

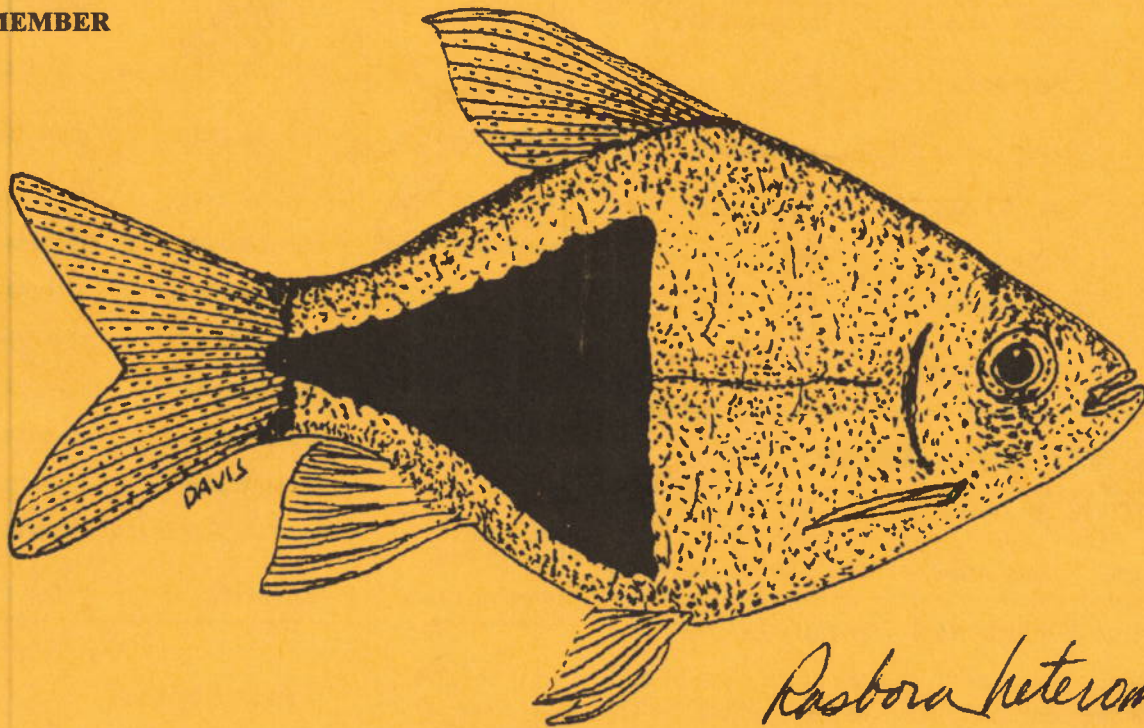
# THE WET PET GAZETTE

April 1997

Volume 2 Issue 3



MEMBER



*Rasbora heteromorpha*  
*Harlequin Rasbora*

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PART II  
MICHAEL KRASILOVSKY

The Journal of  
The Norwalk Aquarium Society





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There are regular meetings on the third Thursday of each month except July and 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.

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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.

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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.

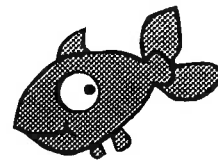
### WET PET GAZETTE EXCHANGES

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  
P.O. Box 84  
Norwalk, CT 06856

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**SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RATES**

ONE YEAR MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES  
SUBSCRIPTION TO  
THE WET PET GAZETTE

JUNIOR	5.00
FAMILY	17.00
NAME BADGE	5.00

SEND TO:  
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492 OAK AVE  
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MAY 1	JOE CANNA
JUNE 5	GENE HARRIS
JULY 10*	CHARLIE GRANDEL
AUGUST 7	BOB PELIKAN
SEPT 4	BASIL HOLUBIS
OCT 9*	BROADMEYER'S
NOV 6	SAL SILVESTRI
DEC 4	ED KATUSKA

\* DENOTES 2nd THURSDAY OF MONTH

**COMING NEXT MONTH  
IN THE WET PET GAZETTE**

The Golden Eyed  
Cichlid  
Nannacara  
Anomala  
by Chuck Davis



Temperature Regulation of Your  
Aquarium Made Easy  
by Michael Krasilovsky

Freshwater Angels  
by Gene Harris



## **A VIEW FROM UPFRONT**

**ED KATUSKA**  
**NAS PRESIDENT**

I would like to thank everyone who participated in this years home show, It is my understanding that we had the biggest showing ever, Don't forget about part two of this contest which will be taking place over the summer for photographing and judging those outdoor water gardens. I am looking forward to the home show presentation so I can see all the fine entries, Good luck to all.

