

# Finformation

Volume 57, Issue 9

[www.gpasi.org](http://www.gpasi.org)

September 2004



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**Next Meeting: September 24**  
**Our Meeting is at the Zoo!**  
(No auction!)

**October 24: Big GPASI Auction**

**CONTACT THE  
NEWSLETTER**

Please send articles or comments to  
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available in full color online at**  
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**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](http://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**  
Sep. 24 • Oct. 29  
Nov. 19

**Board of Directors Meetings**  
7 p.m. at Elmer's Aquarium in  
Monroeville:  
Oct. 4, Nov. 1

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

### September Meeting: At the Zoo!



We will hold our September meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> at the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium. The meeting will start at 7:00 with some time for light refreshments. We'll enjoy a program courtesy of Allan Marshall, Curator of Aquatic Life, and his team of aquarists. Then we will go to the PPG Aquarium for a tour of the facilities (including behind the scenes!). Please bring your children, grandchildren, and friends. Among the exciting new features are leafy sea dragons.

As special treat, long-time GPASI member Tony Leyn is bringing his famous home-made ice cream, so be sure to arrive on time! Many thanks to Tony for his generosity.

Park (for free) in the lower lot at the zoo. We will be escorted to the Education Building by zoo personnel.

**Important note: There will NOT be an auction (we aren't allowed to bring live animals onto zoo grounds).** Please save your fish for our big October auction.

### October Meeting

Rick Lorson will be talking about "Fish, Fishing, and Fish Management in the Three Rivers." Rick is the Area Fisheries Manager with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission for Southwest Pennsylvania. His area of responsibility includes all or part of ten counties in the Southwest with the Three Rivers in and around Pittsburgh included. Rick has been with the Commission for 22 years, with 16 of those years spent in the Southwest. Academic background involves a Bachelor's degree in Biology from Lock Haven State College and a Master's degree in Fish Management and Fish Culture from Southern Illinois University. Rick is happily married, has four sons, and enjoys hunting, fishing, and spending time with family.



*Melanotaenia kamaka*

Photo by Eric Bodrock

See story on page 4.

## Upcoming Events

### Big GPASI Auction

Our auction will be Sunday, October 24 at the North Hampton Volunteer Fire Department Hall.

Registration will open at 10:00. Non-registered buyers must pay cash at the time of sale. Registered buyers must leave collateral in the form of a driver's license or id card and will be able to run a tab during the auction. Accounts must be paid in full at the end of the auction by cash or check. The auction will start promptly at 12:00. Refreshments will be available. We need volunteers to help with running and paperwork.

#### Seller's Rules

1. Split is 70% to the seller and 30% to GPASI. 2. The auction will use the FAAS (Federation of American Aquarium Societies) "Ten Table Method." (Bags are to be numbered sequentially and sold in order to last digit, i.e. bags 1, 11, 21, 31, ...go on Table 1 and all of Table 1 is sold before Table 2, etc.) 3. Seller's proceed checks will be mailed within two weeks of the auction. 4. NO PRIVATE SALES. 5. NO MINIMUM BIDS. 6. Sellers are limited to the following:

- No more than 5 bags of any single species, color strain, or item type.
- Proper fish bags are required: NO baggies or Ziplocs. Fish that have to be re-bagged will be charged \$1 per bag. Double bagging is recommended.
- Each bag or item being sold must clearly display the seller's number, bag number, species name, quantity, seller's name, and phone number. Equipment must state whether it is in good working order or if it needs repair.

Our Sellers' Form is available for download on the home page of our website: [www.gpasi.org](http://www.gpasi.org)

#### Directions to the North Hampton VFD

PA Turnpike Exit 4, Butler Valley. Go north (Route 8). At the first light at East and West Hardies road, turn left. Take the first left onto North Pioneer. The fire hall is on the right.

## In Memory of Wes Runyan

*"... celebrate each day with smiles, laughter, and kindness to each other."*

J. Wesley Runyan, 46, died June 23, 2004. He and his wife, Sherrilyn Reiter, were actively participating GPASI members during the early 1990s, including working as board members, and Wes delighted in his BAP and HAP efforts. He won many places in our shows, being known for unusual specimens of common fish, reptiles and amphibians. He was recognized by FAAS as a major national breeder and exhibitor among its local aquarium clubs.

