

modern AQUARIUM



March 2015
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number 1

Greater City Aquarium Society - New York



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Series III Vol. XXII, No. 1 March, 2015

ON THE COVER

Our cover this month features *Aphyosemion australe*, a gorgeous killifish. Check out Chapter 11 of Rosario La Corte's **An Aquarist's Journey**. This is the species used for the **Mister Wizard** segment he mentions.

Photo by Rosario La Corte

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From the Editor

by Dan Radebaugh

As has been the case for some years now, the March issue of **Modern Aquarium** begins our new year, even as it looks back on the old. You'll see "Photos from our 2014 Awards Banquet," as well as the index of articles that appeared in **Modern Aquarium** during 2014. Looking back much further than last year, check out Joe Ferdenzi's article on "GCAS Traditions." You'll also learn who won December's Cartoon Caption Contest, and you'll find a new cartoon to test your captioning skills.

Al Priest and Jules Birnbaum have contributed articles that are follow-ups to articles they wrote in a past year. Al tells us "The Cave Secret, Part 2," and Jules follows with an update on "Cooking for your Fish."

Steve Sica treats us to another of his photo essays on marine fish, in this instance *Chaetodon capistratus*, the foureye butterflyfish. We are also delighted to present the next installment of Rosario La Corte's autobiography, **An Aquarist's Journey**.

Later in the issue, The Undergravel Reporter presents us with an intriguing question in "How Far Would You Go to Save a Fish?" Following this question, the issue closes with our Fin Fun puzzle, "You Can Count On It."

* * * * *

Remember, we need articles. We always need articles! **Modern Aquarium** is produced by and for the members of Greater City Aquarium Society. Our members are our authors, and with ten issues per year, we always, always need more articles. I know several of you are keeping



and/or breeding fish, or working with plants or invertebrates that I would like to know more about, and I'm certain other members would be interested as well. Share your experience with us. Write about it! If you're a little unsure about the state of your writing technique, don't worry – that's why there are editors. If you don't share what you know, who will?

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





GCAS Programs 2015

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 accompanies each meeting.

March 4	Joseph Ferdenzi <i>A Beginner's Guide to Aquarium Equipment</i>
April 1	TBA
May 6	Richard Pierce <i>Seahorses, Seadragons, and Pipefish</i>
June 3	TBA
July 1	TBA
August 5	Silent Auction
September 2	TBA
October 7	TBA
November 4	TBA
December 2	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 2015 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 Dan Radebaugh

Welcome back to another year with Greater City Aquarium Society! I am very pleased to begin the year by citing a couple of recent, notable accomplishments by our members.

First, Joe Graffagnino had his first novel; a fantasy action adventure entitled **The Journey of Mary/Ma Li**, published by Dreams Publishing Company. You can obtain Joe's novel via his website, www.JAGraffagnino.com, which links to Barnes & Noble and Amazon.com. Amazon also has a Kindle version available for \$7.99. For any information on this and other works by Joe, you can email him at JAG.author@gmail.com or visit his Facebook page at J. A. Graffagnino.

Congratulations are also due Ruben Lugo for his wonderful article on breeding *Hypancistrus contragens*, which appeared in the February issue of **Tropical Fish Hobbyist**! If you haven't seen it, check it out! It's available online, but the printed version contains several excellent photos. Well done, Ruben!

Dan



MARY

From early childhood Mary Petrovich has had visions of a girl named Ma Li Chin living in ancient China. As time passes, the images became clearer until it seemed that Ma Li was physically present, and as Mary grew, their bond became stronger.

Mary travels to China, guided by her spirit partner. An out of body experience while in a coma, carried her to a spirit world where she meets Ma Li. A powerful presence appeared to them and tasked them to learn from each other, partner their skills, and for each to obtain the object that will solidify her existence. For Ma Li, it is her sword. For Mary - her mother's tomahawk. He warned them that they will have to battle enemies in the physical and spirit world to accomplish their quest and that if either would perish their bond will be broken forever. What the commanding spirit did not tell them is the combining of several special objects opens a portal between the spirit and physical world - for demons as well as helpful spirits.

MA LI

Ma Li was a 15th century warrior priestess whose family was murdered by a spiteful samurai leader over a family heirloom that Ma Li won in a tournament. Fatally wounded while making her escape from the castle, she fled with the aid of a friend to a remote island cave where she died and where her body and sword still remain. Ma Li is impulsive, demanding, and aggressive while Mary is courageous, righteous, and cunning. The driving forces for them are revenge and loyalty to each other and to those people who become part of their inner circle.

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THE JOURNEY OF MARY/ MA LI



by J. A. GRAFFAGNINO

J. A. GRAFFAGNINO

Marsha and Dan Radebaugh Inducted Into the Roll Of Honor

Completely catching them by surprise, Marsha and Dan Radebaugh were inducted into the Joseph Ferdenzi Roll Of Honor at the 2014 GCAS Holiday Party and Awards Banquet. They started to squirm when they realized no recipient(s) had been named for this award in the December issue of **Modern Aquarium**. The reason quickly became apparent to them as their names were announced.

The Roll of Honor is the highest award in the GCAS. It is bestowed on persons who have given ten or more years of **exceptional** service to the club. This was their first year of eligibility, and their level of dedication has been beyond measure. Dan holds the positions of both President and Editor, which are the two most demanding jobs in the club. In addition to being Editor, he also takes it upon himself to get **Modern Aquarium** printed with color throughout. Marsha has assumed the responsibilities of membership chairperson, as well as the distribution of the magazine, the door prize tickets, and the Cartoon Caption Contest sheets at every meeting, and always with a smile! These are just the things which you can see them doing. There are many other tasks which they perform “under the radar.”

We, the members of the GCAS, are beneficiaries of the many talents and hard work of Marsha and Dan. You may notice them wearing red pins bearing our signature angelfish logo. These pins signify their status as members of the Roll of Honor. Congratulations!

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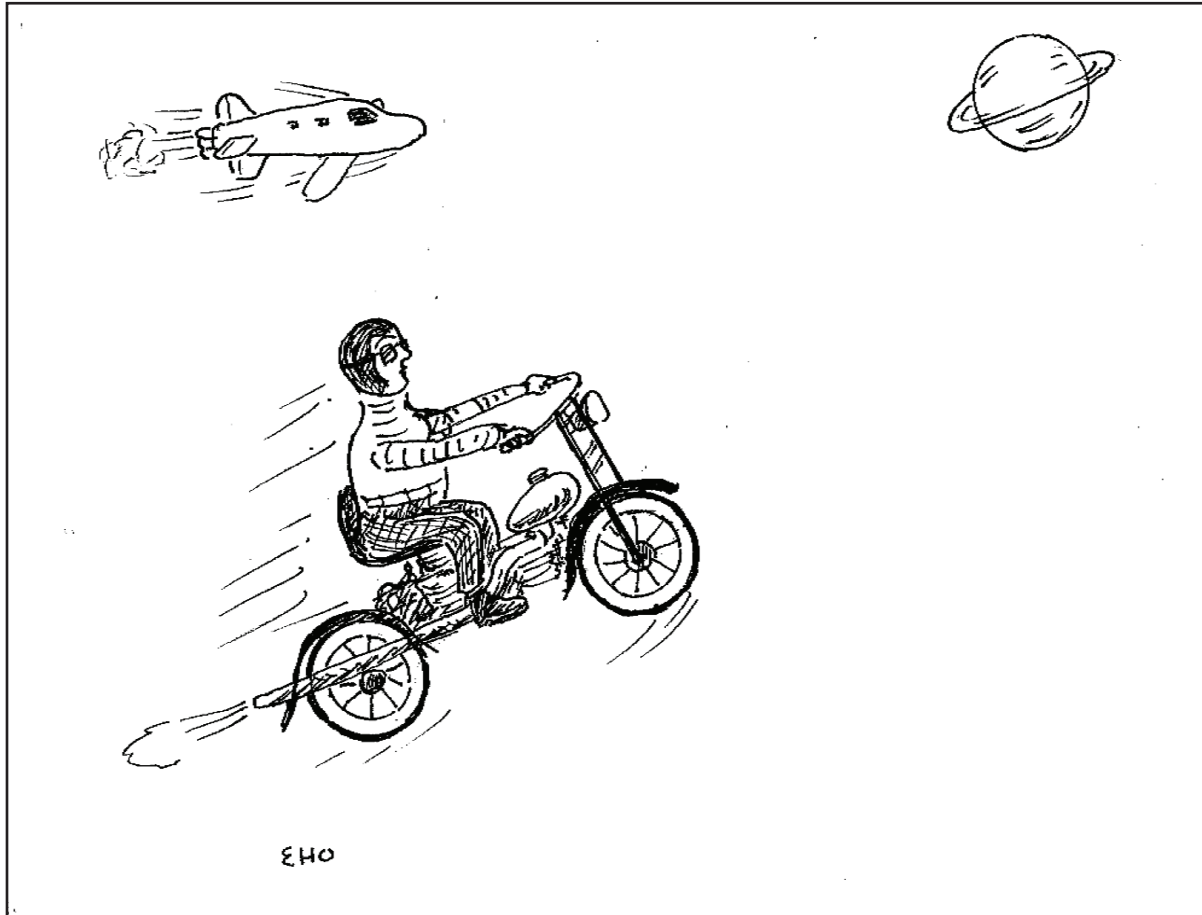
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December's Caption Winner: Joe Gurrado



