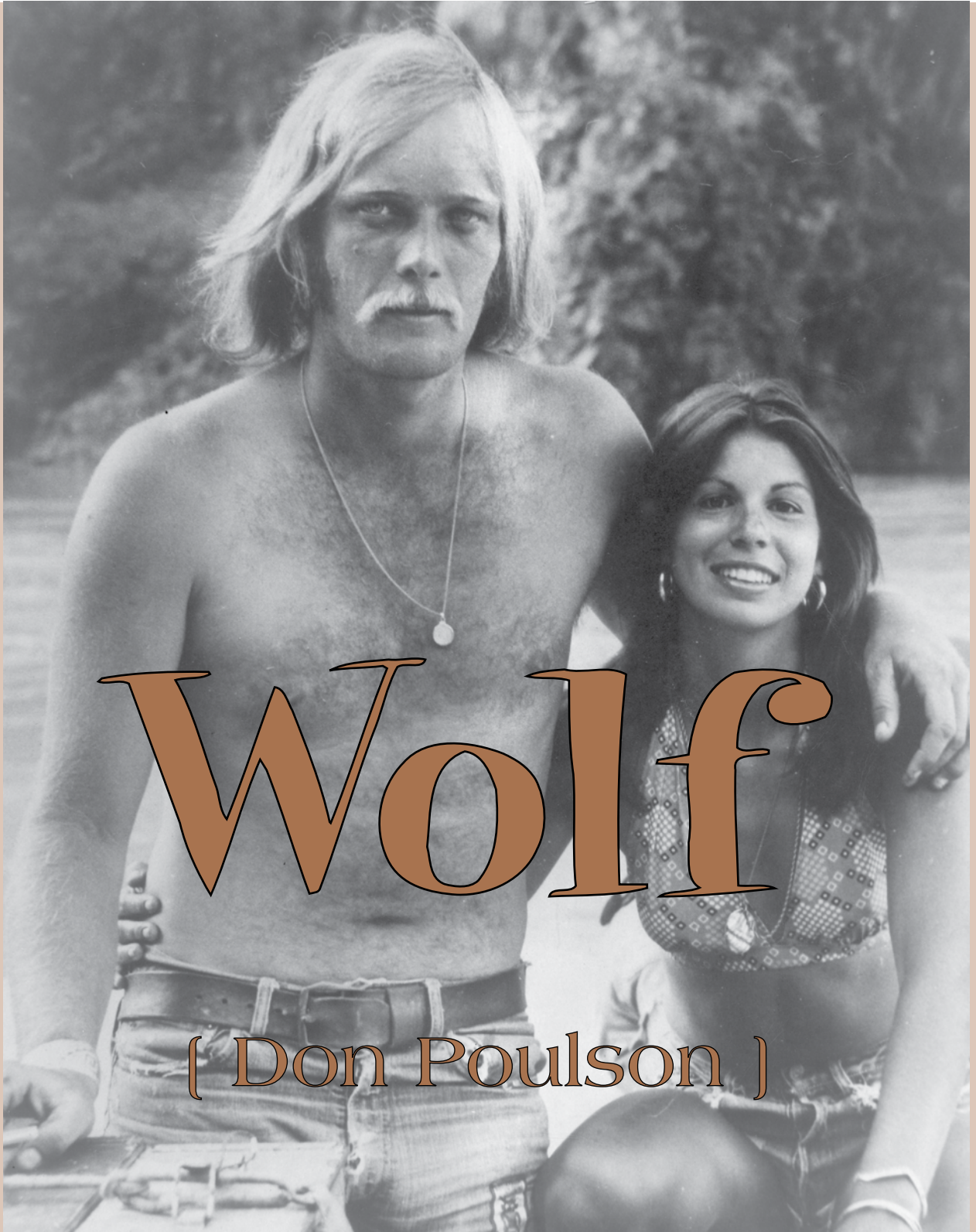


# boatman's quarterly review

the journal of Grand Canyon River Guides, Inc | volume 21 number 4 | winter 2008-2009



Prez Blurb • Changing of the Guard • Guide Profiles • Havasupai Support  
Upper Elves • GCRG at Toroweap • Public Health • Book Review  
Conservation Issues • Back of the Boat • 2009 GTS • Wanted: James White

## boatman's quarterly review

...is published more or less quarterly  
by and for GRAND CANYON RIVER GUIDES.

GRAND CANYON RIVER GUIDES  
is a nonprofit organization dedicated to

*Protecting Grand Canyon  
Setting the highest standards for the river profession  
Celebrating the unique spirit of the river community  
Providing the best possible river experience*

General Meetings are held each Spring and Fall. Our Board of Directors Meetings are generally held the first Wednesday of each month. All innocent bystanders are urged to attend. Call for details.

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Our editorial policy, such as it is: provide an open forum. We need articles, poetry, stories, drawings, photos, opinions, suggestions, gripes, comics, etc. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Grand Canyon River Guides, Inc.

Written submissions should be less than 1500 words and, if possible, be sent on a CD or emailed to GCRG; Microsoft Word files are best but we can translate most programs. Include postpaid return envelope if you want your disk or submission returned.

Deadlines for submissions are the 1st of February, May, August and November. Thanks.

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## Prez Blurb

WELL, WELL, WELL, I'm just back from the Fall Rendezvous and am happy to report that a good time was had by all. It was a great time to see old friends and meet new ones, the weather was perfect and the scenery was spectacular. I love Toroweap! Thanks to Peter Huntoon, who ventured out in his Toyota Corolla, the ever entertaining Greg Woodall, and Ryan Crow for sharing some of the latest and greatest research on the age of the Canyon in general and the lava flows in particular. All three gentlemen added greatly to the experience and to my meager base of knowledge. Thanks also to O'Connor Dale, Nan and Stuart Reeder for gracing us with their presence and for sharing stories around the old campfire. Thanks especially to Art Thevenin for all the hard work of getting the kitchen and dinner together and to Fred for providing the bus. And thanks to Lynn for putting it all together. It was really nice to get out there again.

It's Election Day as I write this. I voted a couple weeks ago and I hope you voted too. I know it can be hard leading this semi-nomadic existence that many of us do, but I believe it's important. Both candidates campaigned for Change and I hope that's what we will get, especially regarding the assault on the environment we've been enduring for so long. Phil Pearl of the Grand Canyon Trust was there at Toroweap and talked about the recent shenanigans going on at the Department of Interior. Apparently they've been making up the rules as they go along regarding uranium exploration on the North Rim. We conveyed our objections a couple weeks ago during the all-too-brief comment period. If you missed your chance then you may have another in the days to come. Be sure and give Lynn your e-mail addresses so she can keep you up on the day-to-day happenings in the Canyon. Phil very kindly offered a free membership to the Trust to any member of GCRG and I think it'd be a good idea to check it out. You can't always trust someone else to do your advocating for you but it's good to know what's going on out there. Eternal vigilance is the price of a healthy Canyon.

Speaking of a healthy canyon, the Havasupai are well on their way to recovering from the nasty dam burst flood this past August. Thanks to all the guides and outfitters that helped out with donations and support. Thanks to Kristin Huisinga for putting it all together. And thanks to AZRA for trucking it all out there. Oh, and thanks to the San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians for donating a million dollars to the Havasupai. Who says Indian gaming isn't a

good thing?

And finally, thanks to all of you for letting me be your President this coming year, it's quite an honor. It's been an eye-opening experience already in the two years I've been on the board and as vice president. I had no idea how much work Lynn does keeping this organization running and how hard those editors work on the BQR for us. Not to mention the work John O'Brien and Andre do representing us to the Power interests at the AMWG and TWG meetings. I'm very impressed! I've gotten to meet and work with some really good people. Not the least of which is Steve Martin and his crew over there at the Park. I can't tell you how lucky we are to have a Superintendent who cares about the Canyon and the River, who works tirelessly to protect and restore it, and who isn't afraid to stand up and speak truth to the Powers-that-Be. Let's hope he finds it easier going in the next four years.

*Matt Hermann*

## Changing of the Guard

IF YOU TAKE A GANDER at our masthead, you'll notice that our board and officers have changed as of September 1ST. We extend our deepest appreciation to Sam Jansen who was at the helm of GCRG as president for the past year, after two years as a director. His intelligence and quiet strength proved to be such an enormous asset. Also, a big thank you to the board members who just finished their term of office: Andy Hutchinson, Emily Perry, and Emma Wharton. All four of these guides donated their time in a number of ways—they attended board meetings, weighed in on important issues, helped craft official GCRG comments, assisted with the GTS, developed the River Courtesy Flyer, and much more. You guys rock!!!

Fortunately we don't have to say goodbye to Emily Perry after all, as she stepped into the VP role! And congrats also to the new GCRG president, Matt Herrman (Moki Mac), and to the new directors: Nikki Cooley (AZRA), Latimer Smith (CRATE), and Doc Nicholson (GCE). Without a doubt, all of these guides will be a big asset to GCRG as they work together with the remaining board members who have one year left to their term of office: Erika Andersson (ARR), Deanna Sanderson (CANX), and Fred Thevenin (AZRA). Such wonderful diversity! Already they've been hard at work crafting official comments opposing uranium mining near Grand Canyon, helping with the Fall Rendezvous, delivering supplies to the Havasupai tribe, and even developing a GCRG group on Facebook! Wow—we're off and running!

Without a doubt, Grand Canyon River Guides wouldn't be here without the dedication of all these individuals as well as all those who have donated their time, ideas, and energy over the years. GCRG's officers and directors are wonderful stewards of Grand Canyon, the Colorado River, and of GCRG, and by doing so they embody the river spirit at its best. It has been a pleasure and an honor to work with all of you, to build the bonds of friendship, and to work for such an important cause—the protection of Grand Canyon and the river experience we all love.

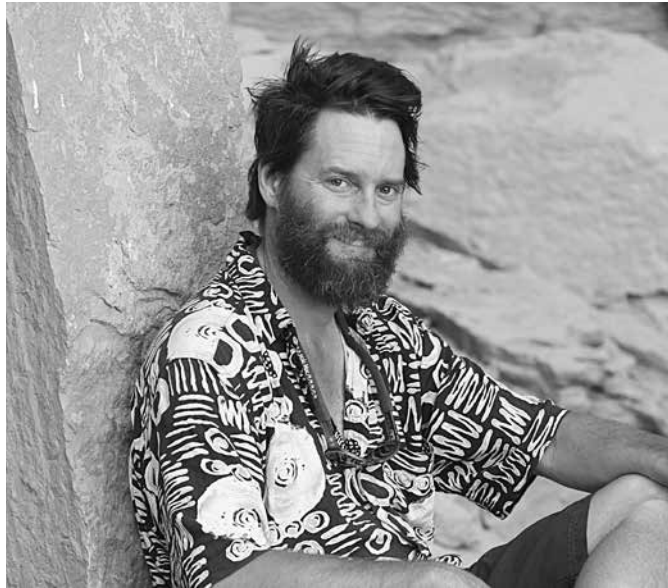
*Lynn Hamilton*

# Guide Profiles

## Matt Herrman, Age 48

**WHERE WERE YOU BORN AND WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?** Chicago. I didn't like it there very much and left before I was one year old.

**WHEN DID YOU START BOATING OR GUIDING?** I started kayaking in college in Portland, Oregon with a bunch of good friends among whom was Rolf Karlstrom, the youngest member of the Flagstaff Karlstrom Clan. He took us on our first trip out into the southwest deserts, a Green River trip with a surplus life raft as support boat. I never imagined I'd like the desert but I kinda did, and after school a friend of Joanie Pope's introduced me to Patrick and Susan Conley who gave me my first job on the river, herding sport yaks down the San Juan. I learned a lot from some very good guides. That winter Joanie got me a job helping build a house up at Cliff Dwellers.



**WHO DO YOU WORK FOR CURRENTLY AND IN THE PAST?** Marble Canyon is a very small place in the winter and I got to know Pam and Clair Quist a little bit. They invited me to swamp a trip the next summer with Pam and Clair on one boat and Mondell Hibbert and me on the other. Then I swamped a Moki trip for Brian Dierker and Brad Dimmock with a 44 year old virgin. I also ran a baggage boat that summer at 50,000 and thought I was gonna die.

During the winter the old guard at Moki quit en masse and in 1986 I suddenly became a real boatman, I've been with Moki ever since.

**WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE WINTER?** I'm a boatman, it's what I do, and in the winter I've been building a little mud hut on the cliff above Hatch. It's not polite to ask me how long I've been working on this project or when I expect to finish.

**MARRIED/FAMILY/PETS?** My wife, Susan Fischer, has been working for the Park Service for many years and keeps us

sheltered at Wupatki until the hut is done. We've got no children but do have a nice goldfish pond up on the cliff.

**WHO HAVE BEEN YOUR MENTORS AND/OR ROLE MODELS?** I've been very fortunate to have learned from the best, including every one mentioned above plus Michael Jacobs, Russell Sullivan, Dave Moulton, Dave Lyle, Clyde Deal, Ray Pope, Dick Clark, Amil Quayle, Vaughan Short, and every one else I've been lucky enough to work with.

**WHAT KEEPS YOU HERE?** I've also learned a lot from the guests I've taken down the river, from cooking techniques to geology to big lessons in Life. It may sound corny, but the people are a big part of the reason I keep coming back. You gotta remember to look up, that's why you're here in the first place, and you might as well take time to learn from your guests. That's what keeps it new.

**WHAT'S THE SILLIEST QUESTION YOU'VE EVER BEEN ASKED ABOUT THE RIVER/CANYON?** One time a lawyer on a trip asked me what I do for intellectual stimulation.

## Emily Dale Perry, Age 27

**WHERE WERE YOU BORN AND WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?** I was born in Kanab, Utah and moved to Flagstaff when I was nine or ten.

**WHO DO YOU WORK FOR CURRENTLY (AND IN THE PAST)?** I work for Grand Canyon Expeditions. I have also done a few science trips and a few Hatch River Expeditions trips.

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN GUIDING?** Six years as a guide.

**WHAT KIND OF BOAT(S) DO YOU RUN?** S-rigs.

**WHAT OTHER RIVERS HAVE YOU WORKED ON?** None (yet).

**MARRIED/FAMILY/PETS?** Married and loving it.

**SCHOOL/AREA OF STUDY/DEGREES?** I have a degree in Zoology.

**WHAT MADE YOU START GUIDING?** I started running the river very early in my life and have always loved it.

**WHO HAVE BEEN YOUR MENTORS AND/OR ROLE MODELS?** My parents were a huge influence. I learned a lot from my dad about the river and running a boat. My mom taught me how to balance the rest of my life



with my passion for river running. Art Thevenin, Dave Spillman and Irv Callahan also taught me much of what I know.

**WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE WINTER?** I am the office manager for Humphrey Summit Ski and I am also the new office manager at Spillman Custom Homes. I'm busy!

**WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR FUTURE HOLDS?** I'm not sure, but I know the canyon will be a part of it.

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Artwork in this issue is by Marieke Taney, guide for Canyon Explorations/Expeditions and former president of CCRG. If you would like to submit artwork for upcoming issues of the BQR, please contact the editors. Thank you!



RMT '08  
Marieke Taney

# Havasupai Support

**T**HANK YOU TO ALL of the individuals, businesses and organizations who donated food, clothing, cash and other supplies to the Havasupai Disaster Fund. Upon notice from the Havasupai Tribe that the villagers were in great need of help due to the August flood, many Flagstaff residents, boatmen and Grand Canyon outfitters gathered a mountain of supplies in just five days. A truck driver for Arizona Raft Adventures delivered everything to April Watahomigie, donations coordinator for the Tribe, on Sunday, October 26<sup>TH</sup>. Thank you to everyone who made this effort to aid the Havasupai people a success.

