

Wet Pet Gazette

The Journal of the Norwalk Aquarium Society

Volume 51, Issue 2

March - April 2001

Dues are due!

Please remember that March is the cut-off date of the grace period.

Don't miss a single issue of
The Wet Pet Gazette.

Any questions, please call Anne
Broadmeyer at (203) 775-0030.

The View From Up-front

*by Kenneth Balog, President
Norwalk Aquarium Society*

I would like to start this month's column by thanking everyone for their efforts to make our benefit auction for the Nature Center a success. All told, we managed to raise \$1200.00 for the Nature Center and a good time was had by all. So, give yourselves a well-deserved pat on the back and let's all try to do even better next year.

Next, I would like to remind everyone about our freshwater collecting trip that will be held on Saturday June 2nd, 2001. I will be scouting a number of river systems in the weeks before the trip to identify the best locations. We should find various species of dace, darters,

and shiners, as well as various gamefish species. Since this date is free fishing day in Connecticut, anyone can fish without a license, so if you want to bring a fishing rod feel free to do so. Further details will be forthcoming.

The Board of Directors has been trying to come up with ideas for new events to enhance the social aspect of the club. The collecting trip and bus trip are two such events. Lately, we have been discussing bringing in big name speakers and combining it with a pot luck dinner to make a full night of it. This type of event would be held on a Friday or Saturday night so families can participate more easily rather than our usual Thursday meeting night. As always, your thoughts and ideas are welcome, so please let us know what you think.

Lastly, I would like to remind everyone that our March meeting is the final deadline for our NAS logo clothing order. For those of you who haven't been to the meetings, we are placing an order for various types T-shirts, sweatshirts, polo shirts, jackets, etc. all with an embroidered NAS betta logo. So, bring money to our March meeting and let me know what you want.

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Come see us at www.norwalkas.org

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Note: All phone numbers are area code 203 unless otherwise noted

Editor's Notebook

by Douglas De Ment
Norwalk Aquarium Society

This month we have a brand new author for the Wet Pet Gazette: Chris Persson! Chris accepted my new year's challenge and wrote a terrific article about **The Large Home Aquarium**. Thanks Chris!

Chris also gives us a second article which is an preview of the upcoming **ACA Convention** in New Jersey. A double thanks, Chris!

By the way, everybody check out Chris's web site at www.persmgmt.com/cichlidscene.

We also have a write up on the speakers at the **NEC Annual Convention** being held in

March, here in Connecticut. If you haven't made your mind up about attending, this should push you into going.

This month Ed Katuska again brings forth his column "**Did You Know?**" I look forward to this column every month! I love it.

I also continue with the series, "**Oh – That's One Of My Favorite Fish.**" In Chapter Two, I talk about *Botia lecontei*.

WE NEED YOUR ARTICLES!

Write up a few! I'll take them in any format.

An article does not need to be long in order to make it good. Take the time to spread the information that you learned. If you haven't bred a fish, write about what you like about fish. Or how about something funny that happened to you? Tell us that story!

NEC 26th Annual Convention

Speakers

Dr. Uwe Roemer comes to the US from Germany and is a Zoologist specializing in Ethology, Sociobiology, Evolutionary Ecology and Systematics. For 15 years he has been concentrating on neotropical dwarf cichlids, which resulted in a book entitled [CICHLID ATLAS 1](#), which will be available in English language soon. He is certainly in demand in Germany as a speaker and comes with high recommendations from Hans Baensch. His program will be "Remarks on Neotropical Dwarf Cichlids" and will contain

information on new species, their ecology, sociobiology, and evolution, new results from scientific research and much more. His knowledge and enjoyment of the hobby becomes evident as soon as you speak with him and we are very pleased he will be able to attend our convention.

Jim Gasior has raised tropicals for the last 40 years - 30 of which have been solely devoted to killifish. He presently maintains approximately 100 different killie species. A member of the "Wisconsin Area Killifish Organization," he has also been past secretary and president of the national American Killifish Association (AKA). The AKA awarded Jim the "Killie Hobbyist of the Year" award for a record five consecutive years. He has spoken at numerous AKA conventions including the most recent 2000 convention in Tampa, Florida. In addition to authoring numerous articles on killies, he is the subject of an upcoming article by "Aquarium Magazine" dealing with his involvement with killifish.

