



Rip Rap

February Meeting

When: Wednesday, Feb. 4
Where: JR Ranch, Hudson
Dinner: 6:30
Program: 8:00
Speaker: Dr. Tom Waters

President's Lines:

At the March meeting, our chapter will elect three board members. Two members, **Chuck Goossen** and **Skip James**, have served their three year terms. Chuck, who has given uncountable hours to Kiap-TU-Wish projects and serves as our Treasurer, will not seek reelection to the board, but will continue as Treasurer. Skip will also retire but still produce RipRap. Last year, the chapter approved an amendment to our By-laws proposed by **Jon Jacobs** that would create a new, two-year board position. So, we need to nominate three new people at our February meeting.

Plans for Winter projects were discussed at a recent board meeting, and there were many suggestions (see bulletin board). Any addition input from the membership would be greatly appreciated. One of the most appealing ideas, and one which the chapter is somewhat committed to in the deal to remove the Mound Pond dam, is to provide access for handicapped persons to the Willow River. There are many suitable sites for structures designed for wheelchair use, and most of them are already handy to State Park trails. Other suggestions including a river cleanup in the recently uncovered stretch of the Willow, to gather the beer cans, bobbers, old tires, bicycles, and car parts that have accumulated over the years. A Spring cleanup on the Kinni, with help from young people, would bring media coverage and good publicity to the chapter.

Our video project is coming along. **Andy Lamberson** has applied for funding from several sources, and we are waiting for positive replies.

There's been some problems with the flow monitor at the new Willow River monitoring station which the board has voted to replace with a unit a little easier to service. **Kent Johnson** and **Gary**

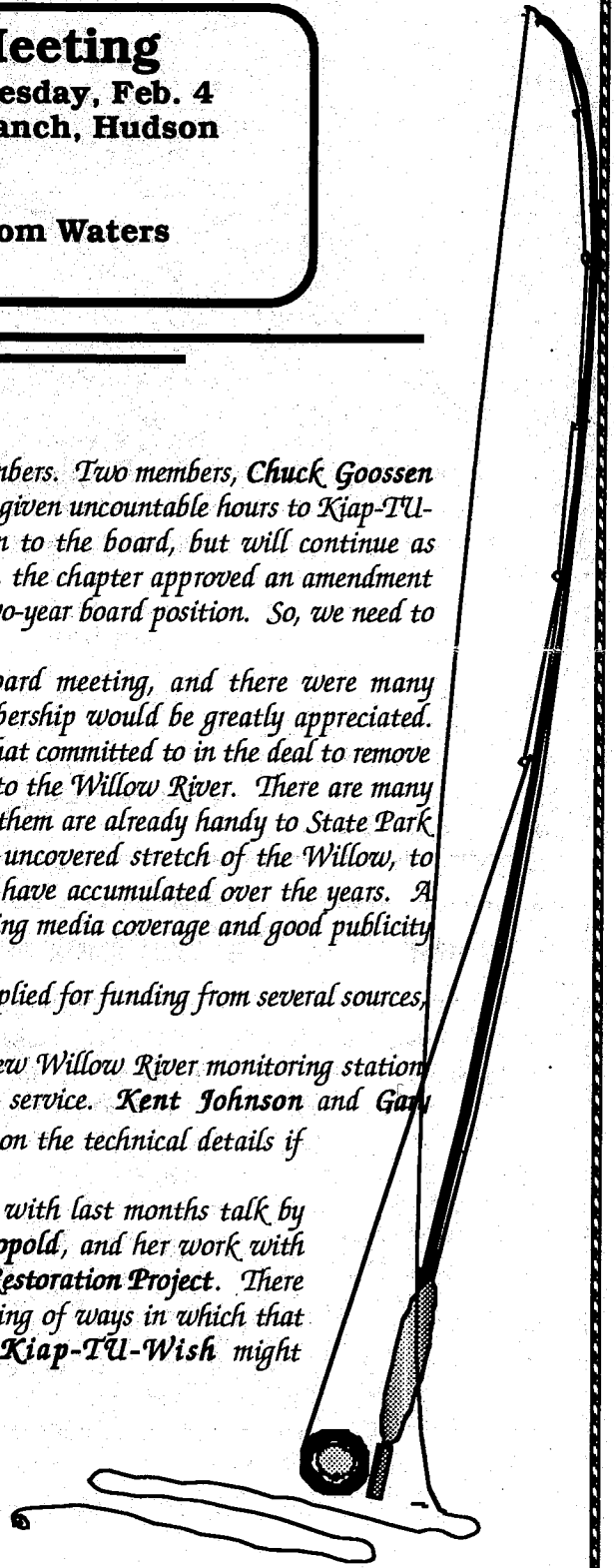
Horvath can fill any of you in on the technical details if you're interested.

