



REFLECTOR

PUBLICATION OF THE CENTRAL NEW YORK AQUARIUM SOCIETY

December 2025, Volume 50, Number 4

This Month
Christmas Party!
Bring a dish to pass



CENTRAL NEW YORK AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Table of Contents

Cover: Olrox, the Blue <i>Cherax boesemani</i> (by: Amber Pomeranz)	1
About CNYAS	3
President's Message	4
50th Anniversary T-shirts	4
Meeting Minutes	5
The Think Tank (New Monthly Club Write-in)	7
Article: "Field Trip Report, Albany" By: Clifford Crain	8
Writer's Award Program (WAP)	12
Breeder Award Program (BAP)	13
Bowl Show	14
Aquatic Horticulture Award Program (AHAP)	15
Fish Friends From Afar "Exchange Report" by: Clifford Crain	16
Article: "Ohio Cichlid Extravaganza 2025 Part 1" By: Clifford Crain	18
The Night Before Christmas? (A series by the Undergroud Reporter)	22
Club Members Fish and/or Aquarium	23
Club Info / Coming Events	24
CNYAS Thanks our Supporters	25
Classified	27

CNYAS GENERAL MEETING

LOCATION

**The DeWitt Community Center
148 Sanders Creek Pkwy
East Syracuse, NY**

DATE / TIME

**Wednesday December 17, 2025
@ 7:00 pm**

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All original, previously unpublished material will be considered for publication. The preferred method of delivery for articles is via E-Mail in MS Word or Text format to Editor.CNYAS@gmail.com. Alternate means of submitting may be arranged via phone. Articles the Editor deems harmful will not be published. Original articles may be reprinted by other non-profit hobby organizations with the following stipulations:

- 1) The **Reflector** is credited as the original Publisher.
- 2) The article is reprinted in its original form.
- 3) The original author is credited appropriately.
- 4) An author's copy is provided to the Editor at the time of distribution of the reprint.

Exchanges:

CNYAS will exchange publications with any non-profit hobby related organization with the following stipulations:

- 1) The request to exchange must be made in writing.
- 2) The organization informs us of their reprint policy
- 3) The exchange is mailed to The **Reflector** Exchange Editor upon publication.

CNYAS Background Information:

The Central New York Aquarium Society, Inc. was established in 1976. It is a non-profit organization under section 501 {c} {3} of the Internal Revenue Code. Board meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month. General meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Dewitt Community Hall in East Syracuse. General meetings normally begin with a brief business meeting followed by a guest speaker, refreshments, door and raffle prizes, and a mini-auction of live fish, plants, and other hobby related items.

Identification Statement:

Publication Title: Reflector

Statement of Frequency: Published ten times per year (monthly except July and August)

Authorized Organization's Name and Address:

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Clifford Crain
Lenny Futterman
Bill Newell
David Pomeranz

Chairpeople

BAP: Michael Flintrop

AHAP: Bill Newell

WAP: Clifford Crain

Bowl Show: Arnaud Germain

Auction: Ron Alexander & Brian Bowers

Membership: Stefani Pritchard

Exchange Editor: Clifford Crain

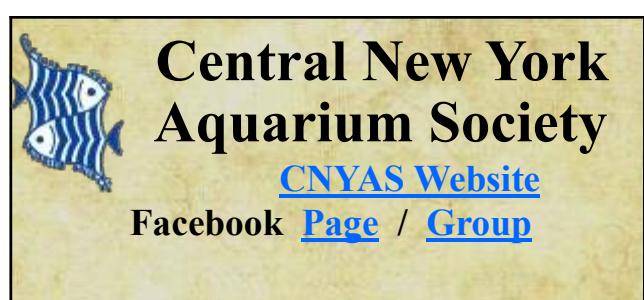
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Assistant Secretary: Sue Kotcher

Hosp. & Refreshments: Mary Teelin

Swap Meet: Doug Hillman

Webmaster: Tom Garafalo





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Ron Fabiny

President's Message December 2025

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and did not eat too much.
Last month's presentation was great by Shelbie Schatz, owner of Fins N Flora.

This month is our Christmas party. There will be a raffle for a spiral cut ham. We ask that everyone bring a dish to pass and the club will be supplying drinks and paper products. Also the 50th Anniversary t-shirts will be available for purchase for \$20. These will make great Christmas presents.

We currently do not have a group for our toy drive that we participate with Low Tide Corals. If and when we do, we will send out an email on the details of the group. I am sorry for any inconvenience.

If I do not see you at our meeting have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ron

50th Anniversary T-shirts are here!

They will be available for sale at the December General meeting.

Cost: \$20.00 each (additional \$2 for 2X or larger)

They will make awesome Christmas presents!!!





BOARD MEETING

CNYAS Board meeting

11/12/2025

Attending: Ron Alexander, Len and Mary Futterman, Doug Hillman, Bob and Sue Kotcher, Bill Newell, Clifford Crain, Ron Fabiny, David Pomeranz, Mike Flintrop, Joe

1. Committee Reports:

1. Treasurer-Report and budget. Budget passed at the Sept meeting.
2. AHAP-see Reflector, Issues with data base, Bill working on fixing it, working on updates to AHAP rules.
3. BAP- see Reflector, working on changing # of fry for points, now have BAP computer. Clifford and Mike to work on fry #s. Updated rules and looked at scientific names to update.
4. WAP- see Reflector. Exchange editor points not eligible for Scaly Eraser.
5. Membership-6 lifetime memberships; 36 memberships total. Can get rid of the paper membership as long as the PDF is backed up per Board.
6. Auction -New tee-shirts next year for 50th Anniversary. Projecting fish bag on the screen, Large banner with pictures. Look at getting lightweight banner. Shrimp/ Pleco raffle. FW has a digital board to advertise the auction. Ron has signed contract. Check to see if we have enough paperwork/cards. Need membership person at the front desk. Can get an auction flyer together soon- Chip to work on. Auction locked in for 4th Sat in April 2026.
7. Bowl show- see Reflector. Ribbons ordered. New world cichlids.
8. Webmaster- Tom doing a great job at updating. Most recent handbook on the website. Potential to have articles posted to the website (Bill).
9. Exchange editor- still getting articles. Cliff doing a great job. Cliff made an exchange editor email.
10. Reflector- Doug is doing a great job! 5% off code for Brine Shrimp Direct in Reflector.

