Mother Nature's SECRET

Wetland filtration offers a simple path to clear water p. 34
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8 Storming Through

Some environments are better suited for water features than others. Case in point, the harsh climate of the Arizona desert presents some unique challenges for any contractor. Paul Holdeman recounts how he and his team were called in to rescue a struggling feature in a stormwater retention area and transform it into a living, sustainable, riparian canyon oasis.

14 Ponds all a Twitter

In many pondscapes, koi and plant life tend to steal the spotlight. As a result, as pond contractors and customers, we often take for granted other aspects of the environment. But fostering the presence of birds around the pond — as Betsy Puckett explains — can have some unforeseen benefits. Turn to pg. 14 and learn about the symbiotic relationship that links air and water.

20 Say Bye to the Bucks

If you’re an entrepreneur, you’ve likely heard the phrase, “Cash is king.” While this still may be true in some markets, a barrage of new technology is usurping the fiscal throne, causing much of the world to go cashless. Let Mark Battersby take you through all the latest developments in transaction technology and help you decide which strategy is right for you.

26 Strut Your Stuff!

There’s nothing like a showroom floor to allow customers to see, touch, hear and experience a product. Stanley Sensenig has adapted this concept for water features in a “self-guided pond tour,” a first of its kind. Take the tour yourself and see how a little investment and innovation have moved up his installation schedule and forever changed the way he markets his business.

34 Mother Nature’s Secret

Instead of buying a biological filter off the shelf, John Adams suggests building your own wetland filtration system with the help of Mother Nature herself. With a high level of technical detail and a thorough discussion of how to design and build a beautiful, all-natural system, we’ve got you covered when it comes to achieving crystal-clear water with minimal maintenance.

41 Shine On! Part II: Hikari Utsuri & Hikari Moyo

Ellen Kloubec continues her discussion of the shimmering Hikari variety of koi from our last issue. Learn how to identify the Utsuri and Moyo types, from the very basic to the more sophisticated and exotic. As always, Ellen provides straightforward, easy-to-remember identification techniques to keep you from scratching your head in front of your customers.

45 Formal Pond Function

Our “Best Pond Practices” series continues from the last installment in our July/August issue, with Kent Wallace detailing the liner and filtration strategies for a formal courtyard pond. This advanced construction project proved quite challenging, but the final product was a highly functional, efficient, quiet pond that exceeded the customer’s expectations.

49 Living the Pond Life

It’s more than just a job, hobby, saying or Facebook page. “Living the Pond Life” is a lifestyle coined by Lloyd Lightsey and his wife Karrie, who share an appreciation for living life to the fullest and touching the lives of their peers in the industry. Take an introspective, emotional journey with Lloyd and learn what the pond life is really all about.

55 Pondemonium 2016 Recap

Aquascape held another well-attended, successful conference this year as it celebrated its 25th anniversary. Jennifer Zuri provides a complete rundown of the activities alongside a montage of photos of this year’s mid-summer tradition.
Let’s hear it!

Another great year is coming to a close. 2016 was a busy year for us here at POND Trade, as we covered a wide spectrum of editorial content, including water feature construction and maintenance, water gardening and seasonal horticulture, profiles of koi varieties from all over the world, engineering and technical tips, business and social media marketing strategies, and even some thought-provoking, inspirational messages — just to name a little bit. The industry seems more vibrant and energized than ever, and we are proud to be one of your go-to resources for all things pond-related.

As our Editorial Committee ramps up for 2017 and we continue to fill the calendar with new, exciting content, I want to make one thing abundantly clear. We listen to you! I’m always on the lookout for unique, interesting and relevant topics that affect our readers. What kinds of stories would you like to see more of in upcoming issues of POND Trade? Is there something in particular that you think could benefit your colleagues in the industry? What can we do to better serve you, your business or your passion for ponds? All it takes is a few clicks of a keyboard or a phone call — our information is listed just to the left of this column, and we would love to hear from you.

In keeping with the year’s trend, this final issue of 2016 is brimming with great stories for your reading pleasure. We are especially excited to feature Stanley Lightsey’s article about his innovative, self-guided pond tour. This is a fantastic concept that could make you rethink your approach to selling water features. We’ve also got an eye-opening feature about adding an avian element to your pond, which will make you consider it in the future. John Adams wrote our cover story about wetland filtration, which includes some valuable, straightforward construction tips. Finally, you won’t want to miss an eye-opening feature about adding an avian element to your pond.

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A FEW THOUGHTS FROM OUR PUBLISHER

As our Editorial Committee meets to determine the future direction of editorial content, I want to share a few thoughts from my recent Facebook group on the pond-related world, engineering and technical messages — just to name a few of our vibrant and energized, professional, forward-thinking audience. Adding a koi fish or a water feature to your pond is often a thoughtful decision, but it can also be a significant investment. With so many variables to consider, it’s important to do your research and choose a reputable supplier. The pond trade industry is constantly evolving, and there are new products and technologies being developed all the time. It’s crucial to stay informed and make educated decisions when it comes to pond maintenance and design. I encourage everyone to stay active on social media and engage with other pond enthusiasts. Whether you’re a professional or a hobbyist, we all have something valuable to share. Let’s continue to support each other and foster a community where we can learn and grow together.

Happy PONDing!
STORMING Through

Seeking sustainability in a Scottsdale renovation

by Paul Holdeman,
The Pond Gnome

When a contractor turns on a pump, and water begins to flow over the top edge of an urn, scupper or stack of boulders, the client is immediately thrilled. It is one of the truths of our industry that if an installation is functional on the first day — and the client pays for it — the contractor can consider it a success. What happens after the first few months is of little consequence to far too many who dabble in the industry. Sustainability is a word that gets thrown around quite a bit. And yet, all too frequently we still come across features that become completely dysfunctional after only a couple of months in use. It is not exactly a tribute to sustainability when an expensive project needs remodeling — or even a complete rebuild — in less than a decade. At The Pond Gnome, we believe that sustainability is defined by a feature that stands the test of time. This is why I want to crow about an 8-year-old project that we are really proud of, rather than one of our more recent installations.

A Living Stream

This story begins in 2007 when we got a call from The Regents at Scottsdale apartment complex in Scottsdale, Arizona, asking us to make repairs to their “koi pond,” which was built in a stormwater retention area at the center of the complex. What they really had was a 2-foot-deep concrete shell with an external pump and sand filter. Stormwater would roll off the surrounding parking lots and fill the retention basin. After every rain event, all the koi would die — go figure!

We spent a lot of time over the course of many meetings determining the most important aspects and goals of their water feature. We came up with a design that captured about 4,000 gallons of each stormwater event and filtered it biologically as it flowed over the various waterfalls and stream courses. Because easier maintenance was one of their goals, we went with a living stream design instead of a koi...
Tackling Challenges

Because the project was to be built in the center of an existing apartment complex, dedicated access and the lack of real estate for materials staging were both huge issues. We also had to work around the renters and the variety of sleep schedules and personalities. At that time, the scale of this project was the largest we had tackled. These issues presented some challenges that we easily overcame by calling in a couple of our pond-building colleagues from outside the Phoenix area. A tip of the hat to Scott Hammond of Aquascape by Blue Creek, who was instrumental in helping us complete the project within a timeline that made the client happy.

Once the dysfunctional feature was removed from the retention area, we began our project by installing a 2,000-gallon, RainXchange cistern to service the 150-foot-long stream and 8-foot-tall waterfall, which would cascade adjacent to the pool area. The owners asked us to install the stream within the same footprint as the original feature, but we were able to convince them of some improvements to that plan. By shifting the headwater a few feet, we created stunning views from the spa and pool areas that didn’t exist previously. We also created enhanced views for many of the apartment balconies surrounding the area. One of the best pieces of advice I received early in my career as a water feature contractor was, “Give the client what they want, not what they ask for.” What every client wants is the best possible water feature for their setting, budget and goals.

The goals for this project included making the entire retention basin and surrounding area look and feel like a natural, riparian canyon. We also wanted to create a sustainable system that would require minimal maintenance. Finally, it was important that the feature would last decades in the face of significant stormwater runoff events and lots of foot traffic. pond. We recommended using cheap, “feeder” goldfish to stock the stream pools between rain events, figuring the fish would die from the runoff water after each storm event. Then, it was time to get started.

