



# Rip Rap

**January Meeting**

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

**President's Lines:**

*Whew!!! The Holiday Banquet was a marvelous success. I'd like to thank all of the auction donors on behalf of the chapter. Your contributions were absolutely necessary to the fund raising success of the evening. You will all be happy to know that we raised more money than last year, and the most in recent chapter history! A double thank you to Karen Stifter who handcrafted the wonderful fly fishing quilt that was the feature raffle item.*

*If you missed the world premiere of the video, you missed something special (see pg. 2). Kudos to Andy Lamberson and to Kent Johnson for a job well done. This project was an enormous undertaking for Kiap-TU-Wish, and those two guys, with the technical expertise of Cathy Wurzer and Dennis Behr, got the job done.*

*There have been some developments in the Parker Creek case (see pg. 5) that are both disturbing and encouraging. How can a legal manure application according to Wisconsin guidelines kill 7,000 trout in one weekend? That is the question that lies before the DNR and the state nutrient management performance standards work group. It will be interesting to see if future regulations nod in the direction of environmental protection or agricultural profit-making. I believe it's up to Trout Unlimited and other groups of citizens of this state to work with the agricultural community to develop new standards and practices that allows farming to be a viable business, yet protects sensitive resources that are so often impacted by it.*

**Table of Contents**

President's Lines  
     Brent Sittlow...1

Chapter Bulletin Board  
     Staff.....2-3

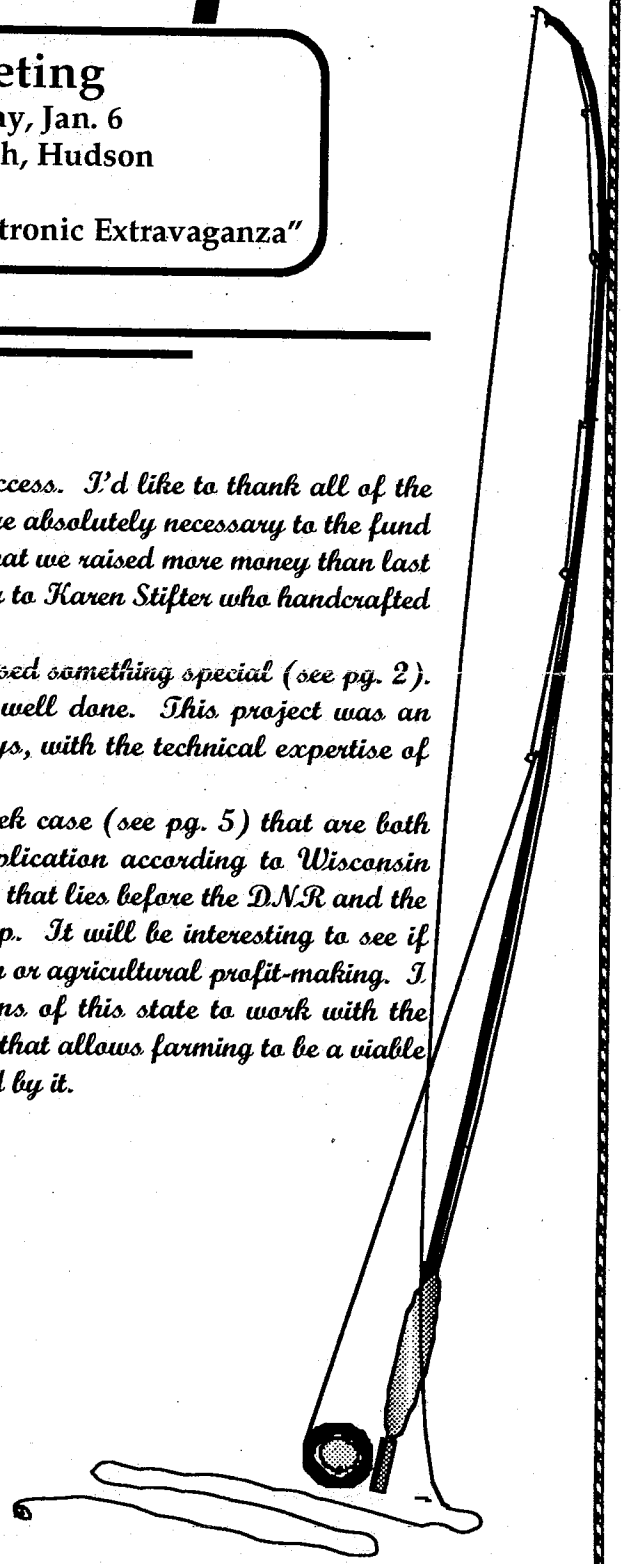
Andy Lamberson's Speech  
 at the Banquet.....4