On August 16, 2008, flooding in Cataract Canyon through Supai village began. Over 2000 square miles of land drains into the Havasu watershed and heavy rains throughout the region caused the first flooding event. When Redlands Dam near Williams, Arizona breached, water headed straight for Cataract Canyon, leading to continued flooding for the next two days. Over 450 people, including villagers, campers, and hikers were evacuated by helicopter to a Red Cross shelter in the nearby Hualapai community of Peach Springs. One private river trip was eventually air lifted to Peach Springs as well, after their boats were washed downstream out of the mouth of Havasu Creek. At its highest, the flood reached approximately 4000 cfs (cubic feet per second) and destroyed millions of dollars worth of homes, irrigation lines, campground infrastructure and fields. A massive mudslide completely destroyed Navajo Falls, which is forever changed.

Once an agricultural society, the livelihood of Havasupai people now depends heavily on income from

tourism to the beautiful Cataract Canyon. As a result of the August 2008 flooding, Cataract Canyon is closed to tourism until spring 2009.

Havasupai life changed drastically around the turn of the century. As late as 1901, accounts from non-Indian

people living among the Havasupai report that major flood events were not “disastrous” events. In fact, periodic flooding was part of life in Cataract Canyon. When floods came, villagers fled to higher ground where they had stashed food for times of emergency. There, villagers waited out the flood and depending on the time of year, they either returned to the village to rebuild homes

and replant fields or they left to begin hunting and gathering firewood for their winter existence in the uplands. This seasonal lifestyle gave the Havasupai people many options when floods raged through Cataract Canyon. “A strictly traditional response to such an event would have included no action until the spring, when the tribe would return from the plateau—perhaps a bit early—to

repair simplistic structures, sow, and subsist on the previous year’s crops set aside in cliff-side storage bins.” (Anderson, p. 40)

Now, Havasupai people have few options. Villagers no longer live a seasonal lifestyle. Instead they live year round in the canyon bottom. Modern homes are not the simple, easy to rebuild wickiups of thatch, willow and timber. When floods

come, millions of dollars of homes, trails, and irrigation lines are damaged or completely lost. Reconstruction is much more expensive and elaborate than it was 100 years ago.

Many people are stepping up to help the Havasupai people. Hualapai Tribe donated 10% of its tourism



dollars for four weekends to the Havasupai people. The San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians in San Bernardino County, California donated \$1 million for reconstruction efforts. Bridges and trails will be rebuilt, an early warning system for the campground will be installed, and tribal members will be employed to repair the campground. San Miguel Band Chairman James Ramos stated that, "We feel very good about helping our brothers and sisters. We believe this needs to happen. Who knows when we might be on the other side of the fence?" (Tucson Citizen, October 24, 2008) In the 1980s, San Miguel sewer lines were out for months due

to a flooding event in California.

For more information, read the historical article by Michael Anderson. "Natural Disasters within Transitional Societies: The Havasupai Indians at Supai, Arizona." Pp. 37-44 in *Reflections of Grand Canyon Historians: Ideas, Arguments, and First-Person Accounts*. Ed., Todd R. Berger. Grand Canyon Association, 2008.

*Kristin Huisinga*

## What's the Deal with Upper Elves?

OVER A YEAR AGO we published an article in Volume 20, Number 3 of the BQR about the Upper Elves closure evaluation. This conservation measure was a product of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion on the Colorado River Management Plan, prompted by concern about potential visitor impacts to the Kanab ambersnail (*Oxyloma haydeni kanabensis*). A joint letter of concern from GCRG and past-president, Jeri Ledbetter to Superintendent Steve Martin, prompted an inter-agency evaluation and the wheels of bureaucracy began to move, albeit slowly. Many of you may be wondering if the matter has been resolved, and indeed it has. Here's the latest information...

In consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the conservation measure will be modified. The new language will appear in the 2009 Commercial Operating Requirements (COR's) as follows:

"To avoid impacts to sensitive wildlife and plants, visitors are not allowed to enter the vegetation in, and surrounding, the pools and hanging gardens in the Upper Elves Chasm area. The Upper Elves Chasm area is that area starting upstream (up drainage) of the large sawgrass patch, and ending at the large "amphitheater" and waterfall. Visitors must stay on rocky and bedrock surfaces when visiting this area."

The agencies believe that the modified measure is more accurate in describing the area of concern, and will allow for visitation to the general area while avoiding impacts to the species.

Again, we thank Jeri Ledbetter for her continued activism and thoughtful examination of the issue. Special thanks should also be extended to Superintendent Steve Martin, Linda Jalbert (Wilderness Coordinator at Grand Canyon National Park), Mike McGinnis (GCNP River Ranger), Jeff Sorensen (AZ Game & Fish), Bill Austin and other personnel from the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service. This was an outstanding effort from all concerned!

It's all too easy to make new regulations, but rarely do we see them rescinded or even modified. This is an exemplary model for discerning a careful balance between resource protection and visitor enjoyment through adaptive management, communication, and information sharing. What an accomplishment! Let's take special care when visiting this magical place, and know that many people worked hard to make that a reality.

*Lynn Hamilton*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GCRG



# GCRG News

## XMAS

**T**HINK CHRISTMAS! When you're frantically searching for the perfect gift for the river lovers in your life, please remember that GCRG has great T-shirts, hats, henleys, and mugs. Also, GCRG memberships make super gifts for family and friends who love the Colorado River! So help support GCRG and buy, buy, buy!

## ADOPT-A-BOATMAN

Keep in mind that there are a number of "partial adoptions" that require additional donations to reach our \$750 goal for a fully funded Adopt-a-Boatman interview. These are as follows:

- Drifter Smith (\$550 needed)
- Vaughn Short (\$250 needed)
- Ivo Lucchitta (\$600 needed)
- Brian Hansen (\$600 needed)
- Serena Supplee (\$360 needed)
- Richard Quartaroli (\$400 needed)
- Dick McCallum (\$300 needed)

You do not need to supply the whole balance. Every bit gets us closer to our goal! Thanks to all of you who have donated to this exciting program that broadens our Colorado River Runners Oral History Project. We hope you enjoyed the Tim Whitney oral history in the last BQR—the very first Adopt-a-Boatman sponsored interview!

## WEBSITE

GCRG is currently designing a completely new website from scratch. Our plans include sections for Guide Resources, Advocacy, Guide-Owned Businesses, Membership, Shopping, BQR, Oral History Project, etc... We will even compile a "GTS Library" consisting of abstracts from talks given at past GTS events on a variety of topics. We will continue to build the library over time as a fantastic and readily available educational tool for all of you. Stay tuned!

## GCRG ON FACEBOOK

GCRG now has a group site on FACEBOOK. Yup! You can check it out at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=26426387969>, or if you're already a member of FACEBOOK, just search for Grand Canyon River Guides. There are already over 80 members of this group, so it's a great way for you to connect with your river buddies and for GCRG to connect with you. This social networking site provides a great new way for GCRG to bring the community together. Thanks to Nikki Cooley for her assistance in setting it up!

Also, check out a related FACEBOOK site, Grand Canyon Sandbars at: (<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=19946579387&ref=ts>), with tons of photos taken after the flood flow last spring. It's an interactive way to learn more about how dam flows affect camping beaches along the river corridor and connect with GCRG's Adaptive Management Work Group representative, Andre Potochnik.

## Farewell

**J**IM NORTON WAS BURIED on Sunday September 7, in Peace Valley, Missouri. Jim was a Canyoneers boatman in the '70s and '80s and worked for other companies as well in subsequent years. He had been diagnosed with prostate cancer in the spring of 2005 and died September 1st of kidney failure due to the prostate cancer. He was 74 years old. Jim had run the Little Colorado in the early '70s with Wild Root Charlie and that led to his guiding career in the Canyon. His easy going attitude enamored him to the passengers and may have contributed in part to his record breaking 52-plus hours on the rock island in Crystal. A young cub could not have asked for a more knowledgeable or patient mentor. Too bad I failed to fully realize my treasure at the time.

*Jim Protiva*



*Left to right: Jack Calabrese, Jim Norton, Joy Staveley, Garlord Staveley, John Gray*



## To Boldly Go Where No Bus Has Ever Gone Before—The GCRG Fall Rendezvous at Toroweap



Is Fred gonna make it? Yes! Photo by Greg Woodall

**H**AVE YOU EVER SEEN a school bus on the Esplanade? If you attended the Fall Rendezvous at Toroweap over the November 1st weekend, you would have been treated to this incongruous sight! Fred “I’m gonna go for it” Thevenin drove the AZRA bus up from Flagstaff, stopping at Tour West in Fredonia to pick up more folks, then the two-hour-long, seemingly endless bumpy ride out towards Toroweap. As on a river trip, diligent guides “scouted” the last big ledge in the road at the entry to the campground, with all passengers disembarking in case of disaster.

What an outstanding weekend—roughly forty people, decent weather (warm on Saturday, and thankfully not rainy on Sunday), great food (especially the fabulous dinner, courtesy of chef Art Thevenin from GCE), and fabulous speakers (Peter Huntoon—North Rim geology, Greg Woodall—archaeology and mining history, Ryan

Crow from the University of New Mexico—volcanic flows, and Phil Pearl from the Grand Canyon Trust—uranium mining and Glen Canyon Dam issues). We also thank the NPS folks who came out to join us!

What were the highlights? There were many...

- We took a great hike to check out the “Little Chicken Mine”—the site of an old copper and silver mine below the rim at the top of the Redwall Limestone. It boggles the mind that these miners managed to get the ore in and out of this seemingly inaccessible area. The barb-wire ladder they used to descend the sheer canyon wall, roughly 3,000 feet above the river is enough to make your hair stand on end. Miners could certainly be considered to be crazier than river runners any day! Peter Huntoon and Greg Woodall were enthusiastic interpreters for this segment.



Lunch on the Esplanade. Photo by Lynn Hamilton

so enthusiastic—it was great spending time with all of you. And of course, the GCRG board of directors worked very hard in many ways to make this a reality, from planning, to implementation. Not to mention, it was their brilliant idea to head north! A huge thank you to Fred Thevenin and Arizona Raft Adventures for providing the carpool option, and for giving us a staging point for food packing. The same goes for Fred’s brother, Art from GCE, who pre-cooked Saturday night’s dinner, brought firewood, and made sure we didn’t get stuck along the road (always a distinct possibility). Also, Dave Brown at Tour West opened his warehouse to us on Saturday and was there once again when we showed up on Sunday to drop people off. Cork N’ Bottle gave us a screaming deal on the libations, and Toucanet Coffee

- We checked out tons of arch sites and roasting pits—nature’s grocery store for ancient inhabitants! Thanks Greg, for painting such a vivid picture of how people lived, survived, and even flourished in this harsh environment.
- We had a surprise visit Saturday evening from O’C Dale and Stu Reeder, who together with Greg Woodall told campfire stories about legendary Tuweep Ranger, John Riffey. The ability to learn about this amazing man directly from those who knew him, respected him, and loved him, was a real gift to all of us. What a wonderful way to honor John Riffey’s memory. We made sure that we stopped at his gravesite on the way out and paid our respects.
- We learned about current uranium mining and dam issues from Phil Pearl at the Grand Canyon Trust. These are issues that concern both of our organizations as we endeavor to build stronger working relationships that will maximize our effectiveness. Thank you, Phil Pearl, for your willingness to reach out to GCRG.
- We hiked to the stunningly beautiful Toroweap Overlook for a show and tell about volcanic flows. Ryan Crow did an outstanding job of discussing volcanism in the area. He’ll be testing his hypothesis that Vulcan’s Anvil is really the plumbing of an ancient volcano, and we look forward to hearing about it in a future BQR!



Much arm waving by Greg Woodall. Photo by Lynn Hamilton

got us going in the morning. We appreciate the efforts of everyone who worked to make it such a success!

When we changed the name from “Fall Meeting” to “Fall Rendezvous” a few years ago, it transformed the dynamics of the event for the better. GCRG realized that the intimate fall gathering should be a wonderful combination of community building, learning, and getting out and doing something really fun. From our houseboat adventure on Lake Powell, to our South Rim odyssey, to our Glen Canyon Dam tour and camping extravaganza, to this year’s Toroweap excursion, the Fall Rendezvous rocks! So make sure you join us next year. We’re already hatching great ideas, so stay tuned!

Our special thanks go out to all the attendees who were

Lynn Hamilton



*Photos by Lynn Hamilton*

## Public Health and the Experience of Time

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE that we are already into the winter months! Time moves quickly here in Flagstaff, partly because the Public Health Program has kept me very busy, but also because Northern Arizona is such an enjoyable place to live and work.

In the last issue of Boatman's Quarterly Review (Fall 2008), there was an interesting article about Susan Greenfield, a GCE passenger, who destroyed her watch while on a river trip. Reading that, I had to pause and think a little bit about time and how we spend it. Or, maybe, just as accurately, "where" we spend it. Thousands of people every year seek the adventure of floating through the Grand Canyon on the mighty Colorado River. Some, like many of BQR's loyal readers, even make it a career—others wish it was! Part of this appeal is undoubtedly how the Grand Canyon alters one's experience with time. Weider Marcia, American author and speaker, said,

"When we are doing what we love, we don't care about time. For at least at that moment, time doesn't exist and we are truly free."

I believe that quote captures the feelings many have while rafting the Colorado River in the quiet, remote reaches of the Grand Canyon. A life-changing experience is found that the adventurer will never forget.

It is very important to note, however, that there is one critical component before attempting to transcend time in the Grand Canyon—good Public Health!

I would now like to add an incredibly deep and thought-provoking philosophical quote of my own:

"Norovirus Negates Nirvana!"

Gastrointestinal illness turns the happy time-traveler into a hapless, miserable shipwreck. Involuntary vomiting, diarrhea, and dehydration while floating through beach-less corridors of sheer cliffs rising from the rivers edge completely changes ones perception of time. The experience becomes more like one described by Albert Einstein:

"When a man sits with a pretty girl for an hour, it seems like a minute. But let him sit on a hot stove for a minute—then it's longer than any hour. That's relativity!"

Our Public Health River Program is designed to make everyone's experience with time and relativity on the Colorado River a positive one! Feel free to send any suggestions, questions, or comments you may have to [matt\\_walburger@partner.nps.gov](mailto:matt_walburger@partner.nps.gov) or call my office at 928-226-0168. Together we can enhance our ability to provide a time-transcending river experience in the Grand Canyon. Thanks to all of you for your commitment to Public Health!

*Matt Walburger*

NOTE: LT Matt Walburger, MPH, REHS is a United States Public Health Service Officer assigned to the National Park Service's Office of Public Health as a Public Health Consultant to National Parks throughout Northern Arizona.

## Book Review

*Ancient Landscapes of the Colorado Plateau*

BY RON BLAKEY AND WAYNE RANNEY

2008, GRAND CANYON ASSOCIATION

ISBN 978-1-934656-03-7

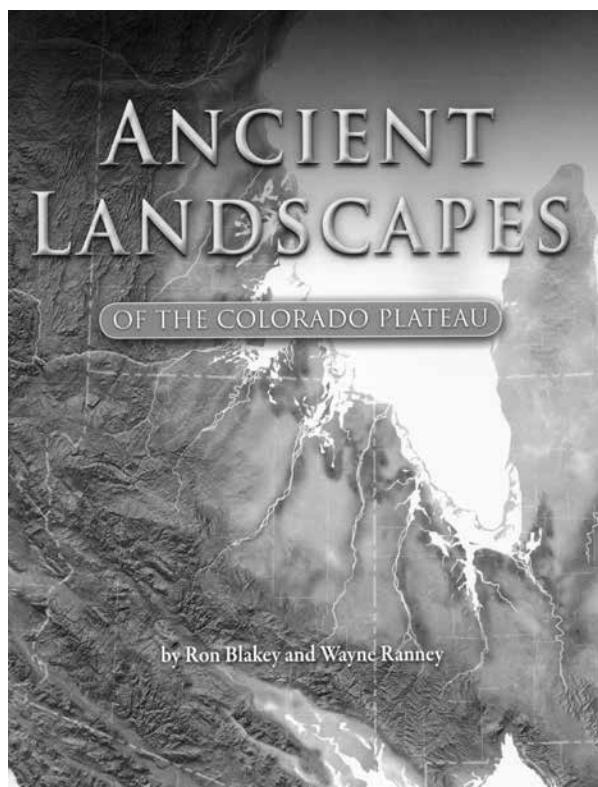
\$34.95

ANYONE WHO SPENDS much time taking in the scenery on the Colorado Plateau will love this book. The Colorado Plateau is widely known as one of the best places on the face of the planet to see, appreciate, and/or study the wonders of geology. For one thing, many of the rock layers that are exposed in the Grand Canyon (for example) can be seen and recognized over a large area. A classic example of "layer cake" geology, the relatively dry climate of the Colo-

rado Plateau means that the rocks there are well exposed in many places, rather than hidden under an impenetrable veil of vegetation. Numerous deeply incised canyons, including our favorite Grand Canyon, provide excellent opportunities to see what's below the surface. Lots of public land, studded with National Parks, Monuments, and Recreation Areas, display different parts of the Earth's history from the ages of early (and simple) life forms up to the relatively recent past.