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A Desert Oasis

The entire project was completed within six weeks. It includes a 150-foot living stream, four 10- to 15-foot-long pondless streams, an 8-foot-tall boulder waterfall and more than 400 feet of dry river beds used to direct water through the retention area to the five separate cisterns. These dry river beds also tie all the features together into one cohesive riparian canyon setting.

The project contains 4,000 gallons of stormwater-harvesting cisterns. We used eight pumps to circulate the water through six independent water features. We chose to use multiple pumps on the larger features so that a pump failure would not be an emergency during the summer months here in the desert. It’s much better to receive a “flow rate is down” service call, which can be handled in a couple of days, rather than a “drop what you are doing and get here right now” catastrophe. We brought in more than 400 tons of rock, ranging from 800-pound boulders to 1- to 3-inch river cobbles.

Mature trees fill the area to complete that riparian feel, and the birds that sing the praises of their urban riparian canyon are loved by residents and pool area visitors alike. It is difficult to imagine you are sitting in the middle of the Arizona desert while relaxing in this environment.

Reaping the Benefits

For those who wonder whether or not a well-built water feature can improve your property value, just ask the owner and management of The Regents at Scottsdale. They charge an $80 monthly premium to live in an apartment with a balcony view of this retention area. The waiting list to get into one of these “waterfront” apartments is quite long.
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Shown here is the main waterfall with one of two pumps not functioning. The two-pump system allows the biological filter and plants to remain happy and healthy in the 120-degree heat while we arrange for a replacement pump to be acquired and installed.

About the Author

Paul Holdeman, co-owner of The Pond Gnome, is a third-generation Arizona native. Growing up in Arizona, he is an Arizona State University alumnus, a certified desert landscaping expert through the Desert Botanical Garden and an active member of the University of Arizona Master Gardener program. He has developed an intimate understanding of the Sonoran Desert, particularly its riparian habitats. In 1999, he was introduced to organic water gardens. He and his wife, Barb, started The Pond Gnome in January 2000. Together, they began a journey that has made their company very popular with the local native plant and wildlife enthusiasts. The Pond Gnome’s mission, to change the way Arizonans build ponds, works to help replace the natural oases that once played a huge role in providing healthy water for native and migratory wildlife as they made their way through the pre-urbanized desert. The Pond Gnome mainly markets to people who want lush, riparian backyards and urban wildlife habitats. The company has created more than 400 sustainable, organic water sources for people — and wildlife — to enjoy.

Needless to say, the owners and management — as well as several residents that consider the water feature their own personal oasis — were thrilled. And so were we. This story had a happy ending. However, many poorly designed and constructed features often get filled in by someone who will never fund another water feature project. Most features that are overly complicated to maintain, overwhelming for the setting, poorly constructed or just plain ugly will scare people away. This is why we believe that it’s important to strive to fill our markets with well-designed and well-built water features that meet expectations over decades of service. Rock On!
Ponds all a Twitter
Complete your pondscape by attracting avian friends

by Betsy P. Puckett, Droll Yankees Inc.

One thing’s for sure — you’re well aware of all the benefits of a pond or water feature. Sitting nearby relaxes you, soothes your nerves and lifts your spirits. The sound of moving water takes you to a tropical place, transporting you away from your worries each time you hear it. Maybe you think that it couldn’t get any better, but you might be missing an element that could heighten your enjoyment and provide even greater benefits to you and your customers. Have you ever thought about how effectively a pond attracts and sustains the living things of the natural world? Consider integrating the necessary elements for a habitat that supports other forms of life — specifically, birds.

Why cater to birds?
We often take them for granted. After all, birds exist everywhere, from the depths of the forests to the desolate deserts to the crowded inner cities. So why would you want to encourage birds to visit your backyard haven? There are several reasons why you’d want to be more in tune with these fascinating, warm-blooded creatures. Birds appeal to most of the senses, with enchanting and varied songs and calls, beautiful plumage and captivating behaviors. Some species will go through their life cycles within your yard, nesting, raising their young and teaching them how to survive on their own. Some of them leave for the winter and miraculously appear again in the spring. The same birds often return to the same yard year after year. They calm and entertain you while they perform valuable services, like eating harmful insects and helping maintain biodiversity within your yard.

Bird lovers probably know this instinctively, but according to Birds and Blooms magazine, an interest in wild birds can provide major health benefits and enhance the quality of life just for anyone. That’s pretty compelling by itself!

If you enjoy sitting by a pond, you might have noticed that birds often visit to drink and splash. Water is essential for birds, and by making it available, you’ve provided one component of a welcoming habitat for them. The other three elements are cover (or shelter), space and food.

Water
A pond should naturally attract birds for hydration and bathing. Without any adaptation, it might perfectly satisfy the birds’ requirement for water. However, birds need shallow water, so the addition of rocks or sand along the edge of a pond will provide a non-slippery entry that will make a big difference in the number of birds it attracts. Dripping, misting, spraying or flowing water increases their interest and enjoyment.

Cover
Shrubs, bushes and vegetation that birds can use for nesting, roosting and protection from predators constitute types of cover, or shelter. Flowering plants and shrubs also contribute seed and insects to birds’ diets. Their instinctive need for protection from predators often dictates their behavior in an area. Birds are more willing to visit food sources when a
Food

As birds establish their range in your area, they will take a seed and fly to a tree to open and eat it, staying out of full view from predators — not directly over your pond. To provide safety from hawks and other predators, you should place feeders near shrubs or trees or water feature. If a tree doesn’t provide room for courtship, nesting, foraging and raising their young and teaching survival skills to the fledglings, you’ll want to adapt bird feeders as needed. If squirrels are a problem, look for products that allow the perfect placement of bird feeders, close to cover and within sight. For each of these different food types, and the label should clearly disclose what type of food to use and what kinds of birds you are likely to see.

Feeders Make It Easier

Fill a tubular sunflower feeder with black oil sunflower seed. This is the single most attractive seed that appeals to the greatest variety of birds. The next feeder type to add is one designed specifically for Nyjer, which is a favorite of finches. Nyjer, formerly known as thistle seed, is a small, silky, black seed that is reputed to be disliked by squirrels. Note that a feeder filled with Nyjer seed mixed with sunflower chips is a squirrel magnet and will require a squirrel deterrent. Fresh, high-quality food makes a difference and will attract more birds, as well as a greater variety of birds.

Tubular feeders come in many sizes, and you can choose from dish and hopper feeders to appeal to a variety of songbirds, from chickadees to cardinals. Some birds prefer tube feeders; others like the flat surfaces of seed trays and dish feeders. Place feeders near shrubs or trees to provide safety from hawks and other predators — not directly over your pond or water feature. If a tree doesn’t provide the perfect spot, pole systems are available, reducing the time the parents have to leave the nest when food is readily available, reducing the time the parents spend away from the nest foraging. The birds studied had greater overall health, a higher survival rate and a higher percentage of baby birds lives long enough to leave the nest when food is readily available, reducing the time the parents spend away from the nest foraging. The birds studied had greater overall health, a higher survival rate and a higher percentage of baby birds lives long enough to leave the nest when food is readily available, reducing the time the parents spend away from the nest foraging. The birds studied had greater overall health, a higher survival rate and a higher percentage of baby birds lives long enough to leave the nest when food is readily available, reducing the time the parents spend away from the nest foraging.
The food you provide is a real life-saving benefit to all the birds that inhabit a yard, not to mention the fact that it’s a multifaceted, year-round benefit for the pond owner, too.

In 2005, Droll Yankees introduced an initiative that simply states the importance of feeding birds — “Just feed birds, and make a world of difference.” It’s true, because when you feed birds, you help more baby birds survive. More birds will eat more insects, so fewer chemicals will be needed to control them. Using fewer chemicals makes the environment healthier for you, your children, your pets, the water supply — and, of course, wild birds. We can make a world of difference, one bird feeder at a time.

Perhaps you’ll appreciate the traditional pondscape with a new perspective. By attracting wild birds and enjoying their gifts of color and song, you’ll play a critical part in a bigger effort to support species that are currently declining or in jeopardy.

