

# CICHLID TAILS

The Official Newsletter of the Texas Cichlid Association

Volume 26, Issue 2

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Several TCA members and I meet at the home of Kent and Rebecca Hunsuckle on March 7<sup>th</sup>. Kent, the President of the Dallas Killifish Association, was having to sell most of his fish and fishkeeping equipment due to some health problems, and as friends and fellow fishkeepers, we showed up to help out with the dispersal. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Hunsuckles during this trying time.

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## President's Letter

Hello, Everyone!

We certainly had a good time at the February meeting, hosted by Ernie and Sheila McAnally in Southlake. Thanks to them for having us!

In attendance at that meeting was David Allison, an Animal Science teacher at Dawson Middle School in Southlake, and a few of his students. Mr. Allison is in the process of converting a 250-gallon salt water tank into an African cichlid tank. Somehow he and Ernie got together about how to make the conversion and Ernie invited him to the TCA meeting. A great group discussion was held on several different topics: what types of filtration to use and what to avoid, types of fish to put in the tank, among others.

As a result, Mr. Allison has invited TCA to meet at his school in March to view the tank and the progress he and his students have made on the conversion. Everyone is encouraged to attend this meeting.

TCA's spring auction will be held on April 19<sup>th</sup> at the Hilton Garden Inn in Irving, where a previous auction has been held. The date was changed from the last weekend in April due to scheduling conflicts. A silent auction will also be held in order to sell all the plants, plus any donations we receive.

On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, take a "Stay-Cation" over the Memorial Day Weekend and hang out with fellow TCA members at the "Celebrate Summer Picnic" at Joe Pool Lake. Thanks to Ernie, we have the use of a great pavilion for the entire day. TCA will be furnishing hot dogs and sodas. Bring the kids and come on out to the park - welcome Summer in style at the TCA Picnic!!

The Oklahoma Aquarium Association has expressed an interest in a joint meeting with TCA here in the Metroplex area. Plans are in the works on this. More information will be forthcoming when everything is finalized.

I hope to see everyone at the March meeting at the Dawson Middle School.

Kathy

## CICHLID TAILS

**Cichlid Tails** is a bi-monthly publication produced by and for the members of the **Texas Cichlid Association**, a non-profit group of hobbyists dedicated to furthering the aquarium hobby and promoting the practice of keeping cichlids by the dissemination of information. Published since 1983, **Cichlid Tails** is dedicated to sharing technical and educational information on the keeping of the fishes of the family **Cichlidae**, and the keeping of aquariums and aquarium fish in general.

### **Officers:**

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| <b>Photographer</b> | Randy Rhoades |
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TCA's website: [www.texascichlid.org](http://www.texascichlid.org)

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Despite the freezing weather, Spring is almost here. I spent last weekend planting pepper, tomato, squash, watermelon and flower seeds and sticking them in my cold frame to get an early start on the growing season. Most everything is for someone (or something) else, as the only thing I like to eat is the watermelons. I just like to grow stuff!

February's meeting was great, with a group discussion concerning converting a 250-gallon salt water tank to an African cichlid tank. The tank is located in the Dawson Middle School of the Southlake Carroll ISD, and our members came up with some great hints and suggestions to help the head fish wrangler, David Allison, get started properly. Thanks to Mr. Allison, we will get a chance to see how he and his kids are doing with the setup as we are meeting in the library of the school on March 21<sup>st</sup>. We also anticipate having an out-of-town speaker to give a presentation.

As an insert in this issue, you will find a questionnaire to be completed by you, dear TCA member, anonymously. Please answer all questions and return your completed form to me by either e-mail, snail mail, or fax (903/334-7007). You can also bring it to me at any upcoming TCA meeting. All responses will be given to the TCA board for review and discussion on how TCA can be improved to better serve our members. Please participate in this important survey.

The new date for our Spring Auction is April 19<sup>th</sup>. Regular auction rules apply to both the live and silent auctions. Please mark your calendar and plan on attending this great event.

Also mark your calendar and plan on attending TCA's "Celebrate Summer" Picnic at Loyd Park on Joe Pool Lake. See the Calendar for more info.

See you then!

