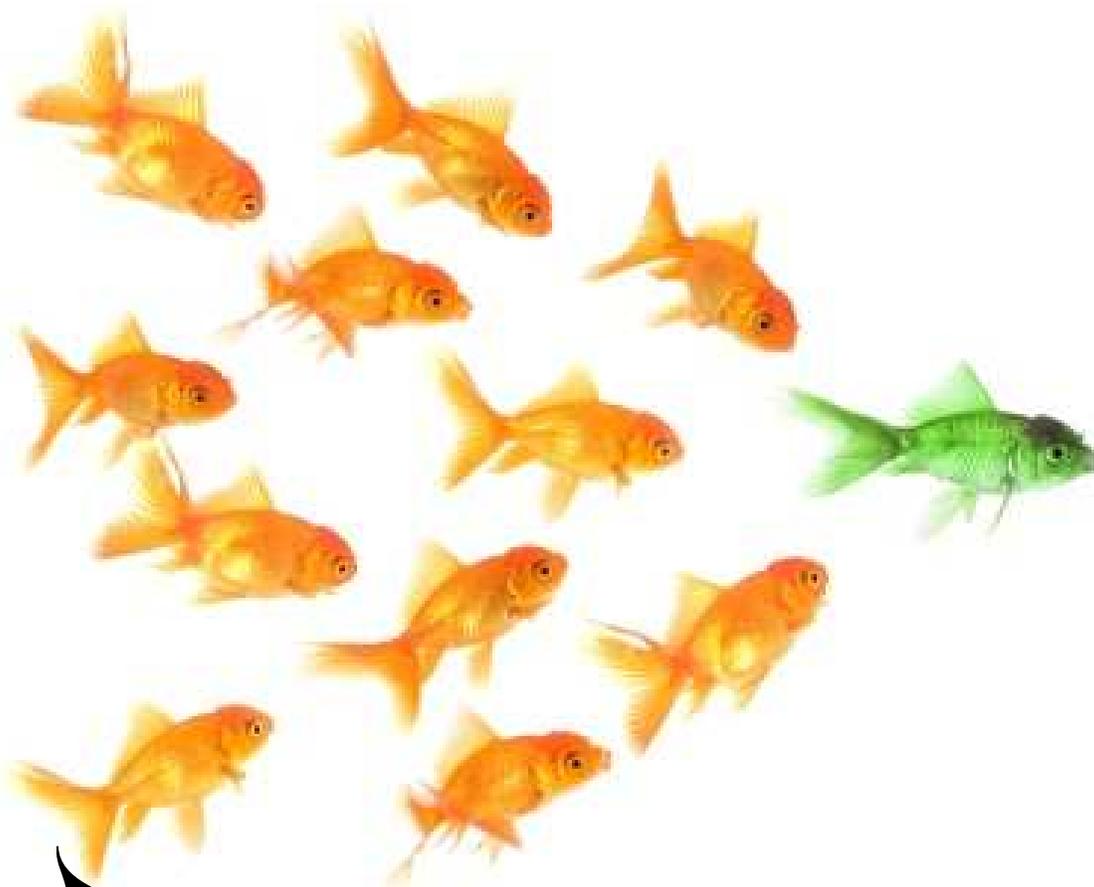


B.R.A.S.S.

Barrie Regional Aquarium Society of Simcoe



Bulletin

NEXT MEETING
MARCH 8, 2011
7:00PM - 9:00PM
MAPLE GROVE PUBLIC SCHOOL

The Mail Bag

From the Office of the President

Here we are coming up to our March meeting. That means spring is just around the corner. Good bye snow and ice!!! Sorry, not a winter person.

Well we had our first executive meeting on the 22nd of February. We covered a lot of stuff. Still have a long way to go. We will start working on our constitution at our next exec meeting. Each of the executive should now have a copy of the proposed constitution.

Doug Fleming was appointed vice president and as such participated in the exec meeting.

Remember if you're not happy with anyone of us in our present positions we can be replaced in June at our annual election.

We have a guest speaker coming to this month's meeting. Who? Read the rest of this newsletter to see.

