

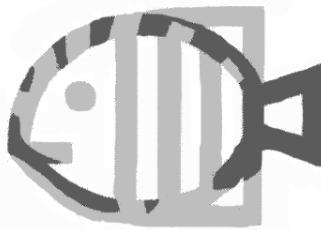
# The Darter

March - April 2005



**MISSOURI AQUARIUM SOCIETY, INC.**  
St. Louis, Missouri

# Aquatico



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MASI 2004-2005 Officials	Page 4
Places to Be/Things to See	Page 5
Presidential Preamble	Mike Hellweg Page 6
Editor's Notes	Steve Deutsch Page 7
Time Line for the Annual Show	Gary Lange Page 7
"A Fish Convention?" You Say!	Steve Edie Page 8
Club Hopping	Steve Edie Page 13
Member of the Year Nominations	Page 13
The Greatest Fishroom Ever!	Ed Millinger Page 14
The Large Home Aquarium	Chris Persson NWAS Page 15
A Little Giggle	Maureen Green Page 18
The Care and Breeding of Gymnogeophagus Meridonalis	Ed Millinger Page 19
Computer Page	Steve Deutsch Page 20
Updated Breeders Award Program Rules	Steve Edie Page 21
Horticultural Award Program	Mike Hellweg Page 24
Breeders Award Program	Steve Edie Page 25
Is It Time For Reassessment?	Ed Millinger Page 26

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## 2004-2005 MASI OFFICIALS

**PRESIDENT:**

Mike Hellweg  
511 Sunward Drive  
O'Fallon, MO 63366  
636-240-2443  
[mhellweg511@charter.net](mailto:mhellweg511@charter.net)

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

Gary Lange  
2590 Cheshire  
Florissant, MO 63033  
314-837-6181  
[gwlange@mindspring.com](mailto:gwlange@mindspring.com)

**TREASURER:**

Klaus Bertich  
9525 Caravan  
St. Louis, MO 63126  
314-849-2164  
[kbertich@msn.com](mailto:kbertich@msn.com)

**SECRETARY:**

Angela Hellweg  
511 Sunward Drive  
O'Fallon, MO 63366  
636-240-2443  
[pugdog64@yahoo.com](mailto:pugdog64@yahoo.com)

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:**

Diane Brown	<a href="mailto:brown_d@kids.wustl.edu">brown_d@kids.wustl.edu</a>	314-361-4193
Bob Buckles	<a href="mailto:robert_buckles@hotmail.com">robert_buckles@hotmail.com</a>	314-849-0587
Kathy Deutsch	<a href="mailto:fishfan@i1.net">fishfan@i1.net</a>	314-741-0474
Steve Edie	<a href="mailto:sredie@sbcglobal.net">sredie@sbcglobal.net</a>	636-922-4232
Charles Harrison	<a href="mailto:csharrison@inkmaker.net">csharrison@inkmaker.net</a>	314-894-9761
Patrick A. Tosie, Sr.	<a href="mailto:pattosie@juno.com">pattosie@juno.com</a>	636-225-7625
John Van Asch	<a href="mailto:johnsfishy@aol.com">johnsfishy@aol.com</a>	618-277-6165

**COMMITTEES:**

Advertising & Promotions		OPEN
Auction Chairman	John Van Asch	618-277-6165
Breeders' Award Program	Steve Edie	636-922-4232
Corresponding Secretary	Patrick A. Tosie, Sr.	636-225-7625
Editor	Steve Deutsch	314-741-0474
-Mail - fishfan@i1.net	9 Old Jamestown Ct.	Florissant, MO 63034
Exchange Editor	Steve Edie	636-922-4232
Fish Raising Contest	Bob Buckles	314-849-0587
Horticultural Award Program	Mike Hellweg	636-240-2443
Historian	Klaus Bertich	314-849-2164
Librarian	Dave Rush	314-291-8932
Membership	Kathy Deutsch	314-741-0474
Monthly Bowl Show	Diane Brown	<a href="mailto:brown_d@kids.wustl.edu">brown_d@kids.wustl.edu</a>
Points Tabulator	Ed Millinger	314-968-8104
Postman	Jim Miller	314-638-1134
Printer	Charles Harrison	314-894-9761
Refreshments	Roy Brandhorst	314-838-8093
Show Chairman	Gary Lange	314-837-6181
Web Mistress	Michele Berhorst	314-353-3418
Welcoming	Ron Huck	314-481-2915

# Places to Be Things to See

THURSDAY, April 21, 2005

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

SATURDAY, April 23, 2005

Executive Council, 7:30 PM hosted by Diane Brown

FRIDAY April 29 through SUNDAY May 1, 2005

MASI ANNUAL SHOW and SLAKA Show at the Stratford Inn

Friday - Setup

Saturday - Show, Speakers, and Banquet

Sunday - Show and Auction

THURSDAY, May 19, 2005

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

Bring your Fishraising contest Fish!

SATURDAY, May 21, 2005

Executive Council, 7:30 PM hosted by John Van Asch

THURSDAY, June 16, 2005

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

SATURDAY, June 18, 2004 (SATURDAY June 25 in case of rain)

MASI Picnic @ Jim and Brenda Thale's

Executive Council following Picnic

THURSDAY, July 21, 2005

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

THURSDAY, August 18, 2005

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

THURSDAY, September 15, 2005

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

# Presidential Preamble

By Mike Hellweg

As I write this, it is mid-February and time to start looking toward Spring. There is still time to get fish and entries ready for the Annual Show, and time to plan things to do with the fish outdoors. Snow is coming again this week, but Spring Training is also starting! The great outdoors beckons...

Hopefully this Spring the club will be putting together a collecting trip. We hoped to do one last year, but it never quite came together. Maybe with a Native Fish speaker coming this year, we can think about doing some collecting. Possibly we can head to the West instead of the South this time for a whole different group of fish from the Great Plains. Hmm. Something to think about. If anyone is interested, let me or Gary Lange know.

Speaking of Gary, he's got a fantastic line up of speakers coming in this year – make sure you make some time to come to the meetings. You won't want to miss them. We've got speakers on Puffers, Native fish, Loaches, Corys and several more!

Also, as some of you may have noted Kathy Deutsch's artwork on our last issue's cover, our club is celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> year – not our 46<sup>th</sup>! Our Historian Klaus had a bit of free time over the past few months as he recovered from surgery and spent some of that time organizing our Historical file – which until he organized it was basically just a few file drawers packed with lots of junk. One of the things he found was that our club was actually started in 1955 (or possibly before, but we've got accurate records going back to 1955). Wow! That's something you don't find out every day. Klaus was also able to go through the old issues of the Darter and make a list of all the articles that have been published, who wrote them, what they were about, and when they were published. He's organized them into useable electronic files so that we can access them. Contact Klaus if you are interested in finding out more, or if you're looking for a particular article or topic.

