

Boatman's Quarterly Review

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Martha
Clark

boatman's quarterly review

Published 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, emailed to GCRG. Include postpaid return envelope if you want your submission returned.

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

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MARTHA CLARK



Sego lily in Tapeats Creek enroute to Thunder River. Photo: Melissa Giovanni

Correction

In reference to The Grand Canon Bibliography in the Spring 2022 BQR, Volume 35, Number 1.

Unfortunately we misprinted the url for Raven's Perch Media where you can find the complete Grand Canyon and Lower Colorado River bibliography website. The correct website is: ravensperch.org. Everything is free and can be downloaded right from the home page.

Prez Blurb

I am fresh off my first trip of the year and headed into a packed river season. I love springtime in the desert. It's a blustery time of year and this April was no exception. My hands are a little raw and my body is quite chapped from rowing in the wind. No doubt there is Grand Canyon sand traveling to far flung places in the world in the duffels and on the bodies of our passengers as they head home to their various locations. It is all worth it to see the desert in bloom, the side creeks gushing with snow melt, or a glimpse of a newborn lamb.

En route from my home in California to Arizona I listened to the recorded audios from the 2022 V-GTS on YouTube. Although we all miss the live event, a perk to having a virtual format has allowed for speakers to present from remote locations who could not attend in person. I was totally enthralled by the talks on climate change in the Southwest. I can remember many years of having to shovel snow out of the rig truck for that first trip of the season. I would never have imagined then as a young guide that I would see places like Vasey's Paradise and Dutton Spring dry up or reduced to a trickle. Yesterday at the takeout of my April trip, I heard about the Tunnel Fire that closed down Hwy 89 outside of Flagstaff and another down in Prescott. Wow!

One of the big take-aways for me from these presentations on climate change was how important the monsoon rains are to the desert. They help keep the soils saturated. When there is a lack of these summer rains the winter moisture is absorbed by the ground and fails to replenish ground water or become snowmelt in the drainages resulting in dry spring conditions. This talk reverberated in my head as I was dropping off the North Rim with my crew for the rig day at Lees Ferry. A powerful windstorm had turned the sky dark and the Echo Cliffs where hidden behind a massive

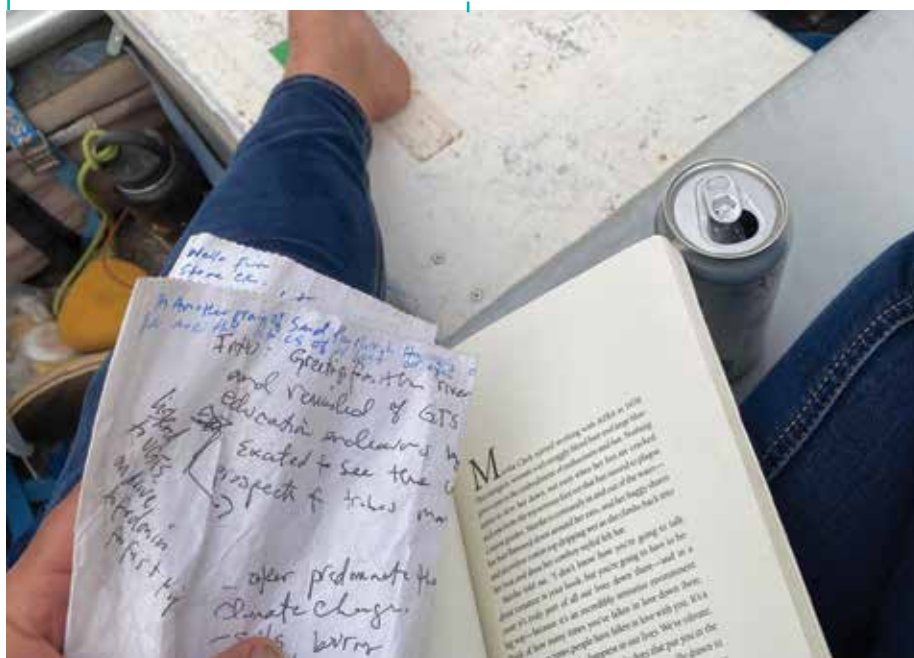
dust cloud. I am sorry for the crews that launched that day, it would have been a hard way to start a trip.

While floating by cultural sites such as Nankoweap and the Unkar Delta, I felt much gratitude for the Indigenous speakers and their presentations at the V-GTS. My interpretation of these sites with our passengers has changed significantly in the last few years. I try to put a lot of emphasis on how cultural sites are relevant to the affiliated tribes of the Grand Canyon and what they are now as opposed to something belonging to a long ago culture. It feels good to have authentic information that we can share with our guests. I am really looking forward to the educational curriculum that the tribes are working on for visitors to the Grand Canyon and their own indigenous communities alike.

The Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park, Ed Keable, gave a great presentation on the happenings in the park. I am happy to hear that the Tusayan Pueblo ruin site at the South Rim and the Desert View Watchtower are going to be managed by the affiliated tribes. It is long

overdue that the original stewards of the Grand Canyon have a say in how their legacy is presented. I love the collaborations that are happening between the tribes, the NPS, the Grand Canyon Trust and GCRG. We have such an amazing opportunity to build relationships right now and work together for a more equitable run park.

Thank you to Emily Ambrose and Laura Fallon for hosting this awesome event. They ran a fun and smooth V-GTS. I have been humbled by Emily's Point Positive workshops for the guiding community. The door is opening for a more diverse population of guides and clients in the outdoor industry. These workshops have really helped to educate and bring to light how to be more thoughtful of minority populations and communicate respectfully. I have not thought of myself as a disrespectful person, but I am realizing that by not learning how to act and communicate with diverse populations is an unjust action on my part. If you are interested in watching any of the V-GTS presentations, you can follow the link on the GCRG



Taking notes.

website to any of these recorded talks.

One of the first books that I read when I started guiding in the Grand Canyon was Louise Teal's, *Breaking into the Current*, about some of the first women guides. Martha Clark, whose interview is the feature of this BQR, is one of these women. I remember seeing Martha on trips and being totally in awe of her. She radiated such an energy that it was contagious. I looked back at the chapter about her in Louise's book while on the river. [Her description of romance](#)

and love in the Canyon and with the people you get to share it with could not have been said better. I share in her sentiment completely and it is why I still love guiding river trips.

A highlight for me on this first trip of the season was seeing Dutton Spring flowing again and realizing how much I had missed this old friend. In my mom's house she has a picture of me from the mid-'90s sitting at the base of the waterfall. I happened to see it right before heading to Arizona a few weeks ago and was startled by the amount of water gushing out of

the spring. I hope this lighter version will hold up and the monsoons this season will help replenish it. Loren Eiseley hit the ball out of the park when he famously wrote, "If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water."

It looks to be a very low water season ahead. For a place made of rocks it is no wonder they are popping up everywhere on these low flows. Be safe and have great runs out there.

Billie Prosser

"I don't know how you are going to talk about romance in your book, but you're going to have to because it's truly part of all our lives down there - and in a big way - because it's an incredibly sensual environment. Think of how many times you've fallen in love down there, and how many times people have fallen in love with you. It's a place we shine. We're the happiest in our lives. We're vibrant. We're just so full of life, and not only does that put you in the mood for love, it sets you up for it. People are really drawn to people who are shining, who feel so happy with where they are and who they are and what they're doing and who they're doing it with."

- Martha Clark
from Breaking into the Current

Martha's quote written down in Katherine Spillman's river journal.

So. Right.On.



Photo: Ka-Voka Jackson

Farewells

Robert “Bobby” Jensen, August 15, 1944–February 4, 2022

Robert Lawrence Jensen was born of Viking heritage in Dover, New Jersey, on August 15, 1944, as the first child of Gwendolyn Jane Griffiths and Lawrence Asbjorin Jensen. He ended his journey 78 years later while peacefully ensconced in his favorite chair, next to his wood stove, in his all-time favorite dwelling—a hogan in Hart Prairie on the lower slopes of the San Francisco Peaks. Hart Prairie (and the nearby The Nature Conservatory preserve, where he was a long-time caretaker) was his home for over forty years. He is remembered there for his colorful “Mountain Man persona” and his generosity and helpfulness when visitors to Hart Prairie found themselves lost or stuck in a snow drift. Bobby Jensen’s many positive qualities notwithstanding, he wasn’t a gentle soul. He had a tough life and remains an archetype of the “rode hard and put up wet” genre of many of the local Grand Canyon boating community members.

Pugnacious pretty much from birth, Bobby joined the Marines shortly after his 21st birthday on August 27, 1965. He served in Vietnam during the height of the conflict until his medical discharge in February 1969 following a serious accident. While training for the medical corps, he suffered a debilitating injury to his right hand when it got between an airplane and a ground crew “push back” vehicle at the Saigon Airport. The injury ended his military career but didn’t stop him from becoming a boatman when he was offered a gig on, amazingly enough, the Niagara River. In 1972, Lou Elliott of the American Touring Association (ARTA; precursor to AZRA) was running short trips down the Niagara River from below the falls to Lewiston, New York. His guides included



Photo: Courtesy of Rae Banasihan

Jerry Morton, Terry Collier, Dick Overguard, Al Wilson, and Breck O’Neill, all seasoned river runners with Grand Canyon roots. And then there was Bobby, a “local kid” who wanted to be a boatman. Bobby took to whitewater in a big way but didn’t last long on the Niagara. He left, he said, because the bosses insisted on strapping passengers and boatmen down with seat belts, and that terrified him. The Niagara is a gnarly river. It routinely runs at 200,000 cfs or more, and S-Rigs were known to flip end over end in “Whirlpool Rapids,” a monster of a rapid with 2.5 miles of thirty-plus-foot standing waves, the largest series of standing waves in North America. Bobby packed up and headed West.

Tom Olsen remembers first encountering the 28-year-old Bobby and his 16-year-old bride Wendy at Lees Ferry in July 1972. At the time Tom and John Seppi were rigging an Outdoors Unlimited river trip, and, uninvited, Bobby jumped in to help. He was a good worker with a great attitude and had incredible stories about the terrors of running the Niagara. One thing led to another, and the next morning’s launch found Bobby and Wendy on an OU trip down the Grand. Unfortunately, Wendy suffered a miscarriage at Grapevine Camp, and while she felt

well enough to continue, at trip’s end she went back home to New York. For good. She had had enough of the river running business, but Bobby was hooked. He secured a position as a boatman for Wilderness World running California and Oregon rivers before returning to the Grand Canyon. Over the years he worked for several river outfitters, becoming proficient in understanding the natural

and cultural history of the Colorado River between Glen Canyon and Hoover Dams. This led to a stint as a boatman/citizen scientist for the Museum of Northern Arizona Ecological Survey. Those of us who knew Bobby, loved him for his loyalty, indefatigable energy, and those elfin eyes that radiated a “can do” approach to life. You are seriously missed my friend, but the memories of your spirit will remain in the hearts of those you touched.

Bobby is survived by his brother Richard Jensen and two daughters, RaeNicole Banasihan and Shoshanna Jensen. Bobby’s family is planning a Hart Prairie memorial for Bobby in July 2022.

Steve Carothers

Matt Winfrey, July 19, 1973 – August 6, 2021

Last August, Matt Winfrey, donned in tartan and cradling his oar, moved on to run those big rivers in the sky.

Matt, or Winfrey, or Mr. Science, was big...big in every way...stature, presence, heart, skills, and passion: Proud of his heritage; ran many a trip in his kilt; an unbelievably talented public speaker with a geology interp

that always left everyone wanting more—and he was a way cool dad!!

More than twenty years ago, I was hiring some new guides on the Tatshenshini and Alsek Rivers for Alaska Discovery, in Juneau. Matt's resume left me in a dilemma. How could I hire someone whose email address was stinkmonkey...this was, indeed, a generational conflict!!

But, how could I not hire him...his experience was exceptional, and his recommendations were the highest.

Our first Grand Canyon trip together, Matt picked me up at the Flagstaff train station to ride to the Fredonia warehouse to rig. He had recently converted his pickup to biofuel. I was impressed...but I was even more surprised when I could smell the truck coming before it pulled into the train station parking lot...the smell of french fries was really, really strong! As we were driving, Matt shared his plan to drive to Alaska that summer... as I lived in Alaska, I was not sure how wise it would be to have a truck smelling like french fries deep in bear country...but that's what he did!

Last October, on the Day of the Dead, we gathered near Moab to celebrate Matt's life: to marvel at his sartorial splendor, chuckle again at his antics, and savor those special shared moments. We day floated the Colorado in his honor...stories were shared, and not a few tears later, some of Matt's ashes were commingled with the river he so loved.

This is one of the gems shared in tribute:

*If there was any among us who laughed
at the odds,
and lived their lives so well that Death
trembled to take them
it was surely you, Matt.
You made our days better.
You filled them with sidesplitting humor.
Your strength and reliability were as
elemental as fire, air, earth, water.
You, who could combine pranks:
I once spent an entire river trip swabbing
myself with Mayonnaise that Matt
had put into my sunscreen bottle;*

*With unlooked for acts of kindness:
a piping hot cup of coffee placed next
to my sleeping bag many mornings
as I slept, aromatic wafts of coffee
gently beckoning me with grace and
peace to the bruised crepuscule of a
never before experienced dawn—a
fast-flowing river to be explored at
our feet.*

*Matt filled our lives with light, with
curiosity.
He was there to throw us a line when
the winds of destiny blew against us.
I would have had many more days,
many more years
with this man who made my life better,
richer, funnier, brighter.
An element that made shared moments
stiller,
their outlines distinct.*

*I have known no one like you, Matt
Winfrey,
and as you pass into these grey waves,
I do hope our atoms rub up against
each other again.
And if it is from behind,
in a kinky and inappropriate way,
I shall know it is you, Matt Winfrey.
Homes.
Thank you.*

*You made the days we shared better.
You made my life more vibrant.
The brilliant flicker of your life is
reflected in the shadow your passing
has cast on the lives of all gathered
here today.*

*It is reflected in the strength and love of
the community gathered here.
—Don Johnston*

And this from Ed Abbey, another irreverent iconoclast:

*May your rivers flow without end...
down again into a vast ancient un-
known chasm where bars of sunlight
blaze on profiled cliffs, where deer walk
across the sand beaches, where storms
come and go as lightning clangs upon
the high crags.*

*Where something strange and more
beautiful and more full of wonder than
your deepest dreams waits for you
beyond that next turning of the canyon
walls...*

Matt gave a part of himself to every one of us....but he also gathered a piece from each of us to further his own growth...this sharing is what our river community is all about.

This summer, at some point heading downstream on the Alsek River, after a stop and sharing a few thoughts, a few more of his ashes will mix with another of his favorite waterways...that's how it should be.

Butch Carber



Photo: Mara Drazina

Upper Clear Creek Gets a Makeover: Stewardship on the GTS River Trip

On 04/06/2022 at Clear Creek Camp (River Mile 84.5R), Guides Training Seminar participants and Jason Nez (Grand Canyon National Park Archaeologist [Fire]) used manual invasive plant control methods (i.e., digging, pulling, cutting) to remove vegetation (e.g., arrowweed [*Pluchea sericea*]) where recreational camping had been lost to vegetation encroachment. In September of 2022, Grand Canyon National

Park Vegetation Program staff and partners will revisit Clear Creek Camp, evaluate treatment success, and complete additional vegetation treatments as needed. In addition, participants visited other camp sites along the Colorado River and collected data to inform future vegetation encroachment mitigation actions. This work supports experimental vegetation treatments as described in the 2016 Record of Decision for the Glen Canyon

Dam Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (https://ltempeis.anl.gov/documents/docs/LTEMP_ROD.pdf).

Lonnie Pilkington
Vegetation Program Manager GCNP



2022 GTS Clear Creek Camp pre-treatment. Photo: Jason Nez



2022 GTS Clear Creek Camp post-treatment. Regular use by river trips will keep the arrowweed from coming back! Photo: Jason Nez



2022 GTS Clear Creek Camp encroachment mitigation. Photo: Jason Nez



2022 GTS Clear Creek Camp encroachment mitigation. Photo: Joe Nielson

FOR EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON: A TEACHABLE MOMENT

Even well-meaning actions can have unintended consequences. One powerful message that the guides on our GTS river trip took away from the stewardship project was that respect for cultural concerns and sensitivities is vital. This in turn underscores the necessity of seeking out, understanding, and incorporating tribal values and concerns into decision-making. Our amazing GTS speaker, Bennett Wakayuta (Hopi/Hualapai) put it best:

"Dolores Honga was one of my teachers that really stressed to me to not pick material out of

season. The plants should be asleep (fall). She taught me how to make cradle boards. After a quick teaching moment, I collected enough to use, as not to be wasteful. I'm hoping this will be sufficient for her and her memory."

In other words, GCRG's intent was to partner with the NPS to improve the recreational resource at the start of the river season, but by doing so, we ultimately caused harm from an indigenous perspective because we were conducting the vegetation removal work at the wrong time of

year. That is an important lesson for all of us.

GCRG would like to extend a heartfelt apology to Bennett, to the tribes, and the elders that still hold right to these traditions. This was a profound learning experience for the guides on our GTS river trip, but it also serves as an important reminder to our broader river running community that the eleven tribes of Grand Canyon are its traditional stewards. It behooves us all to listen, learn, and do better.

Lynn Hamilton
Executive Director GCRG

V-GTS RECORDINGS ARE AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING

What an awesome Virtual Guides Training Seminar (V-GTS)! Our incredible speakers shared a wealth of information over the March 26-27 weekend. All of the V-GTS presentations were incredibly thought-provoking, leaving a lasting impression that will spark additional conversations, for sure. That information will flow out to the broader river running public this summer. Hurrah!

