

In Depth

25th Anniversary February 2014



The Tropical Fish Club of Burlington

Established February 1989

Tropical Fish Club of Burlington

315 US Route 2
Grand Isle, VT 05458
802-372-8716
www.tfcbl.org



We meet monthly, on the second Thursday of each month (Sept-June) at 6:30PM at the VFW Hall, 73 Pearl St, Essex Junction, VT
Everyone is welcome to attend.

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The Guest Editor's Thoughts...

by Janine Banks

What a wonderful 25 year ride! I never imagined the club would be such an important part of my life 25 years down the road, but here we are! Personally I have made hundreds of interesting friends, developed innumerable life-long friendships and learned more than I ever thought possible thanks to the tropical fish hobby and TFCB. Our little club seems to attract the right people – people who want to learn and who are willing to share their successes and their failures, not people on power trips or who are merely interested in making money off us. We have had a friendly, harmonious club for 25 years; a club of which I have been very, very proud to be a member.

Our club grew from a simple thought – meet and learn from others who share your interests. With all the technology in our lives and homes today, I think the club is a breath of fresh air as it gives us a reason to leave our house and gather in person with friends and even new faces from time to time. We are fortunate to have a couple of very good locally owned tropical and salt water fish stores in our area, which are another reason to leave our house. Online shopping is a wonderful option, but we must remember to shop locally if we want that shop to be there when we need to purchase a heater immediately because ours just broke, or we want to purchase a new tank and get a piece of advice along with it. In my mind there is nothing like a face to face encounter to enrich my day.

It has been fun going down memory lane while working to put together a newsletter that encompasses the past, present and future. Looking back over old newsletters I realize what prolific writers some members are but that others choose to participate in the club in other ways. Everybody participates in the way they feel comfortable, and for some that means participating by only paying dues once a year, which is, in fact, participating. I send a sincere thank you to all past and present members because together you made TFCB the great club it was for a quarter century and the great club it is today. I look forward to spending time with you my friends for years to come!

Happy 25th Anniversary TFCB!

Calendar of Events

March 13	7PM, TFCB meeting, Cristel Kasselmann, New Plants (2005 NEC Convention)
March 28-30	NEC Convention, Cromwell, CT
April 10	6:30PM, TFCB meeting, Peter Izzo, Collecting in Uruguay
May 13	7PM, OVAS meeting, Pittsford Library, Pittsford, VT, Les Wilson from Cobalt Int'l
May 14	8PM, MAS meeting, Montreal, Les Wilson from Cobalt Int'l
May 15	6:30PM, TFCB meeting, Les Wilson from Cobalt Int'l
May 15-18	American Livebearer Assoc. Convention, St. Louis, www.livebearers.org
May 18	OVAS Annual Auction, Holiday Inn, Rutland, VT
May 23-25	American Killifish Assoc. Convention, Syracuse, NY http://conv2014.aka.org/
June 6-8	TFCB 25 th Anniversary Event, Holiday Inn, So. Burlington
June 12	7PM, TFCB meeting
July 10-13	American Cichlid Assoc. Convention, Louisville www.2014.aca-convention.com
August 29-31	Marine Aquarium Conference of North America Denver, www.dfwmacna.com
September 9	7PM, OVAS meeting, Pittsford, VT, Steve Lundblad from The Cichlid Exchange
September 10	8PM, MAS meeting, Montreal, Steve Lundblad from The Cichlid Exchange
September 11	7PM TFCB meeting, Steve Lundblad from The Cichlid Exchange
October 9	6:30PM TFCB meeting
October 16-19	All-Aquarium Catfish Convention, Hyatt Dulles www.catfishcon.com
November 11	7PM, OVAS meeting, Pittsford Library, Pittsford, VT, Dr. Paul Loiselle
November 12	8PM, MAS meeting, Montreal, Dr. Paul Loiselle
November 13	6:30PM, TFCB meeting, Dr. Paul Loiselle

President's Message

by David Banks

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all current and past members of TFCB for having an interest and taking advantage of the opportunities the club offers. We also get a lot of support from others in the hobby outside of the club which adds to the excitement and joy we all receive by belonging to a club dedicated to helping us with our hobby.

Twenty-five years ago Janine and I had an idea, to start a fish club here in Burlington. Many others have helped the club grow and prosper and I have written about some of them in my article about the history of the club. But it goes way beyond what one person can write about, and even further beyond that since it is only what one person sees! I know there is much interaction within the hobby with our members that I never see or know about, it is each of us individually, and as a group, that make up the club.

2014 should be a great year for the club. It started off with great mini presentations by Ann Whitman and Brian Candib. I think Ann has a full scale presentation in there. February will be a celebration party for the club's 25th Anniversary. I have been phoning, emailing, etc many past members and several already have plans to attend.

Calendar: We printed a TFCB calendar for 2014, if you don't have one (or two) yet, please contact me and we will get you one. The price is only \$6.

June 6-8 Event: In June we plan to really celebrate with our 25th Anniversary Event. There is lots planned; outstanding speakers, dinner cruise, fun filled Friday with a brewery tour and barbeque, vendors and of course the Sunday auction! We really priced it so hopefully everyone can attend, and we have started to get a lot of interest from hobbyist throughout the NEC and beyond. (See back cover of this issue)

May Speaker: We also have many great speakers lined-up throughout the year. Les Wilson has agreed to be our speaker for May. Of course as soon as you print something (like the calendar), things change. Our May meeting will be moved from the second Thursday to the third Thursday (May 15th) so that Les can speak at OVAS and MAS that week. Les has been involved in the hobby his whole life. He has been the product expert for Tetra, Marineland, Perfecto and Instant Ocean and in 2011 began his own company with two fellow fish geeks. His company Cobalt International has quickly become a name many hobbyists now know.

September Speaker: Steve Lundblad will be our September speaker. Steve is the owner of the Wet Spot and the Cichlid Exchange in Portland Oregon. He has spoken several other times here in Burlington over the years and has always had programs the club has enjoyed.

November Speaker: will feature Dr. Paul Loiselle as our guest speaker. Paul is a very well-known speaker, writer and overall very knowledgeable hobbyist/scientist. Paul recently retired as the freshwater curator at the NY Aquarium.

Programs for other meetings are still being confirmed, but already it is looking good for 2014, hope to see you all many times this year! As always, watch the yahoo group mailing list and the web site for up-to-date info. 🐟

Leaving Your Fish Without Losing Your Mind

by Ann Whitman, TFCB

Sometimes preparing for a vacation hardly seems worth the effort, especially when you're leaving aquariums behind. Taking off for a couple of days or even a long weekend is pretty simple when you have established tanks and adult fish because they can easily go without food for several days. However, if you're leaving for a week or more and have a breeding operation or other special circumstances, you can't just drive away. You have to start planning well in advance of your trip.