And, speaking of our Treasurer, Klaus, he's going to be retiring from that job at the end of his current term in June. That means we've got to find a new Treasurer. If anyone is interested, please contact me ASAP. Klaus will do some training – there's not a whole lot to it. While it can be done by hand, it would be easier if you have a computer – MASi will provide the software if you don't already have Quicken. It does require (or give you a good excuse to be there) that you be in attendance at the General Meeting, the Executive Council Meeting, and at our 4 Auctions. Afterwards, a committee will help get the checks ready for distribution to our sellers. With the new Auction software, even that isn't a chore anymore – it just requires double checking to make sure everything was added in correctly. All in all, a job that requires a couple of hours a month – that's it.

...and for now, 'nuff said...

MASI would like to thank new member Katherine Armey for her generous donation of several books to the MASi Library.

Thank You Katherine!

# Editor's Notes

Steve Deutsch

I hope everyone is ready for the upcoming show. I re-printed the show timeline from the last issue so you will know where to be when even if you can't find the last Darter, or you recently joined. If you have not been to a show it is a great opportunity to meet people, talk fish, see some great entries, and hear some informative and entertaining speakers. It also is usually our biggest auction of the year, with the most out of town participation - that is, the best chance to find something different that what is being bred locally. There is also a St. Louis Area Killifish Association (SLAKA) show held in conjunction with ours.

We have several articles from club members in this issue, including three from Ed Millinger. I even have some more poetry from Ed I did not get printed this time, for the next issue. Ed won the publication award last year and appears to be gathering the most chances at it this year. However, since it is a drawing anyone who sends something for publication has a chance (see rules in last issue). Remember, artwork, cover designs, and so on count, not just articles.

As well as Ed's articles we have one from Maureen Green, one from Steve Edie, and one exchange article, **The Large Home Aquarium** by Chris Persson, NWAS reprinted from **Wet Pet Gazette** of the Norwalk Aquarium Society. We also have an update to the BAP rules from Steve Edie to capture all of the changes that have been made since the last time they were published.

Article deadlines for the remainder of the year are April 15, June 15, August 15, October 15, and December 15.

## Time Line for the Annual Show

by Gary Lange

- 1) Show Entry Forms and checks to Klaus by Thursday April 21st, our meeting date.
- 2) Banquet Forms to Klaus, again by April 21st.
- 3) Class Sponsorship checks to Klaus again by April 21st. Jack Berhorst needs the time to put your name on the back of the trophy so all will know who did the sponsoring!
- 4) Wednesday April 27th - Paper layout. Everything should be in the computer and spell checked by then so it should make the layout process go quickly.
- 5) Friday morning April 29th - 8 am. Be at the Stratford Inn to help set up our display racks. Jim Jr. (Miller) will bring the trailer. A lot of hands will make this a pleasant and hopefully quick operation so if you can, PLEASE plan to be there. Bring a screwdriver, and an adjustable wrench please. Then everyone can get home to start bringing in their tanks.
- 6) Friday April 29th - Hopefully by 1 pm we will have someone at the show site to start handing out the packets so you know where your tanks need to be set up.
- 7) Around 5-6:30 pm I need someone to take our speakers out to dinner, most likely the local Bandanas. Ray, Mike & Robin Schadle, Spencer Jack and Charley Grimes.

- 8) Setup to ~ 11 pm. Please try and get it done ASAP as we have to be back early the next morning.
- 9) Saturday morning April 30th - 8:30 am - Judging starts. Judging should be finished by 11 am. We could use a few people to help volunteer and put the judges sheets together. When the judging is finished the show will be opened to the public.
- 10) 10:15 am Joe Fleckenstein "Live Foods, We Were Using Them Long Before Fear Factor"
- 11) 11:30 am- "Killifish - featuring Jack, Charles and Nevin - "Mops, Dirt, Eggs and Fish . . ."
- 12) 12:30-1:30-Lunch
- 13) 1:45-2:45 Mike Schadle - "Livebearers"
- 14) 3 pm - 4 pm Spencer Jack "Collecting Fishes in Bolivia."
- 15) 5 pm showroom closes, show chair posts tank ribbons, lays out plaques for the evening s events. Killifish people continue to judge their fish so that they will be out of the room by 6 pm.
- 16) 6-6:30 cocktail hour
- 17) 6:45-7:30 dinner
- 18) 7:30-8:30 Awards
- 19) 8:30-9:30 Banquet Speaker - Spencer Jack and Charley Grimes, "Fishkeeping, the Yin & the Yang opinions or "The Odd Couple s Approach to Keeping Fishes".
- 20) 9:30 on Viewing of the displays, tank lights only.
- 21) Sunday May 1st 10:30 am. Auction viewing, showroom open.
- 22) 11:30 am - auction start.
- 23) Teardown, starting ~ 4:30 pm.

## “A Fish Convention?” You Say!

by Steve Edie

Well, yeah. They have such things; and I go to them. And since you ask, I'll tell you why. It contains most of the elements of our (or any other club's) annual show, except on a much grander scale. There's the show, where you can see champion specimens of fish you've kept, fish you've seen, and some you haven't ever seen, even in books. There's the auction, which sometimes goes well into the night (the record was 2:00 AM, Chicago ACA, 1997), and features the opportunity to find fish that have been brought in from all over the country. (Strike that – all over the world.) Then there are the speakers, which comprise renowned experts from the far corners of the globe, in every broad and narrow subject that you can image. Besides the excellent presentations, they usually have extensive question and answer sessions after their talks, and since the major conventions usually run three to five days, there are great opportunities to engage in informal conversations around the hotel with some legends of the hobby. The vendor rooms provide an opportunity to see the newest gadgets and foods (sometimes with free samples) from the major manufacturers; to finally find that rare, out-of-print book you've been seeking for years; or the chance to buy fish directly from an importer or breeder. One seemingly permanent fixture of every vendor room at any major convention in the country is the presence of one Ray “Kingfish” Lucas. I went to six conventions last year and he was at every one of them. (He went to 24 and I was only at six of them). So I'm a slacker. Ray is a tireless champion for our hobby, keeps the manufacturers involved, and if you have ever met him, you know you have a friend for life. There are usually fish for sale or trade all over the hotel, either in rental tanks in a central location, or in people's hotel rooms, kept in styros or tanks set up just for the weekend. Some conventions feature organized tours of the area for the out-of-towners, with buses to take us to aquariums, zoos, or the local tourist

attractions. There are usually some informal carpool tours to see local fish shops and hobbyists' fishrooms, a golden chance to snare that rare species you just can't find back home. One thing I like about the conventions is that it provides an opportunity (actually the impetus) to travel. Various conventions have enabled (provoked) me to travel to places I've never been before, and probably would not have visited had it not been for the convention. As good as all of the above reasons may be, they are vying for no better than second place. Because the more conventions I attend, the more I realize that the number one reason to attend conventions is the people. My first convention I knew only a few people from my own club when I arrived. Three days later, I knew maybe a dozen. Now, after 10 plus years and 25-30 conventions, I can call well over a hundred fellow hobbyists my friend. The contacts one makes will expand your knowledge base exponentially. If you just have to find some particular species, someone in your circle of contacts can help. That is priceless.

