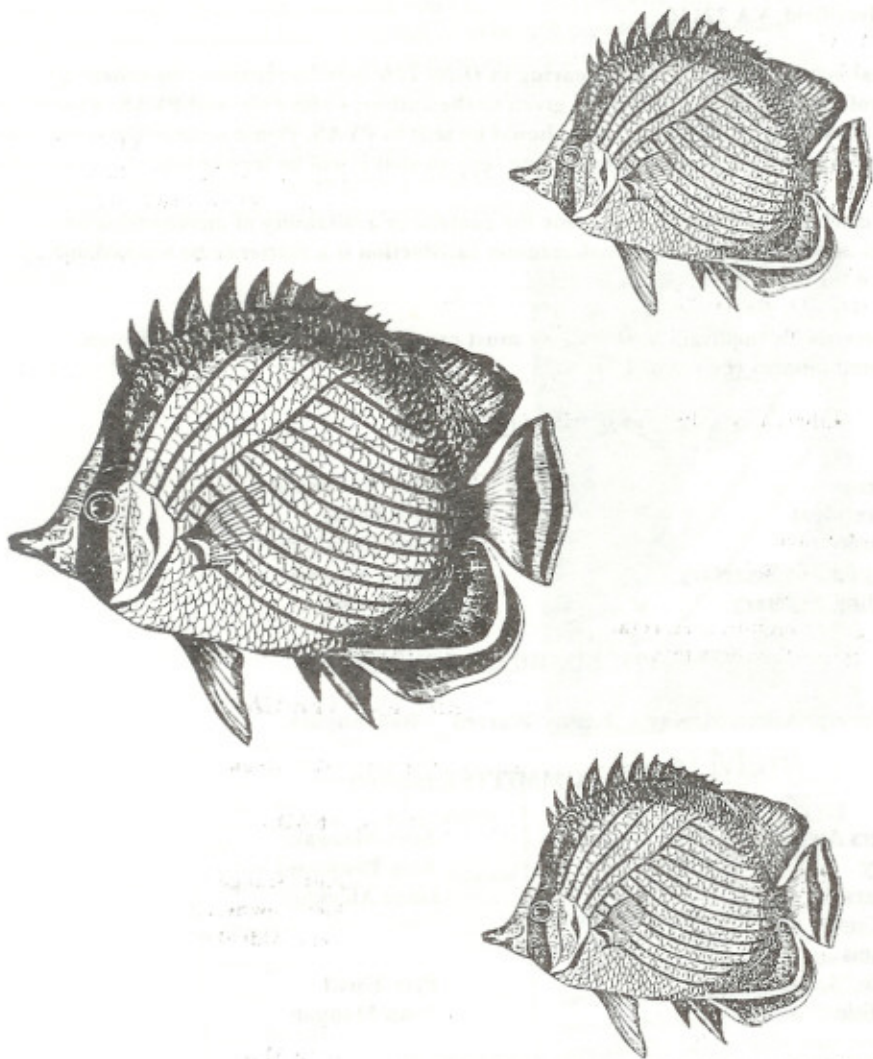


* DELTA TALE *

Sept/Oct
1995
vol. 26, #5

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF

potomac valley aquarium society



The *Delta Tale* is published bimonthly for the benefit of the membership of the POTOMAC VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY INC. , a non-profit educational and social organization . The society was founded in 1960 for the purposes of furthering the aquarium hobby by the dissemination of information and advice, and the promotion of good fellowship among the membership by organized activities and competitions.

All correspondence to the society and to *Delta Tale* should be directed to P.O. Box 664, Merrifield, VA 22116.

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All materials for inclusion in *Delta Tale* must reach the editor by the 10th of even numbered months (Feb.,April, etc.).

