

Pikes Peak River Runners

**Back in the Grand Groove
Aug 2006
Grand Canyon, Colorado river**



By Christina King

Photo Credits: Almost everyone on the trip!

Trip Participants: Keith Fuqua (permit holder), Ava Marshall, Bill Cooke, Christina King, Julie & Malachi Weng-Gutierrez, Mike & Christine Prosser, Christine's sister Joyce, Dave Sample, Anne Pierce, Patti Meyer, Dave Wimmer, Lorie Erickson.



Drive down through Pagosa Springs (August 20, 2006): We started our trip a bit different this year by carpooling from Colorado to the put-in using three trucks and two trailers. We stopped in Pagosa Springs for the night to keep the coolers colder before arriving at Lee's Ferry the day before our launch (August 22, 2006). This trip also marks my first time back down the Grand Canyon since I broke my leg. We stayed at the Best Western across from the Pagosa Hot springs Spa and enjoyed the evening in the hot springs pools. I was only able to stay for a few minutes in the Lobster Pot pool (114°F). It was a delightful start to our trip. Each pool was a different temperature, size, type, etc.... with minimal sulfur smell. Dave Sample and Dave Wimmer walked across the river free public hot spring pool along the river and swam like otters back and forth into the river and pool. The rest of us paid for the numerous resort style pools at the spa and dipped our toes in the river pool access but liked the warmth of the hot springs pools much better.

GThe next day (August 21, 2006) we had a leisurely departure from Pagosa Springs and arrived at Lee's Ferry on August 21, 2006 late in the afternoon. Julie and Malachi arrived from CA about the same time after picking up our Canyon REO groovers in Flagstaff.

We efficiently rigged all our boats in about 3 hours. It was hot but not unbearable. The ranger (I forgot her name- Dave Chapman was out today) gave us a detailed checkout and even made me unroll my orange x's, empty out first aid kits to see contents, scrutinized every zipper (etc...) on all our lifejackets and open the firepan to see the legs and size, etc.... I am surprised that she did not pull out a ruler to measure it all. Interesting. I did not get the impression she enjoyed her job, how unfortunate. We did not get a hint of a smile from our ranger or much conversation until our DVD orientation the next day when Dave Wimmer pointed out his movie star status in the DVD to her. While we were rigging our boats a gentleman (tourist) started asking us curious questions about the trip. He travels around the world on his yacht and was visiting friends across the US (including a side trip to Lake Powell). He had an accent and I asked him where he was from and he said Zimbabwe. Small world because that is where I am going next month. I asked him for all sorts of advice about our upcoming Africa trip and the bottom line was that crime is bad, US cash is king and if you can pretend to be from another country other than the US (guess my Mom and I might revert to Swedish if that helps). However, he also said we would love going on safari and [rafting the Zambezi](#).



Our group is very experienced with only 4 that have not been down the Grand before. We enjoyed a nice dinner (and good service) at Marble Canyon. After dinner we presented Keith with his new waterproof GC map as a thank you for herding us all safely to the put-in and being the permit holder/trip leader.

Day 1 (Aug 22, 2006), Mile 19 Camp

Keith's Grand Canyon trip came together quite quickly when he picked up a cancellation date back in June 2006. Our group demographics are primarily Colorado. We have 8 boats (mix of cats and rafts) and look forward to Lorie hiking in at Phantom Ranch to join us on Day 5.

Last night, Anne spotted a wayward ringtail cat trapped in the put-in dumpster. She rigs a way for it to escape and it is gone in the morning. We enjoy the breakfast buffet at Marble Canyon and then go down to the put-in to do last minute rigging and watch our DVD/orientation with the ranger. Dave Wimmer, Lorie Erickson, Bob, and Susan Marley are in the DVD and we grant them "movie star status". We launch by 11 am or so on clear water. The Paria river is barely flowing (but muddy). The main river only remains clear until Nankoweep on Day 3.



Flows during the trip range from 10,500 - 18-19,000 cfs every day until Sept 1. After Sept 1, flows drop down to 9,000 - 13,000 cfs. This month they have been releasing the flows in a different experimental pattern (slower ramp up and down rates) so that the higher flows seem very delayed by the time they reach us in the first part of the trip (i.e., the high water is running after dark). We all run Badger Creek rapid fine and stop for lunch below the rapid. It is hot today but bearable.

