

# The Bonsai Wire

Volume 41, Issue 7

August, 2015



## Message from the President

We are sorry to hear about the death of a wonderful person and outstanding bonsai artist and teacher, Harry Hirao, "Mr. California Juniper." We send to the bereaved relatives and friends of our departed great bonsai teacher our sincere and deepest sympathy in this hour of sorrow. Our prayers are with Harry and his relatives and friends.

Thank you to Abe Far for an excellent presentation about pH (alkalinity or acidity), bonsai soil, fertilizer, and watering to aid a bonsai enthusiast keep his/her bonsai healthy. Abe conducted thorough research for club members' consumption in this first presentation on pH.

Thank you also to our members who gave their time and other resources to our Club activities moving forward. From bonsai help corner to beginners' class, from kitchen crew to workshop and benefit drawing, from administrative to behind-the-scene activities of Officers and members, and from meeting set up to putting away everything used at our meeting day, a "well done" to all.

Our Fall show is only a few weeks away in September. The success of this show will depend on our members' participation. Please sign up, especially for set up and tear down. We are encouraging maximum participation—especially new members; we have experienced members to show you the ropes. Also, if you want to sell bonsai and bonsai-related items, please contact our VP for Special Projects, Janice Hale.

Shortly after our Fall Show, our Club's fund-raising picnic/auction in Lake Poway is another event to put on your calendar. The success of this event will depend on our members' donations for the auction. As usual, our Club will provide the main dish for the picnic. Please bring your favorite dessert and salad to share with members.

### Announcements:

We are going to Little Tokyo for NESEI week on Saturday, August 22nd, with a stop at a bonsai nursery. If you are interested in joining in the fun, please see Abe Far.

Dan Sola, President



Tom Elias

## This Month's Program

We are honored to have Tom Elias presenting his lecture, "Discovery and Introduction of Bonsai to the Western World" at our August club meeting. Among his many accomplishments, Tom's resume includes President of the National Bonsai Foundation, President of Bonsai Clubs International and Board Member of the National Arboretum.

The earliest known English observation of dwarf potted trees was recorded in 1637. Japanese dwarf trees were in the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876 and in numerous other expositions, including the 1915 San Francisco Exposition and our own 1915 Exposition. The first English book on bonsai was published in 1940; Yoshimura and Halford's *Miniature Trees and Landscapes* would become the "Bible of Bonsai in the West." John Naka, from California, played a major role in sharing by teaching in person and in print, emphasizing the use of native material. And who could forget the Karate Kid movies that spurred many young people to investigate the hobby. So bring your popcorn and pull up a chair for what will be a fascinating presentation.

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San Diego Bonsai Club Website  
[www.sandiegobonsaiclub.com](http://www.sandiegobonsaiclub.com)

## Fall Show Chairman's Note

Hey there members! We are quickly reaching the time of our Fall Bonsai Show and, as always, your participation is important. We did an outstanding job with the Spring Show, and I would like to improve on what we did with this second 50th Anniversary year show.

Yep, it is still our anniversary, and our show can reflect the wonderful talent and expertise the club has cultivated since its inception. Displaying that means showing what new members can do, what members have done, and what our experienced teachers have created over the years. It takes teamwork and a whole lot of energy. Do you have ideas? Bring them to me - I am excited to hear them! Let's make it happen!

Gary Jones, Show Chairperson

50  
Years of  
Cultivating  
the Art of  
Bonsai  
In San  
Diego



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**Beginning Class:** August is the start of the Beginning Class on junipers. This year a variety of junipers will be available. This class is filled, but there is a waiting list. You are also welcome to observe even if you are not in the class. Gary Jones will be the teacher for this class and you will have a fun and informative experience as you go through the three sessions.

A special thank you to Gary for filling in for Martha Choy last month.



**August workshop:** Have you ever wondered how to make the turntables that so many of the experienced bonsai collectors use? This month Abe Far will show us how to make our own. All the materials will be cut to size and the turntable device will be provided. This is a real bargain as you will receive materials to make two turntables for the great price of \$15. Abe will show us how to put all of this together so we can move our bonsai to catch the sun or shade as desired.

