



The Drift: Words from our new President

March 28th TU Regional Meeting: Four Kiap members attended TU's regional meeting in Bloomington: Gary Horvath, Randy Arnold, Margaret LeBien and myself. Chris Wood, TU National CEO and President, kicked off the meeting and shared TU's five year strategy: *Youth Education and Stream Learning, Southwest Natives, Steelhead Initiative, Citizen Science, Climate Change.*

He made special note that the Great Lakes and the Driftless area continue to be an important component of TU's strategy and more funding and staffing will be devoted to support that effort. Chris shared that he was proud that TU has significantly grown its presence in the last five years versus other conservation organizations that have retrenched during the same time period.

Red Cabin: Kudos to Randy Arnold, Dennis Anderson, and Fairmount Santrol employee, Alex Gerdes. They took advantage of a late season snow storm to burn the twelve remaining brush piles on the upper Kinni. This assures that the prep work is finished and the site is ready for earthwork.

As Tom Henderson and I worked on the transition from his leadership role to my new role, I really began to appreciate the job Tom's done during his two years as president. He not only was active in all aspects of Kiap's activities—grant writing, habitat projects and education—but kept meticulous records and, without complaint, handled all of the correspondence and communication with WI TU, TU National, the WDNR and other Kiap partners.

I asked Tom what he felt his most important accomplishments were and he shared: setting up and operating from a formal budget, continuing the scope of large habitat projects and finding a new suitable meeting venue.

He cited opportunities going forward as developing more large stream habitat projects, defining different types of smaller projects that require a subset of our current project capabilities, and setting up a mowing and maintenance schedule along chapter streams.

Tom is not going away. He will be a board member for two more years, and looks forward to working on long range planning.

Thanks, Tom!

April Fly Tying Meeting: Approximately 50 folks attended the April meeting. Thanks to Jon Jacobs for organizing the event and also to the tiers: Maria Manion, Mike Alwin, Andy Roth, Ron Kuehn, Cline Hickok, Jim Kojiis, Andy Selvig and Jon Jacobs.

Amery Perched Culvert: John Carlson reports that the Town of Alden has approved using Kiap's \$2000 funding to have Polk County conduct an engineering evaluation to access the cost to remove the perched culvert on Parker Creek.

Congratulations: Gary Horvath has been elected to a two year term as Western Regional Vice President for Wisconsin TU. The position is part of WI TU's executive committee. The Western Region consists of chapters in the Driftless Region. ~Tom Schnadt

The KIAP-TU-WISH CHAPTER's
almost monthly publication

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The May 6th meeting will be held at
Junior's Bar & Restaurant in River
Falls. Junior's is located inside the Best
Western Hotel on the corner of Main
Street and Cascade Avenue.

Junior's Bar & Restaurant
414 South Main Street
River Falls, WI 54022
715-425-6630

The photo above was taken on Pine Creek
last year. We hope you enjoy many such
pulchritudinous days this season with
all the delight and great fishing that our
natural resources have to offer. Tight lines!

Inside, more stuff than usual. . .

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What Color Was Your Envelope?

Members and friends of Kiap-TU-Wish received bright gold, orange or green Spring Appeal envelopes about a month ago—not easily missed. We hope your envelope only went into the recycle bin after you read the Appeal letter and sent a check to help keep our chapter's projects on track.

Our chapter's Spring Appeal is going into its final six weeks—summer supposedly comes in June. Response so far has been better than in 2014; our Treasurer reports close to \$8,100 (net) versus last year's \$7,200 (net). But we still have a ways to go, and we are hoping additional Kiap members still have their colored envelope, and will reach for their checkbooks.

However, if the Appeal materials already went into your recycle bin, you can reconsider and easily make a contribution online via www.kiaptuwish.org. On the left side of the "landing page" is a "clickable" block with information about Hap Lutter, the Appeal letter, and a response form.

Our Appeal actually brings in more dollars than our annual banquet, and it is vitally important to the chapter's continued growth. Your donation is also tax deductible, so if you were lucky enough to receive a tax refund this year, why not consider sharing a bit of it with Kiap-TU-Wish? Thank you.

~Bob Trevis

Editor's Note

RipRap has a few extra pages in this issue. We're sending you into our chapter's fishing hiatus with more news, tips, flies, stories and opinions to consider—hoping that you'll stay in touch with Kiap until next fall via our website and Facebook page. (Brian Burbach's 5th grade class will keep us posted about the state of their trout and the release date, so check those sites often for "troutling" news.)

Speaking of kids and trout, in this issue of RipRap some of our local fly shop proprietors share their perspectives about youth and fishing. What became apparent for me after reading their thoughts, was the shifting, unrestricted boundaries of youth. Is it kids from 10 to 15 years? 15 to 25? 25-35? Compared to my mother I'm young, compared to some colleagues I'm old. Chronologically I'm above 45. In my head I'm 25, and in my fishing life—my years and experiences in the sport—I'm even younger.

The stories and articles in this issue highlight an important point: whatever your age, whenever that fishing life should begin, fishing and caring for our natural resources that support the "habit" are lifelong passions. They are activities and places of respite as Anonymous writes about growing up and into fishing. They are destressors

during finals week as Ben Carlson writes about the college fly fishing course at St. Olaf. They are shared experiences and places as Loren Haas writes in a letter to his friend Neil, or they are new worlds of discovery and insight as the 5th graders in North Hudson Elementary are learning. So, whatever your age, enjoy your days on the water. (We hope everyone finds inspiration for RipRap articles next year!) ~Maria

First-time donors of \$35 or more can receive a half-dozen nymphs, tested and proven to work on the Kinni and Rush. Donations of \$125 or more can score a half-dozen locally tied dry flies, just in time for the spring hatches.



