

**Ramblings** — Jerry Kyle

Once upon a time long, long ago I wanted another tropical fish tank. I only had one 55 gallon aquarium along with a 35 gallon show tank and two 35 gallon tanks all crammed into the entry area to the family room.

“Phyllis?” I said, “I would like to get a larger fish tank.”

“What will you do with the ones you already have?”

“Keep them,” I said.

“No!”

“What do you mean, No?” I asked.

“No.”

Since I am older and well into second childhood my natural reaction was to respond like a child. Having a young great granddaughter to learn from is a help. The key is to stick the lower lip out only a little. If stuck out too far it becomes obvious and may make an adult mad. Just a little bit with the chin tucked back into the neck, again, only a little. Don't be too obvious and don't say anything. Being mad, talking back, or arguing upsets them. The trick is to not appear to be sulking which is bad, but to just look sad. Pitifully sad. Grandmothers don't feel comfortable being the cause of making someone sad. It may take a little time but hang in there and be quietly sad.

After some time (it took awhile as this grandmother is tough) I heard, “There is no room for another tank.”

“What?” innocently, straining not to smile.

“If you can find a place where there is room to put it you can have another tank.”

Loving this great grandma as she is so much easier to get along with since I entered second childhood, I looked for a place to put my new tank thinking maybe a 100 gallon tank is not large enough since, after all, the reason for a big tank is to have big fish. A tank in a spare bedroom is out of sight and out of mind and cannot be continuously enjoyed hidden from view. It was my idea to have the two large sofas and a club chair with ottoman in the living room making that room too full of furniture already. Back in the family room I wondered aloud if she would like to replace the “old fashioned” ten foot long sofa with a new (shorter) more stylish one. I secretly thought that might free up enough wall space for my big tank with big fish.

“No!” she said but now with a little fire in her eyes. She was on to me. I had pushed this thing as far as it could go, I was against the wall as the deal was clearly finding “a place where there is room to put it.”

**Ramblings (cont'd)** — *Jerry Kyle*

I was not faking as I sat pitifully sad in the family room and gazed dully out the eight foot window into the small back yard. I had played the game as best I knew and lost. The only space big enough for a big tank is where the window is and one cannot block the window. She had won and the corners of her mouth were twitching ever so slightly as she fought to keep from grinning. The only space big enough for a big tank with big fish was outside in the yard on the other side of the window and that would have been dumb. Or would it?

I was nearing retirement and had planned to do something in the yard as I liked digging in the dirt for relaxation and stress relief. The space was directly outside the window in clear view and just lawn. It could be even bigger than 100 gallons! At the park in the Japanese Gardens there are big colorful fish that are really neat looking and way bigger than tropical fish. They are called koi and I thought they were a kind of giant goldfish. I did not know a thing about them but was willing to find out.

“Dear?” Notice I did not call her Phyllis.

“Ummm?”

“I found a place.”

“Where?”

“Right there. Outside. You said if I could find a place and I found a place. There in the yard. A pond will look nice outside the window.”

“Who is going to dig it?”

“Me.”

“OK,” with another one of those secret smiles.

I was on fire. This was going to be great. After all, how hard could it be to dig a hole and fill it with water? By doing my own work it would be cheap to build and would look good. Everyone would be impressed and I would have big beautiful fish. They might be a little more expensive than regular goldfish but some of my tropical fish cost ten or fifteen dollars so I could afford it. After all I would have had to spend a few hundred dollars for a big aquarium. It was time to do a little research about these koi and see what I could find out as I began this adventure which has sometimes obsessed me for nearly five years.

To be continued...