

KILLIE NEWS

A Publication of the Minnesota Killie Keepers Association
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Minnesota Killie Keepers Association
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Table of Contents:

Page 2	September meeting minutes	
Page 2	Life of the Alpha Male	By Bob Wolter
Page 4	Where is Thumbkin	By Bob Wolter
Page 6	Club Communications	
Page 7	Meeting Notice	Page 8
		Calendar of Events

From the Editor:

The show is done for another year (Thank goodness!). Thanks to everyone who participated whether it was by entering fish, helping with various tasks, buying stuff at the auction, or just showing up to visit. You all helped make the show a huge success!

I hope to have some pictures ready for next month's newsletter. I have been very busy because my son is (finally) getting married in just a few days and I haven't had time to do much of anything besides wedding stuff! It is a very exciting and happy time for me, but I'll be glad when all the craziness is done so I can get back to "normal".

Email me at raqbe@usinternet.com if you have any questions, comments or items you'd like to see in the Killie News. Until next month,

Happy fish keeping!

Robin

The Thursday September 18th meeting was held at the home of Robin Engelking.

Present were John Aldrich, Bruce Cameron, Bob Carter, Robin Engelking, Margie Johnson, Mike Kromrey, Jen Kruckenberg, Carter McAninch, Craig Rees, Milo Squires and Brad & Nancy Swanson.

We want to welcome the new members who joined at our show to the club! Greg Hanson, Don Koch, Jeff & Sarah Olson, Nick Rolstad, Teresa Seaberg, Phillip Schmidt and Axel Schwerendiek.

And a special welcome to some former members who strayed, but we are happy to welcome them back to the fold: Sara Chicos (formerly Goodnow), Gary & Carol Palubicki and Brad & Nancy Swanson who were with the club when it first started out. Welcome back!

Here are the minutes I guess. 11 people showed up for the meeting. We talked about the show, found out how much money we made.

Everyone signed a card for Jim Gasior telling him thanks for the nice presentation on killifish keeping which was wonderful.

We talked about the show location for next year. We're anticipating the hotel is going to raise the rates for next year. Discussed how much we should spend.

Discussion on building some new racks for next year's show, which was approved. Brad, Jason and I will be building the prototype in the next couple months. Hopefully this will be done before the Christmas meeting at Milo's.

C Ya at the next meeting
John

The Life of the Alpha Male

By Bob Wolter



“Squaring Off” in a 55 gallon tank

Blue Gularis Alpha Males

A couple of years ago, when you were in grade school, I'm sure you will recall the snow covered playground at recess. There was a high pile of snow scraped off to one corner. It beckoned you!

***“I'm Yertile the turtle, Oh marvelous me!
I am the ruler of all that I see”-Doctor Seuss.***

As you climbed to the top of the snow pile, recall that you were savagely attacked by all of your little friends. Why? Little kids at the top are subject to attack by all the little kids at the

bottom. If you learned this at an early age, you brilliant person, then you learned an essential common sense survival tactic. In the army, they say, “ Stay in the trench and keep your head down”. Fun and gratification can be very costly.

Killie-rules allow for one alpha male – who has lots of fun with ALL of the ladies. This, to the exclusion of all the other males! Kind of like cattle huh? Well, in any case, this “he-bull” of tropical fish pays a price for this honor. The price is an early and untimely death!

“Hey, what’s this got to do with me?” you may ask. If you are setting up a “single species killie tank”, arguably the best way to go, you will need to know this.

Back during my younger days (I wasn’t always this old), I decided to set up a single species tank that would self perpetuate into the hereafter. This is theoretically possible – really! How?

Imagine, if you will, that your tank is the Niger River. Your group of young fish represents the total population of *Gardneri* in the River. This fish obviously self perpetuates, lest the species disappears from the face of the Earth. The bigger your imaginary Niger River tank is, the better your fish will increase and multiply. The bigger the tank, the more Alpha males it will support. It would be sheer lunacy to imagine the **ENTIRE Niger River System** has only one *Gardneri* Alpha male!