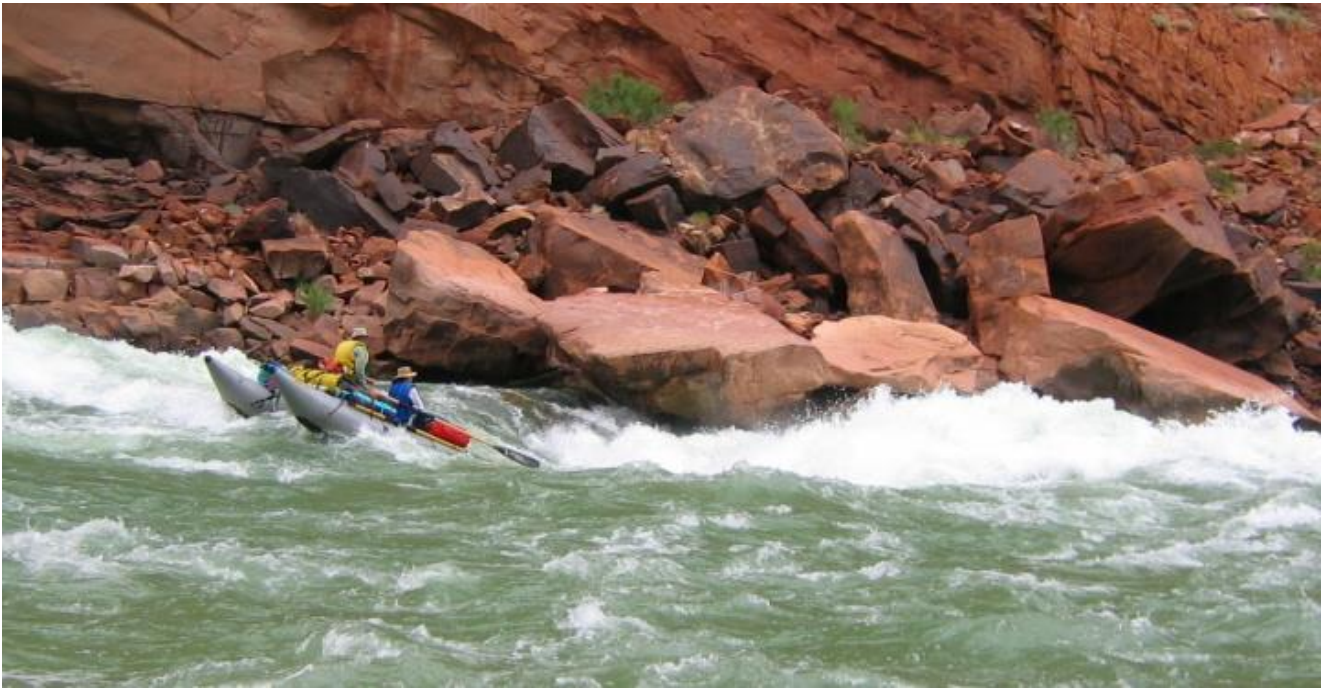
Soap Creek rapid is easy, and we see big horn sheep (first sighting of many) and a lost Navajo Nanny goat with a kid bleating. We stop to scout House Rock

Rapid. House Rock is the lowest I have ever seen it. Very rocky. Probably about 12,000 cfs or so. Not low water to many boaters, but low compared to what I am used to running in August. I run House Rock right of



the hole (which is on river left) and have plenty of room as I take a good look at the hole. Everyone else runs it safely.









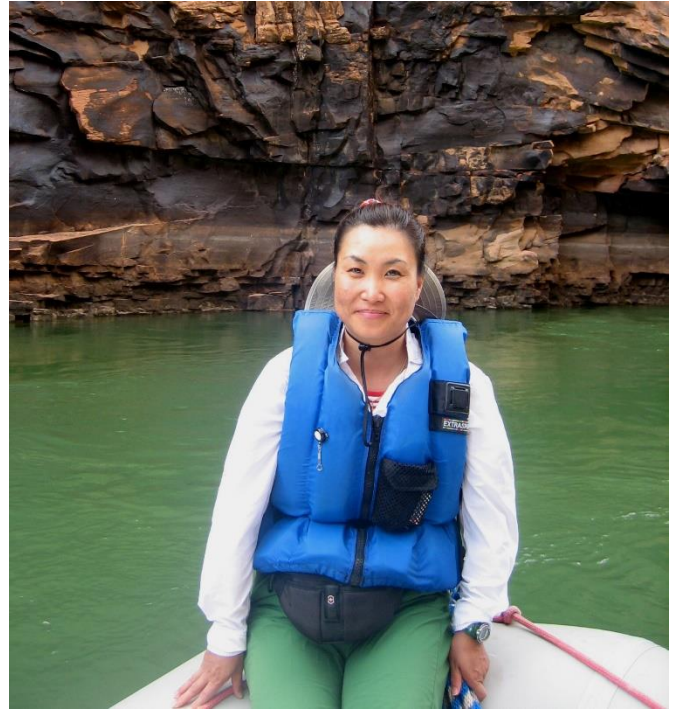


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We decide to camp at Mile 19 camp (river left beach) but in the morning I wished we would have pushed on to North Canyon (nice beach is back). It was a long day; Joyce and I cook dinner for everyone. Joyce has never been camping, on a river trip or on a trip anything like this. As we prepare dinner, I guide her through the steps. It is so funny that when I ask her a trick question; I ask Joyce, "Can you handle cooking the DO potato casserole?" And she says she does not know how and does not think she knows how to do this skill. At the same time, she finishes mixing the items for the DO casserole and I let her in on my joke - that she just did it. She just did not know she was doing it! Everyone loves her DO potato casserole and Joyce insists that she really did not make it, when in fact she did. We clean up after dinner and go to bed early. Everyone appears to sleep soundly in this quiet camp. The first day is always a hard one. Ringtail cats are highly active in the kitchen tonight were denied entry into our foodstuffs. They do manage to grab a loose leftover orange from Anne's boat sometime during the night. High water did not reach us until 8 pm and stayed high all night.



Day 2 (Aug 23) South Canyon

We float down to North Canyon and walk up the side canyon. Ravens swoop in and thwart Christine's effort to chase them off. They end up stealing Joyce's banana and poke through any opening on our boats seeking food. NOTE: Leave nothing unsecured- they can open zippers. The Roaring 20's rapids are easier at low water and we run through them easily. The group seems to be struggling to make miles today- I think we are floating on lower water because of the delay in flow ramp ups at the dam.









We spelunk at the cave (river left) below Cave Springs rapid with Dave Wimmer doing a loop spelunk. Do not forget to dig out your flashlight. We stop for lunch at Silver Grotto with the full intention of camping here, but storm clouds cause us to reconsider. Since we cannot really go up the grotto side canyon with threatening storms we decide to row down to South Canyon. South Canyon camp is more protected from flash flooding events. The group hikes up to Indian Jones cave, enjoys the ruins, petroglyphs, and fantastic views. We play Bocci Ball and try to spotlight ringtail cats on the cliff but are too tired to stay up to wait for them to appear. The weather has been unsettled for the past two days - threatening to storm tonight but nothing has happened yet.



