



Rip Rap

January Meeting

When: Wednesday, Jan. 8
Where: JR Ranch, Hudson
Dinner: 6:30
Program: 8:00

*Ginny Adams, watercolor artist (slides)
 (see pg. 2 for details)*

President's Lines:

Thanks to everyone who attended this year's Christmas party and silent auction. Special thanks go to Jon Jacobs and Mike Alwin for coordinating the event, and to Tom Helgeson for his fine presentation. (see story on page 4)

Please note that the annual brushing project on the Kinni will start on January 18th, (see story on page 5)

Finally, as you will read in the newsletter (page 5), our long struggle to remove the Mounds Dam ended with success! When Ted Mackmiller approached the Chapter Board about pursuing removal over a year ago, I knew deep down he was right. But at the same time I was concerned, for I knew it would take a great effort for success. In hindsight, given the make-up of the Dam Committee and our membership, I should have relaxed. All of the committee members brought special talents to the group and I am convinced that this mix of personalities made the difference between success and failure. I was also pleased at the turnout for both of the public hearings on the subject. I want to thank everyone who participated in any way towards the removal effort. Everyone should take great pride in our successful effort to return more miles of the Willow River back toward its original, free running state. See you at the January meeting.

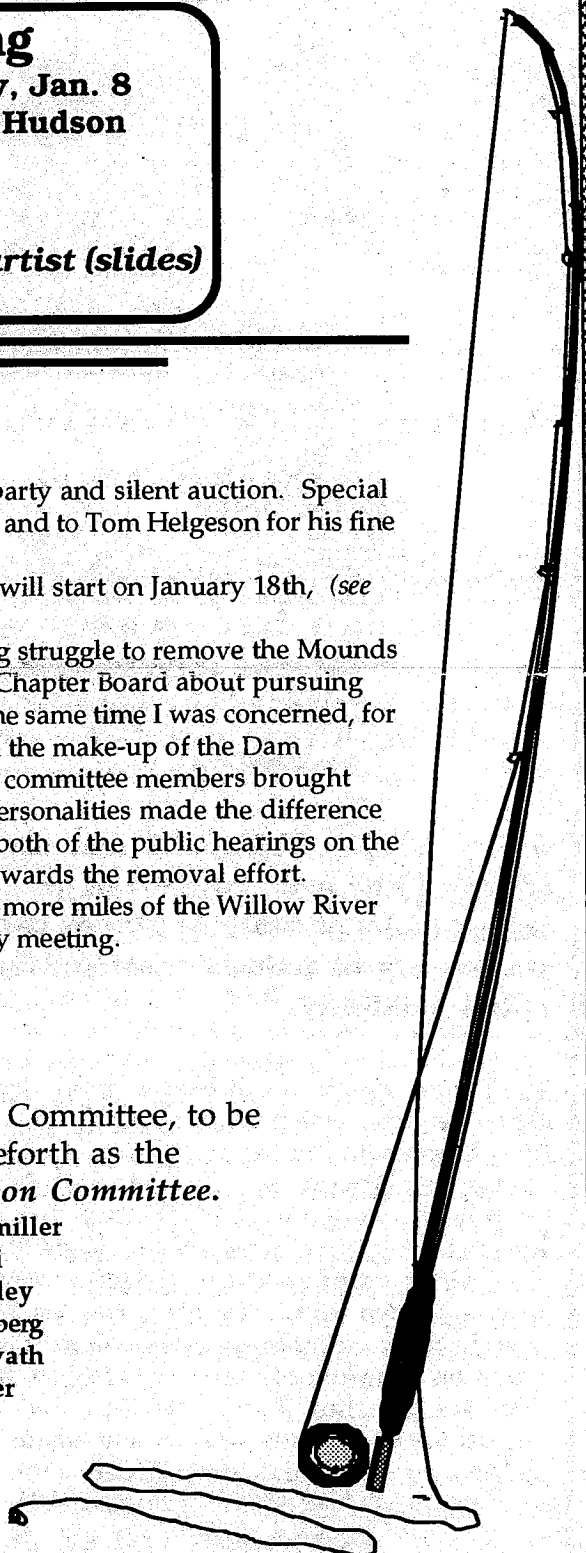
Sincerely,
 Gary Horvath

Kudos to the Dam Committee, to be known henceforth as the **River Restoration Committee.**

- Ted Mackmiller
- Dan Bruski
- Kevin Cooley
- Herb Lundberg
- Gary Horvath
- Tony Stifter

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**Coming up in the
February RipRap:
Special Fly tying Issue**

**What insects to expect in the new
Wisconsin early season.**

Recipes from premier local tiers.

