

modern AQUARIUM



April 2017
volume XXIV
number 2

Greater City Aquarium Society - New York

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Series III Vol. XXIV, No. 2 April, 2017

ON THE COVER

Our cover photo this month is a very colorful community tank, submitted to our Fishy Friends Facebook page. For those of you who are a bit hesitant about diving into the discus experience, you might ask the photographer about his methods for keeping these fish happy. Seems to be working for him.

Photo by Jerry O'Farrell

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From the Editor

by Dan Radebaugh

First of all, the NEC's Publication Awards were recently announced, and congratulations are in order to **Modern Aquarium** authors Susan Priest and Alan Mark Fletcher. Susan was awarded 2nd Place in the "Humor" category for her article, "Mother Nature's Mischief," and Alan's autobiography, "When the Last Aquarium Goes" was awarded 1st Place in the "Open" class. For the complete list of this year's award winners please see page 7 in this issue.

Susan also contributes an article to this issue (page 9), with a wry look at what she deems "The Funkiest Fishtank" she has ever seen. Elliot Oshins follows this with his own (fictional?) tale of a fishtank visit in "The Short Stopover," on page 11. Jules Birnbaum then chips in with his own fishtank story, this one about how to keep our tanks clean and healthy. See "Jules' Rules" on page 13.

On a nutritious note, in our exchange article this month (page 15), Karen Murray of the Kitchener/Waterloo Aquarium Society, asks us "Do You Have Worms?" Sort of a personal question, but I'm sure well-intended. And I'm pretty certain that all of the photo subjects on our Fishy Friends Photos page (17) would enthusiastically endorse a positive response.

Steve Sica returns to this issue with another of his Favorite Marine Fish, this time the redspotted hawkfish, *Amblycirrhitus pinos*, which he photographed during a recent diving trip to Key Largo. Hawkfish are not unknown in the aquarium hobby; my sister keeps one in her marine tank, though I believe it's a different species than *A. pinos*. It's a very easy fish to like, though its mealtime manners are very much "Me first!"

"Pictures From Our Last Meeting" appears starting on page 22. If you're looking for an out-of-the-ordinary wedding venue, The Undergravel Reporter has just what you might like! See "Taking the Plunge" on page 27. Finally, for all you livebearer fans, the Fin Fun puzzle this month is "Guppy Fest!" Check it out!

We've probably all become accustomed to pleas for monetary support from deserving non-profit organizations. Many of us probably support at least one of these groups. Greater City, also a not-for-profit organization, also needs your help, but not necessarily your money. We need *you*.



This magazine has for many years now been one of best-regarded aquarium club magazines in the country, if not the world. Achieving this was, I'm sure, never easy, nor is it an easy status to maintain. On the other hand, it's easier than you might think. You—our members—are the key. All we really need are a few articles.

Do you have a fish that you especially like (or dislike)? Have you come across some little twist on keeping, or feeding, or breeding a certain fish? Tell us about it! None of us knows everything. Do you know something about a fish that you haven't seen mentioned in these pages? If you don't mention it, who will? We all have busy lives; we don't have time to figure out everything.

The nice part about a club like this is that we're all interested in fish. I'll bet that nearly everyone here knows something that would help others take better care of their fish. So tell us! Afraid you might not be the most skilled writer in the world? We have editors. We have proof-readers. We'll make you look good! In return maybe we'll learn something from you that we don't know. That is, after all, why we come to these meetings in the first place. So give it a shot! It's fun!





GCAS Programs 2017

It is our great fortune to have another admirable cast of speakers who have so graciously accepted our invitation to join us throughout the coming season, bringing us their extensive knowledge and experiences. You certainly won't wish to miss a moment of our prominent guests, not to mention the friends, fish, warmth, and camaraderie that accompany each meeting.

March 1	Joseph Ferdenzi <i>Killifish Demystified</i>
April 5	Michael Marcotrigiano <i>Breeding Show Guppies</i>
May 3	Michael Lucas <i>Butterflies in the Water: Discovering Hydrophlox Shiners</i>
June 7	Joseph Graffagnino <i>My New Fishroom</i>
July 5	TBA TBD
August 2	Silent Auction
September 6	TBA TBD
October 4	TBA TBD
November 1	TBA TBD
December 6	Holiday Party!

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 (877) 299-0522. Copyright 2017 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. For online-only publications, copies may be sent via email to donnste@aol.com. 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. For more information, contact: Dan Radebaugh (718) 458-8437 or email gcas@earthlink.net. Find out more, see previous issues, or leave us a message at our Internet Home Page: <http://www.greatercity.org> or <http://www.greatercity.com>.

President's Message

by Horst Gerber

Before I lead this club to greatness, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all the GCAS members for your warm and gracious welcome, and your vow of continued support during this transition period, and I am not talking about the wow factor from the Chevy commercial.

As I sit here reflecting on my many years as a member of GCAS, I've come to the realization that I attend these meetings not only for the fish auction, but to be around a group of people who every month contribute to the success of this hobby. They bring with them their camaraderie, expertise, knowledge, encouragement, and willingness to share with their fellow members and beyond. I am very proud and honored to be a part of this great organization.

I am busily racking my brain for new and innovative ideas to bring to the club, which I will discuss with the board members and you for approval. I know all of you share the same passion to successfully maintain these wonderful creatures that have been entrusted to our care. Many, many years ago I housed a group of clown loaches (definitely one of my favorite fish) which were quite content in a 40 gallon tank in my living room for approximately five years.

I usually maintain my tanks with weekly 30% water changes, but that year there was a water shortage. The Water Department used water from the Hudson River, treating it with copper to make it safe for human consumption. As many of you know this is an area of no return. Copper and clown loaches are a fatal mixture. As they lay dying (within twenty minutes), with tears in my eyes I picked them out one by one, placed them on the floor and proceeded to give them mouth to mouth resuscitation, but to no avail. Sound crazy? Out of 20 only four survived. As I said before, passion for one's hobby goes beyond realm of normality. Well, anybody who knows me well is aware that I play to a completely different drummer. I bring this story to paper knowing you perhaps are not so fanatic, but I hope you will actively participate in all of our important activities and lectures. The moral of this story: do not use copper based medication on clown loaches!

Looking forward to seeing you at the next meeting!

