

# ***InDepth*** April 2019

Tropical Fish Club of Burlington



**Our Club's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention, June 7-9<sup>th</sup>**

**On the Road with Rob: Recap of Fall 2018 Fish Conventions**

**Setting Up a Dry-Start Aquarium**

**Nile Perch Invasion of Lake Victoria**

**Endangered Mission—Keeping CARES Species**

**More Than a Hobby—Making a Lifetime of Fish Friends**

**Calendar of Coming Events**      *...and so much more!*



*Spatuloricaria caquetae*, male with pre-nuptial whiskers, called odontodes . Photo by Ann Whitman

# InDepth

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!

## Officers

President: David Banks [dbanks@together.net](mailto:dbanks@together.net)  
Vice president: Brian Candib [Bcandib@comcast.net](mailto:Bcandib@comcast.net)  
Treasurer: Janine Banks [dbanks@together.net](mailto:dbanks@together.net)  
Secretary: Ann Whitman [awhitman@madriv.com](mailto:awhitman@madriv.com)

## Board of Directors

Ira Gardner-Morse (2020) [thepotoo@gmail.com](mailto:thepotoo@gmail.com)  
Rob Hintze (2019) [rob.vermont@gmail.com](mailto:rob.vermont@gmail.com)  
Pam Crossett (2019) [pamc.vt@gmail.com](mailto:pamc.vt@gmail.com)  
Dwight Moody (2020) [DwightDMoody@yahoo.com](mailto:DwightDMoody@yahoo.com)

## Committees

*InDepth* Editor: Ann Whitman  
Membership: Janine Banks  
Breeder Awards Program: open  
Bowl Show: Brian Candib  
Newsletter Exchanges: Andrew Bessy  
[brewingman@comcast.net](mailto:brewingman@comcast.net)  
Publicity: open  
Librarian: David Banks  
Web page: Dan Gwozdz  
NEC Delegate: David Banks

## Tropical Fish Club of Burlington

315 US Route 2  
Grand Isle, VT 05458  
802-372-8716

[www.tfc.org](http://www.tfc.org)

# Contents

## April 2019

<a href="#">From the President</a> , by David Banks, Jr.	3
<a href="#">Editorial: Mystery Solved!</a> by Ann Whitman	4
<a href="#">Our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention</a> , by David Banks, Jr.	5
<a href="#">Endangered Mission</a> , by Brian Candib	7
<a href="#">Club Meetings &amp; Events</a> by Ann Whitman and David Banks, Jr.	8
<a href="#">Nile Perch in Lake Victoria</a>	10
by Ethan Dague	
<a href="#">Product Review: Marineland Color-Enhancing</a>	
<a href="#">Tropical Flakes</a> by Brian Scott	11
<a href="#">Fall 2018: Fish Convention Tours</a> by Robert Hintze	12
<a href="#">A Mouse in the House</a> by Brian Candib	16
<a href="#">Setting Up a Dry-Start Aquarium</a> by Ira Gardner-Morse	17
<a href="#">OVAS Auction Poster, May 19<sup>th</sup></a>	19
<a href="#">Friends We Have Met Along the Way</a> by Janine Banks	20
<a href="#">Calendar of Coming Events</a> by Ann Whitman	23
<a href="#">NEC and TFCB 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters</a>	24

Material within may be reprinted only if credited to the author and to *In Depth*. Two copies of the publication in which our material appears must be sent to the above address. Opinions expressed in *In Depth* are each author's, and not necessarily those of The Tropical Fish Club of Burlington.



Reticulated Hillstream Loach (*Sewellia lineolata*). Photo by Ann Whitman

# From the President

by David L Banks, Jr



Back in 1989, TFCB was formed, and we have survived and even prospered for the last 30 years. Due to all of the members, our club remains a strong and diverse group that has many accomplishments. This newsletter is testimony to that diversity and strength. I thank all who help in so many different ways to make the club what it is. Without all of you, we would not have a club.

As we celebrate our 30th club anniversary and to help give back to our club, we are holding an exciting weekend convention full of fun, education and even more fun! We hope that everyone can participate, so we have actually kept the price below our costs, our way of giving back to everyone who has given to the club. Even if you just attend occasional meetings, or join in on a conversation, you are contributing!

Be sure to save the dates June 7-9, and even if you can only come for part of the weekend, we look forward to seeing you all there. But hopefully almost all of you will plan on the whole weekend!

We have made so many lifelong friends in this hobby and Janine will expand upon that in her article. But the common interest of tropical fish is amazing and truly allows us all to enjoy our friendship with that theme, even though many times the friendships go far beyond our hobby.

In addition to our 30th anniversary convention, there are so many other events happening through out the northeast. Each has their own lure and all have something special to offer so be sure to check out the Calendar of Events in this newsletter or the calendar in the NEC newsletter (<https://northeastcouncil.org/basic-page/nec-newsletters-2018>) and decide for yourself. Of course, the 44th NEC convention is just around the corner, April 12-14 in Cromwell, CT. This will be the 33rd consecutive NEC convention we have attended, and hopefully we have lots more to plan for in the future.

Other TFCB events of interest over the past few years have been our spring swap and fall auction. This year, with the 30th anniversary convention, we decide not to do the spring swap meet. We will continue that again next year, bigger and better hopefully. We will hold our fall auction, the date is still being finalized but has typically been held the end of October or early November. Dates will be announced as soon as they are available.

Again, I hope to see everyone either at a monthly club meeting, the NEC convention or our 30th in June. The more that attend, the better the event!

—David



# Editorial

## Mystery Solved! Breeding *Hypancistrus* L340

By Ann Whitman



For two years, I've been waiting and waiting for my group of five Mega Clown Plecos, aka Imperial Tiger Plecos, (*Hypancistrus* sp. L340) to start producing babies. All the reports say they are easy to breed and lay eggs in caves just like garden-variety *Ancistrus*. They have plenty of caves, they eat well, but no babies. What's the problem?

I discovered the answer by accident last week when I decided to rearrange the caves and hardscape in their 40-gallon community tank. Before I got started, I watched the tank for awhile, contemplating the potential new layout. While I watched, I noticed a violent commotion in the back corner. A Snowball Pleco (*Baryancistrus* sp. L142) was fighting with a Mega Clown at a cave entrance. Hmm? I've never seen any serious territorial disputes among the several species of Loricariids in that tank. The tank has lots of hiding places for everybody, no need to fight about it.

