



Bonsai Wire

Marin Bonsai Club

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

December 2015

From the VP of Programs

Another year is coming to a close. For the trees, the year's end has arrived somewhat, well . . . briskly. Unusually warm weather kept the green in our deciduous tress longer, then suddenly turned to unusually cold, causing the leaves to pass quickly through the fall colors and drop in a matter of days. That's what's happening in my yard anyway, and I suspect it's not much different in the other Marin microclimates. A short show. By the time this is being read, most of us will have fewer trees to worry about for a little while anyway.

Club activities are winding down for the year as well. We just have the Christmas Party you'll see announced elsewhere in this newsletter and then we're done. Until January, when we'll begin the new year like gangbusters. More on upcoming events in a moment. First a few words about November.

There was an incredible turnout for the impromptu donated pots sale at the 1st Tuesday workshop in November. A few people came with trees to work on, but much of the hustle and bustle for the first hour was all about the pots. The donation of some 75-100 pots was not anonymous, by the way. Bill Goldman, a long-time Sausalito resident with just a few remaining nice bonsai but no club ties, had been collecting the pots for decades and decided to let them go to our club. Thank you again for your generosity, Bill! We rolled out a few dozen of Bill's pots thinking we could let the members sample them, but it wasn't long before we were hauling out many more of them. Thank you also, Sharon, for all the additional pots rescued from the inevitable dumpster to which they were headed as another nursery is sadly closing its doors. Many thanks also to Candace for suggesting the sale, Scott for getting the word out, and both Candace and Chris for frantically and fairly pricing the pots.

One cannot help but wonder if Candace intentionally planned the pots sale to coincide with the other big activity at the workshop: we voted in our mostly carryover crew of board members and initiated a new President. Congratulations to the continuing officers, but especially to Dan Olson, our new club President. Thanks for stepping up, Dan! Dan already has voiced many new ideas and we look forward to seeing the positive influence he is sure to have on the club.

Sadly, I was unable make it to the other club event in November, the Celebration of Bonsai at Ambrosia Restaurant, designed in part to honor the restaurant's owner, Mark, a long time and valued member of the club. Hopefully somebody else is writing about that. I'm sure even with most of the fall colors in abeyance it was still a beautiful sight. It was with deep regret that I missed it.

And now what you've been waiting for: the run-down on the repotting season schedule! We are very fortunate to have wrangled Peter Tea to give us a repotting demonstration to kick off our year. Join us Tuesday, January 5th in the Multi-purpose Room at MAGC for what is sure to be a highly educational approach to the critical topic of how to repot our trees. Over-achiever that he is, repotting one tree isn't enough for Peter. He wants to repot TWO trees. He will bring one well developed tree to showcase techniques for repotting those, but wants to have a relatively young, preferably still in the nursery container tree for the other repotting. There are special techniques Peter wants to show us for ensuring success with young trees and their sparse root systems. All the details haven't been worked out yet, but that second tree most likely will be chosen from among member- or club-owned trees.

VP Programs Continued...

Stay tuned: there will be more about Peter's repotting demo in the January newsletter, but I wanted you all to know as soon as possible that we are going to have a fantastic repotting season.

Peter's demo will be followed by three repotting workshops. As in past years, the remaining meeting and workshop dates in January and February will all be repotting workshops. As we did this year, we will be charging for the club soil. It's not a big charge and it's completely worth it because we're making a good blend with plenty of akadama.

This is our last newsletter to be assembled by Scott Piatanesi. Thank you so much for doing it for as long as you could, Scott! Our path forward is still unclear, but will most likely involve a more strictly electronic form for the newsletter, housed on the club Website with an e-blast to announce each new edition. Apologies to those who still prefer to receive a hard copy of the newsletters, because so far we still have nobody willing to replace Scott in that enormous duty. For that matter, there is still nobody to spearhead the electronic version we're proposing, but we're muddling through, so far with the efforts of our Secretary Candace, her assistant Dan, our Webmaster Sharon, and our new President, Dan O. Anybody willing to help out as we try this new approach, please let any of those individuals know.

Enjoy the anticipation and future planning as we watch our trees go dormant to various degrees. And Happy Holidays!

David Eichhorn

A Celebration of Bonsai

"A Celebration of Bonsai," a not-so-small and certainly elegant exhibition, was held at the Ambrosia Restaurant on Saturday, November 14. Presented by and in honor of long-time club member Mark Lesley, in homage to our mutual appreciation of the art, we celebrated his many contributions to the Marin Bonsai Club over the years, including terms as its President and long time Show Chairman for the Marin County Fair. Mark gave us a room in his restaurant to stage the exhibit, and Jay took on the presentation of many "fall color" trees, and some elegant conifers as well. Guests visited the exhibit throughout the evening, sharing stories and admiring the trees. Many of Mark's customers and employees had not realized the extent of his passion for bonsai before seeing the exhibit, and it was a pleasure sharing the art form we love.



