



the **TREE LINE**

the official monthly publication of the **BONSAI SOCIETY of PORTLAND**

March 2015

Upcoming Events

March 15 Sunday 10am-1pm **Mentorship** Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr

March 24 7pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting** Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr

April 4 10-2pm **OSK** Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr

April 19 Sunday 10am-1pm **Mentorship** Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr

April 25 Saturday all day **Pacific Rim Bonsai Museum Work Party**

April 28 7pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting** Milwaukie Center, 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr

May 23-24 **Spring Show 2015**, Memorial Day Weekend, Japanese Garden

September 25-27 **The Artisans Cup** Portland Art Museum

Words From Your President

The only thing I have been happier about, the last several days (more than the weather) was the great turnout we had at our February general meeting. Over 80 members were present. We had a huge silent auction, four vendors selling pots, a raffle, a new Question and Answer table (more down below) and our very own award winning Scott Elser doing a presentation on how to select bonsai pots. It was a five ring circus of activity. Thank you to all who helped make it a success. Volunteers are what make our club successful.

Again, speaking of needing volunteers, we still have 1 committee chair that needs to be filled: educational outreach. Please contact me, or any of the other board members, if you are interested in this position.

Steve Leaming, your VP of programming, started a Question and Answer table that was up and running at the February meeting. Please feel comfortable bringing in your trees and asking the person we have at this station. If they do not know the answer they usually know who might and will let you know who it is. Hats off to Steve for getting this started so quickly.

Thanks for your trust, *Lee*

Spring Has Sprung

In January of this year I made a trip to Washington DC and one of the best things about the trip was going to the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. The trees are impressive to say the least...some of the best trees in the US. I was particularly in awe of one very special White Pine. This tree has been in training for almost 400 years, which is about the time the pilgrims landed in America. After 6 generations with the Yamaki family, the tree was donated to the museum in 1976. It is especially noteworthy that it was in Hiroshima when the atomic bomb fell in 1945, and it survived. If you are ever in Washington DC, I highly recommend taking the time to visit this amazing museum.

I hope everyone is enjoying the fantastic weather we have been having. I have been racing to get my deciduous repotting done by taking advantage of the optimal repotting time which is before the buds break open. Watering in March? What's that all about? Everything is happening so early and quickly this year, it's amazing the difference a day makes. I hope our surprising spring does not lead to a dread drought this summer....time will tell.

When visiting your favorite nursery or home center, do you ever wonder if some of those nice looking trees & shrubs would make good bonsai material? Our monthly meeting for March will help you answer this question. This meeting will feature our own Greg Brendan & Dennis Vojtilla (the three amigos minus 1) discussing what to look for when selecting raw material and what to do with it when you get it home. This will be of particular interest to those do-it-yourselfers in the club who like to create bonsai from scratch.

I'd like to thank Scott Elser for his informative program last month on selecting the right pot for your tree. I'd also like to thank the many volunteers on hand to help out with our larger than normal February meeting. Due to the success of our Show & Tell and the Question & Answer tables, those features will continue as a monthly event.

Steve Seaming, VP Programs





MENTORSHIP MEETING IN MARCH

The Mentorship group is meeting on Sunday, March 15. Set up starts at 9:30am. Class goes from 10am to 1pm. Clean-up ends at 1:30pm. We will meet at the Milwaukie Center, 5440 Kellogg Creek Drive, Milwaukie. Subject matter will be 'Spring Seasonal Tasks' and our guest speaker will be our very own BSOP Greg Brenden.

Greg is a very accomplished innovative artist who, luckily for us, is passionate about bonsai. Greg graduated with honors from art school and has done artistic endeavors from jewelry (gold and silver) to fantastic botanical models of flora, insects, coral and a myriad of other botanical modeling for prestigious museums including the Smithsonian.

This modeling took him to Arizona where he needed to collect specimens and keep them alive or as we say; a plant in a shallow container. This of course led him into the world of bonsai. Greg moved to Portland in 2006 and joined the BSOP the same year. He immediately became active within the club including 2 years as our VP of Programming.

Greg, to me, is known for his out of the box approach to art and more importantly to applying that to bonsai. The great thing about him being an accomplished artist is that what he applies is always done artistically and creates a lot of comments and discussion.

