**Early Hobby Years:**

To be brief- Carl got his first aquarium in the late 1960's (1968 when he was 9 years old). It was a Metaframe 5 gallon aquarium which was different from the all glass aquariums with silicone for construction, which became more popular in the 70's forward. This aquarium had a simple "bubbler" corner filter powered by a Metaframe air pump. His first fish were Guppies, Zebra Danios, Platties and White Clouds, which were a "starter pack" given with the aqurium.

A little over a year later, Carl received a 10 gallon aquarium where again, he used a simple corner filter even with larger and a more "modern" design. In this tank, there was many types of Tetras from Neons, Head/Tail Lites, etc. Also Rasboras, Corys and his first Plecostomus (no one warned Carl how large these guys could get)...

In the early 70's, Carl purchased a 40 gallon "all glass" aquarium, which had his first HOB filter- a Dynaflo (which is a much different design than current HOB filters). He continued with similar fish, which he had before, just more of them and a little more "exotic" (such as some Buenos Aires Tetras which were exotic to him at the time).

He later (77') decided to try his hand in saltwater even though there was little information at this time about saltwater keeping. He added an Undergravel filter, the "new" Nektonics design, which at the time was considered the best. (At least by others he knew in the hobby). He added Damsels, Clown Fish, a Yellow Tang, a Batfish and some others. He later added a Brown Octopus, which was the most interesting creature he owned. Mostly due to the neat personality it had.

**First years in Pet Stores/Maintenance Business**

In 1977 Carl took a job at Archie's House of Pets. Initially their original La Puente and shortly there after at the West Covina Mall store (it was called the West Covina Fashion Plaza). Danny Digiacomo was his original "boss" (he was not the owner, but ran all three stores as if he were the owner) He was a good mentor and really new his stuff from a business point of view. Later, issues between Danny and the actual owner (who was not a hands on owner) resulted in him leaving as he purchased another high end pet store in Orange County.

Carl shortly there after became an assistant manager at the West Covina Store and the general manager for the fish departments.

Carl made a point during this time to inquire about all trade representatives, such as TMC & Aquatronics, which they had some of the most up to date information about aquarium water chemistry and treatments at the time. They later knew Carl personally due to his many questions and later named him the "Green Flake Man" (more later as to why).

**Bahooka Restaurants:**

In late 1978, Carl started his aquarium maintenance business on the side while still employed at Archie' House of Pets.
In 1978, Carl had an employee of the Bahooka Restaurant contact him for a sick Arowana (the Bahooka was a restaurant, which would become very well known in the LA area for its many aquariums and unique Polynesian atmosphere). She had failed to cure an infection despite many attempts from others advice, however Carl made a house call and was able to save her prize fish. She was so happy, that she told her boss (Jack, one of the owners) and he contacted me to set up and maintain the aquariums at the Bahooka.

Unfortunately the West Covina location lost its lease, however this allowed for the later to be more well known Rosemead Bahooka location to expand, adding a new dining room where by Carl extended their aquarium collection to over 100, and many were over 100 gallons each.
It is noteworthy that these were unique custom wooden aquariums put together with fiber glass laminates with a glass plate pressed against the front from the inside

During Carl's time setting up and maintaining the Bahooka Restaurants, he took in many what would later be very popular fish, including many Pacus, (including Rufus who was much smaller when taken in from a person needing a home for his Pacu that was out growing his home aquarium).

 

This became a launching point for Carl's business and when problems arose at Archie's, it prompted him to start his own store in Hacienda Heights at the end of 1979. Along with his fiancé at the time Tris (who he met at Archie's House of Pets).

**1980s To 2002, Including Experiments/Trade Shows**

Although Carl's aquarium store started slow, it did grow and Carl did have to rent the building next door to double in size, late 1980.
However, it was the maintenance business, which really blossomed and made the name, especially since the store was in a somewhat obscure location.

During the early years, besides the Bahooka, Carl picked up many other well known accounts from the Lobster House, doctors, attorneys, Coaster Co. (which by the 1990s was the largest furniture importer in North America and the largest account with multiple locations, with many aquariums and ponds), and others.

This account with its 100 plus aquariums would be a major testing ground for many of Carl's controlled experiments over the following years. The Bahooka was better than most accounts, since Carl was there (or had staff there) daily, so potential variables were more easily eliminated.