Horst



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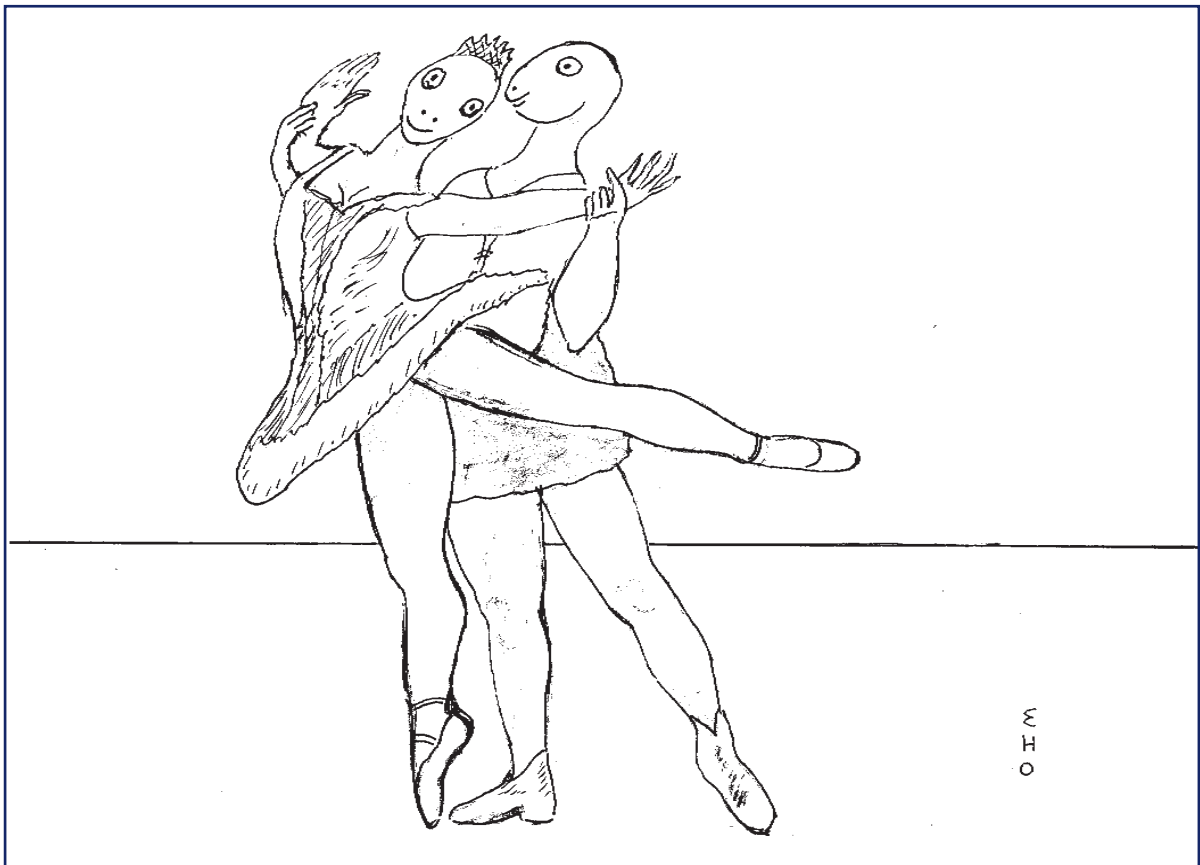
Michael Marcotrigiano, on Breeding Show Guppies

Michael Marcotrigiano is a recently retired professor of plant biology and genetics, and an accomplished breeder of plants, birds and fish. After becoming one of the top zebra finch and society finch breeders in the country, Michael turned his focus to fancy guppies, joining the show circuit of the International Fancy Guppy Association (IFGA), through the New England chapter. By year six he achieved the grand overall male championship. The next year he was elected IFGA's "Guppy Man of the Year" and in 2014 he was honored with the title of Master Breeder, only one of 13 ever to achieve this status.

He is currently listed as Assistant Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Membership Chair for the New England Fancy Guppy Association:
<http://newenglandguppies.org/Officers/officers-home.htm>



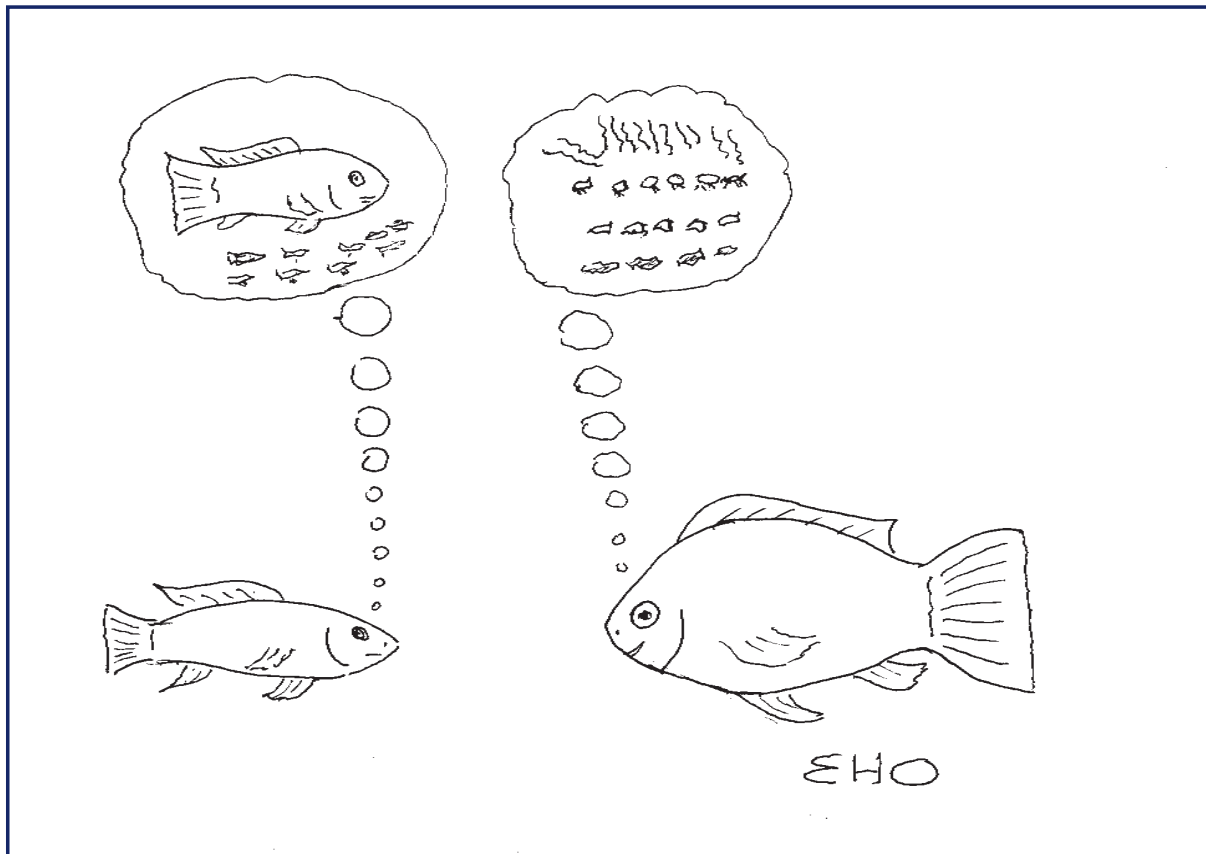
March's Caption Winner: Steve Sica



Tripping the light fin-tastic!

The Modern Aquarium Cartoon Caption Contest

Modern Aquarium has featured cartoons before. This time though, 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. 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 can turn in to Marsha 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:

The NEC 2016

Articles Competition



Artie Platt, Chair

There were 74 entries from 9 clubs.