“Is that really a water meter cover Greg has that plant in?”

Please join us for a great mentorship meeting; hope to see you there. Bring your trees to work on as I have Greg's presentation slated for approximately half of the time we are meeting.

Lee

2015 PACIFIC BONSAI MUSEUM WORK PARTY

Join us on **Saturday, April 25th** to meet Aarin Packard, the new curator of the Pacific Bonsai Museum!

For about the past 10 years, BSOP has sent a crew to the Pacific Bonsai Museum (formerly Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection) to help with spring clean up of the grounds. 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, rain gear and/or sun screen. Also bring a lunch, as there is nowhere close to buy one.

We try to arrive no later than 10:00 AM, and work three or four hours with a break for lunch. Then when we're done with the grounds, we meet in the main tent where the new curator, Aarin Packard, will critique one tree for each member of the crew. This is a great way to see the bonsai collection, and as a bonus, we're usually done at the exhibit in time to visit Bonsai Northwest, only a short drive north.

If you want to car pool, we meet in the north parking lot at Elmer's Restaurant by Delta Park (Exit 306b) at 7:15 AM. If you drive direct, plan 2 ½ to 3 hours travel time. Please arrive no later than 10:00 AM. For more information, call Jan Hettick, 503-504-7760, or email at janhettick@comcast.net. There is a limit to the number of people who can go, so look for the sign-up sheet at the March 24th meeting.

Jan

Fertilizer now available for Bonsai

Several BSOP members report that the specially blended 5-4-4 organic fertilizer with mycorrhiza, formulated by the Portland Rose Society, works well for bonsai. The pelletized fertilizer comes in 20 pound bags at a price of \$16 per bag. For delivery at the March 24th meeting, please pre-order from Bill Hettick at bhettickco@comcast.net or 503-936-5629.

Jan

Mentorship 2015 Monthly Schedule (forecasted)

Please mark your calendars

March Sun 15 th	April Sun 19 th	May Sun 17 th
June Sun 14 th	July Sun 19 th	Aug Sun 16 th
Sept Sun 13 th	Oct Sun 11 th	Nov Sun 15 th
		Dec Sun 13 th

We meet from 10am to 1pm, at the Milwaukie Center, just as we have been. Access to the space starts at 9:30am. Cleanup is from 1pm to 1:30pm.

See

Oregon Shohin Kai

The March 7th meeting of Oregon Shohin Kai went well. Dennis Vojtilla gave a great presentation on Japanese maples. He demonstrated the cut and grow method of pruning these maples, and he also explained how to wire a Japanese maple. Dennis gave a repotting demonstration on one of his maple trees. He brought many examples of Shohin maples. Dennis also had trees available for the members to practice on, if they wanted to.

Thank you so much Dennis for your great work at this meeting.

Our next meeting will be held on April 4th. Hope to see you then!

Debbie



Display at entrance to Wigerts Bonsai Nursery

ADVENTITIOUS BUDS

Welcome new members: Phil Augustyn, Daniel Bateson, Vicki Chamberlain, Denise King, and Tim Mather. We look forward to seeing you at the March 24th meeting!

Scott's BRANCH TIPS

BONSAI TECHNIQUE & PHILOSOPHY

Container Selection

We had a great time at the last meeting talking about containers for bonsai. The only real problem being that we ran way short of time. Things were just heating up when we had to quit, so I thought I would elaborate a bit more on the principles that we talked about.

First of all, we talked about soil volume. Be acutely aware of your trees needs. An inch in width, and especially depth, can almost double the actual volume of soil that the roots have to occupy, or conversely, halve it. On more mature trees, the expansive root base can take up a lot of the space in a pot without really contributing to the feeding root mass of the tree. Sometimes we have only an inch or two around the edge of the pot and a little below the base to work with. We have to be respectful of the tree's needs and weigh in our abilities to care for the tree properly. That really cool pot might mean that we need to water the tree an extra time each day, but without that pot, the tree may not realize its full potential. So select carefully and know your skill level.