One month before departure:

- Stop bringing home new fish, no matter how tempting. You don't want any ich or other surprises. Think "stability" for the next few weeks.
- Prevent fish from breeding, if possible. Baby fish are complicated.
- Buy and test an electronic fish feeder.
- Hire someone to check on your fish every few days to be sure all is well. Hire a house sitter if you have baby fish that need frequent feeding or live food.
- Beef up your biological filtration systems. Add sponge filters or bio media.
- Have a contingency plan for power outages, leaks and other unplanned emergencies. I use PitBoss Sump Alarm, which texts to my cell phone if our power goes out or water reaches the top of our sump hole.

Two weeks before departure:

- Stock up on Poly-Filter pads. These are indispensable for maintaining water quality when you can't do a water change.
- Get light timers, if you don't have them already.
- Check that heaters, filters and light timers are working properly. Replace malfunctioning and marginal equipment while you still have time to test it. Avoid messing with equipment right before you go.
- Observe fish behavior closely. Separate aggressive or weak fish that may cause trouble while you're away. Avoid big reorganizations, though. Calm fish and stable environments are good.

One week before departure:

- Write up detailed instructions for fish care. I use Super Sticky Post-it® notes on each tank for feeding instructions and other critical information. General instructions and my contact info goes on a legal pad. Include the phone numbers of a neighbor and a local fish expert, such as someone from the fish club, in case you can't be reached.
- Pre-measure food portions for each tank and tape the baggies to the aquariums. Or use measuring spoons to help prevent overfeeding. Look for a set of "small portion" spoons that measure in "pinch, dash and smidgen". Remember less is better when it comes to food. Having hungry fish is better than having a polluted tank and dead fish.
- Set a time to meet with your house sitter to go over the routine. Have them feed the fish and do other maintenance with your guidance.
- If your fish spawned despite your interventions, and your house sitter isn't up to the task, farm out the young fry to an experienced aquarist to care for in your absence.
- Do your water changes!

Day before you leave.

- Do your water changes again, and then put a Poly-Filter in each tank to help maintain water quality.
- Leave your house thermostat at its normal setting. Don't turn down the heat or turn off the air conditioner. Aquarium temperatures may become unstable if the tank heaters can't keep up or the house becomes stifling hot.
- Double check your list, hand the keys to the house sitter, and go, knowing that you've done your best to make your fish—and yourself—stress free on your vacation. 🐟

TFCB as Seen by the Gardner-Morse Family

by Cindy Gardner-Morse

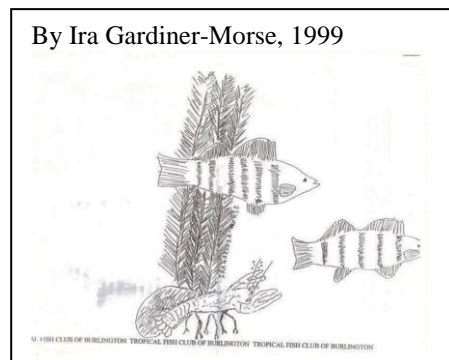
I had had an aquarium in my childhood. We loved the variety of fish and somehow, it was perfectly balanced with the light, the food and the plant/fish populations. I think all we did was add water that evaporated away, for at least two years. It might have had a floss/charcoal filter, but we didn't touch that.

Boy, I wish I could replicate those ideal conditions. I'm still trying, now with three fish tanks of varying sizes and varying degrees of algae infestation! I just don't seem to get the lighting right for the plants, but not the algae.

Jessica Dion from TFCB offered to speak at UVM (where my husband Mack works) about keeping fish as a hobby in the mid 1990's (maybe 1994). Since we were homeschooling, this sounded like a Science Field-trip of sorts, so we attended. Our children were young: John, about two, Eliza, about seven, and Ira, about nine. Jessica later gave us a wide variety of plants to grow in our tank.

As a door-prize at our first TFCB meeting (a new and exciting concept to our children) Ira won a Sea Monkey Kit. He tried it as soon as we got home, and it worked! He grew a cool colony of Sea Monkeys. He later wrote about it for the newsletter--and got published! Our young artists also designed covers for the newsletter, and, if I remember correctly, the editor managed to use all three of their drawings. "Merry Fishmas" was the title of one cover featuring a tree appropriately decorated.

By Ira Gardiner-Morse, 1999



After that, we attended meetings as regularly as roads and distance would allow. We got a ten gallon tank from a neighbor with a Moonfish that lived for a couple years. Then we upgraded to a 20 gallon tank and some of Dave Isham's little baby angelfish. TFCB lectures always sent us to the map to find the countries that the fish came from.

We once gathered fish in a seine net to help the soon to open Echo lake Aquarium and Science Center, and had a boat-ride that day in Dave and Janine's motorboat.

Sometimes club members have donated time to do tanks in public spaces. That is a nice gesture to the public. You never know who you will help. I don't think it was TFCB, but someone had a huge tank going very well at Central Vermont Hospital when my Mom had her stroke. The calm fish helped calm me on that very difficult day.

I've appreciated the practical support and comradeship of the club. Thanks in part to TFCB we have raised two UVM-educated biologists and a young engineer--who knows how fish will affect his career!

Cheers to this fine group of fish fanciers from our family! Carry on! 🐟

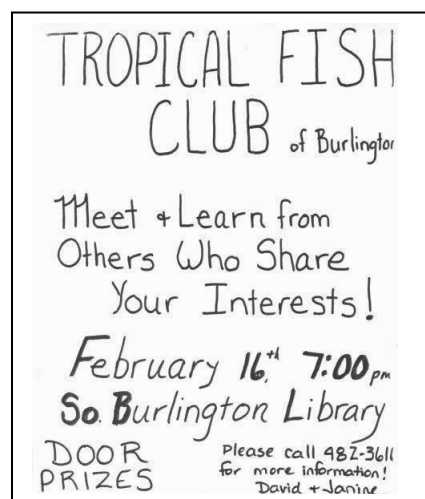
Musings from Susan Perry

Hi. I am a past but still with a foot in member. I love the fish club and I was involved with it back about 20 or 21 years ago when my oldest daughter who now is 31 was something like 9 -11. We had a great time showing fish and we won some trophies and plaques and ribbons also. We went from one small 10 gallon tank in a two bedroom one floor condo to 13 tanks with the largest 100 gallons. We had Oscars, mollies guppies, plecos all in different tanks and I even bread some Betas and Danios. It was so fun but we moved and downsized and now I am a foster mom to five gold fish who needed a tank for the winter because their pond freezes right through. If you want to learn about all kinds of fish and tank settings and live plants as well as fish illness this is a great place to go and the people there are some of the best people you will ever meet. Hope you look into it! Have fun as I still do... 🐟

TFCB, A 25 Year Journey

by David L Banks Jr, TFCB

Who knew back 25 or so years ago, that an idea that seemed so simple would last so long. It has been a journey with both ups and downs, many memories, great experiences and long lasting friendships. My wife Janine and I had first heard about fish clubs in the early 1980's and had attended a few of their annual shows and auctions in southern New England. We also had been able to attend at least one of their monthly meetings and had met some wonderful, interesting, knowledgeable people. We joined two clubs as corresponding members so we could receive their monthly newsletters and learn more about them. We dreamed how great it would be to have a club that was in the Burlington area as these clubs were at least three to four hours away. We had also learned of the Northeast Council of Aquarium Societies (NEC) and we started to form an idea. We were welcomed with open arms by the likes of John Stankevitch, Penny & Al Faul, David and Faith Quinn, Wally & Sue Bush, Jack & Diane Adinolfi and so many others who immediately befriended us and swept us into the world of the organized hobby. We had so much fun with them that we just had to start our own club up here in Burlington! I had just finished college, we had purchased our first house, and the fish room was up and running so the time seemed right.



