



the **TREE LINE**

the official monthly
publication of the

BONSAI SOCIETY of PORTLAND

Upcoming Events

February
2016

- February 14 Sun **Mentorship 102** 10-2pm Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.
February 20 Sat **Mentorship 101** 10-2pm Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.
February 23 Tue **Monthly Meeting** 7pm Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.
March 5 Sat **Mentorship 103** 10-2pm Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.
March 12 Sat **Pine Repotting Workshop** Scott Elser's \$45. 503-803-5343
March 13 Sun **Mentorship 102** 10-2pm Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.
March 19 Sat **Mentorship 101** 10-2pm Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.
March 22 Tue **Monthly Meeting** 7pm Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.
April 23 Saturday **Pacific Bonsai Museum** work party

Words From Your President

Well we now have January's business meeting behind us. We heard from Eileen that our membership is over 260 and climbing. Jan told me after the meeting, that we had 8 new members sign up at January's meeting as well. Eileen went on to give us feedback on our new Mentorship 101 and its high degree of success. John gave you the great news that we are over 34K strong. **Just every meeting we have is paid for by our raffle and auction.** Then Steve reviewed last year's fantastic presenters and rolled out who will be presenting and what to expect over the next 6 months of meetings in 2016.

After the meeting concluded and things were all cleaned up I was discussing our club with Barry Baertlein, a long standing member of our club and a personal friend. He said something I want to share with you. He noted that when he joined the society he was warned to avoid the January meeting as it was the business meeting. He mentioned this, I feel, because he was remembering the old, boring, January business meetings. This year the nine ring circus was alive and well. We continue to bloom!

Our club continues to grow in a very positive manner thanks to all of you hard working volunteers and to all our members who have enthusiasm for bonsai. And by the way, thanks to all you early arrivers and stay laterers who assemble and disassemble the meetings necessities. I also want to make a special shout out to Toni Martin for stepping up and handling the raffle during Shannon's absence.

I have submitted two other articles in this month's newsletter and want to bring your attention to them. One is a new meeting presentation format we are doing with Ryan Neil in March.

Please note that at February's general meeting, we are raffling and auctioning off 5 chances to have your tree worked on by Ryan at the March general meeting; read the article for the details. The other is an honorarium for Lawrence Chegwidde. Linda Chegwidde, Lawrence's wife, donated all the items you saw for auction at January's meeting and much more that we will see in February and March, in his name.

Hope to see you at our mentorship classes or at our February meeting on the 23rd.

Thank you for your trust, *Lee*

Repotting Time

The arrival of spring is a busy time of year in the bonsai world. Repotting season is here already and I hope everyone is taking advantage of our early spring. I try to do at least a couple trees every day and when the weather cooperates, I spend all day outside. Remember if you have repotted trees, they should be protected if the weather should turn cold again.

If you haven't acquired your akadama yet, I will be placing the final order this week for delivery at the February 23rd meeting. If you would like to place an order, please contact me directly at stevenleaming@gmail.com. My supplier is out of Kanuma. The other soil components (pumice & lava) can be purchased through Daybreak Gardens (360) 687-5641 or Wee Tree (541) 971-8979. Call ahead to order.

I would like to thank Margret Keeler for the update on the Portland Japanese Garden remodel at the January meeting. This month Scott Elser will be back with part two of "**Everything will be JUST PINE**". His presentation will be followed by another workshop on March 12th at his home. If you wish, sign up for Scott's workshop at the February meeting.

Ryan Neil will be back with us at the March meeting to do an initial styling (pruning and setting main branch) on five member's trees. Come to the February meeting to get your chance (via raffles and auctions) to be one of those lucky members. Details and rules for the Ryan Neil styling available at the meeting.

I would like to thank all the members who help with setup and clean-up before and after the meetings. It takes a lot of work to get ready for the meetings and reset the room after. We are supposed to be out of the building by 9:30 so all the help I can get is appreciated!

