



Greater Cincinnati Aquarium Society

2975 Old Oxford Road • Hamilton, OH • 45013

April 22, 2015

American Cichlid Association

To: Board of Trustees

The officers and members of the Greater Cincinnati Aquarium Society thank you for the opportunity to bid on the 2016 American Cichlid Association Annual Convention. The proposed dates for the meeting would be Thursday, July 28, through Sunday, July 31, 2016.

The Greater Cincinnati Area is very convenient to cichlid keepers, as it is within a short drive (less than five hours) for cichlid clubs in Michigan (Michigan Cichlid Association), Illinois (Greater Chicago Cichlid Association), and two clubs in Ohio (Great Lakes Cichlid Society and the Ohio Cichlid Association). In addition, several all-species clubs can be found in Indianapolis, Columbus, and Louisville, all within two hours of Cincinnati. Travel to Cincinnati is easy by plane or by car as we are only a 4 - 5 hour ride from Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, and Milwaukee and within a one-day drive of the east coast. Delta Airlines, as well as other major carriers, provide service into Cincinnati's international airport.

The host club, Greater Cincinnati Aquarium Society, was founded in 1974 and has hosted three successful ACA annual conventions, 2003 and 2009 as well as one in the 1980's. Our club has grown over the years with a membership over of 200 and an average attendance at our monthly meetings of over 70.

After a review of our proposal I am sure you will find the Cincinnati area a perfect location for the 2016 ACA convention.

Very truly yours,

Philip C. Benes

2016 ACA Convention Chairman

Convention Proposal

The Greater Cincinnati area has many attractions outside of the convention. For those interested, here are some of the attractions this area has to offer:

Cultural and Historical Attractions

- Taft Museum - Federalist architecture and home of one of the world's foremost collections of landscape paintings and great masters.
- Cincinnati History Museum – 200 years of Cincinnati history.
- Museum of Natural History & Science.
- Spring Grove Cemetery & Arboretum – Landmark landscape design, horticulture, and statuary.
- Krohn Conservatory – One of the world's largest public greenhouses.
- Cincinnati Art Museum – 5,000 years of historical artifacts and works of art.
- The Beach – Ohio's largest water park with 35 water slides and attractions.
- Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden – Insectarium, white Bengal tigers, lowland gorilla families.
- Paramount's Kings Island – World's largest wooden roller coaster.
- Newport Aquarium.
- MainStrasse – Novelty/antique shops and German restaurants in a Rhineland setting.
- Cathedral of the Basilica of the Assumption – 1/3 size replica of the famous Notre Dame.
- Cincinnati Reds Baseball.

Shopping and Dining

- Main Street Entertainment District – Located on the north edge of downtown. Full of coffee houses, restaurants, bookstores, and bars.
- Mt. Adams – Close-knit, Bohemian flavored district with coffeehouses, clubs, taverns, restaurants, and shops.
- Lunch or Dine on a Riverboat Cruise.
- Montgomery Inn – World famous barbeque ribs.
- Dave and Buster's – 65,000 square feet of food and games.
- Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World.

Staffing

Convention Chairman

ACA Fellow Phil Benes, who is familiar with previous ACA conventions and was convention chairman for three previous conventions (1999, Detroit, and 2003 and 2009, Cincinnati) is coordinating planning and organization. In addition, Phil has chaired the Water Wonderland Show committee, which was an annual, all species fish show in Detroit as well as served as the ACA Convention Liaison for the last 10 years. Many members of GCAS are involved in the planning, organization, and administration of this show. In addition to GCAS, the Cincinnati area is home to several pet shops that have volunteered to help make this a successful convention for the ACA. A sufficient number of GCAS club members are available to work in putting on this ACA convention.

Convention Staff

Adequate staffing exists in GCAS to host the 2016 ACA convention. Over 35 volunteers have already signed-up to assist in the convention activities, and several key positions have already been filled as follows:

Showroom Co-Chair	Mark Murtaugh
Showroom Co-Chair	Eric Jacobson
Vendor Chair	Glen Mason
Registration Chair	Jan Benes

About GCAS

In 1974, a young doctor by the name of Dr. Charles Mendenhall moved to Cincinnati to work for the Veteran's Administration Hospital. Being a tropical fish hobbyist, he soon met up with Judy Herway, who at the time owned a fish store in Northern Kentucky, and Dave Morgan, who also was a cichlid lover. They decided to start a fish club and named it the Greater Cincinnati Cichlid Association.

