

Rip Rap

November Meeting

When: Wednesday, Nov. 4
Where: JR Ranch, Hudson
Dinner: 6:30
Program: 8:00 John Welter

President's Lines:

Partnerships...When I was elected and assumed the job of President of our chapter, I realized that I would be in for a few things that I'm not used to confronting or developing. I've relied on the good advice of other chapter members more experienced than I. Personal partnerships help me do my job better. At the recent DNR open house in Baldwin, Buck Mallick, Mike Reiter, and WDNR Secretary George Meyer spoke at length about what that word and idea means to them, but the bottom line is that partnerships are necessary for success as Trout Unlimited tries to find the right mix of muscle, expertise, political savvy and strategic planning to best protect our waters. Our chapter has had wonderful partnerships through the years, with the DNR and other environmental groups. A recent example is the proposed Kinnikinnic Monitor Project where we will work alongside the USGS.

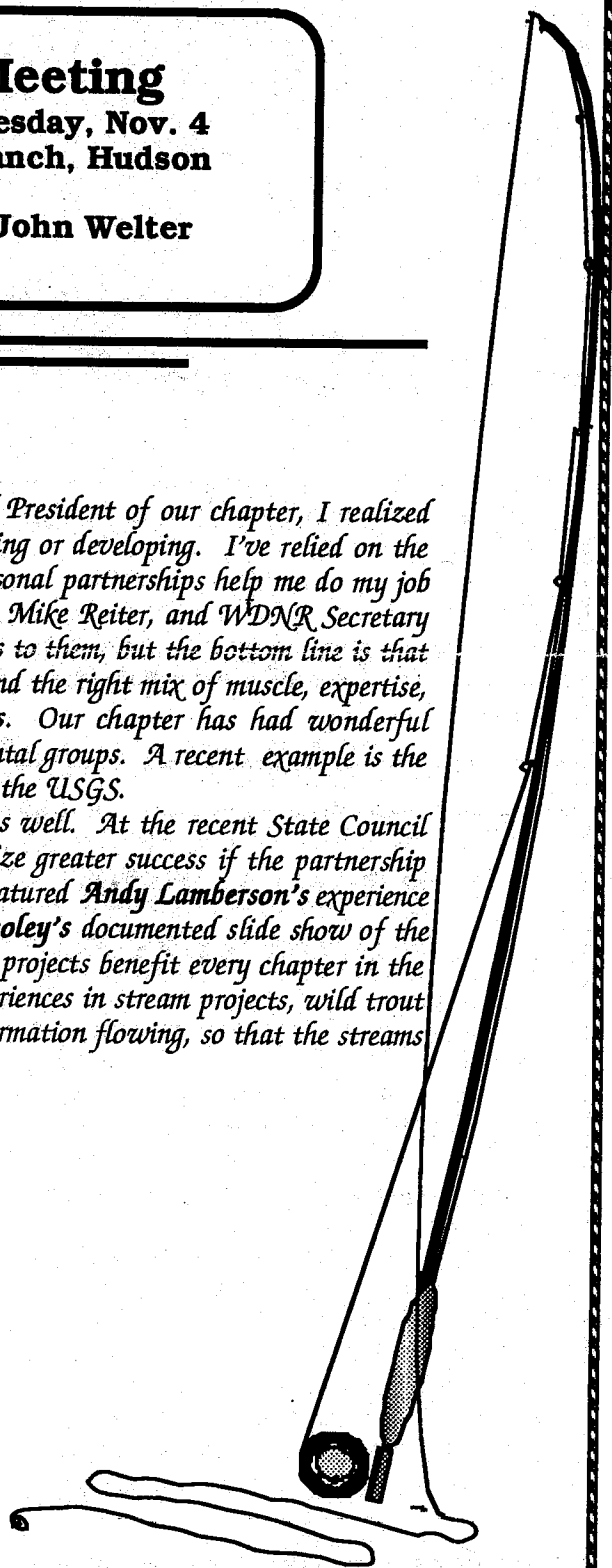
We need to form closer alliances with other TU chapters as well. At the recent State Council meeting in Eau Claire, I got the feeling that we can and will realize greater success if the partnership system is allowed to bloom. The State Council Agenda that day featured Andy Lamberson's experience and work with our Kiap-TU-Wish website, as well as Kevin Cooley's documented slide show of the Mounds Dam removal project. The lessons learned from these two projects benefit every chapter in the state. Conversely, our neighbor chapters may help us with their experiences in stream projects, wild trout programs, or legislative efforts. We must find ways to keep the information flowing, so that the streams will keep flowing, and producing trout.

