



Animal Trade, Aquarium Technology, and the Time After the End of the GDR

by Hajo Herrmann

With this article, I conclude the series on the organized aquaristics of my hometown Gotha. Since it is meant to focus on the pet trade, let me begin with a recollection of what I wrote in the first part of the series about my childhood impression of Gotha's only pet shop at the time. In general, imports of aquarium and terrarium animals were extremely rare due to the scarcity of foreign currency in the GDR. In the 1960s, a few animals could still be imported in small numbers. There were only a handful of enthusiasts among pet shop owners who spent considerable sums on imported parrots, baby crocodiles, various other reptiles, exotic catfish, and impressive brackish-water fish. One of them was Wolfgang Kestner, born in 1924 in Fröttstedt near Gotha. On May 25, 1965, he took over the business previously known as Zoo Böhlke on Gutenbergstraße in Gotha.

For me as a schoolboy, Kestner's pet shop was a little paradise. I described my feelings in the first part, but even as I write these lines now, I can once again smell the aniseed-scented bird sand and the scent of the small marmosets, *Callithrix jacchus*, a memory I will likely never lose and which I associate with my most beautiful childhood moments. Kestner kept in his small shop almost as many animals that he declared not for sale as he did animals available for purchase. This shows how deeply he had taken these creatures to heart. And there was no other pet shop anywhere nearby that had such a wide range of special animals. He also maintained good relationships with breeders. In the Harz town of Wernigerode lived Gerhard Kugenbuch, one of the best newt and salamander breeders of the time—still nearly unmatched today in the number of his captive-bred, especially rare and difficult-to-keep caudates. From him, Kestner acquired several rarities bred in captivity, including fire salamanders, *Aneides aeneus*, and several fire-bellied newt species of the genus *Cynops*. Soon afterward, he moved his shop into the neighboring building, gaining significantly more space.



In this building on Gutenbergstraße in Gotha, the pet shop Zoo Kestner was located.



Fire salamander, *Aneides aeneus*, bred by Gerhard Kugenbuch.

Kugenbuch and Kestner, like many of the best breeders and animal keepers of the time, were introverted people. They did not take part in club life. Because of this, Wolfgang Kestner did not receive the offspring bred by members of the Gotha aquarium club. These were sold at the club's fish exchanges or to the Berlin-based wholesale company Zoologica. Kurt Koch, who still worked as an independent breeder, had little contact with the aquarium club. He sold only what he himself had bred in his aquariums. Yet the Gotha aquarists remained very skilled breeders, so that fish exchanges and the Zoologica wholesale trade were not sufficient to sell all juvenile fish. One of them, Friedhelm Amberger—who had already played an active role in rebuilding the old open-air aquarium after the war—wanted to become self-employed in business. This was not easy due to the many formalities and restrictions in the GDR. Nevertheless, he succeeded by taking over, on January 1, 1967, a previously existing but never truly significant pet shop from its former owner Paul Wettwer and reopening it at a different location.



Letterhead of the ornamental fish house “Zierfischhaus Thüringen Kurt Koch”.



Kurt Koch operated his fish-breeding facility at Roseggerstraße 6.

Amberger was a loud, energetic man, constantly busy with something. He, his wife, and his nearly grown children were always present in his pet shop, which specialized exclusively in the sale of aquarium fish and fish food. As a club member, he received the offspring of the Gotha aquarists and thus had a solid standard assortment. His shop was located on Querstraße, about a three-minute walk from Kestner's shop on Gutenbergstraße. The two competed for customers and took it personally when people switched from one shop to the other to check whether the fish were better or the prices lower elsewhere. In this way, once again, competition raised the level, the range, and the pricing quality. And both made a living; the introverts went to the calm Kestner, while the more talkative and sociable customers found their place at Amberger's. I visited both and was sometimes met with angry words for it, but I always said that I was interested in the animals and the hobby, not in the shop owners—and for that, both maintained a solid standard.



In this building on Querstraße in Gotha, the aquarium shop Amberger was located.

When I now write about aquarium technology in the GDR period, I must first make a few general remarks. The socialist economy was never strong, because neither raw materials nor sufficient international contacts were available. What factories had in terms of machines and tools was mostly left over from the pre-war period, often only hastily repaired or makeshiftly patched. In a way, it was similar to what one sees in Cuba today. Technologically, time seemed to have stood still. The same was true for aquarists and terrarium keepers. Many kept their heaters, air pumps, and lamps in use for many years, carefully maintaining and repairing them, simply because there was no other option.

In the 1970s and 1980s, most of these devices and tools were already old and worn out. People had to help themselves. Citizens of the GDR were considered world champions of improvisation. We could create astonishing things from the most primitive scraps. Here is one example: in our aquarium club, we needed a pump with a simple internal filter for a setup with multiple tanks. One member had an old record player, another a lightly running bicycle crank mechanism with pedals. Both were connected with a rubber belt; the record player motor drove the crank via the belt. The moving pedals operated two pressure cylinders like the connecting rods of a steam engine, compressing air. But what about the filter itself? Following the model of foam internal filters already common in the Western world, we built something similar. Fortunately, we had some old pipes that could be connected to reach the aquariums. But the foam? One member worked on a construction site where insulation material had just been delivered. He brought scraps of it. But how could these pieces be attached to the pipes? Someone came up with the idea of soaking the foam in water and freezing it. Once frozen, it could be drilled precisely to match the diameter of the pipes. This resulted in a self-built aeration system with filter sponges for a series of aquariums.



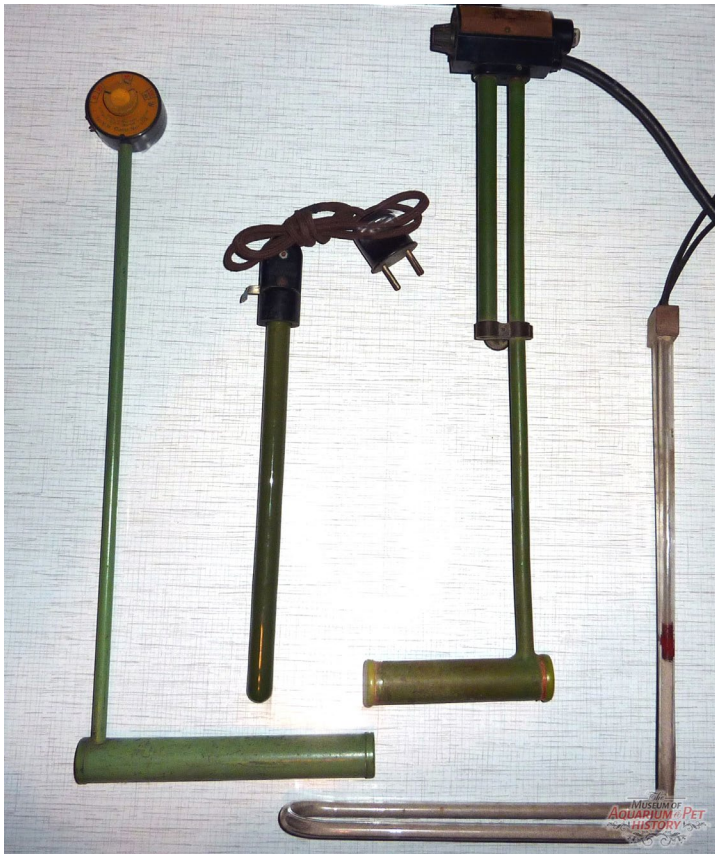
Self-built breeding and holding systems were typical of the GDR era.

A similar spirit applied to the keeping of live food, its breeding, and its collection. Sometimes I think that many of those inventive aquarists would be successful engineers today. Of course, not everything worked smoothly, and accidents did occur, especially in experiments such as an underwater lamp. A slim light bulb was placed inside a glass tube and lowered into the aquarium behind a decorative root. However, the bulb became too hot, the glass tube shattered, and a short circuit shut everything down. Still, it was worth trying.

Many aquarists still used the ceramic or metal heating cones widely used in the 1920s. They were placed beneath the aquarium, which usually stood on a steel frame. They were heated with oil or spirit flames. In later years, gas or early electric heating elements were used. Heat rose upward and warmed the tank. Of course, the heat distribution through the bottom glass was uneven. It was also difficult to control temperature precisely by adjusting the flame size. Sometimes overheating occurred; in the worst case, the bottom glass cracked due to localized heat stress. From the late 1960s onward, simple heating rods became available. They consisted of a glass tube containing a heating wire embedded in sand and sealed at the top with a rubber plug. From the pre-war period, some still used L-shaped metal heaters known for occasionally becoming immersion heaters due to short circuits, sometimes bringing the aquarium water close to boiling. Skilled hobbyists installed relays in front of the heater to stabilize temperature control. Even aquarium lighting at the time was very basic and would not pass any modern safety inspection. In a roof-shaped aluminum housing, one or two slender light bulbs were exposed without protection. If water splashed onto them, they burned out.



Heating cones positioned beneath the aquarium.



Early aquarium heaters that operated exclusively on 110-volt direct current.



110-volt DC heater with relay.



German-made air pump from the 1920s.



German-made air pump from the 1920s.



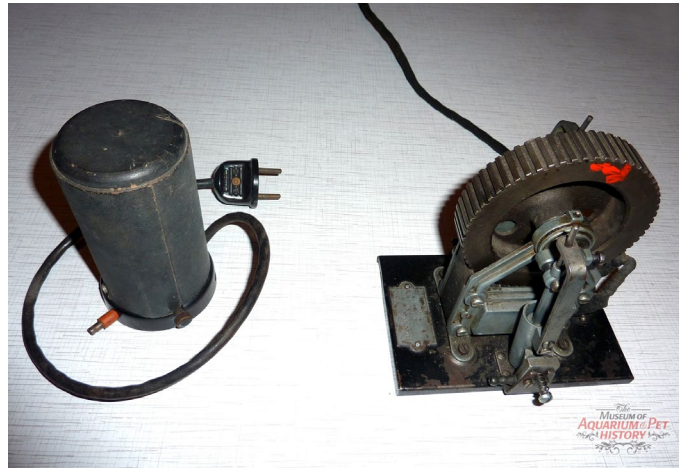
German-made air pump from the 1920s.



