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GCRG  
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# GRAND CANYON RIVER GUIDES

Post Office Box 1934  
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FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA 86002  
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VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2

A Non-profit organization

November 1988

*Professional guides dedicated to the quality of the Grand Canyon river experience*

## GUARANTEED BEST BTS EVER !!

### GCRG, NPS & OUTFITTERS TEAM UP

The general members of GCRG voted that GCRG in cooperation with the NPS and the Grand Canyon outfitters would plan the 1989 Boatman's Training Seminar (BTS). In this joint venture, participation and cooperation are the primary elements. Every Grand Canyon outfitter, the NPS, and GCRG will have input in the planning process. The BTS will be similar to previous years seminars and include two days of interpretive lectures and an intense week-long training trip to Phantom. We feel the best mix will include an equal measure of veteran & new guides, with one of each representing every company. This is an important trip on many levels. More than just a great opportunity for guide education, this is also a chance for us to strengthen the bridges between all of us—guides, NPS, and outfitters alike.

In the past, participation by real Grand Canyon guides dwindled to the point that recently the NPS thought seriously about dropping the trip altogether. GCRG has put its credibility on the line to op-

### CERTIFICATION UPDATE

The NPS plan for a certification examination for guides was one of the main topics at the spring & fall GCRG meetings. The plan has provoked some lively discussion, on and off the river! GCRG wrote the NPS earlier this year agreeing that it is of critical importance for all Grand Canyon guides to be well-versed in and comply with the Operations Requirements. We felt, however, that licensing of guides was unnecessary at any time.

The NPS assured us the intent and purpose of this program is simply to insure that each guide is aware of the environmental protection, sanitation, and safety guidelines set forth to protect the canyon and to provide park rangers at Lees Ferry an accurate method of identifying guides.

Dave Stillely of Wilson, Gaylord, Adams & Stillely Law Offices (motorboatman, Grand Canyon) researched the guides' certification card for GCRG and confirms that it is indeed only legal as a certification card and not a license.

At the fall GCRG meeting, Butch Wilson, Canyon District Ranger, agreed the card itself was of poor quality and said the park would provide a higher quality card for next season. The NPS is open for further discussion on these testing procedures; please send your suggestions to us also.

BE NO!



LE MELON FLAMBÉ

### GCRG GROOMS JACKASS

It was a classic, actually. One of those days that really did kind of make you proud to be an American. There they were: The Whale and Kenton and Billy Ellwanger... Mark Jensen too, of all people, and Connie Tibbetts, Peter Weiss, Nels, Phil, Elena, Dennis Silva... a host of others as well. Mark Thatcher even came. It was the first annual GCRG clean up mission and they pulled it off like a well planned commando raid. The beach at Jackass was swept with a fine tooth comb and left spanking clean. The entire operation was utterly flawless too until the uprun, and even then the skiff Whale and Kenton were in with all the trash never was in any real danger of sinking, it only seemed that way for a second or two there at the island below Cathedral Wash when the damn thing purlled just a little into the upstream current (at 15 miles an hour) from being so heavy with all that trash. But they didn't lose anything, though. They were only underwater for a moment or two and even then only a few ashes from the fire-pit sacks ever got into the river permanently and the rest of it all stayed on the skiff or was rescued in time, at least, and nobody would have ever been the wiser either except afterwards it was too funny to keep a secret.

Anyway, the day was a success and a good time was had by all, and at the heart of it you really did have to admit that the whole thing was pretty much an honest reflection of what GCRG is all about. Which is to say it's not like you're gonna save the world or ever make things absolutely perfect, but they don't have to stay the same always, and they damn sure don't have to get a whole lot worse, either. Every now and then if you just put your mind to it you can at least make something a little bit better than if you did nothing at all or just sat around and bitched about it to anybody who would listen and nod, and pretend they agreed with you.



## Dear Eddy....

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Eddy welcomes all mail. Letters may be shortened due to limited space. All must be signed.

