



**Looking Back as We
Move Ahead:
Thirty Years of
Ann Arbor Bonsai Society
History**

By Jack Wikle, January 2000

About the Author

Only one thing is missing from this history of the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society. It is a tribute to Jack Wikle, who has done more for the Society than anyone. His hard work and devotion over all these years has helped to make the Ann Arbor group one of the premier groups in the nation. Especially of note are his bonsai and teaching skills, which have educated three generations of bonsai lovers. Jack has been the unofficial sensei of the group and its spiritual leader for all these years. He should be recognized for this long effort.

In addition, Jack has received recognition in local, national, and international bonsai matters. He is perhaps best known for his extensive work on popularizing the maintenance of bonsai under cool white fluorescent lights in a typical home installation. He has published his research in journals in Britain, Denmark, India, Malaysia, and the United States.

Over the years Jack has unstintingly served in many positions, including program chair of the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society. He was also the program chair of the 1980 and 1985 American Bonsai Society conventions at Michigan State University. He performed a superior job as editor of the Journal of The American Bonsai Society over a four-year period.

We recognize Jack Wikle as the person responsible for putting together this history of the AABS as well as the person most responsible for the continuing success of our organization. And we thank him.

Jerry Meislik



Looking Back as We Move Ahead: Thirty Years of Ann Arbor Bonsai Society History

By Jack Wikle, January 2000

"...grown in appropriate pots, bonsai trees become a living art that anyone interested in nature can understand."

This quote, from Dr. George Avery, Director of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, was found in an old scrapbook of *Ann Arbor News* clippings reporting our club's formation. It may say as much about us and our survival as an organization as anything that follows.

The Ann Arbor Bonsai Society is well into its 30th year as this account is being written. Of course, all the highs and lows of our excitement about little trees, all the varied personalities sharing a common enthusiasm, and all the products of our efforts, ranging from "world class" to "I love it because it's mine," can never be brought back. Even so, it seems worthwhile to record some milestones.

Our Roots

This Society began October 11, 1970 when some 15 people met at the Dexter, Michigan home of Mary Westman in response to an advertisement she had placed in the *Ann Arbor News*. Those attending agreed that the group would continue to meet. Names recorded at the time were; Laura Atkins, Joan Bonnette, Mrs. Chapman, Mrs. Jennings, Jim and Kathy Kighl, Leonard Kersch, Mrs. B. Rosaen, Dr. and Mrs. Maurice Seevers, Mr. Sobieski, and Torn Thompson. Leonard Kersch volunteered to serve as temporary chairman.

The next meeting--November 5, 1970--was the first held at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Some 35 persons attended. The program featured slides of bonsai in Japan shown by Dr. Maurice Seevers. Election of officers was postponed but dues were set at that time--\$6 for single memberships and \$10 for a couple.

About 30 people were present for the December 10, 1970 meeting, and then attendance sagged to 15 and to 8 for the January and March meetings. February's meeting was canceled for reasons unrecorded.

Business: First Election, First Society Naming, Constitution and Bylaws, Records

The first election--Leonard Kersch as president and Mary Westman as secretary-treasurer--did not come until April 1971. See Appendix I for list of officers from this beginning through year 2000.

Another decision made that night was that the group would call itself the Washtenaw Bonsai Society.

For seventeen years, our club carried on its activities with no written policy other than occasional secretary's notes until a constitution and bylaws were adopted late in 1987. In 1998 these documents were superseded by an updated version. Details of the evolution of our present constitution and bylaws can be found in Appendix II. Only a few--the very earliest--secretary's notes were saved. Much of the information recorded in this history has been culled from a file of monthly mailings to members.

First Exhibit for Public

Following the first election and other business that evening, plans were discussed for a "bonsai show." It was to be staged at Matthaei with the cooperation of the earlier established, and larger, Lansing area bonsai group, the Bonsai Society of Michigan. (Begun in October 1963, the first bonsai society in Michigan, this Lansing group eventually disbanded sometime after its last full year of regular meetings in 1990.)

