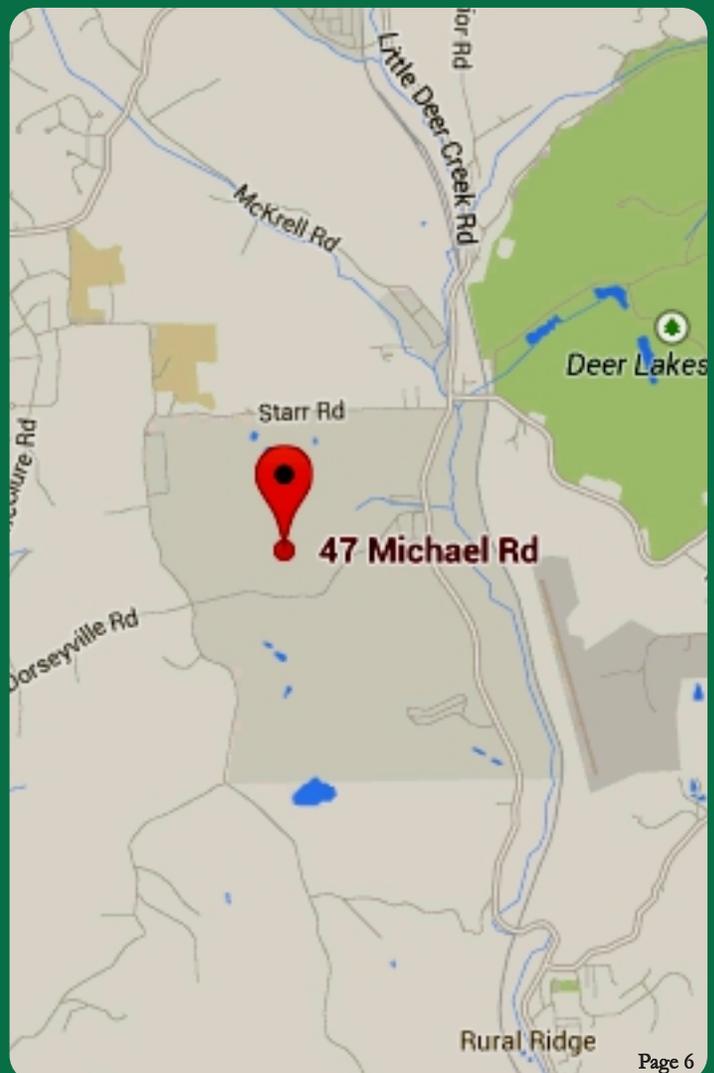
## DIRECTIONS:

### From Pittsburgh:

Take PA-28N. Then take Exit 12 toward Cheswick/Springdale. Keep right at the fork, and follow signs for Russellton and merge onto Hite Rd. follow for 0.5 mi. Turn right at Russellton Road/Little Deer Creek Rd. cont. to follow Russellton Rd for 4.2 mi. Turn left at Michael Rd (look for their sign) and continue up the hill for 0.5mi. Michael Bros. Nursery is on the right. 47 Michael Rd.

### From North Hills and South Butler:

(Ignore Google Maps and Map Quest directions. Use the following directions instead...) From Rt 8/William Flynn Hwy. head east on Gibsonia Road/PA-910. Turn Left onto Oak Rd., right after the Cross Roads motorcycle store. Continue straight through the stop sign onto Bairdford Rd. Turn Left at the next stop sign onto Saxonburg Blvd. Immediately turn right onto East Union Road. Continue to follow East Union Rd about 1.8mi. Turn Left onto Michael Rd. at the stop sign. You will see a green sign for our shop. Michael Bros. Nursery is on the left. (47 Michael Rd.)



# Auction Preparation

Preparing your auction items is similar to the process for the Spring Show: remove any unwanted growths from the soil, do cosmetic pruning for shape if it's a mature bonsai. Leave wiring in place if it is not marking the trunk or branches. Water the bonsai the day before the auction and let it drain well. Wipe the pot. If you are donating tools, make sure they are clean. Clean book jackets and dust your maga-

zines. Polish bonsai pins and jewelry with a soft cloth.

On a card, print your name and identify your item. Species and cultivar name would be helpful for the plants. If you want a certain reserve price, put it down, but be realistic.

Finally, the Society will receive 15% of the final bid on each item, but if you can donate the item, you'll be helping our future Society activities.

For your Bonsai supplies support

the store that exists for the society



Bob Dietz



## Bonsai In The Burgh

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

# Yea! We Got Shirts! Good Shirts!



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)

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

The work group meets every other Thursday at Bob Grealish's farm 6-10pm. For the next date, call Bob at 412 977-0077.

### Spotlight Trees:

Remember to bring your spotlight trees to a meeting for "show & tell". It's a great way for new members to learn about new (to them) species; their TLC requirements and the story of your tree.

### Bonsai Barn:

Whether you want to buy, sell or trade any bonsai-related material, take advantage of the "Bonsai Barn" on our website: [pittsburghbonsai.org](http://pittsburghbonsai.org) You can also list regional/national bonsai events that your fellow PBS members might find interesting.

### Coming Events:

4th US National Bonsai Exhibition September 13, 2014-9:00am to September 14, 2014-5:00pm Rochester NY. International Judges: Susumu Nakamura, Lindsay Bebb, David Easterbrook will evaluate over 200 bonsai from across the United States for awards and present free demonstrations. For additional information and to submit photos for entry contact: William N. Valavanis at: [wNV@internationalbonsai.com](mailto:wNV@internationalbonsai.com) or 585-344-2595

### 2015 Calendar Note:

Artisans Cup of Portland, "American Bonsai Reforged and Refined", Portland OR. September 26th-28th 2015, Portland Art Museum, 8:00am-5:00pm; 1219 SW Park Avenue, Portland. The Artisans Cup of Portland Bonsai Exhibition is the showcase of America's new movement to raise aesthetic appreciation and craftsmanship in the art of bonsai. The show's venue in the renowned Portland Art Museum catapults bonsai into the world of fine art. Event Website: <http://www.artisanscupofportland.com>

### Future Events:

If you have a topic or subject that you would like to see in coming months, please contact Dave Metzgar or Bob Dietz for your idea's consideration. This means NEW members too. PBS wants to help you grow in your knowledge and techniques as your bonsai grow.

### 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 [susekifan@yahoo.com](mailto:susekifan@yahoo.com) If it is a sketch or photo, email Cindie Bonomi at: [cindiebonomi@yahoo.com](mailto:cindiebonomi@yahoo.com)

### October 2014 Issue Deadline:

Submissions for the October 2014 Newsletter are due no later than September 18, 2014.

Compiled by Jay Miller  
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Pittsburgh Bonsai Society  
c/o Cindie Bonomi (Editor)  
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## Pittsburgh Bonsai Society • 2014-2015 Calendar of Events

- Sept 20..... Sat 11 am-3pm ..... Auction 2014: Michael Bros. Nursery, Cheswick  
Oct 15..... Wed 7pm ..... Bob Grealish on Carving: Demonstration & Slide presentation  
Nov 19..... Wed 7pm ..... Dan Yobp: Styling in Context  
Dec 09..... TUE 6:30 pm ..... Annual Holiday Party  
2015 ..... NO MEETINGS ..... JANUARY & FEBRUARY  
Mar 25 ..... 4th Wed 7pm ..... TBA  
Apr 15..... Wed 7pm ..... TBA  
May 29-31..... Fri-Sun ..... Spring Show/Weekend



All events, unless otherwise noted, will be held at the Phipps Garden Center, starting at 7:00pm Phipps Garden Center, 1059 Shady Avenue, 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.