About the Author
Betsy Puckett is the president of Droll Yankees Inc., the company that invented the tubular bird feeder in 1969. Having always had an affinity for wild birds, she felt she was in the right place when she started working for Droll Yankees part-time in 1977. As president of the company since 1992, she is very involved in day-to-day operations and new product design. It’s important to her that bird lovers enjoy quality products that function well for the birds and are easy to use and clean. She makes her home in the woods of Rhode Island with her husband Tom, their black lab River, two indoor cats and an abundant bird population.

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A female downy woodpecker rests on suet cage filled with a protein-rich suet block.
Say Bye to the Bucks
The world is going cashless. Should you?

by Mark E. Battersby

The continued use of cash is surprising, given its inconveniences and the risk consumers face in carrying it around. Love it or hate it, however, cash is playing an increasingly smaller role in society, especially with pond businesses that remain dependent on cash transactions are finding income and profits declining.

While many countries are working to make payment systems less dependent on cash, many pond businesses that remain dependent on cash transactions are finding income and profits declining. That’s right — those pond business owners and operators who are ignoring developments like the recently introduced EMV Smart Card technology, Apple’s mobile wallet and other mobile payment vehicles, cyber currencies and the like may find their profits affected.

The Road Toward Cashless

The Federal Reserve estimates that there will be $616.9 billion in cashless transactions in 2016. That’s up from around $60 billion in 2010. Not too surprisingly, governments have been increasingly pushing for a cashless society.

In Germany, strong moves are underway to limit cash transactions, while Sweden is already far advanced toward a cashless society, with many museums prohibiting cash payments for admission. Sweden has especially advanced far along the cashless path, as many banks no longer accept or dispense cash, and bill and coin transactions now represent only 2 percent of commercial activities.

While the elimination of cash is not yet an official policy in Canada, many people within the country are voluntarily moving toward credit and debit card payments at a remarkable rate, with a whopping 77 percent of respondents to a recent Moneris survey saying that they would prefer to eliminate cash altogether.

On the Homefront

The movement toward cashless is something that hasn’t been lost on businesses in this country, either, as consumers increasingly move to the many alternate forms of payment, including:

- Contactless payment for in-person transactions through a mobile phone (such as Apple Pay or Android Pay)
- Credit and debit cards
- Credit cards stored in a phone’s SIM card or secure element
- Host card emulation, or HCE (e.g., Google Wallet and Softcard)
- Tokenization, or storing credit or debit card information in the cloud.

With tokenization, payment verification, authentication and authorization are still required, but payment card numbers don’t need to be stored, entered or transmitted from a mobile device.

Necessary Security

Along with the convenience offered by cashless transactions comes an increased awareness of security concerns. A good example is provided by the new, chip-encoded Smart Cards, which an estimated 90 percent of consumers will soon have.

By now, every garden pond professional should be aware of the so-called liability shift that occurred when the new EMV (Europay, Mastercard and Visa) technology was introduced. No longer will the credit card companies be liable for fraudulent use of the old credit card technology. In essence, businesses such as retailers, contractors, manufacturers and distributors that continue to use the old technology will find themselves — not the credit card companies — liable for fraud.

Finding a suitable approach for transitioning from conventional credit cards to the new EMV Smart Card technology has been difficult. Some merchant processing companies are attempting to persuade businesses to use so-called “semi-integrated” solutions, selling the marriage of existing point-of-sale (POS) systems with the new Smart Cards. Unfortunately, this has not always solved the problem.

Fortunately, there is good news for merchants: true, integrated solutions have recently been introduced. This new tool is a cutting-edge implementation of technology that takes current POS system data and migrates the communication with a chip-processing device. This streamlined process meets regulations, consumer demand and the bottom-line concerns of merchants.

Break your frame into imaginary thirds on both the horizontal and vertical axes. Place areas of interest at the points at which the lines intersect or along one of the lines.

Cryptocurrency Options

Illustrating the escalating trend toward a cashless world, ATMs may be on borrowed time. Numerous data show that consumers are increasingly embracing other technology for transactions. According to the Federal Reserve, U.S. banks have been progressively scaling back the number of ATMs. In 2015, ATM withdrawals dropped by a record 7.2 percent.

One cash alternative, bitcoin, made its first appearance back in 2009, and today there are hundreds of other cryptocurrencies designed for exchanging digital information. These are mainly used for large transactions. The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that bitcoins and several of its cryptocurrency counterparts are not currencies, but rather investment vehicles that fluctuate in price.

Mobile Payments

The rise of mobile and electronic payments means faster, convenient and more efficient purchases. Mobile commerce, or M-commerce, is the buying and selling of goods and services through wireless, handheld devices, such as cellphones and personal digital assistants (PDAs). M-commerce represented 34 percent of all transactions globally in 2015,
As M-commerce and other electronic payment methods are embraced by consumers, this move away from cash is also being welcomed by many pond and gardening professionals. After all, using cash has its own transaction costs, including the government’s costs when notes wear out.

And don’t forget PayPal, the online payments system, as it continues to add more merchants. PayPal now has 14 million merchants to complement the platform’s 170 million users. Users are able to pay via PayPal online, their mobile phones, in a store or showroom setting, or at the job site.

**Electronic Money**

Electronic money, or E-money, is the money balance recorded electronically on a stored-value card. Another form of E-money, network money, is software that allows the transfer of value on computer networks, particularly the internet. E-money is a floating claim on a bank or other financial institution that is not linked to any particular account. Examples include direct deposits, electronic funds transfers, online banking and, of course, digital currencies.

**Mobile Wallets**

Although the digital era has been in full swing for some time, many pond and gardening professionals have yet to invest in the latest technology. Near-field communication, or NFC, is one such technology all retailers ought to consider.

Many mobile payment systems have been introduced in the past few years, including Google Wallet and Apple Pay. Consumers with mobile devices have a digital-wallet option accepted by an ever-growing list of merchants with NFC terminals up and running.

According to many reports, Wells Fargo Bank is expected to launch an NFC-based mobile payment service very soon. With mobile wallets such as this, consumers will be able to enter their credit card information into their phones before shopping with merchants who use NFC technology. To make a purchase, the consumer holds the phone over a payment terminal, taps a button and enters a Personal Identification Number, or PIN.
Another benefit offered by the new NFC technology is integration with social media. Imagine with a quick scan, customers can automatically alert their followers of their location — your store, garden center or special event — along with an invitation to join them. In fact, some of the many Facebook apps available can automatically send a friend request when two NFC-enabled phones are in close proximity.

A pond business can achieve similar results by setting an NFC tag by the showroom’s entrance. A friend (or like) request for the operation’s website can be sent to customers with NFC-enabled phones as they enter the premises.

Mobile Receipts

As money increasingly goes digital, pond and gardening professionals have a new way of handling paper checks. Instead of using an ATM or a bank teller to deposit a check, mobile check deposits, or “remote deposit captures” as they’re known to the banks, let any worker in the field deposit a check into the operation’s bank account simply by taking a picture of it with a smartphone or tablet.

A November 2014 survey from The Pew Charitable Trusts found that 57 of the nation’s 50 largest banks offer mobile deposit. While banks’ policies differ, it’s not unusual for mobile deposits to be subject to daily and monthly limits. Of course, smartphones haven’t yet solved the problem of checks that bounce due to insufficient funds.

The Demographics

Adopting any of these new and emerging payment systems largely depends on what your customers prefer and are willing to deal with. In other words, will your customers embrace or reject these new payment options?

Many individuals and small businesses are currently unbanked and, for a whole range of reasons, would be severely impacted by a cashless society. Around 8 percent of the U.S. population remains unbanked, and 20 percent of households are underbanked, meaning that while they might have a bank account, they also use alternative financial services outside the banking system, according to a recent survey by the Federal Deposit Insurance Company.

The new technologies being created and improved to facilitate cashless transactions and improve security should be good news for every pond business. But, are you really ready for what appears to be the inevitable, cashless society?

