



# Tank Topics

The Official Publication of  
The Greater Akron Aquarium Society



August/September  
2007

In this issue:

- *South American Catfish*
- *Java Moss*
- *Xiphophorous evelynae*



# THE GREATER AKRON AQUARIUM SOCIETY

**WHO ARE WE?** We are a local group of aquatic enthusiasts. Formed in 1952, the Greater Akron Aquarium Society is a non-profit, non-commercial organization. Our membership ranges from the beginning hobbyist to the advanced aquarist with many years of experience. The goals of our club are to promote the care, study, breeding and exhibition of aquarium related aquatic life and to promote interest in the aquarium hobby.

**MEETINGS:** Our meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 8:00 p.m. at the Mogadore Community/Senior Center, 3857 Mogadore Road, Mogadore, Ohio. It is located East of Route 532 across from McDonald's in the former post office building (see map on inside back cover) Visitors are always welcome, it costs absolutely nothing to attend a meeting and look us over.

**MEMBERSHIP:** The cost is only \$750 for adults, \$10 for a couple or a family (includes children under 10 years of age) and \$5.00 for a junior membership (10 to 17 years) Membership provides an opportunity to socialize with other that share your interests, a subscription to our bi-monthly magazine, library usage and more.

**AGENDA:** Our meeting agenda is simple and informal. The meeting will begin at 8:00 p.m. with a short business meeting. Immediately following is the program for the evening which usually lasts about 45 minutes. Our programs consist of a speaker, slide program, movie or perhaps a panel discussion always on a particular subject related to the hobby or various species of fish. Following the program is a short refreshment break. After which the winners of the Bowl Show are announced, the Breeder's Award Program fish are auctioned and tickets are drawn for the equipment and book raffles.

**THE BOWL SHOW:** Each month members can bring in fish for specific classes to compete for first, second and third place awards. The charge for each entry is only \$.25. Members also compete for annual awards by accumulating wins throughout the year.

**BREEDER'S AWARD and HORTICULTURE AWARD PROGRAMS:** members can receive recognition for spawning species of fish or propagating aquatic plants. All that is required is to turn in a minimum of six fry from the spawn that are between 30 and 90 days old. Members earn certificates for each species and can work towards plaques in different categories.

**LIBRARY:** At the library table are a number of books and other publications covering all areas of the aquarium hobby. Members may borrow the books for a month at a time. Also each month several books are raffled off.

**EQUIPMENT RAFFLE:** The raffle table has such items as tanks, fish food and aquarium accessories that are donated by national manufacturers, area dealers or purchased by the Society. Tickets may be purchased by anyone attending the meeting. Save your losing tickets for the Christmas Party raffle.

**ANNUAL SHOW:** The Ultra-Aqua show is held the first weekend of August at the Tallmadge community Center. This has become one of the largest all-species tropical fish shows in North America. It is an international gathering of hobbyists to display their fish in class competition, talk fish and to learn about the hobby from each other.

**TANK TOPICS:** is published on a bi-monthly basis for the members of the Greater Akron Aquarium Society. Articles and comments for this publication are welcome and encouraged. Such articles are to be submitted no later than the board meeting prior to publication. All articles may be reprinted as long as the author(s) and GAAS are given proper credit and two copies of the publication containing the reprint are sent to GAAS. Please send any correspondence regarding this publication to:

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**This issue's cover:** A female *Xiphophorous evelynae* taken by Wayne Toven. Find out more about this interesting livebearer in Wayne's article on page 20.

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# President's Message

Bud White



Hello folks, nice weather we have been having here, I hope you enjoy what we get. It is a nice 72 degrees as I stumble through this message.

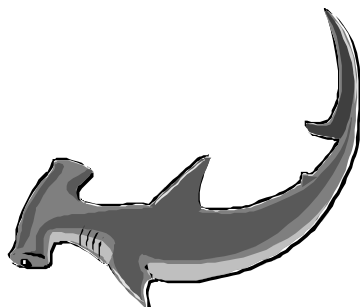
I would like to apologize to some of the other clubs for not being able to attend their auctions and shows. I have been having to work all weekends for quite awhile now and by the time I have been getting off work it is too late to attend. I even had to work the Sunday of our spring auction. For some reason my company has done nothing but grow, so that means I am getting busier. Here is hoping thing slow down and I can get back to what I enjoy, wish me luck!

