

# Fresno Bonsai Society Newsletter

March 2020



## Our Mission

**The purpose of the Fresno Bonsai Society is to expand the knowledge and skills of Bonsai within its members while offering opportunities for appreciation of this art form to the broader community. We do this through the inspiration of the beauty of the natural world and the rich cultural heritage of Bonsai.**

## Officers of the FBS

President.....Mike Saul  
Vice President.....Vacant  
Secretary .....Marilyn Shelton  
Treasurer.....Bob Wright  
Past President.....Dave Soho  
Newsletter.....John Wright  
Carol Wright

## President's Message



Mike Saul—Greetings,

We are heading into the last leg of our repotting season and for many us, we are behind as usual, in our seasonal plans. It doesn't help that we have a couple exciting but time-consuming events for our club in March.

Our annual indoor bonsai exhibit and plant sale will be the weekend of March 6-7-8. Everyone in the club should display at least one bonsai. There is no substitute for looking at your own tree and seeing it clearly. There is no better way to gain insight into that tree than to study it, clean it, and perhaps compare it to others near it. Exhibition helps you see the present and the future for your tree. Trust me, it can be encouraging or brutal. We are our own harshest critics. The point is this is a real learning opportunity, not just our public exhibit.

We will need volunteers to set up and take down, to serve as docents each day, to water bonsai, take pictures and to help with plant sales. We hope that everyone in the club participates. I will email directions and a request for specific volunteer help as the date approaches.

One week later we will caravan to Round Valley Bonsai Nursery for our regular March meeting. Ed Clark will demonstrate the technique of grafting and give everyone an opportunity to practice. Following that class, we will tour the nursery and have an opportunity to obtain bonsai material. We will email the details of our road trip to Lindsey.

We have received several emails from members suggesting additional clarifications to the bylaws. We will review those ideas with Peter Schaffert and the Executive Committee. We may decide to modify the draft of the bylaws and present them to the membership again before the special meeting in April to discuss and vote on these changes. We felt that the discussion of the bylaws and some additional decisions were likely to require so much time that March, April, and May meetings would interfere with our invited guests and workshops. Therefore, we will schedule a separate meeting in April. That date has not been set at this moment. (continued on pg 2)

President's message continued

Our bonsai club has almost doubled in size in the past year. We have added some very enthusiastic young members. We have been working to make membership in the FBS worthwhile. We hope you will tell us what you want from the club in the future. I also hope you will appreciate the need for more volunteers and officers in the future.

Bonsai Center,  
Shinzen Garden  
Classical vs Contemporary  
Design  
June 13th – September 26th

## New Open Bonsai Workshop

We have added a new opportunity for our members to work on their bonsai or to seek advice about their trees. We have arranged an Open Bonsai Workshop for anyone who wishes to attend. The first session was held on Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, from 9 AM until noon. Participants are encouraged to bring one or more trees and their tools, or simply observe others working. This open workshop is open to all levels of bonsai experience. Participants are encouraged to seek advice from any members. The open workshops will be scheduled at the Clovis Police Department Community Room on March 28<sup>th</sup> then we will move the sessions to the Clark Bonsai Collection Reserve Area in April, May and June. We will evaluate this concept based upon attendance before making this a permanent activity. This is an excellent venue with excellent lighting and facilities. We are very grateful to the Clovis PD and to Shawn Miller for helping us obtain access to the Community Room.

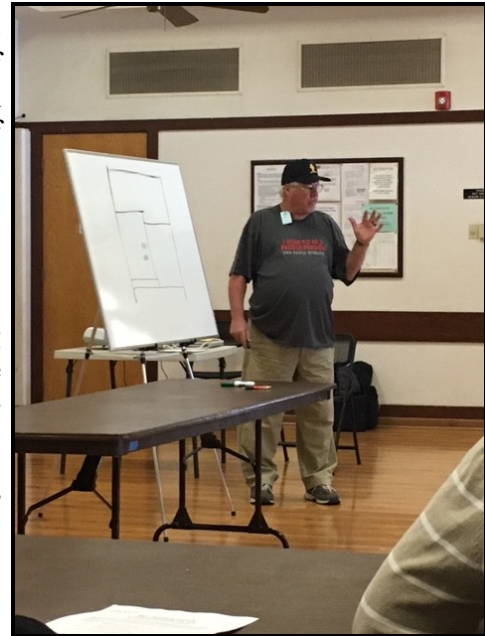
## Recap of February's FBS Meeting

Al Keppler is passionate about a lot of things. He is a devotee of classic rock, photography, cabinetry and blogging. And just about everything bonsai. He is very passionate about teaching every aspect of shohin bonsai. He goes to great lengths to offer clarity and examples in his presentation. This presentation was no exception.

