

# SPLASH

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Florida Fish Farms  
Sunday May 3rd

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Upcoming Events**

**M.A.S. Fish-oramma  
Spring Swap  
Sunday May 3rd 10am - 2pm**

**Fish Fest 2009  
Labor Day Weekend, See advertisement  
This Issue**

**All Events Are Held At Our New Location**

**New Berlin Bowl  
16000 W. Cleveland Ave  
New Berlin, WI 53151**

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## **From the Fishroom of the President:**

Hello fellow fish nuts! Welcome once again to a new issue of "Splash"! For those of you just joining us or who don't know me very well my name is Andy Hudson and I am the new president of the Milwaukee Aquarium Society. Before I go any further I would like to thank our outgoing president Jeff Michels for his years of service to the club. I met Jeff a few years ago when I first moved to Milwaukee from Lancaster, Pa. I was very impressed with his aquarium and fish knowledge and he invited me to an MAS meeting. I was, at the time, a member of several clubs on the east coast but was looking for a new club to join in my new home of Milwaukee. I signed up for the club at my very first meeting. It has been my pleasure to join such a great group of aquarium enthusiasts and been a member of this club. I will do my best as president to ensure that our club continues to thrive and hopefully expand over the coming year.

This coming year promises a lot of fun and excitement for the Milwaukee area enthusiast. The Fish O Rama spring swap is scheduled for May 3<sup>rd</sup> and will offer great deals on new and used aquarium equipment, tanks, and fish. The event is held in our new event location the New Berlin Bowl.

Fish Fest 2009 is scheduled for Labor Day weekend. This mini show is a practice run for our clubs biggest host event in years. The 2010 American Cichlid Association show! Fish Fest promises to be an excellent weekend event for all. With an all New World theme the show features speakers discussing many New World Fish topics and auctions featuring rare New World Fish! I know I am looking forward to learning more about catfish!

And as usual, our monthly meetings are held the last Friday of each month at 7:30 pm at Hoffer's Tropic Life pets.

Good Luck and Happy Fishkeeping!

Andy

Narwhal72 on [www.milwaukeeaquariumsociety.com](http://www.milwaukeeaquariumsociety.com)

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# How Things Work!

## Glass Aquariums part 1.

By Andy Hudson

This is the first in a continuing series of articles on how aquarium products work. There are literally thousands of aquarium products that we all use or are familiar with in relation to our aquariums. Some of this technology is very simple and some is rather complex. Much of the technology was adapted from other industry and some is unique to aquaria. My fulltime job in R&D for a major aquarium company has given me an understanding of the mechanisms and chemistry that drive many of the products that we use every day. As a hobbyist and a frequent online forum lurker I see the problems that people have with the products and I am often witness to really bad advice given to these poor souls by others. The goal of this series is not to nitpick the faults of any particular product but to help educate others about how the products they use work so that they can better use them. Cause if you know how something works, fixing it when it's broke makes it all that much easier! So for my first article I am going to write about the most basic of all hobbyist needs. The Glass Aquarium!

The most basic need of any aquarist is the aquarium. Glass and acrylic are the two basic types of materials used to make an aquarium. Let's focus on glass which is by far the most common type of aquarium on the market for many reasons. I will save acrylic aquariums for a future article of their own. Glass is also the subject I probably know best. In Part 1 I will talk about just the history of the glass aquarium.

The history of the glass aquarium can be dated back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Victorian era aquariums were bronze and iron framed tanks with glass panels that were sealed in place with pitch tar. There were no air pumps or filters at that time and live plants were used for natural filtration. Because of the lack of heaters the fish kept were mainly native fish such as sticklebacks (in Europe) and sunfish in the U.S. Later models of aquariums featured candles placed under the aquarium to provide heat. These aquariums used pitch tar to seal the glass to the metal frames. Besides the obvious problems of rusting the pitch tar did not last forever and had to be replaced often. One of the unique features in these types

of aquariums was that the glass used was actually low iron glass equivalent to today's Starphire™ type glass very popularly used in modern high end aquaria. I had the fortunate experience to work with someone once who had one of these antique aquaria and was restoring it faithfully to its Victorian look. Although it was only 15 gallons this aquarium would have been considered extremely high end even today as it was entirely gilded in 24 karat gold! The only update we performed was to replace the pitch tar with modern silicone sealant. The hardest part was finding sticklebacks to stock it with.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century metal framed slate bottom tanks became popular in the 40's and 50's. This basic construction was little improvement over the Victorian era aquariums but the quality of filtration and heating technology was vastly improved with the invention of the diaphragm air pump and glass tube heater. It wasn't until the 1960's with the invention of silicone sealed aquaria pioneered by people like Jerry Ritzow (founder of All Glass Aquarium) that the modern aquarium took shape. Since that time there has been little change in aquarium construction basics. Materials and shapes have changed but the silicone sealed aquarium is still king.