One of the most important things coming up for our club is the show on August 4 & 5<sup>th</sup>. We need you to be there and support it, try to bring in at least one entry in and see what it is like to participate in one of the best shows around. Of course I am being one sided about this, we do put in a lot of work to be sure things go right and everyone that comes enjoys the visit, it just helps having more members involved in the process. We will be having a general meeting before the show, so if you have any questions see me then.

Speaking of the show, we still have a few classes left to get sponsored, Wayne Toven has been working on it and is keeping the list, so if you want to help by sponsoring class, call him 330 256 7836.

Nicole Schmid, our historian, is going to put a presentation on sharks for us at the next meeting. We had a small problem with getting her presentation to work before, but we should be all set for it this time.

See ya then, Bud.





# Editor's Message

Dave Williamson

## It's Shooowww Tiiiime!!!!

OK, pardon the tacky beginning, I just wanted to get your attention. It's that time of year again Ultra-Aqua '07 is looming large on the horizon. Probably just about a week from when you'll be receiving this issue. As usual when I'm talking about an upcoming show or auction, I'm going to ask for your help. No pleading or begging like when I'm asking for articles, just asking. For a club like ours to put on a show the size of the one we do it takes a few people to put it together. Here is a basic list of what happens over the course of the weekend:

**Friday:** Racks and supplies are loaded into the truck and taken to the show site then unloaded and put together. Table cloths, skirting and air lines are laid out and put on.

**Saturday:** Fish are registered (hopefully some of yours included!), entries are checked for correct placement and re-arranged if needed. Throughout the day water buckets are refilled and floors are mopped repeatedly. Then in the evening we set up for the party and order in and serve the food.

**Sunday:** Helpers and judges show up really early so they can get everything done by noon in time for the auction to start. Speaking of the auction, you need all the regular help for that such as auctioneers, runners, computer, kitchen and so on. Then we hand out the awards followed by disassembling all the racks, reloading them into the truck then unloading back into storage for next year.

Whew! Sound like a little bit of work? The more of that are there to help out, if only for a little bit, the more everyone can enjoy the weekend.

I'll see you at the meeting, show set-up, the show and tear down! I guess it'll be a busy month, ya think?

# Bowl Show & Special Activities



Dan Frase

Dave Williamson is in the lead with 88 points, with Wayne Toven trailing at 70. Jeff Palzak is in third with 25 points. It's still anybody's race. Be sure to bring your AO New World Cichlids, Amphibians, and Bog Plants to the August meeting.

As far as Special Activities go, the show and auction is August 4th and 5th. The auction is on Sunday and it starts at Noon. Please help out by running fish, selling raffle tickets, helping out in the kitchen, or however you want to contribute to your club. It beats the heck out of just sitting through the auction.

We'll be going to the Pittsburgh Zoo's 45000 square foot, 380,000 gallon PPG Aquarium Sunday, September 9. We'll meet up at the McDonalds at 76 and Rt. 44 at 8:30 and leave there at 9:00. The behind-the-scenes tour starts at 11:00 AM. Admission to the zoo is \$10.00 for adults, \$8.00 for children 2-13, and free for small fry. Parking is also free. Hope to see you there!

## **June Bowl Show:**

### Native Fish

1st - Dave Williamson  
2nd - Dave Williamson  
3rd - Wayne Toven

Blue Fin Killie  
Starhead Topminnow  
Madtom Catfish

### Rainbowfish

1st - Wayne Toven  
2nd - Wayne Toven  
3rd - Wayne Toven

*Melanotaenia parva*  
*Melanotaenia mccullochi*  
*Melanotaenia inornata*

### Male Bettas

1st - Dave Williamson  
2nd - Wayne Toven

Copper Plakat  
*Betta bellica* male

### July Bowl Show:

#### Synodontis Catfish

1st - Wayne Toven  
2nd - Wayne Toven  
3rd - Wayne Toven

*Synodontis batesii* female  
*Synodontis petricola* female  
*Synodontis petricola* male

#### Killifish

1st - Dave Williamson  
2nd - Dave Williamson  
3rd - Wayne Toven

*Rivulus rubripunctata*  
*Epiplatys lamottei*  
*Aphyosemion striatum*

### Totals for the Year:

<u>Entrant</u>	<u>Total</u>
Dave Williamson	88
Wayne Toven	70
Jeff Plazak	25
Heather Stansfield	8
Nicole Schmid	2
Dan McMonigle	2
Frank Mueller	1



