

# modern AQUARIUM



November 2022  
volume XXIX  
number 9

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*Greater City Aquarium Society - New York*

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# modern AQUARIUM

Series III Vol. XXIX, No. 9 November, 2022

## ON THE COVER

Our cover photo this month is a little different than usual. Posted on our Fishy Friends Facebook page by way of Judit Szanyel (and Dan Puleo), the subject is a crocheted aquarium by Lindadi Creations / Italy. No worries about nitrogen in this tank!

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## MODERN AQUARIUM

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# From the Editor

by Dan Radebaugh

Well, our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration has come and gone, and I think anyone who attended would agree that being in attendance was more than worthwhile! The Celebration Committee did a wonderful job of preparation, and everyone I saw or spoke with seemed to be having a good time. A little later in this issue you'll find articles by Jules Birnbaum and Marsha Radebaugh, each giving their views of the evening. See Jules' article, "Greater City Aquarium Society's 100<sup>th</sup> Year Gala" on page 10, and Marsha's article, "Reflections on 100 Years" on page 16. For more immediate gratification you can go straight to our photos of the evening (taken mostly by our own Joseph Gurrado) on page 22. Everybody seemed to be having a good time with the food and refreshments, so when the next hundred-year party comes along, be sure and get signed up right away!

Besides the food and drink, or perhaps because of it, former President Joe Ferdenzi gave a really stellar talk on the history of our club—the who and the how of our aquarium society and its rise to prominence. If you are a regular reader of **Modern Aquarium** you will have noticed that we've been publishing a lot of articles (mostly by Joe) on how



the GCAS has developed and prospered over the course of 100 years.

Fortune of course plays a role, but having the right people in the right place at the right time is really paramount. Nothing guarantees success, and there have been many tremendous organizations that have lost (or regained) the spark somewhere along the way. It's ultimately up to us, the members of this wonderful club, to continue in the path of our 'ancestors.' Will we be up to it? We have to want to, and we have to continue to be dedicated to do what is needed. I don't look at what I do here as a chore, but as fun. It's fun to do things well! Greater City has flourished through the years because people were enjoying doing things well! 100 years isn't the goal. The real goal is to find joy in what we do!



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## An Aquarist's Journey

Rosario La Corte is one of the world's leading authorities on breeding fish and he has written numerous articles and books, contributing greatly to our understanding of fish and their habits.

Now, for the first time, here is a compilation of his travels, adventures, successes (and, very occasional failures) all relating to collecting, keeping, and breeding fish, and in his own words (and edited by **Modern Aquarium's** Editor, Dan Radebaugh).

Available in softcover at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)





# GCAS Programs

## 2022

|                               |                                                                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>March 2</b>                | <b>Scott Dowd</b><br><i>Project Piaba</i>                                |
| <b>April 6</b>                | <b>Rosario LaCorte</b><br><i>Images From A Lifetime of Fish Breeding</i> |
| <b>May 4</b>                  | <b>Warren Feuer</b><br><i>Shell Dwelling Cichlids</i>                    |
| <b>June 1</b>                 | <b>Dr. Enea Parimbelli</b><br><i>Voyage in Lake Tanganyika</i>           |
| <b>July 6</b>                 | <b>Joseph F. Gurrado</b><br><i>Reef Keeping</i>                          |
| <b>August 3</b>               | <b>A Night at the Auction</b>                                            |
| <b>September 7</b>            | <b>Andreas Tanke</b><br><i>Plecos of the Rio Xingu</i>                   |
| <b>October 7</b>              | <b>Gala Buffet Dinner</b><br><i>Douglaston Manor</i>                     |
| <b>November 2</b>             | <b>Mark Denaro</b><br><i>Asia Aquatics 2022</i>                          |
| <b>December 5</b><br>(Monday) | <b>Mark Soberman</b><br><i>Corydoras catfish</i>                         |

Articles submitted for consideration in *Modern Aquarium* (ISSN 2150-0940) must be received no later than the 10th day of the month prior to the month of publication. Please email submissions to [gcas@earthlink.net](mailto:gcas@earthlink.net), or fax to (347) 379-4984. Copyright 2022 by the Greater City Aquarium Society Inc., a not-for-profit New York State corporation. All rights reserved. Not-for-profit aquarium societies are hereby granted permission to reproduce articles and illustrations from this publication, **unless the article indicates that the copyrights have been retained by the author**, and provided reprints indicate source, and that two copies of the publication are sent to the Exchange Editor of this magazine (one copy if sent electronically). For online-only publications, copies may be sent via email to [gcas@earthlink.net](mailto:gcas@earthlink.net). Any other reproduction or commercial use of the material in this publication is prohibited without prior express written permission.

The Greater City Aquarium Society meets every month except January and February. Members receive notice of meetings in the mail or by email. For more information, contact: Dan Radebaugh at (718) 458-8437, email to [gcas@earthlink.net](mailto:gcas@earthlink.net), or fax to (347) 379-4984. For more information about our club or to see previous issues of *Modern Aquarium*, you can also go to our Internet Home Page at <http://www.greatercity.net>, <http://www.greatercity.org>, or <http://www.greatercity.com>.

# President's Message

by Horst Gerber

So what do we do after 100 years? Do the Wright thing? OK. What is the Wright thing? Is it to not change anything? Some would have us believe that. Others might point out that just because it rained hard a couple of months ago we'd all be confined to our own hearth & home forever. Well, that hasn't happened either. Yes, we've had to make some adjustments these past couple of years due to the ravages of Covid, but as last month's meeting demonstrated, being knocked down isn't the same as being knocked out.



This story of some hand-trimmed, thick-cut, wood-smoked bacon began in Texas at roughly the same time we did here in New York. In 1922, the year our club started, the roaring twenties were well under way. Prohibition, gangsters, jazz clubs and flappers were all the rage. Also, some fish nuts got together and formed our great club, rather like some folks, bacon makers by trade, in a place called Vernon in Texas. What does this have to do with fish? Nothing! They just started the same year we did.

Albert Eggleston, his son, and son-in-law Roy Wright set out to make a better slice of bacon in the back of a rural grocery store. Using real wood smoke, their thick-cut Wright Bacon brand was and remains a success these 100 years later. As the world has changed around them they still make their bacon the same way, much like the folks in our club who have kept on in good years and lean since 1922.

I could give you the recipe for cooking your bacon, but enough with the bacon. Let's talk about October's Gala Party. We had a full house, right on target with our goal and expectation, and most everybody seemed to be having a good time. How's that for bringing home the bacon?

*Horst*

If you like history, and you like pets, then this is the place for you. Dedicated to the history of aquarium & pet keeping, The Museum of Aquarium & Pet History includes a huge depository of over 3,000 items all focused on the pet industry. From antique fish bowls, aquariums and cages, to foods, medications, books and advertising signs, we've got it all! To learn more about this amazing collection of historical pet artifacts, please visit our website:

[moaph.org](https://moaph.org/)

<https://moaph.org/>



# GCAS Thanks You!

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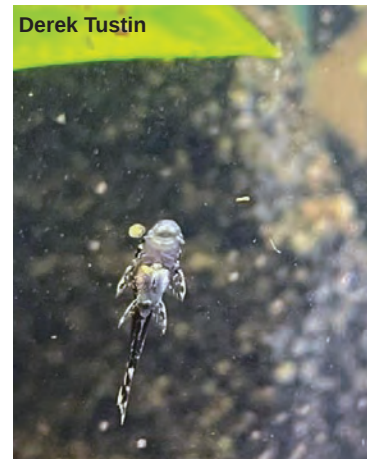
Zilla

Zoo Med Laboratories Inc.

