



# RIP-RAP

EDITOR: CRAIG MASON  
LAYOUT: ANDY LAMBERSON

RESTORATION & PRESERVATION  
THROUGH RESEARCH & PROJECTS

DEC 1992

## ◆ DEC. MEETING

### Christmas Banquet

It's time for the Chapter's biggest event - the Annual Silent Auction and Christmas Banquet! This is our major fund raiser, so start searching for those treasures to donate. The items do not have to be fishing related - we will accept almost anything!

The auction items can be dropped off at Bob Mitchell's Flyshop in Lake Elmo or brought directly to the Christmas banquet. Please fill out a donation form so that we can give everyone who contributes due recognition (and a receipt if needed for tax purposes!).

Please call Jean Mitchell to make your reservation at (612)770-5854

**Location:** Hudson House

**Date:** Wed., Dec. 2, 1992

**Time:** Social Hour at 6:30pm  
Dinner at 7:30pm

**Program:** Yellowstone  
All guests are welcome but *you must have a reservation!!*

**Dinner Choices:**  
Hudson House Steak \$12.95  
Chicken Kiev \$11.95  
Broiled Shrimp \$15.95

**RESERVATIONS ARE NEEDED BY NOVEMBER 30 !!!**



## DEC. MEETING NOTICE

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**TIME:** Social Hour at 6:30  
Dinner at 7:30

**WHERE:** Hudson House  
It's our annual Christmas banquet and fund raiser. Please see the article on the left.

## ◆ SHOES OF THE FISHERMAN

By Skip James

Are the felt soles of your wading shoes getting a little thin? Take your Borger boots, or other Weinbrenner shoes to Endicott Shoe Repair, on the ground level of the Pioneer Building, Robert Street between 4th and 5th in Saint Paul. Fred Balsimo, who is a flyfisher, will resole your shoes if you bring him the felts (separate sole and heel, please). Felt soles are available at Bob Mitchell's Flyshop. Fred does not glue on the felts, he sews them on, just like getting a new pair of wading shoes! The price is reasonable, too... especially reasonable to members of Kiap-TU-Wish. The phone number of Endicott Shoe Repair is 224-7173.



## ◆ BOOK REVIEW

By Jon Jacobs

"The old drunk told me about trout fishing. When he could talk, he had a way of describing trout as if they were a precious and intelligent metal.

Silver is not a good adjective to describe what I felt when he told me about trout fishing.

I'd like to get it right.

Maybe trout steel. Steel made from trout. The clear snow-filled river acting as foundry and heat.

Imagine Pittsburgh.

A steel that comes from trout used to make buildings, trains and tunnels.

The Andrew Carnegie of Trout!"

Can anything better be said of trout? That quote is drawn from Richard Brautigan's *Trout Fishing in America*, which was once described by John Gierach as one of the great pieces of modern surrealism. I'd heard about this book years ago, but resisted purchasing it until it was available for the grand sum of 25 cents from the Washington County Library at that organizations annual book disposal sale. It's undoubtedly one of the strangest pieces of literature I've ever attempted to read, but that single passage is worth far more than a quarter.

Books are one of humanity's greatest inventions. Not only can they entertain, teach and inspire with the stories they tell, the process of acquiring them can become a story for their owners to tell as well. In addition to haunting library sales, I've snooped through second-hand stores, visited fly shops and book stores, borrowed from friends, perused

catalogs and bid for books at auction (One year at the Kiap-TU-Wish holiday banquet I withstood fierce competition from the redoubtable Michael M. Stanton to become the owner of a primo copy of E. Schwiebert's *NYMPHS*). Too, there's great tactile pleasure in the feel of a solid, well made book. I only wish that, say, waders were as durable as a good, hard bound book. With that said, let me tell you about some books that I've come across in the past year.

That master wordsmith Thomas McGuane wrote of John Gierach's work, "A man is brought low indeed when he can't get to the river, but in the pen of Gierach is great succor and surcease".

So it is for me with Gierach's latest, *Even Brook Trout Get the Blues* (Simon & Schuster, 1991, 223pp., \$20.00hb). Gierach's great strength is the easy, conversational tone with which he writes. It's the voice of the Trout Bum, a voice that's more self assured with every new book. Listen to this: "We drove to the river in Larry's souped-up vintage Cadillac, a fine luxury hot rod as big inside as an ambulance, with wide leather seats and electric windows. This thing is painted silver with tastefully pale pink-and-blue flames coming off the hood and front wheel wells. A radar detector is Velcroed to the dashboard." The appearance of the Caddy has precious little to do with fishing, but such a description leaves me begging for more. In this book you'll find stories about an early winter storm on the plains of Montana, the Roaring Fork, fly fishing for northern pike, bamboo rods, hunting dogs, the arduous life of brook trout in the high country, gar and spring snow. The only complaint that I have about this book stems from a story called "A Year in the Life" which purports to chronicle a year measured by fishing seasons. We've all read one too many pieces on the procession of hatches through a year and this tale is filled with too many "and then A.K. said to me and then I said to A.K." cutesy

statements. Still, a very strong effort.