Steve Leaming, VP Programs

Mentorship 102, 103

Mentorship 102 (previously Mentorship) met on January 10. Twenty members attended, most of whom were not at 103 the previous weekend, so Lee did a repeat presentation on soils and prepping for potting. Alan Taft, Ron Cascisa, and Keith Wingfield were on hand to chime in with their knowledge during the presentation, then all four helped us with our trees. Thank you guys! We learned a lot at both meetings. We are blessed in this club to have such an accumulation of knowledge!

Mentorship 102 will meet on February 14. Just as with Mentorship 103, we will meet at the covered picnic area across the parking lot at the Milwaukie Center from 10:00 to 2:00 for sifting soil components, and making soil. Bring money if you need Boon soil, it's \$20/bag. We will then move into the Oregon Grape Room to work on our trees.

Bring a tree or 2 to work on, pots and tools, a sack lunch, work gloves, and a jacket. It's supposed to rain this weekend. If you have soil, bring it, as the newly made soil is too wet for potting. It will need to be dried out when warm weather arrives. Lee will bring the soil ingredients. As always, any seasoned members who are willing and available to help Lee with instructing are encouraged to come join us with your expertise!

See you Sunday! *Elisabeth Hardy*

Pacific Bonsai Museum Work Party Happens on Sat., April 23, 2016!

Each year a small group of BSOP members travel to the bonsai exhibit in Federal Way, Washington, for a close up look at the exhibit and a free critique by Curator Aarin Packard. The only cost is a few hours of your time. Our primary responsibility is the entry path and grounds surrounding the exhibit trees - pulling weeds, trimming landscape plants and the like. We bring our own favorite gardening tools, such as loppers, pruning shears, buckets, gloves, knee pads, hat, rain gear and/or sun screen. Bring a lunch, as there is nowhere close to buy one.

For car pooling we meet in the north parking lot at Elmer's Restaurant by Delta Park (Exit 306b) at 7:15 AM. We're usually home by 7:30-ish. For more information, call Jan Hettick, 503-504-7760, or email janhettick@comcast.net. Look for a sign-up sheet at the February meeting.

Jan



Black pine From
Bonsai Tonight

New Instructional Format Rollout

Hot off the presses we have a new teaching format being introduced to us by our very own Ryan Neil. What is this new format you are asking; well just hold onto your coils of copper and I'll tell ya.

Ryan is honoring his commitment to the BSOP of giving us a free demonstration for our outstanding support at The Artisan Cup and in doing so is also introducing us to a demonstration technique I have yet to have ever seen.

Yeah, yeah Lee but what is it? What is it? Well I thought you would never ask!

At our March general meeting on the 22nd, Ryan is going to discuss and review 5 conifer trees. He will discuss their design and needed structural changes.

After going through those steps he is going to wire the primary branch into place as a styling guide/template for the owner to follow. This times five....wow!

So you may be asking yourself; "self, what 5 trees is he going to use?"

Five of our member's trees is the answer. "How will we choose those five though?"

That is another really great idea we have come up with: At our upcoming February meeting we are going to have three ways to get a chance to have a tree of yours be worked on by Ryan.

First: two raffle drawings, tickets will be the normal price of \$1.00 each and you can purchase as many chances as you want. We will have the drawing appx. midway through the meeting.

Second: two silent auction chances, we will have the silent auction sheets for this occurring at the same time as the raffle is occurring and we will do a countdown at appx. 8:30pm.

Last: we will have an oral auction near the end of the meeting to auction off the last spot.

"Hey, are there any rules?"

Yes, five but the rules have been dictated by Ryan so that the trees he works on will be trees that he feels comfortable designing safely.

Rule 1: The tree has to be a conifer. Raw material or previously worked on are both fine.

Rule 2: The tree must be healthy; free from disease and pests and show vigor.

Rule 3: The tree must not be freshly potted.

Rule 4: The owner must be open minded and willing to see the tree change.

Rule 5: The owner must be able to get the tree to the meeting by 6:30pm

That is it. So take a look at your collection and see if there are any trees you would like to have Ryan style that meet the criteria.