I was extremely pleased with last month's talk by **Marybeth Lorbiecki** on **Aldo Leopold**, and her work with the **Western Wisconsin Prairie Restoration Project**. There was discussion at the board meeting of ways in which that group's interests and those of **Kiap-TU-Wish** might intersect in a joint project.

Sincerely,
Tony Stifter, President

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Kiap-TU-Wish Bulletin Board...

Nominations open at February meeting...

There are two Board of Directors whose three-year terms have expired: Chuck Goossen and Skip James. A new, two-year term Board position was approved and made part of the chapter's Bylaws last year. Jon Jacobs wrote the new provision with the hope that the two-year position would create opportunities for service to the chapter without a three-year commitment, and that it would also broaden the outlook of the Board. This is the first time the position will be filled.

Chuck Goossen, who is the chapter's Treasurer, will continue in that position, but wishes to retire from the Board. Skip James, who is RipRap editor, will continue in that capacity, but will retire from the Board as well. Since both Chuck and Skip will still attend Board meetings in their official capacities, the effect will be to make the Board broader-based, stimulating discussion and allowing more members to participate.

A nominating committee will be formed to select candidates for these three positions. The names of the nominees will be posted in RipRap ten days before the March meeting. The election will be held then. If you're interested in serving, please contact Tony Stifter

Faulty Flow Gauge plagues Willow River station...

Kent Johnson has encountered problems with the Campbell flow gauge that was installed in the chapter-built monitoring station below the Little Falls Dam. No one knows what causes the wild fluctuations that make the readings less than useless. The monitoring station was broken into last Summer, but no one's positive that that was the source of the problem. The company, Utah based, has been contacted, but calibration of the unit can only be done by one of their technicians onsite. There is a more recent model currently in use by Minnesota State agencies as well as many technicians competent to service it in the immediate area.

It was decided at a recent Board meeting to write to the company, asking for a refund for the faulty unit, or a credit against purchasing the newer model for the monitoring station. The Board voted to spend up to \$500 to replace the flow gauge. The conversation at the Board meeting concerning this issue left several Board members 'in the dust.' It was entertaining and enlightening to listen to the technical jargon of Rich Lindholm and Chuck Goossen, engineers, and Kent and Gary Horvath, both scientists.

A Trout Crew for the Lower Chippewa Basin...

Wisconsin stations heavy equipment, supplies, and crews of workers at strategic sites throughout the state whose purpose is to maintain and improve local trout streams. Such a trout crew is based in La Crosse. There is another at Black River Falls. Those crews, under the direction of a DNR supervisor, can move rock for riprap, stabilize banks, remove trees and boulders, repair and replace stream structures, etc. The kind of resource management possible with such a crew greatly enhances the local rivers, and the amount of work done far exceeds what is possible with only volunteer labor and materials. Kiap-TU-Wish has joined with County workers from time to time when heavy equipment was required, such as the rip rap on the Kinni last Summer, and the bank stabilization on the Burkhardt stretch of the Willow.

There has been some talk at the State level of providing such a trout crew for the Lower Chippewa Basin, which would include the Kinni, the Willow, and the Rush, among others. At present, there is no funding for such a crew, but the possibilities of having one on hand to service our local streams is very exciting, and it is well known to Wisconsin DNR that Pierce and St. Croix counties have been identified as the focus of about twenty percent of the growth of the Twin Cities metro area. The chapter will continue to lobby for the establishment of such a local trout crew at the earliest opportunity, and looks forward to future collaborations with one and the many projects that could be accomplished together.

Spring Fishing Clinic Date Set...