These also led to a contract with Disney to build and run the aquarium in the bar for the TV Show (pilot), [Acting Sheriff (AKA "Make My Day")](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acting_Sheriff) starring Robert Goulet.

Strohmeyer was able to work out agreements with many of his service accounts such as the Bahooka & Coaster Co. to provide 100% care and with a certain price, he used these locations for many tests (as well as some breeding).

Carl's earliest tests were with fish foods (based on many ideas provided by mentors and hobbyist doctors he made friends with). This is how he earned the nickname the "Green Flake Man" by Aquatronics as he found despite the popularity of many household brand names such as Tetra Fish Foods, these foods may have raised generations of fish (as many anecdotal pundits of Tetra products would say. In actual controlled tests Tetra foods did not hold up to what Carl called the "Green Flake" at the time (now [Spirulina 20](https://americanaquariumproducts.com/Spirulina20Food.html)) and other foods.

As well during these years and well beyond, he experimented with the product called the "Wonder Shell", originally created by Weco, and his extensive use and testing showed that it worked in ways not noted by Weco such in Redox balance (Weco was/is the original manufacturer), as well as did not work in ways claimed by Weco.
In fact Carl's industry/hobby leading article about [**Aquarium Redox**](https://www.americanaquariumproducts.com/Redox_Potential.html) was an outgrowth of experiments with Wonder Shells and UV Sterilization as popular science at the time did not explain all his results.
Carl also developed a medicated versions of the Wonder Shell too during this time which still stands out as a product with no comparison in the hobby/industry.

COMMENT/EDITORIAL;
Of late Carl has put 1000s of hours of testing and research into the Wonder Shell alone, so why purchase this product from a "parasite" retailer that is just along for the ride and knows little about practical use and are often selling clearance product and/or do not have the full line (including medicated) or proper instructions.
Yes you can often get this same product from a discounter (although often less fresh thus losing mineral Cations), but why not support someone who has supported this hobby his whole life (not to mention has the full line with accurate instructions to back their us up)? Please support AAP's mission of cutting edge information by purchasing your Wonder Shells via AAP only, not Amazon, eBay, or other parasite retailers (although we do have an authorized seller via eBay using our legal AAP name).

Strohmeyer admits, the ideas to perform these tests were because HE LISTENED to researchers and a representative from Sera foods of West Germany at a trade show who, at the time made this statement: "I find it interesting how popular Tetra Foods are in America while in Germany, they are considered the cheap discount food". Carl figured excellent marketing, which still persists to this day.

See Carl Strohmeyer's Fish Nutrition article for more about these fish food experiments.
Along with his Spirulina Article:
["Proper Fish Nutrition"](https://www.americanaquariumproducts.com/Quality_Fish_Food.html).
["Spirulina Algae in Fish Food"](https://www.americanaquariumproducts.com/SpirulinaAlgae.html)

In the late 1980s Carl became good friends with Dr. Herzog, a well respected Endocrinologist in Whittier, which was a long term fish hobbyist (both marine and Freshwater). Carl maintained an aquarium in his office and helped with his home aquarium. During this time Herzog taught Strohmeyer LOTS about what medications can and cannot do, and how even in human treatment a doctor makes an "educated guess" at best.
He taught Carl much, which contradicts to-this-day many anecdotal claims about medications, bacteria, and more that unfortunately still persist in this hobby. Often by people who blindly repeat bad information in blogs, forums, groups, or even Yahoo Answers.

Other researchers in the industry played a major role in strohmeyer's education here as well, as he spent a great amount of time over the years in consultation with the lab techs within the aquarium pharmaceuticals industry.

A recommended read for more on this subject, please see Carl's medications article:
["Aquarium Medications; Page 1"](https://www.americanaquariumproducts.com/Aquarium_Medication.html)

During the late 1980s, Carl also set up many aquariums in a room of his house where he experimented and performed controlled tests of UV Sterilizers, filters, medications, and more.
While his earliest experiments were with fish nutrition, he later shifted to disease prevention, then copious amounts of effort for UV Sterilizers. To this day, this still accounts as the subject Strohmeyer has spent the most of his time in research. Later, came experiments into aquarium chemistry, lighting, and finally Redox, which was the most eye opening for him in the aquarium hobby.

