SOJOURN TO JAPAN--Part One

Pam and I left St. Louis early in the morning for our two-week Japanese koi breeder trip to meet our traveling companions, Bill Doyle from Illinois and Dick and Brenda Thomas from Indiana at the Chicago-O'Hare airport. The flight was thirteen hours to Tokyo. We then boarded buses, trains and another airplane to reach the Hiroshima area in the south for our first week.

Day one was visiting the breeder, Momotaro, to view the Thomas' koi they had purchased last spring and had been growing in the mud ponds. If the name Momotaro sounds familiar, that is where the ceramic filter media is produced that is available through Kloubec Koi Farm. We learned that most of the koi bred here are sold through online auctions. The quality we witnessed was unbelievable. We also discovered that many of these koi never leave this facility, as some wealthy koi connoisseurs do not even have ponds, but purchase them to be shown by the breeder. It is quite an honor to win at the Japanese shows and is considered a status symbol by the Chinese buyers. What price do some of these koi command? Upwards of $50,000 with a $1000 per year boarding fee. The manager of the operations at Momotaro is a Chicagoan who has lived in Japan for many years.

The next morning, we met up with our dealer from California, Kevin Pham, of Genki Koi. The purchasing of koi in Japan must be transacted through a reputable dealer that has established working relationships with the various breeders. It is also a requirement that the dealer speak some Japanese and understand the culture and customs, as the breeders are very traditional in their business transactions. He makes the various appointments with the breeders you want to see and drives you there. The normal fee is 10% of the purchase price. The koi breeders in the south are very spread out logistically and it takes longer to make the rounds and there are fewer of them compared to the north area. (Continued on page 8)

Don’t Miss This!
What: Their Trip to Japan
Where: Missouri Botanical Garden, Ridgway Center, Beaumont Room
When: Tuesday, Jan. 17th, at 7 p.m.
Who: Pam & Rick Jokerst

Momotaro Visit

This is what a $40K fish looks like
BUS TRIP--Rolling Down the Highway!

What a splendid weekend we had for our club bus trip to Kloubec Koi Farm in Amana, Iowa in September. The weather was just right. We had plenty of snacks for the trip, and a great group of 44 members attended the tour. We started out on Saturday morning and met the Chevaliers and Munters from Springfield, Illinois outside of Hannibal. They followed the bus in their van. Several more joined the group at Kloubec's including Jamie Beyer from Boone, Iowa. We had a full tour of the farm along with a satisfying lunch served in their new, state-of-the-art koi facility. The tour was very interesting and the members learned a lot. In the late afternoon, koi were viewed and purchases made. We also had a hay wagon ride around the property to see the mud ponds and the cute little koi ready for harvest.

On Sunday, we had a scrumptious brunch at the Cedar Ridge Winery & Distillery in Swisher, Iowa. This was followed by some speed shopping in the Amana Colonies. We then headed back to Kloubec's to pick up the fish purchases and to tell our gracious hosts, Myron, Ellen and staff, what a fabulous time we had and that their hospitality was most appreciated. On the way home, the bus ran out of gas due to a faulty gauge. Kudos to our driver, Courtney, and member Kent Jarus, to get the bus towed up to the pump. This just made more time to socialize and get to know each other even better. Many personal stories were shared that helped the group bond even more. Please see the pictures of what a great time was had by all and plan to join us on the next excursion!

by Pam Jokerst

On the way to check in at the hotel in Cedar Rapids, we stopped by two gorgeous ponds made available to us by Eastern Iowa Pond Society member, Jackie Allsup. She made the contacts with pond owners Larry & Erma Thompson and Joe & Deb Holzman. The photos will tell a better story. Then we freshened up at the hotel and headed back to the farm for a fun Shrimp Boil Dinner. There was lots of delicious food and lively conversation. The evening ended with drinks around the bonfire at pond's edge while looking at the amazing stars in the rural night sky above. Awesome!

Amanda Gen Store—Taking a Break
Photo by Deb Bokamper

New Koi Facility, Photo by Kent Jarus

Wagon Ride to Mud Bottom Ponds
Photo by Kent Jarus

Kloubec Pond, Photo by Kent Jarus

Thompson’s Pond, Photo by Dan Babatti

Photo to right taken by Jim Bear, Holzman Pond
Greetings, Folks!

Well, we’re starting a new year and a new term for me. Where does time go? I hope you’ve been enjoying the programs and the fellowship. Here’s looking forward to the New Year.

