



A GREAT BONSAI WEEKEND

The weekend of May 1–3 was filled with bonsai activities. On Friday the National Bonsai Foundation Board of Directors met for the day in the Yuji Yoshimura Center. The main topics for discussion were the cuts to the Arboretum's budget and the new marketing alliance.

In February the proposed federal budget cut \$2 million from the funding for the Gardens Unit and the Education and Visitor Services Unit of the Arboretum. At the May meeting, Arboretum Director, **Thomas S. Elias**, was able to report to the Board that it seems now that the funding for FY 2009 will not be cut because the Department of Agriculture will be funded by a Continuing Resolution that will maintain funding at the FY 2008 level. However, he pointed out that this does not bode well for the future as funding is not guaranteed for FY 2010 and hiring for some staff positions will be curtailed. Fortunately this "freeze" on hiring will not affect the selection process for the Museum Curator position.

The other principal issue for discussion was the marketing alliance. After the NBF Board meeting last year NBF Honorary Director **Barbara Hall Marshall** offered a matching grant to NBF for the development of a marketing plan for the Arboretum and the Museum. Working with Friends of the National Arboretum and ShareCon, the developer



Vendor Tent in the Great Meadow.

of two new hotels adjacent to the Arboretum, NBF was able to match the grant, which will extend over three years. In April, **Dana Faulkner**, a marketing professional with broad experience in the field, was hired to develop the plan and she presented an overview of the project at the May Board meeting.

On Friday evening the NBF Board and invited guests attended a lovely reception at the Japanese Embassy in downtown Washington. Cultural Minister **Mitsuru Kitano**, who represented the Japanese embassy at the 5th World Bonsai Convention in 2005, welcomed guests to the reception. Later in the evening visitors were able to view a special art exhibit in the Tea House on the embassy grounds.



Bob Chilton's Ficus 'Green Island' on display in the Special Exhibits Wing.



NBF guests at the Japanese Embassy Reception.

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President's Letter



Two long-time members of NBF's Board of Directors retired in May.

Jerry Stowell, a founding member of NBF, served the bonsai community in many ways throughout his long career. He was the first President of the

American Bonsai Society and the author of bonsai books including his classic primer "The Beginner's Guide to American Bonsai" and a bonsai book for children entitled "A Small World to Hold in Your Hand." Jerry, a student and friend of Yuji Yoshimura, most recently participated in the International Scholarly Symposium on Bonsai and Viewing Stones which was held at the Museum in 2002, recreating a pre-bonsai tray landscape "Kasuga Gongen Kenkie" from 1309 A.D. in the Kamakura period. He cares deeply about the Museum and is devoted to promoting its work.

Mary Ann Orlando told the *New York Times* in an article on bonsai as a national art that bonsai allowed her to focus on the important things in her life. "It is so serene that... it gives me the feeling that everything's all right with the world." Mary Ann was the first Executive Director of NBF and provided leadership for many important events and programs including the building of the John Y. Naka North American Pavilion and the Mary E. Mrose International Pavilion. One of her most brilliant ideas was to form the "Committee of Thousands," composed of those donors of at least \$1,000, who provided much of the funding to build the Naka Pavilion. Mary Ann has been a most generous supporter of NBF and the Museum.

Given the Agriculture Research Service's proposal to cut the FY 2009 budget of the National Arboretum, **Jeanne Connelly**, Chairman of the Friends of the National Arboretum, and I met with ARS Administrator **Edward Knipping** and Associate Administrator **Antoinette Betschart** in May to express our concerns about the proposal. (As noted in the article on p. 1, these cuts will probably not go into effect; instead, Congress will likely fund the Arboretum at the FY 2008 level.) We reviewed Congress's original intent in creating the Arboretum: to provide information relating to trees and other plants in the form of (1) research and (2) education, noting that ARS's proposed budget cuts had all been aimed at the Arboretum's education function. They acknowledged the dual purposes of the Arboretum, but said that because of overall cuts in the Federal budget they had to make a choice between them and decided to preserve research over education.