Sincerely,

Brent Sittlow, President

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Kiap-TU-Wish Bulletin Board...

Holiday Banquet plans begun...

The annual Holiday Banquet will be held at the JR Ranch on Wednesday, December 2. Committee members Karen Stifter, Brent Sittlow, Jon Jacobs, Mike Alwin, and John O'Malley will select a mouth-watering menu, plan an evening's entertainment, and collect items for the silent auction of donated items. This is Kiap-TU-Wish's largest fund-raising event of the year, and everyone has a great time. Perhaps the program will be a showing of our new video, with a 'guided tour' by Cathy Wurzer, who wrote the script, and Dennis Behr, who did the filming. It's too early to tell at the moment. It is not too early, however, to make your reservation or drop off auction items at Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop, (651) 770-5854, or the Jacobs home at (715) 386-2278. Karen Stifter has hand-crafted a quilt to be raffled off at the banquet. You can see and touch, (and scratch and sniff) it at the flyshop.

More Fish for the Willow River...

Chuck Goossen has reported that on September 25, six Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter members scatter-planted 10,500 Brown trout from the St. Coix Falls hatchery in the lower Willow Main and Race Branches. The average length of the fish was five and a half inches. This was the 27th consecutive year of cooperative stocking by the DNR and the Chapter in the lower Willow! Many thanks to those who helped walk the river, lading the baby fish from the hardware-cloth lined laundry baskets into likely places for their survival: Lauren Carver, Ken Hannah, Herb Lundgren, John O'Malley, and, of course, Chuck Goossen.

Program ideas?...

Kiap-TU-Wish is looking for a few good speakers for the January and February chapter meetings. Those cold, winter nights are the perfect time to bring out some slides and tell of your favorite trout hunting adventure. Lies are a lot more believable then, too. Most of us take photos on vacation, and most of our vacations involve trout, at least to some extent. If you know someone that might be available to share their secret getaway, please contact Brent Sittlow. Professional expertise is not a requirement.

The Kinni on TV?...

Peter Rafle, Director of Communications for national Trout Unlimited sent around a questionnaire the other day requesting nominations for trout rivers to be filmed for TU's television show on ESPN2. He says that "the goal is to include as many of TU's most outstanding chapters and councils as possible in this exciting new project...To submit your 'home river' for consideration, complete the enclosed form." The winners will find their rivers showcased on the tube with professional fishermen, guides from local chapters, etc. It goes on to say that if your nomination isn't picked this year, keep trying, and maybe your favorite stream will be picked for a future show. Some of the information required includes hatches, nearest base city, driving time from nearest airport, whether there's professional guide service available, a description of the quality of the fishing to be expected. Editorial: I have said in the past that the more friends a river has the better, but I think I would draw the line at nominating any of our local spring creeks to be a destination for the hordes of fly anglers who might just decide that the Kinni or Rush is just as good as the Livingston, Montana area streams, the Frying Pan/Roaring Fork in Colorado, Yellow Breeches in Pennsylvania, or the Bighorn, and far more accessible, particularly with the MegaMall for rainy days! Look at what fame did for those rivers!

John "Duke" Welter, to speak at the November meeting....

