

# TEXAS BONSAI



A Publication Of

The Lone Star Bonsai Federation, Inc.

Winter - 2010

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

By Buddy Allen

Another year has passed and now it is 2010, that will be strange to say. I have asked each club delegate to write some of the history of their club. It will give everyone a chance to know about the eight clubs in the Federation. As the years pass on we forget who started each club and the people that worked hard to keep them alive.

I was asked, what is LSBF and what do they do? The Lone Star Bonsai Federation is commonly referred to as LSBF. It was started in 1984 to assist the clubs host the state Bonsai conventions. Presently, LSBF gives the host club \$500 seed money to help the club promote and to do the initial planning for the convention. The host club and the Federation split the profits from the State convention. The Federation uses the major portion of its money to pay the transportation of a Bonsai Artist to tour Texas doing lectures/demonstrations and workshops. A member of the LSBF Board arranges and coordinates the travel between clubs.

The Federation originally consisted of twelve clubs throughout Texas—Austin, Dallas, Corpus Christy, Fort Worth, Houston Longview, San Antonio, The Shohin Society of Texas, Tyler, Abilene, Beaumont and McAllen. The clubs at Abilene, Beaumont, McAllen and Tyler are no longer active. I would like to see more clubs formed and the inactive one reactivated. However, I do understand that forming a club and keeping it functioning requires a lot of hard work and dedication. I hope you enjoy this new format.

Remember the Ft. Worth convention in June. See you there.

Buddy Allen  
President



™ LSBF



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Readers are invited to submit articles and photographs on bonsai culture and related subjects for possible publication to the Editor. If requested, all materials will be returned if accompanied by a self addressed, stamped envelope. Authors are requested not to simultaneously submit the same article(s) to other publications.

Texas Bonsai reserves the right to edit all materials submitted for publication. Articles needing extensive editing will be returned to the author with suggestions from the editorial staff.

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## The Fort Worth Bonsai Society

by Steven Hendricks

The Fort Worth Bonsai Society was founded on April 25, 1985. The instigator and founding member was Estella Flather who is still an integral member of the club. We are a fairly young club with many beginners to the art. Meetings range from talks on various aspects of bonsai, to demonstrations by nationally recognized bonsai artists, to members workshops. The society holds its monthly meeting on the second Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden Conservatory, 3220 Botanic Garden Drive North, Fort Worth, Texas. A second meeting is held each month on the fourth Thursday at 7:00 PM at the same location. Sometimes this second meeting has planned programs, sometimes Estella teaches classes, and sometimes it is an open workshop for anyone who wishes to bring in a tree on which to work or to receive advice.

We have two yearly shows held in conjunction with the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens at "Springfest" in April and "Fallfest" in October in the Japanese Gardens. In addition, we have one yearly "Show & Sale" at the Conservatory of the Botanic Gardens, at which vendors sell bonsai and bonsai-related items.

This year the Lone Star Bonsai Federation's 2010 Convention will be hosted by the Fort Worth Bonsai Society and takes place on June 11-13, 2010. Our guest artists will be Peter Warren, Guy Guidry, Mat Ouwinga, Estella Flather and Alisan Clarke. We will have nine workshops including Trident maples, Junipers, Dwarf Podocarpus, Ficus microcarpa, Japanese black pine, Hokaido elms, and Cephalotaxus (Plum Yew) workshops. For the novice, Estella Flather will lead a "Beginner's Tropical" workshop. For those who don't need more trees but need some help in designing or refining a tree they already have, Guy Guidry will host a "Bring Your Own Tree" workshop. In addition, there will be two workshops hosted by Alisan Clarke on scroll making. We cordially invite all LSBF members and interested parties to participate.

## The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit

By Elaine White

A very prosperous New Year is wished for our bonsai friends with expectations of many more beautiful bonsai! On December 20, 2000 The Texas State Bonsai Exhibit received notification from the I.R.S. that TTSBE would be recognized as a 501 © (3) organization - A Publicly Supported Organization.