2. Old Business:

1. Voted to Change SuperBowl prizes to cash, talk about increasing prize amount next year. Voted to increase prizes to 1st 35.00, 2nd 25 and 3rd is 20.
2. Send speaker info to Chip.
3. Cliff brought up doing a group buy of fish on line. 14 members submitted orders, 53 items. Many different fish and plants ordered. Would need to be picked up in Rochester. Club will pay \$50 for shipping. Cliff to be reimbursed for gas, tolls, parking from members who ordered (10 % discount). Cliff to pick them up the day before the meeting next week. There were fish that were DOA. Most people were satisfied.
4. Board discussed that the NEC rep for the club will receive the free convention registration if they attend the required meetings and the club will give them 150.00 to be used to attend the Convention. Passed.
5. Laptop purchased.
6. Ron got VFW contract signed for 2026 Auction.
7. Much appreciation to all who helped clean out Wayne's fish room.
8. Program- Chip working on program, Nov to be Shelby Schwartz talking about Hillstream loaches.
9. Picnic was great success, thanks as always for the Fabiny's for hosting!
10. SWAP meet Oct 4th-Very successfully SWAP meet! Great attendance and good profit for the club! Bill made motion and Sue 2nd to give Doris 100\$ from the SWAP meet from Wayne's fish room. Passed. Doug to sort out what's left from SWAP meet.
11. Len got lamination signs. Ron is distributing.
12. Board decided that points for WAP that are part of a officers or chairs duties can be posted but not used for Scaly Eraser or any awards, passed.
13. Cliff brought up doing a group buy of fish on line. Discussed, he will follow up with interest in participation from club. Voted to put this on hold til after the auction as Cliff is not at this meeting.
14. Shop hop on Nov 15th in Albany area. Meet at Canastota thruway, car pool. Going to 3 shops.

New Business:

1. Clifford to speak at Sept meeting regarding upcoming events. He is planning another shop hop to Albany. Looking at a Sat in November. Len to contact Mike Lucas and Fred.
2. Doug said Empire Aquatics would be interested in doing a fish show.
3. David- A question for people to submit answers to in the Reflector might be fun. David to pose the questions and collect the answers and get to Doug to be posted in the Reflector.
4. Upcoming board meetings-
 - DEC- Len and Mary
 - JAN- Chip
 - FEB- Clifford
 - MAR- Bill
 - APR- David
 - MAY- Bob and Sue
5. Banquet updates – It will be held on June 13th (a Saturday) at Bella Domani, Sue moved to approve a budget of 4000\$, Bill seconded, approved. Menu to be decided. Sue, Mike and Ron to meet to plan some events. David working on 50th Anniversary tee shirt design. Design almost done. Sally has lots of historical information from the early days of the club, Sue to write an article. Selection 5 for the menu. Getting the soda bar too. Will be a cash bar too. Having a photo booth. Mike to continue taking about the early reflectors. Pictures will be in one part of the room. Banner to be set up as a background. Ron to look into getting a stand. Also 3 posters of deceased members, sponsors and local stores. Prices for boards- \$140 a piece. Len to ask if anyone can take pictures for us. Len looking for pictures for the slide show. Len to organize songs. Members to give suggestions for music. Doug to ask in the Reflector. Cost for banquet to be \$15 for all past and current members. Awards program. ? Open mike at banquet. Deadline for music, photos ect. Possible videos from old members.
6. Chip to see about making a list about who is breeding what fish?
7. There is a FB page and a group, do we need both? Ron to look at the page to see if we can get rid of it.
8. T-shirts: Board voted on David's design, voted on deep blue color. Mary and David to find online order shop, people may order other pieces of clothing.
9. Doug said an old member Jack McGraw wants to donate fish room. To discuss.
10. All set for meeting place for next year.
11. David talked about having a CNYAS app. Will demonstrate at next meeting. Board approved.
12. Food drive for Central New York food drive at the next general meeting.
13. Turkey for Nov meeting raffle.
14. Killifish meeting Sunday at Tom's and Brenda's house.
15. Dec meeting Clifford to talk about auction software.
16. Start 1900 Ended 2030

**November CNYAS Board Meeting
at Mike Flintrop's home.**

Photo by: Doug Hillman



11/19/25 CNYAS General meeting

1. Great presentation by Shelbie Schatz! Thanks Shelbie!
2. 50th Anniversary t-shirts ordered and will be here for the December meeting!
3. Great mini auction- Thanks to all who donated and who auctioneered!

The Think Tank

A Monthly Club Write-in

Welcome to the first ever club write in. This is a space for club members to share some of their experiences in the hobby by answering the question of the month. Next months question can be found bellow, and will be announced at the next club meeting on 12/17/2025.

The question today is: **What is your favorite fish (or other critter) to keep, and what do you love about them?**

My favorite fish to keep have always been angels. I have had many different colors as well as traditional pattern over the years. Currently, I have Himalayan blues and Koi angels. As to being peaceful and beautiful, they all share one thing that I have always loved. There is usually a time when they are all stationary, almost like sleeping. Suddenly, one will "wake up" and poke the nearest one. This leads to all of them involved in poking each other. Suddenly, they will stop and back to calm. It has always made me laugh.