If you were unable to attend, never fear, we recorded the V-GTS presentations so you can now watch them at your leisure. GCRG has completed a marathon uploading session of the recordings (whew!!), and now all of these presentations, including the Superintendent's pre-recorded address to the river community, can be accessed and viewed here: www.gcr.org/gts-library. What a wealth of information from our valued tribal and NPS

partners, climate change experts and other scientists—important perspectives and insights, and endless knowledge to absorb and share.

Approximately 125 people registered for the V-GTS, and if you attended our virtual training, we hope you really enjoyed participating. The fantastic questions asked of our V-GTS speakers were a measure of our engaged and well-informed audience. Thank you for taking the time to seek out this outstanding educational opportunity.

Lastly, we would like to give a special shout out to Emily Ambrose, our incredible V-GTS facilitator who was also such an enormous help with coordination and planning. A professionally-led program makes a world of difference, and we could not have done it without her! Grand Canyon River Guides would also like to extend our sincerest *thank you* to all of our GTS funders, partners and supporters, including:

- Grand Canyon Conservancy
- Grand Canyon Fund and all the commercial river outfitters
- Grand Canyon National Park staff and Superintendent Keable
- Intertribal Centennial Conversations Group
- Whale Foundation
- Engage Coaching and Consulting (Emily Ambrose), and assistant Laura Fallon
- Point Positive
- All fabulous V-GTS speakers!! We're so deeply honored!!
- GCRG president, Billie Prosser, and all our GCRG officers and directors
- And of course, all V-GTS attendees, and all you who watch/share these great V-GTS videos!

Lynn Hamilton

GTS River Trip Recap

This year's GTS river trip was an incredible opportunity of growth. Each year, a theme of its own seems to present itself. I did notice more first time rowers, but that was expected. We had a dory on her maiden voyage, which did flip but the recovery was incredible! We also had someone go river left at Bedrock, which was extremely scary but in the end the whole team pulled everything through safely. I do want to give the ARR crew a big shout out and thank you, because during our visit to the Whitmore panel there may have been some foul play witnessed by these young, new boatmen. They were able to not only report it but they also got pictures. Now we have our NPS people investigating. Tribes do our own monitoring but when these desecrations happen, we don't always find the people involved. Along with the crew having witnessed our tribal perspective and what we do for places like Anvil Rock, we depend on these river guides to spread the word of how to respect the river. We did do a small clean up of items left on the rock. I have full faith that these new boatmen will take to heart some of these teachings, and protocols presented on this year's GTS.

I'm so glad to be a part of this growth. Han-kya.

One last thing that was shared from Hualapai teachings, is the respect of plant life and certain seasons we harvest certain plants. We did do a beach clearing but these teachings were not known by the river community, until now.

Bennett Wakayuta



The Bald Rock's raven gets a visit from one of her Canyon cousins. Photo: Melissa Giovanni



Photos: Bennett Wakayuta

April 1–16, 2022



Inset photos: Bennett Wakayuta

The 3am pee break — Milky Way over Granite Camp
Shot on iPhone 12Pro, 10-sec exposure. Photo: Melissa Giovanni

Announcing the 2022 River Runners Hall-of-Fame Inductees

One year ago, the River Runners Hall-of-Fame inductees for the John Wesley Powell Museum in Green River, UT were announced in the pages of the BQR. As members of the hall-of-fame selection committee, our approach was to conduct the 2021 ceremony in-person at the museum. After the long hiatus brought on by the pandemic, we were all looking forward to reconnecting with friends and celebrating as a community. Then, during the months leading up to the ceremony, as the Delta variant surged, we decided to be cautious and cancel the event. Fast forward one year, we are back to planning the ceremony once again. Our 2022 inductees are the same three river-runners we selected last time. They are; Dave Rust, Harry Aleson, and Les Jones.

Rust, Aleson, and Jones were selected individually and spanned different, and also at times overlapping periods of river-running history. Additionally, they fall into a category together as each person stands out for their specific contributions of introducing numerous people to the rivers of the southwest. For instance, Dave Rust oversaw the building of the North Kaibab Trail, the bridge across the river, and he also established and operated Rust's Camp (now called Phantom Ranch) in the bottom of Grand Canyon. In 1923, he became one of the first professional river guides, by taking paying guests through Glen Canyon in canvas foldable canoes. Aleson introduced Georgie White to the river. In 1944, he and White donned life preservers and then swam on 65,000 cfs of melted snow from Diamond Creek to Quartermaster Canyon. Two years later, they hiked a small raft nearly



Dave Rust at the oars of his folding canvas canoe on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon, along with the Kolb brothers (Ellsworth and Emery, in the bow) and two other companions, about 1908-1909.

Photo credit: NAU.PH.568.966, Kolb Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Cline Library, Northern Arizona University.



Harry Aleson. Photo courtesy: Renny Russell



Les Jones. Photo: Dugald Bremner

eighty miles across the plateau, inflated it, and then rowed from the mouth of Parashant Canyon to the Grand Wash Cliffs. Les Jones developed detailed and intricate scroll maps demonstrating many of the river

sections throughout the Green and Colorado Basin, and other rivers as well. A civil engineer by training, Jones's perseverance to the craft of cartography left a lasting legacy for anyone who needed some river-running guidance, and a blueprint on how to do it safely.

Our hall-of-fame selection committee is currently composed of eight members including the executive director of the museum. We meet regularly to plan each year's induction ceremony, which are held annually during the fall in Green River, UT. Throughout the year we welcome nominations of individuals who have contributed in significant and unique ways to river-running on the Green and Colorado Rivers. Nomination forms are available upon request to jwpdirector@gmail.com. The 2022 ceremony will be held at the museum in Green River on Saturday October 1st, from 3-8 P.M. The price for an individual ticket to the ceremony is \$30.00, which will include access to dinner, presentations, discussions, and an auction of river-related gear. We will also announce our 2023 hall-of-fame selections during the ceremony. Attendance is open to the public, and more information can be found during the coming months on the museum's website www.johnwesleypowell.com, and on our social media channels as well. If you have a passion for river-running history, this is an event for you! We hope to see you there on October 1st!

The Members of the John Wesley Powell Museum Hall-of-Fame Selection Committee: Candice Cravins, Loie Evans, Martha Ham, Bob Quist, Ryann Savino, Latimer Smith, Michael Smith, and Roy Webb

HOW LOW CAN THEY GO?

It's no secret. The day has arrived where Lake Powell is so low that Glen Canyon Dam is on the verge of not producing power. Things are bad. The City of Page and the LeChee Chapter of the Navajo Nation are perilously close to losing the primary source of their drinking water. Here is a quick recap of the situation and what it may mean for boating this summer.

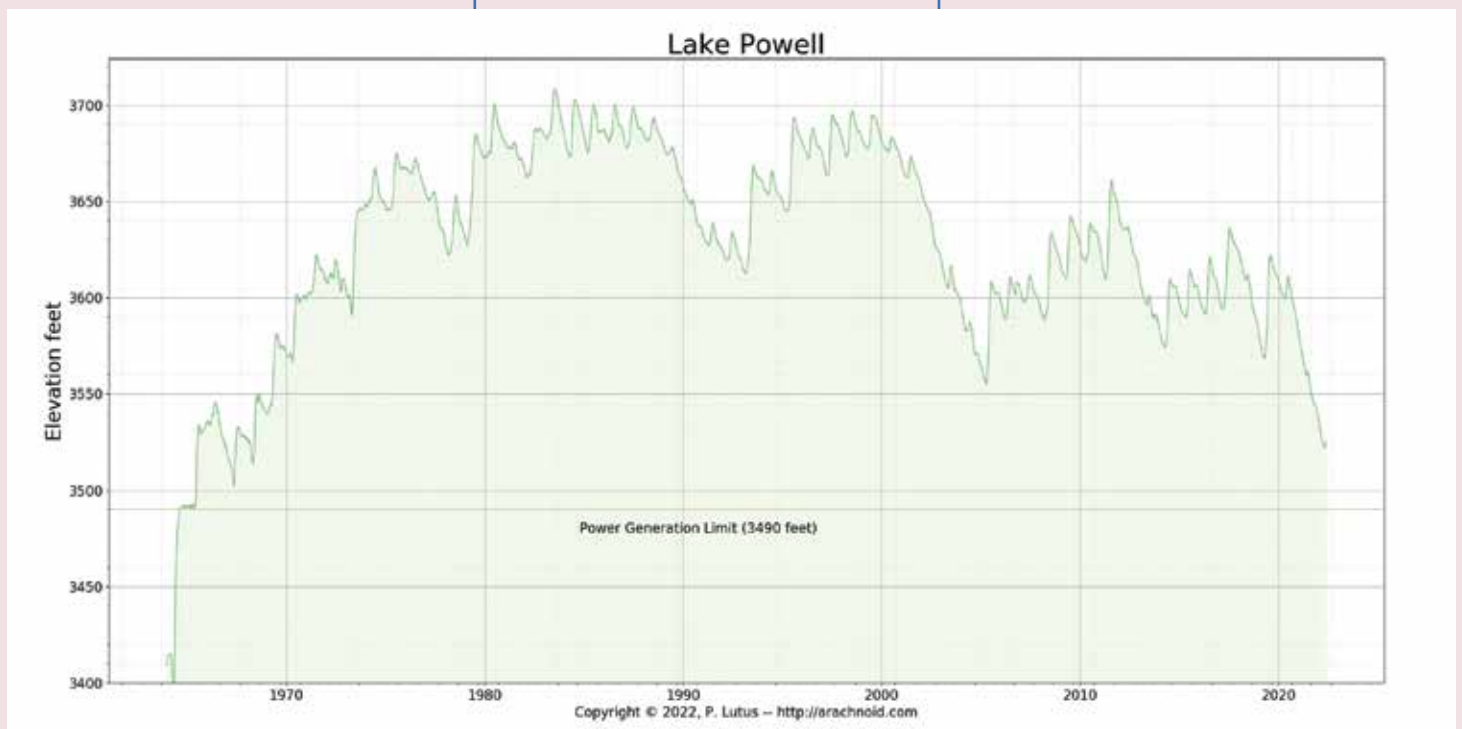
First off, you may already know that the Long-Term Experimental Management Plan (LTEMP) is basically the Bureau of Reclamation's (BoR) playbook for experimental flows. Unfortunately this plan didn't account for the current conditions (giving fodder to litigation by several groups for ignoring climate change). Hopefully there will be approval to continue the Bug Flow experiments. For us boat folks though, the LTEMP failed to work last fall. Despite

prime conditions for a High Flow Experiment (HFE) that would have rebuilt our beaches and benefitted the ecosystem, the best tool in the shed got scuttled more or less because of the drought. At least this was the excuse. Under the LTEMP, the yearly release would be the same whether we conducted an HFE or not and the monthly release volumes would be adjusted to meet the planned annual release. In reality the health of the Colorado River Ecosystem (CRE) took a backseat to stakeholder concerns about financial losses from power generation and non-native fish getting through the penstocks with low reservoir levels.

More recently, some creative accounting has managed to keep Lake Powell from the brink. The seven basin states (CA, AZ, CO, UT, WY, NM, and NV) amazingly agreed to a plan that holds back 480,000

acre-feet per year in Lake Powell while sending down an additional 500,000 acre-feet from Flaming Gorge. The net-net is another million acre-feet in Lake Powell, but as if by magic the BoR will assume that Lake Mead is actually higher than reality. Why? Because if they used the actual reservoir elevations then the next shortage tier would hold back a lot of water for people in Arizona and California. That day is coming, just not today apparently. Of course this means that Hoover Dam is also now perilously close to not having enough water to produce power. As a result it is highly likely it will be a summer of low water navigating.

How low you may ask? If we go by the LTEMP, then the minimum flow could be 5,000 cfs overnight and 8,000 cfs during the day throughout the year. If approved, the Bug Flows would result in low steady flows



Lake Powell water levels, historical and current to 5-19-2022 (3,527 feet).

over the weekends between May and August. However these are unprecedented times and anything is possible.

So what happens if Lake Powell dips below 3,490 feet (or more precisely 3,470 feet which is the centerline of the penstocks)? To keep water flowing downstream the BoR would need to open four outlet works (river bypass tubes) that have never been used before. In other words, they have no idea what would happen (you may recall the not-so-well-designed spillway-spewing-Navajo-sandstone disaster of 1983). At tops these could allow 15,000 acre feet of precious water to flow downstream, but I wouldn't bet on anything near that flow. I mean water ain't free right?

And what happens if the lake drops below the outlets? For now, that would mean disaster. The outlets are situated at approximately 3,374 feet—less than a hundred feet below the penstocks—and there are currently no options to get water around the dam below that level. The old bypass tubes that were used in 1983+, and during BHBF and HFEs to divert the river around the dam when it was being built were plugged up with cement in 1963. For some context, since 2020 Lake Powell has dropped approximately 150 feet, which is roughly the same elevation difference between the current lake levels and the outlet works. Let's hope we never have to contemplate that scenario.

Dave Brown & Ben Reeder

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE LOW FLOWS IN GRAND CANYON IN THE 1970s

When describing the excitement of a trip through Grand Canyon on the Colorado River, most will first mention the water: tongues, holes, breaking waves—the hydraulics of a big-water river. Our pulses increase at the mention of Hance or Hermit Rapid—we pucker at the mention of Lava Falls. At normal flows, no river in the West packs a wallop like the Colorado.

But "water" is not always the first thing we remember after a Canyon trip. Sometimes it's rocks. And not the awe-inspiring rocks of the canyon walls, but river rocks, everywhere we'd like to go. The low water periods of 1973 and 1977 offered the "opportunity" to experience the Colorado River in a unique way—one many hoped never to repeat. The Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) at times released less than 1000 cfs in 1977, resulting in rapids looking nothing like their normal presentation—and offering nothing like well-known routes.

When you listen to boaters describe these flows you hear repeated themes. Again, the river-rocks, everywhere. The normal glassy approach of the pool/drop rapids of Grand Canyon often had a rock garden complicating the entrance. Long, laborious pools between rapids required constant rowing. It was very windy as a bonus. Rapids started earlier and were completely flat way before the end of the rapid as we know them. Lava Falls at 1,000 cfs would be the best example of this phenomenon: totally flat from the V-wave past the Black Rock.

Early post-dam flows were nothing like the (mostly) predictable flows of today. The key to understanding BoR flow-patterns lies in understanding what the 'R' stands for: it's not Recreation—its Reclamation! Prime functions of the BoR are to store water and generate electricity—as efficiently and as lucratively as possible...meaning you increase flow when you need electricity (summer days) and shut down at night—quickly. Were their thoughts turned towards the impact of these patterns on boaters in Grand Canyon? Apparently not. Flows regularly varied prior to the 1990s from below 8,000 cfs to above 24,000 cfs in remarkably short periods. Depending on where you were, boats could end up way dry in the morning, or kitchens might be flooded in the wee hours. The Grand Canyon Protection Act (GCPA) in 1992 made flows more predictable, ramping speeds slower and extremes less extreme.

1973 was characterized by several low flow periods. It's interesting to explore why there was low water in 1973...it was not the middle of a drought. A battle had emerged, pitting water/power needs of the rapidly developing West, against efforts to preserve wild areas. Low water of 1973 was the result of a series of lawsuits to save Rainbow Bridge National Monument (RBNM) from the rising waters of Lake Powell. Preservation efforts were led by David Brower (Sierra Club), Howard Zahniser (Wilderness Society) and other dedicated souls. The initial lawsuit was filed in 1962 by the National



BADGER RAPID
1,000 CFS



LAVA FALLS RAPID
1,000 CFS

Photos: Bob Whitney

Parks Association, a conservation group focused on preserving national parks, against Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall in District Court. This suit ended in defeat for the plaintiffs hoping to halt closure of Glen Canyon Dam's gates. An appeal failed... and the Supreme Court refused the case. Gates closed January 1963 and the Lake began to rise. While the Lake advanced, David Brower—now director/president of Friends of the Earth—mobilized an effort to challenge the threat. In November 1970, Friends of the Earth, Ken Sleight, and the Wasatch Mountain Club filed suit again in Federal Court. The case

was moved to Salt Lake City and produced a victory for the plaintiffs: District Judge Ritter ruled in February 1973 that the BoR must "remove all waters which have already intruded from Lake Powell from...the boundaries of the Rainbow Bridge National Monument...". The only way to do so was for the BoR to begin releasing: 26,000 cfs. However, this exaggerated flow would not last. The decision was reversed on appeal...and the Supreme Court refused the case. Here we (finally) reach the source of low water in 1973. By May a significant percentage of water which the Colorado River Storage Plan (CRSP)

mandates to the Lower Basin states was already released. To avoid releasing more than mandated, the BoR diminished releases. The 'mean daily flows' at times dropped to 3,000 to 4,000 cfs and lower. Motor-boatmen memorized newly emerged shallow rocks and routes, later considering these flows good 'training' for the more sustained, lower flows of 1977. But 1973 differed in several important ways from 1977: 1973 lows were more temporary. Due to regular fluctuations, trips could wait to run higher water. Motorboats "stacked-up" at places notorious for destroyed props and lower units. Unkar looked

like a motorboat parking lot.

In contrast to 1973, 1977 was a drought. The average annual inflow for the five years leading up to 1977 was approximately 15,600 cfs; in 1977 it was 6,844 cfs. (For reference the average annual inflow for 2021 was only 5,965 cfs!) Knowing that water would be short (perhaps a runoff of 45 percent) the BoR probably wanted to save water for the higher summer power demand. April and May flows were at times less than 1,000 cfs. Unlike the fluctuating waters of 1973, the lows lasted for days. It is unclear how much warning the BoR gave river-runners, but enough time for most outfitters to cancel trips. Some companies, though their gut feelings must have warned them, decided to run. Their stories are fascinating, and often humorous, though the effort involved in these (ad)ventures is palpable.

