

SUMMER 2007

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The President's Corner — Cheri Phillips

Greetings! This year has passed in what seems like the blink of an eye and MASNA has been buzzing with activity!

At MASNA's April Board meeting, we reviewed the bid made by Atlanta Reef Club to host MACNA XX. It was a beautifully written and thought out bid and I'm pleased to announce that **MACNA XX** will be held in **Atlanta, Georgia!**

MASNA's 2006-2007 year brought a number of continued challenges for the Board of Directors. In April, we received the resignation of both Kim Lowe (MASNA VP) and Chuck Scannell (Industry Legislation Conservation Representative). Kim was in the position only a short period of time, but we wish to thank her for efforts on MASNA's behalf. Chuck dedicated many years of service to MASNA, as Webmaster, Treasurer, holding the Industry position, and he served two years as MASNA's President! Both personally and on behalf of MASNA, I wish to thank him and wish him well! At the same time, I'd like to welcome Steve Bentz back to the MASNA Board, presently covering both the Vice President and Secretary positions. In July we received the resignation of our Membership Director, John Henrion. We thank him for his efforts this year. I've been filling in as Membership Director for the past several months.

I'm sure many of you have been enjoying the beautiful photography of MASNA's 2007 Marine and Reef Calendar. For the third year, we held a photo contest and solicited entries from the wonderfully talented photographers among you. The winners not only get the honor of having their photo on the wall of hundreds of hobbyists across the country, but there are also cash prizes! The contest has concluded and we are quite pleased with the beautiful 2008 Marine and Reef Calendar which we will offer for sale at MACNA and afterwards in the MASNA Store.

By now you've probably heard something about the 2007 Third Annual Drs. Foster & Smith LiveAquaria Frag Swap that was held June 29-July 1 in Rhinelander, Wis. You may not realize,

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What Is MASNA?

MASNA is a not-for-profit organization comprised of marine aquarium clubs and individual hobbyists. Our membership encompasses over 1,000 individuals from Canada, Mexico, and the USA. MASNA's purpose is to:

- Educate our members with quarterly newsletters, the MACNA conference, and other sanctioned events.
- Assist in forming and promoting the growth of clubs within the hobby.
- Assist in the education of club members to ensure a sustainable future for the marine environment.
- Encourage the ethical growth of the marine aquarium hobby and support captive breeding/propagation.
- Support efforts to eliminate abuses in collecting and transporting marine organisms.

however, that not only did MASNA proudly participate once again this year, we also took the opportunity to hold a Board meeting to discuss the details of our scholarship program.



Cheri Phillips (MASNA President) discussing MASNA with attendees at the Drs. Foster & Smith 3rd Annual Coral Frag Swap Conference in Rhinelander, Wis. on June 30, 2007

Additionally, the Board hosted an open forum for reef clubs to meet attending reef club members and provide the opportunity for club members to ask the MASNA Board any questions they may have for them. That Meet & Greet drew a packed room! Drs. Foster and Smith generously donated a portion of the proceeds of their auctions to MASNA's Scholarship Fund – in the amount of **\$3,000!**



LiveAquaria.com director Kevin Kohen (standing, center) describing the *Scolymia Vitiensis* about to be auctioned outdoors at the Drs. Foster & Smith facility in Rhinelander, Wis. Gordon McGee (standing, left) prepares to auction the item. A portion of the proceeds from each item auctioned went to the MASNA scholarship fund.

MASNA wants to extend our most sincere thanks to Race Foster, Kevin Kohen, and all the wonderful folks at Drs. Foster & Smith that made this donation possible!

Each year at the annual MACNA conference, MASNA presents an award to the person who is considered to have made an outstanding contribution to the marine aquarium hobby. This person is selected by you – the MASNA membership. We accepted nominations up until July 1st and we have a very worthy winner! Stay tuned for the announcement during the banquet at MACNA!

If you haven't yet registered for MACNA XIX (www.macnaxix.com), **September 14-16** in Pittsburgh, Penn., please take care of that right away! You won't want to miss out on the premier marine aquarium conference of the year. The speaker list is outstanding and as always, the vendors will have their latest and greatest offerings! The reports we've been given by the two host club co-chairs indicate there will be over 100 vendors showing their finest!

