



BADGER BONSAI SOCIETY

Promoting and Enjoying the Ancient Art of Bonsai Since 1972

Badger News | A Publication of the Badger Bonsai Society | Sep 2021

Next Meeting Date:

Thursday Sep-9-2021 | 6:30 to 8:00 pm
Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Avenue, Madison, WI

AGENDA:

Care for Boxwood Plantings, John Naka redux,
back to school, air layering

CLUB OFFICERS:

Co-President Wayne / Bill
Vice President Mary
Treasurer Gary
Web Master / Newsletter Wayne
Librarian Ben
Refreshments Elaine

President's Message

Quick ... take a step back and look at how fast things are moving — in a few weeks, summer will officially be transitioning into fall — we are already starting to see a significant, though inconsistent change in the weather. It will soon be time to consider winter protection of your bonsai, especially with the inconsistent WI-weather.

And with the relaxing of COVID restrictions over the past few months, we have seen more and more bonsai-related activities back on the schedule. The Milwaukee Bonsai Society displayed at the Wisconsin State Fair, and just last weekend had their 50th Annual Show at Lynden Sculpture Gardens (best of show, to Jack Douthitt), and the Midwest Bonsai Society Annual Show in Chicago a couple of weeks ago, and many sessions and workshops from artists and suppliers.

And probably one of the biggest bonsai events in the US — the US National Bonsai Exhibition in New York (organized by William Valavanis) occurs Sep-11 and Sep-12 ... is anyone going?

Our Aug-12 meeting at Olbrich Gardens, had a total of 28 attendees, with 5 first time attendees that included at least 2 future members. Mary re-did her grove planting presentation (from Sep-2020 zoom meeting) to some great accolades from the audience (and thanks to Molly, Karl and Barbara for their grove show-n-tells); our blind auction put some good pots, plants and books into member hands — we will do that again in the future ... though probably with a lesser number of items (thanks to Mary, Tim and Gary for assisting in that complicated and busy event), and finally thanks to Karl for his donation of boxwood plantings ... that benefited 18 members.

Our Sep-9th meeting will be held in the Olbrich Gardens Upstairs Meeting Room; our normal 2nd floor meeting location. We'll again use a theatre style seating with fewer tables to provide greater seating capacity and a better opportunity for safe distancing as needed.

With the recent changes due to COVID in Dane County ... masks must be worn at all times for our Sep-9th meeting at Olbrich Gardens.

Remember to turn your nametag back in at the end of the meeting. — *Wayne*

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September Meeting Agenda

Our plans for the Sep-9th meeting includes: new attendees intro; overview of recommended care for new boxwood plantings; a brief discussion of air layering (stemming from questions at prior meetings); a review of the National Bonsai Foundation's August [tribute to John Naka](#); an update on BBS Board proposal for September or October get-together (not ready for a picnic yet! ... members, if you have not replied to the prior email about this get-together, please do so prior to the meeting) and an update on discussions of other club activities.

My First Workshop Experience

Do you remember that first day as a freshman in high school? How nervous you were around all the older kids? But also how, by the end of the day, it really wasn't as frightening as you imagined? I recently experienced those feelings all over again when I attended my first bonsai workshop last week in conjunction with the Midwest Bonsai Exhibit held at the Chicago Botanic Garden. Several interesting workshops were advertised, but I chose to participate in one offered by Andy Smith of Golden Arrow Bonsai in South Dakota. Andy primarily works with wild collected ponderosa pine, and the workshop (limited to six registrants) promised that everyone would take home a show-quality specimen. Advance registration was \$50 and trees ranging in price from \$50 to \$350 would be available to choose.

Although I have a dozen or so bonsai, I am most definitely still a self-taught beginner and so I saw this workshop as a great opportunity to learn in person from a pro.

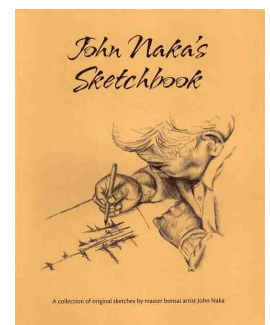
Since I do not yet own dedicated bonsai tools, I gathered up some garden pruning shears, wire, and wire cutters then made the 2.5 hour drive down to Chicago. The minute I stepped into the workroom I started sweating . . . sitting around the table were five men each with a professional kit of well-worn bonsai tools. Around the perimeter were several amazing pine specimens that looked entirely out of my league. I took a seat, introduced myself, *(continued on page 3)*

John Naka Tribute

In a [blog from Aug-10-2021](#), the National Bonsai Foundation presented a tribute to John Naka, one of the premier influencers and contributors to the early development of bonsai in the United States.

John Naka (Aug-16-1914 to May-19-2004) would have been 107 years old this year. The blog presents a digital archive celebrating his life, his trees and his legacy.