Participating clubs: CCY, BASNY, TFCB, LIAS, GCAS, DAAS, NAS, NHAS and TFSRI

<i>Humor</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Club</i>	<i>Place</i>
The Most Crowded Thanksgiving Dinner	Tom Pelletier	LIAS	1 st
Mothers Natures' Mischief	Susan Priest	GCAS	2 nd
Fish Happen	Brian Candib	TFCB	3 rd

<i>Junior</i>			
<i>Poecilia reticulata</i> Mortality from <i>Ichthyophthirius multifiliis</i>	Brittney Leister	ACLCL	1 st
Growth Study Focused on <i>Lepomis cyanellus</i>	Dalton Stoner	ACLCL	2 nd
My Experience With Marine and Freshwater Organisms	Zachary Leitner	ACLCL	3 rd

<i>Breeder Article</i>			
Raising Royal Farlowella Fry	Joan Snider	TFCB	1 st
Candidia Goby Breeding	Larry Feltz	NHAS	2 nd
The Columbian Tetra	Joe Graffagnino	BASNY	3 rd

<i>Open Class</i>			
When the Last Aquarium Goes	Alan Mark Fletcher	GCAS	1 st
Joe's New Fish Room	Joe Graffagnino	BASNY	2 nd
Back in the Black Water	William Chance Peragine	CCY	3 rd
What is Swim Bladder Disease versus Disorder versus Issue	De'Anna Alexander	TFSRI	3 rd

<i>Continuing Column</i>			
The Practical plant	Izzy Zwerin	BASNY	1 st
Lesser known livebearers	Anthony P. Kroeger	BASNY	2 nd
In My Travels	David Banks	TFCB	3 rd



ACLCL Aquarium Club of Lancaster County
 BASNY Brooklyn Aquarium Society
 CCY Cichlid Club of York
 GCAS Greater City Aquarium Society
 LIAS Long Island Aquarium Society
 NHAS New Hampshire Aquarium Society
 TFCB Tropical Fish Club of Burlington



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The Funkiest Fishtank

by Susan Priest
photo by Al Priest

You have all been there. I'm talking about that occasional doctor's visit when you are expected to show up without having eaten. The last time Al had to do this I didn't trust him to navigate on his own without having had his morning cup of coffee, so I volunteered to be his designated driver. (Yes, I **was** caffeinated!)

Fast forward to breakfast. We decided to stop into a diner* we have driven past many times but had never patronized. As we entered, we encountered an aquarium which was strategically placed so that no one could miss seeing it. "Ah ha!" I said out loud. After we had ordered coffee and breakfast, we wandered back for a closer look. "Oh my!" I said to myself, and probably out loud as well. "What were they thinking?" I asked myself, but definitely **not** out loud this time.

At first glance it is a large (my best guess would be 50 to 60 gallons), attractive and colorful tank. However, on closer inspection, the word **funky** kept bubbling to the surface of my mind. It was the worst collection of fish in one aquarium that I have ever seen. For starters, it was a miniature twenty first century version of Noah's ark. There were two of everything.

When we got back to the car we made a plan. We decided that we would come back for a return visit, this time bringing our camera, so that we could document the crime at hand. Even though the food wasn't especially good, and the prices were a bit high, we felt it was our duty to return.

A couple of weeks later we went back. After we had placed our order, Al tackled the

photography duties. Drawing upon my memory, as well as the acquired photos, here is a list of the occupants. You should start with the understanding that there were two of each fish. There were goldfish, gouramis, angelfish, bala sharks, ancistrus catfish, parrot cichlids, silver dollars, and most notably, piranhas. There were also a few small tetras which had been injected with neon dye. (Ugh!)

If you were counting in the last paragraph, then you know that there are sixteen 2"-3" fish. With the exception of the tetras and the gouramis, the rest of them are nowhere near their full grown size, and all of them have the potential to become quite large. The similarity of their sizes (the fact that they weren't "growing out" at different rates), made me wonder if they had all been recently



purchased at the same time, which might be an indication that this was a newly established aquarium. Even with the fish at their sub-mature sizes I would describe the tank as slightly overcrowded.

The temperature of the water is a very important variable. The fish in this aquarium have a wide variety of requirements when it comes to this parameter. For example, the optimum range for goldfish is from 50° to 65°F, and for gouramis it goes from 81° to 86°F, with all the other fish falling somewhere in between. That is a range of almost 40°F! No single aquarium environment can accommodate that.

In a community aquarium every fish is an omnivore, that is to say, an opportunist. They will grab a bite of whatever comes their

way, especially if the other fish nearby deem it to be desirable, (and it will fit into their mouths). In an attempt to meet the specific nutritional needs of each fish, introducing a wide variety of foods has to be balanced with the risk of overfeeding the tank. But since I have no knowledge of what and how much these fish are being fed, I can only hope that their individual and varied needs are being met.

The biggest “wildcards” in this funky fishtank are the piranhas. “Piranhas are dangerous schooling fishes which will eat anything living. They will grow to twelve inches or more.” In addition, “The genera cannot be imported to the U.S. because of the risk of escape and local propagation.” Heck, they shouldn’t even be in this country, never mind this aquarium!

The thing that is so hard to understand is that whoever set up this aquarium knew what they were doing, but whoever picked out the fish clearly did not! The tank was clean, well filtered, and nicely lighted. There were

plastic plants, but no Sponge Bob figurines, and no algae. The fish themselves were active and healthy. Someone has been taking good care of it! To the uninitiated, this was an example of the perfect aquarium. To us, members of the GCAS, well, I can’t seem to shake off the word **funky**!

I don’t think we will be going back to this diner again, but you never know. One day when we least expect it, we might be overcome with curiosity to find out what has become of the **funkiest fishtank**!

* The name and location of this diner shall remain anonymous to protect it from an invasion by members of PETA.

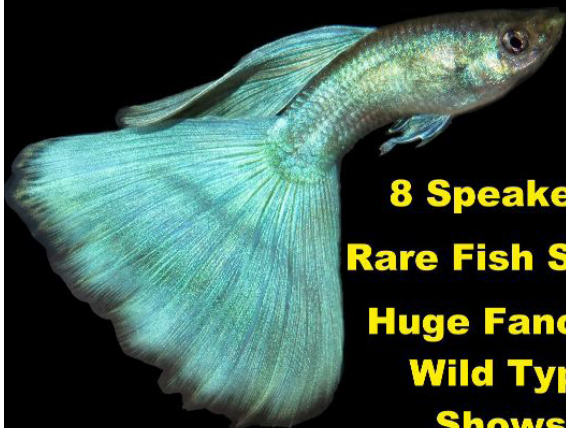
REFERENCE: **Aquarium Atlas**, Vol. 1, Baensch, Hans A. and Riehl, Dr. Rudiger. Tetra Press, 1991 (first edition).



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The Short Stopover

by Elliot Oshins

I find Sunday is a good day to visit my uncle Robert and his wife Mary. They live in Jackson Heights, off 37th Avenue in a private house. Both are retired. Uncle Robert taught school, and Mary was in advertising. Uncle Robert met Mary (whose given name was Mai Loan), when he was serving in Vietnam. Uncle Robert says that was the only good thing that came out of that war.

Parking my car in front of their house and ringing the bell, I heard a melody by Doris Day playing in the background. A voice from the other side of the door said, "Who is it?" and I replied, "It's Mitchell, your favorite nephew." The door opened, and Uncle Robert was in his work clothes, so I knew he was doing water changes in his fish tanks. We hugged, happy to see each other.

I asked "Where's Mary?" and Uncle Robert said, "She's in the kitchen. When Mary knows you're coming over, she always makes something special for you." I replied, "Well I wouldn't miss one of Mary's great meals." We both laughed as Mary walked into the living room and gave me a big hug. "Mary," I said, "everything smells delicious. I can't wait for dinner. You're spoiling me!"

Uncle Robert asked if he could get me a drink. I thanked him, and told him, "Sure, a Coke would be fine." He and Mary went into the kitchen, and Uncle Robert came out and handed me a Coke. I then took a plastic bag of fish out of the shopping bag I was carrying. Uncle Robert took a look at the bag and was quite impressed.