Finally, please consider nominations for the 2007-2008 MASNA Board of Directors. MASNA (and therefore MACNA as well) only exists due to the dedicated efforts of its volunteers. If you have a passion for the marine aquarium hobby and some time available, consider stepping up to give something to the marine aquarium community in a whole new way. As the end of my fourth year on the MASNA Board (three years as President) is approaching, I realize that not only have I given of myself to something I believe in, but in return, I've learned so much and made friendships and contacts within the hobby that could well last my lifetime!

Top 10 Reasons to Be in Pittsburgh for MACNA XIX



10. Learn some geography about the Steel City. Now what are those 3 rivers' names again?
9. Lots of shopping for the family literally next door to the conference.
8. Be one of the last to get your own CPR aquatic shirts before they are retired.
7. Last year's MASNA Award Recipient (Sanjay Joshi) won't have to travel nearly as far this year to attend MACNA. So who will be this year's recipient? Come to the banquet to find out.

6. How about getting to see some of the most interesting new products in the aquarium industry?
5. If you're hungry on Friday morning, how about stopping by MASNA's annual board for some snacks and to hear the latest developments?
4. This is an easy one: meeting and sharing stories with lots of fellow reef aquarists.
3. Be one of the first to receive the latest edition of Anthony Calfo's magazine, *C . . . the Journal of Aquatic Science, Travel and Adventure*. It won't be hard to find; the MACNA program is included in the magazine.
2. Attending the annual MACNA banquet and catching up on all the MASNA award winners.
1. And yes, the keystone for MACNA is listening to over a score of outstanding presenters and presentations and putting that great knowledge to work!

After Pittsburgh, Then What? — How about a Frag Swap in New Jersey?

The New Jersey Reefers Club is hosting the 2007 Fall Frag Swap & Symposium on **Saturday, October 27, 2007** from 11 AM to 6 PM. The location will be at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 390 Forsgate Drive, Jamesburg, NJ, located near New Jersey Turnpike Exit 8A.

Guest speakers include Richard Harker, Scott Fellman, and Jake Adams. The Frag Swap location is within an hour of New York City, Philadelphia, and Atlantic City and is about 30 minutes from the Newark Airport. Register by October 15, 2007 and the fee is \$20 for you and your significant other. Admission gives you access to raffles, speakers, and vendors. Excellent deli food and drinks will be available as well. For more info, please visit www.njreefers.org/fragswap.



SaltwaterU 3 — Teen Program — Bob Lemcke and Del Brashares

During the Atlanta Reef Club's first SaltwaterU in 2005, renowned marine biologist, Dr. Sylvia Earle (yes, the lady who walked untethered on the ocean floor at a greater depth than anyone else in history, also known as "Her Deepness") was the keynote speaker. She talked about her hope that the Atlanta Reef Club would involve teenagers in SaltwaterU and get them interested in the wonders of the ocean.

In 2006, for SaltwaterU 2, Bob Lemcke took on the responsibility for doing the teen program. He worked with Cathy Sackas, the educational director at Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary to develop a program. Cathy's motto is to engage the mind and capture the heart.

As Bob worked with Cathy to develop a program, some of the first thoughts were to provide experiences that were different from those that could be garnered in the classroom. Consider this: in Georgia, unless a student is in advanced-placement biology, it is quite likely that a high school student will never do any dissecting.

Next, the appropriate age group to be targeted needed to be decided. Most of the students selected were rising sophomores and juniors. Bob's team had a goal of having participation from a number of schools. They weren't looking for the "A" students in particular. They wanted to have students that were passionate about learning. They wanted to have students who would benefit from this type of program and take that experience back to their schools. They wanted attendees to have a great appreciation for the drainage of Georgia's rivers into the Atlantic and an understanding that what is done to the rivers around Atlanta will have consequence to the drainage into the Atlantic.

Getting to the students would prove to be a challenge. Bob's team wanted to partner with area high schools and looked for interest from principals and guidance counselors. Many schools seemed to have so many programs that one more, even something as unique as the SaltwaterU Teen Program, didn't raise much particular interest.

With some schools, the right means of contact to key decision makers proved somewhat elusive. Administrators are busy with their day-to-day

duties, school boards, parents, and faculty. Some are almost impossible to reach. Many school administrators get dozens of phone messages and scores of e-mails every day, which makes it somewhat difficult to spot that important message. Even after a member of the Atlanta Reef Club left a message with a principal, it still took two weeks to have an opportunity to discuss the program.

