

Bonsai Wire

Marin Bonsai Club

Monthly Meeting
3rd Tuesday, 7:30PM
Marin Art & Garden Center
30 Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Ross, CA

January 2010

President's Letter

Tradition dictates that at this time of year its fun to look back over the last year and evaluate successes so that future direction and goals can be set for the forthcoming year. So, let's spend a few moments taking stock, while feeling very good about what has been accomplished.

In 2009 we matched the economic trend and tightened our spending to seek better ways to spend our club dollars. Great, informative demonstrations and support came from experts Tim Kong, Jay McDonald, John Doig, Valerie Monroe, Bob Shimon, Bob Gould, Jim Gremel, Greg McDonald and Marco Invernizzi. We supported three quality shows with our excellent trees at San Francisco's Cherry Blossom Festival, Marin Fair and our own very special Fall Show, attracting thousands of visitors. New and resuming bonsai enthusiasts were offered beginner classes which were full and received excellent reviews. To maintain our club balance we had an auction that attracted many members from several other bonsai clubs along with ours, and we organized a really great field trip to ensure members continued to stock their collections. Our membership continues to stay strong and we attract more new members who refresh us with their experience and perspective. And we're getting even more notice from our public with event attendance up over previous years and more enquiries for help.

All of this happened through your continued efforts as well as the generous and dedicated support of the club's board. In particular, on the board I'd like to acknowledge the efforts of Craig Thompson who enabled us to transition from Candace's excellent leadership as well as organize a great demo lineup; Frances Noles who kept us financially healthy; Jay

McDonald who continued to execute incredible exhibitions; Michael Jaffe who organized numerous club activities in addition to her behind-the-scenes secretarial support; Candace Key who ensured we had well-orchestrated, successful events, auction and raffles, etc.; Jeanette Arnold who tirelessly coordinated our docent support of the Bonsai Collection at Lake Merritt; Marlene Philley who ensured our catering arrangements ran smoothly; Tim Burke, our diligent librarian; Carolyn Robbins our knowledgeable club historian; and Sharon Bone, our fearless newsletter editor. And I have just mentioned those board people who feature on our website, but to all the others who continue to contribute in the background, your efforts are most appreciated.

So, how will 2010 shape up?

First, there are resolutions to be kept in our 52nd year of operation. We need to continue running our club efficiently and keeping our balance straight, while at the same time continue to enable existing and new members to hone their bonsai skills. How are we planning to do that? Well, while we'll continue putting on key demonstrations that will help, there will be more emphasis on helping the advanced/intermediate members to learn more through an informal mentoring system (more on that in future newsletters). We hope to reach out to more members to elicit specific information on what they would like to see to improve their own efforts and encourage even higher attendance at our programs and we'll be introducing new and additional programs such as inter-club events like the Iron Man bonsai marathon with the Bonsai Society of San Francisco, to expand our outreach and knowledge.

Second, to ensure optimum operational performance of the club we plan to get more members involved in helping with club activities. For example, we're looking for someone who can take over from Jeanette as docent coordinator for the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt (BGLM), as she takes on responsibilities as club secretary. Duties include arranging volunteers for every 4th Saturday of the month, coordinating with BGLM, and arranging an annual clean up event. We need people to sign up for other duties such as writing articles for our newsletter, workshop layout and cleanup, providing food and beverages for events, etc. No helpers will be turned away!

Third, we are transitioning over 50% of the board positions to new people to enable previous incumbents to devote more time to their bonsai activities. But the board will continue to tap experience and knowledge of previous board members, as well as the general membership, so please don't hesitate to get in touch with any of us to voice your thoughts!

These are all great resolutions, and here's a final one. Let 2010 bring good health and creativity to you and your bonsai. Marvel at nature's beauty and inspiration, take time out to read books from the library for new ideas, involve yourselves in the many bonsai activities that take place around the area throughout the year, and, above all, enjoy all the endless variety our trees continue to give us.

