

Finformation

Volume 57, Issue 6

www.gpasi.org

June 2004



INSIDE

Upcoming GPASI Events	2
Apistos	3
NANFA	5

Next Meeting: June 25
Cavan Allen
on aquatic plants.
(Plus raffle and auction!)

CONTACT THE
NEWSLETTER

Please send articles or comments to
GPASI Newsletter
c/o Jean Grace
360 S. Pacific Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15224
(412) 441-1106
FAX (412) 441-4589
Or e-mail JGRACE@PITT.EDU

Nonprofit publications are permitted
to reprint GPASI articles. Mail two
copies of reprint to GPASI editor.

All other mail should go to GPASI,
PO Box 22452, Pittsburgh, PA
15222-0452

Back issues of *Finformation* are
available in full color online at
gpasi.org/newsletter.html

COVER IMAGE

Cover image by Bill Shenefelt.

MEMBERSHIP

DUES are \$20 a year per family
or street address.

To become a member, write to us or
see Steve Gibbs at the next meeting.
Visit WWW.GPASI.ORG

General Meetings are held at the
Phipps Garden Center in Mellon
Park at the Corner of
5th and Shady Avenues.
DOORS OPEN AT 7 PM

General Meetings

June 25 • July 30
Aug. 27 • Sep. 24 • Oct. 29
Nov. 19

Board of Directors Meetings

7 p.m. at Elmer's Aquarium in
Monroeville:
July 12 and Aug. 9

All members and suggestions for
discussion are welcome. Contact a board
member for meeting confirmation.

NEWSLETTER/WEB TEAM

Thanks to these members who help with
Finformation and the website:
Nancy Frieze, Mailing
Connie Yarris, Exchange Typist
Terrence Trasatti, Printing Facilitator

Upcoming GPASI Events

June Meeting

On June 25, we will have a regular meeting at the Phipps Garden Center. GPASI AHAP Chair Cavan Allen will give a presentation covering all aspects of maintaining planted aquariums. The talk will thoroughly cover lighting, plant selection, maintenance, algae control, and everything else an aquatic gardener needs to know. In addition, Cavan will demonstrate how to attach moss and aquatic fern to driftwood and other items. We will also have an auction and raffle. Cavan Allen has over fifteen years of experience with growing aquatic plants and has been GPASI's AHAP chair since 2000. During that time, he has propagated over eighty species of plants and has attained the rank of Master Horticulturalist. The doors open at 7:00 and the meeting starts at 7:30. We will also have a raffle and an auction.

July Meeting

Curt Smith will talk about South American annual killifish. He'll cover species, breeding, rearing, packaging, and shipping.

Curt lives in Lordstown, Ohio. He has been involved with specifically SA annuals for the past 7 or 8 years. He maintains over 100 tanks of killies. He is a retired electrician from General Motors and fish are his only vice at the present. He is president of YATFS and belongs to both NOKA and PAKA, as well as the SAA.

GPASI Annual Picnic

Once again, GPASI is hosting a family picnic for club members. Unlike previous years, this picnic is to be located at the Richland pavilion at North Park, which is just off Babcock Boulevard. It is relatively close to the swimming pool. There are also a playground and bathrooms right beside the pavilion. There are several other activities nearby, and flyers regarding the park will be available at the raffle table for those who are unfamiliar with the park. **The picnic will be Saturday, August 28, 2004.**

The club provides the hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken, pop, condiments and utensils. Side dishes, desserts, and appetizers will be appreciated, and a sign up sheet will be made available so that we have a good selection. Please see Stacy Gatto at the raffle table to sign up to bring something to the picnic. We do also have the permit for alcohol, so it is permissible to bring beer or liquor. **No glass please!** If anyone would like to volunteer to bring games or provide slave labor, please let Stacy know. (724) 387-2936. The picnic is GPASI's way of saying thanks to the members, so "Thanks for another GREAT year, and we hope to see you there!"



**Apisto Keeping and Maintenance
Story by David Soares**

Editor's note: Dave was a speaker at our show in May and generously offered to share one of his articles with our members.