In these tough economic times it is extremely difficult to raise funds for building when there is much need for ongoing programs for food, shelter and children in the community. It is more vital than ever that the Texas bonsai community, who values the building of this bonsai exhibit more than others, come together to raise funds to accomplish our dream.

Some of the ways you can help:

1. Donate pots for our foster trees
  2. Sell used, unneeded pots, tools and supplies at your annual exhibit or garden show
  3. Have a club garage/yard sale - have fun with it!
  4. Put the TTSBE number on your Randall's Remarkable Card - N0. 9893
  5. Every club budget for a yearly donation
  6. LSBF budget for a yearly donation
  7. Every club member in the state become a TTSBE member for \$25 per year
  8. Join the Cornerstone Society for \$100 or more
- Be Creative! With your help we can make this the year we construct our first building! Many thanks to those that have made the commitment!



Fukien Tea - *Carmona microphylla*



Author's Small Jade - *Portulacaria afra*

## To Be or Not To Be: That is the Succulent Question

By: Jorge E. Mendizabal, M.D.

As the proud owner of a small jade (*Portulacaria*), the question whether succulents are an appropriate bonsai subject is a hot topic for me. It is not rare to see a "frown" on some bonsaists face when faced with a succulent bonsai specimen. In some Internet forums, posts or threads about succulents are looked down upon or simply ignored. Why is that? I don't think I have a good answer to this question.

So, what is *bonsai* anyway? The bare definition is "tree in a pot". My own personal definition is an artistic representation or illusion of a tree in a small scale using live material in a pot. Some purists may only include plants with solid bark. Bonsai esthetics

dictates the presence of taper, appropriate branch placement, nebari, depth, etc.

Based on that, I am not entirely sure why or how succulents are an aberration. Let's use *Portulacaria afra* as the best example. Mature specimens have wonderful bark texture. With proper pruning, they achieve great ramification and taper. The nebari in this species can be powerful and convincing. The end result is the illusion of a small tree in a pot. Even better, this species is care free. It is not prone to pests and is not strict with its water requirements. As a matter of fact, succulents like *Portulacaria* are believed to originate from the South African deserts and, much like a cactus would, they can go without water for extended periods of time.

Yes, Japanese Masters don't work on succulents. But then again, they don't work on Ficus, Schefflera or bougainvillea either. So, next time someone frowns at your beautiful jade bonsai, politely ask them to get a life....



Suiseki



## PRUNING PINES

Pines are one of the classic tree genera used for bonsai throughout the world, however they are also one of the most difficult to understand how to style and prune. Deciduous species (and many conifers, such as Junipers), continuously produce new leaves and shoots throughout the growing season which require continual removal using techniques that can be applied to a tree, whichever variety it is. These techniques however are inappropriate to the growth patterns of pines. Unlike deciduous species, most Pines in Northern temperate areas have only one flush of growth and a different set of pruning techniques need to be applied accordingly.

Pine pruning techniques in reality are very straightforward, however trying to learn them can be very confusing as there is so much contradictory advice offered in Bonsai publications and books. This confusion normally arises from the attempt of Bonsai publications to be too specific about the precise time of the year that certain techniques should be carried out. Unfortunately, different pine species require pruning at slightly different times of the year; different climates will also affect the advancement of Pine growth through the year and this also causes confusion when trying to follow advice that has been written for a different climate.

