



The Angelfish  
Society  
Newsletter

*Highlights in  
this issue:*

- February Photo Contest Winners
- Little Money – Lots of Fish
- A Different Way
- Health Risks from Aquariums

*In this issue:*

Welcome to New Members.....2  
Announcements.....2  
February Photo Contest Winners.....3  
Little Money – Lots of Fish.....4  
Genetics Puzzler.....5  
A Different Way – Trying New Ideas.....6  
Health Risks from Aquariums.....7  
Trading Goodies....10

## Message from the President



By Tamar Stephens

Here at the beginning of 2009, it seems that national news is pretty grim. But when I come home after a long day at work and make my rounds feeding my angelfish, their grace and beauty always lifts my spirits. Who can resist the charm of young angels wagging their tails like little puppies in anticipation of dinner? Or how about the stately older angels who come to the top of their tank just as eagerly, but with a little more dignified restraint. Or the pair that fails to come to the top – and there they are in the back corner, carefully fanning a brand new spawn of pearly eggs. Whether your house is overflowing with angelfish tanks, or you have only one or two of these beautiful creatures, we have all become members of The Angelfish Society because we share a common delight and pleasure in angelfish.

So what do I plan to do as President of TAS? Well, here are my priorities for this year.

My first priority is to see that the web site upgrade project gets completed. We have a plan, a design and a map developed, and the conversion over to the new design is well underway. Once complete, our web site will have a refreshing new look with much easier, more intuitive navigation.

*(continued on page 5)*

Apologies to our members. FinTASTic is meant to be a quarterly newsletter. Due to turnover in staff, unforeseen family illnesses, and other unanticipated circumstances, this is the first issue since August 15, 2008. As president, I am making a personal commitment to making sure that FinTASTic is issued regularly from here on.

*Tamar Stephens*

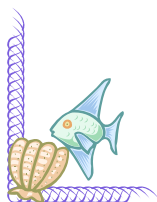
## Welcome to Our Newest Members!

New members from August 15, 2008 - May 4, 2009:



Robert Ambrose  
 Patty Ashley  
 Carolyn Balliew  
 Benjamin Bentler  
 Jarmila Bohmanova  
 Jo Brubaker  
 Stanley Butler  
 Eduardo Cardoso  
 John Casco  
 Rick Colegrove  
 Juan Damelines  
 Bernard Eaton  
 Keith Federle  
 Sue Foggitt  
 Gary Foster  
 Michael Gough  
 Andy Hejnas  
 John Hoo  
 Roger Hopper  
 Robert Johnston

Helene Lagueux  
 Mark Leathersich  
 Frank Ledoux  
 Richard Levacy  
 Jeff Liao  
 Marci Linn  
 Lazaro Lopes  
 Barbara Martinez  
 Edward Merkel  
 Judith O'Brien  
 Carolyn Parkins  
 Conrad Cuevas Perez  
 David Rich  
 Michelle Ricketts  
 Karen Rifner  
 Sheila Scott  
 Mark Sherk  
 Serge Sioufi  
 Tony Strausbaugh  
 Edward Suizak  
 Paul Sullivan  
 Daniel Thompson  
 Michael Troxell  
 Steve Tubbs  
 Johan van Rooyen  
 William Wallace  
 Steve Wit  
 David Yoder



## Announcements and Information

### TAS General Membership Meetings:

Meetings are held each month, usually on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month.

Time: 9:00 Eastern Time (standard or daylight savings, depending on time of year.)

Location: TAS chat room at:

[www.theangelfishsociety.org/chat](http://www.theangelfishsociety.org/chat)

Meeting dates for the remainder of 2009 are:

June 14 • July 19 • August 16  
 September 20 • October 18  
 November 15 • December 13

### NEW! Friday Night Chats!

Chat sessions will be held every Friday night at 9:00 PM Eastern Time in the TAS chat room at: [www.theangelfishsociety.org](http://www.theangelfishsociety.org).

This is a great way to get to know your fellow TAS members!

Thanks to Don Mitchell for getting these chats started!

### Board of Directors Meetings

BOD meetings are regularly scheduled for 2009 to precede the membership meetings every other month.

Meetings for the rest of 2009 are currently scheduled for May, July, September, and November. Additional meeting will be held if business warrants. Meetings are held in the TAS chat room.

General members are welcome to attend BOD meetings as observers, but may not participate in the meetings unless invited to

## February Photo Contest Winners!

The February Photo Contest category was “Any Wild Angelfish.” These two beauties took first and second places.



First Place: Tony Vaughn



Second Place: Michael Gough

### About the Photo Contest:

The photo contest is open to all TAS members. A different category is offered every two months. Whether you have only one angelfish, or hundreds, you are eligible to participate in this contest. All you need is one good-looking angelfish and one good photo of it!