Last year we dealt with a number of budget issues, some controversial, others not. We finally developed guidelines on how much money to keep in reserve and how much to contribute to community organizations and causes, in keeping with our stated objectives to educate and stimulate interest in the hobby.

I’m in the process of building the programs for this year. To start things off Rick and Pam Jokerst are going to tell us about their trip to Japan. If you think the koi hobby is big here, wait till you hear about the Japan!

In February, I’m bringing the folks from Wild Birds unlimited back (it’s been a while) to talk about “The Birds of Winter.” March has Steve Hogenmiller from Tower Grove coming back to talk about care and propagation of water plants. He certainly has some experience running things over there at the park and I’m looking forward to hearing from him. We’ll be repeating the popular plant auction but this time I’m planning to have a commentator present to give us background and care information on the offerings. In May I plan to have Bob Passavoy from Midwest Pond and Koi Society come to demystify the issue of water quality. I’ve asked him to explain some of the chemistry involved but not get so involved that it feels like a graduate course.

I’m working on the rest of the schedule and expect it to be laid out soon. If you have any requests or suggestions I’ll see if we can accommodate them.

Dave Stahre

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**November Elections Result**

The results of the elections were no change Dave Stahre is President for another two years along with Sherry Nelms as recording secretary. A good time was had by all we actually had a far turn out for the week of Thanksgiving. Pam Jokerst gave a power point presentation of the bus trip to Iowa.
Membership meetings in 2017 will be held on the dates and at the locations listed below between 7 and 9 p.m. Meetings will be held at the Missouri Botanical Garden Ridgway Center, Beaumont Room, unless otherwise noted. They are on the third Tuesday of a month unless otherwise noted.

**January 17**—Pam & Rick Jokerst about their Trip to Japan
**February 21**—Wild Birds Unlimited—Birds of Winter
**March 21**—Care and Propagation of Water Plants—by Steve Hogenmiller from Tower Grove
**April 18**—Plant Auction
**May 16**—At the CBEC Building Rm 125 Water Quality for a Koi Show
Bob Passavoy from MPKS
**June 13**—Pond-O-Rama Host Meeting at the CBEC Building Rm 125
**June 20**—
**June 24-25**—Pond-O-Rama
**July 18**—
**August**
**September 19**—

**November 14**—Annual Potluck & Elections
Potluck dinner and election of officers. Nominations will be accepted for the positions of vice president and treasurer to serve two-year terms beginning in January 2018.

_NATIONAL KOI SHOW & POND TOUR CALENDAR_

**March 4-5**—Koi Club of San Diego
30th Anniversary Koi Show, Del Mar, CA  www.koiclubofsandiego.com

**March 10-12**—Central Florida Koi Show, Orlando, FL  www.cfks.org

**April 1-2**—ZNA NorCal National Koi Show, San Jose, CA  www.znanorcal.info

**May 6-7**—Lone Star Koi Club’s Annual Water Garden and Pond Tour, Houston, TX  www.lonestarkoi.com

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Looking for more information about pond building, plants or fish care? Visit our website, [www.slwgs.org](http://www.slwgs.org) Check out our “Articles of Interest” section and “Links We Like” for help.
Did you Know...........

In July last year members Ralph & Pat Merola of Creve Coeur, 8th Biennial Beautification Award for Best Water feature. This backyard transformation is true perfection. A cascading water feature, complete with numerous waterfalls is Zen-like. Each large, flat stone is precisely placed so that water rolls over it, falling peacefully onto the next stone, and downward to a small pond. Hostas, large and small, add to the tranquil, shade-filled setting. All this information and pictures are from the Creve Coeur website. To see more pictures of their beautiful yard go to http://www.creve-coeur.org.
Need fish, fish food, pond equipment/supplies, landscape and/or pond designs or plants? All that and more is available from our advertisers. Drop by or call them when you need help.

Two Ways to Get Water Word

Your issue of Water Word will arrive in your mailbox each month, prior to the monthly meeting, unless you prefer to have it delivered via email. To sign up for email delivery only, contact membership chairman Gail Abernathy at abernat@swbell.net

Water Word is published by the St. Louis Water Gardening Society 10 times annually, and is distributed to all members. The newsletter contains information about water gardening and fish-keeping, as well as information about SLWGS meetings and activities. Contributions of articles and photos are welcome and should be sent to the Water Word editor listed below. Documents should be in common text formats, and photos should be in high resolution (300 dpi or higher) jpeg format. The deadline for submissions is the first of each month.

