



## June Program

On our June 24th program we will take a peak ‘Behind the Black Mountain’. **Jim Greaves** will present a visual tour of *Beyond the Black Mountain – Color Pattern, and Form*, held last autumn at the U.S. National Bonsai & Penjing Museum, National Arboretum in Washington, DC. Photographs of the show will illustrate several innovative display concepts.

As you may recall, this program was originally set for our April meeting but was postponed. Since very few of us traveled to Washington to see the exhibit, this is an opportunity not to be missed. **Jim** is bringing the show to us!



Opening Reception, National Bonsai & Penjing Museum, 2008 (above)  
Children's Workshop, Washington, DC, 2008 (below)



## Stone of the Month

This should be fun! Let's bring in a stone with a story. **Richard Ota** said, “a suiseki should evoke memories of the day you found it, the difficulty of the search, the heat, or the cold, even the mood that possessed you at the time.” Perhaps there is another story, an “aha” moment, something that makes that stone particularly special. We want to see the stone and hear the story.

## Wil of Japan

We first met **Wil** at the 2005 Meihin-ten exhibit and then again in 2007 at Mr. **Sudo's** garden during a *keido* lesson. His knowledge of and enthusiasm for stones was immediately evident and we were drawn to him.

He has been working and studying in Japan since August 1998 and began seriously pursuing suiseki while attending weekend bonsai classes of **Kunio Kobayashi** in 2002. Actually, bonsai was always secondary - it was his interest in seeing high quality stones that first brought him to the garden. After studying there for some time, he became an active member of Japan's suiseki world in early 2003 when he edited the English content of the Nippon Suiseki Association's webpage and translated the small passage "Suiseki Forms," that appears in Mr. **Matsuura's** 2003 book, the *Introductory Manual to Suiseki*. He left Japan for a brief time to pursue a Master's degree in Japanese Art History at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, and returned to Tokyo to continue studying in 2005 after receiving a scholarship from Japan's Ministry of Education. After two years of post-graduate research at Tokyo University and a second Master's degree in Japanese Studies from Sophia University, which focused on the literati arts and culture of the Edo period, he has (finally!) graduated and continues to study and work in Tokyo.

All along, **Wil** has worked as an administrator for the Nippon Suiseki Association, handling all of their foreign correspondence and helping to set up and take down their annual exhibitions. He also traveled with Mr. **Matsuura** to Spain last year to act as his personal interpreter when Mr. **Matsuura** was invited to speak and judge at the Spanish Suiseki Association's first exhibition. **Wil** travels the country as much as he can to visit other shows and talk with members of different organizations and whenever possible, he would now like to contribute to our newsletter to share what he has seen and learned. Hopefully he will be able to help clarify some useful terms and shed a bit more light on the ways in which "things are done" in Japan.

We are fortunate that **Wil** has agreed to join us and we look forward to his first article next month.

[**Wil** prefers to be known by just one name, like **Cher** or **Elvis...**]

Larry Ragle

# May Meeting Notes

by Barry Josephson

ANNOUNCEMENTS: After a moment of silence for the passing of **Alice Greaves**, **Nina** read a message from **Jim** thanking us for all the moral and emotional support given him by the membership. **Jim** expressed his deep love for **Alice** and a great sense of loss. There will be no formal memorial service; however he plans to host a celebration of **Alice**'s life sometime in late August at his home in Santa Monica.

Happy 91st Birthday wishes for **Lee Roberts**. A cake was provided by **Ann Horton**.



Happy 91st Birthday, Lee. It was a yummy cake. Thank you, Ann.

Stone of the Month ( 3 stones from abstract to explicit):

**Joseph Gaytan** showed a multicolored stone from Northern California. **Buzz Barry** showed a geometrical squat black stone, an island stone resembling an alligator in water and a distant mountain black stone.

**Kyra Haussler** showed small stones with multiple graphic patterns. **Don Mullally** showed a near mountain stone with flowers, an interrupted waterfall, a face on a profile and with abstract patterns on one side. **Jack Dennis** showed two abstract pattern stones emphasizing that we get emotional watching an abstract stone which speaks to us. He said a good stone emits grace and elegance.