Shootout at Parker Creek  
     Staff.....5

Skip's Loose Threads  
     Skip James.....6

Rif Raf  
     Jon Jacobs.....7

*Sincerely,*  
*Brent Sittlow, President*



# Kiap-TU-Wish Bulletin Board...



## Electronic media boosts Kiap-TU-Wish impact...

The new video will be shown at the January meeting, and Andy Lamberson will discuss remaining issues about future minor editing, plans for distribution, and financial details. Those who saw its premiere at the Banquet were impressed with its beauty and impact. Now that the project is done, the chapter will have to decide the best ways of using this new tool in the effort to protect cold water resources. There will be an open discussion of the membership on this and other topics relating to education.

Andy has also revamped our computer web site. The new site includes instant access to all previous stream reports, a "chat room" where members and visitors can exchange ideas on a number of pertinent topics, and a new look. There is talk of including some elements of Rip Rap online, if the technicalities can be worked out. It even has a simpler address: <http://www.lambcom.net/kiaptuwish>

The January meeting will be an important opportunity to assess the readiness of our chapter to participate effectively in the technology/rich media environment of the 21st century. Come join the brainstorming!

## How to use a Trout Crew...

Gary Horvath and Brent Sittlow met with representatives of both the DNR and Ojibseau Chapter in Eau Claire to discuss Trout Stamp projects for the next biennium. The role of the proposed trout crew was the major topic. Another meeting will take place this month to finalize the process by which organizations like TU get to propose and prioritize projects within the Lower Chippewa Basin. We need to give Dunn county some major attention to upgrade some fine trout water to our east.

It is absolutely essential that we give these projects our full support with good membership participation at work projects as they are planned and carried out. Ongoing support in Madison for the trout crew will depend on how well and how efficiently it is utilized and how effectively it partners with TU and other groups. Also, wouldn't it be fun to do a joint work project with another TU chapter?

## Mounds Dam Update....

The River Restoration committee (formerly known as the Damn Dam Committee) and all the chapter members that supported the removal of Mounds Dam in Willow River State Park deserve a round of applause. Your efforts resulted in the reclamation of over two miles of Willow River trout water. Those of you who have visited this stretch (upstream from the former dam site, past County E and A bridges, report a truly beautiful "new" river. This free-flowing stretch of the Willow drops forty feet in elevation revealing a canyon, limestone cliffs, riffles, runs, even a mini-waterfall, all of which had been flooded for the past 71 years by the Mounds Dam impoundment. The restored river has scoured its way down to bedrock and the DNR is enhancing the restoration with rip rap along the banks. Be sure to visit this area. We are certain that you too will feel your efforts have been well rewarded. Again, Thank you.

Ted Mackmiller

Get your own, personal copy of "Storm on the Horizon," Kiap-TU-Wish's new video about the dangers of rampant development, thermal pollution, and best use land practices. Write or call Brent Sittlow, 803 Kelly Road, Hudson, Wisconsin 54016, or call at (715) 386-0820. E-mail to [bsittlow@pressenter.com](mailto:bsittlow@pressenter.com)

## Spring Fishing Clinic Bears Fruit...

"I am a ninth grader who lives here in River Falls. I enjoy fishing on the Kinnickinnic River. I am concerned, however, that there are many people who, like myself, care very much about this river but do not know how to protect it. That is why I am writing this letter. My family and I are very conscientious about the environment. Until recently, though, we have been contributing to the damage on rivers and bodies of water without even knowing it. I'm afraid that there are many other people that are doing this also.