-Sue Kotcher

While its difficult to pick a single favorite for me, I will always love South American knife fish just a a little bit above even my other favorites. In particular, I have two Ossa knife fish that are my treasures. While they aren't always active, every time I see their surreal movements I feel like I am in a pleasant dream.

-David Pomeranz



The mosaic Hillstream Loach (Beaufortia polypopsis) is special to me. My 2 were an accidental purchase, included in my purchase of a set of "Hillstream Loaches". Figuring out what they were deepened my enjoyment to of the hobby.

-Greg Summer



Olrox, my lobster (Cherax boesemani) is one of my favorites. I found her without knowing that I needed a crayfish in my life. She was creating a headache for a local fish store by eating all their expensive fish stock and they were all too happy to humor my impulse buy. I think people don't give fish enough credit for smarts, this is doubly so for crayfish. Olrox is very charismatic and engaging (see photo). We made "lobster mountain"- a 20 gal tank project just for her. She enjoys playing with floating vegetables, climbing the top of the branch in her tank and attempting to jump onto the cohabitating guppies (death from above!)- she isn't as successful as she'd like... I love how curious and engaged she is in her environment. She is always moving things around, ripping out all David's carefully manicured plants. She is lovely and I hope I have her forever.

-Amber Pomeranz



Next months question is:

How and when did you get into the hobby? What was your first set up or fish that you remember keeping?

Please submit answers to Davidsaquanook@gmail.com by 12/31/2025 to be featured in next months Reflector. Photos are optional.





Field Trip Report: Albany

By: Clifford H. Crain, Jr.

For the last several years we've taken field trips to Rochester, Buffalo and SUNY Morrisville Aquaculture Center to check out local fish rooms, fish stores, and SUNY Morrisville's hatchery. This year we decided to go east and get a look at what's going on in the Albany area. Member Cheryl Poorman volunteered to chauffeur the four of us on this overcast, cold day in her Chrysler minivan.

We started with a visit to renowned aquarist Fred Behrmann's fish room in Athens, New York. While Fred specializes in killies, and I have to say, I saw more killifish that morning than I had seen in all my years of keeping fish, he also has an impressive selection of angelfish and paradise fish. Fred's water, which is soft and neutral, in contrast to the hard, alkaline water we have in Central New York, allows him to keep fish that require those parameters without having to use a reverse osmosis system. All of us oohed and aahed over Fred's stunning blue gularis.

I didn't count the number of tanks that Fred has, let's just say it's a lot! How do you keep track of what's going on in all these tanks? Fred just puts masking tape on the tanks and writes what's in it and when they spawned; a straight-forward and very effective way of keeping track of things. And how do you change water in that many tanks, when they're spread around? Fred siphons the water into a bucket on wheels, then uses a pump to send the water to a bathroom at the other end of the basement.

A shot of a
Small part
Of Fred's
Fish room



What do you do with
A spare ladder?
Put aquariums
on it!



An
inexpensive
Kiddie pool
Held a bunch
of Angelfish

Killifish expert
And all-around
nice guy,
Fred Behrmann



We could have stayed a lot longer at Fred's, but I was in charge of keeping us on schedule, so we left for lunch at Don Juan's Mexican Grill and Cantina in Latham, New York. CNYAS long-distance member Mike Lucas brought Fred with him to lunch. Socializing with fellow members at lunch is an important component of these field trips, and we had a lively conversation over an outstanding meal, selected from a huge menu. When you go to a great Mexican restaurant, you naturally eat genuine Mexican food, right? One of us, and I won't mention your name, Doug, got a cheeseburger and fries. Sigh.

Now stuffed with the meal at Don Juan's, we made our way to the first fish store, Eddie's Aquarium in Cohoes. Eddie's is a shop for serious hobbyists. Not only is there a large number of aquariums, but they were all fully stocked with wide variety of fish. Eddie's also sports a generous selection of plants and saltwater fish. All tanks were spotless. What are some of the things that really set apart a store like this? Try live *adult* brine shrimp for sale. How about an aquascaping table. Don't forget the large supply of spare parts for aquarium equipment (and Fred bought a replacement impeller for one of his filters). I mentioned a large variety of fish, and I made note of the following: Asian needle gar; gold ocellatus shell dweller; red head Tapajos eartheater; three different species of *Apistogramma* dwarf cichlids; and Hillstream loaches, which the guy who had a cheeseburger at the Mexican restaurant bought.



Chowing down at Don Juan's

Doug and Fred
Checking out
The fish
At Eddie's



Freshwater
Tanks loaded
With fish
At Eddie's

Here's something
You don't see in
Every store:
live adult brine shrimp



Again, to keep us on schedule, I shuffled us out the door for the trip to Ballston Spa to visit Buckley's Fishroom. Like Eddie's, Buckley's specializes in livestock, equipment and supplies that you don't find at the big box pet stores. For example, Buckley's has a generous selection of Ultum Nature Systems (UNS) low iron, rimless, 45° aquariums. These are real showstopper tanks. Buckley's is proud that they quarantine all fish for a week before putting them out for sale. The store has a big selection of not only marine fish but also coral. And they have a whole room devoted to aquascaping. The owner, Matt, and his associates were all very friendly and helpful. This is what a great fish store looks like.

