



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

March 2024


Our bonsai display at Sonoma Botanical Garden is drawing a lot of public interest, so much that they asked us to participate next year. The display started in early January and is continuing through March.

We have also been invited to participate in the Matsuri Festival being held at Julliard Park in Santa Rosa in May. Their mission is to share and promote traditional Japanese art and culture. We need a volunteer to organize REBS participation. Let me know if you are interested.

Our treasurer, Joyce Smith, needs to step back, and we are in search of her replacement. REBS has over 100 members and we hope someone with some basic bookkeeping experience will step up and take her position.

Volunteers are needed to maintain the club, let me know if you can help.

Ivan Lukrich (lukrich@sonic.net). 707-529-3298c

 **IMPORTANT!!- SEE PAGE 9 FOR
POSSIBLE OLIVE TREE YAMADORI FIELD
TRIP**

RECENT REBS ACTIVITIES

MARCH 2024 REBS EVENTS

March 7 (Thurs): 6:00PM to 9:00 PM.

Note the time change

REBS INTERMEDIATE WORKSHOP

Rohnert Park Community Center

Ivan reports that repotting season is closing as trees are starting to push buds. If you need help repotting, bring your trees to this Thursday's Intermediate Workshop. This is also a good time to trim and restyle deciduous trees before leafing out.

Please let Ivan know if you are attending—here's his contact info. Beginners are welcome as well.

lukrich@sonic.net

707-529-3298

March 28 (Thursday):

6:15PM to 7:15-Board Meeting

7:30PM to 9:00PM- General Meeting

Rohnert Park Community Center

Juan Cruz: *Purchase criteria for new bonsai*

with demonstration. Juan is a thermochemical engineer as well as a experienced bonsai devotee.

March 29 (Friday): Adam Toth's Advanced Workshop. The workshops are full. Please contact Bob Shimon to be placed on the waiting list.

shimon@mcn.org

February 1- Members' Workshop

Rumor has it that a quiet and productive workshop was enjoyed by all.

Mid February-

Alan Murakami went to the Kokufu-ten and filed this report: "I highly recommend going to the prestigious Kokufu-ten bonsai exhibit in Tokyo for anyone wanting to see some outstanding trees. I had the opportunity to see the show last week, and it was awe inspiring. The first week, I saw over 100 trees at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum in Ueno. Then, they swap out the trees, and put in another 100 new trees for the second week of the show!"



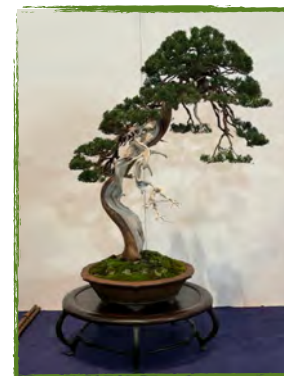
Mt. Fuji. Photo- Alan Murakami



You can even go to the Garden Club a few blocks away to buy pots, tools, stands, etc. What was really hard was looking at all of the beautiful bonsai for sale, and not being able to purchase given the stringent quarantine rules. (However, Mike Tracy clarified that you can buy them if you bare root them, and go through a Japanese inspection process. Who knew?)

Left- Alan Murakami
Right- Bjorn Bjorholm, who is indeed very tall
Photo- Alan Murakami

The age of the trees really stood out to me. The nebari and shari spoke of decades of harsh conditions. Many of the trees were groomed into perfect silhouettes. However, to me, the trees that had more unevenness in their profile along with the matching, authentic deadwood tended to give more of that wabi-sabi feeling. Those were the trees I spent much time viewing and savoring."



Alan Murakami's favorite bonsai at Kokufu
Photo- Alan Murakami

Alan sent me a number of photos of Kokufu bonsai, some of which will be included in the newsletter.

Note: Kokufu-ten, held in Tokyo during February, is the most important bonsai exhibition offered in Japan. Only the highest quality trees of Japan are accepted and on display.

February 17 and 18- Annual Mammoth Auction and Sale Fundraiser

REBS new member Skylar Dewitt visited the Show, but managed not to buy anything- amazing restraint. No one reported any blood being spilled, so I suspect the lines weren't as politely tense as usual.

February 22- REBS Board Meeting and Demonstration

The Board Meeting was interesting and short. Please see page 9 for details.