# Fishy Friends' Photos

by Greater City Aquarium Society Fishy Friends

***B**elow are photo submissions to our “Fishy Friends” Facebook group. I’ve left the subjects unnamed, but not the photographer. If you see a shot you like, and want more info, ask the photographer about it! I’m sure he or she will be delighted to tell you!*



## Tonight's Speaker: November 2, 2022

### Mark Denaro, Speaking on Asia Aquatics, 2022

**M**ark Denaro has been keeping freshwater aquariums since 1970 and marine aquariums since 1976. Mark has been keeping planted and biotope aquariums since the mid-70s and was keeping reef aquariums before that term was coined. He has bred well over 200 species of freshwater fish and propagated over 150 species of aquatic plants. He has spawned 10 species of marine fish and propagated over 40 species of marine invertebrates.

Mark is a coauthor of **Adventurous Aquarist Guide to the 101 Best Freshwater Nano Species**, published by Microcosm, Ltd. in September of 2014. He has written articles for several national and international magazines and wrote the recurring column 'Into the Labyrinth' for **Tropical Fish Hobbyist** magazine. He is currently a Contributing Editor and writes feature articles for **TFH**. Mark has been involved in the organized hobby since 1984. He is a past president of the International Betta Congress, the Indianapolis Aquarium Society and the Bucks County Aquarium Society. He was a founding member and the inaugural president of the American Labyrinth Fish Association. He is a well-known speaker and judge and has lectured to over 50 aquarium societies in more than 20 states, plus Canada and Bermuda, and spoken at numerous regional and national conventions. Mark is sales manager for Emark Tropical Imports, the oldest aquarium fish wholesaler in the US, and the largest transhipper on the east coast. He also makes videos that he shares on YouTube as **All Natural Aquatics**.



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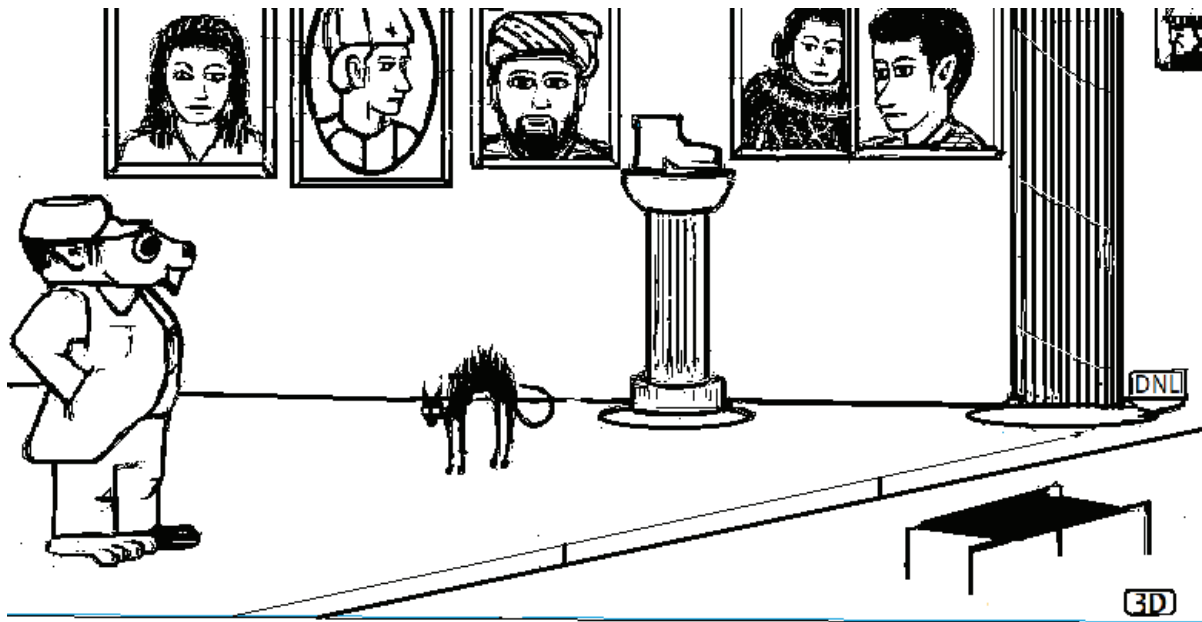
## October's Caption Winner: Donna Sica



Hi pretty bird! I'm not a spider. BIRD: I think it's time to fly.

# The Modern Aquarium Cartoon Caption Contest

*Modern Aquarium has featured cartoon contests before, and they're back! You, the members of Greater City get to choose the caption! Just think of a good caption, then mail, email, or phone the Editor with your caption (phone: 347-866-1107, fax: 877-299-0522, email: [gcas@earthlink.net](mailto:gcas@earthlink.net)). **Your caption needs to reach the Editor by the third Wednesday of this month.** We'll also hand out copies of this page at the meeting, which you may turn in to Marsha or Dan before leaving. Winning captions will earn ten points in our Author Awards program, qualifying you for participation in our special "Authors Only" raffle at our Holiday Party and Banquet. Put on your thinking caps!*



Your Caption:

Your Name:

---



<https://www.amazonasmagazine.com/>

# Stripping Mouth Brooding Cichlids

by Dan McKercher

Over my years in this hobby, I've seen and heard of many folks stripping mouth brooding cichlids of their eggs. There are a few ways that I've seen this done. It usually involves holding the female in your hand, and using some type of small device like a hairpin, to pry open the mouth and allow the fry/eggs to fall into a container of water. While some have called this cruel, others feel that it was in their best interests for a few reasons:

1. Better brood—Many breeders do this because it is the best way to get the biggest count.
2. Letting the female get back to eating—Most don't eat while they are holding, and they do seem to lose some of their body mass during this time.

I must confess that I did try this once, but felt it was too much stress on the fish—and me—as I feared hurting the fish while doing it. It does seem to be very easy to hurt them this way.

So when a fish is holding I simply leave it alone and let nature take its course. While this results in only a few fry surviving the whole thing, this approach does have its advantages. Nature can be rather cruel with its survival of the fittest, but the end result usually is a few very healthy fish. But if I have an interest in getting more, so that I can share with fishy friends, I put the female in a tank by herself and wait until she is willing to let them go on her own. The result



*Haplochromis* sp. "black torpedo", wild male  
by Kim Pedersen

is a much better head count, but not as good as if I were to strip her.

Did you ever find something out quite by accident? I had two female black torpedo cichlids that were holding. I put them in a 5½ gallon tank so they could let go of their fry, in hopes that I could get a reasonable amount of fry. They were in the tank for around 5 days, when I decided to do a water change. I drained the tank over ¾ down and, not thinking, I added water using the line directly from my faucet. During the summer months the water is warm enough so it doesn't bother anybody. After I filled the tank I noticed the females were on the bottom about to lay over and spit all their fry. The fry seemed to be stunned. I quickly drained the tank about ¾ down and added warm water. Within 2 -3 minutes everyone was in great shape. The water coming from the sink was very cold.



*Exochochromis anagenys*

I have done this a few times since my goof-up with great success! The only difference is I use a 2.5 gallon tank instead of a 5.5 gallon tank.

I put the female into a tank about ¼ full with a small sponge filter. I then put in the cold water and wait for like 30 seconds to a minute. Right after she spits out the fry I quickly drop the water level about ¾ down and refill with warm water. After a few minutes everybody is fine. My only problem is I have about 75 fry!

Disclaimer! This has worked very well for me, BUT I make no recommendations on this method to anyone else!