With 25 years of professional experience in the fields of taxes and finance, Mr. Battersby writes on unique and topical subjects in the industry. Although no reputable professional should ever render specific advice at arm’s length, he does craft unbiased, interesting, informative and accurate articles. Mr. Battersby currently writes for publications in a variety of fields. His topical columns are syndicated in many publications each week. He also writes columns for trade magazines and has authored four books.
As the owner of a pond design and installation company, I am always on the lookout for ways to market our “aquatic art.” Over the years, we have done billboards, mailers, magazines, newspapers, social media, flyers, home shows and more — all with decent success. But nothing compares to the results we’ve seen with outdoor displays. Get a person to touch, smell, feel and hear a feature, and they’re hooked!

Each winter during our downtime, we try to find a high-traffic public location and install a water feature with a sign and literature holder. Sometimes the property owners pay for the materials, and we donate the labor. Sometimes we donate both the materials and the labor. Either way, the core agreement is that as long as we are allowed to display a sign with our literature, we commit to maintaining the water feature free of charge. This type of advertising has paid us great dividends.

A New Approach

But last winter we did something different. I was out looking for a display location when I noticed a small house for sale. The house was a little run down, but it was located on a very busy intersection, with roads on three sides of it. The owners were having a difficult time finding a buyer due to the very public, fishbowl-like location of the house. “Perhaps bad for privacy, but perfect for displays,” I thought. We bought the house on the cheap and spent an additional 20 percent of the purchase price on some basic renovations. We found a renter to cover the mortgage and taxes, and then we went to work.

The property was already zoned for commercial use, so we could have opened a store on this site. However, we

by Stanley Sensenig,
Signature Pond & Patio

This self-guided pond tour is a marketing game changer

by Stanley Sensenig,
Signature Pond & Patio

This self-guided pond tour is a marketing game changer

We laminate our self-guided tour description sheets and keep them here for tourists to take.

This small pondless waterfall has been the best seller of all our displays.

Outdoor Displays

Strut Your Stuff!

This self-guided pond tour is a marketing game changer

This small pondless waterfall has been the best seller of all our displays.

Strut Your Stuff!

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This small pondless waterfall has been the best seller of all our displays.
had something different in mind. The local township was surprisingly supportive of our unique endeavor, and before they knew it, we had installed some signs along the road inviting the public to come by for a “self-guided pond tour,” with eight different displays connected by a walking path.

We wanted to start with something eye-catching by the parking lot, so we installed a fountain composed of some very high-end stone-stacked urns, spillway bowls and weathered moss rock at the beginning of the tour. From there, we installed a pondless waterfall, ecosystem pond, patio, pergola, plantings and more along a dedicated path, each labeled with a small, numbered sign that corresponded to a handout.

When we were done, there was almost no lawn left. People driving by wondered if the new homeowners had lost their minds — the landscaping was worth more than the house! It took a little time before passers-by realized that the homeowners actually hadn’t gone crazy.

A Tour de Force

We did some minimal advertising on our Facebook page and website, and the self-guided pond tour took a little time to catch on. But since finishing the display in late March, there has been a steady stream of people every day who park, get out of their cars, pick up a guide sheet and browse the displays. Some even sit mesmerized by the displays. Some even sit mesmerized by the displays. Some even sit mesmerized by the displays. Some even sit mesmerized by the displays.

And while our eye-catching bubbling urns and fountain bowls at the beginning of the tour haven’t sold just yet, they’re definitely pulling their weight and luring in customers. Sales of the subsequent feature — the pondless waterfall with mushroom fountains — have gone through the roof. While the pondless on display is rather entry-level, it has been ordered off the shelf by a wide variety of customers, including two of the town’s very supportive police officers. I’m also pleased that we’ve sold quite a few of the ecosystem ponds, thanks in large part to the $40,000 display pond we built toward the end of the tour.

The ease with which we have rolled out this marketing experiment is also astonishing. Not only are we saving overhead costs that we would otherwise incur at a manned storefront, but we are also spending only about an hour or two per week maintaining the site. This really only involves some minor tidying up and weeding the flower beds. All the water features are equipped with automatic dosing systems, requiring just

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a periodic glance and a refill every now and then.

The neighbors don’t seem to mind the extra foot traffic, and the renter (and his dog) seem pleased by all the daily activity.

**Moonlight Magic**

Approximately 100 LED lights make the displays come alive at night, so this summer, we organized a Moonlight Pond Tour. Besides our usual mention on Facebook and our website, we sent a mailer to all our existing customers and created a huge sign for the front of the property, inviting the public to enjoy the charm and beauty of a pond at night. It may be no surprise that the property was packed full — so much so that we had to borrow some parking spaces at adjacent businesses, which thankfully were happy to help. We’re already looking forward to next summer’s event.

While the tour has only been open for about six months to date, we’re already seeing its effects. This year generally has been a bit slower for many contractors in our area, but we have seen our schedule max out. In fact, we are booked full with water feature installations for the rest of the year. More than 50 percent of this year’s projects have come in through this low-hassle, unmanned display property.

I’ve actually had to consider hiring another employee to help manage the workload. I would encourage anyone with the capability to make a relatively small capital investment who may be on the lookout for a way to increase water feature sales to consider this way of marketing.

**About the Author**

Stanley Sensenig is a Master Certified Aquascape Contractor and the owner of Signature Pond & Patio in Wernersville, Pennsylvania. In business since 1995, his company installs ecosystem ponds, waterfalls and fountains. They also sell retail and wholesale boulders, water garden supplies and decorative driftwood. His company employees five people full-time.

Stanley and his wife Lydia have five daughters. Having their own business has allowed them many opportunities to work together. Stanley is chiefly responsible for marketing and selling the water features they install.

Their company has seen steady growth since the beginning. Stanley attributes their success to great employees, hard work and the blessing of God. For more information, visit www.signaturepondandpatio.com.
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I have been preaching these words for more than 20 years, and it rings true more now than ever. Pond construction as an industry continues to grow and develop, and practices like wetland filtration continue to evolve into more functional, easy-maintenance solutions. These solutions help us maintain the highest level of water quality in our water gardens, yet they become increasingly easier to maintain and service. In this article I will discuss the way we construct our wetland filters and explain how they work. I will also talk about how to plant and clean them — which is rarely necessary!

What Is a Wetland Filter?
A constructed wetland filter in a water feature application is a simple concept. It is an area with very little water flow where plants and beneficial bacteria work in harmony with Mother Nature’s “soup” of microorganisms to remove nutrients and fine sediments from a pond’s water. We like to say that a wetland filter polishes our water, much like reeds and cattails do in naturally occurring marshes and wetlands.

In our experience, there is no biological filter that outperforms a constructed wetland. We have constructed ponds that are 4 feet deep, and the water stays so crystal clear that you can count the individual bits of gravel on the pond’s floor. When torrential rain or our general meddling causes cloudiness in a pond’s water, the wetland filter has it clear again in a few short hours. Here’s how the constructed wetland works for us.

Water is pumped into the wetland from the pond below. At the entry into the filter, we split the water line from the pump. We use most of the flow to create a waterfall that spills onto the surface of the wetland. This does two things. First, it allows the remainder of the water, which will be moving much more slowly, to enter into the bottom of the wetland through the Centipede module, where it disperses and slows down even more. If the design allows the water to move slowly enough at this point, some sediment will

The upflow-constructed wetland filter combines slow-moving water and a massive surface area to naturally filter water.

...
fall out of suspension and collect in the bottom of the Centipede module, where it can be removed if the digestion is not as rapid as the accumulation. Second, the upper waterfall stops the siphoning effect of gravity. When the power to the pump is interrupted, the weight of the water in the plumbing naturally creates a siphon flowing back downhill in the plumbing. Without the ability for air to vent through the upper waterfalls to stop this effect, your wetland water, along with all the accumulated debris, will be sucked up by the siphon and spit back into the pond below.

Once the water has dispersed and slowed down within the Centipede module, it flows up into the storage tank, where it spreads out and slows down even more. Here, growing prolifically, your plant roots and nature’s army of microorganisms should be readily waiting to collect and digest the fine particles and nutrients still suspended in the water. This is where the biological filtration happens.

The water then flows gently upward through the roots and into the gradients of gravel layered on top of the storage tank. We use a 4- to 6-inch layer of 2- to 5-inch stone, then a 4- to 6-inch layer of ¾- to 1½-inch stone, followed by a 4- to 6-inch layer of ¼- to ½-inch stone on top. This formula has allowed us to create enough substrate for proper filtration and desedimentation, while still keeping the filter relatively easy to clean. Extreme situations or specific design requirements may call for a more aggregate depth, but the above formula works well for us in most applications.