**Ann Horton** showed a Murphy stone that had both vertical and horizontal presentations. **Lois Hutchinson** showed a Murphy stone of either a fish or a camel with long eyelashes and **Bill** showed stones resembling a tornado or explosion, a pagoda stone and a lady calling home.

**Harry Hirao** showed a face stone. Talking about the abstract really brought out a few personality quirks. Where some saw not, others saw. There was some head scratching. As usual, the discussion was lively and the participation was good. The following are those not mentioned above.



Bruce McGinnis; gorilla [easier said than seen] and his "dark water" or a "stormy sky", 2 views



Phil Chang; suggestive patterns

YS Farn; explicit scene from the Gobi desert and his abstract shaped stone from China



Joe James; explicit mountain with snow

Larry Ragle; explicit waterfall

Nina Ragle; abstract shaped stone

The 1 inch wide inner margins are designed for use with a 3 hole punch.





Bruce McGinnis; desert stone



Joe James; the Truckee River



Nina's stone in three positions and thus seen in a variety of ways depending on its attitude, the light and the mood of the viewer.



Joe James



Manny Martinez

### May Program Notes

by Barry Josephson

Larry Ragle presented a program of abstract stones tying it in with abstract art. Just as there is a continuum from subjective to objective, there is one from abstract to explicit or representational. The more abstract an object is, the more it is subject to variances of interpretation depending on one's mood, imagination and life experience. Ideally viewing stones as found are suggestive and mysterious. People work stones to make them obvious or explicit. Any visible work on a stone makes it a sculpture. Larry showed several photos of "Moore stones", some natural, some appeared sculpted.

Richard Turner showed a print of a Willem de Kooning painting "Door to the River" with no relationship to the outside world. The title is subject to one's interpretation of language clues [at right].

Larry suggested that rather than labeling each stone at our show which limits the viewers interpretation, we should leave it open to their imagination. Richard also showed photos of glaciers which resembled rocks on daiza.



Al Nelson; Stony Gorge



Barry Josephson; abstract

Larry then showed scenes of the 2007 trip to China.

## Ask Guy Jim

*Dear Friends,*

*Over the months ahead you are likely to find me repeating much of what I say here. This note is unashamedly personal; I thank you for your indulgence. Alice's passing is too recent to digest, but the broad outpouring of love for her and support for me needs a timely acknowledgement. Future musings may be more refined, but no more heartfelt.*

*Her Guy, Jim*

### Alice Kikue Greaves

1935-2009

Born on Molokai in 1935, she was a proud 4H-er as attested to by an old worn scrapbook. As a child she witnessed smoke rising over Pearl Harbor. Leaving on her own at age 15 to attend High School in Honolulu, Alice Kikue Nihei wore many hats beginning with Licensed Practical Nurse. She moved to Los Angeles around 1960, eventually becoming a manager at Pac Bell. Alice married Ronald Arbaugh (hence the Alice K. Arbaugh by which you first knew her) in 1972 and was widowed in 1985. After working in both Northern and Southern California she retired just before we met in 1988. Alice was an avid gardener who could rattle off the Latin name of any flower you put before her – no one who visited her went home without a plant. She was an accomplished seamstress, with skills she later expertly applied to the restoration and mounting of pre-Colombian textiles for art museums and, ultimately, to the creation of the pillows upon which we often displayed our stones.

Alice loved Japanese arts and flea markets – in fact; we met at a rummage sale: I was on the floor sorting through boxes of LP records when a voice behind me asked, “Find anything interesting?” I turned and indeed had! Neither of us could ever explain what caused her to so freely speak to me – probably because of my cute vest! As a story often repeated, some months later, Alice met me for a date at Garnet Hill outside of Palm Springs. After a cursory review of what types of stones we were looking for, she went her way and I watched ... I watched and knew she was the one. From the first moment, she was in heaven combing the steep hill, oblivious to 100+ degree heat and ferocious winds.