# Greater City Aquarium Society's 100th Year Gala October 7, 2022

by Jules Birnbaum

**T**hey say planning and preparation is everything in sports. I think it was that way when planning our Gala that was 100 years in the making.

I was very nervous about being part of this important event in the history of our Greater City Aquarium Society. Fortunately we had a Board of Directors who worked together. The planning started a year ago with much advice from our long time former president and club historian Joe Ferdenzi.

We needed a catering hall that would hold 50 to 100 people. Marsha Radebaugh, our membership chairperson, contacted Douglaston Manor, Queens, New York. Ed and Linda Vukich and I visited the site a couple of months before the event date the Board had decided upon.

The Douglaston Manor was beautiful! The ballroom we were shown was large, with a great view of their golf course and the New York City skyline. There was no doubt that this was the ideal spot for this important event. After consulting the rest of our Board of Directors we signed the contract for Friday, October 7th, 2022.

Board member and assistant Treasurer Len Ramroop kept track of paid attendees. He issued 68 tickets. The stubs would be used to select raffle prizes at the event. I should mention that the Club subsidized each attendee to the tune of \$30. There would be no admissions at the door. It amazes me how much members get for their \$30 annual membership dues.

On the night of the event I showed up with my wife Elaine (many wives attended), not knowing how the evening would go. We got there early and the sight was amazing. The tables were set with Mums on each table that Linda and Ed Vukich brought.

The back of the room was set up for our auction, door prizes and goodie bags for each attendee, provided by our main sponsor, ZooMed. There were so many useful things in those bags, including the bags themselves!

Special thanks go to Harry Faustmann and Tony Siano, who helped get all the raffle items and goodie bags to the event. Also thanks to Joe Guarrado, who brought our new GCAS long sleeve shirts. These great looking shirts are on sale for only \$20.

There were hors d'oeuvres served before a buffet dinner with three choices. There was a big square cake with "100 years" written on it.

Joe Ferdenzi worked with the Douglaston Manor maitre d' to keep everything moving smoothly, and it was smooth. Jason Kerner set up all the electronics for Joe to give a presentation about the long history of our club. Our President Horst Gerber gave a short speech that was very thoughtful and emotional.

We would like to acknowledge ZooMed for providing so much equipment for our raffle, and to their representative, Tom Allison, who attended our Gala. Monster Aquarium has also been a constantly supportive sponsor of our club, and the Gala was no exception with their generosity. Plaques were presented both to ZooMed and to Monster Aquarium. The ZooMed plaque was handmade by our President, Horst Gerber.

On our Facebook page someone asked when our next Gala would be since he missed this one. Someone answered him that the next Gala will be 2122! We hope to see you all there! This gala was an event we will never forget!



# Culturing Banana Worms

by Karen Murray

**B**anana Worms are a species of nematode, which grows to about 1/16 of an inch or less. Banana worms are non-parasitic and feed from the bacteria and yeast from an oatmeal culture medium. Nano fish and fry go crazy for them. They are great for fry, small cories, other bottom feeders and nano fish like CPD's or Endlers.

They are easy to culture and care for. Put a handful of oatmeal in a container with a little tank water. Mix it so all the oatmeal is moist.

Not too wet and not too dry - said Goldilocks. And Goldilocks knows her porridge. Though I would say if she kept banana worms she might never **want to eat porridge again! I don't.** (gives me the willies now!)

Once you have your oatmeal moist sprinkle a think layer of yeast on the top and add your worm culture. Feed the culture every day and in about 3 days you will have enough to feed. I scrape the edges with a skewer and feed the culture yeast daily.

**Don't put your skewer in the oatmeal!** If you happen to forget and need to feed, just put in some yeast in and wait about 10 minutes. You will have worms climbing the sides.

I change out my cultures about every 2 weeks. Keep track, if they start to decline on the sides even though you are feeding, its time to change out the culture. Keep 2 or 3 going so you will always have a container to feed.

**And don't worry. The mixture doesn't stink.** It is rather pleasant actually - it smells like baking bread. If it does stink its is time to start a new culture!!

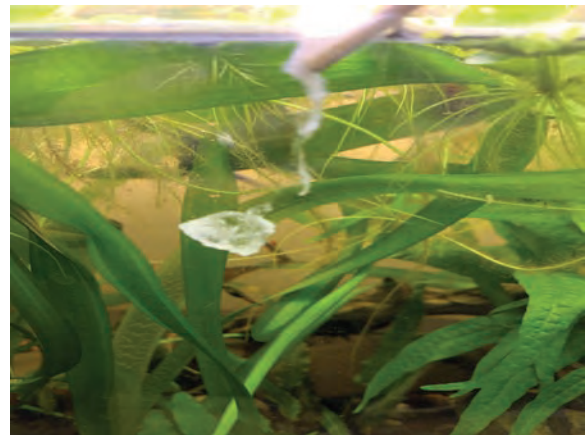


Sprinkle your yeast



This culture had just been fed about 5 minutes before I took the picture.

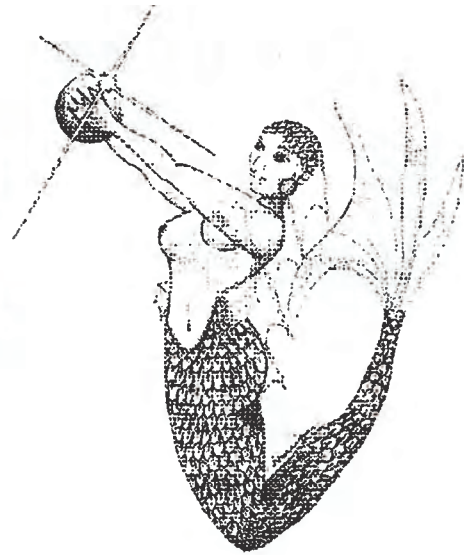
Swirling the skewer in the tank -- so many worms will keep my fish busy for a while.



Reprinted from The Kitchener-Waterloo Aquarium Society's *Fins & Tales*, Volume 58 Issue 7 - September, 2019.



# Mermaid Tales



by "The Gypsy Mermaid"  
(A.K.A. SHARON BARNETT)

## *Fossochromis rostratus*

### The Poor Man's *Cyathopharynx*

I have already told you all about my unfortunate attempts at raising *Cyathopharynx furcifer*, so I won't bore you by rehashing the details. I have since discovered a hardier, less expensive substitute—*Fossochromis rostratus*, a large Lake Malawi haplochromine also known as the Malawi sand-diver. Now, I'll grant you that the *rostratus* lacks the fairy-like fin extensions of *C. furcifer*, but the males of both species have very similar opalescent, jewel-like breeding colors—the characteristic which first drew me to *C. furcifer*.

I obtained a group of juveniles and raised them to adulthood in a 29-gallon tank, along with a group of *aulonocara*. The tank was decorated with a couple of large pieces of holey limestone with a black sand substrate. I have not witnessed the "sand-diving" behavior which I have seen described, wherein the *rostratus*



housed a large group of *Synodontis* species, an 8-inch *Cyphotilapia frontosa*, a couple of *Greenwoodichromis christyi*, some large Malawi haplochromines, and a few Victorians.

Whenever I tell a newbie how to introduce adult cichlids into an established African lake cichlid tank, I stress the importance of rearranging the rockwork so that the newcomers are on a more equal footing with the existing tenants (due to the fact that they are now *all* scrambling for territory in an unfamiliar landscape). I cannot tell you how many times I have given that advice, but as I am sure you can guess, that is exactly what I did *not* do. And so, I lost my beautiful male after a couple of days of constant harassment.



