

The Darter

Nov-Dec

2007



JOLLY OLD ST. CICHLIDUS

Missouri Aquarium Society, Inc.

St. Louis, Missouri

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MASI's official web page: www.missouriaquariumsociety.org
 Join the MASIFishHeads Yahoo Group. See web page for instructions.

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THE DARTER (ISSN 0192-78333) is published bi-monthly by the Missouri Aquarium Society, Inc., 1813 Locks Mill Drive, Fenton, MO 63026-2662. Periodicals Postage Rates paid at Fenton, MO. This publication is free to members of the Missouri Aquarium Society, Inc. and other qualified requesters as determined by the publisher. Subscription requests can be sent to: Missouri Aquarium Society, Inc., 1813 Locks Mill Drive, Fenton, MO 63026-2662.

POSTMASTER: Please send all address changes to Missouri Aquarium Society, Inc., P.O. Box 1682
 Maryland Heights, MO 63043-1682. Please allow 6-8 weeks for change of address. Include your old address as well as new - enclosing, if possible, an address label from a recent issue.

Opinions expressed by the contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Missouri Aquarium Society, Incorporated.

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Places to Be / Things to See

SUNDAY November 18, 2007

Auction, 12:00 @ the Stratford Inn

Contact: John Van Asch – 618-277-6165, johnsfishy@att.net

SATURDAY December 1, 2007

Executive Council, 7:30 PM - Hosted by Charles and Sue Harrison

THURSDAY December 20, 2007

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church
Christmas Party

THURSDAY January 17, 2007

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

SUNDAY February 10, 2007

Auction, 12:00 @ the Stratford Inn

Contact: John Van Asch – 618-277-6165, johnsfishy@att.net

THURSDAY February 21, 2007

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

THURSDAY March 20, 2007

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

THURSDAY April 17, 2007

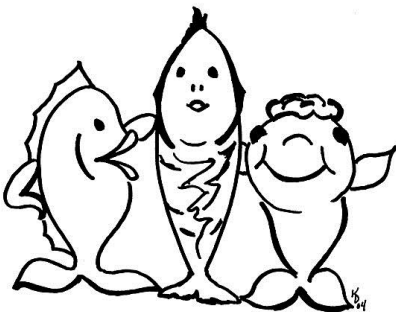
General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

ALL WEEKEND April 18, 19, and 20

Annual Show, Banquet, and Auction @ the Stratford Inn

Contact: Gary McIlvaine - 314-352-3334

Membership - Renew for 2008



Yearly membership in the Missouri Aquarium Society, Inc. is \$20 per calendar year. Membership includes the Darter subscription for the year, which is currently 6 issues. New memberships and renewals can be submitted at club functions such as meetings and auctions, or by contacting our membership chair, Kathy Deutsch at 314-741-0474, katfish@i1.net, or 9 Old Jamestown Ct. Florissant MO 63034

Presidential Preamble

By Mike Hellweg

Wow! Another year has come and nearly gone already. Our 2007 Fall Auction is only about 4 weeks away as I write this. The temperatures have finally dropped, and all of the ponds have been put to bed for the winter.

It's time to concentrate on the indoor hobby. Maybe as a project this winter each and every one of you could sit down at the computer (or typewriter, or even notepad) and write a short article sharing your hobby experiences with your fellow society members. Don't be shy! Even new members have something to share.

Just to give you an idea of how much new members can influence your society, in just the past couple of years we've almost completely turned over the members-at-large on the Executive Council and committee leadership, with mostly newer members now sitting on many of the key committees. Our Show Chair, one of the most important positions in the society, has only been a member for a couple of years. At new member's suggestions, we've started new committees or restarted old ones, all reflecting changing interests among our membership.

My point is, this is YOUR society, and even the newest members can get involved and make a difference. You really can influence what the society does and how it operates. We are interested in hearing your ideas, and what you want to see in coming months and years. We are always looking for new volunteers, and that is really the best way to get involved and get to know other society members.

I know long-time members already realize this, but for newer members I'd like to let you know that we really do appreciate your input and questions, and can often act on them quickly. But the general meeting is often the worst time to try and talk to one of the society officers. Please don't feel slighted if we cannot give you a few minutes before or during the meetings. We're not trying to ignore you, or to give preference to friends, etc. While we all love nothing better than to talk fish, at the monthly general meetings we are usually busy trying to run the meeting and keep everything on time. The (usually) smooth running meetings that you see each month are the result of a lot of behind-the-scenes work put on by a lot of people. Even at the meetings, most of us are also trying to do a couple of jobs for the society, such as me running the meeting and the HAP program, Gary running the program for the evening and trying to keep the speaker entertained, Angela having to pay attention to record the minutes accurately, and Steve running the BAP and the Treasury, among many others. This unfortunately doesn't allow us much time at the general meeting to just chat, as much as we would enjoy doing that. An email or a call at any other time is usually a much better idea if you have something you want to discuss.

You are all welcome at Executive Council meetings, but please call the host first to let them know to plan for more people. This is a great way not only to see how the society operates, but also to get to know other society members, and to see other hobbyist's tanks.

Our social events coordinator, Cory Koch, is planning open fishrooms and other events over the next several months. Take advantage of these! Not only are they a lot of fun, these events are also a great way to get to know other members and see their tanks. Realize that no matter what we do to try and make this enjoyable and informative for you, you will only get as much out of the society as you put into it. Please join us and participate! After all, it is YOUR Society!

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and Happy New Year to all!

...and for now, 'nuff said...

The American Livebearer Association Convention 2007

by Gary McIlvaine

First some quick things I learned at the convention.

- I am a BAP SLUT.
- I never knew that male swordtails piss in the face of their prospective mates.
- I never knew you could stay up late drinking beer and listen to someone play guitar to a song called the “Water Change Blues.” and “Every Swords crazy for a long sword male.”
- I never knew that there are actually guys who breed guppies FOR DEFORMATIES and are willing to get up and give speeches bragging about it and then being excited about fixing the trait of deformed spines in their line!
- Other hobbyists around the country hate the Malaysian Trumpet snail too!! I learned of a new way to get rid of them and I am not afraid to use Chemical weapons on them this time.
- There are people at the convention that upon finding out you belong to MASI, say things like “WOW!!, Gary Lange and Mike Hellweg are in your club. That must be REALLY COOL.
- You know how they tag dolphins and Manatees and watch where they go, there are guys that do that with Swordtails!!

