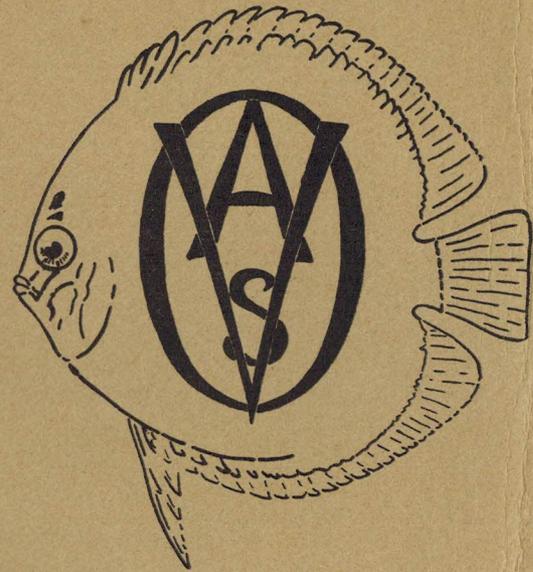


# OVAS NEWS

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

OF THE

OTTAWA VALLEY  
AQUARIUM SOCIETY

OTTAWA VALLEY  
AQUARIUM SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 1135, OTTAWA 4  
ONT., CANADA



THE OTTAWA VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

MEETINGS

Junior Society

Thursday, November 12th ..... 7.00 PM

Thursday, December 3rd ..... 7.00 PM

Senior Society

Thursday, November 19th ..... 7.45 PM

Thursday, December 10th ..... 7.45 PM

Regular meetings are held in the Chemistry Building, Room 37, University of Ottawa, 365 Nicholas Street, Ottawa, Canada.

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MAILING ADDRESS

Ottawa Valley Aquarium Society  
Post Office Box 1135,  
OTTAWA 4, Ontario, Canada.

EDITOR: Harvey J. Wittenberg, [redacted]  
[redacted], OTTAWA 3. ([redacted]).

CONTENTS MAY BE REPRINTED PROVIDING CREDIT IS GIVEN TO THE OVAS NEWS AND AUTHOR.

THE OTTAWA VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY  
1959 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Senior Society Officers

President: Mrs Claire Kroeger [redacted]  
Vice-Pres: Mr Roger Trottier  
Secretary:  
Treasurer: Mr Phil Curry [redacted]

Senior Society Directors

Membership: Mr Dan Jeffrey [redacted]  
Programme: Mr Wilf Doucette [redacted]  
Show: Mr Ben Davis [redacted]  
Magazine:  
Social: Mr Alan Griffin [redacted]  
Junior Soc: Mr Gerry Lalonde [redacted]

Senior Society Librarians

Mr Ed Ledoux [redacted]  
Mr Gordon Croll [redacted]  
Mr Jean Duguay [redacted]

Junior Society Officers

President: Ian Woods [redacted]  
Vice-Pres: Patsy Fitzgerald [redacted]  
Secretary: Graham Conway [redacted]  
Treasurer: Richard Brown [redacted]

Junior Society Directors

Membership: Burton Grundy [redacted]  
Programme: Chipper Vickers [redacted]  
Show: Gordon Wordon [redacted]  
Magazine: Larry Neumann [redacted]  
Social: Andrew Holdham [redacted]

Junior Society Librarians

Larry Neumann [redacted]  
Robert Boyle [redacted]

OTTAWA VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY CONSULTANTS

Area No 1 (to be appointed)  
Area No 2 Mr Geo Bowie [redacted]  
Area No 3 Mr Ken Craig [redacted]  
Area No 4 Mr Jack Dirks [redacted]

TIFAS REPRESENTATIVE

(to be appointed)

PRESIDENT'S LETTER  
Senior Society

It is with mixed feelings that I must announce the impending departure of our very capable Vice-President, Roger Trottier. We are extremely pleased that he has received a promotion with the E.B. Eddy Company which assures his continuing success with that Firm. On the other hand we are terribly sorry that he must leave Ottawa to take up residence in Montreal. On behalf of the entire Membership I would like to thank Roger for his untiring efforts on behalf of the Society, and wish him the best of luck in his new Post.

I am also sorry to announce the resignation of Mrs. Barbara Johnson as Secretary of the Ottawa Valley Aquarium Society. Although she had hoped to complete the year, Barbara finds that her year is a very strenuous one, and she must spend more time on a Course that she is taking. Due to the heavy load she is carrying she feels that she cannot devote the time which she has previously been able to give to our meetings.

The Programme Director has informed me that the Christmas meeting, December 10th, will highlight reports from each of the Directors, greeting of the new President, and will be followed by a Christmas Fun night complete with refreshments. Watch for further announcements in the OVAS News.

The grapevine has it that we should be moving into our most permanent home to date in the new Biology Building during the early part of 1960. Apparently, there we will have even better facilities than ever before, with many more opportunities to learn more of our wonderful hobby.

*Claire Kroeger*  
Claire Kroeger  
President

NOMINATION AND ELECTIONS  
by Harvey Wittenberg, Editor.

