

**Tropic
TANK
TALK**



GREATER DETROIT
AQUARIUM SOCIETY
DECEMBER, 1964

The objective of this Society shall be to further the study of all forms of aquatic life, to promote interest, exchange ideas, and distribute information concerning the hobby, to encourage breeding and displaying of aquatic life.

TOPIC ANK ALK

VOL. NO.

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
GREATER DETROIT AQUARIUM SOCIETY
A MEMBER OF T.I.F.A.S.

MEETINGS: The third Wednesday of the month at 8:00 P.M. in Rouge Recreation Center in Rouge Park, located on Spinoza Drive a half mile east of Outer Drive and a block north of Warren Avenue, Detroit.

PROGRAM:

PROGRAM: DECEMBER 16, 1964

FISH OF THE MONTH: Paradise
Fish and Goldfish

FIILMS: "Salmon- Catch to Can"
"Tide Pool Life"

SELECTED SLIDES OF COBO HALL SHOW

CHRISTMAS GIFT EXCHANGE

DOOR PRIZE: 20 GAL. HI AQUARIUM
with REFLECTOR

GIFTS FOR MEMBERS, REFRESHMENTS

All persons interested are invited to attend. Dues are \$5.00 annually with a \$2.00 initiation fee. Additional family members may join for \$2.50. You may attend two meetings before joining if you wish.

Any portion of this bulletin may be reprinted by Societies of T.I.F.A.S. and by anyone with whom we exchange bulletins. Credit must be given author and source.

MAILING ADDRESS:
GREATER DETROIT AQUARIUM SOCIETY
13951 Faust, Detroit, Mich. 48223

GREATER DETROIT AQUARIUM SOCIETY

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FOUR NEW MEMBERS! WOW!

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OUR GUESTS IN NOV. WERE:

Larry Bishop
 Robert Coady
 Rosalie Olsen
 John McEvoy
 William Couture
 Steve Yates
 Mrs. V.M. Stone
 Brigitte Thompson

WELCOME TO THE GROUP!

wanted!
 15 BLACK ANGELS 5-50# SIZE
 TIM TACKETT
 646-7586

We hope to enjoy your company this month too.

We are all very happy to hear that Dawn Schlatterback is feeling so much better after her bout with pneumonia. See you at the Christmas meeting, Dawn?

Views expressed in articles printed herein are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Greater Detroit Aquarium Society. Anyone who disagrees or wishes to add his experiences and opinions is encouraged to submit his notes to the editor.

Associate memberships in the Greater Detroit Aquarium Society will ensure you of receiving its publication. Anyone desiring this type of membership should send \$1.50 to the Greater Detroit Aquarium Society, 13951 Faust, Detroit, Michigan, 48223. It will entitle you to receive Tropic Tank Talk for a year.

A note of heartfelt thanks to all those hobby manufacturers who have contributed to our prize table. Credit is given at each meeting.

The following article was sent to us by Jim Kelly, the editor of the monthly "Journal of the Modern Guppy Breeder" the publication of "The Fancy Guppy Association" of Great Britain. He graciously sent it to us as an exclusive and we wish to thank him very much for this thoughtfulness. Perhaps we can return the favor.

"IT'S DEAD EASY"

by Jim Kelly

It was whilst we were out for an evening drive that the idea came to me! We had pulled up for a quick nightcap at a typical English Inn, but it wasn't the Magpie architecture, the large open fire or the horse brasses gleaming in the firelight that took my eye. It was the cabinets of preserved fish around the walls.

There were literally dozens of them, mute sentinels to the prowess of local fishermen, their glaring unwinking eyes seemed to twinkle in the firelight, tapping out the message that no matter how much liquor I consumed they still had the edge on me.

They had been well and truly pickled for years!

It set me thinking about preserving fish myself, preserving them to either keep them for examination and identification, or perhaps, if the particular fish was a show champion or an old favorite, preserving his shape for posterity's gaze and admiration. After all, we are all familiar with the "Fisherman's Tale" of the one that got away... think how much more dramatic the tale would be if we could round off the story by producing the corpus delicti.

