

A collection of stylized fish silhouettes in various shapes and sizes, including a large striped fish, a spotted fish, and several smaller fish, arranged around the title.

# DELTA TALE

Official Publication of the  
**POTOMAC VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY**

Volume 33, Number 1  
March 2002

In this Issue:

Venezuela Collecting Diary

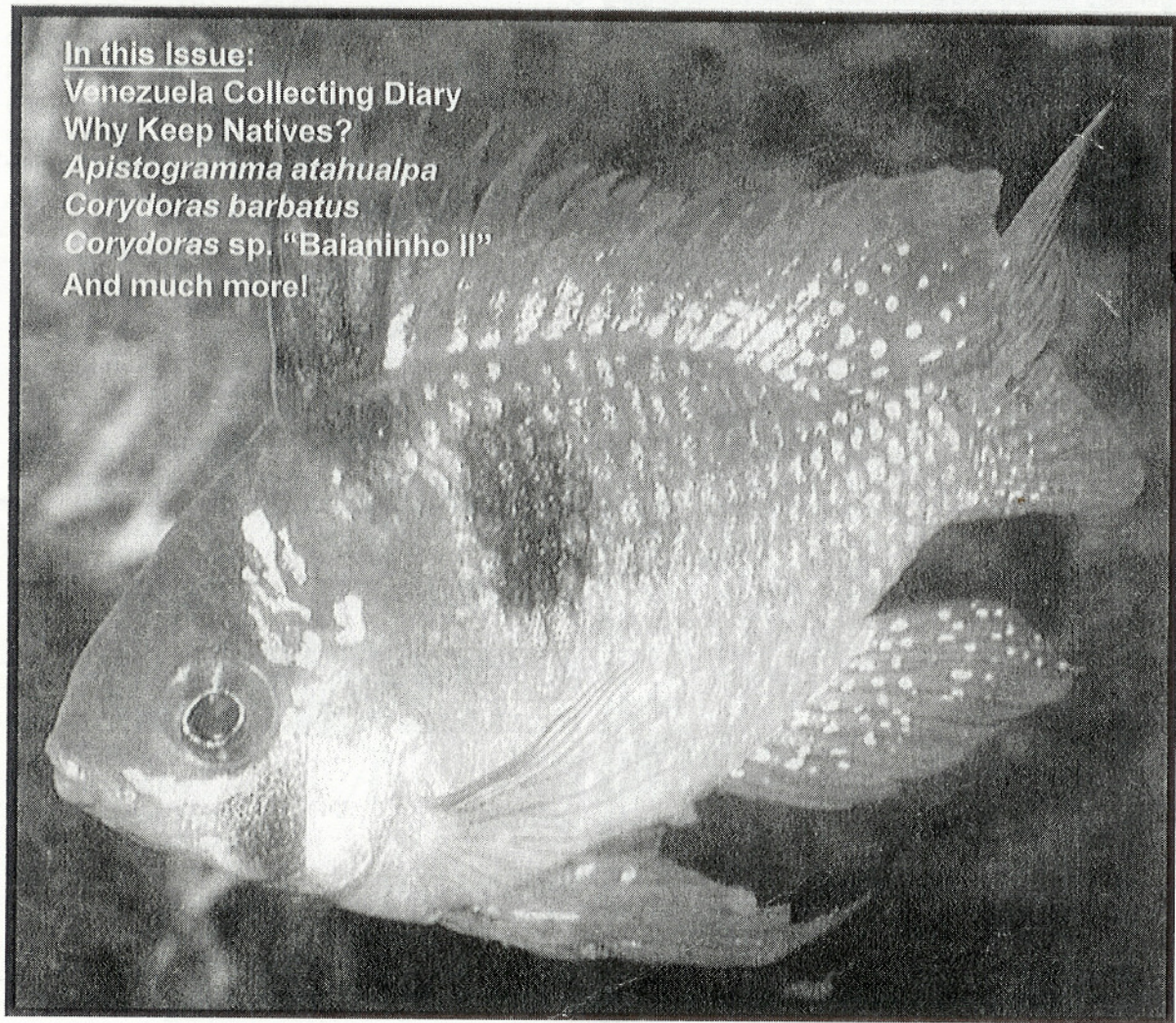
Why Keep Natives?

*Apistogramma atahualpa*

*Corydoras barbatus*

*Corydoras* sp. "Baianinho II"

And much more!







# DELTA TALE

Volume 33, Number 1

Delta Tale is published bimonthly for the benefit of the membership of the POTOMAC VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY, INC., a non-profit educational and social organization. The society was founded in 1960 for the purposes of furthering the aquarium hobby through the dissemination of information and advice, and the promotion of good fellowship among the membership by organized activities and competitions.

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Cover Photo:  
*Microgeophagus ramirezi*  
by PVAS Member Francine Bethea

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<u>Show</u>	Joe Szelesi
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<u>Exchange Editor</u>	Nancy Johnson

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## Table of Contents

President's Message.....	ii
From the Editors' Tank.....	iii
What's Happening.....	iv
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes.....	iv
Bowl Show Classes.....	v
Bowl Show Rules!.....	vi
Trading Post.....	7
Contributing Shops and Manufacturers.....	14
Application for Membership.....	16

### Articles

Venezuela Collecting Diary, R. Shane Linder.....	1
What to Expect at a PVAS Meeting, Nancy Johnson.....	5
Why Keep Natives, Bob Bock.....	6

### Breeders' Award Program

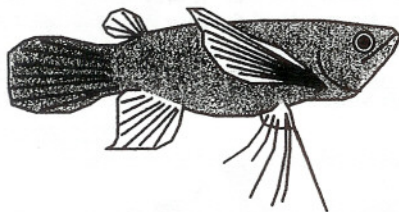
BAP Corner, John Mangan.....	7
<i>Ancistrus</i> sp. Bristlenose, Francine Bethea.....	8
<i>Apistogramma atahualpa</i> , Don Kinyon.....	9
<i>Corydoras barbatus</i> , Francine Bethea.....	11
<i>Corydoras</i> sp. "Baianinho II", Don Kinyon.....	11

### Outside the Fishroom

Exchange Report, Nancy Johnson.....	12
Baggers Should be Choosers, Mark Murtaugh, Greater Cincinnati Aquarium Society.....	13
Every Word is True... Trust me!	
Great Lakes Cichlid Society.....	14

### Nostalgia

Julie Savers and Other Plastic Tricks, Part II George White.....	15
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Line drawing by PVAS member Gene Moy

## President's Message

Doug Patac

### Greetings:

Our first two meetings of 2002 were interesting and informative. Todd Wenzel talked about tropical fish literature and our own Andrew Blumhagen spoke about making the jump from freshwater to starting a saltwater aquarium. (Though I was a little daunted, I will try it one day, Andrew, I promise.) In the coming months we can look forward to Dov Goldstein speaking about new products in the aquarium hobby, Ron Neilson with his talk on African Cichlids, and a spokesperson from U.S. Fish and Wildlife talking about importing fish. If you have any ideas for speakers or any particular topics you would like discussed, please let me know. In addition to securing speakers, the Board of Directors has been working on our upcoming auctions and fall workshop.

Thanks to the work of Francine Bethea, we have two low- to no-cost auction sites this year. This will save the club money normally spent on a hotel conference room. The savings to the club will be substantial. Thank you, Francine! Nancy Johnson has been working with a fervor and energy level that few can match on the fall workshop. She has secured a few speakers (to be announced), and all indications are that this will be a spectacular event. More will follow about the Fall Workshop and if you would like to get involved, please feel free to attend the next Board Meeting.

In addition to the speakers, auctions, and Fall Workshop, I am working on a couple of other projects. I am exploring the idea of having a "fish box exchange" with another club. I hope to reestablish some contacts with the Long Island Aquarium Society to see if they are interested, or perhaps some of you have friends in other clubs that might be interested in having a box exchange with us. The thought of getting some new fish that may not be in our area is exciting. Another source of new fish is closer than you think. There are lots of streams and rivers near my house that are teeming with fish. There has been talk on some of the bulletin boards about organizing a local collecting trip. I would like to see our club sponsor one. South America is a little out of my budget right now, but I can afford a fishing license, net, and tank of gas. Local adventures can be just as exciting as distant ones and there are some interesting fish right in our own backyard. Would you be interested?



And speaking of adventures... are you going to the American Cichlid Association Convention this July in Atlanta? I went last year and had a blast! The buzz that flowed through the hotel was inspiring. I never knew there were so many topical fish enthusiasts out there. I learned many new things about the hobby and met many big name "fish people". I highly recommend making the trip.

Finally, I would like to encourage all club members to attend our board meetings. We generally meet about an hour before each meeting. Check with any board member to find out when we are meeting next.



### From the Editors' Tank

As you can probably guess, there's a lot of work that goes into the Delta Tale. As editors, most of what we do is take what other people produce and turn it into a newsletter. It is, after all, the club's newsletter, not the editors' newsletter. If we didn't have other people generating content, the Delta Tale would not exist. We want to take a moment to thank those people who consistently provide content, both articles and other information, to us to make ours one of the finest aquarium club publications.

Don Kinyon must be at the top of the list of people to be recognized. In the three years we've been editing the Delta Tale, he's produced well over 40 articles on Apistogramma and Corydoras species with a few odds and ends thrown in for good measure. Francine Bethea follows Don in the number of articles she's written and has also provided a tremendous number of photographs to add interest and aesthetic value to the Delta Tale. She also manages the membership and mailing list, which is no small task in itself, and keeps track of the Bowl Show results. Don and Francine have actually had several editions of Delta Tale in which they were the only authors printed. Perhaps we should put a picture of the two of them on the cover of an upcoming edition...

