

## Shmanners 331: Fish Keeping

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[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Hello, internet. I'm your husband host Travis McElroy.

**Teresa:** And I'm your wife host Teresa McElroy.

**Travis:** And you're listening to Shmanners.

**Teresa:** It's extraordinary etiquette...

**Travis:** For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

**Teresa:** Hello, dear.

**Travis:** Or should I say, blub-blub-blub, blub-blub-blub-blub?

**Teresa:** Well, we can't do too much of that because our audience, I think, are people.

**Travis:** Oh, they're not fishies?

**Teresa:** They're not fish.

**Travis:** Ah. We're talking about fish keeping today. Uh, speaking of we're back from across the pond.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I'm sorry. I'm still getting used to the time difference.

**Teresa:** Yeah, right.

**Travis:** I have been going to bed at 9 PM the last three days. Waking up, first time my body was like, "Ah, 4 AM!" But to my body, my body was like, "It's 9 AM."

**Teresa:** Hey, you know what?

**Travis:** It's not.

**Teresa:** Every night you were gone, I went to bed at 9 PM.

**Travis:** Man, you're the coolest.

**Teresa:** No, it's because after my children were in bed, I could not move my body anymore.

**Travis:** Ah, baby. They're our children.

**Teresa:** [laughs] They felt like only mine while you were gone.

**Travis:** That's very fair. So we're talking about fish keeping.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Now, this is a subject that I'm relatively passingly familiar with.

**Teresa:** Yes, you do keep fish.

**Travis:** I'm a fish keeper, and I've used this term, fishkeeping, before, and people always look at me a little bit strangely, but it's just a shorter way than saying, like, I got a fish tank. It's beekeeping, you know, or dog-keeping.

**Teresa:** Well...

**Travis:** No, you don't say that. But I do think it's easier than saying, like, I own a dog! Dog-keeping. Anyway, it's not important. So I have—

**Teresa:** Gamekeeping.

**Travis:** Ooh! I have a 65-gallon tank with tropical freshwater fish and I have a 10-gallon tank that is primarily snails and shrimp, though at this point,

primarily snails and a couple of neon tetras. In my tropical, I've got a big old angel fish named Roy. I got an albino geo named Dr. Harris Bonkers. I've got an albino Plecco named Son of Phantom because I had another Albino Pleco who died, who named the Phantom.

**Teresa:** We have been through several fish.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** It is a little bit of a learning curve. And, you know, there were extenuating circumstances.

**Travis:** We had a couple long power outages that caused issues, even though we did get— Listen, I got a generator for my fish, but it was like the up and down of it. That was not great.

**Teresa:** Yeah, it was not great. And they are delicate creatures.

**Travis:** Well, so this is the thing primary thing, not to get into the technical aspects too much, though I'm sure that will come up throughout. The thing about fishkeeping that surprised me when I started it in earnest, is that the conditioning the tank can take a long time, right? Ostensibly, in a perfect world, you would condition the tank for like four to six weeks before ever putting any fish into it.

**Teresa:** Which is why when one wins fish from, say, a carnival or something like that, that they don't tend to last very long.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Because when you have the fish before you have the tank ready, the tank doesn't get ready in time, and so the fish does not hang around.

**Travis:** I will probably switch these two. I can't remember which ones which. But the idea is that you want— I think it is that your fish in just waste and leftover food, it creates nitrate and you want things that will convert that to nitrite, which nitrite is not good either, but it's less not good and

takes longer. And then you're cleaning out, you're doing water changes and everything.

**Teresa:** Well, we're not going to get into quite those technicalities.

**Travis:** No, but I said conditioning, and I went through [crosstalk] so basically there's good bacteria in there that will break them down into the less harmful version of it so that you have more time to clean out and you get the PH balance, you got all those nit-something correct in there.

**Teresa:** Right. There are different intricacies depending upon what sort of species you have, what other sort of like, family of your plant species as well, and all of that kind of stuff. So let's, hah, dive in...

