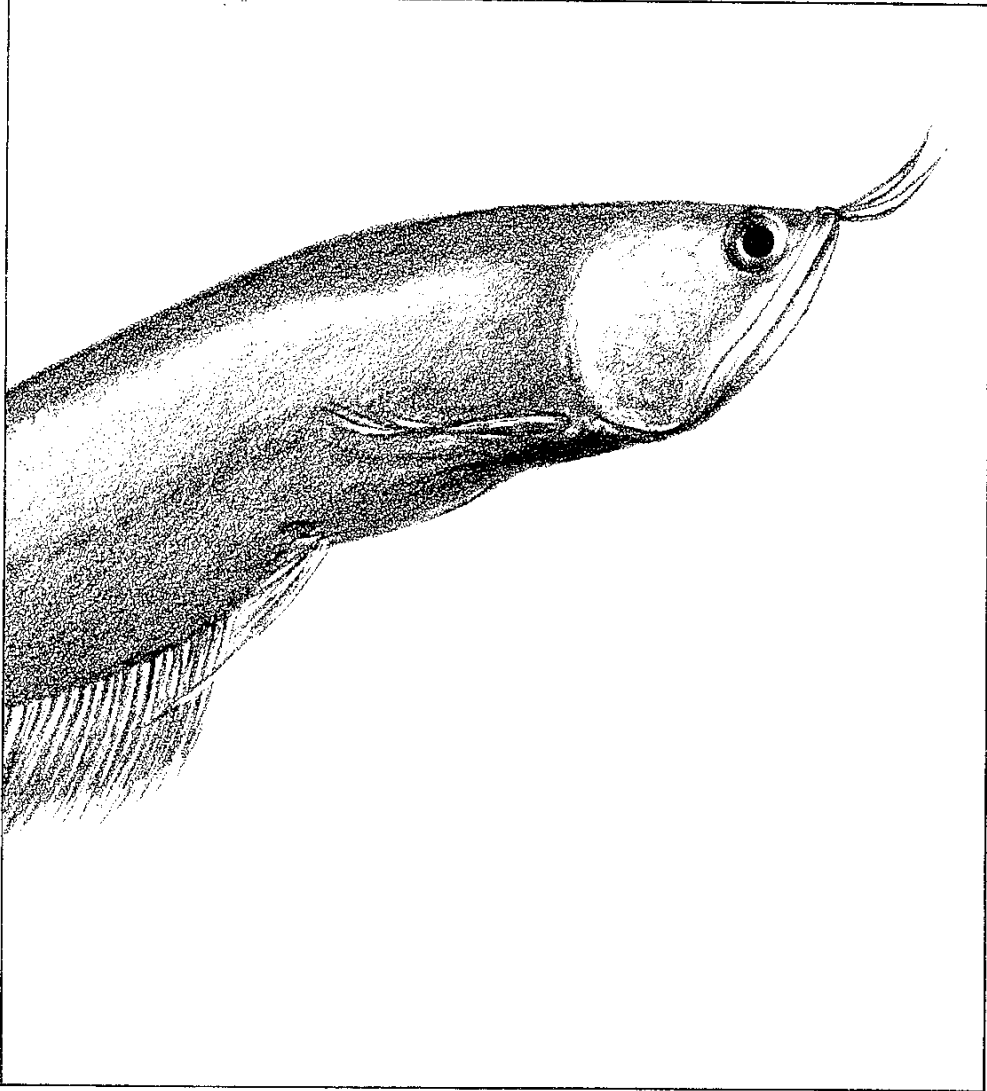


DELTA TALE

Official Publication of the Potomac Valley Aquarium Society

Volume 28 • Number 2

March/April 1997



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.).

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From the President:

The big PVAS Spring Auction is fast approaching. The club is only staging two weekend auctions this year, so be sure to join us on April 6th to sell those fish you are sick of looking at, to buy some fish you'd like to be looking at, and to raise or lower your inventory of tanks and equipment. The club raffle table will be overflowing with hundreds of dollars in new equipment, books, food, and supplies. And there will be more than a hundred fellow fish nuts for you to network with. What more could you want on a Sunday afternoon?