*Ancient Landscapes of the Colorado Plateau* is a beautiful and informative guide to the plateau and its history in deep time. It won't fit in your ammo box, but would make an excellent addition to your bookcase to engage your attention when you need another dose of the Canyon or its environs.

Any visitor to the numerous parks and monuments of the Southwest can't escape learning that the rocks record a vast history of varying landscapes—rivers feeding into shallow seas, deeper oceans far from shore, vast deserts filled with sand dunes, highlands and mountains eroding away to produce the sediments that make up the rocks we see today. Standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon it's easy to notice marine fossils in the Kaibab limestone—but where, one wonders, were the shores of this ancient sea? Now, at last, it's easy to find out.



Geologists Ron Blakey and Wayne Ranney have spent many years thinking and wondering about the landscapes in which the rock formations of the Colorado Plateau were laid down. Over the years, enough geologic information has been accumulated through numerous studies to answer questions about what these ancient landscapes must have looked like. And computer generated graphics have made it possible to create these realistic looking images, each of which is based upon a vast amount of research involving many different lines of inquiry, and dozens—if not hundreds or thousands—of individual geologists.

It's frequently said that "A picture is worth a thousand words." and paleo-geographic maps are a perfect example. Many different lines of reasoning are involved in determining the likely location of the seas and shorelines, rivers, mountains, and deserts shown on

Blakey's maps. Even experts have a difficult time imagining a landscape of the past, based on so many pieces of information, without at least a sketch of the basics. For the rest of us, lacking most of the basic information, it would be impossible.

Northern Arizona University Geology Professor Ron Blakey has been busy making these maps for the last fifteen years. Now, with the collaboration of geologist and interpretative guide Wayne Ranney, these paleo-geographic maps are presented in a format designed for general readers and visitors curious about the scenic wonders of the Colorado Plateau.

Another essential part of this happy collaboration is their publisher, the Grand Canyon Association (GCA). GCA has, over the years, brought out a number of classics of interest to fans of the Grand Canyon—including one of Ranney's previous titles, *Carving Grand Canyon: Evidence, Theories, and Mystery* (reviewed in *BQR* Vol 18, number 2, summer, 2005). The folks behind the scenes at the Grand Canyon Association know what it takes to go from a good idea to a beautiful book that will leap off the shelf into your hands, lightening your wallet in the process. Some of the proceeds have gone to help finance our annual spring Guides Training Seminar. The rest support other educational activities, and future publications.

*Ancient Landscapes of the Colorado Plateau* would make an excellent addition to the library of anyone who appreciates the scenic wonders of the Grand Canyon and Colorado Plateau.

*Drifter Smith*

## Conservation Issues

### STOPPING URANIUM EXPLORATION ADJACENT TO GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

RECENT SPECULATION ON energy resources has sent uranium prices to record levels. As a result, more than 3,500 uranium mining claims have been filed within ten miles of Grand Canyon National Park and more than 4,500 claims have been filed in areas adjacent to this. Unfortunately, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has granted permits without any public notice or comment whatsoever and with no consideration to the real and potential cumulative impacts of what could amount to thousands of mining operations. Further, the USFS defiantly announced its plans to approve these proposals through so-called “Categorical Exclusions” (a convenient euphemism for bypassing environmental review and ignoring the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and other laws).

In response to this situation, the Grand Canyon Trust, Sierra Club, and Center for Biological Diversity filed a lawsuit against the USFS’s use of “Categorical Exclusions”. Just weeks after filing the lawsuit Federal District Court Judge Mary Margaia issued a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction against Vane Minerals (one of the major permittees) and the USFS. Several months later, Vane Minerals and the USFS signed a landmark settlement, requiring the USFS to complete a full environmental impact statement addressing the cumulative impacts of uranium exploration and mining adjacent to the Park.

However (and legal issues are funny in this way),

Grijalva (D-AZ), Chairman of the National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee, to have his committee use a provision of the Federal Land Management Policy Act to pass an emergency resolution instructing the Interior Department to ban all uranium exploration adjacent to the Park for a period of up to three years. Unfortunately, since the Committee took this decisive action, Secretary of Interior Kempthorne has defied Congress and the law, and refused to implement the ban. In response, yet another lawsuit had to be filed asking the court to compel the Secretary to abide by the law and implement the ban.

In this continuing saga, the Department of Interior recently published a proposed rule change which would effectively eliminate regulations requiring the Secretary to comply with Congressional directives regarding emergency withdrawals to protect the public lands. What’s more, the comment period on the proposed rule change provided for only fifteen days for public input. To those of you at GCRG who submitted comments, thank you for taking this important action!

Although the rulings on the lawsuits described above will likely occur after a new and hopefully more friendly administration takes power, the litigation has temporarily staved off a spate of exploratory uranium drilling very close to the rim of the Grand Canyon.

In the meantime, the Grand Canyon Trust, Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity, and members of GCRG are working with Congressman Grijalva to pass

*With all due respect your honor; there is more radioactivity in this courtroom than there is at any of our exploratory sites.*

Gary Urman, Attorney Representing Vane Minerals uranium exploration activities

the settlement with the USFS (administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture) did nothing to prevent the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which is administered by the Department of Interior, from taking a “business as usual approach” and continue issuing exploratory approvals. In response to this, the Grand Canyon Trust, Sierra Club and Center for Biological Diversity worked closely with Congressman Raúl M.

the Grand Canyon Watershed Protection Act of 2008 (H.R. 5583), which will permanently withdraw approximately 1,000,000 acres adjacent to the Park from all future mineral entry. If this bill fails to move in the remaining months of the 110TH Congress, a new bill in the House of Representatives and a companion bill in the Senate will be introduced early in the 111TH Congress.

For those GCRG members that have engaged in this issue, we thank you for your time and efforts!

#### CHALLENGING THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION'S OPERATION OF GLEN CANYON DAM

As many of our long-time supporters know, the work of GCRG, the Grand Canyon Trust and others sparked passage of the Grand Canyon Protection Act in 1992, which directed the Interior Secretary to manage Glen Canyon dam to protect and restore the resources for which Grand Canyon National Park and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area were established. Pursuant to the Act, the Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Program (AMP) was established in 1996 to advise the Secretary of Interior on actions necessary to protect the Grand Canyon. It is the largest experiment in adaptive management in the U.S, and both GCRG and Grand Canyon Trust have been official representatives to the AMP since its inception.

Approximately \$80 million have been invested in research so far, and a comprehensive 2005 government analysis of the science confirmed what we have suspected for some time: that the cold, clear, fluctuating flows from the dam under current operations are destroying native fish habitat and riparian areas, eroding recreational beaches, and damaging archaeological sites. What is needed instead is a more natural regimen in which high springtime flows that redistribute sediment to beaches and backwater habitats are followed by steady flows that preserve these benefits.

GCRG and the Grand Canyon Trust have held steadfast on AMP voting and have led efforts to restore the river, winning many important victories along the way through better understanding of the science, moral

and to continue load-following flows without respite. In response, the Grand Canyon Trust filed a lawsuit in early 2008, arguing that the clear language of the 1994 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Biological Opinion on the endangered humpback chub requires continuous experiments with natural flows.

In an apparent attempt to moot the compelling claims of the Grand Canyon Trust's lawsuit, the Bureau of Reclamation quickly proposed and executed a single flood experiment in March 2008, which is to be followed by just two months of annual steady flows this autumn.

Already, the science is showing that the benefits of the flood were short-lived, supporting the GCRG and Grand Canyon Trust claim that floods must be followed by steady flows. More egregiously, under apparent pressure from the Bureau of Reclamation, the USFWS issued a new Biological Opinion on dam flows and their impacts on humpback chub, attempting to moot their far more substantive 1994 Biological Opinion—an opinion the Trust's lawsuit relied upon.

In summary, the Grand Canyon Trust's lawsuit, and the intense political maneuverings surrounding it, has significant potential to change management of one of the largest and most critical dams in the country, with the health of the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon at stake. Sometime this winter there should be a ruling, and we hope, a celebration of a legal victory. We'll report the outcome of this in the next issue of the Boatman's Quarterly.

*Phil Pearl*

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR GRAND CANYON TRUST

*As much as I regard this courtroom Mr. Urman, it is not one of the seven wonders of the world.*

Judge Mary Marguia, U.S. Federal District Judge—AZ

suasion and minority reports to the Secretary of Interior. Unfortunately, votes within the group are dominated by water and power interests, who profit most from dam releases that follow the daily fluctuations in electricity demand, so we must fight hard for every valuable experimental action.

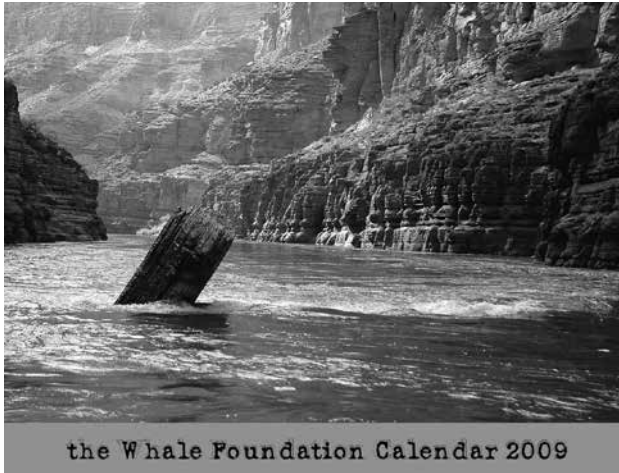
In late 2007, despite the presence of unusually rich sediment deposits at the upstream end of the Canyon, the AMP voted not to do any high flow releases in 2008

# Back of the Boat — The Whale Foundation News Bulletin

## NEW 2009 WHALE FOUNDATION CALENDAR

**I**F YOU HAVEN'T GOTTEN one already, now is the time to pickup your 2009 Whale Foundation calendar! Help support the Whale Foundation's outreach programs and order this great, new, 14-month calendar now. Designed by Mary Williams, this year's edition is filled with fabulous images of the Grand Canyon. These calendars make great gifts, will help you remain organized, and/or can remind you of the Canyon's grandeur when you're are working your winter job on the rim.

In Flagstaff you can purchase a calendar for \$10 if you stop by the office (515 W. Birch,) or at Mountain Sports (24 N. San Francisco Street) or at Humphrey



Summit (505 N. Beaver.) Otherwise, download an order form from our website ([www.whalefoundation.org](http://www.whalefoundation.org)), include an additional \$3 per calendar for shipping and handling, and return the form with your check to PO Box 855, Flagstaff, AZ 86002. We'll speed your order along. For foreign addresses, please add \$5 for mailing costs.

This is a great way to celebrate—and support—the guiding community at the same time.

## WINGDING VII

Mark your Whale Foundation calendars now! The seventh annual WingDing will be held on **Saturday, February 21, 2009** from 6–11 P.M. at the Coconino Center for the Arts, 2300 N. Fort Valley Road in Flagstaff (behind Sechrist School.)

This Grand Canyon river family rendezvous and fundraiser is a great gathering and whale-sized undertaking for about 350 folks. We'll have dinner and music, a raffle and live and silent auctions with lots of beautiful art, books, services, and getaways donated by the river

community. We are looking for volunteers to lend a hand with food, beverages, registration, auctions, set up and clean up. If you'd like to help with the planning and execution of this fabulous celebration, we'd love to have you join the team! Just give us a call at 928-774-9440.

## GTS HEALTH FAIR

We want to remind everyone of the Whale Foundation's upcoming Health Fair at the spring GTS on Saturday, March 28TH at Hatchland. Our healthcare professionals will provide blood work vouchers and free screenings including skin cancer, blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol, plus oral examinations plus more. We encourage those uninsured—or under insured—members of the river community to take advantage of this free \$750 value.

## WHALE FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In 2008 the Whale Foundation welcomed new Board members: Jill Dassing, Dave Edwards and Pat Rose. We thank these individuals, our other Board of Directors, our Health Services Committee, our WingDing Committee—as well as the many others—for donating their considerable time and talents in support of our river family. If you are interested in volunteering for the Board or in other capacities, please give us a call at 928-774-9440. We look forward to hearing from you!

The Whale Foundation  
PO Box 855  
Flagstaff, AZ 86002  
Toll Free Help Line: 877-44WHALE  
Business: 928-774-9440  
Web: [www.whalefoundation.org](http://www.whalefoundation.org)  
Email: [whale@whalefoundation.org](mailto:whale@whalefoundation.org)



## 2009 Guides Training Seminar

**M**ARK THOSE CALENDARS, and plan on participating in the GTS land or river session! The GTS postcards will be mailed out to guides after the first of the year, and we'll post the agenda on our website once it's finalized. But you can express your interest anytime! And talk to your outfitters now!

### GTS LAND SESSION

**DATES:** March 28–29, 2009—Hatch River Expeditions, Marble Canyon, AZ

**COST:** \$35 per person (unless you're sponsored by an outfitter—they'll pick up the tab). This event is open to the public.

**BRING:** A camp chair, a mug, dress warmly and in layers and plan on staying for the weekend.

**FOOD:** Great food provided for all participants (dinner on Friday night through lunch on Sunday).

**FOCUS:** Cultural, natural and human history of Grand Canyon and the Colorado River, plus relevant resource management issues.

**FUN STUFF:** Raffle, party on Saturday night (with a band!), hang out with your friends and make new ones!

**HELPFUL STUFF:** The Whale Foundation Health Fair at the GTS!

**LODGING:** You can stay at one of the local lodges (Cliff Dwellers, Lees Ferry Lodge, or Marble Canyon Lodge), or you can camp.

### GTS RIVER SESSION

**DATES:** April 1–April 7, 2009 (upper half—Lees Ferry to Phantom Ranch)

April 7–April 15, 2009 (lower half—Phantom Ranch to Diamond Creek)

**COST:** \$180 for upper half, and \$230 for lower half. If you're sponsored, your outfitter will pay for your trip.

**MAX SIZE:** 24 people including speakers

**BOATS:** Western River Adventures will provide the motor-rig. We usually have a whole flotilla—a motor-rig, oar boats, maybe a paddle raft or a dory, maybe a kayak or two. You name it!

**PREREQUISITES:** You must be a working guide or trainee in Grand Canyon to be eligible (with work for the 2009 season). We encourage all guides to sign up—whether you're experienced or just starting out. You can be sponsored by an outfitter, or you can apply as a freelance guide and pay for yourself. Preference will be given to sponsored guides as this trip is supported logistically and financially by the Grand Canyon River outfitters and the Grand Canyon Conservation Fund.

### FREELANCE REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) must have all your medical requirements and other guide certifications fulfilled as specified by GCNP, or
- 2) you must be a licensed guide on another river, actively working towards becoming a guide in Grand Canyon. Send us a check (which we will hold until we determine if you can go) and send us a letter or resume with your background telling us who you are and why you should go. This will help with our selection process.