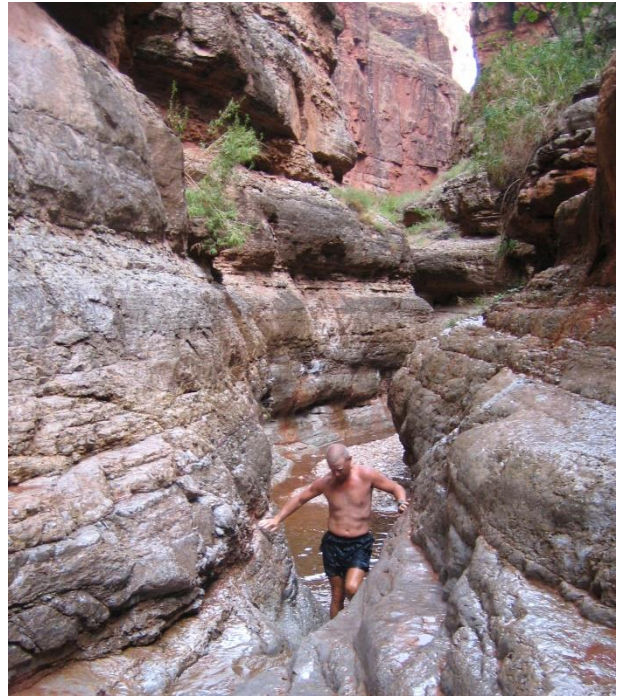
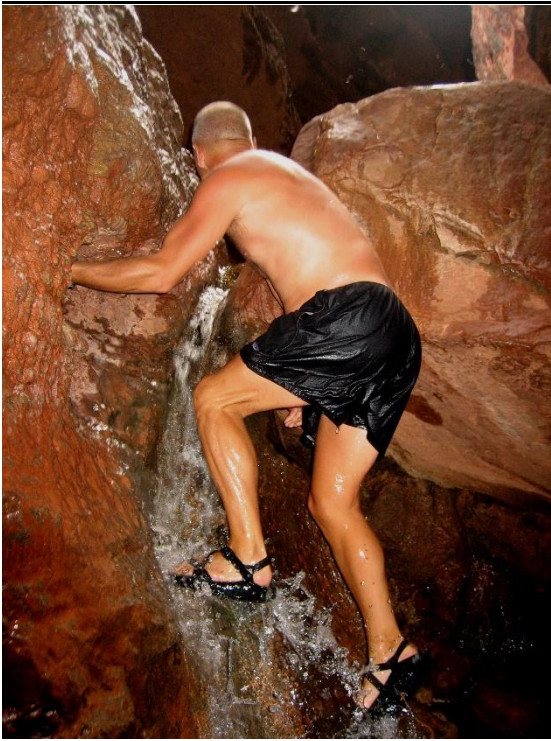




Day 3 (Aug 24) – Nankoweep

Our first stop today is to fill up water at Vasey's Paradise and then we enjoy a Bocci Ball game at Redwall Cavern. I get everyone to assume their favorite Anasazi pose and snap a panorama photo. We pass Nautiloid Canyon ([site of my broken leg trip](#)) and I do not even notice the canyon (psychological block?). Ravens steal peanuts from Joyce (again) and most of the group hikes at Saddle Canyon. Mike spots Anasazi bridge, we run President Harding rapid (on the left) with no problems and row against the wind and rain into camp at Nankoweep. The group is exhausted, and no one hikes up to the Nankoweep granaries. It is quite cool, rainy and we hang out under the parawing protected from the rain.





Day 4 (Aug 25), Rattlesnake camp

Kwagunt and 60-mile Rapids are straight forward, and we make a short stop at the muddy Little Colorado River. It is rarely clear in August. The water flow release delay finally works in our favor and we have high water all day. We stop for lunch at the Birthing Rock- Dave S. tells me about a matate rock he knows about further around the ridge, but we pass on the longer walk for this trip. The Tanner rapid hole is on the right side of the rapid but smaller today- of course I sneak it left of center. Anne managed to run a big no-name rapid hole that shot her boat vertical and scared all of us. Joyce just hung on.

Anne guided us through the Unkar Delta loop (pottery chards and ruins) and afterwards we ran Unkar Rapid (center) to avoid the big waves/holes on the left side. We camped early (20-mile day) at upper? Rattlesnake camp. My rubber rats, snakes and lizards came out tonight and I got most of the newcomers. Anne (our reptile loving vet) was not startled until the next morning, but I did eventually get her too. We played Cranium tonight and had lots of laughs. The wind came up during the night and blew down the kitchen table. Other than that, a quiet night.



Day 5 (Aug 26), Cremation

We ran Neville's rapid, scouted Hance with all of us running left except for Dave, Bill and Anne who ran right. Joyce popped out of Anne's boat and was even more scared about the rapids, trip, etc. afterwards. Anne got her in right away, I do not think Joyce ever lost contact with Anne's boat. We ran Sockdolager (right to left) and Grapevine (center to avoid big holes on the left) rapids

cleanly. Funny thing, saw our first private group of the trip, laying over at Grapevine (odd). They ferried across (and up) river to hike up the canyon (on river right). We stopped at Clear Creek and I stayed behind with Christine and Joyce in the shade of umbrellas. I gave Joyce a pep talk (told her that hiking out was not a safe option for her). Her fears are numerous, and she really makes a positive break through as we travel further along the river. This trip ends up being a real-life changing event for her. By the end of the trip, she rides the rapids with more confidence, climbs steep cliffs like an agile monkey and I even mistake her "pushing rowing style" as Anne's (who teaches her well). Okay, I did promise her that she could walk around Crystal and Lava rapids. What I do not tell Joyce is that it is NOT an option to walk around the heavy hitters tomorrow (Horn Creek, Granite and Hermit). We get to Cremation camp early, Dave W. rows across river to retrieve Lorie from Phantom, and the rest of us fly kites, relax, and play dominoes until after dark.