When you are finished with the construction of the wetland, there are a few things to remember. First, locate the Snorkel Vault away from

An overall picture of the feature shows the diversity of aquatic plantings used to naturally filter the water in this 15,000-gallon oasis.

Zephyr lilies, spider lilies, ginger and elephant ears purify the water while making a dramatic backdrop for any water garden.
the pond edge and higher than water level by 6 inches. Eventually, the sediment loads within the gravel bed can build up and create enough hydraulic pressure that the path of least resistance is up through the Snorkel Vault and out the top. This can cause an edge leak if the Snorkel Vault is right on the edge of the wetland. Often times, the added pressure in the gravel bed will just push more water out of the waterfall on top of the wetland, but this is not always the case — we learned this the hard way. We also like to be sure to keep the liner 12 inches higher than water level all the way around the outside edge of the wetland. Again, the sediment loads within the gravel bed can build up and create enough hydraulic pressure that the path of least resistance is up between the liner and the edge boulders around the outside of the wetland. This happens mostly when we use plants in the wetland that are too large for its size. We have grown plants like banana trees up to 20 feet tall in our wetlands, and I don’t recommend it, because they can cause these types of issues. We also learned this the hard way!

**Which Plants Are Best?**

Plant selection varies by region, but our suggestion is to use a variety of plants. We like to use things that are more clump-forming and manageable. Some use of tropical plants can be a good choice in regions where they die off, because the root mass starts new each season. Use plants that are different heights to get roots down at different levels in the gravel mass and within the storage tank. Variety will work for you, and experimentation will show you what’s best in your area.

**Easy Maintenance**

The cleaning of the constructed wetland is simple. We remove excess foliage, dead plant material and any sludge we can pick up from the surface. The pump feeding the wetland is shut off and the siphon is stopped. We place a clean-out pump down the Snorkel to the bottom and pump our half to two-thirds of the water. This initial flush removes accumulated solids from the Snorkel and Centipede and should have water running clear out of the clean-out discharge hose. We then stop the clean-out pump, attach a high-pressure firehose nozzle and begin cleaning. A simple recirculation of the remaining water does the trick. This is where our constructed wetlands beat the competition’s designs. If you bury pipes or hoses in a huge gravel bed, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible to back-flush or clean the filter in the future. Each time you clean, it becomes more compacted until it finally fails.

With the design we use, blasting water down through the gravel reverse-flushes debris into suspension. We spray until the clear water turns murky, like chocolate milk, and then we pump it out. Then we pump more clear water from the pond into the wetland, filling it about ¼ full. We begin refilling the pond before we do our next cleaning. If the filter is not properly cleaned, it becomes a nightmare to back-flush and can cause these types of issues. We also learned this the hard way!

**About the Author**

John Adams and his son Tristan Adams are the owners of Modern Design Aquascaping. They are Master Certified Aquascapers & Certified Rainwater Harvesting Professionals. They have been building ponds for 20 years and have constructed features in 11 states. They have received the national title of “Artist of the Year.” John has been to Africa twice with the Aquascape Foundation to build rainwater harvesting systems for those in need. He has spoken as an educator to hundreds of people at garden shows, garden centers and trade shows. Their work has been featured on HGTV Ideas and cable television as well as in various newspapers and magazine publications. See their work at www.MDaquascaping.com or on Facebook at Modern Design Aquascaping, or call them at 865/995-1234.
In the previous installment of Language of Koi, we learned how to distinguish between metallic and non-metallic skin on koi, as well as how to identify the characteristic known as luster. We also explored the single-colored, metallic-skinned koi in the Hikari Muji class. Now we will study the other two Hikari classes of koi, Hikari Utsuri and Hikari Moyo. The fish in these groups display more than one color and will have a pattern or markings, all in combination with a metallic base. The fact that they have shiny, metallic skin should be understood, as their classification begins with the Japanese word for shining, hikari.

Hikari Utsuri Class

The fish in the Hikari Utsuri class are multi-colored, metallic-skinned koi that are of Utsuri lineage. They are generally fully scaled, but they can be found in Doitsu type, as well as with long fins (butterfly). They will have heavy-banded patterns comparable to the traditional

Shine on! Part II

Understanding Hikari Utsuri & Hikari Moyo

by Ellen Kloubec, Kloubec Koi Farm

In the previous installment of Language of Koi, we learned how to distinguish between metallic and non-metallic skin on koi, as well as how to identify the characteristic known as luster. We also explored the single-colored, metallic-skinned koi in the Hikari Muji class. Now we will study the other two Hikari classes of koi, Hikari Utsuri and Hikari Moyo. The fish in these groups display more than one color and will have a pattern or markings, all in combination with a metallic base. The fact that they have shiny, metallic skin should be understood, as their classification begins with the Japanese word for shining, hikari.

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Quick Tips to Determine the Correct Hikari Class for Koi

Hikari Muji:
- Metallic skin
- Single color
- No pattern

Hikari Utsuri:
- Metallic skin
- Multiple colors - one is black
- Thick-banded pattern

Hikari Moyo:
- Metallic skin
- Multiple colors
- Random patterns

**Hikari Muji**

- Single color
- No pattern

**Hikari Utsuri**

- Metallic skin
- Multiple colors - one is black
- Thick-banded pattern

**Hikari Moyo**

- Metallic skin
- Multiple colors
- Random patterns

Hikari Muji: Metallic skin

- Single color
- No pattern

Hikari Utsuri: metallic Hi Utsuri, two colors (black and red)

- Kin Showa: metallic Showa, three colors (black, red, and white)

- Kin Hi Utsuri: metallic Hi Utsuri, two colors (black and red)

Just like in the Hikari Muji class, the colors on Hikari Utsuri varieties are often distorted by the lustrous sheen on the koi’s skin. The beautiful luster that is highly desired has a tendency to alter some pigments, making them appear slightly faded or smudged. The sumi pigment will take on a golden tone, and white is transformed into platinum. Likewise, the red, or beni, may become a brownish-orange hue or appear fluorescent when the sheen is very strong. It is rare that any of the pigments appear as their normal shade over the heavy metallic base. However, exceptional specimens with deep and well-defined colors can be found.

**Hikari Moyo**

- Metallic skin
- Multiple colors
- Random patterns

**Hikari Moyo Class**

Finally, we come to the Hikari Moyo class. The fish in this class are multi-colored, metallic-skinned koi that display a pattern, though not of Utsuri lineage. To correctly identify your koi in the Hikari Utsuri class, verify that it has metallic skin, multiple colors (one being black) and a pattern. Its pattern will be displayed as large connecting bands of color that wrap around the body, and perhaps black pigment will be apparent on the fins. The patterns of Hikari Utsuri koi generally parallel those of the traditional Utsuri and Showa — thick bands or patches of color. Ideally, the bands should be evenly spaced along the body from nose to tail. The large patches of color often connect with each other and wrap around the fish down to the belly. The substantial block-like patterns are very impressive on glinting, metallic skin. In the Japanese language, the word utsuri means reflection. Reflection refers to the formation of the pattern, or the way the two colors alternate to mimic a checkerboard, each color the opposite of the previous color. The Hikari Utsuri pattern is graded with the same principles as their non-metallic counterparts, with balance being very important.

Another aspect of Hikari Utsuri varieties is the occurrence of sumi on the fins, although not every fish will display this trait. Most noteworthy is mutsugoro, or sumi located at the base of the pectoral fins. Some varieties in the Hikari Utsuri class will have sumi stripes on the pectoral fins rather than a patch of sumi on the pectoral joint. Hikari Utsuri varieties are also produced with long, butterfly fins. To correctly identify your koi in the Hikari Utsuri class, verify that it has metallic skin, multiple colors (one being black) and a pattern. Its pattern will be displayed as large connecting bands of color that wrap around the body, and perhaps black pigment will be apparent on the fins.

