

# boatman's quarterly review



# JON STONER

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## boatman's quarterly review

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

GRAND CANYON RIVER GUIDES  
is a nonprofit organization dedicated to

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

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

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

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

Deadlines for submissions are the 1st of February, May, August and November. Thanks!  
Our office location: 515 West Birch, Flagstaff, AZ 86001  
Office Hours: 10:30–5:00, Monday through Friday

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## Adopt-a-Boatman Update

AS YOU MAY KNOW, GCRG's Adopt-a-Boatman Program is the public funding mechanism for our Colorado River Runner's Oral History Project. Currently, GCRG has one open "adoption" for Pete Gibbs. We need another \$610 to cover the balance remaining, which will go towards interview costs, transcription and editing. Any adoption can have multiple funders, donating any amount they wish. If you don't know Pete, we have provided a short description below, written by Lew Steiger. Donations can be mailed to GCRG or made on our website, [www.gcrg.org](http://www.gcrg.org) (Go to Oral History Project, then to Adopt-a-Boatman Program on the left hand navigation bar). Pete has some great stories to tell. Help us if you can!

*Pete Gibbs came from Sandy, Utah...the same little neck of Utah that so many Grand Canyon pioneers from that side of the river did. He is friends with Art Galenson, Ron Smith, the Quists, Amil Quayle, Jack Currey and many other Grand Canyon notables. He still lives a few blocks from where Ron Smith's first warehouse was located. He was a mentor and running partner of Don Neff. They were in a triple-rig together when Crystal Rapid was first made large in 1966, and were the second people who ever ran it...which they did while the river was still cutting away the temporary dam created by the Crystal Creek flash flood. Gibbs was a regular at Grand Canyon Expeditions and I think Western too in the early days of both those companies. He is an expert rock climber, and basically made his fortune by inventing the Gibbs Ascender, which is still sold today. Ote Dale was introduced to the river by Gibbs, who took her and Bego down in the winter on a single-boat private trip, rowing one little ten-man so Gibbs and Bego could climb the granite face on the right below Grapevine Rapid. Gibbs rowed them through with nary a problem. Articulate, reserved, supremely competent...he provides a good glimpse of early commercial boating in Grand Canyon. He's been writing novels to keep himself amused in his retirement.*

## Prez Blurb

**A**S WINTER QUIET SETTLES in and river season draws to a close, water begins collecting in the peaks, back to snow, back to a slow gathering high in the mountains that will grace us with its wealth come spring. I will call this short Blurb an ode to happy endings and a joyous shout for new beginnings. I hope you all had a raucous, beautiful, mind-altering season that will fill your winter months with fond memories and keep you waiting on the edges of your skis for the next chance to charge into Grand Canyon on a tiny floating bit of sanity. An end to another glorious season and the beginning of another glorious break!

Many thanks, and so much more, to Emily Perry for guiding us through a year of Grand Canyon excitement, it is my pleasure to follow in the footsteps of such an outstanding woman! I do hope that I can fill her shoes, or perhaps even filling one poses a good goal. Emily, good luck in your endeavors!

This step up to President comes after a long year of challenges and at an interesting time in my boating career. As many of you already know, I have switched over to “the dark side,” joining our astounding crew of National Park Service employees who work day and night to protect the place we so lovingly call home. You will see a little less of me on the river and a little more of me in some less likely spots, hiking around and discovering all of the other wonders this terrain offers.

Graced with the gift of being GCRG’s President while in this limbo of switching from the life of a Boatman to the life of a Ranger proves a perfect set up. I hope to use this year to strengthen the bond and understanding between our guiding community and our Park Service community. We have a remarkable amount of common goals and concerns and I hope to help facilitate open communication and idea sharing to achieve those goals and lessen our concerns. Please feel free to email me regarding ideas for better NPS/guide communication options and with your concerns on Park Service/guide relations.

I spent only 32 short days on the river this year, all on GCY/NPS partnership trips with stellar groups of kids and guides from all walks of life. Though there are a million memories from those trips, the one that sticks most vividly in my mind is this: “Good luck, suckers!”—Big Dan Hall as he floats around the right corner of 209 after somehow persuading Mike Harris and me to try the “Ghost Run.” I flipped my first boat that day; actually, I flipped the Superintendents’ boat that day, it wasn’t mine at all...sorry Steve. The lesson: Always Rig-To-Flip and Never Follow Dan Hall.

Thank you all for choosing me to be at the helm for the coming year!

*Erika Andersson*

## Guide Profile

**Ariel Neill, Age 27**

**WHERE WERE YOU BORN & WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?** I was born in Alpine, Utah. Three months later my family moved, and I racked up 57 moves from southern Arizona to a small village above the Arctic circle in Alaska—all before I left home at age 18.

**WHO DO YOU WORK FOR CURRENTLY (AND IN THE PAST)?** I currently work for Wilderness River Adventures (WRA) out of Page, and part time for the National Park Service. I started my career at High Desert Adventures and then worked a season at AZRA.

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN GUIDING?** Since 2003.

**WHAT KIND OF BOAT(S) DO YOU RUN?** I love driving a 37-

foot S-rig for Wilderness, and also do three to five oar trips per season with 18-foot Maravias.

**WHAT OTHER RIVERS HAVE YOU WORKED ON?** I was pretty much raised in Grand Canyon as far as boating goes. Aside from that, I’ve only guided on the San Juan for HDA and AZRA, but would love to broaden my experience.

**WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES/PASSIONS/DREAMS?** My favorite hobbies are painting and making my own jewelry. I also love to study geology, and I’m hoping to pick up skiing this winter. I am passionate about a lot of things: my husband and family; the River and Canyon; education and learning. I try to be passionate about everything I do. My dreams are to finish our home in Colorado, start a farmers market in our area, and per-

haps start a Geo Tourism company.

**MARRIED/FAMILY/PETS?** I have been married to my fantastic husband, Alan—also a guide for WRA—for almost seven years. I have two great step kids, a part-time dog and also a part-time pig.

**SCHOOL/AREA OF STUDY/DEGREES?** I was mostly home schooled, but I did get to attend a semester of high school my junior year, and a semester my senior year in Montana. I also went to college for a semester. I took geology of the southwest, creative writing and kung fu.

**WHAT MADE YOU START GUIDING?** It seemed like a lot more fun than continuing to work for the drilling and blasting company I was working for at the time. I had also just seen the Grand Canyon for the first time, during my geology class before I worked down there, and I kind of fell in love with the place.

**WHO HAVE BEEN YOUR MENTORS AND/OR ROLE MODELS?** There have been so many amazing people that have helped me grow and learn, and taught me so many invaluable lessons...Bev Caifa would have to be my number one mentor/role model (she rocks!). My husband, Al, has also taught me so much about how to be a great guide; Butch Hutton, who has worked in Grand Canyon for longer than I have been alive; Fred Thevenin and Brad Dimock. But really, I have learned something from everyone that I have had the privilege to work with down there.

**WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE WINTER?** Something different every year: hiking guide; snorkeling guide/deckhand; snowmobile touring or just taking care of my family.

**IS THIS YOUR PRIMARY WAY OF EARNING A LIVING OR DO YOU COMBINE IT WITH SOMETHING ELSE?** Boating is our household's primary income.

**WHAT'S THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT IN YOUR GUIDING CAREER?** We were camped at Stone Creek in August 2005 on an oar trip. I was motor support, along with six other boats, one of which Al was rowing. While asleep as usual on the boat, a flashflood ripped out



of the side canyon around two A.M., and took away the beach that most of the boats were sand staked into; my boat was tied to a pinch in the rocks. The mud/log filled water hit our boats so hard that it tore all of the boats, tied together, from shore. I tried starting my motor, but there was so much driftwood in the motor well and under the boat that it killed it. But luckily an oar boat sand stake caught on the bottom of the river

and started to swing the whole flotilla in to shore. Another guide grabbed his bowline and swam for the nearing shoreline. The S-rig was too heavy and ripped away from the other boats and continued downstream with my husband and I on-board trying like mad to get the motor started again. We succeeded only to have the bowline wrap around the prop and lock the motor down dead. Crap! During all of this we had been unable to find our shoes, clothes, headlamps or a knife, in the mess of rain and wet sleeping bags and tarps on the front of the boat. But we did have our life jackets on. We finally got the rope cut and the motor started, and after drifting through one small riffle and just about to Talking Heads camp, we were able to drive most of the way back upstream with the aid of a generator and spotlight. No one was hurt and nothing was lost, and since we couldn't make it all the way back to camp, another boat brought us breakfast in the morning.

**WHAT'S THE CRAZIEST QUESTION YOU'VE EVER BEEN ASKED ABOUT THE CANYON/RIVER?** "What time do they let the animals out of their cages so we can take pictures?" And also, "Are Indians extinct?", on a trip with Nikki Cooley (an AZRA river guide who happens to be Navajo).

**WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR FUTURE HOLDS?** The possibilities are endless.

**WHAT KEEPS YOU HERE?** The amazing people in the guiding community, This awesomely rewarding job, and being a part of something bigger than myself. I truly love what I do.

## Farewell

“POOR-OLD-JOHN-WITHOUT-A-PISTOL-DAGGETT”, 1928–2010

FEW GRAND CANYON RIVER stories capture the heart and the imagination as does the legendary swim down the Colorado by Bill Beer and John Daggett in 1955. And few characters in river history have ever been as beloved as this flipper-clad duo. Only about 200 people had made the full traverse of the Canyon in boats when these soggy, twenty-something, southern Californians—insurance-selling surfers turned frogmen—flopped onto the silt banks of Lake Mead and into folklore. They had done what most experts thought to be impossible: traversing the entire length of the Colorado through Grand Canyon with no boat at all.

Their saga is beautifully captured in gritty, self-effacing eloquence in Bill Beer’s book, *We Swam the Grand Canyon: The Story of a Cheap Vacation that Got A Little Out of Hand*. In this wonderful book, often hysterical, bumbling downstream by Beer and Daggett is mixed with incredible competence and inspiring courage. Indeed, the pair seemed a perfect blend of wits, daring, and humor. It’s probably a safe bet to say if it wasn’t for the uniqueness of the two fellas who pulled off this stunt, there’s a good chance such an amphibious trip, and thus, the wonderful tale of it, would have never happened. It’s an even safer bet that the recounting of the feat wouldn’t have been near as damn much fun for the rest of us.

Daggett had recently lost his expecting wife and two small children in a tragic accident when a train struck the family car. Coping with the loss, he found himself rooming again with his old college roommate from Stanford, Bill Beer. One rainy day the roomies, inexperienced in river-running, pooh-poohed “heroics” of river runners. During a burst of bravado, Daggett blurted that they would swim the Colorado. Beer and Daggett were exceptionally bright, independent, and adventurous and they were looking for a “vacation on the cheap.” Slowly their brainstorming

shaped a secret plan for an illegal conquest of the Colorado. Their clandestine approach didn’t last. A couple of months into the planning, during a party, Daggett hollered, “Hey everybody, Bill and I are going to swim down the Colorado! Tell ‘em, Bill.”

Now needing to put up or shut up, in April of ’55 they made good on their boast by jumping into the icy, 51-degree spring-runoff water of the Colorado at Lees Ferry. Their gear? Wool long johns, thin-rubber \$15 shirts, and “rubber suitcases.” The pair had purchased these surplus rubber generator boxes for 89 cents each and stuffed them with supplies and river gear, including

a movie camera to record their daredevil feat. Indeed, the launch of the swimmers’ expedition looked so dubious, a small boy standing nearby warned them: “You better watch out, Mister!”

For the next 26 days the intrepid twosome floated, swam, clanked, banged and dragged themselves and their waterlogged river boxes downriver. As the unconventional flotilla meanders downstream, one cannot help but root for these amiable underdogs, especially Daggett. He’s a lovable, tragic-hero, no doubt still searching for meaning in life, as well as a diversion from the grief haunting him in the fresh wake of his loss.

One particularly poignant moment occurs early in the trip while the pair is floating quietly in Redwall Gorge. They start yelling to hear their voices reverberate off the Canyon walls. Then Daggett calls out the names of his dead children. The silence proved deafening when those echoes faded.

More frequently the journey resembles slapstick comedy. If the two aren’t hanging out on shore wearing swim goggles during sandstorms, they’re freezing their butts off in the river, slipping and sliding on muddy banks, getting caked in nasty goo, and lugging sopping-wet “dry” boxes up steep banks only to find their contents drenched and the boxes needing to be drained. Or they’re lighting huge driftwood bonfires, dancing around them to warm their hypothermic bodies, dining on soggy grub coated in grit, or bar-



John Daggett and Bill Beer.  
NAUPH.96.4.11B.16 Bill Belknap

bequing a burro rustled up with .22 pistols after a barefooted chase.

Another memorable and pivotal moment involves Daggett at President Harding Rapid when he nearly joined his departed family. Daggett almost drowns when the two dry boxes he's tethered to himself float past one side of the living-room-sized boulder and he on the other. For several horrifying seconds he's trapped underwater and dashed against the jagged edges of this huge boulder that forms the rapid. Indeed the rapid might be more aptly named Daggett's Tooth after he came close to losing a few. He was eventually able to pull himself free, but his up close and personal encounter with this rock is a one-of-a-kind survival in Grand Canyon.

The trip barely survived a few days later when the two hiked to the Rim from Phantom for some real chow and to re-supply. They arrived to find the National Park Service ready to yank their flippers. Presumed dead, Beer and Daggett had created a media ruckus, as well as an embarrassing and expensive search. Now the NPS was determined to kibosh the rest of their trip. Call it charisma, smarts, or just dumb luck, but the duo was able to finagle their way back onto the river in a tag-team of salesmanship for the ages. Their tactic? A convincing bluff: "When all those guys hear we've been stopped after getting this far, they'll be up here in droves, jumping in the river from everywhere, drowning all over, cluttering up the landscape." Perhaps the image of the river clogged with bodies of frogmen was too much for the Park Superintendent. The feds relinquished, basically shoving off Beer and Daggett to flush downriver and set the record so no other fools would be tempted to kill themselves while trying to grab that particular "first."

Daggett's personality emerges at Bedrock Rapid, Daggett follows Beer's run but gets slammed against a boulder while funneling along the rock island... "Damn you, Beer! You're the luckiest guy in the world. I was way to the right of you. When I saw you get by with no problem, I was sure I was safe. Then the god-dam wave disappeared! It was there for you, but when I came along, no siree. No way the Colorado is going to make it easy for old John. All of a sudden the way was nice and clear and all downhill into that rock. No wave for old-hit-the-rocks John. I was pushing and shoving all along that rock. Right next to the son of a bitch!"

Another revealing episode occurred in camp below Fossil Rapid. As he's cleaning his .22, Daggett loses the pistol's pin in the sand. While downing a few drams of whiskey, he sifts mountains of sand, desperately searching for it into the night, like Gollum for the ring

of power... "Pin's hiding... doesn't want me to find it... doesn't want me to have a pistol. It keeps moving, right now it's under a big pile of sand. Can't sit here and look, pile's too big. Go to sleep poor John. Go to bed. Poor-old-John-without-a-pistol-Daggett."

Daggett and Beer floated all the big stuff, including Lava Falls. They arrived at Lake Mead, astounding photographer Bill Belknap, his son Buzz and a newly-wed NPS ranger. It was a minor prelude to the attention and media salvo that would follow, which included a TV series. Daggett, along with Beer's help, eventually wrote, edited, narrated, and produced a film of their trip, "The Big Swim," a visual experience as fun and enduring as *We Swam the Grand Canyon*.

Bill Beer and John Daggett had made good on their claim that running the river wasn't all that dangerous. Truth be told, the publicity of their float would change river running forever. The very next year numbers of river runners in Grand Canyon would double. "We turned a lot of heroes into just ordinary people," Beer would simply say. A lesson in humility for us all.

For John Daggett, perhaps more than any other, it was a Canyon journey worthy of the "life-changing" cliché. He found reason to carry on. He remarried in '55 and graduated from UCLA Law School in '56. By '58 he had produced two television documentaries and he and his wife had started a new family. Within the next few years he would become a third-degree mason in Hollywood and was elected commander of an American Legion Post. Heartbreakingly, he endured the death of another child, an infant son, who drowned in 1965. Like a decade earlier, it inspired a voyage. This one too, involved Bill Beer. With his family, Daggett sailed his own boat from California thru the Panama Canal to the Virgin Islands, where Bill Beer was living with his family. There, the Daggetts and the Beers would be neighbors for a few years. No doubt, John and Bill, at least a time or two over a shot of whiskey, relived the glory of their Colorado swim. Eventually, John sailed back to the mainland finding home and financial success in Florida real estate and cattle ranching.

Last fall John Daggett had committed to coming to Marble Canyon for the Grand Canyon River Guides Spring Guides Training Seminar to show his film. Sadly, he became ill before he could make the trip. He died in July, 2010, joining his old pal Beer who preceded him in death in June of 2000, when he died of heart failure while flying his Ultralight in Kayenta, Arizona.

The Daggett family kindly submitted the following summary of John's life. John himself crafted it, shortly before he died:

John Stewart Daggett died in Florida on July 25<sup>TH</sup> at the age of 82, his wife of Barbara of 29 years, at his

side. He was born in 1928 of John Stewart Daggett and Marguerite Bunton in Los Angeles, CA, the 13<sup>TH</sup> generation of “Daggetts of America”: Martha’s Vineyard, 1630. He attended Le Conte Jr. High School, Burbank Military Academy, graduated Chicago Latin School, Class of 1946, was appointed Midshipman, United States Navy in 1947, graduated Stanford University, BA, Class of 1950, was commissioned 2<sup>ND</sup> Lt. USMC in 1950, 7<sup>TH</sup> Basic Class, Quantico, VA, and honorably discharged as Major USMCR in 1953. He married Paula R. Smith in 1950, fathered Mary Stewart Daggett, Polly Stewart Daggett, John Stewart Daggett (in utero); was widowed/children killed in 1954-Santa Fe train crossing, Solana Beach, CA. After this tragic accident he swam 270 miles down the Colorado River, documented in the DVD “The Big Swim” and the book titled *We Swam the Grand Canyon* by Bill Beer.

He worked as a fearless tree surgeon climbing tall redwoods during college, an agent for New York Life Insurance Company 1953–1956, graduated UCLA Law School, LLB, 1956, produced two television documentary shows “The Open Road” & “Let’s Play Golf”, 1956–1958, appointed to Third Degree Mason, Hollywood, CA in 1959, elected Commander, American Legion Post 8, Los Angeles, CA in 1963. He married Virginia Doty Davenport of Santa Barbara, CA in 1955, and fathered Mary S. Daggett (1958), Carol S. Daggett (1959), John S. Daggett (1963—drowned in 1965). He then sailed the 40-foot wood sloop *Merinda* with surviving family from Huntington Beach, CA down the Mexican and Central American Coast, Galapagos Islands, thru the Panama Canal, to the U.S. Virgin Islands, and lived there until 1968, then sailed to Bahamas, then settled again in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. In 1977 he divorced Virginia. He re-married Barbara Ann Kovacs in 1981, and returned to live in St. Thomas, VI until sickness forced him to seek treatment in FL, where he passed away after a painful last year. He is survived by his wife Barbara Ann; his daughters Mary and Carol; grandsons Harry and John, and granddaughter Frances. He was buried with military honors at Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, FL on August 9<sup>TH</sup>.

*Tom Myers*

## Mark Your Calendars!

### WFR RECERTIFICATION CLASS, SPONSORED BY DESERT MEDICINE INSTITUTE AND GCRG

**January 28–30, 2011**

COST: \$200 HOURS: 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

LOCATION: Arizona Raft Adventures, Flagstaff, AZ

Checks can be made payable to GCRG and mailed to PO Box 1934, Flagstaff, AZ 86002. Contact gcrg@info-magic.net or (928) 773-1075 with questions.

### BACKCOUNTRY FOOD HANDLER’S CLASS

**March 25, 2011**

COST: \$18 HOURS: 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

LOCATION: Old Marble Canyon Lodge

Checks can be made out to Coconino County Health Department. Send to the attention of Marlene Gaither, Environmental Health, Coconino County Health Dept., 2500 N. Ft. Valley Rd., Bldg #1, Flagstaff, AZ 86001. Contact mgaither@coconino.az.gov or (928) 853-8933 with questions.

