



the **TREE LINE**

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

March 2013

Upcoming Events

March 16 2-5pm **Mentorship Meeting** St. Philip Neri 2408 SE 16th Ave

March 21 6:30-8:30pm **Penjing Discussion Group** Mt. Tabor Middle School, Room 213, 5800 SE 58th Ave. Portland

March 26 7-9pm **BSOP Meeting** St. Philip Neri 2408 SE 16th Ave

April 6 10-2pm **OSK** Elite Care Center, 12353 SW Grant Ave, Tigard

April 18-20 **2013 Intl Bonsai Convention** Yangzhou, China

April 27 7:15am **Pacific Rim Work Party** Delta Park Elmer's

BSOP Meeting featuring Jim Barrett,

March 26 7-9pm St. Philip Neri 2408 SE 16th Ave

The trees have spoken: Spring is here.

If we were expecting an ordinary demo for our February meeting, we got more than we bargained for with the inspiring double-header of Ryan Neil and Scott Elser, who each brought Douglas-firs to work on. Ryan regaled us with stories of his apprenticeship and lessons in both botany and soil science, while Scott shared with us the amazing Indian plum he layered with us last year as well as several other native species projects from his benches. Two excellent Douglas-fir trees became bonsai (well, Scott didn't quite finish the enormous project all in one sitting). And what a great raffle!

Our March 26 meeting will feature one of the United States' premier bonsai teachers, Jim Barrett of Arcadia, California (near Pasadena). Jim has been teaching bonsai since about 1960—much longer than almost anyone you will meet has been doing bonsai. That makes Jim an incredible resource and one of the most experienced teachers in the West. He will be conducting a teaching-oriented deciduous tree demo for the club.

March bonsai tip

By now repotting season is in full swing. Roots are on the move and even if leaves haven't appeared, they're sucking the moisture from the soil. So on those days when it hasn't rained much or at all, don't forget to water!

April meeting preview

Do you ever wonder how or wish you could have really good bonsai like the kind you see in shows or some books? It all begins with finding good stock to work with. With good bonsai stock, which is readily available here in the Portland area, you are well on your way to having excellent trees. If your bonsai trees seem to lack that spark of magic or beauty that really hooks you, it's probably because you didn't start out with excellent material in the first place. So how do you know good material from marginal material? And can you take marginal material and make it magical? And does great material need to cost a lot of money? Answers, in order: Come to the April meeting, yes, and no. (Some of the nicest trees I've seen in Dennis Vojtilla's collection, including the birch that took top deciduous honors at last year's BSOP show and the gorgeous flowering plum in our inspiration area last month, began their bonsai lives as five-gallon nursery trees.) So don't miss it!

Stay thirsty,

Al Polito

Public Relations Opportunity

There are many interesting activities within our club that could attract the attention of new potential members. BSOP can benefit greatly from some basic public relations activity. If you have the experience and some spare time, please contact Chas Martin.

Library Highlights

Where can you find an exciting display of original, contemporary bonsai stands made by American woodworkers? Where can you see the freshness of bonsai pots by American potters? Where can you find professionally photographed native American species presented as excellent bonsai? Don't hurry—take your time perusing the **2012 Third U. S. National Bonsai Exhibition** book by William Valavanis. This exciting addition to the BSOP Library was generously donated by Scott Elser, who also autographed this copy. His authoritative black pine won the National Award. His wonderful dancing hemlock and Dennis Vojtilla's vibrant Washington Hawthorn are also among the many stunning photographs. One of the most exciting things about this exhibition book is the wide variety of native species represented.

Another happy moment occurs when you are turning the pages and noticing how often the names of local bonsai professionals Michael Hagedorn and Ryan Neil appear in the captions. Quite a few of these first-rank trees were styled by them. So, the publication of this book is another exciting moment for the Portland bonsai community. Hurry to put your name on the reserve list for this gem. Even if you have to wait in line, it will be worth the wait.

