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ACA NEWS



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State of the ACA

by Rich Bireley, Chair, American Cichlid Assoc. Board of Trustees

Reminder: The number 1 responsibility of the BOT is fiduciary! This is true of all nonprofit boards as the organization is considered a business.

Our annual election is upcoming. We have not held a formal election in the last couple of years because the number of candidates equaled the number of openings on the BOT. It is unclear if that will be the case this year. The BOT instituted a

Conflict-of-Interest form for candidates, current and incoming board members, and officers. Many have already signed the form and submitted it. While the ACA Bylaws do not address a filing requirement, the issue of Conflicts of interest is mentioned in Article IV, Section 1(l). Additionally, as the BOT has been working to formalize duties and roles within the ACA, it became prudent due to State of Ohio and Federal tax laws to require Conflict-of-Interest filing from all applicable officers and BOT members, including candidates for the BOT. The filing is not onerous, especially for an organization with no paid employees. The vast majority of candidates will have one or no conflict of interest to report. For a fish breeder, you would check the yes box. In the describe section, you would say that you have no contracts or financial dealings with the ACA. Done. For those that have a contract or business dealings with the ACA, the form requires that the filer report the value of any contracts or payments from the ACA to the individual. That's it. The filer can run for the BOT or fill any position within the organization regardless of conflicts, however, any person with a conflict should recuse themselves from the decision-making process and voting where it relates to the conflict. Again, the form is boilerplate and not onerous. It is not intended to be an impediment to running for office or serving the ACA in any capacity.

An issue that we thought was resolved was that during the transition period from mid-June to August, a small number of members paid $35 rather than the current $25 membership fee. This will have been addressed by the time you read your newsletter. Refunds will have been sent for the $10 difference. If you are one of the persons who overpaid, you may see a tiny bit more than $10 because of how PayPal works. In addition, a couple of people had multiple memberships but only 1 email address associated with their account. These people will see a refund for all but one subscription plus the $10 overcharge. If you have any questions about your membership subscription, please contact the BOT.

On a very positive note, we have processed the grants for 4 of 6 grantees this year. We are awaiting final paperwork for the last two. This means that the ACA is officially back in the business of supporting students doing cichlid research. We will publish a list of the students receiving grants and a short description of their proposed research in the next newsletter. We also hope to have at least a couple of students at the next ACA convention in Milwaukee. Exciting times!

