

The Cichlid Chronicles

Look in the mirror...

YOU DID!!

**What killed
my cichlids?**

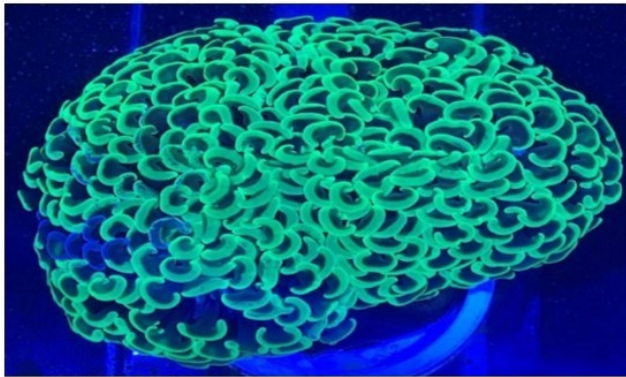




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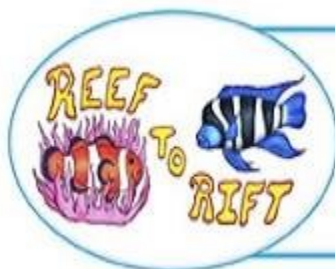


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And now a word from the CCY President



This has been a truly eventful year. I personally have had some obstacles to overcome being president but with the support of the board and the rest of you I have gotten through. This year has been full of Firsts, we started Mygroupauctions, had four first time speakers to the CCY, and held our first 3-day event featuring the Clash of the Cichlids and even added an all species show just to name a few. None of this though would have been possible without the support of you, the CCY members. For that I give you a round of applause. I hope to continue the momentum going into 2017. With your support the CCY can do nothing but get bigger and better.

Thank You,

Dwayne Walker





Cichlid Club of York **Membership**

Dues

Annual dues:

Individual membership: \$20
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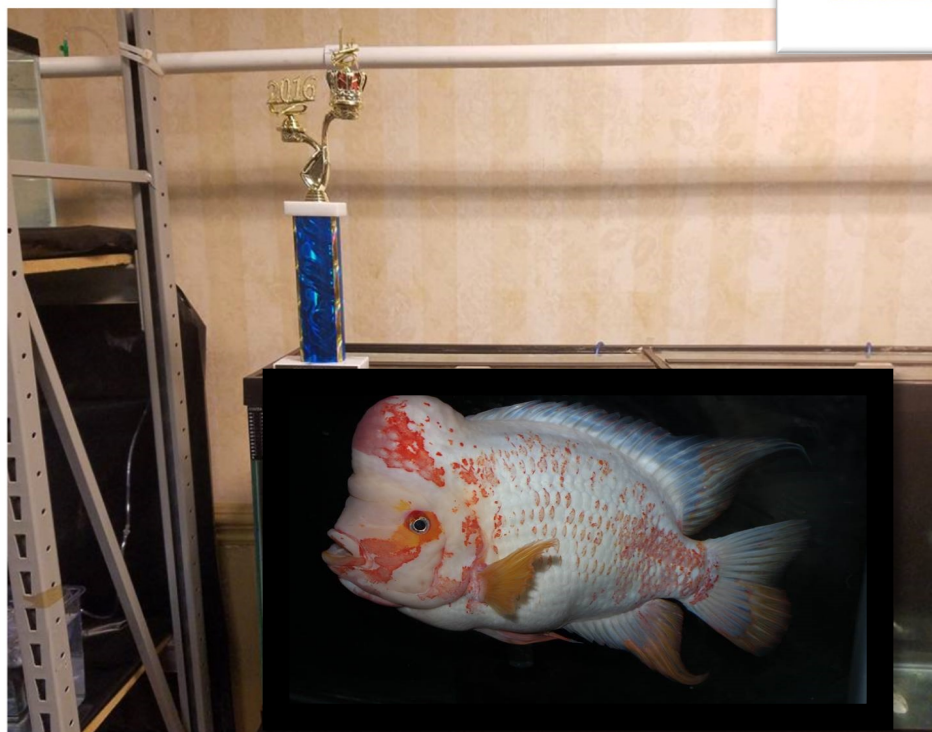
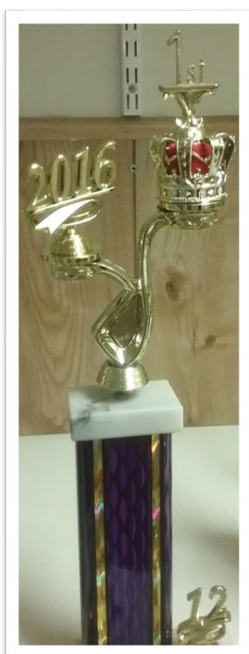