Raffle tickets are available for the 25" color television set which will be drawn the weekend of our annual show and auction. As you probably know this is a big fund raiser for our organization. We are hoping for a little help from the membership on getting some of these tickets sold. Anyone interested in selling tickets can see Charlie Grandel at the next general meeting. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Our program chairperson Anne Broadmeyer has a non-fish related program planned for us in June which will be a CPR Certification Course. This is something everyone in the family should have knowledge about, Anyone planning to attend this meeting should let us know ahead of time so we will have enough Instructors for everyone. All interested should call Anne at (203)834-2228.

By the time you are reading this, the NEC Annual Weekend Convention will have already taking place. As usual the Convention Committee had a fantastic line-up of speakers and events. I hope all attended and had a great time.

I would like to end by encouraging all of our members to support our advertisers. As you go through the pages of this magazine, notice the ads of the stores who support us. I am sure most of you frequent these establishments in your area on a regular basis. Let them know you saw their ad in the Wetpet. Please **SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS.**



## **FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR**

**MARK BROADMEYER**  
**WET PET GAZETTE EDITOR**

My apologies for the recent snow storms. I take full responsibility. I cleaned, and prepared my ponds for the impending pond season. No sooner did I plug in the pumps, and like a rain dance the snows began, after sparing us all winter.

After a few months of the new board taking control of the clubs operations, I feel confident that the club is now moving in the right direction. You can tell when at board meetings, discussion gets heated, and many ideas are thrown out to be considered, that the people sitting in the room truly care about the future of the society.

One of the heated discussions has been the Wetpet and the costs of producing it. They want it smaller. I want it bigger. I have succumbed to making it smaller, but I will not not make it less informative, and I will not cut back on the number of articles either. So I have worked the format a little, made the type a little smaller, and added an extra article this month besides.

A lot of damage has been done because of the exchange issues not being mailed last year. Many of the clubs we have exchanged with dropped us from their mailing list because they are not receiving the Wetpet. I hope that the board can get this matter under control. The exchange mailing for the first quarter of this year still hasn't been mailed. My concerns as Wetpet editor are two fold, first to provide timely information to our members, and second to share with the rest of the world, the insights, and knowledge that our members can provide through their written word.

Special thanks to our members who have been diligently writing articles for the Wetpet. I am waiting patiently for those BAP articles that Sal has also been patiently waiting for.

See you at the meeting !



MARK



# PROGRAMS, PROGRAMS, PROGRAMS

## ANNE BROADMEYER - PROGRAMS CHAIRPERSON

Thank you to Jim Carmark for his presentation on collecting in South America. Perhaps this has enticed you to go and collect there yourself. See you at the first ever NAS Fishy Bingo night April 17th, 1997.

- April 17, 1997**      **Fishy Bingo.** This should be a fun night for everyone, even those non-fishy spouses. Everyone likes a good night of Bingo, great for socializing and win a few fishy items to boot.
- May 15, 1997**      **Building a Patio Water Garden with Michael Krasilovsky**
- June 19, 1997 \* \* \* \* \*** Again, we are going to try something a little different. This will be a **CPR** class. Space will be limited so if you plan on bringing a friend, please let me know because we need a three to one ratio for the instructors. **You must register to participate in this program. call Anne 203-834-2228**
- July**      **Happy Summer - No meeting**
- August 21, 1997**      **Fish Nutrition presented by Shemya Bryant**
- September 18, 1997**      **Home Show Program and Results presented by Basil Holubis.**
- October 16, 1997**      **Discus, by Ellen Halligan of Long Island Discus**




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## SHARING IN OUR SISTER SOCIETIES' EVENTS

by Anne Stone Broadmeyer, Norwalk Aquarium Society

February 23rd Pioneer Valley Aquarium Society (PVAS) held their annual action at the VFW hall in Enfield, CT. The auctioneer was Jack Adinolfi of Black River Aquarium Society, with newcomer (to auctioning, not fish!) Paul Parciak of PVAS, spelling Jack. The room was packed, being one of the largest auctions held by a single NEC society that I have seen in many, many years. They really did something right. They sent out 1,000 flyers, notified the "slicks" and put up flyers in the local shops, etc. All of us can learn a lesson or two from this. Anyway, it was a great day, almost all the NEC clubs were represented. And boy, did I see a lot of NAS members! Good job.

March blew in like a lamb with the Exotic Fish Society of Hartford having their annual auction at the UCONN Medical Center in Farmington. The auctioneers were Jack Adinolfi and our own Mark Broadmeyer. (Of course, we still claim Jack too, since he is a Director Emeritus and put a lot of sweat and hard work into making NAS the great club it is today.)


Although there were less faces at this function, it was a good time. Gene Harris certainly seems to be making the circuit. Keep up the good work. On the same day, Basil was working the other side of the fence at the Guppy Auction, Bet we'll be seeing some new guppies soon!

Next we're off to Worcester Aquarium Society's (WAS) auction. Carpool with a fellow fish head and see what you're missing. Keep in mind that odd little fish you can't find in the corner store may be a dime a dozen at your sister society's auction.