The first thing you see upon entering are the weekly specials



Wow, Lots Of corals for sale



**I was impressed by the
UNS 36" x 8"
12 gallon rimless tank
Completely covered with
dwarf Baby Tears, grown
from tissue culture**

**Some of the high-end
Rimless tanks from UNS**



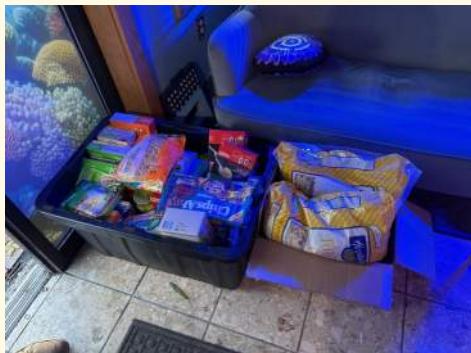
Our final stop was at Benson's Pet Center in Albany. Unlike Eddie's and Buckley's, Benson's is a full line pet shop. I think this store carried more dog food, snacks and toys than any of the big box stores. The fish are in the back corner of the store, and despite a much smaller selection than the other shops, I have to say, the fish all looked healthy. I chuckled when the tank holding Bolivian Rams had them labeled as "Crown Ruby Cichlids." The store has a unique filtering system that I've never seen before: each tank has an in-water background with slots at the bottom that are covered by gravel. A pump pulls water through these slots to what I imagine is some type of matten filter or other filtering medium unseen behind the background and returns the water out the tube at the top. Interesting concept.

The drive home was through uninterrupted rain, at times heavy. Cheryl was a real trooper driving those hours in the dark in a pouring rainstorm. I failed to keep the group on schedule, as we arrived at the Canastota NYS Thruway Park and Ride about an hour late. But we all agreed it was a great trip, and we're already discussing where to go next year. These field trips are a CNYAS member benefit; if you haven't been on one, come with us next year!



Cheryl, Mike and Fred looking over fish at Benson's

CNYAS collaborated with Low Tide Corals for a food drive in November. We collected over 400 lbs. of food that was donated to the Food Bank of CNY! Thanks to all who donated!





Central New York Aquarium Society Inc. Writer's Award Program

Chairman: Clifford H. Crain, Jr., Committee member Doug Hillman

Based on submissions to date through the Nov 2025 Reflector and points published in Dec 2025 Reflector

Name	Status	December Reflector	Scaly Eraser	Total
Crain	Pen & Quill Award	130	342	2,821
Spahn	Pen & Quill Award	0	0	1,276
Kotcher	Pen & Quill Award	5	45	896
Teelin-Futterman	Pen & Quill Award	0	0	711
Pitzeruse	Pen & Quill Award	0	0	652
Fabiny	Pen & Quill Award	0	0	561
Hillman	Author's Award	5	185	455
Rademacher	Author's Award	0	0	215
Futterman	Author's Award	0	85	195
Pomeranz	Writer's Award	25	31	166
Rafferty	Participant	0	50	145
Baird	Author's Award	0	0	130
Beeman	Author's Award	0	15	120
Walcott	Participant	0	45	95
Cody	Participant	40	40	110
Sager	Participant	0	0	70
Tuori	Participant	10	10	70
Gibbs	Participant	0	0	40
Flintrop	Participant	10	10	45
Newell	Participant	10	30	40
Van Camp	Participant	0	0	30
Valdez	Participant	0	25	25
Lindblom	Participant	0	15	15

Submissions appearing in the November 2025 Reflector:

Crain, "My Halloween Tale of Terror," 1 article, 20 points and 4 photos, 20 points = 40 points total

Crain, "An Auction Report Two-fer!," article 20 points, 10 photos, 50 points = 70 points total

Crain, "Fish Friends From Afar #39," 1 article, 20 points

Crain, "Group Buy Report," 1 article, 2 photos = 30 points

Crain, "In Defense of Frozen Bloodworms," reprinted in *Modern Aquarium, GCAS, November 2025, 10 points*

Flintrop, "Keyhole Cichlids Brood No. 3, Day 7," 2 photos, 10 points

Hillman, "Bristlenose Plecos Eating Green Beans (cover photo)," 1 photos, 5 points

Kotcher, "Board meeting," 1 photo, 5 points

Newell, "Anubias barteri Flowering," 1 photo, 5 points

Newell, "Glass bloodfin tetra and plants in Bill Newell's Fishroom," 1 photo, 5 points

Pomeranz, "Club Members' Fish," 3 photos, 15 points, caption < 50 words, 10 points = 25 points total

Tuori, "Elephant Fish," 2 photos, 10 points



BREEDER AWARD PROGRAM

Chairman - Michael Flintrop
Email: michaelflintrop@yahoo.com

Name	Points	Species	Name	Points	Species
Grand Master			Participants		
*Van Camp	965	77	Spahn	30	3
1-2-3-4-6-7-8-9-11-13-15-16			Domanowski, S	25	4
Master Breeder			Chris Pollard	20	2
*Pitzeruse, W.	610	50	Maxwell	20	2
1-2-3-4-7-8-9-11-12-13-14-15-16			Kotcher	10	1
Beeman	640	48	Lenny Futterman	10	1
4-7-8-11-12-16			Russell Phelps	10	1
Fabiny	565	50	Mary Futterman	5	1
1-7-8-11-12-14-15-16					
Expert Breeder					
Clifford Crain Jr.	305	27			
1-7-8					
William Newell	250	23			
8					
Hunter Collins	235	13			
8-11					
Doug Hillman	210	22			
1-8-11					
Advanced Breeder					
David Pomeranz	140	16			
16					
Mike Flintrop	110	9			
11					
Breeder Award					
Wisneski	65	7			
11					
Denise Baird	70	8			
Chris Allen	60	4			
11					
Rich Pitzeruse	55	5			

Numbers under the name are completed Specialty Classification groups.

