



Fish Tales

Volume 6 Issue 1

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On the Cover:

***Pundamilia pundamilia*
Hippo Point - Photo by
Greg Steeves**

Design and Layout

Gerald Griffin



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Fish Tales Submission Guidelines

Articles:

Please submit all articles in electronic form. We can accept most popular software formats and fonts. Email to herpchat@yahoo.com. Photos and graphics are encouraged with your articles! Please remember to include the photo/graphic credits. Graphics and photo files may be submitted in any format, however uncompressed TIFF, JPEG or vector format is preferred, at the highest resolution/file size possible. If you need help with graphics files or your file is too large to email, please contact me for alternative submission info.

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Graphics and photo files may be submitted in any format. However, uncompressed TIFF, JPEG or vector formats are preferred. Please submit the highest resolution possible.

Next deadline.....
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Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies

Presidents Message

Happy New Year to everyone! I hope you had a wonderful 2015 and will have an even better 2016. I am extremely proud to be involved with such a dynamic group as the Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies. I want to thank everyone for their support through last year and hope that everybody is as excited as I am when it comes to where FOTAS is headed. I want to thank the executive committee, Kyle Osterholt, Lisa Hufstetler, and Ralph Deboard for their involvement with our organizations direction. Also, all the club representatives have such a huge role in FOTAS, thank you as well. Another big thank you to Dr. Keith Arnold who continues to not only guide our organization but still has (reluctantly) control of the purse strings. There is no way I could even begin to imagine how tough some of the new programs would have been to get off the ground without the involvement of Gerald Griffin. I have no idea where this man gets his energy from but I'm very glad he has it and allows us to harness it.

With the implication of the HAP and BAP programs, all FOTAS club members are eligible to be recognized for their propagation efforts. Our magazine, Fish Tales is fantastic and getting better and better. I encourage everyone to keep writing. For me personally, I am most excited about FOTAS CARES. I

have had a long involvement with the CARES program and couldn't be happier to bring it to FOTAS. We already have participation that I'm very proud of but with the plethora of fish keepers in the FOTAS family, I know there are a lot more to register.

The 2016 annual FOTAS convention will take place in Schertz Texas, October 21st-23rd. While it is still being planned, my home club, the Hill Country Cichlid Club will ensure that everyone in attendance enjoys themselves. There are already four great speakers booked, the return of the game show and funny money auction will take place at the banquet, and, although

not yet announced, I'm sure there will be a theme (the 80's motif the last time HCCC hosted was a blast!). I am looking forward to repeating my "Best in Show" award.

I am extremely proud of our organization. This is the 64th year of FOTAS and at a time when some say that interest in the aquatic hobby is dwindling, our membership has soared. We've become stronger and more active with each passing year. I feel the evolution of FOTAS to remain relevant in a changing hobby is essential. I'm satisfied that we heading in the right direction and can't wait to see what 2016 has in store for our historic organization.

Greg

FOTAS 2009 in Houston Texas!





FOTAS CARES!

First Quarter Report



It's official! The Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies CARES program is in full swing. Personally, I couldn't be happier and more proud that our organization has become part of this great program. For a complete overview of the CARES program, visit www.carespreservation.com. The FOTAS CARES program is coordinated by me however; we adhere to the international program as set forth on this website.

I'm sure we will have some tweaking to do as our CARES program evolves but we have a firm template based on the best of other organization's CARES programs. I am still considering how to handle the portion of recording how long a person has had their colony of CARES fish. It would be easiest to start everyone evenly as we began our program but this doesn't take into effect the length of time a person may have been working with their fish before FOTAS CARES began. I'll figure this out and hopefully have direction on this by next report. The other glitch I am working on is whether or not to post everyone's involvement. So far, the participants I've discussed this with have no trouble letting everyone know the CARES species they are working with. I can see problems in the future for people trolling such a list

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bothering the CARES participant. For the time being, I will keep the master list to myself, the FOTAS CARES committee, and the CARES program coordinators. I will list CARES news each quarter (Fish Tales publication) with new participants and member milestones.

Starting off the New Year, we have 57 recorded colonies recorded in FOTAS CARES. That's a huge effort put forth with regards to species survival! The most recent participant and colony entrant is Andrea Halbirt who registered *Haplochromis* sp. "ruby", a threatened species from the Kyoga Lakes in Uganda. Andrea received her fish from Jay and Carol Geller who generously offered up several groups of CARES fish, free of charge, to area hobbyists.

Marc Schnell blitzed us with registering nine colonies of Lake Victoria and Lake Malawi CARES fish. With Marc's breeding prowess, these threaten fishes chance at future survival just got better! Marc is already producing fry from many of his CARES colonies.

Our Cajun lumberjack, Jim Valenzuela has entered three colonies, a Lake Victoria species and his two Barombi mbo fish, *Pungu maclarani* and *Myaka myaka*. No fry from

the Cameroonian Crater Lake fish yet but his *Pundamilia pundamilia* have already produced fry. Great work Jim and keep those CARES' fishes rolling!

As a reminder, the FOTAS CARES program is available to any member of any FOTAS club. Please check the priority listing for species you may already be working with. All participants so far have been from the Hill Country Cichlid Club. Come on FOTAS clubs...let's get those fish enrolled.

Entering FOTAS CARES is easy. Email me at FOTASCARES@gmail.com along with the following information:

- Species being entered
- Source of the fish
- Actively breeding (yes or no)
- Approximate date you acquired your fish
- Email address
- The club you are affiliated with.

Feel free to contact me with any questions. See you next report.

-Greg Steeves

Those Amazing Multies!

BAP Report

Gerald Griffin

When it comes to the Aquarium Hobby people tend to have “Favorites” when it comes to fish. It could be your first species you spawned, something that caught your eye, something that is very rare or a species whose antics continue to entertain you. For me the Shellie *Neolamprologus multifasciatus* fits the last bill. They will always be one of my favorite fish and I will always keep a colony of them as I find them such a fascinating species. I obtained my first colony from Kyle Osterholt who had been breeding them for a while and when I finally kept them I was hooked on them. One can watch for hours as they modify and redecorate their tank. This in itself varies as I have had colonies that after they set up their tank it was left that way for almost a year before they changed things up.