Dear Eddy,

The summer of 1988 will be remembered as the return of low water, fluctuating flows, and damaged equipment. It doesn't seem all that long ago that we were looking at the horrors of the 1983 high water. The fact that we can go from the highest flows to the lowest flows in a period of less than 4 years indicates the dynamic nature of the resources we are dealing with and why a wise and flexible decision management program must be developed. Since 1983, the Glen Canyon Environmental Studies (GCES) have been focused on gathering the information necessary to evaluate the impact of the operations of Glen Canyon Dam and to determine if changes in operations are defensible.... The GCES program has proven that there is an impact and that the program has credibility. It hasn't always been evident or understandable. The important aspect is that an effort was made to put the data where our mouths were and to try. Right or wrong, the effort was sincere and for the resources. So where does this leave us? Will a change ever be made at the Dam? Is this just another side-step by the government to avoid addressing the issues of impact? Have the boating concerns just been dumped in the circular file never to be seen again? These questions and hundreds more like them have been weighing on us lately as we try to formulate our direction and future actions... Your input is important to identifying the boundaries and concerns that still have not been addressed by the GCES program.

Your role in this play is to inform your customers and colleagues about the sensitivity of the resources; our job is to take your concerns, formulate them into the proper beauracratc lingo and then effect a change in the operation of the Dam. I wish I could promise that all of our efforts will result in a wiser management of the river resources. The only thing certain is that change is inevitable. It is how we manage change that will define our ultimate success. It is also the ability that we show to accept our responsibility that will define our credibility. In order to insure that the efforts of the GCES program are utilized in the decision process, you must get involved... Please let us know your concerns. I admire the job that the guides of Grand Canyon accomplish. Your perception of the impact of the dam is vital if we are to insure wise management for the future... The GCES program is a bit of all of us. May your runs end right-side up...Cheers,

Dave Wegner, Directory of GCES

Dear Eddy,

Listening to the NPS comments at the GCRG fall meeting, and reviewing the 11-88 CRMP, I found I had a real problem with the present launch system. Numbers of launches in a single day, or even those the day previous and day after, can cause excessive

congestion downstream when coupled with the length of each trip. There were 255 commercial trips in 1988 which launched with less than 16 people. Launching small sized trips and keeping with the maximum total people numbers of 150 per day by commercials raises the total launches by commercials, which is a key to the overall congestion downstream. Total # of launches in a day combined with length of trip is crucial. In neither commercial nor private sectors is it easily changed due to demand for smaller trip size or low bookings for trip date. Yet, somewhere someone has to bite the bullet, set a limit on # of launches in a single day, whether commercials or privates use their allotment or not...to preserve the canyon experience in all aspects. I have urged NPS to implement a study on launch impact and visitor contact. I believe crowding and congestion is a problem which will be hard to solve considering #'s of user days involved, but I do believe it can be reduced to everyone's advantage. I would like to ask all CRG members to get involved with their input to GCRG & NPS.

Thanks, Suzanne Jordan

Dear Eddy,

...If Whitmore is to be used as a takeout for passengers, why not go back to the older system of walking or riding stock out? There is no more reason to permit choppers than there would be at Phantom where river travelers commonly walk or ride out--and much further...The simple prohibition of flights below 1000 feet over national park backcountry/designated Wilderness would do the trick. The Whitmore "war zone" is at least comprehensible to and in the service of commercial trips using this exit. It is neither of these to parties passing down the river. The impact of a half-day of noise and machines several hundred feet directly over the river is catastrophic. Almost all private parties suffer this treatment. The park requires them to strain their dishwasher in the interest of preserving the quality of the Canyon environment but then permits its massive deterioration with the helicopter invasion... This inconsistency should be rectified in the new plan.

Rod Nash, Professor Environmental Studies & History



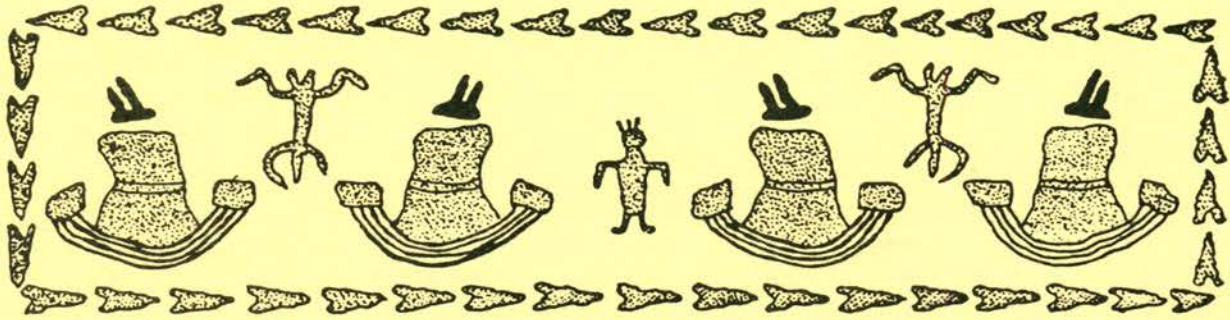
Dear Eddy,

What for me was the most glaring and unacceptable problem with the CRMP is...as stated...one of the goals of the CRMP: "To protect and preserve the river corridor environment within the National Park Service's ability to do so considering the effects of Glen Canyon Dam." This statement, especially as listed as one of the main goals, seems ambiguous, not to mention weak-kneed... Later on you discuss dealing with another outside agency [the Navajo Tribe]...in very strong and direct terms. to