German-made air pump from the 1920s.



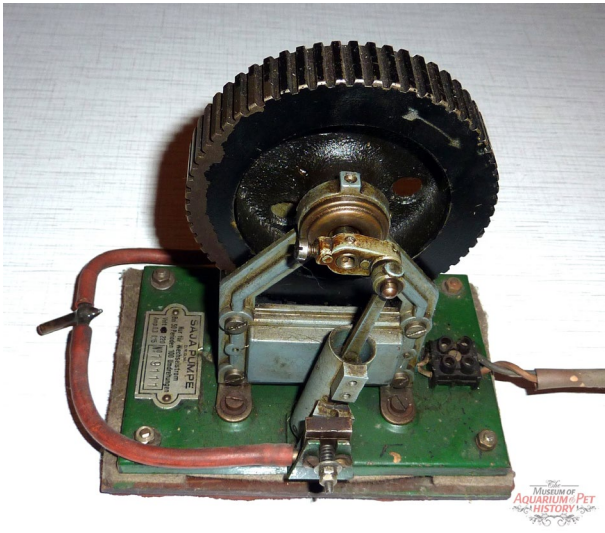
Membrane pump from the first half of the last century.



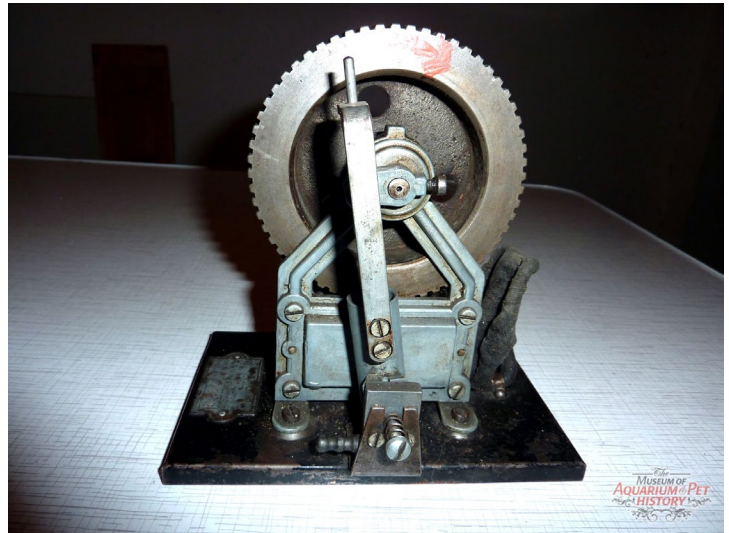
220-volt electric pumps used in aquaristics.



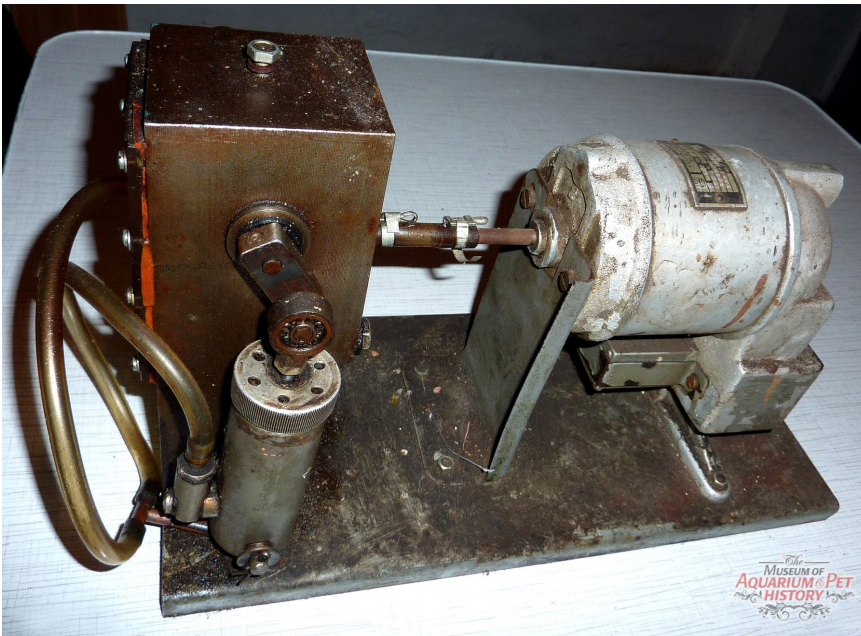
Ellu aeration device.



220-volt electric pumps used in aquaristics.



220-volt electric pumps used in aquaristics.



220-volt electric pumps used in aquaristics.



220-volt electric pumps used in aquaristics.



220-volt electric pumps used in aquaristics.

The company AKA meanwhile offered complete heating systems with contact thermometers and thermal relays, as well as membrane air pumps and piston pumps capable of moving water, enabling self-built external filter systems. For most aquarists, this technology was difficult to access. Therefore, they used various industrial water pumps and adapted them to their homemade filters. Once again, it was a Thuringian engineer in Roda near Ilmenau who applied his technical knowledge to the hobby and eventually turned it into a business idea. Dr. A. Eggert founded the company HIMA and produced Neptun membrane pumps for aquarium aeration, submersible heaters, and temperature regulators for GDR aquarists. I bought countless of these products at Zoo Kestner and used them in my own aquariums. The problem with these membrane pumps was that no durable material for the membranes was available in the GDR. As a result, as performance declined, the pumps began to sound like jackhammers after half a year—unbearable in the long run. So replacements had to be purchased—a thriving business for Dr. Eggert, who of course was well aware of the limited lifespan of his products. The Taifun air pumps produced at the old pump factory in Taucha near Leipzig, in operation since 1905, were no better.



Aquariendurchlüfter

„NEPTUN“

Unterwasserheizer

Temperaturregler

Dr. A. EGGERT & Co. KG

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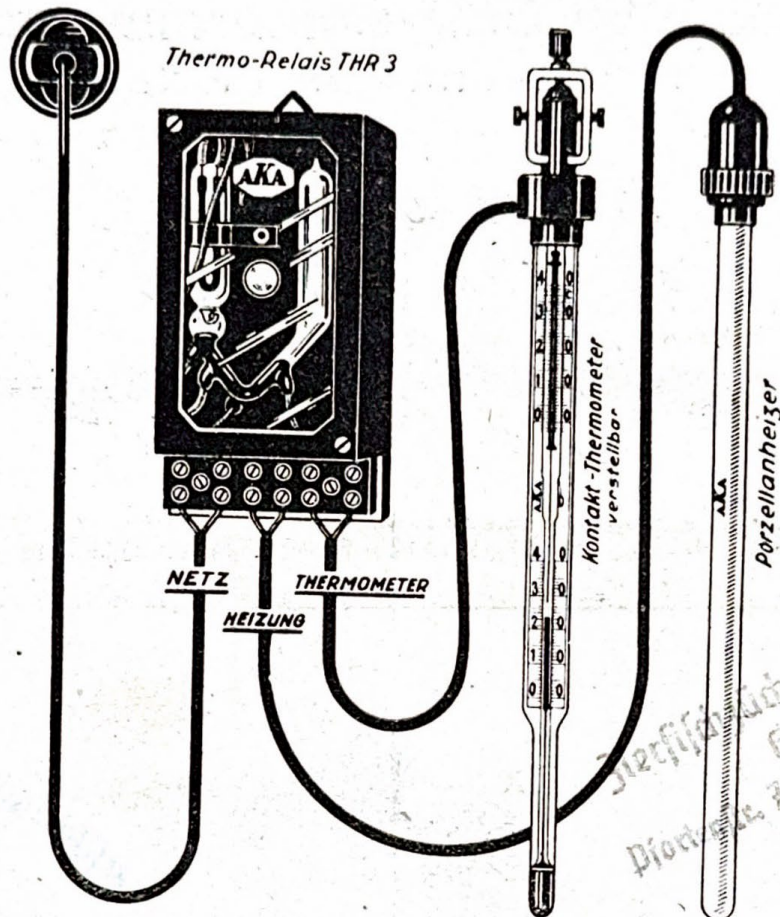
6301 Ilmenau/Roda

Lieferung nur über den Fachhandel mögl



Advertisement for an "Aquarium Aerator NEPTUN Submersible Heater" by Dr. A. Eggert in the GDR journal Aquarien Terrarien.

Die AKA-Heizungsanlage für alle Stromarten



besteht aus dem unübertroffenen AKA-Schaltrelais, einem Kontaktthermometer mit verstellbarem oder festem Kontakt, sowie dem neuen und zuverlässigen AKA-Pyrolan-Heizer („Py“). Die Herstellung des „Py“-Heizers erfolgt nach den neuen VDE-Vorschriften. Der Heizer kann auch für verschiedene Zwecke verwendet werden und wird in jeder gewünschten Wattstärke geliefert.

Der Anschluß der Instrumente darf nur an Hand der oben sichtbaren Abbildung erfolgen. Das AKA-Thermo-Relais kann bei Gleichstrom bis zu 200, bei Wechselstrom bis zu 500 Watt belastet werden. Für höhere Belastungen werden andere Typen hergestellt.

