

RIPRAP

• Restoration • Improvement • Preservation through Research And Projects •

November 2006

Inside

- 2 The Gulf Coast
- 3 Angling disasters
- 4 Board report
- 5 Other stuff

Trout fishing

"My biggest worry is that my wife (when I'm dead) will sell my fishing gear for what I said I paid for it."

- Koos Brandt



This goat/sheep rancher who came by as John and Deborah Koch were packing up to leave after fishing on the Rio Coyhaique Alto.

Patagonian trout adventure

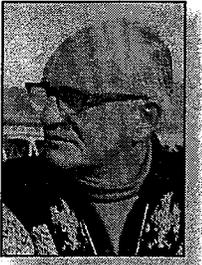
Last year Chapter member John Koch took a much anticipated trip with friends to Chile. John will be giving a slide show presentation of the trip at the November 1st membership meeting.

John is a trout angler and an artist. John and his wife Deborah are Trout Lilly Studios. His art is reduction wood cuts,

photography and writing.

His interests in art, culture, architecture, landscape, conservation, photography as well as trout and angling make this a presentation not to be missed. You may want to get there early because this could be a sellout crowd.

The Gulf Coast



By James R. Humphrey

Jim Humphrey, of Oak Park Heights, MN, is the co-author of Wisconsin and Minnesota Trout Streams. His new series is anecdotal, discursive and opinionated, according to the author. The essays may eventually appear in a collection. Humphrey welcomes comments, including rebuttals. "A bit of controversy is good," he says.

St. George Island on the Panhandle Coast, sometimes called the Sun Coast by promoters, lies east of Panama City, Florida, and close to Apalachicola. The island is divided between a gated leisure community, beach houses and condos for rent, and state park land. The beach is sugar sand and the slope into the gulf is gentle. I cast with spinning tackle and frozen shrimp for anything that would bite, and caught and released small hammerhead sharks until I tired.

In Pensacola to the west we toured old Fort Pickens; and remarked to each other that the new condos lined up on the narrow barrier island near the fort were very close to the water of the gulf and sitting not much higher than high tide. We thought they would be remarkably vulnerable in a hurricane. In the normal scheme of disaster, it was probable that the general public would foot the bill for storm losses through increased insurance premiums or by grants from FEMA. Flood insurance covers only part of the cost. The developers, of course, had long disappeared into the swamps of another Florida deal. Katrina and Rita wiped many of those barrier islands clean; and no doubt the beach houses and condos will be rebuilt. Many barrier islands on the Atlantic Ocean side are also mere strips of sand, subject to the vagaries of weather and wind. The United States also spends \$150 million a year replacing sand along the gulf coast. As the population grows and the desire to live on or near a body of water increases, the shared cost will rise.

Long ago, when Gasparilla Island on the gulf coast south of Englewood was only partly developed, we spent a week roaming the beach and collecting shells. There was a small park and public dock at the south

end of the island where the local old-timers dropped line and fished with live bait--shrimp or minnows. I went often, talked to fishermen and watched them soak bait for big fish. More interesting was their capture of live minnows for bait. They fashioned a linkage of six or seven piano wire rings, something like the fine rings a classy woman might wear in her ears. Each ring was about an inch in diameter and shiny bright. The linkage was lowered from the dock on a line in the shallows where the bait fish played tag through the rings like kids on a carousel. Eventually one would attempt to back out of the loop and would catch a ring behind a gill cover; it was trapped, to end up on the end of a line as bait.

When I visited my cousin, Rodney, in St. Pete Beach, we'd talk fishing and family history, and have a grouper sandwich and beer for lunch at an outdoor restaurant. In the evening we might go down to the breakwater with a long-handled net and search for stone crabs which would cling to the wall at the waterline. Rod also demonstrated his creative method of guaranteeing a supply of stone crab claws. At one of the bridges close to Fort DeSoto he'd drop a couple of concrete blocks in the shallows, hidden from casual waders. The stone crabs would take possession of the spaces in the blocks, and await the arrival of Rod who'd fish them out and break off a claw which the crabs would eventually regenerate.

Some winters I took residence at Indian Rocks Beach or at Redington Shores where I occasionally cast from shore into the teeth of the surf, always without success. Then I discovered the small park at Belleair where the Intracoastal Waterway squeezed through a narrow pass under the 416 bridge to Largo.