### GUIDES TRAINING SEMINAR LAND SESSION

**March 26–27, 2011**

COST: \$40 (unless you’re sponsored by your outfitter)

LOCATION: Hatch River Expeditions warehouse, Marble Canyon, AZ.

Checks can be made payable to GCRG and mailed to PO Box 1934, Flagstaff, AZ 86002. This event is open to the public.

### GUIDES TRAINING SEMINAR RIVER SESSION

**April 1–7, 2011 (LEES FERRY TO PHANTOM RANCH)**

**April 7–15, 2011 (PHANTOM RANCH TO DIAMOND CREEK)**

COST: \$220 (upper half) and \$280 (lower half)

ELIGIBILITY: You must be a current member of GCRG and you must have work in the Canyon in 2011.

FIRST PRIORITY: will be given to guides sponsored by an outfitter, and then to all interested guides and trainees who have trips for the 2011 season.

FREELANCE REQUIREMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- 1) Must have all your medical requirements and other guide certifications fulfilled as specified by Grand Canyon National Park, *or*
- 2) You must be a licensed guide on another river, actively working towards becoming a guide in Grand Canyon.

If you’re not sponsored, you need to send us a letter or resume with your background—tell us who you are, how you meet these requirements and why you should go. We will hold your check until we have made our decision.

We will send a GTS sign-up postcard to guides after the first of the year.

## Tales From **The Truck**

**O**n October 4, a huge flash flood ran down Pearce Ferry Road. Oh...the power of Mother Nature! The road is open but remains one lane in some places. The photos tell all...



The October flood in full force.  
Photo courtesy Greg Squires—NPS



Levee damage from the October flood.  
Photo courtesy Greg Squires—NPS

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

“Tales From The Truck” is a new series in the BQR that features stories of wraps, flips, floods, rock falls, and any other epic happenings in Grand Canyon. Basically it is the stuff that all of us boatmen talk about in the truck ride home... “No shit, there I was...” stories. We know they are out there and happen every year so send us your stories and pictures. We want to hear them!

Road damage from the October flood.  
Photo courtesy Greg Squires—NPS



# Conceptualizing The Possibilities: The Grand Canyon River Heritage Museum Project

**T**HE VISION FOR THE Grand Canyon River Heritage Museum has its roots in the 1995 General Management Plan of Grand Canyon National Park. Consistent with the Park's purpose, this guiding document seeks to encourage "appropriate use and adaptive reuse of historic structures, while preserving historic integrity." In a world where we increasingly look for ways to live lightly, the concepts of sustainability and the adaptive re-use of historic buildings for new purposes are intriguing and hold great appeal.

But how do you ensure that the concept is actually workable? The NPS had already identified the historic Laundry Building (one of the original Fred Harvey service buildings), as a likely and appropriate home for the boats and river museum in its comprehensive 2004 Village Interpretative Area study. In 2009, the National Park Service commissioned a study to examine the feasibility of renovating and re-purposing the historic "Laundry Building" as the Grand Canyon River Heritage Museum.

This feasibility study was completed in August, 2010 and can be accessed on the Grand Canyon River Heritage Coalition (GCRHC) website, [www.gcrivermuseum.org](http://www.gcrivermuseum.org). It's a great way to learn more about the building's suitability for the historic boat displays, possible interior and exterior modifications, the components of the new museum, building materials, schematics, architectural renderings, and more... Take a look!

Amazingly enough, it has been almost a year since the Grand Canyon River Heritage Coalition was formed, bringing diverse stakeholder groups together to preserve our river heritage and share it with the world. I can tell you that as the Coalition members have worked collaboratively on this endeavor, our excitement has grown as we lay the initial foundation for future success. Currently, GCRHC is entering into discussions with our partners, the NPS and the Grand Canyon Association, to clarify roles and responsibilities and maintain forward momentum.

Make no mistake, this will be a long and expensive process, yet by the same token, we are thankful that we are not starting at "square one." The Park has in its possession many of the historic craft, much of the painstaking conservation work has been finished, we have a detailed feasibility study that identifies a workable building plan and location, we have knowledgeable experts to help us along the way, and most importantly, GCRHC and our partners have a vision and the depth of

commitment to see it through. As the NPS Feasibility Study states,

"... the exciting opportunities for preservation, display and interpretation of the park's boat collection, and the multiple stories there are to tell about so many related topics, from the stories of river characters, the quirky evolution of river craft, opportunities to connect with the river experience, to the linkages with evolving resource policy in the West, all add up to make this a potential "must visit" part of the south rim experience."

We couldn't agree more. Help us build momentum for this project by making a secure tax deductible donation on the GCRHC website or by mail. The firm support of our river community will be the critical first step as we heighten the Grand Canyon River Heritage Museum profile to a national and even international level. It all starts with you. Please make your tax deductible donation today!



**Formed in 2009, the Grand Canyon River Heritage Coalition includes the following member organizations:**

- Coalition of NPS Retirees**
- Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association**
- Grand Canyon River Guides**
- Grand Canyon River Outfitters Association**
- Grand Canyon River Runners Association**
- Grand Canyon Trust**
- National Trust for Historic Preservation**

## A Karst Connection Model For How The Colorado River Crossed The Kaibab Arch

ONE OF THE MOST PERPLEXING mysteries of Grand Canyon geomorphology is why the Colorado River—after flowing southward from Colorado for hundreds of miles—suddenly turns west in the vicinity of Desert View to cross the Kaibab arch topographic high. This problem was first stated by Babenroth and Strahler (1945, p. 137):

The origin of the Colorado River through the eastern part of Grand Canyon has been speculated about since the first geological exploration of the region. The feature requiring special attention is that the river passes from the relatively low Marble Platform area westward through the Kaibab arch which resembles a great anticlinal barrier in the path of the river. This portion of the river is critical for testing hypotheses of the origin of the Colorado River.

An excellent history of the geologic ideas relating to the Colorado River and its crossing the Kaibab arch has been presented by Ranney (2005) and will only be summarized here. Powell (1875) and Dutton (1882) regarded the Colorado River as being antecedent to (preceding) the formation of the Kaibab arch; then when the arch slowly upwarped, the Colorado River cut a channel through the arch to maintain its course (Fig. 1). Davis (1897) and Emmons (1897), however, considered it to be of superimposed origin; that is, the Colorado River cut through a soft covering to follow a preexisting buried topography (Fig. 2). Both of these earliest theories are now known to be incorrect:

1. Laramide-age monoclines and Basin and Range-age faults, across which the Colorado River flows, were present *before* the river had established its course through the Grand Canyon approximately six million years ago, and
2. These structural features do not constitute a preexisting buried topography.

Babenroth and Strahler (1945) suggested that as Mesozoic strata were being stripped from the region, the river may have occupied a subsequent lowland belt of weak Moenkopi and Chinle shales between the plunging nose of the Kaibab arch and encircling north-facing cliffs of Jurassic sandstones (Fig. 3). However, as Babenroth and Strahler (1945, p. 138) themselves remarked: “It is necessary to find some reason for the ancestral Colorado

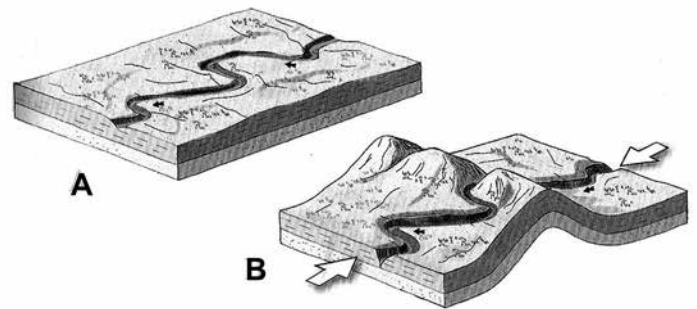


Figure 1. An antecedent river flows across flat terrain (A). As the earth folds, slowly uplifting the terrain, the river cuts a channel to maintain its course (B). From Ranney (2005).

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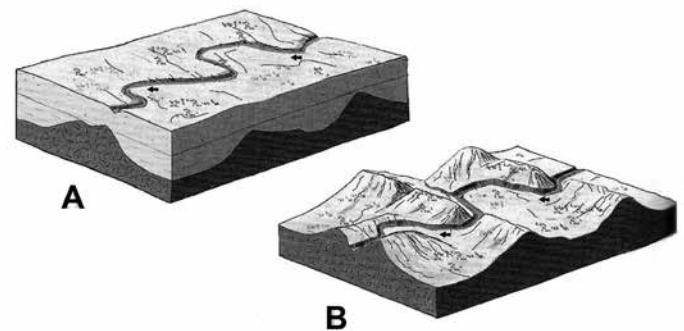


Figure 2. Superposition occurs when a river flowing across a subdued landscape (A) cuts through the soft covering to a preexisting buried topography. From Ranney (2005). Illustration

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River becoming entrenched in the Kaibab arch rather than shifting down dip as the subsequent lowland migrated southward and eastward.”

Probably the most popular theory held over the last thirty years with regards to the Colorado River crossing the Kaibab arch is that of headward erosion and stream capture. In the case of the Grand Canyon, headward erosion would have started in the west along the Grand Wash Cliffs and would have connected across the Kaibab arch with an ancestral Little Colorado River flowing north (Fig. 4). At first glance this scenario seems reason-

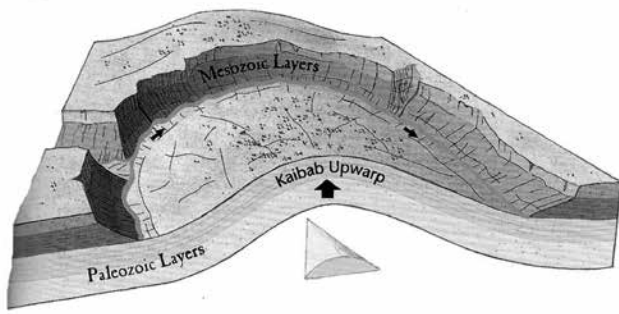


Figure 3. Babenroth and Strahler (1945) suggested how the Colorado River may have been positioned across the Kaibab arch. They envisioned a river flowing through a valley between a receding cliff of Mesozoic rock and the nose of the Kaibab upwarp. From Ranney (2005). Illustration copyright 2005 from *Carving Grand Canyon: Evidence, Theories, and Mystery* by Wayne Ranney. Reprinted by permission of the Grand Canyon Association.

able, but it has the following problems:

1. It appears very unlikely that headward erosion could have proceeded westward from the Grand Wash Cliffs to the Kaibab arch, and then across it, starting only about 16 million years ago – the time when Basin and Range faulting first caused down-dropping along the Grand Wash Cliffs. The process of headward erosion in the arid Southwest is simply too inefficient a process for this to have happened in this length of time (Spencer and Pearthree, 2001).
2. Headward erosion across a topographic divide like the Kaibab arch is very difficult because tiny headwater streams do not have much erosional power

3. In the case of the Kaibab arch, a canyon headward-eroding from the west would have likely shifted down dip around the plunging (to the south) nose of the arch (Fig. 3) rather than connecting with an ancestral Little Colorado River.

Because of such problems, Spencer and Pearthree (2001) and others have favored a closed-basin filling and spill-over model, as proposed by Meek and Douglas (2001). This model has “Lake Bidahochi” filling and spilling over in the area of the Confluence of the Little Colorado River with the Colorado River approximately six million years ago, thus causing a rapid incision of the Grand Canyon. However this model is not in accord with the findings of Dallegge et al. (2001), which strongly suggest that “Lake Bidahochi” was never one big connected lake, but a rather a series of ephemeral lakes and playas that could not have overflowed across the Kaibab arch—and especially not six million years ago when the fluvial-to-eolian upper member of the Bidahochi Formation was being deposited. Dickinson (2010) showed the difficulties of postulating lake spillover to initiate incision of the Grand Canyon unless the morphology of the landscape was quite different from that of today.

Because of the seeming lack of a viable model for how the Colorado River crossed the Kaibab arch, Carol Hill, Noel Eberz, and Bob Buecher (Hill et al., 2008) proposed an entirely new mechanism: the Kaibab arch was first breached by karst water flowing from east to west *under* the arch. Eberz (1995) was the first to propose a karst connection between a Marble Platform

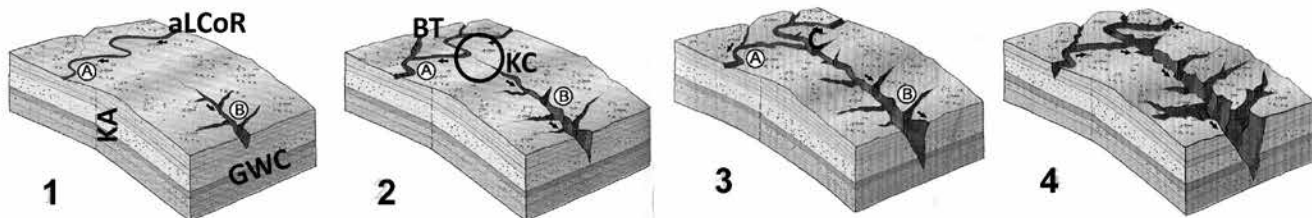


Figure 4. Schematic diagrams of how headward erosion, stream capture, and karst processes could have caused the connection of the eastern (A) and western (B) parts of the Grand Canyon across the Kaibab arch (KA). (1) Headward erosion began at the Grand Wash Cliffs (GWC) approximately 16 million years ago, when the Basin and Range down-dropped along the Grand Wash fault. At that time the ancestral Little Colorado River (aLCoR) flowed north (black arrows). (2) Barbed tributaries (BT), such as South Canyon, flowed north into this northward-flowing ancestral Little Colorado River. The proposed karst connection (KC) of Hill et al. (2008) occurred under the Kaibab arch at about 6 million years ago in the area of the black circle. (3) After the initial karst connection, water that was flowing north along Marble Canyon (black arrow) reversed direction. The eastern (A) and western (B) parts of the Grand Canyon were connected at the Confluence (C). (4) After about 5.5 million years ago, all flow was integrated and to the west, with the Colorado River rapidly incising most (but not all) of the deep canyon that we see today. Modified from Ranney (2005). Illustration copyright 2005 from *Carving Grand Canyon: Evidence, Theories, and Mystery* by Wayne Ranney. Reprinted by permission of the Grand Canyon Association.

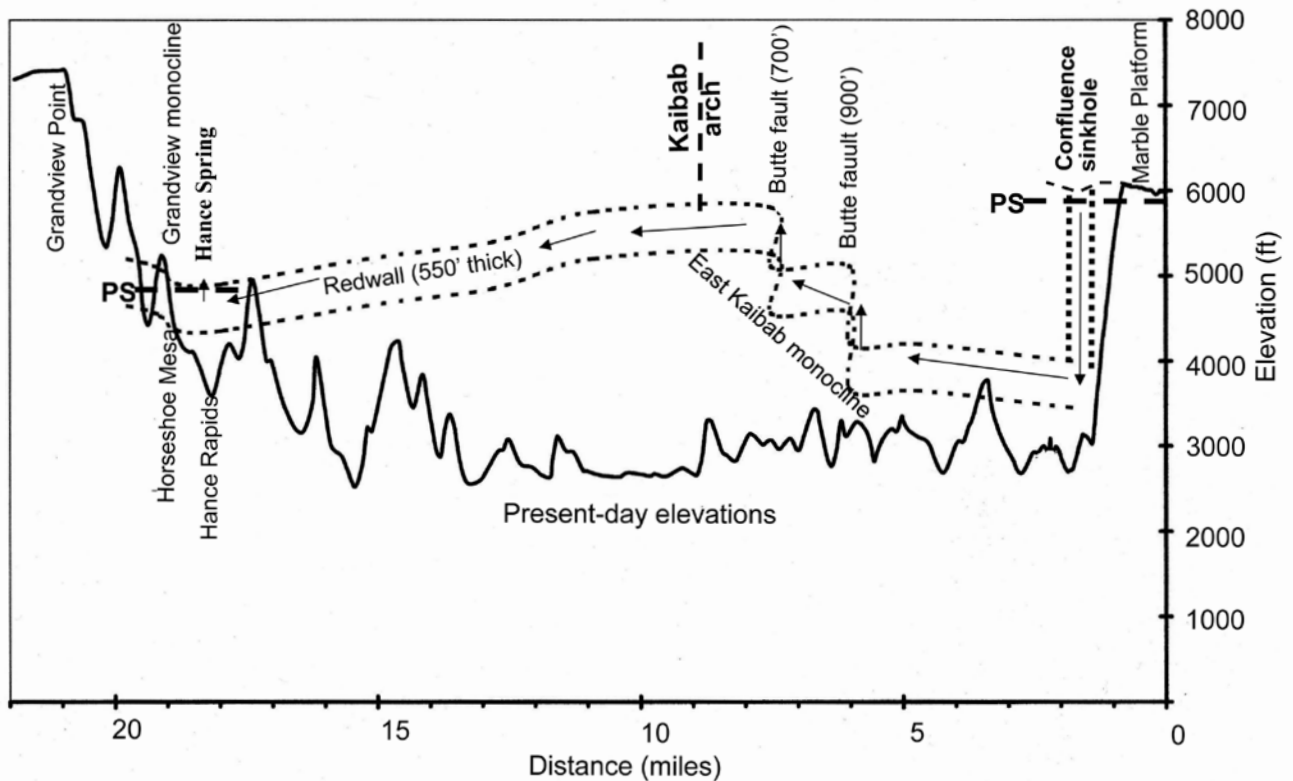


Figure 5. Diagrammatic cross section showing how recharge water on the Marble Platform could have descended to the Redwall Limestone horizon via a sinkhole(s), and then could have crossed under the Kaibab arch to emerge from the Redwall aquifer as a spring (named "Hance Spring" by Hill et al., 2008). Since the potentiometric surface (PS) was higher on the Marble Platform than at Hance Spring, the hydraulic gradient allowed water in the Redwall aquifer to transverse the Butte fault, East Kaibab monocline, and Kaibab arch.

recharge area and springs issuing from the Redwall Limestone along the west side of the Butte fault. The Karst Connection model of Hill et al. (2008) represents a substantial modification of Eberz's original idea. It proposes that water recharging on the Marble Platform went all the way under the Kaibab arch via karst to discharge on the western side of the uplift (Fig. 5).

This model of water going under the Kaibab arch may seem far-fetched to people not familiar with karst and karst processes. Most people do not even realize that a number of caves exist in the Grand Canyon (Fig. 6). The Redwall-Muav limestones are the prime horizon for cave development and the majority of groundwater in the Grand Canyon region has moved (and is still moving) through this aquifer (Hill and Polyak, 2010). Two important hydrologic principles set by Huntton (1995, 2000) apply to Grand Canyon caves and to karst water going under the Kaibab arch:

1. The discharge for Redwall-Muav karst aquifer spring water is from the Redwall Limestone where it has been incised by the main canyon or its tributaries.
2. Flow in karst aquifers can cross faults and folds, move opposite to dip, and go under or through

structures as it pursues a path along the steepest hydraulic gradient to discharge.

This last principle is especially important when it comes to water going under the Kaibab arch. Recharge was on the Marble Platform, where water descended via collapse features (sinkholes) and breccia pipes to the level of the Redwall Limestone aquifer. Note in Figure 5 that in this proposed model, underground water in the Redwall aquifer had to cross the Kaibab arch fold, the East Kaibab monocline, and two sections of the Butte fault to discharge on the west side of the Kaibab arch. This situation posed no problem because in a karst system hydrologically crossing the arch was only dependent on the hydraulic gradient between the two areas. Since the potentiometric surface (PS) in the recharge area on the Marble Platform east of the Kaibab arch was much higher than in the proposed discharge area along the synclinal axis of the Grandview monocline west of the Kaibab arch, the hydraulic gradient and resultant flow was from east to west. The proposed karst connection route of Hill et al. (2008) was from the Confluence to "Hance Spring," in what is now the Hance Rapids area (Fig. 7, H)—only then this route was at the level of the

Redwall Limestone. After this karst aquifer hydrologic connection was established between the eastern and western Grand Canyon at about six million years ago, collapse, incision, and widening of the canyon by the Colorado River then followed this original subterranean route.

