



TEXAS BONSAI

A PUBLICATION OF THE LONE STAR BONSAI FEDERATION, INC.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

I hope everyone had a good repotting season. In the DFW area we hardly had a winter, so repotting time snuck up on me and the repotting window seemed to close remarkably fast this year. While repotting though, I had a lot of time to think. I thought about the plant whose roots were in front of me, but I also thought about what I want to try to improve this year. I came up with wanting to be more zealous about my fertilizing program and spraying program. I want to do a better job of staying on top of the weeds better this year (it seems that when it gets above 95 degrees outside, the



weeds just don't seem to bother me as much). I want to check the wire on my

*Howard Smith-
LSBF President*

deciduous trees more regularly, perhaps even

set a reminder on my iPhone weekly and which trees to check on. I want to also keep my conifers wired out and closer to show ready. Even if I do not show any, I certainly would enjoy them more. But mostly, I want to learn more. That is the most beautiful thing about this wonderful hobby of ours - the path of bonsai learning is never ending. I want to learn more about the idiosyncrasies of how each species grows in nature and have my trees reflect these nuances. I would

like to learn to be more precise in the timing of different techniques with different trees. And speaking of techniques, I would like to practice various techniques more, to achieve a higher proficiency at heavy bending, grafting roots and branches, and styling complex trees.

So, how to achieve these educational goals? Find a teacher, study good trees, practice technique under the guiding eye of a professional, find experienced hobbyists in your similar microclimate and learn from their successes (and failures). What's the easiest way to do all this? Go to your local club meetings and also attend the LSBF conventions! At the educational seminar this last fall, we had an up and coming star in the bonsai world (Matt Reel) give demonstrations, lectures, taught a workshop and critiqued our state level display. His demo on an old procumbens juniper resulted in the most finished out tree I've seen in an LSBF event. It was beautiful! Matt's lecture on bonsai display revealed the depth of his knowledge and how open to so many sensibilities we need to be to put together a pleasing and coherent display. The participants in the bring your own tree workshop all seemed happy with the dramatic makeover their trees had. The critique was eye opening, and expertly offered opportunities for improvement in all our trees. It was a fantastic opportunity to learn from somebody that has dedicated his life to the study of bonsai.

Upcoming educational opportunities include the Corpus Christi club hosting the annual convention in October with a focus on cascade style. I am really enjoying the themed focus we have been having lately in our conventions. Also, next year we look forward to the writer of one of the top bonsai blogs on the Internet, as well as a very talented and learned bonsai

professional Jonas Dupuich of BonsaiTonight.com making the rounds as out traveling artist in 2017.

If you have an idea you would like to pass on to the LSBF board as to how we can improve the educational endeavors and the advancement of bonsai in our region, please email me, pass it on to your club's delegate, or post on the LSBF Facebook site. In fact, I would like to see many more of us using the LSBF Facebook site to share our bonsai experiences with each other. We are all part of a big extended bonsai family.

Best bonsai wishes,
Howard
LSBF President

Howard Smith
www.BonsaiSmiths.net



A previous LSBF Recognition Winner, this Bunjin Juniper was used as the Seminar Logo model



“BUNJIN AND DISPLAY: THE REEL DEAL”

Due to a vacancy in the LSBF Convention schedule for 2015, the LSBF Board of Directors took on the task of hosting an educational bonsai seminar with a specific theme. The event became a condensed convention with one artist held over 1 ½ days.



Bonsai Artist Matt Reel

Review of the LSBF EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR October, 2015 in Houston, TX

Howard Smith was the Seminar Director and was responsible for bringing in Matt Reel. This was Matt’s first multi-day event since his return from 7 years of apprenticeship under Shinji Suzuki in Japan.



The seminar started off with a bring-your-own-tree workshop on Friday afternoon. All of the participants and spectators were impressed with Matt’s knowledge and speed.



Friday afternoon “Bring Your Own Tree” workshop

Also on Friday afternoon, David Kreutz gave an Azalea workshop on azalea plants he had imported from Japan.



Hurley Johnson of the Houston Bonsai Society was in charge of the New Talent Competition.



The winners of the New Talent Competition also held on Friday afternoon.