As a Tanganyikan Cichlid their care is relatively undemanding however one note here. They as well as the majority of the Tanganyikan

Cichlids I am familiar with are very sensitive to rapid temperature changes in their Aquariums. Given that as they are rift valley cichlids they should be kept in alkaline water with moderate hardness. My current water is around 200 ppm hardness with a pH of 7.6. This suits their needs quite nicely as I am constantly finding females with broods in the tank. I have found that the most naturalistic approach with this species works best so their tank is set up with pool filter sand with escargot shells along with some java moss and *Anubias nana*.

Multies are a small species with males growing to a maximum of around 2 inches. Females typically will grow to 1 inch. Although a diminutive species they will quite fiercely defend their territories. Their defensiveness was noted in the National Geographic video Lake Tanganyika – Jewel of the Rift, where a male is biting on the tail of a small crocodile in defense of his territory. All that attitude in such a

small package! In the wild they live in the empty *Neothauma* snail shells. The males establish their territories around clusters of these shells and try to entice females to inhabit these shells. The females will live in the shells and reproduce and raise their fry in these shells. In captivity the males will set up a territory and they will dig pits that will include several shells and the females will then inhabit the shells of the males they find most desirable.

In my experience the females once they have a brood of babies that are free swimming will herd their babies to the java moss for feeding and foraging. I have also witnessed them taking flake fish food and grinding it up and spitting it in front of the babies. The largest brood I have seen was just over a dozen fry but the majority are smaller, however I have witnessed females working more than one brood so its not uncommon to see a group of fry surrounded by quarter

inch fry with the mother as they herd them to feeding sites. They will also take baby brine shrimp as they will shred them to pieces to devour them.

My current setup for my Multies is a 55 gallon tank with a colony of *Julidochromis dickfieldi*. This gives an interesting dynamic as I have a Julie that visits the Multies and a Multie that lives in with the Julies. I have found that although they can live in a 10 gallon tank I prefer larger tanks as it allows for more natural behaviors to be observed. One of my favorite setups is a 30 gallon flat that allows for four square feet of area for them to set up territories. The smallest tank I recommend is a 20 long. As they are a bottom dwelling species the tank does not have to be very tall so the 20 Long is a perfect size for a group of 8.

So if you are looking for something that is completely different, not too hard to keep or breed then this is the species for you. Their antics can keep you amused for hours as they dart into and cautiously come out of their shells. With this they will always be in my top 10 list of fish I will always keep.



A Multie Female on Guard



A Multi Female with fry



A young Multi Male staking out his territory

FOTAS History



By Hazel Hall
Edited by Charles Jones

The Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies (FOTAS) originated in 1952 with five clubs as charter members, including, once and only, an out of state club: The Oklahoma Aquarium Society. The Houston Aquarium Society is the only original club remaining. Who were the four Texas clubs? We know Houston was one, San Antonio (that would be the long dissolved San Antonio Aquarium Society as Alamo didn't join until 1953) and, we believe, Austin and Dallas.

In the intervening years FOTAS has had as many as twelve clubs and as few as four "member" clubs. At this writing, host clubs for the years 1953 through 1963 are unknown or, perhaps, known but the correct sequence is not known. More research and help is needed on this. One thing is known – not one year was skipped, from 1953 to the present.

The By-Laws were revised several times (1967, 1970, 1973, 1975, and 1981). The original Article No. 2 of the Charter headed "Purpose" was not changed until 1981 and it read: "The purpose of this federation shall be to further Aquarium Societies, their formation and activities through mutual cooperation maintain an active list of the members of each society and further shall provide for the exchange of publications of the member societies."

At that time dues were \$10.00 (now \$12.00 ed.) per year per club. One of the revisions made to the Charter was to make it possible for individuals to join FOTAS, their dues being \$3.00 (now \$6.00 ed.) per year. The "Associate Member" could vote, but each vote would count as one half vote.

Each year brought the question, "What do we get for our \$10.00?" Some clubs obviously weren't

satisfied with what they got and weren't inclined to put forth the effort to make it worth \$10.00. There were those who were willing to try. One endeavor was to get the Texas Cichlid made the State Fish. The project was started in 1961 or 1962, ending in 1989 with the State Fish title going to a little known fish native to the Guadalupe River (the Guadalupe Bass).

Almost as popular as "What do we get for our \$10.00?" was the statement, "All FOTAS is, is the convention held once a year."

Trying to answer both question and statement, the Officers and Board Members started adding to the annual business meeting and the banquet. The host club was responsible for the compiling and delivery, to each of the member clubs, copies of the FOTAS membership directory. Small workshops were organized by various club members at first.

Later, starting to branch out, speakers who were well versed in the hobby headed the workshops and/or seminars plus the featured speaker were asked to participate. It came to pass that holding a long business meeting interfered with the speakers and workshops so another change was made. The exact date is elusive, but most of the business was attended to at "Quarterly" Board Meetings, leaving convention time free of business except for a short general meeting and election of officers.

Some of the featured speakers, in no particular order, were: Al Klee, Roserio LaCorte, Andrew Roth, Walter V. Simon, Dr. Gene Lucas, Dr. Carl Hubbs, Helen Simkatus, Dr. Robert Rofen, Braz Walker, Ed Taylor, Dr. Peter Lewis, George Smit, Charlie Grimes, Steve Somermeyer, Dr. Joan Norton, Dr. Robert Goldstein, William Vorderwinkler, Dewey and Dolores Schehr, and many more.

Still working to get FOTAS away from the social image it was decided to start a Fish Judges Registry. Hal Collins spearheaded this venture. Another reason for a "Judges Registry" was to fill a much needed service. It was hard, and getting almost impossible, to obtain services of qualified judges, so why not train the local talent? Show Rules were written, Judges Standards set, and potential judges studied and, when ready, were approved. FOTAS had filled a great need in the state by making available and providing qualified judges from within the state. Most shows in Texas are now FOTAS sanctioned. Along with this is the "Exhibitor of the year" award given to the member who has earned the most points each year.

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The booklet, FOTAS Show and Judging Regulations, was first approved in 1974, revised in 1979, and again in 1981. Not only does this cover fresh water fish, but also marines as well.

In 1980 the Houston Aquarium Society hosted the convention and it was special in that they honored past members Raymond Head and Ernest May, two men who had faithfully supported their own clubs and FOTAS in any way they could for many years. It was made more special that their widows Jerry Head and Ina May were able to attend and participate.