New tools and materials.

**January 8th Meeting
Don't Miss It.....**

**Painting with watercolors...
Do they have a natural
ability to capture the
essence of trout
streams?**

**Ginny Adams will speak and show
slides of her art. She'll tell of
trips to secret watery places sharing
the beauty of nature with her fly
fisher husband.**

Don't miss the chance to hear a prolific artist talk about the relationship of painting to trout fishing. Mrs. Adams was trained at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and up until last September, maintained a studio in South St. Paul. She employs watercolors, and memorializes the magic of running water in her paintings. Often working on commission, she has painted many 'favorite places' for fly fishers over the years. Working at a feverish pace, she often completes two paintings each day when on the stream with her husband, Bob. She says that Bob has opened her eyes to the wonder and beauty of trout streams, a pleasure they have shared since they met in 1953.

**Strong Tradition
Updated Activities**

by Mary Peterson

"Good equipment, sound advice and directions" has always been the philosophy at Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop. For sixteen years Bob and Jean Mitchell gave service and more from the unpretentious basement space in Lake Elmo, Minnesota. "More" ranged from shop activities to their active membership in the Kiap-TU-Wish chapter of Trout Unlimited. It also included intangibles: delight in a customer's successful outing, encouragement for a beginner, and respect for the environment and etiquette of the sport.

Their customers became their friends. News of the impending sale of the shop elicited emotions from loss to panic when, in 1994, the couple decided to retire to Montana.

Mike Alwin remembers panic. The same feeling had washed over him sixteen years before when, upon dialing the familiar number of WoodsAn Trout Shop, he had heard Jean's voice announce: "Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop."

"I was literally their first customer," says Alwin. He had hurried over to Lake Elmo to check out the changes. Since then, Bob Mitchell's became Mike's primary fly shop. He claims that a fly tying class taught there by Tom Anderson in 1981 was "the best twenty dollars I've ever spent." Like all the rest of Bob and Jean's customers, he tapped into the rich resource of the Mitchells' fly fishing experience, asking questions, improving his skills in a sport that was still relatively new to him.

(continued on next page)



Making a point at a fly tying class

Rip Rap pg. 3

Alwin's persistence in improving his own fly fishing, and his excitement over "this cool new thing", combine with his unique teaching skills to 'turn on' students both at Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center and the Science Museum of Minnesota where he has taught "Fly Fishing for Trout" since the early 80's. With his purchase of the shop from the Mitchell's two years ago, Mike Alwin seems to have accomplished what others only dream about. He recalls, "People said, 'do something you love.' That's what I'm doing now."

"The key to the shop's success" he says, "is reasonably priced merchandise, good advice and directions and a free cup of coffee." Long time customers have always known the shop as a place where they can wander in, converse with friends and exchange ideas, while enjoying a freshly brewed cup. "I wanted to keep the level of service high, but offer more classes."

New fly fishers may take today's wealth of accessible information on the subject for granted. Although the sport has a long literary tradition, there is no substitute for 'hands on' instruction. Alwin tells of his frustration when, during the 1970's, he tried to teach himself fly tying and fly casting from library books: "There wasn't much information available," he says, and he doesn't recommend book-taught casting to anyone.

Mike himself teaches fly tying and an introductory fly fishing course. Others are led by Dan Bruski, on-stream guide and tutor. A variety of other experts and product representatives give demonstrations. Bill Hinton is the shop's certified casting instructor. "Sometimes a customer will just stop by and ask for help straightening out a cast," says Alwin. If the shop's not too busy, the two will head out to the lawn behind the parking lot. "You can see by what the line is doing, what's wrong. And if you watch the rod, you can see the mistake transferred through the rod to the line." Often, a more experienced customer will help a beginner with a problem.

This difference in attitude is something Mike has watched with interest. "Twenty years ago," he remembers, "you'd see an angler on the path along a stream, and he'd actually clip his fly off the leader and stick it on his vest patch with a hundred others" Secrecy was part of the game. "Today, if someone comes in with a question, and there are three people here who know, they'll fall all over themselves trying to help." It's a phenomenon which seems to be common everywhere, not just at the shop.