During the 1990s, many of these tests continued and Carl used his aquariums along with Coaster Co (which by now had become his largest service account for both aquariums and large ponds) for his tests, which would eventually contribute to his articles:

[Aquarium Disease Prevention](https://www.americanaquariumproducts.com/Aquarium_Disease.html)
[UV Sterilization](https://www.americanaquariumproducts.com/AquariumUVSterilization.html)
[Aquarium GH, KH, pH, Calcium](https://www.americanaquariumproducts.com/AquariumKH.html)
[Aquarium & Pond Redox](https://www.americanaquariumproducts.com/Redox_Potential.html)

These tests were conducted to try and explain why Strohmeyer was observing certain results with differences in care of many of his client’s aquariums and ponds.

**He also conducted these tests, because it was simply NOT good business for him to make unnecessary visits due to problems with his clients aquariums or ponds (not to mention, better customer satisfaction).** So, figuring out a method or methods, which keep fish alive along with equipment with the least problems was advantageous for him. Aquarium Disease prevention was so important that Carl found employing as many steps as possible were part of this "prevention puzzle" would lower the amount of disease incidence and lengthen fish longevity.

During the late 1990s, when Strohmeyer was considering re-opening his aquarium store, which he earlier had closed for personal reasons (See personal Bio). He pondered using one of Marineland's pet store bio wheel systems since he had many Penguin Filters as well. However, when discussing this with another colleague in the maintenance business (that he would occasionally see at Quality Marine).
The colleague questioned Carl's reasons and quickly made him realize he was sold on the Bio wheel for anecdotal reasons. This was the beginning of another controlled test about these popular bio filtration devices. Please see this article for more:
["Aquarium Answers; Do Bio Wheels work"](https://www.aquarium-pond-answers.com/2006/12/do-bio-wheels-really-work.html).

Many similar tests also were conducted around this time, including using Fluid Filtration, methods for fish disease prevention (which resulted in his Redox research and also tied in with what would become his UV Sterilization and Chemistry article) live rock crumbles for nitrate removal in Marine Aquariums, Protein Skimmers, Veggie Filters in ponds, and many different filter combinations (including drilled canister filters), which often went against the popular filter system beliefs of the time.

**Summary of 1978-2002**

Later, Strohmeyer sold off his maintenance company and then opened an online business, which featured his researched articles and experience as the cornerstone of his business plan. The other cornerstone, which contributed to the growth of his business was the customer service he provided both then and now. In many interviews with his clients, he found while he certainly gained and kept many customers via his ability to keep their aquariums to their satisfaction, it was his customer service, which was the over whelming reason most clients/customers stayed with him both then and now.

**2002-Present, INCLUDING Current Research, Strengths and Weaknesses**

In 2002, Carl had to leave behind his aquarium maintenance business and store.
Noted in his [main biography](https://www.americanaquariumproducts.com/AboutMe.html).

Strohmeyer worked at a candy factory as a production manager when he first had to move to Oregon for personal reasons. For these reasons, please see Carl's personal bio.

He soon started his online aquarium information & later supply websites, in part from inspiration of a co-worker a the candy factory (Rachel Owen). He also realized many people over the years, which knew him during his maintenance business days wished he would put down on paper his [Aquarium & Pond Information Knowledge & Research](https://www.americanaquariumproducts.com/Aquarium_Information.html). He utilized his websites for this idea.

Starting in 2005 he looked to use his long time "American Aquarium" name for the online url (this was basically his earlier business name), but soon realized a band was using this url name, so friends suggested many terms and he went with products to the end even though ***at the time he was not selling any aquarium products*** (thus "American Aquarium Products or AAP).
Strohmeyer published many of his articles to the AAP website and have since researched further, updating, correcting and adding new content (including new articles). He cites as many references as possible, especially for new information added. Unfortunately, the sudden move in 2002 forced Strohmeyer to leave behind a lot of research documents as well.