Now is your opportunity to nominate the member of your choice for

PRESIDENT

VICE-PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

TREASURER

for 1960

Q. When do we hold the nominations?

A. At the November meeting.

Q. How many member are nominated for each office?

A. Any number.

Q. Why do the Membership Committee present a list of members for each office?

A. (1) to insure that there are at least two members for each office.

(2) to assist the membership in obtaining those members who have, during the year, shown certain qualifications and willingness to serve the Society as a result of serving as Director or a member on a Committee.

Q. Why ask the membership for further nominations?

A. (1) there are many members with the qualifications and willingness to serve the society who are not known to the Membership Committee.

(2) as a member of the Society you have the right to nominate a member of your choice.

Q. Why do we have such a small attendance at the meetings when we are holding nominations and election of officers?

(Cont'd page 5)

A. This is a mystery. When the Society, YOUR SOCIETY, is holding two of the most important meetings of the year the attendance should be at least 90%.

Maybe you are not aware that:

- (1) you do not have to accept nomination.
- (2) your attendance at these two meetings is an indication to those nominated, and elected, that every member is concerned as to who is going to serve them in the next year. This confidence is very important to the newly elected officers.

Q. When do we hold the election of officers?

A. At the December meeting, by secret ballot.

Q. When are the Directors of the various committees elected?

A. The Directors are not elected by the membership but appointed by the Officers elected.

Q. Why do the elected officers appoint the Directors?

A. This permits the officers to appoint a Director:

- (1) for any period of the year.
- (2) to change his or her duties if required.
- (3) possibility of re-appointing a Director who has done an exceptional good job during the past year.
- (4) Consider the appointment of the past Assistant Directors.
- (5) A free hand in obtaining the best qualified members to carry out the duties of the committees.

Q. Can I offer to serve as a Director or a member on any Committee?

A. Yes. Only one evening of your free time each month would help the Society to carry on the necessary work. It is a well known fact that everyone who has served on a

(Cont'd page 6)

committee, a member or director, found greater interest in the Society and the hobby.

- Q. If I am unable to serve on a Committee how can I help the Society?
- A. (1) There is always the need for a helping hand at the regular meetings.  
 (2) Support your society magazine by writing an article.  
 (3) Help to increase the membership by bringing a friend to the meetings.  
 (4) Offer your suggestions and comments.  
 (5) Support the Society in any fund raising project.

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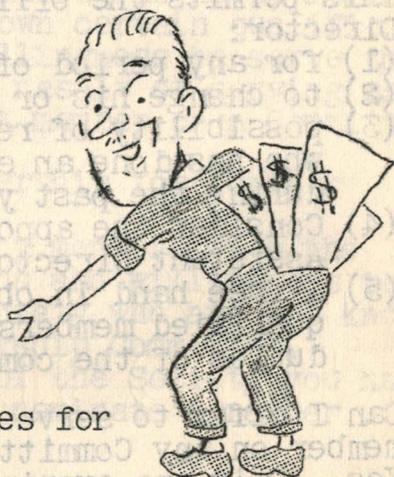
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A COPPER FOR YOUR THOUGHTS  
by Vance Dawson, The Canadian Aquaria Society

Copper can kill your fish, but, if proper concentration is used, it will cure certain diseases and kill obnoxious algae without harming the fish. The concentration must be small, and just a little too much is fatal.

By small concentrations do we mean two parts per million, twenty parts per million, or two hundred parts per million? Well, oddly enough, we might mean any of them, because under certain conditions, two parts per million might be fatal to a certain fish and, yet under other conditions, the same fish may tolerate two hundred parts per million.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the variables which control the fish's ability to withstand copper.

The first variable you run into is the type of fish. Since copper causes the fish to asphixiate, a heavy user of oxygen will be more susceptible than a light user and, even with the same species, it depends on whether the fish has previously been subjected to the copper treatment. A mature, but not old, fish can stand higher concentrations of copper than a young fish, and copper has a cumulative effect, which means that a previous treatment will carry over its' toxic effect.

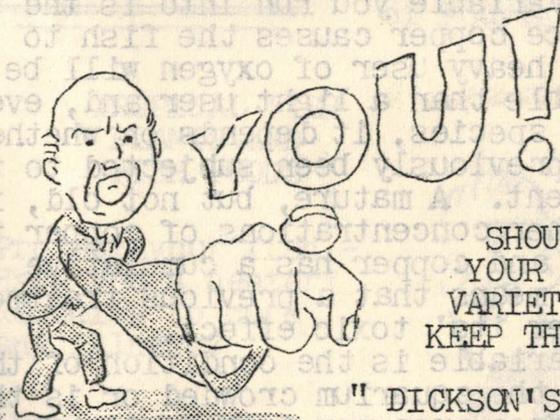
The next variable is the condition of the aquarium. Is the aquarium crowded or is there plenty of surface area per inch of fish? Are you using aeration? Do you keep the tank at a high temperature? A high temperature will make a tank overcrowded, although the same tank may be all right at a lower temperature. Because copper makes it hard for the fish to breathe, give them optimum conditions when using copper.

Although copper will kill algae and plants if a strong enough solution is reached, fish  
(Cont'd page 8)

can stand a stronger solution in a planted tank than they can in a bare tank.

Salt in the water makes the copper less harmful to the fish, without reducing the efficiency of the treatment. There are other chemicals which work the same way, but salt is the common one.

