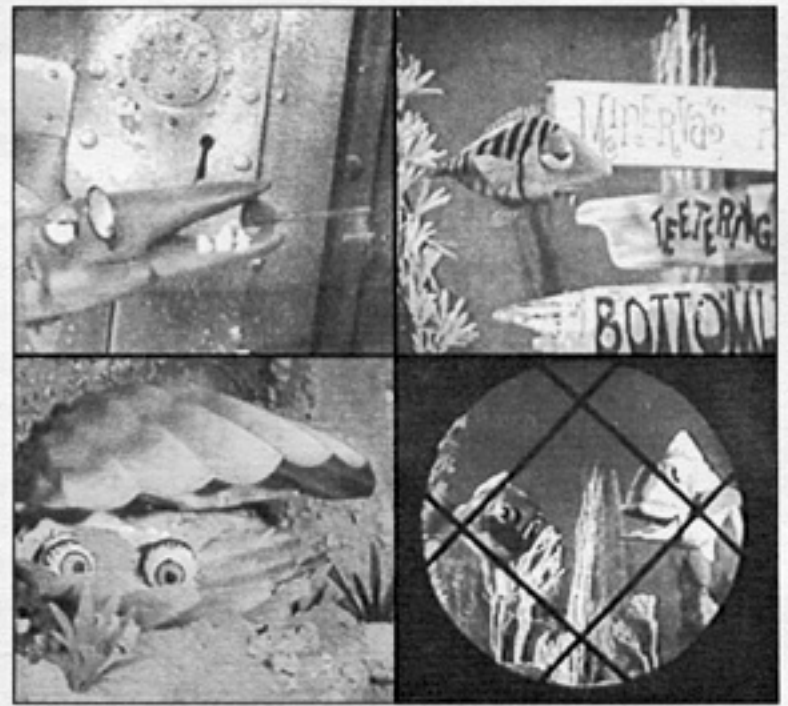




Above (clockwise from upper left): Baron Baracudda, Triggerfish, 'Diver-Vision', Gabby the Clam.

Left: Miss Minerva (Suzanne Turner) surrounded by her fish friends.

enjoyed their adventures. Two giant fish tanks were set up: a large one for long shots, and a smaller one for close-ups that the camera men filmed through to get the underwater effect. Frank Freda remembers, "Every morning when we came in they would have to scoop out the dead fish before we started the days filming!"

Above the set was scaffolding where the puppeteers would lie on their stomachs and work the fish puppets that were attached with single filament fishing line to wooden poles. Frank Freda recalled, "So much of the early work was experimentation. One of the funny things was, he (Kellman) came in one day and the puppeteers were up on the bridge, including Hal Taylor. There was a young man named Martin who was hired and had very little puppeteering experience. Lou came in yelling, (in a German accent), "The fish! The fish are vwigging! They're vwigging! They don't look like they're swimming! You should see the rushes, they're vwigging!" And Martin says down from the bridge, in a very collegiate manner, "Mr. Kellman, I wish we *could* see the rushes, we'd learn from it." He (Kellman) said, "You'd vomit!"

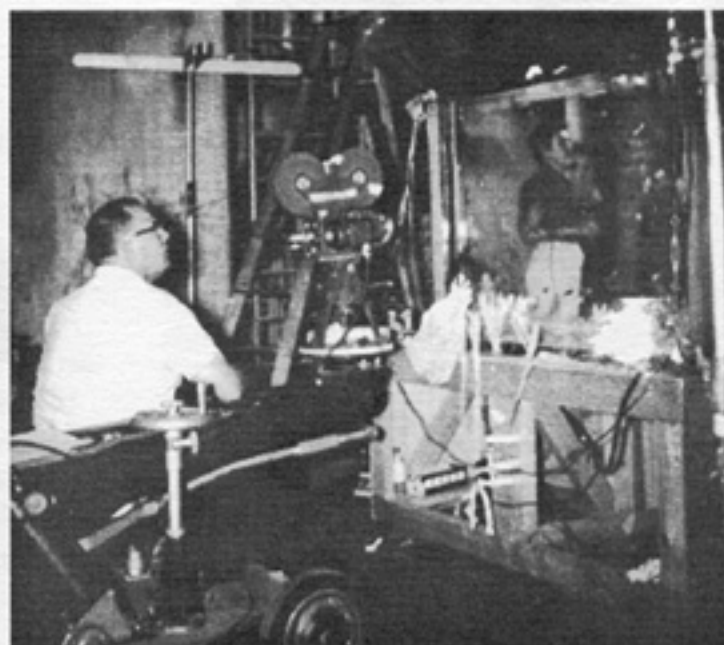
Like animated cartoons, the soundtrack was done first

and the characters synced their movements to it. "Everything was prerecorded," Jack Sky said, "Because the puppeteers didn't have real control over the movement of the mouth. There was a little inertia there so they had to kind of anticipate. They'd rehearse three or four times and then they'd shoot the scene."

Shooting about three episodes a week, they turned out 104 episodes in nine months, which meant that production had to be kept moving along. "Ben Burke was the production manager," said Frank Freda, "he would have this gruff, lower east side manner to him, and there was always a butt in his mouth. And he was Triggerfish! Ben did not have too much of an artistic bent and he had only one thing to say as everybody tried to be accomplished: 'Can we go boys?' And if the producers were there he would say that five extra times, for points, 'Okay, can we GO boys?' and he was like a whipcracker, but he was really a gentle,

nice guy." Freda went on to say, "Ben would do a dance every once in a while. We called it the 'Burke Dance of Fire'. He would forget the cigarette was in his lips, it would get so small it would burn him, and everything would spark and he'd fly (around) brushing and yelling 'Yaahh! Yaahh!' and that was the 'Ben Burke Dance of Fire.'"

Writers Joseph Bonaduce and Ron Roszel were never at a loss for imaginative stories. One episode had Minerva being kidnapped and tied to the mast of a sunken ship; another Diver Dan discovers the lost city of Atlantis. And anyone who grew up watching the show will remember the running gag between the Baron and Trigger - Trigger: *Hey boss!* Baron: *Stop calling me boss! Call me Baron, you idiot!* Trigger: *Duh, okay Baron you idiot.* Like everyone else associated with the show, the writers had something special about them. Ron Roszel was a



Right: Cameraman Morris Kellman gets ready for a close-up shot through the smaller fish tank. **Far right:** The larger fish tank for the longshots.