**Travis:** Oh, I get it.

**Teresa:** ... to some history of the elegance—

**Travis:** Of fish!

**Teresa:** Of fishkeeping.

**Travis:** Oh, okay. Because fish are pretty old. I don't know if you guys know this.

**Teresa:** I know. Yeah.

**Travis:** At least 100 years.

**Teresa:** Fish have been raised as food in ponds or curated ponds for thousands of years.

**Travis:** That makes sense.

**Teresa:** Particularly in Asia. There is a history of people stocking their rice paddies with freshwater fish so they could have those on hand for eating, things like catfish or carp.

**Travis:** I also bet, uh, good. I mean, you're talking about some filtering fish there, which is good for keeping that water and stuff. And also fertilizer. Good for plants.

**Teresa:** Yup. Historians believe that the ancient Sumerians were some of the first who kept wild caught fish in ponds so they could have those fresh fish on hand to prepare for meals. So kind of like a refrigerator, right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Um, and so over time, some of these species were kept in value as pets. You know, tamer breeds of fish...

**Travis:** Like koi.

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Travis:** Koi, so tame.

**Teresa:** Koi are a great example of this. The Chinese and the Japanese began domesticating koi and other fancy goldfish over 2000 years ago. During the Song dynasty, the Chinese people brought goldfish indoors in large ceramic vessels to decorate their homes. If you are familiar with Animal Crossing...

**Travis:** I am!

**Teresa:** If you catch a goldfish, the vessel it becomes displayed in is a small blue ceramic pot as a nod to this traditional way of keeping them.

**Travis:** So instead of like a clear glass side, you're like looking down at it. And now let me say this too. If you ever consider, like, "I will get koi and even some goldfish." Them's get big!

**Teresa:** They sure do.

**Travis:** Oh, boy. In general, if you're looking to buy fish, ask the people you are buying it from. What is the maximum size of this fish I'm buying?

**Teresa:** We will definitely get to that.

**Travis:** Woo. Okay.

**Teresa:** Definitely get to that because there are fish that will grow to fill the size of the container that they occupy.

**Travis:** And some that grow beyond the size of the container.

**Teresa:** So medieval Europe also has a host of freshwater ponds. It was a standard—

**Travis:** They're called moats!

**Teresa:** Well, I mean, standard feature of estates and monasteries had ponds in their gardens, right?

**Travis:** Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Teresa:** And it was good to have a lot of fresh water fish on hand because you couldn't eat meat for certain feast days.

**Travis:** Oh, right!

**Teresa:** In the Christian religion, there were a lot of meatless holidays. And fish don't count as meat.

**Travis:** Sure, because God.

**Teresa:** I'm not sure.

**Travis:** "Well, you see, God rhymes with cod and Todd." You know what, I don't know.

**Teresa:** I don't know. Um, but definitely fish were also valued for their beauty. Wealthy Romans would keep lampreys and other salt water fish to show off exotic treasures.

**Travis:** Those are fun, man. You ever see those eels coming out of, like, a thing in a fish tank? Kids love that. Kids love it. At least my kids do, but they're weird.

**Teresa:** Quintus Hortensius was a famous Roman statesman and lawyer and order who is said to have wept when his favorite fish passed away.

**Travis:** Man, I get that. I get that. When the Phantom— The Phantom was my favorite. And that hit me hard.

**Teresa:** It really did.

**Travis:** Hit me hard when any of our fish have passed, it's not like it's happening constantly. When they have gone, makes me very sad.

**Teresa:** Like I said, we had some difficult times with power outages.

**Travis:** Also, I had one fish—

**Teresa:** And delicate creatures just didn't last. And there was some fin rot, I think, from some of the angelfish.

**Travis:** No, no, no, I healed that.

**Teresa:** No, you healed the fin rot.

**Travis:** I took care of that, that wasn't a problem. But I did have a parrot cichlid who was a real jerk and I think bullied some fish beyond their tolerances.

