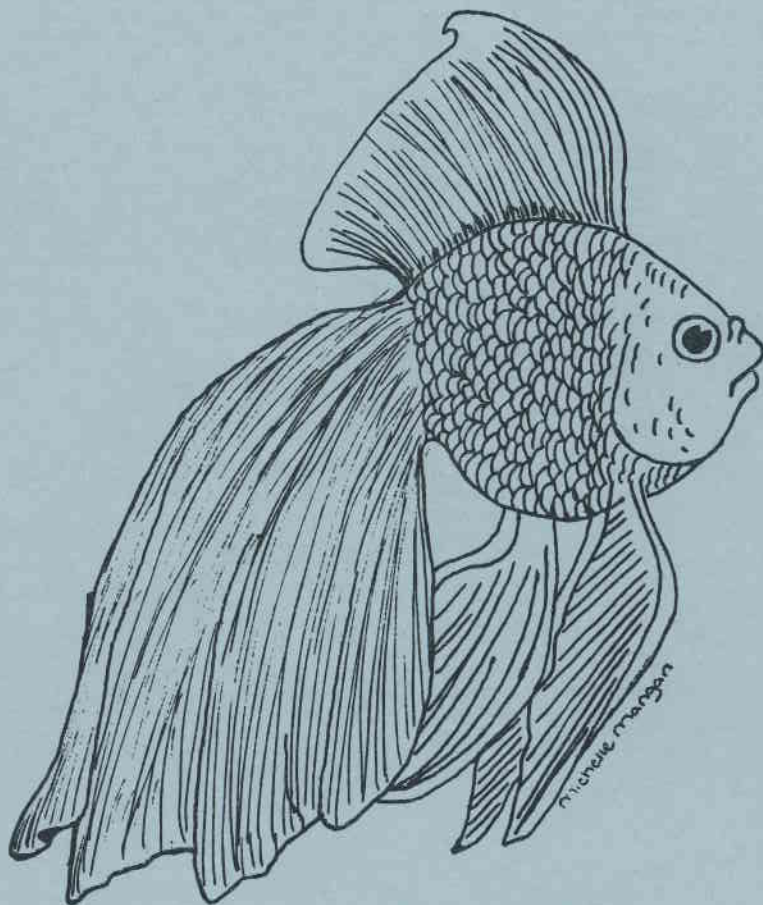


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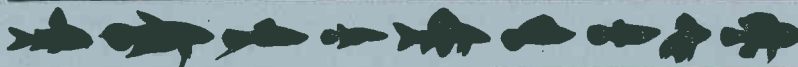
May 1987
vol. 18 #5
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POTOMAC VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY



POST OFFICE BOX 6219 SHIRLINGTON STATION ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22206

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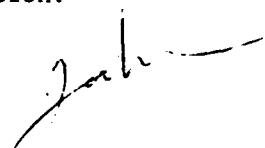
FRUM THE EDITORZ DESK

The Spring Show & Auction are very rapidly approaching. Don't wait until the last minute to start getting ready. If you haven't made your final decision on what fish you want to show do it soon. Make sure you have enough, and the right sizes, of bowls. Make sure that they are good and clean ahead of time, you'll have enough to do on the morning of the show without trying to wash and dry fishbowls. Be sure to have tops for your bowls or your fish may jump out. A piece of plastic held in place with a rubber band works well. Read the show rules VERY carefully. Make sure you understand and follow all of the rules.

Be sure to read the auction rules VERY carefully also. Bag you fish properly. Use bags that are large enough for the size and number of fish. At every auction we see fish in distress because they were improperly bagged. There is no excuse for this. If you don't have enough, or the right size, bags, go to your local pet shop and buy some. They aren't very expensive. Do not try to use ziploc or other similar type bags as a substitute. Besides being stupid, it's against the rules. My final auction tip is DON'T BRING JUNK! If you've been to one of our auctions before you should know that our auctioneers believe in truth in advertising when describing the item they are trying to sell.

There are probably several areas where help is still needed for both the show and auction. See Pete Thrift to offer help for the show and John Jessup for the auction.