wit... "Rigorous efforts will be undertaken with the Navajo Tribe concerning management of the affected reach, and the success of this management effort will be reported in the annual and summary CRMP monitoring reports." The question comes to mind: why are you so afraid of dealing with the dam operators and so willing to use "rigorous efforts" with the Navajo? Most especially as the effects of the dam have been proven to be the most damaging to the riparian and recreational environments?...I love the Grand Canyon, and I hope my great-great grandkids have the chance to do the same.

Jeffe Aronson





## River Stories

### HAVASU DAY

It was a boatman's dream, or nightmare... the kind of situation you've thought about a thousand times already if you're a guide and worth a hoot. (You think about stuff in advance, you try to prepare for that second or two when there isn't time to think. "Oh look: X could happen. Well if it does I'll just do this... I'll do that...")

August 6th, 1988. Tim Whitney and Richard Quartaroli are running an ARR trip, they're coming down from Deer Creek to Havasu and it's cloudy. It dumps on them pretty good there at Last Chance, they float a minute, the rain passes and the sky begins to clear. They go on to Havasu and tie up at the motor rig place down below. Richard's leading this trip, he says it doesn't look like a good day to be on the other side of the creek and instead they'll just go up to the first crossing and take a few pictures. So Richard leads the hike and about ten people stay behind with Whitney. Richard gets to the first crossing and says "OK everybody, there it is, we'll be here ten minutes or so." Then he turns around and trots back to the mouth, where two Western boats and two Del Webb boats are tied. Carl McDonald and Mike Reyes are running for Del Webb, a guy named Darrel is there for Western. Richard says "Hi, where you camping?"

Boom, right there the creek starts to rise.

Richard takes off up the trail, back to where his people are. As soon as he's gone, a two- maybe three foot wall of water hits the mouth. Red mud. Sticks to the max. Tree limbs. Logs. A person. A face in the water.

The face comes roaring through the creek mouth and spills out into the river.

Carl's down there on his boat and he throws a lifejacket in the face's direction and just that quick they're gone- jacket and swimmer both.

Meanwhile, back at the ARR trip they're starting to return from the hike already, trickling in by two's and three's. Whitney's down there on the ledges meeting them and he looks up, sees the flood. Then he sees both Western boats get blown out of the mouth. They're tied together bow to stern and they're out of control, pin-balling down the rapid.

"Get ready!" Whitney yells to his people. "They're gonna try to come in here! Get back! Stay out of the way!"

Whitney runs down to the water and they've had a policy at ARR for years that whenever you're tied at this particular spot everybody wears a lifejacket at all times on the boats. So Whitney puts his on and runs out across his boat to do whatever he can if the Western boats somehow manage to get into the eddy. Darrel's got one motor started by now and he's screaming to the

swamper, a guy named Garvin, to start the other one. Garvin's having trouble, though, and it looks to Whitney like it'll be a miracle if they ever make it. And while he's out there, on the upstream sidetube of his own boat, Whitney looks down into the muddy red water and sees an empty lifejacket. My god, he thinks. It's already washing stuff off the boats up there.

Then he sees the face. No hair, no hands, no neck and shoulders. Just two eyes, a nose and a mouth that is open in a neat round circle, gasping for air.

Ah ha, Whitney thinks. Here's somebody without a lifejacket, swimming in a flood.

So he jumps in too. He grabs the body that belongs to the face and immediately she's all over him, trying to claw her way up out of the water. It's a woman, but Whitney doesn't know this yet. "Take it easy," he says. "Just relax, just breathe easy. I've got you now, it's all over, you're gonna make it." One jacket isn't great but it's floating them, at least. Their heads float just above the water.

We could go to Tuckup if we had to, Whitney thinks. We'll just swim down here along the wall and grab onto the first good thing we find and get the hell out of here. "Piece of cake," he says out loud. "No problem. We've got it made."

