



Fujii Notes

Newsletter of the Phoenix Bonsai Society

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

An article by Vance Wood on the www.artofbonsai.org web site asks the question, "Does the bonsai tree have a soul? Does a bonsai tree have *kami* or a life force? Do we as artists create trees that adhere to the standards and rules in the book yet achieve merely cookie-cutter images of bonsai seen elsewhere? Do we achieve mechanical and technical competence only? Is there something missing? He believes that this something is intangible and can only be acquired through observation and deep thought and a willingness to completely redesign your tree if necessary. The shape of your tree should be determined by your imagination and not driven by a form to be imitated. Perhaps we need to return to the way the early Japanese styled their trees without a heritage to draw from. His advice is rather than prejudging your tree and trying to style it to fit a recognized model, take the time to look at it. Contemplate your tree. This is exactly what our sensei, Leroy Fujii taught us: Spend a long time looking and studying the material before styling it. Don't begin cutting on the first day. Reflect on the material. Allow it to speak to you. This way you can find its soul and beauty.

CLUB NEWS

Our Club has just participated in two very successful festivals two weekends in a row. The first one was the Chinese festival and with great weather there were large crowds and a lot of interest in our trees. This was repeated at the Matsuri just this last weekend in February. The public loves to look at and inquire about the trees. Many of them purchased raffle tickets so they could have their own tree at home. Our club had a nice selection of trees for the displays at each festival. We thank all of those in the club who participated and helped in set up and talking to the public. And thanks also to Jamie Sims and Max Miller who gave demonstrations which drew lots of interested folks to our display.

March 6 there will be a show of trees which Elsie Andrade will address. There will also be a raffle. Some of the items to be raffled include a tree styled by Ben Oki, books, pots and a few surprises! On March 13 there will be a talk on accent plants and March 20th there will be a general workshop.

Many are planning to attend the California Bonsai Society Convention in Anaheim, California at the end of May. Be sure to call for your hotel reservations before they fill up. They can always be canceled a day or so ahead of time if necessary. There will be exhibits and vendors from all over so it will be a wonderful opportunity to find and purchase tools or material for your hobby. It is also a good occasion to see the masters and learn from them at the offered workshops.

-- Marcia Colliat, club president

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This newsletter is named in recognition of Hideo "Leroy" Fujii (1925-1998), student of bonsai for nearly fifty years, a founding member of our club, and our *sensei* / teacher for more than twenty-five years. Our club logo, courtesy of grandmaster John Y. Naka, is based on one of Leroy's trees. Two pages of some of Leroy's other fine creations can be found on our web site, www.phoenixbonsai.com.

"Learn from your trees: they are a reflection of you."

-- Leroy Fujii

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