



DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

Serenity through Bonsai

第一盆裁會
盆中平穩

OCTOBER 2017 | VOLUME 32, ISSUE 10

THE DAI ICHI GAZETTE



JASON SAITO SAIKEI DEMO | SAIKEI WORKSHOP | NANPU KAI SHOW | CHIKUGO-EN NURSERY

DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

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On the Cover

Jason Saito working on a Saikei planting at the September meeting.

Inside Cover

A gnarly piece of deadwood growing on an old growth Juniper at Chikugo-En Bonsai Nursery.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We are blessed to live in this particular spot on the globe.

We have great weather and we are also located to be a meeting place for the cross-roads of the world. The seed for bonsai in America was planted here early and it continues to grow. This can clearly be seen in this month's newsletter with our coverage of the Nanpu Kai show in Little Tokyo. It featured some of the most accomplished bonsai artists who have an educational relationship with John Naka. We also show the vitality of bonsai education today, with coverage of Jason Saito's Saikei demonstration and the workshop, which was hosted at Peter's Nursery. You can clearly see that our community of bonsai practitioners strongly endorses and promotes education.



I have watched our membership swell this year and I really enjoy seeing new faces at our meetings. I want to remind everybody that our club is a volunteer organization and encourage you to participate in leading our club forward in the future. Please consider taking on a leadership role and support DIBK by becoming a club officer or a contributor to our monthly newsletter. We are a diverse club and that makes us stronger. I thank you for your support.

The year is winding down with one more club demo this month and our potluck in November. This month's demonstrator will be Steve Iwaki. I have met him several times and he is the nicest guy, loves teaching bonsai, and is a second generation bonsai artist. I'm sure he could talk story on how his dad "educated" him on bonsai growing up. I'm sure it included weeding and carrying all the heavy stuff. He will be visiting from Nipomo, which is a bit of a drive, so let's all show our support.

Finally I want to thank Peter's Nursery for their support to the cause. I have a feeling that they will become more and more a part of Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai's fabric too.

John van de Wouw

John van de Wouw
President
Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai

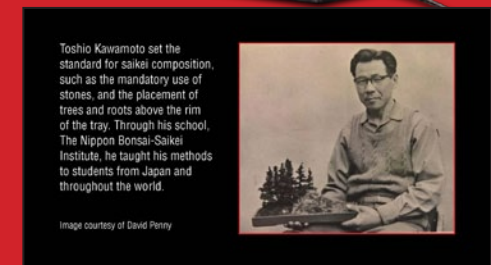
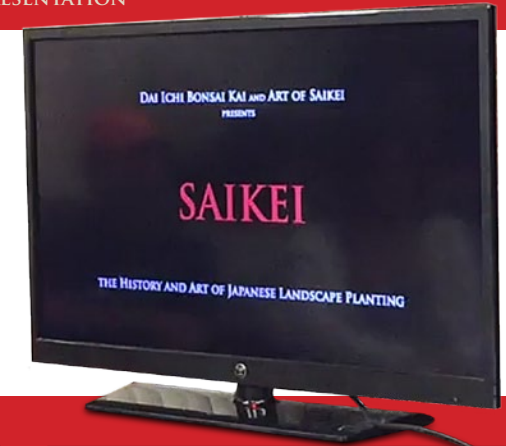
SAIKEI

THE HISTORY AND ART OF JAPANESE LANDSCAPE PLANTING

Our September event was a Saikei presentation/demonstration by Saikei fanatic and DIBK *Gazette* editor, Jason Saito.

(editor's note: OK, writing this article is a little weird.)

The presentation started off with a slideshow discussing the history, design, building techniques and the materials used to create miniature living landscapes.





The demo started off with a nice piece of black slate purchased from a building supply house. They sell these as outdoor ground, wall and counters veneers, so often have very straight edges. Nothing a grinder, chisel and a really big hammer can't fix. Shaping the slate starts out with tracing an outline with chalk or a sharpie. Using a masonry cutting wheel and a grinder, "score" the outline about 1/4" deep. Once scored, the slate can be shaped by gently, but firmly, whacking off the outer pieces of slate with either a hammer, or a hammer and chisel, along the score line. It takes a little bit of practice, but it's easy to



get the hang of. Slate consists of layers of material so each whack will not only remove material, but remove layers creating a bevel on the opposite side of impact. These bevels make for a more interesting piece, so make sure you hit from the bottom of the slate so the bevels appear on the top, finished side.