K-TU's Hap Lutter Spring Appeal



Hap with his grandson, Tate.

photo courtesy of Judy Lutter

Memberships: Stay with Kiap-TU-Wish!

Technological snafu? Logistical snafu? User snafu? Whatever the reason, some of our members have had their chapter affiliation designated elsewhere. Most often this occurs when our Minnesota members renew. To remain in Kiap-TU-Wish—or to help others who might encounter this situation—please take a look at the following suggestions.

Designating Kiap-TU-Wish

- Call **800-834-2419**: The operator will assist you in changing your chapter designation. Make sure the operator knows you want this to be a permanent designation.
- Another option: E-mail trout@tu.org and ask them to change your membership to #168 Kiap-TU-Wish. Make it known that you would like this to be a permanent designation.
- If this is not successful, for some reason, call or e-mail TU's Membership Services Coordinator, Samantha Bachert at sbachert@tu.org or **703.284.9414**.

Setting up a New Membership

- Go to tu.org/intro and select #168 Kiap-TU-Wish from the Wisconsin options in the drop down box.
- When you do this, you will remain in Kiap-TU-Wish every time you renew your membership (even if you move elsewhere, at which point you can call or e-mail TU to have them update your information). *An additional bonus: Sign up for a TU membership in #168 Kiap-TU-Wish at this tu.org/intro site, and the cost of membership is ½ off, only \$17.50. Our chapter will receive \$15 of those dues at the end of the year.*

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the newsletter this past year. Kiap-TU-Wish is all the richer for it.

Don't forget:

- Visit the K-TU website & Facebook page for news & announcements
- Next RipRap deadline: August 14
- Send info to: manion.maria@gmail.com

Tom Helgeson's Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo

The 2015 Expo was a welcome opportunity to see familiar faces and check out some necessities of the art. And how cool is it to have a booth next to Dave Whitlock's! Speaking of names, Lefty Kreh graced the show with casting and good humor. Lefty is now 90 years old and a model for those of us wondering what we may look forward to.

Our objective in attending the show is to share our message with the public and to garner new members. The drawing for flies brought in a good response. As usual, the diorama created by Nick Wescott a number of years ago was a great talking piece.

While I've not seen the show attendance statistics, it is clearly down from past years. Noticeable was the continued decline of booths of destination lodges. Is this to be considered a harbinger of decline in public interest? That being said, Kiap event attendance is up in general.

I would like to thank the volunteers for all the help that made our attendance at the show possible.

~Bob Diesch



Top: Kiap members tending the booth: Bob Diesch, Greg Dietl and Randy Arnold. Below: Tom Helgeson's grandson, Grayson Helgeson, choosing the winner of the box of flies.

City of River Falls Pauses FERC Re-licensing

As reported in RipRap last May, the City of River Falls has filed their intent to relicense their hydropower facility on the Kinnickinnic River in Pierce County with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The facility consists of two dams on the river, the upper or "Junction Falls Dam" and the lower "Powell Dam" whose joint permit expires in 2018.

Kent Johnson formulated the Chapter's study request as part of the FERC process. The request addresses five areas of concern to the chapter including, water temperature, impacts from hydrologic flow, water and sediment quality, the affects on the biological systems within the impoundments and management implications surrounding stormwater. Tom Henderson, past Kiap-TU-Wish President, submitted the study requests to the City on May 11, 2014.

Suffice it to say, the City was caught flat-footed when confronted by the community's overwhelming interest in the relicensing of the dams. It appears the City anticipated little or no interest on the issue and believed relicensing would sail through without a hitch. As such, the current City budget has only allocated \$100,000 for the relicensing effort.

Possibly, as a result of the strong public interest in removal as an option, and their meager budget, the City Council

held two "workshops" in December and January with the Utility Commission, which operates the hydropower facility. These were open to the public but closed for comments. These meetings resulted in the City Council's adoption of a resolution that provided City staff direction regarding the hydroelectric licensing process, including endorsing a Kinnickinnic River Corridor Planning Strategy and directing City staff to request an approximately seven year extension of the current license.

Interested groups, including Kiap-TU-Wish, Friends of the Kinni, River Alliance of Wisconsin, and the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, requested a meeting in March to voice frustration regarding

the length of the extension and the lack of specificity regarding submitted study requests in the Kinnickinnic River Corridor Planning Strategy. As a follow-up to this meeting, the aforementioned groups went on record with FERC and called on the City to initiate formal stakeholder meetings.

At a meeting held April 9, 2015, the City requested that groups and interested persons submit those critical study elements that will be needed to reach a decision on relicensing or removal in the year 2017. Chapter members Kent Johnson, Dan Wilcox, and myself will formulate the chapter's input and will continue to represent the chapter's interests. Stay tuned. ~Gary Horvath



Above: Junction Falls of the Kinnickinnic in 1865.

(Photo from University of Wisconsin – River Falls archive, via Friends of the Kinni)



{Words} Jonathan Jacobs

Driving Lessons

With the 2015 fishing season about to get seriously underway, I thought it time to share with you folks a few of the things I've learned about the use of watercraft as angling conveyances on rivers. Although nearly all of us love the intimacy of wading rivers, there are times when the value of waterborne transportation is nearly incalculable, generally because of size of the water involved, its remoteness, or limits to access of it. The types of watercraft involved are numerous, but due to space limitations and my personal experiences, we'll limit discussion to three: driftboats, canoes and kayaks.

