



The Raleigh Aquarium Society

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July, 2005

(Hey, its starting to get warm out there!)

Next Meeting: Thursday, July 7th @7:30pm

Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at the N.C. State Veterinary Medical College located at [4700 Hillsborough Street in Raleigh](#). Visitors are welcome! Snacks and light refreshments are provided. A raffle of fish and fish related items follow the meeting. Due to Security Issues, NCSU has required that the doors going into the downstairs lobby remain locked. Please be on time, as we will have a designated person standing by the door to let you in. If you are late, you may try knocking or call Brandon Berry's cell phone at 252-266-3559, Jeff Jenkins at 919-612-0229, or John Patterson at 919-264-4011.

Meeting Agenda:

Repairing & Building Fishy Hardware:

- Building a DIY light fixture from AhSupply.
- Repairing filters
- Tips on using air-driven box and sponge filters.
- Re-sealing tanks?

If there's some piece of equipment you'd like to build, repair, upgrade, or just understand how it works, our July 7 meeting is for YOU. All members (and Visitors !) are invited to participate. Topics so far include building & retro-fitting light fixtures, re-sealing leaky tanks, refurbishing old filters and pumps, and tips on using air-driven filters. Bring in those "bargains" you bought at auction and never used ! All other topics are welcome, including On-The-Spot entries!

And if you're a "Handy-Person" please bring small tools and let Gerald know if you'd like to be on our Fix-It Team. Electrical expertise is particularly needed (ouch !!).

Future Speakers for our Meetings: If you know of anyone who would be willing to give a talk at one of our meetings, **please** contact Gerald Pottern at gpottern@rjgaCarolina.com

Newsletter Articles: If you or someone you know would like to have their work or aquarium pictures featured in the newsletter, please contact Patricia Ceger at raleighaquariumsociety@yahoo.com

Monthly Feature:

Some tips on buying fish from Aquabid:

By Patricia Ceger

For anyone who is not yet familiar with it, Aquabid (www.aquabid.com) is the fish equivalent of EBay. It is an online auction site that covers everything fishy, from books and dry goods to inverts and live plants. Remember, a bid is considered to be a contract. Only bid on an item after you have read all of the details. It would also be best if you read their "knowledge base" (<http://www.aquabid.com/faq/index.php?c=2>), which explains Aquabid policies, explains how to sell and/or bid, how to avoid getting scammed, etc. If something goes wrong and you suspect that you have gotten scammed, this section will tell you how to report it and will explain a bit about available recourses.

The knowledge base is a very useful resource that goes into much more depth than I have time for here.

The first thing to be aware of is to beware of things that sound too good to be true. Aquabid states that in its section on how to avoid being scammed. For those of you who would like an example, read here: <http://www.planetcatfish.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=11006&highlight=zebrazucht>.

In general, this series of posts is about someone who is posting a rare and exotic fish in large groups for very reasonable prices. Now, this may not be too good to be true; that is your decision. Just make sure you research very carefully.

Check out the Aquabid forums: <http://www.aquabid.com/forum/forum.cgi?action=forum>

They are a GREAT source of information about good and bad sellers, and they are searchable so you don't have to read through all 18 plus pages of headers to find out about JoeBlow from Queens.

Pay especial attention to information regarding shipping charges. If you are bidding on a \$20 fish and are not willing to pay an additional \$20 to \$50 for shipping, you are probably not going to want to bid. Shipping isn't cheap, and because fish are shipped in nice, heavy water, you're going to have to pay. Shipping charges are especially a consideration with some of those lovely, lovely Bettas you'll see advertised from Thailand or Singapore. They list a \$5 shipping charge, but that charge is for shipping to the continental U.S.! You then have to pay an additional shipping charge to that sellers U.S. transshipped to get your fish to your door. This means that your shipping charges on a \$20 Betta can easily add up to \$30 or more for ground shipping, closer to \$70 for airmail.