Images courtesy of the National Bonsai Foundation



made a joke about being in the wrong place, and sat nervously waiting for instructions.

The first order of business was deciding whether we would wear masks (we did), then we drew numbers to select our trees. Andy talked about each specimen one by one, its price, and what its potential might be. I didn't want to buy the cheapest nor the most expensive tree (what if I ruined it?), but did have my eye on a short pine with a thick trunk and several dead, burly branches that had lots of "character". I drew #4 and picked out my desired tree (image to the right). But, before the lottery was even over, Guys #1-3 were already scraping, clipping, and pruning! I sat there with my heart pounding – where do I start? I stared at my tree for several minutes, turning it around and pretending to study it as an artist would approach a blank canvas.



Fortunately, the man next to me leaned over and offered me a bark scraper and suggested I begin creating jins from a few of the dead branches. Whew! Eventually Andy made his way over to my station as he made the rounds several times. I learned that the others had come from Indianapolis, Springfield, and the Chicago region, but not all were as experienced as I thought they were. A pivotal moment came when I cut my finger (maybe it's just a scrape; I continued; then blood started dripping). I sheepishly slipped out in shame to deal with my wound in the restroom. When I got back I tried to hide it pretending nothing had happened, then one of the men showed me that he had just done the very same thing, and another was carrying band aids because he confessed that it almost always happens to him. At that moment I suddenly felt I had been initiated – indeed, respected for my courage and blood sacrifice. LoL!



By the end of the three hour session, each of us was complimenting the others' artistry, giving opinions on next steps, and proclaiming how much we had learned that afternoon.

I drove back to Wisconsin feeling very pleased and looking forward to next year – school is fun! -- **KenC**

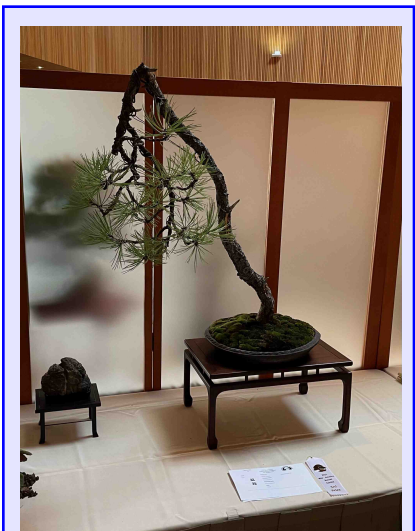


Memorable John Naka Bonsai Quotes ...

The object is not to make the tree look like a bonsai, but to make the bonsai look like a tree.

Listen to the tree; it tells you where it wants to go!

The bonsai is not you working on the tree; you have to have the tree work on you.



A tree produced by a gentlemen from Indiana, attending this workshop in 2019, took 3rd place in a recent show ... I like that expectation, and hope I can live up to the past history!

Other Shows and Conventions or Societies:

Due to the current COVID-19 situation ... check out the individual websites for current status.

US National Exhibition

Sep 11 – 12, 2021 East Rochester, NY

Join people from around the world for the U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition, where over 200 of the finest bonsai in the world will be on display.

MABA/Milwaukee 2022

June 23-26, 2022 Milwaukee, WI

Hosted by Milwaukee Bonsai Society. Includes 3 artist demonstrations, 19 artist workshops, and 6 presentations.

Images from the August meeting ...



Tentative 2021 Calendar for

Badger Bonsai Society meeting & events:

(date is 2nd Thursday unless noted differently below)

Sep-9 - boxwood plantings care, air layering

John Naka tribute

Sep- or Oct-2021 - membership "gathering"

Oct-14 - TBD, nomination of officers for 2022

Nov-11 - TBD, officer elections

Dec-9 - TBD, Suiseki / Viewing Stones

Door Prizes

Congratulations to our 2 door prize winners at the Aug-12th meeting of donated Ficus bonsai; Leanne and SethH. And remember ... bring a 'show-n-tell' item to our meetings that is beyond the meeting topic and you get an extra entry for the door prizes. Thanks to Zach (larch), Lisa (larch), Loren ("tramp" hickory), BenKa (eastern white pine) and JonB (homemade pot) for bringing in their items to show-n-tell!

Recent Links of Interest

- Bonsai Empire: [Air Layering](#)
- Heron's Bonsai: [YouTube Air Layering Tutorial ... EASY!](#)
- Cleveland Bonsai Club: [Air Layering](#)
- Bonsai 4 Me: [Layering for Bonsai](#)
- Bonsai Nut: [The Science of Air Layering](#)
- Bonsai Society of Portland: [Air Layering Tips](#)
- Underhill Bonsai: [Air Layering and A Twisting Ugly Tree](#)



our website: badgerbonsai.net