



# The Bent Twig

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

## President's Message



The ABAS Board invites every club member to show one tree in our Annual Spring Show. We want our Spring Show to be well organized and to be the best possible display of members' trees, so we are changing the way we prepare for the show this year.

Greg McDonald will be our exhibit chairperson, but three members have volunteered to help other members select and prepare their trees for display. John Cota, Paul Holtzen and Doc Ward will visit member homes to discuss show trees, and they will offer suggestions as to how the tree might make a better display (e.g., pot and stand selection, companion plants, etc.).

To ensure that Greg knows how many small, medium and large trees as well as the variety of tree

to be displayed, we are asking members to fill out a form which will be available on the website at the end of October. The form will ask your name, phone number, common name of the tree species, size of the tree, type of tree (e.g., evergreen, conifer, etc.) as well as a couple of other questions. Every member must fill out and submit your entry form by our December meeting if you wish to show a tree. Once your form is submitted, one of our committee volunteers will visit you to help you make any decisions you need help making.

The club will also host workshops at Maruyama Nursery to help members prepare trees for the show. The dates will be available in the next newsletter.

## Golden State Bonsai Federation – Annual Convention

As you probably know, the GSBF Annual Convention will be held in Sacramento this year at the Double Tree Hotel on Arden Way from Wednesday, October 24<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. The Convention is open to the public, with free admission, on Friday and Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Timm Johnson is the chairperson of the Benefit Drawing Committee for the Convention this year. The ABAS Club has donated \$100 to the Benefit Raffle, but Timm is encouraging each of us to individually donate items that are bonsai or garden related, wine, cash, gift certificates, etc. For those who cannot make the Convention and plan to donate, call Timm (362-8147), and he will make

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arrangements to pickup your donation. If you are coming to the Convention, please bring your donation to the Benefit Raffle area. A favorable number of raffle donations and the sale of raffle tickets is the primary source of revenue at the Convention, and the raffle's success is critical to the financial health of the GSBF. Please make every effort to support the raffle and GSBF.

### October Activities

**Please remember that there will no ABAS club meeting on October 23<sup>rd</sup> and the Capital City Show will not take place this year because many club members will be busy setting up for the GSBF convention.**

### Treasurer's Report

Renee reported that the club balance is now \$10,525.65 minus outstanding debts of \$2,336. The auction was a huge success for both members and the club – the club's profit was \$1,136.86.

### Ted Matson Demonstration Utah Juniper



Ted opened by telling members that Sacramento has quality bonsai trees and can compete with shows around the country. He suggested that members take advantage of mentoring from more experienced club members to increase the quality of Spring Show trees. He stressed that fall cleanup and

preparation work can start now and suggested that we think about stands and pots for our show trees. His motto is start working now – not thinking about it!

Thanks to Vince Owyong, Ted had a wonderful Utah Juniper to work on for this demonstration. The tree was a little leggy and had some juvenile growth but that was probably the result of a shady yard. Ted thought the tree had some great features and advised that quality bonsai starts with a tree's fundamental structure – or line. It's all about manipulating the line, giving the tree good movement, a strong look and a good taper.

Movement – Ted said that there are very few straight lines in nature. Only the formal upright style has a straight line. The key is getting movement with gradual, natural looking taper – that's how you get quality bonsai.



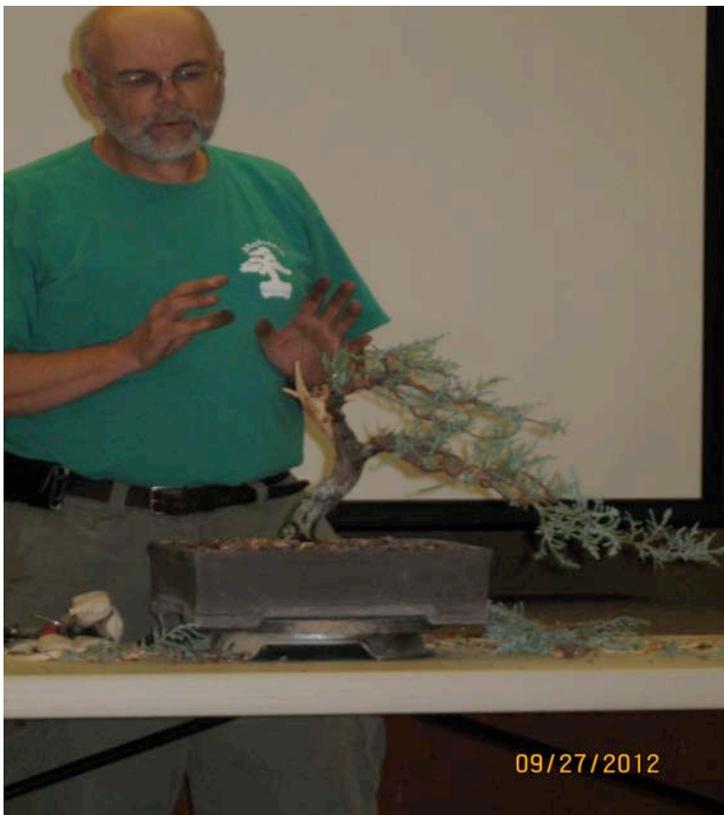
Ted also talked about segmentation saying that trees grow in spurts (the segmentation equals the trunk to branch to smaller branch and represents the tree's growth pattern). The lowest portion of the tree should be the biggest and as you go up the tree, the segments should get smaller.

