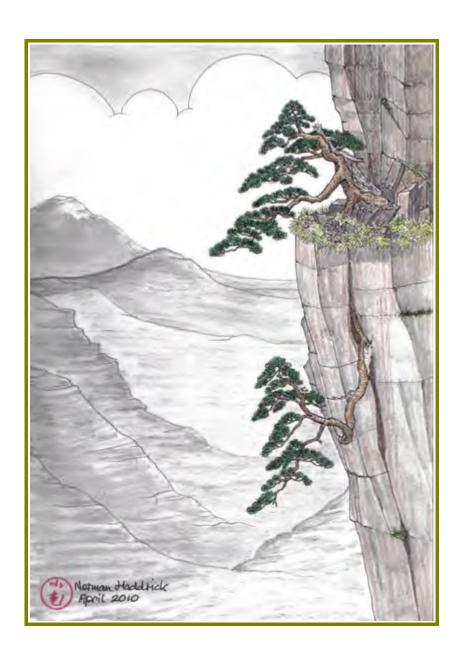


JOURNAL



May 2010

www.torontobonsai.org

Schedule of events

Meetings are held in the **Toronto Botanical Gardens, at 777 Lawrence Avenue East, Toronto**, in the **Auditorium** (west side of building) unless otherwise noted.

Beginner session: 6:30 – 7:20 p.m.

The **Beginner session** is in Studio #2 upstairs. All beginners should read Bob Wilcox's introductory articles, **Information for Beginners** and **Frequently Asked Questions**, on the **TBS web site (www.torontobonsai.org)**.

May: Styling trees for bonsai. A critique of trees by newer bonsai practitioners will be held, focusing on style, branch selection, and the appropriate application of wire. Led by Mike McCallion and assisted by Otmar Sauer.

June: Leaf pruning bonsai.

General meetings: 7:30 – 10:00 p.m.

May 10: TBS meeting: Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*). Bring in your Japanese maple bonsai to show, discuss, and work on. Reiner Goebel will be talking about Japanese maple bonsai, using the one from the March meeting, which will then be raffled. Did he or didn't he remove all the branches? John Biel will do a little seasonal talk on pines. Workshop: Cork-bark Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum 'Arakawa'*). Cost: \$50 (includes tree, wire and instructor). Contact Cheryl and Linda to sign up for the workshop. Bring your own tools. Workshop: bring your own tree, maple (or other species). Prepare your bonsai for the show!

May 23, 24: TBS spring show. Bring in your bonsai, shitakusa, suiseki, and scrolls for display! Volunteers needed -- contact Mike McCallion (mwm@aplixcanada.com). Help set up at 8 am, Sunday, take down 5 pm, Monday. All vendors must submit items before 8 am.

June 14: TBS meeting: Martin Schmalenberg. Bring in your bonsai, especially problematic trees, for display and critique. Critiques are an excellent learning tool for concepts, vision...and **design**. Be prepared to answer questions about your choice of material, potting, and styling.

Backyard workshops and garden parties

May: Sunday, May 16, 1pm: Carol Pearce Meijerink. Work on your tree with the opportunity to prepare your tree for the show. There will be snacks, cake, and beer and wine along with coffee, tea, and pop. The railway garden will be set up but the trains will not be running. Please contact Carol by email (carol@karbelt.com) for directions.

June: Wednesday, June 16, 7 pm: Reiner Goebel; Wednesday, June 23, 7 pm: David Johnson; Saturday, June 26, 10 am: Mike McCallion.

July: Wednesday, July 7, 7 pm: Mike Roussel; Wednesday, July 14, 7 pm: John Biel; Wednesday, July 21, 7pm: Kem Shaw; Wednesday, July 28, 7pm: Dierk Neugebauer.

From the 'Cliff-hanger' series, a drawing by Norman Haddrick. The art of bonsai originated from the admiration of ancient trees growing in nature's wild, exposed locations.

TBS announcements

Fundraiser: donated bonsai stand for sale

Approx. 87" high, 50" wide, 20" deep. Light brown oak finish, with lights installed. For your donation offer, the TBS will help with delivery. Contact Otmar Sauer (on back cover) for details.

