



**Conserve. Protect. Restore.**

## THE DRIFT: Words from our new president, Scott Wagner!

Goldfinches, house finches, song sparrows, juncos, chickadees and cardinals are all mobbing our feeders in advance of an April snowstorm. A few confused and slightly bedraggled robins and a wind-blown bluebird try to stay warm and out of the snow in a nearby thicket. It certainly doesn't look like spring, but spring is coming. It won't be long before the trees start to bud and bloom, before delicate spring ephemerals carpet the woodland floor and blue-winged olives start hatching on our local streams.

It's been an incredible winter for habitat work with Randy Arnold and his hearty crew of Kiap-TU-Wish, Clearwater TU, and Twin City TU members clearing two upcoming



*Scott Wagner, our new prez, with a fine catch.*

DNR stream restoration projects in Dunn County and Kiap's Trimble/Gutting project in Pierce County. Of particular note is that even though the Trimble/Gutting project wasn't signed until March 23rd, Randy and his crews were able to clear the entire project, normally an entire winter's worth of work, in less than a month! Randy was joined in this Herculean effort by members of the three chapters mentioned above, employees of Fairmount Santrol, NRCS employees and several high school youth and their parents. Thank you volunteers!

Spring will be an exciting time for the area schools participating in Dean Hansen's Bugs in

the Classroom exhibits and the Trout in the Classroom trout releases. Our chapter's Trout in the Classroom program is organized by Greg Olson in cooperation with area schools. Classrooms start by receiving trout eggs in the late fall, raise them through the year and culminate their year by releasing the trout fingerlings in a local coldwater stream. This program wouldn't be possible without the many volunteers who support Greg, the specialized trout rearing equipment paid for by Kiap-TU-Wish, and the wonderful teachers who volunteer their time and their classrooms to raise trout with kids.

Spring is also an exciting time for all of us who love the outdoors to get out and visit our favorite stream spots and maybe even explore for new spots. Remember to ask permission before crossing private land and to be respectful of landowner rights. Remember to look for the migrating warblers that use streams as flyways in their northward trek. They're all insect eaters, so paying close attention to them might even clue you into a hatch before anyone else on the stream is aware of it. Remember to pause to notice the spring ephemerals blooming at your feet. And if you think of it, remember to invite a child or friend to come along with you, so that they too can be introduced to the wonder of trout fishing in spring. Happy Fishing. — Scott

*At our chapter's March board meeting, Scott Wagner was elected as our new Kiap-TU-Wish president. Congratulations, Scott! And a big thank you to former president Tom Schnadt who will be serving as Ex-Officio Board Member.*

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



**TROUT  
UNLIMITED**

Volume 11 | Issue 9  
May 2018

Please join us at our May 2nd chapter meeting in River Falls. Heath Benike, WDNR Fisheries Supervisor and our new fish biologist, Kasey Siebert, will be there to talk about our region's trout and coldwater resources.

**Junior's Bar & Restaurant**  
414 South Main Street  
River Falls, WI 54022  
715-425-6630  
[www.juniorsrf.com](http://www.juniorsrf.com)

The photo above is from a previous year's TIC (Trout in the Classroom) trout release on the Willow River. It's a great time and we always need volunteers. See inside for volunteer opportunities this spring, and reserve a spot to help out.

### DON'T FORGET:

- Visit the K-TU website & Facebook page for news, announcements & updates.
- The next RipRap deadline is Friday, August 17.
- Send info to: [manion.maria@gmail.com](mailto:manion.maria@gmail.com)

RIPRAP: Restoration, Improvement & Preservation through Research And Projects

## JUNE CLINIC IS IMMINENT: Last Call For Volunteers

On Saturday, June 2nd, Kiap-TU-Wish will host its annual *Fly Fishing For Trout* clinic in River Falls. For close to two decades we've endeavored to connect the citizens in River Falls to their river. Every year we have about twenty students we hope will fall in love with the Kinni. We believe we'll have similar results this year. And even though we only market this clinic in River Falls, it's open to anyone 13 and older with the requisite twenty bucks. If you know someone who'd be interested, have them call Parks and Recreation in River Falls.

Finally, while we've almost filled out our volunteer staff, we could still use a few more souls to serve as guides, mentors and teachers. The only requirement is a desire to help others enjoy the sport. The clinic runs from 1:00 to 9:00 PM and includes supper. You can work the entire day or opt for a half day, even though I'd hardly call it work.

Contact: [mikealwin@gmail.com](mailto:mikealwin@gmail.com) or 651/739-3150.



Corey Hildebrant, a happy participant at last year's fly fishing clinic.

Maria Manion photo

## Kinni Mini Fiberglass Clave

For a couple years now, Peter Davis and I have met from time to time at Scott Hanson's workplace for lunch and some fiberglass rod casting. We know that in the chapter there are plenty of like-minded glassheads who have been kicking around the idea of a bigger get together. So without further ado:

**When:** May 12th, 2018, 2 pm till the evening hatch dies down....  
**Where:** Glen Park, River Falls, WI  
**The Plan:** Meet at 2 pm, do some casting in the park, grill out, and then walk to the Kinnickinnic River for some fishing.  
**The Cost:** \$5 to cover the cost of hamburgers, hotdogs, buns, condiments, chips, and pop. BYO beer.  
**Who:** Any and all! Fiberglass rod not required. We encourage the "fiberglass curious" as well!