I will try again in the future, with that painful lesson as a reminder. The *Fossochromis rostratus* is a great substitute for the *Cyathopharynx furcifer*. They are not as expensive, don't need as large a tank, and are not as delicate. The two species do share the need to be the dominant species in the aquarium, otherwise they are likely to be shy, and reticent about coloring up.



dives into the sand to escape threats (probably because the sand bed was not deep enough), but I have observed vigorous and almost constant sand-sifting in search of food.

Unfortunately, I made one of my more regrettable errors with the gorgeous adult male that I had raised. The group had long since outgrown their 29-gallon grow-out tank, and needed to be moved as soon as possible. The only available place was the 70-gallon tank which



Photos of adult male *F. rostratus* by Author. Top center shows fish in breeding colors.

This article originally appeared in the November 2008 issue of *Modern Aquarium*.

# A Greater City Memoir

By Joseph Ferdenzi

As I approach the end of my 19<sup>th</sup> term as President of The Greater City Aquarium Society, I thought it might be helpful to me, and of interest to some, if I recorded the beginnings of my involvement with the Society. As the years roll on, my memory might not get better.

It began in 1984. That was the year I walked into a pet shop by the name of Looking Glass Aquarium. At the time, it was located on Northern Boulevard, near the corner of Prince Street, in Flushing. Much later it moved to a small shopping center on Kissena Boulevard, also in Flushing. This particular store was a little on the “funky” side (the owners looked like they had just come from the Woodstock Festival, and there was always some heavy rock music blaring), but they had great fish at reasonable prices. I don’t recall if it was on my first visit to the store that I spied a poster announcing the meetings of The Greater City Aquarium Society, but it was certainly on an early visit. The great part about the poster was that it had small tear-off sheets so you could have all the information you needed to take home with you and remind you of the meetings (I have a copy of this poster in my archives).

At the time, I was living in Whitestone, which borders Flushing to the north, my wife Anita and I having bought our first house there in 1981. We had two little girls (we added a son in 1988), and I was working in Brooklyn. In my spare time I had constructed a fish room in the basement that held about twenty aquariums. Having been involved in the tropical fish hobby since the sixth grade, but never having owned more than three aquariums at any one time, this fish room was a dream come true for me.

In 1975 I had joined the Long Island Killifish Association, which that year sponsored the national American Killifish Association convention. However, in the Fall of that year I left New York to live in Boston, where I attended law school. Upon my return to New York three years later, I was much too busy starting a career and a family (Anita and I were married in 1979) to resume my participation in the LIKA. So at the time I saw the GCAS poster in the pet shop, it had been some time since I had been involved in a club, and I certainly had never been a member of a general aquarium society.

The good thing about GCAS was that it met at the Queens Botanical Garden, which is located on Main Street in Flushing. This meant that it was only about a ten minute drive from my home in Whitestone. Nevertheless, a few months passed before I was able to attend my first meeting.

Then, as now, the meetings were held on the first Wednesday of the month, and the first meeting I attended was in May, 1984. I really didn’t know what to expect, and I didn’t know anyone who was a member. Indeed, I didn’t recognize anyone at that first meeting. But it certainly made a favorable impression on me. The room seemed packed. Wow, I thought, this is great – a room full of tropical fish enthusiasts like me, so close to home, and with free parking! What could be better? And, though I was a stranger, I was not made to feel out of place.

The President at that time was Brian Kelly, who, unbeknownst to me, was completing the last of his three terms as President. I don’t recall what the program was that evening, but I noticed there was a bowl show. In any event, I joined up that very night, and promptly handed the Treasurer, Emma Jordan (now Emma Haus) my dues money.

The next month, I decided to enter one of my male blue gularis killifish in the bowl show. I had no idea that the GCAS season ran from September through June, and that consequently the bowl show champion for the season had already been decided. This explained why my fish was the only entry in that month’s bowl show. When I learned there were no meetings in July and August I was disappointed, but at least I had a GCAS blue ribbon – my first souvenir! The only other happening I recall from that June meeting is that I was approached by a petite lady with bright red hair, who enthusiastically complimented me on my blue gularis, and then struck up a conversation intended to make me feel welcome. Those of you who are veterans of this Society have already deduced from my description of her that it was none other than legendary member Marcia Repanes. She was of course there with her husband, Nick, the other half of the famed duo.

I anxiously waited for September to roll around. By this time I had determined to compete in that season’s bowl show competition. I think I attended every meeting that season. At the end, I learned I had indeed won the championship, and with it the Walter Hubel Memorial Trophy.

Along the way, I was making new friends, and enjoying being in the company of fellow hobbyists. What I didn’t realize at the time was that I was drawing the attention of the Board of Directors. At some point, as the season was nearing its end, I was approached by Tom Lawless. Tom was on the Board, and was responsible for the club’s newsletter, which at the time consisted of a few typed pages, with no graphics or illustrations. Anyway, Tom said I should consider

*This article originally appeared in the November 2008 issue of Modern Aquarium.*

running for the Board, and when I asked why me, he said that something about my level of participation in the bowl shows revealed that I had a strong interest in the club. I guess he was right. So after being in the club barely one year, I was elected to the Board for the 1985-86 season.

Just to back up a little, you'll recall I told you that June 1984 was Brian Kelly's last month as President of GCAS. The man who succeeded him was a veteran GCAS member, Jack Oliva. Jack had been a member since the 1960s. When Jack became President he was already a retired senior citizen. Jack was a gentleman in every way, and, aided by his lovely wife Kathy, did his best to lead the club. Unfortunately, when you succeed a vibrant and robust guy in his 40s, such as Brian Kelly, the energy level at the meetings is bound to drop. Also, the meeting format at the time was tied to an ancient custom that really dragged down the meetings. At the beginning of each meeting, the Recording Secretary would read the minutes of the prior Board meeting. If that wasn't bad enough, they would then open the floor for comments on the activity of the Board meetings. This meant that every meeting began with little (and sometimes big) skirmishes over all kinds of issues that few of the members cared about, and that created a less than harmonious feeling for the rest of the meeting. I mention this to provide you some perspective for what followed.

In that first year on the Board, I was determined to contribute what I could to make the Society even better. I volunteered to draw up and conduct a poll of our members to see how we could better serve them. I actively participated in discussions and made suggestions for improvements, although I can't now recall any of them. I also continued to be active at meetings, and won my second Bowl Show Championship.

As the 1985-86 season drew to a close, an event occurred that was to change my life. I honestly never saw it coming, and took me completely by surprise. It was so startling that I still remember it as if it happened yesterday.

I was sitting on my bed, playing with one of my daughters, when the phone rang. Anita said it was Jack Oliva calling. I said hello to Jack, and after asking how I was, he told me he had decided not to run for a third term as GCAS President. When he said this, I assumed that our Vice President, Ben Haus, would take over the top spot. But as soon as I had thought this, Jack told me that Ben had no interest in serving as President. OK, so now what, I said to myself as I listened to Jack go on. And that is when Jack asked me a question that hit me like a thunderbolt: would I run for President? Me? I had only been a member for two years. I was only 32 at the time; how could I succeed a veteran like Jack? As I mumbled something along those lines to Jack, he reassured me that everyone on the Board thought I could do the job. Me? How could I be entrusted with running the oldest aquarium society

in New York? What did I know about running an aquarium society? It really seemed daunting, but Jack kept imploring me. Could I do it? I had a demanding job, two small children – where would I find the time? But how could I say no to Jack? I don't remember what else I babbled to Jack, but finally I told him I would do it on one condition: he had to stay on the Board to help me and guide me. Like a wise father, Jack readily agreed, and the deal was forged.

