

Kiap-TU-Wish Trout Unlimited January 2002

Holiday Banquet a Huge Success

The Chapter's Holiday banquet, in its inaugural edition at 3M's Tartan Park, was a tremendous success, both as a social event and as a fund-raising vehicle. The banquet netted the chapter in the neighborhood of \$2,300, providing a great start to restoring our chapter's financial health. Tom Andersen in his presentation did an absolutely sparkling job of both entertaining the crowd and of reminding us of what a wonder the natural world is and how fishing brings us closer to it. The staff at Tartan Park did a tremendous job with the meal and with the logistics of our silent auction and thanks are especially due to Lynne Johnson, the banquet coordinator there.

Of course, the chapter is also utterly dependent on its friends, both in business and otherwise, and its members for donations to the silent auction. We offer our thanks and acknowledgment to the following for their contributions:

Kinnickinnic River Land Trust	Jim Anderson
Scientific Anglers	The Fly Shop, Redding
Bentley's Outfitters	Midwest FlyFishing
Kinni Creek Lodge & Outfitters	Thomas & Thomas Rods
Powell Fly Rods	Scott Fly Rods
Stone Legacy, Jan McMasters	Ross Reels
Hudson Nichols	Vern Alberts
Jim Humphrey	Dave Gilbraith
Craig & Jodi Aschenbrenner	Jon Jacobs
Bob Lach	Bill Lovegren
Jim Kroll	Chris Eastman
C. Lundberg	Alan Hopeman
Kurt Weieneth	Don Ausemus
Mike Alwin	Dave Ballman
Gary Horvath	Brent Sittlow
Dick Schwartz	Dan Bruski
Ted Mackmiller	Ginny Adams
Craig Mason	Jay Johnson
Western Wisconsin Fly Fishing	Andy Lamberson

We look forward to seeing you all again next year and, one more time, thank you all so very much.

RipRap Back from the Brink

By Jon Jacobs

The fundraising effort to provide funding for the publication of RipRap has borne fruit. An anonymous donor has provided funds to match those from the following donors:

Bill Lovegren	Art Kaemmer	Vern Alberts
Ed Parsonage	Robert Loch	Alan Hopeman
Tom Johnson	Wayne Stockman	Mark Drutowski
John Walter	Robert Howard	Layton James
Loren Carver	Clarke Garry	Dan & Joan Bruski
Steve Kennedy	Jim Anderson	Duke Welter
Scott Dicken	Collen Grant	Bob Adams
Matt Erickson	Clark Leeson	Paul Wright
Gary Horvath	Kent Johnson	Brian Madsen
B. Maher	Chuck Goossen	Craig Aschenbrenner
Brent Sittlow	John Hanson	Bill Hooper
Beth Gaede & Bob Christenson		

This list is not inclusive, as donations continue to arrive and, accordingly, a dollar total is not yet available, either. The board and officers of Kiap-TU-Wish and the staff of RipRap extend their most sincere thanks to the contributors.

WSN To Host Gubernatorial Candidate Forum at Conference

From a press release

A highlight of the annual Wisconsin Stewardship Network conference Jan. 25-26, 2002, in Stevens Point will be a Friday evening gubernatorial candidate forum focusing on statewide conservation and environmental issues.

The forum will be at Friday, Jan. 25, at 7:00 p.m. in the Laird Room of the UW-Stevens Point Student Center on Reserve Street.

So far five candidates are likely to attend — U.S. Rep. Tom Barrett, Atty. General Jim Doyle, Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk, State Sen. Gary George, and Green Party Candidate Jim Young. Talks are progressing with Gov. McCallum, Ed Thompson, and other candidates.

The forum is free to the public, but all registering for the prior WSN candidate reception from 5:30-6:45 will have a seat at the forum reserved for them. This reception will give attendees a chance to meet and talk with candidates on a personal basis.

The main WSN conference on Saturday, Jan. 26, features effectiveness workshops issue sessions, and opportunities for networking on the state's leading conservation and environmental issues. Saturday's sessions will also be at the UW-Stevens Point student center.

The Wisconsin Stewardship Network is a network of hunting, fishing, conservation, environmental, and other groups concerned about protecting and enhancing Wisconsin's natural resources. For more information about the conference call (608) 268-1218 or visit www.wsn.org.

The Gift of Trout

Editorial by Jon Jacobs

A few years ago, Trout Unlimited published an anthology under this title. I'd like to tell you about a few of the gifts that primitive creature has given me:

A restored sense of wonder: I can't go fishing without marveling at the incredible complexity and majesty of Nature. Look at that complexity closely and one begins to gain some very small sense (*understanding* being much too strong a word) of how tightly interwoven and interdependent all living things are.

A sense of belonging to a place: I moved to Wisconsin partly because I'd become familiar with it from fishing here. Sixteen years later I feel like the calcium in my decrepit old bones issues from the same source as the limestone bluffs that tower above the Kinnickinnic and the Rush and that the water of those shimmering rivers runs through my veins.

Friends: That would be all of you and you are precious to me, indeed. May your new year be filled with peace and plenty.

From the Bridge

By John Koch

"...remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting." - Ecclesiastes 11:10

With the July heat creating an almost audible whine in the hot river valley, we break our way down a short steep slope of dry, brittle grass, weeds...and nettles. Always nettles. I grin ruefully when my young nephew curses in pain as the tiny hairs brush softly across a patch of exposed skin.

In the shade of a fallen tree on the river's bank, we watch a brown trout lazily sip invisible insects off the surface film of the glassy water. As if keeping time with the rhythm of the heat, the trout leaves a regular series of rise forms as it feeds.

