



Rip Rap

March meeting

When: Wednesday, March 4
Where: JR Ranch, Hudson
Dinner: 6:30
Program: 8:00 Business Meeting
 Election of Officers

President's Lines:

In the past, I've heard the chapter referred to as "a fly fishing club." I have to admit that this sentiment bothers me a little. Our goals actually have very little to do with fishing. The goals of this chapter focus on the protection, improvement and restoration of cold water habitats in western Wisconsin. We are a conservation group. Fishing is merely a common interest we choose to rally around.

As local populations increase, we will surely experience an increase in fishing pressure on the streams we wish to protect. However, someone once wisely pointed out that "a river without friends is a river doomed." I would encourage everyone to be as welcoming as possible to new fishermen on the streams we love. We meet these people astream because they love them as much as we do.

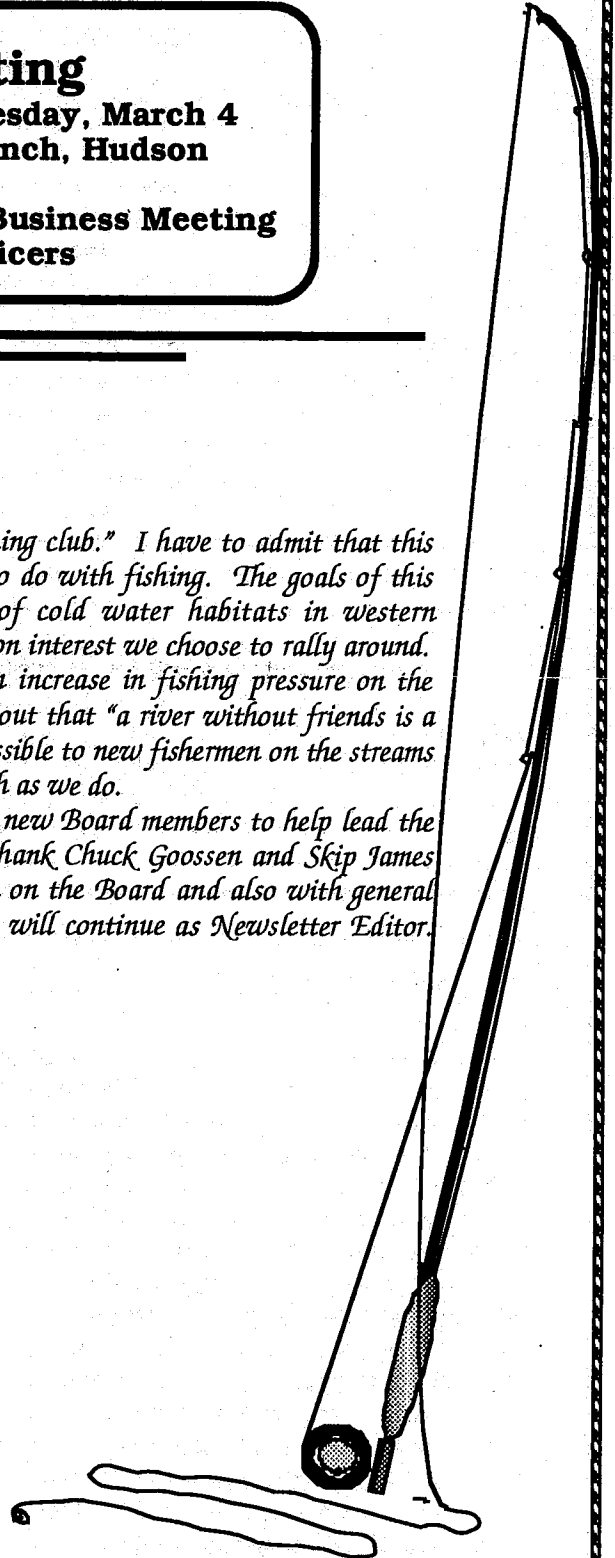
At this month's annual business meeting, we will elect two new Board members to help lead the chapter's conservation efforts. I would like to take this chance to thank Chuck Goossen and Skip James for their years of service. Both of them have worked tirelessly both on the Board and also with general chapter affairs. Chuck will continue as chapter Treasurer and Skip will continue as Newsletter Editor. Again, thanks to you both.

Sincerely,

Tony Stifter

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Kiap-TU-Wish Bulletin Board...

Nominating Committee offers a slate of candidates...

For Board of Directors of Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the committee nominates **Dave Ballman**, from Minnesota, and **John O'Malley** from Wisconsin. Ballman will fill the position formerly held by **Skip James**, while O'Malley will replace **Chuck Goossen** who is not seeking reelection.

Dave is a collector of fine cane fly rods, in addition to being both a biologist and lawyer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. John is a retired army officer whose undergraduate education was in biology, particularly field work. His graduate work concerns the effects of pesticides on the environment. He fishes the lower Kinni allot.