Right after the holiday season, we put up large posters in the local fish stores announcing we were forming a tropical fish club. "Come meet and learn from others who share your interest!" the posters said. The first meeting was in February 1989 at the South Burlington High School Library. We had no idea what to expect. Would only five people come? Would anyone come? We were somewhat overwhelmed when the room filled up and almost every chair was taken! So it appeared there was interest! Janine and I had never spoken in front of so many people, but we muddled through thanking everyone for coming and going over what the club could be about and what we all could do. It would be up to those who wanted to participate. We talked about having monthly meetings with programs and maybe bowl shows or auction items. A newsletter was mentioned. We went around the room so everyone could introduce themselves and tell about their fish experiences. It was a great beginning.

"We have members from the past as well as our current members to thank for the success of the club..."

It was decided before the end of the night that we would have a second organizational meeting for those that wanted to help form and organize the club. Names and phone numbers were collected and we promised to contact everyone with information. We were very lucky; we had a great group of people volunteer to help define the club. We all met and for the next meeting it was decided we would borrow a slide program from the NEC and we scheduled the library again. We put together a plan of what else needed to be done, decided on a slate of officers and picked a name for the club. Then, finally, several days after the first meeting, Janine remembered to tell me that someone had expressed an interest in helping with the newsletter. Little did we know the extreme dedication these volunteers would show for so many years to come!

The second meeting was also well attended and everyone was very quiet and interested in the slide program (it had a voice tape recording that came with it).

Even though there were several slides missing, and the recording was hard to understand, everyone watched and listened very closely. I think it was a great meeting.

Our third meeting featured our first speaker. Bill Murray was owner of Gills and Gravel, a local fish store in the north end of Burlington on North Winooski Ave. We had gotten to know *(continued on page 12)*

On Love and Fish: Musings from the Partner of an Aquarist by Ashley Michelle Fowler, TFCB

My partner has been keeping fish for so long now that I sometimes forget there was a time before tanks. As his collection grows, so does my fondness for the hobby. But I wasn't always so delighted by his life keeping fish. In fact, it may be news to some people that I don't currently keep any fish of my own (I tried owning a betta a few years back and it was a major fail).

Like many people on this Earth, I don't always understand what's so fascinating about fish. Fish are not cuddly, they don't communicate verbally and can't join you on runs. Sure, some are breathtakingly beautiful and have nuance in color rarely seen in nature, but many of them have bland colors and can be unappealing to a discerning eye. Sometimes even the prettiest fish spend all day hiding in the nooks of their tanks so you can't appreciate their grandeur!

"A lot of great people keep fish and it would be a shame to alienate them from my life."



Now before you vote to kick me out of the club, let me share two things: first, I'm up-to-date on my dues; and second, my views of aquatic life are constantly evolving. One of the most fascinating things I've found about the fish hobby is how excited fishkeepers get when immersed in the hobby. Watching my partner, who I love dearly, light up when we walk into a pet store and seeing the exact focus he brings as he examines each fish in every tank warms my heart. As a member of the Tropical Fish Club of Burlington (TFCB), I know there are many more people who experience this same ecstasy and I can never deny anyone their happiness. Think of how much our world would improve if everyone were allowed to be happy all the time!



Here's the real kicker, though- the longer I've been exposed to the hobby, the more I *get it*. When my guy and I make one of our usually 2-hour long trips to the local pet store, I don't just bemoan the day I met him and huff and puff in the corner. Instead, I have my face glued to the tanks and find myself saying things like, "Look at this one!" or "Awww, this one's cute," repeatedly. I've even learned most of the common names for many species of fish, although I sometimes still struggle to distinguish a molly and a platy at first glance.

Having been a member of TFCB for almost 2 years, I'm so happy that this is an organization and community that my fish-obsessed sweetheart and myself, a resistant fish lover, can share in. Sometimes at meetings, we'll hear a member share about how their partner is giving them grief about something related to their tanks. It makes me feel good that aside from the occasional request to have more attention than the fish when we're hanging out together, I've come to a place where I can fully support and celebrate my partner's hobby.

Are you the partner of a hobbyist? Here are some tips I have for how to support them, even if it's not your cup of tea:

- **Remember, we all have our "things."** It's healthy for couples to have shared activities, but also find ways to fill time that are uniquely theirs. Time for a weekly water change? Make your own plans to spend time with a friend, read a good book, or pursue your own hobby!
- **Take an interest in what they're doing.** This is good advice for any aspect of your relationship. You and your partner might have very different jobs that would sound dreadful to the other, but actively and compassionately listening to each other debrief your workdays will allow you both to feel

affirmed. Fishkeeping is no different- you don't have to know all of the terminology or want to run out and start your own aquarium, but listening to your partner eagerly describe their experiences will make them feel heard and supported.

- **Set healthy boundaries.** It's expected that you will take priority over the fish, no matter how much a part of the family they become. Allow your partner time to stare at the tanks, rearrange the display, conduct water changes, etc. but cut it off when it's interfering with your couple time. You need support as much as your partner does!
- **Talk about the hobby positively.** If you present as embarrassed or ashamed of your partner's hobby when in public, they will likely feel dejected and perhaps feel like they're failing you. I love bragging to people about how many tanks my partner has and the incredible finesse with



which he keeps them. Of all of the negative and unproductive ways someone could spend their downtime, fishkeeping is a gift.

I don't purport to have all of the answers, but I'm glad that I've come a long way from the eye-rolling, arms-crossing, deep-sighing partner I used to be. A lot of great people keep fish and it would be a shame to alienate them from my life. I'm grateful to the fishkeepers in my life, including my love, for their patience over the years while I've learned the beauty of this amazing hobby. Here's to healthy tanks and healthy relationships for years to come! ➡

Same Tank, Different Look by Lam Phan, TFCB

In the fall of 2010, I found myself sitting in front of a half-gallon fish bowl that I purchased and (improperly) setup for my 5 year old nephew, Phillip, staring with enjoyment and fascination at the two gold fish we recently acquired. Immediately, my partner Ashley Michelle took notice and made fun of me for getting way more into it than Phillip. Little did we know that would be the moment that rekindled my obsession with fish and aquariums, years after keeping fish as a child with my brother.