It makes a big difference whether the water is soft or hard. Tests were run where it took over fifty times the concentration of copper in hard water to kill a certain species of fish than it did to kill the same species in soft water. Although a water softener will remove copper from solution, remember, it takes a smaller concentration of copper in soft water to kill a fish that it does in hard water.



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VARIETY OF FOOD TO  
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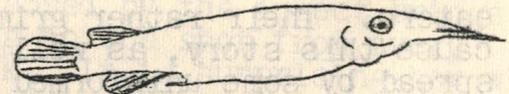
SPECIAL SHIPMENTS OF TROPICAL FISH  
AND PLANTS ARRIVING EACH WEEK

LATEST TROPICAL FISH BOOKS

Mrs. W. Dickson, prop. Phone CE2-7586

THE HALF-BEAK, DERMOGENYS PUSILLUS  
by Jetse Sprey, reprinted from The Aquarium

Occasionally when looking around in a tropical fish store, we see a strange little fish, the half-beak, which I would like to discuss in this article. I might immediately say that the specimens which we happen to see at the dealer's are often in a deplorable condition: thin, without color, and often with a broken jaw.



This factor, together with the fact very little is known about the keeping and breeding of this little fish, results in few people buying it. This is a pity, because the half-beak is not only a very interesting fish, but is also relatively easy to keep and breed.

In nature we find the half-beak all over Southeast Asia. The fish is found in brackish water close to the shore, but also in inland waters, where it is found in the company of Rasbora and Gourami species. This indicates that the fish does not demand any specific kind of water. I keep my half-beaks mostly in medium hard water (about 8 DH), which has some salt added to it; thus the same kind of water in which most people keep their guppies. I have found that half-beaks and other live-bearers make very good companions in a community tank. The fish do not grow very large. The females reach a length of about two and a half inches; the males do not grow larger than two inches. The males are easily recognized by the different shape of their anal fin. The color of the half-beak is a bluish grey, while the female has a bright red spot in its dorsal. The first ray of the anal fin is often red also for both sexes. As for temperature, here again the fish is easy

(Cont'd page 10)

to please. Some of my tanks are not heated at all, and have a winter temperature varying between 68° F. at night to 72° F. during the daytime. The half-beaks which live in those tanks are quite happy and, from time to time, duly produce offspring. Others feel just as well in heated tanks at a higher temperature.

Finally, the food problem must be discussed. In talking to fellow hobbyists here, I often encounter the misconception that half-beaks are strictly live-food eaters. Their rather grim appearance may cause this story, as well as misinformation spread by some uninformed dealers. The half-beak is, as is apparent from its shape, a surface fish. It seldom goes deeper than a few inches below the surface. In nature it eats mainly insects, and is an extremely useful destroyer of mosquitoes. It catches these when they come down to deposit their eggs in the water. It would thus be ideal to feed the fish fruitflies, mosquitoes, etc. The average hobbyist does not have this kind of food in stock, however. Instead of a regular menu, then, it becomes an added treat now and then. Every fly and mosquito I kill during the summer months goes into my tank (except those killed by chemical means. Even dead insects are accepted if one moves them a bit along the water surface. The half-beaks take many types of other food, though. They like frozen adult brine shrimp, frozen fish roe, tubifex, white worms and daphnia. The latter (and live brine shrimp) they catch when the little animals are swimming closely under the water surface at the place where the light is located. For a change, they are even willing to take dry food, like Wawil, for instance. The main problem is to make it possible for them to get their food before it sinks down too deep towards the bottom.

(Cont'd page 11)

Dry stuff like Wawil floats, so that does not create any problems. Frozen brine shrimp and tubifex can best be fed by means of a pair of tweezers. If one shakes the food a bit over the water surface the half-beaks can get it before it is down too deep. The fish will come up and grab the tubifex or white worms from between the tweezers. Half-beaks grow very tame and are extremely alert to every disturbance of the water surface. We can see this when we drop a live fly into the water. The tiny ripple caused by the insect brings half-beaks soaring to the spot from every corner of the tank. It is surprising how wide a grown half-beak can open its mouth. They do like to snap up a young guppy when they have a chance, but they seldom manage to catch one. I had several grown half-beaks in a tank in which a few guppy females were regularly bearing their fry, but practically none of the fry was caught by the half-beaks. Besides, they definitely prefer insects and worms, when given a choice.

I will close with a few words about the breeding of the fish. Half-beaks are live-bearers. In contrast to others of this kind, however, they only bear a very small number of fry. A batch of young fish numbering between fifteen and twenty is a good one. The females carry the young about thirty days before they come free. The female does not eat her own young; at least not during the first few hours after they are born. Other half-beaks, which happen to be in the neighborhood are quite happy to do so, however (if they can get them). It is therefore a good idea, when we spot a heavily loaded female, to separate her from the rest, or to remove the other half-beaks from the tank for a while. For the separation of the female we can use a plastic trap or one of the so-called "baby-saver nets." The young are born in a time-span of a few hours. It happened once to me that I came

