



The Snippet

Sei Boku Bonsai Kai Inc.

March 2021

This Month's Meeting

March 24th, 2021, at 7:00pm



Tonight's meeting will feature Valerie Monroe repotting a Coast Redwood group. Valerie will narrate a previously filmed video, and can answer any questions that members may have about the process.

The forest is made up of Redwood cuttings that were originally started by Gordon Deeg more than ten years ago. They have since grown into clumps and the roots have fused together to make a mountainous landscape feel.

Tonight's presentation will show a complete repotting; starting with a rough foliage reduction, container prep, and planting of the forest. Some progress photos will be shown after the video, to show how the group has come together since the repotting.

Thanks to Richard Phillips, who filmed the video in January.



2021 Membership Dues

Memberships for 2021 can be purchased now. Individual memberships are \$45, family memberships are \$55. If you have been a member for ten years and are 72 or older (72 and 10), an individual membership is \$25, and a family is \$35.

Members, as you probably know, although we are not currently meeting at the garden center, Sei Boku has still been paying rent. We want to ensure if we can, that we will have a meeting place when we can finally safely gather again. Your dues help with rental costs, and outside speaker costs. Please consider renewing your membership for this year, and thank you.



A Little Geranium along the path. Always look around and find those beautiful gems. (J. Carpenter)

In This Issue

- * Redwood Repotting
- * President's Message
- * SBBK Birthday Guest
- * February Meeting Recap
- * Membership Dues
- * Third Saturday Virtual Workshops

President's Message

By Steve Iwaki

Spring is coming and Covid is going! With our present situation, many of you have gotten some of your re-potting done and anxiously waiting for flowering or new growth, if you haven't had already.

My wife and I often go on hikes just after a storm when everything looks and smells fresh. We have recently re-discovered some hiking areas in the local mountains, we haven't been on since the kids were little. Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space (openspace.org), has done a great job developing some areas for some fantastic hiking.

We recently found a great hike called the "Ancient Oaks" Trail, somewhat flat, accessible from different parking sites at the Russian Ridge site. It's around where Page Mill/Alpine Road meets Highway 35/Skyline.

(Continued-page 5)



2021 Calendar

(Subject to change)

March—Redwood Repot (Valerie Monroe)

April—Birthday Party, Dave DeGroot, Special Guest

May—Olives (Jerry Carpenter)

June—Post Bloom Care on Azaleas (Jonas Dupuich)

July—Guest Speaker

August—TBA

September—TBA

October—TBA

November—TBA

December—TBA

January—TBA

As the calendar firms up, date changes may occur. Please check accordingly.

Editors Special Note:

Consider sharing your projects with the club by submitting some photos and captions for the Snippet. Or a short video of your trees for a Zoom meeting. Please send your entries to jcsf1090@comcast.net

February Recap: Jim Doyle on Bunjin (Literati), Keido and Collecting

By Jane Lancaster



With 48 years of experience to call on, Jim knows bonsai. Living in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Jim started his nursery in 1973 and looked at bonsai as a hobby. He soon started a bonsai club that now has more than 100 members. He has traveled world-wide to teach bonsai and conducts year-round classes from his Nature's Way Nursery. He started off with

a short video of his nursery, greenhouses, studio and sales area, event area and teaching area. Jim grows the trees he provides for his classes. His grower's mix is composed of pine bark, coco fiber, coarse sand and pumice. *(Continued page 3)*

Reusable Zoom links

The Zoom links used for the meetings in 2021 are reusable, so members can keep them on hand to use for a future meeting. The four recurring meetings each have their own title for easy identification.

SBBK Monthly Meeting is our fourth Wednesday evening meeting. It starts at 7:00pm.

SBBK Monthly Workshop and Chat is our third Saturday workshop meeting. It starts at 2:00pm.

SBBK Board Meeting is our meeting for board members. It takes place the Wednesday following the Monthly Meeting, and starts at 7:00pm.

Website Meeting SBBK is the meeting for the website committee. Start times may vary. Zoom codes will be sent out prior to the meetings.