There are a few major annual conventions and a number of other worthwhile ones. And yes, they all require varying amounts of time, money, stamina, and a thirst for knowledge. (And neat fish!) Among the national clubs with annual conventions are the American Killifish Association, the American Livebearers Association, the International Betta Congress, the Aquatic Gardeners Association, and more. But the granddaddy of all conventions is the annual American Cichlid Association (ACA) convention, which I will attend for the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive year this summer in Ft Worth. The ACA can draw upwards of 600 people and it can seem overwhelming at times, but just focus in on what interests you. It's what got me started down the convention trail and has led me to places and people that I'm most grateful to have known. My first convention was in New Orleans, and in the competition between the convention events and the French Quarter, sleep was a major casualty. Chicago, the following year, was a huge convention, with the marathon auction, and provided enough activity that I barely left the hotel. St Louis followed, which was hosted by my club, the Missouri Aquarium Society, and I came to the stark realization that these events do not occur by themselves. I could not comprehend the amount of time and effort required to pull off a convention, and now much prefer to travel and attend rather than repeat that ordeal. Next came Detroit, Cleveland, New Jersey, Atlanta, Cincinnati, and Denver, all well attended and enjoyed. As you can see, I got to log a few miles in the process. I went on the tours at most of these conventions, which allowed me to experience aspects of these cities beyond the convention hotels. In New Orleans, we received an after-hours, behind-the-scenes tour of the Aquarium of the Americas, with staff on hand to show us their filtration systems, infrastructure, kitchens (for fish food) and to answer questions. The ACA has enough clout to merit this type of hospitality. For those cities with major aquariums, a behind-the-scenes tour has become a staple. In Chicago, we went to the Shedd Aquarium, perhaps the grandest of the old style aquariums, an absolute classic. In Detroit, we went to the Belle Isle Aquarium, the oldest continuously operating facility in the country, which sadly is due to be closed shortly. I'm grateful that I got a chance to see it. In Cleveland, there was a tour to Sea World, which I passed on since whales and dolphins don't have gills. Get over it. At the New Jersey convention, we went to the Brooklyn Aquarium on Coney Island, where Dr. Paul Loiselle is curator of freshwater fishes. The Atlanta tour was to the Tennessee Aquarium in Chattanooga, which was a five-hour roundtrip bus ride. I skipped this one since I had seen the facility twice, but it is a fabulous aquarium. (More on that later) In Cincinnati, we went to the Newport Aquarium in Newport, Kentucky, just across the Ohio River from downtown Cincinnati. In Denver, we went to see Ocean's Journey, which is the only aquarium that features live tigers. Ft Worth will include the Dallas World Aquarium, in downtown Dallas. So there's a bunch of major aquariums, and this is just the ACA. I've seen a few others via other organizations. Usually the ACA has two tours, one fish related and one featuring more local attractions. In St Louis, we went to the Budweiser Brewery tour and to the Gateway Arch. In Cleveland, we went to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, which I highly recommend. In New Jersey, we took a ferry over to Ellis Island and Liberty Island to see the Statue of Liberty up close and to get an excellent view of the World Trade Center towers. (This was just six weeks before they fell; I can't tell

you how privileged I feel to have seen them). Denver had a bus tour up into the Rocky Mountains. If you travel, make the most of it.

Then there is the show – 400-500 entries of the best cichlids you have ever seen - Rift Lakes, dwarfs, huge South Americans, everything. Speakers. Wow. Paul Loiselle, Wayne Leibel, George Barlow, Ad Konings, Stuart Grant, Jack Wattley, Uwe Romer, Anton Lamboj, Toby Veall, Lee Newman, Rusty Wessel, Charlie Grimes, Pam Chin. On and on and on. ACA rules. At the ACA and some of the other conventions, there is a nightly hospitality suite that opens up after the last talk finishes and runs into the wee hours. Usually snacks and adult beverages (chips and beer), and conversations both serious and silly. However, if it's one of the conventions that Craig Morfit and his crew from Bermuda are attending, then look out for a concoction known as "Dark and Stormy", made from Bermudan Black Seal Rum and ginger beer. One of these will change your life; two will make you glad you're staying at the hotel; three – you won't be able to drive the hotel elevator. For those outside the hobby who think fish people are a sedate, boring lot – well....

Another major convention that I've also grown to love is the Northeast Council of Aquarium Societies (NEC) annual convention. The NEC is an organization of about 15 individual aquarium societies in the Northeast (get it!) from New Jersey to Maine that holds an annual convention every year in Hartford, Connecticut. I'm headed to my 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive next month. Whereas the ACA is a cichlid specialty event, this one includes everything, from tetras to catfish to rainbows, even saltwater and plants. There are usually two different talks going on concurrently so sometimes you have to make hard choices. First rate speakers and topics that expand beyond the cichlid folks – Randy Carey, Rosario Lacorte, Christel Kasselmann (from Germany), Chuck Davis, our own Gary Lange and Mike Hellweg, Ian Fuller (from the U.K.). At first I was a little disappointed that it was always in the same city (in the same hotel) and didn't force me to travel to new places, but I then realized just how many states and destinations are within just a few hours drive. So now I go up a few days early, rent a car, and strike out for adventure. In just a few years, I've been to all of the New England states, none of which I had ever been to before. I've seen the rocky Maine coastline and been to the LL Bean motherstore. I went to Boston and got a personal one-on-one behind-the-scenes tour of the New England Aquarium. (Thanks to a contact made at a prior fish convention) I ate lobster in Plymouth, Massachusetts and scallops in Newport, Rhode Island, and I believe I saw Dick Loudon on the porch of an inn in Vermont. All this and a fish convention too!

The third major convention that I attend regularly is the Cichlid Classic every Memorial Day weekend, put on by the Greater Chicago Cichlid Association. It's kind of a regional version of the ACA, and less than a five-hour drive from St Louis. Good speakers, good fish, good times, good folks. Can't beat it. I also attended the first Aquatic Gardeners Convention in Chattanooga, which was hosted by Charlene Nash, of the Tennessee Aquarium. I learned a lot about plants and plant people, came home with some really fine plants, and got to see one of the best aquariums in the country, up close and personal.