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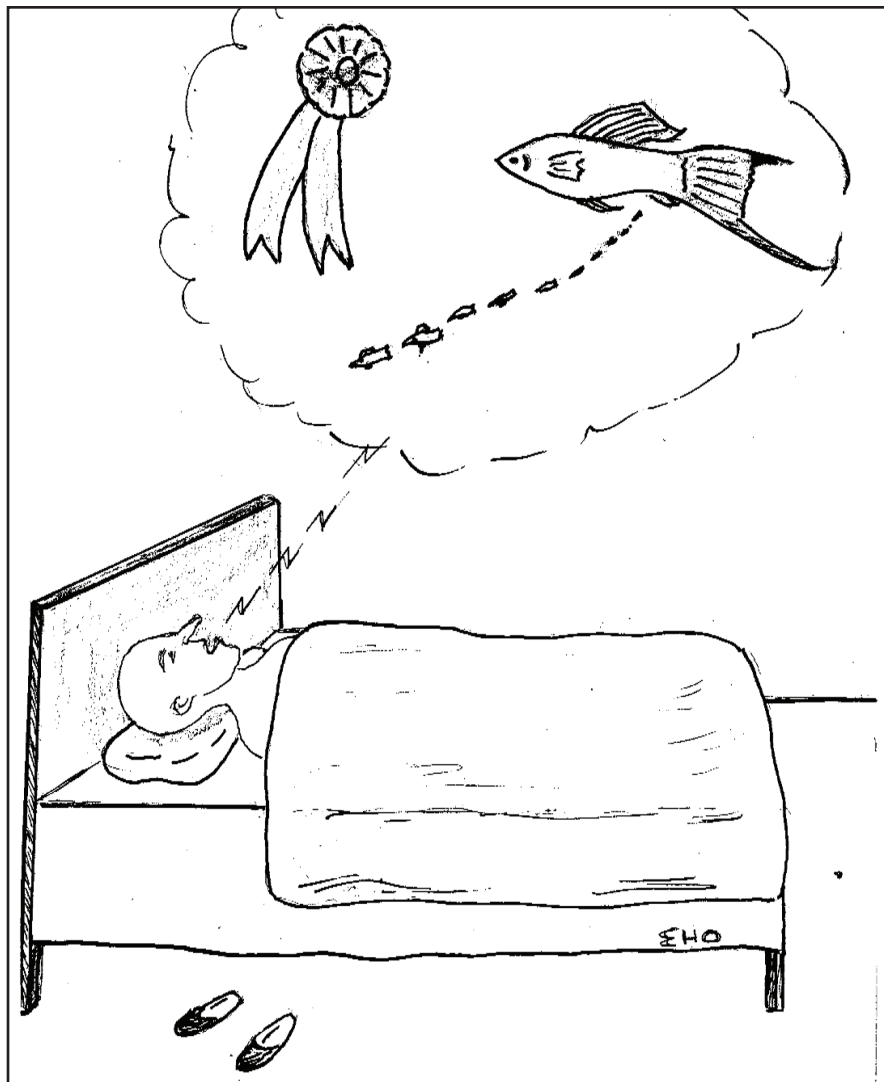
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The Modern Aquarium Cartoon Caption Contest

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!



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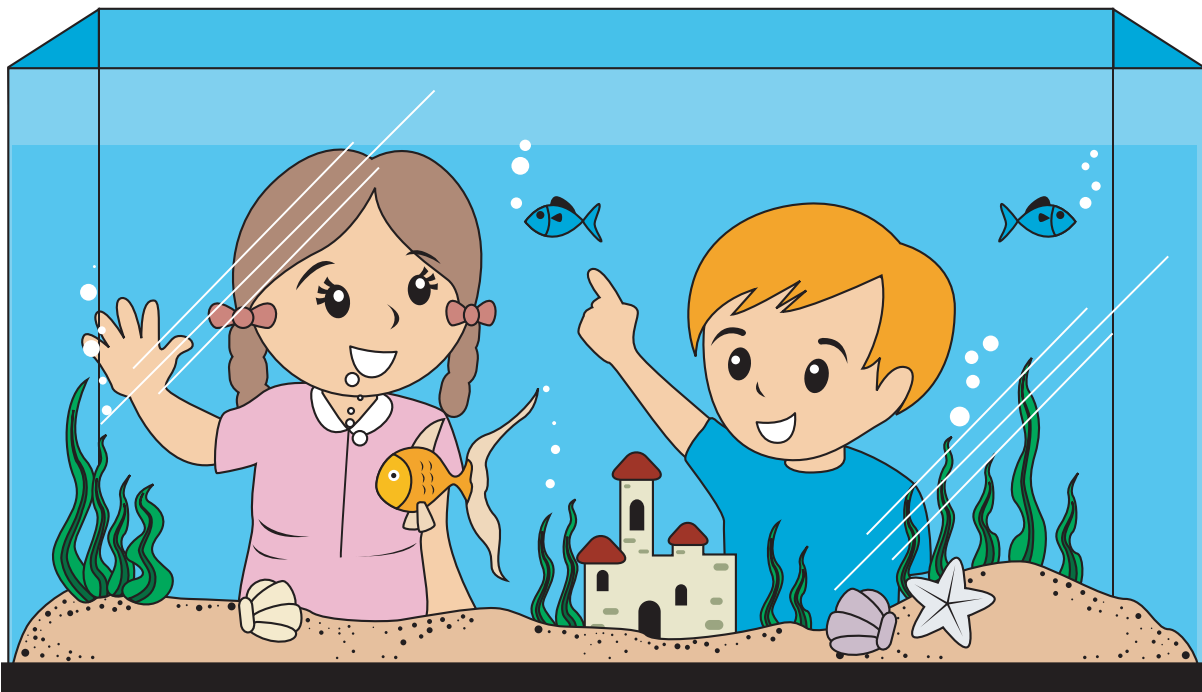
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EASY RIDER AND THE FOUREYE BUTTERFLYFISH

Story and Photos by Stephen Sica

The world is full of relationships. Just ask your relatives. When it comes to relatives, human interaction with them is probably what we think about or act upon during the course of our lives. Our path through the natural world is ripe with these relationships. I believe that just about everything in the natural world is somehow related. Doesn't one theory, or is it a fact, state that everyone on the planet is related? I think that this is based upon common DNA. I know that I don't have any relatives named Adam or Eve but I do have a sister-in-law whose proper name is Eva. Is that close enough?

When we observe something in the natural world, we usually begin to formulate either a theory, an opinion, or some sort of fact-based knowledge. Most likely, the "fact" is our own personal observation, or it might be someone else's who had the same idea before we did. After 2,000 years of "civilization," is there truly an original idea?

For many years during my warm water diving experiences, I would observe a growth on the face or head of small reef fishes. I would avoid photographing these fish because, like most people, I was seeking beauty. Who is enamored by an imperfect subject? Even a representation of one, such as a photograph, may not be appealing. Then one day in Saint Lucia, and a few months later on a dive in the Turks and Caicos, I observed a butterfly fish with the familiar growth that I had occasionally seen through the years. It was the very same growth that I had seen on fish during other dives in other islands.

Now my curiosity finally took hold, and I decided that I should attempt to photograph the fish. Fortunately, our trip to the Turks and Caicos provided

such as opportunity, and a West Caicos butterflyfish allowed me to approach it—I was able to swim within five feet. "Wait a minute!" I blurted into my mouthpiece. The growth appeared to be a seashell. How did a shell attach itself to a fish? Upon closer



Swimming among soft corals on a reef, this foureye butterflyfish, *Chaetodon capistratus*, offers a clean profile. Dark lines mark its scale rows along the body, and the obvious false "eye" is ringed by white. A dark band passes through the face and eyes highlighting a small but prominent snout. This fish can grow to six inches, but most specimens are smaller.

examination, I decided that perhaps the shell was an animal. I guessed that it was some sort of a parasitic worm that either burrowed into or attached itself to the flesh of the fish. I also conjectured that it must be a fatal condition when I compared the sizes of the fish and its parasite. Although I had observed this condition on more than one occasion, I had discarded these observations in my quest to photograph the next fish that I saw.

After all, who knows when I'll be in this place again.

About a year ago, or maybe longer, I was studying photos that I had taken of reef creatures, including small elongated blue shrimp. It occurred to me that I had been observing these shrimp more frequently so I finally decided to identify them. While doing so, I came across photographs in one of my reference books of the mysterious parasite attached to the face of five different fish. The first photo showed the parasite attached to a foureye butterflyfish, *Chaetodon capistratus*.

I enjoy photographing butterflyfish on the reef because they are attractive, distinctive, and usually swim in pairs that I assume are mated. A pair together always makes an attractive photograph. Sometimes, there are three adults swimming together. I'll leave it to your imagination to decide why, but I held the assumption that the third fish was an offspring.

The foureye derived its name from a "false eye," a circular black spot ringed with white at the base of



The isopod attached to this four-eye butterflyfish is clearly evident in this profile photograph. If an isopod attaches itself to a fish for the isopod's natural lifespan, how does it feed? It is not a true parasite, and must feed when the host fish feeds. Are food particles dispersed around the mouth of the fish so that the isopod can pick up a few? I doubt that the small isopod eats much.

its tail. The extra “eyes” give this fish a distinctive appearance and make it easy to spot. A full size specimen at six inches is very impressive. I have never seen one this large. Perhaps the big ones become food for another fish. A four inch fish seems to be the norm. Sometimes it's difficult to accurately judge the size of a fish or other animal since water magnifies everything at least 20 percent, and more likely 25 percent.

If I may return to my earlier research, the key word turned out to be shrimp. My “discovery” of the parasite's true identity was a simple solution. It was a shrimp-like animal in the crustacean family known as an isopod. I never thought that a shrimp could have a parasitic relationship by literally attaching itself to a free-swimming fish. After a bit of research, I discovered that the animal was not parasitic; it was a shrimp-like crustacean known as a Cymothoid isopod. Family members are more commonly known as Cymothoids. This seems to make perfect sense, although I'm not sure if I ever saw a Cymothoid in the wild—or anywhere else for that matter.

