

Kiap-TU-Wish Trout Unlimited April 2005

Fly tiers to hold forth

By Jonathan Jacobs

There are two things one can count on in April – Income Tax Day and outstanding fly tying demonstrations at the K-TU meeting. This year on Wednesday, April 6 Kyle Amundson (warmwater), Chad Borenz (furled leader construction), Bob Diesch (saltwater) Andy Lamberson (trout), Tony Stifter (traditional trout) and Dr. Mary Tuchscherer (general) and Mike Wemlinger (small stuff) offer us a glimpse of their expertise. This meeting is about as pleasant a way as one can spend an early spring evening. With a little luck – good or bad, depending on one's point of view – we may even in some way summon up the spirit of the late angler-flaneur Richard M. "Dry Fly Dick" Frantes. Actually, considering that we meet in a bar, we're probably far more likely to summon up the spirits of Dry Fly Dick, which are readily available to anyone with cash and whose birthday antedates April 7, 1984. The bar, Bob Smith's Sports Club, 601 2nd Street, Hudson, serves a mean portion of barbecue ribs and other comestibles. Dinner is available at 6 PM and the meeting begins at 7 PM.

Board elects officers

By Jonathan Jacobs

As directed by chapter by-laws, the board met after the annual meeting and, in addition to other business on the agenda on March 7, elected officers. The board re-elected the existing slate of officers. Gary Horvath will serve as chapter president; Greg Diel will serve as vice-president and Brent Sittlow will serve as treasurer. Mr. Sittlow will no longer have to serve double duty as secretary and treasurer as the board elected Chad Borenz to the position of secretary.

Bill Lovegren resigns; Gary Richardson joins board

By Jonathan Jacobs

Kiap-TU-Wish board member Bill Lovegren resigned at the March 7, 2005 meeting of the board. Chapter president Gary Horvath thanked Mr. Lovegren for his years of service to the chapter and to its board. The board elected Gary Richardson of Deer Park, Wisconsin to fill Mr. Lovegren's seat until the March, 2006 business meeting. Mr. Richardson has shown a strong interest in chapter matters since joining the chapter and has previous experience as board member of the Twin Cities Chapter of Trout Unlimited when he was a Minnesota resident. Please thank Mr. Lovegren for his work and please congratulate Mr. Richardson on his election to the board.

RIPRAP

Contem-places:

"Spinning Takes All"

By James R. Humphrey

That was the title of an article that appeared in *Outdoor Life* in 1952, or thereabouts. The European spinning road and reel, and their vaunted simplicity of use, barged (or maybe voyaged) into our consciousness in the early Fifties, give or take a year or two.

The equipment and technique caused some of us to drop our jaws. Imagine: One could cast with the dominant hand and retrieve line with the off-hand. Right-handers cranked with the left hand. How odd and easy. The American way, if you remember, was to cast with dominant hand, then shift to the off-hand and crank with the dominant. Fly required the same switch, and many still do.

And that stimulated a train of thought. The early American casting reels placed the handle on the right, which required right-handed anglers to switch hands on the retrieve. How curious, when I watched my brother-in-law shift rod hand to hand, while I, a lefty, cast left and cranked right.

Therefore, being of logical mind, I concluded that the jeweler who built the first American casting reel with right hand crank must have been left-handed; and his design was followed sheepishly by others.

My first combo was a six foot, hollow fiberglass Airex, made in America, a braided four pound test line, and English Ambidex reel which allowed for the crank to be placed on either side. Oh, those clever Brits who also gave us greenheart rods and Hardy reels. My Hardy Flyweight has a right hand crank, perfect for me, always a lefty.

And so to the point of this peregrination: Spinning doesn't take all, but it has its place. I recall an afternoon in the 1980s on the upper Kinnickinnic when the trout wouldn't rise to a fly, but a young man released trout after trout with his light spinning rod and a tiny Mepps spinner (French). Not that I was hooked again by virtue of his demonstration, but I was eager to acquire a Humphrey spinning reel from Dick Frantes. It was a West Coast design, circa 1955, with a side orifice from which the monofilament was supposed to flow out smoothly.