Editor's Note



What a year! November 2015 ended my 3 year stint as CCY President as well as marked the beginning of my role in the American Cichlid Association. Add to it the work Liz and I did for our website "King and Queen Cichlids" and 2016 wasn't much of a retirement for me. I affectionately call 2016 "The never ending road trip". Liz and I week after week found ourselves on the road headed to one event after another. It was probably the most fun I have had in a long time and enjoying it with that special person in my life only made it better. As we count down to the new year, Liz and I plan on doing more of the same. There are so many great events being put on by various clubs in our surrounding area it's truly amazing. Make sure you check out this newsletter for all the upcoming events so you can take part in these great events.

Obviously for us CCY members there is no bigger event than the Keystone Clash. This years Keystone Clash was a huge success and 2017 it will only get bigger!! -*Scott McLaughlin*



Sam Phelan
Winner of the
King and Queen Keystone Show award



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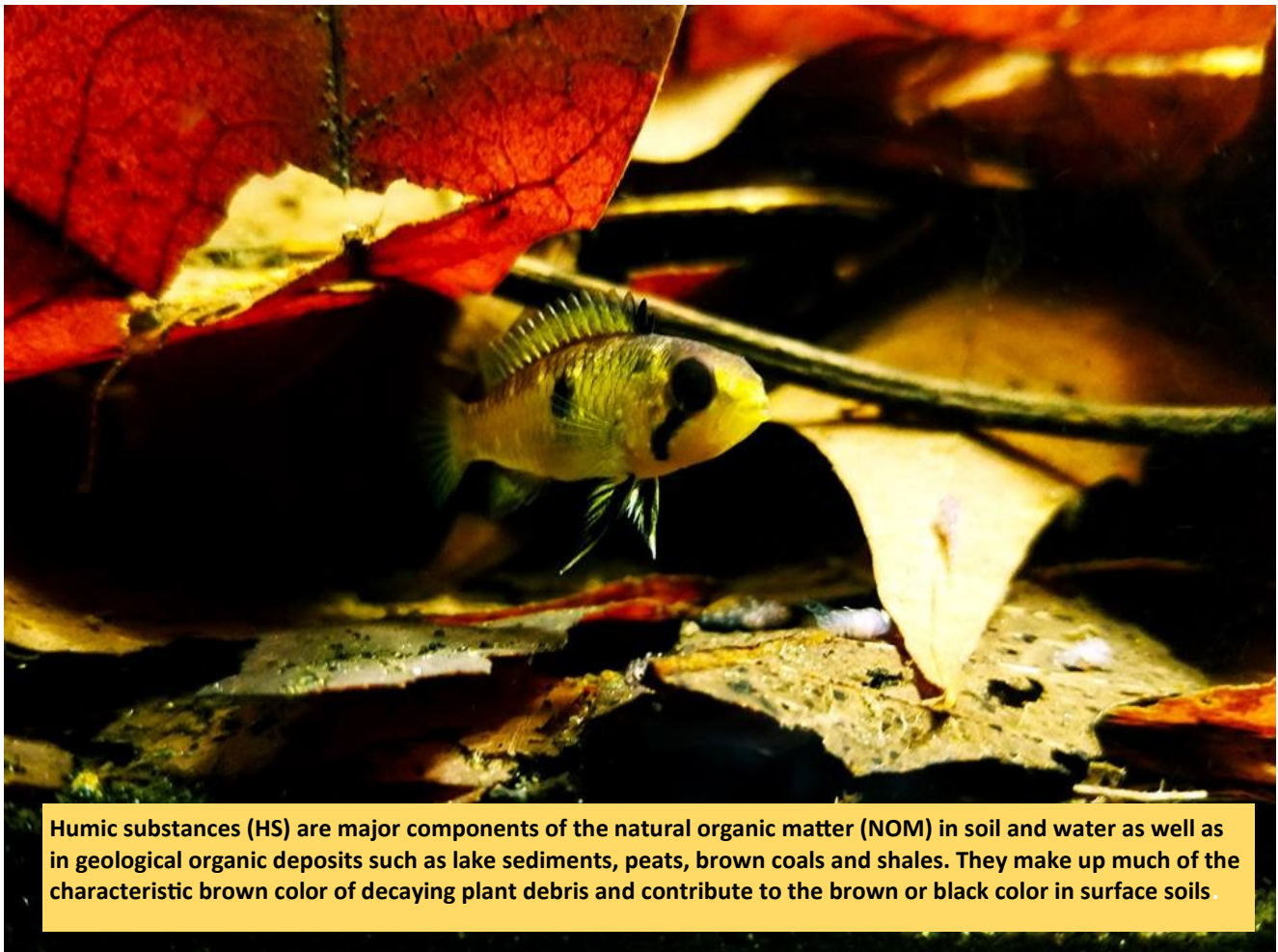