MEETINGS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

The General Meeting and Demonstrations are held on the fourth Thursday of each month from 7:30 to 9:30 pm. Before the meetings, a table will be set out with items that are free, and the REBS Library will have some books/magazines available for members to check out. Another area will have items for sale by silent auction. The items need not be bonsai related; gift certificates for bottles of wine are encouraged. A fee is collected by REBS to facilitate the sale of the members' items.

Free tickets are handed out to win a choice of door prizes, usually bonsai tools. Members also can buy raffle tickets for the door prize, usually the demo tree.

DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR 2024

The 2024 Demonstrations are now set up. The presenters are well-known experts in their fields and REBS is proud to offer the demonstrations to both members and the general public.

January 25– Samuel Tan: *Repotting a Japanese Black Pine*. Sam studied bonsai under Ryan Neil at Bonsai Mirai in 2019. Sam has also attended classes given by Jonas Dupuich and Michael Hagedorn.

February 22– Adam Toth: *Juniper*. Adam apprenticed in Japan under Mr. Taiga Urushibata.

March 28– Juan Cruz: *Purchase criteria for new bonsai with demonstration*. Juan is a thermochemical engineer who has been a bonsai devotee for at least 30 years. He studied under Kathy Shaner.

April 25– Eric Schrader: *Deciduous*. Eric and his wife Dory founded Bonsify. Eric has been growing and developing Bonsai trees for over fifteen years– his specialty is producing modern mini-bonsai.

May 23– Bob Shimon: *Redwoods*. Bob founded Mendocino Coast Bonsai in 1995 and specializes in Redwoods, Sierra Junipers, Mendocino Pygmy Cypress, and Live Oak yamadori.

June 27– Bill Castellon: *Japanese Black Pine*. Bill studied under Mas Imazumi and interned with Head Gardener Tokushirou Tamane in Kyoto in 2001.

July 20 (Saturday) REBS Annual Picnic

July 25– Lucy Sakaishi–Judd: *Kusamono workshop*. Fascinating woman! Check out <https://insidesacramento.com/branching-out/>. She and her late husband have had a long career in bonsai.

August– no meeting. (August 31– tentative show date.)

September 26– Jonas Dupuich: *Show critique*. Jonas is a noted Bonsai artist and instructor. He and Eric Schrader found the Pacific Coast Bonsai Expo. Eric is the author and creator of the blog bonsaitonight.com

October– to be determined

November 21– Boon Manakitivipart: *to be determined*. Boon has won numerous national and international awards for his work on bonsai. He is known for his innovative techniques, unique bonsai styling, and creative teaching methods.

December 21 (Saturday) REBS Annual Holiday Celebration

FEBRUARY'S GENERAL MEETING AND DEMONSTRATION

Adam Toth gave a presentation to a standing-room only audience regarding the appearance of age in a bonsai tree, starting off with the results of his initial survey of what more experienced practitioners wish they had done earlier. Almost to a person, they told him that they wished that they had started earlier and with better material. There was some audience murmuring from the grey haired sorts that starting earlier is not an option now, but it was then pointed out that it's best to enjoy the journey, as trite as that may be. The murmuring stopped and there was a general shuffling of feet.

Adam explained that really good trees don't present their final version right away, but there are ways to speed up the process.

Often, final version can often suggest age, the tree having sustained illness or accident in the past. With junipers, the bonsai practitioner can create "ribbons" of live vein and deadwood, the deadwood being shari in this case. Evergreen trees species suitable for creating deadwood include the aforementioned junipers, as well as hinoki, yew, and redwood.

Note: Shari is the type of deadwood that is present along the trunk and possibly extending to the soil. Jin is the deadwood created from branches, and uro is a hollow, irregularly shaped wound in the trunk. Shari and jin on deciduous trees often look unrealistic, but nature is full of owl hollows in maples.

Another indication of age is rough, fissured skin—no, wait—that's people, he meant bark. Adam explained that, first, the bark must be removed to see what's what and then grown back, assuring us that "should only be 10 years or so." (I could see various grey haired audience members doing the math in their heads and looking a bit stunned. But I digress.)