That first show was held May 16, 1971 in Matthaei's west lobby with some of the bonsai overflowing into the adjacent classroom (Rm. 125). A bold headline proclaiming, "Bonsai Show a Huge Success," accompanied four photos in the *Ann Arbor News* report of the event. Highlight of the exhibit was Dr. Seevers' "90 year old," imported, satsuki azalea in full bloom.

The author of this history, a member of the Bonsai Society of Michigan at the time, was an exhibitor at that first show. After the show closed, many members from both clubs went on to Dr. Seevers' home to enjoy his hospitality and be amazed at the size of his extensive bonsai collection.

Dr. Maurice Seevers and Matthaei's Bonsai Collection

It must be noted that although Dr. Seevers was present at a few early meetings, he never attended regularly nor did he become particularly active in the group. Nevertheless, his enthusiasm and his bonsai, now the nucleus of The Matthaei Botanical Gardens Bonsai Collection, have had a major impact on the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society and its activities over the years.

In 1977, after Dr. Maurice Seevers' death, his widow gave many of his bonsai and some potted stock to Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Fifty-four of these trees, considered to be the least desirable, were subsequently sold at auction raising \$1,662.00 to help fund construction of wintering structures and other facilities to accommodate the new collection.

Over the years, our Society's members have discussed, pruned and repotted MBG Collection bonsai at various times as part of activities at our regular monthly meetings. MBG Collection bonsai have also enhanced many of our annual exhibits. And, since the mid-eighties, volunteers from our Society have had the privilege of practicing and learning bonsai skills by providing weekly volunteer care for the MBG trees.

Society Renamed

Among other items of business conducted at its September 14, 1972 meeting, was a motion to change the group's name from the Washtenaw Bonsai Society to the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society. This motion passed unanimously.

Early Activities and First Out-of-State Speaker

On April 15, 1973, Keith Scott of Chagrin Falls, Ohio came to Ann Arbor as the club's first guest speaker from outside of Michigan. Some 35 members and guests were present for this event. The earliest secretary's reports tell a story of weak meeting attendance after the initial flurry of shared excitement. Just four members and four visitors attended the September 6, 1973 meeting. Attendance at the March 1974 meeting was also eight.

In an effort to reinvigorate the group, Keith Scott was brought back to Ann Arbor April 26, 1974, to do a demonstration open to the public and to conduct a workshop. Workshop participants paid a \$15 fee, which included all supplies. Swollen by members of the Bonsai Society of Michigan and other visitors, the audience for Keith's demonstration, presented in Matthaei's auditorium, was estimated to be 200 people. Your author, who was among those present, remembers the room being very full.

Following the Keith Scott event, I attended the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society's regular May meeting also, and became very conscious that traveling to Matthaei required half the driving time I had been spending attending Bonsai Society of Michigan meetings in East Lansing. My memory is that seven members and visitors were present in classroom 125 that night. I am not sure if I included myself in that count. Items of discussion were the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society's goals and its future, including the possibility of disbanding. Also discussed was the immediate need for a new and more complete slate of officers if the group was to continue. At that time, the only officers were a president and secretary-treasurer. Adding to the sense of urgency, David Sly, then president, absent that evening, was moving soon from the Ann Arbor area.

Second Public Exhibit and Aftermath

Another item discussed at that May meeting was a "small," unpublicized exhibit to be set up in the Matthaei auditorium the following Sunday afternoon, May 19th, 1974. Seeking to become better acquainted with the group, I brought a number of my bonsai to support this show. The secretary's minutes record that five members were present and twelve bonsai were exhibited. That afternoon, I told the secretary-treasurer, Judy Mich, that, if they could find a president, I would join the group and accept a vice president/program chairman position to help the club keep going.