If you are planning on selling equipment, please use the Golden Rule approach to determining if a particular item should be tagged for sale. **NO JUNK!** If you wouldn't put your name and phone number on an item, then it should be tossed or given away, not entered into the auction. Don't cheat your fellow hobbyists.

The club officers and board members would really welcome your suggestions for club activities and programs. We are trying to determine what the membership would enjoy and support. Please speak up. We would **REALLY** welcome any volunteers to help operate the club. Several committees are in desperate need of new chairpersons. Please consider becoming a PVAS "mover and shaker".

Finally, a personal note: I am presently keeping only fish that require soft and acidic water. For some time now, I have been having very negative results with the use of several widely known anti-parasitics. Recently, the Kordon company sent me some very detailed data sheets on their products. These sheets describe the product (including shelf life!), what it does, what it doesn't do, when and how to use it, and, most importantly, when **NOT** to use it. One of these sheets strongly stated that organo-phosphate anti-parasitics should not be used in tanks with acidic and soft water, as the effects of the medicine will be greatly magnified, often with fatal results. The products I had been using all contained this type of drug, but made no mention of the effect pH has on their safe operation. Wouldn't it be great if all aquarium product manufacturers were as conscientious as Kordon? There is nothing worse than watching a prized fish suffer and die as a result of my ignorance, especially when the ignorance could have easily been prevented by a cautionary sentence on a medicine's labeling.



Frum the editor's desk

The first thing I'd like to do this month is to thank Kevin Johnson and Jason Ransdell of Marineland for taking the time to give us a very interesting and informative presentation at our March meeting.

There will be a PVAS Auction on Sunday April 6. Complete rules etc. can be found in this issue. **Please Note-** we are trying something a little different this time. Instead of the colored dot system we usually use to determine the order in which items are sold, items will be sold by item number. Sellers will receive labels numbered 1 - 15 (plus their seller number) ALL of the #1 items will be sold, then ALL of the #2, etc. This will help give everyone an equal opportunity to have their items spread evenly throughout the auction. Under all of the other systems we have tried over the years someone always seems to get the most of their items stuck at the end and almost given away because most buyers have left. This will also help sellers determine where in the auction a particular item will be sold so that that expensive pair of discus, etc. won't have to sit on the table all day long. If there is an item you want to bid on you will be able to judge when it will come up.

A number of PVAS members attended the recent Raleigh Aquarium Society Workshop. As usual they put on a great weekend and everyone had a good time.

On a related note- Delta Tale's investigative reporters have discovered the Raleigh Aquarium Society first lady, Wendy Rhodam Tramm, has been receiving "gifts" in exchange for a chance to spend the night in one of their residences bedrooms. According to our sources two new plecos have recently appeared in her tanks and she cannot produce receipts for them. Is it just a coincidence that that same weekend she had "guests". We don't like spreading rumors (unless they're good ones) so we'll wait for the special prosecutors report before making judgments.

Finally- I'd like to remind everyone to **please** fill out the survey form in Christopher Wright's Water Works column in the last issue and send it to Christopher as soon as possible, or give it to him at the auction. Due to my screwy publishing schedule Christopher's column did not make it into this issue but will return next month.

Until then...



April 6, 1997

POTOMAC VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

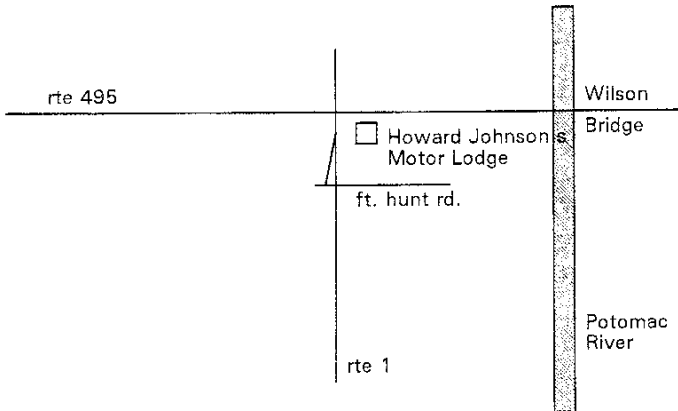
AUCTION!