Day 6 (Aug 27) – Lower Schist

We float to Phantom Ranch, mail postcards, make a few phone calls, pick up mail from my sister Karen (filled with treats) and fill water jugs. When talking to my Mom on the phone, I tell her how the trip is going and about 3 minutes into the conversation she tells me about the latest upcoming Africa trip planning news. You can tell where her focus is and mine soon will be after this trip.

The water seems nice and high today. I appreciate the high water because we have Horn Creek rapid next. Bill and I run an easy sneak on the far left- I did not even get wet. Most of the rest of the group takes the riskier ride (right to left). Everyone comes through okay. We scout Granite next, and I run right, sloppily, managing to stay straight but getting my right oar knocked out of my hand, picking it up, then getting left oar knocked out of my hand. BIG RIDE! Malachi runs left and gets pounded, managing to lose an oar in the rapid, but slapping on his spare oar in record time. Others in the group had varying runs (some forwards, some backwards) but no more problems. We scouted Hermit, I failed to sneak and ran right down the middle. At one point the 5th wave crested just as I climbed to the top, I felt that either I would make it over the 5th wave or might just go end-over end. Imagine the scene in the movie "The Perfect Storm" where the trawler climbs the wave and ends up going end over end to the bottom of the ocean. Well, it is not that huge, but I bet the wave was ~18 feet tall and my boat is only 16 feet long. I felt very vertical! Fortunately, I ended right side up after holding my breath throughout the rapid. I always forget how big Hermit's waves really are! Monstrous. I think Anne ran it spectacularly like me, others managed to sneak it nicely. Mike even eddied out on the right, taking photos of the remaining boats behind him from a safe position.













We stop for a side hike up Trinity canyon before stopping to camp at Lower Schist camp. Later that night we each read our fortunes from my sisters' mule-crushed treat package fortune cookies to each other. My two fortunes read "Success will come to your plans" and "Remember 3 months from this date. Good things are in store for you". That would be Nov 27- maybe that means KC will have beat Denver in KC over Thanksgiving?! I end up pushing the boat out a lot tonight to keep it off the sharp schist rocks at camp. Patti's quote of the trip makes the entire group laugh, "2 stubbed toes, trump 4 blisters". We have had quite a few foot problems (blisters, stubbed toes, cuts, scrapes, cracked heels, hot spots) for most everyone

on the trip. Patti's feet are the worst- her stubbed toes are purple and swollen ringed by ghastly blisters. Superglue is a hot commodity every night.

Day 7 (Aug 28)- Big Dune

Today's big rapid is Crystal, it is at an easy level when we scout it. As promised, Christine and Joyce walk around it. All of us have easy runs on the right. We run the Gems and unbeknownst to me, Keith (& Ava) and Dave Sample (& Patti) switch boats. We do not have consensus on the next event, but it is my journal, so I get to stick with my rapid identification - Sapphire- is where Dave S flips. I turn around and see a blue boat upside down - 7 boats behind me. Ava and Keith saw the flip but had to push hard to get the behemoth (Patti's big red boat) down to them. I blow my whistle; we pull out and someone tells me that Dave S. has flipped. Well, I am so confused because I see Patti's boat that Dave was rowing upright and fine. After my initial confusion, Dave S and Patti pop up on the top of the overturned raft and we push it into an eddy. Dave S, Keith and Malachi flip it over in the water and we regroup and continue. Dave S. told us that he hit a big wave and slid off to the side and flipped. Dave was amazed and pleased that it only took three of them to flip the heavy boat back over (in the river).



Patti's version of the flip: *Nirvana, the most comfortable flip I have ever had!*

aaahhhhhh.... I am thinking... this is the most comfortable journey down the Grand I have had yet! Here we are in Keith and Ava's boat! We have exchanged our river chariots for our daily exploration through "the gems". Remembering how heavy Keith's boat is and how difficult it is to maneuver; I commission Dave to row the elephantine vessel! I am thinking... this is the most comfortable voyage down the river, sailing over the big waves with ease. I am sitting unconstrained Navajo style on the warm sun-

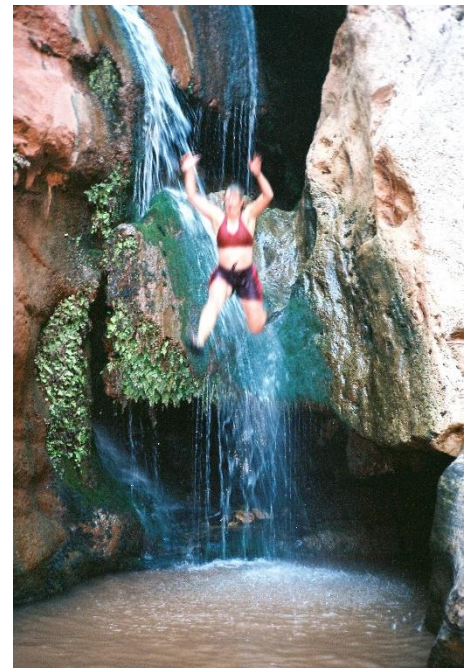


kissed drybags that are neatly assembled in the bow of the boat. I am thinking...I am most comfortable!!!! Holding onto the bowline as if it were a single halter strap over a stallion's head, I am quite at ease "riding" out the wave train. Did I mention how comfortable I am? Then...suddenly...as I am gazing at the colossal wave in front of me, I spy a curling diagonal wave appear out of nowhere like an apparition slightly to my right! As we begin to move in slow motion, I start to suspect, hmmm, I think we are going over!!!!!! and so, we did!