Steve Rybicki is an angelfish specialist who has been breeding show quality strains of freshwater tropical fish for over two decades. He has an absolute fascination with improving ornamental tropicals since he was a young boy, and exclaims, "I'm positive I will be doing it until I'm no longer physically capable of it." His on-line business, Angels Plus began in 1989 to serve the needs of the ornamental fish breeder and the advanced hobbyist, with an emphasis towards those involved with keeping angelfish. Through his intense interest in angelfish genetics, disease control and ideal husbandry practices he has gained the knowledge and insight to breeding and maintaining angelfish. He has maintained

some strains for over 15 years. Steve is quick to say that the biggest reason for his success is that he loves what he does. We are fortunate to have him as our speaker on angelfish this year.

Terry Fairfield received his first aquarium at his eighth birthday as a gift from his parents. By the time he was ten, he was supplying the local fish stores with numerous strains of fancy guppies. In 1989 he graduated from the University of Wisconsin Green Bay with a Bachelors Degree in Aquatic Microbiology. While still in college, he founded the University Aquarium Club that became the Green Bay Aquarium Society. He is now the "fish Doctor" for the Greater Chicago Cichlid Association and lives in Rockford Illinois with his wife and three daughters. He is an author of numerous articles that have been published in Freshwater and Marine Aquarium Magazine, Tropical Fish Hobbyist, Aquarium Fishkeeping and Discus Brief on diseases in addition to his current research projects. In addition to writing, he lectures and gives hands-on workshops to aquarium societies around the United States and will present a lecture and workshop on Fish health at the convention.

Wayne Leibel has been an active hobbyist for over 40 years. His dedication to scientific research as well as to the aquarium fishkeeping hobby has established him as a pillar in the world of tropical fish. The following is taken from the NEC's 14th Convention program, April 7-9, 1989. "Aquaristic "Lifer" having kept fish for 31 of his 38 years, specializing in cichlids of South America for the past 10 years. Has kept and killed most species (ask him about his freezer museum), but has also bred several rare and

“difficult” fishes, apparently by accident. Claims the secret of his success lies in his Zen-like, cichlid mind-look approach (“I am the fish and the fish is me”). Mr. Leibel is a past American Cichlid Association Board Member and the current editor of their bimonthly publication, Buntbarsche Bulletin. Wayne has made over 100 armchair collecting trips to South America (he firmly believes he was an intrepid explorer / ichthyologist in his past life) and one actual trip to the Peruvian Amazon....” We are honored to have Dr. Leibel as our banquet host.

Karen Randall has become one of the nation’s hottest “Plant Ladies.” She is willing to help everyone learn about the wonderful world of plants from the children in classrooms setting up their first tank to the experienced hobbyist experimenting with lighting, heated substrate and carbon dioxide injection. She has been a columnist in Aquarium Fish Magazine for several years and has made collecting trips to South America to experience her hobby first-hand. A strong proponent and volunteer for the Aquatic Gardener’s Association (AGA), she will host the AGA meeting and Discussion group at the convention Friday afternoon. Karen and her long-term friend and cohort Lee Finley are developing a program based on their collecting trips and experiences in the Amazon and will present “Amazonian Ecosystems” at the convention this year.

Lee Finley is renowned for his expertise on tropical fish, especially catfish, and is always a delight to have at our convention. His credentials are too numerous to list, and as the clubs in the Northeast Council will attest, we are very fortunate to have him living in our

own back yard. He always has new information to pass along and he loves to be out and about talking with everyone during the entire weekend. He has made numerous trips to Peru and the Amazon, written countless articles about catfish, presenting scientific information as well as addressing general hobby related issues and maintains a used and antique fish book business. He needs no introduction and has something to offer everyone he meets! Lee will team up with Karen Randall to present to us their observations and experiences in the Amazon.

Greg Schiemer has been a resident of New York for his entire 41 years. He began maintaining marine aquariums shortly after the introduction of the all-glass aquarium in 1970. He is a regular lecturer at aquarium societies in North America and was a featured presenter at the MACNA IX conference in Chicago. Gregory is a regular contributor to numerous aquarium periodicals (Aquarium Fish Magazine, Freshwater and Marine Aquarium) and for three years served as a columnist and Technical Editor for the now on-line publication, Aquarium Frontiers. Additionally, he is an accomplished scuba diver, professional photographer, and aquarium consultant. His photographs have appeared in commercial publications and books around the world. We are fortunate to have him come to the NEC and present his program on reef aquariums.