This past fall, I had the foresight (or just plain dumb luck) to attend the first All Aquarium Catfish Convention in Laurel, Maryland, hosted by the Potomac Valley Aquarium Society. They had an awesome lineup of speakers: Ingo Seidel of Germany (*Loricaria*), Shane Linder of Columbia (collecting), Stan Weitzman (*Otocinclus*), Lee Finley (everything catfishy) and a *Corydoras* forum featuring Ian Fuller of the UK, Mark Soberman, Don Kinyon, and Eric Bodrock, and more. A highlight was a behind-the-scenes (under-the-scenes actually) tour of the basement offices and laboratory specimen collections of Dr. Stan and Marilyn Weitzman in the Natural History building of the Smithsonian Museum complex in downtown Washington, DC. There were literally tens of thousands of

jars of preserved fishes, including a Coelacanth. There was a library of fish books that puts Lee Finley, Mike Schadle, Mike Hellweg and myself (collectively!) to shame. An added feature of the tour included a side trip to the Amazonia exhibit at the National Zoo in Washington, DC. They have four large (9-10 ft) *Arapaima* in their largest display tank. While there, we got to watch them feeding, and I was stunned at how powerful they were during their feeding frenzy. The only times I had seen them before, they just sat still at the surface of the water, but when food's on, look out! Awesome. Again, with my theory of linking conventions and tourism, I arrived in the area several days early and spent most of the time going through the Smithsonian's many museums. What an amazing collection of history, knowledge and wonder. And airplanes. I also made a side trip to the National Aquarium in Baltimore, one of the finest facilities I've seen. (Hint: if you do decide to combine tourism and fish conventions on the same trip, sightsee on the first part of the trip, then plan to return immediately after the convention, so you can get your new fish home safely.)

To recap, conventions are a great way to acquire knowledge, friends, and fish in a very compressed time-span. At a fish show in your hometown, you attend but go home between events or at least nightly and your regular life is still running strong -- soccer practice, grocery shopping, laundry, bridge club, whatever. At the major conventions, most of the attendees are from out of town, so they all stay at the convention hotel. This means there is something to do, someone to visit with, virtually around the clock. Staying at the hotel is definitely worth it. Your regular life is left behind (at least for the weekend) and you can devote your full attention to the convention. Another thing not every one takes advantage of is attending the awards banquet. Some people think it costs too much for a dinner, but it's much more than just a meal. There is usually a master of ceremonies, a keynote speaker, club officers relaying information about past successes and future activities being planned, and sometimes a mystery speaker. At the awards presentations, you can now match names (that you've heard of) and faces (that you've seen) and know who to ask about that beautiful fish in the show, or who may have fry from a show champion. I always meet some new people at the banquet table that I might not have had time to visit with otherwise. If you think you aren't really up for a four or five day convention, try attending the annual show of one of the regional clubs to get your feet wet. I attended the Circle City Aquarium Club in Indianapolis this year and it was a good time on a smaller scale. At the very least, try to participate more in your own club's show. Spend time meeting people between the events, especially the out-of-towners. After all, they are the ones who may have fish that no one else in your club has. We try to keep the Club Hop listing updated in *The Darter*, so pick out an event, reserve a weekend on your schedule, and just go and see for yourself. But be careful, you just might get hooked.

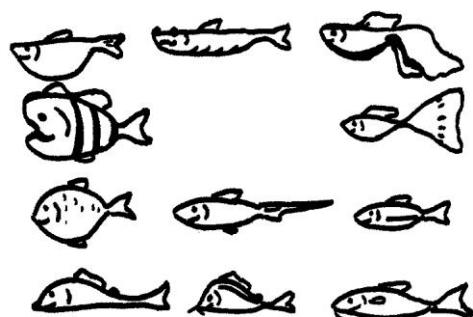
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**We've got a place for you!**

**Missouri Aquarium Society, Inc.**

Come join us at a meeting, or contact our membership chair, Kathy Deutsch for more information  
(314) 741-0474 [fishfan@j1.net](mailto:fishfan@j1.net)



**R&J  
FISH  
FOOD**

**JIM  
314-638-1134**

# Club Hopping

Steve Edie

Apr 8-10 – Indianapolis: American Livebearer Association – Annual Convention  
Apr 8-10 - Bloomington, MN: Minnesota Aquarium Society – Annual Show  
Apr 17 - Arlington Heights, IL: Greater Chicago Cichlid Association – Swap Meet  
Apr 22-24 – Melbourne, Australia: Australia New Guinea Fishes Association – Annual Convention  
Apr 29 – May 1 – St Louis: Missouri Aquarium Society – Annual Show  
May 1 – Milwaukee: Milwaukee Aquarium Society – Fish-O-Ramma  
May 27-29 – Arlington Heights, IL: Greater Chicago Cichlid Association – Cichlid Classic Convention  
July 21-24 – Ft Worth, TX: American Cichlid Association - 2005 Annual Convention  
Sept 18 – Arlington Heights, IL: Greater Chicago Cichlid Association – All-Species Auction  
Oct 23 - Arlington Heights, IL: Greater Chicago Cichlid Association – Swap Meet  
Dec 4 - Arlington Heights, IL: Greater Chicago Cichlid Association – Swap Meet

## Member of the Year Nominations

There were two nominations this year for Member of the Year, one for Mike Hellweg, and a co-nomination for Steve Deutsch and Charles Harrison. The only written nomination submitted for publication is Ed Millinger's nomination for Mike.

### **Why I Like Mike Hellweg For M.O.Y. (member of the year)**

I like Mike for member of the year.  
Four times every 12 months he is an auctioneer.  
He is the M.A.S.I. pres.  
You can always bank on what he says.  
He tells us to keep 'em green.  
He's propagated more plants than most of us have ever seen.  
He makes it possible for us to obtain hard to find plants and fish.  
He can get you almost anything you wish.  
He has a list from which you can make your picks,  
His business is called Exoctic Aquatics.  
He runs general and council meetings and F.O.R.C. also.  
He keeps them moving if they tend to go too slow.  
Many people ask him questions each day.  
He'll always take time to answer in the best way.  
So, for these reasons and more please join me in voting for Mike.  
He is a candidate I think you will like.

# The Greatest Fishroom Ever!

by Ed Millinger

This is a story about someone who had a big fishy influence on me as a youngster growing up. To think of it today reminds me of the old saying "You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone." I don't think I'll ever see anything like it again, at least not in the backyard of a residential neighborhood. It in many ways was a mini fish farm.

Two blocks from my house and next door to a classmate of mine lived an elderly brother and sister, Tad and Marjorie Broesel. I don't remember how I met them but I'm sure glad I did! Tad had lived in this house all his life and could tell me tales of keeping chickens and other barnyard animals over the years. But the most impressive feature of his backyard was his fish house. I'll try my best to describe it if you'll agree not to accuse me of exaggerating.

Before I describe the fish house let me tell you about the yard surrounding it. Tad had six concrete vats approximately two feet wide, eighteen inches deep and ten feet long. He covered them with glass in a wood frame. Running through them and covered in concrete were pipes that were connected to a hot water pump that enabled him to keep fish outdoors throughout the winter. He also had a large oval pond that was no longer operational when I met him. I would guess he was around seventy years old at this time and had cut back his activities to the fish house only.

His fish house consisted of two greenhouses connected by a common back room. As you entered you were immediately looking at a seventy-gallon aquarium filled with a variety of fish. This tank was not quite as wide as the inside vats. These vats were close to 50-60 gallons each. They were built of smoothed concrete with a glass front. They sat back to back and ran 25-30 feet down the middle of the room. With an aisle down the left and right side of the room even larger vats completed the outside walls. These too had glass fronts but were wider and longer. As if this wasn't impressive enough, sitting on the concrete in between them were fifteen-gallon column tanks. I have never seen them since and they probably weren't that practical because of their small surface area. They were five inches wide and eighteen to twentyfour inches tall.

