

Kiap-TU-Wish Trout Unlimited December 2003

BANQUET DEADLINE LOOMS!!

By Michael Alwin

The highlight of your social calendar's year, the Kiap-TU-Wish Holiday Banquet, is fast approaching. Scheduled for the evening of Thursday, Dec. 4th, the Banquet will be held at Tartan Park, the scene of last year's extravaganza. The Tartan Park Clubhouse is located at 11455 20th St. No. Dinner is a buffet with sliced round of beef, boneless chicken breast, potatoes, vegetables and beverage and the price is \$25, the same as last year. Plus, the speaker at this year's Banquet is Bob White, local artist and renowned western hemisphere guide. His slide show will detail a recent fishing trip in the Seychelles, Australia and new Zealand. Think sunny skies, incredible scenery and colorful fish. **WARNING: The absolute, drop-dead last day for reservations is Tuesday, December 2. Call Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop, 651/770-5854 to make your reservation.**

Attention shoppers! Did I mention our silent auction? This is our Chapter's ONLY fund raising event of the year and therefore brings out the best selection of flies, tackle, books, gadgets, crafts, delectable goodies and folderol this side of the Madison. Bring your checkbook. Another way you can help us out is to honor us with your own contribution to the auction. Interesting and high quality items are appreciated and the Chapter will acknowledge your donation with a warm "thank you" and a receipt if requested. Drop it off at the Fly Shop or at the Jacobs' residence. Call for directions.

Michael Alwin of Stillwater, MN is the proprietor of Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop in Lake Elmo, MN and has served on both the chapter's Banquet and Education Committees for several years.

Editor's note: Local merchants are showing their support for this event. One of them has donated an eight foot, four weight, four piece St. Croix Legend Ultra travel fly rod and others are following suit with other kinds of merchandise. With a splendid speaker like Bob White and a silent auction that may be a record breaker, you won't want to risk missing this event. Do call to make your reservations at the earliest possible moment.

AB665: Job creation act or sneak attack on natural resources?

By Jonathan Jacobs

A month ago we were breathing a sigh of relief because Representative Scott Gunderson (R - Union Grove) had withdrawn AB506, a legislative attempt to redefine navigable waters in Wisconsin. Now comes AB665, purported by its sponsors to be the "Job Creation Act of 2003", an odd name considering that the bill is primarily an attempt to strip the Department of Natural Resources of its permitting powers. Examples: The draft bill provides that the DNR "shall issue Statewide general permits" to riparian owners to place bridges to cross a navigable water less than 35 feet wide or to change the course of a stream if the length of the relocation is less than 500 feet. The bill would also exempt from control the dredging of up to 1,000 cubic yards of material from an area not of natural resource interest where the material is not hazardous and where the area has previously been dredged. Here's what the November 15, 2003 edition of WSN News had to say about this bill and its ramifications:

Assembly Bill 665 entitled "The Job Creation Act of 2003" was introduced Tuesday morning and immediately scheduled for a sole Madison public hearing the very next morning. About 30 people testified at the hearing yesterday. Speaking in favor of the bill were builders, manufacturers, industry trade association spokespeople, and private citizens with stories of DNR permitting problems. Speaking against were labor unions, the leaders of sporting, conservation, and environmental organizations, and several private citizens. Supporters focused on the need to streamline WDNR and other state regulations for air, water, and other permits. Opponents were critical of the bill's rush to hearing, its lack of input from natural resources organizations, and its seeming lack of job creation despite being labeled as such. There is no word on when this bill may be voted on, but a vote could come in a special session of the Legislature. Sporting, conservation, and environmental groups have been meeting to analyze its threats since first becoming aware of it just last week, and all have concluded the bill's provisions are a major threat to clean air and water.

SOURCE: WSN.

How to respond to AB665 threats

Legislative Calls

There is an easy way to contact all legislative offices (Legislators and staff, I believe) via email, though I don't think they're widely publicized, nor will you find either of these addresses in a Google search. For the Assembly and Senate, respectively:

ALLASM@legis.state.wi.us

and

ALLSEN@legis.state.wi.us.

You may also leave messages for any legislator with the Legislative Hotline. The Hotline operators will take messages only for the Senator or Representative for the district in which you live. If you do not know the name of your state Senator or Representative, they can locate that information. For larger cities such as Milwaukee, Madison, or Green Bay, which have multiple Senators and Representatives, it is helpful if you know the ward in which you reside. The Hotline can be

reached in Madison at 266-9960 or statewide toll free at (800) 362-9472.