After figuring out a new plan and draining the tank down to 50%, I pulled out all the driftwood, rocks, and caves. Many of the caves had sand and debris in them, so I dumped them out in a bucket of tank water to clean them up. Of course, some caves had fish in them, too, and they also went into the bucket. When I dumped out the cave from the back corner, I got quite a surprise! I was delighted to find a small cluster of bright yellow eggs, in addition to their defending father. The egg cluster had clearly been preyed upon; 10 of the original 15 eggs were empty shells. Only five viable eggs remained. Recalling the fight I witnessed earlier, I knew the culprit and immediately moved all the Snowball Plecos to a different tank. Those L340's have probably been spawning for a long time, but never got to raise any of their fry.

The fat yellow eggs went into a Cobalt Egg Rocker in the parents' tank after I got it reset and cleaned up. All five hatched within two days! Now that the mystery is solved, I hope to have some of these stunning fish available to share later this year.

—Ann



An omnivorous species, Mega Clown Pleco is also known as Imperial Tiger Pleco (*Hypancistrus* sp. L340). Adults only grow to about 3" and are yellow-orange and black patterned. Newly hatched fry resemble sticks on yellow balloons. It takes them about 12 days to absorb their large yolk sac before they begin to forage.

# Our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention—June 7-9, 2019

*Text and photos by David L Banks Jr*

On June 7-9, 2019 TFCB will be celebrating our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary at a fun-filled, weekend-long [convention](#). This will be an educational opportunity, but also a social and fun event. We hope to attract many hobbyists from around the Northeast, and far beyond! It's this great mix of hobbyists that really brings out the total experience. Not only are the speakers there to present a formal program for us to learn from but we get to interact with a host of hobbyists of all levels, right here in Burlington at one of the best times of year, early June. When we held a convention for our 25<sup>th</sup> five years ago, we heard all kinds of great comments, and the dinner cruise on Lake Champlain really capped the weekend.

TFCB's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary is a good time to reflect on the club and our interactions with other members, the friends we have made, and all that we have gained from the club. It is not just the formal things, like the speakers and auctions; it's the encouragement and simple ideas we get from conversations. Sharing successes, and failures too, with others helps us all move our hobby in new and different directions, and better understand our hobby. It allows us to try new things, to get excited about things we otherwise may not be exposed to, and grow our hobby beyond what we would do on our own.



Brian Candib, Dave Isham and Steve Edie relaxing after dinner on the Spirit of Ethan, 2014.

## Weekend of Events

What is happening for our 30<sup>th</sup>? We are going to repeat many of the same things as we did for the successful 25<sup>th</sup>. The weekend starts off with a microbrewery tour in the Burlington area on Friday. Vermont was recently voted the best place to visit microbreweries, and the Burlington area sure has its share of new and long-time favorites. We will conclude the day with a pizza party at one of the breweries. Even if you don't go on the tour, plan on the pizza party; it's included in the weekend package. What a great chance to hang out with old friends, and to make new ones. Pizza and soft drinks will be provided; beer, wine, and ciders will be available for purchase.



Cruising on Lake Champlain during our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention in 2014.

Saturday will feature the more formal part of the weekend. Four speakers will share their knowledge in six talks. Hans-Georg Evers from Germany will do two talks, one on Clown Loaches and another

on Catfish. Steve Lundblad from Oregon, owner of [The Wet Spot](#), will share some of the new species that they are currently importing, plus another talk on the Peacock Cichlids of Lake Malawi. Les Wilson, one of the owners of [Cobalt Aquatics](#), will share his extensive knowledge on filtration. Cobalt will also have a vendor table, so you can talk with Les about all of their products. Andres Alvarado, sales manager at [Aqua Scapes of Florida](#), will share his knowledge on growing plants, both how they do it commercially, as well as tips for your aquarium. Lunch will be provided for all attendees at the hotel.



Vendor and club sales tables at TFCB's 25th anniversary.

### Dinner Cruise on Lake Champlain

After the talks, we will all head down to the waterfront and board the [Spirit of Ethan Allen](#) for a dinner cruise. Parking is always a challenge, so get there early and car pool. The ship leaves promptly! See the info packet for parking ideas. We have a full deck to ourselves, and it's sure to be an enjoyable evening.



A huge and very well-attended auction on Sunday capped a full and exciting anniversary weekend in 2014.

### Sunday Auction

Sunday is our all-day auction, which always has great fish available and many at great prices. The fish and live plants will be coming from breeders both from our club and beyond. We should also have a great selection of donations. There may also have a sales table depending on what we receive for donations. Vendors will be setup all weekend long, and we will keep our website updated with details.



Rachel O'Leary (right) and friend enjoying the sunset from the deck of the Spirit of Ethan Allen, 2014.

I hope all of our members are able to take advantage of this great weekend. We have kept prices low, much lower than the actual costs. The full registration includes the speakers, the pizza party Friday night, lunch on Saturday, and the amazing dinner cruise on Saturday evening, as well as all the fun and comradery that comes along with being there! [Register early! https://www.tfc.org/30th-anniversary/](https://www.tfc.org/30th-anniversary/)

# Endangered Mission

*By Brian Candib*

The mission of TFCB has been to exchange ideas, disseminate knowledge, encourage the breeding and keeping of tropical fish, as well as their preservation. I think as a club we do this well. Our club meetings seem to be fun, educational, and spirited with a lot of discussion and little to no falling asleep.



My tank of *Ameba splendens*, a CARES species.

During our September 2018 club meeting, attendees heard from Klaus Steinhaus as he discussed endangered fish and the CARES Preservation Program. In a nutshell, the purpose of CARES is to encourage hobbyists around the world to devote tank space to one or more species that are at risk and to distribute offspring to fellow hobbyists, while forming an information network, where possible, between aquarists, scientists, and conservationists.

Klaus spoke to us about how clubs are promoting this form of conservation with their members. It starts by asking their members to compare the inventory of CARES fish they possess to what's on the CARES Priority List. They then report those fish back to the club. This allows the club to manage the information with other like-minded clubs with an eye towards helping to share the information out to other aquarists.

From the [CARES Preservation Website](#), "The hobbyist now plays a critical role in the favorable outlook of conservation priority fishes. If each one of us dedicates at least one existing aquarium or sets up one new aquarium with the intent of devoting that tank space to a species at risk, the aquarium hobby has the opportunity to make a major impact in ensuring a positive future for these fishes. The CARES Preservation Program is a universal means by which, together, we can achieve this goal of success."