**September Workshop:** Repotting. John Jackson will lead this workshop on repotting. So if you have a large or difficult tree, a tree you're not sure how to repot, or if this is your first time repotting, this is the workshop for you. Trees that can be repotted in September (per John Naka) are bamboo, boxwood, buttonwood, cedar, citrus, conifers, cotoneaster, cryptomeria, elm, ficus, fir, five needle pine, ginko, hornbeam, Japanese cypress, juniper, maple, olive, podocarpus, pomegranate, privet, pyracantha, quince, and wisteria. Soil that will be available is the SDBC Mix which is 2 parts scoria, 2 parts pumice and 1 part fir bark. Cost: \$15. Soil, wire and screen are included. Bring your own pot, or pots if unsure of the best pots to use.

Barbara French-Lee

VP for Education

## July Presentation

At the July meeting, Abe Far made a presentation on soils, watering, fertilizer, pH, and plant type - all considered jointly. Abe first talked about good bonsai soil mix attributes (fast draining, moisture retention, and aeration) and the interaction with watering. One should not follow a routine of watering without looking at the moisture content of the soil and the type of plant. Some like bald cypress grow in swamps and love water, others like it on the dry side. Some drying is needed between waterings; use a moisture meter and consider the type of bonsai plant.

Abe then turned to fertilizer as necessary for optimal plant growth. The three numbers indicate the relative amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. A balanced fertilizer (10-10-10 or 20-20-20) is generally good for overall bonsai health and growth. Fertilizers high in phosphorus are good for enhanced flowering.

The last element considered is pH, whether the soil is acidic or alkaline or neutral. Some plants prefer acidic conditions, others alkaline. Abe provided a comprehensive list (available on the SDBC website) of plant pH preferences. Abe tested San Diego tap water and showed it is very alkaline, which may limit the uptake of vital nutrients. Ways of reducing the alkalinity for plants that like acidic conditions are to use rain water or to use acid forming fertilizers.

## Tray Landscape Workshop

Shirley Kavanaugh led a tray landscape workshop in July. A tray landscape is like a saikei (trees and rocks), but is in a tray with no drainage holes and also uses small figurines. Because the tray has no drainage holes, a layer of soil lines the bottom of the tray and the trees are elevated using the rocks like a pot to keep the tree's roots from getting too wet.

The workshop participants used three small prostrata junipers and some river rock to build river gorge scenes. After the trees were placed, the flow of the river was created using white coral sand. Accent plants were then placed in front and behind the trees along the river, with moss used to simulate grass and also to fill gaps to hold in the soil around the trees. Lastly, small ceramic birds and huts were appropriately placed. The results were a finished look in under an hour and a half.





# San Diego Bonsai Club

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Members  
July 12, 2015



1. **Call to Order:** The regular meeting of the membership of the San Diego Bonsai Club was called to order at 10:30 a.m. Balboa Park by Dan Sola, President. It was confirmed that a quorum was present.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the June 28, 2015 meeting were approved as published.
3. **President's Remarks:** Thank you to our Club members: those who helped with the Fair booth, displayed items, and the watering crew. Among our winnings are second place booth and "Bill Teague" award (well-maintained booth), and Award of Merit, a monetary value of almost \$800.00. Our Watering crew also took care of the competition booths. Present Bonsai dignitaries were acknowledged: Abe Far, President of GSBF and Past Presidents of SDBC.
4. **Sonya Holmquist, VP for Membership:** Many new members have joined SDBC in recent months. Those present were identified.
5. **Board Member Reports:**
  - **Bob Hale, 1st Vice President, reported:** In August, Thomas Elias President of BCI will present on "Discovery and Introduction of Bonsai in the West"; in September Al Nelson will have a demonstration on Oaks; October we will have our SDBC Poway Picnic. In November, we will have Ted Matson as our presenter; and in December, we will have our Christmas Party and bonsai competition.
  - **Peter Chong, Treasurer, reported:** June income was \$2,779.22 and expenses were \$815.98; June net income was \$1,263.44. Bank balances at present are \$24,012.98 for SDBC, and for the Pavilion— \$14,891.27.
  - **Barbara French-Lee, Vice President, Education, reported:** Gary Jones had the third class of beginners class, thanks to everyone who helped; and a thank you to Shirley Kavanaugh, who conducted a workshop on Tray Landscapes. In August, we will have our beginners class on Juniper starting, and Abe Far will conduct a workshop on Making Turn Tables. In September John Jackson will conduct a workshop on repotting.
  - **Janice Hale, Vice President, Special Projects:** Our yearly trip to NISEI Week will be August 22nd the cost is \$30.00. Our Fall Show will be September 26 & 27. Set up is Thursday 24th and SDBC members tree sale setup is Friday 25th. The GSBF Bonsai Fusion Convention is October 28th- November 1st. A Power of One Scholarship is available for one of our members who has not been to a convention. Any member who has been a volunteer at SDBC and wants to go to the Convention can apply.
6. **Appointed Position Reports:**
  - **Lyn Stevenson, Safari Park Pavilion Liason, reported:** If you are a member and want to volunteer at the Pavilion, you have to go through the volunteer process of San Diego Zoo/Safari Park. The Pavilion is in Safari Park and the park is owned by the San Diego Zoo and the SD Zoo is owned by the City of San Diego, so there is a process that must be followed.
7. **Old Business:** none
8. **New Business:** The majority of the items in the Club nursery belongs to Education. If anything is put in or taken out in the nursery, the VP of Education needs to be notified. The Budget inputs for 2016 are due July 15th.
9. **Announcements:** Sonya has 50th Anniversary T-shirts, aprons and pins, and Hapi coats for sale. "Power of One" deadline is July 31, 2015. First time at the Fair and winner of Bill Murphy Award presented to Christina Far, and 50th Anniversary pin presented to Abe Far and Glenn Jensen (not present). Abe Far has been appointed as the Chair for the nominating committee for the 2016 Board Members.
10. **Program:** At 11:00 am Abe Farr presentation on Fertilizer, Soil and PH.
11. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Brenda Crann Secretary

