

modern AQUARIUM



April 2014
volume XXI
number 2

Greater City Aquarium Society - New York

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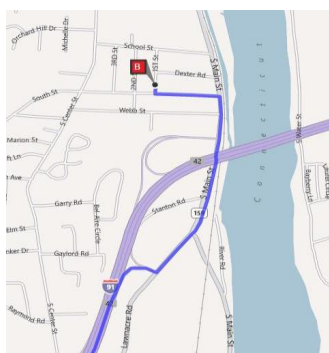
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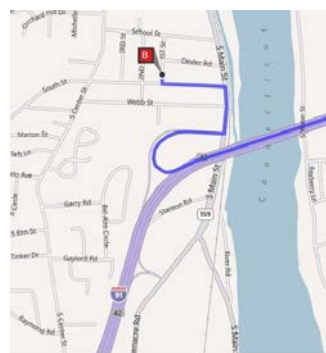
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modern AQUARIUM

Series III Vol. XXI, No. 2 April, 2014

ON THE COVER

Our cover photo this month features *Betta rutilans*. For more information about this diminutive beauty, see Al Priest's "The Reddish Dwarf Fighter," on page 21.

Photo by Alexander A. Priest

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In This Issue

From the Editor.....	2
G.C.A.S. 2014 Program Schedule.....	3
President's Message.....	4
March's Caption Contest Winner.....	6
Cartoon Caption Contest.....	7
The LFS Report.....	8
Coral Aquarium by Dan Puleo	
Our Generous Sponsors & Advertisers.....	9
Never Feed a Dead Fish.....	10
by Susan Priest	
Fishkeepers Anonymous.....	12
by Susan Priest	
Fish Bytes.....	15
by Stephen Sica with Donna Sosna Sica	
Portrait of an Aquarist's Wife.....	17
by Jules Birnbaum	
Exotic Aquarium Fishes.....	18
The Prize Catch.....	
by Steven Hinshaw	
The Reddish Dwarf Fighter.....	21
<i>Betta rutilans</i> by Alexander A. Priest	
Bowl Show Rules.....	23
Sex and the Southern Sting Ray.....	24
by Stephen Sica	
An Aquarist's Journey.....	27
Chapter 2 by Rosario LaCorte	
Member Classifieds.....	34
G.C.A.S. Happenings.....	36
The Undergravel Reporter.....	37
Clearly Unique	
Fin Fun (Puzzle Page).....	38
High Five!	

From the Editor

by Dan Radebaugh

If there's a theme for this issue, it might be called "continued from..." Most obviously, that would refer to the appearance of Rosario LaCorte's **An Aquarist's Journey**, Chapter 2, which you'll find on page 27. I've heard several positive comments about the debut of this autobiography in last month's issue. Coincidentally, Rosario himself is our guest speaker this evening! But there's more—especially for you history buffs! Steve Hinshaw checks in with another episode on collecting **Exotic Aquarium Fishes** (the book, that is). Sue Priest not only identifies last month's Anonymous Fishkeeper, but also picks up the "give us your tips" gauntlet tossed down last month by Jules Birnbaum. See "Never Feed a Dead Fish" on page 10. Jules himself offers some thoughtful insights on aspects of the hobby other than the fish and the gear.

Meanwhile, Steve Sica follows up last month's photo essay on the spotted eagle ray by showing us a ra(y)cy encounter with a southern sting ray. Steve's "Fish Bytes" column also returns this month with his observations on what's noteworthy in recent journals from other clubs (and our own).

Naturally, the Undergravel Reporter ("Clearly Unique") and Fin Fun ("High Five!") fit perfectly into the 'continuing' theme, as does Dan Puleo's "The LFS Report," which this month profiles Coral Aquarium (a shop I'm very familiar with, it being in easy walking distance from my home). Even our cover article, Al Priest's "The Reddish Dwarf Fighter" (page 21) can be looked at as a continuation of Al's ongoing review of the 'coccina complex' of betta species. Hmmm! Maybe we should eventually publish all of the 'coccina' articles together, and call it "The Chronicles of Reddish." Or work up a screenplay, with Vin Diesel voicing the part of Reddish...



* * * * *

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 inverts 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 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!



P.S. Sue Priest apologizes to those of you who were looking forward to the photos she took last month. Unfortunately, there were some technical difficulties with the camera.



GCAS Programs 2014

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 5	Harry Faustmann <i>Live Foods</i>
April 2	Rosario LaCorte <i>The Fish I've Worked With</i>
May 7	Leslie Dick <i>Fish Jeopardy</i>
June 4	TBA
July 2	TBA
August 6	Silent Auction
September 3	TBA
October 1	TBA
November 5	Gary Lange <i>Rainbowfish</i>
December 3	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 2014 by the Greater City Aquarium Society Inc., a not-for-profit New York State corporation, or 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

First of all, I offer our thanks to Harry Faustmann for his excellent presentation at our March meeting. A lot of people showed up to hear it! This evening we welcome Rosario LaCorte as guest speaker, and I'm sure we're all in for a rare treat.

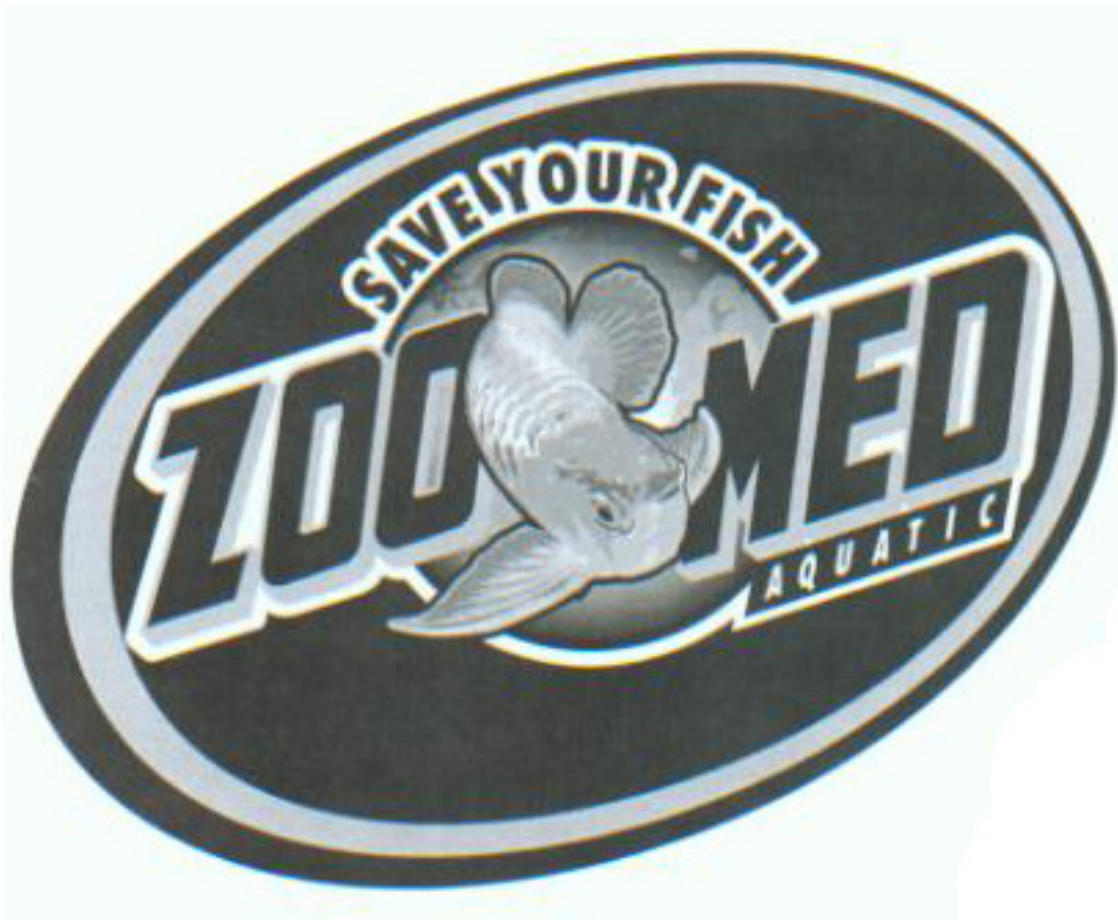
We now have speaker commitments for almost every month this year, though the schedule you see in **Modern Aquarium** doesn't yet fully reflect so. We just haven't finalized who will be speaking in exactly which month. That will be finalized soon.

We're coming into the fish convention time of year, so as you look through your issue of **Modern Aquarium**, be on the lookout for notices of shows that might align with your specific fishkeeping interests. If you haven't been to a convention yet, by all means give one a try. It's a learning experience!

We're also making progress on filling some Board openings. I hope by next month to be able to make some announcements. In the meantime, enjoy your fish!

Dan





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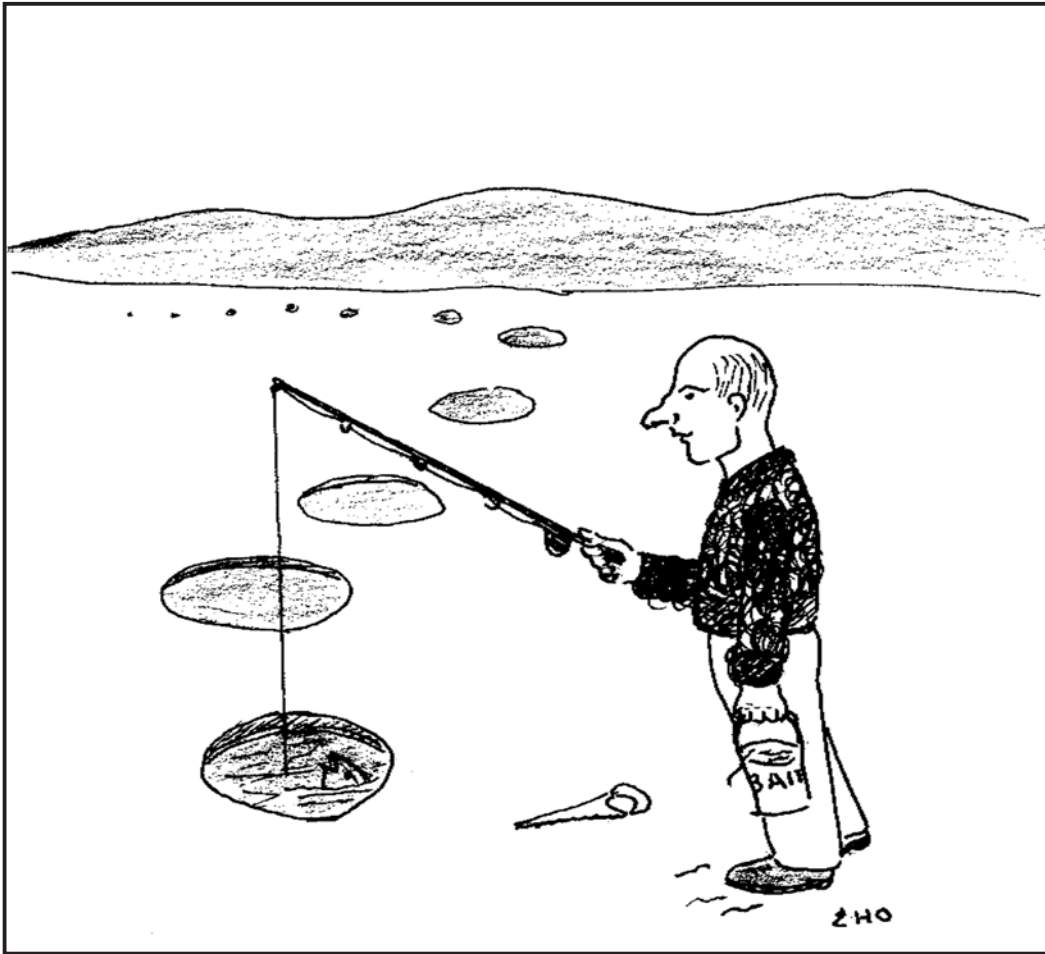
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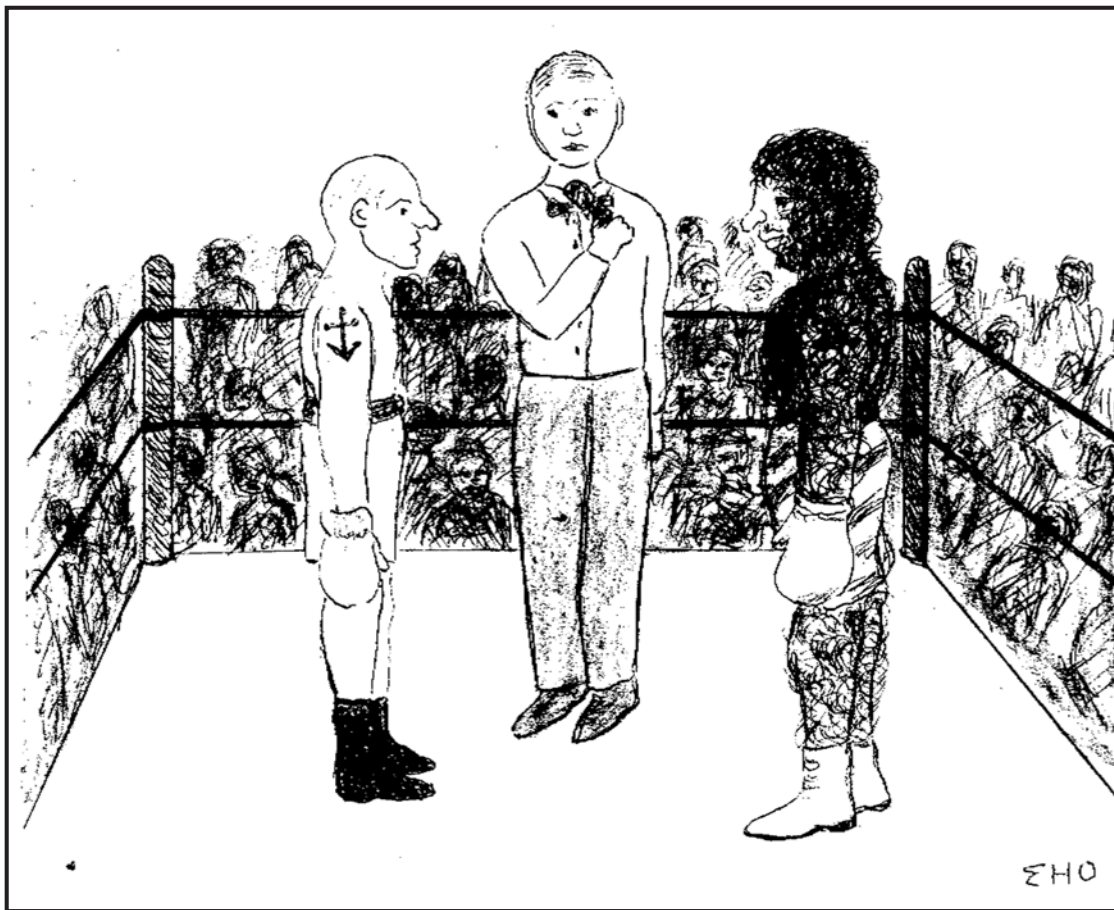
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Modern Aquarium has featured cartoons before. This time though, you, the members of Greater City get to choose the caption! Just think of a good caption, then mail, email, or phone the Editor with your caption (phone: 347-866-1107, fax: 877-299-0522, 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!



