

THE WET PET GAZETTE

January/February 1997



Volume 2 Issue 1

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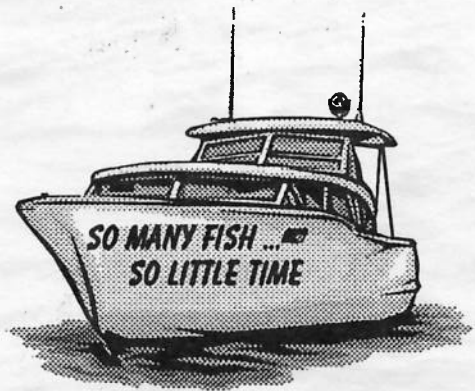
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ED KATUSKA

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DECOR**
CHUCK DAVIS

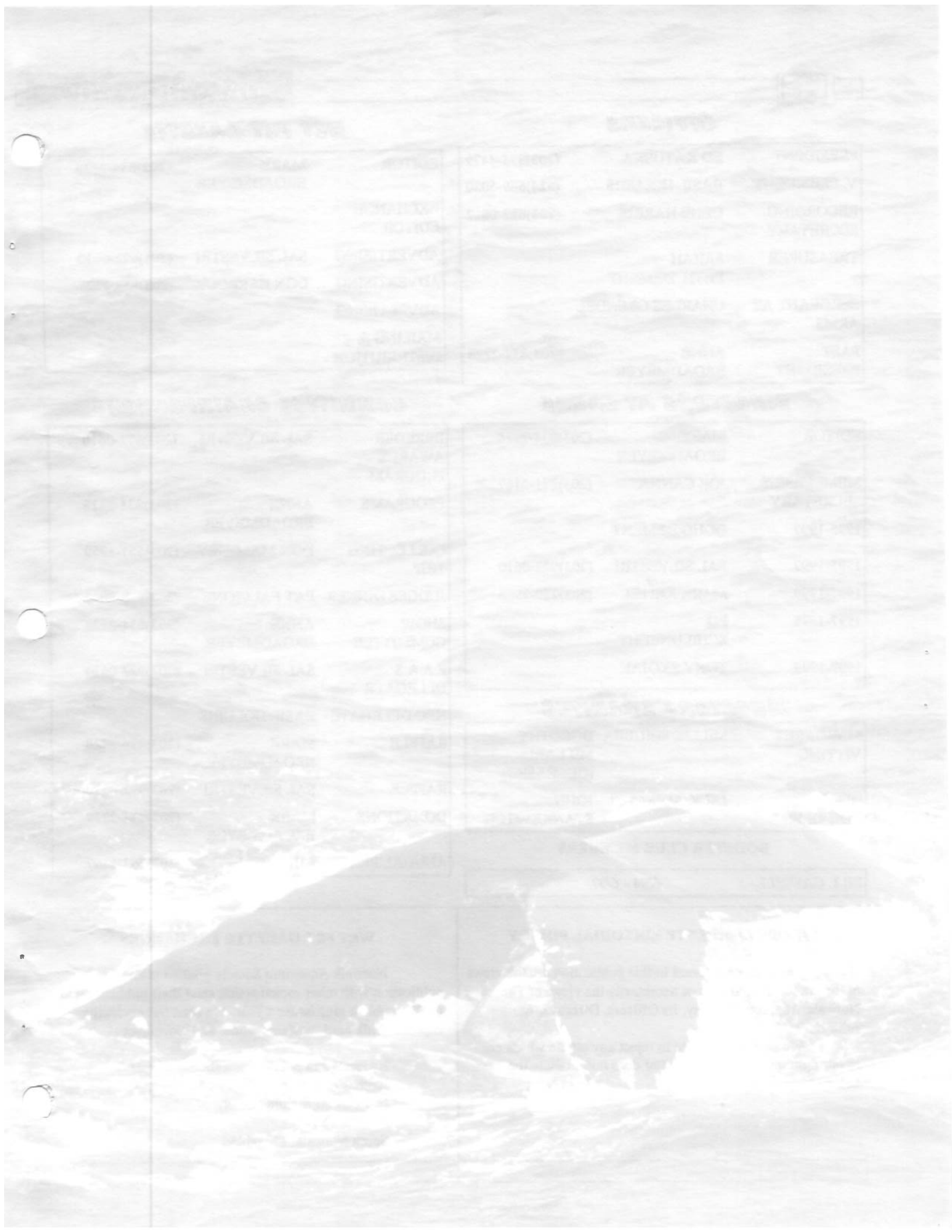
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HOME SHOW 97
BASIL HOLUBIS

**WHERE HAVE THE
MEMBERS GONE?**
PETER FALCIONE



The Journal of
The Norwalk Aquarium Society





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We reserve the right to reject any article which are in our opinion is offensive, and/or does not promote the hobby.

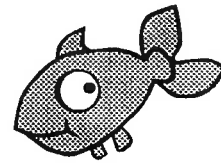
WET PET GAZETTE EXCHANGES

Norwalk Aquarium Society gladly exchanges its publication with other societies that send their publication to us. We publish nine issues a year. We send our exchange copies as bulk mail in March, June, and November

Requests and publications should be sent to:
Exchange Editor
Norwalk Aquarium Society
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AFFILIATIONS



N.A.S. IS A MEMBER OF THE FEDERATION OF AMERICAN AQUARIUM SOCIETIES (FAAS) AND THE NORTHEAST COUNCIL OF AQUARIUM SOCIETIES, INC. (NEC)

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Norwalk Aquarium Society is a not for profit, all volunteer organization, dedicated to the advancement, and promotion of the Aquarium hobby

REGULAR MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

There are regular meetings on the third Thursday of each month except December. Meetings are held at The Nature Center for Environmental Activities, 10 Woodside Lane, Westport, CT. Meetings start at 8:00 PM. Each meeting includes a short business meeting, program or event, door prizes, raffles, auction, and refreshments. All regular meetings are open to the public.



A VIEW FROM UPFRONT

ED KATUSKA
NAS PRESIDENT

I hope all of you had a happy, healthy & safe holiday season.

For those of you that were unable to attend the **Holiday Party**, you missed out on a good time. I would like to give thanks to **Anne & Mark Broadmeyer**, for once again inviting us into their home for an enjoyable event. Thanks' guys.

