



the **TREE LINE**

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

September 2011

- September 17 - Mentorship Meeting
St. Philip Neri, 2408 SE 16th Ave. Portland
- September 27 - 7-9pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting**
St. Philip Neri, 2408 SE 16th Ave. Portland
- October 8 - 10am to 2pm **OSK Meeting**
Location to be announced
- October 15 - 2-5pm **Mentorship Meeting**
St. Philip Neri, 2408 SE 16th Ave. Portland
- October 25 - 7-9pm **BSOP Monthly Meeting**
St. Philip Neri, 2408 SE 16th Ave. Portland
- December 17 - **Annual Holiday Party**
St. Philip Neri, 2408 SE 16th Ave. Portland
- September 14-16, 2012 - **PNBCA Convention**
Hilton Hotel, Vancouver, WA

What's a 'Whack 'n Chat?'

I'll tell you what it isn't--a mythical beast from one of Lewis Carroll's stories! Seriously--I was asked by our dear president, Eileen Knox, to explain what one is since it's been so long since we've done one. We have some newer members who may not be familiar. We usually have one after a convention so everyone can get caught up about what went on and work on a tree @ the same time.

So, bring a tree(s) and your tools and we'll have a chance to get caught up after our summer break. Some of our more seasoned members will be on hand for advice and help on your trees. This is also a good time to bring in a tree that may not have weathered the summer too well to get some advice on. Now is an excellent time for wiring conifers (pines, junipers, spruce, hemlocks, etc.) Bring some wire if you like or purchase some from one of our vendors tables (they appreciate your business and give good deals) Again, there will be members present that can help you with your wiring skills.

The theme for the show and tell table this month is two-fold--bring in your fruiting trees and other species that look especially well in the fall. I'd also like to invite everyone to bring in trees they've got from raffles, auctions, free table, give-aways, etc. that they've worked on to show what's possible to achieve from material that's available every month just from attending our meetings. I looked around my yard and was surprised by how much has accumulated over the years I've been with BSOP. I plan to bring one of the trees from June meeting's raffle table that no one put a ticket in the can. It was a fun little mid-summer project I hope might inspire you to reconsider the material being offered for next-to-nothing by our generous membership.

Lastly, I'd like to announce we'll be having a silent auction for the remainder of Anne's Spencer's bonsai tools, books and other miscellaneous items of interest. Bob Laws of our Heritage Program informs me that there are quite a few tools that will be available, so check out your tool kit and see what's missing! I hope everyone had a great summer and I look forward to getting caught up with everyone.

Greg



Juniper on Display at PSBA Convention



Toyama-ishi
Distant
Mountain
Stone from
Stillaguamish
River, WA
(PSBA Conv)

Out on a Limb

As our Summer begins to wind down, we can look back and assess the season's growth, review our watering strategies, feeding protocols and plant placement decisions. Summer is such a learning time for me. And late Summer gives me an opportunity to reflect.

Many, many thanks to Dave and Donna Burnett for their hilarious Summer Picnic game. It really brought out the laughter and fun. Thank you, also to Rocky Lawton for leading the set-up at Creston Park. I was so grateful he knew what needed to be done, as this was my first picnic.

Many of those attending the Summer Picnic noticed that there has been a steady decline in attendance. Scott Tice mentioned that this decline has been obvious to him for the last five years. The BSOP board is wondering if the membership might be better served by using the funds from the Summer Picnic to supplement the Christmas Party. Each year the club buys burgers, hot dogs, fixings and drinks to meet the previous year's attendance and each year much of that is not used because of the smaller attendance. This year we had 30/32 attend.

The board has also heard that the ticket prices for the Christmas Party are expensive. We could certainly reduce the ticket price if we used the picnic money. Please give this a bit of thought. The board is interested in hearing your thoughts and we will bring it up for discussion at the September meeting.

The PNCBA convention had a strong Portland representation. We were all wide eyed and curious to hear what the other folks attending liked about the Seattle convention and what they would like to see next year.