The annual River Falls fishing clinic sponsored by Kiap-TU-Wish will take place on May 30, 1998. Mike Alwin has issued a call for volunteers. He will need instructors in fly casting, knot tying, stream reading, entomology, and basic fishing lore. The instructors will function as guides for the evening fishing experience which concludes the clinic. If the format is the same as last year, students will assemble in the park to have class instruction, then have a delicious meal, prepared by chapter members, then engage in onstream instruction. Members are encouraged to donate flies for the event, and I'm sure there will be more information forthcoming in future RipRaps as the event date approaches. Mark it on your calendar!



Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area Proposed...

So what's the connection between trout and prairies?

Prairie grasses and flowers, unlike brush and more effectively than trees, stabilize streambanks, keeping spawning beds from silting over. Because many prairie plants grow as much into the earth as they do above it, they establish deep tap roots and networked veins. These absorb and hold moisture in the soil, seining impurities from the rainwater, purifying it before it washes into the groundwater supply and from there into our streams. These deep roots are not damaged by snow and ice, and so are present each spring to slow the floods caused by snowmelt.

In Polk and St. Croix Counties, over 200,000 acres of prairie and oak savanna once dominated the landscape, but obviously, things have changed since the first surveyors roamed through the area in the 1830s, documented the flora. The Wisconsin DNR is doing a feasibility study on the desirability of permanently preserving 20,000 acres of prairies and oak savanna within the two counties. The DNR is not planning to buy the acreage required, but will work with local landowners through permanent conservation easements to restore the land to prairie grasses and other plants. The Western Wisconsin Prairie Project (WWPP) is a group of citizens, hunters, farmers, scientists, prairie enthusiasts, and other concerned individuals that are lobbying for approval of this project. The proposal includes a citizens board to advise on acquisition, habitat maintenance and management decisions. It would also work as a liaison with the community, explaining the value and rewards of returning acreage to prairie grasses to schools, churches and community groups.

At their January 7th meeting, after a presentation of this proposal, the Hudson-River Falls chapter gave the WWPP their energetic support. Some members suggested that the chapter might be interested in planting a prairie on the state lands lining the Willow River near Burkhardt where the Mound Pond dam was recently removed. If that project proceeds as suggested, it could develop into a model for the Adopt-a-Prairie program the WWPP wants to initiate.

(Excerpted and edited from an article by Marybeth Lorbiecki)

Rif Raf...

Poetry, Fiction, Humor, Reviews.

A Short Treatise on the Attainment of Flyfishing Wisdom

by Bill Stieger

Throughout the last years, there has been a plethora of starry-eyed yups crowding onto American rivers in the attempt to imagine themselves as latter day Brad Pitts: shadow casting from atop a rock, or perhaps one of those cowboy-hatted fishermen from the Chevy Blazer ads. It seems these fern-bar Hemingways don't need to flyfish as much as they need the *image* of themselves flyfishing. To be a fisher of the fly has become as romantic as owning a Harley and, what the hell, it's a lot cheaper than a new Electra-Glide.

If you happen to be a fledgling flyfisher, and one day you find yourself on stream dejected by your tailing loops, tangled leaders and your total inability to catch fish, just sing out "Like a Rock" to encourage yourself. And don't forget to wear your fuchsia colored Ex-Officio shirt under your pink Supplex vest. Cultivate the image.

But what can you do to make an impression at TU meetings, flyfishing conventions, or when huddled around the fireplace at your local flyshop? How can you spark conversation with knowledgeable flyfishers when you know so little about the sport? Here's my advice: gain the knowledge of flyfishing's top luminaries, the innovators of flyfishing's history, those who made the sport what it is. Light historical knowledge can impress even the most jaded flyfishing veterans, and your piscatorial social life will be assured.

Since most of us Americans subscribe to Henry Ford's dictum that "history is bunk," you'll immediately gain purchase to the attentions of your local trout pundits by appearing to possess wisdom reserved only for those who read books. And since most of us despise reading, here's a 'cheat sheet' listing the contributions of the great flyfishers of antiquity. Hell, you don't need the knowledge of flyfishing history as much as you need the image of yourself in possession of that knowledge. Let us proceed:

"Dumb" Juliana Berners: A Catholic nun who invented flyfishing in the attempt to keep men moral during idle times. These men went on to trample hedges, litter English rivers with worm containers and beer bottles, and drunkenly forded into the river to relieve themselves (hence the English law against wading). "Dumb" Juliana's largest mistake...the source of her nickname...was in believing men capable of morality in the first place. Was also noted for fashioning flies from horse hair rather than shell out five shillings for a Cortland 444.