Also in 1980, the FOTAS Altruism Award was initiated. Members of each club are to write a letter, to be presented to the Board at the annual meeting, stating who they nominated and why. Each year's winner gets to keep the trophy for a year. Hazel Hall was the first to win. In the following years, not in correct chronological order, Hal Collins, Keith Arnold, Bob Christensen, Lou Harris, Clarence Hall, Silva St. Germain, Ken Bennight, Ed Makowski, Suzy Fairlie and others, (Dan Martin, Carolyn Estes, Grape and Peggie Winkels-ed.) have been chosen.

FOTAS was incorporated (Non-Profit Corporation Act) in 1981 with Dick Barfield, Vice President, and Barbara Arnold, Secretary, signing. Article No. 2 is now Article No. 4 and states: The purpose, or purposes, for which the corporation is organized are: To further aquarium societies, their formation and activities, to promote the home aquarium hobby, to educate the keeping, maintaining, breeding, and conservation of all aquatic life,

and to do all such things as are necessary and incidental to the attainment of the above stated objectives and purposes.

Another area in which FOTAS has tried to help member clubs was in the matter of good programs. Each FOTAS member club was urged to make and submit a program which could be used by the other member clubs. By 1976 FOTAS was the proud owner of five such programs. These did help. FOTAS also acquired slide programs, etc., that member clubs can rent for a very reasonable amount and these helped.

On October 1, 1976, the first FOTAS newsletter materialized. Tail Fin Review, Vol. 1, No. 1 made its appearance. It was designed to be a quarterly publication that would publish both FOTAS news and news from member clubs who would furnish the editor with information to be published. Tail Fin Review is still very much alive with Keith Arnold as its editor.

One FOTAS project still active: the Braz Walker Endowment Fund. In memory of Braz Walker, FOTAS has been instrumental in establishing the Braz Walker Collection of Aquarium Literature in the Special Collections of the Texas A&M University Sterling C. Evans Library as of March 1990.

NOTE: Please bear in mind the above history was written from sketchy references and memory (perhaps sketchy also), so some dates may be inaccurate. Anyone with factual input is invited to come forward. -H.H.

Oryzias woworae – the Little Rice Fish with a Unique Method of Reproduction

BAP Report



Article by Greg Steeves

Several years ago, friends Kyle and Monica Osterholt gifted us a small group of fish I had never seen or heard of before, Daisy's ricefish. Initially I had pictured something akin to *Gambusia* or some other small top feeder. When they arrived, I was taken back by how much color these fish had and wondered why I had never heard or seen these before. They looked more like threadfin rainbows than the colorless mosquito fish I had imagined. I had a 20 gallon high all set up and ready. It was full of a small leafed *Anubias barteri* (nana petite type) attached to a small piece of driftwood. The tank was already populated with six *Corydoras habrosus* (Venezuelan pygmy cory), *Atyopsis moluccensis*, (bamboo shrimp), and a dozen *Iriatherina wernerii* (threadfin rainbows). The aquarium was filtered by a small Aquaclear hang on the

back power filter with a sponge placed over the inlet. This turned out to be a very peaceful tank and although the inhabitants were not from the same areas geographically, no interspecies aggression was ever observed. As time wore on, the rainbowfish slowly died off but all the other tank inhabitants prospered.

Oryzias woworae are from a stream named Mata air Fotuno on the island of Muna in Southeastern Sulawesi. Sulawesi Tenggara is a province in the country of Indonesia. Aquarist might be familiar with the region as a hot spot for many new and beautiful shrimp species being introduced to the hobby. Several waterways in Sulawesi are in ecological danger due to a number of factors all associated with human population and intervention. An extremely alarming practice of fish

farms in the region is to release unwanted or substandard flowerhorns (an artificially created hybrid fish proposed to bring good luck to all who keep it; a marketing ploy) into pristine waters where they quickly become the alpha predator consuming the smaller, mostly endemic species. At present, *O. woworae* has not been access by the ICUN's red list or the CARES priority species listing.

We have made no special adaptations to the aquarium décor for our colony of ricefish. The fish come from an area of high aquatic vegetation with organic matter (leaf litter mostly) covering the substrate consisting primarily of fine sand. Following these natural observations, a planted tank may actually lead to these fish showing their best colors. The natural diet may be containing both micro animal matters along



Biotope Tank for Ricefish

with algae. We have found that *O. woworae* readily accepts any food presented providing it is small enough to ingest easily.

At just over an inch in size; even a small aquarium can house a good number of ricefish. A hatchet shaped body is outlined with brilliant red streaking. The male fish have a blue sheen to their flanks while females are more of an orange-yellow coloration. In our thickly planted aquarium, fry have just shown up and we have not been witnessed to any breeding activity.

Reproduction is rather unique to this species. Reports I have read state that males will spar with each other however, I have not witnessed this myself. It could be possible that the larger the number of individuals, any aggression is dispersed or diluted among the group. Females will release between 10-20 eggs every day or two when in prime condition. Eggs are expelled from the female in a single clump. After the male releases milt and fertilization occurs, the female

continues to hold the semi adhesive eggs near her anal fin. After several days, the female deposits her eggs among vegetation and begins the process once again. Hatching occurs between one and three weeks (presumably temperature oriented) after which time the free swimming fry are left to their own devices. Spawning reports state that the adult fish will predate on the newborn fry. An area of the aquarium containing a fine leafed plant such as hornwort should give the fry ample cover and also provide the

females with an area to deposit their eggs. I have not done this but do plan on providing a thick hornwort area to enhance the number of fry that survive and become part of the colony.

Currently there are 33 recognized species of *Oryzias*. Some are very recent descriptions so I would expect this number to increase. I am not familiar with any other species but have thoroughly enjoyed our experiences with *O. woworae*. If the other species are anything like the Daisy's ricefish, the entire genus is bound to become very popular among aquarists.



The male *Oryzias woworae* is a beautifully colored fish which is perfect for smaller tanks.