Walking into the common back room off to the right was where he kept his pump and supplies. Tacked on the door was an article from the old Globe Democrat newspaper that told about Tad having ordered a seahorse from Florida only to have it arrive with babies that were released during transit.

There were only two vats in the common room, both of them very large. This is where he conditioned his water. He had airstones running in them but I don't know if he added any chemicals or not. As you proceeded into the second smaller greenhouse you would notice fewer but much larger vats. On the left were six vats again with a glass front that were two feet wide, two feet deep and seven feet long. Opposite of these were four vats, four feet deep, five feet wide, and five feet long. At the end of the room was a large industrial size fan to cool the greenhouses during the summer. All the indoor vats had a water pipe covered in concrete running through them like those outside for heat in the winter.

Tad's favorite fish were guppies. In the vat closest to the fan were easily 500 guppies of every color imaginable. He also kept guppies in the column tanks I wrote about earlier. It was especially

impressive to be in the fishroom in the afternoon when the sunlight would strike these colorful guppies. Tad wanted to spawn red tail sharks but never succeeded. He also had this wild idea once to raise crawdads to the size of lobsters and sell them to restaurants. As gullible little kids of course we bought into it and went down to Deer creek, tied a piece of meat on the end of a string and pulled up many crawdads. Tad was going to selectively breed the large ones to obtain supersize restaurant ready crawdads. Needless to say this venture failed.

As I grew older and started cutting lawns Tad would give me fish in exchange for cutting his grass. I used his mower and his gas but I must say it was quite a deal for him. Looking back now I wish I had spent more time at Tad's place. he unfortunately passed away and his sister had to shut down the fish hose. It no longer stands and the house is now occupied by new owners.

# The Large Home Aquarium

by Chris Persson, NWAS

reprinted from *Wet Pet Gazette* of the Norwalk Aquarium Society

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

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

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

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

## 1. Commitment

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

## **2. Location**

Positioning a large aquarium in your home requires a bit more forethought than with standard-sized tanks. As always, a level spot, free from direct sunlight and heavy foot traffic is required. You'll need to plan for easy access for feeding and maintenance. And, of course, you'll want to locate the tank in a place that offers comfortable viewing for you and your guests, but remember that you need not sit as close to large aquaria as you do with smaller ones. When selecting a site for a large home aquarium, keep in mind your sense of proportion as large tanks can easily "overwhelm" a room. Consider the possibility of an "in-the-wall" tank; this can provide a very attractive finished look to your aquarium, and also allows you to service the tank from behind the scenes.

## **3. Weight**

Let's state the obvious: Big tanks mean big weight. Sure, you've got more water than with smaller tanks, but don't neglect the added weight from thicker glass and sturdier stands. For example, an empty 125-gallon glass tank weighs about 200 lbs., while a 300 gallon glass tank (empty) runs 1,000 lbs. or so. Water tips the scale at about 8.3 lbs. per gallon and adds up mighty quickly, as do the heavier rocks and driftwood pieces you're likely to use in a larger tank. By my best estimate, my 340 gallon weighs somewhere in the neighborhood of 2 tons! Big tanks are probably safest in the basement on a concrete slab. The first floor of your home can be workable as well, assuming you sufficiently shore up the supporting floor. Spare yourself unnecessary worry and labor by saving the upper floors of your home for small tanks.

## **4. Stand**

Ready-made aquarium stands are available for pretty much any size tank up to the standard six-foot 180 gallon. Tanks larger than that almost always require that you either custom-order from a manufacturer, or build your own stand. Those of you who, like myself, are inept at matters of carpentry should consider hiring a professional to ensure the job is done right. Determine how high you want the stand to be; high enough for comfortable viewing, but not so high that the aquarium dominates the room. And finally, take the time to figure out how much room you'll need under the tank for any equipment and accessories you plan to put there, and provide enough space for easy access.

## **5. H2O**

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

## **6. Material**

Glass or Acrylic? The debate rages, and each material offers specific advantages and disadvantages. In general, acrylic is lighter than glass and more readily fashioned into unique or extra-tall shapes, but it is more expensive and somewhat more easily scratched than glass. However, some acrylic scratches can be polished out, while scratched glass is all but impossible to fix. Acrylic is supposedly "clearer" than glass, and modern acrylic tank manufacturers claim that today's acrylics do not discolor, as did their predecessors. Personally, I will never again use glass for anything over 180 gallons, if only in consideration of weight.

## **7. Source**

Most any retail pet shop can readily obtain glass or acrylic tanks up to 180 gallons; some stores even carry 7' and 8' tanks up to as much as 265g or so. Get beyond that, and you'll be faced with one of three choices: (a.) Build your own: This alternative is only available to those who are not ham-fisted like myself. Done properly, this can be the least expensive route, as you provide the labor (search the web or check out the "Manual of Tankbusters" for how to do). Just note that glass sheets are heavy and awkward, meaning you won't be able to build a big tank without help. In addition, use care as to the type of silicone and/or sealant employed; many are not approved for aquarium use. Proceed with caution! (b.) Special order via your retailer; He probably has a source of his own that makes extra large tanks. This is the most convenient AND most expensive way to get a tank. You will pay thousands of dollars for tanks over 300 gallons. On the plus side, the retailer will (or should) arrange for delivery, and will also help with any problems that might arise. (c.) Mail Order/Direct Purchase: I have found this provides the most reasonable compromise. If you choose acrylic, there are a number of manufacturers that advertise each month in FAMA and other publications. Glass aquarium manufacturers that sell direct to the public are less common but do exist. You will definitely save money on the cost of the tank by ordering direct, but should be prepared for hidden charges such as packing, shipping crates, and freight; get these prices quoted ahead of time. As a rough guide to cost, retailers quoted me prices exceeding \$4,000 for purchase and delivery of a glass 9' 340 gallon. Buying directly from the manufacturer cut my cost to less than half of this.

## **8. Transport**

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

## **9. Moving**

Once it's at your house, you'll need help getting the aquarium inside. Tanks up to 55 gallons or so can more or less be handled by one person, although I confess to once moving a 125 gallon solo, using a SUV, a trio of sawhorses, and absolutely no common sense, but larger tanks require assistance. Getting family members or friends to help out may be an option, but once you're moving a tank heavier than a couple of hundred pounds you're going to need friends that are either very understanding or very strong. Larger glass tanks may require professional help; I wound up hiring eight movers to get my 340-gallon into my house. Plan ahead! Moving a large tank may require twisting and turning to get around comers and deal with the various angles created by doorways and stairwells. Stories abound of hobbyists who wound up having to remove windows or doors in the process. Inter-American Pet Supply even told me of a customer who took delivery of an 8' x 3' x 3' aquarium only to then find he could not get it into his house! So, measure twice, cut once...

