



the **TREE LINE**

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

February 2012

February 18 - 1 to 5pm **Mentorship Meeting**
materials charge, RSVP(503) 848-2638,
Wilcox residence, Aloha

February 28 - 7 to 9pm
BSOP Monthly Meeting
St. Philip Neri, 2408 SE 16th Ave. Portland

March 3 - 10am to 2pm **OSK Meeting**
Elite Care Center, 53 SW Grant Ave, Tigard

March 17 - 2 to 5pm **Mentorship Meeting**
St. Philip Neri, 2408 SE 16th Ave. Portland

March 27 - 7 to 9pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting**
St. Philip Neri, 2408 SE 16th Ave. Portland

April 14, 2012, Saturday **Pacific Rim Work Party**

September 14-16, 2012 - **PNBCA Convention**
Hilton Hotel, Vancouver, WA

Back by popular demand...

The 'Three Amigos' ride again! Dennis Vojtilla, Lee Cheatle and myself take center stage for our second annual potting/re-potting extravaganza! Al Polito will be on hand to be our MC this year, and I've got Lyle Feilmeier to do video projection of the action to a screen onstage.

We will each take on a different aspect of the potting process like last year with different trees this time and I will also touch on 'Mochikomi' a Japanese term that refers to the years in a bonsai pot that a bonsai has been maintained. This program is designed for wide appeal from beginner to advanced and will be recorded for viewing on the web site and also the library.

Also back by popular demand will be our raffle, which has been on hiatus since the Holiday Party last year. Be sure to track Al Polito down to purchase your tickets.

New this spring--Rose Society fertilizer with mycorrhizae will be available for sale from Bill Hettick for \$16/20# bag. That's enough organic fertilizer to keep most small bonsai collections happy and healthy the entire growing season. I'm excited to see the results I get with the addition of the mycorrhizae. I'm still pleasantly surprised by the effectiveness of this product and the ease of application--no more wasted time with the smell and the flies of making your own!

I'd like to follow up on an announcement I made at last month's meeting regarding a nursery crawl I'm organizing for Saturday, March 10th, to Bosky Dell Natives located in West Linn. I'll send a clipboard for sign-up around at the beginning of our meeting this month before the program starts. Please sign up if you're interested in working with native species as Laurie has nearly everything that grows in the Portland area and the Northwest in general. Even species of native orchids that would be otherwise illegal to collect. I'll be on hand to suggest what I've had success with in my own collection. Depending on the interest, we may extend the day by potting our finds up that afternoon or the next day. I'd like to see more people working with native species in the club. As Kathy Shaner told me it's exactly what the Japanese did and look at what they've achieved with their natives. Trees can be our teachers too!

I've launched a new blog about my art which also includes bonsai I'd like to invite you to check out: brendenstudio.wordpress.com I'm still exploring all the features and learning how to post there, so don't expect great things at first. Click on the pictures to see the full image as the right side bar conceals some of the picture. I've got a thread of progress pictures of a collected cottonwood I styled last month that may be of interest to some of you. Constructive comments are always welcome! I'm looking forward to seeing you all at the meeting

Greg

FEBRUARY MENTORSHIP NEWS

(Spring is on the Way, Are you ready?)

As I am writing this article for the Tree Line, the sun is shining, the temperature is 50 degrees, the birds are singing in the yard, (the grass needs mowing - so not all happy thoughts) and my trees are showing signs of waking up. What that means is it will shortly be time for the annual chores of cleaning pots, trimming and repotting trees, trying to remember all of those Bonsai chores and goals I was going to get done over the winter and did not make as much progress on as planned, and setting up for another season of Bonsai fun.

CAUTION: If you have not checked and inspected on your trees recently, be sure to do so. With the weather forecast for the next week to 10 days being for clear skies, sunny days with temperatures in the low 50's and night time temperatures above freezing, our trees will begin waking up from their winter slumber. Bud swell can happen quickly, so you need to be alert to the activity going on within the trees. This is especially true if your winter storage location has a southern exposure which allows the trees to receive the sunlight for most of the day. Also if you have used a dark colored mulch to surround and cover your pots for winter protection, the exposure to sunlight will allow the mulch collect and store the solar heat from the sun, increasing the temperature in the root zone and getting the roots active. Also, this is a good time to do one last winter spraying of you trees. I use a combination Fungicide-Miticide-Insecticide spray. This takes care of any unwanted little creatures or their eggs that might have survived over the winter or any spores, fungus, or other leaf diseases that might still be hanging around.