I think it is important to understand that CARES is not just in anticipation that our "tank-raised" fish may someday be reintroduced into the wild. But it will allow future generations to see these fish first hand and not just from pictures. Frankly, releasing tank-raised fish back to the wild is something still being argued. After a couple of generations, tank-raised fish will adopt a more domesticated lifestyle (around predator avoidance, hunting for food, and water parameters). However, others argue that a tank-raised fish released back into the wild will most likely encounter a much different environmental habitat than its wild-raised ancestors would have known.

How do we tie our club to this program and how can you assist in this worthy goal? You may already have a species in your tank that is currently listed in the CARES Preservation Program. You can go to their [website](#) (caresforfish.org) and view their priority list of fish that they regularly update.

I know that at least several TFCB members keep CARES List species. In the next couple months, I intend to compile a list of all the listed fish our members currently have. From there, we will work with the folks at CARES and other clubs to share our fish in hopes of distributing them in the hobby and do what we can to ensure they remain available for years to come, no matter their outcome in the wild.

I also will ask the club to consider a future event to support the exchange of endangered tropical fish, such as a chance to swap the fish with other hobbyists and receive fish not yet in the club. This can be our club's contribution to CARES to help preserve fishes for future generations, and another way to strengthen one of TFCB's missions.

# Club Meetings and Events

by Ann Whitman

photos by David Banks and Ann Whitman

We hosted some top-notch speakers last fall: Klaus Steinhaus visited from Ontario to talk about the [C.A.R.E.S. program](#) in September, and in October, we enjoyed [Ian Fuller's presentation](#) on *Corydoras*. Ian, who is from the UK, stopped in Vermont after speaking at the All-Aquarium Catfish Convention in Virginia. He also presented at the OVAS meeting and in Montreal.

The big event in November was our annual auction and bowl show. In December, Janine and David Banks hosted a wonderful and very well-attended holiday party. We all participated in the traditional Yankee Swap and the annual trivia quiz that David produces. Brian Scott and Ann Whitman were tied first-place winners this year.



Klaus Steinhaus talked about the CARES Fish Preservation program at our Sept. meeting.



We had a good turnout for the September meeting that included an auction and bowl show.



We hold bowl shows at our meetings in June and September. Members brought more than a dozen entries for Sept. show.



Auctions are a big attraction at our monthly meetings. We had many, many bags of fish and plants in September!





Ian Fuller, a *Corydoras* expert from the UK, gave an excellent program on keeping and breeding these catfishes.



Ian's talk thoroughly covered all aspects of choosing, maintaining and breeding *Corydoras* catfishes.



Brian Scott judged the Bowl Show at our November auction. Killifish by David Banks and Ann Whitman were the big winners.



Everyone got a gift at the Yankee swap after much trading and stealing.



Brian Scott took home the coveted trophy for winning the annual trivia quiz at the Holiday party.

**Thank you to our sponsors!**  
 Please support the businesses advertised in this newsletter. They donate regularly to our club and auctions, and give so much to our hobby.



# The Nile Perch in Lake Victoria

By Ethan Dague

Lake Victoria is the largest lake in Africa, having over 26,000 square miles lying mainly in Tanzania and Uganda. Water temperatures range between 70-81° F, and pH ranges from 7.8 to 8.6, making it the perfect home to more than 200 species of fish, including many cichlids we keep in home aquariums. Living alongside these many fish is a great abundance of terrestrial animals and semi-aquatic reptiles, including hippopotamus and the Nile crocodile. But, there is one aquatic animal that has wreaked havoc and caused the extinction of many native cichlids.

Lake Victoria is now in crisis, all because of the introduction of the Nile Perch (*Lates niloticus*), which was released into the lake as an intended food source for people and to boost the fishing industry. This invasive species has ruined Lake Victoria's beautiful ecosystem and is responsible for wiping out hundreds of species and counting. Lake Victoria used to be home to over 500 species of African cichlids, and types of endemic *Tilapia* which are a very important food stock. Now the little species that remain are fighting against predation from the Nile Perch. The introduction of the Nile Perch is one of the greatest examples on how much of an impact alien species can have on ecosystems.



*Haplochromis nyererei* is found only in Lake Victoria; one of the many native cichlid species affected by the introduction the Nile Perch. Photo by David Banks

Ever since the Nile Perch was introduced, it has been fished commercially. Initially it fed on native cichlids, but it has now decreased the availability of that food source. Now its main prey is small minnows and shrimp. Its robust size compared to the native species makes it one of the apex predators of the lake, the species can reach a maximum length of 6 feet long and can weigh up to 440 pounds, although most are caught and eaten before they reach this massive size. Just when you thought it couldn't get worse, this fish has other socio-economic effects. The Nile Perch reached an untenable position of making up most of the fish biomass in some areas of the lake. The population grew so big that more mature species resort to auto-predation, or cannibalism. In Nyanza Gulf in Kenya, the species is said to make up over 80 percent of the fish biomass. The Nile Perch has also become an unpopular food with the locals, due to the texture and taste.

Conservationists are still working to control the *Lates niloticus* numbers, but they finally have some good news. In the past few years, over fishing and environmental degradation have significantly reduced their population. Experts found that the biomass of Nile Perch in 2017 was half as much as reported around 2000.

Lake Victoria cichlids still need help. If you would like to help preserve these beautiful cichlids, consider saving a tank in your fish room to keep/breed some of these *Haplochromis* species. If you want to help save some of these fish, check out the [CARES Fish Preservation Program](#) and the many species on their priority list. CARES helps preserve fish and make sure that they stay in the hobby. If you have

CARES fish and you are breeding them, and your fish club is a member of CARES, you can register your fish and help keep them in the hobby! And you can do other things to help through CARES in your fish club and you may even get some awards.

*I'm Ethan Dague. I'm 14 years old, and have been keeping fish all my life. I was introduced into this wonderful hobby by my father who has always kept fish. I will always remember him lifting me up so I could grab the food on top of the 60-gallon in the living room and feed the fish, and watching the Gold Severum named Nemo eat along with the many other fish. I now have over 400 gallons of tanks, including a 150. I also have two tanks with breeding fish, and I have a future CARES pair in the making. I hope to see you all in the future meetings and auctions!*



# AMAZONAS

The world's leading freshwater aquarium magazine!