Again, this method of karst water hydrologically connecting two areas may appear suspect—even to many geologists—but it is common knowledge among karst hydrologists and is not without modern analogs. One of the best examples of a karst connection changing the direction of discharge is the River Danube-Aach Spring system of the Swabian Alb, Germany. The Danube River, which flows eastward toward the Black Sea, is captured in the western Alb by the Danube Sink, leading periodically to a complete loss of water in the upper Danube (Hötzl, 1996). The disappearing Danube water has been shown by dye-tracing methods to exit from Aach Spring, which from there flows to the River Rhine and the North Sea. This Danube water pirated underground makes a 90 degree turn from east to south and travels 11.7 km to discharge at Aach Spring. The proposed Grand Canyon connection route of Hill et al. (2008) also makes a 90 degree turn at Desert View, with the distance traveled being about twice as long (22 km) as the Danube-Aach system.

The method of collapse, incision, and widening of a canyon along a former karst route is also not without modern parallels. In the Chongquig karst of South China, cave unroofing has been shown to be a large-scale geomorphic process in the creation of gorges (Klimchouk, 2006). In this South China karst, huge depressions called “tiankengs” as deep and wide as 670 meters (2200 feet) have collapsed into river cave passages. The parallel idea for Grand Canyon is that a belt of collapse features (sinkholes) followed the former karst connection route under the Kaibab arch, and then a gorge formed through the merging of adjacent collapses. Over the last six million years this gorge has progressively eroded headward and sideward into the wide Grand Canyon that we see today in the Desert View area.



Figure 6. A river cave in the eastern Grand Canyon. Photo by Debbie Buecher.

Carol Hill, Noel Eberz, & Bob Buecher

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Thanks to Wayne Ranney who reviewed this article and who gave his permission for the use of five figures from his book *Carving Grand Canyon*.

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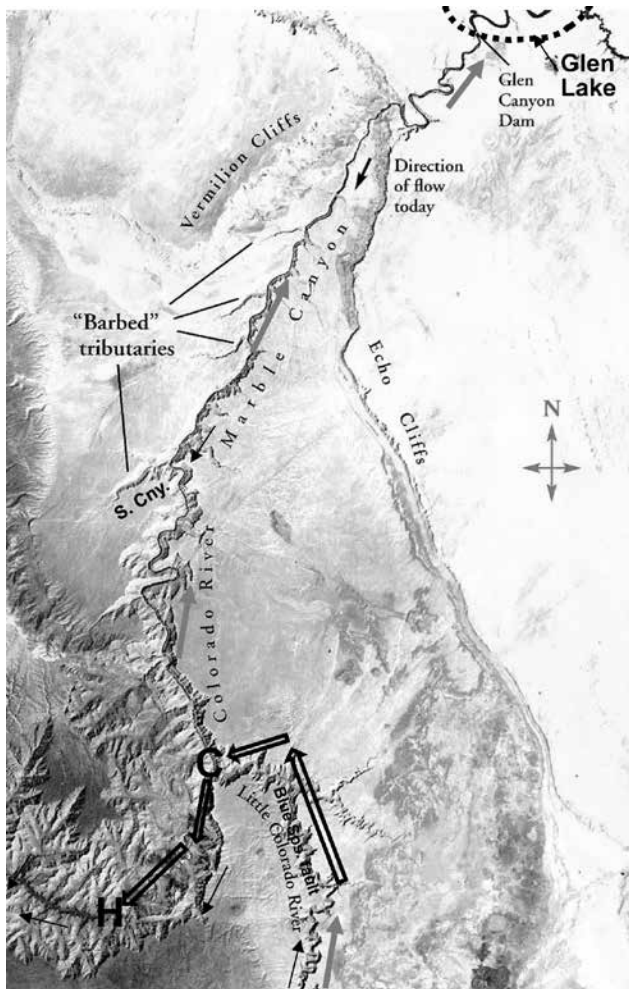


Figure 7. The sequence of events related to a proposed karst connection between the eastern and western sections of the Grand Canyon: (1) **Pre-6 million years ago**. Water flowed north along the Little Colorado River all the way to the Miocene "Glen Lake" of Hill et al. (2008) (bold gray arrows pointing north). Since flow was to the north, then "barbed tributaries" to this flow, such as South Canyon, also pointed north; (2) **6 million years ago**. Water descended along the Blue Springs fault zone to recharge the underground Redwall karst aquifer. Underground sapping caused the collapse of a sinkhole at the Confluence (C), so that Little Colorado River water became pirated down the sinkhole and water stopped flowing north along the former Little Colorado River route. Since the western Grand Canyon had already incised to the west side of the Kaibab arch, and since a hydraulic gradient existed between the two areas (Fig. 5), water flowed under the arch via caves to exit the Redwall Limestone at Hance Spring (H). (The double arrows show the proposed route of flow to the Confluence and then under the arch). (3) **Post-6 million years ago**. After the connection, this karst route collapsed, deepened, and widened to form the canyon seen today in the area of Desert View Bend. Flow reversed in Marble Canyon, leaving the "barbed tributaries" that today point opposite to the flow of the Colorado River. The small black solid arrows denote the direction of flow that the Colorado and Little Colorado Rivers take today through Marble Canyon, Little Colorado River Canyon, and the Grand Canyon. Modified from Ranney (2005). Illustration copyright 2005 from *Carving Grand Canyon: Evidence, Theories, and Mystery* by Wayne Ranney. Reprinted by permission of the Grand Canyon Association.

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## Spirit Unbroken

I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD thank Peter Weiss for anything. Now, twenty-odd years later, I want to. It was 1984, my second year on the Grand Canyon as a guide, rowing down the river with my absurdly top heavy baggage boat, assuming that the 50,000 CFS I was rowing was a normal water level. I was struggling awkwardly through the male hierarchy as the first woman at Mark Sleight River Expeditions and, in my opinion, failing miserably. Trip leader Peter Weiss and I were, at best, enemies; his goal being apparently to drive me off the slim perch I had found on the river while still keeping his. I could see through my frustration and anger that I was in the most beautiful place on earth, yet I hated every day there. Nothing could lift my spirits.

His gift came unexpected and undeserved. We were rowing in the Inner Gorge on a warm July afternoon after a full day of rapids, and Peter decided to stop for the night. I pulled into the rocky camp, lugged the heavy kitchen commissary up the hill to the first flat surface and turned around for another load. Peter, in an unusual act of charity, stopped me. He nodded with his head up somewhere behind us and muttered, "Take a break. Go up to that slab of granite up there..."

"What?" I said, taken aback. *A break?*

"Go find a cave..." he half-suggested as he turned his back to me.

I had no idea why he wanted me scrambling up some granite in the 110 degree afternoon sun, but up I went; I knew better than not to. Something gentle in his usually gruff manner told me that this was more than just a hot hike in the sun.

I didn't notice the "cave" until I was ten feet away from it, and well off the river. This so-called cave would fit about one person folded in half, in a pinch. Buried among many fist-sized pieces of schist, I found an incredibly rusted, badly dented Maxwell House coffee can. I carefully removed the warm, black rocks and found a hand-bound, yellowed stack of curled papers. Scrawled handwriting covered the margins of each of the typed pages. Below the journal, more than a hundred personal notes nested in the bottom of the can addressing the journal's author. Many of these messages spoke of sadness, of longing, of fear: "I will be joining you soon..." and "Your words inspired me beyond my ability to explain..."

*What was this document that inspired such comments?* I carefully pulled out the journal's pages, which were no longer bound at their edges, and sat down on an outcropping to read them as I overlooked the Inner Gorge.

It began, "The Journal of Tiki Galt, 1951–1971," and it was a collection of poems and reflections that struck me to the core. I don't know how to say this any other way: The words I found that day healed my heart and woke me out of the torpor that had plagued me as a new boatwoman up until that moment. I took the words in like an antidote; all my struggles, all my feelings of suffocation with small men in this big place washed away. I realized I had a much larger life than the limitations I was envisioning in that narrow canyon.

"Go, feel,  
live, love  
don't be afraid  
no one knows  
and if they do, why care?  
For you are you"

I continued to devour each and every page of prose in this small battered book. I read without thinking, totally absorbed, and came to the end far too quickly. I looked up, and felt a sobering feeling overcome me. The Canyon looked different, and far more beautiful to me after reading these words. As I scrambled back down to camp, my mind was on the incredible yet simple words I had just read, and the making of dinner passed without my realizing it happened.

"I feel life  
Can you?  
I feel it in the wind as it brushes lightly over me  
I feel it in the darkness as it captures me in its  
blackness  
I feel it in the light as it takes hold of me  
And sings: *here is life*"

*Who was this mysterious poet who died so young and knew so much?* This question haunted me every trip thereafter. Countless times I returned to the Inner Gorge to read Tiki's words, sometimes sharing her words with one or two passengers, but never more. I never ceased to be moved.

That would be the end of the story, except one summer, I showed up to find the journal was gone. Devastated, I had no clue as to who would have stolen something so precious to the Canyon and so meaningful to me. I felt strongly that Tiki's journal belonged where it was, so I put a note in the BQR asking if anyone had seen or moved the journal. After no response,

the need to know more about the author did not disappear, but rather stayed with me like an undiscovered treasure. Each time I talked about the missing journal with passengers or guides, people pushed me to learn more. It took several years, and the encouragement of several passengers and guides, until I discovered the beginnings of why Tiki's journals were in the Canyon.

Her name was Charlotte "Tiki" West Galt who lived from 1951–1971 but never saw the Grand Canyon. She died from Hodgkins Disease at twenty years old. It was her closest aunt, Charlotte Reid (1922–1997), who traveled through the Canyon in 1972 or 1973 with Western River Expeditions with Jack Curry and Jake Luck as her guides. Charlotte had compiled Tiki's words into a small hand-bound book and wanted to leave this journal in memory of Tiki somewhere in this Canyon that had moved her so much. I was able to speak to Jake (1934–1998) and he remembered the trip well when Charlotte secreted away the journal. It was Jake's suggestion that she leave it at the camp where it now lies, and he gave her the Maxwell House coffee can that originally protected the manuscript. Jake recalled Charlotte being a "kind, religious person who liked to sing," and remembered being deeply moved when she read out loud parts of Tiki's journal to him. As an aside, Jake added that it was not unusual for passengers to read poetry to him. It made me want to know Jake Luck, and know what kind of beauty he exuded that gave passengers the safety to read poetry to him.

Jake clearly remembered the placing of the journal as an intimate experience; only four passengers on that trip walked with Charlotte to find the cave where the journal now lies. As they hiked up the stark granite, Charlotte explained to these four passengers that Tiki had wanted to come on the trip but was unable to because of her failing health. Due to this unfulfilled desire at the end of her young life, Tiki asked her aunt to leave some sort of legacy for her in the Canyon. It was a joint decision between the two that this legacy would be Tiki's journals.

Jake remembered Charlotte saying she wanted Tiki's words to be something that would be discovered by people who were searching, rather than something too easily available to just any traveler in the Canyon. Because of this request, Jake confided to me that he neither told nor showed anyone where the journal was during the remainder of his career.

Unlike other journals, Tiki's emerged over time as family members compiled hand written letters, scraps of prose and, as she got sicker, tape recordings. I discovered this when I spoke with Tiki's mother, Susan Galt (1922–2003). During the conversation, I shared with her some of the hundreds of notes that had been

left in the original coffee can—intentions, prayers, and messages—that spoke of Tiki's profound impact on people in need of hope. I felt so fortunate to have spoken with Susan and it seemed the feeling was mutual. "You have no idea how heart-warming your call was. It is so nice to know that Tiki was 'known' to so many people." Susan continued, saying that Charlotte, Tiki's aunt, would have been touched beyond measure to know that the journal she left so many years ago had such a profound impact. After acknowledging how much value the journal held for so many, I was distressed to tell her that the journal was now missing. However, Susan lifted my spirits by telling me that she would mail me four hand-bound copies of Tiki's journal and two copies of a family published memoir, *Spirit Unbroken*, that Charlotte had written to honor her beloved Tiki.

My phone call with Susan Galt in 1997 marked 31 years since the journal had been placed in the Canyon. The journal had vanished years ago, and now, despite delays and hesitations in my own life, I would play a key part in its return. The next summer when I returned to the Canyon and the Inner Gorge, I had a new journal in a water-tight Tupperware ready to be placed in the same cave where so many years ago Peter Weiss had sent me to find the coffee can. To create a spirit similar to the original, I left a letter explaining why the new copy of the original journal was there, and the power of the accompanying notes that were now lost. I hoped this replacement would at least hold some of Tiki's legacy in the place her aunt had intended.

After finding out about Tiki, and reinstalling her powerful words in the Canyon, I felt almost complete. Yet one question still remained: *What had happened to the originals?*

This story almost ended here a second time except that a fellow guide, Ed Hench, had seen my note in the BQR and wrote me some time later telling me that he too loved Tiki's journals and was saddened by their going missing. He told me that one April, many years ago, he told his passengers that "there was something out there to find." Two kids came back and told him they had "found an old journal by a person named Tiki and a whole bunch of notes and comments on the journal dating back to the 1970's." Ed initially corrected them, telling them that the journal they found must have been a copy because the original had disappeared. But when they described what they had found a second time, Ed's curiosity was sparked enough to investigate. "Hurrah, the originals are found," he wrote to me, and described his find in a very remote drainage near the original cave.



Excited, I returned to search. Following Ed's directions, I climbed high following his directions to an obscure overhang, and hunted for over an hour only to find no evidence. I returned to the original spot, in case he had been mistaken, and found only the replacement journal I had left. Unfulfilled, I returned to my boat to continue downstream.

*So, do the originals still exist in the Canyon?* Years later, with the answer still unknown, I find myself finally having time to tell the story. Much has changed. A decade has passed. Other demands of life took over. I raised both a son and a school. Now, when I finally pick up my computer, I regret I didn't do so sooner. I find that many of the people I spoke to and those who knew of Tiki are now dead, including Jake, Susan and

Charlotte. I only wish their memories were here to enrich this story. Only Tiki's brother, Tom, remains. I realize now that I want to share with others Tiki's gift before the thread goes away completely.

Thanks again, Peter.

"I wish that I could go as far as I can see..." Tiki Galt (1951-1971)

Peg Bartlett

**NOTE:** Tiki's words reprinted with permission of Susan and Tom Galt.

## GCY Update

*"It's a blessing to get away from the stress of life and society. When you're away from everything you know you're able to discover the world around you, the people with you, and yourself. It is impossible for me to describe what these trips mean to me."*

—GCY PARTICIPANT, SUMMER 2010

### GC-WHY?

**T**HERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL that happens on a Grand Canyon Youth trip. Kids forget about who they're trying to be back home, and get a little closer to just being themselves. They open up to strangers and make new friends, start to actively participate in living their lives, working as a group and learning and growing as an individual. At the same time, they are involved in the place around them, performing service and science work while feeling a real sense of ownership in their trip. Often kids arrive oblivious and without expectations but leave with an insatiable sense of awe and an inexorable plan to return in the coming years.

GCY is open to any young person age twelve to nineteen who is excited about discovering the Southwest. Participants come from all walks of life, from different cultures, economic backgrounds, and physical abilities.

### HELP US SPREAD THE WORD!

We are currently accepting applications for our 2011 open enrollment programs. Our trips are small and we fill them on a first-come, first-serve basis.

GCY is constantly reviewing our approach to reaching out to as many youth as we can and telling our



story well enough to encourage them to give the river a chance to change their lives. Having experienced it yourself, you can play a major part in getting the word out about our programs. From speaking to kids on your commercial trips, to passing along info ([www.gcyouth.org](http://www.gcyouth.org)) to family members, friends with kids,



Festival & Silent Auction, November 13, 2010.

Tamara Naumann, will be the first recipient of the Confluence Award. Her work was also the inspiration for the award itself. Ms. Naumann has been the principal botanist and coordinator for Dinosaur National Monument's vegetation resource management program since 1995. She is the founder of the Weed Warrior

nieces and nephews, etc., and lending that firsthand enthusiasm for the transformational power of the river, you can help tip the scale for a youth who may otherwise believe staying indoors for the summer might be best.

We make a special effort to recruit participants from underserved populations. In 2010, we distributed over \$30,000 in scholarship funds and served youth from across the country. As we continue to reach more of these young people, the need to provide more scholarships grows. Equipping yourself with a guide packet at the GTS or stopping by our office and picking one up is one way you can make a difference! Introducing commercial passengers to our program and the opportunities to "pay it forward" through our Adopt-a-Youth program is a great way to keep our outreach ability thriving.

#### CONFLUENCE AWARD FOR RIVER STEWARDSHIP

Grand Canyon Youth is pleased to announce Tamara Naumann as the inaugural recipient of the annual Confluence award. This award was created in order to celebrate an individual who has made a positive difference in the Colorado River watershed.

Part of the mission of Grand Canyon Youth is to inspire youth to become future stewards of public lands. The Confluence Award is given to someone who demonstrates a commitment to education, conservation and service. The award will be presented at Grand Canyon Youth's 11TH Annual River Runner Film

volunteer program which just completed its 14TH season. During its tenure the program has utilized 6,333 volunteers who contributed 26,945 hours removing invasive species of plants from the Yampa and Green rivers. The program is about much more than pulling weeds. It gives volunteers the opportunity to learn about the complex management issues surrounding river ecosystems as well as a chance to give back to the place. Grand Canyon Youth's Executive Director, Emma Wharton says: "This program has been truly a labor of love, and Tamara is a great example of someone who sees a problem and works tirelessly to create a positive change." When asked about the award Ms. Naumann responded: "I hope it inspires all of us to continue working diligently and creatively to provide the best possible stewardship for the rivers we love. I am pleased to accept this award on behalf of all the volunteers who have contributed so much to one of America's best places."

Thank you to all those who have continued to provide support! Keep up the good work! Contact Us:  
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Mailing: Please send all mail to PO Box 23376, Flagstaff, AZ 86002  
Phone: 928.773.7921  
Email: [info@gcyouth.org](mailto:info@gcyouth.org)  
Website: [www.gcyouth.org](http://www.gcyouth.org)

*Emma Wharton*

## With a Little Help from Friends, Mavericks, and River Guides

**M**ANY BQR READERS KNOW Amos Burg (1901–1986) as the first person to navigate the Green and Colorado Rivers in an inflatable rubber raft. On August 20, 1938, Burg set out with fellow-Oregonian Buzz Holmstrom from Green River, Wyoming to film a re-creation of the solo voyage Holmstrom had completed the previous year. Holmstrom rowed the *Julius F.*, his hand-made wooden boat. Burg captained *Charlie*, a prototype raft he called “an experiment,” loaded with expensive film and camera equipment. On the upper reaches of the Green Phil Lundstrom, another Oregonian, joined Burg and Holmstrom for a two-week stint. They got along so well that Holmstrom later joked about “the trio of square-headed Scandinavians”. In Green River, Utah, Willis Johnson replaced Lundstrom. After more than 70-days on the river, the trio reached Pearce Ferry on November 4. By all accounts, the new trio also got along famously. Holmstrom became the only boatman to run all the major rapids, including Separation and Lava Cliff. *Conquering the Colorado*, Burg’s film, was nominated for an Academy Award in the short documentary category the following year. Partial credit was due Willis Johnson, who had quickly become a proficient cameraman. Burg acknowledged as much when he nicknamed him “Bill Willis Twillis Twilliger Rock of Gibraltar Johnson”. Lundstrom and Johnson were two of the best and last of Burg’s many companions on his early river voyages, most of whom he could not have done without.

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Early in his career Amos Burg gained an over-sized reputation in the public mind as a solo river voyager. The misnomer was, perhaps, inevitable. Newspaper accounts of his exploits and America’s fondness for solitary heroes forged an image that the modest Burg, at first, resisted. The claim was also not without merit. His 1924–25 winter transit of the 1,200-mile Columbia River was essentially a solo voyage, *except* for the guide he hired for the 180-mile Big Bend reach of the river. Burg made the bulk of his other river voyages—the 1,100-mile Snake, the 3,800-mile Yellowstone-Missouri-Mississippi, and the 3,000-mile Athabaska-Slave-Mackenzie—alone, often under difficult conditions. These voyages, however, had begun with companions who departed early for one reason or another.

Although reporters did mention Burg’s fellow

voyagers, they hewed to the more dramatic narrative of a single individual on an epic adventure. In interviews and during presentations in the Portland area, he attempted to correct the trend. He routinely gave credit to his river companions, stressing the cooperative nature of their adventures. His efforts, however, only served to enhance his persona as a modest heroic adventurer and authentic gentleman.