"Uncle Robert, this is a small gift from me. These are some of the fish that you admired in my big tank at home. They are called platies. These fish are not too big; they get to be about an inch and three-quarters. They come from the Atlantic Coast of Mexico and Guatemala, and the northern waters of Honduras. The male is smaller and more colorful, and can be distinguished by his gonopodium. They are very peaceful fish, even toward their own species. They come in red and yellow colors, and are well suited for any community tank. They can adapt to any size aquarium as long as they have peaceful tank-mates. I suggest you only use hardy plants, such as vallisneria, sagittaria, Java fern and moss, and so forth."

"For water, I suggest a pH of 7.0 to 8.2 with

hardness of 10-25° dGH.* Let me float the bag of fish in your tank so the water in the bag will become the same temperature as the water in the tank and won't shock the fish when we transfer them into their new home. We also have to be sure the pH in the bag of fish water is close to that of the tank water. I brought a pH test kit, so don't worry, your fish are in good hands. The pH is very close. We have good New York water. We'll net the fish out of the plastic bag, as we don't want to use the water that the fish came in. When they start swimming they'll look great—the yellow color of the fish against the green color of your plants."

"By the way, Uncle, you asked me about different flake foods. I think they're all about the same. When I was going to school out west, I went to a fish club one night. They had a speaker who was quite good. He talked about different foods. It was very interesting and informative. It was quite a while ago, but I do remember one thing he said that got a big laugh from the

group. He said, 'Fish can't read!' He was referring to all the printing on the cans and bags of fish food. They will eat pretty much anything you drop into the water. Uncle, my advice to you would be to feed these platies the dry food I brought you. I picked up a few extra bags of it when I went to the fish auction in New Jersey with my friend Ed."

"When you get babies from the platies, and I know you will, I'll give you some of the brine shrimp that I raise for my babies. They go bananas when I feed them brine shrimp. I suppose it's the same reaction as when I'm in a restaurant and I see people going crazy over their shrimp cocktail or shrimp scampi."

I haven't been sleeping too well lately. I go to bed around 11:30 and get up around 3:30 in the morning, wide awake. A friend suggested that I see his psychoanalyst, who he thought might be able to help me. I did, and he asked me a lot of questions about my childhood, and how I spend my time when I'm not working. I told him I watch too much TV, and I'm very much into tropical fish. The doctor asked me how many tanks I have, and I told him I have 15. He looked at me kind of strangely, took off his glasses, cleaned them with his tie (which I thought was kind of strange), and told me to relax, maybe I was nervous, and told me he'd be back momentarily. When he left



the room, closing the door behind him, I got up and put my head against the door to hear what he was saying. He was talking to his nurse about a hospital. When he came back, I told him I had to use the bathroom, and slipped out of his office. I got out of there so fast! If I had a horse I would've been like the Lone Ranger. Hi Ho Silver... Off in a cloud of dust! Anyway, I got out of there fast. I might be a little *meshuggah*, but I'm not crazy.

But maybe I *am* going nuts, spending all my time in the basement feeding my fish and doing water changes on all the tanks. It does take a lot of time. I also love plants, so I spend time trying to grow them, as well. Do you remember I told you I bought a CO₂ system? The air in my basement is not the greatest, and I'm thinking of buying a canary. Coal miners used to take canaries down into the mines with them. If the bird died, they knew there was toxic gas and they'd better get out.

"Next time I come I'll bring some frozen

bloodworms for you. Your fish will go crazy over them. It's like us eating corned beef!"

At this point Mary came out of the kitchen and told us dinner was ready—a dish from back home: noodle soup and steamed rice with beef, served with French bread. With all that good food I wondered how my uncle stayed so thin. Uncle Robert poured us each a glass of red wine. Raising my glass, I offered a toast, "To your and Mary's good health, and to many platy babies in the future!"

* **Aquarium Atlas** Volume One, Page 610, by Rüdiger Riehl, Hans A. Baensch.



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Jules' Rules

For Keeping Your Tanks Clean & Healthy

by Jules Birnbaum

As some of you may know by now, I like to try all kinds of filters. Have I found the best one for keeping my tank water crystal clear? At present I am trying one new (but old idea) sponge filter sold by SwissTropicals and made by Sera. As to integrating my filters into a comprehensive system, listed below are my simple rules for tank hygiene, followed by explanations of how I try to achieve crystal clear water:

- 1) **A 40% water change once a week.**
- 2) **Vacuum the tank substrate or bare tank bottom every other week.**
- 3) **Keep the tank away from direct sunlight.**
- 4) **Keep lights on for only a few hours per day, and maybe keep them off one day a week.**
- 5) **Don't overfeed your fish; give them what they can eat in 30 seconds or less.**
- 6) **Except for fry, skip feeding your fish one day a week.**
- 7) **Clean your filters, using aged water, once a month.**
- 8) **Keep a few catfish, such as corys, to help clean up any leftover food.**
- 9) **Quarantine new plants to make sure they don't bring in algae or pests.**
- 10) **Keep only simple, low-light plants.**
- 11) **If substrate is a must, use a very thin layer, such as a ¼".**
- 12) **Tank water should have good circulation.**

The above rules are from my own experience keeping tropical fish off and on for more than 70 years. I might have missed a few that other experienced aquarists might like to add. I will now go into more detail for each rule.

Rule 1 suggests a 40% water change for a couple of reasons. If you replace 40% or less you really don't need to use a water conditioner. However, I tend to use some anyway, just as a precaution. I buy the conditioner in powdered form from JEHMCO, the online fishroom supply store. Any more than a 40% change might shock your fish by drastically changing the pH and/or the water temperature. Some aquarists with automatic systems change their water daily, and some change only 20% of the water a couple of times a month, but for a high bioload, I feel 20% is not enough

of a change. What is correct? Whatever works for you. Just make sure the new water will not drastically change the pH and the temperature. Our water here in New York City is the best in the country, both for humans and for fish.

Rule 2 is important because some wastes hit the tank bottom and never get to the filter. You don't want to provide excess nutrients for algae to use.

Rule 3: Direct sunlight is too strong, and it will cause green water. This is unsightly, but is not harmful to your fish. Green water is even helpful in feeding very small fry.

Rule 4: I recently changed all my aquarium lighting to LED, which I keep on a simple timer. However, I've had to shorten the time the lights are on. In fact on a few (unplanted) tanks I only keep the LEDs on when I'm in the room. I have little or no visible algae in these tanks.

Rule 5: There is such a temptation to feed your fish when they are active and up front begging. Many of the commercial foods suggest feeding as much as your fish can eat in two minutes. Two minutes is too long. Resist this temptation to fill their bellies. There are some species, such as angels, where you can actually disturb their digestive system by overfeeding. I provide my fish with a varied diet by using flakes, pellets, Repashy (gel food), frozen bloodworms from JEHMCO, and live blackworms from Eastern Aquatics. I've also made my own gel food, but it was just too much trouble. I found too much fat got into the water, even using 90% fat free meat or fish. However it is a way to get vitamins, supplements and medications into your fish. If you want to give it a try, I can give you the recipe if you email me (julsabirnbaum@optonline.net).

Rule 6: Skipping a feeding one day a week will help your water clarity, and will not hurt your fish. We go away for short, 3-or-4-day weekend vacations, and my fish are fine when we return home.

Rule 7: Cleaning your filter is essential to get all the fish wastes out of your tank. It also improves the water flow through the filter material. My son-in-law, an engineer with ConEd, is well aware of what happens to water going through the giant filters in their systems. Over time water tends to channel around the filter material, thus lessening the filter's effectiveness. However, there is debate as to whether you should ever clean a filter, as long as the water flow does not decrease.