Duff/Wikle Team Forms

The following meeting, Betty Anne Duff was elected to her first term, as president and I became vice president and program chairman. Betty Anne was a lady active in Ann Arbor community affairs who, as the spouse of Dr. Ivan Duff of the University of Michigan medical faculty, visited Japan regularly. While Ivan was involved in medical research there, Betty Anne had become interested in bonsai, receiving some instruction and trees from Japanese bonsai teachers.

Having relatively few willing members to draw on as candidates for the officer

positions, this Duff/Wikle, president/vice president, partnership continued for three years. In May 1977, the Society's members voted to change the timing of officer elections and beginning of the new club year, which had been taking place in April or May, to correspond to the calendar year and to extend the terms of the newly elected officers to the end of 1978. Then, to give Betty Anne some rest, Joan Bonnette took over as president from June 1977 through 1978 while I continued as vice president and program chairman.

After a two and a half year recess, while Joan Bonnette and I each did the president job, Betty Anne agreed to return as president serving our Society through 1982 (three more years!) in that capacity.

Our Logo

The first use of our present logo, featuring the silhouette of a Japanese white pine bonsai well known in Japan, was in 1979 when our new corresponding secretary, Bill Labedzki (a graphic artist), began adding it to our mailings.

Michigan Bonsai Societies Proliferate

In the meantime, a number of other Michigan bonsai societies sprang up--peaking in the late 70's or early 80's at eight or nine groups in the southeastern part of the state plus several others outside this area. Many of these clubs were the direct result of the efforts of super-organizer and bonsai activist Ray Boardman of Detroit. Highly energetic, Ray also worked to promote bonsai interest at the national level as an officer of the Bonsai Clubs International organization.

Just how precarious the early years of our group's existence actually were is pointed up by the ultimate demise of all but two of the bonsai clubs, which took root in southeastern Michigan. Today only our Ann Arbor Bonsai Society and the Four Seasons Bonsai Society (first meeting in Pontiac, later in Royal Oak) survive. Efforts to form a regional organization of bonsai clubs, in the late seventies, followed by emergence of BAM, the Bonsai Association of Michigan (a statewide organization of individuals whose goal was promoting state conventions) in the eighties, are reviewed in Appendix III.

Membership Growth Leaps, Creeps, and Leaps Again

After quickly doubling in the late 1974 to early 1976 time period, our Ann Arbor Bonsai Society's membership stabilized in the 40 to 50 person range into the early 80's. Then it pushed up to 60 and eventually spurted to almost 90 members in the late 80's. Among the 80's joiners were people like Dean Atkinson, Lucille Doremus, Gordon Hoialmen and George Randall who had been very active members and office holders in discontinued clubs in the Detroit area before migrating to our group. With their involvement and other new blood, the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society's membership surged again in the 90's to levels unimaginable previously--125, 150, 175 and beyond at our peak in that era.

Members Contributing on National and International Levels

Over the years, many different members have served as the officers and committee members whose extra effort kept our Society alive and growing. Two of these individuals, Dr. Jerry Meislik who joined in 1978 and Bruce Baker who joined in 1983, stand out because they quickly became very accomplished as bonsai growers and, at the same time, very involved in our club's activities. Then, while continuing their Ann Arbor Bonsai Society support, both Jerry and Bruce soon went beyond this to become engaged in national and international level bonsai affairs. Since those early years, both have been featured repeatedly as presenters or demonstrators at bonsai conventions. Both have been prolific authors on bonsai subjects. And, both have served on national and international level executive boards including--between the two of them--the American Bonsai Society, Bonsai Clubs International and The National Bonsai Foundation.

Elsie MacCready, joined our group and quickly became an enthusiastic bonsai hobbyist after going on a 1977 bonsai tour to Japan just because it sounded interesting. Elsie and Betty Anne Duff were introduced by AABS member acquaintances just before this trip. They agreed to share a room and quickly became good friends. In the years that followed, Elsie was active in our Society serving as an officer and helping out in many other capacities.

