



Gift of the Magi

by Michael Wei

In December 1905, O. Henry's story "Gifts of the Magi" was first published in the New York Sunday World. It became a classic short story, a parable for us all about a couple's sacrificial gifts to each other on Christmas morning.

Five hundred years earlier, a Japanese folktale "Hachi no Ki" was written. It told of an impoverished samurai who had a traveling monk stop by on a cold winter night. The only wood to start a fire was the samurai's prized bonsai trees, and with these he warmed the two of them. The monk was actually the powerful regent Hojo Tokiyori in disguise. Later, he rewarded the samurai with land for his selflessness and generosity.

While your trees may go dormant for the season, may your hearts be warmed with generosity and your home and gardens welcoming to those in need. We all wish you a healthy, warm and peaceful holiday.



Refreshment Reminder

Jan Mtg

Lynn O'Dell

Kit & Margaret S.

Feb Mtg

Enrique & Jen O.

Kathi Page

Mar Mtg

SBBK Board

(Club Birthday)

Please find a replacement if unable to bring refreshments as scheduled. Refer to the SBBK roster.

SBBK Calendar

- Dec 13** Nursery Field Trip **Saturday**
Sacramento **7am departure**
- Jan 6** First Tuesday Workshop **Tuesday**
San Mateo Garden Center **7-9 pm**
- Jan 17-18** BABA 42nd Annual Show **Sat 5:30-9pm**
Bay Area Bonsai Assoc. **Sun 10am-4pm**
Garden Center at Lake Merritt
Sat 7pm presentation by Adam Toth
Plant sales, raffle, food, free admission
Question:s Ron (925) 997-4446
- Jan 28** Club Meeting **Wednesday**
San Mateo Garden Center **7-9 pm**
- Feb 8** Forest Planting Workshop **Sunday**
San Mateo Garden Center **10 am - 4 pm**
- Feb 22** Repotting Party **Sunday**
San Mateo Garden Center
- Mar 7-8** GSBF Mammoth Auction & Sales
Lakeside Park Garden Center
666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland
Saturday 1:00 - 4:00 pm Auction
Sunday 10:00 am - 3:00 pm Bargain Sales

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President's Message

By Mike Rosenthal

What a wonderful Holiday Party was experienced by our members with the fantastic organization of John Mekisich. The food at La Lanterna in San Mateo was terrific and the camaraderie experienced by both new and old members was just as expected of our very special club.

I am so indebted to all of you for allowing me to lead such a wonderful organization. The past year has been so special with superb programs thanks to Valerie Monroe and Steve Iwaki, our Program Committee Chairs. Our membership has grown with the addition of many enthusiastic bonsai aspirants with the support of our Membership Chair, Bill McDonald and as is typical under Marsha Mekisich's leadership, our Annual Show was the best it has been. I am most grateful to the SBBK Board of Directors who have been so instrumental in all our endeavors. There have been so many individual examples of members stepping up to make our club so special and I thank you all. I have been a part of many professional and community organizations, but I am not sure that I have enjoyed any to the extent of SBBK.

Now as the cold season has started, please remember that like humans the low temperature can lead to unexpected dehydration so do not forget to water. With our deciduous trees having lost foliage, it is a good time to examine branch structure and plan for styling. Valerie's first First Tuesday workshops provide an excellent opportunity for advice in guiding your approach. Also, we are now in repotting season so put February 22, 2026 down on your calendars for a SBBK repotting party/workshop where we can all come together at the SMGC to repot and enjoy each other's company.

Finally, there will be a Planning Meeting in early January where your Board and a few select experienced members will be putting together our monthly programs for the next 18 months. You are all encouraged to provide any opinions as to what you would like to see considered including demonstrations, workshops, guest presentations, and any other thoughts you might have.

Let me take this opportunity to wish you all a magical holiday season with wishes for a wonderful 2026 filled with joy, love, success and good health.

BGLM Mammoth Auction & Sale

By Suzanne Muller

BGLM Mammoth fundraiser is schedule for March 7 and 8, 2026. The two-day event is roughly four months away!

This month starts the call for auction and sale consignments and donations. Quality bonsai trees, pots, stands, and related bonsai items are needed for the auction. Sale items can be suitable pre-bonsai trees, bonsai trees, pots, stands, tools, and bonsai art.

All auction items must be delivered to BGLM by Saturday, January 10, 2026, 9:00 a.m., so that the items are photographed for the auction catalog. Prepare your items as if show ready!

Please contact Director Suzanne Muller at queueinteriors@comcast.net for delivery instructions and additional information.