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 12 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. **RULE CHANGE!!** The following change is being made on a trial basis for this auction: Each item to be auctioned will receive a label with a seller number and an item number. The item number will indicate in which order the items will be sold. ie. all #1 items (ex. 1-1, 2-1, 3-1 etc.) will be sold then all #2 (1-2, 2-2, 3-2 etc) then #3 etc. thru 15.

LOOK
↓

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 sellers 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 statues 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.

AUCTION TIPS THAT WILL SAVE YOU \$\$\$!

by Chuck Davis

Tropical fish and related items are auctioned by most clubs in this hobby at one time or another throughout the year. For many societies the auction is the one financial activity that keeps the club in the black. I like all facets of a tropical fish auction - buying, selling, doing the auctioneering and just watching.

It is very easy to make a financial mistake at an auction, that could cost you a few \$\$\$\$. So here are some tips for you, come the next auction you attend.

1. Before you leave the house determine two things:
 - a. how much you intend to spend - set a \$ limit for yourself and stick to it. Try to bring cash for this purpose, clubs that take checks and credit cards are inviting you to spend more than you originally intended.
 - b. how much available tank space you have for auction purchases - if you bid successfully on a fish that you do not have room for, the amount you saved on the fish will be peanuts compared to the price of adding another tank to your fish room.
2. Bring the following items with you to the auction:
 - a. pad and pencil
 - b. container for transporting fish - e.g. styro box
 - c. extra bags and rubber bands
 - d. good reference book
3. Be sure to arrive at the auction early enough to get a good look at all the items up for bid:
 - a. write down the item number, description and a \$\$\$ value (the most you are willing to pay)
 - b. do not share the information in "a." with other bidders
 - c. if you do not know the value of an item, ask around; it is OK to pay more than retail if that makes YOU happy.
 - d. understand the auction rules, particularly method of payment and bid raising margins (what the next lowest possible bid can be)
4. Do not get caught up in a bidding frenzy. If there are numerous bidders for one item, join the bidding after the number of bidders has thinned out. This will protect you from an auctioneer that will take advantage of a quick bid raising.
5. Do not let the bidding process become personal. There is no doubt that someone else in the room will want fish that you want. Bidding to keep someone from getting an item is foolish.
6. Make your bids clear and not the very last second possible, you could loose the best buy of the auction.

Building stands

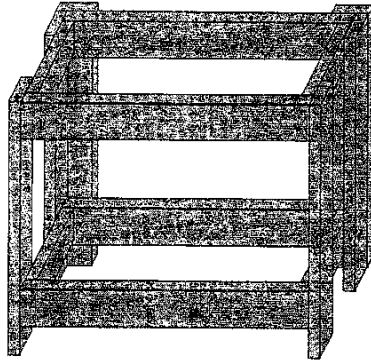
Gene Moy, PVAS

I've recently been responsible for helping introduce several young people to the aquarium hobby. These young hobbyists are nephews, nieces and kids of friends under age 10. My part included building aquarium stands for these young aquarists. These stands are made of wood and finished for protection from water.

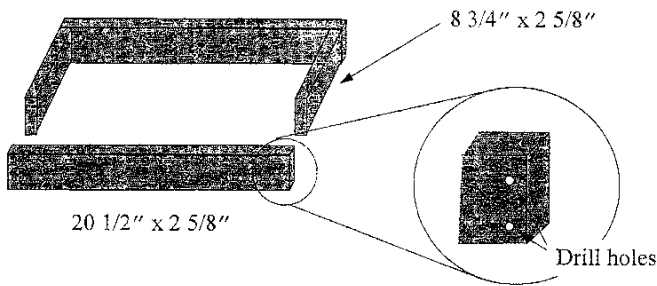
With some rudimentary wood working skills, it is not too difficult to build wood stands that look better and are cheaper than most store bought stands. I've built several stands for myself and a few for to help the budding aquarists. The stands are built with 1 x 3s (really 7/8" x 2 5/8") or 1 x 4s (7/8" x 3 1/2") pine boards readily available at the local home improvement stores. So far the largest stand that I've built supports a 29 gallon tank. I'm in the process of planning and building one for a 40 gallon breeder. The stands are designed to support two tanks and is based on the store bought ones.

