



# The Sea Sta



Newsletter of the Wasatch Marine Aquarium Society

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## Welcome to the Newest Members

Donald Ballash  
Jeremy Berkholder  
Jeff Hite  
Lori Johnson  
Shane Johnson  
Alan Jones  
Thanh Nguyen  
Jason Scott

## WMAS to meet at SeaBase

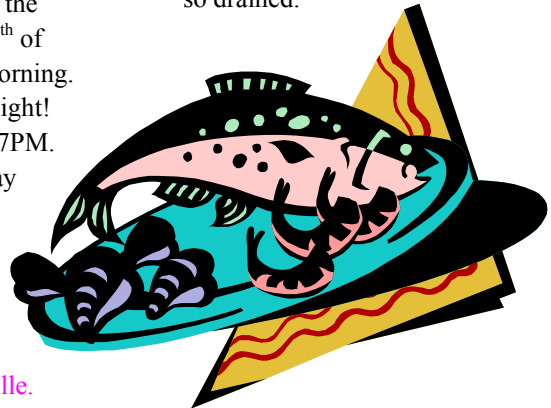
The **Annual Summer Barbecue**, is at SeaBase again this year. Please plan to visit anytime between the hours of 4PM on Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> of July and breakfast the next morning. Yes, some are camping overnight! Dinner should be ready after 7PM. A donation to the club will pay for the meat, provided by Danh and Tim, both great cooks. Please bring a salad or dessert and your favorite game. **SeaBase is located northwest of Grantsville. After traveling west on I-80 take exit 84 south about 5 miles. You will see an old sign on the left.** See their web site at [www.seabase.net](http://www.seabase.net)

On your way out, you may want to visit some of our member's homes to see their aquariums. Please call ahead.. Dianne Freedman lives at Stansbury Park. Her telephone number is (435) 843-0545. Rick Malin lives in Tooele. His number is (435)843-5095 ♦

## Third Annual Reef Tour in September

The **Third Annual Reef Aquarium Tour** is being planned. We may do it for three hours Friday and four hours Saturday, giving people a chance to see the north area or south area or both if they decide to go both days. And there is a choice of **Friday and Saturday, September**

**29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> or Friday and Saturday October 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.** You may have attended previous tours in '97 or '98 (sorry we missed '99). All day Saturday was a long day. If we split it into two days perhaps we won't be so drained.



This is a great event in which we can show off our aquariums. It is a lot of fun. Everyone will be contacted to participate in this major club event. A pre tour event the week before will allow participants to view each others aquariums. ♦

## Wonderful SeaBase

*By Adam Blundell*

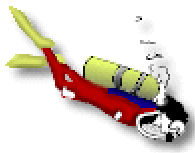
Sea Base is a wonderful place to see marine life. There are many fish that you would not have the chance to see, without traveling a long distance. It also provides the opportunity to see these fish in a large setting. This large area allows room for the fish to grow to their maximum size.

There are also many non living things to see. My favorite sunken treasure is the old water skiing boat. For those of you most interested in the livin' things, I think you will be most

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impressed with the size and number of fish. The large Koran Angelfish are around a foot long. There [was] also the biggest puffer I have ever seen, probably 18 inches or so. (please see box to the right) There is an Emperor Angelfish that is very impressive as well. It really stands out with its bright colors. Although difficult for many to find, the Nurse Sharks are quite impressive. They appear to be around seven feet long, and are usually in some sort of cave. Hundreds of shrimp can be found along the bottom of this sea. Sometimes it appears that the ground is crawling, because of these little buggers. To get a close up view of the fish, I recommend bringing some food. By offering some fresh shrimp, or romaine lettuce, you can attract many fish to eat right out of your hand.

Sea Base has snorkel and scuba gear for rent. And don't forget the WMAS discount. I would certainly take advantage of this oasis and try some snorkeling. The earlier in the day the better. I would say that around 3 or 4 o'clock there should be plenty of sunshine out. This gives you plenty of time, before the meeting begins. The food has always been a highlight to the event. Please remember to bring a salad or dessert. Good adventure'n to all of you. ♦



## New Leadership for WMAS

The new look to the Sea Star is because of a new editor, for this month anyway. As you may have heard, **Mark Peterson**, is the new **WMAS President**. The new **Vice President** is **Danh Ngo**. **Cheri Anderson** remains as **Secretary**. A new member **Rick Malin** is **Treasurer**. **Cindy Jones** remains as **Librarian**. **Council members** are **Joe**



### *Mitzi, In Memoriam*

Mitzi the Puffer passed away just a few weeks ago. Linda Nelson, owner of SeaBase had some Boy Scouts there, and they thought it just too much fun to see her puff up again and again. It caused such stress. We will miss her big blue-green eyes looking up at us asking for a handout.

