

In Depth

June 2017

Bowl Show at the June meeting!

Ted Judy on collecting in Colombia

Visiting the Smithsonian Fish Collection

Calendar of Coming Events

and so much more!



Ted Judy, our featured June speaker, seining in the Llanos region of Colombia.

In Depth

published by The Tropical Fish Club of Burlington

Established February 1989



We meet on the second Thursday of each month, September through June, at 6:30 PM at the VFW Hall, 73 Pearl St, Essex Junction, VT.

Our membership consists of adults, children and teens. Many members are very experienced and have been keeping fish for years, and others are just getting started. People of all ages and experience levels are always welcome. Meet and learn from those who share your interests!

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Have a great summer outside! photo by Ann Whitman

From the President

by David L Banks, Jr

Summer is trying to get started, and our last meeting before the summer break is coming up. We are pleased to have Ted Judy here to speak this month to finish up our spring meetings. Ted is a popular speaker around the country and has been travelling a lot lately! His travels brought him to Columbia recently, and he will share part of his experience on that trip with us. Ted was last here in Burlington 5 years ago, it does not seem that long ago, time sure does fly.



Our fall is starting to shape up, I have confirmed speakers for September and November and working on October. We also are in the process of setting a date for our Annual auction and looking at possible dates for a field trip. And before all of this is our annual summer picnic being hosted by Collin Sourdiffe at his new home in Underhill. We hope to have further details on all these activities at the June meeting.

TFCB had a good turnout for the OVAS auction on May 21st. The auction was held in a new location, which worked out great. There were some very good fish available, some at very reasonable prices, but many sold for closer to what they should sell for. There were nice manufacturers' donations and a good selection of used equipment, too. Overall, a very good auction. Thanks to all the TFCB members that came out and thanks to OVAS for putting on such a good auction! I know I came home with more than I had planned.

Our annual elections are being held this month, all officers and two open board positions are up for election. We have a nominating committee, please contact one of them if you are interested in running for a position: Bryan Goodkowski, Livy Strong or Dean Barnes. If you currently hold one of these positions and want to run again, you should also contact one of the nominating committee. Nominations will also be taken from the floor at the June meeting.

David

BOWL SHOW REMINDER!!!

The June meeting will feature one of our two annual bowl shows!

1. Fish must be displayed in a bare tank or bowl, i.e. no decorations, no gravel etc. The tank or bowl must have one flat side & hold less than 20 gallons of water. No lights.
2. A limited supply of bowls is available. If you need a bowl, contact David prior to the meeting.
3. Life support systems are not encouraged, but will be accepted if necessary to sustain a particular fish.
4. Water is available, but entrants must supply their own water conditioner, nets, etc.
5. There is a limit of 3 entries per person.
6. Judging will be by both popular vote.
7. The Tropical Fish Club of Burlington is not responsible for any loss or damage.

Editorial

Laetacara, Less Common Dwarf Cichlids

By Ann Whitman

As many of you know, I especially enjoy planted tanks filled with communities of compatible fish. Tetras, small barbs, rasboras, pencilfish, danios, catfish, small gouramis and dwarf cichlids. The smaller “dither” fish provide the flash and color; the cichlids provide the personality.

I recently has an opportunity to buy some less commonly available South American dwarf cichlids that were imported from breeders in the Czech Republic. *Laetacara curviceps*, the smiling acara, and *Laetacara dorsigera*, the redbreast acara, are native to several tributaries of the southern Amazon in Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia. They used to be much more common in the hobby than they are now. Always on the lookout for something unusual for planted tanks, I was very happy to see them offered by [Natural Pet](#) in East Norriton, PA, where fish expert Mark Denaro works. As luck would have it, my husband was driving through eastern Pennsylvania shortly after the fish arrived in the US, so they made the final leg of their long journey in the back of our van instead of a delivery truck.

I bought 5 pairs each of the two *Laetacara* species. After quarantine, they’ve settled into well-planted tanks with driftwood, caves and shoals of cardinal and sunset tetras and dwarf gelius barbs. They pay no attention to the smaller fish and spend much of their time begging at the front glass, true to their cichlid personality. Although still young, they are starting to show some nice color. The males of both species will reach about 3” long with females a bit smaller. I expect their behavior will change as they pair up and spawn, but they reportedly are not nearly as aggressive as many other cichlids in this regard.