It was extremely difficult to fit an 18-foot oar-rig down Grand Canyon at 1,000 cfs. However, several 34-foot motor-rigs also attempted the run. When the river reached its nadir, bigger boats were stranded, as captured in a *New York Times* article. Perhaps influenced by this national exposure, as well as calls from frantic outfitters, the BoR decided to increase flows to approximately 6,000 cfs for two-to-three days. Helicopters were dispatched to alert trips of the "window", but two-to-three days were not long enough for human-powered boats. Some tried flagging down full-throttled motor-rigs to discuss a possible ride, but they were afforded only quick waves. Trips attempted to make it to at least Phantom Ranch. Though Phantom is shy of the halfway point, many trips had used up eighty percent of their days, eighty percent of their food, and all their beer. Guides hiked to the South Rim to buy supplies—an arduous endeavor. It is a testimony that some commercial passengers elected to stay with the trips—some hiked with the guides to the South Rim—but loaded their packs with the strongest liquor they could find.

These days were extremely hard and medicinal elixirs were important. Helicopters from Phantom evacuated some equipment and people.

For those trips that continued down the Lower Canyon the nature of the trip was similar, but as we would predict, more harrowing. Major rapids of the Upper Canyon had been negotiated rock to rock. Kayakers described Sock and Grapevine as a picket, some chutes ending blindly. The Lower Canyon was more channelized but had more power and often teeth. Horn Creek Rapid was an extreme right run, punctuated by the large rock at the bottom—some oars did survive. There were difficult rapids that at normal flows were insignificant: 104.5 and (way) lower Doris. At the opposite end of the spectrum were rapids like Crystal—ordinarily feared, several people walked/waded out to the Rock Island and continued across the river to touch the other side! Along the way they took note of the three outboard motors in the rocks of the island—one still attached to a transom. One group ate lunch in Slate Creek Eddy, one group climbed on top of the rock that forms lower Crystal hole.

Some of those who ran the river at 1,000 cfs, less than a decade later ran at almost 100,000 cfs! What incredible perspective. It is tempting to ask, in this time of our extended drought, if the low flows of the 1970s offer us any predictive insight on future flows. 1977 was a drought year, but Lake Powell was less than fifty feet from full pool, and whatever challenges faced the BoR in 1977, the following year offered almost double the inflow of 1977, and 1979 almost triple. 2022 offers no such lake-reserve, nor is a return to 'normal' snowpack likely. Grand Canyon does lay between Glen Canyon and Hoover Dams. Water will move between these two chock-points, whether through turbines, outlet tubes or some as-yet-to-be-constructed bypass. Thus, there will be an opportunity for boating, though it is hard to take comfort in this fact

given the anxiety and pain that water shortages will cause for many. It may be that flows in the shoulder seasons and winter will be greatly diminished to save water for summer's greater demand. We may see changes in the Colorado River Storage Plan and perhaps in the Grand Canyon Protection Act, as there is precedence for unexpected change in established law (1973) in the face of restrictions to water availability and the threat of diminished generation. It remains to be seen if problems common to the arid-West, result in cooperative efforts, and an equitable solution.

Bill Karls

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guide profiles

Jay Healy, Age 47

Where were you born & where did you grow up? Born in eastern Montana, and I grew up in Polson, Montana.

Who do you work for currently (and in the past)? Started guiding in Moab, Utah in 1996. Then worked at Moki Mac River Expeditions from 1997-2012 then AZRA from 2012 till now, along with Moab Jett these last two years.

What kind of boat(s) do you run? I've been lucky enough to have run all kinds of boats, dories, s-rigs, modified j-rigs, loaded and unloaded paddle boats that I opt out of if there's an opportunity. My favorite would have to be the dory 'till the wind blows then I prefer a motor of any kind. I also drive jet boats up in Moab, 20-foot Kwik Kraft.

What are your hobbies/passions/dreams? I'm a glutton what can I say but I really love the guiding life and running boats on any type of water. The newest dream is to get an actual captain's license and see if there's anything other than the Grand to go boating in/on. Most likely a dive boat or sunset cruises somewhere warm.

Married/family/pets? Not married but I have a lovely gal pal, Rose. She puts up with a lot of shenanigans just to go boating a couple times of year. The rest of the family is up in Bozeman, MT.

School/area of study/degrees? I graduated from MSU in Bozeman with a BS in biology, never really used it other than a few USFWS fish trips.

What made you start guiding? I started guiding because I just couldn't spend any more of my time

inside. That and my buddy Solgear kind of shamed me into it, by saying, "I could move to Moab and be a river guide, or go back and live in my parent's basement and work at the one hour photo shop." Needless to say I've never looked back after that.

Who have been your mentors and/or role models? My mentors and role models are pretty diverse. To start it off there was Timbo Angus at YASNY sport adventures, he was as loud and demanding as his army ranger training allowed and since he was a paraplegic it added a whole different view to being a guide. Timbo was the reason I started to pursue the Grand.



Then I met Bob Quist up in Green River and went to work at Moki. I had no idea what I had stumbled into but it was *amazing!* Up there it was Shane Edwards, Chris Smith, Steiner Beppu, Ike Tolpinrud and Dusty Fallentine. Then I mentioned Solgear before but he really pushed me into the skills aspect before I got fired from Green River and had to transfer to Grand Canyon. Now I'm dealing with Pam and Claire Quist. Got on full time with them after 2008. They watched me grow up a lot in the 17 years at Moki, which was an amazing family

to work with. During that time it was guys like Matt Herrman, Larry Vermereen, Scott Mosiman, Bruce Quayle and family, Tim and Simone, and David Stinson, not to mention the other legends that would show up from time to time, Connie Tibbits was one who had lots of good advice for a young guide. Then there was the AZRA squad too, Ed Hasse, BJ Boyle, Happy Jack, Fred and Alex, Dennis Smoldt, Randy Tucker, Dirk Pratlery and Whalen of course.

What do you do in the winter? In the winter Rose and I try to travel and see what's out there; usually someplace remote and warm works best. We bought a house in Moab and are trying to get it updated but it's a slow process as we are always busy.

Is this your primary way of earning a living or do you combine it with something else? Guiding has been my only source of income for the last decade or so. I used to work in the ski industry for a few years but that just never paid, I found it easier to budget harder and not have to beg for time off to do something fun.

What's the most memorable moment in your guiding career? As far as memorable moments go its really all been a blur. I'd say it's all those watershed moments that get shared along the way. That look in someone's eyes when they truly get "it." Sharing the magic with friends, family and strangers.

What's the craziest question you've ever been asked about the canyon/river? "What do you mean by I can't have fajitas for a midnight snack?" Or, "No really what's behind the rocks?"

What do you think your future holds? I was chasing after 200 trips before

I turned 50 but the pandemic put a damper on that reality. It's still a goal, just hope I can get it by 60? The future definitely holds more travel, more adventures, and some sort of career change as I've already had a real good run here in the canyon.

What keeps you here? I'm here because I know the end of an era approaches, with the drought going to make it all change, and I want to see it, whatever that is. I've talked about being able to run the canyon in any boat at anytime at any level and

now it's about to be put to the test! So how could I tear myself away at the moment I've been waiting for, 28 years later...I want to be able to tell the story of how Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell died.

Billie Prosser, Age 45 (gosh, it sure went by fast!)

Where were you born & where did you grow up? I was born in Arcata, California and live in a small town there called Manila. It is on a sand peninsula between Humboldt Bay and the Pacific Ocean. I have lived in the same half mile radius my entire life, sort of like a rabbit I guess, but it's such a cool place.

Who do you work for currently (and in the past)? I have mostly worked for Oars/Dories over the years and still do a late season dory trip with them. More recently I have been working with Tour West and Wilderness River Adventures.

How long have you been guiding? I got my first paycheck for guiding a raft in 1991. I started in the Grand Canyon rowing baggage boats in 1994.

What kind of boat(s) do you run? 18-foot rafts, dories, paddle boats, kayaks, trying to get the hang of driving a motor boat.

What other rivers have you worked on? I began guiding in Northern California mostly on the Trinity, Cal Salmon and Klamath, but have freelance guided on many of the Sierra Rivers in California and the Rogue over the years. I have been guiding in Idaho on the Selway, Middle Fork and Main Salmon for the last twelve years when it gets too hot in the Grand Canyon. This has been the bulk of my guiding career.



Photo: Margeaux Bestard

What are your hobbies/passions/dreams? Art, boating, beach walks, hiking, building projects, yard work. I'm always dreaming of a new river to run.

Married/family/pets? I have a long-time partner, Curtis. We have a dog and cat. They bring much joy.

School/area of study/degrees? I have a degree from Humboldt State University where I studied ceramics.

What made you start guiding? It seemed like everyone was having a really good time!

What brought you here? Originally a private trip. I fell head over heels in love with the Grand Canyon and being able to float down a river for so many days. It was my first trip to a desert. My concept of the Grand Canyon until then was straight out

of National Lampoon's *Vacation!* I had never even thought about a river running through it. I met Robby Pitagora a year later on the Cal Salmon River and he invited me to row a baggage boat on an Oars charter he had put together. I jumped at the opportunity!

Who have been your mentors and/or role models? First of all I owe my boating career to my best friend since kindergarden Jess and her dad Gary for teaching us as kids to row. How lucky I was to be the friend that got to go along. I am so thankful to my parents for letting me go and pursue what made me happy. Gary worked with Bill Wing who owned The Electric Rafting Company and later started Wing Inflatables. Bill became like a big brother to me and took me in under his wing when I was in high school. He introduced me to Robby, probably since he was so tired of hearing me talk about my Grand Canyon private trip. My mentors in the Grand Canyon in no particular order are Bruce and Nancy Helin, Scotty Stevens, Stephanie White, Mike Fabry, Ote Dale, and of course Robby Pitagora. I have to thank Rich Smith, John Fullbright and Kyle Bebb for taking me kayaking. This list is far too short!!!

What do you do in the winter? My favorite winter job has been working on a salmon spawner survey for California Fish and Wildlife on Redwood Creek and the seven Humboldt Bay tributaries that still have spawning habitat. It was really cool to hike and float these streams

and observe salmon. I worked part-time at this job for around ten years. The last two winters I have been teaching private ceramic lessons out of my home studio to kids. Really, I try to work as little as possible.

Is this your primary way of earning a living or do you combine it with something else? River guiding brings in the bulk of my income.

What's the most memorable moment in your guiding career? There are so many! This question makes my head spin.

What's the craziest question you've ever been asked about the canyon/river? I've heard most of the classics for sure. I have learned that I am constantly surprised by what people will ask you.

What do you think your future holds? I am not much of a planner...hopefully good health and happiness.

What keeps you here? The friendships I have made and the ones I look forward to making in the most amazing Canyon in the world.

Reflecting on the Confluence.
Photo: Melissa Giovanni

Back of the Boat— The Whale Foundation News Bulletin

Hello all! I hope the season is treating you well. Here come the hot days...

I'm glad to tell you the Whale Foundation received excellent applications for the Kenton Grua Memorial Scholarship (KGMS) in 2022. Winners will be announced soon. The KGMS has helped dozens of Grand Canyon River Guides pursue their academic dreams and make their lives work better. We're sure proud of all the ways this community supports hard-working guides.

Of course, summer is the quiet(ish) time here at the WF office, but good things are in the works. Our first Crew Meeting was a small but worthy

success: we raised some money and met good folks. We're planning at least one more for this year. I hope you can join us. (Sign up at <https://www.whalefoundation.org/subscribe> and/or follow us on Instagram to be sure to get all the latest info.)

And when you're out on the water doing the awesome things you do in that beautiful place, don't forget to mention the Whale Foundation, GCRG, and GCY to your folks. They often like to have a way to stay in touch with the community they've spent some days becoming a part of. Thank you for your support!

Sam Jansen



Technically Not a Widow

Dugald [Bremner] and I met on the first day of our senior year in high school in Dallas, Texas, in the fall of 1972. We were both 17. It was 5th period English, one of the last class periods that day, and Kaye Fisher, the best teacher in the school, was nonetheless sending us both home for dress code violations (it was my third and final trip home that day).

We discovered that we had in common moving around some while growing up, Dugald's parents immigrating from Great Britain when Dugald was two; mine immigrating from the liberal scene in Minnesota, to the dark place of Texas, when I was 16.

In high school we shared a lot of dreams. We explored city parks, lakes, and creeks. We visited sporting goods stores to study all the useful-looking wares (Dugald tried and failed to teach me shoplifting). We went to Sierra Club-sponsored movies and discussed potential escape, hopefully to some remote town or place in the Rocky Mountains.

After high school, we instead went to college. But we both managed to at least move out west to climb; Dugald to Prescott College, me to the University of Arizona.

At Prescott College, that first fall, Dugald enrolled in a rock-climbing class taught by British/Rhodesian climber, Rusty Baillie. The British were the classic climbers. Our heroes were George Mallory, Edmund Hillary, and the lesser-known Joe Brown, author of *The Hard Years*, where I learned about hex nuts being taken from car engines. They were used for protection, then returned to the vehicle at the end of a day of climbing when it was time to go.

Although I had a head-start learning to climb, having gone on an Outward Bound-style course, Dugald rocketed ahead of me in ability. He was confident on the rock; he made it look easy. He looked like he had stumbled onto his calling, what he was fated

to do. Unfortunately for my soon-to-be-bruised feminist, competitive, egalitarian ego, as we tried new sports like kayaking and nordic skiing, almost every time the same thing happened. I was competent, but Dugald was inspired.

Dugald left Prescott for Flagstaff where he improved his rock-climbing skills and worked at a little outdoor sporting goods store, the Alpineer. Larry Coats, Dugald's climbing partner, and I got jobs there too.

We three shared a dream, to go to Alaska to climb. It was likely we'd die in the attempt. But if not, we'd move on to the Himalayas. For sure we'd die there. And if by some miracle we did not, after that we'd feel pretty darn cool.

Because of this, we took trips from Arizona to Colorado to Wyoming to get practice ice-climbing. For me, these dreams were all too easily surrendered. It was exciting to be bivouacked on a ledge in the Tetons when we had failed to complete a route before sunset. But after one too many nights spent in a tent with my icy waterfall-runoff-soaked woolen clothes, I gave up. Years later Dugald admitted to me that, after I quit going, they spent nights in a cheap hotel, taking hot showers at the end of the day.

In a phone conversation, I learned from Ben Dobbins, a Prescott College/ adventure sports friend, that Dugald had realized those early ambitions to climb internationally. He had gone to China with another Prescott-er, to explore the mountains there.

When I asked the now famous Dugald about realizing his early dreams he'd jokingly say, "Enough about me, what do you think of me?" Then he'd change the subject, talking about his brothers that I had lost touch with. Stuart, Neil, Keith, Duncan, and Andrew were grown up, had gotten married, and were having babies.

Dugald and I got married while I was finishing my college Geology studies, although what we really were doing was rock-climbing. We avoided stereotyping and roles, I avoided housework, he avoided paying bills. The goal was an egalitarian relationship, so, my chore was to change the transmission fluid in his Volkswagen bus (his idea), his was to be sensitive and supportive (my idea).

In college, a psychology major, his one last course was Anatomy and Physiology. He briefly considered medical school in a rare moment of concern about the future (maybe he'd be a doctor after all like his father?) but primarily he seemed to enjoy studying with all the female nursing students.

He graduated from Northern Arizona University, mostly to please his parents, wondering if it had been worth his time. He always seemed to feel that he didn't have time to waste. His parents gave him some money as a graduation present so he could finance a summer of full-time rock-climbing in Yosemite. He then took a student there who paid Dugald to take him.

It's not easy making a living rock-climbing, so Dugald, who was also a kayaker, began working as a raft guide on whitewater river trips. We stopped living in his Volkswagen bus, partly because Dugald began making steady money as a Grand Canyon river guide, but also because our non-conformity to gender roles was fading. Since he was paying most of the bills, to be equitable, I began doing our communal laundry (not sure whose ideas these were).

On the river cooperation prevailed over competition. My tolerance for being left behind in climbing was paying off in getting to go on river trips. He rowed his first trips in the Grand Canyon with Dick McCallum's crew; Brian Dierker and Mike Yard. The first time I went, somehow the

crew absorbed me into their team, overcoming the last of my resistance to conformity.

Was it the non-stop fun? Or that on the river cooperation prevailed over competition, cooperation being a nonconformist attitude I could support. Or was it that my tolerance for being left behind in sports ability was finally paying off in getting to go on river trips? Whatever it was, I helped out when I could figure out what to do, then relaxed on the boat with a beer, forgetting my Himalayan dreams.

Dugald kayaked on his days off, kayaking increasingly difficult runs. The first time I dropped him off at the upper end of some steep mountain whitewater that had hardly ever been run, I wondered if I'd ever see him again, and wondered how the risk he was taking could be worth it. I kayaked (and climbed, skied, etc.) more conservatively, and asked him how he could risk his life, and wasn't he afraid?

He explained he never pushed beyond where he felt in control; that what he was doing was within his level of ability. He told me he only wanted me to run something if I felt it was within my ability to run it in control. We had friends, he felt, who were not in control on the water, and he didn't like boating with them. Of course, he didn't like kayaking with much of anyone. Not me, either. I couldn't keep up.

When marriage, children, and the future first came up, brought up by me, Dugald left the country. He had just started nordic ski-racing and had won the Arizona cup as the dark horse. He didn't think he'd be able to repeat this. So, basically, he explained, he had to leave town. He went to France to teach skiing, and competed in world-loppet ski marathons. When he returned to Flagstaff, I enrolled in his ski-racing clinic.

