

The Federation Report

July/August 2004



The Federation Report
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Riverview, FL 33569

**The Official Publication of the
Federation of American Aquarium Societies**

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Deadlines:	Must be received by:	Deadlines:	Must be received by:
January Issue	December 10th	July Issue	June 10th
March Issue	February 10th	Sept. Issue	August 10th
May Issue	April 10th	Nov. Issue	October 10th

Items submitted for **Calendar of Events** must be submitted by the deadline of the previous issue.

President's Message



Jerry Montgomery
President

School is out. Summer is here and we all have extra obligations that require more of our time. However your Society still needs you to keep on top of the things that your group can be involved in within FAAS.

The position of FAAS Delegate is the critical link between the national group and your Society. It is through your hard work and attention that your group will get the most out of its membership. Please don't forget to keep your Society informed of their opportunities for individual recognition of your members through participation in the Publication, Breeder, Aquatic Horticulture and Aquatic Photo Awards programs.

This would be a great time to help out the editor of your club publication. Write an article outlining the various things your members could be participating in over the course of the year. This might encourage a greater participation on both the local club and national level. Encourage your members to consider taking pictures during the summer vacations if they do any aquatic hobby related things. This could be an opportunity for your group to help FAAS expand its program selection. If enough new material could be acquired to create a new presentation say a topic of collecting trips to various spots around the country for example or maybe a trip to an aquatic exhibit if you are lucky enough to have one near you. It would be a great help if you could encourage your members to assist FAAS in this manner.

Back in the March/April FR I asked for help in finding worthy hobbyists for recognition by FAAS. I have not received even one inquiry or nomination up to this date. Take a couple minutes to look at the handbook and see if any of your members could possibly be eligible for consideration for this honor. Let Roger Halleen and I know if you believe FAAS should consider any of the hobbyists in your club or area for recognition. It is difficult to learn of worthy individuals without the local clubs assistance. Please take a minute to consider if anyone you know might be qualified, then let us know.

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Calendar Of Events

October 2004

October 3, 2004 - Sunday Medina County Aquarium Society Fall Auction

Wadsworth Masonic Temple, 660 High Street, Wadsworth, Ohio. For more information contact John Clark at tpaj@neo.rr.com or 330-723-4748, Ken McGill at fishy@neo.rr.com or 419-688-7452, or Rich Serva at rjserva@juno.com or 330-630-4613.

October 10, 2004 - Sunday The Allegheny River Valley Aquarium Society Annual Auction Auction

J A Community Center, 112 N Barry Street, Olean, NY 14760. Starting at 12 noon. For more information please call 716-372-2096

October 15 - 17, 2004 Sacramento Aquarium Society 4th Annual FINDIG

Friday, October 15th	5pm - 12pm
Saturday, October 16th	9am - 12pm
Sunday, October 17th	9am - 5pm

Marriott Hotel 11211 Point East Drive Rancho Cordova, California 95742 (916) 638-1100 Rooms: \$79 per night. Admission required for Friday and Saturday General: \$30 per person (\$35 at the door) SAS Members: \$25 per person (\$35 at the door) Students: \$15 (with valid student ID) (\$35 at the door). FREE Admission on Sunday. The event will feature freshwater and saltwater speakers from across the country, a huge auction, display aquariums, vendors, a raffle, and social mixers. Please contact Modesta Stevens, FINDIG Chairwoman, (916) 369-0546 Kimberly Beckham, President, (916) 684-8981 or www.SacramentoAquariumSociety.org.



Calendar Of Events

July 2004

July 7, 8 & 9, 2004 - Wednesday, Thursday & Friday **Medina County Aquarium Society** **Fish Splash 2004**

Location to be announced. For more information contact John Clark at tpaj@neo.rr.com or 330-723-4748, Ken McGill at fishy@neo.rr.com or 419-688-7452, or Rich Serva at rjserva@juno.com or 330-630-4613.