And if these hurdles aren't enough, how about the students' schedules? What about sports and band? How about necessary time to prepare for and take standardized tests? We also can't forget family vacations. And, if the Teen Program trip is undertaken during the school year, are school days missed excused? Interesting to note, some public schools require \$1 million in liability insurance. While it would have been very easy to have given up, Bob's team continually looked for paths of least resistance to ensure this great opportunity was available for the students.



Group picture of the 2007 Teen Program class on the beach at Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary

Despite these difficulties, two trips have taken place. Last year, 12 students participated from Martin Luther King HS, Chamblee HS, and Creekview HS. This year, 25 students participated from Martin Luther King HS and Creekview HS. In addition, Bob and teachers from each school served as chaperones. There is a constraint with numbers for a given trip. While the bus can hold at least 50, the pontoon boat at Gray's Reef can only hold about 40.

Now that the kids are ready to roll, what's next? One of the first items on the agenda was pairing

up the students, where practical, with a student of another school for the ride to the coast. The students were asked to learn everything possible about their partner; this served as a superb ice breaker for the trip.



The ladies preparing to go into the ocean and see what they can net

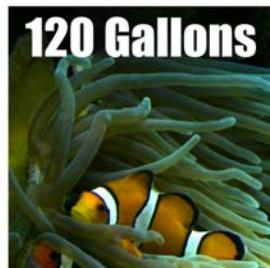
So what were some of the neat activities for the students? What were some of the interesting things they learned? Fortunately, Gray's Reef had 12 microscopes available for the students. How about dissecting squids and dog sharks? How about comparing and contrasting the lens of the squids and dog sharks? Why do dog sharks have six senses? How does the squid confuse prey with a flashing pattern? Did you know that Georgia has more estuaries than Florida? What are the roles of crabs and shrimp in the estuary? How does commercial fishing / shrimping / crabbing affect the region? What is plankton and why is it important?

Again, consider that most of the students really have not given much thought to any of these questions prior to their trip. Imagine how many times each student experience the "ahhh" factor during their trip. Now imagine their excitement when they go back to their school and share their experiences with classmates and teachers. Bob reports that a number of attendees have expressed strong interest in exploring the possibility of becoming marine biologists. At least one student had never been to a coast (saltwater) before. Another student thanked her dad for the trip; she was very unsure when she boarded the bus. Another student had a profound thought; anytime he sees a piece of litter or trash near the riverbed, he wants to pick it up. He now understands the relationship of the Georgia river system and the Atlantic coast line.

Yes, there will be a third Teen Program sponsored by the Atlanta Reef Club. Details are being worked. Attendees typically contribute \$250 for room, board, and transportation for the three days at the sanctuary. For families with financial problems, scholarships are available. Bob stresses that the most important thing is to provide the opportunity for interested students. The Atlanta Reef Club would like to provide special thanks to Bowtie, Inc. and SeaChem for their sponsorship. In addition, Bob noted the special generosity of the employees of PBS&J who collected \$2,000 for the 2007 trip.

It is abundantly clear that the Atlanta Reef Club's Teen Program has proven to be a wonderful experience the past two years. More schools are inquiring about participating and at least one school has a dozen on the waiting list for 2008. While it will be nice if these trips inspire some to become marine biologists, it is at least as important to know that many students each year have an opportunity to learn far more about Georgia's coast than they would in their school system.

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Who is Going to MACNA? — Marc Levenson (Melev)

It's the time again. MACNA is almost here and many (nearly 1000) will make the annual trek to the Marine Aquarium Conference of North America. This year, the Pittsburgh Marine Aquarium Society is the host club. With MACNA XIX being less than a month away (14-16 September 2007), who's going?



Here's the main website: <http://macnaxix.com/>

I wrote an article a few years ago about what it is, as I hoped to help others understand why they should spend the money to attend. From time to time, I've seen people post a link to my article, but last night while I was at work, I thought about a different approach:

Picture in your mind the ultimate fish store – your dream store. Now think bigger. Really big. Big enough to hold a bunch of big tanks full of colorful livestock – zoanthids, SPS, LPS, clams, anemones, seahorses, pipefish, sea squirts, cultured live rock, tank-raised / captive bred fish, as well as some rare fish you might not see often....

Now as you look around, you see all kinds of products. Stuff you've seen before, and new stuff you've never even dreamed of. Keep looking, and keep discovering new goodies. Products are everywhere, set up so that you can check them out and see how they are designed. You can hold it, see how loud it is, is it running warm? Does it do what you'd hope? And even better, representatives are nearby that can take the time to answer all of your questions right there on the spot. You don't have to find that LFS employee that is busy helping someone else because this place is super-staffed.

