

boatman's quarterly review

the journal of Grand Canyon River Guides, Inc.

volume 9 number 1 winter 1995 - 1996

Paul Thevenin

We were headline material in all the Mexican papers, especially down in that area. Up in the States it was covered in Life magazine, Time magazine, Sports Illustrated. And we also made the TV show. But the canyon itself was one that was not runnable. We got into it, the people in the community gathered on the bridge that went over the beginning of the thing, all staring down at these crazy gringos doing this. "Why do you want to do this?" We went in the first day and just floated on down and camped the first night. Next day got up and came to this

twenty-six-foot waterfall. It didn't go straight down, but it went down in about three stages, twenty-six foot, which is a little steeper even than Lava. And we decided, "Okay, we're gonna have to line this thing." But we want to get good shots of it. We'd taken along three twenty-one footers and a seven-man, just for a little support boat with a motor on it. So we went across the river, put the photographer on the other bank so he could get the shots of lining and portaging with the river in the foreground. We got part of it done that day, then decided, "Okay, time to go get the photographer." Jack said, "Well, I'll go ahead and drive the boat." I was going just to help him, in case he needed to edge it upriver or something. We got over and picked up the photographer. I

was holding the boat and letting him get in, and I was trying to make more room for him to get in, so I was in motion while he was in motion, and Jack was in a hurry to get going. He gunned the motor before everything was set down and as he peeled out on the river it just sort of did a nice little peel and up and over it went, right at the head of the twenty-six-foot waterfall.

Turned over?

Turned over.

continued on page 10



thevenin at the oars of a rather large boat

Prices Up

Navajo Notes

Westwater

Bats

Lambslide

501(c)3

Pie Charts

Conservation Fund

Jim Whitfield

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.
Board of Directors Meetings are held the first and third
Mondays 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.

Written submissions should be less than 1500 words
and, if possible, be sent on a computer disk. PC or MAC
format; ASCII files are best but we can translate most
programs. Send an SASE for submission guidelines.
Include postpaid return envelope if you want your disk or
submission returned.

Deadlines for submissions are the 1st of January, April,
July and October, more or less. Thanks.

Our office location: 9½ East Aspen, Flagstaff, Arizona

Office Hours: 10-4 M-W-F

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That is tough!

*Member Luba Frasacky sent us this clipping from
Toronto Life Fashion magazine.*

...I am hiking to the top of Mount Timpanogos, the
highest mountain in my part of Utah, 11,750 feet above
sea level, 5,340 feet above the trailhead where four
hours ago I parked my car. Hiking Timpanogos is not
scary or life threatening, it's just grueling, roughly
equivalent to starting on the rim of the Grand Canyon
and then walking up one vertical mile to the river...

Winter 1996

There are times when the simple life looks
mighty good, and way too far away.
Maybe that's what we love so much about the
river. Real life means something different there. Up
here, all too often, it's weird and hard and complicated.
Down there it's clean and remarkably straightforward.

Water heads for the ocean. Sun is hot in the
summer. Rocks are a factor.

The river's in charge.

The real rules are impersonal, but very consistent.
And they all make sense. Drink lotsa water. Rig your
boat good. When in doubt, scout.

Check those hand-holds when you climb. Tie your
tent down. Don't get cocky. Treat people right.

Have faith. The world is what we make it.

(It was pretty damn good before we ever got here.)

For the river community here, it was a good
news/bad news kind of fall. AZRA boatman Bob
Melville had a bad car crash on New Years day and isn't
really out of the woods yet. For an update on how he's
doing, call the GCRG office. Elsewhere, sickness and
accidents seemed to rain down everywhere.

No snow yet in Flag. Nor even cold.

The Coast Guard situation heated up, looked terrible
for a week or two, maybe got better. We'll see.

Everybody at the local level, really, did what they had to
do. Then the whole mess went to Washington.

Congressman Stump (whose district this is) punched in
on the issue in a big way, as did America Outdoors and
Congressman Clements from Tennessee. Stump's aide,
Lisa Jackson, who's been down the river several times, is
on the case day to day. Old Grand Canyon hand and
now overall Chief of Concessions Bob Yearout stepped
up for the NPS. Captain George Naccarra, who has
been down the river himself, came aboard for the Coast
Guard. Taken as a group, the current knot of players
feels like a classic example of the system at its best:
bright, experienced, practical... a little faith may be in
order.

On the brighter side, we had a great meeting in late
fall with local NPS honchos Dave Haskell (Resources)
and Ellis Richard and Greer Cheshire (Interpretation)
concerning the Guides Training Seminar and overall
cosmic objectives of the commercial sector. All three
were warm, funny, down to earth, very positive, and
very sharp—exactly the kind of people you'd love to go
down the river with, or have taking care of the Park.
Really gave us hope for the future. Later, Chief Ranger
Steve Bone and Assistant Superintendent Gary
Cummins were pretty darned patient, and cut us a fair
amount of slack as we struggled to get our act together
on the actual dates of this year's spring extravaganza. By

and large the birdseye view of the NPS at Grand Canyon these days looks better than ever: a large number of good people who really care and are doing the best they can with a host of difficult issues.

The rest of the story is—at Concessions in Grand Canyon the new tests went in and our outfitters got graded. The results are out now and they've shaken us up: two apparently flunked. One is as large and corporate as it gets. The other's small, as mom and pop as can be. The whole thing's got us stumped, really.

We desperately want a good system here. The place deserves it. We want to think that truth and justice will prevail. We want to have faith in our government. (We need to have faith.) But sometimes it's hard.

If a process like this begins to deselect one of our oldest, best, and most respected outfitters—which it apparently just took a step toward doing—for reasons that seem to have absolutely nothing to do with the kind of trip he and his wife run (i.e. because they filled in the blanks themselves instead of signing up a cadre of lawyers), then certain questions leap to the fore regarding the test itself. Mine were:

When they sorted out the bids, who in that room of life or death judges knew this guy? Who knew his full history in the Canyon (all 40 years of it), or how he treats his passengers, or what he's like to work for, or be with in the Canyon?

Who really knew that stuff about any of these companies? Were these two the worst trips on the river, or the most mercenary companies? No way.

What are the real goals here? And, when it's finally down to the nut-cutting, what should be the most important rules of selection? When it comes to figuring out what's really right or wrong, what values will guide us all?

I talked to Raymond Gunn at Concessions on the South Rim and got pretty much the same impression of him you get from a lot of the people up there these days: good guy, sharp, trying hard to do the right thing. The



Trail, Nevils camp

weird part about his job is, this is the '90s, and taking history into account was precisely what they weren't supposed to do. They were to make an objective, impartial decision based solely on the bids they got—nothing more. The idea was to eliminate the unfair advantage and foster healthy competition; they were literally tasked with ignoring the past. It couldn't count. "How do you make it impartial and not impersonal?" asked Gunn. "You can't... we had to go with what was right there in front of us."

What was really in front of them? Maybe that's the biggest question. What did it have to do with the actual trips any of us run?

Bottom line? This process ain't over, by a long shot. Nobody's truly out yet, or truly in. And the BIG question still remains. When it comes to what's really right or wrong, what values will guide us all? Will it be "The actual trips don't count." "The real people don't count." "He who has best lawyers wins." That last refrain may be the hit song of the '90's. But where's that logic taking us?

The real bottom line? It's *all* personal. Everybody here is personally responsible for what they do, and for making sure it's right. In the final analysis, you don't find that ultimate guidance in the rule books. You gotta look deeper every time.

That's the big stuff for now. The beat goes on.

Lew Steiger





Navajo Notes...

We drove across the reservation, to the Gap/Bodaway Chapter. We went there to discuss cultural issues with Hataalii (medicinenmen). I work as an archaeologist for the tribe. That is my title, but my boss is a traditional singer-chanter. So I travel and learn about the land and the culture from him. The chapter sits at the base of the Echo Cliffs.

Hataalii from all over the reservation's 25,000 sq. mile area were there. Felt hats, turquoise, and silver adorned the weather-beaten men. Women wore jewelry covering their velvet blouses and pleated skirts. The heavy turquoise bracelets showed the supernaturals that the wearer was a chanter. Faces full of character from a life of having participated in an ancient knowledge about the land, their history, and the discipline of the healing mystery. A perspective that is as foreign to the dominant society as the land itself looks to an Iowa corn farmer. We sat in a circle so that all present were equal and all were in view of each other. One hour of introductions followed. Each person stood up and stated their clans, their concerns, the ways, or chants that they had been given. An invocation prayer began the meeting.

On the agenda was a zoologist. The Zoologist talked of the condor's release, its 9 1/2-foot wingspan, its 22 lbs., and its carrion appetite. Its history, biological status and why the Vermillion Cliffs was chosen. He spoke of the condors 50 mile cruising radius, which would bring them through the sky above this very meeting.

The Hataalii began talking about the status of these big birds, and where they must fit into the balance of life. "If they eat the dead, then they must be a part of that community along with the raven, coyote, and others who roam the land as scavengers. We have stories and prayers about all of those."

The Navajo name for condor, or more accurately, vulture, is jeshoo, which means those who are passing judgement, or those who are holding court (the name for lawyer means "the one who argues").

Questions were directed to the Zoologist. Concerns of stock being eaten. Since these birds are so big will they attack a person? Will the Hopi seek them out and kill them for their feathers, like they do eagles (vulture feathers are used in the Snake Dance, I don't know what else)? Navajos are against the annual "gathering" of eaglets. Some are gathered from the very cliffs that tower behind us. What will happen to a person who kills one?

All this was being asked through a translator. The condor's protected status was emphasized by the

Zoologist.

A woman stood up with a very concerned look on her face and asked... "What about the glonies?" There was a chuckle through the room. A Gloney is a drunk. She was afraid that the condors would eat them while they were sleeping off a binge. I laughed, but was then reminded of the baby that was left bundled in its cradle board while the mother went to tend sheep. The baby had its eye pecked out by a raven.

An old man stood up and asked, "If the condor was being reintroduced, what about the other birds that were once found throughout the reservation, but now are only found in traditional song... can they be brought back and released as well?"

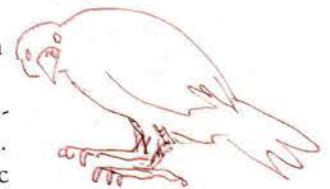
Since no one knows the history of this bird, and what potential problems that it might create, the Hataalii, as a group would not give their approval to the release. They didn't want to be later singled out as being a responsible party, for an unknown creature.

Roger Henderson

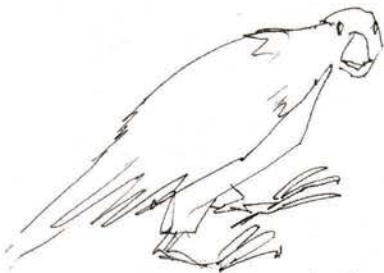


Rape of Westwater

We know you've already got a plateful, but if you've ever boated Westwater, plan to or hope to, please call your congressional representative NOW. The upper part of the canyon has been wrongfully deleted from the proposed Westwater Wilderness Area by a Grand County Commissioner with a serious conflict of interest. Tell your Congressional representative to vote against H.R. 1745 and S. 884 (Utah Public Lands Acts). Hopefully, if the bills are defeated, a revised version will include all of Westwater. Thanks for your prompt attention.



Why Wouldn't We?



Over 30 years ago Glen Canyon Dam was built, changing forever (at least for our lifetimes) the Colorado River in Grand Canyon. Since that time we have rallied, studied, and campaigned...and now we are on the verge of seeing additional protection and restoration come to our sacred river corridor. This is good news. However, if we think we can sit back and celebrate because the Canyon is now safeguarded forever, we may be mistaken.

Although I am actually very positive about the forecast for the Canyon and the Southwest as a whole, there is still a great deal of work to be done in both the scientific and political realms. Clearly, the curve of protecting the Southwest is steep and a long term challenge. Whether the challenge comes from power, water delivery, mining, development, or even recreational interests, there are many future obstacles that will have to be overcome. We must look at Grand Canyon preservation as an ongoing issue. Therefore, we must find sustainable ways to fund our conservation efforts.

Grassroots advocacy is vital, and Grand Canyon River Guides (GCRG) is a fine example of what a small, well-organized group of volunteers can accomplish. Yet we cannot expect GCRG to do it all. We need full-time professionals (scientists, economists, attorneys, etc.) to fight the Southwest's environmental fires, both large and small, that will continue to flare. There are groups already doing such work (Grand Canyon Trust, Environmental Defense Fund, and American Rivers, to name a few), yet they all have limited resources. The key question is how can we, as a community, raise money to hire more people to protect Grand Canyon?