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## SDBC Honoree - John Jackson

John read about the San Diego Bonsai Club and its activities in a 1977 Sunset magazine. He and his brother were both interested and went down to Balboa Park to join. Learning what he could from the teachers, he gravitated toward the San Pu Kai Bonsai Club where he had access to classes with John Naka for 10 years. In time, John would be invited to join the California Bonsai Society, which is an honor extended to only the best.



Not having any trees when he started, it would be seven or eight years before John started showing his trees in the SDBC shows; over the years, his trees would become some of the stand-out trees of each show. I, myself, would always look for what John and Everett Jones were showing; it was guaranteed to be amazing. If you are looking for guidance in how to prepare your tree for a show and how to properly display it, seek out John.

John has had some of his trees for over 36 years, growing some from seeds and some from seedlings. His favorites are his Bald Cypress, Cork Oak, and Orientalis. Like so many of us, John finds his trees to be a great stress reliever; a great way to wind down after any tough workday. He is very proud of his trees, and now that he has retired, has more time to enjoy them. [Though as curator of the Bonsai Pavilion, he may not seem very retired.]

John has lost some trees in his time, but learned from it. When he transplanted a California juniper one year in the spring, a Santa Ana wind occurred and his transplanted bonsai died. Since then, he has chosen to transplant his junipers in the fall which has proven to be highly successful for him. It isn't a mistake when we learn from it.

John takes his hobby seriously and doesn't beat around the bush when it comes to critiquing members trees. He tells things like they are and mentors new bonsai members in the same manner. He would like to see more people "stick with it!" and prefers to mentor those willing to commit to their learning and growth. He is generous in his time and experience with any members who show up and put in the energy. That is why he has done such a remarkable job as the curator for the Bonsai Pavilion at the Safari Park. His abilities to organize, teach, and advise are so valuable to volunteers needing such guidance.

John Jackson is an example of the wisdom and strength

the SDBC has to offer members wanting to become better bonsai artists. He doesn't toot his own horn; his trees speak of his talent and ability. Yet he is always around to offer advice to those willing to approach him. He can be intimidating at times, yet if you are serious about bonsai, he's the man.

Gary Jones, Show Chairman

## Bonsai Ideas by Marty Mann

Watch your sunshine exposure. This is the time of year to move leafy deciduous trees out of full sun and into partially shaded areas to protect the leaf surfaces and fine rootage. Keeping the trees out of the hot sun also tends to improve the maturing fall colors. Rotate all material on a regular basis for even light exposure. Check the general condition of all your bonsai. Turn your trees to give them equal light exposure and even growth.

If you fed your trees in July and are experiencing growth, keep a watch out on training wire that you have placed on your bonsai. Growth spurts can quickly cause scaring and damage of the bark or trunk. Pinch excessive new growth to balance the trees and allow more light to penetrate the interior. Remove extraordinary large leaves that tend to appear on healthy trees from time to time. Continuous pinching encourages 'bushiness and twiggyness'.

If you did not feed your bonsai in July, consider doing so for your August routine. In general, if your plants appear to be stressed due to the heat then reduce your feeding formula to half strength. Particular care must be given to Pomegranates, Olives and other warm climate, tropical material that continue to grow during this period.