Burg was not without ambition. At an early age, he had decided to become an adventurer/travel writer and photographer. As his reputation grew, he realized the value of publicity and made the most of it. Burg never took himself too seriously. Whether in private conversation or lecturing before thousands of people, he downplayed his exploits and often made fun of his missteps. The mix of genuine humility and humorous showmanship made him a favorite on the adventure lecture circuit with east coast audiences in the 1920’s and ’30s.

One of eight children, Burg was a shy and curious child who developed into a sociable adolescent. He liked people, but valued solitude. He readily accepted the burdens of solo river travel, but admitted to bouts of loneliness when he traveled great distances on the river alone. He enjoyed introducing his friends to the wonders of river voyaging, believing that the shared experience enhanced his own experience. It was not unusual for Burg to seek out people who lived along the rivers he traveled. He believed the history and lore of the river and advice on how to navigate rapids lie not only with the modern-day fishermen, bargemen, and steamboat captains, but with the people who watched the river go by.

Parallel to Burg’s desire for companionship, nevertheless, was a practical calculation. As his skill as a photographer and writer developed, he gradually realized he needed help. The demands of outdoor photography (hauling photographic equipment, setting up for shots, developing negatives) and the note-taking Burg thought necessary to write magazine articles were time-consuming activities. When combined with routine camp chores and boat handling, there was simply too much for one man to do, much less do it well. Burg needed what he called “voyage assistants.” He could not afford to pay wages. Instead, he offered what for many was the experience of a lifetime. With a couple of exceptions, he generally showed remarkable judgment in his choice of river companions who ranged from a university professor and deep-water

sailors to his teenage brother, Johnnie, and farm boys.

Burg, then, was anything but a lone river voyager. More poet-messenger than conquering hero, he sought to bring back in words and images the beauty and adventure he experienced on the rivers he traveled. To understand and appreciate Burg and his fellow river voyagers, I offer four arbitrary categories of companions: mavericks, hired guides, groups, and the “chosen ones”. A handful of Burg’s many companions fall into (and out of) more than one category. “Mavericks” may be defined as individuals Burg encountered by chance and traveled with on the river. “Hired guides” speaks for itself. Burg was savvy as well as humble enough to know when he needed expertise on certain stretches of river. As he grew older, Burg enjoyed sharing the rivers of his youth with like-minded, but less experienced, people. Among his wide range of acquaintances and friends, he sought out individuals and families from different walks of life, managed the logistics, and once on the river, acted as historian and story-teller. Thus, the “group” classification. Finally, the “chosen ones” refers to individuals Burg deliberately sought out to accompany him on his early voyages.

#### MAVERICKS

In early August 1922, at Council Bluffs, Iowa on the banks of the Missouri River, Harry Fogleberry jumped ship, leaving Amos Burg to complete the transit of the Yellowstone-Missouri-Mississippi Rivers alone. New Orleans lay roughly 2,800-miles downstream. Burg was not unhappy to see the able-bodied seaman go. Not long after, he encountered his first maverick on the river. Burg traveled with the unnamed boater for a day. He described his new companion’s circumstances in a letter home, “He’d gotten mad at the farmer he worked for, stole the trough from the barnyard in the middle of the night, and took off down the Missouri, floating along like Huck Finn with a board for a paddle.” The unknown boater disappears from the pages of Burg’s river diary without a mention.

Shortly afterwards Burg teamed up with Bob Marshall, who he described as “a broad-faced chicken humorist”. Chicken humorist? The Spanish-American war veteran was rowing a “well-equipped” boat (Burg offers no other details) and was bound for New Orleans. They drifted downriver together for two hospitable days, then parted. Marshall was in no great hurry. Burg later encountered Marshall living aboard a river shanty on the Mississippi River near the town of Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Marshall invited Burg to stay with him. After a few days they had a falling out. Burg headed downriver.

Below St. Louis, Burg picked up a dredge worker

who had recently quit his job at Liberty Island near Crystal City and gave him a lift to Grand Tower, 65 miles downriver. Again, he does not identify his companion by name. He found the young man, roughly his own age, friendly and talkative. Burg felt comfortable enough to leave the *Song o’the Winds* in his new companion’s care when he stopped at a riverside town to purchase supplies.

Burg’s next recorded encounter with a river hitchhiker occurred in September 1925 in Weiser, Idaho. Broke, Burg had taken work at a fruit-packing warehouse while he prepared for the final leg of his Snake River voyage through Hells Canyon. The warehouse boss introduced Burg to Ralph (no last name). Burg described Ralph as “a good-natured fellow with long sideburns and high-heeled cowboy boots.” Ralph harbored big-time aspirations of going to Hollywood to become the next Tom Mix, a cowboy movie star. He also claimed to know the Snake River as well as anyone in Weiser. Burg had yet to find a guide to help him navigate the notorious rapids of Hells Canyon. Cowboy Ralph, at least temporarily, qualified for the guide-companion category as well as the maverick. He may have believed running Hells Canyon was a cheap, if not exciting, way to get to Lewiston, Idaho where he hoped to catch a train to Portland.

By the time they reached Homestead, Oregon, Burg had serious doubts about Ralph’s boastful claims. Burg later wrote, “He either didn’t know he wasn’t capable or else didn’t have the energy to care.” Before setting off downriver, he called a riverside council with Ralph, suggesting that he would be better off returning to Weiser. Ralph did not argue. Burg paid his companion \$5 for his time and effort. Two days later he wrote his parents in Portland to alert them that the would-be cowboy actor was coming through town on his way to Los Angeles. Could they put him up for a day or two? Given the size and power of Hells Canyon rapids, Burg had very likely avoided a catastrophe. He was, however, without a guide.

When Professor George Rebec departed the voyage at Norman on Canada’s Mackenzie River in 1929 to return home aboard the sternwheeler *Distributor*, Burg had the good fortune to bump into Hans Roderick. Roderick had abandoned his wheat farm on the Peace River for a life of fishing and trapping along the Mackenzie River in his double-ended, dory-like lifeboat. He towed two canoes loaded with his traps and three dogs—Mutt, Brandy, and Sourdough—by motor, sail, and oars. The two voyagers agreed to travel together to Arctic Red, 350 miles downriver. Roderick proved to be an excellent boatman, fisherman, and storyteller as well as a congenial river companion—generous, river

savvy, sloppy in his habits, and indifferent to hardship. Burg wrote that the river vagabond was, “a man after my own heart...Hans is like the country. He believes in doing things, and gets them done in a large, rough way”. At the end of their voyage Roderick paid Burg the ultimate compliment with his offer “to go adventuring” with Burg anytime, anywhere.

Burg’s next encounter with maverick river companions occurred seven years later (1939) on an unlikely river—The Thames in England. On assignment for *National Geographic* to cover the coronation of King George VI, Burg also brought along his canoe, *Song o’the Winds*. He intended to paddle from London through the heart of the English countryside to the Mersey River in Liverpool, a 400 mile voyage. When Charles Wheeler, Jr., son of his friend and benefactor, failed to appear, Burg marched off to the U.S. consulate in search of a replacement. He scanned a bulletin board of young American travelers looking for rides or work. He decided on “Harry” who agreed to accompany Burg as far as Birmingham. We know little about Burg’s newest river companion. In his diary, Burg left no information or descriptions of Harry or his reactions to the river voyage, save that Harry grew increasingly disenchanted with the rain and was glad to depart when they reached Birmingham. Burg immediately replaced Harry with 19-year-old “Steve”, who arrived from London eager to paddle to Liverpool. At the end of the voyage, Steve disappears without mention.

Willis Johnson, miner and field-worker, did not suffer the anonymity of Steve or John. In late September 1938, Burg and Buzz Holmstrom landed in Green River, Utah on their transit of the Green and Colorado Rivers. Phil Lundstrom had only just departed and Burg and Holmstrom were interviewing for what Burg called a “voyage assistant”. Johnson, who later claimed he was desperate to go down the river, won the job primarily for his easy-going nature and story-telling ability. Burg’s (and Holmstrom’s) judgment proved prescient. Johnson was a hard worker, a soon-to-be able cameraman, and an excellent river companion. Above Dark Canyon Rapids, Burg wrote in his diary, “Companions best possible. Buzz, sturdy & dependable as his ash oars; Willis entirely generous accepting the thunder and the sunshine with a grin.” At Deubendorff Rapids, he continued his praise, “His ready laugh, willingness and appreciation is so likable that he is a tremendous lesson to me. What most of us excuse in ourselves as being human is mostly downright orneriness. Bill has some of the qualities that the whole human race might acquire in a half million years.” By the end of the voyage, Johnson had been

severely bitten by the river bug.

A sturdy friendship developed between Johnson and Burg. Over the next decade, they made a number of voyages, on rivers and along the Inside Passage, together. The maverick miner had become one of Burg’s “chosen companions”.

In 1968, the 66-year-old Burg returned to the Slave/Mackenzie Rivers. The first five weeks of the voyage he traveled with Vic Bracher, a friend from university days, in a 20-foot Chestnut Freighter canoe powered by motor, oar, and sail. Bracher departed at Fort Smith. Burg continued downriver alone to the Mackenzie. On the beach at Norman Wells, he found 73-year-old Duc Meyer, a retired feature writer from the *San Francisco Chronicle*. A battered aluminum canoe rested beside his pup tent. The two traveled together, but not by canoe. They boarded the survey and buoy tender boat *Dumit* for the voyage to Inuvik on the Mackenzie Delta.

#### GUIDES

When in doubt, Burg never hesitated to consult with or hire a local guide. Part recognition of his own abilities, part concern over the loss of valuable camera equipment, he maintained a balanced blend of humility and confidence. More often than not, the rivermen he hired were river savvy and knowledgeable, but also prone to boasting and exaggeration. They brimmed with masculine confidence. They loved nothing better than escorting a greenhorn and city slicker like Burg down the river. None, however, had run the entire length of their home rivers. Burg, appreciative of their skills, took their posturing in stride.

Bald-headed and mischievous, Joe Evans had worked the stretch of the Yellowstone from Livingston to Timber for decades. During summer the trapper and curio store owner searched for moss agates on the gravel bars for his curio store; in fall and winter he fished the river and hunted and trapped along its banks. When Burg arrived the summer of 1922 with his younger brother, Johnnie, and Harry Fogleberry, Evans bragged that he had escorted the famous travel-adventure writer Lewis Freeman downriver the previous summer. Burg did not hire Evans. (Evans, however, did accompany Burg a short distance on the river.) He did pepper Evans with questions about what lay downriver. Evans warned of swift shallow water, gravel bars, sweepers, snags, mosquitoes, and heat. He later joked with Burg that he had buffaloed the townspeople about the danger of the Yellowstone so he could build a reputation and attract paying customers.

When Burg could not locate Pete Bergenham, a well-known local river guide, he hired local trapper

Knud Knudsen to guide him on the notorious 235-mile Big Bend reach of the upper Columbia River in November 1924. Knudsen assured Burg of the difficulty of the rapids and that he was the man for the job at \$10 a day plus grub. He failed, however, to tell Burg that a year earlier he had capsized in his Petersboro canoe at the head of Redgrave Canyon, losing an entire season's worth of furs, traps, and gear. No matter. Winter had arrived and Burg, hobbling about on a crutch due to a knee injury, had no time to waste.

After Burg completed the 1,200-mile voyage, he wrote of Knudsen, "...the voyage around the Big Bend with Knud was an education. He was indispensable as I was on a crutch and had trouble on the snow-covered bank. The information he imparted made the whole region of that great wilderness come alive. His manner was rough and abrasive. He was foolish in trying to emphasize the extent and profundity of his wilderness knowledge as I was in trying to protect my poor abused ego. Knud was proud of his river running skills but I found this arrogance of knowledge typical of the Big Bend trappers. They were similar to the mountain men I'd read about—the best trappers, the best marksmen, the supreme hunter, the bravest—everything superlative with a pitying contempt for a cheechako like myself...but I had already been five years in ship's fo'castles voyaging the seas of the world and similar Cape Horn egotists had taught me that such talents should be duly recognized and appreciated if one is to function with them in jagged harmony. No money wasted there—just solid gold in dealing with these priceless individuals."

Burg's transit of the Columbia River from source to mouth in the heart of winter, abetted by extensive newspaper coverage, launched his reputation as a solo voyager.

A year later, Burg was in Homestead, Oregon, preparing to descend Hells Canyon. It was the final and perhaps most dangerous leg of his 1,100-mile transit of the Snake River. Two companions, Harry Fogleberry and Ralph (no last name), had come and gone. Burg was in need of a guide. Local people had warned Burg that 50-year-old John Mullins, veteran miner and part-time moonshiner, was an unreliable, if not dangerous, man. (Two months earlier Mullins and his wife had been on the verge of hanging a man who they believed had stolen one of their horses.) Burg did not take the charges against Mullins seriously. He wrote, "Homestead was one of the West's last rip snortin' mining camps and I sort of gloried in all the bloody tales." Mullins' 30 years of experience in Hells Canyon was undeniable. He had made dozens of mining claims along the river corridor, packed railroad survey

and motion picture crews, and floated the river down to Lewiston, Idaho. When Burg approached Mullins, the miner did not balk. He boasted, not unlike Knudsen, that he knew every rock and rapid in the river. In *Snake River of Hells Canyon*, Cort Conley wrote, "They fought the breakers in Kern Rapid, had a close call at Squaw Creek, capsized the canoe at Buck Creek when a tow line broke, shattered the stern at Thirtytwo Point (Sawpit Rapid), washed out of the craft at Steamboat, and nearly dumped at Copper Ledge Falls." Later Burg allowed that, "he ought to since he'd hit them all." Nevertheless, the transit through Hells Canyon was a success.

Despite Mullins' moody temperament and casual recklessness on the river, Burg got along with the hardrock miner by getting along. Mullins had been instrumental in helping Burg achieve his goal. He had also shared with Burg his first-hand knowledge of the history of the river as well as introduced him to Si Bullock, a long-time resident of the canyon. Burg would become the first to paddle the length of the Snake in a canoe. Whether the voyage qualified as "solo" remains debatable.

#### GROUPS

Burg's first deliberately organized group-float occurred on the McKenzie River in May 1927 while he was a student at University of Oregon in Eugene. The one-day, 36-mile run included Burg and three other university students: John Bean, geology major; Frank Sparks, sophomore physics major; and Prince Helfrich, a geology major who had boated and fished the southern Oregon river since childhood. (Later Helfrich would be considered one of the early pioneers of river guiding in the Pacific Northwest running rivers like the upper Rogue, Metolius, Deschutes, John Day, as well as the Middle Fork and Main Salmon in Idaho. Helfrich, along with Veltie Pruit, also designed and built the first modern version of the McKenzie drift boats, a craft revered for its light weight and maneuverability on small, rocky rivers.) Helfrich, of course, qualifies in the river guide and "chosen companion" categories.

In spring, the McKenzie River, fed by snow-melt from glaciers in the Three Sisters range, runs cold and fast. Burg rowed the *Song o'the Winds*; no record of the boat Helfrich piloted remains. He likely rowed a light-weight open wooden boat. Sparks and Bean alternated riding with Burg and Helfrich. They ran a total of thirty rapids. At one unnamed rapid, Frank Sparks was pitched from the stern of the *Song o'the Winds* into the icy river. By the afternoon they were fishing upstream from the confluence of the McKenzie and Willamette.

Quite by chance, a group of maverick boaters joined Burg and 66-year-old George Rebec, one of Burg's professors at University of Oregon, on their 1929 run down Canada's Athabaska, Slave, and Mackenzie Rivers. The party of five, led by a Mr. Howell, a mining entrepreneur, met Burg and Rebec at the confluence of the Clearwater and Athabaska Rivers. Howell had become increasingly worried about the four inexperienced, but self-assured miners—John, Stan, Bill, and Jim. Already they had swamped or capsized on the Clearwater a number of times. Howell and Burg agreed to voyage together as far as Resolution on Great Slave Lake. Both likely thought there was safety in numbers. The river flotilla consisted of a skiff named *Dorothy* and four canoes, including Burg's.

The river alliance was not without occasional disharmony. There were disagreements over when and where to camp and the handling of the boats. Rebec insisted on keeping a tight schedule, but helped little with camp chores. At one point, the group became separated on the river for an entire day, creating more friction as to who was responsible. Rebec complained when the miners ran short on grub and asked Burg and Rebec to share their own provisions. They had little choice but to agree. The miners promised to replace what they had eaten. Nevertheless, when they reached Resolution after two weeks on the river together, the men parted on good terms.

A decade passed before Burg joined forces with a group well-known to BQR readers—Buzz Holmstrom, Phil Lundstrom, and Willis Johnson—to make their Green and Colorado River voyage. Much has been written about their 1938 voyage and needs little repeating here, except to mention the group's remarkable compatibility. In a setting like Grand Canyon, personality clashes among the small knot of river runners was often inevitable. By all accounts Burg, Holmstrom, and Lundstrom, (and later Johnson) got along famously. Each brought certain skills and more important, a willingness to work together which allowed them to function as a cohesive unit through thick and thin. There seems to have been little if any bickering or one-upmanship. (Later, however, unsubstantiated rumors of a conflict between Holmstrom and Burg over money trickled through the Colorado River running community.)

A year later, Dr. Russ Frazier, a Utah physician, invited Burg, Holmstrom and Johnson to accompany him and other members of the "Colorado River Club" on the Middle Fork and Main Salmon Rivers in Idaho in June 1939. Burg accepted immediately, and suggested filming the trip. Johnson jumped at the opportunity. Holmstrom reluctantly declined. Members

of the Colorado River Club included Frank and Gibb Swain, Hack Miller, Bill Fahrni, and Charles Kelly. Frazier brought four wooden boats—the *Stefansson*, the *Rimrock*, the *Also Ran*, and the *Polly B*; Burg brought *Charlie*, his rubber raft. During the voyage the group also retrieved two of Frazier's abandoned boats—the *Blue Goose* and the *Deseret News*—from his 1937 trip).

The trip appears to have been a series of river mishaps and near misses for those piloting the wooden boats. The crafts leaked, oars broke, and numerous laborious portages over gravel bars wore the men out. They routinely hit rocks, punched holes in their boats, and watched them sink. They swamped, capsized, flipped, got caught in log jams, and lost boats while lining. Significant time was spent making repairs. Members of the Colorado River Club, to their credit, did not take themselves too seriously, suffering the mishaps and labor in good humor. Burg, meanwhile, sailed through unscathed much to the consternation of the other boatmen. Later, they grudgingly admitted that Burg might be on to something with his rubber raft. Willis Johnson anticipated the changes to come, "...open boats can be taken on through, it will be much better to have rubber boats, for Amos Burg has proven them to be far superior to any other kind of boats even though a person will have his share of upsets if he isn't alert all the time."

The trip, originally destined to run the Lower Salmon to Lewiston, was cut short in Riggins, Idaho. No reason is given. Charles Kelly, however, wrote, "Everybody is glad the trip is over."

After a 14-year absence, Burg returned to Hells Canyon in fall 1944. It was not an adventurous voyage so much a recreational jaunt with good friends he had known for years. Burg, as organizer, invited Russ Frazier, Pat Patterson, a Seattle businessman, and Charlie Wheeler, an executive with McCormack Steamship Company out of San Francisco and Burg's long-time friend and patron. Patterson brought *Junior*, a 6-foot rubber raft of dubious quality. Frazier rowed an aging 12-foot canvas boat he accurately labeled *Patches*. Burg rowed *Charlie*, with Wheeler as a passenger. The party launched at Huntington, Oregon; Hells Canyon lay 75 miles downriver. At Homestead, Oregon, the group purchased a 14-foot wooden boat from the local ferryman for \$15. By modern standards the fleet of boats, except for Burg's, was inadequate for the fast water of Hells Canyon.

Nominally in charge, Burg acted as a faux guide and river host. It was a role he enjoyed. The light-hearted group traveled at a leisurely pace. The foursome crashed through the rapids, swam in the flat water, fished regularly, ate well, and soaked in the sun

and the scenery. Around the campfire Burg entertained his friends with anecdotes from his youthful voyages. He made impromptu visits with old-timers he had visited two decades ago. They remembered him. When the group failed to arrive at Pittsburg Landing at the designated time, family and business acquaintances alerted the U.S. Army who sent a rescue airplane to look for the “lost” expedition. Burg joked that while he, Patterson, and Frazier had been delayed, only Wheeler had been “lost”. All four men agreed that it had been a satisfying get away. Wheeler and Patterson flew back to Portland; Burg and Frazier continued downriver to Lewiston. Once back in Salt Lake City, Frazier began making plans for a trip down the Yampa.