But then the Western boats manage to get in after all. They hit the cliff downstream bent double, in V-formation, with the upstream boat pointed out into the current and the Johnson 35 on that other boat absolutely screaming its noble, loud, American-made head off. They're just happy to be here, man, they survived a hell of a flood is what they've just done, and they have no idea there's anybody in the water right above them.

Whitney looks up and thinks uh-oh, now we got a problem.

And yep. Whammo, they hit the upstream side of the Western boat, Whitney grabs for the lifeline, sees a couple of passengers up there, then Bloop- the current takes them under, just that fast. God, Whitney thinks. Two Western boats... how long is this going to take?

His eyes are wide open and he can't see a thing. It's black. The water is totally dark around him and the swimmer has him by the neck and he can feel himself bumping against the tubes of the boat as they're swept along. He pries her hands off his neck and woosh, the current rips her away.

Oh man, Whitney thinks. That's it, she's gone.

Just hold on, he thinks to himself. Just hold your breath, you gotta hang on. You're in the current, you're gonna come out. So he holds on, and holds on, and finally he pops up and gets a



breath. Comes out of the red water into light brown water, gets a huge oh-thank-god kind of breath.

Well that was it, he thinks. That was the one chance you had, bucko. You're never gonna see her again.

But no. She pops up a few strokes away, tries to catch a breath, goes under. Whitney swims over, she's going down but he can still see the blur and he dives for her. He grabs her by the hair. He pulls her up and gets another hitch on her, a cross-body carry. He looks around, they're between the boats and the wall now.

At this point Whitney starts to lose it a little.

Now we're gonna get squashed, he thinks. We'll have to swim under the damn boats just to get away. So he starts to squall at Darrel. "Don't run me over!" he yells. And Darrel sees him finally and somehow they end up along the side of the boat. A couple of the passengers go to grab them, but one of those guys starts to fall in, too. He catches himself on the lifeline and he's yelling for somebody to grab his feet. A thirteen year old kid appears, finally, and even though he's utterly goggle-eyed at what's happening he grabs the woman and they manage to pull her up.

Whitney sees the stern of the other boat then and swims to that. He pulls himself up through the motor well and Garvin is still trying to get the motor in the water, he can't figure out the latch.

Whitney puts it in the water and gets it started. The handle's broke but it runs anyway.

They pull in at the first little beach downstream on the right below the rapid. The woman sprints off the boat and jumps on that land like she's gonna kiss it.

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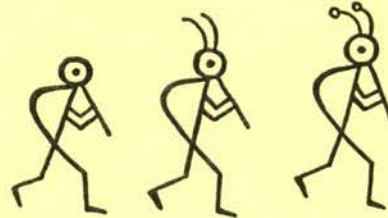
She was a marathon runner, it turned out. A New Yorker, of all things, from Whitney's own trip. In her late forties, early fifties, she weighed about a hundred and ten. She got swept away right there at the crossing, went over that first fall, down the narrows, and out through the mouth. Clear through the rapid without a jacket. The whole thing was over in less than five minutes.

You have to really press Whitney to get him to tell the story and even then, after you try to say what a good job he did, he'll manage to come up with a bunch of baloney like: "Oh come on. This is the Grand Canyon, right? That kind of thing happens every day down here. It's not uncommon at all to see some little move made real fast that'll actually prevent an accident, you know? We see those every trip and they're just part of the job. I mean, hey, I lost her under the boat, man. That's the part that keeps coming back to me."

Whitney'll say a line or two of hogwash like that and he'll dig his toe into the dirt and watching him do it you'll think: All right. It couldn't have happened to a nicer guy. A life was in the balance and Whitney jumped in without a thought and now he has that forever and nobody can take it away from him. It's all his own. Whitney saved a woman's life for sure, and even though he's more the kind of guy that'll forever go "I lost her under the boat, though..." the fact remains that Whitney jumped in when he had to, smack at the head of one hellacious flood. When jumping in was the only way. And how many of the rest of us will ever know for sure we'd have done the same and not tried to go after her with a boat instead? Or screwed around too long with the #@!\* throw rope? (And why is it we do this job anyway and what exactly are we after if it isn't what happened to Whitney or at least something like it... one of the thousand little intangibles that are forever coming up

which have nothing to do with fame or fortune but rather just living your life well in a beautiful place that'll keep you honest all the same? That will make you have your act together from time to time.)

So yahoo, way to go Arizona River Runners, for having that policy in the first place... one of those nit-picky little pain in the rear end procedures that finally paid off. And yahoo Whitney most of all. Here's to you, amigo. This Bud's for you.