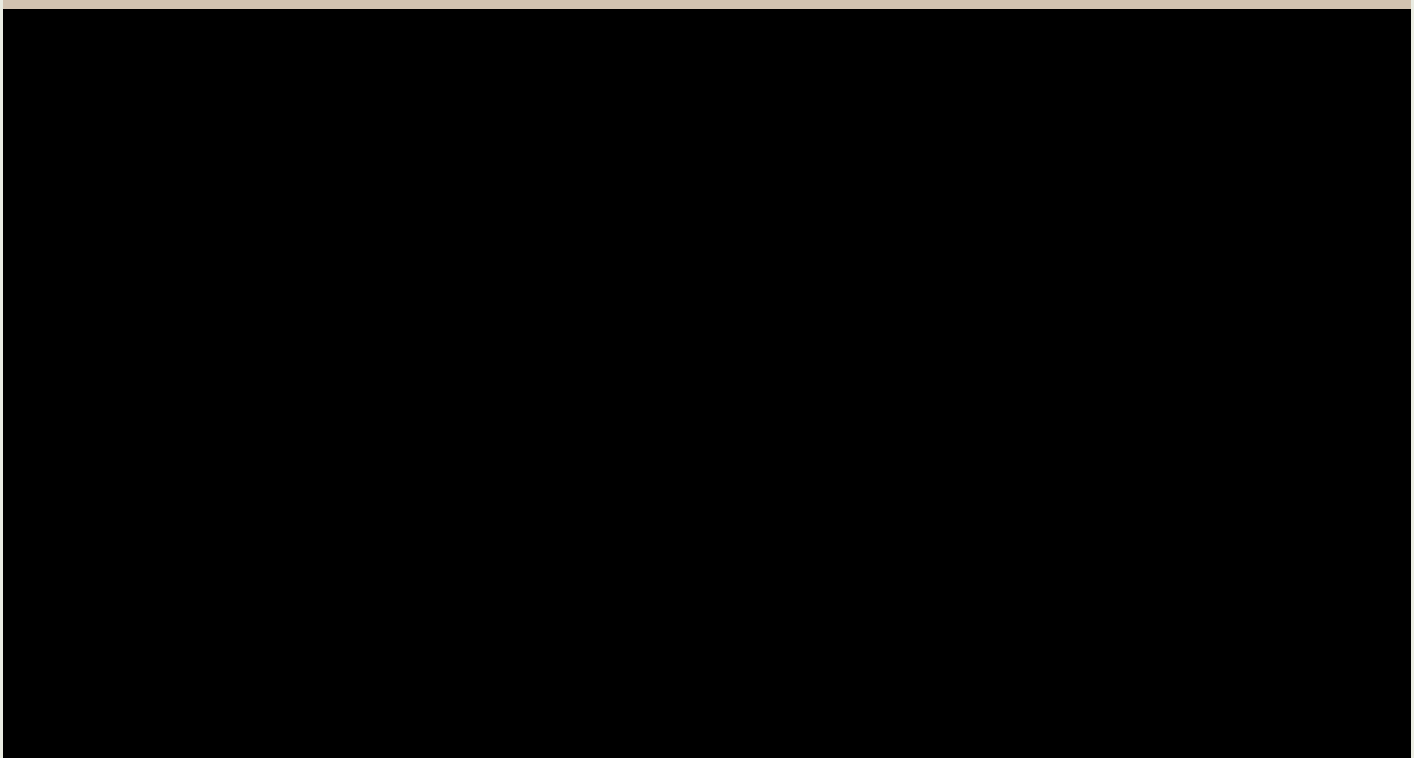
Did I say convention in Milwaukee? I sure did. The ACA convention is going back to Milwaukee next year for the Great Lakes Fish Convention. The organizers are doing a

great job and the website is already live (The Great Lakes Fish Convention). While I am not an aquatic plant guy, I'm excited about a plant event hosted by the Aquatic Gardeners Association (AGA). They are going to have an aquascaping contest with 10 teams. The rules are on the website so go there for accurate details. Ten identical tanks/10 teams and the same budget aquascaping those tanks at the convention sounds like an awesome event. And of course, there will be fish shows with cichlids, livebearers and bettas. The cichlid show last year was fantastic with lots of great fish. The quality of the entrants was amazing. The American Livebearer Association (ALA) is a fantastic organization and if you've ever dreamed about having truly rare and beautiful livebearers, you should definitely attend. Their auction is tremendous and the people are equally awesome. I also have a soft spot for bettas. The International Betta Congress (IBC) will be well represented with lots of spectacular bettas. This will be a fantastic event. If you have never attended a fish convention, this should at the top of your list to see what they are all about. Again, check out the website for all the details.

Well, that's it for this month. Hug a friend and love your family. We all come into the world the same as we go out. It is what happens in between that is important. Make today count!

Member Profile

Amanda & Mike Williamson





Amanda & Mike Williamson live in Caledonia, WI. When asked what got them interested in fishkeeping they joked, “Which time?!” Mike got his first tank between the ages of 10-14. He kept all livebearers at that time. When they moved out of his parents’ house in 2004, they started out with a couple of bettas but soon it exploded because MTS (multiple tank syndrome) is real!

They got down to one tank after having their children and the busyness that entails, but after Mike got hit by a car on the highway while helping a stranded driver, Amanda decided it was time to get back into the hobby. It helped her deal with the PTSD she suffered after Mike’s accident. MTS hit again and now they have 18 tanks up and running. They also have over 150 tanks in storage because they are planning to open a fish store.

Amanda started with livebearers, but now her favorite fish is their Oscar cichlid. Amanda feels they have the most personality - the puppies of the fish world. Mike loves the large South and Central American cichlids.

Mike and Amanda have collected fish near their home in a local river, but their big dream is to go to Brazil with Freshwater Exotics (a fish importing company located in Milwaukee). Another travel goal is to go to Thailand and see Bettas in the wild. Amanda finds scaping and rescaping her tanks to be her favorite part of the hobby as it is very relaxing. Mike says his favorite part of the hobby is getting to know all of the people. He enjoys going to conventions like the ACA and swaps like those held by the GCCA and in the Quad Cities.

