



Rip Rap

October Meeting

When: Wednesday, Oct. 7
Where: JR Ranch, Hudson
Dinner: 6:30
Program: 8:00 Mike Reiter

President's Lines:

Most of us have put away our fishing equipment and have started to pick up leaves, apples, pumpkins, or perhaps a shotgun to replenish our feather supply. For me, the autumn season is looked upon with anticipation. I hope that all of us interested in trout and trout water can enjoy this change of season and endure a temporary break from our fishing passions.

Kent Johnson reports that a successful day of video shooting was done on the Kinni with Cathy Wurzer and videographer on September 11. The video will soon enter the production phase. There was no report of whether Kent had a rod in his hand during the filming. If there was any doubt about the timeliness of this project, one simply had to hear what Ellen Denzer of the St. Croix County Planning Department had to say at our September meeting. She projected some alarming growth statistics that confirmed our worst fears for development in western Wisconsin. Her department has the almost impossible job of forming a County-wide plan that will balance population growth with the health of our natural resources. Kiap-TU-Wish needs to be a partner and advocate in deliberations like this, and I predict that our video project will be an important and successful tool for educating citizens and bureaucrats alike about what happens to watersheds if unchecked development replaces planned, sustainable growth.

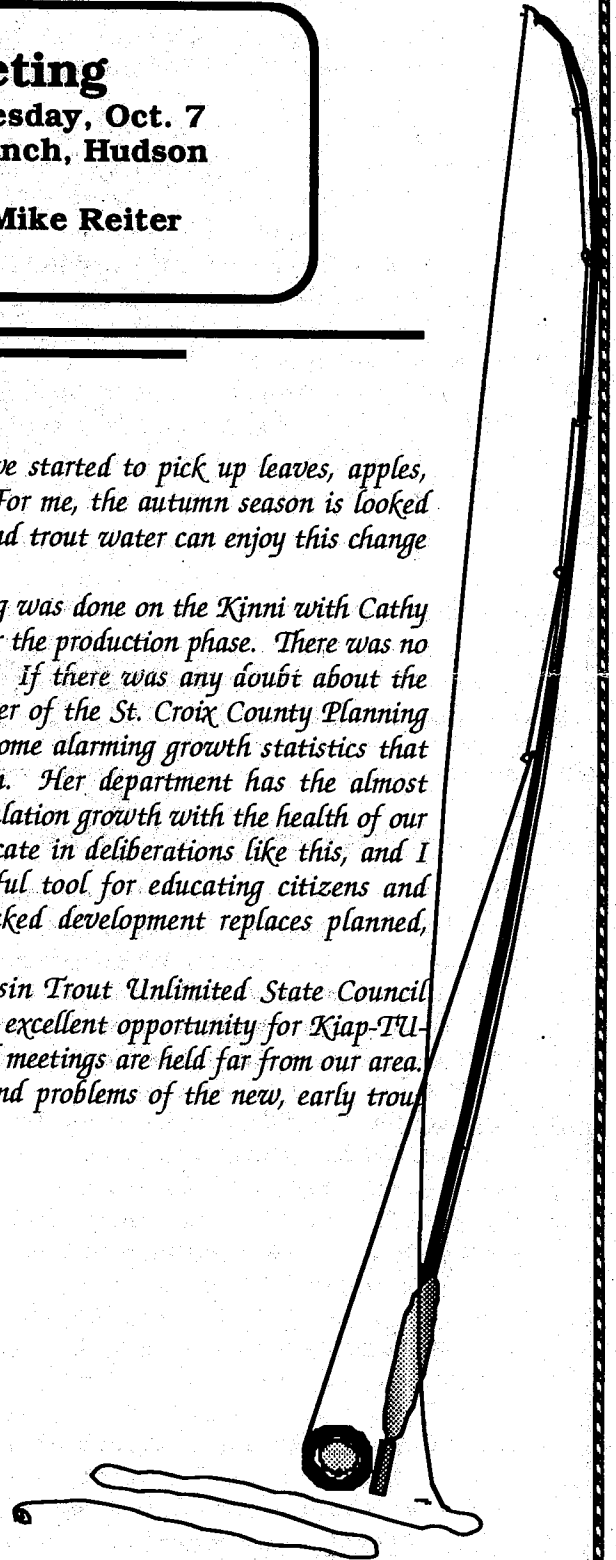
I'd like to remind our membership that the next Wisconsin Trout Unlimited State Council meeting will be held in Eau Claire on October 10. This will be an excellent opportunity for Kiap-TU-Wish members to attend such a meeting, since often the state council meetings are held far from our area. Trout Stamp money allocation and an assessment of the benefits and problems of the new, early trout season will be on the agenda. Contact me for details.