**Teresa:** Mm. Stress.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Anyway, so fish at that point were caught and transported from their natural habitats. But the first person to breed a tropical fish in Europe

was Pierre Carbonnier. He founded one of the oldest public aquariums in Paris in 1850 and began breeding macropods, or paradise fish.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Teresa:** They are small, aggressive freshwater fish with stripes and come in an array of colors. Once he was successful at that breed, he moved on to other species like exotic goldfish and beta fish. His breakthroughs in the world of fish breeding eventually got him the gold medal of the Imperial French [sounding it out] Acclimatization Society.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Teresa:** That's difficult to say.

**Travis:** It is.

**Teresa:** He was awarded this honor in 1875 to congratulate him on his research and success in introducing exotic fish species to France.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** This kicked off a sort of a world fever for fish.

**Travis:** Love fish.

**Teresa:** Looking at them...

**Travis:** Pointing at them?

**Teresa:** [laughing] Pointing at them...

**Travis:** Saying you see this fish over here, guys?

**Teresa:** Visiting them and giving them personalities?

**Travis:** Oh, yeah.



**Teresa:** In 1853, the first public aquarium opened in London Zoo. It was looked a little bit like a greenhouse and it came to be known as the fish house. And then the Americans had to throw their hat in the ring. In 1856, the first American public aquarium was opened on Broadway in New York City.

**Travis:** On the Broadway? Where the plays are? The plays and fish.

**Teresa:** Yes!

**Travis:** It's a place— Oh, you know, you've made it on Broadway if you're an actor or a fish. If you can swim it there, you can swim it anywhere.

**Teresa:** And we have PT Barnum to thank for that.

**Travis:** Now, is this the same PT Barnum I'm thinking of, or a different one?

**Teresa:** No, I think it's the same one.

**Travis:** The same one. Okay, great.

**Teresa:** And we should make a whole episode about this American Museum. And I say that because that's what it was called, the American Museum.

**Travis:** There were quotes around that, too.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Uh, it is bananas.

**Travis:** And don't let Hugh Jackman fool you. PT Barnum, not a great dude.

**Teresa:** Anyway, so in the 1800s, right, we're talking about just after the Industrial Revolution is getting its, you know...

**Travis:** Now we got robot fish.

**Teresa:** That steam engine has started and cannot be stopped. And this is when people had a renewed interest in science and nature. And when I say science, I mean this starting science. Not a lot of science actually happened.

**Travis:** Protoscience.

**Teresa:** Protoscience happened before this. I mean, if we're talking about things like medicine and stuff...

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** You know, real science.

**Teresa:** Real science.

**Travis:** And also this time, I mean, you got to remember, too, as the Industrial Revolution took off, cities grew exponentially. And so then you're living in a bustling metropolis and you want some nature. Zoos are great for that. Aquariums are great for that. Parks are great for that. Because, like, you can't drive to the beach and go snorkeling. Nah, don't worry about it. Check out these cool fish here in an aquarium.

**Teresa:** PT Barnum was especially influenced by the lyceum movement, which is kind of like going to see a lecture.

**Travis:** Oh, right, right, right.

**Teresa:** So people loved to go and see these lectures and demonstrations about the cool stuff people are figuring out about the world.

**Travis:** It was a lot of like, if I shuffle my feet on the carpet and touch this doorknob, watch this, guys!

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Travis:** I don't know what it means yet, but it's going to be a big deal.

**Teresa:** So by the 1830s, over 3000 lyceums existed across the country, and he was like, sold. I'll take that.

**Travis:** You know what's cooler than watching people talk? Fish.

**Teresa:** Fish. Well, not just fish. I mean, this American Museum was a spectacle in, you know, PT Barnum's style.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** So he had I mean, obviously he had a ton of money, so he snatched up a five-story building and opened its doors to the public on New Year's Day, 1842. So there were definitely some scientific displays.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** There were also some pseudoscientific pretend displays.

