

HOW TO FORM A FISH CLUB

One of the main purposes of C.A.O.A.C. is to help to form Clubs and help keep them going. This is the purpose of this summary, but bear in mind that this summary is only a guide and a suggestion and where necessary it should be changed to suit each individual group. It is our hope that this summary provides all the information necessary to form a club and also provides a guide to keep a club operational. It is however realized that questions and problems will be encountered which are not dealt with in this summary. Should a problem arise then by all means write a letter to the Corresponding Secretary of C.A.O.A.C. stating your questions or problems and a solution will be sought for you. It is in this way that C.A.O.A.C. can serve you and the hobby.

The main thing you should have is some interest and enthusiasm. These two together will solve your problems right from the start with the main one being manpower. Try to impress on the people that there is going to be fun, education and the socializing of people with the same interests.

When you start try to get about half a dozen interested people to get the organization off the ground. Next, contact some of the best and more co-operative dealers in your area. These people will be able to give you some advice and recommendations. These are the people you should visit once in a while and patronize. Set a date for your first pre-organizational meeting (preferably in your own home.) Most of all have it organized with an agenda. You will find people will have more respect for a well organized group than for a non pre-organized meeting.

PRE-ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

1. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Make sure everybody knows one another and this will create a much friendlier atmosphere. Keep everyone in the conversation and have lots of coffee or other refreshments (?) As the meeting progresses the people involved will start to show their own talents. If someone is really in the swing of things in your community with other organizations they might make a good public relations chairman. If another knows their bookwork and is good with figures you might have a treasurer. Just think of these things as you go along.
2. **POSITIONS:** You will notice at first that there was no mention of a President or Chairman in the introduction section. The reason why is that if you are organizing the group so far take over as chairman for now. Get volunteers for the other positions such as Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary, Editor etc. (all these positions are optional depending on your own individual group and size) you can even have more if you want. All these positions should be temporary until everything is organized and you are able to have elections.
3. **CLUB NAME:** Be ready to accept all kinds of suggestions whether they be Club, Society, Forum or Aquarists of ----- . Take them all into consideration and vote on it.
4. **DUES:** Again this depends on your group. They can be run on a Family, Senior, Junior, Corresponding or Associate and so on. Remember you must have finances to run a club.
5. **MEETING PLACE:** You should look around for two or three auditoriums or halls and let the group vote on the one they think is right for your individual group. Make sure it is large enough for growth of the club membership. Reserve your hall and get it in writing. Get your first general meeting off the ground as soon as things are organized so you can keep up the interest.
6. **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:** All clubs should have a goal or objective to work towards as a challenge. An example of which is below and this you can change.

The objective of the (name of club) shall be to further the hobby and

studying of the Tropical Fish Hobby. We will promote interest and supply information whenever needed. We will also encourage and try to improve the breeding of tropicals along with displaying all forms of aquatic life. The (name of the club) shall be a non-profit organization.

7. PUBLICITY: In order to get people to come out to your club you will have to let as many people as possible know about your organization. This can be accomplished with posters which look as professional as possible. Circulate these to all the pet shops, grocery stores and any other places the public will notice. Also if possible have plenty of membership forms circulated around so that it will be very easy for people to join, especially at a meeting.

At your first meeting you could have a discussion period which will break the ice and get everyone involved. At the following meetings you will be able to get speakers and slide programs. Sometimes your library will be able to help you. Also C.A.O.A.C. has a list of speakers and programs which are available. Also at your meetings don't be afraid to have bowl shows which at first could just be displays which will create interest in show competition. Later on you can form a point system and rules for your bowl contests.

8. AGENDA FOR MEETINGS: This is one of the most important things at the meeting because it shows at least you are organized. Below is a sample agenda:
 - a. Call the meeting to order.
 - b. Welcome all the guests.
 - c. Secretary's report.
 - d. Treasurer's report.
 - e. Old and new business.
 - f. Break and refreshments.
 3. Program. This is the most important part of the meeting. The program creates the interest and keeps the people coming back.
 - h. Bowl show or Jar show results.
 - i. Auction and raffle.
 - j. Closing of the meeting.
9. PUBLICATION OR BULLETIN: One of the biggest problems facing all organizations is communications. This can be remedied in your own club by the use of a newsletter or bulletin. This should be small at first and should contain all the important information your members will need to know what's going on in their club. Your bulletin may increase in size as you go along and you might find it handy to obtain other club bulletins to see how their's is done.
10. EXECUTIVE OR BOARD MEETING: You should find a place for your executive meeting (preferably at someone's home). At this meeting the planning for the next general meeting will take place. You can also solve some of the club's problems and pick up a couple of the loose ends. At the first executive meeting you will also have to draw up a constitution. Below is a sample which you may change or revise to suit your group.