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Sincerely,

Brent Sittlow, President



Kiap-TU-Wish Bulletin Board...

Mike Reiter to speak...

Mike Reiter, a member of the Conservation Congress, will be the featured speaker at the October meeting. Reiter, who is a Brook Trout enthusiast and sees his position on the CC as an opportunity to bring many differing conservation and sportsman's groups together to protect the trout resource, will speak about the recent CC meeting in Eau Claire, which dealt with some preliminary findings about the early trout season, and work on Duncan Creek.

Mike is a resident of New Richmond, works at 3M as a research pharmacologist, but has a degree in aquatic biology from UW Eau Claire, from which he was graduated in 1969.

He'll be at the dinner before the meeting as well, so be sure to get your two cents worth of advice in at that time. He's looking forward to hearing from as many people as he can. Don't miss the opportunity!

State Council Meets in Eau Claire...

The Wisconsin State Council of Trout Unlimited will meet on October 10th, starting at 10am, at the Eau Claire Rod and Gun Club. The agenda will include committee reports, including the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Trout Stamp Policy. There will also be a discussion of the fate of the early trout season. The Ojibseau Chapter will provide lunch. If you plan on attending please let Chapter President Steve Gausman know. He can be reached at 715-723-8506, or e-mail him at sgausman@sehinc.com.

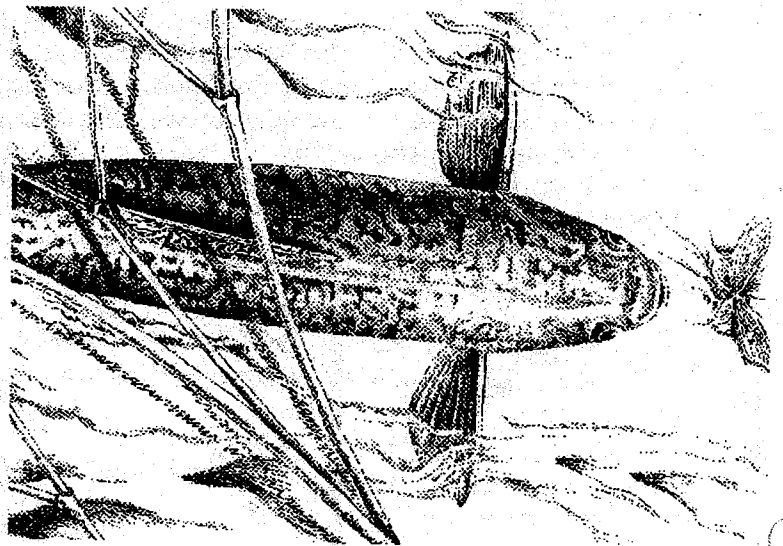
After the meeting there will be a tour of Eighteen-Mile Creek at the site of the former dam. Lower Chippewa Basin Subteam Leader Jim Holzer will lead the tour.

Directions to the Eau Claire Rod & Gun Club
Hwy 53 to North side of Eau Claire. Take Birch St. exit east 3.5 miles to hwy QS, then south .75 to the club. If you're lost, call 832-4391.

Kiap-TU-Wish approves \$1000. for monitoring project...

The United State Geodetic Survey and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources are involved in a joint project to monitor stream flow, nutrients and sediments on several rivers in our area including the Kinni, the Apple and Willow Rivers. This is part of a larger project looking at the effects of nutrient and sediment loads into Lake St. Croix.

On October 1st, guages will be installed to continuously monitor the relevant data. The USGS will take over the operation of Kiap-TU-Wish's monitoring station below the Willow River state park dam, and has expressed a hope that our chapter might build a similar guage station on the Kinni at County F. Gary Horvath mentioned that Kiap-TU-Wish has members with expertise in such things, and it would be far less expensive for us to do the building and installation of equipment than it would for USGS to do it. This is what the money is allocated for. Of course, any data gained would be useful in planning future management options for the trout stream.