Writing at the time of his death, mostly for my own resolution of emotion, I also shared the story of my proposal with family and friends. I was surprised when one said, "That's not

how it happened." Perhaps, I had an unconscious attitude about making sure Dugald, regarding commitment-phobia, was cast in the role of "bad guy." Anyhow, according to this unasked-for critic, who really had no reason to lie, when I said, "I want to get married," Dugald's unperturbed response was, "When?" "Uh..." my bluff so cruelly exposed (and I have no memory of this), I am told that I replied, "well, (gulp)...maybe in two years?"

What I miss most about Dugald is his drive, even impatience, which combined with his competence always resulted in some incredible adventure being underway. It was hard to resist getting caught up in it, partly because my natural competitiveness allowed no other option. But there was also a paradoxical twist; I was always behind (bruised competitive ego), but I was also always getting boot-strapped-up, beyond what I thought were my limits (competitive gratification).

Marriage came up again, brought up by Dugald, this time. He had started work as a sales-rep selling kayaks, and other outdoor equipment. I questioned his purpose. Was this really meaningful work, which would further our mutual goals?

He surprised me by saying what he really wanted was to someday be like our eighty-something friend, Roger Thweet. Dugald said Roger's goal was not to win in cross-country ski marathons, but simply to ski his own perfect race. He went on saying his goal was not just selling boats, but selling people on healthy, active, outdoor pursuits they could enjoy their whole lives.

Maybe I really could marry this guy? I thought. One night Dugald got off the phone with his brother, Steuart. Dugald, who had been born in Scotland, announced that the first Bremner girl born on this continent, his new niece Lorna, had just arrived. "Would you like to be an aunt?" he said.

So, we got married on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, assisted by best man rock-climber Larry who

when we got to the part where he was supposed to sign the marriage license as witness, just shook his head and rubbed his chin. Finally, he signed it, saying, "It's about time," and the deed was done.

We returned to Flagstaff for the reception, a party it seemed the whole town was attending, or at least every rock-climber and kayaker we had ever known. The next morning, we left for Colorado, and a nordic skiing honeymoon.

When we returned to Flagstaff, Dugald, conducted an uninvited edit of my Geology Master's Thesis on a rock formation called the Redwall that he liked to call the "Jane-wall".

Dugald had become interested in writing and researching how to market himself, with guidance from Flagstaff writer, Scott Thybony. His first assignments were to test, and then write promotional articles on, outdoor sports equipment. He kept the often-free boats and other gear after testing it, a nice benefit for me as I then got to use them. Again, precociously it seemed to me, he negotiated a contract and a cash advance (we were broke) to write a book on nordic skiing.

He asked photographers John Running and Sue Bennett for help (who were already helping us by providing me with part-time office and modeling work). Dugald exchanged darkroom work for this assistance, and, if this was a fairy tale it would end here with the words, "They Lived Happily Ever After". But it's not, so it doesn't.

As I said, no fairy tale. We didn't go to marital heaven, instead we went to marital counseling. Dugald's brother, Keith, also divorced, complained that counseling never works, everyone gets divorced in spite of it.

Waiting in the counseling center's lobby, I felt like a student about to get sentenced to detention. In our hyper-competitive, goal-oriented style, we went into the counselor's office armed with pens and pads, ready to tackle the job. (I still have Dugald's "What I like about Jane" and "How does Jane make me feel loved?" lists we had to

exchange). We pulled up our socks determined to "process" whatever was getting in the way of relational success.

"So how do we process something?" Dugald the psychology major demanded.

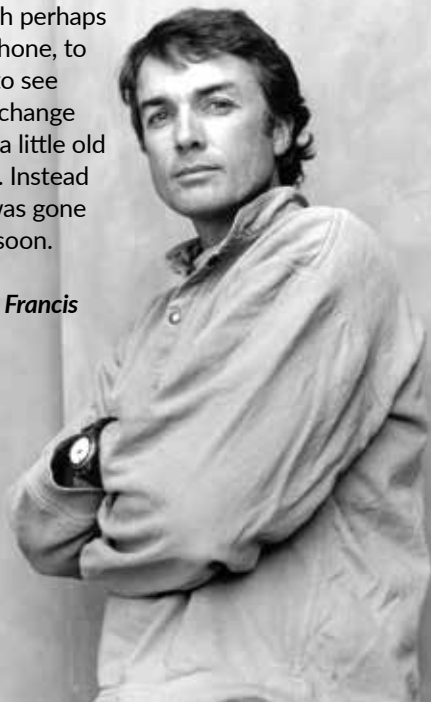
"It's not going to be as straightforward as training for a ski race", the counselor said to the famous ski racer.

"I can't tell you that in steps A, B, and C you will get there. We can start the process, but there's no guarantee. It might not work for you. And, in the end, you might not still be together."

I stayed in touch with Dugald post-divorce mostly by phone, so, when he drowned kayaking, it had been almost two years since I had seen him. I was living in Albuquerque, visiting Flagstaff, the last time I met him for coffee at a shop called Late for the Train. He was graying at the temples. He told me about more photographic work he had landed, and how he had just completed a project for *National Geographic Magazine*. We caught up again on his brothers, and then I told him he was getting old. He replied he felt as young as ever, and tried to get me to agree that I did too. I agreed, instead, to keep staying in touch.

At some long-forgotten time, responding to some long-forgotten comment, Dugald told me, "I don't expect you to change, except into a little old lady." Technically I was not a widow, but I knew that with his death, a part of my life ended. I had expected to see him now and then, to stay in touch perhaps by phone, to get to see him change into a little old man. Instead he was gone too soon.

Jane Francis



SOME KNOTS YOU CANNOT UNTIE EVER

Some knots you can not untie ever
No matter how hard you try,
Pick and pry, fingers bleeding
they resist all effort or good intention.
Misleading, they are baked by sun
And wind, bitter with salt water tears,
And dim, shapeless memories
Hardened by careless misuse
Or indifference, a dense gnarl
Welded onto the heart's
Mystery that defies untangling.

Each morning I reach into my bag of tangled
Line, cord, twine, and rope
To find a piece to practice my knots
Elegant sheet bend, friendly bowline,
Lovely fisherman's loop, fine figure eight,
Clever clove hitch, simple square knot,
solid heaving line, poetic sheepshank, prudent
Prusik, even the monkey puzzle.
I memorize their turns and twists, their overs
And unders, their clean, right-sounding names
Tie and untie, tie and untie
Hands weaving ends—working, standing, bitter
And bights as I bind hope to the day coming.

—Vince Welch

Martha Clark

I had a classic Midwestern upbringing. I grew up in Waukegan, Illinois, an industrial town on the north shore of Lake Michigan, the youngest of six kids. My parents were both teachers. My mom taught first grade her whole life. My dad taught high school history, was the principal of the school, then finally couldn't make any money and went to work for some company being a systems analyst, whatever that really is. I think a big reason they were both teachers was because they wanted to have the summers off, go camp with their kids. Take us on adventures—you know what I mean?—just like we did, but in a whole different era. So, I grew up in a really regular—I call it middle class family—in a small 1950s house that was probably 800 square feet, 8 people, one bathroom, big yard.

And so my parents, it's not that they were really into... what we would say now is nature. They were just into camping, and they would load us kids into the car and we would go drive across the country pulling U-Haul trailers, and we would go to the ocean on the West Coast. We'd go to California or the World's Fair in Seattle. And of course we would go to all the national parks, and we'd go see Mount Rushmore, and Yosemite, and Grand Canyon, and Glacier, pulling a U-Haul with canvas tents and cots and whatever else we had at the time—corny surplus gear. I remember they got a travel trailer in the early-sixties, and it was like getting a Sprinter van now. You know what I mean? (laughter)

I think my dad was the biggest influence on me at the time. I mean, my dad was a Boy Scout leader. He was the father of six kids, had a job, made it for his family, but I think he had this unfulfilled wanderlust. I think he had this dream of his life that he never lived.

He died when I was sixteen, he was fifty-two. But the few years before he died, if we were driving on a trip across the country, he'd pull over on the side of the road... maybe we'd passed a cyclist, which was really unusual at the time, like going on a cross-country trip. And we'd pull ahead like a mile or two in advance, and we'd get out. My dad would get out some orange juice and some cookies, and he would wait for this guy! (laughter) He'd talk to the guy and hear his story and stuff. And even when I was in high school... when I was thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, he would bring home this stuff about American Youth Hostel trips, AYH, in Europe. He'd bring me home these

pamphlets about trips on freighters. It was like you could get on a freighter across the Atlantic for \$200. I'm going, "Dad! I'm fifteen! How do I get on a freighter?!"

I started thinking about it, just a little bit—imagining something like that—but never very seriously. And then he died. But that was a big influence. The following

year, I think because he got me going, you know, kind of traveling, I applied to be an exchange student, and I went to Sweden, and then I came back and did my senior year.

I had always been a really good student, but I never really felt that smart, intellectually, that is. I was clever, I knew what they wanted from me. I knew how to deliver. I always thought I had everybody fooled really. (laughter) So it's 1971 and I was a senior in high school, and I'm seventeen, and I really did not want to go to college. I'd had enough of school, and I really wanted to travel, to do something different. But I didn't know how to do it. So, college was a way out. I knew I wanted to get the hell out of Waukegan. And I wanted to go to a small liberal arts school. I applied to three or four different colleges and ended up choosing Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota because they gave me the



High school senior, 1971.





most money and it was closest to my mom. I was worried that my mom would go downhill with my dad gone and an empty nest. I was the last of six kids to leave home.

And I loved it! Loved the Twin Cities, loved college, fell in love for the first time! I didn't have any direction, except maybe my boyfriend (laughter), so I became an art major, taking drawing and sculpture, East Asian Religion, African American Poetry,

[unclear]...(laughter). But it was just like the world was out there, and I knew it. And I wanted it. Whatever it was.

In my second year we had an independent study for the month of January, so being in Minnesota and not that far from Minnesota Outward Bound, I applied for a scholarship. But I didn't fucking want to go to Minnesota in 30 below zero, flat cross-country skiing. I wanted to go to the mountains, because I'd been to the mountains as a kid with my family.

So I applied for a scholarship to go on this winter mountaineering course at the Colorado Outward Bound School in the South San Juans, at a place called Red Cloud Ranch, outside of Lake City, Colorado.

Mary Williams: In the middle of nowhere.

Martha Clark: Yeah. And not only did I get the scholarship, but they bought me a round-trip ticket and gave me credit!

So I go on this Outward Bound Adventure for a month. I've never skied in my life or backpacked or camped in snow. It's a miracle they didn't...

Williams: Kill someone?

Clark: Kill somebody, yeah. We just had skins on these old stupid downhill skis. They were *terrified* of us ever taking our skins off. And we "walked" around the mountains for a month, and we climbed the Matterhorn, we climbed the Wetterhorn, we climbed Uncompahgre, with these people.

I had the biggest adventure I had ever been on in my 19 years and I absolutely loved it. It was hard, but I just had the time of my life. I just think it's so fuckin' cool. And I had my first glimpse of something I was passionate about. I think going on that Outward Bound trip was just like it would have been had it been the first Grand Canyon trip for me. Here were these guys, these mountaineers, that weren't that much older than me having so much fun and making their living in the outdoors. I wanted to work for the school and to be an instructor, but more than be an instructor I wanted to be a mountaineer! So I tried to get a job and the only job I was qualified for was to work in the

kitchen at Red Cloud Ranch, and I wasn't even qualified for that, really. (laughter)

So I went back to the Twin Cities, waited to hear if I got the job, and I actually got pretty uptight, because I wasn't in school, and all my friends were in school, and the man I was in love with was in school, and I'm going, "What the fuck am I doing?!" Then I got the call that I got the job as the kitchen wench, and that was my start. I went out to Outward Bound as a kid, cooking for about forty people.

And I think it's really funny, because I started off as the kitchen wench, and then I became—they called them sherpas—but you weren't even qualified to be an assistant. And then I became an assistant. And then I eventually became an instructor. I went down the Grand Canyon and I was an assistant again, then a baggage boatman, then I became a guide—I mean a boatman, or boathag. And I did all this stuff in my life and eventually became a restaurant owner—and then like forty, 45 years later, I became a kitchen wench again!

Williams: You're back in the kitchen, cooking for these groups.

Clark: Yup, cooking for fifty people again, or, you know, thirty people.

* * *

Although I have known Martha Clark for many years, and our paths criss-crossed on many occasions in Flagstaff and on the river, it was never for any great length of time and I always felt like I missed out on something. So it was a ton of fun to have had the opportunity to spend quite a number of hours with her in Flagstaff in February, 2022, assisted by Sharon Hester, to hear some hilarious stories, talk about heartbreak, the good ol' days, moving on, and enjoy a lot of laughs. Due to time and space limits, we couldn't get into all the stories from her Outward Bound career, or dive into the weeds about her adventures in the creation of Grand Canyon Youth, along with Fritz [Carol Fritzinger] and Jon Hirsh. Perhaps in Volume II, or the screenplay, ha ha.

Great cook's creations are enhanced by their perfect blend of herbs and spices, and Martha's stories are all the better in telling, with her signature vernacular spicing. As an editor I appreciate this authentic voice and felt strongly that most of it should be left in.

Mary Williams

* * *

Clark: Harry Frishman was a mountaineer, dirtbag, ski patrolman, Southern California surfer who went to Jackson Hole in the '60s and was on the Ski Patrol when they first opened, and became an Exum guide, and then became involved in Outward Bound. When I first went to Outward Bound and I worked in the kitchen, his wife Libby—they didn't hire women in the winter—she was the cook. She was an instructor in the summertime, but

she was only a cook in the winter. And so I was Libby's assistant cook. [She] and her husband Harry were about ten years older, and they took me under their wing. And he was truly, out of the three mentors I think about, it was this man, Harry Frishman, who fell off the middle Teton in 1981 and died at age 39, [who] had a huge influence on my life. I would say it was my father, then Harry Frishman, and then Wesley Smith. Those were my three biggest mentors in my life.

Williams: What about Libby though?

Clark: Libby was a mentor too, in a different way. I was thinking of mentors in the wilderness, on the river. Libby definitely was my mentor cooking. Libby grew up in a family from Berkeley, and her mom read *Gourmet* magazine. I remember cooking with Libby, and we'd be making spaghetti, and Libby would be busy doing something else, and we've got the sauce going, and she would go, "Hey, Martha, spice the spaghetti." And I'd be going, "Jesus, what the hell do I do?" I go, "Libby, how much oregano should I put in there?" Libby goes, "Martha, you can't fuck this up." I'm appalled that she's even saying "fuck." You know what I mean? I'm nineteen years old, and she's older, and I'm looking up to her. And she goes, "You cannot fuck this up, Martha. All you've got to remember is do NOT burn it! Do NOT oversalt it!..." And that is some really good advice. So, I kind of lived by that, in a way, the rest of my life. And so that was my job. But every time a course went out, I went out, because I wanted to work in the field, not in the kitchen.

So, I started working in the field, and finally it was only like a year and a half, and I became an assistant instructor. Wintertime was coming on, and I wasn't qualified to work, because wintertime is so much more serious so I took off with a boyfriend, Larry Campbell, to go skiing in the Okanagan Valley, to some friend's cabin that owned land up there. And there was no snow, and we're hiking with our skis into this cabin. And we meet the people whose land we're walking across; they go, "What are you guys doing?" "We're trying to find [our friends'] cabin." "Oh, well, you're going the right way, but there's no snow." And they offered us a job on this cattle ranch.

Williams: Just out of the blue?

Clark: Well, yeah, because we were trying to get in there, and they said we couldn't make it; and it was kind of like we couldn't hike, and we couldn't ski.

Williams: So you might as well get a job!

Clark: And they needed help, and they were building this house. We were there and they put us up. Larry became the apprentice to the rancher. He started feeding cattle. And I became the apprentice to the mother of the household. So I'm making the noonday meal, and we had a room in their new house that they were working on. So we worked there for not that long, a couple of months, for room and board and the experience. And Larry would be out feeding the cattle, and I'd go out to help him. And it was February, and we're just groveling in cow shit, feeding the cattle, and getting back on the tractor or whatever we were hauling, and I'm just going, "What the fuck am I doing?!" Oh! I had applied to work the following summer—trying to get a job in the mountains. I applied to work as an assistant for the Colorado Outward Bound school. Didn't hear from them...didn't hear from them...and then Larry gets a contract in the mail.

Williams: As a guide?

Clark: As a course director. It was like being a trip leader, or head boatman as we say in Grand Canyon. He was three years older than me. But I didn't [get a contract]. And I am going to myself, "No way am I going to stay on this cattle ranch. And if Outward Bound isn't going to hire me, what am I going to do?" And I thought, "Okay. Okay. I'm going to go travel." And I made this decision on this tractor, in this fucking hideous manure. And I think I said, "I'm going to go travel, and I'm going to go to Scotland. Maybe I'll go to Ireland first and buy a bicycle and ride to Scotland," because I had a Scottish roommate when I was in college. "And Larry, I'm going to stay over in Scotland and Europe, and then after your Outward Bound season I'll meet you in October, six or seven months later. And if this all works out...we'll go overland to Nepal."

So, I go to see my mom, and it's in March, and I'm going to fly to Ireland. I get a contract in the mail and it was from Outward Bound, and it was offering me a job as an assistant instructor. I almost blew off my whole trip. I'm twenty years old, that's *really* what I want to do, and it was a *job*. So, I called up my friends Libby and Harry, my mentors, and I go, "What should I do?" And they go, "Don't even think about it. You go on that trip." And then they go, "Call up the head of Colorado Outward Bound," this guy who was quite a well-known mountaineer, he'd been on Everest, this guy named John Evans. [i.e. husband of Loie Belknap Evans] "Call up John Evans and talk to him." I can't call up John Evans! I was like a twenty-year-old kid; he doesn't know who I am. I'm not going to call him up. And so I got the nerve to call him up, and I said, "My name is Martha Clark. I'm just this sherpa, kitchen wench, I met you last summer," and blah, blah, blah, "in the mountains, at that reunion." And he goes, "Oh yeah, Martha, I remember you." And I told him

On an Outward Bound course.



my dilemma, and he said, "Martha, don't even think about it. You go on your trip. Go for the life experience. Outward Bound will be here for the rest of your life, and you'll be so much better off." And it was really cool that he did that. So that's what I did. I went on this trip for—actually, I went for over a year.