Just a reminder about our monthly auction: We need to bring things for the auction to generate interest in the club. We need to get past the idea that auctions are for making money for ourselves and with the few people we have at meetings the prices are not worth selling the item. Rather we need to think of the benefits of bringing things to the auction. (1) It generates money for the club so we can offer more, like outings, guest speakers, and gives us finances to operate the way we need to in order to keep people interest to keep the club going. (2) It in itself generates interest in the club encouraging people to join us and generating finances through membership and this means more people to bid on items at the monthly auctions. (3) It generates interest in the hobby. People see and buy things at these auctions they may never have seen before or knew it even existed. Maybe they knew the item existed but now they get a chance to try it out for themselves.

Perhaps someone who never bothered with plants sees one at the auction and buys it. They then find they can grow it and start bringing chunks of it to future auctions. The interest in plants causes them to try out new types of vegetation so they buy some and grow it. Soon they start bringing this in for our auction. (4) People learn and experience things they may not have otherwise tried, thus enhancing the hobby. Isn't that why we are here, to gain knowledge, experience new things and to promote the hobby to make it more enjoyable for all involved?

Please plan to support your club with items for the auction. Think about what you might bring a few days ahead so you aren't scrambling the night of the auction and end up coming in empty handed.

Hope all well with you and yours (fish, plants, snails, and other aquatics), and I look forward to seeing each of you at our meeting on March 8.

Doug Smith

Message from the Editor

I hope that you are all enjoying your issues of the BRASS Bulletin and that you find at least one fascinating or funny thing in every edition. I try to mix things up for you and make sure you get a little bit of everything in each one.

Recently, I added a new friend to my bedside aquarium. Bertha is wonderful and will make her debut appearance at our Jar Show in the next few months. In fact I hope to get her a tank mate or two by then.

So, not only do we want you to start putting together items for our auction at our next meeting, but start thinking about what you might like to display at our Jar Show which will be held in the next little while.

As usual please feel free to email me your comments, questions or concerns in regards to our Newsletter. I am always open to your suggestions.

Kara
dkfleming@rogers.com



Secretary's Report

As submitted by Gary Johnson

Meeting Date: Feb 8th 2011

The Meeting took place at the Maple Grove Public School. The meeting commenced at around 7:00 pm.

The first order of business was the reading of the Secretary's report which highlighted the events of the previous meeting. The errors and omissions for this month was that the accounts were in the black.

A bank account has to be set up for the club and have 2 other signing authorities other than the treasurer. The club favored the secretary as well as the news editor to be the signing parties. A suitable date has to be fixed so that all parties are present for the creation of the account.

The Logo has some more work to be done to it. Jeff has an idea of a puffer fish blowing on a BRASS tuba. It was interesting. Jeff and Gary are to work on exchanging ideas and the results will be viewed at the next meeting.

Michael is working on the website and has certain ideas that he has incorporated into the web site. He is creating emails for all the executive members and an events calendar, also included are a photo page and a video page. There will be an area just for the executive members. Even the kids will have a section strictly for games and puzzles etc.

We are looking for a new place for our meeting and a few of the members volunteered their services. Unfortunately they were not present at the meeting. So no more input from that matter at this time.

The Next item of business was the selection of a name for our news letter and a vote was taken from the people present and it was agreed that the name the BRASS Bulletin was going to be the clubs name for the newsletter.

Another point raised was the point of cleaning up our language during the meeting as we do support and are a kid friendly club, bringing in a swear jar was one of the suggestions.

We broke for a bit. And then the prizes and auction took place. Doug Fleming was our auctioneer this month and he did a great job as usual trying to raise money for the club.

Jeff talked about a library and how he was setting up books for people to check out for a month. He was creating a spread sheet for it and has encouraged people to bring in used book or donate books to the club that would help build the clubs library.

A trip and a membership drive were talked about to bring awareness of the club to various places. Of course we will be doing this when the weather is a little better.

Pictures are needed for the club and our secretary is going to be bringing in the camera to take some pictures of our club in action.