LEARN MORE! ▶

## Product Review: Marineland® Color-Enhancing Tropical Flakes

*By Brian C. Scott*

I picked this up as a door prize at the TFCB January 2019 meeting and fed it to the fish I keep in a 46-gallon bow-front tank. This tank has some Red-Striped Rainbows (*Melanotaenia rubrostriata*), Buenos Aires Tetras (*Hyphessobrycon anisitsi*), one blue and one gold-morph Gourami (*Trichopodus trichopterus*), and several Clown Loaches (*Chromobotia micracanthus*).

This is the only food that was fed 2-3 times a day, except for the snails that loaches fed on. After 3 days I started to notice a change in the fishes' colors.

Rainbows: these are not the most colorful of rainbows that I've kept, but the red and blue of the lateral lines did get brighter, more noticeably in sunlight than under LED light.

Buenos Aires tetras: males and females exhibited an increased red in anal and caudal fins, also a blue-green shimmer laterally on back half of fish.

The blue of the Blue Gourami became much deeper and intense, same with the gold morph.

The paired fins and caudal fins of the smaller Clown Loaches brightened up considerably along with orange body color. The larger loaches, 4-5 inches, fins got redder coloration while bodies stayed grayed out, which is common in large Clown Loaches.

On a scale of 0-5 guppies, I give this food 2-¾ guppies. The reasons:

- 1) This product is crisps not flakes (not a fan of crisps),
- 2) There are more ingredients that I can't read, let alone pronounce, than natural ones.

All in all, still not a bad product!



## Fall 2018: Fish Convention Tours

*By Robert Hintze*

Despite the mantra from my wife “It would be way cooler if you were going to a *Phish* show,” I was able to attend the Fall 2018’s biggest fish events. I started by attending the All-Aquarium Catfish Convention in Herndon, Virginia, followed late that month by volunteering at Aquatic Experience in Secaucus, New Jersey, and wound up being able to attend Ohio Cichlid Association’s Extravaganza in Strongsville, Ohio in November.

### Capital Experience—CatCon

First stop: Potomac Valley Aquatic Society presents The All Aquarium Catfish Convention Oct 4-7, 2018, at the Hyatt Dulles in Herndon, Virginia, essentially, Washington, DC.

I was aiming to leave on Wednesday morning around 8AM, which caused a rash of criticism from our late sleepers, the Banks, whom needed to get their stryo delivered to me since they flew. So around 9AM, I finally hit the road and had an uneventful trip, although I’m always shocked at how bad traffic is in major cities. After arriving at hotel, and unloading 5 or 6 trips with the few carts the hotel offered, I was in my room. At 8PM I am setting up my room for Friday night’s Spree on Three, when the entire third floor opens their doors for in-room sales. Think I had the room somewhat setup by 1AM.

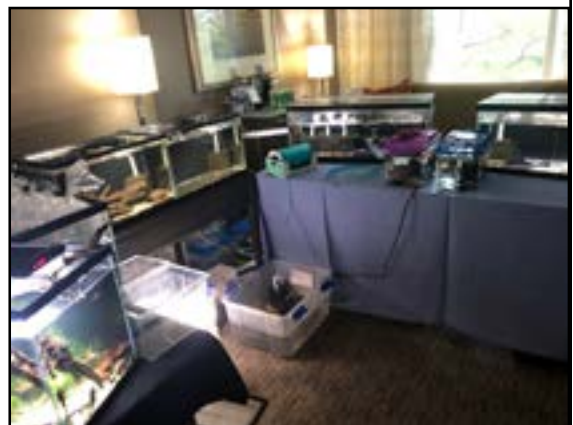
The Hyatt Dulles was a pleasant experience for the most part; the lounge was very nice and has a Koi pond in the middle, which adds to the atmosphere. Food was decent and the area provided a nice space to hang with fellow catfish enthusiasts.

Thursday morning was spent checking the local fish stores, but nothing that impressed me. The afternoon was spent talking fish and helping Susan Peterson set up the rare fish raffles and the dry good raffles that occurred throughout the event. The rare fish raffle was a highlight for me; I won some bumble bee cats, not so rare, and some African upside-down cats that are a rarer variety. Ann Whitman wound up with an awesome pair of Chameleon whiptails from this raffle. I also was lucky enough to chat with Ian Fuller and wound up with six Gold Star Plecos, now classified as L-513, which are the first of this species in the USA. Thursday evening was the official start, with talks by Bob Bock and Hans-Georg Evers, all speaker events were attended to almost room capacity.

Friday morning started with a trip to the National Institute of Health in Washington, DC to see the zebrafish research



The lobby at CatCon featured a Koi pond—a favorite hang out.



I hauled all this equipment to Virginia and set it up for Spree on Three room sales.

facility, which houses over 20,000 tanks. It was quite an experience going through security and visiting the facility. Highly recommend this tour if they offer it again in 2020. The afternoon started with Rachel O’Leary demonstrating a hill stream loach tank setup from bare tank to finished product. It was cool to watch her work and be able to ask questions in this informal setting. Speakers Eric Bodrock, Ian Fuller, and Regina Spotti had some great talks before the Spree on Three began that night. The Spree was quite an event, lots of very nice fish bred by hobbyists available for decent pricing, all negotiable and lots of fun! I enjoyed the experience, but think at next event I would prefer to wander around instead of setting up the room and being stuck selling for the evening. Probably will change my tune by the time the event rolls around again.

Saturday was a long day of speakers, Rob McClure started off the morning slot at 10 AM, followed by Hans Evers, Kamphol Udomnitthiruj, and Luiz Tencatt with whom I had the pleasure of dining at the event banquet that evening. Luis wound up winning a free pass to this year’s Cataclysm in Madison, Wisconsin and he graciously gave it to me since I was the only one at the table planning on going for sure. Looking forward to the event, thanks Luis!

The culmination of the event is an all-day auction of cichlids, catfish, and plants only. It was a seller’s auction for the most part. I got a few bags of South Americans for a few dollars a bag. Most items were going for retail or more with the full room of attendees.

