



RMBS

August 2019

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August President's Message

by Lindsey Berry

Lamentation of a Bonsai Spouse

Hi, my name is Lindsay, and I am the spouse of a bonsai artist. Or practitioner, amateur, devotee, however you want to say it; my husband loves small trees. Some of you may know what this means. If you have watched your partner dig up established landscaping and put it in a pot, then you know. If one of your baby's first and favorite words is tree, then you know. If you have opened box after box from Amazon, expectantly, only to find its contents are literally a bag of dirt, then you know. If you have ever shared a harrowing story from your day and waited a little too long for a response, only to realize your spouse is enraptured listening to his Oregon guru orate on trunk angle, then you know. If you have waited in bed for your partner, wondering where they could be at so late an hour, only to find them re-wiring the same damn spruce again, then you know. Or if you have ever run out of the house INTO a hailstorm of (marble size, repeatedly), to carry the most prized 10-20 trees into the house at the request of your frantic spouse, who is calling you

from work in a panic because they know you are home, then you definitely know.

Being the spouse or partner of a bonsai artist can be challenging. Like a hobby, obsession and pet, all in one, bonsai requires a lot of their attention. I often tell people; it could be worse: he could be a couch potato obsessed with sports and his "bracket". He could have an illicit substance addiction. Or a ruinous gambling compulsion. I mean, what's a few hundred (or thousand) dollars in dead trees compared to that? And it's not like I was using my garage, side yard, laundry room counter and cabinets, back yard, shed, or storage area for anything else. They were all just waiting to be filled with leather pockets of tools, spools of wire, specialized bags of soil and fertilizer, small plants and succulents (kusamono) and pots and pots and pots...and did I mention the \$50 bags of dirt?

Still, despite all the supplies and occasional irritation, I have come to admire these little trees, and especially their delicate companions, the kusamono.

I have even come to notice the minutia that goes into crafting each piece. The subtle and sometimes not so subtle changes to the constant stream of foliage coming through our door. (Me: "You butchered it!" Him: "Wait till you see it in 5 years.") I enjoy coming home to find a balanced arrangement of tree, stone, and stand in some conspicuous corner of our home. To watch my husband over these past few years and see his interest turn to artistry and his passion connect him with fellow practitioners has been inspiring. Bonsai has so thoroughly shaped the aesthetic of our lives in so many ways and he has truly become the auteur of our home. So, I am willing to accept the occasional errant wire shard in the foot, every once in a while? Well...you know.

Andy also wanted me to mention that you should consider bringing your spouse (and yourself) to

Todd Schlafer's bonsai demo for our meeting Tuesday August 6th (at the Central Christian Church). One of RMBS' own, Todd went professional 2 years ago and has become one of the few truly renown American bonsai artists. He will be conducting two workshops the weekend prior to this. If you are interested in having Todd help you transform a tree or two into an amazing bonsai, please contact Connie Garrett for availability and information.

Your Spouse in Bonsai,

Lindsay Berry

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2018 - 2019 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Date and Location	Agenda or Program
<i>Guest Artist Workshops</i> Aug Sat Aug 3 rd and Sun Aug 4 th 8:30am – 3:00pm DBG Plant Society Building	<u>TODD SCHLAFER</u>
<i>Monthly Meeting</i> Aug Tue, Aug 6 th 6:30pm – 9:00pm Central Christian Church	<u>TODD SCHLAFER</u>
<i>Monthly Meeting</i> Sept Tue, Sept 3 rd 6:30pm – 9:00pm DBG Plant Society Building	<u>LONG PROGRAM: BONSAI SHELTERS 101</u>
<i>Annual Show</i> Sept Fri Sept 6 th through Sun Sept 8 th Denver Botanic Gardens	<u>50TH ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL SHOW</u>
<i>Monthly Meeting</i> Oct Tue, Oct 1 st 6:30pm – 9:00pm DBG Plant Society Building	
<i>Monthly Meeting</i> Nov Tue, Nov 5 th 6:30pm – 9:00pm DBG Plant Society Building	<u>Long Program: Aerobic Plants Soils & Microbes - Paul Koenning</u>
<i>Annual Holiday Party</i> Dec Sun, Dec 1 st 10am – 2pm Hillcrest Condos 9968 Appletree Place Thornton, CO	

The entire yearly calendar is online [here](#).