What if there was a way to raise well over \$100,000 annually, at no cost to the outfitters and guides, and we could use the money for whatever projects or professionals we (outfitters & guides) decided were timely and appropriate? If there were such a program why wouldn't we want to be involved with it?

Well, there is such a program already in effect. It's called the Grand Canyon Conservation Fund (GCCF). Over the last several years the GCCF has raised and given tens of thousands of dollars back to the river. The money has gone to organizations fighting to protect the Grand Canyon and Southwest, promoted access trips for the underprivileged and disabled, and supported Grand Canyon National Park resource trips, to give just a few

examples. The GCCF is a success story that we can build upon. Here is how it works:

When someone signs up for an adventure in the Canyon, they receive confirmation of their trip and a bill for payment to the outfitter. On the bill the outfitter assesses an additional \$1/day fee for conservation measures in the Grand Canyon and Southwestern region. This is an optional fee. If future Canyon passengers are not comfortable paying the fee, they simply do not pay.

In other words, a person paying more than \$1,000 for a 7-day trip is asked to contribute \$7 to help protect the Grand Canyon. Recently, I spoke with two of the six outfitters involved in the program. They said that 99.9% of guests contribute to the fund. It seems that people are pleased to play a

role in the protection of the Grand Canyon.

The 6 outfitters in the program represent 40,666 (roughly 35%) of the total 115,500 commercial user days. We should applaud the 6 outfitters and urge the remaining 10 to join the effort. We have a lot of room for improvement.

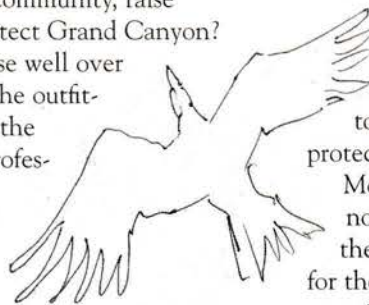
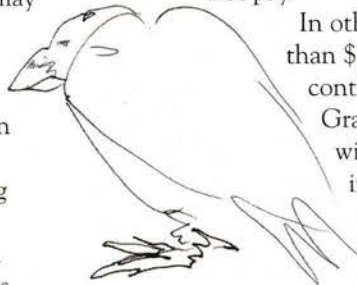
This program can easily be incorporated into an outfitter's brochure or added as an insert. Once more for the record, it does not cost the outfitters or the guides anything. This is a perfect way to raise money to hire top people to protect and restore the place that we not only love, but where we make our living.

We are much more of a community than we are an industry. We are brothers and sisters bound together by the silt of the Colorado River. We have a great time partying together, so why not raise some money to protect the Canyon together?

Money is not everything and in some cases it is nothing. However, it is going to cost money to hire the people to do the jobs that will make a difference for the future of the Grand Canyon. The more money we raise the greater the potential for a bright future.

The Grand Canyon and Southwest are very much worth the effort.

To get involved: Guides please discuss the program with your outfitters and encourage them to enroll. Outfitters please contact the GCCF to learn more about how to administer the program.

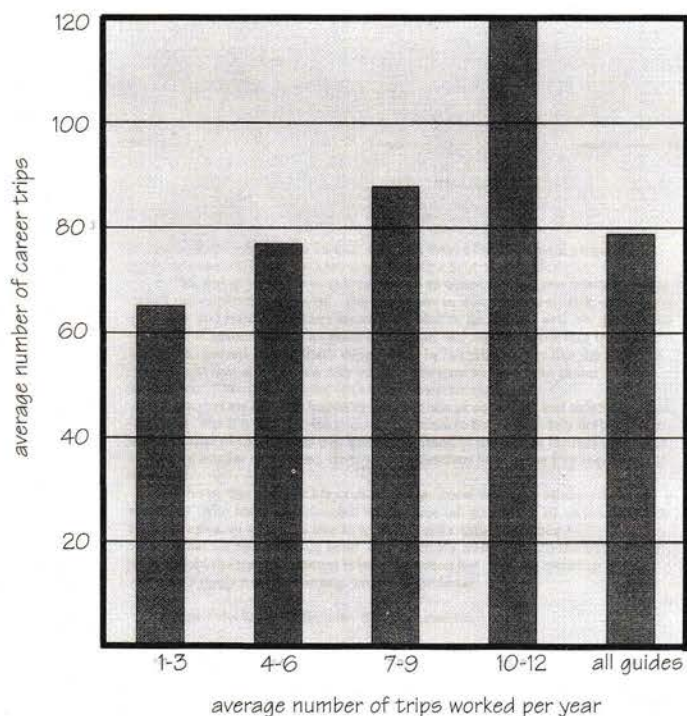


Robby Pitagora



Circles and Arrows

average number of career trips of working motor guides



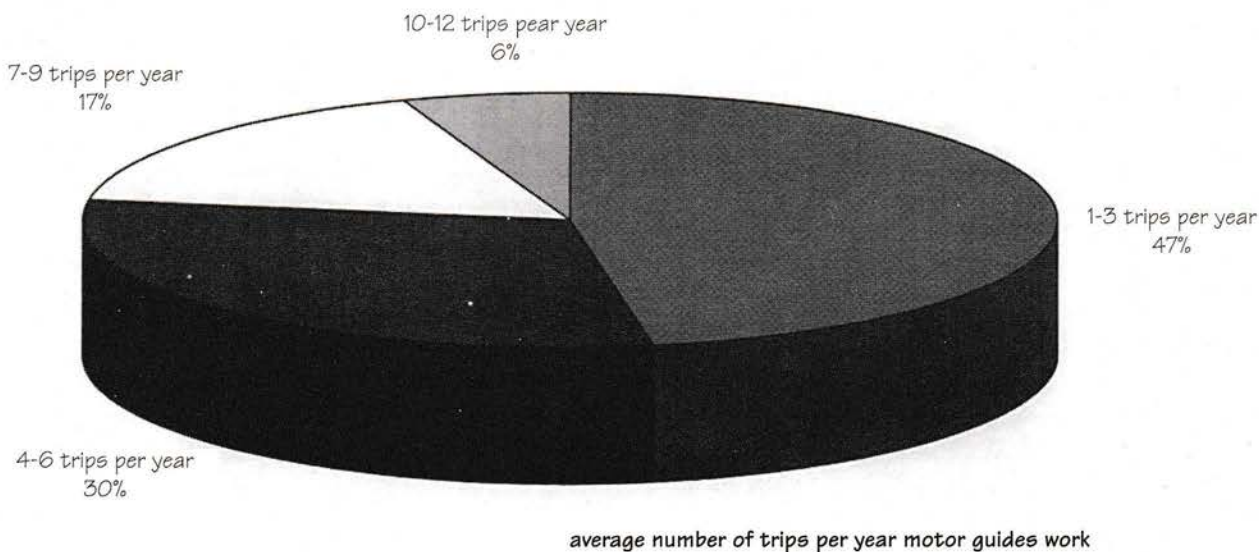
These graphs were generated from data we have been compiling from several sources—outfitters, guides, and trip sheets supplied by the NPS. Some of the results have been surprising.

These particular graphs depict the number of trips and experience levels of the 195 Grand Canyon motor guides who worked as Guide or TL during the 1994 and 1995 seasons. These guides had vast experience in Grand Canyon, averaging nearly 80 trips and over 12 years experience. It was also interesting to find that 77% of motor guides worked 6 trips or fewer. Our being able to produce this information has been invaluable in our effort to demonstrate to the Coast Guard the level of expertise of Grand Canyon boatmen.

We still don't have complete information, however. If you are a working guide, it would be a big help if you would update our office with what year you began working in Grand Canyon and the number of trips you have done. GCRG members can update this information when you receive your renewal notice.

We appreciate the outstanding effort of those who have been helping to compile this information—Susan Cherry at the National Park Service, Kelly Burke, Kim Claypool, Hollis McCord, Lynn Hamilton, and Darah Sandlian.

Watch for more interesting graphs in upcoming newsletters.



The Great Marble Canyon Lambslide

The Arizona Strip, the lands north of the Grand Canyon and south of Utah, qualifies as one of the West's most spectacular and lonely regions. Thanks to its generally arid climate and long history of livestock grazing, it also qualifies as some of the region's most biologically degraded landscape. Beginning in the 1870s, Mormon settlers started using the region for raising domestic animals and by 1887, an estimated 20,000 cattle and at least 200,000 sheep relentlessly devoured the local flora. While the domestic hordes inflicted botanical carnage, the cattlemen and sheepmen, aware of the competition for dwindling forage, cultivated a sometimes violent rivalry. This typically western way of doing things culminated in sabotage, occasional bloodshed, environmental degradation, and a wealth of marginally erotic sheep herder jokes.

In 1909, when 10,000 sheep moved through House Rock Valley, the concerned local cattlemen decided to stick it to the sheepmen by draining the few small, precious watering reservoirs available for stock. Before long 10,000 thirst-crazed sheep reached the canyon rim near Cathedral Wash and, as sheep will, took the last few fateful steps to unlimited water 700 vertical feet below. The expansive, fluffy flow of bleats, bones, blood and wool cascaded over the edge and according to one witness, momentarily dammed the river. Not all 10,000 perished. Later, at least five sheepish survivors were happily grazing near Soap Creek rapid when Julius Stone's hungry river party shot and ate one.

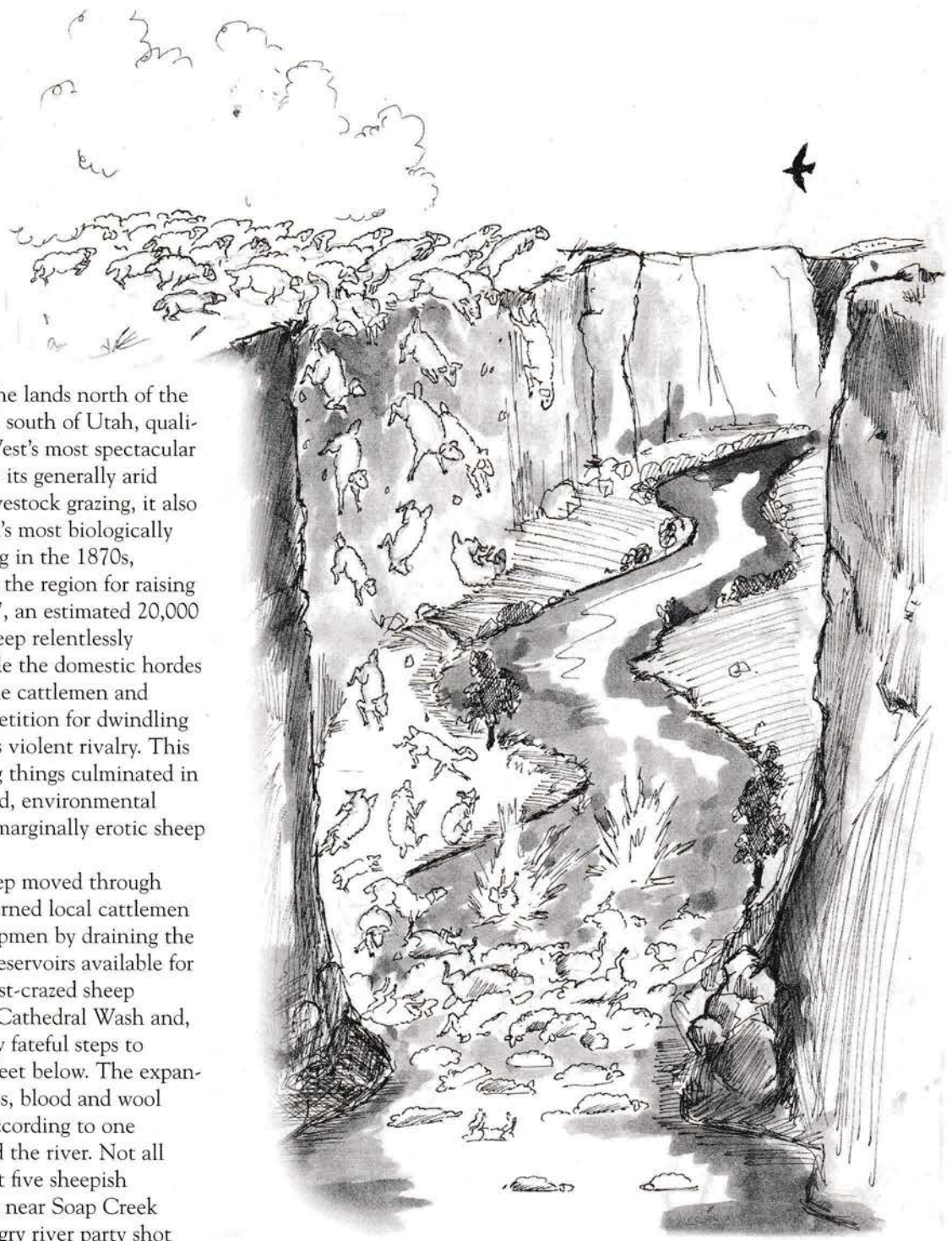


Kim Crumbo

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Let's start some Grand Canyon living

Going to Bat

When GCRG first heard of plans by the National Park Service to remove the bat towers from the north shore of the Canyon, there were more pressing issues. Since the larger, more spectacular south towers on the Hualapai land would remain, we were surprised at the ensuing controversy. There are several guides in our community who feel the bat towers are historically significant and should be preserved, (Guano!, bqr 8:4, 8:2). Others are just as adamant that they should be removed; some couldn't care less. No matter how you feel about the towers, recent developments should raise some huge red flags. This controversy goes well beyond the bats or the towers; it has become an issue of wilderness and wildlife protection versus states' rights.

