

The Collection - Connection

Quarterly Newsletter

Volume VII, Issue 1

March 2009

Features

- Visitor to the Garden
- Director's Corner
- Mammoth Fundraiser 2009
- Curator's Fund
- Featured Docent

Calendar of Events

April

April 26, 2009 - Spruce/Cedar: repot, pinch a spruce or cedar

May

May 24, 2009 - Willow: working with willow

June

June 28, 2009 - Olive or satsuki:
Defoliating and repotting an olive OR
After-flower care of a satsuki azalea



Michelle picks up the broom to help clean up the work area.

An Interview with Michelle Zimmer

Michelle was a visiting Garden worker from Wisconsin who worked with Kathy and team the week of the Mammoth Fundraiser. We choose to interview her to get her perspective concerning Bonsai and her at our garden.

How long have you been interested in Bonsai and working in the art?

I have been interested about 20 years. Like many people, I was given a juniper bonsai as a gift and about a year later I learned that there was a local club. I signed up for the novice class that was just forming. I bought the best Masakuni tools right away—I was 'hooked' and I knew that this art would be part of my life forever.

How do you participate in your local clubs or organizations?

I am not very interested or active in the politics of bonsai although currently I serve as a Director of the Milwaukee Bonsai Society. I have taught beginners and intermediate students, presented programs and recently acted as chairman of the committee that just produced our first "Silhouette Show" which we staged for over 1000 visitors on March 7, 2009.

Tell us a little bit about yourself. I am a certified "tree hugger", a nature lover, an amateur naturalist (mostly plants) and landscaper. I've just started bird watching. Although my formal educational background is in science (chemistry), I grew up surrounded by fine artists: my mother was a fine ceramicist, my sister is a respected watercolor artist, and my husband is an architect and a passionate bonsai hobbyist and author. Although I don't know the language, I've always appreciated the fine arts and have lived in an environment surrounded by the principles of design. I adore the Japanese aesthetic, especially as manifested in Japanese gardens. Our bonsai hobby has allowed us to travel and make friends throughout the world. I am a lifetime learner and currently am studying the French language

Garden Factoids

The following are the dates for the next round of closings for the Gardens at Lake Merritt due to Oakland Furlough days:

Apr 9-10, Thurs. and Friday
May 22, Friday
Jun 5, Friday
Jun 19, Friday

These are only for this fiscal year for the city Oakland; we can expect more in the second half of the year. On furlough days the gates to the garden will be locked and workers with keys can enter but we are not open to visitors.

<http://www.gsbfbonsai.org/lake-merritt/>

GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt Board of Directors

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Laurie Feetham – Corresponding Secretary
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Linda Soliven – Mammoth Fundraiser Event
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which I hope to master some day. Since I retired from practicing internal medicine 2 years ago, I've been practicing the fine art of being where I am—it's an under-appreciated skill that is not admired in a world that celebrates the illusion of multi-tasking.

What brought you to the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt to work for the week? Serendipity and Kathy Shaner. I sat next to Andrea B. at a lunch when we were at the GSBF Convention in 2007. We were discussing a presentation by Kathy Shaner, and I was remarking how lucky California bonsaiists are to have such a fine resource. Then, Andrea told us about the volunteer program at Lake Merritt. Pam W. and I looked at each other and we knew we were going to find a way to have the experience of working on fine trees with a great artist and teacher.

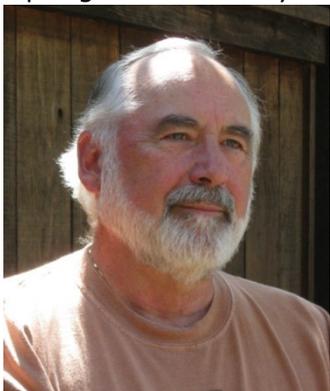
Had you worked with Kathy Shaner before? No, but I had followed her career ever since she wrote the series of articles published in the Golden Statement in the early 90's describing her apprenticeship in Japan. She is a treasure—she's passionate about her work and she wants very much to pass on all that she knows—and she has the skills and temperament to do it! For me, it was a dream—to just be around her and soak up these little dribbles of wisdom about every aspect of the art.