Sei Boku Bonsai Kai

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Sei Boku Bonsai Kai Inc.
Proud member of
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Jim asked us what "Literati" or "bunjin" (interchangeable terms) means to us. Steve I. thinks of elegance, a feminine look because they are so slender. Val likes the comparison of calligraphy to bunjin trees. Milton C. talked about the origin of the words bonsai (tree growing in a pot) and bunjin (scenery in a pot). Caroline K. sees bunjin as a tree that has survived despite what nature has thrown at it. Jim sees a tree that can survive, yet is graceful like a dancer. He referenced bonsai master Saburo Kato who says that bunjin have a natural style with everything unnecessary eliminated,

a tree with natural grace and a feeling of elegance and simplicity. Jim struck a bell and asked if that was literati. The way the sound undulated can parallel the way a bunjin tree trunk moves in and out.

A slide of a lovely Japanese Red Pine illustrated the idea that bunjin trunks should have three movements or more, branches can cross the trunk line, with the tree's emphasis on its upper third. "Focus on the hole in the doughnut." Jim has collected trees all over America. He likes to collect pitch pine, an understory tree that stretches up. Before styling, it helps to draw what you want to do with the tree. "A poorly styled live tree is better than a beautiful dead tree." Be careful and go slow in training your tree. Bonsai is fun!

Literati doesn't have to be a single tree. You can use 2 or 3 trees, or a forest, and even a cascade. At the Taikan-ten bonsai show in Japan, he saw some lovely trees in all types and shapes of containers. Jim even put a pitch pine in an old filing cabinet drawer. He likes American trees in American pots when possible. One of the training styles that he likes is to take a branch and have it mimic the movement of the trunk. He has been gradually giving away some of his trees to various botanical gardens on his travels. He has about 2000 trees he wants to get down to 800. Longwood Garden is starting up a bonsai garden, and some of his trees are going there. The Chicago Botanical Garden has one of his trees that the garden dedicated to his first wife after she died. He had the honor of having one of his trees chosen to be in the U.S. National Arboretum, American bonsai pavilion. One of his students is the assistant curator, so that might have helped.

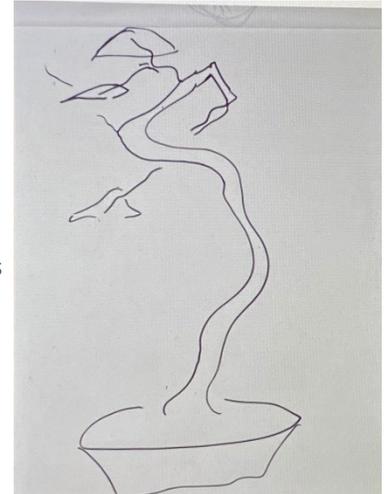


To be critical of your trees, use a blank background and shine a flashlight against the tree. The tree's shadow will show off the tree better. Also try drawing your tree to see its future.

February Recap

Think of how incense smoke moves up and tapers off when training your tree. Literati doesn't have to be a coniferous tree. He had a picture of a lovely Japanese sumac bunjin.

Bonsai is the only living art, and it is always changing. There is Discovery with bonsai: see a tree for the first time, collect it, bring it home, and maybe someday it will be a bonsai. Inspiration: see something in a tree, what are its possibilities in 5, 10 or more years? Jim still has his very first tree. It's dead, but he keeps it for its lessons. A bonsai can out live its corresponding tree in nature. Essence: a bonsai as it has developed with the ideas you put into the tree is a strong element of why we do bonsai. Your tree evolves and becomes more. A tree could have spiritual value. Trees grow up toward the sun; they have a desire to grow and flourish. Continuation: This is a living art, always ongoing. The tree will keep growing, even past our life times. All these ideas make up literati.



