

THE TWIG

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MHBS President's Yearend Letter



The concept of growth lies at the heart of bonsai and related horticultural arts. From a biological point of view, it concerns the strategic accumulation of tissue leading to maturation. More simply, it involves changes over time. Though paintings and sculptures are subject to the incidental effects of time, it is integral to the creation, expression, and interpretation of bonsai and kusamono making them four-dimensional art forms.

Interestingly, while growth is always moving forward, it happens so gradually that we can only appreciate it by looking back from the present state to the past. It is rarely linear and often messy. Natural pauses occur such as the repose in winter required for nascent biochemical processes in roots, buds, and seeds to build their potency for spring and the subtle dormancy at the height of summer that heralds the preparation for autumn's approach. Although growth provides ramification and thick trunks and branches, it also gives shoots in undesirable locations and overly dense canopies that shade out interior growth and stifle air circulation leading to poor health. Furthermore, growth is enmeshed in the fabric of nature with its droughts, storms, and temperature swings that can also adversely impact our trees and plantings.

The challenges associated with biological growth have applications for our personal development and evidence suggests that we learn best when we adopt what has been called a "growth mindset." Too often, we develop noxious fixed beliefs about the limits of our abilities, which cause us to see our mistakes as confirmation of these perceived shortcomings. Worse, we may view our failures as reflections of our self-worth and come to feel inadequate. A growth mindset gently acknowledges our fallibility and the limits of our control by reframing errors and setbacks as inevitable, necessary, and meaningful life experiences. It also focuses on our potential and encourages faith in our capacity to learn and improve regardless of our current state. Plateaus and ruts are not viewed as the end of the line but as a signal to back up and consider a new path forward, perhaps by allowing for a bit of subconscious processing and/or a review of the basics. Focusing on a particularly difficult moment makes it easy to feel discouraged but, as mentioned previously, growth is only appreciated by looking back at the progress.

I am delighted and honored to have grown with you over the years and encourage you to take some time to reflect on and take pride in your own growth and the growth of our club. It is your enthusiasm, talent, and effort that drives our individual and collective success. Thank you for your support and camaraderie and best wishes for health and happiness in the new year.

Bill Papura
President, Mohawk Hudson Bonsai Society

Looking Ahead

2025

NEW! January 26 - Jonas Dupuich virtual presentation on tree evaluation and show prep. Jonas runs the Bonsai Tonight website, blog, and podcast and helped found the Pacific Bonsai Expo. Club members will be able to access his presentation (and attend the club meeting) from the comfort of your own home - full details in the January Twig.

February 23 - BYOT open workshop at Faddegon's.

March 30 - TBD

April 11-13 - MABS Spring Festival, Grantville PA

April 26-27 - Mark Arpag Saturday full-day and Sunday half-day workshops. Sunday demo and raffle.

NEW! May 18 - Frank Mihalic

Late May/Early-Mid June - Annual MHBS Club Show & Exhibition. Exact dates TBD.

June 21-22 - Young Choe half-day workshops Saturday and Sunday. Demo and raffle on Sunday afternoon.

July 27 - TBD

August 31 - TBD

September 12-13 - ABS Learning Seminars, Doubletree Hotel, Rochester NY.

September 13-14 - 9th U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition, Total Sports Experience, Rochester NY.

NEW! September 28 - John Romano

October 26 - TBD

November 16 - TBD

December - Club Holiday Party

November Workshop

Thanks again to DJH Bonsai for hosting our November MHBS club meeting and BYOT workshop!

Members present heard about some of the upcoming workshops and visiting artists for the coming year (check the calendar on the events page!), discussed the upcoming holiday party/auction, bid on more pots in a silent auction, and discussed both the upcoming 2025 MABS show as well as moving our annual club show to June in 2025.

MABS (Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Society) is a coalition of regional mid-atlantic bonsai clubs, of which The Mohawk Hudson Bonsai Society is a member. The member clubs gather annually for a weekend of bonsai display and demonstrations in the spring.

For those interested - MABS 2025 will be held April 11 - April 13 2025 and will take place at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg-Hershey, 604 Station Rd., Grantville, PA 17028.

Member clubs benefit from the conference as a whole proportional to the number of club members in attendance, so if you're free please register to enjoy some wonderful visiting artists, shop some wares, and see some great bonsai! Details on registration to follow and you can always check out the MABS page itself at <https://www.midatlanticbonsai.org/>

After the club meeting those present enjoyed sharing some snacks, finishing up the silent auction of pots and discussing and working on our trees!



Thanks to Guy Pastena for the recap and picture, originally posted on our MHBS website.