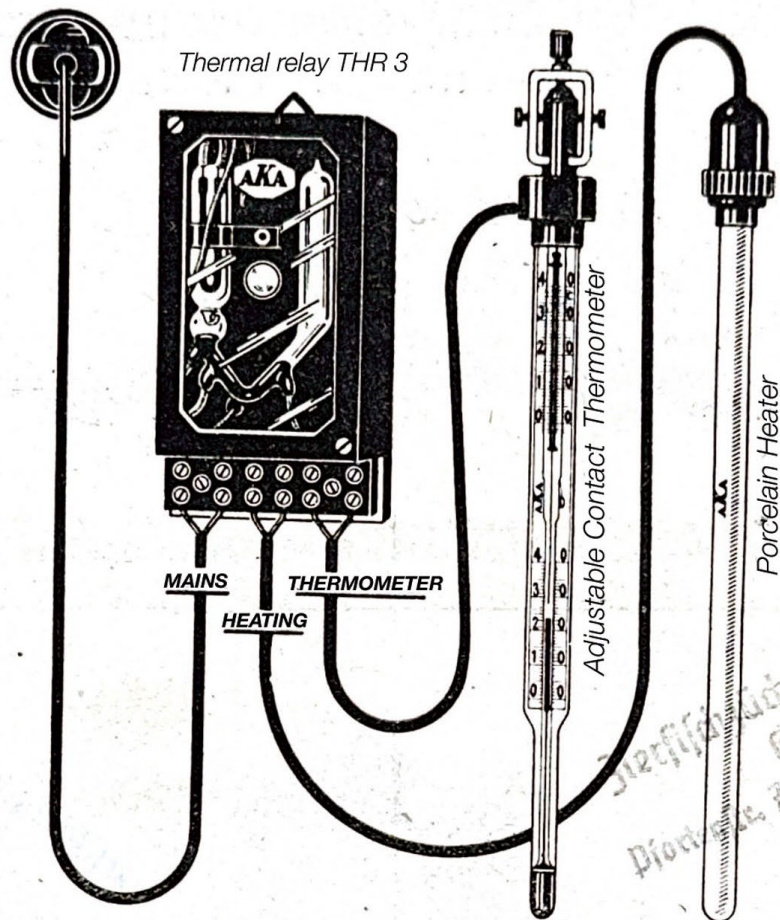
Wichtig für den Händler und Verbraucher!

**Die Stromaufnahme für das Kontaktthermometer beträgt höchstens 15 mA.
Eine größere Stromaufnahme zerstört das Instrument!**

Man darf ein Kontaktthermometer unter keinen Umständen ohne Relais anschließen!

The AKA Heating System

for all current types



Consists of the unrivaled AKA switching relay, a contact thermometer with either an adjustable or fixed contact, and the new, reliable AKA Pyrolan heater ("Py"). The "Py" heater is manufactured in compliance with the new VDE regulations. The heater is suitable for a variety of applications and is supplied in any desired wattage.

The instruments must be connected strictly in accordance with the diagram shown above. The AKA thermo-relay can handle loads of up to 200 watts on DC and up to 500 watts on AC. Other models are manufactured to accommodate higher loads.

Important for Dealers and Consumers!

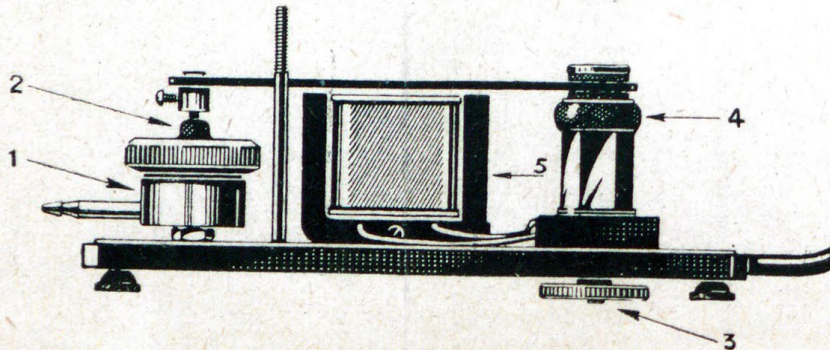
The current draw for the contact thermometer must not exceed 15 mA. A higher current draw will destroy the instrument! Under no circumstances may a contact thermometer be connected without a relay!

Für Ihr Aquarium

biete ich Ihnen an:

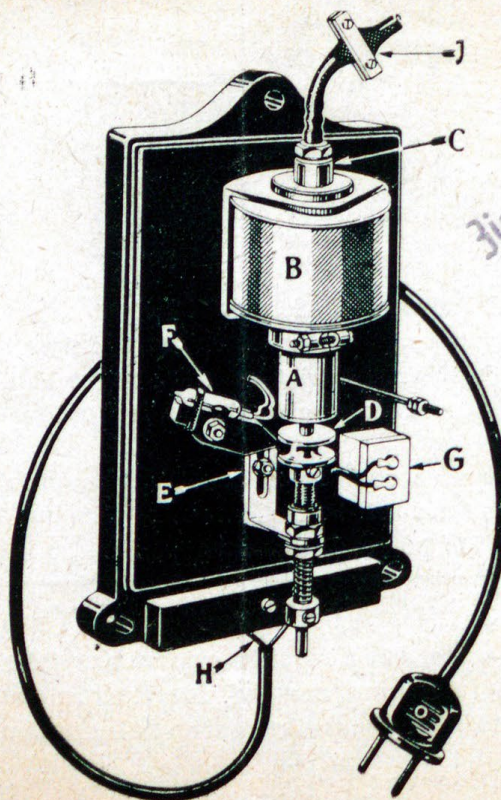
AKA-REKORD-Membranpumpe

für Wechselstrom 110 und 220 V.



Die AKA-TRIUMPH-Kolbenpumpe

für Gleichstrom 110 und 220 V.



*Fischzuchterei. Barthel
G o t h a
Pfortenstr. 7 — privat Badstr. 12*

V/2/7-X-1081/54
The MUSEUM OF
AQUARIUM & PET
HISTORY

Cover of the accompanying brochure for the AKA-REKORD membrane pump and the AKA-TRIUMPH piston pump.

„K. D. A.“ Kindelscher Durchlüftungs-Apparat
 Bereits über 4500 „K. D. A.“ im Betrieb.
 — Filter K. D. A. für Süß- und Seewasser, —



„K. D. A.“, Lufthahn „Air“, unsere Buchsbaumausströmer, Gasblaubrenner „Perfect“ usw. ergeben die allseitig anerkannt besten Durchlüftungs- und Heizungsanlagen der Gegenwart.

Achtung! Das allbekannte und beliebte erstklassige **Trocken-Fischfutter „Wawil“** ist wieder zu haben, pro Dose Mk. —.30.
 — General-Vorragung für Groß-Berlin. —

Kindel & Stössel, BERLIN SW 68
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 Telefonnummer: Dönhoff 9125. :: Postscheckkonto: Berlin NW 15210
 Gegründet 1907

Prospectus
 nur
 gegen Ein-
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 des Portos

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Advertisement for the Kindel aeration device.

“K.D.A.” Kindel Aeration Apparatus
 Over 4500 KDAs already in operation
 — KDA Filters for Fresh and Saltwater —



The KDA Air Tap, our Boxwood Airstones, "Perfect" Gas Burners, etc., combine to form the universally acknowledged finest aeration and heating systems available today.

Attention! The widely known, popular, and first-class **"Wawil" Dry Fish Food** is available again — 30 Pfennigs per tin.
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Kindel & Stössel, BERLIN SW 68
 Neuenburgerstr. 18.
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 upon receipt
 of postage.

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Advertisement for the Kindel aeration device translated using notegpt.io



Membrane pumps from various manufacturers.



AKA membrane pump.

Finally, a few words about the aquariums themselves. Until the late 1970s, iron-framed tanks dominated in the GDR. They were extremely heavy, rusted quickly, and repeatedly leaked. That would not have been so bad, since skilled aquarists could have resealed them with new aquarium cement. But this cement was scarce. We had a term for such goods: “Bückware,” meaning “bend-down merchandise,” because the shop assistant would, after making sure the preferred customer was alone, bend down behind the counter to retrieve the hidden, rare, and highly desired goods. Aquarium cement was such an item. In its absence, everyone tried alternatives. I had a persistent leak at the front right corner of my largest framed tank. Because of the lack of proper cement, I used window putty, which was intended for sealing glass to wood, not iron frames, and only adhered slightly to the existing seam. I had to repair it repeatedly until a fist-sized lump of putty formed a wart-like deformity on the tank. Only gradually, from the mid-1970s onward, did silicone-bonded aquariums become available—at considerable cost.



Typical framed aquarium with a simple lighting unit.

How did the Gotha aquarium club experience the end of the GDR? At first, the freedom to travel, the introduction of the Deutsche Mark (instead of the worthless GDR mark), and finally the possibility of contact with West German aquarium clubs were a long-awaited liberation from old restrictions, shortages, and the inbreeding-like reproduction of stock caused by isolation. But soon, the Gotha aquarists, like many other East German clubs, felt the arrogance of their western counterparts and especially of the VDA (Association of German Aquarium and Terrarium Societies), who did not take their new (old) members seriously. Membership had been suspended during the 40 years of the GDR. Yet it soon became clear that the East German hobbyists were far more well-read, technically demanding, successful in breeding, and superior in practical matters. This was a result of scarcity: one could only survive by being better, by outsmarting the restrictions and shortages. This did not please the aloof western club officials, who behaved dismissively and unfairly toward the East German aquarium and terrarium clubs. For the Gotha club, Jan Frank wrote a letter on June 15, 1994 to the director of the VDA, clearly stating the reasons for Gotha's withdrawal.

Jan Frank
Dorotheenstr. 43
99867 Gotha

Gotha, den 15.06.94

Verein für Aquarien- und
volkshilfliche Naturkunde
- Zierfischfreunde Gotha

VDA Geschäftsstelle
Hans Stiller
Luxemburgerstr. 16
44709 Bochum

Werter Herr Stiller!