We will start with driftboats because they are the boats with which I am most familiar. Even though these boats are increasingly common in the Midwest, I understand that you do not likely own one. However, should you get the opportunity to be a guest aboard one, it's best to know a little something about

be overcome by understanding that the great strength of a drift boat is its ability to proceed downriver more slowly than the current and to "slide" left or right across the current easily. Note that I mentioned pulling on the oars to steer. This is what slows the boat. So, the surest way to avoid an obstacle or to move away from a bank is to point the bow of the craft directly in the direction you don't want to go and then pull on the oars. When out of line with the current, the boat will quickly scoot across it. Remember, the greater the diagonal, the quicker the speed of the retreat. The boat's ability to proceed slowly while under control at a fixed distance from the bank is a large factor in what makes these boats such a wonderful fishing platform. A fly cast takes time to complete. Proceeding slowly makes sure that the angler can deliver a cast to a downstream target (Another point: The

the person in the stern by giving him or her every opportunity to angle from aft. In slower water, this is easier and more practical than you might think. With a little practice, you'll be surprised by how, just as with a drift boat, you can effectively slow, steer or position the craft. Using your paddle in opposition to the current will produce the best results. Simply remember that a sustained backstroke on the port side will rotate the stern to starboard and vice versa. That can be mitigated by moving the paddle's fulcrum point aft as far as practical and by pushing inward or outward with the paddle to make course corrections.

I've never been in a kayak, so I am not qualified to offer advice on how to use one. Also, it seems as though while you can always tell a kayaker, you can't tell them much, so what would be the point? In lieu of how-to advice, I'll offer some brief where-to counsel specific to Wisconsin: Obtain a copy of Wisconsin DNR Publication FH-302 2015, Guide to Wisconsin Trout Fishing Regulations. Within it is an atlas of sorts. Streams highlighted by red, blue, yellow or green lines are those that a kayaker should avoid entirely. These are trout streams, some even too small to wade properly and virtually none large enough to boat. Fishing one from a kayak will not be particularly productive due to the lack of a stealthful approach and it will ruin the angling experience for wading anglers, most of whom will justifiably be glaring at the insensate paddlers as they run

“. . .the great strength of a drift boat is its ability to proceed downriver more slowly than the current and to “slide” left or right across the current easily.”

how to row one so that you might give the main oarsman a chance to do some angling. My experience suggests that folks new to these specialized dories experience difficulty for two reasons, the first being that tyros are unaccustomed to facing in the direction of travel and the second being that their experience in canoes has taught them to try to outrun the current when avoiding obstacles. The first problem can be overcome by remembering that the bow moves to the left when you pull on the left oar and the bow moves to right when you pull on the right oar. The second difficulty can

be overcome by understanding that the great strength of a drift boat is its ability to proceed downriver more slowly than the current and to "slide" left or right across the current easily. Note that I mentioned pulling on the oars to steer. This is what slows the boat. So, the surest way to avoid an obstacle or to move away from a bank is to point the bow of the craft directly in the direction you don't want to go and then pull on the oars. When out of line with the current, the boat will quickly scoot across it. Remember, the greater the diagonal, the quicker the speed of the retreat. The boat's ability to proceed slowly while under control at a fixed distance from the bank is a large factor in what makes these boats such a wonderful fishing platform. A fly cast takes time to complete. Proceeding slowly makes sure that the angler can deliver a cast to a downstream target (Another point: The

angler should make every attempt to fish ahead of the boat. Fishing at right angles to the boat or behind it creates drag problems, surrenders the advantage of stealth and drives the oarsman crazy) and establish a reasonable drift. The best advice I can offer in the use of a canoe is that you find a partner who knows what the hell they're doing and put them in the back of it. Once you've placed your partner in the stern position, recognize that that person is in charge and obey every order issued to you. You can show your appreciation for

over the anglers' drifts while banging their paddles against the plastic hulls of their crafts. Now that I think about it, you might point out to your non-angling kayaking friends, since they seem to be incapable of reaching this conclusion on their own, that kayaking on trout streams is contrary to all that's decent and that they should cease and desist immediately from engaging in such aberrant and abhorrent behavior. It will be good for the souls of all concerned and will help restore order to the universe.

Have a fun summer. 🐟

Letter to a friend: Dear Neil,

I fly fished our favorite stream yesterday. As bad as the upper reach was last time we were out, the lower is equally excellent. It may have been the best day of fishing ever!

Remember the big teardrop-shaped hole with the big rocks on the hill? You caught a 16-inch brown under some fallen tree branches upstream of that hole by just floating the fly past him for 20 minutes. Persistence, patience, dogged determination paid off. I don't think I have ever caught a fish out of that hole, ever. I had one on once, but never actually caught one until yesterday. It's still technical water, and even a ripple on the water from wading will put the fish in a sullen mood. Sometimes, like yesterday, it's just way more fun to be lucky than good. Actually, that kind of sums up fishing in general doesn't it?

The day started out with a light hatch of Trico mayflies, blue-winged olives and ginger midges. Not much rising though as I rounded a bend into a light riffle. I noticed some flat water, maybe deep, and what looked like an undercut bank on the far left side—right into the sun still too low on the horizon. If I were a fish, that's where I'd be. I tied on a size 20, short-shank, no hackle Trico with foam wings to 5x tippet. I looked at the target, shook my head, and added a short, thin, sticky-backed foam indicator four feet from the fly. There was no way I was going to see my fly. On the first cast I hit the upstream edge of flat water with the red indicator but no sign of the fly. Not a ripple or a rise anywhere. The red indicator disappeared in a flash. I paused, thinking a small trout just inhaled my red foam. If I waited, he would spit it out and I could continue my drift. Not happening. So I stripped some line and felt a huge tug. I was more surprised than the fish. A 16-inch hen had sipped that fly without leaving a trace of a ripple on the water.