Both men bring skills to the board that will be useful in coping with the increasing problems of chemical and thermal pollution caused by rapidly expanding development pressures, and will aid in planning strategies so that Kiap-TU-Wish can preserve and protect our rivers.

Twin Cities Chapter to hold annual fundraiser...

The 15th annual banquet of the Twin Cities Chapter of Trout Unlimited will be held at the Sheraton Metrodome, 1330 Industrial Blvd., Minneapolis on Friday, April 3. The silent auction will begin at 6pm, followed by dinner at 7:15. Meal choices are prime rib or Mahi Mahi, and the tab is \$45. each, or \$70. for a couple (not two fishing buddies!) Kids age fourteen and under eat for \$20. There will be great prizes, raffles, and both live and silent auctions for guided trips, custom rods, even some non-fishing items.

Help out our neighbor chapter if you can by attending their banquet. Many Twin Cities members have taken part in Kiap-TU-Wish's winter brushing projects. Some, like **Bill Hinton**, have devoted many hours of skilled labor to building log covers on the Willow, or constructing the monitoring station at the base of the Little Falls Dam. Most of the members of Twin Cities TU would rather drive an hour to fish in Wisconsin, rather than two hours to fish in Southeastern Minnesota. For reservations, send money and meal choice to TCTU, P.O. Box 11465, St. Paul, MN 55111-0465

Eau Galle-Rush River Club plans Trout Contest...

Last year, Charles Wiff built a cedar strip canoe for a raffle prize. The endeavor raised so much money that the **Eau Galle-Rush River Sportsmans Club** has decided to do it again, and Wiff has completed another beautiful boat that will be on display in the hardware store in River Falls until the drawing is held for it on May 2nd, during activities at the club's annual Trout Fishing Contest. Canoe raffle tickets are available from **Skip James** or **Tony Stifter** (see phone numbers on pg. 4) at a cost of \$1. each, or six for \$5. Tickets must be handed in to Skip or Tony by April 29th. You need not be present at the drawing to win.

Separate from the canoe raffle are the entry tickets for the annual Trout Contest, held opening Saturday, May 2, from 8am until 5pm. There are plaques and prizes for the three largest trout caught, in both adult and junior (age 15 and under) categories. The official weighing station will be at the Ellsworth Rod and Gun Club, on Hwy 72. All day long, there will be food and drink at the club, as well as a pancake breakfast to start the day. Trout Contest tickets are also available from Skip or Tony at \$1. each.

This event is the largest fund raiser the Eau-Galle Rush River club holds during the year, and the money funds many of the same kinds of stream improvements and stocking programs that Kiap-TU-Wish carries out. The club is also looking for volunteers to help with the food and beverage service at the Ellsworth Rod and Gun Club on May 2nd. If you're interested, call **Arby** or **Lin Linder** at 715-273-5621. You might even be interested in joining the club. Their meetings are held at the El Paso Bar. Unfortunately, they're held on the same first Wednesday of the month as Kiap-TU-Wish TU!

Skip's Loose Threads...

How much longer can it be until the buds burst, the birds sing love songs, and trout sip Mayflies from the surface. Heck, it's only February, but it seems as if our mild Winter this year decided to give way to Spring on Valentine's Day! In the past week, I've received a nice note from Dorothy Bergman Schramm about fly patterns, an article for RipRap (April issue) on the same subject from Jon Jacobs, and recently taught a class at Bob Mitchell's in advanced tying. I guess it's time to get out my fly box, tie a few replacements, perhaps a new pattern or two, and do some thinking (the most fun of all) about how to fish flies effectively. Most of the talk I hear, and the books and articles I read about fly tying deal with imitation: how well does the pattern replicate the insect it's designed to mimic. On the other hand, not many articles talk about fly selection based on water types, or whether the angler fishes upstream or down.

First, it's probably obvious that some flies, those that are conceived as dead drifters, mostly duns, emergers, and nymphs are fished best with the angler working upstream. Streamers, bucktails, most Caddis imitations, and most wet flies are best fished downstream. These flies allow a tightening line in the current to give action, or swim the fly to the surface. How many of you are equipped with at least a few flies to fish effectively downstream?

Even in upstream, dead drift imitations, water type determines fly selection. Low riding sparse dun imitations are not only hard to see in tumultuous water, but they drown quickly. On the other hand, Wulff flies, even heavily hackled Catskill ties (ala Dan Bailey) can ride fast water buoyantly and dry. In the case of nymphs, I carry only unweighted ones, so that I can fish in the film, down a foot, or on the bottom, adding split shot to reach the feeding level of the fish in the water column. The relative depth and turbulence of the water not only defines the amount of weight added to the leader, but how large and how far away from the fly I place my strike indicator, and the gauge and length of my tippet. There is a large and growing literature about leaders designed to deliver a drag free drift, all determined by currents.