The tools that I use are: a power miter saw; a circular saw; a cordless screwdriver; a cordless drill; a hammer; bar and C clamps; a belt sander; a pad sander; a small block plane; sanding block; and brushes for applying stain and water proof finish. Not all of these are absolutely necessary, but some such as the cordless screwdriver and miter saw makes some tasks much easier. Other supplies beyond the wood are: carriage bolts with washers and nuts; drywall screws; nails; sandpaper; waterproof glue; and rags.

The stands that I've built are basic frames 30 inches tall with a lower shelf for either a second tank or storage.



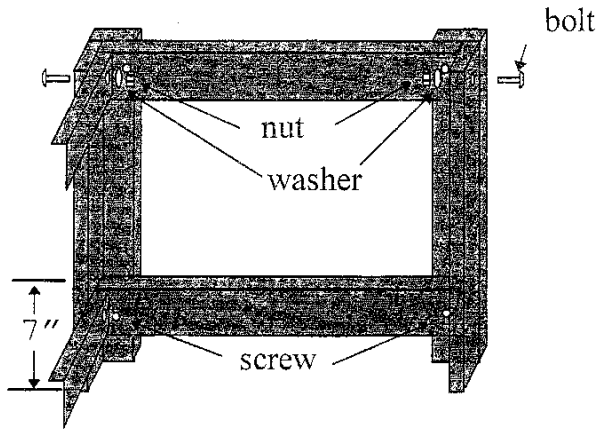
Start out by building the horizontal support frames. The upper and lower frames are identical in size and shape. I measure the base dimensions for the size tank to be supported and add $1/2''$. For one brand of 10 gallon aquarium, the base is $10\ 1/4''$ by $20\ 1/4''$. So, the frame I build starts out as $10\ 3/4''$ by $20\ 3/4''$. After cutting and sanding, I've found that I usually end up with a frame of $10\ 1/2''$ by $20\ 1/2''$, oh well. I first cut four pieces to $20\ 3/4''$ for the long side of the boxes. Allowing for the thickness of the two long pieces, I cut short pieces to $8\ 3/4''$. The two long pieces are butt jointed with the two short pieces.



I dry fit the pieces, then drill holes to accommodate the drywall screws used to hold the pieces together. The holes should be slightly larger than the shank of the screws. Do not drill into the ends of the short pieces, as this will decrease the chance of the screws holding. I next apply glue to the joints. Depending on the

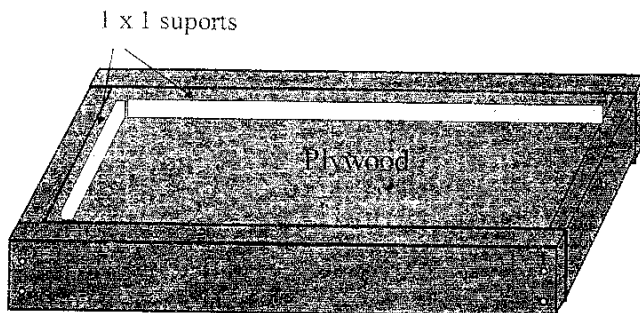
amount of warping in the wood, I will use clamps to hold the pieces together until I can put the screws in. I put the second frame together the same way. During the assembly of the frames I determine for square by measuring the diagonals. For a 10 gallon stand I use 1 x 3s, so the warping is not too bad, but when using 1 x 4s for the larger stands, warping may have to corrected by clamping.

I let the frames sit, while I cut 6 pieces to 30" each for the legs. Four of these will be bolted onto the horizontal frames, augmented by screws applied from inside the frames. The combination of the 1/4" bolts and drywall screws help maintain the stand's square. The remaining two pieces are used to help maintain square of the whole structure. These two will be nailed to the two back legs along the outside edge, and screwed from inside the support frames.



Next comes the sanding. I generally use a pad sander to even out the edges, especially at the joints. Start with coarse sandpaper then proceed to fine sandpaper to get wood smooth.