He started his presentation by recalling the Shohin Seminar in Santa Nella last week. He pointed out that many of us had studied the exhibit carefully. We looked but did not see! Al explained the logic behind the construction of the shohin display stands. We were focused on the individual trees.

Al explained that a well done Shohin display is arranged according to the design concepts of feng shui. The individual levels of the stands were arranged to create "visual flow" downward and toward the center. The King of Bonsai, the black pine is always at the top. The "dependent" bonsai are placed so that their "flow" is toward the visual center. Additional small stands are utilized below each bonsai to create enough negative space above each. The small individual stands add "reverence" to each tree. The lowest level on the stand may be occupied by an accent plant rather than a tree. Each shohin is continued from page 2

selected to provide visual interest by differences in pot



color and textures of leaves and bark. The display is carefully arranged as an integrated whole. Ideally, the bonsai and accents are displayed to portray a single season or environment. Thus, a thoughtful shohin display requires a large variety of shohin bonsai, small stands, and some accessories. In addition to the display stand, a thin burl called a plinth may be placed adjacent the stand. An additional shohin may be placed on a root stand in addition to an accent piece on the plinth.



Al explained the display principles of Shohin stands. There is a great deal more to understand than a casual observation would convey. Al also makes these beautiful stands! A man of many talents.



Continued from page 3

Al then turned his attention to the preparation of bonsai in general for preparation in exhibition. He noted that a simple household pumice bar is the most effective means to remove calcium deposits on both glazed and unglazed pots. He found that the pumice would not harm the glaze but will remove the patina on old pots. Loss of the patina reduces the beauty and value of an old pot.

After cleaning the calcium salts from the pots, he oils them with Vaseline. This is more durable and less slippery than mineral oil or cooking oil. This can be done 2-4 weeks prior to the show.

Trees to be shown should obviously be free of weeds and debris. He noted that the soil surface may be covered with very small grain akadama, lava rock, or moss. Al collects and saves moss from his trees and under benches. He places a fine layer of akadama on the surface and then applies a patchwork of numerous pieces of moss on the surface. He selects different colored and textured moss if he



can, to add some visual variety to the surface. He will often cut a sheet of plastic needle point mesh to fit over the moss. He then waters the tree through the mesh to prevent watering from washing away to akadama or moss. This also shades the moss and protects it from drying.

He mentioned the need to scrub the bark of junipers with a soft toothbrush and water to remove dirt and old bark. This will enhance the contrast with deadwood on shari and jins.

Following his wonderful presentation, Al gave out eighteen large “chop sticks” which he had fashioned from an exotic hardwood. These tools were designed by Ray Thieme and produced by Al to honor Ray’s contribution to bonsai in Fresno.

We again had a great turnout for the February General Meeting at the Clovis Senior Center. The Senior Center Staff provided a short presentation on the programs available to anyone 50 and older. This has been a great meeting space for the FBS this winter.



## PLEASE NOTE

Everyone in the Club is responsible for picking up their own trash at all club meetings and EVERYONE is responsible to help take down tables and clean the floors at 12:40 PM after every meeting. We are guests at the Clovis Senior Center and the Clovis Police Department Community Room, We need to be appreciative of their generosity. Many hands make light work.



Following the program portion of the meeting members gathered to work on their trees or help others with their trees. Tim Robinson working on his oak, as a follow-up to his discussion with John Thompson at the January meeting.







