Birds of Winter....

I am a life-long resident of the St. Louis area. I attribute my interest in nature to my family’s love of the outdoors. Some of my earliest memories are of fishing trips with my grandfather, father and brother. During times waiting for the cork to bob, my grandfather would have us bring him a leaf or a bug and he would explain its role in nature. I pursued this interest during my formative years in the scouting programs earning many merit badges including Bird Study and Botany. Later, I attended the University of Missouri at St. Louis studying science. I have worked at Wild Birds Unlimited since 2007 as a salesman in the Birding and Agricultural Department.

Through Cornell University and WBU I received the honorary award of Birding Specialist. I give guided Nature walks and lectures to various community groups as well as work in the development of new food blends. I am an advisor to the St. Louis chapter of the Audubon Society and do field surveys for them. In addition, I am a past board member of the Wild Bird Rehab, volunteering whenever possible, caring for injured birds. I am an active contributor to the on-line bird sating site MO-BIRDS.ORG. and E-Bird.

Don't Miss This!

What:    Birds of Winter
Where:  Missouri Botanical Garden, Ridgway Center, Beaumont Room
When:   Tuesday, Feb. 21st, at 7 p.m.
Who:      Bryan Layton Prather of Wild Birds Unlimited

Question #1: How long can my pond be ice-covered without compromising my fish?

Answer: Each pond is unique, with no one answer for all. Under the ice, your fish are in a state of stasis-respirating, not hibernating-so gas exchange is very important. It is best to not let the pond freeze over entirely, but to keep an opening by running a waterfall, air bubbler, or surface pond heater.

Question #2: Can I feed my fish during warmer winter days?

Answer: Absolutely NOT! A few warm days could stimulate an eating response by your fish, but feeding could result in undigested food rotting inside and possible mortality and compromised immune systems. Wait until spring when water temperatures remain constant in the middle 50's and start a gradual feeding regimen while they adjust to food again.

Question #3: Are water changes and filter cleanings important during the winter months?

Answer: Most definitely. Plan these chores when weather permits.

Please text or email your questions to Rick Jokerst, AKCA/KoiUSA Representative, at 314-368-2652 or rickjokerst@gmail.com. Thank you.
Pond-O-Rama 2017

To St. Louis Water Gardening Members:

Pond-O-Rama 2017 is fast approaching. The organizing committee is working hard to make this year’s tour the best ever. Let’s celebrate our 17th Annual Tour in style!

That means offering the best list of gardens, ponds, and water features we can put together. We are looking for a wide variety — small and large, ornate and simple, formal and whimsical. As you know, this is the only time that we, as a group, open our gardens to the public with a chance to shine—to share our passion with others who are interested and spread the word about water gardening. It reaches a vast group of individuals from our members, to advertisers, to contractors, to the public in educating and sharing the special places we all enjoy.

We want you to enjoy the day and make it a special one; not only for you, but also those who visit your oasis. Past years have been fantastic and we receive accolades from people who have come from other states. People are even calling to know the date so they can save it.

This is a wonderful community event that we have sponsored for the past 16 years with the focus on educating the public, sharing our knowledge, and inviting people to join our wonderful organization.

We have the best people as members and some of the best gardens and water features in St Louis and the Metro area.

We need you! Without the cooperation of our members who are on tour and support the tour by being on various committees, Pond-O-Rama would not be as successful as it has been. Be a part of the 2017 Pond-O-Rama tour!

You can also download the form from our website: www.slwgs.org. If you have questions about being a host, call Bob Henson at 314-495-4233 or e-mail Bob Henson, hatt8v92@aol.com.

March 1, 2017, is our deadline to ensure that our hosts are featured in the Pond-O-Rama ticket book. We look forward to seeing your space.... great places....and smiling faces!

Thanks so much!
Bob Henson
Ginny Mueller
Co-Chairs 2017 Pond-O-Rama
Greetings, Folks!