Karen VunKannon

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.

Pacific Northwest Bonsai Convention 2013

We have the convention information up on our website here www.inlandbonsai.com , and we have set it up so that people can register on line, so no need to print and mail registration forms. There is still a version of the registration form that can be printed and mailed for those who prefer to do that.

As you know we have an exciting lineup of guest artists, including Robert Steven, Ryan Neil, Michael Hagedorn and David DeGroot.

Our workshops feature excellent material, and a couple of them are already filled after the early registrations at last fall's convention. People who want to take a workshop should register soon while space is still available.

Also this year we are planning a world class exhibit, and as an incentive for registrants to submit their best trees to the exhibit we are offering cash awards in various categories. The awards so far include:

First Runner Up:

300 from Inland Empire Bonsai Society
Gift Certificate from Telperion Farms

Second Runner Up:

\$200 from Inland Empire Bonsai Society
Gift Certificate from Telperion Farms

Wee Tree Farm Best Deciduous Tree in Show Award:

\$200 from Wee Tree Farms

Telperion Farms Best Pine in Show Award:

\$200 from Telperion Farms

Other Awards:

Sculpture from Legendary Art

More awards are being added, so check the website for updates.

Roger Snipes, Convention Chair

Bonsai Fertilizer If you are looking for a good quality, easy-to-use fertilizer for your bonsai, consider this: Several BSOP members report good results with the 5-4-4 organic fertilizer with mycorrhizae which is produced by the Portland Rose Society. Fertilizer sales start again at the March 26 meeting, and will continue in April and May. The pelletized fertilizer comes in 20 lb bags and will cost \$16 per bag. Please contact Bill Hettick to pre-order, so he knows how much to bring to each meeting. He will not be bringing excess bags for sale. Contact Bill at bhettickco@comcast.net, or 503-936-5629.

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 Barbara Devitt (bbd.jcgroup@yahoo.com or 503-764-8242) 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!

UPDATES FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Take Our Survey. Help Shape BSOP's Future

At our January meeting, I announced that we would be conducting a survey to learn more about member goals and needs. With help from Al Polito, we have prepared a 10-question survey to gather opinions.

Your feedback is important. We'll use survey responses to improve the format and content of our programs, workshops, events and resources. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey. Printed copies will also be available at our next meeting. We hope to collect and compile our results by the end of March so we can make plans for the year.

[Take the survey now.](http://www.portlandbonsai.org/survey) www.portlandbonsai.org/survey

BSOP to be Honored by Portland Japanese Garden

Earlier this month we received the following note from Stephen Bloom, CEO of the Portland Japanese Garden:

“2013 is an important milestone for the Portland Japanese Garden as we celebrate our 50th anniversary! As we look back at the past 50 years, it is apparent that we have had a few partners in the community who have time and time again walked hand in hand on this incredible journey which has realized the Garden as perhaps the finest in the world outside of Japan. Indeed Bonsai Society of Portland is one of those critical partners. In honor of all that you have done for, and with, the Portland Japanese Garden, we would like to publically recognize your contributions to the Garden over these many years.”

The award will be presented at their annual meeting on April 15th at 6pm at the Garden Pavilion. Kashintei-kai, and Ikebana International are also being honored. All BSOP members are welcome to attend. Please be advised that parking will be extremely tight.

Monthly Raffle Policy

In January 2012, the Board discussed distribution of proceeds from the raffle held at our monthly meetings. The funds had gone to the Mentorship program in the past. The board decided to begin a monthly rotation to distribute the funds for support of the Mentorship Program, Library and Shohin Kai. Other groups within our organization may also apply to the board to share in this small fund. Each participating group is responsible for organizing the raffle and selling tickets. Raffle items are donated by members or given to us by outside individuals who no longer need them.