Am 9.6.94 erhielten wir die Nachricht über die Reaktion des VDA auf die Austritte der thüringer Vereine vom Freund Hertel aus Bad Langensalza.

Unser Verein hat zur Jahreswende die Austrittserklärung an den VDA geschickt. Für uns war es sehr bedauerlich, daß wir bis heute noch keine Antwort auf unsere Mitteilung bekommen hatten. Inzwischen ist ein halbes Jahr vergangen und ich möchte noch einmal zu verschiedenen Punkten Stellung nehmen.

Unser Austritt wurde durch mehrere Faktoren beeinflusst, und betrifft nicht nur die Entscheidung über die weitere Zusammenarbeit zwischen VDA und BNA. Nach unserem Demokratieverständnis, ist es nicht außergewöhnlich das Vereine aus einem Verband austreten, wenn sie sich mit ihrer aquaristischen Arbeit und der Arbeit des Verbandes nicht mehr identifizieren können.

Ein Schwerpunkt dieser fachlichen Meinungsverschiedenheit ist sicherlich der VDA - Befähigungsnachweis. Zu diesem Problem sind wir weiterhin bereit eine ehrliche Diskussion (u.a. in den Fachzeitschriften) zu bereichern.

Wir sind weiterhin der Meinung, das die Geschäftsleitung mit dem Befähigungsnachweis keine qualitativ bessere aquaristische Arbeit erreichen kann.

Zum anderen, aus unserer Sicht, hat der VDA nach der Wende die organisatorische Struktur der neuen Bundesländer lediglich übernommen und eingegliedert, und dafür Beiträge einbezogen. Auch unserem Verein ist es, trotz mehrfacher Bemühungen, nicht gelungen eine ernsthafte Zusammenarbeit mit einem Verein aus den alten Bundesländern aufzubauen.



Letter announcing the Gotha aquarium club's resignation from the VDA, first page.



Jan Frank
Dorotheenstr. 43
99867 Gotha

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volkstümliche Naturkunde
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Hans Stiller
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44709 Bochum

Werter Herr Stiller!

On June 9, 1994, we received news—via our colleague Mr. Herbel from Bad Langensalza—regarding the VDA's reaction to the withdrawal of the Thuringian associations.

At the turn of the year, our association sent its formal notice of withdrawal to the VDA. We found it deeply regrettable that, to this day, we have yet to receive a response to our notification. Six months have since passed, and I would like to take this opportunity to comment once again on several specific points.

Our decision to withdraw was influenced by a number of factors and was not solely a matter of the decision regarding future cooperation between the VDA and the BNA. In keeping with our understanding of democratic principles, we do not consider it unusual for associations to withdraw from a federation when they can no longer identify with the federation's work or with the direction of their own aquaristic activities within that framework.

A central point of this professional disagreement is undoubtedly the VDA's "Certificate of Competence." We remain ready to contribute to an honest discussion regarding this issue (including via articles in specialist journals).

We maintain the view that the Executive Board cannot achieve a higher standard of aquaristic practice simply by implementing this Certificate of Competence.

Furthermore—from our perspective—following German reunification, the VDA merely adopted and incorporated the organizational structures of the "New Federal States" (the former East Germany), while simultaneously collecting membership dues from them.

Despite repeated efforts, our association, too, has failed to establish any meaningful cooperation with an association based in the "Old Federal States" (the former West Germany).



Die Überheblichkeit auf die wir bisweilen stießen war teilweise grenzenlos. Ich möchte Sie daran erinnern, das sich in den 40 Jahren DDR eine eigenständige Aquaristik entwickelt hat, Hierbei spielten natürlich wirtschaftliche Faktoren der ehemaligen DDR eine große Rolle. Jedoch hatte sich eine Struktur entwickelt, die zu 95% nicht auf Importe angewiesen war. Gerade in der Frage der Importfische bietet die Aquaristik heute bundesweit die größten Kritikansätze. Damit wir uns richtig verstehen. Wir trauern nicht den alten Zeiten nach. Aber es ist eben sehr schade, das der VDA aus unseren Erfahrungen nichts einfließen läßt. So bleibt letztendlich das bittere, immer noch vorhandene Verhältnis zwischen Wessi und Ossi, welches wir eigentlich abbauen wollten.

Wir wissen natürlich nicht, ob wir mit unserem Austritt aus dem VDA die inhaltliche Zusammenarbeit, zu der wir jederzeit bereit sind, verbessern oder erleichtern können, aber dies beruht eben auf gegenseitigen Zugehen. Deshalb würden wir uns sehr freuen, wenn das Präsidium auf dieses Schreiben reagiert. Am Besten wäre es natürlich, wenn sich eine Gelegenheit bietet und wir unsere Gedanken persönlich austauschen können.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

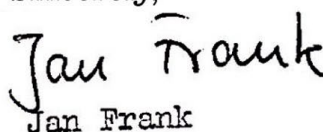
Jan Frank
Jan Frank

Letter announcing the Gotha aquarium club's resignation from the VDA, second page.

The arrogance we occasionally encountered was, at times, boundless. I would like to remind you that, over the 40 years of the GDR's existence, a distinct and independent aquaristics culture developed. Naturally, the economic factors of the former GDR played a major role in this process. However, a structure had evolved that was—to 95%—not dependent on imports. It is precisely regarding the issue of imported fish that the aquaristics community today faces its most significant points of criticism nationwide. Let us be clear: we are not pining for the old days. Yet it is truly regrettable that the VDA fails to incorporate any of our experiences into its work. Ultimately, this leaves us with the bitter—and still-lingering—rift between West Germans and East Germans, a divide we had actually hoped to bridge.

We do not know, of course, whether our withdrawal from the VDA will serve to improve or facilitate the substantive cooperation to which we remain fully committed; however, such cooperation is, by its very nature, contingent upon mutual outreach. We would therefore be very pleased if the Executive Board were to respond to this letter. Ideally, of course, an opportunity would arise for us to exchange our thoughts in person.

Sincerely,


Jan Frank

Letter announcing the Gotha aquarium club's resignation from the VDA, second page, translated using notegpt.io.

In the 1990s, the oldest open-air aquarium once again fell into disrepair. Newspaper articles from that time report on this. Then aquarists came together who cleared it out and rebuilt it, this time together with Sven Hübner and his family, who leased the former club building—which had in the meantime also been used as a café—and converted it into the restaurant “Aquarium.” More recently, further modernization has been undertaken by him. In 2001, I published a photo report on the old Gotha aquarium in my “Aquaristik-Fachmagazin” together with my mother and her sister. Regional newspapers also repeatedly honored Gotha’s aquaristic tradition on various anniversaries.



Restaurant “Aquarium” at the time of its founding.



unabhängig, überparteilich

Gothaer Wochenblatt

Heute mit den
„Informationen des
Landratsamtes“
Ausgabe März 1993

Auflage
57.610

Tel. 2 32 60

Offizielles amtliches Bekanntmachungsorgan des Landkreises Gotha.

Ausg. 10 · Jahrg. 4 · 10. März 1993

Schnell informiert

Oppositionspolitik

Drei Tage nach den starken Verlusten bei den hessischen Kommunalwahlen haben SPD-Politiker eine klarere Oppositionspolitik ihrer Partei gefordert. Nach Ansicht der stellvertretenden Fraktionsvorsitzenden Matthäus-Maier haben die SPD-Ministerpräsidenten bei den Solidarpakt-Gesprächen eine große Verantwortung für das weitere Erscheinungsbild der SPD.

Frühjahrsmesse

In Leipzig begann gestern die Frühjahrsmesse. Rund 1600 Aussteller präsentieren bis Samstag ihre Produkte und Dienstleistungen. Auf einem »Innovationsforum« zeigen etwa 400 Unternehmen aus den neuen Bundesländern neue Verfahren und Techniken. Eine »Infobörse Dialog '93« will den Bürgern die Orientierung in der Marktwirtschaft erleichtern.

New York

Diplomatische Lösung

Der UN-Botschafter der USA, Bartholomew, hat einen Einsatz von US-Bodentruppen in Bosnien »im gegenwärtigen Stadium« ausgeschlossen. Er erklärte, daß sein Land auf diplomatischen Wege eine gerechte Regelung für alle beteiligten Konfliktparteien erreichen wolle. Die Sprecherin von Präsident Clinton hatte zuvor betont, daß die USA keine Vorbereitungen für eine Entsendung von Truppen nach Bosnien getroffen hätten.

Moskau

Machtkampf

Das russische Parlament will

Kleinod ist jetzt eine Müllhalde

Dabei war das Gothaer Aquarium Deutschlands erstes

Gotha (sd). Es ist noch gar nicht so lange her, da wurde es als Sehenswürdigkeit der Stadt Gotha gepriesen; das Aquarium. Etwas mehr als sechzig Jahre - doch die haben ausgereicht, daraus ein Gelände zu machen, das heute mehr einer Müllhalde als einem botanischen Kleinod gleicht. Dabei war das Gothaer Aquarium das erste deutsche Freilandaquarium. Erst viel später wurden in Berlin und Hamburg ähnliche Vereine ins Leben gerufen.