Burdekin Rainbowfish on the verge of disappearing from Running River!



by

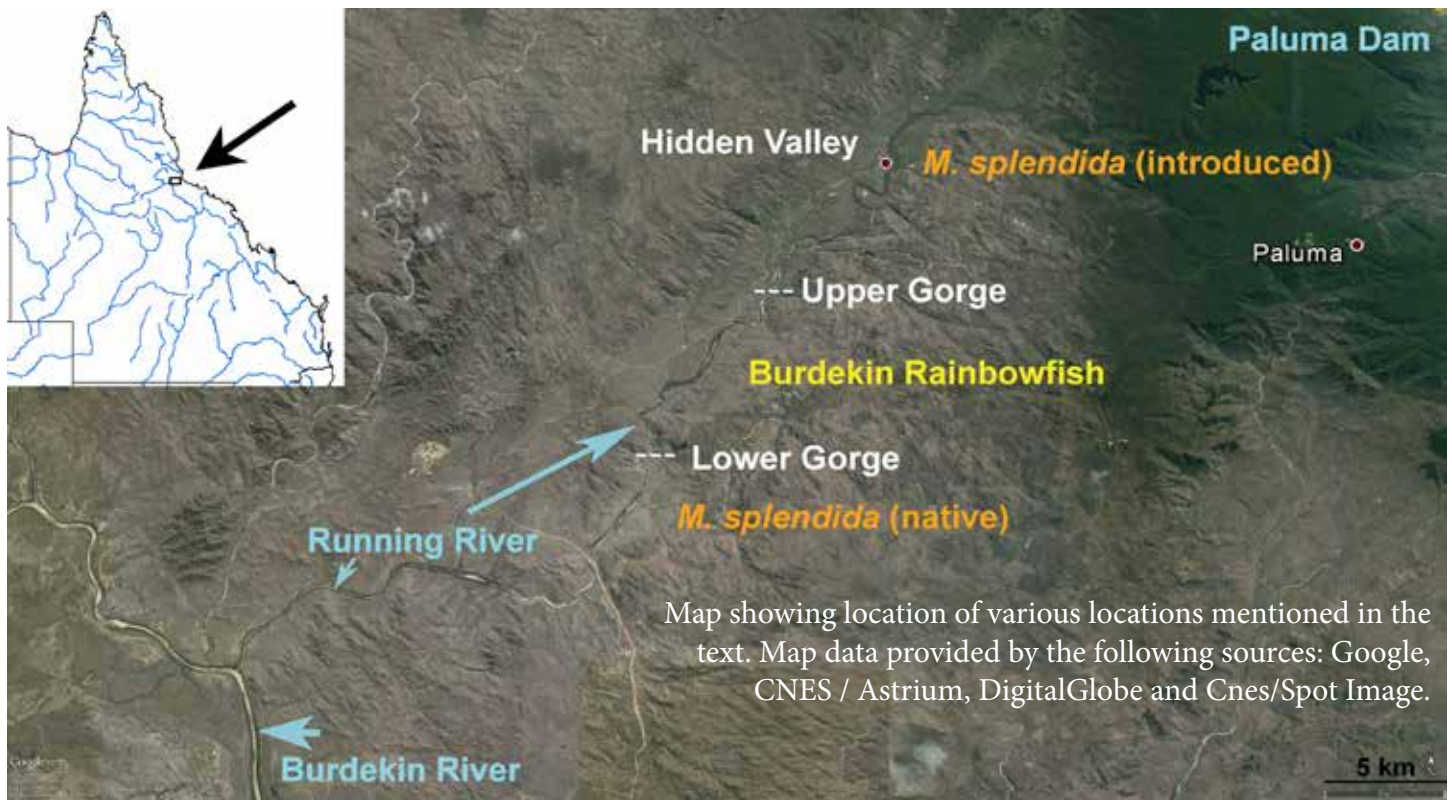
**Peter J. Unmack &
Michael P. Hammer**

With golden to green bodies, bright red fins and distinctive black zig-zag lines on their flanks, aquarists have long recognized the rainbowfish from Running River in the Burdekin catchment of northern Queensland as unique. The population has also been somewhat enigmatic due to uncertainty surrounding its taxonomy. The issue of whether they represent an undescribed species, or an unusual colour variety of Eastern Rainbowfish *Melanotaenia splendida* remains unresolved. Names in common use for this fish include Burdekin Rainbowfish, Running River Rainbowfish, Hidden Valley Rainbowfish or Zig Zag Rainbowfish (the latter is also sometimes used for *Glossolepis dorityi* too). The term Burdekin Rainbowfish can be equally applied

to unusual looking fish found in various parts of the broader Burdekin River system, but the latter three names are specific to the Running River fish, and here we use the name Burdekin Rainbowfish as that is the historical name used for this fish.

In the next issue of Fishes of Sahul there will be a comprehensive article reviewing information on the Burdekin Rainbowfish. In the meantime we recently (August 2015) sampled various Rainbowfish populations across the Burdekin drainage and have come across some unusual findings concerning Running River, and by contrasting our data with previous knowledge from ANGFA members, an alarming pattern has emerged with strong conservation implications.

Two gorges appear to promote natural patterns of rainbowfish distribution in Running River, resulting in three distinct zones (Figure 1). The Burdekin Rainbowfish is largely limited to the middle reaches of the river. The lowermost section of Running River is dominated by typical looking Eastern Rainbowfish, and there appears to be barriers in the downstream gorge section that prevents these from moving upstream. There is the occasional observation of Burdekin Rainbowfish lower down, but this seems to be seasonal or episodic (e.g. relating to large flow events), as per our recent visit where only Eastern Rainbowfish were encountered. The upstream limit of Burdekin Rainbowfish aligns to another gorge just below the township of Hidden Valley. No Rainbowfish are



considered native upstream of this gorge. Some however, are thought to have been released into Birthday Creek in the upper Running River, but could not be found at the release site when it was sampled earlier in 2015 (Keith Martin pers. comm.). In addition, typical *M. splendida* have also been seen in Paluma Dam since 2004, but not downstream of the dam (Jason Shaffer pers. comm.). Surprisingly we just found large numbers of Eastern Rainbowfish in the upper Running River at Hidden Valley at the main road crossing. No rainbowfish had ever been reported at Hidden Valley at least up until 2013. We also noticed a few Eastern Rainbowfish extending further downstream in the Burdekin Rainbowfish population (Figure 2).