Cartoon by Elliot Oshins

Your Caption:

Your Name:

The LFS Report

by Dan Puleo

LFS in the spotlight: Coral Aquarium

75-03 Roosevelt Avenue, Jackson Heights, 11372
(718) 429-3934

This month the LFS Spotlight shines on a store that has been around for a long time. Started in the 1950's, Coral Aquarium came under the ownership of Larry Paul in the 1970s and remains so to this day. Here we have a shop which has seen it all, and continues to adapt to the changing pet industry. Located across the street from the Roosevelt Avenue/74th Street subway hub, it is conveniently located for many queens commuters, and parking on Roosevelt Avenue has never been a problem when I have stopped by.

Originally primarily a fish shop, as the name implies, it now generates much of its income from the dog and cat supply trade. They also sell small birds, rabbits, Guinea pigs and the like. "You have to move with customer demand to stay in business," says Anna, the manager I spoke to on a recent visit. "Nowadays people are all about their cats and dogs, and not so much the fish, but we love them, so we'd never consider getting rid of the fishroom." For that we can be thankful.

When I stopped into their fish room this week, several tanks caught my eye. The first thing I noticed was a tank of young long-finned golden koi (\$13) that showed great potential for the future. Robust color and full-flowing fins are evidence of both good genetics and proper care. Pearl gouramis (\$6) and kissers (\$4) also looked good. On the rarer side, I was happy to see a group of clown barbs (\$9) coloring up nicely. These are one of those fish that tend to look like nothing when they are young and in a dealer's tanks. It's only when they are given time to grow out in a planted tank that they begin to color up into what should be the pride of any fish keeper's tank. It takes a shop like Coral to have the sense and dedication to carry a fish like this, and have the sales staff to encourage their customers to take the plunge on a fish that isn't all flashy at the moment of purchase.

As in many of the fish shops I've reviewed this year, Coral does have one family of fishes that they

seem to excel in. Here it's the livebearers. If you're interested in sailfin mollies this is the place to go. At \$10 a pair you get specimens that are large, robust, and active. Only with rare exceptions will you be able to find better sailfins than Coral's, and never with the same regularity. This week it was whites and oranges in the tank. Other times I've seen really nice Dalmations and wild types. Lyre-tailed mollies (\$4 each) are just as robust, with silvers, blacks and golds also on display. Coral is also the best place to consistently get Lyre-tail swordtails (\$5 each).

Of course no aquarium shop would be complete without angels, and Coral does not fail that test. Nickel to quarter-sized fish are \$4 each, and the silver dollar-sized ones are \$10, and included nice silvers, blacks and marbles. The pre-breeder sized angels are \$25, and they really look good—the gold-head marbles, half-blacks, and especially the red-eyed blacks all look fantastic.

Coral also has a good selection of plants, especially for those not interested in high-tech, super demanding ones. Young but full Amazon Swords are the perfect size for your new setup, and at \$4, the price is right. Bunches of anacharis are \$3, and looking at them in Coral's tanks makes me wonder what I'm doing wrong. It always melts in my tanks, but here it's obviously growing nicely. Red and green cabomba looked even better, and at \$4 a bunch you can't go wrong. They also have some nice young Java fern growing on lava rock that would easily make a great impression in the mid-ground of an aquascape.

The saltwater side of the hobby is also well represented. While not a salty dog myself, I was impressed by a gorgeous coral beauty for \$30, and the black percula clowns (\$20) definitely stood out, and would make an impression in any reef tank. They also had a colony of Tomato Clowns displayed so that you can see how they set up their colony hierarchy.





This month's LFS Report was originally distributed in flyer form at our October, 2013 meeting.

The hard goods department leaves little to be desired, and I find their prices to be quite fair compared to other shops. A large selection Hikari foods figures well in the selection of foods offered, and again, to my thinking, the prices were quite reasonable. I also noticed a 24-27" piece of Mopani wood that was only \$30, which certainly would have been more in many other establishments.

All in all, Coral is a great shop that definitely deserves a visit. They won't steer you wrong, and I know from the experience of fellow aquarists that if you develop a relationship with them they will be interested in buying salable sized fish such as African cichlids and those livebearers.



Photos from Yelp.com.



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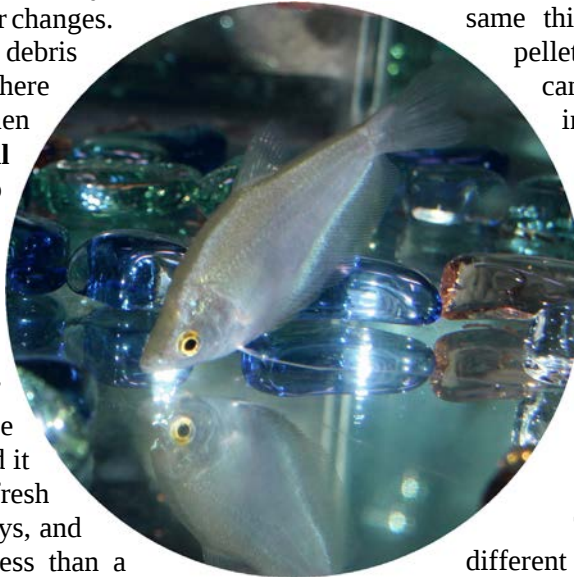
by Susan Priest

In the March 2014 issue of **Modern Aquarium** (last month), Jules Birnbaum shared several “random fishkeeping tips” with us. Then he asked us to “please reciprocate.” So, in the spirit of reciprocation, here are a few fishkeeping habits which I have picked up along the way.

SKIP THE GRAVEL

Some of the tanks which Al and I set up back when we were beginners (23 years ago!) still have a gravel substrate. However, at this point most of our tanks are bare-bottomed. The advantage of this is that you will do more frequent water changes. Why? Because the debris which collects down there is an eyesore, and when you see it, and you **will** see it, you will want to remove it promptly. Recently I did a water change on a bare-bottomed tank, and the next day I noticed a small “pile of stuff” that I didn’t like the look of, so I syphoned it out. That tank got fresh water twice in two days, and it will probably be less than a week before it gets more.

This doesn’t mean that the floor of your tank needs to be boring. You can toss in some colorful glass stones or marbles, a couple of coconut shells or empty flower pots, or even some free-floating or potted live plants. Also, when the glass floor is exposed it acts almost like a mirror, reflecting whatever is above it. Just leave plenty of open space on the bottom so you will notice the accumulation of debris, and keep your siphon handy!



THREE TIPS IN ONE

These tips all have to do with the use of dry fish foods.

- 1) When you open a container of dry food, label it with the date (most manufacturers don’t put a date on their products). If you are still using it a year later, assume that it is past its nutritional peak, and toss it out.
- 2) Store your dry fish foods in the freezer.
- 3) Mix small portions of a variety of flake foods (some vegetarian based and some protein based) into a plastic bag. Shake it up and transfer the food to a container with a tightly fitting lid. (You can do the same thing with a variety of pelleted foods.) Then you can feed a varied diet all in one meal without the need to open several containers. Even the strictest of herbivores or carnivores will appreciate an occasional trip to the smorgasbord.

VARIATION ON A THEME

This is a slightly different approach to one of Jules’ tips. I always keep a couple of unconnected sponge filters tucked behind a castle or a clump of plants in a well established tank. They can stay there as long as necessary (the longer the better) until you need to set up a new tank on short notice. It will provide a hefty supply of nitrifying bacteria, as well as plenty of infusoria for fry to graze on. You never know when you will find something irresistible at a GCAS auction. I can’t remember if it is the Girl Scouts or the Boy Scouts whose motto is to “be prepared,” but in either case, it’s good advice!

THE BETTER TO SEE YOU WITH

This is the simplest tip. When you are siphoning water from a tank, put it into a white bucket. Advertently (is that a word?) or inadvertently, you might remove some fry, and a white bucket will give you a much better chance of spotting them. If your bucket is black, purple, or navy blue, any fry will most likely go unnoticed even if you are looking for them, and will end up being discarded with the water.

DON'T BE SCARED TO C.A.R.E.

Everyone reading this page knows what the **C.A.R.E.S. Preservation Program** is. I have heard it said more times than I can count that "I'm too scared to take care of a CARES fish," or "a CARES fish is too much responsibility for me," or "I have only kept one kind of fish. I wouldn't know what to do!" Maybe you have your own phraseology for this disclaimer. I confess to having said "not me" more than once myself.

GCAS members are better prepared to fight for the endangered fishes of this world than any other collection of people I can think of, and there is plenty of help available. So don't hold yourself back, and don't be afraid to try. There is no one more qualified than you!

NEVER FEED A DEAD FISH

Obviously no one would deliberately do this. The point I want to make here is to be observant of your fishes every day, especially when they are eating. Are they approaching the food with their usual vigor? Is one of the fish being pushed aside by more aggressive ones? Is one of them grabbing food into its mouth and then spitting it out? Is the food still there an hour later? A fish which is not eating should be isolated. It may be ill, or near death, and could endanger the well being of the others.

MIRACLE GROW

Last but not least, don't discard any perfectly good fish water (fresh water only) when there is a plant nearby that would love to have it. I have offered up this tip before, but it can't be over emphasized. Fish water is the perfect fertilizer for your terrestrial plants. The more stubborn the plant, the more it will benefit. Besides, you already have an abundance of it, **and** it is **free**!

My houseplants have been reaping these benefits throughout the winter, but soon I will be filling my front and back patios with as many pots of flowers as space will allow, and planting row upon row of the same varieties of tomatoes and peppers that I have been growing for years. Then there are the raspberries, which are nothing short of a gift from heaven. Spring is when I start to skip the buckets and siphon water from my tanks straight into watering cans. This makes for fewer steps between the tanks and the plants, and with water weighing in at 8 1/2 pounds per gallon, all shortcuts are appreciated!