## How the Point System works:

1st - 4 points  
2nd - 2 points  
3rd - 1 point  
1 point per entry, maximum 10 points per class

## Remainder of the 2007 Bowl Show Schedule

**August:** All Other New World  
Cichlids, Amphibians, Bog Plants

**September:** Photography, Gouramis  
& Anabantoids, Sharks & Loaches

**October:** Arts & Crafts, Marine Fish,  
All Other Old World Cichlids

**November:** All Other Livebearers,  
All Other Egglayers, All Other  
Catfish

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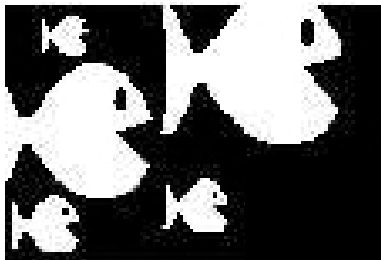
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# BAP/HAP

## Report

Wayne Toven



Summer is officially here, a lot of people must be outside doing fun things, but we still need to take care of the fish, because they can't do it themselves. I found a way to do both, I have ten 110 gallon Tuff Stuff tubs out behind my garage, they are all full of various water plants, lilies, irises, and of course fish, all livebearers. There have been at least three spawns that I have found since I put the fish out in late May, some have so many plants it is hard to see the water, so there might be more. The lilies are flowering now, the irises are all done flowering for this year, and the other plants are growing like weeds, actually some of them are, especially the curly pond weed, *Potamogeton crispus*. I feed them occasionally, but mostly I let Mother Nature take care of them, the only thing I do is add fresh water if they get low from evaporation, we need more rain! I know it's hot, but if your fish room is like mine it is the coolest room in the house, it's in the basement, so when it gets too hot, I go work in the fish room. The number of spawns that have been turned in is still way below what it was last year at this time, but we are still trudging along. One member is one spawn short of getting a can of brine shrimp eggs, at the magic number of 10 spawns. Let's get those fish busy!

### June 2007

#### **BAP**

<u>Species</u>	<u>Common name</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Points</u>
<b>Dave Williamson</b>			
<i>Xiphophorus monticolus</i>		Livebearer	5
<i>Pundimillia nyreri</i> "Ruti Island"		Cichlid m.b.	10

#### **HAP**

#### **Dave Williamson**

<i>Cryptocoryne balansae</i>	C -vegetative	15
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### July 2007

#### **BAP**

<u>Species</u>	<u>Common name</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Points</u>
<b>Malachi Brasch</b>			
<i>Xiphophorus helleri</i>	Swordtails	Livebearer	5



**Frank Mueller***Lamprologus ocellatus*

Cichlid s.s. 15

**Wayne Toven***Xiphophorus evelynae*

Livebearer 5

**Bud & Cathy White***Gambusia regani*

Livebearer 5

*Xiphophorus birchmani*

Livebearer 5

**Dave Williamson***Brachyrhaphis olimina*

Livebearer 5

*Rivulus rubropunctata* "PBS -10"

Killifish 5

**2007 Spawn & Point Totals**


	<b>BAP</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>HAP</b>	<b>Points</b>
Dave Williamson	9	75	2	30
Wayne Toven	4	30		
Christina Biederman	2	20		
Malachi Brasch	2	25		
Rich Serva	2	15		
Bud & Cathy White	2	10		
Frank Mueller	1	15		
Jeff Plazak	1	20		
Dan McMonigle			48	530



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# Coming Events

## **August 4 & 5 – Greater Akron Aquarium Society -**

### **Ultra-Aqua 2007 Show and Auction**

Tallmadge Community Center, 80 Community Rd., Tallmadge, Ohio

For more information: Bud White (330) 848-3856 ([bwhite@neo.rr.com](mailto:bwhite@neo.rr.com)),

Wayne Toven (330) 296-6322 ([wtoven@hotmail.com](mailto:wtoven@hotmail.com)) or Rich Serva

(330) 650-4613 ([riserva@juno.com](mailto:riserva@juno.com))

## **August 19, 2007 – Youngstown Area Tropical Fish Society -**

### **Summer Auction**

Lordstown Administration Bldg. 1455 Salt Springs Rd east of Rt. 45

For more information: Mike (330) 761-2066

([airbrush6@zoominternet.net](mailto:airbrush6@zoominternet.net)) or Tom (330) 758-3043

([mruaru2@aol.com](mailto:mruaru2@aol.com))

## **August 25th & 26<sup>th</sup> - The Medina County Aquarium Society - Show and Auction.**

Location is at the Holiday Inn at I-77 and Route 18.