About six months ago I attended a fly fishing clinic sponsored by Trout Unlimited. I received a brochure about storm water and what it does to the rivers. It also shows what materials cause damage to the river and wetlands. There were the obvious materials such as pesticides, plastics, paint, auto exhaust, motor oil, gasoline, tire wear, and fertilizers but it also had not so obvious materials such as grass clippings, leaves, eroded soil, pet wastes, and metal corrosion. It then told what cities and individuals can do to help. This brochure was very informative. I think that if more people were informed about the dangers they place upon their favorite rivers everyday then I think many people would change their ways. I certainly have.

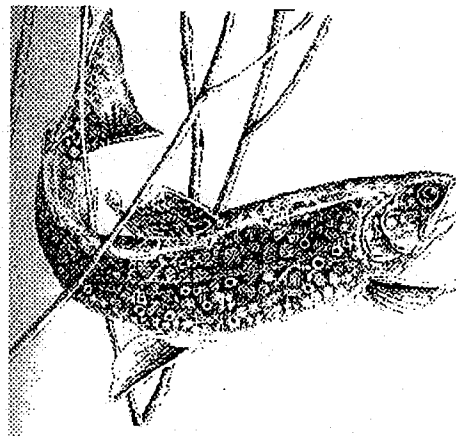
As I began thinking about what would help solve the problem of uninformed citizens I thought of your newsletter. I would be willing to work with my parents, English teacher, and whoever else it takes to write a nice complete article and/or informative drawing to submit for a newsletter. If you are interested in trying to make space in your newsletter for something like what I have proposed, please contact me. I am eager to help.

Sincerely,  
Kenyon Scheurman"

Reprinted from a letter to Mr. Keith Rodli of The Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, Dec. 2, 1998. I have asked young Mr. Scheurman to write an article for Rip Rap. Look for it in an upcoming issue.

## New Rip Rap Editor Sought...

I have asked to be relieved of the job of editing Rip Rap after completing the May issue. Since it isn't published during the summer months, the new editor would have three months to learn the job. Requirements include a good knowledge of English usage, style, and the ability to be concise and precise with language. The editor must also possess computer skills and at least a minimal experience in desk-top publishing. When I succeeded Ken Hanson, I had no experience in desk-top publishing. The time commitment is presently about 12 hours in writing, gathering information, editing, and layout. Another three hours is spent labeling and stamping the finished product. Presently, the newsletter is sent first-class mail. If the Board decides to switch to bulk mail, then an additional hour will have to be spent sorting by zip-codes. I will continue to write my column "Skip's Loose Threads" for Rip Rap.  
Skip James



*I care not, I, to fish in seas,  
Fresh rivers best my mind do please,  
Whose sweet calm course I contemplate,  
And seek in life to imitate.  
-Izaak Walton-*

*"We must clearly demonstrate to the decision makers in this community that the river has more value as a trout stream than as a ditch."*

*Andy Lamberson*

Hi, my name is Andy Lamberson and for those of you that don't know me, I've been involved with Kiap-TU-Wish for over ten years now. I was the chapter's Vice President for a couple of years, President for three years and on the board of Directors ever since. I'm also the web-master for the Kiap-TU-Wish web site.

I recently reorganized by Trout Unlimited notebook and I found the meeting minutes I wrote from the first Kiap-TU-Wish/City of River Falls and Wisconsin DNR meeting. I was amazed at the date: December 19, 1989. I remember when I was trying to organize the meeting that it was difficult to identify groups or individuals that were interested in the river. There were a few people who fished the river, the DNR agreed to come...(Marty, I think you were there as the 'new guy' right?) Representatives of the University came and frankly admitted that they viewed the river as a "ditch."

There have been a lot of good changes in those ten years! First, the university sees the river as an "asset" now...not a ditch. Second, the City of River Falls applied for and received 205J funds to help protect the river from storm water run-off. Third, the river has been designated a "priority watershed" and there is a cross-functional team of government, farmers and scientists working hard to help protect it. Fourth, the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust was formed and has done some very significant work to help protect property along the river's banks. And last but not least, Kiap-TU-Wish embarked on a very important study to understand the impacts of storm water on a trout stream.