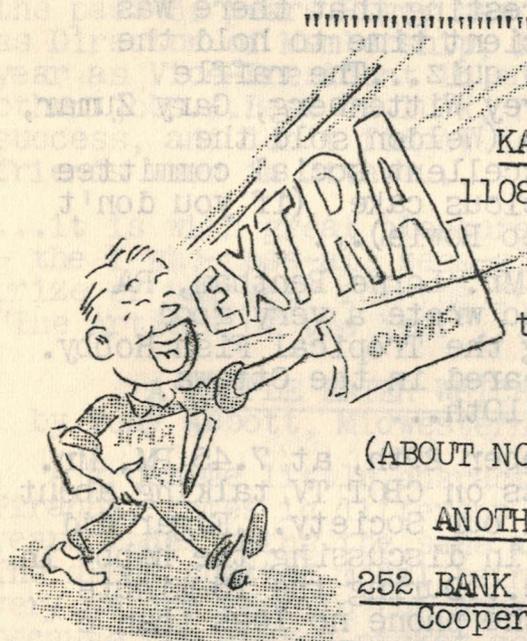
home from work and looked into a community tank in which one heavy half-beak female was swimming. As I looked, a young fish was born, and was immediately gulped down by a big Scat which happened to be nearby. I immediately removed the mother, putting her in the first thing that came to hand: an empty soup plate that had been standing on the table. I then went to the other room to get an empty container, and when I returned I noticed that the fish had given birth to six or seven fry in the meantime, which were all happily swimming in their soup plate. So we see that half-beaks are certainly not hard to breed! The main problem is the question of timing. It is rather easy to see when a female becomes pregnant, but it is difficult to foresee exactly when her time will be up. This becomes a matter of experience. In the beginning it is better to take no chances, but if we see a female getting bigger and bigger to set her apart after a week or three. She should be fed normally, of course. It is possible to stimulate the birth of the young by putting the female into completely new water. If this is done the transfer should take place gradually. Sudden change of water is one of the few things half-beaks are sensitive to. It is necessary to take about an hour to transfer the fish gradually from one type of water into another, if the type of water is very different. If we do not force the birth of the young the fry are larger, and we have practically no bellysliders or dead ones.

The young fish can be fed live baby brine shrimp right away. They also take finely mashed Wawil. One of the things to keep in mind again here is that the food should be close to the surface. The easiest way to get young half-beaks through their first weeks is to keep them in very

(Cont'd page 13)

shallow water; one or two inches is fine. The best temperature lies between 70° and 74° F. I noticed that at a lower temperature the fry are bigger at birth.

It will be clear from the above story that the half-beak is not very difficult to keep. It is not a fish to keep in schools. One male and a couple of females do very well in a community tank. I do hope that some enterprising hobbyists will give the little half-beak a try sometime. I don't think they will be disappointed.



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Ken Craig, prop..... PA9-2057.....



HAVE YOU HEARD THE LATEST????

...it appears that our speaker for the Senior meeting, Mr. John Haas, will have to return very soon. The meeting was excellent and Mr. Hass's talk was so

interesting that there was not sufficient time to hold the Fish of the Month quiz...The raffle winners were Harvey Wittenberg, Gary Zumar, and Weldon Hodges (Weldon sold the tickets)...our excellent social committee served some delicious cake (if you don't believe me ask Geo Bowie)...

...our thanks to Mr. Lorne Bentham, RA News Reporter, who wrote a very good article regarding the Tropical Fish Hobby. This article appeared in the Ottawa Citizen, October 10th...

...Thursday, October 29th, at 7.45 PM, Mr. Edgar Parisien was on CBOT TV talking about tropical fish and our Society...Edgar did an excellent job in discussing the hobby in such a short time...During the 15 minute show I answered the phone no less than 6 times - informing me that Mr. Edgar Parisien was on TV...

...the Senior Society welcomes a new member from Ste. Justine de Newton, PQ, Mrs. T. Oosting...

...I happened to be looking through a Senior Society attendance list and was quite surprised to find that a great many of our old friends have been absent for 2 or 3 meetings...we miss your cheerful faces, so

(Cont'd page 15)

why not get to the meetings and meet your old and new friends? If you are ill please inform our good friend Dan Jeffrey...

...sorry to hear that our Secretary, Barbara Johnson, had to resign due to other commitments. Barbara is attending night school and found it very difficult to keep up with her job as Secretary...

...we are losing two very good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Roger Trottier, who are leaving Ottawa and making their home in Montreal. In the past 3½ years Roger has served the Society as Director of Membership, Programme, and this year as Vice-President in addition to many other jobs...Best of luck, happiness and success, and don't forget to visit your OVAS friends when in Ottawa...

...it is with great pleasure that I (thats me - the 1 who-nose-all sees-all) award the grand prize of the year for the following article "The Article of the Year"...

A PEOPLE EATER WHICH AIN'T PURPLE  
by Tony Abbott, Midwestern Aquarist Club

A gruesome little character, known as the Piranha, comes in different models. This years model being the same as last years model. The sleek spotted model being the largest is very seldom kept in the home aquarium, mostly because the cotton-picker gets too big.

Another small blood-thirsty model is the red-breasted. He grows to a length of about 9 inches and is very narrow minded concerning other fish.

I have kept one of these for quite some-time and have found him to be a very willing garbage disposal. He will even be willing to dispose of the tips of my fingers as I feed him.

So many tales have been told of this

(Cont'd page 16)

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vicious fish that he has become a legend. For this reason, most dealers keep one of these charming characters on display in their shops.