Our next meeting is going to be on the 8th of March and I do hope to see many new faces as well as our beloved members there. Have a great fishy month everyone.

How to Buy an Aquarium

Borrowed from <http://www.aqua-fish.net/show.php?h=buyaquarium>

Aquarium size

Many beginner aquarists start out with small aquariums, but a large aquarium is actually easier to maintain than a small one. When shopping for an aquarium for the first time it is therefore a good idea to look for fairly large ones and leave the small ones for more advanced aquarists. In a large aquarium, the larger water mass will create a more stable environment for the inhabitants and there will also be more water to dilute organic waste and other pollutants. If you as a beginner find yourself in a situation where you have to choose between filling a large aquarium with inexpensive fish or filling a small aquarium with expensive fish, you should definitely choose the first alternative. It is unfortunately quite common for beginner aquarists to stock small aquariums with costly fish only to be forced to watch them die one after another due to improper water conditions.

Volume

Volume is not the only interesting figure when purchasing an aquarium. If you plan on keeping bottom dwelling fish the bottom area can be more important than the exact volume and it can be better to go for a shallow aquarium with a large bottom area than a tall aquarium with a small bottom area. If you on the other hand plan on keeping very tall fishes, such as freshwater angelfish and discus, the height of the aquarium is more important than the volume since these fishes can become stunted in aquariums that aren't tall enough for them. When it comes to size it is naturally also important to check the measurements of the final destination and the vehicle you plan on transporting the tank in. Your living room or basement may be large enough to house your huge aquarium, but will you be able to fit it into your car and maneuver it through doors and hallways? Perhaps it is better to choose an aquarium that can be assembled onsite? Perhaps you need to arrange special transportation for your tank? Some stores (both online and local) offer home delivery, but it is important to check the fine print to find out if it will be delivered to the right part of your home or simply left outside your house.

Aquarium weight

Before buying an aquarium, it is important to calculate how heavy it will be when filled with water, substrate and aquarium decorations. An aquarium can actually cause the floor to collapse, so you have to be careful. The collapse doesn't have to occur right away; the long-term impact of the weight on a particular spot can cause long-term damage that may not manifest until you have had your tank for a while. In addition to having a strong enough floor, you will also need a strong enough stand or aquarium furniture to place the aquarium on. Placing anything larger than 20 gallons on an ordinary table or shelf is considered risky.

Glass or acrylic?

Both glass aquariums and acrylic aquariums are popular within the hobby and they each come with their own advantages and drawbacks. Acrylic is stronger than glass and a better isolator, but it is also more susceptible to scratch marks. It will usually be extremely clear when new and then gradually lose its clarity as it receives more and more scratch marks. Glass is more resilient towards scratches and will therefore typically stay clear for a longer period of time, but since it is a poor isolator it will call for more potent heating. Generally speaking, acrylic aquariums are more expensive than glass aquariums.

Acrylic is rarely used for large hobbyist aquariums but is a fairly common material for small and medium sized tanks. One of the main advantages of acrylic is that it can be molded into many different shapes, e.g. to create aquariums with rounded corners. Other benefits of acrylic are that it is light and known to withstand transportation well.

If you decide to go for a glass aquarium you will have to decide between regular glass and optical quality. Regular glass contains iron impurities which give it a blue-green tinge and can make tank inhabitants appear less colourful. The thicker the glass, the more noticeable the tinge. Optical quality glass is considerably more expensive but also much clearer than regular aquarium glass.

Things to check for

■ Always check the aquarium for scratches before you make a purchase. This is especially important if you are buying an acrylic aquarium. It is however possible to repair light scratches on acrylic aquariums by buffing the marks out with metal surface polish and a rag. If this is not enough, try a really fine sand paper before proceeding to metal surface polish and rag.

■ On glass aquariums, all cut glass edges should be smooth and even.

■ The various parts of a glass aquarium should be joined together by an even bead of silicon. It is important to choose an aquarium where all the silicone joints are contacting well, unless you are okay with fixing this on your own before you use the tank. (Acrylic aquariums are instead bonded cohesively with a liquid that fuses the parts together.)