Unlike many of the enthusiasts in the TFCB, I am not as into fish as I am into aquariums (I hope I didn't just get myself kicked out of the club). What I mean by this is that I am more interested in how an aquarium looks as a whole rather than what fish is in it. Don't get me wrong; I love all kinds of fish—from single-colored red platys to the vibrant peacock cichlids. However, it is about the total package. Let's be honest, it can be difficult to enjoy the beautiful fish when you are distracted by the algae that is covering the tank. That is why the art of aquascaping is the thing that got me addicted to this hobby.

I have been in the hobby seriously for a little more than 3 years and I consider myself to be a beginner. I have much to learn about the art and science of fish keeping and



Circa Spring 2011



Circa Fall 2011

aquascaping. But one thing I have learned so far is this: You are never “finished.” Just because you are happy with the current state of your aquarium doesn’t mean that your work is “done.” An aquarium is an ecosystem with living organisms that change and grow. You must adapt to it.

With that said, here is my 30-gallon planted bow front aquarium and its growth in the past 3 years: 🐟



Circa Winter 2012



Circa Summer 2012



Circa Fall 2012



Circa January 2013. Most of my plants were starting to deteriorate for an unknown reason.



Circa May 2013. This is about 20 days after I decided that my tank needed a makeover. I broke it down completely and use top soil and clay underneath the black substrate to fertilize the plants.



This is my tank today, January 2014, nine months after the conversion to a dirt substrate. It has been a fun and rewarding three years. I am looking forward to many more years of growth and changes.

Circles of Life

By Brian Candib, TFCB

Growing up, I was never an avid aquarist. I recall in my youth around 8 years old, an older son of my parent's close friends had a ten gallon aquarium in his bedroom. Whenever we went over, my brother and I would hang out in his room and watch the fish. It got to be so common place that even when he was not there, we would still trespass and play around while the old folks sat in the kitchen talking. I really do not recall all the circumstances which arose from this but I remember a visit where my mother said we could no longer go into his room without supervision. It seems that during our last visit we thought it would be fun to catch the fish with our hands and well needless to say their cat ate very well that day.

I really never owned my first tank until I was about 30 years old. I really jumped right in with two 55 gallon tanks right off the bat. It seems my neighbor's son was moving and needed to get rid of them along with the Oscars in one tank and a Pacu in the other. So I think at the time it was about \$150 and they were mine. I moved them home and to this day, I still have them. The fish have long since moved on and the tanks were put in the cellar storage. I always wanted to set them up but never really got around to it.

That changed when I joined this fish club back around 2007. I was then back in the Tropical Fish hobby with many tanks and a room dedicated to this endeavor. I had met David back in early 2000 and for a few years we would talk about the hobby and the club but it took me a few years to finally partake.

"I think we all have special fish we were fond of just like our first car or bicycle..."



I pulled those two tanks out of storage and got them back in running condition. I remember one of the first purchases I made was a bag of Convict Cichlids that were about a quarter in size. I believe I had about a half dozen of them to start with. I recall one was a pink convict and I had a few Congo and Zebra Convicts to complete the set. I could not prove this but I think because of their ferociousness, it is why they were sold at the auction and probably why I got them for a buck.

Over the years, I would acquire more tanks, more fish and of course some good times and bad. But the convicts continued to grow and eventually gave birth. Their breeding was more about fate than it was about my skill level. I was probably more surprised than anyone when it occurred. This is when the Convicts showed their true fierceness. The parents of the offspring were relentless in protecting the fry. And this is how I came to notice the offspring. I started noticing all the other convicts (and Pleco) were cowering behind one rock in the far corner while the parents were circling the tank and pinning them down. I even saw where the cowering fish were bitten and had red marks piercing their skin. I then noticed the ever so tiny offspring swimming around as if everything was wonderful and feeding off the tank decorations scattered about. Of course, the parental security detail was all too willing to clear the way for their offspring. It was at this time, I thought it best to remove all the "other" fish in the tank and place them in a 20 Gallon just for their own safety.

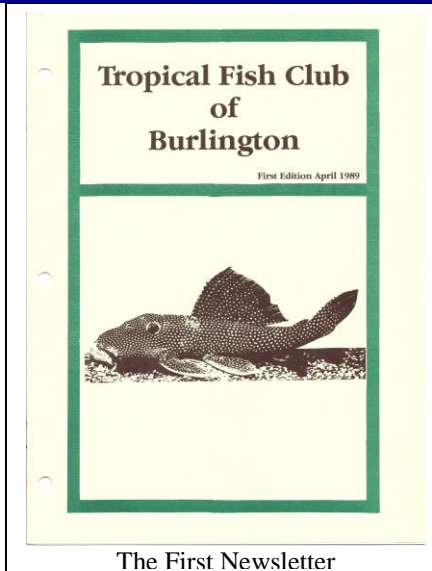
Over the years I did lose many of the convicts to my own carelessness but I do still have a core group of males which have endured the years. At some point, I may attempt to replenish them which some may find odd because this is one fish few people ever seem to want to keep. But in my defense, it is a fish I started with, that have bred and still persist no matter what I do to get in their way.

I realize I have written a lot about myself and how I got started but I think we all share a common theme in that we were all introduced to the hobby by someone with the patience and ability to *(continued on page 20)*

(continued from page 7, TFCB; A 25 Year Journey) Bill and his store quite well as it was right next door to the laundromat and we spent many hours there. We had gone from having our 1st 20 gallon tank to having three 20 gallon tanks and a 10 gallon tank while doing our laundry and spending time at Gills and Gravel. Bill is responsible for us, as well as many others getting so involved in the hobby. By the third meeting, we also had our first newsletter published, with original articles, and one article that we had known about for some time which just had to be included, "Keeping Fish is FUNdamental" by James Laurie from the Tropical Fish Society of Rhode Island. (ed: and it is reprinted in this issue!). Steve Ahern had offered to be the editor, and Richard "Max" Maxwell was going to be the publisher/printer. Max eventually took over all aspects of our newsletter, "In Depth," and produced a beautiful, professionally printed newsletter for the club for many years. Shortly after starting the club, we had received a phone call from someone who had been involved with fish for a long time and they had invited us to visit them in Milton. Serah and John Fisher would become important contributors to the club, and starting with the second issue of In Depth, Serah embarked upon a long string of cover art and John started to write articles. John also took on the task of developing TFCB's breeder program.

During that first year we had several new enthusiastic members join, including Cynthia Teague. She became our travel partner, taking trips to many other clubs' activities and helping to make TFCB an active participant in other NEC clubs' events. In the third year of the club, all of the officers (David – President, Max – Vice President, Janine – Treasurer and Cynthia – Secretary) turned 30 years old, and we were all very energetic and active within the club.