BACK IN BLACK... WATER

by **William Chance Peragine**

There was a time in fishkeeping history when, if your tank water went brown, it meant you needed to change the water. Luckily for us, those days are gone. We are now beginning to understand that humic substances (the stuff that makes the water brown) can be beneficial and, perhaps, even a requirement. Now does that mean I am telling you to dump a trash bag full of leaves into your 10 gallon tank? No! You can if you want to though.

Fun fact- did you know that every natural body of water in the world contains humic substances to some degree? Yes, and that also includes you reef keepers. Maybe you guys should to consider dropping some Indian almond leaves on those polyps. So now that we know humic substances are everywhere, we can consider the qualifying part of that statement: “natural body of water.” You see, when the water company treats your water with chlorine, fluoride and anything else it deems fit, it first removes ALL traces of humic substances. They do this because the humic substances react with the treatment process resulting in water that can be harmful to us humans. This leads to fish tanks completely devoid of all humic substances and tannins (totally unnatural), unless we add them back in. Now, because the intent of this article is not to be overly fancy or scientific, from here on out I will refer to humic substances as tannins. While this is not an exact translation, it is a word many of us are more familiar with. In this article it will be used as a “catch all” for anything pertaining to the tint.



Humic substances (HS) are major components of the natural organic matter (NOM) in soil and water as well as in geological organic deposits such as lake sediments, peats, brown coals and shales. They make up much of the characteristic brown color of decaying plant debris and contribute to the brown or black color in surface soils.

With a heavy heart I must tell you many of my closest friends like to keep stupid fish. My friend Scott J. McLaughlin likes to keep large moronic Central American cichlids, while my friend Dwayne Walker enjoys keeping small idiotic Rift Lake cichlids. Often times, keepers of these types of fish do not stop to consider the benefits tannins can bring to their tank. . It's not really their fault though. If they add leaves to their tanks, their fish will likely take a break from slamming their faces against the glass or incessantly chasing each other in circles to inspect any

new tank addition. Most of the time, these fish will assume that anything that isn't themselves **MUST** be eaten or destroyed. So as I said, you really can't blame my friends because they are dealing with such irrational fish; they just aren't as good of a fish as South American or West African fishes are. These cichlids can, however, still benefit from the addition of tannins, even if they are too stupid to realize it. These substances have natural antifungal, antiparasitic and antibacterial capabilities. This means if your fish have tannins, they are naturally healthier. Tannins have even been shown to inhibit the growth of *E. coli*, along with numerous other pathogens. So how can these poor souls get tannins into their tank? Driftwood is an easy choice, and you don't have to always boil it. Boiling anything will remove a portion of tannins from it. In my opinion, it should only be boiled if you have good reason to believe it could be harboring something that could contaminate your tank, like if you pulled it from a river. I generally just add it directly to my tank. This goes for anything that may introduce tannins to our tanks. Another good option is some leaves or pods added into the filter as a media. Take out that crappy carbon or purigen and add in some "aquatic botanicals" such as those sold by my good buddy Scott at Tannin Aquatics. You can also take the "tea" approach. Simply boil some leaves or other "aquatic botanicals" to release the tannins, then add the liquid directly to your tank or during a water change. This approach gives you the ability to adjust the tint in your tank on a case by case basis.