Next, Jim showed us some examples to get across some principles of Keido, the art of display. He had a tokonoma set up with a Japanese black pine, a Suzanne Barrymore scroll and a begonia complementary planting. Val asked how long he will keep a display up indoors. Depending on the plants, three days is his limit, longer if using a tropical bonsai. Just suiseki and a complementary plant will stay a week. Mostly when he has a display up for company, he removes the plants at night. He used an Engelmann spruce, the hawk scroll, and an ox figurine for the Chinese Lunar New Year. An appropriate complementary planting would be a fern for the season. He showed his winged euonymus (burning bush) with the begonia complementary plant. He likes euonymus for its yellow flower in spring, green leaves in summer that blush to red in the fall with an orange-red fruit. He uses corks to help separate branches since they can't be wired. "A good excuse to drink wine." He next used a tropical tree, a Jabily Bonsai Tree from Madagascar with a warty bark. Even though this tree has inverse taper, since this is natural to the species, it is all right as a bonsai. Jim used a little pig figure as the complement. Once Jim used 4 boxes of cocoa puffs cereal as ground cover on a bonsai in a show. After two days the cocoa puffs started to move. Ants were eating them and taking them away. Steve I. thinks we need a show inspired by humor, and we need to introduce Jim to Tim Kong.

Jim has fond memories of collecting trees in California. He has collected Sierra and Rocky Mountain junipers, and alpine fir that are all doing well in Pennsylvania. Mostly he has given his collected trees away. It was enough pleasure for him just to be in the Sierra Nevada. Once he was able to talk a Stanislaus National Forest ranger into allowing them to collect. He even got permission at an Indian burial ground to collect. He had a relationship with a Modesto man (who invented the smoker's patch) to collect oaks and junipers on his 35,000 acre property.



He advises the collector to have respect and be patient. "The only person you have to satisfy is yourself." Using pumice and wood boxes, it sometimes takes five years before he could work on a tree. Wait for signs that they are healthy and happy and style them while they are still in their boxes. Then wait 2 to 3 years before putting them in a pot. They like the good life that they get as bonsai compared to life in the mountains. "They like the steak and eggs."

After 48 years of bonsai, Jim still considers himself to be a student. There is always something to learn, as in life. Having these trees to work on has been a blessing for him (and us) during this covid lockdown. Check out his website for class schedules. If you ever have any questions, feel free to call or email him.

President's Message—Continued

As I'm sure you do, I'm constantly looking at trees and scrubs. I study old trees to see how they grow and age, especially deadwood. I look at younger scrubs to see if they would make great bonsai. It gets stored somewhere in my brain, to hopefully, get rediscovered on my trees. Now that we're limping out of this pandemic, we hope you too rediscover nature.



News flash...in lieu of our annual show in June, we are having an SBBK fundraising sale, June 5th. Gordon has opened his front yard to approximately 15 tables for member sales only. It will be open to the Bay area bonsai community



and beyond, as we will follow all Covid protocols ordered by the county at that time. Mike Rosenthal will follow with specific details soon, via email. This will hopefully bring back some normalcy!

If you haven't already, get your dues in. We've got big plans for the upcoming year, however we do need funds.

SBBK Birthday Bash with Dave DeGroot

Beloved artist, teacher, author and demonstrator Dave De Groot will be our very special guest for our 38th Birthday Party this year. Many of you will remember when Dave was our demonstrator at our 2013 exhibit. He was famously, the long time managing curator of the bonsai collection at Weyerhaeuser, near Seattle. He has written several articles and two comprehensive books on Bonsai Design.



David De Groot: Bonsai Artist, A...
bonsaibark.com

Aside from his artistic talent, Dave has the rare ability to objectively critique and present ideas without raising anyone's defenses. He has a unique perspective on the arts, coming from a music background; several visual concepts can also be described with musical ideas.

Dave will be presenting at our April meeting.

Sei Boku Bonsai Kai Inc.

Club Meetings

Our club meetings are currently being held online. The meeting is scheduled for the 4th Wednesday of each month, except for December. The meeting starts at 7:00 pm and ends before 10:00 pm.

When we can meet in person our location is at the San Mateo Garden Center is at 605 Parkside Way, San Mateo, CA right off the Alameda de las Pulgas near Hillsdale Mall.

3rd Saturday Virtual Open Workshop 2-4 PM Zoom Workshop is available this month.

It's 2021 and we're still sheltering in place until we can all get vaccinated, but that doesn't mean we can't get together virtually! We are able to ask and give advice, and although some of us stayed on for the whole two hours, some folks just dropped in for a little while.

It's a great opportunity to work on your trees and catch up with your Sei Boku friends!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86992887655?>

Contact Us

Send us an email or visit our website for more information.

Sei Boku Bonsai Kai Inc.

Visit us on the web at
<http://seibokubonsai.org/>