Please respond to me, Greg Olson, by email: [driftless23@gmail.com](mailto:driftless23@gmail.com) if interested, so we can get an idea of how much food to buy. Thanks!

— Greg Olson

## IN HONOR OF MARTHA HULINGS KAEMMER

It is with heavy hearts that we report that Martha Hulings Kaemmer passed away in late March. Martha was a St. Paul businesswoman and philanthropist, married to Dr. Art Kaemmer, MD (the KRLT's first-ever Vice President). The Kaemmers have supported the Kinni Land Trust from our founding—in fact, they were our 'angel investors': they backed us when we were only an idea, and not a lot more. Martha and Art's financial support, through their HRK Foundation, and generous personal support have continued ever since. Many of our members will fondly remember Martha from events like our "Corks, Cuisine, and Conservation".

Martha was a kind, genuinely unassuming, and generous spirit—eager to know what we were doing, and hear about our challenges and our successes. It seemed to me that Martha focused her attention and care outward, towards others—the very definition of a 'generous spirit.' We send our sincere condolences to Art, and to their family, for their loss.

Written by Robert Chambers, KRLT Board Member and KRLT founder.

—  
Reprinted courtesy of the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust.

## Kiap-Tu-Wish Women at the Movies?

A few of the chapter's female anglers have been toying around with the idea of a low-key-let's-get-together-and-hang-out movie night. If you'd be interested in something like this—or know someone who would be—please contact Sarah Sanford at [sarahsanford@yahoo.com](mailto:sarahsanford@yahoo.com).

There's a short film out there about Megan Boyd, a world-famous British fly tyer. Might be fun to celebrate Megan, spend some time together, and chat with other women who share an interest in fishing or our beautiful water resources.

Or, should you have another film in mind, we'd love to hear about that too!

— Sarah Sanford & Maria Manion



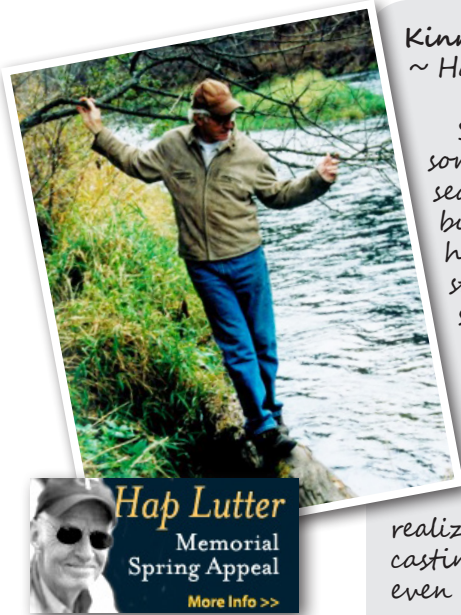
## Editor's Note

I'm sitting in my den and working on this newsletter. My faux-woodfire electric heater is on full blast and I'm watching the inches of snow pile up outside. It's mid April and we're in the midst of our chapter's spring appeal.

Like spring itself, our Hap Lutter Memorial Spring Appeal started a bit later than usual this year, so we don't yet have a preliminary total to share. Thank you to those who have donated thus far. Your contribution helps the chapter with stream restoration efforts including mowing and matching for grant requests; educational programs like Trout in the Classroom and Bugs in the Classroom; youth camp sponsorships; and stream monitoring which recently supported our advocacy efforts for dam removal in River Falls.

Speaking for myself (and I suspect others), I whole-heartedly support all those things mentioned above, but I donate to our spring appeal to benefit me. My appeal donation helps ensure that the beautiful place I love to fish, and the beautiful fish I love to catch, remain.

Last year we shared an excerpt from Hap's fishing journal which is worth sharing again now. I've had days on the river such as Hap describes, and I'm sure you have had similar days yourself. Those days feed our souls, as they say, even on spring days full of snow. Please donate to our spring appeal.



To learn more about Hap Lutter and the Spring Appeal, visit our web site: [www.kiaptuwish.org](http://www.kiaptuwish.org)

### Kinnickinnic River/1996 ~ Hap Lutter

Sat and watched the water; this is something I've done most of the last season. It's really nice to sit entirely by myself and watch the birds, the hatch and the river. Have had a streak of five days of not getting skunked so I'm starting to feel I understand something about the water. Today I did everything right, caught only two, but take solace in the beauty of the river. All in all I feel this was my "ah ha" year: all of the sudden realizing what it took to catch fish: my casting has improved and maybe I've even learned to think like a fish.

... beautiful with the leaves turning but still early. Fog rolled down the river, not enough to blur vision but softening all the edges.

## 2018

## EVENTS CALENDAR

- **Rocky Branch Elementary ECO Day**  
April 27, 2018  
1:15 - 3:15 pm
- **Greenwood Elementary School Bugs in the Classroom**  
May 22, 2018  
10:15am - 11:40am
- **Meyer Middle School Service Day**  
May 11, 2018
- **Kinni Mini Fiberglass Clave**  
May 12, 2018  
Glen Park in River Falls  
Starts at 2pm  
\$5 to cover food & beverage  
(See opposite page for details)
- **Amery Intermediate School Trout Release**  
May 18, 2018  
Willow River State Park  
Starts at 10:30am
- **Ellsworth Middle School Field Day**  
May 21, 2018
- **Greenwood Elementary School Trout Release**  
May 22, 2018  
Willow River State Park
- **River Falls Fly Fishing Clinic**  
June 2 2018  
Glen Park in River Falls  
1pm-9pm  
(See opposite page for details)
- **RipRap Deadline for September 2018 Issue**  
Friday, August 17, 2018  
Send your stories or info to: [manion.maria@gmail.com](mailto:manion.maria@gmail.com)

Thank you to all people who have been involved with RipRap this year — our writers, our stamp lickens and mailers, the volunteers who do the work we write about each month, and most especially our printer, Bob Bradham. Without Bob's generosity, we would not come home after a day's work to find a hand-delivered copy in our mailbox. Thank you all for your time and effort.