IN CONCLUSION

I know that there are a lot of you who never touch a bucket, and I know it sounds like I do a lot of siphoning and carrying of buckets, but I really don't. I have a few five and ten gallon tanks for which that is the only practical method to change water. They have also served as the best examples of some of the tips I have been describing.

I hope that each of you has found something here to enhance your enjoyment of the time you spend with your fishes, and that all of your terrestrial plants will do swimmingly well. Spring is finally here!!

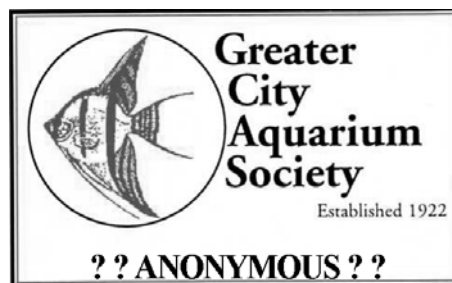
PHOTO:

A female moonlight gourami (*Trichopodus microlepis*) frolicking among the moon rocks.

[*Trichopodus microlepis* was formerly called *Trichogaster microlepis*.]



FISHKEEPERS ANONYMOUS



by SUSAN PRIEST

Have any of you guessed the identity of our latest anonymous fishkeeper? He has attended pretty much every meeting since April of 2013 (that's when he became a member), including our Holiday Party. Al and I ran into him when we were all attending the GCAS event sponsored by **Pacific Aquarium** last August. His favorite aquarium, which he talked about in his bio, is pictured on the next page. Wow! No wonder it's his favorite.



Joe Gurrado

By now you have all recognized the smiling face of Joe Gurrado. We can thank Marsha Radebaugh for introducing Joe to **Fishkeepers Anonymous**. After she described it to him, he went on line to check out some back issues of **Modern Aquarium**. Right away he said to himself "I can do that!"

I think I can speak for all of us when I say that we are looking forward to an upcoming article from Joe which describes his "vintage stainless steel tank." Thank you, Joe, for giving new life to an old favorite **Modern Aquarium** feature.

Suggested Questions

- ✓ Please introduce yourself.
- ✓ Tell us about your favorite aquarium.
- ✓ What was your very first fish?
- ✓ Tell us about your education as a fishkeeper.
- ✓ Is there someone you think of as a mentor?
Tell us about him or her.
- ✓ Describe your "Fantasy Fish Tank."
- ✓ If you were a fish, which one would you be?
- ✓ Who is your "Hobby Hero?"
- ✓ What fish which you have never kept would you like to acquire?
- ✓ Describe your biggest fishkeeping "bloop!"
- ✓ Describe your most memorable fishkeeping experience.
- ✓ What changes have you seen in the hobby during your tenure as a fishkeeper?
- ✓ What advice would you give to a beginning fishkeeper?
- ✓ What are your fishkeeping goals?
- OR write a narrative story -

As of this writing, no new biographers have stepped forward. I'm hoping that those of you who enjoyed reading this column back in the day, as well as some of you newer members, are saying to yourselves "I can do that!" You can send your submissions to **snpriest@yahoo.com** or give it to me at a meeting, or snail-mail it to the return address on your reminder postcard. Handwritten is no problem!



REMINDER:

Contributors to **Modern Aquarium** of text and/or photos are entitled to a second "author's copy" of the issue in which they appear, including **Fishkeepers Anonymous**.



Joe Gurrado's favorite tank

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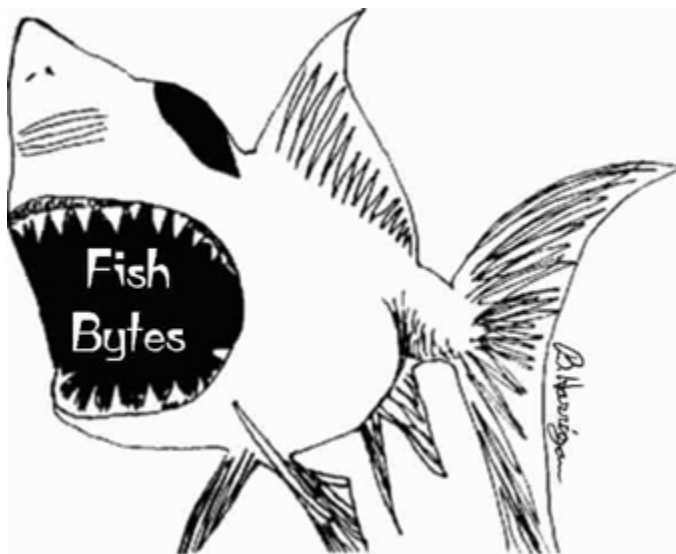
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An occasional column for society exchanges, guest appearances, articles, and items of general interest. We try not to bite off more than we can swallow. If you wish to offer comments, suggestions, or any information that you would like to see in this column, the authors encourage you to contact us through the Editor (gcas@earthlink.net), or at a monthly meeting.

by Stephen Sica with Donna Sosna Sica

Well, it's the end of January and my conscience is beginning to disturb me. In less than two months another GCAS season begins. I know that I have to write at least one column in this new year to keep "Fish Bytes" occasional. Not to change the topic, but perhaps on a brighter note for me, another inch of snow has fallen early this morning while everyone was asleep. The outside temperature is fourteen degrees. One of my jobs today is to clean the snow from the car and drive Donna to an 8 AM medical appointment, as well as a visit to our dentist at noon. Since I was fortunate enough to escape a follow-up appointment, I should have some down time in both waiting rooms.

Oh well, I guess that it's time to begin my (annual?) column. At this moment the problem is that the publications that I receive via e mail are on another computer, and publications that are postal mailed to me are scattered somewhere in the house as a result of strict orders to clean up the place for last month's holidays and our dog Cordelia's January birthday and adoption party. This means that while I'm waiting at Donna's first appointment, the long one, I have no fish information to offer anyone who actually reads this column. Those who do read it already know, or usually figure out soon enough, that much of the stuff that I write has nothing to do with fish. I do this because our illustrious Editor is

always seeking new and different perspectives. I do admit that he seeks these new perspectives about fish related topics, but no one, especially me, is perfect. Just ask my wife.

It only takes an hour or two, maybe less, to write a simple two or three hundred word article about something that you know about or have an interest in. If you're like me, and don't know that much, you can ask questions in your article and let



Donna is always on the prowl for fish gossip: "Start talking or you're all going to Petland!" "Doe, a deer, a female deer, ray, a drop of golden sun..."

your readers inform you, or you can look it up in a book or on your computer. If you're *really* like me, write about your opinion and offer some conjecture; it's almost as good as making it up! Now I don't truly recommend making up a story, but few things in today's ever-changing world are definitive, so offering conjecture or an opinion can be interesting.

Believe me, our Editor will sincerely appreciate it. Every year one or two, some "non-writing" club members put their words on paper and create an article. It seems to me that more and more new authors are giving it a try, and if you are shy, like the Undergravel Reporter, you don't even have to put a name on your article! I don't recommend this though. Contemplate how exciting it would be to see your article and name printed in **Modern Aquarium!**

Tonight we invited Joyce, a girlfriend of Donna's, over for dinner. Afterwards she and Donna are going to the movies, which is good because it

lets me off the hook. Her friend, who had a slight health scare, is on a new diet. A few weeks ago she discovered canned sardines as a healthy food. She claims that she enjoys them very much. Over dinner, she wants to know if anyone in the “fish club” keeps sardines. Oh well, I guess that sacrificing a night at the movies with my loving wife must have some inconvenience. I told Joyce that if any member of the GCAS has sardines, I imagine that these fish would be kept in their refrigerator. Okay, so now that I’m a sardine expert, I guess that it’s time to say something about other species of fish.

Going all the way back to last May/June’s **Cichlidae Communique**, the author of an article on Chocolate Cichlids, *Hypselecara temporalis*, took all of the photographs for his article with his iPhone! Daniel Spielman, the author, feels that these cichlids are “like a peaceful version of the ever-popular Oscar.” I found this to be very impressive, because the reproduced photos appeared to be of high quality. I don’t even know how to properly operate my cell phone as a phone, much less take photographs with it—and transfer them. In fact, I only carry my phone occasionally, because it’s just too bulky. Once Donna and I were out together but temporarily separated, so she phoned me to meet up. Donna was annoyed that we couldn’t make contact. “Why didn’t you answer your phone?” she demanded. I had to admit that my phone was at home on her bureau. Maybe I could practice taking photographs of Joyce’s sardines in her fridge!

Kevin Plaza’s “The Last Word” column in last July’s **Cichlid Blues** explains that the introduction of Tilapia species as a food fish to ecosystems worldwide is decimating many native cichlid species. This has become a common theme in the natural world. He recommends against eating “grocery store tilapia” unless it comes from a non-harmful-to-other-cichlids source. Who can describe such a source? Well, don’t tell this to my wife, because she just loves to prepare tilapia so that I eat it. She is also quite proficient at making swai taste like things other than fish. Did you know that swai is a very large river-farmed catfish? I’ll guess that it may be a brackish water fish. It is also low in calories.

For livebearer fans, Ed Koerner began a monthly column, “Living With Livebearers,” last September in the Kitchener Waterloo Aquarium Society’s **Fins & Tales**. Many of his topics involve CARES fish.

In the “better late than never” category, Joe Ferdenzi delivered his program, “A History of the Aquarium Hobby in America,” last November at the Bucks County Aquarium Society. His picture and biography was published in the November issue of

The Bucketette. As we all know, Joe has impressive credentials. Of course, the following page was the “Puzzle Corner.” Is this man a conundrum or is the puzzle? On a different note, the December 2013 **The Bucketette** reprinted Joe’s article, “The Legacy of Dominic Isla: Endler’s Livebearer,” that was published in October 2012 in **Modern Aquarium**. I quickly re-read this article, because anything that Joe writes is worth reading. Out of curiosity, I googled Dominic, a former Greater City member and acquaintance of Joe’s through the club. Most sites want you to join in order to research records, but it appears that if I found the correct Dominic, he died in Denver, Colorado in 2009. On a less somber note, **The Bucketette** had a picture of the original computer. Much to my surprise, it is a pencil. You use the front end to write and the back end to delete. It’s quite a simple machine!

If you’re into snails, see Pam Danyluck’s “Apple Snail Care” in the December 2013 issue of **Fins & Tales**. If you are not into snails, that’s okay too. A nice killifish introduction is an article written by KWA’s killifish novice Karen Murray in the January 2014 **Fins & Tales**. Her article is titled “Diving into the Killifish Pond—Caution, Shallow Waters!” In the same issue, if you are looking to add an “algae eater” to your fish tank, Ed Koerner, who works in a very large aquarium store, recommends the bristlenose pleco. Don’t forget to supplement the natural algae in your tank with algae wafers and similar foods to keep your pleco healthy and give it a long life.

Mark Soberman will be participating in The Northeast Council of Aquarium Societies 39th annual convention. By the time that you read about it here, the convention will have concluded, so thanks, Mark, for a successful presentation on the “Keeping and Breeding of Corydoras, Aspiforas, and Brochis Catfish” on March 28th. The next day he offered “African Catfish: Old Favorites and New Possibilities.” I call that a full schedule!



PORTRAIT OF AN AQUARIST'S WIFE

Story and Photo by Jules Birnbaum

Way back in 1954 I was away at Air Force boot camp and engaged to a 19 year old girl back in Flushing, Queens. At the time, I had several fish tanks in my family's basement. Elaine (my future wife) and I wrote each other almost every day. I kept all her letters.

Last month, my wife of 58 years pulled out all of my letters and read them to me aloud. A few were of particular interest. In the middle of a letter telling me about what she was doing back home, she wrote, "I fed your fish today." This was repeated in several letters.

When I arrived home those fish were all doing very well. In 1955 we were married and I received my commission as a second lieutenant in the Air Force. I was assigned to a Texas air base and my wife Elaine came with me. That was the end of those fish tanks.

After my military service we came home, bought a home, and had two children. Naturally, I discussed a fish tank for the children, to be placed in the den (Or was the tank for me?). Having some experience in the hobby, I suggested a small 100 gallon tank with a few beginner fish such as discus (HA!). Elaine was very understanding, and said go ahead. That tank did very well until a faulty thermometer caused me to keep turning up the temperature on the heater. I came home one night to cooked fish. Elaine was again very understanding, and we restocked.

The next catastrophe was what we aquarists all dread. We heard a crack, and rushed into the den to see a huge crack in the aquarium's glass. Elaine, still not a fish person, allowed me to start again. As the children grew we spent more and more free time at our community ice rink. Elaine loved ice skating, and the family concentrated on the sports of ice dance and ice hockey. We finally sold the tank and stand to a local man.