Perhaps others have felt, as Alwin does, the satisfaction of sharing their knowledge. He recalls reading about hatches, then attempting in vain to correlate what he read with actual stream experience. "You have to know what you're looking for before you can see it," he says. He feels rewarded when he gives a customer correct advice about current insect activity. "They come back amazed," he says, 'when they've actually seen it."



"Today, if someone comes in with a question, and there are three people here who know, they'll fall all over themselves trying to help"

Alwin's retail sense comes partly from experience, partly from instinct. "We try to be helpful. We don't try to sell people what they don't need." Most fly shops have the same basic equipment for sale, rods, reels, lines and leaders, wading gear, and a collection of flies. "If I think something is interesting, useful...if I can offer it to customers without having them instinctively cover their wallets, I'll buy it. If I think it's stupid, regardless of whether it's something people ask for all the time, I won't sell it." Recently, the shop has moved from the basement to the ground floor. "All that's changed is that we have more windows." Someday, Mike hopes to have more space, but any changes in ambience, hours or staffing will have to meet his ultimate guideline: to treat people the way Bob and Jean would have. "It's Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop," he says. "It will always be Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop."

Mary Peterson is a freelance writer, and wife of speedy fly tier Tracy Peterson.

Kiap-TU-Wish Bulletin Board

Holiday Banquet an Unqualified Success !

Kiap-TU-Wish and I wish to thank everyone who participated in the 1996 Holiday Banquet. Special recognition is due Tom Helgeson for his excellent presentation, everyone who donated items for the silent auction, and Michael Alwin, who volunteered Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop as both a donation drop point and as a reservations center.

Over eighty people attended the banquet, enjoying the sumptuous food, the good conversation, and Tom Helgeson's terrific slide show. The auction netted \$1500.00 for the chapter!

Two comments on the auction: First, this is the only fund raiser we have. The proceeds provide the money necessary for the basic operations of the chapter (newsletter, etc.). Covering the fixed expenses this way allows the chapter to use bequests, grants and gifts for capital projects, such as temperature monitors and the test station recently constructed in Willow River State Park. Second, it's obvious that people give generously in any way they can, but I am annually impressed by the donations that express the personal creativity of our wonderful donors. Paintings, homemade maple syrup and jellies, handcrafted landing nets and exquisitely tied flies are only a few of the things that reveal the remarkable talents of these folks. Again, thank you all.

Sincerely,
Jon Jacobs

Fishworkers Wanted!

by Mike Alwin

It's not too late to enroll as a Kiap-TU-Wish stream improvement volunteer. A simple phonecall will entitle you to the rights and privileges of an official Kiap-TU-Wish Fishworker. What do you get for your money?

1. First, we'll call you prior to every work date to remind you of the project.
2. Second, you'll be able to cut, haul and burn brush to your hearts content.
3. Third, you'll be able to eat your half frozen sandwich and drink coffee on your lunch break in '0' degree weather.
4. Fourth, at the end of the day you'll be able to see how much you and your fellow workers accomplished for the good of the trout. Come summer, you'll be able to show your children what you've done for them.
5. Fifth, you'll have bragging rights at the office on Monday. After all, who else would do such a fool thing.

**Join us, because Kiap-TU-Wish
needs you and the trout need you.**

Just call me at Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop and have the following information on the tip of your tongue: your name, address and phone number, and whether or not you have a phone machine, a chain saw, or a hand lopper. You can even leave a message on the phone machine. Call now!

612-770-5854

Two Positions Unfilled

The chapter still has openings for two positions of major importance:
Program Chair and Stream Improvement Co-Chair.

The Program Chair gets to decide what the programs are going to be for the year and then sends a notice to the RipRap editor for inclusion in the issue preceding. This is a good job, particularly if you're a control freak, because you can turn down the president and you never have to introduce anybody.

The Stream Improvement Co-Chair is a plum for the person who can't resist being where the trout are. This person gets to work hand in hand with the Wisconsin DNR designing and staffing stream improvement projects. On the work dates you get to waddle around collecting names for the newsletter, handing out release forms and supervising the project.

If you're interested, contact Mike Alwin at the Fly Shop...(612)770-5854

Mounds Dam to be Demolished !!!