Chas Martin

2013 Pacific Rim Work Party

This year the Pacific Rim Work Party is scheduled for **Saturday, April 27, 2013**. If you did not sign up at the last BSOP meeting, contact Jan Hettick. There are still a few spaces left.

The purpose of the visit is to help get the grounds of the bonsai exhibit ready for increased public activity during Spring and Summer. Occasionally a couple of people might get to work on the trees, but our primary responsibility is the entry path and grounds; pulling weeds, trimming landscape plants and the like.

Please bring your own favorite gardening tools, such as loppers, pruning shears, buckets, gloves, knee pads, rain gear and/or sun screen. Also please bring your 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 for a critique by Dave DeGroot. Each person is encouraged to bring one tree for Dave's analysis, instructions and styling tips. This is also a great way to see the bonsai collection, and Bonsai Northwest is only a short drive north.

To car pool, meet in the north parking lot at Elmer's Restaurant by Delta Park (Exit 306b) at 7:15 AM. To 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.

Jan

March Mentorship News

It is that time of the season when the trees are waking up; garages and work areas have that smell of musty, damp soil; finger nails are dirty and shoulders are sore as we race Mother Nature to get all of our trees repotted, trimmed and spruced up from the winter dormant period and ready for a new growing season. If you did not get your pots scrubbed off in the fall, all of the debris off of the soil and a good spraying for overwintering bugs and diseases then our March Mentorship program is the one for you. It will not be long before those white, grey and black hairy molds and fungi start to sprout and little green, white, black or red sucking insects begin to show up to feast on that delicate (and tasty) new foliage your trees are pushing out and you are contemplating what to do. The right application of pesticides, fungicides and/or insecticides at just the right time can save a lot of frustration (and damage to your trees) later in the season.

Our March Mentorship Program will address all of these concerns and get you and your trees off to a safe and healthy start. Our Presenter will be BSOP member Lyle Feilmeier. With our typically long, very wet springs and our cool, very short summers, if you are like me, you probably experience plant disease and pest problems you had not experienced before. Things like black spot, leaf rust, powdery mildew, wooly scale, brown scale and more. In past years, we have covered this topic in the fall as part of the Winter Preparation program for our trees. This year, in consultation with Lyle, we determined to present the program in the Spring, expecting that control and prevention now, would be more beneficial. Lyle is the man to help us identify the problems and apply the right solutions. We will be discussing techniques of application from surface and contact sprays, to soil drenches (for a systemic approach) and all things in between as well as how to identify specific pests or problems. I hope you will be able to join us. If you have a particular disease or pest problem you would like identified, bring a sample of material with you and we will do our best to identify it. Be sure to put your sample in a sealed Zip Loc baggie so we do not pass the problem around on our hands, clothing or other plants.

Our program is scheduled for Saturday, March 16, 2013 at St. Phillip Neri Church from 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.. I hope to see you there.

Best Regards,

Keith Wingfield

Oregon Shohin Kai

Thank you Dennis Vojtilla for an excellent, well planned program on Shohin maples on March 2nd! Dennis started with a well organized hand-out, and had a couple hundred examples of a couple dozen varieties of maples. Well, maybe not that many, but lots and lots of examples and a few for sale. We learned the differences between the species, and how to pinch, prune, and pot, as well as air layering, fertilizing... everything we need to know about maples. Including what NOT to use for Shohin (paperbark and hedge maples are two). After the lecture, Dennis circled the room giving one-on-one care and styling tips for individual members' trees.

Apex Bonsai was present as well, with some maple starts, tools, wire and soil for sale. Pretty handy, having a bonsai store come to the meetings! Thank you Steve. We hope to see you again next month.