What trees did you work on while at the Garden? Well, we were here at transplanting time and also right before the mammoth fundraiser, so there were lots of people and lots of activities. We worked on transplanting some pines that had just been donated as well as trees that had been in the collection for a while. We also helped out with some garden cleaning and maintenance chores. I felt a little timid since there were many skillful volunteers and much work to do. I was happy to help out whenever an extra pair of hands was needed.

Have you taken with you any gems of wisdom about the art of bonsai? I learned more about transplanting in 4 days at Lake Merritt than I have in the last 4 years! When you think about it, this is the most unnatural thing that we do to our trees. In nature, a tree grows where it sprouts and that's where it spends its life be it long or short. Our task is to understand what each individual tree needs from the point of view of health (first) and then design. I noticed that the transplanting process is customized for each tree depending on where it is in its history. It's not important to be fast, but to be meticulous and thorough. Kathy has a reason for everything that she does based on science, study, observation and experience. This approach appeals to my scientific nature, so I was ready to hear these lessons. Then, if one superimposes her wonderful eye for design, her ability to create that dynamic asymmetrical balance that we are all looking for and to bring out the best that each tree has to offer, well—it's rare to have that combination in one person—and she is willing and able to teach it, too!!!! What a privilege! -- My head is still spinning!

Director's Corner: Gordon Deeg

Spring is such a busy time at the Garden. Not only are we planning and producing the Mammoth Fund



Raiser, it is the season for repotting our wonderful collection of bonsai trees. The Mammoth Fundraiser was chaired this year by Linda Soliven. She is a marvelous organizer and got everybody on the same page, resulting in another outstanding event. Linda's article on the fundraiser appears in this issue. Along with her, I also want to thank those in charge of the various sections for the outstanding job done. Even with the rain, the Saturday auction and Sunday free-for-all was well attended, and at least to me, all had a good time. In planning for the future, Linda would like to have a "Chairperson in Training" to assume her position in 2011. She is putting together folders outlining each section's duties and responsibilities. Under Linda's guidance, this new person will be well prepared for Chairpersonship in 2011. Also Andrea Burhoe the Fiscal Manager for the Garden would like to have somebody assume the bookkeeper's duties for the 2010 fundraiser.

This person would be working under Andrea's direction. If you would like to do something more for the Garden and assume one of these positions please contact Linda, Andrea or myself.

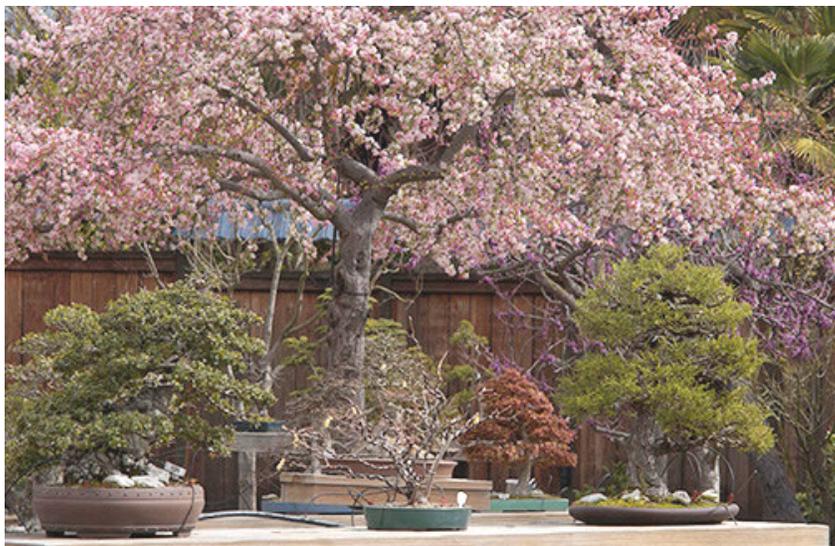
Kathy Shaner and her crew have done an outstanding job of getting our trees into new soil and, sometimes, new pots. They all look great. Each year at this time I marvel at how much improvement there has been from the previous year. Truly we are becoming the best public bonsai garden in the United States.