The first priority of this organization is, and always has been, protection of Grand Canyon. Unquestionably, wilderness designation is the best possible protection we could attain for any part of Grand Canyon. Yet, according to the NPS, such designation cannot happen to that area as long as the towers remain. Several guides have commented that as they motor among the mud flats of Lake Mead, surrounded by jet boats, speed boats, jet skis and tamarisk, the pursuit of wilderness designation seems absurd. But we should not write off the entire area based on our narrow perspective of what we can see from the lake. Beyond its shores there is a vast, wild, and beautiful area that contains some of the largest side canyons in all of Grand Canyon; an immense area of hidden springs, spectacular beauty and wildlife. Shouldn't the wilderness values of this area take precedence over a deteriorating 40 year old man-made structure?

The NPS has set aside many historic structures for preservation. But where is the line between a structure of *true* historic interest, and merely *old stuff*? The spectrum of man's relics in Grand Canyon includes ancient split-twig figurines, Anasazi ruins, the Ross Wheeler, the Bundy jars, the bat towers, the USGS cable crossing, and Glen Canyon Dam. How do we distinguish between artifacts we should preserve and debris which detracts from wilderness values? To do so, perhaps we must reexamine man's sometimes egocentric perception of his own importance.

The bat towers are certainly unique; their construction was monumental. However, US Guano Corporation, driven by the desire to turn an immense profit, gave little or no thought to the damage it was doing to the bat population or anything else. When it became obvious they had greatly overestimated the amount of guano and underestimated the costs, they simply shut down, leaving their toys strewn about like

spoiled children.

If we are to revere such monuments to man's greed and shortsightedness, what message are we sending? If times had changed and man no longer did such things—no longer raped the land for the almighty dollar—it would be more important to preserve these reminders. "Look, you guys!", you could say as you passed the towers, "Back then people actually just took what they wanted from the land and never even considered restoring it to its natural state. They sometimes even passed the costs along to the government! How quaint." But we have no shortage of such reminders. Man continues to exploit the land, to pummel the earth until its wealth is exhausted, then move on, giving little thought to cleaning up the mess he leaves behind. We should not embrace such behavior.

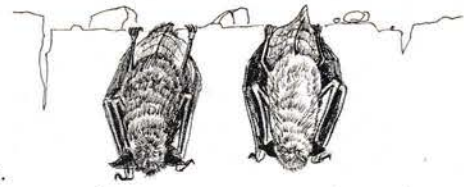
The State Historical Preservation Office supported removal of the towers, asserting that the action "should have no effect on any National register listed or eligible property." Concurring with the NPS proposal were Arizona Game & Fish, the Bureau of Land Management, National Parks and Conservation Association, Wildlands Project, Sierra Club and Grand Canyon Trust. The EIS process determined no significant impact from the proposed action. During the public comment period, eighteen respondents were supportive of proceeding with the removal of the towers, fourteen were opposed, and two expressed no opinion. The Hualapai Tribe raised objections, although the largest towers on their land would have been untouched.

Officials from Mojave County expressed outrage.

When the NPS announced they would proceed with the project, they were informed that Mojave County law enforcement would stop NPS personnel who attempted to remove the towers. Whether we want the towers saved or not, we should not applaud this action. Rather, we should be extremely concerned that a local government could exert such control over resource management decisions made, with due process and public input, by the NPS. The scary part is, what's next? Mining? Grazing? If NPS doesn't have ultimate authority over our nations parks, where are we headed?

Wilderness protection is a complicated process; it directly affects people who must give up certain uses of the land; this issue is no exception. Considering the current onslaught on our nation's wilderness, it is vital that we preserve as much as possible. The vast, often unnoticed and unappreciated area north of the lake deserves the best protection available.

Jeri Ledbetter





Jim Whitfield

On a sad note, we just heard that Jim Whitfield, an ARTA boatman of the early '70s, took his life in Cortez, Colorado.

Perhaps the best known tale of his Canyon days is how he ended them. Late one night, camped at Grapevine, he

decided he'd had about enough. So he walked out. No flashlight, no goodbye. Just went back to Flagstaff.

He was an artist and writer; the eagles above are a detail from one of his drawings. He was at work on a book on ethnic star mythology at the time of his death.



Paul Thevenin continued from page 1

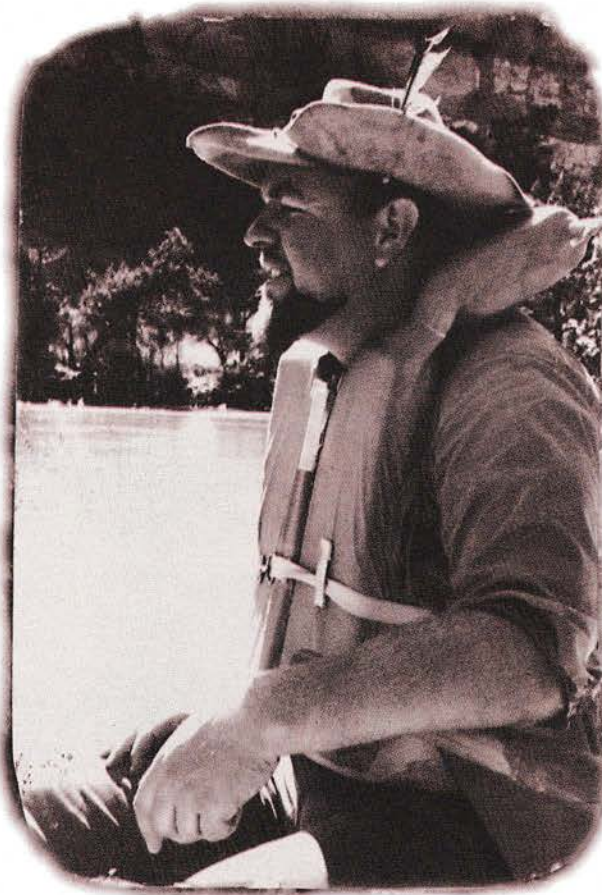
Paul Thevenin met Jack Curry in 1961 and got in on the ground floor of Western River Expeditions. After a long and colorful career as operations manager for both Western and, later, WhiteWater Expeditions, he laid out awhile only to get the itch so bad he had to come back in the summer of '95 and start rowing boats all over again. During that gap the River was not Thevenin-free, however; his kids Fred, Art and Theresa are all familiar faces on the Colorado. Paul's lovely wife Loretta is obviously a patient woman, but after listening to a few of Paul's stories you begin to see why she puts up with him...

Uh-Oh!

Turned over. And there we are right at the head of the waterfall. Well, Jack is in the back of the boat, close to shore, and like I say, he was a great athlete and could have had a swimming scholarship, and he just started stroking like mad and grabbed the rocks right before the falls, then climbed up, sort of dove in and jumped from rock to rock and, diving, got to shore. Well, the photographer... he and I are dangling from this now upside down boat on opposite sides, drifting right towards the head of this twenty-six-foot waterfall. I muscled myself up so I could lean over the bottom of the boat and say, "Bob, have you still got the camera?" And at that stage of the game, Bob let me know that the camera was not really what was on his mind.

Anyway, we washed right up to the head of the falls, and there was a rock there, and the boat (splurge!) [wrapped] right on that rock, and Bob was dangling down one side of the waterfall, and I was dangling down the other side. I was more in the mainstream. In those days we were much more the image of outdoorsmen than boatmen are today. We didn't run around in shorts and thongs and things like that. I mean, we wore manly clothes—we wore Levis and cowboy boots. So I'm dangling over the waterfall, and the waterfall rips off one of my boots. The other boot was too tight around the ankle, it couldn't get off, so it ripped the sole completely out of the boot.

So... in other words, you're having to hang on pretty



good.

I'm hangin' on as strong as... And I'm watching my grip slowly go. My grip goes before Bob's goes, and so I go (spew!) down through the slot, which then allowed the boat to slide Bob's way, and he slid off to the side and went over the first four-foot drop. Got washed into sort of a back-eddy and got into the shore. Now, he was a good photographer, and he was a nut, because the next day when it got light and he got one of the other cameras, they put that boat back into that little pool again and had Bob crawl down underneath so here you got the scene of the waterfall and the boat just looking like it's going to go, no it's going to bounce back and go out... and if at any time something had've gone wrong, he could have

gone the rest of the way. And now we have the picture on the film of him climbing out from underneath the boat. It's staged, but it's basically what had happened the night before when there was no camera going. Anyway, so I went down the center slot and we'd given people all these lectures... you know, if you get in the water make sure your lifejacket's on good and tight, and then you aim so that your feet go downriver and you hold your hands out, right? You know, just the way we teach people, if you get caught in a rapid, get your feet and then sort of block with your hands. So I'm in this waterfall in this position, with my feet and my hands out in what I think is in front of me. However, I soon discovered that my body is not going that direction, as my head bashes solidly into a rock—ooo!—and then I decided there's only one position for this, and that's the

fetal position, with my hands securely over the top of my head. And I'm bouncing around down there, and it tears my lifejacket in half, rips the collar completely off and everything else, and I'm....

This was a Mae West?

Yeah, the good old ones, the good solid ones—the ones that'll last any test the Coast Guard can give 'em. They didn't last that test!

But anyway, I'm down there being beat to pieces under the water, and I only have so much air left. I played tuba in the band, I got good lung capacity, but even that's going to give out. And I finally decided, "I'm gonna die."

Now this'll show you what kind of a man I am. You know, there's people, as they're about to die, they realize, the thoughts that flash through their minds... And I had gone through home before I went to Mexico. My parents had given me my Christmas present and said, "Now don't open 'til Christmas," so I was a good boy and I left my presents all behind in Salt Lake, and at the moment that I realized that Death is there, my thought was, "I should have opened the presents!" (laughter) About that time—I guess my thoughts—the other side decided I wasn't ready to come to heaven or go to hell yet, so all of a sudden, *blap!*—I blast to the top, and I'm up on the top. "I think that's a lovely rosy sunset I see up ahead of me." Then I realized that isn't the sunset, and that isn't roses, that's blood pouring out of the top of my head. So I started swimming like mad for... A lot of people said, "Weren't you unconscious?" It's a good thing I wasn't, because a short ways downriver was a sixty-four foot waterfall, which... I'm just as glad I didn't go over that one. But anyway, I managed to do some stroking over to a rock, got up on the rock and started poking around, found the hole right up in the very top of my head, and pushed my finger on the top of my head for a while, because, you know, most of those cuts aren't very deep, but they bleed like mad. So I'm sitting there on the rock looking around with my finger on my head, and the guys are way over on the other bank, running down. All three of us thought that the other two were dead, because when Jack grabbed the rocks, he looked down and saw both Bob and me go over the falls, and when Bob got dropped off four foot down, he couldn't see upriver, and he figured anybody that went down through the center was obviously dead, and I got down there and I didn't know they'd dropped off along the way, and I figured (chuckles) gee, I'm not supposed to be alive and



el sumidero team

the other two definitely aren't. So we all thought the other two were dead. And of course the people on the shore on the other side knew exactly where everybody was, what the game plan was... and I'm there with my finger on top of my head, sitting on a rock. Then they all realized that the other two, they could still get back across the river by taking one of those boats way upstream and rowing it across, picking up the other two, and then rowing back across. But there was no way they could get down to where I was, because past that waterfall was a sheer cliff on that side. So I got in that little bay over there, finally got to shore, figured I'd better get there before I ran out of blood. And they could run down the opposite shore and semi communicate with me. Of course it was a terrible loud roar, and one of the guys—John Cross, Jr.—had played baseball. So they decided I needed some food, and the only thing that they could get across were oranges. They tried throwing tins of tuna, but John couldn't get a grip on the tuna to get it all the way across the river, so the only thing he got across the river were oranges. Now, if you ever get a chance to see the movie, for some reason, Bob Moran, when he edited it, he put it in reverse order, that we had finished all the portaging, and then somehow I'd gone over the falls, and then they came immediately and got me. But I was over there for two-and-a-half days.