For openers – let’s start with a small group of young. Now let’s put them into a waiting EMPTY kindergartner tank with lots of hiding places. As they grow toward adulthood, you will notice that one fish becomes a “Meany”. The “Meany” nips at and chases his little friends into their hiding places. “Oh No” says Mr. Bill, as he captures this “Meany” and relegates him to prison tank! Away you go you naughty bad fish! Now everything is copasetic right? Wrong! After several days, a brand new “Meany” arises to take the place of the original. What’s going on?

Congratulations my friend, you have now learned Nature’s Principal of the Alpha male. The principal is that only the finest genetic material is allowed for the survival, preservation and continuation of the species. How?

You will recall that the fertilized egg requires genetic material from both the male (sperm) and the female (unfertilized egg). This genetic material is only ½(or haploid) until it is combined (diploid) in the fertilized egg. In controlling the mating, nature controls the destiny of the species!

How is this possible? Only the finest, most colorful, and strongest males are allowed to reproduce – mortal combat if you will! The male killie will have the “deck stacked” against it from birth. It is more colorful to attract females – **and predators**. It is stronger – to kill rival males. It is more virile – to mate with many females and pass its superior genetic material to its progeny. Sounds exhausting? The Alpha male has a glorious but much shorter lifespan.

There will come a day when his waning strength and eventual defeat at the hands of a younger and faster rival is inevitable. Sounds like the gunslinger of the old west? Life at the top is tough right?

I had noticed in my first happy single species tank, after several years, the most colorful male was being bitten and chased by its progeny. The poor fish was hanging near the very top of the tank, being chased away at feeding time, and frequently dashing into hiding places. Since I found no corpse, the poor fish was probably eventually torn apart and devoured by its offspring. *Oh Horrors-PATRICIDE!!!!*

What could have been done to prevent this horror? You could take the fish out of the “group tank” to live his life by himself in retirement. My experience shows that when removed from its environment, especially Blue Gularis, the fish becomes depressed, won’t eat, and soon dies. Otherwise leave him in there and add a few more good hiding places. Your former king will have equilibrium troubles from having done so much “hard displaying” and having fought so many battles: both real and mock. He will slowly waste away and one day you will find the former “king” has died. In nature, the minute the King showed any weakness, a predator would have quickly dispatched him. But you, my gentile soul, have provided a fish nursing home for the former king.

How long do you have before the “Saga of the Alpha male” plays out? You will have the same alpha male for at least several years. The females, with their drab coloration and less aggressive ways, should last much longer.

As they often say, “Size Matters!” So, the bigger the tank, the more Alpha males it can support. Several Alpha males really look great in a larger tank as they display and harmlessly engage in mock battle. Do you really enjoy watching your fish? Do you really want to learn about nature?

If you have answered yes, go out and buy a fifty-five gallon tank and about 10 or so Blue Gularis fry. You will have a “mini Niger River” with babies and several Alpha males right in your own living room!

The King is dead! Long live the King!

Where is Thumbkin?

By Bob Wolter

Remember your wonderful childhood song? In this month’s article, we are going to use Thumbkin to help us feed our baby fish.

Lets all do a little practice first:

1. Extend Thumbkin from your right hand.
2. Place your index finger and place directly on top of Thumbkin
3. Simultaneously rotate your index finger and Thumbkin, while applying a good deal of pressure.
4. Do this until you get real good at it

Congratulations – For you have created “Mister Squashy”.

Now open Mr. Squashy up and put a few flakes of fish food on top of Thumbkin and close. Now squash and grind as you have practiced. There you industrious rascal – you have created “baby sized” flakes for your pint sized charges.

For top feeding babies, simply sprinkle a little powder on the top of their container. For the mid tank feeding babies, take your empty high blood pressure or other pill container. Now throw out your pills and fill the container with a little water. Wisk off your now thoroughly

ground up “baby flakes” into your pill container and shake thoroughly before adding to your baby fish container. Combined with your micro worms, this method will insure that your now better-nourished babies will grow much quicker.

Oh My! – This article isn’t long enough. Ok, Ok – I’ll just have to add another hint!

Going Topless

Bet that got your attention didn’t it? Actually, this is not a good idea for our killies. They will simply leap forth from their tank and commit suicide, unheralded and unnoticed, on the floor. For those with 10-gallon or larger tanks, you can buy one of the nice new commercial All-Glass hood/light combos.

