

29 October 2015.

Dear SABA-members,

The African Bonsai conference from 22 to 25 October in Stellenbosch was a great success and the organising committee of Phil Levitt can be proud of what they achieved. I think it was the best display of bonsai I’ve seen in South Africa and Viky Petermann and her team should be applauded.

Despite student protests the turnout was healthy, registrations a new record and the quality of the talks and workshops exemplary. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped to make this a truly national and international event.

It was a historic event. The directors of the World Bonsai Friendship met for the first time in Africa and also planted a Friendship Forest that will be on permanent display in the Stellenbosch botanical garden. The first tree in the forest was planted by the mayor of Stellenbosch, mr. Conrad Sidego.

Ryan Neil from America also restyled some pines of the Mother of Bonsai in South Africa, Becky Lucas. These trees date from the early 1940’s and are also in the Western Cape Heritage Bonsai collection in Stellenbosch. This was the first time they were restyled.

Dr. Ivan Meyer, minister of finance and international affairs in the Western Cape, hosted the WBFF at Lanzerac while the rest of the bonsai fraternity enjoyed the game between the Springboks and the All Blacks. The Japanese consul, mr. Mitsuru Murase, was also at the event where he said that they taught us how to play rugby in the World Cup and we taught them some new things about bonsai!

Since ABC4 we’ve received a lot of compliments from the overseas visitors and locals who seemed to have enjoyed the bonsai as much as the hospitality and the wines.

New Talent competition

A big thank you to Earl Jeffreys who organised the new talent competition and for Stephen le Roux who sourced some good material from Rudi Adam.

Photos of the trees before and after the competition was taken and shown to delegates at the prize giving. The judges were Gail Theron, Tobie Kleynhans, Tony Tickle and Francois Jeker which gave a nice mix between local and overseas experts.

The entrants were Kobus Fourie (Boland), Stefan Pretorious (Suikerbos), Amanda de Beer (Kat Rivier), Meryl George (Kengai), Andries Havenga (Cape bonsai), Shaundre Craucamp (Eastern bonsai) and Nishal Randhim (Durban).

The winner was 15 year old Shaundre Craucamp who received R1000 from SABA. We hope to see a lot more of his work in future. Second was Andries Havenga who won R500 and third was Meryl George who received R300.

SABA photo competition

The SABA photo competition was judged by the international headliners Ryan Neil (America), Tony Tickle (England) and Francois Jeker (France). It took them two days but they were very complimentary about the quality of material submitted.

The winner of the indigenous category was Rudi Adam and the runner up was Thys Klem – both for wild olive. In the exotic category Tobie Kleynhans won with his wisteria and Gary Howes was runner up for his juniper procumbens nana.

Bonsai exhibition awards

The judges for the exhibition awards were the delegates from the World Bonsai Friendship Federation. They each chose their top 20 trees and then Jonathan Cain, president of the African Bonsai Association, did the averaging out to produce the most voted for trees.

Gold awards went to Hennie Nel (veld fig); Stephen Le Roux  (elm forest); Rudi Adam (huge elm forest); Freddie Bischoff (fire thorn); Boetie Bamburger (celtis) and Trevor Venerables (veld fig).

Silver awards went to Carl Morrow (Swamp cypress); Viky Petermann (olive); Freddie Bisschoff  (privet); Viky Petermann (olive); Freddie Bisschoff (maple) and Dorothy Franz (juniper).

Bronze awards went to Boetie Bamberger (cedar); Francois Voges (maple forest); Gail Theron (buddleja); Tobie Kleynhans (ficus); Viky Petermann (olive) and Stephen le Roux (juniper).

Some of the certificates got damaged in the watering of the bonsai and one was chewed on by a rat. We are working on a plan so that the winners can download signed certificates from Dropbox so that the can frame them. We will keep winners posted on this.

Well done to everyone!

New Exco

At the AGM a new Exco was chosen. So for the next two years the team will consist of Willem Pretorius (president); Earl Jeffreys (vice president); Terence OFlaherty (treasurer); Antony Smit (website); Robbie De Witt and Hennie Reyneke who will be allocated positions after the second meeting (first was held at the conference). I think it is a good representation of regions and expect everyone in the regions to support them.

The only tender for the convention in 2016 was received from PE of which Robbie is chairman. He asked if we could move it to 2017 as they have a busy year ahead. Therefore we are looking for a club to host next year’s convention and would like to hear from you soonest. Please remember the policy of rotating the convention between regions.

Lifelong achievement awards

There were five nominations from clubs for this award. The Exco decided to award three this year. The other two will be carried over to next year.

The recipients of this prestigious award are Johan Ras, Jessie Edwards and Lionel Theron. Congratulations and thank you for your service to bonsai over many years. You can be proud and I hope clubs will have a special ceremony to present the award and honour those who could not be at the convention.

President’s report

The president’s report and the audited financial statements were handed out to clubs who paid their membership. It is therefore not included in this newsletter. To summarise – our financials are healthy, communication is better, participation from clubs growing and there is a positive response to SABA projects.

Without the enthusiastic support of all our clubs this would not have been possible. A big welcome to the new clubs and thank you to the older clubs and chairmen who communicated with us and helped to spread the load. Without this support SABA is just an umbrella. Strong clubs make SABA strong and that can only benefit bonsai.

Regards,

Willem Pretorius.

President.