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Greater City Aquarium Society - New York

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ON THE COVER

Our cover photo this month, from GCAS Fishy Friend Beryl Roberts, features a striking Japan Blue Endlers hybrid.

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From the Editor

by Dan Radebaugh

A recent conversation with one of our newer members reminded me that not everyone who has joined our club knows everything about what is available to our members regarding where to find past issues of **Modern Aquarium**. From time to time I reprint what I call “MA Classics.” These are articles and/or photos from the rich past of our magazine. Many of these are by the members who resurrected the **Modern Aquarium** title and established its now familiar layout style back in 1994!

I no longer recall exactly when it was, but at some point we established a Web site and began to make all of our issues available on the Web, beginning retroactively with 1994. Needless to say,



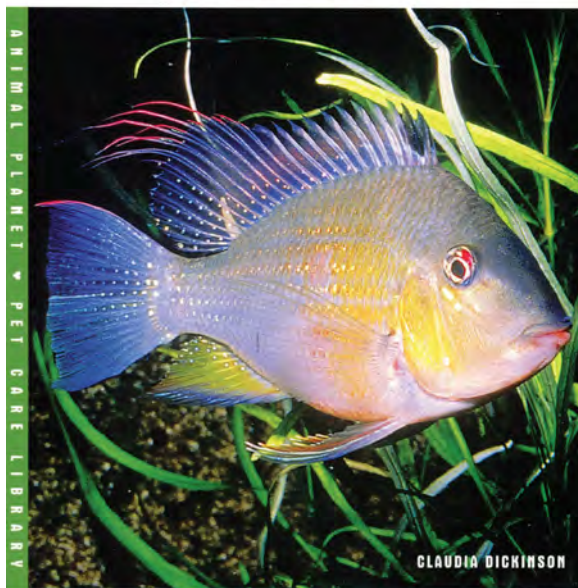
this was a fair amount of work, as all those older, paper-only issues had to be manually scanned and then converted to a useful electronic format. The result is that, if you're wondering about finding something in one of our back issues, all you have to do is go to our web site, GreaterCity.net, where you can peruse, and even print or download any issue of **Modern Aquarium** since 1994.

Meanwhile, I think you will find many wonderful articles in this *current* issue of **Modern Aquarium**! Most of these were written by folks whom you have probably sat beside at our meetings! To help you get an idea of who is writing about what fish they keep, take a look at our contents page! If you want to speak with one of the authors, he or she is likely to be sitting near you at one of our meetings. Don't be shy! Talk with them! That's why we have these meetings!

Anyway, if you have an article, photo, or drawing that you'd like to submit for inclusion in **Modern Aquarium**, it's easy to do! Just fax it to me at (877) 299-0522, email it to gcas@earthlink.net, or just hand it to me at a meeting. However you get it to me, I'll be delighted to receive it! Enjoy!



Aquarium Care of Cichlids



by Greater City member Claudia Dickinson
(Animal Planet® Pet Care Library)

Hardcover – Also available on Amazon Kindle
<https://www.amazon.com/Aquarium-Cichlids-Animal-Planet-Library/dp/0793837774>





GCAS

Meeting Schedule

2025

March 5	Breeder Boxes
April 2	Natural Aquariums, Part 1
May 7	Natural Aquariums, Part 2
June 4	Guppies
July 2	The Balanced Aquarium
August 6	Night At The Auction
September 3	The Blue Gularis
October 8	Cichlids with Livebearers
November 5	TBD
December 3	Holiday Awards Dinner!

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, or fax to (347) 379-4984. Copyright 2025 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. 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, 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 Warren Feuer

Are Your Fish Happy?

To answer this question, we need to realize that fish don't smile, won't wag their tails or lick you or jump up on your lap like a clearly happy dog will. Fish won't purr contentedly or rub up against you like your happy kitty will. So, how can we tell if the fish we keep are "happy?"

To begin, it's necessary to understand that fish do have emotions/feelings. Scientists have studied the emotional lives of fish many times, observing their behavior in different environments and even measuring physiological reactions such as changes in hormone levels.

These studies have determined that fish exhibit emotions comparable to those we humans show. For example, many fish species are known to be selective when choosing a mate. Fish like to have fun. Have you ever watched your fish swim into and through a stream of bubbles? The fact that they keep repeating the same behavior and action indicates they are "enjoying" the experience. Clearly, fish exhibit fear. We all know how fish react when a net is placed into their tank. In a study, scientists in Canada conducted a test in which a particular light was turned on before a net was put into the tank. The fish sought to escape whenever the light went on, even before a net was placed in the tank. Although the mbuna in my 125 Malawi tank will swim near me, in anticipation of food being introduced into the tank, they will quickly swim away if I get too close to them.

Our fish are not "cute but dumb." They show behavior that supports that. For example, some Oscars definitely display recognition of their owners and act excitedly in their presence. It's a well known fact that octopuses are considered intelligent, able to solve puzzles to get at food, and are advanced escape artists.

And, while fish can't experience emotions in the same way humans do, you can observe certain behaviors to gauge their well-being and potential happiness. Healthy and happy fish typically display active swimming, good coloration, a healthy appetite, and social interactions. Conversely, signs of stress or unhappiness include dull coloration, lethargy, hiding, and lack of interest in their environment.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

Signs of a happy and healthy fish:

- **Active Swimming:**

Happy fish are generally active, exploring their environment and swimming throughout the tank, not just hiding or staying in one spot.

- **Good Coloration:**

Healthy fish have vibrant, bright colors, which can indicate good health and comfort.

- **Good Appetite:**

A healthy appetite is a positive sign. Happy fish will readily eat and swim to the surface at feeding time.

- **Socialization:**

If your fish are social species, they will interact with their tank mates, exhibiting playful or curious behaviors.

- **Exploration:**

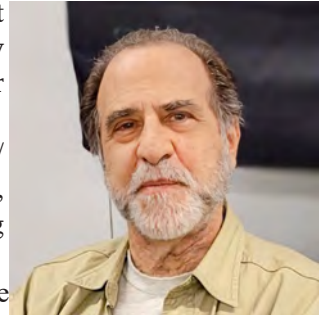
Happy fish will be curious and explore new decorations or changes in their environment.

- **Breeding Behavior:**

In some species, breeding behaviors like bubble nest building (for Bettas) can indicate contentment.

- **Rhythmic Breathing:**

Fish that are comfortable and healthy will have regular, rhythmic breathing patterns.



- **Responding to stimuli:**

A happy fish will show curiosity and interest when you approach the tank or interact with it in other ways.

Signs of a stressed or unhappy fish:

- **Dull or Faded Coloration:**

Loss of color can be a sign of stress or illness.

- **Lethargy:**

Fish that are lethargic, spend most of their time hiding, or appear sluggish may be stressed.

- **Loss of Appetite:**

If your fish is not eating or is eating very little, it could be a sign of stress or illness.

- **Gasping at the Surface:**

This can indicate poor water quality or a lack of oxygen, both of which can cause stress.