Setting the hardscape is the first step to creating the composition. Every other aspect of the planting will revolve around the hardscape, so it's vital to get the layout as balanced and ideal as possible.

Your stone sizes should vary with one main stone or grouping being the focal point. Your design should allocate room for main trees and accent plants, while following the flow and composition of your hardscape.



Stones are anchored down to the slab by wedging smaller anchor stones and packing in modeling clay. Eliminate all air gaps under the grouping by firmly pressing the clay into the base of the structure. Once your grouping is anchored to the slate, remove excess clay from around the base so there is more room for soil.

Muck is then used to build walls to create planting "zones." Muck is like a pliable, moldable soil that you can use to compartmentalize your planting so that your main trees can have their own soil base. The muck will eventually dry, leaving it porous so drainage is not an issue. Adequate space for the tree's roots must be provided, so visualize the size of your tree's root ball as you create your zones.





Once the muck walls are set, a good bed of planting soil is applied. Start out with a good medium sifted cactus mix and amendments such as shredded sphagnum moss, fine sifted redwood bark (for water and nutrient retention), and sandy loam (for additional drainage). You want the planting soil to occupy about 90% of the height of the wall, so keep that in mind as you set your planting bed.



And now, the fun part really begins. Adding the trees and accents breathes life into your composition. Prepare the trees by reducing (minimally) the rootball to fit into its planting zone. Comb soil into the roots as much as possible. Once all trees and accents are placed, you can backfill the planting soil to 90% height of the muck wall. Add the remaining 10% sifted, inorganic top soil to desired height.

We're in the home stretch now! Moss needs moisture and humidity to thrive, so over the muck walls apply a moss bedding consisting of New Zealand Sphagnum and Sandy Loam. This bedding will hold moisture and help to keep the moss alive and healthy.



Apply the moss to the bedding. Break the pieces down into various circular shapes and sizes to create a tight, textured carpet across the entire bedding surface. Once covered, apply firm pressure to compact the moss and bedding as much as possible.



Aftercare is important as the planting, at this point, is in a raw and fragile state. Very similar to repotting aftercare, the same measures should be taken. The planting should be kept out of direct sunlight and heat, as well as shielded from strong winds.

Additionally, multiple daily misting of the moss will keep it well hydrated.

Now all that's left to do is enjoy your planting.



Congratulations to Dave Hazard and Joe Ortega for winning the demo Saikei, and to Brad Ellman for winning the participation seat at the Saikei workshop.

Special thanks to Doyle Saito for making both of these events happen.



To view the full History and Art of Saikei demonstration (in 3 parts), please visit www.facebook.com/DailchiBonsai



Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai shared their live video.

Published by Alyssa Factor Saito [?] · September 15 at 8:23pm · 🌐



To learn more about Saikei, please visit www.facebook.com/groups/ArtofSaikei

SAIKEI WORKSHOP

A look at the Saikei Workshop at Peter's Garden
led by Saikei fanatic and DIBK *Gazette* editor, Jason Saito.

(editor's note: Yup, still kinda weird.)