Oh so you don't like your water to be brown? Good news; you can have clear water and tannins at the same time! Many of my tanks appear crystal clear unless I drain them into a white bucket; only then do I even notice the slight amber color of the water. If the water becomes too dark, simply do a water change. This approach, instead of carbon or purigen, will leave your tanks with tannins as well as nice clear water. Both carbon and purigen remove ALL traces of tannins. To me, and likely to your fish, this simply is not feasible. It's like if someone removed all the nutritional value from your meals before giving them to you. Both products have their upsides, but they are outweighed by the negative effects of 100% tannin removal. For me, they should only be used to remove medication from hospital tanks. Some of us fish keepers actually enjoy that nice amber color though. I encourage everybody to at least try a blackwater tank at some point. Don't get hung up on the idea of having to get "blackwater fish." All fish can benefit from black water, so just convert one of the tanks you have and see how you like it. It can be a very visually striking contrast to other tanks. I personally love the look of a dark amber blackwater tank with floating plants dropping long roots down. I recommend the use of a spotlight type light. You just shine a single strong beam of light to highlight one portion of the tank. The dark water will accentuate the beam of light and keep it from spreading through the tank. You can really make it appear as if a sunbeam is just barely parting the jungle canopy.



Blackwater tanks can be quite serene when properly set up. With fall fast approaching at the time of writing this, now is the time to act. Other than a handful of exceptions, leaves do not die and drop off trees at any other time of year. One exception to this rule is Magnolia leaves, which drop in the spring. The question I'm asked most frequently has to be, "Do I have to wait for the leaves to turn brown and fall off the tree?" The answer is yes; you do need to wait until this happens. They must die completely before you use them. Any green left to them means that the remaining living tissue will continue to decay. Once inside your tank, this decomposition process will release ammonia into your water. Obviously this is a terrible idea. The second most frequent question I get is, "Can I only collect the leaves in fall?" My answer is there is no set in stone rule I know of. I WILL tell you that I speak from experience when I say that wandering around in the summer picking up one dead leaf at a time is painful. Do yourself a favor and only collect leaves in the fall. We dark water aficionados must build up enough leaf litter to last us the entire year, so seize the day and prepare your large garbage bags. Depending on where you live, there are sometimes companies, such as Tannin Aquatics, that sell black water products, but if you plan on collecting them on your own, great! Just fill 7 or 8 enormous garbage bags full of leaves and you should be ok for the year. I'M JOKING!! One large "contractor" type garbage bag will last the average hobbyist a very long time. If you only have 1 tank, a simple grocery bag may last you a year. I go through about 4 or 5 bags a year, but I use far more leaves than most and have way more than two or three black water tanks. When I have particularly difficult fish, or an overly aggressive pair, I will sometimes use as much as 7 or 8 inches of leaf cover in the bottom of the tank. With so much leaf litter you can be sure that, even in a small tank, the subordinate fish will be able to escape.



With so many leaves on the ground which should you pick up? Well, I guess it's hard to say what is safe and what isn't until I have personally tested every single leaf out there. I generally research each individual leaf, find out what tree it came from, and look up the tree. I make sure it doesn't contain anything that may be harmful before using it. There are books for tree identification by leaf, but the easiest method I found is using an android app called Virginia Tech Tree I.D. It asks you questions about the leaf until it narrows it down to a few possibilities. From there, I just do my own research on the tree and see if I can find any dangers. So far, I have not had any problems using this approach. Based on my research I wouldn't use eucalyptus, tea tree, or pine needles. I also would avoid any tree with a medicinal use for humans. I have three "go to" types of leaves I use, each for their own reasons. Almost all kinds of Oak are preferable because they are very durable and long lasting. Magnolia leaves are great because they hold their shape better than most other leaves, which quickly become floppy and limp. They also make excellent spawning caves for small fish. Lastly, I use Sugar Maple due to its ascetically pleasing, large size.

“Wouldn’t it be easier to just pick one type of leaf, known to be safe, and only use it,” you ask? While this is completely acceptable, it really is just doing the bare minimum. All tint is not created equal, I’m sorry to say. Natural bodies of water have complex sources of dissolved organics (dead stuff). It doesn’t just come from one type of leaf, or one type of seed pod. It is an intricate balance of all decaying matter. This means to truly replicate it, you will also need a diverse source of aquatic botanicals. Seed pods, coconut shells, various types of driftwood, and leaves; these all will come into play. Creating a diverse biological system is, in my humble opinion, nearly as important as getting some tannins in there at all. Each different leaf, seed pod, and type of wood you add brings its own element into the equation. So during this fall season, don’t be afraid to get out there and collect some leaves, stock up Blackwater supplies, and get those tanks tinted!