Jan Hettick and her 2012 Convention Committee put together a fabulous brochure promoting next years Portland Convention. A big thank you to Arlene Sigourney, a.k.a Super Editor. Lee Cheadle organized a fun Vana/Vano program to show convention goers the fabulous trees to be used for next years workshops.

A real highlight of the 2012 convention will be the mini-workshops. These inexpensive classes will make it possible for our local members to enjoy the fun of the convention while keeping within their budgets. Stay tuned to learn more about this at the September meeting.

On a final note, a huge thank you to Barb Devitt and Karen VunKannon for their Herculean effort with the library over the Summer. They have inventoried, reorganized and cataloged the entire library. They have created an Library Index so that we can easily access specific information about any bonsai topic. I am really excited to learn more about this at the September meeting. See you there!

Smiles,
Eileen



Pictures from two of the demonstrations at the PSBA convention



Boon styles a coastal redwood burl



Ryan styles a Rocky Mountain juniper

Library Highlights

They say “A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.” I have to admit the truth in this as the number of casualties in my back yard mounts steadily. (I am nearly ready to write a book about what NOT to do to a tree in a pot.) **They** say “It takes three years to learn to water properly.” I hope enlightenment strikes soon, because my deadline is quickly approaching and I am still getting it wrong all too often. **They** say “Lay the wire on the branch.” Does that include the pieces of wire lying on top of the pieces of branches already on the floor? **They** say “When the pupil is ready, the master will appear.” **They** don't say how long he will be willing to put up with me. So, in an effort to improve my bonsai skills, I have undertaken to read and index the entire BSOP periodical collection; and therein I have found a kindred spirit:

Andrew Smith, author of “The Wabi/Sabi of Super Glue,” (ABS Journal, 2003 Vol.37/2) begins his epistle of wisdom with the words, “The world, as they say, is broken.” He inspires the eager student by talking about the sun rising, the sun setting, great expectations, and expectations unmet. He quotes from a Buddhist master. Hey, this guy just has to know what he's talking about! So what enlightenment does he bestow on the lowly beginner at bonsai?

“The spirit of bonsai...it's the spirit of caring, the spirit of love... And you can extend this feeling to anything... From a neglected corner...in your yard, to a neglected person...or even a broken...pot. 100 factory made bonsai pots may look identical on casual inspection. But if you drop them they all break differently and their unique character is revealed... I had the pieces to several formerly excellent pots, I had a desire to fix them and I had a guiding philosophy. How could I possibly fail?... I spread them out on a work table in the basement and then forgot all about them. Thinking about repairing them from time to time was satisfaction enough. I saw no sense in ruining it by actually trying to do the work.....”

As Smith meditates deeply on his broken pot, he realizes that “in many ways it's better than new... It loses its lifeless perfection and gains the oddity of true character.” Mind you, he still hasn't glued it back together, but you get the feeling he's really far along the path to enlightenment and might reach Nirvana at any moment:

“And for a minute there I got into this whole wabi/sabi thing and almost convinced myself that a broken, repaired pot was actually much better than an unbroken one. I got my hammer and headed out to the greenhouse to smash the rest of my pottery, but was suddenly overcome with laziness when I thought how long it would take to glue them all back together again. So I decided that they would just have to be good enough the unbroken way they were. But now, for the first time, I saw the real, untapped (with a hammer) potential in each one. And I can break them whenever I want to, anyway. Maybe just for special trees...”

Gosh, maybe if I follow Mr. Smith's lead and just leave well enough alone, then I too shall one day reach bonsai Nirvana. (I'm pretty sure I came close when I was falling out of my chair in hysterical laughter while reading the entire article.) But meanwhile, there are all these trees in pots in the back yard...

Karen VanKannon



Nebari close up
from
PSBA convention

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If you need bonsai supplies, please call ahead for delivery at a BSOP meeting



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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