My personal opinion is that it is easier to learn to prune pines by observation of the growth pattern of your own tree in your own environment. This ensures that your tree is pruned correctly, at the right time, when your tree is ready; and not simply because it is a certain time of the year. This article concentrates specifically on techniques for pruning Japanese Black Pine (*Pinus thunbergii*), but these techniques can just as equally be applied to other Pine species if simple observation of varying growth rates between different Pine species is noted. Japanese Black Pines are a vigorous species, particularly in warm climates, other two or three-needle pines with sufficient vigour will respond similarly. Please note that *Pinus mugo*/Mugo Pines require a different approach to pruning and repotting, for further information refer to [Mugo Pines In-depth](#). For Pruning and Care Guidelines specific to please refer to [Japanese White Pine/\*P. parviflora\* Pruning and Care](#)

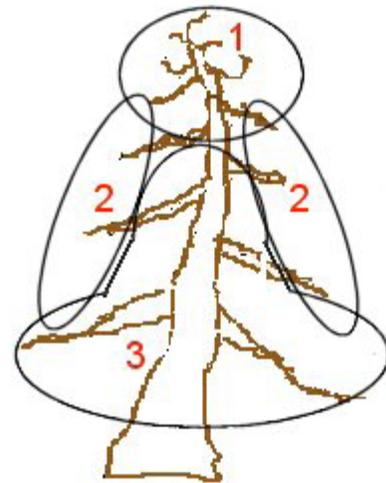
## PINE GROWTH CHARACTERISTICS

Pines are extremely apically dominant. This means that their most vigorous area of growth is always towards the top or outer-reaches of the tree. If the tree is left unpruned, all growth will be centered on the apex/top of the tree at the expense of the lower branches and foliage, which, in time will weaken and dieback.

An unpruned or poorly pruned Pine will nearly always display characteristics of heavy top and outer foliage, with little inner growth near the trunk, which is unsuitable for bonsai.

Pines are able to produce buds from anywhere that there are still needles though it is rare for buds to break anywhere other than the tips of shoots. It is very difficult to force Pines to bud-back on the trunk or branches; without careful pruning, branches can be completely bare other than a ball of foliage at their very tips.

Diagram showing vigour areas of a Pine tree



Area 1 is the most vigorous.  
Area 2 has medium vigour.  
Area 3 is the least vigorous area.

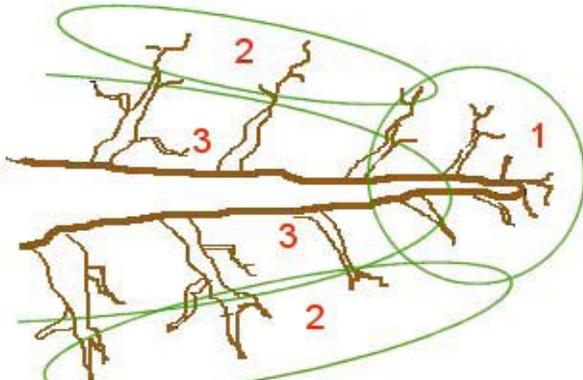
Typically, the other major fault with unpruned pines that needs to be avoided is the natural tendency to produce 'whorls' of buds at the end of branches which elongate into multiple subbranches that look ugly and create problems with inverse taper at the point in the branch (or trunk) that they emanate from.

Due to these growth characteristics, it is necessary to start shaping pines from an early age, pines that have left unpruned whilst developing their trunks can have



little or no branch structure that is suitable for use when it comes to styling the tree. Often, in these cases grafting is the only way of encouraging branches low down on the trunk.

Diagram showing vigour areas of a Pine branch



Area 1 is the most vigorous.  
Area 2 is of medium vigour.  
Area 3 has the least vigour.

The best way to develop a thick trunk on a pine whilst retaining suitable branches low down on the trunk is to cultivate lower and inner shoots as future branches whilst allowing top other branches to extend freely as sacrificial growth that can be removed at a later date.

### Hard Pruning/ Removing Branches

Pruning of branches is nearly always carried out when the trees' growth slows down in late Autumn through to Spring to avoid excessive sap-loss. When pruning in Winter it is always best to leave a small stub rather than cut back close to the trunk. Leaving a stub when pruning pines is advantageous as it leaves open the opportunity in the future of creating jins and it also allows time for the sap-flow to bypass the missing branch, reducing sap-loss through bleeding. Pruning close to the trunk and hollowing out is best carried out whilst still semi-dormant in early Spring as scars will heal quickest with the Spring growth that follows. It is better to be conservative when hard-pruning and reducing Pines. Severe reduction without allowing for recovery time can be fatal particularly with old or large trees. Reduce large trunks and/or branches gradually over a number of seasons so that the tree is able to adjust.