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Here is a quick look at the ACA photo contest running right now! It's not too late to join and win some great prizes! I have included the winners for all the previous months. There are some spectacular photos. Enjoy!

The American Cichlid Association proudly presents:
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Entries are to be submitted and uploaded at the Cichlid Room Companion forum under the ACA photo contest forum.

<http://www.cichlidae.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=132&t=18795>

You will have to attach your photo to a post.





March Photo Contest



Juan Miquel Artigas



Philippe Burnel



Philippe Burnel



J Cunningham



DS Wells



CONWAY STEVENS



meksjoef



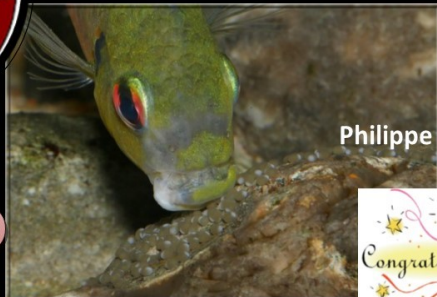
April



Klaus Steinhaus



Photo Contest



Philippe Burnel



meksjoef



Conservation Knowledge Fellowship



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May Photo Contest



carlt54



Indecisivecichlidkeeper



Philippe Burnel

Congratulations!

June Winners



1st place winner
Klaus Steinhaus



Conway Stevens



Carl T Olszewski



Tyler Termini



William Peragine

Robert Luna A Jacobfreiergi



Carl Olzewski S.mapentensis



#1



#2



Tyler Termini Blue Diamond Discus

T Termini P. managuensis



#3

Robert Luna H.obliquidens



July 2016 Photo Contest Winners





miguelgr7



CarlT54



Rluna



Brittani Pittman



Rluna

August Winners

August Winners



Robert Luna



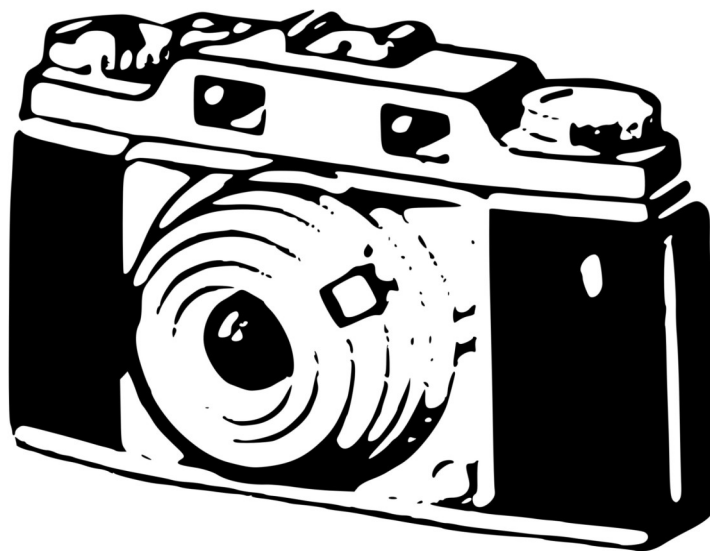
Carl Olszewski



Ronald Marcos



**ACA September
Photo Contest Winners**



The Segrest Farm Photo Challenge

1st place= 5pts

2nd place= 3pts

3rd place= 2pts

Honorable Mentions= 1pt



Robert Luna- 15pts

Carl Olszewski- 13pts

Conway Stevens- 8pts

Klaus Steinhaus- 8pts

Philippe Burnel- 7pts

Miguelgr7- 5pt

JUAN ARTIGAS- 5pts

Alaskaxtreme- 5pts

Tyler Termini- 4pts

Meksjoef- 3p

J Cunningham- 1pt

DS Wells- 1pt

William Garden Peragine- 1pt