—River Alliance of Wisconsin

Contacting government officials

By Jonathan Jacobs

At the November meeting, our chapter president related an anecdote about a busy U.S. Senator seeking input from his staff on how to vote on a health care issue. He asked the staff what his constituents had had to say on the matter. A staffer said that there had been three contacts from his state on the issue with two of them favoring the legislation. The Senator said, seriously, "Two thirds of my constituents favor this bill" and he voted for it. The point is that your opinion carries weight, but you must express it.

At that same November meeting, Gareth Horvath, whose organizational and research skills never fail to amaze me, showed me official directories for both St. Croix and Pierce counties. These little books, available at no cost at county government centers information desks, are a gold mine of information. They list elected and appointed officials for all levels of government and provide contact addresses, too. Here are some relevant examples:

Senator Herbert Kohl: 202-224-5653,

senator_kohl@kohl.senate.gov

Senator Russell Feingold: 202-224-5323,

russell_feingold@feingold.senate.gov

Representative Ron Kind: 202-225-5506,
ron.kind@mail.house.gov

State Senator Sheila Harsdorf: 800-862-1092,
sen.harsdorf@legis.state.wi.us

State Senator Joe Plouff: 888-529-0029,
Rep.Plouff@legis.state.wi.us

State Representative Kitty Rhoades: 888-529-0030,
Rep.Rhoades@legis.state.wi.us

The above are but a few of the addresses available in the directories. If you need to contact any city, village, town or county official, committee person or anyone with any type of governmental authority, these books will tell you how. Their publication represents a tremendous use of tax dollars.

In any communication with government officials, be brief and to the point. Identify yourself and give your address at the outset. Tell the official why you are contacting him or her and give your position on the issue and why it would be in the public's best interest for the official to support your position.

Ojibleau meeting is December 11, features restoration projects

By Duke Welter

Stream habitat and restoration projects in the Vernon County area will be the focus of a talk at a December 11 meeting sponsored by Trout Unlimited's Ojibleau Chapter. The meeting, at the community room of the Eau Claire Gander Mountain store, will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Featured speakers will be two county and federal agency leaders in the field of stream restoration, Vernon County Conservationist Jeff Hastings and NRCS District Conservationist Jim Radke. They have worked for 18 and 25 years in Vernon County, respectively, to control stream-bank erosion and restore fish habitat in their projects. Hastings and Radke will report on their efforts to work with landowners, conservation groups, DNR crews and others to pool resources and expand projects. Over \$250,000 a year has been spent the past 10 years by Hastings' office on stream projects.

Vernon County's trout streams, some of the best in the state, draw thousands of tourists and anglers each year, and those visitors pump millions of dollars annually into the local economy. Many small businesses serve those

visitors, including campgrounds, restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and sports shops.

A slide presentation on the chapter's Gilbert Creek stream restoration project in Dunn County will also be available. The public is welcome and there is no charge for admission.

For more information, contact Tim Meyer at 715-834-5814 or Duke Welter at 715-833-7028.

Duke Welter of Eau Claire, WI, is a long-time trout conservation activist active at the local, state and national levels of Trout Unlimited.

To arms!

Editorial by Jonathan Jacobs

I had dinner one night recently with two gentlemen who have worked long and hard on conservation issues. It was an evening filled with pleasant conversation and keen observations (On their part. I had sufficient mother wit about me to know that I'd benefit more from listening than talking). We had been talking about the current state of the environment and the dark forces that lead an unceasing assault against it. One man said, "Everyone knows that I'm as pessimistic as anyone about the long term outcome, but I'm optimistic as hell about the good work that's being done." He went on to say that the work is worth doing for its own sake. He's right, of course. Trout streams may not last forever even if we work as hard as we can, but they will surely perish if we don't. In the mean time, we can have as much fun as possible fighting the good fight.

There are limitless opportunities to contribute to the conservation cause within Kiap-TU-Wish. Here are several of them:

Vice President: When Mark Waschek got kicked upstairs, it created a vacancy in this office. The vice presidency is the traditional training ground for chapter leaders. If you think you have what it takes in terms of time commitment and leadership skills to fill this position, talk to the board.

Program Coordinator: We need someone to round up speakers and programs for the monthly meetings. You know the format. We like to hear about any kind of angling adventure; we like to learn what other conservation organizations are up to; we like to see pretty slides and we're suckers for talk about the natural world. In a similar vein, if you have a little slide show of your own, step forward. If you feel this is your mission in the chapter, contact any board member or officer to volunteer.