Honorable Mention Award Winners

Other activities for the seminar included a 22 tree exhibition of the bunjin style, a Vendors' Room, and a Friday night Mexican meal with cake.





Bunjin "Best of Show"



Friday night demonstration juniper, completed, and Auction winner, Ken Cousino.

Friday night featured our guest artist, Matt Reel, styling out a procumbens juniper in the bunjin style. The completed tree was auctioned at the Saturday noon auction along with 18 other trees. Raffles were held on both days with many items being

donated by all club members. The Raffles were very successful as a fund raiser.



Kevin Preston from San Antonio Bonsai Society directed all the raffles.



Shannon Gilliland of the Longview Bonsai Society handled Registration during the Seminar



Friday evening meal

Saturday morning held a lecture on formal bonsai display by Matt Reel and then a bunjin critique of all the trees on exhibit.



Dolores Plaisted of the Shohin Society of Texas handled the refreshment area on both days.

The last event was held on Saturday afternoon with Matt initially styling a large Ashe Juniper.



Matt Reel with Ken Cousino, Houston Bonsai Society, winner of the styled Ashe Juniper

The Saturday noon meal recognized the winners of the Lone Star Bonsai Federation's "Excellence in Bonsai" Awards.



L-R: Hurley Johnson, Houston Bonsai Society, Honorable Mention; Dr.Hoe & Soon Chuah, Houston Bonsai Society, Honorable Mention; Mark Bynum, Fort Worth Bonsai Society, Best in Show; Sylvia Smith, Exhibit Director, Bonsai Society of Dallas. In addition, Sylvia handled the meals, cake, and much of the clean up!

The Seminar Chairman, Howard Smith, Bonsai Society of Dallas, would especially like to thank Pete Parker, Houston Bonsai Society, for his coordination with the Kingwood Community Center. Pete with the help of Terry Dubois, HBS, coordinated the Vendors Area. Thanks also go to: Versie Marks, Corpus Christi Bonsai Club, for helping with the Raffles; Joey McCoy, Austin Bonsai Society, for supplying the photos used for this article; Hurley Johnson, HBS, for supplying tables used in the Vendors Area; a member of the San Antonio Bonsai Society for the dinner centerpieces.

Howard was particularly impressed with the impromptu volunteer help of all the LSBF clubs during the event table changes and meal setup arrangements. This made the seminar run smoothly without taxing any one club.

Overall the **LSBF Educational Seminar, Bunjin and Display: The Reel Deal** was an educational, social, and financial success. It was a good example of cooperation amongst the clubs. Future LSBF Conventions will be able to draw from this successful example.

50 YEARS- Bonsai Society of Dallas

***Editor's Note:** In 2015, the Dallas club celebrated its 50th anniversary. This article was written by David Schleser, a very long time member. I believe that the BSD is the oldest bonsai club in Texas and spawned several other clubs around the State making it worthy of inclusion in this publication.*

In 1965 George Gray, Arch Hawkins, and several other people formed what was then known as the Bonsai Society of Texas. It came about when George brought a small azalea bonsai to his workplace and a co-worker, who was the Program Chairman for a local garden club took note. He invited George to come and talk about bonsai and that sparked the interest of several members who decided to organize a separate club. This was during the early years of bonsai in the United States and we were the very first bonsai club in Texas. The first meetings were but a handful of people and they met in people's homes; specifically, George Gray's home initially. The original founders were George Gray, Arch Hawkins, Maxey Reeves, Pinta Huff Harris, and Constance Sneider. George Gray first became interested in bonsai in the 1940's while wandering around the streets of Seoul, Korea on military R & R and saw a beautiful little zelkova forest bonsai. It was love at first sight! He wanted more people to

know about this 'emerging' art form. Eventually he became a very important early person in US bonsai, lecturing widely, becoming the mentor to many of our club members, including myself, serving two terms as Director of the American Bonsai Society, and contributing several articles to the ABS Bonsai Journal.