Ted Judy has a YouTube video on why and how you should periodically clean your sponge filters. Stephan Tanner of SwissTropicals advises to only clean your filter if it clogs and cuts the water flow. Whatever you do, I recommend using only aged water. I prefer not killing any nitrifying bacteria built up in the filter material. In fact, one top breeder in the USA even cleans and reuses his floss (he is not cheap, just smart), to keep whatever nitrifying bacteria build up there.

Rule 8: Some new to the hobby believe catfish eat waste from the other fish. They do not. They look for food in the substrate or on an empty bottom. However careful you are with feeding there are always some minute particles that fall to the bottom. This is where the real workers of your tank come in. Many are nocturnal, so they work 24/7 for very little pay. Some small plecos will eat not only leftover food, but algae or dead plant leaves. I sometimes supplement the plecos' diet with a lettuce leaf or a slice of zucchini attached to a pleco feeder.

Rule 9: Plants can help in keeping tank water clear, but a new plant can bring in parasites and algae, so it is best to keep them in a quarantine tank for a week or two. I sometimes do not follow this rule if I know the plant has come from a friend's fishroom where it has been for some time. Cameo pet shop, which is sadly gone now, sold wonderful plants, which Steve Gruebel (the owner) always quarantined before selling.

Rule 10: The advantage of low-light plants should be obvious. They are easy to keep, and don't demand much light (read electricity). They usually have strong leaves, and some should not be anchored in the substrate. I attach them to wood and rocks using black thread. Since they are attached to the wood or rocks I can easily move them around. Some low-light plants can be maintained in clay pots, which can sit on a bare tank bottom. These potted plants can be easily moved around.



Rule 11: The reason for using little or no substrate is to avoid a buildup of mulm, with its toxic effects. A thick layer of gravel is usually harder to clean. I've gone to using a ¼" layer of pool filter sand that does not contain chemicals. I purchase the sand at a local hardware store. It is easy to wash, and gives a natural look to the tanks. If you wish to grow plants that require substrate you can construct a barrier across the back of the tank to hold 2 to 3 inches of substrate, leaving the front of the tank almost bare. In this case I would not use pool filter sand, it tends to compact, and will strangle the plant roots.

Rule 12: Provide adequate circulation. This rule could have been one of the first few. The circulation allows dirt particles to be moved to the filter. In my 20 gallon tanks and larger I keep two sponge filters going, one at each end. These SwissTropical filters have "jetlifters," directing the water across the tank instead of straight up. Most of us like to keep our tank water crystal clear, and I, like many, have tanks that have crashed. These rules are just my way of doing things, and hopefully you can pick out one or two that will work for you. Maybe you can add a few to this list yourself!



Do You Have Worms?



by Karen Murray



If not, I highly recommend you get them! If you had told me even 3 years ago that I would have a basement full of worms I would have said you were crazy. I actually think I said at one point, “Eww! Never!”

But for anyone spawning fish they are a necessary evil. Live cultures keep the water cleaner and can induce spawning. Many are small enough for fry and help them to grow quickly. Fry of some species can thrive without live food, but many don't recognize food when they are first born unless it is moving. Plus live food is free! So for anyone who never thought they would have worms, ask around in your club and I am sure you will find some cultures to begin your own with.

Whiteworms are the largest of the ‘white worm’ cultures listed here. Adults and large fry go crazy over them. I keep these in a soil mixture, very damp, and feed them dry cat food, bread, mashed carrots, and fish food. They can get a little stinky, so feed a little at a time until you see how much your fish are eating. Scoop them off a piece of plexiglass placed on top of the soil. I rinse the dirt off them and siphon them out into the tanks. I feed these weekly or bi-weekly as they are a fatty food

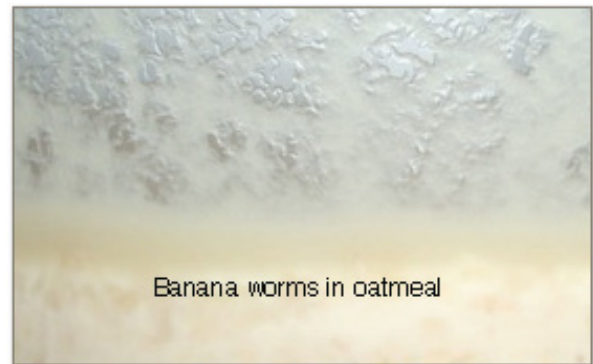


Whiteworms in Soil

Banana worms are easy to culture, but don't last as long as the other cultures listed here. The good news is that a new culture is easy to start and produces worms quickly. A margarine container with water, oatmeal, and yeast is all it takes. Scoop them off the side of the container and swish it in the tank. Instant live food.

I keep these on hand just in case I have a bad baby brine shrimp hatch. I make sure I clean the bottom of my fry tank well after feeding these; there are more in

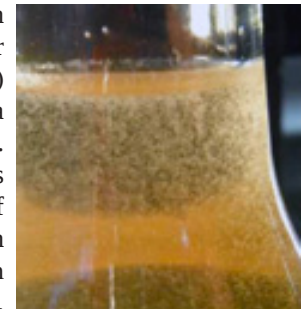
a small scoop than you can imagine. Ramshorn snails will help clean them up too. But then be ready for lots of baby ramshorns!



Banana worms in oatmeal

Grindal worms are larger than banana worms and not as big as whiteworms. I use damp soil to culture, and experiment with oatmeal, cat food and milk soaked bread for feeding. I rinse them in water and siphon them out to feed. They don't last long!

Vinegar eels are by far the easiest worms to culture. Water, cider vinegar and apples in a pop bottle will keep you going in live food for up to a year (some people say more!) Harvesting, however is a little more complicated. A slim-neck bottle is needed. Pour some of the mixture in, top it with a wad of filter floss, then pour tankwater on top. Within a few hours you will see the ‘cloud’ moving into the water. Siphon it directly into your tank.



Maggots & Fruit Flies may infest your worm cultures and affect the survival rate of your worms. They are not harmful to the fish; the fish actually love them.

To prevent cross cultures and infestations, use a fine mesh to cover the lid holes in your cultures and use different spatulas or sticks to harvest each culture type.

The great thing about vinegar eels is their ability to survive in the tank for long periods of time. They are the smallest of worms and are great for fry too small for baby brine shrimp. A little ‘travel tip’ I tried was making up a mini bottle of the vinegar in a tube stuffed with filter floss. I put this directly into the tank

Reprinted from *Fins & Tales*, Kitchener/Waterloo Aquarium Society, Volume 61 Issue 09, November 2015.

before I go away for a day or two. The vinegar stays in the bottle, and the eels drift through the floss into the water, feeding my fry while I am away. This is great for newly hatched fry which can't be left long without food! Be cautious though, and make sure you apply this tip so the vinegar does not escape the bottle.

Other invertebrates: Infusoria can be present in the tank where there are live plants such as moss. Fry and small fish will pick at these microscopic invertebrates. You can culture infusoria with green algae water. Daphnia cultures (often called water fleas) are fed green water or active bakers yeast. Best cultured outdoors, but can be cultured indoors. The water should be cool and kept clean. Feed enough to cloud the water for 24 hours. When the water clears they are ready to be fed again. I find these the most difficult to culture. One wrong move, the water fouls and the culture is dead. Do not siphon the mulm from the bottom of your culture. This can contain food sources and cysts for new daphnia hatch. Use large slow bubbles to aerate the tank.