Also starting in 2005 (before even selling aquarium products), Strohmeyer also became active in in many aquarium forums/groups (often via invitations), starting with Google "use-net" forums. He also was active in Yahoo Answers for some time at the suggestion of many of his friends he made in these forums/groups (although he is no longer active in Yahoo Answers).
Of late he has been invited into many Facebook groups to share his experience and article library.
His time helping and sharing in forums along with updating/researching of his articles now takes up the majority of his time!

While the original selling website was more to simply sell shells and related "Ocean Decor" products, he quickly realized (in part by urging of those who knew him for years), that he should go back to selling what he recommends. One friend bluntly stated; "why not sell some of these products that are noted in your articles?"
While now the shell/ocean decor part of the website is a very minor part of this business, it still represent a large portion of the website since Carl's original intention was to utilize his growing library of aquarium/pond keeping information to attract person to a more simple business of selling shells/ocean decor.
For those who make Ad Hominem attacks upon Carl, it is clear they never even bothered to investigate this webpage or Carl's history as the facts are the history of his articles that some detractors with no otherwise valid refutatation claim to be to "shill" products, go back decades before this AAP website selling aquarium products or even existed. Again to clarify, even the AAP website which began in 2005 to provide a place to place his article with the selling of Ocean decor as a way to pay for the time and content, did not begin to actually sell aquarium products until 2006!!

Carl first started aquarium products selling via eBay (while his "American Aquarium" web site was still evolving from just information and shell decor).
He sold mostly what he could readily obtain from long time contacts. In the beginning this was by his own admission what would achieve eBay "price points", not always what he used in his aquarium maintenance and design business. A good example was a Chinse Sponge Filter knock off.
Friends who he knew and met (while active in online aquarium help forums) questioned why he did not always sell what he recommended such as the Sponge Filters, silicone and Vecton/Advanatage UV Sterilizers. He stated that he was trying to not appear to have a conflict of interest. However friends pointed out that this was silly and was basically appealing to Logical Fallacy arguments.
So as he was evolving his web site, he did not follow what he necessarily sold on eBay.

What Carl would like to point out to readers of this biography is, much of his success and knowledge over the years is not based on my scientific brilliance or similar, rather more to his use of management/business skills to recognize what he did and did NOT know. This allowed himself to learn from others and as well recognize in others where they could make up his deficiencies.

Strohmeyer continued to research for his articles and he generally research OUTSIDE the Aquarium industry/hobby, because he RECOGNIZED much of the popular information was often re-posted and passed around over and over. Carl would research fish farming studies, horticultural studies, medical studies, lighting innovations, water chemistry and its effects on life in general, and many other such sites (often .edu sites too).

One of Carl's talents is that he is very good at organizing information, while at the same time, he's a poor analytical thinker (He's a much better "picture" thinker). Most who have worked with him over the years have noted that he's often open to learn and that he make up for his weaknesses with his businesses organization and similar skills.

**An example:**
Even during his stint of attempting a career change of becoming a professional pilot, that four VERY different flight instructors and even a very hard ass FAA examiner (for his multi-engine pilots license) noted that he was only an average pilot in his flying abilities, but his excellent cockpit organization and recognition of his weaknesses (he was not at all cocky according to one instructor) made him an excellent pilot.

What does this have to do with fish keeping?
Well, a lot of Carl's feedback over the years with clients who stated they appreciated his honesty, integrity (he would not simply sell a product, because there was a lot of money to be made or it was popular which also proves out by the fact he earned less than minimum wage over his 16 years online), dependability, and willingness to always learn.,br> The fact is, another mentor over the years (Reggie) at a aquarium supply wholesaler, which finished his business career there told Strohmeyer this: "I have never seen a more dishonest and back stabbing business than the aquarium industry".

These statements are NOT to puff Carl up or put others down, rather to point out that his ability to learn is something anyone who is honest and puts their mind to it can do. What Carl is good at (as per others too), is that he's very good at organizing information, listening to others, and testing what they say, regardless of his opinion at the time (which may be then forced to change...).

Even in areas of less knowledge, such as specific fish species knowledge and breeding. Carl HAS kept many of these fish in a generic sense and has applied his tests in keeping fish alive and long term fish health to these fish with excellent results. So, although he may not know the specifics of many different exotic fish, he can attest to VERY good success in long term health and care (Clients that had many different aquarium service personnel before Carl have stated this as well).