Alice was thankful to pursue a low-keyed life, although, with her life-long friend Lil, she did enjoy an occasional escape to Vegas where she had uncanny luck with Blazing Seven Slot machines! She was also up for a challenge: you may recall from early lectures that she did **all** the driving of our old RV across the continent to the Gaspe Peninsula and Nova Scotia and then back to California (over 11,000 miles). Together, we drove cross-country six times with an additional three cross-

country trips on Amtrak. Alice assisted on my working trips at the Bellagio Hotel and could grace the dance floor of a Five-star Ritz Carlton, but she was happiest when camping by a river, snuggled in a sleeping bag with Taka and me in the back of our old Aerostar van.

Alice simply loved stones, especially looking for them, but also introducing others to the joy she experienced. She always resisted my entreaties to write down some of her own thoughts regarding collecting; I could not even get her to sit down with me to do a photo-essay showing her technique for making the pillows for stone display. Yet, she supported all my efforts even when deadlines interfered with collecting opportunities. Unsung, Alice spent long hours searching through our references for examples related to various topics I was working on for *GuyJim*; she critically read and proofed everything.

Alice groomed our bonsai and the moss beneath. Alice and I were always a team.

During the mounting of exhibitions it was the same, Alice quietly got things together, from the physical work of setting up tables, to thinking to buy host ribbons, to humbly sweeping the floors – more than once she painted and, yes, even washed the windows! Alice did not demand, she just did.



Cleaning cases, Washington, 2008 (above)  
Night guard duty, Huntington, 1991 (below)



Long-time club members may recall that when the early Huntington shows were on the patio, Alice even slept outside on

some very cold and rainy nights to guard the stones.

However, it is as an uninhibited, exuberant ambassador that she is best seen serving the cause of stone appreciation. Her love of stones was so genuine (non-commercial, non-politicized,



At the Huntington, 1991

non-competitive) that it overcame any inherent inhibitions she may have harbored against interacting with strangers, be they children, ‘experts’ or dignitaries. Over and over, individuals have remarked that it was Alice who introduced them to stones

or was the first to take the time to truly welcome them into the community of stone collectors. My favorite moments in every show were when I could silently step back and simply watch her engage a visitor; she would light up the room as she did my life.

Over the past three years our apartment was more often than not, a holding/transit area for stone projects – we seldom had more than a glimpse of the floor of our living room and had no space to entertain friends. The effort afforded to exhibitions and book took its toll on our ability to get out on the rivers and actually collect. Alice chafed to get going. Ironically, we were finally just set to begin a long looked-forward-to year of unencumbered socializing and collecting; we were packing to join friends in a mushroom and stone hunting trip in Oregon the weekend she was hospitalized. Through wonderful years, I’ve had the joy



Huntington host, 1991



Discussing stones, Washington, 2008

of watching Alice collect in blazing heat, ferocious wind, torrential rain, sleet, snow, and hail – even by flashlight! Nothing excited her more than ‘catching stones’.

While in the hospital, Alice never could have seen your many offers of the flowers she so loved. Some of you have already asked how we might memorialize her. I have yet to find a specific answer. For now, may I suggest that she would have felt honored by any support you might provide to further our concept for an American Viewing Stone Resource Center, be it a contribution of expertise and time; a monetary donation towards projects such as publishing; historical records, stone references; display materials; or, especially, a stone you would consider worthy to represent your own personal collecting for inclusion within our comprehensive historical concept ... or even the offer of a great stone for us to purchase in her name. While admittedly this is also a self-serving attempt to capitalize on the moment to give myself some meaningful direction, I can think of nothing else that would have gratified Alice so much. (Without her by my side I will need help more than ever.) Through the dozen years since the germination of the idea, Alice has enthusiastically supported the goal of eventually donating our stones, references and display materials to the creation of an AVSRC. She sacrificed precious ‘collecting’ time so that we could do the boring groundwork needed to launch the project; she attuned herself to the longer range, bigger picture of our goal. When she spotted an antique that she thought would compliment the display of stones, she bought it; if I found an arcane book or over-priced stone that I thought might contribute meaning, without hesitation she said, “Get it”. We often shook our heads and agreed that we had ‘no checks or balances’, that we were certifiably nuts. We were in a universe of our own making with one passion and vision. I pledge my best to see our concept through to fruition. I am a romantic at heart, and Alice was the heart of the most wonderful romance imaginable.



