

The Kofu Kai Review

The Monthly Newsletter of the Kofu Bonsai Kai Club

MEETING TIME and PLACE

Meeting Date: March 18, 2017, at 7:00 pm

Anaheim Methodist Church, 1000 South State College Boulevard, Anaheim



It's that time of the year, **DUES ARE DUE!** Your newsletter will discontinue if you have not renewed. **Contact Ryan Cali at the meeting, or when making Annual Dues payments by mail, please use these directions:**

Make Checks out to: KOFU BONSAI KAI, \$20 per individual, or \$25 for couples or two persons at one address. Include your Name, Address, Telephone Number, and e-mail address is mandatory if you wish to receive a newsletter.

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Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688-1024**

If you joined during the months of October, November, or December 2016, you are paid for 2017.

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MARCH 18 MEETING

AL NELSON



Our March meeting will feature the return of **Al Nelson**, one of our favorite demo artists. A long-time member of Kofu Bonsai Kai, a friend and student of accomplished teachers such as **Harry Hirao** and **John Naka**, and now a bonsai and woodworking teacher for several Kofu Kai members. **Al** will be doing a demonstration on the creation of a *Saikei*. *Saikei* is a descendant of the Japanese arts of *bonsai*, *bonseki*, and *bonkei*, and is related to similar landscape styles like the Chinese *penjing* and the Vietnamese *hòn non bộ*. **Al** and his assistant(s) will start with a tray or slab, a pile of rocks, bonsai soil, some moss, muck, gravel, or other soil toppings, and a small tree (or two or three), and will turn these elements into a cohesive miniature nature scene, explaining for us each stage in the process, and telling us how to find the materials, how to assemble them, and how to provide aftercare and long term maintenance of the finished creation. Bring your notepad, or your notepad app, because this presentation will be full of excellent detailed knowledge. **Al** is also known for his wit, and always has an interesting story to tell, so this should be a very entertaining evening. One lucky person will take the finished scene home. *Saikei* is a particularly fun and easy way for beginners and intermediate bonsai artists to create interesting pieces for their collection, as it does not require old, well-developed trees. If you select the right trees, small readily-available nursery stock is perfectly suited to the creation of a *Saikei*. Don't miss this one! ---Michael Walsh

MULTI-CLUB BONSAI EXHIBIT AT THE FULLERTON ARBORETUM

APRIL 22 – MAY 14, 2017

The exhibit is only open on weekends. Set-Up date is Saturday, April 15. Exhibit Opens on Saturday, April 22, during the Spring Fling event at the Fullerton Arboretum, 1900 Associated Road, Fullerton, CA 92831. Kofu Bonsai Kai's weekend to host the exhibit is May 6 and 7. The exhibit closes on Sunday, May 14

The trees are lovingly watered and cared for every day by **Tak Nakamatsu**, **Tom Vuong**, and other trusted members of our community. You do not need any kind of display tables or accent plants for this show. Trees are placed directly on benches constructed for this recurring event. There is a light shade cloth over the entire area, and it is fenced, locked, and secure.

The bonsai exhibit at the Fullerton Arboretum is coming up soon. The exhibit was very successful last year and the clubs even made money on the event. ***We are responsible for bringing 8 trees to the show.*** Although the trees can remain the entire time, it would be better to trade out some of the trees during the show.

Each club will be doing some kind of demo on the Saturday and the Sunday of the weekend they are hosting. I have volunteered to do the Saturday demo, and I need a volunteer for the Sunday one. The audience will be made up almost entirely of members of the public with no bonsai experience so the demo should be geared toward that audience. You do not have to donate the demo tree if you don't want to. The demo can be a simple before and after on a juniper, for example.

I will be bringing a sign up sheet to the March meeting for the exhibit. If you have not shown a tree before and think you have one that is ready, jump in. This is a somewhat informal show and a great way to get started. We are looking for a variety of trees for the show.

We have also been asked to help locate at least two really immense trees like the huge Chinese elms we had last year. You know, '**forklift**' trees. If you know someone who has a beautiful behemoth of a bonsai in their yard, please put them in touch with me or any of the organizers of this exhibit. ---Carol Upston



Photo by Carol Upston

It's Time to Think About Accent Plants



Cheryl Manning's elegant and simple accent, bulbs on a small ceramic dish.

It's time for my annual Accent Plant Nagging. Accent plants improve in quality over time so now is a good time to start some for future use.

When we set up a formal bonsai display in a show or in a *tokonoma*, accents are not intended as just an attractive addition to the scene, they have a purpose beyond that. The accent, whether it's a plant, a stone or an art object, is there to enhance the exhibit in specific ways. When we display bonsai, they are like an idealized tree, which suggest to the viewer's imagination a natural scene. The accents should say something about the setting in which the tree might be found and also should suggest the time of year.

For example, a gnarled California juniper suggests a rugged desert or mountain environment with harsh conditions in which the tree struggles to survive. The accent should also reflect that imaginary scene. A lush accent would not contribute to the illusion we are creating. If it's a fall or winter exhibit, the accent might show fall colors or winter dormancy. This is why you may see dried dormant grass as an accent in winter.

In Japan, accent plants often were and still are created with wild roadside plants that we would call weeds. Local wild weeds are totally cool as accent plants as long as they are seasonal and proportional to the main tree. This practice has given rise to an

entirely separate art form called *Kusamono* with it's own exhibits. More about that another time.

An elm forest in the spring suggest a place with lots of water, and the accent would be more lush and green. A tropical tree like a ficus, trained in a banyan style, suggests a warm jungle setting.