This all has resulted in Car often being sought out for his expertise in aquarium/pond fish diseases and prevention, including cutting edge articles about Redox, lighting, & UV sterilization where persons have even sought out Carl's expertise from outside the aquarium/pond keeping industry. The Covid 19 Pandemic has in particular had many asking Carl for his thoughts, especially when it comes to oxidative stress (Redox) and the role it can play to how this virus often kills due to a an inflammatory response by the victims own immune system.
Disney World is a well known entity that has sought Carl's advice (again in particular about UV Sterilization and Redox).

In closing, Carl is still learning and though some may criticize him or label him a fish expert guru, in reality he's somewhere in the middle and he will also point out, besides the fact he's still learning, many of those he's learning from are younger or even only a few years experience. (Suzie Q at Everything Aquatic was relatively new to the hobby, but she taught him things he didn't). He has also learned from others at [Everything Aquatic](https://www.everything-aquatic.com/) such as John Laffin (Murdock), Rogier Van Vlissingen, Bill, Jon V, Eve, Parker, fishfever, and MANY others there alone. (Please forgive Carl if your name is left off here, even though chances are, he has learned from many posts, especially questions that made him re-check his own research or expand it!!)

Carl will also admit, while he was not treated well on many Google groups he was on, he still learned from some of those, which were rude and nasty. He did not let their nastiness get in the way of good information.

**As noted earlier, if Carl's articles have been helpful, please help him by providing a link in a personal blog or website to your favorite articles/products give a "shout out".**

A list of most of Carl's article:
[**Aquarium Information**](https://americanaquariumproducts.com/Aquarium_Information.html)

***Other Help:***

* Other help for this website has come from Steven Wright's fantastic picture skills (he really exemplifies the expression "a picture is worth a thousand words" with his picture art).
* Tommy Butler with his professional knowledge of operating systems and more has helped Carl much, including hosting of web sites and just his inspiration
* Blaine Scheidegger also contributed much in his 8 month tenure here with vast improvements to web design, layout and simply fresh ideas.
* For their many talents, thank you Misti King & Devon Trigg.
Besides their work in improving articles, they help everyone at AAP deal with the extreme negativity and dishonesty, which is unfortunately occasionally found in the aquatics hobby/industry. We have to deal with it in emails, forums, groups, Facebook, etc. Thank you.

***For critics of what many will call his bias in products***, it is difficult for anyone to make such a statement and call themselves an honest person with a straight face if they have read this bio, the AAP Mission Statement, & his personal bio.
He has made many personal sacrifices professionally and including passing on good contracts that could have made him considerable $$ over moral reasons, getting much lower discounts from manufacturers by refusing to sell entire lines as requested as he did not find all the products something he would use professionally, and even leaving a business in the hands of untrustworthy person when he was force to move his family to protect them from a psychopathic predator that was harming his family just to save jobs (he lost a $1000s in this decision alone).

Even now he only resides in a small 900 square food home and works a second job with very limited income because he places others in the hobby first, he certainly is NOT getting rich off from his long hours and efforts!!!

So in the end, beware of isolated anecdotal low information persons/forums/FB pages that will use personal attacks on Carl to discredit him since they have no real arguments against his vast experience, testing, & cited references, most often with the old argument that he "sells stuff"; just note what he has given up for others's:

1. He canceled his largest contract (110 aquariums) that not only provided a good portion of income, but more so a LOT of publicity just to stand behind an employee after the new owners of this large contract sexually harassed said employee
2. He helped many over the years, taking in families into his home. however one person had bad intentions and harmed his wife & daughter and took $1000s.
This actually got worse, resulting in Carl having to move literally in the middle of the night and intrusting his business with others against his lawyers advice so as to keep their jobs, only to see them liquidate his business for 10s of $1000s
3. Later, once operating online and helping many all day & into the night and weekends, this Ghost from the past reared its head and caused family issues we will not mention, but suffice it to say, one of the ways these forces against Carl brought up was that he cared more about helping others in the aquarium community than his family (which of course was not true). Then when he cut back the time he spent helping others to meet this criticism, more criticism was poured out on him by his detractors.

These are but a few examples, just to remember when his detractors use the tired Ad Hominem argument that all Carl is about is selling stuff!!