As you wander around looking at all the brand new stuff around you, you see high-end light fixtures, computer-controlled ballasts, tanks in a variety of shapes, sizes, and varying design.

Hobbyists are milling about ooh-ing and aah-ing over all the treasure they continue to discover, and you eavesdrop to pick up on their reactions. Listening in, you decide for yourself if their list of pros and cons make sense to you or not. All kinds of protein skimmers are on display. Some are running so you can see how they work. Aquarium controllers are laid out clearly, so you can figure out how they work, what they do, and why they can benefit your system at home. Find out more about different fish foods, whether frozen or freeze-dried. Compare the different test kits available or stick around long enough to see how to use them correctly. Looking for a tiny heater for a pico tank? It's over there, down-a-ways on the left. It's right next to that really neat tank set up with submerged! LEDs.

Some products are showcased with video via laptops, others have rich colorful banners and posters, and there are plenty of handouts to help you remember those products you're interested in. Many things have a special MACNA price, discounted on the spot.

Popular reefkeepers that you know from online forums such as this one are there, and you can finally meet them face to face. Authors of books you've purchased (or have considered purchasing) are there laughing and hanging out, or demonstrating how to frag corals. You see scheduled talks planned for all three days on every conceivable topic that has to do with this hobby, and can choose to attend those in large spacious rooms nearby that are presented with slides, power point, or video where you can listen and learn without distraction.

While your normal LFS closes around 6 or 7pm, this place is abuzz with activity all evening. People are chattering about what they saw, what they just learned, what they hope to buy in the next day or so, or to regale others with their reef-war stories. You know you've got some of your own to tell. What better place to do so then in a collective group of hobbyists that can totally relate as they laugh and clink beer bottles together until late into the night? Sure, you could go up to your room and get a good night's rest, but you know it is way more fun staying up late. You can sleep when you're dead, right? 😊

Similar to the Woot-Off event where people

come together and chat about all kinds of nonsense while waiting for the next item to appear on Woot for a possible purchase, MACNA's 72 hours is the time when you'll get information overload – in a good way. You'll hardly get any sleep, you'll come home with fun memories, new gear, and less money... and that is exactly how it should be!

If you've never gone to this event before, there is still time to get registered. Sure you'll have to

(for additional MACNA info, check out www.melevsreef.com/macna.html)

spend some hard-earned dollars but your skills in this hobby will be greatly enhanced. Your reef will benefit, and you'll be able to help others improve their skill as well because you'll have some solid answers to their questions. My first MACNA was in 2002, and I've not missed one since. It is a blast, and if you're lucky, you'll even win something in the raffle on Sunday afternoon. PLUS the vendors give away all kinds of stuff during the three days. Make out like a bandit – I hope to see you there.

The Education Corner — Wooster, Nevada High School — Steve Bentz

As I surfed the web one fine day, I came across Rodger Moore (no, not that Rodger Moore) and some interesting photos and articles he posted out on Reef Sanctuary concerning his classroom project of setting up a Reef Tank and having his students keep journals on the progression of the tank and its inhabitants. The only problem was that he was in dire need a few items to complete the setup and begin to populate the tank with the specimens he and his students had chosen. I was able to put our good friends at Drs. Foster & Smith in touch with Rodger and he has been able to get the project moving again!

He got an idea from one of the Reef Sanctuary members to breed and grow sea urchins and take notes on their movement, feeding habits and other interesting attributes. But what is most exciting is that Rodger is planning to have his microbiology students grow bacteria out of the tank to see what is in there. His micro students will also be using a special agar (what we can grow bacteria on) to isolate a type of

bacteria that has bioluminescent properties. Keep the movement alive, Rodger, and we'll see what the students report back to us later this year.