There are many reasons to join your local fish club. Many of you who read this article can say “Yep, I learned a lot over the years by going to fish club meetings, and I never stop picking things up.” I think going to the shows is a worthy endeavor as well. The majority of my fish knowledge is learned. I have to tell you it was surprising to hear the “Yoda” of our club say that he had never heard something before either. The sharing of knowledge is one of the fun parts of the hobby. I think there is no better way than by going to a fish convention. If you think you learn a lot at the meeting, go to a convention!!

First I would like to discuss the economics of the convention trip. I was able to catch a ride with Klaus Bertrich and Mike Hellweg. We rode up to Strongsville Ohio in Klaus’s Van. There was plenty of room and the ride provided a total of 19 hours of great company (There and back). No one can doubt between these two gentlemen that there is a lot of “stuff” these guys know. It really made the ride in the van enjoyable and did not seem like one of those “are we there yet” rides. Klaus did mention that a few times though. I stayed in my own room at the Holiday Inn the two nights at the hotel cost me a total of \$235. The Gas Money was something like \$60. So I was able to get a weekend away from St. Louis talking about fish for \$295. NOT BAD. If you want to save even more money find a roommate.

The Speakers at the ALA were great. I missed 2/3’s of Mikes talk, because I was still sleeping. The one thing about staying up late and singing the Water Change Blues is that you always don’t get up too well in the morning, and Mike’s talk was really early, it started at 11 a.m.!! (It was my vacation; so cut me a little slack!) I could write an article on every one of the speeches, but will keep it at you just missed out if you were not there.

I tried my hand in showing fish at the A.L.A. and am proud to say both my entries placed. I was lucky enough to place 1st in the Family show class. I showed my Zoogeticus Tequila’s and 10 of their fry. I also showed a pair of Limia Tridens Las Salinas, Dominican Republic. I obtained the parents at the MASI meeting when Rit Forciefier came to speak. (They placed second in the pairs class.) This was my first time showing fish at the convention. I now have the two plaques on display in my fish room. The best part about the show was how helpful everyone was, and having Mike and Klaus there made it that much easier to get set up and not feel like I was missing anything.

The fish were amazing. I saw species of fish I had only seen in pictures, and certainly are not your garden-variety livebearers here. Don’t get me wrong, there are some great livebearers circulating

in the club, but I picked up 4 species in the auction that I have never seen in our local auctions. I can't wait to BAP them out. Many people brought fish with them to sell, and one long break in the convention activity left me with time to look down the halls of the hotel. People keep fish in their rooms, along with Plants and anything else you can mention.

I was able to obtain a beautiful pair of Sail fin mollies. I met the gentleman who bred these mollies on Saturday night in the Hospitality room. He was a neat fellow. He shared many of his trade secrets with me at the convention. I am not going to write them down in fairness to him. (I thought nothing of the knowledge he was giving me at the time, until on the ride home Mike mentioned that he could not believe the guy was sharing all that information with me.) To me I was just a curious guy and was enjoying one of the best things about the convention is having time to just talk to people who are more addicted to fish than me. This makes me feel Okay about my addiction. I lucked out and only paid \$30 for a pair of these mollies. It was the lowest price a pair went for while we at the auction. One of his pairs even went for \$70!!

I invite more of our members to go to the ALA convention next year, I am tentatively putting it on my calendar. I would like to throw out that you have no idea what you are missing unless you go to a convention like this. You always here people name drop on line about this persons fish and that persons, at these conventions you actually get to meet and speak with the Legends of the Hobby and the cool part is they are having as much fun as you!! The auction alone made the trip worth it. I was like a kid in a candy store and ended up buying a lot of fish that I had no idea I even wanted until I saw them there. You know how you go to the fish store and wonder where all those beautiful livebearers are in the fish magazines? They are all at the auction table at the ALA.

October Bowl Show Results

Monthly Class Plants:

1st: Java Fern by Klaus Bertich

2nd: Anubias frazeri by Marlon Felman

3rd: Bacopa by Marlon Felman

Open Class:

1st: Satenoperca daemon (Spotted Demonfish) by Mark Langer

2nd: Nomorhamphus Liemi (Celebes Halfbeak) by Jim Miller

3rd: Knight Goby by Mark Langer

Thoughts From The Fishroom

by Ed Millinger

If you've never checked out aquabid dot com you really should. Recently someone listed a mated pair of Tapajos red top geophagus for \$350. You should be able to buy a regular pair for around \$25. Like my grandmother used to say "asking ain't getting." Also I saw a stingray listed for \$8999. Now I don't know about you but if they had priced it at \$9000 I wouldn't have even considered buying it but at \$8999 well just maybe I could swing that. Can you imagine having the winning bid and telling your wife "Hey honey I won the bid on the stingray and it was less than \$9000." "Oh really " she replies "was it the red '63 with the white bucket seats?"

Aquarium Tech Tips

By Andy Walker

We all have moments when the light upstairs comes on and we discover a way to do a better job or create a novel do-it-yourself tool with little expense out of common hardware or junk destined to the landfill. This is your opportunity to share tips and tricks that can help your fellow MASI members get the most out of their hobby or profession. The tips need not be elaborate, evidenced by the inaugural tip in this issue so don't be shy about submitting your ideas. Every publication shall endeavor to publish at least one tip from our membership. You will receive 2 or 5 service points and at the end of the year the member with the most points for the Aquarium Tech Tips section will be announced at the annual Christmas party and win the admiration and thanks of our membership!

