



the **TREE LINE**

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

December 2013

Upcoming Events

Dec 14 9am - 1pm **OSK Max's Fanno Creek Brew Pub, Tigard**

Jan 28 7-9pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting St. Marks 5415 SE Powell**

Oct 18 - 21, 2014 Intl Bonsai Art & Culture Biennale, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Some Well Deserved Thanks

I believe the two most important words in our language are "thank you." With great appreciation and humility, I want to share my thanks for some key people over the past year.

Special thanks go to our Vice President, Al Polito who has done a spectacular job this year with his monthly programs and ongoing support as my sounding board. I also enjoy his creative spirit and humor. Thank you to our Second Vice President, Margie Kinoshita who manages all membership, directories and mailings. Thank you to Robert Wofford, our rock solid Treasurer. Robert has consistently committed whatever time is necessary to assure that our organization meets legal and financial requirements of a responsible nonprofit. Thanks also to our diligent and detail oriented Secretary, Karen VunKannon who keeps us on task. Our Past President, Eileen Knox has also been a valuable source of wisdom and guidance. Collectively, this group has given me and our organization excellent leadership and countless hours of their time. I am grateful to them beyond words.

We have more to be thankful for in our volunteers. I will undoubtedly overlook someone. I apologize in advance for that. Our most dependable and visible volunteer is Jan Hettick seems to be everywhere. In addition to her leadership for Shohin Kai, she co-chaired our search for a new location and followed up by leading the work party for the new library shelving. Add auction data base support and library data base management to her list of activities. When does she have time to attend her bonsai?

Thanks also to Barbara DeVitt for maintaining our excellent library, another detail oriented task. Our library works so seamlessly, we don't often think about it. But, the library is one of our greatest resources as an educational organization.

Thanks to both Keith Wingfield for his incredible commitment to our Mentorship Program for the past few years, and to Lee Cheatele, our new Mentorship Chair. This is another essential function of our educational mission. We are fortunate to have such talent and willingness to share their passion for bonsai.

Another transition this year came to our Heritage Program. Bob Laws, founder and champion of the program has passed the reigns off to Manny Tavan. We know that this program is

the primary reason a few of our members continue to participate. Thanks to both Bob and Manny for keeping this service active.

Every month Peter Pelofske creates another edition of our Tree Line. He tactfully prods me to submit my entries. Then he quietly but dependably produces each edition. Thanks Peter!

No meeting is complete without refreshments. Thanks to Patty Myrick for showing up every month with an assortment of treats. Again, it's another task that we often take for granted. But, Patty's dependable volunteer spirit keeps the coffee warm and the plates full. Thanks Patty!

Perhaps our most visible annual event is our show at the Portland Japanese Garden. A lot of volunteers make this possible, but Scott Elser is our artistic director in charge of coordinating the display and organizing the critique. This is yet another event where everything appears to go so smoothly it looks effortless. I know it is far from effortless. Thank you Scott for your high standards and inspiration.

This past year, we have renewed our relationship with the Japanese Garden and engaged Steve Bloom, the CEO, to participate in some of our discussions about the future of bonsai in the region. Steve is a visionary with boundless energy. Thanks to Steve for helping us think outside the pot.

There are others who find it hard to say "No" when asked. And some who don't even need to be asked to volunteer. Thanks to all. And one final thank you to our members. Your ongoing participation helps us share our knowledge with newcomers. As we move closer to our 50th anniversary in 2015, we have built quite a legacy. We are a very diverse group with many opinions, ideas and insights. Our common love of bonsai transcends all of that. My hope for the new year is that more members will find gratification in volunteer roles. That's the only thing that keeps us moving forward.

Be well. Have a great holiday! See you all January 28th at our new location: St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 5415 SE Powell Blvd., Portland OR 97206. See New Location Update for directions.

Chas Martin, President

NEW LOCATION UPDATE

Our January 28th meeting as well as our Shohin Kai and Mentorship meetings will be held at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 5415 SE Powell Boulevard. About two miles from I-205 and 3 miles east of Ross Island Bridge.

Parking is on the north side (back side) of the church. Turn north on SE 55th at the An Dong Oriental Market. There is ample parking in the large parking lot, but be considerate of others and park efficiently. A second entry on SE 54th Avenue is often blocked by a chain.

Meeting Room - Turn right as you enter the church and go up the stairs at the end of the hallway. Acoustics in the room are excellent, so if you want to visit during meetings, take it out into the hallway.