See you all at the show. Good luck...



What's Happening in May

Program: Fish Photography by Gene Aldridge

Miniauction: NO miniauction this month. Save all of your stuff for the Spring Auction.

Door Prize & Raffles: as usual some good stuff will be given away.

Bowl Show: Cichlids- New World Mouthbrooders, Pseudotropheus, open.
Egglayer/Livebearer- Goldfish & Koi, Characins, open.

Spring Show & Auction: May 15-17. See flyer in the center of this issue for details.

A 5 1/2 GALLON MARINE INVERTEBRATE TANK

By Wendy Snow-Long, B.A.S.

A salt water tank need not be expensive! A 5 1/2 gallon marine invertebrate tank is easy to maintain and is not expensive to stock or run. I have one in my studio and I'd like to share with you how I did it. It's a fascinating project.

The quickest way to set-up a marine tank is to use one that's already set up with fresh, especially if it has an undergravel filter in it. Any size tank can be used, but let's talk about our 5 1/2 gallon.

First, remove the gravel from your already established tank (siphoning is the easiest method) and leave the undergravel filter in place! Do NOT wash the plate or remove every trace of dirt from around or under the filter plate - this "dirt" is chock full of the beneficial bacteria that you'll utilize to cycle your undergravel filter for marine use. "Cycling" a salt water tank means letting your tank run for 4 to 6 weeks with hardy, inexpensive fish. These fish will introduce the beneficial bacteria into your tank. They can generally live through the waste build-up that accompanies new tank set-up. But by leaving the "dirt" under the filter plate of an established fresh water set-up when you convert it over, you can cut this cycling time in half!

Now, add a layer of fresh dolomite or crushed coral to a two inch depth. Crushed coral is better because some dolomite can contain trace heavy metals, toxic to invertebrates.

Next, mix up your salt, any major brand will do. A hydrometer (an essential tool) reading of 1.020 is best, invertebrates like it a mite less salty than the fish. So, hook up your air pump (in a 5 1/2 gallon the smallest pump will do. I have an Elite 801 on mine.). You may want to run only one air lift stem on a 5 1/2 gallon instead of two - you get more power that way. Install a small heater (50 watts is dandy - don't worry about fancy brands or submersible heaters on this size tank) and away you go!

Head down to the nearest pet shop with marines and purchase the smallest damsels that you can find - 1 inch and under, maybe a tiny hermit crab with a few extra shells (small - small - small!), or you can go the cheap route. Pick up a half dozen mollies and let them have the run of the tank for a while. After two weeks (sparse feedings, please - every other day!) bring a sample of water to your local pet shop and have it tested for ammonia and nitrate. If you started your tank completely fresh, you'll probably only have an ammonia reading and will not have an established tank for a couple of more weeks, but if you converted the tank from fresh water with a good established undergravel filter bed, you'll probably have a minimal or no reading of ammonia OR nitrite.

If your water is okay, purchase a small anemone (1 or 2 inches).

Decide if you want a Pacific (usually expensive) or an Atlantic (usually cheap) anemone, because you can't mix the two oceans, they will fight. I know it sounds hard to believe that anemones fight each other, but they do - in slow motion, yes - but they do!

Once your anemone is settled into the tank, catch your damsels and return them to the store. You don't need or want them anymore because they will eat 99% of the invertebrates you'll want to keep, exceptions being hermit crabs, anemones, most other crabs, possibly cleaner shrimps. Most shops will give you trade-in credit for starter fish returns.

Now your tank is ready to go. Purchase slowly, stock no more than one or two things a week and remember a 5 1/2 gallon tank won't hold much, so stock interestingly.