For auction and sale forms, visit the BGLM website at <https://bonsailakemerritt.com/mammoth-auction-sale-fundraiser/>.

Best Time for Juniper Cuttings

by Valerie Monroe

Someone asked about taking juniper cuttings at the recent holiday party. After the course of the evening and talking with everyone, now I don't remember who asked!

According to my 'Reference Manual' junipers have wide success as a cutting material almost any time of year. A few pointers: Take cuttings from healthy well growing stock plants. Best season seems to be winter (November to March), but some will take almost all year; mid summer seems to be the worst time. Use some rooting hormone. Although not necessary, it seems to encourage more.

You can plant these in small granule (1/8") aggregate soil. Can be used bonsai soil, perlite, peat and sand.

Improving Your Trees

by Michael Wei

Valerie led an open discussion on how we can improve our trees. Thanks to those who brought in example trees, that ranged in species and stages of development. Examples of suggestions involved balance and movement, strengths and areas of improvement. This started with a presentation which referenced a recent blog by Michael Hagedorn (see QR code below), where edited photographs by "whiting out" branch/pads. This allows the exploration of what may be pruned and inform you which may improve your tree.

Feel free to bring in a tree for Show & Tell at next year's meetings, and seek out opportunities to get feedback on your trees. Hope this inspires you in preparing for the club show in June and plans for your trees in the coming year.



2025 SBBK Annual Business Meeting

On November 24, 2025, the SBBK Annual Business Meeting was held at the SMGC. Mike Rosenthal presided as President and addressed a number of issues concerning the administration of SBBK. He pointed to the significant number of new members that have joined over the past year as well as the well-received monthly programs, field trips and our annual show. Patricia Lee, SBBK Assistant Treasurer, informed the membership of the healthy financial status of our club and also the memorials for Gerry Fields and Bill Daniels sponsored by SBBK with donations to the San Mateo Garden Center and the GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt respectively. Acknowledgment was expressed for the exemplary work done on our newsletter. The Snippet serves as a most useful tool for our members and a wonderful example of the contributions of our club to bonsai. In addition, Gordon Deeg and Kamrin McKnight were congratulated on their recent move to Oakley and

gratitude was expressed to Gordon who has agreed to continue as the SBBK Consultant/Sensei.

Russell Loenard, representing the Nominating Committee, presented the recommended slate for the 2026 SBBK Board of Directors to include officers and at-large directors. Without additional nominations from the membership in attendance the slate was approved. With the exception of Pamela Gallegos, who elected not to run for another term, the current officers and directors were reelected with the addition of Michael Fernandez as one of the at-large directors. Appreciation was expressed to Pamela for her service over the past year and her most valuable contributions.

The SBBK Board presented an amendment to our by-laws which altered the method of selection of the SBBK Nominating Committee, and this was approved by the membership in attendance. The revised selection process now states as follows:

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Forest planting workshop

by Valerie Monroe

Forest Planting Material

Scott Chadd from Lotus Bonsai Nursery will be our forest planting demonstrator in January. He can also provide some groups of material for members who wish to create their own forest plantings. Contact Valerie Monroe if you are interested in any of the material listed below, and she will order from Scott.



“Here are some images of material that will be brought to the club. These are meant to be representative of what I will bring. There will be variations as I put together the groups for sale.

I will do my best to provide good material. The prices are estimates that may vary \$5 to \$10 one way or the other.”(Scott Chadd)

Boxwood three tree \$100 [A]

Boxwood five tree \$139 [B]

Acer palmatum three \$100 [C]

Acer palmatum five \$130 [D]



Photo credit: Jonas Dupuich / Bonsai Tonight



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Forest planting workshop

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A palmatum shi shi gashira three \$75 [E]

A palmatum shi shi gashira five \$100 [F]



Dwarf hinoki cypress three \$100 [G]

Dwarf hinoki cypress five \$150 [H]



Forest Planting Workshop Sei Boku will have the forest planting workshop on **Sunday February 8th from 10 am - 4 pm**. The workshop will be held in the Redwood Room at the San Mateo Garden Center. There will be room for ten participants and will cost \$30 to attend. Participants must provide all of the supplies needed for the class (see detailed list below). Bring a lunch and your enthusiasm and create your own group planting. Members interested in the workshop, please email Valerie Monroe.

Supplies needed to participate:

Plant Material - three to five (or more) trees of different thickness. See article from Scott Chadd.

Planting Container - some type of tray to hold all of your plant material. For ease, consider a deeper large pot to accommodate roots. For this workshop, a pot with a lip is highly recommended.