See Gulf Coast, page 7

● Angling disasters—part 2

Getting wet

Editor's note—Last month Jon Jacobs introduced the word "fubar," an acronym for Fouled Up Beyond All Recognition," and shared some fubars his fishing life that stemmed from equipment malfunction. This issue he takes up fubars that had to do with getting wet.

By Jon Jacobs

I end up wet so much of the time that it's a relief to go wet wading in warmwater rivers because I can't really "fall in" in this circumstance; I'm already wet and it's over with!

● My first chest waders were Seal Dris. No longer available, they were made of stretchy natural rubber. They were quite comfortable, really, although they retained body heat far too well. They were expensive, too, costing an amount equivalent to what you'd pay for mid- to high-grade breathables today. I blew the family budget buying them and knew that they had to last a long time.

I wore them one night when I went exploring in the trackless wilderness along the upper Kinnickinnic. I'd just gotten underway when I tripped and fell into a group of beaver cutting and ripped one enormous and several smaller holes in the left leg.

● Suspending my scant knowledge of physics altogether, I soldiered on, reasoning that the tear was only in the left leg. The 52 degree water of the river reminded me the instant I waded in over crotch deep that water seeks its own level. Ice water flooded the right leg.

The stretchy rubber ballooned to the point that I could barely lift my right leg once I scrambled out of the water. I found a grassy spot and lay down so that the water would

flow out the tops of the waders. Frigid water cascaded over my back. I quit the field of battle soon after.

Back at home, desperate to salvage the waders, I cemented a large segment of tire inner tube over the largest tear and applied commercial patches to the rest. Amazingly, the patchwork held and I used the waders until the rubber simply rotted.

A couple of years later, after we'd moved to Hudson, I donned those waders before hitting the Kinnickinnic for an evening's fishing. Unbeknownst to me, the river was in flood.

I tried fishing anyway, and managed to trip on a submerged rock that was normally up on dry land. Soaked and cold, I examined my options and concluded that perhaps the Race was in better condition.

I drove there straightaway. I fished until dark and made my way back to my truck. I carried a key on a "zinger" on my vest. I learned that night that there is no such thing as a dependable pin-on retractor. The body of the device was there, but the key was long gone. This was long before cell phones were common and my wife thought I was fishing the Kinnickinnic.

Fortunately, there was one car left in the lot. It belonged to Al Roy, whom I met for the first time that night when he gave me a ride home. I meekly rang the doorbell. My sweet wife, who isn't fond of either surprises or poor planning, got our then-baby daughter out of bed, strapped her in her car seat and drove me and a spare key back to the Willow.

Thank the angling gods for friends like Al and wives like mine.

"I found a grassy spot and lay down so that the water would flow out the tops of the waders.

Jon Jacobs

See FUBARS, page 7

President's Lines

By Greg Dietl

The October issue of Wisconsin Trout, the news letter from the Wisconsin Trout Unlimited State Council, featured an article about local chapters being re-chartered.

The article did a fairly good job of explaining the re-chartering process. No Wisconsin chapters were de-chartered and nine were re-chartered. As the article states, this is a four-year process of measuring and evaluating chapter effectiveness. I have had some inquiries concerning Kiap-TU-Wish. We are not in danger of being de-chartered. We have a strong chapter and will be re-chartered. The Chapter Effectiveness Index (CEI) is a new method of charting chapter activity and effectiveness in providing membership services. Our CEI will reflect our chapter strength and activity.

That being said, I need to restate that we have a vacant Vice Presidency position, a vacant board position, another board opening coming up in March, and we have committee positions that could use some energy. In order to remain a strong chapter we need to have a strong board that renews itself with new members, activities and ideas. Weighing issues of family, work, recreation and volunteer activity commitment are all very personal time decisions. If you are interested in being a board member, please contact any of the current members or officers.

It is also time to remind you to consider a voluntary donation or subscription to Rip Rap. One of the items in the CEI is a chapter newsletter. We have an excellent newsletter. The production of the newsletter takes time and money. Each year the board redirects base funding to the newsletter because of its importance to the chapter. Annual costs of the newsletter average about \$2000. If each

member took a \$10.00 voluntary subscription it would go a long ways to guaranteeing future publication. (Acknowledgement to Gary Horvath's October, 2005 reminder on this subject).