Shane Linder, who is on assignment in Venezuela with the U.S. State Department, has been allowing us to print his collecting diaries, for which we have received tremendous response from club members. He also pro-

duced some great breeding reports before he went overseas. Gene Moy has provided us with breeding reports as well as some fantastic computer drawings that we consistently use throughout the publication. My favorites are the African Butterflyfish and the Clown Loach. I'm sure you've seen others that you like. David Snell also wrote some great breeder's reports on fish that you don't see a lot of information on, namely small characins.

John Mangan does a tremendous job on the Breeders' Award Program. Most of the articles we print are generated through participation by club members in that program. He also makes sure we have standings and brief synopses of recent activities. We have to also mention Larry Grenier for his work on the website. While he technically doesn't do this for the Delta Tale, it gives us a place to find information like the calendar or photographs to fill in the gaps. As Exchange Editor, Nancy Johnson does a great job reviewing other club's publications and providing us with articles to reprint as well as reviews of the other publications out there. She's also written a number of articles on her observations and participation in the hobby. Finally, there are also a number of one- or two-time authors for whose submissions we have been extremely grateful.

So after all that, we need content. Don's starting to run out of eligible Apisto and Cory species. Anybody out there keep Labyrinth Fish? Killies? Tetras? Large Cichlids? Livebearers? We know you do. Write us an article. Out of all the fish you could keep, only certain species have a place in the breeding tank. Tell us why, how and what makes that fish so unique. Then tell us how you breed them. It's not hard once you get started, we promise. OK, we know you don't need to write an article for a ten-point fish to get points for them. But it would be nice if you did. It only takes a few minutes. Maybe an hour. We'll fix your goofs so you don't feel embarrassed. And when you've finished your article, e-mail it to us at [delta@pvas.com](mailto:delta@pvas.com).



Line drawing by PVAS member Gene Moy



## What's Happening

### PVAS Calendar

January 14	Monthly Meeting
February 11	Monthly Meeting
<b>March 10</b>	<b>Winter Auction</b>
March 11	Monthly Meeting
April 8	Monthly Meeting
May 13	Monthly Meeting
<b>June 9</b>	<b>Summer Auction</b>
July 8	Monthly Meeting
August 12	Monthly Meeting
September 9	Monthly Meeting
October 21	Monthly Meeting
<b>October 26-27</b>	<b>Fall Workshop/Show/Auction</b>
November 18	Monthly Meeting
<b>December 8</b>	<b>Holiday Party/Awards Presentation</b>



### Other Local Events

March 3	<b>CMAS Meeting, Baltimore, MD</b>
March 9	<b>CCA Meeting, Bowie, MD</b>
March 16	<b>CAKC Meeting, Burtonsville, MD</b>
April 6	<b>GWAPA Meeting, Silver Spring, MD</b>
April 20	<b>WAMAS Meeting, Vienna, VA</b>
May 5	<b>CMAS Meeting, Baltimore, MD</b>
July 20	<b>WAMAS Meeting</b>
October 19	<b>WAMAS Meeting</b>

CAKC-Chesapeake Area Killifish Club,

[www.pvas.com/cakc](http://www.pvas.com/cakc)

CCA-Capital Cichlid Association,

[www.capitalcichlids.com](http://www.capitalcichlids.com)

CMAS-Chesapeake Marine Aquarium Society,

[www.cmas-md.org](http://www.cmas-md.org)

GWAPA-Greater Washington Aquatic Plants Association, [www.gwapa.org](http://www.gwapa.org)

NANFA-North American Native Fishes Association,

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

WAMAS-Washington Area Marine Aquarium Society,

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

If you know of another local aquarium club and would like to include its information, please e-mail the editors at [delta@pvas.com](mailto:delta@pvas.com).

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes January 14, 2002

Motion made by Doug Patac: open meeting at 7:45 pm. Motion seconded by John Burns. All present were in agreement.

1<sup>st</sup> topic of discussion: John Burns presented the PVAS financial summary for 2001 & explained how the summary was tallied.

Motion made by John Burns: PVAS will cover the total cost incurred (food, gas, etc.) for all speakers making presentations during PVAS meetings. Motion seconded by Terri Vance. BOD vote: unanimous in favor of the motion.

2<sup>nd</sup> topic of discussion: Francine Bethea confirmed that PVAS has been approved to use the CCA meeting sites for March & June auctions. March 10<sup>th</sup> will be at the site in Wheaton & June 9<sup>th</sup> at the site in Rockville. BOD was informed that Rick McKay is the person in charge of advertising/PR (newspapers, TV, radio, brochures, etc.) for all 2002 auctions.

3<sup>rd</sup> topic of discussion: presentation by David Snell & Joe Szelesi on the winter workshop/show/auction. David confirmed the Falls Church Best Western for Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> & provided the BOD w/ a site description & floor plan. Joe provided details on what would be needed for the show (racks, 10 g. tanks, air pump, sponge filters, power outlets, water, etc.).

Motion made by John Burns: the show budget for the Oct. workshop will be \$1000.00. Motion seconded by "Smitty" Smith. BOD vote: unanimous in favor of the motion.

4<sup>th</sup> topic of discussion: responsibility for speaker acquisition. It was agreed that Nancy Johnson would be the Auction/Speaker Chairperson. Andrew Blumhagen will work on acquiring a saltwater speaker, Hank Darin one or more Marineland speakers, & Joe Szelesi a discuss speaker.

5<sup>th</sup> topic of discussion: the formation of committees for bylaw revision, Delta Tale, & advertising/membership promotion. John Burns agreed to provide all BOD members w/ a copy of the bylaws for the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.



## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes February 11, 2002

1<sup>st</sup> topic of discussion: Auction Locations & Dates Confirmed

### March 10th

Saddlebrook Park Police Headquarters  
12751 Layhill Road  
Silver Spring, MD 20906

### June 9th

Shady Grove Maintenance Facility  
Training Room  
16641 Crabbs Branch Way  
Rockville MD 20955

2<sup>nd</sup> topic of discussion: Speakers for the PVAS October Workshop

Dr. Tim Hovanec is confirmed. Topics to be covered include fresh & saltwater filtration, water quality, & microbiology.

Bing Seto has been invited but has not yet confirmed. Topics to be covered, should he confirm, include fish husbandry & discus.

Dr. David Schleser is available to speak on the topics of collecting in Central & South America & fish diseases. He has yet to be confirmed.

Other possibilities include local speakers such as Bob Dozier of the Betta Assoc., Chris Scharpf of NANFA, &

Peter Thode re: discus.

3<sup>rd</sup> topic of discussion: Auction Volunteers

We are in need of adult members who are able to volunteer just 1-2 hours of their time to act as runners at this year's auctions. Volunteers should contact any member of the PVAS Board of Directors on or before the date of the auction you wish to volunteer for. Thank you.

4<sup>th</sup> topic of discussion: Reminders

Terri Vance will be working on the new PVAS brochure w/ David Snell.

Rick McKay will see to the auction flier.

Andrew & Alysoun need any necessary updates for submission to the DT.

Larry Grenier needs any necessary updates for posting to the website.

John Burns will supply copies of the bylaws for our next meeting.

Nancy Johnson will bring the coffee machine to the next meeting she's able to attend.

PVAS will need to supply the food/drinks for the March 10<sup>th</sup> auction.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m. \*

### 2002 Bowl Show Classes

Month	Class I	Class II	Class III
January	<i>Cichlasoma</i> over 6"	Loricaridae	Pencilfish
February	Victorian Cichlids	Swordtails	<i>Botia</i>
March	<i>Aspidoras</i>	<i>Crenicichla</i> over 6"	Platys
April	Barbs	<i>Laetacara</i>	Paradisefish
May	<i>Crenicichla</i> under 6"	Goldfish	<i>Fundulopanchax sjoestedti</i>
June	African Killifish	<i>Corydoras</i>	<i>Betta splendens</i>
July	Open: Reddest Fish	Open: Albino	Open: Bluest Fish
August	<i>Rasbora</i>	Livebearers	<i>Pelvicachromis</i>
September	Saltwater	Tanganyikan Cichlids	Angelfish
October	TBA	TBA	TBA
November	TBA	TBA	TBA
December	Awards Ceremony		



## The Bowl Show Rules!

Francine Bethea

The monthly Bowl Show participation is really picking up. Check with our website at PVAS.com for the monthly classes. Bring in those fish and compete for those great prizes at the end of the year.

### January 2002

Show Entrants & Placing Results

#### Class I: Cichlasoma > 6"

No entrants

#### Class II: Loricaridae

First - Don Kinyon

King Tiger L66

Second - Dov Goldstein

*Hypancistrus zebra* L46, Gold Nugget

Third - Henry Darin

L129 *Hypancistrus zebra* L46, Gibbeceps

Gene Moy - *Ancistrus* sp.

