

The Bonsai Wire

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September, 2015



Message from the President



Thank you to Dr. Tom Elias for his eloquent and informative presentation on the history of bonsai: How the art of bonsai was introduced to the Western World. It was an impressive well-researched presentation.

The NESEI trip to Little Tokyo was fun and productive, especially for members who visited NESEI Week the first time. The 26 members on the trip were more than twice the number of participants from last year's trip. The bus offered plenty of leg room and huge storage space for those who bought bonsai and bonsai items at the House of Bonsai.

And thank you again to our members who gave for another successful month of activities: credit is given to all those who gave time and other resources—large and small. It is proof that the success of any volunteer organization depends on the contributions of its

members, a BRAVO ZULO to all who helped last month.

Announcements

Our Fall Show sign-up sheets still have plenty of open slots. As mentioned above, the success of our show will depend on your generosity of time and resources. There is no experience needed. If you are not sure about what you can do, talk to Janice Hale or Gary Jones at the September meeting or send them an email (listed on page 2).

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

Dan Sola, President

This Month's Program

"Every oak tree started out as a couple of nuts who decided to stand their ground." - Unknown

Thank goodness for those nuts since oaks trees are the subject of this month's presentation by Al Nelson. Al is a long-time member of the California Bonsai Society and has studied with many of the Bonsai Masters, including John Naka. His specialties are group plantings as well as making small stands for viewing stones. Back in 1985, Al, John Naka, and Harry Hirao made a number of trips to the Lompoc area collecting oaks. One of these collected trees is a cascading oak that was donated by John Naka to the U.S. National Arboretum. Al has also donated a majestic oak tree to the Safari Park bonsai pavilion.

Al will be sharing his wealth of experience working with oaks with the club, and just maybe something more, so don't miss this month's meeting!!!

Bob Hale, 1st VP



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50 Years of Cultivating the Art of Bonsai In San Diego

Editor's Note

One of the great things about SDBC is the availability of experts to help us develop our skills as bonsaiists. This month's presenter, Al Nelson, would not remember it, but he introduced me to *saikei* at the GSBF Convention in Riverside in 2011, when I'd been with the club less than six months. He was very patient with the questions of this newcomer. When Cindy Read had a *saikei* workshop the next year, I was ready to dive in.

And this month's lifetime member profile is of Fred Miyahara, my teacher for the last two years (though he may not admit it given the poor quality trees I keep bringing to class). I've learned an enormous amount from Fred, but feel like I've just scratched the surface of his knowledge of bonsai. I encourage all members to take advantage of these opportunities to learn through demonstrations, workshops, the help corner available each month, and other opportunities such as the GSBF convention.

Dave Barker, Editor

A Harry Hirao bonsai at the Nanpukai Bonsai Exhibit



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Beginning Class: In September, we have the second Beginning Class on junipers taught by Gary Jones. Thanks to John Jackson for finding and raising these beautiful shimpaku junipers. With this heat be sure and keep your trees watered. This month you will work on shaping and designing your tree with pruning and wiring. Don't forget, any member is welcome to observe.



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) include bamboo, boxwood, buttonwood, cedar, citrus, conifers, cotoneaster, cryptomeria, elm, ficus, fir, five needle pine, ginko, hornbeam, Japanese cypress, 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. You can bring as many trees as you can repot in the workshop time period (up to three trees). Workshop includes soil, wire and screen. Bring your own pot, or pots if unsure of the best pots to use.

Barbara French-Lee, VP for Education

August Meeting

Dr. Tom Elias presented his lecture on the introduction of Bonsai to the Western World. Some interesting facts included:

- World expositions like the 1915 one in San Diego were the primary way bonsai were introduced
- Most of the first bonsai purchased in the U.S. all died because they were kept indoors
- Up until the 1950s, it was thought that bonsai were special dwarf trees grown only in Japan



Nisei Week Field Trip

The SDBC visit to Little Tokyo for the Nisei Week Celebration was quite fun. Pop over to the Club's website to view some photos of the trip, the Nanpu Kai Bonsai Exhibit as well as a Samurai sword fight video! We enjoyed other exhibits of calligraphy, sashiko Japanese embroidery and the tranquil garden of the Japanese American Cultural Center. Some of us wandered down the street to visit the beautiful Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple. While a few of us waited outside enjoying the gardens, others went inside to view the Temple. Evidently a service started and the doors were locked from the inside and outside; our brave Peter Chong jumped into action and went to the rescue.

