

boatman's quarterly review

André Potochnik

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

GRAND CANYON RIVER GUIDES
is a nonprofit organization dedicated to

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

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

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

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

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

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Fall Rendezvous Hiatus

YOU KNOW WE DEARLY love our Fall Rendezvous events like last year's jaunt to the South Rim to get reacquainted with our own park, or heading out to super fun locations like the Buckfarm Overlook, Thousand Pockets near Page, or Toroweap. However, attendance has fallen off a bit in recent years, so we are considering going to an every-other-year schedule. Please send us some great suggestions for 2018! And when guide members get that Fall Rendezvous postcard in the mail, please sign up right away. Each and every Fall Rendezvous has been fantastic and everyone who participated has been so darn glad that they did. Who likes to camp, hike, explore fun areas and learn cool stuff? You do! Join us next year and you'll see what we mean.

A Grand Scout

Just as lazy lapping waters, oars rhythmic dipping and the soft warmth of the sun slips us into a drowsy doze, a roar below stirs sleepy eyes.

The rafts land on the sand, a quiet tension sifts and ripples as we watch the parade of pros trail over the hill.

Eyes trained on bubble lines, hands on hips and jacket straps in purposeful focus. Decision made. Nothing more to say. Time to go.

The beach now behind and anxiety left swirling in the eddy, yet heart and hydraulics pumping adrenaline to the beat of thundering holes below those horns.

Pushing, pulling, whirling swirling, sucking. The scout is over. It's time to get wet.

—Wildaiua

(inspired by Horn Creek at 6000 CFS, May 1, 2017)

Cover photo: Rudy Petschek

Prez Blurp

ONE MONTH AFTER my last river trip this season, my wife Jillian and I are expecting a baby. It will be our first, and whether a boy or girl it will be a surprise. Into the Great Unknown! I plan to approach this adventure like I'm running a huge rapid for the first time. Take lots of advice, pay attention to the direction and speed of currents, get in the boat and go. Ready to adapt for plan B, C, and square-up when needed. While I am excited for this experience, I wonder what kind of world we will be leaving the next generation, especially in regards to this changing landscape that has shaped me so much.

In Terry Tempest Williams's latest book, *The Hour of Land*, she writes, "In the twenty-first century, borders are fluid, not fixed, especially in our National Parks." This has become evident during the Trump Administration's quest to re-examine 27 National Monuments, starting with Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante in Southern Utah. This May I attended a rally in Kanab, Utah, when Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke came to evaluate the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument. In support of our public lands, hundreds of environmentalists, river runners, and small business owners rallied to urge Zinke to uphold the protections of the land that ties us all together. Though eighty percent of all comments made during the public comment period have been in favor of protection, Zinke has made a suggestion to shrink the boundaries of Bears Ears National Monument. A final decision is likely to be announced on August 24TH.

Issues on boundaries seem to be spilling into Grand Canyon as well. Many of you have witnessed the "No Trespassing" signs put up by Hualapai Tribal leaders at National Canyon and Spencer Canyon this summer. I have a deep respect for all native cultures and people—especially those connected to Grand Canyon. Past, present and future—these people have deeply-rooted wisdom that tie them to this sacred landscape—that which is sacred to me, as well. These sensitive boundary discussions will occur on a nation-to-nation basis, and as a river stakeholder, GCRG supports the park's position that the Hualapai boundary is the historic high water mark as intended by the 1975 Grand Canyon Enlargement Act. I also believe that through mutual respect we can resolve the need for disruptive signage in the middle of wilderness. My hope is that through shared goals of preservation we can help support a healthy ecosystem

and uphold wilderness values by minimizing human impact as much as possible.

Despite where lines may lie, drawn upon a changing map, we only get one chance in this life. I'm striving to leave a personal legacy of protection, rather than destruction. Ahead of his time, in 1955 Wallace Stegner wrote in *This is Dinosaur*, "If we preserved as parks only those places that have no economic possibilities, we would have no parks. And in the decades to come, it will not be only the buffalo and the trumpeter swan who need sanctuaries. Our own species is going to need them too. It needs them now."

As my term as president comes to an end, the polarity of land use has driven so much of the debate. I feel so lucky to spend a career working here in the Canyon. I feel driven to instill in my clients just how unique/fragile/special this place is. I also feel compelled to protect this place for future generations, at all costs. Talking with a friend of mine, a former GCRG president, they reiterated this sentiment; "Name one good reason not to protect these lands. We have to protect these places from ourselves; the future will be better for it." I'll be thinking about this while rowing on these last two trips this season, with the anticipation of our newborn coming soon. Hoping that the 4TH generation of Reeder-river-runners has the opportunity to experience the beauty of this place as I have.

Ben Reeder

Farewell

DRIFTER SMITH, AUGUST 8, 1943 – MAY 3, 2017

DRIFTER FELL IN LOVE with the Grand Canyon at the age of fourteen, when he hiked to the bottom on a family trip. On that same trip he saw Emery Kolb's movie of the Kolb brothers' river trip, and decided that looked like something he

Shortly after that trip, he and his wife split up, and he headed to California, where he ended up at the ARTA house, a semi-communal house where many of the guides working for ARTA lived. For several years he worked as a guide on rivers in California and Utah, and spent the winters traveling, doing private trips on other rivers, working on archaeological surveys, and



wanted to do, but it took him another twenty years to realize his dream. After graduating with a degree in geology from Brown University, he held a series of jobs, including taxi driver and health inspector for the city of Philadelphia, and became a serious caver, taking trips to West Virginia every weekend to explore labyrinthine caves. He also took up sky-diving for a time. Around the same time he bought a ten-foot Avon, which the distributor told him was just the thing to take down the Grand Canyon! He paddled down the Lehigh River near his home several times to get some experience, but hungered for more wilderness.

A trip down the Green River in that Avon with his first wife changed his life—he and his wife sold most of their stuff and headed west, to do another month-long trip down the Green.

one winter, living in a tree house that he built on the banks of the Stanislaus River. Then finally in 1978, he was hired by ARTA's Grand Canyon operation (which later became AZRA), and started his career in the Canyon. The first couple of years he lived in a teepee behind the AZRA warehouse in Parks. After the AZRA warehouse moved to Flagstaff and he met his wife Sue, he moved to Flagstaff.

Drifter worked for AZRA for 34 years and did 190 trips (including private trips) through the Canyon. He loved his job, and he loved the Grand Canyon, a feeling which only grew stronger as the years passed. During the off season, he and Sue hiked and boated all over the Southwest, and he worked a variety of part-time jobs. He worked on archaeological surveys, he managed the Sacred Mountain Trading Post when



photo courtesy: Christopher Brown

the owner was out of town, and he worked for Elder Hostel (now Road Scholar).

Drifter was a truly unique individual. He had a vast store of knowledge and a ready wit, and he was a fabulous cook, a great storyteller, and was always willing to help. He was also a wild man at times, whooping and hollering during thunderstorms, posing in a dress and falsies on party night, laughing his signature laugh. He was always incredibly smart and highly articulate. Although his high school in Western Pennsylvania was not even accredited for college admission, Drifter (then Stu) and his debate partner placed third in the National High School Debate Championships in 1960. And he was later admitted to Brown University on a scholarship. Those attributes served him well in later life. He had not been in the Grand Canyon long before his intellectual curiosity kicked in. Over the years he amassed a tremendous library of all things Grand Canyon. His interests augmented his training in geology, but also delved deep in the Canyon's human history. Early exploration, boats and boating styles, Native American activities and traces, and many other tangents caught his imagination. He could speak at length about most anything, and argue a point with a well made case.

He was Grand Canyon River Guides' go-to book reviewer, always presenting an informed, even-handed evaluation with honest praise and accurate criticism.

Drifter was President of Grand Canyon River Guides in 2005, during the period when the Colorado River Management Plan was being drafted, and he spent hours poring over the voluminous documents produced by the Park Service and soliciting input from other guides. He also became a respected Grand Canyon historian, and was a member of Clio, an eclectic online river history group. But he also had the unique ability to transform all this encyclopedic knowledge into a good story. He told them often, with a twinkle in his eye, and punctuated with that famous full-throated laugh.

He was plagued with health issues throughout his life, and had several near-death episodes, but he hiked further, boated more, and explored more than all but the most dedicated athletes. He had a burst appendix and nearly died when he was fourteen, he had amoebic dysentery that went into his liver and nearly killed him when he was thirty, and he had a terrible accident on a motorized bicycle that hospitalized him for two months when he was 63. He had a strong constitution and a zest for life that kept him bouncing back from these crises, but he couldn't bounce back from the last one. He was a good friend and a mentor to many, and will be greatly missed.

Sue Ordway

Guide Profile

Katie Proctor, Age 37

WHO DO YOU WORK FOR CURRENTLY (AND IN THE PAST)?

AZRA, Grand Canyon Youth, and St. Jude Enterprises/GCMRC. I did my very first river trip in 2004 with Harlan and Marieke Taney. It was an AZRA motor trip. Experiencing Grand Canyon from the river and watching these two exemplary guides changed my life and motivated me to try it myself! I began guiding with GCY and then AZRA in 2005 and have been there ever since!

WHAT KIND OF BOAT(S) DO YOU RUN? I row, motor and paddle boat. I'm now a greenhorn sport boater for science trips.

WHAT OTHER RIVERS HAVE YOU WORKED ON? I've worked with ARTA on the Middle Fork of the Salmon, OARS on the Main Salmon, GCY on the San Juan, and Last Descents in China.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES/PASSIONS/DREAMS? My passion is connecting people to wild places and watching their true nature rise to the surface. I like providing opportunities for people to roll around in the mud, hike beautiful trails, learn about their surroundings and go home with a renewed purpose. That's the gift of the river and I love experiencing it myself and sharing it with others. My dream is to continue to share the gifts and experiences the river has given me in new and creative ways that benefit our community and the environment through guiding and other new paths.

MARRIED/FAMILY/PETS? To be in Grand Canyon is to be in love, with places and people and experiences. I am fortunate to be a member of our river community whose love is felt from the depths of the Canyon, to Flagstaff and beyond. My mom, dad, brother, sisters, nieces and nephews in Virginia mean the world to me. There are so many that have my heart.

WHAT MADE YOU START GUIDING? Honestly, I started guiding because I wanted to see if I could do it and I knew in my gut it was something I had to do.

WHAT BROUGHT YOU HERE? What brought me here was the Spirit. An old Dodge Spirit.

WHO HAVE BEEN YOUR MENTORS AND/OR ROLE MODELS? I have learned something from everyone I've worked with and have appreciation for so many ridiculously fabulous people there are too many to list. My deepest admiration goes to Randy Tucker, Brad Dimock, Fritz, Somer Earle and Nate Klema.



WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE WINTER? Work at all my jobs, travel, ski, mountain bike...

IS THIS YOUR PRIMARY WAY OF EARNING A LIVING OR DO YOU COMBINE IT WITH SOMETHING ELSE? Guiding has been my primary career. I also work as a massage therapist, yoga instructor and part time for the awesome folks at Ceiba. I love caring for people and have worked as a hospice caregiver, head start teacher and women's shelter manager.

WHAT'S THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT IN YOUR GUIDING

CAREER? Too many memorable moments!! My new favorite Grand Canyon memory is driving the wrong way on a one way with no moon. ;)

WHAT'S THE CRAZIEST QUESTION YOU'VE EVER BEEN ASKED ABOUT THE CANYON/RIVER? My favorite question ever was recently asked by a rad GCY youth from New Orleans. At the top of the diving board at 50-mile he asked, "What do you know about the solar system?" "Could we land a spaceship on Neptune?" I think his mind was blown...

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR FUTURE HOLDS? I hope my future contains good work, good people, and wild adventure.

WHAT KEEPS YOU HERE? Love keeps me here.

Canyon Dream

I had been working all the year
I felt my life had lost its cheer.
I was not feeling at my best.
I knew I needed sleep, and rest.

I slept, and I began to dream.
I floated on an ancient stream
A lean and lovely river guide
Steered me down the river's tide.

We floated through a canyon grand
We floated through a magic land
Where rosy in the glowing dawns
Shone many marbled Parthenons
And ringed by towering fortress walls
Stood ancient sandstone Taj Mahals.

And day by day, I sat in awe.
And marveled at the sights I saw.
The canyon walls were piled high
In layers rising to the sky
Of ancient deserts, ancient seas
Through eons of eternities.
Yet of that book of earthly ages
Far greater were the missing pages
Of seas and deserts in this place
Which disappeared and left no trace.

Above, at night, shone sparkling seas
Of countless stars and galaxies;
As countless as the flakes of snow
When mighty winter blizzards blow.
Each night I slept upon the sand
And gazed upon the heavens grand
And marveled at the sky so deep
And slept a long and restful sleep.

And as each canyon bend we wandered
The more I saw, the more I pondered.
I pondered on the scale so vast
Of all those ancient ages past
And wondered what my place could be
In such a vast eternity?
In such a scale of time and sky
What my brief life might signify?

And so I asked the river guide
Who listened, smiled, and then replied:
Your questions are a mystery
Their answers are not known to me.
So many thinkers before you
Have pondered these same questions too.
But never could they all agree
On what they've learned or what they see.
The more we learn, the more we know
How vastly far we have to go.
For round each bend of learning lies
Another question and surprise.

But our small world, our speck of time
Is blessed with beauty so sublime
Perhaps our purpose just may be
To love and cherish what we see.

Now wake, and work, and sing and play
But take a little time each day
To let your thinking drift away
To muse upon this wondrous place
This special speck of time and space.

And so I woke the morrow morn
As if from sleep and dream reborn.
Since then, it seems, I better see
The beauty in each rock and tree.
And when I such contentment feel
I wonder, could it maybe have been real?
That canyon with its mighty walls
And ancient sandstone Taj Majals?

— Gunnar Knapp (October 2016)

Escalade

Please read these powerful words in strong opposition to the Grand Canyon Escalade proposal—a massive 420-acre resort featuring a 1.6 mile gondola that would snake down the canyon walls, carrying over 10,000 people per day to the sacred confluence of the Little Colorado and Colorado Rivers in Grand Canyon. The following article appeared as a Letter to the Editor of the NAVAJO TIMES (July 6, 2017) and is reprinted here with permission of the author, Rita Bilagody, Tuba City, AZ resident and Save the Confluence member.

WHY WASTE \$65 MILLION ON THIS ATROCITY?

ON THURSDAY, JULY 6, the Escalade development legislation is scheduled to be heard by the Naabik'iyati Committee. This committee is the last of the four standing committees to hear the legislation. We shall see.

Mr. Benjamin Bennett, sponsor of this controversial proposal, has pulled this bill numerous times from various standing committee hearings since he introduced it in August of 2016. By my count, he has pulled it at least five times from the NABI Committee alone since February 2017.

I spoke with him at Sawmill Chapter in January 2017 where we had traveled to present our resolution to ask for support from the chapter in opposing Escalade (which the chapter members passed in opposition to Escalade). At that time he informed me that he introduced it to the Navajo Nation Council to “put this proposal to rest once and for all...whether it passes or not. We want to let this issue follow the legislative process as provided in the Navajo Nation government.”

Mr. Bennett, you spoke so sincerely to me about letting this go through the legislative process and yet by pulling it off the hearing agenda at the last minute, time after time, you seem to be making a great effort to stop your own legislation from proceeding through the process.

We shall once again be in attendance at this hearing. I request of Mr. Bennett, Mr. Albert Hale and Mr. Rial Lamar Whitmer, partners of the Escalade, to stop playing games with the lives of the Diné affected

by this development.

I have seen many of our people crying, filled with worry, feeling the weight of the stress upon their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual being. Each time you stop the process by pulling the bill, you are conveying your disregard and your disrespect to our Diné who live in the area who oppose this project. Let's see if this legislation will actually be presented to the full Navajo Nation Council for their vote at summer session, a full year since it was introduced.

As of June 2017, the grassroots organization Save the Confluence, comprised of families who live in the area and their supporters, have gone before four of five agency councils. The Northern, Eastern, Western and Fort Defiance agency councils have passed our resolution against the Escalade. The fifth agency,



Chinle, is scheduled to hear our resolution Saturday, July 8, in Tsaile, Ariz., at their meeting.

By traveling throughout our beautiful Dinétah, we have secured resolutions against the Escalade project from 23 chapters. Going to the chapters for their vote stemmed from Mr. Benjamin Bennett's refusal to let us have a voice to speak at the committee hearings to

state our opposition, which he has a right to do as he is the sponsor of the legislation.

Our only solution was to come before the people, present our resolution and ask for their support in opposing Escalade. By going this route, Diné have truly spoken when they vote. By the many chapters voting against the Escalade thus far, Save the Confluence families have solid and overwhelming support from our Diné who have voted against the Escalade at their chapters. The 86,000-plus have signed the online petition and the comments section of the Navajo Nation website along with the over 5,000 who have signed the paper petitions.

Here are some facts and truth for your perusal:

- 1) Escalade will be exempt from paying Navajo Nation taxes;
- 2) Only 8 percent to a maximum of 18 percent of revenue will be returned to the Navajo Nation;
- 3) an environmental impact statement/study has not been conducted;
- 4) the legislation skips the most important step of the Navajo Nation business-site lease process...that of getting permission of grazing permittees and land users;
- 5) Escalade project violates the compact signed by the Navajo Nation and Hopi Nation to end the 43-year-long Bennett Freeze law. One of the provisions was that both tribes will leave sites sacred to both untouched. Hopi Nation has every right to sue to halt this project, as do other tribes who hold this area sacred;
- 6) the boundary between Grand Canyon National Park and the Navajo Nation has not been defined or settled, legal challenges will ensue;
- 7) there is a non-compete clause in the master agreement which will prohibit Diné artisans from selling their wares within many miles from the project site;
- 8) Escalade Partners say they will only be taking 420 acres of land but according to their own legislation, it is closer to 226,195 acres. In this zone, they will be the ones to determine developments, not the Navajo Nation.

A very important issue in this project to be aware of is that the \$65 million they expect from the Nation is only for infrastructure (sic) paved road, power lines, waterlines, etc. There will not be an immediate hiring frenzy for 3,500 jobs.

After lawsuits ensue, which the Nation will have to defend, it could be years and years before this project will be built because \$65 million is a lot of money.