Here is what I have or plan to have in my 5 1/2 gallon invertebrate tank:

- one pistol shrimp
- one clown anemone fish (1")
- one Atlantic pink tip anemone (small)
- one clown shrimp
- one common starfish
- one Sally-light foot crab (small)
- one hermit crab
- one seahorse (small)
- one small nudibranch
- or
- one small snail

One note of warning! Beware of copper! I had a major problem when I started because we have copper pipes in my building. When you set up your tank and whenever you do water changes, use a water conditioner that detoxifies, or chelates, heavy metals. Aquasafe or Hagen's Fincare works well. Also run a good activated carbon filter in the tank for a day after a water change (change half the tank every two weeks and keep a pH buffer solution handy to add on the weeks between water changes). This procedure will eliminate any copper that may be present. Before you introduce any invertebrates initially (except for any starter hermits, they can stand up to most anything...) have your water copper tested at your local pet dealer. There should be a zero reading before you start. Also beware that if your pH drops too much (down into the 7's) any copper that has bonded in your gravel and is harmless will be released once again into the water and kill your inverts! I lost three anemones and a flame scallop because of copper but my hermit and pistol shrimp survived just fine.

Other than that one warning, invertebrates are easy to care for. They only need to be fed every three days. Live or frozen brine shrimp and chopped beef heart is a good diet with occasional meals of chopped algae (either Pro-Green or Instant Ocean SeaSalad) and a good staple food flake is good for any fish you keep and the scavengers - shrimps, crabs, etc. Anemones should be hand fed; push the small chunks into their tentacles, the other inhabitants can scrounge as they want.

Tubeworms and nudibranchs are filter feeders (as are some anemones

and live corals). Feed them Marine invertebrate Diet and Liquifry for Livebearers (for the greens in it). Add 5 or 10 drops every 3 days depending on how many filter feeders you have. The water will cloud, but will clear shortly as the animals sift the particles from the water.

Small seahorses should be fed live baby brine shrimp, hatched the same as for feeding fish fry. Large seahorses eat adult brine (live or frozen) and newborn baby guppies.

If you have any questions consult your knowledgeable dealer and it's always a good idea to pick up a book on marine fish keeping. The Instant Ocean Handbook and Tetra's Marine Fish Care and Keeping Handbook are good for beginners, and The Marine Aquarium Guide by Frank de Graaf is excellent for more indepth study. Try and find it, however, as far as I know it's out of print, but don't take my word on that matter!

So, you should be off to a good start, with an initial outlay of under \$100 for your equipment and decor and the inhabitants of your tank averaging under \$10 each, (you can spend much, much more on livestock, but an interesting tank can be had all the same spending less money). Why not give salt water a try?

Reprinted from THE DAPHNIAN, The Bulletin of the Boston Aquarium Society, Inc., October 1984

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Julie Savers and Other Plastic Tricks

by George White, PVAS

Anyone who has attempted to spawn certain highly territorial species or those given to intra-species rivalry, notably aggressive cichlids, soon realizes the value of providing numerous hiding places in the aquarium. Adult members of the Lamprologus and Julidochromis families of cichlids, to name a few, will often quickly form pairs and kill all potential rivals before the fish hobbyist can save them unless enough hiding places are provided. Some of the most desirable fish, such as Lake Tanganyika substrate spawning species, will not do their thing unless they have suitable dark hollows in the rocks or suitable substitutes.

The problem of providing adequate hiding/spawning "caves" has long plagued not only fans of cichlids, but would-be breeders of many other species as well. Piles of rocks will do the trick nicely, but have the disadvantage of being heavy and, unless they have the right shape, difficult to stack. (Slate is the choice of many for constructing fishy "apartment buildings.") Other often used possibilities include halves of coconut shells, flower pots, and pieces of PVC water pipe. While these materials are lighter than rocks, they do not lend themselves to stacking, and often look out of place in an aquarium.

The best "caves" can be made from medium brown plastic (probably PVC) raingutter downspout obtainable from a local hardware store. (The brand sold in many of the local stores is Raingo). The downspout usually comes in ten foot sections, and is square, about three inches across. It can, of course, be cut lengthwise to form "caves" with lower ceilings. Compared to flowerpots and round PVC water pipes, the downspout is easier to cut, stackable, and cheaper to boot.

Cut across diagonal corners, the downspout forms L-shaped pieces perfect for terracing an aquarium. It can also be used to construct plant pots or trays to afford some protection to plant roots in aquaria where either the substrate is not deep enough or in which the fish dig too much for the plants' good.