Barry Miller



Jason Saito, Tootie and Brad Ellman



Carol Upston

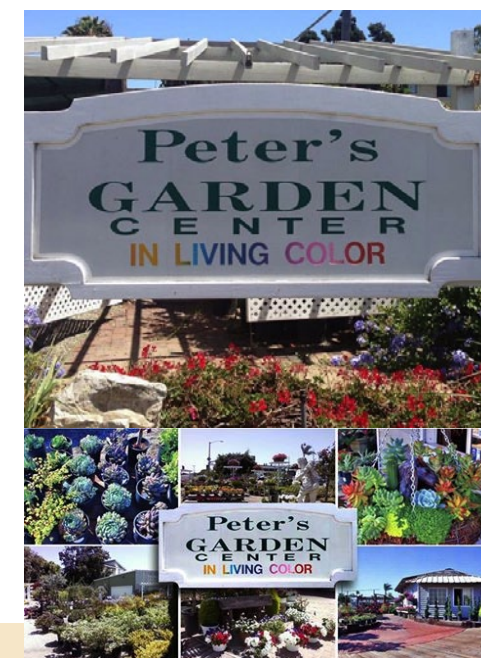
The cool ocean breeze welcomed our members and friends to the Saikei workshop, held at Peter's Garden Center in Redondo Beach.

Fresh from the previous evening's demonstration, everyone settled in to put to use the skills and techniques that they learned the night before. Materials such as stones, trees and accents were chosen, and then the fun began. It was messy, it was challenging, but most of all it was an awesome time for all, and some amazing landscape plantings were created that day.

Thanks to the hard work of Doyle Saito, Carol Upston and CJ Levinstein for their assistance with the workshop. Nice job guys!

Special thanks to Teresa and Peter for their generosity and hospitality in allowing us to take over their greenhouse for the day. It was the perfect place to hold our workshop.

Photos by Doyle Saito



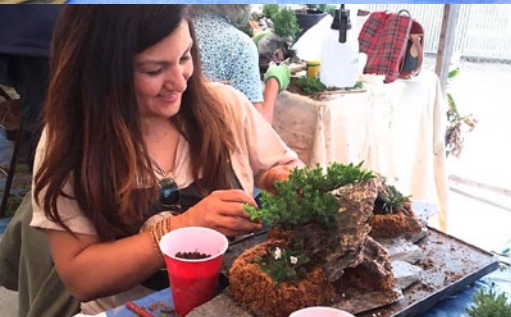
Peter's Garden Center
814 N Pacific Coast Hwy
Redondo Beach, California, CA 90277
(310) 372-2288



Dave Hazard created a gorgeous landscape which will go nicely with the matching Saikei he won at the demo.



Mary Hileman did a terrific job creating her first landscape planting.



Tootie and Brad Ellman had a blast gettin' dirty and creative with their plantings. Tootie took the workshop seat that Brad won, and she did an awesome job.





Joyce Gibbs and Gary Lai's years of bonsai experience helped make quick work of creating their Saikei masterpieces. Great job Gary and Joyce!





Barry Miller did a superb job creating this large 5-tree Saikei.

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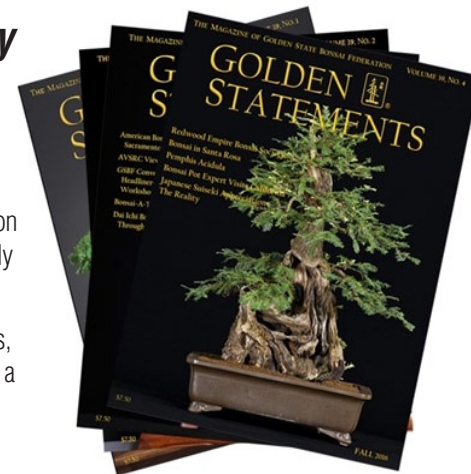
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(Updated 1/2015)

NANPU KAI SHOW

In August, Nanpu Kai had their annual exhibit as part of the Nisei Week festival. The exhibit was beautifully set in white and a wide variety of trees were on display for all to admire. The crowd was enthusiastic and plentiful and the overall experience was quite ethereal.

There were demonstrations by Robert King, Jaime Chavarria, Mel Ikeda and Frank Goya.

The Taiko Drum activities outside provided the perfect soundtrack for the show. Attendees were also treated to Calligraphy demos, Japanese Doll exhibits and even a Gyoza eating contest.

Through their studies, John Naka's dream for his Nanpu Kai students of nurturing the traditions of bonsai, and introducing the art to a wider audience, carries on.