## **10. Filtration**

A wide array of options exists for filtering the large tank. Although you could strap on a bunch of outside power filters or canisters and get the job done, I've found though that a better option is to order the tank "reef-ready." What's reef ready? The tank comes pre-drilled with several holes and an overflow box, which are plumbed to a second smaller "sump" tank, which contains a trickle filter or other filtration process. Water pumps are used to circulate the tank water between your main tank and the sump via PVC pipe or flexible tubing. This may sound complicated, but plumbing an aquarium is less complex than installing a faucet or toilet. Just be sure to allow a few days for all glue and sealant to

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

## Success

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

# A Little Giggle

by Maureen Green

For years, I had heard that Koi and watergardens don't mix. Koi either eat the plants or treat them like beachballs, and when my friends decided they wanted watergardens, I told them absolutely "NO KOI".

They incorporated three ponds with a small waterfall pond as a focal point. I kept reminding them "NO KOI".

One day I went over and they proudly pointed out three baby koi, and the rest of the summer nothing happened. "Maybe, you heard wrong" they said "wait until they reach breeding size" I said. Two of the koi died that summer, but one thrived.

Next spring they pointed out that Lady Koi still wasn't showing any outrageous behavior. (Really rubbing my nose in it). The waterlily leaves were spreading and the flower buds were about to open, Lady Koi decided to play. Plants were out of their pots, ripped and the water was quite murky. "Koi is frisky and wants to breed" I said. "NO, it has to be a marauder" they said. They cleaned up the pond (Lady Koi was husband's fish, watergarden's was wife's). Three days later they said the marauder came back, another cleanup. After the third time, they decided that Lady Koi was the culprit.

They put her in the small waterfall pond. I told them that Koi can get sunburned, they did succeed in constructing a shade for her. Husband was delighted, still his fish (she would stick her head out of the water to be handfed and petted). Meanwhile, wife spent most of the summer cleaning the filter (koi's excrement was too heavy for it).

They put her back into the big pond for the winter, but the following spring, she had grown quite large and when she would retrieve something from the bottom, a third of her would stick up in the air. (wife was cleaning the filter almost everyday, and I heard her mutter "FILET", husband saying "NO WAY".

It took half of the summer, before husband found a new home for the lady. His eye's still seem to mist over when he talks about the fish that could be handfed and petted. Maybe, there will be a fifth pond in their future.

# The Care and Breeding of *Gymnogeophagus Meridonalis*

by Ed Millinger

Last summer Mike Hellweg brought a fish list from his company Exotic Aquatics to one of our monthly meetings. Listed under South American cichlids was *gymnogeophagus meridonalis*. I had never heard of these fish and always on the lookout for something new I asked Mike to order six of them for me. They were \$4.25 apiece. Luckily I also ordered a new book entitled South American Earth Eaters. I say luckily because I checked all three Baensch Atlas's and could not find them listed anywhere.

On September 30th I drove out to Mikes to pick up these fish and the book. (I'm always looking for an excuse to see Mike's fishroom). Upon arriving home I floated the bag of six two-inch long *meridonalis* and looked them up in my new book South American Earth Eaters by Thomas Weidner. This is a fantastic book and I highly recommend it to anyone with an interest in any of the geophagus. The book is well written, easily understood and the photography is excellent.

Weidner explains that *gymnogeophagus* is Greek for naked earth, meaning they have an unscaled anterior body. He goes on to explain that these fish inhabit cool and calm waters. In Latin *meridonalis* means southern and a map shows they do indeed inhabit locales in Southern Brazil.

I turned down my heater because It had been set at 80 degrees (which is typical of most South American cichlids I have kept in the past). I performed a water change with 72-degree water to bring down the temperature to around 75. Weidner states that these fish grow old fast if kept at high temps. I released the six fish into the barebottomed tank and they immediately began exploring their new environment.

Feeding was no problem at all. The *meridonalis* eagerly ate flake, shrimp pellets, live (adult brine, black worms), and frozen foods. By the end of November the fish were well acclimated, growing and showing much more color. They display yellow, red and blue with a black lateral spot. The males are larger and more colorful with a maximum size of only around four inches. One prominent male began to establish himself from the beginning while the others were not as distinguishable. By the time the M.A.S.I. Christmas party rolled around however I felt fairly confident that I had three pairs. Knowing that Mike likes fish four inches and under and wanting to show my appreciation to him for finding these fish I bagged up a pair and gave them to him for Christmas.

Now that I was down to two pair I kept a close eye on them and in February I began to notice the before mentioned dominant male was hanging out around the four inch flower pot with his favorite female. I removed the other two, which I will trade to Rick Tinklenberg for some nice halfbeaks he told me about at the Champaign auction. I started feeding more blackworms and in between water changes I siphoned out any debris on the aquarium floor. I was rewarded on a Sunday night with approximately 125 eggs in the flowerpot. They were clear in color at first but as the days went on they grew darker. Although many cichlid eggs hatch in 2-3 days these didn't hatch until Friday night, a full five days later. The fry are small and will be a challenge to raise. I started an infusoria culture and will have to hold off on the baby brine for at least a couple of weeks. Weidner states that the parents are very attentive and that the female will move them around.

All in all this is quite a fish. They don't demand much (for instance I never did check the pH, I assume it's neutral), they don't take up a lot of space, you don't have to keep the tank that warm and they are not fussy eaters. To top it off they are quite colorful!

# The Computer Page

Steve Deutsch

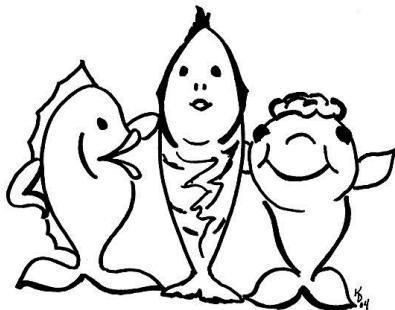
MASI's official web page: [www.missouriaquariumsociety.org](http://www.missouriaquariumsociety.org)

Addresses are only printed with permission of the owner. If your address is not printed and you would like it to be, please email me at [fishfan@i1.net](mailto:fishfan@i1.net). If you would like yours removed, or if it needs correction, also please email me.