#### Class III: Pencil Fish

First - Don Kinyon

*Nannostomus beckfordi* "Coral Red"

**BEST IN SHOW**

Second - David Snell

*Nannostomus beckfordi* "Coral Red"

#### Show n' Tell

Kelly Kinyon - Long-finned White Cloud

### February 2002

Show Entrants & Placing Results

#### Class I: Victorian Cichlids

No entrants

#### Class II: Swordtails

First - Henry Darin

Montezuma Sword

**BEST IN SHOW**

Second - John Mangan

*Xiphophorus clemenciae* 2nd

Third - Henry Darin

Highfin Lyretail Sword

John Mangan - *Xiphophorus helleri*

#### Class III: Botia

First - Don Kinyon

*Botia macrocontrus*

Second - Kelly Kinyon

*Botia lohachata*

Third - Gene Moy

*Botia macrocontrus*

Henry Darin - *Botia lohachata*

#### Show n' Tell

Dov Goldstein - *Paranannochromis caudifasciatus*,  
*Ctenopoma oxyrynchus*, *Ctenopoma ocellatum*

#### January 2002 Standings

PVAS Member (S)	(3rd)	(2nd)	(1st)	(B)	Total
Don Kinyon	2	-	14	2	18
Dov Goldstein	2	5	-	-	7
David Snell	1	5	-	-	6
Henry Darin	3	3	-	-	6
Gene Moy	1	-	-	-	1
Kelly Kinyon	1	-	-	-	1

#### February 2002 Standings

PVAS Member (S)	(3rd)	(2nd)	(1st)	(B)	Total	
Henry Darin	3	3	-	7	2	15
Don Kinyon	1	-	-	7	-	8
John Mangan	2	-	5	-	-	7
Kelly Kinyon	1	-	5	-	-	6
Gene Moy	1	3	-	-	-	4
Dov Goldstein	3	-	-	-	-	3

#### Legend

(S) to Show - 1 point  
(3rd) 3rd Place - 3 points  
(2nd) 2nd Place - 5 points  
(1st) 1st Place - 7 Points  
(B) Best in Show - 2 points

#### YTD 2002 Bowl Show Standings (as of 2-15-02):

PVAS Member	Points
Don Kinyon	26
Henry Darin	21
Dov Goldstein	10
Kelly Kinyon	7
John Mangan	7
David Snell	6
Gene Moy	5



## Venezuela Collecting Diary

R. Shane Linder

September 8-10, 2001

We spent 8-10 September collecting on Hato Chinae Arriba just south of Calabozo, Guarico State. Since it is now the middle of the rainy season, the great plains of the llanos are completely flooded and the rivers are all very high with lots of sediment. We went down to the Rio Orituco to give it a try, but the river was 100 feet wide and really moving. One look at the river and we decided to limit our collecting to the flooded plains and a few lagunas (pools). Despite days of intensive collecting, the only siluriformes we caught were hundreds of one inch *Hoplosternum*. I had expected *Corydoras* and maybe even a few loricariids, but no luck. I am sure that most loricariids stick to the rivers, but I do not know where the *Corydoras* were hiding out. Here are some notes on the three main environments:

### Site 1

A section of the flooded plains. The water was 6-12 inches deep and the emerged vegetation was very thick. The water was soft and neutral and stained slightly red in color. The red color is caused by the palm trees leeching tannins into the surrounding waters. The water temperature was about 85°F. Species: Many, many tetras including *Pyrrhulina* c.f. *brevis*, juvenile *Hoplosternum*, and two species of electric fish. Perhaps the coolest catch was a gravid female electric fish (probably *Eigenmannia virescens*). She was very gravid and the eggs, since the fish is somewhat transparent, appeared pinkish. I had never seen a gravid electric fish, so it was a great catch.

***"Imagine collecting in one of Amano's tanks and think about how hard it would be to catch fish in one that was 100 by 200 feet in size."***

### Site 2

A laguna: This site was an aquarium plant lover's dream! Crystal clear water (about 82°F) and thick with aquatic plants. We collected bags of many beautiful plants. The fishing was not so good, but turned up many tetras and a handful of rams (*Microgeophagus ramirezi*). Imagine

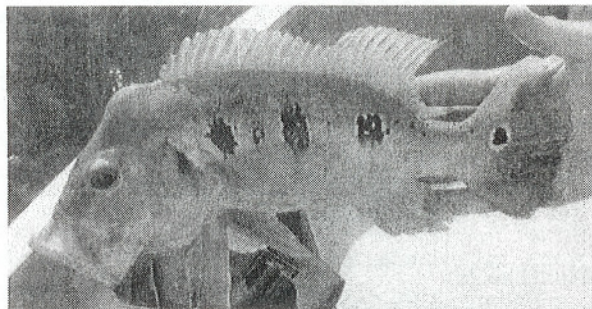


Photo by PVAS member Shane Linder

collecting in one of Amano's tanks and think about how hard it would be to catch fish in one that was 100 by 200 feet in size. The vegetation made collecting very tough and tiresome because the net had to be pulled through *Egeria*, hairgrass, stargrass, *Sagittaria*, *Telanthera*, and a dozen other species of plants.

### Site 3

A channel draining from Site 2. The water was very warm (85°F) and the water was slightly turbid due to the clay substrate. Very few aquatic plants, but stands of lilies and emerged vegetation. The channel was about 10 feet wide and 3-24 inches deep. This site was the cichlid lover's dream. Lots of small *Cichla ocellaris* (2-3 inches), two spp. of Acara, lots of rams (near the vegetation in very shallow water), pike cichlids, and *C. krausii*. There were also a number of interesting tetras. My guess is that all of these predators were eating fishes washed out of the pool above.

We returned on the 10th with plans to fly down to Amazonas the following day and collect the upper Orinoco for four days. As the tragic events of 11 September began to unfold, we canceled our trip and I hurried into work at the Embassy. I just want to take a second and let my fellow Americans know that the support and sympathy for the U.S. has been amazing in Venezuela since the cowardly attack against our country last week. The Embassy entrance sign is surrounded by 15 feet on all sides with flowers, cards, and messages of friendship. Every Venezuelan I know called to share their condolences and random people on the street have stopped me to share their feelings and to tell me that they are praying for the victims and their families. Just tonight thousands of Venezuelans marched in support of the U.S. through Caracas. The Defense Attache told me that they are getting 10-20 calls a day from Venezuelans that want to join OUR military. We are very lucky to have such friends around the world.



***"[C]ollecting means being chest deep in caribe-infested water with your feet stuck in the mud while mosquitos attack every part of your body that is out of the water."***

**September 22, 2001**

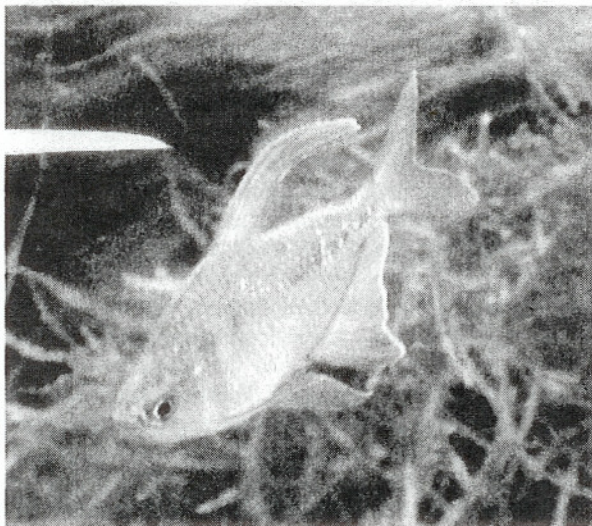
We spent 22 September 2001 collecting in and around the Rio Guapo and, on the way home, stopped off at Cano Mendoza which flows into the Rio Tuy. Last week I received a nice e-mail from the new biology teacher at the International School. She had heard about my forays and wanted to accompany me on my next trip. I figured this would be the perfect opportunity to return to the Rio Guapo for more Diamond tetras and to collect more of the caribe (piranha) species I had located there on my last trip. I am always worried when I take people to the field because many think the idea is great, but do not realize that collecting means being chest deep in caribe-infested water with your feet stuck in the mud while mosquitos attack every part of your body that is out of the water. To my pleasant surprise, Cindy (the new teacher) turned out to be a real trooper and a pleasant companion in the field.

Our first stop was a small unnamed creek that feeds into the Rio Guapo on the opposite side of the river from the pueblo of El Guapo. On my first trip to the creek I had collected four beautiful Diamond tetras and I wanted more. Of the original four that I collected, the two males are now the size of silver dollar coins and are just gorgeous displaying to each other in my 55 gallon plant tank. I went back to this location in the dry season, but the creek was just a dry gravel bed. Various tetra species were abundant in the creek and we even caught a few small Acara cichlids. I was very disappointed when, after about 30 minutes, we had not caught a single Diamond tetra! We kept moving further and further upstream and eventually began catching a few Diamond tetras.

As we kept following the creek upstream, the landscape changed dramatically. The creek became a series of deep pools that were heavily shaded by groves of banana, cacao, and other trees. The substrate changed from gravel and rock to packed clay and the water in the pools was significantly cooler at about 78°F. We entered the first pool with a ten-foot seine and brought up

about a dozen beautiful Diamond tetras. Every pool we sampled was full of Diamond tetras and in no time I had a nice school of about 15 large males and females to take home. While the dominant tetras in the lower reaches of the creek were *Astynax bimaculatus* and Coporo (juvenile *Prochilodus*), we found very few of these upstream. Diamond tetras and larger *Brycon* were the most common in the upper reaches of the creek. Happy with my catch, we headed all the way downstream to where the creek enters the Rio Guapo.

On the way back, we came across a campesino doing his laundry in the creek. He looked at my fish and insisted that I place rocks from the river in the bucket so the fish would have oxygen. He patiently explained to me that oxygen comes from rocks and that my fish would die without the rocks in their water. Having spent many hours explaining things like why there are different time zones to a Quechua elder in Ecuador, I was ready to explain to this gentleman that oxygen does not come from rocks. However, it suddenly hit me that he was right! Although he was more than a little confused, he understood the biological filtration cycle. He knew that rocks from the river, when placed with fish in a closed system, helped them live. As we all know, this is because the rocks have nitrifying bacteria. After a few moments, I decided not to argue with the guy and just thanked him for his advice while thinking how amazing it was that he understood biological filtration.



*Photo by PVAS member Shane Linder*





Photo by PVAS member Don Kinyon

The Rio Guapo was running high and the water was very turbid, about the color of coffee with lots of cream. The river was also full of fish and every sweep of the net brought up *Astynax*, *Brycon*, and *Charax* tetras. Due to the river's turbidity, the fishes' colors were all very washed out. We also brought up a 7 inch long electric fish which I have yet to identify. Twenty minutes later, while standing waist deep in water, we brought up our first caribe. As soon as I saw the piranha, I thought, "Ok, Cindy will head right for the shore now." She just smiled and asked again if I was sure that they would not attack us. As proof, I reminded her that we had already been in the water 20 minutes without a single bite. We continued collecting for another hour and Cindy never asked about the caribes again. I was impressed! We managed to catch a small juvenile and an adult female *Ancistrus brevifilis*. I kept the female because she was an overall gray color and I thought she might be a different species. However, once transferred to clear water, she changed back to the normal *A. brevifilis* coloration. We collected no Diamond tetras in the main river, but did manage to catch some very pretty *Aphyocharax erythrus* (see Aqualog Photo Collection 4, pg. 50).