Photo contest rules are on the TAS website at <http://theangelfishsociety.org/photocontest.htm>. Categories for the rest of the year are: June – Gold; August - Smokey; October – Blushing; and December – Your Best Angel.

Thank you to Sarah Smith and Bob Barone for doing a wonderful job of organizing our photo contests!

# Little Money – Lots of Fish

Article by Jan Kessler

As a hobbyist and angelfish breeder, I have had to learn many tricks and short cuts to grow my fish room on a very low budget. In this article I share some of my tricks for inexpensive tanks and filters.

## Fish Tanks

One of the best ways is to find FREE or low cost aquariums.

Let friends and your family know what your plans are and that if they know of anyone that has a used aquarium in their basement or garage, you will be happy to pick it up and take it out of their way.

Search areas as Ebay.com, Kijiji.com, Craigslist.com or on Free Cycle. com. A few of these sites has an area of “FREE”. Set up an automatic search using the words, “aquarium, fish, tanks” and each day check your email or search the site for recent postings of free stuff.

You can also post an ad for “Wanted.” Make sure you include the words “Does not matter how dirty.” People do not want to even give away something dirty, but they do not want to take the time to clean it. You will have much better results.

I use clear 18 gal plastic containers as tanks for my fry. I cut the lid top for the heater filter/hoses. This way I have a tank, lid and a tank that is very easy to lift and carry for cleaning. The best times to buy these are after

the holidays and at spring time when stores are promoting organization. I usually pay \$6.00. Make sure you check the container for any cracks, and when cleaning be careful not to be too rough.

## Filters and Maintenance

It is not too hard to clean up an external filter system. Soak all parts in a lime remover and hot water. In just a few minutes, the lime deposits will easily come off and your filter will look like new. Make sure the fly wheel in spinning properly. Sometimes filter material gets wrapped around the wheel and keeps it from spinning. Other times, the part of the fly wheel that catches the base and allows it to spin is just worn down. You may want to try liquid gel glue and apply a few drops where it is worn down. Let it dry completely, then soak a few seconds in bleach water then rinse well.

## Make your own sponge filters!

I buy sponge material from Wal-Mart for about \$13.00 and is about 24 inches wide by about 84 inches long. Then I take a craft plastic grid, used for yarn art, it costs about 35 cents and is 8x11 inches. Depending on the size of the sponge filter you want, just cut the plastic canvas and bend it in a circle to about the size of a half dollar. Place 3 rubber bands around it to hold it to make a round tube. Cut your sponge the size to go around the plastic canvas and overlap by one inch. Again, use 3 more rubber bands to hold the sponge in place.

## Little Money – Lots of Fish

(continued from page 4)

You will need to soak the sponge in a water bleach solution for about 15 minutes. The sponge starts out white and then will turn yellow. I believe the manufacture ads a chemical in the sponge that keeps it white. This is harmful to the fish, if you bleach it, it becomes usable. Put a milk jug lid on the bottom of the

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plastic canvas, using it as a cap. This can be hot glued to the canvas or just used extra rubber bands to make a ridge that the cap can snap onto. Use another mike jug cap for the top, but this time melt two holes in the top. You can do this by heating up a screwdriver over a stove flame and just puncture two hold in the top. One hole is for the airline hose and the other is to allow the bubbles to exit.

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## Message from the President

(continued from page 1)

My second priority is development of a strategic plan. The purpose of a strategic plan is to have a plan for the future of TAS by identifying our long term and short term goals, determining the steps needed to achieve these goals, and prioritizing them. You will be hearing more about this over the next couple of months, and I will be seeking feedback from all of you.

Third, I want TAS meetings to be informative and worth attending, and have implemented a new meeting format for non-business meetings, to allow more time for presentations and discussions on topics of interest.

I hope to see many of you at our monthly meetings. These are a great way to get to know your fellow TAS members while learning more about angelfish.



## Genetics Puzzler



Gold (g/g)

Silver (+/+)

1. T/F – It is possible to cross a gold angelfish with a silver angelfish and get smokey offspring.
2. If true, can you explain why?
3. What percentage of the offspring will be smokey, and what will the rest be?

*Answers on page 11.*

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## A Different Way – Trying New Ideas

Article by Isaiah Jenkins

The people who become great, and are great, are not those who follow. They are the ones who think of new ideas, try something different, and are leaders to others. I have read many books, talked with and listened to many experts. Everyone has become successful at this hobby in their own way, even if just in a small way. I have been keeping and breeding tropical fish for almost ten years now. I have developed my own ways of keeping aquarium fish in those ten years (I have kept over 100 different species of fish, and spawned about a third of those).