Skip's Loose Threads

Fishing where there's 'no hope'

There are places in most good trout streams where almost no one fishes. You know the ones. The wide flat with foot deep water with no discernible current in which you can spot several nice trout. Water in which every time a bird flies by, or a rod shadow crosses a trout snout, the fish evaporate under the rocks. Or the eddy under a Willow tree in a deep pool, where fish rise all day long, but where, if you could ever get a cast under the branches, the drag would be instantaneous and catastrophic. We all tend to fish the easier water: nice, medium deep runs suitable for either nymphing with an indicator, or floating a dry fly. No drag problems, plenty of depth so the fish don't spook so easily, enough current so the quarry doesn't get too good a look at your fly. The last few weeks of this season, I decided to test myself against some of this 'no hope' water on the Rush River.

A decent hatch of *Centropilum* Elsa happens in mid-afternoon during September. This is the tiny Sulphur identified by Duke Welter as "The Fly Formerly Known As Pseudocloeon." After being skunked on top during this hatch, I captured a few samples and repaired to my vise. I tied several styles of dry fly, including parachutes, paraduns, soft hackles, etc. The following day found me on the same water, upstream from the Pig Farm, with a 2-weight Sage, some 16-foot leaders tapered to 7X, and a collection of #22-26 dry flies. Guess what? The fish didn't want them that day. I caught a few on an old reliable, a #16 Adams, but drew the line at throwing a weighted nymph with that light an outfit. On the way back to my car, I met Dan Bruski, who was standing on the opposite bank from a Willow tree in almost currentless water, watching the lazy risers under the branches. He said that he'd had no luck with those fish today, and we traded tales of woe. I remarked that I'd tied some *Centropilum* flies and gave him a couple. He liked the look of it, refined his leader even more, and tied on one of my imitations. He managed to snake a cast under the limbs of the Willow, the fly floated drag free for about three inches, and a nice trout came from the bottom and sucked in the imitation. Well, at least my fly was effective that day.

The next afternoon, I came prepared with more general-purpose tackle, a cane 4-weight, the same flies and leaders, and stationed myself in a similar position to that which Dan had occupied the previous day. The Willow across from me shaded a deep pool, and the current tongue went under the branches, but between me and the Willow, the water ran the other way. I was on the edge of a large eddy, but at the foam edge, where the two currents met, trout rose greedily. A cast to this foam slot resulted in about a two-inch drift before the fly was yanked away. I thought that if I could throw a puddle cast, delivering my leader in a pile, then I might get a little more float time. But the tree branches prevented me from casting high enough to accomplish the delivery I wanted. Twice, I managed to put the fly in the right place, more by luck than an excess of skill, and trout rose to my offering, but then slid back down to the depths. Obviously, the *Centropilum* pattern wasn't on the trout's menu. The wind picked up, the upstream breeze rustling the yellowish leaves of the Willow. Every time the leaves shook, the feeding activity under the tree increased. There was something being blown off into the water that turned on the fish. I decided to tie on a small, black ant, size 20. I tied it to a six-foot, (yes, six-foot) tippet of 7X. I theorized that that long tippet would never turn over, might fall in a pile and accomplish what the puddle cast was supposed to do, but with a straight delivery. I pushed a cast hard into the space beneath the branches, the tippet loop collapsed, and I got about sixteen inches of float before my ant was taken confidently by a rather large, healthy brown trout. Catching and releasing that fish was extremely satisfying.

The third afternoon, I decided to see if that super tippet that worked so well on the brown under the Willow might make it possible to seduce a fish from one of the Rush's innumerable flats. I had one all picked out, too. Both the fish and the flat. I know of a place where there's about a half acre of flat water, with a depth of about two feet. The bottom's rubble and small boulders, with surface weed beds. I had watched a large fish feed behind the largest boulder in the pool, leaving tiny rings. That fish usually followed a fly, drifted downstream under it for maybe two or three feet, then turned and took it facing downstream. The fish would then swim up to its boulder hideout. I had offered a fly to this fish on other occasions, but the first cast always spooked the fish immediately, and it didn't resume feeding, at least while I was there. I thought that maybe the super tippet would put enough distance twixt me and the fish that I'd have a better chance of winning the battle. When I arrived at the flat, I was happy to see that I was alone, and that the fish was still there. There was a slight upstream breeze, which suited me fine, since it would allow the tippet to unfurl if I cast from downstream and slightly across. Now, I know you've all read about sneaking up to a trout on your knees, but I sure haven't seen many fly fishers do it. Well, I did it. I tied that *Centropilum* imitation to my six-foot tippet, got within thirty feet of the feeding trout, and let my line work out behind me in the water. My concentration was intense. I was a 'predator.' Everything was perfect. I made just one forward motion with the rod, and... an enormous gob of weed flew over my head and splashed into the water ahead. That trout was so scared, he may not eat until next season! Just as well. I've got all Winter to plan.