Bereits 1882 wurde es eingeweiht, exakt am 9. Mai. In den 70er Jahren unseres Jahrhunderts gab es bereits Bestrebungen, das Aquarium wieder in Ordnung zu bringen. So wohl die Sache auch gemeint war, so nutzlos war sie auch. Jetzt denkt man in der Fachabteilung für Grünanlagen darüber nach, wie im Süden der Stadt diese Sehenswürdigkeit wieder auferstehen kann. Dazu hat man eingangs eine Studie in Auftrag gegeben, die den Zustand beschreibt und sagt, was zur Erhaltung notwendig ist. Und diese in aller erster Linie ist die Erstellung eines Projektes. Denn wer wie wild darauf los arbeitet, richtet bekanntlich eine Menge Schaden an. Auch die Finanzierung ist wichtig, doch da gibt es einen ebenso klugen wie praktischen Gedanken: Ausgleichsmaßnahmen. Jeder neue entstehende Betrieb, gleich welcher Art auch immer, versiegelt Natur mit Beton. Dafür muß er einen Ausgleich schaffen. Mit diesen Mitteln dann eine solche Aktion finanziell beleben wie die Rekonstruktion des Gothaer Aquariums, ist mehr



Wahrlich wenig erfreulich der Anblick des Gothaer Aquariums derzeit. Eine Studie zählt auf, was an dringlichen Arbeiten notwendig wäre, dieses Kleinod der Stadt wiederaufzufrischen zu lassen. Foto: sd.

als lobenswert. Immerhin wird in der Bundesrepublik jährlich eine Fläche von der Größe des Bodensees zugebaut, und es dauert gerade mal 250 Jahre bis in umserem Nachbarland Hessen alle Na-

tur unter Beton verschwunden ist - geht es weiter wie bisher.

Kehren wir zurück zum Aquarium. Sein Entstehen verdankt es unter anderem der ausgestorbene Zunft der Röhrenbohrer. Diese Handwerker benutzten den Teich zum Lagern und Wässern der Holzstämme aus denen sie dann holzerne Wasserleitungen schufen. Dieser Teich war vor mehr als einhundert Jahren auch bereits mit Gerumpel und Schutt verschüttet. In mühevoller Arbeit wurde er freigelegt und eben jenes wundervolle Areal geschaffen, von dem in den 30er Jahren ein Besucher schreibt: »Es bietet sowohl dem Schaulustigen als auch dem ernststen Naturfreund manches Seltene und Hochinteressante zur Unterhaltung und Belehrung.« Die Wasserfläche maß zweidreiviertel Ar, gespeist wurde der Teich von einer Reihe schwacher aber warmer Quellen, die am Südufer entspringen.

Mittels eines Projektes könnte der Urzustand wieder hergestellt werden - jedenfalls in wesentlichen Teilen.

Täter gestellt

Gotha(mb). In der Ülleber Straße stellte eine Streife der Polizei am 6. März, gegen 22.50 Uhr, drei Jugendliche in einem Abrißgebäude. Die 13- bis 16jährigen hatten im Haus Elektronik aufbewahrt, die wahrscheinlich aus Diebstählen stammt. Auch waren sie im Besitz einer fremden Scheck-Karte, mit der möglicherweise Geld abgehoben wurde.

12 Mark geraubt

Kriminalstatistik 1992

Aufklärungsquote über Landesdurchschnitt

Gotha(mb). Die Polizeidirektion (PD) Gotha legte am Montag ihre erste Kriminalstatistik vor. Polizeirat Hans Kupke erläuterte im Rahmen einer Pressekonferenz die Statistik für das Jahr 1992. Nicht ohne Stolz verwies er darauf, daß die Aufklärungsquote über dem Landesdurchschnitt liegt. Im Bereich der PD Gotha, die Führungsdienststelle und zuständig für die Kreise Arnstadt, Bad Langensalza, Eisenach, Ilmenau und Gotha ist, wurden im vergangenen Jahr 18 210 Straftaten erfaßt. Davon konnte die Polizei 6 884 Fälle aufklären, was einer Aufklärungsquote von 37,8 Prozent entspricht. Gegenüber dem Jahr 1991 bedeutet das eine Steigerung um 2,9 Prozent. Bei einer Bevölkerungszahl von 417 706 Einwohnern traten 5 468 Täter in Erscheinung.

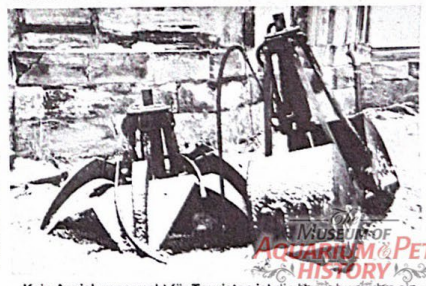
Die Diebstahlskriminalität bildete im vergangenen Jahr, wie schon im Jahr davor, den Hauptschwerpunkt an der Gesamtkriminalität. Es wurden 11 933 Fälle registriert. In der Gewaltkriminalität wurden 238 Fälle erfaßt, wobei alle Mordfälle aufgeklärt werden konnten. In der Rauschgiftkriminalität ist eine Steigerung zu verzeichnen. Von den 39 erfaßten Fällen klärte

man 32 auf. Drogentote wurden nicht registriert.

Im Bereich der PD Gotha erfaßte man 1992 insgesamt 5 468 Tatverdächtige, davon 4 291 männlichen Geschlechts. Im Kreis Gotha, der durch die Polizeiinspektionen Nord und Süd (mit Sitz in Waltershausen) betreut wird, wurden 7 599 Straftaten registriert. Das bedeutet eine Steigerung um 29 Straftaten.

All diese Zahlen lassen von der Einsatzbereitschaft der Polizei nur ein wenig ahnen. Die Statistik verschweigt auch die Probleme der Ordnungshüter, mit denen diese zu kämpfen haben. Dennoch sind die Polizeibeamten stets für den Schutz und die Sicherheit der Bürger da. Dafür dankte der Zweite Kreisbeigeordnete des Landrates, Peter Gerlach, Polizeirat Hans Kupke. Der Stellvertreter des Landrates betonte auch, daß Vorbeugung von Straftaten von großer Wichtigkeit sei. Freizeitbereiche, besonders für Kinder und Jugendliche seien wichtig. Kommunen, freie Träger und viele andere sind gefragt. Aber auch die Bürger könnten selbst mithelfen, ihre eigene Sicherheit zu erhöhen. Ein Hinweis der Polizei dazu fehlt es nicht.

Niemand verantwortlich?



Kein Anziehungspunkt für Touristen ist die Umgebung des einstigen Orangeriecafés. Hier sollte sich bald etwas zum Positiven ändern! Foto:Burckhardt

Article on the poor condition of the aquarium from the Gotha Weekly Newspaper, March 10, 1993.

A Gem is Now a Dump

Yet the Gotha Aquarium Was Germany's First

Gotha (sd). It was not so very long ago that it was hailed as a major attraction of the city of Gotha: the Aquarium. A little over sixty years have passed—yet that was enough time to transform the site into a grounds that today resembles a garbage dump more than a botanical gem. And yet, the Gotha Aquarium was Germany's very first open-air aquarium. It was not until much later that similar societies were established in Berlin and Hamburg.

It was inaugurated as early as 1882—on May 9th, to be precise. In the 1970s, efforts were already underway to restore the aquarium to its former state. However well-intentioned those efforts may have been, they proved entirely futile. Now, the city's Parks and Green Spaces Department is considering how this landmark in the southern part of the city might be brought back to life. To this end, they have commissioned an initial study to assess the current condition of the site and outline the measures necessary for its preservation. The very first step identified in this study is the development of a comprehensive project plan; for, as is well known, rushing into work haphazardly without a plan often results in significant damage. Funding is, of course, also a critical factor; however, there is a concept—one as clever as it is practical—that offers a solution: compensatory measures. Any new business or facility being established—regardless of its nature—inevitably covers natural ground with concrete. In return, the developer is required to provide environmental compensation. Using



The current sight of the Gotha Aquarium is, truly, far from pleasing. A study enumerates the urgent work that would be necessary to bring this urban gem back to life. Photo: sd.

these compensatory funds to financially underwrite a project such as the reconstruction of the Gotha Aquarium is a strategy that is as praiseworthy. After all, in Germany an area the size of Lake Con-

stance, is built over every year; and—if current trends continue—it will take a mere 250 years until all traces of nature in our neighboring state of Hesse have vanished beneath concrete.

Let us return to the Aquarium. Its creation is owed, among other things, to the now-extinct guild of pipe-borers. These craftsmen used the pond to store and soak the logs from which they then fashioned wooden water pipes. More than a century ago, this very pond had already been choked with rubble and debris. Through painstaking effort, it was cleared out—creating that very same wonderful site about which a visitor wrote in the 1930s: "It offers both the casual sightseer and the earnest nature lover many rare and highly fascinating things for both entertainment and instruction." The water surface measured 2.75 acres, and the pond was fed by a series of modest yet warm springs welling up on the southern bank.

Through a dedicated project, its original state could be restored—at least in its essential aspects.

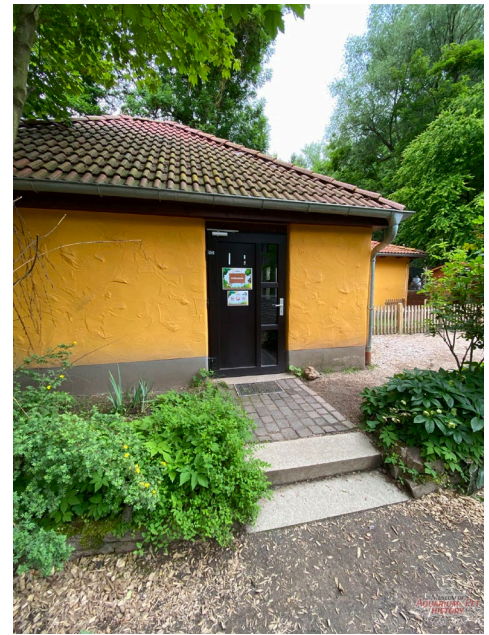
Kreistag beschloß:

Article on the poor condition of the aquarium from the Gotha Weekly Newspaper, March 10, 1993, translated using notegpt.io.

The local wildlife park on the former Danio grounds has been converted into a small zoo, which barely still reveals that it once was a beautiful park with natural ponds. These have been filled in and replaced by installations that no longer resemble the naturalistic Danio-era design. Across Europe, zoos increasingly follow a standardized design language that unfortunately obscures individual character. However, precisely at the site of the old aquarium building, there is now a newly constructed facility—apparently built on its original foundations—with well-maintained aquariums and terrariums.