Fundraising: Here's a big one. The need is great; our financial resources are meager. Three of our members have stepped forward and are considering asking the board to create a standing committee to work on this issue. Heaven and Earth know that they could use your help.

Banquet/Silent Auction: If we can round up a half dozen worker bees, we're going to re-work the silent auction to make bidding more interesting and more equitable and to make the end of evening checkout smoother. Talk to Michael Alwin (651-770-5854). This is light, pleasant work and it only comes around once a year.

Attend public meetings: Your attendance and input at public meetings make a difference! Don't worry about being grandiloquent or about being seen as an interloper. You'll be treated civilly. Politicians actually appreciate your input. It helps them clarify what's important to the public and it helps them to decide to do the right thing. Even if you're hesitant to speak, show up anyway. You'll learn through observation and the few members who've worn the tires off their vehicles driving to these meetings for years will appreciate your presence.

Stream improvement: We've worked on Cady Creek and helped on the Gilbert Creek project and we have a substantial role to play in the restoration of the Eau Galle River. We need someone to help coordinate these efforts and to enlist and call other volunteers.

Fishing clinic: Michael Alwin has done a splendid job with this event. The mentors and guides who work on this project have at least as much fun as the students. Call Michael Alwin at 651-770-5854 to volunteer.

Monthly meetings: Your attendance is vital! This is your organization; show your interest in it! Well-attended monthly meetings improve chapter communications. A good-sized audience tells a speaker that he or she made the right decision in coming to talk to us. The folks at Bob Smith's Sports Club furnish us with a meeting space; let's show our support for their business.

Write for RipRap: Trout anglers are widely known to be an intelligent and articulate lot. Relate your tales and opinions here and you won't have to read nearly so much of the Editor's inane drivel. RR welcomes contributions on any subject, but remember to apply community standards of decency and to avoid libel. Remember, telling the truth about the machinations of a scurrilous politician is not libel.

The fly tying hot stove league

By Jonathan Jacobs

RipRap received an e-mail from former chapter president Andy Lamberson the other day. Mr. Lamberson must have been projecting himself into his winter tying session and thinking over what he might need to tie to satisfy next season's requirements. In part he was engaging in that ages-old speculation that goes along the lines of "If you could only have six fly patterns, what would they be?" This question is always a good one in a long Midwestern winter, but Andy, whose mind is always racing, took it a step further, as you'll see. He wrote:

Here's my 6:

How about:

1. Pheasant tail beadhead, size 18 (For all BWO hatches)
2. Beadhead Caddis Larva (Better than Bait, of course), size 14
3. BWO Comparadun, size 18
4. Rusty Spinner, size 16 (Spinner for most of the BWO spinner falls)
5. Tan Elk Hair Caddis, size 16
6. Trico Spinner, size 20

This could be the theme for this year's Fly Tying Meeting. Angler's Top 6...and why.

There you have it. In my editorial, I suggested that you write for RipRap. This would be an easy way to begin. Let us know what your top six would be and why. (The *why* could very well be the most interesting part. For example, I think that Trico spinner should be a size 22, but should it have twinkle organza wings or wound and clipped hackle wings or Zelon wings or hackle tip wings? Should it have an dubbed abdomen, or simply wound thread on the shank? Microfibbets or spade hackle fibers for tails? The endless opinions and speculations are a part of the charm of the sport. Let's hear from you on this. Your contribution needn't be fancy, just honest. We'll try to interest some fly tyers in divulging their favorite six come April. Maybe you can influence them in the mean time.

Driftless

By Jonathan Jacobs

The southwest corner of Wisconsin – a rough right triangle of land bounded by Illinois on the south, the Mississippi River on the west, and an irregular line extending from north of LaCrosse to a point just west of Beloit – encloses more than just an arbitrary space within geopolitical boundaries. It represents a distinct physiographic region, an area defined by its specific surface geography, and were you to drive there, you wouldn't need a map to know when you'd arrived. It simply looks different. – from *Jerusalem Creek* by Ted Leeson

I was going to call this piece "Highway 61 Revisited" in homage to Bob Dylan's work of that name, but it's been used to headline other angling articles and, while it would have accurately described what I was up to, I came to like "Driftless" better, because it describes both where I was and how I felt at the end of a trip I made last summer.