For more information: Brian Shrimpton at 440-237-5092 or

Email [BrianShr@wideopenwest.com](mailto:BrianShr@wideopenwest.com)

## **September 29th - OCA Swap Meet**

Strongsville Holiday Inn Select, set up 9am sales at 10am - 3pm closed at 4p. For more info contact Don Danko [donfish@Ameritech.com](mailto:donfish@Ameritech.com) 440-526-

0755 or Dan Woodland [mojarra@cox.net](mailto:mojarra@cox.net) or visit [www.ohiocichlid.com](http://www.ohiocichlid.com)

## **October 6, 2007 – Great Lakes Cichlid Society - Fall Auction**

Masters Church, 771 East 260th Street in Euclid. Registration starts at

9AM, auction starts at 11. All species, plants and dry goods. Contact

Dean at [Merspaining@netzero.net](mailto:Merspaining@netzero.net), 330-656-0079 or Marty at 330-650-0237 or Bill at 216-692-9296 or Ron at 440-944-3245. web site:

<http://www.greatlakescichlidsociety.net>

## **October 13 – Greater Cincinnati Aquarium Society - Fall Auction**

Oasis Conference Center, 902 Loveland-Miamiville Rd., Loveland, Ohio

For more information or to pre-register: Phil & Jan Benes 513 894-7289

## **October 13 & 14, 2007 – Southwestern Michigan Aquarium Society Fall Workshop and Auction**

Plainwell Community Center, 798 E. Bridge, Plainwell, MI

For more information: Pat Hartman (269) 649-2949

([phat711@sbcglobalnet.net](mailto:phat711@sbcglobalnet.net))

or SWMAS Website: [www.swmas.org](http://www.swmas.org) for updates

# Meeting Notice

**Thursday, August 2, 2007**

**Program:** Nicole Schmid – Attending Kent State University majoring in Zoology Sharks!! man-eaters or really neat fish?

(Yeah, this time for real, the computer will work!)

**Bowl Show:** All Other New World Cichlids, Amphibians, Bog Plants



**Saturday, August 4 (Show party speaker)**

Jim Powers (from Indiana) will talk on Hill Stream Loaches.



**Thursday, September 6, 2007**

**Program:** Brian Shrimpton on high tech fish room

**Bowl Show:** Photography, Sharks & Loaches, Gouramis & Anabantoids

# Exchange Report



Wayne Toven

First things first, if any member of the club would like to read one of the articles mentioned below, let me know and I will get a copy of it to you. Second, one of our members **Dan McMonigle** had his article *Fish Caves* reprinted in the Youngstown Area Tropical Fish Society's May/June issue of The Youngstown Aquarist.

**Pacific Coast Cichlid Association**, Cichlidae Communique: May/Jun 07  
*Cryptoheros nanoluteus*, by Pam Chin  
*Keeping Neolamprologus cylindricus*, by Anthony Tu

**Greater Cincinnati Aquarium Society**, Fincinnati: Mar/Apr/May/Jun 07  
*Waterfalls*, by Michael Sanderman

**Motor City Aquarium Society**, Tropiquarium: May 07  
*Neolamprologus helianthus Zambia*, by Rick Wittner

**Delaware County Aquarium Society**, Fin Fax: May 07  
*Alien Invaders Part III*, by Joe Semeister

**Greater Pittsburgh Aquarium Society Inc.**, Finformation: May 07  
*Procatopus nototaenia "Yabassi"*, by Eric Bodrock

**Hamilton & District Aquarium Society**: May 07  
*Spawning a Different Loricaria*, by Charles Drew

**Motor City Aquarium Society**, Tropiquarium: Jun 07  
*Lamprologus brevis*, by Rick Wittner

**Missouri Aquarium Society Inc.**, The Darter: May/Jun 07  
*Apistogramma diplotaenia*, the Sand Cichlid, by Rick Tinklenberg  
*The South American Molly - Poecilia caucana*, by Mike Hellweg  
*The Lace Brachy - Brachyrhaphis rhabdophora*, by Mike Hellweg