**Travis:** Yeah, manipulative, maybe exploitative, that kind of thing.

**Teresa:** Some of these things, but not— this is obviously not an exhaustive list. A zoo, a museum, a lecture hall—

**Travis:** A zoo-seum, a mood—

**Teresa:** A wax museum, a theater, a sideshow, dioramas, panoramas, cosmoranas, scientific experiments, a flea circus, a loom powered by a dog, the trunk of a tree, where, quote, "Jesus's disciples sat." An oyster bar, a rifle range, glassblowers, taxidermists, trained bears, quote "mermaid skeletons," and an animal that is incredibly named Ned the learned seal.

**Travis:** Now, which one of those is scariest to you? Because for me, it's the oyster bar.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Because just listening to that list, there's no way he's like, "And don't worry, we've been so careful that you're definitely not going to get any ill effects from these oysters."

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Oh, ee.

**Teresa:** Um, so...

**Travis:** I can't wait to hear more. I imagine specifically about oyster bars.

**Teresa:** There's a lot more.

**Travis:** And ask me when I come back because I want to point something out. Don't let me forget. But first, a word from some other Max Fun shows.

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**Jordan:** And I'm Jordan Morris, boy detective.

**Jesse:** Our comedy podcast, Jordan Jesse Go just celebrated its 15th anniversary.

**Jordan:** It was a couple of months ago, but we forgot.

**Jesse:** Yeah, completely. Our silly show is 15 years old. That makes it old enough to get its learners permit.

**Jordan:** And almost old enough to get the talk.

**Jesse:** Wow. I hope you got the talk before then. A lot of things have changed in 15 years. Our show is not one of them.

**Jordan:** We're never changing. And you can't make us.

**Jesse:** Jordan Jesse Go, the same forever, at MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts.

[ad break ends]

**Travis:** Okay. Have you ever noticed right across the street from like, every aquarium is a seafood restaurant? This is something—

**Teresa:** Especially if it's a coastal aquarium.

**Travis:** Yes. We travel a lot, right? And we go to tours and everything. And so one of the things is consistent. If we're doing a show in a big city, there's an aquarium there. Our kids will love it. Charlie to Gus is what, like seven to one? Eight to one?

**Teresa:** And there's something for everyone.

**Travis:** Right. And so, without fail, I've noticed that you walk out the front door and right across the street, like right as you walk— It's like they were saying, "Yeah, they looked pretty good, huh?"

**Teresa:** This is especially apparent in Boston, I think.

**Travis:** Oh, yeah, baby.

**Teresa:** Like, there's the aquarium and then it's just kind of surrounded by legal seafoods.

**Travis:** Yeah. Yeah. And you know what? Not going to lie, as a big seafood fan, there are moments where I'm like, "those are some beautiful crabs. Mm, crab."

**Teresa:** Yes. And PT Barnum's American Museum had a full scale, like, aquarium, a range of exotic fish. One article catalogued them, but probably not very accurately.

**Travis:** Yeah, probably just listed whatever they wrote down. So he probably wrote down the Magic Wish Fish or something.

**Teresa:** Well... Here is what is listed in this particular article. The angel, the Peacock, the four-eyed Cherub, the Cow, the sturgeon, the porcupine, and the Spanish Lady, as well as the squirrel, the Crimson Cabaretta, the parrot, the Grouper, the Zebra, and the yellow snapper.

**Travis:** Okay, now, some of those...

**Teresa:** Some of these definitely are fish. Some of them seem like mammals.

**Travis:** I'm searching squirrel fish right now, because I must know.

**Teresa:** He also had two beluga whales in New York City.

**Travis:** New York City! Not— Hey. Not a great place to keep a beluga whale.

**Teresa:** No, it isn't.

**Travis:** Can I also once again guarantee, just knowing what I know about PT Barnum, I doubt very much he was like, "Listen, we've gone to the utmost care—" [crosstalk]