Since I was already clutching the bowline as if it were an expensive designer handbag, I used it to pull myself closer to the overturned vessel and propel myself onto the shiny black bottom! I quickly find the straps that lace the floor in place, poke & prod my fingers through the ties, and bulldoze myself onto the bottom of the tub! Charged with adrenaline, I scamper to the stern in search of Dave. He is ok, but is not having nearly as much fun as I am. Remembering my first aid and cpr class from years ago, I quizzically demand, "Are you ok? Are you ok?" He wearily replies, "I was under for a long time." Anxiously awaiting a concerted rescue, I pull, he pushes, and we find ourselves perched on the bottom of the boat relieved and rested. And I am thinking...this the most comfortable flip I have ever had!



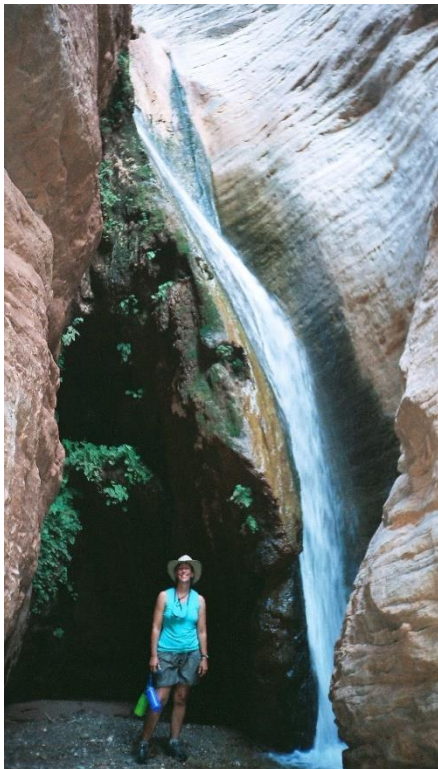
We lunch at Shinumo, hike to the falls and then run Waltenburg (big holes). A stop at Elves to enjoy the falls (kind of cool temp. I fret anxiously over the smooth rock boulder we must climb over at Elves and have flashbacks about my broken leg incident where I slid on a smooth rock. Keith, Dave S, and others help me get over my anxiety and I move beyond the rock blocking the trail down. Today was a long day, Keith does some gear drying in camp (from the flip), we have a late dinner (it is all in the presentation- in the dark) and then to bed. During the middle of the night, a ringtail cat landed in Lories stomach and she threw it off with a start. It sounded so funny when she told us the story the next morning, but I am sure it would have given me a nightmare if it happened to me.



Day 8 (Aug 29)- Stone Creek



We float to Blacktail and enjoy a flutist's music in the shady canyon. I enjoy the sight of the intricate sinewy walls of this canyon which is so peaceful. [Blacktail Canyon Flutist video.](#)



We stop at Fossil canyon and find a few good fossils with everyone's

heads hanging down and eyeballs straining to spy them on the hot canyon floor. Lorie showed us a new stop above Specter rapid on river left that she has called Brain rock. The stalactites are amazing, and the rocks are brain-like in appearance. As we float down to Specter rapid, I notice this section of canyon has lots of these rock formations. Specter has huge waves on the right side run with no sneak, but we run it fine. We enjoy lunch in the small sliver of shade in the waterfall canyon (river right) above Bedrock and then visit the Dollhouse above Bedrock Rapid. Joyce and others scramble over the rock wall and wander the rooms in this cute rock formation. It reminds me of an Alice in Wonderland scene. We run Bedrock and row down to Deubendorff rapid. At the last minute, the group decides not to scout Deubendorff - I had a great run not even getting wet but think that we could have had some trouble here. It does not appear that anyone else ran my run and some hit huge waves/holes. It is hard to

tell but I think everyone would have had better runs if they would have scouted the rapid. We camp at Stone Creek. Biting flies are bad this trip and particularly bad at Stone Creek. Some of the group hikes above the Stone Creek waterfall and the rest of us lounge below the falls in pools with friendly fish (darters?). The waterfall itself pelts us with stones and we avoid lingering long under the pounding water (I get a small lump on my head from one of the rocks). We enjoy watching a large lizard squeeze in a small rock crack.

Day 9 (Aug 30)- Panchos

The boats are firmly beached in the morning. It takes some hard effort to get them in the water. The wind was hot last night, and the flies return at breakfast. We float to Tapeats and drop off the loop hikers (Bill, Dave W & Keith). We fill water and I promise Keith that I will have Ava row right behind me in the rapid and get her safely down to Deer Creek. I promptly dump my boat over a dome hole in Tapeats rapid because I am watching Ava behind me and NOT looking downriver. I did not flip but it sure was poor boating. Fortunately, Ava cleverly notes that this might not be a good way to run the rapid and makes her way fine without me "guiding" her.