These animals are not true parasites, because they do not dine on the tissues of their hosts. Single



This four-eye butterflyfish was swimming toward me. I noticed that it had an isopod attached to each side of its face below the eyes. You can just about see the isopod on the fish's left cheek. It must be unpleasant to the fish to have these lifelong attachments and be unable to shed its free rider.



A four-eye butterflyfish and its attached isopod swims amid sponges and coral on a reef near West Caicos in approximately fifty feet of water.

individuals or mated pairs attach themselves to the head region of reef fish with several pairs of hook-like legs. They benignly scavenge particles of food from the water. When a Cymothoid attaches itself to a fish, it loses its swimming ability and remains with the fish for life. I truly feel sorry for the fish. Who would want one or two of these creatures attached to its face? Males can change into females to increase the odds of finding mates. If a male settles on a host fish that already has a female in place, the male mates with the larger female. After the female dies, the male changes sex and awaits the arrival of a young male. If a male Cymothoid settles on a fish without a potential mate in place, the male will accelerate its growth and change into a female. The largest are brooding females; they can incubate more than 100 juveniles inside bulky ventral pouches.

Twelve species of Cymothoids in the Caribbean have been identified to date. Different species tend to inhabit specific regions. These animals are common in Florida and the Bahamas, as well as the Caribbean. If you see one, its coloring is gray to dark brown. Its oval body is formed by overlapping plates and a fan-



This four-eye butterflyfish is turned slightly to its left, exposing its isopod for a clear look. Although relationships such as this are part of the natural world, I would find it disturbing to be saddled with a free and easy rider. Does the isopod offer anything to the fish in this relationship? I do not know, but I doubt it.



This foureye butterflyfish swims away because I decided to follow it and photograph the animal attached to its face just below the left eye. After many years of sporadically observing this relationship between a reef fish and its "parasites," I finally decided to investigate after finding an identical photo in one of my fish identification reference books.

shaped tail. I have never seen one except attached to the face of a small fish. Where do they congregate before they find a fish? I unsuccessfully reviewed some of my older photos to try to find more pictures of a Cymothoid and host fish.

While researching data for this article, I learned that barnacles are crustaceans. This reminds me. Do you know what Donna likes to say when she is annoyed with me? "An old crab lives here!" Well, old or not, I'd rather be a crab than a barnacle any day!



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GCAS Traditions

by Joseph Ferdenzi

During the course of my periodic researches, I came across the following brief article that appeared in the **Brooklyn Daily Eagle** on December 25, 1932. This particular newspaper ran a “pet page,” and that is where this item about Greater City’s holiday party appeared.

A few notable items stand out for me. For one, you will see that the party took place on Wednesday night. Well, 82 years later it still does. Our most recent holiday party took place on a Wednesday night, December 3, 2014. For another, favors were distributed. They still are. The most recent party featured novelty items, such as a glowing ball with a toy fish inside, and drinking straws with tropical fish decorations. However, unlike 1932, when it appears all members were men, everyone at the party received the same favors. Some things are bound to change in 82 years!

What impresses me most is that in 1932, when GCAS was only ten years old, we had already begun traditions that have carried over to the present day. I wish I had a photo of that 1932 party. Fortunately, elsewhere in this issue you *will* find photos of our 2014 party!

Just remember this. When you are a Greater City member, you are part of a long tradition of camaraderie and good will. Our 100th year is not that far away.

Brooklyn Public Library

<http://bklyn.newspapers.com/image/59977929>

The Brooklyn Daily Eagle (Brooklyn, New York) · Sun, Dec 25, 1932 · Page 10

Printed on Nov 7, 2014

Tropical Fish Given as Favors

Fish for prizes, that's the newest wrinkle in party giving.

Masculine guests at the Greater City Aquarium Society's Christmas party, held Wednesday night at the Highland Park Y. M. C. A., received pairs of fish as souvenirs of the evening's merriment.

Guppies, platties, swordtails, danios, helleri, all kinds of the finest tropical specimens were among the gifts. More than 100 fish were given away.

Women guests at the party received candy.



THE CAVE SECRET

Part 2

by ALEXANDER A PRIEST - photos by the author

In the August 2010 issue of **Modern Aquarium**, I wrote an article titled “The Cave Secret” with various tips on spawning mouthbrooding *Betta* species. A majority of *Betta* species are mouthbrooders, and all mouthbrooding *Betta* species are paternal mouthbrooders, meaning the male holds fertilized eggs in his mouth until they hatch.

That article mentioned what I found to be the best conditions for spawning, such as substrate (I use none), lighting (generally low light), filtration (I always have at least one sponge filter), and water parameters.

My article concluded with: “Now the big ‘secret’ **CAVES!** Caves provide a sense of security (stressed fish don’t spawn), give brooding males a quiet place to stay, and provide shelter to harassed fish. For *Betta* mouthbrooders, I always have more caves than fish.”

After viewing the tanks and reading accounts of some aquarists, I now realize that I left out one very important fact. Look at the photos below, taken from my own tanks of various mouthbrooding *Betta* species, and see if you can find a common “theme.”





OK, did you see the commonality in all of these photographs (other than some of the tanks might be in need of a good cleaning)? The answer is that **none of the openings of the caves (and by “cave” I mean any walled or partitioned and mostly enclosed space) face the opening of any other cave.** Just following that simple rule allows caves to be in very close proximity while giving each fish who “claims” a cave to feel secure.

There is also a temptation to have cave openings squarely face the front of the tank (so you, the aquarist, can look all the way in). For much the same reason that it’s important for a fish to feel secure by not being able to see other fish, once far back in a cave the fish should not be able to see you. That’s it, a very simple “secret” but one that’s really important.



COOKING FOR YOUR FISH?

by Jules Birnbaum

When I was teenager many moons ago, all my friends had at least one fish tank. I had four, with some real meat eaters. Not knowing what I was doing, I brought home two Oscars, a blue acara, and some angelfish. Some pet shop (it seemed there was a pet shop in every row of stores) sold me an arowana. This fish, upon growing too large, eventually went back to that pet shop. Meanwhile my friends and I experimented with blends of chopped meat, baby vegetables, and Knox gelatin.

Most of the time we fouled the water with the animal fat and the excess food. It was messy, and we never made it again. Many years later I joined the AKA (American Killifish Association) and noticed a recipe for gel food in one of their publications.

Why is blended gel food making a comeback? First, live food is becoming expensive. Second, it is not as accessible as it was in the past. Third, most serious aquarists are coming to the realization that flake and pellet food are not the best nutrition for the growth and breeding of their tropical fish. When you read the label on flake or pellet food showing the ingredients and nutritional analysis, remember that this is before cooking it. Cooking destroys some of the vitamins.

Recently, Joe Ferdenzi gave me a sample of some frozen gel food prepared for his own fish. I fed

small-bite size portions of Joe's food, and my fish went crazy for it. Next, Joe Gargas sent me his recipe which became the basis for the food I describe in this article.

At that point I became fixated on coming up with a recipe that would be a complete diet for all my fish. To that end I reviewed the gel recipes from Joe Ferdenzi, Joe Gargas, the AKA, and Angels Plus.

I should mention there is one seller of a pre-prepared gel mix which I have tried, but in my opinion it is just another version of a dried food. Their label showing the analysis is before cooking. It is also not cost effective for me. I purchase flake and pellet food at a much lower price.

You can substitute calves heart, beef heart, chicken breast, any lean meat, shrimp, or tuna packed in water. Keep in mind that fat will make your tank

messy and stick to the glass, so avoid any fatty meat. Some recipes call for Knox gelatin instead of the cold binder. However, be aware that Knox gelatin has been known to cause digestive upset in humans. There are vegetarian gelatins available, but I have not used them. The menhaden (porgy) fish oil is an attractant, so I would not want to use a substitute, but you can use the fish oil sold in drug or health food stores. A liquid multi-vitamin can be included in the mix, but in my opinion it is not essential. Fresh peas, spinach, other



The recipe, equipment, and ingredients for Julie's Super Health Food:

Own a good blender—something that won't burn out.

1 pound of 99% fat free ground turkey breast (fresh, not frozen).

Add 2 cups of water and then blend.

Add 2 jars of baby food mixed vegetables then blend for 1 minute.

Add 1 tablespoon of Menhaden fish oil (sold by bait stores) as an attractant. Loaded with vitamins! Blend for 30 seconds.

Add 1/4 teaspoon of Carophyll Pink, sold by Brine Shrimp Direct (to give a blood color to the food and bring out the color of the fish. It is not cheap!).

Add one tablespoon of cold binder (Joe Gargas sells this).

Blend again for about 30 seconds.

Pour the mix into ice cube trays, let set 2 or 3 hours, and then place the trays in the freezer.

You can also store it in plastic bags frozen flat to save space.

The shelf life of this frozen gel food should be the same as frozen human food, which is generally one year.

fresh vegetables, or bananas can be puréed and added to the mix instead of using baby vegetables..

Frozen gel food does not have to be defrosted. Simply break it into chunks and feed it directly to your fish. There will be no ill effect from a fish eating frozen food. I've seen my buffalo heads, which have large mouths, grab a frozen chunk with no problem. In fact, while feeding these fish the gel mix a 6 inch buffalo head jumped at my fingers, which were holding a chunk of frozen gel food. When I jumped in surprise, he became attached to my finger, and fell to the floor. This was the best testimony that my recipe was a big hit. The fish was put back in the tank with no damage.