I caught five more nice fish on my way upstream just to get to the teardrop hole. One got away, a 17 or 18 inch male, but I knew he was under an overhanging tree, in a hole below a large riffle, and was rising to size 20 or 22 blue-winged olives. This is a pattern I have tried to master this summer. The brute would rise and take several emergers at a time to make his trip to the surface worth the effort. His flashing bright colors were a dead giveaway. I stayed on that hole for almost two hours, trying to get him to take anything until I got desperate and put on a black ice fly jig with a fake cream rubber grub. I know, I can hear you scolding me! I'm still ashamed, but I was really "desperate." Anyway, it was heavy and hard to throw. I don't know what he thought it was, but he grabbed it deep on the first drift. I had him to my feet three times. No net, then he spit the hook. (Colorful superlatives? *!#^<) The trout gods said, "Nay, nay, no jigs!" Speaking of hooks, the jaws on the big males were hog hooked and heavily toothed. The colors were bright orange, yellow and hints of green with huge red spots and brown circles around the spots. Wish you were there. Wish I had a camera, and a net.

The big teardrop hole was just upstream and now I was eager to get to it. The fish in that hole are just too smart and would have nothing to do with a jig. I went back to the dry micro mayfly and picked up a few fish before I finally concluded they wanted something to chase. The old standby bead head prince nymph, which didn't catch a fish all day, was suddenly all the rage. Stripping it through the water, I caught 10 fish on the downstream side of the hole without moving my feet. They were over 11 inches, the biggest was 17. Then I moved to the upper hole and caught four more, one was 15. From about 12:30 to 3:00, I think they would have chased anything. I will never know for sure because I still caught fish even though the fly was ragged and torn.

Suddenly the bite was over. No more risers or chasers and no reason to hang around so I headed back downstream. Tired and slow, I waded tight to the bank until I found two fish rising 20 feet apart from undercut banks in water only 18 inches deep. My prince nymph no longer had wings or gold tinsel ribbing or much of a tail left, just ragged peacock herl and a bead. No matter, they were both 14 inches. I don't know what I did right, but the trout gods were sure smiling on me.

Hope all is well. Loren



From the Field: why brushing volunteers do what they do



Randy Arnold photo

We all need to give something back to our sport. It's real hard to do that on your own which is why I participated in your work parties.

It's surprising for all of us when we see what can happen with several of us getting together for just a few hours on occasion for stream improvements. We all can contribute something, even if one doesn't have the equipment some do.

Plus, one can learn more about our individual members and their experiences that we wouldn't ordinarily get by just attending an occasional monthly meeting.

For those of us new to TU, the work projects are a good way to see what TU is all about, not just a fishing club.

~Brad Wistrom, TCTU

Thankfully the white stuff on the ground in the above photo is gone for a while, and we can enjoy warmer days and temps. Maybe we'll see each other on the streams, fishing the Trimbelle, checking out the Red Cabin or spending time on any of the stretches that Kiap-TU-Wish has had the privilege of restoring. Thanks again to all the volunteers. We share Brad's sentiment: it's surprising what can happen when people get together for stream improvements.

Left: We'd all love to receive a letter like this one, or better yet, write a letter like this one. Loren Haas is a new board member for Kiap-TU-Wish, but a long-standing project volunteer. Many of you would recognize Loren when donned in hard hat and orange safety clothing. This year his daughter joined him on the workdays. The next Haas family chainsaw operator?

Simple, Unintended Appreciation

Ever wonder why you fish? I started out to explore this complex question by writing about it. However, I soon came to the realization that we fish simply because, for one reason or another, it makes us feel good inside. The literature is endowed with endless recitals of how and why people of all ages, trades, and societal status have pursued the endeavor. So what can I add? Probably not much other than mine is kind of a fun story to tell.

A very young kid living 30 miles outside of Chicago, I was one of three children but the only one to pursue the affliction. There are pictures of this young fisherman and family that predates my ability to remember. And at that age, the family was whole. My father was a businessman who, like many of the time, was engrossed in living the post war dream: work hard in the city with a quaint family in the suburbs. The reality of the dream was that there was little time to do much other than work. So in the precious and rare moments afield, we were a happy and congenial family.

While I can't explain the origin of my need to fish, it was on the Delaware River at my uncle's cabin that the emotional attachment to the water was truly created. It was a big playground for an eleven year old. The year was 1956. People were happy and consumed with what the area had to offer: A gin clear river, mountains, and trails in the sand of the flood plain that led to nowhere but everywhere for a kid. The only stern rule that I remember distinctly was that the bamboo fly rods in the rack behind the cabin door were totally off limits.

Suddenly, in 1957, our summer vacations came to an end. Dad passed away and a young mother with three kids no longer smiled at life. The young child turned to the comfort of the local, safe and warm places provided by the woods and the water. It would become my respite. What water you might ask? Anything within bicycling distance, which, back then was about five miles. Carp, largemouth bass, and pan fish were the fare. No, we never fished for bull heads. Cane poles soon gave way to the Mitchell 300.