Just like the previous two groups, the class name begins with the word Hikari, so the koi in this class will have beautiful, iridescent metallic skin, too. Each will have two or more colors, and every koi will have a pattern. The word moyo means pattern, design or marking. However, there are no checkerboard patterns in this class, because these koi are not of Utsuri lineage. Each koi in the Hikari Moyo class has a bright, metallic, platinum base color. All will have at least one complementary color. Some varieties will have two, three and even four colors. These additional pigments form interesting patterns. Like the varieties in the Hikari Utsuri class, the colors are often muted or diffused because of the strong metallic quality of the underlying skin. Generally, beni is slightly transparent, so it appears as a beautiful, golden-orange color on top of the platinum base. The black shows up as a light-charcoal gray. Because they are in the Hikari class, the luster is harshly judged in this group, too. Again, a glinting sheen should cover the entire body of the koi and spread all the way to the tips of the fins. Generally, the koi in the Hikari Moyo class will have flashy, white metallic fins that accentuate the pattern. These impressive pectorals can be spotted easily, even in ponds with tepid or somewhat cloudy water conditions.
is the Kujaku. It has a platinum base color with significant red markings. Its scales have dark-colored overlay centers, or pinecone patterns. This is called reticulation. Being of Hikari type, the red on Kujaku is often transformed into a dazzling, bright orange. That, together with dramatic contrasts between a platinum base and the dark scale centers, produces a radiant effect.

Pattern is generally random in this class and may be compared to the patterns of non-metallic varieties, such as Kohaku, Sanke and Bekko. Many koi hobbyists are drawn to the fish of this class because of their brilliant, shiny base, wide range of colors and extensive pattern possibilities. The Hikari Moyo class contains many unusual and uncommon metallic varieties. Some are scaled, some are Doitsu type and some are produced with butterfly fins. Many are thought of as rare or exotic.

- **Hariwake**: platinum koi with orange or yellow pattern
- **Yamatonishiki**: metallic Sanke, platinum base with red pattern and black spots
- **Kujaku**: platinum base with reticulation on scales and orange or red pattern
- **Kikusui**: platinum koi with red pattern, always Doitsu (no scales)
- **Gin Bekko**: metallic Bekko, platinum koi with black spots

To determine whether your koi belongs in the Hikari Moyo group, verify that it has a clean, bright, platinum base color with at least one additional color, while displaying a pattern that is not an Utsuri (checkerboard) style. By using this information, you can easily identify your favorite metallic koi variety and determine in which Hikari class it belongs.

For more help with koi identification, and to see our illustrations of many koi varieties, visit our website: www.kloubeckoi.com/ellens-koi-education/

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**About the Author**

Ellen Kloubec and her husband Myron began their aquaculture business in 1981, and their farm consists of 80 acres of mud ponds. Together with their son Nick, they raise and supply healthy and hardy koi to wholesale customers throughout the United States and Canada. Ellen loves all things koi. www.kloubeckoi.com

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**Polyurea Liner**

With the structure and basic plumbing in place, the polyurea liner can be installed. Polyurea is usually a two-coat application, with the first application consisting of making sure any imperfections are taken care of. These are usually in the form of pin holes and small gaps around some of the penetrations. By coating the entire concrete surface with a cementitious product, such as Bond-Kote, the process is much easier. Shotcrete surfaces are usually very rough, and in standard pool construction, the plaster crew makes it all beautiful. But with any rubberized or plastic waterproofing, the surface must be smooth. The best way to describe the desired finish is:
Paul Parszik of Artisan Aquatics applied the polyurea. The isocyanate component has a reaction to chemical moisture in the concrete and to some additives in certain types of cementitious surfacing compounds. Normally a minimum cure time of 28 days is required, and depending on the environment and the type of concrete mix used, this still may not be enough time. We have experimented with many types of surfacing compounds over the years, and we have found Bond-Kote to be the best. Bond-Kote can be troweled very thin and hardens quickly, sealing the moisture in the concrete surface from the polyurea. Whatever Bond-Kote is made of, polyurea returns allow water to radius out in all directions from the return, evening out the flow around the floor. The auto-fill return is a ¾-inch fitting with a recessed flange specifically for polyurea, which can be used with rubber liner as well.

**Filtration**

Filtration for this project is divided into three separate circuits, each consisting of a pre-filter, pump and biofilter. The pre-filters are static suction pre-filters of my own design. These are sealed to be used above or below ground in a direct-suction configuration before the pump. The lower half of each pre-filter is a vortex settling chamber with Bacti-twist 300 in the upper chamber above a separation plate. The optimum flow rate is about 4,000 gph, with 6,000 gph as the upper end limit. The water enters through a 2 ½-inch side inlet and rotates in a vortex motion, allowing the heavier solids to fall to the bottom. The water, with the heavier solids removed, flows up through the separation plate and through the Bacti-twist, filtering out the finer particles before flowing to the pump. The bottom of the tank has a 2 ½-inch cleaning port and a water pressure inlet to blast the bottom of the tank. The separation plate has an air-blower cleaning manifold attached, and the top of the tank has three shower heads that blast downward during the backwash cycle.

All three pumps are W. Lim Wave 1 ½-horsepower pumps at 6,000 gph each, for a total of 12,000 gph. Each pump uses only 2 amps, making for a very efficient and quiet system. The two biofilters located in the filter room are filled with both #100 and the finer-cut #50 Bacti-twist. Each contains a separate air cleaning manifold for blowing the debris off the media during the backflush and rinse cycles. Each filter is connected to the same main air distribution manifold the pre-filters are attached to. One 2-horsepower blower cleans all the filters. The circuit with the skimmers has a 58-watt Flo-Free UV light of my own design. Two of the four bottom drains flow through the second circuit in the filter room. The remaining two bottom drains flow through the third pre-filter and pump circuit up through the ceiling to the third biofilter at water level in the garage above.

The third biofilter is the aerated system with a split internal design. The lower half is #100 Bacti-twist with the upper half consisting of 1 ½ cubic feet of Cermedia MP2c. The MP2c is aerated with a Medo air pump (45 liters per minute) with approximately 98,000 square feet of surface area for each cubic foot of media. Since most low-volume, low-pressure air pumps don’t operate efficiently over about 2 ½ pounds per square inch, it was important to place the internally aerated biofilter at water level to operate properly. It would not be possible for this filter to function 12 feet below water level. Once air is injected into the biofilter, it must be purged before returning to the pond to prevent air bubble restriction in the piping. Bubble restriction causes burping in the pipes and is visually disturbing. The air purge manifold is located just beside the filter and separates the bubbles out of the water.
column, venting them in the courtyard trough return. The water, purified of air, flows back down through the floor and returns to the pond through three of the in-floor returns. The aerated biofilter is cleaned by turning a three-way valve on the incoming air line, diverting air to the bottom for back flushing.

The only water feature in the pond design is a narrow-steel “H” beam trough paralleling the entry walkway that spills into the water as you enter the courtyard. The pump for this is a Wave I 1/15-horsepower unit that pulls water from the outlet side of the center pre-filter. A Medo air pump (80 liters per minute) on a timer sits on a shelf above the filters to supply the bottom drain air diffusers. The auto-fill is a Levelor electronic unit with the sensor inside the skimmer closest to the filter room.

**A Quiet, Functional System**

The filter room is used for other purposes and is adjacent to the downstairs recreation room. Creating a quiet system was important to the homeowner. The large piping with 2½-inch inlets and outlets on the filters keeps the dynamic head as low as possible, allowing for the use of the most efficient pumps available. The gauges on the tops of the filters don’t move and stay at a constant 2 ½ pounds per square inch, whether the pumps are on or off. My low-head pressurized biofilters help make this possible. The pressure reading on the gauge is the water pressure at the depth of water where the gauges are located.

Although this was a challenging system to create, it turned out well. As you enter the courtyard, the only sound you hear is the spill from the end of the trough return. Unexpectedly, the pattern of water flow can be seen easily around the in-floor returns as the biofilm and thin carpet algae began to grow on the floor. This visual pattern enabled me to easily adjust the returns as necessary to balance the flow.

**Living the Pond Life**

A lifestyle that transcends earth and water

by Lloyd Lightsey, The Pondmonster

In one way or another, we can all agree that living, laughing and loving are key parts of the pond life. However, these terms are relative, because we all think of these things differently — just as ponds and water features mean different things to different people. A multi-million-dollar commercial pond with massive boulders, waterfalls and pumps is blissful to one person, while someone else may find serenity in a washtub on the porch with a waterlily and a few goldfish.