A look inside of a work in progress

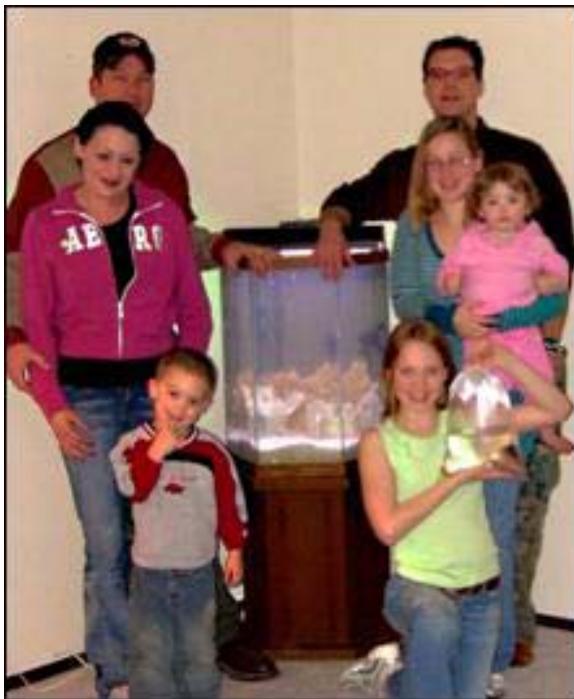
Time to Renew Your MASNA Membership?

For many of you, it's that time of the year. September begins MASNA's fiscal year and that's the time many renew their membership. So if you're a believer in the purpose of MASNA as stated on the bottom right-hand corner of page 1, please go to www.masna.org/application.pdf, fill out the application form, and mail it with either your check or credit card information, and you too will continue to be a valued member of our MASNA team. Look forward to having you on board!

And by the way, those who renew for the full year (\$20) will receive a complimentary copy of the 2008 MASNA calendar. If ordering by mail, please include \$2 extra for shipping and handling. For those renewing at MACNA XIX, there will be no shipping and handling fee.

A Coral Wish — Chris Braithwaite

A forecast of winter precipitation didn't stop Razorback Reef Marine Aquarium Society's (RRMAS) trip to Bentonville to grant a wish for the Fairygodmother Foundation located in Chicago, Ill. The foundation's recipient, Nicole Young, is a two-time survivor of ocular and brain cancer only to have been faced with the news last year that her battle was not over as she would now have to face liver cancer. Her current treatment takes her and husband, Mathew, to M.D. Anderson Cancer Research Center in Houston, Texas every three weeks for a trial that involves chemotherapy administration directly into her liver.



Despite the tribulations of fighting cancer Nicole has fought valiantly by educating herself on every facet of her illness and the means by which to cope with everyday struggles. She has become actively involved in educating others on obtaining financial support for the cancer battle through the creation of www.messageinabottle.com in conjunction with the "Live Strong" Lance Armstrong Foundation.

Nicole's inspiration can be seen in the eyes of her children Wyatt, Dakota, and step children Haley and Alison. But on this particular Saturday, a bag full of brightly colored blue and yellow damsels were the center of attention. Through her

research, Nicole found the Fairygodmother Foundation (www.fairygodmother.org) and wished for a saltwater hex aquarium so that she might bring a little of the serenity found on a coral reef into here home.

Razorback Reef was contacted by Lena Clement of the Fairygodmother Foundation to help grant Nicole's wish and over the proceeding months put together an aquarium that fit Nicole's wish to a tee. The 35-gallon hex aquarium and stand were donated by former V-Pres. of RRMAS Randy Brown along with Central Delegate Norman Davis and current V-Pres. Marti Rankin supplying the filtration and lighting. Worlds Under Water in Johnson, Ark. graciously donated salt and several blue and one bright yellow damsel to fulfill the goal of serenity in Nicole's living room.

Shortly after arriving at the Young household the children were put in charge of keeping safe the damsels while RRMAS president Chris Braithwaite and member Sundance (yes that is his real name) set about the task of installing Nicole's aquarium. After overcoming the standard setup difficulties that only a new aquarist like Nicole and her family might find embarrassing, the aquarium was ready. With only the water temperature to rise and damsels to acclimate, the children and Nicole had just a few more hours to wait for her wish to be complete. Razorback Reef provided Nicole with a membership (www.razorbackreef.com) to their website so that she can follow up on the care of her new fish through the forums where she can have questions answered or by calling the Reefers help line putting her in touch with three Arkansas aquarists having over 75 total years of experience with marine animal husbandry.

Granting Nicole's wish for a saltwater aquarium was Razorback Reefs proudest moment since its inception in June 2004. To date, Razorback Reef Marine Aquarium Society boasts 65 members and sponsored four members' attendance to the Marine Aquarium Conference of North America in 2006. Razorback Reef's goal is to educate hobbyists about the responsible husbandry of marine aquarium animals and the techniques to accomplish that goal. We were honored to have had the opportunity to bring our passion to Nicole and her family and look forward to what the future holds for both Nicole Young and Razorback Reef.