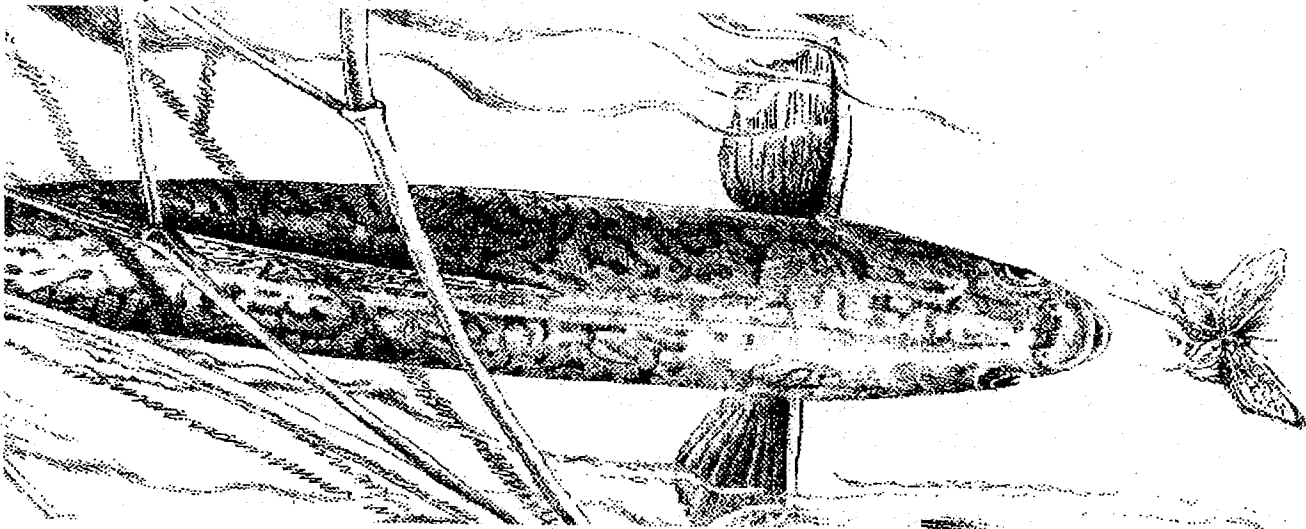
But there have been a few negatives, too. The river is much better known now...it's gotten a lot of press coverage and the corresponding increase in angling pressure. The counties of Pierce and St. Croix are two of the fastest growing counties in the state and that development is threatening the river.

In spite of these things, it's very important to realize two important facts: 1. The river is in the best shape it has been in since white people settled the valley; and 2. Even though it's in great condition, there are still significant threats to its future health. And that's what this video is all about.

It is critical that we clearly demonstrate to the decision makers in this community that the river has more value as a trout stream than as a ditch. That while development in the area is inevitable, we must thoughtfully plan and develop the area with protection of the river in mind. This river needs friends. People who will yell bloody murder when someone abuses it. The river needs YOU...everyone of you- to speak up for it and fight. Again: We must demonstrate that the river has more value as a trout stream than as a ditch, or it will become just that.

A year ago, our chapter embarked on an ambitious video project to help educate the community about the river and the threat of storm water to the river. In this effort we somehow managed to convince a very busy Cathy Wurzer and Denny Behr to help us produce this film. I really appreciate all their time and efforts to help this dream come true. Here is the fruits of our labors: "Storm on the Horizon."

**Andy Lamberson's speech at the Holiday Banquet introducing the new Kiap-TU-Wish video "Storm on the Horizon" was very moving, succinct, and sums up all that our chapter stands for in our fight to preserve trout streams in western Wisconsin. It is reprinted here for all those of you who couldn't attend.**



## Shootout over Parker Creek...

### Man Accused of Harmful River Discharge...

A 35-year-old River Falls man pled not guilty in St. Croix County Court Dec. 16 after being implicated in a fish kill incident along the Kinnickinnic River last May. Eric Swenson, 148 CTH W. was named as being responsible for killing over 14,000 trout by allowing liquid manure to flow into Parker Creek, a tributary of the Kinnickinnic. Swenson is said to have spread the liquid manure on land adjoining the creek. A 2-inch rainfall May 15, followed by thunderstorms, is believed to have washed the manure into the creek, killing the fish and other aquatic life. Organic material from manure reduces dissolved oxygen in the water, which in combination with ammonia toxicity can kill fish.