Oh, once the newsletter file goes to Bob for printing, I never look at it again because I know that I will find an error that will drive me nuts. Bob and Judy, who often proofread the newsletter before it goes to print, were unavailable last month, so off it went with only my eyes at attention. Well, Jon Jacobs found an error that has actually given me a chuckle every time I think about it. I don't believe I would have changed it if I could. See the caption on the photo of Paul Johnson tying flies on his vise. Sorry about that Paul — and all you avid fly tyers. Didn't mean to imply that tying flies was a vice.

Have a good spring and summer season. Pen some stories and send suggestions my way for next September's RipRap. Angle on. — Maria Manion



# Trout in the Classroom & More

*LEFT: The Beast guarding its territory!*

*RIGHT: Rocky Branch fifth graders teaching the second graders about trout.*



## Trout in the Classroom Update

The trout fry in all four classrooms are doing well. We have had very low mortality this year.

Steve Papp's class at Greenwood Elementary has been observing some interesting behavior. Early on, the kids found that the fry liked to hang out in the rocks at the bottom of the tank. They now have a fry, "The Beast," that has claimed the aerator as his/her own and chases away all fry that get near the aerator or the bubbles. Jeremiah Fisk's class at Amery Elementary, has a few fry that will chase and eat their siblings if given the chance. Notice that I just reported some fishing tips? Use streamers by highly oxygenated water and you should find some big fish!

Joe Young's kids at Rocky Branch are the experts at all this. They had the TIC program last year as fourth graders and as fifth graders this year, they have been doing a great job taking care of everything including teaching the entire school about trout!

## Volunteers Needed

### 1. **May 9 | Greenwood Elementary BIC**

With the Hudson program taking the year off and the kids at Amery and Rocky Branch, already going through the program, we only have Greenwood Elementary participating on May 9th, from 10:15 to 11:40. It would be great to get 3 volunteers to assist with the different bug stations that Dean puts out.

### 2. **May 18 & May 22 | Amery Intermediate School & Greenwood Elementary School Trout Releases**

Amery Intermediate School is going to release its fish on May 18th in Willow River State Park. The plan is to start at 10:30 am with the trout release and then do some bug collection from the river and identification. Lunch and fly rod casting instruction will follow.

The trout release for Greenwood Elementary will occur in the state park on May 22nd. We would like to get 3 volunteers for each trout release. Rocky Branch and Amery High School are old hands at trout stocking and don't require any assistance.

### 3. **April 27 | Rocky Branch Elementary ECO Day**

Rocky Branch Elementary is having their ECO Day on April 27th. One of the stations is going to be bug collection and identification on the Kinni. They need three volunteers from our chapter to assist with this from 1:15 to 3:15pm.

### 4. **May 11 | Meyer Middle School Service Day**

Meyer Middle School's Service day is scheduled for May 11th. The service project is planting prairie grasses and forbs on the Trimble /Holst easement. Prior to doing the planting, Kasey Seibert and the WDNR crew will demonstrate electro shocking. Afterwards Dan Wilcox, Tom Schnadt and Caitlin Smith will help the students seed the riparian zone along the Trimble.

### 5. **May 21 | Ellsworth Middle School Field Day**

The annual Ellsworth Middle School field day is set for Monday, May 21st. Students will learn about the Pine Creek Stream restoration project, investigate invertebrates in Pine Creek and learn about Fairmount Santrol's Maiden Rock facility.

No experience is necessary for volunteers and we always have a fun and rewarding time. Please email me at: [driftless23@gmail.com](mailto:driftless23@gmail.com) if interested or if you have any questions or concerns. Thanks for considering this; the teachers and kids really appreciate your help!

—Greg Olson



# Meet Suzanne Constantini by Judy Mahle Lutter



New Board Member and treasurer Suzanne Constantini brings years of experience, as a fly fisher and accomplished professional, to Kiap-TU-Wish. Many of you probably know Suzanne and her husband Ed who are long-time members of the chapter and attend most meetings. Suzanne says she likes to sit back and listen, a talent honed in her long career as a nursing administrator.

Following college, Suzanne spent three years as an Army nurse, one in Vietnam in 1970-71. One of the things she appreciated most about her experience was the collaborative efforts and respect between nurses and doctors.

She and Ed met at Fort Benning

Georgia where she was stationed as a pediatric nurse and Ed performed duties as a lab technician. They married three years after their Vietnam service. Suzanne's nursing career spanned 46 years and the location and responsibilities changed and grew. She was a head nurse in pediatrics at Fairview, director of the NICU at Minneapolis Children's Hospital, and then went back and got her masters in business. She laughs saying, "I know how to budget and use money wisely." For 16 years she was the Vice President of Patient Services at St. Croix Hospital, located in St. Croix Falls Wisconsin. It was there she learned a lot about rural healthcare. She ended her nursing career at Gillette Children's Specialty Center which she loved because of the patients and the caring attitude of all staff members.