- **Frayed or Ragged Fins:**

Fins that are torn or appear ragged can be a sign of stress, injury, or disease.

- **Abnormal Hiding:**

For example, if your fish is constantly hiding, it may be a sign that it doesn't feel safe or comfortable.

While we can't take our fish's temperatures, or ask how they are doing, or look for wagging tails, wet noses or purring sounds, we can observe their behavior and pay attention to the above signs and get a good idea of whether your fish are happy and healthy or if they might be experiencing stress.

And, finally, I'd like to share a link provided by Everyday Aquatics with a discussion on how to recognize a happy betta. For the most part, the presentation can be applied to all the tropical fish we keep: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBJtJtM85vkUuI&t=59s> (source: everyday aquatics).

I have to confess that I obtained most of the above content from the web simply by Googling "do fish have emotions" and "how can you tell if a fish is happy?" If the above has piqued your interest and you'd like to learn more I encourage you to do what I did. There's a tremendous amount of information out there to learn from.

This is my fifth month as President of Greater City, and I have to admit that I am having a blast. The turnout at each meeting has been amazing and we have an almost completely full house each month. I look forward to seeing everyone's friendly, smiling faces each month and I have not been disappointed yet!

Our auctions have been tremendous, and many thanks go to our auction group: Ed Vukich, our lead auctioneer sets the tone for each successful auction. Also providing substantial assistance are Mark Soberman, Dan Puleo and Joe Ferdenzi, who all pitch in to help Ed with the large number of lots each month. We have a great crew of runners, including Artie Friedman, Vinnie Richie, Pete D'Orio and Ron Webb, as well as Dan Puleo when he's isn't pitching in with auctioning. If I've left anyone out, it's not intentional, just too many names for me to remember at once! The point is everyone's contribution is important and much appreciated. And, speaking of auctions, please make sure and pencil next month's meeting on August 6th on your calendar. It's going to be a special "Night at the Auction" meeting, and the meeting will feature an August meeting only opportunity for a 70/30 split on all live goods. Be sure to bring in your fish, shrimp, plants and whatever you want to sell. The evening will also offer special randomly drawn presents for bidders. Don't miss it!

In closing this month, let me wish everyone a safe and happy Fourth and let you all know how much I appreciate your presence at our meetings.

Warren





BOWL SHOW RULES

There is a Bowl Show at every GCAS meeting, except our Night at the Auction/fleamarket meeting and our Holiday Party and Awards Banquet meeting. Bowl shows are open to all members of GCAS. Rules are as follows:

- Only current GCAS members may enter fish in the Bowl Show.
- There is a limit of 2 entries per member per meeting.
- Unlike some other clubs, every month is an “open” Bowl Show at the GCAS (i.e., there is no “theme,” such as that one month cichlids are judged, the next livebearers, the next anabantoids, etc.).
- Any fish that wins any prize (1st, 2nd, or 3rd) may not be entered again in the same meeting year.
- B.Y.O.B. (Bring Your Own Bowl!) Entrants are responsible for providing suitable containers and suitable water for their fish. These containers must be clear on at least three sides.
- Only one fish per container (i.e., no “pairs”).
- No plants, ornaments, or equipment (filters, airstones, etc.) are allowed in the judging tank (an external mirror, or opaque cards between containers is acceptable, as is a cover that does not obstruct side viewing).
- Points are awarded: 5 points for 1st Place, 3 for 2nd Place, and 1 for 3rd Place.
- Ribbons are awarded: blue for 1st Place, red for 2nd Place, and green for 3rd Place.
- The person with the most points at the end of the meeting season receives the Walter Hubel Bowl Show Champion trophy at the Awards Banquet.
- The decision of the judge(s) is final.
- A running UNOFFICIAL total of the points awarded is printed in **Modern Aquarium**. Only the tally of points maintained by the Bowl Show Coordinator is official.
- **In case of ties:**
 - 1st Tiebreaker – most 1st Places
 - 2nd Tiebreaker – most 2nd Places
 - 3rd Tiebreaker – most entries

EXPLORING A UNIQUE STYLE AQUARIUM STAND

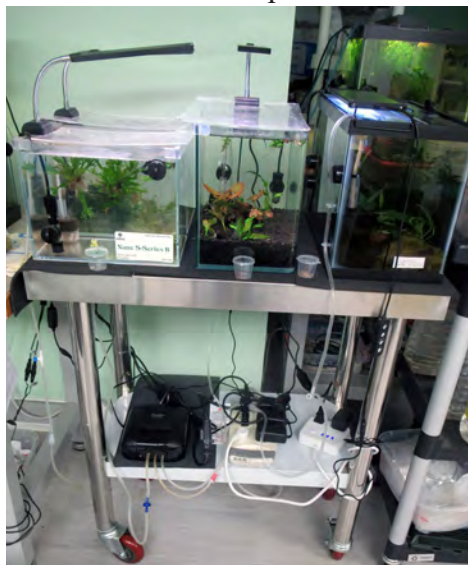
Story and Photos by Stephen Sica

Since I do not have custom-made racks or similar for my twelve small fish tanks in the basement of our Hollis Hills home, I am always on the lookout for a sturdy and inexpensive stand that will support at least twenty-five gallons of water. With the weight of a fifteen or twenty gallon tank and accessories, I estimate that the stand has to support at least two hundred and fifty pounds. Adding a storage shelf or two below the top surface of the stand is also a big plus, because we all need a little extra space for our “stuff.”

When you explore the internet under general or specific subjects you occasionally come upon the perfect answer to your search. I may have discovered this in 2024 while I was searching for a sturdy aquarium stand. The product that I discovered has an industrial look. It is not advertised for aquarium use, and it does not appear to be a piece of furniture. It definitely is not disguised to look like a piece of furniture, but it does have plain square lines to give it a clean and simple appearance. I am hardly impressed with those fancy furniture-looking aquarium stands for a few good reasons. They are expensive and usually cheaply constructed using fiberboard or a similar fake wood compound type of material. They usually show a somewhat fancy front with a backside structure that is not too inspiring.

Many years ago I purchased one such stand from an Amazon vendor. It was delivered

severely damaged by UPS. I sent it back for a replacement that was also damaged. Now I don't mean a small chip here or there. Both stands were absolutely demolished during the shipping process. Many shipped items are not packaged in another box with cushioning material for added protection. They just send it as the manufacturer packaged it. Buyer beware! I once was shipped by Amazon a small glass aquarium smashed on two sides. Maybe I should have saved the broken stand to display the broken aquarium. Just call it a piece of “art”!



Wheels on this model are small but can support 400 pounds on top and 300 on bottom shelf. The bottom shelf can be set at one of three levels but are not movable up or down once set. This stand is set at highest level to avoid too much bending.