As I have gone to chapter after chapter to present

ESCALADE UPDATE

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- The Naabik'iyati Committee voted 14-2 against the Escalade proposal. Only the bill's sponsor, Ben Bennett, and delegate Leonard Tsosie voted in favor.
- Escalade legislation sponsor, Ben Bennett, has avoided an opportunity to hear debate on the bill during the Summer Session of the Navajo Nation Council. However, the legislation may appear on the agenda in the Fall Session.
- The Chairman of the Hopi Tribe, Herman Honanie, has written a guest column for the Navajo Times (July 24, 2017) entitled, "It's time for Bennett, Confluence Partners, to let go!" The Escalade legislation is in direct violation of the Intergovernmental Compact between the Hopi and Navajo tribes and would undo years of good-faith negotiations.
- The bill's sponsor, Ben Bennett has also expressed that he wants to create a negotiating team of Council delegates to sit down with the Escalade developers to make some changes to the master agreement. New legislation may be required.
- The continued vigilance and effective grassroots efforts of the Save the Confluence (STC) families within the Navajo Nation have been key to their continued success as they work diligently to defeat this bill and protect this sacred landscape in perpetuity. STC will continue to stand strong in opposition to the Escalade development and will closely track any legislative efforts during the Navajo Nation Council Fall Session. We thank them for their hard work and support STC in their endeavors!

our resolution, there are always seven issues raised by Diné saying we need help with: housing, roads, waterlines, electric lines, veterans, elderly, and scholarships among many other needs.

At chapter after chapter, Council delegates speak of loss of revenue, which the Nation receives, and to expect diminished funds to chapters. Yet, eight or nine Navajo Nation Council delegates think it's OK to lend our money to a developer from Scottsdale and Mr. Albert Hale for 8 percent to 18 percent returned to us.

Lastly, it was interesting to listen to Mr. Leonard Tsosie, an ardent supporter of the Escalade project,



The letter's author (Rita Bilagody) educating visitors at Grand Canyon National Park about the threat of Escalade.

photo courtesy: Roger Clark



Rita and Ellen Heyn, GCT Communications associate, at the Save the Confluence information table at Grand Canyon Visitor Center during Earth Day 2016 . photo courtesy: Roger Clark

state his objections to NGS legislation among which was giving up our sovereignty by having any legal disputes settled in state courts rather than here on the Nation.

Mr. Tsosie, in case you haven't read the three-inch Escalade master agreement, that is exactly what the developers have inserted in the agreement.

A lot of the language in the NGS legislation is also in the Escalade legislation. Why is it OK to give up our sovereignty for Escalade?

We have been asked if we have an alternative to Escalade. I'm happy to say that yes we do but this alternative has been met with a deafening silence from the eight or nine Council delegates and the partners' supporters.

Build businesses on the Highway 89 corridor in Western Navajo where millions of tourists drive to visit the South and North Rims of the Grand Canyon, who visit Lake Powell, Monument Valley and points in between.

Let's capture those tourist dollars by building cultural centers, hotels, restaurants, truck stops, gas stations, and convenience stores. Let's bring our children home to own and run these businesses. The Cameron and Shonto communities have already done this recently. Let's not intrude on one of our sacred sites.

Yes, Mr. Leonard Tsosie, this is a sacred area, despite your belittling and sarcasm regarding what does the word "sacred" mean. When we have stories in our culture since time immemorial, of Salt Woman, of the sacredness of Toh ahidiliih, the Confluence of the Colorado River-male and the Little Colorado River-female, when the Hataalii Advisory Council of the Navajo Historic Preservation issues a position statement opposing the Escalade, when the

Diné Medicine Men Association issues a resolution opposing the Escalade, when the Havasupai and the Hualapai, the Hopi and Zuni tribes, and the All Indian Pueblo Council issue resolutions opposing Escalade citing their origin stories, when medicine people come to me to tell me that this is a sacred area, I am inclined to listen to them.

I invite you eight or nine ardent pro-Escalade Council delegates to tell these medicine people that Toh ahidilii is not sacred. That you know better than your constituents who elected you to represent and carry their voices to Window Rock, who elected you to advocate for them. Thousands upon thousands of Diné have said with a crystal clear voice: No Escalade tram.

In closing, the numbers and facts I have cited come directly from the Escalade master agreement, I am not pulling these out of the air, it's in their language. If eight or nine Council delegates think the nation has \$65 million for this atrocity, why not use this money for the whole Nation, say \$13 million for each of the five agencies?

I want to say a sincere "Ahe'eeh" to the Council delegates who have supported us, who have encouraged us.

A big "Ahe'eeh" to all the 23 chapters and four agency councils and tens of thousands of you who have made your voice known by supporting our efforts. You are way cool.

Thank you for reading this long letter, it is much appreciated.

Rita Bilagody
TOHNANEESDIZI, ARIZ.

Record Set!

AFTER FOUR DECADES of rowing the Grand Canyon, Dick Griffith made his last run in May—and he set a record. Griffith already held the record for the first person to row an inflatable raft through Lava Falls in 1951. In May, he became the oldest to ever row that same rapid. Griffith was 89, four years older than the previous record-holder, Martin Litton.

the trip had ended. Johnson-Sullivan, the author of *Canyons & Ice: The Wilderness Travels of Dick Griffith*, joined the grizzled survivalist on his historic run. Also along for the ride (and just in case Lava decided that it didn't like Griffith) were Johnson-Sullivan's husband, Bill Sullivan, and two Wilderness River Adventures boatmen, Sean Crane and Kale Cowell.



Dick Griffith rowing Lava in May 2017 at age 89. Also in the boat are: Kaylene Johnson-Sullivan, Bill Sullivan, Sean Crane and Kale Cowell. photos courtesy: Andy Trimlett

Griffith, the most charming, cantankerous old man you'll ever meet, didn't have record-breaking on his mind when his hands gripped the oars. In harrowing and inspiring journeys across the Arctic, the Grand Canyon and Mexico, Griffith has faced foxes, polar bears, frostbite, starvation, and gun-wielding bandits. None of those managed to kill him, so why not take the oars through the biggest rapid in the Grand Canyon at 89? Griffith only learned that he had set a record when Kaylene Johnson-Sullivan checked with river historians Brad Dimock and Richard Quartaroli after

Griffith's run through Lava Falls was recorded by a camera crew for the forthcoming Alaska Public Media documentary, *Canyons & Ice: The Last Run of Dick Griffith*. You can learn more about it at www.canyonsandice.com. Just don't spoil the dramatic ending!

Andy Trimlett

NOTE: Andy Trimlett is the director of the *Canyons & Ice* documentary.

From Private Oar Boater to Commercial Motor Passenger: Observations Along the Route

QUESTION: *How many decisions does it take book a commercial trip?*

ANSWER: *One.*

UNTIL RECENTLY, I CONSIDERED myself a strict oar boater. Never, I thought, would I subject myself to the invasive sounds of a droning motor and the cloying smell of exhaust fumes emanating from the back of the boat on a river trip. I did my first Canyon trip, a motor trip, with Grand Canyon Youth Expeditions, Dick McCallum's program, with ten Junior High classmates. But since I was only twelve, I figured I was just ignorant about river transportation in general back then. However, most of my private boater friends are either a) too old or b) too stove up to want to take on the work needed to organize a private trip much anymore. Rowing is hard. They've moved on to other pursuits, and so I realized that the only way to get my Canyon first-timer husband down the river was to hire a commercial outfit. Plus we only had a limited amount of cash to spend, so a commercial oar trip was out of the question because of cost and length of time required. Hubby's fit but his well-used knee disallows hiking, picking up a lower or upper half wasn't feasible, and I wanted him to have the entire Canyon experience, from Lees to Diamond or thereabouts. I felt like giving him half a canyon trip would be like dining at a Michelin-rated restaurant but before sampling dessert. So, grudgingly, I engaged a commercial company earlier this year, paid the money, and spouse and I appeared at the requisite meeting time and place on a warm July morning with two-dozen other passengers for a double rig trip. I felt overwhelmed watching all those people scramble around the Lees Ferry launch, looking a little like ants crazily running in and out of an anthill, carrying fragments of gear in their hands. That morning I listened, bemused, to the orientation, and then awkwardly scrambled up on what looked like an inflated rubber aircraft carrier, compared to the last boat I had run the Canyon in: a tiny twelve-foot raft with just enough room for ourselves, our gear, and probably a day box or two, with my then-boyfriend and I taking turns at the oars (he did most of the work).

* * *

QUESTION: *How many passengers does it take to set up the company-provided roll-a-cot?*

ANSWER: *Two. One to grab a cot from the cot pile, struggle mightily to assemble, then throw the cot back on the pile, an epic fail, and another passenger to grab same cot from same pile and magically set up same cot in a minute or less.*

The first night I realized that in essence, trips, motor or not, commercial or not, are similar. Find a camp, set up kitchen, set up groover (the commercial guides called it a "port-o"), locate a level sleeping place. Hearing my fellow passengers complain the first evening about bugs and sleep in tents in the sweltering heat because to novices, tents equal camping, and sleeping outside felt too exposed for many of them, reminded me that it takes a while to find our river rhythm. I emptied my day bag many times the first night looking for the same item that was in my personal box; I hadn't fallen into my own river cadence yet myself.

CANYON WREN FALLING-DOWN-SCALE SONGS HEARD: *Dozens.*
TASTY MEALS FIXED BY CAPABLE GUIDES, GIVING ME FREE TIME: *Two.*

WARM, SOMNOLENT BREEZES WAFING OVER MY UNCOVERED BODY WHILE DRIFTING OFF TO SLEEP: *Numerous.*

* * *

QUESTION: *How much patience do commercial guides have when asked the same question over and over by their passengers?*

ANSWER: *Like the biblical Job.*

Exhibiting my knowledge about running rivers elevated me to teaching assistant status for the rest of the trip. Passengers on this trip found out I could answer some basic queries. But observing our commercial guides address the same questions over and over without exhibiting even the slightest annoyance wowed me. I can tie a mean half hitch but I can't change a prop. I can read water, but I can't drive a motor-rig. I tried—for about ten minutes, with my patient guide gently making suggestions and watching me leave a serpentine wake in the flat water of the river, causing those in the "bathtub" to look over their shoulders, horrified, when they saw me grinning crazily back at them while death-gripping the throttle.

The care our guides took with passengers who were a bit unsteady on their feet when hiking, when climbing on and off the boats, always offering a hand, but not solicitously or paternally—immeasurable. Secretly I'm impressed at their ability to shepherd two-dozen folks each day downstream and then provide excellent meals for us morning, noon, and night, all in heat and wind. The monsoons hadn't arrived yet, so the heat was brutal at times. Some passengers were cranky. Dauntless, our guides were unflappable the entire 188 miles of river, and I never saw them sweat, literally or figuratively.

FALLING STARS SEEN WHILE LYING ON MY BACK, FALLING ASLEEP TO RIVER SOUND: *Too many to count.*

* * *

QUESTION: *How many rivers does it take to turn staid professionals into ten-year-old kids?*

ANSWER: *One—the Little Colorado.*

The LCR flowed that astounding milky-blue color when we visited, a color that, even though I've seen it multiple times on previous trips, never fails to stop me in my tracks when I see that lovely cerulean liquid lazily mix with the richer emerald of the Colorado. Dozens of adults wearing orange lifejackets like diapers, shouting, splashing, and making "people trains" while floating the LCR's warm-water rapids, were already having a blast in the mid-morning heat. Our group? No different; the freedom and lightness of the river, of moving water, affected us equally. The oldest passenger on our trip was 79; the youngest, nine, but for two hours we were all children lacking worries and cares, simply playing in the waters of that magical Confluence.

And here's something about healing stream sound. It seems that science has determined that moving water—rivers, creeks, oceans—produces negatively charged ions in the tens of thousands per square inch, while polluted air only holds about 300–400 per square inch. Negatively charged ions appear to having healing properties, produces a soothing alpha brain wave, and can help relieve depression and seasonal affective disorder. Is it any wonder we feel relaxed, that we sleep better, more soundly, when we sleep next to a river?

MILES TRAVELED: 61.7

SHOT GLASSES OF SUNBLOCK APPLIED: *At least a fifth.*

REALIZATION THAT I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT DAY IT WAS AND DIDN'T CARE: *One, about day three. Or day four. Day five?*

* * *

QUESTION: *How many days does it take for layers of above the rim life to be shed? For a group of commercial passengers to wind up being, for at least a short time, a river family?*

ANSWER: *Who cares? It happened on this trip, and that's all that matters.*

We laughed hysterically through Hermit, bonded below Lava; marveled at bighorn sheep grazing on shore. We helped each other, unloaded gear as a group (tired but still determined at the end of the day to pull our weight), we washed dishes, shared beers, complained about the heat, smiled at each other a lot. We were cognizant of personal space in tight camps and on boats. Although some of us made close friends out of strangers, others preferred to stay more to themselves and that was okay too.

I finally realized that a commercial trip is no different than a private trip. The river still moves us in ways, allows us to grow, to observe, to let go, to be kind. The view from Nankoweap granaries is the same spectacular view it always is, no matter whether we are motoring downriver or pulling on oars. We can all be induced to find our Canyon stewardship, to realize the aesthetic beauty of this natural wonder and when we rejoin our regular lives, can act to protect her. In the end, we are all the same passenger, oar or motor, commercial or private: we are all wondering and excited and fearful and observing, happy and gleeful and reflective and tired, sunburned and elated and grateful, all loving this Grand, very Grand Canyon and this Colorado River together.

MILES TRAVELLED: 188

NUMBER OF EPIPHANIES REALIZED BY ME ON TAKE-OUT DAY ABOUT THE RESTORATIVE VALUE OF ANY RIVER TRIP, COMMERCIAL OR PRIVATE, MOTOR OR OAR: *A very big, very humbling One.*

Robyn S. Martin

NOTE: Robyn S. Martin is a member of GCRG and worked in the industry on the upper Colorado back in the day. She wasn't very good at it. She's a senior lecturer in the NAU Honors College and has previously published in the BQR.

Roll On Colorado

(to the tune of Woody Guthrie's "Roll On Columbia")*

Green Douglas firs where the water cuts through
Down our wild mountains and canyons she flew
Tops of the Rockies to the ocean so blue
It's roll on, Colorado, roll on

Many great rivers add waters to you
The Dolores, the Pine, and the Animas they do
San Juan, Piedra, and Green River too
It's roll on, Colorado, roll on

Roll on, Colorado, roll on
Roll on, Colorado roll on
Your canyons are calling us all farther on
So roll on, Colorado, roll on

In Marble we ran as the cliff walls they grew
Through Badger and House Rock and Nevills we flew
Saddle, Shinumo, and Nankoweap too
It's roll on, Colorado, roll on

At Sock we caught sight of an unusual crew
Buckets on their heads, down the rapid they flew
Who are they? we wondered, and can this be true
It's roll on, Colorado, roll on

Came the word they might be those legends without peers
Known on the river as The Four Bombardiers
They never will scout and they never show fear
It's roll on, Colorado, roll on

Three of their boats, they're nearly on the shoals
The fourth one, he shouts, "I'm a-goin' for the hole!"
Into the maelstrom, and out—holy mole!
It's roll on, Colorado, roll on

Roll on, Colorado, roll on
Roll on, Colorado roll on
Your canyons are calling us all farther on
So roll on, Colorado, roll on

The years they have passed and the river rolls on
The wren still sings brightly and heralds the dawn
I wonder what became of those four farther on
It's roll on, Colorado, roll on

Now some say the "Diers," they went down on their luck
Traded their boats, and bought 'em a truck
Off to South America to make a fast buck
It's roll on, Colorado, roll on.

Others say they broke out of a boatmen's nursin' home
Headed for the canyons and rivers to roam
Eatin' wild roots and gnawin' on bones
It's roll on, Colorado, roll on

Cordin' to the tale, here's the end of the four
Toward Lava they float and they ship all their oars
Then they wash up on eternity's shore
It's roll on, Colorado, roll on

Roll on, Colorado, roll on
Roll on, Colorado roll on
Your canyons are calling your bombardiers home
So roll on, Colorado, roll on

Now, Big Red has seen its brave canyoneers
Powell, Bert Loper, and even Bill Beer
But never the likes of The Four Bombardiers
It's roll on, Colorado, roll on

Roll on, Colorado, roll on
Roll on, Colorado roll on
Your canyons are calling us all farther on
So roll on, Colorado, roll on
Roll on, Colorado, roll on
Roll on, Colorado, roll on . . .

— by Will Hobbs

* Don't remember what the tune sounds like? Scan this.



China's Grand Canyon

HIGH MARBLE AND GRANITE walls soar above us as I sit on my boat, rowing downstream with hands cracked by the hot sun. The last rapids are still whispering in our ears when a young kayaker paddles up to my boat and inquires, "Are there gonna be more rapids?" His mom smiles and tells me how proud she of him and how much her own fears have dissipated with every floating mile. She is now able to let go of her fast-paced, urgent, urban life as we float slowly spring birds singing under the blue sky. From where I sit, I watch her visibly relaxing, leaning back against the bags and welcoming splashing from the blue-green water. Sounds familiar doesn't it? However, this is not the muddy Colorado, this is the Grand Canyon of the Nu Jiang or Salween River in Yunnan China. The mother and son riding with me became so enamored with the river experience that they run the Salween every year. Last year, the two fulfilled a dream of rafting down the Colorado in Grand Canyon. Rounding a wide sweeping turn in the river, I watched the young man point his red kayak into the tongue of a rapid. "He wants to be a river guide," his mom tells me in broken English, "his father and I are encouraging it."

Her story is becoming not so unusual or surprising. At the end of each 4-day commercial river trip on the Salween, guests gather together to tell what the experience has meant to them. The families are from big cities like Beijing and Shanghai. They told us how they are beginning to feel something is missing from their lives in massive metropolises even though everything there seems available and accessible. As

the pollution indexes rise, the prospect of stepping outside under a yellow sky begins to threaten the city dweller's physical health and increasingly, the problem is felt more deeply than that. The families spoke of feeling a loss of connection with nature that creates an unhealthiness that goes beyond what is felt in the physical body. This is not what Chinese parent's want for themselves or their children. They are beginning to crave connection to their own magnificently diverse landscape.