George Gray, from 1971 ABS Newsletter

Arch Hawkins became fascinated with bonsai after reading an article about them in the November 1960 issue of Better Homes and Gardens magazine. He was also later a founder of the Austin Bonsai Society. He was a member of both ABS and Bonsai Clubs International and wrote articles for both organizations' publications. Sadly, both George and Arch passed away in 1994 within a month or two of each other. I miss them greatly however both of their legacies live on. One of George's exquisite Japanese maple bonsai is in the permanent collection of the Pacific Rim Bonsai Exhibit near Seattle, WA and Arch has one of his cedar elm trees displayed in the National Arboretum's American Bonsai pavilion in Washington DC. Other members of note who joined during the club's first few formative months were Fred and Elizabeth Meyer, later to be founders of Dallas Bonsai Gardens, and Ted Guyger. Sadly, Ted is no longer with us, but he mentored innumerable newbies to the hobby, wrote numerous articles for the Dallas newsletter

and served in many different positions on the board. He also has a tree in the national collection – a wonderful, large trident maple developed over many years from a 20' tree he dug out of someone's yard.



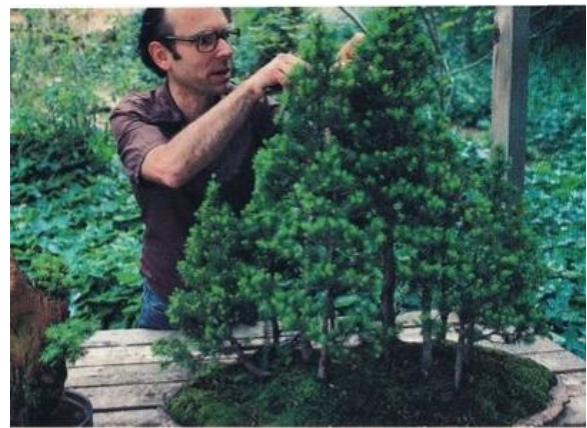
Ted Guyger, from 1981

Other early members still active in the society are John Miller and me. We both joined in 1973. Lois Flood and Howard Starling joined just one year later in 1974. In the mid 70's, with other bonsai clubs now firmly established in several Texas cities, we were asked if we would consider changing our name from Bonsai Society of Texas to Bonsai Society of Dallas. After a long and very heated debate that continued through several monthly club meetings, the membership finally voted for this name change. Early meetings and the first show was held at the now closed Dodd's Garden Center, but both soon moved to the community room of North Park Center. By the early 70's, meetings moved to the home of Marjorie Sharp in North Dallas where they remained until the early 90's. With the growth in the number of trees being brought by members to our annual shows it was obvious that we required a larger facility than the North Park room to display them properly. It was our luck that the Fair Park Garden Center (now known as the Dallas Discovery Gardens) offered us use of their large events room for a spring show in exchange for us staging a second show during a weekend of the State Fair of Texas. It remained there for many years until after the privatizing

of the Dallas Discovery Gardens when the space was no longer available to us.

After much effort, we were allowed to have a 'table' at the Dallas Arboretum during the first weekend of Spring Blooms. A table eventually turned into a room in the DeGolyer Estate that then eventually led to a big exhibit room when Racine Hall was built. Although visitor attendance here was exceptional, repeated scheduling conflicts forced us last year to move our annual show to the wonderful facility offered us by the great folks at North Haven Gardens, where we hope to stay for the foreseeable future. These shows are very important to our club as they introduce this horticultural discipline to many people who are unaware of it, as well as the existence of our society for those who would like to join, learn more about growing bonsai and try it for themselves.

What the next 50 years will hold for our group is anyone's guess, but with the public's growing familiarity and appreciation of the art of bonsai, and the growth of gardening in general, I can only foresee a very bright future. So let's celebrate!



Dave Schleser, from 1981

**LEGENDS OF THE LONE
STAR BONSAI FEDERATION**

This series of articles is a program by the LSBF Board to recognize the legends of our organization and will be featured in the LSBF Newsletter over the next few years. The legends are members of LSBF who have, in some way, impacted the advancement of bonsai art in our organization. As the articles are published they will also be archived on the LSBF Website as a permanent record.

John Miller

By Sylvia Smith

Bonsai Society of Dallas

I don't think that there's anyone in Texas bonsai that is not familiar with the name of John Miller. John's musings have appeared in Texas Newsletters for so many years now that very few of us even know when the initial publication began. He is one of the first members of the Bonsai Society of Dallas. At that time, it was the first bonsai society in Texas and was appropriately called the Texas Bonsai Society, so one can easily say that John Miller IS Texas bonsai.