# WHAT'S ON THE CALENDAR

<b>1997</b>		
<b>APRIL</b>	26	NEC BOARD MEETING AUBURN STEAK HOUSE, AUBURN, MA
	27	BOSTON AQUARIUM SOCIETY ANNUAL EVENT, WEYMOUTH ELK'S HALL
<b>MAY</b>	2-4	TROPICAL FISH CLUB OF BURLINGTON, ANNUAL SHOW AND AUCTION, BURLINGTON, VT CALL JANINE BANKS 802-482-3616
	17-18	GREATER CITY AQUARIUM SOCIETY TROPICAL FISH SHOW, LAGUARDIA MARRIOT
	18	NORTH JERSEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY ANNUAL AUCTION RAMADA INN, RT3, CLIFTON, NJ 1:00 PM
	16-18	AQUALAND AQUARIUM SOCIETY 24th ANNUAL SHOW AND AUCTION, BONNIE ACRES, BRISTOL, CT
<b>JUNE</b>	1	NORTHEAST COUNCIL OF AQUARIUM SOCIETIES QUARTERLY GENERAL MEETING HARTFORD FARMINGTON MARRIOT
	6-8	JERSEY SHORE AQUARIUM SOCIETY 1st ANNUAL SHOW AND AUCTION
<b>AUGUST</b>	24	BLACK RIVER AQUARIUM SOCIETY ANNUAL AUCTION
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	19-21	TROPICAL FISH SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND ANNUAL SHOW AND AUCTION
	21	DANBURY AREA AQUARIUM SOCIETY ANNUAL AUCTION, HATTER BANQUET HALL, DANBURY, CT 1:00PM
<b>OCTOBER</b>	3-5	NORWALK AQUARIUM SOCIETY ANNUAL SHOW AND AUCTION
	26	LONG ISLAND AQUARIUM SOCIETY ANNUAL AUCTION
<b>1998</b>		
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	15	PIONEER VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY AUCTION
<b>MARCH</b>	8	EXOTIC FISH SOCIETY OF HARTFORD AUCTION

**AUCTIONEER  
CERTIFICATION SCHOOL** 

The NEC is looking for all parties who are interested in attending an NEC certification school for Tropical fish auctioneers. Any one interested should contact Mark Broadmeyer or Jack Adinolfi for further details.

**NOTICE TO ALL BAP CHAIRPERSONS  
NEC MEMBER CLUBS**

The NEC is requesting that a copy of all member aquarium societies Breeder Award Program criteria and pointing guidelines be forwarded to TOM NEAL, P.O. Box 694, Somersworth, NH 03878-0694

**NOW IN OUR 47TH YEAR**

## BREEDER AWARDS PROGRAM REPORT APRIL 1997

by Sal Silvestri, *BAP Chairperson*  
CURRENT POINT SUMMARY

Sal Silvestri	Expert Breeder	1160 points
Don Barbour	Grandmaster Breeder	780 points
Robert McKeand	Grandmaster Breeder	745 points (#)
Don Johnson	Master Breeder	530 points
Mark Keitel	Master Breeder	565 points
Don Maloney	Master Breeder	365 points
Ed Katuska	Senior Breeder	365 points
Robert Pelikan	Breeder	460 points (*)
Anthony Skojec	Breeder	350 points (*)
Broadmeyer Family	Breeder	270 points (*)
Basil Holubis	Breeder	85 points
Doug DeMent	Breeder	55 points
Ed Schildnecht	Breeder	55 points
Gene Harris	Breeder	50 points
Richard Marino		90 points (#)
Joe Masi		85 points (#)
Jeff Polster		60 points (#)
Kenneth Belog		40 points
Sharon Blasius		25 points
Ed Peters		15 points
Peter Izzo		10 points
Will Swanson		10 points



**CONGRATULATIONS** to Gene Harris and Doug De Ment for reaching the Breeder Plateau. Gene is a new participant in the BAP program, not only did he reach the breeder's plateau but he also wrote an article to qualify for the plateau "what a way to start!!".

(\*) & (#)..As for my famous "Asteric Club Members" .."YOU OWE ME ARTICLES!!"

### RECENT SPAWNS:

Sal Silvestri - Endlers-Livebearer, Melanotaenia-Praecox.

Robert Pelikan - Lamprologus-Brichardi.

Mark Keitel -Cyphotilapia-Frontosa, Ancistrus Sp.- Bushy Nose, Poecilia-Reticulata

Don Maloney -Tropheus-Moorii, Aulonacara-Jacobfrebergi.

Richard Marino - Iodotropheus-Sprengerae



### WELCOME, NEW PARTICIPANT TO THE BAP:

Gene Harris - Aulonacara-"Regal Blue", Haplochromis sp.-"Green Double Line", Labidochromis-"Yellow Top", Poecilia-Reticulata, Apistogramma-Eunotus.