**Teresa:** Let's not get into the ethics surrounding the keeping of fish in the 1850s.

**Travis:** Okay, because—

**Teresa:** We know it's not good.

**Travis:** It was bad.

**Teresa:** It was bad.

**Travis:** Okay, great.

**Teresa:** There was one particular fish that garnered national fame. Mrs. Bigge Trout.

**Travis:** I'm sorry? Mrs. Big trout?

**Teresa:** Bigge, spelled B-I-G-G-E. Trout.

**Travis:** Well, is trout her married name or her maiden name? What happened to her husband?

**Teresa:** Her husband has been lost to the annals of history.

**Travis:** But I can imagine, if I may, his name was Mr. Something Trout.

**Teresa:** Maybe!

**Travis:** Who knows?

**Teresa:** In 1861, she was incredibly popular because she was incredibly pregnant. Now, trout do not give live birth. They do lay eggs, but there were so many. It was so prolific. One article in the New York Daily Tribune said, "Into this motley world, 7060 eggs all at once were laid by Miss Trout."

**Travis:** Now, listen, I love the detail there. Could have stopped at 7,000. I don't know why they had to specify 7060.

**Teresa:** I don't know how they even counted that.

**Travis:** That's an impressive— Well, they probably made it up.

**Teresa:** And here's the thing. When the reporters heard that this fish was pregnant, I'm certain that somebody went, "Pfft. I got to count all those fishes."

**Travis:** I'm sorry— Who was this, in your mind, was this a good reporter? Is this a bad reporter?

**Teresa:** He was opening all the doors.

**Travis:** No, I got the door part. But a guy who's like, "I'm gonna count all those fishes." It's like, "No, you're not allowed in here, whoever you are."

**Teresa:** Well, he could have been reporting on the Civil War, which was imminent at the time, but anyway...

**Travis:** But instead, he focused on fish eggs, which were swimming it. Swimming it because they were swimming.



**Teresa:** Unfortunately, she did not survive the ordeal, and the article was not only a celebration of her life, but also an obituary. So the writer speculated that the childbirth induced death, quote, "Probably the odd 60 at the end, proved her ruin."

**Travis:** Uh-huh. Okay.

**Teresa:** "But she is by no means the first who has fallen a victim to overweening ambition."

**Travis:** Okay. Wow.

**Teresa:** That was the 60. That was why.

**Travis:** Just for color, you know what I mean? That was flavor text right there, frankly.

**Teresa:** So this obituary is fantastic because it describes in specific detail how all the other animals in the building mourned her passing. They listed the exact time of her death as well as her hometown, but expresses disappointment that, quote, "The date of her marriage is unknown", and it ends with, quote, "her mourning friends, the other fishes were prevented by previous engagements from following Mrs. Trout's remains to their final resting place."

**Travis:** Beautiful.

**Teresa:** Because they're fish. They can't get out.

**Travis:** Yeah, I get that. Yeah.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Like, one of the things I love most about fish is I've noticed that when it comes to naming fish, people have a lot of fun with it. Growing up— Growing up. We had a fish. We had a fish named Bob Schube. I can't—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** ...for the life of me tell you why. That was just his name. His name was Bob Schube. You know what I mean?

**Teresa:** We had a pair of striped fish for a while, which one was Zebra, and I think the other one was Cinderella because we were two young girls.

**Travis:** Yeah, I have two fish. I think they're redfin sharks named Eddie and Izzard because I think about the Eddie Izzard bit of like, "And I swam like I was chased by sharky-sharkies," whenever I look at them. I just like naming fish. It's fun.

**Teresa:** Oh, and we named all the angel fish after Ted Lasso characters. And Roy is the lone angel fish.

**Travis:** Only one remaining.

**Teresa:** Only one remaining. He's the all black one. Made sense.

**Travis:** Yeah, he's brooding.

**Teresa:** Yeah. We had a beard. We had a ted...

**Travis:** We had a killi.

**Teresa:** And we had a killi. Gosh, killi was so pretty.

**Travis:** Lost over time. Lost over time.

**Teresa:** Anyway, so tons of aquariums in the 1800s opened up after this. The Aquarial Gardens in Boston, the Marine Aquarium Temple in Hamburg. I mean, it was just all over the world. Fish fever.