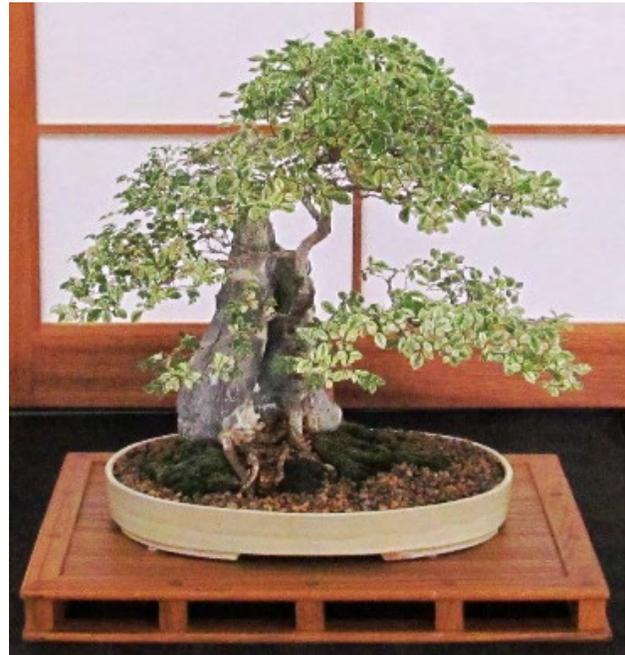
The next meeting will be **Saturday, April 6, 2013**, between 10 am and 2 pm. Our speaker will be Scott Elser, who will be assisting us with our conifers. As you may know, the highest tree on the mountain (or Shohin stand) should be a well developed conifer, and Scott is the man to help us create those powerful little trees. Bring your conifers, both raw and refined, and learn how to take them to the next level. As always, feel free to bring any other kinds of trees that need your attention, along with your repotting tools and supplies.

For the time being we will continue to meet at the Tigard Elite Care facility, with its large, well lit barn. We are, however, considering changing to another location. If anyone has a suggestion, please let me know. Directions to Elite Care's Tigard facility may be found on the OSK page of the BSOP website, www.portlandbonsai.org or watch for an email blast the week before the meeting. Feel free to email or call if you have questions: Jan Hettick, janhettick@comcast.net, 503-504-7760.

Jan



Colorado Blue Spruce BCI 2012



Variegated Corkbark Elm BCI 2012

Annual Spring Show at Japanese Garden

Are your trees starting to wake up about now, and maybe a few are still sleeping in a bit? All the while you are coaxing them out of their slumber saying, "We don't have much time. You have to get dressed soon! The show starts in just a month and a half! That's right, our annual Spring Show is coming a bit earlier this year - a whole month, in fact. This year's exhibit at the Japanese Gardens will take place on Saturday and Sunday, April 20th and 21st.

This means that we may have a different mix of trees to show at that time of year, especially the flowering varieties. We'll get to enjoy some of those Wisteria that just seem to have troubles holding on till May, and then there will be some trees like beeches that might not have leafed out yet at all. This should provide some real opportunities to get new trees into the spotlight. Some of you have trees that were especially prepared for our convention show, so they should be in tip top shape for this one. I hope that you have been working on the rest of your trees this past year and getting them ready to show. We already have a few new folks displaying trees for the first time. Send me a note along with some pictures if you would like to show a tree or two, bonsaielser@gmail.com, or call me at 503-803-5343. The hours will be expanded this year also, with the exhibit open from 9am to 6pm both days.

Be sure to join us Saturday evening for our annual Critique of the exhibit. We will start at 6:30 with a potluck of finger foods/snacks and desserts. Bring your favorite munchies and spend an hour perusing the great exhibit. The club will provide non-alcoholic drinks, but you may bring your own alcohol to share, just no staining liquids, like red wines. At 7:30, Mike Hagedorn will once again take the reins for a review of the exhibit, talking about bonsai art and technique. I hope that you can make it. The price is still only ten dollars. Get your ticket at the next meeting.

