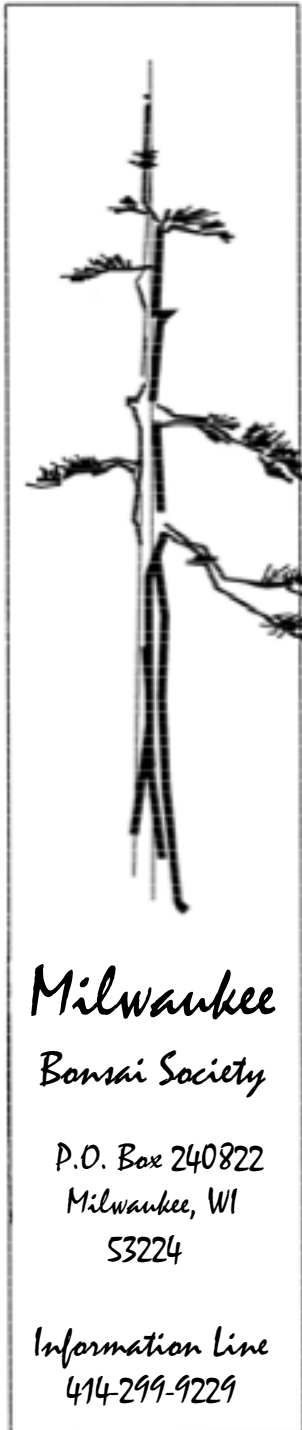


MAY 2014

Bonsai News



MAY MEETING

Peter Tea Program

By Pam W

Peter Tea is coming back to the Milwaukee Bonsai Society for a demonstration on May 6. Let's look at how MBS and Peter have arrived at this point.

MBS is well respected, nationally, by the bonsai community. We are an innovative group and artist like Peter Tea enjoy sharing their experience with our club. In 2002 MBS hosted the American Bonsai Society Convention and at that event, our own Jack Douthitt conceived the idea for the Joshua Roth New Talent Competition. This competition has not changed much since MBS started it. To enter, contestants with less than 10 years of bonsai experience submit several photographs of their work. From these initial submissions, eight finalists are selected to compete in person at the appointed venue usually an ABS Convention. The finalists are given similar material and have eight hours to complete their work.

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2014 Events

MAY

May 3-4 - Peter Tea classes*

May 6 - Club Meeting
Peter Tea - guest artist

May 10-11 - Spring Display at Lynden

May 11 - Novice Class #3*

May 17-18 - Chicago Spring Show & Madison exhibit

May 31 - Spring Public Workshop at Lynden 9-12

JUNE

June 1 - wkshop w/ Arthur Joura* 9-4

June 3 - Club Meeting
Guest Artist - Arthur Joura

June 21 - Intermed. Class #2*

June 22 - Children's workshop at Lynden 9-12

June 28-29 - Peter Tea classes #2*

JULY

July 1 - NO MEETING

July 5 - Open repotting wkshp Boerner 1-4

July 12 - Intermed. Class #3*

July 12 - Wauwatosa Exhibit

July 19 - MBS picnic

July 31 - State Fair Exhibit

***Members only**

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday May 6 - 6:45

Boerner Botanical Gardens

President's Message

Don't miss this month's meeting. Our guest is Peter Tea. Peter is an outstanding young bonsai artist, a graduate of Boon's Bonsai Intensive program, winner of the Joshua Roth New Talent Bonsai Competition in 2009, and has apprenticed with Bonsai Master Junichiro Tanaka in Nagoya, Japan.

The doors are open at 6:30 and we start the meetings at 7:00pm with the first half hour to socialize, check out the library and the vendors. If you want help with a tree bring it in and talk to other members for ideas on styling or health.

I was happy to see that some members took advantage of our library collection at the last meeting. We will try to have the library open for each meeting. If you have MBS library materials that need to be returned you may do that during the social time also. You may keep the books for more than one month just don't forget other members may be waiting to check out that book.

There is a Spring Exhibit at Lynden Sculpture Garden on the 10th and 11th this month. It is going to be an outdoor display! A first for MBS. Hope for sun and warm temperatures.

- *Greg*

Before ordering plane tickets for Colin Lewis (our guest artist at the annual exhibit in September), some interest has been shown for having a private/semi-private lesson with him. He is available to us before or after the show (Sept 19-21). If you would be interested, please contact hagr8d@mac.com or 262-512-1228 by the end of April. Thanks.

(Continued from front page)

Why do I bring up this history? Seven years later, that high honor went to Peter Tea for winning the 2009 Joshua Roth New Talent Bonsai Competition in Riverside, CA. Peter explained how he approached the tree. He began by cleaning it.