2009 Fall Show Highlights

It's fair to say that it was the best show the club has ever put on – dramatic exhibitions; fabulous attendance; un-ending praise from many visitors and bonsai experts on the quality, variety and detail of the exhibits; excellent demonstrations and lots of fun enjoyed by all.

We started with some behind-the-scenes drama on Thursday night when we found we had no backdrop supports for our displays – for those who are superstitious, an alarming reminder that having an event on Friday the thirteenth might portend a less than perfect experience. But, what could have been a significant show-stopper, was valiantly turned around by the swift actions of John Doig and Jay McDonald, along with incredible support from Peggy Kelly, Clyde and Merle Ongaro, Jeanette Arnold and Emily Shibata, starting at 7am on Friday. More of

the setup crew came throughout the day, arranging the rooms and displays, polishing stands, cleaning pots, setting out food, organizing raffles and the silent auction, etc.

It was an awesome production effort to get ready before 4:30pm – and thanks to Candace Key, Daniel Keller, Frances Noles, Marlene Philley, TJ Williams, and Duane Johnson, we all had time to change into our party clothes and waited to greet our guests. And our guests kept arriving, and arriving – the rooms became an explosion of sound, laughter and excitement, while we wondered if we had sufficient time to get everyone through dinner to start our evening's entertainment provided by the great maestro Marco Invernizzi. Members Karen Stagg, Lydia Truce, Michael Jaffe, Richard Dobson, and David Stern were on hand to greet guests, handle tickets sales and ensure everyone was happy.

Friday dinner proved to be a winner with the crowd – food and wine was generously provided by Mark Lesley (Ambrosia restaurant) and our members, and the whole proceedings well orchestrated by Marlene along with Tim and Emma Kong and Linda Laureano. The tables were beautifully decorated by Frances and Jeanette, and their accent pots drew much appreciation from the diners.

Master of ceremony, Craig Thompson, drew the crowd back into the room where Marco engaged a rapt audience for several informative hours while he performed some amazing magic on a very old, collected Juniper. It was after 10pm before the happy party broke up – wiser for the experience and laden with prizes for the night.

Saturday turned out to be a bright fall day, bringing over 150 visitors from Marin and further afield, along with many of our own club members. Marco became "The Bonsai Doctor" and helped his "clients" evaluate their trees; transition "fledglings" towards "adults", and generally hand out well-considered advice to encourage effort and progress. Meanwhile, Jay performed an excellent demonstration to create a Saikei with Juniper and companion planting. Jim Gremel was on hand selling tools and bonsai ware to eager customers. Complimentary refreshments and lunch provided by the club ensured our visitors did not leave us prematurely! By 5pm, the tide of visitors began to wane, and we began clearing up. Why is clearing up always so much faster than staging? Heart-felt thanks go to Alan Voight, Nick

Winer and Chris Ross, along with the many other members who joined in to make another special day.

Behind the scenes, as always, there is a lot of preparation to get guests to an event, such as sending out invitations, notifying other clubs, calling people, advertising, etc. Many thanks go to Michaele for making this happen, along with other board members who also used their special knowledge to make things run smoothly! Now...who'd like to be Show Organizer for next year?

- Alison Seaman

From the Raffle Wrangler:

Many thanks to all those who generously donated raffle items and trees and pots for the silent auction for the show. We had many stellar and creative prizes and I think the quality and variety played a big part in how well we did financially this year. I'd like to give special thanks to our sensei Tim Kong whose donation of two high quality trees made our first time Silent Auction a rousing success. Bidding for his trees was intense and two lucky winners went home with fine prizes. Also thanks to Nick Winer who fought the good fight and won back the oak he had sold the club earlier in the year. It must be meant for you Nick.

We saw this year how much difference quality auction and raffle items can mean to the success of the Fall Show and it was very gratifying to see how energetically club members responded to our calls for raffle materials. We realize this is a bit of a sacrifice for some and we appreciate your commitment to the club to big deep and find different ways you can help out. May we suggest you be thinking about 2010 auction and show raffle items now as you shop for trees at the winter bonsai shows? The Mammoth Bonsai Fundraiser which is a benefit for the Bonsai Gardens at Lake Merritt is a particularly great place to shop.