As usual, we will be needing volunteers to help staff the show with set-up and take-down, as well as tree sitters, tour docents, and demonstration artists. Pat Foldi is handling the sign-ups for all volunteers, and the spots are filling up. Tour talks will be given at 11:00am, 1:00 and 3:00 pm. We will have continuous demonstrations on the back deck. I hope that you are all able to attend the show at least once to enjoy the fruits of our labors.

Scott Elser



Ponderosa Pine BCI 2012

In Our Own Backyard...Chas Martin, BSOP President

The greatest gift you can give yourself is the gift of your own life. You can give yourself permission to pursue creativity with passion, to take risks, and to bring those around you into the circle of your own creativity. Chas Martin seems to have done just that with great success and with joy. Trained as a commercial artist, he was attracted to painting in acrylics, oils, and watercolors. He also explored still photography and sculpture. Bonsai is one more pursuit that blends his artistic talent with his love of nature. He has found ways to use his artistic talent that make earning a living an original and exciting endeavor.

While he spends days at a time out in the wilderness above 5,000 feet painting landscapes, he is a naturally warm, outgoing person who enjoys networking and entertaining. So backpacking can often be shared with family or friends. Never the misanthropic reclusive artist, Chas enjoys connecting with people through teaching, which he has done in the past. He currently combines education with sales in his part time position at Blick Art Materials in Portland. This gives him the chance to exercise his creative problem solving abilities with a wide range of people. Innovation and problem solving are also the focus of his own firm, InnovativEye. He uses his creativity to rethink problems and solutions, awakening creative thinking in others. He consults with companies on both regional and national scale.

As his career in the corporate world winds down, Chas has found more time to to paint; but true to form, he has balanced solitary creative work by connecting with people through his participation in BSOP. He has been the club's webmaster for over two years and now serves as President.

During a discussion of painting, Chas described two kinds of approaches—studio painting and “*en plein air*” (direct painting “in the open air”). Studio work involves careful, thoughtful planning, methodical development of composition and color towards achievement of the long-term goal. It may involve periodic re-working. This is not unlike the long-term development of a bonsai specimen. *En plein air* painting is the creative experience of painting within the present moment: the artist seeking to capture a landscape outdoors must work quickly before the light and weather change. The goal is to capture the energy of a point in time. The artist must immerse himself in the moment. It sounds like an almost zen experience of the movements of the brush and the perception of light and color. Chas works in watercolor which presents special challenges—like when it starts to rain! Another challenge is that the true colors only reveal themselves when dry. So, results are not usually apparent for hours or days.

This approach also parallels an aspect of bonsai. When the viewer engages with a tree, the experience is in that immediate present moment, under specific lighting and environmental conditions. Also many bonsai artists report that time seems to fall away as they immerse themselves in the immediacy of working on a tree. Although they work with a mental vision of the intended result, they have to finish and then step back to see what the final product has become.

Another connection between Chas's fine art and bonsai is the fact that the landscapes he loves to paint are those that are the original environment for the collected bonsai specimens many artists treasure. It is as if Chas is collecting not the trees themselves, but the home world of the bonsai trees. Imagine one of his landscapes replacing the traditional Japanese scroll behind a specimen in an exhibit—it would be a truly valid and original American form of bonsai display.

Chas's first interest in bonsai was sparked by the discovery of a stunted western hemlock growing beside his house. Like many bonsai novices, he began by reading, only to discover the depth and complexity of the subject. He was also intrigued by bonsai he saw at the arboretum when he was a student at Pratt Institute in New York City. He never made the connection between art and horticulture until he took a workshop with Boon Manakativipart, who told him never to touch a tree until he had drawn it repeatedly. That was when he realized that business, painting and bonsai share a common process. Vision precedes strategy. Strategy determines tactics.

During inclement weather, he paints the trees in his greenhouse. Painting has improved his bonsai and vice-versa. He can see more in the trees when he is painting. Chas views his bonsai as works eternally in progress. He does not aspire to show them; he just enjoys working on them and watching the changes over time.