This story started when I had to move quite suddenly, and could only take one of my twelve aquariums. Every one of my adult angels was very dear to me. Picking from them was tough. I ended up taking 12 adult and young adult angels. I know you are already shaking your head. The tank also contained a pair of kribbs, pair of orange flash apistos, trio of koi

***“What is this guy running? A sardine factory?”***

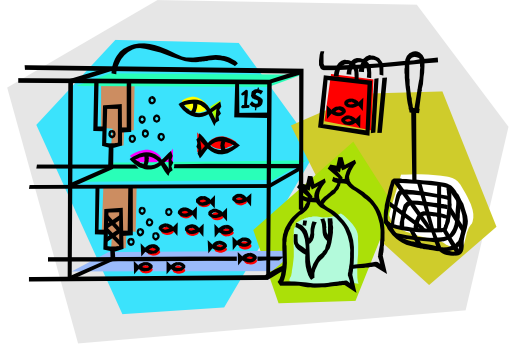
swordtails, pretty peckitolas, bristlenose plecos, and about a dozen cardinals. Now you are thinking, “what is this guy running? A sardine factory?”

I moved near the end of April. I set up the tank without a heater. The room temperature was in the low 70’s. The cooler temperature reduces some fighting, which is another African cichlid trick. Within a few weeks I had three pairs of angelfish going in this tank. I was doing water changes twice a week.

The bare bottom is decorated with a large oak root (that had been soaked for a couple years in a pond), several large java fern plants, and water fern which cover the entire surface of the

tank. The filter is a Whisper rated to handle up to a 60 gallon fish tank.

In late August I decided it was time to focus on fish, partly to take my mind off of the fact that my girlfriend would



be going away to college soon. What better way to do that than to throw myself back into my hobby? At this time the tank was up to 10 angels, including four large males and two proven females.

My girlfriend left for college, so I decided to go to a fish auction with a buddy. Near the end of the auction a bag of two adult angels went up. I ended up winning them for two dollars. I immediately opened the bag and gave them freshwater and they perked right up. When I got them home they turned out to be two nearly perfect gold marble veils, about nine inches from tip of the dorsal fin to the bottom of the anal fin; stunning fish. I won another bag with eight juvenile angels - about nickel size- for three dollars.

All the fish went into the 29 gallon. I was now up to 22 angels in there. I now have three proven females and fish spawning all the time. Still the fighting is not bad because the population is so high.

***“You don’t always have to follow the book!”***

What I am trying to say here is that fish keeping is not as hard as it seems. You don’t always have to follow the book. Don’t be afraid to try and do things your way, you never know what

might work or what you might find out. I am not saying this method will work for everyone, but it is my pride and joy.

Good luck!



## Health Risks from Aquariums:

### *Mycobacterium marinum* (fish “tuberculosis”)

Article by Tamar Stephens

#### Introduction

Can we catch diseases from our fish? It would seem unlikely, given that we aren't very closely related to fish. Surprisingly, though, yes we can catch diseases from fish. One of the more common diseases is a bacterial infection caused by *Mycobacterium marinum*. You may know this more commonly as fish “tuberculosis.” This bacterium is related to the bacteria that cause tuberculosis and leprosy in humans, and can infect people as well as fish.

**Any fish should be considered a potential carrier**

*M. marinum* is found world-wide in freshwater and marine water fish and in the water itself. The bacterium is usually slow growing and it sometimes can take a

couple of years for a fish to manifest the symptoms. Any fish should be considered a potential carrier and any aquarium should be handled as a potential source of infection.

#### Symptoms in fish

Physical symptoms in fish include wasting away, emaciation (shrunken abdomens), and may include skin inflammation, skin infections and ulcers, and fin and scale loss. It may also cause edema. In advanced cases, it may cause spinal deformities. If an infected fish is

dissected, gray or white nodules may be seen in the liver, kidney, heart or spleen. The fish may show behavioral symptoms including loss of appetite, refusing to eat, hiding behavior, and clamped fins.

#### How people can get infected

*M. marinum* usually infects at the site of a sore,



***Mycobacterium marinum* nodules on an infected hand.**

(From *Dermatology Online Journal* 10 (3): 2)1

cut or abrasion, and can be caught from contact with aquarium water, when handling, cleaning or processing fish, and while swimming or working

in fresh or salt water. People have become infected from fish spine punctures, cleaning fish, shrimp or crabs, getting scratched on fish tanks, splinters from fish net handles, and even mouth-siphoning fish tanks. *M. marinum* does not spread from person to person.

## Symptoms in people

*M. marinum* is slow growing and it usually takes two to four weeks before symptoms will appear. In some cases, it has taken two to four months for symptoms to develop. Localized nodules, or granulomas, form in the skin where a cut or abrasion allowed the bacteria to invade. These start out as small red or purple bumps that develop into non-healing sores, and in time may ulcerate. Usually, infection is limited to the skin. *M. marinum* doesn't typically grow at normal body temperatures, so it will most likely be limited to the cooler skin of the extremities such as the forearms. For some people these sores are painless; for others they may itch or may be painful.