We ran into a bunch of other things all the way down. We came to one where Jack said, "Well, we're going to have to line this," and Cross, Fenstermaker, Morgan, and I said, "Jack, get all the people to say they don't care whether they lose their luggage or not, and we will run all the boats through." And Jack said, "Do you

think you can make it?" We said, "No, but we'd rather die trying, than do another portage." We ran it through, and it was a whale of a ride. So we made it through with all of them. There were some fantastic passes down there, it made a great movie, it was definitely unrunnable. We were supposed to be in National Geographic, but National Geographic, as you know, is the ultra-snob magazine as far as photography goes, and



oh no—lava falls again; Grant Reeder under the wave

some of our pictures were not up to their standards. They said, "Well, if you go back and do it again and get some better pictures, we'll run the story, because it's a great story." And we said, "Well, we'll skip National Geographic this time." People said, "Would you do it again?" and I said, "No." We had to put down a number of semi-rebellions who wanted to call in the helicopter and fly everybody out. But we had ulterior motives. All those people had to worry about was their lives—we were worried about advertising.

"Paul's Falls" were named during a publicity stunt run by the nascent Western River Expeditions on the Rio Grijalva in Chiapas, Mexico. They'd found the falls at the head of the sixteen mile El Sumidero gorge, which they "ran" successfully in a mere eleven days—not too long after Georgie White abandoned a similar attempt through the same stretch. It was a wild and wooly trip, but that wasn't exactly unusual for those days.

I graduated from the Coast Guard Academy, spent about eight years with Uncle Sam, and got out in 1960. I was going to be career, but I'd had a whole bunch of hardship duty out in all sorts of places, and they gave me a job that was a reward in Washington, D.C., where I

only went to work every third day. So I had one day on and two days off, and if there was nothing going on at night, I still got a full night's sleep. I was getting bored out of my skull taking lessons to be a dance instructor, taking lessons on how to be a masseur, which came in very handy later. That's how I got into river running.

Uncle Sam gives you one year to decide where you're going to go and how you're going to get home, and he

ships your stuff there.

But I wasn't ready to go home to California, and being raised basically a half-breed—my father was Catholic, my mother was Mormon—I decided every Mormon ought to serve a tour of duty in Utah. So I notified my aunt that I was coming to live with her, and she was amenable to that. I got out there and found out I couldn't teach in Utah. I'd taught in Virginia for a year, just with my bachelor's degree, but Utah wanted a teaching certificate, and I thought, "Well, someday I'll have to get that." I looked in the

want ads and one said, "Masseur needed, will train." It was out at the Deseret Gym under the auspices of the Mormon Church. The guy said, "Well, I've had about twenty guys in today, I think I've already picked the guy, but what makes you think you want to be a masseur, and how long will it be before I can get you trained?" I said, "I'm already trained." He said, "You are, huh?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "I'm getting up on this table, I'm tired. Show me what you know." And fifteen minutes later I was hired in the Deseret Gym. (A sidelight, this was under a guy by the name of Brother Jonathan, who had been World Heavyweight Wrestling Champion, one of my heroes when I was a teenager. So I ended up working for him in the Deseret Gym. And that's how I met Jack Curry.)

Jack Curry had decided to go into the river business. He'd made one trip with a group of friends that fall and decided that's what he was going to do. He spent a lot of time in the Deseret Gym playing handball, and while he was waiting for his turn at the court, he was reading a bunch of books on legends and stars and everything else, and somebody said, "You ought to go see the new masseur, he used to be a navigator in the service." So

Jack came in to talk to me, and I knew how to find my way around the world by the stars, but I didn't know the legends, and that's what he wanted. I tried to trade him a series of massages for a trip down the river, and he didn't want any massages. So the only thing left to do was to go to work for him.

He said, "What do you know about boats?" I said, "Everything. I grew up out there in California, I was a Boy Scout, I did some canoeing and rowing, and I spent eight years in the Coast Guard." He said, "Okay, you're hired," and about that time I left the Deseret Gym and went to work for KLUB in Salt Lake City—"Club" Radio, in advertising, and Jack was in advertising with—I think it was KCPX, Channel 6 in Salt Lake. So we had a lot of time where we could put boats together and patch them and paint them and put names on them, put names on a truck and all sorts of things like that. I ended up being his right-hand man, all the time planning and organizing, so when we actually got into river running that spring, even though I had guys like Art Fenstermaker, who had run with Georgie White and Ken Sleight, and there was Ron Smith who was running for some of these same people, and Art Gallenson... since I'd been with Jack helping to put the equipment together and because of my age (at age twenty-seven I got into it a little older than most guys did) and supposed maturity, I ended up as Jack's right-hand man. I was in charge of guys who'd run far more rivers than I had. In fact, I had never really run a river, but we showed up for the Yampa and Jack pulls up at the head of Warm Springs Rapid—and back in 1962, it wasn't. It wasn't until a flood a couple of years later that Warm Springs really became a rapid. But anyway, Jack pulls up there, because in those days we had passengers who rowed the boats, and we got up there on top and he started talking about the tongue, the slide, the slick, the this and that... And I thought, "Well, okay, fine, I'll just follow the boat in front of me." They all went through and did a wonderful job, and I went through right behind them and all of a sudden we were all swimming and for years afterwards I looked at Warm Springs and for the life of me, I never could find a place to flip a boat in the old Warm Springs. Mother Nature came to my aid a few years later and made Warm Springs into actually a killer rapid. I guess the first boatman that hit the new Warm Springs, Les Oldham, unfortunately had his oars tucked under his knees and was sitting on his life-jacket like boatmen were prone to do in those days, and it was a cold spring trip, and he didn't anticipate Warm Springs being what it was, and he went over and under. The people said it was one graceful movement. His Army field boots and his Army field jacket just drug him under. So Warm Springs changed greatly.

The thing is, this was actually Jack's first commercial trip. He'd run a trip where he considered it was a river

trip, because he'd gotten a group of friends together the year before, but this was technically, probably, really the first trip he had.

The first commercial trip he'd ever done?

First commercial trip. But as we talked to the people and told them about the safety procedures and precautions, he included the line, "Well, don't worry what happens if you flip or anything—we've never had a boat go over on a regular trip yet." And suddenly I'm upside down. I figure, "I've ruined this guy's record." He said, "Don't worry about it, we'll take care of that." And so the very next trip, as he's giving the same speech, he says, "Don't worry, we've never had a boat turn over on a regular trip yet." And I pulled Jack aside and said, "Jack, what happened last week?" He said, "That wasn't a regular trip." Anytime a boat went over, that was not a regular trip. (laughter)

So anyway, Jack Curry got into the business. He'd come from Southern California as a Pillsbury salesman and gotten in with a group of guys up in Salt Lake: Mendenhall who became pretty big in construction, and Jerry Morgan who was into all sorts of sales work and they did a bunch of things together. They were part of that group that had made that friendly trip down the fall before. They had a fair amount of money, and Jack had a fair amount of time and know-how, and they were technically all three equal partners, but Jack actually ran Western River Expeditions.

When I came with him, he had actually gone out and bought three boats, and that's all Western had at the time I joined them, was Jack's one trip down the river and three boats.

They were the old Army ten-mans, or Navy ten-mans. And then we went running around looking for boats like that, and back in those days, if you were hard-pressed you'd pay fifteen bucks for one of those boats. You could sometimes get 'em cheaper. So that's one of the other differences in boats between then and now, is you could pick up a good boat for fifteen bucks or less.

Now, let's get this straight. Here's Jack Curry, he's worked for Pillsbury, and he worked for advertising at a TV station. What do you think drove him into the business?

Well, Jack was really a super-athlete. He probably could have gone to college on a number of athletic scholarships: football, swimming, et cetera, et cetera. And in good shape. He wasn't one of these guys who spent all of his time with weights, he was in overall, all-around good shape. But he married his high school sweetheart and they had kids and he just figured college was out of the picture. He got a good job and he was a good salesman as well. He was a good-looking guy, made a good presentation, could sell things. He loved the out-of-doors, and he loved that trip he went on. He thought, "Hey, this is neat, this is wonderful, this is what I want

to do." And he managed to accumulate people who thought that this was a neat thing to do, too. Like I said, in the old days, we'd have customers handle the boats. You'd maybe have six, seven, eight boats on the water, and you'd only have three professional boatmen.

On the trip.

On the trip, because in those days, your clientele was outdoorspeople, whereas today our clientele, many of them have never zipped or unzipped a sleeping bag in their life. But back in those days, there was no such thing as "rental units" because everybody who went down the river had their own stuff. Most of them had their own rubber packs—again, surplus packs that you picked up. Some of them—well, when I started, a lot of my customers had a whole lot more experience on rivers than I did. I just happened to be the one whose name was on the list as trip leader.

Would you have customers rowing the boats on hard rivers?

Yeah, on hard rivers. Well, it depended upon who you had. I mean, some of these guys would come down trip after trip, and they were good. And if they weren't, if you ended up with a trip they weren't, you'd pull over at the head of a rapid of any size and say, "Okay folks, you stay here." You'd run through, walk back, run one of their boats through, walk back, and take another boat through. Then you'd go on downriver—you know, give the boats back to them—and go on down the river until you came to another rapid you felt they couldn't handle. And of course most of the stuff we were running was up on the Yampa and the Green and the Main Salmon and the Middle Fork of the Salmon, which were basically our bread and butter. Most of the rapids, if somebody was somewhat felicitous with the oars, he could handle it as long as he followed the boat in front of him. So you'd put the guy in, go down, and say, "Okay, now stay right behind me."

Of course, this is how Henry Falany got into the business [and later started WhiteWater]. We've skipped a few years ahead, but Henry and Wade Falany were coming up with a father and sons outing from Turlock, California. And at the last minute, their dad couldn't make it, so this dentist said, "Well, hey, Joe, I'll take your kids up there and look after yours while I look after mine." We got to Idaho, and the dentist ended up being one of the boatmen. And the Middle Fork of the Salmon, the first major rapid you come to—in fact, the Middle Fork, everything occurred rather rapidly. It's about 90 percent whitewater, and it all went fast. In fact, I'd guess it was almost a year before I could recognize the scenery of Velvet Falls coming up, because we got to Velvet Falls while I was still trying to explain to people what to do, and I would suddenly yell out, "Hey, this is Velvet Falls! Hold onto your hats!." Anyway, I did that,

we got to Velvet Falls, I suddenly realized we're there and I yelled to the boats behind me, "This is Velvet Falls, keep it right in the center where I go!" And this one dentist watched me drop out of sight in Velvet Falls and started rowing back upstream to slow the boat down, which... that's not the thing to do on a set of waterfalls. So he eased his boat right over the edge of the lip of Velvet Falls, and didn't have any speed. When he hit the bottom, the back wave just caught it, and the boat started turning around like one of those little cages in a chipmunk cage, or something, going around and around and around. Eventually the boat came out and nobody was hurt. We pulled the boat ashore and got it rightside up, and they got in their boat, run a little further down, and then we started off again. The Middle Fork was at the point where sometimes you went right of an island, sometimes you went left, depending on the water level. I was in the ten-man, and Art Gallenson was handling one of the bigger twenty-eight-footers. The right-hand run looked like it might be a little shallow, so I said "everybody hold back a little bit," and I went down the right side and signalled Art, "No, no, you'll never get the twenty-eight-footer down here. It's going to be a pain." I was already committed to the right-hand run, so I drug my boat around over the rocks, and slithered and slid down, and came around out the underside of the island and looked back upriver. I saw Art's boat way up the channel. He really should have been down about the same time I was, but he was way up there. And I saw the reflection of the boat on the water, and thought, "Well, now, that's a strange reflection, because Western River Expeditions is written smaller in the reflection than it is in the boat. And then it suddenly came to my awareness that it was not a reflection, but it was a twenty-eight-footer sitting on top of an upside down ten-man. The dentist had decided that he was going to stay close to the boat, so he could hear the orders better. So when Gallenson hit a rock and stopped, there was no room between the two boats, and the ten-man went up and underneath Gallenson's boat.