I would like to congratulate **Peter Fraboni** on being the recipient of the **Arthur Sciubba** award. This award was voted on by the general membership and is presented to a member that over the years has gone beyond the call of duty and helped our organization advance. Peter is a person that is always there for us and takes care of many behind the scene activities. I cannot think of someone more deserving for this award, Congratulations and many thanks Pete

Well its the start of a new year and it looks like a its going to be a busy one. **Volunteers** will be needed to Help share the workload, and lend a hand organizing some of the events that will be taking place this year. The officers and the board cannot effectively do all the work that has to be done. Most of the areas needing volunteers do not take up much time or effort on your part. A little help from the membership will be appreciated.

Time is running out to enter your tank or tanks in this years **Home Show** that will be taking place **March 29 & 30**. This event used to be a big success in the past and we are hoping for many entries this year. So show your stuff and good luck.

Flyers are available for the **Northeast Council 22nd Annual Convention**. It will be taking place on **April 11-13** at the **Hartford Marriott Hotel** in Farmington, CT. As usual the workshop committee has a fantastic lineup of speakers and a fun time planned for all. Hope to see you there.



FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR

MARK BROADMEYER
WET PET GAZETTE EDITOR

Happy new year to all. I look forward to 1997 as a year of growth for the society. Under Ed's leadership and the foresight of the board. I see a great future for us.

I hope you will find this issue of The Wet Pet Gazette interesting, and informative. I have to thank all of you who have taken the time to write articles for it. This month I have published: The first of three parts of **Ed Katuska's** judging thesis article. An article is required to complete the **NEC Judging School** requirements. **Chuck Davis** has written an article on aquascaping an aquarium, that I think all of you will benefit from. **Peter Falcione** gives his thoughts about membership, and **Gene Harris** has written an ongoing saga of **Pterophyllum Altum** and his experience with this fish as it happens.

Next month there will be more original articles from **Pete Schaumberg, Gene Harris, Chuck Davis, Ed Katuska,** and our new rising star **Michael Krasilovski**.

I have plenty of room for your **Classified ads**. Send them to me as soon as possible. One man's junk is another man's treasure.

Pay close attention to the **Calendar of Events**, and ads from our sister societies. There are a lot of events coming up you won't want to miss.

There are more **Internet Addresses** that you surfers will want to check out. In the **New Products** column are announcements from manufacturers about what they have been up to. **Anne** has been working on getting great programs together. keep up to date in the **Programs** column.

There are other ideas in the works to make this the best publication in the hobby. I am open to your thoughts, and ideas that will help achieve that.



MARK



PROGRAMS, PROGRAMS, PROGRAMS

ANNE BROADMEYER - PROGRAMS CHAIRPERSON

I hope all of you enjoyed the wonderful program given by Bob Metesky on Simplified Reef Keeping. I am sure that Bob is going to be busy giving this program all over New England. Get your car tuned up Bob. This month we bring back "Dr." Pete Schaumberg for fix it night. If it's broken he can show you how to repair it. This program is guaranteed to bring cost savings to you. If you have broken aquarium stuff bring it to the meeting with you. In March will be Fishy Bingo. More information on that next issue.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

February 20, 1997 DR. PETE'S FIX-IT NIGHT
by *Pete Schaumberg* of the Salty Society.

Pete visited us about a year ago and you all were so interested in his program that he only got half way through! In this program he will show how to fix many items in the hobby.

March 20, 1997

COLLECTING IN SOUTH AMERICA

Featuring: *Jim Carmark* from Massachusetts. Jim has

been keeping fish for over 30 years, and been collecting in South America for the last ten.

April 17, 1997

NAS BINGO NIGHT

Come join us for a night of fishy bingo and socializing.

COMING NEXT MONTH IN THE WET PET GAZETTE

THE GENUS CORYDORAS PART 2
BY ED KATUSKA

WHAT A KILLIE MEANT TO ME !!!
BY CHUCK DAVIS

FISH AND THE INTERNET
BY PETE SCHAUENBERG

A MORE NOBLE PURSUIT
BY GENE HARRIS



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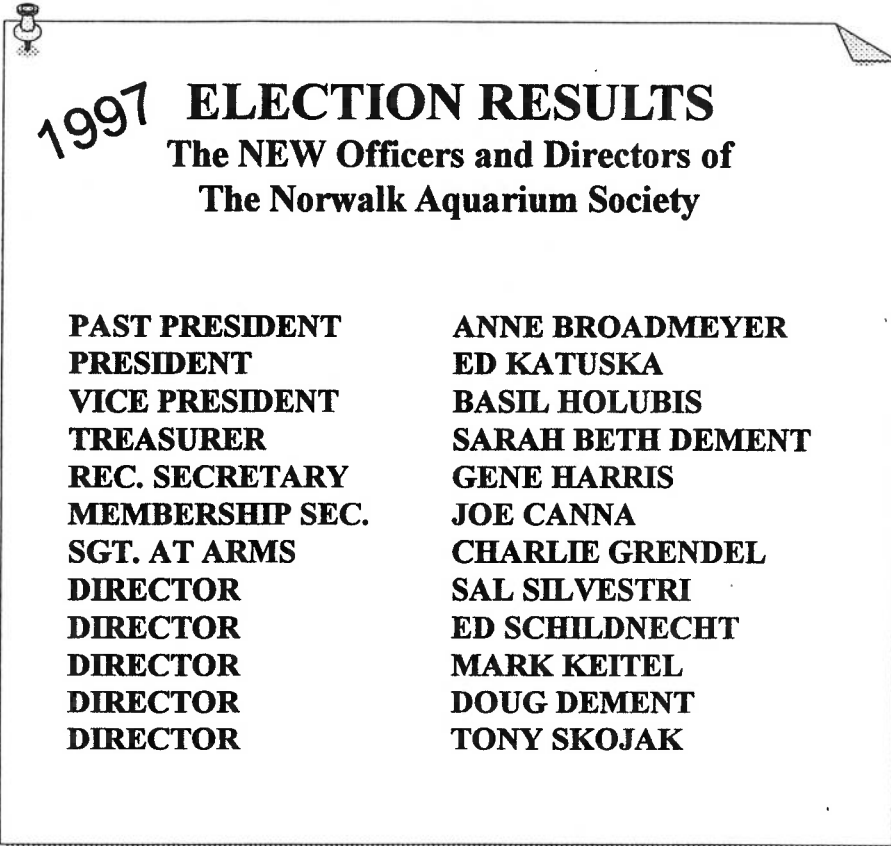
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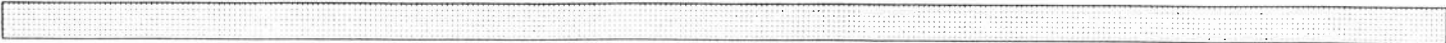