Beau Bushor, Dave Kirsch and Rick Mayhew were at the first meeting and became three of our original board members and each added significantly to the club. Beau led the development of our constitution and bylaws. Dave brought in many new members over the years and really drove the marine side of our club for many years. In fact, he helped to bring in over 75 people to a meeting featuring John O'Malley speaking on marine aquariums. At the time, John was a very hot speaker and his photos were outstanding. John had photos in every issue of Aquarium Fish



TFCB's 1st Show 1993 at VFW in Burlington
Doug Chamberlain and Janine Banks



From the 15th Anniversary party, TFCB original members
Richard "Max" Maxwell, David Banks, Janine Banks,
Rick Mayhew and Beau Bushor.

Magazine, including many cover shots. Rick was the longest serving of these three original board members, and kept the club strong with many new ideas and efforts to keep things going even through the slower times of the club.

Back to the breeder program. It was Steve and Abbie Ahern who were the first to reach Breeder level in the club program. With John Fisher giving monthly updates, we had a very active program. Prizes were given to the top three participants for each level. Our monthly meetings those first few years consistently had 30 - 35 people in attendance. People attended from all over Vermont, New York and even Canada. The monthly bowl shows had good participation, and with so many members breeding fish, the monthly auctions were always a hit. Another person that joined the club in the early years was Kevin Hosmer. Kevin had collected fish in Australia and was very involved with keeping and breeding rainbowfish and thus introduced many species of rainbowfish to our club. He went on to serve as club president.

A very difficult position to fill in a club is the treasurer position. Paul Nachowitz took over as treasurer from Janine and really did an outstanding job for many years. He was very good with keeping records, and made sure each monthly auction was 100% straight, not an easy task with everyone rushing around at the end of each meeting.

Of course we had to have a club logo, so we held a logo contest. I mentioned this to my father who was a professional graphic designer. He spent many hours and came up with three different designs. Others also came up with designs too, but in the end, one of my father's logos was chosen by the club to be our new logo. The logo combines the green mountains with a silhouette of a blue Tropheus surrounded by the club name in a blue circle with white lettering.

Our first auction was a challenge as the club had no treasury at this point. We had no idea how successful an auction would be, so we wanted to keep expenses down. Dave Kirsch offered his store, Vacuum City, on St Paul Street in Burlington to use as the venue. He had a large showroom, so the store would be large enough, but it was also full of vacuum cleaners! A crew of us got together Saturday evening after the store closed and moved all of the vacuum cleaners and displays to the basement. One of our members had access to chairs, so we moved those in and we were ready for the auction! We had guests from all over New England attend. Some came up Saturday night and we had a pizza party at our house that night for everyone that made the trip north. Sunday more people came from other clubs, and lots of TFCB members and local guests were there too. Rich Mayhew provided snacks and drinks. Sunday was a great success, but once the auction was over, all those vacuums had to be moved back up into place for store opening Monday morning! It was a whirlwind event, but it gave the club a solid treasury and a good footing for the future.

Through the years we held many other events from additional auctions to full blown fish shows. Our first show was held at the VFW Hall in Burlington. We had local sponsors for each class of fish. The club bought small plastic fish tanks (that we still use today for bowl shows) for the show. We had six judges, five NEC certified judges and our local fish expert, Bill Murray. Each judge was presented with a beautiful framed original color drawing done by Serah Fisher. Best of show was a very boldly colored red tail shark brought in by a local hobbyist that had heard about the show and decided to enter a fish. We had 102 entries in many classes. Future fish shows were held in the University Mall, Christ the King school, Burlington Square Mall and the old science center in Burlington before ECHO was built.

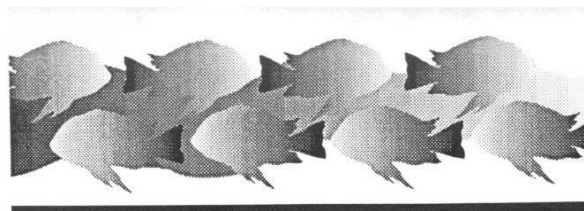
TFCB had field trips too! One trip was to the Biodome in Montreal with an overnight stay in Montreal and another to the New England Aquarium in Boston, both had a full behind the scenes tour. We helped design



David Banks, John Stankevitch NAS,
Janine Banks, Jacques Brosseau TFSRI
at TFCB's 1st auction 1990

and setup the visitor center at the Ed Weed Fish Hatchery in Grand Isle. We printed our own calendar in 1991. Summer picnics are a tradition and have been great outings. We set up publicity tables at the mall and at several pet stores. We were at one such table outside a pet store when Hurricane Hugo passed through!

These events were all very exciting, fun and gave everyone a chance to see other aspects of the hobby and to connect with other hobbyists from other clubs. However, the mainstay of the club has always been our monthly meetings, and we have had many great meetings over the years. From the speakers to the great interaction of members, the door prizes and monthly auctions, each meeting is well worth attending. Each speaker offers their own insight and unique advice and many times inspires us to pursue additional or different areas of our hobby. Your fellow TFCB member can offer that same inspiration, and you can meet with them each month, or even more often!



Tropical Fish Club of Burlington

The lineup of speakers our club has seen over the years is truly amazing. From hot, nationally known speakers, to many up and coming speakers, to our local club members, the broad range of topics and the knowledge shared by the speakers really make our meetings special. Even if you think you don't have an interest in a topic, it is always good to hear an experienced speaker give his presentation and most times you will learn something that will be helpful to you in your hobby. To look back at our speaker lineup over the 25 years would take pages and pages, but several speakers stand out.

Lee Finley agreed to be our speaker at the September meeting in the first year. We had a group of members join us for dinner with Lee, and all were amazed he ordered catfish off the menu when catfish was his topic at the meeting that evening! Lee became a regular speaker at TFCB and for many years he was our September speaker, kicking off the fall season. Lee could talk on the same subject, and each time you would learn new things, but of course he had many different catfish programs. We even had him put together programs on catfish areas we requested to mix things up even more. The club never tired of having him as a speaker.

"The lineup of speakers our club has seen over the years is truly amazing."

Al Castro was from San Francisco and had been curator of freshwater fish at the Steinhart Aquarium. We had met Al as a speaker at an NEC convention and I had the opportunity to visit his fishroom once in California. Al was a speaker in the newly formed Tetra speaker program, a program designed to help aquarium clubs bring well-known speakers to their meetings. We spoke to Al and asked if he would be interested in coming to Vermont and speaking at TFCB along with several other clubs. This turned out to be a five club speaking engagement from Burlington to Providence, RI! Apparently he enjoyed it because we had him back, the second time to only speak at three clubs.

I have already mentioned our first speaker, Bill Murray. Bill also spoke several more times for us over the years. He always had a great perspective on the hobby, and lots of information and experience. Some of my best memories of our early hobby were just hanging around his store chatting and buying fish while we waited for our laundry!

We have had many other very helpful and productive members over the years, way too many to mention here. One who has certainly earned a nod however is Dave Isham. In Feb 1999, on the club's 10th anniversary, Dave was asked to fill in for our newsletter editor that had suddenly moved out of state and he has been our editor ever since! At that time the newsletter was a photocopied, mailed version which he took on and eventually developed into one of the first fish club online newsletters, and it has been online ever since. Thanks for 15 great years Dave!