November 24 Club Meeting

October minutes were approved and Treasurer report provided.

Review of upcoming activities: January meeting featuring Jonas Dupuis will be virtual—a link will be emailed to members to participate from home. He will discuss show prep and tree evaluation. Added to the 2025 calendar are Frank Mihalic in May and John Romano in September. Sergio Cuan will visit in Sept 2026.

Nominating Committee presented slate for 2025 officer openings: Dan Bee for Vice President, Arika Adams for Communications, Nancy Castillo for Secretary, Jon Stewart for Activities. Voting will be held at holiday party on December 7.

MHBS registration committee still awaiting info from MABS to continue their work.

Club holiday party is December 7 at McGreivey's in Waterford. Bring wrapped items for mystery auction.

The Executive Board voted to keep club dues and workshop fees at the current amount for 2025.

December 7 Club Meeting

Meeting was held at club holiday party. Minutes from November approved and treasurer report given.

No new dates added to 2025 club calendar. January will feature a zoom presentation by Jonas Dupuich. The zoom call will open early at 11:30a, club meeting at noon, then Jonas' presentation after the meeting.

Website is updated for the holidays.

Thanks to Nominating Committee of Patricia Tatich, Dan Bee, and Arika Adams. The following officers/directors were unanimously approved by the membership for a term ending 2027: Vice President Dan Bee, Secretary Nancy Castillo, Activities Jon Stewart, and Communications Arika Adams.

MABS registration committee is still waiting on information for the registration form. The MABS treasurer position remains vacant.

An Honorary Lifetime Membership plaque was designed, ordered and donated by Patricia Tatich. Alan Tallman is our newest honoree. Thanks to Patricia for her work and generosity.

We need 2 volunteers for Oversight Committee and need volunteers for the 2025 Club Show & Exhibition committee.

Bill presented gifts to the Executive Board and to Dave & Lori of DJH Bonsai for hosting our club meetings.

Time to Pay 2025 Club Membership Dues

For 2025, MHBS club membership dues will remain the same at \$45 for an individual and \$60 for a household.

Please pay your 2025 dues now from the [Membership Online Payment](#) page of our website. You can also pay by mailing a check to Treasurer Lori Hodgetts ([address on page 8](#)).

Meet your New Club Officers



Vice President Dan Bee (they/them)

Dan has been practicing bonsai for a decade. They especially enjoy working with junipers to explore the possibilities of unique and non-traditional design ideas. Outside of the garden, they enjoy working on/riding bicycles, and spending time in LGBTQ+ community spaces.

Secretary Nancy Castillo

Nancy is currently the Communications Director and will be moving into the club Secretary role. Her bonsai journey started in 2018 in Pauline's beginner class. Her favorite bonsai species changes often - she currently loves her azaleas, but loves best those trees she can keep alive.



Communications Director Arika Adams

Arika has been an enthusiast of trees nearly her entire life. While an avid collector of 'house plants' for many years, her introduction to bonsai was in 2020 through her partner Jon. Arika prefers tropical and subtropical trees and has a particular appreciation for nontraditional design elements and ceramics.

Activities Director Jon Stewart

Jon seriously entered the bonsai world in September 2018, with the purchase of a Ponderosa Pine he still cares for. His favorite species include Chojubai, and natives like Red Spruce and Larch. While not practicing bonsai, he is a luthier and musician.



Holiday Party

We had a great turnout at our holiday party this year with 35 members and guests celebrating the season with bonsai friends. This is our second year at McGreivey's in Waterford where we enjoyed a delicious lunch followed by our club meeting.

The holiday party is also a significant fund raising event for the club, with our traditional mystery auction, as well as a silent auction. Our silent auction also featured a number of items donated by Alan Tallman, including six Nick Lenz pots, a tokanoma, a turntable stand and more. Thanks to everyone who donated items and to those who joined in the bidding—we raised \$2,363 for future club activities and programs.

As they say, a good time was had by all! Please enjoy the photo collages on the next couple pages.

And this seems to be as good a place as any to wish you all the happiest of holiday seasons. We hope to see you often in the new year!

Holiday Party





Bonsai Calendar by Dave Hodgetts - December (Early Winter)

The fully dormant temperate bonsai, having been sprayed with dilute lime sulfur, are now in winter storage. The goal is to protect them from desiccating winds, root temperatures of 23°F and below, and hungry rodents. However, any trees that underwent heavy work in fall, are otherwise weak or at risk (shohin/mame) are given additional protection, ideally at around 36°F. This will both prevent frost damage and fulfill their dormancy requirements.