Of course we all had to do a little shopping in the quaint souvenir shops of Little Tokyo, and the newer members were introduced to the Club's favorite shop, Anzen Hardware. Did I mention we stopped at House of Bonsai on the way north? We had a full size tour bus with lots of storage space, of which we took full advantage.

Janice Hale, VP
Special Projects





San Diego Bonsai Club

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Members
August 9, 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 July 12, 2015 meeting were approved as published.
3. Moment of silence was observed to honor Mr. California Juniper, our honorary member, Harry Hirao.
4. **President's remark:** Thank you 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 member, and from meeting set up to putting away everything used at our meeting day, a well done to all.
5. **Susan Baker reported for Sonya Holmquist, VP for Membership:** We have several new members, and they are asked to stand.
6. **Board Member Reports:**
 - **Bob Hale 1st Vice president, reported:** In September Al Nelson will demonstrate on Oak; October we will have our SDBC Poway Picnic; in November Ted Matson will be our presenter; in December, we will have our Christmas Party and bonsai competition.
 - **Peter Chong, Treasurer, reported:** July income \$1,422.00 and expenses were \$2,616.73; July net income was minus 1,194.73. Bank balances: SDBC \$24,292.81 and Pavilion \$14,891.27.
 - **Barbara French-Lee, Vice President, Education, reported:** Beginners class started with Gary Jones on Junipers; Abe Far conducted an workshop on Turn Tables. In November Michael Sykes will do a follow up on Foeminas from past classes. In September, John Jackson will be conducting a class on repotting; the cost is \$15.00.
 - **Janice Hale, VP of Special Projects:** NESEI weekend field trip is filled up; the Power of One winner is Nancy Wilson- Ramon.
7. **Appointed Position Reports:**
 - **John Jackson, Safari Park Pavilion Curator, reported:** Thanks to the volunteers; there was a good turnout; lots of work to be done.
 - **Glenn Jensen, JFG Curator and Barbara French Lee, JFG liason reported:** We have a small group of dedicated volunteers working hard on the trees at the Garden. On August 6, 2015, we had 19 Middle School Students who came to the garden to learn bonsai. Thank you to Glenn Jensen, John Jackson, Dennis Wagner, Nelson Cortes, and Shirley Kavanaugh.
 - **Gary Jones, Fall Show Chair, reported:** We need volunteers and will need trees to fill our tables.
8. **Old Business:** None
9. **New Business:** None
10. **Announcements:** President Dan Sola thanked Ron & Janet Palmer for the volunteering at the tool table. He also indicated Abe Farr will be our chef for our October picnic.
11. **Program:** At 11:00 a.m. Bob Hale introduced Dr. Tom Elias who presented "Discovery and Introduction of Bonsai to the Western World."
12. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Brenda Crann Secretary

Don't forget you can get your bonsai supplies at the club. Just go over to the tool table at the left side of Room 101 and Ron Palmer will be glad to assist you in finding just what you need.



SDBC Honoree - Fred Miyahara



Fred was introduced to his first bonsai when he received a little nana juniper as an anniversary gift from a gentleman who had been a groomsman in Fred and Trisha's wedding. Fred had an uncle who had

done bonsai so as questions came up, he would call his uncle for advice. Finally, his uncle told him there was a bonsai club in San Diego and he should go join it. He found out the club had the room from 10 to 4 on Sunday, so after watching a football game, he showed up around 1:00. Well nearly everyone was gone by then, but he did meet Wayne Chapman and Dr. Markowitz. He was encouraged to return and join, which he did.

Fred gravitated toward Stan Childs as a mentor, working with him and getting involved with a Shohin group that was beginning. Mas Ishi from L.A. was the group's first demonstrator and Fred loved what he was doing. When Mr. Ishi found out Fred spoke some Japanese, he asked him to translate for the demonstration. As chance would have it, Mr. Ishi invited Fred up to his place and became Fred's mentor for grafting techniques working with Kishu junipers. "Hundreds upon hundreds of grafts," Fred says, "hundreds."

In 1998, Kenji Miyata first came to the U.S. from Japan and returned for a series of workshops for GSBF in 2000. Fred translated for him throughout the workshops and Kenji invited Fred to his home in Japan. In 2001, Fred went to Japan with Kora Dalager to see the Kokufu-ten and Kenji took him to his home where Fred saw some incredible black pines. A relationship was formed and Fred assisted Kenji in moving to California, helping set up his home and bonsai nursery. Fred has now been working with him for about 12 years, improving his favorite black pines, and recently working with needle junipers.

