



# Fujii Notes

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Newsletter of the Phoenix Bonsai Society

Vol. 13, No. 1 – August 2007

## Library Collection Expanded Through a Generous Donation

At the end of May, a long-time member of the Phoenix Bonsai Society donated a number of books to the club's library. This was no small donation but rather the gift of an impressive professional collection of Bonsai books and resource materials. The club has added over 60 new titles to the Library and they are available for check out by members. Carol Roberts has completed the cataloging of all of the new titles, and all have been included in the listing of library holdings in the 2007 - 2008 PBS Handbook. The listing can also be found on-line. All of the new donations have been placed within the Phoenix Bonsai Society library collection at the Valley Garden Center. You will find the added titles to be both interesting and educational. The generous donor has asked to remain anonymous and that request will be respected.

## Overview of the 2007-08 Calendar

Club meetings will resume on Tuesday September 4. Updates and details can be found in the club's on-line calendar at [www.phoenixbonsai.com/PCalendar.html](http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/PCalendar.html).

Our schedule of activities for the coming year will be slightly modified from past years. Each month we will focus on one topic that will be emphasized at all of our meetings. A mentor will be responsible for providing leadership to all three of the month's meetings. This new schedule was developed by the current PBS Board and the club mentors. The mentors played a lead role in developing the format for the 2007-08 year. We thank the mentors participating in developing the calendar for the year, including Cheryl Sykora, Ernest Hansan, Joan McCarter, Jim Claycomb, Larry Seymour, Elsie Andrade, Max Miller, Bill Mooney, Nona DiDomenico, and Penny Schneck. The intent of the new format is to provide hands-on experiences at as many meetings as possible. Members are encouraged to bring trees relating to the monthly topic. Small trees will be available for sale so that members have an opportunity to work on trees. All members are encouraged to work on trees during our meetings.

The first meeting of the month will involve a brief business session and the show of trees. The mentor responsible for that month's topic will provide a short overview of the topic. During the second meeting of the month the mentor will provide a demonstration, lecture, or workshops. Immediately following, there will be a hands-on workshop. The third meeting of the month will involve a workshop during which we will continue to work on the topic of the month.

We will continue to hold junk sales, raffles, Bonsai in the Garden functions, trips, digs, nursery crawls, etc.

For the 2007-08 season we will have the following mentors and members provide leadership on various topics:

September - Formal Upright with Elsie Andrade

October - Slant Style with Ernie Hasan

November - Various Pines with Jamie Sims

December - Informal Upright with Penny Schneck

January - Fertilizers, Potting, and Soil with Alex Gray, Joan McCarter, and Cheryl Sykora

February - Broom Style with Max Miller (Max expects to be in town for these activities)

March - Cascade Style with Ernie Hasan

April - Photographing Trees with Alex Gray and Eilen Stewart

May - Desert Trees with Joan McCarter

The mentor responsible for the monthly topic will be available to provide feedback and assistance. In addition, other club mentors will be in attendance and will be available to provide assistance and direction.

## Show of Trees 2007-08

We will continue to have a monthly show of trees. Members are encouraged to bring a tree for critique by a mentor. Mentors will provide feedback and suggestions on how your tree may be improved or enhanced. Members are encouraged to bring trees that relate to the topic of the month. For example, in September our topic is Formal Upright. If you have a formal upright tree and you would like a mentor to review it, September is a great time to bring in that tree. All other trees are welcomed of course, but we would like to have as many trees relating to our monthly topic as possible during the Show of Trees.

In addition to providing critique and feedback about our trees, the mentors have agreed to provide feedback about your stand and accent plant. All members are encouraged to bring in a complete "Bonsai Display" for the Show of Trees critique.

## Large Trees at Baker's Nursery

During the early part of the summer, three large trees being cared for by the PBS were moved to Baker's Nursery. These trees will be maintained by the nursery and displayed to the public. Max Miller, Jamie Sims, Kerry Boehmer and Mike Magee designed and constructed a large stand to support these large trees. In addition to these three large trees under PBS care, Mr. Baker has a tree on display. The trees are a large Olive originally styled by Doug Acker, a large Olive that belonged to Leroy Fuji, and a large Ficus forest developed by Doug Acker. Joan McCarter and Elsie Andrade are going to Baker's Nursery every two weeks to check on the trees and do some trimming. During the course of the year, Joan and Elsie will provide an on-location workshop describing their plans for the trees, how they maintain their shape and the challenges of working on a large bonsai. Members are encouraged to attend these special workshops.

