



# the **TREE LINE**

the official monthly  
publication of the

**BONSAI SOCIETY of PORTLAND**

## Upcoming Events

September  
2015

- September 22 7pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting**, Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.  
September 25-27 **The Artisans Cup** Portland Art Museum  
October 3 10-2pm **OSK** Oregon Grape Room, Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.  
October 11 10am **Mentorship Meeting** Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.  
October 17 **Fall Show**, Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.  
October 27 7pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting**, Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.  
November 15 10am **Mentorship Meeting** Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.  
December 13 10am **Mentorship Meeting** Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.  
December 13 **Holiday Party**, Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr.

## Words From Your President

Howdy y'all; I picked that up while in Kentucky this summer.

July came and went, then was followed by August which tried to slip by albeit the smoke from the Washington fires tried to choke out our picnic, it failed to succeed. Let's thank our luck that we are not going through what they are. But speaking of the picnic; it was a rousing success. The attendees brought more than enough delicious grub for all. The food would have gone without a hitch except for a dim-witted Chef, yours truly, who ran out of gas (propane) halfway through the cooking process but recovered with the help of a handy new tank and some expert assistance. In addition, we had 20 bonsai contestant winners, several purchasers of Anne Spencer Elms, a Norm Sandberg tree raffle that netted the club appx. \$250.00 dollars (thank you Norm) and a whole lot of fun. For all of that, we thank John Thomas our Treasurer, who orchestrated the entire summer picnic singlehandedly. Thank You John, it was excellent.

Your Programming Vice President has plans to have more trees for silent auction at September's meeting on the 22nd. See his article for other meeting details.

I am thankful that our September meeting is before The Artisan Cup so we can promote it in person at least one more time. Since this event is so historical I want to add it to this message.

**Do not miss attending The Artisan Cup at the Portland Art Museum! Friday September 25th through Sunday the 27th.**

**This will be the premier bonsai event that has occurred in North America....ever!**

Right here in our front yard! Over seventy of the finest trees that North America has to offer will be displayed in a way that you will have not seen before.

Bonsai is not a hobby and is truly "Living Art." American Bonsai has arrived.

Remember to "Pay It Forward" by volunteering.

Thanks for your trust, *Lee*

## GET READY FOR FALL

Wow what a summer! I hope all your trees are doing well and did not become "finished" bonsai over the summer. I know my water bill was at an all-time high but almost every tree survived, so it was worth it.

For our meeting this month, instead of the normal guest speaker, we are going to feature a "Get Ready for Fall Show Whack & Chat". For those who don't know, a whack & chat consists of bringing your trees to the monthly meeting and working on them. We are asking that members bring the tree they are planning to display in the fall show to work on. However any tree you need help with is fine too. We will have several of our resident expert "advanced" members on hand to give guidance and advice.

Lee will also be doing a discussion of tree care we should be focusing on as we move into the fall & winter seasons. Additionally our monthly meeting will feature auction & raffle trees and items, and our vendors will be on hand for your shopping needs. I will send out a pre-meeting reminder with more information.

We will also be discussing The Artisan Cup which is coming up at the end of the month. I am involved with the Cup as volunteer lead and I can assure you, this a BIG DEAL! If you have not yet volunteered to help, you might want to consider doing so. There will be much that can be learned though working with a show of this caliber, not to mention seeing some of the absolute top notch WORLD CLASS trees. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact me at [stevenleaming@gmail.com](mailto:stevenleaming@gmail.com) or 503-750-4552 and I can connect you with the areas that still need volunteers. Or bring your calendars and sign up at the meeting with Eileen.

*Steve Leaming*, VP Programs

## OREGON SHOHIN KAI

Oregon Shohin Kai met on Saturday September 12th. Alan Taft gave a very informative presentation on preparing our trees for winter. He also gave out six small Red Pines to members. Alan and Lee Cheatle helped us wire and shape the young trunks of the Red Pines. As usual, Alan and Lee helped us with our own trees. We are fortunate to have such a wealth of knowledge from our mentors!