Personally, I tend to feel life’s daily trials and
Tribulations wash away with the sound of water. Moving water always attracts the eyes and ears, luring you to it. I believe it is in your being to explore this sensation, so that it soothes you in that very moment. As you read this, did your mind’s eye wander to a particular feature? Did you picture yourself in front of it, perhaps with a loved one? In the split second of answering this question, did you feel your heart rate drop? Did you feel your worries lessen? This “split second” is what we grasp and share in what we call “Living the Pond Life.”

A Way of Life

On April 15, 2015, my wife Karrie was diagnosed with stage 3 colorectal cancer, the same cancer that had taken her mother’s life three years before. The treatment included radiation, aggressive chemotherapy, surgery and then more aggressive chemotherapy. Life as we knew it was changing, and we had to minimize negativity and pessimistic attitudes. We reached out to those who gave us positive feedback and, in turn, inspired us to live positively, laugh and love life in the pond world.

Karrie gathered all the good that was sent to her, and she coined a simple phrase — “Living the Pond Life.” Karrie also was coming to the realization that maintaining a positive attitude of putting this illness in its place regardless of its outcome would keep negativity at bay. By sharing her attitude, it made her realize that she wanted to do more for others who were going through a similar situation. So as the tides where changing again, she decided to give back and donate to cancer research, starting at Pondliner’s Water Garden Expo this past February. All the arrangements were made to bring customized shirts for attendees who wanted to show their support for Karrie with an overwhelming amount of love. However, in the first week of January, Karrie’s white blood cell count dropped, and she had to start a series of injections that would allow her to continue her chemotherapy. Unfortunately, this would also keep her from attending the Water Garden Expo, and I would have to go without her.

My emotions were unexplainable. I could go and share the news that she was going to beat the cancer, but she had to stay home. No one knew this more than our good friends, Demi and Sue Fortuna. Sue is also a cancer survivor, and they both gave us tremendous support.

Sharing the Attitude

Before Karrie’s diagnosis, I wrote...
an article that appeared in last year’s March/April issue called “You Don’t Have to Mow Water!” At the end of the article, it mentioned Karrie’s announcement of starting her own line of pond products that she was developing that would be called “Living the Pond Life.” This has dramatically changed from a business focused on the pond industry to an entity chiefly about living life. The treatments that we were going through took most of everything we had. We were receiving positive input from so many of our peers and friends. Jason Lenox of Ponds Inc., called many times to give us encouragement and asked if he and Gerard Touhey could help us by starting the Facebook group “Living the Pond Life.” We’ve started using the hashtag on Facebook with “living” and “life” in all-capital letters — #LIVINGthePondLIFE. This was great therapy for the both of us, as it created a passionate group of people to help others laugh and enjoy life with ponds and water features. There’s a good chance you’re already familiar with it. When the group was started, we got a great response from a lot of people who were also enjoying the ponds and water features that many enthusiasts, contractors and their customers were posting. A member who asked to join by the name “Missy Dunfee” posted a picture of her pond that she and a friend had built by themselves with one shovel, a lot of hard work and much enthusiasm. She said, “In the grand scheme of things, my pond is a puddle compared to the beautiful ones I see on this page, but it gives me hours of pleasure, nonetheless.” Karrie’s immediate response to her was, “That is a beautiful story, and although you think your pond is small, you are living the pond life in a huge way.”

Applications of ‘Pond Living’

As a pond contractor for more than 40 years, I love stories about how people got their start. For example, there is a contractor in South Florida by the name of Alex Castro who owns Tranquil Waterscapes Inc., and the Koi Smart Pond Supply Store. When he was young, his parents took him to an amusement park called Splendid China in Orlando. It featured koi ponds with mini model villages that mesmerized him and ignited his passion to get into the business. It just so happens that when Splendid China closed its doors, one of my customers bought many of those mini houses and set them up beside the pond in his backyard in Kissimmee, Florida. I sent Alex a picture of my customer’s backyard after a visit and then enjoyed a great laugh when an ecstatic Alex called to express how awesome it was to see the setting that got him into the pond business. Many of us enthusiasts and fellow builders try to apply the lifestyle to our businesses and our workforce. If you have joined us on Facebook, you have probably noticed the antics that Jason, Gerard and I have been enjoying — a brief trip to Pennsylvania to see what Gerard calls his “garden,” which is really just his entire property all the way around his house. It’s so breathtaking that the whole time we were there, I didn’t take one picture. It was just so amazing and mesmerizing that everywhere you looked, there was something else to see and explore. Then we all went to Geneva, Illinois, to see Jason’s newest projects at a few clients’ houses and
Hundreds of water feature industry professionals attended Pondemonium, Aquascape’s premier training and networking event from Aug. 24-28, 2016, in St. Charles, Illinois. This year’s theme was “Leading the Change” in honor of Aquascape’s 25-year anniversary. In-depth classroom sessions and hands-on training were available for both novice and advanced water feature professionals throughout the event. Numerous networking sessions allowed for the exchange of ideas among peers.

An inspiring Leadership Bootcamp for business owners and managers opened the event on Wednesday, Aug. 24. Attendees completed a DiSC profile in advance in order to learn their personality styles and how they influence leadership behaviors. Classroom training and hands-on activities provided insight on how to coach and interact with staff to create the best work environment.

Wednesday evening was set aside for the annual Top Frog dinner, where leading contractors and retailers were recognized.

Keeping Perspective

While sitting in the waiting room of her oncologist, two days short of the one-year mark of her diagnosis, the doctor was delayed, so Karrie caught up on the Living the Pond Life Facebook page. She started to feel that it had become too commercialized from contractors showing off their builds, so she felt compelled to write her own post on April 13:

“Do you guys (pond builders) know what you do for people? You walk into a customer’s life and set them up with serenity and a place to be happy, a place to share, a place where they belong and a place to relax, even when life is not so good to them. You give them a lifestyle! #LIVINGthePondLIFE is what you give them. Living life with a pond, and for that, you should feel awesome!”

These words, when I read them, hit me like a ton of bricks. I realized how during this last year of holding my partner’s hand while she went through this battle, it wasn’t just me she was leaning on. It was all of you who do what we do — build some of the most amazing water features while loving, laughing and “Living the Pond Life.”

It’s all fun and games on the road with (top, from left to right) Gerard Touhy, Pieter van Westervelt, Jason Lenox and Lloyd Lightsey. Pond installer Trey Bradley (bottom) enjoys his Texas style pond in Dallas/Ft. Worth.

Chuck Catton of Aquascape (right) leads one of several small groups during the hands-on training sessions.

Pondemonium 2016: Leading the Change

Premier industry event catered to first-timers and Master CACs alike

About the Author

Lloyd Lightsey, The Pond Monster, has been building, engineering and just plain loving the water feature industry for over 40 years. He loves playing with life-sized Tonka trucks and throwing dirt and rocks all day with his crew. Lloyd has an awesome wife, Karrie, his “partner in life and business” who will soon be announcing her own line of pond accessories. Lloyd and Karrie have been “digging the pond life for the five years we’ve been married (pun intended).”

by Jennifer Zuri,
Aquascape

Pondemonium Recap

Premier industry event catered to first-timers and Master CACs alike

Dogs love ponds, too. This one belongs to Mark Wilson from England.

It’s all fun and games on the road with (top, from left to right) Gerard Touhy, Pieter van Westervelt, Jason Lenox and Lloyd Lightsey. Pond installer Trey Bradley (bottom) enjoys his Texas style pond in Dallas/Ft. Worth.
for foreman and water feature installers new to the industry. After classroom training was completed, attendees were divided into smaller groups to apply what they had learned and install an actual waterfall feature. At the same time, an advanced waterfall build with hands-on training took place at the Q Center in St. Charles with Certified Aquascape Contractors.

Thursday concluded with an inspiring keynote presentation from Jim O’Connor.

Friday and Saturday mornings consisted of keynote presentations from Greg Wittstock, the owner and CEO of Aquascape Inc., and Ed Beaulieu, the vice president of field research. The mornings continued with roundtable discussions led by industry peers, classroom training and inspirational sessions focusing on water features and best business practices. A local pond tour, a fish wet lab and a tour to Lurvey’s Garden Center were conducted in the afternoon. A fundraiser for the Aquascape Foundation was held at Top Golf on Friday evening.