Among the best trees for growing impressive bark are the pines, although junipers work as well. Debarking is relatively simple, involving strong tweezers, chisel, and a stiff brush.

At this point, Adam began to work on the youngish juniper with more effort, leading me to divide my attention between watching his techniques and taking notes. What follows here may be a bit random.

Adam asked the audience to come up and analyze the tree to determine the front. It was suggested that the first items to notice are the tree base— don't bother with surface roots— and the potential for creating deadwood. Old trees very usually have only one live vein.

Teo Loyola came forward and, looking for movement in the juniper, suggested a front. It was noted that a defining characteristic of old junipers is movement, so play to the tree's strengths or lack thereof.

Bob Shimon then came forward and looked for the best trunk taper, and movement as well.

Adam pruned off branches that will never be useful. The branch may be too long, too heavy, too straight, or too big in proportion with the trunk. The pruned branch could be made into a smooth jin with a blunt tip. Note that as much as 30% of the trunk can be shari(ed) without the tree dying.



Teo Loyola, suggesting a front to the juniper, prior to Adam working on it

To create a jin, pop out a strand from the ill fated branch and then follow it down until the strand pulls out.

The correct pot can assist in the appearance of age in a tree. How much soil/roots can be removed? Generally, 50 to 60%, however, an older tree can't be bare rooted. A younger tree can have more roots/soil removed as well as more work done on them, compared with older trees.

FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING AND DEMONSTRATION, CONT

Adam pointed out that an interesting tree worthy of being passed through generations is not created in a 2 hour demo– snip snip and hey presto! An authentic bonsai. (Someone in Japan just clutched their heart.)

In the bonsai community, there is a continuing debate between using power tools versus hand tools to create deadwood. Adam likes to use power tools to create the basic structure. Hand tools can be used later to smooth out the power tool marks, as well as create details.

Upon a member asking, Adam described the basic bonsai calendar.

Spring– strong growth

Summer– dormant, although there may be a second small flush of growth

Fall– slow down

Winter– dormant

Another member asked about lime sulphur. It's used to preserve the tree from horticultural difficulties and to change the color of the deadwood to a silver grey. But only to the more developed deadwood, the younger stuff needs to shrink and expand.

The take-away

Good bonsai takes decades, so spend wisely and buy one good tree instead of five nursery stock.

The juniper demo tree was won by Ivan Lukrich. Lucas Bibiana, one of REBS newest, youngest, and cutest members, received a deciduous tree



Ivan Lukrich winning the “after” tree



On the right: Lucas Bibiana with his new bonsai.

MARCH'S UPCOMING GENERAL MEETING AND DEMONSTRATION

Juan Cruz will give the next demonstration, the topic being how to evaluate prospective trees as “better material”. As we have learned from Adam’s February talk, selecting the best bang for the buck is very important in bonsai practice, especially if one is just starting.

Juan is a thermochemical engineer who has been a bonsai devotee for at least 30 years. He has given numerous talks and been featured on several videos. Juan studied under Kathy Shaner.

UPCOMING REBS EVENTS

March 7 (Thurs): **6:00PM to 9:00 PM. Note the time change**

REBS INTERMEDIATE WORKSHOP

Rohnert Park Community Center

Repotting season is closing because trees are starting to push buds, despite or perhaps because of all the rain. If you need help repotting, bring your trees to this Thursday's Intermediate Workshop. This is also a good time to trim and restyle deciduous trees before leafing out. Beginners are welcome as well.

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Three point display
Photo- Alana Murakam

UPCOMING BONSAI EVENTS

March 16 (Saturday): 11:00 to 5:00

March 17 (Sunday): 12:00 to 4:00

SAN JOSE BETSUIN BONSAI CLUB SHOW

There will a demonstration on Saturday at 1:00pm by David Nguy and at 1:00pm on Sunday by a club member. The benefit drawing will follow immediately afterward. Vendors will be present. 640 N 5th St, near Japantown, San Jose

March 19 (Tuesday): 7:00 PM to 9:30PM

Wiring Workshop

Marin Bonsai Club, Terra Linda Community Center, San Rafael

Marin will have a beginner's wiring workshop. Marin members are first in line, so please RSVP to let Tung know if you are interested. The workshop fee is \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members. tung@marinbonsai.org.