Next, we talked about the differences between masculine and feminine characteristics in pots. Is the pot rugged and strong or elegant and graceful? All of these are relative terms and paying attention to these characteristics will help us bring out the best in each tree. There is no magic formula, and if there were, it would just lead us to the land of boredom. Maximizing the best attributes in any tree may mean using a pot to contrast the color and shape of the bonsai, or harmonize with it. Certainly there will be some kind of difference between container and tree, and we can control the amount of difference. Some examples of contrast might be using a blue colored pot to set off orange colored blossoms. The brighter the blue, the more the contrast between pot and flowers. A dark, navy blue makes the contrast more subdued and refined. The difference is a matter of taste.

For another example, let's take a wild, collected juniper. Would you like to accentuate its movement by planting it on an equally rugged lava rock, or contrast the wildness with a stable, smooth-sided ceramic pot? Both can be invigorating and work very nicely, but you, as the artist, have to decide what kind of story you want to tell, and how you are going to tell it. The more showy the tree, whether it be colorful flowers, or fantastical deadwood, the more adventurous the pot can be to go with it. Here is where I go back to the definition of a bonsai. A tree in a tray – not a tray holding a tree. Get the difference? The emphasis should always be on the tree, or composition and not the container. We have some great containers out there now, but they can often demand all the attention. The best containers are those that work synergistically with the tree to create something greater than either could be by themselves.

After talking with some of you following the meeting, there were some thoughts that bear going over and clarifying. When thinking about pots and their overall feel, there is a hierarchy.

If you forget, just go to any website with bonsai pots and it will remind you by the way they are organized. Number one – glazed or unglazed. Seems obvious, but this is usually the first distinction. Number two – the shape of the pot. This is the way that it appears from above, not the side. Square, rectangle, oval, round, etc... And the endless variations after that. Thirdly – the side profile. Does it have straight sides, angled sides, or curved sides? So a round pot that is generally considered feminine can become very masculine with straight sides, or very sensuous with curved sides. The last part to consider is the decoration. This will include the feet - whether straight, curved, cloud, or otherwise, and any banding or ribbing. We would also consider painted or carved motifs. If you have delicate hand painting on the side of a rectangular, straight-sided pot, it is still very masculine. In fact, you might be sending mixed signals.

This brings us down to the question of taste. You as the bonsai artist get to decide what you like and don't like. Of course, you can follow all the principles I just laid out and come out with some great trees. But it may not be what really inspires you. Taste within the bonsai world ebbs and flows. I know they do in mine. What I value changes over time. Can you imagine wearing double-knit polyester pants with a silk shirt now? Or a mullet hair cut? So don't be afraid to let things change and evolve. Even the Japanese are not doing things exactly the same way they did ten or twenty years ago. And certainly they do not have our cultural heritage and references. We have different trees and a different culture, so naturally things are going to look different here. Let's not settle for just copying but creating something new.

Remember, Photoshop is your friend. And a bonsai friend is an even better friend. Don't be afraid to try a new pot with Photoshop if you have the skills. But better yet, get some help. I rely on my wife's keen eye quite a bit for selecting pots. She has great instincts and spots some of the aspects I have missed or chosen to ignore, that maybe I should reconsider. And then there are those times that I just do what I feel is correct. Matching trees to containers is one of my favorite aspects of bonsai. I am constantly amazed by the differences that a change of pot can make. It is sort of like coming in from a day of digging ditches in the mud. We take a shower and shave, do our hair, etc... But then we put on some nice clean clothes – maybe our favorite t-shirt and a pair of jeans, or maybe nice pants and a jacket for a night on the town. The clothes make the man and the pot makes the tree. Containers don't change the actual bonsai anymore than clothes change a person, but they present a different aspect of the same soul. Happy potting!

Scott

Recycle Wire

Please bring your used copper wire to the monthly meetings. Roger Case will have a five gallon bucket available to collect used copper wire to turn in for cash for the club. Take advantage of the fact that he has volunteered to do this for the club to generate income for BSOP.

How to Renew Library Materials

If you have library materials checked out and will not be at the meeting when they are due to be returned, you can renew them. Simply call or email Jan Hettick at 503-504-7760 or jan-hettick@comcast.net BEFORE THE DUE DATE and tell her you want to renew your items. That's all it takes. Just say "renew" and you are good to go!

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Welcome to the Village



BONSAI SOCIETY of PORTLAND

P. O. Box 21271
Keizer, OR 97307

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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