After I made that decision, about three weeks later I flew from Montreal. You could get a round trip ticket for a year that cost about three hundred bucks. I flew to Ireland, tried to buy a bike, couldn't buy a bike. It was March, it was raining like a son of a bitch. It was hideous. I started hitchhiking. I hitchhiked across the country, and I fell in love with Ireland in that month I was there. I finally found a bicycle in Dublin. But at that point I was kind of over cycling, and I was into hitchhiking—which I wouldn't have done on the continent—you know, in Europe—but Ireland was just so far behind, like twenty years behind the continent. I got picked up so many times on horse-driven milk wagons by men who tried to hook me up with their sons! (laughs) I ended up spending a couple of months in Ireland, and then I went to Scotland.

Michael Weiss came over [to Scotland] to go climbing, with another friend, Paul Sibley—[they] were kind of celebrities even at the time. And I was, you know, the girlfriend. So, my friends had this car in the back yard. This 1957 English Rover, real cool, but *big* car. And Paul went out there—he's a mechanic—and got it running. It leaked oil like crazy, and we just bought cases and cases of oil. And our friends that we were staying with in Scotland painted it. We were going to try to drive it as far as we could to India, overland. And we called India at that time "Habulaland or Hadduduhland." So painted all over the car was "Habulaland or Bust!"

Williams: Spray paint?

Clark: Yeah, it was pretty obnoxious. None of us had our license. Paul was dyslexic, he couldn't read a map. We took that car from Scotland, and drove down through England climbing, ferried across the canal [i.e. English Channel] to France. We didn't care about the culture so much, we went through Paris, we went to the Louvre for about an hour. We were just so focused on climbing. We just wanted to be in the mountains. So we go to this hideous climbers' camp, Snell's [Field], in Chamonix. I remember hearing in the tent next door that Nixon resigned.

Williams: Oh my gosh!

Clark: It was in the fall that Nixon resigned. So that was 1974—I'm pretty sure. And so Michael got in this serious [climbing] accident and he's got to be flown back to the States. He's in the hospital in Chamonix for a couple of weeks. And I go, "You know what, maybe I'm out of here too." I didn't want to be left behind. And then I thought, "Uh-uh [no], I'm not out of here, I'm going to hold on." I

decided I was going to hold out for my plan to meet this *other* boyfriend. (laughter) We were going to go overland to Nepal. So I ended up doing that. On the way to the airport, in Geneva, we picked up a hitchhiker and sold the car to him. So we dropped them off in Geneva, and then he [the hitchhiker] dropped me off on the outskirts of town. I hitchhiked to Zurich, flew to Greece, [spent] a month. And it turned out that the original plan, when I left the cattle ranch worked! Larry flew over to Greece, and we went overland to Nepal. And then I spent another five or six months in Nepal. So that whole trip was about a year or so.



Nepal, 1974. Photo: Larry Campbell

While I was in Nepal, I got offered a job with Harry [Frishman], who had become the director of the new Southwest Outward Bound School. He was a wild, bad boy, irreverent at heart. And he was pulling together Prescottees—it was one of the first years that people graduated from Prescott College, and from Northwest Outward Bound—from the bad boys at Northwest, and all the people that had been fired from COBS [Colorado Outward Bound School]. And I wasn't old enough to be fired yet. You know what I mean? So when I came back from my travels I went to New Mexico and started working for the Southwest Outward Bound School. And so that's a long history, but it's Southwest Outward Bound School who I first did my Grand Canyon trip with.

I hadn't really been that drawn to the Grand Canyon because I was so into hiking. I was just so into exploring canyon country, especially Southern Utah, Escalante country. I thought Grand Canyon was too big, not intimate enough, and too many people. I'd rather go to [Natural] Bridges, I'd rather go to Zion, than Grand Canyon. So Harry goes, "Hey, Martha, you want to go on a free trip down the Grand Canyon?" because I was going



Travel to Morocco, Egypt, 1981.
Photos: Michael Winn



commercial salmon fishing in Alaska and there wasn't time to do the spring Outward Bound trip. And I said, "Of course I want to go on a free trip down the Grand Canyon!"

Williams: Was it an Outward Bound trip?

Clark: It was the first Dip Trip.

Williams: What's the Dip Trip?

Clark: The diplomat trip.

Williams: Was that through Outward Bound?

Clark: It was modeled on Outward Bound, and what happened is the head of the...

Sharon Hester: U.N. [United Nations].

Clark: Yeah, the U.N. was involved, but it was this group called the Executive Council, that was out of Washington, D.C., and they would have this conference every year, with

state department people, ambassadors, U.N., international businesspeople, and they would do these Outward Bound courses all over the country, to, you know, break down communication barriers through the short, Outward Bound corporate trip. So one year they go to Harry Frishman, Southwest Outward Bound, and said, "The Executive Council wants to do an Outward Bound trip down the Grand Canyon." And Harry goes, "We don't have a permit to do an Outward Bound trip." But Harry said, "You know, we could probably run an Outward Bound trip in Grand Canyon because the owner of ARTA, Rob Elliott, helped start the Colorado Outward Bound River Program, and we could run the trip through Rob Elliott and ARTA." And that was how the first trip happened.

This was in, like, April. And then I'm going to go up [to Alaska] to fish in May. And Harry goes, "What you have to do for your free trip is I want you to go help make that trip more of an Outward Bound course and less of a guided trip."

Clark: That's my job for my free trip down the Grand Canyon.

Hester: So this is the first Dip Trip at AZRA.

Clark: The first Dip Trip ever at AZRA. So I show up for that first Dip Trip, and I'm 24-years-old, I'm coming from Outward Bound. There's [Bob] Melville, and [Dave] Edwards, and [Don] Briggs, and Jimmy [Hendrik], and lots of other boatmen. And it's like I'm supposed to show up and tell them how to run a trip in Grand Canyon?! (laughter). To make it more Outward Bound-ey, we spent three days at Lees Ferry talking about it.

It was a sixty-person [trip], divided into two trips. So there's thirty people on each side, so then there's like six guides [per trip]. [The Dip Trip] is only the upper end, not the whole trip.

Williams: They all hike out?

Clark: They all hike out. And they're from all over. A lot of them do not speak English as a first language. We used to write "left" and "right" on the front of the boat, to remind them which direction. And you know how paddlers are usually lame—especially early in the trip—but these people are really out of their element. So we're at the Ferry, and I was new but I was no dummy. I could just see this scene, and I'm scamming to get on the other trip from Rob Elliott. All the guides are, so of course I am too. And I'm just working it, and it's hard to work it, because I don't know anybody. But they're probably working me, because I'm the [unclear] chick on the trip, and there are so few women. So I end up on the other side from Rob, and they're dividing [everyone] up, and it's really politics, who they're putting on which boats together.

Hester: What I remember as really important was which executive from which high-end company, like AT&T, Standard Oil, which executives were going to be on which boats with which African nation's ambassador.

Williams: Really?!

Hester: Oh yeah. It was all rigged by...what was the

organizer's name? He was an organizer from the Executive Council...

Clark: Stoutenberg! Jim Stoutenberg. And we called the porta-potty, for years, the Stoutenberg. (laughs)

Hester: So it was really important to the United Nations Executive Council, because they were funded, probably, I'm guessing, by AT&T and Standard Oil, and Exxon.

Clark: All the money boys.

Hester: Yeah. And so usually vice-presidents, occasionally presidents, of these corporations went on the Dip Trip; and then they would be paired in the rafts with the ambassadors—usually, but not always—from South American or African countries.

Clark: That they wanted to exploit.

Hester: So it was the same crew for six days. Each guide had a team, like three execs usually, and three ambassadors from a country. Or maybe it was an exec and a wife and an ambassador and a wife, but there were the same six people. It was all paddle, and you kept that team for the six days. Not only did you keep the same team, you were supposed to cook. They were supposed to cook, and they were supposed to do the porta-potty.

Clark: And the trip was all about the classic Outward Bound, breaking down communication barriers. And we would go on those trips, and put the sultan from Oman, just sit him on top of the load. And we'd put a cape on him, and a cardboard crown, and we'd have him direct: "Left! Or I'll take away your country." You know what I mean? We were so irreverent and had so much fun with them, and they just *loved* it."

So I was looking around, we're at the Ferry, and Steven [Dupuis] the trip leader, is going, "Well, just pick one of the boatmen, Martha, and stay on their crew." And I look around, and I picked, instead of the most handsome, the coolest-looking guy—I picked Don Briggs. He looked the most eccentric and weird. Yeah, I picked Briggsy.

I have told this story a lot because it's House Rock, and the first time you have to really do anything, and it's a good story. So we go on down. It's my first trip in the Grand Canyon, my first time on a raft, and it's probably our second day, not our first—you know, to House Rock. And it's *really* low water. And this is supposed to be a whitewater school. So we're all pulled in on the left, and it's like fucking six boats, "Beverly Hillbillies" style shit on the boats.

Now you've got to remember this. ARTA was one of the only companies willing to take paddle boats in Grand Canyon. I really think it was because Rob was so dedicated to "experiential education." But these were *not* today's paddle boats. They were 18-foot Avon bucket boats. We would *all* paddle and it was totally self-supported. No baggage boats whatsoever. So we've got the loads for a 34-person trip piled in the middle. And there's probably seven of us on each boat: two in the front, two kind of in the load in the middle, two on the back, and then the paddle captain. We swam, for years, all of the time...

Hester: Well, there were no foot cups, and the really saggy floors filled full of water.

Clark: Yeah. And so we get on down to House Rock and we're going to scout. Like an Outward Bound "whitewater school" thing. So we pull over on the left, it's my first time ever, we're up at the big rock—you know, that big flat rock at House Rock—and we're looking down there, and I'm looking at the river, going, "Fuck!" I'm just sick to my stomach.

Williams: You don't know anything.

Clark: No, I don't know anything. Do you remember that, looking at rapids, and it seemed like everything starts moving?

Williams: Oh yeah.

Clark: And like, we're thirty people, and we're looking... start from the downstream, look up at the dangers, read the water. And they're doing this whole whitewater school. And someone said, "Martha! Let's go down and look at the hole. We're going to do a picture run." We're going to run [the boats in two groups]. And so I go, "Okay." I don't know anything.

And we're looking into the House Rock hole, and it's *such* low water—it's like 5,000 [cfs] or something. I'm terrified. It is just the most violent thing. And so we're like staring at this hole, and I'm nauseous, and then Briggs goes to me, "Martha, do you want to captain?" And then I looked at him and I go, (pause) "Yeah. But I'm really scared." And he says "Well I'm really scared too. Probably more than you."

So as we're up on the rock with our people, Rob Elliott pulls up, and there's no room on the left-hand side.

Williams: That's the whole other trip?

Clark: The whole other trip. Of thirty people. So Rob pulls over on the right-hand side...and they're, like, boogeying down along the shore to watch us. And I'm watching [our first group] from the rock, with [the rest of] our folks and boatmen...The lead boat [in the first group] was Randy Breckenridge, who Randy's Rock is named after. So I'm watching this, and they come on down, and they're all together. Maybe Melville and Phil Towne, and Steven Dupuis, I think is...he's probably out there on that run. Oh, God, it's so good, even when I think about it [now] I start laughing. We're watching this scene, and they're lined up really well to support each other. You know, got good spacing and all that. And Randy goes down, and Randy flips.

Williams: The first boat.

Clark: The first boat, flips. It's really low water, so you're trying to get right and, of course, nobody get to the right. So the next boat goes down, and they see Randy flip right in front of them, so they're kind of on the boogey 'cuz they're scared and have to rescue their friends. Well, they make it down, they don't flip, but they lose maybe five out of seven people. And then the next boat goes down and loses more people...There wasn't a clean run.

So they're all just floating into the big eddy, boats and

people, upright or not. People are climbing out on shore or onto the other rafts. And we're all up on that rock watching this carnage at the first real rapid on this mucky-muck trip that we spent three days at Lees Ferry talking about. And Rob *really really* wants this to go well.

So we're up on the scout rock with our folks who are terrified after watching this, and one of the boatmen sees it's all fine down in the eddy, and starts yelling "Yeah! Yeahh! Way to go! Those are our team members!!" And so everybody starts yelling, hesitantly at first, but then full throated "Yeahhhh, let's go!"

But Rob has watched this from the other side with all his folks. They haven't done their "whitewater school" yet. They had just arrived and watched this scene. So he is *not* happy and everyone is sort of flipping out.

So we go down, the last three boats. I can't remember who was in front of me, but they didn't have a clean run. So now it's our turn and I'm captaining and I'd never even seen the river before, let alone captained. So I go...Briggs is on my left side, and we lose almost everybody I think... including him...all but three of us.

Now the last boat is Jimmy's. Well, Rob *really* didn't like Jimmy, but had to hire Jimmy on this trip. He needed people who really could paddle for this trip so he had to hire him because Jimmy supposedly knew how to paddle.

So Jimmy's out there, that last of our group, and there's probably 34 people watching from the right side. And Jimmy's thinking "Well shit, I haven't see *one* clean run." Nobody had even begun to make it right of the hole, so he's going "Fuck it! I'm going to try *far* right. I'm going to try a technical run and go down the rocks." And we had discussed how that was an option, but none of us chose to do it.

So Jimmy's out there, *far* right as you could be. He's standing, looking downstream, *barking* commands like he's still in the military. "Right turn! Stop! Left turn! Stop! Backpaddle! Stop!" It's obvious he's trying to go way right but then he sees Rob standing on the point trying to make eye contact with him, and Rob's going...he's pointing to the shore like, "You motherfucker...you'd better go to the right!" But it's obvious he's already *going* to the right. And then we hear Jimmy go, (yelling) "Left turn! Left! Left turn!" And Jimmy paddles over, right into the gut of it... he doesn't even try to make it right. He just, like,...goes straight down the tongue, didn't flip, stayed in the boat, but lost everybody else.

So we're all down there and Rob's trip is just flipping out because *he's* flipping out. This is the first serious rapid, and they don't want to go. I don't know, they had a whole meltdown. They eventually went and paddled it far right and didn't lose a soul!. But our trip, it just *made* our trip. This was my first rapid experience! And I'm going "So this is boating in Grand Canyon? Yes! I'll take it!"

* * *

First trip, 1978.

Clark: I was so far gone. I mean, I just will never forget that whole first trip. It was just so unbelievable.

Williams: What an experience for you!

Clark: We go down to Elves Chasm, and they go, "Martha, come on." Three or four guides took me and we went up to Upper Elves Chasm.

Hester: But none of the passengers?

Clark: No. It was just a guide thing. I mean, how do you not get blown away in Upper Elves Chasm? You know what I mean? (laughter) Then...I slept in Blacktail and duckied Dubendorff...and then we went to Thunder River.

Williams: Oh, you're hooked.

Clark: And then we go to Havasu, and it just cracked me up, I just started laughing. I'm going, "You have to be kidding me, that this can exist on the planet!" So I was a goner after I got off that trip. Because I fell in love with the trip leader, I fell in love with the river, I fell in love with boating, I just went nuts.

* * *

Clark: And then I went fishing in Alaska—commercial salmon fishing. I commercial salmon fished for two-and-a-half seasons. The first year I fished was the first year I went down the Grand Canyon, and that was in 1978. So I did that Dip Trip in the springtime. And then I went to Alaska. And that was my introduction to fishing. I fucking hated commercial salmon fishing! I just hated it. I liked the physical work of it, but I really *didn't* like killing fish, and I didn't like the competition, these coded maps, and private pilots flying over, and you couldn't tell anybody else where you were. And I'd gone down the Grand Canyon, and I was, like, so in love. It wasn't even so much Steven I was just in love with, it was [everything]! And so I ended





1983. Photo: Terese Drabec

up working my first salmon season, which is only a few months or something like that. Then went back down and got [another trip]. I decided I liked people more than fish!

Williams: With AZRA?

Clark: With AZRA—it was ARTA at the time. I did a shitload of A.B. trips.

Williams: Is that the baggage boat?

Clark: Assistant Boatman.

Hester: An unpaid, work-your-way position.

Clark: It was unpaid, and I probably did twenty, twenty-five trips over the next few years. But I had never rowed. I'd never paddled before. I was a people person, an outdoor adventure person, a mountain and canyon gal, but I wasn't a river person. And I just thought it was the coolest damned position because you would just go from boat to boat, learning from each boatman. You'd be scouting Unkar with Melville and he'd go, "The *only* place to go is down the wall on the fucking left. The *only* place to go." And then you'd go with him and he'd let you row it. Then you would go on the next trip with someone more conservative and they'd say that it was insane to go down the wall. But the best thing—and I think we talked about that—was hearing everybody's story, hearing everybody's bullshit. And it was more stories and bullshit than it was natural history at that time. But the stories...Oh my god the stories. And I just loved it...And I remember Rob finally offering me my own boat, and I hesitated—like I kind of didn't want it, because I was sort of addicted to the role of A.B. It was also security to be with somebody who really knew what they were doing. I really liked it, because I learned so much.

* * *

Williams: You said Wesley was one of your mentors. In what way?

Clark: He was a magical human being. I just think he was kind of a profound man. And he was so fucked up, but he was also so...Brilliant is not the word.

Hester: What's that word, the emotional quotient, emotional intelligence? [His] was incredibly high.