We stop at Christmas Tree Cave and climb up to it. Julie spots the Christmas Tree first to win a semi-valuable prize (a purple fossil fish combo keychain and bottle opener). We spend all day at Deer Creek enjoying the falls and patio room. The loop hikers showed up around 2 pm and we float down to camp at Panchos. Lots of motor rigs bunched up today. We meet up with another private group today that will take out the same day as us at Diamond, but



they trail us the rest of the trip. Everyone enjoyed themselves today! Keith and Ava prepare a wonderful Szechwan Chicken dinner under the hot overhang. Patti and Dave W compete in river horseshoes and Patti whips his butt. Of course, Dave must downplay his loss by saying it was only pre-season, but we know better. A rematch occurs on our last night of the river (Boys vs Girls). Item of note- there are more women on this trip than men (and 4 women rowers). It makes for a nice trip balance.



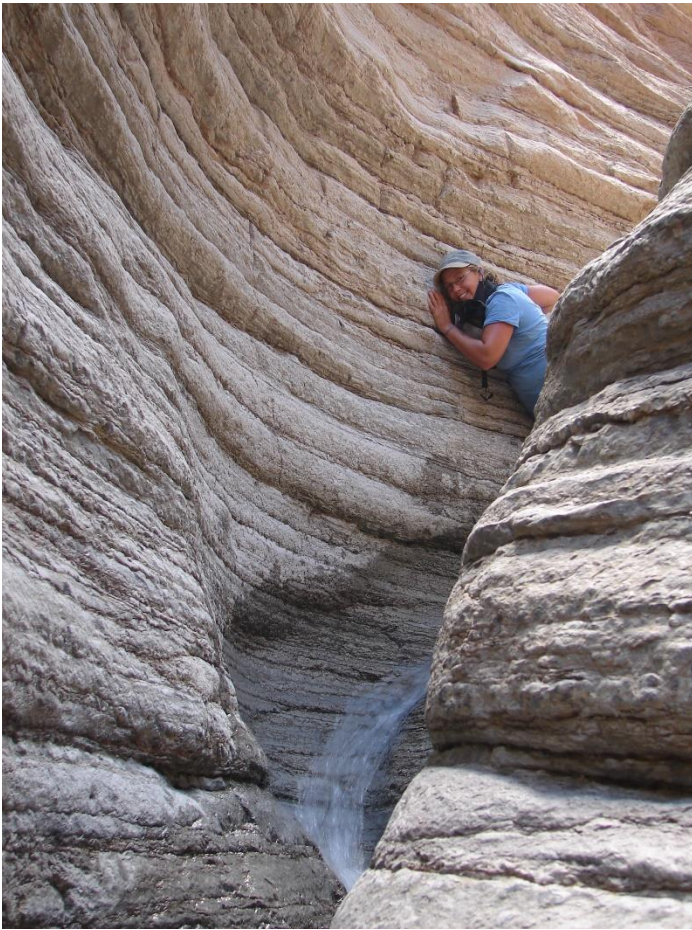


Christine and Joyce gave all the river girls a cooling/refreshing Korean face mask. We put them on, relax, low, and behold, a motor rig passes by as we relax and we just wave. Loud guffaws (and the clicking of photos) come from their passengers and we even crack a laugh from the motor rig boatman who make our day! We look like Freddie Krugers from Halloween but feel wonderful.



Day 10 (Aug 31)- Matkat Hotel

We woke to a clear morning after an unsettled night but no rain. We ran Fishtail rapid (hard right sneak for me) and pulled into Matkatamiba Canyon. Everyone slithered up to the amphitheater and we had a great time creating magnificent butt dams. We have lunch at Matkat Hotel and a storm starts brewing. We decide to camp here rather than float down to Ledges camp where it is less protected. The storm snuffs out and we enjoy a HOT night in camp.





Day 11 (Sept 1)- National

Hot morning, scouted Upset Rapid first thing. We run it but Mike did not realize that the hole at the bottom left/center was not all the way across river. He hits the right side of the hole hard with a spectacular ride up and over it. Beautiful. Patti intends to run it right but catches her oar handle on her shorts (2nd time she has done that) and ends up extremely far left completely missing the hole (I think). It is hard to tell. I ran right and watched the chaos. We filled up water again at Ledges spring and then pull into Havasu Canyon. Mike, Lorie, and Dave W. hike up to Beaver Falls and the rest of us meander in this side canyon enjoying the pools.





We camp at National Canyon and Ava won the "Spot the Nautiloid" game in Oracle Rock. Anne and I walk up National and enjoy a quiet stroll in this beautiful canyon. We listen to frogs/birds and scan many signs of animals (great ringtail tracks). National reminds me of a backwards Matkat type canyon. I do not hear it but Julie screams when she goes to bed in their tent. It turns out a tarantula squeezed in a small unzipped area of the door and attached itself to their tent ceiling. Malachi spotted it first and told Julie to exit the tent so he could get a spider out. Julie wonders if she really needs to get out and Malachi says it would be a really good idea to do exit the tent. Malachi traps it in Julie's empty pee container and brings it outside. That is when Julie first sees it and screams. Lesson learned: if you set up a tent, or sleeping bag before you go to bed, zip it shut or shake it out. The reptiles, insects, and rodents like these places.



Day 12 (Sept 2)- Whitmore Wash

Lava Day- we launch before 8 am like most mornings and I am pleased to see water touching the base of Oracle rock- which means the left side run of Lava should be open. We have a long float down to Vulcan's Anvil (we touch it for good luck), and scout Lava Falls rapid on the left. Sure enough, the left side is runnable but neither the left or right side runs look great. In fact, they both look hard. Dave W scouts right too but we all decide to run left. I run first with Keith right behind me. I have an ugly left side run getting pushed sideways after the first drop (Keith did too) and hit the next hole sideways - high siding to keep the boat right side up. I succeed but it was not pretty- at least the ledge hole was not involved in my run. Keith does my exact same run and gets through upright as well. Bill and Patti bounce down the far left (ugly but effective). Dave W hits things wildly- also an ugly run. Mike, Malachi, and Anne have great runs with Anne winning the prize for best run through Lava. Nobody flips, we pick up Christine, Joyce and Ava who walked around and continue to lunch. On the way down river, I get sloppy (not paying attention) and hit the Son of Lava waves sideways filling up with water. Oh well, being below Lava upright makes me happy.