Currently, there are about 10,000 protected areas but no unified system to regulate or safeguard these regions. As a culture driven to succeed and motivated to find intelligent solutions to challenging problems, the Chinese people are beginning to focus on environmental conservation, protection and the development of a National Park system. For many years, the country was focused on bringing electricity and jobs to approximately 44% of its population living rurally. Hydro electric and mining projects along the country's river corridors abound and China now finds itself in a place not unlike our own country was sixty years ago when we realized we couldn't just use our resources, we had to monitor, protect and conserve our use or the resources would disappear.

The Chinese central government has been working with officials in our park system, including Grand Canyon National Park, to learn about natural resource management and to create a similar National Park system around 123,000 square kilometer site called the "Source of Three Rivers" where the Yellow, Yangtze, and Mekong rivers originate. This fragile corner of western China is known as Asia's "water tower." But against the background of climate change and economic development its high grasslands are changing. The area faces desertification and melting glaciers, caused by overgrazing and global warming. This is turning large swathes of precious grasslands and wetlands into desert. China is reaching out urgently to experts in the field of parks recreation management for assistance in creating these parks.

One such company is Last Descents, one of the only commercial river running companies in China. Travis Winn and Adam Elliott, Grand Canyon guides and kayakers, grew up on rivers and share a deep understanding of the value of a river experience. After spending time kayaking the rivers of China, they noticed the lack of opportunities for Chinese people to connect to their rivers and the urgent need to do so before damming projects shifted the landscape.



Together, they were determined to provide such an opportunity. Enlisting the help of Travis's wife Wei Yi, Last Descents began facilitating river experiences down the Salween, Yangtze and Daqu rivers. Through endless networking and marketing, Last Descents has brought downstream top government officials and many Chinese families. By offering river trips and a youth kayak club that even meets off the river for roll practice in a pool in Beijing, Last Descents hopes to facilitate connection to the environment and create stewards that seek to protect and preserve natural resources for many generations to come.

I was fortunate enough to join a trip that was comprised of community leaders, a governor, Tibetan officials, a member the Chinese Nature Conservancy, and business people from a company that organizes sporting events. Sharing in a circle on the last day, I listened as these officials who I'd watched just days earlier "corn dog" themselves by rolling down sand banks and participate in what I would consider one of the world's most engaging water fights, speak of the personal and professional shifts they felt after just 4 days. The energy of that circle was optimistic, determined, and simmering with creative plans on how to continue running such trips, ideas for creating National Parks and collaborating with Last Descents to reach more and more Chinese. Listening to this group of budding environmentalists, I was reminded of Martin Litton, Grand Canyon River runner and conservationist who brought government officials down into Grand Canyon on the Colorado to see/feel/discover and to leave the river with a visceral understanding of the importance of such trips. As Lao Tang a Last Descents guide and China's first professional raft guide put it, "This is proof that the river has worked her magic."

We here in the US are in a different place than China. Half a world apart to be exact. With an established National Park system in place our challenges have shifted from how to create such systems but how to maintain them successfully while constantly being bombarded by encroaching and unnecessary development, environmental degradation from a multitude of sources and nefarious political policies. As the focus of our country becomes more centered around national interests pulling away from the global community and away from environmental concerns, I wonder, what lessons can we learn from our neighbors around the globe and what will be lost if we stop extending our hands in friendship and desire for mutual learning and understanding? What is the impact if we do not maintain our connection with our neighbors across the globe? It seems if we

continue to wrap the robe of fear tight around us, we will alienate our neighbors, which will not enrich or enhance our experience and it certainly won't protect us. It is true, the challenges facing Grand Canyon and the desert Southwest are unique to this region as are the multitude of political policies, regional traditions, and cultural values that are involved in the management of these places are as complex as the landscape itself. But what happens when a community shifts its focus into a narrow scope?

We've all been stuck in the mire at times attempting to solve a problem close at hand, becoming narrowly focused and frustrated. Taking a step back can help gather in a wider perspective. This space allows someone to point out something you didn't notice before. Or perhaps someone who speaks in an entirely different language is able to communicate a deep love and understanding of place that resonates with your own. Suddenly you recognize that you've jumped into the river of universal experience and, "A-Ha!" you come up with a creative conclusion to your local challenge that you hadn't thought of before. Gathering in a wider perspective often shakes loose what we have been holding onto so tightly so that just the important things lay before us poignantly clear.

I tell this story as a reflection for how far we've come, a treatise for continued collaboration with our friends who desire the same positive changes for their people and landscapes as we do. We could create opportunities to host families from other countries to visit Grand Canyon and look for opportunities to engage with them on their home turf. The broader experience and worldview can be invigorating, and inspiring. As China works to create successful solutions to environmental degradation and pollution, we could learn from their policies in order to prevent our own country from ever having to take such measures. Like the philosophy of Martin Litton and Last Descents, we could invite our policy makers and politicians downstream. The truth could be as easy as floating down a sun-drenched river.

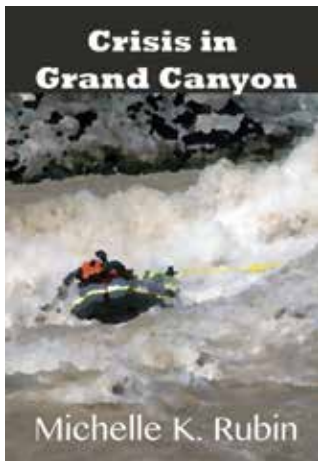
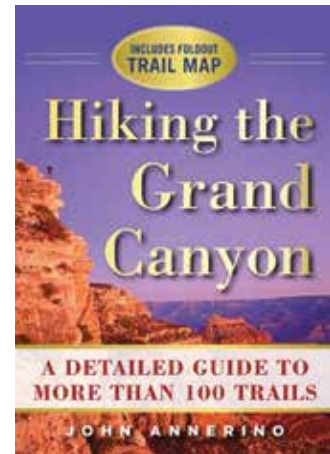
Katie Proctor

If you would like to learn more about Last Descents and opportunities for getting involved, please go to www.lastdescents.info and as well, check out some river trip photos on Instagram [@lastdescents_riverexpeditions](https://www.instagram.com/lastdescents_riverexpeditions).

Book Announcements

Hiking the Grand Canyon, Commemorative Hiker's Edition, JOHN ANNERINO, Skyhorse Publishing, New York, 356 pages, ISBN 10: 1510714987, ISBN-13: 978-1510714984, \$16.99.

THE AUTHOR HAS DONE a yeoman's work researching and writing an all new carry-along guide to the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Included in this small colorfully-illustrated tome are informative chapters about preparation, training, hazards, and gear. Splendid accounts of Native Peoples, explorers, and naturalists breathe life into each trail description. The handy foldout Grand Canyon Trails map is now waterproof. He includes minutia-filled chapters on the canyon's biogeography, geology, Native Peoples, and their "cultural landmarks." Also of note, Annerino takes a stand on critical issues facing the Canyon: Confluence development, uranium mining, tainted spring water, logging old growth forests, and the trans Canyon pipeline. —*John Wolfe*



Crisis in Grand Canyon, MICHELLE K. RUBIN, CreateSpace, 420 pages, ISBN-10: 1547203226, ISBN-13: 978-1547203222, \$14.83 (Paperback), \$3.99 (Kindle).

A NOVEL BASED ON THE AUTHOR'S sedimentology/archaeology trips in Grand Canyon and her Spring 2004 article in *BOATMAN'S QUARTERLY*, *Crisis in Grand Canyon* combines adventure, science, unceasing excitement, and vivid descriptions of life on the river. When Claire joins a two-week rafting trip down the Colorado River, she expects exquisite beauty and a deep, natural silence. As the rafters wend their way into the magical, sculpted refuge, the guides row skillfully down the canyon, through the rugged, majestic wilderness, until the river flow unexpectedly rises and the canyon's changing conditions threaten tragedy. For the guides who have spent years in the canyon, the river is unknowable. For those with less experience, a journey in Grand Canyon can be life changing.

The Grand, The Colorado River in the Grand Canyon, a Photo journey and Visual Guide, iBook 2nd edition, Version 1.2, STEVE MILLER, iBooks, 365 pages, \$5.99.

THE SECOND EDITION OF THIS BOOK (first iBook edition) was published in 2014. This new edition includes, for the first time, 25 movies (24 of which are of rapids), and additional photos, all taken on a September 2016 Grand trip. These additions provide yet better coverage of the Canyon and update changes in the river, such as new rapids. Some re-writing has made for better reading. This third edition is a must for keeping up on the Canyon.



Ode to a Grand Canyon Boatman of Thirty-Six-Years*

Brief cloud cover cast itself across cliffs as varnish,
the Moenkopi//deep burned red, air feeling

of a weighted heat when he hears the Colorado
call—heard only by those keen with an ache

for something wild, something calm—something
like the cold of the river//waves and slack water,

redbuds and cottonwoods, ocotillos lit orange on talus.
For years he would see the Canyon change

from April waters to September, gazing intently,
hand on the tiller that let him run the river,

nearly perfect, every time.

* * *

And yielded from desert ground and water was love.
How he'd watch her walk alongside the river's edge,

hair dark and long, reaching down to her waist//upon
which his hands would rest while meeting her balmy eyes

with his own. Her eyes their child would share—inquisitive
and strong. And when he cradled, for the first time, his son,

he knew he held all the right the world could offer.

* * *

Each season, when Monsoon rains fell long
into the night, he'd sit back, rain gear and beer,

waiting for it to clear. And in the morning he'd shake
out his jacket, comb his hair and into a reflection say,

Good Morning, Handsome, then start his day.
And so it went for over thirty years.

And he came to know the river well,
saw all of Crystal, Dubendorf, Lava and the rest.

Countless times he'd turn his boat about,
running safety for a Second pin-balling near shore,

dropping the Table Rock, or crunching a frame,
and more. A calm gruffness in his voice he'd say,

I've seen Big Red more than once or Been there too,
as he helped an abashed new boatman,

red faced and grease smeared, repair
another broken part. And his follow boatmen

still know they owe for their early
seasons, with carnage aplenty,

when he got them through the Grand.

* * *

Though the Colorado has not let go her pull,
she's filled his life enough//so he might step away

from ringing outboard motors and endless questions
of the water's depth and the height of cliff walls,

to hear a new call and to see what new wild calm might appear.

Rachel Hanson

* This poem is for Ray Pope, who retired June 20TH, 2017 from
a 36-year career as a boatman in the Grand Canyon.

Grand Canyon Youth (GCY) Update

SAVE THE DATE

YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS OUT ON GCY'S 18TH annual River & Reels Fundraiser Saturday, November 4TH at the Coconino Center for the Arts from 5 P.M. to 10 P.M. This event features river themed films, dinner, a great silent auction and a celebration of community!

Please consider making a donation of art, goods or services to this event. We rely on the amazing generosity of the river community to make this event possible! Thank you!

WOW! WHAT A SEASON

We have been busy connecting youth from diverse backgrounds to the rivers and canyons of the Southwest! So far this year we've served over 900 youth from across the country on a variety of programs, from day trips on the Verde to the San Juan to our first backpacking program.

The following write-up comes from Kate Stanley, our 2016–2017 Americorps Vista member who



GCY building lifelong friendships and connection to Grand Canyon.
photo courtesy: Caleb Ring

facilitated our Outdoor Discovery clubs and classes for local high school students at four different schools. She was the Trip Coordinator for a recent Partners in Science Program in conjunction with the United States Geological Survey.

Rafting trips consist of many routines; the endless fire-lining of gear to and from boats, the myriad of tasks associated with an ephemeral kitchen, visiting those special places that are still gorgeous after a dozen-plus visits. Grand Canyon Youth's (GCY) Partners in Science trips have all the regular rafting trip routines, but with the extra special tasks of collecting data for several of the Grand Canyon Monitoring & Research Center's (GCMRC's) current research projects. Over the years, the research GCY assists with has crossed many topics, but this summer's focus has been mostly on vegetation surveys, bat capture and monitoring and beach studies. This June,



Youth taking in the majesty of Grand Canyon on a Partners in Science trip. photo courtesy: Angela Keith

I had the pleasure floating down the upper section of the Canyon with fifteen youth, six guides and two scientists with the hope of collecting vegetation data and providing the youth with a proper (re)introduction to the Canyon.

As we completed all the necessary tasks associated with any rafting trip, we also made time each day to set-up light traps to collect insects each night, conduct spectroscopy measurements on plants during lunch time and the occasional side-hike to gather specimens for a plant genetics project. Despite mid-afternoon temperatures well above 100 degrees, our students bush-wacked with measure tapes in hand, plucked individual leaves on steep slopes and took dozens of data points on exposed sand bars. The best part, these students usually did it with smiles on their faces. One scientist told me we completed a survey that hadn't been done since 2005, mostly because no other scientist wanted to deal with that much brush. The enthusiasm, humor and intrigue of teenagers truly makes undesirable conditions to conduct science a memorable and worthwhile experience. Science on GCY trips also expands outside of the data collection for GCMRC as many participant choose science topics as part of their educational project they are expected to share with their peers. One of the highlights from our trip was the turquoise blue of the LCR glimmering in the background as a student explained the influence limestone has on pH levels within the Colorado River watershed. It was simply innumerable how many times the Canyon provided example after example for students to learn scientific principles and methods, especially with the assistance of such engaging and enthusiastic GCMRC scientists and guides.

For more information about Grand Canyon Youth please visit www.gcyouth.org, email us at info@gcyouth.org or give us a call at 928.773.7921. Thanks!

Emma Wharton

Back of the Boat— The Whale Foundation News Bulletin

YOU’VE GOTTA LOVE A LITTLE cloud cover in July. Even if it doesn’t entirely dissipate the heat, it sure is a relief when it presents itself.

Every summer for the past few seasons, The Whale Foundation, through a generous gift from a friend of the community, has encouraged guides to purchase their own health insurance by offsetting the cost, offering a bit of relief in the form of a stipend to those who do. We call it the *Health Insurance Assistance Program*, and it’s just one service within the *Tim Whitney Wellness Initiative*.

Again this July, we awarded just shy of \$10,000 to nearly twenty guides for simply doing right by themselves. Being practical is difficult sometimes. We get it.

Similarly, we are happy to announce this year’s *Kenton Grua Memorial Scholarship* winners. We had seven really deserving applicants, but in the end, could only choose three. The following have each received \$2,000 for their educational and career pursuits.

- **KELLY WILLIAMS** (CanX) is enrolled at Yavapai college, pursuing a career as an environmental paralegal and hopes one day soon to be working on the issue of water rights in the West.

- **AMANDA LARICHE** (Wilderness) is pursuing her paramedic certification at Arizona Academy of Emergency Services in Mesa. Ultimately, she would like to be a flight nurse for the National Park Service in Grand Canyon, focusing on evacuations.
- **HOLLY SULLIVAN** (ARR/GCWW, GCY) is finishing an associate’s degree in psychology at Coconino Community College with the goal of one day sharing the gifts of music, art, and wilderness with those who could benefit from them most.

We’re proud of all of our industrious and future-minded guides and will continue to seek ways to both encourage and support their efforts toward goals beyond a commercial guiding career. If you have ideas to support our work, we’d love to hear from the community.

Write to whalefoundation@outlook.com or call 928.774.9440 to be in touch. Until then, find shade when you can!

John Napier
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



photo courtesy: John Napier

Andy Hall's Promotion

A CURIOUS THING HAPPENED to Andy Hall between 1947 and 1951, between the time historian William Culp Darrah introduced Hall to the public in the *Utah Historical Quarterly* and the time Darrah published his biography *Powell of the Colorado*. Andy Hall became a much wiser man. He went from being a hell-raising young “character” to being “a genius...with judgment far beyond his years.” Darrah needed to improve Andy Hall’s image because Hall had suddenly become crucial to Darrah’s desire to absolve Powell of blame for Oramel Howland, Seneca Howland, and Bill Dunn walking off the trip.

William Culp Darrah spent years searching for letters, journals, and other documents about the members and events of the Powell expedition, but by the time he organized them into a special issue of the *Utah Historical Quarterly* in 1947 he had not made any connections with Andy Hall, no family, no personal documents. He had to settle for a brief introduction cobbled together out of comments from other crew members. Hall was: in the Major’s words, “The Character” of the party. Although but 18 years of age, he had already spent five years on the loose in the plains as a bullwhacker, mule driver, and Indian scout. He had engaged in numerous Indian skirmishes and had raised hell wherever he found it...He seems to have had some knowledge of English literature. It was Andy who suggested the name “Lodore” after the poem by Robert Southey, and on several occasions Powell makes direct references to the young fellow’s pertinent comments and objectives. The Major first met Andy, a skilled boatman, resting upon the oars of a home-made craft of nondescript design. He engaged the lad on the spot. On many occasions it was Andy’s good humor that enlivened the monotonous and gradually vanishing fare until starvation faced the whole party.¹

After his *Utah Historical Quarterly* article was published, Darrah was informed by Wallace Stegner, who was researching his own Powell biography, that the museum at Grand Canyon National Park had a copy of a letter Hall had written from the river. Darrah contacted the park superintendent, Harold C. Bryant, who put Darrah in touch with the letter’s donor, Mamie Hall Laughlin, Andy Hall’s niece, and she put Darrah in touch with another niece, Martha Stetson, who possessed other letters, two of them about the expedition. Of these three letters, one was written from Green River, Wyoming, as the trip was ready to launch, another was sent from the Uinta Indian Agency along the way, and the last was written

from Fort Mojave at the end of the trip. This last letter contained Andy Hall’s very brief account of what had happened at Separation Rapid: the Howlands and Dunn left because they were afraid to run it. This question had continued troubling Darrah, for Jack Sumner and William Hawkins had published strong accounts blaming Powell’s bad leadership, and river historians such as Robert Stanton and Dock Marston were ready to go along with them or to go even further in lowering Powell’s reputation; the worst interpretation was that Powell forced the men to leave, ordered them to their deaths. When Darrah received Hall’s letter, he wrote to Martha Stetson that he was “more than pleased with the information they give” because he could now prove his case that the fault lay in the river and the weakness of the three deserters, not in Powell: “Any lingering mystery as to the true reason has been completely solved.” Considering that Hall was offering only one sentence to stack up against the detailed testimony of Sumner and Hawkins, Darrah might be a bit over-eager in saying that the case was “completely solved.” He also told Stetson: “It is too bad that your daughter had her first introduction to the history of the Powell expedition by way of Stanton’s *Colorado River Controversies*. In the first place the book is the product of that debunking age in which authors took delight in belittling the accomplishments of famous people.”² Darrah had been conducting a lively correspondence with Dock Marston, who was fond of psychological theory and had proposed that the chair Powell rigged on his boat on his second expedition was a Freudian throne that proved Powell’s megalomania, an idea that exasperated Darrah. Now Darrah couldn’t resist writing Dock Marston that Hall’s letters “adds incontestable proof that the Howlands and Dunn left voluntarily because they refused to go further.”³ Marston answered that, no, Hall’s letters didn’t settle it: “Why did the three decide to quit at Separation after all those miles above them?”⁴ At the bottom of Marston’s letter Darrah noted: “Not answered. I’m through with his prejudice and blindness.” It was the end of their “friendship.”