Despite failing health during the last decade of his life, Burg continued to organize group trips with family and friends. He was bemused when he had to apply for a permit to run the Snake. Once he received the permit he encouraged those who hesitated, wrote letters and made phone calls to agencies, and offered advice on gear. Burg especially liked introducing newcomers to the magic of the river. Among his numerous fellow river runners were the artist Rita Munoz, Pastor Don Brown, and Roy Pepper, who had married Burg’s niece, Helen, and their families.

On the river he shook his head at the number of raft parties. So much had changed. At night he spun half-century old tales of his voyages and the characters he had met. He was cheered by the simple redemptive qualities of voyaging—sunlight, scenery, fast water, sandy beaches, starry nights, and above all, companionship. In 1977, he ran the Yukon from Whitehorse to Carmac. The next year he ran the Hells Canyon section of the Snake and immediately afterwards, returned to Alaska to run the Yukon. Burg’s river running days, however, were over. Although he would be invited on trips each year for the remainder of his life, he graciously declined.

#### COMPANIONS—FIRST AND SECOND CHOICES

Despite two notable exceptions, Burg displayed remarkable judgment in choosing companions to accompany him on his early river voyages. Early on he seemed to have realized that compatibility was as important an ingredient on a successful trip as competency. He sought out men of a temperament not unlike his own—easy-going, self-effacing, a droll sense of humor, uncomplaining in the face of difficulty or hardship. He thought the able-bodied seamen he worked with aboard transport ships would make decent river men. (One did; one did not.) Occasionally Burg’s choices were dictated by immediate circumstances. When his first choice dropped out or

could not make it, he was forced to go searching for an alternative. Other times he extended invitations out of a genuine desire to share the river experience with individuals he believed might appreciate it.

Burg met Fred “Spokane” Hill for the first time aboard the *SS Waikiki*, a transport ship on a round-the-world voyage in 1919–20. Hill, a WWI veteran and six years older than Burg, was a no-nonsense, plain-spoken WWI veteran who liked a drink and did not mind a fight. He had once teased Burg, wondering what he was coming to because Burg “didn’t drink, smoke, or chew.” Hill, nevertheless, took the novice seaman under his wing. They became fast friends. Burg wrote of Hill, “Spoke is a swell fellow who never gets sore when you tease him about the little mustache he is trying to raise.” Despite superficial differences, the two seamen had much in common—Scandinavian heritage, immigrant parents who had arrived in the Northwest at roughly the same time, and a thirst for adventure.

When Burg pitched the idea of running the Lower Snake River from Lewiston, Idaho to its confluence with the Columbia, and then down to Astoria on the Oregon coast, a distance of 450 miles, Hill agreed immediately. Despite Burg’s voyages on the upper and lower Columbia, neither he nor Hill had any fast water experience. Neither seemed especially concerned. In late May 1920, they launched from Lewiston. Whether through carelessness or intention, they carried no lifejackets. Young, strong, confident, carefree—they made their way downriver, laughing at their spills and mishaps. Twenty-five days later they arrived in Astoria. Hill had proved competent, reliable, fearless, and damn good company. Over the next decade Hill was often Burg’s first choice as a river companion. The pair made voyages along the Inside Passage of British Columbia and Alaska. Immediately afterwards, they returned to the headwaters of the Columbia and ran the length of the river. The following year, Hill accompanied Burg on another marathon voyage, this time on the 2,000-mile Yukon River.

If Burg believed Hill to be an ideal river companion, he was ambivalent about 28-year-old Harry “Shorty” Fogleberry, an able-bodied seaman he met aboard the *SS Kadar* in 1921. Burg was making ready to launch on his first epic voyage, a 3,800-mile run on the Yellowstone, Missouri, and Mississippi Rivers in May 1922, when he learned that Hill, his first choice, was in jail in New Orleans. Burg turned to Fogleberry, who he described as “fair and honorable and as square as chocolate éclair.” He had also invited his inexperienced 15-year-old brother, Johnnie “in the hopes that it might give him a better understanding of life and



the gratitude which he must feel toward mother and father in the end, for giving such a home." The choice of Johnnie Burg was certainly familial; the selection of Fogleberry appears to have been one of expediency. Nevertheless, Burg's decision to bring two neophytes together as companions on a lengthy voyage on an unfamiliar river in a single craft is perplexing.

In Billings, Montana, only a week into the trip, Burg wrote home that Johnnie seemed to be enjoying himself, but once they reached Bismarck, North Dakota, he would be putting his brother on a train for Portland. It is unclear whether the younger Burg's departure was planned or not. In newspaper accounts and Burg's journal, explanations ranged from the need for Johnnie to return to school to a case of homesickness.

On August 5, two weeks after Johnnie Burg left, Burg and Fogleberry reached Council Bluffs, Iowa. After a month and a thousand miles on the river, Fogleberry called it quits. Throughout the trip, he had been restless, even irritable. Always reluctant to speak ill of others, Burg wrote of his shipmate, "he seemed mad all the time he was on the river. He was like a coiled spring ready to go off."

Fogleberry had no great love for the passing scenery, certainly not the history of the river. He was happiest when he was busy in the kitchen or paddling downstream toward a destination. At one point he had grown so impatient that he insisted on paddling at night. After Fogleberry's departure, Burg revealed what was likely the underlying cause of his shipmate's distress in his journal. "Why this oaken-hearted sailor who had sailed the seven seas had respected the wishes of a twenty-year-old kid to not take a drink, I'll never know... Although Harry was a good shipmate at sea he found the canoe too confining." Burg wasted no time in finding a replacement. In a letter home he mentions his new partner, "This Jean is a Dutch boy and good-natured and not a bit crabby." Jean had worked with Burg aboard the *SS Egeria* bound for Australia. A week later Jean slips and injures his leg, rendering him useless. Soon after, he disappears from Burg's journal. Burg will travel more than 2,000 miles downriver to New Orleans alone.

Three years later, Harry Fogleberry appears back on the scene. This time he is traveling with Burg down the Snake River. Initially, Burg had been reluctant to take his friend with him. It appears, however, that he had trouble finding anyone to accompany him. He decided to take another chance with Fogleberry. Again, Burg banned alcohol on the trip. Early on things go well. Fogleberry was an efficient cook and even seemed to enjoy the river and the scenery. Burg rationalized his

companion's sour moods and temper as a means of relieving stress, certainly preferable to days of relentless brooding. He wrote an affectionate description of Harry, "I like to watch Harry walk down a trail, this short, rugged, brown-skinned Norwegian seaman, broad shouldered, his hat crooked to one side, his movement in rhythm to a sailorly roll... I think Harry is an admirable character." When Fogleberry recovers Burg's canoe and camera equipment after a near-disastrous capsizing, the promise of a successful voyage with an affable and capable companion seems within reach. By the time Burg and Fogleberry reach Slim "Baconrind" Hossman's ranch at Hoback Junction, however, the trip was beginning to fall apart. After a couple days working for Hossman, Fogleberry grew increasingly ill-tempered. He was anxious to go down river. Burg, clearly fed-up, now wrote, "Since leaving Portland Harry's temper has made me miserable until I felt at times that life was unendurable. He deadened the charm of the valley, of Slim's talk, and all that was beautiful and interesting in life thru his infernal temper."

In the Alpine Canyon reach of the Snake River, the situation deteriorated. Ignoring Burg's plea for caution, Fogleberry took control of the numerous lining operations. Above the mouth of Wolf Creek (near present-day Three-Oar-deal Rapid) the *Song o' the Winds* got away from the men, drifted downstream, and disappeared. In a huff, Fogleberry sets off for the town of Alpine, Idaho, seven miles away. Burg and Hossman searched the river, eventually discovering the battered canoe wedged between two boulders. It was beyond repair. By the time Burg and Fogleberry were reunited in Alpine, it was clear that the trip was over. It is less clear on what terms the two seamen parted company. A subdued Fogleberry asked Burg if he had found his wallet containing citizenship papers, as well as his all-important merchant marine documents. It would be a significant loss. Burg had, in fact, recovered Fogleberry's wallet. Initially, he and Hossman consider holding onto their companion's papers briefly, a small retribution for Fogleberry's behavior. Burg was not one to hold a grudge. He wrote of the incident, "I thought it a huge joke. Then I remembered the morning below the mouth of Gros Ventre that Harry swam the treacherous river to salvage the outfit. I saw him as my comrade still, a man to stand by and I handed him the wallet to gladden his heart as the jammed canoe had gladdened mine."

Burg returns immediately to Portland to purchase another canoe. A couple of week later he is back on the Snake. He finishes the voyage alone, the first complete transit of the 1,200-mile Snake River. Fogleberry never

voyages with Burg again.

Of Burg's numerous river companions, 66-year-old George Rebec was perhaps the most unlikely. Rebec, teacher and head of the philosophy department at University of Oregon, had never camped outdoors, much less run a river. The armchair traveler was prone to spouting romantic notions about the nature of adventure. He also suffered a heart condition. Burg, however, admired Rebec, describing him as "a man of learning, honor, and wisdom." Rebec found Burg more mature and experienced than the average university student. A friendship developed. Throughout the school year, Rebecca questioned Burg in detail about his previous voyages on the Yukon, Columbia, and Snake Rivers. Burg, likely in a burst of enthusiasm, invited his teacher to accompany him on a 2,000-mile voyage on Canada's Mackenzie River. The seriousness of Burg's offer remains unknown. Rebec accepted and agreed to contribute \$400 to the venture. It was unclear if Burg contributed financially or whether he and Rebec had reached an informal agreement: Rebec would finance the trip in exchange for Burg's services as organizer and guide. Friends and colleagues tried to dissuade the pair. Mrs. Rebec, however, was encouraging; she told Burg that her husband considered the upcoming journey "the opportunity of a lifetime." Burg did not want to disappoint. Almost immediately, however, he appeared to suffer doubts about his decision to bring Rebec.

In late June 1929, they launched from Waterways, north of Edmonton, Canada, on the Clearwater River. They had 900 miles to cover before they reached the mouth of the Mackenzie River. They floated the Clearwater until they reached the Athabaska River, which empties into Athabaska Lake, then crossed the southern tip of the lake to the headwaters of the Slave River. They reached Fort Resolution on the shore of Great Slave Lake. The headwaters of the Mackenzie River proper lay across the lake.

Burg's worst suspicions about Rebec as a companion were confirmed. He discovered that his favorite professor demanded much attention and did little work. Rebec is also impatient with delays, insisting that they are falling behind schedule. Burg's explanations were ignored. "The Doctor, thinking of the long distance yet to be crossed, blew up, quoted statistics and schedules until Howells (who they were traveling with) promised to get us into Resolution by July 1." After weeks on the river, Burg scolded himself about his choice, "Of course I felt complimented by his trust in coming with me, nevertheless, I realized all too clearly that I am cramping my summer and running into extra expense for a fastidious partner, a man whom I

must watch, necessitating limitation of runs to insure against the cold. It is sometimes hard not to forget that this has been my life, never again, I thought, would I give such optimistic views to anyone."

Burg was quietly relieved when Rebec, who became ill (possibly a strain of influenza or pneumonia), decided to return home early. Rebec had calculated that it would be impossible to complete the voyage in time to return to his teaching duties. Burg did not disagree with the decision. Despite the tension, teacher and student parted on amiable terms. Both felt the sting of departure. Burg wrote of Rebec, "He is much at home in the world of books, but too much inclined to let little things disturb him in the outer world."

Burg continued down the Mackenzie (voyaging with Hans Roderick for part of the journey) until he reached the Mackenzie River delta, completing his transit of the Mackenzie River. At McPherson (on the Peel River) he hired an Indian guide to lead him over the Davidson Mountains into the Yukon Basin. He then floated down the Bell and Porcupine Rivers alone in a flimsy eight-foot raft (the Indian guide's dogs had carried it over the mountains) until he reached the Yukon River.

Frank Sparks, Burg's former classmate at University of Oregon, had long wanted to accompany Burg on one his river voyages. Burg had thought Sparks incompatible company for a long voyage and resisted. In April 1930, however, he agreed to partner up with his college friend for a voyage down Canada's little-known Canoe River, and then down the Columbia River to Portland. The purpose of the river trip was to photograph and film the wildlife in the area and the Columbia Ice fields near Jasper Park. Burg, of course, needed an "assistant." If he wrote letters or kept a diary about the voyage, they have disappeared. We know little about Sparks or how he performed on the river.

In August, only weeks after completing his assignment on the Canoe and Columbia Rivers, Burg set off down the Snake alone in an eight-foot rubber boat. The make or model of the craft goes unmentioned. Burg appears to have avoided any mishaps. Hundreds of river miles later, he picks up his canoe and Jack Fletcher, a Portland friend and businessman, in Weiser, Idaho. Whether Burg had extended an invitation to Fletcher or he had suggested accompanying Burg is unknown. By now, however, Burg had found a way to defer costs. The 260-pound Fletcher proved a good companion and cook, but a liability on the river. Burg joked that when his friend sat in the stern of the canoe, the bow popped up out of the water.

Perhaps the best known of Burg's river companions to BQR readers is Haldane "Buzz" Holmstrom.

After reading about Holmstrom's solo voyage in the February 1938 issue of *The Saturday Evening Post*, Burg immediately wrote to his fellow Oregonian with a proposal to run the Green and Colorado rivers, secure a place in river history, and make money. Holmstrom agreed immediately. In the midst of preparing for the journey, Burg had written to Holmstrom, "There is one thing I desire most and that is to come off the river your friend and to remain one. Otherwise, I shouldn't like to take it."

In late summer the pair set out from Green River, Wyoming, to film a re-creation of Holmstrom's solo voyage on the Green and Colorado Rivers the year before. With the completion of the voyage, Burg hoped to achieve his decade's long goal of running all the major western rivers.

Although time revealed that Holmstrom and Burg were clearly different personalities, they had much in common. Both were modest men with a wry sense of humor, their Scandinavian backgrounds much in evidence. Each was close to his family, especially their mothers. Each valued their friendships. Both had fallen under the spell of rivers in their adolescence and continued to seek adventure throughout their lives. They often sought out friends to accompany them on the river. Both also harbored dreams of making a living on the river. Burg, with the financial backing of his father, had come closer to realizing this ambition than Holmstrom. The struggle to fund their voyages, however, was ongoing. If Burg had run his numerous trips on a shoestring, Holmstrom had run his on a bare thread. Neither was married at the time of their Grand Canyon voyage. (Holmstrom never married; Burg married at 55.)

No issue arose between the two men about who would be "trip leader" on the river. When the situation called for it, one or the other would take the lead. Burg repeatedly acknowledged the value of Holmstrom's previous experience and his superiority as an oarsman. Although he "cheated" numerous runs, Burg often deferred to Holmstrom's judgment when running rapids.

On the river Burg wrote of his relationship with Holmstrom, "Our thoughts, coming out of simplicity and awe, filled us many times with a deep earnestness. I felt humbly that Buzz and I were one in understanding. We never sulked, nor did we argue too intelligently, even under when under the utmost strain."

Holmstrom, in turn, welcomed Burg's advice in terms of logistics, promotional possibilities, and potential photographic opportunities during the early planning stages of the trip. He realized that Burg was a superb organizer as well as a savvy promoter with numerous, well-established connections in the film,

lecture, and magazine fields. Both men hoped to profit financially from the "re-creation" voyage. During the trip Holmstrom wrote of Burg, "We get along fine—He is a very hard worker and a wizard with the boat." To Lois Jotter, he wrote, "I wish you could meet him... he is a person who appreciates the beauty all around us." When Phil Lundstrom joined Burg and Holmstrom in Green River, Wyoming, Holmstrom had joked about "the trio of square headed Scandinavians."

Decades after the 1938 Burg-Holmstrom river trip, however, rumors persisted that the two men had had a falling out over money. Burg, the story went, had cheated Holmstrom out of the meager profits from *Conquering the Colorado*. The charge arose from a story Frank Swain told river historian Dock Marston in a letter written in January 1950, four years after Holmstrom's death. The claim was never substantiated. In the years following their 1938 voyage, Burg and Holmstrom continued to correspond. The tone of the letters was friendly, often reminiscing about their extraordinary voyage. With his numerous social connections, Burg sought work opportunities for Holmstrom. During the war Holmstrom visited Burg at his New York apartment. Like many in the river running community, Burg was stunned when he learned of Holmstrom's death, apparently a suicide. He wrote of his companion, "Most of the poetry of Buzz was in Buzz. Interested in birds and animals. Intense, simple. He wanted to get close to life. Buzz was so complicated it finally got the best of him. Every time I talked to him I felt I was arrogant and boastful. He had the common touch."

In May 1968 Burg set off on a voyage on the Athabaska, Slave, and Mackenzie Rivers with Vic Bracher, his final "chosen" companion. He had known Bracher, an executive at Remington Arms, since their college days at University of Oregon and shared a common interest in rivers and the out-of doors. Bracher was also an avid birdwatcher. Burg wrote that "We had decided to capture some of the ecstasy that we had known on former wilderness voyages. They voyaged in the latest reincarnation of the *Song o' the Winds*, a twenty-foot V-stern freighter Burg purchased from the well-known Chestnut Canoe Company. They carried a six horse-power engine, oars, and a sail. The two men voyaged well together. After five weeks, Bracher departed reluctantly. He was sorry to leave. Burg continued on alone (until he encountered Duc Meyer, another maverick boater mentioned earlier). In late July Burg and Meyer reached Inuvik on the Mackenzie Delta. When Meyer departed, Burg wrote, "Over 70... he is putting his dreams into reality." A day later Burg befriended a young man half his age on the beach.

Tony (no last name) was preparing to paddle his aluminum canoe along the Arctic Coast to Barber Island. The two voyagers swapped yarns and information. Burg expressed his admiration for Tony's adventure, but kept his envy concealed. There was a time, long past, that he would have joined him.

Roy Pepper, who voyaged with Burg aboard the *Dorjun* through the Tierra del Fuego archipelago in 1934–35, ran the Snake and Yukon Rivers with him five decades later, and eventually made a trip through Grand Canyon (without Burg), summed up the nature of voyaging friendships best in a 1984 letter to Burg,

Regarding the Cape Horn trip, I feel you and I got along very, very well together. We did not always have the best of food; we had our share of Cape Horn gales and storms for days on end. In between we had the endless rain. This we had to endure in quarters that were very small. In fact a modern queen bed would be far bigger than the entire area we slept, dined, cooked, washed, wrote, dressed and other incidentals. I simply cannot recall any surly or cranky words that were said between us for all those months.

Considering our quarters, weather, and all—it was remarkable. So Amos, I think you and I have been suffering from the same things. Namely that we think we owe each other something. There is only one way to resolve this dilemma, and that is to recognize the fact that you and I are about the two best fellows that we have ever met. ...When we came through the Canyon last year I tried to visualize your first rubber boat trip through the Canyon a couple of years after the Horn. Your first mate would have made that one with you had he not run away with your niece. As we came down the Canyon we came to a mile post page with your name on it [in Buzz Belknap's Grand Canyon River Guide] as the first rubber boat through the canyon...I should have made this trip 50 years ago.

Vince Welch

**NOTE:** Welch is presently at work on a Burg biography, *The Last Voyageur—Amos Burg and the Rivers of the West*

### Amos Burg's River Trips

- 1916–1919—Numerous three-day canoe trips on the Upper Columbia (The Dalles to Portland, Oregon, 100 miles) and Lower Columbia (Portland to Astoria/Pacific Ocean, 100 miles).
- 1920—Lower Snake River (Lewiston, Idaho to confluence with Columbia River, 150 miles) and Columbia River to Astoria, total 400 miles.
- 1922—Completes transit of Yellowstone, Missouri, and Mississippi Rivers, 3,800 miles.
- 1924—First to complete solo voyage in a canoe on Columbia River, 1,200 miles from headwaters of Columbia to Pacific Ocean.
- 1925—First to finish complete transit of Snake River, 1,100 miles to confluence with Columbia.
- 1926—After a two-month voyage along the Inside Passage, Burg and Spokane Hill decide to return to the headwaters of the Columbia River and make the 1,200-mile voyage, Burg's second complete transit.
- 1927—Runs 36-mile section (McKenzie Bridge to Deerborn Ferry) of Oregon's McKenzie River.