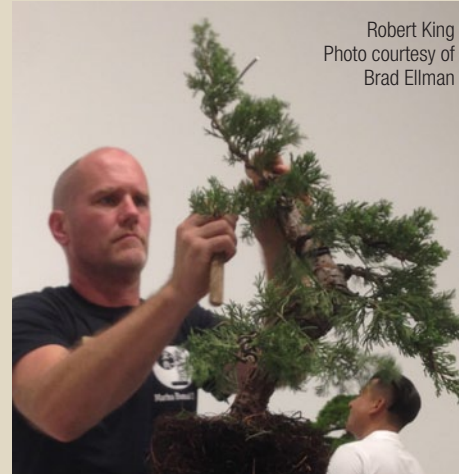
Frank Goya
Saikei Demo



Mel Ikeda demonstrates bonsai techniques as Mary Morrisey fields questions from the attendees.



Robert King
Photo courtesy of
Brad Ellman



Jaime Chavarria
Photo courtesy of
Brad Ellman



Lindsay Shiba



Harry Hirao



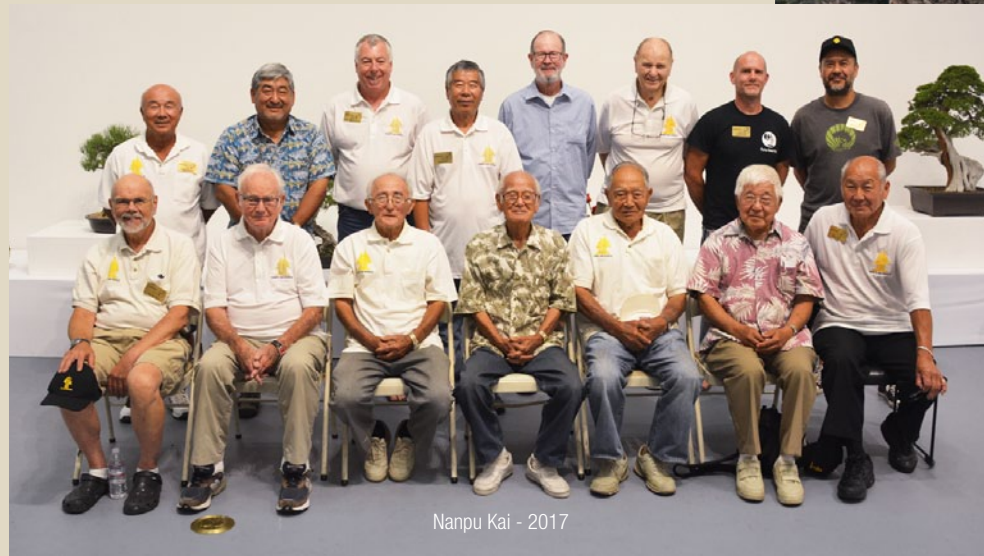
George Yamaguchi



NANPU KAI SHOW



Wally Kunimoto



Nanpu Kai - 2017



Ted Matson



Saikel demo by Frank Goya live from the Nanpu Kai show.



Mel Ikeda demo - Nanpu Kai show.



History of a John Naka tree as told by Ted Matson.

To view Nanpu Kai video coverage of demonstrations, interviews and more, please visit and like www.facebook.com/DailchiBonsai

CHIKUGO-EN

BONSAI NURSERY

For decades, the Ishii family have been strong supporters of Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai, and this month we talk to proprietor, Gary Ishii about the business of bonsai, and the legacy of Chikugo-En Bonsai Nursery.

Started in 1981, Chikugo-En was the business and passion of Gary's father, the late Mas Ishii. The nursery has become the perfect example of how one man's talent and love for bonsai can be turned into a thriving legacy of art, learning, and commerce that would span generations.





Feb 2003, DIBK demonstration with Mas and Gary Ishii.
Photo courtesy of Rick Wagner, Elaine Pine.