**FOCUS:** Fantastic interpretive training opportunities in the cultural, natural and human history of Grand Canyon, with relevant resource management issues. The GTS river trip also incorporates at least one stewardship project as well as a mentorship component where newer guides can learn the intangibles of guiding from more experienced guides. This is the only totally cooperative training trip with guides from different companies.

The annual GTS is coordinated by GCRG in cooperation with the Grand Canyon commercial river outfitters, Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Canyon Association, and the Native Voices of the Colorado Program. Thanks to all of our GTS partners!

The GTS is made possible in part by funding from the Grand Canyon Conservation Fund (a non-profit, grant-making organization managed by the Grand Canyon river outfitters), the Grand Canyon Association and individual contributors. Thanks to our funders for their wonderful support!

### Backcountry Food Handler's Class

**Date:** Friday, March 27th (the day before the GTS land session)

**Time:** 12:00–4:00

**Location:** Old Marble Canyon Lodge, Marble Canyon, AZ

**Cost:** \$18

**Sign Up:** Checks can be made out to Coconino County Health and sent to the attention of Marlene Gaither, Environmental Health, Coconino County Health Department, 2500 N Fort Valley Rd., Bldg #1, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

**Questions?:** Contact Marlene Gaither at [mgaither@coconino.az.gov](mailto:mgaither@coconino.az.gov) or (928) 853-8933

This is a great class for new guides or for those with burning questions. And it's an easy way to get your food handler's certification squared away before the river season!

## Wanted: James White

WHILE RIVERS OF SPECULATION have flowed about the story of James White being the first man to travel down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, no one has ever investigated the one part of White's story that was verifiable. White's account of his adventure began with him and some companions stealing some Indian horses near Fort Dodge, Kansas, and heading for the Rockies. Fort Dodge kept extensive records of area events, and it turns out that White's departure from Fort Dodge was especially well documented. White was fleeing an enraged Fort Dodge commander, who had ordered the U. S. Cavalry to catch and arrest White. The Fort Dodge documents have much to say about the credibility of the rest of White's story.

In March of 1867 Major Henry Douglas was a very worried commander. All winter he had been convinced that a major Indian uprising would break out as soon as the spring grasses allowed the Indians unlimited mobility for large forces. Douglas had repeatedly written to his commanding officers to convince them of the danger and to obtain reinforcements for Fort Dodge. Now spring had come and the grasses were growing fast. In February the Indians began giving Douglas ultimatums that the whites cease all settlement activities and leave the area. On March 14 one chief "gave me ten days to move from this post, that he wanted the mules and cavalry horses fattened, as he would have use for them, for he intended to appropriate them".

On February 24th Douglas received his first report of a band of eight white trappers operating in the area. While they were trapping wolves for bounty money on the upper Cimarron River, six of their mules and horses were stolen by Cheyennes. Two weeks later the trappers were camped on Mulberry Creek some thirty miles south of Fort Dodge. A few days later the trappers showed up at Fort Dodge, and Douglas, eager for reports of Indian activities, conducted a long interview with their leader, "Captain" Baker. Baker gave Douglas a detailed report of tribal numbers and movements, and reported that the Indians were extremely well armed. Baker had camped near the Cheyennes and watched them target shooting, using ammunition "more lavishly than he had ever seen Indians use it before," Douglas would write to his commanding officer. "On his [Baker] expressing his surprise at their prodigal use of it, they said they had plenty more of it at home." Baker agreed that the Indians were preparing for war.

At this time James White was driving the stage-coach between Fort Dodge and Cimarron Crossing, twenty-five miles to the west. Cimarron Crossing was the Indian's favorite place for raiding horses from

whites, for when a wagon train was fording the river it was especially vulnerable. A lone stagecoach was even more vulnerable, and White must have understood that in the event of an Indian uprising he was in the most dangerous place and job of all. It was a prudent time to leave. There was a ranch/station at Cimarron Crossing, and it was actually a stronger fortress than Fort Dodge itself, complete with stockade, guard towers, and rifle portals. When Baker's party left Fort Dodge they went to Cimarron Ranch, and thus James White fell in with them.

Baker didn't tell Douglas that he was observing the Cheyennes so closely because he intended to take back his livestock. Upon seeing how heavily armed the Cheyennes were, Baker must have decided there were easier places to obtain livestock. On March 29th Major Douglas received an urgent letter from the owner of Cimarron Ranch, reporting that Baker was planning to raid an Indian camp on the Pawnee Fork, twenty-five miles north. Since some of these Indians had been to the ranch and seen Baker there, "they would naturally vent their rage towards the ranch and occupants, thereby exposing innocent men and women to their tender mercies."

Douglas had a far greater concern than the danger to Cimarron Ranch. The whole prairie was a powder keg ready to explode, and a band of whites attacking an Indian camp was just the spark to set it off. Douglas dispatched a courier to Cimarron Ranch with a letter to Baker, warning him that such a raid "will not be countenanced. It is contrary to the present military and civil policy of the government and it is my duty to prevent it, and if such a raid is intended by you, to protect the Indians concerned...I have this morning sent my guide to the Indians camped in the Pawnee Fork to put the Indians on their guard against any raids that may be made by white men." It is a measure of how disastrously the powder keg exploded that twenty days after Douglas was trying to guard the Pawnee Fork camp, the U. S. Cavalry burned it down, and Lt. Colonel George Custer was chasing down its fleeing residents. The 1867 uprising would be one of the major events of the Indian wars.

Douglas demanded that Baker declare his intentions, and Baker sent back a letter declaring that he sought only his own horses and promising not to raid any innocent tribe, adding: "I understand fully the responsibility attaching to those who are instrumental in bringing on Indian difficulty. I have neither the wish or intention of violating the military or civil policy of the Government."

Now that the Pawnee Fork camp was on alert, Baker had to find another target. He had already sized up

the Arapaho camp on Mulberry Creek. The Arapaho Chief Little Raven was one of the few chiefs who had remained on good terms with whites and was trying to prevent a war, yet even within his own tribe, there were many asserting that whites were treacherous thieves who had to be fought.

On April 17th Douglas received word that Baker and eight other men (note the addition of another man—presumably James White) had raided Little Raven's camp and stolen twelve horses. Douglas flew into a rage. On discovering that Baker was heading up the Arkansas River, Douglas dispatched orders to Fort Lyon in Colorado to intercept Baker and seize his horses: "The man declared to persons here that he would steal horses from the Indians, and run them off to the mountains, and he did not care whether it brought on war in these parts or not".

But the U. S. Cavalry would soon be quite preoccupied with other matters. Within days, fighting exploded all around Fort Dodge.

Now that we finally have a documented version of part of James White's story, what can we say about White's veracity?

White told us some of the truth, but left out the most important part, and falsified other parts. White claimed that his band included only four men, when it included nine. White told us the raided Indian camp was one hundred miles east of Cimarron Ranch, when it was more like forty miles south, an unlikely mistake for the stage driver who knew the road east from Cimarron Ranch better than anyone. White claimed that on the night after their raid, the Indians retaliated by seizing a dozen horses from inside Cimarron Ranch, when in fact no such raid occurred, and Cimarron Ranch was the last place where the Indians would try to get horses. White's implication that the Indians traveled 100 miles in 24 hours is dubious on its own terms. In one version, White implies that Baker was recovering horses from the same Indians who had stolen his. In another version, Baker is just a fellow stage driver.

White had a clear motive for lying. As he and Baker headed for the hills, they heard reports that a major Indian uprising was breaking out behind them, and they feared they would get the blame and be hunted down and punished. It might be a good idea to disappear into a remote wilderness a long way from Kansas. When White was "caught" in Callville, the only way left to distance himself from the crime was with lies. White wasn't at the Arapaho camp, he was 100 miles east. White didn't know anything about those other five men. White was justified in recovering Baker's stolen horses. Don't feel sorry for the Indians because the next night they got an equal number of horses back from Cimarron Ranch and they were thieves too anyway. Then again, Baker was just a stage driver who deserves the blame for prompting

White to run away from his job. White didn't profit from selling the stolen horses because when Baker and White got to Utah, Indians stole the horses back. Most importantly, since Baker was killed by Indians in Utah and George Strole was drowned in the Colorado River, they'd received their punishment and the case was closed. There was no need to interrogate White about Baker's whereabouts. By applying to the Colorado River story the same two deceptions he had used in the Kansas story—blame it on the Indians and greatly distort the geography—White could avoid admitting where he and Baker may have traveled overland until they split up.

James White has sometimes been credited with being a modest man who never sought fame for his Colorado River feat, and thus had no motive for making it up. But perhaps White had a good reason to keep quiet. Perhaps he knew that somewhere out there Baker and Strole were still alive, and that at any moment they might step forward and discredit White's story about his river journey.

*Don Lago*

## Announcements

### Job

Grand Canyon National Park has a job opening that guides may be interested in:

Small Craft Operator (Whitewater boat operator)—this is a temporary, intermittent position. The NPS needs to compile a list of boatmen who could be available for working on specific trips (like GCY trips, science trips, etc...).

Go to <http://www.usajobs.gov> and use the search engine to look for Small Craft Operator.

If you have any questions, you can call NPS ranger Dave Desrosiers at (928) 638-7675, option #1 (leave a message if nobody answers) or through email at [David\\_Desrosiers@nps.gov](mailto:David_Desrosiers@nps.gov).

### Found

Photo equipment found at Saddle camp mid-September 2008. Please call 208-874-3202 and identify.

### Lost

Lost camera in a flip at Lava on August 22nd. It was a Nikon Coolpix digital camera. Metallic silver. If the back of the camera is facing you, there is a curved hump on the front right side. The lens expands and retracts when turned on. There is both a view finder and a viewing back. It was in a black camera case, not much bigger than the camera with two batteries in the pockets. The batteries were about three inches and curved looking like there were two aa batteries incased in black plastic.

Please contact Vicki at CRATE (800-253-7328 or [crate@crateinc.com](mailto:crate@crateinc.com)) if found. Thank you.

### Lost

Paddle on a private trip, takeout date September 1st. Description: at-4 with black bent shaft and white blades. Each blade has b.zabel 503-679-7798 printed in green lettering. Please contact Brian Zabel at 503-679-7798.

### Lost

Lost Olympus Camera left on a small beach downstream from Cave Springs on river left. Please email [knbkaiser@msn.com](mailto:knbkaiser@msn.com) if found.

the walls are high  
adventure long  
sailing by  
out freedom strong

the canyon grand  
the river wild  
friendships deeper  
with every mile

one week down  
in nature's core  
the simple life  
and nothing more

we learn to let go  
we learn to unwind  
and march to the beat  
of the peace that we find

the cry of the canyon  
the call we heed  
a life on the river  
is all we need.

Laura Sherman

### Rivers Hardly Ever

Rivers hardly ever run  
in a straight line.  
Rivers are willing to take  
ten thousand meanders  
And enjoy every one  
And grow from every one –  
When they leave a meander  
They are always more  
Than when they entered it.  
When rivers meet an obstacle,  
They do not try to run over it;  
They merely go around –  
But they always get to the other side.  
Rivers accept things as they are,  
Conform to the shape they find the world in –  
Yet nothing changes things more than rivers;  
Rivers move even mountains into the sea.  
Rivers hardly ever are in a hurry –  
Yet is there anything more likely  
To reach the point it sets out for  
Than a river?

Tamie Moreland

### Green Room, Havasu

naked we hurried upriver before the afternoon monsoon  
rolled in leaping over rocks loose lariats of rattlesnakes.

Bold lizards—janizaries leading the way—suddenly broke  
rank. Along the bank cottonwoods and willows laughed

gathered their green dresses up wading to their knees.

five miles we ran dust clouds swirled  
in the air like ash.

At last we reached the falls

where thunder hollowed a deep wide pool  
in the limestone travertine.

so loud we had to shout

watch me he yelled I'll guide you.  
I shivered as he dove down

swallowed in the river's booming blast. I gulped a breath  
finned behind into a corridor emptied out of light.

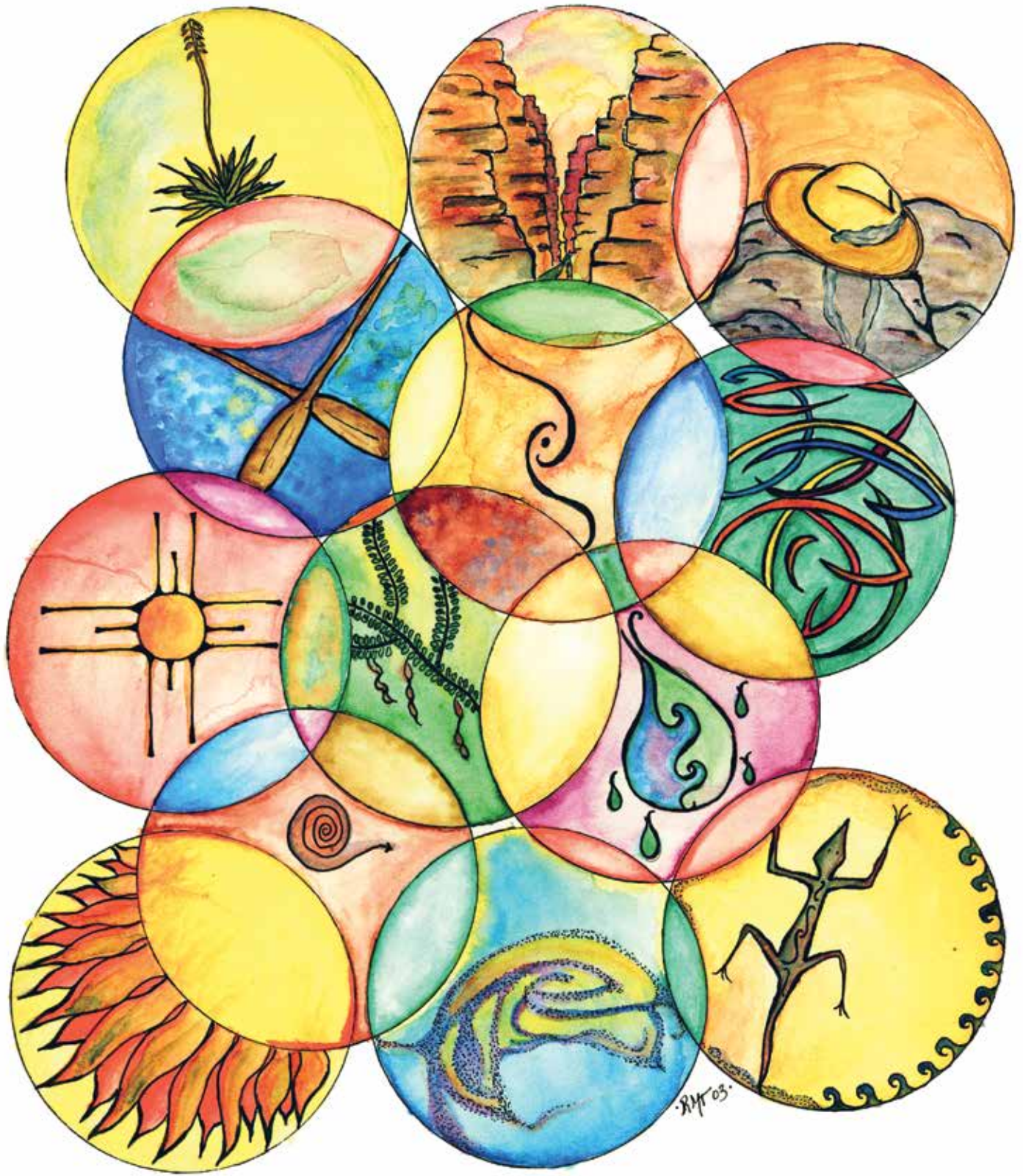
blind my heart ticked in its shell until

we bobbed into a cave quiet save our breathing.  
unmoored weightless asphodels we floated.

below us the fathoms opened their turquoise doors

and like little gods we flew or fell  
into the broken sky beneath the world.