- 1928—Five-month, 2,000-mile voyage on the Yukon River to the Bering Sea.
- 1929—4,000-mile voyage on Canada's Mackenzie River (including Athabasca and Slave Rivers) to Arctic Ocean. At the mouth of the Mackenzie, Burg hikes over Davidson Mountain Range and floats down the Bell and Porcupine Rivers in an eight-foot inflatable raft.
- 1930—Descends Canoe River to Columbia River and continues voyage to Portland. Burg's third complete transit of Columbia. Total miles: 1,600. Upon reaching Portland, Burg turns around and makes a solo voyage on the Snake River. Meets Jack Fletcher, friend and Portland businessman, in Weiser, Idaho for voyage through Hells Canyon. Total miles: 1,300 miles.
- 1937—Paddles the River Thames via English canal system from London to Liverpool, 400 miles.
- 1938—Completes 1,200 mile voyage of Green and Colorado Rivers. First to voyage in an inflatable raft through Grand Canyon.

1939—Accompanies Russ Frazier, members of the Colorado River Club, and Willis Johnson on Idaho's Middle Fork and Main Salmon. First to float two rivers in inflatable craft.

1944—Returns to Homestead, Idaho to begin voyage in Hells Canyon on the Snake River. Takes out Lewiston, Idaho. Approximately 250 miles.

1968—Returns to Canada's Mackenzie River for lengthy voyage.

1969—Runs the Bell and Porcupine Rivers to confluence with Yukon River.

1977—Voyages on Yukon River from Whitehorse to Dawson (approximately 250 miles).

1978—In July Burg returns to Hells Canyon on Snake River with family and friends followed by a trip on the Yukon River. These will be Burg's last river voyages.

## Back of the Boat— The Whale Foundation News Bulletin

### WINGDING IX

**M**ARK YOUR WHALE FOUNDATION calendars now! The ninth annual WingDing will be held on Saturday, February 26, 2010 from 6–11 P.M. at the Coconino Center for the Arts, 2300 N. Fort Valley Road, Flagstaff (behind Sechrist School).

This Grand Canyon river family rendezvous and fundraiser is a great gathering and whale-sized undertaking for about 350 folks. We'll have dinner, music and dancing, live and silent auctions with lots of beautiful art, books, services, and getaways donated by the river community. We are looking for volunteers to lend a hand with food, beverages, registration, auctions, set up and clean up. If you'd like to help with the planning and execution of this fabulous celebration, we'd love to have you join the team! Just give us a call at 928-774-9440. During part of the evening we'll have an open mike so bring your instruments and your dancing shoes!

### GTS HEALTH FAIR

We want to remind everyone of the Whale Foundation's upcoming Health Fair at the spring GTS on Saturday, March 26<sup>TH</sup> at Hatchland. Our healthcare professionals will provide blood work vouchers and free screenings, including skin cancer, blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol, plus oral examinations and more. We encourage those uninsured—or underinsured—members of the river community to take advantage of this *free* \$750 value.

### FLAGSTAFF COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AND THE GEOFUND

The Whale Foundation Board of Directors is deeply grateful to these two Flagstaff organizations for their recent award in support of the 2011 GTS Health Fair.

Many thanks also to Whale Foundation Directors, Wyatt Woodard, Elena Kirschner and Susan Hamilton, for continuing to make the Health Fair a great success.

### 2011 WHALE FOUNDATION CALENDAR

We have got another great Whale Foundation calendar! Our 2011 14-month calendar with awesome images is a larger format (9.5" x 13"). You can download an order form off our website at [www.whalefoundation.org](http://www.whalefoundation.org) and mail us a check at: PO Box 855; Flagstaff, AZ 86002. Or just pick one up at the office at 515 W. Birch Street in Flagstaff. The price is \$12 out of the box or \$15/calendar shipped nationally.

### WHALE FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In 2010 the Whale Foundation welcomed two new Board members: John Crowley and Dan Hall. We thank these individuals, our other Board of Directors, our Health Services Committee, our WingDing Committee—as well as the many others—for donating their considerable time and talents in support of our community. *If you are interested in volunteering for the Board or in other capacities, please give us a call at 928-774-9440. We look forward to hearing from you!*

The Whale Foundation  
PO Box 855 Flagstaff, AZ 86002  
Toll Free Help Line: 877-44WHALE  
Business: 928-774-9440  
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# STONON RIVER

Jon Stoner

**I**KIND OF GOT THE ITCH to journey west from watching things like “ABC Wide World Of Sports,” about mountaineering, white water rafting, stuff like that. I actually saw—I think it was 1960—saw the Hamilton jet boat upriver run from Lake Mead to Lees Ferry on “Wide World of Sports,” and thought, “Boy, that looks pretty daring.” I was talking to a buddy of mine, and he had a brochure on Sanderson River Expeditions. We’d sit around and talk about taking a raft trip through Grand Canyon. I think that was in the mid 1960s—’65. He never actually took a raft trip through Grand Canyon, but I did.

WHEN I GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE...BLOOMSBURG [WHERE I went to school] in the mountains of Pennsylvania, located on the Susquehanna River, not too far from the Poconos...I’d never been west, and so I tried to get some people to go with me. I had a little V.W. Super Beetle. I couldn’t get anybody to go with me. I’d heard people say, “If you want to do something, just go do it. Don’t wait for somebody else, because you’ll never get it done.” So in ’73, after I graduated, I took off and took about two and a half months and headed west. Pretty much drove straight—I think it was on Interstate 80—until I got to Wyoming—like Iowa, Nebraska, those areas, just flat and a lot of corn. But when I got to Wyoming and up to Jackson Hole, Yellowstone, that area: wow! Then I dropped down into Utah; I think I went by Bear Lake and then over Donner Pass into California. The West seemed...I don’t know, it just really kind of captured my soul. And the people I met along the way, campin’ out...Went down the coastal highway (Route 1) of California. Came over, wanted to see Grand Canyon. I actually camped overnight in Valle, at the Fred Flintstone place. (laughter) At that place! I camped out there, yeah, in ’73. I got up early in the morning, because I wanted to see the sunrise over Grand Canyon. Headed up to Grand Canyon, got there, I think it was probably out at...Oh, what is that? Mather Point? I think. Overlooking Grand Canyon. Just watched the sun come up, and spent most of the morning there and...“Wow.”

1977 WAS MY FIRST RAFT TRIP, AND THAT WAS WITH SANDERSON River Expeditions. That first trip was actually with Darryl Diamond. Darryl’s wife Linda was there and Leslie [Darryl’s little sister] was on there too. She would have been about eight years old. They called Leslie “Skeeter Bug.” She was a cutie. Little cutie runnin’ around gatherin’ lizards, and what she called those

little “woolly woks,” those wingless wasps and other critters. Real entertaining to the folks. That trip had some exceptional people on it. It was pretty entertaining.

**STEIGER:** Yeah, Darryl was such a live wire back then.

**JON STONER:** He was just a phenomenal storyteller, too. Of course the gals on the trip fell in love with him—you know, the passengers and stuff. He was just tellin’ stories. And so was Jett, telling a lot of stories. They had a great story about Mooney down at Havasu, and how he was lost under the falls, hidin’ all his gold or silver. They’d taken us up into that cave, that you hike up and go through the little window there, and then go up to the left and back toward the river. It’s an old silver mine or something, that’s up there. There’s that mine shaft there. Jett had run ahead with this old man’s mask with long gray hair. He went to the center of that room and there was some trash in there, and he got underneath the trash—you know, old cardboard or whatever—and he laid underneath there. So Darryl took us in there and had us stand at the perimeter of that room when you get back in there, and he told this story about Mooney, how he’d gotten lost and they never found him and all. Toward the end of the story—and Darryl did a really good job of tellin’ it, because everybody’s interest was just heightened—you could hear this rustling in the middle of the room, and then this face comes out, and Darryl hits it with a light, and people are runnin’ out of there goin’, “Aaaaaaaah!” Oh, it was just so funny. It was hilarious.

**STEIGER:** You told me a story about Hoss [Kevin Sanderson] that was pretty funny, too. How on your second trip...this was your charter? Here’s a bunch of college kids, young guys and gals, a bunch of *cute* girls, and it looked like it was gonna be a pretty fun trip. Kevin meets the trip at the orientation...and...was it Karl?

**JON STONER:** Karl McDonald was supposed to do it, yeah.

**STEIGER:** But Kevin says, “Karl, you’re off the trip! I’m on this one!” (laughter) Really?

**JON STONER:** Yeah, right there at the orientation. Kevin just happens to show up, and he just scopes it out, and it’s like the light bulb goes on, “This is gonna be fun! I’m *on* it!” This is one of the boatman’s worst nightmares these days probably, but they were supplying cots on those trips for everybody. We asked...not too long out of college, and still in that partyin’ mode, we go, “Well, how much beer do you have?” They go, “Oh, we got like twenty cases.” “Well, that’s not gonna



Young Jon Stoner, sleeping on his first boat, Eagles Mere, Pennsylvania.

be enough. We need like thirty more cases.” They go, “No possible way, there’s no room. Fifty cases of beer? There’s no room.” Then they go, “We could take the cots off.” And we go, “Yeah! Take the cots off! We don’t want any cots. Get rid of ’em!” So they took all the cots off and filled it up with beer. It was pretty entertaining. We ran out. I think it was down there at that camp, 242 on the right, has the wall comin’ out on the right. You go around the corner there, and there’s that beach that’s all covered by coyote willow and arrow willow now. It’s all overgrown. We land on that beach. Hoss goes, “You know, we buried a bunch of beer in this beach last trip we were down here. It’s right over there.” We go, “Where?” And he shows us where. Of course he pulls out a couple of shovels, and we dug the biggest hole. You know, it’s like five, six feet deep and eight feet in diameter, and we find no beer. He’s over on his boat just laughing. (laughter) He’s just crackin’ up. It was hilarious. Good trip.

**STEIGER:** That crew, that whole Sanderson bunch, man those guys were wild.

**JON STONER:** They were.

\* \* \*

*Jon Stoner started out working for Arizona River Runners in 1981. He freelanced for several companies after ARR sold in the mid-’80s, eventually landing a manage-*

*ment position with Tony Heaton’s Adventures West that came full circle when the new Arizona River Runners bought that company too. He still gets to do a few trips a year, but spends an incredible amount of time making sure that nobody at ARR has to go through the kinds of equipment issues that were just SOP when he started out. One of the funniest things about Stoner is that he is—in reality—the absolute, utter antithesis of what his name implies...he is the most straight-arrow, responsible, well-grounded guy imaginable...solid as a rock to those who know him well. This Adopt-a-Boatman interview took place in Jon (and his wife Ruthie’s) kitchen in Flagstaff, in 2008.*

\* \* \*

I’m originally from Coatesville, Pennsylvania, which is about 45 minutes west of Philadelphia. I was born in 1951, raised on the ancestral family farm, that was built in the 1730’s by Samuel Withrow, one of our ancestors. My father served in the U.S. Navy in Guam during World War II and worked at Lukens Steel company as a financial cost analyst for 32 years. My mother managed the family farm. I would find King George pence pieces digging around the foundation of the farm house... We had sixty acres. There were the woods, stream, pond, an old stone house and barn, so plenty of places to explore and roam. I went to Bloomsburg



First love, his 1974 Porsche 911 Coupe.

University College, swam four years on the varsity swim team (qualified for the NAIA Nationals—400 Free Relay team—in 1972). During the summers I worked in the open-hearth furnace at the steel company, and a couple other places: the Army-Navy building, Metallurgy building, and turnover tables plant. My main job at the open-hearth building was to knock the loose brick off the walls of these giant ladles with a 100 pound jack hammer. The ladles hold the molten steel. You would use a 20-foot ladder to descend into the ladle, which was still hot. The first time I did this, I remember the floor of the ladle being so hot, my feet felt like they were on fire and I ran up that ladder as fast I as could! The guy teaching me the trade just died with laughter. Said “Get back in there boy.”

I got a degree in business administration in 1973, and moved back to Coatesville, Pennsylvania after graduation. Went to work at Lukens Steel Company. Did that for about a year, and then went to work with F. W. Woolworth Company in West Chester, Pennsylvania in the management training program. Then my father retired from Luken’s and bought “Butler’s” family hardware store. I worked in the family hardware store for about seven years. My dad had always wanted to own some type of store/operation/manufactur-

ing business as a kid, because when he grew up, *his* dad had a grocery store in Sadsburyville, and during the Depression he went out of his way to help folks out. He would give families food and write up IOU’s. So Dad always wanted a store, and it was his lifelong dream, after he retired from working at Lukens Steel Company, he bought a hardware store. He’d always wanted me to run that, or be some successful businessman with my own business. But that’s not the path I chose.

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THAT FIRST RIVER TRIP IN GRAND CANYON WITH SANDERSON, it was just like the eight days I spent in the canyon, I went away from that saying, “Boy, I just don’t know anything about this place, and I want to learn as much as I can about it. I’m not sure how I’m gonna do that, but...” And then went home, and I was workin’ in the hardware store, and it was like two and a half, three months, of kind of a depression, anxiety, like anger. I was kind of miserable, just being, you know, the day-to-day to the hardware store, and the same routine, and counting the nuts and bolts, and just workin’ but not really enjoyin’ it. After that second river trip, it was easy for me to just say... That pushed me over. I said, “That’s the place I need to be.”





Backcountry in the San Juans.

**STEIGER:** What-all did *that* entail?

**JON STONER:** Oh my. Actually, at the time, I was still living at home. But I had started collecting antiques and stuff like that, and I had done some traveling overseas, so I had some things from my travels overseas. And then I had my little sports car—which my mother said was the only thing I ever truly loved—that was a 1974 911 Porsche coupe, that I *babied*. It actually was garaged every night, and just immaculate. I bought that in '74, and sold it just before I headed west for exactly what I paid for it. At that time, I think it was like \$12,000 in '74 for a brand new coupe, 911 with the “S” instrumentation, which I managed to get up to 150 miles an hour a couple of times. It would *fly*. That was hard to part with, but my mother said, you know, truly, I must have fallen in love with the river and the mountains of the West, to part with that.

**STEIGER:** Now, why did you part...Did you have to, you needed the money to get a stake?

**JON STONER:** Well, the cash I raised from that, I bought a 1980 Corona, Toyota station wagon, four-door, five-speed, and that's to haul everything I had left, west, because I was outta there, I was leavin'. Everything I had, that I actually owned, was with me at that point. I wanted to travel as light as possible.

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I FIRST WENT TO BATH, MAINE, AND SPENT A MONTH THERE at the Shelter Institute, a passive solar design school. And then I moved to Boulder, Colorado, for a little while. And then out to San Luis Obispo, California, stayed with some friends that I met on that first raft trip in 1977. I still keep in touch with them. Then back to Boulder, Colorado, where—I think it was the fall of 1980—I took an outdoor mountaineering school. It was a three-month program called Outdoor Leadership Training Seminar, run by an ex-Outward Bound instructor, Rick Medrick. We did mountain climbing in the San Juan's, Sangre De Cristo Mountain Ranges, Arapaho National Forest (Continental Divide), ice climbing and winter peak ascents, then in the spring some white water rafting on Westwater, Arkansas River; and rock climbing in Eldorado Springs and Nederland Canyons. I wanted to work in Grand Canyon. I thought it'd be a great place to work. So I sent out all these resumes, when I was livin' in Boulder, Colorado (working at Eddie's Mexican Resturant part time)...I think the sheet I had was a form sheet to fill out and put a picture of yourself on there. On the bottom it said there's like a one in ten thousand chance you'd ever work in Grand Canyon. And I started getting all

these replies to my resume, but they were all from back east, and I'd just moved from back east, I don't want to go back east.

So I was out on the Flatirons of Boulder, Colorado one day, climbin', and I came back to my apartment and my roommate said I got a call from a Carol Burke from Arizona River Runners, and she wanted to talk to me. I gave her a call and she said, "Hey, I'm down in Arvada," just outside of Denver, "visiting my parents, and I want you to come down for an interview. We don't hire anybody unless we talk to 'em, and usually I don't hire the people, but my husband, Fred, hires people. But if you come down, we'll sit and talk." So I hung up the phone and I called June Sanderson, because I'd been on two trips with Sanderson River Expeditions. The group I had organized, we did a lot of the cookin' and cleanin' up and stuff, and we had a great time, had a lot of fun. So I called June. I wanted to get a reference, a referral. But the line was busy, so I waited like five, ten minutes, and I called again, line's still busy. I'm lookin' at my watch, [thinking], "I'd better get down there, or I'm gonna be late." So I took off and drove to Arvada and found Carol's parents' place, walked up to the door and knocked on it. I think it was like mid-morning. Carol opened the door, and she had a martini in one hand and a cigarette and a big smile on her face. She had all this turquoise jewelry hangin' from her ears and on her wrist, and necklace and stuff. She goes, "Are you Jon Stoner?" I go, "Yeah!" She goes, "You're hired!" I said, "Well, you haven't even talked to me." She goes, "I just got off the phone with June Sanderson. June said if I don't hire you, *she's* gonna hire you for the river in Grand Canyon." So that's how I got to Grand Canyon in the spring of 1981.

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WHEN I ARRIVED THERE FROM BOULDER, COLORADO, IT WAS like the first two weeks I thought, "Boy, have I made a big mistake!" I walked in there, and Vermilion Cliffs is out in the middle of *nowhere*, and it's not easy to access anything. When I first walked into the restaurant there, it had the pool table and the juke box and a lot of character and stuff like that. The first person I met was actually Allison Schmidt. I told her who I was, and she said, "You must have a lot of friends, because I've got a stack of mail for *you!*" She brought out two big bundles about a foot high each. And then went in the back, they had a little area for the employees, a little table and ice machine there. The second person I met was Stuart Reeder—who Vaughn Short refers to in his book *Raging River, Lonely Trail* as the mountain man, I think, in one of his ballads. But comin' from Boulder, Colorado, and the mountains and cooler temperatures, it was pretty stifling—the heat and

location and the little rooms for the boatmen, with the scorpions crawling up the walls, and rattlesnakes. It was just a period of adjustment. But once I got on the river, things started to come together. I felt more at home, being on the river, than at v.c. But over the years, working for Fred and Carol, it was all part of the family, getting to know the family and the place. I definitely wouldn't trade it for any other path. It's been a wonderful journey, a great commuity, and continues to be.

**STEIGER:** It's interesting, because that's quite a fork there. I mean, here you are, you've got your Porsche, you're all set up, you're gonna run the family business, you're making good money then, if you could afford a \$12,000 automobile—which back then...\$12,000 then is like \$30,000 now, or \$40,000?

**JON STONER:** I think when I graduated from college in 1973, I graduated with a business degree, but a teacher's starting salary then was like \$5,700 a year.

**STEIGER:** Yeah, I remember my truck...I got my little Datsun that I bought almost new in 1974, cost me \$1,600.

**JON STONER:** Yeah. Well, there you go.

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MY FIRST TRIP WAS WITH STUART REEDER AND JIM NORTON. After that trip I was sittng on the rock wall outside v.c. watching the full moon come up over the Echo Cliffs and Jim Norton joins me with a cold beer. He gives me this old 50 cal ammo can as a gift. He says "Jon, I think you will be doing this river running a long time and I'd like you to have this ammo can." I still have that 50 cal can with my initials painted on it in the original ARR green colors... Then, after that, it was Stuart Reeder and Connie Tibbitts, and the second half of that year was with you, Lew Steiger and Ed Smith. I got off the river—it's vivid in my mind—I think it was September 17<sup>TH</sup> I'm off the river, and September 22<sup>ND</sup> I'm at the base of Mount Kenya in East Africa, and I'm gonna spend four weeks on Mount Kenya, climbing, and three and a half months in East Africa, just traveling around. Indian Ocean, snorkelin', stayin' on an Island—Lamu [phonetic] out in the Indian Ocean, climbing several peaks on Mt. Kenya—and just step-pin' back in time a thousand years.

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THAT'S THE GRAND CANYON COMMUNITY, THE FOLKS THAT work down there, the people I've met along the way, it's just like they go off to different parts of the globe, and then river season they come back, and here they're on a river just with all these wonderful stories of where they've been and what they've been doin', and yet here you are with your pards, down on the river, livin' the dream. So how do you make this work? How do you



Mt. Kenya, East Africa, 1981.

sweatin' it, I'm really sweatin' it. And so we have the old cotton boats, we have the old steel frames with wood planks and stuff. We had the Merc 20 engines, which had their own idiosyncrasies. And so they gave me three Mercs. I had three Mercs for my first trip, own boat. I'm headin' downriver and everything's goin' pretty good. Pammy's playin'

make that work for you long term—physically, financially, emotionally, all that mental stuff? It's a tug and pull constantly.