John was born and raised on a farm in Elms, Missouri. He was drafted into the army right after high school graduation and served his country from 1951 to 1953. It was during this time that he met and later married his wife Sue. John attended the Missouri School of Mines on the GI Bill and graduated with a degree in physics and a minor in electronics. His engineering career would involve many moves until finally procuring a job with Texas Instruments in Richardson, Texas. The nicest thing about these moves was that unlike a home garden, John could take his bonsai trees wherever he went, and that made him happy. His first introduction to bonsai came after reading Yuji Yoshimura's book "The Japanese Art of Miniature Trees and Landscapes" in 1966.



John Miller, 2015

It wasn't long afterwards that John began to grow bonsai on his own. Then, in October of 1972, the local Dallas club held an exhibition at Fair Park. At last, John had found a group of people with the same interests as his. "I found people there I could talk to. I followed two mentors around the exhibit and listened to them critique the trees". "That's where I took my first workshop, an English boxwood which I still have today. You have to get your hands dirty in order to really learn!"

Shortly afterwards John went on his first digging trip off the country roads of Hwy 289, now known as Preston Road. Of course this just fired the flame and bonsai soon became a part of John's life. He was very active in the club learning as much as he could from the early pioneers of Texas bonsai Ted Guyger, George Gray, Arch Hawkins and Fred Meyer. He was exposed to demos and workshops with the great John Naka and studied for many years under the tutelage of Ernie Kuo. Somewhere in the middle of all that learning, he too became a teacher, offering his skills as an LSBF Artist, giving demos, workshops and writing informative articles of guidance for all bonsai enthusiasts.

But perhaps what we all most admire John for is his generosity. He loves to share his knowledge and insight with others freely. To my knowledge he has never charged any club for his programs and is always available at a meeting to give his expert advice on trees. He served many years as the BSD LSBF Delegate and never asked for a refund on gas expenses. Instead he quietly just gave of his time and experience to benefit his local clubs or anyone with an interest in bonsai simply because he too had been smitten with that same passion for trees 40 years ago.

John retired in 1994 and he and his wife Sue, who also grew up in the country, settled on acreage near Farmersville, Texas, to be near family. The Millers have 5 children, 13 grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren. "We have our house and my trees, and I keep it mowed. No livestock of course, I didn't retire to go to work." Says the guy with hundreds of bonsai!

NEXT LSBF BONSAI CONVENTION-Oct. 13-16, 2016

"Bonsai- Living Art"
Hosted by Corpus Christi Bonsai Club

*Bonsai Exhibit Special Category:
Cascade or Semi-Cascade*

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Lone Star Bonsai Federation MISSION STATEMENT

The corporation is organized exclusively for non-profit, charitable, and educational purposes, which include:

- A. Advancing education in the aesthetic, historical, scientific, and horticultural features of the art of bonsai.
- B. Conducting meetings, exhibitions, and conventions to further the public's knowledge and interest in the art of bonsai.
- C. Encouraging and aiding in the formation of clubs, societies, or associations to promote and further the art of bonsai in Texas.

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2017 LSBF BONSAI CONVENTION

April 7-9
DALLAS, TEXAS

NEXT ISSUE: September, 2017

- Mostly dedicated to the LSBF Convention in Corpus Christi
- Article on Fred Meyer, owner of Dallas Bonsai Gardens, large & popular online bonsai supply source.
- Next "Legends of LSBF" article

EDITOR'S NOTES:

Currently, I issue 2 Newsletters per calendar year; a pre-convention and a post-convention issue. These are distributed by email to your club's delegate to the LSBF Board. The delegate is then to distribute the Newsletter on to the members. Each newsletter will also be archived on the LSBF Website at www.lonestarbonsai.org.

I am always looking for interesting articles to add to the newsletters. Articles can be specifically bonsai related or general information such as the history of your club. Contact me with your thoughts.

*Happy styling, Mark Bynum,
Fort Worth Bonsai Society,
Director of Publications
mark.bynum12@att.net*

*My sincere thanks to **Joey McCoy, Austin Bonsai Society**, for the use of his pictures of the 2015 LSBF Educational Seminar.*