At our February Program, we prepare the soils we will be using for our trees this year, so naturally our March program will be on Repotting (funny how that worked out). The class will be conducted on Saturday, March 17th, at St. Phillip Neri Church. We will be discussing the essentials of repotting (soil replacement, pot size, root pruning, and where appropriate bare rootling) and using the repotting process to determine the safest and most appropriate training procedures to apply to the tree for the current growing season and future seasons. Everyone is invited to attend and bring a couple of trees to work on or get assistance with. I am still looking for a couple of more experienced members to assist with this class.

Until our next Society meeting, my best regards to all of you and best wishes for a successful 2012 Bonsai season.

Keith

Library Highlights

The process of re-potting and root-pruning is most often undertaken in the spring. Doing it properly is critical to the health of the tree. This may be the reason that the professional journals do so many articles on the subject. A quick glance at the Periodical Index revealed approximately 50 different articles in the library on this topic. Since our February general meeting will have a re-potting program, the librarians will put out as many of these articles as we can on the display table then. This would be an excellent opportunity to check out one to review before we reach the all-too-busy spring season. Don't forget to visit the library table at next month's meeting!

If you are interested in how to re-pot a particular species, our library has articles on the following types of trees:

- **Acer palmatum (Japanese maple), Bonsai Today 1999-Nov-Dec, Vol. 64, 1995-Nov-Dec Vol. 40, International Bonsai 1993-3, Bonsai Today 2003-Nov-Dec Vol. 88**
- **Jasmine, Bonsai Today 1995-Nov-Dec Vol. 40**
- **Apricot, Bonsai Today 2003-Nov-Dec Vol. 88**
- **Beech, Bonsai Today 2001-Nov-Dec Vol. 76**
- **Cork Bark Japanese maple, Bonsai Today 2003-Nov-Dec Vol. 88**
- **Cork Elm, ABS Journal 2005 Vol.39/3**
- **Crabapple, International Bonsai 1994-1**
- **Fig, International Bonsai 2000-4**
- **Hornbeam, International Bonsai 2010-2**
- **Juniperus chinensis, Bonsai Today 1996 Nov-Dec Vol. 46**
- **Magnolia, Bonsai Today 1995 Nov-Dec Vol. 40**
- **Norway spruce, Bonsai Today (Thunder) 1994-Nov-Dec Vol. 34**
- **Red pine, Bonsai Today 1996 Nov-Dec Vol. 46, 1995-Sep-Oct Vol. 39**
- **Stewartia monadelphica, Bonsai Today 1999-Nov-Dec Vol. 64**
- **Zelkova, Bonsai Today 1999-Nov-Dec, Vol. 64**

Karen Vukannon



Greg Brenden with his Southwestern White Pine

In Our Own Backyard...

Greg Brenden, BSOP First Vice-President

When you walk into Greg Brenden's work area, two passions are immediately evident—there are plants of all kinds amidst a collection of models and sculptures. The botanist and the artist are both vibrantly alive in this creative man. Greg is vocal about his interest in the preservation of the natural environment, the wild qualities of plants, and native species. He doesn't say as much about his sculpture; but take one glance at his museum models and you will be mesmerized by his exquisite eye for realistic detail. These are models of the native species he loves so well, models produced for museum habitat exhibits, and they are simply breathtaking. His creation of the permanent exhibits at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum were described by its director as “top of the line.” His work has also been displayed at the Smithsonian's Natural History Museum.

Greg seems keenly aware of the natural world. His knowledge of plants is specific and wide-ranging. When asked about places he has lived, he responds with descriptions of the geography and the flora, not just the name of the state. It is apparent

that he has spent a great deal of time getting acquainted with plants in the wild.

A tour of his garden reveals the passion of the botanist for preserving native species. He seems to savor each plant's most individual characteristics, and his face lights up with joy describing how and where each plant was collected and telling how many years he has kept it in good health, despite the environmental stresses brought about by moving to several different regions of the country.

Greg is an avid collector. He liked unusual plants right from the start: as a teenager he grew carnivorous species. Later he began to hike in the wilderness and collect native wildflowers. His grandmother gave him his favorite book, *A Field Guide to Rocky Mountain Wildflowers* (Craighead, Craighead, and Davis). Born into a line of farmers from Montana, he grew up loving botany and art equally. When he had to choose a career path he earned a Master's degree in Fine Arts. In his professional life Greg has concentrated on zoo and aquarium design as a museum exhibit contractor, a career that has allowed him to sample habitats from the Ozarks to the desert Southwest to the rainy Pacific Northwest.