Kat

# Confessions of an Mbuna Freak

by Dave Ball

*President of the Southern Colorado Aquarium  
Society  
Aqarticles*

**Freak:** (freak) n. 1. A sudden causeless change of mind; a whim. 2. A malformation; monstrosity. 3. A splash; streak.

A long, long, long time ago a child was born unto some very happy parents. He was their first born and the center of attention around the home. Life was grand. As the child grew he took a great interest in water. He loved it. The child liked to swim, the rain, even liked to take baths and showers. The one thing that he liked most of all was the aquarium in the corner of the living room. The tank was meager by today's standards but beautiful in its own way. It had a metal frame and top with an incandescent light, just a few plastic plants and a live banana plant trying to take hold. A couple of guppies, marble mollies, swordtails, an angelfish, and a lone Cory cat were the residents. Nothing fancy, just the average home aquarium. The tank held the attention of the child and the cat, who tried to get a free meal every now and then. Movements of the fish were reflected in the gleaming eyes of the child. It was a sight to see. The time came to move one day and the tank had to be taken down and the fish given away. It was a sad day for the little boy. His favorite thing in the whole world was gone. But there would be other tanks in his future, the seed had been planted.

The country was traveled and more moves took place never settling down for more than a few years at a time. There was never another aquarium set-up in these other houses. That metal tank was used to keep snakes, frogs, and praying mantis collections. This last occupant of the tank was a sign of things to come. This child had a dark side to this craving of the odd and different. With no aquariums in the house the young lad, now approaching teen-hood, would wander the woods looking for streams, creeks, and forest ponds. He had his favorites, he knew where the crayfish were and where the frogs laid their eggs every season. While walking through the woods along a creek he could tell which rock or fallen branch would reveal a salamander when overturned. He had learned many things by just being curious.

There was one thing that he never saw and that was fish. He would find many of nature's creatures, but never any fish. He liked fish, they caught his glance whenever they

moved. He could watch them for hours. It didn't matter what they were. He liked them all. When he would go to the zoo the animals sparked only a mere ounce of interest unless they had to do with water. Elephants and gazelles were common and often made him yawn. However when it came to the aquatic part of the zoo he was in heaven. Water fowl and aquatic reptiles started his heart racing. He urged his family along because he knew that fish were inside. Tanks would line the walls. Little ones, big ones and just plain huge ones were everywhere. He wanted to spend the rest of his life in here. This was what he wanted. Gigantic sharks and groupers lived in these big aquariums. Many of the other tanks held smaller salt-water fishes and there were a few freshwater aquariums, but mostly salt. There was even one which you could look down into and in it were giant clams. They were several feet across and very beautiful. Then there was this voice that said "Mbuna". He turned to look from where the voice came, but there was no one. He looked at the tanks some more ignoring the sound and it was soon forgotten. Little did he know the seed had germinated and was starting to grow.

The boy had grown into a young man and was rapidly approaching legal adulthood when the urge struck again. In this house was another aquarium. Much more modern than the last one and it was almost three times larger than the other. But it wasn't enough. He wanted his own. Yes, it was time to try one. He searched the ads in the local paper, but they were too big or too much. Finally he earned enough to buy his own tank and was on his way. He started out much like the first tank he ever saw, just the standard fishes. He tried raising some baby livebearing fishes but they died. It didn't matter to him for some reason. It was very frustrating at the time but he shrugged it off for the time being. As time went on, one tank turned into three and they were there to stay. But something was wrong. He had a hard time keeping them alive very long. He knew nothing about the nitrogen cycle until it was explained to him. The fish kept on dying after a short time. He had almost given up. Then one day the voice came again and said "Mbuna". He turned around but no one was there. Where did it come from? Why him? WHY? It drove him nuts. It was like a hot needle had been driven into the base of his brain. The pounding was tremendous and caused him to pass out.

When he awoke he was face down the middle of his room. Getting to his feet he knew he was a changed person. Leaving his house on his regular tour of the local fish stores, he had some strange new urges. Walking into the first store he asked the owner if had any "Mbuna."

"How odd," he thought, never having used that word before. The owner didn't have any of those African Cichlids. "What's a 'sick lid'?", he thought to himself again on his way home. After finding out what a cichlid was, he got rid of his tropicals and changed his whole outlook on the fish keeping concept. He wanted this mysterious "Mbuna". He would pray to the "Great Mbuna" god seeking to find this fish. Then one night he got all dressed up so that the "Mbuna" god would bless him. He put on his great, great grandfathers Viking helmet and his own hot pink leopard skin loin-cloth, his python in his left hand and his "Nkolokolo" in the right hand, he danced around the fire he had made on the living room carpet. Chanting all sorts of Latin fish names he had learned, hoping that the "Mbuna" would show themselves. Two houses later and \$40,000 in arson fines there was still no "Mbuna" in his tanks. He was at the end of the line. Maybe the fish were just to be photographs in expensive books collecting dust on his shelf. He wanted these fish badly but they were nowhere to be found, until...