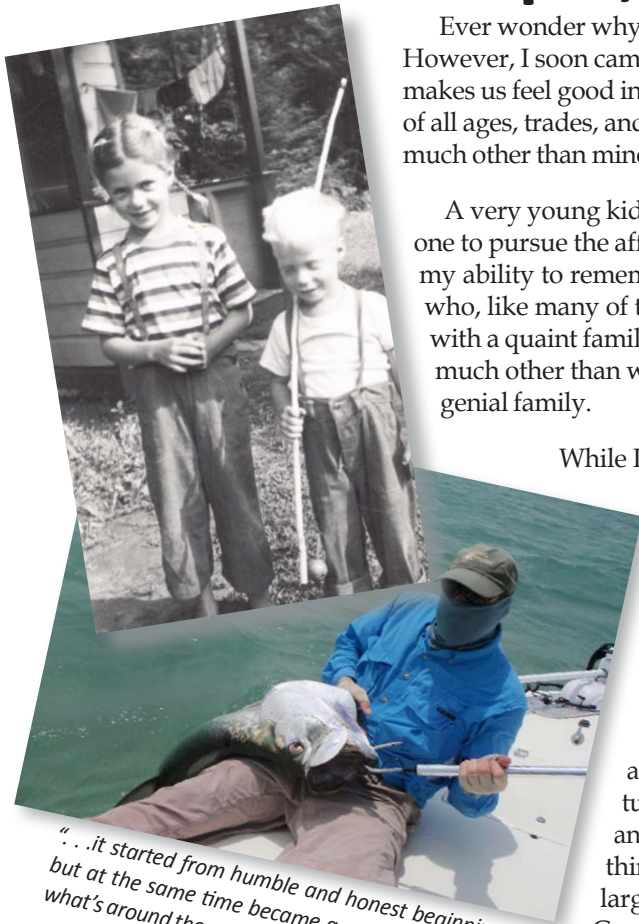
In the spring of 1959, I believe, our neighbor gave me a Japanese bamboo fly rod to fish white streamers to spawning crappies. That was the start. There were no magazine adds or movies of the trout life, but simply the earnest joy that comes from being intimately in touch with all aspects of catching a fish in a fair and sporting manner. From then on it was a Herter's beginners fly tying kit (complete with a sheet metal vise) and lawn mowing money spent on little poppers for sunfish. While I really didn't know how to cast, I knew that my gear was lacking so, in 1965, I bought the beloved white Shakespeare Wonder rod (which I still have). One year my mom bought me a Thompson vise for Christmas. I guess you could say at that time I was a fly fisherman.

Moving to Minnesota in 1969 with my new wife was all part of the grand plan to get closer to the big woods and water. Trout streams in southern Minnesota, smallmouth in the St Croix, and walleyes throughout the state. I was set, or so I thought, until 1973 when I heard about steelhead.

What makes this fish so desirable? My take is that it is a learned behavior caused by the promise of a rare and shiny fish that pulls drag. I went for three years chasing the illusion before, on a late spring day, a fish in the Sucker River took my spawn bag back out to Lake Superior. My hand was left bleeding from trying to get hold of the handle of a Pflueger Medalist. I am a bit ashamed, but also proud, to say that my family suffered significantly from neglect for the next fifteen years.

The learning years were spent on the north shore tributaries. The Devil Track was the epitome of the sport. I knew Highway 61 intimately. But there was a problem. The rivers needed water to bring the fish in, and, that was becoming a rare occurrence.

{continued on page 10}



"... it started from humble and honest beginnings but at the same time became a way of life: to see what's around the next bend and to be in the water."

TIC: Trout Alert

From Brian Burbach's 5th grade class at North Hudson Elementary: the fish are getting bigger, as evidenced in the photo below. It's awhile yet before their release into the Willow River, and they still need to pass their "physical," but stay tuned. Although RipRap will be on hiatus until the fall, we'll post TIC: Trout Alerts on the Kiap-TU-Wish website & Facebook page.



Brian Burbach photo

Oles Fishing: a liberal arts education

{Words} Ben Carlson

Ben, who started The Jolly Angler through an entrepreneurial grant from St. Olaf, is a teaching assistant for Fly Fishing 128.

When speaking about St. Olaf, the first thing that comes to mind is often our annual Christmas Fest, which is amazing as long as you wear a Norwegian sweater and pretend to like Lutefisk. Others think of our outstanding academic programs, spewing out vast amounts of future doctors and Peace Corps volunteers. But one little known fact is St. Olaf offers a class devoted to fly fishing, and it has emerged to become one of the most popular classes on campus. Mending, roll casting, and prince nymph, which may sound out of place on a college campus, are now common banter during our bi-weekly class. After all, to graduate from St. Olaf every student has to take two gym classes to ensure a fully rounded liberal arts education. The Fly Fishing class not only meets that requirement but also provides an opportunity to break up the monotony of everyday college life and learn a lifetime sport that many students wouldn't otherwise get a chance to try.

Class time on Tuesdays is dedicated to tying flies. The class starts with simpler patterns like Brassies and Woolly Buggers, and just last week got to Elk Hair Caddis. Much like a true college class, each week we learn a new technique, such as tails, ribbing, body tapers, and most recently, hackle. This leads Tuesdays to be dubbed "arts and crafts time for adults." Tying flies gives the students the chance to take a break from everyday college life and find enjoyment in hands-on activities. Class time on Thursdays is for fly casting, using bits of fluorescent steelhead yarn as "flies" and casting towards hula-hoops spread out across the fieldhouse floor. Much like tying flies, the casting has followed an education progression, starting with simple casts and moving on towards more advanced techniques like roll casting and shooting line. We begin most of our casting classes with an old VCR tape of a Joan Wulff instructional video. Our instructor, Scott Nesbit, also loves to draw on his fly fishing friends to come in and give guest lectures, where it seems like every week



Photo: Tying a caddis with "Doc"

Some students are so excited they borrow class equipment before any sanctioned outings and hit the streams. There are several local spots the class can go to. The Cannon River, which holds decent smallmouth, carp, and northern populations, is one prime example. Through the Carleton Campus, the Cannon River has been diverted to form a few ponds that hold bluegill. Although

"... the class provides them an opportunity to learn a lifetime sport they most would not have been exposed to ..."

someone comes in to teach us a new cast, tie us a fly, or simply sit around a circle and tell us fishing stories on everything from entomology to rod building. For any experts out there who would like to come in and talk or simply see how the class works, we always love visitors—just be sure to bring a few good fishing stories with you.