The top frame fits at the top of the legs. I position the top edge of the bottom support at 7" from the bottom. This positioning allows room for maintenance of the bottom tank. If a shelf is desired, then I cut some 1 x 2s in half the long way, making 1 x 1s. These are then screwed onto the inside of the bottom frame, with proper spacing to place a piece of plywood on top. The plywood sits flush with the top edge of the frame.



I've taken two approaches toward applying a finish to the stand. On occasion, I've applied the stain and finish to the pieces before bolting them together. The thought was to not allow water seepage to damage the wood in the future. I've also apply the stain and finish after I've put everything together.

My personal preference is for a light pine type of stain, then followed up with two or three coats of polyurethane. I just follow the manufacturer's directions.

It usually takes me about one week to put a stand together, working during the evenings. I find great satisfaction with the results. The cost of materials for a 10 or 20H gallon stand is about \$15 to \$20. The cost for a 29 gallon stand, is about \$25 with additional reinforcement applied to the horizontal frames. The overall cost is offset by my time of course, but I still think building a stand is well worth it.

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TOURING EUROPE THE RIGHT WAY

by George White, PVAS

Tourist guide books often do not lead you to the best things in town. Or, they are packed with details on topics you are not interested in, while offering scant information on the really exciting attractions. Several years ago, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the briefly described Berlin Aquarium was one of Germany's greatest attractions--and one of the largest in the world. So much for the tourist guide books. If you ever plan a trip to Europe, do not forget to put the major aquaria on your agenda--many of them have historical importance as well as collections with a number of spectacular fish not found in American public aquaria.

The Berlin Aquarium is actually part of the historic Berlin Zoo and is situated next to the huge public park, the Tiergarten. Long before the Berlin Zoo was formally founded, the public had the opportunity to see wild animals. The Elector (somewhat like a baron) Johann Cicero established a park for big game animals in 1490. The first "zoo," a small menagerie was set up in 1572. The first elephants arrived in 1689.

The Berlin Aquarium is contained in a mostly reconstructed (less than a hundred animals survived the bombs of WW II) building that looks like the original early 1900s style "palace." It has the sprawling stretched form of a Frank Lloyd Wright public building (slightly reminiscent of his Tokyo hotel) with 1920s style rectangular sets of windows. The facade sports large bas relief stone carvings of dinosaurs--a modern version of classic Greek friezes. (I threw this paragraph in just in case someone is traveling to Europe and needs something to convince a non-fish fan spouse that seeing the Berlin Aquarium would be a cultural thrill.)

Once inside the aquarium, the real thrills begin. A huge one story high hexagonal tank contains an impressive school of paddlefish who obviously flourish in the space. The aquarium chose this design to ensure that the paddlefish would not bang their delicate mouths into glass sides--their huge mouths apparently cause them to make wide turns. Incidentally, this fish is the symbol of the Berlin Aquarium.

While the paddlefish fill the middle water of the hexagonal tank, the top belongs to the rare Asian and Australian Bonytongues, several of which are endangered species. The Berlin Aquarium is a partner in an international effort to breed these fish in captivity. Freshwater stingrays coast about the bottom levels. The combination of all these unique fish makes this display one of the most popular in the aquarium.

The rare fish to be found lurking in various tanks include the snake-like Bircher from Central African rivers, several types of electrical fish such as the African Mormyrids, the electric eel and the electric catfish. There is also the rare freshwater sawfish found only in isolated waters in Northern Australia.

The Berlin Aquarium's decorations are occasionally changed, so some of the displays I saw on one visit were not there the next time I had the opportunity to tour the tanks. One of the best was a set of twenty gallon high tanks for keeping killifish. Each one of them had a semi-circular wall of small broken slate stones stacked up about 2/3s of the way to the top. This formed a narrow ledge at the top that was planted with drooping plants and grasses that created the impression that you were peering into the edge of a small pond.

Like other public aquaria in Europe I have visited, featured an excellent selection of aquatic and terrestrial plants. There were a number of species of plants I have not seen in either books or aquaria before or since. Many of the tanks looked like art displays. The creators had carefully blended various types of rocks and plants to create pictures of nature.