Cleaning H.O.T Magnum Micron Filters



I recently had a bout with persistent cloudy water in my two-month old tank and used a H.O.T. Magnum 250 filter to polish the water. It's a compact unit that hangs on the aquarium and cycles the water through a Micron Cartridge Filter to remove microscopic particles. The filter had more than done its job after a week of service. As you might expect, the pleats of cartridge were filled with debris. Rinsing under the faucet removed the loose debris but the filter was still stained by fine embedded matter. The instruction manual recommends soaking the

cartridge overnight in a chlorine bleach solution diluted with three parts of water. This gets rid of most staining but some remained even after repeated rinsing under the faucet. This also means that I may have residual bleach in the cartridge, a suspicion my nose confirmed. Rather than using a jet spray to blast away the remaining embedded matter and bleach – along with some of the filter as well – decided to try another method and found an effective solution that gives near perfect results.

My wife saved a large plastic coffee can for me and I've stored it under my utility sink for about a year. That, some water and a little elbow grease works like a charm. I filled the can about half full with water, dropped in the cartridge, snapped on the top and began agitating it for about 20 seconds. After repeating the process four times I allowed it to dry overnight and repeated again the following day. Doing this restored the pleats almost to the original shade of white and removed all traces of odor from the bleach. Rather than throwing your Micron Filters away, try to prolong the useful service life of your dirty cartridge next time you remove it for cleaning.

SAILFINS!!

By: Gary McIlvaine

My new favorite tank is a 65 gallon planted tank. I am running two big hydro sponge filters in it and a Whisper 30 Power filter. It is heavily planted with weeds. It is filled with Vals of probably 3 different species. It is also frequently overgrown with Najas grass and an assortment of other aquatic green funk. I have several pieces of driftwood that add tannins to the water. This is the real good driftwood that sinks the second you put it in the tank. The wood really colors the water to a more natural look. I mention this, as there is a huge difference in driftwood. I explain the tank, as I want to color the setting of what exactly has made this tank the one I sit in front of all the time. I in fact sit in front of this tank with my son Evan daily and we watch for what is going on in our tiny little soap opera.

I purchased the fish from a breeder on aqua bid, he was really impressed with the mollies he had, and I had not turned that species in yet for BAP. I am a BAP slut so it seemed like a good fish to pimp out to the BAP. The cost was not that great something like \$40 for 12 fish with shipping. The fish arrived nicely and in good shape. I acclimated them to a 10 gallon quarantine. I was very unimpressed with these fish at first and in fact regretted the transaction in my head and added it to my list of times I really felt like a sucker. They were healthy, but did not have much of a sailfin like they were advertised.

These fish lived the next few months in the same ten gallon tank. I do frequent water changes and the tank was on a rack that is just the right height that I often changed 2 gallons a day in the ten gallon. I also am a big fan of using the oversized hydro sponges. In a 10 gallon tank I use the sponge that is rated for 30-40 gallons. These guys also enjoyed daily live baby brine, flake, and every couple days got some blood worms. The fish remained unspectacular in my eyes so I pretty much had written them off for "show" potential. I was talking with another member in the club about how disappointed I was in these sailfins. I wanted to find some that were "old school" with lots of size, and huge sailfins. The club member suggested giving them a tank with larger quarters to develop to their potential and really give them a lot of room.

The day after a MASI auction, I often find myself playing mad scientist in the fish room. I have room in my tanks again. I moved the sailfins into the 65 gallon tank. I remained unimpressed with these fish for another month. One night after work I was feeding in the fish room and noticed that one of the males sailfins had gotten HUGE. I ended up watching the soap opera in the 65 gallon that night. In the course of a couple months these fish continued to color up more fully. The Dorsal fins became increasingly colorful. As I spent more time watching these fish and learning their behavior they became mesmerizing. My experience with sailfins have taught me a couple things. You do have to be patient with these fish. When I say be patient they need to be at least 9 months old to have a really good sailfin and develop to their full potential. Salt is in fact a myth. The most important thing as with all fish is consistent good water quality. The fish in fact eat all day. They spend a majority of their day picking at every surface of the tank. This is one of the reasons I keep them in heavily planted tanks. When I do have a couple days of purging they will clean the tank rapidly. These fish are swimming filters when not offered other foods.

These fish are responsible for me trying out more livebearer species. I have some of my own mad science going on in the tank now. I had the opportunity to purchase some very nice P. Latippinia (Sail Fin Mollies) at the A.L.A. convention in Strongsville. I am currently crossing some virgin females from the fry of the parents. I am crossing them with my own sunburst line. I can't wait until next year, when the resulting fry will be coloring up!! I recommend giving this fish a try if you have not. It is a fun, active, colorful fish and has a decent temperament. The one exception is in the hierarchy. I have had the low male on the totem pole get picked on so much that it can and has caused death.

How to Keep the Peace

By Len Haggblad

Reprinted from March 2006 Calquarium Of the Calgary Aquarium Society

In my early days as a fish keeper, I had experienced many frustrating set backs. There were leaking tanks, dead fish, non growing plants, and it seemed everything was too expensive for a paperboy's wages. These were all serious problems, but I was able to overcome most of them with a combination of enthusiasm and determination. There was one problem that I face even today, that being my family's usually dim view of my chosen hobby.

The difference is that now I have gained the objectivity to deal with the situation in a peaceful manner instead of the sometimes open warfare of earlier years. I learned to keep in mind that *My Hobby* is not necessarily important to the other family members. Our hobby, however important to us, does not become important to others simply because it is important to us. This is something to remember when someone complains about a part of our hobby that has intruded upon their lifestyle. Do not be foolish enough to think others will put up with something just because you are willing to do so. You should make an effort to make things less troublesome to others, or hopefully eliminate the problem entirely. Do not just hope the problem will go away on its own, it won't.

There are several good habits that you should practice as much as possible in order to make the hobby more tolerable to others. If others can see that you are making the effort they will be more likely to let your hobby grow and develop, and if you play it right, you may even get someone else hooked on fish.

➤ **Neatness Counts**

Even though you know your tanks are healthy, you should also try to make them attractive. We all know algae is harmless, perhaps even beneficial, but to the nonbeliever it is simply ugly slime. Water spots and spill marks, along with dust and crumbs of fish food on the glass tops are all likely to draw complaints. Try to keep the tanks and the area around them clean and uncluttered, and the tank glass and tops clean and shiny. If your community tank is highly visible, make a special effort to keep it sparkling as well as decorating it in a pleasing manner.