Adding to an outstanding collection of bonsai trees already at the garden we have been the recipient of 22 donated bonsai since the first of January. No less than 10 separate individuals have made donations. We are planning on including all of these trees as part of our permanent collection. Several have been repotted and are on display in the Garden. Individuals donating trees are: Alex Austin, Linda Ferzoco, Gary Tom, Robbi Baham, Kathy Shaner, Betty Pitts, the estate of Noboru Fukuchi, Kay Hardy, Joan Scroggs, and Richard Rameriz.

I would like to close by mentioning the passing of Betty J. Pitts on February 11, 2009. Betty was a long time supporter of the Bonsai Garden. She also was the GSBF Treasurer for many years. We will all miss Betty. All of her bonsai and bonsai related material have been donated to the Garden.



Above: This *Acer wis* wired with the help of bamboo to give separation of the multiple trunks. Right: The BGLM in spring!
(Photos by John Edwards)



18th Annual Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt Mammoth Fundraiser -

Due to the MAMMOTH EFFORTS of all VOLUNTEERS and DONORS, A SUCCESS!

by **Linda Soliven**, 2009 Mammoth Fundraiser Chair

This being my first experience to Chair the Mammoth Fundraiser, the annual major fundraising event for the prosperity of the Bonsai Garden, I am in awe of the tremendous work that goes on behind the scenes, the months of planning, the generous giving of time and energy. I find it important to share with our readers vignettes of this process.

The Backbone

I am positive that some are aware, but not all KNOW, the person who most makes this entire event possible and has been doing so for years is BOB GOULD. He's the first person there on the event days.



As soon as the event is over, he negotiates the building for next year. All through the year he collects donation trees, bonsai materials from donors, and items for consignment. He's the one who all people contact with their items for the plant and auction sale. He travels often many miles and often with his own manpower to pick up the items, records and maintains owners wishes and keeps the bonsai healthy, in some cases, makes them healthier. He and his crew prepare trees for auction, with hours of grooming, organizing, and setting up the trees for photographing. This is done with Toby Trezona, Bob's loyal and constant assistant. Bob has charge of preparing for and getting all the tables, chairs and equipment in the right place at the right time for both days of the event. This is no easy task

communicating with demonstration, drawing, vendor, plant sales, cashiering, food and auction setups. Bob is always the last one to shut the doors, checking that all is left well. Bob and Toby are always the last ones to shut the doors, checking that all is left well.

Auction

The viewing, value decisions and visiting of the crowd during the Pre-Auction show was enjoyed and abuzz with laughter and the pouring of libations by hosts, Polly Gould, Joan and Jim Heady. At opening the filled room of an expectant audience who were quieted by the superb voice of Gordon Deeg, auctioneer and Chairman of the GSBF Bonsai Collection at Lake Merritt. The pace was lively and filled with laughter as Jay McDonald brought each item on the auction block for viewing. Between Jay and Gordon, a special aspect of the tree was pointed out - Jay carefully moving a branch (while suspended in air) and Gordon's comments about value, his own bidding to stand beside his word. The auction officials and crew gathered by Seiji Shiba, each moved swiftly and purposefully and without glitch, labored for 3 hours straight with naught a respite. Cashing out went smoothly with an efficient crew set-up by Andrea Burhoe.

Auction Registration and Hosting

Ruben Guzman and his crew manned the Auction Registration and welcoming as he has for years. A burst of bidders come all at once wanting to sign-in, get their bidder's card, and wasted not a minute to preview the auction items. Ruben also spends hours on prepping the auction trees in the months previous to the auction. Many of those that entered auction items can thank him for the care and tidying up of their wares to ensure the best possible bid.

Plant Sales

What can be said of the years of service of Tim and Emma Kong who take on the responsibility of the Sunday Sales but, WOW! Early on both days, work goes into the transporting, registering items, and placement for sale. What is often a big challenge is the previewing of sale items and then all customers outside the door before the sale opens. This is Tim at his best, orchestrating the movement of people

from browsing to payment line, with quips and suggestions, a smile and a nudge. There is no one like Tim and no one who supports him as Emma.