In the early 1980's it was decided to change the name of the club to its present name, Greater Cincinnati Aquarium Society, to include all tropical fish enthusiasts. Also in the early 80's, the Cincinnati club hosted the American Cichlid Association convention with the festivities being held at the Thomas Moore College and the participants staying at the Drawbridge Inn in Northern Kentucky.

Over the years we have had various activities including fish shows, auctions, picnics, tank tours, and Christmas parties. We have had nationally known speakers at our meetings such as Ad Konigs, Dr. Wayne Leibel, Gary Lange, Jack Wattle, Dr. Paul Loiselle, Charlie Grimes, Rusty Wessel, and Dr. Peter Lewis, just to name a few.

Today we have one of the largest and most successful semiannual auctions in the country, averaging 900 bags of fish and/or plants. We are a tax exempt, nonprofit organization whose membership has grown from the original three to about 20 in the mid 70's to approximately 250 at present time.

As you can see, we've come a long way in the last 41 years. Our membership has grown, the auction has gotten bigger, and attendance at the meetings and Christmas parties has never been higher. Thanks to the foresight of our three founding members plus the work and dedication of all of our former and present officers and members, we have prospered and will continue to do so.

Site Study

Due to the size of the ACA convention, only one suburban hotel was determined to be large enough to provide adequate space requirements to house this convention. The Red Lion, Cincinnati North (Sharonville, OH). This hotel was the site of the 2009 ACA Convention and provides adequate guest rooms for the event and sufficient space for the meetings, general sessions, show, and auction.

- Free parking
- Easy, walk-in access to cars
- Suburban location
- Indoor On-site water park
- Truck access to show for loading and unloading
- Upscale shopping mall and a variety of eating establishments within a 5 minute drive
- All activities on one floor
- Simple, easy to follow layout for guests
- \$109 per night room charge for up to two occupants (\$5 for each additional guest)
- Minutes off of I-75 for easy access
- Outdoor Pool

Speakers

Specific individuals have not yet been contacted but a variety of speakers representing all parts of the cichlid hobby will be presented. It is expected to have nationally renowned experts speaking on the cichlids of Lake Malawi, Lake Tanganyika, Madagascar, and Central and South America. Speakers are always one of the major draws for a convention and GCAS is currently working on lining-up an awesome group of speakers.

Convention

GCAS recognizes that the final income for the convention will be directly proportional to the total attendance, so great care will be taken to assure only top quality speakers and workshop chairmen. With the quality of the program and rising costs for all services, the convention committee recommends a registration fee of \$45.00 per person. Payment of this fee will allow admittance to all presentations, hospitality suites, and will pre-register auction buyers and sellers. The auction on Sunday will be open to everyone. GCAS reserves the right to waive the registration fee for Club members working a minimum number of hours for the convention.

Exhibitions

For the convention, GCAS has scheduled a twenty two class competitive exhibition of cichlids, four ornamental classed, and four photography and art classes. First, second, and third place awards will be presented for each class. We will work closely with the BOT in determining the final structure of the classes. The exhibitions will be open to anyone who registers for the convention pays the entry fee of \$5.00 per entry and agrees to abide by the exhibition rules.

Banquet

A private banquet will be held Saturday evening at the hotel. A preliminary schedule includes dinner, presentation of the awards, and a speaker. A cash bar will be available for those guests interested. The price will be approximately \$40.00 per person.

Auction

An all-cichlid and catfish auction will be held on Sunday with seating available for over 750. Entry will be free to all, however a \$5.00 registration fee will be charged to all sellers who did not register for the convention. The convention split is proposed to be 70/30, with the first \$1.00 and the remaining 30% going to the host club to be split 50/50 with the ACA.

Outings

Several outings have tentatively been scheduled and will be available on a prepaid, reserved basis:

[Cincinnati Zoo](#) – One of the premier zoos in the country.

[Newport Aquarium and Newport-on-the-Levee](#) - A behind the scenes tour of one of the nation's newest aquariums and an afternoon of shopping and dining in one of the area's newest entertainment complexes, which includes an Imax theater and GameWorks.

[Paramount's Kings Island Amusement Park](#).

[Cincinnati's Museum Center](#) - Discover the Cincinnati History Museum, Cinergy Children's Museum, Museum of Natural History and Science, Cincinnati Historical Society Library, and the Robert D. Lindner Family OMNIMAX Theater.

Accommodations

The Red Lion is located in suburban Cincinnati and is only 30 minutes from the airport. A for fee airport shuttle bus will be available for the convenience of the attendees who arrive by air. This fine hotel has sufficient facilities to accommodate all convention requirements.