**Hamilton & District Aquarium Society**: Jun 07  
*Metriclima hajomaylandi*, by Larry Johnson

**Eastern Iowa Aquarium Association**, Fin Flap: Jun 07  
*Setting Up and Caring For a Low Tech Planted Aquarium*,  
by Joy Twentyman-Crock  
*Propagating Dwarf Java Fern*, by Joy Twentyman-Crock  
*Propagating Needle Leaf Java Fern*, by Joy Twentyman-Crock

**St. Catharines & Area Aquarium Society**, The Scat: Jun 07  
*Riccia On Wood*, by Dave Unruh

**Aquarium Club of Lancaster County**, Tank Tales: Jun 07  
*Betta raja, a Colorful Language - Part I*, by Tara

**Michiana Aquarium Society**, Michiana Tropical Times: Jun -07  
*Tilapia snyderae*, by Robert Stevens  
*Breeding Chalinochromis brichardi "The Masked Brichardi"*,  
by Shaun Dunham

**Eastern Iowa Aquarium Society**, Fin Flap: Jul 07  
*Hemianthus calitrichoides*, by Joy Twentyman-Crock  
*Propagating Pearlweed (Hemianthus micranthemoides)*,  
by Joy Twentyman-Crock  
*Propagating Red Root Floater (Phyllanthus fluitans)*,  
by Joy Twentyman-Crock

**Michigan Cichlid Association**, All Cichlids: Jul 07  
*The Red Jewel Cichlid - Hemichromis lafalili*, by R. M. Blubaugh-Brown

**Southwestern Michigan Aquarium Society**, Swam: Jul 07  
*Xiphophorus monticolus*, by Chase Klinesteker

**Raleigh Aquarium Society**: Jul 07 *Raising a Fruit Fly Culture*,  
by Christine Duncan

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# *South American Catfish, What little we know*

Bud & Cathy White

Let me start out with the facts, I am in no way a expert in this area of fish keeping. We have had several lucky and successful spawns of different catfish over the years. We have met and made a few friends in this hobby, and all have been willing to tell me their secrets for a successful spawn and of course I blab them to anyone who will listen. So much for secrets!

There have many estimates as to how many catfish there are, but let's just say there are a lot. New ones are being found on a regular basis and many that won't be found because they were wiped out when man setup a city where the fish lived.

Cat fish are named so because they have whiskers and these are a important part of their makeup. Most all have at least 6 whiskers or 3 pairs if you look at it that way, some have more. Some have several branches of whiskers. A catfish without whiskers is not a good sign, many people will say that sharp rocks are the cause of whisker loss. While this may be true in some cases, I find that most whisker loss is from a bacterial problem in the tank,



Sexing is easy

whether bare tank or a tank with gravel, it is still the same problem. They need more water changes and the gravel cleaned more often with a hydro vac system, to keep the rotting food cleaned up.

Sexing these catfish is easy, once you know what to look for. The male's body shape when viewed from the top will look like a V



Not what we want

more like it

shape from the gills back to the tail, the female's body shape is more like the shape of a human eye, it bulges to the side from the gills to the tail. This has worked for all of the catfish in this article, the pictures with this article should help.

The catfish like to eat so feed them well. If you have them in a community tank, make sure the food is getting to them. Let's clear something up here, they do not eat fish feces, they need food just like the rest of your fish do.



*Corydoras* are among the most popular of these catfish and some are the easiest to spawn also. Many will spawn anywhere, on the side of the tank, on the lift tubes, anywhere that is flat, while others will want fine leaved plants or maybe a killie breeder mop. Do a little research and make sure you supply what is needed.

If you have spawn of lets say *Corydoras aneus*, they will have eggs all over the tank glass in clusters. You'll need to either move they fish from the tank or take a sharp new razor blade and scrape the eggs from the tank wall and move them to another tank for hatching. This usually takes about 5 days, sometimes a little longer. A word of warning, you may see the egg casings still on the tank wall or in the hatching tank and think that nothing has hatched.

Don't do any water changes, look real close and you will see the eggs are empty. The fry are small and can hide very well in the corners of the tank or under a filter. You need to feed something small here, I use micro



worms, but you can use powdered fish food or even hard boiled egg yolk, but keep a eye out for pollution. I use a piece of air line and 1/8" ridged tubing to siphon the water out, it's slow, but you can keep from getting any fry that way. After a week you should be able to feed things like baby brine shrimp. They will grow fairly well, with steady feeding and water changes.



