

THE BONSAI Wire

The Newsletter of The Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

February 2022

FROM THE President

It was good to see that we have new members that joined up this year.

After the Spring Garden show hopefully, we can gain a few more. It was also nice to see so many members show up for the silhouette show. What a good sign for the new year to have our meeting attended so well. I'm sure next month's meeting will be very well attending seeing that we have a rising star in the bonsai world coming to share her knowledge. Jennifer Price has studied with Walter Pall and more recently with Ryan Neil. She is sure to bring in a unique perspective into the art of bonsai. I look forward to seeing what she creates with the material that gets selected.

Now is a good time to clean off those benches, insects can overwinter under and around the stands your trees are on. You can use a 10-1, water-bleach ratio, to clean benches and stands. If you stained your benches, you can apply another coat once they have dried sufficiently. This will help preserve them longer. I use an all-in-one stain and sealer(waterproofing) by Olympic. It's also a good time to spray your trees for insects that are overwintering on your trees. Horticulture oil or Neem oil would work best this time of

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MEETINGS & Events

Friday, February 11, 2022

Program: Lecture/Demo by Jennifer Price 7:00pm (Change in program)

One of the new rising stars in bonsai, Jennifer Price discovered bonsai after retiring from the stage as a professional ballerina. For the last several years she has been involved in an intensive study program with Walter Pall from Germany and Jim Doyle from Pennsylvania. She has taught workshops and given demonstrations worldwide and last year was in Germany to be a part of Generation Bonsai and went on to represent America at an international bonsai convention in Shanghai, China.

Jennifer will be doing a short presentation on women in bonsai and then doing a demo on a bald cypress. She will select from three pieces of demo material while explaining the ins and outs what to look for when choosing material

Saturday, February 12, 2022

Program: Jennifer Price Bring Your Own Tree Workshop 9:00am

Jennifer will conduct a Bring Your Own Tree workshop. Cost for the workshop is \$60. To get the full benefits of this workshop try to bring a tree that you have already worked on and wish to improve or a high quality raw tree.

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Program: Bald Cypress Lecture/Demo by Randy Bennett 7:00pm

Randy, as many of you know from his newsletter articles, is well versed in all aspects of bald cypress collecting, development, styling and care. This is your chance to have all your questions about this native species answered. If you have a bald cypress, bring it in for display and questions/advice.

Saturday & Sunday, April 2 & 3, 2022

City Park Garden Show

Set up is on Friday April 1 from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Show hours Sat and Sun are 9-4

Meetings cont. pg 7

Meetings take place at the **Marine Corps League Hall, 2708 Delaware St., Kenner, LA.** For more information, articles and everything bonsai, check us out on our website at www.gnobs.org

BONSAI Techniques

Bonsai Show Prep Schedule

By Dawn Koetting

Editor's Note: Dawn presented this information at a GNOBS Study Group. As we plan to do a nice exhibit at the City Park Spring Garden Show, I thought this would provide everyone some excellent information on how to prepare their trees to show them at their best.

1 to 2 years prior to show

- 1) Find shows that you have interest in
 - a. Registration requirements
 - b. Logistics if a trip is involved.
- 2) Choose your tree. Make last major changes and start to concentrate on final style and ramification. Use this time to wire and train, so that the wire can be removed or refined prior to showing
 - a. Choose 2-3 if possible, as one tree may not present well at the appointed time. (Hard summer, a branch dies, etc)
 - b. Set a schedule to spray or prevent for common diseases so the foliage is close to perfect at show time. Especially needed in pines since you show with 2 year old needed on the tree if they have needle cast from 2 years ago it will still be present.
 - c. Without a tree, you can't progress to pots and stands.
 - d. Don't forget to make sure it fits in your vehicle!

6 months to 1 year - choosing pots and stands. Don't forget to shop at shows where vendors are. They may have what you want and you get to see it first. You can also talk about their inventory at home.

- 1) Plan to provide shade cloth if needed to keep tree in good shape during the summer. Especially needed if you have moved to a smaller or shallower pot.
- 2) Choose a pot for your tree
 - a. Don't stress. There are always multiple options that can work, like a frame on a picture. It depends on what you are trying to convey and draw attention to.
 - i. Also, think of it as a work in progress – each repot try to select a better and more appropriate pot.
 1. Keep working on rootball to get tree in smaller, shallower pot
 2. Keep your eye out for better pot (size, shape, color, etc)
 - b. If you don't already own a pot that your tree can be shown in, it can be a bit of a challenge to shop for one.