Mark is the source of the wonderful lasagna we have all enjoyed at our recent fall shows and auctions held at Marin Art and Garden Center. This year instead of bringing his food to the bonsai show; we brought the bonsai show to the food, pairing two art forms, gustatory and visual. Thanks to Jay McDonald, Mark Lesley, David Stern, Craig Thompson, Candace Key, Chris Ross, Roger Lion, Art Wasserman,

Celebration Continued...

Tim Burke, Dan Keller, Peter Miller, Michael Jaffe, George Haas and new member Marcia Summers for their contributions of time and trees. Most of all, thank you to Mark for providing such an elegant forum in which to celebrate the people and the art of bonsai which have meant so much in our lives.

Dan Keller



Marin Bonsai Club Holiday Party

It's that time of year again and surely you have all reserved the Sunday, December 6 date to celebrate the holidays with fellow bonsai enthusiasts. Here are the details:

Where: The lovely home of Roger Lion and Marlene Philley

When: from 2:00ish until 6:00ish

What to bring: your favorite side dish or dessert, and a beverage, alcoholic or otherwise (the club provides salmon and ham)

What to wear: festive holiday attire (no official ugly holiday sweater contest, but your favorites are welcome)

Entertainment:

Viewing Roger's beautiful gardens and bonsai collection

Hanging out with friends and sharing holiday cheer

Decorated bonsai tree contest - 3 great prizes!

The chance to see Jay in a tie

Family and friends are welcome. If you have not been to Roger's house before or need directions please email Candace or call Roger. It's very easy and centrally located.

Candace Key



Photo Courtesy Chris Ross

The Taskmaster, December 2015

The great things about being in the Bay Area Mediterranean-type microclimates as a bonsai artist are that the long hard freezes never come, the trees never really stop growing completely, and the sun shines a lot. The bad things turn out to be the exact same things. You don't get to put the trees under wraps and take a nap, they still have to be fed and tended, and you still have to water and turn the pots every week.

Watering is a weekly puzzle if it rains very much. Did the rain actually penetrate the canopy on the evergreens and make it into the pot or do you have to go out into the wet and water a bit anyway? Did it rain so much that the pots need to be propped up on a slant for a while to help prevent soggy roots? Did it rain so long that the pots really should be re-propped the opposite way for a while? And, you know, since all those Summer roots have grown and filled some of the pots, the drainage may be dangerously slow here and there around the garden. For the slow drainers, get a Phillips screwdriver and poke some holes in several places through the soil to the bottom of the pot for aeration and better drainage. Group the slow ones together so you can easily keep an eye on them all at once, and mark them for repotting first when the time comes in Spring.

Fertilizing is a debated subject. But many successful growers in our mild climate use low-number N-P-K fertilizers all year round with success, and others swear by 0-10-10 types for two or three months or so over Winter. So it turns out to be a personal choice, with a history of success both ways. One way to think about it is this: how slow or fast do you want this tree to grow? Nitrogen promotes fast growth, so that can sometimes be the deciding factor.

Keeping an eye on the weather is a good idea. We occasionally do get brief frosts or freezes. Little plants in little pots can get in more trouble than you might think, so putting them under the eaves of the house, or under their benches, or even in the (empty) garage may be advisable at times for a day or two when it looks like there may be serious cold. Better safe than sorry.

Working on the trees to improve them can be done during the Winter slowdown- some twigs can be snipped or shortened, some careful loose-fitting wiring and moderate bending can be done. But remember that bigger cuts and heavier wires should be avoided because wounds and scars made in Winter heal too slowly and can become permanent, or may at least become portals for disease. Wiring the evergreens is a great idea, because the sun and air can get into the tree during this slow but continuing growth pattern. Don't do any trimming or pruning on ficus, pomegranate, crape myrtle, fuchsia or the tropical trees until all the cold weather goes away.

All the pines can be worked and wired and tended in Winter, and many should be. But the age, stage of development, general health, and other factors should dictate what should be done. Find a good instructor and/or read "Pines" by Stone Lantern Press, and take the guesswork out of it.

