



# The Bent Twig

*Dedicated to the learning, enjoying and promoting of bonsai*



## November Business Meeting

President Dino Pappademos conducted a short meeting which covered the following:

- Treasurer Renee Seeley reported that the current bank balance is \$7,976.
- The club schedule for 2013 has been e-mailed to all members and is available on the website.
- The club Christmas Party will be held December 20<sup>th</sup>. Set up will start at 5:30 p.m. and everyone is welcome to help decorate. Dinner will be served between 6:30 and 7:00 p.m. There will also be a bonsai decorated tree contest and a voluntary gift exchange (\$20 maximum). Please bring a side dish or dessert for 6-8 and remember your plates and silverware. Please see the flyer on the website.
- Annual Club Show will be April 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. We have chairpersons for all the major committees but we will need many volunteers to help with show activities.
- Bob Bugay will present information on show preparation at the February meeting and there will be a show preparation day at Maruyama's nursery the Saturday following the club meeting.

## John Thompson Demonstration



JT has been involved in bonsai for over thirty years, is a past president of the Midori Bonsai Club of San Jose and he is known as Mr. California Oak throughout the bonsai world.

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The demonstration tree was a White Mountain juniper with a blue tint and a Utah smell. JT said these trees are native to California and they are found mostly in desert or dry areas. The tree was very healthy as shown by the long runners in the foliage and these runners also indicate a good root system. The tree showed a little stress with some of the foliage ends displaying scale. John suggested that you should wait until collected trees display long spurs to ensure they are healthy enough to begin work.

The first step is always to find the front of your tree, to look for good characteristics, and to eliminate dead foliage. JT reminded us that it is not the bark that is interesting because that will peel off – it is the deadwood that gives the tree interest. This tree had a lot of roots and some were fairly high on the trunk and may have to be eliminated at a later date.



You have to evaluate every angle of the tree and he used sandbags and wedges to tilt the tree to different angles.



The tree had good movement lower on the trunk and then was straight for a while. The goal is to keep movement going so you have to change the angle of the tree to achieve this.

JT removed the loose bark because it is a good place for insect larva to develop. He decided this tree would not look good as a cascade or heavy slant and selected a more gradual lean and he removed dead, dying and down foliage.

John also identified a nice branch coming down but there was a large bare area from the trunk to the foliage. This area will always be a problem but he didn't cut it all off because he didn't want to stress the tree. The branch will be removed gradually over time. Fortunately there was a younger branch near this area that can be used. The most likely place for buds to pop will be in the crotch area. If there hadn't been a nice young branch here, JT would have cut the tip off the old branch and waited for crotch growth.

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Remember that too much pinching stifles growth. We need to let foliage grow to increase the tree's energy. John selected a good area to create some deadwood for interest and removed bark 2 – 4 inches down to create the deadwood. He used a brush to clean this area and then used a scraping tool – you don't want to cut into the tree, but only to peel off a layer. Lime sulfur and then wood hardener would then be used to seal the tree – but this should be done next year.



Creating deadwood and removing a layer or two is also an opportunity to give the tree better taper. If you can change a branch which is round (younger looking) into thinner pieces using a root cutter to pull pieces off the deadwood then you have a flatter look with less size. You can also use a branch splitter to tear and achieve the same result.



JT suggested that copper wire be used with conifers to change branch angles. Copper wire will harden once it bends and it will hold longer. You can also use a smaller size wire to achieve a bend. He anchored his wire to one branch in a clockwise direction and then wired the target branch in a counter clockwise direction and reminded us to try for a 45 degree angle.

A question was asked about cutting aerial roots – and whether this would cause branches to die. JT responded that typically you don't lose branches from cutting aerial roots on junipers because most conifers don't have a direct connection between roots and specific branches.

This tree should be allowed to continue growing in this pot for a full season before being repotted. JT's advice for the winner is to establish taper – thicker at the bottom and thinner at the top. He said that as the branch runs and thickens you can reduce the limb and wire side branches closer to the trunk. The tree should be allowed to grow and then cut back and allowed to grow again and cut back again. This tree will need some depth developed in the back of the tree.

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The lucky winner of the demonstration tree was Ed Slomovic!



JT and Ed discuss future styling options.



**Show and Tell**



Dan Buckley – suiseki imported from Japan in the 1960's



Ramona named John's tree the Tammy Wynette – Sawara Cypress



Paul's flowering pear



Walt's Weeping Persimmon



Dino's Winter Gold Crabapple





Boxwood styled by JT in April



John Cota will style the juniper shown above and below and bring the tree back next year.



Thanks to Bill Burns for continuing to round up great raffle prizes!

## 2013 Dues

**Please pay your 2013 dues (\$40 per household) at the January Club meeting. Dues should be paid by the February meeting.**

**Calendar of Events:**

- **December – No Meeting. Christmas Party – December 20<sup>th</sup>.**
- **January 19-20<sup>th</sup> – Bay Island Bonsai Show**
- **January 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting – Scott Chadd discussing winter silhouette branch selection and wiring.**
- **February 23-24<sup>th</sup> – Mammoth Bazaar in Oakland**
- **February 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting – Bob Bugay and Show Preparation.**
- **March 2<sup>nd</sup> – Show Prep at Maruyama’s Nursery**
- **March 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting – David Nguy will style a California Juniper**

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