

Report from the West Coast

by Ray Suydam

Greetings to my fellow L.I.A.S. members. Well, as you may figured out, I finally made it here to California! I made the entire journey in four days, with almost non-stop driving, except for a overnight layover in Flagstaff, AZ, for two VERY good reasons. First was for a much needed rest, as I had been driving almost non-stop for 3 days, stopping only for gas, fast foods, and potty breaks. Second reason was I hit the most INTENSE thunderstorm I have ever seen in my entire life, and was incredibly lucky to stumble across a very nice hotel just off of Interstate 40. I had been warned about the weather in advance, but it really has to be experienced to be believed!

And yes, my two cats, who were in the back seat, survived the trip just fine, and finally stopped howling their protests about being cooped up in the car by about the third state out. In fact, they love it out here, and adjusted to living here just fine, perhaps a little better then their owner!

My belongings arrived from the moving company about two weeks after, and I started setting up my fish room.



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In two days I was up and running, letting the water cycle, and by the second week, I was ready to introduce some inexpensive starter fish.

The water is extremely hard here, in this part of the state, not at all like that water on Long Island. In fact, just washing your car here will leave a fine white film on the surface on the vehicle, if not wiped off before it dries. But, according to the few fish breeders I have met in the area, does not effect raising fish to any great extent at all.

There are three Live Fish stores in the surrounding area here. One is a very nice hi-tech Aquarium shop. They have, or can order, almost anything you may need to keep fishes. However, the prices are high as compared to NY for the dry good items, so it is not such a good bargain for someone on a limited budget, such as myself.

The second is a smaller full line shop, selling both aquarium supplies, as well as puppies, kittens and reptiles. There are some good bargains to be had here, however, the quality of the fish has something left to be desired.

The third shop is something of a mystery. In the year and a half, that I have been coming to this town, long before I moved here, they have had a sign up proclaiming COMING SOON!....but they still have not opened the doors for business. Finally, out of sheer frustration, I slipped a note under the door, leaving my name and phone number. I was able to meet the owners, a very nice older couple, a few days later when they called me back.

They gave me a behind the scene tour of the shop, and have invested a lot of time and money into this store, with some very exciting animals and live set ups, something along the lines of COUNTRY CRITTERS in Patchogue. They informed me that they have had plans for months on have the grand opening of the shop, but they have had a series of personal problems, which have caused un-foreseen delays.

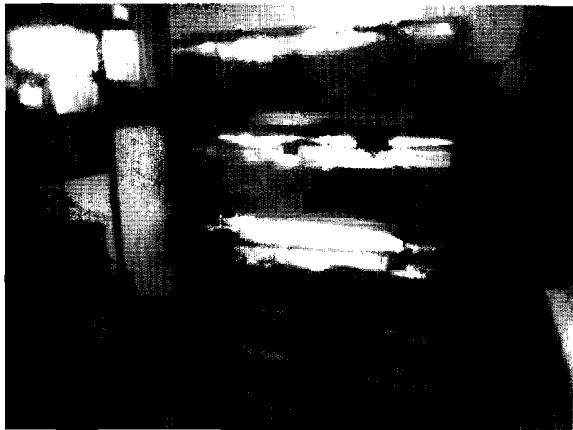
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I have developed a friendship with the owners, and I eagerly look forward to doing business with them in the future.

I am sad to report, there are NO Aquarium Society's in this area at all. The only thing close is a small informal Cichlid club that meets in once in a blue moon. I am now preparing to see if perhaps I can generate any interest in starting up a Society locally, but time will tell.

On the 16th of Sept, my girlfriend Deb and I traveled to Glendale CA, just outside of Los Angeles, to attend the SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA KILLIFISH CLUB's annual fish fry and fish Auction, about 250 miles from my home here in Grover Beach. The meeting was held at the home of Mr. Ron Harlan.

Ron is a very nice, friendly fellow, who has been a member of the American Killifish Association for many years. Ron's fish room set up is very interesting, a small building in the back yard of his home, with its own utility hook ups and drainage system.



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There were about 50 people in attendance at the auction, some traveling for as far away as AZ, just to attend. It was interesting to be able to see some well known Killi keepers, some who I have just heard of, or have corresponded with over the Internet over the years.

There was a large selection of Killifish, as well as plants, food cultures, supplies, and a few odd fishes entered into to the auction, some donated locally, and many donated from the Arizona Rivulus Keepers (A.R.K.) Plus, tons of food and great raffle prizes.

I was able to stock my new fish room with some great Killifishes, and well as some plants, food cultures, and a few needed supplies. And, of course, I tried to make some new contacts for future trades and purchases. Certainly worth the trip!

So, my fellow fishy friends, that's my report here from the West Coast. I hope to be in New York again soon, and I promise that, if I can, I will endeavor to attend a L.I.A.S. meeting. 🐟

Regards,
Ray