At the same time she also attended regional and national bonsai meetings, eventually becoming an officer of The American Bonsai Society. Elsie's family donated bonsai in the Elsie G. MacCready Memorial Collection at Michigan State University's Hidden Lake Gardens to the Gardens after her death in 1987. Memorial donations from the MacCready family and Elsie's friends continue to support that collection. The author of this history has also received some recognition from outside of the local bonsai community mostly for pioneering efforts in growing small bonsai indoors under cool white fluorescent lighting.

My articles on this subject have been published in Britain, Denmark, Malaysia and India as well as the United States. Moreover, I served as program chairman for both the 1980 and 1985 American Bonsai Society Annual Symposia held on the Michigan State University campus. And, I edited The American Bonsai Society's quarterly journal for a little over four years.

Annual Exhibits

Our Society's uninterrupted string of publicized "Annual Exhibits" began Sunday, June 1, 1975. Setup started at 10 a.m. on that date. The show opened at 1 p.m. Takedown was at 4. Over the years this show improved annually as our trees grew and our members grew as bonsai artists. Each year brought a new sense of accomplishment and new exclamations of, "best ever" and "this is absolutely the best show we have ever put on."

It's interesting to note that 1981 show information stated, "Members who help and/or bring trees will not be asked to pay the 25 cent admission fee." Information distributed to members prior to the October 1984 exhibit began with this comment,

"For the past nine years, our exhibits have been staged with a minimum of organization and preplanning. Feeling that our past approach is no longer adequate, our newly formed Show Committee has met four times since the 1983 exhibit. Accordingly, we will be trying a blend of old procedures and new approaches this year."

A new, less static room arrangement designed by Bill Milne, new pedestals (heavy cardboard tubes supporting plywood disks), new table coverings and higher, stronger lifts (pieces of galvanized pipe used to lengthen table legs) were all introduced in the 1984 show. This show was open 1-5 p.m., Sunday, October 14. Admission charge was \$1.00 ("Children FREE").

Early exhibits continued as single afternoon events with morning setup until October 1987. That year the show was set up Saturday morning and opened to the public 1 to 5 on Saturday and 1 to 4 on Sunday. This two-day show format was repeated again in 1989, with even longer hours, 12 to 5 on Saturday and 10 to 4 on Sunday. Admission to this show was \$2.00, children free.

October 1991 brought another major leap for our show. A very ambitious show committee--led by Hester Hill with the assistance of Pat Hopkinson, Kurt Smith and Tom Trueman--initiated Friday setup, less static room arrangement, new large backdrops to supplement the small cubicles in use since 1975, and more complete table skirting. "Special Gardens" installed by Mike Abbot, Kurt Smith and Tom Trueman were part of the new show.

Classroom to Auditorium Move

As membership mushroomed in the late 80's and early 90's our meeting space in room 125, which had been so comfortable except in hot weather, became increasingly claustrophobic. Late arrivers were forced to carry in extra chairs from other rooms or stand along the counter and walls. The possibility of changing rooms was discussed repeatedly before our meeting night was eventually moved from the third Wednesday to the fourth Wednesday of the month to gain access to Matthaei's "big" auditorium.

Regular meetings in the auditorium began in 1992. Our newsletter recorded that 91 members attended our March 1992 meeting. Our membership list swelled to more than 150 early in the auditorium era. Without question much of this growth was the direct result of the extraordinary promotional and organizational work of Andy Jartz and his wife Melody who were deeply involved in all aspects of AABS activity at this time.

Nationally Known Guest Artists

While making a speaking tour through the East in 1981, Jim Barrett, from Arcadia, California (Los Angeles area), became our first visiting artist from the West Coast.

It was three years later, September 1984, that Bruce Baker arranged for the legendary Dan Robinson from the Seattle area, the man "famous for his chain saw sculpting of bonsai," to demonstrate and conduct the first ever carving workshop for our club. The workshop fee was \$20.00.