**REMINDER:** We'll be dropping from the BAP report anyone who has not bred a fish for two consecutive years. Any BAP submission will automatically return breeders to the report. All past points remain intact.

BEFORE I CLOSE I WANT TO THANK ALL PARTICIPANTS, YOU'RE ALL WONDERFUL...."NO MATTER WHAT I SAY!!". JUST KEEP THOSE FRY COMING.  
DON'T FORGET THOSE NORTHEAST COUNCIL BPP FORMS

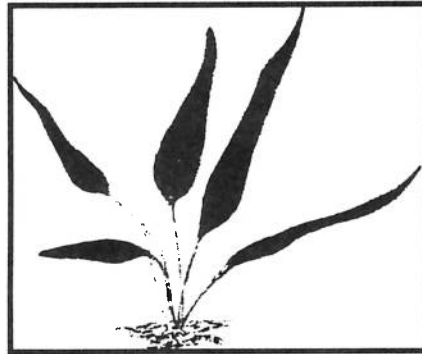


# One Tough Crypt

by Bruce Weegar, St. Catherines Aquarium Society

You say you can't grow a Cryptocoryne plant if your life depended on it? Well, have I got a Crypt for you. One of the sturdiest Crypts this author has found is *Cryptocoryne nevillei*, a small robust, undemanding plant that is perfect for foreground planting in your tank.

*Cryptocoryne nevillei* is a rosette type plant growing approximately 5 cm to 8 cm tall, it has deep green, thick, leathery leaves 1 cm to 2 cm wide and 3.5 cm to 7 cm long, green petioles 4 cm to 5 cm long with no veination present. The rootstock of this plant is thick and very white. *Cryptocoryne nevillei* is not as susceptible to disease and melt-down as some of the delicate



*Cryptocoryne nevillei*

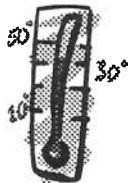
*Cryptocoryne* species. Propagation of *Cryptocoryne nevillei* is fairly easy as this plant is very undemanding as to its substrate and water requirements. This plant has grown in full light and in shade. A fine gravel, 3 mm to 5 mm in size, seems to allow this

plant to propagate more readily. This plant reproduces by runners and is a slow process as *C. nevillei* takes a considerable amount of time after transplanting for the rootstock to become accustomed to the new position. One it has, one plant will soon become 5 or more. Fertilizers and RO water do not seem to increase growth, so save your money. The next time a club auction comes up, look for this tough little *Cryptocoryne*. With a little patience, and time, anyone can have a beautiful green carpet in the foreground of their show tank.

Reprinted from the "SCAT" the publication of St. Catherines Aquarium Society. Feb 1997 page 1

### FAHRENHEIT TO CELCIUS CONVERSION

F°	=	C°
58	=	14
60	=	16
62	=	17
64	=	18
66	=	19
68	=	20
70	=	21
72	=	22
74	=	23
76	=	24
78	=	26
80	=	27
82	=	28
84	=	29
86	=	30



### GALLONS TO LITERS CONVERSION

GAL	=	LTR
10	=	38
15	=	57
20	=	76
30	=	114
40	=	151
45	=	170
50	=	189
55	=	208
70	=	265

### HOW TO DETERMINE THE VOLUME OF YOUR AQUARIUM

MULTIPLY THE INSIDE DIMENSIONS OF THE LENGTH TIMES THE WIDTH TIMES THE HEIGHT IN INCHES AND DIVIDE BY 231. THIS WILL GIVE YOU THE CAPACITY OF YOUR AQUARIUM IN GALLONS

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY GENE HARRIS





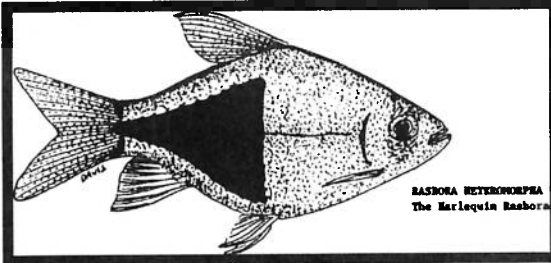
# THE GREATEST SMALL COMMUNITY FISH

by Chuck Davis, Norwalk Aquarium Society

I don't know how much more can be written about one of the icons of tropical community aquariums. But I want to give it another shot, because

this is really a great fish and too many aquarists that I know have not had the pleasure of its company. And without ever having the experience of

keeping a small school of Rasbora heteromorpha - the Harlequin Fish or Rasbora - one's aquaristic sophistication is incomplete. This fish is small - no larger than 2 inches - so it is perfect for small fish tanks. When it was new to the hobby it was deemed difficult, but years of experience have changed all that and



now it is commonly bred by hobbyists and commercial breeders. A well conditioned Harlequin Rasbora is a beautiful sight. It will display deep reds to a plum color, midnight black and

shimmering silver. A native to Malay Peninsula region, this is a fish that looks better in quantity, like schools of six or eight.

