

November 9, 2006
Issue 10-08



SKAPA Newsletter

Articles:

The Library Aquarium
By Ken Austin

Turtle Cove
By Elaine Hengen

SKAPA
Appreciating Koi Through
Friendship and Knowledge
Since 1996

Celebrating our 10th year

From our
President



**A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS
JOSE PORRAS and GASTON CYK
WE ARE PLEASE TO HAVE YOU JOIN US!!**

SKAPA Community Projects

We are very proud to feature an article on the Aquarium that SKAPA provided and installed at the Doris Van Doren Library branch. This project spearheaded by KOI Health Advisor Ken Austin is just one of the SKAPA community projects that are funded through your dues and the Annual Pond Tour.

Preliminary numbers for this years pond tour show that we raised about \$5,700.00 thanks to the very hard work of pond tour chairman John Manns, the Pond Tour Committee, and all of the Pond Tour volunteers.

A very special get well soon to our President Ralph Smith who is recovering from ankle surgery. Ralph is our unsung stalwart who is always working for SKAPA. You can bet that he will be at the next meeting crutches or not.

What a great meeting at the Keystone Botanical Garden, with guest speaker Brett Rowley of Brett's Fish Farm, not only did Brett talk KOI, he sold out all his koi he brought with him. My thanks to our members for supporting this event. A great big thanks to everyone who helped put together and tear down equipment. So a great big THANK YOU to Ken Austin, Don Harrawood, Eric Harrawood, John Manns, Elaine Hengen, Lalo Aragon, Darrell Dodd, and of course Patti Dodd for our refreshments.

We also want to thank our advertisers for this years Pond Tour. Their fees helped finance our tour and they donated a large percentage of our raffle prizes. Please support these wonderful people whenever you can: OASE, Pond Armor, Pentair Aquatics, Savio, Ecological Laboratories, Pet'sBarn, Kordon, Desert Rock, Emperor Aquatics, Brett's Fish Farm, Nash Gardens, and Casa Verde Nursery.

Larry Lockard, our new webmaster is redoing our website and it's looking good, Thanks Larry. If you have any comments or questions you can e-mail Larry at larry.lockard@yahoo.com . Visit our website at WWW.SKAPA.ORG.

Don't forget our December meeting and tenth annual holiday gala will be held this year at the Cattlemans Steak House on December 9th. Please make advance reservations with Patti Dodd at 585-2035 or Patti1@elp.rr.com

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Keystone Pond Cleanup

Our thanks to To Don Harrawood, Carol Miller and Clif Stevens of Jac's Animal Rescue (Phone 478-2543) for cleaning out the Keystone Pond. After the cleaning, all the string algae is gone and the pond looks like new. SKAPA members are always asking who cleans ponds, so we will give you Clif's telephone number. Clif does pond cleaning and graciously cleaned the Keystone pond as a volunteer project.

Please note that SKAPA does not sponsor or recommend any pond services, but is forwarding this information for member consideration.

As always's we are particularly indebted to KOI Health Advisor Don Harrawood who not only directed the cleanout but jumped in and netted about 80 baby Koi that had spawned in the pond. **It was reported that it took him several hours and was quite a sight to watch.**

A very Special thanks to our Pond Tour Sponsors and Advertisers

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Calendar of Events 2006

Date	Event	Contact
NOV. 11-12	Southern Arizona Koi Association 27th Annual Koi Show and Auction.	Debby Young @ (520) 682-7697
Nov. 18	SKAPA meeting to be held at the Doris Van Doren Public Library, 551 Redd Road at 2:00 P.M.	Smitty @ (915) 532-5219
DEC. 09	SKAPA ANNUAL HOLIDAY GALA to be held at the CATTLEMAN'S STEAK HOUSE	Patti Dodd @ 585-2035


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The Library Aquarium

By Ken Austin

KOI Health Advisor

SKAPA's community project for 2006 was to install an aquarium in the Doris Van Doren Library Branch on Redd Road in El Paso. The original design of the library building included having an aquarium in a built-in cabinet. The building was completed and opened to the public with the cabinet there, but no aquarium. That required additional funding. Through conversations with friends, Ken and Susie Austin learned about the library's need for the aquarium. They presented the idea of having SKAPA purchase and install the aquarium at one of the monthly club meetings and the project was approved.