Up front I want to thank those who have expressed concern for my daughter who has been diagnosed with breast cancer. The family has been a little distracted by the issues surrounding it but now that she is in treatment things are getting back on track.

Hope you made the January meeting. If not you missed a great presentation by the Jokers about their trip to Japan. I was amazed to hear about the prices koi can command in Japan! I’m glad we have access to excellent quality fish through our koi auction at great prices!

I’m still in the process of building the programs for this year. This month we have Bryan Prather from Wild Birds Unlimited back (it’s been a while) to talk about “The Birds of Winter.” Next month Steve Hogenmiller from Tower Grove is coming back to talk about care and propagation of water plants. April will be a repeat of the plant auction. In May we’ll have Bob Passavoy from MPKS come to talk about water quality. I’ve asked him to explain some of the chemistry that homeowners deal with but on a level that doesn’t require a graduate degree in chemistry. He’s promised me he’ll do it. In June we’ll have a presentation on orchids. I’m working to get someone from AKCA to talk about the Koi Health Advisor program.

Well in my prior ponderings I’ve wandered off of my narrative about building the pond. If you may recall Sherry and I bought about 3 tons of sandstone to use for the perimeter and waterfall. After much procrastination I finally started trying to build the perimeter. I soon found that the dirt under the liner didn’t want to stay in place and soon four of the six rocks were on the bottom of the pond. My intent was to leave the interior as liner rather than rock it in. The way things were going it looked like the pond was going to rock itself in!

Well, getting discouraged at my prospects I decided to relax and enjoy the fish. I put on my “safari” hat, swimsuit, and old T-shirt and decided to get in the pond. Sherry gathered up the video camera and I grabbed some fish food and slid in. While Sherry taped, I hand fed the fish (which I always find relaxing). My first “customer” (as always) was “Oliver” (my green chagoi). He’s friendly and gentle despite being the largest fish in the pond. He took his food (always a LARGE portion). He was followed by “Babe” (my yellow kigoi, a vicious little bantam). Although she is medium sized she’s rough and tough and will try to take your fingers off! Fortunately she doesn’t have teeth. Avoiding her gaping jaw I managed to retrieve all ten digits! After the largest and the most aggressive had fed the other fish moved in some brave, some timid. While I was feeding them I felt something nipping at my back through my T-shirt. I scanned the pond and noted that Babe was nowhere to be seen. I turned around and came face to face with her. Sherry was throwing food into the pond behind me encouraging Babe to “attack” me! Paybacks are Hell!

Dave Stahre
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 Ridgeway Center, Beaumont Room, unless otherwise noted. They are on the third Tuesday of an vary every month unless otherwise noted.

**February 21**—Birds of Winter  
By Brian Layton Prather of Wild Birds Unlimited

**March 21**—Care and Propagation of Water Plants—by Steve Hogenmiller from Tower Grove

**April 18**— Plant Auction

**May 16**— Water Quality for a Koi Show by Bob Passavoy from MPKS  
CBEC Building Rm 125

**June 13**—Pond-O-Rama Host Meeting at the  
CBEC Building Rm 125

**June 20**—  
June 24-25 —Pond –O-Rama  
July 18—  
August —Annual Banquet  
September 19—

**October 17**—

**November 14**— Annual Potluck & Elections  
Pot luck 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.

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**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
New Dwarf Pink Sunburst Medium Pink variegated Canna. Grows only 18-30" tall. Flowers all summer. Remove roots after frost and store in cool dry place for winter. Replant 1st of summer. Full Sun. Tied with Orange Punch and Cleopatra for our three favorite amazing Cannas!

Black Coral Taro, deep shiny black leaves with a distinct electric ble veining. The most incredible and cool new plant for this season! Grow at the water’s edge in a basket, in a stream or even in the garden if you will remember to keep it watered! Grows 18 to 30 inches tall with 8 to 14 inch leaves. Just as cool as can be. Fertilize monthly. Needs Warm water 70 or better. In hot conditions acclimate this slowly out of the box over 3 or 4 days into part or full sun. One of the most incredible colocasia.