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BUT GOSH...A NUMBER OF THINGS STICK OUT IN MY MIND running with Stuart and Connie. In particular was Connie's hard working attitude and great mechanical ability. I remember her saying and it has stuck with me over the years, "I am not a boatwoman, I'm a *boatman!*" When she and I followed Stuart on low water in the early days she'd say, "Watch for Stuart's cowboy hat to dip." It would be real quick so you had to watch closely, but that meant he was lifting the jackass to miss a rock, and we would follow. I don't think I ever saw Stuart without that Stetson on. One time, running either Hance or Crystal, a gust of wind came up and instantly grabbed that hat off his head into the river. Sunk instantly. I thought to myself, "Now what is he going to do?" Well, within seconds he pulls out a brand new Stetson cowboy hat, out of his 20 mil, that is already pre-shaped and ready to go. He didn't miss a beat in the rapid.

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I SWAMPED TWO YEARS FOR ARR, AND ACTUALLY THE VERY last trip that I did the second season, I got my own boat. I was really concerned about it, because I'd heard that Fred was going on it, Pammy [Manning, now Whitney] was going on it, and I'm not sure if Linda Crowther was on there or not, but I'd heard every trip that Fred went on, the boatmen got fired. So I'm

interference between Fred and me. She'd give me updates, "Fred wants to know why you're cookin' the roast beef that way. You should be cookin' it *this* way." (laughter) And then you've gotta be rollin' the biscuits with the whiskey bottle and the Coors can cut-out and all this stuff. He wanted to make sure everything is just right, just so. So Pammy would keep me in the loop, trying to protect me, which was really sweet of her...Oh, Dennis Mitchem was the trip leader. So we get down to Crystal, and it's just like, "Wow, this is pretty scary." I think it's low water, yeah. I remember your runs in low water, that big rock that set up on the right-hand side there—that's not there anymore.

**STEIGER:** Yeah, that flat rock.

**JON STONER:** Yeah.

**STEIGER:** I remember we used to go in there and turn around and back past that and then...actually, we used to back past that, and then go right a lot of time.

**JON STONER:** Yeah. So I go in there, and in that top wave, I swamp out with this Merc. I go, "Doggone it!" I'm pullin' and pullin', and it finally starts, but when it starts, I have pulled the pull cord completely out.

**STEIGER:** Little wound up there, huh?

**JON STONER:** Just a little over amped, I think. (laughter) And the other thing, too, is, the linkage jammed into high. You know, the throttle linkage had jammed into high, so the engine's screamin'. But by the time I got it started, I'm goin' backwards toward the rock bar—you know, the island. And it's just like, "I'm not gonna clear it, I can see that. But if I leave the engine

in the water, I'm gonna just smash it to smithereens." And Dennis has already run it, he's waitin' down below, and Fred's on that boat.

**STEIGER:** But if it's jammed on full throttle, how are you gonna tilt it?

**JON STONER:** I can't pull it, yeah, I can't tilt it. I've gotta kill it.

**STEIGER:** Now there's no pull cord.

**JON STONER:** Now there's no pull cord. You get that picture! (laughter) Just like all that stuff's running through my mind. I probably have a lot of time to think about it, but it seems like (snaps fingers) it's just flyin' by and it's just seconds.

**STEIGER:** "I'll never see whitewater again!" (laughter)

**JON STONER:** Yup, "This is my last trip!" So I finally kill it, and I pull it, and I get hung up on the rock bar. And so I change out the engine and gas line, and then I start movin' people around. I'm fortunate, because the water's comin' up, and after twenty minutes, I float off, and I float down around and everything's okay and we continue on the trip. We had a really good trip, interesting group of folks and lots of personal dynamics. I actually have some pictures from it, that Pammy and Fred—some real cute photos. We camped down at, what is that? Spencer on the left, I think, down there on the lake, has the drainage comin' in from the left. We camped there the last night, and there's nothin' growin' there, it was a big sandy beach. And we're up partyin' late, you know, champagne, the cake, and everything. We—the guides—go to bed about two o'clock in the morning—Pammy and Dennis and me and some of the folks have gone to bed. No sooner had I laid down, I hear the blaster turn on. I'm goin', "Who is turnin' on the blaster?!"

**STEIGER:** Fred wants an early start?

**JON STONER:** Fred wants an early start.

**STEIGER:** "Three o'clock, time to go!"

**JON STONER:** And we had coffee and breakfast—cooked breakfast in the dark! And we're on the river just as the sun's comin' up. We're all thinkin', "We could have gotten up now and still made it to Pearce Ferry in time for the de-rig, but here we are leavin' at first light, already fed, headin' for Pearce Ferry." Fred just was like a horse goin' to the barn, he's out of the gate, and he's runnin' there.

**STEIGER:** It's the cowboy way. Long day, gotta get goin' early.

**JON STONER:** It was pretty funny. Oh my.

\* \* \*

I think it's... '83-'84, I worked the Crested Butte Ski Area for the mountain resort. Actually, Fred hooked



Owen Baynham, Ruthie Stoner, Ed Smith, Jon Stoner at VC.



Skiing in Crested Butte, CO.

me up with, ...Ralph Walton brought his family on a river trip. I wasn't actually on the trip, but Fred, at the end of the season, he said, "What are you gonna do?" I said, "Well, I always wanted to work in a western ski town." I was thinkin' about Telluride or Crested Butte, because Aspen, Vail and Breckenridge were too commercialized, too many people, too much hype. But Telluride, Crested Butte, would be the place. And Fred said, "Well, this Ralph Walton we just took downriver, wants you to stop in and see him at Crested Butte." That was in '82. So I went up and talked to him, met with him, and he hooked me up with the supervisor of lift operations. I interviewed with a fellow by the name of Stuart Johnson. He said, "Okay, I'll hire you

as a lift operator. You're hired. You start November 15." I said, "Okay, I'm heading back east," and I gave him my home phone number in case anything came up. So Brian Hansen and I traveled cross country. From Crested Butte, Brian rode with me back to Coatesville, Pennsylvania, and we got back there, visiting family. Twelve days later I got a call from Stuart Johnson. He goes, "You want to be a lift foreman? I have a spot for you, if you're interested." I said, "Sure, I'm interested." He said, "Well, you've gotta be back here two weeks early then." So I pretty much turned around and went right back to Crested Butte. (laughs) He hired me as a lift foreman, and I think by Christmas—I didn't put this whole picture together then—but by Christmas we had like 325 inches of snow at Crested Butte. Now, this is all gonna drain into the Grand Canyon. I wasn't even putting that together. But we had one 45-day stretch where it snowed every day, and by the end of the season we had close to 400 inches at the ski area there. I would be up every morning at three A.M. and at the lifts by four A.M. to start digging them out so we could open by nine A.M..

So I headed down to the canyon in the spring, not thinking of the consequences of Lake Powell being full, and then having all this snow, and April bringing warm weather and rain in the Rockies and just flushin' it all down. That's when the excitement really began.

I think I remember the first couple of trips the water was comin' up, and the park service word was

"camp high, be safe." Each trip was like a whole new river, because it was comin' up so fast. One night we were sittin' in v.c. where a lot of the different companies' boatmen—guys, gals—would gather to listen to the juke box, eat, and play pool. I think it was around ten o'clock at night, somebody came in from Hatch—I can't remember who—but they said, "Wally's down at Lees Ferry," he's in a little motor boat that Hatch had, "and the water's comin' up so fast we have to move our S-rigs," that were tied downriver from the ferry, "cause the water's just surgin'." I remember going down there. We were wading through the tamarisk trees in the dark of night and the current was really strong... I mean, the current is just pushin' us through the tamarisk trees, and we're tryin' to get to our bow lines, untie 'em, get out to the boat, start it, and motor up that little inlet. There's that little culvert—motor up there to tie off somewhere. It's just like, "Wow." At that point in time it was like high adventure. I look back on it and go, "Boy, we did some really stupid things." We could have lost ourselves. Wally's out there in the pitch black, you know, motorin' up and down, tryin' to make sure the boats are getting secured and everyone is safe. It might have been Dick Clark, actually...

**STEIGER:** ...who shamed everybody into goin' down there? Yeah.

**JON STONER:** Yeah. And we went down there, because, I remember—I've got pictures of this—we launched then. Dick was leading, I was followin', and



Heading up the Paria to have lunch at Lonely Dell, 1983.

Brian might have been on that trip too. I can't remember if it was him or not, swamping. But we launched from Lees Ferry with our folks. And then we got down to the Paria, we took a hard right, and we went underneath the bridge there, where you cross over the Paria, going to Lees Ferry to rig. We went underneath the bridge and just told the people to duck. Everybody put down their heads, we motored underneath the bridge, and we motored up to the orchard at Lonely Dell, and we had lunch there. That's where we served lunch! And it was just, "Wow. How often do you get to do that?!" So that was a pretty neat experience. It was amazing, because along the river you'd totally lose where you are, logistically. Like the camps were underwater, and you're actually campin' up in the rocks with the rattlesnakes and all the critters and—we were gettin' into their territory, so we were seein' a lot of those critters. You motored by Boulder Narrows, and it's almost underwater. You're motorin' to the back of Redwall Cavern, and turn off your engine and pull yourself along the cavern ceiling. Motoring up underneath Deer Creek Falls. And if you didn't watch yourself, you could get ahead. It's like you're on a six-day, seven-day trip, or eight-day trip, and Day three you could be at Havasu if you didn't watch yourself, the water was going that fast. A lot of tremendous eddy fences and boils.

One of the things that stands out in my mind is going' through Marble Canyon, you'd be in your motor rig, S-rig, and people would be sittin' on the front, and all of a sudden this big boil would come up and grab the front of the boat and start pulling it under. And you yell for the people to hang on, and the water would come up almost to their necks, and you're tryin' to motor out of it, and the rivers' hydraulics would just turn the whole S-rig right around, and then all of a sudden it'd pop out. Just like, "Wow." You know, it's very exciting.

**STEIGER:** That must have been in a cotton boat.

**JON STONER:** Yeah, it was a cotton boat.

**JON STONER:** I remember Dick Clark, me, and Owen got permission from Fred to take his bass boat up to the dam, to check it out. The jet tubes were open, and the spillways and stuff are open. Fred said, "Sure, go and check it out." So Dick's driving. We're headin' up there and we turn the corner where you can see the dam, and it's just like this cloud of mist. Then as we get closer, it's like you're in a raging sea with crosswinds and current. It's like six-, eight-foot swells. We're in this little bass boat. We go, "Gosh..." We didn't even have life jackets on. They had a buoy across there, where you couldn't go above that buoy. Well, that was

broken, you saw it floatin'. But we went above it...I have no pictures or anything, but it was just like, "This is wild," because you couldn't even hear. It was rumbelin' and roarin' so much. And we're sittin' at the base, waitin' for the dam to blow, you know. It was crazy.

(For more on 1983, see the sidebar about one of Stoner's big days at Crystal...)

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**JON STONER:** I feel at home here. This is where I need to be. I feel stifled when I go back East. It's too close—too close. But Fred and Carol, that little river community of guides, the things we did spring, fall, the trips up to the Kaibab to cut firewood, the fall trips to Silver Stream Lodge at the base of the San Juan's. The Fourth of July parties at Hatchland, things like that. Georgie's party there at Hatch. Her birthday celebration and that crowd. And then the houseboat trip put together by Fred and Carol for the ARR crew, and the Guaymas adventure in Mexico...here's a picture of that Guaymas trip. When they sold the company, Fred actually sold to Bruce Winter and Bill Gloeckler, who currently have Arizona River Runners. It's some really special times, and characters all along the way.

All those people, I've made some really lasting friendships within the river community, and also passengers—people I've traveled the world with, like with Mary Altman to Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Liberia) and India and Bhutan in the Himalayas, bordering Tibet. Travels to the Phillipines, South America to run rivers, Spain...Brian Hansen went on that trip to India and Bhutan.

**STEIGER:** Mary Altman was a Pan-Am stewardess who did a few ARR trips. Boy, that was a little gold mine. Arizona River Runners—my sense of it was we had tapped this vein of these Pan-Am guys, and they—I think it was Mary and Mike and maybe another couple or two, came, and liked it, and then brought a whole bunch of friends. There were a bunch of those trips with her, weren't there? It seems like there were several.

**JON STONER:** There were a number of those trips where they filtered in the Pan-Am stewardesses and pilots. Yeah. So people like that. Gosh, people with historical connections to Grand Canyon...I'm just thankful for, over all the years, some of the really special people I've met. I kind of reflect back on Vaughn Short's book, *Raging River, Lonely Trail*, in his introduction, he writes about on backpack trips or horseback trips and river trips, it's really the people on the trip that make it special. And I've felt that over the



Jon on the Bhutan – Tibet border.

years. I've taken that to heart. People just open up to you and tell you their life story. I've been fortunate to hear a lot of life stories from passengers along the way, that have become personal friends of Ruthie and I over the years. I've been able to travel the world with some of them, wonderful adventures to different parts of the world, explore and appreciate different cultures.

Mary Altman, I actually met her in 1981. Her great grandfather (or grandfather?) was Sergeant York, who was a World War I hero from Tennessee and received the Congressional Medal of Honor. Just a phenomenal woman; stewardess for approximately 28, 29 years. Traveled India, Africa, the Himalayas. Brian Hansen and I went to India with her and several of her Pam-Am friends for a month in 1984. We traveled first class, Pan-Am, for a hundred bucks, round trip from New York JFK Airport. Yeah, they plugged us into the buddy deal. And we spent time in New Delhi, the Taj Mahal, and then twenty-some days in Butan, hiking through the Himalayas, near Tibet. Really a very special trip and cultural experience. They now live in Tucson, and they have the Congressional Medal of Honor that Sergeant York was awarded, hanging in their house. His story was, Alvin York, he came from Tennessee and

killed some 32 Germans and captured 132 personally in 1918 at the battle of Argonne, and came out of World War I as the great American war hero.

Susan Edwards I met back in 1984, she's still a life-long friend, lives down in Phoenix. Her first trip was actually with Grand Canyon Expeditions and O'C Dale. She came back to the river, I think has done like four or five trips with me through the canyon. She gave me a copy of this *Down the Green and Colorado Rivers* by Barry Goldwater, 1940, a copy of the original manuscript that he had typed up.

Then there was Judge Richard Bilby, a federal judge in Tucson, that I met on a Wilderness trip, and he came back and did a number of trips with Ruthie and me. He would tell stories of his grandfather down at Phantom, when Teddy Roosevelt was coming through to hook up with Uncle Jim Owens to go hunting on the North Rim for mountain lion and deer. Just a great connection we had with him over the years.

Then, gosh, most recently a guy named Jonathan Sutton who was on a trip with his family and Julius Stone's niece. To be on the river with them and hear the history of Julius Stone, and for them to bring out photos of Julius and his family at Stone Creek and



*It's not all fame and glory...*

share with us, and do a family photo re-enactment, and just to make connections like that.

**STEIGER:** Yeah, we were talkin' about that when the tape wasn't rollin'. Did I get this right? You were sayin' that you didn't even know there was the connection, they didn't even get into that until you got down to Stone Creek?

**JON STONER:** Yeah, just above Stone Creek, I think the night before, they started saying "We know that guy," yeah.

**RUTHIE STONER:** "We just wanted to make sure you knew the story."

**JON STONER:** Yeah. So you know, him...like in 1909, Julius Stone bein' the first guy through Grand Canyon for sport, for adventure, and having Galloway make up these boats and financing the entire trip. Then after his second trip, calling his family back in the Midwest where he manufactured fire engines and had a bank, calling his wife and saying, "Hey, we're moving to San Francisco, bring the kids, the nanny, and get on a train. I'll meet you in San Francisco, we'll move there." A lot of his historical collection and historic photos are at Berkeley, in the library in Berkeley, California. So all these innerweavings and connections with people throughout the years traveling through Grand Canyon and internationally, everything kind of dovetails together and makes you realize how small the world

really is.

Just to hear the stories and the connection, it's just...It's a wonderful thing. You can be taking down people that are government officials, CEO's of big corporations, which we all have. Or you could be taking down—what really struck me is this one group of people out of Omaha, paid the way for a taxi cab driver. They brought him and they paid his way. They met him through paying him taxi fares—you know, "Take me to so-and-so place in Omaha. I need a taxi." And so they befriended this guy, and they fell in love with him, and finally said, "We're gonna take you on a Grand Canyon river trip." And it was with ARR in the early days, and here's this taxi cab driver, and he's just a wonderful salt-of-the-earth guy, the stories that he was tellin'.

**STEIGER:** Well, you know, I remember—when I started...in '72 a river trip was \$345, and we had all kinds of blue-collar...you had postmen, schoolteachers, truck drivers, UPS guys. We had the whole swath. I mean, it was pretty much anybody could go—which you still can, and you still see that to a little degree, but not near like it was.

**RUTHIE STONER:** Yeah, it's changed.

**JON STONER:** Well, the second trip that I chartered with Sanderson River Expeditions, where I arranged for my college buddies and their wives...I think it was



like \$495 or \$525 for an eight-day trip from Lees Ferry to Temple Bar.

**STEIGER:** And there was a motel room too! Did they throw in the room and everything?

**JON STONER:** Yeah, at the Pageboy. We stayed at the Pageboy. But I collected money over a period of a year, monthly—\$100 or \$50 or whatever—because they couldn't afford to shell out...

**STEIGER:** In one chunk. So you made all your friends pay on an incremental plan?

**JON STONER:** Yeah, exactly.

**STEIGER:** So they wouldn't bail on ya'!

**JON STONER:** So they wouldn't bail on me, yeah. And that's what we did, to make the trip happen. Oh, gosh. But I've had people on trips, early ARR... I had twins from Monticello—I can't remember their names. But they told of the dedication of Navajo Bridge in 1929 and traveling there. Their dad loaded 'em up in the car, all dirt roads, water jugs, and makin' the trip. Took 'em like four or five days from Monticello to the Navajo Bridge for the dedication.

**STEIGER:** I remember Jack Lee—who was John D. Lee's grandson—telling that story too, about how they had the biggest party. They were so glad when that bridge was done, because it was such a pain in the ass to go on the ferry. Everybody was so happy.

**JON STONER:** I had recently a gal, just a couple years ago, she and her husband were honeymoonin' at the El Tovar Lodge, and the air disaster of, what was it... 1956? And she remembers it well, and all the commotion and excitement about it. And then I've had stewardesses and pilots that knew the people that were on those flights. So all these stories inter-connect. When I first started workin' down there in 1981, there was still some of the fuselage from that air disaster on the right hand side—doors and other pieces of the planes. On the left, down below Little Colorado River, just around Crash Canyon, there was a piece that was up on the ledges, the Tapeats ledges. And I would tell folks, "Okay, when we go around the corner here, you're gonna see this piece from the air disaster sittin' there." But sometimes it'd be there, and sometimes not. Sometimes I'd come around, and it was gone. "Where is it?!" The next time I wouldn't tell the story, because it wasn't there the previous trip, but I'd go around the corner, and there it is! I'm goin', "What is goin' on there?!" And years later I found out, Hatch boatman, Bobby Hallett, would hide it.

**STEIGER:** Every time he went by?

**JON STONER:** He would hide it! He'd pull it out or hide it. And he just got the biggest kick out of people, like myself, tellin' stories like, "Okay, this is gonna be here," and it's not, type thing. He was foolin' around

with stuff like that.

So meeting people from all walks of life, that had connections to the canyon, that were on my trip, or even other boatmen's trips. It's the living history of the canyon. And there's all this ancient history, the Puebloan cultures and the ruins and the pots and things like that. But there's also the recent living history and connections to the early explorations—John Wesley Powell, 1869, to up till 1950, only a hundred people had ever gone down there. To where it is today. But it's still just a phenomenal place. People, including myself and Ruthie, going to South America, doing rivers down there, goin' over to Africa and the Himalayas... But I really feel at home when I get past the Paria riffle and I'm in the canyon. That's really where I'm most at peace with myself, and just... the place is just like... I'd said to Bill Gloeckler one time, "You know, boy, if I die and go to heaven and there aren't any rivers there, I'm not sure what I'm gonna do." And Gloeckler goes, "If there's no rivers there, you're not in heaven." (laughter)

### Crystal Rapid, the first day at 72,000 cfs...

**STEIGER:** That one particular trip we did in '83 you saved our asses, because I remember—where were we at, Unkar or something? Basalt? Somewhere up above the gorge.