According to a complaint from the St. Croix County District Attorney's Office, the incident took place between May 15-18 and originated in the town of Pleasant Valley. State Conservation Warden David Hausman reported that on May 21 he and a crew from the DNR surveyed an area in Parker Creek along CTH W after receiving reports that dead fish were spotted. The survey revealed a nearly 100% fish kill in the area. On June 4, Hausman met with Swenson, who owns and farms the land just south of 18th Avenue, adjacent to the tributary that connects downstream to Parker Creek. Swenson said he spread liquid manure on only one acre because he knew a rainstorm was coming. He said he spread at a rate of about 10,000 gallons per acre. Swenson said he pumped liquid manure again on May 16 and May 17, with the majority being applied to his fields on Monday, May 18. By then, Swenson said, he had applied 360,000 gallons of liquid manure to his 36-acre field. He began tilling the field where he spread the liquid manure on Tuesday, May 19.

Hausman reported that at least 2.5 inches of rain fell in the area of Swenson's fields on May 15-16 and up to an inch on May 18. On May 20, Tom Aatirla (sic), a water resources sub team leader for the lower Chippewa River, helped investigate the incident. Ten sites from the Pleasant Road bridge on Parker Creek to Swenson's farm were included in the investigation. Also included were four tributaries that flow into Parker Creek above Swenson's field. The investigation revealed the presence of aquatic life in the four tributaries downstream from Swenson's field. However, a number of dead fish and a lack of aquatic life in Parker Creek downstream from Swenson's field to the site of the initial complaint at Pleasant Avenue and CTH J at CTH JJ were also discovered.

On May 21, Hausman walked the tributary flowing through the Swenson farm adjacent to his field and spotted several long, stagnant pools within the tributaries. He also smelled a strong odor of manure, he reported. It is estimated that 14,726 fish were killed in Parker Creek as a result.

St. Croix County DA Eric Johnson said Monday that a "great deal of investigation and discussion" was involved regarding the case, causing the delay in setting a trial date. Swenson has been charged with violating a county law. A mandatory pretrial hearing has been scheduled for 9am Tuesday, January 26, in St. Croix County Court.

On October 10th, DNR Lower Chippewa Basin Water Team Leader, John Paddock, addressed the Wisconsin State Council of Trout Unlimited. In his address, Mr. Paddock reported that with all of the gathered evidence surrounding the Parker Creek fish kill, **no intentional negligence or violation of liquid manure application standards occurred.** On May 16, 1998, a 1.75 inch rainfall saturated the soils of the operator's 36 acre field and dry run. The following day, approximately 350,000 gallons of liquid manure was applied to his field with no assignable evidence of equipment problems that may have concentrated the manure. Then on May 18th, an additional 0.5 inches of rain fell on the application that had not yet been incorporated into the soil. The rain ultimately washed the manure and its toxicity into a dry run near the head waters of Parker Creek. From that point, and further downstream to the Kinnickinnic, it caused tremendous damage to trout and other cold water organisms.

It is painful to think that this manure fish kill situation easily fits within the guidelines of the NRCS Technical Standard 590 for nutrient management in Wisconsin. How could this be? Could the accepted agricultural practices and standards in Wisconsin be slanted toward maximum crop production, rather than protecting the vital resources that belong to the citizens and visitors of our state? And what about all of the other non-point source pollutants from agricultural operations of all scales? They too effect trout every time a cloud gives out watersheds a poisonous drink.

As is clear from the accompanying article from the River Falls newspaper, the farmer has not been charged with a state offense, but with a violation of a county ordinance. **Perhaps Madison will get its act together and draw new guidelines that actually protect the environment while continuing to preserve the profitability of farming. Stay tuned....the battle isn't over yet!**

## Skip's Loose Threads....

### Trout fishing and kids



The other day I played the Vivaldi *Gloria* with a remarkable bunch of youngsters from the Trinity School at River Ridge in Bloomington. The concert was to take place at St. Phillip's Catholic Church in Minneapolis, Sunday afternoon, December 20th, and the rehearsal was scheduled for Saturday morning at 10am. Now the reason I got asked to play the organ continuo part is that my SPCO colleague, bassist Chris Brown, directs the Trinity School string orchestra. He donates his time to the music program at the school where his daughter Linnea is a ninth grader. It's a small school, the parents are very involved in the music program, and they have a truly dedicated and well-trained music teacher, a Mrs. Gaylord. I figured if Chris could donate hours and hours to coaching a little group of strings, then I could afford a couple helping them out at the organ.