1995 PVAS OFFICERS

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Printed by TOP CAT PRINTING, Manassas Park, Va

From the editor's desk

By the time you read this summer will be over, the kids will be back in school, and it will be time to start catching up with all of those things in the fish room that you've neglected all summer so that you could play outside. It's also almost time for the PVAS Fall Auction. Start deciding what you want to sell off, and making room for all of the neat new stuff you're going to buy. *Please* make sure that you bag your fish properly. Big fish need big bags. Lots of small fishes need either a big bag or to be split up into several smaller ones. You can bind the small bags together or sell them as separate items. Use proper fish bags not ziploc bags or leaky used bags. If you need bags your local pet shop should be able to sell you a few very cheaply. There will be a complete set of rules printed in this issue. Make sure you read them carefully so there are no surprises for you on auction day.

PVAS elections will be coming up soon (Nov). Start thinking about running for an office. If you have any questions talk to any current officer about what is involved with any specific position.

Until next time...



Write to: Feed the Waifs
Industria Superstudio
New York, New York 10014
or call 1-800-SOS-WAIF

Yes, I want to help sponsor a:

- female supermodel male supermodel in:
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 Enclosed is my gift of \$_____. Please send
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 Please send me further information.

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How Many Times Can You Look Away?

For just 39¢ a day, less than the cost of a cup of coffee, you can keep this girl, and other supermodels just like her, alive. When you help sponsor a supermodel, you'll be providing essentials like warm miso soup and tuna carpaccio, a spare SoHo loft, and some truly spectacular clothing. Please help soon. Feed Kate Moss. Don't look away anymore.

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

 For up to the minute information on what's happening call the free PVAS hotline anytime. (703) 352-3365.

Sept. 11: PVAS Monthly Meeting Program (subject not known at press time), door prize, raffles, mini-auction, refreshments. Note: the parking lot fills up fast due the karate classes. If you can't find a parking space go back to the street, turn right and then right again at the light. You can park in either the health center or school parking lots. Doors open at 7:30, meeting starts at 8:00. Everyone is welcome.

Oct. 16: PVAS Monthly Meeting. Please note- this is the 3rd Monday of the month not the 2nd when we usually meet. The 2nd Monday of Oct. is Columbus Day and the Wood Center is closed.

Oct. 22: PVAS Fall Auction. Complete details elsewhere in this issue. Always lots of good stuff for sale. Don't miss it.

Nov. 13: PVAS Monthly Meeting

TRADING POST

PVAS members may advertise in the trading post at no charge. Send ads to *Delta Tale*, c/o John Mangan, 12633, Oakwood Dr. Woodbridge, VA 22192.

For Sale: backissue aquarium magazines. Many different titles. Send SASE for catalog. John Mangan, 12633 Oakwood Dr., Woodbridge, VA 22192.

For Sale: Breeding group *Corydoras panda*. Total of 10 fish: 3 females, 3 males, 4 unknown. \$40 or best offer, please contact Jeff Burke, (703) 941-3230.

For Sale: Aquarium stands, various sizes. Contact Laura Sakos, (540) 720- 2502.

Oct. 22, 1995

POTOMAC VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

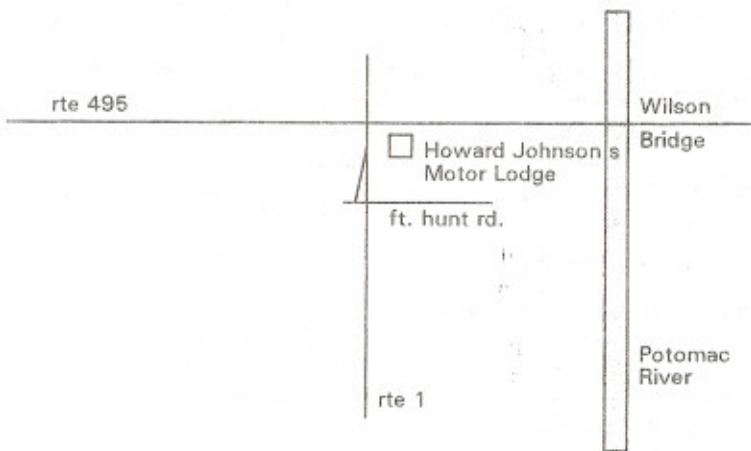
AUCTION!