This, to me, is a great way for the whole club to learn and benefit. I am looking forward to it as much as I did for the four session demonstration that Ryan and Scott did for two years.

Only one winner per person is allowed. If you win a second time, you have to forfeit one of your wins. IE: If you win the raffle and then win the auction, the auction will go to the next highest bidder. If you win 2 of the raffles, you have to forfeit one and we draw another ticket.

Mentorship 101 Dates for 2016

Mentorship 101 met in January to repot maples. Our thanks to Joanne Raiton, Paula Bentley and Lee Cheattle. The bonsai turned out wonderfully. Our February 20th class will focus on Japanese Larch repotting. And March...do you hear the round of applause?... will feature Anne Spencer Elms with our guest artist, Robert Wofford!

Mentorship 101 will meet on the third Saturday of each month through June. Here are the dates. February 20th March 26th April 16th May 21st June 18th



Hollywood juniper
styled by
Matt Reel

Membership Directory

Contact information for each BSOP member is available on the club website under Member Resources. This listing provides a primary phone number and a link for email contact where authorized by the member.

Each year in February or March, BSOP publishes a hard copy membership directory for those members who do not have access to the club website. It provides contact information for each member, although restricted information is not included, if so indicated on your membership application.

This year we are asking members who wish to receive a printed copy of the roster to pay \$5.00 to cover printing costs. You may order your copy at the February 23rd meeting. If you want to know what information will be included for your name or have other questions, talk to Jan at the next meeting (I'm at the computer) or email me at janhettick@comcast.net.

Jan

An Honorarium In Memoriam of a Fellow Bonsai Artist Lawrence Chegwidden

Our club, as large a membership as it has, is not the entity for all bonsai enthusiasts. There are, oh, so many who quietly go about caring for their trees with as much love and passion as those of us who associate as club members within our society.

One of those individuals, Lawrence Chegwidden, recently passed away in November 2015. I do not believe any of us knew him but from what I have been told from his wife Linda, he loved his bonsai.

If you were at January's general meeting, you may have been one of over a hundred members who were viewing this gentleman's collection of trees, books, pots and tools. It is very fitting that we honor both Linda and her husband Lawrence Chegwidden. It is in honor of Lawrence that I am writing this article. I want to say to him and to his wife how very much we appreciate their donation to our society.

I also want to emphasize that Lawrence's collection will live on in the hands of other bonsai enthusiasts for years and years to come.

So in closing Linda, please know that our members appreciate so very much your generous donation and that Lawrence's treasures will live elsewhere now caressed by other hands.

With deep sincerity from the Bonsai Society of Portland.

WEBSITE:

Chas Martin, who did a fantastic job of bringing our website into the 21st century, has now stepped down as our Website Chairperson. Karl Holmes is now our new Website Chairperson and is already helping the board to continue with Chas Martin's successes. A highly grateful thank you to you both!

By its very nature, the website is a work in progress, so keep an eye on it for future changes. If you can't log in, contact Eileen Knox to reset your log in information.

FACEBOOK:

Scott Tice is our official Facebook Manager. He has been quietly handling the this job for several years and certainly deserves to be recognized. Thanks a ton Scott!

Membership Renewals

BSOP membership renewals are progressing well with the conversion from year-end to anniversary-date due dates. Renewal notices are sent at the start of each month and payable by the end of the month. Dues can be paid via the club website, by USPS or at the monthly meeting. If you don't receive a notice when you think you should, please contact Jan Hettick, janhettick@comcast.net, 503-504-7760. Jan can tell you when you are due to renew.

BSOP Bonsai Convention 2018

You may recall President Lee Cheatle asking a question at the November club meeting: Are you interested in hosting a bonsai convention in the near future? The answer was a resounding YES. So, on February 2nd a group of BSOP members with a great deal of convention experience got together to begin what is often a three year process.

The assignment of the February 2nd meeting was to answer three questions:

1. Is it practical for BSOP to host a bonsai convention?
2. What would be the goal of the convention - raise funds, provide education, or be fun?
3. Should BSOP partner with ABS or PNBCA?