In the aquarium, they have a Garbo attitude, "I want to be alone." In their native waters they swim and gather together like a bunch of fish fans.

They are very modest as far as letting the outside world in on their courting and spawning.

I wonder what the happy home life is like with everyone having such a sweet disposition????

### MY THREE FAVOURITE PLANTS

by Mrs. Lorna Olley, OVAS Senior Society

On the first visit to the pet shop it is always an understandable, but not usually wise idea, to purchase a large variety of plants for the aquarium.

The two most hardy, inexpensive and fast propagating are Vallisneria and Sagittaria. They are rivels and both seldom prosper in the same tank.

Vallisneria and Sagittaria thrive in  
(Cont'd page 17)

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hard water, making these ideal plants for the person who does not want the trouble of obtaining soft water, as per - rain water or distilled water. These plants can take it, up to a certain degree of course. With strong light and plenty of fish present these plants should soon develop.

Another good plant is the Water Sprite. It is very fast growing and when the stalks touch the water they need to be replaced by the floating younger plants. The younger plants seem to grow faster when the planting is held back until the roots are at least half an inch in length.

The Amazon Sword Plant is another extremely beautiful plant when in good condition. Personally, I find this plant

(Cont'd page 18)

rather difficult to grow which I believe is due to water changes, but no doubt there will be some disagreement on this point. One day my sword plants were beautifully green and healthy, then within three days the majority of the leaves were turning brown. No water was added, same amount of light, and no one except myself was near the tank - yet my sword plants were dying.

My opinion is that the former three plants are the most suitable for aquarium use.

THE MOST INTERESTING HOBBY IN THE WORLD  
by Mr. Edgar Parisien, OVAS Senior Society

Recently while being interviewed by a TV Producer, the old standard question was asked "why do you say this is the most interesting hobby in the world"?

To get the point across in such a way as to arouse public interest, and thereby contribute to the hobby, one can not give the individual opinion when there are such a vast number of interests in the hobby for all walks of life.

To one who has been interested in the hobby for more than 20 years, my answer is usually a brief outline covering the wide field of interest. It is my opinion that the field is endless, and find that the prime interest in this hobby varies greatly, depending a great deal on the education and background of each individual.

For instance, the biologist would be deeply interested from a different point of view than the fellow who wants a community aquarium to decorate his living room or den. He may go on a project with a study of genetics in mind, and along the way he would branch off into fields of

(Cont'd on page 19)

interest not dreamed of by the average hobbyist.

If I were a geologist I would study the relation of rock and gravel to the water condition and well being of the fish.

If I were a chemist I would be primarily interested in the study of water and such questions as "why do some fish do better and show better color in soft water, while others are not affected", also the real affect of PH on fish.

If one is a botanist he would be interested in the study of algae, such as the blue or black algae, how to control it or look for a cure for the various blights that sometimes mean slow death to plants.

The horticulturist would be interested primarily in growing beautiful healthy plants and the fish would be secondary.

The average aquarist finds his pleasure in keeping fish. He may focuss his interest in developing fine guppies or improving some other species.

What ever the motive, every aquarist must first learn the secrets of aquarium management which includes a limited knowledge of ALL the previously mentioned (and many more) subjects necessary to maintain a perfect balance of nature.

Everyone has a special interest in the hobby and specializes in certain fields, each one depending on the other for assistance and information, the biologist, geologist, chemist etc.

This is my answer to the question "why do you say this is the most interesting hobby in the world". If you agree, then we should be doing everything we possibly can to share our hobby interests.

In order to share the pleasure with others and obtain valuable information, many books are published and the societies make every effort to bring this information to the

(Cont'd page 20)

hobbyist via society magazines, bulletins, and at the regular meetings. No doubt you have met many hobbyists who devote much of their time and energy organizing aquarium Societies, the International Federation of Aquarium Societies, writing articles, etc, so as to spread information about the hobby. We all have something to offer.

Have you shared your field of interest with other hobbyists by writing an article for the OVAS News? Everyone obtains some information that is going to be of benefit to others, however if this information is not passed on then we are not helping our friends, society, hobby and ourselves.

Our hobby is growing but just think how much faster it would grow if everyone contributed.

LETTER FROM OUR VICE-PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

We wish to thank everyone for their kind wishes in our new life that is beginning in Montreal.

1960 is proclaiming itself as the criterion in the Society's history - a permanent home. We would have enjoyed immensely sharing this with you and the other developments that are pending.

Your future executive will have a great task to perform and only your full support will be their mainstay. The ballot privilege in December will become your voice in future policies. They will need your help. Without this your officers cannot expect the Society to function as a club.

We wish you the best. We shall follow your progress and if possible visit you occasionally.

Not "adieu" but "goodbye" to all Senior and Junior members of the Society.

Yours sincerely,  
Pierrette and Roger Trottier.

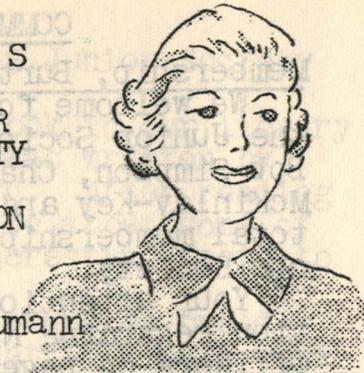


O V A S

JUNIOR  
SOCIETY

SECTION

Editor:  
Larry Neumann



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

First of all I would like to remind you that the nominations for the new slate of officers for the coming year will be accepted from the floor at our November meeting. The election of officers will take place at the December meeting. This will give you an opportunity to seriously consider the member of your choice.