*Indicated Species Classification Award

^Indicates first spawning

New Additions:

David Pomeranz

Orzyzas javanicus ! first spawn

Cardina cantonensis

Punctius titteya

Perugia Limia

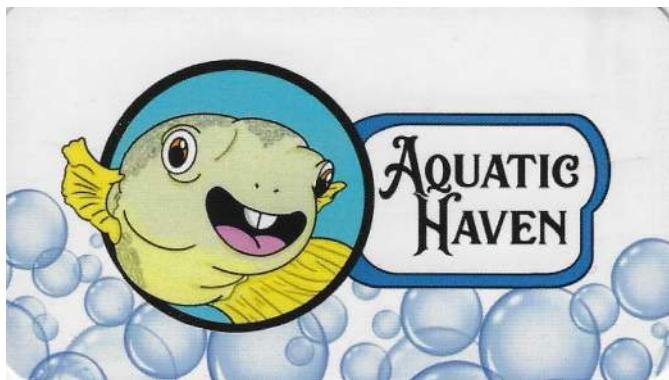
Taterundina ocellicauda

Congrats for completing species class 16

Doug Hillman

Pethia conchonius

Rivulus sp Colombia





BOWL SHOW

Chairman - Arnaud Germain

YTD Scores:

	104	Points
Doug Hillman:	68	Points
Bill Newell:	21	Points
Chloe Gibbs:	18	Points
Denise Baird:	1	Point
Debbie Walcott	1	Point
David Pomeranz	1	Point

The 2025-2026 Categories will be as follows:

September:	Livebearers
October:	Orange and Black Fall Colors
November:	New World Cichlids
December:	Barbs, Rasboras & Danios
January:	Killies
February:	Catfish & Loaches
March:	Bettas, Anabantoids & Gouramis
April:	Old World Cichlids: Africa & Asia
May:	Super Bowl

Don't forget the OPEN category option at each meeting.

All bowl show guidelines are available online in the Members Handbook (pages 5-6)

To participate, either bring your fish in person or submit pictures to ag297@cornell.edu before noon on Tuesday before the general meeting. Online submissions will be displayed during the meeting break using the projector for judges to award points.

We had 3 entries for the November Bowl Show!

A: *Apistogramma baenschi* (Inka)
 B: *Apistogramma cacatuoides*
 C: *Apistogramma borellii*

Bill Newell – 10 points
 Bill Newell – 15 points
 Bill Newell – 21 points

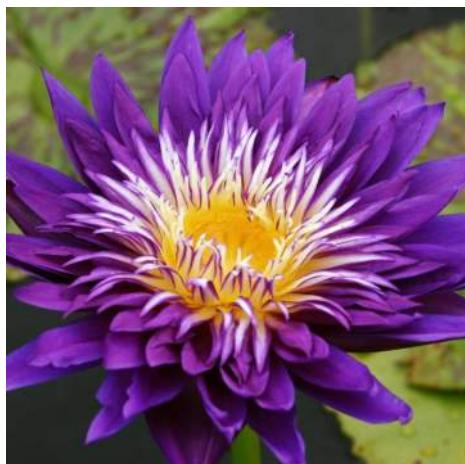




**AQUATIC HORTICULTURE
AWARD PROGRAM**
Chairman– Bill Newell
Email: bnewell44@gmail.com



Name	Points	Species	Name	Points	Species			
Grand Master								
Spahn*	4,015	288	Beginning	90	7			
1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14			Yard	95	9			
Pitzeruse, W*	1,230	87	Wisneski	65	7			
1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14			Taylor	50	6			
Fabiny*	940	68	Participants					
2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,12,13,14			Flintrop	45	5			
Master			Rademacher	35	2			
Van Camp*	465	36	Janus	25	4			
1,7,8,9,11,14			Smith	20	1			
Lee*	575	42	Additions:					
3,4,7,8,10,12,13,14			Mike Flintrop					
Expert								
Senior								
Snead*	460	26	<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i> (doubling) 5 pts					
2,4,7,10,14								
Lioto	285	21						
Aquatic								
Newell	215	21						
6								
Kotcher*	185	14						
6,10,14								
Futterman*	180	16						
Beeman	190	19						
3,4,6,7								





FISH FRIENDS FROM AFAR #40 EXCHANGE REPORT

By: Clifford H. Crain, Jr.

Email: exchange.cnyas@gmail.com

Aquarium society exchange editors: please note the new email address listed above. Remove my personal email address and use exchange.cnyas@gmail.com.

Oh no! Another aquarium society magazine is disappearing! Worse yet, it's one of the best: *Modern Aquarium*, published for many years by the Greater City (New York) Aquarium Society. Their editor, Dan Radebaugh, has announced his retirement, "and there seems to be no one to pick up the mantle," as Warren Feuer, President of the club, states in his President's Message in the December 2025 issue. Sadly, the reviews below of articles from *Modern Aquarium* will be the last.

I find it highly ironic that while publishing and distributing an aquarium society magazine has never been easier and more professional-looking compared to the old typewriter/printing/mailing days, there are fewer and fewer club magazines being published. I'm so proud that our own aquarium society, based in a small-to-medium sized city, still generates a great magazine for our members ten times a year. Kudos and thanks to our outstanding editor, Doug Hillman! You can help keep the *Reflector* going by writing articles and submitting photographs.

"A Modern Legend" by Joseph Ferenzi
Modern Aquarium, Greater City Aquarium Society, December 2025

The first article in *Modern Aquarium*'s final issue recounts the history of the magazine. Joe relates that for 32 years the magazine was always printed in time to be distributed to members at the monthly meeting "without missing a single issue!" So sad to see the end of this fine magazine.

"From the Pages of Yesteryear: *Modern Aquarium* January 1971"
Modern Aquarium, Greater City Aquarium Society, December 2025

This isn't an article, just a photograph of "the staff of *Modern Aquarium*" that appeared in the January 1971 *Modern Aquarium* nearly 55 years ago. What's striking is the size of the staff: it took twelve people to generate that magazine! As I said in my message above, it's far more efficient to generate a better-looking magazine nowadays, yet fewer are being published.