The answers to the first two questions are: Yes, BSOP has finances and membership base sufficient to host a great convention. The primary goal is to provide education opportunities to local bonsai enthusiasts in a fun environment, with profit a minor secondary goal. The committee determined that the optimal time, subject to finding a suitable venue, would be fall of 2018.

Decisions were not made about the partnerships at this time. PNBCA is the Pacific Northwest Bonsai Clubs Association, which is an association of 15 clubs throughout the Pacific Northwest, including Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and BC, Canada. The goal of PNBCA is to facilitate regional bonsai conventions (the 2016 convention is in Olympia, WA, hosted by Puget Sound Bonsai Association). We have also been asked to consider hosting the ABS Learning Seminars. ABS is the American Bonsai Society, serving individuals and clubs in Canada and the US and publishing the ABS Journal magazine.

The next goal of the convention committee is to design a program that will enable local bonsai people to attend and participate in the convention, not just work for the benefit of other clubs. After a program has been chosen, committees will be established to find a venue, find guest artists, and begin collecting workshop materials. There are many, many other jobs and committees to be formed. While we have a core group of experienced people to oversee these activities, we need new people to assist and learn for future events. So, please volunteer.

If you want to know what it takes to host a convention, check the BSOP website under Resources, Member Articles. Look at the document "Convention How-To Instructions". Each committee and its general responsibilities is outlined. Please take a look at the book and begin to think how you would like to help. Remember, you voted for this! It takes a whole club to host a bonsai convention. If you have questions, contact Jan Hettick, janhettick@comcast.net, 503-504-7760.

Jan Hettick & Lee Cheatle, Convention Co-Chairs



White pine display
From Bonsai Tonight

Best \$65 in Bonsai

By far the most questioned aspect of bonsai is that of styling. It's always what people want to hear about. Sure, you take a workshop and you find out how to pinch a maple or prune a pine. But what you really want is help in styling your own trees. So, for all those folks who ask that question, here is your \$65 answer. The Artisan's Cup Retrospective. This subscription based website for entire Artisan's Cup experience provides you with a photo of each of the 71 trees and five audio critiques for each tree by each of the judges. At an average of two minutes each, that's over ten hours of critique. Plus, you get access to the three panel discussions.

I have been waiting intently and patiently for several months as the website was being prepared to get to these critiques. The scores that one of my trees received was lower than expected, so I was curious as to what the judges had to say. I wanted to improve my trees, and actually rework them, but I wanted their feedback before proceeding. Actually, I couldn't wait on one tree. The European Beech that was featured in my Tips article awhile back has been completely reworked and it will be the subject of next month's article – you'll have to have a little of your own patience for that report. But guess what. I addressed most of the points that the judges had brought up on my own. So that just lets you know that the artists in the exhibit may readily know how to improve their trees, but lack opportunity, and not necessarily skill. It takes time for a branch to grow longer. And finding better pots is a huge challenge, especially with larger trees. And in the Beech's case, I did not want to impact the tree or foliage before the show.

So this is where you have an advantage over most folks. Many of these trees are in your own back yard. Here. Local. You can listen to the critiques, look at the photos, and maybe even visit the trees themselves and take a look. Many of the trees I am already familiar with, so it makes each critique's points much richer. The judges often have similar things to say about each tree, and conversely varying points of emphasis. They also approach suggested fixes in different ways. You won't learn how to physically make the changes, but more importantly, learn what does need to be changed to improve a certain tree.

I have listened to about ten trees so far (That's fifty sound bites). So here is what I have gleaned. The voice of Colin Lewis is so much fun to listen to. His voice is deep and rough with a great British accent. He is fairly even handed in his comments. Boon carries the most deeply felt Japanese influence and is the strictest on detail. It was fantastic to here my old teacher's voice in very familiar Thai accented phrases like, "Liddle bit" and "It have tweest". I still have so much to learn from him. Then there is Walter Pall, where almost every tree he talks about is "Wow" and, "One of the better trees". That's great because they were all fantastic. He is definitely more free spirited and has a disdain for just following conventional styling. Peter Warren is harder to hear, but he really emphasizes the entire display in a way no one else does. He is very strict in these regards. Dave DeGroot follows up with a spot on evaluation of each tree.