With some luck and good husbandry, I’ll be able to report back in the fall on whether or not this is true. I hope to have babies to share at our fall auction!

Have a great summer!

Ann



Mature *L. dorsigera* pair. Top male, female below. The male is larger, more robust, but it has a smaller spot in the middle of the dorsal fin. [photo](#) by Roman Rak



The smiling acara, *L. curviceps*, gets its name from the black line on its face that resembles a smile. The genus name means “happy”. Note the longer, more pointed anal and dorsal fins on the young male (left). photo by Ann Whitman

Speaker of the Month

Ted Judy travelled to Colombia in 2016 and documented his journey in a series of excellent videos. A well-known videographer in the aquarium hobby, Ted also has many helpful videos on building and outfitting a fishroom, breeding fish, and much more on his YouTube channel. He even tours other peoples' fishrooms and shops wherever he travels and shares them with the rest of us. For some great armchair travel, see and subscribe to his channel [here](#).

TROPICAL FISH CLUB OF BURLINGTON

PRESENTS

Ted Judy

“Colombia 2016 – Llanos”

Thursday June 8, 2017
6:30PM

Free admission & door prizes plus an auction



VFW Hall
Pearl St
Essex Junction



For more information

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Go along with Ted as he explores the Llanos streams around Villavicencio, Colombia. *Apistogramma*, *Coridoras*, *Crenicichla* and lots of other great aquarium fish, filmed in the streams where they live. Visit a fish farm that raises rare Colombian species like altum angelfish and panda uaru. See how a fish shipment is packed for export out of the country.

Hobby History

Big Influences in the Hobby

By David L. Banks Jr

The passing of Herbert R. Axelrod last week makes 2017 a year in which we have lost some of the biggest influences in the aquarium hobby. Earlier this year we lost both Stanley Weitzman and Albert Thiel. These three had a huge impact on the aquarium hobby during their lifetimes and I will share a little of what I know about them.

Herbert R. Axelrod

Axelrod probably had the largest public influence on the aquarium hobby than any other person in this country starting in the 1950's. Through *Tropical Fish Hobbyist* magazine and many, many books he published and authored, he reached so many new and upcoming hobbyists.

Axelrod had many fish species named after him, including one that I have kept recently, *Sundadanio axelrodi*. Of course, the most popular must be the cardinal tetra, and many written and oral stories have been told about how that name came about. Axelrod had his share of controversy over his practices and business dealings, but he certainly did help to promote the hobby and is at least partially responsible for the great popularity the aquarium hobby has enjoyed.

Albert Thiel

Albert Thiel may not be a name many are familiar with, but he was an important part of the marine hobby and really introduced the hobby to the wet/dry (trickle) sump filter. He authored several popular books on reef keeping, posted many articles and was a very active speaker in the marine hobby world.

In 1990, he spoke at the NEC and his talk included information on his filter. Two years later, I setup a large display tank and, although it was going to be a freshwater tank, I decided on the wet/dry filter from Thiel. It was a 300-gallon acrylic tank with an overflow in one corner. The sump fit under the tank nicely and had two pumps to return the water back to the tank. One was plumbed to return through the sump for additional filtration, or it could be switched to return back to the tank with a change of valves. This setup worked great and the filter did an excellent job at keeping the tank with large African cichlids in show condition.

Stan Weitzman

Stan Weitzman was unique in the fish world, I think; he was a true hobbyist, but he was also a well-respected and accomplished scientist and served as a long-time curator at the Smithsonian. Stan and his wife, Marilyn, were frequent travelers to South America, collecting and studying fish, but they also attended hobby conventions and kept many aquariums setup in their adjoining offices at the Smithsonian. I had the pleasure of attending several of his talks, both at the NEC and the All Aquarium Catfish convention. He and his wife seemed to really enjoy these hobby conventions, even staying up late into the night in the hospitality rooms chatting with the attendees. At one catfish convention, Dr Weitzman hosted a field trip to the Smithsonian. The article I wrote about that trip is reprinted on the next page.