A good home for this rasbora is a well planted tank, with soft and slightly acid water. It can be maintained at normal aquarium temperatures, 74-82 °F. The spawning behavior for these rasboras is relatively simple. Isolate a well conditioned male with a ripe female in a tank planted with broad leaf plants.

The pair will travel together for a short courting period than begin spawning. The pair will deposit their eggs on the underside of these broad leaves. Eggs will hatch at 80°F in about twenty four hours. They fry are very small and get no parental support, so very fine foods are required. Green water and micro-worms are best. Be very careful not to foul the tank with uneaten foods. As the fry grow, they can be switched to baby brine shrimp and then a commercial fish food.

You should be warned that they can be very shy at first, but once they are acclimated and comfortable with their surroundings, the shyness disappears. A good filtration system, as with most fish, and regular water changes will keep them stress free. Enjoy...

**Tips, Techniques and How-tos.**

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## THE TROPICAL FISH CLUB of BURLINGTON PRESENTS ITS 4TH ANNUAL TROPICAL FISH SHOW AND AUCTION MAY 3 & 4, 1997

**CHRIST THE KING SCHOOL  
LOCUST STREET BURLINGTON, VERMONT  
AUCTION OPEN TO ALL 1:00 PM MAY 4, 1997**



For more information on showing fish or entering  
fish & dry goods in the auction, call: Dave and Janine Banks (802) 482-3616  
or write: TFCB c/o Dave Banks, RR3, Box 1548, Hinesburg, VT 05461

### ACA CONVENTION JULY 10th to JULY 13th CHICAGO

WYNDHAM NORTHWEST  
CHICAGO HOTEL  
CALL LEE ANN CLARY 630-968-6431  
OR DON CAVE AT 630-980-5933  
LEAVE NAME AND ADDRESS ON  
ANSWERING MACHINE

### MACNA IX

SEPTEMBER 12th TO 14th, 1997  
CHICAGO

WYNDHAM NORTHWEST CHICAGO HOTEL  
WRITE CMAS, 1455 NOTTINGHAM,  
HOFFMAN ESTATES, IL 60195  
OR EMAIL 73773.215@compuserve.com

### THE NORTH JERSEY AQUARIUM SOCIETIES ALL SPECIES TROPICAL FISH AUCTION MAY 18, 1997

VIEWING 11:30 TO 12:45  
AUCTION STARTS AT 1:00 PM  
BIDDER FEE \$2.00

RAMADA INN HOTEL  
ROUTE 3 EAST  
CLIFTON, NJ  
NJAS HOTLINE 908-541-1392



# WORD JUMBLE



BASOARR

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AMAULTSCU

-----  
LGFASHFI  
-----

LAST MONTHS  
WORD JUMBLE ANSWERS:

WETDRY  
DANIO  
APISTOGRAMMA



# THE FAMILY CALLICHTYDAE - THE GENUS CORYDORAS

## HISTORY, CHARACTERISTICS, GENERAL CARE, DISEASES, AND JUDGING - PART III

### BY ED KATUSKA - NORWALK AQUARIUM SOCIETY

#### JUDGING

Anyone who has any experience with judging fish or someone who shows fish would agree that judging a class of Corydoras is not an easy task. To come up with a first, second, and/or third place out of multiple fine healthy entries is a chore no matter which class is being judged. With Corydora species, unclassified wild Corys could easily be mixed together with other fishes being shipped. This is common with Corys. This makes judging that much more difficult. Let us discuss some general criteria judges look for in judging fish.

**Size** - usually when judging fish on size most judges go by the standard length. The standard length of the fish from the tip of the nose to the end of the caudal peduncle. This eliminates using the caudal or tailfin in the measurement.

**Body** - all Corydoras should have a full body. The area around the stomach should not look concave. Look for injuries and deformities throughout the body. The eyes should be proportionate to the body size, and they should also be clear and disease free. Both sides of the body should be thoroughly checked for such matters. Different Cory species vary greatly in coloration and patterns. Markings should stand out according to specie norms.

**Fins** - fins are a very important part of judging the fish. Many fish injuries go unnoticed by the owner of the fish. Fins should be in good condition with no rips, tears or other deformities. Rays in the fins should be checked for previous healed injuries that did not heal correctly. All paired fins should be checked for symmetry. Paired fins should be of same size and color on each side. Fins are also judged on

proportionate size to the body.

**Department** - behavior differs between species of fish. At judging time the fish is being judged also on its activity or lack of activity according to the specie norm. As far as a single Corydora is concerned, a Cory sitting at the bottom of the tank not moving too much, acting shy and may be frightened is actually acting quite normal for a lone schooling fish. Judging is a matter of calling it as you see it at the time. Judges must be consistent and judge each fish in the same manner.