On Wednesday, December 18, the Wisconsin State Building Commission unanimously voted to support the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources petition for the removal of the Mounds Dam on the Willow River. This successfully concludes Kiap-TU-Wish's eighteen month effort to return another portion of the river to its original, free running state. The Kiap-TU-Wish Dam Committee argued that removing the dam would improve water quality and save money as well. Many members of the chapter showed up and voiced their opinions at two public hearings held in Hudson. The decision for removal is contingent on the DNR agreeing to mitigate environmental damage, providing shoreline paths and landscaping in the area, and their commitment that the Little Falls Dam will not be removed in the future. The actual date for demolition has not been set, but will likely occur in early summer. Kiap-TU-Wish was joined in its effort by other Wisconsin TU chapters, TU National, St. Paul Fly Tiers, Kinnickinnick Land Trust and the River Alliance. Thanks to all those groups, and particularly to our Dam Committee, whose names are listed on the front page of the newsletter.

State Council Conservation Awards Banquet Set for February 1st

The 12th annual Conservation Awards Banquet will be held at the Oshkosh Hilton Hotel and Convention Center. Cocktails will be served at 5pm, to be followed by dinner at 6:30. Choices include Roast Wisconsin Turkey, Tenderloin Bourguignonne, or Seafood Newburg.

This is the primary fund raising event for the State Council. There will be a raffle and both live and silent auctions. Most important will be the awards ceremony, acknowledging the work of individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Wisconsin's cold water fisheries.

If you want to attend, tickets are \$25.00 and must be purchased in advance. Ticket requests postmarked before January 11 will be eligible for the early bird drawing of \$100. Send checks to:

Trout Unlimited
P.O. Box 291
Menasha, WI 54952

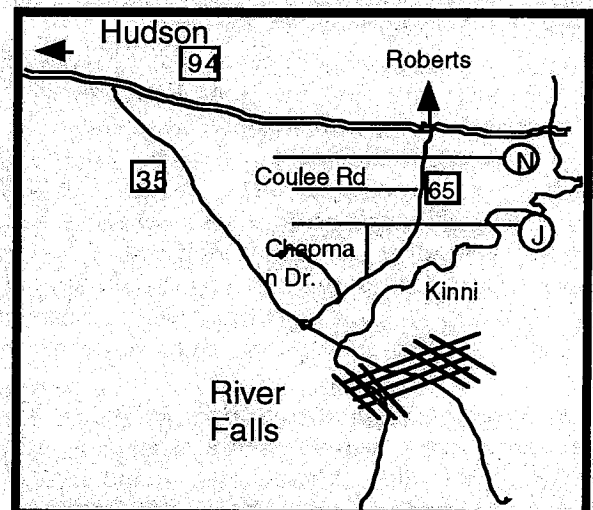
Fishworks'97 Site Revealed...

Plans for this year's work project have been finalized. Brushing will occur on the DNR property north of County Road J. We will commence at the bridge and work upstream. Volunteers should bring warm clothes and a lunch. We will need some people with waders, and others with chain saws and hand loppers. (See the call for volunteers on pg. 4.) We will also be removing fences, so bring pliers and wire cutters as well.

This year's work days are January 18, February 1 and 15, and March 1, 15, and 29. Meet at 9am. As always, the Rule of 20 will be in affect. Listen to WCCO at 8am, and if the temperature or wind chill is -20 degrees or lower, the work date is cancelled.

Directions:

From I-94, exit ST HWY 65 South
Turn LEFT on County Road J
Proceed approximately one mile to the bridge



Skip's Loose Threads: Landing on the 'Net'

I suppose that there are still a few Luddites out there who refuse to have anything to do with computers, but you better watch out...you may finally succumb to the vast amount of fly fishing information available on the Internet. All you need in addition to the computer is some basic software, a modem, and a telephone line.

The modem is a piece of hardware that allows you to access other computers through a telephone line. You can buy a top of the line modem for less than \$150.00 and the software necessary for Internet access, plus e-mail and many other services is usually included on a disk packaged with the machine. If you want to change services, once you have the modem, you can download software for almost any service for free. The faster your modem, the less time it takes to download files from other computers. Until recently, your time 'online,' determined your bill from the access service company. Now, most services offer unlimited access for a flat fee, usually about \$20.00 per month. In addition to the international services, American Online, CompuServe, Prodigy, Netscape, etc., there are many local ones as well, run by major newspapers and other media outlets. If you are a graduate of the University of Minnesota, internet access is available as a perk from the Alumni Association.

Once your modem is hooked up, and access software installed according to directions, sign on and listen to your modem chirp as it attaches your computer to a giant server computer a phone call away. You are now a very small part of a gigantic network that spans the globe. You can send messages anywhere instantly, access foreign libraries, see what the stock market is doing, or pursue your favorite sport, fly fishing.