Food

The Bonsai Garden Kitchen was blessed with the leadership and expertise of Kathleen Haley this year. Great choices of cold and delicious hot foods as well as homemade cookies by Kathleen and Mike Haley! This year the Garden made a profit on the food and still offered lunch both days for every volunteer!

Vendors

Bob Shimon single-handedly arranges for the vendor participation, sets up the vendor areas and oversees that every vendors' needs are met. He also solicits vendor donations for the Benefit Drawing. Visitors from all over the bay area count on being able to stock up on bonsai-related wares for the coming year at this event. There was not disappointment. The Vendor areas were abuzz with buyers.



Drawing/Silent Auction

Mike Mello and Michael Haley stepped in to carry out the job that stalwart Allen Hightower has chaired for years. Allen had recent medical issues that prevented him from physically participating this year. But he offered guidance to Mike, Michael, and their team. Despite the loyal donations from vendors and individuals, a lot of teamwork, and forethought both the Drawings and Silent Auction, tickets were not bought as readily this year, nor did the Silent Auction draw much interest. But Mike and his team set up a wonderful display.

Publicity

All our efforts could be unrewarded without the behind the scenes work of Jerry Carpenter and Linda Ferzoco to publicize the event and maintain the website with information on the fundraiser. This year, there was an increase in public attendance outside our bonsai community. Kudos go to the wide dispersion of information concerning the event.



Cashiers

Perhaps the least recognized and the most fundamentally important to the success of this fundraiser is the work of Andrea Burhoe and her team of cashiers. The whole event is about raising the necessary funds to support the function of the Garden. Due to her careful planning and set up, the process of cashing out was seamless and efficient. Customers were processed graciously and quickly. Andrea's work goes many hours beyond the 2 day event to process consignment payments and costs to enable immediate feedback on the event's success.

Security

No one is aware of the watchful eyes of the security corps: namely Lonnie McCormick, Mike Mello, Dennis Hawkins, Alex Clarke and Gordon Deeg.

AND THE FINAL OUTCOME IS...

The bottom line question is how much revenue did we bring in? Some think that we did very well to bring in \$19,474.00 in light of the economy and the quality of the auction items offered up. This amount is "shy" of what we have made in previous years. However, we are "rich" with effort and are already planning the 2010 Fundraiser.

Thank you everyone for your support, cooperation and good-will!

UPDATE: CURATOR FUND DRIVE 2008-2009

Wonderful News! Generous donors, you got tough, dug into your pockets and met the \$4000.00 challenge of a very special donor. Your donations have been doubled with some additional dollars!

The Curator Fund Drive which began November 1, 2008 will continue through August of 2009. The appeal for donations goes to a list of friends and students of Kathy Shaner. However, this list is not inclusive of many of all her friends, students and admirers.

Kathy is so humble, that she will not divulge the names of all whom she influences so greatly. It is certain there are many more individuals throughout the world that Kathy has worked with who have not received the appeal.

They also have been touched by Kathy's devotion to the developing and maintaining quality bonsai. They experience her quality teaching skills and care of her students but their names are not on the appeal list.

So...each of the generous donors who have already contributed and the Board of Directors of the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt are asking that YOU go a step further and challenge someone you know or are acquainted with, who has been touched by Kathy Shaner. You may know one of many out there, local or distant, that you can contact and extend a challenge to match your donation level.

Think of one potential donor who may be out in the Bonsai Universe. Personally contact this person and offer your challenge. You can send your challenge personally or send the person(s) name, address, phone number and email address to the Garden address and a challenge will be sent in your name. By the Summer Edition of the Collection-Connection, you will have a complete report of all your efforts with this fund drive.

Thank you for your generosity and support of the Kathy Shaner Curator Fund Drive.