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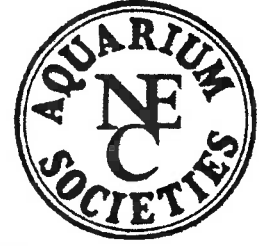
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The **NORTHEAST COUNCIL**
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PRESENTS THEIR

22nd ANNUAL CONVENTION

April 11-13, 1997

Hartford Marriott Hotel - Farmington, Connecticut
Exit 37 off I-84 West of Hartford, in Farm Springs Park

1997 SPEAKERS:



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Ginny Eckstein	Catfish
Charlie Grimes	Banquet Speaker
Ad Konings	Tanganyikan Cichlids
Wayne Leibel	Pike Cichlids
Oliver Lucanus	Cichlids of Madagascar
Steve Lundblad	Peacocks
Mike Schadle	Livebearers
Terry Seigel	Marines
Peter Unmack	Desert Fish
Kurt Zadnik	West African Dwarf Cichlids

- ↳ Friday night includes dry goods silent auction, social hour and specialty organization introductions, cichlid breeding discussion
- ↳ Saturday night banquet
- ↳ Giant auction Sunday 11:00am, open to the public. Live fish, plants, and drygoods. Viewing opens at 9:30am
- ↳ Raffles, Door Prizes, Manufacturers displays and vendor tables
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This is a weekend devoted to the exchange of information among tropical fish hobbyists of all levels of expertise. Approximately 300 novice to expert tropical fishkeepers will gather together for the weekend to greet old friends, meet new friends, exchange ideas and information, and gain further knowledge, not only from the speakers, but also from other hobbyists who have a world of information to share. National manufacturers of aquarium products and equipment will be represented at the convention. Display booths will be set up with representatives there to explain their newest products, answer your questions, and discuss their product lines. Independent vendors will also be present selling their fishy wares - live aquatic plants, new and used aquarium books....Door Prizes.

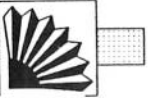
REGISTRATION INFORMATION AVAILABLE:

CALL: Janine & David Banks (802)482-3616 or Penny & Al Faul (508)371-0593

or **WRITE:** Janine Banks - RR 3 Box 1548 - Hinesburg, VT 05461

or **EMAIL:** us at dbanks@together.net.

VISIT NEC's web page at <http://www.cadyvision.com/nolimits/nec.html>



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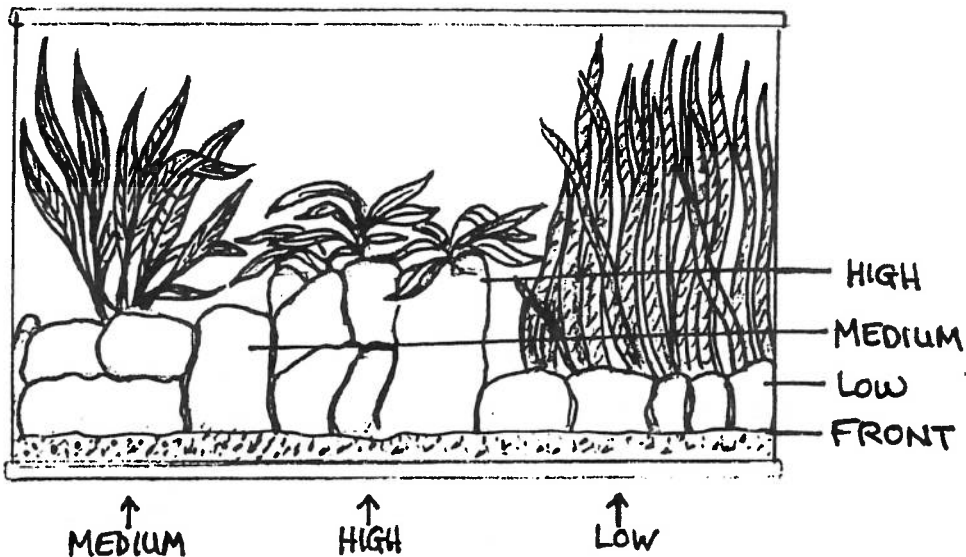





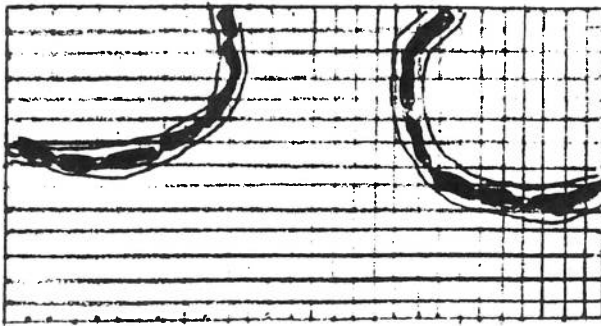
SPLIT - LEVEL AQUARIUM DECOR

BY CHUCK DAVIS

Looking good! That's how you want your community tank and one of the best ways to accomplish this is with a multi-level aquarium. As shown below you can take a quantity of small and medium size rocks and glue them into rock work that forms gravel barricades. Use only approved aquarium sealant since other types of silicone sealer can bleed toxins into the aquarium. Be sure to wash the rocks good before glue is applied; it wouldn't hurt to run a rough brush over them to loosen any weak pieces.



The diagram above shows a four level design, wherein the rock work barrier serves to form planter for various types of flora. Shorter plants are placed in the highest level, which is also good for plants that require more light, as they are closer to the light source. Taller plants are cultivated in the lower levels, allowing them to reach for the water surface. Rock work is always attractive aquarium decor.