Looking to the future, we asked that the ARS officials not propose similar cuts to the Arboretum budget. This led to a discussion of how best to fund the Arboretum's operations—both research and education—and whether the Department of Agriculture is the most appropriate home for the Arboretum.

With the Federal deficit at record levels and a new Administration about to take office, **Barbara Marshall's** generous sponsorship of our new marketing program could not have come at a more fortuitous moment to help us respond to the budgetary pressures and enlist the help of the appropriate decision-makers. We look forward to working with our new marketing director **Dana Faulkner** as we face the challenges ahead.

Felix

New Members for NBF

By David Bogan

Over the Memorial Day weekend I had the pleasure of attending the "Rendezvous" at Brussels Bonsai nursery in Olive Branch MS. As a NBF Board Director I also had the privilege of talking about the work of the National Bonsai Foundation.

Brussel Martin, owner of the nursery, holds this event every year during this holiday weekend. This year he gave NBF a special table to solicit new memberships and to promote the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. As a member of the NBF Board of Directors and a huge supporter of the organization, Brussel went out of his way to make sure we had ample space to display our materials.

And I am happy to report that we gained 11 new members. More importantly, we had the perfect opportunity to explain to everyone the good work that NBF does in supporting the Museum. Unfortunately many bonsai enthusiasts have no idea what NBF is and how important is

the work that it does providing support for the bonsai collections at the Arboretum. So this was a wonderful opportunity to explain our mission to an interested audience.

As a wholehearted advocate for NBF, Brussel has also agreed to place an NBF membership brochure in every package that is mailed out from the nursery. This will mean that purchasers of bonsai and related materials will be receiving information on NBF with their orders. So we are looking forward to accepting many new memberships in the future.

With regard to the "Rendezvous" itself, it was (in my humble opinion) the friendliest bonsai event I have ever attended and of course it included many wonderful workshops and demonstrations. In addition to all of this we were treated to some of the best southern cooking I've ever had! I hope to be able to return next year and have the honor and opportunity once again to draw more supporters to the cause of NBF.

A Great Bonsai Weekend

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On Friday, Saturday and Sunday the Potomac Bonsai Association sponsored a large vendor tent in the meadow across from the Museum. On display in the Special Exhibits Wing of the Mary E. Mrose International Pavilion were selected trees from the bonsai collections of the vendors. In the audi-



Mr. Nakajima consulting with Curator Jim Hughes and Assistant Curator Aarin Packard.

torium of the Administration Building, trees and stones from the collections of PBA members were on exhibit.

In addition to all of this, over the weekend there were several bonsai demonstrations. **Chuck Croft**, the incoming President of PBA, composed a forest

planting of Japanese cedars, *Cryptomeria japonica*, in the Yoshimura Center. And in

a special tent in the meadow, NBF Board Director, **Cheryl Manning**, repotted and styled a Japanese Black Pine, *Pinus thunbergiana*. Her work will be the focus of an article to be published soon in the *Journal of the American Bonsai Society*. On Saturday, **Shinichi Nakajima**, President of the Nippon Growers Association, worked on a *Juniperus procumbens* 'Nana', donated by NBF Board



Cheryl Manning at work during her demonstration.

Director, **Chase Rosade**, and then on Sunday he styled a Japanese yew, *Taxus cuspidata*, from the Museum's holdings. On both days his commentary and dialogue with the audience were translated with great style by **Hiromi Nakaoji**.

A combination of a wonderful display, great activities, excellent publicity, and absolutely perfect weather provided for large and happy throngs of visitors. This certainly pleased the sponsors of the event: PBA, NBF and the Arboretum!



Spring Kusamono Exhibit

By Kathleen Emerson-Dell

Encouraged by the success and popularity of our kusamono exhibit, *Kusamono Display*, last summer, we asked volunteer **Young Choe** to create kusamono for the spring season this year. The exhibit was on display from May 10 through the 18th.



Workshop participants create a take-home Kusamono.