And Henry and Wade were in the water again.

This is their first trip. (laughter) After that it turned out to be a pretty good trip. And they were a couple of good kids. Henry was sixteen and Wade was fourteen, and they were good kids, they wanted to help around the campsite. They said at the end, "If we ever do this trip again, we'd really rather row our own boats."

What was your first Grand trip like?

Memorable. I ran all the way from Lee's Ferry to the Paria Beach.

There'd been some sort of agreement that they would never drop the water below 1,000 cubic feet per second, and it was marginal whether you could operate at that. We tried to get information from the Bureau. We didn't, and just before we left... you know, we had this group of

people...in those days we brought the equipment down in the truck, with the people sitting on top of the load, and we didn't have to check in with the rangers then, but there was a ranger there, so out of courtesy we would always stop in and say hi to the ranger, "How are things going?" blah, blah, blah. "We're going in." "Fine." Nothing official. We said, "What have you heard about holding the water back?" He said, "Oh, I haven't heard much. Probably sometime this month." So we go down, rig our boats and load the stuff in. Put the people on the boats and start down. As we start down through that first little riffle, we suddenly see this ranger running across the beach, yelling at us. We start to pull towards him, and he's screaming, "Can you make it at three hundred?!" We said, "You mean three thousand?" Obviously the guy's a nut, because they promised they'd never cut it below a thousand. So we decided we'd be nice and pull in to the beach and straighten him out. "Where'd you hear this?" "Oh, I decided to go back and phone after I got through talking to you, and found out they've already shut the water off." "How far did they shut down?" He said, "Three hundred." So we pulled the boats up on the beach and started walking towards him. "No, you mean probably three thousand." He said, "Turn around and look at your boats." In that amount of time, our boats were already out of the water. We just stood there and watched the rocks grow. They cut it all the way down to three hundred.

We turned to our people and said, "Folks, there's a neat trip up in Cataract Canyon." We rolled up the boats and—fortunately they were ten-mans—drug them across the sand beach and up to the road and threw them in the truck and put the people up on top of them and drove to Moab. So my first Grand Canyon trip was from Lee's Ferry to the Paria Beach.

What was the next one like?

We had shifted to the idea on Cataract and Desolation and Glen Canyon that you really needed to have a motor, because in those days—I hate to say it—the philosophy was, if it's more than fifty feet off the river, it doesn't exist. We were there to run the rapids. So when we made our first trip through the Grand Canyon, we carried a motor on about every third boat, and we'd lash it up. We'd extended the rowing frame—you're familiar with the old tail-draggers that stayed around for a long time. It was not that we liked it better

that way, but boatman logic and evolution don't always go together. So we had a rowing frame, and to stick a motor on the back end we just stuck a couple of boards on, made the rowing frame a little bit long. At least we had sense enough to put them together with pins, and just hang the motor frame right out over the water, which was a terrible place to run a motor anyway. For anyone who has ever sat on the back tube, it's a lot of action.

But anyway, we'd already adopted this policy, and my first real trip down the Grand Canyon, we're tooling on down the Canyon, and every time we run a rapid, we row the rapids, and then we get down in the calm water, we'd drop the motor frame over the side and drop the motor on it, because we could also pull the frame up out



whatever you say, Jack; one motor and two oars

of the water. And we finally decide "There's no real point in dragging the frame up, it doesn't hit the rocks that hard." And then we'd hang the motor from it—we didn't want to leave the motor back there. So we'd pull the motor up, run the rapid, hit the calm pond, put the motor back in, hook up two more boats behind us, and drag them through the calm water and go on down. And Jack's philosophizing, as Jack frequently does, "You know, Georgie runs everything with a motor." "Yeah, Jack, that's fine." "We ought to try that sometime." "Yeah, Jack, fine, we ought to try it sometime." "We ought to try it on the next rapid." "Jack, the next rapid is Lava." "Yeah, I know that, we ought to try it." "Jack, the next rapid is Lava." "Yeah, we ought to try that."

Now, this, as I remember was, I think Jack had made one trip down the Grand Canyon, but this is my first trip down and I'd never seen Lava before.

And these are Army ten-mans?

These are ten-mans, and we had the thirty-three-footers for support boats, carrying all the garbage. We wouldn't hang the motors off the thirty-threes. We'd just drag them along behind one ten-man, because we had the frames built for the ten-mans. And there'd be this little ten-man, dragging a thirty-three-footer behind on a rope. We'd put the oars up while we're dragging it. But then we get to Lava, Jack has decided, "Okay, we're going to run it." "Jack, shouldn't we try it on something else first?" "Nah, this'd be a good chance." So we get there, and again we had passengers running the boats, so you know, the idea is, we'll take our boat through, and then we'll go back for the other boats. And my boat's the thirty-three, I'm rowing the thirty-three with Grant Reeder [*Stuart Reeder's dad, who according to Paul is a great boatman, which comes as no surprise*] up front. We go through, and it was a messy run. I've got a couple of beautiful pictures of it some passengers took. All you can see is the top of Grant's hat and two of the oars sticking out through the water. I mean, the boat is totally, thoroughly underwater. This is a thirty-three-footer, and you can't see the boat. You can see Grant Reeder's hat, and you can see two oars sticking out.

Went down the right?

Went down the right. That was the only place we knew to go!

But anyway, we made it through. It was a lousy run, but we made it through. And Jack said, "Okay, go up and get the other boat." But we don't trust motors, we're still oarsmen. So Amil Quayle was on the trip, and Amil is going to man the oars in case anything goes wrong. Now, if you're gonna run rapids....

Jack tells you, "You guys go up and run this motorboat down." It's not like he's gonna do it?

No, Jack was gonna do it, and Jack did it, he ran one through. But anyway, Amil and I go up, but we're not gonna trust the motor. So Amil was poised there with the oars ready, and I'm on the motor. And you can run rapids with motors, and you can run rapids with oars, but my advice to anybody is do not run them with both. As soon as I would get the boat lined up, a wave would come up and slap that oar Amil had at the ready, and spin the boat around, and I'd be back there on the motor, straighten it out, as soon as I get it straightened out, a wave would slap the other oar and spin it the other way. And I mean, we're just zig-zagging all the way down there, with the waves slapping Amil's oars, and me trying to straighten the boat out. And it was a miserable mess, but we made it through. And Jack wasn't letting any of the passengers ride with us—it was just Amil and

me. I think it was Amil... We go back up and do another one, it's the same thing—it's a miserable run, slapping those oars all over the place—but we make it through. And the customers started complaining, "Well, they made it through, why can't we ride?" Jack said, "Okay, some of you guys can ride." So we all go up and get in the last boat to go through, and I'm tooling down there, and I finally got it all figured out. I go into everything and I have never made a better run of Lava in my life! I am doing great, I've anticipated, I am doing it beautifully. I've got one hole left to go, and I'm mentally patting myself on the back, and... I look down and I see the sky. I look up and I see the water. (others chuckle) And the guys on the bank said that was the most graceful flip they've ever seen in their life. So often when a boat flips, it hits that wall of water and it shudders and bounces, and it's looking like "should I or shouldn't I flip?" They said this boat had no decision to make whatsoever. It was smooth. It just went into that thing, up the curl on the wave, and didn't even slow down. Went right straight over, without a shudder. And I got to swim Lava, the bottom part of it.

So anyway, that was my first full trip down through the Grand Canyon, where we did it with oars and motors.

And a thirty-three and the ten-mans: you drag the thirty-three and motored through the flats?

Yup.

So just to trace the equipment evolution, you started out with the ten-mans, and how many people would you have on those?

Oh, we'd sometimes squeeze in six passengers. Maybe even more than that, I'm not sure. The thing is, we found we just didn't have the room to carry things we'd want to carry. So the twenty-one-footers came into existence right that same year, and then the twenty-eight-footers showed up, I think it was about the next year, and—phased out the twenty-one-footers. The twenty-one-footer added a whole lot of weight, but didn't add that much more room, where the twenty-eight-footer added a whole lot more room, and I really think it was more manageable than the twenty-one-footer was. And then we found the thirty-three-footer, which was totally unmanageable!

But, boy, could you put a bunch of stuff on it!

Oh, could we! We could get ten, twelve people or more on those things! Now, the twenty-eight-footer, once you learned how to handle it, the twenty-eight-footer was really a lovely boat. And it could be handled by one person. Once you got over the idea that when you had your fourteen-foot oar, you had an awful lot of weight. You couldn't find commercial oars in those days that would hold up for river runners, so we found some guy in Mapleton, Utah—I don't know what his name

is—unofficially around the company he was known as “Hatchet Harry.” His oars very seldom broke. You could never find a matching pair, and some of the round handles had not gotten all the square taken out of ‘em, from being four-by-fours at one time. They were strong oars, but they were heavy. When you’d sit there with the oars dead, it took most of your energy just to hold them up, (laughs) because you had such a short distance between your hand and the post, and then you had this great big oar setting out there in the water. But after you got used to it, it really wasn’t bad. There was a real difference between a twenty-eight-footer and a thirty-three-footer, though, because twenty-eight-footers only had twenty-four-inch, twenty-eight-inch tubes, whereas the thirty-three-footer had the big thirty-six-inch tubes.

But you guys would row the thirty-threes too?

Yeah. We finally decided it wasn’t practical for one guy, you had really very little control. So you would put another guy—you had oar locks mounted up front too—and of course the oar locks in those days were half-inch or three-quarter-inch water pipe pounded down through wooden blocks that were nailed onto the frames. And then the oars had cut-up rubber tires put on ‘em with hose clamps in the right position, bent just a little bit so they’d fit down around the post. And you’d row with them.

But anyway, we started putting a person up front. Or sometimes, if it was customers, we’d put two people up front, one guy on each oar. And the brains were supposed to be the guy in the back. The people up front were supposed to do whatever the guy in the back told them to do, which worked well if they could take orders, and if they knew left from right. There was one other problem, though... when we put another boatman out there, if he had a difference of opinion on how a rapid should be run, things got a little sticky.

What about the “J” rig?

Well, the “J” rig came along after that. Most of these boats we used were Army surplus. They were bridge-building pontoons, World War II, and they were built like pontoons, much like most of the boats are today, and there was what we called the donut part of it. That’s what we were used to, what we were using. And we would look for surplus sales and other places to find them.

Hatch boatmen used to be sort of—it was a running joke that Hatch boatmen didn’t know how to patch, but

Hatch boatmen didn’t need to know how to patch, because if they got a hole, they could put duct tape or something over the hole and make it back home. Then they’d throw the boat away, because Bus Hatch had somehow collected a whole heap of boats, and he’d just pull another boat out of the swamp. Well, Jack was looking for that same ability, and somebody gave him a contact that there were a whole bunch of boats down in Kentucky or Tennessee or somewhere that the government was getting rid of, and Jack got a real coup. He ended up getting two railroad cars full of these boats.

I recall Gallenson and I unloaded those railroad cars. We said, “There’s something wrong with these things, they’re not what we want.” And when we unrolled them, they were these long, skinny snout things that they had used in the Korean War when the military got smart and said, “Hey, these things are too big for one man to carry.” Shoot, it took about four men to carry them. So they said, “Well, let’s make them smaller.” Instead of making them look like a boat, they just made what the snouts look like today. And one guy could carry ‘em, or two guys could carry ‘em easily. Then they’d strap ‘em all together, it didn’t make any difference which way the river ran, you could butt them together. That’s what all the straps in the back were for, that’s what all these “D” rings were for, you could strap



three oarsmen

them together sideways, you could butt them together, whatever you wanted, for as wide as the bridge was. But they didn’t look like a boat.

Now Jack, when he found out he had two railroad cars full of these things, started mass producing brochures, sending them to all the lakes and recreation centers all over the United States and everywhere he

could find, trying to sell them as bumpers for docks. You know, have this nice air cushion to bring the boat up next to so you don't scratch the boat. He was trying to get rid of them! And they were not selling very fast. (laughter) When the sale was over, we still had one and three-quarter railroad cars full of 'em. To me, they looked sort of like the catamarans I've seen out in Hawaii. I said, "Jack, why don't we build a catamaran?" Jack said, "I don't want a catamaran." "Oh, Jack, you gotta do something with these things." "Well, on your own time, you can go ahead and build a catamaran if you want." And so I built the catamaran and decided it was a little bit unstable. I thought, "Well, why not, instead of one pontoon on each outside edge and dragging the frame across them, just lash them all together sideways." I think I did four tubes together, and put a platform on 'em. Then we thought, "Well, maybe we just need it a little bit wider than that," so we threw in the fifth one. Of course the idea was to row it, and by the time you got five tubes side-by-side, the fourteen-foot oar didn't quite reach, and the longer oars wouldn't reach because they kept rubbing on the outside tube. So I built this platform that was a good four or five feet up in the air, so that when you rowed it, your oar would dangle down in the water. And that's about the time I left the company. Jake Luck came along, and we were almost going to motors by that time.