A co-worker, Kenny Green, introduced him to bonsai after Greg gave him a Shrubby St. John's Wort he had collected. Greg was excited about hunting - for trees from the wild. He and Kenny went hunting together. Then Kenny showed Greg an article on bonsai in a Smithsonian magazine (October 1989). Greg could not imagine how one could get a tree to live in such a small container. He was hooked. He chose to concentrate on using native species as bonsai, in part because of his background in collecting wild plants, and also based on advice he received from Kathy Shaner. Later, his long friendship with Michael Hagedorn got him interested in pots and their relationship to the trees they hold.

Since Greg was already a creative artist in his own right before he began to work in bonsai, it is only natural that he uses bonsai in his own creative way, knowing that it

can be sometimes be provocative. For instance, he deliberately made a philosophical statement with his “Juniperus shovellii” (his title): It was “nothing special”—a Rocky Mountain juniper growing in a pocket of solid limestone in Montana, with no branches on the side backed up to the rock face, and with a trunk that wasn't great. But planted on the blade of an old shovel that he found discarded in a dry wash in Arizona it became a visual reminder of man's impermanence. Nature will eventually overcome every item mankind produces. Greg finds it interesting to listen to the stories that viewers imagine about the meaning of the piece. He does not mind at all that his unorthodox presentation is sometimes unaccepted by traditionalists in the bonsai community.

When asked which part of the bonsai process he enjoys the most, he says that satisfaction comes when you see the first set of buds that means you have succeeded in figuring out how to help a wild plant successfully adapt to captivity. He loves the process of collecting trees in the wilderness. He believes that one should try to preserve as much of the wild tree as possible when creating a bonsai. He is not much interested in the most commonly used tree species for bonsai; Greg is a person who likes the rare, the singular, the unusual, both in species and in containers. He loves accent plants as much as bonsai trees. While he does not feel much attraction to the traditional Japanese approach to bonsai styling, he does relate to their cultural reverence for the feminine as well as the masculine aspects of plants. Bonsai should never be about having the biggest anything, he says. He prizes innovation and believes that innovative presentation is one contribution Americans can make to the art of bonsai.

Karen Vuokannon



Chaenomeles japonica 'Chojubai' from Crataegus.com



Honorary BSOP Life Members Announced

Club President Eileen Knox recognized 2012 Honorary BSOP Life Members Arlene Sigourney and Bob Laws at our January meeting. Honorary members are recognized as long standing BSOP members who have made significant long term contributions to the club and the art of bonsai. These two honorees continue to contribute their time and creative energies to the growth of our club in so many ways. Whether it is convention support, Heritage Group involvement, Shohin Kai participation or just nurturing fellow members, they are always there to volunteer their help and lend an experienced guiding hand!

Arlene Sigourney and her husband Bob (now unfortunately deceased) joined BSOP in 1980 when there were just a handful of members. They learned of the club through a local convention where they met an early founder of the club, Tim Boyle. Bob took private lessons from Tim who introduced Bob to several books on bonsai stands after learning of Bob's woodworking skills. Bob quickly became a consummate designer/builder of high quality bonsai stands in exotic woods. That was the impetus for Bob and Arlene's lifelong love of all things bonsai!

Bob's gorgeous bonsai stands can be seen at our local shows as well as nationally accompanying some of the finest bonsai trees on display. Together Bob and Arlene attended or participated as vendors at some 45 conventions from Orlando, Florida to Korea. Their travels also took them to Walter Pall's home in Germany and to Pius Notter's in Switzerland.

Arlene and Bob often worked on trees side by side. Oftentimes they would visit local nurseries buying two examples of the same species tree, one larger for Bob and one smaller for Arlene. They deemed these "His and Hers" additions to their collection. Unfortunately, most all of their work and trees were lost in a 2001 house fire that enveloped their solarium attached to their house at the time! Arlene, however, continues to create and nurture trees she has created since that time, mostly through her involvement in Oregon Shohin Kai that she helped found in 2004. Her current collection is now nearing 25 bonsai and another 50 in pots she considers "in development". Most all are considered shohin size with about a half dozen larger specimens. About one half of her collection are azaleas, obviously one of her favorites for their gorgeous spring and summer flowers. Arlene is currently the committee head of Oregon Shohin Kai and one of the founding members of the Heritage Group (for the care of member's trees due to ill health or death). We are indeed honored to have Arlene as one of our 2012 Honorees.