The next group is the suckermouth catfish, they are a more varied group than the corydoras. Some will spawn caves, some want open pipes, some want driftwood and then some will use the bottom of the tank. You need to do some more research and hope someone has mentioned the type of spawning they do. I will list some that I have had spawn and hope it helps.

The bristlenose pleco such as *Ancistrus temminckii* are good algae eaters when young. If you don't have enough algae to keep them fed, you must provide some steady green food for them.



feed lots of zucchini

The female needs to get very full to produce a good amount of eggs. I usually feed zucchini to keep them in shape. They generally are not aggressive toward other fish and like to spawn in a cave type environment. The male is a very good parent and will guard the eggs and fry well, usually never leaving the cave when either are in there with him. The female is not allowed back in after spawning and can usually be found hanging around the cave.



The male will try to hide the spawn

If you see a male trying to block your view into the cave with his tail or body, you can be sure there are eggs or fry in there also.

The eggs are yellow or orange colored and they hatch in about 7 to 10 days. The fry develop much like cichlid fry, they have a egg sack until they are fully developed. First foods for them should be fresh canned peas, you squeeze with your fingers to remove the

inside of the pea pod and throw away the pea casing. Do not throw the whole pea into the tank, the casing become traps for the fry. They will work their head into the casing to get the food and get trapped and die.

After about a week of feeding peas, I usually slice up zucchini and weigh it down with lead plant weights so that it drops to the bottom. Once they start eating this they



one happy family





really start growing. They usually clean it up completely, but you need to keep up on the water changes, the water will get acidic very quickly.

Another suckermouth type catfish is *Loricaria filamentosus* or Whiptail cat as it is known around here. These get to be about 7-8 inches long and are a non-

aggressive fish. They are not as good at keeping a tank clean as the bristlenose, but do work at it. They like to spawn in a open pipe and have dark green eggs. the male sits on them and cleans them till they hatch. The fry fully develop in the egg casing and hatch out ready to go after about 10 days. Feeding is much the same as I mentioned with the bristlenose.

I actually got to watch these guys spawn. They both were in the tube, the male would move to the side of the female rubbing her side with his cheek whiskers. She would quiver, lay some eggs and the male would move up even with her and fertilize the eggs then repeat the process till spawning was done. When no more eggs were forth coming, she was chased out of the pipe and the male took over. He never left the eggs until they hatched, never bothered fry after hatching, amazing.

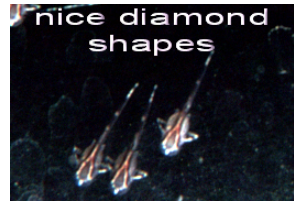


I will mention one more sucker mouth type catfish and that is *Sturisoma panamense* or as some call it the Royal Farowella, I have always thought it funny how a fish could be named to fit in a different group and this is



one of them. The pair I had were both over 10 inches long, liked having a large piece of drift wood in the tank. They ate about anything I fed them and were peaceful with each other except during spawning. The male has short stiff cheek whiskers and using these to stimulate the female during spawning. I

have seen one male rub a hole in side of the female and this is tough to cure, so keep a close watch on them. This fish liked to spawn on a flat surface, like a large rock or even the bottom of a bare tank. The eggs are clear and you can miss seeing them at first. The male tends them very well and keeps them clean. The eggs develop like killie eggs, the fry are completely grown when they hatch out and are about 3/8" long at birth. A tank of these guys is really neat to see, they have white markings on the top that are shaped like diamonds. Feeding is the same as the brittlenose, they grow fairly fast and at 8 months I had 6 inch fry with very long extensions from the dorsal and tail. Very nice looking fish.



One last catfish to mention, *Hoplosternum pectorale*. These fish are usually found at about 4-6 inches long and are easy to keep. They eat most anything, but live foods do help condition them. They don't move a



lot when you are watching and do not seem to be aggressive. These spawn differently from the others, the male builds a bubble nest much like *Bettas* do. The male has a much thicker front ray in the pectoral fin, and he likes a little plant material to use in the nest. Something like *Riccia* is great for this.

During spawning the eggs fall to the bottom and the male gathers them and puts them in bubble nest and tends them till they hatch in about 8 - 10 days. These guys are small so micro worms are a good start for them, then baby brine shrimp. They grow a little slower than the others, but usually do well.

All of these fish were spawned in ten gallon tanks, except the *Sturisoma*. They were put in a 20 long. All tanks were bare bottom tanks with sponge filters. Water changes were done one a week, unless we saw the water was getting polluted, then we did it as needed.