The executive is very pleased to extend an invitation to the parents to attend our November meeting. We would like to see as many members and parents attend. A very good programme has been arranged, including a door prize and raffle.

Many of us are not supporting our Junior Section of the OVAS News. If every member was to write one article (one only) we would then have sufficient material for our Junior Section of the News for one year. All articles should be forwarded to Larry Neumann or Mr. Harvey Wittenberg.

Remember to return your library books at each meeting otherwise your deposit will be forfeited. The deposit for all hard cover books is .25¢.

Don't forget to bring your parents and a friend to the next meeting.

*Ian Woods*  
Ian Woods, President.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership, Burton Grundy, Director

We welcome four new members who joined the Junior Society at our October meeting: Bob Simpson, Charlie Pitts, John McKinlay-Key and Aundre Godbout. Our total membership is now 64 - a record for our Society.

Your attention is drawn to the information regarding Nomination and Election of Officers on page 4.

Show, Gordon Worden, Director

Our first Fish of the Month Quiz was a success with Graham Conway's group winning the prizes. The winner of the Jar Show was David Barron who received the greatest number of points for his prized Zebra. I was very pleased to see 13 entries which was a record for our Jar Shows.

Programme, Chipper Vickers, Director

Our November meeting is "Parents Night". A very good programme has been arranged for this special meeting.

Don't forget that our next meeting has been advanced due to the Christmas holidays and will be held on December 3rd.

Magazine, Larry Neumann, Director

Our thanks to Chipper Vickers for the very good article on Guppies.

Social, Andrew Holdham, Director

The Senior Society Social Committee, Mr. Allan Griffin, Director, kindly consented to serve the refreshments for the Parents at the November meeting.

Soft drink bottles are not to be taken out of the meeting room - please cooperate.

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REMEMBER TO BUY FROM OUR ADVERTISERS

GUPPIES

by Chipper Vickers, OVAS Junior Society

Recently I read a new book in our library entitled "Guppies", which was written by Messrs. Axelrod and Whitern. After reading this book I decided to write about some of the most important and interesting facts to be found in it.

Popularity of Guppies. Guppies breed rapidly, and it is said that if a pair were allowed to breed freely, and none died, they would have 3,000,000 descendants in one year. This fact, undoubtedly, accounts for the nickname given the Guppy in England - "The Million Fish".

No two male guppies have exactly the same markings or fins and because of this scientists once thought that each was a different species. For at least thirty years after they were imported to England they were looked upon as freaks.

It is because of the quick breeding and great variety in a tank of guppies that they have become the most popular of home aquarium fishes.

How the Guppy Got It's Name. The history of this fish dates back to 1859, when a great German ichthyologist, named Wilhelm C.H. Peters, found a specimen in a collection brought from Venezuela.

He named it Poecilia Reticulata, noting it's resemblance to the killifish family.

At this time there were few aquaria being maintained, so the best he could do was to watch this little fishes' peculiarities and habits. In 1866 a British botanist named Rev. Robert John Lechmere Guppy brought some of these fish from the Island of Trinidad.



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The museum director, to whom he had brought some of these fish, named them Guppy thinking Rev. Guppy had discovered them.

Care of Guppies. If Guppies are to be kept in small aquaria, their own droppings will soon contaminate the water and either cause their death directly, or so weaken them that a serious parasite would finish them off. Therefore, in order to keep the aquarium clean, we must provide our guppies with as large a volume as possible - 20 mature guppies will not do their best in an aquarium smaller than ten gallons. By the use of a sub-gravel filter and the water sprite, it is a simple matter to keep the water clean and sweet-smelling. If the water sprite grows well, so will the fish.

All water has its measurable amount of acidity or alkalinity. The scale of acidity runs from 0 to 14, with units of tenths. The center of the scale, 7.0, is water that is neither acid nor alkaline. It is probably the most desirable PH for most aquarium fish, but guppies like a PH of 6.8 to 6.6, though most guppy geniuses don't bother about PH. They say; "If water sprite grows well, the PH must be right", and it usually is. You may consider it safe to change guppies to water which has a temperature variation of not more than 4<sup>0</sup>F and a PH difference of not more than 0.2.

The hardness of the aquarium water is the measure of the dissolved salt contained therein. Too few dissolved salts (such as in rain or distilled water), is as dangerous to fish as very hard water, (lime water), and it is impossible to raise fancy guppies in either. The best way to check the PH and DH, (DH can be read as degrees of hardness), is with special kits which are available at your pet shop. If the DH is between 4<sup>0</sup> to 10<sup>0</sup> hardness, it is alright

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and there is nothing to worry about, except if you have gravel that contains soluble salts. These gradually dissolve in the water, building up the DH. A sign of increasing DH is the white scum line along the top of the waterline. This is the distillate product of dissolved salt and is a warning that a change of water and an investigation of the sudden change is necessary.