The Education Corner — A Nano Tank Grows in the Northlands

— Steve Bentz and Del Brashares

June 2006 (initial meeting between Steve Bentz and the Drehers) — It seems like it was just yesterday when I called Brooke Dreher's name from the raffle box at last summer's Drs. Foster & Smith / Live Aquaria Frag Swap to present the ticket holder with the remaining Nano Tank from the event. Little did I realize that our winner was a shy, young "reefer in training" who, with a little coaxing from Mom, stopped within all of the craziness of the day to pose with me for a picture for posterity. What a wonderful moment in my life and what a great way to end such a successful event.

After numerous attempts to get in touch with each other, Deb Adams at Drs. Foster & Smith completed the connection. Although fighting massive growths of hair algae, Brooke is hooked and is doing her best to get the abundant flora under control. The most important lesson Brooke learned is to read as much as possible and ask a lot of questions about how best to tackle the troublesome "underbrush" that only a Lawnmower Blenny could dream of!

Mom (Linda) and the young ones are still tending the 150-gallon reef tank at the in-home day-care center (The Gingerbread House) and we're hoping for pictures very soon of all the new fish and corals that have been added to their tank. As members of the newly created Northern Wisconsin Reef Society, Linda and Brooke are hoping to bring home as much advice from the "Pros" and maybe some new "critters" as well. This is MASNA at its finest!!

June 2007 (follow-up visit by Del and Ruth Brashares) — When Steve was unable to attend the 2007 Coral Frag Conference, he asked us to pay Linda Dreher a visit and see how things have been going with the tanks and

the children's enthusiasm for saltwater aquariums. At the appointed time, Ruth and I followed Linda to her home, which also serves as a day-care center. We were in for quite a treat as Linda's kids, and other day-care kids and their parents were there.



Nine of the youngsters who regularly spend time at the Dreher residence just a few miles from Rhinelander, Wis. It's amazing to see their interest in the aquarium and to hear their stories.

While we had heard of Linda's 150-gallon reef tank, it was still a surprise to see such a nice tank with lots of corals, fish, clean-up crew, and excellent water flow. It was really fun to listen to the young folks tell about how they mix the food, spot feed the livestock, and identify the various species. And how about this? They even handle some of the cleaning! As you might guess, they have also taken this golden opportunity to use the aquarium as the basis for school reports. Linda is quick to credit Jody of Drs Foster & Smith for her expertise in helping the kids pick out corals.

Brooke was eight when her number was called for the nano tank last year. Linda tells me that Brooke is somewhat shy and wouldn't raise her hand to claim the tank. Her older brother Dylan came to the rescue and helped secure the nano tank for Brooke's room.

The Drehers moved to the Northlands in 1999 and rekindled their interest in fish in 2001, starting with a freshwater 55-gallon tank and a 20-gallon tank. Soon thereafter, another 55-gallon and 40-gallon tank came into the household. As they outgrew various tanks, some of their friends became

recipients of the extra tanks. The Drehers were involved with fish keeping even prior to moving to the Northlands. About 15 years ago, they used to raise discus and angels.

All in all, it is clear the Drehers, and the other children and parents who stop by regularly, enjoy having aquariums in the home. Even Linda's husband has been in the act; he's the one who built the stand for the 150-gallon tank. It was our pleasure to have visited the Dreher residence and see how everyone was doing.

And while our visit there was complete, the kids and parents had more aquatic activities in mind for that day as they headed back to Rhinelander to participate in the hands-on activities that the Drs Foster & Smith team had prepared for the weekend.



A somewhat rare activity, a young lad handling a sea star in Northern Wisconsin.

An advertisement for Doctors Foster and Smith Aquarium Outfitters. The background features a vibrant, colorful coral reef scene with a large, multi-colored fish (yellow, red, blue) swimming. The text "DOCTORS FOSTER and SMITH" is in a serif font, with "and" in a smaller script font. "Aquarium Outfitters" is in a large, bold, yellow sans-serif font. To the right, yellow text reads "The best selection of aquarium supplies and the best values for the aquarium hobbyist!". Below that, smaller text says "Shop online today or call for a FREE catalog." and "DrsFosterSmith.com • 1-800-323-4208". At the bottom, the website "LiveAquaria.com" is in a large, bold, yellow font, with "Live" in a script font. Below it, the tagline "Quality Aquatic Life; World Class Service • 1-800-334-3699" is in a smaller, yellow font.