Well that's enough history for now. In the next installment I will go over the glass itself.

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# Splashing Through The Exchanges

by Jim Everson

April '09

Kudos this month to Ed Curran. Ed's article Bandit Corydorax is reprinted in the Jan'09 issue of Fish Tales, the newsletter of the Tri County Tropical Fish Society (Peoria, IL). The editor notes that this article was the 2007 First Place Award in the FAAS Publication Awards. (category: BAP article under 500 words) Congratulations Ed!

Ted Judys' article Danionella translucida is reprinted in the Nov-Jan '09 newsletter of the Brazos Valley Aquarium Society.

The Nov'08 issue of Tropic Tank Talk reprints two articles from the Splash: A Couple More Catfish by Kevin Korotev, and I Wish I Had A Pencil Thin Mustache: Spawning Corydorax adolfoi by Dave Lorbeske.

The Jan'09 issue of Tropic Tank Talk reprints Ed Kowalskis' article Care and Maintenance of Rio Cauca Caecilians in Captivity. This reprint originally appeared in the Apr'08 issue of Splash. In addition to the Caecilian reprint, this issue contains an article by Vinny Kutty entitled Let There Be Light (and plenty of it). Mr Kutty shares some of his techniques to photograph his fish. This article originally appeared on his website "Mostly Cichlids". He states "The two most critical factors responsible for exceptional aquarium photography are the two 'L's – lens and lighting." He stresses the use of a flash because the light from the hood just isn't enough. An inexpensive flash from a camera store costs about \$75. In addition, he uses what are called "AC slave strobes" which cost about \$25 from mail order camera shops. He keeps his flash about 2-3 feet away from both his camera and his subject, aimed at about a 45 degree angle. The strobes are clamped on either end of the tank aiming down at the fish. By having 3 or 4 sources of light when he shoots, he avoids getting a photo of a washed out fish in dark shadows. The fish appear more three-dimensional, and the background is illuminated.

Rounding out this issue is an article by Randy Carey entitled My Quest to Keep and Spawn the Barred Pencilfish (Nannostomus espei). (Reprinted from Aqua News May 2001, Minnesota Aquarium Society) A rare and special species, *N. espei* required a number of special steps to spawn it. Randy maintained his colony in a 20 long tank, 76 degrees, with driftwood and java moss. No hard water for this South American as peat-filtered water (or R/O), pH6, and hardness around 5 is recommended. Randy separated the most likely pair, raised the temp slightly, added a spawning grate to the bottom of the tank, and conditioned the pair with live mosquito larvae. After two weeks of conditioning, eggs were

found under the grate and the adults were removed. After five days the fry were free swimming. They were fed green water for the first few days until they could take newly hatched brine shrimp. This experience turned Randy "into a believer of dedicating tanks for isolation and conditioning."



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## ***Pelvicachromis taeniatus* 'nyete'**

### **A Breeding Tank Description**

By Ted Judy

*Pelvicachromis taeniatus* (Boulenger, 1901) is a dwarf cichlid species from West Africa. The range of the species includes Nigeria and Cameroon. There are many geographic types of *P. taeniatus*. The 'nyete' form is found in the southern Cameroon region south of the Senaga River. The 'nyete' form is very similar to the 'lobe' form described in Cichlids from West Africa (Linke and Staeck, 1994) and The Cichlid Fishes of Western Africa (Lamboj, 2004).