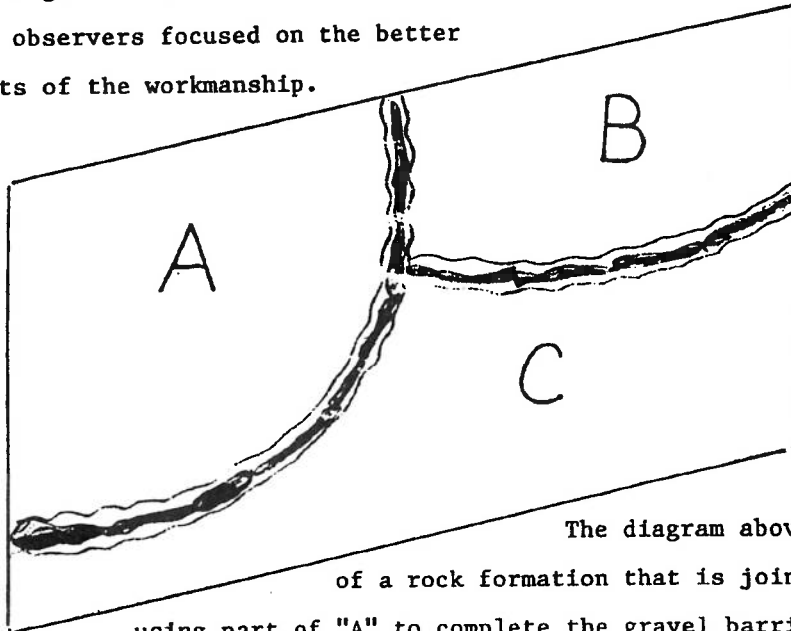


To the left is a view from the top of the fish tank. Glued together rocks form two different levels that can be the same height or different.

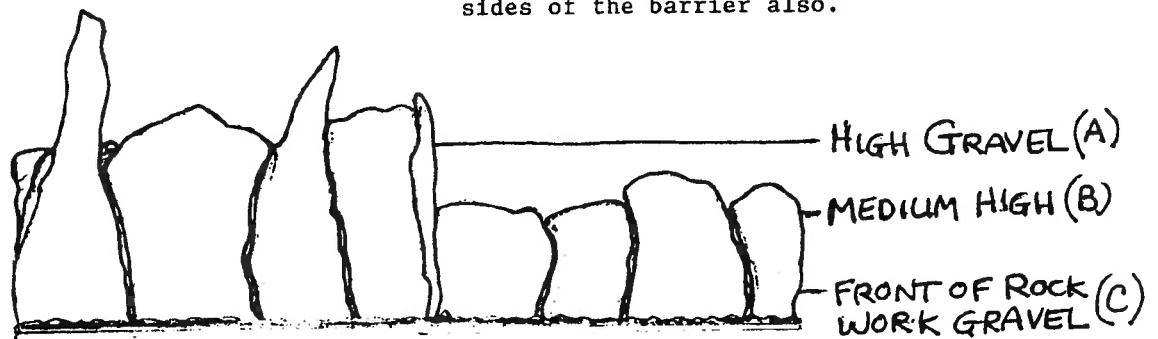


SPLIT-LEVEL continued

I find that shale and other 'strata' rock work best for this type of project, because vertically they take up much less room and are easier to piece together. Be sure to avoid using too much glue and wipe off any excess glue from the visible side of the rock formations. This will keep observers focused on the better points of the workmanship.



The diagram above is the top view of a rock formation that is joined together - "B" using part of "A" to complete the gravel barrier. "A" and "B" can be joined or left to stand on their own. Below, you can get an idea of what this formation looks like front the usual observation point. Of course, the barrier will only hold rock to it's lowest point, but all different sizes of rocks can be used. In this case the glass walls of the tank provide three sides of the barrier also.



The following diagrams will offer a more elaborate design scenario. Figure #1 shows two rock formations that are connected by a rock bridge, using both a top and front view. You can see that the bridge work is two pieces glued together for a more unusual effect. The second diagram,

SPLIT - LEVEL continued

Figure #1

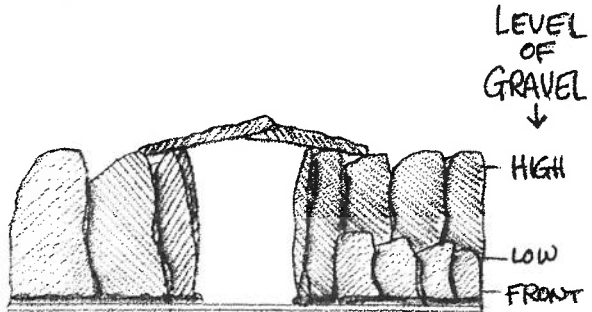
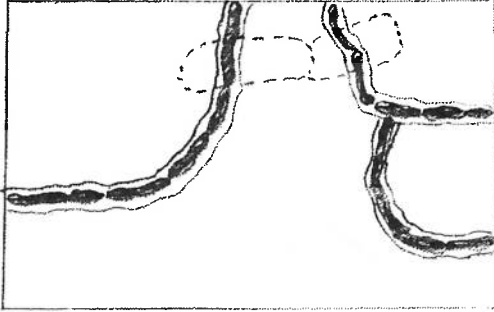


Figure #2

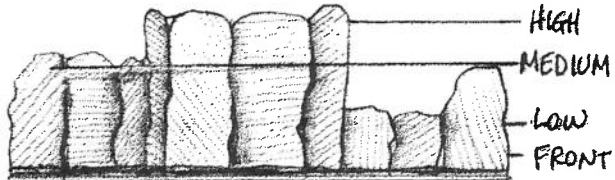
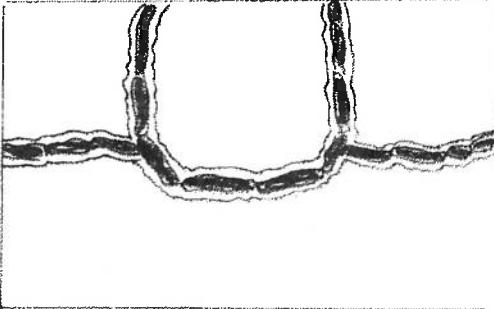


Figure #3

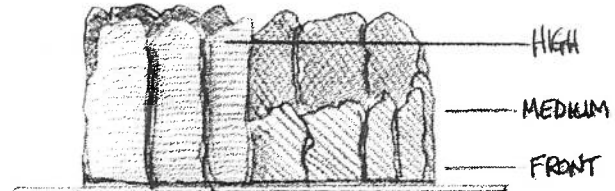
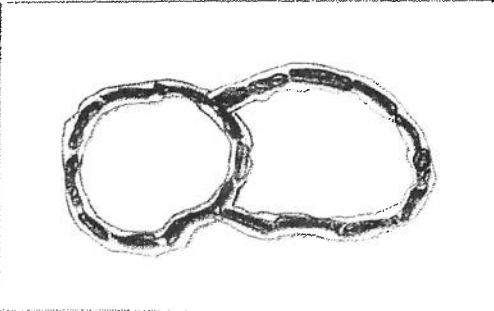
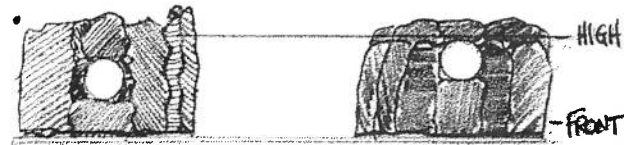
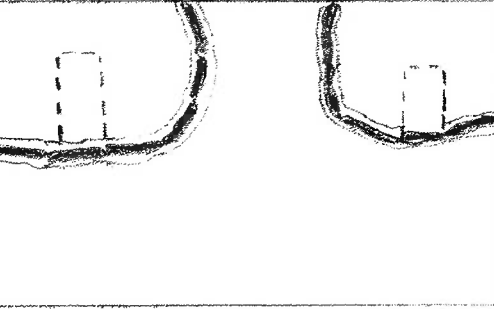