This issue contains banquet information from Mike and Jon. Your generous donations over the years have made each year's banquet successful. Our chapter does a good job of raising funds to support our mission. However, the banquet is not all about fund raising. It is also a once a year opportunity to get together and celebrate our common interests and friendships. I am looking forward to another enjoyable evening!

Chapter Ambassadors redux

By Greg Dietl

During the National TU Convention in Minneapolis this September we had two other Chapter members who guided National TU members on Wisconsin waters. Last month I reported on Sarah Sanford's day on the water.

Dave Gilbraith, long time KTU member guided Frank Elson from Kentucky and his son Tom Elson from Deephaven. Dave took Frank and Tom to the Rush and Kinni and both expressed their gratitude for their day on the water.

KTU member Randy Arnold had bicoastal guests. Randy's guests were John Regan from San Francisco and Bill Blaufuss from Connecticut. Randy spent the day with John and Bill on the upper Kinni. Randy said that while the fishing was a little slow they had a good outing.

Thanks to Dave and Randy for introducing these folks to our waters and for being chapter ambassadors.

We have a vacant Vice Presidency position, a vacant board position, another board opening coming up in March, and we have committee positions that could use some energy.

Greg Dietl

● Hayward guides to headline annual banquet program

The Kiap-TU-Wish Holiday Conservation Banquet committee is proud to announce that Larry Mann and Wendy Williamson, proprietors of the Hayward Fly Fishing Company will headline this year's event. Their full service fly shop in Hayward, Wisconsin specializes in drift boat angling for smallmouth, northern pike and muskellunge on the storied rivers of Wisconsin's great north woods.

● The banquet is slated for Thursday, December 7 at 3M's Tartan. Park facility at 11455 20th Street in Lake Elmo, MN. Social hour begins at 6 PM and guests will be seated for dinner at 7 PM. The program will follow dinner.

The banquet menu features a garden salad or Caesar salad, queen's breast of chicken, roast loin of pork, cornbread stuffing, wild rice pilaf, whipped parsnip and potato, vegetables of the season, coffee and, to finish things off in grand style, a fruit cobbler dessert.

Tickets for the event cost \$35 dollars in advance and \$40 dollars after Monday, December 4. There will be a door prize.

● Reservations may be made by calling Michael Alwin at Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop (Phone 651/770/5854) or Jonathan Jacobs (Phone 715/386/7822). Please be aware that

seating is limited to the first 110 registrants, so don't dally; make your reservation today!

The evening is famous for its conviviality, fellowship and bonhomie, but its traditional silent auction is also a significant source

of funding for the chapter. Details on silent auction items will be available in the December issue of RipRap. Your donation of artwork, Caribbean vacations, Faberge eggs, Swiss watches or English side by side shotguns is welcome. So is your donation of angling or other sporting equipment, goods or services, handi-

craft items or whatever you value and think others would as well.

Donations may be dropped at Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop. In past years, many of your generous donations have been delivered to Tartan Park the night of the banquet. While this is a suitable approach, the banquet committee appreciates the opportunity to catalog items in advance.

If you would like to become a part of the banquet committee, or if you would like to volunteer the night of the event, please contact Greg Dietl, Michael Alwin or Jonathan Jacobs.



Summer on the Wane

By Nick Westcott

You could feel the season change. The shade seemed cooler on this late August afternoon as we prepared for an evening of fishing on the Rush. With rods strung and fly choices made, we found an opening in the woods and stepped into a wall of green. Both of us were quickly enveloped by brambles of every sort. Buckthorn and wild rose among much dead wood made the going slow. Continual ducking of heads and sidestepping didn't dissuade us from reaching the stream that lay ahead. The water felt especially cold this day as it lapped against our waders. No matter, it felt good simply to be out on the water.