After a few cold beers in the village of El Guapo, we continued to Cano Menodoza. As always, the Cano was full of *Corydoras aeneus*. Since the water was fairly clear, it was possible to just stand on the bank and watch the little Cory schools dash about looking for food. We caught several tetra species and another adult female *Ancistrus brevifilis*. The catch of the day at this location was a ten-inch pike cichlid. It was very beautiful and clearly not the same species that I normally find in the Orinoco drainages. Although I was tempted to keep it, logic came through and I decided that I was not willing to house a large predatory cichlid.

While packing up our gear, we were approached by two teenagers that wanted to sell us a sloth. Sadly, in this area (as in almost all tropical jungles) the locals catch monkeys, parrots, and sloths and sell them along the highway. These might seem like neat pets to the passing city folk, but I doubt that any of them have the means to provide suitable care for these animals. The best thing to do in this situation is not to buy these creatures. I have seen American and European tourists buy these animals and then release them thinking it is a good deed. However, this just causes the locals to catch more, since they get paid whether you keep the animal or release it. If you do not buy the animal today, you are protecting its species since the local will have no reason to catch more tomorrow.

### December, 2001

While up in Mexico last week, I managed to make a stop at a cenote just outside of Chichen Itza in Yucatan State. A cenote is formed when the earth above an underground river collapses and creates a sinkhole. Cenotes are common in southern Mexico because the large number of underground rivers and the limestone base provide for unstable ground. The cenote I explored was located at Ik Kil in Xcalacoop, Tinum about 30 minutes from the ruins of Chichen Itza. Above ground, the cenote looked like a huge hole about 100 feet across. The water was about 150 feet straight down from the opening. Descending into the cenote was very exciting. From the bottom looking 150 feet up (that is 15 stories!), what had looked like a huge hole while up top now looked like a small circle of light. After reaching the bottom, I could see hundreds of catfish in the water. The property owners plan to construct a tourism attraction at the cenote and had installed underwater pool lights just below the surface. The catfish were pure black and stayed near the water's surface.

**"Only after swimming right up to the catfishes with my mask and snorkel and carefully counting the barbels was I sure they were not bagrids."**

My first thought was that they were *Hemibagrus*! I thought that maybe someone had released Asian catfish into the cenote because these fish look just like black *Hemibagrus*. Only after swimming right up to the catfishes with my mask and snorkel and carefully counting



the barbels was I sure they were not bagrids. They showed no fear of me, probably because there are no predators, or even other fishes, in their natural environment. I would guess that the catfish all stayed near the surface because they feed on whatever insects or animals fall into the cenote. Although now considered a junior synonym of *Rhamdia laticauda*, these fish were originally described as *R. sacrificii* by Barbour and Cole in 1906. Barbour and Cole chose the specific name as reference to the catfish's habitat in a sacrificial cenote near Chichen Itza. The ancient Maya would offer sacrifices of humans and treasure to the gods by throwing them into a cenote.

The water was cool at about 70°F, very deep, and crystal clear. Given the limestone nature of the cenote, I would expect the water to be rather hard with a pH of over 7. The largest specimens were about six inches total length. Given its attractive appearance and small adult size, it would make a very interesting aquarium resident. The tank could be aquascaped with limestone and lit by a blue or red tube. I am very curious as to how they reproduce as scattered eggs would sink perhaps a hundred feet deep or could be carried by the underground river to the sea. Also, because of their strange underground environment, they are not subject to the climatic or chemical changes that typically serve as spawning triggers. Given the large range of sizes that I saw, I believe this fish may reproduce year round.

## February 10, 2002

On 10 February 2002, my wife Erica and I traveled down to the llanos to do some collecting. As it is now the dry season, I could hardly wait to get back down to the plains and try some new collecting locations. Studying the map, I decided to set out for the village of San Francisco de Tiznados, which is located near the juncture of the Rio Tiznados and Rio Mapire. A friend of mine told me that the location was very beautiful and that he had once caught, on hook and line, an eighteen-pound Payara (*Hydrolicus scomberoides*). Now that was one big tetra!

Unbeknownst to us, we were in for a couple of surprises that day. First of all, a dam was built at the juncture of the Rios Tiznados and Mapire. Where my map showed the village of San Francisco was now the middle of a huge reservoir and the village must be hundreds of feet under water. What was an area with several large rivers coming together was now just one big lake. However, the Rio Tiznados still flows from the dam's flood

**"[I]t was also perfectly clear that we would not be collecting at this location. The river's shores were lined with literally thousands of llaneros drinking beer, barbecuing, and celebrating Carnival for all they were worth."**

gates and the river was beautiful. The water was perfectly clear and a quick glance at the aquatic vegetation and structure told me that the river would be teeming with fishes. However, it was also perfectly clear that we would not be collecting at this location. The river's shores were lined with literally thousands of llaneros drinking beer, barbecuing, and celebrating Carnival for all they were worth.

Looking again at the map, which by now I had lost a great deal of faith in, we found a road a few miles east that branched south from Highway 13 and led to the village of San Jose de Tiznados. The map showed that this road crossed the Rio Tiznados and dead-ended near the village. Once again my map failed me. The road has since been extended and now continues south all the way to Highway 2. So, we drove along past San Jose on a road that did not exist according to our map. Eventually, near the village of El Limon (not on my map either) we found a nice place to access the river. I looked closely at the river and could see why the water was so beautiful. It was obvious that they had opened the dam at San Francisco to provide lots of fresh cool water for the Carnival celebrations. This had caused the river to rise about two feet judging from the terrestrial plants along the banks that were now covered by water. In the center of the river, the water was moving fast enough to create a fair current (as we will see later). The temperature was also abnormally cool for the dry season at about 78°F. The high water level precluded collecting in some of the choicest spots because in and around the cut banks the water was five to seven feet deep.

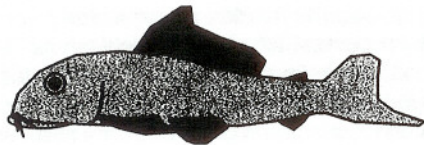
Collecting among the flooded grasses along the banks we pulled up several tetras and "*Cichlasoma*" *krausii*. The two most interesting tetras were *Xenagoniates bondi* and *Paragoniates albumus*. *X. bondi* looks uncannily like an Asian *Kryptopterus* glass cat. The resemblance is amazing and Erica said that, if she did not know we were in South America, she would swear that they were glass cats. They were very common and we caught



several up to three inches in length. *P. alburnus* is another amazing characin because its body shape makes it look very much like a gourami. Both of these tetras are pictured in Baensch Vol. I on page 253. The pictured *P. alburnus* is a juvenile and Baensch's reported length of 2.5 inches for adults is incorrect. We brought back two specimens that are four inches total length.

While seining around a large patch of vegetation, we caught the day's biggest surprise, which was a new *Farlowella*. As soon as I saw them in the net I knew they were something different. The rostrum is very long and broad and they look like nothing that I can find in the literature. We also collected several beautiful *Farlowella mariaelenae* with caudal extensions up to five inches long and a single two-inch *Hemiloricaria*. The new *Farlowella* was by far the most common loricariid in the river. We also captured several *Microglanis* and *Centromochlus* amongst the weeds. The only true aquatic plant in the river was *Egeria*, which grew in thick stands in the shallows.

Slightly down river I noticed several fallen trees and wanted to try sampling them. As we brought the net around one tree, the current started pushing Erica downstream. She tried to fight it, but it pulled her closer and closer to the center of the river. I tried to help her out and was caught in the same current. Finally, when the water was about up to my neck, I managed to plant my feet and stop myself. However, the water was now over Erica's head and she was floating away from me right down the middle of the river. I yelled at her not to let go of the seine, which was now our only connection. It was quite a picture. She was horizontal in the water due to the current, holding onto the seine's brail for her life. I managed to walk slowly up to the shallows, pulling her along, and when I had good footing, I pulled the seine in with Erica still attached. Although we had a good laugh about the incident, it served as a good reminder that you can never let your guard down in the field.



Line drawing by PVAS member Gene Moy

## What to Expect at a PVAS Meeting

Nancy Johnson

Do you come to PVAS meetings? Regularly? Sometimes? Not at all?

Well, if you don't, you don't know what you're missing.

It's a night out without the kids, spouse, roommate, parents or anyone else with whom it would be healthy for you to have a little "space." You can talk fish until you're blue in the face, or until the speaker starts. You learn a LOT ... which always makes keeping fish more fun and successful. You can get something for nothing, or nearly nothing. Each meeting offers a free door prize of a tank, or choice of another prize if you win and don't want the tank, and usually about five raffle prizes. I buy \$10 in tickets, and most nights I win two raffle prizes! The raffle prizes are ALWAYS worth well over \$10 each.

The monthly mini-auctions are almost unbelievable. Typically we have 10-20 plant items, and about the same number of fish items. Often you can buy this stuff for far less than at the big auctions. Some examples of mini-auction bargains:

- I once bought a healthy discus for \$5.
- I usually buy one or two pairs or trios of Apistos for \$10 per pair/trio.
- I sold several trios of special copper Egyptian mouthbrooders for about \$7 a trio. I didn't realize it at the time, but they are not *P. multicolor*, something rarer although I don't recall exactly what. Dov Goldstein can tell you.
- We have several members who are active importers, and may sell F1 or wild-caught fish.
- Last month the speaker auctioned off two computer diskettes with more than 16,000 indexed entries of articles that have appeared in fish magazines over the past decade.