Hall’s letter was now crucial to Darrah, but it also presented a problem. Hall’s letters were riddled with errors of format, spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. Hall looked like some kind of dummy. In truth he was no more illiterate than millions of American youths of the time, especially on the frontier, where schooling might not get much beyond basic reading, writing, and arithmetic, and where few jobs

required writing skills. But now Hall's feeble letter was supposed to discredit Oramel Howland, who as a newspaper printer had a good command of the English language and who wrote eloquent letters from the river. Now Hall's letter was supposed to vanquish Jack Sumner, whose lack of education did not stop him from telling vivid stories. Hall's writings conveyed little authority. Even Darrah's statement that Hall "seems to have had some knowledge of English literature" now seemed questionable. And indeed, there is no source for Darrah's claim that it was Hall who took the name "Lodore" from an English poem; no one on the expedition ever said it was Hall. Darrah seems to have invented this, and now his discovery of Hall's letters was calling his bluff.

Darrah's solution: he doctored Hall's letters to a major degree. In the Separation Rapid letter, which held 397 words, Darrah made about one hundred improvements. Hall's "perlos vorg" became Darrah's "perilous voyage." Hall's "me and bill Rhoads" became Darrah's "Bill Rhoads and I." Hall's "the made of the canion" became Darrah's "*The Maid of the Canyon*." Hall's "wrapped" or "rapped" became Darrah's "rapid." Hall's "the magor" became Darrah's "the Major." In the crucial sentence about Separation Rapid, Hall's "They was a frade to run it so they left us in abad place," became Darrah's "They were afraid to run it so they left us in a bad place."

Darrah did not change the meaning of Hall's words, but Hall's letter now read very smoothly, as if it were written by a smart, authoritative, fully trustworthy man. Darrah also doctored the first letter, from Green River. By some standards of scholarly editing, Darrah's changes might be acceptable, showing mercy and true meaning to readers with a limited patience for playing decoding games. Yet scholarly rules also require editors to disclose they are intervening and not presenting the original text. This was not Darrah's course. And Darrah had a big dilemma. The second letter, sent from the Uinta Agency, was now on file at Grand Canyon National Park, where other scholars could see it and compare it with Darrah's version, if he made changes to it. Darrah decided to publish the second letter as it was, packed with errors. It was sandwiched between his two doctored, literate letters. The discrepancy between the styles of the three letters wasn't hard to notice. Darrah did leave a few errors in his two doctored letters, changing "grene river" only into "Grene river." In his introduction to the letters Darrah then committed a bold falsehood, saying: "The original letters pay little heed to spelling or paragraphing. Nevertheless, so far as possible, they are here reproduced faithfully. Their simplicity, affection,

and impulsiveness would be destroyed by alteration."⁵

Darrah published these letters as an appendix to a 1949 special edition of the *Utah Historical Quarterly* devoted to documents from the second Powell expedition. He presented them with: "Here then is the final link in the chain of proof that the separation of the Howland brothers and Dunn was simple desertion—they refused to go farther."⁶ With his new information from the Hall family, Darrah was now able to correct Hall's age from 18 to 21 and to fill in more details about his origins and wandering life on the plains.

Darrah went back to work on his Powell biography, and when he introduced Andy Hall in it he left him a hell raiser but raised him quite a bit higher:

Too young to join the Union Army, Andy Hall left his home in Illinois to seek his fortune. For four years he roamed the plains, engaged in a dozen Indian skirmishes, and generally raised hell wherever he found it. He was in a sense a genius, full of fun, strong and daring. With judgment far beyond his years and with a humor that never failed him, Andy was the life of the party.⁷

Powell agreed that Hall was entertaining, but Darrah did not repeat the rest of what Powell said about Hall, which would not have enhanced Hall's credibility: "He can tell a good story, and is never encumbered by unnecessary scruples in giving his narratives those embellishments which help to make a story complete."⁸ When Darrah came to the events at Separation Rapid, which he discussed not in the text but in a long footnote, he declared: "The simple fact is they were afraid to go farther and deserted."⁹ He then quoted Andy Hall's letter as proof.

Darrah could have published a letter Hall wrote from Ehrenberg, Arizona, six months after the end of the expedition, which mentioned his motivations for going on it and his feelings about the results. In making his comments on Indians, Hall could have been thinking of the fate of the Howlands and Dunn:

Ehrenburg, arizona ter, March 6, 1870

Dear sis it is a long time sins I have herd frome home on acount of drifting about so much frome one place to another I have ben in seven or eight diferent teritorys and part of california i amnow on the collorado river that runs betweene irasona and california whare I think I will stop this sommer this is the hottest place i ever was

in snow is never knowne here I dont like this warme climate in the foul I will either come home or go to colorado and start a rencio my last years work has beene all throne away exploring this river i started with the intention of finding some god farming land and failed to find any there is some good land nere prescot and vegtebels and grane is very hy but the indians will not let the country git settled a man can not go out to the plow withought his gun and pistole with him and carful as they are theyre is always some one geting killed the country is so rough around there that the soldiers can't follow them I have no more newes at present if you get this leter write soon give my love to all yours truly from your wild nefue A Hall ¹⁰

Did Hall really go through the canyons of the Colorado River searching for good farmland? It was, of course, the Great Unknown, but Hall could have found plenty of good farmland back on the prairie he had left. It's more likely he was motivated by the same taste for adventure that had led to his years of wandering the West. Hall may have intended his words about farmland to reassure his family back in Illinois, where a respectable life consisted of farming; his family had opposed his heading west. Hall began many of his letters to home by reassuring his family that he was still alive. He seemed to miss his family, for several times he complained about how long it had been since he'd heard from them and urged them to write to him. In his Ehrenberg letter it does sound as if Hall was tired of going everywhere without getting anywhere and was feeling like planting some roots. We can wonder if Darrah skipped publishing this letter because someone who went through the Grand Canyon to find farmland might, once again, look like a dummy.

Who was Andy Hall and how did he come to be on the Powell expedition?

The first public record of Andy Hall, located by British historian Christopher Penn, is in the 1851 British census, which shows Mary Hall and her three children, Helen (whom the family often called Ellen), William, and Andrew. Andrew was born in Scotland in 1848, but his father soon died. Mary's brother, Henry Scott, had emigrated to America and taken part in the 1849 California gold rush but had decided there was better pay-dirt in the farmlands of Illinois. Henry was still a bachelor and invited Mary to join him and become his housekeeper. She emigrated in 1854, taking six weeks to sail across the Atlantic, and settled in a neighborhood

full of transplanted Scots in the town of Toulon, Illinois, in Stark County, only thirty miles from the town of Hennepin where John Wesley Powell would soon be teaching school. Andrew grew up hearing Henry's tales of the West, its amazing landscapes and adventures, and this may have planted the seeds of wanderlust and adventure in Andy. His niece Mamie Hall Laughlin told historian Darrah: "My father often told us children of Andy's love of adventure and of his fearless disposition."

¹¹ Among his schoolmates Andy soon got a reputation as a daredevil. "One day," explained Mamie Hall Laughlin, "a revolver he was holding was discharged accidentally and his hand was injured. Just as soon as the wound was attended to he was ready to get hold of the gun again."¹²

Curiously, the 1860 U.S. census seems to show Andrew Hall living in two places, in Toulon with his mother and also in the town of Wethersfield in next-door Henry County where he was living with Peter and Helen Inglis, both born in Scotland. Ingles was a farmer with three kids too young to help with the labor of running a farm, so perhaps Mary Hall rented out Andy as a farmhand, which also left one less mouth for her to feed. It's unknown if there was any family tie with Inglis, but the 1880 census shows a Peter Inglis living in Pawnee, Nebraska, the same town where Andy's brother William settled and farmed for most of his life. William's son Charles remained in Nebraska, and in 1938 he saw an article about Buzz Holmstrom rowing solo down the Colorado River; Charles wrote Holmstrom a letter, introducing himself as Andy Hall's nephew, and Holmstrom answered. One great grandson of William Hall was studying geography at Illinois State University (where Powell once taught) in 1969 and was invited to go on a raft trip through the Grand Canyon to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Powell's expedition, but this relative had lost touch with his family history and was not aware that he was related to a Powell crew member, and he did not go.

Farm work probably did not satisfy Andy's appetite for adventure. When the Civil War broke out, Andy's older brother William enlisted, "but Andy was refused," as niece Martha Stetson told Dock Marston, "as being too young which made him rather indignant, so to off set his disappointment and in spite of his family's objections he joined a wagon train that was headed west. He was only 16 at the time, but had already acquired the nick name of 'Dare Devil Dick.'"¹³

Andy wandered from place to place and from job to job, trapping, hunting, bull whacking, sheep herding, apprenticing with a Denver gunsmith, tended a store, and getting into fights with Indians, whom Hall commented would love to scalp his fourteen-inch-long hair. In October 1868 he wrote his mother that he

was at Green River, Wyoming, hauling wood for the railroad. In January 1869 he wrote his brother William that he was “in Denver waiting for a job,” and then he scolded William for misspelling Denver in a letter he’d written to Andy. The job in Denver must not have come through or lasted, for a few months later he was back in Green River, where Powell spotted him and signed him up.

Powell must have been impressed that Hall had already explored at least a bit of the Green River, at least by land. In one of his years in the Rockies, Hall had made winter camp at Brown’s Hole, a valley along the Green River and a longtime favorite camp for mountain men. Hall wrote two letters from Brown’s Hole, one to his brother and the other to his mother, though unfortunately neither letter has a date, so we don’t know which winter it was. To his brother he wrote:

I am now in winter quarters in the loveliest place in the rocy mountains it is what is called browns holes on greenriver Utah ter write close to the unty valley whare the unty Indians ar camped we have vennasn in abundance all the time I am getting fat for once in my life. I waied to day 150 lbs the heaviest I ever waied in my life.

O sweet is the vaill whare this river jently glides through the mountains so easy and free but sweeter by farr to my childhoodse joyes days is old spoon river to me

Spoon River is the pastoral river than ran close to Hall’s Illinois childhood home, and that later became famous in Edgar Lee Masters’s *Spoon River Anthology*. It’s a bit surprising that Darrah omitted mentioning that Andy Hall had spent a winter in a place that he saw again two weeks into the Powell expedition. In his river dairy at Brown’s Hole, Jack Sumner mentioned that Hall killed a few ducks at a lake near their camp, and it’s likely Hall knew about this opportunity because he had hunted there before.

Four months after his 1870 letter to home, Andy Hall was still in Ehrenberg, where the 1870 u.s. census listed him as being twenty years old and born in Scotland. In a letter to his mother he reported that he was not doing well financially. From an 1897 letter written by William H. Hardy we know that at some point Andy Hall came to him and got a job driving his stage from Hardyville to Prescott. By 1872 Hall had moved to Prescott and was running the Grey Eagle Stable, owned by Captain W. J. Ross, who had fought Indians under General Crook. A letter to his brother

makes clear that Hall was still caught up in Wild West dreams of wealth, this time a rumor of diamonds, and he said he would not come home to Illinois till he had made enough money to live on the rest of his days—he never did go home. He assured his brother that while he was no longer the quiet boy they had known, he did not drink or gamble. By 1875 Hall was back to driving, judging from a brief mention in the (Prescott) *Arizona Weekly Miner* on January 8, 1875: “Andrew Hall, driver of the Mohave county mail wagon, informs us that the Moss mill...is being hauled to the Sandy.” In the winter of 1875–76 he was a special constable in Tucson. In the spring of 1876 Hall moved to Florence, Arizona, where the 1880 census lists him as married to a 32-year-old lady named Francisca, who was born in Sonoma, Mexico. They had a son, Amota, age thirteen, and a daughter, Amilia, age four, both of whose parents are listed as being from Sonoma, so it seems Francisca had a previous husband. When Francisca died twenty years later, an article in the Florence *Arizona Blade*, on August 10, 1900, gave what little we know about her life:

Mrs. Francisca Santacruz, died Thursday, of dropsy. She was about fifty years of age and leaves a large family of children all of whom, except one, are married. She was the widow of Andy Hall, the Wells Fargo messenger, who was killed by the stage robbers, Hawley and Grimes, near Pioneer, fifteen years ago. She had one son by Hall, named Andy, who now resides in Florence. She was a good woman, and was highly esteemed by her people.

Powell historians were unaware that Andy Hall had a wife or son; this was pointed out to me by British researcher Christopher Penn. Penn also notes that the many newspaper articles about Andy Hall’s death in 1882 never mentioned him having a wife or son, so he wonders if their arrangement was informal or if they had parted ways by that time. The further life of Andy Hall’s son is unknown.

At some point Hall began working for Wells Fargo, as a messenger and guard in their freight route between Casa Grande and Globe. On the evening of March 18, 1879, Hall ate in a Chinese restaurant on the main street of Globe, walked out the back door, and was confronted by an angry dog. Hall tried to kick the dog away, but it continued lunging and snapping at him, so Hall pulled out his pistol and shot the dog. The dog belonged to the restaurant owner, a Chinese man named Fan Gee, who came out and found his dog dead and saw Hall heading away. Fan Gee went inside and

got his pistol and went searching for Hall. He found him in Klein's Store and angrily berated him for killing his dog, then lifted his gun towards Hall, whereupon Hall yelled "Don't you do it." Hall shot him, killing him. Hall walked down the street and went into Kerr's saloon, whose owner was a deputy sheriff, told him what had just happened, and surrendered his gun. The next day Hall came before the local justice of the peace, and when onlookers testified that Hall had acted in self-defense, he was released. But the county attorney and district judge decided that the justice of the peace had not handled the matter properly, since there was no attorney and no witnesses for the victim. Hall was arrested but let out on bail, and then on April 27 he came before a Grand Jury and was indicted for murder. He was let out on bail again. Hall's case remained in limbo, not going to trial, possibly because the creation of a new county was reshuffling the legal jurisdiction of the case. Hall still had not been tried when on August 20, 1882 he was guarding a Wells Fargo pack train with a \$5,000 gold shipment, which was attacked by robbers. He could have allowed them to get away, but he pursued them. If this was his taste for adventure at work again, it finally betrayed him. Hall was shot, eight times, and killed. He was 34. When his funeral procession wound its way through Globe, the man ringing the church bell was one of the three men who had committed the robbery and murder. They would soon be captured, and two would be lynched.

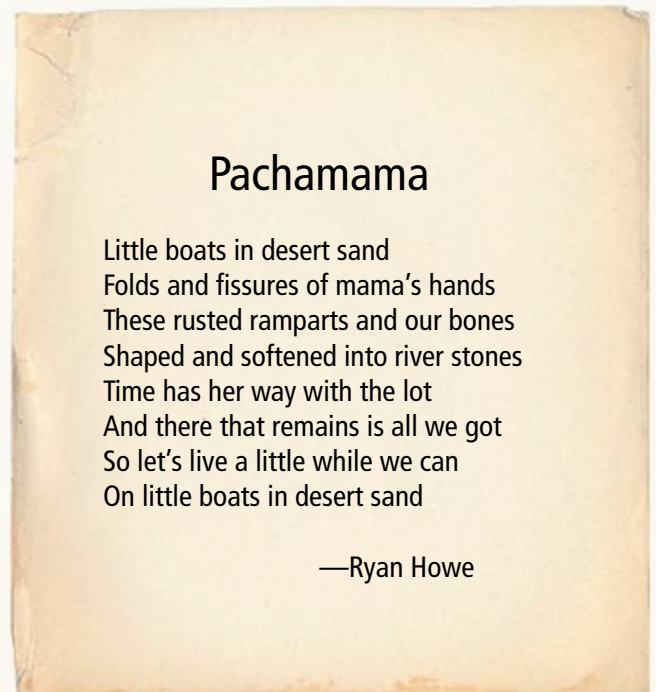
Hall has proven elusive even in death. According to more than one source, including the records of the Wells Fargo Company, which paid \$109.50 for his funeral, Hall was buried in the Globe cemetery, but several people, including myself, have searched the cemetery for his gravestone and not found it. The most extensive search was done by river guide Art Christiansen, who not only searched the cemetery thoroughly three times but looked through all the cemetery records from 1882 and later and found no mention of Hall. There should have been a gravestone: a few weeks after the funeral the local newspaper reported that deputy U.S. Marshall Gabriel, a friend of Andy Hall who had taken charge of the murder investigation, had pledged to donate his share of the reward to buying Hall a gravestone and a fence around his grave. But the cemetery does hold many old graves without markers, and many with wooden and stone markers so eroded they no longer hold any names. One Grand Canyon hiker, who needs to remain nameless, may have committed the most honorable of violations of the law against removing things from a national park when he climbed both Hawkins Butte and Hall Butte and took rocks from them to place on the graves

of William Hawkins and Andy Hall. The Hall stone is still waiting for its proper resting place.

Don Lago

FOOTNOTES:

1. William Culp Darrah, *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. xv, 1947, 107
2. William Culp Darrah to Martha Stetson, December 23, 1948. Darrah Collection, Utah State Historical Society (USHS)
3. William Culp Darrah to Otis Marston, June 17, 1949, Darrah Collection, USHS
4. Otis Marston to William Culp Darrah, July 7, 1949, Darrah Collection, USHS
5. Darrah, *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. xvi-xvii, 1948-1949, 506
6. *Ibid*, 506
7. William Culp Darrah, *Powell of the Colorado*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), 115
8. John Wesley Powell, *The Exploration of the Colorado River and Its Canyons* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1987), 123
9. *Ibid*, 141
10. Darrah Collection, USHS
11. Mamie Hall Laughlin to Darrah, Nov. 18, 1948, Darrah Collection, USHS
12. Mamie Hall Laughlin to Darrah, Nov. 26, 1948, Darrah Collection, USHS
13. Martha Stetson to Otis Marston, Nov. 14, 1960. Andy Hall File, Marston Collection, Huntington Library



GTS Library and Other Useful Resources

YOU MIGHT THINK of the Grand Canyon River Guides website, www.gcr.org as a great place to renew your membership, make a donation, buy cool stuff or sign up for events like the Fall Rendezvous, Guides Training Seminar, or our WFR re-certification classes. Of course, you can do all those important things, but you may not realize how incredibly useful our website can be. A few of the excellent resources you may not be aware of are:

GTS LIBRARY

Because ongoing education is necessary to keep guides at the top of their game, GCRG has been compiling detailed abstracts of Guides Training Seminar (GTS) talks into a “library” of sorts, categorized by topic. Topics range from archaeology to flora and fauna, geology, boating, human history, financial health, safety, astronomy, dam management and so much more!