We stop at the pictographs above Whitmore and then onto camp. Gosh is it hot, thank goodness for our shade umbrellas which pop up on the river like poppies springing open. During dinner, a storm builds and pelts out a hard rain right as we sit down for dinner. We hang out under trees until it stops in about 20 minutes then the heat returns. A hot wind blows sand in our faces all night.









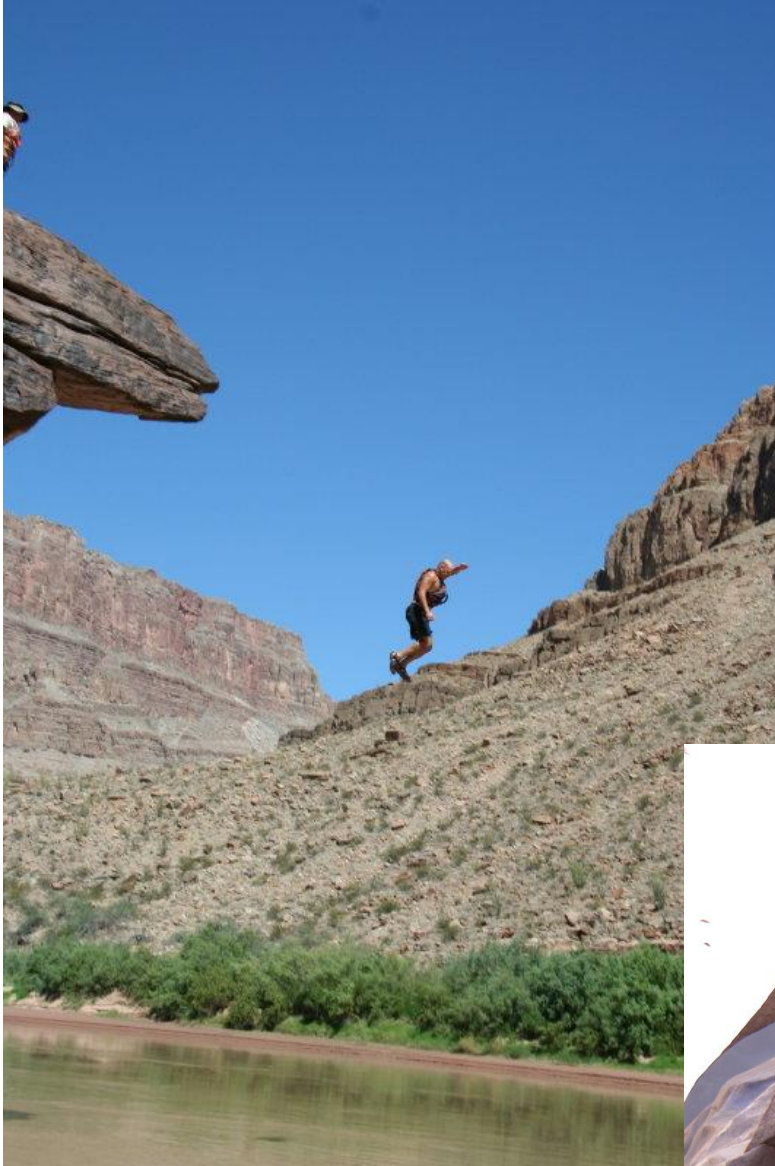
Day 13 (Sept 3)- Indian Creek

We put on the river early this morning because it was so hot last night. We stop at Parashant Wash and check out the "book of worms", but the fossil finds were even more entertaining. Dave S and I search for a camp that we "think" we remember but never find it. Mile 205 rapid has big waves. We end up camping at Indian Creek canyon (more flies) and Bill entertains us by directing us in a musical song. We have a great time and play dominoes too. I notice I have a dead scorpion in my wet shorts- glad I did not get stung when I washed them. Lots of ants in this camp, nice canyon. We see a California King snake in camp- let us hope he eats bugs!

Day 14 (Sept 4)- Mile 220

Joyce (of all people) finds a whip snake (one of her greatest fears) while we pack up camp and we move it to a safer place behind camp. Today is our last full day on the river. We enjoy ourselves and run Mile 209 rapid avoiding the big hole. Stops today include Womb Rock, Pumpkin Springs, Three Springs canyon. The Womb

Rock beach has a special reptile at home here (a pink GC rattlesnake). In fact, it is very inactive, waiting to hit the sun to warm up. Julie gets close to photograph it. Julie is the reptile specialist today and finds a "gazillion" little frogs at Three Springs and Dave devises new methods of constructing butt dams. Little Bastard is as big as I have ever seen it (probably due to low water- I think they have shut the flow down Sept 1). Jump Rock is another favorite stop, and it is so funny to see the jumpers leap off this high cliff into the river. Malachi manages a very "acrobatic" (some would describe it as awkward) jump that results in a



red and numb face afterwards (think partial face plant). Mile 217 rapid is our last big rapid of the trip. Water fights break out and of all people, Mike, Christine, and Joyce start it.

They sneak up on others by looking so innocent. Lorie ambushes Julie hiding behind her boat umbrella. Shade umbrellas pop out all over the river on our boats and I almost lose mine from a wind gust as we float into camp at Mile 220. I fix dinner with Joyce's help and Joyce bakes the DO spice cake all by herself. I think she is got DO cookery mastered.