Fred has formed different bonsai study groups throughout the years to pass on what he has learned as well as make bonsai masters such as Kenji available to members of the club wanting to go farther in the study of certain types of bonsai. Pine study, shohin groups, and regular beginning classes all have been a part of Fred's involvement with SDBC. Fred believes that the basics are what American bonsai enthusiasts are lacking the most; that is why his focus is on the fundamentals. He also believes no

matter how long we've studied, we can benefit by studying with masters who offer to share their knowledge.

Fred says that what he gets out of bonsai is two things: taking a bonsai tree that is nothing and making it into a nice finished product, and teaching someone who is a novice and watching them develop into someone really good. Fred feels that American bonsai has an opportunity to grow like never before with the advent of so many English speaking persons who have returned from Japan with knowledge to share and the ability to convey those principles to enthusiasts in a way they might understand.

Fred Miyahara is truly a wonderful source of talent, skill, wisdom, and guidance for the SDBC. His standards keep getting higher based on his study and exposure to some of the best bonsai. He challenges himself and everyone in the club with his desire to enjoy this art of bonsai at the level it deserves. And he tells such great stories.

Gary Jones, Show Chairman

Shohin Study Group



The group met in August with Ted Matson. He gave a talk on bonsai principles and soils and also consulted with each member. Ted offered the following bonsai insights:

- Visual space within a tree is important. Hold it up to the light. There should be some light coming through the tree. No? Then clean the crotches of growth and remove twiggy growth. Now, one can see the structure. If needed, re-pot the tree to revitalize it. The back-budding produced will help to replace some of the interior growth. Then the tree can be reduced by cutting branches back to new buds.
- Soil. Finding a consistently sized source of organics for shohin is difficult. There are suitable non-organic alternatives like akadama and a very similar material called "calidama." These materials have better water/nutrient absorbing and releasing properties than organics, and are chemically more stable in the long term. Depending on the hardness of the akadama, it breaks down after about 3-5 years; calidama does not break down. (cont. on p.6)

San Diego Bonsai Club Pavilion at the Safari Park

Even with the very warm days of August, the Pavilion volunteers responded generously with their time and participation in grooming the bonsai collection and the garden. . . Many thanks to these warm weather guardians: **Neil Auwarter, Ken Bross, Alan Burrows, Julia Chow, Cathy & Mark Edgar, Bob & Janice Hale, Sonya Holmquist, Curator John Jackson, Jim Kirchmer, Charlie Mosse, Ron Ogdon, Ron Palmer, Marcella Perez, Jon & Terri Petrescu, Sally Prestele, Harlan & Mary Ann Price, 'lyn Stevenson, Dennis Wagner, and Dave Woodall.** Additional thanks to Charlie, John, Cathy, Julia, Ron Ogdon, and 'lyn for tasty snacks. Jim Kirchmer has arranged with the Safari Park Volunteer Office to also help stock our Pavilion refrigerator with some special snacks in the future. We all appreciate that special gesture.

The Safari Park has now completed the requested drains in the work area extension that the Pavilion volunteers had completed several months ago. We are so thankful that the drains are now in place! We can now add new benches in that work area for our expanding collection. With everyone's concern about the possible El Niño rains later this year, this will prevent any major problems that could arise in the work area of the Pavilion. Our thanks always to Cary Sharp, the Safari Park Horticulturist, and his Staff.



Several newer SDBC members are now completing their application process with the SD Zoo Volunteer Office and will be receiving their photo ID cards, volunteer shirts, and credentials as they join our team of volunteers. SDBC members are always welcome. Of course, volunteers do not receive financial remuneration, but there are perks for those who sign



up and even more perks for those who donate at least fifty hours a year. Talk to any of our current volunteers if you have questions about the work we do.

'lyn Stevenson, SDBC-Safari Park Liaison

Japanese Friendship Garden

Volunteers from SDBC lead a beginning bonsai class for kids at the Japanese Friendship Garden



This week the volunteers will make a trip to A-1 soils to get material for our Fall and Winter repotting. Most of our trees will need to be repotted this year so we are getting prepared. We are also in planning with the Japanese Friendship Garden for a large storage and plant holding area.

The Garden has greatly expanded and is working toward museum status so we are trying to support them with healthy, show quality trees in a variety of styles. Thanks to our curator **Glenn Jensen** and volunteers **Trisha Bonapace, Nancy Wilson-Ramon, Charlie Mosse, Julia Chow and Warren Tam.**

Barbara French-Lee, JFGLiaison

Shohin Group Continued

Both are good replacements for organics.