Anyway, I came across a website that sells just about anything and everything. I think that it tracked my internet behavior, because it seemed to start popping up on my computer. The company is [vevor.com](https://www.vevor.com). One of their “departments” sells restaurant equipment and food service carts in a variety of lengths and widths. Many have wheels. Personally, I try to purchase carts or stands that have wheels. I enjoy mobility. Most of the carts sold by [vevor.com](https://www.vevor.com) are advertised to support four hundred pounds on the top shelf.

Each cart has a lower shelf that you can adjust to three levels. You pick the level when assembling the cart, so if you decide to raise or lower the shelf you have to remove four screws and readjust. Obviously, this is not practical since the top shelf is supporting a weighty object, such as a fish tank. The bottom shelf does not affect the weight capacity of the top shelf. The bottom shelf

is rated to support another three hundred pounds. You can hold two tanks if youth is on your side, that is, if you enjoy squatting or sitting on a low bench. For older folks who want to save their backs, I would recommend against bending and stooping unless you're a physical specimen. I store some of my stuff on the lower shelf; it's a smaller area than the top shelf.

To assemble the cart, I usually open and spread out the carton on the basement floor to avoid scratching the surfaces and parts. I use old kitchen chair cushions as kneepads to kneel close on the floor. I also use those off-white cloth work gloves when I don't need a delicate touch, to help save the arthritic joints on my fingers and hands. Knee pads are a worthy substitute.

Once you unpack the parts, it should take about forty-five minutes to leisurely assemble the unit using the allen wrench included with the hardware. Over the past several months, I have purchased three in various sizes. You can earn rewards and save a dollar or two on a subsequent purchase.

The first two stands that I purchased support small aquariums, while the last one is used as a worktable, as well as storage for miscellaneous items. It currently holds two small containers with aquatic plants.



This thirty inch stand supports four small aquariums from 2.3 to 5.5 gallons. The bottom shelf is helpful by supporting air pumps, power strips/surge protectors, etc.

Its wheels enable me to move it under the overhead lighting in the ceiling. These are four foot LEDs. Sometimes I roll it near a window for sunlight. I use the bottom shelf of the three to keep some of my stuff readily accessible.



Thirty-six inch long stand supports a 15 gallon aquarium lengthwise and an 8.3 gallon widthwise. I store stuff on bottom shelf, as well as the floor.

My first purchase was a rolling cart with a top surface area of 36 x 24 inches. I put a fifteen gallon aquarium lengthwise and an oddly sized 8.3 gallon glass tank sideways. I estimate that with water and accessories both would weigh just under two hundred and fifty pounds. With a maximum support of four hundred pounds, the top surface is sturdy. A few months later I purchased another rolling cart of 30 x 18 inches. It supports four small tanks from 2.4 to 5.5 gallons. The final cart that I bought at 24 x 18 inches is used mostly as a mobile work bench. The largest cart is currently selling for \$86. I paid \$10 less seven months earlier. I guess that's tariffs.

These carts are silver, so if you want efficiency versus fancy, at what I believe is a reasonable price, consider giving these products a try. There is a fairly large selection of lengths and widths with a 32 to 34 inch height. I like this product. Could any of these be a perfect fit for you?



ZooMed's New Aquarium Heater

by Joseph Ferdenzi

The first time I saw a print ad for this product, I knew that ZooMed had a completely different kind of heater.

As the accompanying photos illustrate, this heater is round, and it has a host of welcome features.

The heating element itself is encased in a plastic holder that is approximately 3 inches in diameter. This size gives the heater a great deal of flexibility in terms of its placement in the aquarium. The model that I examined was 100 watts, but I believe all the wattage (from 25 watts to 300 watts) are the same size. The heater has three suction cups attached on the back for placement on any of the tank's glass surfaces. The heater must be fully underwater in order to function. One of the features I like best is that if it is somehow accidentally removed from the water or if the water level drops below the ZooMed logo, the heater will automatically shut off.

The other feature that I regard as being very important is that the heater is controlled by a switch on the electrical cord that is

outside the tank. That means you never have to stick your hand in the tank in order to adjust the temperature.

Another well-thought-out feature is that

the heater has a digital LED display in its center that tells you the temperature of the water. So not only is the heater telling you what to set the temperature for, it is also giving you a constant temperature display.

One more thoughtful feature is the power cord. It is a full 9 feet, 8 inches long. This allows you great versatility in terms of plugging it into outlets that are somewhat far from the

tank. Lastly, the heater comes with a detailed instructional booklet written with easy to understand directions.

If you are looking for a new heater, this product is definitely worth considering. ZooMed is renowned for making novel and hobbyist-friendly products. This heater promises to be another of their very fine products for the aquarist.



Who Are We?

by Marsha Radebaugh

In its 100+ years of existence, Greater City Aquarium Society has had a membership of thousands. Each month, with the exception of those during the Pandemic, our meetings have an average of 40 – 60 members and visitors in attendance. We all know who the “stars” are, the officers, presenters, regular runners, etc. are individuals well known to the rest of us. There are those, however, who quietly and consistently attend most if not all meetings. We sit beside each other, sometimes chatting, sometimes not, without any idea who our neighbors are outside of this room. Well, I think it’s time we found out. As Membership Chair, I have the opportunity to meet and greet each of you, checking you in and handing you your **Modern Aquarium** issue, your door prize ticket and collecting dues. I know who you are! But do you? So, going forward, as often as I can, I’m going to select a loyal member and introduce him or her to the rest of you in this column.

Meet Roger Brewster



I remember back in (I believe it was) 2011, a charming gentleman with a lovely Caribbean accent, accompanied by two well-behaved children, came up to the membership desk and asked to join Greater City. And thus the Brewster family became part of the GCAS family. They traveled all the way to Flushing from White Plains where Roger and his wife Jean had relocated to after getting married in 2001 and briefly living in the north Bronx. Jean and Roger met when a mutual friend brought her to a party Roger gave at his Mid-Manhattan apartment. The friend kept calling him after the party to urge Roger to call Jean, so he did.

The rest is history! Jean works in business development and marketing. Roger does his own thing in taxes and accounting having graduated from Hunter college and gone on to get a graduate degree from Columbia Business School. A very accomplished couple indeed.

So, where do the fish come in? Well, growing up in Trinidad and Tobago, Roger kept fish as a young teenager. He had a tank in the house and a drum and bathtub outside where he kept goldfish, guppies, swordtails and at one point even had a little alligator. Some of the fish came from a stream in his neighbor's back yard. Others came from pet stores and from trades and purchases from fellow aquarists. He laughs about those early uninformed days when some swordtails escaped from the drums kept outside. Thereafter, he kept them in the house tanks. At the age of 18 he came to the U.S., settling in the Bronx with his parents. Their small apartment couldn't accommodate aquariums, so he took a hiatus from the hobby. Eventually he moved out, got his own place, and resumed fishkeeping until he and Jean met and married, and he was again restricted by space in their small north Bronx apartment. But then they moved to White Plains, and there his fishkeeping flourished. He set up 3 55-gallon tanks, 2 regular and one hexagonal. He subscribed to TFH and found the classified listings for fish clubs, discovering Greater City Aquarium Society. He met Joe Graffagnino at a meeting and obtained some livebarers from him. Still something of a novice, he learned an expensive lesson when, lacking battery backup for his tanks, in 2003 the East Coast suffered a major blackout. He lost all his fish. Another cruel lesson came when he took a week-long trip. Some of his tanks were upstairs in the house and some in the basement boiler room. He made sure they all had enough feeders for the week, etc. What he didn't know was that in an effort to be economical while they were away, "someone" had turned the home heat way down. Well, all of the fish upstairs were lost, but those in the basement that retained some heat, survived. Ah the vicissitudes of this hobby!