Should you wish to keep a dead fish for any length of time the best preservative is obviously alcohol. (Spirit) Unfortunately, the latter is not only expensive but is usually hard to get hold of.

Methylated spirits can do the job just as well without the attendant disadvantages of alcohol but one snag is its purple coloring. Good commercial Meths should contain about 95 per cent. alcohol, but please remember to keep it well stoppered, not only does it evaporate very quickly but it is also hygroscopic, it takes up water from the atmosphere.

The chemical most commonly associated with preserving is, of course, Formalin. This can be purchased ready made up from good manufacturing druggists, disadvantages in using this are it makes the specimen brittle and destroys colours, particularly blues and yellows.

The first action to take on observing the dead fish you wish to preserve is to drop the fish into either a 60 per cent. solution of Meths or a 5 per cent. solution of Formalin. Remember when using the latter that most commercial Formalins contain about 50 per cent. formaldehyde. This means a 5 per cent. solution contains only 2 per cent. formaldehyde.

This procedure should be quite suitable for specimens up to say, four inches, if you wish to preserve specimens over four inches in length then buy a hypodermic syringe and squirt the preserving solution (via the vent) into the stomach and internal organs of the fish. Start with a dilute solution and after about two days immersion change this to a much stronger solution, this will help to cut down shrinkage.

Constance and I have been experimenting with a preserving fluid used by morticians for embalming purposes and though a little "smelly" it does the job fine. Be careful to thoroughly wash your hands after using this fluid as it is a poison. Keep the bottle away from the inquisitive fingers of young children.

In an emergency (and who doesn't keep a drop of the hard stuff in the home for just such a contingency?), whiskey, gin, or most spirits will do providing you keep the bottle well corked. Specimens done this way will keep for quite some time.

JUST A THOUGHT ...

by Betty Champion

If my family should all perish together heaven help the poor unsuspecting soul who has the task of emptying the refrigerator-- I'd like to see the reaction.

Earthworms nicely rolled in bits of wax paper and securely fastened together with a rubber band. And what a job it was packaging them so neatly.

Bits of cooked shrimp securely wrapped and packaged. They look a lot like the scrapings from someone's plate neatly stored for future use in case of famine.

Little packages of fish roe all neatly bundled-- looking somewhat like left-over tapioca stored for emergency use in the same famine.

Something frozen in little jars that smells like liver sausage that never quite made it into proper casings, all neatly stacked.

Pieces of uncooked trout which resemble the pickings from the bones (which they are) neatly packaged in postage stamp bundles.

Frozen mosquito larvae- brine shrimp- individually wrapped sections of chicken liver (uncooked variety)-- piece of heart-- half a hard boiled egg yolk neatly wrapped.

It didn't worry me too much until this week. My better half has added a whole coon skin neatly packaged in a plastic bag to the collection.

Of course, anyone might want to store a coon skin against the day there will be enough of them to make a coat, but added to the collection already there would anyone believe this story?



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WE CATER TO THE HOBBYIST

AQUARIUM PLANTS - TYPES AND USES

by Evelyn Cohen



(Continued from last month)