March 24 (Sunday): 10:00 to 3:00

Lotus Bonsai workshop- "Japanese Maple"

Lotus Bonsai Nursery, Placerville, CA

Japanese maples grown from seed at the Nursery will be styled and moved into bonsai pots. \$150

Contact us at mail@lotusbonsai.com

April 13 (Saturday) and 14 (Sunday):

10:00 AM to 4:00PM both days

American Bonsai Assoc., Sacramento Bonsai Show and Sale

Shepard Garden and Arts Center, Sac.

Featuring Bonsai and Suiseki Exhibits, vendors, and consignment sales.

Demonstrations both days at 1:30 by Headliner Tyler Sherrod. Tree to be "raffled" immediately afterward

-Beginners' Workshop: Sunday 10:00 AM Incl. tree, pot, soil, and instruction \$15.

Email abasbonsaiclubs@gmail.com to reserve a space

SEASONAL TIPS FOR BONSAI CARE

Gleaned from the "Bonsai Season Care Guide for the San Francisco Bay Area", as published by the East Bay Bonsai Society (snarky comments are my own and meant for humor only)

General care for Early Spring: Move all trees into full sun. Rotate trees at least twice each month to promote symmetry as roots and canopy begin period of rapid growth.

Fertilizing has risen its ugly head: Delay feeding any tree until 2 to 6 weeks after repotting, except if you are Ryan Neil, who fertilizes right after repotting.

Young trees, especially deciduous ones, can be lightly fed with a standard fertilizer after the first flush of growth. Unless you are Bjorn BJORHOLM, who recommends pushing a young developing tree with chemical fertilizer, or Ryan Neil, who scorns chemical fertilizers and preaches the pure virtues of organic fertilizers.

Watering considerations: Water regularly to keep the root ball moist. Repotted plants usually have reduced roots requiring less water. Adjust automatic watering systems for spring and lazy family members who swear that they will water your trees whilst you are gone on a short vacation.

Insect, Disease, and Weed Control: Apply fungicide and pesticide one a month as preventatives. If you follow Bjorn BJORHOLM's advice, the State of California will laugh at you and point out that one of the chemicals is BANNED. Cleaning your tools with Sevin is not a happening thing in California either.

Styling and Pruning: As I know from very sad experience, check your deciduous trees, especially maples, to avoid wire bite on the trunks and branches. However, do pick the center of new buds now, but wait until growth hardens off to do major work, usually late Spring. Pomegranate, ume, plum, apple, quince, hawthorn and bougainvillea- trim branches on flowering and fruiting trees before flower buds form so they have time to develop.

As for conifers, five needled white pines and other single-flush pines (they only have one growth season per year) need to have a reduction in the length of the candles by breaking during mid spring, which this isn't. (Will the candle police come after you? Stay tuned.) Regarding Black Pines- if some candles grow too strong, reduce the length by breaking in half. (More work for the candle police). Junipers- pinch to maintain shape if styling is mature.

Broadleaf evergreens can be wired now. Sasanqua camellias can be cut back to two leaves, wired, and shaped. Sasa bamboo can be pruned, leaving the first node about the base of the culm. Satsuki azaleas can tolerate a lot of work- remove excess flower buds, if not done already. The azaleas can have their trunks and branches wired and bent before repotting. This is the best time to prune large branches and seal all wounds. Note- let the soil dry so plants will be more pliable for bending, unless you are Ryan Neil, who advocates watered plants. Wire every branch to upcoming tip, trim errant branches, remove extra-long stems or use them for thread grafts or shorten them to two leaves. You can also talk to our own Art Kopecky, Mr. Azalea.

NEW MEMBERS

The Redwood Empire Bonsai Society welcomes its newest members- Len Moriyama, Paula (I'm so sorry, I don't know your last name), Kim Hanson, and George Burmeyer. We look forward to seeing you all at the meetings and hearing your bonsai stories.

MONTHLY MEMBERS' INTERMEDIATE WORKSHOPS

The Intermediate workshops are held on the first Thursday of each month, from 6:00 until 9:00 PM at the Rohnert Park Community Center. Senior members will provide assistance to members with beginner and intermediate levels of experience. Observers are welcome. Cost is \$15.00 per workshop, payable by check OR CASH at the door.