When I got to the church, the sanctuary was locked. I found an official-looking woman in the school part of the building who had keys and she let me in. The church was freezing...actually it was only about 50 degrees in there. The pipe organ was locked. About that time, Mrs. Gaylord arrived with a van full of choir risers and some hunky-looking Trinity senior boys to muscle them around. When I asked for the key to the organ console, she remarked in dismay that the church hadn't used the organ for months, perhaps a year since the previous organist had departed, and she'd have to call her husband back in St. Paul to get a key from the pastor of the church. After much fussing and searching, we found the key, just as the husband arrived to tell us he couldn't reach the pastor. The kids all arrived and began tuning their violins and 'cellos in the cold. You could see their breath in the air, at least near the open door. The oboe player, one of the mothers it turned out, couldn't get her cold instrument to play anywhere near the proper pitch. Everytime she blew into it, her breath condensed on the inside and made the instrument sound like a sheep in love. The rehearsal was truly wonderful: out of tune, lots of mistakes, terrible conditions, but the spirit was great! Those young people's imaginations had been roped and cornered and focused on performing a great piece of music, and they did it with enthusiasm and ardor.

What has that to do with trout fishing? Well, I've known one of the singers since he was adopted by his parents as an infant. His mom caught me at the organ and said hello, and then remarked that Joseph, who is 13, had been bitten with the fly fishing bug. Joseph was holding down the tenor part in the third row of the choir at the time. At the intermission of the rehearsal, Joseph appeared at my elbow, and after the briefest of greetings, asked "Mr. James, how do you know how wide a hackle should stick out on a dry fly?" He asked with the same kind of breathless intensity that the young instrumentalists had been showing as they tackled the Vivaldi. After answering his question, I thought how much fun it would be to take him fishing next Spring down on the Root River. I thought about him all afternoon and evening. The following day, before the concert, I gave his mom a sort-of-neatly-wrapped Christmas present for Joseph, a copy of The Art of Fly Tying, properly autographed of course.

I've often wondered what mysterious force turns some children to the pursuit of fish, and others not. The letter from young Ken Scheurman (pg. 3) shows that some seeds planted in young minds take root and grow. The Kiap-TU-Wish Education Committee should be immensely proud of that letter. In some way, all of us, even at extremely advanced ages, are children when it comes to trout fishing. There is an innocence about our pastime that refreshes the spirit and lightens the cares of the world.

Perhaps Kiap-TU-Wish should establish a program just for young people, to educate, teach fishing skills, share adventure. Not as elaborate as the Boy Scouts or 4-H, but with regular meetings, adult advisors, stream work days, etc. Our video and other materials could be used to raise their consciences about environmental issues, and if the fishing bug bites, they'll be zealous TU'ers for life. Besides, it would be such a relief from dealing with politicians, money raisers, county boards and city councils. A youth chapter of Kiap-TU-Wish might re-invigorate us all.

## Rif Raf...

### Cane or Graphite? Mr. Jacobs Responds...

My failure to recognize split cane as the *ne plus ultra* of rod building materials has drawn a curious response from Perry Palin. Perhaps my working title was a bit glib and a tad flippant. I was rebutting Mr. Bill Stieger's veiled contention that graphite rod users were yuppie jerks and the idea that cane rods are so good as to be worth extraordinary amounts of money. I gave no reasons for my opinions about the superiority of graphite rods because that wasn't my point. Even the most cursory and careless reading of my piece reveals clearly and unequivocally that I never asserted that graphite was 'better' than bamboo, only that "it was impossible to convince me that a bamboo rod is at any time superior to graphite." Nothing in Mr. Palin's criticism has changed my mind. Candidly, there are many reasons why I feel that graphite is the better choice, but most are nearly as subjective as the claptrap I hear from my bamboo brethren when they rhapsodize about the glories of cane, so I'll not inflict them on you. Being "more in touch" with one's equipment is as about as objective an undertaking as being in touch with one's feelings or inner child. And exactly what is a "moderate action" or a "forgiving casting stroke" anyway?