My recipe is not original, and as the saying goes, "whatever works for you." Use it as a guide to come up with your own recipe that will be best for the particular fish you keep. I might be imagining it, but after feeding this gel food, my fish look healthier and show more color. If any GCAS member would like me to prepare this food for them to try, I will donate any proceeds, after expenses, to the GCAS.



GCAS Classifieds

FOR SALE: 50 Gallon Breeder Tanks (52 gal.) 48 X18 X 14H. Drilled, with bulkheads. \$25ea.

Call Coral Aquarium: 718-429-2934

FOR SALE: Tank: 220 Long. Looking for someone who will take the whole system, move it out and give me a decent offer. Not looking to make a mint off it.

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(917)837-6346**



Pictures from our



Emma and Ben Haus



Bob Klein & guest Kristin



Gilberto Soriano & Ming



Ron Webb, Elliot Oshins, Ed Vukich



Pete D'Orio, Ed Vukich, Jeff Bollbach



Dan and Marsha Radebaugh

2014 Awards Banquet



**Roll of Honor:
Dan and Marsha Radebaugh**



**Aquarist of the Year:
Leonard Ramroop**



**30-Year Member Award:
Horst Gerber**



**Breeder of the Year:
Mark Soberman**



**30-Year Member Award:
Ben and Emma Haus**

Author Awards



**Author of the Year:
Al Priest**



Joe Gurrado



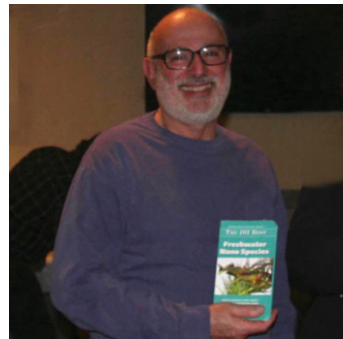
Dan Puleo



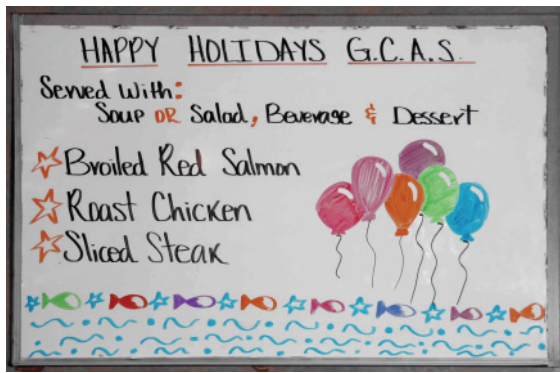
Jeff Bollbach



Jules Birnbaum



**Author Raffle Winner:
Steve Sica**



Flagship Diner Welcomes the G.C.A.S.



Sharon Barnett



Bob Hamje



Steve Miller



Al Grusell



Joe Gurrado



Walter Gallo



Andrew & Jillian Jouan



Marsha Radebaugh &
Barbara Small



Donna & Steve Sica



Herb and Michelle Walgren



**Harry Faustmann, Florence Gomes,
Joe Ferdenzi, and Bill Adams**



Mark Soberman



Denver Lettman



Dan Puleo



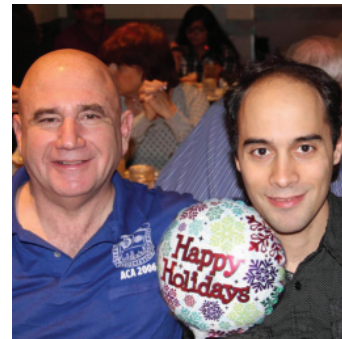
Peter & Lorraine Goldfein, with Ron & Fran Kasman



Rich Levy & Florence Gomes



**Marty -- Winner of the
Hat Door Prize**



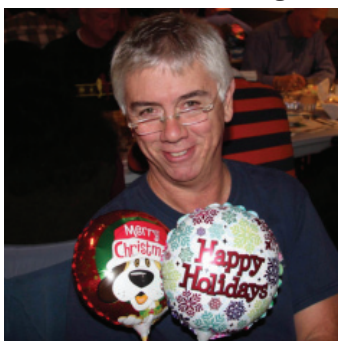
**Michael Gallo & nephew
Marty**



**Leonard Rammroop with
daughter Lauren**



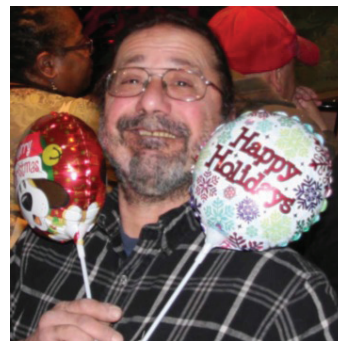
**Richie Waizman &
Natalie Linden**



Jeff Bollbach



Bill Amely



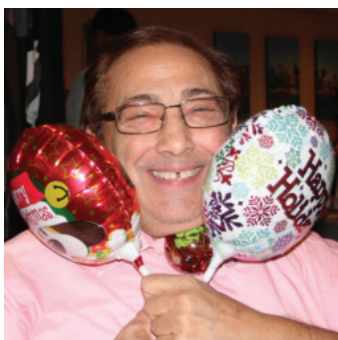
Pete D'Orio



Horst & Linda Gerber



Joe & Anita Ferdenzi



Ron Wiesenfeld



Michael Macht



Jules Birnbaum

Photos by Susan Priest

AN AQUARIST'S JOURNEY

Story and Photos (unless noted) by Rosario LaCorte

Chapter 11

The early 60s also brought Jorgen Scheel to our country. I was part of an international group that was involved with the advancement of killifish. Scheel wrote his Killifish Letters, which were a compilation of his crosses of a large number of cyprinodonts, a plethora of his experiences, and the history of many killies. I still have my copy of his works that he sent me. It came to 175 typewritten pages of information. There were approximately 29 people internationally who received the Killie Letters. They can now be seen on the AKA web site. You may also find them at http://info.killi.net/articles/by_Author/Scheel/.



From left to right: Fred Gloede, Col. Jorgen Scheel, and myself. Photo taken in the early 60s.

Jorgen held the rank of colonel in the Danish military, and was involved in military matters with NATO. He stayed at our home for a week, and when necessary would travel to New York to fulfill his military obligations, returning in the evening. I was able to show him around to various fish-related establishments. We spent some time visiting with Fred Gloede, as well as with Bill Riese, at his wonderful place on Pelham Parkway. Not many people were aware of it, but Scheel also held the title of Count in his native Denmark. He was an extremely intelligent man, and contributed greatly to the study of killifish and their chromosomes.

Scheel's book **Rivulins of the Old World** is still a must-have for those interested in cyprinodonts. His photographs were outstanding for that time. Several years earlier I had become interested in photography, so I questioned him about his technique. He explained to me that he used a telephoto lens, while photographing from a distance in his room. This allowed him to stay far enough from his subjects to allow them to relax and stay calm as he took the photos.

Scheel was also a very generous man, and willing to share some of his collections with others. He exchanged eggs with many aquarists throughout Europe, the U.S., and South America, particularly Argentina. He placed the eggs in glass vials, adding oxygen to retain viability. He sent me eggs on several occasions, but unfortunately none survived the trip. The vials being very small and tightly sealed. If one egg fungused, all the oxygen in the vial would be consumed.

Scheel was very active for a number of years, and contributed much to our knowledge. Later in life he developed heart disease, and moved to the south of France, where the weather was more to his liking. I heard from him on a few occasions during this time; his last letter to me was about doing some work with the annual fishes of Brazil, but unfortunately he did not live long enough to pursue this wish very far.



Jorgen Scheel to the left, in the center is Bill Riese, with Fred Gloede to the right. Pictured below, the ruby tetra, *Axelrodia riesei*, was named for Bill.



Ruby tetra. Photo from shop.panta-rhei-aquatics.com.

Tony Cirincione was a very active aquarist in the New York metropolitan area, and a member of most of the societies in the New York/New Jersey area. I met Tony in the mid-50s, and would see him several

times a month, as I had memberships in several of the same societies. Tony was well-known for the giant *Osphronemus* gourami he maintained in a large tank. When small, these fish resemble the handsome chocolate gourami *Sphaerichthys osphromenoides osphromenoides*, but many aquarists get fooled, thinking they will remain that way. Tony's specimen was the largest I had ever seen, and was the centerpiece of his collection.



The giant gourami, *Osphronemus goramy*.
Photo from Animal-World.com.

In 1962 Tony asked me to give a presentation to the New York Aquarium Society, which met in the Museum of Natural History. It would be my second appearance there, having spoken to them a year earlier. The president of the club was a Mrs. Randall, a delightful lady who had held the position for some twenty years, according to Tony.

As the reader may recall from an earlier chapter, the very first time I gave a slide presentation I embarrassed myself by losing my voice in the early stage of the program. So this time once again, I stood in front of the audience, and suddenly my voice just ceased to resonate. One of them members offered me a glass of water, and as I began to drink it, a very silent group focused on my dilemma. I thought, what would I do if this continues? Should I just silently present the slides, so that it would not be a total disaster? But after a few moments my voice returned, much to the relief of the audience and myself.

How did that happen? The answer turned out to be simple, and I shared it with the audience. A few months earlier I had discovered some new daphnia ponds, located in what we called The Meadows. It was on the edge of Newark Airport, and I knew every water hole that was there. I spent many hours there over the years, collecting tubifex, daphnia, glass larvae (*Chaoborus crystallinus*), and mosquito larvae. There was an abundance of daphnia there, but also an abundance of gnats flying about, getting into your face and eyes. It was such a nuisance using a long-handled net while at the same time trying to shoo the gnats away, that I decided to try smoking a cigar while collecting, hoping the smoke would keep them at bay. In those days a package of four Bering cigars could be purchased for one dollar. Since I went to

The Meadows every day after supper, I began to enjoy smoking the cigars, even though I wasn't inhaling—just puffing. Thus, prior to giving the program my throat became dry from the smoke, causing the loss of voice.