Benjamin Amundsen is my nephew. He's nineteen years old. He grew up in Moline, Illinois, on the banks of the Mississippi, scant miles from Highway 61, that storied road that stretches from northern Minnesota to the Mississippi Delta. Benjamin inherited sturdy legs and a prodigious appetite from my side of the family and athletic grace from his father's gene pool. He graduated high school this spring and signed a national letter of intent to play football for the University of Illinois. His parents threw a party in celebration of these events this past June.

I've spent too little time with my Illinois family in recent years and I thought that attending the party might be a way to partially make up for that. While there, I stayed with my sister, Barbara, and her husband, Joe, with whom I had lived when I was Ben's age. Sending a fine young man like Benjamin off to a promising future made for a great party and the time spent with my family made for a great reunion. The years and emotional distance disappeared and I wrapped myself up in my family's affection. I came feeling more anchored than I had in some time and a thing anchored is a thing *driftless*.

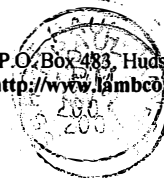
I deliberately planned my route to include as much of Highway 61 as possible. It's an efficient route, but more importantly, it carries one through the heart of Wisconsin's Driftless region, that area of the state left unmolested by the last advance of the glaciers that flattened the Midwest. I've lived at the northern edge of this area for many years and I can't imagine another place where I'd feel so much at home as I do here. The limestone bluffs and the hardwood-covered coulees produce a sense of belonging to a place in me, rendering me, again, *driftless*. I'm bonded to the trout streams, too. It's remarkable to me that Wisconsin has more miles of spring creek fishery than any other state in the union. Cold water gushes forth from the porous limestone. The great majority of the little

creeks that you see as you drive along Highway 61 are trout streams.

I've been traveling up and down Highway 61 for more than thirty years, but despite the fact that I've fished my home waters in the Driftless region at a sometimes fearsome pace in that time, I'd never found the time to go angling as I motored along Highway 61. That changed with this trip. I packed my angling gear along with my party clothes and on Monday, June 9 I did my best to make up for lost opportunity. Somewhat incongruously, I imagine, I kicked off my fishing with a visit to a smallmouth bass stream, the Galena River. The Galena flows roughly north to south from its headwaters east of Platteville down into Illinois. The mineral galena is a lead ore and the river runs near towns with names like New Diggings and Lead Mine. I imagine that lead mining was hard on the watershed, just as intensive agriculture has been. I fished near Benton, WI on a stretch of water in state easement that ran through a cattle pasture. It was interesting fishing for smallies, a fish I've always associated with woodland streams, in a meadow setting. The limestone was there and there was certainly abundant spring influence, but the water that day carried a lot of color. One extremely feisty thirteen inch smallmouth found my crayfish-colored Clouser minnow before it was time to move on.

My next destination was the Big Green River. Its name implies the existence of a Little Green River and, while I didn't see that watercourse, it must be tiny indeed if the stream I fished can be considered big. Please don't misunderstand; the Big Green is a lovely stream packed with wild brown trout, but big it is not. I found the stream by turning west off Highway 61 onto Green River Road. I soon saw some sparkling green watercress beds out of which trickled minute amounts of crystal clear water. Other cress beds appeared and soon there it was, a trout stream. I fished downriver a ways, in a long, deep, steep sided valley in another state easement stretch. I caught fish on a nymph and on a foam beetle and narrowly avoided an encounter with a water snake that swam down past me as I stood dumbfounded on the bank.

From there I was off, technically for home, but the Little LaCrosse River sang a siren song to me as I drove along parallel to it on Wisconsin 27 south of Sparta. I was badly out of time, but I couldn't resist. I parked and reconnoitered for a bit before gearing up and pitching a black woolly bugger into a likely corner. I caught a little brown trout on the first cast. I should have called it a day at that point, but I had to continue until a fall that got me wet convinced me to head on back to my wife and daughter at home, the place in my life where I am most truly most *driftless*.



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MEETING SCHEDULE:

DECEMBER 4: (NOTE THURSDAY DATE) HOLIDAY BANQUET FEATURING NOTED SPORTING ARTIST BOB WHITE.

JANUARY 7: TBA

FEBRUARY 4: TBA

MARCH 3: BUSINESS MEETING

APRIL 7: DRY FLY DICK FRANTES FLY TIERS

MAY 5: WISCONSIN DNR

DEADLINE FOR JANUARY RIPRAP: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26.