Little did I know at the time that this "deal" would result in my serving an unprecedented eleven straight years as President – but they were great years! I made a lot of friends, went everywhere as the ambassador of Greater City, made more friends, and really enjoyed the hobby.

Of course there was some work to be done. During the first few years I wrote and published our newsletter, **Network**. I ran the Breeders Award Program and the Bowl Show, and arranged for our speakers. One of the other things I did was eliminate the aforementioned practice of reading Board minutes, which had resulted in bored members (pun intended).

In those early years we had wonderful Board members like Jack, Marcia and Nick, Ben and Emma, and others whom many of our current members may not recall, such as Pat Piccione, Mary Ann and Joe Bugeia, and Doug and Don Curtin. A little later Mark Soberman joined the Board, and he went on to serve successfully as our Speaker Chair for many years, and then as Vice President.

In 1992, in recognition of our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we revived our tropical fish shows. They were great fun, and unqualified successes. In 1994 we resurrected our legendary magazine, **Modern Aquarium**. This was quite an achievement, and was made possible by the influx of new members with the talent to pull it off: Warren Feuer, Stephen Zander, Al and Sue Priest, Bernie Harrigan, and Jason Kerner. Along the way we accumulated other dedicated Board members such as Vince and Rosie Sileo, Carlotti DeJager, Pete D'Orio, and Greg Wuest.

In 1997 we held a glorious 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary show at the Marriott Hotel near LaGuardia Airport. The show was memorable for many reasons, not least of which was the arrival on the GCAS scene of Claudia Dickinson, who has gone on to serve Greater City brilliantly in many capacities.

At the conclusion of the 1997 season, I decided that eleven years in a row as President was enough for anyone, and I managed to convince Vince Sileo to stand for election as President. Like Jack, I promised I'd stay on the Board to help in the transition. Vince ably served for two terms, and was followed by Jeff George, who valiantly served one term.

At the end of Jeff's term, I once again received a phone call from the President, imploring me to serve once again as President. I suppose a sense of duty and devotion led me to once again say yes, and so the 2000-2001 season of GCAS began with me once again

at the helm. Of course this time I felt a little more confident about it.

In the ensuing years, we continued to hold fish shows, and we continued to build on the quality of **Modern Aquarium**, as well as to improve the level of our monthly meetings. In this, most – if not all – of the credit goes to our wonderful Board members and magazine staff, who have sacrificed so much of their time and energy. Besides all the people I have already mentioned, Greater City's continued vitality has been immensely augmented by two other people – Jack Traub, who became our Treasurer, and Brad Dickinson, who, though not a tropical fish hobbyist, sacrifices some four hours every first Wednesday to drive Claudia to and from our meetings (and everyone knows that without Claudia, our meetings would just not be the same). On the **Modern Aquarium** side, GCAS has been extremely fortunate to have had one great Editor after another, starting with Warren Feuer, then Al Priest, and now Dan Radebaugh.

I have so far deliberately failed to mention one other Greater City member who was of tremendous help to me. Though he never served on the Board with me, he became a friend and mentor. This person was Gene Baiocco, who passed away all too soon in 1999 at the age of 77 (in an instance of serendipity, Gene was born in the same year that Greater City was founded). Gene had been a member of Greater City since the 1950s, and had served as its President in that decade for a then unheard of six consecutive years (he also served one more term in the 1970s). To me, Gene was Greater City personified – its traditions, its history, and its glory. Through Gene I learned a lot about the Society and what it meant to the aquarium hobby, especially in New York City. He, along with Marcia

Repanes and Jack Oliva, is largely responsible for the wonderful archival material we have that documents the illustrious story of The Greater City Aquarium Society (by the way, if you're wondering why I keep throwing in the capitalized "The" in front of our name, it's because that is part of our official incorporated name; yes, we are The Greater City Aquarium Society). Upon his untimely passing, GCAS named its Aquarist of the Year Award in his honor – that makes the award even more prestigious.

My dedication to Greater City would not have been possible without the support of the most important person of all, my wife Anita. She is a superstar! Smart (she earned her doctorate from St. John's University – while raising three children), beautiful, gracious, and full of love. She patiently withstood the onslaught of seeing my Whitestone fish room grow from twenty tanks to eighty of them. One year, when we were short a Recording Secretary, she stepped in to cover the post. In addition, she acted as an inviting hostess for all the meetings and visitors at our home. (Believe me there were quite a few!) My children, inheriting the sunny disposition of their mother, just seemed to accept the non-stop "fish" events as part of their lives. So in a very real sense, for these nearly two decades Anita has served as the silent co-President of Greater City. The Society owes her a great debt, and when I am no longer President I will attempt to repay it.

Well, I'm now at the end. I've served another eight consecutive terms. Like the original Yankee Stadium and Shea Stadium, it's time for me to go. Whoever succeeds me will be at the helm of a great club. The new President just needs to be dedicated; the rest will follow.



# Reflections on 100 Years

by Marsha Radebaugh

On October 7th, 2022 GCAS celebrated 100 years of continuous existence. Milestones such as this often prompt great reflection. For me, this was the theme of the event.

I reflected on the years since Dan and I joined the club, I reflected on what it took to produce such an event, and most of all, later that night, I reflected on happenings at the event.

My most recent reflection concerned the fact that, due to the pandemic, I haven't attended an in-person meeting since we resumed them last year. But I haven't missed one virtually. So I was pleasantly surprised but a little taken aback when so many people expressed how happy they were to see me after so long. I thought "what are you talking about? I've been at every meeting!" Of course it didn't occur to me that they hadn't seen me! It was this warm welcome that reminded me of the first time Dan and I attended a meeting back in 2005, and how welcoming everyone was.

This was the beginning of a long and happy relationship (though not quite 100 years). Since then, Dan spent 8 years as president (succeeded by current president Horst Gerber) and more as editor of **Modern Aquarium**. I've been member chairperson for all that time as well. In that capacity, I've had the job of implementing our annual Banquet/Holiday Party, where awards are presented and we share a lovely dinner of diner fare. It's pretty basic: finding a diner that can accommodate our group at a reasonable cost. Most of that planning I do on my own after soliciting suggestions for sites and making the arrangements. Al and Sue Priest secure the trophies and plaques, help with setup, special authors' raffle, and usually Joe Ferdenzi moderates and makes the presentations. This time, celebrating 100 years had to be different—a step up! This time it called for a committee. Again, with Joe Ferdenzi's able guidance we set about planning well in advance. The committee included Jules Birnbaum, Ed and Linda Vukich, and Lenny

Ramroop. These folks did a fantastic job of making things happen, doing all the footwork and implementation. We also had major technical and graphics assistance from Jason Kerner. The evening was a resounding success!

The highlight of the evening, and the ultimate exercise in reflection, was Joe Ferdenzi's fabulous presentation on The History of Greater City Aquarium Society. Jason worked tirelessly with Joe to produce a first-rate PowerPoint presentation, and Joe took us on an exciting trip back through time to the origins of the club. Who knew that GCAS was born in Ridgewood, Queens, a small neighborhood that straddles the Queens/Brooklyn border? Joe gave us a real sense of the flavor of the community and the founding members. And now, according to the Time Out Index Survey, Ridgewood, Queens is the fourth coolest neighborhood on the planet for 2022! Of course! That's where the coolest aquarium society was born. This was just one amazing tidbit of our history that left us all cheering his presentation. Now this presentation will itself become a part of the history of the hobby.