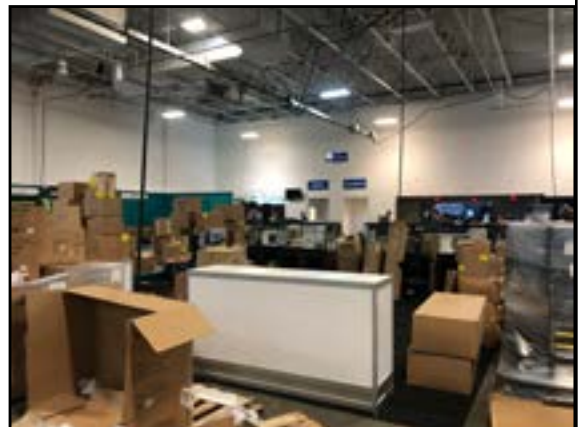
### Navigating the Meadowlands—Aquatic Experience

Aquatic Experience was a totally different experience. I arrived on Wednesday for the Friday show, which was set up trade-show style, with speakers and vending. Hikari, Cobalt, Fluval, and Segrest Farms welcomed you as you entered the vast hall. It was the mix of vendors’ and suppliers’ display setups that made this event unique. This event also had a large attendance of vloggers from YouTube and hosted many aquatic events. I personally helped to assemble and set up the ACA cichlid show; there was also an aquascaping contest, where the contestants got to keep the setups and the International shrimp contest that was a big event. Spectacular colors of shrimp, demanding exorbitant prices, were very cool to see, but out of my comfort zone, price wise.

To my dismay, the only downfall of the event was the live



One aisle of holding tanks at the NIH Zebrafish Research Facility in Washington, DC.



AE in the early stages. Vendors are moving in and the heavy work begins!



Progress! The AE show floor is still a few hours away from being ready to open for the public.

shark encounter. It was hard to swallow, being a lover of all things fishy. I did not enjoy watching animals that should not be in captivity, certainly not in a rectangular tank in a semi-truck trailer to be displayed for public events. I was told they like to have a show of sorts and the sea lions, which were a hit, were already booked. Hopefully next year!

The daily raffle at this the event was a highlight, as well as the many raffles at individual booths; I wound up with a full-tank setup with fish and stand included, a ton of rainbows, and lots of assorted goodies. The Sunday raffle offered all the tank setups which were numerous and very nice. They ranged from 240 to 5 gallons and there were several of every size. People had some great hauls.

I missed most of the speakers due to the activity in the main hall. But did catch Ted Judy speak about Columbia, nice talk; he was complaining they made him shorten the talk, which further delayed the presentation.

### Ahead of the Storm—Road Trip to OCA

Last, but certainly not least, I wound up being able to attend the Ohio Cichlid Association at the Holiday Inn in Strongsville, Ohio. This event was well run and quite fun. I acquired the legendary duo, Dave and Janine Banks at the Park and Ride in Vergennes, and off we went trying to beat the impending ice storm. Seems weather is a regular issue with this event, as it always falls on the weekend before Thanksgiving.

On Friday morning, Dave Hale opened his shop, [Something Fishy](#), and crazy fish basement, along with a satellite building that housed another hundred or so tanks with an amazing variety of mostly African species. Dave graciously provided donuts, which some of us got excited about (Dave Banks) and coffee along with an amazing tour of his facilities. As the tour progressed, the guide was turning signs to indicate the tank had babies. Was fun to watch his excitement as a few tanks had spawned that he had not expected. It was a cool look inside the insanity of a true local fish store, a dying breed unfortunately.



One side of the ACA cichlid show set up at Aquatic Experience. Lots of work!



A beautiful Discus was the big winner of the ACA cichlid show at AE.



The visit to Ohio Fish Rescue was a highlight of my trip.

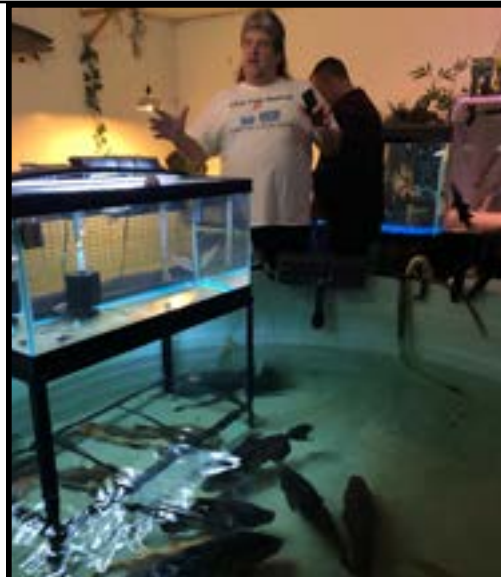
Next stop, [Ohio Fish Rescue](#). This Aquatic version of an old folks home was the highlight for me; Big Rich Price is an amazing person who has dedicated his life to the dark side of the hobby. I knew we were in for a treat when our host, Antonio Martina, informed us he was asked to bring hot dogs as a gesture for our tour. Yes, they were for the fish. It's hard to describe the enormity of Rich's fish house; it was an array of all those fish you wanted, but get too big to properly house. Rich pulls it off with an array of tanks, tubs, and bins that house the grandest of aquarium fish. Peacock bass in with a tub of gorgeous rays. A kiddie pool full of assorted catfish that once were home-aquarium residents, but now lucky to be here, since they out-grew their prior hosts' patience and tanks.

Back at the event, room sales were set up and that made me really think hard about how crazy we all are in this hobby; the 1st floor was completely converted to a huge fish store. Every room had list of goods or just left the door open, and the set ups were intense. People had furniture rearranged to house the racks of tanks or tables of dry goods. On top of this was an event-sponsored fish sale as well as two auctions. This event also had some fun speakers; I had a wonderful time getting to know Steven Grant from Catfishes of the World, I was lucky enough to get to cart him around throughout the weekend. All of the talks at this event, Steven Grant, Charley Grimes, William Heijns, and Lawrence Kent provided hours of entertainment and knowledge. I really enjoyed Charley's Dead Fish Talk and Lawrence Kent's talk on getting arrested while collecting (Collecting in Africa).

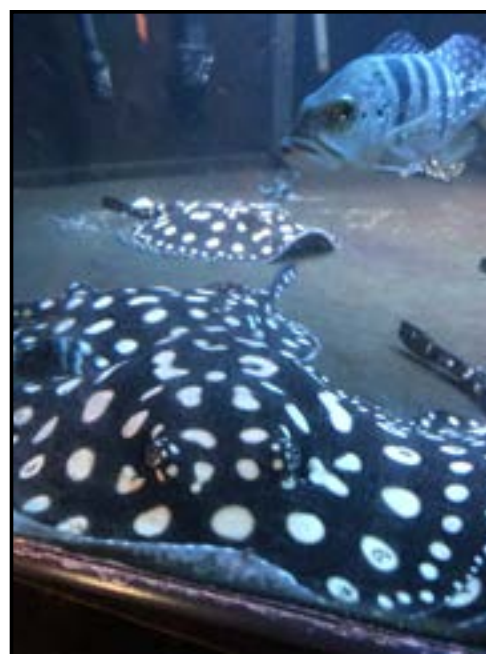
The first auction, on Saturday night, was just donated dry goods. The Sunday auction was quite the event, only cichlids and catfish were allowed in the auction and it was the largest auction I have personally attended. Bags of fish were selling for good prices, some

a bit crazy. It was a seller's auction for sure, but the quality of fish made it fun, albeit expensive as a buyer.