Steve Lundblad majored in fisheries in college and has been involved in the tropical fish hobby for 25 years, exclusively African Rift Lake Cichlids for the past 15 years. In addition to his breeding and wholesale operation (established in 1982), he has recently opened a retail store. He has traveled

to Lake Malawi in Africa collecting Cichlids and has remained an avid supporter of aquarium societies and the organized hobby. He is a hardworking club committee member, a judge and well-known speaker and we are pleased to have him return to the NEC convention and present a program on the Fishes of Lake Malawi.

Charles Thomas has been growing water lilies for over 50 years. Recently retired, he was the third generation owner of America's largest water gardening specialist, Lilypons Water Gardens. He is an avid collector of aquatic plants from all over the world, holds several water lily patents and has authored three water gardening books. As founder and past president of the International Water Lily & Water Gardening Society, past president of the Mail-order Gardening Association and director of Garden Writers Association of America he has become an internationally recognized authority on water gardening. Through the Marineland Speaker Program he will share with us his knowledge of maintaining a successful pond & water garden.

Sally Boggs began her fishkeeping on the island of Jamaica BWI. Now living in the United States, she fancies herself to be a "Dr. Leaky of fish." A Grand Master Breeder as a member of the Greater Pittsburgh Aquarium Society, she enjoys observing the behavior and breeding idiosyncrasies of the more than 150 species she has spawned. She favors the oddballs of the hobby and those fish with green eggs. Her numerous articles have won her awards from the Canadian Association of Aquarium Clubs and the Federation of American Aquarium Societies, and her articles have been published in Aquarium

Fish Magazine and Freshwater and Marine Aquarium Magazine. Sally adheres to the meaning of sharing – she shares her knowledge and experiences in the hopes of learning from those she meets! Loaches will be her topic at the Convention this year.

Northeast Council of Aquarium Societies
Please See Our New Web Page!

<http://www.northeastcouncil.org>

Tropical Fish Club of Burlington, VT

<http://cichlid.uvm.edu/tfcb>

A Book Review of
"Tropical
Aquarium Fish --
Comprehensive
Edition"

By Walter D. Stevens Jr
Norwalk Aquarium Society

Tropical Aquarium Fish is a book (1991) written by Dr. Chris Andrews and Dr. Ulrich Baensch and published by Tetra Press. It is a hard cover book containing approximately 240 pages of information on the fresh water aquarium, 160 color photographs of the most commonly kept fresh water tropical fish, and sufficient information on each fish (Name, native location, size, difficulty to maintain, recommended water conditions, diet and some important pointers) to allow the hobbyist to select which is suitable or desirable to maintain or breed. The book is divided into two

sections, the first section is a practical approach or introduction to the requirements of selecting and maintaining the proper equipment and water conditions necessary for a fresh water aquarium. The second section is a catalogue of roughly 160 popular fresh water aquarium fish and their particular requirements for successfully keeping or breeding them. In some cases references to breeding are very general, such as "difficult to breed" or "No details of any breeding success in captivity are known." I felt this was fair since the book's primary purpose is to introduce the hobbyist to what is available and difficulty in maintaining or raising.

Just about every page has an illustration or colored photo to demonstrate a point being presented. I found the illustrations to be very effective. Scattered through out the first section were numerous tables which outlined main points, calculations or development cycles of fish. An excellent method for presenting a point.

Recently most books I have been reviewing are discussing the two measurements of hardness, General hardness (GH) and carbonate hardness (KH) in degrees of German hardness (or degree dH), where most kits I use measure hardness in "parts per million of calcium carbonate" (or ppm). I finally found a book with a definition of the relationship between them.

The book deals specifically with the setting up and maintenance of a tropical freshwater aquarium and does it well. I highly recommend it as a gift to someone entering into the hobby, to help them make the right decisions on selecting the right equipment and fish.

2001 ACA Convention

By Chris Persson
Norwalk Aquarium Society

The annual American Cichlid Association (ACA) convention will be held this summer in nearby Parsippany, New Jersey.

The ACA 2001 convention is the premier cichlid event of the year, and features a host of activities for both fish-fanatics and their families. There will be speakers and study groups; vendor and manufacturer exhibits; day trips and other social activities; a huge cichlid-only auction; and a 24-class cichlid show topped off by an awards banquet.

This year, the convention is being hosted by the North Jersey Aquarium Society (NJAS). Remember them? They're the same folks who needed a U-Haul to take home all of their trophies from the NEC/NAS show last fall. The NJAS is serious fish-people, and you can bet they'll run a great convention.

Here are the particulars:

Date: Thursday July 12 – Sunday July 15, 2001.