Figure #4





SPLIT - LEVEL continued

Figure #2, completely transverses the tank to form a complete gravel barrier, using three different levels behind a rock wall and the regular gravel height in front of the wall. This set-up allows for the use of different plant sizes to include potted plants in the deeper sections. Figure #3 certainly is not a conservative rock work idea. It makes an island out of the center area of the fish tank. This can be useful for shy fish and fish that swim in schools, much like the shark tanks (circular runs) at public aquariums. I would not suggest this set-up if there is no visual capability on either side of the aquarium. The center island design can also be very useful in maintaining an amphibian type animal, by allowing the highest island to remain out of the water and not submerged, while the second highest island is just below the surface giving the amphibian a mounting point for the land mass.

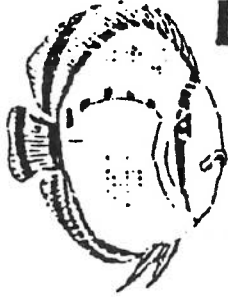
Figure #4 is seriously more ambitious. It involves placing lengths of PVC pipe into the wall to form caverns. This is specially good for cave dwelling and spawning fish, like *Apistogramma* cichlids, suckermouth catfish, and many species of sharks and loaches, eels and knifefish. Be certain that you get the gravel to fill the underside of the PVC for support. Caves can even be built to have two or more entrances and exits, by using T-joints and elbows on the cave pipes. It is important the you be able to see inside the caves to be sure that none of the fish get stuck in there.

Use any or all of the designs shown, mix and match them as you see fit. Add live or plastic plants, more rocks and driftwood to develop a pleasing display. The combinations of possibilities is endless! You may want to use one or two of these ideas for an entry in the community tank class at your next show.

Finally, let me re-caution you about using on silicone sealant that is approved for aquariums. It would be a shame to create a beautiful set-up that does not tolerate aquatic life.

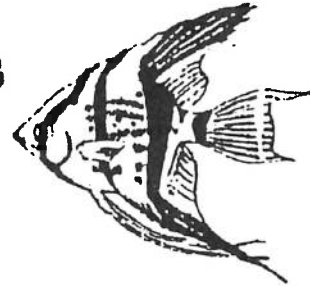


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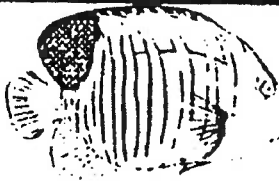
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WHERE HAVE ALL THE MEMBERS GONE ?

**BY PETER FALCIONE
NORWALK AQUARIUM SOCIETY**

Recently I received a phone call from a friend in another state. He is concerned, that membership in his club, was shrinking. "How is your club?" , He asked. He wanted to know if our rolls contained new members. Did we have many junior members? Were we able to replace members, lost through attrition? The hobby and aquarium clubs are in trouble, he lamented.

Calm down Burt, I said. Remember I own an aquarium store, business has never been better in the 26 years I have owned the company. Sure Burt replied, the dollars are there. But who is spending. Upon reflection, Burt is right. The number of small starter customers is down, Multi tank hobbyists are negligible, Much of the gross business comes from corporate commercial and professional sales. Twenty years ago, a week did not pass without a hobbyist selling our shop 50 to 100 baby angelfish. Once a month a club member would bring in 12 to 20 male bettas, for trade against future purchases. Even 10 & 11 year olds would show up with swordtails and fancy guppies to sell on weekends. Today a major breeder in Long Island sells us angelfish once a month or so. The only other fish we seem to be offered, are large Oscars, or Pacus that became too expensive to feed, or too much work to care for.

I believe all clubs suffer from the same malaise. Lets regenerate our hobby and club locally. If every member brought a friend to the next meeting, and it was entertaining and informative, our club has a chance of gaining a new member. The next gift you have to purchase might be a living gift of an aquarium. Every hobbyist has a functional ensemble tucked away in the garage or attic. Instead of it gathering cob webs, clean it up and give it to that young person next door, or down the street. Check on their progress occasionally and if he or she is "Hooked" on the hobby, bring them to the next meeting.

Mark Broadmeyer tells me that we have about 50 members locally, with 25 to 35 attending our monthly meetings. If 25 members brought along one friend each, then in a few months, those 25 escorted another friend each, then the pyramid begins. Burt tells me the average person keeps a fish tank 14 months before it ends up being disassembled. The reasons range from, lack of interest, fish death, too much work, or to unsightly appearance. It's all our jobs to break this cycle through education and club strength.



WHAT'S ON THE CALENDAR

1997

- FEBRUARY**
 - 16 PIONEER VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY ANNUAL AUCTION, KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HALL, ENFIELD, CT
 - 22 WOOSTER AQUARIUM SOCIETY ANNUAL AUCTION
- MARCH**
 - 2 NEC 3rd QUARTER MEETING , FARMINGTON MARRIOTT HOTEL
 - 9 EXOTIC FISH SOCIETY OF HARTFORD ANNUAL AUCTION, UCONN MEDICAL CENTER, FARMINGTON, CT
 - 15 NEW ENGLAND KILLIFISH ASSOCIATION ANNUAL BOWL SHOW
 - 30 MAINE STATE AQUARISTS SOCIETY AUCTION
- APRIL**
 - 11-13 NORTHEAST COUNCIL OF AQUARIUM SOCIETIES 22nd ANNUAL CONVENTION - HARTFORD MARRIOTT HOTEL, FARMINGTON, CT - 11 SPEAKERS - ANNUAL AWARD BANQUET - AUCTIONS - MFG'S DISPLAYS - CALL JANINE BANKS 802-482-3616
 - 27 BOSTON AQUARIUM SOCIETY ANNUAL EVENT, WEYMOUTH ELK'S HALL
- MAY**
 - 2-4 TROPICAL FISH CLUB OF BURLINGTON, ANNUAL SHOW AND AUCTION, BURLINGTON, VT CALL JANINE BANKS 802-482-3616
 - 17 GREATER CITY AQUARIUM SOCIETY TROPICAL FISH SHOW
 - 16-18 AQUALAND AQUARIUM SOCIETY 24th ANNUAL SHOW AND AUCTION, BONNIE ACRES, BRISTOL, CT