SNOWBALL (Water Snowball) Creeping, upright, stems with fleshy, dark green leaves. Round, ball-like flowers commonly used to attract butterflies especially monarch butterflies. Simply place stem end in small area of clay soil in pot, stream bed, or along the shore in dirt with the foliage above water. Hardy in Zone 7-12 New this year

Spider Lily (Hymenocallis Lirisome) This plant has white spring and summer flowers and grows about 24” tall. The leaves are strap-like. It can be easily wintered as a houseplant.
**Two Ways to Get Water Word**

Your issue of *Water Word* will arrive in your mail box each month for additional $5, 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

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**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.

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:

### 2017 SLWGS Officers and Board Members

- **President**: Dave Stahre  
  (618) 623-9341 dstahre@hotmail.com
- **Vice President**: Steve Metzler  
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  (314) 968-8432 stevelitzsinger@gmail.com
- **Recording Secretary**: Sherry Nelms  
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- **Publicity Chairman**: Ginny Mueller  
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- **Special Events Chairman**: Pam Jokerst  
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- **Society Shirt Sales Chairman**: Ruth Mosley  
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**Water Word, February 2017**
SOJOURN TO JAPAN—Part Two

Week two begins with our bullet train ride called the Shinkansen from Niigata city to Nagaoka in the northern section of Japan. This train can reach speeds up to 200mph! There we met up with Devin Swanson, our dealer from Koi Acres in Minnesota, and his wife, Mikki. Devin speaks fluent Japanese after spending a three year apprenticeship with Marudo Koi Farm in Niigata Prefecture.

The one noticeable difference in koi breeders from the north compared to the south is that the farms are in very close proximity to one another, making it very easy to visit several in one day. This is the koi harvest season, where koi are brought in from the summer mud bottom ponds to their winter homes in greenhouses. Marudosan asked Devin if I would like to participate in one of the harvests, which I happily accepted. It is quite an honor for an American, or anyone that is not family or an employee, to participate in a harvest, as most mud ponds are tucked away and secluded on the hillsides without any signage so as not to make known the ponds known. Yes, it is very secretive!

Well, the koi we pulled were great and quite large for being only two years old. Marudosan personally inspected every koi, categorizing them for quality and probably pricing them in his mind. Back at the greenhouses, the koi were plentiful. In fact, I would consider the vats overstocked, but good filtration and frequent water changes alleviated this concern. During this transition to the greenhouse tanks, the fish are heavily salted, up to 7%, and are not fed for a period of time. They then receive a series of treatments for parasites.

After visiting their farms, the larger breeders take you to lunch or dinner, if they like you and your dealer has a good relationship with them. Purchasing their koi also helps! This is where the food and drink were as abundant as the koi. The offerings were like Thanksgiving, but nothing looked like turkey and dressing.

We went to almost twenty different breeders during the week. Some of these were Isa, Nogami, Kanno, Izumiya, Marusaka, Oya, Torazo, Shintaro, Igarashi, Hiroi, Kawakami, Otsuka, Teradomari, Shinoda and Marujyu. We even had the almost unheard of opportunity to purchase koi from a top breeder. They are housed in a "secret" greenhouse where the breeder takes his best koi directly from the mud pond. We selected one, whose name is now Pearl. She will be kept in Japan and we look forward to the breeder showing her at the All Japan Show in the future.

We were fortunate enough to be in town during the Wakagoi Koi Show. A national Japanese television station interviewed our group. Fish in Japan are shown by the breeders, not the individual owners of the koi. Most of these fish were just a week or two out of the mud pond and were beautiful, even though they were not at their most pristine. This really displayed the quality of these koi.

While in Niigata, we attended a koi auction sponsored by Dainichi Koi Farm. We picked out a couple of kohaku from the brochure at the pre-auction dinner party the night before. We told Devin to bid on them, if the prices were reasonable. Nothing is reasonable at Dainichi! At least not if you are an American hobbyist. The first sold for $32K and the second for $86K. Not exactly my idea of reasonable! But when you are purchasing a work of art, a living jewel, how do you set a limit? This is what collectors of fine objects have to consider.