TROPICAL FISH AND EQUIPMENT

HOWARD JOHNSON HOTEL, 5821 Richmond Highway, Alexandria,
VA. (route 1 at the beltway).

A great opportunity to buy-sell fish, plants, aquariums, books, equipment, supplies...
We will also hold a raffle for new equipment and supplies!

Registration 9 am - 12 noon
The auction will begin at 11 am!



Directions: Howard Johnson's is located on the east-side of rte 1 just south of rte 495 and north of Fort Hunt Rd. Exit rte 495 onto rte 1 south. Howard Johnson's is located on the other side of the divided highway. Follow the signs for Ft. Hunt Rd., then turn back onto rte 1 heading north.

POTOMAC VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

AUCTION RULES

RULES FOR THE SELLER

1. You do not need to be a PVAS member to buy or sell hobby-related items, including fish, plants, equipment, etc. in the auction.
2. Registration of items for sale will begin at 9 AM and will end at 12 PM. Auctioning will begin at 11 AM. Items arriving after 11 AM may not be placed on the tables until after the first break. You must be in line by 1: PM to register.
3. All items must be labeled with the identity of their contents, to include: number, sex (if possible), and other pertinent data. Use a waterproof marking pen and adhesive label. Labeling equipment will be available at the auction site, but items must be labeled before being registered.

Fish: "Pair" means one of each sex. "Mated Pair" means a pair that have spawned with each other. "Trio" means one male and two females. "Reverse trio" means two males and one female. "Mixed sexes" means at least one of each sex is present. If you are not certain label "unsexed". Any major flaws should also be mentioned. PVAS reserves the right to reject any fish judged as unsuitable for auction.

Supplies: All equipment **MUST** be labeled as to working condition, missing parts, and any other pertinent data. PVAS reserves the right to reject any item judged as unsuitable for auction.

4 **Proper fish bags must be used.** Live items must be bagged with ample air and water (don't overfill the bag with water, leave plenty of air space also). Make sure the bag is of a suitable size for the fish in it. Do not overcrowd fish. More than one bag may be joined together as one item if necessary. Fish packed in ziploc or similar bags will not be registered. If a fish is registered in a bucket, tank, bowl, etc. the container will be considered part of the item and they will be auctioned as a unit. PVAS reserves the right to reject any improperly packed item and to re-bag any item if necessary.

5. Registration is limited to 15 items per person. A limit of 5 bags per species or color variety or form is allowed unless prior approval is obtained from the auction chairman.
6. Each item to be auctioned will receive a label with an item number and a colored dot. Those items with a red dot will be auctioned first. Each seller will be given one red dot for each four items registered. There will also be three other colors. The order that they are auctioned in will be determined by the auction committee and/or chairman after the auction begins.

7. Items will be offered as is and will be sold as one item. Once registered, the contents of an item may not be split.
8. Each item carries a \$1.00 minimum bid, unless the seller assigns a higher minimum (make sure to include the minimum on your label if it is higher than \$1). The seller may lower the minimum on an item that does not sell. Items that do not sell will be set aside and offered again at the very end of the auction.
9. No payment will be made to the seller on the day of the auction. Payment will be forwarded by mail within ten days after the auction date. It is the seller's responsibility to give PVAS a proper name and address to receive payment. Envelopes for this purpose will be filled out during registration.
10. The seller will receive two-thirds of the selling price. PVAS retains one-third.
11. All items not sold must be claimed at the close of the auction, or they will be disposed of at the discretion of the auction chairman.
12. The auctioneer retains the right to set aside any improperly bagged or marked item, or any sick or otherwise unsaleable item.
13. Fish species that are restricted by either federal or state statutes will not be accepted.