Make a donation for the collected larches

Okay, most people didn't know you were supposed to make a minimum \$1 per tree donation for Lotte and Herman Brunner's collected larches. Neither did I. And it was a very busy meeting, with all the soil mixing, repotting, styling. We all descended on them like starving children! But now that the dust has settled, you can still make your donation at the members' table at the next meeting.

Trees for sale to TBS members

In June 2009 the club purchased a number of trees for the use in workshops. Among them were **8 Trident maples** and **8 zelkovas** similar to elm). These trees were repotted at the April meeting and are in excellent shape. The Tridents have already nicely developed roots and the zelkovas are beginning to show their potential in the broom style.

Since the club cannot look after these trees for the next few years the club's executive has decided to sell these trees to interested members. The trees will be on sale at the May meeting, for \$20.00 each, starting at 7:30, sold on a first-come first-served basis, and can be reserved by emailing Cheryl and Linda (on back cover).

Selling items at the TBS show?

Please read Grace Wicht's article at the end of this TBS Journal.

Library closing for summer

In one month's time, the TBS library will be closing for the summer. Please return all your materials before then!

Outside the club:

Buffalo Bonsai Show: May 22, 23. See the web site: http://www.buffalobonsaisociety.com/monthly_meetings.html

Marco at the RBG: May 30, Burlington, On. Marco Invernizzi (http://www.marcoinvernizzi.com/ichiban/en/index.html) will be conducting workshops during the day and an evening demonstration and lecture at 7pm. Contact Mike McCallion (mwm@aplix.ca) for more information.

U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition: June 12, 13, 9 – 5, Monroe county hospital, Rochester, N.Y. See the National Bonsai Exhibition section at the International Bonsai web site (http://www.internationalbonsai.com/) for details.

Brant Bonsai Society Meeting: June 28, 7 – 9 pm. Tranquility Place, 436 Powerline Rd, Brantford, ON. Stone carving, by Robert Dubuc. Carve a cinder feather weight stone either as a pot, mountain landscape or as a slate. \$5 for non-members. Contact Robert Dubuc (on back cover) for more details.

Mid-America Bonsai Alliance (MABA) 2010 Convention: June 25 – 27, Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, Michigan. See MABA web site for more information: http://www.mababonsai.org/pages/convention.html

Bonsai Clubs International (BCI) group tour of China: Sept. 30 - Oct.12, 2010. The programs are specially designed for bonsai and suiseki lovers to explore the beautiful collections from Guangzhou, Nanjing, Yangzhou, Xijing, Beijing, Tianjin. Please visit the BCI website (http://www.bci2010chinatour.com/) for details.

Bonsai theft warning There have been four different incidents of bonsai theft recently in different areas of Quebec. Please be careful when buying trees from non-members. Check the web site www.interre.net/bonsai for pictures of stolen trees to ensure that you are not acquiring stolen property. You can send an email to ipm@bonsaiquebec.com to report any signs of these stolen trees.

ABS stolen bonsai To check for stolen bonsai in the USA, check the Stolen Bonsai Registry at the ABS web site.

May president's message: what is a picture really worth?

by Mike Roussel

A thousand words? Maybe that's true but in bonsai a picture is just a picture, a snapshot in time, from a fixed viewpoint. That is because bonsai is a multi-dimensional art form (length, width, depth, time, others?).

With a picture you really only get length and width with just a suggestion of depth. The dimension of time is not really present in a single picture. You cannot walk around the picture and see the tree from multiple angles. Sure you can take multiple pictures from different angles, at different times of year but all of this is dependent on the skill of the photographer and the amount of pictures taken. Nothing substitutes for a person's amazing ability to process a constant stream of information as he or she walks around and peers at a tree "live". Film might capture the tree over time, but it too is limited by the photographer's eye and the camera lens.

Now I am not saying that photography has no place in bonsai. It is a great way to record the changes a tree goes through over time, as most people do not have a photographic memory. What people usually remember is the "feeling" of the bonsai. Photography is also a great way to document technique and disseminate that information to a wider audience, and can be used as a way to mentally "travel" to see trees that one does not have access to, due to the various constraints in one's life. Its other good use is to give a degree of separation, which allows for some objectivity in appreciation.

Bonsai is not only about showing the change of seasons; they themselves change over the years, so one cannot truly learn from a tree without seeing it over a longer period of time. This is especially true for deciduous trees in which the structure of a tree can only be understood when the leaves have fallen, and the true silhouette can only be seen when the leaves are out, not to mention other seasonal aspects like flowers, fruit, fall colours, etc ... Even conifers go through seasonal changes and do change form over time.