Grasses were the stars of last year's summer show, but moved to a supporting role for the delicate and colorful blooms of spring this year. The display in the Special Exhibits Wing also incorporated a number of the Museum's bamboo accessories, originally collected in Asia by bamboo research specialists from the Department of Agriculture in the 1930s.

In conjunction with the exhibit this year, we offered a special workshop, taught by Ms. Choe in the Yoshimura Center, to give participants the opportunity to create their own kusamono. This event was so popular that it sold out weeks in advance. To see more photos of the exhibit please visit the NBF website at http://www.bonsai-nbf.org/site/ex-spring_08_kusamono.html.



Kusamono Phlox 'Minnie Pearl' in Michelle Smith ceramic container.

Visit NBF's Website:
www.bonsai-nbf.org

Lower Courtyard Garden Redesigned

By Amy Forsberg

A number of people from the Gardens Unit staff recently came together to help redesign and replant the garden beds of the lower courtyard. Previous plantings in this area have suffered due to the harsh growing conditions of the sunny courtyard. The heat and light reflected by the paving and walls intensifies the full summer sun causing many plants to bake. Therefore our goal was to choose plants that will better tolerate these conditions. At the same time the need to replant also gave us the opportunity to achieve other design goals.

To begin the work we tried to unify the disparate garden beds and create a more singular sense of place by repeating certain elements. For example we planted *Sedum tetractinum* in all the beds as a groundcover to give a carpet of green instead of a brown mulch cover. This will also lend a bit of a Japanese garden feel to the area although it is a nontraditional plant choice. The more traditional moss or *Ophiopogon* would not survive the heat and sun as the *sedum* will.



At work in the Lower Courtyard.

The bed in front of the dragon wall of the Chinese Pavilion was designed with a dragon theme in mind. Red roses and other plants with red/purple foliage (*Loropetalum* and *Albizia*) all lend dragon-like color and were planted with an undulating line while the *Albizia* 'Summer Chocolate' serves as the tail of our dragon. Even the name of the red rose, 'White Pearl in Red Dragon's Mouth' is appropriate! Then for this bed we chose with great care Chinese garden stones to harmonize with the existing stones on the inside and at the entrance of the pavilion.

The elements of scent and texture were also taken into consideration. The garden will have lots of wonderful fragrance day

and night and in all seasons. During the warmer weather two kinds of *Gardenia*, two species of *Osmanthus* and three different roses scent the air and the uncommon *Sarcococca confusa* will even give some fragrance in winter. The bold textures of *Hedychium*, *Trachycarpus*, *Hibiscus* and a hardy bamboo all give a tropical Asian feel to the space. And, we have incorporated a number of broadleaf evergreen shrubs and trees to give gentle breaks to the long views between the upper and lower courtyards. These will eventually give the space a more intimate aspect.

Of the Gardens Unit staff working on the project, **Stefan Lura** was vitally important in helping me with the planning and design phases. He selected most of the plant choices and suggested their placement. **Pat Lynch** was indispensable in operating the front-end loader while placing the very large stones with great precision. Stefan and Pat, along with **Chris Upton**, **George Waters**, and **Nych Hansen**, all worked incredibly hard on the day of planting. **Carole Bordelon** served as an advisor on the project and as always was a voice of reason!

We all look forward to watching this garden develop as the young plants grow and mature, and we hope that this new design will enhance the beauty of the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum.



Gardens Unit Staff planting the Dragon Wall bed outside the Chinese Pavilion.



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*Thank you for your support
of the National Bonsai &
Penjing Museum.*

MUSEUM NOTES

- **Robin Everly**, U.S. National Arboretum Librarian, who had oversight of the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum Library, has accepted a position as Librarian in the Botany/Horticultural Library at the Smithsonian Institution. The Museum Library Collection was well served by Robin's professional expertise during her 6 year tenure. Working with volunteers **Akiko Sprague** and **Kathleen Doherty** she completed a catalogue of this special collection and brought the unique holdings of the Library to the attention of the Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries. We wish her well in her new job.