Suzanne also has a long fishing resume. She was exposed to fishing early as her Dad was an avid angler. Starting in 1973 she and Ed made frequent trips to the Boundary waters where they mainly fished walleye and bass. In 1987, after moving to Stillwater, Suzanne took a fly casting course at Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop after she decided it was not a good idea to try and learn from Ed. After that, they fished their two favorite rivers, the Rush and the Kinni.

Suzanne also took a fly tying course from Bob Mitchell and observes the fun Ed, Ken Hanson, Roy Erickson, and Greg Dietl have at their frequent winter

tying sessions. For Suzanne, fishing is just as much about the calmness and beauty of a river as the fish she catches. "I don't care about numbers, I do love to take my journal and camera and just soak it all up." Suzanne recently wrote a book review for the April issue of RipRap; she chose the book *Little Rivers*, by Margot Page because the author explores the many experiences of fly fishing from a woman's point of view. She's encouraged by the increasing numbers of women who fish and are becoming more involved in preserving and protecting the rivers and streams.

Now retired, Suzanne is finding more time to fish as well as paint and read. She and Ed frequently take drives just to find new rivers and streams. I suspect they would share some of their favorites.

Scott Wagner and Tom Schnadt recruited her to the board. She attended the January board meeting before committing and says one of the things that excites her is the potential to learn new things about freshwater habitat and help the chapter continue its important mission. Her passion and varied background make her a great asset and addition. 🐟



**Both Suzanne and Bob are part of the**

**Kiap-TU-Wish book scene — Suzanne for her book reviews and Bob for his tell-all about fishing in southeastern Minnesota.**

**Try your local fly shop for a copy of Bob's book (now out of print):**

- *Fly-Fishing for Trout in Southeastern Minnesota... a Troutchaser's Guide* by Bob Trevis

**Try your library or online retailer for a copy of titles Suzanne has reviewed:**

- *A Different Angle: Fly Fishing Stories by Women* by Holly Morris, Editor
- *Little Rivers: Tales of a Woman Angler* by Margot Page

## Fly Wrangler Needs Fly Donations

In spite of Paul Johnson's many fly contributions, we need help from our Kiap-TU-Wish members to fill out our chapter's fly inventory. We need flies for youth who attend the spring fly fishing clinic, as well as for reward assortments for those who contribute to the spring appeal for the first time, or at the \$125 level.

We are in need of trout flies tied in sizes 12, 14, or 16, both nymphs and dries. Smaller flies, although effective, might be difficult for youths and beginners to use. Your flies can be sent to the Kiap-TU-Wish mailbox, or they can be brought to the chapter meeting and delivered to Bob Trevis, the current "Fly Wrangler." Thanks in advance!

— Bob "Fly Wrangler" Trevis



Tom Schnadt photo

If you've only heard mention of this "Fly Wrangler" but can't put a face to the name, here he is: Bob Trevis. He'll be at the next chapter meeting if you want to give him flies for his wrangling efforts. You might also know Bob from his years as a Kiap-TU-Wish board member or as author of *"Fly-Fishing for Trout in Southeastern Minnesota ... a Troutchaser's Guide."* —Maria Manion





# BRIDGES

An essay by Greg Meyer

*Sometimes, if you stand on the bottom rail of a bridge and lean over to watch the river slipping slowly away beneath you, you will suddenly know everything there is to be known.*

— A. A. Milne (Winnie-The-Pooh)

**Until recently, I hadn't thought much about generational stuff.**

I had just returned from a trip to Florida, there to visit my frail dad who had made the small nursing home his final destination. You know the one. The one where he vowed he would never be — where we all vow we'll never be.

While we were having rambling conversation, my dad asked me if I had any kids, where his mom was, and where I lived now. At least he could still recall who I was, if only for the time being. For a brief moment, I had a vision of me lying there in his place. Which, by any reckoning, is not a particularly happy vision—if you know what I mean.

Sure, I have an estate plan that is mostly finished: My favorite hand-wrapped fly rod that I made is to be given to my firstborn son, although my daughter may be the one to carry on (which is more than OK by me). All of my fly fishing tackle and fly tying goo are to be divvied up between the kids, with

the leftovers going to Kiap-TU-Wish and the St. Paul Fly Tiers. My wife gets the IRA and all of the headaches that go with sorting stuff out at the end of things. But it's too early to think about that ... Right?

**I really needed to get away. I needed to visit an old friend and go fly fishing.**

I went to visit my old friend often. He would provide contentment and a calmness as I'd mull over the divorce I was experiencing, or contemplate a job change—willingly or otherwise.

More recently, my friend was there for me after my own mortality had suddenly flashed before me while I was at work one day. I found myself scared, on an ER gurney with wires and gadgets protruding from me, monitoring for a possible heart attack. Good thing I was told "it must be gas," or "you're anxious about something." Anxious. No shit.

Now I really needed to go fishing with my old friend. I started to get excited, looking forward to seeing him, looking for something different to

change my outlook on things.

I hadn't seen him in quite a while. I had this nervousness, this anticipation I couldn't explain. It was a different feeling. Something didn't feel quite right.