He wandered into a store one day, face blackened with soot and his eyebrows singed almost out of existence, looking for "Mbuna". Then he saw it. A tank with a pile of rocks for decoration and fish swimming in and out of them. He ran over and hugged the tank as if he were trying to put his arms around a big oak tree. Found at last, the fish he wanted. Dropping to his knees, smoke still rising from his body, he started praying to the "Great Mbuna" god in the sky. Thanking him for the new found treasures...

**Cichlididiot:** See freak & substitute the word cichlid in the appropriate spots.

Reference: Funk & Wagnalls Co., Standard Dictionary International Edition, 1958-59

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## **TCA "CELEBRATE SUMMER" PICNIC May 23, 2009 - Loyd Park at Joe Pool Lake**

TCA will be cooking hotdogs and providing soft drinks. Please bring a dish to share and your softball equipment, as well as cards, board games, lawn chairs, anything to have a great time at a picnic. For more information check out the Calendar of Events below.

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## **COMING EVENTS**

**HILL COUNTRY CICHLID CLUB** is having a "fish and fish stuff" swap meet on Sunday, April 26th, at the Springhill Inn and Suites, 3636 NW Loop 410, San Antonio, TX 78201. This is a great opportunity to get rid of your excess tanks, filters, lights, etc., plus sell a few fish, for a small booth rental fee. Doors open at 10 a.m. For more information go to: [www.hillcountrycichlidclub.com](http://www.hillcountrycichlidclub.com).

**HOUSTON AQUARIUM SOCIETY'S** Spring Live Fish Auction will be held Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, at the American Legion Post, 11702 Galveston Road in Houston (where the jet is). Seller/Bidder check-in begins at 10:00; auction begins at 11:00. No outside food or drinks allowed, and no smoking is permitted inside the building. The American Legion is having its monthly "Steak Dinner Night" with baked potato and salad dinner available for purchase in the afternoon. Call 281-286-2238 or visit the HAS website for more details.

## **MARRIAGE AND THE AQUARIST**

**By a Long Suffering Wife**  
*From the newsletter of The Ilford and District  
Aquarists Society, England*  
**Aquarticles**

Aquarists should come with the warning, "marriage to me can damage your sanity". Unfortunately they don't. And anyway who reads the small print? To start with love is blind but when the glitter starts to tarnish and you are heading for your first nervous breakdown it's time to look realistically at life and come to grips with a few basic facts.

### **1. Fish come first, last and always.**

It might be an occasion you have been looking forward to for weeks, spent a fortune on a new dress, suffered agonies at the hairdressers and got yourself all dolled up to the nines. Only to find sir is still unshaven and wearing dirty jeans and T-shirt and his reason for this state of unreadiness - "but they are breeding!" or "Arrgh! White Spot", or some other reason of world shattering importance. So you beg, plead, cajole, threaten and eventually he trails along grumbling every inch of the

way and you arrive half an hour late. From that auspicious start to the evening things gradually get worse. He won't dance; he'll ignore all others at the table and answers all questions in monosyllabic grunts. He will then proceed to get drunk and he will tell one of two people "his wife doesn't understand him", either the barman or the stunning red-head who is wearing (or nearly wearing) a dress that she deserves to catch her death of cold in. It is pointless to sulk or start an argument. He just will not understand why you are upset, (his father has told him all about women and their funny moods).

**2. Do not speak disparagingly of any item in the house.**

If you should make this mistake, resign yourself to the fact that you have lost the item for good. It'll vanish into the fish room never again to see the light of day. No matter what it is a use will be found! Bread bins are perfect for storing all those fiddly little jars and tins. Tupperware containers - perfection itself for carrying fish, they're watertight. Saucers can be used for a variety of things except for use with cups. Cheese grater, if it's only been used for frozen beef heart you've a chance of re-claiming it, but once it's been used for earthworms you need a new one. In the modern kitchen with all its gadgets, it's advisable to keep your liquidiser under lock and key.

**3. Develop a thick skin, a sense of humour, and the ability to cope when one of your guests has a fit of hysterics.**

The first two seem self-explanatory but the third may need some explaining to the uninitiated. The following are some examples that have been known to upset guests. Tubifex worms are all right in their place, the fish room. Buckets in the loo are just not on, regardless of how many water changes they need. Even worse are those containers that fit inside the cistern so there are always dead and dying worms in the bowl. This is particularly upsetting to maiden aunts. Sons, normally the most understanding of creatures, have been known to get upset when they've spent all evening and a week's wages chatting up a girl, managed to get her home on the sofa in the living room fully believing their luck to be in. Only to find Dad's white worms or maggots have escaped and are crawling all over the carpets or her feet. This is a known passion killer and girls never seem to accept a second invitation to come in for a "coffee". And the effect that a six foot tank has when it bursts on the vicar's wife just has to be seen to be believed.