### Wiring Pines

As well as being a useful tool for shaping and

positioning trunks and branches, wiring is an effective way of distributing energy and vigour throughout a pine. When the trunk or branches of a Pine are wired, the flow of sap through these branches is slowed so that not all the trees energy goes directly to its branch tips.

There are many schools of thought as to when the correct time to wire a Pine is. Some say that you should only wire in late Autumn or Winter as whilst the cambium is less active during this time, damage is reduced. Other bonsai enthusiasts recommend wiring during the Summer when any damage to the branch can be repaired immediately by the tree as it is still actively growing. My personal feeling is that it is better to wire during the late Autumn and Winter; pine branches tend to increase in thickness quickly during the late Summer and there is a greater risk of wire damage. Wiring after this time means that the wire can nearly always stay in place until the following Summer by which time the branch should have set in place correctly.

### IMPROVING PINE RAMIFICATION

The pruning of pines for foliage and branch formation can be split into four basic areas; bud selection, candle pinching, shoot trimming and needle plucking.

#### Bud Selection

The development of foliage pads or branch structure on a bonsai dictates that the branch tips should fork and subdivide into only two smaller subbranches. As previously stated, Pine buds most often emerge in clusters or whorls at the end of branch tips. The basic rule in Bud Selection is to select two of the buds and remove the rest so that when the buds extend as shoots they form a two-pronged fork.

Selection of buds according to position on tree



From Left to Right;  
Image 1: Example of a typical bud-cluster  
Image 2: Reduce dominant area cluster to two weak buds  
Image 3: A cluster in a weaker area should be reduced to 2 or 3 stronger buds



Buds continually need to be reduced to two as they appear, in Autumn and in Spring. Deciding which 2 buds in a bud cluster should be retained needs some consideration. As previously stated pines are apically dominant, upper and outer areas can (and should) be restrained by careful bud selection and elimination. Apical areas of a pine can produce 5 or more buds to a shoot terminal, by removing the largest and strongest buds and retaining the two smallest and weakest, vigour is redirected to wards inner and lower areas of the tree. Conversely, weaker lower branches are allowed to retain their largest, most vigorous two or three buds to encourage more vigour to them. If a third bud is retained on a weak branch it can be removed at a later date when its job is done. To encourage good branch structure and proper formation of foliage pads, whenever possible, buds that appear on the sides of a shoot should be retained rather than those than on top or below.

#### Extension of buds into new subbranches



From left to right;  
Image 1: Appearance of shoot tip before bud selection in Spring.  
Image 2: After bud selection.  
Image 3: After extension of the buds into new subbranches in Summer

Note the appearance of a further set of buds developing at the new shoot-tips.

#### Candle Pinching

During the Spring, the buds that you have retained will elongate into candles, their size being in relation to each candle's individual strength and vigour. To ensure that growth extension is regulated and energy is dispersed evenly throughout the whole tree; these candles need to be pinched back. The amount that each candle is reduced depends on its position within the structure of the tree and its future purpose. After the candles have extended into new shoots and branches, it is at their tips that new buds for next year will form.

Just as in bud selection, candles growing in more

vigorous areas of the tree should be reduced by far more than candles growing in weaker, inner areas. If a new branch or subbranch is required the candle can be left unpruned to extend; however it should be noted that more of the trees energy will be directed to it at the expense of other areas. Candles left unpruned to encourage vigour in weak areas or to develop new branches can then be cut back to a desirable length once they have fully elongated and hardened, this will soon be followed by the appearance of buds at the tip.