Baby brine shrimp are cultured with a slow bubbler and a bottle. The water is generally 1.2% salt. Let it sit, and strain to feed. BBS should hatch between 24 and 48 hours, depending on temperature and light. Buy quality BBS eggs for high hatch rates. Clean your tank of dead

BBS or unhatched eggs daily. If you overfeed you may get hydra, which will attack your fry, so keep an eye on the fry tank.

Size Does Matter!
in approx. order of size:
-infusoria
-vinegar eels
-banana worms
-walter worms
-baby brine shrimp
-grindal worms
-daphnia
-white worms

Daphnia Cultures:

<http://www.mkka.net/articles/DaphniaCultureMadeSimple.html>

See our forum for information on Vinegar Eels and Baby Brine Shrimp: [kwas.ca](http://www.kwas.ca)



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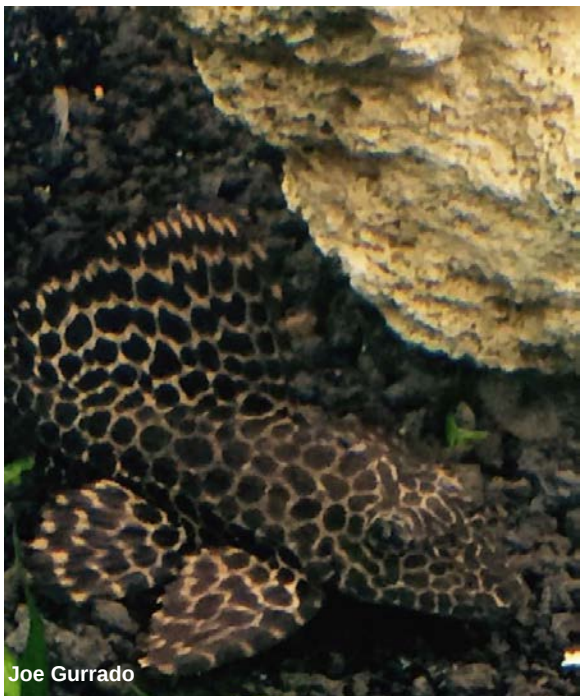
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Fishy Friends' Photos

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!



My Favorite Marine Fish

The Redspotted Hawkfish

Story and Photos by Stephen Sica

I have never seen this fish in a public aquarium, specialty fish store, or general pet store, but in the wild, every so often a redspotted hawkfish, *Amblycirrhitus pinos*, swims my way. Well, not really. My reef fish identification book claims that this fish is common to occasional in South Florida, the Bahamas, the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, Bermuda and south to Brazil. Now this is an extensive range for a fish whose average length is two to three and a half inches. I can probably count on five fingers or less the number of times that I have been fortunate enough to find this fish in its natural habitat.

I admit that my eyesight is less than perfect, and I require eyeglasses to see fairly straight. When diving, the only vision aide that I use is my wife. She can see like a hawk, or should I say—a hawkfish.

I suspect that the reason that this fish is allegedly common, as well as not so commonly seen, is because it prefers to perch on the bottom in the midst of coral reefs. Its habitat is the reef; you will never see a redspotted hawkfish swimming in open water. It is wary of divers and will flit a short distance to a new perch when closely approached. At under four inches long it's easy enough to flit off into the reef's expanse. Even a tiny section of a reef contains dozens of passages and hiding spots.

When I see a fish that I wish to photograph dart into a hiding place, I try to anticipate where it may exit. This is usually a guessing game. Fish that are smarter than I will hide in the reef, only to leave their refuge after I lose patience and swim away. Many fish swim into a nook or cranny and disappear into the reef. Unfortunately for my photography skill, there seem to be a lot of smart fish out there!

On November 5, 2016, during our annual scuba divers reunion in Key Largo, I got lucky. While scouring the upper reef for small, even tiny, photographic subjects, I spotted what appeared to be a small, deep-brown colored fish sitting next to a common sea fan. The color brown always attracts my attention because it is rather uncommon in tropical fish.

For example, the brown chromis is brownish gray to olive-brown. Either a fish is more colorful than brown, or simply gray or black. When I approached this unknown fish, it did not flit away or flee outright. It decided to stay in place.

I snapped off a few photos from a safe distance. I did not use my camera's strobe. The fish stayed in place as I slowly moved in closer, but finally swam a few inches away where it froze again. I was very fortunate that the fish stayed in the immediate area. A bolder fish will often allow a close approach only



The brown and white striped body of a redspotted hawkfish caught my attention as I scoured a coral reef in Key Largo, Florida searching for small fish and micro subjects to photograph.



The redspotted hawkfish perches itself on its pectoral fins on a typical coral reef. At an average length of only two to three inches, it is difficult to observe the uniqueness of this colorful fish.



Distinctive features of the redspotted hawkfish, *Amblycirrhitus pinos*, are red spots (hence the name) on the head, upper body, and dorsal fin. On the tips of the dorsal fin spines are unique appendages often described as "tassels."



The small size of the redspotted hawkfish, as well as its ability to sit stationary among hard and soft corals, sponges, and crevices helps this fish to at times disappear in plain view. It takes a keen eye to locate this specimen, and similar delicate and beautiful fish.

to swim away before you can photograph it. This hawkfish held its ground.

I finally was able to approach within two or three feet, and to identify that it was indeed a redspotted hawkfish. I decided again not to enable my camera's strobe for my close-up photo attempt. A bright flash would surely cause the fish to flee.

On most occasions when the sea is clear and calm, and the sun is shining above, I can take three to five photos of a subject. If I do, I assume that I will have taken at least one good photo. The hawkfish was small and fairly well camouflaged by sea fans, so this time I continually took photos as I kept moving in closer. I kept shooting while the fish kept posing—even after the fish had slightly relocated. The sea fans and other reef flora prevented a clear shot. When I got as close as I could, a white encrusted orange sponge cut off my angle for a full profile photo. Regardless, I took a total of fourteen photos of the fish. All of the

photos in this article are of the same hawkfish. You can tell by the background.

As I mentioned above, the redspotted hawkfish is a reef inhabitant. Its average size is three inches in length but may grow to four inches. It likes to balance itself on its pectoral fins as it sits on the reef. It is the only species in the hawkfish family of *Cirrhitidae* that is found in the Atlantic region, including the Caribbean.

Most reef fish, including the redspotted hawkfish, are found on reefs from just beneath the surface to as deep as eighty feet. This hawkfish was on a reef in about thirty feet of water, twenty to forty feet being the average reef depth.



I tried to hold my camera, a Canon G9X in a waterproof case, to frame as much as the Redspotted hawkfish in my photograph. The coral blocked a view of the whole body and sea fans prohibited me from other trying angles.

If you are fortunate enough to observe this fish in an aquarium, take a good look. It's unlikely that you'll have a second chance. It's a true beauty among the smaller inhabitants of the coral reef.