Such an aquarium is sure to be a great conversation piece and can be used to pique the interest of others in your hobby. What can the family say if one of their friends gazes into the tank while making sounds of enchantment. They most certainly won't make disparaging remarks.

Keep breeding tanks spotless and they won't be considered eyesores. Even though bare bottom tanks are easier to keep clean, if they become encrusted with algae or dirty, other are sure to notice.

If you must use the sink area in the kitchen or bathroom, make sure to leave it at least as clean as you found it. If you have a need for a household item, it is better to buy your own, but at least take extra cleaning care if you use the household's items.

➤ **Water Changes, Hazardous To Others?**

If you are blessed with several aquaria, and do all the water changes at the same time, you could be a hazard to others navigation. If at all possible keep the tanks together and in one area. My approach is to use a continuous siphon to a floor drain, and a pump to return the water from the storage containers. You could do the changes on Saturday or Sunday mornings before everyone gets up. This should reduce to next to zero the chances of others tripping over hoses or bumping into you when you are carrying large buckets.

When doing water changes, try to be careful, but be prepared for the worst. By laying out an old throw rug on top of a sheet of plastic, you can catch most of the water before it becomes a serious problem. You must still pay attention, as most spills are simple negligence.

➤ **Live Foods???**

I'm sure we have all heard those words exclaimed when others "discover" our cultures. If cultivating live foods, especially fry foods such as microworms or infusoria, be prepared to do some extra work. Since the tolerance for the smell of these cultures is not an easily acquired skill, you must keep them from becoming smelly. What is tolerable to us fishkeepers is an extremely unpleasant odor to the non-fishkeeping members of your family should things spiral out of control. You could try newly hatched Baby Brine Shrimp instead. Although they are a little more trouble, the chances of an "incident" are greatly reduced. If you must cultivate the more odiferous culture, place them in a garage or outside shed if possible. If this is not possible ***BE SURE*** to avoid opening the cultures when others are eating or when you have guests in the house.

Live foods for adult fishes are also a common source of conflict. To last any length of time, you must keep live foods such as tubifex and black worms, and brine shrimp refrigerated. If non-fishkeepers especially mothers or wives, are likely to be repelled by the thought of such things in the family refrigerator, either store them in well marked, tightly sealed containers or get another fridge to keep them in. If they cannot actually see them, they usually will not worry about them.

➤ **Attitude Matters!**

If you wish to expand your hobby and still keep the peace, then your attitude will make all the difference. No matter how considerate of others you are, there is likely to be those who cannot understand your fascination with those cold, slimy things. Even if your aquaria and other related pieces are not in the way, sometimes a lack of understanding can still exist. If someone does not understand something, they are more likely to react in a negative way.

Try to remain open to questions, and do not react defensively if possible. If you are asked a question, try to explain what you are doing, and why it must be done. If the other person acts in a hostile manner, try not to raise the level of hostility, this only leads to a self defeating contest.

However, after taking as many steps to avoid conflict as reasonably possible, you may have to take a stand. If you feel you have done everything reasonably possible, you should firmly insist upon a little tolerance from others. They will no doubt have pastimes which seem unimportant to you, yet you are not bothering them about their interests. You must be ***FIRM*** but not ***AGGRESSIVE*** when doing the insisting. Simply refuse to budge if they are complaining about some aspect of your hobby that does not seem to be bothering anyone else. This takes a lot of patience to be firm but not aggressive. After learning this skill, try something easy like breeding Zebra Plecos.

➤ **Share Your Hobby**

The best way to spread interest in fish keeping that I know of is to have a highly visible tank, with brightly colored fish. Another eye catcher is to spawn some fish as outsiders are greatly attracted to the sight of baby fish darting around a tank. I have yet to meet an outsider who won't pause by such a tank, "just to check on them". The others in your family may not be taken in by this trick, but if their friends are, what are they going to say? Now your tank has become a spectator sport and even your family will want to learn something about what is going on so as not to be left out.

You must be ready to share your hobby. Even when seemingly pestered with questions, it is in your best interest to stay calm. They are only asking because they are interested, so try to encourage questions. As I said before, people are often negative toward things they don't understand.

To sum up, keep it clean and tidy, keep it out of the way, and above all keep it visually interesting. Even though they seem to lack tolerance, people who love you are much more likely to tolerate things they really do not like than it seems. This is something to cherish, not abuse. If you keep your hobby as tolerable as you can, maybe they won't object to "Just one more tank?" Maybe you can expand your hobby without being evicted....

**R&J
FISH
FOOD**

**JIM
314-638-1134**

BAP Report

Steve Edie

Member	Species	Common	Pts	Total
Sept 2007				
Jack Berhorst	<i>Aequidens pulcher</i>	Blue Acara	5	160
Jack Berhorst	<i>Telmatochromis temporalis</i>		10	170
Jack Berhorst	<i>Poecilia wingei</i>	Endler's Livebearer	5	175
Charles Harrison	<i>Chromaphyosemion splendopleuro</i>	'Muyuka Police Station' C89/15*	20	1707
Charles Harrison	<i>Danio kyathit</i> *	Fire Ring Danio	15	1722
Mike Hellweg	<i>Apistogramma pertensis</i>		15	2817
Mike Hellweg	<i>Celestichthys margaritatus</i>	Celestial Pearl Danio	15	2832
Jerry Jost	<i>Megalechis thoracata</i>	Hoplo Catfish	15	200
Jerry Jost	<i>Puntius conchoniuis</i>	Rosy Barb	10	210
Cory Koch	<i>Neolamprologus leleupi</i>		10	666
Cory Koch	<i>Poecilia reticula</i>	Green Cobra Guppy	5	671
Justin Lehmann	<i>Pterophyllum scalare</i>	Orange Koi Angel	10	10
Gary McIlvaine	<i>Gambusia (Flexipenis) vittata</i>		15	436
Gary McIlvaine	<i>Limia caymensis</i>		5	441
Gary McIlvaine	<i>Poecilia reticulata</i>	½ Black Rainbow Guppy	1	442
Gary McIlvaine	<i>Scolichthys iota</i>	Ugly Fish	10	452
Philip Newell	<i>Xiphophorus maculatus</i>	Sunset Fire Platy	5	45
Oct 2007				
Marlon Felman	<i>Thorichthys meeki</i>	Firemouth	10	15
Charles Harrison	<i>Neolebias trilineatus</i> *		25	1747
Cory Koch	<i>Symphysodon aequifasciatus</i>	Marlboro Gold Discus	20	691
Mark & Tammy Langer	<i>Nematobrycon palmeri</i>	Emperor Tetra	15	735
Mark & Tammy Langer	<i>Pelvicachromis pulcher</i>	Albino Krib	10	745
Mark & Tammy Langer	<i>Puntius oligolepis</i>	Checkerboard Barb	10	755