I periodically check the daytime and nighttime temperatures of my various storage zones, empty and rebait my traps and water the trees as needed, aiming to keep the soil just slightly damp.

Tropical and semi tropical trees are managed with the lighting, humidity and temperatures they prefer.

I like to work on Larch in the winter, the only problem being that I prefer to protect them from frost once they've been wired and the branches placed, which requires I have enough storage capacity. I bring the, probably frozen, tree into the workshop and look at it, getting a vague idea of what shape I'm going to aim for, while exposing the branches to room temperature for an hour or two. (I have no proof this helps, but it seems reasonable to me.) Structural pruning and/or the removal of any old wire is performed and then the tree is wired and the branches appropriately placed. I enjoy this period of interaction with the tree, reveling in its' potential for growth and development in the coming year, especially as the garden is typically blanketed with snow, cold, windy and frequently grey at this time of year.

Making a list of your bonsai that will require repotting in spring, and matching them with the appropriate pots, can be a satisfying winter activity. Confirming that, despite the number of pots you own, you lack the pot or pots of the shape, size or color dictated by your innate sense of good taste and style, is less satisfying. But it does give you license to shop.... stocking up on the other required repotting materials is also sensible. Cleaning and sharpening your tools is also worth your while.

You could also give some thought to the tree(s), accent(s) and/or accent plant(s) you hope to exhibit at MABS or the club show & exhibition next year, if you haven't already started the pre-show preparation process.

Lastly, you may wish to consider the quality of your bonsai in general. Are you satisfied with them? Have they improved in the last year? Do you have a plan to take them to the next level? Do you need or want one? Food for thought, I hope.

As this is my last submission of the year, I wish you all Happy Holidays and a healthy and fruitful New Year, and, as Pauline used to say, keep growing.

Volunteer Needs

- ♦ 2-3 more volunteers are needed for the 2025 MABS Spring Festival registration responsibilities. This group will prepare/update the registration form, prepare individual registration packets, and help manage the registration table at the festival.
- ♦ We are looking for 2 volunteers to conduct the 2024 audit, due March 31, 2025. If you can balance a checkbook, you have the skills needed for the Oversight Committee. This is just a 3-month commitment.

If you can help, please contact club President Bill Papura. Thanks so much for considering these opportunities!

The Mohawk Hudson Bonsai Society

We are the Mohawk Hudson Bonsai Society and our purpose is to generate interest in and educate the public about the art of Bonsai as well as to increase Club members' enjoyment of the hobby, offer education for all skill levels, provide opportunities to practice the art, and form friendships with other enthusiasts. MHBS was founded in 1968 - we celebrate our 56th anniversary in 2024!

We welcome to our membership anyone expressing interest in the art of Bonsai and the stated purposes of the Mohawk Hudson Bonsai Society. 2025 membership dues remain at \$45 for an individual and \$60 for a household. You can pay your 2025 dues from the [Membership Online Payment](#) page of our website.

We meet on the last Sunday of each month, January through November (dates may vary with holidays), usually at [DJH Bonsai](#) in Feura Bush, NY (Albany area). Guest artist visits typically include a full-day workshop on Saturday, a half-day workshop on Sunday morning, followed by the club meeting and luncheon and a guest artist demo and raffle. Workshop and/or material fees may apply.

[MHBS Constitution and By-laws](#)

The Twig and Club Social Media

All links in the Twig are live and can be followed to the resource listed (websites, social media accounts, email addresses, etc.). Your feedback, suggestions, and contributions are always welcome. Links to our website and social media accounts are located on page one of the Twig. We encourage club members to share pictures or videos that can be posted to our online sites. Send pictures and videos via [email to Brandon Herwick](#).

MHBS Officers 2024

Position	Name	Phone	Email	Term Ends
President	Bill Papura	207-408-3909	billpapura@yahoo.com	2025
Vice President	Dave Hodgetts	518-380-4508	djhodgetts@aol.com	2024
Secretary	Open			2025
Treasurer	Lori Hodgetts 1793 Tarrytown Rd Feura Bush NY 12067	518-369-7243	LHodgetts46@gmail.com	2026
Activities Director	Jon Stewart	518-879-9789	stewarjm192@gmail.com	2024
Communications Director	Nancy Castillo	518-321-6913	twocat106@gmail.com	2025
Webmaster & Outreach Director	Guy Pastena	518-227-0722	MHBS.outreach@gmail.com	2026
Immediate Past President	Tom Kiszkiel	845 687-9115	kiszclove00@aol.com	
MABS Directors representing MHBS	Bill Papura and Dave Hodgetts			