So I left, and Jake came along with his welding machine and changed the wood to metal, and ran it with motors. I think there was one trip run with that wooden stack tower I made, and I think that was the only time it was run, and probably the only time it should have been run.

It'd be fun to see some pictures of that... So, the "J" rig invention wasn't like, "I'm going to have a boat with a bunch of these tubes." (laughter)

No, it was "What are we going to do with these stupid things?!"

One particularly interesting run was the time that Amil flipped a boat in Upset. This is backing up again, the days when we carried spare oars. This was on a single thirty-three, so you could row them, but he'd messed up all of his motors by the time he'd got there.

Then when he flipped, he lost all but one oar. So he managed to coast the thing in downriver, and got into Havasu and hiked those people out.

Wow. So he turned one over.

Turned one over. This is with Western. He's on a one-boat trip, and the motors wouldn't.... See, the thing is, if we'd known as much about motors then as we know now, Amil probably could have fixed the motors. But in those days when a motor went bad, we didn't know anything about mechanics. You pulled it off, you put the other one on. If it went bad, you went to the oars. And he'd lost all the oars but one. So he managed to get that thing in there at Havasu and hiked the people out. Jack

sent me and some kid we had from California after the boat. He said "Okay, take four oars and go around, and hike back down Havasu." So we're carrying these four oars. I mentioned earlier, these oars were made by this guy, Hatchet Harry, down there in Mapleton or somewhere. I mean, they were heavy. And we're trying to carry them two at a time. Finally I got smart, I said, "We'll bundle them up, all four of them. We'll carry them safari-style with our supply of food hanging from the middle." Well, when we got to Mooney Falls and Havasu Falls, that was fun. We'd throw those things over one at a time, and they'd go down, hit the water, they'd disappear and

pop back up and jump about five feet out of the water. Then we crawled through the hole, went down and retrieved them. We were carrying them down there, I finally said, "Nuts! We gotta tie these oars together." So we carried all four oars together on our shoulders, and that got to be a pain. And I thought, "You know, we got a perfectly good river here." So we'd float them down the river. We'd get to one of the falls, I'd have the kid hold back and I'd go downstream and say, "Shove 'em over," and we got to talking about the travertine and all the little holes and what would happen sometime if one of the oars got stuck in one of those little travertine tunnels. We got down at the bottom of this waterfall, which, my guess—see, we didn't know the names of anything upstream—my guess is it must have probably been Beaver, because Beaver was the only one big enough for it to have been. So I'm down below

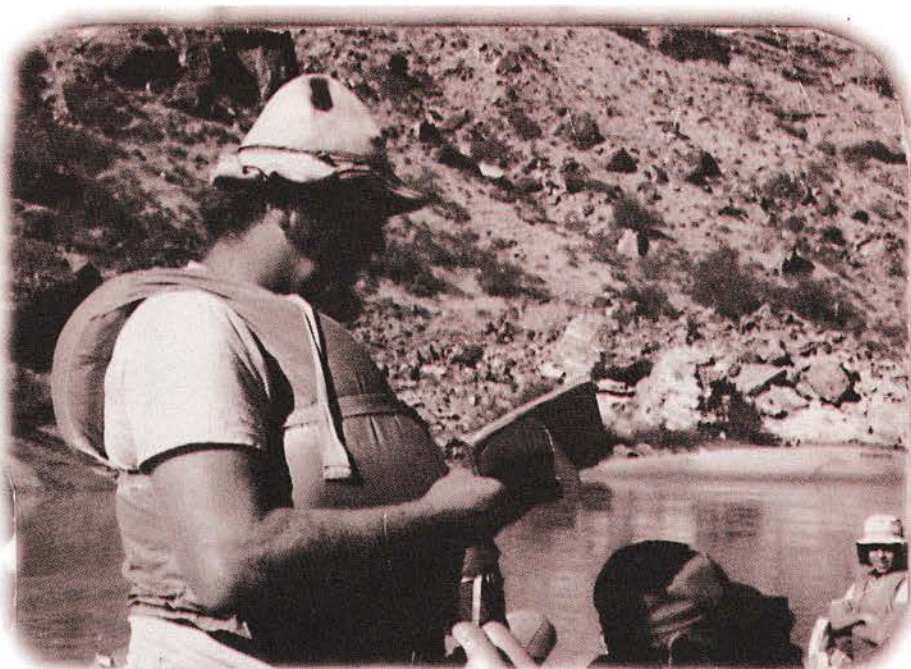


Beaver—my guess is it's Beaver, anyway—and I say, "Okay, send 'em over." He said, "I already have." I said, "Well, they haven't come down to me." So I get to the falls, no oars, I start diving to the bottom. And sure enough, there they are, all four of 'em wedged in this tunnel. The pressure had been enough, it jammed them in there, and I could stand on the bottom, I could pull on the oars, and they would not budge. The kid says, "Well, are we going to hike back out for more oars?" I said, "No." "What are you going to do?" "I'm going to hike down and take the boat out." "Well, Amil couldn't take it out." I said, "Amil had passengers, we don't." He said, "Well, there's only one oar. Can we do it with one oar?" I said, "No. Kid, you got your choice right now. You can walk back up the canyon, or you can come with me." And for some reason he decided to come with me. We walked down there, and sure enough there was only one oar. The boat was sitting there in the heat. When the tubes were black, they had a tendency to blow up, so the tube just behind the nose on the left had popped. I wasn't going to patch it. I thought, "Okay, fine, we'll just shove off, and we'll look for some driftwood somewhere along the way." So we're just tooling on down, and I'm pushing and pulling. We find a big hunk of driftwood, and I grab that. So I've got one oar on one side and driftwood on the other side. Then we find a bigger patch of driftwood and I get a bigger driftwood oar. You know, I'm doing pretty good, I'm getting down that river, oar on one side, driftwood on the other side. Got a couple pieces of driftwood in case one of them breaks. I'm tooling on down the river. In those days, there weren't a lot of people in the canyon, so we didn't see anybody. Just tooling on down the river with oar and driftwood, oar and driftwood. I came to Lava, the kid says, "This is Lava!" I said, "Yeah, it's Lava." "Well, what are you going to do?" "I'm going to run it!" He said, "Shouldn't we line the boat?" "Nah, we'd never catch it afterwards." He said, "Can you run it with driftwood?" and I said, "No, but I can get most of the way through it. (laughter) If you want to be safe, kid, go walk around it." He said, "Well, you gonna ride it?" I said, "Yeah, I'm gonna ride it." "I'll ride it too." So I'm up there, entering Lava, and boatman reflex, I'm concentrating more on Lava—the big problem with the boat, I mentioned that one tube was soft. If you aimed straight downstream, you were going at an angle, because the nose of the boat really wasn't aiming downstream, it was aiming off to the left somewhere. So I'm going in the rapid, trying to adjust

for the nose not pointing downstream, and I get that momentary reflex a boatman has, one quick adjustment, and I go "eyah!" I hear this crack. And there went the driftwood. And so there I am entering Lava with one oar and it was push-push-push, pull-pull-pull—made it through Lava, and right down below, in that back-eddy over off to the left is an oar. (laughter) So the rest of the trip was a breeze, I had two oars from there on down.

It was in an eddy?

I think it was the eddy on the left. See, this was low water, so there was an eddy over there on the left before



it went into Little Lava.

There was an oar that was big enough?

It was one of Amil's oars.

Now wait, just to get this straight. Amil is down there, this is a thirty-three.

Thirty-three-footer.

And it has no floor in it, had a motor and a set of oars.

No, this one had a floor in it, because this was a tail-dragger, with the motor hanging over the tail end.

Amil's on a one-boat trip, flips in Upset.

Turns it over in Upset.

Manages to get everybody back together and gets the boat rightside up.

No. Goes through until he gets down to Havasu. And I recall he left it upside down until he got to Havasu.

And he got it into Havasu.

Well, again, it was low water, so it was easier pulling them out, you know.

Pulls it into the mouth of Havasu, upside down.

You'll have to check with him. As I recall, he said he swam in with a rope. (laughter) And then pulled it in. He grabbed the end of the bow line and jumped and swam, and then pulled the boat in. And then hiked the people up.

And Jack calls you and says, "Hey, go get that boat."

Yeah, it was a couple of weeks later. We left it down there for a while. I think it may have been 1967, the year that I was gone most of the summer and I just got back, I think. It was either 1966 or 1967.

Who was that kid with you?

I don't even remember who the kid was. I don't think he ever came back. We'll have to check with Amil sometime to get the true account of exactly what happened on that thing. But that's close.

I only had one other minor adventure with that kid. We got down there to Diamond, and Bryce was picking us up. Derigging the boat it starts to sprinkle, the kid says, "Oh, wonderful, I can get a shower." "Get to work, right now! Now! Now! Get the thing on the trailer!" "What, are you guys afraid of a little bit of rain?" "Yes!" (chuckles) And we got about a quarter of the way up, the water started getting higher and higher in Diamond Creek. We had me running in front of the left tire, this kid running in front of the right tire so if the water ever got above our knees, then Bryce would know he had to go to the left or right. And the kid learned why we were afraid of rain.

Bryce was driving the International Travelall with a small trailer behind it and one of the Hualapais was up there, who had seen the water coming. He went for high ground, which was a sensible thing to do. But we're plowing through that thing, and he takes a look at us and, "Well, white men can do it, so can we." He pulled down off that same hill and in behind us, and without the weight we had, he just started drifting down. So we grabbed a rope and tied it on the back of our trailer, ran down, tied it onto his bumper. So now Bryce was towing up the trailer and this other pickup, with me and this kid running out in front of the wheels.

Made it to the top, though! I got up, and it really cut loose up there. I had a convertible parked at Peach Springs, and the top went completely...you've seen in the cartoons where all of a sudden the guy opens his car door and the water pours out? (laughter) That was it exactly! (more laughter) I opened that door and here came the flashflood.

You guys didn't see anybody else the whole time on that trip?

Many times, when you put on the river, there wasn't

anybody else down there. You'd go down the river and say, "Ooo! that looks like another boat party somewhere up ahead," and you'd row like mad to catch up. They'd row back upstream so you could talk to each other, because you hadn't seen anybody else in two or three days. That's one of the changes, you know. It was an isolated experience back there.

The thing about Paul Thevenin is, this guy knows a lot of good stories. Ever since the oral history project began, his name has cropped up as a mandatory interview. Richard Quartaroli finally captured him, and we sat at Richard's place in Flagstaff for two afternoons, racking up 207 pages for the collection at NAU. The stories just kept coming. And they were all good. We talked about further adventures in Mexico, and the heyday of WhiteWater, and wild days in Idaho. Paul paid homage to the women of Grand Canyon, mentioning that while Georgie was the first, she hadn't exactly blazed a trail for anybody else... a whole generation had been forced to scrape and claw to break in themselves. He spoke of fond and colorful memories of Connie Tibbitts, Liz Hymans, and Louise Teal, to name only a few. He remembered Bryce Mackay jabbing the icepick hard into his wooden leg every time they loaded coolers, just to blow bystander's minds; and Grant Reeder shifting gears to become an anesthesiologist instead of a GP, just so he could run rivers every summer. He remembered Shirl Nagle packing a whole motor on his back down the trail from the South Rim to Phantom Ranch because he'd trashed the first three, and, another time, Shirl and Joe Greeno leaving an hour late to catch a big trip with an extra boat and a gorgeous passenger who'd accidentally been left behind ("ask Bart Henderson why she got left," said Paul), but it took them three days to catch up.

We bashed the government, naturally:

I worked in Washington, D.C. a while, and the thinking of far too many public servants is, they are not public servants, they're public masters...