When I first started keeping 'Apistos' (South American dwarf cichlids of the genus *Apistogramma*). I didn't know anything about them. When I managed to get a hold of some, I would throw them in a tank with some water and wait around for something to happen. Needless to say, nothing ever did. I went through a lot of fish in those days. I wasn't killing them in great numbers, but I wasn't producing any either. I had a great pair of *A. nijsseni* that would spawn on a regular basis, once every 10 days or so and I never saw any free-swimming fry throughout the whole time I had them.

I decided that I needed to know a little bit more about these fish, so I started bugging people on the telephone, and reading everything I could about the fish and the water conditions they live in. At the very beginning I learned some things that enabled me to keep them longer and to spawn them. I also found that some of what I learned was adequate, but not good enough.

Tanks- there is a lot of material in aquarium literature about tank size and how it relates to the fish. In most of the literature you will find that large tanks are recommended for large fish and small tanks for smaller fish. I remember one line that stated that Apistos are perfect apartment dwellers because you can keep them in small tanks. Well, this is true, to a certain extent. You can keep them in small tanks, and they will live and breed in there. What you won't see, however, is Apistos as they really are in nature. Uwe Romer has found, in studying Apisto populations in the wild, that these little fish live in a fairly crowded environment. Perhaps as many as a thousand fish in an area of nine square meters, with leaf litter up to one meter thick on the bottom. You can't duplicate these conditions in a small aquarium, but you can in a large one. I keep my fish in tanks from 30 gallons to 150 gallons. Large tanks provide many advantages. They are easier to maintain, it is easier to maintain the proper pH and hardness, it is easier to control the effects of ammonia and nitrites, and you will see the fish act in a way that more closely resembles their behavior in the wild. I have as many as 135 *A. juruensis* living in a 20 gallon aquarium. At present, I have around 700 *A. cacatuodies* in a 150 gallon tank.

Of course, to have this many fish in a tank it must have the correct environment. I achieve this in one of two ways. My aquariums have either lots of wood, rocks, and plants, or wood rocks and leaf-litter. Follow the usual precautions with the wood and rocks- make sure they are clean (sterile is best). With the rocks, don't use any types that will alter the chemistry of the water (i.e., limestone). The plants I use are pygmy chain swords and Indian fern, but any plant that you do well with is fine. For spawning caves, I use the little 1 1/2"-2" plastic planting pots that are available at most nurseries. They are cheaper than other kinds, and you can get some that are green, which kind of blends in with the environment. As often as not, though, the fish will spawn on a rock or a log. Put the caves in though, the fish still like them. The most important component of an Apisto tank is the water. There are three things about the water that have to be right: hardness, pH, cleanliness. I am fortunate when it comes to the water I get from the tap. It is snowmelt, right off the Cascade mountain range in Oregon. It is almost, but not quite good enough to keep Apistos in without any conditioning at all (100ppm hardness and a pH of 6.5). Because it is not quite good enough I still run it through an R.O. (reverse osmosis) filter. Ion exchange is OK, but I don't like recharging them or having to get new resins when they're used up. Besides, with my tap water, I have yet to wear out the membrane in my R.O. filter! (continued next page)

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
JEAN GRACE
(412) 441-1106
JGRACE@PITT.EDU

VICE-PRESIDENT
JANE SWANSON
(412) 341-5682
JESQUIRES@AOL.COM

INTERIM TREASURER
JIM DAVIDSON
(412) 781-3938
JIM308@BELLATLANTIC.NET

RECORDING SECRETARY
MARLENE SCHOLZE
(412) 682-2711

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
STEVE GIBBS
PGHMARINE@AOL.COM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