RifRaf...

My Cane Confession

by Bill Stieger

I remember the judge at my bankruptcy hearing asking about the fly rods: "You have *two* fly rods," he said, peering at me over his half-focals, "worth a *thousand dollars* apiece? Why is it that you have two fly rods, either of which is worth more than the value of your car?"

"Judge," I asked. My lawyer coughed and elbowed me in the ribs. "Your *Honor*," I continued. "These rods are handmade...of split bamboo. Something in life oughta be good, don't you know?"

The august presence on the bench considered the squirming life-form before him. "I really don't know what to say to that," he said. I shrugged....offered no further explanation. Let me try to explain.

I am, as they say, 'in the arts,' a condition that to most folks is synonymous with 'bum.' As a jazz drummer and freelance writer, I often make *less* money than your average, garden-variety bum. More strikes against me in the public perception: I'm single, the owner of a rusted Volkswagen, and I live in a place where you pay up every two weeks, so the landlord doesn't get stiffed because you bought some food with the 'other' pay check. Don't ask how I fund my fly fishing. The Catholic Church doesn't know where all those visions and miracles they talk about come from, either! Hey, I'm not pleading sympathy here: I *chose* this life. And despite its hardships, it's mostly a positive experience.

Fly fishing is my escape from the grind of trying to stay a couple of steps ahead of creditors and other people who measure success by the dollar. I find great beauty, a measure of peace, relaxation in the honing of my craft. Above all, my fishing creates a bridge by which I can engage the natural world at *its* level, not mine. Hey, if that last sentence sounds like one of those inspirational tapes you buy at Target, okay...I am a devout and dedicated fly fisher. Only my devotion to the *cane* fly rod still needs explaining.

I saw my first bamboo rod the first day I got my feet wet in the Kinnickinnic River. As an absolute rookie, I'd gone troutless the whole day...no big surprise to anyone except me of course. I was headed back upstream to my car, wading noisily through some crashing pocket water that I'd almost lost my balance in on the way down. On the opposite bank stood a bearded angler, waderless and wet to his thighs, wearing a dirty vest and a baseball cap. In his hand carried a golden yellow, wooden fly rod.

Understand that all the other fly fishers I'd seen that day were attired in neoprene. Many wore vests of various pastel colors. They made short casts, always with a strike indicator attached to the leader. And they weren't very friendly...at least not to me. They all seemed to own the same brown, graphite fly rod. Because I had built up fly fishing in my head as some romantic thing, the seeming lack of style displayed by these fishermen left me gravely disappointed.

But the man across the river was different. That yellow fly rod with its emerald wraps bobbed at its tip as he easily forded through the water that had earlier nearly capsized me. He tore himself from the boiling current, proceeded up the gravelly bank, and with a thumbs-up sign and a grin asked: "What's hatching?" "Are you speaking to me," I said. "Is that fly rod bamboo?" "Yes, it's a Leonard." "Are those the good kind?" Somehow, he didn't seem surprised when I informed him I was a neophyte. I shared my story of a fishless day, that I was on my way home. "You'll miss the best part of the day if you leave now," he said. I followed after him like a puppy, asking questions, hoping I wasn't too much of a pest.

As we walked upstream, he introduced himself. His name was Dan Farmer, raised on Michigan's Upper Peninsula, he had recently moved to the Twin Cities. He was a software engineer. He mentioned rivers I'd never heard of: the Yellow Dog, Ontonagon, Blind Sucker. He had inherited the Leonard from an uncle with Hodgkins disease who wanted it to be used by someone who could appreciate it.

That rod...I couldn't take my eyes off it. Gazing at that Leonard, it was suddenly crystal clear to me that this is what a fly rod should be. Elegant, beautiful, it was perfectly appropriate to the pursuit of trout. It *belonged* on a beautiful river. I swore to myself that if I mastered this art of fly fishing, I would one day own a fly rod made of cane.

We came to a bend in the stream, where the opposite bank rose in a cliff of limestone, crowned with tall pines whose branches sighed with the passing breeze. I sat on a rock while Dan watched for signs of rising fish. What followed was an image I will carry in my heart until they stuff me into that sad pine box.