And slammed the resurgent idea of Coast Guard in the Park:

I spent eight years there, went through the Academy, all that stuff. I was an officer in charge of enforcing all the regulations on the ocean, the harbors, the navigable waters, and when the Coast Guard decided—thirty years ago—to step into this thing, they brought up basically the same test they gave guys down in San Francisco Harbor. "What's the maximum capacity of the bilge before you have to have such-and-such?" "If you are proceeding downriver in a fog and you hear a vessel blowing two blasts on his whistle, what do you do?" Well, I couldn't find it on the test, but the obvious answer was, you stood on the bank and cheered the idiot on. I mean, trying to go upriver in a fog! (chuckles) I don't know too many guys that went upriver in the

Grand Canyon. But these were the type of questions that were on there.

The one organization that gave the most sensible test I've seen... the State of Utah got pressured into it by the Legislature. Ted Tuttle was the Head of Recreation for the State, and Bob Anderson was the Head Boating Ranger. They came to the river outfits and said, "We're going to have to license you guys. Would you get together with us and help us make up a test?" So a bunch of us sat together with the State of Utah and made up questions we thought would be appropriate for a boating license. And when there were differences of opinion, so it wouldn't be: "Well, I like to push and you like to pull, which is the best way?" —we avoided questions like that. We'd go over all the questions, everybody would say, "Well, nah, I don't think that's a good answer, because I really prefer to do it this way and I get by just as well." Then we'd throw that question out. By the time they got the test put together, it was about boating, and they were things that everybody agreed to, that people ought to know...

The test I took this year with the Park Service here, really had very little to do with boating. It was, "How well do you understand the regs of the Park Service? What temperature do you cook the food at, how cold the ice box has to be, what places are off limits?" One of the questions I missed really isn't a boatman's responsibility: "At what length does a boat not have to be licensed by the Coast Guard?"

We re-hashed motors v. oars:

The thing is, for the rowing guys, when a motor trip goes by you have the noise of the motor, then it's gone. But if you put all those people on the water with oars, all launching at the same time, you're never going to have any privacy.

We talked about Paul's winter job, teaching:

The last part of my career was all math, and I've taught everything—cooking, English, social studies, journalism. I taught junior high and high school. Mostly high school. I had an elementary credential, but I never did actually teach elementary. They looked at all the education I had and said, "Gee, we don't know what to give you," so they gave me a general credential, which licensed me to teach anything...

Most of my kids indicated they found out having me for a teacher was a unique experience. (pregnant pause) Most of my administrators said about the same thing.

*We collected cosmic data:
Still active in the Church?*

Mormon Church? Yeah, most of the time. I'm on vacation now.

How do you reconcile that with all that geology stuff in the Canyon?

What geology stuff?

You know, how old the rocks are and like that?

You mean, on Sunday I should close my eyes and pretend the rocks don't exist, and on Monday through Saturday pretend God doesn't exist?

Just fishing for something cosmic. (chuckles)

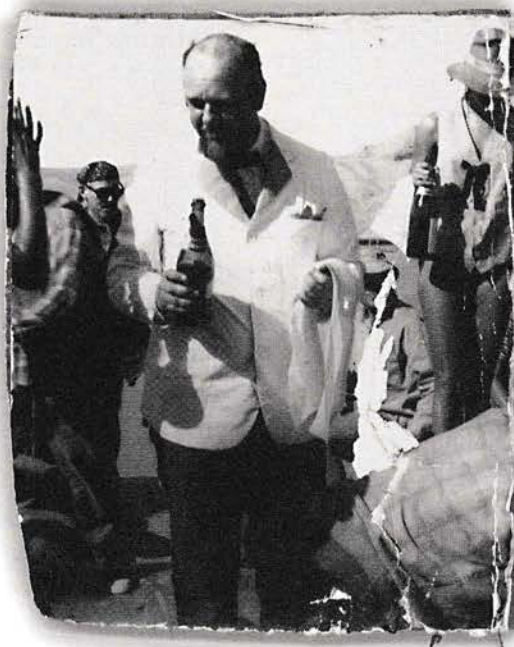
Some cosmic data? Well, let's put it this way: My degree was in science, engineering degree, and I've read the Bible very thoroughly, more than once. Now, there are a couple of things the average person hasn't done. The average Christian hasn't read the Bible, and the average scientist gets focused-in on only one phase of what he's studying. Now the Bible does not say how God made the earth. It says in the first day he did this, the second day he did that. So people take it literally. But what is a day? Like we're talking about in this

"day" of river running. Are we talking about Saturday, August whatever it is. Fifth? Is that what today is? Is today's era of river running only today? Or is it the last twenty years? Or fifty?

God said "Let's do it." But then what happens on a river trip? The boss says, "Let there be a trip that leaves on August 12." Is that all that happens? No. You gotta pack the food, somebody's gotta book the customers before that. But all the boss says is, "There will be a trip August 12." Right? The Lord said, "Let there be...." And maybe somebody else got stuck with the work.

We talked about river stories:

Know what river stories are made of? Bad runs. I mean, the good runs don't make stories. This last trip I went down, the water level was so ideal my son was



running his boat down through there, and you know, we tell these people about these rapids, and then we make these slick runs... they almost look disappointed. "I went down through Lava this time and entered on the left, went right past that rock and slid off into the tongue. And man, that was a real smooth run." I mean (chuckles) what kind of a story do you get out of that? Henry maintained he never hired me because of my boating ability. He hired me more for my entertainment factor. (all chuckle)

Well, it's funny, just since the early seventies, the technology has really evolved: the boats are ten times better, we know how to run the...

And in all honesty, the boatmen are a whole lot better.

Well, looking back, do you have....

Do I have a big love? I think in the Grand Canyon, Lava and I have an ongoing love affair that is probably as sadistic/masochistic as they can ever be. Lava beats the daylights out of me, and I keep coming back...

My final resting place is on my mantlepiece at home already. My son has been actively engaged in pottery for the last number of years, which is one of his better grades in school, so he said, "Dad, what do you really want?" And I've been, in my church work, working with a whole lot of people that have been dying, and realizing that the morticians and the funeral parlors and cemeteries are making a great deal of money out of all this. So I said, "Son, make me a little vase to put my body in, my last remains." So my thing is now sitting there on my mantlepiece. It's beautiful: on one side it has a nice picture of the Canyon, a scene; and on the other side there's a little gold plaque that says, "Paul Thomas Thevenin" and gives the date of my birth and leaves a little place over there. So my urn is sitting there waiting for me. Now we have talked about, possibly, when that day comes, we'll seal the top of it, and we'll get one of these inner tubes from one of these wheelbarrow tires, and we'll wrap it around the urn, and we'll put a rope on it and drag it behind somebody's boat and see which rapid finally gets it.

Oh yeah? Lava, undoubtedly.

The stories just kept coming, actually. We'd heard before how Paul could do an orientation that was however long it needed to be. He'd just stand there and keep talking until the hard-pressed boatmen flew in from Diamond Creek on those brutally tight old WhiteWater turnarounds and hustled down the ramp at Lee's Ferry to start all over again with the brand new people, who'd been listening to Paul for an hour, or two or three—whatever it took. It never did matter. 30 minutes with this guy and you could see the claims were true. He could've done that easily any time he had to. The man was a magician, and he drew the stuff up from a bottomless well.

Bottomless? Would even Loretta agree? Hell yes. If you'd been down even once all you had to do was shut your eyes and listen... you'd see the real source went forever, in every direction.

Actually, in all honesty, probably my favorite river in the past—it's not the same nowadays—the Forest Service has chased all the hermits off and they've done all sorts of things. But the Main Salmon, I think, was a really underrated river, especially for giving people an outdoor experience, because you still had hermits up there at that time... Have you ever run the Main Salmon? Was Buckskin Bill still up there? Or is he now a legend?

Buckskin Bill was a guy who'd grown up in Oklahoma with Indian heritage, and the family felt that you ought to spend one year on Mother Nature before you became a man. He was born there when it was Oklahoma Territory. He went to the University of Oklahoma, and he'd done some surveying work up in Idaho. He said, "This is where I choose to do my one year," and he hiked up the Salmon River and sat down on an old mining claim, lived up there for a year. When he came out, the Depression was on. He thought, "Man, it's tough out here. I had it great up there." He went back. Said, "I'll stay up here until this thing blows over." And he didn't come out until World War II when they drafted him, and served as a bombardier on a flight crew. He went back in after World War II, and he was a unique guy, made all of his own guns, his own knives, own pots and pans, got the old drill stock and bored holes out of it, made riflings in it and everything. Just did everything by hand. A rather unique hermit, because old Fenstermaker and I pulled in there the first time because we were curious about this big pink building. He welcomed us with open arms, told us we could stop anytime. We used to bring the people down, all these people from the city, and they'd meet this real old hermit up there. All these things he could show them and tell them.

There was another old hermit up there by the name of Dan Carlson. I was going downriver one time and in the early days we did anything to make money, and we were scratchin' for customers. Jack sent me down with a twenty-eight-footer with only two people—one on one end of the boat, one on the other because they didn't like each other. They met in Stanley and decided right then and there they didn't like each other, so they sat on opposite ends of the boat. They talked to me, but they wouldn't talk to each other. I'd talk to one, then the other. And I'm going down, and here's this guy stumbling down the rocks. It's getting late, I'm looking for a campsite. I yell over at the guy, "Hey, oldtimer, you need a ride somewhere?" He suddenly looks up at me and says, "What, what, what?" I said, "Do you need a ride?" "Where to?" I said, "I don't know, where you going?"

You're stumbling in the rocks." "I can make it." "I'm sure you can, but do you want a ride? The rocks are getting rough, and it's starting to get dark." "Well," he said (gruffly), "you wouldn't take my dog." "Yeah, I would." At that time I would have taken anybody to match with those two people. "What do you want to give me a ride for?" I said, "Well, it's getting dark, you're stumbling on the rocks, I don't want you messin' the rocks up." "Well, it is gettin' dark. Where are you camping?" I said, "Dillinger Creek." He said (gruffly), "Why you goin' to Dillinger Creek?" I said, "It's a great campsite, and it's just down around the bend." He said, "I know where it is." I said, "Well, then do you want a ride down to Dillinger Creek?" He said, "That's down across from where I live. You must know where I live." I said, "I don't know where you live. Do you want a ride or not? Get on the boat or don't." "My dog can really get on?" I said, "Yeah." So I finally got him on there, and all of sudden, these guys start asking questions, "What's he doing out there? Why's he there?" And he suddenly becomes sort of the expert, and starts talking to these people. They started getting together so they can both ask questions. He's bringing my people together for me. We get down there, we drop him off, and he said, "Drop me off here, I don't want you to know where I live." So I dropped him off, then I pulled across the river and camped. He said (gruffly), "Now don't you guys watch me." "Don't worry." So that's the last I saw of him. I thought he was out of the picture.

So next year I go up there, and one of the boaters up there—almost everybody ran the power boats, the jet boats—and Joe Scobel [phonetic spelling] says, "Hey, you know Dan Carlson?" I said, "Dan Carlson?" He said, "Yeah, he's a hermit, lives down there by Dillinger Creek." "Oh yeah, I know a guy. Yeah, Dan! Yeah, okay, I know who you're talking about." He says, "We haven't been able to get our boats down there so far this year. We can't get past those first set of rapids and get back upstream." I said, "Well, so what?" He said, "Well, the guy hasn't come in for his spring supplies yet, and we're worried." I said, "So?" He said, "Well you get down and find him." "I don't know where he lives." He said, "I'll draw you a map." (chuckles) So I go tooling on down. He said, "By the way, if you find him dead, you gotta bury him." I said, "Fine." I'm a nice guy. So I get down there, and I pull off and leave my people. I said, "Stay here, fish, whatever you want to do. Play in the water. I've got to make a

little trip." And I walk up, follow this trail way up in the woods. I go up, there's this guy sitting there, and I say, "Hey, Dan!" He whips around with his gun barrel, (gruffly) "What are you doin' here?" I said, "You're Dan Carlson, aren't you?" He said, "Yeah. What are you doin' here?" I said, "I came to see if you were alive." "Why?" I said, "The guys up in Salmon are worried about you." "Why are they worried?" I said, "You didn't go out for spring supplies. They're worried. Do you have enough food?" "Yeah." I said, "Besides that, if you're dead, I've gotta bury you. So tell me you're alive so I can get out of here." (gruffly) "I'm alive. I don't care about those guys, they don't need to know anything. Don't tell 'em anything." (laughter) I said, "Ah, they're worried about you." "Don't need to worry about me." I said, "You got enough then?" He said, "Well, I'm out of tobacco. You have any tobacco?" I said, "I don't have any tobacco. You want me to bring you some next trip?" "Nah, I couldn't afford it." I said, "You couldn't afford the tobacco?" "Nah, you guys charge too much for freight." I said, "We don't charge anything." He said, "Where you makin' your money?" I said, "I got a whole bunch of California people down there, they pay for me to come down the river. You want some tobacco, tell me, I'll bring it." "Well, that's all I need. How much you want?" I said, "When you get the tobacco, you pay for it." "You ain't gonna charge me no freight?" I said, "No, I ain't gonna charge you any freight. I'll bring you the receipt from the store." "Well, alright, but don't tell them guys I'm alive." So down the river I go. I get back and Jack has changed the schedule and I've gotta stay in for a week, and so Fenstermaker's gonna go down. I tell Fenstermaker how to find the guy's place, and give him