Aquabid (and EBay) include both buyer and seller feedback scores. They are based on feedback left by both sides of the transaction. These scores and the comments entered can be read by anyone. It is a good idea to check out the score of the seller in whose fish you are interested, and read what the negative comments say. Bear in mind that sometimes people will post nasty comments that are based not on a fault of the seller, but a shipper error, or are retaliatory in nature. Still, in general the higher the seller rating, the more likely you are to be satisfied with your order. As my personal rule of thumb, I have never ordered from anyone whose rating is lower than 98% positive, but I'm not a big risk taker. Then you want to consider how many reports have been left. It is a simple rule of averages. If a person has had 1000 satisfied customers, and only 1 or 2 negative ratings, odds are better that you will get what you order on time and alive. Also, there have been cases of some unscrupulous sellers who registered under fake names, bid on their own items, and left positive feedback for themselves. Both Ebay and Aquabid are aware of this problem and are taking steps to prevent it, but in the meantime, it seems reasonable to assume that even the most dishonest person is too darned lazy to do this sort of thing 1000 times. Does this mean you should not bid on items offered by sellers who only have a few sales under their belt? No, just be careful.

Here is a discussion about this very issue: <http://www.petfish.net/forum/index.php?board=52;action=display;threadid=25945>

This particular series of posts addresses a person's experiences with a bad seller and her attempts to resolve things. On page 4 there is also a mention of something I address below; outside temperature and shipping.

Read the payment details carefully! I once ordered some fish from a guy who had listed that he accepted paypal payments, only to have him tell me that I should have read more carefully. He only accepted paypal payments from accounts that were bank account based, not credit card based. I ended up paying for the order by USPS money order, which was not nearly as convenient.

Read the text referring to pictures carefully. If you buy, are you really going to get that beautiful fish you have your heart set on, or is that a "representative" shot of the "quality and size" of the fish you will be getting? Personally, I want to SEE the fish I am bidding on, not a representative, but it is up to you. There are those who argue that there is no guarantee that a picture of "the actual fish" IS the "actual fish". This is possible, but if you have an "actual picture" and what you get doesn't look at all like the photo to you, you have a better position from which to negotiate.

Check to see whether live arrival is guaranteed. Some sellers guarantee that your fish will arrive alive, but only if you choose shipping by airmail, while others sell on a "pays your money and takes your chances" approach. For those who do, they will want some confirmation of dead arrival, usually in the form of a picture of the dead fish in the original bag in the shipping container. Be aware of this, and have a camera (with film or available memory) on hand. Also note that some shippers will only guarantee live delivery if someone is there to sign when the package first arrives. Now, if you're like me, you'll swear that UPS has a monitor on your door! You've been home continuously from 8 AM to 4 PM, and you finally decide to slip out to the gym. When you get home 1 hour later, there's that stupid "sorry to have missed you" note. If that is the case, you have just lost your guaranteed live arrival.

On a related note to the above, pay attention to the temperature outside. All sellers should be shipping your fish to you in styrofoam boxes, but there is a limit to how much insulation those boxes provide. Your fish will not be inside in a nice, temperature controlled room during the shipping process. Their box will be exposed to outside temperatures. If shipping during the winter, you will probably need to have heat packs included. This is an area where good sellers really shine. Heat packs (or cold packs) must be very carefully packed. If they directly touch the bag, they can kill your fish. Some sellers charge extra for including them not just to make up the cost of buying them, but to compensate for the extra care involved in using them. These packs have a limit to how long they work. If your package gets hung up in transit and takes a week rather than 2 days, well, too bad. If the fish are well packed, you might get lucky. Some sellers will refuse to ship during the worst heat of summer or cold of winter. Those who will ship will often require that you use the fastest, most expensive shipping methods. If you insist on buying fish at these times, pay the extra for rapid shipping. It's worth it.

Some of the sellers on Aquabid are transshippers. These are not fish that they have bred themselves and raised from fry. These are fish coming in from another country and being placed into holding tanks pending shipment to your door. Aquabid has a link with e-mail this seller a question. Feel free to use it. If you are going to be spending money to buy a fish you have never personally seen, then you want to get as many details as possible. In the case of transshippers, you want to know whether the fish has settled in, does it look healthy, and is it eating. Actually, Aquabid states that you should always talk to the seller before bidding on ANY item. This is not a bad idea. Besides, if you e-mail someone reasonable questions about their item and they refuse to answer, you most likely don't want to buy from them anyway.