During the course of our travels, we were in cities, the countryside and up in the mountains. The scenery was beautiful. We frequented small, family-owned restaurants where the locals ate. Most houses we passed along the road had vegetable gardens. We also noticed the more modern style of homes was mixed in with the traditional Japanese homes, which shows the up-to-date influence in the culture.

The trip was amazing. It was also long and exhausting. We traveled on every mode of transportation, except a boat and a bike. Pam and I truly have a deeper appreciation of the koi industry. We met more friendly and helpful people in this hobby from around the world. We are so very thankful we took this journey.

by Rick Jokerst
IS IT SPRING YET?

About this time of year, Rick and I start getting a little antsy to see our fish. They are usually under the frozen water or hardly moving at all in their cage, preferring to be near the bottom or under the protective cover of the filter mat on top. We miss seeing them gracefully gliding by the lilies or playing in the waterfall's cascade. We do have the luxury of visiting the bigger girls in the heated and enclosed pergola pond, but some days are so icy, cold and windy you just cannot get out of the house! So, what to do? Book your trip to the Orlando Koi Show!

This show is sponsored by the Central Florida Koi Show, www.cfks.org, which is comprised of five separate koi and pond clubs in the region. It is held the second weekend in March. This year the dates are March 10-12. The venue is new, at the Hilton Doubletree Hotel at Universal Studios, as the previous host hotel has closed for renovations. Rick and I look forward to this sunny vacation each year. We even go down a few days early to take in a couple of Cardinal Spring Training games in Jupiter.

The show is free to attend. There are various seminars held on Saturday on different topics for a $10 fee. The Awards Banquet on Saturday night is fun and gives you the opportunity to meet koi enthusiasts from all over the country, as well as judges and retailers. This year the show is hosting ZNA America, which is the North American Regional District of Zen Nippon Airinkai, an international society based in Beppu, Japan. Their mission statement and goal is to spread the hobby of koi keeping, to improve upon the husbandry techniques for maintaining koi, and to elevate the appreciation aspects of nishikigoi as living art. Their motto is Friendship through Scales. Learn more at www.znaamerica.org.

So if you need a koi fix, and you are koi-kichi (translation: koi maniac) this is the place to be in late winter. The weather is warm, the skies are sunny and the koi at this show are fantastic. Plus there are a myriad of other things to do and see in the area. If you have questions, contact Pam Jokerst, Special Events Coordinator, at 314-276-9461 or pamjokerst@gmail.com.

P.S. A good read to take along on your trip is the latest issue of KoiUSA magazine. Subscriptions are available for the club rate of $25 per year at www.koiusa.com.

By Pam Jokerst

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Water Word, February 2017

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Time to Renew!
Membership renewals for all St. Louis Water Gardening Society members are due in January. If you have not sent in your dues yet you may make your payment in person at the February meeting, or mail a check to Gail Abernathy, Membership Chairman, using the form at right. Dues are $25 per household for email copy of the newsletter $30 per household for snail mail copy of the newsletter. While non-member guests always are welcome at SLWGS meetings, there are definite benefits to membership. For example, all member household receive two free Pond-O-Rama tickets, a $30 value. In addition, all members receive the regular issues of Water Word, and may participate in a number of special events throughout the year, including tours and field trips that are arranged for members only. Don’t miss out on the fun of 2017.

Send this form with your $25 check for email delivery or a check for $30 for snail mail, payable to the St. Louis Water Gardening Society to Gail Abernathy, 10922 Kildare Court, St. Ann, MO 63074
Please print or type clearly

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☒ New Membership  ☐ Annual renewal (Renewals are due in January)
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via email only?  Or by regular mail?  Circle one please.

Out on a Limb and need some help?
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Photo of the Month

Grand Champ