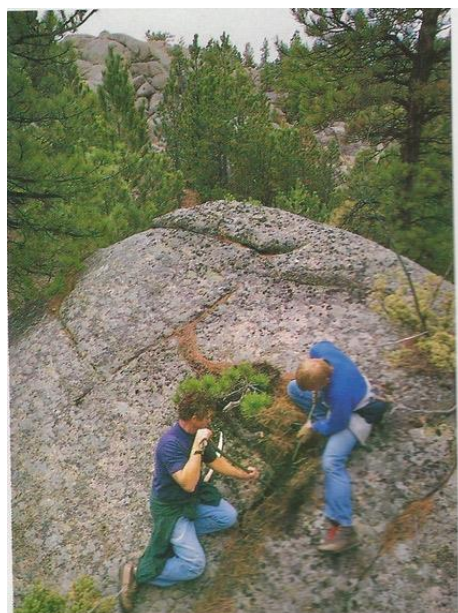
DISTINGUISHED MEMBER PROFILE – by Pat Deutschman

Heritage Trees and RMBS "Roots". Larry Jackel

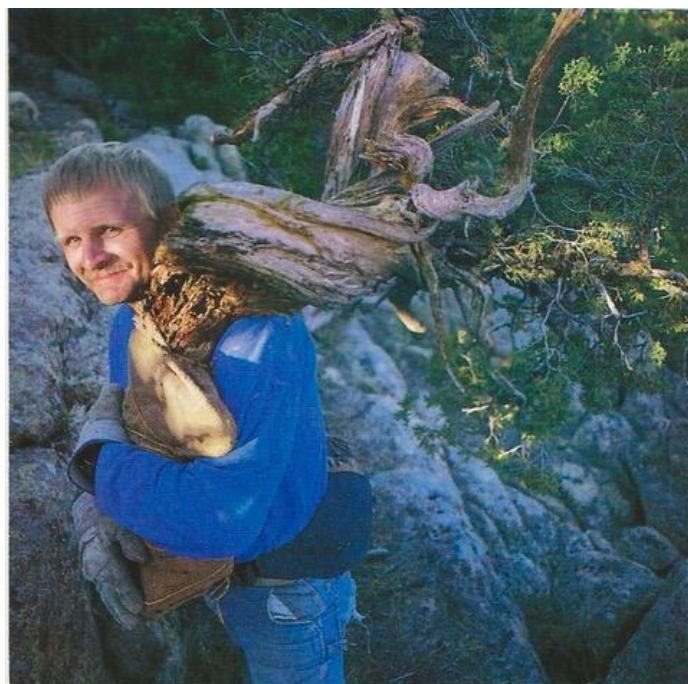
Collecting Yamadori for bonsai – challenging, exciting, addicting! Larry Jackel learned collecting techniques from early founding members of the RMBS, then called the Denver "Junior" Bonsai Club. But he also credits these gentlemen as being a major influence on his life by the way they lived their lives. People like Kai Kawahara, Bob Kataoka, Bob Krueger, Jim Robinson, Malcolm Correll and others who were driven by their desire to share what they had learned and to be of service to others. They were inclusive and welcoming, compassionate, kind and generous. Making beautiful bonsai was the mission...as Malcolm Correll often said, "Let's make it the best we can." This group of fellow bonsai enthusiasts went on collecting trips together (including to stock the DBG Japanese gardens with native material), worked on their trees in each other's back yards and learned from other great masters that the club brought in to do presentations and demonstrations.

While Larry Jackel's interest in bonsai began in Illinois, he was transformed when he moved to Colorado and discovered the thrill of collecting native mountain material. He is known for his ability to shape dead wood using small tools and is keenly observant of the impact the environment has on the trees he chooses to add to his collection. He quickly rose to national attention in the 1980s because of his styling abilities and because people wanted wild Colorado trees.

During the course of his bonsai journey Larry befriended several well-known bonsai artists who he, in turn, taught the art of collecting in the west and planned yearly "collecting trips" together. Dan Robinson, a collecting buddy since 1981, and Larry would seek out the middle of nowhere and call it "Heaven" looking for wild trees on ridges where they survived perhaps for hundreds of years. One of these trips was the subject of an article in Smithsonian magazine, October 1989: "Bonsai, a way of looking at trees with different eyes."



Using a crowbar and tire iron, Dan Robinson and Larry Jackel struggle to free stunted ponderosa pine.



Hugging a root mass in a burlap sack, Jackel carries 700-year-old juniper from its home on Wyoming range.