These vendors have a variety of mass produced and some have hand made pots.

- i. Underhill Bonsai Nursery Folsom LA,

- ii. Bantings Nursery in the West Bank has on occasion
 - iii. Louisiana Nursery in BRhas on occasion.
 - iv. Brussels Bonsai Olive Branch, MS
 - v. Clark Long Bonsai- Lake Charles, LA
 - vi. Bogans Bonsai
 - vii. Bonsai Vision
 - viii. Superfly Bonsai
 - ix. Many others found thru the internet and listed on Ebay
- c. Custom and hand thrown pots – some artists list stock available, and some will take custom orders. A minimum of 4-6 months is needed as potters don't fire a kiln until it is full.
 - i. Byron Myrick
 - ii. Ron Lang
 - iii. Sara Raynor
- 3) Choose your stand – you will need to know the measurements of your pot before knowing exactly what stand will work.
 - a. Stands can be purchased from some internet sources, including eBay
 - b. Building a stand at home is an option and you can customize the top and height measurements compared to commercially available stands
 - c. Some cabinet makers will make stands
 - d. Custom stand makers list on the internet and have stock designs as well as doing custom work
 - i. Mark Rhyne- Stands and Stones
 - ii. Artofthedaiza.com
 - iii. Austin Heitzman
 - e. Some Asian furniture can be used as a bonsai stand
 - i. Some can be adjusted by shortening legs, etc
 - ii. Some coffee tables can be used for a large forest or group planting
 - iii. Stands used for ikebana are generally too narrow front to back for most bonsai pot configurations unless it is a similar pot shape.

2-3 months – start final push

- 1) Call your potter or stand maker and ask them if they know what the date is!
- 2) Continue to provide protection from heat, wind, storms, bugs, fungus, etc, etc.
- 3) If you have a species that tends to close their leaves indoors, keep them under shade cloth or in a shadier area prior to the show so they are “used” to a lower light situation.

1-2 months – Start final cleanup

- 1- Clean moss, algae, etc off trunk and main structural

branches of non-cork bark trees.

- a. Trees known for their flaking bark (Pines, Cork bark elms, paper barked trees, Acacia) should only have 1:4 vinegar:water sprayed on the bark to kill moss.
 - b. Tooth brushes and brass and nylon brushes – take care not to damage bark. Use stainless steel brushes VERY carefully
 - c. Red Arrow dry cleaning stain remover or screen shirt mistake corrector (keep away from leaves – will damage)
 - i. Don't put your hand in front of water stream – can cut skin
 - ii. Use a scrap branch to test the strength of the stream – it can take bark off to the cambium
 1. If a hard cleaning is needed, I suggest 6-12 mos in advance
 2. Will help to remove tough lichen, bark scale
 3. Use Wilt Prufon the tree after to protect injured areas
- 2- Disguise larger wounds
 - a. Plastic wood or 2 part epoxy sticks can be used to fill larger defects
 - i. Use your sculpting skills to mimic the bark and trunk contours
 - ii. Come back with acrylic paint and match the trunk's color, using a variation of colors to help the repair disappear into the tree.
 - b. 2 part epoxy can be used but after the show the epoxy is harder to grind or sand down to allow callus to continue over the wound.
 - c. If the base layer of the defect is natural wood or already repaired with epoxy, Plasticwood can be used on top. This can usually be “popped out” and the wound then dressed for continued healing

- 3- Get a last big trim in, making sure you're are trimming only what is needed to help your design and define your silhouette and cloud shaped pads.
 - a. This allows for a bit of fresh growth if desired,
 - b. If not, trim closer to the show.

2-4 weeks before the show

- 4) Start mossing the soil. Last minute mossing can be done, but if there is time to let the moss recover and knit together, it can look better.
 - a. Classic mossing is using all one kind of moss and for the surface to be smooth
 - b. Some artists use a variety of mosses and lichens to evoke a natural landscape
- 5) Make last minute trims, hide cut tips with a touch from a brown or grey Sharpie
- 6) Use fine copper wire to set unruly leaves or branchlets
- 7) Pick and clean up your accessory plant or tree
- 8) Pack your show kit

- a. Spray water bottle
- b. Mineral or camellia oil for pot (unglazed)
- c. Paper or regular towels
- d. Small set of basic bonsai tools
- e. A couple sizes of fine gauge copper wire
- f. Scroll if using
- g. Bonsai Stand (nice to clean, wax and to have arranged a box and packing materials prior at last minute)
- h. Boxes for packing accessory plants, towels to pad them.