I soon tired of spinning, perhaps because I tired of releasing trout, or probably it the Humphrey reel that did me in.

Jim Humphrey is the co-author of Minnesota and Wisconsin Trout Streams. He lives in Oak Park Heights, MN and is a featured contributor to RipRap.

Valley Creek

By Henrietta Glenn

More than forty-five years ago at our little hatchery on Valley Creek at Afton we took mature eggs from brook trout in the fall. In a shack Andy and I raised the eggs to tiny silver trout and eventually returned them to the stream at the proper time.

The process went like this: With the help of neighbors we seined the adult brookies from a pond which was connected to the creek. The main guy, Andy Glenn, stood in the shallows and stroked the eggs from the females into a large pan that was held by a volunteer. When the eggs were two inches deep in the pan, the males were stripped of their milt by stroking their bellies. The sperm would shoot out under pressure while the helper rotated the pan. The eggs would harden within the hour to show they were fertilized.

One time a school bus came down the road loaded with fourth-graders, nine and ten years old. Their teacher thought that they would be amused and educated by the demonstration of a trout's life cycle.

It was a beautiful October day, warm and green and alive with color. Some of the kids ran to the dam downstream and onto the lawn to kick through the leaves. Our work continued with running comment, while the kids asked "How" and "Why" and "What for?" One curious boy asked, "Mr. Glenn, show me how you do that stroking, will you?" MY husband gave the lad a male and the bow immediately turned and targeted one of the girls. And the kids screamed with laughter!

After sanity resumed, Andy led the group into the shack to laundry tubs. The fertilized eggs were distributed on screens in the tubs. Cold creek water was piped in to keep the eggs moist.

In January the minnows developed, and an electrical mechanism would dispense feed at timely intervals – finely ground feed at first, larger gradations later.

When the small brookies reached the proper size they were transferred into holding tanks to grow. At fingerling size they were released into the stream.

This was a day with Andy to remember: The hill above us was glory-red with sumac framed by green growth. Yellow and orange leaves floated on the stream that glistened in the sun.

Valley Creek is a Minnesota tributary to the St. Croix River. Henrietta Glenn is a resident of Oak Park Heights, MN.

My name is Retrotrout

By Skip James

To many who know me as one who values the traditions of our sport, it may appear out of character for me to applaud a new technology, one that has absolutely nothing to do with trout, water, or fly fishing. But it is precisely because I love old tackle, books about fishing, and the history of the pursuit of trout that I spend a lot of time on Ebay. My Ebay name is 'retrotrout.' That's appropriate, I think, for someone who fishes with bamboo and silk, who ties flies in the style of Pritt and Stewart, and who reads with relish the adventures astream of Halford, Skues, and Gordon.

Of course I revere the more modern proponents of fly fishing for trout as well. After all, I haven't been napping while Charlie Fox and Vince Marinaro were trying to tell the world how to catch the prima donna trout of the Letort and Yellow Breeches, or unaware of the underwater experiments of Gary LaFontaine, or the efforts of Schwiebert, Flick, Arbona, Borger, Swisher-Richards, and McCafferty, among others, to identify, photograph and study American trout stream insects. But the vast flea-market of Ebay enables me to deal in bamboo rods and reels and to enjoy a chance to pick up a first edition or a precious Heddon Featherweight.

Many of the sellers on Ebay have no idea of what they're selling. Rods are often called 'poles,' guides are 'eyes,' ferrules 'joiners,' winding silk is 'string.' But, thank goodness, most merchandise comes with photos that shed at least a little light on what's for sale. Many times, when a bamboo fly rod is offered, the description doesn't include the length, and some sellers neglect to convey whatever model number, weight, or line size indication that have been written on the rod shaft. But you can ask sellers questions, and they usually answer your request for information if you're specific and tell them what to do with their item, or where to look. There are plenty of dealers and collectors lurking in cyberspace, too. You may think that you're about to become the owner of a nice rod or reel at a particularly good price, when, just at the last moment, actually in the final seconds of the auction, three other bidders magically appear and buy the item for more than twice what your bid was. That's called sniping, and you can download software that will allow you to bid that way. It's kind of like futures-trading... done at the speed-of-light!