Within a \$1000 budget, SKAPA was able to purchase a 120 gallon, tank cover, pump and filter, air pump, and lights. Club president Ralph Smith donated an automatic feeder. Don Harrowood donated 7 butterfly koi and the Austin's donated a plecostomus (algae eater). Several club members met at the library one afternoon to install all the equipment.


The next step of the project was to cycle the filter. This is a process of establishing beneficial bacteria in a biological filter. Filters come very dry and sterile from the factory and initially are not capable handling fish waste and keeping the water clean. While a filter is going through its startup cycle, frequent water changes can be employed to keep the water clean. In the library however, changing the water was not an easy and convenient thing to do. It was a long way to any water faucet or sink. To solve this problem, household ammonia, added to the tank water was used the cycle the filter before any fish were put in the tank. This process took about two months.

When the tank had been installed, story boards were also attached to the wall next the tank. The information on those storyboards initially was about why there were no fish in the tank and what cycling a filter meant. Now the story boards have information on the history of koi and the hobby of pond keeping. There is also recommended reading list of books that will be available in the library for anyone interested in the hobby.

The library staff is delighted to have the aquarium in their facility and have taken over operation of the aquarium and care for the fish. The aquarium is now a center of attraction for every one who visits the library.

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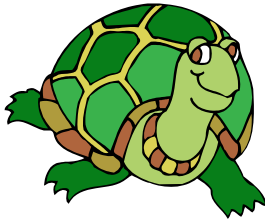
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Turtle Cove

by Elaine Hengen

We have all heard the expression that the more that you learn about something, the more there is to know. That certainly is true with turtles. I have read and studied a lot about turtles in the last few years, but you know, just when you think that you know it all . . .

We all know that you can tell a box turtle by its eye color. The males have red eyes and the females have dark brown or black eyes. Right? Wrong. About a month ago, I saw a photograph on the Internet from a reputable source of an Eastern box turtle laying eyes. This pretty mama turtle had bright red eyes. The eye color myth was further shattered with the arrival of a new three toed box turtle in Turtle Town (aka our back yard).

Last year, a friend gave us a three toed box turtle he had found while walking his dog. After searching the Internet and observing its eye color, I pronounced it a female three toed box turtle and named her Lucy. This year, we acquired another one from someone looking to give his turtle a new home where it could be with another of its species. It was bigger than the first one, but it had lighter brown eyes. Although I was confused by the difference in size, since females are usually bigger, I decided that Lettuce was a boy and renamed him Les. Our veterinarian concurred with my guess at his sex.

One Saturday in mid October, my car inexplicably turned into the parking lot of the Pet Emporium, so I went in. Inside was a beautiful three toed box turtle. Her large size indicated that she was a female, although her eyes looked the same as Les'. To make a long story short, it did not take long for me to realize that Lucy, was really Lucas, and the two boys could not believe their good fortune. I'm thinking that Mama Lucie, as the new turtle is now called, is wondering what happened to the peace and quiet of the store.