There are giant data bases called Search Engines, and they help you find locations that interest you by allowing you to type in a topic, key words, or other parameters that will define a search. Some common search engines are Alta Vista, Yahoo, InfoSeek and Lycos. They all work pretty much the same way. The locations themselves are called 'websites.' The technical term is URL's. One of the first you should look at is the Kiap-TU-Wish site maintained by Andy Lamberson. The address is on this newsletter, right underneath your name.

When you type the word fly fish in the 'find' box of one of the major search engines, what turns up is a list of over 10,000 sites! Maybe you should restrict your search a bit, perhaps with the words 'casting,' 'flies,' 'Midwest,' 'Wisconsin,' 'guides,' etc. You will notice that

the list of sites gets smaller and smaller as you restrict the search parameters. You'll also notice that there are topics and words printed in blue, in italics, or underlined. These are called 'hot links' and allow you to explore related subjects by clicking your mouse on the highlighted word. From our web page, for instance, you can access the related web pages of Trout Unlimited National, other Wisconsin TU sites, stream reports, even a photo of Andrew Lamberson with a nice trout. You can also find the e-mail addresses of the officers and board members of Kiap-TU-Wish.

In addition to more or less static websites that you can visit, there are chat rooms, or newsgroups that interact with each other on a given topic. All of the major online services have fly fishing groups. Usually, you can read messages and questions from other members of the group, send messages to all the other group members, and join in online discussions. There are a few drawbacks to being involved with these groups. If the group is large, there can be an amazing amount of mail each day for you to browse through. If you go on vacation, that mail simply builds up while you're away. Unfortunately, most of these groups or chat rooms are full of people that are just beginning in fly fishing, and so the level of conversation is not what you might find at Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop, for instance. But, on occasion, you will have the opportunity to talk to experts like Dave Whitlock, Barry Beck, Bob Krumm, Gary Borger, or Lefty Kreh.

You can also put these large lists to good use by locating folks of similar interest, sources of rare tackle or fly tying material, and local stream information. I've found other Heddon cane rod collectors, a source for legal polar bear hair, and news of what was hatching on the South Platte River in Colorado just before I made a trip there. If you're looking for guide services, tackle shops, environmental studies, travel packages, anything from local fly patterns to weather reports, newsgroups are great. You can ignore the query from the guy that writes: "I've just taken up fly fishing. What kind of rod should I buy?" He'll get five hundred different answers to his question. Answers that clog up the mailboxes of everyone on the list. The bottom line is that newsgroups are fine if your questions and answers are narrow enough, and awful if they're too general.

I thought, when I began this article, that I would report on several websites that I found interesting, or useful. Instead, I'll just ask you to explore for yourself the wealth of information that's out there. Oh well, if you want my favorite fly fishing website, it's called The Classic Angler, at <http://www.gorp.com/bamboo.htm>.

Go fishing with your computer, and see what turns up when you look into the 'Net.'

RifRaf...

Reviews, humor, poetry, fiction

by Skip James

Entomology 101 (continued)

Here are four books to help sort out your aquatic life! They range from seriously scientific to collections of insect 'pin ups.' One of the four should be just the ticket for you. The books are: An Angler's Guide to Aquatic Insects and their Imitations, Hafele and Roederer, Johnson Books, 1987, 182pp; Trout Stream Insects, Pobst, Lyons and Burford, 1990, 81pp; Naturals, Borger, Stackpole, 1980, 223pp; and Aquatic Entomology, McCafferty, Jones and Bartlett, 1981, 448pp.

From the relative size of these guides, some of you may decide that a little is better than a lot and you don't need to pore through McCafferty to find exactly the right imitation. Actually there are no imitations in McCafferty, and only scant references to fishing except in the subtitle which reads: "The Fishermen's and Ecologists' Illustrated Guide to Insects and Their Relatives." This is a tome of monumental proportions. The bibliography is extensive and complete, the taxonomic information precise, with superb black and white drawings. The color photos are beautiful, too, but not all the important trout stream insects are portrayed in color. This is the best book of the lot for information about an insect's habitat and life cycle. It covers not only Mayflies, Caddis, Stoneflies and Midges, but also Beetles, Damsels and Dragons, Springtails, Waterbugs, Alderflies, Dobsonflies, plus any insect that hunts in an aquatic environment and other animals like Shrimp and Crayfish that one is likely to find there. McCafferty is the ultimate key for all these insects. It is thorough, precise, exhaustive in its presentation of each insect, and quite easy to use, once you get accustomed to how it's laid out. It is not a streamside guide, however...it weighs seven pounds! Another unfortunate aspect of this book is that one would expect that a book costing about \$50.00 would be in hardcover. Unfortunately, my copy is falling apart from use. A nice feature at the back of this book is a correlation of fishermen's names to scientific names. One can get a feel for the impact of this book on the academic community by reading the review of a Notre Dame professor, George B. Craig, Jr. He says that "As a text for courses in Aquatic Entomology, this book is far and away the best in the field."