My father, who was a keen observer of American life, once said that all great orators were and are from the South. There was down there, he thought, a greater appreciation for fine language and mellifluous speech. I think that this extends to the written word as well and that Harry Middleton writes like the son of the South that he is. In his *On the Spine of Time*, subtitled *An Angler's Love of the Smokies* (Simon & Schuster, 237pp., \$18.95hb.) he says this of trout: "Trout are excellent company, creatures of noble and admirable and perplexing qualities, much like human beings only more honest and sincere. They are totally unpredictable and therefore totally bewitching, at once brutal, beautiful, suspicious, graceful, and powerful, fastidious and wary, cautious and aggressive. Raw instinct burns like electric current through their cold, wild flesh." There is page after page of good, fluid writing like that in this book. Unfortunately, some of Mr. Middleton's prose is just a tad rich (Green is never simply green. It's "beryl green" or "jade green" or somesuch, for example). On balance, though, this extended homage to Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the odd characters that Middleton finds there is a fine book. Incidentally, Bob Mitchell, who's tastes in literary matters are undoubtedly impeccable, says that Middleton's *The Earth Is Enough* is an even better book.



My wife and daughter gave me a copy of *A Wedding Gift and Other Angling Stories* by John Taintor Foote (Lyons & Buford, 1992, 121pp., \$16.95hb) for Father's Day. This particular edition has a special introduction and commentary by

Foote's son, Timothy, who also contributes a story entitled "The Loch Ness Monster". This book sets down all of Foote's amazing and hilarious stories about the trying times of that angling-addicted WASP, George Baldwin Potter and his long-suffering wife, the lovely Isabelle. I've praised these stories previously and don't wish to go on about them at length here, but, to my taste, they're flawless. Timothy Foote's story is intriguing. In it, he's astounded to receive a phone call from the fictional Potter's son, who has inherited none of his father's angling skills and is badly in need of lessons. It's very cleverly done.

The ladies also gave me *Home Waters* (Fireside Books, 1991, \$12pb), an anthology edited by Gary Soucie. It's virtually impossible to go wrong with any anthology, but this is a good one, with pieces from a broad selection of authors, including Nick Lyons, John Gierach, George Reiger, Geoffrey Norman, Charles Waterman, W.D. Wetherall, Russell Chatham, Thomas McGuane, Datus Proper and a host of others. It's well worth the money. I borrowed a friend's copy of *An Outside Chance* (Houghton Mifflin, 1990, 294pp., \$19.95), a compilation of work by the incomparable Thomas McGuane. Many of the pieces were originally published in *Sports Illustrated* in what McGuane calls that magazine's golden age. Not all of the stories are about fishing, but in every one of them is prose that will take your breath away. It almost seems unfair that one man can have such a gift for writing. There's talent enough here to supply several writers. Here is McGuane's view of nymph fishing: "As I face new water, I always ask myself if I am going to fish with a nymph or not. Presumably, you do not walk straight into rising trout. Camus said that the only serious question is whether or not to commit suicide. This is rather like the nymph question." And, indirectly, on his fly tying skills: "I

come up with one [a fly] I tied myself that imitates the effect of a riot gun on a love seat." Broaden your literary horizons, read this book.

I love the premise behind Robert H. Smith's *Native Trout of North America* (Frank Amato Publications, 1984, \$15pb). Smith, a retiree from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, grew tired of fishing for "rubber trout", as he calls hatchery fish, and went on a mission to catch, photograph and describe a truly wild specimen of every species of *salmo* and *salvelinus* endemic to the continent. Dartmouth-educated Smith is nobody's fool and he shoots straight from the shoulder in condemning pollution, poor forestry practices and the shabby genetics of hatchery fish. He summarizes well the geologic and climatic forces that are largely responsible for the isolation that was necessary for the development of distinct species from a common ancestor. His anecdotes about his search for these fish are lively and compact.

I've always admired Gary Borger's books on trout foods and fishing. The good doctor has now turned his attention to fly tying with the publication of his excellent *Designing Trout Flies* (Tomorrow River Press, 1991, 214pp., \$27.95hb). The book is well thought out, designed and produced. It introduced several approaches to effective imitation and fly construction that were new to me, a novice tier. The book is illustrated in pen and ink by Borger's son, Jason. Drawings have one important advantage over even the best photographs: Unnecessary detail and clutter can simply be omitted in a drawing and the younger Borger seems to have realized this. The hardbound price tag is a bit steep, perhaps, and a softbound edition is available for less money.