Entrance to Gotha's zoo on the former Danio site today.

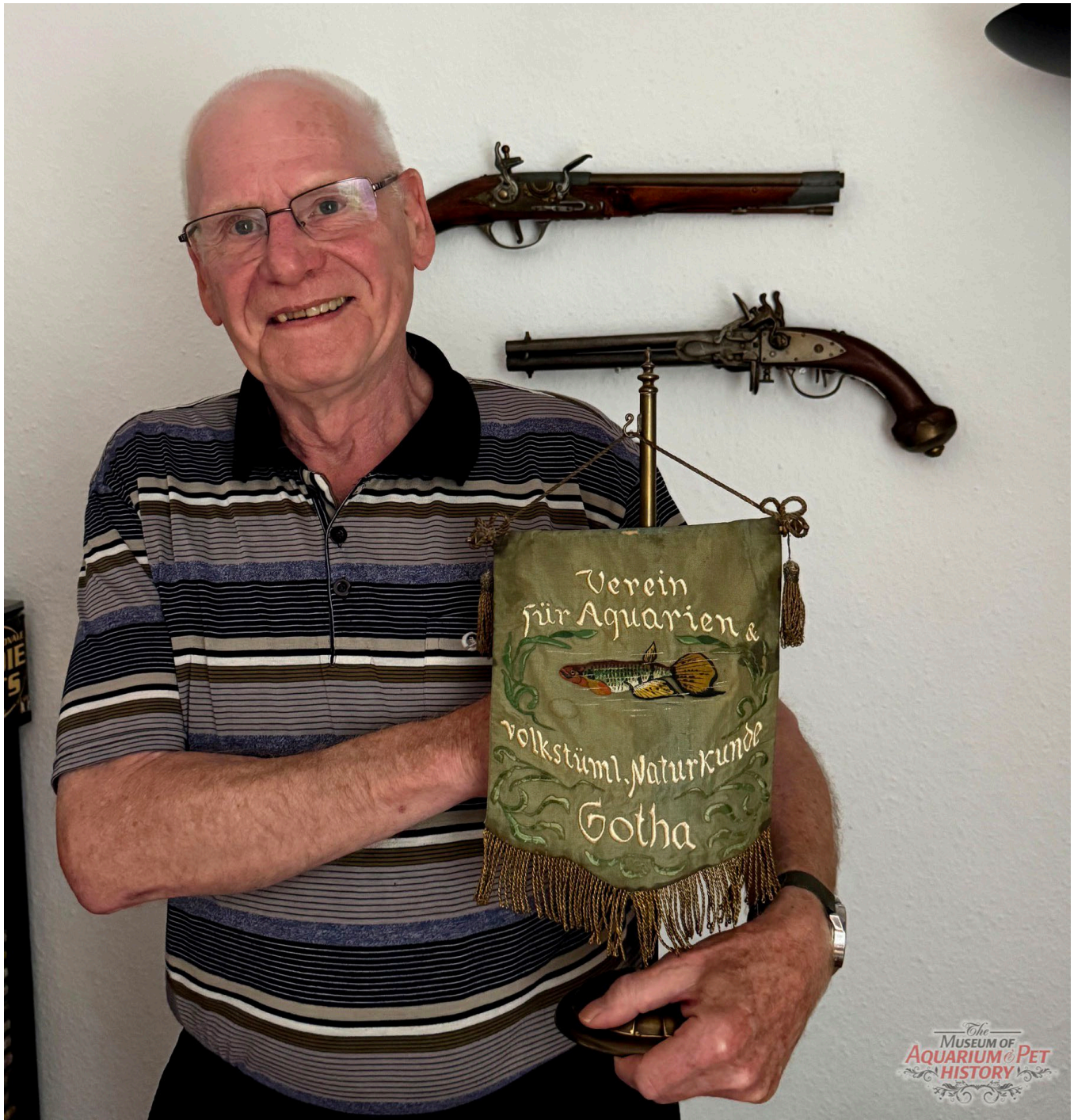


A new aquarium building has been constructed on the site of the former Danio aquarium house.

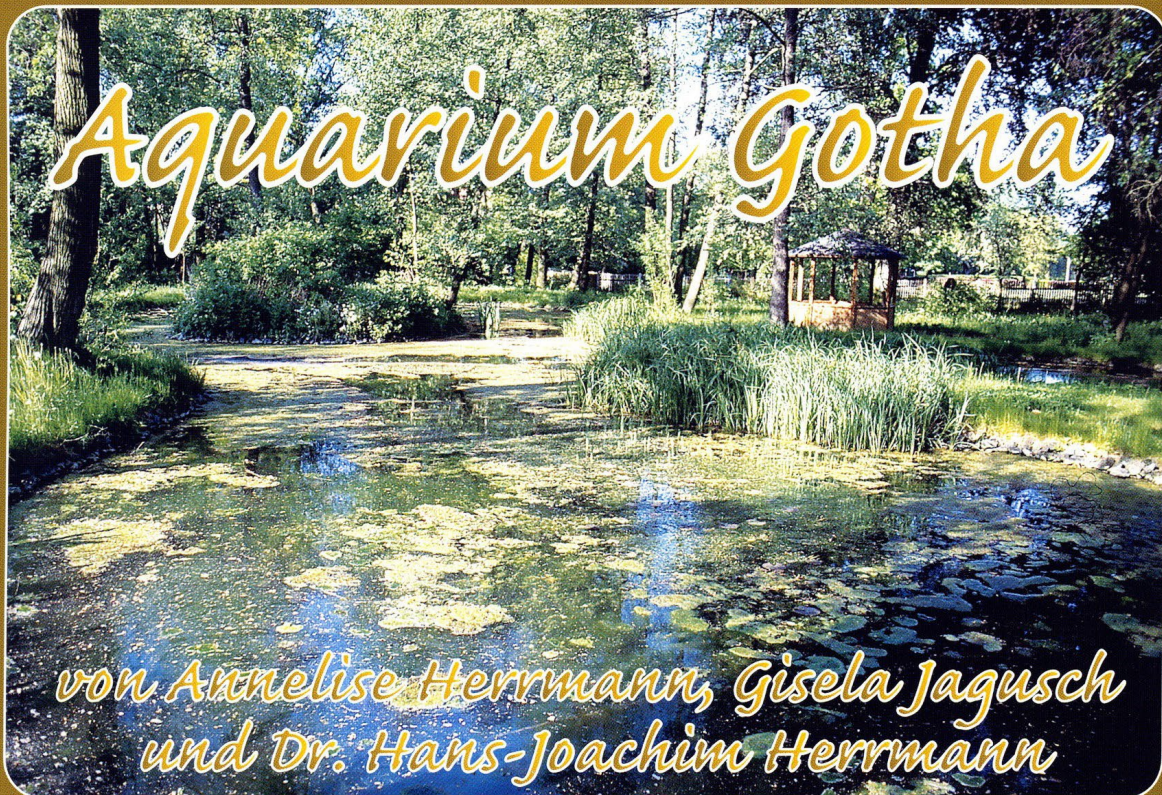


The aquariums and terrariums are attractively designed and modernly equipped.

Finally, in 2022, city officials together with local heritage enthusiasts and conservationists decided to convert the site of the aquarium into a protected biotope for wetland animals and plants. The aquarium club, which continues to meet in the restaurant “Aquarium,” welcomes this stewardship by the city. The members are now elderly and urgently need younger reinforcements. Uwe Heustock is the current chairman and guards the relics of the founding era like a treasure. Given the ups and downs in the now 144-year history of the Gotha club, one may expect that a renewal will soon come again— with new impulses, ideas, and goals, always grounded in the knowledge-based broad field of aquaristics and vivaristics.



Uwe Heustock is the current chairman of the Gotha aquarium club and preserves the remaining historical artifacts, here shown with the VDA pennant.



Wenn man die Geschichte der Aquaristik verfolgt, so wird man feststellen, dass entscheidende Impulse für neue Ideen, Methoden oder Experimente oft von Lehrern ausgingen. Pädagogen wie ROßMÄBLER, die es verstanden, die faszinierende Lebewelt unter Wasser leicht verständlich und volkstümlich darzustellen, trugen wesentlich dazu bei, dass Vivaristik bereits Anfang dieses Jahrhunderts zu einem Volkshobby wurde, das sich selbst Arbeitslose leisten konnten, denn es ließ sich in der eigenen Wohnung betreiben und warf durch den Verkauf von Nachzuchten sogar einen kleinen Gewinn ab. Das ist übrigens, abgesehen von meerwassergefüllten oder mit farbig bekleckten Karpfen besetzten Repräsentationsbassins, bis heute so geblieben. Und auch die Lehrer wirken immer noch volksbildnerisch durch ihre populärwissenschaftlichen Beiträge: Viele unserer Autoren sind Pädagogen, etwa STALLKNECHT, SEEGERS, SCHÖPFEL, OTT ...

Die nördlich des Thüringer Waldes gelegene Stadt Gotha hatte bereits im

19. Jahrhundert – gefördert durch progressive Fürsten im Schloss Friedenstein sowie durch eine fortschrittliche Stadtverwaltung – den Ruf, „Schulstadt“ zu sein. So waren es auch die Gothaer Lehrer Direktor Jakob SCHÄFFER und Studienrat Fritz MATTHES, die aus den zwanglosen, durch die gleichen Interessen immer wieder zufällig entstandenen Treffen beim Tümpeln in einem Feuchtgebiet in der Nähe der Königsquelle regelmäßige, organisierte Bildungsveranstaltungen machen wollten. So entstand 1882 der erste vivaristische Verein der Welt unter dem Namen „Aquarium“. Noch waren die Importe bunt schillernder Fische aus wärmeren Gefilden nicht abzusehen, noch ermöglichten die damaligen technischen Voraussetzungen keine gut durchlüfteten oder gar gefilterten Warmwasseraquarien. Da lag doch die Idee nicht fern, Fische und Wasserpflanzen in Teichen zu kultivieren.