Brittani Pittman- 1pt

Rad0mir- 1pt



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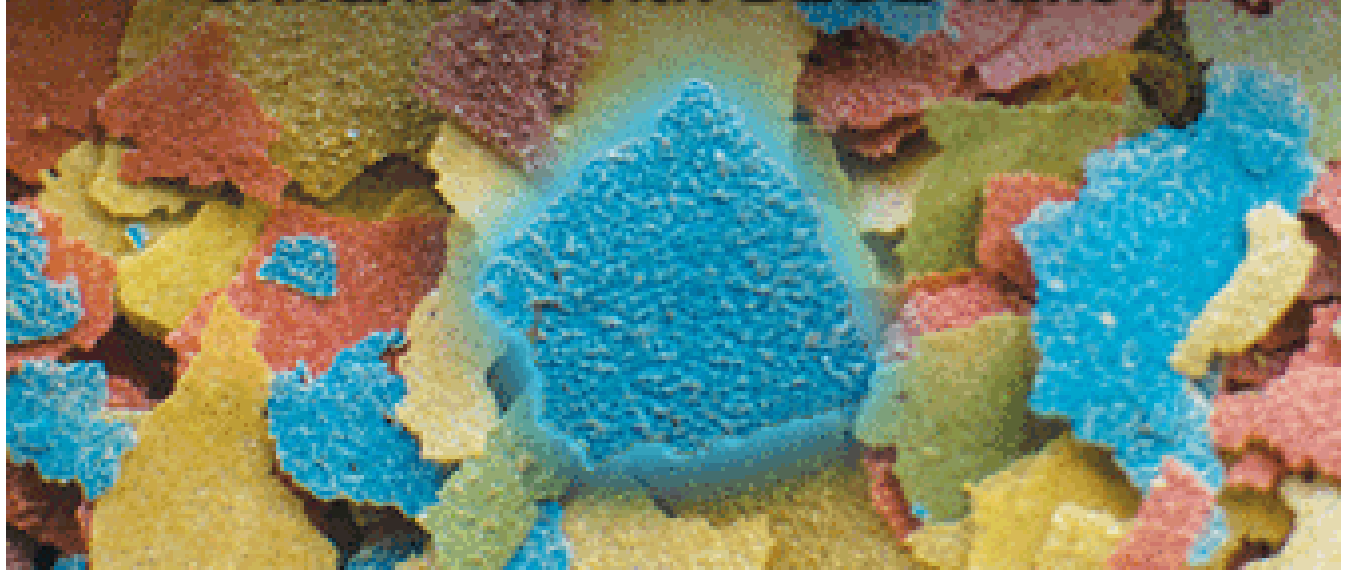
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I was arrogant.....

My head had swelled past the warning alert and entered full fledged "**He's full of himself**" mode. To put it mildly I was **cocky**. Yeah those were the days when I would scroll through Facebook posts from various clubs and chuckle as I saw post after post of people asking what was wrong

with their fish. Yet another fish knock knock knocking on Heavens door I would sing... How stupid could you be I would say as I saw bad situation after bad situation result in fish deaths. "I mean do you guys even research what you are keeping before you purchase them"- I'd yell! And then one day it happened to me..... I found the carcass of one of my newest cichlid purchases floating. I chalked it up as a fluke and privately removed the cichlid remains never posting about my loss on social media. But then it happened again... And again.... Oh my God what was going on???

I had gone through many successful years of fish keeping with minimal loss. I had won several cichlid shows with cichlids I personally raised and I was becoming known within the hobby for the large cichlids I kept. I had created (with the help of some great people) a club focused on cichlids called the Cichlid Club of York PA and it was growing with every meeting we ran. Hell I had even been hand selected to join the American Cichlid Association team which I accepted with great honor. I was on top of the fish world!

But with "success" comes "excess", I'm sure someone smart said that.. And what I found as I looked back at the recent rash of cichlid deaths was a pattern of poor decisions and carelessness. I had lost my discipline and my focus on what was most important in this hobby. Looking in the mirror, somehow the reflection I saw looking back at me had become more important than the very cichlids I was keeping.