Roddy "Hal" Halford: Inventor of the dry fly. Halford claimed that trout only fed on the surface, that the floating fly was the only way to properly use the flyrod. Responsible for creating an army of purists who caught only ten-inch trout. Famous for his long-running feud with a nymph fisherman named "Screwed," who had the temerity to believe fish ate nymphs. Halford once hooked a five pound brown that proceeded to break his hook. The inscription on his grave reads: "I should have used Tiemco's."

"Little Teddy" Gordon: First American trout bum. Claimed to be in ill health, thereby credited with the invention of workman's comp. First American to buy dry flies mail order (see Roddy Halford). Tied first Catskill style dry flies by attaching wood-duck wings to all his patterns no matter what the mayfly really looked like. His girlfriend Frieda was credited with giving him the nickname "Little Teddy", and not because of his height. His patterns are used to this day by flyfishers interested in not catching fish.

Edward "Ringworm" Hewitt: Inventor of the fishing hat because of his wife's repeated pleas to "hide that scabby halo." First millionaire trout bum. Happily fished through the Great Depression while everyone else either sold apples or starved. What Gordon was to Halford, Hewitt was to "Screwed," (whatever that means.) First creditable American fisher of nymphs and inventor of the first androgynous dry fly, the Bi-visible.

Lee "Royal" Wulff: Famous debunker of flyfishing superstitions. Jumped into the Beaverkill with water filled waders to see if he'd drown (how smart is that?). Caught tarpon with a one-weight flyrod and a broken Medalist reel. Caught Ahab's great white whale using a Paul Young Midge and came away from the battle with both legs intact. Created barbaric looking dry flies from deer and calf tail hair, all tied with the hook held in his fingers. Infuriated Atlantic Salmon anglers by using a trout rod and easy to tie fly patterns. Nickname was an abridgment of "Royal-Pain-In-The-Ass", which is what salmon anglers called him.

"Joan of Arc" Wulff: Earned her nickname by steeple casting a dry fly to the top of the Eiffel Tower...quite an accomplishment when you understand Mrs. Wulff was casting from a pier in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Remains "a babe" well into her sixties. Famous for writing fly casting books too complicated to understand.

"Lefty" Crude: Mr Crude once began a fly casting seminar at a K of C in Chicago by announcing: "D'ja hear da one about da Polack who wanted to meet da Pope?" Mr. Crude was single-handedly responsible for destroying the premise that fly fishers were somehow elitist by lowering their sportsman's status to the level of stock car drivers, pro-wrestlers, and guests on the Jerry Springer Show.

Ernie "The Complete" Schweebore: Mr. Schweebore was responsible for transforming flyfishing from a soothing, pastoral hobby into a full-blown obsessive-compulsive disorder by requiring serious flyfishers to carry ten times the fly patterns they carried before the publication of his innovative book: "Catching the Hatch." Instead of a relaxed day fishing with a Bi-visible (see Edward Ringworm Hewitt) or Royal Wulff (see Lee "Royal" Wulff), modern day flyfishers are deprived of all serenity by chasing Mayflies with aquarium nets and enduring night school courses in Latin. His writing are famous for his dialogues with his best friend: himself. His Id and Ego also respond to his entomological inquiries in italics: *Hmm...Isonychia? But of course!* Mr. Schweebore's nickname, "The Complete", came from a colloquialism for any fly fisher acting arrogant: "Goddamn it, Larry...you're acting like a Complete Schweebore!"

Skip's Loose Threads...

Bill Stieger's irreverent piece about the 'image' of flyfishing raises some questions about the future of our sport, and the perception of flyfishing created in the media since our cult film "A River Runs Through It" appeared. He's right. There are lots of novices who want to identify with the image of flyfishing. It's aesthetic, wholesome, and is usually carried out amid great natural beauty. The image sells lots of beer, sport utility vehicles, weeks at western resorts and an enormous volume of fishing tackle. How many pages of *Fly Fisherman* or *Fly Rod and Reel* are aimed at the novice flyfisher? How many ads are designed for those who have yet to purchase a flyrod? The *Orvis Catalog* was delivered to my mailbox last week, and just inside the cover is a two-page spread counseling me on "How to Choose a Flyrod."