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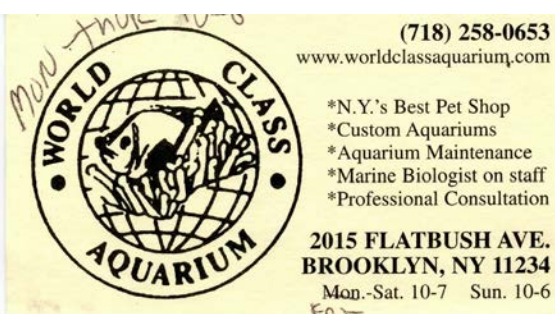


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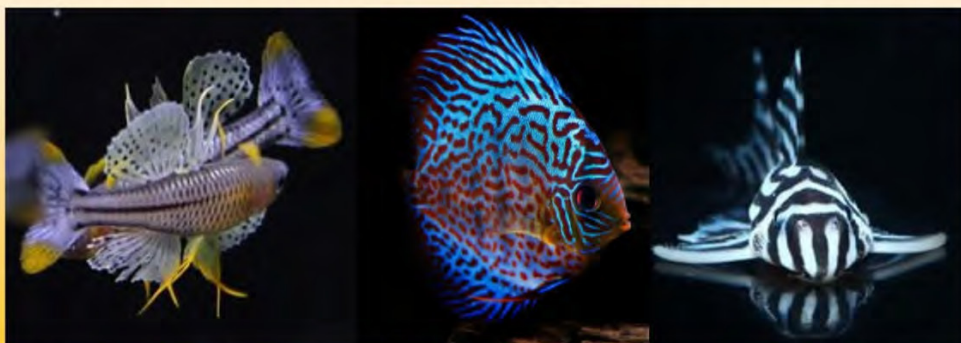
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NJAS is a New Jersey Registered Non-Profit, All Volunteer Aquarium Society, Established 1953.

Pictures From

Photos by Al Priest



Our President Emeritus and speaker for the evening, Joe Ferdenzi



Our new President Horst Gerber addresses the group



Joe Gurrado, our Bowl Show coordinator



A generous donation from Brine Shrimp Direct



Our stalwart auctioneer, Ed Vukich



Long time member Jerry O'Farrell assists with the auction

Our Last Meeting

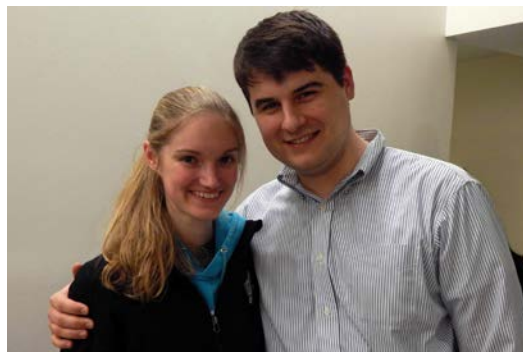
We warmly welcome new members:



Scott Peters



Peter Woltjen



**Our charming newlyweds
Becca and Thomas Warns**

Bowl Show Winners:



2nd and 3rd place: Ed Vukich



**1st place:
Jeff Bollbach**



Andrew Jouan

Door Prize Winner



Meeting Reminders



Almost every month at least one meeting reminder postcard is returned undelivered. Sometimes the member moved and just forgot to update his or her contact information with Greater City. Other times, well it's a mystery—the address was correct, but the Post Office marked it as “undeliverable.”

Unlike some aquarium societies, at Greater City there is never a charge for non-members to attend, there is no “bidder card fee” to bid on items in our monthly auctions, the refreshments are free to everyone at the meeting, and anyone can purchase raffle tickets. But membership does have its privileges, including this award winning magazine, door prize chances, the ability to participate in our bowl shows, and advance reminders of our meetings. If you have an e-mail account, please consider getting your meeting reminders by e-mail, instead of by postcard. You will be getting two notices (one a week in advance, the other a day in advance) instead of only one, and the chances of non-delivery are virtually none (unless you change your e-mail address). While it's a very small thing, you'll even help the environment by using less paper. An e-mail sign-up sheet is at the membership/Modern Aquarium table, or send an e-mail to gcas-webmaster@usa.net.



GCAS Classifieds

FOR SALE: African cichlids -- all sizes, as well as tanks and accessories.
Call Derek (917) 854-4405

FOR SALE: Frontosas -- all sizes.
Call Andy (718) 986-0886

FOR SALE: Supreme AP-60 air pump. This pump easily supplies air for 30 to 40 aquariums. It is very quiet, and uses less than 70 watts. They wholesale for \$180. I have a brand-new, never used one for \$120. Contact Joe Ferdenzi at gfcadeo@gmail.com.

FOR SALE: 45 gal Tall tank w/black stand, hood, light.
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FOR SALE: Fish Hobbyist's Dream Home: \$149,500!

Fishroom: 15 X 26 – Almost 400 square feet. 10 Picture-window tanks, with built-in wall shelving underneath for storage. Room for more tanks, with pressurized air system throughout the room. Full sink (hot/cold) with work space; ceramic tile floor.

Pond Room: 12 X 16 – Almost 200 square feet. 300 gallon indoor pond for tropical fish.

Mag pump, ceramic tile floor, large cathedral windows, lots of light for growing plants. Gorgeous views. Great place to read the Sunday papers.



Rest of House: 2 BR, 2 BA, HUGE kitchen with 49 cabinets and drawers. All rooms huge, LR/desk area. Almost 2,000 square feet. Central A/C.

Climate: 340 sunny days last year. Mild winters with absolutely NO snow shoveling.

Location: Truth Or Consequences, New Mexico. Great name, huh? Was formerly called Hot Springs (and yes, we've got 'em). Very friendly community. Cars actually stop for you to cross the street. Rarely hear a car horn. Two blocks from town.

House Location:

On historic site for Geronimo and his braves, where they ground holes in huge boulders (on the southern edge of the property) for cooking maize. Evidence still there (placard next to property). Just 20 feet below us stands a fish pond stocked with trout, and another hundred feet down is the Rio Grande River, for rafting, tubing, and fishing. For even greater bass fishing, we're only five miles from Elephant Butte Lake, the largest

lake in New Mexico, which also features water sports such as boating, swimming, fishing, jet skiing, etc. There are two marinas.



VIEW FROM FRONT PORCH



ELEPHANT BUTTE LAKE



RAFTING ON THE RIO GRANDE NEARBY

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Summing Up: We lived here for more than 23 years, and I had both the fish pond and the fishroom built for my hobby, but I'm now well into my 80s, and it's time to retire from the hobby. We watched our grandchildren grow up as they spent all their summers here. Irreplaceable memories. You could have some too.

Charlie Kuhne: (575) 894-2957





GCAS Happenings

April

Last Month's Bowl Show Winners:

1 JEFF BOLLBACH	RED ALPHA SWORDTAIL
2 ED VUKICH	ELEPHANT EAR BETTA -- RED
3 ED VUKICH	ELEPHANT EAR BETTA -- BLUE

UNOFFICIAL 2017 BOWL SHOW TOTALS:

JEFF BOLLBACH	5	ED VUKICH	4
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A SPECIAL WELCOME TO NEW GCAS MEMBERS SCOTT PETERS AND PETER WOLTJEN!

A WARM WELCOME BACK TO RENEWING GCAS MEMBERS BILL AMELY, JULES BIRNBAUM, JEFF BOLLBACH, CARLOTTI DE JAGER, PETE D'ORIO, ROD DU CASSE, AKINWUNMI DUROJAIYE, ARTIE FRIEDMAN, MICHAEL GALLO, WALTER GALLO, ALONZO GARRETT, FLORENCE GOMES, JOSEPH GRAFFAGNINO, JOSEPH GURRADO, VICTOR HRITZ, ANDREW & JILLIAN JOUAN, ROBERT KOLSKY, DENVER LETTMAN, RICHARD LEVY, RUBEN LUGO, JR., MICHAEL MACHT, DONITA MAYNARD, DICK MOORE, ELLIOT OSHINS, ARTHUR PLATT, AL & SUE PRIEST, DAN PULEO, DAN & MARSHA RADEBAUGH, LEONARD RAMROOP, VINNIE RITCHIE, DONNA & STEVE SICA, GILBERTO SORIANO, SANDY SOROWITZ, ED VUKICH, THOMAS & BECCA WARNS, RON WEBB, AND LARRY D. WHITFIELD!