Congratulations to our big raffle winners this year. It was a thrill to see how happy Johnny Uchita was at winning Marco Invernizzi's juniper Friday night. Despite being in bonsai for a very long time there was real delight in his eyes to be taking home Marco's latest creation. Our own Jeanette Arnold got lucky on Saturday, winning a lovely azalea Jay McDonald styled. Dennis Mui who trekked over from the East Bay was the winner of Jay's big demo, a lovely Juniper saikei. Thanks to Jay and Marco for

their inspiring work and all who made the raffles and the show so successful.

- Candace Key



*Dennis Mui with Jay McDonald at the Fall Show..
Dennis won the Juniper saikei Jay created shown
below.*



January Meeting Program

To start the year off with some excitement we will bring the Iron Bonsai event back to Marin Bonsai Club at our January meeting. This was a popular program when it was held among club members a couple of years ago, so this year we decided to make the event even more challenging by bringing in some outside competition. Members of Bonsai Society of San Francisco will square off against our best to see who can get the most votes for the best bonsai created in a very limited amount of time. Tim Kong will be the Master of Ceremonies, directing our attention to brilliant styling techniques and ill advised cuts, questioning the contestants at every snip. The pressure is intense, as are the laughs. It was surprising how comedic bonsai can be last time, but there was also a lot of learning going on as Tim talked about the different approaches taken with the trees.

This year three types of high quality deciduous trees from Lone Pine Nursery will be our challenge and those not styling trees will be cheering or jeering the contestants. Everyone will have the opportunity to not only vote with raffle tickets for their favorite tree, but have the chance to take the tree home as well. A great way to jump start or add to your collection. We hope to see a big crowd for this meeting to cheer for our side. There are many talented bonsai artists at BSSF and they will surely bring out their best. Don't miss this historic bonsai duel - all in good fun, of course.

- Candace Key

Weeding at the Bonsai Garden

Please mark your calendars: Saturday, February 20, 2010 for weeding at The Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt. It is our Club's annual contribution to clean up the Garden a week before the Mammoth Auction and Sale. More details to come in next month's newsletter.

- Jeanette Arnold

RE-POTTING SEASON is coming

Get your fresh Bonsai soil!

\$20.00 per Bucket

Contact Chris Ross or John Doig



Condolences to Jay and Greg McDonald. Their mother, Mary Ruth McDonald, passed away peacefully at home on December 1st, 2009.

After Glow

*I'd like the memory of me
to be a happy one.
I'd like to leave an after glow
of smiles when life is done.
I'd like to leave an echo
whispering softly down the ways,
Of happy times and laughing times
and bright and sunny days.
I'd like the tears of those who grieve,
to dry before the sun
Of happy memories that I leave
When life is done.*

~Helen Lowrie Marshall



Alison Seaman's little tree was a winner at the Holiday Celebration in December. Thank you Roger and Marlene for hosting a wonderful party!

TASKMASTER – January 2010

January in the Northern California north bay area microclimates is typically wet and can be marked with occasional frosts, or even a freeze. This means that some tender plants must spend time in the garage or deep under the eaves up close to the house, but most bonsai do just fine and some seem to like a little brief frost.

The rain makes it more obvious which plants are desperate for repotting, and January is a great time for repotting most trees. Some, like evergreen oaks, must wait until August or September. Some, like the pines, need to wait for February or until the new growth begins to pop up. But the rule is, if you can't tell for sure or you can't remember when it was last done, or if you're no longer entirely happy with the pot, or the front isn't well placed, there's hardly a better time to repot. Trim things back to eliminate all long internodes, pitch out all that old soil with its load of weeds, seeds, ants, eggs, nematodes, moss, and clumps, trim those crazy roots, and give everything a fresh new start while nature is taking a rest. You won't be sorry, and most trees need it every two or three years anyway to be able to truly thrive.