Location: Hilton Hotel, Parsippany, NJ, located at the junction of I-287 and Rte. 10 near Morristown.

Schedule: Things start happening early on Thursday, and keep on happening until late

Sunday. You can easily find plenty to do each day from 8 a.m. to well past midnight! Key points to note are:

Thursday: Setup starts for show entries.

Thu & Fri: Day trips, evening speakers.

Friday: 3 p.m. deadline for setting up show entries.

Saturday: All day speakers.

Show room closes at 2 p.m. for judging.

Awards banquet at 6 p.m.

Sunday: Auction registration starts at 7 a.m.

Auction begins at 10 a.m.

Show entries must be removed by 11 a.m.

Speakers: Slated speakers are impressive: Dick Au, Pam Chin, Rosario LaCorte, Wayne Leibel, Paul Loiselle, Oliver Lucanus, Ole Seehausen, and Mike Sheridan. In addition, there will be presentations by the Discus, Apistogramma, and South American cichlid study groups.

Tours: Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island (Thursday); NY Aquarium and South Street Seaport on Friday.

Show: A 24-category competitive show offers a chance to view (and compete against) hundreds of world-class cichlids. You can setup all day Thursday or by 3 p.m. on Friday; entries must be removed between 7 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sunday.

Auction: An all-day/night cichlid auction on Sunday concludes the event.

Sound good to you? Registration for the convention is \$45 a person, which includes the speakers and study groups (the banquet and tours are additional). For registration forms and further info, check out the website at <http://www.aca2001.com/> or call (877) 903-NJAS.

Thinking about putting an entry in the show? For NAS members this may very well be the most conveniently located ACA Convention we'll see for some time. No airport hassles or shipping worries; it's just an hour or two drive.

Can't attend the entire convention? Those who would rather just make a quick stop to check out the cichlids are welcome to do so, as the show exhibit is open Thursday through Saturday to the public (just be sure you get there before judging starts at 2 p.m. on Saturday). Note too that Sunday's auction is the sole event for that day.

The convention will be a great opportunity to view, buy and sell cichlids, as well as to rub elbows with some true cichlid fanatics. Look for me (and one of my cichlids) there!

Chris Persson, Norwalk Aquarium Society
www.perssmgmt.com/cichlidscene

March 2001

BAP REPORT

by Sal Silvestri
Norwalk Aquarium Society

CURRENT POINT SUMMARY

Sal Silvestri	Expert Breeder	1315 points
Don Maloney	Expert Breeder	740 points (*)
Don Barbour	Grandmaster Breeder	875 points (*)
Robert McKeand	Grandmaster Breeder	835 points(#)
Ed Katuska	Master Breeder	405 points
Basil Holubis	Senior Breeder	240 points(#)(*)
Kenneth Balog	Senior Breeder	150 points
Richard Marino	Breeder	155 points
Doug DeMent	Breeder	70 points
Jeff Polster		75 points (*)
Rich Grenfell		35 points

As for my famous "Asterisk Club Members"
... "YOU OWE ME ARTICLES!!!"

That's all I'm going to say, "surprised?!!!"
All joking aside, our Wet Pet editor is begging for articles. In order to maintain the quality of our publication we need original articles. For those of you that are intimidated of writing, we will help you.

WELCOME NEW PARTICIPANT TO THE BAP PROGRAM:

Richard Grenfell: *Pelvicachromis - Pulcher*,
Microgeophagus - Altispinosa, *Xiphophorus - Helleri*

Rich has been in the hobby "on & off" for many years but, he said that now he's going to

stay awhile and wants to become a good breeder. I know he will accomplish this as soon as he learns two things "patience and being a good listener!!!"

Hey Rich ... the one thing I neglected to tell you was that since I'm the writer of this column plus the fact that you became my "adopted" son, it gives me *card blanche* to "harass" you!!! ... hehehehaha

RECENT SPAWNS

Sal Silvestri - Nematobrycon - Lacortei,
Nannacara - Taenia, *Nannacara - Anomala*,
Lamprologus - Meleagris

Kenneth Balog : Pelvicachromis - pulcher,
Capadichromis sp. - "Yellow Fin",
Atneniobius - Toweri

Don Maloney: Apistogramma sp. "Emerald",
Poecilia Mexicana, *Lamprologus - Meleagris*

NOTE: - As I stated in my last report I dropped from the BAP report anyone who has not bred a fish for two consecutive years. In doing so I noticed that only a handful of people are left that are breeding any fish. This is an alarming observation! What's happening to the rest of the breeders? All it takes is one spawn every two years to remain on the active list. I don't think this is asking too much! I want to see my page full of breeders again ... I even promise not to harass my "asterisk club!" **For a limited time only.**

BEFORE I CLOSE I WANT TO THANK ALL PARTICIPANTS. "JUST KEEP THOSE FRY COMING".