The timing of pinching out candles will affect where the new buds that follow will form. Pinching the candles before the new needles appear will cause new needles to form at the base of the candle. Pinching the candles after the needles begin to appear and start to elongate will cause the buds that follow to form at the end of the new shoot. Don't pinch out all the candles at once. Start pinching out the weaker areas of the tree first and finish with the strongest areas 2-3 weeks later. Generally, as a rule of thumb, candles growing in vigorous areas of a Pine should be reduced by 1/2 to 2/3, candles in weak areas should be reduced by no more than a 1/3.

#### Needle Plucking

Needle plucking is a very useful tool for pine maintenance. It allows air and light to penetrate the outer foliage to increase the health and vigour of inner shoots and branches. It also helps to spread energy throughout the tree in the same way that bud selection and candle pinching do.

In late Autumn or early Winter, both old and new needles are plucked according to their position on the tree. The principal behind needle plucking is that the more foliage or needles a branch has, the more vigorous it is; by reducing the amount of needles on a vigorous area of the tree (such as the apex) in comparison to the number of needles a weak area has, vigour is distributed more evenly.

As a basic rule leave less needle-pairs on the upper shoots and more on the weaker, lower and inner shoots. Often no needles are plucked from inner shoots to preserve their vigour. The actual numbers of needles that are removed will depend on the needs and strength of the tree. With a very vigorous tree it



may be possible to leave as little as 4 pairs of needles on the upper branches, 6 or 7 pairs on the mid-level branches and 8-12 on the lower branches. Base your starting number on the lowest, weakest shoots since you can only decrease strength with this technique and not increase it. Do not remove so many needles that the overall vigour of the tree or branch is lost.

**Diagram showing shoots that have been needle-plucked according to their position on the tree**



From left to right  
Image 1: Lower or inner shoot  
Image 2: Mid-level shoot  
Image 3: Upper or Outer shoot

### Shoot Trimming and Forcing Back-Budding

To force a Pine to back-bud is difficult ordinarily. However, shoot trimming is a useful technique for trying to force back budding and generally increasing the number of buds on a tree.

All shoots should be allowed to grow unhindered throughout the growing season. In Autumn, all the current years' growth is removed leaving only the previous years' needles. This will cause the tree to produce a large number of buds at branch tips and further back along the branches, sometimes even into old wood. This technique is however very stressful for the tree and should only be carried out on healthy, vigorous specimens.

### NEEDLE REDUCTION

It is often necessary with all but the largest Pine bonsai to reduce the length of the needles to help refine the image of the tree.

It has often been recommended that needle reduction can be achieved by reducing the amount of water and fertilizer available to the tree during the Spring so that new needle growth is limited; literally 'starving' the tree. This is not a satisfactory technique as it entails deliberately weakening the tree and

reducing its vigour for a number of weeks.

These days, there is a new technique which helps reduce the length of needles by limiting the time the tree has to grow its needles before growth slows or stops for the Winter.

Allow shoots to grow through the Spring and Summer. In mid-Summer, cut the new shoots leaving only last year's needles. Over the course of the next few weeks new buds will form; these will need to be reduced to two as outlined previously. These new buds will not develop into candles, but will sprout new needles as soon as possible. They will not have enough time in the remainder of the season to grow long resulting in a set of reduced needles.