Essentially, Running River Rainbowfish is about to get genetically swamped out of existence by these newly arrived Eastern Rainbowfish - the genetic dilution has probably

already started. This is because the two species are quite closely related and it is highly unlikely they will be able to co-occur and maintain separate gene pools. Naturally co-occurring Rainbowfishes are virtually always from very different Rainbowfish lineages-species such as the Splendida, Trifasciata, Nigrans and Maccullochi groups, which are all quite unrelated to each other, however, different species within those groups never co-occur. Thus it is paramount for anyone who has Burdekin Rainbowfish to take good care of them. Earlier collections are more likely to represent the original fish than what is swimming in the river today, so please contact us if you have any known origin Burdekin Rainbowfish. So far we have determined that Bruce Hansen and Keith Martin have breeding colonies from a collection made in 2012, Peter Eggler has some from 2010, and Peter Ford has some too. Both ourselves and Peter Eggler also have fish collected in 2015.

There are other populations of Burdekin Rainbowfish in different Burdekin tributaries, but they are poorly documented and remain essentially unstudied genetically or morphologically. We are initiating some genetic work on them shortly to try and sort out their taxonomic status. In addition, it will be necessary to get some captive breeding going for Burdekin Rainbowfish and to make people aware of what is occurring, as another example of the dangers of translocating fish to areas where they don't naturally occur irrespective if they are considered an Australian native species or not. The Burdekin Rainbowfish is an attractive and interesting fish and it would be a shame to lose it completely.

We have established a "crowd funding" webpage in an effort to raise money (\$3500+) for a genetic study. This will compare wild (1997 and 2015 samples) and captive fish from various sources, to devise the best



Habitat shots of the Running River
Photos by Michael Hammer.





mix of fish to setup a captive stock with and to be sure there is no genetic contamination in those broodstock. These stocks can then be distributed to commercial breeders like Ausyfish, Aquagreen and Guyra to try and ensure a larger population is established in captivity which can then be spread more widely to native fish enthusiasts. Stay tuned to Fishes of Sahul and the ANGFA webpage or Facebook page for more updates. Please consider making a small donation, 100% of your donation goes to the project and donations are tax deductible. <http://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/uc-foundation/what-can-i-support/research/running-river-rainbow-fish-fund> or <http://bit.ly/1RZUMht>

Below: Adult male rainbowfishes from Running River sampled for genetic and taxonomic evaluation; top – Burdekin form, middle reaches, and bottom – standard Eastern Rainbowfish from lower section.
Photo by Michael Hammer.



An Interview With Aquarium Tank Manufacturing



**By Clay
Trachtman**

Aquarium Tank Manufacturing (ATM) is one of the country's most successful builders of custom acrylic aquariums. ATM takes on more than 200 projects every year with tanks ranging from 50 to one million gallons in size. The television show, *Tanked*, follows the co-owners of ATM, Wayde King and Bret Raymer as they build and install awe-inspiring aquariums for top celebrities, luxury hotels and casinos, Fortune 500 businesses, private homes and millionaire homeowners across the country. Episodes of *Tanked* have featured Tracy Morgan, Betty White, Shaquille O'Neal, Jeff Dunham, Howie Mandel and many others.

Recently, I had the chance to meet the staff and crew of ATM in Las Vegas and Wayde King was kind enough to grant me a brief

interview.

Before the interview started, I had my own *Tanked* show experience as "The General", Irwin Raymer, ran into Wayde's office with a block of clear acrylic that some vendor had dropped off at the store. The piece of acrylic was in a reasonably nice cardboard box (unfortunately, I did not have the voice recorder going yet, so I will have to paraphrase from memory).

The General then began to explain how ATM could sell these blocks of acrylic as souvenirs from the store (keep in mind that ATM has a ton of scrap acrylic). However, in the General's description, he never mentioned that his idea was to use the scrap acrylic from the store and that the boxes would be similar to this demo box, but would have the ATM logo. It literally took 5

minutes for that idea to be understood.

"It's like that all of the time" Wayde King said as he bewilderedly shook his head.

And with that, the interview began:

Fish Tales (FT): Have you been keeping fish and aquariums your whole life?

Wayde King (WK): My whole life. I started keeping freshwater when I was seven years old. I kept a lot of piranhas, wolves, pikes and flowerhorns. Keep in mind that I am turning 50 years old, back then people really didn't record what fish were legal to keep (they are illegal in New York now).

FT: What brought you to Las Vegas?



Aquarium at Inspiring Body of Christ Church in Dallas Texas.



Wayde King with Guy Harvey at the Guy Harvey Outpost in the TradWinds Resort in Florida.

WK: Manufacturing. Back in New York, my parents were taking care of aquariums. I moved out here and was taking care of aquariums as well. The acrylic manufacturer was called American Acrylic, also known as Ampro, went out of business, so I decided to get in to the manufacturing side of the business. My father in law, The General, backed us and that was the start of ATM.

FT: Whose idea was the show?

WK: That was Bret's idea. He wanted to be on TV. He said if they can do it with Orange County Choppers, we can do it with aquariums. He really wasn't doing much of anything at that time, so I said give it a shot, and it succeeded.

FT: What was the most difficult or complex aquarium that you have set up?

WK: A lot of people don't realize that the most difficult part of the job varies by the set up. On some jobs it is the engineering at the beginning, other jobs it is the installation, while other jobs it is the actual



Aquarium that was built out of an old milk truck for a custom car shop in Las Vegas.

manufacturing. We did one outside of Dallas, Texas at Inspiring Body of Christ Church (IBOC). That aquarium took 2 and ½ years to build from the ground up. There was a lot that went into it, from the water proofing, the filtration, the life-supports, the cranes, the forklifts, the engineering, but it was an incredible experience. People don't release that it's not boom, build it, and wow, it's done. It's not like that.

FT: Is that your favorite aquarium as well?

WK: It's hard to say because I have done little ones that I also like a lot. We have done over 10,000 worldwide. One of my favorites was the one that we did at the TradeWinds Resort in Florida, the Guy Harvey Outpost. We did a nice tank where you can dive in and swim with the fish. To be in that tank and to actually dive with Guy Harvey was an incredible experience.

FT: You have a lot of celebrity customers. Do any of them now suffer from MTS or Multiple Tank Syndrome?