1-2 days before the show

- 1) Last minute tree clean up
 - a. Check leaves
 - b. Check moss
 - c. Remove slugs, bugs (spray if won't leave spots on leaves)
 - d. Check for wired branches getting shifted and being out of place
- 2) Clean pots – and use a dab of Elmer's glue to put thin rubberized material (shelf padding) on the feet of your pot so as to not scratch the stand
- 3) Clean, wax or oil stands (if not already done) AND PUT IN CAR
- 4) Last minute clean up accessory plant or tree
- 5) Put show kit IN CAR

Ready to go – put the trees and plants in the car and have fun! Be watchful of a hot car if you have to make stops.

When you get to the show, go over your tree, pot, stand and accessory to identify any needed last minute fixes. For trees that have leaves that fold up indoors (Brazilian raintree, mimosa types) try and keep them outdoors or in bright light as long as you can.



BONSAI Techniques

Prepping Bonsai for a Show

By Dawn Koetting

Many people are practitioners of bonsai but don't show their trees, yet there are many good reasons why you should.

1- prepping our trees for show actually gives us a chance to look at our bonsai – really look and see things you just don't when walking through the garden or watering.

2-You may not think your trees are “special” enough, but you will find that people appreciate seeing that species, or the style, or something else that THEY don't have in their collection or haven't seen before.

3-No matter what stage YOU are in, there will be someone who is “behind” you and will appreciate seeing where either regular nursery stock or a young bonsai tree could be in a few years

4- And for people at your stage of learning bonsai, you showing your trees may encourage them to show theirs.

We don't always have to be shooting for a state or national show, but knowing how to present your tree at its best and in a display that enhances the visual appearance of your tree, is part of the fun of bonsai. We will have the Spring Garden show at City Park, our club show in July/Aug for the Johnny Martinez Award and participate in the Louisiana Day of Bonsai with the Vaughn Banting Award. Use these opportunities to improve your trees, and the secret is to start now.

What you need to show your tree to its best potential

1- Comfort – a comfortable work station is often overlooked, but all of this visual/thoughtful work and tedious/detail work takes time, and if you are uncomfortable you won't give it the time. Conversely, if you have a nice lazy susan and adjustable chair with good lighting, the time will fly while you get into what you are doing!

2- A healthy, clean bonsai tree.

- No insects, slugs, etc
- No diseased leaves from insects or fungal infection
- Clean trunk and branches - no algae, moss or mold.
- A tree without large, fresh cuts or undressed cuts
- For show, wire shouldn't be on the trunk (or at least crossing in the back when possible) and should be neatly applied and of the smallest gauge possible. Guy wires should be fine gauge copper. However, in a club show

or in the City Park spring show, trees of all stages of development are welcome and show others how we do what we do – so more wire is fine, larger gauges are fine, just apply it well.

- No weeds, and well dressed soil with a moss covering if possible.
- If a last minute trim leaves behind light colored cut ends, take the time to use a grey or brown Sharpie on them. Just touch the Sharpie to the tips to knock down the look of the “white spots”.

3- A clean and appropriate pot

- Use brushes or pot scrubbers to clean your pot of dirt and water/fertilizer residue. You may need some CLR to help with calcium concretions from hard water, but only on the outside of the pot – best done while the tree is out of the pot – do not get on soil or tree.
- Use a brown or appropriately colored sharpie to disguise spots that can't be removed
- Sparingly apply mineral oil to unglazed pots and rub in for a low gloss shine
- Choose your pot size based on the size of your tree, the girth at the base, and the style of the tree. For most styles:

- Pot width normally about 2/3-3/4 height of tree
- Pot height normally about the same measurement as the tree trunk is wide.

e. Choose unglazed or glazed and the color from the type of tree, and whether it is fruiting, flowering or in fall color when shown. An unglazed pot is always appropriate but they come in many colors.