Ivan Lukrich is the workshop leader and a long time devotee of the art. He joined REBS in 1985 and is a certified bonsai instructor. Please contact him if you are planning to join a class. He needs to know what club supplies, such as wire, to bring.

lukrich@sonic.net.

Have fun and learn stuff- sounds like a plan.



Ivan needs a bigger boat

Root cutters!



2024 ADVANCED WORKSHOP SCHEDULE WITH ADAM TOTTH

Adam Toth is a Bay Area resident and has just completed an apprenticeship in Japan. He brings a wealth of bonsai knowledge and is eager to assist us in elevating both our skills and the quality of our trees.

Jan 26 (Friday) – Group 1

Jan 27 (Saturday) – Group 2

Feb 23 (Friday) – Group 1

Feb 24 (Saturday) – Group 2

Mar 29 (Friday) – Group 1

April 26 (Friday) – Group 1

May 24 (Friday) – Group 1

June 28 (Friday) – Group 1

July 26 (Friday) – Group 1

July 27 (Saturday) – Group 2

August – No Workshops

Sept 27 (Friday) – Group 1

Sept 28 (Saturday) – Group 2

Oct – No Workshops

Nov – 22 (Friday) – Group 1

Nov 23 (Saturday) – Group 2

Dec – No Workshops

Please contact Bob Shimon to be placed on the waiting/substitute list
shimon@mcn.org

FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Ivan Lukrich suggested "Let's start at 6:30 since we don't have that much to decide." OK.

Joyce Smith said we received \$760 from memberships.

Issue with the auditorium lights still not resolved.

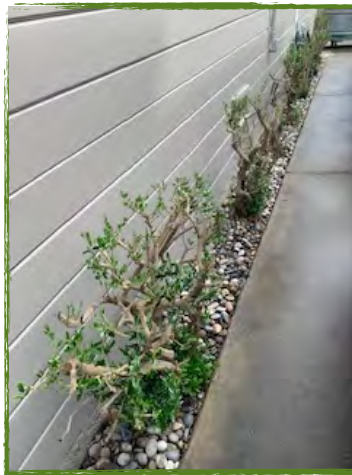
The Sonoma Botanical Garden would like us to do our bonsai presentation again next year and include suiseki. It will start January 9, 2025 and run for 11 weeks(?). This year there were 140 visitors in one day, and 65 another day. George Haas said he will gladly coordinate again, but would like more members to participate. He particularly noted there is a good French bakery close by in Glen Ellen. Board accepted to continue next year.

After the robbery, The Collection North is reviewing the security which is currently split up between too many actors.

Alan Murakami is investigating advanced workshops locations. It appears Barbara Bardella is still happy to host us. The October 24 demo with Bjorn Bjorholm will be held at the larger Senior center.

IMPORTANT INFO RE OLIVE YAMADORI FIELD TRIP

Ivan Lukrich informs me that he has been contacted by a homeowner regarding some olives that he can donate to REBS. The homeowner reports that he has "nine "little Ollie" fruitless olive trees along my driveway that need to be gone by the end of March. All are approximately 2-3 feet tall with bulging root ball bases. They were cut back from 4-5 feet this winter and are recovering nicely. Thought they might make nice bonsai. Not looking for \$\$\$, just some help digging them out. I can provide pictures by request. Located near downtown Petaluma."



Contact Ivan Lukrich if interested. lukrich@sonic.net 707-529-3298

MEMBERSHIP DUES 2024

REBS membership dues became due in January 2024. Both current members and those wishing to join should complete the Membership Application available on the website and mail it, with a check, to

Joyce Smith, REBS Treasurer
2309 Dancing Penny Way
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

The 2024 dues are \$35 for individuals and \$55 for family.

In order to receive the “Nebari Network”—the REBS monthly newsletter, as well as various notifications via email, the 2024 Membership Dues must be paid.

NOTEWORTHY

Are you subscribed to automatic email notifications whenever a posting to the REBS website blog occurs?

Visit the REBS website and scroll down the left column until “SUBSCRIBE TO BLOG VIA EMAIL”. Enter your email address where it says “Email Address” and click the button “SUBSCRIBE”. That’s it! You will receive an email notification of any new postings to the REBS website blog. Blog postings occur for past demonstrations, generally of styling techniques, and special announcements, such as recent club activities.