I know 2017 is only half over, but I'm hoping we don't lose anyone else this year. Below are links to learn a little more about each of these influences in our hobby.

Article on the Weitzmans in Copeia, published by: American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25140723?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Info on Albert Thiel on reef2reef website. <https://www.reef2reef.com/threads/albert-j-thiel-fundraiser.303000/>

Obituary for Herbert Axelrod. <http://www.practicalfishkeeping.co.uk/news/fishkeeping-news/articles/2017/5/30/obituary-dr-herbert-r-axelrod>

reprinted from a previous *In Depth* newsletter

A Tour of the Smithsonian Fish Collection

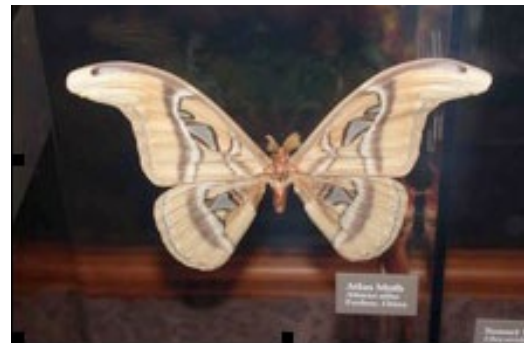
By David L Banks Jr, TFCB

In October 2006, we attended the 2nd All Aquarium Catfish convention in Maryland. As part of the convention, there was a tour of the Smithsonian's collection of preserved fish. This was most likely the last open tour of this collection as was being moved off the mall in Washington, DC, to a more remote location that will have restricted access. The tour was lead by long-time curator, Dr. Stanley Weitzman and his wife, Marilyn. Marilyn is much more than just Stan's wife; she has the office next to his and still makes trips to South America for fish, even though she is nearly as old as Stan's 82 years!

The tour started with an early morning gathering at the hotel for the bus ride into DC. We would travel into the museum, have lunch after the tour at the cafeteria there, and then travel to the National Zoo to the Amazonia exhibit. It was going to be a full day, since the convention really got started after the tour returned at 5PM.

With the traffic in the DC area, it was a slow ride in. We were only 15 miles or so away, but the trip seemed to take forever. Once there, the bus pulled up on the back side of the building and we all went in. While waiting for the visitor badges and paperwork, I checked out the lobby area. There was a wonderful exhibit of moths from around the world, including the Atlas moth from China.

The tour was limited in size to about 20 people, but the first stop on the tour was way too small for even that many. Our first stop was at the combined offices of Stan and Marilyn Weitzman. Marilyn is mainly working with the group of fish that the splash tetra is part of and she had many fish tanks setup in her office, each with a species of these types of tetras. Live plants were taking over most all tanks, and with so many



Atlas moth in Smithsonian lobby display.



Weitzman office sign on door, with fish!



Tanks in Marilyn Weitzman's office.

people squeezed into a small area, taking pictures of the fish was almost impossible. The size and color of some of these fish was amazing. Typically when you think of a tetra, you think of small schooling fish, but some of these were 4 to 5 inches long. Most were housed as pairs, or in some cases just a single fish. She also had a pair of killies she had collected on one of her recent trips. I believe all the fish in her office were ones that she had collected. There were also type specimens and other reference fish on the shelves. There were books and papers of all kinds.

Stan's office is next door, with fewer tanks, but still full of material. The pictures (left) show two species Stan has been working with, the otocinclus and the new red pencilfish. Both Stan and Marilyn include live specimens for study, while many other ichthyologists only use preserved specimens, so they are as much hobbyist as the rest of us.

Of course directly across the hall, there were many, many preserved specimens. The collection is quite extensive, and includes many specimens that were collected in the 19th century and even the 18th century! There are many fish from far away lands, many from around the US, both freshwater and marine. When we first entered there were only lights on in the first few rows and you had the sense you were in a normal sized room, although a large room. However, when they started turning the lights on, what appeared was row after row. The row that was first lit on our right was only 20 or 30 feet long, however the left side was much longer as it had 3 or 4 sections equal to the other side.