Today, he keeps Angels, Kribensis, freshwater shrimp, platies and barbs, in 5 tanks. That hexagonal tank, that he still has, houses only his Barbs of several varieties. Thus the story of the evolution and education of another of our long-time members.



FISHES ON THE WEB

Mantis shrimp clubs filter sound to mitigate damage



John A. Anderson/Shutterstock.com

Mantis shrimp withstand repeated high-impact forces without structural damage. Researchers discovered the shrimp's clubs feature a protective pattern that controls how stress waves travel through its body. The patterns resemble herringbone and twisted, corkscrew arrangements. Insights from this discovery could inspire advanced protective materials for reducing blast-related injuries.

https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2025/02/250206142357.htm?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email



Florida
AQUATIC NURSERIES



Borneo Biotope

by Jason Gold

Part 2 of 2

Did I at one point say we were going to start with the fish? Well we did, actually, and it has led us on all sorts of excursions. Geography. Ecology. Geology. Paleogeology. Botany. But now let's circle back. You'll recall we got bogged down trying to assemble a group of sympatrics from the Jelai Bila. We'd just switched our focus to the Kapuas when things got -ology crazy. But the virtual card catalog is fathoms deep. I did a search for "Kapuas freshwater fish" and hit paydirt: The Freshwater Fishes of Western Borneo (Kalimantan Barat, Indonesia) by Tyson R. Roberts, published in 1989. It's a scientific monograph cataloging the entire freshwater fish fauna of the region including its primary river, the Kapuas. I downloaded the 208-page PDF from forgottenbooks.com. Forgotten no longer. It's jammed with more jargon per paragraph than a year's worth of GCAS meetings. Most of it is devoted to descriptions of every single fish species the author found either on his own collecting trips or documented in other scientific literature. But toward the beginning there are seven pages listing each of his collecting sites, exactly what the conditions were, and exactly which species they found there. Wow! Yeah, it looks as impenetrable as the rainforest itself. But to me, each of those locations is a magic carpet to another world. All I have to do is get over my nerd rapture and pick one of them, and I will absolutely, positively know that these fishes do meet one another in the wild. Now I'm really excited! It's dense and there are dozens of these collection entries—it's gonna take me a while to bushwhack my way through all this...

OK, here's the one I chose:

"Kapuas 1976- 51. Small forest stream, 3-5 m wide and 50 cm deep, about 1 km up Sungai Tajan from Tajan, 87 km E of Pontianak. Lat. 0°02'S, Long. 110°07'E. Current sluggish; water moderately turbid, dark brown, 28°C, pH 6.5, bottom mud, with leaf litter and logs. Rotenone. 22 August.

Eirmotus octozona, *Osteochilus spilurus*, *Rasbora agilis*, *R. argyrotaenia*, *R. bankanensis*, *R. dorsiocellata*, *R. dusonensis*, *Acanthopthalmus semicinctus*, *A. superbus* (type locality), *Acanthopsoides gracilis*, *Nemacheilus selangoricus*, *Mystus micracanthus*, *Clarias melanoderma*, *Hemirhamphodon pogonognathus*, *Xenentodon canciloides*, *Doryichthys deokhatoides*, *Nandus nebulosus*, *Oxyeleotris urophthalmoides*, *Pseudogobius sp.*, *Betta dimidiata* (type locality), *Betta pugnax*, *Parosphromenus deissneri*, *Trichigaster leerii*, *Channa Iucius*, *Macrogynathus aculeatus*, *Mastacembelus maculatus*, *Tetraodon palembangensis*."

Why this one? Well, first off the species list is long and includes several I actually recognize. (Side note: Rotenone is a fast-acting piscicide, used in small doses to stun the fish. They then float to the surface where they can be collected, identified, and released. This is a way of ensuring that all fish at a given site, even those hidden under logs and in burrows, are accounted for. It's very biodegradable and vanishes quickly from the environment.) A few of these are even generally available in the hobby today. Some are harder to find, but findable. Plus, among the names I recognize, there are a range of fish families and lifestyle niches. There are schooling rasboras and barbs, surface-dwelling halfbeaks, bottom-dwelling scavengers, and a range of anabantids. Let's dig deeper, working with all the different information and trade sites, and break it down:

Eirmotus octozona - SF says this fish is from the mainland; references to Borneo are actually *E. insignis*. *Eirmotus insignis* is a tiny, adorable banded barb, not even 1.5" long. It would make a great schooler if we don't end up including anything big enough to eat it. Not listed at any of the usual sources (Wet Spot, Aquarium Glaser, AquaBid), so presumably difficult to obtain. Too bad—it's a cutie!

Osteochilus spilurus - Another type of barb. That's all I could find out.

Rasbora agilis - Wiki calls this the Redstripe Rasbora. SF calls it the Gold Neon Rasbora. Either way, it's a beaut! Another tiny schooler, only 1" long. Listed as "out of stock" on Wet Spot, but presumably that means it's sometimes in stock. Right?

Rasbora argyrotaenia - The Silver Rasbora. That's all I could find.

Rasbora bankanensis - The Golden Rasbora. This species was collected at a lot of the locations listed in the Roberts book. Another tiny schooler. It's a streamlined little fish with a gorgeous rainbow sheen, like a Congo Tetra. "Out of stock" at WetSpot.

Rasbora dorsiocellata - Now known as *Brevibora dorsiocellata*, the Eyespot Rasbora. A great little schooler, about the shape, size, and demeanor of a South American *Nannostomus* pencilfish, though they stay in a tighter clique. I used to have a group of these charmers in my display tank. They show up from time to time at the local aquarium stores on my radar like Monster and Pacific and the Union Square Petco.



Rasbora dusonensis - A beautiful, yellowish torpedo, about 4" long. Can't find any sources. Photo from SeriouslyFish.com. In a non-biotope setup, these would be gorgeous paired with their Indian cousins, the similarly sized and shaped Roseline Barb (*Sahyadria denisonii*).

Acantophthalmus semicinctus, now known as *Pangio semicinctus*, the Kuhli Loach in the trade. Easy to love, easy to get, easy to keep, impossible to catch. They're social, so get a bunch! All sources say they're nocturnal, but in my experience they'll gladly appear whenever it's feeding time, emerging from whatever crevice they've all packed themselves into.