SUBSCRIBE TO BLOG VIA EMAIL

Enter your email address to subscribe to this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email.

SUBSCRIBE

MONTHLY MUSINGS

Is there in truth no beauty? (The reference is to a Classic Star Trek episode, but the original source is the poem “Jordan” by George Herbert, penned in the early 1600s, resulting in my being able to quote a much more elevated source than Captain Kirk, best known for chewing up the scenery and loosing his shirt at regular intervals.)

In my mind, once I rid it of William Shatner in gold lame, beauty is indeed a major part of bonsai ethos. So are drama, whimsy, and elegance. Was much whimsy on display at Kokufu? It seems unlikely. The descriptions of Kokufu always sound like the terrifying aunt who always knows the best way to do things.

I’ve read that if your bonsai is developed to reflect the true nature of the tree, it will become its best self. Here we have beauty in truth. Will the beauty and truth shown by the tree show you some of your own truth?

I’ve also read many times that beauty is in the eye of beholder. Truth is neutral, in theory. The problem is that humans put their own meanings and perceptions into truth, which can lead to a great deal of mischief in the world.

On a much smaller scale, bonsai show judges can be thought of as arbiters of truth. (What a dreadful thought.) However, they can evaluate the trees as to how well the tree presents its own nature. When judging, an experienced and educated individual can observe the fidelity of the tree to itself. Does the styling suggest age? Does the tree charm with its whimsy or elegance? Is the tree a reflection of the drama in. Nature?

To conclude my discussion of truth and beauty, I can either quote Shakespeare and proclaim “To thine own self be true” or, more in the American idiom, “Let the Chips Fall where They May”.

Elizabeth Herbert, perhaps a very distant relative of George Herbert (see above), and present day REBS Newsletter Editor.

REBS SHOW VENDORS

Art of the Daiza- Jerry Braswell- Custom Suiseki and Bonsai Stands. <https://artofthedaiza.com/>

Bonchi Bonsai- Matthew Walker- Copper Wire, Muck, Fertilizer, and Bonsai Services. <https://www.bonchibonsai.com/>.

Bonsai Tonight- Jonas Dupich- Everything You Need to Make Beautiful Bonsai. <https://bonsaitonight.com/>

Bonsify- Eric Schrader- Bonsai Trees, Supplies, and Instruction. <https://www.bonsaify.com/>

Carman's Nursery- Nancy Schramm- Bonsai Starters, Dwarf, Rare, and Unusual Plants. [Carman's Nursery:](#)

Drew Tucker Enterprise- Drew Tucker. [Midori Bonsai Club](#)

Danny Powell- "Stumbling my way through the art of bonsai in the SF Bay Area"

<https://www.instagram.com/dpowellphoto/?hl=en>

Hokum Bonsai- Geoff Campbell. hokumenbonsai@gmail.com

Janelley's Bonsai- Jannette Bautista. jannetteavid2@yahoo.com

Lotus Bonsai- Scott Chad- Bonsai trees, Supplies, and Instruction. lotusbonsai.com

Mendocino Coast Bonsai- Bob Shimon- Trees, Display Stands, Slabs, and Joshua Roth Tools. <https://mcbonsai.com/>

Moonshine Ranch Bonsai- Phil Richardson. moonshineranchbonsai@gmail.com

Pagodas, Lanterns, & Temples- Rick Saval. pagodas@sonic.net

Peter Tea Bonsai- Peter Tea- Bonsai Creation, Collection Management, and Instruction. <https://www.ptbonsai.com/>

Rizeup Bonsai- Mikel Edwards- Pottery. <https://www.facebook.com/rizeupbonsai/>

Soh-Ju-En Satsuki Bonsai- Darren Wong. <http://www.sohjuensatsukibonsai.com/>

Suiseki Stones- Ken McLeod- Beautiful Viewing Stones From All Over. <https://suisekistones.com/>

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Santa Rosa, CA 95405-2872
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COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK

If you want to contribute articles, advertise items you wish to sell, buy, or donate, or to ask questions, please contact the Newsletter Editor, Elizabeth Herbert, at eherb1954@gmail.com (way) prior to the end of the month.