Do your tanks tend to kill those expensive store-bought plants? At PVAS mini-auctions, you can afford to keep replenishing them until you find something your tank likes. A few months ago I bought a HUGE bag of giant *Vallisneria* for \$5, and unlike most plants I bring home, these are growing like crazy and taking over both my 125 and 110 gallon tanks. I'll be able to sell some at an auction soon. You can always get bags of Hornwort for \$1 at a mini auction, and many other types of plants sell for \$1 as well.



Most auction items are not EVER available at a pet shop, anywhere. Usually all of the fish have been tank raised by members, and you can discuss the care of the fish you buy from the breeder.

It's very informal. Come as you are, don't worry about how you look, because there's certain to be someone else there who looks worse than you. We may be fun, but most of us aren't that pretty. You won't feel strange unless you want to. Our members range in age from mid-20s up, and we always have quite a few women, and folks of many colors. It's a fairly colorful crowd in other ways, too! There are no kids usually, and the few who attend on occasion pretty much hug the walls.

We also have sodas and cookies, and coffee if I remember to bring the pot. Our speakers are usually club members, and the presentation is usually brief. If you would rather chat than listen to the speaker, you are welcome to step outside - no worries. We're very informal.

The location is very easy, off the beltway and I-66, about 2 miles from Fairfax Circle. Meetings are the second Monday night of each month at 7:30, by which time traffic is smooth, even in Fairfax City. They typically end by 9:30 or 10:00. If the location is bad for you, please help us scout alternative locations in other parts of the metro area. We need a free or very low-cost location that will allow us to have water (fish bags and bowl show tanks), and we will hold a meeting there!

We also are open to holding meetings at members' homes, if anyone would like to volunteer. These could be on a weekend, instead of a Monday night if that's more convenient for the host. We typically have 30-40 people attend a meeting, but a meeting at someone's home would probably be a smaller group. So, if you have room for 15 or 20 people in your home or on your deck, invite the club for a visit and show off your tanks!

Give one of our meetings a try. If you like fish and can tolerate people, you'll probably have fun. Please write to me at [natahoausual@worldnet.att.net](mailto:natahoausual@worldnet.att.net) if you have ideas, suggestions, complaints or other comments about the meetings. I'd love to hear from you!

*Nancy Johnson is the Vice President of the Potomac Valley Aquarium Society. She is also the Exchange Editor for the Delta Tale.*

## Why Keep Natives

Bob Bock

Why keep natives? Store-bought fish are easy enough: a few zebra danios or Moscow purple guppies. Just drop a heater in the tank, and feed them flake food twice a day. Why bother with drab-colored fish that will only eat live or frozen foods? That you can't buy in a store but have to collect yourself?

For me the answer goes back long, long ago, to when I was a 10-year old kid. On Saturdays, I'd bring my fishing rod to Lincoln Park Lake in my hometown of Jersey City, New Jersey. I baited my hook with a half-cooked piece of macaroni, then cast it into the murky depths of Lincoln Park Lake. In those days, the park's athletic fields were far over-fertilized. The runoff turned the water deep, dark algae green and it was impossible to see anything in the hidden realm below.

I can still remember my first fishing trip there. I cast my macaroni-baited hook about 75 yards or so. I pulled the line tight, then sat and waited in the drizzling early spring cold. The rod scraped across the concrete shoreline, headed straight for the water. I grabbed it just before it went into the water and began turning the reel handle. It took all the strength I had to crank whatever it was to shore. An older boy was trying to help me bring the big fish in. We brought it in close, and for the briefest of moments I saw the bronze scales and dull yellow underbelly of a monster carp. Then the hook pulled loose and that was the last I ever saw of the mysterious leviathan from the emerald green darkness.

But that childhood disappointment also piqued my curiosity. I was back the next day, with more half-boiled macaroni. My stringer soon held a half dozen small carp and wild goldfish. I brought home a big, fat, round, 12-inch goldfish and put it in my father's 29-gallon tank. Like me, Pop marveled at its size and shimmering color. But within an hour, the fish produced so much waste that the tank water turned a fuzzy milk white. My father drove the goldfish and me back to the park.

Of course, I brought more fish home. One day, an unfortunate brown bullhead took the macaroni bait and ended up in my ten-gallon tank. He spent most of his time trying to hide behind the corner box filter, with his square tail and more than half of his dull, bronze, scaleless body sticking out from the side. But "Charlie," as I



## BAP Corner

John Mangan

soon called him, would always lumber out of his hiding place when I threw food in for him. His tiny, pinhead eyes were probably all but blind, but he seemed to home in on his food with his stringy black barbels. I'd never seen anything like it before. With a kind of awkward grace, he zeroed in on the bologna pieces I fed him, swallowing them in a wide mouthed gulp. I've since learned that these larger Ictalurid catfish have taste receptors on their barbels and covering most of the r bodies.

I soon began bringing home the little sunfish that I pulled out from the lake's shoreline. They were beautiful in the summer sun - iridescent blue-striped gill covers and yellow-orange bellies. Their color faded under the incandescent lights of my 15-gallon tank. But once again, the emerald darkness had given up one of its secrets. A nesting male shimmied like a black mollie, using his tail to sweep a circular depression in the gravel. I was so amazed by the display that I didn't mind that he tore up the stands of *Hygrophila polysperma* that had taken so long to grow.

It was this same sense of wonder that got me back into the hobby about ten years ago. I've been out to the ponds and streams many times since. Once, I videotaped longear sunfish spawning. Not in the C&O Canal, where my kids and I caught them, but in my 65-gallon aquarium. The male and female soon developed bright purple stripes. They circled the nest for nearly twenty minutes, their ventral fins pressed together, the male upright, the female swimming at a right angle to him, almost horizontal. A few days later, tiny fry appeared. They were no larger than a pinhead, too big to carry around the yolk sac on which they perched.

I'd love to collect in the Amazon, or in Africa's rift lakes. For now, though, such trips are beyond my budget. But like Lincoln Park Lake, nearly every pond, stream, lake, river, bay and inlet near my suburban Washington, D.C., home also has its veil of mystery. With a seine, dip net, or small fishing rod, I can take home a few of its mysterious underwater denizens. And with some careful aquarium care and a little luck, they will reveal their secrets and I'll discover something about their hidden lives that I wouldn't have otherwise known.

In the coming months, I hope to share a little of this wonder with you.

Bob Bock is past president of the North American Native Fishes Association, [www.nanfa.org](http://www.nanfa.org).

### Standings

PVAS Member	Points	Award Level
Don Kinyon	1155	Master Breeder
Gerry Hoffman	945	Master Breeder
Lorne Williams	500	Master Breeder
Jeffrey Burke	445	Advanced Breeder
Gene Moy	290	Intermediate Breeder
Francine Bethea	235	Intermediate Breeder
John Mangan	185	Intermediate Breeder
David Snell	185	Intermediate Breeder
Dov Goldstein	165	Intermediate Breeder
Bill Pabst	125	Breeder
Shane Linder	85	Breeder
Lee Hardy	30	Breeder
Robert Smith	20	Breeder
Debbi Smith	20	Breeder
Michael Kaiser	15	Breeder
Kelly Kinyon	10	Breeder

Recent activity: Don Kinyon receives 20 points for *Corydoras aeneus* "Black"; 15 points for *Apistogramma trifasciata*; 15 points for *Apistogramma* sp. "Jurua"; 20 points for *Corydoras araguaensis*; and 15 points for *Apistogramma masken* "Cara Pintada".

### Trading Post

**For Sale:** Plastic fish bags and back issues of aquarium magazines, many different titles. Send SASE for catalog to John Mangan, 12633 Oakwood Dr., Woodbridge, VA 22192.

#### **For Sale:**

*Aphyosemion ahli* "Kindou" (CI 02/02) 50 prs; \$12.50pr  
*Epiplatys infrafasciata* "Bidou" (CI 02/02) 25 prs; \$11 pr  
*Apistogramma hongsloui* "red" (Form I) 10prs; \$24pr  
*Paranannochromis caudifasciatus*; \$23ea.  
*Pelvicachromis taeniatus* "Lokundje" 50prs; \$28.50pr.  
*Betta coccina*; \$15pr  
Dov Goldstein  
301-471-9655  
[dov@rarecichlids.com](mailto:dov@rarecichlids.com)

**Your Ad Here:** PVAS members may place an ad in the *Delta Tale* for free. Simply e-mail your notice to [delta@pvas.com](mailto:delta@pvas.com) and it will be included in the next issue.



## BAP Checkers

<u>Checker</u>	<u>Area</u>
David Snell.....	Centreville/Chantilly/Manassas
(703) 968-9084	
Mike Cardaci.....	Centreville
(703) 222-3833	
Robert "Smitty" Smith.....	East Prince William County/ Springfield
(703) 490-4048	
Dov Goldstein.....	Frederick
(301) 694-7582	
Don Kinyon.....	Manassas/Rte 66 Corridor/ Far West Suburbs
(540) 635-9559	
Gene Moy.....	Mt Vernon/Alexandria
(703) 765-0865	
Rick McKay.....	Oakton/Vienna
(703) 281-1647	
Francine Bethea .....	North Prince George's County
(301) 809-3894	
Lorne E Williams.....	South Prince George's County
(301) 630-7674	
Doug Patac.....	Prince George's / Montgomery Counties
(301) 743-6908	
Pete Thrift.....	Springfield/Franconia
(703) 971-0594	
Gerry Hoffman.....	Warrenton/Manassas
(540) 347-7486	
John Mangan.....	Occuquan/Lake Ridge
(703) 491-4980	

## *Ancistrus* sp. Bristlenose

Francine Bethea

There are at least seven different species of *Ancistrus* currently listed in the Image Library at the Planetcatfish site ([www.planetcatfish.com](http://www.planetcatfish.com)). There isn't a picture that represents the particular species that I possess, although Julian 'Jools' Dingall, the Webmaster of this wonderful site, suggests that my fish are probably an aquarium strain of *temmincki* or *lineolatus*.