- Use compliment colors (opposites on color wheel) to add drama
- Use softer greens, creams and grey's to play quietly off trunk color or give a restful image.

f. Thoughts with pots.

- Masculine trees – Rectangles, simple feet, straighter lines, unglazed
- Feminine trees – Ovals, fancier feet, lipped rims, glazed
- To soften a masculine rectangle, look for rounded corners or indented corners and cloud feet. Also flared rectangles
- Flared or straight sided ovals with plain feet are less feminine than a convex walled and rimmed ovals with fancy feet.
- Shohin are often shown in very bright and/or decorative pots (sometimes with painted scenes)
- Bunjin are often shown in shallow, round pots
- Cascades and semi-cascades are shown in either

tall square or round pots or with a shorter square or round pot on a tall stand.

4- Stands - Stands can be home made, custom made, or found on bonsai sites and Asian furniture stores or sites (look at tables that could be made to work)

- A stand's height is determined by the height of your tree. The ideal is to have the visual center of the tree at eye level, or at least at a height easy for viewing
 - A very tall or large tree is often displayed on a wooden slab or a table that has shorter (2-3 inch) legs
 - A medium tree is often shown on a table with 8-10 inch legs so the tree is easier to see.
 - A cascade or semi-cascade is normally shown on round or square stand due to them being potted in round or square pots. A tall stand can be used to raise as emi-cascade for easier viewing or to provide a cascade the height needed to keep it off the table if its cascade apex falls below the bottom of the pot.
- The top of the stand is normally a rectangle, unless it is a stand for a cascade (then it is square or round) If it has an inset/floating top, the pot should remain within the rectangular panel, allowing the outer pieces of wood to “frame” the pot. if it is a solid top, be sure to have enough space so that the pot does not appear crowded on the stand.
- The style of the stand should suite the tree and pot. A very curvy trunk and/or flowers and fruit can handle a more decorative stand with fancy legs or carved sections. A more masculine tree or a more austere tree would be best shown on a stand with simple lines. Bunjin are often shown on a flat wooden slab due to their height
- The material the stand is made from can vary widely. Classically they are wooden, but many stands are now being made with a more modern vibe. Some include metal and lexan, and are more modern and clean in design.

5- An accessory plant or tree

- The season should be suggested
 - Bright, light greens and light colored flowers for spring
 - Summer/Tropicals – variety of greens, intense colors and flowers
 - Fall – grasses with seed heads, red, orange, yellow foliage or berries with darker foliage
 - Winter – dormant grasses, evergreens with berries, “naked” deciduous tree or plant
- Should suggest the location of where the main tree is from (alpine, coastal, tropical, etc)



Photo courtesy
Wigert's Bonsai

- The size and type of accessory should not overpower your main tree but enhance it. it should also show well (not be tiny if it's a large tree)
- Have a directional flow, and use that to “point” to your tree, which should also have a flow and “point” back.
- Sits ahead of a horizontal line drawn along the front edge of your main stand.
- The kusamono type accessory can be a single species, or two, three or several.
- Most are small species, often wild plants, weeds and grasses. Some nurseries have suitable plants for use in “fairy gardens” and terrariums.
 - Pots used are normally unusual in shape, color or patterns. This allows the eye to start with the forward positioned accessory plant, but it shouldn't be so showy that the eye can't then go to the main bonsai and then the scroll if present.
 - Accessory plants are shown most often on a wooden slab
- If the accessory is another bonsai
 - A mame or shohin sized tree may be used, but a larger specimen could be needed for a very large or Imperial sized main tree.
 - The accessory tree will need its own stand, normally a slab or low stand so it sits below the level of the main tree.
 - The accessory plant or tree should be cleaned up and presented the same as the main bonsai. Clean the pot, trim away diseased and discolored foliage, use moss over bare soil areas.
- For the kusamono accessory, you should put it together at least 4-6 weeks in advance of the show. The longer it is together, the more natural it will look. A natural accessory will positively influence the viewer and not be distracting, causing the viewer to hesitate on the accessory and not smoothly move to the main tree.