## GCES

The Glen Canyon Environmental Studies (GCES) has reopened an office in Flagstaff at 114 North San Francisco St., Suite 205, phone 527-7363. Nancy Brian & Michael Yard will be staffing the office and will organize field work and provide staff support for all study teams. Dave Wegner, Project Manager, will be splitting his time between Salt Lake & Flagstaff.

**GCES PHASE II ACTIVITIES:** A memorandum from the Department of the Interior (June 16, 1988) has directed the Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service to provide additional study and analysis before any action can be considered regarding the GCES. Areas to be studied are the effects of both low and fluctuating flows on endangered fish species, the trout fishery, beach erosion, and economic analysis of operational options. The GCES program will be funded through the Colorado River Storage Project power revenues and are anticipated to last at least two years. Two study teams are formulating study plans which will be available for review and comment. For further information, contact Dave Wegner, Study Manager, BOR, P.O. Box 11568, Salt Lake City, UT 84147, phone (801) 524-6086.

Major Federal actions (i.e., operation of Glen Canyon Dam) which result in significant environmental impacts require compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). To make changes in how water is released from Glen Canyon Dam Powerplant requires an Environmental Impact Statement. To make your opinion known on this issue, write: Sec of the Interior, 18th and C St., Washington, D.C. 20240.

To get information on daily averages of water releases you can call the River Forecast Center 801 524-5130.

**Status of Navajo Bridge:** The Arizona Dept of Transportation has completed public coordination hearings on the proposed bridge across Marble Canyon. A draft Environmental Assessment has been written and a final is due mid-Dec. A new bridge is scheduled to be constructed in 1990 (after rights of entry and preliminary drilling have been completed) parallel to Soap Creek and the old bridge will remain in place as a foot bridge. Information on this issue may be obtained by calling the ADOT's Environmental Planning Svc. at 602 255-7768 or by writing the same at 205 S 17th Ave, Room 240, Phoenix, Az 85007.



## The Fall Meeting

GCRG held their second general meeting on November 12, 1988 at historic Marble Canyon Lodge. The turnout was excellent. We extend our sincere thanks to Jane Foster for donating the use of her facility.

The following motions were made and approved:

- A committee was formed to provide a cooperative effort in operating the '89 BTS. Up to \$500 in GCRG funds can be spent in this effort and the committee will mail at least two updates to members prior to the BTS.
- The Board will look into a bulk mail permit.
- The Bylaws were amended to allow the Board to set the time and place for the Spring meeting.
- A motion was passed that meetings be ruled by parliamentary procedure and Robert's Rules.
- A motion was carried to allow officers' nominations to be accepted by mail.
- A committee was appointed to look into GCRG forming a clearinghouse to match outfitters with freelance guides and a report will be presented at the spring meeting.
- The board was directed to send letters asking for an extension in the CRMP review period to allow greater opportunities for input.
- The board was directed to set up a regular meeting schedule with NPS to enable constant and open communication.

## GCRG Company Reps

To provide a common link throughout the guide pool, the guides below have volunteered to distribute information and accept input for GCRG, they are GCRG. Talk to them and make it work.....

- Adventure West.....Bill Ellwanger
- AZRA..... Suzanne Jordan
- ARR.....Tim Whitney
- Canyoneers.....Shane Murphy
- Canyon Explorations.....Jane Bernard
- Colorado River and Trails.....Bill Trevithick
- Diamond.....Karen Byerley
- Expeditions..... Geoff Gorley
- Grand Canyon Dories..... Brad Dimock
- Grand Canyon Expeditions.....Nels Niemi
- Georgie's River Rats..... Georgie Clark
- Hatch River Expeditions.....Bill Ellwanger
- Hualapai.....
- Moki Mac..... Mike Jacobs
- OARS.....Bruce Helin
- Outdoors Unlimited.....Gary Bolton
- Sleight.....Walt Gregg
- Tour West..... Dave Stratton
- Western..... Jim Anderson
- Wilderness River Adventures..... Karen Byerley

## Wanted: GCRG Logo



We are in need of a representative logo. a few ideas a have been submitted. Any ideas? Send them to GCRG, it could be your creation gracing our letterhead, newsletter, T-shirts, etc....