The Berlin Aquarium also contains a number of huge paludaria (a combination of an aquarium and a terrarium). Several of them, like the one containing crocodiles, have glass about three inches thick to keep all the thousands of gallons of water and the creatures in. The background is a large shore area. This gives you an excellent opportunity to see the crocodiles and turtles (in separate display) swimming more naturally than they would in small tanks.

As you might guess from the classic style dinosaur friezes on the exterior of the aquarium, the establishment takes pride in its collection of living fossils. One of these is the Australian Lungfish, which has extremely long lobed pectoral and ventral fins resembling legs. 60 million years ago the lungfish was in its prime. Today only six species of the genus Protopterus remain--ancient creatures sure to stir anyone's imagination.

Breeder's Award Program

BAP Checkers:

Annandale/Falls Church area: Jeff Burke (703) 941-3230
Montgomery County: Ray Hughes (301) 424- 3531
Montgomery County: Wayne Considine (301) 977-5973
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
Prince George's County: Lorne E. Williams (301) 630-7674
Springfield/Franconia area: Pete Thrift (703) 971-0594
Warrenton/Manassas area: Gerry Hoffman (540) 347-7486

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*****

Jeffrey Burke 385***
John Mangan 155**
Don Kinyon 130*
Lorne Williams 50*
Gene Moy 40
Gerry Hoffman 10 +

Recent activity: Gene Moy, 10 points for the Jewel Cichlid, *Hemichromis bimaculatus*.

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 here 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.

SUPPORTING SHOPS

ANNANDALE PET SHOP
7406 Little River Trnpg.
Annandale, VA 22031
256-2400

AQUATIC ENHANCEMENT
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Alexandria, VA 22304
765-4620

CREATURES 'N CRITTERS
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361-7769

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Herndon, VA 22171
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CONCEPTS
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Herndon, VA 22094
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Rockville, MD 20855
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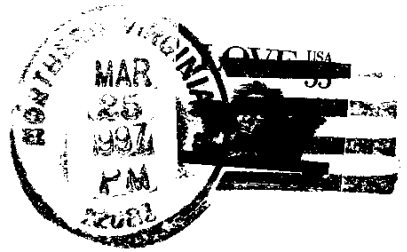
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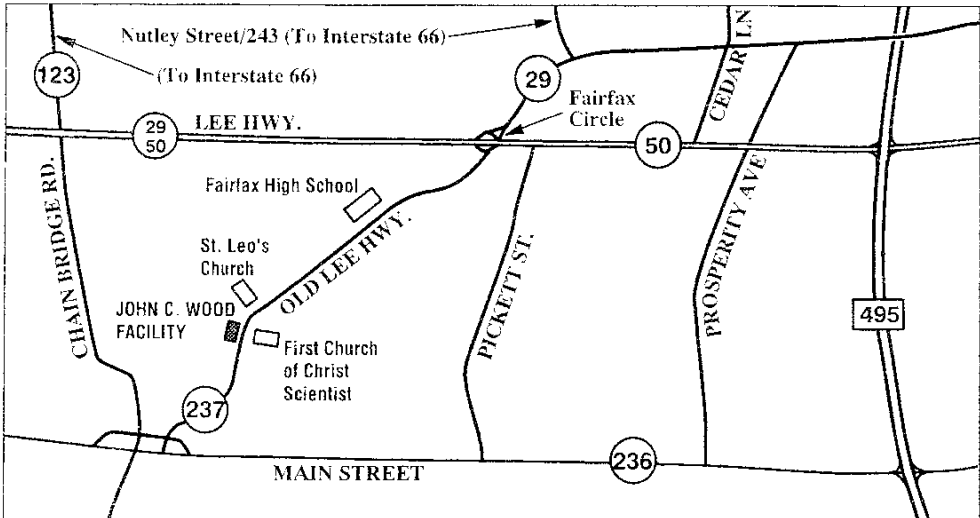
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David J Snell 06197
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MEETINGS are held at the John C. Wood Facility, 3730 Old Lee Highway (Route 237), Fairfax City, Virginia. We meet in room 6, which is located behind the police station. Doors open at 7:30 and meetings start at 8:00—EVERYONE IS WELCOME!