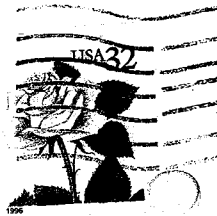
Thank you very much, Orvis, but I don't need or want your help. I've known how to choose a flyrod for about forty years to date. There's been a sea change in the way people come to flyfishing. When I was a boy, if you fished, you probably also hunted, and the print media, *Outdoor Life*, *Sports Afield*, were comprehensive in their coverage of guns, dogs, fishing tackle, techniques, outdoor tips. It was also assumed that you would grow in your knowledge of outdoor sports through contact with those more experienced, and by reading books by them about the various aspects of technique, or full of insightful observation. I may be wrong, but it's my impression that the 'dropout rate' from fishing and hunting was much less than it is now. Bait casting and flyfishing were the only two ways of getting a lure or bait to a fish in those days, and while tackle manufacturers providing many grades of equipment, from the hardware store variety to high end items from mail order catalogs, it was not a budget-breaking proposition to outfit yourself to go fishing. Just buying equipment didn't solve the problems of snarled leaders and backlashes. You had to practice.

Although in those days there was certainly an 'image' of flyfishing, it was a very different one than that presently in vogue. The picture I conjure up is of an older man, dressed in well worn but comfortable neutral colored clothing, rich with lore and wisdom, one who through the years has kept meticulous records of fish caught and patterns tested. I see him on bended knee in a snowstorm, braving the elements to pit his skill against a worthy trout. What a contrast with our present image of a young person in trendy Montana, on a brilliantly sunny day, dressed in fresh, colorful vest, waders and hat, waving the latest technological marvel while the guide ties the knots, picks the flies, nets the fish, rows the boat, cooks the lunch.

The modern image promises success to those who invest enough money in travel and equipment. Will the sport of flyfishing become a revolving door for white collar, upper income rookies, who spend lavishly but soon discover that it takes more quality study time than they're willing to spend? Will the marketers continually flaunt the false image in order to draw ever more beginners into the sport? Will our streams be ever more crowded? I wish they'd created an upscale image of ice fishing. Perhaps we should lobby for a remake of "Grumpy Old Men."



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



KIAP-TU-WISH OFFICERS:

President: Tony Stifter 715-549-5708
Vice President: Ross Nelson 715-386-9752
Treasurer: Chuck Goossen 715-386-5137
Secretary: Richard Lindholm 715-386-5394

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ellen Clark 612-426-0147
Chuck Goossen 715-386-5137
Skip James 612-436-1565
Kent Johnson 715-386-5299
Andy Lamberson 715-386-7568
Brent Sittlow 715-386-0820

RIP-RAP EDITOR

Skip James
16323 St. Mary's Drive
Lakeland, MN 55043
Fax: 612-436-8555
E-mail: kplmstr2@aol.com

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Dick Arney, a warm friend to most flyfishers in this area, passed away January 14. He will be remembered as a gentle man with a beautiful, cultured voice, who was as enthusiastic in discussing the classics as he was describing the proportions of a Humpty, which he did the Saturday before his death while teaching Advanced Flytying at the flyshop. In fact, proportion seems to be a major factor in Dick's life. As Washington County Attorney for many years, he was known to be strict but fair. As a flyfisher, he was no purist, although he did have a penchant for 'fishing with dandruff' as Mike Alwin says. I fished with him several times in Forestville State Park, on the South Branch of the Root River, where we enjoyed the all-too-short seasons of catch and release fishing. I remember a particular Spring, when the chill was only beginning to yield to the wan sunlight, and Dick and I fished a narrow run, one side of which was in shadow, the other in light. It seemed as if all the fish we caught came out of the darkness to seize the fly in the light. They gave up the shadows and comfort of the depths to sample, if only for a moment, that rare brilliance they only dimly remembered from long ago. Isn't that the route we'll all take someday, leaving the shadows for the light? Dick, may you always cast to risers.

*God grant that I may fish
until my dying day
And when it comes to my last cast
I then most humbly pray
When in the Lord's safe landing net
I'm peacefully asleep
That in His mercy I be judged
Good enough to keep.*