Over the years, our members and visitors have had the privilege of watching, listening to and learning from dozens of nationally and internationally known bonsai artists whose visits to Ann Arbor were arranged by the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society. Horst Kreckler from Germany probably holds the record for being the demonstrator the greatest distance from home while sharing his artistry with us.

Support for the National Bonsai Foundation

The National Bonsai Foundation, NBF, has also been a beneficiary of the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society's efforts. The NBF is the "private, non-profit organization". . . "responsible for funding capital improvements and for assisting in interpretive and educational activities . . ." in support of the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, DC. To date, our contributions to the NBF total a little over \$5000.

Looking to the Future

Of course no history of an ongoing organization is ever finished. Today's personalities and activities, so clear and close at hand, will someday be misty and somewhat selective memories. As its author, I can understand fully why many of those who begin reading this summary may lay it down in favor of going out and working on their bonsai. If you find yourself still reading, you may be a candidate to write the next updating of the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society's history. Keep all those old mailings.

**Appendix I:
Washtenaw Bonsai Society*/
Ann Arbor Bonsai Society
Officers**

October 1970 - March 1971

Leonard Kersch (volunteered at first meeting to serve as temporary "Chairman")

April 1971-April 1972

Leonard Kersch (first elected President)
Mary Westman, Secretary/Treasurer

May 1972-May 1973

Larry McMahan, President
Joan Bonnette, Secretary
Leonard Kersch, Treasurer
Mary Westman, Ordering Secretary
Judy Mich, Telephoning

June 1973-May 1974

David L. Sly, President
Judy Mich, Secretary/Treasurer
June 1974-May 1975

Betty Anne Duff, President
Jack Wikle, Vice President /
Program Chair
Michael Speer, Secretary
Mary Westman, Treasurer
Ethel Knueppelholz, Membership
Chair
Connie Frederick, Librarian

June 1975-May 1976

Betty Anne Duff, President
Jack Wikle, Vice President/Program
Chair
Val Campbell, Recording Secretary
Myung Schmitter & Jane Andrea,
Corresponding Secretary(s)
Judy Mich, Treasurer/Membership
Dick Turner, Librarian
Virgil & Nathan Hinds, Supplies

Chair(s)

June 1976-May 1977

Betty Anne Duff, President
Jack Wikle, Vice President/
Program Chair
Val Campbell, Treasurer
Bill & Sue Toop, Corresponding
Secretary(s)
Joan Bonnette, Recording Secretary
Virgil & Nathan Hinds, Supplies
Chair(s)
Jack Taipala, Librarian

June 1977 - December 1977

Joan Bonnette, President
Jack Wikle, Vice President/
Program Chair
Betty Blake, Recording Secretary
Val Campbell, Treasurer
Peg Crandall, Corresponding
Secretary
Bill & Sue Toop, Librarian(s)
Virgil & Nathan Hinds, Supplies
Chair(s)
Bill Labeledzki, Show Chair

1978

Joan Bonnette, President
Jack Wikle, Vice President/
Program Chair
Betty Blake, Recording Secretary
Val Campbell, Treasurer
Peg Crandall, Corresponding
Secretary
Bill & Sue Toop, Librarian(s)
Virgil & Nathan Hinds, Supplies
Chair(s)

** Name under which the Ann Arbor
Bonsai Society was organized.*

1979

Jack Wikle, President
 Joan Bonnette, Vice President/
 Program Chair
 Bill Labeledzki, Corresponding
 Secretary
 Jack Laut, Recording Secretary
 Val Campbell, Treasurer
 Virgil & Nathan Hinds, Supplies
 Chair(s)

1980

Betty Anne Duff, President
 Joan Bonnette & Jerry Meislik,
 Vice President/Program Chair(s)
 Jack Laut, Recording Secretary
 Harry Mast, Corresponding
 Secretary
 Mary Stribley, Treasurer
 Steve & Robert Klinger,
 Librarian(s)
 Virgil & Nathan Hinds,
 Supply Chair(s)