RULES FOR THE BIDDER

1. All persons wishing to participate in bidding are required to register with their full name and address. Bidding numbers will be assigned to all buyers.
2. Items may be inspected only before the auction and during breaks.
3. Bidding raises will be in \$1.00 increments. The auctioneer has the right to alter this on an item at his discretion.
4. Successful bidders will have their items brought to them at which time payment is expected. An authorized bidder may run a tab or pay by check. See the treasurer before the auction. Proper identification will be required in these instances.
5. **All sales are final.**
6. In all cases the decision of the auctioneer is final.

A Review of Five Discus Books Jerry Jellison

As a relative newcomer to the trials and satisfactions of raising discus, I recently acquired a number of books discussing the care of these fish. In what follows, I provide brief reviews of the books I have used in learning about discus.

Discus, by Tony Silva and Barbara Kotlar (TFH, Neptune, NJ, 1980).

This is a 92-page introductory-level guide. It is illustrated with color and black-and-white photos. It contains concise, accurate information that covers most topics a beginner might wonder about. There is a particularly good summary of techniques for raising discus fry artificially. Like many books, it puts an inappropriate emphasis on culturing of live foods like bloodworms, gammarus, etc. (in this day of frozen fish foods, does anyone really bother with live foods other than baby brine shrimp?) Another quibble is that the recommended temperature range for discus – 79 to 84 degrees – may be a bit low. The text discourages keeping discus with other species, but a photo shows discus in a community tank with angelfish and black mollies!

All About Discus, by Herbert R. Axelrod (TFH, Neptune, NJ, 1970, revised edition 1978).

This is an odd book. It is a rather out-of-date presentation of discus fundamentals by an authority on South American tropical fish, combined with about ten reprinted articles from *Tropical Fish Hobbyist* magazine. It is illustrated with color and black-and-white photos; a few of these seem to be of type (i.e., dead) fish.

The material by Axelrod comprises the first 30 pages of this 128-page book. It is mostly useful information, although I was surprised to see a recommended temperature of 76 degrees!

The reprinted magazine articles are interesting, providing scientific and practical information on diseases, parasites, and spawning practices. Of particular interest is an article by Jack Wattley summarizing discus care. Wattley makes a few controversial statements (cheese as discus food!) which are attacked in a follow-up "critique" article by Axelrod. Since these articles are from several authors, are rather old, and probably represent opinions formed before a consensus of discus care had formed, one has to be tolerant of some inconsistencies.

Discus Health, by Dieter Untergasser (TFH, Neptune, NJ, 1991).

This 416-page tome is the only "expensive" (about \$50) book reviewed here. It is a complete guide to discus health, although the large number of color photos results in somewhat less text than one would initially think.

Discus Health is a smoothly-done translation of a German text. The book is intended to be a care guide for discus, angelfish, and other large cichlids; in fact, most of the text and photos are oriented toward discus. The first several chapters give an exhaustive discussion of the functioning of a biological filter. A rather long chapter on "harmless aquarium inhabitants" follows; this section is interesting to anyone who has ever wondered about near-microscopic wriggling or darting "things" in a fish tank, although it is not specifically related to discus keeping. There is a long discussion of nutrition, including information on the function of various vitamins, minerals, etc. A

section on water toxins warns against inadvertent exposure to metal contaminants, such as copper and lead (lead plant weights are a possible source of contamination). There is a good chapter on the characteristics and uses of medications (some of which may not be readily available in the U.S.). The final 120 pages or so discuss specific diseases and parasites. The information is well-presented and useful.

As with any "professional" treatment of fish diseases, this book discusses microscopic characteristics of parasites. Hence, a microscope is needed to get full benefit from the data presented. *Discus Health* includes a section on how to work with a microscope, as well as information on dissecting procedures.