TERMS EXPIRING JAN. 2006

CAVAN ALLEN
(412) 221-9499
MILLSMAN7@YAHOO.COM

JOE KRAJCOVIC
(412) 371-8303
JOSEPHKRAJCOVIC@HOTMAIL.COM

STEVE OKABAYASHI
(412) 362-6839
SOKABAYA@US.IBM.COM

BILL SENSOR
(724) 845-7171
WSENSOR@MICROCONNECT.NET

BILL SHENEFELT
(724) 864-0582
SHENE@KILLI.NET

TERMS EXPIRING JAN. 2005

STACY GATTO
(724) 387-2936
MWCLOWNFISH@AOL.COM

HANK MARZINA
(412) 833-7639
PRASCO@ICUBED.COM

MIKE OTT
(412) 487-8133
ME0001@AOL.COM

ARMAND SICHI
(724) 872-6760
ASICHI@VERIZON.NET

MIKE SOLITO
(412) 571-2418
WHEELS115@COMCAST.NET

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

AHAP

CAVAN ALLEN
(412) 221-9499
MILLSMAN7@YAHOO.COM

AUCTION

JOE KRAJCOVIC
(412) 371-8303
JOSEPHKRAJCOVIC@HOTMAIL.COM

BAP

CHUCK BIALON
(412) 487-2378
BIALON@PPG.COM

EDUCATION

MIKE OTT
(412) 487-9513
meo001@aol.com

FAAS REP & NEWSLETTER

EXCHANGE
ARMAND SICHI
(724) 872-6760
ASICHI@VERIZON.NET

FUNDRAISING

MIKE SOLITO
(412) 571-2418
WHEELS115@COMCAST.NET

NEWSLETTER & WEB

JEAN GRACE
(412) 441-1106
JGRACE@PITT.EDU

PROGRAMS

STEVE OKABAYASHI
(412) 362-6839
SOKABAYA@US.IBM.COM

RAFFLE

JOHN LEWIS AND STACY GATTO
(724) 387-2936
MWCLOWNFISH@AOL.COM

REFRESHMENTS

ARMAND SICHI
(724) 872-6760
ASICHI@VERIZON.NET

SHOW

BILL SENSOR
(724) 845-7171
WSENSOR@MICROCONNECT.NET

Zoo

MARLENE SCHOLZE
(412) 682-2711

~ There can be no club without its members. If there is anything that you would like to do for GPASI, just let one of us know. We'd be happy to have you as part of the team. ~

Although I know some very competent Apisto keepers who use straight R.O. water for their fish, I mix mine with tap water to get a hardness of 10ppm. The next thing I do is treat the water with Sodium Bisulfate to bring the pH of my water down to 4.5. I also use peat in my filters, and leaves (either oak or beech) to bring the pH down. However, I have found that these two natural methods won't get the pH as low as I like it, so I supplement with the chemical alteration. I like to end up with a pH of 5.0 to 5.5 for most of my fish. The fish in the *A. pertensis-A. iniridae* complex seem to like it lower, around 4.5 pH.

Water cleanliness means three things: filtration, water changes and feeding. I have used a few different kinds of filters, all biological. The one I have finally settled on is one that I build into the tanks myself. The sponges that you buy commercially usually don't have enough surface area to keep an Apisto tank clean, or they require too much maintenance if you have a lot of tanks. The filters I use are glass partitions that separate one part of the tank from the rest and turn into a trickle filter. For the medium, I use form and red lava rock which "grows" in my driveway. I mix peat with the bottom half layer of rock. With water changes done once every week to nine days, with the R.O. water I have conditioned, the tanks stay nice and clean.

The feeding part of the equation is simple. I feed only baby brine shrimp twice a day, and only as much as they can eat in five minutes or so. I know some Apisto keepers who practically count the number of shrimp they put in the tank, but it is really very important because uneaten shrimp breaks down quickly and Apistos are very susceptible to bacterial infections.

Now that you have some idea as to the keeping of Apistos, here are a few questions I get asked a lot — "Which ones?" and "How many?" Some Apistos seem to be a bit more forgiving than others. *A. cacatuodies*, *A. steindachneri*, *A. macmasteri* and *A. schwarzsbaum* could all be considered good fish for starting out. However, if given the right conditions, most Apistos will take nicely to the aquarium situation. Apistos are great fish to keep with other fish. While territorial, they don't go to any extremes in defending their territory. One thing should be kept in mind, however, is that Apistos are divided into complexes within the genus: Regani complex, Macmasteri complex, Agassizii complex etc. These complexes include fish which are closely related. In the *A. agassizii* complex there is *A. bitaeniata* and *A. elizabethae*. In the *Cacatuodies* complex, there is *A. juruensis* and *A. luelingi*. If you mix fish within the same complex in a community tank, you could get some fireworks or some hybridization (to be avoided at all costs). Other than that, no problem.

