

## Motor City Aquarium Society: A Brief History

By Betty Campau

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Motor City Aquarium Society, formerly Motor City Guppy Club, was a small group of people who met at a pet shop/house on Utica Rd in Fraser. The pet shop was in the basement of the house. It was in 1967 that they decided to change from a guppy club to an aquarium society. By 1968 it was Motor City Aquarium Society, and they were meeting at a bank: Colonial Federal Savings and Loan, located at 9 mile and Gratiot in what was then East Detroit.

This small club decided to hold a contest to find a name for their monthly newsletter. The winner of the contest was Juergen Kasprick and the name he came up with was TROPIQUARIUM. Publication of TropiQuarium did not start until May 1970. It was sometime in late 1968 or early 1969 that Don and I joined MCAS. We, Don and I and our two children Cindy and Glenn, would spend weekends shop-hopping. It was during one of these trips we picked up a flyer at Macomb Pet telling us about MCAS. The flyer gave information about their monthly meetings and Don and a friend decided to check it out. The rest, as they say, is history! It wasn't until 1971 that we became active in MCAS.

Don and I were invited to attend a board meeting at Juergen's home. We went to the board meeting eager and naive. We left with Don becoming a board member and myself as secretary/treasurer and wondering what we had gotten ourselves into. At that time the secretary and treasurer were one job. I officially became Secretary/Treasurer in January 1971, and Don became a board member and Social Chairman.

In 1970 MCAS did not have a Bowl Show or a Breeders Award Program. We did not have a constitution or HAP or.... I'm getting ahead of myself. First things first! The original Bowl Show rules were set up by Norb Lawrence and published in the April 1970 issue of Tropiquarium. Our first Bowl Show entry was in October 1970, it was a guppy and earned 4 points.

The Breeder Award Program was adopted from Greater Detroit Aquarium Society; the rules first appeared in Tropiquarium in May 1970. Larry Riley was the first BAP chairman. We did not take part in the BAP until October 1971; the fish we registered was a swordtail - *Xiphophorus helleri* - a five pointer. It wasn't much, but it was our start. Like most aquarium societies, "all work and no play" gets dull in a hurry. So MCAS decided to have a picnic. The first annual picnic was held July 18, 1970 at Stony Creek. Unfortunately, it was almost flooded out. That did not stop the few hardy souls who showed up from having fun.

Monthly meetings and BOD meetings are an important part of a successful society, but one get-together that I think is important and fun is the open houses we used to have. On a Sunday afternoon for a few hours, a member opened their doors to fellow members to show off their fish room or maybe just a couple of tanks. It didn't matter, the getting together and just talking and socializing was great.

By March 1971, the BAP had five names on it. By October it was up to twelve names. MCAS grew a lot in 1971. The BAP and the Bowl Show entries tripled. Names like Karl Doering and Garry Mousseau were added to our roster. Our meeting place at the bank was getting too small. The BOD was talking about looking for a new meeting place... MCAS was on the move.

The 1970s was a decade of changes for MCAS. In April of 1972, Don and I became publishers of Tropiquarium. The printing method at the time was a fluid duplicator. Besides being publishers we were collators, addressers, stampers, and mailers. We had a get-together at our house every month, much like we currently do, to accomplish the task. Every month, after this meeting, we would have major problems with our tanks. The fish would come to the top gasping and stressed. The glass would get slimy and the water cloudy. It took a lot of water changes and the use of our diatom filter to de-stress the tanks. We knew it had something to do with printing the paper, we just did not know just what it was. Ed Riley worked for Wayne State University at the time and took a water sample to be tested. It seems the fumes from the duplicator fluid destroyed the bacteria in the water. Once we found out the cause of our problem we were no longer publishers.

The '70s had a lot of firsts. Our first constitution was published in Tropiquarium in May 1972. In July of '72 I established our club library. Don and I carried it to each meeting. So maybe it wasn't so big. It was a start. We now have a considerable library. In January 1973, MCAS grew so much that the club decided to make Secretary/Treasurer two jobs instead of one. I was then Treasurer and Judy Frick was Secretary. MCAS held their first auction in March of 1973. The auction was needed to raise money for our first show. We held our first show at the Macomb Mall on Nov. 3 & 4, 1973. That was an experience I will never forget. We used borrowed equipment from area clubs. Most of the MCAS members had never been involved in putting on a show, but we did it, and it was a success.

How many firsts can I squeeze onto one page? Our first cover change was September 1973. In February of 1974, we started our new printing method. We exchanged with eight other clubs - today it's 80. One more first I almost forgot: MCAS's first and only female president..... BETTY CAMPAU. The year was 1977.

There is no end to history; it just keeps happening, and so, I hope, will MCAS. The 1980s and 90s brought a lot of changes. The major changes were our meeting places. After the bank we went to the St. Clair Shores Civic Center, then to St. Leonard's, Warren Cultural Center, Eastland Center, and finally our current place: St. Gertrudes Parish in St. Clair Shores. The current place being the best of the lot.

In 1976, both of Don's parents died. We dropped out of "active duty" for a few years and almost out of the hobby. Like most societies, MCAS had its share of internal problems. It was in the early 1980s we received a phone call asking us if we would return to the board; they needed our help. We returned, and with the help of all the members, the problem was finally solved. We've stayed active until this day. No regrets!

MCAS put on some pretty spectacular shows in the '80s. The two most outstanding were at Eastland Shopping Center. Our first Eastland show we had over five hundred entries. It was awesome. We had several more shows at Eastland before changing to the Macomb Mall. Maybe I'm old-fashioned, but I still think public shows, like in shopping malls, are the best.

In 1985, Water Wonderland was born. A great idea! All of the area clubs combining their efforts to put on a show of shows. The area clubs formed a group called All-Clubs and Water Wonderland was one of their accomplishments. The Winter Speaker Program was another. The first Water Wonderland Show was held at Midway Motor Lodge, Warren.

There will always be changes. I think the hobby is going through changes right now. I have been in touch with other societies around the country and many are having the same problem: lack of interest

- computers and TV. We could blame it on any number of things. Being the old-fashioned person that I am, I believe the hobby will bounce back. It always has.

This is the final chapter in MCAS History as I see it.

Betty Campau, an "Old-fashioned hobbyist"