This year, I hope to see you all at: [NEC](#) in Cromwell, CT, April 12-14; [TFCB 30th](#) in Burlington, VT, June 7-9; [ACA-NECA](#) in Cromwell, CT, July 18-21; [Cataclysm 2019](#), in Madison, Wisconsin, September 13-15; [Aquatic Experience](#) in Secaucus, NJ, Oct 11-13, and [Ohio Cichlid Extravaganza](#) in Strongsville, Ohio, November 22-24. I'll be there!



Rich Price gave us a tour of his amazing rescue operation.



Freshwater rays and Peacock Bass at Ohio Fish Rescue.



Huge, unwanted fish live out their lives at Rich Price's Ohio Fish Rescue.

# A Mouse in the House

*By Brian Candib*

There is a mouse in our house! In the 36 years we have lived there, never has there been an infestation of any kind until this past fall. But truth be told, my wife insists that my fish hoarding was an infestation. In my defense, I have been doing my best to lighten the load to a more manageable level.

The mice infestation started just before Christmas with her finding some droppings in a kitchen drawer directly beneath the wall ovens. We then discovered a drawer where they had been taking the dog's food and stashing it for some sort of apocalyptic event, such as a pending famine or interstellar travel. I just could not understand why they needed so much food. But I digress. The discovery of mice led into a full-fledged cleaning of all the kitchen drawers, cabinets and cupboards. It was something that took priority over everything else. To further underscore her concern over this, my wife visited two different hardware stores to purchase every available trap in inventory. It were no less than 20 spring-loaded, circular get-in but can't get out devices and then the d-Con in little mouse huts. She claims she caught one in those contraptions that they go into but cannot leave. She said that trap weighed more so I must believe her as I never saw it or weighed it myself.

But the hunt did not stop there. They must have been getting in from somewhere, but where and how? Which brings me to the fish room. She was convinced that they must have made their way up from the cellar fish room, as that is the main source of food for such a strenuous climb to the next floor. She started going through my fish room, on a kind of Sherlock Holmes investigation. She searched all my dry goods and empty tanks for evidence. She dusted the food shelves, nooks and crannies in the fish room. She ensured all the food was sealed, remove all things dirty, swept the floors and wiped the walls and cabinets. This ended up being a benefit to me as I am a terrible at tidiness.

However, during her efforts, she discovered some mice poop on my bench. Mind you not a lot of mice poop. It was a couple of droppings, but enough to make another trip to the hardware stores and purchase another dozen or so more traps.

But, here is the strange thing. Since the initial "purported" mouse capture, we have not found any mice in the traps or discovered any dead mice. We have spread the traps around the cellar and a few are still in the kitchen, but no takers. Some are cheese, others peanut butter while some are d-CON. I am not sure what to make of it, but in over two months we have been checking the traps almost daily and dusting for evidence, nothing further. I am sure the adage is correct, if there is one, there is more but still not able to get conclusive proof of their existence.

It scares me to know there are intruders in the house, but I am thankful for the fish room cleaning that I received because of it. I now must think of a way to repeat this occurrence annually to benefit me...





# Setting Up a Dry-Start Aquarium

*By Ira Gardner-Morse*

I swapped out one of my 55-gallon tanks for a 65-gallon rimless planted tank. Here are some notes on the dry-start process I used, which was surprisingly easy. This process is well-documented on many forums, so this article is just a few pictures of what I did and a brief summary of the process.

## Materials:

- Used 65-gallon rimless tank from Craigslist - \$100
- Substrate: 1 bag Safe-T-Sorb from Tractor Supply - \$5
- Lights: 3x PAR 38 9-watt bulbs and holders from Lowes - \$10 total
- Rocks collected from my local woods - free
- Plants purchased at TFCB auction - \$10
- Filter: Poret foam attached to a 3-watt pump from AliExpress - \$4

## Miscellaneous supplies:

- 2-mil plastic greenhouse sheeting, scissors, masking tape - \$2
- Spray bottle - \$5
- CO<sub>2</sub> equipment - \$20
- A few Osmocote pellets for fertilizer

## Setup:



I positioned the rocks in a layout that more-or-less formed a Fibonacci spiral. I did try to keep the grain of the rocks running in the same direction (flipped on the left vs. the right side of the tank), and create a contrast in texture and size between the major focal points in the foreground and background. The layout was by far the hardest part of this process, and took a couple days. I am still not very happy with it. If you look closely, you can see the thirds lines I drew with a Sharpie on the front glass to help position the rocks. Google “rule of thirds”.



I scattered the Osmocote pellets around the bottom of the tank, then poured the Safe-T-Sorb around the rocks, and sprayed it down with water to minimize dust:

Mistake #1: I should have had more substrate slope from the back of the tank to the front. As it is, it's nearly flat, which is a cosmetic problem.

Mistake #2: The substrate was too thin. I should have made sure it was at least 1” thick, even near the front glass. The plants along the front glass tend to uproot themselves.

Mistake #2: The substrate was too thin. I should have made sure it was at least 1” thick, even near the front glass. The plants along the front glass tend to uproot themselves.

I planted the tank with a few species:

- *Hydrocotyle tripartita* grew too fast when emersed, but slowed down once the tank was filled.
- *Riccia* Got into the tank by accident, and is a total pest. Worse than duckweed.
- *Anubias* was not originally dry started and melted over the next couple weeks. I suspected this might happen and used a very small piece. Melting *Anubias* rhizome is toxic to both fish and shrimp.
- *Staurogyne repens* is a classic; one of my favorites. It needs CO<sub>2</sub> to grow, but can survive without it.
- *Pogostemon helferi* This is the second time I have tried this plant; the first time was without dry starting it and it immediately melted.
- *Hemianthus callitrichoides* (HC), better known as Dwarf Baby Tears. The majority of the tank is carpeted in this. It does NOT require CO<sub>2</sub>, but it grows very slowly unless dry started.

Instead of filling the tank immediately, I covered it with flexible greenhouse sheeting and sealed the edges with masking tape, providing a 100% humidity environment. I misted weekly and began injecting a small amount of CO<sub>2</sub>, which is heavier than air and sinks to the bottom of the tank, encouraging plant growth, but no other maintenance was needed. I positioned the lights above the tank to provide a PAR value of 30 around the edges, 50 in the center.