July 2004

July 17, 2004 - Saturday **Champaign Area Fish Exchange** **Summer Auction**

Urbana Civic Center 108 Water St. Urbana IL Doors open at 8am. Auction begins at 10:30 am Anything related to the Aquarium hobby may be presented for sale at this event. Fish, plants, food, equipment, pond related items, etc will most likely be there. For information contact Mark 217-428-6133 or email guppymom_2000@yahoo.com or Jerry 217-359-6707 or email jmont@insightbb.com This event is open to the Public. Free Admission.

September 2004

September 3 - 5, 2004 - Friday, Saturday & Sunday **Tri County Tropical Fish Society** **36th Annual Tropical Fish Show**

2004 Northwoods Mall Peoria, IL. For more information please contact Roger Halleen 309 699-7394 Roghfish@aol.com

Delegates' Council Report



Al Priest
Chair, FAAS Delegates' Council

The Delegates Council was discussing two issues. One was whether or not to recommend a publication award category for an article that is reprinted by the society that originally printed it, but the article was never submitted previously for consideration for a FAAS publication award. After extensive debate, the overwhelming majority of the delegates felt that reprints should not be considered, even if the article could not have been submitted for a FAAS Publication Award when it was originally printed (as might be the case if a society that only recently joined or rejoined FAAS, or if the article, when originally printed had no suitable category in which it could be entered, but a suitable category now exists). Thanks to everyone who participated in this discussion.

The second item up for discussion was whether the Council should recommend awards for society websites. All delegates voicing an opinion felt that this was a good idea, but questions were raised regarding specifics. One recommendation that a few delegates agreed with was having the Delegates Council involved in the judging somehow. During a series of e-mails with FAAS webmaster Rick Borstein, I pointed out that FAAS judging rules for both the Photo and Publication Awards specify that: Judges are selected by the Committee Chairman with the Following restrictions: 1. No one may judge a category in which they or any member of their family has an entry. 2. No one may judge a category in which any member of any FAAS society that they are affiliated with has an entry. 3. No one may judge a category in which any FAAS society they are affiliated with has an entry. In instances where a member society is handling any part of the judging they are restricted from judging any category in which they or any of their members has an entry. To be consistent, the Website Awards, if approved, would undoubtedly have the same restrictions. So, if the Delegates Council were involved in judging, the delegates would be disqualifying their own society's websites!

On May 6, Rick sent an e-mail to all of the Delegates on the Council saying that he put together some judging criteria for the FAAS web site awards. Rick asked the Delegates to go to: <http://>

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**Delegate's Council
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www.gcca.net/faas/webjudge/web-judging.htm to view his proposal. At that link, you will find: + Website Scoring Sheet + Website Judging Criteria + Website Scoring Explanation

Judging is point-based. Points determine the winner in the following categories: Best Overall Society Website Most Informative Society Website Most Innovative or Unique Website Best Website as a Resource for the Aquarium Hobby

Rick is recommending that each website be judged in six categories: 1- Functionality 2- Design 3- Club Content 4- Hobby Content 5- Originality 6- Professionalism and Effectiveness

A month has gone by since Rick's e-mail to the Delegates but, to date, I have received no responses. Please go to the website above and download the files there, review them with your society's governing body, and get back to the Council with your comments and suggestions. If you have any problems reading or downloading the files, send me an e-mail and I'll see what I can do to help. If you get an error message in trying to e-mail me, resend the message to: aapriest@usa.net. (Mail sent by at least two people I know of recently was rejected — something to do with the fact that their Internet Service Providers do "dynamic IP addressing" which, because it is not a standard fixed-IP address, is automatically rejected by Compuserve as a potential source of spam.)