WK: We do get some of that. We have done several tanks for Tracy Morgan among others.

FT: On some episodes of the show, there are some stock selections that really should not be done. For example, on one episode, aquariums were made out of a drum set. In one of the drums, there were five medium sized gold fish in a five gallon drum aquarium without a filter. Can you explain your position on that?



Clay Trachman with Wayde King, CEO and Founder of ATM.

WK: Our main thing is that we build a tank, ship it across the country and then install it. The world only sees 44 minutes of that. You might see us take a fish out of a bucket for a few minutes and put it in a drum set. The world does not see the amount of time and production that both Animal Planet and ATM put into getting those shots. We do our best to make sure that the environment that we set up is the healthiest and safest for the fish. I think that overall, we have done a lot more to show the world how to take care of fish and aquariums.

When we do something on the show like that, it stirs up a lot of interest. We will get thousands of emails and phone calls. We do our best to explain the situation and educate people when they have questions, generally through email. It's funny, people think that because we are on TV, we are the world's best fish doctors.

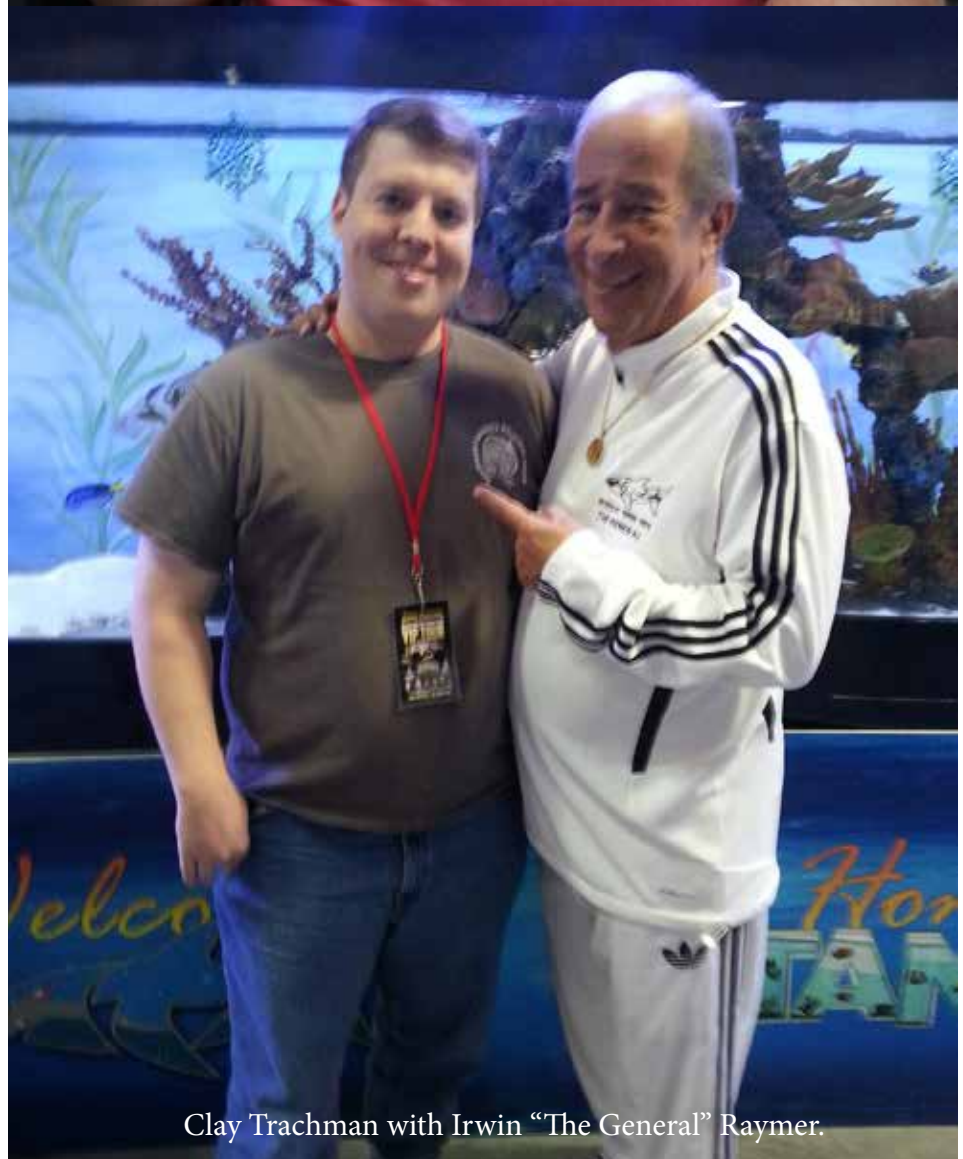
FT: What can you tell us about the upcoming season?

WK: We just finished season 5. In one of the upcoming episodes, we have Jeff Tremaine from Jack-ass and DJ Ashba from Guns N' Roses judge 2 aquariums that Bret and I built in each of our homes (Christmas 2015 episode). We will also show more of the education side, things like pumps and filters. Of course, we will also have a lot of celebrities that request some crazy stuff...hopefully we can pull through!

New episodes of Tanked can be seen on Animal Planet on Fridays at 9 PM Central Time.



Mike Frueh with ATM. He was instrumental in setting up the interview. Check out the board in the back. John Wall plays for the Washington Wizards, Jimmy Butler for the Chicago Bulls and everyone knows who Shaq is!



Clay Trachman with Irwin "The General" Raymer.

When is it not *Anubias hastifolia*?

By Dr. Keith Arnold

At the HCCC July 2013 auction I purchased a plant labelled as *Anubias hastifolia*. I took my purchase home and planted it in a 29-gallon community aquarium. The plant flourished and put out new leaves on a regular basis. It wasn't long, however, that I realized that leaves were pushing against the glass top of the aquarium. I opened the top and before long those leaves grew 5-6 inches above the aquarium. Should I move the plant to my 55-gallon aquarium? Time to learn more about this species.