Clark: And I'd never met anybody like him. He was just an inspirational human being, and he just had so much heart. He had so much knowledge, but it was more...He had plenty of, what would you say, intellectual knowledge. He knew a lot of things about natural history and just about the world in general, but his knowledge was—I felt like—more spiritual. He was a wise man and he had a giant heart. He was a very unique human being, and he had the most phenomenal sense of humor. He was a prankster. When I think of him, I just start laughing. I mean, Wesley was the kind of person, when I started working he could... He'd get drunk, and he'd get really screwed up. Then he'd get out the pots and pans and he would start chanting. I'll never forget that, because I didn't even know what he was saying. He'd just start going on in this really kind of tonal chant—like a Native American sounding chant. And he'd go on and on, and it would take me a long time before I [realized] that he was saying, "K-Mart" or something. "Safeway, Safeway, Safeway, Saaafe Waaay." And he'd get really going, doing that, and people didn't even know what he was saying but he would get them all chanting with him.

Hester: They thought he was doing a spiritual.

Clark: They did, yeah. But in the morning the old ladies would love him, the uptight people would love him. He would get away with it! He could be just a jerk by keeping you up all night, but he would get away with it. I think one of the best things I ever learned in my life, and it was as a young guide on a trip with Wesley, was...You'd go on a trip with him, and Wesley would take the biggest asshole, he'd take the most disliked person, he'd take the most difficult person. He wouldn't take the jewels. He would take the ostracized, disliked person, on purpose, just subtly. And he would make them his best friend. And then because everybody kind of loved and worshipped and wanted to be around Wesley, then his sidekick would become really cool, because they were Wesley's best friend. Wesley



Wesley Smith, 1983. Photo: Terese Drabec

would bring them out and they would become a star too because they would be by his side.

Williams: And did people transform that way on the trip, do you think? Did they become less...

Clark: I think probably everybody did. Probably whoever he was taking on. I think it affected the guides, just like, "Look at that, that's pretty big of him to do." And then I think the people would go, "Ohhhh, maybe he is a pretty cool guy after all."

But I can tell so many Wesley stories. I want to tell you two of them I think about. Wesley hated to get wet, he really did *not* like to get wet, so he hated water fights. I remember one time toward the end of a trip, and it's after Lava—I think it was an all-paddle trip. Wesley paddles up, and he's got his whole crew, and he goes, "Martha! Martha! Wait! Wait! Don't get me wet." He really did *not* want to get wet. And he goes, "I've got an idea!" Wesley paddles up to me, and he starts unstrapping a black bag off his boat. He doesn't tell me, he just goes, "Wait!" So we're tied up, so we've got like twelve, fourteen people tied up together. So Wesley pulls out this black bag, and it's got like four or five down pillows crammed into it. He goes, "Here's what we're going to do," and he pulls out a big thing of Gatorade. And he gets some water, and he dumps it in, just mixing it up with his hand. And I still don't know what he's doing. He goes, "Wait!" And then he goes, "We're gonna Gatorade and feather 'em!" (laughs) I mean, come on! Who does that?! We're going to pour this sticky water on 'em and then we're going to put the feathers on?! We're going to Gatorade and feather 'em. And so that's what we started to do. And of course it backfired, and the feathers were going all over, and his boat trying to get the other boat, just got inundated. And then it brought the eggs out, because there's all these feathers, and it turned into mayhem. I mean, that kind of humor.

Wesley never flipped a boat in Grand Canyon. I think he might have flipped a boat in Ethiopia, I'm not sure...but he was a charmed boatman. He was a good boatman, but it was more his—I feel like his energy or his magic, that he didn't flip. It's like he *should* have flipped, but he didn't. He barely ever got wet!

I remember going to Crystal, and...it was a high-water year. It wasn't '83 I don't think, but it could have been. It was one of those years. Fifty-thousand [50,000 cfs] became normal. And I went down and Wesley was at Crystal, and he's sitting there on the rock, and we're scouting. And actually, it might have been '83, when we were still running paddleboats. It just got ridiculous: I swam, I got stitches in my head, before we called it off, before we realized how dumb it was to do. I just know it was a really hard level, and was a classic try-to-get-right, and not being able to get right. The people all went up on the hill, and I went wherever Wesley was. So Wesley's on some

rock [at the river], and was just staring out there. And I sat down next to him, and he's kind of rocking, and he's got his hand in his pocket, and he has a "binky"—one of those synthetic fuzzy pieces of material.

Hester: Oh, from his blanket.

Clark: Yeah, from his blanket, and he had it in his pocket, and he's just rubbing it in his pocket. And I was terrified. I had swum Crystal a couple of times. And I'm sitting next to Wesley, and he's rubbing his binky. He's scared too. And I sit down next to him, and he goes, "You want some binky?" And I go, "Yeah! I really do." And he tears off a piece of that binky, and I put it in my pocket, and I sat down next to him, and I started rubbing it.

Williams: Oh, that's good!

Clark: He was a huge influence. Actually, I would say Wesley and Suzanne Jordan were my biggest river mentors. It was really hard for me to become a real boathag and not have Suzie by my side. I was addicted to her, just trusted her so much. I was kind of scared to do a trip without her, because I believed in her so much. Suzanne and I were so tight. We'd sleep together every night. I'd wake up with my head on her belly. We were just thick as thieves. I remember going with Suzanne, and she was the first person who taught me how to read a rapid. I would stand up there on a rock and she would go, in her heavy Southern accent, "Alright, we're going to start from the bottom—you know, what our danger is at the bottom—and we're going to work our way up." She was really good.

And it was *really* cool, because she mentored me, and then she came over to New Mexico, to the Gila, where I was an Outward Bound instructor, and she came as an assistant. And Suzanne came over and she had that Fiesta wear—remember those tiered skirts she would wear...and that little top with rickrack on it...and her wild, red, beautiful hair? And Suzanne would wear those little Mary Jane ballet



Martha running Crystal Rapid at 60,000 cfs, June 1983, with Rob Elliott.
Photo: Terese Drabec



Suzanne Jordan, 1987, at Martha and Renny Russell's wedding.

shoes. She would wear shorts in the wilderness, but any place outside of the wilderness, Suzanne wore her tiered skirts. But I remember Suzanne going climbing, and there she is in her little ballet shoes. She'd never climbed. She was a big gal, and she'd just dance up a wall. We used to do these Outward Bound trips for women over thirty, and we weren't even over thirty. And I remember they'd ask her questions, and she'd go, "I don't know!" in her Alabama accent. A million things about her I loved. She wouldn't pretend at all. She'd go, "I don't know any more than you guys." But she was a beautiful, natural leader and such an inspiration to me.

* * *

Clark: I have to say, for all the times—and I can trash Rob with the best of them, and I have my whole life, because I'm still kind of bitter about AZRA and how I was eventually treated—there are things that he did and gave to me that are precious. For one, he hired women. It's part of the reason why I never really have liked being part of [the book]...I've always called it "Breaking Wind."

Williams: *Breaking into the Current*.

Clark: *Breaking into the Current*, [i.e. by Louise Teal] because I never really felt at ARTA like I had broke into the current. I just got carried along. I didn't struggle because of the crew, I just felt so [well] treated...accepted and respected.

Hester: It was great. AZRA was really, really good. Those particular guides at ARTA...Well, AZRA, but they were still ARTA guides.

Clark: You [Hester] started with ARTA, because Jessica [Yule] hired you, right?

Hester: It was already AZRA, but it was still the old ARTA guides. But those guides, those male guides, for the most part, weren't misogynists, they were really open to supporting you—and the few females that were there.

Clark: And the few females.

Hester: They really were supportive.

Clark: They were.

Hester: That might have come from Rob, believe it or not.

Clark: That was my take as well—but I do think it was because Jessica was a boatman too...He married Jessica, who also was a very strong woman a river guide. But I do think it was in his personal philosophy that he saw us equally.

So we were working, we had these women, Sharon [Hester], Lorna [Corson], Louise [Teal], Suzanne [Jordan], and me. I'd say that was kind of the corps. Wouldn't you?

Hester: Yeah.

Clark: I mean, Becca [Lawton] was before, Becca was a little bit earlier and definitely a pioneer, but for a number of years there, it was those five women.

* * *

Clark: Some of my biggest experiences obviously were those high-water years. I would say those are my most memorable...My early years and those high-water years, through the eighties, even into the '90s, were my most beloved and kind of memorable times! This story has been told so many times, and I don't think we should tell the story [again], but that first high-water trip when it was going to 96,000 [cfs] was a profound trip for me. It was this "Transformation Conference" trip. You know, we told that story at a GTS, and Christa [Sadler] wrote it up, [*There's this River, Grand Canyon Boatman Stories: "High Water"*] but that was one of the most amazing and insane trips I've ever done. But those years, were pretty outrageous...You know, I was at the Diamond Creek flash flood in '84.

Williams: Was that at Diamond when OARS...

Clark: Yeah, OARS and OU

Williams: ...were washed out. And where were you?

Clark: My version, we came down, we were on an all-paddle trip, and I think at the time we had one baggage boat. And we would have these convertible frames, and we carried oars in case we had to convert the boats. It was high water, and it was when there was no eddy, the river just banked into Diamond Creek.

Williams: There was no room.

Clark: There was no room, and there was no eddy.

Williams: You had to wait for each group to leave before you could go.

Clark: You had to wait. And so we were the last in line...I think it was OU first, and then OARS, and then us. So we were waiting, waiting, because you had to park at the bottom of the trail up to the porta-potty, because that's where you had to walk every fucking piece of gear up the hill.

Williams: Up that dune?

Clark: Up that dune. And that's the place where a truck could back up to. You couldn't use the mouth. So you were just parked upstream, tied to tammies [i.e., tamarisk trees], underwater. I mean, there's probably eighteen, twenty boats tied up. So OU was there first. And they're just going for it, because it's one boat at a time. So we get there, and

we see the scene, and OU's truck was there, and OARS's truck was there, but our truck wasn't, and we were like little kids complaining the it wasn't.

And so OU gets out of there...gets out of there in maybe about ten, fifteen minutes before it happens. So now it's OARS's turn. So they're on it, and they're going for it, and finally they leave...about five minutes before it happens.

I'm with Jerry Jordan. And so we're at the bottom of the hill, and we're in slow motion. It's hot and stupid. It had been storming almost every day, we could hear thunder. We had seen Tapeats [flash flood], it had just been storming right and left. And we were worried a bit that Diamond Creek might go, but it had been flooding already so much we weren't worried about a historic flood. And we had already walked our people up to the confluence of Diamond Creek and Peach Springs Wash because the bus was up there. Yeah, we *all* walked our people up there 'cuz the trucks could make it down but the busses couldn't.

Williams: The road wasn't too bad?

Clark: The road was fucked because it had been flooding so much. The people were all out, so the boatmen were just trying to get out. So our people are gone, our truck isn't there, OU is gone, OARS is gone and I hear what I think is distant thunder. And then I thought a jet airplane. And at that moment—this all happened simultaneously—this thunderous roar is coming down, and our trip leader, Dwight Morgan, just *screams*—and Dwight *never* raised his voice—"Flash flood!" So Jerry and I looked at each other. You didn't have time to say anything. We are probably like thirty to forty feet away from the mouth and we just started running upstream, which there's not much room to run, because it's right up against the tammies. And I remember looking over my shoulder and seeing, I don't know, it's like an eight- to twelve-foot wall of debris—boulders, logs—but it's not just debris. We saw boxes and frames and rolled up boats and oars. But at that point you know you're okay, because it's constricted to the mouth. And so we grabbed life jackets, grabbed a throw line, and went up on the hill. Our whole crew is up on the hill, and we're just looking into this raging torrent. Looking at frames and boxes and debris and rocks rolling. And we're just in shock, knowing...

Williams: Your friends are in there.

Clark: You know they're dead, if they're in there they're gone. And so we're watching this, and then we see the wheels of a vehicle. And then they sunk. And then it came up again, but they're upside down, and we're going, "No, that's two trucks." But then we look to the mouth where there's this outrageous hydraulic happening and we glimpse some axles and then they disappear

We know everybody on that whole crew: [Mike] Walker and Dennis [Silva]...we just know everybody. And we go, "They're dead." Both trucks are in there. They couldn't survive if they were inside. So Dwight and I both started walking up...Where the flood split around, it made an island out of that sand dune, where we had to cross a bit of that flood. We had to hold arms to negotiate. I was just in tears.

I was thinking, "This isn't worth it. Fuck boating and rivers!"

I decided I wanted to look around the first bend. So that takes a while to get up there, because you're up against the side and you've just got to scramble and climb. And this flood hadn't dissipated in the slightest. And so finally I got up...and I can see around the bend, and all I'm just seeing is this fucking ridiculous river coming around the corner. And then I looked...and I saw six, eight, ten people hanging out on different ledges, at different elevations—some truly only a couple feet above the flood. And I'll never forget, I'm holding lifejackets, I'm just in tears, I'm thirty feet off the water, and then I just burst into tears again, because I saw people alive. Then I get all concerned again because I couldn't see *all* the people, so I just think definitely there's people gone. Eventually they started coming down, I started going up, and blah, blah, blah.

Hester: So they eventually came back down, and you still had your gear so you could make dinner?





Martha rowing a snout, big water, circa 1983-1984.

Clark: Yeah, they got back down, and we still had our gear. We lost nothing because we were upstream of the mouth.

I remember the two gals in the OU truck. It was Deb [Jordan]...the driver, and [a gal named] Amy. [The OU truck] was stuck, and...I think everybody was out of the OARS truck, because they were trying to move it...and they saw this flood. And for them it was bigger, because they were in the Narrows, and I think their wall was probably more like fifteen feet because it was constricted. The same thing, they just had time to go to look at it and run for their lives. But [the gals] in the OU truck ended up on the other side of the river, in a really precarious place when I saw them. And it took hours before finally they could walk down farther toward the mouth. It took a long time before they could even come off their perch. And then I remember we sent food over to them on ropes, and I think some warm gear. Sam Street was there when the Park [Service] came on down.

Hester: From the river?

Clark: Yeah, after this all happened. Because I remember Sam Street was there and kind of took on the rescue of the gals.

And then in the morning, OU and OARS walked up to the confluence because somebody came to get them. [The flash flood] all came out of Diamond Creek, not Peach Springs.

We were left with six boats and six people and all our gear. So we made a Georgie rig. I think we deflated the oar boat and took the oars from it, and loaded the oar boat on the paddleboats, which had convertible frames for the high water, and then we Georgie rigged the...

Williams: Like a triple-rig kind of thing?

Clark: I think we triple-rigged it. Maybe we deflated an oar boat and one paddleboat—you know, put it on top. But then we couldn't get out into the river because the flood had changed the whole mouth. So we had to wait for a motorboat to come and tow us out into the current.

Hester: Because you couldn't get around the debris?

Clark: Yes, we were so beached, and the debris fan was too massive, and we couldn't get it out into the current. And so we waited for somebody to come along...



Martha captaining paddle boat, June, 1983. Photo: Terese Drabec

And then we went out into that raging river and it took another day and a half to get down. And I remember just [being] out of control, running at 50,000-60,000 cfs with fucking oars on this whole rig we had come up with. We were lovin' it! I remember we set up tents. We were like boat people out there with tarps.

Williams: Boat refugees.

Clark: I never saw so much water. It was just storming incessantly. It was just that whole month.

Hester: Rainy year.

Clark: And there was sheet water. You know what I mean? Sheet water coming off the cliffs. Curtains of it.

I remember one of the first things—because, you know, we're picking up gear—but it would have to float to us, we couldn't get to it. And I remember there was an OU generator box, and we pulled it in. And it was their big shit receptacle. (laughter)

We were so cold, and we were tired, but still kind of having fun. We just wanted to camp, but the only place to camp was in the mouth of a side canyon, and there was no fucking way we were going to go on shore in the mouth of any side canyon. And then I remember finally Rob hired some kind of motor-rig and came up with [his son] Adam. Adam was eight years old or something at the time. And he came up to tow us out.

* * *

Hester: This is the deal about Martha: she was always like, "Let's push the boundaries with everyone, every time."

Williams: Unless someone cries, it is not an adventure!

Hester: And I'd be like, you know what, I pushed those boundaries at least once or twice with myself, and I'm done. Martha would be like, "Let's do it again! And again! And again!"

Clark: Deer Creek Narrows. I just loved this. To take them down through the Narrows, and people are just freezing, and they're scared because you've gone down that rope.

Hester: Down the *second* one?!

Clark: Yeah. You get down both ropes, you're all the way

down in there.

Hester: The worst one is the second one, and the waterfall.

Clark: That's what I'm saying, that one, it's scary. So then you get down there, and you've still got some more moves to make, and swim through all that, and then you get to that last bend—and you can't see around the bend—I go, "Okay, listen!" Get really serious. "Listen up!" because you had to scream at them because it's so loud right there. And I go, "There's current you guys! We can't go all the way down to the falls that we saw." And I'm yelling this. "Because there's a thirty-foot falls that stops us. But you've got to jump in, and you've got to swim like a motherfucker to get out of the current before you reach that thirty-foot falls. So we're going to go down there first...and we're going to get ready to catch you and pull you in." And they're just like going, "Nnnnn." You don't even give them time to think.

Williams: Psychological warfare. (laughs)

Clark: [You] swim around [the bend], and they can't see you, [then] your feet are dragging and you walk right out. And then you go, "Okay, ready!" They won't go because [they're] about paralyzed. They [want to] live. But then they'd come swimming like crazy around the bend, and their feet would start to drag, and they're looking up, going, "You motherfucker!" And then you'd pull them in, laughing, going, "Shhhh!"

Hester: And they'd realize it was a joke.

Clark: But they don't realize it until they're around that bend.