After a month, the tank looked like this:



After two months, the tank looked like this:



It's quite obvious that the Dwarf Baby Tears around the edge of the tank is not getting enough light. It's still growing, just not as quickly as the areas in the center.

Mistake #3: I should have added one or two additional lights here. I still haven't done this, and the tank is fine, but growth is much slower around the edges.

After 3 months:



The tank had almost completely grown in. I filled it shortly after this picture was taken.

The filled tank after 4 months (1 month post-fill):



The tank is overdue for a trim, and I will bring in cuttings to share at a club meeting. CO<sub>2</sub> is not required; it just increases growth rate of the plants.

**13 th Annual**

# *Otter Valley Aquarium Society*

*Tropical Fish Auction & Bowl Show*

**Sunday May 19, 2019**

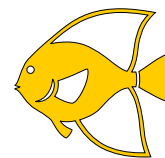
**Noon - 5:00 PM**



**American Legion Post 31**

**33 Washington Street**

**Rutland, VT 05701**



**Free Admission Door Prizes  
Viewing Lots 9:30am - 11:30am**

***Raffle at Auction***

**50/50**

***Silent Auction Plant Tables***

**Peoples Choice Bowl Show**

**1st Prize \$100 - 2nd \$75 - 3rd \$50**

**Please see bowl show rules on our website**

**PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR AUCTION RULES**

Pre-register before May 17th and get a 60/40 split

[www.ovasociety.com](http://www.ovasociety.com)

# Friends We Have Met Along the Way

*By Janine Banks*

In May of 1985, David and I walked into Aqualand Aquarium Society's show and auction in Bristol, CT and met a group of people who would become lifelong friends and, in the process, change the course of our life forever. Penny & Al Faul, Lee & Aline Finley, Rit Forcier, Sue and Wally Bush, Jack and Diane Adinolfi, Dave and Faith Quinn, John DeAngelis, John Galvin, John Stankovitch and Mel & Alberta Emmons. Although we did not realize it, this was probably the most important day of our life together!

Aquarium club members are usually a welcoming and fun bunch. They love to talk about their hobby and they love to share what is happening with their beloved fish in their own tanks! They also want to know what you are breeding and what turns you on within the hobby. They are interesting, fun and generous people, and that is why I am still in the hobby today.

## New Friends, New Hobby

I consider Penny Faul to be the Mother of the fishkeeping hobby in the Northeast. She saw the good in everyone, she lived to greet new hobbyists that came to meetings or to the Northeast Council's Annual Convention that she chaired for 20 years, she was the heart and the conscience of the Boston Aquarium Society and of the NEC for almost 50 years, and I personally believe she is an Angel on this Earth. A friend that never judges and always has your back. A person who would do anything to better the fishkeeping hobby. Penny is my hero.



Canadian friends, Evelyn and Claude Gagnon

The special group I mentioned above all worked tirelessly for decades for the aquarium hobby. I'm sure many have heard of Lee Finley (happy to report he and Aline are both doing well), Jack Adinolfi, Rit Forcier, and even Dave Quinn, as each of them has their own huge legacy in the fishkeeping world. They are all heroes to our beloved hobby and each has a place in my heart forever!

This group took us under their wings and enabled us to start the Tropical Fish Club of Burlington in 1989. The first meeting of TFCB had 50 people in attendance, and it is amazing how many became friends of ours! They may not attend every meeting, but they have each contributed in so many ways to the club and to our life.

## TFCB Charter Members

Richard (Max) Maxwell is of course the first one I mention! A printer by trade, he was the editor and printer of our newsletter for many years, but more importantly, he became our best friend. He had ideas, he delved into them and saw those ideas through, he jumped in wherever needed in the club, always had the club's back and we could trust him with our lives. After 30 years, he is still a part of our life and always welcome in our home.



Jeni and Dean Barnes, long-time TFCB members.

Dave Kirsch (owner of Vacuum City) was instrumental in getting the club off the ground. In the late 1980s-90s, he imported marine fish into his basement in Winooski and did his best to provide the Burlington area with quality, healthy marine fish. He was our friend and instigator for getting the club to its first meeting and off the ground. We met Dave through Gills and Gravel, the local fish store that was next to where we did our laundry. The owner, Bill Murray, was generous with his time, educated us on fishkeeping, became our friend and followed through into our personal life with the Wednesday Night Drinking Club and many special times spent together!

TFCB was very fortunate. I believe Vermont is full of great people, and TFCB had a great group to jumpstart the club. They were from all walks of life but became our friends and made the fish hobby a great place to be! John Fisher, so full of knowledge about African cichlids and his wife Serah whose incredible artistic ability made our club stand out within the NEC. Beau Bushor was instrumental in writing the club's by-laws and constitution. Cynthia Teague, who met Dean Hougen at a fish convention in FL and were married shortly after, joined at the second or third meeting and proceeded to drag us all over the country to fish conventions (she was an awesome travel partner and so intelligent and unique). Eric Schuele did whatever was asked of him and was a lover of all forms of life – words cannot describe his dedication to the club and to us. They all have a special place in my heart and are part of the reason I am still working for the hobby. They are my friends.

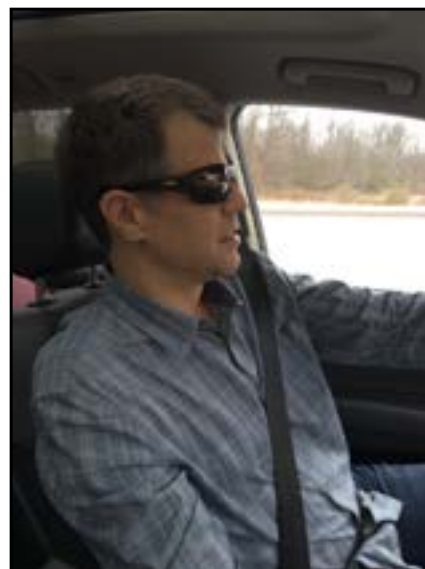
## River of Time

Throughout the years of TFCB, many members have come and gone. Each along the way furthered our experience in the club, became our friend and re-energized us. Steve and Abby Ahern who are now doing aquaponic farming south of Burlington, Dean Barnes (the turtle guy) has gone in and out of our lives since the early years, but when we needed help recently with the fish room, hands down he was there for us, and speaking of member/friends that keep coming back, there's Rob Hintze, and Ira Gardener-Morse who was home schooled at our meetings and left for his college years, but is now on our BOD and is a star at auctioneering. Brian Candib was a friend before he ever joined the club, but I am glad he did as I got to become friends with his awesome wife Tami, which brings me to...