Peter with his Joshua Roth New Talent Bonsai Competition winner

He removed the little shoots that grew at branch intersections and thinned out areas where shoots were crowded. While giving the tree the once-over he found that he could use most of the existing shoots in his design. He cut or jinned unnecessary branches and opened a shari on the trunk to add interest. All that remained was the detail wiring.

Using that educational experience, it was the catalyst to be accepted as an apprentice at Mr. Junichiro Tanaka's Aichi-en Bonsai Nursery located in Nagoya, Japan in 2011. With Mr. Tanaka's blessing, he returned to the United States to Milwaukee to headline our 42nd Annual Milwaukee Bonsai Society Exhibit on September 14-16, 2012. You can check out the MBS site for links to several videos of his lectures and critique.

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Two years into his 5 year apprenticeship, Peter had an incredible experience of preparing a tree for the 32nd annual Gomangoku show (Daiju-en show) and entered it into the 87th annual Kokufu-ten in February of 2013. Much the same way he prepared for the 2009 New Talent Competition, Peter explained how he approached this tree. He began by cleaning the trunk and lifeline using a small scraper to carefully peel the bark away. He then removed branches to show off more of the trunk features. Then he washed and scrubbed the deadwood with water and a toothbrush. Allowed it dry in the sun and applied a 1-to-1 solution of water and lime sulfur. He explained that styling a tree for a show can be very limiting. Most of the time, the tree is already in good shape and there isn't a lot of big changes being made. Even if major changes would increase the quality of the tree, doing it right before the show is not an appropriate time due to the stresses involved.


Much of the wiring work is purely for fine tune adjustments and making sure the wires are not noticeable. All that remained was the repotting and applying moss collected from the streets and parking lots of Nagoya.

As this marks the first time Peter styled a tree for Kokufu-ten, he learned a lot and his confidence grew! Later in 2013 having completed his 5 year apprenticeship early,



Peter with his entry in the 87th annual Kokufu-ten

he returned to the United States ready to continue his business and work. This brings us to the present where Peter brings back to Milwaukee his love and passion for sharing his bonsai educational experiences with our advanced students and will be sharing with all of us as he lectures and demonstrates at the general meeting on May 6. This event should not be missed.



REMEMBER:
Open Workshop
Sunday April 27
10:00 - 2:00

If you are repotting trees, please remember to bring everything you need.

A Collection's Story

A look at the GSBF Collection at the Huntington Library and Gardens By

Pam W

Curator

The curator of the bonsai collection at The Huntington, Ben Oki is one of the world's leading masters of the art of bonsai. Trained



under the tutelage of legendary master John Naka, Oki has devoted more than four decades to the art and has received so many honors as a teacher himself that several prestigious awards bear his name, including the Ben Oki International Design Award sponsored by the Bonsai Clubs International. His fame comes not only from the world renowned Huntington Gardens, in San Marino, but through a lifetime of awards and dedication to his art.

Ben has been growing and teaching bonsai since 1958, specializing in California Juniper. He shares his hands-on experience and expertise in his article, "Collecting California Junipers", published in a British magazine. He is well known for his rugged, freeform style, fine detail work, fast wiring, and skillful tree-splitting techniques.

For Ben Oki, that commitment for excellence in bonsai extends to teaching...and to learning. And he is in no hurry to finish. "People call me master, but I'm still a beginner," he says. "Every day with bonsai is the beginning of the day."

Collection

The idea for the garden took root in 1911 thanks to the devotion to the Japanese aesthetic of the museum's founder, Henry Huntington, and his ranch foreman, William Hertrich. Early letters between the two men describe the goal of landscaping the small canyon below Huntington's house in a Japanese style. The Marsh Tea Garden was less than two miles away in Pasadena. And so Huntington purchased the entire property and moved its ponds, grotto plants and stone ornaments as well as its Japanese House to his little canyon. Huntington also hired Japanese craftsmen to build what had been one of the garden's most colorful features, a moon bridge, painted bright red—a strictly American interpretation—which was eventually stripped and allowed to return to a more natural gray-brown in 1992.

After the institution opened to the public in 1928, following Huntington's death the year before, the garden became a major attraction. But by World War II labor shortages caused the garden to deteriorate. Moreover, growing anti-Japanese sentiment—the garden was renamed "The Oriental Garden"—only worsened the situation. By 1957, it was just a pool in the middle, including the house, was just closed and abandoned.



Fortunately, at that point, a group of local residents united to form the San Marino League, an arts-based organization that took an interest in the garden, raised money and restored the house (as well as the garden's original name). One of the early leaders started teaching ikebana, or flower arrangement, classes—launching the first era of the garden's public programs, which also included organized tours for schoolchildren, tea demonstrations and festivals.