I happen to think that one of the finest fly reels ever made for trout fishing was the early Orvis CFO, actually made by Hardy. From the early 70's when these reels appeared, Orvis has subtly changed the design, the weight, the price, the sizes, until the latest incarnation, that appeared only last year, is markedly different from the original models.

Notwithstanding the American belief in 'progress,' some of us think that those early reels work smoother, and that they are also lighter model for model by at least 1/4oz., and that the click and pawl mechanism allows lighter drag settings than any disc model produced. Regardless of your position on these preferences, Ebay is about the only place where you can buy a 1970's Orvis CFO. In fact, on most days, you have about a dozen to pick from, some modern, some old.

If I fish with a graphite rod, I prefer the Sage Light Line Series in the original two-piece versions. Of course, as well all know, Sage discontinued them some years ago. On Ebay, you can usually find one or two LL's, in the original bags and tubes, selling for a good deal more than their original purchase price. Of course, you can find fifty or so other Sage rods anytime.

I'll bet that I've piqued the curiosity of at least some readers. So how do you operate Ebay? It's really easy, and you don't have to be a member or pay anything unless you want to bid or sell. Then, signing up is really very simple, and quite secure. One of the best things about Ebay is that like any good market, reputations are really important, and 'feedback' is collected about every single transaction that happens on Ebay. Don't buy from a seller that has 'negative feedback,' because that feedback has come from disappointed buyers. Sellers won't deal with a buyer with 'negative feedback,' because that means the buyer didn't pay.

Go to www.Ebay.com and use the search engine to look for what you want. Look up 'trout,' or 'fly rod,' or 'vintage fishing tackle,' or 'bamboo' or 'Sage,'. The search functions are very specific and extensive. If your search parameters are too big, such as 'lure,' you'll get literally thousands of items to look at. But if you look for 'Crazy Crawler,' you'll only find fifty of those famous Heddon lures of yesteryear.

Most auctions last a week, and if you bid on something, and win, you are under contract to actually buy it from the seller. Some items have a 'buy it now' price that allows you to purchase immediately, without waiting for the auction to end. Of course, most 'buy-it-now' prices are a good deal higher than what the seller might expect from letting the auction determine the price. A reserve price is a certain figure beneath which the seller will not conclude the deal. If you bid on an item, and it says "you are the high bidder, but the reserve price has not been met" that means that you or someone else will have to bid higher to try to meet the reserve price set by the seller. If it doesn't happen in the auction, the seller will usually relist the item, sometimes with a smaller reserve.

I've been an Ebayer for several years now, dealing in fishing equipment. I know that there is a market where I can reach interested buyers from all over the world, (I've sold five rods to folks in Japan, for instance), and a place where I can find tackle, books, rods and reels from a former time. Most of you know how much fun it is to look in a tackle box, yours or someone else's, or assemble and wave a favorite rod on a snowy night in the middle of the winter. Looking at Ebay every evening just before you go to bed, is just as exciting, nostalgic and heart-warming. And, who knows, maybe somebody's cast-off listed on Ebay may be just what you've been looking for. Happy Bidding.

Ames aims true

Book review by Greg Diell

We are fortunate to have a sport rich in literature. The winters especially are made more bearable by the Gierachs, Lyons, Middletons and many others. This year I discovered the writing of Dave Ames. His book **True Love and the Woolly Bugger** was a title that for some unknown reason I kept putting at the bottom of the pile. I can get a little put off by the overly philosophical fly fishing memoir, although they certainly can be well written and worth the time. What I really like is good story telling. Dave Ames fills the bill. If these stories are true, this guy has had some adventures. If they are fiction, he's got one imagination. I don't really care; I just enjoyed the ride.

in the chapter "A Light Green Rain", in the Pacific Northwest, you'll meet Red, the six and a half foot rescuer, fiddler; and Molly O'Brien of a roadhouse of the same name. At Molly's roadhouse the solid hemlock bar is notched with dozens of small half-moons with teeth marks. I'll not spoil the reason for the teeth marks. If this book were only this chapter it would be worth the read. But, there's more.