A few of the photos in this book are included merely because they look nice (with captions like "if you want to raise a brood of cichlids such as these *Cichlasoma citrinellum*, you must practice proper hygiene in the aquarium..."). But many of the color photos are invaluable as illustrations of disease lesions and other abnormal conditions.

The book is generally well-organized, with an adequate index. Although a discus keeper can get by with less expensive references, *Discus Health* is essential to the professional breeder or serious amateur.

...*And Still King*, by Frank G. Anderson (RCM, Sierra Madre, CA, 1993).

This is a rather cursory (65 pages) book by the author of the "Discus Beat" column in *Freshwater and Marine Aquarium* magazine. The information is basically good, although Anderson has a tendency to belabor the obvious (e.g., telling us to use a thermometer to measure temperature; explaining in two separate places how a siphon works). The book is illustrated with color photos - far fewer photos than in the TFH books, which is fine with me.

Discus Fish, by Thomas A. Giovanetti (Barrons Educational Series, Inc., Hauppauge, NY, 1991).

This is a well-designed 80-page softcover book. It is illustrated with drawings and color photos. Besides the usual "how to keep them" information, this book provides good coverage of filtration technology, discus-compatible plants (including information on plant nutrition and ailments), and recommended quarantine procedures for new fish. The information on disease recognition and treatment, while naturally not as complete as that found in *Discus Health*, is quite helpful and probably covers most problems likely to be encountered by a small-scale discus keeper. The information on discus keeping is up-to-date and accurate. However, many experts would probably disagree with Giovanetti's recommended water changing schedule of only 20 to 30 percent per month. For an established tank with adult fish, this may be adequate; to prevent young fish from becoming stunted, however, more extensive water changes should probably be done.

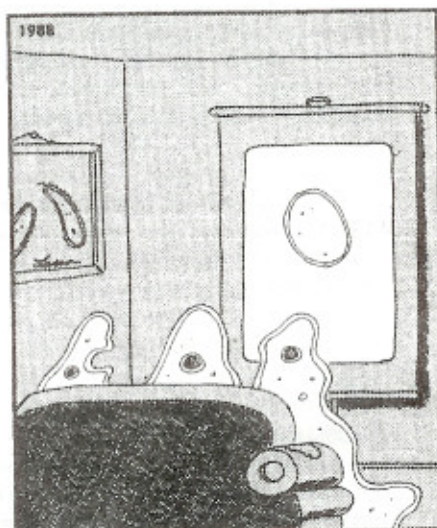
The books reviewed above have a lot of overlap, although they are complementary to some extent. For a beginner, I think Giovanetti's book provides the best value. For the more advanced discus keeper, Untergasser's *Discus Health* would be recommended.

Reading these books still left me with a few unanswered questions. None of these references provides adequate coverage of the various discus strains available. For example, are there agreed-upon standards for strains? Does identification of a discus type

as a "strain" normally mean that it breeds true? Care of juvenile fish is also slighted by these books. It is customary to provide large feedings to young discus; this and appropriately massive water changes apparently results in maximum growth, but these books do not discuss this. Furthermore, the books do not refer to the existence of growth-limiting hormones, which apparently can stunt juvenile fish that are not given adequate water changes. I have not found the "perfect" discus book. Of course, there are a number of other prominent discus books, including several by Jack Wattlely, and a real "discus nut" will probably not be content until he's read them all.



Before paper and scissors



"No, wait! That's not Uncle Floyd! Who is that?
... Criminy, I think it's just an air bubble!"

Are these the kind of things you've been doing for entertainment?
Try coming to a PVAS meeting instead.

BADIS BADIS

BY

JEFFREY BURKE

While in a pet shop in Pennsylvania I noticed a tank of Badis Badis, I had an empty 10 gallon at home so I decided to buy 6 of them and set the tank up for spawning.