The Canadian influence! Just after the club formed, we received a letter from someone in Quebec who wanted to bring a few people to our meetings, and they did (the letter was from Wilfred Prevost who is another article all in itself!). One person who came down for the meetings was Claude Gagnon who, after coming to several meetings, wanted us to meet his wife Evelyn at the North Beach Campground where he was camping. I just wanted to go home, but David said we should go to the campground and, well, that was one of the best decisions we ever made as we are the best of friends with Claude and Evelyn to this day! We just spent Christmas Eve with them. Another life-changing day thanks to the fish hobby.



Andrew Blumenthal, organizer of CatCon.



Rob Hintze driving us to Ohio for Ohio Cichlid Assoc. Extravaganza.

Oh, and there is Mike Fratoni! We met in the early days before I took over as Chair for the NEC Convention in 1996. He was newly married and became the President of the NEC soon after we met. Another life-long friend, we were his and his wife Kelly's summer home with the kids that, of course, came along for years and years. As a baby, Samantha almost froze to death on one of our many camping trips and Joe (Punkin Nose), the youngest, is now in college. We hope Mike will be coming to visit this summer, possibly bringing daughter Samantha and Joe, too!



Hans-Geog Evers, Steve Lundblad, and Janine at the 2018 Catfish Convention.

We have also traveled with the hobby beyond TFCB and the NEC and met life-long friends along the way and collected so many warm memories.

Selling pizza on the 100+ degree sidewalk with Steve Lundblad at the 1997 ACA Convention in Chicago during the year of the "Tent," hanging in 1995 with Mike Schadle (had a 3-hour conversation till 4 AM with him last week) at the "Summer Splash" in Ontario and dragging trees as big as we could out of the woods with his friend Nancy for the bonfire Sunday night, hitting all the thrift shops possible in an ten-hour day with Eric Bodrock and Regina Spotti recently in PA, Nancy Villars and I becoming the dynamic duo, David and I working our butts off at the Aquatic Experience with taskmaster Les Wilson, birding with Hans Evers when they'd all gone south, and most recently flying to the Ohio Cichlid Association Extravaganza with Rob Hintze and meeting the fabulous Don Danko, over and over again (thank you Steve Edie).

## Life-Changing Hobby

It has been nice to watch so many friends have their lives changed completely by the aquarium hobby. Karen Randall became a world-renowned authority on aquatic plants, Stephan Tanner now owns two businesses in the hobby and is my boss, Andrew Blumhagen started from scratch what is now arguably the best fish convention in the country (CatCon), Douglas Patac had an idea, developed it, patented it, marketed it and now produces it (Pleco Feeder), Brian Scott has been himself all these years but has become a wealth of knowledge, Ann Whitman is now the executive editor of *AMAZONAS* magazine, Russ McAndrews now finds himself President of the NEC, and Chuck Davis is still Chuck Davis.

The hobby is not only about fishkeeping and aquariums; it holds true friends and many surprises along the way and around the next corner. Believe me. There is a lot to enjoy about our hobby and you will treasure many memories for years to come including experiences with your friends that you could never forget. We love all our friends and acquaintances that we have made along the way, and we thank them for enriching our lives and for putting up with us! Cheers to David and to my Angel Penny; may this ride never end.



## CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

- April 12-14 [NEC 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention](#), Cromwell, CT
- Apr 18 [TFCB meeting- Ira Gardner-Morse, A Look at the AGA Contest](#)  
Note: this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, not our usual meeting night
- May 2-5 [Aquatic Gardeners Association Convention](#), Seattle, WA
- May 9 [TFCB meeting- Gary Elson, Livebearers, VFW, Essex Jct, VT](#)
- May 23-26 [American Livebearer Association Convention](#), Louisville, KY
- May 24-26 [American Killifish Association](#) annual Convention, Columbus, OH
- June 7-9 [TFCB 30th Anniversary Convention](#), Holiday Inn, South Burlington, VT
- June 13 [TFCB meeting - tour of Club member tanks!, VFW, Essex Jct, VT](#)
- June 20-23 [International Betta Congress](#), show and annual meeting, Irving, TX
- July 18-21 [American Cichlid Association-NECA 2019 Convention](#), Cromwell, CT
- Sept 12 [TFCB meeting- Jeff Cardwell, topic TBD, VFW, Essex Jct, VT](#)
- Sept 13-15 [Keystone Clash 2019, Harrisburg, PA](#)
- Oct 10 [TFCB meeting- Ann Whitman, Terrariums, VFW, Essex Jct, VT](#)
- Oct 11-13 [Aquatic Experience 2019, Secaucus, NJ](#)
- Oct/Nov [TFCB fall auction, exact date TBD](#)
- Nov 14 [TFCB meeting- Zenin Skomorowski, Loaches, VFW, Essex Jct, VT](#)
- Nov 22-24 [Ohio Cichlid Association 25th Extravaganza, Strongville, Ohio](#)



THE TROPICAL FISH CLUB OF BURLINGTON

# Celebrates **30** Years!

## PLEASE JOIN US

- June 7-9, 2019
- Holiday Inn, South Burlington, VT

Great seminars and speakers:

- Andres Alvarado
- Hans Georg Evers
- Steve Lundblad
- Les Wilson
- and more



ALSO INCLUDES: Tour of Vermont Microbreweries, Dinner Cruise on Lake Champlain, Friday Night Brewery Pizza Party... PLUS Sunday Auction, Raffles, Vendors, and so much more! **We hope you will come celebrate this milestone with us!**

**For more information, please visit [www.tfc.org](http://www.tfc.org).**



## NorthEast Council of Aquarium Societies

INVITES YOU TO COME...

# dancing with the fishroom stars



44th ANNUAL CONVENTION \* APRIL 12-14, 2019 \* CROMWELL, CT



Karen Alofs Eric Bodrock Ken Boorman Ryan Curtis Hernán López Rosario LaCorte Paul Loiselle Regina Spotti

12+ PROGRAMS: FISH INVERTS PONDS BREEDING \* SHOWS: FISH NANO PHOTO \* MULTIPLE AUCTIONS & VENDORS

[www.northeastcouncil.org](http://www.northeastcouncil.org)

RED LION HOTELS™