Moira Magneson



RM 03

Marieke Taney



Marieke Taney

## Don Poulson, aka Wolf

**T**HE POULSONS CAME FROM DENMARK. Came across on one of the last sailing ships, before they went to steam ships; and I don't know from where—from Missouri, somewhere...they walked out here, pulling their stuff in hand-carts. They got up there and then they got assigned where to go [by the Church]. This is my dad's side of the family. My mom grew up in Caineville, which is Capitol Reef, at the very edge of Capitol Reef, goin' towards Hanksville. That's where she grew up. Then they got together. It's a long story—Mormon story.

My sister has a chest. That's all that's left of what they drug across. Like a chest that you put stuff in, like a pirate's chest, or a hope chest.

My brother, Breck, and I have been involved in the river since around '71, but we grew up in Redmond, Utah, which is up by Richfield. It's in South-Central Utah. Our sister, who's older than us, married a guy from Richfield, and his father had a shoe store up there; and when Page started, the government put out contracts for businesses to move to this town. It was a government town, and so everything like the shoe store, the grocery store, the barber—everything—that's what you did, you made a bid on it, and then they awarded you a contract, and that's what you moved to Page on. So he packed up and moved from Richfield to Page in 1958. Well, my sister and her husband came with him. My brother and I, the first time we came to Page, the bridge wasn't built. We came over the Kaibab and then around that way and up to Page and back, just to visit. We were just kids, you know, but we came down here to visit. When I was getting out of high school, I came down here and worked as a dispatcher for the Page Ranger Station in the summers, when I was goin' to college; and Jerry Sanderson and Bill Diamond were both Page Rangers, which is the police force. They were U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Rangers; and I dispatched for 'em in the summer. They talked to me at that time about this river thing they had goin' on in the Grand Canyon. It sounded interesting to me, but it wasn't like I thought, "Man, I need to go..." What they were doing—it was more like a family vacation type thing, at the time. It wasn't really a business yet. They were just starting to get a business going. This is like '65, '66, '67...in that era somewhere, is where they really started saying, "Wow, maybe we got somethin' goin' here. We can do a business."

Anyway, I had no idea what it was to go down the river in the Grand Canyon. The Sanderson family had been doing it through Jerry's father, Rod Sanderson. Bill Diamond got involved through Jerry. I'd heard about it, but it just didn't light my fire too much, so I wasn't

like, "Man, that's somethin' I gotta go do!" My girlfriend in high school got pregnant, so I ended up getting married, and I had that to deal with too. So I was going to college, doing whatever. Vietnam was going on, as you know, and a lot of guys came from that. But I got a deferment because I was married with a kid. I ended up getting out of college, went to work for my uncle out in Michigan for a little while, couple of years, year and a half. In the meantime, my wife decided to leave, and so we ended up getting a divorce. Well, then I became available for the draft, and this is like '69, '70, right in that era. When the very first lottery came out for the draft for Vietnam, I was available, so I went and did the physical. I still remember my number was 209. This is the first one they ever did. They were going to draft up to 150 for sure—from 150 to 250 probably; and I thought, "Man, I'm goin' no matter what." So I kind of just partied all year pretty hard. Hell, I was divorced, nothin' to do, I was goin' to Vietnam. They ended up only taking 196, so then I didn't get drafted. I didn't know what I was going to do.

Well, I came back to Salt Lake, was working up there. I actually moved back down to Redmond, was working a construction job. Breck said, "I think I'm gonna go down and talk to Sanderson or Diamond about doin' that river thing." I went, "Oh yeah, wow, that'd be cool. I think I might do that too." So I came down, actually went to Bill Diamond's house in the winter, talked to them about doing a river trip. I remember Bill said, "Man, you're big enough to hand-pull a wagon," or somethin' like that. But he liked my size for running the river. Left—Bill didn't say, "Yes, you're gonna be hired," or "no you won't," or whatever—and I went back up there to Utah, working in the winter, never knew what was gonna happen. Finally, like on a Friday I came home, and Pat Diamond had called my sister, who was living in Page, said, "Does your brother still want to do the river?" So she called me on a Friday, "Pat Diamond called and wants to know if you want to do a river trip." I said, "Yeah, dang straight, I do! I'm goin'! When?" And she said, "Monday." I said, "Well, okay, I'm coming. Tell him I'll be there." So I packed up my stuff, quit my job up there, came down here. Drove down on Sunday night. I didn't even get here to help 'em rig or nothin'. It's only about four hours from here, but...I came down. When I got here, they had the boats rigged. I just went and talked to Sanderson, I think, whoever it was, talked to him, said, "I'm here," and went to orientation that night. Had no clue what the heck was goin' on. Went and got in the back of the truck the next morning, drove down to Lees Ferry. We used to pack our ice and all that stuff in the back of the truck



in those days. Loaded up the boat, and went down the river. I thought “Wow, man, what a place!” I was just in awe of it, I couldn’t believe it was there.

The guy I was with was Kim Rawlins—Grub Worm. The second boatman on that trip was Ken Hawkins, who worked at Lees Ferry for years, was the maintenance guy. But anyway, I went with them. On about the sixth day or so, they said, “We think we’ll tell Sanderson you’re okay, we should hire you, you would work out for the river.” I said, “God, I hope so! I quit my other job. I thought I was already hired when I came down here. I didn’t realize this was a test trip!” (laughter) I had no clue.

Anyway, that’s kind of how I started doin’ the river. In those days we ran like four trips and then they said, “Here’s your boat, go get it,” and away we went. Never came close to running all the rapids before they gave you a boat. I remember those guys telling me, “You’ll run ’em when you have your own boat. Don’t worry about runnin’ ’em now.”

**STEIGER:** Oh really? “You’re not running my boat!”

**POULSON:** No. “You’re not wreckin’ this one! Wait ’til you get your own. Then you can wreck it.” But anyway, they gave me a boat, I finished out that summer. My brother came down, started working with us. Went into the next summer. I think Bill Sanderson was doing some of the shop work...the shop foreman, Gary Townsend, was the “rom”—river operation manager—the guy that puts the trip on, takes it off, all that kind of stuff. Well, Gary quit to go work for the city of Page, and Don Diamond took that job. So then they needed another lead. I became a lead the next summer, and then just ran lead the rest of my career, ’til I quit. I never quit entirely. I kept comin’ back and runnin’ a trip or two every summer.

That’s kind of how we got involved. My brother came in, he would run some, go away for a year or two, come back. He could just never get away from it entirely, and now he’s the downriver manager for Wilderness. He’s been doing that for quite a few years. [**STEIGER:** Now he’s the “rom”?] Yes, exactly, he’s the main dude for the river part of it. I did go—when Sanderson and Diamond split up, I went over with Diamond. All my years were with Sanderson, except when Diamond first started, I went with him for two years, and then I came back to Sanderson. That was a money thing: he offered to pay me more money, and at that time that’s what it was all about for me. God, we’re the same as always, you know: boatmen always are starving in the winter and living high on the hog in the summer. [**STEIGER:** You gotta make a living.] We were making, as trip leaders...my whole career as a trip leader, for twelve years, was \$55 a day, and that never changed, never went up. Never ever went up—until in my last years, I talked and whined and cried to Sanderson a lot—and

Diamond—but Jerry offered to pay me and Wyatt Woodard and Karl McDonald and Hoss Sanderson, I think, were the four leads he had, and he paid us in the winter, too. He paid us a thousand bucks in the winter.

**STEIGER:** A retainer.

**POULSON:** Yeah.

**STEIGER:** That’s pretty good! Especially back then.

**POULSON:** Yes. This was back in ’81, ’82, somewhere in there. That, and then most of us were working at ski areas or whatever. I was workin’ up at Brian Head. So between that and then your other job, you could actually make enough to survive on, which was a big deal. And then it was a thousand bucks a month out of their pocket. But we got that check all winter, without even having to be here, without having to work in the shop or anything. I remember Jimmy Hall and a couple of those guys were pretty jealous of that. Talked to me about it. It was...it was a money thing. No river runner that I’ve ever known of has made...you don’t do it to make a lot of money, but you still need enough to survive on, I believe. And wages have gotten better. But so has everything else. I mean, inflation’s increased tenfold.

Anyway, that’s brief on how I came into the river and got started on it. Just blown away by it, couldn’t wait to do it. I loved it, it was the best thing I ever fell into—still the best thing I ever did in my life, now, lookin’ back on it, by far. Really enjoyed it, enjoyed bein’ there. Had a lot of fun, some heartaches, but a lot of fun. I just wouldn’t trade it for anything.

It’s just a unique place. I never had the spiritual or religious experience I think that a lot of people have had or talked about. For me, I had a lot of fun, it was a great place to be, it was a great job, I loved every minute of doing it. But it was a job. I felt very fortunate to be there, doin’ it. It never made me “see the light” or anything. I just really enjoyed what I was doing. A lot of work, a lot of fun, good times.

When I came down and was working dispatch, I drove over to the North Rim and looked down. Actually, I’d been to the South Rim once, too, as a kid, with my family. We were going to California to see some relatives, and we came through Page, visited our sister, and then went around the South Rim. I’d been like the regular tourist. I stopped and looked off. But as far as being in the canyon, I never had. I had been to Lees Ferry once before. We drove around through Marble and Vermilion and that stuff, and looked at it. But I didn’t know...I can’t remember seein’ it on TV, or anything like river running. It was just starting to come into vogue. Just barely. So I really didn’t know what it was at all—I mean what a river trip was or entailed or anything, until I got on there and went. It was just, “Wow. People are doing this, it’s really cool.” I just really liked it, and always have ever since. One of the

big things, too, for me, is the people I've met, and the friendships and the bonds that we've all got. They never go away, ever. I mean, the people that we worked with in our era, I still hear from some of them. If I ever do see 'em, man, it's old home week. We all just bonded really tight. The new people I've met, same thing. I mean, everybody's got this bond that's going on from being a Grand Canyon boatman. It's a real good feeling, and a real unique experience, I think.

\* \* \*

Don Poulson, A.K.A. "Wolf," was a senior boatman for the Sanderson and Diamond river companies back in their heyday—through the '70s and into the early '80s. He ran a few trips for Fort Lee, too. In a decade rife with colorful characters and wild parties, Wolf stood out in his own quiet way as a natural leader. He was a lot of fun, but responsible too. Good boatman. Solid as a rock with people and crew...the kind of person you'd trust to lead an expedition anywhere and to pick up the pieces of whatever calamities came along. He was "adopted" by an anonymous donor and this interview took place last fall at his house in Page.

\* \* \*

**POULSON:** Three times Sanderson motorboats flipped in Lava, and I was the trip leader on all three. They didn't flip for anyone else, just me, sitting there waiting for them, so I got real paranoid at Lava, very much so...and I was runnin' left. I didn't care. I mean, I was gonna bounce off rocks, but I was not going to go down that right side and hit the bottom hole at certain water stages.

My brother says I talk about these flips, and people say, "what happened?" and I say, "Well, we were runnin' Lava and the boat flipped and we went down, turned it back over, and went to camp." He says, "You gotta tell more than that!" What else is there? I know nowadays that the park service would be very—you couldn't do that, it's all changed. We didn't have radios to speak of. Most of our evacs were done by signal mirrors. We had some radios that we packed, but they were really erratic, and you had to have an airplane in sight to talk to anybody. It just didn't work very well. So when these boats flipped, that was all I knew. There was nobody else coming. You would have had to sit for another day—or who knew how long?—before someone else came along. That's all I knew. I didn't know to not turn 'em over and then just go to camp. We were at Lava, so we were getting out the next day, so that's what we did. But anyway, I'm gettin' way ahead of myself here on the story.

1974 was the first one. Went through, pulled over

on the right side, not right below the saddle rock, but—about a hundred yards down or so. My people got off and walked up there, and the guy running the boat was Mark White. They called him Spooner. Helen Diamond was with me on my boat. Anyway, all the people got off. Jeremiah Jett was a swamper on that trip. I'm just sittin' there—in fact, I'd got a beer, setting there havin' a beer, waitin' for 'em to run. They come through, come into the third hole, the boat comes in straight forward. I think he swamped his motor in the "v" wave. It's happened a hundred times, you know. Went in straight, comes through, starts surfen', comes into the third wave, drops down, comes up, starts surfen' out to the left, surfen' out to the left, and then all of a sudden just goes way up in the air sideways and boom! upside down. I'm sitting there. "Whoa, man! What the hell was that?! I can't believe that just happened!" I'm goin', "Helen! Helen! God! Push me out! Push me out! I gotta get out and save 'em!" My people are still all up there, whatever with their pictures. I had her push me out. Mark climbed on top of his upside-down boat. I got out to him before he got to Little Lava. Man, I'm tryin' to push him into shore, push him into shore, and I couldn't get him into shore. We both end up goin' through Little Lava. I'm still tryin' to push him into shore, and we go around that turn past that. I didn't know...I was worried about somebody bein' under the boat. I didn't know what the heck was goin' on. The only ones there now—all the passengers are gone—me and Helen and Mark and the two boats, one upside down, and me right-side up. And I can't get him in. So finally I said, "I've gotta leave ya', I gotta go. I've got to stop and go back and get people." So he floated off on his upside-down boat, really shook up, scared, didn't know if he'd killed people, didn't know what the hell had happened, you know. I stopped on the right side, and walked back up. As I'm walkin' up about to that campground on the beach there at Little Lava on the right side as you go by, my people were just getting to there, that I'd let off. I said, "Go on down to the boat. Helen's down at the boat, and she'll take care of you. Just wait there at the boat." Well, every person on that boat, which was the upside down boat—I think there were twelve or thirteen people—every one of them swam to shore before Little Lava, on the left side of the river. And they were all on that little beach below the spring. There's that one little beach, right at the head of the rapid. Every one of 'em were over there. Every other flip I've had, people went through Little Lava. But this first one, every person made it to shore, above Little Lava.

**STEIGER:** It must have been high water, the way you're talkin' about it.

**POULSON:** It was high. I'll show you a picture. I'm sayin' like 20,000.

**STEIGER:** Maybe even 25,000, if it was goin' over the

saddle in the black rock.

**POULSON:** It was going through the saddle. Whatever elevation that is, is the level. My boat's downstream, probably a mile now, or however far that is from where I am. It's just me on the right side of the river, and all the people on the other side. So I hollered over at them, above the rapid. I'm wired to the gills, too. I'm all excited and shook up. I asked them if everyone was okay, if they'd got everybody. "Yeah, everything's fine, everybody's okay." All's good, life's good. I went, "Okay. Well, now what I need you to do is: I need you to swim this rapid in your life jackets."

**STEIGER:** (laughs) They're like, "Are you out of your fucking mind?!"

**POULSON:** They said, "What?!" And I said, "I have to have you swim this rapid in your life jackets." I heard back, "No!" (laughter) I said, "What do you mean 'No!'" This is all bein' hollered back and forth across the river. They said, "We're gonna wait for another boat!" I said, "There are no other boats! There will be no other boats until at least tomorrow, I don't know when. It could be two days. I don't know, but there are no other boats today. You can't stay there overnight. I've got the other boat downstream with a guy on it. I've got to get you in here and go." I finally said, "Give me two people, the bravest ones..."