**4. Never accept anything he says at face value.**

"You're looking a bit peaky. A day out is what you need"

- funny there isn't a lot of daylight or sunshine in an Aquarium. "Learn to drive, just think of the advantages" - you can take a pair of fish to so and so or deliver a tank etc. My favourite, romantic that I am: "I'm taking you to France for a few days" - he's seen all the local fish shops.

**5. Have someone whose shoulder you can cry on.**

You've slogged your guts out doing the housework until the place gleams, but he decides the tank in the living room needs to be stripped down. Buckets of dirty water fascinate small kittens, and ruin carpets. He tries to be helpful, mindful of last time you screamed at him about the mess, and decides to Hoover up the wet gravel causing the Hoover to blow a fuse.

Why do we stay? How do we put up with all this aggravation? We could say, "They are our husbands and we love them" - or we could tell the truth ... Valium.

**TCA Spring Auction**

**April 19th**

**Hilton Garden Inn DFW South**

**2001 Valley View Lane, Irving**

**Registration opens at 10:00; Auction**

**begins at 11:00**

**SPRING 2009 AUCTION RULES**

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME, BUT YOU MUST PAY THE AUCTION REGISTRATION FEE IN ORDER TO BUY AND SELL.**

Items are accepted at seller's risk. TCA cannot accept responsibility for any item's safekeeping nor its condition either before or after the sale.

Once they are registered, all for-sale items become property of the TCA and cannot be withdrawn from the auction.

Each seller is allowed to sell 40 bags of fish, with a maximum of five (5) bags of any one species or color strain.

All fish are expected to be bagged properly. **ABSOLUTELY NO ZIP-LOCK BAGS ALLOWED! The seller will be charged \$2.00 for each bag of fish that requires rebagging.**

**BIDDERS: Know what you are bidding on. All items are available for inspection prior to the auction. Take the time to examine each item so you positively know what it is BEFORE you bid.**

Each bag must include fish species, quantity, a description if appropriate (breeding pair, trio, sex, etc.), assigned seller initials and a **unique** bag number (do not put your buyer number on each bag as the bag number). If you're selling 10 bags, your bags should be numbered 1-10. The information must be legible--use black lettering directly on the bag or lettering on a white label on the bag. Make sure you use permanent markers that won't run or smear when they get wet. Example of how your lettering/labels should read on the bag:

MLE #1  
Altolamprologus calvus  
"Zaire Black" F1  
Breeding Pair

Adult males and females of the same species should be bagged separately and the bags attached together.

Priority colored dots will be issued at registration. Place one dot on each item for sale. At the beginning of the auction, one color will be drawn at random. The items with that color dot will be sold first. After all the items with that color dot are sold, another color will be drawn. This will continue until all items are sold.

Each bidder must register and be assigned their own bidder number. TCA will not split items sold under one bidder number between multiple bidders at checkout time. **Each bidder** is responsible for **EVERYTHING** bought with their bidder number.

When an item is sold, the runner will bring the item to the buyer, along with a sales verification form, which the buyer will initial. **No one will be allowed to remove any auction item from the auction room unless proof of payment is shown. Your proof of payment is your paid auction receipt.**

Once you have cashed out, you will no longer have a bidder number. If you want to purchase other items, you must be issued a new bidder number (there is no additional charge for the second bidder number).

The auction chairperson retains the right to reject any fish not fit for sale (sick fish, deformities, hybrids, etc.).

### SPRING 2009 SILENT AUCTION RULES

**1. EVERYONE IS WELCOME, BUT YOU MUST PAY THE REGISTRATION FEE IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SILENT AUCTION.**

2. You must have a bidder number.

3. Each item in the silent auction will have a bidder's sheet. The sheet contains an item number, a description, a starting minimum bid, and an "open" and "close" time. If you wish to bid on that item, enter your bidder number, your name and the amount you wish to bid on that item.

4. You may bid any amount you wish, but your bid must be at least \$1.00 more than the previous bid. **BIDS MUST BE IN WHOLE DOLLARS ONLY. BIDS NOT IN WHOLE DOLLARS WILL BE IGNORED.**

5. The closing of an item will be announced a few minutes before closing to allow final bids. Once an item is closed, no more bids will be accepted.