In conclusion, a community tank without Corydora cats is a rare sight. Their activity, peaceful nature, scavenging abilities, different color, and varieties make them a fine addition to any aquarium. It is easy to see the reasons

why these catfish are a favorite from advanced hobbyist to beginners alike.

#### REFERENCES

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- "Baensch Atlas of Aquarium fish Part 1.
- "Baensch Atlas of Aquarium fish Part 2.

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## 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.

**C.A.O.A.C. HOME PAGE**  
<http://www.pawprints.com>

**The Krib**  
<http://www.caltech.edu/~aquaria/Krib/index.html>

**The Boston Aquarium Society Home Page**  
<http://world.std.com/~jdo/BAS.html>

**Energy Savers (Coralife)**  
<http://www.esuweb.com>



## NEW PRODUCTS UPDATE

Aquadyne Computer Corp. introduced the Octopus 3000. The Octopus 3000 is a very high tech analyzing device for monitoring, recording, and charting of pH, ORP, Temp, and conductivity continuously. Windows 95 compatible.

contact Aquadyne Computer Corp at 1-619-569-2082 or visit their web site at <http://www.aquadyne.com>

Neptune Systems has announced its aqua controller. This unit provides continuous monitoring of pH, Temp, ORP, has lighting timer(16 channel support), Wave maker controller, and timed dosing. Audible alarms and pager alert when tank is outside of your parameters and is Windows 95 compatible.

Contact Neptune Systems at 1-415-938-9584 or visit their website at <http://www.neptunesys.com>

Mark Weiss Companies, Inc. introduced its new Aquacultured Live Sand. This Live Reef Sand has a 6 month shelf life. It contains no algae spores, pathogens, or parasites. contact Mark Weiss at 1-954-894-9222

## BOSTON AQUARIUM SOCIETY EXTRAVAGANZA

Sunday, April 27, 1997

Weymouth Elk's Hall,  
1197 Washington St.,  
Weymouth, MA 02190

10:30 a.m. Paul Loiselle  
"Fishes of Madagascar"

## GIANT AUCTION

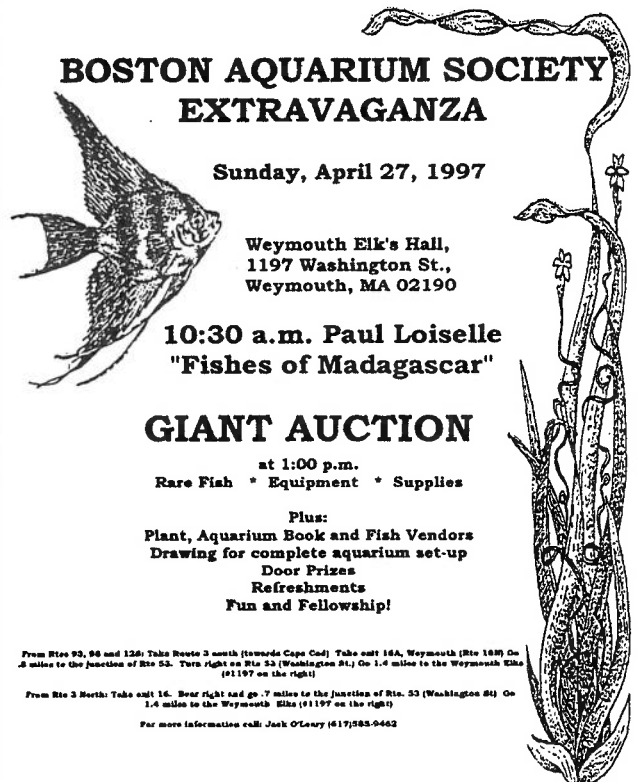
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From Rte 3 North: Take exit 16. Bear right and go .7 miles to the junction of Rte. 53 (Washington St) Go 1.4 miles to the Weymouth Elk (R1197 on the right)

For more information call: Jack O'Leary (617)583-9462



# ALTUMS TIMES III

BY GENE HARRIS - NORWALK AQUARIUM SOCIETY

As you will recall from the last episode, I had 4 remaining wild caught Pterophyllum altums out of the given to me for Christmas. Apparently the use of medications had wiped out my nitrifying bacteria and ammonia had built up in the tank. The school of rummy nose tetras was removed from the 55 gallon tank as I wanted to minimize further ammonia build up. I used Aquatronics "Ammochlor" for two days along with significant water changes. The ammonia level was starting to drop, but still not at healthy levels yet. I was beginning to use aged tap water as the rainwater supply was depleted and temperatures outside were about 10°F. No chance of new participation in sight.