CONSTITUTION OF (your club name)

Article I: NAME

Article II: PURPOSE

The objective of (name of the club) shall be to further the hobby and studying of Tropical Fish. To promote interest and supply information whenever needed. To also encourage and try to improve the breeding of Tropical Fish along with displaying of all aquatic life. The (name of the club) shall be a non-profit organization.

Article III: MEMBERSHIP

- A. Anyone interested in the Tropical Fish hobby or any of it's phases may become a member of the club.
- B. Adult membership shall be anyone 18 years and older.
- C. Junior membership shall be anyone under 18 years old.
- D. Corresponding members shall be members that receive the bulletin but have no voting rights.

Article IV: DUES

Dues shall be \$_____ for adults, \$_____ for juniors, \$_____ for a family, and \$_____ for a corresponding member.

Article V: MEETINGS

- A. A general meeting will be held once a month (summer months optional)
- B. An executive or board meeting will be held every month. An executive member may call an emergency meeting at any time if it is necessary. All members may go to the executive meetings unless stipulated otherwise.

Article VI: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- A. The officers of the organization shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Editor and Corresponding Secretary (all these are optional and can be dropped or more added at your discretion)
- B. The entire executive shall consist of the elected officers (A) and 5 (optional) other executive members who are appointed by the elected officers.
- C. The executive members shall be members of good standing and shall hold office for one (1), year.
- D. The club may or may not have a nominating committee of at least three members chosen by the President and approved by the executive. This committee shall select a slate of nominees which will run for office in the next term. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor on the night of the nominations and elections. The election will then take place and the new officers will take office before the next meeting.

Article VII: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

- A. President: The president of the club shall be an adult member of the club. He will preside over all meetings, appoint all chairmen of committees. He will also be a member of all committees and have the authority to sign checks with the treasurer's knowledge.
- B. Vice-President: He shall be an adult member of the club. He shall fill in for the President during his absence and perform all duties of that office. He shall have the authority to sign checks with the knowledge of the treasurer. He shall fill in for any executive member during their absence.
- C. Secretary: The Secretary shall be an adult member of the club. They will keep a record of all the meetings and minutes. They should be ready for review at any time.
- D. Treasurer: The treasurer shall be an adult member of the club. They shall keep an accurate record of all funds collected and paid out. They shall pay all bills that are approved by the executive. The books shall be audited each year before the new treasurer takes office. The treasurer has the authority to sign checks.
- E. Editor: The editor shall be responsible for the monthly bulletin and its content. The editor has the right if he feels it necessary to appoint an assistant.

Article VIII: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

A two-thirds vote of the membership at any regular meeting, if a majority of the members are present, may ammend the constitution. Any member is intitled propose an ammendment in writing to the executive. If the executive approve it, it will go to the membership for a vote at a regular meeting.

Article IX: DUTIES OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. Program: The program chairman shall be responsible for all the programs at the general meeting. If he feels it is necessary he may appoint a committee to help him with the executives approval.
- B. Librarian: He or she shall be responsible for all library books and material.
- C. Breeding Award Chairman: He shall be responsible for checking all applications for awards. He also must keep a record of all applications and awards. If he feels it is necessary to appoint a committee he may do so with the approval of the executive.
- D. Show Jar Chairman: He shall be responsible for arranging the monthly entries in the jar contest. He shall also disqualify any entries which are illegally entered and give out the awards each month.

The one thing you must realize is that in this hobby you are working with people, and when you work with people you must have flexibility. You must realize that most people are going to want to know what they are getting from their club.

The main stay of your club should be a good President. This person must be the go between for all disagreements. Behind your President you must have a good executive and they both can't do the job properly without the other.

We wish you all the best of luck in the future. There are many aspects of the hobby such as success, learning, friendship, achievement, failure and frustration. You will encounter all of them along the way and learn to face all of them.