Acantophthalmus superbus - Now known as *Pangio superba*. Another wriggly, um, I mean anguilliform, loach. No further info. Image from Loaches.com.



Kuhli Loach - Photo from Aquatic Arts



Acanthopsoides gracilis - This is a species of Horseface Loach. I can't find any more details about this exact species. In general, they're peaceful, social bottom dwellers, preferring areas of open, sandy bottom. Some *Acanthopsoides* species stay small and are great in a community tank. Others become enormous. So find out which you're dealing with before you take the



plunge.

Nemacheilus selangoricus - A small, shy loach that prefers running water over a sandy substrate. Also likes to consort with its own kind, so a shoaler. Both SF and Glaser list several species in this genus, but not this particular one. So it could be hard to come by. Photo from Yahoo.com.

Mystus micracanthus - An 8" long whiskered catfish with a big gulping mouth. Any companions would have to be quite large. Again, sources list other species in this genus, but not this particular one.

Clarias melanoderma - Blackskin Catfish. This is a foot-long catfish. Not listed on SF, but the closely related Walking Catfish (*C. batrachus*) is: "A greedy and omnivorous species that will eat almost anything offered." Large companions only.



Hemirhamphodon pogonognathus - A 4" long, livebearing, blackwater-dwelling halfbeak. Super-cool and hard to resist—if you can figure out how to get ahold of them. Listed with German wholesaler Aquarium Glaser, so these fantastic oddballs must be in circulation from time to time.



Xenentodon canciloides - Needlefish. A foot-long predator, but a very interesting one. Gar-shaped (though not closely related to gars), with a long, pointed snout. It's also a schooling fish. In a big enough biotope a group of them would be totally amazing. Plus, it's a generally peaceful fish that could be part of a community of appropriately sized tankmates. It's listed by Glaser, so again, must occasionally be available.

Doryichthys deokhatoides - Dwarf Pipefish. OMG, I love these!!! Wikipedia describes it as inhabiting areas of grassy vegetation and maxing out at about 7.5". But its mouth is tiny and no danger to any fish bigger than a newborn guppy. Two related species are listed by Glaser, where their feeding demands are emphasized—tiny, motile live food only. Nothing on SF or AquaBid. Like their marine cousins the

seahorses, the male broods the eggs in a pouch, then gives birth to fully-formed, free-swimming young. From the trivia junkyard by way of Real Science, on YouTube: seahorses don't have stomachs and therefore must feed constantly. I wonder if these fabulous, fully freshwater relatives have the same quirk? And I could find no sources for this particular species, but a group would make a spectacular single-species biotope subject if you can get your hands on them and have that consistent source of live food.



Nandus nebulosus - Asian Leaf Fish or Borneo Leaf Fish. A gorgeous blackwater denizen. It's only 3" long, but big-mouthed and highly predatory. A great biotope subject if you choose its tankmates wisely. Listed "Out of Stock" with both WetSpot and Glaser, so keep checking.

Oxyeleotris urophthalmoides - Sleeper Goby. I can't find much on this particular species. Other fish in the same genus that I did find are so varied in size and habit that it's difficult to venture any comparative generalizations.

Pseudogobius sp. - Obviously not a specific species, so we'll leave it at that. But gobies are definitely a cool group of fish I'd love to investigate further. A different aisle in the library....

Betta dimidiata - A gorgeous wild Betta with highlights of yellow and blue. This is a shy blackwater species and a paternal mouthbrooder. "Out of Stock" at Wet Spot, which calls it the Blue Firefly Betta. But it is available online right now at wild Betta specialist BW Aquatics.

Betta pugnax - A beautiful, shimmering Betta species, spangled iridescent blue. According to SF, it's found in both blackwater and clearwater, but always where there's plenty of shelter in the form of leaf litter, overhanging tree roots, or thick stands of aquatic plants. Also a paternal mouthbrooder. Also "Out of Stock" at both BW and Wet Spot, which calls it the Green Mask Betta.



Parosphromenus deissneri - An exquisite Licorice Gourami. Tiny and shy, a creature of the blackwater, as are most of its clan. I've seen them for sale on Wet Spot, though they're currently not available. Also listed by Glaser. *Parosphromenus* have occasionally appeared at Monster Aquarium. It's been a while, though, since I've seen them there, and I don't recall which particular species.



Channa lucius - The Forest Snakehead. A 15" long, voracious predator. If you're into monster fish, this could be the sole occupant of your Kapuas biotope.

Trichogaster leerii - Now known as *Trichopodus leerii*, the Pearl Gourami. An old favorite, in the hobby since forever. A mature pair of these will make themselves the centerpiece of any aquarium. They're peaceful, active, and outgoing. And a full grown male is one of the iridescent masterpieces of fishdom. They'll gladly breed under their sprawling bubble nest even in a tank as busy as rush hour at Grand Central.



Macrognathus aculeatus - The Lesser Spiny Eel. SF lists five species in this genus all of which look an awful lot alike and are all "Out of Stock." They're a little deeper-bodied than the Spiny Eel we see in commerce. It gets to be about 8" long and will spend its days buried in the substrate, emerging at night to hunt. Tiny rasboras beware! But if you don't include anything too small, it would make an interesting and peaceful member of your Kapuas community.



Mastacembelus maculatus - The Spiny Eel. OK, this is the one you'll find from time to time at your local aquarium store. In fact, they had them this past weekend at the Union Square Petco. Same size and habit as the preceding species.



Photo from Jennifer Doll

Tetraodon palembangensis - The Humpback Puffer. Super-cool fish! It gets to be about 8" long. SF says, "unsuitable for the community tank." But a 30-gallon biotope with just one of these gorgeous curiosities could be a showstopper.

Phew! And now, we have what we need to complete our Kapuas River blackwater biotope aquarium. In addition to quartzite sand (remember, no mud!) and lots of leaf litter and submerged wood as described at the collecting location; in addition to a pH of 6.5 (or less) with almost no dissolved minerals (the water at the collecting site was "dark brown"); in addition to a grove of native Crypts—the gorgeous, textured leaves of *C. striolata* are the one I'd go for—and Java Moss and *Bucephalandra kishii* covering branches near the surface, with accents of spiky *Aridarum* and leafy *Barclaya*; in addition to filtration through peat that doesn't create much current and water changes as often as possible to simulate the frequent rainfall; in addition to all this, let's choose some fish found at collecting site Kapuas 1976-51.