Yuha Desert, 2005

*continued on page 7*

# Sui-seki

by Richard Ota

According to the dictionaries a stone is a “piece of rock” and a rock is any “solid mineral matter”. To a Sui-seki enthusiast a stone is more than that, considerably more.

No one really knows when the cult of sui-seki began, however the first written records appeared some 600 years ago. It has been said in Japan that the full appreciation of Sui-seki can be acquired only after one has cultivated and acquired reverence and appreciation for ancient writings, *objects d-arte*, paintings and bonsai, but even if true, anyone with a love of beauty can admire Sui-seki. Like bonsai, Sui-seki fall into several definite styles of classifications. For example,

there is the *to-yama-ishi* or “Distant Mountain View stone”, the *shima-gata-ishi* or “Island Shaped Stone”, the *sugata-ishi* or “Figure” stone, which may be in the shape of clouds, or birds, or various animals. There are eight classic styles.

How or where a Sui-seki stone is displayed of no matter, so long as it is in a

natural manner. An Island Stone should sit in its mounting so that it is viewed as an island and a *kikka-seki* so that its chrysanthemum blossom shows to its best advantage. Never however, color, or carve, or alter the natural shape, nor put two or more stones together to look like one. A Sui-seki stone is of Nature’s creation, not a piece of sculpture.

It is written in an ancient book that “stone is close to Zen”. If this observation seems a bit esoteric consider the following: No two stones are alike. The impressions a person receives from a stone are singular, to him and for him alone. And while the beauty of a flower is a fleeting thing, a stone is forever.

This importance of the more permanent over the transient is why Japanese gardens display flowers at a minimum and stress rocks and sand and evergreens. The famous stone garden, Ryoan-ji, in Kyoto is a perfect example of the fore-going, just rocks and sand and yet, each observer receives a different emotional experience, a different impression when he sees it and, perhaps, a distinctly different one when he sees it again, or at another hour of the day.

Probably the most important factor, aside from a stone’s intrinsic beauty is the sense of immortality its permanence conveys. Changeable in its effect, yet unchangeable in essence. The same stone under a hot

sun is a different stone in the moonlight, or wet with rain. And to repeat, what you see in this stone is not what I see. This is the fascination of Sui-seki. This is its curious beauty. And lastly, a Sui-seki stone should evoke memories of the day you found it, the difficulty of the search, the heat, or the cold, even the mood that possessed you at the time.



Richard Ota's *toyama ishi*, distant mountain view shape stone from the same publication.  
15" x 7" x 12"

Search for a Sui-seki stone sometime. They’re not everywhere. But when you find one, look closely, you may see that it can be a great deal more than just a chunk of “solid mineral matter”.

This article is reprinted with the permission of the author. Thank you, Richard. It originally appeared in Volume 1 of *Bonsai in California*, 1967.

**Alice Greaves**

continued from page 5



Ozette Beach, Olympic National Park, WA, Oct 1995

Earlier I mentioned Alice's many hats. She did love hats. Many fellow collectors will remember her in a sloppy, crushed rain hat or one of the signature broad-brimmed straw hats in which she collected, gardened, and sometimes napped:



Oklahoma, with Taka, 2008

*Crouched beneath straw brim  
Turning a stone in her hand  
She is in heaven*



The "A & J" Team: "Putting on the Ritz", Oct 1990 (above, left)

Skidoo, Panamint Range, 1990's (above)

Linking crowbars, 2006 (left)

Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection, 2007 (below left)

Mingei Museum Opening, 2007 (below)



No disclaimer this time. Please feel welcome to contact me to share your memories of Alice or discuss any aspect relating to the proposed AVSRC: Jim Greaves, 1018 Pacific Street, Unit D, Santa Monica, CA 90405, (310) 452-3680, jimgreaves@roadrunner.com

California Aiseki Kai meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm at the Nakaoka Community Center located at 1670 W. 162nd St, Gardena, CA. Second floor. We do not meet in Nov-Dec.