**But this was different. Really different.**

A feeling similar to the time in my college days, when a pal and I went to roust up a friend to go celebrate the Fourth of July. We arrived at his apartment only to find an envelope carefully placed next to a pile of photos, barely visible through the crack in his chain-linked locked door. Something just didn't feel right. The door was chained from the inside, so he had to be home, but he wasn't answering. "For Mom and Dad Only.....PLEASE," was written on the envelope in his somewhat messy and smudged handwriting. We broke down the door. You know the rest.

**I was having this same unexplainable feeling. Like I knew he was gone.**

Having the same gut-punch feeling



I had that day when I visited my dad lying there in that dank, urine-smelling "home." It forced me to take pause, to reflect upon my fly-fishing days gone by. The beautiful places I had visited, the beautiful creatures I had been blessed to hold in my hand. My family. My friends. Those wonderful days I had fishing with my friend as he looked over the river. It made me contemplate what lies ahead for me and my own mortality — as well as my family and future generations of fly fishers.

Just this side of 90 years old, my friend had been there for me when I was a fly-fishing virgin trying to find my way, escaping the rigors of the corporate life. Often comforting me when I was having a bad day.

He had been with me for a few awesome days on the Rush River in western Wisconsin, where I had witnessed epic hatches that I had not experienced anywhere else in the U.S.: not Montana, Wyoming, Yellowstone National Park, Utah, or even the Bighorn River.

He was there when I taught my six-year-old son to fish for trout with a cheap spinning rod and a dangling gob of wiggly night crawlers bought from the refrigerator of the "Whitehouse" porch near the banks of the Rush.

He was looking over us when I taught my nine-year-old daughter to fly fish down-and-across with a gaudy and impossibly pink, sparkly concoction we'd tied up the night before while she was sitting on my lap. He was there three years later when she caught that 19-inch brown on a dry fly.

He was also there when the snotty-nosed kid came up to me to display the beautiful (although dead), 26-inch brown trout that he'd just caught for supper. "On a water worm from the Whitehouse refrigerator," he announced with pride.

My friend taught me that I had better learn to throw a long leader and a slack line over the glassy pools of the Rush, as I cast over and over, hoping to poke that 20-incher lying beneath the old oak on the river bank. You know the one.

**My friend was there to share this all with me, an irreplaceable part of my fly-fishing experiences.**

With perfect predictability, the first week of March, I would take advantage of the early catch-and-release season to fish with my friend. After an often cold

and bitter winter, it was good just to get out to shed that pent-up cabin fever. While I would usually fight cold hands, frozen guides, and not many fish, I had no expectations — it was just my friend and me. He was solid and quiet, never complained.

**He was one of the few friends that really never let me down. He couldn't. It wasn't in him.**

My heart sank as I pulled into the gravel lot of the small park next to the river. The place where my friend stood watch over the river for decades. The place where I went to visit him with perfect predictability, year after year — for nearly thirty years. My friend, the old silver bridge, with all his personality, history, and stories was gone. Replaced by an anonymous concrete slab. The product of a throw-away generation that tends to think we should always build new — instead of taking care of and improving what we have.

**Oh, the stories he could've told. Now he was gone.**

To this day I can vividly recall all his rust and imperfections, the moans-and-groans that come with age and being useful. I will miss the noisy semis with the familiar kadunk, kadunk sound emanating from each humming tire as it passed over my tired friend.

The drip, drip, drip, of the condensation provided by the morning's awakening. Rust streaking from each bolt, swallows and cedar waxwings, active and diving to eat the day's insect hatch. Their echoes resonating within earshot of anyone trying to concentrate on that big nose poking through the surface film of the popular spring creek.

My friend who stood watch over one of the best trout streams in the Midwest was one of a series of vanishing landmarks that define the "Driftless Area" fishing experience. Truss bridges. Round barns. Wooden stiles. Swinging gates. He was something picture cards are made of, and he held a special place in my heart and no doubt many others'.

**I had hoped he would be around to hold the same significance for my children and grandchildren. A place of reflection, contemplation, excitement.**

Surrounded by an air of melancholy, I thought about this as I sat in my truck at that small park. I didn't fish that day. I thought about my friend, my father,

my family, my graying TU chapter, fly tying club and others. Who will be there to watch after them, our traditions — our rivers? Who will be there to teach history's lessons to drive the momentum to move forward, to bridge the gap between past and future anglers, to create a place to reflect and do good work?

Why can't we try to preserve such places, give them a face lift, to help carry on across generations — to preserve our stories? More than a landmark, my bridge was something memories are connected to. When all the old landmarks are gone, replaced with bland modern conveniences, how will the next generation connect with tradition, with stories? What will disappear next? Our rivers?

#### **Who will be our bridge builders?**

Let's build bridges with purpose, and where possible direct our efforts into strengthening the bridges established by others. Bridges that have not just utility, but meaning. Ones that make our traditions, rivers, and efforts all the more productive.

Over the years my old friend helped bridge the gap between communities, fly fishers and locals. He was a landmark of the Midwest's Driftless Area for generations of folks that would come together, drink a few beers, tell a few stories, remember old friends. A place where my buddies would announce "meet me at the Silver Bridge," and I knew exactly where to be.