We'll start with a couple of schooling species, *Rasbora bankanensis* and *Brevibora dorsiocellata*, at least a dozen each, but as many as will fit in whatever size tank we're working with. Visually, these will be the backbone of the setup. *R. bankanensis* is widespread throughout the Kapuas drainage and can be seen as a mainstay of the entire regional biota. *B. dorsiocellata* is beautiful, active, and easily obtainable. Next, a bottom-dweller, *Pangio semicincta*, at least six of them, to patrol for

tidbits the other fish have left behind and make us smile with their wriggly, whiskered ways. Also readily obtainable. Then two small, shy anabantids, *Betta dimidiata* and *Parosphromenus deissneri*, six of each, to dart among the plants and botanicals. We might not see either of these fish all that much, but it will be a special delight when we do. Both are available from time to time through more specialized breeders and distributors. We're going to take a chance on those amazing halfbeaks, *Hemirhamphodon pogonognathus*, because they're surface dwellers and just too crazy-cool to pass up. But we will need to keep a careful eye on them in case they get big enough to get that predator-prey action going. It'll take some searching to find them in the hobby marketplace. And finally, a larger, showier gourami, a pair of *Trichopsis leerii* (or more if there's room!), with their shimmering, reticulated patterning, flowing fins, and outgoing manner. They're the Golden Retrievers of the aquarium, everyone's pal, and easily obtainable too.

Well, that was fun!!! But when am I actually going to emerge from the stacks and put together this recreation of Kapuas 1976-51? We'll see.... I'm already working on some other crazy ideas, up to my eyeballs in browser windows. Could take a while.... Maybe this is a template I could use to research other biotopes—the Kapuas Lakes, perhaps, or back to the Jelai Bila. Or the Orinoco. Or the Gambia. Or a Mesoamerican cenote. Or maybe Lake Inle in Myanmar, brimming with endemics. Or an ephemeral floodplain pond in Kenya and its resident *Nothobranchius*. Or some place like the Kapuas that I've never heard of before and discover along the way. Or maybe it doesn't really matter if I never assemble a Kapuas biotope at all. Maybe inexplicable fascination isn't just a starting point; maybe, sometimes, it's the whole point!



Helmet Diving In Bermuda

by Donna Ansari

Every year on my birthday, I challenge myself to do something that I've always wanted to do, but that scares me a bit. This year, that thing was helmet diving. Unlike scuba diving (which is probably something I'll do on a future birthday), helmet diving requires almost no skill or effort. If you can walk around on land, you can helmet dive. The difficult part is overcoming your own fear and not panicking, which for some of us is easier said than done.

we instantly wanted to do it, even though it looked terrifying to my mind. Fortunately or unfortunately, I was saved from having to talk myself into it by a force beyond my control. The aquarium staff let us know that our younger son Nadim (who frequents our club meetings) was below the weight limit. We didn't want to go without him, so we put it off, saying "next time."

Before a planned trip to Bermuda with friends over my birthday week this year, one friend pointed out the helmet dive company.



After the dive, when all my fears were in the past!

Backing up in time, last summer was the first time I witnessed people helmet diving. We were at an aquarium in St. Thomas, USVI, when through the windows of an underwater tower we saw a group of people holding onto a metal bar and walking around the coral reef, guided by a group of scuba divers. My spouse cannot swim, and was jealous of our talk of seeing so many beautiful fish while snorkeling, so when we saw that,

The diving boat docked only a five-minute walk from our cruise ship's port. No weight limit was listed on the website for this company, so reservations were made. I successfully fought down the feeling of panic for the next eleven months before the cruise.

Then the day arrived. June 4th, my birthday, and the day of our helmet dive. All day, I tried to forget about it because every time I thought of it, a mild panic would

rise. The time of our dive was 2 PM and my birthday was 6 PM. “Will I actually make it to my birthday?” kept flitting around in my head. We went to a beach in the morning, and the water was so cold that I was having a hard time snorkeling, which is one of my favorite things. If I couldn’t manage to snorkel in 5-foot deep water, how could I walk around in 12-foot water without my lungs seizing up?

At noon, we headed back to the boat to quickly eat lunch and gather our final thoughts. I made the decision to eat an egg salad sandwich and drink a carbonated soda. Maybe not the best idea in retrospect, but boat travel has never once upset my stomach, unlike every other form of travel known to humankind. Nevertheless, we eventually boarded the **Rainbow Runner**, the boat from which **Hartley’s Helmet Diving** (<https://www.hartleybermuda.com/>) operates.

The four people in my family listened to the safety briefing, and then the captain asked a question, which I *thought* was, “For whom is this their first dive?” Naturally, I raised my hand. Then the captain said, “OK, good! We have volunteers for the first group to go out.” I was immediately regretful, but no take-backsies, so I docily got into the wetsuit I was handed. Indeed, there were wetsuits! At least I would not be cold!

Faced with the ladder down to the depths and the instructions to descend quickly once the helmet is on your head, panic again bubbled up to the surface of my mind. I volunteered my fourteen-year-old son, the bravest soul among us, to go first.

“Adults first,” I was told. Saif, my partner of twenty years, who can’t swim, came to my rescue and was under the water in less than a minute. There was no putting it off when the guide put the heavy metal helmet over my shoulders and commanded that I go down the ladder “quickly and without hesitation.”

Down I went! When I jumped off the last rung of the ladder and dropped the last few feet to the ocean floor, the captain, Greg, was there in his helmet and wetsuit to greet me.

He had somehow been notified (or could tell from my panicked face) that I was nervous, so he took my hands and slowly walked me over to a movable bar that tethered us all together. Once I gave him the thumbs up, he retrieved my children. My mind was so completely blown by the fantastic view that I completely forgot to be upset!

The sun was out that day, Mother Nature’s birthday present to me, and the ocean



The Ansari family submerged! (Left–right, Saif, Donna, Nadim, and Samir.)

floor was bright and full of colors from the fish and coral. An easy crier, I immediately went from tears of fright to sobbing with happiness at being so lucky to have this amazing experience! The fish, knowing they were going to get fed, immediately started flocking around us.

Greg went over details of the various fish and corals to us with the help of signs held underwater. We saw so much aquatic life, but some of my favorites were Herb the Hind, Gollum the Squirrelfish, and George the Grunt. Yes, the fish are regulars at the dive site, and why wouldn’t they be, with several free meals a week? We also were treated to the sight of a moray eel who was lured out of its hiding spot, and a tiny marine shrimp.

The entire dive was about thirty minutes, but it will live in my memory forever! Some other things we did included snorkeling, looking at shipwrecks from a catamaran, looking at shipwrecks while snorkeling, looking at fish through a glass-bottom boat, and going to the beach. Since the cruise ship



Samir, the only one of us who succeeded at paddleboarding

we were traveling on would only be in port in Bermuda for three days, we didn't get to do many other things, such as visit the caves, aquarium, and some nicer beaches, which

were further away from where our ship was docked. Bermuda definitely warrants another trip, preferably when the weather is warmer and we won't need wetsuits!



Girardinus Metallicus

by Timothy A. Brady

The Black Chin Livebearer, scientifically known as *Girardinus metallicus*, is a small, peaceful, and hardy freshwater fish native to Cuba and Costa Rica. They are known for their vibrant colors, especially the prominent black chin stripe on the males. They are also sometimes called the "Metallic Livebearer" due to their shiny, golden appearance.