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Program Committee



Jerry Montgomery
Program Committee Chairman

I have begun trying to take fish pictures myself but unfortunately, I am not a great photographer. I am however getting a good one now and then. Maybe you can help out as well. If any of your members have digital cameras ask to see if they might be willing to try taking pictures as well. The images can be of anything aquatic and need to be high resolution if I am to be able to convert them to slide print images For those who know about digital images on a more technical level the images must be a minimum of 72 dpi. If you have an area of interest focus on that for your topic, then as soon as I have acquired enough images to create a new program I will attempt to get one made. I can possibly receive small numbers of images by email at jmont@insightbb.com but would prefer to have them sent to me on disc to avoid the possible glitches that can happen over the Internet. IF you have anyone that already might have digital images of that resolution and they are willing to share them with FAAS, they can be sent to FAAS Program Committee, Jerry Montgomery, 2508 Alton Drive, Champaign. IL 61821-4777. If you might be interested in assisting and have questions feel free to drop me a note or I will be happy to give you a call and chat about it.

FAAS

Financial Report Not Received

FAAS

Breeder's Award Program

Scott Tetzlaff
Chair, Breeder's Award Program

The listing of the Breeder's Award Program will continue next month as space allows.

FAAS

**On the Web
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be a judge in the site awards. Since virtually every club has a web site, I believe it is not fair to exclude a delegate because that would mean that the judges' clubs wouldn't be eligible to participate.

I propose that the Web Site Judging Committee be open to anybody, but you judges cannot score their own club's site. I believe that everyone is capable of being impartial and objective.

A valuable part of the process, to me, is the scoring of club sites. As a webmaster, I welcome feedback and ideas. Getting an official score from FAAS and finding out the strengths and weaknesses of my site would be very helpful.

I'm here to help...

If you would like some advice or a critique of your club's web site, email me at webmaster@gcca.net.



Expired Or Expiring Memberships

Central New York Aquarium Society 3/04

Champaign Area Fish Exchange 5/04

Colorado Aquarium Society 9/04

Greater Detroit Aquarium Society 1/04

Houston Aquarium Society, Inc. 7/04

Medina County Aquarium Society 7/04

Minnesota Aquarium Society 6/04

Nassau County Aquarium Society 9/04

Rockey Mountain Cichlid Association 5/04

Southwestern Michigan Aquarium Society 6/04

Tri-County Tropical Fish Society 8/04



**President's Message
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As always I would like to encourage any club not already on the Delegate Council to find a willing member and begin participation in the ongoing discussion taking place there. Also, be sure that when officers and addresses change that you let FAAS know immediately to insure that we are able to keep in touch with your club.

Being involved in the aquarium hobby is fun. Lets all work to help keep it a going strong and enjoyable for the next generation of aquarists.



On The Web



Rick Borstein
FAAS Web Master

In the last *On the Web*, I discussed basic organization of an aquarium club web site. Once you decide what you need on your site and how you want it organized, how will you put it together? What tools will you use?

Before I get started, I should let you know that I work for a software company— Adobe Systems Incorporated— and we make the web-authoring tool called GoLive. It's a great tool and believe me, I'd love you to buy it, but there are many choices, so read on.

Site Building Options

Here are four options for building your club's web site:

- 1) **Use a word processor or notepad and hand code your HTML.** If you are a programmer or want to be one, this may be a good option for you. Most folks do not want to learn the HTML document object model and build a site totally from raw code. You will still need an image processing tool.
- 2) **Use host-provided on-line site building tools** Many web hosts offer template-based fill-in-the-blank site building tools which do not require any web knowledge to use. Most of these tools are not very flexible. You have a small choice of templates and, for the most part, need to adjust your preferred method of organization to the template provided.

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**On the Web
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3) **Use web authoring software.**

Examples include FrontPage (\$199), Dreamweaver and GoLive (each \$399). Dreamweaver and GoLive allow you to build a site organized the way you like that looks the way you like. Both of these products are pro-level tools— you'll need to spend some time learning these apps to get the most out of them.

FrontPage is more template-based and does not fully support as many web standards as Dreamweaver and GoLive. FrontPage is from Microsoft and integrates well with MS Office on Windows. Unfortunately, FrontPage defaults to writing heavy, IE-specific code that doesn't work as well in other browsers.

Dreamweaver offers very good tools for managing databases and building professional web sites.

GoLive integrates very well with other Adobe products such as Photoshop and Illustrator, making it easier to work with graphics.