We add to the list each year so always check back for new information. The GTS Library allows many of the excellent presentations from the Guides Training Seminar to have a useful life beyond the event. This wealth of information comes directly from the presenters themselves—NPS personnel, researchers, authors, tribal representatives, educators, and other experts. Fantastic learning, right at your fingertips!

BOATMAN’S QUARTERLY REVIEW

The BQR page of the GCRG website includes many of the past BQR issues which are available for download. So many gems! We’ll be working on posting more, so please check back. The BQR submission guidelines are available on our website as well.

CURRENT DAM OPERATIONS

If you are curious about the flows from Glen Canyon Dam, the most recent dam flow report from the Bureau of Reclamation is always posted on the GCRG website.

GUIDE-OWNED BUSINESSES

River guides are incredibly creative and industrious folk, and their interests and talents are wide-ranging. In fact, many current and former river guides have their own businesses that deserve your support and patronage, some river-related, and others not. You can get your teeth cleaned, buy some great books or beautiful artwork, outfit yourself for a river trip or plan a scuba expedition in the Maldives—all through

businesses owned by guides! Many of those businesses also give discounts to members of GCRG. Sounds great, right? And that’s just the tip of the iceberg. Check out the ever-growing list on our GCRG website and steer your business their way!

FIRST AID CLASSES

Most guides know that they can sign up for GCRG’s WFR recert on our website. However, if that timing doesn’t work for you, we try to make your life easier by providing links for a whole slew of excellent first aid providers as well as a list of classes in the Flagstaff area, so you can find something that suits your needs.

Mile 225

On the 21st day
after 225 miles
we arrive at the red balls,
the most unwelcome of notifications
that our time is up
Before, we could pretend
that the idyll might never end
but no, now the take-out
is just around the bend

What’s real?
What’s unreal?
The world that will reclaim us is certainly the latter
as now we prepare to leave the real world
the world of the Canyon
to which we have escaped for 21 days

We fled from a crazy place
a place of too many people and too much stuff
of all-consuming greed
a place where killing is commonplace
and nature is not safe
as we turn our only home
into a garbage dump

Go if you can
go to the Grand Canyon
and get its good tidings

—Steve Miller

André Potochnik

I WAS BORN AND RAISED in Northern California, Modesto. I was raised by parents who were very politically active in the sixties, and a tumultuous time for a young fella, hearing all the problems of the world, ranging from Cold War and imminent bombing, to Vietnam, to assassinations of political figures. I didn't know when I got out of high school if I was going to have a life after that, because the world didn't look very happy in those days, and I didn't want to go to college right away, even though I'd been college prepped in high school. I was disillusioned with a lot of things, "Well, what do I really like to do more than anything?" I thought, "Ski! I'm just going to go skiing." I did take a semester of junior college. It didn't inspire me too much to want to stay in college, except that one of my courses was geology, taught by a young professor, a really enthusiastic fella named Charlie Love, the son of David Love, the famous "Mr. Geology" of Wyoming. It was such a fun course I almost stayed in college at that point, just to study geology. I went to the mountains and lived at a ski resort in the middle of the winter, made a whole bunch of new friends, and had a great time skiing, working in restaurants.

* * *

André "Dr. Dray" Potochnik—boatman, geologist, PhD teacher, student, educator, scientist, Adaptive Management representative, 7TH GCRG president (1997–1998), dory aficionado, storyteller. You'll hear a lot about many of these aspects of André in this condensed version of extensive interviews that I conducted at his home in Flagstaff, May 2017. Like many Grand Canyon boatmen and arm-waving geologists, André is never at a lack for words. We tried to keep the highlights of the story telling, but so much more is left in the full transcript, which, along with the audio, will be archived with many of the river runner oral histories at NAU Cline Library Special Collections. There you'll find extensive details of his graduate work regarding Salt River and Grand Canyon geology, along with post-doctorate ideas tying them together, and his tireless efforts representing the river community and GCRG with the Grand Canyon Protection Act, Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management, and the Colorado River Management Plan. And don't forget geo-archaeological research, extensive studies and teaching, and life-changing emotional events on the river. I enjoyed reading all these stories over and over as I edited, as much as I enjoyed finally sharing a dory river trip with

André last fall. You never quite know what you're going to share, such as the rock fall in camp at Fern Glen, which is part of the beauty and mystique of Grand Canyon.

—RICHARD QUARTAROLI

* * *

It was in Bear Valley that I met and got to be friends with Curt Chang, and Curt cooked in a restaurant—one of the two restaurants in town—and I cooked at the other one. We would cook in the evenings, and then wouldn't have to cook in the morning, so we'd bust out with the powder horns and go with the patrol and get first tracks all throughout the week. I had no idea at that time that Curt was one of Martin Litton's original boatmen, lived down the street from Martin, and Martin talked him into learning how to row a dory in the Grand Canyon. I started doing other fun things like hiking and backpacking and living in the hills with some friends and built cabins in the woods, and did that whole back-to-the-land thing. I did that a couple of summers, and then I come back in the fall and Curt says, "Come on over, we're having a potluck at my house. We're going to show some slides of Grand Canyon." He shows all these slides of the Grand Canyon and dories going on the Colorado River, and I am just blown away. I had never really been in the Southwest before. I knew nothing about river running. I said, "Gosh, Curt, I didn't know you did that." He said, "Oh, yeah. You can do it, too." I said, "Well, I don't know how to row." He said, "I'll have to show you how. It's not that hard. Why don't you come out next summer, and you can learn how." I didn't have anything else to do in the summer particularly, after the ski season was over. I thought, "Well sure!"

That next summer, Curt took myself and several other of our close friends in Bear Valley—Mike Davis, Jane Whalen, Stevie Dalton, and Tom Rambo, Tom Gallagher—down the Stanislaus River—wonderful river run, a day trip, or you could do it in two; we did it in one. "Wow, this is really fun, bouncing down a river in a little raft. This is great!" He said, "Well, write Martin a letter if you want to do this, and we'll see if we can get you on." I scribbled a letter out on one sheet of paper: "Dear Martin Litton, you don't know me, but I'm a friend of Curt Chang's, and I understand you need boatmen. I don't know anything about rowing, but I would sure love to learn to do that." Just one of these straight-up letters, nothing formal about

it. Martin asked Curt about me, and he said, “Yeah, bring him on out.” I came out with several other friends from Bear Valley that next spring.

We went to do an exploratory trip with Martin and Esther and all his Grand Canyon boatmen on the Hell’s Canyon of the Snake River, spring of 1973. Martin wanted to expand his operation from Grand Canyon up into Idaho, with the idea of eventually doing the Salmon and others. The idea was that Curt was going to become the operation manager, and he still is today. That’s where I really got a sense of a multi-day river trip—five, six days—camping out and cooking food as a group. It was my first multi-day river trip, only my second river trip ever, and it was just exciting as all get-out. I just loved it. I loved being in nature, I loved skiing and hiking, and that part of me was already attuned to this whole thing. Of course a young man, 22 years-old, enjoyed the physical challenge of it. Martin had just expanded his dory operation the previous summer, from a very small operation of just a few trips a year to *twelve* trips a year in 1972. That was the year the Park Service put regulations on how many people could go down with any given outfitter.

Martin had two crews of boatmen in the Grand Canyon. The idea was that myself and a couple of other friends would be trained with the Grand Canyon boatmen, and then we would be transferred to help Curt start the Idaho operation. I went on the river in Grand Canyon in May of 1973 as an apprentice. We had a little raft, that went along with the dories that hauled the apprentices and a few bags—an old Green River raft, 15-footer. Because the trips weren’t always filled by passengers, we apprentices could ride on the dories and be trained by the dory boatmen—tutored at the oars—starting, of course, with simple maneuvers, then more complex maneuvers, eventually learning how to read water, and then navigating the rapids. Mark Johnson, Moki, was one of them. After three apprentice trips in a row in the Grand Canyon, I was just *so* taken by the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River and these beautiful little dory boats. I wanted to stay and work *there*. I didn’t want to go to Idaho. The Southwest had captured my imagination and my heart. After the third apprentice trip they said, “Off to Idaho with you!” I told Tuck Weills, our manager, “I really don’t want to go to Idaho, I want to stay in Grand Canyon,” and he said, “Well, I don’t have any slots for you in the Grand Canyon. The last trip of the season, one of the regular boatmen might be leaving early; if that happens, I’ll let you know.” I didn’t go to Idaho with the rest of the guys. I did some hitchhiking around that summer. I actually did

a river trip. Prescott College called the warehouse, “Do you have anybody who can teach college students how to row?” They said, “Oh, yeah, this André guy, he’s hanging around, he’s got nothing to do.” “Sure I’ll do that!” We went up to Cataract Canyon, and that’s where I first met Brad Dimock. He was a Prescott College student, and he was one of those students that I was supposed to teach how to row. You know how Brad is, he pretty much can figure out anything himself. We had a great river trip in Cataract. I was 22 years-old, so Brad would have been college age.

We came off that Prescott trip, I called the warehouse, “Yup, André, it looks like that slot’s going to be open on the last trip of the season, and you can have it.” The end of my first summer ever rowing a boat, I was a dory boatman. It’s unheard of today that someone could rise through the ranks that quickly. But I got fortunate with getting my foot in the door on that last trip of the season. September ’73, and I was assigned my first dory, and in my first rapid I promptly crashed the crap out of it. *Moki Steps*, an aluminum dory. I missed the tongue in Badger, got swept over that big hole on the right entry, and proceeded—it was low water—to pinball down the right side, but came out okay. But that was the worst run of the trip for me. After that, I did real well, I didn’t hit any more rocks, didn’t flip the boat, got it all the way through fine, and came out of there with good commendations from the crew. I was set to *possibly*, if the openings would occur, continue on the next season in Grand Canyon.

I got to be a dory boatman the next summer in the aluminum *Ootsa Lake*. By then previous boatmen had begun to filter away, and I got to be one of the regulars. I think my third or maybe my fourth season I got my first wooden boat. The dories were all these thin plywood boats, they weren’t fiberglassed—very fragile, like little floating eggshells full of a *huge* amount of weight, and you’re hurtling through these rapids. You even tick a rock, and it would shatter the boat. But to get my “wood rating,” as they used to say, was quite an achievement. I was really proud that I didn’t have to row an aluminum boat any more. I got *assigned* a boat, the *Flaming Gorge*; back in those early years, that’s how you did it. If you became a regular boatman, you got assigned a boat. Martin owned all the boats, but it became, “your” boat, and *you* took care of *your* boat. If *you* broke it, *you* fixed it. And you didn’t get paid to fix it. There was an impetus not to break boats. We loved the boats so much we didn’t want to break them; there was a very steep learning curve in those first few years about how to get one of these craft through the Grand Canyon in one piece and right side up. It was what I like to call the School of Hard Knocks. We didn’t have

the benefit of a legacy of boatmen before us who could train or teach us the ropes. We were teaching each other, and learning from our own experiences. It was a *very* exciting time, really challenging.

That first trip I did in September was the first time any of the boatmen had seen low water. They'd always run on 20,000 or 25,000 cfs all summer long. They had never seen 5,000, 7,000, and that's what we had on that trip. I remember just how bony the rapids were, and how much consternation that created. Back then, an "old-timer" had one previous year of experience. That's how much legacy there was in the boatman community. There wasn't much at all—maybe two years. It was really the very beginnings of the knowledge base that we have today, which is really quite extensive when you look at the collective knowledge of what we've learned, and *continue* to learn, about how to get a dory through the Grand Canyon safely.

* * *

In 1979, I was leading the trip. We get to Crystal, a really difficult rapid. We used to run the dories along the right shore. You have this dance where you can't get *too* close to shore because of the shallow rocks, the most technical run we've ever had. Break in at the top,

big lateral feeding out into the middle, and then play that shoreline current, and do rock-dodging, hit little slots, and turn the boat and spin it and drop through. A real experienced crew: Regan Dale, Mike Davis, Cam Staveley, and Cliff Taylor. This is the worst we've ever seen it. The feeder lateral was *huge*. "Let's have lunch, and then maybe the water will change enough, and it'll get better." It didn't. I said, "How about if I take the raft through first as a trial run, and Regan and Mike ride with me and then we can all see the line better." I ran it through and we made it, dropped into Ego Beach.

We would do two groups of dories, and we'd ride with each other. Martin didn't let us take people through Crystal, and wisely so. We'd high-side for each other. I'd make it, Regan makes it. We're tucked in at Ego Beach, and here comes Mike; he *doesn't* make it and flips in the hole we called Milt's Stop 'n' Eat, a big reversal offshore, real steep. He flips right-side up again. He and Cam are swimming. His boat is screamin' straight for that first big rock in the Rock Garden we used to call Big Pink, full brunt of the current going right into it. Mike's hanging on the downstream side; he's about to get pinched. He pulls himself up over the gunnel into the boat just before the boat hits Big Pink, smashes the dory open—this is a wooden dory. Mike stays on the boat, and he goes



Fern Glen Camp, boatmen discuss upcoming run through Lava Falls. L to R: Eric Sjoden, Andre, Roger Dale, Vince Welch, Wally Rist, John Jaqua, Regan Dale, Frank Starling, Bruce Simballa, 1982.

rolling off down through the Rock Garden, hitting more rocks. His shorts were down around his ankles—that was pretty funny. But it was scary as hell. Comes out at the bottom. Regan and I go chasing off down to help, get him in at Thank God Eddy, and his boat's sinking. He's pulling stuff out of his hatches. The one bad hatch has a big hole in it. We were over there helping him stuff bags into that hatch, to displace the water so he wouldn't sink in the eddy, and got him up against the shore and stabilized.

Then Cam and I hiked all the way back—it's a long walk, difficult walk, over fins of schist for half a mile. "Cam, how are you doing?" He says, "Man, I am whupped. That was a tough swim." "Cam, I'm still feeling pretty good. Do you want me to row your boat for you?" So he high-sided for me, I rowed his boat. That was my *third* time through. I pull his boat in at Ego Beach, go back up, and Cliff needs a high-sider, so I go with him. That was my fourth run through. He missed the run totally, straight down The Highway and left of the Rock Garden, but we made it.

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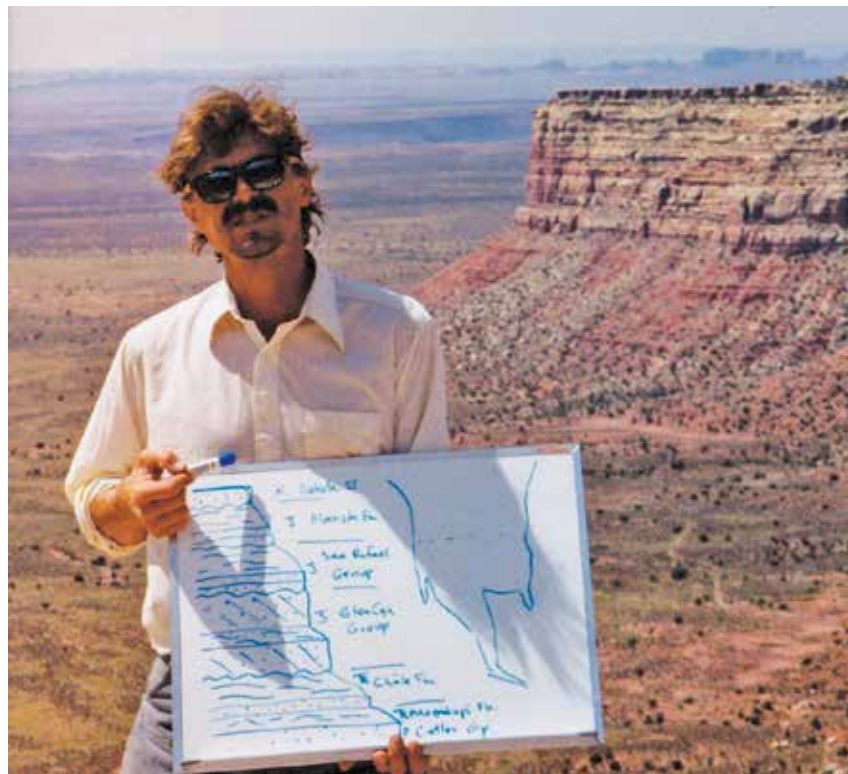
On one of those early trips I met a geologist named Max Crittenden, and his lovely wife Mabel, a botanist. I was really interested in not just learning how to row a dory and camp in the Grand Canyon, but in the Canyon itself. I picked up as much information as I could from books and guides and other people. A lot of the information I got early on was from passengers who had expertise in various fields. I would hang out with Max and Mabel. We'd go hiking together, and I'd ask questions, and they'd show me things. They kept coming back and we got to be very close friends. They inspired me to go back to college. I'd been a dory boatman now four years [it's 1976], and I reached a point where I was getting pretty good at what I was doing on the river—quite competent. I thought, "Maybe I should go to college"—still loving the river so much.

1977 with junior college and then '78-'79 I went to Columbia College in the Sierra Foothills; then did my upper division work at Sonoma State University. I thought, "*That's* what I'm going to be, is a geologist." New career, because I wanted to do something other than just be a boatman—not to say that being a boatman wasn't really satisfying—it was when you had the adulation and the admiration of all the passengers for getting them through this great Grand Canyon. It really felt like you were somebody and important. But I found that in the wintertimes, like I think a lot of boatmen do, if they don't have something else

going on, no one recognizes you for what you do in the outside world. They just can't relate to it. You get no social feedback that says what you're doing is a cool thing. That wore on me, and I got my bachelor's degree in geology. I thought, "I've got myself a good girlfriend, I went to work as a geologist, and I quit the river." 1983, of all things. (both chuckle) I didn't see the '83 season in the Grand Canyon, but had some great adventures from 1973 up through 1982.