Why am I bringing this up? The only way to truly learn about how good bonsai are constructed is to see them in person. You must actually visit a live bonsai to experience it. The next stage is to try to repeat those successes in one's own trees. To be clear: you are only copying those bonsai successes, not the trees' shapes.

What opportunities to see live bonsai are you taking advantage of? Below is a list of places you can go to see great bonsai:

- TBS meetings
- TBS shows
 - Spring, Fall
- TBS garden visits (listed on the 'Schedule' page, herein)
- Other GTA clubs
 - Show at the Royal Botanical Gardens
 - O Misseto show
 - Matsuyama show
- Montreal Botanical Gardens
 - North American, Japanese, and Chinese (indoor) bonsai gardens
- United States
 - O MABA show in Grand Rapids, Michigan, this June
 - O **US National Exhibition,** in Rochester, N.Y., also in June
 - O Rochester Symposium, in October
 - National Collection in Washington, D.C.
 - o Pacific Rim Collection
 - Established Bonsai Retailers, in Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and New York state

Abroad

- Japan, especially the Kokofu Show, February, in Tokyo, Japan, and Omyia Bonsai Village.
- European shows

Not going to at least one of these means that you are missing out on the experience of bonsai. You can never create bonsai if you do not see bonsai.

Alert! Volunteers are needed for the TBS spring show, to work on the TBS executive, and the Journal still needs a publisher!

Enjoy all the benefits of being on the "inside" of the club! Contact Mike Roussel or Otmar Sauer.



Karen Brankley & Mike Roussel, two of our best (and happiest) **TBS** engines.

Growing beyond the challenge

by Mike Roussel

When I wrote the president's message for June 2009, I introduced the theme of my presidency of "Grow to the Challenge" where the membership was called to a greater dedication to their collections and to the club. I can say that over the ensuing months, many of the members have met that challenge head on and made significant contributions. I am grateful for their efforts because the club has benefited greatly from their participation.

However, last meeting **Lotte and Herman Brunner** set the bar even higher! They met the challenge by collecting and bringing to the club (at the perfect time of year I might add) an entire van **full** of larches to be shared with the membership. In a very altruistic way, they asked for nothing for themselves in return, just that those who took trees would make a donation to the club. Unfortunately, that message was relayed after the most of the trees were spirited away. That said, I was very pleased to see that a number of those who benefited, honoured Lotte and Herman's wishes and made a donation to the club (minimum \$1 a tree).

Well, whether you made a donation or not, or even didn't take any trees, I am sure you recognize the hard work that went into this effort and we should all be grateful to Lotte and Herman for their contribution to the future legacy of the **Toronto Bonsai Society**. I for one look forward to seeing these trees in future garden visits and shows.

Lotte and Herman, on behalf of the **Toronto Bonsai Society**, thank you very much for taking time to think of the club. We appreciate it a lot!

Cheers!



April Beginner Session - Bob Wilcox on larches

by Barbara Pope

This month **Bob Wilcox** shared his wisdom with respect to collecting and styling larches. Clearly Bob is particularly fond of *Larix laricina*, which comprise approximately 50% of his collection!

Here are some of the points that he made during his talk:

- In general, it is a good idea to limit the total number of bonsai trees you possess to less than 50. Each year Bob lines his trees
 up in his yard from favourite to least favourite and "nibbles away" at the ones he doesn't want. This process helps develop a
 critical and discriminating eye.
- Larches are a great species to work with. They have the smallest needles of any conifer and retain their shape well from year to year.
- When collecting, look for good roots, potential taper, and usable branches. "Collecting (trees) is like fishing hold out for the good stuff", says Bob.
- Start with smaller trees which can still be shaped.
- Look at the roots and the tree will tell you what style it wants to be. If the roots are on the same plane, the tree can be styled as an upright. If the roots are higher on one side than the other, the tree can be grown on a slant and bent into interesting shapes if desired.
- After collecting, Bob keeps the root balls tightly wrapped in the original soil. The trees are then transplanted into a wooden
 growing box with the long roots cut to fit into the box and arranged to the sides. Branches are wrapped with rubber tubing
 from old bicycle tires and then pulled into shape and stabilized with guide wires attached to nails in the box. Guide wires are
 tightened periodically in the first few months.
- Make a long diagonal cut to redistribute the stress and reduce damage to a branch which is being bent up to form a new apex.
- When developing newly collected material, keep all the growth to fatten the trunk.
- Wire branches in the spring before the buds have opened. Repot later in sandy soil, until the time when the buds have
 opened but have not fully elongated. Repot infrequently, only when the root ball is pushing out of the pot. Leave in the
 original soil for as long as possible and trim roots minimally.
- To develop ramification, remove end buds to push the energy back to where branches will develop. Remove downward buds. Selective wiring and ramification can lead to a wonderful stratification of the branches like a "fish skeleton".
- Bob completely wires every mature larch in his collection every year, leaving the wire on for a full year. The art is in the branch selection and wiring.