Another excellent fly tying book is A.K.Best's *Production Fly Tying* (1990, \$39.95hb, \$29.95pb). This

book is subtitled *A Collection of Ideas, Notions, Hints, & Variations on the Techniques of Fly Tying*. That's a fairly cumbersome subtitle, but it does accurately summarize the sense of this work. This is an interesting look into what it takes to earn a living from tying flies. Obviously, you must be a bit of a character to undertake such an endeavor. Besides that, you must be well organized, disciplined, fast and original to compete against what importers euphemistically refer to as "offshore" production. Best is a man of strong opinions and convictions. I thought the best parts of this book were his recommendations on tools, bench organization and materials acquisition, storage and handling. Less interesting were the photo sequences of flies under construction, even though the quality of the photographs is excellent. It suddenly occurred to me why this book is expensive: There must have been a good deal of production expense in the photo and printing processes and, for that matter, it is a sizable book. Worth the money.

I stumbled across a surprising coffee table book at a store called The Reading Railroad in St. Paul's Bandana Square, a place that specializes in overstocks and remainders. It's called *The Complete Book of Flyfishing* (Bonanza Books, 1990). It's one of those "overview" kinds of books that tells the reader something about virtually every aspect of the sport. This book was designed, and published in Sweden, printed and bound in Spain and, as nearly as I can tell, originally written in English. Much of the content is actually about fishing in the New World, although Atlantic salmon fishing gets prominent display, too. The photographs are often superb and the print production is first rate. I'm sorry that I don't have a price for you. The original publication price was quite high, but I think it was

marked at half price, or around the twenty dollar mark.

One more time: *A River Runs Through It* by Norman Maclean (University of Chicago Press, many editions, many prices) is one of the finest pieces of fiction ever written. It's now a movie, of course, and it's been getting rave reviews. I'm getting the sense that many flyfisherfolk are beginning to think of this as "our" movie because "it's about flyfishing" and it is, to about the same degree that *Moby Dick* is about the commercial whaling industry in 19th century New Bedford. This isn't "your" movie only if you've never been part of a family. So, go see it and enjoy it, but please read the wonderful book on which the movie is based.

TWO ADDITIONAL MEDIA NOTES: First, when, oh when, are we going to see an edition of the collected works of D.F. Flote? This guy's a comer and we're fortunate indeed to get the first look at his material. Second, last year I knocked *TROUT* magazine pretty badly in a review. I stand by that, but let's give credit where it's due: The magazine has been making great strides, with an excellent piece by Steve Grooms on the Great Lakes lake trout fishery and some fine work by Ray White in his two-parter on the evils of fish hatcheries.



◆ **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

We will soon be getting ready to start Trout Works 1993 on our local streams and though Marty Engel and Mike Alwin have not finalized plans you can almost bet it will have something to do with chain saws, brushing, burning, smoke, cold hands and aching backs. I can hardly wait!

At first it surprised me, that is, when I asked "new" members what they liked best about our Chapter. Was it talking about fishing, chapter meetings, or the special presentations at the meetings that they liked best? "No", came their answer, "I really like getting out and doing some work along the streams".

We have always had "good" attendance

by Kiap-TU-Wish chapter members at Trout Works Projects but what is really amazing is the number of Twin Cities Chapter Members that show up. We have had work crews where the Twin Cities Members made up nearly half. We have had quite a few Twin Cities members switch to our chapter because of the work we do.

There is a great deal of satisfaction in working hard and improving a Trout Stream. At the end of Trout Works 1992 a lot of members were very proud of how much work we got done and looked forward to fishing the area the next season.

That "next season" has come and gone and a few of us did fish the

project area, some with great success, others said "Well, it was real pretty and very relaxing" which translated meant they didn't catch anything. But it doesn't really matter how many you caught because you could tell that the project is helping the stream and that's what it is really all about.

So, I invite you to participate in Trout Works 1993 this winter. We have a job for everyone, from hard to easy. And everyone has the opportunity to feel like they can make a difference. Something that is all to rare in todays world.

*Andy*

**Kiap-TU-Wish**

President: Andy Lamberson (715)386-7568

Vice President: Gary Horvath (715)425-8489

Secretary: Don Ausemus (612)636-0625

Treasurer: Tom Battey (612)559-3370

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Jon Jacobs (715)386-7822

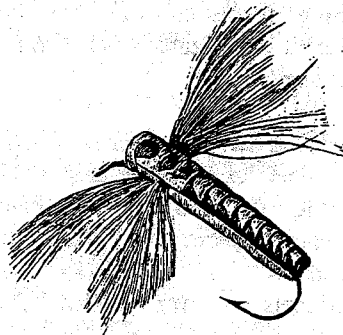
Kent Johnson (715)386-5299

Gary Horvath (715)425-8489

Craig Mason (715)425-2282

Mike Alwin (612)439-8159

Skip James (612)436-1565



**Kiap-TU-Wish  
1992-1993 MEETINGS**

- Dec. 2: Xmas Party
- Jan. 6: Russian Salmon Odyssey
- Feb. 3: The Bighorn
- March 3: Business Mtg.
- April 7: Fly Tiers
- May 5: Marty Engel Wisc. DNR

**Dinner at 6:30 Meeting at 8:00**  
All meetings are at the Hudson House.

**KIAP-TU-WISH  
TROUT UNLIMITED  
P.O. BOX 483  
HUDSON, WI 54016**