I reflect also on all the people Dan and I have met over these past 17 years; a rich cornucopia of types of people brought together by a common passion for tropical fish. I reflect on those I miss who weren't there to celebrate with the rest of us—some because of relocation or life changes or health limitations, like Claudia and Brad Dickinson, Al and Sue Priest (who welcomed us and signed us up that evening in 2005), Elliot Oshins, and those we've lost, like Joe Graffagnino, Sharon Barnett, Larry Whitfield, Bill Adams, my party planning predecessor Emma Haus and her husband Ben. I hope they are celebrating too, wherever they are.

Let us now reflect on what the future holds for Greater City. With any luck, a pandemic-free environment, and expanding membership with new, young blood joining us veterans, and even "GREATER" participation in the workings of this glorious institution!



# WET LEAVES



a Series On Books For The Hobbyist  
by **SUSAN PRIEST**

When you look closely at the cover of this book, you will find the words “Adventurous Aquarist Guide” in small letters across the top. There are indeed a multitude of adventures to be found within its pages.

No matter how long you have been an aquarist, I guarantee you will find something new to entice you.

We have all been throwing the term “nano” around for quite a while now, and we have generally come to understand that it is descriptive of something small. As you begin to thumb through the pages of this book, the question you will want answered right from the get-go is “what is a nano tank?” Our authors have defined a (freshwater) nano tank as having a capacity of twenty gallons or less.

You will find that most of the species described (there are actually more than 101), are suitable for tanks in the five to ten gallon range. Cichlid lovers who are used to a wide variety of species to choose from will find precious few among the nanos. Rasboras, tetras and danios are well represented, to name but a few.

The section on shrimps in the aquarium has led me to boldly go where I have never gone before. Suffice it to say that they are an adventure unto themselves. Shrimps have very different requirements than fishes. Mark and

Rachel have dedicated a significant amount of space to their needs and natures. Here is a brief quote from the page describing Amano shrimp: “readily eats filamentous algae, is truly the workhorse of dwarf shrimps and the most popular addition to a planted tank. They are low-order breeders, so they do not reproduce in fresh water, but have a relatively long life span, and large size (2 inches).”

Did you notice the reference to planted tanks in the previous paragraph? Virtually every species/aquarium under discussion mentions the inclusion of aquatic plants.

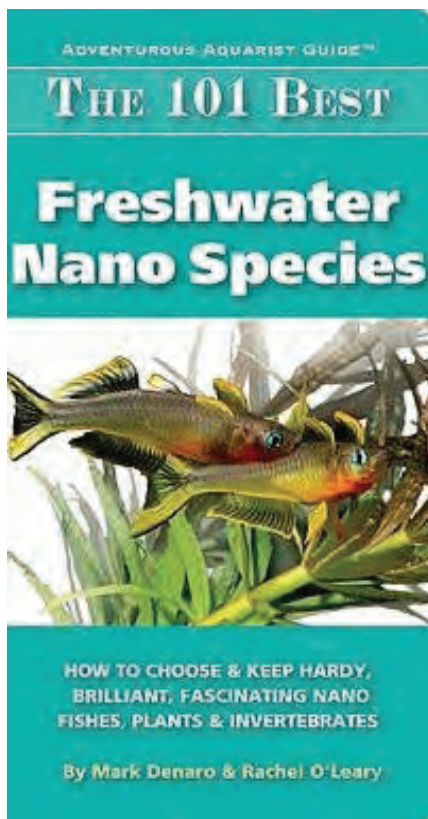
There is a very nice chapter on nano-plant species. Some of them are old standbys, and others were new, at least to me. Pearlweed, which is native to the southeastern United States, was calling my name.

Small aquariums housing small fishes do not translate into a small investment of your time. For example, feeding is not a once-a-day activity. “Fishes with small mouths eat very little at one time, preferring small, frequent meals.” When using a liquid fertilizer “figure out the dosage for your aquarium, and if it is suggested as a weekly dose, divide it into seven doses. Add 1/7th of the weekly dose per day.” And it goes without saying that water quality will require extra attention. The smaller the tank, the smaller the margin

for error.

Are there any among you who are up for a challenge? The chapter on nano-communities offers the reader several suggestions for combinations of species. Each is more enticing than the one before it. The challenging part of the project will be trying to collect the recommended livestock.

**The 101 Best Freshwater  
Nano Species**  
**Mark Denaro and Rachel O'Leary**  
**TFH Publications, Inc.**  
**Publication date: 9/1/2014**



Reprinted from October 2014 issue of *Modern Aquarium*

Rachel's 5.5 gallon Asian rainforest pool calls for nine chili rasboras, one horned nerite (that's a snail), one pair of flame badis, and eight Malawa shrimp. Happy shopping!

The inside of the front and back cover flaps serve as "quick species finders." There is a species index, and a bibliography. The glossary clearly describes the difference between a school of fish and a shoal of fish, as well as defining many other terms. There are color photos throughout, and the paper has a density that your fingers will appreciate.

Of particular usefulness is the color coding. Each page in the section on 101 species has a colored bar along the outer edge. Green means suitable for aquariums of five gallons or less, blue means suitable for six to ten gallons, and purple means suitable for eleven to twenty gallons. The color bar also tells you which fishes are peaceful, which are territorial, etc. There is no way you can make a mistake!

So, what did I find to be enticing? The chili rasbora, *Boraras brigittae*, is so tiny that is known as the 'eyestrain rasbora.' "Despite their small size (2 cm) they make a big impact and are hardy, even suitable for the beginning aquarist."

This is the perfect place to make a point that our authors made early on. "It is up to you to know your limitations." Having said that, I would add my own assessment that there are adventures to be found here for those of you with every level of fishkeeping experience.

Speaking of our authors, I would like to thank Mark and Rachel for putting a fresh title on our bookshelves; the first new one to arrive in a very long time. They have both presented programs at the GCAS, so we already know that we can rely on their expertise. Among their many suggestions, cautions, and even descriptions of personalities, you will find a fresh adventure every time you reach for this book, which will be often.

### Author's Note

I hope that at least a few of you have been missing **Wet Leaves**. I know I have. Its absence has not been from a lack of searching for suitable titles. The number of choices to be found on the shelves in pet stores and book stores can be counted on one hand, and were published at least fifteen to twenty years ago. On-line searches have turned up a much longer list, virtually all of which have been reviewed here in the past, or are not suitable topics for freshwater hobbyists. I was hoping to score a few titles written for children, only to be inundated with coloring books.

Then one serendipitous summer day, I came across the Mark and Rachel book (that is how I have come to think of it). I can't remember if I actually jumped for joy, or merely exclaimed it verbally. Wait a minute; what does that say? Pre-order! Even though I was offered a discount, it meant that I would have to wait. Did I hesitate to place my order? Of course not. Did I wait? You know I did, and longer than I was led to expect.

Anyway, Mark and Rachel have put an end to the dry spell, and there is no way to guess how long the next one will be. Until then I will continue my efforts to find books worthy of a space on your bookshelf. S.P.



# Ein? Swai? Tra? Basa?

by Dan Radebaugh

Reading Steve Sica's "Fish Bytes" column in our April issue, I was intrigued when he mentioned a food fish called swai, which he described as a large, river catfish. Never having seen the word 'swai' before, I went online and discovered that it is in fact a catfish from Southeast Asia, the Mekong River specifically, and it is a fish that likely many of us have at one time or another kept in our home aquariums. Some of you have probably already guessed this mystery fish's identity, but before I get to that, I must tell you that there are many threads to this story, going back over a number of years.