Jones, Tim Weidauer, Kelley Johnson, Dianne Freedman, Kevin Judd, and a new member, Michael Howton.

On behalf of all club members past and present, I wish to thank all those who have done so much to promote the success of the WMAS. To all those who have volunteered to serve.

Many thanks to our outgoing President, Joe Jones, and special thanks to the outgoing presidency and Council Members, Paul and Monique Turner, Chuck and Suzy Earnest and Brett Partridge.

Thanks also to Mike Blevins, our Web Master, for his devotion to the web site. As of this writing he has just updated the site. [Check it out. www.xmission.com/~mikeb/wmashome.html](http://www.xmission.com/~mikeb/wmashome.html) ♦

## The Lessons of Xenia

*By Mark Peterson*

In C. S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia, the first book of which is known to most as The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe, four children are transported to a fantasy world where things do not behave quite like the world to which they were accustomed. To the members and friends of the Wasatch Marine Aquarium Society (WMAS), in Salt Lake City, the world of underwater creatures is not quite the same as life is for you and me. The undersea world seems to be governed by principles which we do not yet fully understand. Take *Xenia*, for instance.

*Xenia* gave several WMAS members a bit of a fright last winter. Various types of this beautiful soft coral were flourishing in several members aquariums, when suddenly

they began melting away. Multiple colonies of beautiful pulsing *Xenia* were disintegrating right in front of us as we tried desperately to save them. Some were gone within hours. What could be done? Water changes? Carbon filtration? Removal to another tank? All of these remedies were tried. Sometimes the remedies worked to slow the demise, but most attempts failed and the *Xenia* disintegrated into the water.

In an effort to discover the cause of this unusual and disturbing behavior, we consulted with each other and compared experiences. There were temperature fluctuations, possible water chemistry changes, and yet, in some cases, opposing changes had the same effect. It didn't matter whether the temperature rose or fell, the *Xenia* still disintegrated.

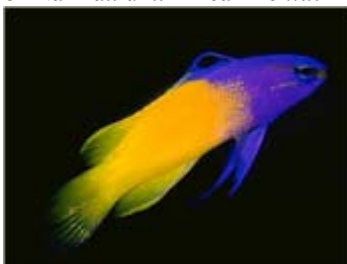
As the animals died, the aquarium became polluted with organic toxins. The closed ecosystems suffered as a result. The amount of toxins quickly reached lethal levels because the natural filtration systems could not handle the load. Fish and invertebrates died, further polluting the system. The effect cascaded like a line of dominos.



A call to our good friend, Leroy Headlee, of the Geothermal Aquaculture Research Foundation ( [www.garf.org](http://www.garf.org) ) shed light on the subject and led to the observation that this phenomenon, though not understood, may be a natural

occurrence. It seems that the story is told of an experience divers had near Fiji. A large group of *Xenia* which appeared healthy during one summer day's dive, could not be found on the next visit, a week later. The totally sessile animals had disappeared!!

Perhaps the answer is as simple as seasonal reproductive behavior. This may explain why tiny *Xenia* colonies have been found months later, growing in areas of the aquarium which had not previously been home to the animal. It is not known why some *Xenia* do not exhibit this behavior. It is a mystery of Narnia.. uh.. I mean *Xenia*.



There may be a lesson to be learned from this. A lesson which applies to all the coral we would keep, grow and propagate. We still know so little of coral living parameters and behavior, perhaps for now we should consider populating our aquariums with less of one kind of coral. In other words; more species, but smaller quantities of each. As the coral grows, propagate and share the cuttings. Perhaps this way, if problems do occur the amount of toxin released may be small enough to be handled naturally within the system. And if we do lose our specimens, perhaps a friend still has some which can be returned to our aquarium.

As an example of this "more diversity, smaller animals" approach, take a look at Sally Jo Headlee's aquariums, pictured on

[www.garf.org](http://www.garf.org). Hundreds of types of small coral growing like crazy and which she is continually harvesting for sale. I will never forget the jaw dropping experience of my first visit to the GARF facility in Boise Idaho. So many different coral grow like weeds and the magnificent types, colors and varieties are a wonder to behold. My jaw still drops and my eyes widen each time I visit all those GARF aquariums overflowing with beautiful captive grown coral.

One of the best things about visiting GARF is traveling to Boise with a van full of friends and returning with a van full of friends and coral cuttings. So far, luckily, there has always been room for friends to squeeze in around the boxes of cuttings for the return home. And a half ton of aragonite rides quite well on the top of my van! High wind? No problemo!

Acknowledgement and thanks to LeRoy and Sally Jo Headlee for their contribution to the hobby and undying enthusiasm for coral and for teaching others to grow coral so that we may all do our part to protect the reefs of the world by growing our own. The GARF Fall Seminar this year is on the weekend of October 21 and 22. Hope to see you there. ♦