**STEIGER:** Did you have your jacket on?

**POULSON:** No, I don't think I did. I think I'd left mine back at the danged boat. But I said, "Swim, and swim hard over here to the right. I'll be down here on this beach. Swim to me, swim to me on this beach here." So finally two guys said, "Okay." And they jumped in and they didn't swim, all they did was float. They went right into the rapid and right against the wall. I lost sight of 'em. I went, "Oh, Jesus! God dang, they're gone! I just killed two people." Well, eventually they popped out down below. I'm hollerin', "Swim to me, swim to me!" And they floated on down, out of my sight. So I walked back up. I said, "Okay, two more come." Finally two more got in the water, but they wouldn't swim. They just would float. Once they got in, it was like... They were so scared, and I can understand that...they just floated through. They made it, but man it was killin' me. I'd lose sight of 'em against the wall. Anyway, I went back up and I said, "No more two at a time—all of you at once! All of you get in the water and come through to me. And swim to me, swim over here." So finally they all got in and came in one bunch. I'm yellin', I'm runnin' up and down that beach, "Swim! Swim, dammit! Swim over to me! Swim! Swim! Swim!" And most of 'em go floatin' by. But Jett, and one kid he had with him, managed to swim over to me. All the rest of 'em went on down. I got Jett, all the people are gone. At least they're through Little Lava. I had seen 'em in their life jackets now, floating on down the river. I'm hoping

they're all okay. Got 'em, walked down, had gathered a couple of people up. Went down, and Helen and the other people had caught the rest of 'em when they got down to them. Got 'em all down to the boat, everybody was safe. Helen and the rest of the people were there. And then they got 'em warmed up. There was a little bit of shock goin' on, but not anything major. They were all in pretty good shape. I got 'em all in my boat, loaded 'em up, and then drove down. I had to go find Mark on his boat. Went clear down to...You know where you go down past that basalt rock, when you're goin' straight from Lava, you go about three miles...

**STEIGER:** Yeah, Hell's Hollow or whatever. You go left, the current goes left through those big rocks.

**POULSON:** Right. And that's where Mark...He was past that. On that point right below that, there's two or three rocks. I still look at 'em, they stick out. He was hung on those rocks. He went through that rock that sticks out in the water and then went to the next point down there. Georgie used to have a helicopter pad there. Anyway, we pulled in. He had been settin' there for however long it had been—two or three hours, just stressin' out, because he didn't know what had happened to his people. He's just settin' on his upside down boat by himself, nobody around, thinking all these disaster things. First thing I said, "I've got everybody, everybody's okay, it's all gonna be all right." Then we all set around there and probably had a beer for a minute. "What the hell was that all about?!" Tied some ropes across the top of the upside-down boat, got some people to hold it down against a side tube for a pivot point. Got everybody pullin', we got it goin' just a little bit at a time, little bit at a time. Finally got it up in the air and was able to flop it on over. Tubes still on, yes. I didn't take the tubes off, they were still on it. We flopped it over. Every one I turned over, I never did take the tubes off. Once I did one, I knew I could do it without. I didn't have any extra help, it was just the people we had, and we were able to turn it over. The only thing different about this boat and the second boat that flipped—they were what we called ice-chest units. They were not a full frame. Three-quarters of the boat was just rubber and people. We didn't have basket frames, we had what we called the center section, that went down the center.

**STEIGER:** Right, with a tube in the middle. So there wasn't a lot of weight up front.

**POULSON:** They were kind of snaky, you know. There was no frame, no solid bracing up towards the front of the boat. So I think that had some influence on why they were able to go over. [**STEIGER:** They didn't punch through.] Right, they just got up and kind of surfed that wave. Once the current got that upstream tube...it more shoves them over, more than...But we got up and went down to camp, lost stuff, lost some bags, probably some ammo cans. I had the food on my boat, so we were okay

that way. Cooking stuff was all on my boat—most of it.

**STEIGER:** So probably the standard thing was you would give the shortie to the junior person?

**POULSON:** That's what it was.

**STEIGER:** And don't put too much stuff on this guy, 'cause they're learnin', and they might as well have a lighter boat and less stuff?

**POULSON:** They were. And that was the thing. We didn't have a spare motor on that boat. We used to put big oars along the side, those thirteen-foot oak oars, and that was your spare means of propulsion. I had one spare motor with me. Yes, for years we just ran with one spare motor for two boats. And we had those oars on there. But I tried oarin' those boats, and they didn't row very well. You know that. They were just too heavy, you couldn't maneuver 'em at all. I remember watching Hatch do it, where they would run left at Lava with their tail draggers. They'd helicopter their people out, and they would come in and tilt the motor out of the water and then kind of row through the left side of Lava there somehow. Ted didn't want them to run—that's the story I always got, anyway—didn't want 'em to run Lava. Yeah, right above, there's a little camp there, and then you walk up on that hill. Yes, exactly. They would helicopter 'em out there. I had remembered watchin' 'em run through there. After these flips—I had one in '74, '75, and '76—and after that I was pretty paranoid. So I said, "I'm gonna run left. I don't care...I've seen Hatch boats bounce through there one way or another, I know it can be done." It had to be really low for me to go right. Now I'm back to doin' right. But the boats have changed too, and I think Lava somehow has changed a little bit. The water level, I think, is not as high. Most of the time, we're not as high as we were then. Because we had those great fluctuations where we would get thirty [30,000 cfs] to three [3,000 cfs] every day. I had run Lava, higher water, where the rock's completely covered. Or in a lot lower water where the rocks that make the ledge hole were out of the water. You know, those two extremes.

**STEIGER:** So it's not like Lava, the higher it gets, the worse it is?

**POULSON:** Not for that. Not for me on those flips, it wasn't. We'd all run it on higher water, and every flip it was that same water level. Every time I came past Cove Canyon and that big rock bar at Cove Canyon... when these boats flipped, every time that rock bar was just barely covered. You know, the whole rock bar there at Cove. There's like one or two little rock heads that were stickin' out every time. I happened to notice that. So every time I would go by there, that was my big indicator too—that, and the water goin' through the saddle on the black rock—of what kind of water level we had at Lava.

But the second one I just showed you the pictures of

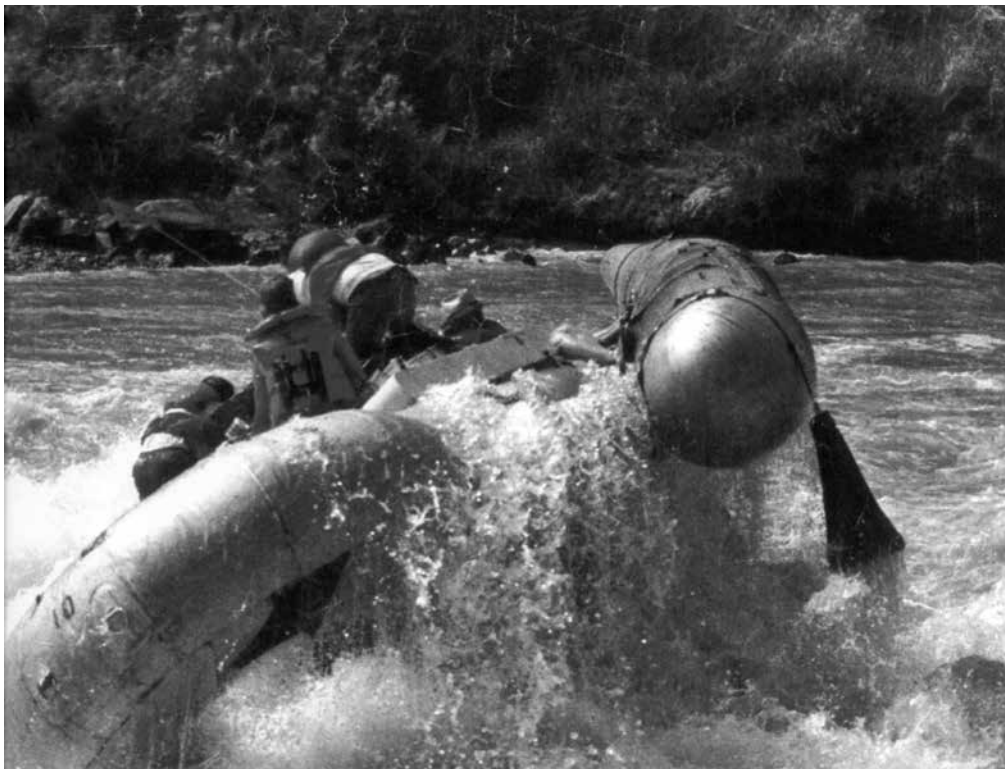
here, that's Jett, too, also. That's Jerry Sanderson and Joe Richards, who was the sheriff of Coconino County for a long time. They were on that boat. Sanderson was givin' Jett a check-out ride on that one. We got down... We scouted Lava from the left side in those days. We were lookin' at it, and I remember Sanderson sayin', "Eh, piece of cake." I didn't know. I mean, we'd had a flip already, but that had to be something real weird and unusual. Once again, I go down, run it, got hammered pretty good, but stopped, pulled in. Jett comes through, that's the pictures you're lookin' at, just kind of comes up, surfs, rolls over, boom!, upside down again. I'm goin', "Good God Almighty!" But I'm wiser this time. I let 'em all go by, everybody, and then I get my people back on my boat before I ever leave, then I go start picking people up from that point down.

**STEIGER:** You're not worryin' about the boat first this time, you're gonna get the people.

**POULSON:** The boat's gone, I can't get it in. I've tried that program, it didn't work. I can't get him into shore. I'll catch him wherever I catch him. I started just gatherin' people from the rear end, down. I remember Jerry, and a few other people too, swam above Little Lava. I remember there was like an eighty-year-old guy. Everybody went to the left. Nobody ever made it to... Well, the very last flip, a guy got to the right, over by me, and I was parked there, and I was yellin' at the people, because they were all still around the boat, and they were gonna go through Little Lava. I'm yellin' at 'em, "Stay away from the boat! Stay away from the boat!" because I didn't want them to get pinched in between the wall there. You knew the boat was gonna hit the wall—it did every time. And I didn't want them to be hangin' on the boat... So I'm yellin', "Stay away from the boat! Stay away from the boat!" Finally I hear, "Wolf!" And I go, "What?" This guy goes, "You mean me?" I look down, and this guy had swam over to me. I said, "No, not you! For God's sakes, you..." (laughs) But that trip, when he flipped, was the trip you might have heard about, when Whale did an endo at Lava in the Wilderness World boat. [**STEIGER:** Yeah, there's a picture of that somewhere.] Same day. Same day. They were camped... oh man, at that camp above the Anvil there. One of those camps right above the Anvil. They were camped when we went by that morning is how I remember it. I think we ran first that day. I'm pretty sure we did. Anyway, got down there and had flipped and were down below, trying to get our boat back organized. Then Wilderness World—Mark Jensen, Whale, all those guys, came down. And Whale had flipped in Lava too. There's a picture of it? [**STEIGER:** There was a Rich Bangs magazine—Bush League—or something like that... Okay, so this time you actually did follow everybody, and everybody got out?] Yes. Sanderson and like a 70-, 80-year-old guy had swam to shore actually



Lava Falls flip, 1975. Jeremiah Jett driving, Jerry Sanderson standing, Sheriff Joe Richards on the left. Pictures were printed in a German magazine.





above that little beach, and then they had crawled up

into those...that travertine and up through all that saw grass, God, yeah. They got down to...They had actually made it down to that little beach by...See, it took me probably whatever it takes to get all my people back. And Sanderson, I was watchin' 'em all, they crawled up into that grass stuff and crawled through that, and then down to that beach. I pulled in down there, picked them up, went down, got most of the rest of the people. The boat went farther than the people who went through. I remember one guy was hangin' on rocks...I picked one guy up who was hangin' on a lava rock where he could have let go and just gone about another ten feet and he could have walked out on shore. They just didn't know, they were so scared.

One guy, when I went around there, was settin' on the shore hollering, screaming that he'd lost his wife. He'd tried to hang onto her, he couldn't keep her, he'd lost his wife, he'd lost his wife, go help his wife! So I just kept goin' past him, went a little bit farther, found his wife, she was okay. I mean, shook up, but okay. Got on the shore, went walking back upstream, and I could hear this guy just yellin' to no one, there was no one there, "I've lost my wife! My wife's gone! Ahhhh!" carryin' on and on. I thought, "Oh man, I got a problem here," and went up and tapped him on the shoulder and said, "Hey, man, I've got your wife, she's okay." He goes (calmly), "Oh, thanks man." That was it! But we got him, and I know we were all there together, with Whale and all those guys turnin' that boat over. Got it turned over, and the same thing...went on down. I think we camped at Pumpkin. I can't remember who-all was there. I remember Mark and Whale. I can't remember, I'm pretty sure we ran first that day. I could have that screwed up, it's been a long time ago. That boat was way above the other one. It was just probably, oh, a mile or so below Little Lava...I think they'd got it into shore. It was just in like a little eddy thing, hung up. I think Jett climbed back on top of his boat that time. He was a swamper the first time, yes. And he had somehow got it dogged off the shore there, on a little sand beach. So we were able to get in, get it turned over, and go on down and camp again, and tell stories.

**STEIGER:** Nobody was hurt too bad?

**POULSON:** Nobody was hurt.

The third one, to me, other than the shock of seeing these other two, was...Hoss [Kevin] Sanderson and Shane Jones were on that boat. With me was Joanne Nissen and Kenny Wright. They were old-time river runners from California. Kenny was actually on the boat that flipped. Joanne was with me. I actually had another trip scheduled, and they had a charter goin'. All these people lived over in the Big Sur area of California. We were friends. So I swapped with whoever was gonna take this trip, and I took the trip they were on. It was me and Hoss Sanderson. But on this trip we had a regular big

frame on both boats.

This time I pulled in on the right. We went up and scouted it. "Ok, it's that level again." I come walkin' back. Hoss only went up to where...I went down to Boatman Rock on the right side. I looked at it and said, "Oh man, I'm goin' left." I come walkin' back, Hoss is standing where you very first walk up, where you can see the rapid there from the right side. He's just standin' there, and I come walkin' back. He says, "What are you doin'?" I said, "Man, I'm goin' left. It's too big for me today. I'm gonna bounce my way left somehow." He said, "Well, I'm goin' right." I said, "Yeah, I figured you would, but that's your call. If I were you, I'd stay as far left of the right as I dare run," or somethin' like that. I bounced through on the left side, and actually was able to get right behind the black rock, basically, real close to the rapid. My people got up and we're sitting there, and here comes Hoss through. Okay, he comes into the third hole, motor goin', powerin', dead on. Angles a little bit like that. Yeah, he's on it, dead on. The boat goes over to the right...

**STEIGER:** Goes over toward...? How could that be?

**POULSON:** The front of the boat comes down and hits the rock—BOOM! Man, I'm settin' right...Yes. It hit the rock. I don't know how. This is a picture of it.

**STEIGER:** Oh yeah, well, that's how. It just got ahold of his upstream tube.

**POULSON:** Yup, and it went off and up and way over. See, he's still driving. He don't know yet.

**STEIGER:** Not only is he still driving, that boat is bent in an "L."

**POULSON:** People are starting to fall off. You can see 'em startin' to fall off, because the boat's so on an angle. This guy's standing on the rock, so you can see where it's coming.

**STEIGER:** Wow. I'm glad I never knew that! Because I always said, "Yeah, you can flip these big boats, but usually only the soft front ends. They've never flipped a two-frame boat over!" (laughs) But this was a big unit?

**POULSON:** Well, this actually had a center tube too, but a shorter one. The frame went halfway up the boat at least. And even with this one, this one turned over, and then came down. So I think what actually hit hard on that was this tube right here, the front of this tube. Because I thought, "Man, as hard as that hit, goddam there's gotta be people hurt his time—bad hurt." You know, all up there in the bathtub and stuff. And some people were scraped up a little bit before they came off the rock. Anyway, came up and came down and hit the rock. I went, "Oh! God Almighty! Not again! I cannot believe this is happening again." OK, start the drill. Started pickin' 'em up, gatherin' 'em, goin' on down. I remember Hoss, when he was under the boat, or him and Shane, they had to actually dive and get somebody out from under this boat, which they did. They saw



Hoss Sanderson flipping in Lave Falls. Boat turns over to the right in the 3rd hole and the front left of the boat hits the rock when it comes down.

them somehow, and they couldn't quite get out, and they were able to get under. They still had life jackets on, but they were able to get under and pull this person out somehow, some way. They got 'em, we got down. This was the trip where—more people got banged up on this one than any of the others. The angle of the waves, everything is out to the left side. To turn over on that angle was really weird, really strange.