I got a job working for Union 76, the biggest developer of geothermal electrical energy generated from heat from the earth. Doing exploration work in Southern California, in the Imperial Valley, I did a summer season there, hotter than blazes. Geochemistry work on natural springs—things called mud volcanoes. I supervised a drilling rig, where we punched a whole bunch of holes to figure out where the geothermal gradient was the highest. There's a magma chamber that heats the groundwater at relatively shallow crustal depths, and that hot water comes up close enough to be drilled. I was looking for another hot spot for them to drill. Oh, God, it was a cooker. 120 degrees. It was sticky hot.

During that time I thought, "I really want to keep studying geology. I wonder if I could go to graduate school. Maybe I could get a master's degree." I got in at the University of Arizona, and that's when I moved



Muley Point, teaching Colorado Plateau stratigraphy to NAU students, 1991. Photo credit Ernie Cisneros.

to Tucson with my girlfriend—we both went to the graduate program in the Geosciences Department. Once again I was off into geology and college work, and not doing much in the river community. I'd do one or two trips a summer in the Grand Canyon, dory trips, just keeping my finger in the pie.

* * *

My master's topic was using deposits from ancient river systems, trying to figure out when the rivers switched direction from going to the northeast on the southern Colorado Plateau boundary, to the southwest, as they do today. There had clearly been a drainage reversal, but we had very little fragmentary evidence for *when* this drainage reversal occurred, what caused it, how long did it take, and what was the nature of the stream systems that were involved. I saw an opportunity in east-central Arizona, right on the southern Plateau boundary, on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. There were all these outcrops that had been mapped of ancient river deposits, but nobody had ever really studied them in detail, from a sedimentological point of view. I had to find outcrops in that thickly-forested country where I could actually see the deposits—not easy to do. That's probably why it had never been studied before: very difficult access, the Apache is a very tight, restricted tribe; they don't let people just wander around out there willy-nilly, they've got a very good police system

and backcountry patrol system, and it's a very big reservation. My first attempt was rejected by the tribal council. I had already done prelim work and I was really disappointed. I came back the next year and made a connection with their attorney in Washington, and got *his* blessing, and with *his* blessing I got the tribal council's blessing. What was cool about the Apaches, once they decided I was in, I was *in*. "Okay, now you're working for *us*." They loaded me with maps, they gave me an overflight of the reservation to map where outcrops were. They gave me free license to go anywhere on the reservation. I drove this old '55 Chevy pickup, and all the patrolmen knew who I was; they would see me out there camped somewhere and didn't even bother me. That was really a blessing, because I had to go a lot of places and do a lot of backcountry work on roads mostly, and hiking, to get to these outcrops. I pieced together a really good story, named a new rock formation called the Mogollon Rim Formation, that describes an ancient river alluvial plain depositional system that flowed northeastward toward the Colorado Plateau from the Central Arizona Highland Province. Since that time, the ancient mountain range, the Ancestral Mogollon Highland, has structurally collapsed, and become the lowland that it is today, the low deserts of Central Arizona. I published my master's thesis, which is something that broke new ground in the geologic community and I was very proud of.

I got a job in Houston working for British



Hite takeout at Lake Powell, Prescott College J.W. Powell course after 45 days on the river, 1992

Petroleum, for a summer internship looking for oil in East Texas. I spent the summer in Houston at the top of a thirteen-story skyscraper inside of a windowless room, doing geology on the subsurface of East Texas, which was the antithesis of the geology that I had grown up with in the Grand Canyon [where] you could see everything. I'm working on well log data in East Texas, trying to figure out how to milk more oil out of an old oil field. It was a very different geology, and I wore a suit and tie every day to work. It was so far removed from my lifestyle as a boatman that you couldn't have asked for a greater change.

There was a teaching job at Yavapai Junior College that was a semester leave replacement position. I thought, "Well, I wonder if I could teach for a semester. It's something to do anyway, to make some money." I found I really enjoyed it a lot—classroom teaching. Nearing the end of that job in the fall, I get a call from an old professor friend of mine at NAU, Dale Nations, "André, how'd you like to come up here and teach? We need somebody to teach some undergraduate classes this winter." Going back up to Flagstaff where all the boating community is, and teaching at NAU, geology! I moved to Flagstaff, and I went out to dinner with Brad and a couple of friends. I said, "I'm coming up here to teach, I don't have a place to stay. You guys have any ideas?" Brad says, "You can come live at my house." Brad had built the famous Pole House. He would go away to Chile those winters, run the Bio Bio, so I got to be around there a lot, making sure the house was okay, and teach at NAU. I could go back to running rivers in the summer, being a dory boatman again in 1990.

Martin sold his company in 1987. That was a big transition period for the company. Martin Litton's operation in Hurricane was shifted over to Flagstaff. It was a big change because Martin had built the size of the company tremendously, such that there were three dory trips running simultaneously, with six or seven dories on every trip. He had a lot of dories, he had a lot of boatmen, full swing operation, while I was in graduate school. When George Wendt bought the company, Martin only sold him half of the user days, which basically meant that a whole bunch of dory boatmen were out of business. So, relatively few dory trips now. A lot of the boatmen went away to other work. I was coming back at that time. I was running three trips a summer of the academic year. That work



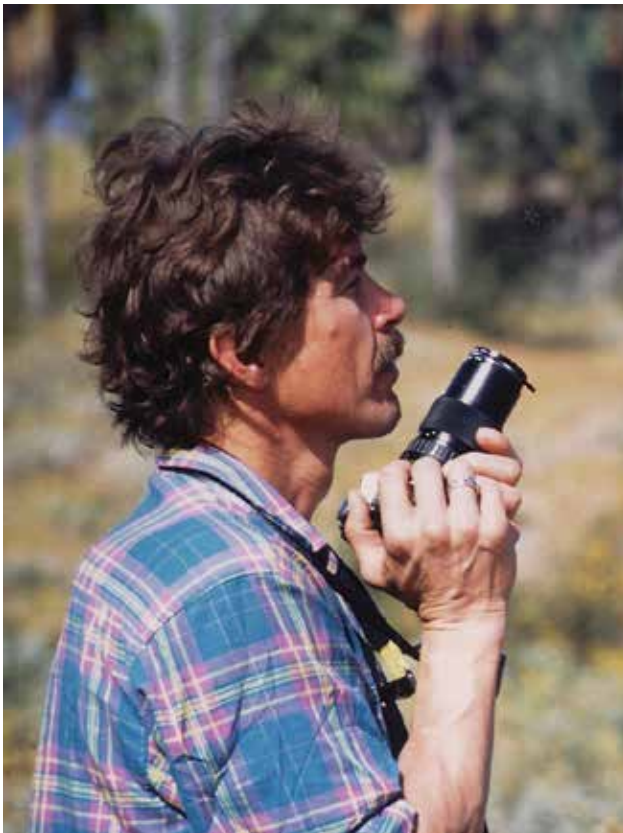
Yavapai College, Andre teaches first geology course, 1989.

was great in the early-90s, until the job ran out at NAU.

At that time, Prescott College called me, "We're going to run this college course, and it's going to be a John Wesley Powell reenactment trip. Would you teach it?" At that time I was with Christa Sadler. She and I were both really interested in doing a course like this, a Colorado River oriented course. Fall of '92, we launched October 8TH at the base of Flaming George Dam, and went all the way to the head of Lake Powell at Hite. That was 45 days to Hite, did the Grand Canyon trip for 28 days. We got a tour of the dam, went through the insides, into the control room. You can't get *near* the control room today. We went down the Grand Canyon and did that trip, finished it December 31ST, generally had pretty good weather. It was really a great course and the students were fantastic.

* * *

Meanwhile, I had gotten an offer to go back and do my PHD. There were a lot of unanswered questions on my master's thesis about the reversal of the drainage. I had pretty well established what the ancient rivers that flowed to the northeast looked like, and where they were coming from, and why, but I didn't know when the river switched direction, and how did that occur. I'd since discovered an outcrop of rocks that actually represented the switch of the river direction. There's



Cabo San Lucas, Baja California, taking photos, 1991.
Photo credit Christa Sadler.

this whole section of Salt River Canyon region that has this unexplored, undefined, ancient river gravel unit that tells the story of the reversal. I've got the knowledge now of where to go look to describe the rest of the story of how the river switched back the opposite way to become the modern-day Salt River. The Wilderness Section of the Salt River has contained within it the story of the reversal of the drainage and how it came to be the modern-day Salt.

People are fascinated when you tell them that the river switched direction. They immediately imagine, because most people don't think in terms of geologic time, how *long* things take geologically. It wasn't like you went to bed one night and the river was flowing one direction, you wake up the next morning and it's flowing the *other* direction. It took millions of years for the river to switch direction. The typical question people ask me then is, "What caused it?" The short answer is that the plate tectonic situation changed along the coast of California, and changed the stresses in the Earth's crust. There was a tectonic reversal that induced rivers to want to flow in the direction the modern-day Colorado River flows, which is into the Pacific Ocean. Previously, these ancient rivers had flowed into the Atlantic Ocean. The continental

divide shifted eastward from California over to where it is today at the crest of the Rockies, and everything flexed downward to the southwest, and the modern tributaries of the Colorado River began to coalesce to form the modern Colorado River. The Salt River was an important part of that switch. Fortuitously, the deposits that record that reversal are still preserved in the Wilderness Section of the Salt River.

The problem with Grand Canyon has always been that the deposits aren't there anymore that would tell you the story of the reversal. We've got deposits that tell us that there was an ancient river system flowing to the northeast in the Grand Canyon vicinity, and we don't know what that ancient river did in terms of canyon-cutting. This is something that frustrated me as a young boatman before I went back to college. I'd ask geologists like Max Crittenden, "Well, Max, how old is the Grand Canyon?" "We don't know." "Max! You're a professional geologist, you work for the U.S. Geological Survey, you're eminent in your field, you're one of the most famous geologists of the West, and you can't tell me how old the Grand Canyon is?!" "Nope." That was one of the things that gave me the impetus to want to figure that out. Because if the geologists can't tell you how old it is, and this is the most storied, studied place on Earth, geologically speaking—I didn't think that spoke well for geology. I thought, "Well, how can we know that? There's nothing in the Grand Canyon to study to tell us that." That was when it dawned on me, the answer to that question has to be in the broader context *around* Grand Canyon. So the idea of studying an outlying region—the Salt River, in my case—became my method of getting to the riddle of Grand Canyon and its age and how the Colorado River came to be through that canyon.

That's when it occurred to me, "If a bedrock canyon could have been carved by a river going the opposite direction here in the Salt River, toward the Colorado Plateau, then why not in Grand Canyon?" Maybe the Grand Canyon origin can be explained by an ancestral river going the other way. This became an idea that was profound, and I first began giving talks about this in the symposium on the origin of the Colorado River that we did in 2000, at the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. That's where I gave the talk that if it happened in the Salt River Canyon, it may have happened in the Grand Canyon as well, therefore, because the two settings are very similar from a geographic point of view. I knew that I probably didn't have the clout to really get very far with my idea initially because I wasn't well-known in the geologic research community.

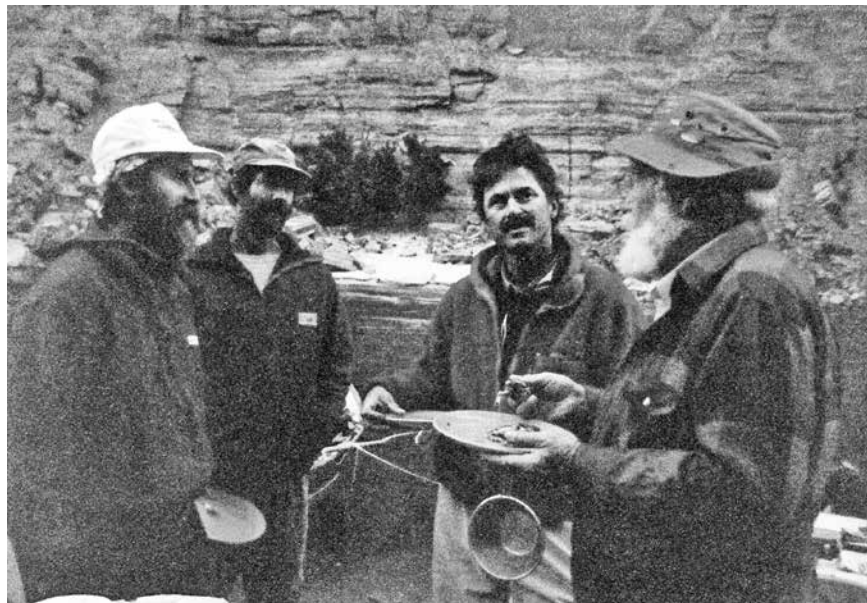
Meanwhile this resurgence of interest in the origin of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River occurred with the symposium. I met Becky Flowers, who was just finishing a PhD, and she was studying the uplift of the Colorado Plateau. She was using a new technique. They got around the problem of studying uplifts—uplift means erosion, and erosion means loss of evidence. Geologists, in order to study the timing of uplift, have always resorted to the erosional products of the uplift to explain the age of the uplift by inference. With this new technique, you can study the chemical nature of rocks in a particular mineral called apatite that's in almost all rocks. That is to say, the timing of uplift itself, directly *from* the ancient uplift. This was a revolutionary new idea. Dr. Flowers did a comprehensive study all the way across the Southern Plateau. She writes a paper that basically says, "The Grand Canyon, my evidence shows, and the geologic evidence of other workers—i.e., André Potochnik and Dick Young—that the Western Grand Canyon may be as old as 74 million years," which at that time everybody was thinking it was *six* million years. So the idea of an ancient Grand Canyon really made a big splash with their paper, with Flowers and others' paper in 2008. At least now we can talk about it, we can talk about evidence for it, and it's not some crackpot idea that I'm putting forward. Is the canyon old or is it young? It's stretched the realm of thinking of geologists about what is possible. Now the idea that a predecessor canyon, formed by another river going the other way, could have been partly responsible for the origin of the Grand Canyon, was a new idea that was now out on the table.

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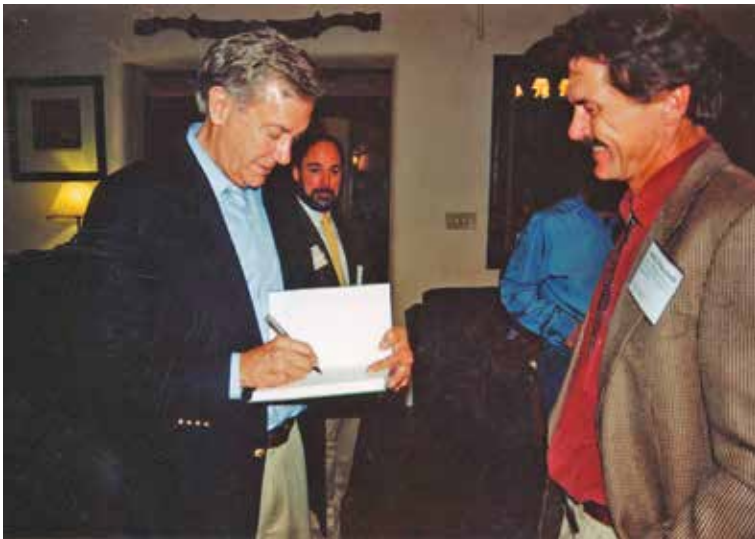
When I moved to Flagstaff in January of 1990, Brad Dimock took me in, and I lived at his house, rented a room, and got to know Brad again, because it'd been some years I hadn't seen him, and other members of the river community. All the original meetings for Grand Canyon River Guides Board of Directors were held at the Pole House. I was already at the meeting! 1991, '92, and '93 was the time when the Environmental Impact Statement and the studies of Glen Canyon Dam were really concentrated. The Phase I Glen Canyon

Environmental Studies were inconclusive because the studies were dealing with a period of high-water years in the '80s where they couldn't *see* the beaches, because the water was too high. They decided that they needed to do a Phase II, because now the water was dropped down, the beaches were available, we could study the ecosystem more easily. Phase II was initiated by the Bureau of Reclamation. At that same time, the newly-formed Grand Canyon Trust was pushing this idea of an act of Congress that would protect the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon, the Grand Canyon Protection Act. Tom Moody was very involved in it, was president of Grand Canyon River Guides at that time. He really got the organization functionally operating, and got a lot more people involved.

The environmental issue with Glen Canyon Dam had become really a big deal—a lot because the river community had been making a lot of noise [with] the Bureau of Reclamation during the Phase I studies, that the beaches were eroding in the Grand Canyon. The cry went out into the broader D.C. Beltway community of environmentalists that, "we've got to do something about Glen Canyon Dam damaging the downstream environment in Grand Canyon." The Grand Canyon Trust, being the local nonprofit advocacy group for the plateau in general, took it on and got this act of Congress drafted. The first time that they tried in 1990-'91, it didn't go through. One day at a board meeting Tom Moody said, "The Grand Canyon Protection Act is being put before the Senate subcommittee one more time to see if we can get it through Congress. I was supposed to go, but I can't.



Regan Dale, Tom Moody, Andre, Martin Litton on the river discussing results of the first (1996) artificial flood from Glen Canyon Dam, 1996.



Bishops Lodge, Santa Fe, NM. Bruce Babbitt signs his book "Cities in the Desert," Water Education Foundation Colorado River Symposium, 2005.

Would you be willing to join this group of lobbyists from these other environmental organizations and represent Grand Canyon River Guides, and lobby in D.C. for the Grand Canyon Protection Act?" This was the fall of 1991. "Well, I've never done *that* before, but sure. Why not?" I dusted off my nice clothes that I'd put away from my time at the oil company, put my tie on, and flew with Rob Smith from the Sierra Club, southwest director of the Sierra Club; representatives from America Outdoors; Rob Elliott. The fellow from the Environmental Defense Fund, very important because he had the data that we needed about power generation and that sort of thing that we could argue with the hydropower people. We went around to the offices of Representative George Miller's, Senator Jeff Bingamon, and Senator John McCain, and we talked with their staff that dealt with environmental issues, and talked to them about why this needed to go through, and why we needed the support of their senator or congressman. We did that lobbying for about a week and the culmination was the Senate subcommittee hearing on the bill. Rob Elliott gave our prepared common speech from the environmental community. I remember rubbing shoulders with all the basin state people, and the hydropower people were all standing in the hall of Congress—these guys are professionals, I'm just a boatman, right? It was a pretty interesting experience.