Mission completed, Robinson heads across Colorado prairie with load. In nine days, his haul was 40 trees.

Larry Jackel has a long list of accomplishments and contributions to the local bonsai community and the "American Bonsai movement" nationally. He has exhibited trees in the U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition show in Rochester, NY., made multiple presentations around the country at bonsai societies and authored a book, [Ponderosa Pine as Bonsai](#). A member of the RMBS since 1976, he has been the recipient of the RMBS Artist of the Year in 1992, 2000, and 2012 as well as receiving the Malcolm Correll Distinguished Service Award in 1997 and 2001. In 1997 he was the National Convention Chair and in 2012 Larry was the program chair for the ABS/BCI National Bonsai convention in Denver as well as a workshop presenter and has earned two BCI "Excellence in Bonsai" awards. He has also served twice as the President of the RMBS.

Being a (now retired) high school teacher by profession, Larry passionately conveys his knowledge and wisdom to students of bonsai. He has taught "Beginning Bonsai" with Harold Sasaki at the Denver Botanical Gardens for many years. He works with a group of "volunteers" at the Denver Botanic Gardens on Wednesdays, asking them to do a tree analysis by talking about the tree, questioning what they would do with the tree, encouraging them to see the tree from different perspectives. His goal is to inspire within them an appreciation and desire to do bonsai better, improve their skills-becoming lifelong learners.

Larry's personal collection of trees has been reduced over the years to a very select group. He has given away many of his trees for purposes of demonstration and kept only those prized trees that he continues to nurture and show. His oldest tree is a 300-year-old Limber Pine he

collected. His collection also includes Rocky Mountain Junipers, Colorado Blue Spruces, Pinyon Pines, and a Douglas Fir that is in a Japanese pot from the 1960s. As the resident "bonsai specialist" at the Denver Botanic Gardens, he cares for the bonsai in its permanent collection including several heritage trees from RMBS members whose trees were donated to the gardens after they passed away - he sees this as a true honor. While he respects the original design concepts, he works to improve the tree as it grows with good horticultural practices. His approach (as he puts it with a slight smile) with these heritage trees is to "continue to advance the style".

One of the things Larry Jackel loves about bonsai is that each tree has a story to tell about the interaction between people and the tree. Recognizing that members of the RMBS come from all walks of life, the common interest in bonsai has continued strongly through the past 50 years of the club's existence and was most certainly passed on by the original members of the "Senior Denver Bonsai Club" who brought their Japanese culture to Denver and significantly increased the standing of bonsai in the US. They all shared a core value in learning how to do beautiful bonsai. That is their lasting legacy. Larry adopts the Jim Robinson philosophy, "We should be developing masterpieces!" That continues to be the purpose of the RMBS today.



1998 Limber Pine. Shown at 2008 US National Bonsai Exhibition



Tree originally collected by Dick Meleny in 1994. Acquired and styled by Larry Jackel in 2006 in a 1960s Japanese pot. This tree was shown at the 2010 US National Bonsai Exhibit.

NEWS FOR MEMBERS

Membership Renewal:

RMBS has adopted a policy where all membership renewals occur on July 1, and cover the succeeding 12 months, ending on June 30th.

All memberships renew this summer on July 1st, 2018. Individual memberships are \$35 per year and family memberships are \$50 per year.

You may pay via cash or check at any monthly meeting or mail your check to the address below. If you mail your check please be sure to include your email address and telephone number.

PAYMENT ADDRESS:

Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society
c/o Membership Renewal
PO Box 271043
Louisville, CO 80027

Discounts Available to Members:

We have an account established with Way to Grow Gardening Supply in Denver. You can receive discounts on some items up to 15%. You will need to tell them you are a member of RMBS.

Resources for Members:

Other internet resources:

[New RMBS Web Site](#)

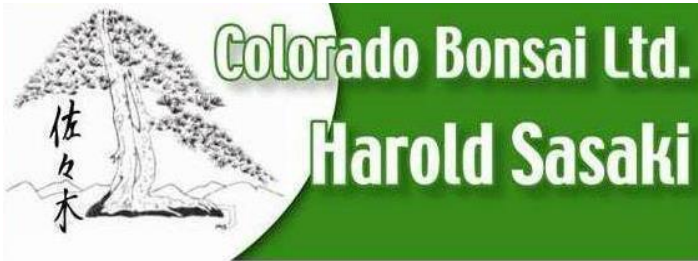
[Colorado Bonsai Ltd.](#)

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