In a small number of cases, the infection will invade more deeply into the body. It can infect bones and tendons, resulting in painful symptoms similar to arthritis, synovitis and bursitis. Someone with a compromised immune system may have fevers and swollen lymph nodes.

## Treatment

Diagnosis is often delayed for various reasons. Most people will try to treat the sores with over-the-counter antibiotic ointments, which are not effective. Generally, a physician will first assume it is a more common skin infection such as staphylococcus, and will prescribe medications that are ineffective. It is not uncommon for it to go undiagnosed for months or even for a year or more.

**Medications may be needed ... sometimes up to six months.**

Once it is diagnosed, infections usually require a long course of oral antibiotics. Medications may be needed anywhere from two to six weeks, and sometimes up to six months. In the past, *M. marinum* was treated with antituberculosis drugs like isoniazid, streptomycin, and para-aminosalicylic acid. Recent studies have shown

that *M. marinum* may be developing more resistance to this class of drugs. Medications used today include rifampin plus ethambutol, tetracyclines, trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, clarithromycin, or fluoroquinolones. When the infection has invaded deeper than the skin, the average time needed to treat it is almost a year.

## Prevention

The best way to avoid this disease is to use preventive measures in the first place. If you are cleaning or processing fish, you should wear leather gloves to protect yourself from punctures. If you are handling tropical fish with sharp spines, take care to avoid getting poked by the spines. Use waterproof gloves when cleaning aquariums, especially if you suspect a fish has the disease or if you have any little cuts or scrape on your hands. Don't start a siphon with your mouth. If you are dealing with a diseased fish, then when you clean the tank out, sterilize it and anything that was in it with a bleach solution. When you are done with any aquarium cleaning tasks, be sure to wash your hands and forearms well with warm soapy water.

**Use preventive measures ... waterproof gloves ... wash hands and forearms well...**

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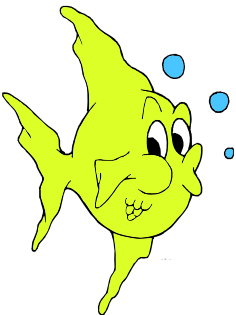
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#### Genetics Puzzler Answers (from page 5)

1. True. A cross between a gold and a silver angelfish can produce smokey offspring.
2. This can happen because the gold angelfish can carry a smokey allele. In double dose, gold is epistatic to smokey. "Epistatic" means that one gene will suppress the expression of another gene. So the gold angelfish must have the genotype  $g/g - Sm/+$ .
3. The offspring will:  
50%  $+/g - +/+$  silver  
50%  $+/g - Sm/+$  smokey



#### Do you have a story to tell? Do you want to see your name in print? We want to hear from you!

Tell us what you are doing with your angelfish. Did you show them at a fish show? Did you raise some that you are really proud of? Did you create a show tank that you really love? Share with your fellow TAS members.

We are looking for short snips for the newsletter – one or two paragraphs accompanied by one or two photos.

We are also looking for longer articles on any topic related to angelfish.

Submit newsletter items to:

[newslettercommittee@theangelfishsociety.org](mailto:newslettercommittee@theangelfishsociety.org)

The next issue of FinTAStic will be in August.

Deadline for submitting items for publication is August 2, 2009.

## Trading Goodies and For Sale Section

This page is reserved for future items that TAS members would like to trade, give away as freebies or sell. If you have any items, please submit your ad to:

[newslettercommittee@theangelfishsociety.org](mailto:newslettercommittee@theangelfishsociety.org)

Your "fish for trade" ad here  
Your name  
Your contact information

Your "for sale" ad here  
Your name  
Your contact information

Deadline for submission for the August issue of FinTAStic is August 2, 2009.

\*\*\*\*Any items submitted must be no more than 6 lines text in length, and must contain the TAS member name, a phone number or email address or, you prefer, state your TAF forum name so you can be PM'ed. Those without contact info will be discarded.

\*\*\*\*Please submit your trades and give-aways separately from your for sale items so the committee doesn't have to guess which is which. The subject line of each request MUST state whether your ad will be for the "For Sale" portion or for the "Trading Goodies" portion. Please do not submit banners or pics as there won't be enough room for these in the columns.



**Newsletter Committee**

Tony Vaughn  
Tamar Stephens  
Sarah Smith  
Jan Kesler  
Isaiah Jenkins  
Amanda Wenger

**A special thanks to the following article contributors. Without you, this newsletter wouldn't have happened:**

Isaiah Jenkins  
Jan Kesler  
Tamar Stephens

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