A Coral Weekend in the Northlands of Wisconsin — Del Brashares

For the third year in a row, Drs Foster & Smith hosted their Coral Conference and Frag Swap in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. Attendance continues to grow and this year, 600 were registered, up from 400 in 2006. Goodie bags, loaded with useful samples, were handed out to the attendees and everyone was anxious for a fun weekend. At least 55 registrants took the opportunity to set up nano tanks provided by Drs Foster & Smith for the frag swap.



One of two wings that housed vendors and frag swappers

As usual, there was a full complement of orange-shirted Drs Foster & Smith employees helping out in the retail store, at the frag swap, on tours, at the auction, at the presentation area, at the kids' hands-on area, and literally everywhere. I rarely, if ever, have seen any organization that had a set of employees that seemed to enjoy their work and were as interested in helping the customer as those in Rhinelander.

A lot of vendors were on hand to demonstrate their wares, answer questions, and provide samples. The lineup of raffle prizes for the final day was particularly impressive and including a number of nano cubes. Guest speakers included Sanjay Joshi, Julian Sprung, and, for the banquet, Scott Michael. As you can guess, there were book-signing sessions. The retail store was particularly hard hit with many registrants arriving a day early. Everyone enjoyed the special discounts on all items in the retail store during the conference.



Julian Sprung signing a copy of one of his books for an ardent aquarist at the Two Little Fishes booth

As expected, it appears all the attendees were quite thrilled with the event as in the past. It's always interesting to hear their excitement after touring the superbly organized warehouse and the coral propagation / "what you see is what you get" exotic fish facility.



a couple of youngster using the computer to learn about aquatics and the youth area

One special activity in this year's event was the auctioning of over 100 corals and fish throughout the weekend with a portion of the proceeds going to the MASNA scholarship fund. Once all was said and done, the fine folks at Drs Foster & Smith donated \$3,000 to the scholarship fund. The MASNA board is extremely thankful for this generosity.



MASNA BOD members Del Brashares, Cheri Philips, and Bob Lemcke discussing plans for MACNA XIX at the MASNA booth

So what are the odds the event will continue? Pretty darn good – I understand the Holiday Inn Express banquet rooms have been reserved by Drs Foster & Smith for a weekend each year through 2010. For those of you who want to mark your calendars, next year's event is scheduled for 22-24 June 2008. And once registration opens, don't wait too long because registration has been cut off the last two years.



Kevin Kohen, director of **LiveAquaria.com**, practices what he preaches; he maintains two beautiful aquariums in his office

If you go to the event over the next few years, consider staying in the area an extra day or two to get to know northern Wisconsin a bit better. Friendly folks abound everywhere. There are also well over 100 lakes within

an hour's drive of Rhinelander. While I'll be the first to admit the lakes aren't stocked with corals or saltwater fish, it's still a great area to visit!



some of the beautiful specimens in the coral propagation facility



some of the ultra friendly Drs Foster & Smith employees you'll run into the next time you go to Rhinelander

See you all next year! Not too many more months before the red carpet gets rolled out in the Northlands of Wisconsin again.

***Rather Ingenious Thinking* — Del Brashares**

For a couple of years, Red Sea was planning to enter the nanocube market. Their team spent considerable time analyzing nanocubes on the market and sifting through customer requirements to help in their design. At the Houston MACNA, many hobbyists and dealers saw Red Sea's MAX 34-gallon nanocube (29 gallons in the display and five gallons "behind the scenes") for the first time and the response was extremely favorable.

Like many, I was intrigued with the product and spent some time talking with David Szpakowski, Red Sea's East Coast Sales Manager. As expected, David provided a detailed and interesting tour through the system. I couldn't help but be impressed with the immense amount of thought that went into the design. However, I found a couple of anecdotes particularly intriguing and worth sharing.

Red Sea aquarists spent considerable time discussing all facets of the nanocube such as the T5 power compact bulb, the skimmer, water flow, and moon lights. So, how thick should the glass be? The typical thickness in other nanocubes was in the 5-6 mm range. Red Sea asked for prototypes to be built with glass that was 7 mm thick. Later, as a Red Sea executive was on the phone in final discussions with their manufacturing arm and confirming that the 7-mm glass would be fine, he heard an "uh oh" type of sound. Sure enough, the glass in the prototype aquarium had just cracked. As you can guess, Red Sea decided on the spot that the glass would be 8 mm thick.