"Aquarium Advice That Never Reaches Beginners" by Joseph Ferenzi
Modern Aquarium, Greater City Aquarium Society, December 2025

Having kept fish for 60 years, Joe lists some of the things he wishes beginners would be told in order to reduce mistakes. On the list: aquarium size ("The myth persists that a small tank will be easier for a beginner."); the Noah's Ark syndrome (stocking two of everything); a heater (which eventually malfunctions and is not needed for many fish as long as the room temperature is 70°); a plastic cover to protect the aquarium cabinet and a background to hide wiring and heaters; placing rocks on the tank bottom instead of on gravel; and a top on the tank to keep fish and humidity in the aquarium. Included is a photo of the author's beautiful metal frame (what appears to be a) 40-gallon long tank with a background and plastic covering the stand.

“How to Decorate Your Fish Tank in One Easy Step” by Stephan Sica
Modern Aquarium, Greater City Aquarium Society, December 2025

The basis for Stephen’s article is: “As I get older, I try to make things simple for myself.” His one easy step approach is “for tanks that range in size from about three to twenty gallons.” And here it is: “fill up the rear of the tank with any or several kinds of java moss. The moss should completely cover the back of the tank... Add medium to preferably large sized *Anubias barteri* plants to hold the moss in place.” Stephen includes four photos of his tanks that utilize this method and proves that tanks can be beautifully decorated in “one easy step.”

“A Life in Fish: South American Biotope” by Jason Gold
Modern Aquarium, Greater City Aquarium Society, December 2025

Jason recommends watching YouTube videos of actual underwater footage of biotopes. There are many such videos on YouTube, and many are narrated. He has found them not only super-informative and enjoyable, but also they helped him decide how to mimic nature in his own aquariums. “And hey, a big shout-out to YouTube for expanding our horizons as aquarists and in all things!”

“*Pseudomugil*: The Spotted Blue Eye Rainbowfish” by Sam Fernald
The Darter, Missouri Aquarium Society, November/December 2025

The November/December 2025 issue of *The Darter* focuses on fishes of Australia and surrounding islands. For those not familiar with rainbowfish <Exchange Editor raises his hand>, Sam appeals to us by starting his article: “*Pseudomugil gertrudae*, the ‘Spotted Blue-Eye,’ is likely the widest kept rainbowfish in the global aquarium hobby. Beginner friendly and mass-produced on fish farms worldwide, these pygmy rainbowfish breed readily in captivity with minimal intervention.” Place your best males and females in a heavily planted 10-gallon tank, wait a month, pull them out, and “A mountain of fry should erupt over the coming weeks.” This all sounds so simple, yet it takes Sam 11 lavishly illustrated pages to describe the various morphs and fine points of maintaining and breeding “one of the best nano aquarium fish.”

Reprints and reviews:
None this month.





Convention Report: Ohio Cichlid Extravaganza 2025 Part One: The Convention

By: Clifford H. Crain, Jr.

The Ohio Cichlid Association has held a convention every year in the same city, in fact the same hotel for the past 31 years. The convention is similar to other fish conventions with speakers, vendor room, swap meet, fish show, dinner and awards, and wrapping up on Sunday with an auction. While the emphasis is on cichlids, the OCA is following the trend of dubbing catfish as honorary cichlids.

I took six buckets of fish for the auction. As is my usual practice, each bucket has a sponge filter (with the gunk squeezed out the previous day) and heater to keep the fish alive in my hotel room until the auction.

The six hour trip to the Best Western in Strongsville, Ohio was uneventful, and traffic was light on a Thursday afternoon other than the usual slowdown in Cleveland where I-90 takes an infamous 90° sharp left turn combined with the posted speed limit ratcheted down to 35 MPH.

A big attraction of this convention is that attendees pay only \$76 plus tax per night for a room that was entirely acceptable and featured a refrigerator and free wi-fi. On the other hand, I was reminded of the complaint I filed in last year's convention report: there is no stop light to make the left turn from the hotel in order to access the many stores and restaurants on busy Royalton Road, and there's no other way off the hotel property. The wait to safely turn left can be quite long.

There were many sales of fish and related stuff conducted from hotel rooms. Why do buyers like to purchase fish directly from sellers, either in the hotel rooms or the Saturday swap meet? They get the fish they were looking for without fear of being outbid at the auction. And why do sellers go to all the trouble of selling from their room, given that they miss some of the convention activities while they're stuck in the room? A seller told me he gets a higher price. I noticed that some sellers place their unsold stock in the Sunday auction. I bought a bag of eight *Chalinochromis bifrenatus* from an Ohio dentist who uses his practice's oxygen tank and meter to inflate his fish bags.

This seller hoped the Grinch and Max will entice buyers to their room



The purpose of a bed is to display bags for fish for sale, amirite?



More fish for sale in a hotel room



I buy all my fish bags from this vendor

On Friday morning and afternoon, I went on the unofficial shop hop tour hosted by Greater Pittsburgh Aquarium Society Inc. member Joe Doyle. There is so much to tell about the shop hop, I'll report on it in the January edition of the *Reflector*.

Who better than Dan Sharifi, owner of Cichlids of the Americas and credited with spawning over 100 Central American cichlids, to kick things off Friday night with his recommendations for, you guessed it, breeding Central American cichlids. In his business he kept the fish in spacious 400 gallon acrylic tanks measuring 6'x4'x2'. Since the water was kept at 88°F, heavy aeration was essential. He fed the fish a low-fat diet containing less than 7% fat and excluded any food containing chicken, pork and beef. Interestingly, the wild-caught fish were not as aggressive as the line-bred fish. He recommends no substrate in the tank so the aquarist can observe the feces; you can tell a lot about the health of the fish by looking at its excrement.