DON'T FORGET THOSE NORTHEAST COUNCIL BPP FORMS!

Mar./Apr.- 2001

Did you know?

by Ed Katuska
Norwalk Aquarium Society

The warmer weather is just around the corner and with that in mind, it is a good time to start planning your calendar and make an appearance at some of our sister societies annual events. As usual the year is full of fishy activities that you and the family can enjoy. Other clubs and organizations are very supportive of our annual event so remember to return the favor, please show some support.

This month we are bringing you some facts on plants. It seems to be a topic that we do not cover to often so I thought the change would be good. Fortunately the newswires are still pumping out fish or hobby related stories so don't be left out, keep informed on current events by reading *The Wacky Fish World* segment.

Last month's trivia question was answered correctly by our own Chris Persson and I must say it was a tough one. Chris also wrote his first article for our publication that you can check out in this issue. We like to see new authors in the making. Thanks for getting involved; hopefully it will encourage others to start writing (hint, hint). I'll have to check our emaciated prize closet and find some goodies for our trivia winners.

Did you know...

Yellow cabomba, *Cabomba aquatica*, derives its name from the yellow flowers it displays when in bloom.

The singular of algae is alga.

Plants that are called "calcifuges" are tolerant of acidic conditions whereas plants called "calcareous" are suited for water of alkaline in nature.

Many plants from the genus *Apongeton* come from areas that experience heavy tropical rainfall followed by a long, dry season. These plants should be removed from the aquarium and rested for a three-month period every nine or ten months. They should be stored in moist sand at temps of 65 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

The Wacky Fish World

Tuna again

San Diego, CA- 3/13/00 (Reuters) - A worker on a fishing boat has been charged with assault with a deadly weapon – a 20-pound tuna, police said. Anthony Scott Tucker, 37, was arrested and faces possible felony charges. An unidentified 43-year-old fisherman was taken to the hospital for treatment for a broken vertebrae and a concussion, Sgt. Don Claypool of the San Diego Harbor Police Department told Reuters. Tucker hit his customer with the tuna on the boat while they were counting and sorting fish, said Claypool. (If you look into the archives of this column you would be

amazed at how many people get hit with tuna, unbelievable.)

Incoming

Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey- 6/20/00 (ABPnews.com) - A South Jersey teenager is up to his gills in trouble, charged with tossing a dead fish onto the windshield of a passing car, police said. The 15-year-old was reeled in shortly after 11:30 p.m. Saturday on a remote stretch of Bargaintown Road minutes after a motorist had complained that a rowdy teen flung an 11-inch bluefish onto his windshield. It was not immediately clear how the motorist reacted when the flying fish bounced across his car, police said. But it's a safe bet his first words were not "Holy Mackerel," said LT. John DeAngelis. In the meantime, the accused sushi-tossing teen has been caught and released to the custody of his parents.

Amazing creatures

Manfredonia, Italy- 8/30/00 (Reuters) - A dolphin saved a 14-year-old boy from drowning in the Adriatic sea pushing him to the surface and helping him to a nearby boat. The boy, who could not swim, told Italian news agency ANSA he fell from the boat as he was sailing with his father in the gulf of Manfredonia, off the southern Italian coast. As he was slipping under the water something was pushing him up. "When I realized it was Filippo, I hung onto him, the boy said, referring to the dolphin. The mammal carried the boy to the boat and swam away. The dolphin has lived in the gulf's waters for years and has been dubbed Filippo.

Last months trivia question

In the TV series "Star Trek the Next Generation" Captain Jean-Luc Picard had a pet lionfish, *Pterois volitans*, in his "ready room." Like most pets, this fish had a name. Name that fish.

Answer

Livingston

This months trivia question

In 1856 this famous person opened the very first public aquarium in New York at the American Museum. Can you tell me who it was?

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Broadmeyer at (203) 775-0030.