In besagtem Feuchtgebiet hatten Mönche im früheren Dorf Mittelhausen Teiche nahe der ehemaligen Mönchsmühle angelegt. Das bot sich offenbar

an, denn hier entspringen außer der Königsquelle, die sich zu einem Bach ergießt, einige kleine Quellen. Südlich des Flüsschens Ratsrinne befand sich unter anderen der von einer relativ warmen (3 bis 5°C) Quelle gespeiste Röhrenteich, so benannt, weil in ihm von Röhrenbohrern Lärchenstämme gewässert wurden, bevor man sie in der Stadt als Wasserleitungen verlegte. Hier war also auch im Winter ein frostfreies Milieu für Fische und Pflanzen gegeben. Damit fremdländische Pflanzen und Fische in Freilandkulturen gepflegt und gezüchtet werden können, braucht man eben solche Voraussetzungen. Außerdem eignete sich das überaus weiche Gothaer Wasser (gothaha = griechisches Wort für gutes Wasser, resultierend aus einem seinerzeit sensationellen Kanalbau im Jahr 1369) So richteten die Lehrer gemeinsam mit vielen Vereinsmitgliedern und Schülern, finanziell unterstützt durch den Justus PERTHES, eine Teichanlage ein, die einem kleinen Park glich. 1895 bis 1897 folgten den bekannten Landkartenverleger (Herrmann Haak) weitere Teiche, die den beiden Pädago-

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If one traces the history of aquaristics, one discovers that crucial impulses for new ideas, methods, or experiments often originated with teachers. Educators like Rossmässler—who possessed the gift of presenting the fascinating underwater world in a way that was both easily understandable and accessible to the general public—played a pivotal role in ensuring that vivaristics became a popular hobby as early as the beginning of the last century. It was a pastime that even the unemployed could afford, for it could be pursued within one's own home and, through the sale of captive-bred specimens, even yielded a small profit. Incidentally—aside from saltwater tanks or elaborate display basins stocked with artificially dyed carp—this remains true to this day. And teachers continue to serve an educational role through their contributions to popular science literature: many of our authors are educators—such as Stallknecht, Seegers, Schöppel, and Ott.

Situated north of the Thuringian Forest, the city of Gotha had already earned a reputation as a "city of schools" in the 19th century a distinct-

ion fostered by progressive princes residing at Friedenstein Castle as well as by a forward-thinking municipal administration. It was, in fact, two teachers from Gotha—Director Jakob Schäffer and Senior Teacher Fritz Matthes—who sought to transform their informal gatherings into regular, organized educational events; these meetings had arisen quite by chance, time and again, out of a shared interest in collecting aquatic specimens in a wetland near the Königssquelle spring. Thus, in 1882, the world's first vivaristic society was founded under the name "Aquarium." At that time, the importation of brightly shimmering fish from warmer climates was not yet on the horizon, nor did the technical capabilities of the era allow for well-aerated—let alone filtered—heated aquariums. Consequently, the idea of cultivating fish and aquatic plants in ponds was a perfectly natural one.

In the aforementioned wetland, monks in the former village of Mittelhausen had established ponds near the site of the old monks' mill. This location was evidently well-suited for the purpose, as—in addition to the *Königs-

quelle* (King's Spring), which flows into a stream—several smaller springs originate here. South of the small river Rastrinne lay, among others, the *Röhrenteich* (Pipe Pond), fed by a relatively warm spring (3 to 5°C); it was so named because larch logs intended for use as water pipes were soaked there by pipe-borers before being laid as water mains within the city. Thus, a frost-free environment for fish and plants was ensured here, even during the winter months. To cultivate and breed exotic plants and fish in outdoor settings, precisely such conditions are required. Furthermore, the exceptionally soft water of Gotha—(from *gothaha*, the Greek word for "good water," a name derived from a canal construction project undertaken in 1369 that was considered sensational at the time)—proved ideally suited for this purpose. Consequently, the teachers—working in collaboration with numerous club members and students, and with financial support from Justus Perthes—established a pond complex that resembled a small park. Between 1895 and 1897, additional ponds were added to the site of the renowned landscape publisher (Hermann Haack, 1843-1914).

gen zu Ehren „Schäfferteich“ und „Matthesteich“ genannt wurden. Um die Jahrhundertwende folgte ein weiterer Teich. Noch heute vorbildlich wirkende Vereinsstatuten ermöglichten praktische naturkundliche Studien und gleichsam bildende Erholung in der Freizeit. Das „Gothaer Aquarium“ war als Verein und als weltweit erste Aquarienfreianlage entstanden.

Immer größer wurde das Interesse an der neuen Anlage. Nicht nur die Parkanlage lud zum Spaziergehen ein, sondern auch die im klaren Teichwasser gut zu beobachtenden Goldfische, Bitterlinge und Rotfedern ließen insbesondere Kinderherzen höher schlagen. Die Gothaer Schulen hielten fortan manche Unterrichtsstunde im Aquarium ab. Aber auch als besonderer Schulgarten fungierte es. Dabei sind insbesondere die Sumpf- und Wasserpflanzenkulturen im milden Milieu des Röhrenteiches erwähnenswert, denn 474 Pflanzenarten gedeihen im Gothaer Aquarium. Welche Wasserpflanzengärtneri kann heute einen solchen Artenreichtum vorweisen? Diese Kulturen waren Vorreiter für die Akklimatisierung und später auch die Aquarienhaltung. Sie wurde ab 1890, seit einer Ausstellung der Gothaer Wasserpflanzenkulturen im Grand-Hotel zu Berlin, zum Vorbild für alle später folgenden Züchtereien. Doch auch mit der ersten Fischbörse Europas im Jahre 1883, bei der Nachzuchten einheimischer Arten feilgeboten und getauscht wurden, schrieb das „Gothaer Aquarium“ Geschichte.

Doch auch in der Vereinsmeierei waren die Gothaer Aquarianer für die folgenden Generationen beispielgebend. Nach Querelen löste sich das „Aquarium“ bereits 1922 auf. Die Teichanlage wurde von der Stadt den Schulen zugeschrieben, die damit fortan einen edlen Schulgarten nutzen konnten. Inzwischen gründeten sich weitere neue vivaristische Vereine in der Stadt unter den Namen „Nymphaea“ und „Danio“. Beide richteten wiederum Teichanlagen ein, die sogenannten „Sieben Teiche“ (heute nicht mehr existierend) und das „Danio-Gelände“ (hier befindet sich der heutige Tiergarten Gothas). So bekannten Züchtern wie Karl FUCHS und Kurt KOCH gelangen dort manche Erstzuchten neu eingeführter Arten, insbe-

sondere natürlich jener, die weiches Wasser bevorzugen. Spektakuläre Ausstellungen der seltenen Arten sorgten für Furore.

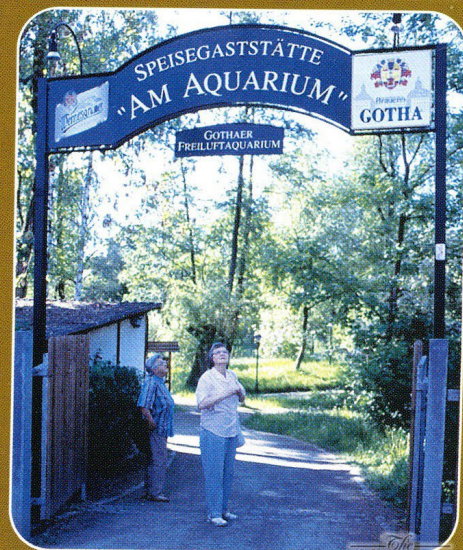
Alle Freilandaquarien wurden in den letzten Wochen des zweiten Weltkrieges zerstört. Erst nach 1950 gaben die Gothaer Schulen die Hoheit über das traditionelle Aquarium an die Stadt zurück. Es befand sich damals in einem erbarmungswürdigen Zustand: Die Kriegsschäden waren das eine, wild abgelegter Müll und die naturgemäße Verschlammung das andere. Erst 1960 bemühte sich Karl FUCHS um den Wiederaufbau mit Hilfe ehrenamtlicher Helfer aus dem wieder aktiven Gothaer Aquarianerverein. Immerhin war es den gleichen Enthusiasten bereits 1951 bis 1954 gelungen, das ehemalige „Danio-Gelände“ zum Heimattiergarten umzufunktionieren, der fortan von der Stadt betrieben wurde. In großem Arbeitsaufwand entstand die alte Aquarienanlage wieder so, wie sie Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts ausgesehen haben musste. Doch die Zeiten hatten sich geändert. Andere Prioritäten und fehlende Förderung ließen das gerade erst wieder hergerichtete Gelände erneut verfallen. Angler- und Geflügelzüchterverband nisteten sich zeitweise ein, doch die alte Schönheit des längst zu einem altgewachsenen Park entwickelten Gothaer Aquariums war dahin.

Erst Mitte der 90er Jahre bewirkte eine Klausel im Thüringer Naturschutzgesetz, dass für die Versiegelung von Boden beim Errichten eines neuen Industrie- und Gewerbezentrum im Süden Gothas – unweit des besagten alten Feuchtgebietes – Grünflächen rekultiviert werden mussten. Durch diese Fügung wurden städtische Mittel frei, die zur Restaurierung des mittlerweile geschützten Parkes, des alten Gothaer Aquariums, führten.