There are various opinions floating around about what is appropriate in accents, ranging from extremely formal and strict rules to an 'anything goes' point of view. I like to see some creativity, this is an art form after all, as long as it fits within some general guidelines:

The Only 'Never': Accent plants should complement the main tree, they should **never** look more important than the tree. For example, accents should not be taller than the tree; if flowering, the flowers should not be so exciting that they draw all attention to themselves. You can adjust a flowering accent by removing some flowers to tone it down. The accent should be smaller and more subdued than the tree.

Accent plants Should: Be in tune with the species of the main tree and look like they would live in the same environment, be seasonal, and reflect the season in which the show is held, be displayed on a small stand that harmonizes with the overall display.

There's a lot of enjoyment to be had when you treat accent plants as an art. There are the pots, chunks of

wood, seashells, interesting stones, antique teapots, and anything else you can think of to grow them or display them in. There is the joy of exploring native plant species, available as seeds or young plants from local sources, and the idea of treating some of the weeds popping up right now as welcome additions. Of course, always follow local laws about wild plant or seed collecting.

I hope some of you will put some effort into this small and humble art. If not, there's always good old scilla (see photos). ---Carol Upston

Photos by Carol Upston



John DeLuca's accents on old chunks of wood

Left: Scilla, now called *ledebouria socialis*

Kofu Kai Spring Volunteer Opportunities

The First Sunday Spring Festival at the Bowers Museum

Every year, we set up a small exhibit of four or five tables outdoors at the Bowers Museum and spend a pleasant day talking to the public about bonsai while enjoying performances and free admissions to the permanent exhibits at the Bowers. We are happy to do this as a thank-you to the Bowers for their generosity to our club in hosting our annual exhibit at no cost to us.

I need three or four volunteers to bring a tree on a stand, and an accent on a stand, just like a standard bonsai exhibit. You can also bring something to work on which really helps us to show people what we do. There is no set up. The Bowers sets up the tables, and I put on the tablecloths. You just show up and plop your tree and accent on the table.

I need three or four volunteers to bring exhibits and talk to people. The event is usually open to the public from 10 am to 4:30 pm. We show up around 9-9:30 am to place our trees.

Please contact me if you'd like to show a tree. If you need to drop it off in the morning and go do other things and pick it up at 4:30, that is also fine. All club members are welcome to come to the festival and enjoy free admission to the museum.

Carol Upston carolupston@icloud.com 310-346-4203

CALENDAR of EVENTS

- March 25-26 **California Bonsai Society** annual exhibit at the **Brody Botanical Center**, Huntington Library, At Collections, and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA. Reception on Saturday evening, March 25, at 6:00 p.m.
- April 22-23 **Koen-Nai No Bonsai 2nd Annual Fund Raiser for the Clark Bonsai Collection at Shinzen**, Shinzen Friendship Garden at Woodward Park, at Friant and Audubon Roads, Fresno. Hours are Saturday 9:30 am to 5:30 pm and Sunday 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. Demonstrations by Peter Tea and David Nguy. Huge auction and mammoth vender area. Toko-Kazari Display Competition and tours of the Regional Bonsai Exhibit in the garden. Several shohin workshops will be offered. For more information, contact Bob Hilvers at bonsaigui@comcast.net.
- April 22- May 14 **Multi Club Bonsai Exhibit at Fullerton Arboretum**, 1900 Associated Road, Fullerton, CA located west of the 57 Freeway off of the intersection of Associated Road and Yorba Linda Boulevard
- April 27-30 **World Bonsai Friendship Federation 8th World Bonsai Convention** at Saitama Super Arena, Saitama City, Japan. Japan's highest class bonsai and suiseki masterpieces. Extensive sales area, various on-stage events, and demonstrations by bonsai artists from all over the world. For registration forms and information to <http://world-bonsai-saitama.jp/en/index.html#>
- April 29-30 **San Diego Bonsai Club** spring bonsai exhibit at Casa Del Prado, Room 101, Balboa Park, San Diego. Show hours are 10 am to 5 pm both days. Demonstrations at 11 am and 1 pm. Free admission. Bonsai pots, trees, and other related bonsai items for sale. For more information, visit www.sandiegobonsaiclub.com.
- May 29-21 **Bonsai Club of Santa Barbara** annual bonsai exhibit at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, 1212 Mission Canyon Road, Santa Barbara. Hours are Saturday 11 am to 4 pm and Sunday 10 am to 4 pm. Demonstrations at 1 pm both days. Plant sale by the club. For more information, contact Joe Olson at 805/964-0869 or email joeyuccaseed@verizon.net or visit www.santabarbarbonsai.org.

SPECIAL THANK YOU

Raffle Donors

Wendy Tsai, Dave Miles,
Kaz Hosozawa, and
Carol Upston

Refreshment Donors

Wendy Tsai, Al Nelson,
Shari Religa, Tom and Hannah
Vuong, Bob and Kim Warner,
and Kaz Hosozawa

PRE-MEETING WORKSHOP

Want to start off 2017 improving your bonsai artistry and technique? Beginners: Wondering how to get started in bonsai and have many questions? Have questions on how to prepare and display your tree at the Annual Show?

No matter what your objectives are, come To the pre-meeting workshop from 4pm to 6 pm before the March meeting. Let expert Kofu members **Ryan Cali**, **Harley Newman**, **Paul Vasina**, and **Carol Upston** help you with your bonsai questions and objectives.