During that period, we came to know that Wes had been struggling for years before we met him with recurring malignant brain tumors, and for almost 10 years he and Sherrilyn had dropped from sight as his battle intensified. They had just recently returned to reactivate old friendships, and we were shocked to hear of his sudden decline and death in June.

In his official obituary as published in the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* of June 26, Sherrilyn requested that Wes be memorialized in the hearts and behavior of his friends in that they should "... celebrate each day with smiles, laughter, and kindness to each other." This was in keeping with Wes' lifelong attitude toward both humans and all members of the animal kingdom. Those of us who knew him were touched by his gentle nature and often tweaked by his astute observations and sense of humor. The accompanying photo was taken at the GPASI show and auction this past spring. We regret that he will not be with us again.

**Finformation September 2004**



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~ 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. ~

**BAP Article****The Kamaka Rainbowfish: *Melanotaenia kamaka*****By Eric Bodrock**

These are one of the newer species of *Melanotaenia* rainbowfish to be seen in the USA market/hobby in the past year. At first glance the fish resembles *M. lacustris*, the Turquoise rainbowfish, which is more commonly seen, but there are some big differences. The blue color of *M. kamaka* is mixed with a silver shine, making it much brighter. Their overall body is also covered, for the

most part, with a slight pinkish/orange cast that can be seen as the fish moves and reflects light. The fry color up at a much younger and smaller size than the *M. lacustris*, showing off the bright silver/blue color as early as two months. *M. kamaka* only grows to about half the size of *M. lacustris*, obtaining a maximum size of just three inches.

I obtained a group of adults, approximately one year old, which consisted of four females and a single male. The adult males have a much higher body than the females and have a little bit more of an intense color to them. Males can start to be sexed out at about four months of age at the size of one and a half inches by their color and body shape. I must add the females do show some nice colors, more so than many other *Melanotaenia* species, making them just as desirable as the males.

The group was housed in a twenty-gallon high aquarium, which was filtered by a single Hydro-sponge filter. The bottom had a couple of handfuls of crushed coral scattered about to bring the pH up to about 8.0. Temperature was maintained steady at seventy-eight degrees Fahrenheit. A large acrylic yarn mop (I prefer to use dark green yarn) was placed on the bottom and another floated in the aquarium. Diet consisted of frozen bloodworms, live blackworms, live baby brine shrimp and assorted flake foods, all which were eagerly accepted. Once to three times a day they were fed.

Within days of setting them up, the floating mop was pulled and found to contain several tiny, clear eggs. As the fish settled in to their home, more and more eggs were found more often. Pretty much anytime the floating mop was checked, eggs could be found. Notice I said "the floating mop"...I found it rather odd that I rarely ever found an egg in the sunken mop, even if it was the only one in the tank! To hatch the eggs, I remove the mop and place it in a one or two gallon container which is filled with water from the spawning aquarium. I add an airstone with a gentle airflow and place the container in a darker part of the fishroom away from any direct or bright light. It takes about ten days for the eggs to hatch and I found that a good many of them do hatch. The problem now is feeding the tiny fry. At hatching, the fry are just over one millimeter in total length and as thin as a hair...if you don't know that you're looking for tiny fry, you'll miss them!

First foods I offered were Euglena and "sponge scrunge" (the squeezed "dirt" from a seasoned sponge filter); in addition, I added a small piece of Java Moss, which houses an assortment of smaller "bugs" the fry may feed on. The numbers of fry seem to increase for a few days as more eggs hatch, but soon the number of young decline as the days pass. It takes about a week before microworms seem to be taken by the youngsters and another week for newly hatched brine shrimp. What started out as a container of maybe a hundred and fifty fry, after ten days, will be down to a couple dozen. From that point the fry are easy to grow out. The last catch to them is the rate of growth...which is very, very slow! At four months the fry will range from three quarters of an inch to one and a half inches.