The tric was kept in an unheated 10-gallon tank with a sponge filter. Since the fish measured in at only 3" each, this seemed an appropriate sized tank. I used rainwater with a pH of 6.0. The tank's lighting was provided by light emanating from the room. Therefore, the tank was primarily dark. Most *Ancistrus* are nocturnal and prefer darkness. I provided a bamboo tube for the male that measured 1"x 4". The bristlenose were fed primarily zucchini with the occasional algae tabs. I have found that if the other fish in the tank miss some of the brine shrimp or bloodworms, the bristlenose will sample this food as well.

I placed a bamboo tube in the tank and the male took residency immediately. Purposefully, I placed the tube opening facing the front glass to allow me to shine in a light to check for eggs, just in case. After about 10 days, all that I could see of him was from his midsection to his tail. I noticed that the male had taken on a piebald or mottled pattern. I checked the tube with the light and spied a large grape-like cluster of orange eggs.

Within a week the eggs hatched. For 3-4 days, the young looked like an egg with little tails. The male was diligent at fanning and mouthing the wrigglers. At this point, I prepared a 2.5-gallon tank filled with the same water. I lifted the bamboo tube, with the male and wrigglers inside, and placed it in the smaller tank. Initially, I used an air stone. I added a small portion of zucchini for the male, but I didn't switch to a sponge filter until the fry started eating. Once the fry resembled the adult and started venturing outside the tube, I removed the male and his cave back to the original tank.

If you plan to hatch the eggs yourself, you may use a breeding trap or similar contraption. A container of this type could be hung inside the tank to benefit from being in the original water. Or, if you decide to hang a container on the outside of the tank, daily water changes

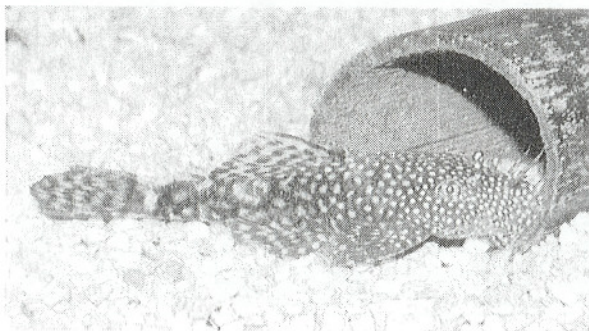


Photo by PVAS member Francine Bethea



from the parents' tank are required. Place a vigorous bubbling air stone close to the eggs in both methods. Once the eggs begin to hatch, resist the temptation to remove the empty shells. The cluster of eggs is extremely adhesive and will not fare well from being pulled apart. Once all of the fry have emerged, then begin to siphon off the debris and egg casings. The fry will not need to be fed until the egg sack is exhausted. At this point, transfer the fry to larger quarters with a small section of zucchini and a soft piece of driftwood.

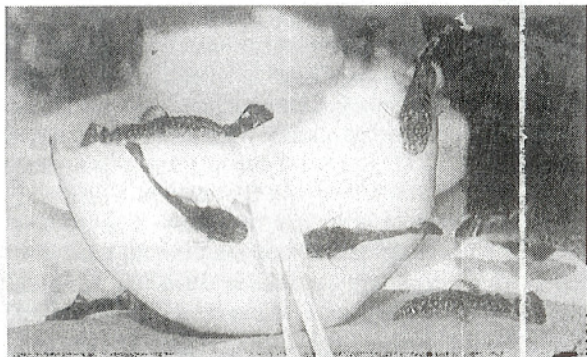


Photo by PVAS member Francine Bethea

### ***Apistogramma Atahualpa***

Don Kinyon

For a while, this was the "hot" fish that everyone was after, and with good reason: it's one of the most beautiful things to come out of South America lately. It was known only by "Species Sunset" for some time, but has been described and named *Atahualpa*, after the sixteenth century Inca ruler. Uwe Romer's diagnosis is published in *The Buntbarsche Bulletin* (journal of the American Cichlid Association) number 182 from October 1997.

This cichlid is found in the Basin of the Rio Ucayali, in eastern Peru. I found no recordings of the water parameters, but I assume it is a black water species, for reasons you will read later.

This fish is a thick-lipped *Apistogramma* from the *A. cacatoides* group. It displays black markings at the caudal peduncle, the first few spines of the dorsal fin along with a dotted line at its base, an eye stripe slanting down and back, and an indefinite lateral stripe that can be light or dark depending on mood. The female will also

display jet black ventral fins. When in good condition, the males will show some wonderful color. His body has a base color of tan to brown, with a bright yellow cheek and abdomen. His ventral and anal fins are blue, and his upper dorsal has a pale blue stripe, topped by a yellow one. The first few spines on the dorsal fin are elongated in the adult male. The female is beautiful in her own way, especially during spawning and egg/fry care. She displays a bright yellow body with contrasting jet black markings. During this time, the lateral stripe disappears and she develops a black spot on her side.

I had some of these fish in the past, but never had any luck getting them to spawn. It seemed they would go through all the motions, but not produce any eggs. I assumed the pair to be too old and gave up, apparently too quickly. I gave the fish to another hobbyist who had many broods from them. I was later able to obtain a number of younger fish and grew them up. I fed them a lot of live foods, along with flake and freeze dried, which grew them out quickly.

The biggest and most colorful male and the best female were put into their own 20-gallon tank of very soft, acidic water. I use mostly rain water with Amazon Basin fish, and these fish seemed uncomfortable in anything that was above a pH of six. The water in the tank was a pH of 5.5, with very little hardness. The temperature was raised from 76° gradually to 82° and the fish got twice weekly thirty percent water changes, with pure rain water and live food, daily. The pair exhibited spawning behavior on several occasions, but didn't spawn for the first few weeks.

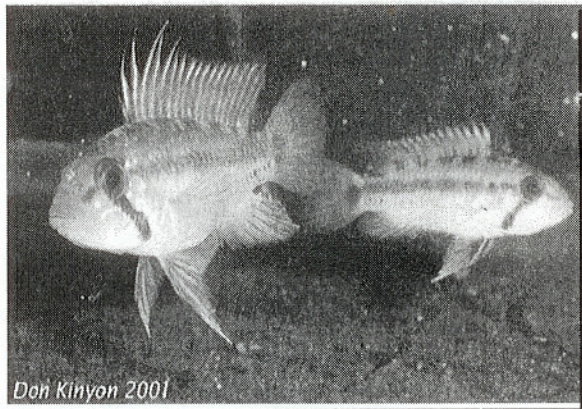


Photo by PVAS member Don Kinyon



**"The temperature was warm at 80°, and the total hardness was very low at about 40 ppm, but the thing that caught my attention was the pH: 3.8!"**

As is many times the case, because the fish didn't lay eggs in the first month or so, my attention was drawn to other fish room matters. The water changes became less frequent, but they still received live food daily. The lack of so much new water is probably what triggered the spawning. As I was doing water changes several weeks later, I noticed the female hovering over one of the small upturned flower pots in the corner of the tank. On closer inspection, she was guarding a clutch of pinkish eggs that had been laid on the inside wall of the crockery and wasn't going to let the much larger male out of the far corner of the tank.

I have gotten into the habit of checking water parameters as soon as possible after any spawnings, to perhaps duplicate the conditions again, or advise other hobbyists. The temperature was warm at 80°, and the total hardness was very low at about 40 ppm, but the thing that caught my attention was the pH: 3.8! I know that tanks can "crash" when the water has little or no buffering, and many fish would be belly-up in these conditions, but it evidently had no ill effects on the Sunsets.

I did a normal water changes on the tank and observed the fish whenever possible. I ended up removing the male after a few days, for his own good. Poor guy was afraid to come out of his corner to eat. The female stayed over the crock for another six days, at which time she led about forty free-swimming youngsters out into the tank.

From the first day, the fry were able to eat micro worms and newly-hatched brine shrimp, and they always seemed ready to eat. Most of the *Apistogramma* young that I've seen will stay with the mother fish and be led to the food, but as soon as these little ones saw the eyedropper push out a cloud of shrimp or micro worms, mom no longer mattered; it was a race to the meal. With appetites like that, it's no wonder the youngsters grew quickly. By one month's age they were nearly a half inch in length.

I was careful to check the water more regularly, especially the pH, and did my best to keep it at 5.0 or above, but even if it dipped below that point, neither mother nor

children were bothered. Water changes continued at once a week, but they contained a small amount of tap water to keep some buffers in the tank water.

Once the fry were large enough, they started getting flake foods and freeze-dried along with their live foods, much the same as the adults ate. At a little over a month of age, there was a die-off of about ten fish, which I believe I caused myself by being a bit overzealous with their feeding. They fry always seemed so ravenous that I assumed they weren't getting enough to eat, but even these ever-hungry young cichlids had limits. I lowered the temperature to 75° degrees and added a couple young *Corydoras* catfish, and the problem went away. The water temperature was a little warm for the Corys to be totally comfortable, but they didn't seem put out too much.

With thirty-some growing cichlids in a 20-gallon tank, the water changes had to be doubled to twice weekly. I still added some tap water with each change to keep the pH from crashing, and it stayed somewhat stable at around 5.5.

At this writing, the young sunsets are two months old, and most are over 1 1/4" long. They haven't lost their large appetites and are still growing like weeds. Water changes have moved up to every two or three days just to keep up, and I'm emptying out a larger tank to move them into.

Although the newness has worn out for this *Apistogramma*, they should remain a popular cichlid and staple fish for the South American dwarf cichlid hobbyists.