1981

Betty Anne Duff, President
 Joan Bonnette & Elsie MacCready,
 Vice President/Program Chair(s)
 Rhona & Jerry Meislik, Treasurers
 Marie & Harry Mast, Recording
 Secretary(s)
 Jack Laut, Corresponding Secretary
 Bill Labeledzki, Librarian
 Richard Teske, Supplies Chair
 Jack Wikle, Show Chair

1982

Betty Anne Duff, President
 Jerry Meislik & Jack Wikle, Vice
 President/Program Chair(s)
 Betty Blake, Recording Secretary
 Elsie MacCready, Corresponding
 Secretary
 Bonnie Vamer, Treasurer
 Tom Mooney, Librarian
 Joan Bonnette, Historian

Mel Charette, "No. 1 Sweeper"
 Richard Teske, Supplies Chair.

1983

Richard Teske, President
 Sam Campbell & Betty Anne Duff,
 Vice President/Program Chair
 Betty Blake, Recording Secretary
 Elsie MacCready, Corresponding
 Secretary
 Bonnie Vamer, Treasurer
 Tom Mooney, Librarian
 Joan Bonnette, Historian
 Sally Hruska, Supplies Chair
 Jack Wikle, Show Chair

1984 **

Richard Teske, President
 Elsie MacCready, Corresponding
 Secretary
 Bonnie Vamer, Treasurer
 Jack Wikle, Show Chair

1985

Bruce Baker, President
 Jerry Meislik, Vice President/
 Program Chair
 Mary DeLancy, Recording
 Secretary
 Rita Bencuya, Corresponding
 Secretary
 Mary Campbell, Treasurer
 Bill Labeledzki, Librarian
 Sally Hruska, Supplies Chair
 Phil Briggs, Show Chair

***Complete listing of officers for 1984
 not found in mailings to members.*

1986

Jerry Meislik, President
 Bruce Baker, Vice President/
 Program Chair
 Roger & Donna Gaede, Treasurers)
 Linda Partridge, Corresponding (&
 Recording?) Secretary
 Scott Solsburg, Librarian
 Joan Bonnette, Historian

1987

Lois Vorrath, President
 Jack Wikle, Vice President/
 Program Chair
 Roger & Donna Gaede, Treasurers)
 Andrea Solsburg, Recording
 Secretary
 Linda Partridge, Corresponding
 Secretary
 Sally Hruska, Supplies Chair
 Rita Bencuya, Librarian
 Joan Bonnette, Historian
 Bruce Baker, Show Chair

1988

Rich Glauser, President
 MaryElizabeth Sanchez, Vice
 President/Program Chair
 Roger & Donna Gaede, Treasurer(s)
 Andrea Solsburg, Recording
 Secretary
 Linda Partridge, Corresponding
 Secretary
 Jerry Meislik, Supplies Chair
 Rita Bencuya, Librarian
 Joan Bonnette, Historian
 Hester Hill & Pat Hopkinson,
 Show Chains)

1989

Rita Bencuya, President
 Richard Teske, Vice President/
 Program Chair
 Gordon Hoialmen, Treasurer
 Jack Wikle, Recording Secretary
 Linda Partridge, Corresponding

Secretary
 Richard Glauser, Supplies Chair
 Mary Elizabeth Sanchez, Librarian
 Joan Bonnette, Historian
 Dean Atkinson, Show Chair

1990

George Randall, President
 Dean Atkinson, Vice President/
 Program Chair
 Gordon Hoialmen, Treasurer
 Hester Hill, Recording Secretary
 Richard Teske, Corresponding
 Secretary
 Kurt Smith, Supplies Chair
 Bruce Baker & Jerry Meislik,
 Show Chair(s)