When it is time for me to cross the river for the last time, do me a favor: "Meet me at the Silver Bridge," then I will be complete. 🏹

*The Highway 63 "Silver Bridge" in Martell, WI, has come to pass and is no longer — replaced by a generic, slab concrete bridge. This spring, at the park where the bridge once stood, the St. Paul Fly Tiers will be building and dedicating a bench for all those fly fishers and folks who came before us — Tom Helgeson, Bob Mitchell, Bill Spiess, Mark Tibbetts, Big Ed, et al — and those who will come after us. A bench to sit, reflect, contemplate and enjoy the river. A place to think about your own future as well as the future of our families, friends, and the river. — GM*

# Hit the road, Jack!

By Jonathan Jacobs

Before last month's tying demonstrations done in memory of Dick "Dry Fly" Frantes, I took a look at Jim Humphrey's recollections about Dick and the compulsively exploratory nature of his trout fishing in the Humphrey/Shogren book *Trout Streams of Minnesota and Wisconsin*. Jim wrote of Dick's typewritten ledger of these explorations, which Dick guarded closely and considered highly confidential. I am proud to say that I have access to that ledger. After mulling over the possibility of Dick reaching from beyond the grave to put a hex on me, I even scanned a relatively innocuous page of it for inclusion in a presentation I did about looking for new water.

In that presentation I named several local and semi-local trout streams, asking the audience for a show of hands if they had fished them. The exercise confirmed for me a long-held opinion, i.e. anglers are creatures of habit and typically don't get around much. (There was one odd moment when I asked if anyone had fished the Brill River, which is northeast of Rice Lake, WI. It's not prime trout water and I was surprised by the strong show of hands. As it turned out, my long-suppressed Iowa accent must have emerged because, as I learned later, most people thought that I had asked about the famous Brule River.)

I posit that exploration is a good thing and I urge you to do more of it. If you need inspiration beyond your natural sense of wanderlust, consider that you might just find your personal angling Eden out there. Too, with armadas of plastic rental boats helmed by jabbering inebriates ready to descend on one of the immediate area's premier trout streams, you might consider an exploratory probe of Wisconsin's interior as a means of blood pressure control. In a letter to author and publisher Nick Lyons, Norman Maclean expressed surprise at reading that Lyons had reported fishing in solitude on the Big Hole River because, Mr. Maclean wrote, "The Big Hole used to be home, sweet home for every son-of-a-bitch from Butte..." If you've begun to regard your usual haunt in that way, it's likely time to hit the road in search of new water.

I looked at Wisconsin DNR trout stream maps and found, within a seventy-five mile radius of Hudson,



Jonathan Jacobs photo

**"If you need inspiration beyond your natural sense of wanderlust, consider that you might just find your personal angling Eden out there."**

dozens of trout streams that are likely aqua incognito for most of you reading this. Some have public access stretches while others do not, but there's always access from bridges, and landowners are a surprisingly friendly lot when approached with respect. Our chapter has even had some involvement in stream improvement projects on some of them. St. Croix County's Parker Creek is one of them and the most nearby. The stream thread is longer than you might think and much of it is readily accessible. The Willow River and its Race Branch have fallen on hard times recently, but there are stretches of the main stem and both its forks that just might offer surprising fishing. Chapter members have put in work time on Tiffany Creek, Wilson Creek, Bear Creek and Gilbert Creek. One wonders how many of them have returned for recreational purposes. The chapter is increasingly active on the Trimble River and I imagine that many of our members have fished there, but can that be said of the Little Trimble?

Looking beyond those streams, there are others about which one hears whispers and innuendo that may indicate their worthiness as a destination. In no particular order, there are Duncan and McCann Creeks, which are often

mentioned in the same breath. How about Upper and Lower Pine Creek? This is not the stream near Maiden Rock, but now that I mention it, have you been there? Elk Creek? Big River? Sand Creek? The South Fork of the Hay River? The Trade River? Arkansas Creek? That's an interesting spelling, but the most mysterious name is Lousy Creek. Is it simply lousy, or is it lousy with fish, or mosquitoes? Go find out! There are other streams in the area, of course, that I did not name. Among fans of jazz and blues music, it's common to hear that what's important in a guitar solo are the notes not played. You might think about that.

Lastly, before I wish all of you well for the summer, I would like to thank Kiap-TU-Wish, and most particularly Maria Manion, who is doing stellar work as editor of RipRap, for allowing me to contribute to the newsletter. I also thank all of you who taken the time to say nice things to me about my contributions. I've told several of you that writing is just about the hardest thing I do, so anything that allows me to think that my miserable toil, to cop a phrase from H.L. Mencken, means something to you makes it all worthwhile. 🐾



# Winter Brushing Year in Review 2017-2018 by Randy Arnold

As I write, there is a winter storm moving into the state, threatening to cancel what I had hoped would be the final workday of the winter season. The workday was tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 14, on the Trimble/Gutting easement.

To date, since last November, there have been **30 scheduled workdays**. Most

occurred on a Saturday, but there were a lot of mid-week workdays too, as we struggled to race against the onset of spring. Total volunteer hours spent on brushing this winter total 2,176, almost double the hours from the previous year.

From a low of just one volunteer to a high of 30 volunteers, it's been a challenging and enjoyable work season.

Thank you to each and every one of you who volunteered. You truly make a difference in trout habitat. The work we accomplished this winter makes the actual bank restoration work go much faster when the habitat work crews arrive.


Here's how we spent our 2017/2018 winter brushing season:

**The Kinni:** We began work in early November. For three successive Saturdays we removed box elder saplings from an easement on the Kinni owned by chapter and board member John Kaplan. A total of 169 volunteer hours were logged on this project.