Chas brings unique experience and skills to the post of BSOP President. He brings ideas based on his background in the corporate world. He also knows that in any organization, people always come first. So decisions on new projects will only happen when he has engaged with the members. Chas is a thoughtful listener and values creative ideas from all who are involved. His first step will be to survey the membership. New programs to be developed should bring BSOP members reachable challenges and incremental rewards. Chas wants to see people who begin bonsai keep making progress in the art. Education is the central focus of his efforts. His goal is to see more people become actively involved beyond participation in monthly meetings. He would like to see more of the members taking and/or giving workshops, helping to plan or taking part in club events, and most importantly, introducing their friends to the world of bonsai.

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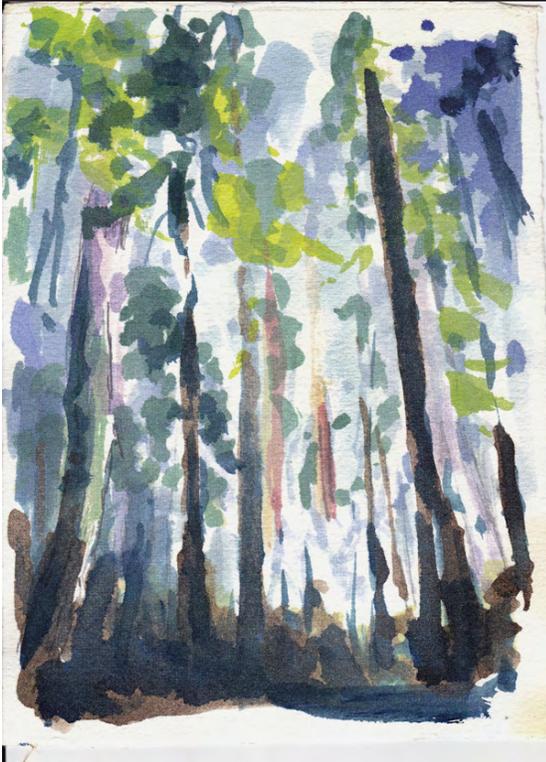
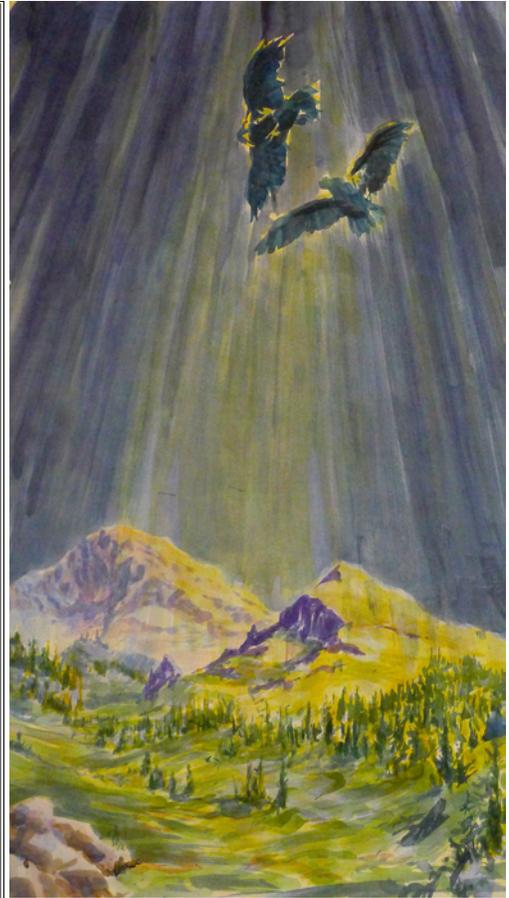


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Some pictures of Chas and his artwork, on canvas and in pots.



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

St. Phillip Neri Parish

2408 SE 16th Avenue, Portland OR

Northeast corner of SE Division and 16th Avenue

Visitors are always welcome!

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