What great advice! Thank you, Bob, for sharing your experience with us!

The perfect tree collection

by Duane Harrison

The most recent collecting trip for the **Toronto Bonsai Society** enjoyed perfect weather, on a warm, sunny and thankfully dry Saturday morning. Due to this year's drier than usual winter and spring, areas that were previously swampy were now available to explore.

Although being in various bonsai clubs for several years, I found that this collecting trip caused an adrenaline rush that resulted in a disregard for the basic knowledge I acquired over years of presentations. I was already to the point of trenching around the tree I had selected to collect before Otmar Sauer wandered by and pointed out that, although the tree trunk had movement, I had neglected to dig below the surface to check the nebari and root systems. Luckily, my rookie mistake didn't result in a complete waste of effort, as a check did find acceptable nebari and roots.



An uninvited participant, who showed up with a bad attitude, no tools, and bothered diggers.

To further illustrate that there is also something to learn each time out for the bonsai student, Mike Roussel pointed out that I had also misidentified the species of tree I was collecting. Last year I had collected several apple trees from the same fields and believed this was yet another example. Mike gave me the tip that if I was unsure of species, check to see what other trees were in immediate area, and that might give you a hint. So my "apple"

Presently it sits in my garden, beside my real apple trees, where I shall allow it to recover from its recent stress and establish itself in its growing box.

tree became a white elm!

From there, the sky's the limit. I will, of course, keep styling and pruning it!

Hopefully I can start to work on its development next year.



Duane, Carol, Carlos, Jorge, ready to dig.



Carlos Bras: What, no roots?! Better put that one back!









Thanks to Otmar & Mike for advising me, and Mike again for organizing this event!

Editor's note: Thanks also to **Carlos Bras**, for helping yours truly find, prune, dig, and carry my own "stubby" apple tree out of the field, helping me find a literati style cedar, and also a red pine!

Why go to a bonsai convention, anyway?

By Steve Moore

MABA (Mid-America Bonsai Alliance) Vice-President, Warsaw, IN., U.S.A. Fort Wayne Bonsai Club

Late last year, I started talking up the MABA 2010 convention, trying to persuade as many as possible of our local members to attend. A question from one lady stopped me in my tracks for a moment. The gist was: I don't have much bonsai experience; wouldn't things at a convention be over my head? So what point would there be to my going?

That rocked me a bit! As I considered her question, I realized that I had not mentioned the great difference my own first convention made to me. My first bonsai convention resulted in a "quantum leap" in my bonsai knowledge, enjoyment, and confidence. (I really don't like clichés, but occasionally a cliché does actually say it best.)

The first convention I attended was the 1992 American Bonsai Society Symposium, hosted by the Susquehanna Bonsai Society and held in Hershey, PA. Even though I had acquired my first tree (a Serissa) 2-½ years before, I was still very much a beginner, learning as best I could from books and journals. My work schedule at the time kept me from involvement in any bonsai club.

How did the symposium result in a "quantum leap?" Let me give you some specifics.

First: learning, learning, learning! Opportunities to learn were all around me:

Demonstrations. I saw Bruce Baker, of Ann Arbor, MI, start out with an unkempt-looking collected yew that I, frankly, thought was quite boring, and transform it into a masterpiece. The work took two days, most of it off in a side room; but when Bruce was finished I was very much impressed by the result! I learned how a potter creates an oval pot on a round potter's wheel by watching Max Braverman do it. (He threw a round pot, then cut a leaf-shaped section out of the center and carefully squeezed the sides in to close the gap.) And I grasped some techniques that I had not yet understood from reading, by **seeing** them done.