From the time we met, Elaine has been very understanding, but never became more than an aquarist's wife. After retirement we traveled to England, France, and Italy. We continued to pursue Elaine's love of ice skating, but age took its toll, and

with more free time, back came my childhood hobby in the form of a 55 gallon aquarium placed in our upstairs den.

Elaine is into needlepoint, and made me a 3' by 4' impressionist fish scene with sea horses, whales, and some smaller fish. This needlepoint is framed, and now hangs in our upstairs den (see attached photo) where we have three tanks. The next step was a few more tanks, but we were worried about the weight in that upstairs den, and decided on the building of a fishroom by converting our garage. My wife

naturally wanted a new laundry room and storage space as part of the project. Elaine rarely enters the fishroom other than to encourage me to keep it clean, though she does like to see the cichlids parenting their fry.

One of Elaine's interests is the English language, and she usually screams at the TV when poor grammar is used. She proofreads all the articles I write for **Modern Aquarium**. Although she professes not

to know what she is reading, she has picked up lots of knowledge. She recently read the chapter one of Rosario LaCorte's autobiography, now appearing in **Modern Aquarium**, and commented favorably on it. She is looking forward to future chapters that have the same human interest as the first one.

After 60 years together and 58 wedding anniversaries there are some lessons to be learned. The first is that love conquers all. The second is to be understanding of each other's interests and at least try to stay positive. Third, try to get your spouse involved in your hobby in some small way, such as shopping trips with a stop at a local pet shop. Ask for help decorating a tank, or selecting fish your spouse would like to see in your tanks. Fourth, as tough as it is to do, sometimes remember to say, "I'm sorry." Fifth, stay out of her kitchen with those bugs and other aquarium stuff. The sixth, seventh, and remaining lessons are, LOVE CONQUERS ALL!



Exotic Aquarium Fishes

The Prize Catch

by Steven Hinshaw

When a collection is completed or a long sought object is found, how does one describe the surreal feeling that ensues? It just seems odd, almost too easy to be done—and often is followed by relief, wonderment on why it took so long, or maybe there is a bit of depression. After all, the *quest* can be the driving force behind the collection, not the piece itself! I think I live for that awesome intensity of opening the package and involuntarily whispering: “Whoa, that’s it!” It is very satisfying. A real catch! But what’s next after the excitement ends?

Obviously, it is hard to articulate the elation of acquiring the last three items in the quest of all variations of **Exotic Aquarium Fishes (EAF)** published by William T. Innes from 1935 to 1956 (with subsequent editions into the 1980s). For a full



Figure 1 : The 2nd variation of the 4th Edition published in 1942. Note the smoother linen boards.

overview of the collection please see the articles in **Modern Aquarium** from the March, May, and July 2012 issues from which this note continues.

The initial prize is a third variation of the 4th Edition **EAF** published during WWII (figure 1). The second, the extremely rare Gothic-styled typeface of an early dust jacket (figure 2). And finally, you may also recall the anecdotal collection of items featured on the back of the 19th Edition **EAF** dust jackets. That hunt ended with the acquisition of the very hard to find November 1956 vol. 25, no. 11 issue of *The Aquarium Magazine* (figure 3).



Figure 2: An early example of the **EAF** dust jacket in green ink. This one was found on a 6th Edition (1945). Note the Goudy Lombardic Capitals typeface.

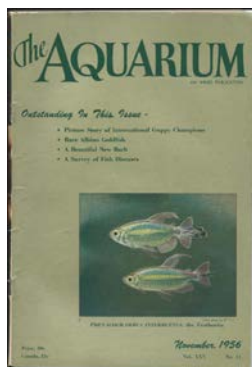


Figure 3: The November 1956, Vol. 15, No. 11 issue of *The Aquarium* magazine. Note the silvery olive color of the background.



Figures 4 a & b: The three variations of the 1942 4th Edition of **EAF**. Note the bindings of Leatherette, Linen, and Iridescent Vinyl, respectively.

The 4th Edition was published in 1942, when resources were becoming scarce and rationing was in full force. Alan Fletcher, who did most of the work on the 19th Edition **EAF** (1956), verified that this was a trying time for printers, and they had to use whatever they could get to publish their books—in this case, three different types of boards to bind the book (figures 4a & 4b). The first variation (presumably the first in the series), looks like all the other editions, with its dark green leatherette boards, gilt rasboras on the



Figure 5: The Leatherette and Linen boards almost match in color. Also note the texture differences.



Figure 6: Granny Smith Apples. The darker shades may resemble a 4th Edition book cover.

cover, and a yellow-colored hatchetfish on the paper spine label. The most common book appears to be lime green with vinyl-like coated boards that have a wavy iridescent pattern. All else is the same as its siblings. From my experience, the rarest is the third variation, with linen textured boards a shade off of forest green. Its color almost matches that of the first variation (Figure 5). I learned of this variation through a collector of antique aquarium/tropical fish paper who had once owned a copy. He recalled the boards being somewhat smoother and having a muted “Granny Smith Apple” green color. Although it is lighter in tone than the traditional boards, the color is darker than a Granny Smith apple (Figure 6), which may be the reason I had such a hard time locating an example!

Indeed, when describing this book having “felt-like boards,” I got better leads! I have speculated that the first variation with the leatherette boards came first, then the smoother boards came next as the best match, and finally, as supplies ran out faster than expected, the wavy iridescent became the standard for the rest of the run. It would be interesting to find out if all the 4th Editions were printed at the same time, or in batches throughout that year(s), responding to demand. The 5th Edition did not come out until 1944, so there were several years in which the 4th could have been printed (despite the publishing date of 1942). Of course other permutations could also be true. We may never know; the important thing is that all three examples exist and are in one location.

The second addition is the much sought after and mysterious Gothic styled typeface dust jacket printed in green ink (figure 2). However, it isn’t a Gothic typeface! When I can’t figure out a typeface or font, my “go-to guy” is Michael Yanega, who runs the website <http://bowfinprintworks.com>. Mike had no problem identifying the letter style as: “Goudy Lombardic Capitals from the Monotype Goudy Text typeface.” He also informed me that “Fortunately, they digitized this old metal typeface,” referencing the site: <http://www.myfonts.com/fonts/mti/goudy-text-mt/>. If you check it out, you will see a whole family of typefaces in the Goudy family including ours, the Goudy Lombardic Capitals! The typeface was designed by Frederic W. Goudy in 1928 and published by Monotype, fitting nicely into the early history of *Press of Innes & Sons*. It was digitized and offered by MyFonts.com in 2001. An example from the glyphs chart is seen in Figure 7a. Incidentally, the next generation of dust jacket used the Goudy Handtooled typeface designed in 1915 (!). (For the glyph cart, see <http://www.myfonts.com/fonts/mti/goudy-handtooled/std/glyphs.html>, or refer to Figure 7b.)



Figure 7a: Partial Glyph Chart of the Goudy Lombardic Capitals designed in 1928—the typeface for the early EAF dust jacket.



Figure 7b: An example from the glyph chart of the Goudy Handtooled Typeface. This typeface was used on the second generation of dust jackets from about 1947 to 1955.

The person I acquired the jacket from did not recall when or where he got it, but it graced his 6th Edition on which it was wrapped. Since I already have a signed copy of the 6th Edition, as well as a trophy 6th

Edition, I only wanted the dust jacket. Eventually we came to a trade agreement involving the exchange of several books and a bit of cash to seal the deal. This was the only example the seller had seen in his 30+ years of collecting such things! It has been inserted into a protective archival cover, and again protects a 6th Edition EAF. The only other reference to this style of jacket is in Stu Wheeler’s article referenced in the April 2012 *Modern Aquarium* article. Mr. Wheeler relates that this Gothic dust jacket appeared on his 5th Edition, but that it was on EAFs from the 8th Edition on down to the 1st. The other nice feature of this 95% complete dust jacket is that the title on the spine runs from the bottom up. I have an incomplete 10th Edition that came from England with this same orientation (while all other titles in the collection run from the top down); presumably, differences between the United States and European markets (Figure 8). So this jacket provides two things: 1. a complete spine title orientation, and 2. the early typeface (Figure 9)!



Figure 8: Left—title on spine runs from the bottom to the top. Right—the title runs the opposite way. These differences are seen between the USA and European markets.

For the third item, I located a seller on Aquabid.com who had just found a mint copy of the November 1956 *The Aquarium* magazine, and was willing to sell me his original.



Figure 9: Early dust jacket (left) thought to have been used from the 1st edition to the 8th. Later dust jacket (right) found on 8th edition through the 18th edition. Note the difference in typeface and spine title.

Unfortunately, the copy he was replacing had a rolled-over spine, but otherwise was in excellent condition. Didn’t matter; I wanted this very hard to find item, and the story behind it made it special! Purchased by himself as a young man off the rack in 1956, he had kept it as part of his entire collection of *The Aquarium* all these years! He had wonderful stories about his aquariums and treasured EAF books, even recalling the first one he bought. Nostalgically, it was hard to give up this magazine. Despite the claim was that it was the hardest one to find, he was willing to let it go to a good home. I am truly honored to be its current steward. Note the difference in color between the one featured on the 19th Edition dust jacket and the actual magazine (Figure 10).

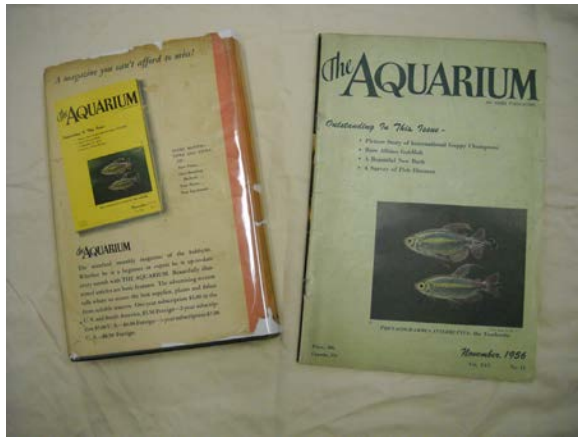


Figure 10: Early example of the 19th Edition of EAF with the corresponding November issue of The Aquarium magazine, both from 1956.

Is the collection really complete? No, of course not! There are always the mint-condition trophies to find; BUT, there is one burning question I'd like to solve. When did the edition numbers start being printed on the dust jacket? The 10th Edition (and earlier) does not have the edition number (see Figure 9), while the 13th on up do (Figure 11). Unfortunately,

my collection is missing the dust jackets for the 11th and 12th Editions which would provide the answer. Do you have them?! As the seller of Goudy Lombardic Capitals dust jacket realized a nice wad of cash in his pocket, and a close friend once prophesized, "when you get down to the end of the collection and need that final piece, you will pay more than it is worth; trust me." I didn't believe him. However, now I appreciate how insightful he was—and I am prepared to do it again!

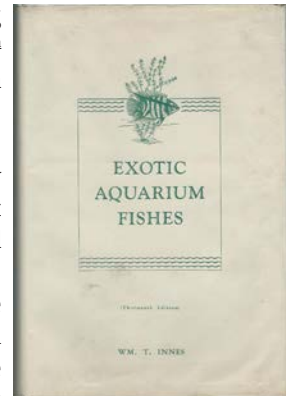
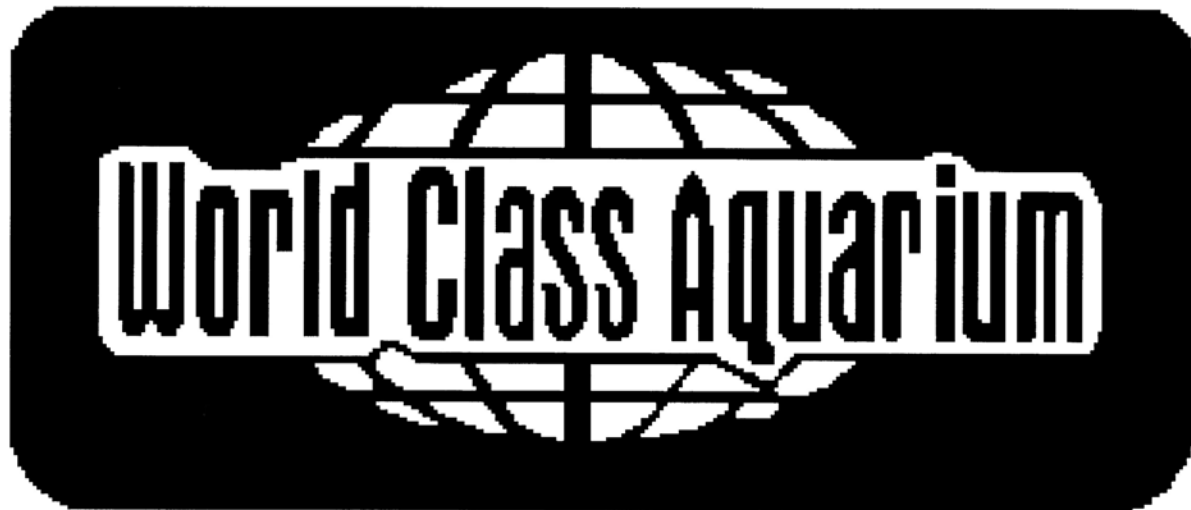


Figure 11: It is not known when the edition number began being printed on the dust jackets of EAF. It is thought to have started on the 11th or 12th. This is an example from the 13th edition. Note the edition number between the title block and the author's name.