The glare of my reflection was blinding causing me to say - *"MIRROR , MIRROR ON THE WALL- WHAT CAUSED SOME OF MY FAVORITE CICHLIDS TO FALL?"* Strangely enough the mirror answered in a southern twang that sounded like Rusty Wessels voice and it said:



#1 Just Say No! I can't tell you how many events and meetings Elizabeth and I traveled to this year but it was quite a high amount. Most of these meetings or events end with a auction that helps raise money for the club. It's in these auctions where my failures began. You see some times (especially at auctions that run long) some bags of cichlids can go for alarmingly low prices..... So low that you feel (or at least i did) obligated to purchase them . So now you are taking cichlids home you never planned on purchasing. You throw them in a tank already established and all heck breaks loose. The pecking order war begins, stress breaks out and before you know it you either have a dead cichlid or a tank full of Ich. As Murphy Law would have it,

the cichlid that dies is the one you spent 100.00 on and not the one you just threw in that cost you 1.00! Morale of the story? Discipline is the key to success. Don't bring home cichlids you haven't planned for. If you do get cichlids you weren't planning on getting, put them in solo tanks and look to rehome them only thinking of their well being not profit. Remember there are a lot of great cichlids now available in the hobby that come in many different colors, shapes and sizes. But you can't have them all. Keep your plans and goals realistic, stay focused on that plan and if all else fails just remember to say "No"!

#2 Water Changes

Water Changes are the single most important factor to successfully keeping any fish. For the type of "tank busting" cichlids I keep, water changes are a matter of life or death. These great beast eat a lot, poop a lot (for lack of a better word) and create high amounts of ammonia. Without a disciplined schedule of weekly water changes where a large volume of tank water is removed (50% or more) your tank will quickly start having issues. I went from doing water changes religiously to tricking myself into thinking my tanks look great and didn't need a water change. Biggest lesson learned? It doesn't matter how great you believe your filtration system is, there is no substitute for a good water change. **JUST DO IT!**



#3 Food/Diet

A varied diet is essential to the health and longevity of your cichlids. This can include, pellet and flake foods, frozen foods and live foods. Once you find a rotation of foods that your cichlids thrive with, it is best to stick to it. One of the great things about going to multiple fish events is that you get "welcome bags" filled with the latest and greatest foods. If you go to as many events as Elizabeth and I go to, you end up with enough sample packets that you find yourself not needing to purchase any fish food. Here begins the problem. Cichlids need a balanced diet of nutrients that they would get naturally in the wild. In the aquarium they are dependent on you to feed them properly. The mistake i made was randomly feeding my cichlids various foods i found in these welcome bags instead of sticking to my feeding routine. I am not saying you shouldn't try some of the new foods that are now available for cichlids, but i do suggest you read the ingredients and research the effects "pro or con" they will have on them. Remember cichlid fans, determine if your cichlid is omnivore or a vegetarian and then figure out what they need to live long and healthy. If all else fails ask a seasoned hobbyist what has been successful for them. Fish people are the greatest!



Lesson Learned



Some time has past since my revelation within the mirror and the balance among my tanks has been restored.

I find it quite ironic that the various meetings and events I was attending in an effort to educate myself about cichlids, led to the downfall of my fish systems and initiated the start of my bad habits. In the

end the success or failure of my fish tanks depends on me. Nobody knows that better than the man staring back at me in the mirror. Lesson learned...