**3**  
SATURDAYS | **169** HOURS  


**Wilson Creek:** Our only obligated brushing commitment for the season was the Trimble/Gutting easement, but contract negotiations were holding up the start of our work. Until sorted, we moved our assault on box elders eastward to Dunn County where a stretch of Wilson Creek (below county Road O) is scheduled for NRCS-funded restoration work this summer. Over 2,000 box elder trees stood in the path of that work.


Starting in early December and stretching into February, 14 workdays were held at Wilson Creek amounting to just shy of 1,000 volunteer hours. Though outside of Kiap-TU-Wish's "home waters," we took on this challenge to assist the Clearwater Chapter to the east. A fair number of their members showed up regularly to assist with the work.

**14**  
WORKDAYS | **1000** HOURS  


**2000+** BOX ELDERS 

**Hay Creek:** With work coming to a close on Wilson Creek, and still lacking the signed contracts needed to begin work at the Trimble/Gutting easement, we moved to Hay Creek, another Dunn County project slated for NRCS-funded restoration work this summer. Hay Creek, a brook trout stream, is located just 2-3 miles south of the Wilson Creek site at the Ruenger easement.


Volunteers worked 6 workdays for a total of 420 volunteer hours. The WDNR had already done some clearing work in conjunction with volunteers from Dunn County Fish & Game who harvested a number of box elder trees to build 'fish cribs' for installation in some area lakes. Volunteers from Fairmount Santrol assisted with work on the final day of box elder removal.

**6**  
WORKDAYS | **420** HOURS  


**The Trimble:** Within the past month, the contracts were finally signed and work has begun on the much anticipated Trimble/Gutting easement. Landowners Chris and Heidi Gutting attended our March chapter meeting and were as anxious as I was to start clearing box elders from their 2,400-foot easement that stretches both upstream and downstream of the bridge on 640th Avenue.

So far there have been 7 scheduled workdays occurring both mid-week and Saturdays in order to complete as much work as possible while snow remained on the ground. In those 7 workdays, 600 volunteer hours have been logged including April 11th when some of my die-hard regulars were joined by 8 volunteers from Fairmount Santrol.

One full day of brushing work remains on the Gutting easement. I am hoping we'll be finished before you receive this newsletter.

**7**  
WORKDAYS  
**SO FAR** | **600** HOURS  
  
**& COUNTING**

# High Tech Hex

by Herb Lundberg

I was getting weary of being out-fished by my two sons. This was especially true when we night-fished the hex hatch in the Bibon Swamp on the White River. So when friend Mad Davie accepted my invitation to fish the hex hatch on the White, I thought it would be a good opportunity to try out my newest high-tech gadgets. The gadgets were two very fancy hearing aids that could be adjusted for both volume and wavelength frequency.

It was July 2, pretty late for the hex hatch but still probably okay. We got to the Goldberg parking lot at about

**"Mad Davie had driven up all the way from Madison, and I'm thinking that the hatch was all over and that this trip was to be a flop."**

7:00p.m. To my surprise, there was not a single vehicle in the lot. Mad Davie had driven up all the way from Madison, and I'm thinking that the hatch was all over and that this trip was to be a flop. I tried to stay positive as we strapped the canoe to the wheels and loaded our gear into the canoe for the half-mile portage.

It was a beautiful evening. Temps were in the 70's and wisps of clouds muted the sun as we set off on the two-mile trip downriver to my favorite spot. The wild blue irises were in full bloom along the river and the kingbirds swept down to pick off a few insects before the real action was to begin. That night was about as perfect as it gets. There is something magical about the Bibon Swamp just before—and even after—dark, but it can be a bit daunting to the uninitiated. Mad Davie, however, showed no signs of apprehension, as he is an experienced hiker and wilderness camper.

We pulled into a swampy area and made our usual preparations: put on bug spray, prep line and tippet, eat a candy bar, and swig down a can of soda. Right on cue at 9:45p.m. the duns started appearing on the surface, slowly at first, then gradually building to very heavy numbers. In fact, the river was virtually covered with feed. By 10:00p.m. clouds of spinners were overhead and I could actually hear them. I had turned my new hearing aids up to the maximum and I could hear every little sound, even the duns making their clumsy take-off

from the surface. The spinners and duns blanketed the water, but there wasn't a single rise, not even a tiny trout rise. Nada!

At about 10:30p.m. I'm saying to Mad Davie: "Davie, unfortunately I've had this happen once or twice before. There's only one thing to be done and that's to paddle upriver and hope we come upon a rising trout." So up the river we paddle. Finally, about halfway back there is the telltale sound of a rising fish, amplified by my juiced-up hearing aids. We pull up along the west bank as quietly as possible and grab the cattails

to hold position. Mad Davie gets out into the hip-deep water and works the fish. It's pitch dark. Can't see a thing. So it's not long before he's hung up on a branch across the river. He breaks off. While he re-rigs I get into the river and work the fish. No luck. When he's ready, he gets back into the river and tries again. Same thing. Catches an overhanging branch. I try. No luck. He gets back into the river. This time I say "Davie, that fish is just past the middle of the river, so try not

**"One of the great thrills in trout fishing is when a lunker trout takes an imitation on the surface in the near total silence of a completely dark night."**

to cast so far over." He says nothing and gets hung up for the third time.