The Large Home Aquarium

By Chris Persson
Norwalk Aquarium Society

Thinking about a large home aquarium? Even if you aren't, there are plenty of good reasons for getting one. Perhaps you'd like to house a really big fish or two, or several aggressive fish in the same tank, or maybe you'd just like to put LOTS of little fish in one tank. Or maybe you're an aquarist who is now ready for the challenge of setting up and maintaining a bigger aquarium.

Large aquaria have much to offer those of us "in the hobby." In addition to satisfying the space requirements of big fish, large tanks tend to offer more stable water conditions than do similarly stocked and filtered smaller tanks. And, if properly set-up and maintained, a large aquarium can be an extremely impressive addition to your home.

In the past 8 years, I have purchased, set-up, and maintained a number of large aquariums, including a 9-foot-long, 340g glass aquarium. I've seen the good, the bad, and the ugly of dealing with big tanks. I've moved so many heavy tanks that I've exhausted the goodwill of my family and friends and helped put my chiropractor's kids through college. I've been to the brink of litigation with freight companies. I've filled, spilled, and drained water in Noahian proportions. And I've loved every minute of it.

Still ready for the challenge of setting up and maintaining a large home aquarium? Here then are ten steps for success:

1. Commitment

As my Grandpa always said, "If you're going to do something, do it right ... or don't do it at all!" And while he may have neither coined that phrase nor been sober when he said it, it's the motto by which any hobbyist looking to set up a large aquarium should live by. Before you even begin, make sure you have the backing of your spouse, significant other, and/or family; after all, these are the people who will have to share their home with a huge water-filled contraption. You also need to ensure that you've got the necessary financial resources to purchase a quality product. And finally, be certain that you are both prepared and determined to put substantial time and effort into this project.

2. Location

Positioning a large aquarium in your home requires a bit more forethought than with standard-sized tanks. As always, a level spot, free from direct sunlight and heavy foot traffic is required. You'll need to plan for easy access for feeding and maintenance. And, of course, you'll want to locate the tank in a place that offers comfortable viewing for you and your guests—but remember that you need not sit as close to large aquaria as you do with smaller ones.

When selecting a site for a large home aquarium, keep in mind your sense of proportion as large tanks can easily "overwhelm" a room. Consider the possibility

of an “in-the-wall” tank; this can provide a very attractive finished look to your aquarium, and also allows you to service the tank from behind the scenes.

3. Weight

Let’s state the obvious: Big tanks mean big weight. Sure, you’ve got more water than with smaller tanks, but don’t neglect the added weight from thicker glass and sturdier stands. For example, an empty 125g glass tank weighs about 200 lbs., while a 300g glass tank (empty) runs 1,000 lbs. or so. Water tips the scale at about 8.3 lbs. per gallon and adds up mighty quickly, as do the heavier rocks and driftwood pieces you’re likely to use in a larger tank. By my best estimate, my 340g weighs somewhere in the neighborhood of 2 tons!

Big tanks are probably safest in the basement on a concrete slab. The first floor of your home can be workable as well, assuming you sufficiently shore up the supporting floor. Spare yourself unnecessary worry and labor by saving the upper floors of your home for small tanks.

4. Stand

Ready-made aquarium stands are available for pretty much any size tank up to the standard six-foot 180g. Tanks larger than that almost always require that you either custom-order from a manufacturer, or build your own stand. Those of you who—like myself—are inept at matters of carpentry should consider hiring a professional to ensure the job is done right. Determine how high you want the stand to be—high enough for comfortable viewing,

but not so high that the aquarium dominates the room. And finally, take the time to figure out how much room you’ll need under the tank for any equipment and accessories you plan to put there, and provide enough space for easy access.

5. H2O

We know we’re going to put water in the tank—and take some out during maintenance—so we’ve got to plan ahead. A nearby source of cold and hot water (and a drain) is a must. Although modern water change systems like the PYTHON make this less of a concern than in the past, this doesn’t mean we shouldn’t consider other options. With proper planning, water lines can be run adjacent to or directly into the tank, and means for draining water can be incorporated as well. Remember, even a 25% water change on a big tank is a lot of water; imagine the convenience of turning a couple of valves to drain—and also to fill—the tank rapidly.

6. Material

Glass or Acrylic? The debate rages, and each material offers specific advantages and disadvantages. In general, acrylic is lighter than glass and more readily fashioned into unique or extra-tall shapes, but it is more expensive and somewhat more easily scratched than glass. However, some acrylic scratches can be polished out, while scratched glass is all but impossible to fix. Acrylic is supposedly “clearer” than glass, and modern acrylic tank manufacturers claim that today’s acrylics do not discolor, as did their predecessors. Personally, I will never again

use glass for anything over 180g, if only in consideration of weight.