The next OSK meeting will be October 3 from 10 AM to 2 PM. We meet in the Oregon Grape room at the Milwaukee center. Be sure to bring several trees to work on. We will continue to learn about preparing our trees for winter, and anything else we need help with or want to share. (That is, about your bonsai trees I mean!)

*Elisabeth Hardy*

# In Remembrance of Norm Sandberg

It is with much sadness that I have to inform you that Norm Sandberg passed away on Monday, August 17, 2015.

Norm has been an active member of our club for 18 years. Being around Norm would always bring a smile to your face. He had a wry sense of humor that he would spring on you when an opportunity presented itself.

Norm served for two years on the board as Treasurer and often volunteered for many club activities. He was always clear about what he wanted which saved a lot of time when he was a part of club activities.

Norm enjoyed propagating, cultivating and caring for multiple species of trees for bonsai. Most recently, he donated nearly 150 of his trees to our club.

Norm is survived by his wife Pat and their children.

We will miss you Norm; thanks for the memories.

## Change in Membership Renewal Procedures

In May 2015, the BSOP membership voted to change the renewal date for dues from year end to anniversary month. This change is to take place effective with members who joined in October 2014. Renewal notices will be emailed (or mailed by USPS for those without email) some time within the next week or two. The plan is to provide a printout of your membership information – please confirm and change anything that needs correction.

Dues will remain at \$30 for individuals and \$40 for families. Up to date club rosters with name and email address (if authorized) will be available on the club website to facilitate contact among the membership. Anyone wishing to receive a printed roster like we had in past years, generally printed in February or March, please add \$5 to your payment and so note on your renewal.

Your dues must be paid by the end of the month to remain a member in good standing. Renewals may be paid by check or through the club website. To renew by mail, put your check and a copy of your renewal notice in an envelope and mail to the address indicated. To renew by internet, log to the BSOP website at [www.portlandbonsai.org](http://www.portlandbonsai.org) and select “Join”. You will need to complete the required information, then press “Submit” at the bottom of the page to get to the payment section. Be sure to include an extra \$5 if you want a printed roster.

If you have any questions or would like to know when your renewal date will be, contact Jan Hettick, [janhettick@comcast.net](mailto:janhettick@comcast.net) or 503-504-7760.

*Jan*

# 2015 FALL SHOW AND PLANT SALE

***Don't Forget! Saturday, October 17th*** is the 2015 Fall Show and Plant Sale.

With the intense focus currently on The Artisan's Cup, we need to remember our own event, the upcoming BSOP fund raiser, the 2015 Fall Show and Plant Sale, to be held at the Milwaukie Center. This event helps fund our top-quality meeting space at the Milwaukie Center, which in turn allows more funding for ongoing high caliber programs.

The Fall Show and Plant Sale is open to the public and fulfills BSOP's #1 mission of "promoting interest in and enjoyment of the art of bonsai." With a focus on having FUN while educating the public, this year's event will consist of several sections: a bonsai exhibit (Steve Leaming), a vendor and member sale section (John Thomas), refreshments (Patty Myrick), children's activities (Wayne King and Eileen Knox), door prizes and auctions (Lee Cheatle). See the June newsletter for more detailed information.

I know there has been a lot of pressure... make that opportunity!... to volunteer at TAC in September, but truly, we can't do this fund raising event without the participation of BSOP members. Please sign up for a two to four hour shift on Friday or Saturday, October 16 and/or 17. We need tree sitters, cashiers, help with set up and take down, and many other jobs. Please look for Pat Foldi at the September 22nd meeting and get involved. Remember, involvement equals learning! Experience not required. Or you can email Pat at [patfoldi@comcast.net](mailto:patfoldi@comcast.net).