■ Does the aquarium have a lid? Many fish species are agile jumpers and need a secure lid to prevent them from escaping from the aquarium.

■ Are lights included in the aquarium lid or do you have to get a separate light fixture?

Insurance

A broken aquarium can turn into a costly experience and it can therefore be a good idea to contact your insurance company before you purchase an aquarium to find out if they have any special requirements. Some insurance companies will for instance refuse to pay for accidents caused by an improperly constructed aquarium, e.g. an aquarium where thinner (weaker) glass than recommended has been used.



Dates to Remember

March 8, 2011 (7:00 – 9:00 pm)

Next Meeting at Maple Grove P.S.

March 6, 2011

Hamilton & District Aquarium Society Auction
http://hdas.ca/?page_id=53

March 27, 2011

Brant Aquarium Society Show & Auction
<http://brantaquariumsociety.ca/index.php?q=sa>

April 10, 2011

Durham Regional Aquarium Show and Auction
http://www.dras.ca/forms/annual_show_2011.pdf
www.caoac.ca

The Life Cycle of Ich

Borrowed from <http://www.aqua-fish.net/show.php?h=lifecycleofich>

One of the most common problems that nearly all fish keepers have to contend with is dealing with White spot in the aquarium, nearly all of us have had to deal with this problem at some time and no doubt it will keep cropping up as a regular visitor in the future. It can be deadly at times, in other cases it can disappear as quickly as it came without harming the livestock in the aquarium. There are many ways of dealing with this problem but understanding the life cycle of this parasite will help you to understand the easiest way of keeping it under control in your aquarium. Treating the White spot can also cause further problems if any medication or treatment is not administered properly so this article will also explain the most effective methods for treating your fish.

Ich are Protozoa called by the scientific world as *Ichthyophthirius multifiliis* and are capable of multiplying at an alarming rate once they take over the tank. The problem is increased due to the closed environment of an aquarium as the fish are sometimes stressed in these conditions and this will weaken their immune system making them much more vulnerable. It is believed in some circles that these protozoa are present in the aquariums at all times but under normal circumstances, the fish can fight them off when they are in full health, in some cases it can be the conditions that the fish keepers are keeping their fish that actually help the disease rife especially if the water quality is poor or the fish are not being given the correct diet. Often new fish that are added to the aquarium can carry the disease to the older inhabitants; this is why it is important with certain species of fish to quarantine them before adding them to the main tank.

The life cycle of the protozoa involves several stages of development and catching it at the end of the cycle will speed up the treatment process. The protozoa attach themselves to the fish and will start to feed on the skin and tissues of the fish, as they work their way into the body the fishes natural defense is to try to form a barrier around the protozoa and block it off but unfortunately this has the effect of making it harder for any medication to be effective. The protozoa will encapsulate themselves in a cyst and continue to grow and feed but the cysts walls are impenetrable to any treatment that you try. Eventually these cysts will burst and the protozoa will fall to the substrate and these will then multiply into thousands of units ready to attack other fish in the aquarium. They rely on temperature to replicate, warmer temperatures will speed up the process, lower temperatures will slow it right down. The protozoa at this stage are known as "tomites" and these will now start to swim around the tank looking for fish to latch onto but they will also attach themselves to plants and décor in the aquarium. It is at this stage that any treatment will be at its most effective. The tomites only have 48 hours to find a fish to attach to, after this time they will die off. Once they have attached, the whole process will start again and cysts will form on the fish feeding on the skin and tissues.

Treating the Aquarium for Ich

Before adding any medications to the water to treat this disease make sure that this is the problem, there are a few symptoms to look out for and will help with your diagnosis. The first sign of Ich is the appearance of white spots on the gills and body of the affected fish, they are very small and can be missed if you do not look at the fish very carefully, they will increase in number but catching the disease at an early stage will speed up the process of eradicating it.

The fish will start to lose their appetite; they will appear restless and will start to rub themselves on the aquarium décor or substrate trying to relieve the irritation that the parasites are causing. If left unchecked it will lead to the death of the affected fish as the parasites will eventually cause permanent damage to the gills and vital organs of the fish which will be irreversible.