We hope this helps you get started with the South American catfish. Not much, but like the title says, it's what little I know.



## Java Moss - *Vesicularia dubyana* The (almost) Indestructible Plant!

Dave Williamson

I was needing a short “filler article” to finish off an issue of Tank Topics so I started looking around the fish room to see if anything jumped out and said “Hey, write about me!” And of course, nothing did. The longer I thought about it, the more I kept coming up with the idea that it should be about something so blatantly obvious nobody would think to write about it! That’s when it came to me, Java Moss! I’ve got the stuff everywhere, I have to prune it back every couple of months or it doesn’t leave room for the fish to swim. I even supply what we sell at work.

The serious information on the plant is that it comes from all over south-east Asia and the Indian sub-continent. Why it’s named for the island of Java (which is part of Indonesia) I couldn’t really tell you. It is a true type of moss. Mosses are simple and a very ancient type of plant, they go way back before the flowering plants. Most types of moss are terrestrial, but they prefer damp areas and since they don’t have true roots they aren’t able to pull water from the ground like other vascular plants.

As for aquarium care, they don’t get any easier than this. 1. Give it some light (not too much though since if the tank is too bright algae can grow on top of the Java moss - which surprisingly doesn’t kill it, it just looks bad!) 2. Give it a little food (fish poop works great, you can actually “starve” Java moss by keeping the tank too clean. Let a little “muck” accumulate under it.) 3. Keep it wet. (That’s obvious in an aquarium, but keep in mind that Java moss will grow above the water or in a damp terrarium. This picture is actually growing on the tank frame through a gap in a glass top.)



So all in all, Java moss is a great aquarium resident except in live plant tanks where it can get all tangled up with the other plants. You also have to watch it with power filter intakes as it can get all tangled up with the impeller or clog the pipes. It’s the perfect baby saver for livebearers and an excellent egg laying substrate for egg scattering fish. You can attach it easily to anything with a rough texture (rocks, driftwood, etc.) or just let it grow loose in the tank. One other handy thing is that most fish won’t eat it. It must taste bad, but I don’t know for sure, I’ve never tried it!

# Keeping and Spawning the Puebla Platy- *Xiphophorus evelynae*

Wayne Toven



I started keeping fish in 1988, Joanne thought I needed a hobby, wow was she wrong, it is now 2007 and no longer a hobby, but more like a lifestyle. I retired from my job as a die maker two years ago, now I work at home, no days off,

no vacations, no excuses. I get up in the morning and I'm at work, I check and make sure all the lights are on and everything is running smoothly, then I can have breakfast. Back to the past, my first spawn was in 1991, it was a mouth brooding cichlid, back then I only had a few tanks, and kept almost strictly cichlids, Joanne kept the livebearers. Over the years thanks to garage sales, yard sales, and fish club auctions, I have gained a few more tanks and drum bowls, I am not sure of the exact total, but it is over 200, approximately 150 are currently set up. Some are just for shows, about 50 or more, they set empty on shelves awaiting their turn at fish shows, which are a lot fewer now than back in the early 1990's. One year we went to 13 shows, from New York, to Chicago, to Pennsylvania, to Michigan, to Florida, and all over Ohio. That was then, now there are maybe half a dozen shows within driving distance.

Anyway back to spawning, over the past six years I have concentrated more on livebearers, not the common ones of course. Two years ago I finally spawned some black mollies (*Poecilia sphenops*), and back in March of this year I spawned red wag swordtails (*Xiphophorus helleri*) Since the beginning of 2005 out of the 35 species I have successfully spawned, 22 have been livebearers, and of the total spawns of 28 species of livebearers 16 of them have been Goodeids. Now thanks to the recent American Livebearer Association Convention, I have crossed another 6 species of Goodeids off of my wish list.

Excuse my ramblings, but I just wanted to give you an idea of what can happen in the "hobby" of fish keeping, so be warned it can happen to you too. This spring I went to a fish club auction in Columbus, Oh., sometimes you have to do a road trip to get some unusual and out of the ordinary fish, than what show up at the local auctions. I bought a couple of bags of *Xiphophorus evelynae* for a total of nine adults, four males and five females, like a lot of the livebearers they do best in groups of six or

more. If you are not sure about the fish you might be purchasing hunt down the seller, and ask about how they should be kept. They are usually more than happy to talk to you, as they don't want to see their fish go to that big fish pond in the sky.