Entering the stream, I am instantly up to my thighs in muck, over which flows a few scant inches of crystal clear water. Turning, I struggle back to shore through the

sucking mud, my trail swirling behind me, the sliding river re-depositing the disturbed sediments far downstream.

My nephew laughs, the fish disappears, and we move on. And so we continue through the hot day, what was to be our last day together. The boy's eagerness eventually wanes, and only then is he rewarded with trout caught on the fly. And with that, a spark of understanding is lit beneath his seventeen-year-old eyes. We spend the better part of an afternoon drifting bits of fur and feathers to rising trout, sometimes hooking a fish, but more often times not. It was good, and right.

On a September afternoon, in a cold, sweeping rain, five of the boy's friends and I buried him. Far from the trout streams and grouse woods we had enjoyed together, Sam's body now rests on a hill beneath a pine tree.
(October, 2000)

Out of the cool cedar forest I walk, steel cables swaying gently in time with my footsteps. I've come to this northern river, perhaps Wisconsin's most celebrated, to fish fall-run steelhead. The news of an old friend's death, after a prolonged battle with cancer, has led me to seek solace along its banks. In addition, exactly a year has passed since my nephew's death - a year of profound, surprising sadness and guilt. Sadness over a bright life extinguished in its prime, guilt over something that I had no control over, surprise at the depths that this event has touched my soul.

From the bridge, I look down at the river swiftly crashing below. It lies before me, violent currents of vapor moving silently beneath its surface. I close my eyes; and in the shimmering Indian summer heat, I imagine what perhaps could have been: three men, one young, one middle-aged, and one old, making their way up-stream, casting their lines into the seething currents. Advice is given, stories are told, and jokes are traded: The friendly banter of the three makes up for the poor fishing on the hot autumn day. I open my eyes; my reverie is broken.

I spend the day alone, fishing pools with names such as "Blair Wood" and "Powerline". No one but me, it seems, is interested in plying the famous waters today. For good reason: the area has not seen rain for several weeks, and the river is running very low and very clear, with no migrating fish to be seen. Still, hope is always alive: the memory of two jack rainbows actually caught, along with the site of several tremendous fish making their way upstream the week before, feeds some of my desire to make the three hour trip to fish here.

The biggest reason I came and will continue to come to fish the mighty Brule doesn't have much to do with

catching fish. When the fly fishing bug had thoroughly imbedded itself into my nephew a couple years before his death, Sam had expressed an interest in coming here. Like many before him, he had read articles in several fishing rags about the river, and had asked me on several occasions about going. Not knowing much about the river, and busy with my own growing family, I never made time to make the trip with him.

Little would I realize how much had been missed, lost forever. The thing that possibly hurts the worst in life is opportunity lost.

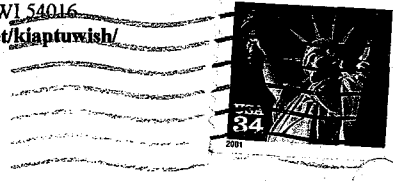
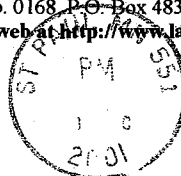
I had never met the old Scotsman in person, but I knew him as a friend. Eric was as kind, gentle and charming of a man as I had ever hoped to meet - what a wondrous thing it was that our meeting was due to a bad business deal. A fly-fisherman from the start, Eric had fished the waters of the world. I spent many hours on the phone sharing stories with him - mine from fishing the streams here in the Midwest, his from Europe and the Pacific Northwest. We shared our memories of fishing the Southern Sierras; it turns out we had both spent time in the Bridgeport area, fishing the East Walker River and its tributaries. My fondest memory that I was able to share was that of my companion at the time, a Hopi Indian, hand-lining a huge cutthroat out from one of the area's many alpine lakes. For the past several years, I've had a standing invitation to visit and fish with him in Southern California, where he had retired. After living there for several years, Los Angeles is not a destination I would pick to visit anymore, but in this case, I was making plans on someday making the trip.

My last phone-call to my friend, in which I wanted to give him an update on one of my steelhead fishing trips up north and discuss plans for a trip, ended up being to his widow. Eric had passed away two weeks earlier after a long battle with pancreatic cancer. I had known he was ill, but he had never given an indication that he had been as sick as he was.

So now I am left with the memory of the two. I am left to imagine what kind of influence I could have had in my nephew's life, what could I have done to help him avoid his tragic and senseless death. And I am left to relive my friend Eric's stories and to imagine what it would be like to have been able to spend time with him.

As I make my way back across the rickety suspension bridge, the flowing water that binds us all continues its ancient course.
(November, 2001)

John Koch of Spring Valley, WI is a Kiap-TU-Wish board member and a frequent contributor to RipRap.



Clarke's Bugs Live!

Join us at Bob Smith's Sports Club, 601 2nd Street in downtown Hudson on Wednesday, January 2 for Dr. Garry's update on his study of the Kinnickinnic's aquatic insect community. This is a great presentation that will satisfy your curiosity as an ecologist and will give you the inside track as an angler intent on matching the hatch. Dinner is available in the front room at 6PM and the meeting begins in our dedicated "back room" at 7PM.

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MEETING AND PROGRAM SCHEDULE:

JANUARY 2: Clarke Garry on Kinnickinnic Entomology
FEBRUARY 6: Bonefishing in Cozumel
MARCH 6: Annual Business Meeting
APRIL 3: Dick Frantes Memorial Fly Tying Extravaganza
MAY 1: WiDNR on local conservation issues

DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY RIPRAP: FRIDAY, JANUARY 26.