By New Years Day I was glad to see the group of 4 still alive, but not eating. I added one Corydoras Panda, making a total of 6 now in the tank as the only company to the Altums. This Cory was from friends upstate who are "downsizing" their hobby and had just this one individual, so he was a natural addition to mine. Not only that, but the gene pool is widened for these fish should they breed someday. Also, I added a large piece of seasoned driftwood, of the heavy Tanzanian variety. The price was reasonable and it had some type of Java moss like plant imbedded and growing upon it. The tank needed a new look for the new year so this aquascaping did the job. I removed the small portion of frontal black paper from the tank. If the altums were to die, I at least wanted to enjoy seeing them before it might be too late.

On the morning of January 3, I removed 3 dead angels from the tank. The only one altum left didn't look

good. This is starting to look like a 55 gallon tank with a half dozen corys! On January 4<sup>th</sup> the last of the remaining altums went to join other great angels from times gone by.

It looks like this may be my last report for a while. I've lost 9 fish and over \$150 to date. But I'm not giving up. Battles are won by those who refuse to quit. I'm looking for F1 altums on the basis that they have been conditioned and will likely live. Perhaps Rose will get me some F0 next Christmas and I can try again.

Should I ever get the opportunity to buy wild altums again, I will do several things differently. Any

meds will be administered by dipping the fish in a separate tank, away from their normal biological filtration. I will check water quality daily and not make any assumptions that ammonia is OK. The pH, temp, nitrites, nitrates, and hardness will be checked more often than normal as well. I may stick to freeze dried, frozen and flake food and perhaps brine. The risks are too high for black worms. Tubifex is out of the question. I have also heard that very low pH tanks result in nitrifying bacteria that are highly sensitive to even small changes in temperature. I'll keep this in mind for future plans.

Perhaps these Pterophyllum altum stories will serve to guide other hobbyist. Learn from my costly mistakes.

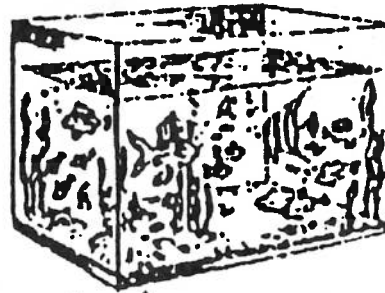
"I will check water quality daily..."

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# MY LIFE AS A FISHKEEPER

PART II

BY MICHAEL KRASILOVSKY

JUNIOR MEMBER - NORWALK AQUARIUM SOCIETY

I have more in my fish life than just the fish themselves. Since the first day of the NEC workshop in March '96, I have been working on what I thought was going to be a brochure, but has turned into the writing of a book. I have kept the book somewhat of a secret until a few months ago, and would actually like to keep it a secret except for outside of the aquarium society because the fact is, if a publishing company gets word of the fact that I am my age, they would probably think twice. I have written a lot so far, and it is tiring work. I have only been able to contact a few publishing companies, and I honestly don't think the book will be done for a few years. I have been joking with my parents lately that I am writing the book so that I don't forget any information. In a way this is true. The other night, I wanted to feed my pleco some lettuce in addition to his cucumber and zucchini diet, but I forgot whether I am supposed to boil it or not, so I had to look it up in my book. The main reason I am actually writing it though is because too many fishkeepers know very little about the technical aspects of the hobby, and by giving them the knowledge they need, they can be successful.

Last year, I became interested in ponds. This summer, I had the opportunity to build one for one of my teachers. It turned out pretty, it was a small prefab pond called the deep muffin and is about 75 or 80 gallons. I was pretty excited that I had finally built a pond, so I called up the Broadmeyers to tell them. Mark and Anne know basically everything that goes on in my fish life because I always call them for

**"... I have more in my life than fish themselves"**

advice. Any way, Mark offered to give us some free plants from one of his ponds, so we accepted. We went to his house one day, and he had a big Styrofoam box full of potted plants! Thanks again Mark! We also took a look at his ponds, and they were gorgeous. One pond was full of plants and had some fancy goldfish and a frog, and the other had the most beautiful Koi I have ever seen! They were all orange and black and there might have been some white or yellow on them. WOW! I hope someday my parents will decide to let me build our own pond. I have the feeling that they will though, because we have a place with totally bare ground and a tree stump smack in the middle which they said would be a good place for a pond. Maybe sometime this year

It is pretty funny though. When I was hoping to build a pond last year, I planned to build it the size of a small swimming pool, but they said it would be too expensive and didn't want to have a pond the size of a swimming pool. I said that in fifteen years when they retire, guess what they can use it for! Now that I am interested in Discus, they seem to be thinking maybe a pond wouldn't have been so bad after all! I have contacted many places looking for discus that I could afford, and was coming close to buying some, until the holiday party at the Broadmeyers a few weeks ago. During dessert, Don [Barbour] caught my eye and asked me very simply if I wanted some baby