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The Reddish Dwarf Fighter

Betta rutilans

Text and photo by ALEXANDER A. PRIEST



First described in 1991¹, *Betta rutilans* is endemic to the island of Borneo in Indonesia. It has been placed in the “Coccina Complex.”² All members of this complex are considered endangered and are on the “Conservation Priority Species at Risk List” of the **C.A.R.E.S. Preservation Program**³ A “species complex” is a grouping of species primarily based on similar physical and/or behavioral characteristics. The “Coccina Complex” consists of *Betta* species endemic to blackwater environments, all having small, slim, red or dark colored bodies (*rutilans* is Latin for “reddish”).

Members of the Coccina Complex are all fairly small. *Betta rutilans* usually grow no larger than 1.4 inches (3.5 cm) total length (that is, from tip of nose to farthest end of tail). Males tend to be a darker red with more pointed dorsal and longer pelvic fins. Females are generally rounder and mature adult females can often be seen to have an egg spot (small white dot on the abdomen marking the opening of their egg tube).

This species has been collected from localities connected with the rivers Mempawah and Kepayang close to the town of Anjungan in Kalimantan Barat (West Kalimantan) province, Borneo, Indonesia.⁴ The water in this region typically is stained dark (i.e., “blackwater”) and fairly acidic from humic acids and other chemicals released by decaying organic material.

Horst Link found it in “a marshy, low conductivity (39mS), acidic (pH 4.5) stream with clear, dark brown water, where it feeds on bloodworms (chironomid fly larvae), mites, and ostracods.”⁵

All *Betta* species have an accessory breathing organ in their head consisting of a labyrinth-like network of membranes that enable the fish to absorb oxygen directly from the air above the water’s surface, instead of through their gills.

Because of this accessory organ, anabantoids (i.e., all species in the sub-order Anabantoidei) are often called “labyrinth fish.” This accessory “labyrinth organ” allows anabantoids to “breathe” oxygen directly from the air around them. Because of that, as long as their bodies do not dry out, they can survive out of water for extended periods of time. Possibly because of this, these species all seem to be

hard-wired to jump out of the water when they feel threatened. Keep a tight lid on every anabantoid tank, including placing blocking material around even the smallest opening (such as for air lines or electrical parts). Filter floss or plastic wrap works well for this purpose.

Before I get into the care and breeding of *Betta rutilans* in the home aquarium, I want to insert a

personal caveat. Of all the Coccina Complex species I have kept (and I’ve kept most of them), I have found *Betta rutilans* the most challenging. I have never seen a mention that these fish were any more difficult than other Coccina Complex members (none of which I would recommend to the absolute beginner). It could have just been an idiosyncrasy of the groups I had, but I feel obligated to mention this. Mine are very picky eaters and seem extremely sensitive to even slight changes in water conditions.

I’ve mentioned this before in other articles I’ve written on blackwater species requiring acidic water, but it is something that anyone not familiar with this environment should be reminded of. In a tank with water having a pH as low *Betta rutilans* require, fish waste, and decaying food and plants do not break down by the usual bacterial action. Ammonia (NH₃) is the principal nitrogenous waste released by fish, and it is toxic to them. Normally, naturally occurring nitrifying bacteria break down ammonia in stages to less harmful compounds. However, below a pH of 6.8 the nitrifying bacteria are inhibited, and so cannot convert toxic nitrogen compounds into harmless compounds.

Scientific Name: *Betta rutilans*
Common Name: Reddish Dwarf Fighter
Special consideration: anabantoid (air breather)
Adult Total Length: 1.4" (both sexes)
pH: 4.0 to 6.0 (acidic)
Water hardness: very soft
Temperature: 72°F - 80°F (22.2°C - 26.6°C)
Distribution: Borneo
Reproduction: submerged bubble-nester
Temperament: peaceful, timid
Environment: low-light, caves and/or driftwood, tight-fitting cover with no gaps
Nutrition: primarily carnivore (live or frozen blood worms, daphnia, brine shrimp, etc.)

What happens in those very low pH tanks is that the fish, detritus, uneaten food, and decaying plants will still produce toxic ammonia, but in the absence of beneficial nitrifying bacteria a chemical process occurs converting ammonia (NH₃) to the non-toxic compound ammonium (NH₄). However, this also means that water added during water changes must match the pH of the original water. If newly added water has a much higher pH (i.e., is less acid), then neither this chemical process nor nitrifying bacteria are readily available to handle a suddenly increased bioload, resulting in a deadly ammonia “spike” wiping out an entire tank in just minutes!

The spawning behavior of *Betta rutilans* is typical of the genera, with the male wrapping himself around the female and expelling her eggs. Typically, the male places the eggs into a nest of bubbles he has prepared in advance and which he will guard until the fry are freeswimming.

It is usually not necessary to remove the female after the spawning, unless she appears to be a threat to the eggs. The male will guard and tend the nest. Depending on the temperature, the eggs hatch in one to three days (hatching faster when it’s warmer). The newly hatched fry will still have their yolk-sacs attached, so they should not be fed until the yolk sac is completely absorbed (in another three to four days). Once the fry begin to swim freely, the male will stop guarding the nest and generally ignore the fry. The fry can then be fed microworms and newly hatched brineshrimp, as well as finely crushed dry food.

This fish is a submerged bubblenester. This means the male builds a “nest” of bubbles in a cave or under driftwood (as compared with the common *Betta splendens*, which is a surface bubblenester, building a nest at the surface of the water).

Several members of the Coccina Complex, including *Betta rutilans*, have been reported to be “switch hitters” and may either build a bubblenest, or paternally mouthbrood. The mechanism that determines the mode of reproduction to be used is, as of now, unknown.

It is probably safe to say that *Betta rutilans* is primarily a submerged bubblenester since most reports of its spawning have been of the male guarding a cave containing a bubblenest. Because of this, tank filtration should not result in rapid water movement.

To reduce the pH, and provide the dark “blackwater” color to the water that mimics the fish’s natural environment, I use crushed Indian almond leaves in a box filter, and

driftwood. Initially, and until the almond leaves and driftwood have had enough time to leach tannins into the water, I use a wild almond leaf extract: “Atison’s Betta Spa” by Ocean Nutrition™.

To further mimic their natural environment, the tank should have subdued lighting and contain multiple caves and hiding places. Caves are a necessity for a “submerged” bubblenesting male in which to build his nest of bubbles (and, if for some reason he decides to mouthbrood, then the cave will be where he stays for the duration).

Few plants can survive in a dimly lit, very acid, and very low mineral tank. I have found that Java fern (*Microsorium pteropus*) and most *Anubias* species (especially *A. hastifolia*, *A. coffeefolia*, and *A. barteri*) are about my only choices.

I would recommend *Betta rutilans* to experienced aquarists wishing to maintain an endangered **C.A.R.E.S. Preservation Program** listed fish.



Betta rutilans - the dwarf red fighter



¹ Kottelat, M. 1991. *Notes on the taxonomy and distribution of some western Indonesian freshwater fishes, with diagnoses of a new genus and six new species (Pisces: Cyprinidae, Belontiidae, and Chaudhuriidae)*. Ichthyol. Explor. Freshwaters 273-2f

² <http://www.ibcbettas.org/smp/Pages/complex.html>

³ http://www.carespreservation.com/priority_list.html

⁴ <http://www.seriouslyfish.com/species/betta-rutilans/>

⁵ Goldstein, Robert J, 2004. *The Betta Handbook*. Barron’s Educational Series, Hauppauge, NY p. 39



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

SEX AND THE SOUTHERN STINGRAY

Story and Photos by Stephen Sica

The last time that we went diving in Key Largo was 2013. It was the first day of November, to be precise. I occasionally remark in my articles about seeing something new or different for the first time. If I do, it is customary for me never to see it again. Considering that Donna and I only spend a few hours underwater each year, I am amazed that we see anything extraordinary at all. Of course, networking often comes into play, especially as it relates to the other divers in the water with you. Often they see what you do not. If they're observant, unlike myself, they point it out to you—assuming that you are close by and paying attention. For this reason, I tend to look at and for other divers when I'm not busy taking my own photos. Letting someone else find it for you is always a good rule, and that's one reason there are dive masters to lead groups. They are familiar with the reef, and know where to find the unique animals. For me, it's usually Donna who finds that unique animal. I know very well why it's so easy to miss amazing sea life.

Likewise, some divers are too busy tracking and observing to have the time to signal to you. For example, early in our dive I saw Carl, with his camera, rapidly swimming after something, though the water was too murky for me to see what he was following. Luckily, Carl is easy to spot, because he and his wife do not wear wetsuits. I guess that if you come from

Chicago, you can handle the cold. Signaling to Donna so that we would not become separated, I tried my best to follow his route.

When I caught up, it turned out that he had been following a fully grown green moray eel, that was swimming in open water a few feet from the bottom. After the moray settled down into the mouth of a cave,



The initial photo of Southern stingray while approaching it from above its left side.

Carl took several photos. When he finished, I moved in for a few of my own. Fortunately, the moray had found a hiding place where it was readily observable. It even cooperated by facing towards the cave entrance so that it was in an excellent posing position. More often than not, eels and other kinds of sea life disappear into a crevice on the reef. Very often the sea life will swim out another

opening in the cave or reef in an effort to avoid a confrontation with a diver who is only seeking a photo op. There's so very little that you can observe and attempt to photograph as you travel in your small, sectionalized underwater sphere.

A few minutes after seeing the green moray, we were concluding our hour long dive of that afternoon, and as we were heading towards the boat, another diver with a camera swam toward us. He caught our attention, and started flapping his hands and arms like a bird, and then he extended his hands far apart to signify something large. Being quite intuitive, I immediately knew that he had seen a prehistoric pterodactyl flying under the water. Donna failed to exert her imagination, and signaled to me that it was a stingray. We only had to swim a few more yards to see that it was indeed a southern stingray, *Dasyatis americana*. Would you believe me if I admit that I was just a little disappointed? Oh well, I guess that my intuition only goes so far; and as Donna would say, maybe my imagination goes way too far. I was always good at daydreaming, and I still am. You just never know when an unrealized dream or wish will come true! But as usual, I digress. As I begin to write this article, it is exactly one week before Christmas. Being in a joyful mood, I feel that I'm entitled to imagine a little, as John Lennon sang many years ago. Now back to our story.



Green moray eel, *Gymnothorax funebris*, poses in a coral cave entrance.



Smaller male Southern stingray approaches large female on her left side.

This stingray was extremely large—signifying that it was female. A fully grown female can weigh 450 pounds. It was lying motionless in a patch of sand about thirty feet below the surface. I positioned myself to take a head-on photograph of the animal, but as I was about to take my photo, something disturbed the sand next to the stingray. It was a much smaller stingray, nuzzling up to the large female's left side. The smaller ray was a male, and it appeared to be attempting to mate with the female. Since this was the first time that I had seen two stingrays behave in this manner, I couldn't tell if they actually made a connection or if the male was only attempting to do so. Neither had Donna ever seen this before. The female didn't move, so I will conjecture that she was cooperating with the male. Their encounter lasted for no more than ten or fifteen seconds. The male spent most of his time on the female's left side, so I was wondering where the important organs were? Did they actually connect, or did the male simply release sperm in the vicinity? Since the sand was stirred up it was difficult to tell precisely what had transpired.



Male "inspects" the female.

Besides, I was more interested in photographing the encounter, rather than being a voyeur. The clarity of the water was reasonable, and I had already raised my camera to photograph the formerly solitary female, so I was able to take a series of photographs during a span of several seconds just before the female ended the encounter by simply swimming away. When she

swam off the male abruptly did the same, in a different direction. Both disappeared into the blue as quickly as the male initially had appeared next to the female. So much for stingray romance, I imagined.

A few weeks later, as I was perusing my reef



After or during mating the male hovers above female.

fishes identification book for this article, I learned that there are species related to the southern stingray known as the Atlantic stingray, *Dasyatis Sabina*, and the roughtail stingray, *Dasyatis centroura*. The Atlantic has more rounded "wing" tips, and is much smaller in size—about two feet maximum versus five and a half feet maximum for the southern stingray. The Atlantic stingray is common off the west coast of Florida and the Gulf of Mexico. It can occasionally be found up the Atlantic coast of the United States.