## MASI MEMBERS E-Mail Addresses:

Al Andersen	alander602@hotmail.com
Jim & Sue Amsden	<a href="mailto:CatToon@aol.com">CatToon@aol.com</a>
Michele Berhorst	<a href="mailto:mmberhorst@aol.com">mmberhorst@aol.com</a>
Klaus Bertich	<a href="mailto:kbertich@msn.com">kbertich@msn.com</a>
Jim Brodack	<a href="mailto:jbrodack@earthlink.net">jbrodack@earthlink.net</a>
Diane Brown	<a href="mailto:brown_d@kids.wustl.edu">brown_d@kids.wustl.edu</a>
Scott Bush	<a href="mailto:stlslus2@aol.com">stlslus2@aol.com</a>
Dwane & Phyllis Cotton	<a href="mailto:Infofish@aol.com">Infofish@aol.com</a>
Steve Edie	<a href="mailto:sredie@sbcglobal.net">sredie@sbcglobal.net</a>
Maureen Green	<a href="mailto:jmsgreen@iopener.net">jmsgreen@iopener.net</a>
Charles Harrison	<a href="mailto:csharrison@inkmaker.net">csharrison@inkmaker.net</a>
Mike Hellweg	<a href="mailto:mhellweg511@charter.net">mhellweg511@charter.net</a>
Angela Hellweg	<a href="mailto:pugdog64@yahoo.com">pugdog64@yahoo.com</a>
Steven Hoffman	<a href="mailto:hoffmo@jobe.net">hoffmo@jobe.net</a>
Randy Ison	<a href="mailto:Rison@hypercom.com">Rison@hypercom.com</a>
Gary Lange	<a href="mailto:gwlange@mindspring.com">gwlange@mindspring.com</a>
Charles & MaryAnn Lenau	<a href="mailto:CMLenau@swbell.net">CMLenau@swbell.net</a>
Mike Meyer	<a href="mailto:michael@meyer.net">michael@meyer.net</a>
Ed Millinger	<a href="mailto:amazonedd@aol.com">amazonedd@aol.com</a>
Jim Mueller	<a href="mailto:muellerj44@yahoo.com">muellerj44@yahoo.com</a>
Jim & Brenda Thale	<a href="mailto:tbird55jb@aol.com">tbird55jb@aol.com</a>
Pat Tosie	<a href="mailto:pattosie@juno.com">pattosie@juno.com</a>
Patrick A. Tosie, II	<a href="mailto:patricktosie@juno.com">patricktosie@juno.com</a>
John Van Asch	<a href="mailto:JohnsFishy@aol.com">JohnsFishy@aol.com</a>
Harold Walker, Jr.	<a href="mailto:hwfishhead@msn.com">hwfishhead@msn.com</a>
Jim & Rosie Yaekel	<a href="mailto:jryaekel@htc.net">jryaekel@htc.net</a>

## Membership



Yearly membership in the Missouri Aquarium Society, Inc. is \$20 per calendar year. Membership includes the Darter subscription for the year, which is currently 6 issues. New memberships and renewals can be submitted at club functions such as meetings and auctions, or by contacting our membership chair, Kathy Deutsch at 314-741-0474, [fishfan@i1.net](mailto:fishfan@i1.net), or 9 Old Jamestown Ct. Florissant MO 63034

# Updated MASI Breeders Award Program (BAP) Rules

Steve Edie

## I. Purpose:

1. To encourage members of the Missouri Aquarium Society to breed fishes.
2. To share information concerning their spawning and rearing.
3. To make available to the hobby a wider variety of fishes.
4. To recognize achievements by members concerning the breeding of fishes.
5. To promote greater participation by members in the activities of MASI.

## II. Administration:

1. A BAP Committee consisting of a BAP Chairperson, appointed by the President, and 2 to 3 additional members appointed by the BAP Chair shall administer the BAP.
2. The BAP Chair shall set up and maintain a record system containing all pertinent data, along with a file of spawning reports submitted. The BAP Chair shall be responsible for preparation and presentation of awards, and for submission of information to the Editor for publication.
3. The BAP Chair shall be responsible for the placement of fishes into point classifications, and shall maintain a list of these classifications. From time to time it may be necessary to reclassify certain fishes. In case of reclassification, all previously reported spawnings shall receive the current point value. In the event a classification point value is lowered, the breeder's current point total will not be lowered. Nomenclature will be determined in accordance with the California Academy of Science, currently the most complete reference available.
4. The BAP Chair shall keep a record of participating members' point totals, to be published in *The Darter* at least once a year.
5. All decisions of the BAP Committee relative to this program shall be final and binding.

## III. General Rules:

1. Participants must be MASI members in good standing.
2. All fish entered by a member into the BAP must be conditioned and maintained in his/her own tank. The breeding of the fish and raising of the fry must be done in the same manner.
3. Points will be assigned in the name of a couple (i.e. John and Mary Doe), a family (i.e. Doe family), or an individual (i.e. John Doe).

4. In order to be credited with spawning any species, the member must spawn and rear to at least 60 days of age at least 4-10 fry, depending on the class of fish. The fry shall be presented at the first general meeting following their having reached 60 days of age, except where noted for Class "D", in which case special rules apply.

5. In order to defray the cost of award plaques, and to spread various fish species through the club, some fry from each spawn (2-10, depending on the class of fish) are to be donated to the club at general meetings, to be auctioned to the club membership.

6. All spawning reports must be submitted upon approved BAP forms to the BAP chair for verification.

7. In all Classes, the date of spawning shall be considered to be the date the eggs hatch, and the date of birth for livebearers.

8. Hybrids of any type are not allowed, with the exception of domestic livebearer strains.

#### IV. Requirements for Spawning Credit According to Classification:

1. Species will be classified according to four levels of difficulty, Classes "A", "B", "C", and "D". Requirements for receiving credit for spawnings from the various classes are as follows:

**Class "A"** (5 Points) - raise 10 fry; donate 10 fry or a pair. General Rules apply.

**Class "B"** (10 Points)- raise 8 fry; donate 5 fry or a pair. General Rules apply.

**Class "C"** (15 Points) - raise 6 fry; donate 3 fry or a pair. General Rules apply.

**Class "D"** (20 Points)- raise 4 fry; donate 2 fry or a pair. General Rules apply. In addition, a member of the BAPC must be notified and given the opportunity to witness the spawn and spawning conditions within two weeks after spawning

2. **MASI First Spawn Bonus** (5-15 Points) To promote the raising and sharing of rare species, a bonus point system has been implemented. For the first MASI spawn of any Species, a 5 point bonus will be given, in addition to the standard points given for its class. An additional 5 points will be given for the first MASI spawn in any Genus and any Family.

3. **Color Variety Bonus** (1-4 Points) In the BAP, full points will be awarded only once (to each breeder) for any species or subspecies, regardless of variety. Subsequent spawns of the same species (but of different color or finnage varieties) will be awarded reduced points. (i.e. Black Angelfish = 10 points; then later, Silver Veil Angelfish = 2 points)

#### V. Achievement Levels:

The following achievement levels will be recognized upon accumulating the listed requirements:

**Novice Breeder** - Only Novice Members of MASI may receive this award. Spawn any 3 species, from 3 different genera, must include both eggayers and livebearers.

**General Breeder** - (50+ Points)

at least 2 species from Class "B" or higher  
at least 2 different families

**Advanced Breeder** - (100+ Points)

at least 2 species from Class "C" or higher  
at least 3 different families

**Senior Breeder** - (200+ Points)

at least 3 species from Class "C" or higher  
at least 4 different families

**Master Breeder** - (300+ Points)

at least 1 species from Class "D"  
at least 5 different families  
at least 1 article regarding Class "D" species

**Grand Master Breeder** - (500+ Points)

at least 2 species from Class "D"  
at least 6 different families  
at least 2 articles regarding Class "D" species

**Advanced Grand Master Breeder** – (1000+ Points)

at least 3 species from Class "D"  
at least 8 different families  
at least 3 articles regarding Class "D" species

**Senior Grand Master Breeder** – (1500+ Points)

at least 4 species from Class "D"  
at least 10 different families  
at least 4 articles regarding Class "D" species

**Supreme Grand Master Breeder** – (2000+ Points)

at least 5 species from Class "D"  
at least 12 different families  
at least 5 articles regarding Class "D" species

**Ultimate Grand Master Breeder** – (2500+ Points)

at least 6 species from Class "D"  
at least 14 different families  
at least 6 articles regarding Class "D" species

Articles should provide details and insight on the spawning conditions that resulted in a successful Class "D" spawn. The article shall be submitted to the MASi Editor for publication in *The Darter*. With prior approval of the BAP Chair, an article on a Class "C" that was a MASi First Species may be substituted for a Class "D" article.