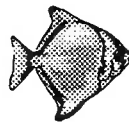


March

1997

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

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9 EFSOH AUCTION	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 MSAS AUCTION	31					



April

1997

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

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6	7	8	9	10	11 NEC ANNUAL	12 CON-VENTION
13 NEC	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 BAS AUC-TION	28	29	30		TFCB ANNUAL	SHOW & AUC-TION



AQUARIAS DAY '97

PIONEER VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

**THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HALL
WASHINGTON RD
ENFIELD, CT 06082
1-203-745-8125**

FEBRUARY 16TH, 1997

GIANT AUCTION TO START AT 12:00 SHARP

**THERE WILL BE REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT LINDA PARCIAK AT: (203) 745-8785**

GENERAL PUBLIC WELCOME

**AQUARIUM RELATED
WORLD WIDE WEB SITES**

The Internet World Wide Web has taken the world by storm. Each month we publish addresses of aquarium hobby related sites. Have you found an interesting site you would like to share? Send us the the address.

THE AQUASTORE
<http://www.aquanet.com/aquastore>

AQUATIC BOOKS
<http://www.seahorse.com>

AQUALOG BOOKS
<http://www.aqlog.com>

ALL GLASS AQUARIUM
<http://www2.all-glass.com/allglass>

SINGAPORE AQUARIUM FISH EXPORTERS ASSOC.
<http://www.netv.com/safea>

VIRTUAL PRESENTS
<http://www.virtualpresents.com>



WORD JUMBLE

LMATU

OGYB

HISF



NEW PRODUCTS UPDATE

BOYD ENTERPRISES, INC HAS INTRODUCED 2 NEW PRODUCTS - REEF ESSENTIALS IODIDE FOR ANEMONES AND SOFT CORALS, AND REEF ESSENTIALS STRONTIUM FOR STONY CORALS AND CALCAREOUS ALGAE

EUGENE DANNER INTRODUCES THE 1200 GPH MAG DRIVE UTILITY PUMP - ALSO AVAILABLE WITH 18' CORD FOR USE IN OUTDOOR PONDS - SUBMERSIBLE OR EXTERNAL OPERATION - HEAVY DUTY IMPELLOR - BIG POWER IN A SMALL PACKAGE

WARDLEY CORP. INTRODUCED ITS NEW LINE OF WATER CONDITIONERS, INCLUDING COMPLETE CONDITIONER, COMPLETE REMEDY, CLEAN SWEEP, CHLOR OUT, ICH OUT, pH UP AND pH DOWN. AVAILABLE FROM 1 TO 16 OZ. SIZES

**LAST MONTHS
WORD JUMBLE ANSWERS:
ANGELFISH
PUFFER
LOACH**



THE NORWALK AQUARIUM SOCIETY 1997 ANNUAL HOME SHOW COMPETITION

HERE IS YOUR CHANCE TO SHOW OFF YOUR HOME DISPLAY AQUARIUMS. ON MARCH 29th AND 30th, 1997 A SMALL GROUP OF JUDGES WILL COME TO YOUR HOME TO VIEW AND PHOTOGRAPH YOUR ENTRIES. YOU MAY ENTER ANY SIZE AQUARIUM.

CLASSES

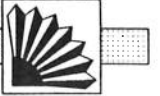
*ENTRIES MUST BE WITHIN A 50 MILE RADIUS
OF WESTPORT, CT*

FRESHWATER NATURAL	EVERYTHING IN THIS AQUARIUM MUST BE NATURAL - NO PLASTIC PLANTS OR MAN MADE OBJECTS. THIS AQUARIUM CAN BE SPECIES SPECIFIC OR BALANCED COMMUNITY. THERE SHOULD HOWEVER BE A NUMBER OF FISH
FRESHWATER ARTIFICIAL NATURAL	IF YOU LIKE THE NATURAL LOOK BUT THOSE BIG CICHLIDS WON'T LEAVE THE REAL PLANTS ALONE. THIS CLASS IS FOR YOU. THIS AQUARIUM SHOULD BE NATURAL LOOKING
AFRICAN CICHLID	SINCE AFRICAN CICHLIDS AQUARIUMS ARE IN A CLASS OF THEIR OWN WE HAVE ADDED THIS CATEGORY
MARINE NON REEF	THIS TANK MAY CONTAIN FISH, NON LIVING CORAL OR OTHER DECOR
MARINE MINI REEF	MINI REEF AQUARIUMS CONTAINING LIVE ROCK, LIVE CORALS, AND OTHER REEF INHABITANTS
ORNAMENTAL PONDS	ORNAMENTAL WATER GARDENS HAVE BECOME VERY POPULAR- WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOURS- INSIDE OR OUT. THIS CLASS WILL BE JUDGED BY APPOINTMENT IN THE MONTH OF AUGUST TO ALLOW FOR POND MATURITY

GENERAL RULES

1. NO ILLEGAL FISH WILL BE ALLOWED
2. APPOINTED JUDGING TIME WILL BE BASED ON THE BEST ROUTE FOR THE JUDGES. TIME WILL NOT BE CHOSEN BY THE ENTRANT. OUR BEST EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO ADHERE TO THE ANNOUNCED SCHEDULE.
3. ALL ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED BY THE FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEETING
4. THE ENTRY FEE IS \$ 5.00 FOR THE FIRST TANK, 3.50 FOR THE SECOND, AND THE THIRD IS FREE. THERE IS A LIMIT OF THREE ENTRIES.
5. TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE JUDGES, YOU MUST PROVIDE A MAP AND DETAILED DIRECTIONS TO YOUR LOCATION.