Meeting times and locations of some of the aquarium societies in the Metropolitan New York City area:

GREATER CITY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Next Meeting: May 3, 2017

Speaker: Michael Lucas

Topic: *Butterflies in the Water: Discovering Hydrophlox Shiners*

Meets: The first Wednesday of the month (except January & February) at 7:30pm:

Queens Botanical Garden

43-50 Main Street - Flushing, NY

Contact: Dan Radebaugh (347) 866-1107

Email: gcas@earthlink.net

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

BIG APPLE GUPPY CLUB

Meets: Last Tuesday each month (except Jan, Feb, July, and August) at 7:30-10:00pm.

Alley Pond Environmental Ctr.: 228-06 Northern Blvd.

Contact: Donald Curtin (718) 631-0538

BROOKLYN AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Next Meeting: April 14, 2017

Speaker: Todd Gardner

Topic: *Long Island, New York: An Unlikely Hotspot For Marine Ornamentals*

Meets: 2nd Friday of the month (except July and August) at 7:30pm:

NY Aquarium - Education Hall, Brooklyn, NY

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

Website: <http://www.brooklynaquariumsociety.org>

LONG ISLAND AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Next Meeting: April 21, 2017

Speaker: TBA

Meets: Olive Garden Restaurant

257 Centereach Mall,

Centereach, NY 11720 Phone: (631) 585-4027

For map directions, go to olivegarden.com/locations/ny/centereach/centereach-mall/1507.

Email: Margaret Peterson - president@liasonline.org

Website: <http://liasonline.org/>

EAST COAST GUPPY ASSOCIATION

Meets: 2nd Tuesday of each month at 8:00 pm.

Alley Pond Environmental Ctr.: 228-06 Northern Blvd.

Contact: Gene Baudier (631) 345-6399

NASSAU COUNTY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Next Meeting: April 11, 2017

Speaker: Todd Gardner

Topic: *Long Island, New York: An Unlikely Hotspot For Marine Ornamentals*

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

Molloy College - Kellenberg Hall ~1000 Hempstead Ave - Rockville Centre, NY

Contact: Mike Foran (516) 798-6766

Website: <http://www.ncasweb.org>

NORTH JERSEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Next Meeting: April 20, 2017

Speaker: TBA

Topic: TBA

Meets at: Days Hotel, East Brunswick NJ

Contact: NJAS Hotline at (732) 332-1392

Email: tcoletti@obius.jnj.com

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

NORWALK AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Next Meeting: April 20, 2017

Speaker: Ruben Lugo

Topic: *My Adventures keeping and breeding L-numbers and other fish that suck.*

Meets: 8:00 P.M. - 3rd Thursday of each month except for July & December at: Earthplace - the Nature Discovery Center - Westport, CT

Contact: Sal Silvestri

Call our toll free number (866) 219-4NAS

Email: salsilv44@yahoo.com

Website: <http://norwalkas.org/>

Taking the Plunge

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.

A series by "The Undergravel Reporter"

An aquarium in Britain is holding "underwater weddings." Staff at the Sea Life Centre in Blackpool, Lancashire, have received enquiries for the venue from couples planning their weddings.

Couples can be lowered into the main display tank alongside sharks, stingrays and other marine creatures to exchange their vows in the water, with their heads just above the waves so the registrar can hear them clearly, to comply with the law. (The registrar will conduct the proceedings from dry land as opposed to climbing into the tank). Couples can also choose to be married in drier parts of the aquarium, such as in the shark tunnel, or in front of the giant ocean window, with colorful sea creatures making a spectacular backdrop.

The venue can provide champagne and canapes for guests on arrival, as well as a full wedding breakfast to follow the ceremony.

Hmm, I wonder whether caviar, or bagels and lox are on the menu? If so, I'd be a bit suspicious about the origins of those delicacies (imported, domestic, or home grown).



References

¹ <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/weird-news/take-plunge-married-life-first-10039866>



Fin Fun



Guppy FEST

Find the various guppy varieties in the mass of letters below. As always, should you fail, the Editor will disavow any knowledge of your actions.

Q	L	F	P	O	D	E	X	U	T	S	Y	E	E	F
G	S	I	M	I	W	T	J	G	K	N	C	T	V	B
U	K	W	A	R	N	E	N	S	G	A	O	E	O	A
A	D	G	O	T	L	T	P	N	L	K	G	L	U	F
G	E	R	D	R	L	A	A	I	S	E	N	E	M	E
S	Z	W	S	D	D	I	A	I	X	S	I	O	V	T
Q	Y	E	P	E	R	T	E	F	L	K	M	P	P	Y
Y	W	Q	T	D	E	W	A	V	V	I	A	A	O	A
K	R	A	V	R	B	Y	Q	I	A	N	L	R	R	M
K	I	J	Y	E	W	P	S	N	L	R	F	D	O	A
L	V	L	F	F	A	N	T	A	I	L	B	S	V	T
L	I	A	T	S	S	A	R	G	N	X	A	O	X	L
G	Y	A	T	K	R	M	Q	E	M	I	B	C	C	E
L	X	H	I	G	H	B	L	T	C	H	M	A	X	D
N	W	T	B	I	F	R	U	B	Q	E	J	H	F	S

COBRA

MOSAIC

TUXEDO

FANTAIL

VEILTAIL

DELTA

SWORDTAIL

FLAMINGO

SNAKESKIN

LACE

LYRETAIL

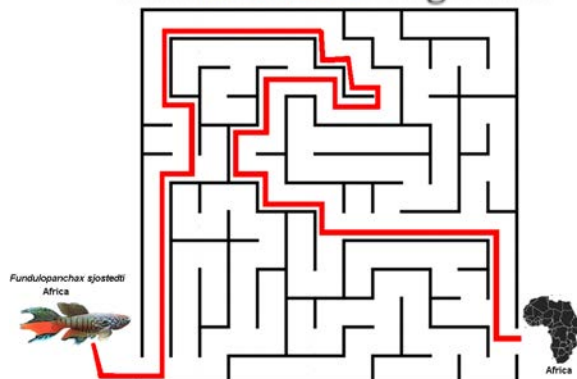
PINTAIL

SPADETAIL

LEOPARD

GRASSTAIL

Solution to our last puzzle: An **AMAZE** - ing Killie



ALA 2017 ANNUAL CONVENTION

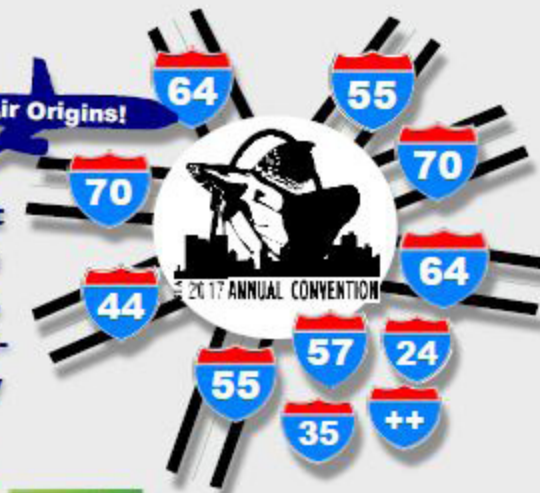
All routes lead to St. Louis in May!



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