Ed Millinger	<i>Betta brownorum</i> * @		45	545
Philip Newell	<i>Xiphophorus</i> sp. 'Domestic Swordtail'	Twin Bar Sword	1	46
Philip Newell	<i>Xiphophorus</i> sp. 'Domestic Swordtail'	Marigold ½ Twinbar	1	47
Dwayne Peters	<i>Xiphophorus maculatus</i>	Plumetail Platy	5	17
John Van Asch	<i>Macropodus opercularis</i>	Blue Paradisefish	5	255

* = First MASI species spawn (5 point bonus)

** = First MASI species and genus spawn (10 point bonus)

*** = First MASI species, genus and family spawn (15 point bonus)

@ = C.A.R.E.S Species at Risk (Double base points)

We believe that Ed's spawning of *Betta brownorum* may be the first in the US. Nice going Ed.

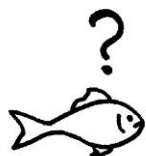
Editor's Notes

Steve Deutsch

Thanks to all who made another year of the Darter happen - Charles Harrison for printing, Gary McIlvaine for being our postman, Steve Edie for his time as Exchange Editor, all the authors, and everyone who helps assemble the Darter. Now that I have taken over as Exchange Editor I am seeing more of other club's publications, and I think the Darter stands up well. We get our exchange articles from some of the other good publications out there. We don't have room for everything in other clubs' publications, so I will be bringing the issues I am done with to the monthly meetings for anyone that is interested to take home and look at.

Andy Walker is starting a column on tips and gadgets for the aquarium. See his first Tech Tip in this issue, and think about what ideas you may have for him to include in a future article. He also submitted a couple of photos for his two articles in this issue, as Charles has been wanting to experiment with printing photos in the Darter. If it went well we'll try to include more in future issues. Andy's photos are simple, but illustrate his articles well. You don't need to be a professional writer to have something interesting to share, and you don't need to be a professional artist/illustrator to provide the picture that's worth 1,000 words to go with it. Since we're doing pairs of articles in this issue, we also have two by Gary McIlvaine, two by Ed Millinger, and two exchange articles.

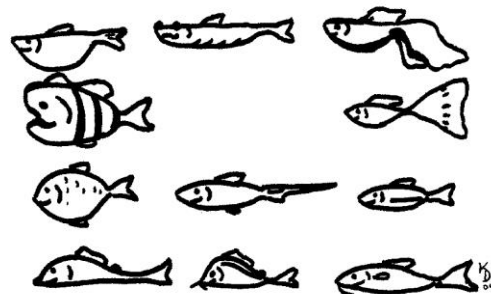
It's time to start writing for 2008. Deadlines for articles will be December 15, February 15, April 15, June 15, August 15, and October 15.



We've got a place for you!

Missouri Aquarium Society, Inc.

Come join us at a meeting, or contact our membership chair, Kathy Deutsch for more information
(314) 741-0474 fishfan@i1.net



Betta brownorum

by Ed Millinger

At our July general meeting Mike Hellweg presented a program on wild bettas. Afterwards I purchased a pair of Betta brownorum for \$40. Once home I placed them in a ten gallon tank I had bought from the Reet Thomas collection. Reet along with Ralph Wilhelm were stalwarts in the Missouri Aquarium Society for many years. Unfortunately they have both passed away. I also have a twenty gallon high from Ralph's fishroom. It's a real treat to have something each of them owned and used over the years. As a reference for some of our newer members let me say that if there were a M.A.S.I. hall of fame these two would be unanimous first round selections. I went through some of my earliest "Darters" and discovered that these two gentlemen held the following chairmanships or office, Auction chair, trophies, president, council member, refreshments, show chair, Darter contributor, cartoonist, F.A.A.S. delegate, etc. I think you get the picture. Their greatest contribution may have been their willingness to share both knowledge and fish.

The next day I did some research on line and found an article that stated you had to have two males before you could spawn them. This isn't what I wanted to hear. What I learned about preferred water parameters however was good news. My Reet Thomas ten and my Ralph Wilhelm twenty were outside my heated fishroom and the brownorum do well in mid 70's water. They also like soft peat filtered water. I have a corner filter inside that contained Keta peat nuggets and filter floss. I added Kent black water expert and floated some water sprite. I also added three six inches sections of one and a half inch pvc pipe.

Betta brownorum is a small thin red fish with a blue spot right in the middle of the body. There is a little iridescence on the caudal and ventral fins. Total body length is a little more than two inches, with the male slightly larger and more colorful.

From the beginning the male aggressively chased the female. He didn't injure her or tear any fins though. I fed them baby brine shrimp, micro worms and the smallest live blackworms and frozen bloodworms I could find. I only filled the tank about 60% of the way full. Water changes consisted of about a half gallon at a time. It was during one of these water changes that my eye caught some movement. I figured it was just some debris moving around due to the siphoning of the bottom of the tank. After a second such movement and a closer inspection I happily discovered these were fry not debris. My earlier research indicated that the parents would not bother their young so I felt no need to move anyone. I continued feeding both micro worms and baby brine. The babies were very small as you can imagine.