7. Starvine (*Hydrilla verticillata*) Resembles elodea in appearance, but has six leaflets in a whorl around the stem with the space between the whorls at least one-fourth of an inch apart. Prefers strong light source.
 8. Hygrophila polysperma (no common name) New to most northern markets. Easily rooted from cuttings; light green in color with new branches and roots arising from the axils of the leaves when the stem is lightly buried in the sand. Makes a good bushy plant if the stems are pinched back; needs moderate of light, either natural or artificial. Low priced and attractive.
- B. Floating
1. Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*) Plummy, attractive plant resembling Milfoil and which floats just below the surface of the water. Never produces roots and is somewhat brittle. Suitable for spawning the egg-scatterers and concealing babies. Needs a moderate amount of light. Plant sometimes gives off an objectionable odor but this is natural and not too offensive.
 2. Stonewort (*Nitella flexilis*) Rapid growing fine-stemmed native plant having neither roots nor flowers. Stem elongates and branches forming a delicate screen which will successfully conceal small fry. Grows best in a sunny location; neutral to alkaline water.
 3. Water Sprite (*Ceratopteris thalictroides*) Attractive light green plant used extensively by guppy fanciers due to the fact that if it won't grow well, neither will the guppies. Interesting in that the floating plants will have broad flat leaves on the surface of the water whereas the same plant rooted in gravel will sprout leaves more finely cut. Grows well either way. Propagates by new plantlets forming in the axils of the leaves. These rise to the surface when the "mother" leaf decays. Needs moderate daylight or artificial light and a covered tank. Under these conditions some leaves will even be supported above the water surface. Good for concealing fry. Bubble nest builders will spawn under the leaves. May be sold rooted. Scientific name indicates that it unrolls its leaves much like the ferns do. Sometimes erroneously called water fern. (see #4).
 4. Water Fern (*Ceratopteris deltoidea*) First cousin to the water sprite, which it closely resembles. Floating leaves are somewhat broader, thicker and darker green. Care and uses same as for sprite.
 5. Naias microdon (no common name) Finely branched, thin leafed plants native to pools and ponds in the southern states. Pale translucent color, sort of a webby appearance. Broken pieces will root where they become lodged and plant may take over in soil bottomed pools. Forms a dense mat at the bottom of a well lit fish tank and provides good cover for babies and the eggs of the scatterers. The writer received some pieces in a shipment of plants and little attention was paid to it until early March, when lengthened daylight hours caused it to grow very profusely. Upon removal of some several handfuls about three dozen baby red swordtails were noticed for the first time. These were well over half an inch in length.

6. Duckweed (*Lemna minor*) This tiny floating plant with oval leaves scarcely one-eighth of an inch long has the unusual distinction of being the smallest flowering plant. Will cover the surface of ponds and aquariums but it can be easily removed. Useful as a cover for reducing light in tanks. Does not prevent oxygen from entering water even when it forms a dense mat.
7. Water Hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*) Native to the southern U.S. where it sometimes makes waterways impassable, this attractive bushy-rooted plant has leaves which are unusual in that they have at their bases two-inch round floats. The plant blooms with a lovely fragrant lavender spike of flowers resembling a Dutch hyacinth, to which it is not related. Needs many hours of full sunlight per day so it is unsuited for the home aquarium. Ideal for pools and ponds where it shades underwater areas. Roots make a good spawning medium.

C. Plants Sold Rooted

1. Broad-leafed Amazon Sword Plant (*Echinodorus rangeri*) This lovely South American import is highly favored as a center plant for a show tank. Between twenty and forty large oval, bright green leaves emerge from a central crown and spread in a fan shape to the top of the tank. A long lived plant which is best suited to tanks of twenty gallon capacity or better, it needs room to spread roots and leaves. Needs a fair amount of natural or artificial light to grow properly or the leaves will turn brown and die. The crown of the plant must not be buried. A six inch high plant with about fifteen to twenty leaves may cost between one and two dollars whereas a twelve inch high plant may sell for as much as five dollars. Reproduces by runners which should be weighted down and only cut apart when well started. Snails or cichlids may sometimes chew the leaves. Several other species, suitable for smaller tanks, are now available. They have the same habits as the above species.
2. Pygmy Chain Sword Plant (*Echinodorus tenellus*) This "half-pint" member of the sword plant family is ideally suited for foreground plantings in either small or large aquariums. It never grows taller than three or four inches and is a perfect miniature of the larger varieties. To make a centerpiece of this species in a small tank the runners should be pinched off so the crown will produce more leaves. The writer has a plant, which, after two months since purchase, has made no less than fifteen chains or runners. Plants are quite inexpensive.
3. Eel Grass or Italian Val. (*Vallisneria spiralis* or *V. torta*) This long-leafed, grass like plant, which is native to most of the U.S., has been an aquarium standby for many years. The strap-shaped leaves, arising from a center crown, are graceful, light green and well suited to the background of an aquarium, where it forms a screen in a short time. Height varies from fifteen to twenty inches; reproduces by runners. There is a stripe down the center of the leaves which divides them into three nearly equal stripes of two shades of green.
3. Curly Val (*V. spiralis* var. ?) This sport of the above species has become very popular due to the charming effect of its spirally twisted leaves. Height averages between seven and twelve inches making it suitable for smaller aquariums than the eel grass. Rapid propagation by runners makes this plant inexpensive.