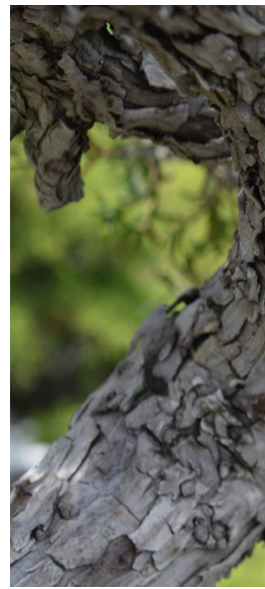
Chikugo-En Bonsai Nursery is renowned throughout the world for their high quality trees, and especially their twisted trunk, grafted Junipers. Originally from Fukuoka, Japan, Masaru Ishii and his wife Reiko started Chikugo-En Bonsai Nursery in 1981. Specimen trees like the ones Chikugo-En is known for, can only come from an artist with the knowledge, experience, and love for the art form itself. As Mas' son Gary puts it, "Bonsai was always dad's focus. It was like his backyard hobby and he was always content just staying out back working on his trees. The nursery became his sole focus and it all grew from his love for the hobby. The nursery was where he came to play. It was his passion and he was good at it."

"Early on, I wasn't into bonsai too much. At the time I was a printer, but I did come in to help him out on evenings and weekends. About 25 years ago, I started to get more involved in the business. It really is a lot of work as it's never ending and there's always something that needs to be done. In addition to the artistic styling work, there's also repotting, fertilizing, pest and weed control, and when you times that by hundreds of trees... Well, it keeps us pretty busy all year round. A lot of people say 'Gary you have it so easy in the fall' and I just say 'no, it's just as much work in fall as it is in spring.'"





One of Chikugo-En's trademarks is their twisted trunk, grafted Junipers. "The twisted Junipers were something my dad did on his own. He started the understock from cuttings of San Jose and Prostrata stock, and once he got them going he would graft Kishu, Shimpaku and Itoigawa stock onto the understock. He would twist them up... carve them... all when they were very young. Sometimes as small as 3/16". Every year you're putting a growth ring on the tree, so over time you start to develop some girth on the base. A lot of the trees we have are probably 30+ years old at this point, and even though they're small, like *Chuhin* sized, a lot of time and work have gone into them. That's how he started these twisted varieties. You know, trees are always a work in progress... they're never finished, so i'm always refining the trees as I handle them. It challenges me to find the best direction for each tree and to make them the best that they can be.



Gary's Sargent Juniper on display at the 2015 DIBK Exhibit



CHIKUGO-EN LEGACY OF LEARNING

Throughout Chikugo-En's long history, Mas and Gary have nurtured quite a few students in the art of bonsai. We've spoken to a few of them, and they were gracious enough to share their memories of learning bonsai at Chikugo-En.



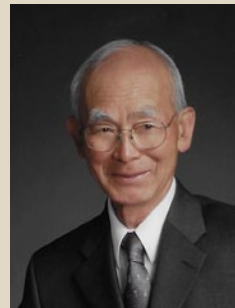
TRAVIS GOLDSTEIN

Travis Goldstein has been involved in bonsai since he was 10 years old, but it was after traveling to Japan that his passion for bonsai grew. Travis is the proprietor of California Bonsai Studio in Thousand Oaks.

In 2001, I started learning bonsai at Chikugo-En with Mas and Gary Ishii. Upon my request, they allowed me to help out around the nursery, which furthered my learning experience immensely. Cleaning out the back area was especially enjoyable, as I could watch as Mas sat and worked on his trees. He was a man of few words, but that meant I really paid attention when he spoke. Mas was a kind and patient man, and seemed to truly love bonsai. A trait he quickly passed on to me.

Funny enough, I think one of the answers I would get from him the most often when I had a question about what to do with a tree was, "whatever you like."

I truly enjoyed my time at Chikugo-En, but just as Mas was a man of few words, my experience there is difficult to put into words as well.



TED OKA

Ted Oka is one of the original founding members of Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai. Ted is an amazing bonsai artist in his own right, and much of his skill and talent is due to the training he received from Mas at Chikugo-En.

One day in 1985, I stopped by Chikugo-En Bonsai Nursery and couldn't believe what I saw. Row after row of beautiful grafted Shimpaku bonsai. I was so amazed and impressed, I jokingly said I wouldn't move till they give me a lesson. Thus began the beginning of my lifelong bonsai journey.