*X. evelynae's* natural habitat is the Rio Tecoluta system an Atlantic drainage in Puebla, which is in central Mexico. They are a wild type variatus platy, males grow to about 2" and females to 2 1/4". Basic body color is tan with an off white patch on the belly, both sexes have black blotchy spotting, mostly on the back half of the body, and blue iridescent spotting on top of the black. The fins of mine are clear, but the dorsal and caudal fins can have a hint of yellow color, the males are only slightly slimmer and have a gonopodium, the most noticeable difference.

Housing can be a community tank if there are no other swordtails or platys present, as they can hybridize. They are a peaceful schooling fish that should be kept in a medium size well planted well lit aquarium, with plenty of free swimming space. Water should be well filtered and aerated, at a Ph of 7.5 - 8.5 slightly alkaline, at temperatures ranging from 68 - 77 degrees F. Being omnivorous most anything will be eaten, flake - regular and veggie, live foods, freeze dried - blood worms and daphnia, and frozen - blood worms and brine shrimp. Algae should be allowed to grow in the tank, as the adults will munch on it also. The fry do best in a breeding tank with lots of algae, but should also be fed crushed vegetable flake and liquid fry food for livebearers. Gee, sounds like the perfect fish for an outdoor 110 gallon tub with lilies and other plants, and Wow! I just happen to have ten of them, that I just set up this spring. It is now the first week of June and the tubs all have fish in them, including the *X. evelynae*, and the lilies, irises, and plants are growing well.

Broods of up to 25 fry are the average, males need 12 - 15 months to color up, and the lifespan of both sexes is 2 - 3 years. Not being sure if the parents will eat their fry, I moved two gravid females to a ten gallon nursery tank, with a sponge filter and lots of plants for the fry to hide in. My females are just over 1 1/2" long so they are not fully grown yet, I found at least ten fry just over 1/4 inch from the first female, then the second female dropped about the same, so I have at least twenty fry so far. Now the adults are outside so it will not be as easy to find the fry, they will be on their own. However, I do feed vegetable flake food in addition to what Mother Nature provides.

#### References:

Baensch Aquarium Atlas # 2 & # 4 by Hans A. Baensch & Dr. Rudiger Riehl

Livebearing Fishes by John Dawes

Aqualog of All Livebearers & Halfbeaks by Michael Kempkes & Dipl. Biol. Frank Schafer

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T- shirts or patches from any or all aquarium clubs. Any size, and condition to be used in a craft project.

**Joanne Toven**

(330) 785-4047

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2. No retail or commercial sales establishments will be permitted to list.
3. Only hobby related items will be listed.
4. Ads are limited to six items only and may only be run for three issues of Tank Topics. (You must give the Editor notice before the publication deadline to have an ad re-run!)

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### Shipping Styros

for sale. Small (7"x10"x7"deep) and medium (9"x11"x11"deep), with covering boxes available. \$1.00 for small, \$2.00 for medium.

E-mail me at

[LadysSolo@aol.com](mailto:LadysSolo@aol.com)

**Carolyn Hanlon**

## Have:

Lyretail Platies  
Plumetail Platies  
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Koi Swordtails (normal eyes)

## Want:

*Characodon sp.*  
"lateratis - Los Berros "  
*Skiffia sp.* " Black Beauty "  
*Girardinichthys multiradiata*

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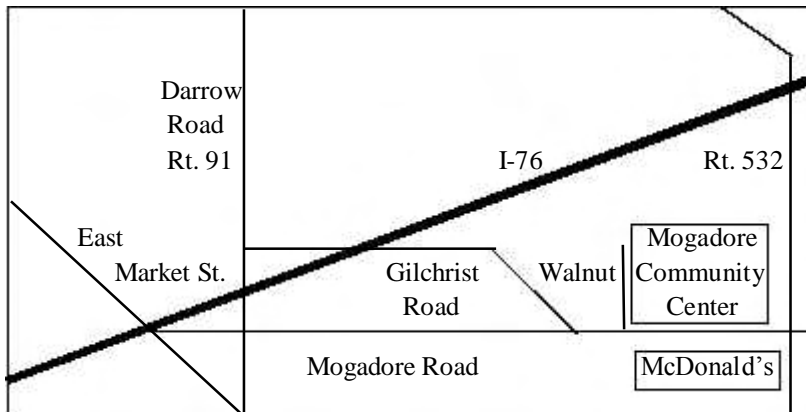
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