But anyway...Every one of these I was involved with, of course, that was a lifetime thing for those people. I mean, it was a Disneyland ride no more. They'd been involved in something major, which they had. The camps at night were just incredible, with all the stories people telling about where they had been, what they had felt, the experience of the boat going over—not even knowing, and then all of a sudden they're in the water. Because they were so used to—you know, they've got water on 'em—but all of a sudden this water is like—something isn't right here. Then to realize that they're completely upside down, and to get out. Just had

some great stories...This one, we actually lost all our cooking stuff, and food. Hoss had all that. Yes, he did, he had it all. So we went down and camped. Of course in these days, we were cooking on wood and stuff, too. So we went down and made a fire. We used to carry what we called a "Panic Bag" that had, like, Dinty Moore beef stew in it, and stuff like that, and we broke that out. We had enough cups and stuff, we were able to give everybody enough to get by. But they weren't terribly concerned about eating anyway.

**STEIGER:** You had some beer left, I hope.

**POULSON:** We had beer. They wanted to drink beer and tell stories! Every one had lost some—people's personal gear, like some bags. Because all we did, we just took their bags, put them on that center section, put a bungee cord over 'em. They weren't tied in. We never rigged for flips at all. We lost stuff, you know. Every flip, we lost some stuff. A lot of stuff we were able to save. I was able to pick up...we found a lot of bags floating as we went down, that we were able to get. We always lost



some personal ammo cans, some things like that. We lost all our kitchen gear, the porta-potty. I don't know, we lost stuff. You never saved everything, because we weren't rigged for that—to turn over.

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**POULSON:** We were strictly a motor company when I first came here, like Arizona River Runners and Hatch and a lot of us were. But a lot of us wanted to row. We talked to Jerry and Bill about it quite a bit, and said we'd like to try to row, you know. They didn't have row boats. They had one ten-man raft that I heard they won from Georgie White's husband, Whitey, in a poker game. That's the story I always got. I guess it made Georgie pretty mad. But we had seen ARTA rowin' snouts. We said, "Well, we've got the rubber for snouts, we just need a frame. We can put together a frame, and we'll row that. We'll row snouts!" Not even knowing how big and clumsy and awkward they were. We just wanted to row. So we, in the winter, came up with a frame for a snout, and in March—I don't remember what year—but in March of the year we did it: Derryl Diamond and myself, and Breck, and Bill Gillenwater—Giant—remember him? And Roger Neisess. We went down to the Ferry, loaded that ten-man raft, and that

snout, and took off on a ten-day to Diamond. So we left the Ferry on a Saturday, and bein' boatmen, we should have been wise. We weren't wise. I don't know what it was, there was no water—no water. Got to Badger, couldn't run it. Sat at Badger until Monday afternoon, before the water finally came up high enough to run it. Then we took off for Diamond Creek from there, rowin' these two boats. Of course we didn't stop at any of the attractions or anything, we just rowed all day, and we made it. It's no kind of record or anything. Like you said earlier, we didn't know how to row... We'd run motorboats and had an idea about current, but as far as rowin', we didn't have any experience. That was kind of the thing on this trip, they said, "Well go row, go train yourself, and then if it works okay, we'll schedule some row trips." So we took off and we pretty well banged... both boats got to Granite Falls and we didn't scout it, we were just gonna run it. For some reason, we were both so far right... Breck and Giant and Roger were all in the snout, and they hit the wall down where that little point comes out. So Derryl and I are in the next boat, and this ten-man had two oar seats and two sets of oars. Yeah, it did. Wood frame, no floor. If you stood up, it sunk, because you didn't have a floorboard. Yeah, just the rubber floor, no floorboard. Yes, exactly. But anyway, Derryl and I go through. We hit the wall too. We had to



Wyatt "Stick" Woodard rowing a snout boat through Lava Falls.

be so far right. I have no idea why we were entering that far right. But we hit the wall at the bottom of Granite, and Derryl smacked into my back—he was behind me—and then went off into the river. I'm pinned against the wall there, and I set back and take a dig on my oars, and Derryl's hangin' out here on my right-hand oar. "What the hell?!" Derryl goes, "You ain't gonna believe it, Wolf, I hung onto the oar!" I go, "Get in the boat! Man, I broke both my legs!" When we hit the wall, I was somehow standin' up and it had thrown me so far with such force I thought I'd actually broke both femurs. It turned out just to be bone bruise, but man, at the time, I was like, "Ah man, I broke my legs."

**STEIGER:** Derryl was all proud of himself?

**POULSON:** Oh yeah!

**STEIGER:** "I hung onto the oar!"

**POULSON:** I remember runnin' Crystal, and then I couldn't walk, my legs were so beat up. I thought, "God, somehow just get through Crystal, don't turn over or anything, 'cause I'm in big trouble here." I can't remember who rowed it—I think Giant—but then I rode on the snout, and I remember bein' real thankful to get through Crystal. This was the Maytag Crystal days, you know. But they did, and we went on through. I remember my other thing was, once again, back to Lava.

We got to Lava, now my legs are healed enough, and I'm back in the ten-man with Breck. We were above that, and we put on two little, like, construction worker hardhats. (laughter) Yeah, we did! I remember sitting there and there's nobody around. The snout went through, they went down the right side, but Breck and I, we're gonna row this thing left, ok?

**STEIGER:** So you waited until they went, and then you put on your hardhats!?

**POULSON:** Yes. We did. [laughter] I don't know what we thought they would do for us, but we did. We rowed up to the edge of it. With both of us rowing, we could hold ourselves right there. So we were just kind of settin' there, holding, and goin' "No way!"

On the far left, far left. We were so far left. I mean, we were in-the-rocks left. Left of everything. We finally let the current take us enough to bounce down through there, and that's what we did, was bounce, literally. We were on rocks, but we stuck it through. Anyway, got back to Page, and they said, "How'd it go?" "Great, no problem, let's go rowin'!"

**STEIGER:** Oh yeah, "We can do this commercially!" [laughter]

**POULSON:** "Let's go rowin'!"



*Wolf on a Sanderson snout boat.*

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**POULSON:** When I came to work for Sanderson, there was a guy, Kim Rawlins, Grub Worm, was here. Dave Bledsoe was here runnin' some trips for Sanderson. I think Giant was here. Larry Zurker was one of the boatmen. Don Diamond. A guy named Hugh Scott. Moose Jaw Mason. John Cooley, they called him Cool Cat Cooley. They were all runnin'. Dick Buck, Buckaroo. David Warner was runnin' some trips.

**STEIGER:** Yeah, I swamped a trip for him and Schmedley.

**POULSON:** Yeah, exactly, Schmed! Now Schmed and myself...I'm sure I started a little before they did, but then Schmed and...oh heck...Jett. Of course then that's when Butch and Wyatt Woodard and all those guys came in too. Tim Kazan. Karen Byerly, you know, Catfish and Karen. They were all workin' there—we all were at the same time, through my era. All those other guys, like Buckaroo and David and Zurker, Dave Bledsoe...A guy named Dave Stitt was there also—they had all moved on or whatever. They didn't stay a long time after I first started. It just happened to be one of those changeover times, I guess. A lot of those guys left, and then it was me...Karl McDonald was around. Bill Gillenwater—Giant. Oh! Frenchy! God, I'm forgettin' Frenchy! Frenchy was great, loved him. Derryl Diamond. [STEIGER: I remember he used to be so much fun.] He was great. He was so full of life and so...[STEIGER: So sparkly.] Yes! Just fun to be around. Always. Never down. Always got some good story goin'. I really loved the guy, a lot of fun to be around...Now Don and Derryl and Bill, Lori Diamond—they're all gone. Schmed and Tim and Catfish and Karen...Schmed's thing, I was there when he went down on the river, too.

**STEIGER:** You were on that trip? Maybe we should tell that story.

**POULSON:** Yeah, I'll talk about it a little bit. Schmed was great. Little short guy, muscular, wiry, strong, able to do anything—thought he could do anything, too. In fact, some boats used to run through Lava...He would get on the black rock, when the boat came through the third hole, he'd bail from the rock onto the boat, whoopin' and hollerin'. I couldn't believe he was doin' that. I couldn't believe it. But when I first worked for Sanderson, we ran every hole on the river, on purpose. That was the idea.

Don Safely was Schmed's real name...I'd heard something about the Marine Corps or somethin', and they had like a go-fer guy, and that's what they would call him, and somehow he ended up with that name or somethin'—I really don't know that for a fact. When I came to know him, he was called Schmed. That's what they called him. But he was not afraid. He would just bomb every hole. And it cost him his life eventually, I

guess. He had this little, like, 1947 or '8, Luscombe—two-seater airplane. He flew a lot of other planes, too, he would shuttle planes to Alaska for people, and do whatever. But he had this little plane that he would fly down in the river, and he would buzz people, buzz us. Fearless, totally fearless. He would put his wheels on the water type stuff.

**STEIGER:** I remember we were down there paintin' boats at ARR at Vermilion Cliffs, and this little plane comes down and circles and circles, and gets down really low. And then he turns off the engine!—it's Schmedley—so we can hear him—he sticks his head out, opens the door, turns off the engine, he's glidin' around, yells down, "Hey, get to work down there!" and then starts it up and goes on, you know.

**POULSON:** Goes off wherever he was goin', yeah. Exactly. We all flew with him at one time or another, and we would go out and do loops and whatever he felt like doin' that day—under Navajo Bridge, always just out dinkin' around.

But we were doin' this private trip, and I talked to him the day or two before we left. He said, "Where you gonna be?" I said, "I'm plannin' on 19 1/2 on the left there, above North Canyon. I'll camp there the first night." He said, "Okay, I'm gonna drop you a note," which he did all the time. He would fly by and just throw a note out that says, "Have a good trip, be safe," or whatever. Just stuff. He would say somethin' like that. So we were setting there, Wyatt Woodard, me, Shane... Stacy Woodard was on that trip too. That's probably about it—and then some non-boatman-type people. I could have missed somebody. Yeah, this was a private. He came by, goin' upstream, and not on the water, up a ways, a hundred or two hundred feet...High for him. Not on the water—high. But he had that big shit-eatin' grin—you couldn't miss him a mile away. You know, he'd come by, and you could see him, and he had somebody with him that, we didn't know who it was, but he went by going upstream. He went up and just started climbin' out of the canyon, climbin' out of the canyon, got up, from our view, like almost out of the canyon, and then made a left-hand turn, and I've heard it called like a box canyon turn or something. But anyway, turned—fell left hard. From our view, God, it looked like it was goin' straight down, but I'm sure it probably had some angle. But we're lookin' at it like this. Comin' down, and he full powered—power, power, comin', comin', startin' to straighten out, but just that prop goin', everything goin' full power. Got about 100 or 200 yards from us, boom! Just buried it in the river. Couldn't get it up. I don't know, something happened on that turn, I think. We've wondered since, because he would have been on the left side when he made that hard turn. Maybe his son...It turned out to be his son that was with him. Maybe he kind of fell on him or

something, because it was a hard turn he made. And his seat belt might not have been tight, or who knows what? Somethin' occurred in that turn, when he made the hard turn up at the top there. Came back, but then he knew he was in trouble, and he was tryin' to pull it back out. It's not like he lost power, he had full power, everything. And then boom! buried it in the river. Wyatt and I went and jumped on boats, rowed out. We were rowin' and held our spot in the river, and there was no debris, no nothin'. Nothin'. No oil slick, no anything. Just when the airplane hit the water, there was a big splash and a noise like a ka-boom noise, and it was gone, river smoothed over, just gone. It was hard to believe, even if you really just saw that. There's a little protrusion, a little point that comes out there, and it has actually a couple of rocks that just stick out in the river. Right there. It's not very far above that camp, pretty close.

The plane's still there, actually. That's what I've been told. But it hit—gone—nothin'. Nothin' we could do. Sad. A lot of "What the hell happened?!" Knew he was gone. Knew. But that was it, there was nothin' to be done. Didn't know who was with him, didn't know if it was one of our family, or...Didn't have a clue. People flew with him all the time. We didn't know who the other person was. We knew they were both gone, whoever the hell it was. It was just before dark, just in the evening. So we set there all night. The next morning we put life jackets on the beach, signal mirrors, waited. After first light, we could hear planes flyin' around. We assumed they were probably looking for a missing aircraft. Finally either park service or one of the airplanes flew kind of down the canyon, and they had like a loudspeaker on the plane, like they do, and they said, "If you have a medical emergency, we've dispatched a helicopter from the South Rim. So we waited there for them. When they landed, we went over and told them that we'd seen this; that Schmed had just crashed there the night before. They immediately took off, went back up above the rim where they had radio communication, and said they had located where the missing plane was, and came back down. Then we all gave them interview type things about what we'd seen and what happened. Then that was it. They sat there for a while. We left. They set up a big search thing there from that beach. It was muddy, it was in August, like August 17. They turned it down real low, to nothing. In fact, I've run into some people that were talking about the lowest water they'd ever seen was because of that. Yeah, they backed it off, but they still couldn't locate him somehow. Finally like late October or the first of November...When the plane hit, it cracked open like this. Tom Workman told me, like an eggshell cracked open...Finally Schmedley's son floated out and floated down to South Canyon, and some fishermen people spotted him. Then in November sometime, Tom and some other park people went down

to where we told 'em the plane had went in, and dove, and Schmed was still in the plane. Got him out, and that was it.

But yeah. It was a sad day. I still think about it sometimes, still. Tough deal, tough go.

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**POULSON:** Breck and I, Kalohi and Hoss, did a snout oar trip... Breck and I were rowin' the ten-man that we talked about, only now we'd modified the seats where it only had one oar station. He had two passengers. We were rowin' snouts. He flipped in House Rock, then he was rowin' all the way from there down, and I'm rowin' the snout. He's in that little thing, and he's runnin' circles around me. He's laughing at me, rowing that snout-rig. I kept telling him, "I want to row—let me row that little boat." And he would never let me row it. Then he flipped in, like Zoroaster, one of them down there. We get to Horn Creek and it is really bad, low, kickin' butt, ugly, ugly, ugly rapid.

Stopped, and I'm scoutin' it on the left, and trying to decide what to do, how am I going to do this, I don't know where to go. People are scared to death, they're all standing behind us, real close, so they can hear what we're discussing. I talked to Kalohi and Hoss about what they're gonna do—I think—I'm pretty sure it was Hoss. But anyway, finally I turned to Breck and said, "How are you gonna run it?" Breck said, "I'm not." I said "What do you mean you're not?!" He said, "I'm not gonna run that boat through Horn Creek." He says "I'll flip in the first hole, and I'll drown in the second one, so I'm just not gonna do it." I said, "Well, you have to do it! You're a damned Grand Canyon boatman. You can't stand here on the shore above Horn Creek and tell me you're not gonna run this boat through that rapid!" He looks at me and says, "Well, you've been wantin' to run it all trip. It's your turn!" I said, "My turn?! There's no way I'm takin' that thing through there. Not a chance, man!" We're havin' this big argument there. Everybody's scared and whatever. [STEIGER: That calmed everybody down for sure.] Yes, exactly. But I ended up kickin' it loose, lettin' it go, and it went down the far left side and made it through without flippin' somehow, some way, I don't know how. I got in the snout and tried to do a right-to-left, and didn't make it. Yeah, I got straight. It worked out okay. I didn't even hit the rock on the right. But I ate all that junk right below the right horn, just (skkrrechh!) trashed me around.

**STEIGER:** Did you go a little bit right of the big hole at the bottom?

**POULSON:** I might have. Probably did. Probably why I made it through. My whole goal, though, was to do a right-to-left...I think Kalohi and them went between the horns—I'm pretty sure. Yeah. I remember him digging...