- Water. Shallow pots can hold water in suspension in the bottom of the pot. Remember Bob Hale's talk about the "perched water table" in the bottom of the pot? Ted suggested a single layer of pumice in the bottom of the shohin pot. Nestle the root ball onto the pumice so that the root ball is elevated above the bottom of the pot. Adjust the height of the tree with the soil mix as needed.

Charlie Mosse, Club Member

New Members

Please welcome our new members: **Fujiko and Charles Gordon, Steve and Amy Fritzenkotter, and Ofelia Vidal.**

Sonya Holmquist, VP of Membership

Refreshments

Thank you to the following members for bringing refreshments to the August meeting: **Abe Far, Janet Liggett, Dennis Wagner, Michael Sykes, Christina Begale, John & Margaret Jackson, Charlie & Sylvia Mosse, Harlan & Mary Ann Price, Shirley Kavanaugh, Mariela Gonzales, and Christine Elmer.**

SDBC Benefit Drawing

Thank you to the following for your donations to the August meeting benefit drawing: **Eric Jacobson, Dan Sola, John & Margaret Jackson, John & Meg Polo, Beth Williams, Janice and Bob Hale, Ken Bross, Charlie & Sylvia Mosse, Shirley Kavanaugh, Scott Flack, Darryl Elmer, Gary Jones, Peter Chang, and Neil Auwarter.**

Website News

Our SDBC website is always adding new information for club members. Check out what's new on the website this month:

- Pictures of the Nisei Week trip including the bonsai exhibit trees such as the ones shown below, and various Nisei week events
- Charlie Mosse has a nice article of sourcing pumice locally for your Shohin bonsai soil mix.

New Website for GSBF Collection at The Huntington

Our own award-winning SDBC webmaster, Eric Jacobson, has created a website for the GSBF Collection at the Huntington. I am thrilled to be able to help with this endeavor as the webmaster. Please look up www.gsbfhuntington.com and keep up to date with your Southern California GSBF bonsai collection. And be sure to mark your calendars for the 2016 Bonsai-A-Thon at The Huntington. I've already rented a bus for our trip on February 27, 2016.

Janice Hale, GSBF@Huntington Webmaster



Special Events

2015 GSBF Bonsai Fusion Convention

Registration is open for the GSBF Bonsai Fusion Convention to be held at the Riverside Convention Center, October 29-November 1, 2015. You can register online or print out and mail in the registration forms from the GSBF website www.gsbf-bonsai.org. Wonderful bonsai artists like Bjorn Bjorholm and John Wang will be offering workshops and/or seminars, as well as our own Martha Choy and Fred Miyahara. In conjunction with the convention the Hyatt Place Riverside/Downtown and the Mission Inn Hotel and Spa have special room rates of \$99. You will receive a special code for the hotels after you register for the convention.

Janice Hale, V.P. Special Projects

2015 Fall Show Update

Hey everyone, it is September! Our Fall Bonsai Show is less than a month away and we are all beginning to feel the excitement of another opportunity to see the beautiful bonsai trees members have created. And the sales tables will be full of potential- bonsai, pots, accents, and suiseki, oh yes! It is too bad we can't do this at every meeting because we would certainly be overstimulated.

And it doesn't happen like magic, but almost. Lots of volunteers showing up anywhere they are needed will make this show a reflection of the fun, dedication, and innovation this club possesses. So sign up to help; and show up to help. Bring your enthusiasm and we'll do the rest to put your labor and talents to work.

When does this all take place? Glad you asked! Set-up of Room 101 will be Thursday afternoon/evening 09/24/15, we'll bring the show trees and sale items Friday afternoon/evening 09/25/15 and the show will be Saturday and Sunday 09/26-09/27/15. Sign-up sheets will be available at our September meeting as well as sale tags and consignment sheets. See you at the meeting and on set-up day.

Gary Jones, Show chairperson



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

San Diego Bonsai Club Calendar of Events

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 24th, Thursday, and Sept. 25th, Friday

Fall Show Set-up

September 26th Saturday and Sept 27th, Sunday

Fall Bonsai Show ←

September 27th, Sunday

5 pm Fall Show Tear-down

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

November 8th Sunday

Club Meeting—Ted Matson

Sunday, September 13, 2015
 Balboa Park, Room 101
 Casa Del Prado

Meeting Agenda

Time	Activity	Room
08:30– 10:20	Beginning Class	104
08:30– 10:20	Repotting 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	Demonstration	101
12:30	Lunch	101
12:45	Benefit Drawing	101