The next major milestone was the creation of the Bonsai Courts in 1968. A continuing collaboration with the Golden State Bonsai Federation helped make the Huntington a center for promoting the art of bonsai in 1993. In February 2011 a stunning new miniature

bonsai court was dedicated. And while these specimens of 6 inches (or less) are stunning, many are partial to the bigger bonsai—like a 200-year-old rooted piece of California Juniper draping

nearly 4 feet from its pot and growing out of what appears to be a gnarly piece of driftwood.

In the Bonsai Court, dozens of outstanding examples of bonsai are displayed year round. One of Ben Oki's favorite trees, a California juniper grown from a half-dead stump estimated to be more than 350 years old. Its rebirth as a bonsai started 50 years ago. A strong and

healthy trunk now curves gracefully around the bleached white bones of the dead wood. Its vigorous branches extend skyward. This tree (pictured) was donated by Oki in memory of John Naka.

Artist Visit to MBS

Ben has not been to Milwaukee since 1990 when he spent time with members of MBS working on what was believed to be *Juniperus communis* 'Compressa'; very rough nursery material with really no bonsai potential. Both Jack and I, still have these trees from that workshop however both of us have them in our landscape. You cannot say enough about getting good material when you spend time

with a master than the tree alive 14 years later but relegated to the landscape. What we could have had had we started with a truly nice pre bonsai juniper.

In Indiana, Cheryl and Charles Owens honored

Ben with both the Ben Oki International Design Award and the Ben Oki National Design Award -- the awards for excellence in bonsai design quality -- sponsored by Bonsai Clubs International (BCI) and the American Bonsai Society, respectively. No one from Milwaukee has won this award. Yet...





Four Tips for Better Wiring

Quiet Crow Bonsai is a collection of articles, essays, and views for bonsai artist, devotees and supporters.

www.QuietCrowBonsai.com

I can't say that I'm the best bonsai artist out there, but I can certainly wire better than when I started. I've read a lot of advice and worked with several masters about getting better at wiring over the years. Some advice has been very helpful and some advice just hasn't worked for me. I want to share just a couple of tips that have helped me improve, particularly over the last four or five years.

1. **Wire a lot.** How much is a lot? Malcom Gladwell says it takes about 10,000 hours of doing something to become an expert at it. So the more you do it every day, the faster you'll get good. In 2004, I attended my first private lesson where I nervously showed the artist I admired around my collection and work in progress. My instructor recommended that I work to finish wiring a tree a month, at minimum. I did just that, several months over, and was amazed at how quickly I progressed over that time.

2. **Slow and Steady.** Especially when learning to do small branches, go slowly. It's just like practicing a musical instrument. You start as slowly as you can without making mistakes, then you speed up. Go as slowly as necessary to have control over what you're doing on the branch. This is particularly important when trying to wire secondary and tertiary branches. While it's best to wire two branches with a single wire with a quick stroke, I've never seen

an artist I admire tertiary branches that way. Most will carefully and deliberately chunk out the branch and carefully reduce wire thickness with smaller controlled wiring.

3. **Fix it until it's right.** When working on a difficult branch, rewire it until you get it right. Especially if you're starting out, I recommend never crossing wires, equaling spacing of wires and a good clean look. When you review your wire and come to a point where you feel it is crossing or too sloppy, you can re-work and readjust until you get it right. Set a high standard for yourself and work to achieve that with every branch. Look at your wiring from many angles to reveal problems in the wiring. *Don't take this suggestion too far.* If you're really hitting a wall, abandon the branch, and start another. It's more important to wire a lot than get stuck on one branch.

4. **Study the Fundamentals.** Study the best books and videos on bonsai. I like the resources found at bonsaiboon.com. Go to YouTube and search for bonsai wiring, weekly, if possible. Go to a nursery every week and look for material that you can improve with wiring. I highly recommend reading *The Japanese Art of Miniature Trees and Landscapes: Their Creation, Care, and Enjoyment* by Yuji Yoshimura. The sections on proper wiring technique alone are worth the price of the book.





P.O. Box 240822
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Next Meeting of MBS
Tuesday April 1, 2014
Boerner Botanical Gardens
9400 Boerner Dr
Hales Corners, WI 53130

2014 MBS OFFICERS

President	Greg P
First VP	Judy S
Second VP	Susan L
Secretary	Julie McN
Treasurer	Barbara S
Director	
Director	Teri W
Director	Steve Ca.
Past Pres.	Steve Con.

Other Club Functions:

Newsletter - Kris Z
Webmaster - Pam W
PAB Board - Rob P, Ron F & Houston S



Things at readiness
With budding trees, pots and tools
The season begins

- Joe Nemeec