Badis Badis is a small dwarf cichlid like fish although it is not a Cichlid. They only slightly aggressive and when put in the company of Apistogramma Agassizii and Crenicara Filamentosa they are at the bottom of the pecking order. The Badis Badis has a unique ability to change color, it is able to do this by blending in with objects. For example, one of the fish would camouflage itself by the keeping a small branch behind half of its body. The half in front of the branch was dark to match the branch and the half of the body sticking out was lighter in color. The dominant fish have beautiful blues and reds in their body and there fin.

After 6 months in the 10 gallon with no signs of spawning it was time to put them in the 30 gallon plant tank with several other tank mates being I needed the 10 gallon tank for my Corydoras fry. The Badis Badis settled in quickly and a few months later when I was trying to move the Apistos I discovered a female and a brood of young. The young had just hatched and they were still hanging on to the wood that I had picked up. I the wood and fry in a 2 1/2 gallon tank. The fry were the

smallest I had ever seen and it was difficult seeing them.

The first stepping stone to overcome was to remove the wood and debris without removing the fry. After three days the fry were hopping around the bottom of the tank so I slowly removed the wood hoping any fry on the wood would be swept back into the tank with the water. With the wood removed there was a lot of debris on the bottom. The debris took 10 days to siphon out because of the care needed to avoid sucking out the babies. No matter how careful I was some of the fry got sucked out and with the debris. After cleaning out the debris any fry in the siphoning bucket was removed with a eye dropper and released back into the tank. The next problem was feeding, from day 1-5, I used 2 drop of liquid fry in the morning and then again in the evening. Day 5-7 the fry started to waste away and die. So I tried Baby E powder food and that did not help. On day 8 I tried frozen Baby Brine and live Microworms and I could see maybe 5 full bellies, but the rest still were starving to death. On day 8 I started a Culture of live baby brine and on day 10 they were fed live baby brine and sure enough they reacted positively toward it. On day 15 they were eating live microworms in addition to live baby brine. At 60 days only 14 fry survived out of 60 eggs. Badis Badis have interesting color scheme and are interesting to observe. Both adults and fry prefer live food.

TANGANYIKA SECRETS

a review by
George White, PVAS

Tanganyika Secrets by Ad Konings and Horst Walter Dieckhoff provides a wealth of pictures of the spectacular Cichlids of Lake Tanganyika, one of Africa's Great Rift Lakes. This vast array of photos shows why so many aquarists consider the vibrantly colored Cichlids to be freshwater rivals to saltwater fish for the honors as the world's flashiest fish. Some of these photos are the first ever of certain species in their natural habitats. Many of them provide clues to the natural behavior of the various Cichlids.

Tanganyika Secrets also includes an ample supply of maps--a nice touch for aquarists interested in knowing where their favorites come from and a rough estimation of their geographic ranges within Lake Tanganyika. (This book would obviously be an invaluable guide for anyone contemplating a trip to Lake Tanganyika.) The authors clearly aimed their selection of material at Cichlid fans, or any other intelligent person who wants to know more about various sites in Lake Tanganyika.

No information is provided that directly deals with maintaining Tanganyikan Cichlids in home aquaria. However, Cichlid hobbyists will benefit greatly from new insights into the various species' modes of feeding, territorial behavior and breeding strategies. This will not only make it easier to understand certain interesting habits (or irritating actions), but may also give clues about how to stimulate certain behavior in the aquaria.

Duplicating nature can be fun. For example, anyone who has ever been plagued with plant devouring snails will find certain Lake Tanganyikan Cichlids dear to their hearts. Snail crushers (like *Neolamprologus Tretoccephalus*) and the snail suckers (*Neolamprologus Mondabu*) would gladly give the snails their come-uppance. The Mondabu have vampire-like canine teeth to impale snails which they then suck out of their shells. If snails could talk, they would surely be telling horror stories about vampire Cichlids.