Some months back, as my wife Marsha and I were shopping for dinner at the local grocery, we saw some fish filets, light in color, called 'basa.' We asked the counter clerk what kind of fish that was, and unsatisfied with his rather vague reply, did some research on our own, finding that 'basa' is an invented name for a large catfish native to the Mekong River, *Pangasius bocourti*, also sometimes called the yellowtail catfish. Moreover, it seems that the basa is a close relative of the aforementioned swai, as well as to the 'tra.' With a little more digging, I discovered that the swai and the tra seem to be different marketing names for the species *Pangasius hypophthalmus*, a fish many of us know as the iridescent shark, a species that has been sold in pet shops for longer than I've been in the hobby, which goes back to the late 1950s.

Nearly everything you can find about *P. hypophthalmus*, or the shark catfish group in general, involves controversy. My search brought up a number of rather heated debates in online fish forums about whether or not iridescent sharks should even be considered for home aquariums. Their potential size (around four feet in



*Pangasius hypophthalmus*, the iridescent shark.  
Photo from scotcat.com.

length) argues against them, though many aquarists and some merchants insist that they won't grow this large in a home aquarium. One seller went so far as to guarantee that if a lady in the discussion bought such a fish from him that it would never exceed seven or eight inches in length. Of course there were plenty of supporters of the old myth that fish will only grow to the extent allowed by the size of their tanks, so everything should work out fine. On the other hand, there were those who told of purchasing one or two or three of these fish (they are said to prefer living in groups), only to have them outgrow first a 20-gallon,

then a 55-gallon, and finally a 125-gallon tank before a home was found for them in a local public aquarium (a long-shot solution). This brought to mind a thread I came across on a forum years back where a young woman in the U.K. offered an impassioned defence of this fish, citing their gentleness, intelligence, and

attachment to their owner and to each other. She had kept a pair for some years, both of which were at that time about three feet long and living in a large pond.

More common were stories that the fish perhaps didn't outgrow their quarters, but after a time declined in health. Specifically mentioned in this regard were skin lesions, eventual loss of consciousness, and death. They are said to be notably vulnerable to ich, though this may be due to their owners not easily being able to see the diagnostic white spots on their scaleless bodies. These fish are known for being skittish and easily startled, and since their eyesight is apparently not great they've been known to injure or even kill themselves by crashing into the sides of the aquarium. As they get larger, the potential for having a literal 'tank-buster' increases. Some keepers recommend heavily planting the ends of the tank so that they'll perceive a 'wall' rather than apparent open space.

Parasites aside, the tank size/water quality issue is well worth discussing, whether for this fish or for any large, heavy-bodied species. Symptoms like skin lesions and dying would indicate that the fish are living in a less than optimal environment. Some of the old-timers here at Greater City will recall guest speaker David Boruchowitz (former Editor of **TFH**) and his talk here on the idea of frequent, large-scale water changes. The gist was that in nature, water in a fish's watery environment is constantly being replaced, in the process washing away the various dissolved organic compounds generated by the fishes'



*P. hypophthalmus* migrations in the Mekong River. Orange: March to May, Dark green: May to September, Red: October to February. Shaded region: spawning region of the southern Mekong population between Khone Falls and Kratie. Map from Wikipedia.com.

This article originally appeared in the July 2014 issue of *Modern Aquarium*.

metabolism. A large part of the difficulty of keeping large fish (or large numbers of smaller fish) healthy in a confined space like an aquarium is that the fish are just trapped there, living in their own metabolic wastes, which are not being removed by the natural ‘water changes’ provided by nature. So theoretically, you could keep an Oscar healthy in a ten-gallon tank if the water was constantly being replaced. If you’ve ever visited a fish hatchery you can see this principle in action. Despite the crowded fish runs, the water is continuously being replaced—flowing in one end of the run and out the other—allowing for a much greater density of fish than could otherwise be maintained.



Iridescent sharks in albino form.



*P. hypophthalmus* with skin ulceration.



Iridescent sharks can injure their noses by crashing into the glass. Photos above from Aqualandpetsplus.com.

So, we know that these fish are native to Southeast Asia, most notably Viet Nam, they aren’t difficult to come by, they can grow to a large size, and they’re easily found in supermarkets. What else do we know about them? Well, let’s look at the supermarket part for a moment, as this leads into some areas of controversy,

including the weird names. One of the reasons this fish has been in the hobby for so many years is that they’ve been a long-time product of aquaculture back in their native lands, and so fingerlings have been available to the aquarium hobby as well as to the “meat men.” This is also the reason we often see other large-growing, aquarium-questionable catfish in pet shops. Ever wonder why North American channel catfish (also quite large as adults) are so easy to find in aquarium shops, and so reasonably priced? If your livelihood is growing and selling fish, you’re going to try to explore all ‘channels!’

Returning to the subject of the weird names (‘tra’, ‘basa’, ‘swai’), the large-scale importation of these fish (*P. hypophthalmus* and *P. bocourti*) as food began in about 1994, as part of our normalization of relations and increasing trade with the countries of Southeast Asia. Did you know that for some years now Viet Nam’s largest trade partner has been the United States? Did you also know that catfish farming is an important industry in the southern United States? Do you recall that part of our elected officials’ job descriptions is protecting the jobs of their constituents? Well, in 2002, “the United States accused Vietnam of dumping catfish, namely *Pangasius bocourti* and *Pangasius hypophthalmus*, on the American market, charging the Vietnamese importers, who are subsidized by Vietnam’s government, of unfair competition. With pressures from the U.S. catfish industry, the United States Congress passed a law in 2003 preventing the imported fish from being labelled as catfish, as well as imposing additional tariffs on the imported fish. Under the U.S. Food and Drug Administration ruling, only species from the family Ictaluridae can be sold as true catfish. As a result, the Vietnamese exporters of this fish now label their products sold in the U.S. as basa fish or bocourti. At the height of the ‘catfish war’, U.S. catfish farmers and others were describing the imported catfish as an inferior product. However, Mississippi State University researchers found imported basa were preferred 3-to-1 to US catfish in a small blind taste test.”

The “catfish war,” incidentally, was also sometimes called the “whitefish war.” The flesh of these shark catfish is light in color, so sometimes their meat is referred to (for instance on the packaging of imported frozen fish sticks) as “whitefish.” Check it out.

While catfish farms in the US usually consist of pond complexes, in Viet Nam and Thailand most farming of *Pangasius* catfish is done in containment pens in the rivers. This is sometimes touted as the reason for the superior taste of these catfish. Their water is constantly being changed by the flow of the river. On the other hand, an ongoing concern voiced by people who have been there and seen the operations, is that in many smaller, “developing” countries, industry is not being crippled by burdensome regulation. The Mekong is arguably one of the most polluted rivers in the world to begin with, and visitors have reported seeing

the use of malachite green in the catfish pens. If you haven't already done so, take a look at the warnings on your ich medication containers. In June of 2001, the US Food and Drug Administration imposed increased and more thorough testing on Southeast Asian farm-raised seafood including the basa fish after repeatedly discovering fish contaminated with heavy metals and banned antibiotics. An Australian team back in 2007, surveying 100 fish from the Mekong, found traces of 14 antimicrobial chemicals at low levels. Earlier this year Russia temporarily halted importation of tra and other aquatic products following their inspection of eight tra fish processing plants late last year. *Caveat emptor!*

Photo from [scalestails.tumblr.com](https://scalestails.tumblr.com)



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# Pictures From Our Gala Dinner

Photos by Joseph Gurrado



Roxie Rodriguez and Tony Siano stand before our vintage 1960s banner.



The one-of-a-kind plaque handmade by Horst for official dinner sponsor ZooMed.



President Horst Gerber presents ZooMed rep Tom Allison with plaque of appreciation as Joe Ferdenzi MC's the event.