We have confirmed a rate of \$109.00 per night at the host hotel with occupancy up to 2 people in each room. There is a charge of \$5.00/night for each additional person after that. There is no charge for meeting and show space provided that we meet the minimum revenue expected by the hotel based on meeting a minimum of 470 room nights. Previous conventions, including 2003 and 2009 in Cincinnati, have well exceeded this minimum requirement. Additionally, a complimentary sleeping room will be provided for every 40 rooms booked.

The Red Lion offers facilities that meet or exceed the requirements as described in the ACA Convention Guidelines.

Events

A tentative schedule of events is presented below. This includes the required items listed in the ACA Convention guidelines and some other events to take advantage of the unique attractions the area offers.

Wednesday, July 29, 2016	8:00 am	Fish Room, Manufacturer and Vendor Set-up
	5:00 pm	Registration opens
	6:00 pm	Fish Room available for show fish
Thursday July 30, 2016	8:00 am	Fish Room, Manufacturer and Vendor Rooms open
	8:00 am	Registration opens
	9:00 am	Tour Number 1
	7:00 pm	Speaker # 1
	9:00 pm	Speaker #2
	10:30 pm	Study Group #1
	12:00 am	Study Group #2
	10:00 pm -??	Hospitality Suite
12:00 am	Fish Room, Manufacturers and Vendor Room closes	
Friday, July 30, 2016	8:00 am	Check-In Fish for Display Area and Show
	8:00 am	Check-In Photo & Artwork for Show
	8:00 am	Registration opens
	8:00 am	Fish Room, Manufacturer and Vendor Rooms open
	9:00 am	Tour Number 2
	7:00 pm	Speaker # 3
	9:00 pm	Speaker #4
	9:00 pm	Fish, Manufacturer and Vendor room closes for judging
	10:30 pm	Study Group #3
12:00 pm	Study Group #4	
10:00 pm -??	Hospitality Suite	
Saturday, August 1, 2016	8:00 am	Fish Room, Manufacturer and Vendor Rooms open
	8:00 am	Registration opens
	9:00 am	Speaker #5
	11:00 am	Speaker #6
	1:00 pm	Lunch
	2:00 pm	Speaker #7
	5:00 pm	Fish room, Manufacturer and Vendor Rooms close
	6:00 pm	Cocktail Hour/Cash Bar
	7:00 pm	Awards Banquet and Speaker #8
	10:00 pm	Hospitality Suite
	10:00 pm	Fish Room, Manufacturer and Vendor Opens
12:00 am	Fish Room Closes	
Sunday, August 2, 2016	8:00 am	Auction Registration / Fish Room Open
	10:00 am	Auction Starts
	11:00 am	Show Room Break Down / All show fish removed

Event Facilities

350+ comfortable, bright, deluxe rooms, 5 suites
In-room coffeemakers and hairdryers, cable TV and in-room movies
4,000 sq. ft. available for the fish show room and exhibitor's show
3,200 sq. ft. available for the general session, theater style seating
2,500 sq. ft. available for vendors and rental tanks
2,500 sq. ft. available for manufacture's show
ACA BOT meeting room (Seating for 25 people minimum)
Dedicated registration area with storage space
Banquet Room with seating for up to 550 people
ACA & GCAS Sales and Registration Table Areas

Other Features

Outdoor Swimming Pool
On-site Indoor Water Park
Tri-County Mall shopping center within a five-minute drive
Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World 10 minutes away
Lounge for light fare breakfast, lunch, or dinner
10 restaurants within walking distance

Conclusion

Assembling an experienced committee has been a key to bringing this proposal together.

With the many attractions the area has to offer, families and individual attendees will be entertained through a variety of events before, during, and after the convention. Also, being only a short 4 -5 hour car ride from Chicago, Cleveland, and Detroit, areas very strongly involved in cichlid keeping, should assure a strong turnout for this convention.

Ample meeting room space, local eating establishments, and deluxe accommodations at only \$115.00 per night all contribute to the overall attractiveness the area brings as a convention candidate.

Phil Benes' experience with putting on a three very successful ACA Conventions in the past provides a proven leader to chair the convention committee. In addition, GCAS stands ready as a very experienced and strong club (many of the 2003 and 2009 volunteers are already committed to working the 2016 convention) to provide all the support necessary to assure a very successful show.

A conservative estimate for the projected profits that convention can generate is as follows:

Total Convention Attendees	Projected Profit (split equally between GCAS & ACA)
400	\$27,765
500	\$32,265
600	\$36,765