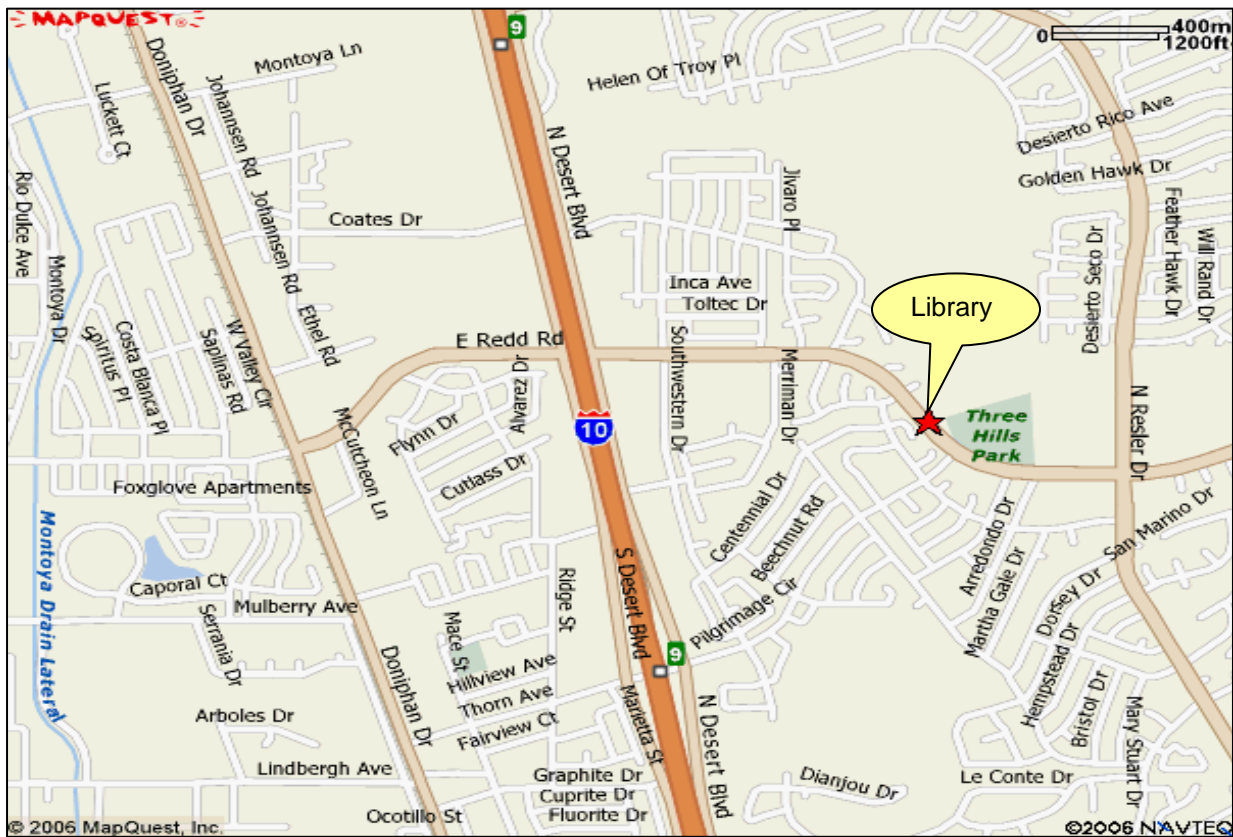
There are many interesting things about three toed box turtles. One is the involved courtship the male undertakes with the female—much more so than the desert box turtle. Both Les and Lucas spend time rubbing their heads on Mama Lucie's head and looking in her eyes. I now know why. The three toed box turtle can pull its head and legs in and close up its shell much tighter than a desert box turtle, and this is important to know. On day two of the courtship, I observed some commotion in Turtle Town. I looked closer and saw Lucas on his back, with a hind claw stuck in Mama Lucie's closed up shell. After some effort, I was able to pry her plastron (bottom shell) open enough for Lucas to get his foot out. That had to hurt and I immediately understood why the male needs to be sure that the female is enamored before he proceeds further with his courtship.

It's that time of year for hibernation. Water turtles will stop eating when the water temperature gets below 65-70° and they will settle in at the bottom of the pond. A few will continue basking through early November, but if you continue to see them at the surface, they are not hibernating well. Two years ago, Rambow spent a lot of the winter at or near the surface, caught pneumonia, and died in March. The box turtles will bury themselves. Once they are completely buried, we'll spread some hay over them to add extra warmth and protection. If we have a warm February, check the turtles to make sure they don't partially unbury themselves before the cold weather is completely over.



The next SKAPA meeting to be held at the Doris Van Doren Public Library, 551 E. Redd Road on Saturday November 18th at 2:00 P.M. The library is easy to get to. Just take I-10 to the Redd Road exit and go east until you see the Library on the Left hand side.

We have about 75 copies of "The Water Gardener" magazine to pass out to the membership at this meeting. This magazine has some interesting articles.



Don't forget to sign up for the SKAPA ANNUAL HOLIDAY GALA at the **CATTLEMAN'S STEAK HOUSE** on December 9th. contact Patti Dodd @ 585-2035 or e-mail Patti at patti1@elp.rr.com.