In the "New Age Sensitive Angler" you'll hear about the DTI--The Domestic Tranquility Index. You'll follow the author's struggles with lust, domesticity, and fishing. Characters abound: Scary Mary, Deke, Splash, Airbrush.

"No Secrets" is a hilarious and hair raising trip to the Bahamas for bonefish and tarpon, with surprise accommodations, a vision impaired guide, sharks, barracudas and no whining allowed.

Dave Ames has been a fishing guide and has written extensively. The last chapter in this book is "True Love". It's a guiding story not to be missed. It was probably meant to lead the reader to his new book, **A Good Life Wasted: or Twenty Years as a Fishing Guide**. It worked for me - I have it ordered and hope to crack it open soon.

River Falls clinic set

By Michael Alwin

Mark Saturday, June 4th on your calendars, because that's the date of this year's version of the annual Trout Fishing Clinic in River Falls. Hosted and staffed by the Education Committee, this event is always a load of fun for students and instructors alike. Students receive instruction in casting, entomology, knot tying, stream tactics and safety. Plus, we feed 'em supper, supply them with flies and take them fishing in the evening.

In the February Rip-Rap we sent out an appeal for a volunteer in River Falls to help solicit food for the clinic. A gallant young man, Kevin Greaser, stepped forward to volunteer his services and so this clinic is off and running.

We always are in need of helpers and helpers always have fun...ask anyone who has volunteered in the past. We have need of folks to act as mentors/guides. You'll help out by coaching students in the fine art of fly fishing, following the lead of whoever taught the particular segment we're working on, and act as a guide during the evening's fishing. We have need of a few people to help out with the evening meal, both serving and cleaning up afterward. If your schedule doesn't allow you to participate in person you could always tie up some flies for us: Adams, Elk Hair Caddis, #16 Kinni Sulphurs, Hare's Ear Nymphs and various Soft Hackles are always welcome.

If you would like to volunteer in some capacity just call me at The Shop (561/770-5854) or e-mail me (I can't believe I said that) at mike@bobmitchellsflyshop.com.

Thank you for your support.

Real estate tip

By Jonathan Jacobs

The chapter recently received information about an interesting home for sale located in Minnesota within 8 miles of Stillwater. Built in 1966, it's a 3 bedroom, 3,000 square foot home with workshop and garage located on 1.3 acres. The compelling feature that puts in the pages of RR is that it's located on a spring pond stocked with trout of gargantuan dimensions. The sellers seem interested in finding a buyer interested in the ecology of the immediate area. They've produced an impressive brochure about the property. You may contact Bruce or Margaret Johnson at 507/452/3522, evenings or weekends, for further details.

Pick up trash, mend metaphorical fences

By Jonathan Jacobs

Many anglers seem to assume that access to the Rush River is guaranteed to the public. This is not so. Very little stream frontage on the Rush is under easement. A tradition of rural owner-occupancy and hard work by the Rush River – Eau Galle Sportsman's Club in maintaining cordial relationships with incredibly generous and patient landowners has until recently made "No Trespassing" signs a rare sight on the Rush. There are forces at work that are changing that. First, patterns of land ownership are in flux. Small tract owners are likely to assert their rights to exclusive use of their property. Second, an abundance of recreational time, greater levels of prosperity and high-speed roads have brought urban-dwellers to the Rush in previously unthought-of numbers. Crowding stresses everyone, most especially the owners whose riverbanks are being trampled and littered by the fraction of folks who choose to be poor guests. Third, it's likely that the "old guard" of visiting anglers knew enough to thank the landowners for their generosity and to establish personal relationships with them. Fourth, there's the adumbration that fly anglers in particular are prone to displaying a certain off-putting haughtiness.

K-TU member Sarah Sanford has been working hard to improve landowner-angler relations. She's helped develop a remarkable cooperative effort with TCTU, the Ellsworth Rod and Gun Club, the Eau Galle Rush River Sportsmen's Club, Laughing Trout and Kiap-TU-Wish to conduct a Rush River Litter Walk. The idea is to gather 100 volunteers to cover 25 miles of the Rush's riverbanks and who will pick up trash for collection at the rod and gun club. The event is scheduled for 10 AM on Saturday, April 23. The rendezvous point for the effort is the parking lot of the Ellsworth Rod and Gun Club, where workers will pick up trash bags and their assignments. The club is located on the west bank of the river on the north side of Highway 72. Lunch will be served to volunteers and landowners back at club headquarters later in the day.

