

MABA 2006 Convention & Board Meeting

By Dave Billing

MABA 2006 Notes

Well you missed another good convention. The MABA 2006 Convention in Milwaukee in June was a great opportunity to improve your bonsai skills by studying under a fine group of masters. I chose to study with tropical bonsai master Jerry Meislik from Montana. Jerry is an excellent teacher who makes you consider new ideas before beginning your styling. His workshop featured some very nice Water Jasmine, *Wrightia religiosa*, trees from southeast Asia. This tree has white flowers that are scented much like jasmine. I think Jerry would be a good tropical bonsai teacher for us to use. I also took a workshop on bonsai judging lead by Alan Magruder of Iowa Bonsai Association.

Another feature of this convention was to have clubs sponsor unified displays for the exhibition. These were very well done as a rule. Some clubs chose to send a collection of individual bonsai, but others



really got into the spirit of the event and provided a some beautiful displays. Check out the MABA 2006 photo page on the BSGC web site, www.cincinnati-bonsai.com/MABA2006Photos/MABA2006Photos.html.

MABA Board Meeting Notes

At the end of the convention the MABA board met for elections and other business necessary. The Mid-America Bonsai Alliance is an organization of bonsai societies. The periodic convention is their primary purpose, but they have several other goals as well.

Another goal of this board was to sponsor a guest artist series which member clubs could use to reduce the costs of guest masters. President Ron Fortmann attempted this event, but only received two responses from member clubs. This is not enough to bring in masters particularly for abroad.

Communication among member clubs is carried out through their web site and publications. Preparation and distribution of a newsletter is a difficult task at best and one has not been produced for several years. However the web site was newly rebuilt during the last few years. Webmaster Todd Renshaw has done an excellent job of carrying out this work. The web site is doing the communications job, but the board still would like to have a newsletter available for member clubs to use. In this regard, Janine Catchpole of the Springfield (IL) Bonsai Society volunteered to edit a quarterly newsletter that will be distributed through the web site.

Elections were held, and officers for the next term are as follows: Paul Weishaar, of Indianapolis Bonsai Club, and Ron Fortmann, of Milwaukee, were nominated for the office of President. Paul declined to serve and Ron was re-elected President for another term. Helene Magruder, of the Iowa Bonsai Society was re-elected VP; Sharon Schmidt, of Milwaukee, was re-elected Treasurer; and Janine Catchpole of Springfield (IL) Bonsai Society, was re-elected Secretary.

The next convention is to be in Indi-

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anapolis in 2008. Paul Weishaar is the Team Leader for this effort. A motion was passed to provide seed money in the amount of \$5,000. Also the MABA credit card machine was passed from Milwaukee to Paul for use in the convention. Their next effort is to choose dates and obtain a hotel to host the convention.

The Treasurer, Sharon Schmidt, reported that as of two days prior to the convention MABA had a balance of \$15,817.33. This balance is before most convention income and expense. The report was accepted by vote of the board

Another MABA tradition that was not carried out at this convention was the MABA

Award for Bonsai Excellence. This award is given for the best tree in the exhibit indigenous to the MABA environment, i.e. a tree native to the MABA area. A comprehensive listing of these tree species was produced by Vance Wood in 1995, and it has been used for several conventions until this one. Some folks are not happy with this list. I volunteered to revise the list as necessary.

Another item put up for review were the MABA by-laws. Several parts were questioned, and it was decided that we should seek a volunteer attorney to review them. Jim Fairchild volunteered to look into the need for D&O insurance to cover MABA officers and directors.



Luis Vallejo of Spain, the convention headliner, talks about his three tree, winged elm planting.