Don't forget the three dormant sprays of Winter, sometime around Thanksgiving, then Christmas, then end of January. If you missed the first one, then go ahead and do it late. This practice can help you a lot next Spring and Summer with healthier fruit, flowers, leaves, and bark, plus less mold, mildew, scale and bugs. Lime-sulfur spray at the rate of ten tablespoons per gallon of water is very good but getting hard to find. Ninety-eight or -nine percent pure horticultural oil is often used effectively, and the label should give dilution directions for winter-weight spray. Arborists and agricultural growers add copper solutions or other elements to these sprays to prevent leaf and fruit diseases, and most garden centers like Sloat or Green Jeans or the excellent lady at the United Markets Nursery on Third Street in East San Rafael can probably help you with these products. Be sure to cover the soil when you spray, cover every surface top and bottom, and tap or shake the excess off. Gentle use of a plastic fly swatter is a good tool for this. Do it in the morning so it can dry soon, and if it rains within twenty four hours you have to redo the job.

Keep your feet warm, keep your jacket handy, and keep your gloves dry. Watch the seasons change, watch the weather come and go, watch the stars and Winter constellations

The Taskmaster Continued...

wheel across the night skies. Read some poetry, listen to some beautiful music, and take a walk to some unfamiliar place. Find someone you love and ask them to kiss you like they really mean it. These are things that help make the Winter more interesting. It may be an incomplete list.

The Taskmaster

Winter Haiku

Through the cold, dark nights
The trees sleep in the starlight
Perhaps they dream of Spring

Northern California Bonsai Events

February 27 – 28, 2016, Oakland, California GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt: The annual Mammoth Fund Raiser will be held at 666 Bellevue Ave. (Garden Center Building). Saturday: Auction preview at noon with Auction starting at 1 PM. Sunday: Vendor Sales start at 9 AM, Plant Sales start at 10 AM, and Demonstrations at 1 PM. The Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt will celebrate the many bonsai clubs who have created and support the Garden by inviting Bonsai Clubs from all over Northern California to showcase their best bonsai display and promote their club activities. Attendees will be eligible to vote for their favorite display. Bonsai Garden will be open 10 AM to 4 PM on Saturday and Noon to 4 PM on Sunday. For more information or to sell trees, email bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com and visit www.gsbf-lakemerritt.org.

April 9 -10, 2016, Sacramento, California American Bonsai Association, Sacramento: 57th Annual Bonsai Show at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd., Sacramento, CA. Saturday 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Sunday 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, featuring member trees and viewing stones. Demonstration each day at 1:30 PM by American bonsai artist, Peter Tea. Beginner's workshop Sunday, 10:00 AM; daily raffle includes the demonstration tree; large vendor and member sales area. For more information, contact Renee Seely (916) 929-2106, breadcrumb@comcast.net or visit our website <http://abasbonsai.org>.

Apr. 2 – 3, 2016, Santa Cruz, California Santa Cruz Bonsai Kai: 28th Annual Show at the Museum of Art & History, 705 Front Street, 10 AM – 5 PM both days with demonstrations at 2 PM. Saturday's demonstrator is Mike Pistello and Sunday's will be Katsumi Kinoshita. Raffle drawing for demonstration tree and trees especially prepared by club members are part of the raffle each day. Sales area will include quality vendor and member trees, pots, and other related bonsai items both days. Fresh items will be in the vendor area on Sunday. Admission price of \$5.00 to the Museum includes entry to bonsai show/demo and complementary coffee, tea and cookies. For more information contact Ed Lambing at edinbonnydoon@comcast.net.

Bonsai Wire Newsletter Submissions:

The deadline for the Bonsai Wire Newsletter is the Saturday following the Club's Monthly General Meeting.

Please email any news, articles, event info, Haiku, photos etc. to:
mbcnews@marinbonsai.org

Marin Bonsai Club Events

December 6, 2015: Holiday Party, Details on Page 3.

January 5, 2016: Monthly Meeting,
Multi-Purpose Room, 7:30 PM. Peter Tea
Repotting Demo.

January 19, 2016: Repotting Workshop,
Multi-Purpose Room, 7 PM.
Fee: \$5 for Small Tree, \$10 for Large Tree.

February 2, 2016: Repotting Workshop,
Multi-Purpose Room, 7 PM.
Fee: \$5 for Small Tree, \$10 for Large Tree.



Marin Bonsai Club

2015 Marin Bonsai Club Officers:

President	Vacant	
VP Programs	David Eichhorn	415-888-3756
VP Shows	Jay McDonald	415-847-8909
Secretary	Candace Key	415-491-1989
	Daniel Keller	415-453-7265
Treasurer	Art Wasserman	415-454-3077
Historian	Carolyn Robbins	415-460-0339
Librarian	Roger Lion	415-924-5134
Webmaster	Sharon Bone	415-898-9618
Newsletter	Scott Piatanesi	415-456-6848
Hospitality	Marlene Philley	415-924-5134
Docent Coord	Vacant	

Marin Bonsai Club

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