



# THE GOLDEN STATE BONSAI FEDERATION COLLECTION AT THE HUNTINGTON NEWSLETTER

October 2022

## UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

For the past five years, Ellen Keneshea has done a spectacular job of chairing the GSBF Collection at the Huntington and has now handed her baton to me. While I may be new to this position, I'm very familiar with this organization. I've been on the GSBF Collection Board for many years and I volunteer in the bonsai nursery, but my involvement goes all the way back to 1996.



Twenty-six years ago, I organized the first Bonsai-a-Thon to raise funds for an endowment to pay for the bonsai curator. The first event was a one-day affair in Friends Hall that soon was expanded to an entire weekend. When Friends Hall was slated for demolition, we moved the Bonsai-a-Thon to Banta Hall. For more than two decades, the last weekend in February has been the time when aficionados and the general public come together to celebrate the art of bonsai and support the collection at the Huntington. Then covid changed everything. After a two-year absence, we returned to Banta Hall with a very successful fundraiser in April. It was wonderful to share good times with fond friends at a favorite venue. Sadly, it turns out to be our last gathering in familiar surroundings.

We have been informed that construction in Banta Hall will begin early next year. The Huntington has kindly offered to move our event to the Rotunda and surrounding spaces which is part of the Education and Visitor Center located near the Admission and Membership Entrance. I'm confident that this new venue will be the best place to hold the Bonsai-a-Thon. The Collection Board and I look forward to setting up shop in this new space and will begin planning the upcoming event as soon as the Huntington confirms the proposed date.

The reason that we're all here is for the bonsai. Curator Ted Matson has further elevated the trees into a world class collection over the past ten years. His vision is accomplished with the assistance of a small army of able volunteers and visiting bonsai masters from across the country. Along with the collection, the gardens throughout the Huntington are also being refined. It's a glorious place to commune with nature, so when you're in need of beauty and serenity, visit The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens.

Cheryl Manning  
Chair GSBF Collection at the Huntington





## BECOME A HUNTINGTON BONSAI VOLUNTEER

and join volunteers Paul Anderson, Mitch Matsey, Kathy Benson, and Tony Thien working to make the bonsai great.

If you want to join in, contact Ted Matson at [tmatson@huntington.org](mailto:tmatson@huntington.org)

Golden State Bonsai Federation had a Rendezvous at Mission de Oro Hotel in Santa Nella the first weekend in October. Below are some of the beautiful trees in the lovely exhibit put on by the Modesto Bonsai Society.



Left, Jonas Dupuich cleans the roots of an exposed root pine during a demonstration at the GSBF Rendezvous.



## CURATOR'S REPORT



The health of our bonsai collections is very good, despite the late summer heat spell, which gave me a chance to use the new emergency overhead watering system. On those 104°F days, it definitely cooled things down and raised the humidity. The nice thing is that I was able to activate the system at home from my phone.

There are a number of volunteers from the bonsai community that come on a regular schedule, but the overall number of volunteers has dropped off some. We had a number of interested people sign up to become volunteers at the Bonsai-A-Thon, but getting them processed was a challenge. Luckily, we now have coordinator David Munoz working to process more volunteers through the system. In recent weeks, we've added a couple of groups, including many students from Fuji Nursery and a couple of bonsai veterans. So, I'm hoping that we can start getting beyond maintaining trees and into advancing the styling and refinement of many that need it.

The Huntington has hired the replacement for Dave MacLaren, who retired in June. The new Horticultural Curator of the Asian Gardens is Aaron Hughes. Aaron is a bonsai devotee, formerly working as a volunteer at the U.S. National Collection at the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., and even studying bonsai in Japan in an apprenticeship at Aichen Nursery. He was really excited to see our collection and I know he'll be a good addition to the botanical staff.

We've been lucky to receive some nice gifts this year, including a likely internment camp pot from John Voss, and another potential internment camp pot from Chris Westvig. We also received a gift of 11 large bonsai and an antique Chinese pot from a client of John Wang's. We have yet to pick them up, as our nursery was filled with plants from two other in-kind gifts donated for fundraising from people moving.

One was a group of 45 trees, stands and books from Elbe Connor. All were planted in "mud" and after Joe Galgoul, Tom Lau and I picked them up in late June, all required immediate bare-root repotting. So, over the course of a couple of weeks, our volunteers got their hands dirty.

All but one, a desert oak, made it through beautifully, taking advantage of the heat and better soil to really grow. While colorful, these trees don't have masterpiece stature and were not intended for accessioning. So a batch of them, including 27 vibrantly blooming bougainvilleas, were sold to happy bonsai enthusiasts at the L.A. Bonsai Swap Meet on Oct. 2.

A second in-kind gift was a group of 19 bonsai and stock from Jeff Lahr, most of which will be held until the next BAT. However, a Cypress cedar, which is not appropriate for SoCal, was auctioned off at the GSBF Rendezvous on Oct. 8.

We have secured a grant from the Eileen and Clarence Peterson Foundation to purchase material for our bonsai education programs, specifically the Bonsai Builders program offered through the HG Education Dept. Since we will no longer offer those at the BAT, we are giving Education the opportunity to stage multiple stand alone classes at different times of the year.

Finally, we will be getting a brand new work area. The Huntington is trying to create somewhat of a Japanese village and the completion and opening of the 320 year old Japanese Heritage House across the road from the nursery will fulfill that. As part of the plan, visitors who go through the house will get a chance to experience bonsai work being done. So, just outside the existing bonsai nursery, we're getting a brand new constructed and equipped work area with many bells and whistles. The project is expected to take place over this next year.

Ted E. Matson  
Bonsai Curator

## JAPANESE HERITAGE HOUSE

The Huntington has been given a 320-year-old house from Marugame, Japan. The Japanese Heritage House is an exquisite example of a working magistrate's residence that once served as the center of village life and home to generations of the same family.

The house was taken apart, shipped here in pieces, and carefully reconstructed across from the bonsai nursery. The project is scheduled to be completed and open to the public in late 2023.



April 2021  
Beginning to reassemble the house.

January 2022  
Outside reconstruction almost complete.



October 2022  
House covered in plastic to protect the wood and stucco during landscaping based on the original garden and including stones, lanterns, gatehouse, and a rice paddy.