**Travis:** I should say, because we mentioned it earlier, the Boston Aquarium, say it now, beautiful.

**Teresa:** Beautiful.

**Travis:** It's got, like, a central pillar. And you walk around, and it's like on the outside perimeter is, you know, all the tanks and stuff. And then you can look down at any point down the center and see all the penguins swimming around. And then down the center, there's a big clear tube of water and fish and tropical guys swimming around, like three stories tall. And then you can walk down a spiral around it. Beautiful.

**Teresa:** Beautiful.

**Travis:** I love it. Meditative. Pushing a stroller around it, not wild about it, but in general, it's great.

**Teresa:** So before it closed on September 30, 2013, the oldest American aquarium was the National Aquarium in Washington, DC. which was founded in 1873.

**Travis:** When did it close?

**Teresa:** September 30th, 2013.

**Travis:** Did we ever go to that one?

**Teresa:** I don't think that we did. The Shed Aquarium in Chicago was the largest in the United States for decades until the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta opened in 2005. We have been to that one which is also lovely.

**Travis:** We've been to both of those, we've been to the Shed.

**Teresa:** We have?

**Travis:** Yeah. The Georgia aquarium is great because they've broken it down into different biomes or whatever you would call it. Or it's like, this is the freshwater. This is the cold water. This is, um, salt water? This is the ocean, that's— And it's like, oceans and rivers and...

**Teresa:** Coastal areas and things like that. Yeah, it's really great. The largest public aquarium in the world is the Chimelong Ocean Kingdom Theme

Park, which opened in China in 2014. It holds a total of 48.75 million liters of water.

**Travis:** That's a lot of water.

**Teresa:** That's a lot.

**Travis:** And only one fish. And that's the weird thing.

**Teresa:** [laughs] There are plenty of aquariums all across the world. Some of them operate more ethically than others. But public aquariums have been a big part of ocean conservation efforts across the world. Dozens of these facilities host events and workshops to generate enthusiasm and interest in oceans and waterways. And some even offer, like, internships or work study programs for young marine biologists. I know that when Barbie had a marine biologist phase, I also wanted to be a marine biologist.

**Travis:** Oh, Barbie like the toy. I was like, who are you talking about?

**Teresa:** The toy!

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** She's been through lots of careers.

**Travis:** I don't know if you mentioned it, but there's also a lot of aquariums that also operate as rehabilitation centers for injured animals. You see that a lot with manatees, where they will help rehabilitate them and get them back out, or like turtles or whatever, things that are very prone to being damaged by humans, and then they will work to get them back into the wild.

**Teresa:** Our very own Newport Aquarium has a resource conservation team which successfully diverted nearly 3000 lbs of flat plastic and more than 1300 lbs of styrofoam from landfills.

**Travis:** I'm a big fan of the Newport Aquarium. I think it's very lovely.

**Teresa:** I wish that the aisles were bigger.

**Travis:** Yeah. I wish that there were less people, but that's just true of everywhere I go.

**Teresa:** [laughs] They had that giant gator for a while and that was really cool.

**Travis:** They did have the giant— Was it a giant albino gator?

**Teresa:** Big Mike. No, he was a regular alligator.

**Travis:** I always feel good seeing albino animals in zoos and aquariums, because they are animals that, because of their albinism, would not be able to survive in the wild.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And so that, to me, is always especially, like, there's a reason that I'm always drawn to the albino fish to put them in my aquarium, because I'm very comfortable having them in my aquarium, knowing, like, you are safer here in my home than you would be in other places.

**Teresa:** So if you're going to go to an aquarium, here are some general tips, etiquette for visiting. Hey, don't tap on the glass...

**Travis:** No!

**Teresa:** ... or stick your face up on it. It's not nice for the animals. And it's unhygienic.

**Travis:** And sound travels differently in water. It travels farther or it's louder in water, and so tapping on it can be very scary for the fishes.

**Teresa:** In the same way, try not to be super loud because it's an enclosed space most of the time and sound carries. It can disturb the other people around you. Also the fish as well.

**Travis:** Same with like if you go into an area that is like a dark area, don't, like, use the flashlight on your phone to look into things and stuff. Let the fishies chill out.