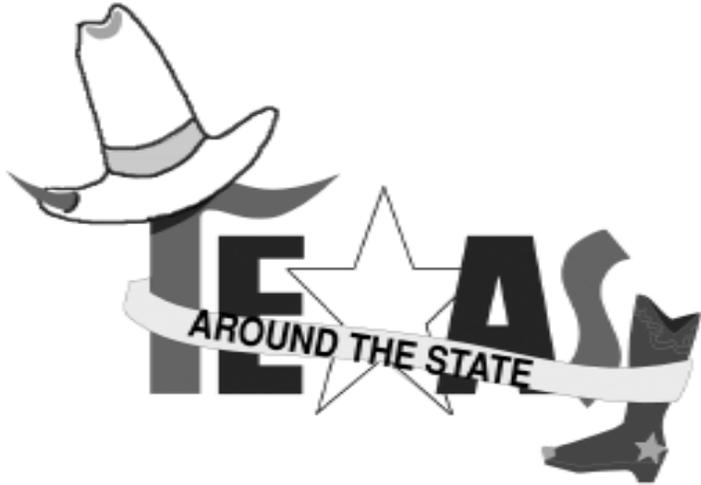
### Trimming back shoots in Summer



From left to right:  
Image 1: Two candles that have been allowed to fully extend into shoots.  
Image 2: After trimming back in Summer  
Image 3: Resulting buds.

This technique should only be carried out on Pines that have an established trunk and branch structure. Using this technique will decrease the vigour of the tree and its ability to thicken up branches and trunks; needle reduction should be regarded as the last stage of developing a pine bonsai.

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Photographs by Joey McCoy



Japanese Maple - *Acer japonica*



Chinese Elm - *Ulmus parvifolia*



Japanese Black Pine - *Pinus thumbergiana*



Japanese Maple - *Acer japonica*



Chinese Elm - *Ulmus parvifolia*



Coffee Tree - *Coffea arabica*



Dwarf Yaupon Holly - *Ilex vomitoria 'nana'*



## Lone Star Bonsai Federation Meeting Minutes

**October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM by President, Yvonne Padilla. Yvonne called for any changes to the minutes of the last meeting. There being no changes, a motion was made and carried to approve the minutes as published.

### Treasurer's Report

Pat Ware reported that the LSBF treasury held \$5,342.55 as of September 30, 2009. This amount did not include the "seed money" for the 2011 LSBF Convention nor the printing charges for the last LSBF Newsletter. A motion was made and carried to approve the Treasurers Report. Pat noted that \$512 more has been spent by the LSBF this year than has been taken in but, with the income from the last convention yet to be deposited, we will likely end up approximately even for the year. A brief discussion was held regarding the reimbursement of the clubs for part of their costs for this year's visiting artist, Roberto Martinez. Because of the limited funds in the treasury, it was decided not to offer reimbursements this year. A motion was made to that effect by Buddy Allen and the motion was passed.

### Old Business

#### Conventions

2009 – Buddy Allen presented a check to the treasurer for LSBF's half of the profit from the 2009 Convention in Houston. The amount was \$1979.83. He noted that they were required to pay \$85/day for each of the workrooms at the hotel and extra money for storage space. Buddy also passed out a copy of the convention expense report to each club representative.

Yvonne brought up the question of the memorial plaque. The material appears to be all together now except for the tripod. A substitute tripod was provided while the search continues for the original. All items should now be in the possession of the Fort Worth group and available for display at the convention.

Yvonne noted that the plaque and its associated book and tripod should be kept with the LSBF President between conventions.

2010 – Steven Hendricks discussed the upcoming convention in Fort Worth. All of the workshop materials are in hand. The hotel will be the same from the previous conventions, but now it is a Radisson instead of a Holiday Inn. The convention dates will be June 11, 12, and 13.

2011 – Versie Marks discussed the 2011 convention which will be hosted by the Corpus Christi Bonsai Society. She indicated that they are still negotiating with artists and are actively seeking a "rock" man. The convention will be held on May 17, 18 and 19 of 2011 at the Emerald Beach Hotel and the rooms will cost \$99/night. The hotel is on the waterfront.

Versie brought up the issue of "goodie bags" for the convention and indicated some concern that there was such disparity between the goodie bags at the conventions. She indicated that they were a money losing proposition, which all agreed. Buddy Allen indicated that they spent \$4 apiece for the buckets at their convention. Pat Ware suggested that the goody bag costs should be factored into the registration price. Jay Nolan indicated that they had very good luck soliciting free items for the bags.