**Contact People**

**Programs:** Larry Ragle 949.497.5626  
**Treasury/Membership:** Nina Ragle 949.497.5626  
**Annual Exhibit:** Jim Greaves 310.452.3680  
**Exhibit Set Up:** Marge Blasingame 626.579.0420  
**Refreshments:** Lois Hutchinson 714.964.6973  
**Historian:** Ray Yeager 760.365.7897  
**Webmail:** Bill Hutchinson 714.964.6973  
**Newsletter:** Larry and Nina Ragle 949.497.5626



cfsmail@cox.net  
ragle@cox.net  
jimgreaves@roadrunner.com  
margeblasingame@att.net  
whutch70@dslextre.me.com  
ryeager890@aol.com  
hutch@aisekikai.com  
ragle@cox.net

**Newsletter Committee**

**June Contributors:** Barry Josephson, Jim Greaves, and Larry Ragle.  
**Mailing:** Flash Partch  
**Editor:** Nina Ragle

We hope you will participate. Please send any submissions to ragle@cox.net no more than 10 days following our monthly meeting. Thank you!

**Ragle  
P.O. Box 4975  
Laguna Beach CA 92652**

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**



*Leaves no stone unturned*

*See us on the web*

**aiseikikai.com**



## Coming Events

### AMERICAN VIEWING STONE RESOURCE CENTER

Thematic Exhibit: *Eternal Rhythms: Seasons & Time*  
Melba Tucker Gallery at the National Bonsai & Penjing  
Museum, U.S. National Arboretum, Washington, DC.  
Continuing – June 2009 (29 stones)

### KO FU BONSAI KAI

Bonsai Exhibit at the Orange County Fair, July 10 - August 9,  
OC Fairgrounds, 88 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa. Wednesday-Friday,  
noon to midnight, Saturday-Sunday, 10AM to midnight.  
Admission to the Fair: adults \$10, seniors (60+) \$7, children  
(6-12) \$5 and kids (5 or less) free. Each Friday, seniors (60+)  
admission is \$4. For more information: **Paul De Rose**  
714.637.4592

### REDWOOD EMPIRE SOCIETY

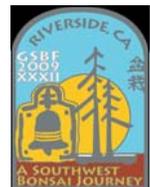
26th Annual Bonsai Show, August 29-30, Santa Rosa  
Veterans Memorial Bldg., 1351 Maple Ave., Santa Rosa. Sat  
10-5 Sun 10-4. Demos 1:30 both days. **Yasuo Mitsuya** and  
**Kathy Shaner**. 200+ trees, sales, raffle. For more info: **Bob**  
**Shimon** 707.884.4126 or email [shimon@mcn.org](mailto:shimon@mcn.org). Website:  
[rebsbonsai.org](http://rebsbonsai.org)

### HAWAIIAN BONSAI ASSOCIATION

Bonsai Ohana II Convention, September 25-27, Pacific  
Beach Hotel, Waikiki. Demos **Tohru Suzuki** and **Mel Ikeda**  
Suiseki display. For more info: [hawaiibonsaiassoc.org](http://hawaiibonsaiassoc.org)

### GOLDEN STATE BONSAI FEDERATION

"A Southwest Bonsai Journey",  
Convention XXXII, November 5-8,  
Riverside. Marriott Hotel. Suiseki convention  
within a convention. [www.gsbfcconvention.com](http://www.gsbfcconvention.com)



## Refreshments

Thanks to **Marie Atkison, Kit Blaemire,**  
**Joseph Gaytan, Harry Hirao, Ann**  
**Horton, Joe & Arlene James** and **Emma Janza** for  
the plentiful and yummy May munchies.

The June break table will be filled by **Buzz Barry,**  
**Linda Gill** and **Yau-Suen Farn.**