**RUTHIE STONER:** That day?

**STEIGER:** Yeah. It used to be... we had it figured out how you could go from the head of the inner gorge to Stone Creek. And then we could have a whole day to hike!

**RUTHIE STONER:** Did Fred know you were doin' that?

**STEIGER:** That was like however many miles. It was a little beyond the rules, but we had it down pretty good...

**JON STONER:** No interpretation, no talking.

**STEIGER:** There could be a little! But you could eat lunch at Shinumo Creek, then go to Elves' real quick, and still camp at Stone Creek. We did it a lot. Well, I don't know if anybody else did, but I was doin' it a lot.

**JON STONER:** Maybe Lew was doin' it a lot. (laughs)

**STEIGER:** 'Cause you could hike at Saddle! You could go slower up above, even on that seven-day motor schedule, but then that was the day to put the hammer down. But I had just seen Crystal

at fifty-something, and it was big, and I remember lookin' at the hole as I went by, thinking, "that'll be run-able pretty quick, it's gonna wash out with a little more water." It had this kind of big open shoulder the trip before. So I did not think that it was gonna be what it was. And I had *no* plans to scout it whatsoever—absolutely not, (JON STONER: I'm glad we did.) because I had this other plan in my mind. What I remember about that day is I got up that morning and said, "Hey, Stoner, is there anything you want to do today in particular?" Jon said, "Yeah, I want to scout Crystal." So I said, "Sure, fine, no problem." But if you wouldn't have said that...no way, I wasn't gonna scout.

JON STONER: Yeah, I'd be eatin' my lunch! (laughter) Yeah, that trip *we* did...launching, going downriver, and having the park service helicopter comin' overhead with their—they reach out with a little plastic bag with sand in it, or pebbles, with a red bow around it.

RUTHIE STONER: Hey, I put together some of those! (laughter)

STEIGER: Yeah, "Camp high, be safe." We were like, "Oh-kay."

JON STONER: So that gorge day, headin' for Crystal... and you know, we went right by Phantom Ranch that morning, the boat beach...nobody was out there flaggin' us down, or any warnings or anything like that.

STEIGER: I had it in my mind, lunch at Bass, Stone Creek or below for dinner. I don't know how I thought...there wouldn't have been any camp at Stone, but I wanted to get down there somewhere anyway.

JON STONER: Yeah. But most everything was washed out, except like Hance, Crystal, Lava. But we stopped above Crystal, and I remember you saying, "Okay, folks you stay on the boat. We're just gonna run up there, take a *quick* look, and we'll take off." So we run up there, kind of crouch down and take a look at it, and it's just like lookin' at the Pipeline over in Hawaii... And Lew goes, "You know, somebody could... perish here."

STEIGER: I remember saying to Stoner, "If anybody goes in there, they're *dead*!"

JON STONER: Yeah. I was tryin' to tone that part down.

STEIGER: No, I was like...I remember it felt like bein' punched in the stomach, just looking at it.

JON STONER: So I think the critical thing was, you said, "Okay, what we're gonna do is jam into the right-hand shore and do a turn-around run, just like we'd do in Upset, at low water, and just miss *all* that, miss it all."

STEIGER: There was a little tammie, and it was like:

come in behind the tammie and just turn around, and slide over, and that was the run.

JON STONER: It was phenomenal. But we looked downriver, and above Tuna we could see there was a motorboat hangin' out on the left-hand side, and we could see Georgie's thrill rig hangin' out on the right-hand side, up in the brush. We thought, "What is that?! What are they doin'? What's goin' on?"

STEIGER: And then the helicopter went by. Do you remember that?

JON STONER: Don't remember that. Then you said, "Okay, I'm gonna run it first. you watch me." And so you ran down and you ran it first, and I watched the run. And then I came second. We both did the exact same run, I turned around, jammed into shore, tried to hit those trees.

STEIGER: And there wasn't *that* much of a slot, either. It was a little wider than a boat, but there was a lot of water goin' through the trees on that side still... And then there was this *thing*, the old hole, which was just this monster...

JON STONER: Yeah. But you float by there, and look over, you can look right down the pipeline to the other side of the river. I mean, it's just like the perfect curl for somebody surfin' Hawaii, the Big Wall.

STEIGER: It was 35-feet tall, at least—don't you think? I remember it was just so sharp at the corners. There just wasn't any water feeding through. It was all just...

JON STONER: There wasn't any water, yeah... And so we got down, and Lew had already talked, I think, to the Cross boatmen. Georgie's boat had flipped.

STEIGER: Yeah, before I got to the Cross guys, I went by the Georgie thrill boat, and they were over on the right, and I was gonna pull in on them—they're wavin' me in—but the water was so fast and violent right there, I'm headin' in towards 'em, and then I think, "No..."

JON STONER: It's not a good spot.

STEIGER: "I'll smear 'em all over this cliff here!" So I snapped around, and I'm tryin' to power upstream and hold myself there, but I'm goin' on down. I'm like, "What's goin' on?" And they're like, "Our big boat flipped! Our big boat flipped! Help! Help!" But I couldn't even stop. So I ferry over and get in behind this point where this Cross guy is, on a one-boat motor trip. I go over there, and that whole trip, their eyes are like this big around—everybody on this boat. And I didn't know why, but everybody was all...I'm like... "Hey, those Georgie guys said their big boat flipped. Is that true?" Everybody on the Cross boat is goin', "Yeah!" I go, "Well is anybody else down there after 'em?" They go "No!"

JON STONER: "We're not goin' down there! There's

two more Cross boats comin!” is what that guy said.

**STEIGER:** The Cross guy goes, “I got another trip coming! I’m waitin’ for them right here!” And I’m like (semi-disgusted)...So Stoner comes down, and we just huddle-up for a second, and “God, this boat’s flipped, and we’re the next guys through here, so we’d better go get ’em.”

**JON STONER:** “Break!”

**STEIGER:** I remember we both went, and stopped right in the middle of Tuna. It was somewhere right down there.

**JON STONER:** Right down below Tuna there’s people up in the cracks and crevices.

**STEIGER:** I remember there was like three people. We both pulled in, and the first person got on your boat, but there were these other two people, and they were all shell-shocked, and you could see it was just gonna take ’em forever to get down there to the boat.

**JON STONER:** They’re not movin’.

**STEIGER:** This wasn’t happenin’ too fast, so I remember goin’, “You know, Stoner, I think you’d better get these guys, and I’m gonna go until I catch up with that flipped boat, or something else anyway, and I’ll just... see ya’ when I see ya’...because we can’t both be sittin’ here until we know everybody else is accounted for.

**JON STONER:** That’s it, yeah.

**STEIGER:** Which got me out of a lot of work! (laughter)

**JON STONER:** Well, I started pickin’ up these people that were shell-shocked. I mean, you pull up to ’em, and they couldn’t talk to you, they couldn’t move. You had to like walk up to ’em and take their hand, get ’em on the boat type stuff. Then I went down a little ways, and fortunately there were a couple of nurses on the trip that could pay attention to these folks and deal with ’em. So I went down and pulled into this eddy. I’m not sure, down around Sapphire? Or what? On the right-hand side—can’t remember exactly where—I’d spun around, and looked back upstream—I saw a blue box and a blue bag. I’m thinkin’, “Oh, somebody’s taken another hit up there in Crystal, and there’s some stuff comin’ down, so I’ll just go out there and pick it up.” So I motor out into the current, and start tryin’ to pick this stuff up, and I look up, and then I see big cooler boxes and all this flotsam and jetsam. I’m thinkin’, “I’m gonna mess up my engine if I have to stay out here. There’s no way I can handle all this stuff that’s comin’.” So I pulled back into the eddy, and just wait there. All of a sudden this entire Cross boat [35-foot S-rig] comes around the corner, and the bow and stern are completely deflated. The swamper’s on the stern, with a hand pump, tryin’ to keep it pumped up, to keep the powerhead out of the water. The boatman’s

boatman’s quarterly review

able to pull in next to me. So I ask him if he needs any help or anything, out of respect—you know, it’s his boat. But I look over there, and there’s little kids on the boat, and adults and stuff; and the adults are huggin’ some teddy bears. The boat’s in disarray. I’m thinkin’ “I’ll just stay put.” But through the course of that, there’s a woman on the far side in the front left, I can hear her screamin’ every once in a while, and just cryin’, and then she’d get quiet. She’d scream...cry... and nobody was really payin’ any attention to her. I thought, “I’d better go over and check her out.” So at

*This must  
be for you  
folks!  
C. Healy  
AZ RA*

Mrs. Ted L. Hoover  
R. R.  
Rio, Ill. 61472

Dear Arizona Raft Adventures,

I am trying to locate a boatman whom I think is with your company who rendered us aid after a bad raft accident at Crystal Rapids on Friday 6/24. The raft was a very bright turquoise green with black letters, I think. My husband and I had been in the water perhaps 15 min. In the Crystal and probably several others and were suffering from cold, shock, plus I had numerous contusions, a black eye, a couple head lacerations and a lot of neck pain. Since my glasses were lost in the river I wasn't seeing too well and wasn't in very good shape for recalling details. Your boatman's name was "John". He wears a full moustache and beard. What a kind and gentle man! He was just wonderful to us at a very distressing and traumatic time. We are deeply indebted to him.

If you could help us locate John and thank him, we'd be so grateful.

If John is not with your group, could you pass this along to other companies that might have "Arizona" in their name, and vivid turquoise rafts? Thank you very much.

that time I had long hair and a big beard. So I walk over, down the plank, and I sit right next to her, and I take her hand. I go, "I'm Jon, I'm here to help you." She kind of just looks at me and just gets all calm, she says, "It's John the Baptist." (laughter) I go, "Well, I'm not sure about that."

**STEIGER:** We laugh, but I mean...I laugh about it now, but those people were so shell-shocked...

**JON STONER:** Yeah. So I tell her, "These are the options I have for you..." And all of a sudden here comes a Park Service helicopter, and [Kim] Crumbo's hangin' out on the skid with a megaphone goin', "Okay, evacuation Bass Camp. Get everybody and bring 'em to Bass Camp down there." So the helicopter takes off. About that time, the other Cross boat comes in, same situation. The bow, stern, tryin' to pump it up, boat in disarray. I'm able to walk this lady over to my boat and lay her out on top of the boatman box, and a couple of nurses are helpin' me, like one at the head, one at the feet, just to calm her. So I go around and get some other people, possible broken arm, possible broken leg, get 'em on my boat to go to the evacuation pad. So we get everybody situated, and I have my regular passengers that we floated by Crystal, and there was nothin' to it. People didn't even get wet. Then all of a sudden, experiencing this, and they're just like, "What happened here?!" It's just like, "Wow." So as I'm gettin' ready to pull out, I look up, here comes the Georgie thrill rig, full steam ahead, headin' right for me! It's like, "I'm gonna take a hit!" So I yell for everybody to hold on, and as it goes by me, it doesn't stop, but everybody that's on there, their passengers, go, "We are scared to death, and we're comin' with you." And they're leapin' through the air.

**STEIGER:** To get on the boat?

**JON STONER:** To get on my boat. They're grabbin' whatever they can to get on my boat and hang on. So pretty quick that boat's empty, and the Georgie boatman goes by, it's just him now.

**STEIGER:** So this wasn't necessarily his idea?

**JON STONER:** I don't think it was his idea. It was like, "Okay, you made it through safe, and we're goin' with you. We want to be with you." So I said okay. So I have like my thirteen, fourteen people on my boat that I've had throughout the trip, and now I've got another thirteen, fourteen people on my boat, and we're headin' to Bass. I have this lady laid out—and I actually have a letter from her—I've kept a lot of my correspondence from over the years—I still have that letter. It originally went to AZRA, trying to locate "John the Baptist." Fred and Carol got a big kick out of that, but I eventually got it, and I corresponded with her a couple times. But we're headin' for Bass Camp, and I

held onto her hand the whole way. I said, "I'm here to help you and take care of you. I'll let you know what's going on, I'll talk to you the whole way." From Sapphire or wherever I was at, to Bass Camp seemed like I'd never get there, because every time we got near a rapid, you could hear it, she'd start cryin' and screamin' out, and she was just squeezin' my hand. And by the time we got there, I was in tears myself. I could just feel the emotion from her comin' through me.

So we pulled into Bass Camp and I remember the park service helicopter landing and Jennifer Lawton gettin' off, and Curt Sauer gettin' off, and Jennifer comin' back to this gal on my boatman box. Jennifer says...before she actually did anything, she took her little Skoal can out of her pocket and put a pinch in there, took a bite, and then she started her work and said, "Okay, this is what we're gonna do, and this is where we're takin' you." Lew and myself and other crew members—people, passengers—helped with the litters, taking people up to where that helicopter landed on those rocks, where it wasn't completely flat. The helicopter never shut down.

**STEIGER:** Yeah, this was...the old Lower Bass, before '83, was this huge beach. All that was underwater. We were up there high, and there's these black rocks.

**JON STONER:** On the schist, right on the schist. We had to carry this one guy that I think maybe had a broken leg or something up there, and he was heavy—all of us on the litter trying to carry him up there. Just like, "Are we gonna make it up there without droppin' this guy?"

**STEIGER:** Yeah. Bill Skinner and a Western trip showed up somewhere in there too, with some other survivors. What I remember, the reason we were all at Bass, is because that was the only place. That was the only place there was. Everything else was just cliffs, and just all that water that was goin' so fast.

**RUTHIE STONER:** Well, and getting into Bass in '83 in general...

**STEIGER:** Yeah, rowin' was really hard...We should say, for this document—and correct me if I'm wrong—what had happened there, actually, was a Georgie big boat went in there at Crystal the day it first went to 72,000 CFS, and tipped over. It wasn't Georgie herself in her triple rig, it was a single-rig. She was somewhere else. This was one S-rig and a little thrill boat [three 18-footers lashed together, with both a motor on the middle boat and oars on the outside boats].

**JON STONER:** Georgie was out ahead.

**STEIGER:** Yeah. This was bein' run by these...kind of...firemen that weren't super-experienced or anything. And we weren't communicating with 'em very well, either. We hadn't ever talked to them. But we had

been seeing them.

**JON STONER:** Volunteer firemen.

**STEIGER:** We had noticed 'em. What I have in my mind now, though I didn't see it, i...the 33 goes through and tips over: goes right down the middle, hits the hole, flips. Then the thrill boat saw them and were so gripped by that, they were gonna miss that hole at all costs. But the thrill boat ran into the trees with their little triple-rig, and pancaked the upstream boat under. 'Cause they were so scared they just got too deep into the trees.

**JON STONER:** I wasn't there to see it either—but what I'd heard was one Cross boat went in there, the lead went in there; and then the second was close behind and saw it and thought, "I'll just come in and punch it out of there."

**RUTHIE STONER:** Yeah, because the first Cross boat got stuck in the hole.

**STEIGER:** I don't know where I heard this, but what I heard later was the very first boat—the guys we saw first, whose eyes were all this big around—what happened to them was they go in there, and they're goin' down the middle and they hit the thing straight, and the boat starts to climb out, and then it surfs backwards, and it's just wobblin' in there. Then it starts to climb out again, and it surfs backwards again, and it's wobblin' in there, and it starts out again a third time, and then it snaps around, completely around, 180 degrees, and then...I don't know where I heard this, but I've had it in my mind, then it's surfin' backwards on that thing, just bouncin', and then finally it got spit out backwards. And that's why those guys were like, "Oh...my...God." But it was a miracle for them that they got let through. So that trip is waiting there, and then the two-boat trip comes in, and boat number two said he was tryin' to push that first boat of his outta there.

**RUTHIE STONER:** That's always been the story.

**STEIGER:** Nice story, but I just bet they were probably both comin', and what are you gonna do? Stop? Boat number one was surfin' in there, and boat number two goes right over the top of him.

**JON STONER:** And clears the top of it. I have pictures of the Cross boats, the frames just mangled and the boxes blown apart. Doesn't even look like a boat.

**STEIGER:** You said you couldn't tell if it was right-side up or upside-down.

**JON STONER:** Yeah, it was just like, "Wow."

That day we spent at Bass, like you said, we were just totally exhausted all day there, evacuating people, triage type stuff. Then you finally said, "Hey, we gotta get downriver, feed our folks, and stuff." And we camped on the Tapeats ledges right above 122 there on the left.

**STEIGER:** Yeah, someplace you've never been since, I bet.

**JON STONER:** No, I haven't. We broke the champagne out early and had cake and celebrated. We said, "We're celebratin' now instead of down on Lake Mead." It was just like, "Wow."

**STEIGER:** And we must have camped there where we did...just because that must have been the first decent place we could find after Bass Camp?

**JON STONER:** Yeah, I think it was. Yeah.

**STEIGER:** It was just rippin'. That was quite the adventure. John the Baptist. Boy, were those guys glad to see you!

## Announcements

### LOST

I was on a private trip in Grand Canyon that launched at Lees Ferry on August 15 and took-out at Diamond Creek on August 30. I flipped my 14-foot Sotar raft at Lava (on August 28) and lost two oars (one was a spare that was torn from the raft!). One was a 9.5-foot Cataract—black shaft (87-inch) with a yellow Carlisle blade (6.5-inch width). The other was a 9-foot yellow Carlisle shaft (80.5-inch) with a yellow Carlisle blade (6.5-inch). If found please contact Bruce Brabec at [brucemarlene@dospalu.org](mailto:brucemarlene@dospalu.org).

### JOB

Grand Canyon River Outfitters Association is seeking a new Executive Director. Formed in 1996, the Grand

Canyon River Outfitters Association is a nonprofit trade group whose members include the sixteen professional river outfitters who provide public whitewater rafting trips in Grand Canyon National Park. The Executive Director serves the interests of the member outfitters, their employees, and the outfitted public. Applicants should possess the following: Excellent speaking and writing skills; The ability to prepare formal budgets; Knowledge of public relations/media; Effective advocacy skills; A high degree of knowledge about Grand Canyon issues; Excellent computer skills. A more detailed job description and information about the application process can be found at [www.gcroa.org](http://www.gcroa.org). The position will require some travel. Interested candidates should send their resumes to [gcroa@yahoo.com](mailto:gcroa@yahoo.com).

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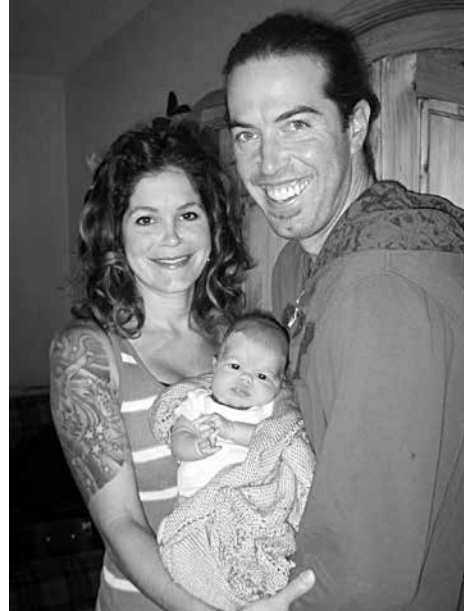
**Zenith Maritime Academy**—360/296-2747

## More River Babies!

**A**NN-MARIE AND ADAM BRINGHURST welcomed Nathaniel "Natty" Adam Bringhurst to the world, September 22 at 6:42 P.M. He weighed nine pounds, and was 21-inches long. Everyone is happy and healthy!



**O**PAL REYES OLSEN was born at home on September 30, 2010 to Cori Reyes and Jonathan Olsen. She weighed seven pounds, nine ounces and was 19-inches long.




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## Care To Join Us?

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

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## boatman's quarterly review

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

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### Misery Loves Company

From the "Arizona Daily Sun," August 11, 2010

A motorized Western River Expeditions boating trip was hung up in the "rock garden" at Crystal Rapid in the Grand Canyon on Friday, prompting the National Park Service to fly in fast boats by helicopter to rescue 16 passengers and crew and take them to shore on Friday evening, according to the National Park Service.

Another group, an oar-powered raft by Outdoors Unlimited, ran into the same area as the Western boat was being retrieved and also became stuck. It took until Monday for Park Service rangers to free the first boat; the second lost some of its gear but was freed on Sunday. No one was injured.