4) **Use portal software.**

Portals manage several aspect of your web site by running programs at your host. A typical portal will include a news section, calendar, discussion forums, member sections, etc. Portals range in price from free to thousands of dollars. Most portals allow multiple users to make changes to the site. This means that you can spread the work around your club.

Portals have four major issues that you need to consider. First, portals need to be installed as programs at the place you host your web site. If your web host offers portal software as part of their hosting package, you might want to consider using it, especially if the support is free. Otherwise, you will have to install, or pay someone to install the software.

The second problem is that portals are dynamically generated. That means that a program running at your web host creates the HTML uniquely for each user that hits the page. You may have to pay more to host a dynamically-generated site and pages often won't come up as fast.

A third problem is that many portals can only be customized in a very limited way— e.g. turning on and off specific sections and changing colors.

Lastly, portals are great until they stop working. You have to be a programmer to fix them or modify them.

So, what tool should you use?

I use Adobe GoLive to build and maintain the FAAS and GCCA web sites. I love it... and I'm paid to say that, of course! Here are some personal issues to consider when choosing a tool:

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**On the Web
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FAQs, Tips and Techniques

Is there a Frequently Asked Questions section? Are their tips and techniques listed?

Hobby Tools

Any hobby tools included? Examples include a Classified section, fish identification, disease identification, etc.

Would you want to come back?

Is this a sticky site? Is there information that makes you want to return?

5-Originality

Originality of design

Is the design unique? Or, does it look like a bunch of other sites you've seen.

Originality of photos

Does the site include original photos? Did the site "borrow" photos from other web sites without attribution?

Originality of content

Does the site include hobby information that you can't easily find elsewhere?

Innovative Approach

Does the site take a new or interesting approach in organization or layout?

Does the site stand out from other club sites?

How does the site compare to other club sites? Does it stand out or blend in?

6-Professionalism and Effectiveness

Proper Grammar

Proper language and sentence construction

Proper Spelling

Limited number of misspellings. Are their problems on every page? Did you only find one or two?

No outdated pages

Does the club list events that took place two months ago? Is information up to date?

How well does the website serve the club?

Does the site serve to attract new members? Does the site have information that serves the membership?

How well does the website serve the hobby?

Does the site make a positive impression to attract people to the hobby? Does the site offer information that helps new hobbyists?

Does the site offer a sense of community in the hobby?

Who should judge?

There was a lot of discussion between delegates about who should

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**On the Web
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- Ease of navigation
Is it easy to navigate the site? You shouldn't have to work hard to figure out the site.
- Consistency of navigation
Is the navigation consistent from page to page?
- Easy to read
Is the text easy to read?

2-Design

- Visual appeal
Is the site nice to look at?
- Professional Appearance
Does the site look professional?
- Use of space
Is there adequate space between elements? (take off points if things are densely packed)
- Consistency of design
Is the design consistent from page to page?
- Typography
Are fonts in proper sizes and styles used to enhance clarity?

3-Club Content

- Next Meeting Info
Can you find info on the next club meeting? Who is the speaker? Where/when is it?
- Club Calendar
Is there a calendar of events page? Does it list future meetings and events?
- Event Info
Do special events have their own page(s)? Is it clear what the events are and when they take place?
- Club Programs Info
Is there information about club programs such as BAP, bowl shows, awards, etc.
- Club Mission/Goals
Does site clearly state the club's goals and mission statement? Is it clear who the club is trying to attract to join?

4-Hobby Content

- Quality of off-site links
Is there a good links section on the site? Are the links categorized and useful?
- Fish and Hobby Info
What kind of fish and hobby info is on the site? Look for fish profiles, articles, publications of the club, etc.