**"...one of the Xiphophorus maculatus gave birth ... Christmas Eve."**

Discus. What? If I wanted some Discus? I knew he was serious, but I couldn't believe it! The next day my dad drove my brother and me to his house, and we went down to his fish room. Wow, did he have some beautiful discus and African Cichlids! The big tank with the baby discus had a large shoal of the discus, and he said I could pick three. Easier said than done, these discus knew exactly what to do so that I couldn't catch them, but with Don's help we eventually caught some, and they are great fish! They are all completely differently colored too. The largest has a light brown body that has 9 vertical black bars, with red and blue on the ventral, anal, and dorsal appendages. That one is actually the size of my palm. One of the small ones has a body that is almost yellow with very well defined black bars and dark red ventral fins. The third one has very wide black bars that are on a very dark body. The main body color on that one is a mix between a cobalt and a shade of brown. All three of the discus have red eyes as well. I took the Discus home and put them in their own 20 gallon high tank, which was given to us by Don as well the year before! The tank consists of one of Don's home made sponge filters, a heater, and as of now the only decoration is a small "No Fishing" sign that is in there strictly for the purpose of allowing them to set up boundary lines in relation to the filter. I did this because the little discus that is greenish is more timid and feels more secure, and the three fish exhibit very different behavior as well. The greenish Discus respects

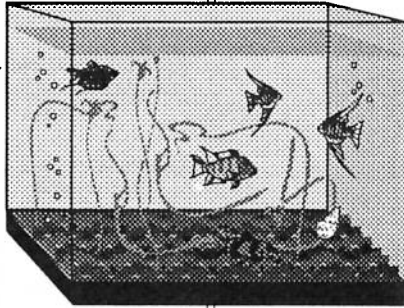
*(Continued on page 15)*



## My Life As A Fish Keeper Part II

*(Continued from page 14)*

the boundary lines, while the other two don't care, however, the only form of aggression I have noticed is the largest Discus swimming into the other discus with his forehead, and because he does it slowly and actually does nothing to either of the other fish, I interpret it as an expression of communication rather than aggression. The greenish one, however, is also the only one of the three that does not go up to the top of the tank and beg for food, while the other two practically jump out of the water every time I walk by the tank. I would also like to mention their hardiness, as I feel that they were unusually hardy. For the first few days that I had them, they were in water that was too cold, and they didn't eat at all. Once they did start eating, their water was polluted with about 1 ppm Ammonia before the filter started to cycle. Because of the fact that somewhere their will be somebody brand new to fishkeeping reading this, I feel the need to state that when setting up a new aquarium, stock as lightly as possible in as large a tank as possible, and have as many fast growing plants as you can afford. It is not unusual to even get Ammonia readings of above 6 ppm, which can kill 99% of fish. The reason that the Discus were okay was because of large frequent water changes, and I will admit that as an aid I did add a small live bacteria culture to get the sponge filter started, a practice that I actually advise against. I would rather let it cycle for 6 weeks and establish a natural balance of the many species of bacteria needed for the oxidation of Ammonia and Nitrite, so keep in mind that in a fully cycled tank, if you are getting any readings of Ammonia or



Nitrite at all, that you have a problem. Either too many fish, too much overfeeding, not enough siphoning the gravel, or not enough frequent water changes.

To add to all that has happened in my life recently, one of the Xiphophorus Maculatus that I bought gave birth to a batch of fry the night that I bought her, Christmas Eve. Unfortunately, I was only able to save 14 of the entire batch because many got sucked into my outside power filter and eaten by other fish. In addition to this, because I feed cucumber slices to my Plecostomus, it was only inevitable that eventually one of the seeds would sprout, and the other day, one did. To protect it from being eaten it is in a floating worm cone feeder in the tank, and is doing very well. It seems to enjoy the tropical temperature, lots of light, and high

phosphorus content of my aquarium. The reason that the aquarium has a high phosphorus content is that I use a phosphorus based pH buffer. I am still not sure why it is an accepted fact that it is bad to have phosphorus in an aquarium with plants, because I have found that one of the main elements that plants need is phosphorus, but I am now touching on a controversial issue, and I am still researching the subject. Until I get the correct answer to the phosphorus assumption, happy fishkeeping.

Post Script note to readers: Unfortunately, the Small greenish discus that was very shy past away last week. There was no evidence of disease or poor water quality, and the other two have been thriving. The reason that he apparently died was that he wasn't eating enough food, and was slightly thinner than the other two discus. Whether I fed them my paste food, pellets or flakes, he just didn't eat enough.



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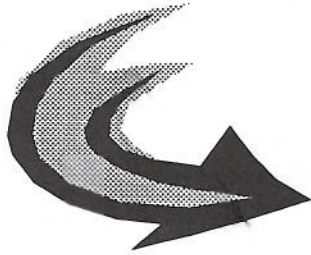


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