The bottom line with Aquabid is that it can be a great way to buy some really rare and exotic fish, like the new Vietnamese whitecloud, Tanichyths micagemmae, BUT you MUST be careful and do your homework or you can get burned.

Trading Post

To advertise please send the information to raleighaquariumsociety@yahoo.com.

Dan Mueller: My items for the post is following. Breeding group of 5 purple princess (sp 83) \$75 group, quad of albino 1/2 crimson \$50, breeding pair of blue fin \$50, breeding pair nyereri \$50, 20 fry nubious (1.5") \$4.00 each, 10 hongi \$3.00, flavus \$3.00, group of frontosa kitumba 4 @ 2.5" \$150.00 and pair looks like male and female @ 4" \$200.00 (moba frontosa) and coral 4" and bigger 1-9 pieces \$15, 10-19 \$12.50, 20-40 pieces \$10.00. aquaholic33@aol.com

Sal Notarmaso –has: Yellow Regal Peacock \$ 8 - 3 inches full color
Lombardi Kenyi \$ 4 - All sizes to breeders
Yellow Lamb \$ 4 - 3 inches and more
Obediean L.V. \$ 4 - 3 inches and more a good buy
Angels-Koi \$ 3 - good size 20 left

I will be taking orders on almost any fish from the 3 Lakes 1 to 2 weeks to get to you, but still the same low prices, they may not be as large as the ones I breed. I can usually give you a price over the

phone for fish and equipment of Tanks,Heaters,filters,Lids.Lights,used and new soon. 919-383-3131 leave a message

Links that may be of interest:

Betty Splendens, where the motto is "Go breed better Bettas": <http://www.bettysplendens.com/articles/home.asp> This site has lots of really nice, informative articles. I went there to read about the new metallic Bettas I saw on Aquabid, and ended up reading all of the articles.

The International Betta Congress: If you like Bettas, you should have this bookmarked.<http://www.ibcbettas.org/>

The American Betta forum: <http://www.americanbettaforums.com/> Talk to American Betta enthusiasts.

The International Betta forum. Want to talk to folks in Singapore about their breeding setups, exciting new fish, etc.? Maybe drop a line to someone in Germany? Check out this site: <http://www.bettas4all.nl/portal.php>

Derek Parr recently went out to the NC mountains and collected native fish. He got some really beautiful darters. Check out the photos here: <http://www.derekparr.com/photos/2005-06-21/>

"Gunn Chusakul, Greensboro, NC, would like to extend an invitation from the MAKC, Mid-Atlantic Koi Club, <http://www.makc.com> to come to the Koi America (August 12-14th) 2005 in Chantilly, VA. There will be Koi and Goldfish Show, and many Vendors whom have Products which relate to Aquarium and Watergardens. By the Way, if any of the RAS members would like to enter their fishes, Koi or Goldfish, in to the Show, they are welcome to do so. You will find the information on the above web site: <http://www.makc.com>"

The [Atlanta Area Aquarium Society](http://www.atlantaaquarium.com) has several auctions per year. The next one is October 29th, 2005. For their annual calendar, click here <http://www.atlantaaquarium.com/events.htm>

The [Potomac Valley Aquarium Society](http://www.potomacvalleyaquarium.com) is having their 2005 Fall Fish Festival October 21-23 at the Best Western Maryland Inn in Laurel, MD
There will be a freshwater fish show, speakers, and a Sat. evening banquet and auction on Sunday. (I'll post more details as I get them).

Both PVAS and AAAS send members to our annual auction and help to support us. In return, please show our support for them by attending their workshops and auctions! RAS has been offering shared transportation to these meetings and paying for a night in a hotel for members who wish to attend these out of state jaunts.

Aquatips

This month's topic:

Setting up "Nano" tanks (5 gallons or less).