June 1976, left to right: Kalohi, Hoss Sanderson, Wyatt "Stick" Woodard, Roger Neisess, Don "Wolf" Poulson, Jody Sanderson the Kid.

He ended up gettin' his right shoulder pulled out of the socket, because he tried to dig down in there somewhere, dig an oar. You know how they jerk...Jerked his arm out. Yes, pinned oars, all pinned oars. I remember we went down and camped at Granite and then we took that ten-man straight across to those tamarisk trees straight across from the Upper Granite camp, and just de-rigged and rolled it up and put it behind those trees and then went on out, because Kalohi couldn't row no more. Then on my next motor trip, I stopped and picked that ten-man up, hauled it out.

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**POULSON:** My last thing on Lava, though, after that last flip...like I've said, I was really nervous about Lava. So I would run Lava, and then I would get pulled in wherever down below. When the next boat came through, I could never watch 'em. I would face downstream. I didn't want to see it, I didn't want to...That's how shook up I was about it. I would not watch 'em run. I could tell by the reaction of people close to me—you know, you'd hear 'em go, "Ooo! Oh! Ow!" You know, whatever, and then it was all okay, and then I'd turn back around.

But I stopped watchin' 'em run. That's how shook up it had me there. It still bothers me. I still get—to this day, I run a couple of trips a year ago, and I was like... "Lava, man." My brother's goin', "It's okay, it's okay." Now we've got these radios. Breck said, "Well, I'm just gonna run. You pull in..." Because my people wanted to take pictures. We did a Discovery Channel thing—it's supposed to be on tv this winter sometime on the Discovery Channel... the "Planet Earth" stuff, where they're goin' to—they were here at Grand Canyon, and then they're goin' to the Sahara Desert, all over. There's like seven places they're goin'. We took this crew from England on the trip. They would go set up and film us comin' through the rapids, and then talk about the Canyon. So I remember Breck runnin' Lava, and then he had all the video camera people with him, and they had to go get set up down below. I'm settin' up there (pacing) "I wanna go! I wanna go! I wanna go!" And I know it's nothin', it's no big deal. We've got bigger boats, things are different, the frames are different... Littler water, lot littler water. I know I'm all right, but I had to wait up there for an hour and a half or so for them to get their cameras set up, and my belly's churnin' the whole time. This is all these years later. Breck calls

me on the radio—we had radios—he says, “You know the good thing about what we’re doin’ here?” I go, “No, what?” He says, “I’m sittin’ down below here, and you’re still up above.” (laughter)

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**STEIGER:** I’m not sayin’ this just to suck up to you—in my mind you were somebody I really looked up to when I started—one of the senior boatmen out there, of the various companies. (phone rings, recording paused) Where were we...I guess we were talkin’ about just gettin’ old and all that? It’s been hard, our generation. You got out. You figured it out. There’s quite a few of us that didn’t quite figure it out, and we’re hittin’ the wall now. It’s gonna be interesting. I mean, I’m hangin’ on by my fingernails—and I want to...I really want to keep doing it as long as I can.

**POULSON:** Oh, I know.

**STEIGER:** But I can see the writin’ on the wall.

**POULSON:** That’s it, that’s the problem...It’s just a tough deal. It’s a tough deal for boatmen. I mean, you get doin’ that job, and it’s such a great thing, and “I can do this forever!” and “It’s so much fun, I get to meet all these new people, and there’s so many cool things goin’ on! I take passengers and they tell me I’m great.”

It’s hard to go away from that, it is. I don’t know, I just felt maybe I...I needed a bigger security blanket. I didn’t dare just let my life keep goin’ on, with that, because I was too afraid of what was going to happen down the road. I look back on it, I don’t know, it would have probably worked out fine, and that’d be just dandy. Or maybe it wouldn’t have. I might be, who knows? But I chose to go get a job that gave me some benefits, and I didn’t have to worry about down the road so much, you know.

At the time, I didn’t know. At the time I was like, “Man, what have I done? I didn’t need to do this.” ... When I first left the river and went out there to the power plant, it was a real shock. I went from “Wolf” to “Don” or “Donnie,” and these people out there at the plant had no clue. I mean, they knew about the river, but didn’t care. [**STEIGER:** Didn’t know what that was, or what you’d done there?] No. Didn’t matter to them what or who I was, or what I’d done, or anything. It was an ego bust. I went from bein’ a Grand Canyon boatman to just bein’ a normal guy workin’ shift work out here. I had to fight myself, to make myself stay there for the first, especially, year or two. It was a culture shock for me, for sure—from all the years of working the river, to coming into this kind of an environment was tough for me, it was. I did it because I felt like I needed to do it. It paid a decent wage, but mostly I got some medical and some retirement benefits out of it, which I felt like I needed. I was 36 when I went out there. Just a time in my life...I

just couldn’t see myself staying “a guide.” I could tell my back was breakin’ down. I didn’t know what other medical problems I might have. I was afraid I might get to be around fifty and broke down, and then what the hell do you do? “We can’t use you, you can’t work.” So now what am I gonna do? So that was a big incentive into my takin’ that job out there. I knew I could still do some trips, a trip or two type thing every year, which I have done. And so it actually worked out okay. But the shock of goin’ to a job like that after bein’ a river guide was pretty big. I had to force myself to eat it, to take it. I don’t regret it, I’m glad I did it. If I would have stayed with the river, it would have probably worked out, and I could have possibly—that might have worked. I don’t know. I think it probably would have. I could have probably stayed involved, totally involved with the river. But I didn’t know how that was all going to fall into place. So I took that job, and I’ve never regretted doin’ it. Hell, it’s been okay.

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**POULSON:** My dad died in ’77, I think. Would have liked to have got him down.

**STEIGER:** My dad was always...Without him, I never would have got here. But he was always like, “Okay, runnin’ the river again? Didn’t you do that already? Aren’t you done with that?” (laughs) I really wanted to show him what I was up to.

**POULSON:** Our mother was like that...I mean, “Aren’t you ever gonna get a real job? You can’t do this forever. When are you gonna grow up? My God, you’re thirty-some years old.” I remember tellin’ her, “I’ll do this all my life, Mom, that’s just the way it is. Whatever I’m doin’, I’ll still be somehow, some way, involved with the river thing.”

And I plan on being involved somehow, some way, whatever, ’til, like you say, I’m done. That’s it. I had to go, I went to work to the plant for a while. Well, for 23 years. But you know, that job kind of fell into me. Wyatt Woodard was out there workin’, and I wasn’t sure...Diamonds and Sanderson had split already. Sandersons were talkin’ about sellin’, which they did, eventually, to Del Webb Corporation. I didn’t know how I was going to fit into this whole program, going from a family-owned company to a business thing...Anyway, Wyatt ended up being able to get me a job out there. I knew my health was failing some—like my back, I’ve had to have it all fused and operated on and all that stuff, and my knees were shot. So I was able to get that stuff taken care of. And it worked out all right for me. It let me live in a place I wanted to live at, that I’m pretty happy with. I go up to Southern Utah all the time, and I like that. It worked out fine, it did.

I retired from the power plant last fall, a year ago,

and then came and worked with Breck and them down to Wilderness this summer. Just putting trips on, takin' 'em off.

**STEIGER:** But you did a couple trips yourself?

**POULSON:** Yeah, I did. I don't want to go back and be a guide, that's not a goal of mine. I mean, I just couldn't do it. [**STEIGER:** Well, motorin', you work your ass off.] Yeah, I just couldn't do it, so that's not somethin' I'm tryin' to do or even want to do, you know. But I still like goin' down the river, bein' in the canyon. I really like running boats, whatever: rowin' 'em, drivin' 'em, I don't care what, I still get a real kick out of that, I do. I'm pretty weak on people. (laughter) I am. I've lost it. I just have a harder time talkin', and keeping upbeat, you know. I want to, believe me, but I've lost some of that somehow, some way.

**STEIGER:** I have a hard time visualizing that.

**POULSON:** I just know it myself. You might not even notice it so much—and they sure don't know it, because they don't know the difference... That's just one of the things I've noticed, and that's not fair to the people who come to do the canyon. It's not.

**STEIGER:** I know that Sanderson and Diamond back there in those years that we're talkin' about here, those were high-energy times, high-energy trips. I mean, everybody seemed like you all were putting everything you could into it.

**POULSON:** Yeah, I think they were, and tryin' to do the best you could. It's the same with Mike Denoyer, all those guys. Everybody. Hatch, Jimmy Hall, Steve Bledsoe, all those guys that we used to run with all the time and see. Wilderness World. Man, everybody was just... I mean, you'd go hard all day and hard all night. I enjoyed workin' with all of 'em, pretty much.

**STEIGER:** In terms of the river, what jumps out at you? Can you tell it's changed? I mean, just the canyon down there, and all that. Does it seem different to you?

**POULSON:** It don't seem as hard—seems easier, seems mellower. I don't know why. Why is that? It don't seem as mean. I know it is, maybe it's just me in my old age.

The equipment's better—maybe just because they've been doin' it all these years... When I go run this trip now, even the kitchen gear, the lunches, everything is just so smooth and so organized. It seems a little easier. I definitely know the work part is still there, it's still a lot of work. No matter what the heck you do, a river trip's a lot of work, but somehow it don't seem quite as mean to me as it once was. But hey, I loved it then. I liked it. Yeah, I don't feel like I'm out there by myself quite so much now.

We run a trip now, a rubber boat trip, and leave Lees Ferry, and might have to pump the boat up one time after we leave. That was a chore: every day we'd pump those boats up, those rotten cotton boats. Every day... And sometimes you'd hand pump 'em up at lunch too.

**STEIGER:** Well and motoring, you might even... I bet you run motor trips now where you don't really have to scout anything.

**POULSON:** They don't. They don't. I asked them to stop at Lava on a trip, to scout it. Not for me. I'd talked to these people about it some, and it adds to the excitement of the whole thing if you go up and do a scout and talk about doin' this. When you just go, and they've never seen it before, and then bomb through and come out and go, "Wow, that was it?" And I'm so wound up about that, you know. But they don't even have to scout it, they know what they're gonna do. They know their runs, they've got 'em down.

**NOTE:** THIS INTERVIEW WAS FUNDED BY GCRG'S ADOPT-A-BOATMAN PROGRAM, A PUBLIC FUNDING MECHANISM FOR GCRG'S COLORADO RIVER RUNNERS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT. THE INDIVIDUAL SPONSORING THIS INTERVIEW WISHES TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

*Cover photo: Wolf with his wife Felicia in 1975 or 1976. All photos courtesy of Wolf.*



Marieke Tancy



Wilderness First Aid Courses 2009  
Sponsored by Grand Canyon River Guides  
Desert Medicine Institute (Dr. Tom Myers & Dr. Michelle Grua)

WILDERNESS FIRST RESPONDER—January 31 - February 8, 2009

Prerequisite: None  
Location: Arizona Raft Adventures, Flagstaff, AZ  
Time: 8:00 A.M. – 6:00 P.M.  
Certification: 3-year WFR certification and 2-year CPR certification  
Cost: \$450

WILDERNESS REVIEW (RECERT) COURSE—January 9–11, 2009

Prerequisite: DMI will accept anyone who has had and kept current a WFR certification (80-hour course) through Wilderness Medical Associates, WMI, SOLO, NOLS, DMM and other Wilderness medicine providers.  
Location: Arizona Raft Adventures, Flagstaff, AZ  
Time: 8:00 A.M. – 6:00 P.M.  
Certification: Renews your certification for three years plus 2-year CPR certification  
Cost: \$200

Lodging and meals are on your own. Class size is strictly limited to 22 participants for the GCRG/DMI Review and WFR classes. Send your \$50 non-refundable deposit with the application below to us at PO Box 1934, Flagstaff, AZ 86002 to hold a space. Checks can be made payable to GCRG. If you work for an outfitter who pays 100 percent of course costs, just send in the registration form by itself and we'll take care of the rest. The courses are already filling, so act now! GCRG reserves the right to cancel any classes due to insufficient enrollment. Call the GCRG office at (928) 773-1075 with any questions.

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FIRST AID COURSE REGISTRATION

CIRCLE ONE:            Wilderness First Responder            Review Course

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TYPE OF CURRENT 1ST AID \_\_\_\_\_

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## Bob Melville Wants Visitors

**B**OB MELVILLE, a long-term guide for AZRA from 1972–1996, is now confined to a long-term care facility in Flagstaff, Arizona. He would very much like to receive visitors and was hoping that old friends or acquaintances would read this notice.

In case people do not know what happened to Bob or where he is, here is the low down. Bob was in a car accident in 1996 and suffered some brain damage and due to worsening deficits, he now needs assisted care. He would really enjoy the company of old friends and contacts. Bob enjoys conversing, reading, going to bookstores, coffee shops and movies. He especially enjoys being brought up to date on the boating community. He could use some help in learning about the internet and email.

Bob would greatly appreciate it if people would be so kind as to stop by (visiting hours 9 A.M.–8 P.M.), call, or write to him at:

Bob Melville c/o The Loyalton  
2100 S. Woodlands Village Blvd., Room # 125  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001  
Cell phone: 928-814-6440  
Loyalton Phone number for messages: 928-779-7045

## Shop at Bashas' and Help GCRG

**G**RAND CANYON RIVER GUIDES is participating in the Shop and Give program (formerly Bashas' Thanks a Million). It's easy to support GCRG every time you buy groceries at Bashas', anywhere in Arizona from September 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009. Here's how it works:

- Link your Bashas' Thank You Card to GCRG's group ID number (just once on or after September 1) at any checkout. The link remains active until March 31. **Grand Canyon River Guides Group ID Number is: 24776**
- From September 1 2008 to March 31, 2009, be sure that your "Thank You Card" is scanned every time you shop at Bashas'.
- Supporters who participated in last year's Thanks a Million program must re-link their "Thank You Card" at the start of this year's program.
- Bashas' designates a portion of your purchases back to GCRG at the end of the program.

So link to GCRG's number, shop at Bashas, and help GCRG every time! What could be easier than that!

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## Care To Join Us?

**I**f you're not a member yet and would like to be, or if your membership has lapsed, get with the program! Your membership dues help fund many of the worthwhile projects we are pursuing. And you get this fine journal to boot. Do it today. **We are a 501(c)(3) tax deductible non-profit organization, so send lots of money!**

### General Member

Must love the Grand Canyon

Been on a trip? \_\_\_\_\_

With whom? \_\_\_\_\_

### Guide Member

Must have worked in the River Industry

Company? \_\_\_\_\_

Year Began? \_\_\_\_\_

Number of trips? \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\$30 1-year membership

\$125 5-year membership

\$277 Life membership (A buck a mile)

\$500 Benefactor\*

\$1000 Patron (A grand, get it?)\*

\*benefactors and patrons get a life membership, a silver split twig figurine pendant, and our undying gratitude.

\$100 Adopt your very own Beach: \_\_\_\_\_

\$\_\_\_\_\_ donation, for all the stuff you do.

\$24 Henley long sleeved shirt Size \_\_\_\_\_

\$16 Short sleeved T-shirt Size \_\_\_\_\_

\$18 Long sleeved T-shirt Size \_\_\_\_\_

\$12 Baseball Cap

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\$ 8 Insulated GCRG 20TH anniversary mugs with lid

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Between 1935 and 1943 the Works Progress Administration's (WPA) Federal Art Project printed over two million posters in 35,000 different designs to stir the public's imagination for education, theatre, health, safety, and travel. Due to their fragile nature only two thousand posters have survived.

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Thanks to all you poets, photographers, writers, artists, and to all of you who send us stuff. Don't ever stop. Special thanks to the Walton Family Foundation, the Adopt-a-Boatman sponsors, "Circle of Friends" contributors, and innumerable GCRG members for their generous and much appreciated support of this publication.

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Flagstaff, AZ 86002

## boatman's quarterly review

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