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Featured Docent: John Boyce

If you visit the Bonsai Garden on the first Thursday of any month, chances are you will be greeted by John Boyce. John started docenting when the Garden opened in 1999 and has been a regular ever since. He also spends many other days at the Garden, giving workshops to bonsai enthusiasts at all levels, overseeing the fertilizer applications to the trees, working on the trees, and generally being one of the key persons keeping our Garden as good as it is.



John first became aware of bonsai when stationed in Japan in the Navy in 1955. He studied Ikebana at that time and worked in a florist shop practicing flower arranging when he got out of the Navy in 1959. In 1960 he saw a newspaper ad that a bonsai club was to form, and he joined the Bonsai Society of San Francisco as a founding member. He has been President of BSSF and a Director numerous times. Bonsai has become a major part of his life since 1960. His favorite trees are the Japanese Black Pine and bunjin. His interest and knowledge of Ikebana carried over into bunjin style bonsai. He has been teaching Ikebana for many years.

In John's words: "Being a docent made a dream come true, because working with Kathy Shaner for several years I was allowed to work on the collection under her guidance. Through her I met Tokidasan and Mr. Mitsuya. That was like ice cream on top of the chocolate frosting. I meet people from around the world while docenting. To talk to them about their experiences in different countries makes me feel so fortunate I live in California. First, the weather here is ideal for growing trees, and second the direction and encouragement from Kathy is more than I could ask for. The education part of it never stops and because I can work when Kathy is at the collection it is really helpful. I urge people to docent and work with Kathy."

THANK YOU TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS

Through contributing your TIME, ENERGY AND GENEROSITY the 18TH ANNUAL MAMMOTH FUNDRAISER was a Success! The names with an * indicate chairman who led various committees.

Sachiko	Aioyma	Lucky	Fung	*Mike	Mello	*Linda	Soliven
Charlie	Anderson	*Bob	Gould	Frances	Mello	Sharon	Stone
Jannette	Arnold	Polly	Gould	Dennis	Miu	Phyllis	Swanson
Ken	Azuma	*Ruben	Guzman	Carl	Morimoto	Craig	Thompson
Lu	Bedard	Dennis	Hacker	Bet	Neary	Toby	Trezona
Debra	Bleemer	*Michael	Haley	*Janet	Nelson-	Bill	Tsuchida
John	Boyce	*Kathleen	Haley		Trumm	Inga	Woefl
*Andrea	Burhoe	Dennis	Hawkins	Hugh	Nguyen	Pam	Woythal
Pat	Cahill	Jim	Heady	Frances	Noles	Michelle	Zimmer
*Jerry	Carpenter	Joan	Heady	Ann	Norton	*Linda	Ferzoco
Dan	Casey	Steve	Huffman	Carl	Osterholm	Robert	Smith
Marge	Casey	Steve	Jang	Karen	Paulos		
Alex	Clarke	Randi	Kepeler	Ron	Reid		
Tom	Colby	Candace	Key	Mark	Rhine		
John	Coss	*Tim	Kong	Phyllis	Rizzi		
*Gordon	Deeg	Emma	Kong	Chris	Ross		
Janice	Dilbeck	Lawrence	LeClaire	Allison	Seaman		
Michelle	Dilbeck	Alexis	Lozano	*Kathy	Shaner		
John	Doig	Gerald	Martinez	*Seiji	Shiba		
John	Edwards	Lonnie	McCormick	Della	Shiba		
Lauri	Feetham	Jay	McDonald	Emily	Shibata		
				*Bob	Shimon		

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*Phone: 510.763.8409
Website: <http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org/lake-merritt>*



We are trying to arrange the office at the BGLM to have more functional workspace. The office is in need of a **2-drawer, standard filing cabinet**. We will use about 4-6 cabinets on which we will put a plywood top as a desk.

We are also seeking a more **substantial bookcase with several shelves**, preferably adjustable. The bookcase needs to be no more than 5 feet in width. The taller the case with more shelves is better.

If you have either of the items above and no longer have use for them, they can find a great home in the Bonsai Garden office.

Please contact Linda Soliven @ 925-776-2342 or email gsbcnorth@gmail.com