Where does one learn about aquarium plants? Why the world wide web, of course! As I consulted several web sites, the two outstanding characteristics of *Anubias hastifolia* seemed to its height and "arrow-shaped" leaves. Well, my plant certainly had tall leaves that I could certainly describe as "arrow-shaped" (see photo). However, my resources described that plant as 12-20 inches in height and the accompanying photos displayed leaves that looked quite different from those on my plant. While the leaves of *A. hastifolia* certainly are "arrow-shaped", the "base" of the leaf is rounded where it attaches to the stem, while the leaves of my plant have pointed lobes at the attachment to the stem.

Hmmm, so what is this plant in my aquarium? In a quick search of the web, I soon found the answer: *Anubias gigantea*. Bingo! The leaves are exactly like those of my plant.

And while, I didn't find a particular height for this species, but the comment that "...Gigantea grows faster if you allow its leaves to grow above the water line" suggests to me of a size taller than *A. hastifolia*. Like most *Anubias* species, the plant does well in low light and can be

propagated by dividing the rhizome. One reviewer stated "...a majestic plant when comparing to other *Anubias* ...simply regal and gorgeous..." I would have to agree with this assessment.

Keith Arnold, Bryan, Texas



The unknown *Anubias* bought at auction.

Attack of the Clones!

The Marbled Crayfish

BAP Report

by Gerald Griffin

When it comes to the Aquarium Hobby there is literally something for everyone. However this could be a boon or a curse depending on your point of view. We have specialists in every field along with generalists and the novice. Sometimes we find common ground, sometimes we squabble but in the end we do it for the creatures we love and they bring us some entertainment. The Marbled Crayfish is one of those controversial creatures, maybe not as much as one of those GMO fishes but it comes with it's own controversy. Why would an inoffensive crayfish bring controversy? To understand we have to go to the beginning of it's discovery. In the late 1990s a crayfish was found that was spontaneously producing offspring. This new crayfish was given the name Marmorkrebs which is

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German for Marbled Crayfish. Upon examination it was demonstrated that this crayfish was Parthenogenetic (able to produce offspring without reproducing). This was bizarre because science knew of no crayfish that could do this feat. It would take scientists over 10 years to discover their parent species, at that time they were traced back to *Procambarus fallax f. virginialis*, the slough crayfish of the South Eastern United States. The parental species is not parthenogenetic so the search was on to figure out what caused this anomaly in Marmorkrebs. After an exhaustive search Peer Martin announced on the 7th of January 2013 that Marmorkrebs are triploid which is the mechanism that allows them to self clone.

The consequences for such a

creature is that if they escaped into the wild they could create an "army" of crayfish that could theoretically out compete native crayfish and drive them into extinction. Unfortunately populations of Marmorkrebs were found in the wild. Since this is only a captive born crayfish its introduction had to be Aquarist related which is a bad stigma to our hobby. They were first discovered in the wild in Southwestern Germany in July of 2009. In November of 2012 they were discovered in Sweden and in July of 2014 they were found in the Ukraine. This prompted the European Union to ban this "species" on January 2nd 2016. In the United States the state of Missouri banned Marmorkrebs in March of 2011 and at the beginning of 2016 Tennessee outlawed the Marmorkrebs. Is there a reason to fear these creatures?

The island of Madagascar is having a significant problem trying to curtail this species and there is a legitimate fear they could cause damage to an already fragile ecosystem that is currently have major problems so the fear is quite legitimate. As to the rest of world this “species” remains as a trade species. I often preach to peoples about the dangers of releasing captive animals into the wild. I know the people that do it think, “its only one, what harm could they cause” or “I just can’t kill it, in the wild it can live free”. I have heard this time and time again. Here is the issue, if we don’t police ourselves then we will force others to do it for us. I am against Governmental Control or Bans on the Pet Trade. Every so many years groups like PETA and HSUS try to push bans on the Pet Trade. The actions of naïve Hobbyists give these groups the ammunition they need to try to push their agendas. Add to that the Marbled Crayfish is the most widely distributed “Pet Crayfish” in the Aquarium Trade



A very young Marbled Crayfish less than one-half an inch long our foraging.

and you can see where there might be a problem!

Now if you are wanting an interesting invertebrate to keep in a tank then the Marbled Crayfish definitely fits that bill. They can keep one entertained for hours and are not that destructive of aquarium décor unlike some of their crayfish cousins. However one must note they are still crayfish and that means

they are opportunistic when it comes to food and feeding opportunities. When they first hit the pet trade in the United States I was told they are totally inoffensive crustaceans that do not harm other tank inhabitants and peacefully coexist with fish. Nothing is further from the truth! My first experience with this was placing a bag of *Pundamilia nyererei* in a tank that contained a dozen Marmorkrebs in a 55



Locations where the Marbled Crayfish have been found in the wild from introductions from Aquarists.

gallon tank. Within seconds of the Cichlids release one of the crayfish had nabbed an almost 3 inch cichlid and was going to town on him. I managed to get to that fish in less than 10 seconds but it was already too late as the crayfish had mortally wounded that fish. They are also not that kind to each other. One day in my classroom I heard a group of students scream. I went to see what they were screaming at and it turned out that one of the Marmorkrebs was molting and another one had grabbed the defenseless crayfish and was dragging it into its cave to devour it. I managed to save it and placed it in isolation until the next day when its exoskeleton was hardened and I placed her back into the colony. Over Spring Break this year the other one molted and I found its pieces in the tank so I can only assume that its fortune was reversed and one of the other ones got her. Even with all the barbarism in their tank it is still one of my students favorite displays.

When it comes to actually keeping Marmorkrebs they are not demanding on their care. As to food they eat most every type of fish food one could offer. As with any organism a varied diet is best and they do need some foods with iodine to help the molting process and seem to do better with some plant material as well. A general community flake would be a good staple diet with some additional plant items like zucchini added in weekly. Marmorkrebs can live for 3 years and start reproducing when conditions are good at about 5 months of age. When they first start out their broods are small, just in the dozens however as they get larger their broods are in the 100s.

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A quarter inch baby Marbled Crayfish on the search for food.

Despite the information one might find on various Marmorkrebs websites they do cannibalize each other quite well. If not the tank would be totally overrun with them in very little time. Also in my experience when a female goes into reproductive mode, the other females follow suit quickly.