Please bear in mind that these are tips based on the past experience of others. They are not guaranteed to work for you.

1) Use plants with small/fine leaves. Some nice examples would include: Ludwigia arcuata, Didiplis diandra, Rotala rotundifolia "green", Echinodorus tenellus "true micro", Mayaca fluviatilis, Blyxa japonica, Glossostigma elatinoides, and the various mosses, such as Xmas Moss, Java Moss, etc. Also consider the new narrow leaf Java Fern. This plant spreads rapidly, has a nice,

grass-like appearance, tolerates levels of light ranging from low to outrageously high, and is adaptable to water ranging from soft and acidic to hard and basic. If you'd like something that floats and has a wonderful color, consider the red rooted floater, *Phyllanthus fluitans*.

2) Many small tanks come with incandescent light bulbs. Consider replacing these bulbs with "daylight" compact fluorescent bulbs that are easily available from Lowe's or Home Depot. This will decrease radiant heating from your lights, and give you better plant growth.

3) Stocking options: Remember that these are very, very tiny tanks, that will need to be stocked very lightly. Your options can be somewhat limited. What do you use if you don't want to put in a Betta or a Paradise fish? Consider some of the pygmy *Corydoras* species, like *C. habrosus*, *hastatus* or *pygmaeus*. What? Still too common? Consider something a little more exotic, like *Aspidoras* (for more info, check out www.planetcatfish.com, or check out the Potomac Valley Aquarium Society breeders articles). Maybe you can try some least killifish. This small livebearer is tinier than guppies, relatively easy to keep and is often "lost" in a larger tank. Just make sure you have room to grow out the babies!

4) Consider an invert tank instead. Just think how lovely a small tank filled with cherry red shrimp would look. Give it some black gravel and some nice green plants...wonderful! Just read up on them first. One source I located recommended no more than 3 shrimp per gallon of water.

5) Remember that your small tank will need frequent water changes. Since a python will be just a little too big for such a small tank, try airline tubing instead. To prevent sucking up all of your gravel, try cutting a small piece out of a pair of panty hose, and use it to cover the end that goes into the aquarium.

Club Sponsors

(The following businesses give *RAS members* a discount on purchases)

Aquatica	5533 NC Hwy 42-W, A-16, Garner	(10%)
Carolina Pet Supply	322 McCormick Street, Garner	(10%)
Creative Pet	1350 E Broad St, Fuquay Varina	(10%)
Critter Country, Inc.	14 Technology Drive, Garner	(10%)
Fish Pros	5221 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh	(10%)
Pet Mania	All Area Locations	(10%)
Pet Paradise	9101-141 Leesville Road, Raleigh	(10%)
Triangle Tropical Fish	3600 N. Duke St., Suite 36, Durham	(10%) (Excludes Aquariums and hoods)
The Pet Pad	1347 Kildaire Farm Road, Cary	(10%) (Excludes sale items. Discount cannot be combined with the "Pet Club" discount)
Fins, Furs & Feathers	303 S. Horner Blvd, Sanford	(10%) (Excludes tanks)
Pawz Pet Supply	7317 Six Forks Rd., Raleigh	(10%)

You may be asked to show your RAS membership card.

Please contact Patricia Ceger at raleighaquariumsociety@yahoo.com if you are an active member of the Raleigh Aquarium Society and do not have an up to date membership card. Membership cards can be picked up at any meeting.

Raleigh Aquarium Society

Application for Membership

Membership privileges include:

Ability to post items in trading post section of monthly newsletter

A discount card good at participating local pet stores

All club discounts on club functions

Education from the most knowledgeable aquarium experts in NC

Yearly Membership - \$15.00 (includes spouse and children)

(Membership dues run from March 1st each year. New members joining any other time will be pro-rated at \$3 + \$1 for each month remaining in the year.)

Name(s): _____

Date to begin membership: ____/____/____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____ (2) (____) _____

Email Address: _____

New Membership ____ Renewal Membership ____ Mail to:

*Raleigh Aquarium Society
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