Cichlids appeal to advanced aquarists not only because of their often unbelievable colors, but also thanks to their wide variety of sizes, shapes and behavioral patterns. Cichlids' behavior is determined largely by the most important things in life which they approach in an intelligent manner by fish standards (they don't go wandering about like some silly Goodies). Watching Cichlids establish territories, determine which mates are suitable and, most of all, providing care to their offspring can be fascinating and often heart warming.

The wonderful diversity of Cichlids in Lake Tanganyika (estimated now to be over 100 species and subspecies) evolved in part due to their specialization in feeding techniques. (It was all possible also because Lake Tanganyika was isolated from other bodies of water for much of its history.) This adaptability enabled them to take advantage of almost all the ecological niches in Lake Tanganyika. Body forms evolved to a large degree to match the choice of food as well as the physical demands of the lake zone in which the Cichlids dwell. For example, benthic species battling the waves in surge zones have characteristic goby-like bodies suited to quick spurts and bottom hopping.

Appropriately, *Tanganyika Secrets* devotes attention to feeding styles, choices of food, and lake micro-habitats as well as to the various breeding and fry protection strategies employed by different Cichlid species. The chapters are titled: The Lake; The Fishes; Feeding Strategies; Utilization of Available Space; Breeding Strategies; Evolution of the Lake and its Cichlids; and, DNA Sequencing and Cichlid Speciation.

Many of us who have read a number of books value Ad Koning's books for all their wonderful pictures (he and Horst Dieckhoff are too of the most skilled and prolific photographers of Cichlids) and first hand accounts of the habitats and ecological niches of various Cichlid species. While this book contains its share of "mugshots" (useful for identifying species), it also boasts a wealth of action shots taken underwater in the lake. Horst once commented at an American Cichlid Association convention that he had probably spent over a thousand hours diving in Lake Tanganyika.

Ad Koning's speculative essays on Cichlid evolution and on the development of new species are thought-provoking, giving aquarists fresh insights into the nature of their Cichlids. A word of caution: some scientists involved in the study of Cichlids have criticized Ad for his supposed tendency to jump to conclusions without adequate proof or for overly simplified and hence misleading presentations of some complex theories. (I personally like Ad's willingness to speculate and even get out on a limb while contemplating the natural history of Cichlids). No matter what one's preferences are, Ad's presentations on evolution should not be regarded as the last word. One example in this book is his argument that the development of new Cichlid species in Lake Tanganyika occurred only when various populations of some species were geographically isolated. He notes that a number of similar species that depend on rocky areas for protection from predators appear to have ranges limited by open water areas that they dare not cross. Indeed, many examples of this limited range phenomenon can be cited in Lake Tanganyika.

Many scientists see species evolution as more complex and probably occurring through several different mechanisms. One such mechanism is the development of new species in the presence of their parent populations when several or more individuals spontaneously develop different appearances through genetic mutation. If these individuals look different enough that the "normal" members of the species do not accept them as conspecific, they will be excluded from breeding with "normal" members. If enough of these different appearing individuals survive to adulthood, the urge to breed will in some cases be strong enough to drive them to breed with each other. Voila', a new species is on its way to evolving.

Tanganyika Secrets contains one of the best collections of photos of the shell-dwelling Cichlids ever published. These fish live in bonded pairs, one-male-dominated harems, or multi-family colonies residing in the empty shells of the large fresh water snails found in Lake Tanganyika. These photos show the small shell dwellers hovering over or swimming near their mostly buried shells in the sandy lake bottom areas. The Cichlids in the photos include: Neolamprologus sp. "Multifasciatus", N. Calliurus, N. Hecqui, N.cf. Meeli, N. Brevis, Lamprologus Signatus and L. Knugweensis.

A word of caution: Cichlids may be fascinating for their beauty and behavior as well as tough and hearty, but they do have some requirements that must be met. Some species are highly territorial and aggressive, while others are quite sensitive to water quality. Anyone considering setting up a tank of these jewels should be prepared to read a little first. An excellent choice would be one of the books on maintaining Cichlids by Paul Loiselle (for example, A Fishkeepers' Guide to African Cichlids, or the Cichlid Aquarium).