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**On the Web
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- **Do you really want to learn how to build web pages the right way?**
If you do, I highly recommend a pro-level tool like Dreamweaver or GoLive. If you are interested in ultimately building sites and charging for your work, you should buy the best tool.
- **Are you a non-techie?**
If you are not a computer-geek, your best bet is to use a host-based site-building tool. Sure, you'll be limited by what is offered, but if you are willing to accept a number of compromises, you can still build a decent site for your club.
- **What is your budget?**
A number of freeware and shareware web authoring tools are available. I haven't tried them since I get thousands of dollars of software free as part of my job (ha!), so you'll have to experiment. Go to shareware.com and see what you can find.
Host-based tools are free as part of your hosting package, so you can try them. If you're a bit geeky, you can install one of the many free portal packages.
- **Do you want to build a unique look for your site?**
If you are a creative-type and want to create something unique, Dreamweaver or GoLive, and to a lesser extent, FrontPage, can create something artistic, different and uniquely suited to your club.
- **Who can help you?**
In my very first "On the Web" column in the *Federation Report*, I encouraged clubs to identify members who have web knowledge. Even if you're not a geek, with the help of a knowledgeable person in your club, you can probably learn to use a pro-level tool.

FAAS Web Site Award Judging Proposal

In a message to the FAAS delegates in early May, I proposed a point-based system for determining the four awards proposed by Alexander Priest:

- **Best Overall Society Website**
- **Most Innovative or Unique Website**
- **Most Informative Society Website**
- **Best Website as a Resource for the Aquarium Hobby**

On the next page is a sample form, filled in with the maximum possible points in each category.

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**On the Web
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FAAS 2004 Website Awards Judging Form

Name of Society	Galactic Guppy Club
Website Address	http://www.galacticguppies.com

Rating System	1=Poor 2=Good 3=Excellent
----------------------	---------------------------------

1-Functionality		2-Design	
All links working	3	Visual appeal	3
Load time	3	Professional Appearance	3
Ease of navigation	3	Use of space	3
Consistency of navigation	3	Consistency of design	3
Easy to read	3	Typography	3
Total	15	Total	15

3-Club Content		4-Hobby Content	
Next Meeting Info	3	Quality of off-site links	3
Club Calendar	3	Fish and Hobby Info	3
Event Info	3	FAQs, Tips and Techniques	3
Club Programs Info	3	Hobby Tools	3
Club Mission/Goals	3	Would you want to come back?	3
Total	15	Total	15

5-Originality		6-Professionalism and Effectiveness	
Originality of design	3	Proper Grammar	3
Originality of photos	3	Proper Spelling	3
Originality of content	3	No outdated pages	3
Innovative Approach	3	How well does the website serve the club?	3
Does the site stand out from other club sites?	3	How well does the website serve the hobby?	3
Total	15	Total	15

Best Overall Society Website	90	Most Informative Society Website	36
Most Innovative or Unique Website	15	Best Website as a Resource for the Aquarium Hobby	18

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**On the Web
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Here is some commentary on how points determine the winner for each category:

Best Overall Society Web Site has a total possible points of 90 which is the sum of the total points in the six judging categories:

- Functionality— 15 points
- Design— 15 points
- Club Content— 15 pts
- Hobby Content— 15 pts
- Originality— 15 pts
- Professionalism and Effectiveness— 15pts

Most Informative Society Website has a total possible points of 36 which is the sum of the following:

- Club Content— 15 pts
- Hobby Content— 15 pts

... and two questions from the Professionalism and Effectiveness section:

- How well does the web site serve the club?— 3pts
- How well does the web site serve the hobby?— 3pts

Most Innovative or Unique Website has total points possible of 15. It is simply the total for the Originality section.

Best Website as a Resource for the Aquarium Hobby has total points possible of 18. It is the sum of the following:

- Hobby Content— 15 pts

... and one question from the Professionalism and Effectiveness section:

- How well does the web site serve the hobby?— 3pts

How are points awarded?

Judges may award the following:

- 1 Point — Poor
- 2 Points — Good
- 3 Points — Excellent

I put a lot of thought into the six areas that determine site scoring. To help judges, I developed a list of criteria to consider when scoring. If you run a fish club web site, score your own site to see how you do.

1-Functionality

- All links working
 - Are there broken links? No more than 1 for an excellent rating
- Load time
 - Do the home page and other pages load in a reasonable amount of time?

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