Nowadays the club is doing very well and we currently have many helping hands to thank! We have several great speakers lined up for 2014 and we've published another calendar for 2014. We have members from

the past as well as our current members to thank for the success of the club and our February meeting will be a party, with cake and, we hope, many past members as guests. For the really big celebration, we plan to have a special 25th Anniversary Event June 6-8, 2014 at the Holiday Inn in South Burlington. I hope everyone can attend the party in February and the 25th Anniversary event and help us celebrate being a quarter of a century old! 🐟

My Experience with the Tropical Fish Club of Burlington

by Susan Ryan

I loved going to the joint fish club auctions. One time I got three baby tinfoil barbs. They were the size of a 50¢ piece. I had them for five years and they ended up in a 40 gallon tank all of their own. They would “play” a game I called “bump.” When I came into the room, the three of them would line up, side by side at the front of the tank. Once there they would jockey for position by “bumping” each other as if to get a better seat at the table.

They were six inches long and two and a half inches deep...pretty big. At this time, I was no longer attending meetings because I was worked 7PM to 7AM. I had always wanted to report that they didn’t grow up to be silver colored with black trim...they were a light pinkish silver with kind of greyish markings. They were fun to own. You know what it is like trying to explain to someone that your fish know you...

Congratulations on your 25th Anniversary!

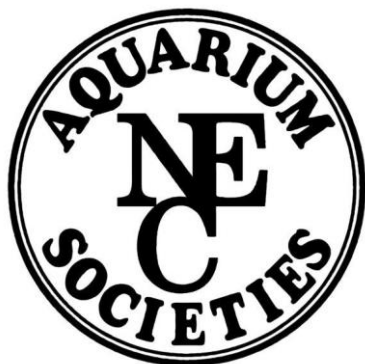
TFCB is "Groupie-Friendly"

by Joan Ebbeson

I married into fish keeping when I married Ralph. Never had a fish before, except a short-lived guppy I won by throwing a ping pong ball into a fishbowl at a local carnival. And, while I have put together a couple of my own tanks to decorate my office and I enjoy watching the tanks in our home, I am not really "into it" like most of you.

That said, while living in Vermont, I totally enjoyed attending meetings and spending time with all of you at TFCB. I even picked up, by osmosis, some of the binomial nomenclature and basic knowledge about burning issues such as snails, algae, ick, etc. It helps that you meet at a place that serves alcohol.

Happy Birthday and best wishes for many more years of TFCB!



TFCB is a member of the NEC so all of our members are also members of the NEC!

Albert G. Faul
1935 – 2014



As TFCB celebrates its 25th Anniversary, we are faced with the fact we are all getting older. This year we lost a good friend and lifelong fellow hobbyist, Al Faul. Al and his wife of 57 years, Penny, were members of TFCB and huge promoters of our club. Although from Boston, they loved our club and its members and attended as many of our club functions as they could. Al was a sensitive and generous man who volunteered for over 40 years to help within the organized hobby and did whatever he could to promote the hobby in general. I will miss him, his encouragement and his insight, but I am fortunate to have had Al in my life and will always appreciate having known him. I have many memories to cherish – thank you Al!



Please visit our local stores and say thanks for supporting TFCB!

FINLEY'S CATFISH A SUCCESS

By Ira and Cindy
Gardner-Morse

The September meeting of the Tropical Fish Club of Burlington had Lee Finley (from Rhode Island) with a slide show about catfish. His clear slides depicted many species of catfish and showed specifics to watch out for, like nose damage (from irritating substances like glass, gravel or other causes) or not having 3 pairs of healthy barbels (whiskers). Catfish could lose their barbels from poor water quality or not enough gravel cleaning.

When catfish are mature, Mr. Finley can tell the males because they are slimmer than the "rotund, Ruben-isque females". We think we need those slides to help us sex our 6 catfish. As we are beginners, we do not have huge tanks. Therefore, Mr. Finley's suggestions about avoiding shark catfish, and other fish with "smiling"

January 1999

jaws was helpful. They are usually predators. Iridescent sharks are not good in community tanks for other reasons too. They rapidly grow too large for small tanks (3 ft. in the wild). The constant movement that makes them attractive at the petstore when they are small becomes dangerous when they are older. They hurt themselves and other fish. Mr. Finley said if you want something smaller, you could keep a school of 3 or 4 glass catfish in a 10 gallon tank. Glass catfish come from southeast Asia, are 2 1/2 to 3 inches long, are peaceful and like a planted aquarium. In the wild they live in schools of hundreds to thousands. A single catfish might get lonely. We had thought of getting a banjo catfish. Mr. Finley said that they hide themselves. They just disappear in to the plants and rocks. They need hiding places. You also have to be sure that they get their own food at night, so you must feed them when you shut off the lights. They like to eat in total darkness. Mr. Finley offered lots of information about the social conditions catfish like, showing them in beautiful settings.



Reprinted from *In Depth* January 1999



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25 Years of Blessed Fish; A Piscean Tale

by Richard Maxwell Jr, TFCB

Twenty five years ago, on a February Vermont winters eve, they descended upon the South Burlington High School public library, strangers uniting for a common purpose, Piscean husbandry, aquarium fish keeping for clarification. They were a fairly large crowd, of a number that cannot quite be recalled, joining together to “Meet Learn and Share From Others Who Share Your Interests.” They all had fish stories to share, and it was not about the one that got away either. On the contrary, it was about the ones that they housed in their home aquariums.

“They” were a group that would come to be known as The Tropical Fish Club of Burlington and their tale is a great one. Over the course of the next twenty five years they would do great things in the realm of the aquarium hobby and beyond. This, my friends, is a condensed version of their swim upstream to the year two thousand fourteen.

Let us first pay homage to the masterminds of this endeavor, David and Janine Banks. As it were, we were all drawn to this meeting by a notice found in all the local pet stores of the time, announcing an upcoming forum geared at bringing together folks with similar interest in the aquarium hobby. It was a novel idea and one could only think in wonderment that there were others out there with the same passion and fever that we had for aquarium biotopes. Who would of thunk it? They did, with a little help from their friends.

It was our fortune that Dave and Janine had swam in from out of state and had met some folks from their area who belonged to tropical fish clubs where interests ran the gamut from what are called “bread and butter fish” to saltwater fanciers and everywhere in between. In part, we would come to know some of their mentors as The Northeast Council of Aquarium Societies. This council was, and still is, “The Mother Tank” of many established and upcoming aquarium clubs and societies in the northeast. A sort of clearing house of all things aquarium related. We pay tribute to them, as best we can, on a yearly migration that many a hobbyist from all around the world school to for a weekend of fishstravaganza.