**SUBMIT ENTRIES TO: BASIL HOLUBIS, CHAIRMAN - C/O NORWALK
AQUARIUM SOCIETY, P.O. BOX 84, NORWALK, CT 06856 OR CALL HIM AT
914-669-5030**



The NAS HOME SHOW COMPETITION

ten reasons to enter your aquarium

BY RASIL HOLURIS
HOME SHOW CHAIRPERSON

10. THERE IS NO BETTER REASON TO CLEAN YOUR AQUARIUM - COMPANY IS COMING OVER
9. THERE IS PLENTY OF TIME TO REDECORATE - MAYBE A SCHOOL OF NEONS, BLACK GRAVEL, AND LIVE PLANTS
8. MAYBE YOU CAN LEARN SOMETHING FROM US - THEY SAY OUR EYES ARE THE BEST THIEF OR MAYBE WE WILL GET AN IDEA FROM YOUR FISH ROOM
7. WE GET TO SEE WHAT ALL OUR FISH FRIENDS AQUARIUMS LOOK LIKE-NO ONE SHOULD FEEL THAT THEIR TANK IS TO SMALL OR NOT GOOD ENOUGH.
6. YOU COULD WIN A PRIZE ! JUST LET US IN THE HOUSE TO LOOK AT YOUR TANK, WHAT COULD BE EASIER
5. YOU WILL BE PART OF HISTORY. AFTER EDITING THE VIDEO, IT WILL BE SHOWN BOTH AS A PROGRAM, AND ADDED TO THE TAPE THAT IS SHOWN EVERY YEAR AT THE ANNUAL SHOW.
4. CLUB PARTICIPATION ! GET INVOLVED IN A CLUB ACTIVITY - ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SPRUCE UP YOUR TANK AND LET US SEE IT
3. ITS SIMPLE TO REGISTER BY PHONE OR BY MAIL- CALL ME ANY EVENING BEFORE 10:00 PM. AT TEN I'M IN MY JAMEY'S
2. PONDS! EVERYBODY WANTS ONE HELP OTHERS GET MOTIVATED BY SHOWING THEM YOURS. THESE WILL BE JUDGED IN AUGUST BUT REGISTER NOW !
1. THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON IS THE CLUB WILL GET THREE PROGRAMS OUT OF THIS.
 - A.) FISHROOMS - SMALL OR LARGE - HOW DO YOU DO IT - LET US VIDEO TAPE YOURS
 - B.) INDIVIDUAL TANKS-A TEN GALLON TANK CAN BE AS BEAUTIFUL AS A 100 GAL- DON'T FEEL YOURS WON'T WIN. IT JUST MIGHT ! SIZE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE JUDGING
 - C.) PONDS-THIS IS A SUMMER VIDEO BUT I THINK IT WILL BE A PLEASANT SURPRISE

SO COME ON PICK UP THE PHONE AND CALL ME TO ENTER

P.S. WE HAVE INVITED OUR SISTER SOCIETY THE DANBURY AREA AQUARIUM SOCIETY TO COMPETE IN THE SHOW THIS YEAR.I HOPE PARTICIPATION FROM BOTH CLUBS WILL BE GREAT. THE CLUBS WILL BE THE REAL WINNER WITH A GOOD VIDEO PRESENTATION.



Pterophyllum Altum
by Gene Harris,
Norwalk Aquarium Society

After looking and asking for months to find albums, I finally found some by pure chance at a local individually owned (not corporate) store on 11-8-96. I was almost out the door after browsing and mentioned to Chuck to call me if he ever hears of Altum angels being available. He shook his head in concern, asked me to follow him and told me that they were not doing well. I couldn't believe I had missed them. They were in a 10 gallon tank, higher shelf, mixed in with about 4 other regular PTEROPHYLLUM scalar silver and marbled angels. Two were active and about, the third was cowering but alive. I had expected them to be much worse shape based on the owners first response. Body size was between quarter and half dollar. They were the only ones Chuck had seen in 6 years and were wild caught from Columbia. Chuck assured me these were true Albums, not the false or 'black Altums' sometimes seen in the hobby. The fish definitely looked different than any angelfish I'd ever seen before, with very high extended dorsal and anal fins. They had a slight cinnamon brown coloration on the central body lines extending vertically into the fins. He really was not in a hurry to sell them, on the belief that they were all sick and only having them 2 weeks from the wholesaler. I asked how much he would want individually for them. Chuck has seen me several times over the last few years, in fact he has bought some of my excess fry at times. He realized these wild caught animals would be going to a 'good home.' We then settled upon a group purchase price with my understanding that I was really buying 2 1/2 fish. This was my rare version of an 'impulse' buy. Within 4 days the weak one died. How does the Meatloaf song lyric go ... 2 out of 3 ain't bad ?

The remaining 2 are in what I call 'breeder #3' a 30 gallon 30" x 18" footprint tank with some potted live plants, and sand substrate. Tank also has 4 small Apistogrammas Borelli and 5 Cory "Panda" catfish, and some baby guppies as potential Altum feeders. Water temp is 82 degrees F, with pH at 6.5. Ammonia, nitrite, and nitrate are near zero/negligible. Water is believed to be soft. More on that later. There is a sponge filter for biological filtration and two box filters with floss only for mechanical filtration. Chemical filtration is accomplished by 10% water changes twice a week, with the live plants consuming some nitrates.

The Altums' seem to space themselves, one to each side of the tank. They will eat live



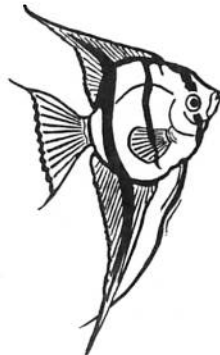
black worms and occasionally go after floating flake, freeze dried bloodworms. They are skittish of each other and me. However, at times they color up and spread their fins nicely, especially if they are not aware of my presence. The 'fish room' is near the oil furnace and I'm the only real 'traffic' that goes back into that cave !

I have finally checked the water for hardness and it is 80ppm total hardness. That's not soft enough and is something I'm working to reduce. I generally use a large plastic barrel with aeration for 48 hours before using the southern Connecticut municipal district water it in my tanks. I know this removes all chlorine because 'all the books say so' and because I've actually tested the water to confirm zero chlorine. Some say that the hard minerals and other impurities are evaporated if aerated long term as I do. Who knows, its does seem to 'condition' the water pretty well. I'll start to collect rainwater, that should be soft! If necessary I'll resort to a commercial pillow softener. Reverse osmosis equipment is not something I'm looking forward to buying.

I've been told by several people that altums die, altums won't live to maturity, and they certainly won't breed. This sounds like a challenge to me !! Even if I have 2 males, or both females, these should grow to be beautiful animals with a potential vertical size of 15 inches as a show fish. I know from experience that angels should be raised from young in large groups in order for a male/female pair to naturally develop and since it's not easy to sex angels. I've put the word out to several contacts that I want more altums of the same approximate size to make a full colony.