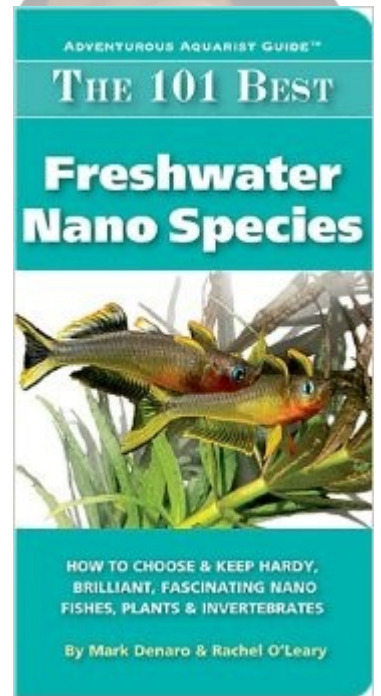
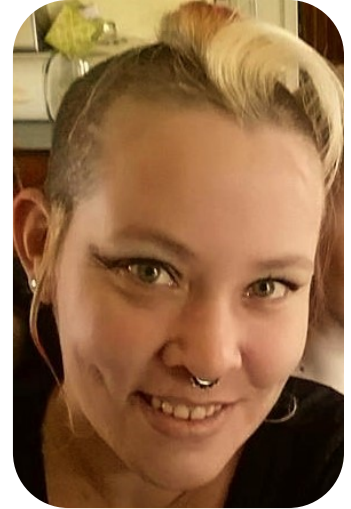
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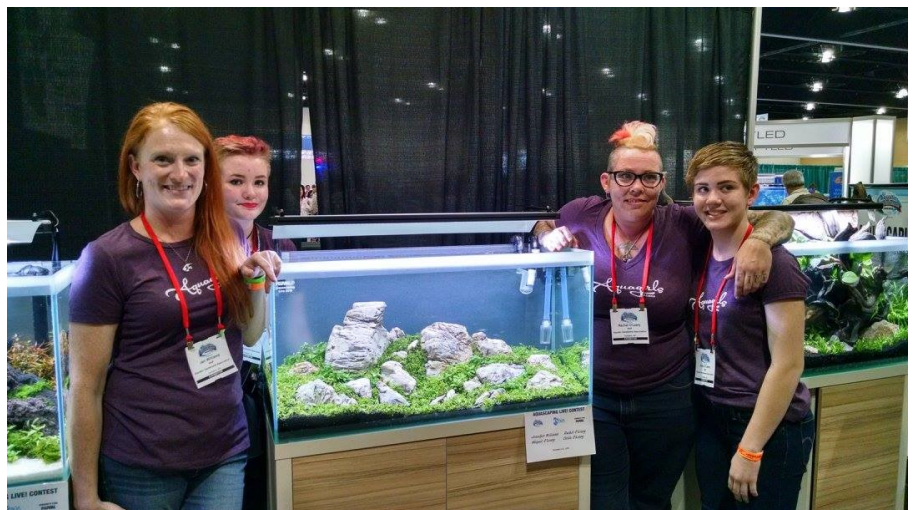


invertebrates By Msjinkz

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When I got started in the hobby several years ago my first love was big, mean fish. I started simple with Green Terrors, Convicts, Oscars, and Midas cichlids. I loved how personable they were. These playful wet pets would greet me at the end of every day and make me smile. Big cichlids love to interact, 50% because they want food and 50% because they want your attention. Each is different too. I have had the same species

where one male is so aggressive he kills every fish and another so passive I could keep him with angels, severums, or other mild mannered cichlids. I even had a vegetarian friend question why I think fish have personalities and feelings. I invited her over to show her my fish only for her to leave a changed person. You see she had no idea they were so intelligent and personable and because of this she no longer can eat fish. I still do... Fish is TASTY!

I have started noticing the beauty and grace of Nano fish after a trip we made to Racheal O'Leary's house earlier in the year. If you don't know Racheal then **shame on you**, secondly get on YouTube and check her out ASAP! Racheal is the leading female Nano fish keeper/ breeder and just an amazing woman. Her tanks are full of gorgeous Nano fish and of all kinds of beautiful plants. I was so inspired I wanted a little piece of that in my fish room too. Large cichlids are fun but you really can't keep them in planted tanks. Trust me I have tried and they will eat and shred live plants like a Ruby Tuesday salad buffet.

I picked up a 1 gallon tank with some Dream Blue Velvet Shrimp (*Neocaridina davidi*) at a CCY auction to start. They were so pretty and cool to watch, but I didn't realize how hard they were to keep and soon I lost them. Not in the sense that they died, but more like a prison break! So I put the tank on the shelf and forgot about it for a little while. Soon my thoughts on little guys was rekindled and at the Keystone clash where I picked up a pair of *Petruichthys* sp. 'rosy' Rosy Loach. I was so excited about these stunning fish that I got my 1 gallon tank up and running again. After a bunch of research and some help from my green thumb friend Kerry Dilks, (who brought me some Tanaka Maple Leaf Guppies) I got my tank planted! This tank looks like a mini forest and sits in my living room so I can watch in the

evenings while Scott watches his sports (yuck!)

Soon to follow was a group of *Hemigrammus rhodostomus*, rummy-nose tetras that I got into a bidding war at an ACLC meeting, added to my tank of *Geophagus*, keyhole cichlids, loaches and cory cats. I got to enjoy these fish schooling for about a week when I started to notice the group got smaller and smaller only to realize Scott had put a female *exCichlasoma ornatum* in my tank who got beat up so she could heal. Well she healed all right and got fat on my fish. When you have kept large fish for so long and are used to moving them around its easy to forget that you have some small guys in a densely planted tank. I look forward to starting again soon on my community tank but for now Scott can enjoy my one gallon as he sleeps on the couch.



