

KILLIE NEWS

A Publication of the Minnesota Killie Keepers Association
An affiliate of the American Killifish Association (AKA)

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From the Editor:

Welcome to the second edition of the Killie News. I hope you enjoy this issue. We are fortunate to have two articles this time. Bob Wolter has promised that he is a very prolific writer and I hope we can enjoy more of his articles in future issues. And I know Craig will always submit something if we are in a pinch.

Both of this month's articles are along the lines of helping a fellow hobbyist find a better or easier way of doing something. If you have a time saving secret or wonderful doodad you'd like to share I'm sure we'd all appreciate it. You can send articles to me at raqbe@usinternet.com.

If you have any ideas about something you'd like to see in this newsletter, please don't hesitate to let me know. This newsletter is for the entire club and I welcome your ideas and suggestions.

Happy fish keeping!

Robin

“Gizmo” saves elderly person’s back

By Bob Wolter

Would you believe I just 50% water changed 8 30-gallon tanks, complete with new filter fiber in filters, in 90 minutes. Let’s do the math! That works out to 11 minutes and 15 seconds per tank. That’s a total of 120 gallons of water to siphon and dump and 120 gallons to fill and replace. 240 total gallons times 8.5 pounds per gallon equals 2040 pounds of water to siphon, lift, and dump. “Have a sore back!”

BUT...Thanks to John Meier’s Gizmo, I did not have to lift a ton of water. Let’s rewind to the beginning OK?

When I was young and my back was strong, I was raising fish for Pet Shops and Wholesalers. The endemic African Rift Lake Cichlid “Boom” had just started. They were awesome, came in every color imaginable, and “looked just like salt water fish.” What was really nice was that you didn’t have to maintain salt water for them. They absolutely awed the consumer, who had to have a large display tank for them. What was even better was that these first generations were “tricky” to breed and I was getting a five pound bucket of Tetramin for a shade over \$20. Making serious money, I could afford lots of “goodies”- Conde air compressor, lots of large tanks, a nice tank rack, and *an automated water change system*. Another big plus was that electricity was cheap in those days. To quote Charles Dickens- “It was the best of times...!”

To finish the Dickens Quote, it would soon be “...the worst of times!” Soon everyone that wanted one had his or her big Display Tank. As always happens- succeeding generations of fish became easier to breed, and the darned fish lived for years! Someone wanted my complete breeding set up, so I sold out. Soon, in the 1980’s, the boom was over. Pet shops all across the state were going out of business, as did one of the countries largest wholesalers.

I didn’t have a tank, but remained in WAKO (Wisconsin Area Killifish Organization) because of friendship with Jim Gasior and all of the nice people. Killifish never were commercial but they were a lot of fun. Very gradually, I added tanks and slowly got back in.

So, for the last 25 years or so, I had been doing my water changes the old fashioned way with siphon and bucket. I must confess to trying one commercial “gizmo” that purported to make life easier. I hooked this thing up to my kitchen faucet and it proceeded to spray water all over my kitchen. Worse yet it wasted good water to “suck up” the old water. It was quickly disconnected. I then took it outside, jumped up and down on it a number of times, and threw it in the dumpster. The inventor undoubtedly had a patent from Hell.

Several months ago, I was talking with John Meier from JEHMCO. John said that he had “rigged up a Gizmo” with PCV pipe, some nice tight fittings, a long hose, and a power head. Incredibly, he maintained that it wouldn’t spray all over the kitchen or waste good water. I bet this contraption would cost a lot, but to my surprise it was just a shade over \$30. He sent it *and it actually worked!*

I highly recommend an extension cord with an on and off inline switch as you move the “gizmo” from tank to tank to empty. I got one at Menard’s for \$5. A clamp to secure the hose to the toilet or drain is also nice. Since you will also have the “gizmo” and a lot of attached hose to store, a gym bag adds a nice touch. When you finish draining the tanks, simply attach the hose end coupler to the faucet, turn on, adjust the water temperature, and fill.