After meeting concludes the female rises from the bottom and swims away.

The roughtail stingray has a row of bumps and spines down its back, and numerous rows of spines on its tail. Like the southern, its snout and "wing" tips are pointed. It averages four to six feet wide, but can reach seven feet. I imagine that a large roughtail specimen makes for an imposing creature with its "spiked" tail.

I have seen many types of rays in the semi-tropical waters of Florida and the Caribbean, but I have yet to see either of these two stingrays. Someday I hope that there's a big roughtail waiting for us on a beautiful Caribbean reef, but as I always like to say when I wrap up these stories, that's for another time and another adventure.





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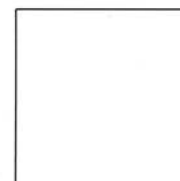
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AN AQUARIST'S JOURNEY

by Rosario LaCorte

Chapter 2

The street where we lived during my childhood, East Jersey Street, was of historical significance during the early years of our birth as a nation. A few blocks away was the home of Elias Boudinot (1740-1821). He was one of the signers of the U.S. Constitution, as well as the first President of the Continental Congress (1782-83). Jean and I, during the early years of our marriage, spent a pleasant afternoon on a private tour of his home. Original window glass was still in place; you could see the impurities in its structure. Also on display was period apparel. Our first president, George Washington, had lunched there on the way to his inauguration in New York in 1779. In 1937 our teachers at Elementary School 8 guided us to East Jersey Street, a block away, to watch the annual re-enactment of Washington's stagecoach ride to the Arthur Kill, from where he was taken by boat to New York.

As young children, we were always in awe of military and patriotic parades, and since East Jersey Street was so important to the city's history, the parades would gather in the port section and march west to City Hall, where there would be speeches and the like at its termination. The parades in the 30s were to honor World War I veterans and smaller numbers of Spanish American War veterans (I knew one personally), as well as still-living Civil War veterans. All of these last were quite feeble—most being pushed in wheelchairs. Almost all of them still wore long beards, which were quite the style for the old-timers. So it was, in 1946, that a special parade was held for the city's favorite son, Admiral William "Bull" Halsey. Admiral Halsey was born in Elizabeth and attended Pingry School, a higher learning school. Admiral Halsey was commander of the Third Fleet in the Pacific during WW II, and was highly successful in destroying a large number of the Japanese ships.

The parade took the same route as most of our parades, along East Jersey Street. Our home housed my father's shop, which extended out from the house. The shop's roof allowed us to climb out of the living room area and spend evenings in the fresh air during hot summer nights. There was a brick façade around the perimeter of the roof, so we could look down

below and have a bird's-eye view of any parade that passed by. My mother and I watched this parade, and as Admiral Halsey's car passed, my mother and I waved, and he went out of his way to acknowledge our greeting, waving vigorously back at us. We were very excited. The city was overjoyed to see him. Later on in life, when I worked at my brothers shop, one of the workers, Ted Dion, revealed to us that he had attended Pingry School with Halsey.

In 1946, World War II was over, and my father, who like many immigrants worked hard and saved money, wanted to get his own piece of property. He was able to make a down payment on the purchase of his first home, and we moved to a nicer area in the north of Elizabeth.



That's my wife Jeannie when we got engaged 64 years ago. She is still pretty!

Older brother Joe was home from the Army Air Corps, and brother Frank returned from the European theater with four Battle Stars, two Purple Hearts, and a Bronze Star. By the time Frank returned we had already moved, and Frank had to ask the neighbors for the location of our new home. It was just great having my older brothers back with us. Life was

returning to normal.

The war years had brought the nation together in a way that I just don't see today. All of us were in the same boat, as nearly all families had had someone they loved in the service. Many families weren't fortunate, as we could see by the gold star banners (meaning a family member had been killed in action) displayed in their windows.

Our new house (not really new—it was built in 1883) had twenty rooms. It was a four-family dwelling, and had a coal burning furnace with an automatic stoker. After the coal was expended the stoker automatically removed the ash into a pit, which was then cleaned out with a shovel. The ash was then emptied into metal garbage cans and placed in front of our home for pickup.

This also meant that we now had a thermostat that controlled the hot water system—a real step up from the cold water flat we had left on East Jersey Street. The number of my aquariums swelled to about ten. They were now placed on tables, a few metal racks, and even on some of the dining room furniture.

Older brother Joe and I shared the dining room as a bedroom, with a fold-out couch. Brothers Pete and Frank shared a bedroom on the second floor, adjacent to my parents' bedroom, while my younger sister had her own small room, also next to that of my parents.

I was now a teen-ager, and was becoming more enthralled by the hobby—sending away for catalogs from Aquarium Stock and Eastern Garden. Eastern was owned by a Japanese gentleman, and sported the unique offer of sending you eggs of a variety of fishes. It was sort of a grab bag as to what you actually got. Aquarium Stock was the “big gun” store, and it would be a few years before I was able to visit there.



Scrapbook page from Eastern Garden catalog. This scrapbook was put together when I was 15 years old.

In earlier years, when my friends and I were swimming in Kean's Woods, I had met a gentleman who frequently visited the swimming hole. His name was Oscar Datter, though he went by the name Gerry (after his middle name, Girard). Several years older than we were, Gerry worked at New York Bell Telephone, deliberately choosing to work evenings so that he could enjoy being outdoors during the summer. He befriended us, and became sort of a mentor to me over the next several years.

Gerry had three small aquariums at the time, and when he learned of my interest in fish he offered the three 2½ gallon tanks (with covers) to me. So with one of my friends, I went to his home and picked up the tanks. The top edges were rolled glass, to guard against accidentally cutting fingers. The metal frames were marbled, and the four vertical corners protruded about the rounded edges to act as a nest to contain the covers. To a young kid it was an extraordinary gift. My friend George Hudson and I carried the three tanks back home on the number 30 bus, and I put them to use immediately.

As luck would have it, when my family and I moved to our new home, it turned out to be only a block away from Gerry's house! It was great to know someone in the area. Gerry loved nature, and

his hobbies were pigeons and bantam chickens. In another coincidence, our next-door tenant was my former ninth-grade homeroom teacher, Miss Kathleen Smith, who lived with her elderly father. So the move to a new area actually placed us in contact with people we already knew.

Gerry turned out to have a big influence on my life. His love of opera rubbed off on me, and to this day I still enjoy the more popular operas. Gerry had an elderly friend and fellow pigeon hobbyist, Adam Fry, who lived a few blocks away. Adam was a character, but had some history behind him. He worked, painting the hull, on the U.S.S. Holland, the first submarine built and launched in New Jersey (Elizabeth, 1904).

Gerry advised me not to reveal my ancestry to Adam, as the man wasn't fond of “Hi-Talians,” as he called them. His reason for being prejudiced stemmed from a pigeon race, wherein Adam accused one of the racing club members, an Italian, of cheating by manipulating the time clock. Adam forever after considered all Italians to be suspect. Despite this, I liked Adam and found him to be very funny, with a sort of hillbilly twang about him.

Adam was a close friend of Major Myers, who was the officer in charge of the pigeon section of Army Signal Corps, headquartered at Fort Monmouth. The famous German pigeon “The Kaiser” was captured by American soldiers during the Great War (WWI). During that conflict, pigeons were extensively used to carry messages back and forth between HQ and far-flung units. Many were wounded, and became heroes by reaching their destinations despite grievous injuries. Many never returned due to being shot, killed by hawks, succumbing to bad weather, etc. The Kaiser lived to be 33 years old, to this day a record age for a pigeon, and he sired many offspring. I was once invited to see The Kaiser, as Fort Monmouth wasn't that far away, but I somehow never got around to do it.

Gerry and his family were very kind to me, and I especially liked his mother. She was a wonderful lady—at that time probably in her eighties. His father was of German ancestry, and he usually sat in a folding chair. I don't think he weighed more than about eighty pounds. I'd greet him with a “Good morning, Mr. Datter,” and he never answered, just nodded in the affirmative and stared. He passed away not too long after I first met him.

Gerry knew many aquarium shops, and would take me to see them. In 1946 he took me to Vailsburg Aquarium, on South Orange Avenue in the Vailsburg section of Newark.

The war was over, and some exotic fish were now making their way into aquarium shops. It was at Vailsburg that I saw neon tetras for the first time. What



Paracheirodon simulans, a close relative of the classic neon tetra.

an impact that had on me, after all the swordtails, platys, zebras, and so on. I never imagined that a fish could be so dazzling! The price was \$6 each—an awful lot of money! At fifteen years of age (still living in my first home), I had a summer job loading cardboard into freight cars under the Goethals Bridge, which connects New Jersey to Staten Island as it spans the Arthur Kill. I worked 40 hours or so for \$18 a week, giving my mother \$10 and keeping \$8 for myself, so you can see how \$6 for one neon tetra was out of reach. Vailsburg Aquarium was owned by two German brothers. I only recall meeting them once or twice. Gerry also took me to Aquarium Stock and to some of the stores on Nassau Street. At about that time I purchased my first copy of **Exotic Aquarium Fishes**. I was really impressed by my first real fish book, and spent many hours reading it and looking at the photos over and over again.

In 1947 I graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School. The yearbook, like all yearbooks, posted our studio photos and club activities as well as what our intentions were for professional life. Under my photo it says, “Tropical Fish Breeder.” That shows what intensity I had for the hobby even then. Of course it wasn’t really a future—I had no idea what I wanted to do. One of my high school buddies, Jack Khul, thought it would be a good idea to enlist in the Army Air Corps, so off we went to Whitehall Street in New York City, and signed up for a three-year hitch. I was eighteen, and I thought it was best path for me. Shortly after our enlistment, the Army Air Corps broke off from the Army, and became a new branch of the armed services, the U.S. Air Force.

The day before leaving, I went to Gerry’s home to say good-bye to his elderly mother. I can still picture her at the sink, washing a few items, as I told her that I was leaving and wanted to say my good-bye. She didn’t turn, but I could see her gently crying. It was a very emotional moment. I gave her a hug and said goodbye, not realizing I would never see her again.



Standing in front of a B29, preparing for flight.

Jack and I went to Texas for our basic training, and then were sent for further schooling for several months following basic. We were split up shortly after that, but remained in contact during our further assignments.

I was assigned to a B-17 squadron, the First Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, though soon after I got there our B-17s were replaced by B-29s. Attached to the tough, cigar-chomping General Curtis LeMay’s Strategic Air Command, our squadron travelled to many parts of the world, eventually making its home base at Fairfield-Suisun Air Base in California.

June of 1950 saw the start of the Korean War, and though my enlistment was supposed to be up in August of that year, President Truman froze our discharge dates so that we could assist in the conflict.

On August 5th, the North Koreans crossed the Naktong River in overwhelming force, and the decision was made to dispatch a nuclear bomb to the Eastern Pacific in two parts, using two B-29s. The highly explosive outer casing was to be carried by one of my squadron’s B-29s, under the command of Brigadier General Robert F. Travis, our base commander. The aircraft took off, but five minutes later an engine malfunctioned. The propeller was feathered to reduce drag, but with the loss of power the wing dipped downward and clipped some eucalyptus trees, causing the plane to crash. The resulting explosion was so loud that it was heard over a distance of thirty miles. A number of crewmen were killed, one of them a friend of mine. The general was severely injured and died five days later.

Very shortly after that, the base was renamed Travis Air Force Base. It was from there that President Truman flew to the Pacific to fire General Douglas MacArthur from his command of United Nations Forces. This anecdote is of course not very relevant to my journey as a fishkeeper, but later in this narrative there is an ironic twist related to this incident.

It was on my return from overseas that I met Jean, my future wife. I was on furlough, and with my friend Bill McMillian (from New Brunswick), decided to go to a dance being held at the YMCA. While walking along Broad Street, then the heart of Elizabeth’s commercial center, we struck up a conversation with two young ladies. It was idle and innocent chatter, and after a few minutes the girls continued on their way. Close by was the Regent Sweet Shop, a hangout for young people, that served light lunches, ice cream sodas, and the like. The girls went in, and I said to Bill, “Let’s go in too; maybe we can join them.” The girls had been directed to a booth and seated by the time we made our presentation. “Do you mind if we join you?” The answer was, “Sure.” We made our introductions, and after a few minutes of conversation I learned that Jean had graduated from Battin High School, an all-girls’ school (the high schools were not coed at that time). I had graduated from the boys’ high school, Thomas Jefferson. I soon discovered that my sister Ann, also a graduate of Battin, had been in some classes with Jean. I made a date with her for the following day.

