

February
2026

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Number 1

Billboard

Newsletter of the Bonsai Society of Upstate NY



From our President

Greetings Friends,
Here we are on the eve of the Lunar New Year and it is the Year of the Fire Horse !

I am looking forward to a lit 🔥 year for Bonsai and for the Bonsai Society of Upstate New York. This month the special program is on Literati Bonsai with 3 Formal displays as well as discussions relating to Literati Bonsai display, creation and all the different types of Literati. In addition Bill Valavanis and I will be joined by Bob Blankfield and possibly also a mystery guest Artist creating a Literati tree and the raffle winner will get their choice to bring home ! I affectionately call these special programs 3 ring Circus but they are excellent and bring three different approaches to topics and are great for all levels of members from beginners to advanced and everyone in between! If you have a Literati tree you have questions about it, bring it and we will give you a brief answer.

With the thaw remember your trees will be looking for a drink. Treat them well with snow or a wee sip of water in storage. For those still hibernating we invite you to come and enjoy time out with Bonsai & friends!

— — -Mark



Literati display



Literati Display

Next Meeting

**Tuesday, February 24 at 7:00 pm
Literati Bonsai**

Once again, leadership and expertise from within our ranks will present an informative program. Bill, Mark, and Bob will revisit the 3 ring circus performance to talk about and then demonstrate Literati Bonsai. First, each will present a display of a Literati Bonsai, and discuss their display. Then each will do a demonstration showing the creation of a Literati bonsai. Bring a Literati Bonsai that you have questions about, and ask the experts!

Before the meeting, at 6 pm, the Suiseki Study Group will meet. Toby Ziegler will do a presentation and lead a discussion about air layering.

Don't forget to bring your small items (\$100 or less value) for the silent auction. All proceeds benefit the club, and you can clean out duplicates!

And for a winter warm up special treat, Mark will make Chili, and Tom and Marti will make cornbread. If 2-3 more of you want to make chili, that is welcome, especially if you let us know!

Buckland Lodge at Brighton Town Park

Refreshment Manager, Marti Macinski will provide, coffee, tea and individual drinks. If you are willing to bring something to share, please email Marti at mmacinski@mac.com.

2026 Programs:

- February 24 - 7 pm Literati Bonsai, presentation and demonstration by Bill Valavanis, Mark Arpag and Harvey Carapella or Bob Blankfield
- 6 pm Shohin Study Group - see above

See page 4 for dates and programs into 2026

Suiseki Corner

The Suiseki Study group kicked off the year with a Study Group session at 6 pm, before the regular meeting. Members brought stones for discussion about the use of Suiseki with Bonsai in displays.

We hope to have an outline of the year's Suiseki's activities for the March Billboard. While we wait, here is an inspiring stone from Les Allen, Daiza by Bob Blankfield to admire. All members are welcome to participate in all Suiseki Study group meetings and activities.



January program and workshop on scrolls by Sean Smith - WOW!



Intense concentration was evident at the Scroll workshop led by Sean Smith. First, Sean explained all the "tools" and paints, so we knew what we had to work with. Then he showed us several scrolls and talked about themes. Then, saying "it is simple, just do this" - he demonstrated how to do it. Well, we all quickly found out how simple it is NOT. Even the experienced artists among us had to concentrate VERY intensely.

A few of us clearly have a future creating scrolls (and some of us clearly do NOT!). This was a very rewarding workshop, and many, many thanks to Sean for all his hard work, supplies, preparation and delightful presentation.



The evening presentation was, as we always expect from Sean, informative, historic, entertaining and generally delightful. Thanks, Sean Smith, for your expertise and your artistry!

Help wanted - open position

Are you ready to become more involved in the club by taking on some responsibility? We need you! Marti Macinski has been our refreshment coordinator for the past few years, and is ready to let someone else take over. Email Marti to ask questions and get more information. Please consider taking this on after June 2026! mmacinski@mac.com

Bonsai and Suiseki events around and about

Every year, Bill, Mark and many others find it difficult to stay home, and go trekking across the country in search of additional Bonsai knowledge and camaraderie. Going to other club events and exhibitions is an excellent way to learn something new, gain a new perspective and meet like minded Bonsai folks.

- Mid Atlantic Bonsai Societies Spring Bonsai Festival, April 17 - 19 2026
Holiday Inn Harrisburg (Hershey)www.midatlanticbonsai.org
- 2026 Meijer Gardens MI All State Bonsai Show, May 9 - 10, 2026
Grand Rapids, MI - more information to come as Bill learns it
- Longwood Gardens Bonsai Exhibition, Auction and Sale, June 24 - 29, 2026
Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA
- 2026 Michiana Bonsai Show, September 19 - 20, 2026
Wellfield Botanic Garden, Elkhart IN www.michianabonsai.club
- Fall Fruit & Foliage Bonsai Exhibition, October 17 & 18, 2026
Hidden Lake Gardens, Tipton, MI

All of these events offer incredible opportunities to learn, purchase, network and more.

2026 Dues Renewal Notice and Membership News - One more time!

Membership dues for the 2026 calendar year are now due. Please send your check now to keep your name on our membership list and to continue receiving the Billboard and other membership news. Our current policy states that annual membership dues are due during the month of January, therefore not later than 1/31/2026 for membership through the end of 2026.

Annual dues are now \$50, both for an individual and for a family.

Please note that all news and announcements, including the Billboard, are provided only via email. If you have questions about your membership, please send those questions to: diane.koretz@gmail.com

Thank you, Diane Koretz, Treasurer

Please make payable to and mail your check the address below.

BSUNY Dues and Membership form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Bonsai Society of Upstate NY, Inc

PO Box 92215, Rochester, NY 14692

Membership \$50.00

Membership \$50.00

SHOHIN BONSAI FEATURE OF THE MONTH



Shohin Bonsai, Variety: Crab Apple

It's a Semi Cascade. Small heavy trunk with a compact set of secondary branches. The large crop of apples are clearly the Focal Point. The large design on the pot is very bold and is trying to be the focal point, I wish the design was much smaller and delicate. It is competing with the fruit for attention. Correctly potted dead center in the round pot as it should be, but again we have the one foot in front rather than two, which I prefer for the look and feel of stability. — — — Harvey Carapella

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Please submit any ideas for the Billboard to Marti & Tom. If you have ideas for the Billboard, please email Marti & Tom:

mmacinski@mac.com

2026 Program dates:

- March 24 7 pm - Bill Valavanis TBD
 - April 28 7 pm - Andrew Robson
 - May 16 & 17 TBD times, Club Show
 - June 23- 6 pm Club picnic @ Auction
 - July 28- TBD, summer outing
 - August 25- Bring your own tree
 - September 29 - TBD
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