The impressive display of ZooMed gift bags that everyone received.



Our tech wizard Jason Kerner, getting everything ready for the evening's events.



Member Jason Irizzary was accompanied by his wife Anna.



Our Treasurer, Jules Birnbaum, and his wife Elaine.



Buddies Rich Waizman and Bob Hamje (on right).



One of our dinner coordinators, Linda Vukich, shares a moment with long-time friend and member Artie Friedman.



Auctioneer Ed Vukich with helper Dan Puleo looking over his shoulder.



From left to right: Rebecca and Tom Warns, and Kat Benevisto with fiancée Dean Ferdenzi.



From left to right: Enza Buzzetti (wife of member John), and Kathy and Tom Keegan.



From left to right (clockwise): Tony Siano, Doug Curtin, Steve Miller, Joe DiBartolomeo, and Ronnie and Basil Holubis.



Our delicious cake with cannoli cream filling.



Sylvia and Walter Gallo enjoying the evening.



From left to right clockwise: Rob Kolski, Artie Mayer, Roxie Rodriguez, Tamer Altan, Lonnie Goldman, Rich Waizman, and Bob Hamje.



Facing the camera: Sherry and Rich Marino, backed by Megan and Jeff Gruber.



Mums galore, along with (clockwise) Donna and Steve Sica, Peter Goldfien, and Ron Kassman.



Lita Goldberg and member Bill Amely share a tender moment.



Ever reliable long-time member Harry Faustmann.



Ron and Peter with one of the full-of-goodies gift bags



A partial view of the room filled with members and guests



Our long-time hospitality chair, Al Grusell, and wife Fran.



President Horst Gerber with his wife Linda.



First slide of the evening's program (artwork by Jason Kerner).



President Emeritus and unofficial historian Joe Ferdenzi, who gave the program.



*Modern Aquarium* Editor and past President Dan Radebaugh with his wife Marsha, our Membership Chair, who was also one of our gala dinner coordinators.



Member Florence Gomes (on left) and guest Veronica Torres, flanked on their right by member John Buzzetti.



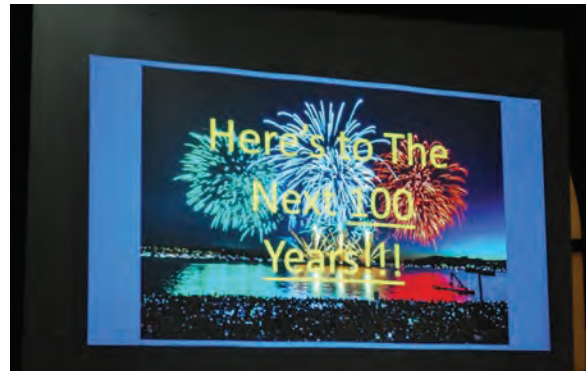
Our Assistant Treasurer Lenny Ramroop and Treasurer Jules Birnbaum get the cash ready for the auction.



Part of our auction team (from left to right), Dan Puleo, Ron Webb, and Ed Vukich.



Joe Ferdenzi auctioning a complete autographed set of Rosario LaCorte books from the 1960s (on the left is long-time member Pete D'Orio).



This slide speaks for itself (artwork by Jason).



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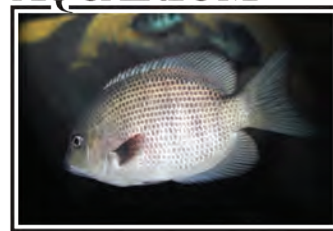
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May 2008 *Corydoras schwartzi*  
June 2008 *Heros efasciatus*  
July 2008 *Trichopodus leerii*  
August 2008 *Paretroplus menarambo*  
September 2008 *Trichogaster chuna*  
October 2008 *Pterois volitans*  
November 2008 *Xystichromis phytophagus*  
December 2008 *Celestichthys margaritatus*

by Alexander A. Priest  
by Dan Radebaugh  
by Marisa Ferdenzi  
by Alex Apostolos  
by Alexander A. Priest  
by Alexander A. Priest  
by Alexander A. Priest  
by Stephen Sica  
by Lee Ann Steeves  
by Alexander A. Priest



# You won't find THIS lion at the zoo

A series by the Undergravel Reporter

**In spite of popular demand to the contrary, this humor and information column continues. As usual, it does NOT necessarily represent the opinions of the Editor, or of the Greater City Aquarium Society.**

**L**ionfish (*Pterois sp.*) are a venomous fish species, native to tropical waters in the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific. They also are an invasive species to Florida waters. They were first detected in the state in the 1980s, and experts suspect they came from aquariums, by either accidental escape or release. The venomous species are increasingly common off the Florida coast and have a severe impact on native marine life.

According to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, the government agency responsible for the stewardship of the nation's ocean resources and their habitat, lionfish can reduce the population of native reef fish by 79 percent.

As the species feast primarily on herbivorous fish species, this can lessen the amount of fish eating algae from the reefs. If algae is allowed to grow, this could have adverse effects on the ecosystem.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission sponsors an annual lionfish challenge to control the rapidly expanding lionfish population. The challenge offers prizes for the most successful participants (that is, those who have caught the most).

A record of 707 people signed up this year for the challenge, which ran from May to September, 2022, with 25,299 lionfish caught. The winner this year in the recreational division, was Isaac Jones, who caught 1,018 lionfish. The runner-up in this sector was Baye Beauford, with 863 lionfish. The champion in the commercial

fishing division was Paul DeCuir, who caught 1,092 pounds of lionfish. The runner-up was Alex Fogg, with 1,090 pounds.

Commercial fishermen usually sell the lionfish to a dealer, who then resell them as food. According to NOAA Fisheries, ciguatera poisoning

is a potential side-effect of eating the species. However, there have been no confirmed cases of such poisoning from lionfish.

The Reef Environmental Education Foundation provides advice to restaurant chefs on how they can incorporate the fish into their menus. The NOAA calls the lionfish a "delicious, delicately flavored fish" similar in texture to grouper.

Regardless of how they may taste, I'm sticking with non-poisonous food!



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## References:

<https://www.newsweek.com/lionfish-challenge-florida-thousands-captured-1744337>



# Fin Fun



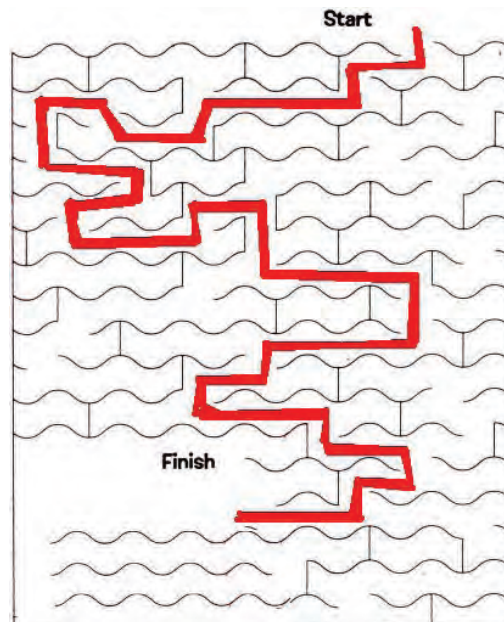
## *Behind the Scenes*

An award winning publication and a society that has lasted for 100+ years (and still going strong!) doesn't happen by accident. It takes the hard work of many dedicated people. On the masthead of this issue some of those people are listed. See if you can find all those listed in this issue in the word search puzzle below (last names only).



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Solution to our last puzzle: **BENEATH THE WAVES**





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