Once the weather warms, and the students have begun to master basic techniques, the on-water sessions begin.

most Oles wouldn't ever risk being caught on the Carleton campus (had to get in one rivalry joke), the bluegill ponds with a fly rod in hand does provide an exception to that. Nesbit insists they use flies that they tied themselves, which really brings the students' experience full circle. There is one trout stream in Rice County, called Rice Creek/Spring Brook. A local dairy farmer lets the class walk through the land to cast for their first trout, native brookies that inhabit the stream. There is not a large

trout population, but the Biology and Environmental Sciences departments at St. Olaf have done quite a bit of experimentation and stream repair to try and bring the population back. The big event comes during finals week, when all the students pack into vans and go down to a southeastern Minnesota stream, usually Trout Run or the Whitewater River. Here, the students get to practice everything they learned and use the flies they tied, creating a perfect ending to the class and a great destressor during finals week. With students coming from all different fishing backgrounds, the class provides them an opportunity to learn a lifetime sport they most would not have been exposed to by family or friends. And judging by how many class alumni come in and speak or send in pictures and reports, fly fishing stays with some students past graduation sometimes more so than material from a traditional academic class. Whether creating future doctors or fly fishermen, St. Olaf left no stone unturned to find the true definition of liberal arts. 🦅

What's up with youth?: some fly shop perspectives

At the Kiap-TU-Wish holiday conservation banquet, Dennis Anderson, StarTribune Outdoors Columnist, spoke about young people and the outdoors. I've wondered about that topic on and off since then, falling into conversations with others about the state of the "youths." As a lot of people frequent our local fly shops, I asked various shop proprietors about what they see in regard to youth in fishing. Their perspectives are below. (Note: *Demographic data from Wisconsin trout stamp license sales was not yet available at the time of this newsletter. Maybe next year we'll learn more as revealed by the statistics.*) ~Maria Manion

Robert Hawkins @ Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop

In order for any group to thrive and stay relevant, you need to constantly be bringing in new people. Fly fishing is no different. As many people, ahem, "age out" of the sport, there are plenty of

High School that are really impressive, good fly tiers. They are always stoked to show me photos of their latest fly or fish on their phone. Some of these kids have taken it upon themselves to learn fly fishing; it was not because their dad or grandpa did. I'm always curious what gave them the bug to fly fish. Did they

of aging former punks with bad knees getting into the sport. Along that line, we have had some parent/child duos that have come to take classes and learn how to fly fish together. I think it's a great way for parents to connect with their kids and connect in something they can both enjoy for a lifetime. We have quite a few father/daughter teams that come in together too.

"Some of these kids have taken it upon themselves to learn fly fishing; it was not because their dad or grandpa did."

new people stepping in to fill the empty spots on our river banks. As the owner of a fly shop, I have a court side seat to the evolution of the demographics of our sport. We offer classes at the shop regularly, and I am always happily surprised at the number of students that are under the age of 20, as well as folks in the 20-40 year old range.

We have a couple of regular kids that come in the shop who attend Stillwater

came across an article or video that got them excited on fishing?

Another expanding demographic is the young professional. Young professionals have busy lives and hectic careers. They are always looking for a way to slow down and relax and fly fishing and fly tying are both great ways to do that. Heritage crafts and sports are definitely popular in this day and age, and fly fishing fits that niche perfectly. I like to joke that there is a new generation

The last demographic that has been exciting to see is the traditional spin fishermen looking for a change. They've been fishing the same water for the same fish for years and are looking to shake things up a bit. This has been especially true for the warm water species. It's a new way to go after the fish they've know for years.

I, for one, love all the change. As a shop owner, I love when someone comes in for the second time. They always come back with a story. And you can see it in their eyes, they're hooked.

Brian Smolinski @ Lund's Fly Shop

One thing I find interesting about fly fishing demographics is that most people see the main age group of fly fishermen and women as those in their 50s, 60s, and 70s. But I think the second largest group of fly fishing folks is made up of thirty-somethings. The difference in their behavior is that whereas the older demographic tends to stay connected with anglers of similar interest by attending tying events and groups like TU and other clubs, the younger crowd, it seems, tends to connect in online forums and social media.

I think it can be a bit of a problem for

the younger crowd; when they try and explore the "real-life" social gatherings, they feel out of place. Since the age of the majority of the groups' attendees are around twice that of the younger attendees, it can be very tough for these two demographics to come together.

". . .we—as ambassadors of the angling world—need to do anything we can to encourage as many people as possible to love the outdoors."

After all, many of the older generation have known each other since the younger group was in diapers!

I would just like to reiterate the importance of what Dennis Anderson

spoke about at the holiday banquet; we should expose our younger family members to the outdoors, but also make efforts to welcome any young people we see showing interest in the sport of angling. If avid outdoorsmen really do make the best conservationists, then

we—as ambassadors of the angling world—need to do anything we can to encourage as many people as possible to love the outdoors. That is the only way that our conservation efforts will continue on for generations.

Paige Olson @
Kinni Creek Fly Shop

Youth in the outdoors has been in a decline over the years for many reasons, with many single mothers not being equipped to mentor their children in a variety of outdoor sports to the ever-increasing intrusion of electronics sucking the time out of a family's quality time together. When I wrote my Master's thesis before the turn of the century we had already been seeing this participation decline at staggering numbers. So much so that there was a national movement on Capitol Hill to "Leave No Child Inside," which was partially inspired by a book written by Richard Louv, Recipient of the 2008 Audubon Medal titled "Last Child in the Woods." In the late 1990's my friends and I formed a group of concerned mentors to put on a day for youth called "Youth in the Outdoors" where we had demonstrations and

participation activities for youth ranging from archery, fly tying and casting, trap shooting and canoeing.

