

B.R.A.S.S.

Barrie Region Aquarium Society of Simcoe



Bulletin

NEXT MEETING
APRIL 12, 2011
7:00PM - 9:00PM
MAPLE GROVE PUBLIC SCHOOL

The Mail Bag

From the Office of the President

Well it looks like spring is finally here. As I write this they are calling for three days of rain. Maybe it will wash away all the piles of snow still lingering in parking lots etc... Well the March meeting was certainly a good one with lots of fish knowledge and a guest speaker. I really enjoyed the conversations on fish keeping etc... We would like to thank Jerry Draper on his excellent talk on showing fish.

We had a great auction. Thanks to all who brought stuff in. Hopefully we can continue to get good support with our auction as it will help to build our club.

We continue to wait on CAOAC to reply about our registering with them.

Your executive met on the 4th Monday and is going through the constitution so we can present it to the club at a general meeting so it can be voted into effect.

We still don't have a club logo. We continue to look for ideas and samples we can vote on. Hopefully many of you went to the Durham show and Auction and I also hope you got some great deals while you were there.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting.

Doug



Message from the Editor

YIPPEE! No more snow!

It is now time for spring cleaning to take place. So while you are cleaning out the closets and taking stock of what you have keep in mind our auction and bring your items in!

Our beloved auctioneer (whose picture appears on the back page) is really enjoying his job and needs more things to auction off!

As well if you are looking to sell larger items please email me and I will place them in a Classifieds section in the Newsletter.

If you have any comments or suggestions for the Newsletter you can reach me at the email address below.

Kara
dkfleming@rogers.com



Secretary's Report

As submitted by Bonnie Smith

Minutes of March 8, 2011 meeting

Doug Fleming read the minutes of our last meeting, as our Secretary was away. Bonnie read the Treasurer's report. Doug reported he had contacted CAOAC to register our membership. Our membership fee will be \$60 insurance is \$180 as well as a \$50 fee for late registration for insurance. Doug is trying to find out why we are charged a late fee for insurance when we are a new club registering not a late club forgetting to register for Jan.1. He will report to us when he gets any replies to his questions, no one seems to know. Randy is waiting on answers if we can use his Union's meeting hall on Edge Hill Drive for our meetings next year. We were supposed to choose our logo tonight but no one brought one in to vote on. We have put this on to next meeting, anyone interested is to bring in their picture for our logo and we will vote. We did vote on the name of our newsletter; BRASS Bulletin.

Doug asked if there were any questions or anything anyone would like to share regarding their hobby. This sparked an informative discussion on water changes, how to, how often etc. Everyone has a different answer but all brought up different aspects of housekeeping that we all need to keep on top of. One point that prevailed was how important water changes were to the health of the tank and your fish. A tip given in this discussion was to tie a string on a bottle brush to clean hoses. Run hot water and send the string through and out the other end, using the string you can then pull the brush through. A side question was how often does the average breeder feed? It was agreed to feed according to the size of the tank, size of fish and how many fish in the tank. This

Open Forum time is a new part of our meetings so come to meetings ready to share or ask questions. We are also going to have a DIY time in our meetings. So if you have a skill or innovative ideas please share with the rest of the group. We have some very talented people in our group who have learned over the years how to streamline or invent their own way of doing things. This is why we have meetings, to learn from each other and share what we have learned in our successes and failures. Randy will bring in his egg tumblers, large and small to show the group. Please contact Doug Smith with your DIY idea so he can put it on the agenda, that way we'll be sure to have the time needed to spend on your presentation.

Our Guest Speaker, Jerry Draper, is a CAOAC Judge and store owner and has been a hobbyist for a long time. He talked to us about Showing Fish. He gave us a handout to help explain what the judges will be looking for and how the point system works. He suggested to go to the web site of the Club holding the show as each club has different rules. He showed us a picture of his store that has a wall of all the trophies he has won over the years. There are cash prizes for a win at a show, so that gives us more incentive to enter our fish. It was a great talk with lots of information. We asked Jeff next time he sees Jerry to see if he has a copy of some of the information we can get. He had a really good idea of a kit he takes to all the shows, things he has learned that could be needed, or problems that can crop up and he is prepared. One tip he shared was what he uses to show his fish. No bowls are allowed at shows, you will be disqualified. Jerry uses a 2 gallon tank with a solid colour background for his show tanks. See Bonnie for a copy of the handout if you were away.

Aquarium Basics: Partial Water Changes

Borrowed from http://www.aquahobby.com/articles/e_waterchange.php

One of the most frequent and most fatal mistakes made by beginners is to think that they need to "clean-up" the tank every now and then. By this they mean: scoop up all the fish into a bucket, remove everything from the tank, give it all a good scrubbing, assemble everything back, and dump the fish back in. Poor fish! This is completely wrong under normal circumstances, and hopefully this article will help you understand why.

Good, **consistent** water quality is the single most important element of a healthy aquarium. To maintain water quality, a regular schedule of **partial** water changes is essential in most aquarium setups. The reasons why partial water changes are so important (as opposed to total "clean-ups"), involve the concepts of Basic Aquarium Water Parameters and The Nitrogen Cycle, which you should be familiar with in order to take best advantage of what follows here.

The first part of this article will describe one of many good ways to do a simple 25% water change for a 40 L (10 G) aquarium. It assumes you have a gravel substrate, artificial decorations, external power filter, and few or no live plants - a typical beginner's aquarium. Part two suggests some ways to decide how much and how often you need to do your water changes for your particular situation.