Elevator – There is a small elevator near the church entry. Press the call button; wait for the elevator to arrive and the door to open BY ITSELF. Do not try to move the door, either to hurry it open or closed. There is a maximum load of 3 persons and 750 pounds. Once inside, WAIT FOR THE DOOR TO CLOSE, then you can press the button for the second floor. The inside

door will close and the elevator will move. Once on the second floor the door will again OPEN BY ITSELF. If you try to speed the door up by pushing or pulling on the door, it may jam, then you'll be stuck! So don't do it!

Carts – There are two carts for moving materials. Both should be by the front door.

Restrooms – There is one unisex restroom on the main floor at the foot of the west stairwell, and a larger restroom in the basement, near the elevator. That one can be reached using the elevator or the stairs at the end of the main-floor ramp.

Meeting Check-in – The Registration Desk and Hospitality Table will be in the hallway on the second floor. Show and Tell tables will be in the hallway, along with raffle tables.

Library – Be sure to check out the new library storage cabinets. For the first time in years, all 889 items, books, videos and magazines, will be accessible. Take advantage of the “new” library software and check out some items. Note: All items currently checked out are due back at the next meeting, but can be renewed easily if you can't get there.

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 e mail Jan Hettick at 503-504-7760 or janhettick@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!

Life in the Heart of December Darkness

As I write this, we're in the middle of the coldest December in Portland memory. I decided to put a couple more trees in the garage tonight and it took a little bang with a sledge to break them free of the grass. Don't worry, they were in plastic pots!

As this year winds down, I'm looking forward to warmer weather (it really can't get any colder!) and a great year of programs in 2014. Our January business meeting will be paired up with some other fun things, which I'm still planning. There will be a large Heritage Program-related plant sale, and there may also be a pot swap. And of course a State of the Club presentation from the board... IN OUR NEW FACILITY AT ST. MARKS! Yay! It's really great how trees get to change hands at our auction, Heritage sales, meetings, and picnics. I picked up a freebie clump of birches at the BSOP summer picnic that I had a blast working on in the dead of winter, creating a copse of trees like you'd find in the Boreal Forest. It's really great to have material to practice on when there's not much else to do on a winter night. So if you want a great deal on some interesting material that would be fun to make into good bonsai, look no further than our own meetings.

So looking past January, we will have the return of Ryan Neil and Scott Elser repotting their Douglas-firs in February, and a visit from none other than Peter Tea in March. If you don't know who Peter is, he's another member of the new breed of bonsai professionals graduating from apprenticeships in Japan. Peter has a very informative blog, and promises to be an engaging presenter.

And looking back, what a great year of programs we had. We learned a great deal from Ryan and Scott, John Thompson, Jim Barrett, Bob Shimon, Ted Matson, the Three Amigos... Even though our holiday party didn't escape the chill that gripped the whole region, we are a fortunate club indeed full of warm and engaging people, and awesome trees.

As solstice nears the corner, I sure am looking forward more light, more rain, more warmth, and to spring! I'm guessing I'll find a pot for that birch from a club member...

Stay warm and watch for the light,

AL



Freebie birch,
before and after some logging

Oregon Shohin Kai

Oregon Shohin Kai meets on the **SECOND** Saturday this month, December 14, 2013. Note the hour earlier meeting time. We need to be out of the space early for a party that starts at 2:00). **All BSOP members are welcome.**

The program this month will focus on wiring, led by Dennis Vojtilla. Dennis will bring in some of his grapes and let us practice wiring on them. This material is perfect for serious wiring practice, because they have great character but not too many tiny branches to get in the way. I've done a few (4 to be exact!) and can assure you I learn from each one. We will learn how to identify the plant's front, how to plan the future design of the bonsai, and most important, how to plan our wiring to accomplish our design.

As usual you may bring whatever type or size of tree(s) you want to work on or that needs your attention. **However**, with our plants safely tucked in for the cold weather, working on Dennis' grapes is a great opportunity to improve our skills. With all of us working on similar material it is easier for Dennis to teach general wiring techniques rather than styling a certain

particular tree. An added advantage – you don't need to pack a lot of trees or tools. Just bring wire cutters, two pairs of pliers and some chopsticks. Yes, I said TWO pairs of pliers. One for each hand (really!).

The meeting will again be held in Tigard at Max's Fanno Creek Brew Pub. **Remember the time change; come at 9:00 AM.** Be aware that light is a little weak in Max's meeting room, so bring a lamp. You can bring a lunch or take advantage of Max's great menu.