G. metallicus attains a length of 3 to 4 cm in males and 8 cm in females. The synonymy includes *Girardinus garmani* Eigenmann, 1903, and *Girardinus pygmaeus* Rivas, 1944. It was originally described by Poey (1854) in "Los guajacones, poecesillos de agua dulce," in Poey, F., *Memorias sobre la historia natural de la Isla de Cuba*, Havana, 1: 374-392. The species name is Latin for metallic (luster).

The body is compressed. The ground color is grayish brown, the belly light. The fins are rounded and transparent. The dorsal fin has a round black spot in both sexes. A few dark diagonal bands, usually more distinct in males, cross the flanks. The scales have a metallic shimmer in the proper light. Black males, which appear in many populations, have a deep black head, chest, and gonopodium area. It has been suggested that black specimens are natural hybrids—this species lives along with *denticulatus*—but this has not yet been proven.

The species is found all over Cuba, living in standing and flowing waters of the most varied kinds, with significant seasonal fluctuations in temperature.

These attractive fish are quite easy to care for in the aquarium. Their need for warmth is satisfied at 26 to 28°C. They also like ample vegetation and moderately agitated water, along with a varied diet, including plenty of vegetable matter (flake food). After about 24 days gestation, 10 to 40, rarely up to 60, young are born, each about 9 mm long. After about four months they reach sexual maturity. This species

is an old aquarium favorite and still commonly seen in Europe.

Based upon *metallicus*, Poey established the genus *Girardinus* in 1854 in Havana. This generic name was given in honor of the American zoologist Charles Frederic Girard, 1822-1895, who is considered one of the first important general ichthyologists. He was also specifically connected with the study of the family Poeciliidae. Seven of the eight valid species of the genus are

limited to the main island of Cuba. The exception is *Girardinus microdactylus*, which is still found on the Isle of Pines, just off the Cuban coast.

Members of the genus are not attractively colored. Only *G. metallicus* has

acquired any aquarium hobby interest to speak of. All species have elongated bodies. They are peaceful fishes suitable for community tanks, and they are lively swimmers. The males have a very long gonopodium provided with a large anchoring hook. They prefer waters with plentiful plants and temperatures that vary between 15 and 30°C, sometimes above, according to season. These readily adaptable fishes should be kept in aquaria with the water at 26 to 28°C.

This species was introduced into the aquarium trade in the early 20th century but disappeared soon after. It subsequently reappeared in a Berlin zoo in 1965 and has been available from specialist breeders ever since. It occasionally appears for sale in aquatic shops.

A very hardy, attractive and reasonably prolific fish, the *metallicus* is originally from Cuba, but has been introduced to a number of places in the US. A popular aquarium fish worldwide, the black coloration from the jaw to the gonopodium on the males is not the normal wild coloration. That trait, however, is found in many wild populations. Today, the *metallicus* is in the hobby carrying the black coloration, and also without, though the Black coloration is far more popular. Non black marked males can be



Girardinus Metallicus
Poey, 1854

This article originally appeared in the May, 2025 issue of Aquarium Club of Lancaster County's Tank Tales

difficult to obtain. However, when breeding them, an occasional male will appear without it, and most hobbyists cull them to maintain the colored line.

Appearance:

They are small, reaching only about 2 inches in length. Males have a distinctive black chin stripe and a golden or chrome-like appearance. Males possess a gonopodium and are smaller in size than females.

Male *Girardinus metallicus* have a prominent black chin stripe which extends nearly to the tip of the prodigious gonopodium. For a small livebearer it is a striking fish, and visitors to the fishroom always seem to notice it. I do get regularly asked about this fish, so it seems like it has a following.

Female *Girardinus metallicus* are more muted in appearance. The background of the female is tan/gold. Depending on her mood, she may appear speckled.

Habitat: They thrive in freshwater, preferring sluggish waters with abundant vegetation. It can be found in streams, ponds and ditches. The water is commonly stagnant and often brackish.

Tank Setup: A mature tank with dark substrate, plenty of hiding places (driftwood, dense plants) and a mix of rooted and floating plants is recommended. A well-planted tank with some floating cover is ideal for this species. Water should be medium hard and alkaline or brackish.

They prefer harder (8-20 dH), higher pH (6.5 - 8.0) water, and a temperature range of 70-78 degrees Fahrenheit.

Peaceful, but does appreciate brackish conditions, so tank mates should be chosen with care. If keeping in hard freshwater, then hardy corydoras, tetras and small rainbowfish are good choices. In a brackish setup *G. metallicus* can be kept with bumblebee gobies and other small species.

Breeding:

G. metallicus are livebearers, meaning they give birth to live young. Very easy if soft, acidic water conditions are avoided. Reproduces in standard livebearer fashion. As with other species, the males can be somewhat incessant in their pursuit of females, so we recommend that

several females should be kept to every male in order to dissipate this. Areas of dense planting will also help. Gestation takes around 24 days, and broods of between 15-30 fry can be expected. The adult fish will predate on the young so the best method of raising them is to remove the gravid female to a separate tank and allow her to give birth there, before returning her to the main aquarium. The use of breeding nets or traps is not recommended, as their small size is not suitable for raising fry. The fry are quite large and will accept brine shrimp nauplii or powdered flake from birth. They should also be fed vegetable matter such as blanched spinach or spirulina. They grow very quickly if fed 2-3 times per day.

Females are best separated to have their fry, allowed to drop their fry in a 10 gallon tank filled with fine leaved plants such as Java moss or Najas grass. Remove the female after she has dropped and raise the fairly small fry on BBS and finely powdered flake food, releasing them in with the adults at about a month old.

Diet:

Omnivorous, they enjoy a varied diet of algae and meaty foods. Diet should include small frozen, live and dried foods with a high vegetable content.

The Black Chin Livebearer is a captivating and easy-to-care-for fish that adds a touch of vibrancy to community tanks. Their small size, peaceful nature, and hardy temperament make them a popular choice for both beginner and experienced aquarists.

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Pictures From Our Last Meeting

Photos by Marsha Radebaugh



GCAS President Warren Feuer instructs another full house on how to bid in the auction.



Raffle Table awaiting its time



Bowl Show Entries



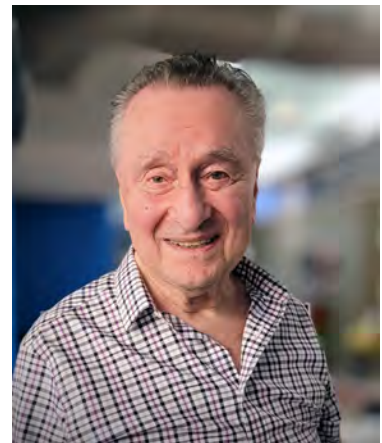
The Sica family: Steve, Donna, and Cordelia



Some of the Auction Items



GCAS Technical Coordinator, Jason Kerner



Former GCAS Treasurer, Jules Burnbaum



Joe Ferdenzi describes an auction item.



Bill Amely presents 3rd place bowl show prize to Joe Ferdenzi. 1st and 2nd awards go to Richie Waizman.