In the early years much time and endeavor was dedicated to ensure the longevity of the club through various trains of thought and expertise. We would need to be professional so as to present well to the public and to appear as we knew what we were doing (we did, yet we had to put all the integral pieces in place for the puzzle to be assembled). With that strive toward professionalism would come the precarious and time

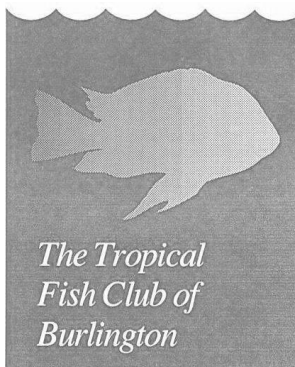
consuming work of establishing a constitution and bylaws. Many thanks go out to Beau Bushor, and his family, for his connections within the state and his commitment to the club by spending much of his personal time sifting through the opinions and information of said contacts. It was an arduous task for the club that took the better part of two years, but do not hold me to an exacting time frame here, to accomplish and a combined effort and pool of thought got it finalized.

To speed things up a bit we needed some constants too. We needed to have a consistent time and space to meet and it was decided that the second Thursday of each month at seven in the evening would suit us, and for the most part it has.

The bulk of our existence also found us meeting at the Howard Plant Post

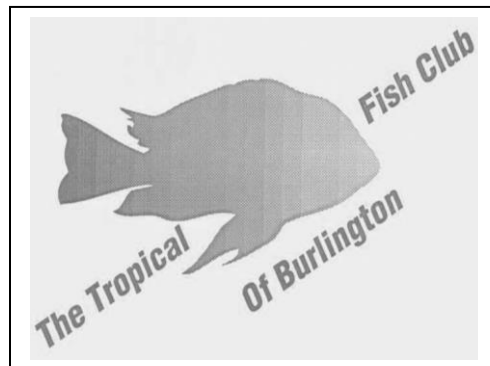
Veterans of Foreign Wars post in the center of Burlington. We would shift to a couple of different sites along the way but home base, in my mind, will always be on South Winooski Avenue.

*“We started
as they,
became we,
united as us,
and still
maintained
our own
individuality,
perspective,
and most
importantly
we survived
the changing
times.”*



Over time we became a fairly tight knit group of individuals swimming along the stream of life and in our travels we encountered many an interesting, and unique, individual with much to share in not only the realm of fish keeping but an infinite web of other life sustaining topics, ideas, and perspectives about the world we live and thrive in, of course fish always taking center stage and our uniting and unifying theme. God bless the fish!!!

Topics and talks have encompassed reaching aquarists of all interest levels and we work diligently to keep vested in the principles of our beginnings to leave no aquarist in the dark, without filtration, or navigating the hobby without the proper propelling fins. Guest speakers have come mainly from the United States and Canada and topics have ranged from live foods to food fish, African, old world, rift lake cichlids to South American, new world, dwarf cichlids, and the propagation of plants to the propagation of live food for our Piscean pets. We try to run the gamut as best we can.



Over the years we have learned how to strategize, negotiate, and succeed in activities like the monthly bowl show, newsletter, breeder program, auctions, expedition's, exploration's, fish shows, and a myriad of other events with a common thread linking them all: making what we do educational, informational, and most of all fantastically fun. I am proud to say I believe we have maintained our high standards throughout and as we continue to navigate the slipstream of time I believe we can continue to do so.

We started as they, became we, united as us, and still maintained our own individuality, perspective, and most importantly we survived the changing times. We have given of our time, our knowledge, our wisdom, and ourselves. We have broken bread with each other, embraced new friendships, watched children grow, been through happy times, supported each other in times of grief and sorrow, and built a sense of community amongst ourselves and others we have encountered in the ocean of life that surrounds us. We have held ourselves to the original mission statement set forth twenty five years ago on that February winters eve: Meet And Learn From Others Who Share Your Interests!!!

In closing I would love to thank everyone by name yet there is not enough space here at this time. Suffice it to say that I believe you all know who you are and I am proud, honored, and humbly appreciate what you have done for each other over a quarter of a century. I am equally all of those aforementioned things to have reaped the harvest of your friendships.

Young David Bushor once asked his dad, Beau Bushor: "What would happen if the club ceased to exist?" Beau said to young David (not his exact words but something to the tune of) "We will have made some very good friends." That we have for sure David! That we have. 🐟



David, John, Tammy, Brian, David, Ira, Pam,
Joan, Ann, Andrew, David and Emily.



Alan, Brian, Douglas, Emily, David, Janine,
Tami, Joel, David, Fran and Julie.

Word Find

by David Banks

T	F	C	B	T	K	D	A	M	S	E	L
E	W	G	G	I	C	O	R	A	L	L	P
N	O	E	G	R	I	K	K	R	I	L	L
B	R	I	N	E	S	H	R	I	M	P	E
A	K	N	A	T	E	P	H	N	L	M	C
R	E	E	F	R	Y	A	I	E	A	L	O
C	L	C	C	A	T	F	I	S	H	S	I
B	P	C	I	C	H	L	I	D	A	P	N
R	A	O	H	K	G	R	A	V	E	L	A
E	A	R	T	E	T	T	O	E	E	A	D
E	Y	Y	B	E	A	T	T	E	B	N	Y
D	S	C	A	L	E	A	P	L	A	T	Y

Tetra	TFCB	Reef
Danio	Tiretrack eel	Coral
Barb	Brine shrimp	Pet
Scale	Catfish	NEC
Gravel	Cory	MAS
Breed	Cichlid	Fin
Betta	Fry	Ick
Marine	Hatch	OVAS
Plant	Twenty Five	Damsel
Egg	Tank	Crab
Pleco	Net	Kelp
Krill	Killi	Platy

(Continued from page 11, Circles of Life)

share knowledge around successful fish-keeping. I think we all have special fish we were fond of just like our first car or bicycle we had. I reflect upon those relationships and try to pass along my skills and wonders to both family and friends. I also think we have a story or two to share along the way.

I have two nieces and a nephew that want to help me around the fish tanks would let them help me with water species and sexes as best I could. They then) but enjoyed the fish so much. that they were getting a fish tank of they needed and would visit and help ensure it would be a weekly comfortable with. It seemed to go on the community tank going. But as of the fish expired.



would always come to visit and (even before I had a fish room). I changes and try to point out fish were little (around 7 – 10 years Their mom (my sister) said one day their own. I helped them with what them with water changes just to responsibility they would get for a few years and they had quite things do happen, it seemed some

My nephew was the youngest and really had taken a liking to one of the fish. When it died unexpectedly, he was convinced the Pleco had killed it. I am sure the Pleco was only taking advantage of a food source but there was no convincing the nephew. In a fit of anger, he took the Pleco out of the tank and threw it in the back yard to expire. The mom happened to look out the window and see him throw something down on the ground. She then sees the cat run in to grab it up and hurries out to find the expired Pleco hanging out of the mouth of the cat. He probably was unable to easily eat it because of its size and texture.