Mas Ishii was a very gentle and respectful sensei to his students, as well as their trees. He would always ask permission before cutting a tree branch.

His philosophy was that the best bonsai teacher is the tree itself, as one will always learn from the trees.

To this day, I treasure those moments I spent with him. That's the reason I still go there... to reminisce about those precious moments. Thank you, Mr. Ishii.



"My teaching philosophy is to have students master the basics, the same way I was taught... kind of your classic, old school way. Learn the rules first and foremost so you can understand what the tree needs to look its best. Once you've learned the rules, you'll understand when the design requires you to break them. You can't follow all the rules every time, and oftentimes you need to in order to create balance and harmony.

"I'll sometimes look to books for inspiration and guidance, but the books don't show you the structure underneath. I used to go through my dad's old Kokufu Ten and Kindai books for examples and I would use them as guidelines, but mostly I just try to bring the best out of each individual tree. I don't force the tree to be something it's not. Traditional styles like Cascades and informal uprights are my favorite style of tree, and I would not try to turn them into a style they aren't meant to be."

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CHIKUGO-EN
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FRED MIYAHARA

CHIKUGO-EN LEGACY OF LEARNING

Fred Miyahara is a master of many aspects of bonsai, especially in the area of grafting and the Japanese Black Pine. He has done thousands of grafts using Shimpaku scions onto San Jose Junipers, and Nishiki (cork bark), Mikawa and Awaji scions onto Black Pine stock. He learned his grafting skills from Mas Ishii.

In January 1990, I met Mas Ishii when he did a grafting demo for the San Diego Shohin Study Group. I was absolutely mesmerized and amazed at his grafting skills. During the demonstration, he found out that I understood a little Japanese and asked me to translate some points he was trying to make. After the demo, he invited me to visit his nursery, and after a few visits, I asked him if he would be willing to teach me grafting. In January 1991, I spent three days with Mr. Ishii learning about grafting. Over the next six years, I attended Mr. Ishii's classes every month, only missing two classes during that time.

Being a novice, my experience with Mr. Ishii was extremely educational. He taught me all the basic bonsai information. Being from Japan, Mr. Ishii taught in the Japanese style which meant you learn by watching not by verbal instruction, which can be somewhat difficult for a western educated person. When asked a particular question though, he gladly responded with an explanation.

Probably the one most important thing I learned from Mr. Ishii was to horticulturally care for the tree. By that, it was more important to have a healthy tree than to worry about the design factor. Too many teachers stress what's above the ground instead of what's below the ground.

Aside from my monthly visits, my fondest memories of Chikugo-en was attending bonsai conventions with Mas and Reiko.

Mr. Ishii was so popular and renowned within the bonsai circles, I was able to meet many bonsai dignitaries while helping vend his booth. I was able to meet and make friends with many people throughout the United States because of this experience. We attended the California Shohin Seminars, GSBF conventions and the CBS conventions.

I feel Mr. Ishii was the most accomplished grafter in the United States. As renowned as he was, I think he would have been even more famous and respected if it wasn't for the language barrier. In my opinion, Mr. Ishii was a pioneer in the field of grafting for bonsai trees.

Mas Ishii was my first bonsai teacher, and though I have had many teachers since, it was Mr. Ishii who instilled in me, the knowledge, philosophy, and love of bonsai that I possess today. For that, I will be eternally grateful.

**It was Mr. Ishii who
instilled in me, the
knowledge, philosophy,
and love of bonsai that
I possess today.**

**For that, I will
be eternally grateful.**

~Fred Miyahara

SAN DIEGO BONSAI CLUB FALL SHOW

BY DOYLE SAITO



Fred Miyahara and Joan Holliday



The free kids workshop was a hoot. Everything was donated by Jason Chan of Eastern Leaf



The San Diego Bonsai Club
**Bonsai
Exhibition**





STEVE IWAKI

OCTOBER 20, 2017

Our feature presenter for October will be Steve Iwaki. A second generation bonsai artist, Mr. Iwaki offers workshops and demos throughout California. Steve's philosophy is simple: "My goal is to pass down what I've learned from others, my experiences, and my appreciation of this traditional practice. In doing so, I find that I teach all the facets of the art form, from the technical and craftsmanship side to the more esoteric aspects. I believe that bonsai instills in you commitment, patience, and a sense of accomplishment; and above all creates balance in your life."

