

# Redwood Empire Bonsai Society



## REBS NEWSLETTER

Volume 29, Issue 2

February 2012



REBS President Arty Kopecky

### President's Message

Dear Friends:

I love to wax poetic about the art and community of bonsai. As I return home after dealing with the world, I see the rain refreshing the gardens; a certain thrill touches me as I think of which plants I will work with. I like to put on some Spanish guitar dance music and continue with wiring a tree and bringing it to life with motion and poise. The bonjin style particularly lends itself to suggesting human form in dance.

So now go back to enjoying this calming, relaxing, this meditative and contemplative art form, which brings soothing tranquility and serene enjoyment of the natural world and our caring place in it.

The march of blossoms commences early in our mild climate. Bulbs are opening and some can be used as accents. I have seen very effective

Japanese iris plantings. The daphne and camellia lead the way. Some plums will be budding soon, and the umé, flowering apricot, is one of the earliest also. Some cyanosis are starting to bloom.

But wait, before I get too carried away with spring fever let us not forget the merits of the winter silhouette. Gene Lynch's plum grove, displayed on Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>, is a wonderful example, as is the intricate bonsai presented by Steve Price. It is only without the leaves, in silhouette, that the minute ramifications can be seen. There are so many aspects to bonsai; the winter presentation of the desiduous trees' stark forms is very important to appreciate.

I hate to bring it up again, but I am going to keep harping on a crisis in

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# Redwood Empire Bonsai Society

## US Postal Service Honors Bonsai

The U.S. Postal Service has selected paintings of bonsai trees by Hilo artist John D. Dawson for a series of five stamps that have recently been released. The stamps are first-class "Forever" stamps.

The stamps depict the art of bonsai, Japanese for "plant in a pot," cultivated miniature trees.

The five-stamp series depicts a Sierra juniper, a trident maple, a black pine, an azalea and a banyan. Plants 15 to 20 inches tall served as models for Dawson's paintings.

Dawson's previous work for the U.S. Postal Service includes stamps for the "Nature of America" series, the first of which was released in 1999 and depicted a Sonoran Desert landscape.



## Announcements and Upcoming Bonsai Events

**February 3-5**

**Santa Nella, CA**

**California Shohin Seminar 2012** at the Hotel de Oro. Demos on Friday, workshops on Saturday. Registration forms and information can be found at [www.calshohin.org](http://www.calshohin.org), or email [calshohin@yahoo.com](mailto:calshohin@yahoo.com).

**February 25-26**

**Oakland, CA**

**GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt: Mammoth Fundraiser, 2012** at the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. On Saturday an auction of fabulous bonsai will be from 1 - 4 p.m., with preview at 12 noon. Sunday hours are from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. and will feature demonstrations by Collection Curator, Kathy Shaner and Team; many vendors, a large consignment sale of bonsai and bonsai related items and several raffle drawings throughout the day.

For general information email [www.bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com](mailto:www.bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com), visit [www.gsbfbonsai.org/lake-merritt/NewHome.htm](http://www.gsbfbonsai.org/lake-merritt/NewHome.htm), or phone Randi Keppeler 650.598.0127.

**March 24**

**Oakland, CA**

**GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt: 'Great Repotting Party'** with **Ryan Neil** at the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Contact [bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com](mailto:bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com) for details.

President's Message  
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our future coming in the fall.

Yvonne Batcheller says she will retire from being the treasurer after a six year stint. I know it is early but I see this rushing up in no time and it would be so much easier to have someone aboard for a few months so the procedures remain the same as we make the transition. I do have a sense of responsibility as your president. There will be several positions needing to be filled toward the end of the year and I want the membership to be aware that this challenge is coming up and to begin dealing with it now.

For the moment, all officers and chairpersons are staying in place. Let me give a rousing shout out to all for their continued service to our Bonsai Society. It has been a pleasure working with the club officers, but we do need a few new folks to join us.

Thanks for your continued participation, and carry on,

—Arty

## Calendar Of Events

February 2012

No Board meeting this month.

- 12<sup>th</sup> Kathy Shaner Advanced Workshop, Sunday (6.3). and special repotting & wiring evening. **Still one vacancy!\***
- 13<sup>th</sup> Kathy Shaner Advanced Workshop, Monday (6.1 & 3.1).
- 14<sup>th</sup> Kathy Shaner Advanced Workshop, Tuesday (6.2).
- 16<sup>th</sup> Intermediate I Workshop, Thursday, Santa Rosa Senior Center, 704 Bennett Valley Rd., Room 17, Santa Rosa, with Richard Hoskins and Ivan Lukrich.
- 17<sup>th</sup> Intermediate II Workshop, Friday, Frank Bardella's Bonsai Studio, with Frank Bardella and Gene Lynch.
- 28<sup>th</sup> REBS General Meeting and Demonstration, 4th Tuesday, 7:30-10:00 p.m., **Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center, 2050 Yulupa Avenue · Santa Rosa · CA · 95405.** Our own bonsai expert nonpareil, Jim Gremel, will be doing the demo.