SLWGS membership dues are $25 or $30 annually per household. Information about the Society, including how to join, can be found at our website, www.slwgs.org or from any of the officers and board members listed:

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Cathy Schallenburg
What are you doing in the off season?

I’m sure you are doing the same thing as most of us are doing. The new garden and seed catalogs are slowly trickling into your home. Even though we have not really had a whole lot of cold weather yet, we all know St. Louis. It will be changing in the next month or even weeks. As I’m writing this piece they are predicting snow and colder temps by the end of the week. Maybe you have not had a chance yet to browse through the catalogs you received. They have some stunning new annual garden plants in 2017. I’m sure there will be a lot of new water plants

in 2017. Let’s start dreaming of the new look in our gardens for this year. This month I will show you a few of the new plants I have found so far that I think will pop in the garden since the color looks unique at least in the photos. We all know the actually plant may not be as brilliant in color. Check out these new Crazytunia Hybrid Novelty Petunias. All are new ones this year except the Star Jubilee.

Library and Learning Center

The Library and Learning Center would like to remind anybody that may have interesting photos or articles about Koi, pond care or pond construction to please bring them to the next meeting. Photos can be reclaimed at the end of the meeting or donated to the library. As mentioned last year, the library has bought a digital photo frame. So if you have a favorite photo of your fish or pond bring it in on a jump drive and it can be added to the photo frame. You can also email them to Katie at beezey696@hotmail.com and she can upload them.
SOJOURN TO JAPAN--Part One

Continued from page 1

Our first stop with Kevin was at Sakai Koi Farm, a premier breeder known around the world. This is a state-of-the-art greenhouse facility the size of a football field. We were given four large holding tanks to select koi from. Pam made the first selection of a two-year-old three-step Kohaku with exceptional skin and pattern. But upon bowling and inspecting the fish, we determined that the mouth had a slight deformity. Unfortunately, that koi had to be returned to the tank. Bill Doyle selected two Kohaku to view, one at $10k and the other at $20k, which sent him into shock! Dick Thomas' selection was also $10k. These three fish are in the photo. Mr. Sakai himself quotes the prices on all fish being considered. In the afternoon, we had lunch at his home adjacent to the farm. Another thing we experienced while there was an EARTHQUAKE, which measured 6.6 and was less than 100 miles away! Quite an extraordinary experience. especially when you are standing in a glass greenhouse! We visited four more breeders that week. Omosako, Taniguchi, Tamaura, and Oyama, along with several cultural points of interest before heading north to Niigata Prefecture.

The koi were great, plentiful and expensive. At the end of the first week we were in koi overload! We realized that the best koi start with the best genetics and most of those koi are not sold outside of Japan. We felt fortunate that we had the opportunity to see these exceptional koi and to purchase a few to bring home to our ponds to enjoy. Next month's article will highlight week two of our adventure in Japan.
For the past 16 years, the members of the St. Louis Water Gardening Society have shared some amazing water features and gardens during this two-day event. These generous hosts welcome the ticket holders from all over the area as well as out-of-town guests. This event receives national, regional, and local publicity in many online sites and local magazines.

The event also attracts more media attention than ever, helping us meet our primary event goals of introducing water gardening to the public-at-large and increasing our membership through a free trial membership offer to Pond-O-Rama ticket holders.

The hosts, the advertisers, the retailers who sell tickets for us, everyone who bought a ticket or used their free one to go on the tour, and the Pond-O-Rama committee are all the wonderful people who make this event successful each year. The 2017 Pond-O-Rama Committee is up and running for this year.

We are all excited! Our 17th annual tour will be held Saturday, June 24 and Sunday, June 25, 2017.

If you have a beautiful waterscape, pondless waterfall, or a great garden, this is your opportunity to share your beautiful space. Large or small, self-built or professionally done, every water feature is different and interesting. All our Pond-O-Rama hosts have a story to tell. We look forward to hearing yours!

Contact Pond-O-Rama Co-Chairs:
Robert Henson - 314-495-4233, hatt8v92@aol.com
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Blueberry Scone Chameleon Calibrachoa
Blooms begin one color but continually change throughout the season as they react to light levels, day length and other seasonal factors, providing you with an everchanging color display purple and yellow tones on one plant.