## VI. Awards:

All awards will be presented to recipients at the regular general meetings, and notice will be published in the society publication in recognition of the member's accomplishments. Awards for Master Breeder and higher will in addition be recognized publicly at the Annual Show banquet.

Revised Jan 2005

# HAP Report

Mike Hellweg

Hello all,

2005 has started off well - with several entries this month including one MASI First from Jim Miller. Jim also earned his next level award - Senior Aquatic Horticulturist! Congratulations, Jim!

Keep 'em green

Member	Species	Common	Rep	Pts	Total
<b>January '05</b>					
James H. Miller	Alternanthera species cardinalis	Cherry Water Hedge	V	15	220
James H. Miller	Hygrophila corymbosa angustifolia	Willow Leaf Hygro	V	5	220
James H. Miller	Micromeria brownei	Creeping Charlie	V	15	220
James H. Miller	Sagittaria platyphyta	Fountain Sag	V	5	220
James H. Miller	Zosterella dubia	Willow Grass	V	10	220
Jerry Jost	Nesaea species		V	15	290
Micky Lee	Spirodela polyrhiza	Giant Red Duckweed	V	5	545
<b>February '05</b>					
Jerry Jost	Alternanthera species ?		V	15	335
Jerry Jost	Echinodoras sp.	Ozelot Sword	V	15	335
Jerry Jost	Micranthemum umbrosum		V	15	335
MASI First!					

Reproduction Key: V = Vegetative, OB = Outdoor Bloom, IB = Indoor Bloom, S = Seedling

# Breeders Award Program Report

Steve Edie

Member	Species	Common	Pts	Total
<b>Jan 2005</b>				
Mike Hellweg	<i>Aistogramma trifasciatum</i>	3 Lined Cuckoo Apisto	15	1957
Gary Lange	<i>Poecilia reticulata</i>	Lyretail Guppy	5	1239
Jim Miller	<i>Aulonocara</i> sp. "Red"		10	1889
Jim Miller	<i>Otopharynx walteri</i>		10	1899
Rick Smith	<i>Poecilia reticulata</i>	Leopard Guppy	5	10
<b>Feb 2005</b>				
Mike Hellweg	<i>Aistogramma</i> sp. "Rot Punt"	Red Spot Apisto	15	1972
Mike Hellweg	<i>Carinotetraodon travancorius</i> ***	Pea Puffer	15	2002
Mike Hellweg	<i>Corydoras adolfoi</i> *	Adolf's Cory	10	2017
Jerry Jost	<i>Corydoras aeneus</i>		10	10
Jerry Jost	<i>Fundulopanchax marmoratus</i>		15	25
Gary Lange	<i>Hyphessobrycon elachys</i> *	Featherfin Tetra	15	1259
Gary Lange	<i>Moenkhausia pitteri</i>	Diamond Tetra	15	1274
Gary Lange	<i>Puntius conchonius</i>	Rosy Barb	10	1284
Gary Lange	<i>Puntius semifasciolatus</i>	Gold Barb	10	1294
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Melanotaenia catherinae</i>	Waigeo Rainbowfish	10	595
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Nannacara anomala</i>		5	600
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Nomorhamphus ebrandtii</i>	Red Fin Halfbeak	10	610
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Tilapia bythobates</i>	Bloody Deep Walker	15	625
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Xiphophorus pygmaeus</i>	Pygmy Swordtail	10	635

\* = First MASI species spawn (5 point bonus)

\*\* = First MASI genus spawn (5 point bonus)

\*\*\* = First MASI family spawn (5 point bonus)

# Is It Time For Reassessment?

by Ed Millinger

Relax, this isn't about real estate taxes. I wrote last year about transferring fish (altums) from a 75 gallon aquarium to a 200 after Gary Lange had made such a suggestion. I was thinking the other day that maybe I should consider other changes. We all get into routines in our lives and caring for fish is no different.

It would be easiest to ask an outsider for their opinion. But I think maybe we could train ourselves to do it without outside help if we didn't have access to it. In order to accomplish this you must ask questions. For instance, I've had those (whatever fish are in a certain aquarium) for some time now. Sure they look comfortable but are they prospering? Wouldn't a larger tank better fit their needs? Do I need to add plants or fixtures to add to their sense of security? Would dither fish bring them out of hiding more often?

You might take a look around your fishroom. Assess or reassess each tank and its inhabitants. Do they have enough room? Can you switch tanks? Sometimes moving fish can cause them to spawn. I once had a pair of laetacara dorsigers that I tried to spawn in a twenty high, a twenty long, and finally a forty-five. Although they don't get much larger than two inches they showed no interest in spawning until I put them in the forty-five.

A number of times I've given up on spawning a certain fish only to give it away and have someone else spawn them. Why not move it within your fish room? Maybe go back to your library and reread the conditions they prefer.

A bigger question may be do I have enough tank space or too much? Going overboard with too many tanks can limit time spent productively and spread you too thin. Not having enough aquariums is fun because adding tanks gives you more options.

You might want to take a look at what you feed your fish. Have you tried a new food lately? Why not? Your fish might appreciate it.

I find the biggest help in improving your fish room can come from seeing other fish rooms. The best way to guarantee this is to join the executive council of your local fish society. They often hold meetings in member's houses and you get great exposure to how other hobbyists operate. You don't have to be a long time member or have expertise with a certain facet of the hobby. Just a willingness to learn and share your ideas. Talk to a council member or Gary Lange our vice-president (some say our one and only vice) about serving. The rewards will far exceed your contributions.

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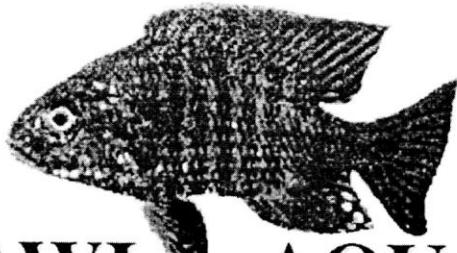
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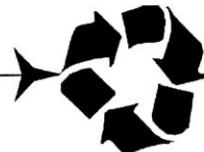
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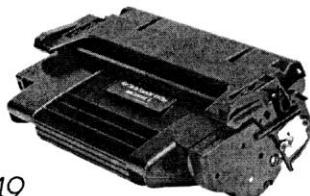
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