In addition to volunteering to work the event, please plan to bring at least one tree to the show. We'll need it Friday afternoon in order to stage the exhibit. There will be various sections for bonsai in different levels of training, from new efforts in nursery pots to well styled trees in show pots. The aim is to show the public how much FUN we can have in the process of raising bonsai. The only rules for trees entered in this show are that they be free of bugs and diseases, and have some identifiable degree of styling. We'll also have sections for suiseki (viewing stones) and kusamono (grass plantings). Contact Steve Leaming to let him know what you will bring. [StevenLeaming@gmail.com](mailto:StevenLeaming@gmail.com).

Tables will be available in the Marketplace for members with bonsai related businesses and for members who just have excess trees or pots to sell. There will be a charge of \$20 per table (remember, this is a fund raiser). Reserve your tables through John Thomas. [Chaparral-books@aol.com](mailto:Chaparral-books@aol.com).

Also, we are looking for donations of trees, pots, tools or other bonsai objects for door prizes, raffles and auctions. If every member donated one thing we'd have about 250 auction items! Please let Lee Cheatle know what you can donate. [leecheatle@msn.com](mailto:leecheatle@msn.com).

There is only the one general meeting (September 22) prior to this event, so don't miss this chance to get involved. The plan is to raise a little money, spread the word about bonsai, and HAVE FUN!

***Jan Hettick*** [janhettick@comcast.net](mailto:janhettick@comcast.net).

# BSOP Picnic 2015

Our summer picnic was held in the picnic shelter of the Milwaukie Center. Lee cooked tasty burgers and hotdogs. Members competed in many categories of tree contests and won prizes. People brought lots of food and had ample time to visit with friends.



Winner of most twisty competition



Car crash bonsai



Authentic Ume Tart. An unforgettable taste sensation by Alan Taft.



Head Chef, President and M.C. preparing to cook. Also other members old and new



Hot off the grill from Lee

What a spread!

# Scott's BRANCH TIPS

*BONSAI TECHNIQUE & PHILOSOPHY*

## **Case Study #2 –European Beech – in it for the long haul.**

Alan Taft and I have an arrangement of sorts. He grows trees from scratch until they are too big to handle. Then I buy them from him. At least it seems to work that way, and I have several to prove it. Last week I was in his back yard and I somehow failed to spot any new prospects. I wasn't really looking, but I think it was because he has been consistently working down the size of his collection, both in numbers and dimensions for the past few years. I too have been working on downsizing the number of trees in my collection.

But curiously, it is the medium size trees that seem to be leaving my garden. I am still entranced by large trees, and alternately, I am increasingly drawn to shohin. I didn't set out to do this, it just happened. Of course, when I say medium size, it's really a large size to most of you. I guess that means I am sort of a XXL kind of guy.

Enough digressing. Quite a few years ago I spotted a large beech in Alan's back yard. He had raised it in the ground for many years, from a seedling acquired at the Hoyt Arboretum. The tree was immense, maybe a good three or four feet wide. After some brief negotiations, I took the tree home with me. That was somewhere near 2000-2002. The early history is a bit cloudy, but as you can see by the first photo, I had already drastically pruned back the long and leggy branches back to very thick main branches, leaving just a few buds.

I was also working on some root grafts. Of course, this being my first stab at root grafts, not all of them took. They really helped improve the nebari, but also set it back in other areas, leaving a big scar when they didn't take. It is a testament to the strength of the tree that I did not have more die back of roots than I did. When I did these grafts, I cut a shallow groove in the base and aligned a seedling with it and hoped for the best. With this method, the tree can fairly easily push the seedling away and heal over.

Now I cut a nice deep groove, the depth of the whole seedling, so that it has no chance of escape. I also prefer a thread graft if I can do it, with the top of the seedling emerging below the soil line, so it's hidden. This requires using a sort of L-shaped seedling and root. Awesome technique.

I had been hosting an informal monthly study group in my garage for quite some time. During one of these sessions, I decided that it was time a good time for a defining cut on the tree. I really wanted to get the tree down in size and the existing top just wasn't doing it for me. So I handed the saw to Alan as I braced the tree. Note the piece of rubber hose protecting the new top.