Thevenin in Lava 1995

the big can of Prince Albert and the little receipt attached to it. So Fenstermaker goes down, parks his people at the bottom of the hill and he walks up. Carleson looks at him and says, "What are you doin' here?" "Paul couldn't make it, here's your tobacco." "You know where I live now." Art said, "Nah, I forgot already. You owe me \$2.81." "Two eighty-one?!" "That's what the tobacco costs." "What about the freight bill?" "No freight." "You're as dumb as the other guy. You can't make a livin' on this river not chargin' for freight." "I got a whole freight full of California guys down there." "You too, huh?" "Well, you tell that Paul fella I want to talk to him." Art said, "Fine," goes on downriver. I come in the next week, "Hey," I said, "you needed tobacco, Art's trustworthy, he won't tell anybody." "Well hell," he says, "the bears are eatin' the apples up here." I said, "Yeah? So what?" He says, "Got a couple boxes of apples out here. Your people eat apples?" I said, "Probably." "You get these damned apples out of here, the bears are eatin' 'em." So I carried two boxes of apples down to the boat. He says, "Tell that Art guy to stop next time." So Art stops and he says, "Damn bears

are gettin' in the cherries. Got two boxes of cherries." (everybody laughs) So he stopped next time, we kept stoppin' and walkin' up there; leave our people down and walk up. He said, "Them people down there ever do any work?" I said, "Well, they don't have to." He said, "They willin' to do any work?" I said, "Yeah, why?" He says, "I didn't pick you any fruit this time." I said, "That's okay." "No, no, I want to get rid of the fruit. Get them folks up here." I said, "But Dan, you don't want people to know where you live." "Aw hell, you guys know where I live, I may as well let them know." So I start taking the people up there, and here's this guy, he starts talking to the people about this and that and everything, and the trees. See, somebody had gone in there to homestead and left this great orchard with apricots and apples and cherries and everything else. So all summer long we stopped there, people would go up and pick fruit, we had fresh fruit all summer...

Lew Steiger
Richard Quartaroli



the mighty, big WHITEWATER rig; now extinct

Announcements

Tom Workman is back in Arizona; he's Chief Ranger at Canyon de Chelly. Box 460, Chinle, AZ 86503.

All who travel through Grand Canyon are influenced by the experience, and for many it becomes life changing. Sometimes those changes are due to the influence of river guides. Sometimes they are due to significant events, like a flip, or an involuntary swim through Lava or Crystal, or coming face-to-face with a fear of heights, or some physical limitation that was overcome.

It is important for people to know how river guides contribute to their passenger's lives, as well as how a "natural" Canyon experience benefits those who have travelled through there. It is my intention to write a book demonstrating the positive impact the Canyon and those who work there have on people's lives.

If you have been a Canyon guide for any period of time, you have observed or participated in one or more of these life changing experiences. If so, I would like to hear from you. Please send me a short description of what happened, and, if you know, what change(s) occurred after the passenger (or guide) left the Canyon. Also, please include your address and phone number so I can follow up with you. If you would prefer, drop me a card or call me and I will interview you over the phone (at my expense). Either way, I look forward to hearing from you. Charly Heavenrich, 2822 3rd Street, Boulder, CO 80304, (303) 545-5414

Professional River Outfitters is looking for a full time, year round office person. Phone skills, a strong background in boating Grand Canyon, and a proficiency in secretarial duties are required. Also they are hiring a seasonal full or part time food packer; wage is based on experience. Please submit resume by 3/1/96 to: PRO, Box 635, Flagstaff, AZ 86002.

Canyon R.E.O. is seeking a highly motivated warehouse manager. Grand Canyon river experience is required; competitive salary & benefits offered. Please send resume, references and salary requirements to: Canyon R.E.O., P.O. Box 3493, Flagstaff, AZ 86003.

Needed: First descent participants, Mekong River, China. Earth Science Expeditions (ESE), a non-profit tax exempt organization, is organizing a first descent and geological reconnaissance of a 90-100 mile roadless stretch of the

Mekong River below the Man Wan dam in southwest Yunnan, China. Flow is 30,000 cfs or more, gradient is 5-6' per mile. Grand Canyon or other big water experience is required.

Participants will leave the US April 19 and return May 9 for the 10 day river expedition. The trip is being conducted with the cooperation of the Center for International Scientific Exchange, a division of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing. ESE owns two 16' catarafts and two kayaks stored in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan, and has successfully completed two first descents of the Mekong and a tributary, the Yangbi, in western Yunnan. Cost is \$4500 round trip from Hong Kong for all participants (including oarspersons, kayakers and passengers). Maximum trip size is 10. Discounts are available if you bring your own kayak and/or if you travel to Kunming from some city other than Hong Kong. Needless to say, this is a unique opportunity.

Contact Peter Winn for references, a map and other info: email pswinn@aol.com, 970-242-7108, fax 970-243-9226, 202 North Avenue #102, Grand Junction, CO 81501.



Price hike

After eight years without a price raise, we finally had to jack up dues a little bit. Five bucks a year. But hey, you're getting a lot more in the way of a journal, and we're working on a lot more fronts, albeit often behind the scenes.

Anyhow, we'd never be able to do what we do without your support. Keep in touch and let us know what you want to see us doing.



501(c)3 Status At Last

As we went to press last issue we got another in a long series of calls from Matt Claman of Anchorage, Alaska—the boatman/lawyer who took on the forbidding task of trying to get tax-deductible status for GCRG.

These calls had been coming on a regular basis for the last year or so—he was usually looking for a few hundred more facts, figures, statistics or something that the IRS wanted to see. And though he often sounded a bit weary of the project, and although getting the actual 501(c)3 status rarely seemed to get much closer, he never seemed to begrudge us his time. Considering he and Lisa have two babies and are trying to make a living, it's amazing he never said, "Umm, why don't we just forget it you guys..."

But this call was different. He had just talked to the IRS and gotten word that our request had at long last been approved! GCRG is now a 501(c)(3) organization,

and your contributions to us are now tax-deductible.

So—to all of you who have been waiting to send us millions of dollars, go for it. And Matt—Thanks immeasurably, thanks from all of us. You're our hero.

You May Have a Tax Deduction

If you have sent a contribution or membership since June '93 (t-shirts, hats and posters don't count) it's tax deductible. If you would like us to let you know your tax-deductible amount, write or call and we'll be glad to send you a statement.

Wilderness First Aid Courses

Whitewater Advanced First Aid (WAFA) Date: March 21 - March 25, 1996 (5 days)
Sorry—This one's full, but you can get on the waiting list if you like.

Wilderness Review Course Date: March 27 - March 29, 1996 (2-1/2 days)

Prerequisite: must be current WFR, WEMT, or WAFA

Place: Lee's Ferry - Camp at private boater's campground Class Size: 22

Member Cost: \$145 Non-Member Cost: \$165 (3 meals per day included)

Wilderness First Responder (WFR) Date: April 1 - April 9, 1996 (8 days)

Place: Albright Training Center, Grand Canyon National Park South Rim Class Size: 24

Lodging: Albright cabins, included in price Meals: On your own; small kitchen in each cabin

Member Cost: \$395 Non-Member Cost \$415 (meals aren't included, but lodging at South Rim is)

Class sizes are strictly limited with preference given to GCRG guide members and guides. Send your \$50 *nonrefundable* deposit with the application below to GCRG to hold a space. All courses are already filling, so act now.

Circle One: WAFA Review Course WFR

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (important!) _____ Outfitter _____

Guiding since _____ # Trips _____ Type of current first aid _____

Discounts to Members

A few area businesses like to show their support for GCRG by offering discounts to members.

Expeditions 625 N. Beaver St., Flagstaff Boating Gear 10% off merchandise to members	779-3769	Professional River Outfitters Box 635 Flagstaff, AZ 86002 10% discount on equipment rental for members	779-1512
Cliff Dwellers Lodge Cliff Dwellers, AZ 10 % off meals to members	355-2228	Sunrise Leather, Paul Harris 15% off Birkenstock sandals. Call for catalog.	800/999-2575
Teva Sport Sandals and Clothing N. Beaver St. Flagstaff Approx. 1/2 price to boatman members Pro-deals upon approval	779-5938	Mary Ellen Arndorfer, CPA 230 Buffalo Trail Flagstaff, AZ 86001 20% discount to boatmen members for tax returns	520/525-2585
Dr. Jim Marzolf, DDS 1419 N. Beaver Street, Flagstaff, AZ 10% of dental work to boatman members	779-2393	Fran Rohrig, NCMT, GCRG Swedish, Deep Tissue & Reiki Master \$10 discount to members	526-0294
Dr. Mark Falcon, Chiropractor 1515 N. Main, Flagstaff \$10 adjustments for GCRG members	779-2742	The Summit Discounts on boating equipment	520/774-0724
Laughing Bird Adventures 10% discount to members on sea kayaking tours Belize, Honduras and the Caribbean.	800/238-4467	Five Quail Books—West 8540 N Central Ave, #27, Phoenix 10% discount to members	602/861-0548
Yacht True Love Bill Beer, Skipper Virgin Island Champagne Cruises 10% discount to members	809/775-6547	Aspen Sports 15 N San Francisco St, Flagstaff Outdoor gear 10% discount to members	779-1935
Canyon R.E.O. Box 3493, Flagstaff, AZ 86003 10% discount on equipment rental to members	774-3377	Snook's Chiropractic 624 N Humphreys, Flagstaff 20% discount on initial consultation	774-9071
		Spark Minter, Certified Massage Therapist 318 W Birch, Suite 8, Flagstaff 25% off sessions for GCRG members	773-1072

Thanks to everyone who made this issue possible... to Dave Edwards for your artwork; to Paul Thevenin and Cline Library for photos ...to all of you writers who keep submitting amazing things... and to all of you who support us... It wouldn't happen without you. Printed with soy bean ink on recycled paper by really nice guys.

Care to join us?

If you're not a member yet and would like to be, 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.

General Member		\$25 1-year membership	
Must love the Grand Canyon		\$100 5-year membership	
Been on a trip? _____		\$277 Life membership (A buck a mile)	
With whom? _____		\$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.	
Guide Member		\$_____ donation, for all the stuff you do.	We don't
Must have worked in the River Industry		\$16 Short sleeved T-shirt	Size_____ exchange
Company? _____		\$18 Long sleeved T-shirt	Size_____ mailing
Year Began? _____		\$22 Wallace Beery shirt	Size_____ lists with
Number of trips? _____		\$10 Baseball Cap	anyone.
Name _____		\$10 GTS Kent Frost Poster	Period.
Address _____			
City _____ State _____ Zip _____			
Phone _____			
Total enclosed _____			

add this to the Quartzsite Falls file...



"We had overlooked the fact that most of the water ran under the rock, and the boat was trying to make a short cut."



Loper - "is a miner and knows what to do with a single-jack. A hole was drilled into the small rock that held the boat, so that it reached a depth of three feet below the water."

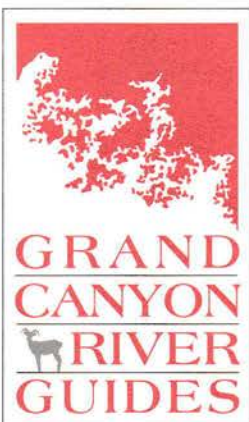


Two sticks of giant powder finished the job, and the rock was shattered. It was dark when the boat was rescued. We had only lost four days.

E. L. Kolb. Photos.

Box 1934
Flagstaff, AZ 86002
phone 520/773-1075
fax 520/773-8523

In 1914 Ellsworth Kolb and Bert Loper made the first descent of the Gunnison River in Colorado. Actually, they made the first extended portage of the Gunnison. Ellsworth's pictures and captions tell some of the story. Photos (#568-5911, 568-6011, 568-9535) courtesy Emery Kolb Collection, Special Collections, Cline Library, Northern Arizona University



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