Eine trefflich, doch gleichzeitig mit Unterhaltungswert formulierte Parkordnung soll ein erneutes Verwüsten des Geländes verhindern. Das tun übrigens auch die Mitarbeiter des städtischen Gartenbauamtes in regelmäßiger Arbeit. Die

teiche wurden entschlammt und ihre Ufer befestigt, die Königsquelle neu eingefasst. Holzbrücken, Pergola, Pavillon und neu befestigte Wege entsprechen dem Stil der 80er Jahre des 19. Jahrhunderts. Auch die Neupflanzungen von Bäumen und Sträuchern sind damit gut abgestimmt. Ein neuer Eingangsbereich lädt alle Passanten zum Besuch des Aquariums ein. Für die Vermittlung von Wissen sorgen die didaktisch gut aufgebauten Tafeln über einheimische Tiere und Pflanzen. Das leibliche Wohl befriedigt eine Gaststätte.

Freilich ist manches von den Idealen der beiden Pädagogen vom Zahn der Zeit benagt worden. Die durch moderne Technik möglich gemachten schmucken Wohnzimmerraquarien befriedigen den Beobachtungs- und Forscherdrang von mehr als drei Millionen Menschen allein in Deutschland. Da braucht man nicht mehr die Goldorfen in einem Freilandaquarium, um das Herz höher schlagen zu lassen. Dafür haben sich einheimische Tiere im Gothaer Aquarium angesiedelt. Dort sieht man wieder unzählige Wasserfrösche und viele Wasserinsekten. Vielleicht setzen ja die Gärtner demnächst wieder jene Pflanzen ein, die sich auch schon 1882 in den Teichen des Gothaer Aquariums befanden, also einige Seerosen, Sumpffirnis und solche Arten, die hier erstmals in Freilandkultur den mitteleuropäischen Winter schadlos überstanden.



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honor of the two educators, these were named the "Schäfferteich" and the "Matthesteich." Around the turn of the century, yet another pond was added to the complex. The club's statutes—which remain exemplary to this day—facilitated practical nature studies while simultaneously offering educational recreation during leisure time. Thus, the "Gothaer Aquarium" came into existence—both as an association and as the world's very first outdoor aquarium facility.

Interest in the new facility grew steadily. It was not only the park grounds that invited visitors to take a stroll; the goldfish, bitterlings, and rudd—easily observed in the clear pond water—also delighted visitors, and children in particular. From then on, schools in Gotha frequently held classes at the aquarium. It also served a unique function as a specialized school garden. In this regard, the cultures of marsh and aquatic plants thriving in the mild environment of the reed-lined pond are especially noteworthy, for 474 plant species flourished within the Gotha Aquarium. What aquatic plant grower today can boast such a wealth of species? These plant cultures pioneered the fields of acclimatization and, subsequently, aquarium cultivation. Following an exhibition of the Gotha aquatic plant cultures at the Grand Hotel in Berlin in 1890, the facility became the model for all subsequent breeding establishments. Yet the "Gotha Aquarium" also made history in 1883 by hosting Europe's very first fish exchange, where captive-bred specimens of native species were offered for sale and trade.

Yet, even in the realm of club organization, the aquarists of Gotha served as a model for subsequent generations. Following internal disputes, the "Aquarium" club dissolved as early as 1922. The pond facility was subsequently allocated by the city to local schools, which were thus able to utilize a magnificent school garden from that point onward. In the meantime, other new vivaristic societies were founded in the city under the names "Nymphaea" and "Danio." Both, in turn, established their own pond facilities: the so-called "Seven Ponds" (which no longer exist today) and the "Danio Grounds" (the site of Gotha's current zoo). There, re-

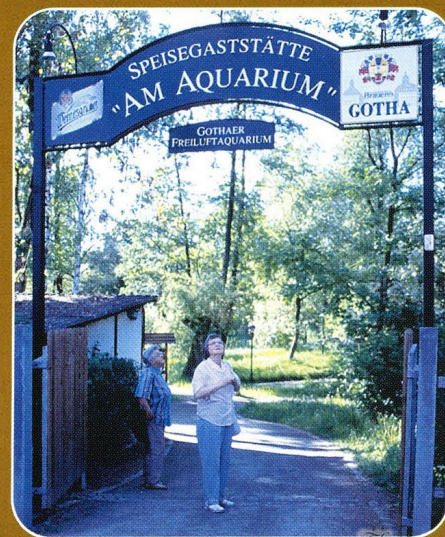
nowned breeders such as Karl Fuchs and Kurt Koch succeeded in achieving the first captive breedings of various newly introduced species—particularly, of course, those that prefer soft water. Spectacular exhibitions featuring these rare species created quite a sensation.

All of the outdoor aquariums were destroyed during the final weeks of the Second World War. It was not until after 1950 that the schools of Gotha relinquished stewardship of the traditional aquarium site back to the city. At that time, it was in a deplorable condition: war damage was one issue, while illegally dumped refuse and thenatural accumulation of silt were another. It was not until 1960 that Karl Fuchs spearheaded reconstruction efforts, aided by volunteers from the newly reactivated Gotha Aquarists' Association. After all, these same enthusiasts had already succeeded between 1951 and 1954 in transforming the former "Danio grounds" into a local animal park—a facility that was subsequently operated by the city. Through immense labor, the old aquarium complex was restored to look exactly as it must have appeared in the late 19th century. However, times had changed. Shifting priorities and a lack of funding caused the site—which had only just been restored—to fall into disrepair once again. Associations of anglers and poultry breeders temporarily took up residence there, but the former beauty of the Gotha Aquarium—which had long since evolved into a mature, established park—was lost. It was not until the mid-1990s that a specific clause in the Thuringian Nature Conservation Act mandated that, to offset the soil sealing caused by the construction of a new industrial and commercial center in southern Gotha—not far from the aforementioned historic wetland site—new green spaces had to be reclaimed and restored. Through this turn of events, municipal funds became available, which led to the restoration of the park—now a protected site—the old Gotha Aquarium.

A park ordinance—formulated with both precision and entertainment value—aims to prevent the grounds from being vandalized once again. Incidentally, the staff of the municipal parks department

also contribute to this effort through their regular maintenance work. The ponds have been desilted and their banks reinforced, while the *Königsquelle* spring has been newly enclosed. The wooden bridges, pergola, pavilion, and newly paved paths all reflect the style of the 1880s. The newly planted trees and shrubs are also harmoniously integrated into this aesthetic. A new entrance area invites all passersby to visit the aquarium. Didactically well-structured information panels on native animals and plants serve to impart knowledge to visitors, while a restaurant caters to their physical well-being.

Admittedly, the ideals of the two educators have, in some respects, been gnawed away by the passage of time. The attractive home aquariums—made possible by modern technology—now satisfy the urge to observe and explore in more than three million people in Germany alone. Consequently, one no longer needs to seek out golden orfe in an outdoor aquarium to feel a thrill of excitement. Instead, native wildlife has taken up residence in the Gotha Aquarium. There, one can once again observe countless water frogs and numerous aquatic insects. Perhaps the gardeners will soon replant the very species that graced the ponds of the Gotha Aquarium back in 1882—such as water lilies, marsh irises, and other varieties that, for the first time in an outdoor setting, successfully withstood the Central European winter without sustaining any damage.



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Article in the April/May issue of Aquaristik-Fachmagazin (2001), third page.

The photo translates:

Visitor Regulations

Dear Visitors to the Aquarium, This facility is here for the enjoyment of all citizens. We require your personal support to ensure that this wetland habitat can develop in harmony with both its natural and newly created conditions.

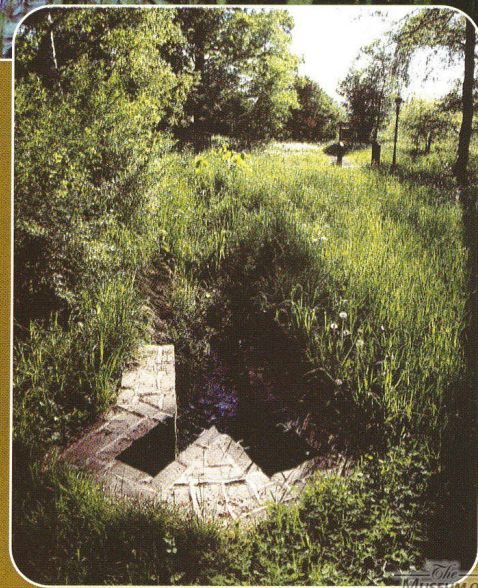
This habitat serves as a home for amphibians, birds, small mammals, insects, and various plant communities. To help protect this facility, we kindly ask that you observe the following guidelines:

1. Please remain on the designated paths so that the local flora and fauna may develop undisturbed.
2. Bringing dogs into the facility is not permitted.
3. Bicycles must be parked in the racks provided in the entrance area.
4. Please keep a watchful eye on your children. A guided tour—accompanied by explanations of the facility—will make the visit a more enriching experience for children.
5. The removal of plants is strictly prohibited.
6. During the winter months, walking on frozen areas of the ponds is strictly forbidden.
7. Feeding ducks or other animals is discouraged and is harmful to the water ecosystem.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding.

Facility Opening Hours: Monday through Sunday, starting at 10:00 AM. Any alternative arrangements must be made through the City of Gotha Parks Department.

City Administration of Gotha



AF 158 59

The
MUSEUM OF
AQUARIUM & PET
HISTORY

Article in the April/May issue of Aquristik-Fachmagazin (2001), fourth page.

The
MUSEUM OF
AQUARIUM & PET
HISTORY



The street on which the aquarium is located is named “Am Aquarium.”



From it branches off the street “An den sieben Teichen,” recalling the former outdoor facility.



Plaque at the entrance of the aquarium outlining its history.



Memorial stone in the aquarium as it appears today.



Information boards about the wetland inhabitants are placed throughout the grounds.



The aquarium entrance today.