## 7TH U.S. NATIONAL BONSAI EXHIBITION SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2020

### **FBS Activities for March**

**Fresno Home & Garden Show**  
March 6-8th Fresno Fair Grounds

**Our General Meeting,**  
March 14th Visit to Round Valley Nursery  
including a grafting demo with  
Ed Clark, 24022 Ave 230, Lindsey CA

**Open Bonsai Workshop**  
Saturday March 23rd at 8 AM till Noon at the  
Clovis Police Department Community Room

**SPRING INTO YOUR  
GARDEN PLANT SALE**  
**CLOVIS BOTANICAL GARDEN**  
**Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**12 to 4 PM**  
**945 North Clovis Avenue**  
**in Clovis**

### **Bonsai Almanac for March**

March brings us to the end of the primary repotting season. Generally, pines, junipers and other conifers are repotted during this month, as many of the deciduous trees have already begun to leaf out. As the weather warms, trees which are subject to infestations should be sprayed with dormant spray in order to kill eggs which may have wintered in the crevices of bark and roots. Elms should be sprayed for scale insects and scale junipers need a spring bath to ward off spider mites in particular. Neem oil is effective and safe for shimpaku junipers, for example, to kill spider mite eggs. Use of this oil avoids the problem of rapidly developing resistance to insecticide chemicals. As temperatures and breezes are unpredictable, trees should be checked for moisture daily and water as needed. Deciduous species that are starting to leaf out should be moved into the bright sun, if they were shaded during the winter, in order to prevent weak leaf development. Spring moss may interfere with water and should be removed if not to be exhibited. Conifers, which have not been transplanted within the last month, may now be fertilized. Trace elements, like iron supplements can be given in dilute solutions. Deciduous trees which have not yet leafed out may be thread grafted now, if the buds have not swelled excessively.

## February Open Bonsai Workshop

See the calendar for open bonsai workshop in March



The first open bonsai workshop was well attended and provided a relaxed atmosphere for members to work on their own trees or to help others. The February and March workshops are being held in the Clovis Police Department Community Meeting Room.

The workshops are intended to expand the opportunities each month for FBS members to gather and work on their trees. Let us know how you like this addition. And remember these facilities are being made available at no cost to the club, so let's be good guests and leave the rooms better than we found them! Plan on helping to set up and clean up. The FBS runs on volunteers, so come a few minutes early to help set up and stay until the room is cleaned up. We want to continue to use these rooms at the City of Clovis. Thanks again to Shawn Miller.





On a different topic, the FBS officers continue to search for talented bonsai practitioners to strengthen the quality of our monthly programs. This last month some of our FBS members had the opportunity to work with Todd Schlafer, owner of First Branch Bonsai, in Denver Colorado. Todd represents the quality of bonsai practitioners we are looking to utilize in future programs, subject to availability and cost. We have Peter Tea coming in May. If you have other suggestions please let us know.





## FBS Calendar 2020

- January 31– Feb 2 California Shohin Society Convention.  
This event occurs every other year.  
Hotel de Oro Conference Center, Santa Nella
- February 8 General Meeting Al Keppler will provide information on  
“Preparing Your Bonsai for Show”  
9 a.m. Clovis Senior Center 850 Fourth St. Clovis
- March 6-8 Fresno Home & Garden Show (FBS Exhibit and Sale)  
Fresno Fair Grounds, All hands needed.
- March 14 General Meeting (Visit to Round Valley Nursery  
including a grafting demonstration with Ed Clark)  
24022 Ave 230, Lindsey, CA 93247
- March 23 Open Bonsai Workshop  
8 a.m. to noon, Clovis Police Community Room  
1033 Fifth St. , Clovis
- April 11` General Meeting, with guest speaker Jonas Dupuich  
9 a.m. Clovis Senior Center 850 Fourth St. Clovis
- April 25 Asian Fest at Fresno City College.  
Display and demonstrations by FBS members
- May 23 General Meeting, Peter Tea - Yearly Schedule of Bonsai Tasks  
Followed by a bring-your-own bonsai tree workshop  
9 a.m. Clovis Senior Center 850 Fourth St. Clovis
- May 30 Annual FBS Picnic, Clovis Botanical Garden, 11AM
- Sept 26-27 Central Valley Koi Show at Woodward Park