Soil - enough bonsai soil to fill your entire container. Should be relatively small grained.

Sundries - drain screen, wire, tools, chopsticks, plastic tubing, muck, table cover, bin for soil, bucket to take home used soil.



Photo credit: Boon / BonsaiTonight

FYI: Redwood Development

Sharing ABAS' YouTube presentation by Sam Tan on his redwood development.



I found it enlightening and inspiring.

Kusamono Corner

By Barbara Philips

I am lousy at working on trees. I have tried, killed many, hate wiring, couldn't decode the advice given, thought I would just quit. Then I took a Kusamono workshop with Young Choe, a Kusamono artist. That helped me see bonsai in a different light.

So I stuck with learning, found activities I could do, continued to take workshops, and wondered how I could pass on some of what I have learned to others. Not as an expert, but as a fellow traveler, explorer.

It seems to me you have to offer new people hands on activities in which they can participate rather quickly. Since I understand kusamono and making pots, that is what I offered.

The new members in these pictures, Jay, Renata, Debbie, Sophia and Christian, all made pots at the August club meeting. Then they were invited to plant their pots in preparation for a group display showing new folks work at the club show next May. These activities, ceramics and Kusamono, connect them to the breadth of bonsai related arts, including (but not limited to) Saikei, Ceramics, Kusamono, Suiseki, and of course, Bonsai trees. They may not yet or ever have a show tree, but they can participate.

I thank Jenn Tan for helping prepare for this planting workshop, and helping design the new folks table for the 2026 show. She is a fellow explorer.

Barbara



風雪
の美

The phrase "Fūsetsu no Bi" is a Japanese expression that translates to "The Beauty of Wind and Snow" or "The Beauty of Hardships". It refers to the aesthetic appreciation of beauty that is forged through enduring harsh natural conditions or significant life challenges.

Raising Our Holiday Spirits

by Michael Wei

It was great to see so many festive members at this year's holiday party. Kris Kringle did not disappoint, neither did La Lanterna for a lovely meal. We overwhelmed the staff, but we all had a great time. There were table settings of trees, bonsai adorned with ornaments, a fun raffle and gift exchange. It was a very successful year to look back on for the club, and those unable to attend were missed. Hope to see you in the new year.

Special thanks to John & Marsha Mekisich for organizing the event and spreading good cheer. Thanks for all who contributed to the decorations. May you all have a special holiday season with friends and family. Cherish the shared moments, the stories shared over coffee (or wine), be a good listener, give grace and then some. Sei Boku Bonsai Kai wishes you a very merry season and happy new year.



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Article VI Committees:

Section 3. Nominating Committee:

The Nominating Committee will be chaired by the immediate past-president or previous past-president if immediate past-president is not available. The Committee shall consist of three (3) members appointed by the Executive Board no later than the Board meeting immediately following the August membership meeting. Members of the Executive Board shall not unduly influence the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of nominees to the membership at the regular November membership meeting. Additional nominations may be made by the

membership. All nominees must agree to the nomination and be advised of the responsibilities of the position.

In closing Mike expressed his deep appreciation for the extraordinary work performed by the current Board as well as numerous additional members. The contributions of so many have made SBBK a most successful organization that continues to exist as a superb educational and community service club, and above all, a most enjoyable environment for those with interest in bonsai.

New SBBK Calendar of Events

2026

Jan	Scott Chadd Group/Forest Planting Extra workshop to follow
Feb	Young Choe Kusamono Extra Workshop to follow
Mar	Birthday Meeting. Adam Toth Shohin
Apr	Kaya Mooney
May	Multi Species Workshop
June	Bonsai Challenge

Welcoming New Members



- Debby Diaz
- Jay Chew
- Alexander Kowell

If new members would like to be paired with a **SBBK Bonsai Buddy**, please reach out to Bill, bill@walter-mcdonald.com

Seasonal Advice by Bonsai Tonight

Bonsai Tonight: <https://bonsaitonight.com/winter-care/> "Begin by removing leaves from deciduous trees and brown needles from conifers. If trees show any signs of insects or fungus in fall, treating them before moving them into storage will help them recover and prevent the problem from spreading to other bonsai. Some people apply dormant oil to all of their trees in fall as a precaution."



Editors Special Note:

Consider sharing your projects or best seasonal trees with the club by submitting some photos and captions for the Snippet. Please send your entries to mwei2cre8@msn.com.

Visit us on the web at <https://seibokubonsai.org/>
or at <https://facebook.com/seiboku.bonsaikai>
or at <https://instagram.com/seibokubonsai>



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Sei Boku Bonsai Kai Inc.
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