Watering is an important summer responsibility. Warm summer breezes encourage increased moisture evaporation through healthy leaf surfaces. For balanced plant health consider increasing your watering schedules to consistently renew this moisture. Avoid wetting the leaves during the warmest part of the day for two good reasons; leaf burn and fungus. Excessive moisture in the crotch of leaf clusters or on their undersides creates environments ideal for the formation of fungus and the related health threatening damage.

If you go on vacation, develop a watering buddy partnership ahead of time in order to care for your bonsai during your trips. These relationships help you to feel more at ease during your trip and can benefit both bonsaiists in the long run.

Enjoy your summer!

This article has been extracted by Mario Condit from the book 'Bonsai Ideas'. © By Marty Mann. Material is not to be copied without publisher or author's permission.

## San Diego Bonsai Club Pavilion at the Safari Park

Summer weather with the surprise rain did not daunt the Pavilion bonsai volunteers at Safari Park. . . The July contingent included **Neil Auwarter, Peter Chang, Julia Chow, Cathy & Mark Edgar, Jeff Gerring, Bob & Janice Hale, Sonya Holmquist, John Jackson, Jaya Kaelberer, Jim Kirchmer, Charlie Mosse, Janie & Ron Ogdon, Janet & Ron Palmer, Marcella Perez, Sally Prestele, Harlan & Mary Ann Price, 'lyn Stevenson, Dennis Wagner, Mark Walters, and Dave Woodall.** Special treats were provided by Mary Ann, Harlan, Janet, 'lyn, Marcella, Julia, Cathy, and John. Many thanks to these summer volunteers and food purveyors! THANK YOU ALL!

Extra special thanks this month also to Jim Kirchmer who annealed all the old copper wire that was donated by Marty Mann, to Ron Ogdon and Dennis Wagner who put up new poles and koi flags for the Pavilion entrance (though we do not maintain koi in the Pavilion ponds), and to Charlie Mosse and Mark Walters who spent several hours over the July 4th holiday trimming landscape trees and major debris clearing. Beside the usual bonsai trimming in the front show area, there are many tasks in the back work area, raking and weeding the garden, clearing the drains from the July rain, cleaning bonsai pots, defoliating, fertilizing, and some repotting.

It takes many volunteers to keep the bonsai and the bonsai garden looking great. The Pavilion is open to visitors whenever the Safari Park is open every day of the year so we need to keep it tended. We usually are there on the first and third Saturdays of each month, but we have been increasing hours on other days now too.

Interested SDBC and San Pu Kai members are always welcome to join us but need to be credentialed by the Zoo/Safari Park. Much sharing and learning and several perks are benefits to joining the volunteers along with



the camaraderie with fellow bonsaiists. Talk to Curator John Jackson, Assistant Curator Dennis Wagner, Liaison 'lyn Stevenson, or any of the volunteers that are listed each month in the Bonsai Wire if you have questions.

All the bonsai in the Pavilion have been donated to the collection by members, members' families, and bonsai friends throughout California. Harry Hirao's previous gifts of suiseki and bonsai to the Pavilion are treasures

now with his passing at the age of 98. Harry was always interested in SDBC and appreciated the fact that the club had undertaken the maintenance of a huge bonsai collection for the public to enjoy. It is a great honor for the Pavilion to have a part of Harry's artistry on exhibit.

'lyn Stevenson, SDBC-Safari Park Liaison

### Harry Hirao, Mr. California Juniper, Remembered

Harry Hirao, friend, teacher and mentor of countless enthusiasts of bonsai and suiseki, passed away on July 23, 2015 at the age of 98 years. A kind, gentle man known for his generosity, Harry looked forward to his visits to San Diego Bonsai Club every March on his birthday and demonstrating on one of his collected California Junipers.



Harry took pleasure in taking his students and friends to dig California Junipers. Every tree digging trip was a great adventure with everyone hoping to find a masterpiece just over the next hill. However, if you did not find a tree, he was sure to find one for you to take home.

Harry Hirao is known and respected world wide in the bonsai and viewing stone community. During his lengthy career Harry received numerous awards. He donated a masterpiece bonsai to the John Y. Naka North American Bonsai Pavilion, National Arboretum, Washington D.C. and San Diego Bonsai Club's Safari Park Bonsai Pavillion. Harry also donated viewing stones in honor of his beloved wife, Alyce, to the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum as well as donating to the Huntington Library, Harry Hirao Viewing Stone Courtyard.