(Cont'd. next month)

We got another letter- but this time from India !! You are hereby encouraged to correspond.

Dear Sir!

I am a keen beginner aquarist. I have just come across a September 1964 issue of the Aquarium Magazine. The magazine mentions an article titled "Bettas Sell Themselves" appearing in the July issue of your bulletin "Tropic Tank Talk". Further it also mentions that your Society should be contacted for exchange information.

I am very much interested in procuring this article but do not know how the system for exchange information operates. I will be very much obliged if you could explain the system and also indicate the annual subscription for your bulletin.

His address:
K.V.Mariwala
No. 3 Tardeo Road
Bombay 34, India

Thanking you in anticipation
Yours faithfully
K.V.Mariwala



HERE'S OUR SINCERE WISH TO YOU FOR A

Happy Holiday

SEASON AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!



Greater Detroit Aquarium Society

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DAILY 11 to 9 CLOSED SUN. AND WED.

SO YOU MISSED THE NOVEMBER MEETING, TOO? IMAGINE THAT!
(First one I've missed in years, honest!)

Our intrepid refreshments provider who happens to be this editor's better half gleefully related what happened at the meeting... being one up on me for having been there. She says that Evelyn Cohen made an excellent auctioneer who knows how to squeeze out that last nickel. About \$60. was realized. Wish I could have seen the "Unicorn Fish ??". It sold for \$10. ? The winner of the door prize sure made his feelings known, didn't he? Heard there was quite a crowd, too. Yea! I know. If you want to enjoy a meeting and enjoy what goes on you have to be there. I get the message.

CHRISTMAS GIFT EXCHANGE CHRISTMAS GIFT EXCHANGE CHRISTMAS GIFT EXCHANGE

Everyone goes home with a gift! The idea is- you bring a wrapped (if possible) gift of a dollar or under in value- related to the hobby or otherwise- and place it on the gift table at the meeting. Numbers will be given those present, and when your number is drawn out of the hat you select a gift from the table. At least it'll go something like that. Indicate, too, if your gift is specifically for a man or woman.

A very special thanks to Betty Champion, Art Gordon and Ron Gordon, Evelyn Cohen and, of course, Jim Kelly our special contributor this month. The above members took a few minutes of their time to jot down their thoughts so that others may enjoy and share their experiences. Won't you please do the same?

Eric Fulham, president of the Ann Arbor club, (Washtenaw Aquarists) reports that he talked to Carl Naja of Milwaukee over the phone. Carl says he has a thousand or two yellow angels now but is not going to sell one until he is ready. Needless to say, Eric was disappointed.

We got another letter from our friend in Puerto Rico, MR. Carlos F. Reichard. Apparently there were not many who wrote to him. Will you? Box 445
Aquadilla, P.R. 00603

Have you ever wished you had photos of particular fish or tank setups? If so, Gerry J. Gazda is your man. He is a professional photog interested in photographing fish, has all the equipment needed and makes his living as a free lance photographer. To top this off he is also interested actively in the hobby. You'll never believe it but he has been spawning neon tetras! He plans to photograph this and will show proof at a future meeting if he is successful. Yes, you'll have the chance to meet him at the Dec. meeting.



The ad normally seen here for Michigan Hobby House is this month deleted. And for good reason. Bob has opened his fabulous new shop and hasn't had quite enough time to work out the copy for his ad. Drop in, see the shop and patronize him. An article will appear soon on this new shop. It's located on Schaefer just south of Six Mile Road across from the Mercury Theater. It's called Exotic Aquariums.