**Teresa:** Yeah. There are always designated pathways. And, you know, don't sit on fences or railings, but make sure to follow any specific instructions at a touch tank. If you go to one of those I know every time I go past one of those, I think about the scene in Finding Dory in the touch tank, and it is...

**Travis:** Traumatizing. It's terrifying.

**Teresa:** It's terrifying. I just can't bring myself to do it anymore.

**Travis:** I also just don't know how I'd feel. If giants came along and was like, "Look at that purple hair," and reached out and touch me, it would freak me out. So I try to leave them alone.

**Teresa:** Obviously don't feed any animals unless you're specifically allowed to and someone provides the correct food. I mean, see the episode of Bob's Burgers where Louise gets to feed the sharks.

**Travis:** Right. If you get a chance to hang out with penguins, please do it on behalf of me. Let me know what it's like. I've never gotten to. I would like to hang out with penguins. I think we would get along well. I think I have a very penguin-like demeanor.

**Teresa:** They have a penguin encounter at Newport.

**Travis:** I know. I've just never gotten the chance to hang out with them. Man, you know, I want to.

**Teresa:** Hey, remember that some of the fish might not be visible during the day. Maybe they are shy in the way of, like, they like to hide from predators. That's kind of like their deal, even if there aren't any predators in the tank. They might also be nocturnal. You never know.

**Travis:** That's also true.

**Teresa:** So, you know, just mitigate your expectations that way. And feel free to spend as much time as you'd like viewing each exhibit. But do be aware that the viewing areas are only so big. So back up and let other people take turns. But if you want to hang out in front of the sharks all day I have seen people do that.

**Travis:** Yeah. Especially if you want to draw 'em.

**Teresa:** At the Newport Aquarium, they have this huge, big— I mean, it's like the size of a movie screen, uh, shark tank window, right? And they have set up benches and everything. And it's great to sit there all day if that's what you want to do. Just make sure that you allow other people their turn to see things too.

**Travis:** I want to talk a little bit about fish keeping at home.

**Teresa:** Absolutely. Let's talk about that next.

**Travis:** I would say first and foremost, like we said, it's so much about the preparation of the thing, and it can be really hard, especially if you're like me, and you have ADHD, and you want immediate satisfaction, and it's just like, so much of, like, a stitch in time saves nine kind of deal. Just, like, read about it before you know where you're going to put the thing, know what you're going to do, all that stuff.

**Teresa:** It's not an impulse decision, so make sure you do a Google, okay? And also, there are a lot of very knowledgeable aquarium stores that you can visit. I don't know exactly how much someone at a PetSmart may know, but you can always ask them questions.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** And they'll help you as much as they can. But there are definitely, like, aquarium stores that have people who are very interested in creating lifelong companions of fish.

**Travis:** And I say this as someone who worked at a PetSmart, it's hit or miss. That's all we're saying. There's definitely going to be people there who

are like, "Yeah, listen, I love fish, and I am happy to work here, and I can tell you everything about them."

And then there's people, like, when I worked there, where I'm like, "I like dogs. And besides, you can ask me questions about the other things. I don't know, man. I'm going to read the tag." Also, though, and this is so important, the makeup of your fish tank is there are some fish who are like, do not put that fish with these fish.

**Teresa:** Right, yes.

**Travis:** And some where it's just, like, it'll probably be okay. And some where it's, like, definitely okay. The parrot cichlid that I got was probably okay. It wasn't.

**Teresa:** Well, we figured that the angel fish would kind of stay in a gang because they do like to pair up.

**Travis:** That's the other thing. You got to figure out which of yours like to school up, what likes to be, like, the only one in there, if it needs, like, heavily planted or lots of places to hide, all that stuff.