6. Upon the close of bidding, the winner of each bid will receive their item and must pay for it at that time.

7. All items must be paid for and removed from the hotel by the end of the live auction on Sunday.

**NOTE: All plants will be sold via the silent auction; however, they must be bagged and marked as if they were being sold in the "regular" auction (see bagging and labeling instructions above). Plants will *not* be considered donations; regular auction split will apply**

# TAIL TRADER

Got something fishy to sell or trade? All TCA members in good standing may advertise fish, equipment and related supplies for sale, or place a "want" ad free. Notify the *Cichlid Tails* editors.

## **David Andrews**

3828 Wayland Dr  
Fort Worth, TX 76133  
**(817) 291-4169**  
[dandrews12@att.net](mailto:dandrews12@att.net)

### **FOR SALE:**

Cyphotilapia Frontosa - Mpimbwe - 1 3/4" \$15.00 each  
Albino Dwarf Bristlenose Plecos \$3.00 each  
Marble/SilverAngels - quarter size \$1.00 each  
Endlers Livebearers \$0.50 each  
Telmatochromis Brichardi - Magara - F1 - 1 1/4" - 1 1/2" \$2.00 each  
Pelmatochromis Nigrofasciatus - F1 - (West African) - 1 1/4"-1 1/2" \$1.00 each  
Juli Dickfeldi - 1 1/2" - 1 3/4" \$2.00 each  
Juli Transcriptus - 1 1/4" \$2.00 each  
Red Empress - 1 1/4" - 1 1/2" \$2.00 each  
Pseudotropheus Polit - 1 1/4" \$2.00 each

## **Randy Rhoades**

**(817) 426-0901**  
[fish\\_man\\_randy@yahoo.com](mailto:fish_man_randy@yahoo.com)

### **FOR SALE:**

Four 60-gal. tanks . . \$100 each  
Four 79-gal. tanks . . \$100 each  
Two 58-gal. tanks . . \$80 each  
OR ALL FOR \$900  
Double stack stands w/doors on bottom. Call for more information.

**Rob Mears**  
**(214) 476-5927**  
**FOR SALE:**

Six 20-gallon tanks  
One 55-gallon tank w/hood & filter (never used)  
Stand to support all tanks, including sponge filters, heaters, and PVC tubing and brass fitting to supply air to tanks  
All for \$250 or best offer.

## Calendar of Events

**March 21, 2009:** Regular monthly meeting at 7:00 in the library of Dawson Middle School, 400 South Kimball, Grapevine, Texas. **NOTE THE CHANGE IN MEETING PLACES FROM WHAT WAS PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED.**

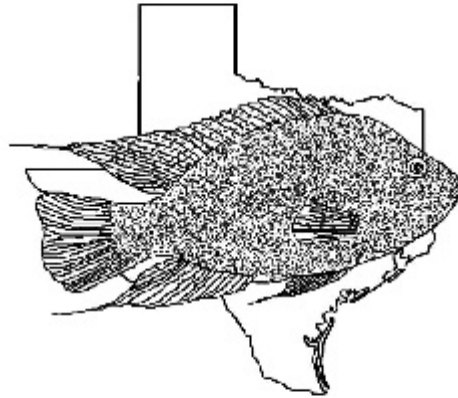
**April 19, 2009:** TCA Spring Auction at the Hilton Garden Inn DFW South, 2001 Valley View Lane, Irving, where FOTAS was held last year. **NOTE THE CHANGE IN WEEKENDS FROM THE LAST WEEKEND TO THIS DATE.**

**May 23, 2009:** **Celebrate Summer Picnic at Joe Pool Lake. Take a "Stay-Cation" over the Memorial Day Weekend and party with TCA!** TCA will be cooking hot dogs and providing sodas. Please bring a dish to share, as well as softball equipment, playing cards, board games and lawn chairs. Cost is \$10 per car (6 people max) to get into the park. From I-20 go South on TX-360. Turn left at Ragland Road. Turn Right at Park Road 1. Destination will be on the left. Park is open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., and TCA has the pavilion for the entire day. Hotdogs will be ready some time after noon. For a map to the site, go to: <http://www.joe-pool-lake.org/drive/loyd-park-driving-directions.html>

**June 20, 2009:** Regular monthly meeting. Details and location to be announced at a later date.

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***OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF***



***THE TEXAS CICHLID ASSOCIATION***

Texas Cichlid Association  
Kathy Stearns, President  
1515 Creekview Drive  
Keller, Texas 76248