Various non-profit groups at that time also made special efforts to bring children back into the outdoor sports fold such as Pheasant's Forever Ringnecks, Trout Unlimited's Stream Explorers

being made outdoor-industry-wide are beginning to make a difference. I have seen an influx of youth coming through my fly shop door over the past couple of years. They are coming in with parents, uncles, aunts, and mentors and are eager to learn more about the sport of fly fishing. They come for fly fishing schools and guided trips and just to mill about the fly

“...there is a new excitement in the air (and on the water) ... It is breathing new life back into an electronic generation. . .”

and Trout in the Classroom programs – also Duck's Unlimited Project Webfoot and Green Wing program. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation also has initiated a youth membership in an effort to better promote and protect the present and future of conservation through a love of the outdoors and hunting.

With all of this being said, the efforts

shop to sponge up any knowledge they can about fly fishing, the conditions on the rivers and what the fish are biting on.

It seems that there is a new excitement in the air (and on the water) of the next generation getting back into the outdoors. It is breathing new life into an electronic generation, one of peaceful days on the river and in the outdoors.

Mike Fischer @
Mend Provisions

There are many people out there that think fly fishing is a dying sport of old men. As a new fly shop owner in Minneapolis, I can tell you that the majority of my business comes from people in their 20's and 30's (and some of them are pretty bad-ass women). There is a lot of interest in fly fishing among young people in the community and it's awesome. When the old guys are in my shop talking about how it's too hot out, the fish aren't biting, or the

media (Instagram, Twitter) has created a new community among younger fly fishers across the globe to further stoke their desire for adventure.

I've personally been fly fishing since the early 1990's. I recall magazine articles back then that complained about increased pressure on rivers becoming a problem, and people being mad at others for giving up 'secret spots' to their readers. The whole time organizations like Trout Unlimited were trying to raise awareness for the sport and getting new people involved.

owner. Yes, I love fly fishing and, yes, I enjoy teaching interested people how to tie flies, how to rig a hopper-dropper, and the differences between fly rod A and fly rod B. But, do I have a desire to bring throngs of new people into the fold and convince them that they should want to be fly fishers? No.

Personally, I wasn't the kid who wanted to hang out with older people learning a technical activity that took a ton of time and didn't include many girls. I honestly don't think trying to get kids interested in fly fishing is important. Don't get me wrong: Is your 12 year old curious about why you fish with that long stick and those tiny hooks? Great, teach them all about it! I just don't have a problem with people coming to the sport organically, and I think a person's mindset is in a better place to take on fly fishing when they are a little more mature. As long as we teach the kids about the environment and how the ecosystem works, hopefully, their respect for the earth will do some of our leg work for us. There may be a time a little later in their lives when their work sucks, or they realize they've spent too much time in front of a computer screen and they need fly fishing. That's when we'll be there for them

“...social media (Instagram, Twitter) has created a new community among younger fly fishers across the globe to further stoke their desire for adventure.”

flies are too small this time of year, the young guys are out bushwhacking to find a spot that you never even thought to fish, and they are creating exciting new directions in the sport: making amazing videos from their experiences, chasing musky, carp and other species that no one cared about 20 years ago, creating insane fly patterns, doing multi-day bike-to-fish trips, and who knows what's next. In addition, social

This brings me to the question of what is good for the sport, should it grow, and if so how? Frankly, the only justification I can come up with for why we should want to grow the sport of fly fishing is to increase the number of people that understand and want to protect the ecosystem. Most other growth is based on financial gain or ego stroking for someone behind the curtain. Yes, I'm saying this as a fly shop

CASTING TIPS: Lefty-isms

{Words} Margaret LeBien



{Images} Gini McCain
Lefty Kreh at the 2015 Great Waters Expo

Lefty Kreh's 5 principles of flycasting have been his stock-in-trade for over four decades of fishing and teaching. Watching him at the 2015 Great Waters Expo, I'm still trying to get my head around his signature side-arm casting style. His long sweeping stroke allows for deep rod loading. There is almost no change in his wrist angle throughout the cast. He uses a lot of drift and short, sharp snaps at the end of the stroke. He rotates his casting thumb away from his body about 45 degrees before he makes the backcast pick up. On longer casts, he leans well back and then forward in a smooth fluid motion. It sure looks easy the way he does it.

Lefty loves to gore the sacred cow of conventional casting instruction. He disagrees with Joan Wulff's use of the term "power snap" to describe the extremely short, ultra-fast final acceleration at the very end of the cast. "Power snap implies a hard punch—it's really a 'speed stroke'. All you need to do is "make a quick 'speed-up-and-stop' in the direction you want the fly and line to go, wait until the unrolling loop is a rod length forward of the tip, then drift the rod tip down to the water." If you were unable to witness Lefty's masterly casting demonstrations at the Expo, here is an abbreviated version of several of his popular dicta:

1 "Don't make long pulls during a double haul. Yanking on the line only tears your underwear and makes you look like a monkey hoeing cabbage. Tug with your line hand at the same time and exactly the same distance you move your rod hand during the speed-up-and-stop, usually only 4 or 5 inches or less.

2 "All stops are smooth unless you want to make a curve cast. If you make a hard stop, you shock the tip and get a "wind knot" in the line. Even if you do shock the tip, you can avoid a tailing loop by tilting your thumb down slightly. This ducks the tip out of the way of the fly line. Only tilt the thumb a tiny distance—no more than a "frog's hair"—the instant after the stop. Tilt it too much and you rip your loop open and spoil the cast.