Photo from NJAS Christmas Party of 1983: Front row, left to right: Charlie Grimes, me, George Lauten, Louis Rexford. Back row, left to right: Bill Jacobs, Tony Cirincione (arrow), Rich Soblewski, and Dan Cuvillo.

As Tony and I drove to the museum for our first presentation, he mentioned that Mrs. Randall was a very knowledgeable art historian. Since I had done some artwork, and had some knowledge of it, I shared my interest with Mrs. Randall. On my second visit, Tony told me that Mrs. Randall had asked him if she could trust me and my integrity, and that, following his affirmative response she was planning to invite him and his wife, and as myself and Jeannie, as well as another couple from the society, to come to her apartment and view some of her precious oil paintings. Her residence was on Central Park West, which was then home to the upper crust of the city.

As we entered her apartment I noticed that the phone number was blocked out and the Venetian blinds tightly closed. On the walls a number of oil paintings were on display, all by prominent artists. One that I recall was a landscape by Samuel B. Morse, the inventor of the Morse code. I was aware of his having been a noted American artist, and he would probably have been better known for that had he not gained even greater fame by inventing the code which was to be the basis for worldwide electronic communication well into the 20th century. I became aware of his paintings in 1946, seeing a landscape on display at the Newark Art Museum.

I was quite impressed by the wonderful collection she had on her walls. Mrs. Randall had prepared a table-full of goodies for us to munch on, and as we sat down to eat she excused herself, saying that she needed to prepare her large painting for view, which was in an adjoining room. After fifteen minutes or so, she led us into the room, which was in complete darkness except for a floodlight, strategically placed to bring out the very best in the masterpiece. It had been locked in a wall safe, and now I could understand why she was so careful about whom she invited in.

The painting, in a magnificent frame, was a rendition of a nude Venus, with two cherubs in a corner, and the Devil opposite them. It was very impressive – even overpowering. She went on to explain that the painting was commissioned by Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, the monarchs who financed Christopher Columbus' voyage in search of a new route to the Orient. She would not reveal the name of the artist, but did say that this painting was the only work representing that artist in the U.S. at that time.

In November of 1961 the Metropolitan Museum of Art purchased Rembrandt's painting of Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer at auction for 2.3 million dollars—the very first time a painting was sold for over a million dollars. Mrs. Randall asserted that her painting was of even greater value, further divulging that she and her husband had bought the painting some twenty years earlier, using most of their life savings. At the time of purchase, the only figure that could be discerned was Venus. An Italian professor of art who specialized in restoration worked on it for a year, painstakingly removing the dirt and grime accumulated over 500 years of containment in a European castle. The three other figures became visible as the painting was cleaned. There were artists who painted with 24-karat gold, and Mrs. Randall pointed out the flecks of gold in this painting.

Very knowledgeable about art, and always searching antique stores for hidden treasures, she once came across an etching by François Boucher (1703-1770), a Parisian artist known for his racy drawings and paintings. She paid \$25 for the etching, which turned out to be worth \$400—a nice find! This whole episode of the painting was quite memorable, and I felt privileged see the magnificent painting, especially since it was in the possession of such interesting people. I lost touch with Mrs. Randall; she passed away years ago. To this day I never learned who the artist was who created that masterpiece, and I've wondered about it ever since.

Also in the early 60s, my friend Dick Lugenbeel invited Jeannie and me to spend a few days in Washington, DC, and give a presentation to his aquarium society. His most notable member at that time was Helen Simkatis, who became editor of **The Aquarium** magazine. Helen was interested in the

marine side of the hobby, and in 1958 authored the book **Salt-Water Fishes for the Home Aquarium**. Although I had exchanged some correspondence with her, this was the first occasion we were able to chat.

This was our first visit to the nation's capital, and Dick, a wonderful host, gave us a tour of the famous monuments, including a visit to Arlington National Cemetery. I looked about, and was awed by the sacrifices of all who did not return. As I looked around

at some of the names on the headstones, I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw the gravesite of Brigadier General Robert F. Travis, my former commanding officer, and the person Travis Air Force Base was named for. I was truly surprised to come upon his resting place considering the thousands honored there, and the chances of accidentally finding someone I knew.

As mentioned earlier, I attended a number of Pet Trade Shows in the Hotel New Yorker. This was an annual event, attended by many notables, and the convention provided an opportunity to meet them and have a pleasant conversation. At one such

show I met August Roth, the editor of **Aquatic Life**. Augie was a most charming gentleman, and I got to know him quite well. Many of his articles were from well-known German aquarists, such as Fritz Mayer, who also illustrated many of his articles with his own drawings, which were quite good. A little-known fact is that Augie's entire magazine was printed by him; he actually set the type by hand. I recall as an 8th grader taking a print shop class and learning to set type manually. It was a slow, tedious process. Augie had a section in his magazine called "Augie Sez," containing some words of wisdom, along with his profile in black. He gave me a free subscription, which I received for years. He was one of a kind!

In 1964 I received a call from the producers of the NBC television program **Mister Wizard**. The show was the brainchild of Don Herbert, who started it in 1951. Don usually had a boy and a girl who would be part of the program, and they would conduct experiments that could be easily understood by children aged about ten to thirteen. I recall watching the program many times with my children. The producer asked if I could supply some killifish eggs that Don could use to present the program, "Transparent Animals." I supplied them with *Aphyosemion* eggs retrieved from



Brigadier General Robert F. Travis. Photo from Wikipedia.

a spawning mop that were embryonated, and under the microscope would reveal the circulatory system and heartbeat. The accompanying letter* from NBC indicates the success of the experiment. For the next several years the staff folks at NBC were most kind, and at Christmas time I would receive a card wishing me happy holidays. It was an unexpected courtesy, and much appreciated.



Don Herbert with young assistant in 1971. Photo from Wikipedia.

Don Herbert's **Mister Wizard** show lasted until 1965, when it was canceled. Years later it was resurrected and shown on the Nickelodeon channel. Not many people know this, but Don Herbert enlisted in the Army Air Corp during World War II, and became a B-24 pilot. He was attached to 15th Air Force out of Italy, and flew 56 combat missions. Don died on June 12, 2007, at the age of 89.

Sometime in the mid-60s my friend Dennis Simometti and I decided to visit Paramount Aquarium in Ardsley, New York. I had been there a number of times, and knew Otto Schnell, the brother-in-law of Fred Cochu, a well-known collector of Brazilian fishes. They imported many fish during their many years of operation. A Mr. Kramer was assistant to Schnell, and a permanent fixture at Paramount. He was an extremely friendly and congenial man—always a joy to speak with.



Vic Hritz, owner of Crystal Aquarium.

During our visit, Vic Hritz, of Crystal Aquarium, was there making his weekly purchasing trip for the store. I had never met Vic before, but I had heard of Crystal Aquarium. Dennis was a frequent visitor there, and often mentioned the store, which was located at Third Avenue and 91st Street in New York City.

Vic and I hit it off immediately. It was obvious that he had a great affection for fish, and was always on the lookout for new species. At the time, I had a single specimen of *Carlastyanax aurocaudatus* from the Rio Cauca in Colombia. I described the fish to Vic in the hope that he may have had it. He said that it sounded like a fish he had in his shop, and invited Dennis and me to follow him back to the city. I was happy to go and see his store, even though the possibility of finding that particular fish there was remote.

Upon our arrival I was quite impressed by the cleanliness of all the tanks and the picturesque arrangement of each aquarium. The lighting was excellent, showing off the fish to their best advantage. It was a very impressive first visit. Vic pointed out the fish he called the rainbow tetra, and sure enough, it was the species I was searching for. Even better, it was a match to the single specimen I had at home.

Ironically, the species that I wanted, *Carlastynax aurocaudatus*, had been photographed by Aaron Norman, and was from Vic's tanks. The photo can be found on pages 372 & 373 in Gary's **Characoids of the World**. The fish were spawned and successfully reared. The unusual brownish eggs required two days to hatch at 75° F. Many South American characins' eggs hatch in 24 to 35 hours.



Carlastyanax aurocaudatus.

Meeting Vic was the beginning of a lifelong friendship that still endures today, in 2009. Over the years, Vic imported many wonderful fish from Africa, South America, and Asia. He was always generous with me, and made sure that the rare individual fish would end up in my hands.

In 1969 I received a call from Dan Carson, executive editor of **Modern Aquarium**, the official magazine of the Greater City Aquarium Society. I had been a speaker at their fine group several times, so our friendship was quite solid. "Rosario, our editors would like to visit your fish house and do a feature article on your background." I agreed to their proposal, and a date was set for a small contingent of their group. This contingent consisted of Dan Carson, Charlie Elzer, Ray Juschkus, and Gene Baiocco.

The group decided to feature my profile on the cover of their magazine, and titled the article "A

Family Affair.” The centerfold featured a photograph of Jeannie and our oldest son Robert, who was then 16. (See the cover of **Modern Aquarium**, March 2014.) The article was quite flattering, and I was very pleased to have some of my family members mentioned in a favorable light.

A few years later I was invited to speak at the Brooklyn Aquarium Society. The society always had a wonderful turnout at their monthly meetings, and it wasn’t unusual to have more than 150 people in attendance. After my presentation, a member came up to me with the May 1969 issue of **Modern Aquarium** featuring a photo of me on the cover. The woman asked me if I would sign the cover. I said, “Certainly,” and asked her name so I could include it with my signature. She replied, “My name is Marcia Repanes,” so I wrote on the cover: “To Marcia, Best Wishes,” and signed my name. It turned out that Marcia was a dedicated aquarist, and both she and her brother Nick were very active in the society. Marcia was recording secretary for a number of years. I later learned that Marcia’s brother was the world famous author of over 500 books, mostly in the field of science fiction, Isaac Asimov. I ran into Nick and Marcia at many conventions. Marcia passed away in March of 2009.