1991

Steve Worden, President
 Tom Trueman, Vice President/
 Program Chair
 Gordon Hoialmen, Treasurer
 Pat Hopkinson, Recording Secretary
 Andy & Melody Jartz,
 Corresponding Secretary(s)
 Kurt Smith, Supplies Chair
 Lucille Kent, Librarian
 Betty Anne Duff, Historian
 Hester Hill, Show Chair

1992

Steve Worden, President
 Tom Trueman, Vice President
 Jerry Meislik, Guest Demonstrator
 Chair
 Gordon Hoialmen, Treasurer
 Pat Hopkinson, Recording Secretary
 Andy & Melody Jartz,
 Corresponding Secretary(s)
 Kurt Smith, Supplies Chair
 Lucille Kent, Librarian
 Betty Anne Duff, Historian
 Mike Abbott & John Lindsay,
 Show Chair(s)

1993

Andy Jartz, President
 John Lindsay, Vice President
 Jerry Meislik, Guest Demonstrator
 Chair
 Gordon Hoialmen, Treasurer
 Marc Makohon, Corresponding
 Secretary
 Connie Bailie, Press Secretary
 John Lindsay, Librarian
 Mike Abbott, John Lindsay &
 Kurt Smith, Show Chair(s)

1994

Andy Jartz, President
 John Lindsay, Vice President
 Jerry Meislik, Guest Demonstrator
 Chair
 Gordon Hoialmen, Treasurer
 Marc Makohon, Corresponding
 Secretary
 Lou Miller, Press Secretary
 John Lindsay, Librarian
 Mike Abbott, John Lindsay,
 Marc Makohon & Kurt Smith,
 Show Chair(s)

1995

John Lindsay, President
 Marc Makohon, Vice President
 Marge Clayton, Secretary/
 Newsletter
 Gordon Hoialmen, Treasurer
 Connie Bailie, Public Relations
 John Lindsay, Librarian
 Mike Abbott, John Lindsay &
 Kurt Smith, Show Chains)

1996

Dean Atkinson, President
 Mike Abbott, Vice President /
 Program Chair
 John Hall, Corresponding
 Secretary/Co-Newsletter Editor
 Connie Bailie, Recording Secre-
 tary / Co-Newsletter Editor

Gary Kuehnie & Paul Kulesa,
 Public Relations
 Gordon Hoialmen, Treasurer
 Roger & Donna Gaede,
 Treasurers) - (appointed to office
 {in April ?}, when Gordon
 Hoialmen was having health
 problems)
 John Lindsay, Librarian & Show
 Chair

1997

John Foley, President
 Dustin Mann, Vice President/
 Program Chair
 Deborah Eddy & Carol Jacobs,
 Recording Secretary(s) /
 Newsletter Editor(s)
 Paul Kulesa, Corresponding
 Secretary/Public Relations
 Roger & Donna Gaede,
 Treasurers)
 John Lindsay, Librarian & Show
 Chair

1998

Dustin Mann, President
 Jerry Meislik, Vice President/
 Program Chair
 Deborah Eddy, Recording
 Secretary/Newsletter Editor
 Paul Kulesa, Corresponding
 Secretary/Publicity Chair
 Roger & Donna Gaede,
 Treasurer(s)
 Ron Milostan, Librarian
 Dean Atkinson, Show Chair

1999

Connie Bailie, President
 Hugh Danville, Vice President/
 Program Chair
 Deborah Eddy, Recording
 Secretary/Newsletter Editor
 Paul Kulesa, Corresponding
 Secretary

Roger Gaede, Treasurer
Ron Milostan, Librarian
Randy Gill, Gordon Hoialmen &
Cyril Grum, Director(s)
[Cyril appointed to fill director
slot left vacant by Gordon's
death]
Bob Schnapp, Publicity Chair
Mary Maguire, Show Chair

2000

Connie Bailie, President
Hugh Danville, Vice President/
Program Chair
Deborah Eddy, Recording
Secretary/Newsletter Editor
Paul Kulesa, Corresponding
Secretary
Roger Gaede, Treasurer
Ron Milostan, Librarian
Randy Gill & Cyril Grum,
Director(s)
Gloria Duncan, Publicity Chair