Plants. It has already been mentioned that the best plant for the guppy aquarium is water sprite. This plant serves many purposes - it uses fertilizer, tests the water and serves as a hiding place. Though water sprite is the best it is not the only plant used. The second best is a team of plants with *Nitella gracilis* floating on the surface and *cryptocoryne* and *hartelliana* anchored in the gravel. *Nitella* is a sensitive plant and will die if the water is not pure. It also serves as a protection for baby fish. Stay away from all broad leafed plants as they won't grow in an aquarium with a sub gravel filter and they are too tough to provide the necessary vegetable portion of the guppies diet.

Gravel. It may seem unimportant what kind of gravel you put on the bottom of a guppy aquarium, but it can be the difference between success and failure. The most important is the size of gravel - a No.2 or 3 gravel is ideal. If a gravel is too fine it will hinder the growth of the plants by disturbing the proper circulation of gasses and water. If it is too coarse, it will provide inaccessible lodging for uneaten particles of food, thus affording excellent opportunity for decay bacteria to do their evil job. Another consideration is the solubility of the gravel. Some gravels contain soluble calcium and sodium salts, which dissolve in the water and make it harder and harder. This type of gravel is not suitable for your aquarium.

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Proper Light and Temperature. The role of light and temperature not only plays a big part in reproduction but also in the health and growth of your fish. From a survey of 10 successful guppy breeders the average amount of light given the fish was twelve hours a day. The temperature ranged from 73 to 80°, with the average temperature 77.5 which would be the best for beginners. After a twenty four hour period of intense light it was found that the guppy colors faded.

The breeders who keep fish in the 80° range say the higher temperature makes the fish grow larger, faster, even though they admit they sacrifice a long life span. The cold water boys point out that larger fish with a longer life, are produced at lower temperatures.

Feeding Fancy Guppies. It cannot be stressed enough about the importance of feeding the guppies properly in order to obtain "super guppies". Guppies should be fed a minimum of three times a day, but more often is definitely an asset. Most important in feeding is a well balanced diet. The best food for young guppies is brine shrimp, shredded shrimp meal, liver, salmon eggs, also beef meals.

After the first two month period, when the guppies have been separated, a more substantial food must be given to the fish. Tubifex worms are valuable for this purpose. They should be offered once a day along with other food. Daphnia may also be offered but it is not the best food, although it is relished by the fish. Two good rules to follow when feeding guppies are (1) Feed as little as possible as often as possible and (2) Super guppies require super diets.

Diseases of the Guppy. Fancy guppies are prone to many diseases. Once a guppy

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has become ill then its value as a breeder is over. One great authority said "once the guppy is ill the aquarist guesses at the disease, guesses at the treatment and at the strength and length of the treatment".

The most common disease is ick or white spot. The disease appears on the fish as a white spot which covers the body. The treatment is simple - raise the temperature ten degrees and add one tablespoon of kosher salts to each five gallons of water.

If the fish has torn fins or scales he may develop fungus. If this happens you must put him in a separate tank and use the same treatment as for ick.

The third is one of the most fatal diseases. It first appears as a flattened fin or pinched tail, then a small white area appears on the tail. This is a sure sign of death in approximately three days. Although little is known about this disease there is a good cure for it. Place the fish in a tank with the temperature 4 to 5 degrees higher than normal, then add two drops of 40% formalin. Remove fish after ten minutes. Young fish should only be treated for five minutes.

Two things to remember about guppy diseases are (1) although guppies are prone to many diseases they will have a better chance and healthier life if they are kept at an even temperature, (2) an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

#### AQUA-PLANT LIFE

by Joe Youngs, The Calgarian, Calgary  
Aquarium Society.

The Amazon Sword Plant was introduced to aquarists from tropical America in 1937. It has long narrow light green leaves on short stems, that rise from a central crown and

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droop slightly. In a 15 to 25 gallon tank, its sturdy compact appearance makes a beautiful centerpiece.

When planting, keep the crown above the gravel level but make sure the large root is completely covered.

With good light it should grow well in just the aquarium gravel, but if you are using an undergravel filter, place the plant in a small glass or plastic container filled with soil. A bottom filter will stunt growth and give a washed out appearance.

Sword Plants reproduce by runners that shoot upward. Groups of two small leaves appear at intervals, those nearest the parent growing larger. In a short time, small roots appear beneath each group of leaves. When this happens, press the new plant into the gravel, but do not cut from the runner until at least six leaves appear.

Angel fish are fond of spawning on the leaves of large Sword Plants.

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JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE JULY

THE AQUARIST'S CALENDAR  
"The Aquarium"

NOVEMBER - Your aquariums should be exposed to more daylight (or artificial light) as the power of the sun's rays diminishes. However, if they are placed nearer the daylight, avoid opening windows, as a quick chill will surely result. In fact, opening windows anywhere in the room should be avoided, since the cold air settles in a layer from the floor upward. Considerable heating and time are necessary to return the room to its normal temperatures. By then the damage may be done. (Cont'd page 29)

Now is the time to "weed out" your tanks. All yellowish or weak-looking plants should be removed. Summer growth has probably increased the plant population considerably. Many of these new healthy ones should be removed. Most people greatly over-estimate the plant requirements of an aquarium.