Meeting Jean’s mother for the first time was slightly embarrassing. Because of my unusual

name, people sometimes couldn't remember it, and sure enough, as Jean was introducing me, she asked, "What's your name again?" Really confidence building! As I was introduced to Jean's older brother, he asked me, "Is Joe LaCorte your brother?" Good old brother Joe! He had cut a swathe for me all through school because of his immense talents. It suddenly seemed like old home week, and everything went smoothly. Years later Jean told me that when she brought a date home, her mother would stay in the background and nod positively or negatively as to her approval. Fortunately, I got the positive nod!

Jean and I hit it off nicely, and before my thirty-day furlough was over she met my family. The next year was consumed by letter writing, and before too much longer we became engaged. When my fourth year of active duty was completed I returned home. Our wedding day was November 18, 1951.

My parents had an apartment above their own, and offered it to us as we embarked on our new journey. Of my siblings, I was youngest of the boys and the first to marry; I was twenty-two and Jean was twenty. Despite my four years of military service we were really a couple of kids.

Jean continued to work for the Singer Sewing Machine Company, one of the largest companies in the world at that time, employing over six thousand people. I was encouraged to work for my brother Joe as an apprentice in the wood pattern making field. Wood patterns were used for making sand molds at a foundry, which were then cast in a variety of metals. The apprentice program required five years to become a journeyman.

Brother Joe had founded the company in 1947, starting out in the cellar of my parents' home. His company, with its crew of five workers, stayed there for a few years, and then moved to Roselle Park, where we enjoyed more spacious quarters.

Jean and I spent our first Christmas together in December of 1951. Brother Frank asked me what I'd like for Christmas. I responded, "How about an aquarium?" Frank was the only one of my three brothers who showed an interest in fish. In fact, he was the only brother who had an interest in pets—dabbling with canaries and pigeons. So for Christmas I got a five gallon aquarium, and the "bug" was back.

At that time I did not even own a car. Frank was very generous with his time, and on many Saturdays he would drive us to some of the better pet shops. All of my aquariums (about fifteen by now) had been stored outside beneath the back porch, weathering the temperature changes for the four years I was away. As my fish collection began to grow again, I needed more tanks (we all know about this insidious disease). Our apartment had a small room with a single window, and I began to use this as a fishroom. Once the summer months arrived, I remembered Ursino Lake—the reservoir, as we called it. There I could collect daphnia and feed my small array of tanks.

Since I worked in Roselle Park, two buses were required to reach work. On the way home, often times I would stop at Watts Pet Shop and buy a portion of tubifex worms. I could also keep an eye open for new fish. It was about one mile from home, so on nice days I would walk home with either fish or tubifex in hand.

On October 25, 1952 our first son, Robert, was born. The following summer we were able to place Bobby in a nice carriage and Jeannie and I would walk to the reservoir, which was about a mile or so from home. A large pickle jar with a screw-top lid to retain water was carried in the pocket of the carriage. I was able to collect daphnia and feed my small collection. This was not a daily activity, but only on occasion, when we would get a chance to take Bobby out & do a little walking on our own.

The Lure of Baseball

Besides my love for fish, I had a great love of baseball, and in my earlier years I ate, drank, and slept this wonderful game.

During the Depression we kids played many games, which I believe kept us in good physical condition, running and jumping in all kinds of kids' games. In the very early years all of us, being poor kids, found a cheap way to play a game that was not baseball, but very close in rules, and provided the basis to learn the rudiments of the game, as well as to hone skills which would develop as we migrated to the ultimate of playing real baseball. That game was stickball. It was an easy way to start, as there were no expenses involved. A broomstick handle and a rubber ball were all that was needed.

Bases were fashioned out of a rock, or most often, a piece of cardboard. The pitcher would bounce the ball to the batter, usually one bounce, and the batter would attempt to hit it. There were no gloves, as catching the

ball didn't inflict pain as a baseball would if you caught it barehanded. As we got older and stronger, the ball would really travel. With age we began to migrate to softball, and then eventually baseball. All of us were too poor to buy a real baseball, so we made our own, which I believe was pretty common with many kids. We would use a small stone for the core of the ball, then proceed to wrap string around the stone until we felt we had reached the desired diameter. Once we attained that goal the next step would be to wrap black adhesive tape around the string



U.S. Air Force Photo

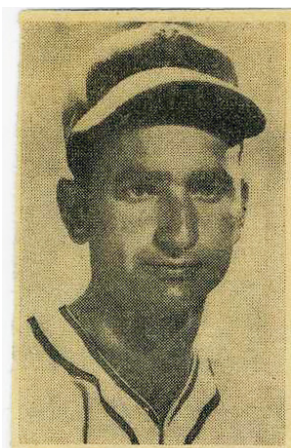
until the whole assembly was secured. Well, the ball didn't last too long; before you knew it, a good hit in flight began suddenly to lose its speed, and slowly a tail would appear. Oops, the tape was beginning to unravel, and quickly the speed of the ball diminished so that the home run you thought you hit turned out to be a dud. We would then attempt to repair it with fresh tape. Today tape adhesive is great, but in those days it wasn't manufactured for making baseballs.

We were able to buy baseball gloves as we grew older and began to migrate in that direction. I had a pretty good arm, and decided to pitch, and I did make the teams in middle school and high school. After my enlistment and upon completion of basic training, Jack Khul and I were sent to Keesler Field, in Mississippi. I was delighted to learn that during off-duty hours baseball was available to anyone who could make the team. Most of the guys were career airmen, and several of them had played professional baseball. It was a wonderful experience, as we played many of the great colleges in the south: Loyola, Tulane, and LSU, to name a few. We traveled to Gloster, Mississippi to play a team that was composed almost entirely of professional players that excelled both in baseball, and particularly in football. The Poole family was from that town, and a number of them were great football players, playing with the St Louis Cardinals and New York Giants. Barney Poole was one of those players. He had just resigned his commission from West Point, where he was All American as an offensive and defensive end. We had a nice conversation with him as he explained the reason for his resignation. Two of his teammates at West Point were Doc Blanchard and Glen Davis, two great football players. Glen Davis was in the limelight, as he was dating Elizabeth Taylor.

We played at many other military bases, as a number of them had baseball teams. We had a game scheduled with Maxwell AFB in Alabama, and we were excited to learn that Bob Neighbors played shortstop for them and was captain of their team. Bob was a former major leaguer, having played with the St. Louis Browns in the American league in 1939. The Browns eventually moved to Baltimore and became the Orioles. Upon our departure for Maxwell AFB we were told that our travels would be in an army

bus, much like the school buses we have today. It would be an overnight ride, and the bus could only do about 35 miles per hour. The army had placed a governor on the engine so drivers could not exceed that speed. It was the ride from hell! I went to the back of the bus where there was a large tire, thinking I could sleep in it. Not a chance! Every bump was felt on that grueling ride. We arrived at midday, missing mess hall dinner. All that was left were a few pieces of chicken and bread. I don't know how we managed to play nine innings. We were tired from the journey as well as eating just before the game, and we lost the game in the 9th inning on an outfield error. I did go in in relief and got Bob Neighbors to ground out. It felt good, even though we lost. Bob Neighbors had a tough life as a young man—his wife was killed by a car. He enlisted in the army, and became a pilot in the Army Air Corps. He remarried at Maxwell and

had a son. I believe his son became a pilot in the Air Force. During the Korean War, Bob and his crew radioed that they were bailing out, as their A26 had been hit. They were never found, and were presumed dead on November 9, 1952. He was 34 years of age—the only major league player killed in the Korean War.



'ROSIE' LACORTE
... Tops For Travis AFB

LaCorte Hailed As Standout Pitcher

TRAVIS AFB — Pitchers may come, and pitchers may go, but Rosario (Rosie) LaCorte has gained acceptance this season as the most outstanding hurler in the history of baseball at this sprawling Solano County air base.

And not only is the hard-throwing sergeant hailed as a pitcher, but he has gained additional plaudits as a batter. He carries an average of .461, third highest mark on the championship Sky-master nine.

LaCorte, a native of Elizabeth, N.J., paced the Skymasters to the Bay Area Armed Forces diamond crown by chalking up 11 victories without a defeat.

His most recent showing resulted in a 2-1 victory over the strong Mare Island Cafeteria nine in a game played in Vallejo.

Although baseball is his favorite sport, he comments he wouldn't trade his assignment in the Air Force for a job in professional baseball. And his spectacular success with the Sky-master nine has caused members of the pro sport to predict big things for him if he ever decided to make a career of baseball.



Getting ready to wind up, as I tried to maintain sharpness during off-duty hours. These were practice sessions between barracks at Travis AFB.



Our squadron was moved to a few other bases, where again I had the chance to play. Eventually we settled at Travis AFB. After our overseas tour and in the last phase of my enlistment I joined the team at Travis, and was elated to rejoin a former teammate from Keesler, Herb Gilmore. Herb, a third baseman, was in the St. Louis Cardinals' farm system prior to his enlistment. In my final year we won the Armed Forces Championship. I had a great team behind me, and I was able to post a 14-3 won/loss record. The last game of my life was a night game in a stadium in Vallejo, California. It cost one dollar to see that game. It was a game that the Vallejo Cafeteria wanted to play, as they



Bay Area Armed Forces championship team 1951. I'm seated in center row, third from right.

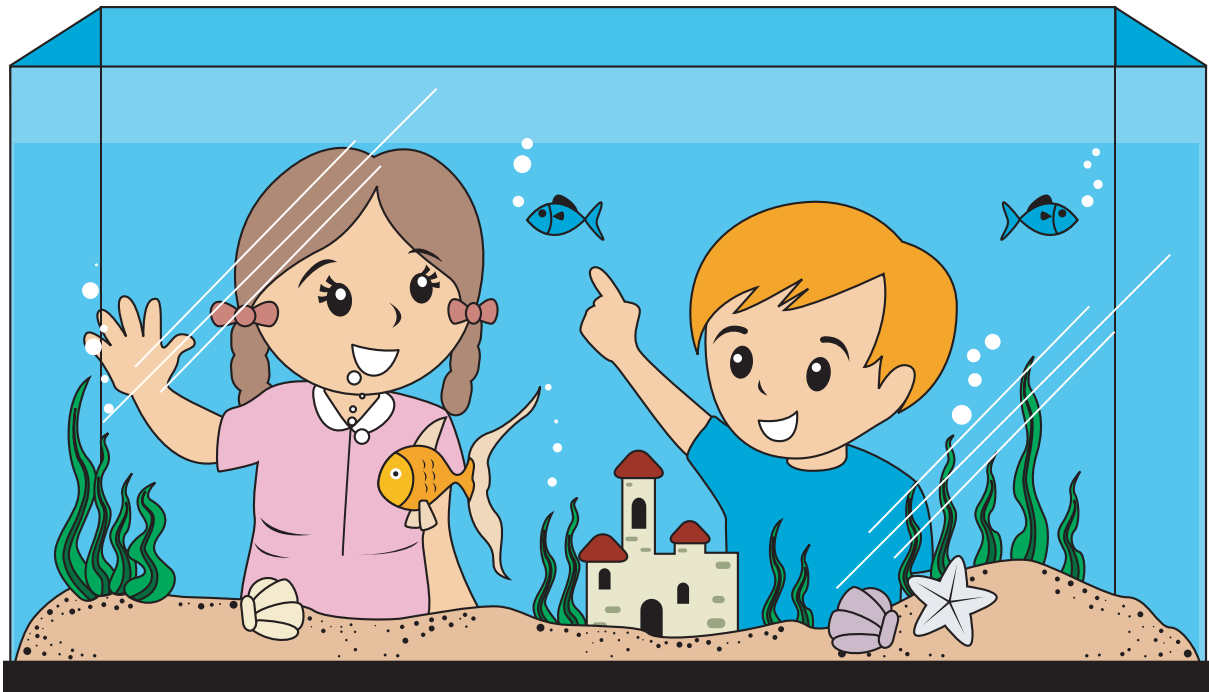
had the best record of all the semi-pro teams in the Bay Area. It was a pitchers' duel; they scored the first run on an error in the 5th inning, but we came back to win 2 - 1. I pitched a 5 hit, 8 strikeout game. Shortly after,

I was asked to play in a class C league in California upon my discharge. In those days minor league baseball was tough. Pay was nothing, and it was a great struggle to survive. At age twenty-two, my career was over—I never played again. Regrets? No. I missed it greatly, and there are times when I think about it and wonder, "What if?" But by then I was engaged, and felt

that that was my future.