By this time nearly an hour has passed and this fish is still feeding. I mumble something about the fish not being that far over and Mad Davie says, with a bit of tension in his voice, "Look. That fish is way over on the far bank, and since we're never going to hook it anyway, the next time that fish rises I'm going to flash the lantern over there and prove it to you." So when the fish rose, Mad Davie shined the lantern that way. Sure enough, the ripples were radiating from tight against the bank about 30 feet across and the offending branch is hanging over the river some four feet or so upstream. I could have sworn that fish was ten or fifteen feet closer than it

actually was. I realized that my hearing aids were responsible for my gross miscalculation. So much for extreme high-tech assistance.

We hadn't been exactly quiet during our hour of trying for that fish. We had a few bangs of paddles against the aluminum canoe, as well as other miscellaneous noises but now that the fishing part of the trip was over we made no attempt to keep the silence. We were about to start paddling back upriver when oops! The fish rises again! So now I'm thinking that Mad Davie should have the final chance. After all, he had driven over 300 miles for this. I make the offer but he generously declines. I clamber back into the river and start making casts, letting out a foot more line with each cast, targeting just above my mental image of where the overhanging branch was, and clumsily trying to hook the fly downstream to avoid drag. I really didn't expect it but I heard a rise, instinctively raised the rod tip and KA-BOOM! Got 'im!

One of the great thrills in trout fishing is when a lunker trout takes an imitation on the surface in the near total silence of a completely dark night. It happens after casting a hundred times or more and setting the hook multiple times based on the sound of any rising fish in

the vicinity. One doesn't really expect to hook up, so when it does happen and the trout makes that thunderous sound in the dark (something like a beaver slapping its tail) it really is jolting. And it was especially true that night when expectations had been drained.

After a long, rather sluggish battle, Mad Davie got out of the canoe and netted the very heavy hen. It was stuffed with an hour's worth of hex food and measured 21". I took a flash photo of Mad Davie holding it (paltry justice), and the lunker was given its freedom.

That was the action for the night. We got back to the campsite at 1:30 a.m. with memories of a long and beautiful night capped off with the encounter of but a single fish. 🐟



## FLY TIER'S CORNER: RK's Riffle Runner

*Rob Kolakowski's version of the traditional soft hackle.*



Rob Kolakowski photos

- Hook:** Size 12 - Tiemco 2488 or Daiichi 1130 (Heavy versions 2488H or 1120)
- Bead:** Cyclops Brown Olive 3/32 (or larger for heavier version)
- Thread:** Brown Olive Uni 8/0 or Danville 6/0 (70 denier)
- Dubbing:** Fox squirrel (Just use whatever you have on hand, natural or synthetics)
- Soft hackle:** Speckled hen cape/back (Hen comes in several colors and is wonderful for soft hackles)

### Tying instructions:

Tie these in a variety of colors, sizes and weights. Place bead on hook, wrap thread, a tiny pinch of dubbing, a wrap or two of soft hackle and done.

### A few fine fishing tips:

If your going to fish with a downstream presentation be sure to use a wide gap hook and offset the point. I tend to bend the hook gap open as much as possible when I fish this way. Use just a gentle lift of the rod or better yet let the fish hook itself. For any fishing situation, don't put a ton of pressure on the fish if it is thrashing on the surface or air born. Tight line downstream presentations result in low hook up ratios and the things I just mentioned will improve your success considerably. Also if you find yourself out on a hot sunny summer day and have exhausted all the possibilities, please give this a try. Find a shaded riffle and swing this fly through it.

### Personal insights:

It's well beyond argument or debate that soft hackle flies are effective for trout. If you don't have them in your fly box you definitely missed the boat. Back before beads were popular and just coming on scene in the fly tying world, I tied my version of the soft hackle with a bead to get it running deeper in the riffles. I demonstrated this tie at Bob Mitchell's back then and often wondered what the old timers thought; a little off perhaps. I was the young guy in the mix at that time and youngsters always test the boundaries. To this day the beaded version is one of the top six trout flies I would not be without. The traditional unweighted version is up there also. Although these flies work well in a number of ways and places I truly enjoy fishing the fly on the swing in a riffle. I picked up the spey casting techniques around fifteen years ago and it has been pure bliss. Forget the workout of running and gunning with streamers, the tangles of nymphing and overhead casting and the stress of hatch matching with dries. Put on a Riffle Runner, step into the stream, make a simple spey cast and relax. I can't prove it, but when you fish this way I'm pretty sure the bad things flow out of your boots and proceed down river out of your life.

— Rob Kolakowski

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**Judy Mahle Lutter** is a longtime chapter member whose late husband, Hap, started our chapter's spring appeal. Judy proofreads and writes for RipRap.

**Greg Meyer** is a longtime chapter member and previous editor of RipRap.

**Herb Lundberg** is a longtime chapter member who's got another story to tell about a fish-finder and a 50 lb car battery. We're hoping he gets it down on paper.

Questions? Stop in at Lund's Fly Shop or send an email: [brian@lundsflyshop.com](mailto:brian@lundsflyshop.com)



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May 2, 2018  
Chapter Meeting

Junior's Bar & Restaurant  
414 South Main Street  
River Falls, WI 54022  
715-425-6630  
[www.juniorsrf.com](http://www.juniorsrf.com)



photo courtesy of Eddie Rivard

Dinner starts at 6pm (your dime).  
The meeting starts at 7pm.

## Let's talk trout.

Please join us at our May 2nd chapter meeting in River Falls. Heath Benike, WDNR Fisheries Supervisor, and Kasey Siebert, our new fish biologist, will be there to talk about our region's trout and coldwater resources.

May 2nd. Join us!