Mark your specimens well but remember that most preserving fluids, and Formalin in particular, quickly blot out pencil and ink. Play safe, and use India ink on parchment or a Chinagraph Pencil for writing directly on the glass.

Should you wish to preserve Fancy Guppies be sure to spread their fins out well. Guppies, particularly the Fancy Guppies, with long flowing finnage tend to clump their fins just prior to death and this spoils their appearance. Try fastening them to a small piece of parchment with small pins, after they have been immersed in the preservative for a day or two you can remove the card and pins and the fins will have set.

I hope these few short notes have helped you to make preserving your favourite fish DEAD easy. Perhaps some readers of "Tropic Tank Talk" have found an easier and better way. If you have why not drop the Editor a line and let us all know about it. That's why club magazines are printed!

Thanks much, Jim! This editor suggests that anyone who reads your article and feels moved to comment do just that. May I further suggest that the fancy guppy breeders in our little group return Jim's favor by sending him an "exclusive". Ed.



Mr. Jim Kelly
Chairman- F.G.A.
212, Ashton New Road
Manchester, 11, England



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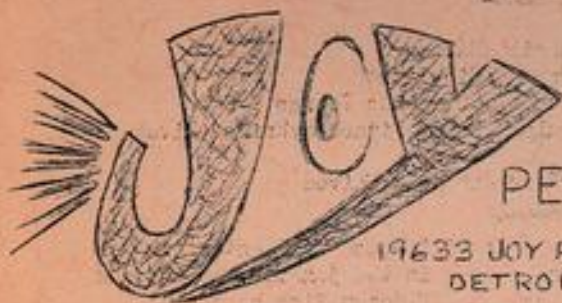
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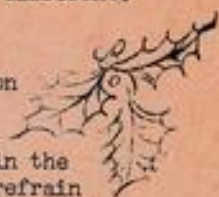
"Half-Beaks" cont'd.

the tank. In this end place an air stone. Feed heavily, but siphon off excess uneaten food daily replacing water from the original tank. The young are born after an incubation period of from 30 to 35 days most generally at dusk. So the best time to look for young is a couple of hours after dark. After removing the female, raise the water level slowly over a period of a couple of weeks with aged water for the original tank. The young are about 3/8 of an inch long and can eat newly hatched brine shrimp at once. I would highly recommend the "Half-Beaks" for a community tank arrangement of smaller fish for those who desire a hardy active fish that is just a little bit different.



A FEW LOOSE ENDS

by Ron Gordon



Dear Ed. (That's Walt)

I was so impressed by Stan Shubel's fine article on filtration in the Sept. issue of our fine magazine, TROPIC TANK TALK, that I cannot refrain from adding something to it; which I am sure would make an interesting follow up. That something is the harmony of good filtration working hand in hand with the proper number and kinds of scavengers in the tank. This I am sure Stan will agree with. Some years ago, when I first became interested in keeping tropicals, I was lead to believe that two aneus cats were about right for a ten gallon tank and perhaps they are. However, I have found that much more interest and beauty can be added to a tank by selecting for that same tank; say two otocinclus, a couple pygmy cats, a whip tail or some other odd ball, and/or a leopard cat or two. It seems that a number of smaller cats do a better job of cleaning than two larger ones, and as I have said make for a much more interesting tank. And last but not least, that "God sent" scavenger the plecostomus... if you manage to get a fairly small one, will do a wonderful job of keeping the algae at a minimum and can be switched from tank to tank periodically.

However, since I am not much of an authority on scavengers, perhaps someone who knows a little more about them would be so kind as to lend us some of their experiences in the form of an article in next month's bulletin. It would also be interesting to find out how various members deal with growths of hair algae on the plants and if there is some fish which will rid the plants of this eye sore.

9 Signed: Ron (The Crpyt killer) Gordon

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