Workshops are of course an excellent chance to learn, as many of you already know. I didn't take any in Hershey, but I was a silent observer in one or two, and even observing I learned quite a bit.

Exhibit Critiques. I took one critique at ABS '92, and have been convinced of their value ever since! Vaughn Banting, of New Orleans, led a dozen of us thru the convention exhibit, explaining what he found good and not-so-good about each tree. I know I learned more in that one hour than in any other four hours that weekend! Vaughn, by the way, had an encouraging way of referring to a bonsai's "dilemmas" rather than its "problems."

Private conversations. Within half an hour of checking in I found myself welcomed to listen in as a Serissa's owner discussed design options with a teacher. Several times during the weekend I stopped one teacher or another in the hall, to ask (politely) if he would mind answering a question. My questions then were at kindergarten level, but only one man blew me off.

Vaughn Banting was the most helpful of all. After courteously listening to a design dilemma that had me stumped, Vaughn sat down with me on a nearby bench. Taking the pad on which I'd sketched out my problem, he in turn sketched a simple, fairly elegant solution, which was well within my abilities at the time. When I protested that his suggestion broke a basic design rule, he explained that this was a valid exception. ("A major branch may cross the trunk, if the tree is a windswept.") It has always seemed to me that the best way to show my appreciation for the helpfulness of Vaughn, and others, is by passing it on. Vaughn died in October 2008, and since then it has also seemed the best way to honor his memory.

Second: inspiration! Pictures can be very useful, but nothing compares with being able to see a bonsai directly: you can look at it from different angles, from closer or farther away; you can see more detail, more nuance. I went through the bonsai exhibit in Hershey at least three times by myself, studying the trees, finding new details, new insights. Several times I bent down to put my eyes about at the level of the nebari, and looked **up** into the branch structure.

Sometime during ABS '92, I'm sure, is when I started saying to myself, "I didn't know you could **do** that," in mingled surprise and delight. After 18 years, I still say it from time to time.

What sorts of insights can you gain from studying good bonsai?

- Species. Would you expect English ivy, or giant sequoia, to make a good bonsai? A convention display is a good place to expand your horizons about species you may not have considered before.
- Style and color matches. Sometimes we don't realize that a certain style will work well for a given species, until we see an example. The same is true for pot colors and the foliage, fruit, or bark of different trees.
- Ways to handle dilemmas. One of the trees in the Hershey exhibit had a major trunk-chop wound that was far from being
 completely closed. The artist put the wound to the rear, and grew a new leader directly in front of it, to conceal it. It was the first
 time I had seen that. Seeing how others have handled design dilemmas can give us ideas for dealing with the challenges our own
 trees present.

Third: community. This benefit is intangible, but it is very real. **Paul Weishaar**, President of **MABA**, approaches this concept from an angle that hadn't occurred to me, in his current 'President's Message'. Rather than appear to compete with him, I'll just ask you to read his second paragraph, beginning with, "As I write this I cannot help but think of our bonsai community ..." (You'll find this on the MABA website, at the bottom of the page: www.mababonsai.org.

Finally, let me leave you with a 9-year-old's perspective. I asked my daughter what she would say on this point, as I was getting ready to write. I'll quote her answer as closely as I can: when you go to a convention, you learn a lot about bonsai, and then you find you have a hobby that you will enjoy for the rest of your life!

This article is adapted from the February 2010 'Stuff from Steve', a column in the Fort Wayne Bonsai Club monthly newsletter. Emphasis added by TBS Journal editor.

From MABS 2010 Joshua Roth new talent competition

Hi all,

I went to Kerkonten, N.Y. (to MABS), and I came back!

It was the greatest learning experience ever! It was great!

I would like to thank the **Toronto Bonsai Society** for having sponsored me in the 2010 Joshua Roth New Talent Competition. Even though I came in last place, I came in first for Canada - I was the only Canadian there!.

I just simply took too much off my tree - no worry, it will re-grow.

I received a **Certificate of Recognition** and a 25% discount from Joshua Roth Ltd. I am proud of having attended the competition, even though I did not come in first.

I am pleased to say that I have met and made new bonsai friends and also the fact that **Linda and Cheryl from the TBS** also attended the conference while I was there.