Apistos are great little fish to keep and with a little care, and providing them with the right conditions, you can have a lot of fun with them. Give them a try.....and good luck!!!!!! ■

New Online Magazine

GPASI member Steve Pro has drawn our attention to a new, free, online magazine called *Conscientious Aquarist*. It covers all things aquatic: freshwater, marine, plants, reef, and ponds. The maiden issue is available at <http://www.wetwebmedia.com/ca/HomeCA.htm>. Steve has an article on protein skimmers in this issue (for May/June).

The North American Native Fishes Association Story by Scott Graner

A while ago my family and I attended a North American Native Fishes Association (NANFA) convention. NANFA is an organization dedicated to the appreciation, study, and conservation of the continent's native fishes. The convention was held in the very scenic Hocking Hills State Park, Ohio. The park is about three hours from Pittsburgh and has over 25 miles of hiking trails winding through and around deep stream-cut gorges and caves. Attending this convention stimulated my growing interest in native fishes as well as provided a nice three-day vacation for the whole family.

My desire to learn more about our North American native fishes came about from going on a few collecting trips sponsored by GPASI. I learned that there are many fascinating darters and minnows in southwestern Pennsylvania streams that can make good aquarium subjects.

The first day of the convention was devoted to talks given by a wide range of people with an interest in our native fishes. The park's naturalist Pat Quackenbush gave an overview of the history of the park, what wildlife and geographic details we might see on the trails, and the recent disruptions to the park due to a very large flood in 1999. He also talked about the species of fishes in the park. Ken Wintin, the curator of fishes at the Arizona Desert Museum, spoke about the museum's efforts at species maintenance of threatened and endangered native Killifish. The problems faced by many species in the west are decreasing water levels due to pumping for irrigation as well as the introduction of non-native species. Roger Thoma of the Ohio EPA talked about the fishes of the Lake Erie shoreline and the danger they face from the accidental release of non-native fishes, especially a type of European goby. This goby is a native of the Caspian sea and was very likely brought from Europe in the ballast of cargo ships that came into the Great Lakes via the St. Lawrence Seaway. This goby has completely displaced some native darter populations from areas of Lake Erie. The Ohio Fish and Game department is very concerned that anglers will trap them and use them as bait in other areas, thus resulting in their further spread. Randy Sanders of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources discussed the return of streams to their original condition and the great benefits of doing so. Over the years many streams have been straightened, dredged, and even buried in concrete culverts and pipes. The Department encourages landowners to replant the stream banks with trees and shrubs to reduce silting. In streams where these changes have been made, scientists have recorded a greater diversity of fish species.

On Saturday there was the chance for all attendees to go on collecting trips, one led by the Park naturalist to a stream within the park and the other a short distance away on private land. Many species of darters, minnows, and even a few larval-stage lampreys were collected.

Saturday evening saw everybody return to the park lodge to examine the specimens caught earlier in the day and to enjoy a buffet dinner followed by an auction of aquarium products and accessories. The unusual thing about a NANFA convention is that there were no fish for sale in the auction due to the strict regulations that most or all states have about selling native fish.

If you are interested in learning more about our native fishes check out the NANFA website. It is www.nanfa.org. At the site you can download and read a sample copy of their journal, *American Currents*. I can also recommend a book called *American Aquarium Fishes* by Dr. Robert J Goldstein. Of special interest to me were all the wonderful color photos of darters in Dr. Goldstein's book. ■

GPASI Marketplace

BUY

Armand Sichi wants to buy 4 used heaters submersible or hang on: two 100W and two 50W heaters. Please contact at 724-872-6760 or Asichi@verzion.net

Mike Parahus wants to buy up to 6 long-finned white cloud mountain minnows. He'd like a mix of males and females and is not interested in the "golden" variety. He would also like to buy up to 6 *Rasbora brigittae*. (724) 843-0584.

Lily Wasik is seeking common pond snails, juvenile to breeding age. She can be contacted at bpdlily@yahoo.com.