I can't tell you how pleased I am with the professionalism and thoughtfulness of all of the-secritiques. All the judges do a superb job. Where else can you get a ten minute critique of each of these great trees and go back and listen again? I enjoy looking at the photos of the trees while the judges are talking via my computer, although I was only able to listen to the audio, sans photo, at any one moment on the iPad. Still working on that one. What you don't get is the basic styling and the establishment of the movement. And you certainly don't get information on techniques for getting the trees to where they are headed.

It's all about how to make great trees better, from a visual perspective. The judges are talking about nuances and this where we almost never get to go with a demonstration or workshop. For a more in depth review of the site, with photos, visit Jonas Dupuich's blog, BonsaiTonight.com.

So if you are still interested, sign up and take a listen to the critiques on my Ponderosa Pine, tree number sixteen. I had an epiphany working on this tree for the Cup. In Boon's critique, he mentions the tree has five "Tweests". Actually it has seven, and there in lies the greatest problem. The foliage is obscuring the other two twists. I realized this while styling it, and that I was covering up part of the good stuff, so I made a gap in the foliage so that you could see into the trunk.

However, I could see that the foliage was super dense in respect to a Ponderosa, but I was proud of that density. Hard to grow, it showed great development and age. But I could also feel a sort of heaviness that I was not able to quite come to grips with. A nagging sort of feeling that I wasn't sure what to do about. The judges universally saw the same thing. So now I have more courage to thin it back out. The challenge is that the branching is rather convoluted in spots, so I will really have to work at getting the structure better, because it will be more visible. I may change the angle and general position of the foliage to help these matters.

Also, I am still kicking myself for not getting a pot made by Ron Lang for this tree. He has a style that is perfect for it, but now will not be making pots for awhile during his relocation. And he will no longer have an anagama kiln to fire it in (Wood fired, big undertaking). I have always wanted something more rugged for the tree, but have never found a pot in the style that was large enough, and few folks make them that large. But I am still going to work on it. So the next time you see this tree, it may look quite different. And the rest of my trees too. They must all move forward. TheArtisansCup.com.

Scott

BSOP Library Continues to Grow

The BSOP Library now has 1,060 items, including 773 magazines, 248 books and 39 videos. We have virtually every issue of the four main magazines (Bonsai Focus, Bonsai & Stone, ABS Journal and International Bonsai) since 1990, and many other unique publications.

We have recently added 12 books, including three fairly recent ones: 1) *Bonsai, in Collaboration with Crepsi Bonsai Museum* which was published in 2014. This is a large format book full of huge, gorgeous photographs and little text. 2) Francois Jerker published *Bonsai Deadwood* in 2014. The back of the book states, in part, "Neophyte and amageurs are warned that this book responds bluntly to questions that arise about dead wood in bonsai." How can you resist? 3) *Create Your Own Bonsai* by Ken Norman was published in 2015, which provides "50 step-by-step projects shown in over 400 photographs". Most of the pictures show very young material made into interesting starter bonsai. A good place to start. Please talk to your Librarian, Barbara Devitt, about checking out the new books and magazines.

Jan

Scott's BRANCH TIPS

BONSAI TECHNIQUE & PHILOSOPHY

Ponderosa Styling

Way back in October during our first of the three part Pine series, I introduced this Ponderosa Pine to you. The material was raw, in that it had never really been styled. I worked on one major bend many years ago with Boon to make it into a cascade, and then never did anything from there. We just bent the trunk, so as soon as the raffia and rebar were removed, you couldn't really tell that it had ever been touched.

This "Pondo" was originally collected by Randy Knight and my original thought was to graft Japanese Black Pine onto the right hand trunk to make a very forceful, masculine little tree. But there wasn't really quite enough movement to carry that off, nor a convenient place to graft. Then my taste started to shift more towards preserving the original foliage whenever possible on wild trees, so it was left alone.