## GOODBYE & WELCOME

GCRG bids Richard W. Marks farewell from his position as superintendent of the Grand Canyon National Park, where he has given 7 years of committed service since his arrival in 1981. Dick will be moving up to the S.W. Regional office, Santa Fe, N.M. We extend many thanks for his years of dedicated service to the Grand Canyon National Park and we welcome Jack Davis, present superintendent of Sequoia National Park, in his assumption of the duties as the new superintendent on Dec 6, 1988. We look forward to working with him in the management of the river corridor.

## NPS VACANCIES

There are 4 vacancies to be filled in the River Subdistrict: River Patrol Supervisor and 3 seasonal river patrolmen. The supervisor position must be filled by a qualified applicant with 90 days federal service. The seasonal positions need no prior federal service. The seasonals will be hired @ a GS4 or GS5 level for 180 days (9 mos.) which will yield an earnings of \$11,000 to \$12,000 for the season. Applications from the river community are solicited by the NPS. For more information contact Mark Law at Grand Canyon National Park, but hurry, deadline for seasonal packets is Jan. 15.

## Why Grand Canyon River Guides, Inc.?

GCRG is a means to get some of our collective voices together. Through this organization we will exchange information, solve many of our on-river problems, and make our views on management known to the powers that be. We've only just begun and you are needed: your input, experience, and enthusiasm. The more people that are involved the more effective we can be. There is a lot we can do.

Join us. Get involved. Send ideas and submissions for the next newsletter and/or meeting. Bend the ear of your GCRG B.O.D. or company representative and keep things flowing. We've tried to keep the dues low enough so that you can afford them, yet high enough so that we can generate enough money to accomplish something. That comes to \$20.00. It's Christmas! Join GCRG for a new year's worth of working together for the best cause, our Grand Canyon.

**Officers:** Pres. - Kenton Grua; V.P. - Bill Ellwanger;  
Sec./Tres. - Denice Napoletano;

**Board of Directors:** Terry Brian, Dave Edwards,  
Mike Walker, and Tim Whitney

**Annual Dues:** General Members .....\$20  
Guide Members .....\$20

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

name \_\_\_\_\_ nick- \_\_\_\_\_

name \_\_\_\_\_

birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ S.S. no. \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

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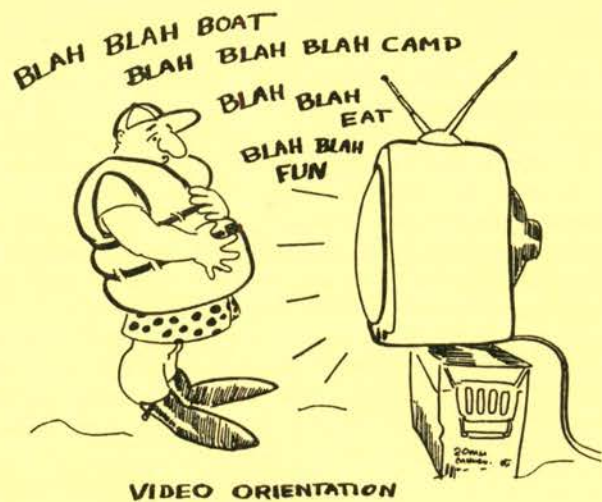
mer \_\_\_\_\_ winter \_\_\_\_\_

year started in GC \_\_\_\_\_ no. of GC seasons \_\_\_\_\_



## U.S. parks threatened, director says

GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK, Wyo. -- National Park Service Director William Mott opened the first conference of park superintendents in 12 years Wednesday by warning that the state of America's park system is "deplorable". Mott told the gathering of 331 superintendents that the park system faces growing threats from development, timber cutting, and oil and gas exploration, as well as internal problems, such as serious maintenance deficiencies. Using such terms as "desperate needs," "deplorable state" and "shameful" to describe the status of parks, Mott urged the superintendents to become "risk takers" to protect the nation's outdoor resources.



### Favorite Canyon Quotes

Everyone who had binoculars was standing in the boat observing two rams butting heads on a promontory about a mile above Kanab.

Lady: What are they doing?

Guide: Its mating season and those two rams are fighting for dominance over the ewes.

Lady: Ohhhh, I wish they wouldn't argue.

Somewhere in the river corridor...

Passenger: "How far below sea level are we???"

Just before dropping into Horn Creek....

Lady: Say... do those rocks go all the way to the bottom???

Question between Vulcan's Anvil and Lava Falls....

"When the lava flows came, did that change the order of the rocks any???"

*Send us your favorite golden quotes for the next newsletter*

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Some items for the Spring meetings:

- Election of Board Members
- Amendments to GCRG By-laws
- Discussions on crowding & congestion