Before I left on that junket to Washington, I went over to Glen Canyon Environmental Studies and I said to Dave Wegner, "Do you have any photographs of eroding beaches that I could take with me, because I need to be able to show them something when I go there?" He pulled out these eight-by-ten black-and-

white photographs of eroding beaches [Jack Schmidt's work], with dates on them, and it showed clear cutting away of a cut bank. I had one chance to bring those out, and it was to the environmental assistant to New Mexico Senator Bingamon. She said, "You're a boatman in the Grand Canyon? Are the beaches *really* eroding in the Grand Canyon? Because in the Beltway they really don't know. They're in an insulated environment." I said, "Oh, yes they are! I've been a boatman in the Grand Canyon for twenty years, and look what's happening," and I bring out the photos and she looks at them. She convinced Bingamon to go to bat for the bill. Congress passed it, and it was called the Grand Canyon Protection Act of 1992. It was the first act of Congress ever passed that became a part of the Law

of the River that actually had to do with mitigating environmental issues with regard to the Colorado River, to my knowledge anyway. The critical language in the Protection Act was "the Secretary of the Interior shall operate Glen Canyon Dam in such a manner as to mitigate adverse impacts to and improve the values for which Grand Canyon National Park was created." That became the central language that drove the beginning of the Adaptive Management program of Glen Canyon Dam.

It also stipulated that there would be an EIS on the dam, which had never been done before *post facto*, after a project had been built. It was a big deal, and it was recognized at the completion of the EIS in 1996, when the Record of Decision was signed by Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior, that we don't know it all yet, and this is a changing environment, and there's still a lot more to learn about the impacts of the dam on the ecosystem. We need a long-term monitoring program of some sort to know how to make future adjustments to the dam. This had actually been written in as part of the Grand Canyon Protection Act. The idea of adaptive management is you bring all the stakeholders into the same room and you get them talking to one another. You make sure whatever you study are the things people care about being studied, and that you utilize the best available scientific information, because that reduces the amount of arguments that go on with regard to the management decisions. If all are operating with the same reliable information base, you all stand a chance of at least coming to some consensus about how to make recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, who is the ultimate operator of the dam.

The Federal Advisory Committee Act established the Adaptive Management Work Group. They selected Grand Canyon River Guides as one of the recreational nongovernmental members. They asked me if I'd do it. I'd already been on that lobbying junket. Tom Moody and I both worked hand-in-hand on this. Tom was very much involved. He became the representative for Grand Canyon Trust at that time and I became the representative for Grand Canyon River Guides. The very beginning was one of the craziest times because the management of the dam was going from this top-down, strict control by Reclamation to all these people, 25 people, from all these different diverse constituencies that are somehow going to have to figure out what to do with this dam, and how it's operated, to satisfy the Grand Canyon Protection Act. It was a very uncertain time.

I remember going to the last meeting that was convened by Reclamation on the Glen Canyon Environmental Studies, and the Record of Decision had been written and ready to be signed. Rick Gold was a head of Reclamation at that time. We weren't part of the committee, we just were interested groups that would come to meetings of the environmental studies as public interests. One of us from the group raised our hand, "Well, Mr. Gold, when does the Adaptive Management start?" "I guess this is it," because he was old school, and he was used to being in charge, and what he said went, because he was western

regional director of the Bureau of Reclamation. He was saying, "It's all of us now, the whole diverse set of constituencies, and it's going to be the Adaptive Management program."

When the program first started, we didn't know what we were doing, we didn't know what we were going to study, or what needed to be done. A lot of the science that had been done under Wegner was hard to access because Wegner had left. But we had to figure out some priorities. It started out as this mishmash of ideas, and Kelly Burke and I helped sit down with all this brain dump of ideas of what needed to be studied in the ecosystem of the Grand Canyon, and to sort it out and to categorize it according to generality and specificity, and then put it into a document that had some semblance of order. From that came the development of the strategic plan, and I was on the strategic planning subcommittee that developed the strategic plan for the program.

I continued on with that program for fourteen years. I initially started out being the only one doing it until Matt Kaplinski and John O'Brien stepped up for heavy lifting on the TWG [Technical Work Group]. The meetings are long and boring, two-day meetings where you sit around and argue, but at the same time it was interesting to me, because of the collaborative nature of it, the egalitarian nature of it. I was just a river guide, but my vote counted the same as the State of California Department of Water Resources. Or sitting

shoulder-to-shoulder with the Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park. At the time that I stepped down, I was one of the two longest-standing members of the committee. People would listen to me, because if I had something to say, they knew it was coming from somebody who knew the resource, and was a trained scientist, and had a lot of experience with the place. Almost all of them had had no experience with the river ecosystem in the Grand Canyon, so they couldn't speak from personal experience. They could only speak from their agency perspective, which they would get directives from above to talk about.

* * *

I digressed from my role with Grand Canyon River Guides. After



Andre with his Prescott College geomorphology students celebrating the 2008 artificial flood from the dam, finally accepted as a dam operation protocol after 12 years of committee work, 2008.



To Andre Potochnik with Best Wishes!

March 2008



Dirk Kempthorne
DIRK KEMPTHORNE

Base of Glen Canyon Dam, Interior Secretary signs photo. L to R, Dave Garrett-Science Advisors, Mark-Trout Unlimited, Andre-GCRG, Secretary Kempthorne, Brad Washburn and Clayton Palmer-Western Area Power Administration, 2008.
Photo credit Dirk Kempthorne.

just being an attendee of meetings, I was on the board for a couple of years. We're getting toward 1996, and the Colorado River Management Plan was being revisited. It was developing into a highly contentious situation where you had the existing outfitters, all wanting to protect their established use; you've got a very *strong*, growing constituency of private boaters, and there are not only many of them, but they're getting organized. They've got a constituency and a nonprofit. The outfitters get organized, they create GCROA [Grand Canyon River Outfitters Association], and they've got a full-time person running that. You've got these constituencies getting organized, and Grand Canyon River Guides is one of those constituencies. We represent the commercial, operational river guide aspect of things. You've got the wilderness advocates saying to get rid of motors in Grand Canyon. They've got a good argument to make, one that the park has to listen to. Everybody's getting organized around this new river management plan process, right when I become the vice-president, then president.

It was also an interesting time because the Sierra Club had come out with the opinion that Glen Canyon Dam needed to be decommissioned. For them to say that the dam needed to be decommissioned was basically to undercut the whole Adaptive Management program. This freaked out the Upper Basin states, the hydropower interests, and the Bureau of Reclamation. In a way, I think it really helped all those

constituencies—"Let's make the Adaptive Management program work. Let's not talk about this getting rid of the dam thing anymore." It was a very electric time.

I was invited to an informal conference in 1997 to represent the river running constituency of the Grand Canyon about the decommissioning of the dam. It was in a big auditorium in Ephraim, Utah. Here I am representing private boaters, commercial boaters, motorboaters, rowboaters, wilderness advocates, and they want my opinion on whether Glen Canyon Dam should be taken out or not. How am I supposed to represent this diverse constituency of people?! I'm on a panel with the representatives of the Upper Basin states, hydropower consumers, Western Area Power Administration, Bureau of Reclamation...and me. And I didn't know what to say. I didn't even have time to poll anybody. Was I going to come out against the dam and say [I thought it ought to] be

removed? Was I going to say, "No, we need to manage it better"? It was an exhilarating time because those of us who did not like the dam, had grown up with the dam that we really resented—I was one of them. I gave an informational talk and it was off the cuff. "I represent a community of diversity, of people that don't like the dam and would love to get rid of it; people who appreciate it, it makes river running consistent in the Grand Canyon; I have people who hate the way it's being managed; other people who have hope that it can be managed better. My own opinion is that it provides a function right now that unless we can show some demonstrated reason why it needs to be decommissioned, we need to keep operating it, and operating it in the best possible way for the environment in the Grand Canyon." I sort of hedged my way around. But I also came from the geologist's perspective, and said, "A lot of people don't know this, but the Grand Canyon has had big dams in it naturally in the geologic past—large lava dams once made *huge* reservoirs that flooded the entire Grand Canyon multiple times. These dams were eroded by the river. Grand Canyon has been a giant reservoir before, and animals and plant life have had to adjust to these changing conditions over thousands of years. Glen Canyon Dam is not a totally new thing in that regard, and it's not going to last, just like the basalt lava dams never lasted. The Colorado River will eventually win and take out the dam. For those of us who are geologists who see the longer-time picture, we don't

see the Glen Canyon Dam as a permanent feature on the landscape. It's going to reach the end of its lifespan and it's going to go away, just like all those basalt dams did in the past. So for those who don't want to have Glen Canyon Dam anymore, they may take some consolation in that." That's how I approached it, and a lot of people, "Really?! There used to be dams in the canyon?! What about these ancient dams?" They didn't know about them. It was fun.

* * *

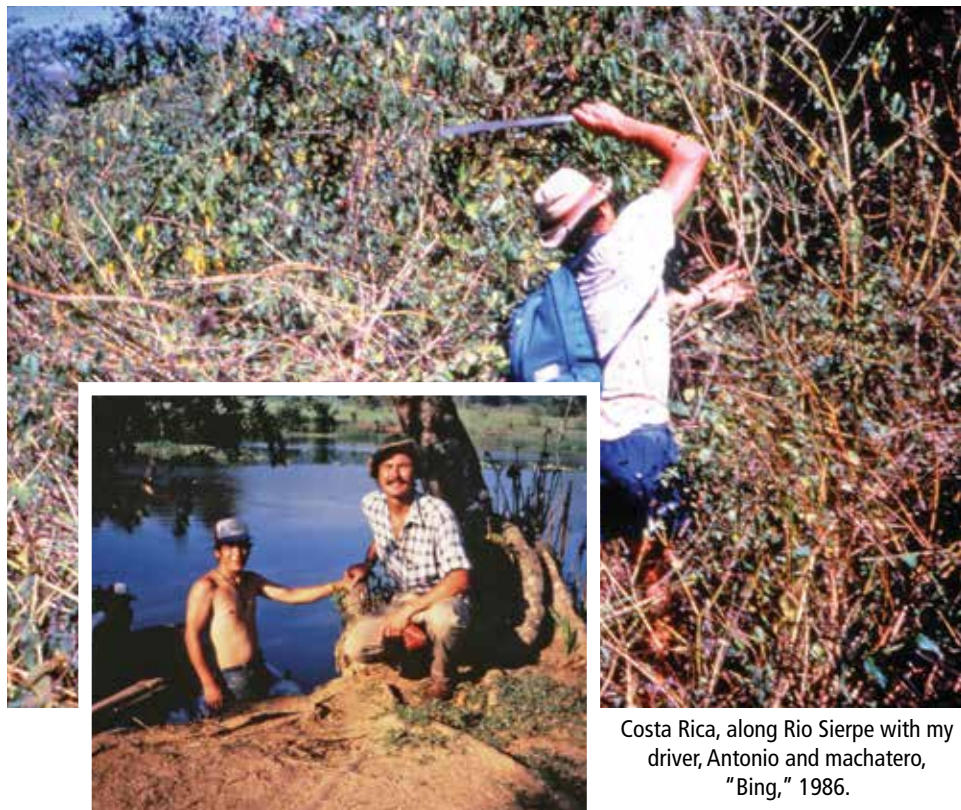
I did go to Costa Rica and spent three months running rivers, but that was not commercial, recreational river running, that was for a job I was working for Los Alamos National Laboratories. They had a big contract from AID to do a mineral recon survey of the country. I was one of five grad students that were hired to be the remote team for this larger group of Costa Rican students and us to take samples of the river sand. They'd taken all the topographic maps of the country and divvied it up into watershed segments, and they put a dot on these maps. Each of us had our own little remote team and we'd be assigned, "Go get samples at these dots." I had a driver and a four-wheel-drive, and a *machatero* to cut trail for me. I'd look at the maps and figure out how to get there, and whether it would require a day hike, a backpack trip, or a river trip. They

gave me a little raft with oars, and it had a little motor, too. I ran a lot of the rivers in Costa Rica, because that was the easiest way to get to the sample sites, some rivers that had never been run before, which was fun exploratory stuff.

I had never camped in the jungle, never been in the jungle. Learning to navigate in the jungle was a whole different thing than being out here in the Southwest. You're under the canopy a lot, most of the time you can't see out of it. The job wasn't about geology so much as navigation, getting to these sites to get the river sand sample, then coming back with it. There were different techniques that you used that were new for me. It was a lot of fun, it was a big adventure, paid a lot of money. It was really good at that time. They called it hazard pay, because it was definitely hazardous work—the most remote regions of Costa Rica. The driver would always stay back with the truck. I had this 18 year-old kid who was my *machatero*. You never would go anywhere without a machete, because it's thick. There would be a main road or something where the river would eventually cross, and that's where we'd meet. The longest was a six-day trip—the main river in the southern part of the country, Rio General—did the first low-water run of the Rio General. Costa Rica was just being discovered by Americans back then, 1986, during the Reagan administration. Costa Rica was considered an ally of ours; the Reagan administration

wanted to make sure that they were supported by the U.S., because there was a war going on just to the north of Costa Rica in Nicaragua, where the Sandinistas—communist so-called rebels—were fighting for control of the country, with the Contras, which were the Reagan administration's so-called freedom fighters. I worked around the northern border of Costa Rica and had to be careful. I had an armed guard at one point that was issued to me by the federal government, that would make sure we didn't run into any armed encampments by mistake. Didn't want any bullets to fly.

I was the only boater.



Costa Rica, along Rio Sierpe with my driver, Antonio and machatero, "Bing," 1986.

Whenever there was something to do with a boat, I got that job. A lot of Costa Rica is mountainous, but in the southern part of the country there's some lowland jungles near the coast, and the rivers coming off those lowland jungles were really placid rivers that went through the jungles. I sometimes put in somewhere where there was a town along the coast, drive my little boat up along the coast to get to the estuary, the river mouth, and then time it with the tide so I could catch the high tide going in all the way up the river for fifteen, twenty miles, get my sample. Then when the tide turned around, I went back out. A lot of alligators, and that was always a concern, because I'm in this little rubber Avon raft, maybe ten feet long. The thought of an alligator coming up and chomping on my tube when I'm out there in the middle of the river was always something to consider. They'd plop into the river off the banks as we went by, and disappear. Didn't see any crocodiles, and those were a little more dangerous. But it was like being on the jungle cruise at Disneyland. Going up all these rivers, all these different tributaries that get smaller and smaller, and the whole canopy would be across the top of the river, you couldn't even see the sky. A lot of wildlife. Amazing. Birds down there are just incredible.

The other funny little thing about that story is the snakes down there are really dangerous. Here we are, these five *gringos*. We're all pretty outdoorsy guys, we're outdoorsmen, all of us, in our own ways. At the university at San Jose they had a talk being given by one of the professors, "The Deadly Snakes of Costa Rica." "Oh, my God, we're going out there?!" Because you can't see. In the desert you can see if there's a rattlesnake in front of you, but you can't see wading through grass and bushes. The fer-de-lance was the worst one probably. There's the jungle rattler, which we had no idea about. There was the green tree viper, which lived in the trees. I saw one of those. Saw one fer-de-lance the whole time, I think. Didn't ever see a rattlesnake. "Okay, at least we've got each other." Our leader said, "Oh, actually, no, you're all separating and going individually on your own expeditions." "W-w-wait a minute. Whoa, you didn't tell us about this." He says, "Yeah, I can't afford to have you guys team up. We've got so much to do. We've got one dry season to get all the samples collected." I just resigned myself to it, thinking, "If a snake's going to get me, a snake's going to get me, and I'm not going to be able to know or see, and that's part of the job."

We'd go to the store and buy a bunch of food, had all our equipment with us, and compass, and maps, and get in the truck, and off we'd go and do our job for four or five days, get all the samples, come back,

take a day off, get reassigned, go back out again. We'd work three weeks on and one week off. It was physically the hardest job I've ever had. It was 21 days of just balls-out goin', goin', goin'. The locals were really fun people, just a wonderful group. Their philosophy of life is *pura vida*, "the pure life." Live the good life. Very friendly, nice people. When we were camping, we always camped in a hammock, never slept on the jungle floor because it came alive at night. (chuckles) You wanted to be up in that hammock. It was an adventure to get up in the middle of the night and go pee because you didn't know what was down there, creeping and crawling around.

* * *

Early '90s, the National Park Service in the Grand Canyon and the river guide community had sort of a difficult relationship over the years, and there wasn't a lot of communication or respect between the two entities. There was a guy who was running the river unit that a lot of people really didn't like because, quite frankly, he didn't like river guides. You probably know who I'm talking about—"Mr. Rules," I'll call him. Now Bego and he in particular had it bad. I don't know what had happened in their history, but they had some issues. We're on this river trip, right after July Fourth weekend, so Bego had some fireworks, some leftovers. I didn't know he had them. We get down to Phantom Ranch and all of our people leave and a whole new group comes in, a big charter group, and it's so big all the dories can't carry all the people, so we have a Hatch motor-rig join us at that point—Dick Clark was running it. The purpose of this charter trip was this billionaire, Southern Baptist fellow, was having a 75TH birthday, and he'd been a previous client before, loved the trip, and wanted to celebrate his birthday on the river with all of his family and friends. Very humble, nice guy—I can't say a nicer word about the old fellow. His wife was there, and his minister, and the minister's son who was also a minister. Very nice people, all of them. He brought along about half a dozen of his old cronies, buddies of his that he'd grown up with.

"Well, when is the party going to be?" Because I was leading the trip, I asked his wife, and she said, "Whenever there's a good opportunity. It doesn't have to be *on* his birthday." We get down to Stone Creek, and, "How about tomorrow? We'll lay over, a big hike tomorrow, and when we come back from our hike, we'll have a big celebration." Now these people don't drink alcohol—or at least they're not supposed to. Dick Clark's got his blender going and he's making margaritas for anybody who wants a margarita.