Thank you,

Robert Dubuc

Selling items at the TBS show

by Grace Wicht

- All items for sale must be at the show by 9 a.m. on Sunday morning. Items will not be accepted after that, or at the social on Sunday night. Items will be also be accepted on Monday morning before 9 a.m. 5% of all sales will go to the TBS.
- Items must be checked in with one of the sales people before they are placed on the tables.
- Code all your items on attached tags. Please check first with Gim, Bob, or me as to the code you will be using, so that you don't use the same code as anyone else. If your name is John Jones, you would put JJ #1 and the price. If you have room on the tag, you could identify the item. On the sales sheet you would also use the code JJ #1, and some information on the item; that is, type of tree, age, years in training, as well as the sale price. If you are willing to give a discount, note it on the sales sheet. Please price and code each item that you are selling. Do not bring in a group of items, all costing \$1.00, and give them one code number. Price each item individually. The price of items should be in even dollars, rounded off to the nearest dollar no 25 or 50 cents.
- If you are having a problem pricing an item, please speak to one of the sales people.
- At the end of the show, all items not sold must be picked up and checked out with one of the sales people. We are not responsible for items not picked up.
- Anything bonsai related, such as trees, pots, stands, tools, fertilizer, and so on, will be accepted for sale. No huge items, such as large garden shrubs in nursery containers, will be accepted we don't have room!
- Proceeds from the sale may not be ready at the end of the show. Please be patient: they will be given out at the next meeting.

From the editor: reporting on repotting

by Greg Quinn

Is repotting your bonsai, or bonsai-in-training, important? Do you want new feeder roots to grow well? Do you want your tree to be healthy? Judging by the number of experts who brought their bonsai in to repot during our big TBS repotting extravaganza session at the general meeting in April, the answer is a resounding **yes**!

What a bustle! It was certainly the most active meeting we've had in a while, underlining what many among us have observed: **bonsai** is **something you do, not something you watch!** So take it all in, and then go home and spend the same amount of time you spent watching working on your own trees.

It's okay to write about it, too, (I can always use articles for the TBS Journal!) as long as it doesn't cause you to neglect your trees!



Bob Cole, our club refreshment provider, works a tree.



Mike McCallion road trip:

bonsai soil, trees, pots...

Thanks to all who helped, and especially to Mike Roussel, who made this happen!

Links to other clubs:

Matsuyama Bonsai Society: http://www.informdurham.com/record/OSH1103

Ottawa Bonsai Society: http://www.ottawabonsai.org/

Kitchener-Waterloo Bonsai Society: http://www.kwbonsai.com/Welcome.html

The Bonsai Society at RBG: http://www.bonsaisocietyatrbg.com/

Bonsai Gros-bec: http://www.bonsaigrosbec.com/

Societe de penjing et bonsai de Montreal: http://www.bonsaimontreal.com/

Buffalo Bonsai Society: http://www.buffalobonsaisociety.com/monthly_meetings.html

Bonsai Society of Upstate New York: http://www.bonsaisocietyofupstateny.org/billboard.htm

Regular TBS meetings

Meetings take place on the second Monday of every month, except July and August, at the Toronto Botanical Gardens, located at 777 Lawrence Avenue East, at Leslie Street, in the auditorium (west side of the building) at 7:00 p.m. The general meetings frequently include: **demonstrations** of bonsai techniques, **critiques** of bonsai trees, and **workshops**, in which each participant styles a tree with the help of an experienced member.

A small fee is charged for workshops, and a tree and wire are provided. To participate in workshops, it is necessary to register in advance of the meeting so that materials can be provided.

Members are encouraged to bring in bonsai to show and work on during the meetings. Wire is provided at no charge. Non-members may attend a meeting at no charge to see if the club is of interest to them.

Library hours and policy

The library is open to members at the beginning of our regular meetings. Members may borrow books free of charge for one month. Late returns cost \$2 per month with a minimum charge of \$2. **Return all materials before summer.**

Membership desk

The membership desk will be open at all meetings. The opening time may be extended for the first fall meeting to assist with renewals. You may also register for workshops there.

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The JOURNAL was founded in January, 1964, is published monthly, except July & August, and exists to further the study, practice, promulgation, and fellowship of bonsai.

Visit the Toronto Bonsai Society's website at:

www.torontobonsai.org

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