

# In the Beginning...

J.J. & Richard Turner

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**H**IS was a Sea Grape in a toilet tank lid. **HERS** was a *Pittosporum* with galls and an exposed root. Thus began our bonsai collection 30 years ago.

**WE** wanted to learn. In the early 1980's **WE** attended a bonsai and orchid convention in Orlando that had a few lectures that weren't very helpful and a vendor area that had four booths. **WE** did buy some cute plants with big roots from a vendor who did not want to take them home.

Then came business, careers, love, marriage and the proverbial baby carriages and about twelve years passed and our cute little plants and cuttings had become a large overgrown glob of bonsai possibilities. **WE** read about bonsai in the books **WE** could find. The *Sunset Bonsai* book and *Brooklyn Botanical Gardens Bonsai Handbook* told us a lot about pines and maples. **WE** trimmed and shaped but our *Ficus*, *Bougainvillea* and *Portulacaria* were not looking like the pictures in the books.

**WE** needed help. **HE** happened to see in the local newspaper that the Treasure Coast Bonsai

Society was having a meeting and Ben Oki would be doing a bonsai demonstration. **SHE** stayed home with the children. **HE** came home with an application for the club (less than \$20 for the family – what a bargain) and that included a membership in the Bonsai Societies of Florida (who knew!). **HE** met a couple of guys (Jim Smith and Jim VanLandingham) who were nice and seemed to know a bit about bonsai. They said BSF would send you information four times a year about Florida bonsai and BSF put on a convention once a year where people who practiced bonsai got together, visited, learned about and celebrated their art. The Jims suggested **HE** should attend the upcoming convention where John Naka (John who?) was the featured artist.

**WE** arrived in Ft. Lauderdale, with a fellow bonsai novice and a 5-year-old to spend the day at the convention. From previous experience, **WE** weren't expecting much. The first person **WE** meet at the registration table is Tina Trout. She tells us that our day pass includes the

banquet meal that night. She says she has an extra meal ticket, so our child could eat too. **WE** say **WE** are not properly dressed. **WE** are wearing jeans, flip flops and T-shirts. She says **WE** are dressed just fine – go to the banquet. (**WE** learn later that her husband grew up in Key West where collared shirts are considered formal wear.)

**WE** attend a demonstration and critique by John Naka and learn he has written books that are considered "Bonsai Bibles." **WE** watch a Jim Smith demonstration and discover that he undoubtedly knows more than he lets on. **WE** met Brother Paul from the Monastery where **WE** purchased the Naka books and see tools and supplies that **WE** have no idea what their use could be. He gives a bonsai pin to our son. **WE** try to talk Jim Moody into lowering the price on a tree and he tells us he just can't accept any less because...he had to hop uphill with a broken ankle in the snow (in



Si-Diao BSF 2008

Florida??) to collect this very tree using a spoon from his lunch box and a dull pocket knife, etc., etc. then he gives our son a tree. **WE** stroll through the exhibit and see breathtaking work by Mary Madison, Mary Miller, Ed Trout, Jim Smith and Mayna Huchinson. **WE** buy raffle tickets and win wire and a concave cutter (an invaluable and necessary bonsai tool that greatly improved our pruning technique). **WE** ask John Naka to sign our books and he sits and talks to our child while drawing a bonsai tree on the cover page, signs it and adds his chop. **WE** attend the banquet, admire the Hapi Coats and bonsai pin collections. **WE** head for home knowing **WE** will return – the spirit of friendship, genuine kindness and generosity, the love of bonsai that **WE** experienced

## In the Beginning CONTINUED

at our first convention were unforgettable and have continued throughout the years. We strive to share those positive concepts and principles with others, that others shared with us in the beginning when we knew nothing.

This year marks our twelfth convention. (Missed one due to soccer.) Each year We look forward to seeing friends, haggling with vendors, meeting new bonsai enthusiasts, buying raffle tickets, bidding on auction material, learning from and listening to the masters and viewing the exhibit. We enjoy celebrating the Art of Bonsai with others who share our passion.

If you've never been to a BSF convention or haven't been to one in a while, come and join us the first full weekend of June 6-9 at the Radisson Hotel & Resort in Cape Canaveral. For more information go to <http://www.bonsai-bsf.com/events/2008/convention/>

Even if you can't come for the whole convention, just come for a day - see the exhibit featuring trees from the best artists in Florida. Visit the vendor area and stock up on hard to find pots, plants, materials, tools, books and supplies. Bring a problem plant to the Free Bonsai Clinic where bonsai technicians can help solve

your problems - potting, wiring, trimming or pruning. Experienced bonsai artists will be demonstrating the styling of bonsai plants in the vendor area throughout each day and you can purchase a plant and work one-on-one (like bonsai training wheels) to begin styling and shaping your own plant. There is a fabulous raffle with exceptional items and astounding bargains that can be yours for the purchase of a \$1 ticket. There will be auctions and raffles throughout each day. Come and see if you can have as much fun as We have!

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(FYI: The above mentioned 5-year-old, Jordan Turner, graduates from high school on the Friday of this convention, but he'll be there on Saturday and Sunday!)

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