Clean up all the fallen leaves, clear and clean the benches and stands, spray early in the month lightly with horticultural oil and at the end of the month with the third spray of lime-sulfur dormant spray diluted to about thirty to one with water. This is The Cure for scale, borers, and other serious and life-threatening pests.

Then take a tip from nature and relax a bit.
Drink a bit of ginger tea and read a bit of poetry.
Try to slow things down a bit.
Take a little nap and dream of beautiful trees.

- The Taskmaster

BAY AREA BONSAI EVENTS

January 16-17

Pleasanton, CA

Bay Island Bonsai Annual Bonsai Exhibit. New location. Bigger facility. Hall of Commerce, Alameda County Fairgrounds, 4501 Pleasanton Avenue, Pleasanton, 94566. Admission \$5. Free Parking. Same great auction on Saturday, with preview at noon and auction at 1 PM. Guided tours of the exhibit both Saturday and Sunday. Bonsai sale and vendors both days. Hours: 10AM - 4PM Saturday and Sunday. For more information: (510)865-1008 or www.bayislandbonsai.com

February 5-7

Santa Nella, CA

California Shohin Society Seminar 2010 Hotel de Oro Conference Center. 13070 Santa Nella Blvd. Workshops, Demonstrations, Exhibit and Bazaar. Vendor sales area. Raffle. Single day walk-in registration available. For registration info: <http://calshohin.webs.com/> or email calshohin@yahoo.com.

February 27-28

Oakland, CA

GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt: Mammoth Fundraiser 2010 at the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Saturday: Auction of fabulous bonsai 1PM-4PM with preview at 12 Noon. Sunday: Mammoth Fundraiser and Bazaar, 9AM-4PM. Demonstration at 1:30PM by Collection Curator, Kathy Shaner. Silent auction, vendors, benefit drawings, raffles and a large consignment sale of bonsai and bonsai related items. For general information: <http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org/lake-merritt/> or Linda Soliven, 925-776-2342.



MARIN BONSAI CLUB EVENTS

January 5, 2010: Workshop

Starting at 7pm, this will be a repotting workshop with Tim Kong and Jay McDonald. Fee is \$10 for members, \$20 for non-members.

January 19, 2010: Iron Man Bonsai... Marin vs. BSSF

7:30pm - The first annual Iron Man Bonsai contest - the Marin Bonsai Club vs. Bonsai Society of San Francisco. You don't want to miss this one!!!

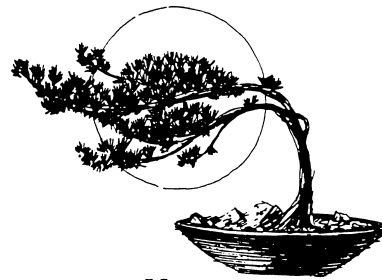
February 2, 2010: Workshop

Starting at 7pm, this will be a repotting workshop with Tim Kong and Jay McDonald. Fee is \$10 for members, \$20 for non-members.

February 15, 2010: Repotting workshop

7:30pm - This month the 3rd Tuesday meeting will be a repotting workshop. Bring your problem trees to be repotted. Soil will be provided.

For a full list of currently scheduled MBC events, see <http://www.marinbonsai.org/events/index.php>.



Marin Bonsai Club

2010 Marin Bonsai Club Officers:

President	Alison Seaman	415-789-1167
VP Programs	Candace Key	415-491-1989
VP Shows	Jay McDonald	415-847-8909
Secretary	Jeanette Arnold	415-883-2651
Treasurer	Frances Noles	415-461-0437
Historian	Carolyn Robbins	415-460-0339
Librarian	Karen Stagg	415-897-6824
News Editor	Sharon Bone	415-898-9618
Hospitality	Marlene Philley	415-924-5134
Docent Coord	Jeanette Arnold	415-883-2651

Marin Bonsai Club

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