Part One: How to do a Partial Water Change

You will need:

From the housewares store:	From the aquarium supplies store:
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 plastic buckets, 10 liters (2.5 G) each	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 plastic scraper
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 plastic 2 liter (2-quart) pitcher	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 gravel siphon
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 set of plastic measuring spoons	<input type="checkbox"/> Water conditioner
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 plastic turkey baster	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 algae scrubber
<input type="checkbox"/> Paper towels	<input type="checkbox"/> filter replacement cartridges or media
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 wooden chopstick (optional but useful)	

Keep your water-changing supplies and equipment together and reserve for aquarium use only. If your tools are used for other purposes such as household cleaning, residues from the chemicals used for cleaning may harm your fish.



Procedure:

1. Fill one of the buckets with fresh tap water. Using the measuring spoon, add water conditioner to the water and set aside on a counter top.
2. Unplug all electrical units: filter, heater, lights, air pump.
3. Clean the inside glass of the aquarium using a folded paper towel, algae scrubber, or plastic scraper, depending on how tough your algae is. To get into tight corners, wrap the end of the chopstick with paper towel and use that. Do not use sharp or scratchy objects on an acrylic tank.
4. Place the large end of the gravel siphon into the tank. If not self-starting, use the turkey baster to start the siphon by squeezing the bulb, inserting the narrow end into the hose end of the siphon, then releasing the bulb and pulling it out of the hose to pull the water through. If you have trouble with this at first, ask for someone's help. Sometimes you need an extra pair of hands, but eventually when you get the hang of it, you can do it by yourself. Have some old towels ready in case you spill some water.
5. Once the siphon is started, vacuum the gravel. Push the tube straight down into the gravel and then pull straight up. Gravel will fall back down and debris (or 'mulm') will be pulled up with the water. Repeat as you move across the bottom. Do not sweep the tube through gravel as this will stir up debris and cloud the tank. You will not be able to completely clean the gravel when you do a water change. Do a different section of the gravel each time you do a water change.

Tip: The deeper your gravel is, the more mulm will be trapped in it and the harder it will be to clean. This can contribute to water quality problems over time. With a basic, unplanted aquarium with no undergravel filter it is helpful to have a shallow layer of gravel, just enough to give the look of a gravel substrate - about 3 cm deep. Suction cups can be used to replace the plastic base of plastic plants to secure plants to the glass bottom of the aquarium under the gravel so that a deep layer of gravel is not necessary to hold down plastic plants. These suction cups are available in hardware stores or aquarium supply shops. Plastic plants can also be attached to rocks by removing the plastic base and 'gluing' the plant onto the rock using aquarium silicone.
6. Fill the bucket with water from your aquarium, taking care not to overflow the bucket. Again, having someone help you with this the first few times will help you get the hang of it without major spills.
7. Refill tank with clean water: Carefully tip the bucket to pour fresh water into the plastic pitcher, and then slowly pour water from the pitcher into your tank, being careful not to pour so fast that it disturbs the gravel. You can break the flow of water by putting your hand in the tank and pouring the water into your hand. Repeat until tank is refilled.

8. Follow manufacturer's recommendations for changing filter media (cartridge, sponge, floss, etc...) according to the type of filter you have. Dry your hands, wipe cords and plugs with dry paper towel and plug in all your electrical units again and check for proper operation. Maintain drip loops on all cords used for your aquarium to prevent electrocution and fire danger. To make a drip loop, make sure that every cord hangs straight down below your outlet and forms a 'U' before running back up to the plug. Any water that might get on the cord will drip down at the bottom of the loop and will not climb up to the outlet.

Tip: Many filter cartridges can be reused many times. Carbon will lose effectiveness, but it only lasts a short time anyway. Try rinsing the used cartridge well with a strong spray of water if possible. If it comes out pretty clean and is still in good condition, you can reuse it. Shake out excess water, then set it aside to dry. Keep a dry one ready to replace in the filter as if it is "new". Reusing cartridges will save you money. Throw it away when it wears out and replace with new ones.

9. Wipe down the hood and outside glass of your tank with paper towels. You may use a glass cleaner on the exterior glass, but take care that cleaning chemicals don't get into the water.

10. Used tank water can be used to water plants, or discarded. Mulm is a good, natural fertilizer.

11. Rinse out your equipment and allow to air dry, or dry with paper towels. Store in a dry place.

Sometimes you will need to do a more extensive cleaning. The filter should be cleaned if there is a noticeable reduction in water flow. Keep in mind that when cleaning the inside of a filter and intake tubes of the brown, slimy buildup, you will be removing a large amount of biofilm, which is your system's biological filter. If you clean all your tank's surfaces at once, your nitrogen cycle may be disrupted which will be dangerous for your fish. Generally speaking, you can do a thorough cleaning of some other area along with your water change if needed. You can do a water change and a filter clean, or a water change and remove the plastic plants and decorations to clean them separately. If in doubt, collect some of the brown biofilm from inside the filter, keep it wet while you clean your tank, then put it back in your filter. It will not "re-dirty" your filter but it will ensure that you have enough biofilm to maintain biological filtration in case you over-clean your system.

It seems like a lot of steps, but once you get the hang of it, it doesn't take very long to complete this procedure from beginning to end.



Upcoming Programs

This month's speaker presentation will be from one of our own members, Jeff Mountjoy who will speak to us about how pelleted fish food is manufactured. The presentation will include a description of ingredient selection, formulation and the manufacturing process.

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