Bob Laws (retired dentist) joined the BSOP in 1986 when Bill Howard, our club's president at the time and teacher at the U of O dental school encouraged Bob to attend the club's meetings. Bob was first exposed to bonsai in college when one of his dates' (pre Nancy, probably because she wasn't born yet!) father had a bonsai. Bob still remembers that juniper but has somehow forgotten the details of the date...or isn't talking! Bob bought his first bonsai (a juniper, no less) that he still owns to this date, at a San Francisco convention in the 1980's. Bob has attended a myriad of conventions since, including many California and National conventions as well as most every PNBCA convention held but for a few! Bob considers himself blessed to have his wife Nancy who is such a great partner in travel, and is patient and understanding in his love of bonsai. They have been married 52 years this month! Bob is also forever grateful for Nancy's care and patience in caring for his bonsai when he is away on travel (and himself upon return!)

Bob's collection of trees is well into the hundreds with about one third considered near finished bonsai,

while the remainder are in various stages of development. Bob is deservedly proud of his collection of trees, pots and stands and unselfishly contributes their use to meetings, shows and conventions. He, like many of us, has lost some great trees through the years, too many to count! In a freak cold snap about three years ago he sadly lost seven of his best and largest trees!

Some of his most memorable experiences in bonsai include his work in various study groups, Boon Manakitivipart visits, and the wonderful trips to Japan with consummate host and bonsai master, the late John Naka. John was a joy to be around and he is sorely missed in the bonsai world! One of Bob's favorite current experiences is his monthly trips northward with Gene Gold to visit and study with Dave DeGroot at Weyerhaeuser's Pacific Rim Bonsai collection in Federal Way, Washington. Bob especially likes working with Japanese black pines, which are both challenging and rewarding. He considers each of his pines longtime friends.

When asked if he has advice to newer members, he suggests the studying of bonsai photographs to generate ideas as well as perspective. He also feels attendance and attention at meetings and workshops is very important, but he also adds that "all that is said is not absolute". Take away what works for you. He would also add that you heed your tree's and spouse's advice if you want them to stick around for 50 years or better!

Bob served as club president from 2001 to 2002 and was chairman of the last PNBCA convention, and currently heads up the Heritage Group. We are proud to have Bob as one of our 2012 Honorees.

On behalf of the entire club, I thank you both for the many gifts of time, experience, volunteerism and friendship you continue to provide us all! You are both National Treasures to me and the Bonsai Society of Portland!

Ron Cascisa

Recycle Wire

Please bring your used copper wire to the monthly meetings. Roger Case will have a five gallon plastic 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 a little income for BSOP.

Oregon Shohin Kai

What a busy day at Oregon Shohin Kai!! Alan Taft led us in a busy workshop with multiple projects. First we glazed the pinch pots from a previous meeting. These glazed pots will be fired and ready for planting at our next meeting.

Moving on, Alan prepared his tools and items for cleft grafting a Juniper. There were three grafts to be made to replace destroyed, broken off branches. We were shown how to prepare a scion for insertion into the opened cut on the Juniper trunk. Alan secured the scion by putting a small plastic bag with some damp sphagnum moss over the newly inserted scion to form a protective/moisture retaining cover. Follow up care includes protection from too much sunshine and keeping the inside of the plastic bag moist. Shohin Design was also taking place at the meeting, and Alan helped several OSK members sharpen a few of the different Bonsai tools we regularly use in caring for our trees. Putting all of these multitasks into our meeting time frame was accomplished very well by Alan. Thank you, Alan, for sharing your expertise.

The next OSK meeting will be March 3, 2012, at 10:00 AM at the Elite Care facility in Tigard. The project for this meeting will be repotting. Bring your trees, tools, soils, and lunch. Watch your email for additional details.

Notum



Detail of the root of a Field Maple bonsai split lengthways and hollowed in 2007. To the left is an approach-grafted root attached the same year.

Harry Harrington at bonsai4me.com



Newly carved and styled Privet bonsai, ready for a bonsai pot next Spring, at bonsai4me.com

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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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