Pondemonium concluded with its annual awards ceremony and “Blow-Out Bash” party. Special award recipients for the year included:

**Businessman of the Year:** Joe Phagan of Living Waterscapes, Kernersville, North Carolina

**Certified Aquascape Contractor of the Year:** David Blockson of Pondscapes of Charlotte, North Carolina

**Water Feature Artist of the Year:** Alan Decker of Decker’s Landscape and Aquatics, Pattersonville, New York

**Conservationist of the Year:** Bernie Kerkvliet of Skyline Ponds, Blue Jay, California

In addition, awards were presented to the Top 20 Contractors and Top 20 Retailers. Next year’s Pondemonium event is slated for Aug. 23-26, 2017. For more information about the event, visit www.pondemonium.com. For information about Aquascape products and services, visit www.aquascapeinc.com.
**Trade News**

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**EasyPro’s Vianti Falls Family of Products Expands with Wall Scuppers**

EasyPro Pond Products of Grant, Michigan, offers Vianti Falls Stainless Steel Wall Scuppers. These accent spillways are ideal for formal water features with 5- to 10-gallon-per-minute flow. They are available in four styles: diamond trim, round trim, square, and channel. To request your full color catalog or for more information on EasyPro products, call 800/448-TW3 or visit our website at www.easypropondproducts.com.

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**TidalWave Variable Speed Controller**

Atlantic’s new Variable Speed Controller (VSC) offers wireless control of its popular asynchronous pumps. Unlike integrated variable speed controllers, the TidalWave VSC can be added to any new or existing TW or TT-Series pump. Just plug the pump into the VSC and use the built-in screen or the remote to vary the output flow from 25 to 100 percent, start and stop times, decrease electrical consumption and lower operating costs. The 2.4-gHz remote wirelessly controls power and flow rate functions within a 100-foot radius. The Variable Speed Controller carries a 3-year warranty.

For more information:
James Chubb, National Sales Manager
Atlantic Water Gardens
616914-5955 www.atlanticwatergardens.com

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**The Water Cleanser is Now Available in the United States**

Eco-Librium (www.thewatercleanser.com), a San Antonio-based company, is pleased to announce an exclusive marketing agreement with Marine Easy Clean Pty Ltd. (www.marineeasyclean.com.au), to sell and distribute their flagship product, the Water Cleaner, in the United States.

The Water Cleaner is disruptive technology invented and manufactured in Australia that restores long-term water health by harnessing nature’s cleaning power instead of using popular chemicals that provide a short-term solution but can often cause harm to fish, plant and other marine life. This product is a wax block that serves as a protective home for organic colonizing microbes and provides the essential breeding trace elements for them to multiply to their optimal levels so that they can then consume the organic waste in the water at an accelerated rate. The Water Cleaner contains millions of microscopic capillaries from which these naturally-occurring beneficial microbes can colonize, essentially creating a microbial mat. The Water Cleaner does not contain any microbes or bacteria, but rather provides everything that naturally occurring beneficial microbes require to re-establish a healthy population in the water system and perpetually perform the natural waste breakdown process that they were designed to do. By removing the waste that harmful bacteria and algal blooms utilize as a food source, the beneficial microbes treat and prevent those events.

The applications for the Water Cleaner are various; it can be used anywhere organic waste in water is found. Benefits include improved water quality and clarity; control of algae, elimination of odor, fewer water changes, healthier fish with reduced infections and lower chemical usage in pools.

For more information:
www.thewatercleanser.com
support@thewatercleanser.com
210/849-5470

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**Irrigation Show and Education Conference Offers Growth, Networking & Fun**

The Irrigation Association is heading to Las Vegas for its 2016 Irrigation Show and Education Conference, Dec. 5-9. An exciting new part to this year’s show is the unveiling of a 2016 co-location with the National Ground Water Association’s Groundwater Week. The combination of shows will create the largest irrigation show ever — 9,000 attendees along with 600 exhibitors. The show floor will be open to both NGWA and IA registrants. Both groups will also co-host an opening reception on Dec. 7, a keynote presentation on Dec. 8 and a Drought Summit on Dec. 9.

The Irrigation Show is the place to be to learn about new technologies. On the show floor Dec. 7 and 8, attendees will be able to browse and talk to exhibitors. Attendees can take their careers to the next level by taking advantage of the education courses and certification exams offered throughout the week. Choose from agriculture irrigation, landscape, golf and business classes. There is an additional registration fee associated with these classes.

Registration for the Irrigation Show and Education Conference is open. Visit www.irrigationshow.org for more information and to register.

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**Little Giant Launches New Aeration System to Promote Water Beautification & Biological Pond Health**

Franklin Electric Co., Inc. offers the new Little Giant Aeration System that allows contractors to provide a solution for water beautification and biological pond health challenges. This multi-functional, ½-horsepower Aeration System is capable of moving up to 500 gallons per minute, great for bodies of water up to half an acre in size and making unit sizing simple.

The Little Giant Aeration System is ready to use out of the box, coming pre-assembled as an all-in-one package that includes the float, aerator and a proven Franklin Electric motor to keep water clean and healthy. The system requires 115 volts and a minimum depth of 18 inches of water to operate. In addition, the Aeration System can be used for decorating bodies of water, water agitation, ice prevention and mixing.

One unique feature of the Little Giant Aeration System is its ability to quickly transform into an attractive fountain display. An optional conversion kit includes the pump head, nozzle stem and multiple fountain nozzles. With the easy installation of your selected fountain nozzle, the system provides up to five different spraying patterns — the Sonata, Cantata, Concerto, Staccato and Crescendo — appealing to any aesthetic preference with average spray heights from 8 to 15 feet and average spray widths from 14 to 30 feet.

For more information, go to www.lg-outdoor.com/c/decorative-water.
Aquascape Inc. Announces New Hires to Customer Care Team

Aquascape Inc., North America’s leading innovator in the water features industry, is pleased to announce the recent growth of its customer care team to support new and existing clientele.

“Water features are once again growing in popularity and the need for increased customer support is evident,” stated Colleen Heitzer, president of Aquascape. “I’m excited to welcome our newest customer care representatives who service our valued distributors, retailers and contractors.”

Michael Hammer, National Sales Manager
Michael joins Aquascape from Rugby IPD Corp, where he served as general manager of the Chicago distribution center and as partner in $1.20 million wholesale distribution. Michael brings a strong leadership dynamic to Aquascape’s customer care team, with 20 years of experience leading operations and sales teams.

Ruben Gonzalez, Territory Sales Manager
Ruben brings 16 years of green industry experience to Aquascape, having previously worked at TruGreen Chemlawn, Ewing Irrigation and Horizon Irrigation. Ruben became knowledgeable of Aquascape during his 9-year employment span at Ewing Irrigation, where he received seven awards from Aquascape.

Brad Heuser, Inside Sales Representative
Brad joins Aquascape with 12 years of customer support experience, having most recently served at In the Swim, a manufacturer of pool supplies. Brad’s extensive training and experience leading sales teams make him a valuable addition to the team.

Lori Noethen, Inside Sales Representative
With more than 20 years of experience and an infectious energy, Lori’s ability to quickly develop relationships with customers makes her an enviable asset to the Aquascape customer care department. Lori spent six years working in the pool industry, earning valuable product knowledge.

For more information about Aquascape and its products and events, log onto www.aquascapeinc.com or call us at 866/877-6637 (U.S.) or 866/776-3426 (Canada).
Window to the world.

»Created for the endless enjoyment of water«

We develop products that inspire the water gardening industry, worldwide, with their high performance, reliability and longevity. We combine modern, automatic manufacturing technology and know-how into our production to deliver high-quality items.

Throughout the entire OASE line, our products proudly carry the seal of quality.

Discover OASE North America: www.oase-livingwater.com
EASY IN.
EASY OUT.

The Little Giant® Aeration System makes it simple to keep a body of water clean and healthy. Quickly attach or detach the pump from the float. No bolts, no screws... just easy installation and conversion to our optional fountain kit.