The first couple of riffles fished resulted in one hit but no take. It was time to move on, and we plodded across the current. The crystal clear water tugged at our legs, each footstep carefully placed before the next, groping for openings between the rocks below. Out on the other side, we were treated to a well worn path running parallel to the river. Ahead the water began to slow and pool and one could hear the occasional splashing of rising fish. Scouting from among the tangles that separated us from the pool, it was difficult to determine what entomological tidbit the trout were feeding on. A tiny blue-winged olive seemed a logical choice. One of us went downstream and the other up. Below me was a rise and another. Situated closer to the bank I needed to false cast across my left

side. Stripping out enough line I put the rod in motion. Back and forth the rod swayed, the line lazily following behind. The forward cast landed just ahead of the last rise and the fly drifting toward it. The take was a quick one. I pulled back as soon as the trout hit. My three-weight began to throb, its tip bowing in an inverted "U." Rod held high, the line was quickly stripped in. The trout made several attempts to run but finally submitted. A brookie. I marveled at this beauty as it was held just below the water's surface. Its back a dark olive, patterned as if it were an ornate maze. Its side gorgeously spotted a wine red and haloed with bright blue that rivaled the turning sumac across the river and the early evening sky above. Unhooked, the fish darted toward the safety of a partially submerged tree.

I stopped fishing, looked around and took in my surroundings. Unlike the over-exposed harshness of midsummer, the sun was now sending shafts of gold through the hardwood tree tops illuminating the opposite bank with a richness of color only observed at this time of year. I felt fortunate to be here and nowhere else.

We met up after awhile. Both of us had taken brook trout, but for me, just the one.

It was time to make our way out and retrace our steps before it became too dark to see, the air chillier than when we started. You could feel the season change.

● **FUBARS,** from page 3

Watercraft can get me wet, too.

Several years ago, two friends and I canoed and fished the Snake River below Pine City, Minnesota. I managed to flip myself out of the canoe while it was beached! Don't ask me how. The canoe went over, too, and in my rush to put the whole incident behind me and hopefully out of the memories of my companions, I left behind a little bag that held a spare spool for a wonderful fly reel that was already out of production.

We went back a week later. The bag was there, but the spool and some other items were gone. Do you imagine anyone really derived any use from that spool?

This summer I got spectacularly wet when a friend, an expert canoeist, and I, a lummoX, hung an aluminum canoe on an unseen boulder in a stretch of rapids.

We teetered on that rock for what seemed like hours. We were even planning our escape when it seemed as though the water beneath us swelled up as if the Kracken, the sea monster from the second Pirates of the Caribbean movie, were about to surface under us. In an instant, the canoe ejected us and all of our equipment.

We were close to the bank, but the water was surprisingly deep. I had sufficient mother wit about me to grab my rod and a cooler. I looked downstream and saw our paddles exiting the rapid at what looked like twice the speed of the current. It was if they were making the most of an opportunity for freedom.

The old saw "Up the creek without a paddle" took on a new gravity for me. My friend, who hadn't dumped a canoe in forty years prior to hanging out with me, jammed the half-sunk canoe between two exposed boulders and lit out down the bank like a

man possessed in pursuit of our paddles and assorted gear.

I used the cooler to keep myself upright in the current while I inched my way to shore. Fortunately, my friend's adrenaline rush and his good physical condition allowed him to chase down every last bit of our stuff.

Our fishing pals in a second canoe arrived soon and ferried him and our equipment back up to the canoe. We even rescued a loaf of bread and a jar of peanuts.

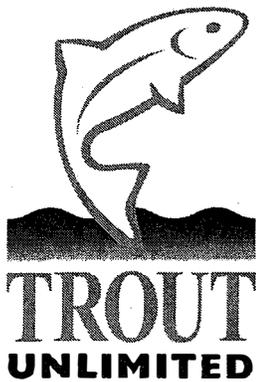
Manly men that we are, we fished our way down to the canoe landing as if not much had happened. With 80 degree air temperatures this was an easy attitude to project. In cooler weather this could have been a very serious incident.

Gulf Coast, from page 2

I waded and cast with spinning gear and fly rod; and cast and waded. It was a wonderful experience thinking about catching a Snook; and other folk seemed to accept warm sand and cloudless sky and fishless days as I did, because I never saw any of them catch a fish. I'd go back in a minute, given the chance.

Any angler who wants to enjoy a leisurely attempt to catch one of many possible species of fish may pay a fee at the Redington Pier, buy a bucket of bait, and sun himself while waiting for a passing fish to hit. An angler may also take a nap while he obtains sunburn. It is not a bad way to pass a day.

*I looked
downstream
and saw
our paddles
exiting the
rapid at what
looked like
twice the
speed of the
current.*



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Deadline for December RIPRAP is Friday, November 25.