November is probably the most difficult month for aquarium fishes. The ones which have been brought in from outdoor pools are still making an adjustment to cramped quarters and less oxygen. Extra aeration is an aid in helping the fishes make the most of their new conditions.

Most of us are reluctant to turn on our heating systems early in this month. As a result the temperature of our homes is likely to fluctuate considerably. The fish will suffer unless heaters are in good condition and in use.

There are numbers of excellent commercial dry foods on the market, but a large percentage of aquarist prefer to mix their own - at least occasionally. It's fun. This is a good time to do it as fresh ingredients are in general supply.

AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER

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FUN WITH CICHLIDS

by Guy Jordan, "The Tropical Breeze", San Diego Tropical Fish Society.

The family Chichlidae is a rather varied one as to size, color, habits, and geographical distribution. There is the large 8 inch "Oscar" and varying intermediate sizes down to the 2 inch or smaller dwarfs, represented by the dazzling Ramirezi. Colors range from beauties such as the Discus, Jewel and Ramirezi to the drab but still interesting members. Habits, especially as regards

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spawning, vary in detail, but the overall conclusion must be that nearly all Cichlids are excellent parents and reproduce despite some pretty harsh and unfavorable conditions.

Asia has contributed two species, one of which is the Orange Chromide which has reproduced well for us and is quite well known here. Africa and Madagascar are represented by a number of varied-sized specimens, with mouthbreeders and the colourful but savage Jewel being some of the better known.

The New World, from Texas down into South America, has supplied us with a varied group. The lordly Angel is the most readily recognized and available. It is being bred in goodly numbers by amateurs and professionals and is a "must" in the average community tank. They will usually spawn on rather firm leaves of rooted plants but many breeders use a slanting green rod which is placed in the spawning tank and removed with the eggs to safer quarters for hatching.

Porties, as do most of the New World Cichlids, prefer to spawn on a smooth stone. With almost no exceptions, the parents fan the eggs until they hatch and then remove the helpless babies to prepared depressions in the sand where the fanning continues until the babies become free swimming. Babies are moved (and scrubbed) from time to time, but a youngster is rarely harmed.

The first requirement in spawning is a compatible pair. In most cases, sexing is difficult, so we house a number of youngsters in a large tank where they eventually pair off unmistakably.

The larger Cichlids, including the 4 or 5 inch Porties, do best in a spacious tank, but adapt themselves to unfavorable conditions quite cheerfully. I have spawned and raised Ports in an unaerated 15 gallon tank and dwarfs in a (Cont'd page 31)

5 gallon aquarium.

Another thing I like about Cichlids is that most of the babies need no smelly infusoria - they do nicely on newly hatched brine shrimp and micro-grain. Crushed boiled egg yolk is taken greedily. I leave parents with the young in most cases for about a month.

I suggest that Mr. Innes' "Exotic Aquarium Fishes" be consulted before you choose a Cichlid. Some are gentle, but others, although pretty, may be very savage and can be used only in special situations. One parting remark - "There is a Cichlid to suit anybody."

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

...From "Tank Talk, Midwestern Aquarist Club, The Black Lace Angel Fish are the end result of a long selective breeding by several experts at scattered points. They first started in the Scalare pond of Mr. Woolf of Florida in 1948...

...Fins'n Bones, Aquarium Society of Wichita. Infusoria is available in tablets which dissolve in water. Caution should be exercised in feeding. Don't dissolve them directly in the aquarium, use a jar and feed from this...

...Tropical Topics, The Aquarium Hobby Club of Indianapolis...When an aquarium with fish and plants get poor light, the water turns a brownish color and the plants stop growing. A state of deterioration starts in and a bacterial growth attacks the roots of the plants, thereby stunting their growth. This is especially true when uneaten food falls amongst the plant roots thereby causing rot. ...fanciers should be careful in the use of (Cont'd page 32)

some of the varieties of colored sand and gravel. A little can be used for decorative purposes in various spots of the aquarium, but not for a whole bottom, as it affects the root growth of some plants and in the long run may affect the health of the fish...

...Tropicals, Tropicals Magazine. The first three weeks of scientific observations of the Zambesi Valley in Africa, during its flooding because of the Kariba Dam hydro-electric development, has been a real "field day" for the ichthyologist. After the sluice grids on the dam had closed to reduce the flow of water from the Zambesi River, it was observed that the river dropped 15 feet in one afternoon. Panic resulted in the down river pools - trapped fish were jumping everywhere. A noted South African ichthyologist has netted at least 60 new species for study and it is reported that every one is a "jewel".

...Brant Aquarium Society say "Don't Crowd Your Fish"...How would you like to live your life in a space the size of an ordinary elevator? Of course you could live, but there certainly would be no fun in it. So - give your fish a break and a chance to live at their brilliant best. Don't crowd them, don't crowd their tanks with bulky ornaments. Free swimming space, occassional live food, proper temperatures and a clean tank are all they ask. They will repay you by long life and capacity reproduction...

CHRISTMAS IS NOT FAR AWAY.....REMEMBER TO  
BUY FROM OUR ADVERTISERS...TROPICAL FISH,  
PLANTS, AQUARIA, BOOKS AND ACCESSORIES.  
ALL PRICED TO MEET YOUR CHRISTMAS BUDGET.