Branch ramification (in addition to movement, line, taper and segmentation) is also important in

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creating quality bonsai. Few trees read the manual and rarely do we find a tree with all the qualities we want so we have to work to create or maximize the five elements.

This juniper's first segment from the root mass to the first branch was good but there were some problems with larger segments higher up in the tree that Ted wanted to address. The tree had taper, movement and segmentation but there were places that we lost compression and we also needed to think about ramification. The big issue was several heavy areas in the tree, but there was deadwood in these areas that could be stripped of bark for jin and shari to visually remove some of the tree's bulk.



Ted thought there were several options for this tree. We could make a two level bonsai but that would be a little more abstract. He thought that Americans (as Westerners) look for stability and balance where the crown comes up and centers the tree. But this can get boring after a while and the Japanese may offset the crown to make it more interesting and dramatic. The tree needed to be simplified to get rid of the stuff that looked like cylinder branches because they had no taper. One way to reduce a

cylinder branch is by stripping fiber bundles within the branch. Fiber bundles within a large branch are moist when they are cut so you can peel them back and achieve a better taper. You can also control where the bark strips away – to ensure that the life line is kept intact. Pay attention to tissues that are exposed and use cut paste so that callus forms at the cut and prevents the cut from expanding and damaging the branch's life line.

Ted told us that exacto knives are great when you need a really sharp knife to get a proper cut so that the cut will callus over and heal properly to avoid getting a bulge at the cut site. It sounds cosmetic and to a degree it is but we want it to look natural so that no one immediately knows where the cut was made. Ted mentioned this is a good time to do jin because trees have a secondary growth spurt in September, and if the sap is flowing it's a safe time to create jin. Ted suggested that we separate the fiber bundles instead of cutting the branch in half because this will allow you to create taper.

The winner should treat the jin and shari with lime sulphur in the spring because in the rain the wood will open up a little and accept the sulphur coloring. If we apply lime sulphur now it will just sit on the surface of the tree. Ted's philosophy about deadwood is that you see white deadwood at high timber lines (which get high exposure to UV rays) and on the seashore because the wood is exposed to salt and this bleaches the tissue. This bleached look does not, however, look right on deciduous trees and just because we can do something doesn't necessarily mean that we should. You lose the viewer because a deciduous tree wouldn't ever develop white, bleached areas. You can use lime sulphur and paint the area with a little India ink and this will darken it somewhat and give a more natural look – especially in hollows and dips to give them more definition.

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Ted stressed that this was not a show tree – he does not believe in instant bonsai. The tree has to be healthy and the strength of the tree is shown in the mass of foliage. This tree probably won't die back but it might shut down. He left some of the legginess to produce dense growth over the next two or three years. Ted's philosophy is that you can either spend time or money to get a tree to the show stage. Ted also suggested that you use pliers to bend wire because if you use your fingers the wire sometimes bites right into the wood and you might lose structure. If you use pliers, the wire forms to the branch and you lose less structure.

Ted talked about learning bonsai and thought that belonging to a club is the best way to learn. The techniques of bonsai take about two years to get comfortable with by learning and practice. After two years of learning techniques, you'll spend the rest of your time learning about trees – how to work with each type of tree. Techniques vary by species and sometimes by sub-species. So learn about the species you enjoy and develop a relationship with each of your trees. Don't confuse techniques with species-related horticulture.

Bonsai is more about the effect your tree will have on others. It should transport us to a special time or place. Ted said that he used to do instant

gratification bonsai, but now he looks at his trees to see what he needs to do to make it have such value and quality that someone else will want to carry on – because our trees will far outlive us.

The lucky winner of Ted's demonstration tree was Bud. Congratulations!



### Show and Tell

Pictured below on the left is Dino's Centurion Crabapple and on the right is Ann Harris' Pygmy Cypress styled by Peter Adams at a demonstration last year.



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John Cota's Sawara Cypress - the tree displays a powerful trunk.



Dino's Satsuki Azalea – Dino said that he almost killed this plant by over fertilizing and causing a reverse osmosis - fortunately, it is healthy again.



John Cota's double trunk Hinoki Cypress.

Paul Holtzen's Chaparral Honeysuckle (with red berries and yellow flowers) - this is a native plant that Paul collected and he may show it in the GSBF exhibit.



Member's suiseki

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### **FALL GARDEN SALE RESULTS**

The Fall Sale at the Garden Center was successful for the club and members. Total sales were \$300 and the club netted \$142.

### **Meeting Refreshment Schedule**

Please remember to bring refreshments for the club meetings on the dates you volunteered.

- October – There will be no meeting in October in deference to the Golden State Bonsai Federation Convention.
- November – Renee Seely
- December – Christmas Party
- January – Ann Harris

#### **Calendar of Bonsai Events:**

- **October 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> – Golden State Bonsai Federation Convention at the Double Tree Hotel**
- **November ABAS Meeting – John Thompson will be our guest artist for our November Meeting.**

### **Stone Vendor**

Dino discovered a great place to find stones. The vendor is a member of the Sacramento Gem and Mineral Society. There are pallets and pallets of stones to discover. If you are interested in stones, see Joe Shook at 5467 Ballentine Street, #16 (close to Watt and Fruitridge area).

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