Photo by PVAS member Francine Bethea



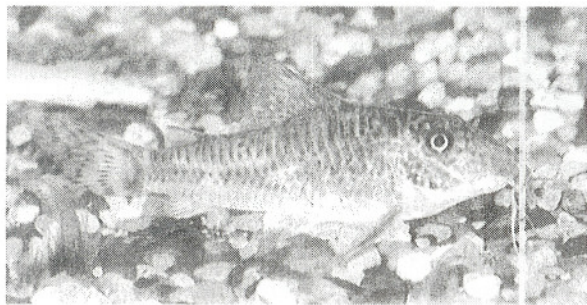


Photo by PVAS member Francine Bethea

## ***Corydoras barbatus***

Francine Bethea

I keep five *Corydoras barbatus*, a pair of *Ancistrus* c.f. *dilopterus* and five *Apistogramma* 'Rio Mamore' in a 33 long. The décor consists of a very shallow layer of gravel, a few pieces of slate and a large piece of driftwood. The temperature is maintained at 78°. Filtration is barely handled by an AquaClear 200 with two sponges instead of the carbon pack. The pH is 6 and the hardness is negligible.

After a water change, I found eggs on the front and side glass of the tank. I prepared a 2.5-gallon tank with water from the parents' tank. Using one of those plant plastic ID tags, I scrapped the eggs off the glass and placed them approximately in the same position on the glass of the 2.5. Next, I used an air stone to keep the water moving around the eggs. I did not use a fungicide. After 4-5 days, the fry were free swimming. Microworms were used as first food. The fry grew to half an inch in one month.

The *C. barbatus* spawned again three days after the first one. This time, I was fortunate to watch the spawning process take place. The pair secluded themselves in the area under the return of the filter. The female would go up to about 2" below the surface and start laying the eggs. Laying a few eggs at a time, the female would go back down to the male, who was hovering above the gravel. Once the pair was on the bottom together, the female wriggled her barbells at the male's vent. The male would then swim up to where the eggs were laid and fertilize them. This process went on until the female was spent.

## ***Corydoras* sp. "Baianinho II"**

Don Kinyon

This species has not yet been officially described, though I'm told they're working on it. It is native to Brazil, but the specific system or systems that it comes from is sometimes debated. They very much resemble a small *Corydoras barbatus*, having the long snout and coloration of that fish, but only reaching about three inches in length. The pattern of both sexes is also similar to the larger species, but the males don't seem to get the jet black-on-white during breeding; they are more of a dark charcoal.

I was able to get a few of these Corys when they were still a fairly "new" fish, but along with them came some kind of malady that wiped out every one of them, along with quite a few other species I was keeping before the affliction ran its course.

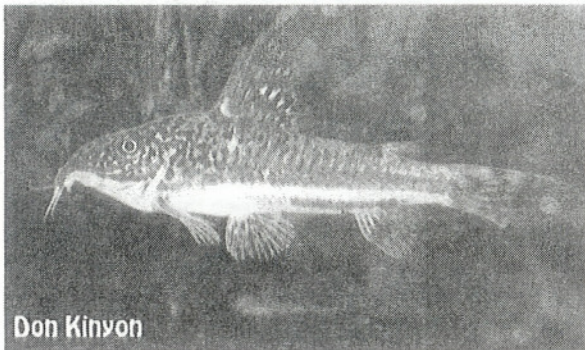
More than a year later, I received a group of young fish from a private breeder, and was able to raise a few. They were housed in a *Corydoras* community tank, the way I rear most catfish for space's sake, with several other species. I first noticed some eggs in the tank and wondered from which catfish they were. I removed the eggs, but none were viable. By watching the tank a little more closely, I was able to determine which of the Corys were spawning, and removed the male and three females to another tank.

The breeding set-up was a simple cube style tank, bare except for a single stone with some Java Fern attached to it and a couple small pieces of sunken locust wood. A large power head provided filtration and current with a sponge filter attached. The outlet of the power head was fitted with a hose for aeration. Water was straight from the tap; 7.4 pH and 140 ppm total hardness, kept at room temperature; between 72 and 80°.

In this set-up each female spawned about once every ten days, producing an average of sixty eggs, but none were viable. The eggs were laid in plaques, much like *C. barbatus*, usually close to the water line, and usually in a corner near the current.

By changing the water slowly over to softer, more acidic rain water, I was able to drop the pH and get the hardness to near zero in a few weeks. The very first spawn after the pH reached six had a fifty percent hatch. Sub-





Don Kinyon

Photo by PVAS member Don Kinyon

sequent spawns proved to be less successful if the pH rose or fell too far from that mark. I was never able to achieve much over the fifty percent level, but the ratio of one male to three females probably made it difficult.

I scraped the eggs from the glass with a razor blade and put them into a plastic "shoebox" for hatching, using water from the breeding tank and a small amount of acriflavin. I kept an air stone in the shallow pan and changed ninety percent of the water twice daily.

In five days, the eggs hatched and the young catfish were mobile. In another two days, they started feeding on micro worms, which they lived on for the first week. After that I added decapsulated brine shrimp eggs to their diet. I have had some very bad luck feeding young *Corydoras* on brine shrimp nauplii, so I no longer use them, but use the decapsulated cysts instead. The fry eat these readily, and grow just as quickly without the terrible problems I had using the hatched shrimp.

When the fry were three weeks old, they got their own tank, a 15-gallon, and I got a reprieve from the twice-daily water changes. The only way that I have found to make this transition is to leave the new tank as shallow as the old container and add water very slowly, over a period of days, until the preferred level is reached. The small catfish have a very delicate air bladder, and if water level changes are made too quickly, it can be damaged and kill the fish.

The youngsters lived in this tank until they were over two months old, and got a water change every third day of about fifty percent. At about a month old, they ate the same foods as the adults, though it sometimes had to be chopped up a bit. They grew very well and most were over half an inch by two months.

These fish have proved to be a little harder to keep and spawn than the average *Corydoras*, but the benefits are well worth it. They are enjoyable to have in a community or species tank, and are always easy to sell or use as trade-bait for some of the other fish that you are lusty after.

## Exchange Report: Reprints of PVAS Articles

Nancy Johnson

The following articles from the PVAS Delta Tale have recently been mentioned or reprinted in other aquarium society publications:

"*Corydoras* in Paradise" by Gene Moy was mentioned in Paradise Press, Jersey Shore Aquarium Society.

Don Kinyon's "*Pelvicachromis Taeniatus*" was reprinted in the Great Lakes Cichlid Society's Cichlid Evening Post, Nov. 2001 (Cleveland, Ohio), and in All Cichlids, Michigan Cichlid Association.

Fin Fax, Delaware County Aquarium Society (Ridley Park, Pennsylvania), mentions Don Kinyon's articles on *Apistogramma diplotaenia* and *A. sp. aff. breitbinden*; Francine Bethea's articles on *Fundulopanchax sjoestedti* and *Nanacara aureocephalis*; and David Snell's articles on *Hemigrammus ocellifer* and *Nannostomus beckfordi*. It also mentions "Venezuela Collecting Diary" by Shane Linder, an article about his adventures in Caracas collecting catfish.

The details of Francine's "*Nanochromis transvestitus*" were reported in the June/July 2001 issue of Tank Topics, Greater Akron Aquarium Society, Akron, Ohio

Dave Snell's "*Symphysodon discus*" and Don Kinyon's *Apistogramma species affinis breitbinden* "Sao Gabriel" were reprinted in the September issue of Great Lakes Cichlid Society's Cichlid Evening Post (Shaker Heights, Illinois)

A shortened version of Dave Snell's "*Hemigrammus erythrozonus*, Durban 1909" appeared in Tank Topics, Greater Akron Aquarium Society, Oct/Nov issue.

Francine's "*Apistogramma gephyra*" was reviewed (quite favorably, I might add) in GCCA Cichlid Chatter, Greater Chicago Cichlid Association.



## Baggers Should Be Choosers

Mark Murtaugh

*This article was first published in Finsanati, a publication of the Greater Cincinnati Aquarium Society.*

After spending the last year as Vice President and auction chairman, I feel compelled to write an article on proper methods for bagging fish. There have been several auctions where I have witnessed fish bagged in situations that could and often do lead to the fish dying. For example, there have been plate-sized discus in a bag where its nose and tail were touching the bag. Also there have been 4 or 5 large African cichlids in a bag that should have been used for fry.

When bagging my fish for an auction, I view it as if I was traveling on vacation. Sure, when I was younger I would try to squeeze stuff (beer, buddies, and some clothes) into a car, which at that time was a two-seater sports car. Of course now, older and wiser (OK maybe just older), I prefer to travel in a little more comfort and space. Which is how fish should travel. Now I pack the wife and kid and load as many of the comforts of home as my pickup will hold. This works well for me now, because I prefer not to be the one belly up gasping for air in the car.

One of the most important rules for transporting fish is the size of the bag. Pick the size that is best suited for the size and type of fish. For example, livebearers tend to be smaller and can be put in a smaller bag as opposed to cichlids, which require more space due to their size and aggressive nature. Another important consideration is the type of bag.

There are different thicknesses of plastic used in bags. I recommend using a bag at least 3 mil thick. This thickness works well because it does not rupture easily.

Bags come in two different styles, flat fold and box style. The box style is what I prefer, because they stand up at the auctions and in my cooler. Fish can get trapped in the folds of both styles of bags; for this reason I double bag my fish. And I always at least double bag, if not triple bag, any catfish because of the fins poking through the bag. Always use rubber bands when closing up the bags and never use those bread bag twist ties. Twist ties don't seal the bag very well and can poke holes in other bags.