I was pleased that the next speaker, Ingo Seidel decided to focus on the care and breeding six different kinds of catfish, rather than show hundreds of photos of catfish from around the world. It was an informative talk that kept the interest of a non-catfish guy like me.

The next speaker had a presentation unlike any I've ever seen. Heinz Büscher has made 55, yes, 55! trips to Lake Tanganyika and recorded many hours of cichlids in the lake. He hit the "Play" button and for the next 45 minutes or so just narrated his own video without pause. Wow, talk about first-hand knowledge. He was able to tell the food these fish ate based on an examination of their feces. In the wild the fish are continually hunting for food, very different from their feeding mode in the aquarium.

The evening wrapped up with Lawrence Kent hosting reminiscences by famed aquarist and humorist Charley Grimes. Now 84 years old, Charley related that he has spawned over 500 species of fish in a 20'x30' addition that he put on his house in order to hold 100 aquariums. How did he afford that addition and three collecting trips to the Amazon? He said selling thousands of *Lamprologus leleupi* that he spawned paid for it all. I've heard Charley speak before, and he has not lost any of his wit and humor. I stayed for the entire funny and enjoyable question-and-answer period despite it lasting well past my bedtime.

Ingo Seidel returned Saturday morning with a talk focused on bristlenose catfish, based on a book he recently published titled *Bristlenose Catfish: Genus Ancistrus*. He divided the talk into what they are, their habitat, care, breeding, recommended species and an in-depth presentation about the common bristlenose catfish. For spawning, Ingo recommends cones (conical) breeding caves. These fish also must be the right age for spawning, since they stop spawning when they get older. For this reason, he's careful to never sell

all of his fry. Separate the sexes before breeding, and offer them a selection of different spawning caves. Ingo recommended a cooler water change. And after they produce fry, daily water changes in the fry tank are a must. Finally, don't keep two different species together, as bristlenose have been known to hybridize.

Dan Sharifi made a return appearance for his talk, "Tank Busters of South America." As can be guessed from the title, he spent time talking about the care, diet, behavior and breeding of these large cichlids. To be honest, I was only paying half attention since I don't have any aquariums large enough to hold these monsters. But Dan got my attention when he started comparing South American cichlids to Central American cichlids. In general, they tolerate lower oxygen levels better but can't stand big temperature fluctuations. They like lower pH and water no harder than 400 TDS. They tend to prefer soft sand bottoms instead of rocks. Dan was emphatic that South American cichlids are not compatible with Central American. The large Centrals will eventually clobber the large Souths. Large South American cichlids are mostly piscivores and require a high protein diet, while the Centrals tend to be foragers. The difference in food preference can be determined by the vast difference in jaw structure. Another difference is that large South American cichlids are predatory but not territorial except when spawning; they're nomads. Temperature impacts sex ratios: cooler temps lead to more males. The large South American cichlids tend to be spawn on flat surfaces rather than caves (exception: *Crenichla*). And finally, to illustrate the difference in water hardness compared to Central American cichlids, Dan related that *Mesoheros festae*, the Red Terror, is extremely sensitive to hard water.

The final speaker Saturday afternoon was Lawrence Kent. His lively, humorous "Seeking Cichlids and More All Over West Africa" presentation told of his adventures over the years in Nigeria, Mali, Benin, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone. After being infected with hookworm and losing 30 pounds, he has labeled that parasite "The African Ozempic." He had a practice of hiring local fishermen, who know where the fish are, to cast the nets and collect the fish. While there he enjoyed eating dried cichlids and showed the video to prove it.

After the final talk, the main room was closed to allow time for people to set up their tables for a large, and I mean really large, swap meet. It was here that I bought a bag of six *Julidochromis ornatus*, black worms and white worms.

Very crowded at the large swap meet



Another view of the huge swap meet



A view of the vendor room



After the swap meet I returned to Aladdin's, a fantastic Lebanese-Mediterranean restaurant that I discovered at last year's OCA. It would be great if that chain would please open a branch in Syracuse.

I returned in time to hear some speeches and watch the awards being handed out to the winners of the fish show. After the show awards were handed out, there was a dry goods auction of all the items donated by hobby manufacturers. The OCA combined the donations into about 20 large bags of quality stuff which fetched high bids.

Sunday mornings at a fish convention are always busy since so much has to be done in time to meet deadlines: getting dressed, bagging fish, packing up, loading the car, eating breakfast and checking out. I entered ten bags in the auction consisting of *Thorichthys maculipinnis* and the last of my rainbow cichlids, *Julidochromis marlieri* and *Lamprologus tigripictilis*. I freed up three tanks for the fish brought back from the OCA.

The auction, where credit cards were accepted for payment, used the "four color sticker" method of grouping the bags. But all four colors were chosen at random, so there was no way for sellers to ensure that their highest-value fish would be auctioned first. As usual, I volunteered to be a runner to counteract boredom and get some exercise before being cooped up in the car for the drive home. While the first auctioneer was slow, by the second hour the next auctioneer was moving things along with his fast cadence. I bought a bag of *Rocio spinosissima* and left at 12:30 for the long drive home.

One surprise bonus I got at the auction: while waiting in the runner line with an auction lot, I noticed a person nearby who looked familiar. Reading the name on his lanyard, I discovered it was Mike Huber. His picture appears with his excellent articles for the Missouri Aquarium Society *Darter*, which I read in my capacity as the CNYAS Exchange Editor. I introduced myself and had a person take our photo.

Always held the weekend before Thanksgiving, the convention is subject to massive lake-effect snow. Sure enough, one week after the convention, upstate New York received enough snow to require me to fire up my snow thrower. Despite the possibility of bad weather, I plan to attend the Extravaganza again next year, and I hope some CNYAS members will join me.



An unexpected pleasure meeting Missouri Aquarium Society's Mike Huber

The Night Before Christmas?