Everybody's saying, "Nah, Shirley Temple, no tequila in mine." But then you'd see some of them sneak up on the side and put a little bit in. It was a good ol' time, we had a great party. Just as it was getting dusk, I noticed in the middle of the group there's a Park Service person in Park Service clothing. I knew him. I said hi to him, but I didn't think another thing of it. Then he disappears. Everybody's filtering off to bed after dinner and the birthday cake, and the old man is sitting around with his five or six cronies, telling stories about the old guy and roasting him, and they're having a good ol' time. Kenton and I—it was Kenton and Bego and Elena [Kirschner] and I—were on, rowing the dories. Kenton and I go off to the side, sitting there chatting. Bego goes down to his boat; because the water's fallen way off, the boats are way away from camp. We hear this "Boom!" and this firework shoots up into the sky, "Boosh!" makes this beautiful display. Kenton and I, "Wow, that was beautiful!" We didn't think about the Park

I got everybody primed to get going early the next morning. We're going to blast out of there and head for Thunder.

The Baptist minister says, "Do you mind if after breakfast I just say a few things to my flock here? Sunday morning, you know." "As long as you keep it short, sure, I'm not going to tell you, you can't." I mean, it's their trip, right? "But," I said, "we do have to get going then." After breakfast he's got everybody sitting in a group, including all the boatmen. And this guy—you never would have known it—but he came out with this fire-and-brimstone sermon that was, "And God shall smite those who..." "The devil will be destroyed!" Hell and Heaven. The people, the flock, the parishioners are all just gobbling it up, they love it, because this is what they're used to hearing. He goes on, and he goes on, and he goes on. Half an hour goes by—the critical half an hour to getting out of camp before the Park Service arrives. Sure enough, the park pulls in on us. The ranger who had come and visited



Andre gives a Great Unconformity talk to guests at Blacktail Canyon, 2012. Photo credit John Blaustein

Service presence. And then Kenton goes, "Uh, park's just camped right upstream." "Oh, no!" They were at Galloway, and that's where the Park Service guy had come from. I go, "I'd better stop this." And before I could start down there, "Boom!" another one goes up, "Boosh!" I go down to Bego, "Bego! Chill out! Park's just right upstream." But it was beautiful, and it was done safely. It was well away from camp, well away from anybody. I make this plan for the next morning, we're going to go hike up to Thunder River, and it's a hot time of year, so we've got to get started early.

us the night before, he was the ranger in charge. He came over to me and pulled me aside. He said, "Hey, André, I've got to inspect your camp before you break it down." We go through camp, he inspects everything, and we had a perfect score. He pulls me aside, "We couldn't help but notice last night, the fireworks. We all saw them at the same time, and I've got three senior chief rangers on the trip." He had all the top rangers in the park on the trip, except for the river unit ranger. He said, "Well, we talked about it, and we decided we'd just pretend like we didn't see anything. We all agreed

that we didn't see anything, because we don't really want to..." I explained the situation and everything of why. He knew. He said, "But then we thought, gosh, if one person spills the beans, we're all screwed. So I have to say *something* on my form here." On the bottom of the form where it said, Added Notes, he put, "aerial display noted." That's all he put, and hoped that would just slip right by Mr. Rules at the river unit. It didn't, and he got questioned on it.

The Park Service took out before us. We went out to the lake at Pearce, and they went out at Diamond. By the time we got to Pearce takeout, the lake ranger comes down and pulls me aside, "André, there's a thing about the fireworks that were shot off on your trip and it got reported, and Mr. Rules wants me to cite somebody here for the infraction." Bego comes up, "That was me! I did it! Nobody else did it. Nobody else knew I was gonna do it. I take full responsibility. Cite me!" He cites Bego, \$50 fine. I thought, well, okay, got busted for that. We get back to the warehouse, and my manager, Regan, pulls me aside, "André, you gotta call Mr. Rules right now. He is mad as hops... You've got to talk him down on this one, explain the situation." While everybody else was cleaning up, I'm talking to Mr. Rules. I knew him I told him the whole situation, the context of what happened, and it was a mistake, and we were really sorry, we would never do it again, and it was just one of these things. I was very contrite, and he said, "I understand. I get how it happened and everything like that. Okay." I thought, "Okay, are we good then?" He said, "Yeah, we're good." I hung up the phone. Well, the next day he has written a letter to the owner of the company, George Wendt, just lambasting Kenton Grua, Bego, and André Potochnik as being—just really denigrating us as people—character assassination, basically—a letter saying "these guys shouldn't be trusted, can't be trusted, shouldn't be boatmen in the Grand Canyon." It was really harsh. George Wendt is the owner of the company, he's got to do something. Now I'm in hot water with George Wendt, and Kenton is, too, and Bego, because we were all associated with this situation—all senior boatmen, been around a long time, super-competent boatmen. Kenton and I just got fired up at that point. Bego was, "Ach, fine, can't deal with it anymore. I'll pay my fine."

Well, Mr. Rules, in that letter, had decided to ban Bego from the river as a boatman, which incensed Kenton and me to the point we weren't going to put up with that. We both went home and individually wrote long letters to the Superintendent, and asked for an audience to talk to him to explain the situation, because we thought it was *super*-unfair that Bego was banished from the river. Superintendent Jack Davis got

the letters and we talked to him on the phone, and he set up appointments individually for Kenton and me to come see him up at South Rim. He's a really nice guy. Initially he told Mr. Rules to back off and said this was *too* severe of a punishment. Mr. Rules backed off and he said, "Okay, you're banned from leading trips ever again, Bego, in the Grand Canyon." We came back to the Superintendent and said, "No, no, you can't do that, this guy's one of the most competent people we have. He's a trip leader, he's the most solid, reliable person you'd ever want to work with. You can't not let him be a trip leader. This is wrong." The Superintendent went back to Mr. Rules again, and got him to back off again, to where Bego couldn't lead trips for a year, and that was the only punishment.

At that point we just went, "Well, we got him to back off twice, so we're doing pretty good," and had our audiences with the Superintendent, and established a real rapport with the Superintendent, who had never really met a river guide before. It changed the whole relationship between the river guides and the park at that point. That whole thing ended up having a silver lining, because from then on we started cooperating with the park, working hand-in-glove on things like the river guides training seminar, cosponsoring it, getting it going again. We chose, as a river guide organization, to sponsor it—previously it'd been sponsored by the Park Service—and have the park be our partner. In doing so, it really helped to develop a working relationship with the park that still continues today. It's a much more amiable and affable relationship. So there was a good side to that whole thing.

* * *

It was really rare in those early years, the '70s, that we got through without any broken boats or flipped boats. That's what we call a Golden Trip. It was always the goal. "God, I wonder if we could ever get a Golden Trip out of this river." Seasons would go by and you wouldn't have a Golden Trip. Then you'd have one, and it was cause for celebration. I remember once we got a Golden Trip, everybody was so happy. We're going out Lake Mead and we're all tied together in this rig around the raft. The current's moving us on downstream, we're not paying attention, and the rig heads over toward shore—bam! right up against the wall. We'd made it all the way through the Grand Canyon right-side up and no broken boats, and Sharkie's boat got mashed into the wall. In those early years it was just the blind leading the blind a lot. Like I said, School of Hard Knocks.

Your luck comes and goes. My worst hit was in Horn—the worst hit I’ve ever had in a wooden boat. Went between the horns, but didn’t—went over the left horn, dropped off the left horn, landed right on a rock, hit underneath the bow post and basically broke the front third of the boat off, split the sides to the gunnels, had to patch it all back together down at Monument Creek. That was the worst hit.

I can remember exactly every one of my flips. They’re indelibly imprinted on my brain. It’s the feeling when you flip, you never lose that feeling of the boat going over. It’s a very humbling experience. Anybody who’s flipped knows that. You get back in the dory, “I don’t know about this boat!” It takes a little while to get your confidence back where you’re feeling, “I can keep this boat right-side up.” Initially there’s always that loss of confidence that happens. There was a flip that was pretty wild once. (laughs) I missed the cut to the left in 25-Mile low water. There used to be a reversal hole in the middle. Rudi had gone into it in front of me and he flipped. I came in behind him, caught that hole, and it started side-surfing me, I was just hanging on the downstream gunnel. The boat bucks and spins, it does a 180, now I’m side-surfing on the *other* gunnel, and it surfs across the river, and the current going by the right side of the hole, the boat hit that current and (whump!), just took it so quick, just (snaps fingers) (whump!) over, came out, and we rescued alright. But that was two boats upside-down at the same time.

There was another time in Horn Creek where we had almost all the boats upside-down at once. We didn’t know how to scout Horn Creek from the right. We’d only scouted it from the left. We only could run between the horns, thought that was the only way. It was real low water. “Can’t go between the horns. What do we do?” The first dories went and they tried to make the cut down from the right to the left. Regan flipped, Tom flipped, O.C. dumptrucked, went right up on his side, lost all of his passengers, I think, came down right-side up. Gary Lane and I are up there watching. I said, “Gary, I think we really need to try that right-to-left run. We have to get over there and we have to make that cut.” But the current was really fast, and to get over to the river right to scout it, to even look at it, was really hard. I’m ferrying like a mad dog, and I get over to river right, and I make it just barely into the little eddy right above the rapid. Here comes Gary, he’s rowing as hard as he can, upstream ferrying with all of his might, and he’s slowly coming across, and he’s not going to quite make it into the eddy; he’s about to drop down the right tongue, and I go out into that eddy, I’m up to my waist. He *just* makes it, I can

grab his boat, and I pull him in. (gasping for breath) He was just whupped. I said, “Okay, Gary, you rest here, I’m going to go up and make the run, and I’ll be back up, and I’ll help you out if you need help—I’ll high-side for you.”

I make the cut—I don’t make it. I hit that water behind the right horn and get spun. I straighten up, and I go into that gigando wave and down the right side, the biggest thing, hit it straight, (kerploosh!) completely fill up, stall out, just wallow out the downstream end of it, right-side up. I pull in my boat, run back up, and I said, “This is really tough, Gary. You should just walk your passengers.” “I’ll row the boat for you Gary, I know how tired you are.” He says, “No, I can do it.” “Okay, I’ll high-side for you.” He’s whupped, his arms are limp. He hits behind the right horn and just spun straight, bow downstream. Well, unlike me, he spins it back into ferry position again—that takes time. He didn’t have time. He doesn’t get any more strokes in, we drop down into that big thing *dead* sideways. “Look, this is going to be the biggest, fastest flip in history.” I’m high-side over the downstream gunnel, and the boat goes (sfwip!)



Floating in Marble Canyon, 2012. Photo credit John Blaustein

to the right, goes around the hole to the right, right by the giant boulder on the right shore, and it slips around it, and we come out the bottom side without any water in the boat. (whispers), “Oh my God, how did that happen?!” That was the Ghost Run, the fabled Ghost Run of Horn Creek. But it’s a dicey run, and we did it by mistake. But it’s there. The chances, if you go too far right, of smacking into that big boulder on the shoreline would destroy a boat—as it did many years later. Anyway, big day at Horn Creek.

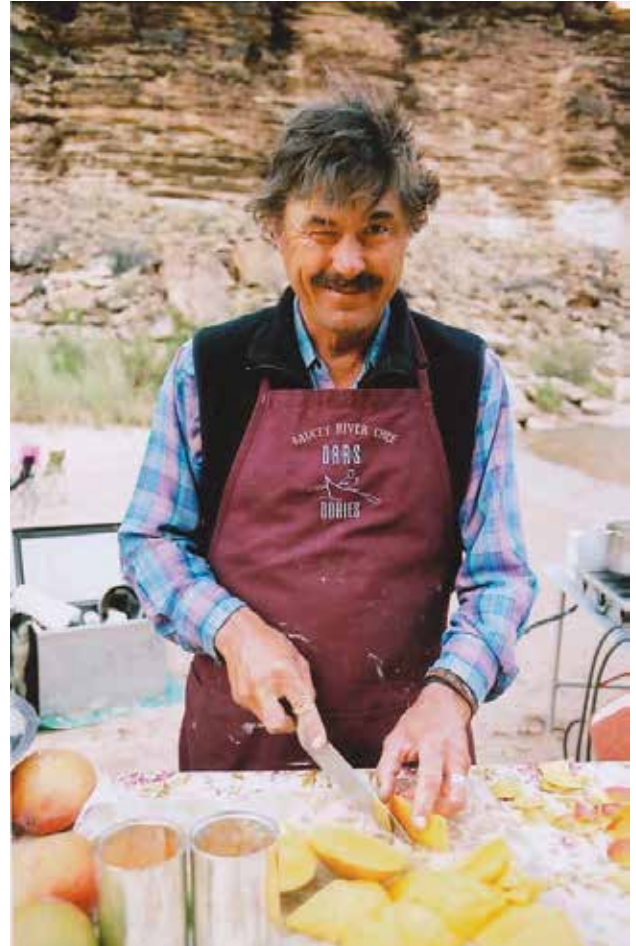
Lava I flipped three times in. I suppose if there was a nemesis rapid, that would be mine. I haven’t flipped twice in any rapid, but I’ve flipped three times in Lava: two of them early on in my career, and then one just five, six years ago. One was coming off the Black Rock at the bottom—we flipped in the eddy behind the Black Rock. The eddy line drops off, it’s about five feet high, coming around the Cheese Grater. We had been high-siding against the Cheese Grater rock, and then as we swept around the left of the Cheese Grater, we were suddenly on the low side. I’m crawling, scratching the decks, trying to get back up to the new high side, and I could hear all the cans in the hatches falling to the low side—boom, ba-loom!—and the boat just plopped upside down into the eddy behind the cheese Grater. That was a silly flip.

My first one was running The Slot, which was one of the most exciting runs, because you couldn’t see it. You just had to have faith that you were lined up in the right spot. You come up over the top, you see it, there it is! I was a little too far right on the entry and hit that reversal to the right of The Slot, turned sideways, went down into the “V-Wave,” flipped in the “V-Wave,” backwards. Yeah. Classic crash-and-burn run, down the right side.

* * *

Since I finished teaching at Prescott about five years ago, I went back to full-time boating, which for me is about five or six trips a year, about a hundred days a year on the river in the Grand Canyon. Happy to say I can still row against the wind, schlep the gear every day, and still enjoy the folks. Dories are beautiful. Martin used to say that, too. His original brochure showed dories in different scenes: “high and dry in the heavy going”; “steady in the riffles”; “graceful in repose.” But, yeah, they are beautiful boats, and I was captivated by them right away and fell in love with them. There was a time in the ’70s when I was learning my chops and getting better at it and loving it, that I thought, “I have found my place in the world.” I can remember down to one particular moment on

a trip. It was in Fern Glen. We pulled in above Fern Glen, above the rapid, to go hike, and I remember having this incredible feeling of completeness, that I am exactly where I want to be in the world. I don’t need anything else. It’s like these dories, this river, this canyon—it’s my holy trinity. The adventure, the opportunity to learn, the aesthetic beauty, the people—just a lot of really neat things. I don’t need to go anywhere else in life—this is it, I’m there. Yeah. I’ll never forget that feeling.



Saucey river chef.

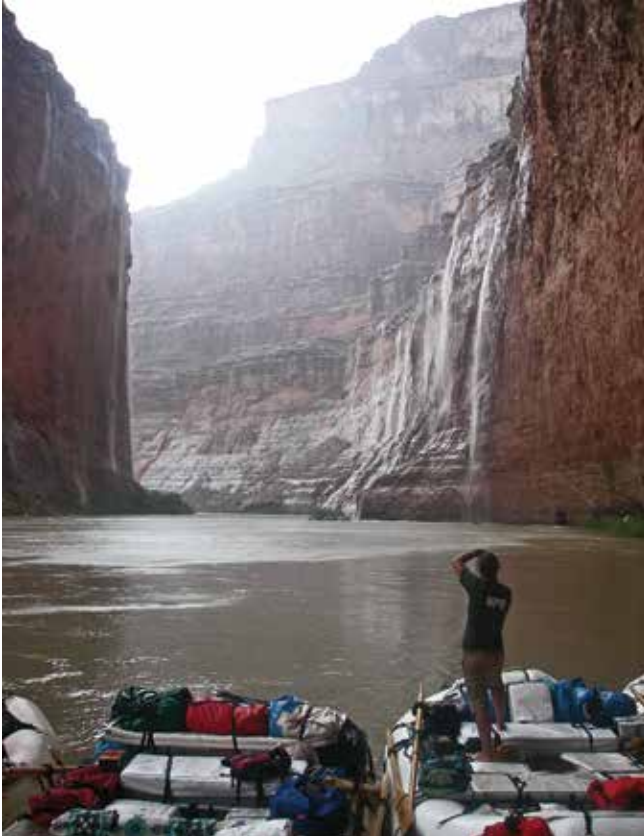
Yay Monsoon! Love Those Rim Falls



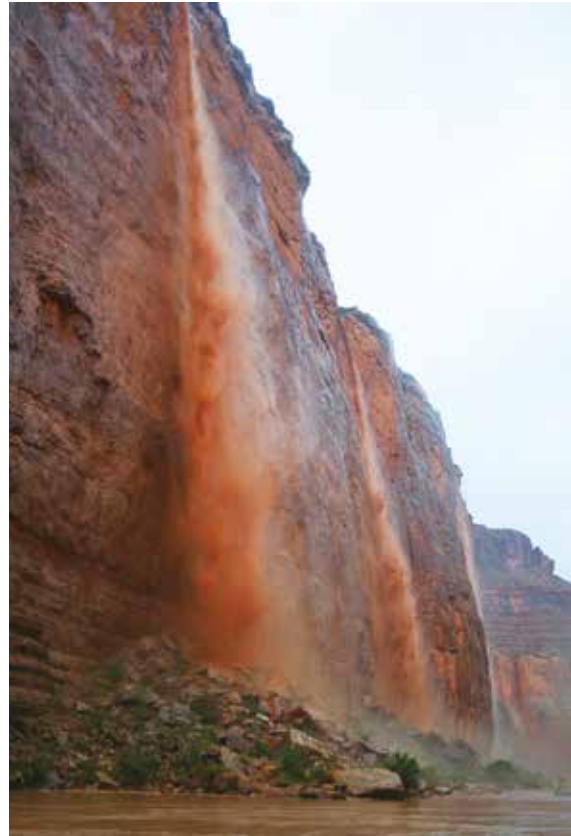
Andy Hutchinson



Ben Reeder



Walt Gregg



Wayne Ranney



Andy Hutchinson



Joel Russell



Wayne Ranney



Susan Tanges



Laura Chamberlin

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Monsoon ... And Then There's This



Susan Tanges