Appendix II: AABS Constitution and Bylaws

As noted earlier, our Ann Arbor club's activities proceeded through seventeen years with no written policy other than occasional secretary's notes. As our membership and treasury grew, some of us began to feel that a formal constitution and by-laws might be useful in maintaining continuity particularly if problems threatening to divide the group should arise. The resulting document drafted by a committee in which Richard Teske and I were heavily involved, was approved by the Society's membership at the November meeting in 1987. This new constitution and bylaws included a provision making not just current officers, but all past presidents, who were still club members, part of the Society's Executive Committee.

As past presidents accumulated, the Executive group grew large enough that logistics of convening a meeting and discussions involved in decision-making were difficult to manage. In response to a perceived need to update the old constitution and bylaws, a new special committee was appointed in December 1995 by the newly elected 1996 president, Dean Atkinson. Its members, Connie Bailie, John Hall, Gary Kuehnie, Paul Kulesa, and your author met repeatedly to almost completely reconstruct these documents. The result of our efforts was eventually submitted for membership approval and accepted by the membership attending the September 3, 1998, monthly meeting.

Appendix III: Regional & Statewide Bonsai Activity

In late 1977 through 1978, an attempt was made by supporters of the concept to bring together the bonsai clubs of southeastern Michigan under one parent organization to be known as SEMBA (Southeastern Michigan Bonsai Association). This effort came to an abrupt halt early in 1979 as the organizers who envisioned a strong central group served by its member clubs decided they could not work under amendments to their constitution approved by delegates who felt the member clubs should be served by SEMBA.

Following the demise of SEMBA, our Ann Arbor Society, working independently, organized and hosted a "Michigan Bonsai Enthusiasts Meeting", including speakers and an exhibit held at Matthaei in September 1979.

In 1980, The American Bonsai Society met for its Annual Symposium at Michigan State University. Rosie Pope of Bay City was chairperson for this event with volunteers from most of the bonsai clubs in the state involved in one way or another. In October 1981, the Four Seasons Bonsai Society (Pontiac), following Ann Arbor's lead, hosted a Michigan Bonsai Enthusiasts Meeting and exhibit at the Somerset Inn in Troy.

In May 1982, the Shibui Bonsai Society (Southfield) hosted a "Mini Convention" at the Wayne County Extension Building.

In June 1983, the Matsu Ba Bonsai Society of Flint hosted its "Flint State Convention".

In the meantime, a loose organization of individuals --- individuals because SEMBA, the organization of clubs, had not panned out -- joined forces to form BAM, the Bonsai Association of Michigan. The expressed purpose of this organization was to accumulate seed money and assist clubs in organizing Michigan bonsai conventions. BAM members each paid a \$10.00 one-time fee to be on its membership list indefinitely. A share of convention profits was anticipated to be BAM's main source of revenue. BAM's first state convention was held in Kalamazoo hosted by the Bonsai Society - Kalamazoo in 1984.

In 1985, BAM co-sponsored The American Bonsai Society Annual Symposium's return to the Michigan State University campus.

The June 1986 BAM meeting, with John Naka as the featured guest artist, was held at the Campus Inn in Ann Arbor hosted by our Ann Arbor Bonsai Society. Bruce Baker was the chairman for this event.

Following a year in which no club hosted a state meeting, BAM returned to Kalamazoo under the sponsorship of the Bonsai Society Kalamazoo in 1988 then slipped into dormancy.

This publication was written in January 2000 by Jack Wikle at the request of the 1999 AABS Executive Board and was first published as four monthly articles in our newsletter starting in July 2000.

The AABS Executive Board wishes to express its gratitude to Jack for this work and to the members who helped prepare it for print. We proudly present this publication to the AABS membership on October 25, 2000, in honor of our thirty-year anniversary of this first recorded meeting.