The first photo was taken in 2007, making it obvious that it had been collected several years prior. It has been out of the mountains for at least a decade. After the first year or two, it was repotted from the usual 2x6 lumber box into its present ceramic container and has not been touched since. As I remember it, probably three quarters of the soil is native to Wyoming.

The second photo I have to offer is from this winter. Notice the difference between 2007 and 2015? Hard huh? That's because there isn't much. Eight years of watering and weeding has produced very little "Bonsai" growth. And here in lies my first point. Trees don't get better by themselves. Only when we have styled a tree, optimizing the branch placement for light and orienting the foliage so that the growth can be balanced throughout the tree can it begin to really develop as a bonsai. Ponderosas grow really slowly, so this is an important point. We need to get this thing wired and styled so it can begin to really accelerate its development.



The next few photos are the before and after process of designing this tree. It was five feet wide!! It took up a lot of precious bench space. I spent several sessions over a couple of days studying the tree at various angles and coming up with some design solutions. I really liked the lower section of trunk on what was to become the back side, but it emerged from the soil with reverse taper, so not so good. I saw a way to make a stumpy, muscular semi-cascade, but I

would be losing out on three quarters of the tree. Ultimately I came back to the same angle that we talked about in October.



Before styling



Right side



Back



Left side



Removed back branch



Detail



Front

As I worked, I discovered the untamed beauty in the line of the trunk, and I really wanted to work with this. The only problem was that the foliage was not really placed in the proper positions to work with this design – the classic Ponderosa dilemma. Most all of the foliage is out on the tips. There were a lot of branches down low on the right, but the trunk was ascending on the left. To compound matters, the right hand trunk/branch took a convoluted route back on to itself several times. This is usually a feature, but not so much for this design. I had to minimize that, and I am still open on this area.

From here the design hinges on the ability to bring the left branch down and forward. Fortunately, Ponderosas are the most flexible tree that I have ever had the pleasure to bend. Most of the required bend comes at the juncture where it emerges from the trunk. Impossible to protect

with raffia there, so it ended up tearing a bit. This is the only place on the tree where I have any concern. After I wired it and then pulled it down with a guy wire, I found that the branch had some stiffness in the middle, so it did not flex with the force of the guy wire – one of the reasons it tore.

To me, the still straight branch was exposed and ugly. So then I had to go back and retrofit number four copper wire from the trunk out onto the branch. Once I did that, I really no longer needed the guy wire. With that major hurdle overcome, I was free to work on the rest of the tree. I tried my best to wire on the major branches and tried to work all over the tree to progress the design. I had to stop and work on the lower right branches to see how they could work into the design. I cut the farthest back branch that will now be a jin. The right hand branches were brought over behind the main trunk to help create depth and mass.

Once that was accomplished, I could then see that I really wanted the crown to extend from the left side over to the right to complete the movement. I was able to swing the top, which was constructed of two main branches, forward and around.

I very much tried to be disciplined and provide branches growing out the back for future growth, not just make it look good from the front. The new tree is now 42 inches tall and much more compact on the sides. Of special note is the fact that when we changed the angle we now have the weaker parts of the tree on the top and the stronger on the bottom. This is an ideal situation. The tree will naturally want to grow stronger on top, so I expect that region to develop more rapidly and catch up with the lower section.

Now that we have changed the angle, it's time to get it repotted. Normally I might wait for up to a year to do this, but the tree is very stable and strong and has been in the current pot way too long. So for our February program, we will be repotting this beast on stage. Be sure to be there and give your input on the pot. Do we utilize a new one, or keep the old one? My back would really like to see it in something a bit smaller. We will focus on all the details to make a successful repot and stress the finer points of handling collected material. Be sure to join us for the fun.

Scott



Moss accent
From
Bonsai Tonight





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Welcome to the Village



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The Bonsai Society of Portland meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

The Milwaukie Center

5440 SE Kellogg Creek Drive, Milwaukie OR 97222

Enter parking lot from Rusk Road

Visitors are always welcome!

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