Harry Hirao leaves a great legacy of beautiful bonsai and suiseki, but more importantly, he leaves many, many friends.

Glenn Jensen, Club Member

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## New Members

Please welcome our new members: **Daniel Luczak, Deanna Brigham, and Jonathan Sigmund.**

**Sonya Holmquist**, VP of Membership

## Refreshments

Thank you to the following members for bringing refreshments to the July meeting: **Cristina Vargas Far, Trisha Bonapace, Abe Far, Janet Liggett, Susan Mae Hull, Janet Palmer, Dennis Wagner, and Cathy Edgar.**

## SDBC Benefit Drawing

Thank you to the following for your donations to the July meeting benefit drawing: **Eric Jacobson, Dan Sola, John and Margaret Jackson, Abe and Cristina Far, John Voss, Paul Lawrence, and Glenn Jensen.**

## SDBC Website

Our SDBC website is a treasure trove of resources for club members. Check out what's new on the website:

1. A downloadable print flier for the Fall Show is available on the show webpage. There are both Black & White and Color versions of the flier.
2. An historic timeline of the SDBC club over the last 50 years is available under Resources or at the bottom of the "About Us" webpage.
3. Abe Far's soil/watering/pH/fertilizer handout will be posted for review when it is ready.

## Special Events

### *Nisei Week Field Trip – August 22, 2015*

Our annual trip for the Nisei Week Celebration in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, will be Saturday, August 22nd. The outing will include a visit to the Nanpu Kai Bonsai Show at the Japanese American Cultural Center and a stop at a



bonsai nursery. Abe Far is our contact person for this trip, and he will have a sign-up sheet at the August general meeting. The cost estimate for the trip is \$30/person and will be further determined by the number of participants.

### *Fall 2015 Bonsai Show – Sept. 26-27, 2015*

Get those trees ready, the Fall Show is coming up fast! Sign-up sheets for volunteer assignments will be available at the August general meeting. There is something for everyone, so come join in the fun and satisfaction of putting on a spectacular show. Set up of Room 101 will be Thursday evening Sept. 24th. On Friday evening, Sept. 25th, you can bring in your beautiful bonsai trees and viewing stones and set them up for the show. You can also bring in your plant material and bonsai pots for the sale tables. There are show flyers available for you to print, or email to your friends, from the club website [www.sandiegobonsaiclub.com](http://www.sandiegobonsaiclub.com). Show flyers will also be available at the August and September meetings.



### *GSBF Bonsai Fusion Convention 2015*

*October 29 - November 1, 2015*

Registration is now open for the GSBF Bonsai Fusion Convention to be held at the Riverside Convention Center. You can register online or print out and mail in the registration forms from the GSBF website [www.gsbfbonsai.org](http://www.gsbfbonsai.org). For the best value, sign up before the Early-bird registration closes August 15th. Wonderful bonsai artists like Bjorn Bjorholm and John Wang will be offering workshops and seminars. Our own Martha Choy and Fred Miyahara will also be conducting workshops.

*Janice Hale, V.P. Special Projects*

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## San Diego Bonsai Club Calendar of Events

August 9th Sunday

Club Meeting—Dr. Tom Elias on the  
 "Introduction of Bonsai to the Western World"

August 15th, Saturday

SDBC Workday at Safari Park , 9 am to 12 pm

August 22nd, Saturday

Nisei Week Trip to Little Tokyo in Los Angeles

September 5th Saturday and Sept 19th, Saturday

SDBC Workday at Safari Park , 9 am to 12 pm

September 13th Sunday

Club Meeting—Al Nelson on Oaks

September 26th Saturday and Sept 27th, Sunday

### Fall Bonsai Show

October 3rd Saturday and October 17th, Saturday

SDBC Workday at Safari Park , 9 am to 12 pm

October 11th Sunday

Club Meeting at Lake Poway (picnic & auction)

October 29th, Thursday - November 1st, Sunday

GSBF Convention in Riverside

Sunday, August 9, 2015  
 Balboa Park, Room 101  
 Casa Del Prado

### Meeting Agenda

Time	Activity	Room
08:30– 10:20	Beginning Class	104
08:30– 10:20	Turntable Workshop	101
09:00 - 10:20	Get Help w/ your Bonsai	101
09:30– 10:20	Library Open	104
10:30-11:00	Business Meeting	101
11:00-12:30	Presentation	101
12:30	Lunch	101
12:45	Benefit Drawing	101