Downstream fishing was commonly practiced both here and abroad until Halford and others in England, with typical Victorian self-righteousness, decided that it was unsporting. (*see last pg.*) It is the reason why on most streams, even today, there is a procession of anglers in an upstream direction, an entire code of chivalry concerning the rights and privileges of upstream fishing: ie. the wetfly, downstream fisherman should get out of the water and quietly sneak around an upstream, dryfly man, relinquishing his fishing opportunities to the fishermen on the higher moral plane, and trying hard not to disturb the purist's water. One day many years ago, in Pennsylvania, I was fishing upstream, and I noticed a wetfly fisher coming downstream toward me: a boy actually, even younger than I was, but he had learned the rules about getting out and going around, because he carefully waded to the bank and left the water. But just before he got out, he disdainfully looked my way, unzipped his pants and with a flourish took a whiz in the stream.

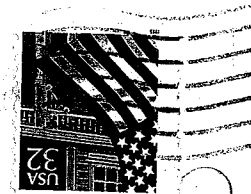
The debate over the relative righteousness of fishing upstream or down has left a large imprint in the minds of most fly fishers, and it is reflected in the way they fish, and by marketers. The new Orvis catalog that was in my mailbox the other day has only five wet flies for sale: Partridge/Yellow, Partridge/Orange, G.R. Hare's Ear (which was originally a dry fly!), March Brown, and Hornberg (which I classify as a streamer). If you look at catalogs from the 1930's, there are hundreds of wet fly patterns, nothing that could be called a nymph, and only a few dry flies imported from England.

But, you must realize that trout don't read books, or worry too much about what is sporting and what is not. It's true that the Brook Trout went crazy, almost to the point of extinction over wet flies, that on many rivers, using more than one on a tippet was illegal because of their fish catching qualities. (Isn't it ironic that in the last ten years, the use of multiple flies has reemerged as a 'new' technique). When was the last time you were looking for risers with your fly dangling in the water behind you, and you got a strike? Tie up a few March Browns, a Leadwing Coachman or two, perhaps a soft-hackle like the Partridge/Green, and a Brown Bucktail, and give downstream angling a try. You will be fishing to trout that cannot be reached by the angler fishing upstream, so in effect, you will have first crack at numerous fish. Be sure to use a slightly heavier tippet because strikes will happen on a tight line. Cast across and let the fly swing in the current. Put it in trouty places, in front of rocks, under the opposite bank, through a riffle to the beginnings of a pool. Caddis hatches are great fun, fishing an almost drowned Elk hair in the film on a tight line, or even better, a March Brown just beneath the surface. For a chance at a better than average fish, try the bucktail fished with little jerks underneath roots or undercut banks.

There are two directions to fish a stream. Most anglers fish upstream, and carry only flies that are appropriate to that technique. You can magnify both your fun and trout catching potential by carrying flies and learning techniques to fish the other way. See your favorite stream from the other vantage point. It's like fishing brand new water! (A good, recent book on the subject is Wet Flies, by Dave Hughes, Stackpole, 1995)



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RifRaf...

An excerpt from Practical Dry Fly Fishing, by Emlyn M. Gill (New York, 1922)

"However much anglers may disagree about many theories, yet on these points all writers, all experts, and all users of the floating fly are apparently in accord. They all accept the exact imitation theory- a bone of contention among wet fly anglers for many years. There is no divergence of opinion in regard to fishing upstream- another topic of discussion among the wet fly men that probably will never be settled to the satisfaction of all. And the proposition that the dry fly must float down with the current, with no other motion whatever, is universally agreed to. So in many ways the dry fly fishermen form a happy and harmonious family, and the knotty problems that are forever coming up to cause disagreements among the users of the sunken fly are reduced to a minimum.

And still harmony does not always reign supreme among members of the English floating fly fraternity. The dry fly 'purist,' as he is known, casts his fly usually only when he sees a trout rising; he 'stalks' the fish; if he sees a rise, he goes within casting distance of the spot, carefully places his fly so that it falls exactly where the trout had risen, or just above it, that the fly may float down over the fish. If he does not get a rise, it is not unusual for him to try a fly of a different pattern; if he finally gives up in his attempt to catch this particular trout, he looks for another rising fish, but doesn't make another cast until he again sees it rise. If no rises occur within his vision during the day, he does not wet his line. Some of this cult carry field glasses with which they scan the surface of the stream

An American, with a mind capable of seeing humorous features in almost all things, and also at times not beyond the temptation of indulging in ridicule, may easily see an opening for poking fun at the disappointed purist, as he returns at evening without once having cast a fly during the day. .. Mr. G.E.M. Skues, a bright and at times sarcastic English writer, says: "I know of no sight more gloomy than that of a golfer painfully tramping from shot to shot. But perhaps the next gloomiest sight is the angler, who, with perhaps but a single day at his disposal, lounges hour by hour by the side of the main river, waiting with such patience as he can muster for the rise which comes not."