For some current information on Pterophyllum altums see the June 1994 Tropical Fish Hobbyist page 70 regarding spawning, or the October 1996 edition of Aquarium Fish Magazine page 74 regarding all 3 (yes three) species of wild pterophyllum freshwater angels; altums, Scalare, and the little known, little seen Leopoldi.

There will be future updates in the Gazette on my Altum raising experiment, presuming I can keep them alive !!!





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Queens - New York City, NY



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**THE FAMILY CALLICHTYDE
THE GENUS CORYDORAS
HISTORY, CHARACTERISTICS, GENERAL CARE, DISEASES,
AND JUDGING
BY ED KATUSKA
NORWALK AQUARIUM SOCIETY
PART ONE OF THREE PARTS**

AQUARIUM HISTORY OF CORYDORAS

The first exportation of Corydoras species was in 1880 when the *C. paleatus*, sometimes called the pepper cory was shipped from the Laplata region of Argentina in Europe. The species arrived in North America sometime around the year 1915. Due to the peaceful nature, hardiness, and the prolific abilities of the *C. paleatus* the Corydoras quickly became popular to aquarist world wide.

HABITAT

Corydoras are native to South American streams and small rivers where the water is shallow. Distribution is from Southeastern Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Venezuela, Columbia and Trinidad. The waters are slow moving but not stagnant, with a general hardness of 5-10 DH. corys are usually found in water which is soft, neutral to slightly acidic or slightly alkaline with a pH value varying from 5.3 to 6.7.

In home aquariums these dwarf armored catfish can survive in a wide variety of pH and hardness variations as long as they are not extreme. A shallow tank should be provided for corys to come to the surface to gulp air if the oxygen level in water diminishes. Not being able to receive oxygen could result in suffocation.

The substrate used for the tank should not be too fine, for it packs down too tightly, and too large of a stone should also be avoided. A small grade stone gravel seems to work nicely. Avoid gravel, rocks or decorations with sharp edging for it could cause injury. Driftwood pieces would be a good choice of tank decor. A heavily planted environment would make the fishes more comfortable. For some suggestions various swordplants, Vallisneria, Sagittaria, Elodea, Cobomba or Bacopa to name a few would make excellent choices for the catfishes habitat, an open area should be left in the tank for purposes of swimming and eating. good filtration should be provided to keep the water quality at its maximum. Although Corys could withstand very harsh conditions. There is a difference between thriving and just surviving. A weekly twenty percent water change is recommended. Since Corydoras are found in many different parts of South America, pH, temperature and hardness varies between species. Research is required to house your wet pets in the optimum environment.

DIETARY NEEDS

In the wild corys feed on a variety of foods such as bottom dwelling insects: insect larvae, various types of worms and plant matter. Their feeding method is to search the bottom with their sensory Barbels and pick up food items in their mouth. Sometimes burying their mouths as high as their eyes. corys seem to find their food by means of "chemical odors". Sometimes you can drop food right in front of their noses that will be ignored until they could follow the scent right to the food.

Being omnivorous corys are quite easy to feed in the aquarium. Most normal aquarium food is eagerly



accepted. As with most other fishes, a good varied diet is recommended such as different types of flake or freeze dried foods and of course live foods such as Cyclops, Daphnia Tubifex and Bloodworms are all fine choices for a stable Cory diet. When feeding live worms I have used a small clay dish on top of the substrate with a small amount of fine gravel within. Placing the worms on the dish assures you the worms will not go through the gravel bed of your tank where they cannot be found.

As mentioned earlier most corys feed nosing around in the substrate. They are not restricted to this type of feeding habits. It is not uncommon to see a hungry school of corys rush to the top of the tank in an upside-down position to accept food such as many species of the Synodontis catfish from the family of Muchokidea do. It is important to note if you are keeping catfish in a community tank you should be assured fish are receiving enough food. Do not rely on the assumption they could just survive on what the other fish happen to miss. An inadequate diet could cause your catfish to become listless and ill. if you feel your: corys are not receiving enough food: a clearing could be made between some; plants where other larger fishes would have trouble gaining access to the area.

DISEASES

Fortunately for the aquarist and the Corydoras as well they are very resistant to many diseases and parasitic infestations. If a problem does arise, check the water quality of the aquarium. Most infections, illnesses or parasite problems are brought on by poor water conditions such as low pH or high toxic ammonia levels. If the aquarium conditions are not suitable the problems should be corrected immediately or the fishes will continue to remain in poor health regardless of the medications being used. If the conditions of the tank check with everything within proper limits visually inspect the fish or fishes which are ill. It is not always an easy task; to determine what exactly is wrong with a sick fish. Some examples of symptoms to look for are bloodstreaks or hemorrhage marks in the body. This is normally an indication of a serious internal bacterial infection. The fish should be put in a separate "sick tank" and be treated with antibiotics. With corydoras you will usually see blood patches just behind or around the gill area or in the caudal peduncle region. Corys are susceptible to fungal infections. Most fungus infections are caused by a bacterial problem and should be also treated with antibiotics. Many hobbyists mistake fungi with parasitic problems and therefore treat with medication that is ineffective. Fungus infections could be caused by low pH in the aquarium or by an injury that the fish has suffered.

When purchasing Corys in a local pet shop look at the bodies of the catfish well. Check for white spots on the side of the body and head area. Corys are shipped to wholesale fish factories with many fish in a box. Sometimes as many as 150 catfish in one package. Being crowded together could cause the fish to injure each other with their sharp, spiny pectoral fins which can cause secondary infections such as fungus to take effect. If caught in time fungus infections are easiest to cure with the correct medication. Multiple missing scales, swollen and redness coloration in the gill area, fin or tail rot and cloudy eyes are all forms of bacterial problems which can be seen when inspecting the ill fish. If treated in time with the proper medication these symptoms can be cured.

Parasites such as Ich can usually be noticed quite easily by the fish keeper. Ich can be best described by referring to tiny grains of salt on the fishes fins and or body. Sometimes heavy parasitic infestations can cause the fish to stop eating and create heavy breathing. Most parasite problems are easily treatable if medicated at first stages of infestation.

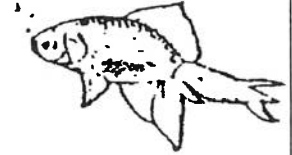
Some diseases such as Tuberculosis (TE3), or Dropsy (which is swelling of the body) are hard to diagnose. Many veterinarians today are treating various types of aquarium fishes. A vet trained in the field of treating aquarium fishes or someone from a quality pet establishment should be able to help with types of medications you will need to cure the ill fish.



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