Ed Shilling is looking for Watkin goldfish. prhunter1@juno.com

FREE

Tobias Beck is a vet student at OSU with a huge interest in fish pathology and treatment. He is trying to find a suitable home for a 2.5' *Pseudorasbora niger*. Its 180 gal tank has become quite restricting and it needs much larger quarters. It is in great health and quite beautiful as jumbo catfish go. Tobias has been unsuccessful at finding a public aquarium that will take him in and does not have the means or space to build an indoor pond to house him. Tobias is hoping that perhaps one of our members might have suitable facilities and desire to take over his care or have contacts at a public aquarium. Tobias would deliver him to a suitable home at no expense. Any suggestions or help would be greatly appreciated. (c) 614-531-8447, pvoltan@yahoo.com

SELL

Walter Roth has plastic bags to sell in 100 count packages. Sizes are 6 x 12", 8 x 15", 10 x 20". Call (724) 449-9651.

Sharon Serbin designs and creates fish-related art: stained glass mosaic tables and wall hangings; tile mosaic floors; and hand-painted T-shirts and other clothes items. E-mail sjserbin@pgh.net or page her at (412) 949-3106.

Ross and Laura Cronkhite still have assorted tanks, plus airline and fittings, a few nets, and a supply of 5 gallon buckets and 4 and 5 quart ice cream buckets, and assorted stands. Contact (412) 233-0996 or lauross@libcom.com

Upright tank on right for \$50 (the wood base without tank is in Petco right now for \$129.99; we paid \$215 for the whole set in 1997). If you buy the tank, we will sell you a box of both new and used (but very clean) supplies for an additional \$5. Will sell this box of supplies separately for \$10 if someone is interested. Carol Churchill
<Carol.Churchill@alcoa.com>

To let other members know about aquarium-related items you'd like to buy, sell, or trade, contact Jean Grace at (412) 441-1106 or jgrace@pitt.edu



GPASI SPONSORS

The following national businesses and our local sponsors (listed on the back cover) have given GPASI the fuel it needs to have a great year. Please support all our sponsors and thank them for helping to make our show and our club a success.

All-Glass Aquariums
www.all-glass.com

Aquaculture Tech One/Red Sea
18125 Ammi Trail
Houston, TX 77060

Aquarium Pharmaceuticals
www.aquariumpharm.com

Aquarium Systems
8141 Tyler Blvd.
Mintor, OH 44060

Aquarium Technology
PO Box 33623
Decatur, GA 30033

Burford Albums
www.burfordalbums.com

Cichlid Press
www.cichlidpress.com

Cichlid News
www.cichlidnewsmagazine.com

Diskus Brief Magazine
www.diskusdesign.net

Doctors Foster & Smith
www.drsofostersmith.com

Energy Savers Unlimited
www.esuweb.com

The Fish Factory Mike Schadle
676 Mississinewa Rd
Chesterton IN 46304

Finley Aquatic Books
150 North Road
Pascoag, RI 02859-2504
www.finleyaquaticbooks.com

Rolf C. Hagen (USA)
50 Hampden Road
Mansfield, MA 02048

HBH Enterprises
1879 N 1300 West
Springville, Utah 84663

(continued next page)