3 "To make that "extry-long" cast, keep your wrist locked. Bending your wrist when you speed-up-and-stop causes the tip to move over a longer distance and that causes you to throw wide open loops. Just take your forearm (never the wrist) straight back 180 degrees from the target. Your rod and arm should be straight behind you. Lean back on your casting-side foot. This will allow you to move the rod through a longer arc. How long should the stroke be? As long as it takes to get the end of the line moving.

Wonder if I should buy one of those TFO rods he sells. . .

{Simple. . . from page 6}

There had to be an alternative. And there was: the Brule that was spring fed with a lot of fish and not many fisherman. You could camp at Coop Park or sleep in the truck at a fisherman's parking lot. Frozen waders in the morning, cold sandwiches and beer got you through. It was a magic place that often brought tears of thanks to one's eyes.

But as we all know, the fishing is always better across the lake, or, in the case of steelhead, across the country. Names from dreams included the Olympic peninsula in WA, and the rivers around Lake Superior. The Pere Marquette in Michigan became a favorite for big fish. I taught my son how to drift yarn on the Root River in Racine. Speaking of drifting yarn, these were the early years where a few pioneered the art. It was deadly, even on the west coast. Later, nymphing became the challenge. Jim Keutin was the high priest that preached sermons every weekend at his shop in Duluth.

In our gatherings however, the words "salt water" floated to the surface. It's fair to say that we live just about as far from salt water as you can get; but since when does rationale apply to fly fishing? Names like Chico Fernandez and Lefty Kreh became common. So, as true as a compass needle points north, we went south to find out if it was possible to learn about this new place on a family man's budget. We rented skiffs, slept in some-not-too-nice places and washed our freshwater reels religiously. This total lack of rationale must have had its roots in something other than warm thoughts that make one feel good. Let's call it building on the fly fisher's totem. Admit that it started from humble and honest beginnings but at the same time became a way of life: to see what's around the next bend and to be in the water.

I suppose if one had more time and money the rest of this story might be different. But I'm content to say that it actually settles back to, and caring for, the beloved home waters as time permits. What started as a simple, unintended appreciation born in youth (or later for some), fishing has become an assemblage of natural beauty and fine people that share the same knowing appreciation of that which makes one feel good. ➡

FLY TIER'S CORNER: bread & butter caddis v4.0



Fly Recipe

Hook :: Daiichi 1130 Emerger Hook size 16

Thread :: UTC 140 Denier – Gray Brown

Body :: Dubbing Blend (Adams Gray Superfine, Hare's Ear, & Clear UV Ice Dub)

Under-wing :: Poly Yarn – Cream

Wing :: Deer Hair – Natural

Questions? Send them in an email to brian@lundsflyshop.com.

Instructions

- [1] Start the thread on the hook and wrap back to the bend so your thread lines up with the barb, or just beyond it.
- [1] Tightly dub the thread with the dubbing mixture and build a tapered body, stopping it about the length of a hook eye from the front.
- [1] Cut a piece of the poly yarn and split it into two pieces of equal thickness. (When using carded yarns, always cut it where it bends around the side of the card, that way you insure the pieces will lay straight on the fly.)
- [1] Tie in the poly yarn piece right in front of the dubbed body, and cut the yarn just past the bend of the hook (about half the hook gap or a little less).
- [1] Cut a clump of deer hair and use a hair stacker to even out the tips.
- [1] Tie in the clump so the tips stick out just beyond the yarn fibers (about the entire hook gap length, or a little less, beyond the bend of the hook).
- [1] Start with the hair clump on the side of the hook and roll the fibers onto the top of the hook while flaring the hair fibers as you cinch them down tightly.
- [1] Pull the butt ends of the hair up and bring your thread in front of the fibers. Whip finish and trim the butt ends creating an angled head.

I recently sat down with Rob Kolakowski, the creator of the original B&B Caddis, and together we worked out an updated version of my favorite caddis pattern. Rob, who lives in River Falls, has worked as a guide, casting and tying instructor, and production fly tyer for over 15 years. Over the years Rob has tied thousands of caddis flies both for his own guide service and for the fly bins at Bob Mitchell's and Lund's Hardware. Around the time the hardware store was closing up and my shop was opening, Rob decided he needed a break from production tying.

Since my shop has been open, Rob's B&B Caddis has been by far the most requested fly pattern that was missing from my fly bins. The latest version of Rob's Caddis is tied on an emerger hook to aid in an increased hook up rate, and the under-wing was changed to poly yarn which keeps it floating longer—although even subsurface, this fly is killer. Rob taught long ago a method of fishing this pattern undressed. While at the end of a drift, bring your line taut and use the drag of the current. Getting the fly just under the surface of the water can sometimes trigger a big fish who is being more selective to eat your fly!

Kiap-TU-Wish

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Next RipRap deadline: Friday, August 14? Really?

We love receiving submissions to RipRap! We really do. So make note of your fishing adventures this spring and summer, write them up, and send them my way. The deadline might be August 14th, but any ideas, photos or stories you care to send from now until then would be warmly welcomed. manion.maria@gmail.com



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DON'T MISS the MAY 6th MEETING at

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You can find parking:

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Dinner begins at 6PM (your dime).
The meeting begins at 7PM.

Jane Doe
123 Anystreet
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Marty Engel *will join*
us on **May 6th**



Planning for the Future Management of Brook Trout

Marty Engel, WDNR Fisheries Biologist for Dunn, Pierce, Polk and Saint Croix counties, will be joining us on May 6th. We're fortunate to have Marty speak with us each spring; this year he'll be talking about the future management of brook trout. **Please join us!**