Some of you might be wondering how the size of the Red Sea nanocube footprint was determined. After hearing the story, I was indeed impressed. Imagine for a moment that you have a standard 4' x 4' pallet. This is the key to our "equation" as the nanocubes will be shipped from Red Sea to distributors and retailers. Now, in your mind, virtually divide the pallet into four 2' x 2' sections. By making each of the boxes to be placed on the pallet 2' x 2' in size, four aquariums can be neatly

placed on each layer (a story) of the pallet (the foundation). So, what about the stands? Turns out that three stands can be placed in a box the size of the aquarium. If we think about a set of boxes three stories high, we have cubic symmetry. On the first story, there are three boxes, each containing three stands, along with one aquarium. The second story has four aquariums as does the third. Therefore, the three layers contain nine aquariums and nine stands.



The 34-gallon Red Sea MAX nanocube as pictured at www.redseafish.com

Our "tip of the hat" to Red Sea for investing a considerable time up front thinking through the myriad details necessary to bring a product to the showroom. Kind of nice when a great idea "stacks" up. There is some discussion that Red Sea is contemplating developing an even larger self-contained aquarium. Let's see; if the standard pallet size is 4' x 4'

National Geographic (September 2007) — Ultra Marine

In far eastern Indonesia, the Raja Ampat Islands embrace a phenomenal coral wilderness. Check out this fine article about the region with the greatest coral reef biodiversity for its size in the world.

So What's the Story with Those Shirts? — Del Brashares

If you've attended one of the large aquatic gatherings around the country in the past five or so years, chances are good that you've seen attendees wearing highly noticeable black, blue, and green shirts covered with an array of colorful marine fish. The background color of the shirts has a pleasing shimmering effect reminiscent of that created by bright sun on the reef. These shirts made their public debut at a World Wide Pet Supply Association convention about seven years ago. Their creator, Suk Choo Kim, CEO of CPR Aquatic, Inc., was looking for an interesting marketing idea for his company.

Having been in the fashion industry, the idea of a shirt came to mind. Suk Choo wanted 100% cotton shirts and scoured many bolts of fabric before finding some to his liking. He also wanted distinctive buttons and found some made from shells that were manufactured in the USA. He decided upon an initial run of about 100 shirts. Because of the quality he demanded (material and craftsmanship), the shirts cost about \$30 to make. Each shirt required about three yards of fabric. Suk Choo then took them to a WWPSA convention and used them as giveaways for customers who brought products. In addition, he gave customers a 15% discount on purchases if they wore the shirt to the show. The shirts were a hit and were gone in two days.

Seeing that he was onto something, Suk Choo looked into the possibility of obtaining more shirts. He found out that if he would commit to 8,000 shirts (quite a leap in faith), he could cut the labor costs by over \$10 per shirt, thus bringing his cost per shirt down to under \$20 per shirt. After all these years, he's down to less than 80 shirts, or

less than one percent of his 8,000-shirt commitment.

The shirts have proved to be quite popular with fish stores as well. Preuss Pets in Lansing, Michigan, is one of a number of stores that used the shirts as the employee uniform.

And if you're interested in a shirt? Suk Choo says he'll bring his remaining shirts to MASNA in Pittsburgh. While the black shirts are gone, he has green and blue left in the size of large. By the way, Suk Choo says that MACNA XIX will be the last time he plans on bringing his remaining shirts to a show.



new-shirt purchaser Ron Beleno of Toronto, Ontario (left) smiles as he poses with CRP's top gun, Suk Choo (center), and Suk Choo's sidekick, Russell Chung (right); photo was taken at this year's IMAC

Does Suk Choo have other interesting marketing ideas in the back of his mind? He did mention ties, with a smile on his face. Too bad, we just passed Father's Day.

Ready for a New Book on Our Reefs?



A new beautifully illustrated 360-page coffee-table book from DK Publishing called *Reef* has hit the bookstores. The book is written by the Scubazoo team, a dedicated team of underwater cameramen who have devoted their lives to the filming and preservation of reefs worldwide. According to the book jacket, buying the book helps support the Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to saving coral reefs around the world. The book retails for \$40 and includes a 30-minute DVD. For more information on CORAL, visit www.coralreef alliance.org. At the moment, the book is available from amazon.com for \$26.40. Christmas can't be too far away . . .