In 1971 the American Killifish Association Convention was sponsored by the Metropolitan Area Killifish Association. Graham Sisson was the convention chairman. I was asked to be the banquet speaker, an invitation that I accepted with great anticipation. Two major events took place around that time, the first being the banquet. Jeannie and I decided to invite our oldest daughter, Mary Ann, 15 at the time, to go with us. It would be her first outing in a more than a year, after having undergone spinal surgery at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York. The procedure had required 30 days of in-hospital care, and for her to wear a body cast for nearly a year. We were thrilled to have her at the banquet with us after a year of such unpleasantness.

The other event was the procurement of Constance White’s drawings. Constance was the wife of General Thomas White. The drawings, sketched with crayons and colored with pen and ink, were Mrs. White’s renditions of some of the annual fishes in the Rio de Janeiro area of Brazil. I first became aware of the drawings when seeing them in the July 1952 issue of **The Aquarium Journal**. Dr. George S. Myers, who was managing editor at that time, devoted the entire issue to the natural history of the annual fishes. These fishes are short-lived and generally found in temporary pools of water. Their eggs are deposited in the subsoil, to remain in a desiccated state until the next rainy season. When I first read this issue it really made an impression, and it was to have a profound effect upon the rest of my life, opening the door to my involvement with these fascinating fish.

Though Myers wrote about the Whites’ rendition of the Rio species, the article contained no reproductions of Mrs. White’s drawings. So now we knew that the drawings existed, but where were they, and in whose possession? Did General White still have them? I thought it would be great if I could obtain copies of the drawings to use for my banquet presentation. I knew that in 1971 the general was no longer alive, as he had passed away back in 1965. Stan Weitzman had known the general, as he would visit the Smithsonian from time to time, so I decided to contact Stan regarding the drawings. Stan informed me that all of General White’s papers, and Mrs. White’s drawings, had been given to Dr. Myers at Stanford University prior to the general’s death. This also included all the personal correspondence that White had with Myers in the early 1940s prior to our entry into World War II. Dr. Myers, upon his retirement, thought it best to forward all of White’s materials to the Smithsonian, where it could be available for anyone to study them. I mentioned to Stan that I was certainly interested in using the material for my program.

A few weeks before the convention I received an unexpected package. Opening it, I found a box marked ‘Kodak’ containing 36 35mm slides. Holding them up to the light I could see that they were photos of fish drawings. There was no return address, so I had no idea who had sent them. I finally called Stan, asking him if he was the mysterious donor. Chuckling, he confirmed that it was indeed he. I was thrilled! This would be a great program, as this would be the very first time they would be viewed publicly.



Drawing done in crayon by General White's wife Constance in 1940-41; her rendition of *Nematolebias whitei*, named for General (then Major) White by G.S.Myers.

The banquet attracted 150 AKA members—a good-sized group of people. The program ran smoothly. I presented the Whites’ drawings, as well as my own slides of many killies that I had photographed over the years. As I completed the presentation, the entire audience stood to applaud. I was both elated and humbled by the response. A line formed for people to come forward and shake hands. One of the AKA members was Joe Anascavage, a very prominent and active member of the AKA. His very first question was, “Where did you get White’s drawings? I spent a few

hundred dollars trying to get them.” Joe was a retired Air Force veteran of 20 years, and was very familiar with General White. He contacted the general’s daughter after spending a great deal of time and money to locate her, but after finally contacting her, she was not able to supply him with the information he sought concerning the availability of the drawings. I had a nice conversation with Joe, and we would run into one another at subsequent conventions. I always remember the generosity of Joe’s role with *Cyprinodon alvarezii*, a handsome pupfish from Mexico. This convention was an opportunity to meet some of the people from Chicago who were prominent in aquarium circles in that city. One of these was Horst Latzel, who made a point to introduce himself to me. I found Horst, a German immigrant with a thick accent, to be extremely friendly, outgoing, and comical. I immediately liked him. George Maier, himself a German immigrant and the owner of a pet shop in Chicago, was Horst’s best friend. He was also a very popular and respected hobbyist in Chicago.

Horst introduced us, and I could feel a veil of embarrassment between us. As you may recall from earlier pages, several years back George had circulated a letter condemning my involvement with the Instant Fish craze. Horst, in a roundabout way and without mentioning the incident, encouraged us to forget the past. I never once mentioned my feelings to Horst or to George.

Horst asked me if the contingent of Chicago hobbyists could visit my fish house during their attendance at the weekend convention. I responded that I would be delighted to have them visit. Jeannie was well aware of the situation, and suggested that nothing would be gained by bringing up the past.

We determined that Sunday would be a great opportunity for the group to visit. Upon their arrival, all but George Maier made a bee-line for the fish house, my converted three-car garage that now housed 200 aquariums, and sported six skylights. Jeannie was on the back porch, chatting with George and introducing him to some of our children. Number three son Tom, the youngest of five, and 12 years old, shook hands with George, during which George slipped him a silver dollar. It was a nice gesture.

The group could not have chosen a better time to visit. It was a beautiful Spring day—the Memorial Day weekend. The sun was out in full force, and the skylights illuminated the entire fishroom. The tanks were brimming with fish, many of which none of our guests had ever seen before. The majority of these visitors were interested in killies, and six tanks of fully grown *Nothobranchius rachovii* under natural light was a stunning sight. I also had quite a few discus at that time. The whole episode was very satisfying. Besides having so many species of fish (at that time about 125) for them to view, I had two Styrofoam boxes filled with recently collected daphnia that seemed to impress them.



Nothobranchius rachovii.



Discus

I was pleased to have made some new friends, and also to have had George visit, apparently without being embarrassed. It was an important lesson, and once again demonstrated the old adage, “silence is golden.” George returned to Chicago with a different outlook on what he had written in his letter of several years earlier. He now felt that my contributions were important to the advancement of killifish. We received Christmas cards from him each year until he passed away.

Horst and I became good friends, and shortly after the visit he called me with an invitation to speak in Chicago on the Labor Day weekend of 1972. I accepted, and Horst made the travel arrangements, inviting me to stay at his home. I arrived in Chicago on a Friday evening, and was met at the airport by Horst. We drove to his home, where I met his wife and two young daughters. They were a delightful family, and I thoroughly enjoyed their kindness.

I wasn’t aware of Horst’s faith, so I asked if it would be possible to attend Sunday mass at a local Catholic church. Horst replied, “Ja, Rosario, ve go to church.” With that his wife responded, “Poppa, you go to church? Ja, ve go to church.” His wife and daughters then made a circle and proceeded to dance around Horst, singing “Poppa’s going to church! Poppa’s going to church!” It was pretty comical. Evidently Horst didn’t always attend mass with his family. His wife brought up the girls with a strong religiosity; her brother was a missionary priest in Africa—a member of the order of White Fathers. So on Sunday morning we all attended mass with great satisfaction. Upon our

return Horst cooked up a delicious breakfast. Horst was a chief cook with NBC TV, and had in fact cooked for Johnny Carson when Carson was in Chicago.

Prior to my visit to Horst's home someone tipped me off to Horst's Swiss Alps cowbells. There were several large cowbells attached to a rope, and anyone who was a guest in his home would be greeted in the early morning by the horrible, clanging noise of those cowbells. It was enough to wake the dead! Having been tipped off, I was expecting Horst to scare the daylight out of me. However, one thing Horst did not figure into the equation was the time zone difference. I was already awake at 7 AM (According to my body clock it was already 8AM Eastern time.), so I was lying in bed wondering when Horst was going to fling the door open and ring those confounded bells. As I lay there waiting, I heard a very slight "clang" and thinking, "Uh-oh, here comes Horst," I quickly jumped behind the door and awaited his entrance. Sure enough, the door flew open and he began to ring the bells like there was a fire drill going on. I then appeared from behind the door, exclaiming, "Aha! I was waiting for you!" We both had a good laugh.

On Sunday Horst dropped me off at O'Hare Airport to catch my flight home. It was going to take a while, as dark clouds were gathering over O'Hare, and the storm was covering the entire path of our flight. Jeannie was at Newark Airport with our oldest son Bob, awaiting my return. I had to wait at O'Hare for six hours, not arriving in Newark until 3 AM.

In the latter part of 1973, I was notified that Horst was in the hospital for a triple bypass. I subsequently heard from George Maier that the surgery was a success and that Horst was doing well. We were all thrilled with the outcome, but we soon received another call informing us of Horst's sudden death on October 5, 1973. I was really shocked by this, not understanding how such a thing could happen. The doctors determined that Horst had an aneurysm, which had caused his untimely death. It was tragic for his wife and children. Horst was still a young man of 44 in the fullness of life. I wrote a letter of condolence for Horst (see above)

that appeared in **Killie Notes**, then the name of the AKA journal. His wife wrote me a beautiful letter of appreciation.