Is your back worth \$30? If it is, call John Meier toll free at JEHMCO-1-800-521-6258. Be sure to have him send the proper fittings for your kitchen (inside the faucet threaded) and basement (outside the faucet threaded). Also be sure to get a lot more hose than you actually need. John's System works best with larger tanks: 20 gallons and up.

Save your back for about \$30. Isn't it compelling?

Flightless Fruit Flies: Apterous, the true wingless By Craig Rees

A fantastic live food to keep on hand in the killie keeper's fishroom is flightless fruit flies. Nothing is better than live foods and this culture is easy to raise, maintain and keep going. Most of your fish will relish flies and the motion that the flies make on top of the water will attract the fish to feed on them.

Here is what you will need to put a culture together:

- Disposable (Aqua Fina) water bottles
- Plastic canvas (can be purchased at Michael's craft store)
- Instant fruit fly media (can be purchased at Trans-mississippi Biological Supply)
- A few grains of baker's yeast (helps cut down on mold growth)
- Filter floss or sponge caps (to cap the bottle, yet breathe)

I like to cut the neck of the bottle off to make the opening just a little larger. You can do this with a hack saw or a razor blade knife. Be ever so careful if you use a knife; keep your fingers behind the blade at all times, not in front of the blade when cutting.

Add three tablespoons of instant media into the bottle. Now add 10 to 15 grains of yeast. Then add an equal amount of water to the media. It is important not to add too much water, as the flies will sink and drown. Too dry and they can't lay their eggs. You can always add more water after the flies have been added to the culture if it is too dry; but you can't take water out if you have added too much. An eye dropper works well for wetting the media. Cut the plastic canvas so it will fit through the hole in the neck of the bottle. The canvas can be bent to form a U shape so the flies have more surfaces to climb up on.

Before adding flies to start your new culture, make sure that there are not water droplets on the sides of the bottle. Flies can drown when they climb into a drop of water. Wait till overnight or until later in the day when the sides of the bottle are free from droplets.

Go ahead and put some flies into the bottle. Around 20 flies will be a good start for each culture. It takes usually 2-3 weeks to get enough flies to start feeding your fish. By that time they will have reproduced plenty. Always keep 6-8 cultures going and start some at different time so you will always have flies on hand to feed your fish.

All you do to feed the flies is tip the bottle and tap like a salt & pepper shaker. Because the bottles are clear, you can see the flies as you are tapping them into the water.

Keep your cultures out of direct sun light and store at 70 to 80 degrees. Wingless fruit flies are a very easy and worthwhile live food culture that will benefit the health of your fish.

Directions to the Cameron's

Take I-694 to Silver Lake Road. Go south to 5th Street (at the stop light) and turn left (east). Drive approximately ½ mile (past a school) to 17th Avenue NW and turn left (north). It is the 5th house on the right.

See you on **SATURDAY!**

547 17th Ave. NW
New Brighton
651-633-9484

MKKA 2008 Calendar of Events:

Saturday April 19, 2008 is scheduled to be at the home of Bruce Cameron.
Social time starts at 7:00 pm and the meeting starts at 7:30 pm. 651-633-6484

Thursday, May 15, 2008 is scheduled to be in the home of Bob Carter
Social time starts at 7:00 pm and the meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

Thursday, June 19, 2008 is scheduled to be at the home of Milo Squires.
Social time starts at 7:00 pm and the meeting starts at 7:30 pm. 952-448-4153

July 2008 is open.
Social time starts at 7:00 pm and the meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

August 2006 is open.

Thursday, September 18, 2008 is scheduled to be at the home of Robin Engelking
Social time starts at 7:00 pm and the meeting starts at 7:30 pm. This is the post-show meeting. 763-560-5038.

Thursday, October 16, 2008 is scheduled to be at the home of Craig Rees.
Social time starts at 7:00 pm and the meeting starts at 7:30 pm 952-403-6038.

Thursday, November 20, 2008 is scheduled to be at the home of Jen Kruckenberg. We will take nominations for Board members for the 2009 year. 651-457-2302.

Thursday, December 18, 2008 is scheduled to be at the home of Milo Squires. We need to elect officers this month.
952-448-4153.