We play our crossword puzzle game then onto the real event (river horseshoes). The girls vs the boys river horseshoes rematch results in a win for the girls (GIRLS 11 - BOYS 8). Joyce is the cheerleader who yells (okay speaks loudly) "Put it in, put it

in". The girls are dubbed as poor winners by the boys because they do so much trash talking and, in your face, high-five moves during the game, but they sure do have fun. Girl's rule! I reorganize and partially de-rig my boat to get



ready for tomorrow's de-rigging frenzy. After dark, those still awake - share the special parts of this trip with each other.

Special for me (Christina): *introducing boaters to their first Grand trip, new places we visited, so many women boatmen and more women than men on the trip, seeing Joyce transition from extremely scared to having fun and teaching her how to cook and bake using a dutch oven.*

Anne- *great trip, new boat setup, nice to be part of a compatible group- really felt like I fit in.*

Julie- *visited so many new places compared to last trip, spiritualness of Blacktail Canyon (flutist), Deer Creek and Matkat*

Malachi- *ditto- what Julie said.*

Keith- *I would have to say one of my best trips. Lots of fun with an exceptionally great bunch of people. I would love to do it all over again with the same group. New places I have never stopped at on previous trips. Always something new to discover in the Grand.*

Patti- *rowing my own boat, confidence, peaceful experiences.*

Dave- *devised yet new butt dam methods (prone position and the use of lifejackets as water stoppers between butt cracks? this trip brought back memories of my first Grand trip and how special that was. See his original comments below:*

This was an incredibly special trip for me. I got to participate in a trip with lots of fun people. The previous GC experience of the group made it an easier trip. Setting up camp just seemed to happen. The personalities meshed well. I had a strange sleep pattern where I had too much adrenalin to fall asleep immediately so I just star gazed for about an hour every night. Then I would sleep well for about 5 hours then wake up to more star gazing. Then I would sleep another couple of hours. This was only possible because we went to bed so early. I forgot how bright the stars are in the canyon.

I especially enjoyed participating in the experience of people who were doing "firsts" (first trip, first time rowing their own boat, first flip in the Canyon, first time seeing special sites, etc.) down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. Joyce was an inspiration on this trip.

Mike- *rapids, scenery, hikes, flat water, overwhelming and fun!*

Anne- *On the first day of the trip a large, bright yellow tiger swallowtail butterfly was fluttering determinedly around my boat, positive that with so many bright colors around there must be something good to eat. My passenger, Joyce, whom I had just met, watched with me, but whenever the butterfly would act like it was considering landing on her she would flinch away in fear that it might touch her. I thought to myself that this woman is going to be in for quite a trip if she finds butterflies scary. At House Rock rapid later that day Joyce's eyes were as big as saucers and her expression clearly said that this was more than she had bargained for. I knew that this was the moment of truth, she was either going to collapse into a puddle and cry and insist she cannot do it and therefore require continual wheedling and cajoling for the rest of the trip, or she was going to suck it up and come out the other side a better person. When we got back in the boats to run, she did not say a word. I could tell she was afraid, but she took her place and prepared to go. I knew from that moment that*

everything was going to be all right, even if she did not always know that herself. By day five, with Phantom Ranch nearby, I know she was doubting her ability to finish the trip and she was sorely tempted to give up and hike out, but she did not. By day 11 she had mastered basic rowing skills, given up on the makeup, and sat on the deck and laughed while genuinely enjoying the ride through the rapids that had originally terrified her. I hope that if I am ever confronted with a situation that put me so completely into unfamiliar surroundings, I can face the challenges with as much grace and strength as Joyce did.

Day 15 (Sept 3)- Takeout day at Diamond

We took out in a frenzy of activity with Donnie (Canyon REO) noting that we were very efficient. The Hualapai signaled us in (two boats at a time). We enjoyed a hot clean hotel shower in Flagstaff and ate dinner at the Sizzler with a fresh salad bar.

Home:

Follow up story from Julie....

This weekend I had an interesting thing happen to me that was a remnant of the Grand trip. I thought I would share...Did any of you have tiny black pinhole spots on your body, e.g., on your fingers or hands? I know Dave S had a couple and Malachi had one on the palm of his hand. Well, I came home with one on the tip of my left ring finger. Little black spot with a pinhole at the tip. I just thought it was blood or something, no biggy, right? Well, then mine started to grow into a lump and it hurt whenever I accidentally tapped the tip of my finger on any surface. Malachi started teasing that the pinhole was a breathing tube for some larva that may have been deposited subdermal. Of course, that left me wondering. So, I started to pay closer attention to my fingertip. The hole closed, the lump started to grow bigger, and my finger became more sensitive. Hmmm. I started to think maybe I should visit the doctor. But I hate seeing the doctor. So, I did not. Well, the skin on my fingertip became very taunt and tough. The lump kept getting bigger until it looked sort of like a tumor. Then the skin began to lift like I could peel off a layer. So, I picked at it and peeled off layers of skin. Suddenly yellow-green puss oozed out of my fingertip. "Eeww, that's gross!". Then I started squeezing my fingertip to rid it of the puss, until blood showed. Suddenly something shot out of my fingertip onto the napkin that lay on the table. I jumped and screamed because I was startled. Malachi asked what was the matter with me and I told him something just shot out of my finger! I looked and it was a cactus spine about a 1/4 of an inch LONG!!!! Okay, so I am a little jumpy these days between the tarantula in the tent, my proximity to the gazillion frogs at Three Springs, and now a cactus spine shooting out of my finger. Hope the story was entertaining at least.

I thought for sure Julie would pop an alien or at least a lizard larva as I read her story above!