**GPASI SPONSORS
(CONT'D)**

Hikari Sales USA
2804 McCone Ave.
Hayward, CA 94545
fish@hikariusa.com

Jungle Laboratories
PO Box 630
Cibolo, TX 78108

Kent Marine
1100 Northpoint Parkway
Acworth, GA 30102

Kordon/Novalek
2242 Davis Court
Hayward, CA 94545

**Lee's Aquarium and Pet
Products**
294 La Maree Road
San Marcos, CA 92069

Margarita Tours
www.amazon-ecotours.com

**Ray "Kingfish" Lucas
and Kingfish Services**
E-6715 Pinehurst Dr
Boston, New York 14025-9624
www.kingfishservices.net

**Marineland Aquarium
Products**
PO Box 8005
Moorpark, CA 93020
www.marineland.com

**Masterson's Garden
Center**
www.mastersons.net

Perfecto Manufacturing
20975 Creek Road
Noblesville, IN 46060

Python Products
www.pythonproducts.com

Red Sea
18109 Ammi Trail
Houston, TX 77060

**San Francisco Bay
Brand**
8239 Enterprise Drive
Newark, CA 94560

Tetra-Second Nature
3001 Commerce Street
Blacksburg, VA 24060

**That Fish Place and
That Pet Place**
www.thatpetplace.com

Upcoming Events of Interest

- 6/26–27 SCALES Show and Auction, Perry Grange, Massillon, Ohio--contact Don McGuire (330) 833-7194; Mike Taylor (330) 834-9337; or John Baad (330) 452-9027
- 7/10-11 Medina Show + Auction – (330) 723-4748 John Clark
7/22–25 ACA Convention, Denver, Colorado – (303) 429-5917 Mark Whitney
- 8/7–8 Akron Show, Tallmadge, Ohio (330) 848-3856 – Bud White
8/21–22 YATFS Show + Auction (330) 824-2653 – Curt Smith
8/28 **GPASI Picnic, North Park**
- 9/4 – 6 Killie Revue, Xenia, OH (513) 251-1569 Fritz Bazely
9/11-12 Loraine Show + Auction
9/18 Great Lakes Auction, Euclid, Ohio (440) 944-3245 – Ron Georgeone
9/25 Erie, PA Auction
- 10/3 Medina Ohio Auction (330) 723-4748 John Clark
10/14–16 All-Aquarium Catfish Convention, Laurel, MD. For more info, visit <http://www.pvas.com/catfish/welcome.htm>
10/17 YATFS Auction 330-824-2653 – Curt Smith
10/24 GPASI Auction!
- 11/7 Akron Auction, Tallmadge, Ohio (330) 848-3856 – Bud White
11/19-21 Ohio Cichlid Assoc Show + Auction, Strongsville, OH (440) 236-6301 Marc DeWerth

Ongoing Reptile Swaps at Palace Inn in Monroeville, PA Herb Ellerbach (412) 361-0835

All–Aquarium Catfish Convention

**Presented by: The Potomac Valley Aquarium Society
October 15-17, 2004, Washington, DC**

Speakers: Lee Finley, Ian Fuller, Shane Linder, Ng Heok Hee, Ron Nielson, Ingo Seidel, J.R. Shute, Stan Weitzman

Corydoras Forum Featuring:

Eric Bodrock, Ian Fuller, Don Kinyon and Mark Soberman

Topics:

Catfishes as Aquarium Inhabitants: A Preliminary History

Breeding Corydoradinae Catfish: I Did it My Way

Collecting Catfishes in Venezuela and Colombia

Asian Hillstream Catfishes

Collecting Catfishes in Sumatra and India

Catfishes of Africa

The Mouthbrooding Catfishes of Loricariid Subfamily Loricariinae

The Loricariid Catfishes of Subfamily Ancistrinae: Ecology, Care, and Breeding in Captivity

North American Madtom Catfishes

Hearing in Catfishes: The Remarkable Ear Horn of *Otocinclus*

Registration and more information: www.pvas.com/catfish/welcome.htm

Special Thanks to Our Local Sponsors for Their Support

All Oddball Aquatics	www.alloddbballaquatics.com	(412) 884-2333
	Walk-in hours: Mon. – Sat., Noon to 8 pm, Sun. noon to 4 (cash only)	
Aqua-World Pet Super Center	8143 Ohio River Blvd. Emsworth	(412) 732-9100
Elmer's Aquarium & Pet Center	4005 William Penn Highway, Monroeville	(412) 372-6535
In Leafy Shadows Jewelry Home Parties	ilshadows@excite.com	(412) 263-1638
Linda's Lovely Angels	www.lindaslovelyangels.com	
Paulette's Perennials	North Apollo, PA	(724) 478-4218
Pet Boutique	513 Mckean Ave, Charleroi	(724) 483-5700
Pet Supplies "Plus"	4714 McKnight Road, Pittsburgh	(412) 369-7350
Pet Supply Warehouse	Roseytown Road, Greensburg	(724) 834-0500
Petland	Miracle Mile Shopping Ctr., Monroeville	(412) 380-2522
Pittsburgh Marine Aquarists Society	http://pmas.org	
Shene's Killies	http://shene.killi.net	(724) 864-0582
Three Guys Aquatics	www.threeguysaquatics.com	
Walt's Water World	4151 Grandview Dr., Gibsonia	(724) 449-9651
West Hills Pet Center	West Hills Shopping Center, 925 Broadhead Road, Moon Township	(412) 262-2220
Wet Pets and Friends	Waterdam Commons, Rt. 19, McMurray	(724) 942-4442

GPASI
PO Box 22452
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-0452



June 2004