#### LSBF Speaker Tour

2009 – Comments were solicited from the representatives as to their satisfaction with the recent LSBF Tour speaker Roberto Martinez. All agreed that his reception was good and that he was found to be very personable and his presentations interesting. Versie Marks noted that there will be an additional baggage free for his airline travels that will be presented to the treasurer.

2010 – Carl Quisenberry reported on the 2010 tour. Roy Nagatoshi has agreed to the terms of the tour with the following fees: \$350 for the first program and \$300 for the second program if on the same day. If two programs are on different days, then the price of \$350 will apply to each. Roy asked to fly into and



out of LAX. The tour will take place in September of 2010. Carl will begin assembling the schedule. Jet Blue was recommended as a good quality carrier with reasonable prices.

Yvonne suggested that for future tours we should consider looking for less expensive, lesser known artists, both within and outside the state.

### **New Business**

#### **Bonsai Vendor List**

Yvonne suggested that Steven Hendricks re-send to the club representatives the new bonsai vendor list that incorporates some recent additions.

#### **Texas Artists List**

Buddy Allen submitted a new name for the Texas Artists List; a Houston club member by the name of Alex Leong. He is very much into the Chinese art form and, though he has an accent, is easily understandable.

#### **New Officers.**

Carl Quisenberry presented the slate for LSBF officers for the 2010-2012 term.

Buddy Allen – President  
 Els Ulug – Vice President  
 Pat Ware – Treasurer  
 Steven Hendricks - Secretary

A motion was made and seconded to accept the slate as presented. The motion carried.

#### **Miscellaneous**

Yvonne suggested that each club needs to find alternates for their delegates.

As incoming President, Buddy Allen suggested that instead of a President's Forum in each newsletter, that each club delegate should have a turn in writing a short article telling about their club. This would be called the Member's Forum. A discussion was held as to whether this would be in addition to or replace the President's message. No clear decision was made on that point. The first club to compose an article

will be the Fort Worth club as they are hosting the next convention. The rotation will continue basically along the convention rotation schedule.

Fort Worth	January 2010
Corpus Christi	June 2010
Dallas	October 2010
San Antonio	January 2011
Austin	June 2011
Longview	October 2011

Jay Nolan presented copies of the Texas State Bonsai Exhibit newsletter sent by Donna Dobberfuhr. They are for the representatives to take back with them and distribute to local nurseries and gardening related venues to help raise awareness of the exhibit.

Carl Quisenberry passed out copies of the Fall Edition of the LSBF newsletter to the club representatives. A motion was made and passed to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2:17 PM.

## **AGENDA**

### **Lone Star Bonsai Federation Meeting**

Saturday January 16<sup>th</sup> 2010 Time: 1:00 PM.

IHOP Restaurant

1101 South MoPac Expressway

Austin, Texas

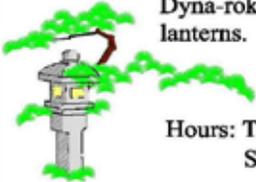
1. Approval of minutes
2. Treasurer's Report
3. Old Business
4. Convention Reports
  - A. Steven Hendricks - 2010
  - B. Versie Marks - 2011
  - C. John Miller - 2012
5. LSBF Touring Artist
  - A. Versie Marks - 2009
  - B. Carl Quisenberry - 2010
  - C. TBA - 2011
6. New Business
7. Suggestions for the future



### Sanderson Creek Bonsai

1634 Stella Street, Fort Worth, Texas

Bonsai, collected and pre-bonsai trees, sieved soil, lava, pumice, exp-shale, kanuma, akadama, pots, Dyna-rok, Joshua Roth tools, classes and granite lanterns.



You are welcomed!

Hours: Tuesday thru Friday 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm  
Saturday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

e-store [www.sandersonbonsai.com](http://www.sandersonbonsai.com) ph# 817-534-3220

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