I reread my submission several times, trying to find where I took, in Mr. Palin's phrase, a swipe at Bill's preference for cane. Bill is a gentle sort and a wonderful writer and it was never my intention to denigrate his choice of fishing rods and if I did, I apologize. I never found the purported swipe, but just in case there's some confusion, let me shout this from the top of Mount Rip Rap: I have absolutely no argument with anyone who wishes to fish with bamboo rods. However, I'll continue to vigorously maintain that it's possible to fish with a graphite rod without being an insufferable boor whose toughest decision in life is whether to drive the BMW or the Land Rover to the trout stream.

Further, I have no argument with anyone who wishes to view bamboo rods as working tools. Mr. Palin's Tschida rods fit my definition of a working tool perfectly. I don't doubt that they fish nicely. I've seen Gordy Seim's work and I can tell you that he's a craftsman of the very highest order. However, I wasn't thinking of that sort of rod when I used the phrase "collector status" in my piece. I had in mind the rods by Payne, Garrison, Gillum and others of that ilk. If Mr. Palin has a rod that would sell for thirty to forty times what he paid for it, it's not because it fishes thirty or forty times better than it once did, or given the nature of cellulose fiber, even as well. It's because it's "collectible." Which is to say that its alleged value derives not from its intrinsic utility, but from its name or history. And unless its original worth was no more than ten dollars or so, from my economic perspective, its current price would certainly fit my definition of expensive. One sees these rods, along with those by second tier makers like Granger, Phillipson and Heddon, in classic tackle lists published by tweedy purveyors of snob appeal and status. These people and the supercilious peck sniffs who look down on my choice of fishing rods make me plenty cranky. They are not selling fishing equipment. They are selling image and a sense of exclusivity. The gentle old briar-smoking sport with the Garrison rod that we project on the screen in the theater of our minds in reality likely fished over stocked trout on private water upstream of his factory which dumped pollutants into the downstream stretches of the same river. Meanwhile, the workers in that factory struggled with economic uncertainties and the specter of impending war.

The creeping quality-inflation evident in this trade is more than a little irksome, too. Now that the trout model rods produced by the first-echelon makers have reached absolutely astronomical prices, one finds that the plebeian fishing poles of a few years ago suddenly have "lovely, crisp dry-fly actions" and "charming dark-flamed" or "wheat-colored" cane and are in some way at least the rough equivalent of the prestige-name rods. Most incredible are recent claims that tomato stake makers like Horrocks Ibbotson and Montague every now and then cranked up the quality level and turned out a special model that, at a minimum, is equal to a Heddon or Granger in value. If these folks were merely separating a few wealthy twits from a bit of inherited money, I'd say not a word. However, in my opinion, they work insidiously on the minds of people who quite probably could better invest their money, in an attempt to convince us that in some mystical sense our lives would be more nearly complete if we could just get our hands on that spiffy seven and a half foot Paul Young Parabolic.

I'm irked at myself, too. I'm fiddling while Rome burns by engaging in this 'tempest in a tea pot' debate. On Sunday, October 11, 1998, the Swinging Gate stretch of the Kinni was sold at auction. Due in large part to the Herculean efforts of Rick McMonigal of the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, this important piece of riverside property found its way into the hands of a conservation-minded buyer. It could have as easily been purchased by a rapacious developer. Perhaps we all ought to spend less time arguing the merits of various bits of tackle and whether to spend money on fancy rods in either cane or graphite. Then, we could spend more time on and donate more money to the causes that help to preserve the rare and fragile places we use the tackle.

P.S. If Mr. Palin finds a Dodge Prowler, he'll have a real collectible on his hands because there is no such thing. If he's referring to a Plymouth Prowler, he's talking about a thoroughly modern automobile that makes extensive use of space-age plastic, the same sort of plastic one might find in, uh..., I don't know..., a modern fly rod, perhaps?



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"Team Video" enjoys the Holiday Banquet.... Left to right:: Andy Lamberson and family, Cathy Wurzer, Dennis Behr, Kent Johnson