They have plastic cutouts for your heater (if used), and very narrow holes for your airlines. The cut outs can be easily removed with either a pliers/kitchen knife combo or an Exacto hobby knife. What is an Exacto knife? It is a knife with an adjustment screw so that you can move forward and break off pieces of your Exacto razor blade as it dulls. Buy one at your Home Depot or local hardware or hobby stores. You’ll have lots of uses, I promise! To top it off, these hoods look really nice. The fly in the buttermilk for the thrifty – these hoods cost as much as the tank!

Oh oh – I can hear many of you whining over the cost! Ok! Ok!

For the Cheap – newspaper, corrugated cardboard, or even the back of a cereal box may be cut to the dimensions of your tank top. Attach with wide masking tape. This can also be a good temporary solution. I am not cheap!

For the thrifty and handy – Buy Ed Warner’s book from WAKO member Ruth Warner. It is a treasure trove of information and well worth its small cost. On page 4 of the book, there is a really good diagram of a tank top. You can create this with wood molding, a miter saw, wood glue and plastic screen. I am not handy!

For the thrifty and relatively handy – I have seen some really great looking clear Plexi-glass tops. The top owners told me it was easy to make. So, off I went to Home Depot. The salesman showed me some reasonably priced Plexi-glass sheets along with a special knife to score and cut it. He told me it was real easy: all I had to do was take a ruler, draw a line, use my new tool to score deeply, give it a whack with my hand, and presto. Right! All I got was a very sore hand. Then I had a brainstorm and got a hammer. My would-be tank top cracked and then shattered into pieces that I am now using for my white worms. After this horrendous experience, I couldn’t even think about glass. I am not even relatively handy!

For the Klutzes and other assorted creatures – Go back to Home Depot or local craft store and purchase a low cost sheet of Styrofoam and an Exacto Knife. If using your kitchen table, place LOTS of sheets of newspaper under the table. This will avoid making an engraving on you table, as the Exacto knife is quite sharp. Next take a ruler and pencil to draw your dimensions on the Styrofoam and cut. There, you Klutz, now you have a perfectly fitting top. Simply poke a whole in it with a pencil for your airline and you are done! Works for me – I am a Klutz!

May all of your Killies be happy ones!

October Club Communications:

Club Business:

1). We need to decide on a location to hold the 2009 killie show. We will try to list the pros and cons of both locations. FYI, the deposit Craig has down on the Canterbury Inn is to hold & reserve the site for 2009. **That does not mean that we can't try out the VFW in Brooklyn Park.** We just wanted to hold the Canterbury site in case that's the way we decide to go. Craig has gotten some feed back from members. So far it has been almost 100% for the Canterbury Inn.

The VFW that is near Robin's house is \$550, which is the same rate they are giving MAS for Friday, Saturday, & Sunday.

Here are some of the advantages we might have if we have the show at the VFW:

- 1) Hold the show on the north side of town. It is easy to reach from 694 and it is more centrally located in the Twin Cities area.
- 2) Equipment is only about a mile from Robin's house. [only about 3 blocks-Ed]
- 3) Street level door to bring in the equipment – Easy loading and unloading.
- 4) Hook-up our own RO unit so we don't have to haul water. Bring 2 each 55 gallon plastic barrels to age water before the show.
- 5) We can have the banquet right at the VFW as long as we bring in food from Cub or Rainbow. (Deli food)
- 6) The room is very large and has tables & chairs. Of course the bar is on site.
- 7) There are several motels located right on 694 near the show site for our out of town guests to stay at.
- 8) The VFW isn't as "classy" as the hotel.

The Canterbury Inn will cost \$300 for Friday September 11th, Saturday September 12th and Sunday September 13th. This is a savings to the club of \$150.00 over last year's costs. A lot of auction-fish & raffle ticket sales make-up for the club costs, however.