7. Source

Most any retail pet shop can readily obtain glass or acrylic tanks up to 180 gallons; some stores even carry 7' and 8' tanks up to as much as 265g or so. Get beyond that, and you'll be faced with one of three choices:

a. Build your own.

This alternative is only available to those who are not ham-fisted like myself. Done properly, this can be the least expensive route, as you provide the labor (search the web or check out the "Manual of Tankbusters" for how to do). Just note that glass sheets are heavy and awkward, meaning you won't be able to build a big tank without help. In addition, use care as to the type of silicone and/or sealant employed; many are not approved for aquarium use. Proceed with caution!

b. Special order via your retailer

Your retailer probably has a source of his own that makes extra large tanks. This is the most convenient AND most expensive way to get a tank. You will pay thousands of dollars for tanks over 300 gallons. On the plus side, the retailer will (or should) arrange for delivery, and will also help with any problems that might arise.

c. Mail Order/Direct Purchase

I have found this provides the most reasonable compromise. If you choose acrylic, there are a number of manufacturers that advertise each month in FAMA. Glass aquarium manufacturers that sell direct to the

public are less common but do exist. You will definitely save money on the cost of the tank by ordering direct, but should be prepared for hidden charges such as packing, shipping crates, and freight—get these prices quoted ahead of time.

As a rough guide to cost, retailers quoted me prices exceeding \$4,000 for purchase and delivery of a glass 9' 340g. Buying directly from the manufacturer cut my cost to less than half of this.

8. Transport

If you buy directly from the manufacturer they will either send the aquarium to a nearby airport or to your local freight depot. You can then arrange your own transportation and pick it up, or have the freight company deliver to your address. Note that this does not mean they will bring the tank into—or even near—your house. They'll bring it only to the end of your driveway; you'll still have to unload the tank and move it in. If you decide to have the freight line deliver you should be aware that these companies are notorious for not showing when promised; I prefer to go to their depot (with my own movers) and get the tank myself.

9. Moving

Once it's at your house, you'll need help getting the aquarium inside. Tanks up to 55g or so can more or less be handled by one person—although I confess to once moving a 125g solo, using a SUV, a trio of sawhorses, and absolutely no common sense—but larger tanks require assistance. Getting family members or friends to help out may be an

option, but once you're moving a tank heavier than a couple of hundred pounds you're going to need friends that are either very understanding or very strong. Larger glass tanks may require professional help—I wound up hiring eight movers to get my 340g into my house.

Plan ahead! Moving a large tank may require twisting and turning to get around corners and deal with the various angles created by doorways and stairwells. Stories abound of hobbyists who wound up having to remove windows or doors in the process. Inter-American Pet Supply even told me of a customer who took delivery of an 8' x 3' x 3' aquarium only to then find he could not get it into his house! So, measure twice, cut once...

10. Filtration

A wide array of options exists for filtering the large tank. Although you could strap on a bunch of outside power filters or canisters and get the job done, I've found though that a better option is to order the tank "reef-ready." What's reef ready? The tank comes pre-drilled with several holes and an overflow box which are plumbed to a second smaller "sump" tank, which contains a trickle filter or other filtration process. Water pumps are used to circulate the tank water between your main tank and the sump via PVC pipe or flexible tubing.

This may sound complicated, but plumbing an aquarium is less complex than installing a faucet or toilet. Just be sure to allow a few days for all glue and sealant to cure before filling with water and adding fish.

This plumbed system works great; it permits easy access to the filter media, and allows you to put heaters, filter intakes and such in the sump and out of sight—as well as out of reach of large fish. The water pumps used in such a system are very powerful and provide excellent turnover of tank volume. And since there are no filters hanging off the back of the tank, you can push the aquarium flat against a wall. Sumps also have room for you to add other fancy stuff, like a fluidized bed filter or UV sterilizer, should you so desire.

Success

Once the tank is set-up, filled, decorated and cycled, you're ready to add fish, sit back and enjoy ... and think about the even BIGGER aquarium you're going to tackle next time!

Chris Persson

www.persmngmt.com/cichlidscene

Dues are due!

Please remember that March is the cut-off date of the grace period.

Don't miss a single issue of
The Wet Pet Gazette.

Any questions, please call Anne
Broadmeyer at (203) 775-0030.