Dwarf Kingsville Boxwood

By Kathy Barbazon

Sources: Dallas Bonsai, Brussel's Bonsai and American Bonsai Society

General Information

Buxus microphylla 'Compacta' is generally known in the bonsai world as the Kingsville Dwarf or Dwarf Kingsville. This species has an interesting history – some resources claim this plant as “Japanese”, when in fact it originated in the Baltimore, MD area in the early 1900's. History's tale is that William Appleby discovered the seedling as a sport on a Korean Boxwood, back in 1912. It was released to the trade in 1937, and registered by Dr. Donald Wyman in 1963. It has since risen to popularity among enthusiasts and beginners alike. This tiny little boxwood does not grow past a foot tall or wide.

Tree's Attributes

This widely sought-after cultivar is highly prized for its leathery, tiny leaves (about 1/4”), dense growth habit, and rough, aged-looking bark which is so valued by bonsai growers. The branches are horizontal growers which gives the tree an even older appearance. It is a very slow grower – so keep that in mind when styling.

Temperature/Lighting/Location

Dallas bonsai said to protect from freezing but Brussel's notes that they thrive outdoors with some protection down to 20 degrees. In our area, you would rarely need to provide protection. In a severe cold snap when freezing is expected, place on ground and cover the pot.

As with other boxwoods, it is possible some foliage can take on an orange cast from extreme cold. Protect your foliage if you are concerned.

Both droughts and prolonged rainy periods can cause damage to the Dwarf Kingsville.

This bonsai is tolerant of most light levels. A breeze can help keep mildew on inner leaves at bay.

Watering

Buxus microphylla prefers moderate moisture conditions, and does not tolerate wet feet. Allow to dry a bit between thorough watering's, but make sure not to let it dry out completely. Daily misting helps keep the foliage green and healthy.



Fertilizing

Boxwood plants do well with a balanced bonsai feed with supplemental iron. Fertilize bi-weekly during the growing season. An application of pulverized organic fertilizer once during the growth period is beneficial.

Pruning/Training

Styles – the dense foliage on this boxwood make it suitable for many different shapes, as well as shohin and mame. It takes readily to root-over-rock and responds well to jin and shari.

Pruning should be carried out in spring. The extreme slow growing nature of Dwarf Kingsville Boxwood makes it low maintenance and easy to shape. After branches have been

exposed to the sun hard break-back will occur readily, facilitating development of foliage pads. Thin and pinch off most of the new undesirable growth in order to control shaping. Take care to minimize the removal of foliage though, as these are very slow growing at only a quarter of an inch to an inch annually.

Wiring may be performed on this tree, just do so with caution because the branches can be brittle. Copper wire allows you to sense when a branch is being bent too close to the breaking point. The boxwood assumes interesting shapes on its own so be sure to utilize those before making drastic changes, integrating them into your design.

Propagation

The Dwarf Kingsville Boxwood Bonsai Tree may be propagated by placing mature cuttings that have been treated with rooting hormone into a mixture of equal ratios sharp sand, perlite, and peat. The cuttings should be placed in the shade, preferably in a cool greenhouse envi-

ronment in the fall. Water throughout winter and apply bottom heating for best results. Air layering can work well with larger specimens.

Repotting

Dwarf Kingsville Boxwood typically only needs repotting every other year. (If tree seems weak, it may be potbound) This should be carried out in the spring. Group plantings may go as long as four to five years before being repotted. This species is very tolerant of aggressive root pruning, allowing up to half of the root mass to be removed.

The soil should be well-drained and can be slightly alkaline. A low-acid soil designed for bonsai is best, along with an occasional application of lime. Fertilizer and iron may be added during the transplanting process, although it's not necessary. This plant prefers a pot on the deeper side.

Insects/Pests & Diseases

Boxwood may be affected by red spider mites, leaf miners, and various fungi, including rust. Washing the plant down will remove most pests. If evidence of fungus is noticed – curled or spotted leaves – remove infected leaves and treat with a mild fungicide.

Root rot can be a problem for this bonsai – if leaves begin to wilt or wither in the absence of a watering issue, the roots

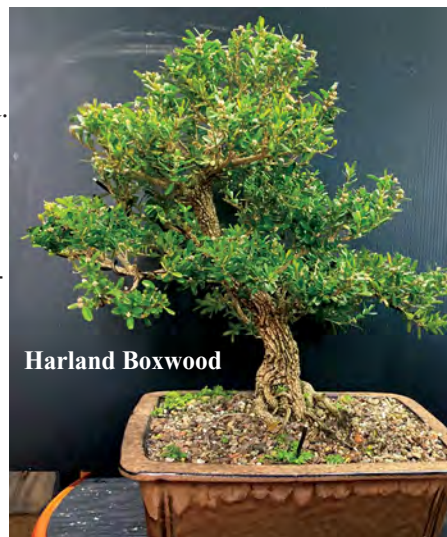
are usually the culprit. Examine the root system and remove any discolored, mushy, smelly, or otherwise “off” roots.