Chairman of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited, Welter is a trout-crazed lawyer who seems to always have time to spend being an advocate for his favorite fish and the places they live. He is constantly goading the Wisconsin DNR to do its job better. This includes follow-up on potential punishment for the farmer whose manure killed the trout in Parker Creek, among other things. Come hear about the goings-on at the recent State meeting in Eau Claire.

"Swinging Gate" farm bought by KRLT...

In a surprise move two weeks ago, William Lubich, the owner of the farm on hwy 65 north of River Falls affectionately known as the "Swinging Gate" put his property up for sale at auction. Moving very fast, Rick McMonagle canvassed as many potential buyers as he could, seeking to preserve the access to the river, and making sure that a conservation easement barring house lots was put on the land. A last minute consortium of two benefactors put together a deal that allowed the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust to buy the whole parcel for \$430,000. Yeah, Rick!!!

The Inaugural Lake Elmo Fly Casting Championships

by Jon Jacobs

Michael Alwin, proprietor of Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop, developed this concept as a way to partly assuage the feelings of gnawing emptiness most anglers experience with the demise of the fishing season. Mr. Alwin hosted the event on Saturday, October 3, three days after the end of the trout season. There were events designed to measure skills in both casting accuracy and distance casting. In the distance event, the contest was further split between 'standard' (full flyline) and 'modified' (shooting head) divisions. Everyone competed on equal footing in the accuracy event, which consisted of a series of casts at targets at distances of twenty, thirty, and forty feet, but the distance event had three categories: men, women, and youth. Gordy Seim was the overall winner, and will receive the prize of a Sage 1-weight rod and reel outfit. Bob Nasby won the 'standard' distance event, while his grandson, Robert McGraw, won the modified distance category. Allison Jacobs won the women's distance event. Jim Humphrey, celebrity contestant, cast in the accuracy event with a lovely cane rod.

Some anglers have told me over the years that they object to fly casting contests on the grounds that it introduces competition into an area of their lives better enjoyed without it. That sounds reasonable, but after observing this contest, I can't agree. The atmosphere was collegial, with contestants cheering one another on and offering praise for every effort. It was an example of fellowship at its best.

The contest was educational and inspirational as well. One could not watch an expert caster like Gordy Seim, Bob Nasby, Kevin Becker or Bill Hinton lay out a hundred feet of flyline gracefully without thinking, "Golly, I'd love to be able to do that."

Young McGraw's display of skill in the shooting head category was an amazing thing to watch, too. Robert is an average sized thirteen year old, but when he cast, he looked like Brad Pitt in the movie *A River Runs Through It*. I observed his form from downrange, which is the only adequate word I can use to describe my distance from the caster. He would pick up and haul the head and a length of running line, haul again on the forward cast and stop the rod beautifully, arm extended fully. I'd see the dark brown head go streaking by, trailing bright green monofilament behind it like the contrail of a jet aircraft, and the cast would extend a hundred twenty feet or more.

As you may know or have guessed by now, Allison Jacobs is my fourteen-year-old daughter. Dispensing with any pretext of reportorial objectivity, I must tell you that I was bursting with pride that day. Of course, I was happy that she cast nicely, her best effort close to seventy feet with a 7 weight rod. I was more proud, though, that I have a kid who is willing to get out there with her fellow anglers and have at it. I hope Mike Alwin repeats the event next year and I hope to see you there participating.

(See photos on next page)



Whoosh!!...

Bob Nasby casts in the full flyline category as contestants Greg Thorne, Kevin Becker and Gordy Seim look on. Nasby won the event.

A little 'body English' might help Dick Sagarra in the accuracy event as the crowd looks on



RifRaf...

Graphite is right; Grass is crass...

A rebuttal by Jon Jacobs

I enjoyed Bill Steiger's *Cane Confession* in the October RipRap. For several reasons, not the least of which is a concern for Bill's financial health, I hope that the work was fiction. his characterization of graphite rod users as a bunch of pastel-wearing, neoprene-clad churlish yuppies caused me some anxiety and does not match my experience in any way. Many of the anglers who have helped me through the years, fine people like Bob Mitchell, Jim Humphrey, Andy Lamberson, Craig Mason, Michael Alwin and others too numerous to mention, fish preponderantly, if not exclusively, with graphite rods.