Anyone who would like to be kept up to date on new species and developments in the world of Cichlids should consider joining the American Cichlid Association. The membership chairman's address is:

Howard Schmidt
ACA Membership Chairman
P.O. Box 5351
Naperville, Illinois 60567-5351

Breeder's Award Program

BAP Checkers:

Annandale/Falls Church area: Jeff Burke (703) 3230
Montgomery County: Ray Hughes (301) 424- 3531
Mt. Vernon/Olde Town area: Gene Moy (703) 765- 0865
Oakton/Vienna area: Rick Mckay (703) 281- 1647
Occoquan/Lake Ridge area: John Mangan (703)491-4980
Springfield/Franconia area: Pete Thrift (703) 971-0594

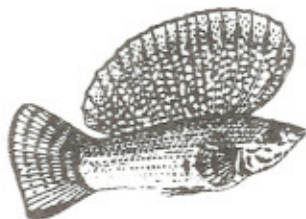
We still could use some more checkers. There are a number of areas where we don't have anyone. Even if there is someone already listed for your area we could always use someone else to help spread the work around.

BAP Standings:

Breeders Award *
Intermediate Breeder **
Advanced Breeder***
Master Breeder****
Grand Master Breeder*****

John Mangan 155points **

I'd like to print the complete BAP standings but I can't. I still haven't received the records from Tom. Anyone that has copies of your records please photocopy them and get them to me if possible.



POTOMAC VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY
PO BOX 664, Merrifield, VA 22116

Application for Membership

Date: _____

Name: _____

Street: _____ Apt. _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Optional information:

Occupation: _____

Where did you hear about PVAS/get this application? _____

Number of aquariums: _____ Time in the hobby: _____

Special interests: (e.g., catfish, cichlids, etc.) _____

Reason for joining: _____

Membership dues for PVAS are

Individual/Family: \$12/yr

Corresponding: \$ 9/yr

Junior (under 18) \$ 5/yr

Please send application and check to the address above.

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PETS ETC-HERNDON

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11248-11250 Triangle Ln
Wheaton, MD 20902
942-6464

TOTALLY FISH

14332 Layhill Rd.
Silver Spring, MD 20906
598-2229

TROPICAL FISH WORLD

16529 S. Frederick Center
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
921-0000

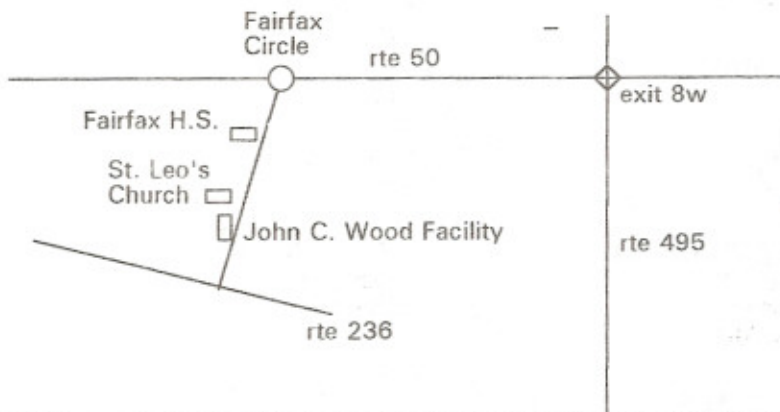
TROPICAL LAGOON

9439 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
585-6562

AQUATIC CREATIONS LTD

2909 Urbana Pike
Ijamsville, MD 21754
(301) 831-8200

Potomac Valley Aquarium Society
PO Box 664
Merrifield, VA 22116



Meetings are held at the John C. Wood Facility, 3730 Old Lee Hgwy. (rte 237), Fairfax City, VA. Room 7 (in the rear of the building). Doors open at 7:30, meetings start at 8:00. Everyone is welcome.