The pairs of 'nyete' that spawned for me are wild fish that I obtained from an importer in the United States (Toyin Ojo at Rehoboth Aquatics). I purchased three pairs and placed each pair into a separate tank. The following is a description of the setup:

tank size: 20 gallon  
pH: 6.5  
conductivity: <50 mS  
carbonates: <1  
temperature: 27 C  
filtration: air driven sponge filter  
substrate: fine gravel, dark color  
decoration: driftwood planted with *Anubias sp.*  
lighting: dim fluorescent lighting  
tankmates: three platies and two juvenile *Ancistrus sp.* Plecostomus

The 'nyete' were small but sexable when I received them. The males were 4 cm total length and the females ranged from 2.5 cm to 3 cm. The males are a greenish color, much more green than any other *P. taeniatus* form I have seen. The upper edge of the caudal fin in the males is red, and there is some red edging to the soft rays of the dorsal fin as well. There are no spots on the males at all (which is consistent with the close relationship to 'lobe'). The females have a single spot in the soft rays of the dorsal fin. They are not as green as the males, and have the characteristic whitish belly of *P. taeniatus* females. When aggressive the female's belly becomes a purplish color.

One of the pairs was not compatible, and the male killed the female after being together for about a week. There was no warning. One

day she looked great, the next she was well beaten and dead. The other two pairs were peaceful with each other from the start. Both pairs spawned within a month.

The spawning sites were under the driftwood pieces. There was quite a lot of driftwood, so determining the exact location was impossible. The females disappeared for a few days and came out not at all. The males became more aggressive towards the platies, and kept them away from the bottom of the aquarium. One male succeeded in killing a juvenile *Ancistrus*, but this was the only incidence of plecocide that I observed.

The females reappeared with fry after being sequestered for six to seven days. The broods were not large, with the larger consisting of only 18 fry. The fry were smaller than most *Pelvicachromis* species. First foods included decapsulated brine cysts and microworms. One brood did not last three days, but the other brood (the smaller of the two) lasted for three weeks before the last fry disappeared. During brood care the males and females switched roles frequently. The males were as attentive as the females.

Both pairs spawned again about a month after their first broods were lost. I separated the fry from one pair (the least successful pair) and artificially reared the fry... without success. All of the fry were dead within a week. The second pair were more successful their second time around. Their brood of 20 survived without losses for two weeks, then about half of the fry disappeared. I removed the rest and reared them in an incubator. Five of these fry survived to be 1 cm long in the incubator, but died shortly after being moved to a five gallon rearing tank.

Both pairs continued to spawn and produce broods for several months. Very few fry survived beyond 1 cm in length, regardless of any action that I took to rear them. Overall, I found *P. taeniatus* 'nyete' and interesting fish to keep, easy to breed, but very difficult to rear.

#### References:

Lamboj, Anton: The Cichlid Fishes of Western Africa; Bergit Schmettkamp

Verlag, Bornheim, Germany, 2004

Linke, Horst et al: Cichlids from West Africa; Tetra Press, Melle, Germany, 1994.

## THE SPLASH

The Splash is the official publication of the Milwaukee Aquarium Society, and is published six times per year under the direction of the Board of Directors. Articles are always welcome. Please submit them to the editor (Michael Laursen) no later than the first day of even numbered months to be included in the next issue. Articles should be sent to the editor in digital format @ [mas.splash@gmail.com](mailto:mas.splash@gmail.com)

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### ABOUT THE MILWAUKEE AQUARIUM SOCIETY

The Milwaukee Aquarium Society is an organization devoted to the hobby of tropical fish, both freshwater and saltwater. It's membership consists of hobbyists gaining expertise in all phases of raising and breeding tropical fish, as well as area retailers. Our membership's expertise covers a wide range, from beginners to expert breeders, but all members are interested in promoting the hobby and encouraging others to join in the fun.

General meetings are held monthly, generally the fourth Friday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. at **Hoffers's Tropic Life Pets, 7323 N. 76<sup>th</sup> Street, Milwaukee**. We thank them for their hospitality. Free parking is always available, and guests are always welcome. No general meetings in July or December.

Annual membership dues are as follows: Families: \$20.00 a year; Individuals: \$15.00 a year. Membership dues provide for the Splash, monthly speakers, community support, annual events, and show support. A yearly subscription to the Splash is available for \$15.00 a year. New or renewal of membership dues should be sent to the treasurer: **Jerry Michels, 6333 W. Boehlke, Milwaukee, WI 53223**

**The Splash**

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