Like Bill, I too have an appreciation for the craftsmanship evident in cane rods. I've whiled away my working life, such as it is, in an industry where a few tenths of an inch can mean the difference between a quality product and expensive trash. Thus, I find it truly remarkable that the craftsmen who work with cane can manipulate a natural product within such incredibly tight limits. I marvel at the perfect detail work, the flawless cork, the gleaming windings and the glass like finish one finds on fine bamboo rods.

Again, like Bill, I have an emotional attachment to cane. In 1987, George Myrand, a very gruff but good man, retired from the company for which we both worked. In a charming reversal of the usual course of events, George gave me a retirement gift: an eight and a half foot, two-tip, three-piece South Bend Model 359 cane rod. He had owned it for many years and had used it so hard that it needed to be totally redone. It was a completely blue-collar and unpretentious rod, much like the man who gave it to me. I found a 1948 Shakespeare reel for it in a used tackle list, and now fish this combination a time or two every year. As I do, I think about George and hope he's had the happy retirement he deserves.

Still, if one puts sentimentality aside, it's impossible to convince me that a bamboo rod is in any way at any time superior as a fishing tool to a modern graphite rod. This summer, I attended a little car show at the Pierce County Fairgrounds in Ellsworth. The Best of Show award went to an extremely rare, and immaculately restored 1932 Cadillac roadster. It was in every way a beautiful automobile. In addition to gorgeous coach work, it had technical and engineering features that were very advanced for its day, including an aluminum V-12 engine, roller lifters, hydraulic brakes all around and suspension components that rode on needle bearings. The pleasant lady who owned it in partnership with her husband hinted broadly to me that the appraised value of the vehicle was a long distance call on the far side of one hundred grand! However, was it as good a transportation device as your average Honda Civic? Not in this particular universe. It rode on ungainly bias ply tires. It was drafty and hot at the same time. That sweet sounding engine was a polluting gas guzzler. The exquisite tin work was stretched over a twist and rot-prone wooden skeleton. FM radio, cruise control, seat belts or air conditioning? For get about them. and to top it all off, the car seldom moved under its own power on public roads anyway, being too valuable to risk on such an undertaking. To me, it was the four-wheeled equivalent of a collector status bamboo rod: beautiful to behold, but heavy, ponderous, primitive, of dubious utility and incredibly overpriced. One can name other examples, perhaps most notably World War II fighter aircraft, old Harley Davidson motorcycles or Chris Craft power boats.

There is a natural progression at work here. Just as unit steel construction replaced wood in automobiles and just as jet engines replaced Rolls Royce Merlin motors, carbon fiber has outmoded cane. Tonkin cane, in its day, replaced Calcutta cane, which had previously pushed aside Lancewood and Greenheart as state of the art rod building materials.

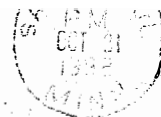
I understand that sport fishing is not war, or even food gathering, and that we sport anglers willingly set limits on ourselves in pursuit of an ideal that we call fair chase. To me, that limit is somewhat near a graphite rod strung with a plastic line, a copolymer leader, a strike indicator and a weighted flashback nymph. If your personal limit is a cane rod rigged with a silk line and gut leader, to which is snelled a Parmachene Belle, you have my admiration.

Editor's note:

I'm sure many of you will want to share your opinions, and RipRap is a great place to do that. I could hardly restrain myself from inserting some footnotes refuting portions of Jon's piece as I typed it. Something juicy to keep us busy until next Spring. Skip



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Cane collectors showed up at the Lake Elmo Casting Championships in spite of bad press from J.J. (left to right) Jan Jancourt, Jim Humphrey, Dennis Hook, Dave Ballman, and Ed Richards