The result was quite a large wound, which I have yet to fully heal, but am still working at it. After this cut, I let the top grow freely without pinching for several years so that I could both heal the cut and smooth the taper of the trunk. This was not difficult since beech are incredibly strong at the top.



2003 Many branches have been severely pruned, but not the top. Root grafts in place



Scott and Alan make the big cut on the trunk.



After the big cut and further branch pruning



2006 – The beginnings of structure

My development technique was to pinch the new growth in the spring back to two pairs of leaves. Beech will only reliably issue one set of growth in the spring. It may send up sporadic shoots in the summer, but you can never tell where they are going to appear, nor depend on them. During August, I would cut the leaves in half to let more light into the interior and slow things down a bit. Now I try to do this work in July. With leaves like these, I like to fold them lengthwise, then make a diagonal cut across the top, halving the surface area. You hardly notice that they've been cut.

In the winter, I can cut this tree back to a single bud, but I usually leave two. I don't have to worry about timing because beeches just eat up the cold weather. They thrive on it. The tree is really strong and is just now beginning to slow down, in a good way.

When you look at the photos of 2003-07, you can see that the tree is slowly developing some great ramification, but the shape is rather ugly and uneven. At this point, I shifted my strategy. Instead of just always pruning to one pair of buds, no matter what, I began to leave areas that were weaker with more buds and length for the following year. I pruned the top area back to just one bud, but let the lower areas have more.

I applied the same concept to spring pinching. I pinched back to two leaves on top, which may be reduced to just one leaf in the summer, while weaker areas were pinched to three leaves, which could be reduced later if needed. The results were that the tree started to make a more even silhouette.

I also worked on the nebari, repotting about every two or three years, carving away at the bottom to push the root developing upward. You can see a variety of pots. The newest, an orangish, cornered oval is by Ron Lang. I found it at a National Show. The roots are now evening out a bit now. In the beginning, there were just three huge roots – not ideal for bonsai. I have even gone so far as to carve the roots in half and let them heal over into what appears to be two separate roots on the surface. This method seems to be working for this tree.

You can see that I also used wire at various stages to direct growth. I highly recommend this. Everything wants to grow upward, so pulling things down was critical. But not too far. I made a decision on this tree, and all of my deciduous trees a long time ago, that I would develop them as close to their own nature as possible. This meant tossing out the traditional pine tree shape for the branching. I still want to apply wire at times, just to make adjustments.

The tree has been maturing nicely. The last two photos were what I used to submit the tree for the Artisan's Cup, which is just in another week by the time you read this. One photo naked and one fully clothed. Actually, I had to show all four sides, also. Be sure to stop by and introduce yourself to Mr. Beech. Hopefully, he will be dressed in his yellow suit.

*Scott*



2007 – Starting to fill out and the root grafts are still there.



2015 – Ready for scrutiny



2015 – All leafed out

## Bonsai Supplies from Wee Tree Farm

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Welcome to the Village



6707 SW Pine Street, Portland, OR 97223

The Bonsai Society of Portland meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month except in summer, when other group outings are arranged.

**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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Jan Hettick [janhettick@comcast.net](mailto:janhettick@comcast.net)

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Librarian: Barbara Devitt [bbd.jcgroup@yahoo.com](mailto:bbd.jcgroup@yahoo.com)

Mentorship: Lee Cheatle [leecheatle@msn.com](mailto:leecheatle@msn.com)

Shohin Kai: Jan Hettick [janhettick@comcast.net](mailto:janhettick@comcast.net)

Newsletter: Peter Pelofske [pelofskej@outlook.com](mailto:pelofskej@outlook.com)

Webmaster: Chas Martin [Chas.Martin@innovativeye.com](mailto:Chas.Martin@innovativeye.com)

Heritage Group: Manny Tavan [etavan@gmail.com](mailto:etavan@gmail.com)

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