Steve will be working on an Alberta Spruce. This is going to be a great demo you don't want to miss.

UPCOMING

All events are tentative and subject to change.

NOV 17, 2017 | **HOLIDAY POTLUCK**
BONSAI BINGO

DECEMBER 2017 | **NO MEETING**
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

EVENTS

October 7 – 8, 2017 Conejo Valley Bonsai Society: 14th Annual Bonsai Exhibition

Gardens of the World
2001 Thousand Oak Blvd.
Hours: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Demonstrations at 11 AM (Saturday) and 2 PM (Sunday) in the Bandstand. Free Admission.
For information, call Marj Branson at 805-373-1330 or visit www.cvbs-bonsai.org.

Oct 25 – 30, 2017 GSBF Convention 40 "Bonsai New Horizon"

The Double Tree By Hilton
2001 Point West Way, Sacramento
Headliners: David Nguy, Kunio Kobayashi, Boon Manakitivipart. Guest artists: Bill Castellon, Tom Elias, Frank Goya, Jim Gremel, Gasy Ishii, Peter Macasieb, Ted Matson, Frank Mihalic, Fred Miyahara, Pauline Muth, Mike Pistello, Bob Pressler, Steve Price, Kathy Shaner, Tak Shimazu, Bob Shimon, Cary Sullivan, Michael Sykes, Jonny Uchica, Bill Valavanis, Steve Valentine. On-line registration opens on July 1, 2017.

For more information, please visit www.gsbconvention.org

Dec 26 - 30, 2017 California Aiseki Kai 28th Annual Show

The Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens
1151 Oxford Road, San Marino
Hours: 10:30 AM – 4:30 PM
For more information, visit:
www.aisekikai.com or contact sashaichris@gmail.com

For more event information, please visit
bit.ly/GSBF-MoreEvents

GRATITUDE

*Thank you to all of the members who contributed.
The club truly appreciates your generosity and giving spirit.*

Benefit Drawing Contributors

Doyle Saito, Gary Lai, Gib & Elissa Hoxie

Refreshment Contributors

Fred & Shirley Floresca, Joe Ortega,
CJ Levinstein, Tom Culton, Louis Carrillo
Carol & Glen Takahashi, Doyle Saito
Drinks by Barry Miller

Refreshment Signup for October

Please fee free to bring your favorite yummys. Nom nom nom. ;9

Please remember to sign the contribution sheet so that we may acknowledge your generosity.

Special thanks to

Doyle Saito, Phil Aupperle, Liz Do, Barry Miller, Alyssa Factor Saito,
Teresa Serrato - Peter's Garden Center, Carol Upston, CJ Levinstein, Nanpu Kai - Mel Ikeda,
Frank Goya, Ted Matson, Brad Ellman, Gary Ishii, Ishii Family - Chikugo-En, Travis Goldstein,
Ted Oka, Fred Miyahara, Rick Wagner, and the San Diego Bonsai Club
for their contributions to this issue of the DIBK Gazette.
Our apologies to Soung Shin whom we inadvertently renamed Lewis in last month's issue. Sorry dude.

ABOUT DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai ("Number One" Bonsai Club) was established in January, 1986.

Our club is dedicated to promoting the art of bonsai, and takes great pride in its family-oriented character.

The club meets on the third Friday of each month at the Ken Nakaoka Community Center, 1670 W. 162nd St., Gardena, at 7:00 P.M. Each meeting features a bonsai demonstration, benefit drawing and the public is welcome.

www.daiichibonsaikai.com

***Please feel free to forward this publication to friends, family
or anyone with an appreciation for bonsai.***

Do you have any comments, questions, or submissions? If so, please contact:
Jason Saito ph 310.909.4598 | email jason@zenpalace.com