Another helpful hint as you prepare your fish for transportation is one you need to think about a day or two before the auction. **You should stop feeding your fish.**

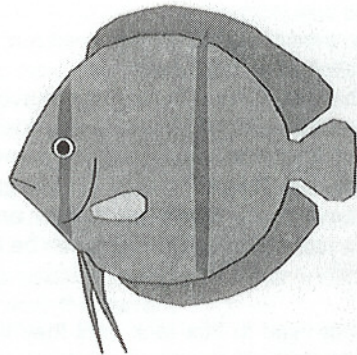
The rule of thumb that I use is for adult cichlids or any fish over three inches: stop feeding 48 hours prior to bagging; for smaller fish, stop feeding 24 hours prior. The reason for this is it helps to keep the fish from fouling the water in the bag. Remember, they can't use a rest stop to relieve themselves.

Imagine riding in a car with a couple of friends on a 10-hour trip and not stopping for bathroom breaks. Yes, I have opened bags that smelled like that.

**There are products that can be added to bagged fish to help them with their travels.** Bag Buddies is one and another is called PolyFilter. This is what I use; just cut it into one-inch pieces and toss in the bag. The PolyFilter removes ammonia from the water. I have also used PolyFilter to bring back fish that were close to expiring. Also methylene blue can be used, but be sure that if you are taking bags to any auction that they allow medicated water in the bag of fish.

The last thing when bagging your fish is the ratio of water to air. **Use one-third water and two-thirds air.** This will help to insure that there is enough oxygen in there for your fish to survive extended periods of time.

As we get ready for our auction keep these helpful hints in mind. Remember, the most important thing is the well being of our fish and to ensure that we both buy and sell them in the best possible condition.



*Line drawing by PVAS member Gene Moy*



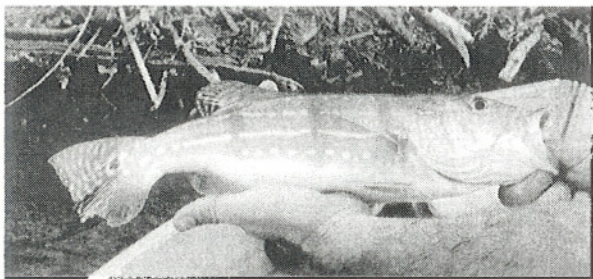


Photo by PVAS member Shane Linder

## Every Word Is True ... Trust Me!

*This was first published in the October 2001 edition of the newsletter of the Great Lakes Cichlid Society.*

A man carrying two buckets of fish was leaving a Northern Michigan lake, well known for its fishing recently, when he was stopped by a game warden. The game warden asked the man, "Do you have a license to catch those fish?"

The man replied, "No sir. These are my pet fish."

"Pet fish?" the warden replied.

"Yes sir. Every night I take these here fish down to the lake and let them swim around for a while. I whistle and they jump back into their buckets, and I take 'em home."

"That's a bunch of hoey! Fish can't do that!" said the game warden.

The man looked at the game warden for a moment, then said, "Here, I'll show you. It really works!"

"Ok, I've got to see this!" The game warden was curious now. The man poured the fish into the lake and stood and waited. After several minutes, the game warden turned to the man and said, "Well?"

"Well, what?" the man responded.

"When are you going to call them back?"

"Call who back?" the man asked.

"The FISH!"

"What fish?"

## Contributing Shops and Manufacturers

Don Kinyon

One of the reasons our meetings, workshops and auctions are successful is the support we get from manufacturers, their representatives, and local aquarium shops. We would like to extend our thanks to all who donated their products, time and effort to make our event successful. A special thank you to Aquaria Incorporated (Marineland) and their ambassadors, who always add generously to our events, to Ray Lucas of Kingfish Services, who adds as much with his sense of humor and company as he does with his donations, and to Totally Fish, a local aquarium shop that never misses an opportunity to give us unsolicited support.

### Supporting Shops:

Totally Fish  
Tropica Fish World

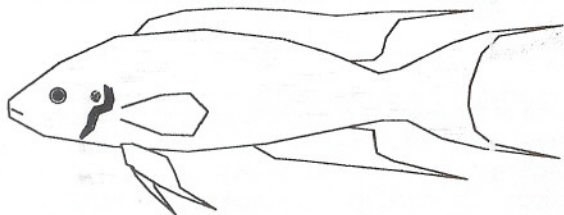
### Supporting Manufacturers:

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Tropica Fish Hobbyist Publications



Line drawing by PVAS member Gene Moy





Line drawings by PVAS member Gene May

## Julie Savers and Other Plastic Tricks, Part II

George White

This article first appeared in *Delta Tale* Vol. 11 No. 6, June 1987

### Protecting Fish Who Lose Fights.

One of the fascinating yet irritating characteristics of cichlids is their political behavior – they grab territory faster than a greedy politician. In nature this practice enables the strongest and brightest of the males to control the best feeding and breeding areas, promoting the survival of the fittest (sounds nice in theory).

Unfortunately, such behavioral patterns often have deadly consequences in the confines of the aquarium. An aquarium prevents the loser in a territorial struggle from signaling that the fight is over by using body language, i.e. by removing his or her body from the war zone. Brichard and a number of the experts who have observed cichlids in Lake Malawi and Lake Tanganyika report a notable lack of the deadly aggression often commonplace in aquaria.

The fight over territory in a tank will sometimes continue to the bloody end as long as the loser remains in sight of the victor. One way to halt the internecine warfare is, as every good cichlid breeder knows, to pack the aquarium with stacks of rocks and other materials to create ample hiding places. An interesting and highly effective variation on this is to cut some three-inch square plastic raingutter downspout into pieces six to eight inches long and attach them to the back of the aquarium just below the surface of the water. Synthetic yarn can

be strung through them and then taped to the back of the aquarium or tied to the rear legs of the aquarium stand.

These hiding places of last resort offer several advantages over hiding places on the bottom of the tank. Aggressor fish usually patrol only the substrate of the tank when seeking out rivals to eliminate, seldom thinking to look up. In addition, you can fit a large net over the pieces of downspout and remove the injured losers without the chaotic chase that usually ensues when you lift up rocks or hiding places on the bottom of the aquarium. This method of protecting fish works especially well with Lake Tanganyika substrate-spawning cichlids like Julies or *Lamprologus* species.

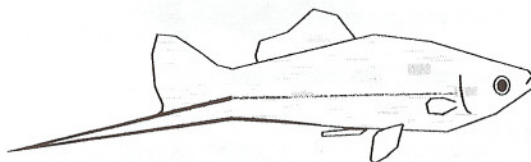
### Breeding Traps

The raingutter downspout can also be used to construct breeding traps for egglayers. First cut a piece of slightly shorter than the endside depth of the sides of the breeding aquarium. Then slice it in two lengthwise. Next, cut a rectangular piece of plastic "eggcrate grid" (which comes in two foot by four foot sections) to be used with ceiling fluorescent light fixtures) to fit over the bottom of the breeding aquarium. Next cut a piece of 1/8 inch grid plastic screen (used to make bird cages or in aquaculture) to fit over the "eggcrate" and glue them together with aquarium sealant. After this has dried two days in can be placed on the downspout pieces.

I offer this last idea on the condition that it not be used to contribute to the spread of goodeids.

Former editor John Mangan: Goodeids are smart enough to tell the difference between their fry and their food so they don't need breeding traps!

*Ed. note: Have you ever wondered why battered or stressed fish hang out just under the lip or behind the uptake tube of a power filter? Don't you just love the goodwill between the various "cliques" in the aquarium hobby?*





**POTOMAC VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY**  
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**Optional information**

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Where did you hear about PVAS/get this application?

Number of aquariums: \_\_\_\_\_ Time in the hobby: \_\_\_\_\_

Special interests: (e.g., catfish, cichlids, etc.)

Reason for joining:

Membership dues for PVAS are:

Individual/Family: \$12/yr

Corresponding: \$9/yr

Junior (under 18) \$5/yr

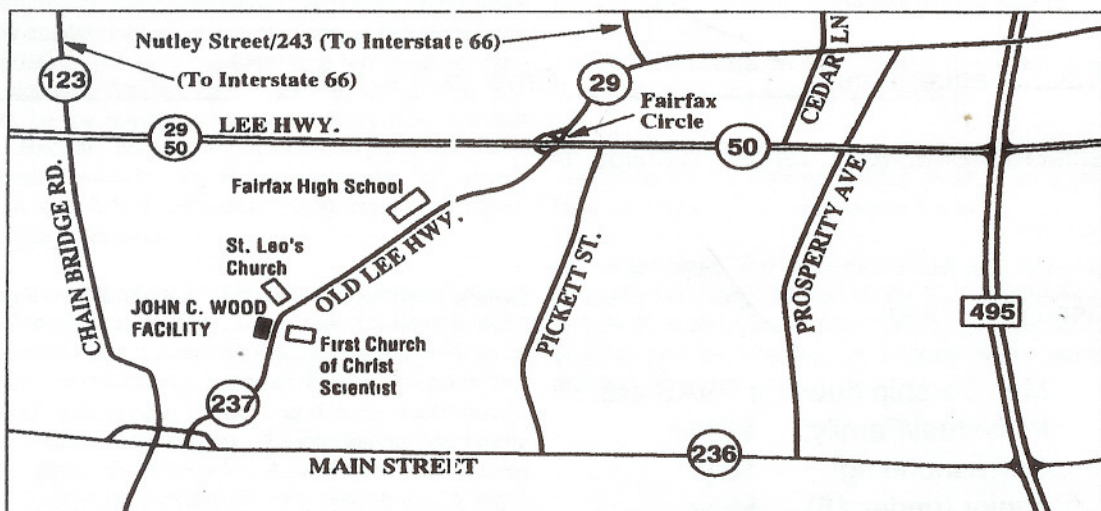
Please send application and check to the address above. Renewals are due in January; at other times of the year, dues will be prorated.



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**MEETINGS:** are held at the John C. Wood Facility, 3730 Old Lee Highway (Route 237), Fairfax City, VA. We meet in Room 6, which is located behind the police station. Doors open at 7:30 and meetings start at 8:00 p.m.—EVERYONE IS WELCOME!