Although I never witnessed the actual spawning I must assume from the movement of the male that they probably spawned in a bubbler that was constructed inside the pvc pipe. This pair has spawned many times and by observing the different size fry I would say each spawn produced between 15 to 20 babies. In an effort to help them grow and alleviate overcrowding I did two things. I increased the water in the ten and moved some fry (just a few at a time) to the aforementioned twenty. This tank at the time held cherry shrimp, was the same temperature but did not contain black water expert. The fry adopted well and suffered no ill effect from the lack of blackwater conditioning. I also started feeding cyclop-eeze dry food, which they consumed with gusto. This is a nice fish to keep. It isn't that demanding and you don't need a lot of room to house them.

HAP Report Sept- Oct 2007

Mike Hellweg

Hello all,

It's been a busy year this year! In the next issue we will have totals for the year 2007. There have been many new participants and several folks have earned awards. It looks like we'll also have a couple of awards to present at the Annual Show banquet, too. Well done all!

....keep 'em green

Member	Species	Common	Rep	Pts	Total
Jerry Jost	Nymphaea sp.zenkeri		IB	20	1370
Jerry Jost	Pogostemon helferi		V	15	1385
Jerry Jost	Pogostemon yatabeanus		V	15	1400
Jerry Jost	Tentative creditus*	Susswassertang	V	5	1405
Marlon Felman	Cryptocoryne retrospiralis	Retro Crypt	V	15	50
Marlon Felman	Sagittaria platyphyta	Fountain Sag	V	5	55
John Van Asch	Caltra palustris	Marsh Marigold	S	10	705
Mike Hellweg	Anubias sp. muntengene*	Muntengene African Sword	V	15	2615
Harold Walker	Pogostemon yatabeanus*		V	15	785
Harold Walker	Selaginella wildenowii*		V	10	795
Derek Walker	Aponogeton natans		S	15	1895
Derek Walker	Aponogeton boivinianus		IB	10	1905
Derek Walker	Aponogeton natans		V	15	1920
Derek Walker	Tentative creditus*		V	10	1930
Derek Walker	Lilaeopsis mauritiana*		V	10	1940
Derek Walker	Ludwigia sp. guinea*	Guinea Ludwigia	V	10	1950
Derek Walker	Ludwigia sp. cuba		V	10	1960
Derek Walker	Marsilea minuta*		V	15	1975
Derek Walker	Nymphaea rubra		V	20	1995
Derek Walker	Nymphoides sp. taiwan*		V	20	2015
Derek Walker	Pogostemon helferi*		V	15	2030
Derek Walker	Pogostemon yatabeanus		V	15	2045
Derek Walker	Polygonum sp. sao paulo*		V	20	2065
Derek Walker	Riccia sp. dwarf japanese*	Japanese Dwarf Riccia	V	10	2075
Derek Walker	Rotala rotundifolia		V	15	2090
Derek Walker	Rotala sp. araguaia*		V	15	2105
Derek Walker	Taxiphyllum sp. Peacock Moss*		V	5	2110
Derek Walker	Taxiphyllum sp. Flame Moss*		V	5	2115
Derek Walker	Tentative creditus	Susswassertang	V	5	2120
Derek Walker	Utricularia minima	Least Bladderwort	V	5	2125

Reproduction Key: V = Vegetative, OB = Outdoor Bloom, IB = Indoor Bloom, S = Seedling

* = MASI First

How I Anchored a Driftwood Stump

By Andy Walker



Ever see a piece of driftwood you think is special? Well, I was pondering the idea of using a stump as my main aquascape feature. Great place for coryadorus to hide. After days of searching various sites on the web I came across an old stump that I had to have in my new tank. Old River Rat Driftwood collects wood from small, clean, freshwater rivers and streams in Middle Tennessee. Due to the age of the wood they can't always identify the exact species but they were reasonably sure that the stump I had my eye on was ironwood (*carpinus caroliniana*). After wire

brushing and pressure washing it to remove bark, rotted matter and loose debris, I soaked the piece in a tall kitchen trash can because the seller dries the wood at 250 F to 300 F to kill pathogens. Even after a week, I could not water log the piece enough to keep it from floating. African and Malaysian driftwood (whatever species of wood it may be) are self-sinking alternatives and are commonly available at some retailers in the area and on-line. So, if you don't want the hassle of finding a way to sink wood that wants to float, either one of those is the way to go. Plus, you can move the self-sinking driftwood around anytime to any place in the tank. Since I couldn't find a stump of self-sinking driftwood that was within my budget, I decided it was time to deal with buoyancy of domestic woods since that's what I had for the right price.

Keeping buoyant wood on the substrate isn't rocket science and there are two basic ways to accomplish this. One way is to push it down from above. You could make the driftwood heavier by attaching or inserting lead sinkers. I can't argue that this will not work but it may not be aesthetically pleasing or practical for all shapes and sizes. Plus, I'm not certain if there are any health issues with the fish or flora. I made a decision to play it safe and steer clear of it. Back in the 60's when I was still a sprouting lad, my Dad would have drilled a one-inch hole in the bottom, melted a bunch of sinkers and poured it in the hole. My, how times have changed. If you have rocks in your aquascape this is an option if you have a branch to lodge under it. This, however, has some layout limitations and may not look natural. Moreover, rocks weigh about two and one-half times as much as the same volume of water so there's some additional weight the glass bottom of your tank must carry. I'd rather not concern myself with a potential nightmarish situation. This isn't to say there are no pluses to this method. It's very simple in design because you could do this anytime you find a piece you like without putting any forethought into your initial setup.

The other way is to secure (pull) the piece from below, which requires more craft and planning, but ultimately gives you a natural look with fewer layout limitations. Driftwood can be attached to a flat piece of rock by a screw. Most if not all of the driftwood I've seen at pet stores or on the web are affixed this way. This would work for my stump but I was reluctant to go down that path because I didn't want to deal with the size, weight and drilling of the rock. Plus, plants don't grow well into rock and I would not want to deal with the mess of pulling the rock out of the substrate if I wanted or needed to remove the driftwood a year or so later. I found another way of accomplishing the same thing on the web, fortunately with out these drawbacks. The Old River Rat Driftwood site suggested tying the driftwood to an underground filter with fishing line. Can you think of a better use for an unwanted relic!