Examining your plant frequently for bugs and other health problems, paying close attention to proper watering and feeding, will help you keep the tree healthy and strong.

Other Boxwoods used for Bonsai

Harland Boxwood (Harlandii) - A native of Taiwan, its

leaves are thinner and softer than other box species. The attractive bark is deeply fissured. Flowers frequently with tiny white flowers. This box doesn't like cold, and should not be exposed to temperatures below 37F. (Personal note: I have never protected mine and it has been fine)



Saunders Boxwood (Buxus Microphylla 'Saunders') - sometimes called Saunders Kingsville) - Faster growing than your true Kingsville, this dwarf hybrid is an excellent choice for bonsai with very small leaves. Leaves are slightly more elongated than a true Kingsville and not as dense.

Buxus microphylla: Japanese box - Grows to 5 feet, and has evergreen leaves under 1 inch long. It tolerates both sun and shade. All *B. microphylla* varieties are scentless. It grows best in zones 5-8.

Buxus microphylla 'Koreana': Korean boxwood - the most hardy box, it grows in zones 4-8, but expect the foliage to brown in the winter. It is a low, spreading variety, growing to only 3 feet.

Buxus microphylla 'Morris Midget': Morris Midget boxwood. Another small dwarf growing naturally to only about a foot high and wide. Zones 6-8. Somewhat resistant to boxwood leafminer but very susceptible to boxwood blight. It has few pest or disease issues when planted and cared for properly. Similar in appearance to Kingsville.

Buxus sempervirens: common box, English box - this box can grow to 25 feet in a mild climate, and therefore appears as both hedges and small trees. Its evergreen leaves grow to 1 1/2 inches. This box is hardy in zones 6-8 with some winter protection at the upper end of the range, although there is a cultivar, 'Vardar Valley' which is hardy to zone 5. This is a long-lived plant, and historic boxes from Colonial days are still alive in Virginia

Buxus sinica - A native of China, similar to other small boxes

President *cont. from pg 1*

year. If you repot now or the coming weeks, just be mindful if there is a freeze, you'll have to protect those trees, even if they can normally be left out in freezing weather. You still have time to prune those deciduous trees you need to cut back, even those hard cut backs. It's also a great time to start air layers to give them a head start come spring time. Continue to watch the soil moisture levels of your trees, it's easy for them to dry out with low humidity and high winds.

The Spring Garden Show in City Park is April 2&3. We are in need of volunteers to help throughout the show. Please sign up if you can help out. If you plan on showing a tree we will need the species name, how old (approximately), how long in training, origin (collected, nursery stock, bonsai nursery, etc.). Set up is on Friday 4/1 from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Show hours Sat and Sun are 9-4. This is a great way we can get our club noticed, interact with the public and share the love of bonsai!

Dennis Burke
GNOBS President



Meetings *cont. from pg 1*

Tuesday, April 12, 2022

**Program: All about Roots by Dennis Burke
7:00pm**

Dennis will do a program on root development, improvement, treatment etc. as well as layering to develop or improve roots.

Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society

PO Box 381 Kenner, LA 70062

President: Dennis Burke 504-224-0038 (cell) dpbbonsai@yahoo.com	Newsletter/Website Editor Kathy Barbazon 504-470-8134 (cell) 504-737-6747 (home) kbarbazon@me.com	Hall Manager Cheryl Mechler/Gerald Nolan 504-452-1222 mechler465@att.net
Vice-President: OPEN	Masters Program Director(s): Byron Carr 318-218-4844 bcjcec@aol.com	Past President: Randy Bennett 504-402-3646 (cell) 504-888-7994 (home) ourproperty4u@gmail.com
Treasurer: Dawn Koetting 985-859-3400 (cell) dkoetting@msn.com	Evan Pardue 985-351-4797 evan@underhillbonsai.com	
Recording Secretary Melissa Leblanc missykobe@hotmail.com		