Water chemistry is not that critical however they do better in moderately hard water and poorly in soft acidic water. If your water is too soft crushed coral can be added to the substrate to bring the water hardness up. Temperature is not that critical as well. They do best when the water is in the low 70s F but can take both warmer and cooler water as well. Remember that crayfish are territorial so will need a number of hiding spaces. I provide what I call shrapnel which is broken up terra cotta flower pots and tossing the shards in the tank. This provides variously spaced hiding spaces allowing the inhabitants to pick a hiding space that suits their needs. I also provide clay caves which are sold at various cichlid and pet supply websites.

When Marmorkrebs feel secure

they will forage in the open and provide entertainment as they feed. If disturbed they will quickly retreat to their caves.

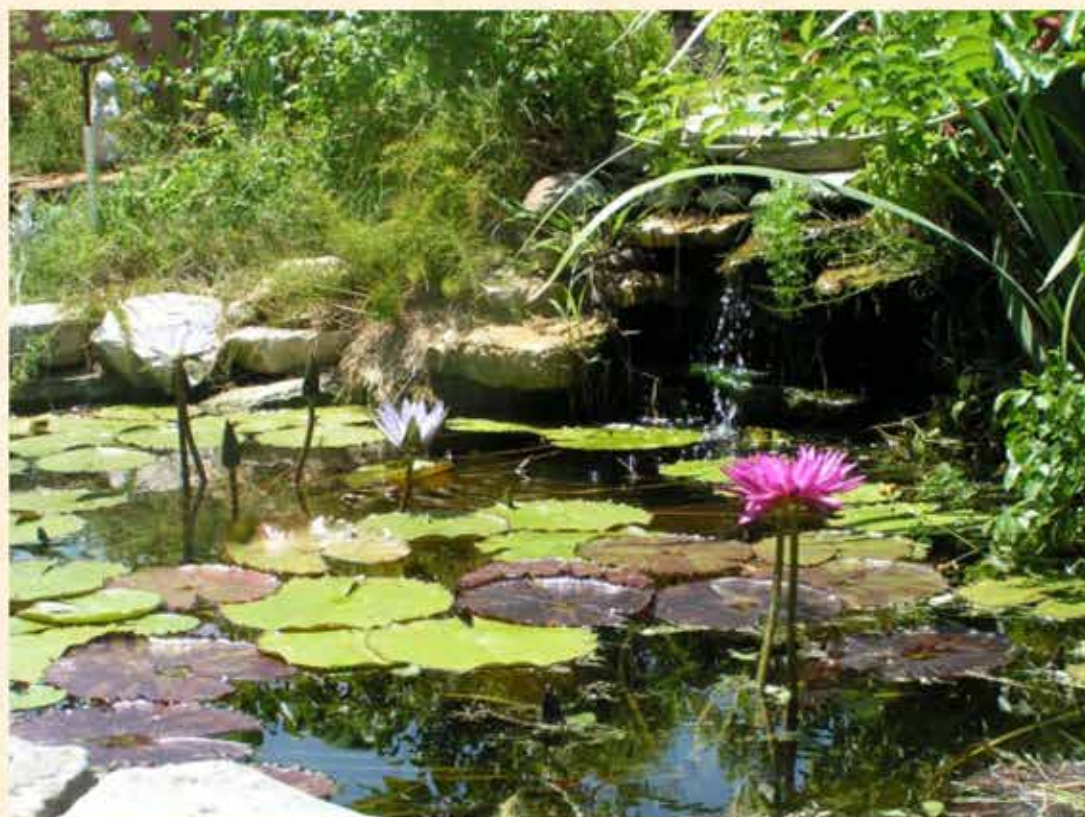
When reproducing I have experienced brooding females to make burrows in the substrate if the substrate allows it. I use several inches of Turface which allows them to make rudimentary burrows against the side of the aquarium which allows me a peek at their progress. Marmorkrebs typically brood for 3 weeks however can as long as 6 weeks in lower temperatures. In my experience they brood for 3 weeks. So if you are looking for an undemanding pet that can give you hours of entertainment then a Marbled Crayfish might just be for you. They are still relatively easy to obtain currently however that is subject to change. On a personal note I do not distribute this species as I am fearful of their potential for becoming an invasive species. I do however give these to individuals I feel I can trust. My only request is that if you ever feel like you don't want them any more return them to me, never release them into the wild!



Saturday April 23rd 2016

Water Garden Gems

Marion TX



Jose Gonzalez will be speaking at noon followed by a **Rare Fish Auction** as part of our FOTAS fundraising efforts.

Follow <https://www.facebook.com/groups/hillcountrycichlidclub/> for some of what will be offered.

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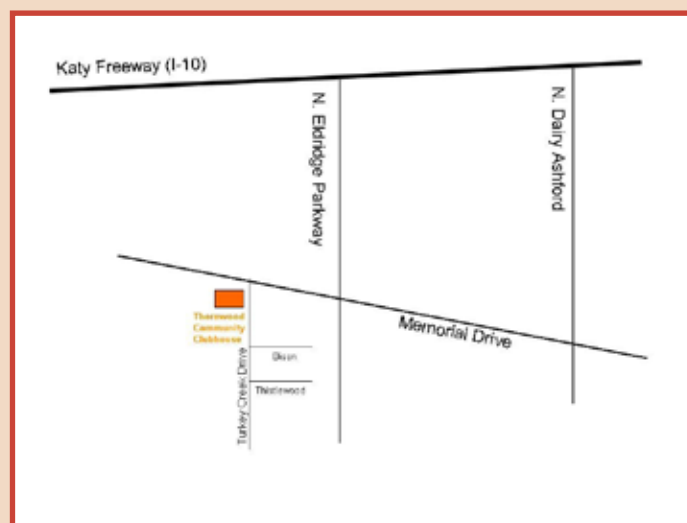


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Previous Issue of Fish Tales

What would you like to see in the next Fish Tales Magazine?

Contact the Editor if you have story ideas or would like to contribute to Fish Tales!



Fish Tales

Vol 5 Issue 4

**The Future of the Federation of
Texas Aquarium Societies**

Greg Steeves

The New FOTAS HAP and BAP



**What the Heck
is an ESU?**

Leslie Dick

**GloFish, Love them or Hate
them; They are here to stay!**

Gerald Griffin

**Spawning the
Buffalohead Cichlid**

Duc Nguyen

**FOTAS CARES!
Program Overview**

Greg Steeves

**Spawning Julidochromis
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Gerald Griffin