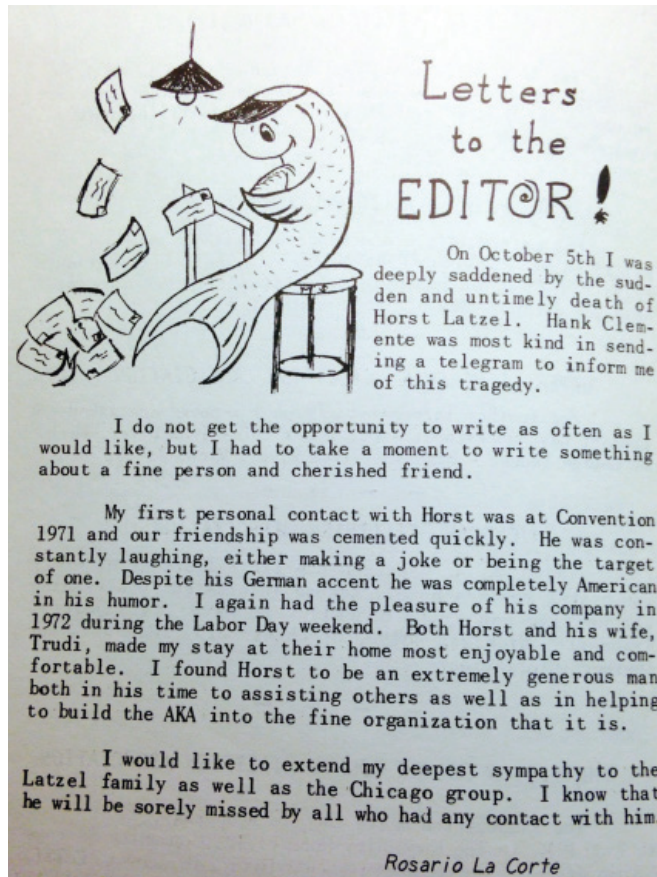
The AKA has a Best Foreign Entry award, called the Horst Latzel Award. This award is given each year at the Memorial Day weekend convention. **Horst Latzel.**

I was delighted that Horst was honored in such a way, for he was responsible for many fish that were sent to the USA from our German friends. Horst spent many hours housing and caring for these foreign entries while preparing for the convention.

For the May-June 1970 issue of **Tropical Fish World**, Joe Bellanca, the editor, contacted me suggesting a feature article on my work with fish. Joe titled the article "Man with a Mission." We set up an appointment, and upon his visit he took a lot of photographs and spent quite a bit of time interviewing me. At the time I was having a great deal of success with discus, and getting extraordinary results with coloration. The article was very complimentary, and well written. I was well pleased with Joe's overview of the fish house and the work I had done with the fish.

Meeting Joe was a pleasure, as it provided another outlet for fish news, and another view of the hobby. Joe asked if I would do an article on *Julidochromis ornatus*, then rather new on the scene. I had acquired them in the late 1960s. The article, an in-depth profile of *J. ornatus*, was published in the November-December issue.

After this article was published, a young boy in Houston, Texas was stirred to write me a letter. The issue, he said, containing "Man with a Mission" was of great interest to him, but the second article, on *J. ornatus*, gave him the courage to contact me. So in 1971 I received a letter from the young man. "Hi, my



name is Bobby, and I am 12 years old.” He went on to inform me that he had a newspaper route, and saved the money he made (\$40 per month) to buy fish. He mentioned that he had read the article featuring my fish house, and wondered if he could purchase some discus.

I took the time to write him and offer some fatherly advice, suggesting that he start working with less expensive fish, preferably swordtails and platies, learn as much as possible, and get the feel of maintaining fish. Bobby accepted my advice, and periodically I would hear from him. Here was a young man with a very keen interest in fish, and I felt it was important to maintain that interest.

The young man was Bobby Ellerman, who today is one of our foremost historians. When Bobby was 15 years old he contacted me by phone, asking if it would be possible for me to speak at the upcoming Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies convention. Bobby was a very active member of the Houston Aquarium Society, and had suggested my name as featured speaker. I accepted the invitation, and upon arriving in Houston was met at the airport by Bobby and his sister’s fiancé. Bobby had told me that he would be holding a net and a fish book, since I had no idea what he looked like. I looked around expecting to see a normal-sized 15-year-old boy, but instead I was surprised to meet a 6’ 4” young man!

Bobby said that he wanted to stop at his home so that I could see his fishroom. I liked the idea of seeing Bobby’s work with the blue gularis. He had been quite successful, rearing a number of fry. Very impressive for a young man working with a fish with which many more experienced aquarists are not too successful! The problems I noticed immediately were their large size, and lack of quality finnage and color. I correctly diagnosed that the diet he was using consisted of a large amount of beef heart. I explained to him that this diet was unnatural, and that he needed to adopt a different dietary strategy to obtain satisfactory results.

Several years later Bobby wrote an in-depth article on the gularis incident for the Houston Aquarium Society’s magazine, **The Fish Fancier**.

Bobby progressed nicely in the hobby, gaining experience and knowledge. As he got older he decided to get into the theatrical arts. In 1979 he contacted me to say that he had been accepted at Lee Strasberg’s renowned acting school in New York City. Strasberg taught many of the most famous American actors of the middle twentieth century, including Marilyn Monroe.

Bobby’s move to the east coast allowed him to finally visit with us and see my fish house. While studying in New York City, and needing income for room and board, Bobby decided to look for a position with a pet shop, having had experience working in a pet shop in Houston. He applied for a position with Fish & Pet Town, located on 59th Street between Lexington and Third Avenues. The owners, a father and son

team named Dave and Mike Kovin, maintained one of the better shops in the city. Bobby prepared a resumé of several pages, outlining his background and experience while living in Houston. In the resumé my name was mentioned as a friend. According to Bobby, my name leaped off the pages and opened the door for his employment.

Mike, the son, wanted to know how he could make some changes in the display of their aquariums. Bobby’s response was to rid all the tanks of their colored gravel and replace it with natural gravel. He also gave them a contact from whom to purchase an assortment of aquarium plants to make their aquarium displays more attractive. Bobby’s ideas worked, and sales improved dramatically. Although I never met Dave and Mike Kovin, Bobby was responsible for having them visit my hatchery and purchasing fish. Bobby remained with Fish & Pet Town until he completed his studies with Lee Strasberg.

He now has an extensive background in theater. He founded a theater company in Chicago in the 1980s, and today teaches acting, directing, and theater history in New York at the Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute and for NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. While in Chicago he would from time to time send me the theater bill outlining the play and its stars. That lasted about twenty years. In 2009 Bobby gave a presentation on A History of the Hobby, which according to a number of friends who attended the AKA convention, was superb and well received. I’m happy to have been part of his life in the aquarium hobby. It’s a good example of how important it is to



Bobby Ellermann

be patient with young kids who show an interest in the hobby. One never knows how a little kindness can become a big encouragement in someone’s life.

In 1973 I received a call from Edd Kray in Cleveland, asking if I could speak to their aquarium society. I accepted. It was a weekend affair, with the presentation to be given at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Edd picked me up at the airport in Cleveland and drove me to his home, where I would stay for the weekend. Both Edd and his wife Jan were kind to me during our stay. Saturday evening I gave my presentation in the Museum’s auditorium. It was quite different than a usual aquarium society meeting.

The whole arrangement was quite professional, with the projection room in the back of the auditorium and the projector suspended from the ceiling. There was a full screen that cascaded in the 'down' position, allowing excellent viewing for the audience.

My presentation consisted of a variety of rare fish and their reproductive behaviors. Also shown was a series of photos depicting discus spawning, demonstrating the effects of proper nutrition on the coloration of the offspring. It was an excellent group of people, and many questions were asked.

The president of the society was Kathy Bradshaw, wife of Bill Bradshaw, who was also an avid aquarist. Following my presentation Kathy asked if I could stop by her home for lunch on Sunday. My departure was scheduled for mid-afternoon on Sunday, but she said that their place was near the airport, so there shouldn't be a problem. Kathy went on to tell me that her husband Bill had been working with discus for three years. The specimens, she explained, were the size of dinner plates, and they couldn't understand why they were getting such poor spawning results. Edd agreed to take me by their home the following day for lunch, and to see Bill's discus.

The next day the Bradshaws took me to a hatchery greenhouse to view fish that were bred locally. It was an interesting tour. Bill's discus were in a finished basement, and I was certainly impressed by their size. I studied them, and they were certainly healthy, but once they turned to face me head-on, I could not but notice the girth of their bellies, bulging out at the sides. I told Bill that, at three years of age, he would never spawn them. He was surprised, and asked, "Why do you say that?" I responded that "I can tell that you've been feeding them beef heart, and they are loaded with fat, placing a heavy burden on their reproductive organs." Bill conceded that the bulk of their diet had been beef heart. I suggested that he change their diet to one that would include shrimp and plant matter. I also suggested that he contact Jack Wattley, and also include members of his club to join in purchases in order to reduce cost by numbers. Jack was a long-time friend whom, while we had not met personally, I had conversed with on the telephone. Our in-person meeting would come at a much later date.

Bill contacted Jack and placed an order for some young discus. Once the order had been filled, Bill planned his new breeding program, including a better nutritional strategy. Once Bill got started and the youngsters reached maturity he began to have tremendous success. He developed his own strain, which he called American Reds. He then migrated to the culture of piranhas, in which he became highly successful. Over the years we kept in touch, especially during the Christmas season, when we caught up on our yearly activities. I returned to the Cleveland area on several occasions to speak to aquarium societies. The Bradshaws were always my gracious hosts on these occasions.

One day in the early 70s I received a call from Kathy in mid-year, and immediately felt that something was not right, as we usually focused our communication around Christmas-time. "Rosario, this is Kathy, and I don't have good news for you." I could hear the pain in her voice as she told me that Bill had been diagnosed with cancer, had perhaps five months to live. I was totally stunned. He was still a young man, had a wonderful marriage, and so much to live for. He eventually passed away not long after. Bill was a nice guy, and I really enjoyed spending time with him. Kathy continues her annual Christmas greetings to Jeannie and me, and from time to time I will call her. To this day she still has many fond memories of her husband.