They have tons of stories to tell about their adventures in fish keeping. One time, after the birth of their first child, Lauren, Mike when home to get some things before picking up Amanda and the baby. When he walked into their home, the tank was a suspicious red color. Mike feared the worst - that the cat had fallen in and been attacked by the large cichlids. How was he going to tell Amanda? Eventually, he found the cat - alive and well. The red color? It was tannins from a piece of driftwood he had put in the tank the day before.

Amanda and Mike are wonderful ambassadors for the hobby. When asked what advice they would give someone new to the hobby they both had great points. Amanda noted that you should look for used equipment as it will save you a lot of money. Mike chimed in that people should look for clubs in their area and attend the swaps.

Mike and Amanda are very active in their local club, the Milwaukee Aquarium Society. In addition to being an integral part of the planning for the Great Lakes Fish Convention next year, they are both on the board. Amanda is the secretary and Mike is the president. Amanda is also the swap chair, the participation points record keeper and part of the swag team. Mike is the auction chair, on the swap committee and also on the swag team.

They have also been members of the Wisconsin Area Killifish Organization (WAKO) on and off over the years.

The Williamson’s have been to several ACA conventions over the years. Amanda enjoys the Friday night auction. Mike had a hard time choosing his favorite part of the convention - “I enjoy it all.” If pressed, however, he says the vendor room and the speakers top his list.

Right now, they primarily have cichlids, but they also keep some catfish - Woodcats, Hoplo cats, Rapheal cats, a false albino redtail catfish and plecos. Amanda would love to be the first person to spawn Asian Sun cats (Horabagrus brachysoma). Other fish that inhabit their tanks are Angelfish, Rainbow fish, Endlers, Celestial Perl Danios, Bettas and Guppies.

Amanda's favorite cichlids are Oscars and Geophagus sveni. Mike loves the big guys from South and Central America - Red Devils, Red Dovi and True Red Terrors. Other pets include cats, a newt, a crested gecko and they will soon be acquiring a 2nd crested gecko, poison dart frogs, a bearded dragon and a tortoise.



July 21-25, 2027

Mark your calendars now for July of 2027 in Milwaukee, WI!

Preparations for The Great Lakes Fish Convention (ACA, AGA & ALA's combined convention) are well underway. Andy Hudson has things incredibly well organized. The website is LIVE. https://greatlakesfishcon.org

Check out this video created by the American Livebearer Assocation on the convention featuring ACA and Milwaukee's own Andy Hudson!

https://www.youtube.com/live/MiagwC4zZX8?si=VgsqLWdfh_NGIK84

There are a variety of activities, 12 talks and killer swag to commemorate the event. Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in a "Poker Run" game. Each participant will get to choose a playing card when they attend a talk. At the banquet the person with the best hand will

win a prize. The poker decks are going to be a “must have” momento for the event and will be available for sale on the website. The t-shirt comes in two colors this year - smoke grey and teal. The teal shirts are more fitted so order a size up if you want a looser fit. Teal shirts will only be available for pre-orders and will not be sold at the convention.

All of the speakers have been selected and include: Gary Bagnall, Johnaton Butkus, Charles Clapsaddle, Chantz Cramer, Mike Hellweg, Peter George, Rebecca Goldring, Gerald Griffin, Michael Köck, Lee Newman, Michael Pauers and the ALA Grad Student Poster Sessions.

There is a fun-filled schedule coming together including:

- the above mentioned biotope aquascaping contest (hosted by the AGA)
- an IBC betta show
- the ACA cichlid show
- the ALA livebearers show
- the KICK room for the kids
- a bowling & pizza party
- a collecting trip and barbecue
- a tour of the Miller Brewery
- a tour of Lambeaue Field & Advanced Aquarium Systems (an AWESOME local fish store)
- a Saturday swap meet
- the Saturday night banquet
- the ACA Friday night auction
- the hospitality room (AND a seeecret hospitality suite after the official room closes)
- Back by popular demand, the Sunday auction!





Thank you to Prestige Aquatics (Diamond sponsor) & Chemi-pure (Platinum sponsor) for their support of the convention.

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