Also, it is time again to think about attending the California Shohin Convention January 31 through February 2, 2014. The location is Santa Nella, California, which is on I-5 about 100 miles south of Sacramento. Held at the Hotel Mission de Oro, a "quaint" little old motel right on I-5, the Shohin Convention is unique. It is a no-frills event, designed to keep the cost down. Full registration is only \$110. Workshops are very affordable, generally priced at the cost of the material because the artists donate their time. And they have a *divine* marketplace! A copy of the registration form is attached to this email. If you want to attend be sure to get it sent right away. It has to arrive before January 5 to qualify for the workshop lottery. If you have questions, give me (Jan Hettick) a call.

DIRECTIONS:

**MAX'S FANNO CREEK BREW PUB
12562 SW MAIN STREET, TIGARD, OREGON 97223
(503) 624-9400**

Take I-5 or Hwy. 26 to Hwy. 217. Take the Tigard exit from Hwy. 217. Travel southwest through Tigard and cross the railroad overpass. About .8 mile from Hwy. 217 **turn LEFT onto Main Street.** A landmark is a big bright blue warehouse for George Moreland Plumbing on the northeast corner of the intersection. Max's is maybe 300 feet from the intersection on the south side of the street. You can park on the street or in back. The back parking lot is accessed from the alley next to the building housing the paint store and karate studio. Use either back door – the one on the right enters directly into the meeting room.

Questions? Contact Jan Hettick at 503-504-7760 or email at janhettick@comcast.net

Jan



Scott's Tips Second in the series .

Buying Time

As I continue along on my bonsai journey, I find myself enjoying many more trees than I used to. That might lead you to believe that my criteria for bonsai have somewhat softened, but I think you'd find that quite the opposite is true. My standards for my own bonsai are always increasing to follow my bonsai knowledge. But the knowledge that I gain changes my perception of what a quality bonsai really is. One characteristic that has really been driven home in the past couple of years is the value of age, and why the Japanese put such esteem on it. Certainly as things become older, they become more rare, and thus more valuable. Or maybe they just become junk. We don't tend to revere age in our society the way that many others do. We are about youth. We tend to ignore the wisdom of our elders and go for the quick fix. But when it comes to bonsai, things should be different.

I have always liked larger trees, as many of you well know. But growing them big takes time. Sometimes centuries. I am growing a bunch of deciduous and flowering trees in the ground in my back yard. The temptation is to let them grow really fast and really thick. In reality, if I do that, I get these straight segments of trunk that are joined with harsh angles and no transitions. The trees look very artificial, very obvious, and decidedly uninteresting. You've seen a hundred like them before. The roots also grow thick and useless. So I must balance the rapid growth in the ground with regular and strategic pruning to get satisfying results. And it IS happening.

If you have heard our excellent recent speakers, John Thompson and Ted Matson, they both commented on the same idea. We have to use some wire, a little technique, and a lot of patience. I am always delighted at this time of year to check out the progress of the trees after all of the leaves have dropped. It's like unwrapping my Christmas presents a bit early. Each year, I am slowly managing to dig a few up and get them into pots. The trouble is that I really want them two or three times the size – which means another five or ten years in the ground, then another five years to develop a decent branch structure before I could even think about it as a showable tree. More time. But there is another way!

You can shorten the timeline by letting someone else do the work. You can buy a tree that has already been developed, whether it's a raw trunk, or fully developed, you'll be years ahead. What you are really buying is not a tree, but time. Time is our most valuable asset – we give it to employers and customers in exchange for money. So hopefully, when you turn that cash back into trees, you are buying quality time. Years that someone spent carefully and knowledgeably developing the tree.

Sometimes I buy a tree just because it is old. I will have to start over with the styling and might have to develop new branches, but what I am buying is a thirty year head start on the bark of the trunk. With age also comes character. Branches die, insects invade, the dog chews on it, birds pick at its roots. All manner of events contribute to the persona of our trees and it is the tree's visual record of these events that makes them interesting. Our job is to bring out the unique parts of each tree and maximize it's potential, whether it's a new seedling or an ancient monarch.

Scott

Holiday Party 2013

The BSOP annual Holiday Party was held at Oaks Park Pavilion. It was well attended in spite of record cold. Folks placed bids on silent auction items and examined trees for the oral auction. After some food, winners for the silent auction were announced as tables closed. The oral auction included a wide variety of plant material and some bidders got real bargains.



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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.



"Ascending Dragon" Shimpaku Juniper (grafted on Sierra Juniper trunk) Boon



Trident maple, 2011 Takian ten, Kyoto

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Welcome to the Village



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

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

5415 SE Powell Boulevard, Portland OR

Parking behind the church on 55th Ave.

Visitors are always welcome!

Board of Directors

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