Not only does the brown color help the downspout blend into the scene, its flat sides facilitate stacking or cementing slate or other rocks as camouflage on the downspout pieces (use only aquarium silicon sealer). A piece three inches in length can be cut diagonally to create L-shaped pieces that can be used to close one end of another piece, forming a nice dark "cave." While I cannot claim accurate knowledge of fishes' taste in home design, I suspect that dark, brown "caves" are preferred to white PVC tubes--and may induce more spawning activity.

TRADING POST

For Sale:

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All for \$130.00 - David Sun, 941-5115.

For Sale:

40 gal. woodgrain tank, Full Hood, Supreme Danner Aquaking,
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10 gal. tank, 610 AquaClear, Gravel.

All for \$300.00 - Ricki Tyau, 765-6713 evening
364-5014 weekdays.

For Sale Just in time for the Spring Show:

Stainless steel framed tanks with slate bottoms.
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Sizes: 20H - \$12, 10 - \$7, 5 1/2 - \$7.
Pete Thrift, 971-0594

Wanted: BACK ISSUES OF THE DELTA TALE FOR THE PVAS LIBRARY.
Pete Thrift, 971-0594

For Sale: Belonesox- adults \$25/pair, fry \$2 each. Backissue
aquarium magazines, send SASE for catalog/price list.
Free to good home: 4" snapping turtle.
John Mangan, 9770 Oleander Ave. Vienna VA 22180.

Ads for the trading post should be sent to Tom Hetzel, 5601 Seminary rd.
#1702, Falls Church, VA 22041, by the 15th of the month prior to
publication.

Q & A

Questions on any aspect of fishkeeping can be sent to Rick Bell,
178 1/2 Hill Meade Sq. Frederick, MD 21701.

POTOMAC VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY



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

Number of tanks _____ Time in hobby _____

What can this club do for you ? _____

What do you want to do for the club ? _____

Membership dues for the Potomac Valley Aquarium Society are:

Family: \$12.00

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Please send application and check for dues to address above.



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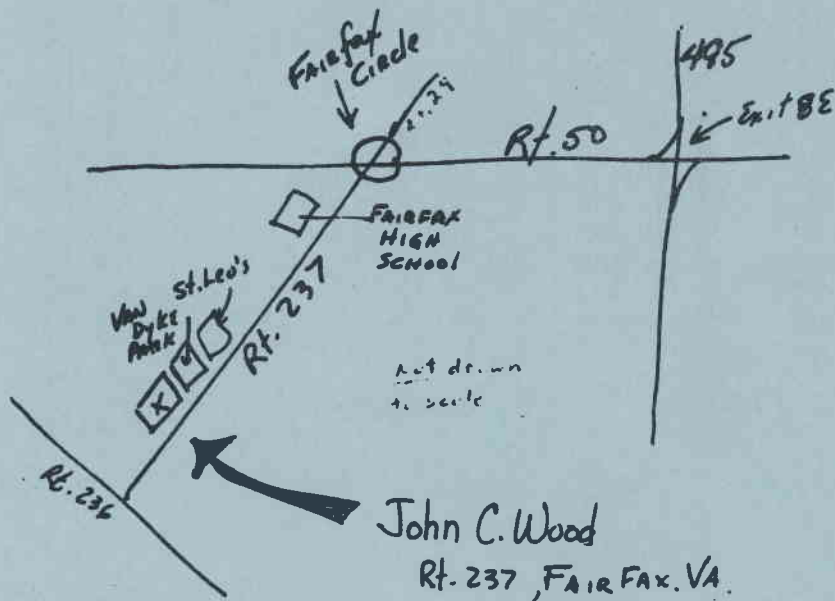
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The Potomac Valley Aquarium Society will meet on the following dates in 1987:

Jan. 12	May 11	Sept. 14
Feb. 9	June 8	Oct. 12
March 9	July 13	Nov. 9
April 13	Aug. 10	Dec. 14

Meetings are held at the John C. Wood Facility, Rt. 237 (Old Lee Hgwy)
Fairfax City, VA. Doors open at 7:30, meetings start at 8:00 PM. Everyone
is welcome.