\* Fee is \$53. Please bring your own soil, wire, mesh, and tools. Call Will Spires (707.328.5377) or email [will\\_spires@comcast.net](mailto:will_spires@comcast.net) ASAP to reserve these spaces. All members are welcome, any level.



We love this guy's attitude!



# Redwood Empire Bonsai Society

## Bare Roots Exposed! Repotting Two Trees

24 January 2012

**O**n January 24, Sensei Kathy Shaner presented not one, but two demonstrations at the REBS monthly general meeting. First, Kathy showed us a healthy Mugo Pine (*Pinus mugo*) or Mountain Pine in a colorful flowered, porcelain pot. This tree was first shown to us during the meeting in November



Removing the Mugo from its recent home.

of last year. Then it was fuller, dense foliage and bushy. Since that time, Kathy has worked on the pine to remove half or more of the branches and foliage. She also wired and styled the tree. The purpose of this demonstration was now to repot the pine into a new bonsai pot.

The second demonstration tree belonged to veteran member Bernardo Fernandez. It was a medium, six trunk Seiju Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia* 'Seiju') purchased by Bernardo from Brent Walston of Evergreen Gardenworks Nursery, Kelseyville, Lake County, CA. The purpose of this demonstration was to split two trunks off and repot. Bernardo noted that the elm was photographed and evaluated by bonsai artist Peter Adams, who presented three colorful sketches of potential future designs. These designs were published in *Bonsai Focus* in September 2010.

The first step in the process of repotting any bonsai is to be sure to cut and remove the tie down wires at the bottom of the container. Next is to gently lift the tree by its root ball from the pot. In some cases, the soil should be loosened with a root knife cutting around the inner edge of the container. Kathy then prefers to use a large root hook with dull point to peel off from the bottom of the root mass. The dull point of the root hook tends to cut into the root mass with ease, while



Like a proud mom, Kathy shows off her tree's now-exposed bottom, er, roots.

separating the soil from the roots. She indicated a sharp pointed root hook can hit and destroy vital roots. Kathy uses scissors then to trim the roots. The scissors should be sharp in order to get clean cuttings.

Kathy and Bernardo cut off two smaller trunks from the six trunk elm by using a sharp wood chisel hammered through the trunk base. At that point, Bernardo performed the same techniques as above to clean the root ball, straighten roots and trim roots on the elm.

No sealant is used on trunk or roots below the surface of the

soil. However, on the elm special attention is paid to the trunk and root cuts. A sharp knife is used to slice the cut areas and cambium in order to promote root development. This is important on any root ¼ inch or larger.

Kathy proceeded to evaluate the front view of the trees so that repotting ensured proper placement in the new pots. The pots required filter screens and tie down wires installed in the bottom of each pot. A layer of coarse bonsai soil was put into the new pots. On top of that finer bonsai soil was used. The soil is amended with horticultural charcoal and super phosphate.

Kathy demonstrated the proper techniques for tying down the root ball in place. This critical tie down is



Kathy makes chopsticks fly as she removes old soil from the elm's root ball.

Bare Roots Exposed! Repotting Two Trees

Show & Tell



The elm has been skillfully tied down using chopstick pieces to protect the roots from the wires.

performed in bonsai so that the root ball will not shift or move around and to allow for tiny feeder roots to grow and develop. Kathy used parts of chopsticks to cross over each other along with the tie down wires to avoid any wire coming into direct contact with the roots. This would prevent the tie down wires from cutting into any roots.

Kathy discussed special considerations for the mugo pine tree. It had well defined roots and solid root base. She dug holes the size of a dime using a chopstick all around the root mass. These holes will be filled in with bonsai soil mix and help to water thoroughly through the root ball. Otherwise the water would flow away from the roots and only moisten the bonsai soil. She said that mugo pine can be difficult to maintain. She said that



Kathy carefully makes holes in the soil that will assist roots in accessing water.

most people will remove too much of the foliage or overdo wiring of mugo pines. Kathy wanted the top growth or foliage of the demo tree to be left untouched for one year or more in order for the pine to regain its strength. The newly potted pine was almost bare rooted in the process.



Finally, Kathy uses a spray bottle to gently water the repotted pine.