Auctioneer Extraordinaire, Ed Vikuch and runner Pete D'Orio study the next item



Steve Sica, Door Prize Winner

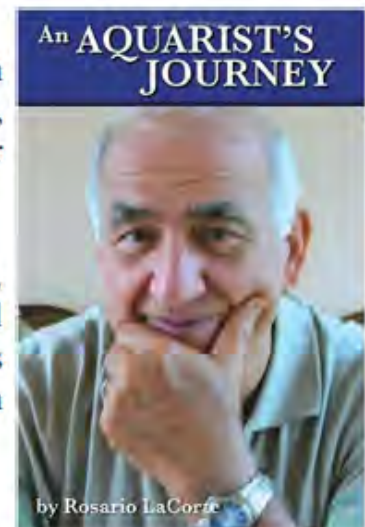


An Aquarist's Journey

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).

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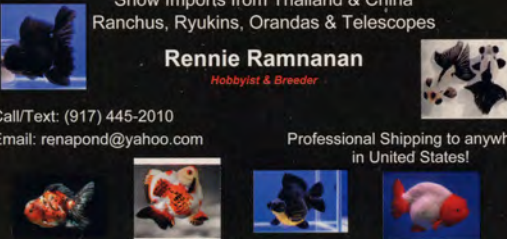
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GCAS Happenings

June

A WARM WELCOME BACK TO RENEWING GCAS MEMBERS RON KASMAN AND TOM KEEGAN!

June's Bowl Show Winners:

1ST PLACE RICHIE WAIZMAN
 2ND PLACE RICHIE WAIZMAN
 3RD PLACE JOSEPH FERDENZI

UNOFFICIAL 2025 BOWL SHOW TOTALS TO DATE:

RICH WAIZMAN 16 HARRY FAUSTMANN 6 MARK SOBERMAN 5 JOSEPH FERDENZI 4
 JOHN "BUZZ" BUZZETTI 5

Here are some aquarium societies in the Metropolitan New York area:

GREATER CITY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Next Meeting: August 6, 2025
Night at the Auction

GCAS Usually Meets the first Wednesday of the month
 at 7:30pm, at the Alley Pond Environmental Center
 22465 76th Ave, Oakland Gardens, NY 11364

Contact: Joseph Ferdenzi (516) 484-0944

E-mail: GCAS@Earthlink.net

Website: <http://www.greatercity.net>

BROOKLYN AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Meets the 2nd Friday of the month (except July and August) at
 7:30pm: New York Aquarium - Education Hall, Brooklyn, NY
 11229

Call: BAS Events Hotline: (718) 837-4455

Website: <http://www.brooklyn-aquarium-society.org>

LONG ISLAND AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Meets: 2nd Fridays (except July and August) 8:00pm. Meetings
 are held at AMVETS Post 48, 660 Hawkins Avenue,
 Ronkoncoma, NY 11779

Website: <https://ncasweb.thechinesequest.com/>

NASSAU COUNTY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Meets: 2nd Tuesday of the month (except July and August) at
 7:30 PM. Meetings are held at:

Molloy University - 1000 Hempstead Ave, Rockville Center,
 NY, Barbara H. Hagan Center for Nursing, Room 239

Contact: Mike Foran (516) 798-6766

Website: <https://www.nassaucountyaquariumsociety.org/>

Fishy Friends' Photos

by Greater City Aquarium Society Fishy Friends

Below 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!

Joseph Ferdenzi



Katherine Hernandez

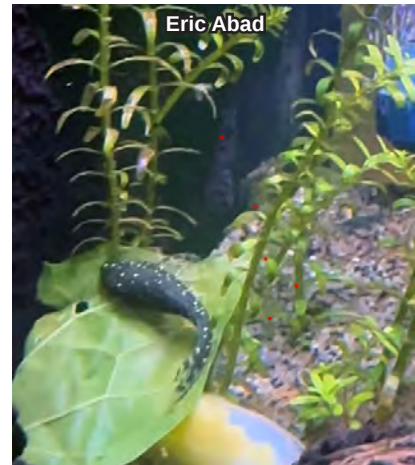
Jason Kerner



Jules Birnbaum



Eric Abad



Jan Sereni



Diego Cheng



The Bed - Stuy Fish Pond Has Returned!

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.

That's right—the Bed-Stuy Fish Pond is back! Last summer, a handful of longtime Bedford Stuyvesant residents touched off a viral sensation when they dropped a few goldfish into the pit surrounding a leaking fire hydrant. The Bed-Stuy Fish Pond—or more accurately, the Fish Puddle—became a community attraction, but also stirred opposition from animal lovers who thought that the pond was cruel. One local resident opposed to the Fish Pond “liberated” the goldfish one night (those goldfish were quickly replaced). The Fish Pond even sparked a broader conversation about gentrification. The Fish Pond became such a cultural touchpoint that one nearby deli on the corner of Tompkins Avenue and Hancock Street renamed itself “Aquarium Deli Food.”

Eventually, the FDNY fixed the leaking fire hydrant and New York City filled in the pit next to the fire hydrant, which seemed to end the Fish Pond saga for good (and predictably led to the tragic demise of those poor goldfish). But a makeshift aquarium was briefly built in the fall, before that too was dismantled. The site then stood empty through spring 2025.

That is, until Saturday, June 21. On the first day of summer, Je-Quan Irving placed an aquarium filled with goldfish next to the site of the old Fish Pond. From the pictures, it appears to be just ten gallons. No filtration is evident. A handful of residents were happy to see the fish pond back, albeit in a different form. Multiple aquatic veterinarians and animal rights activists, however, immediately denounced the move, and it isn't hard to see

why. With New York City baking under a heat wave, it doesn't take a genius to predict that temperatures inside the tank will reach over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The pictures of the aquarium show most of the fish gasping at or near the surface of the water, further confirming that the water is too hot and lacks oxygen.



Je-Quan Irving, one of the founders of the original Bed-Stuy Fish Pond, claims that certain unnamed city officials told him that an aquarium was acceptable, it just could not be set up underground. Mr. Irving says that he will be adding “some reefs, some plants inside the aquarium.” It is unclear what Mr. Irving means by “reefs” since goldfish are freshwater fish. He also plans to contact “marine biologists” to determine what other fish he can add to the aquarium, further suggesting that he does not understand how to take care of goldfish.

Mr. Irving will not be joined this summer by co-founder Hajj Malik Lovick, who was convicted of attempted murder and sentenced to twelve years in prison. At one point, however, a life-sized cut out of Mr. Lovick was placed next to the sidewalk aquarium.

No matter how this saga ends, the Undergravel Reporter hopes the goldfish in the Bed-Stuy Aquarium do not suffer the same tragic fate as those in the original Bed Stuy Fish Pond!



Sources:

<https://nypost.com/2025/06/23/us-news/bed-stuy-aquarium-returns-reigniting-fish-abuse-concerns/>

From The Pages of Yesteryear

Freshwater And Marine Aquarium magazine

January 1988

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