I found out the next week from my sister what had transpired and I harken back to my days at his age in my parent's friend's house. The tank is back to normal and they were able to replenish the fish including a new Pleco. But I also can't help but think, just like the circle of life, we all realize fish come and go but in our case, when a fish goes, there always seems to be a cat around to reap the rewards. 🐟

Keeping Fish is Fundamental!

by James R. Laurie

Reprinted from *The Tankquillizer*, Sept. 1988
and the first TFCB Newsletter, April 1989

Greetings, all you fellow fishkeepers out there. I hope all of you and your fish are doing great. Now that the social amenities are out of the way, I shall begin my article.

I think the most important aspect of this hobby is having fun. How many of you out there don't have a favorite species or a favorite specimen that makes you happy just to look at it? Not many, I'll bet! But I'll bet there are those who are really busy, or have an outrageous amount of tanks to attend to, and sometimes they forget about the pleasure of owning fish. This could also pertain to someone who has been keeping fish for a long time or has become "too scientific" about the hobby.

Try planting yourself in front of one of your tanks for a while and let the fish work their natural magic on you. I guarantee you'll come away feeling the better for it. Don't forget, your fish are fun!


Most of you out there are probably saying, "Hey, this guy isn't telling me anything I don't already know". OK, let's take a look at WHY fish are fun.

Keeping fish is fundamental. Now when I say fundamental, I mean it fulfills a basic need in all of us concerned. This need is to do things that we enjoy, and have fun at. This need manifests itself in as many ways as there are fishkeepers, and the hobby of keeping fish appeals to us for a great variety of reasons.

Some of us are collectors at heart, and so many have many different kinds of fishes. Perhaps you are artistic, and derive much joy from decorating your tanks, which can be done over and over. And on a grander scale, tanks themselves can be used as a focus of much aesthetic appeal for your home! Some of us use fish as an intellectual stimulus. What a perfect and (relatively) inexpensive way to become a scientist right in the comfort of your own home! Water chemistry, experimentation, and making observations; these things fill the need for a thinking hobby. Certain people like a personal challenge. Can I be successful at keeping fishes which are difficult to maintain? Can I manage to breed them? Will I be the first one to accomplish this? Can I raise better specimens than most people and gain recognition at fish shows? I could go on and on, but guess you get the idea.

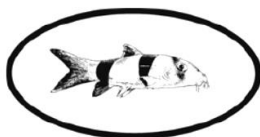
In a different vein, there are some wonderful side benefits to this hobby. Here are my two favorites.

You can join a fish club. Or two or three, or as many as you want! This opens up your life to many friendships that you would otherwise never have. You'll meet people of all ages from all walks of life; people of all races with different ideas, varying financial statuses and social positions. All brought together by their common interest in keeping fish. I think that is an amazing and fabulous thing.

The other thing is that watching and relaxing in front of your tank can reduce your blood pressure. I read that in *Tropical Fish Hobbyist* magazine. I myself have often used my tanks to relax and reduce stress, especially on hot summer days when things get pretty hectic at work. And it always works. But above all, don't forget that keeping fish is fundamental! 

From the last page of most *IN Depth* issues published in the 1990's by Richard "Max" Maxwell:

"SPECIAL THANKS: V.F.W. POST 782 – ALL COVER ARTISTS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE – ALL OUR ADVERTISERS AND SUPPORTERS – LAKE CHAMPLAIN GRAPHICS – VANTAGE PRESS – CHET BROTHERS – TURMAX PRINTING SERVICES – THERESA MAXWELL – AND ESPECIALLY DAVE & JANINE BANKS FOR HAVING THE DREAM!"



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2014 Auction & Bowl Show

Sunday May 18

Noon - 5:00 PM

Holiday Inn Rutland

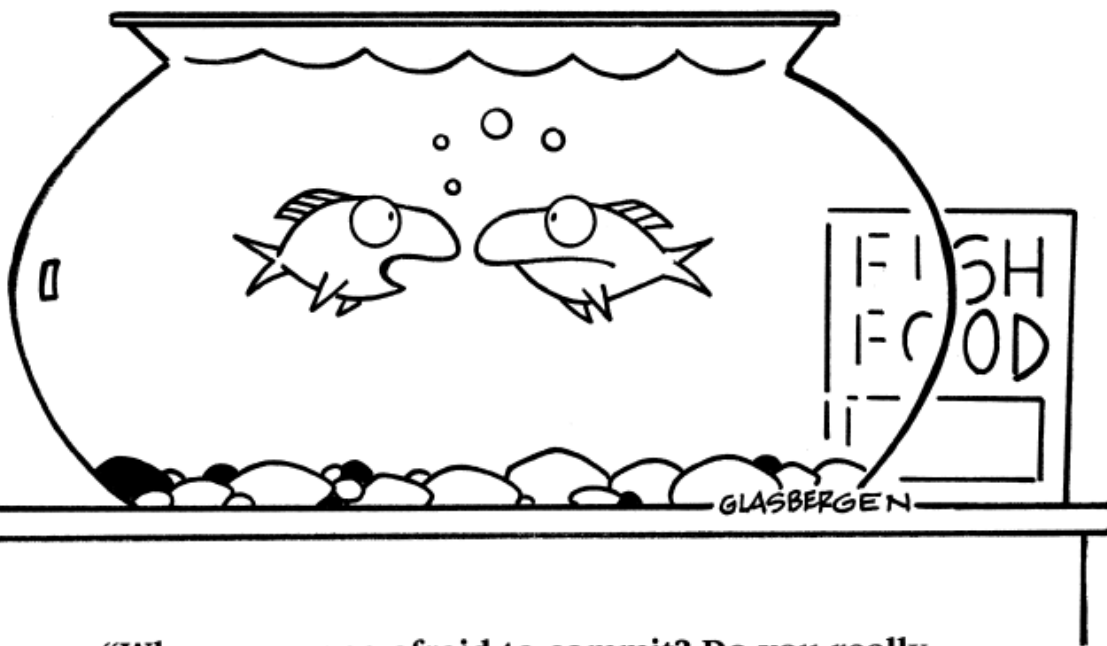
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"Why are you so afraid to commit? Do you really think you're going to meet someone better than me?"



39th Annual Convention
March 28th - 30th

2014

Northeast Council of Aquarium Societies

39th Tropical Fish Convention

March 28 – 30, 2014

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Fish Show – Workshops
All Day Auction Sunday!**

SPEAKERS

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Ted Coletti

Ken McKeighen

Matt Pedersen

Roxanne Smolowitz

Mark Soberman

Kris Weinhold

Workshops

Andrew Murphy

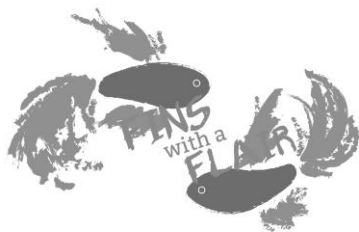
Roxanne Smolowitz

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Visit Convention Web Page for All Details
including Auction Info and Rules,
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Ray "Kingfish" Lucas Good for the Hobby, Organizations and the Industry

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Celebrating 25 years of participating at club events!