Hester: Well, then you pull everyone in one by one. This is the cult of Martha. (laughter) And it pretty much continues the rest of the trip! (laughter)



1983. Photo: Terese Drabec.



Martha Clark and Jimbo Tichenor, 1983. Photo: Terese Drabec.

Clark: That was so funny! I just thought it was so funny. That's the only time I ever really tried to scare people.

Williams: Did you ever get any passenger letters about the trauma?

Clark: No, they loved it! Maybe about other things....

Hester: Only so many people made it that far. Yeah, it was kind of a culling effect, and only some would make it to the cult of Martha.

Clark: The ones at the end were probably ready for it.

* * *

Clark: What I loved about ARTA at the time was that Rob was the only company willing to do paddle trips, and the trips were as much about hiking as boating. But also he ran—or he helped start—Colorado Outward Bound's river program. He was really into experiential education. So as hard as I am on him, his philosophy was my philosophy, [which] was to go on the trip with these people as an adventure, not as just a "guided" trip. I could go with these people and help facilitate this growth experience. And that was just amazing and rewarding and so much goddamn fun!

And then over the years people have talked...about how much the people changed. I never really bought that. I thought as much as the people changed, the guides changed. Even the fact that we became "guides" instead of boatmen and boathags. It was just the whole evolution of the industry. I *loved* being a boatman in Grand Canyon. It was the best job, best life I could have ever had.

I worked for sixteen years before the first time I was fired. So '94 or whatever. But I could never find, when I would go back—and I worked for Dick McCallum, I worked for OARS, I worked for the Park Service, I worked for science, I worked for a lot of different people—but I could never find the place to go back to practice the kind of "guiding" I knew and loved and grew up with at ARTA. I didn't even want to call it guiding. Being a boatman, a boathag...the way that I

wanted to do it. People would go, "Oh, it's insurance, you can't do that anymore." It wasn't just because of insurance... it was an energy or an attitude that I couldn't find—I kept looking for, and I couldn't find. I would try to be on my best behavior, do the best job I could, and it just wouldn't work out. I wasn't a "Stepford" enough of a guide. And I liked the people too much. You weren't supposed to do that. It seemed to me like you were supposed to hang out with the other guides and drink and talk *about* the passengers not to them, or god forbid *be* with them. *We* are the guides—you are the people—was the energy I felt. And if you weren't *with* them, meaning the guides, you were too much of an individual for these new boatmen. They seemed to be in competition with each other to prove who could work the most and hardest. It was *all* about efficiency and I kept finding the trips rather soulless. If you didn't comply with their behavior requirements they would [make a complaint].

We used to love, or at least *tolerate* (laughs) our fellow guides. I think we embraced individuality, our weirdness and differences, as long as we were safe and not slackers.

Yes, AZRA kept hiring me back but it was the last thing in the world to be celebrated. It was kind of humiliating.

I have thought for years and years that it was kind of funny to be doing these interviews. Like we sort of honor old boatmen in the BQR but so many of us in our 50s or 60s or 70s or *dead* could never have gotten a job these last decades. Can you imagine Georgie applying for a job?!

I've always been so attached to the Grand Canyon and my life in the Grand Canyon. I just wanted to be a guide that could come back for one or two trips, and I could never find a home...

It took me years and years to "move on." It wasn't really until a few years ago. Everybody would tell me to, "Get over it," and I just held onto it. I guess I'm over it now, but I don't know that I am.

Hester: It's a powerful thing.

Clark: I always wondered, God, how can you healthily leave? I know I carried on in Alaska but the Grand Canyon always had my heart and soul.

* * *

Williams: As the years went on, it all was kind of reined in.

Hester: As it was everywhere.

Williams: But the stars aligned for Martha.

Clark: At that period of time.

Hester: They did. It was also Rob allowing that. It was also the Outward Bound philosophy. It was also some of the guides who were already there, like Briggs and Melville and Edwards...these guides that were just allowed this freedom to experience and do without any restraints. And they all aligned for this incredible era. And you can never recreate that.

Williams: And that era, it's not anyone's fault that that era is gone, but that era is gone. And I feel fortunate to have been on the tail end of that era, like '84 to whenever.



Martha, Bob Melville, Suzanne Jordan.



Martha, Unknown Passenger, Suzanne Jordan, Wesley Smith



Martha, Bob Melville, Kevin Johnson.

Clark: I was thinking about how when we, early in the days when we would have a great meal, passengers in the kitchen—because, of course, that's where the party was happening...it was so fun. And then we wouldn't necessarily do the dishes every night. It depended upon what happened the night before. Wesley taught us to put willow sticks in the slop buckets and the first chickie pails so the mice couldn't drown. That was how we took care of the kitchen. (laughs)

Williams: That was the end of the night. (laughs) Save the mice!

Hester: There's a lot of stars that aligned. There were the really early days, when the early river guides were just learning how to run the fucking boats. I mean, *you* were learning how to paddle, but *they* were learning just how to get down the river. And then the era changed, and the change in your era—that I was on the tail end of—let's see what other adventures can we do besides the river? Let's do different hikes.

Clark: But I feel like ARTA, AZRA, you know, I feel like in that era, I feel like we were kind of hiking pioneers...and so then other people started hiking more, and then motor trips eventually started realizing they had all the time in the world to go hiking.

Hester: I have to say, Martha ran the adventure trips. There hasn't been, except for maybe Jon [Hirsh]...but Jon and Martha, they really knocked off some cool stuff.

Clark: You know what? That's really nice to hear from you. I've never heard that from anybody.

Hester: Well, no, you developed a lot of the hiking. A lot of people don't even know it. It's only people of your era or even slightly after that even know how a lot of these hikes—harder hikes, at least—got developed.

Clark: Do you remember when we used to take them...up to Mooney Falls? I was terrified to go behind Mooney Falls, and then someone took me. And when I discovered...when I would discover something, I would just go, "Whoa!"

Williams: "Everybody's got to do this!"

Clark: Everybody's got to do it. And it was so cool because...

Hester: That is true. Martha was the Georgie White of "let's make this for the masses." (laughter) "I don't care if you're in a wheelchair, you're going behind Mooney Falls!" That was pretty much Martha's M.O.

Clark: Once I would do something, I would go, "Oh, it's not that...It's only *slightly* terrifying."

Hester: I remember when you developed the Tabernacle hike.

Clark: I have to say I will make [that] claim, because when I married Renny [Russell], that was '87, and we got a dory from Derald [Stewart] and started going on these winter dory trips with these Durango people—you know, Andy Hutchinson and Marianne. Me and Renny, Dusty Teal, Jerry Cox, Chuck [Wales] and Amy [Wiley]... Derald was making the boats. And we'd go on these wintertime trips, on these thirty to forty-day dory trips. I don't know



Martha (rowing) and Renny in Granite Rapids. Photo: Wiley/Wales



Martha and Renny

which year it was, because we did it several years. You know, we'd put in on like Valentine's Day...But we went down, and I had looked—I hadn't read about it, but I kept looking at that fault, across from the Bridge of Sighs, and that's when we went up there, and we go, "Fucking 'A', this goes." And I'm going, "This is a passenger hike...I can take folks up here!"

I remember one trip we were on about day 10 and only at Kwagunt because we were climbing temples, rimming out at Eminence, and looking for the infamous "Cave of the Shrines" which after a few years we finally found. Along with the only split twig figurines I have ever seen.

And I remember when we went down to climb the Tabernacle—we had looked at it on the map—we went and camped at Rattlesnake but we did this stupid-ass route, like straight up out of Rattlesnake, and onto the back side. Yeah, we went up the canyon, on the backside and we got on top, we looked down, [unclear]. "Look at that ridge!" [and took it] all the way back to camp. And we did that. So I knew...I do lay claim to the Tabernacle and the Bridge of Sighs for passenger hikes.

* * *



Making pancakes. Watercolor: Elizabeth Black

Williams: So then how did you transition into all the cooking and restaurant world?

Clark: As a boatman, cooking was actually one of my favorite parts of the trip. I loved rowing, but I think I loved the hiking most of all. I loved the land, and the hiking and the adventures that we went on, but a huge part of the trip for me—and I actually think for a lot of the guides—was cooking. It was a big part of the experience for me. It might [not] have been for other companies, but it definitely was for ARTA/AZRA, because it was a group effort. And people always wanted to cook because it was where the most...

Williams: It was where the fun was! (laughs)

Clark: It was always where the fun was...And I've just always loved to make food, and I've always loved to feed people, and I think I've always just loved the gathering of people around food. I like to give a party more than go to one. I'd rather cook the meal than eat it.

When the [Whale Foundation] Wing Ding first started...I remember Walt [Taylor] saying—he was on the board—"We've got to find a caterer." I remember [going], "Pick me! I'll cater it! I need the money!" And that will be the way the Whale Foundation helps me, by giving me a job!

So I started cooking the Whale. And that led to...I started cooking with these local gals—Elena [Kirschner], Rosie [Lamberson], Nancy [Taylor], Tracy Anderson—and we called ourselves the Mosey Girls or Mosey's Kitchen, and we



Martha cooking, circa 1984. Photo: Chris Brown

started cooking weddings—just odd events—not really to make money, but because we knew how to have a gathering and set up a river kitchen, and make great food while having a blast.

In like '92 or '93, I got to know Edie [Arrowsmith]. She was a guest on a trip. So I had seen [her] house, and I had seen the garage apartment at the beautiful malpais stone house on W. Mead Lane that she had restored, and I asked Edie if I could live there. Edie was restoring the Colton House [at the Museum of Northern Arizona], and I needed a job. And so I went over and started digging ditches, whatever, grunt work, working with this Navajo crew at the Colton House. As she was finishing, she starts talking to me, she goes, "What do you think?...because they didn't know what they were going to do with the Colton House after they restored it. Do you think maybe you'd like to be the caretaker, manager of it?" And I said, "Well, I don't know. Maybe." But I remember this, I was like 45, and I go, "I wish she was offering this to me when I was fifty." I just really still wanted to guide, but I was having a hard time finding where I *could* guide, because like I told you, I didn't feel very wanted. I'd been fired three times from the company I loved. And I go, "You know, I'll think about it." And I went on another river trip. But I was just thinking about it, and I got off the trip, and Edie goes, "You've got an interview with the director of the Museum." I was still ambivalent, but I said, "Okay, I'll just try it out."



Some of the Mosey's serving it up. — Rosie Lamberson, Deana Stout, Nancy Taylor, Tracy Anderson, Martha, Elena Kirschner, Alida Dierker.

And she goes, "It's with the director, and it's with the head of Fred Harvey, like the board—the restaurant association or something—some big wig." And I go, "Okay. You know that river skirt I have? I'll wear that skirt and my cowboy shirt." And Edie goes, "I don't think so."

So I became Edie's restoration project for this interview... She's going to prepare me for this event. Now, the Museum is going to do whatever she tells them. She's giving them millions of dollars, so if she wants me to be the manager, I'm going to be the fucking manager. But we've got to go through the hoops. So Edie truly takes me downtown, she takes me to "I Do, I Do," [i.e. an iconic lingerie and bridal shop in Flagstaff] which we had called, "Okay, Okay," or "I Will, I Will" or something.

Hester: "I Did! I Did!" (laughter)

Clark: Edie takes me down to "I Do, I Do." We're the only people [i.e., customers], and there's this little Asian woman. I don't know if she's—she's probably still there. Edie proceeds to buy me underwear and a slip...trying on different underwear, fucking lace things, and this woman comes in and she goes, "Oh, you won't be cook for long!" (laughter)

Edie takes me to her office downtown and she has her secretary-administrator make a resume for me to submit, and then buys me a leather folder to put the resume in. She buys me some boots. Truly! Slip, underwear, bra, boots, the leather folder. And so then the day of this interview she goes, "Okay, you can't put the outfit on because we've got to do your makeup first." She curled my hair a little bit. And I was like so fucking nervous by then. And it was at—it's called Josephine's [now]—it was called Chez Mark [at the time]. Edie drops me off...and we just had this three-hour lunch that ended up being really fun. They knew exactly who I was and who I wasn't. And they hand-delivered a letter offering me this job, for [what was to] me a lot of money, because it was room and board, a retirement program, and I don't know, it was like \$40,000–\$50,000. I'm going, "Okay. I'll take it." So I did that for, I don't know,



Martha and Thad Stewart, circa 2008.



At the Colton House.



[five years?]. I felt like a millionaire after being a dirtbag boatman for 20 years.

Williams: Were you cooking there, too, like for events?

Clark: Yeah. The Museum would have all these mucky-muck dinners, and I was the cook...[the hostess, the caretaker, the gardener] and the neighbors, Rosie and Nancy, would come over, and we'd figure it out and make it elegant. But I really didn't know how to cook all that well. People just think I'm a great cook. I'm a good cook, and I like food, and I like flavors...But I'm not really a gourmet cook. But it was a pretty damned fun job.

* * *

Clark: I married Thad [Stewart] on my fiftieth birthday, 2003. I knew him from the river. But Thad was the boyfriend of M.A., Mary Ann Jones, and I was single, and the three of us would do all this shit together. I'm *always* looking—that's the story of my life—to find people to go on adventures with me. It's the story of my fucking life. It's the reason I get married, or got married a couple of times. You know, I just have always looked for people to do shit with. So Thad was with M.A., and M.A. was one of my dear friends, and we'd go off on adventures together. And then their relationship fell apart, and Thad and I stayed friends... and we started doing stuff together. And he was just this partner in crime. And people would go, "What about Thad?" I'd go, "What about him?" People would ask Thad, "What about Martha?" And he'd go, "What about her?" It was like we were brother and sister. And now we've been married for almost twenty years.

* * *

Clark: I was moving on, but I didn't know what to. So I left the Museum, was living with Thad up in Southern Utah, and we decided to go north...It was 2003, and we had just gotten married. We had both wanted to live in Alaska, long before we were married. And we had both been going to Alaska for years. I'd been commercial salmon fishing, we'd been running the Asek [River] or the Tatshenshini [River], and we'd both gone to the Arctic, so we're thinking we'd like to live up there and so went up to boat all over and keep an eye out for a place we might want to live.

And so it was Thad's idea. The Museum had bought this food truck—it was a renovated horse trailer—but it never really panned out. And so [as I was leaving the Colton House job], I bought that truck—for a couple thousand bucks—but we didn't know what we were going to do with it. So then we're in Alaska, looking for a place to live, not thinking about a burrito wagon or a food truck or anything, and Thad goes, "Why don't we bring that truck up? We could have this burrito wagon, and then we could do a trip a month and go explore Alaska," because that's what we really wanted to do. And so Thad always blamed it on me, because he hated it, but it was really his idea. It was his idea for *me*.

Hester: And he got roped in! (laughter)

Clark: Right. So...[when we got back to Utah] we turned it into a professional kitchen, which was a challenge, and I started to paint it. I painted the door turquoise—I was attached to New Mexico. And I've always loved New Mexican food, and green chile and red chile. Ever since I lived in New Mexico, it's just been my passion. And so I started painting these ristras. And Faye [Atkinson] comes through on her way up north, to visit. And she spends a couple days and she goes home, and her husband Paul [Jacobowski]...is a mural artist, and she tells Paul, "You get your ass down and paint Martha's burrito wagon for her!" So Paul comes down and he...paints it. On one side there's an ocotillo wrapping around it. On the other side there's a prickly pear wrapping around it. On the back side he had this image, and I always wanted an image of a bucking bronco, that has the lasso. But this was a bucking bronco, and she had a frying pan in one hand and a whisk on the back, and the horse is rearing. And it's like this cartoony blonde-haired chick, and Thad would be off to the side offering suggestions like, "Put some more cleavage in!" But you know, it was a beautiful thing. If you saw it you'd wanna go check it out. We almost had Paul paint bars on the window because the famous Martha Stewart was in jail at the time and we had just gotten married and were going to move to Alaska as the Stewarts.

So [the next summer] we went up. We got this really cool '65 Airstream that I bought from Edie. We've got this burrito wagon, we have Thad's 92-year-old father, my brother, Thad's brother. My brother hauled the Airstream, we hauled the burrito wagon, and we drove to Bellingham—along with 800 pounds of roasted green chile.

So we had this whole outfit and we put it on the ferry.



Leaving Zion—North to Alaska!

And it was April, and we get off in Haines, and it's sleeting. It's just hideous weather, and we drive to Denali. It's still too early. And so we went up to Jimmy and Julie's...

Williams: Jimmy and Julie?

Clark: Jimmy Hendrik, and he was married to [at the time], Juliette Bocelli. And she owned the local mountaineering store, had done really well for herself, and also started this little river company called Too loo uk. It's in Denali.

Hester: Was this right in the middle of town, sort of?

Clark: No, it was at a place called Glitter Gulch. It's



Mosey's outside Denali, 2003

hideous. It's like a small Tusayan, and the cruise ship industry owns one side, and the private is on the other side. Nothing pretty about it. Denali is spectacular, but... it's not even right at the entrance, it's like five miles from the entrance. So we set up shop and we start... "How the fuck do we do this?!" It's just been so epic. It just was epic beyond words. And so we set up shop, and they went nuts over us.

Williams: The cruise ship people too?

Clark: Everybody. We're going to run the burrito wagon, and then [think] we're going to do a trip with Too loo uk like one week out of every month, and pull off as many new rivers as we could. But you can't, if you're trying to make [money]...and we had to make money. And so people would come to the window to order and they'd go..."Oh we had the most amazing day. We saw the grizzly eat the baby moose." or "We saw the wolf pack swim the river and then the eagle snatched a puppy." And, "We're heading next to the Arctic or Brooks Range," and "Oh, God we love your burritos! Just love them!" And we're like, "Fuck you, you fucking asshole!"

Hester: "We're stuck in this wagon! Choke on it!"