Interestingly, another web site (that I can't recall) suggested using piece of plexiglass rather than the filter plate.

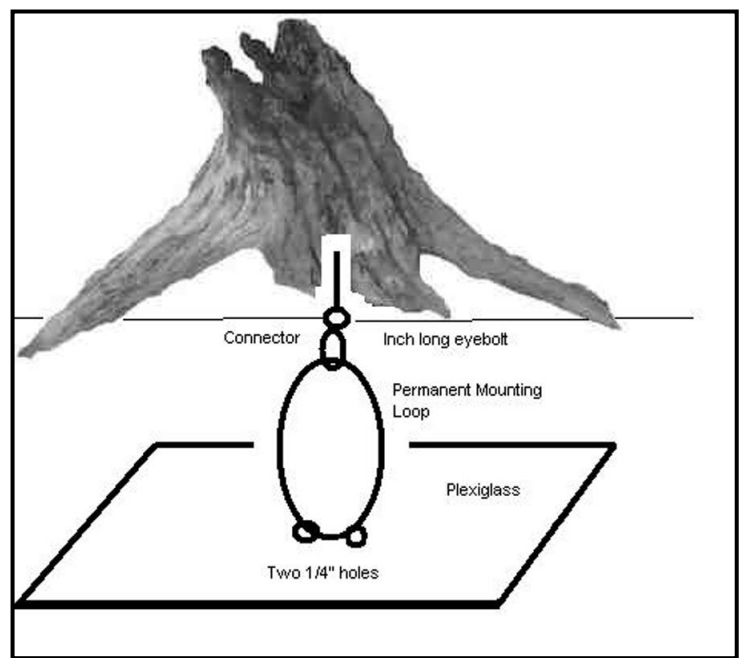
For better or worse, I decided to use Plexiglas to anchor my stump. Here's the hardware list: (1) one 10" x 12" x 1/8" piece of Plexiglas, which was the size of a remnant at my local hardware store, (2), one 1" long eyebolt and (3) three plastic cable wraps. I began by drilling a pilot hole for an eyebolt in the bottom of the stump and screwed the eyebolt in as deep as it would go without stripping out the hole. Then, I drilled two 1/4-inch holes about an inch apart in the center of the Plexiglas. Note that this is much easier than drilling rock, adds little additional weight to the glass bottom and there's less worry about damage from a drop. I fed one cable wrap through both holes and connected the loose ends to the other cable wraps. This gave me enough length to feed the cable wrap through the eyebolt to complete the loop. Before setting the piece in the tank, I adjusted the loop length so the distance between the stump and Plexiglas was the same (or a little less) than the substrate thickness. All I had to do was add sand and occasionally pull the stump up to remove slack as additional sand was added.

This method works because the weight of the 3 inches of sand on the Plexiglas is greater than the buoyancy of the driftwood. Other substrates like Soilmaster Select (Lesko Manufacturing) are lighter and may require a larger piece of Plexiglas to work. You just have to make sure that the weight of the substrate is more than the buoyancy of the driftwood. If you are concerned and want to make a crude estimate of that, start by weighing your dry driftwood. You will need a container (like a tall kitchen trash can) that's large enough to submerge your driftwood completely. Before filling the container to the brim with water, make sure it's in a basin (like a wash tub of some sort) to catch the water that will pour over the edge when you submerge the driftwood below the water. Weigh the water that ran out. The buoyant force you must overcome is the difference between the dry weight of the driftwood and the weight of the water that spilled over the brim. This is a tried and true method that Archimedes (c. 287-212 BC) would have used a while ago so it should be good today! Once you get your weight, make sure the substrate on the Plexiglas is heavier. Since you actually have to accommodate for the buoyancy of the substrate as well, I'm guessing you may want at least twice that as a practical minimum.

It should be obvious now (and in case it isn't I'll mention it) that this is something done best when you setup your tank for the first time. Plus, you may be wondering what happens if you want to remove the driftwood or add a different piece?

That's literally a snap. Just cut the loop and it's done. Your substrate and plants growing on it are virtually undisturbed. But what about reattachment or adding a new piece? If I had used a little more forethought in my original setup, I could have improved the design by making a permanent loop from the cable wrap that was fed through the Plexiglas. That way I would always have a loop buried in sand and I could use that to attach a new piece without disturbing the substrate much when the piece is returned to the tank or a new one is added.

No way is perfect. Most options are a balance between many factors. It's always good, however, to have alternatives and options available to you so you can make the best decision for your particular setup. It worked for me and I'm sure it will work for you as well.



Arowana: Not a Fish For Everyone

By John Todaro

Reprinted from March/April 2005 Aquatica Of the Brooklyn Aquarium Society

One of the most primitive looking of fish is the Arowana, *Osteoglossum bicirrhosum*. This species of Arowana is native to the Amazon. If you decide to keep Arowanas, keep in mind they have a healthy appetite and demand a diet of live foods, goldfish and other expendable fish. One person I know keeps one as a terminator fish. Whenever he needs to cull fish from tanks... his Arowana does the dirty work.

Once the fish acclimates to the tank and is fed regularly, you can expect it to have a long and healthy life.

I have rarely heard of an Arowana dying of old age. Most all have died by jumping out of their tank. I lost a small 8 inch Arowana that way. It jumped out of a closed tank by managing to get through where the filter tubes were, fortunately it landed in the tank next to it.

I put it back and the next time it jumped it landed on the floor and I found it the next day. After that I decided Arowanas were not for me.

I know of one member who won a high bid at one of our auctions for a foot long Arowana. I warned him about the jumping. He put a brick on the glass top, assured that would keep his Arowana safely in the tank....

Not so fast.

He came home one night, about a week later, after a date. It was dark in his apartment, and as he walked to light a lamp he felt something squishy under his foot. He lit the lamp and there was his Arowana with his \$200 Italian loafer print mashed into its body...naturally it was dead. The brick? The brick was on the floor next to the tank.