The first stage of the treatment should always be to turn up the temperature of the tank, we need to speed up the life cycle of the Ich so that the cysts will burst and the spores will fall to the substrate so that the medication can act quickly. Raise the temperature up to 80 deg F but do this gradually over a two day period so that we do not stress the fish, once this temperature has been reached the life cycle of the Ich will be completed over a period of four days so adding medication over the same period should theoretically wipe-out the disease. The whole tank will need to be treated as from reading above trying to treat the infected fish doesn't work once the cysts are attached, moving the infected fish will not cure the aquarium. The most effective treatments are the ones that contain formalin or you can also use malachite green but be careful as these treatments can also affect the health of certain species of fish, scale-less fish such as loaches will definitely be affected so in this case it is recommended to use the medication at half strength. Remove any carbon from the filters as this will soak up the medication straight way making it useless and in the case of a saltwater set up, turn off any skimmers or UV systems.

Preventing Ich from entering your aquarium

Of course we cannot guarantee that Ich will never enter the aquarium but there are several steps to decrease the chances.

- Only purchase fish that look healthy and disease free, if you are unsure about the way a fish looks, don't buy it.
- Quarantine your fish before you add them to the main tank, this will give you time to observe the fish and spot any signs of diseases, if any disease does appear you can treat this in the quarantine tank which is a lot easier to do than with your main tank.
- When you purchase plants don't add them to the tank straight away, these could also be infected so place the plants in a separate container for at least 4 days, this will give time for the spores to die off.
- Keep the water quality high in the aquarium and perform regular water changes and use a gravel vacuum to clean the substrate.
- Overstocking the aquarium can stress the fish so always stick to the recommended stocking levels and the fish will be happy.
- Make sure that you feed your fish the correct diet with a balance of the required vitamins and minerals to keep them healthy.

By being observant and maintaining a healthy aquarium the chances of Ich striking will be minimized so form a regular routine with the tank maintenance!

Attention: Library Donations Needed!

We have started a club library for members to utilize. Members can sign out a book, magazine or article at each monthly meeting and the item will be brought to you at the next meeting. A maximum of 2 items is allowed and we ask that you return the item the following month so that another member has the opportunity to utilize this great resource.

However, our library can't be useful or grow without donations! So if any of you have any back issues of fish magazines or books that you would like to donate to the club please let us know.

All donated items will become the property of the club; however each item donated will be individually recognized with respect to the donor's name.

So consider supporting the club in this way. It's a great way to share some excellent information with fellow hobbyists.

Thanks,

Jeff Mountjoy

Upcoming Programs

March 8th-Jerry Draper (owner of the Tropical Fish Room, Brantford) will be speaking to our club on "Showing Fish". A great topic and very timely as there are lots of opportunities for us all to showcase one or more of our prized fish at the many upcoming shows in southern Ontario this spring.

Some speaker/programs for April/May are in the works... stay tuned!

Executives

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February 11, 2011

Dear Valued PetSmart Pet Parent,

Marineland has issued a voluntary withdrawal of the Stealth PRO Submersible Heater (100, 200 and 250 watt). The product is being withdrawn due to a quality issue.

If you have this product, please stop using it immediately and take the following steps:

1. Unplug the heater from the wall to stop the flow of electricity
2. Let the heater cool for 15 minutes
3. Remove the heater from the tank

Please bring the product to your closest PetSmart for a full refund or exchange. Replace the product with a comparable heater as soon as possible to maintain the temperature of your aquarium. A PetSmart store associate can help you select the right heater for your aquatic environment.

If you have questions about this withdrawal, please call Marineland Customer Service at 800-526-0650 or 800-432-6986.

At PetSmart, we are concerned pet parents, too. We will continue to do everything we can to help you and your pet during this time.

Sincerely,



Debbie Gonzalez
Vice President, Brand and Customer Marketing

*Big Al's is also accepting exchanges on these heaters without the receipt.