Clark: Exactly! That's *exactly* what we [were thinking]. (laughter)

Williams: I'm guessing they didn't have food inspectors up there.

Clark: Oh they did! When he came...I went and met him, because I was on the phone with him numerous times, and we thought setting up a wagon—Alaska's the frontier! It will be easy!

Williams: Yeah, they'll be open to anything!

Clark: No. You might as well be in Sedona. It was just as hard, if not harder. "You guys have to have a triple sink, and it has to accommodate your largest pot. You have to have a hand wash. You have to have a mop sink." It had to have five sinks—in a burrito wagon!

I mean, we had to haul water. We had to go sneak and get water from the Park because there was no water.

Hester: You had no running water?

Clark: No. We had a tank, but you had to go fill it. You couldn't find anybody who would sell you water. We set up out back and I bought a Big Green Egg, which is this



roaster. We had a freezer outside. We set up this whole camp outside. The table, the Big Green Egg. We would roast beef all night, leave it and go back to camp.

Hester: Calling all bears!

Clark: Our gray water tank we'd have to empty daily. We had so many trenches of gray water, out behind, covered with moss. We're living from trailer to trailer, and it was stressful. We were trying to be above [board] and do it correctly, but we didn't really know how to run a business. And we'd be back in the trailer and we're counting receipts, and we've got all this cash, and we have it in ammo boxes, and we'd go [to Fairbanks] only maybe every three weeks.

Williams: Were you even running credit cards?

Clark: No. Cash only. Couldn't run credit cards. We had these ammo boxes *stuffed* with cash. In one ammo box you could cram a lot of money. So we'd have like \$6,000–\$7,000, or I don't know, maybe \$10,000—I don't even remember—in the ammo box. And then I remember... there's tundra all around us [where we're camped]. You know how it's just so clumpy, lumpy? Well, we'd just pull some up and kind of dig a hole, and we'd bury the ammo box. That was our bank. We went to go to Fairbanks every few weeks. One time we had to delay our trip, because we couldn't find the right clump with all our money. (laughter)

Simone [Sellin] came up that first summer to help me in the wagon. And again [the next year] to Haines to help in the wagon and then to open the restaurant. She was a big part of our lives up there. You know she's from Kodiak. I never knew that.

So [after that summer] Thad was *really* over it. I kind of could have done it again, because I just wanted...We wanted to be close to the Arctic. That was my passion. But whatever, we ran it until mid-September, and Thad's going, "We are so out of here!" But we left it up there, because we didn't...You know, what are we going to do? We didn't know. So...we went back to Zion, and I thought, "Let's just try this in Zion" but we couldn't find land [to set it up on], we couldn't find a way to do it. So the next year we went back to Denali to go get it, and we were going to bring it back to Utah. We didn't know what we were going to do with it. We weren't going to do *anything* with it.

So when we went back up there, we went to Haines. And Haines was kind of a base, and we knew people in

Haines, and we're driving out of town, it was springtime again, you know, probably March or April, and we're driving up to go get [the burrito wagon], and we looked all over Haines. We go, "Okay, let's try it in Haines." And we could not find a place. Now-a-days there's places all over...[but] we were five or ten years before the whole food wagon craze. I mean, we were kind of pioneers. We looked to buy land in Haines, just to put the wagon on, and we couldn't find it. And so we're driving out of town, and at this tire shop, Leonard Dubber's, and we're getting an extra spare tire because we're going to go across the Denali Highway. And we go in there, and Leonard goes, "What are you guys doing?" And we go, "We're going up to Denali. We've got this burrito wagon. We've been looking in town, and we can't find a place." He goes, "Well, how about"—pointing to his yard. He and his partner were like Click and Clack...He goes, "I can do anything I want with my land." And it's not the beautiful side of Haines, it's as you drive out of town. And so we go, "Okay, well maybe." We didn't know, so we...gave him our contact. I think we had a cell. So we go up to [Fairbanks to] get the wagon, and Leonard Dubber gets ahold of us. He goes, "You guys putting your burrito wagon on my property? You'd better do it, because the bike race from the Yukon happens May 15th, and that's big money!" So Thad and I drove that burrito wagon down, and we put it on Leonard Dubber's land, and we're going to try this again. And Thad's just like fucking rolling his fucking eyes. And we've got our Big Green Egg, and we've got our green chile. We brought some more up there.

Williams: Just in case!

Clark: So we set up, and we get all ready, and we're going to open up again. And these guys are walking up the road, and they are obviously Mormon missionaries. You can just see it, they've got white shirts and black ties, and they're walking towards us. Thad had just opened the window, I'm at the stove stirring up a pot of beans, the griddle is hot to make a fucking burrito...and these guys walk up...our first customers, and Thad just spontaneously goes, "Oh my God, we just drove 2,500 miles to get away from you guys!" (laughter) I could not believe he said that. He truly did! And then they started laughing, and we started laughing. And Thad, I think, apologized. I think we gave them a free burrito or something.

The bike race was no big deal, but they loved us, we were a big hit in town. And then the fair was going to open, and we were going to cook at the fair. And then we went and tried to eat...

There was a Mexican restaurant in town, in the old part of town. It was in the historic district, and it looked like a historic house, but it wasn't. It was a piece of shit, made to look like the fort. And we kept trying to eat there. The restaurant was called South of the Border, which was a great name, because it was south of the Canadian border, and it was Mexican food.

What happened...these people had raised their kids...

they were in their fifties...she was going through a midlife crisis—I think they both were. Their names were the Wackermans and they were definitely wacky. And she told her husband, "I want to start a restaurant. And so...they turned their family home into a Mexican restaurant. And she did a pretty okay job, for never cooking Mexican food. Some things were kind of good. Some things were really out there. But she really, once they got it ready to open, she was already over it. And so she was hardly ever open. They'd only been going for about a year, hardly ever serving food. She'd put a flag out [when open]. You couldn't call them, they didn't have a phone, or they wouldn't answer the phone, so you had to drive over there to see if the flag was out. And so we went, and so we're looking in the window, and it's kind of a cool-looking place.

Williams: Was the flag up or down?

Clark: It was down. (laughter) And so we're looking in the window, checking out this funky [restaurant] with all this Mexican schlock in there. We can hear someone's in the kitchen, it's midday, but the lights aren't on, the restaurant's closed. And they hear us or they see us and they come out, going, "What are you guys doing?" And we go, "Well, we came to see if you were open, to eat something. We have that burrito wagon on the other side of town." "Oh," they go, "that's you? Why don't you make *this* your burrito wagon?" You know, the restaurant.

And we bought it. And so we kept the burrito wagon open, we cooked the fair, and then we opened the restaurant. And it turned out—we didn't know this until after we bought it—the restaurant was a front. Their son was growing dope up in the attic, up above [in] the apartment, and running dope across the border.

We knew...if we did really well at the burrito wagon, even for the next couple of weeks, people would follow us to the restaurant. And that happened. In the restaurant we decided to have an open house. I had brought the ingredients to make tamales, of course. I had green chile. And so we did! The town just went nuts...I mean in Haines they're really into free things. (laughter) They're *really* into free things. I think we were smart about that.

Hester: Hook 'em right at the start.

Clark: We just hooked 'em, and we had tamales, and we made our own chips, our own salsas.

So they came, big open house, ate everything. That was like on a Wednesday. It was the middle of summer, late July, or maybe August. We had this open house on Wednesday, and our official first day was going to be on Friday. And we opened, and Ben and Tracy Anderson, these friends, were visiting; Elena was visiting, Simone was there, and we just made them the bar...We had some waitresses, but really didn't know what we were doing. I had never cooked with a ticket in front of me. I'd never even been a *waitress* in a restaurant! The burrito wagon was the most...

Williams: That was small-time compared to this.

Clark: Before we opened, we looked out, and there was



Mosey's Restaurant in Haines, Alaska.

a line all the way out...It was like forty people coming up the steps.

Hester: And you're the main cook, back in the back. Oh my God!

Clark: It wasn't that big a place. With the porch and everything, you could maybe serve 34 people or something. Maybe it was 34 inside, and with the porch it was bigger. And so we opened shop, and it was fucking insane, and we didn't know what we were doing. At one point that evening, there was a [customer]...

Williams: Helping?

Clark: Yeah. He ended up doing dishes for an hour and a half. It was just a shit show, but they loved it. They absolutely loved it. They went nuts and we were a big success.

That winter we wanted to get our liquor license—just our beer and wine license—and it was really hard in that town to do it. I flew up there and spent several weeks... and I had to walk the streets like a Mormon missionary, because you had to have [support from] a certain percentage of the population. Finally we were successful, and had to argue it in front of the town. And then Thad went up that winter...and he's just a really [good builder]... My inspiration was Pasquales, in Santa Fe. On the outside it's all white, looks like...I guess you'd call it Victorian. Big wraparound porch. And you'd walk inside, and I have to say it was beautiful. It was so New Mexican, with New Mexican art, and Thad made the hand wash sink where you put food up—colored tile. And the bathroom was bright pink and chartreuse and lime green, with Mexican sinks. But it was a really cool-looking place and so outta place in Alaska.

And so I learned. I had to learn to have a restaurant, and I learned. And like I said, we had it for nine years, and I'm really glad I did it, but once was enough, and I never want another one.

* * *

Williams: All nine years you were there, did you always bring fresh green chiles all the way from New Mexico?

Clark: That was a huge part of it.



Opening Day. Elena Kirschner, Martha, Tracy Andersen, Simone Sellin.

Williams: That's kind of what I'm curious about.

Clark: I've always been big on green chiles, personally. And I've always made my pilgrimage. I think my whole life, ever since I lived in New Mexico and got green chile, I used to bring green chile on river trips. I was going to go buy chiles in Hatch [New Mexico], and I was with my brother-in-law, Kirk, and I had this little Beetle [i.e., Volkswagen]—a new Beetle, not the old one—and we went over and we got as far as Albuquerque, and I think Elena told us, she goes, "You should check out this place, Gus Wagner. It's in Corrales," which is just on the north side of Albuquerque. Well, we went to Corrales, and they had chile from all over. You know, it was a big farmer's market that had just opened for apples, chiles, pumpkins, in probably August or something. And then they had like six to eight roasters going, and they had Chimayó chile. They had chile from all over. So I probably bought, I don't know how many, maybe 300–400 pounds of chile.

Williams: All roasted by them?

Clark: Yeah. Then they put it in sacks, but it leaks out all over. So I put it on the roof of the bug, and there's probably fifteen, forty-pound sacks, at least. And I'll never forget driving back with Kirk. By the time we get to Gallup...It's all leaking! All down the windshield, and the windshield wiper wasn't enough to get the chile juice off.

* * *

Williams: Kind of explain the process. You're going to get these chiles to Alaska, right, from here?

Clark: I'll tell you what it evolved into. And I did this for many years. I would go over and get this chile, and I would have friends in Albuquerque or somewhere, and I'd borrow their driveway, and I would lay out the chile to cool off, and after it cooled—and it would always be in late October when I would do it, because it'd get really cold at night. And then I'd get up in the dark and put gloves on, and take Ziplock bags and just shove them in.

Williams: So you weren't peeling them.

Clark: No, not then. So for a few years I did that. And then you'd take all this chile. And then we'd have a freezer in the back of the truck that you'd have plugged into

somebody's house or some motel or whatever, through the window, with the freezer in the back of the truck. And then we'd start to layer the freezer...

Williams: With Ziplocs.

Clark: With Ziplocs. The freezer's buzzer would go off constantly for a couple of days because it's too much mass in the freezer. And then we would take it back to Utah, and then we'd have to unload the chile out of the freezer. Then we'd have to get the freezer out of the truck and put it on the back porch. And then we'd have to load the chile back into the freezer. And then a few months later...we'd have to do that whole thing again. A lot of loading and unloading the chile in the freezer, and then getting it up to the ferry, or driving it up the ALCAN Highway. So after a couple of years of taking chile unpeeled, up there, and then you have to pay somebody to peel it when we got up there...and the weight of it is ridiculous...Well, then what happened is, I'm on a trip in Grand Canyon, and I meet these old friends, Steve and Kathy Miller, who I knew from Outward Bound, and they owned a river company, New Wave Rafting...They live just in between Española and Pilar, and they guide on the Rio Grande. "Come peel chile at our house, we got the perfect place." So what happened for probably seven or eight years was, the last week in October we'd come down from Alaska, I'd go to Gus Wagner's and I would buy 2,000 pounds of chile, all roasted. On top of that, I would buy food and alcohol for a bunch of people, and we'd get firewood—and I'd go up to Steve and Kathy's. Their outfit is right on the Rio Grande. It's just this cool scene. We'd take these tarps and lay it out, down right along the river. You know, skunks would be running across it in the middle of the night. Spread it all out, let it cool, and then you'd shove all the chile into the coolers.

So we'd have probably six or seven massive coolers of chile. I would have brought knives, gloves, oilcloth, and we'd set up shop and we'd see whoever we could find: Steve and Kathy's friends, boatmen. I paid ten bucks an hour, and I fed them, and it'd be a big party every night. And actually it was really cool, because we got so many people from all these different walks, and people would hear about it, and they would come over. Some people would just want to do it for fun. Some people just wanted to be fed. Some people wanted to make some money.

At first it would take us about a week to peel all the chile. It's labor intensive. So not only do you peel it, then you chop the stem off it and scrape the seeds out...then we weighed it, [into] five-pound bags. They had their freezers, I had a freezer I'd bring down there. So we had all these different freezers so we could get it frozen quickly. We got really professional with it. And then every night... We'd probably drink beer all day, but then every night we'd kind of party with whoever was around, peeling, and we'd all camp. It was a really fun scene.

* * *



Chile camp.

Clark: We sold the restaurant, I think it was about 2015.

Williams: And how did you end up in Felt [Idaho]?

Clark: We didn't know what our next step was. That got over guiding years ago; I kind of never did, but I didn't want to go back to being a guide. I didn't want to cook, I mean, in a restaurant again. I didn't really want to retire.



Adventures in Alaska.

We didn't know our next step. So, we kept doing our usual: going on river trips, going in the mountains, going back to Alaska to play instead of work.

We owned this beautiful piece of land and house right on the Virgin River in Zion, but Thad didn't want to spend the rest of his life in Southern Utah. And also, Zion was just becoming overrun. We just had a golden time there. And where do you get to live, being a boatman, in the Southwest, on a river? That's just really unusual. And at the same time, you're kind of in prison on your land because it's such a scene.

Williams: The tourists everywhere, you mean?

Clark: Yeah. We were three miles from the entrance to the Park [i.e. Zion National Park], and when people started to back up from the Park entrance, up to our driveway... And then when they put a helicopter pad in down the road, we're just going, "You know what, we're outta here!"

So about...five years ago we were up in Wyoming, traveling around. I used to live in Wilson, so went and asked these old friends, "Where should we go hiking...not in the park?" because we have two dogs. And my friend said, "Go over on the west side [of the Tetons]...go climb Rammell Mountain." [After hiking that] we were going to go on a backpack trip for four or five days, but we had

gone to the trailhead and there was no water. And so we bumped into some people there, and I introduced myself, to ask them about where the closest water was. And it turned out that we had mutual friends.

Hester: Of course! (laughs)

Clark: He was an old NOLS guy, and he goes, "Well, the closest water, you've got to go back to Tetonia. We live—did you see that old homestead as you came up the hill?" And he goes, "Well, go back down there and go across the meadow. We live over there, have had a place there for twenty years," or something like that, "and we have a well." And as we drove into this parcel, you're on this bench of land, and we're driving on this dirt road, through these grasses. It's the first of September or something, and we're going, "You've got to be kidding!" It was just *stunning*. The view of the Tetons, just the whole place.

So we go get water...spent a couple hours talking... we have all these friends in Outward Bound, NOLS and [talked about] all of them. Talking about the land, and his homestead, he goes, "Yeah, this was part of the Paul Petzoldt Ranch." Paul Petzoldt was the founder of NOLS, an old mountaineer. "This was part of a Petzoldt piece of land that got subdivided in late 1998 or 1999, into these ten-acre parcels."



As we left to go back up in the mountains, we're like a couple hundred yards away from the house, there's this real estate sign in the grass—old, beat-up real estate sign—and a telephone number. And there was good [cell phone] reception. I said, "Thad, should I call them up?" And we called them up and I got [the agent] right off the bat, and he said, "Yeah, this is part of the Petzoldt thing. It's ten acres for \$75,000."

We went up in the mountains and we couldn't stop thinking about it. Then we came down, early, and...truly bought it probably the next day.

Williams: "This is the place."

Clark: "This is it." And so we bought the land. It was three days after we saw that sign. This was, I think, 2017.

I had been trying to get this job in this transition time when we didn't know what the fuck we were doing, at this weird college [in California], Deep Springs. And it just wasn't working out. I knew the president, he had been an old Outward Bound person. It just seemed like the perfect job to me, because it was like an Outward Bound cooking

job. It's a working cattle ranch. I was supposed to teach cooking. It's on the border of California and Nevada, forty miles to due east of Bishop. It's living remotely, but it's a community of fifty people. And what better place to cook, and you're using the students to cook...

Williams: It's like right back to the river.

Clark: Exactly. It's meant for me. And it wasn't happening. And finally I went, "Great—in another lifetime I'll go work there."

So we find this land, and Thad and I both fall in love with it. And we're walking out of the bank, we're in escrow, and the president [of the college] calls me up and goes, "The cook just quit. Are you still interested?" And I did say, I go, "Son of a bitch, David!" (laughter) I wanted so much to build with Thad, and then we decided that...I'll take the job, Thad will start building the house, and then as he's finishing, I'll retire and help build.

But we didn't build the house with what I was making. We had to sell our house in Zion to be able to build. And that's what we did.



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