The fish had knocked the brick off the top, dislodged the glass, and did a swan dive onto the rug, flopping across the room to the front door. How it was going to open the door was beyond me.

I can't tell you how upset my friend was. He spent a lot to get this large Arowana... only to step on it a week later.

The moral of the story: one brick is not enough to keep an adult Arowana in its tank if it wants out.

They are truly escape artists, unfortunately in captivity they escape, most of the time, into a rug.

The fish has developed jumping as a way to get food. In the wild, if they see a bird or even a monkey on a low branch over the water it attracts their attention... to them it's a meal on a stick, and up they go to get it.

Now that you've been warned...are you still interested? OK, Lets talk about why people keep this fish. They are quite beautiful fish with large opalescent scales that reflect a rainbow of colors when the light hits them.

They can be trained to come and eat from your fingers and even be petted, if that's your thing.

Did I mention they are predatory fish with a huge mouth? In the Encyclopedia of Freshwater Tropical Fishes, Expanded Edition, they describe it as a large "Landing Barge" mouth.

They have never been bred in captivity as far as I know. So when you find them in fish stores they have been captured from the wild. The way they are captured is rather grisly, but I'm going to tell you anyway.

Arowanas are mouth brooders. The female, keeps the fry safe in its mouth and when a native collector find a brooding mom they cut off its head, because the fish will not release the fry it's caring for. Dump out the fry into a bucket, and toss the head back into the river. That's why you see baby

Arowanas with egg sac. A few days before, they were safe in the mouth of their mom, swimming in the Amazon.

Until they absorb their egg sac they do not have to be fed. The food will only rot in the tank and cause pollution problems.

After the sack is absorbed, start feeding small fish, guppy fry and adult brine shrimp. Try breaking them into eating frozen foods.

The other Arowana, the Asian Arowana, *Scleropages formosus* whose habitat is Australia and Southeast Asia, lives in weed choked creeks and rivers.

The Asian Arowana is considered lucky by the Chinese. They will spend hundreds and even thousands to acquire one. This species is protected under the Washington Species Protection Act and cannot be sold in the United States. If found in the trade they will be confiscated by Customs and turned over to public aquariums or other reputable sources.

These organizations must keep records of the fish and any that die must be frozen and at some point counted, to make sure these fish do not get sold. Customs wants to make sure they keep track of endangered fish... dead or alive.

Any Arowanas you see in pet stores should only be the South American species.

If you still want to try your hand at keeping Arowanas, you should talk to Al DiSpigna, our president. He's one of those reputable sources to whom the Customs people entrust confiscated Arowanas.

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Freshwater Fishes of the World, by Dr. Gunther Sterba, The Pet Library, Ltd, 1966

Aquarium Atlas Vol.2, Hans A. Baensch, Dr. Rudiger Riehl, Baensch, 1993.

The Encyclopedia of Freshwater Tropical Fishes, Expanded Edition, Dr. H. Axelrod, Dr. C. Emmens, Dr. W. Burgess, Neal Pronek, G. Axelrod. TFH, 1986.

Club Hopping

Steve Edie

Nov 18 -- St Louis, MO: Missouri Aquarium Society – Auction

Dec 2 -- Chicago, IL: Greater Chicago Cichlid Association – Swap Meet

Feb 10, 2008 -- St Louis, MO: Missouri Aquarium Society – Auction

April 11-13, 2008 -- Hartford, CT: Northeast Aquarium Council – Annual Convention

April 18-20, 2008 -- St Louis, MO: Missouri Aquarium Society – Annual Show and Auction

Jul 17-20, 2008 – Atlanta, GA: American Cichlid Association – Annual Convention

Oct xx, 2008 – Laurel, MD: All-Aquarium Catfish Convention – Convention

Jul xx, 2009 – Cincinnati, OH: American Cichlid Association – Annual Convention

The Computer Page

Steve Deutsch

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MASI's email group: MASIFishHeads Yahoo Group - see web site for joining instructions

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Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

1. Publication Title
THE DARTER

2. Publication Number
0 1 9 2 - 7 8 3 3

3. Filing Date

4. Issue Frequency
Bi-Monthly

5. Number of Issues Published Annually
6

6. Annual Subscription Price
\$20

7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4)
1813 Locks Mill Drive, Fenton, MO 63026-2662

Contact Person
Pat Tosie

Telephone
636-225-7625

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer)
1813 Locks Mill Drive, Fenton, MO 63026-2662

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)
Publisher (Name and complete mailing address)
Pat Tosie 1813 Locks Mill Drive, Fenton, MO 63026-2662

Editor (Name and complete mailing address)
Steve Deutsch 9 Old Jamestown Ct., Florissant, MO 63034-1725

Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address)
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10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)

Full Name
Missouri Aquarium Society, Inc.

Complete Mailing Address
P.O. Box 1682 Maryland Heights, MO 63034-1682

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box None

Full Name
Complete Mailing Address

12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)
 Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
 Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

13. Publication Title

14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)	115	
b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation		
(1) Paid (Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541. (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies)	57	
(2) Paid In-County Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies)	47	
(3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution	0	
(4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	0	
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b.(1), (2), (3), and (4))	104	
d. Free Distribution by Mail (Carriers or other means)	9	
(1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541	1	
(2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541	0	
(3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	0	
e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	0	
f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d. and 15e.)	10	
g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c. and 15f.)	114	
h. Copies not Distributed	6	
i. Total (Sum of 15g. and h.)	120	
j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c. divided by 15g. times 100)		

16. Publication of Statement of Ownership
 Publication required. Will be printed in the NOV - DEC 2007 issue of this publication.
 Publication not required.

17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner
(original signed) Pat Tosie, Publisher
Date 10/31/07

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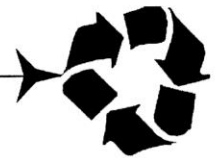
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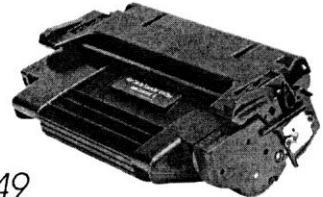
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