- 1) This is the location we have used for the last 3 years, so people know where it is.
- 2) We have to haul the equipment from Robin's house in Brooklyn Park to Shakopee.
- 3) There is an elevator to move the equipment into the show rooms to minimize the amount of carrying we have to do. We also have a large cart and dollys.
- 4) We would need to bring in buckets of water from someone's house.
- 5) We would not use the Devon room, which is the room where we had the box sales. We are not getting our money's worth using the Devon room at \$50 per day. Our box sales can be held in the angled room and the sales table can also be moved into the angled room (The first room you enter). The computer and registration can be moved into the show site room. That will make for more space on Sunday where the auction, speaker, and awards presentation are held.
- 6) The hotel, restaurant, & bar are on site.
- 7) It is \$250 cheaper than the VFW.

Any club members that have opinion, we would like to hear from you too. Please email one of the Board members. You will find the names and email addresses of Board members on the first page of the Killie News.

2).Does anyone want to volunteer to do a short killie talk at the next MKKA meeting? You may choose any fish related subject.

We have a many new people in the club but even the intermediate and old timers always get something out of a talk. If you are interested at giving a presentation at one of the monthly meetings contact one of the board members and let us know. The club is about sharing knowledge with fellow fish keepers!

3). The following are the people who renewed their membership at the show. If your name is not mentioned, your annual membership dues are late. Please send a check for \$10 to Robin or Craig.

Jason Albers, Brent Aitchison (for three years), Bruce Cameron, Bob Carter, Gary Greenwood, Rick Ivik, Jen Kruckenberg, Carter McAninch, Doug Pham, Craig Rees, Milo Squires, Brad & Nancy Swanson, Pat Whitney, Bob Wolter. Tom Kean paid for 2 years last year.

4) Brad Swanson, John Aldrich and Craig Rees started on some of the new folding racks at Brad's yesterday. There are 2 1/2 racks almost cut out. There will be a finished rack brought to the next MKKA meeting so the club can see what they look like.

John brought up the idea of members sponsoring a rack. Sponsorship for a rack would be \$20. This would really offset the club's costs in undertaking this project. We could then build all the racks and most likely have them done within the next couple of months.

Kudos: Thank-you to **Jim Gasior** for the killie talk on Sunday. Everyone loved it! Thanks to **Mike Kromrey** for sorting all the zillions of raffle items we got from manufacturers. Thanks to the manufacturers for donating their goods to our club. Thanks to **Craig Rees** for getting the killie racks down from Robin's rafters. Thanks to **Milo Squires** for loading and transporting the racks and equipment to the show site. Thanks to **all the club members** who came to help set-up and help with the show and teardown. (Too many to mention and I don't want to miss anyone!) A special thanks to **Bob Carter** for helping with the database and show registration. Robin would be lost without you!

Fish and Plants Available:

Upcoming Affiliate Shows:

Wanted:

Miscellaneous:

Directions to Craig Rees' apartment:

Take I 494 to the Penn Avenue exit. Go south on Penn to 102nd street. (This is the last street before Old Shakopee road.) Turn right on 102nd. Craig's apartment is set back from the corner. Look for the Pennbrooke Apartment sign.

Buzz the party room and take the elevator located to the right to the third floor.

2400 West 102nd Street Apartment 123
Bloomington
952-888-1806

MKKA 2008 Calendar of Events:

Saturday April 19, 2008 was at the home of Bruce Cameron.

Social time started at 7:00 pm and the meeting started at 7:30 pm. 651-633-6484

Thursday, May 15, 2008 was at the home of Bob Carter

Social time started at 7:00 pm and the meeting started at 8:00 pm. 651-633-4351

Thursday, June 19, 2008 was at the home of Milo Squires.

Social time starts at 7:00 pm and the meeting starts at 7:30 pm. 952-448-4153

Saturday, July 19, 2008.was at the home of Mike and Erin Kromrey

Social time starts at 4:00 pm and the meeting starts at 4:30 pm.

Saturday, August 9, 2008 cancelled

Tuesday, August 12, 2008: was 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, September 11, 2008 was the day we will loaded the show equipment from Robin's garage to take to the hotel. We will started around **1 pm**. (Thanks, Craig and Milo!) Robin touched up the paint on any killie racks that needed it.

Friday September 12, 2008 was the day we did the show set-up at Canterbury inn in Shakopee.

Saturday September 13, 2008 was the 15th annual MKKA killifish show.

Sunday September 14, 2008 was the fish auction and awards presentation. There was a killie talk by Jim Gasior at 10 am.

Thursday, September 18, 2008 was 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.