Ivan Lukrich won the mugo pine tree in the raffle of the demo tree. He also won a couple of free workshops with Kathy to further wire and style the bonsai.



George Haas showed off a lovely juniper cascade in a hand made ceramic vessel.



Bernardo Fernandez's juniper cascade looked better than this photo shows atop his-own-hands-made pepperwood stand.

# Redwood Empire Bonsai Society

## Show & Tell, cont.

### Directory 2012

|  |                  |                       |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| Art Kopecky<br><b>President</b>                                      | 707 · 829 · 5670 | artsankopecky@msn.com |
| Rick Batcheller<br><b>Vice President</b>                             |                  | r1xcape@sonic.net     |
| (Open)<br><b>Secretary</b>   |                  |                       |
| Yvonne Batcheller<br><b>Treasurer</b>                                |                  | ybforms@sonic.net     |
| Jim Gallagher<br><b>Board Member</b>                                 | 707 · 575 · 8726 |                       |
| Ivan Lukrich<br><b>Board Member</b>                                  | 707 · 527 · 0795 | lukrich@sonic.net     |
| Ned Lycett<br><b>Board Member</b>                                    | 707 · 887 · 2004 | nlycett@comcast.net   |
| Gene Lynch<br><b>Board Member</b>                                    | 707 · 763 · 7504 | erlynch@aol.com       |
| Bob Shimon<br><b>Board Member</b>                                    | 707 · 884 · 4126 | shimon@mcn.org        |
| James Whitfield<br><b>Board Member</b>                               | 707 · 538 · 1077 | jawhit6@yahoo.com     |
| Jim McGlashan<br><b>Past President</b>                               | 707 · 942 · 6316 |                       |
| Kathy Shaner<br><b>Sensei/Accredited<br/>Bonsai Master</b>           | 408 · 226 · 6625 |                       |
| Rick Batcheller<br><b>Membership Chair</b>                           |                  | r1xcape@sonic.net     |
| James Whitfield and<br>Peter Naughton<br><b>Magazine &amp; Video</b> | 707 · 539 · 4253 | jawhit6@yahoo.com     |
| James Whitfield<br><b>Book Librarian</b>                             | 707 · 539 · 4253 | jawhit6@yahoo.com     |
| Celestia Amberstone<br><b>Webmaster and<br/>Newsletter Editor</b>    | 707 · 527 · 6292 | rebsweb@earthlink.com |



Bernardo Fernando's winter azalea looks great on a pepperwood slab, cut and polished by his own hands.



Jeff Konicek's bunjin style black pine was admired by all.



Steve and Ian Price displayed a lovely euonymus, showing all its complex ramification, unseen for most of the year.



Gene Lynch's plum grove shows off its beautiful silhouette in its winter phase.

### RYAN NEIL RETURNS IN MARCH

Did you miss him in September? Didn't get enough of him then? Well, don't miss our March meeting when, once again, Bonsai artist **Ryan Neil** will be styling an excellent California juniper that will, as usual, be raffled off after the demo.



Visit <http://www.bonsaimirai.com> for a real treat—an excellent website for a remarkable bonsai artist.

"...after graduating with a degree in horticulture from Cal Poly, he apprenticed in Japan under Mr. Masahiko Kimura for nearly six years. He completed his apprenticeship about a year and a half ago. Besides holding classes at his bonsai nursery near Portland, Oregon, he is busy traveling throughout the United States and the rest of the world giving demonstrations, holding workshops, and doing work for private clients."

—Bob Shimon

Tuesday · March 27<sup>th</sup> · 7:30 p.m.

Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center  
2050 Yulupa Avenue · Santa Rosa · CA · 95405

Please Contact Bob Shimon at 707-884-4126 or [shimon@mcn.org](mailto:shimon@mcn.org) for further info.



This unusual little dogwood brought in by Jeff Konicek sports little yellow flowers in its silhouette.

Official REBS Newsletter is published monthly.

## Redwood Empire Bonsai Society



Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center,  
Santa Rosa, California

REBS was founded in 1981 for bonsai enthusiasts. Our club meets every fourth Tuesday of the month (except in July and December). The monthly meeting and demonstration are held at the Luther Burbank Art and Garden Center, 2050 Yulupa Avenue, Santa Rosa, 95405. Meetings are open to the public. Please refer to our calendar of events for specific time, date and guest demonstrator.

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**We're on the web:**  
**[www.rebsbonsai.org](http://www.rebsbonsai.org)**

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Redwood Empire Bonsai Society  
PO Box 2872  
Santa Rosa CA 95405-2872

*Address Correction Requested  
Please Forward*