If you are a Rainbowfish fancier and don't have these guys, I'd have to tell you that you should add them to your fishroom "wish list." With their attractive colors, peaceful behavior, easy maintenance and rarity, they should fit that "need" for the oddball hobbyist. ■

### Jewels of the Pond: *Hemichromis bimaculatus*

By Wallace Cox

Early May 2004, I decided to run my pond experiment. I set up a 60 gallon black preformed pond. I used cinder blocks and small blocks of wood 2"x 4" to prop and level the pond above ground. I did it this way in case my little project was a horrible failure so that it would be easily broken down. The pond was filled 2" from the top. I used a cheap Hagan Elite 802 dual port air pump with two ATI Hydro-sponges V (acquired from All Oddball Aquatics on a trade) for filtration. I put the pond up against the side of my house for some sort of protection (child control). The pond received full morning sun and diffused afternoon sun. It was left to sit for almost two weeks before any life was added.



Memorial Day weekend I went out and purchased a pond lily, 2 water lettuce and 2 water hyacinths. The pond lily was potted in regular potting soil and covered with aquarium gravel, to keep the soil in the pot. I also bought 10 *Hemichromis bimaculatus* at 50 cents a piece because they were hard to pass up. Not having any room in any of my inside tanks to house them, the jewels went straight to the pond.

The pond temperatures fluctuated from around 55 degrees Fahrenheit as the low to the mid to upper 70's. Surprisingly, this did not seem to have any ill effects on the fish. A 50% water change was done every Sunday. The fish were fed once daily with flake or pellet foods.

A couple of weeks went by and every thing seemed just peachy. The lettuce and hyacinths were multiplying, the water lily was putting up new leaves and the jewels were all still alive. Until that one fateful evening when disaster struck in the form of a couple of raccoons. I really don't know when it happened or for how many days it was going on because it only became obvious when they decided to have some salad with their fish dinner. Of course not knowing who may actually read this article I will refrain from using any curse words. For the record, the verbal tirade that came from my mouth was one of epic proportions. My wife found one of the water lettuces half eaten and over the hill on the ground. I ran outside and tore everything out of the pond only to find nothing - all of the fish were gone. Not wanting to sacrifice anyone else, I decided to just try for some AHAP points with the pond plants.

For the next 5 weeks I did really nothing to the pond. My lettuce and hyacinths did not bloom and never got more the 3 or 4 plantlets a piece. The water lily, however, put up a nice yellow flower for about a week and of course I never got a picture for AHAP verification.

It was July 4th weekend and being completely frustrated with the whole thing, I decided to end the experiment and break everything down. I began to drain the pond with my Python hose equipment periodically cleaning the bottom of debris. I removed all of the plants and placed them into 5 gallon buckets half filled with pond water. As the pond approached about 2" in depth I noticed movement. To my elation, I found two jewel cichlids swimming in a panic around the bottom of the pond. Not hesitating I grabbed the 2 with my hands and run them inside to throw them into a 55 gallon community tank. I ran back outside to see if any more fish had survived the onslaught of the raccoon hordes. I looked into the pond and did not see any other fish, so I starting cleaning the bottom of the pond again to remove more garbage that had collected. As the level approached about a 1/2" the water became alive with movement. I immediately ripped the hose out to see what was making all this commotion. I couldn't believe it but it was fry about 1/4" big, thousands of them everywhere (slight exaggeration but I was so excited). I quickly collected them in a 5-gallon bucket and set up a bare bottomed 10-gallon tank with a sponge filter. After I was done setting up my miracle fry I sat back and wondered how many of them I had sent over the hill while I was cleaning the pond. As it turned out, I had 77 jewel babies.

The fry were fed live baby brine, ground up flake food and micro worms once daily. They grew fairly quick attaining 1" in size in two months. The tank had only indirect sunlight, a temperature of 78 degrees Fahrenheit, and a pH of 7.0. The parents ate well and resided in the 55-gallon community tank, until being traded away.

I truly believe this is only of the most resilient fish that is out there today. They survived extreme temperature changes, night attacks from raccoons, and no feedings or water changes for almost 5 weeks. I can only surmise that the fish hid in the drain tray of the

plastic flower pot to avoid detection from the raccoons. I am also guessing that the jewels ate insects that hit the water and grazed from the green hair algae that grew on the sides of the pond. Whatever those "Jewels of the Pond" had to do to survive they did exceptionally well, because they not only survived but they reproduced. Now that is one tough fish! ■

## Member Article

### Good Reasons to Keep Aquatic Plants By Timothy Gross

A question that I am often asked is... "Why should I keep aquatic plants?" Although the answers seem fairly obvious to me, I can understand why one would ask that question. For instance, generally speaking most people are somewhat intimidated by keeping them. Most people that I have come in contact with have that "plastic plants don't die" idea ingrained into their head. Well, it is true that they do not die, but the advantages of keeping live aquatic plants far outweigh the advantages of keeping plastic. In this article, I will give the advantages of keeping live aquatic plants, and hopefully I will help to motivate the reader to dive into the world of aquatic plants.