Farmer unhooked the fly from the keeper ring of his rod and began false casting, feeding out more and

(Continued from pg. 4)

more line. Unlike the other fly fishers I'd seen that day, his cast extended slowly, gracefully... the peach color line suddenly catching fire in the booklet of the setting sun. He began pulling with his line hand as his casting motion gained momentum. Finally, in a serious aside to me, he said: "Watch!". Then, with a slow but deliberate motion, he launched that iridescent fly line in a climbing arc, its front loop extending outward toward the cliff and the pine trees, while the loose fly line below him coiled up through the guides, fed out the tip top, still climbing, until the end of it made its slow descent, delivering the fly gently only a moment before it disappeared in the mouth of a trout, a bend in the rod as Farmer set the hook that went into *me* as much as it had the small fish he proceeded to reel in.

As a person 'in the arts,' I must explain that this was at least two years before the release of *A River Runs Through It*, and so I didn't at that moment jump up and weeping with emotion, utter some profound metaphor. But the beauty of that instant in time...it stunned me.

To this day I have yet to see a graphite fly rod that could match the slow and powerful launch of fly line that was possible with that bamboo Leonard, though I myself, if I may say, often duplicate it with my Jenkins fly rods, instruments that temporarily blind me to the more sordid details of my life, and which remind me of how beautiful living on this earth can be.

To that judge I could have said: "Let me have my moments. Allow me this, what you think of as unfathomable foolishness." I'd pull out several crumpled sheets of paper from my pocket, filled with longhand, and show him this story. "Your honor," I'll say: "There's something you've got to understand: From life's debts, life's travails, my cane fly rods are exempt. Because something in life oughta be good, don't you know?"

Bill Stieger has contributed fiction to RipRap before. His article on fishing the Brule River will appear in an upcoming issue of Fly Rod and Reel

Shrimp scent danger downstream...

by Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor...London Daily Telegraph, August 1, 1998

Freshwater shrimp can detect the smell of a trout lurking downstream and change their route to avoid being eaten, scientists have discovered.

Swedish zoologists believe that the shrimp created miniature currents to carry the scent of the trout upstream, by twisting their bodies and wriggling their feet. When the bottom of the stream is rough, natural back-eddies from pebbles greatly increase the range over which the shrimps can detect trout.

Jonas Dahl and colleagues from the University of Lund placed mesh enclosures in a stream, half of them empty and half containing trout. Fewer shrimp reached the enclosures containing trout, indicating that the shrimps had some kind of advance warning. In a laboratory test, trout were encased in a large glass tube in a stream of water, so that shrimp could see them but not smell them. In this case, an equal number of shrimp drifted down each side of the stream.

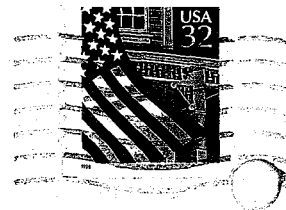
Checks on the flow patterns around the shrimp found small back-eddies caused by them placing their backs to the flow and moving their feet, which might carry the scent signals upstream for a short distance. Natural back-eddies from pebbles increase the range.

"It has been known for some time that *Gammarus pulex* (the shrimp) move erratically downstream. This strange behavior is why we looked at what the shrimps were doing," said Dr. Anders Nilsson, a member of the research team.

This interesting tidbit of useful information was supplied by Kiap-TU-Wish member Herb Lundberg, who was in England this Summer. Did you take a fly rod, Herb?



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Kinnickinnick River Land Trust purchases Kelly Creek...

The purchase of Kelly Creek, a spring and tributary to the Kinnickinnick River, was recently negotiated by KRLT. Over a span of two years, the Walt and Dorothy Howard property, which involved not only the creek and alder stand surrounding it, but a grass landing strip, a hangar and a couple of buildings, went from being offered on the open realty market to being included in a deal to protect it from development by KRLT and neighbors Allan Klein and Harriet Lansing, who are members of the Land Trust.

Buying land to protect it from development is not the primary way that KRLT operates. The organization prefers to negotiate a conservation easement agreement with the owners which will protect the river at minimal cost. But the chance to buy an entire feeder creek and to perhaps use it as a natural outdoor workshop was too good a deal to pass up. The board of directors authorized the purchase of Kelly Creek and the surrounding 25 acres for \$75,000. The agreement was signed on June 25, 1998, which will also include donated conservation easements on the Klein/Lansing property which adjoins the creek. KRLT still has to raise the money to buy the creek. A line of credit will secure the purchase, but a fund drive has begun to pay back the loan. Donations in any size are welcome. Please make out checks to KRLT and include a memo about Kelly Creek Fund. Then send to:

**Kinnickinnick River Land Trust
P.O. Box 87
River Falls, WI 54022**