A series by the Undergravel Reporter

In spite of popular demand to the contrary, this humor and information column continues. As usual, it does NOT necessarily represent the opinions of the Editor, or of the Greater City Aquarium Society.

Twas the night before Christmans, when all through the tank Not a fish was stirring, not even for a pellet that sank. The ornaments were placed in the tank with care, In hopes that more fish would soon be there!

The children were nestled all snug in their beds, While visions of tetras and barbs danced in their heads; And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap, had just settled down for a long winter's nap, when out of the fish tank there arose such a clatter, I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter. Away to the tank I flew towards the crash, And turned on the light with a very bright flash.

The light scattered the fish with its blinding glow, Gave the lustre of mid-day to shiny fish below, When, what to my wondering eyes should appear, But a massive, gray, dinosaur bichir!

My tetras and danios started darting around quick--quick, I knew in a moment it must have been St. Nick. More rapid than trout my danios they came, And I whistled, and shouted, and called them by name!

"Now, Fishy! now, Finnaeus! now, Bubbles and Ray! On, Bob! on Squirtle! Let me see you're OK! To the top of the tank! To the side near the wall! Now dash away from that bichir! dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly, When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky! So up through the tank those fish all swam, And I realized that St. Nick had left me in a jam!

Didn't Santa know anything about fish? A giant bichir with my danios, something no one would wish. As I reached for a net, and was turning around, Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound!

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot, And his clothes were all wet from his hat to his boot; A bag of fish he had flung on his back, He made the floors a mess with water dripping from his pack.

His eyes -- how they twinkled! His dimples how merry! His cheeks were like barbs, the ones that are cherry! His droll little mouth was drawn up like a cory, In a wry little smile like that fish named Dory!

The stump of ph test strips he held in his teeth, And the gravel siphon hung round his neck like a wreath; He had fish eyes and a little round belly, That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly!



He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old loach, And I yelled when I saw him like an angry football coach; "How could you put a bichir in with my danios you fool?" I knew to say that was naughty, but I lost my cool.

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work, And scooped out the bichir; then turned with a jerk. And dropping a net into his wet sack, He drew out a footlong clown loach that fell in the tank with a smack!

I stared in wonder at the clown loach he had brought, No stores had ones half this size to be bought. When I turned back around he was already out of sight, But I heard him yell HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL FISH LOVERS, AND TO ALL A GOOD-NIGHT!

This article originally appeared in the December 2025 issue of Greater City Aquarium Society - New York's Modern Aquarium



CLUB MEMBERS' FISH AND/OR AQUARIUM

Photos by: David Pomeranz



A male Peacock Gudgeon, right after I removed his eggs, clearly letting his keeper know how he feels about it.



A Lake Tabera Rainbow fish in breeding regalia, Zooming about the tank



This is a dominant male Empire gudgeon (*Hypseleotris compressa*) displaying for a subdominant male in my 30 gallon planted display tank



UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 10, Board Meeting
Dec 17, General Meeting
Jan 14, Board Meeting
Jan 21, General Meeting

BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month and are open to all members who would like to attend.



2025-2026 Schedule

Sept: Ron Fabiny	Oct: Doug Hillman
Nov: Mike Flintrop	Dec: Mary & Lenny Futterman
Jan: Chip Alexander	Feb: Clifford Crain
Mar: Bill Newell	April: David Pomeranz
May: Bob & Sue Kotcher	June: TBD

CNYAS CLUB MEETINGS

Each monthly meeting consists of :

- Short business meeting; program (slide show, movie, guest speaker, etc.).
- Break (refreshments/social gathering)
- Bowl Show
- Mini auction of member items (plants, fish, equipment, etc.).
- Raffle (equipment, books, food, magazine subscriptions, etc.).
- Question and discussion session.



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Witnesses for the BAP and AHAP Programs

Sue Kotcher	BAP	AHAP
Clay (315) 622-9668		
Ron Fabiny	BAP	AHAP
Clay (315) 440-5806		
Len Futterman	BAP	AHAP
East Syracuse (315) 560-0955		
Herschel Beeman	BAP	
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Bill Newell		AHAP
Liverpool (315) 440-9513		
Mike Flintrop	BAP	
Manlius (315) 415-1471		
David Pomeranz		AHAP
Homer (516) 592-9940		

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CNYAS is a non-profit educational organization with a goal of furthering the study of all forms of aquatic life. In order to achieve this, we promote the interest in, and encourage the breeding of, aquatic life. Through the exchange of ideas and distribution of information concerning the hobby, we will advance our members' knowledge of the hobby, providing valuable information to those who seek it.

[CNYAS is now on Facebook!](#)

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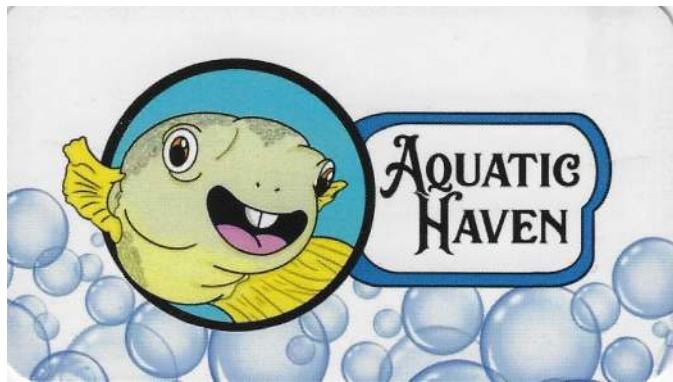
CNYAS has made our archives of past published Reflectors available online to all members. They go all the way back to 1976, to the inception of our club. The link below will take you to the archive. Enjoy your trip through our fishy past!

<https://tinyurl.com/CNYASreflectors>

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