About half the size of McCafferty is Gary Borger's book, Naturals. Unlike the former, this one includes lots of practical information for fly fishermen, including fly patterns, tips on presentation, how to select and use lifelike fly tying materials, even recipes for dying materials. There is a guide to collecting insects, the tools that you need, how to make a collecting net, etc. Gary's training as a biologist allows him to speak to fly fishermen in terms they can understand without skimping on scientific information. This book has no color plates at all, but very good drawings (by Bob Pils) and the keys are excellent. Like McCafferty, this one includes non-insects like Minnows, Crayfish, even Voles and Mice. The inclusion here is based upon what trout might eat, not simply on what you might find at streamside. Although not as precise or as detailed as the previous book, Naturals gives the angler all the information necessary to key out insects to the species level in most cases, and genus level among the Caddisflies. In hardback, 6"x9", this is not exactly a streamside guide either, but worth much more than its \$16.00 price tag.

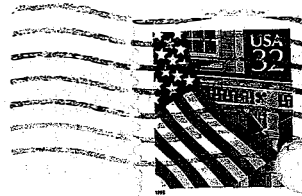
An Angler's Guide to Aquatic Insects and their Imitations is slightly shorter than Borger's Naturals, and one might quibble with the inclusion of a chapter on fly tackle. This book doesn't cover non-insects at all, has no color plates, good black and white drawings, but a little less precision in the taxonomy, although it will get you to genus level in most cases. There is some very useful information on habitat and life styles of the various insects, correlated to fishing techniques. In softcover but the same size as Naturals, this would be rather bulky in your vest. This book uses angler's names for insects, as well as Latin ones. At \$15.95, not as much information as Borger's Naturals.

Finally, a remarkable little book by Dick Pobst, Trout Stream Insects may be just what the doctor ordered for the ultimate streamside guide. There is no attempt here to key out insects through wing veination, sexual organs, gills, etc. Instead, there are some remarkable color photos, hatch charts, and notes on habitat, that allow the fly fisher to anticipate what insects he might see, and then to compare them with the photos in the book. The corners of the pages are color coded for various seasons of the year, and the book covers both Eastern and Western hatches. Only the four major insect groups are covered: Mayflies, Caddisflies, Stoneflies, and Midges. There are suggested fly patterns and colors to imitate the insects discussed. This book, in hardcover, slips easily into your vest. It probably should be available in waterproof softcover for ease of use on the stream. At \$16.95, this is a terrific book!

As a footnote to all this, keep in mind that these four books are guides to all aquatic insects. There are lots of superb books that deal with only one Order: Mayflies, Caddisflies, Stoneflies, etc., that have great photos, good fishing tips, and are exhaustive in every way. Perhaps your insect studies will eventually draw you to these books, too.



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TROUT UNLIMITED
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DEADLINES

FEB 1/15
MAR 2/15
APR 3/15

Now on the Internet at:

<http://www.spacestar.com/users/lambcom/kiap.html>

In Memoriam: Lorn Pracht (1929-1996)

Kiap-TU-Wish former President and board member Lorn Pracht of New Richmond died November 16th while on a pheasant hunting trip to Kearney, Nebraska. An industrial arts teacher by profession, Lorn was a sportsman and environmentalist, a life member of TU, also the National Rifle Association, Ducks Unlimited, the Ruffed Grouse Society, and Pheasants Forever. Lorn was a tireless worker for Kiap-TU-Wish, both with his brains and with his back. One of his favorite jobs was stocking fingerlings in the Willow River each fall. A current project was the building of a cabin on the banks of the Yellowstone River in Montana. Our condolences to his wife, Lynda and the rest of his family. We will miss him...

*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.*