## Interesting to Think About...

- - from the Phoenix Bonsai Society President

As a person new to the art and craft of Bonsai, I have so much to learn and understand. I keep on the alert for materials that provide comment and opinions on the art of Bonsai. Since

I have far to go before I can provide any meaningful comment, I will use space in the Fuji Notes to report interesting articles, opinions, or debates I have read. I will not be presumptuous and provide any recommendations or conclusions, but rather discuss interesting conflicts I am trying to understand and resolve.

There is a very interesting site on the web that serves as a location for opinions and comments. This site contains many controversial discussions and often there are very diverse opinions stated. Often both sides of the arguments seem to have validity. I encourage you to look at The Art of Bonsai Project ([www.artofbonsai.org](http://www.artofbonsai.org)) if you are not already familiar with that web site. This summer I reviewed several articles and issues that seemed to warrant some thinking.

One issue discussed in several publications as well as on The Art of Bonsai Project web site dealt with the 'OWNERSHIP' of a bonsai. In the July 2007 edition of Bonsai Focus there was an article discussing the rise of Peter Warren to prominence in the world of bonsai art ("Unusual rise to prominence" by Ann Scutcher). While the article was interesting and presented a biography of Mr. Warren, he made several comments in an interview that deserve some reflection. He indicated a fundamental problem with the way bonsai is approached by occidental (western) artists. (I assume that his use of the term "European" could be considered or construed to mean "Western.") This problem is built into the European way of thinking.

Mr. Warren asserts that Europeans think it highly inappropriate to display someone else's material. You simply cannot purchase a bonsai tree from another artist and then display it at an exhibition or show. This would be viewed as highly inappropriate and unacceptable. However, he states the opposite happens in Japan. He noted 'in an exhibition of 250 or so trees, only three or four may have been created by the actual exhibitor.' He feels that we need to be more open in displaying trees we may have secured from others rather than hide them away in personal collections. Such trees should be displayed and shared. We do learn something from each bonsai we critically view.

Mr. Warren commented that bonsai is a four-dimensional art form; there are height, width, depth, plus the dimension of TIME creating the four dimensions. This makes Bonsai a very unique art form. Mr. Warren states that we in the West do not understand the dimension of time. This is an interesting comment and opinion. Since the west is relatively new to the world of bonsai, have we rushed to find short cuts to reflect time? Have we been so concerned with "creative" authorship that we are prevented to share an excellent bonsai in our collection that was in fact created by someone else? Are we reluctant to share a tree that is older than our own life span? Attending the prestigious Kokufu-ten show in Japan, it is abundantly clear that the great majority of the trees on display are easily two to three times the age of the current owner of the tree.

In my yard I have several "legacy trees" that were developed by others. I always acknowledge those trees as being developed and styled by the original artist. I think they must be given credit for the development of the art of the tree since I have made no major style modification; I am only the current caretaker of their work. But, I am proud to bring them to club meetings and to our shows.

Any thoughts on this?

--- Ken

And Finally...

At the start of the new club year it would be especially enlightening for newer members to read our club's official history, *Designing Dwarfs in the Desert, Up Through the First 35 Years of the Phoenix Bonsai Society* by Robert J. Baran (Phoenix: Pyramid Dancer Publications, 1997, 88 pp.). This gives a synopsis of the lives and early horticultural involvement of the club's first three great teachers – Paul Matsusaki, John Naka, and Leroy Fujii – plus, an overview of the growth of bonsai in Arizona. The rest of the club's history (for the past decade) can then be found at <http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/PHistory.html> .

## OTHER ARIZONA CLUBS

- Bonsai of Scottsdale (est. 2000) meets at 1:30 p.m. on the First and Third Saturdays of the month at the Via Linda Senior Center, Rm. 2, 10440 East Via Linda in Scottsdale, half a mile south of Shea Blvd. Contact Scottsdale President John Kudelka (480) 948-4816 for details.
- Tucson Bonsai Society (est. 1972) meets at 12:45 p.m. on the Third Sunday of every month at the Tucson Botanical Gardens' Porter Gardens facility, 2150 North Alvernon Way (near Grant). Contact David Meyer @ (520) 722-2000.
- Southern Arizona Bonsai Enthusiasts (est. 2001) meet the FIRST SUNDAY of each month at 12:30 p.m. For information contact Doris Cavanaugh, [doris.c@worldnet.att.net](mailto:doris.c@worldnet.att.net) / (520) 290-0522 , Pat & Thelma Patterson [dezertrats@aol.com](mailto:dezertrats@aol.com) / (520) 825-9685 , or Kurt [simonsk@pop.mindspring.com](mailto:simonsk@pop.mindspring.com) / (520) 321-4173.

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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 at <http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/LeroysTrees.html> .

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

-- Leroy Fujii

## PHOENIX BONSAI SOCIETY

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