In the early 1970s I met Pat Mahoney at one of the North Jersey Aquarium Society's weekend shows. Pat was very active in the American Cichlid Association. He was from the Washington DC area, and a member of the Potomac Valley Aquarium Society. Pat had 40 years of service with the Navy Department in foreign aid programs. He had already attended some of my presentations, and was interested in having me speak at his home society.

We set up a date for my trip to Washington. Since he had told me about his association with the Navy Department, I asked if it would be possible to trace one of my friends, a retired officer in the US Navy. Captain Vito 'Rocky' Milano was one of my close friends when we were stationed at Kessler Field in Mississippi. He was from Jersey City, both of us being Jersey boys of Italian heritage made for a natural bond. In 1948 the congressman from his district appointed him to the US Naval Academy at Annapolis. From the time he entered the Academy until his graduation we stayed in touch. Upon his graduation in 1952 I received a letter announcing his impending marriage to his long-time sweetheart, Irene. After his marriage (at which I was best man) we kept in touch, but several years later, as our families grew, we lost contact. Rocky, on active duty for many years, was at sea more than at home.

Prior to my search request I had been in touch with Rocky after hearing his name mentioned on the radio, as a naval inquiry board was investigating a fire aboard the USS Constellation, to which he was attached. The aircraft carrier was heavily damaged while under construction. Fifty lives were lost on December 19, 1960, and 323 shipyard workers were injured. It was finally commissioned on October 17, 1961. Our families managed to visit one another during this period of turmoil. With all of that, I was anxious to contact Rocky and Irene. I knew that they lived in the DC area, and with Pat's association with the Navy, he assured me that every officer was listed in a book, and Pat felt that locating Rocky would not be a problem.

When I arrived at Dulles Airport in Washington, I was greeted by Pat. As we acknowledged one another,

he was quick to tell me that he had made every effort to locate Rocky. His last home address was listed, but apparently they had moved and no forwarding address was given. I was disappointed, for I had been looking forward to an exciting weekend, giving a presentation and getting together with the Milanos.

Pat reminded me that there would be a gathering of Potomac Valley members, as well as old friend Ed Taylor, who for a short time had been the editor of **TFH**. Also on hand were good friends of many years Dr. Stanley Weitzman and his wife Marilyn. I was delighted to learn of this planned gathering, and looked forward to meeting new people and seeing old friends.

That evening Pat and his wife Maggie had prepared for all the guests, and his home filled rather quickly as the early evening arrived. I was sitting with Ed Taylor and Stan Weitzman in the corner of the living room. I had assumed that all the guests had arrived, as Pat's home was pretty well crowded with the members. The doorbell rang, and as I turned my head in the direction of the entrance, Irene poked her head into the room! I was astonished, as apparently the whole room was well aware of the whole situation. Pat had kept me completely in the dark, and all the guests had remained silent about the deception. After greetings of hugs and surprise, the gathering all had a chuckle about Pat's surprise. The evening was just wonderful!

My presentation the next day was well received. When we returned to Pat's home to retire for the evening, I asked Pat if it would be possible to attend Sunday mass. I certainly didn't want to put anyone out to accommodate my request. Pat assured me he

would attend mass with me Sunday morning, though he wasn't always attending mass as frequently as he once did. He told me that two of his sisters were nuns in a convent, which I thought was wonderful. He wasn't as loyal as he once was. His reason for his decline in attendance was his unhappiness with the Vatican's change to allowing guitars to be used with singing hymns. I agreed with him, and to this day I am not very fond of guitars as instruments to be played in church.

Pat and I were from the old school, having grown up with the Latin mass, and always with the majesty of a pipe organ, but despite my preference of instruments, I didn't allow it to interfere with my attendance. This conversation took place during our drive to mass. He said the guitar mass was held once a month, and he was hoping that this Sunday the guitars would be absent. As we arrived, there they were—two young men strumming on their guitars. As fate would have it, Pat was not a happy camper. Each time the guitars accompanied a hymn Pat would bury his head in his arms. I really felt sorry for him; it did bother him a great deal. As much as I agreed with him, I didn't let it affect my feelings about the mass.

Later that day I thanked Pat for a wonderful week and returned to New Jersey. I continued to see Pat from time to time, and he was always a good friend to some of the aquarium societies in the New York/New Jersey area. Pat passed away On December 12, 1985, leaving a legacy to the American Cichlid Association. Later on, I was pleased to learn that the ACA had decided to honor Pat by creating a cichlid show champion award called the Pat Mahoney Award.



* This letter and other documents will be included when this series is published in book form.

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The fish shops listed below offer discounts to members of Greater City Aquarium Society. To take advantage of these generous offers, just present your Greater City ID before checking out.

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BOWL SHOW RULES

There is a Bowl Show at every GCAS meeting, except our Silent Auction/fleamarket meeting (August) and our Holiday Party and Awards Banquet meeting (December). These 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 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.
- The current Bowl Show Coordinator is Leonard Ramroop, who usually also serves as judge (although guest speakers are often asked to do the judging honors).
- 2.5 gallon containers are available for use (brought to the meetings by the Bowl Show Coordinator), but entrants are responsible for providing enough (and suitable) water for their fish.
- For a fish too large (or too small) for those containers, entrants must supply a suitable container, which must be clear on at least three sides.
- Only one fish per container (i.e., no “pairs”).
- No plants, ornaments, or equipment (filters, airstone, 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

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A SPECIAL WELCOME TO NEW GCAS MEMBER LARRY WHITFIELD!

Here are meeting times and locations of some aquarium societies in the Metropolitan New York area:

GREATER CITY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Next Meeting: April 1, 2015

Speaker: TBA

Topic: TBA

Meets: 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 (718) 458-8437

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: March 13, 2015

Speaker: Discus Hans

Topic: *Raising Discus*

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: March 27, 2015

Speaker: TBA

Topic: TBA

Meets: 3rd Fridays (except July and August) 8:00pm.

Room 120 in Endeavor Hall on the State University at Stony Brook Campus, Stony Brook, NY

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: March 10, 2015

Speaker: Jules Birnbaum

Topic: *Building the Fishroom*

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: March 19, 2015

Speaker: Mark Soberman

Topic: *Catfishes*

Meets at: Quality Inn, 10 Polito Ave, Lyndhurst NJ

Contact: NJAS Hotline at (732) 332-1392

Email: tcoletti@obius.jnj.com

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

NORWALK AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Next Meeting: March 19, 2015

Speaker: Ray "Kingfish" Lucas

Topic: TBA

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/>

How far would **you** go to save a fish?

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.

A British man paid a veterinarian £300 (about \$500 US) to operate on a goldfish. The



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<http://www.practicalfishkeeping.co.uk/content.php?sid=6615>

hour-long operation to remove a lump close to the fish's anus, causing constipation, was performed at Toll Barn Veterinary Centre in North Walsham, England. A second lump was removed from the fish's dorsal fin during the surgery.

The veterinary surgeon, Dr. Faye Bethell, said there was "nothing special" about the fish, but that the customer "just liked it a lot."

Bethell's procedure involved removing the patient from the bowl, flooding its gills with anesthetic-fortified water and using a tiny scalpel to remove lumps, with the surgery guided by a miniature heart-rate monitor. The fish has made a full recovery and is now back in his tank, in his owner's office.¹

An aging copper rockfish with cataracts had his left eye surgically removed two years ago at the Vancouver Aquarium. Then, the bullying began. The other fish started picking on the rockfish for only having one eye. So this past Thanksgiving Dr. Lesanna Lahner, staff veterinarian at the Seattle Aquarium, came up to the Vancouver Aquarium to fit a prosthetic eye into the socket of the copper rockfish. Lahner then oversaw the same operation, performed by the Vancouver Aquarium's head veterinarian, Dr. Martin Haulena, on a yellowtail rockfish.



Both patients are doing well. The copper rockfish is now swimming among its fellow rockfish, just one of the gang. The yellowtail will soon be returned to its home in a display tank at the Vancouver International Airport.

The surgery took about 20 minutes using a cheap taxidermy eye that cost a little over a dollar. The fish were placed on a foam bed during the operation and anesthetized by a specially formulated anesthesia run over the gills. The prosthetic eye was then fixed to the bone above the eye socket by nylon sutures and titanium clips.²



References

¹ <http://www.practicalfishkeeping.co.uk/content.php?sid=6615>

² <http://www.vancouveraquarium.com/health/Pete+McMartin+fish/10723675/story.html>



Fin Fun



You Can Count On It!

Sure, you count from one to ten, but can you do it by correctly matching the scientific names of these numerically named fish?

Common name	Scientific name
<u>One</u> spot betta	<i>Decodon pacificus</i>
<u>Two</u> spot ctenopoma	<i>Epiplatys sexfasciatus</i>
<u>Three</u> spot cichlid	<i>Polydactylus multiradiatus</i>
<u>Four</u> -eyes	<i>Ginsburgellus novemlineatus</i>
<u>Five</u> -lined cardinalfish	<i>Chaetodon octofasciatus</i>
<u>Six</u> bar panchax	<i>Ctenopoma nigropannosum</i>
<u>Seven</u> finger threadfin	<i>Betta unimaculata</i>
<u>Eight</u> -banded butterflyfish	<i>Cichlasoma trimaculatum</i>
<u>Nine</u> lined goby	<i>Cheilodipterus quinquelineatus</i>
<u>Ten</u> -tooth wrasse	<i>Anableps anableps</i>

source: <http://www.fishbase.org/>

Solution to our last Puzzle: **Diner Maze**



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March 20-22, 2015 • Rocky Hill, CT

Pteronotopis welaka, the blue nose shiner, photo © 2011, Tony Terceira

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Mark Denaro	Mike Hellweg
Shane Linder	Brian Perkins

Hartford
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