Each family is listed at the end of each row, as I walked down reading the family names there were some that were familiar, but many that were not. Several of us quickly found a row with catfish in it. There were Synodontis and Loricarids in this row. Again, some that were familiar, and many that were not. The large jar of *Synodontis multipunctatus* was something to see, there must have been 40 or more in this one jar. And there were many jars of this particular species, most with only a few or a single specimen.

After roaming for a short time through this amazing maze of preserved fish, Stan was gathering us all to view the largest specimen they had, the coelacanth. This was not kept in a glass jar, instead it was in a large stainless steel box. The coelacanth was thought to be extinct until it was rediscovered by a fisherman in the 1930s. This one had been collected some time ago, and had had a lot work done with it since it was such a rare find, so it had ties all around it to hold it together.

I then set off reading the family names again on each row, trying to reach the last row. I was almost



Picture and drawing in the Weitzmans' offices



Marilyn Weitzman and Devon Gramham from Margarita tours in the collection room.



Jar of preserved *Synodontis multipunctatus*.

to the end when someone appeared from around the corner. He was one of the techs responsible for maintaining the collection. He asked if he could help me find anything, I just explained I was looking through all the names. He asked if we had found the corydoras since he knew we were from the catfish convention. They were down a couple more rows, down a few shelves. He said they had been moved there out of place because they had run out of room where they had been kept. He hung around chatting with me for quite some time. Another tour attendee had also found his way down here and the three of us hung out until we heard it was time for lunch. He explained how they were getting ready for the move of the collection. They had been resealing all of the containers with new Teflon liners. He showed us the labels, and what some of the marking meant. He pointed out which marking designated a specimen as the halotype or phenotypes. We found a few examples of corys that had been collected by Stan Weitzman, some back in the 1950s and 60s. In each jar were labels floating in the alcohol, each label had to be marked with a special ink so that it would not dissolve and alter the specimen. These were put in so that if the exterior label fell off, there would be a way to determine which specimen was in the jar.

The collection is being moved because of concerns that all of these preserved specimens are preserved with alcohol. With this large concentration of a very flammable liquid right on the mall next to many other museums and monuments, there was concern for safety given the higher security needed these days.

I was glad I got to see this collection, even if only for an hour or so, before it becomes less accessible. Dr. Weitzman has given these kinds of tours several times and I was finally able to take advantage. There are collections like these all over the world, in museums and universities, and I guess I never realized just how many dead fish people keep!



Stan Weitzman showing us the preserved Coelacanth.



Tour in the fish collection room..



Technician showing us the Corydoras collection



CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

June 8	TFCB meeting , speaker Ted Judy, 6:30 PM, VFW Essex Jct, VT
June 8 - 13	NANFA. Convention , Meramec State Park, MO
June 22 - 25	International Betta Congress , Orlando, FL
July 8 - 9	Pioneer Valley Water Garden & Koi Club Pond Tour, Western MA and CT
July 13 - 16	American Cichlid Association Convention , Novi, MI
July 15 - 16	New England Fancy Guppy Assoc. , IFGA show and auction, Lancaster, MA
August 25 - 27	Marine Aquarium Conference of North America , New Orleans, LA
Sept 14	TFCB meeting , 6:30 PM, VFW Essex Jct, VT
Sept 22 - 24	Cataclysm Catfish Convention , conference & auction, Madison, WI
Sept 22 - 24	Keystone Clash , conference, show & auction, Lancaster, PA
Sept 24	East Coast Cichlids , fall auction, Union, NJ
Oct 12	TFCB meeting , 6:30 PM, VFW Essex Jct, VT
Oct 13 - 15	South Jersey Guppy Group IFGA Guppy Show & auction, East Brunswick, NJ
Nov 3 - 5	Aquatic Experience , Chicago, IL
Nov 9	TFCB meeting , 6:30 PM, VFW Essex Jct, VT
Nov 17 - 19	Ohio Cichlid Association Extravaganza , Strongsville, OH



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CORAL
Volume 12, Number 5
Sep/Oct 2015

AMAZONAS
Volume 4, Number 5
Sep/Oct 2015

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