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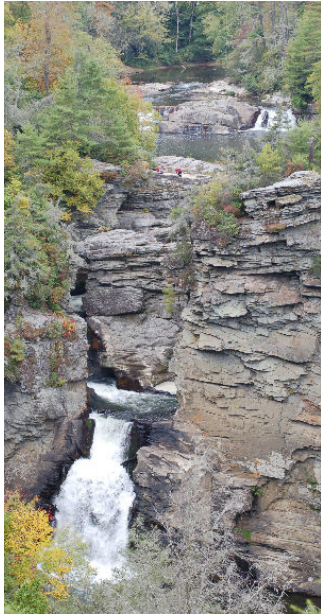


Support Fish in the Classroom!

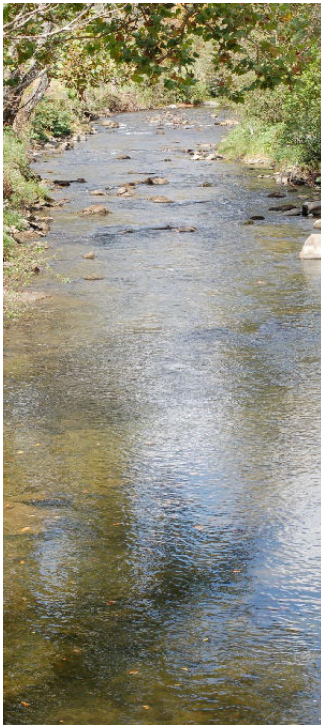
If you have any 5 or 10 gallon tanks, or any filters, pumps, or plants that you could donate to NYC teacher Michael Paoli's classrooms, could you please bring them in or email Rich Levy (rlevy17@aol.com). If you'd like to donate larger tanks, be sure and email Rich so he can make sure Michael can accommodate it.

North American Native Fishes Association

2014 NANFA Convention Western North Carolina June 5 - 8, 2014



Linville Falls



Collecting Area

The 2014 NANFA annual convention will be held June 5-8 at the **North Carolina Forest Service Training Facility** located on the banks of the Linville River in Crossnore, North Carolina, which is about 30 minutes south of Boone. This place is closely located to the Catawba, Nolichucky (Tennessee) and New River watersheds. While the event runs from 5-8 June, arrangements are being made to stay on the 4th and depart on the 9th for those who want to do this.

There are 5 dormitories available with 45 rooms for a maximum of 88 beds. Most rooms have 2 single beds and a sink. Buildings A and B are closest to the dining facility and each have 14 double rooms and 1 single, all with sinks. Building A, which will be our primary gathering place, has separate men and women's restroom/showers. Single women would most likely stay in this building, as well as couples. Our registration and auction can be held here. Building B has the same number of rooms but only one unisex shower/rest room. Both have microwaves, refrigerators, and TV. There is a large burn pit outside these buildings for gatherings. The Mountain Lodge sleeps 11 (1 single) and has a unisex shower/restroom. It also has a full kitchen. The River Lodge is the newest and sleeps 9 – one room has 3 beds. No sinks in these rooms. There are 2 shower/restrooms in this building so couples and single females could stay here also. Large gathering room upstairs. The Helitack Building is about a ¼ mile away and sleeps 10, no sinks in the rooms. It has a full kitchen with 2 bathrooms.

Costs to stay here are very reasonable. If you come in on Thursday and leave Sunday, room and meals will be \$154, plus registration. Registration will be \$75 for members, \$105 for non-members (includes 1 year membership), \$35 for students and collecting spouses, and \$12 for non-collecting spouses (if they are coming to the banquet). All registrations include cook out on Friday. Since the Forest Service needs to know how much food to buy, you will need to send your **final payment to NANFA by May 9th** in order to allow them to buy the right amount of food (but see below about early registration). Late comers may be able to stay at the facility but keep in mind that numbers are limited and they **DO NOT** take credit cards. You can register and select your housing options (which includes meals) and pay via PayPal at: <http://www.nanfa.org/cgi-bin/2014convention.pl>

There are a number of campgrounds in the area including the one at Linville Falls operated by the National Park Service, which is only 6 miles away. Two motels are located in Linville Falls and one in Pineola, both about 5 miles away. There are a number of good restaurants in nearby Linville Falls, Crossnore, and Newland. The nearest airport is in Asheville some 70 miles and 90 minutes away.

For those arriving sometime on Thursday, we hope to meet the WRC biologists and their electro-fishing boat on the French Broad River for electrofishing and seining. Friday will consist of collecting/snorkleing in nearby watersheds with arrival back at the facility at a reasonable time to enjoy the cook out and auction. Saturday will also be more collecting/snorkeling but there will also be a collecting challenge between 2 teams who will visit the same 4 sites, in reverse order – all catch and release. Numbers will be limited on these teams so when registration opens up, if you wish to compete, be prepared to register. There will an extra fee (\$10) for this which will go to the funding of t-shirts for the winning team. Sunday will be more of the same with some groups heading in different directions on their way home or staying in the area.

We will try and get trip leaders under the scientific collecting permit of the host so no other licenses will be needed unless you decide to collect on your own, before or after the convention.



Member Classifieds

FOR SALE: 29 gallon tank with wood stand, 35 gal high tank.

Call Rod: 516-731-1719

FOR SALE: 75 Gallon Tank, custom wood stand, lighting, 2 filters.

Call Paul or Debbie: 718-908-8127

FOR SALE: 210 Gallon Tank, wood stand, glass canopies. Tank & stand both need some repair. Make offer...

Call Dan: 718-458-8437

FOR SALE: Fish Hobbyist's Dream Home: \$169,000!

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.

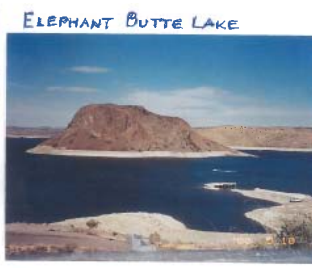
Location: Truth Or Consequences, New Mexico. Great name, huh? Was formerly called Hot Springs (and yes, we've got 'em). Very friendly community. Cars actually stop for you to cross the street. Rarely hear a car horn. Two blocks from town.

House Location:
On historic site for Geronimo and his





VIEW FROM FRONT PORCH



ELEPHANT BUTTE LAKE

RAFTING ON THE RIO GRANDE NEARBY



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: Tremendous! From the front porch (completely tiled) you have the best view of Turtleback Mountain rising majestically above the park and river in front of you. Breakfast on the porch is breathtaking! Lunch too!

Taxes: Only \$600 per year.

Summing Up: We've lived here for 19 years, and I both the fish pond and the fishroom built for my hobby, but I'm now 83, 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 them too.

Charlie Kuhne: (575) 894-2957



POND ROOM (12x15)



FOR SALE: African Cichlids -- Fry to Adult size; plus filters heaters, etc.

Call Derek: 917-854-4405

FOR SALE: *Herichthys carpintis*, Escondido: Fry -- 1" to 3."

Call Dan: 347-866-1107



GCAS Happenings

April

Last Month's Bowl Show Winners:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1 WILLIAM AMELY | BETTA |
| 2 MARIO BENGION | BETTA |
| 3 RUBEN LUGO | HYPANCISTRUS |

A WARM WELCOME BACK TO RENEWING GCAS MEMBERS BILL ADAMS, BILL AMELY, SHARON BARNETT, MARIO BENGION, JULES BIRNBAUM, JEFF BOLLBACH, ARNE BRISTULF, TOMMY CHANG, CARLOTTI DE JAGER, LESLIE DICK, PETE D'ORIO, GERRY DOMINGO, ROD DU CASSE, HARRY FAUSTMANN, JOE FERDENZI, WARREN FEUER, ARTIE FRIEDMAN, MIKE GALLO, WALTER GALLO, HORST GERBER, FLORENCE GOMES, AL GRUSELL, JOE GURRADO, BOB HAMJE, VICTOR HRITZ, JASON IRIZARRY, ANDREW JOUAN, ROBERT KAHN, DENVER LETTMAN, RICH LEVY, RUBEN LUGO, MICHAEL MACHT, DONITA MAYNARD, STEVE MILLER, TEMES MO, RODERICK MOSELY, AL AND SUE PRIEST, DAN PULEO, DAN AND MARSHA RADEBAUGH, LEONARD RAMROOP, BARBARA ROMEO, STEVE AND DONNA SICA, MARK SOBERMAN, GILBERTO SORIANO, ED VUKICH, HERB WALGREN, RON WIESENFELD, AND JEFFREY UY!

A SPECIAL WELCOME TO NEW GCAS MEMBERS MICHAEL AND BONNIE LOWETH, AND ALTAN TAMER!

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

GREATER CITY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Next Meeting: May 7, 2014

Speaker: Leslie Dick

Event: Fish Jeopardy

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: April 11, 2014

Speaker: Rachel O'leary

Topic: Freshwater Nano Diversity

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 18, 2014

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@lisonline.org

Website: <http://lisonline.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 8, 2014

Speaker: TBA

Event: TBA

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 17, 2014

Speaker: TBA

Topic: TBA

Meets at: The Lyndhurst Elks Club, 251 Park Avenue, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071

Contact: NJAS Hotline at (732) 332-1392

Email: tcoletti@obius.jnj.com

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

NORWALK AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Next Meeting: April 17, 2014

Speaker: TBA

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/>

Clearly Unique

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.

I would guess that many of you have kept, or have at least seen in local fish stores, the so-called "Glass" or "Ghost" catfish. These fish have a transparent skin that enables you to see their internal organs. Well, a recently discovered fish from the freezingly cold waters of the Antarctic has been found to have totally clear, transparent blood. Hemoglobin is what gives oxygenated blood its red color, but the blood of the ocellated icefish, *Chionodraco rastrospinosus*, is completely clear because its blood contains no hemoglobin.

Unlike other vertebrates, fish of the Antarctic icefish family (Channichthyidae) do not use hemoglobin to transport oxygen around their bodies. Researchers believe the fish can live without hemoglobin because it has a large heart and uses blood plasma to circulate oxygen throughout its body. Its skin is also thought to be able to absorb oxygen from the rich waters of the Antarctic, where it is found at depths of up to a kilometre (3,300 feet).¹

Unless you want to visit the Antarctic (and after a winter such as the one we just had in the Northeast, I can't imagine too many of our members would be interested in doing so), the only other place on earth where you can see a pair of these fish is at the Tokyo Sea Life Park in Japan, where a pair of these scaleless fish are on display and have spawned in captivity. Then again, I know several folks who absolutely rave about their cruises to Alaska!



References

<http://phys.org/news/2013-04-japan-aquarium-mysterious-clear-blood-fish.html>



An ocellated ice fish, caught in the Antarctic Ocean in 2011, swims in a fish tank at Tokyo Sea Life Park on April 5, 2013. The fish has no haemoglobin, which is what makes blood red and is the agent that carries oxygen around the body. Researchers believe the fish can live without haemoglobin because it has a large heart and uses blood plasma to circulate oxygen throughout its body.



Fin Fun



HIGH FIVE!



There are quite a few fish names that seem to include every letter in the alphabet and are “tongue twisters” to pronounce. Then, there are those fish species with scientific or common names of only one or two syllables. See how many of the five letter fish names you can find in the puzzle below.

A T C I Y A K O B L Y Z R H O T I U T I I B U H C A O L K I R J M T M O K Y H F J E Z K N D I O I V Y A P C L S O A Y A A B Z P L C P P P W I X X R D R T R D A U L U N E F U T M W I F T R T Z E G K U R E S C G O W A E E E C Z V T T C B R Z W J Z Q B M O B P Y E E H A J U N T M U Q J D V A H N O U O N F L B S H E R O S Y V L P J O H J N R J A J I J P I G V M M O L L Y M C D J Y E U C N J L E G N A Y K K P A I K J M B K G I A F V X U R S Y U O L S	<u>Words in the Puzzle :</u> ACARA ANGEL BETTA BOTIA DANIO DARIO GUPPY HEROS JULIE KUHLI LIMIA LOACH MOLLY PERCH PLECO TETRA
--	--

Answer to our last puzzle: **It's Elementary** 

- 1) If you have a 30 gallon tank and you remove and replace six gallons, what percentage of water change have you done? 20%
- 2) If you add black water extract to an aquarium, will it make the pH go up or down, or stay the same?:
It will make the pH go down
- 3) If you treat your tap water with a chlorine/chloramine remover and make any needed adjustment in hardness and pH, what else must you do to the water before you can use it for a water change?:
Adjust the temperature
- 4) If you include dolomite as part of your filter media, will this affect the water's hardness? If so, in what way?
It will make the water harder
- 5) If you have two identically sized and decorated aquariums except that one has a gravel substrate and one is “bare bottom” (no substrate), which will support a larger amount of nitrifying bacteria?
The one with substrate because of the larger surface area it provides

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