Further details about this event are available on the chapter's web page or by contacting Ms. Sanford at sarahsanford@yahoo.com. You may also contact Greg Dietl at mccaiglee@hotmail.com. It's an excellent opportunity for our members to make connections with landowners in a way that both thanks them for their stewardship and undoes some of the damage inflicted by the lesser lights of the angling fraternity.

Drift boat at Great Waters Expo

By Jonathan Jacobs

Tom Helgeson, creator of the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo scheduled for April 1 through April 3 at the Sheraton Bloomington, has kindly offered Kiap-TU-Wish space to display the chapter's drift boat in the main lobby of the hotel. This means that everyone who attends the show will get a look at the boat, which is bound to help with marketing it. It also means that everyone who attends the show will have the opportunity to think about why a group of people would surrender much of a too-short summer to building the craft. An interest in boats, woodworking and camaraderie are among the reasons, but everyone involved was seriously interested in generating cash for the chapter's never-ending list of worthy projects, too.

You can thank Mr. Helgeson for his generosity by attending the event. If you see him there, be sure to offer your thanks and words of encouragement.

Not everything is lousy

A shocking editorial by Jonathan Jacobs

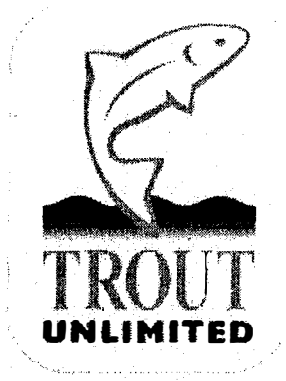
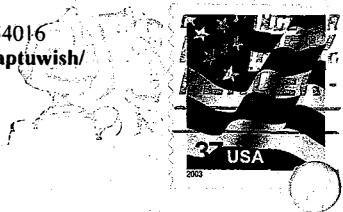
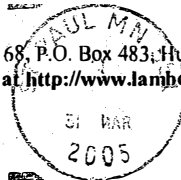
That's a ham-handed headline, but anything more positive might induce a case of the vapors in those among you who are more accustomed to reading yet another jeremiad from a greybeard loon. Here are some good things:

At the chapter level, K-TU is in the best shape I've seen it in many years. Meeting attendance has taken a sharp upswing. We have people on board who are serious about the disagreeable but necessary task of raising money and while we have miles to go before we're as much as competent at this, the chapter is learning and solidly solvent. We are again working on stream improvement projects and turnout for them has been absolutely excellent. There are some fresh personnel in the chapter's leadership who are nicely complementing the experienced hands there. We're networking with other conservation organizations in efforts like the Eau Galle restoration and the Rush River Litter Walk.

At the state level, the State Council of TU is moving forward with exploring the idea of creating a position for a paid professional Executive Director and is examining funding mechanisms for such a position. Having a pro to help guide chapters and to fight for all of us in Madison would be a great thing.

On the regional level, the TU DARE program has the potential to push the preservation and enhancement of Midwestern spring creek fisheries to levels never previously imagined.

Keep up the great work, everyone!



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MEETING SCHEDULE:

APRIL 6: DRY FLY DICK FRANTES FLY TIERS
MAY 5: WISCONSIN DNR

DEADLINE FOR MAY RIPRAP: FRIDAY, APRIL 22

CHAPTER COMMITTEES, ONGOING PROJECTS AND CONTACTS:

Kinnickinnic Monitoring: Kent Johnson, Project Leader
Willow River Monitoring: Chuck Goossen, Project Leader
Fundraising Committee: Corey Mairs, Chair.
Publications: Jonathan Jacobs, Editor.
Program Committee: **VACANT**
Education Committee: Michael Alwin, Chair
Habitat Committee: Greg Dietl, Chair
Website: Andy Lamberson, Webmaster
River Restoration Committee: Ted Mackmiller, Chair
Chapter membership development: **VACANT**