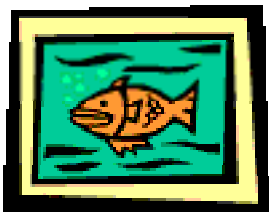
Fish need an environment that helps them feel comfortable. If fish do not have a place to retreat when they are nervous or frightened, they will soon get sick and perish. Aquatic plants will give them that refuge. In a live planted aquarium fish look better and act more natural. Nervous fish (the ones that when frightened, swim around the tank bashing themselves off of the fake plants and ornaments) cannot hurt themselves on live plants. Also aquatic plants are a great place for fry to hide. Plants such as Java moss, najas grass, hornwort, and water sprite, to name just a few, are great places for fry to hide in.

Aquatic plants can provide food for both adult and baby fish. They will help grow small microscopic food such as rotifers, protozoa, and small crustaceans, which will help to keep baby fish alive and healthy. Some fish like Pacu, African cichlids, and goldfish will eat live plants. So if you have a community tank with some cover plants such as duck weed or anacharis, then try throwing some in for the plant eating fish as well. They will love you for it.

Aquatic plants are great natural filters and oxygenators. They help to get rid of the toxin ammonia as well as rid the water of excess phosphate and nitrate, which in turn helps control and keep algae away. When the lights are on, which should be approximately twelve hours a day for live plants, the plants will take the carbon dioxide that fish produce and convert it back to oxygen. This, with the aid of filters, will help to keep oxygen levels high in your tank. Live plants help to keep your environment a lot more stable.

Aesthetically speaking, aquatic plants just simply look better. Not much looks better than a beautifully planted aqua-scape. Just pick up a Takashi Amano book and look for yourself. Watching fish interact within a live planted aquarium is awe inspiring and very relaxing which in turn helps to reduce stress.

Keeping live plants and fish together can be a great teaching tool for children and adults. The relations between fish and live plants in a closed environment can teach a lot about biology, chemistry and ecosystems.



In conclusion, live plants are definitely worth a try. With all the benefits of keeping live plants how could you not. As with anything a little research on keeping them is a must, but it is well worth it in the end. So keep it real...stay away from plastic. ■

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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.

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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.

### SELL

I have a very beautiful 13 inch red devil male for whom I would like to find a new home. He is 12 years old and very personable. Needless to say, he is not a good playmate for most fish that I could place in his tank. If we could find a large female I would keep him but other than that I would like to get him a home with someone who would have an appropriate tank for him with appropriate tank members. I would like him to go to a 75 gal tank minimum. I live in Greensburg and would sell him for \$30 or best offer. My contact information is as follows: Don Young, 724-925-0225. or email me at [koiforjoy@aol.com](mailto:koiforjoy@aol.com)

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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](mailto:lauross@libcom.com)

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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](mailto:jgrace@pitt.edu).

### Upcoming Events of Interest

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10/3	Medina Ohio Auction (330) 723-4748 John Clark
10/14-16	All-Aquarium Catfish Convention, Laurel, MD. For more info, visit <a href="http://www.pvas.com/catfish/welcome.htm">http://www.pvas.com/catfish/welcome.htm</a>
10/17	YATFS Auction 330-824-2653 - Curt Smith
<b>10/24</b>	<b>GPASI Auction!</b>
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

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Linda's Lovely Angels	<a href="http://www.lindaslovelyangels.com">www.lindaslovelyangels.com</a>	
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	<a href="http://pmas.org">http://pmas.org</a>	
Shene's Killies	<a href="http://shene.killi.net">http://shene.killi.net</a>	(724) 864-0582
Three Guys Aquatics	<a href="http://www.threeguysaquatics.com">www.threeguysaquatics.com</a>	
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**  
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