March-April 2001

**Oh – That’s One Of My
Favorite Fish!
(Chapter Two)**

Botia lecontei

*by Douglas De Ment
Norwalk Aquarium Society*

Note: Not all of my favorite fish are Botias, and this column will contain other fishes than Botias ... but not this month! Since I wrote about the *Botia modesta* last month, I thought it would be good to follow-up with *Botia lecontei*.

Another of my favorite fish is the loach *Botia lecontei*. It is sometimes called the “red finned loach” and sometimes “Le Conte’s loach.” It is sometimes confused with *Botia modesta*. In many pet shops, I have seen tanks of *lecontei* labeled as *modesta*. The *B. lecontei* is more slender than the *B. modesta*. Also, the cross band on the caudal peduncle (tail) often remains as a spot in adults. If you see a *modesta* and a *lecontei* side by side, you’ll readily see the differences. The *lecontei* individuals that I have kept seem to be more aggressive than the *B. modesta*, often badgering others (their own and other species) more so than *B. modesta*.

The natural range of the *lecontei* is Southeast Asia, east Thailand, and Laos. Soft, slightly acid water (pH 6.9 to 6.5) is appropriate, although the fish will tolerate stable water that is just outside this zone. Frequent water changes are important, 10% weekly.

Lecontei does well with a tank bottom of fine sand. Hardy resistant vegetation is in order, with the roots protected against the burrowing.

They readily take meaty foods, such as worms, but can be adapted to take some prepared foods. The *lecontei* loaches that I have kept, would all take standard flake food, although they love meatier fare. I will go to my other tanks for some snails, and drop a few into his tank. The *lecontei* will search out these snails and eat them up, shell and all.

Since they haven’t been bred and they can be belligerent, I’m not sure what it is about these fish, that I find appealing. Maybe it the fact that they will hold their own against “milder” cichlids, although I’ve seen them dart in and gobble fry, so if you are breeding the cichlids, don’t have the *lecontei* in the tank!

The species are generally more active at evening or night, and low light levels are recommended to keep the fish at ease. Phased lighting is definitely appropriate.

There have been no reports of breeding in an aquarium. Probably few people have been willing to give them the larger tank that multiple individuals would need. I have seen specimens for sale that from about two inches to five inches. The fish can get to 10 inches.

Reference:

Baensch Aquarium Atlas.

AFFILIATIONS

N.A.S. is a member of the Federation of American Aquarium Societies (FAAS), and the North East Council of Aquarium Societies (NEC).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETINGS

Board of Directors' (BOD) meetings are held in member's homes. They are generally but not always the first Thursday of the month. You do not need to be a board member to attend or to host a BOD meeting. Attending a BOD meeting is an excellent way to get better acquainted in the society, it also gives you a chance to see another aquarist's set-up. Just let the host/hostess know if you plan to attend. Hosting a BOD meeting is an excellent way to have some experienced hobbyists review your set-ups. Just let any BOD member know that you are interested in hosting a meeting and when. The BOD will gladly relocate a meeting to a member's home.

Following is the tentative list of board meetings. Dates are subject to change. The July board meeting will be July 19th due to the 4th of July week-end. The October board meeting will be the 2nd Thursday due to our Annual Show.

April 5	Richard Moore, Brewster, NY
May 3	The De Ments, Trumbull, CT
June 7	(unconfirmed), Weston, CT
July 19	Gary Krasilovsky, Westport, CT
August 2	The Silvestris, Norwalk, CT
September 6	(unconfirmed), Old Greenwich, CT
October 11	Gary Krasilovsky, Westport, CT
November 1	The Barbours, Norwalk, CT
December 6	The Silvestris, Norwalk, CT

REGULAR MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

Meetings are on the third Thursday of each month except July and December, starting 8 PM at the **Nature Center for Environmental Activities**, 10 Woodside Lane, Westport. Meetings are open to members and the public. Each meeting includes a short business meeting, refreshments, a raffle of goods, and a program/event.

NAS EXCHANGE PROGRAM & REPRINT POLICY

We will exchange our publication with other societies that send their publication to us. Our articles may be reprinted by not-for-profit aquarium societies by acknowledging the source and sending us two copies (one for our library, one for the author).

WET PET GAZETTE ADVERTISING RATES

The Wet Pet Gazette will offer a web page on our web site for any business that will display and offer our membership flyers. (We supply the flyers, the business simply provides the space.)

For ad spaces in the Journal, the cost per issue is

FULL PAGE \$ 25

HALF-PAGE \$ 15

These ads must be paid in advance of printing.

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