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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Tropical Fish Owned By Summerside Club

By NEIL A. MATHESON

SEEMS A LONG time since the Summerside Lobster Carnival , but I recall with pleasure a chat with Joe McCarthy, president of the Summerside Tropical Fish Club, and some of the fish he showed me and described in interesting fashion.

The fish display was one of the more interesting exhibits in the main building part of the Carnival.

The unusual and colorful fish were all interesting, but the larger tank with “the more aggressive fish” – the words are those of Mr. McCarthy – had an extra fillip of interest for me.

You’ve heard about the man-eating sharks that are the terror of the waters they inhabit. Well, they had some sharks at Summerside, only they were greatly reduced in size.

The sharks Joe McCarthy showed me are small. Memory tells me that some grow perhaps 10 inches in length. They’ve been reduced in size by selective breeding.

The tri-colored sharks are worth about \$15. each. They are a beautiful fish, but are fairly aggressive.

The Silver Dollar

ANOTHER TYPE is commonly called the Silver Dollar. If any fish fanciers read this column, the proper name could not be recalled at the time of our chat.

“There’s really a bad cat out there”, said Joe as he pointed to one called “Jack Dempsey because of his pugnacious appearance.” As most people know, Jack Dempsey was a heavyweight champion who was a ring terror until Gene Tunney defeated him with skillful boxing and superior tactics.

This fish will take a run at one of the others, if he takes the notion. “He pulled the tail off one of my best fish already”, Mr. McCarthy told me.

“Here’s another really bad cat”, he told me. “He belongs to one of our club members but he’s been traded five or six times already because nobody can really handle him.”

The club members “don’t know his real name but he’s called ‘Old Yeller’ in the club.”

This fish “is a real bearcat”, I was told. At one side of the glass tank was gravel piled up against the side several inches high. It had been evenly distributed on the tank bottom, but ‘Old Yeller’ redistributed it by taking a piece in his mouth at a time and placing it in its new location, probably to get rid of some of his aggressive tendencies”, Joe observed.

‘Angels’ Are Not Angels

THERE ARE “Angels” in another tank, but the name does not mean they’re that good. They are “not too well behaved”, and can be very aggressive if they take the notion. Club members have been successful in breeding this variety in Summerside.

They are the same family basically as the Chichlid, a very large family.

Tetra are a very small fish and are very beautiful. Adding to the attractive appearance of the various tanks of fish was the plant life that was in the tanks. The plants were all natural. The 'BaleTail" Angel was one of the most attractive fish on display.

These fish are all live bearers, Mr. McCarthy explained. They breed in the tank with other fish; they bear live young and deliver their young swimming and alive. By contrast, other fish have to lay eggs to reproduce.

Some of these tropical fish species are virtually man made. They are developed by cross breeding, and careful selection to bring out certain desired characteristics.

Man Eaters Interesting

The Piranha fish were interesting. They are the flesh eating fish that will eat a human being if they get a chance. They are small, though, and are dangerous, apparently, only in large schools, I was told. One would be too small, apparently, to do much damage.

The "Tiger Barb" comes from a large and popular fish family. Summerside Tropical Fish Club members have been successful in breeding "quite a few of these fish".

A "Head Stander" was unusual. The fish, as its name implies, has a propensity for standing on its head in the water.

The "Discus" fish are the queens of all tropical fish, Mr. McCarthy suggests. They cost about \$30 each. They come in plain browns, greens and blues.

The Siamese fighting fish do just that; they are fought commercially at times, I was told.

The Neon Tetras actually glow in the dark and are very colorful.

Fierce Fighting Fish

THE BETTAS are small but they are fierce fighting fish. They won't stop fighting until one, or both of them are dead. They go at each other in a fight to the finish.

The way Mr. McCarthy sees them, these fish "are absolutely gorgeous, the finish on them is out of this world".

Another type of fish has no eyes. They live in Mexican caves where no light can enter, the eyes are unnecessary. "Nature did its job and gradually took the eyes away", this man observed.

Actually these fish are grotesque and a lot of people don't like them. "But these happen to be mine", Joe told me.

The Kuli Loach is an interesting looking fish. It looks much like an eel. It has a tail "and is quite colorful".

The Summerside Tropical Fish Club is two years old. It appears to be an active group. I am looking forward to seeing more of those interesting fish at a future date.

My thanks and appreciation go to Joe McCarthy for his courtesy in showing the fish and for his most interesting information about them.