**Teresa:** What are those red fish you have in there?

**Travis:** The wags?

**Teresa:** Yeah. They have live babies. We did not know that when you first got them.

**Travis:** Correct. And now I have about 30 of them, all very little. These beautiful red wag platies and koi platies who just, like, are swimming around. They're having a great time. They're doing great. I've also got—

**Teresa:** They love it.

**Travis:** I also got glow fish because I have kids and the kids love the glow fish. Those are the glow gals.



**Teresa:** Again. They need to be in pairs, too, or you need to have— They do tend to pair up.

**Travis:** They like to be together.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** And then what's the other ones? I got the stripey barbs. I call them the barbs. No, they're the— Let's see, I got the glow gals. I got the barbs. I got the koi boys and the wags and I have a bunch of other ones.

**Teresa:** The slow sharks.

**Travis:** The sharks, Eddie and Izzard. I've got Roy. I've got Doctor Harris Bonkers. I've got Son of the Phantom-slash-Junior. I've got...

**Teresa:** What about those long plecos?

**Travis:** Oh, yeah. The ones that are like, uh, I think they're called fan tail cats?

**Teresa:** I haven't seen those for a while.

**Travis:** Well, I think there's only one of those left and his name is Whip.

**Teresa:** Whip.

**Travis:** Whip is still in there.

**Teresa:** And then all of the snails.

**Travis:** All the snails. Lots of snails.

**Teresa:** Did you know that snails lay eggs in your aquarium?

**Travis:** Yeah. You're doing a great job. Snails are like, "this is a safe neighborhood. I like this." That's why I had to get a second aquarium. I have found out that there's an aquarium shop near me who will trade me

store credit for my baby snails. And I'm like, sick, bro. So I'm going to take them some baby snails soon.

**Teresa:** So they keep making those snails?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** They love it. If you are, speaking of fish shops, when you transport fish, it is important that you are gentle with the bags. And they do have a kind of like step process to getting into your aquarium. So make sure you're familiar with that.

**Travis:** It's acclimation if you want to look that up. Acclimation.

**Teresa:** And don't shake the bag like Darla.

**Travis:** No! Also, it's important to note if you're going to buy fish in a bag and take them home, it should be like the last stop you make before you head home because the water after a while is not healthy for them to be in. So, same with, like, if it's a hot day or a cold day or anything like that, right? So this is like, get them home, get them in the water. And that's going to do it for us. Thank you so much for joining us. Let's see, we've got shows coming up here in Cincinnati and Detroit and...

**Teresa:** And DC!

**Travis:** And DC next weekend. You can go to [Bit.Ly/McElroyTours](https://bit.ly/McElroyTours), get all those tickets there. It's going to be an absolute blast. We're doing a Shmanners here in Cincinnati, so don't miss it. Let's see, what else. Oh, there's a lot of new merch over the merch store because it's a new month, so make sure you check that out. [McElroyMerch.com](https://McElroyMerch.com). Um, what else, Teresa?

**Teresa:** We always thank Brent "BrentalFloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Thank you to Kayla M. Wassil for our Twitter thumbnail art, that's @ShmannersCast. Thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan run Facebook Group, Shmanners Fanners.

If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today.

Thank you to Alex, our writer and researcher without whom we could not make this show. Thank you also to our editor Rachel, who also we could not make this show without. And if you would like to send us topic suggestions or Idiom submissions, you can email Alex at [shmannerstcast@gmail.com](mailto:shmannerstcast@gmail.com) and say hello because she reads every single one.

**Travis:** The new merch is going to be there's a Shrimp ornament, there's a Bureau of Balance metal ornament, and a Candlesnights ornament designed by Brie Paulson. Proceeds from this ornament will go to Harmony House, and then 10% of all merch proceeds this month will go to Natives, which promotes indigenous food waste education and facilitates indigenous food access. All of that at [McElroyMerch.com](http://McElroyMerch.com).

Like we said, don't forget about the tour coming up. Those tours do require mask and proof of full vaccination or negative COVID test within 72 hours of events start. And that's going to do it for us. So join us in next week.

**Teresa:**

No RSVP required.

**Travis:**

You've been listening to Shmanners.

**Teresa:**

Manners, Shmanners. Blub-blub-blub-blub.

[theme music plays]

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