



Grand Canyon Pioneers Society - Monthly Bulletin - July 1999

GCPS Meetings for 1999

July 17: Meet at Albright Training Center at the Grand Canyon South Rim at 12:30 PM. Carolyn Richard, curator of the Grand Canyon National Park's Museum Collection, will walk us across the street to the new Museum Collection Research and Storage Facility. Carolyn will give us a half-hour tour of their new building. The collection contains artifacts related to Grand Canyon's natural and cultural history, oral histories with Grand Canyon pioneers, objects from the early days of the park, and they currently have a small display on one of our members, Harvey Butchart, in our lobby.

Then at 1:00 PM we'll meet at the Albright Center to hear Transportation Director Jim Tuck speak on the future of GCNP. Jim has been involved in the implementation of the General Management Plan since its approval in 1995. Concentrating on the transportation and regional information aspects of the plan, Jim manages the day-to-day shuttle system contract, has brought alternative fuels (back) to the park and is helping plan for the greatly expanded transit system. He will cover all aspects of the implementation of the General Management Plan. If you want to avoid the crowds in the Village eateries, bring a picnic lunch to the patio of Albright at 11:30 AM.

August 14: This outing to Chavez Pass is being arranged by Ron Werhan. Meet at 10:10 AM at Two Guns, Interstate-40 Mile Marker 230 (35 miles east of Flagstaff) for a discussion of the local history including Canyon Diablo Trading Post, Two Guns, Indian trade route, and view of the original Old Trails Highway and old U.S. highway 66. From there we're off on quite an adventure -- past Meteor Crater to Chavez Pass and a 1/2 mile hike up and down hills to some ruins. We'll drive through a beautiful old growth ponderosa forest and past lakes and meadows. The trip mileage is 134 miles round trip from Flagstaff. The entire trip will take 7 hours. We should be back to Flagstaff by 5:00 PM. Much of the trip is on gravel roads and is suitable for passenger cars in good weather. You may want to carpool out of Flagstaff.

September

18: John Westerlund, our scholarship awardee for last year and this year, will show slides and tell us about his doctoral project on the World War II prisoners at Navajo Depot and the Japanese internees at Leupp. We'll meet for lunch at Furr's Cafeteria in Flagstaff at 11:30 AM and afterwards make our way to the meeting room. The presentation will be in the Liberal Arts Building at Northern Arizona University at 1:00 PM in Room 135. In case you do not come to the lunch, the Liberal Arts Building is on the north campus,

Building 18. Parking is in Lot 10. Room 135 is on the north end of the building, first floor. Maps are available at most campus entrances.

October
16: Annual Meeting

November Plans are in the making for a first ever meeting of the Grand Canyon
13: Pioneers in Tucson. We'll start with our own personally guided tour of the Arizona State Historical Society museum from 10:30 to 11:30 AM. After lunch in a nearby restaurant, we'll gather in the Historical Society Boardroom for two presentations. Ruth Stephens Baker will talk about her climb up Shiva Tempe with Emery Kolb. Then Betty Leavengood will show slides from the Bass Collection that is housed at the Historical Society and talk about Ada Bass. We'll come up with some plans for folks staying overnight, so mark your calendar for a visit to the Old Pueblo.

December : No meeting

An Article from the Williams-Grand Canyon News dated June 16-22, 1999: Longtime Canyon Explorer Honored

By Brad Fuqua, Grand Canyon News editor

For years, George Steck had to listen to people he met ask, "Are you the brother of Allen Steck?" Yes, he was the noted mountaineer's brother. But after Saturday afternoon, there was no doubt that this was his day in the limelight.

Steck was honored with the Grand Canyon Pioneer Society's Pioneer Award for his significant contribution to the advancement of knowledge of the Grand Canyon. Steck is a longtime backcountry hiker who is widely published and has authored two books.

"It's humbling in a way to know there are enough people out there who care enough for me to accomplish this," Steck said after receiving an impressive looking plaque in a ceremony at Shoshone Point. "I know how much work it is. I was very touched by all the effort."

Steck's background at the Grand Canyon is an even bigger effort. Steck went on several hiking trips through the Canyon, his biggest trip being an 82-day excursion from Lees Ferry to Pearce Ferry. That trip was one of two trips which covered the entire Grand Canyon. The other was a trip from Lees Ferry to Lava Falls.

Although Steck doesn't recall the exact years, he believes his first Grand Canyon hike came in 1957 or 1958, "The year of the big flood," as he remembers. "I took this trip with Georgie White from Lee's Ferry to Phantom Ranch," Steck said. "It was really a magical place. I was probably 35 when I saw the Grand Canyon for the first time."

The 74 year old still hikes, although for not as far or for as long, he said. An Albuquerque, N.M., resident since 1955, Steck was born in Berkeley, Calif. His love affair with the outdoors began there with frequent trips into the Sierras. After his Phantom Ranch hike in the late '50s, Steck spent about six years at Glen Canyon, saying "I was so enamored with it, I bought a boat."

But it was his years and accomplishments at Grand Canyon that led to the Pioneer Award. Steck spent many nights in the Grand Canyon and many days exploring it. In all that time, the only injury he ever suffered was a sprained ankle. "The wind got caught in my windbreaker at Tuckup," Steck said about the fall. "I took aspirin and kept on with the trip. After four days; the sprained ankle was the one that was blue."

Steck said there were remarkably few injuries on the trips he led. "There were minor falls and even a scorpion sting once, but nothing too serious," he said.

The worst injury occurred when a German friend fell 20 feet and landed on his back to crack his pelvis. After the doctor said he should exercise to help heal the injury, the German got right back on the trail and continued the trip.

Lee Albertson, a society member, gave Saturday's onlookers a background on the award winner. Albertson said the award was being presented to Steck for the following reasons:

- for the significant contributions made as a Volunteer-in-Park (VIP) at Grand Canyon National Park;
- for cataloging permanent springs and indexing place names;
- for being an unselfish mentor to numerous backcountry enthusiasts who sought his help and advice on doing off-trail loop hikes and routes to seldom visited areas that harbor some of the most beautiful parts of the Canyon;
- for his detailed work in documenting the "unknown and unfamiliar" for an enhanced understanding of the Canyon;
- for informative and humorous lectures, publications and "how-to" articles on handling adversity in the backcountry;
- and for supporting Grand Canyon restoration projects.

Tom Carmony, Grand Canyon Pioneers Society President, presented the award to Steck. He is the third recipient of the award. Previous winners were Harvey Butchart and Gale Burak.

Steck's literary efforts include a feature story entitled "Dances With Mice," which appeared in the February 1994 issue of Arizona Highways magazine. He wrote a pair of books, "Grand Canyon Loop Hikes" and "Grand Canyon Loop Hikes II." Steck has also made several lectures and slide presentations on the Grand Canyon, Glen Canyon and Marble Canyon.

Four others were honored.

The Grand Canyon Pioneer Society and the National Park Service also inducted four people into the Grand Canyon Hall of Fame for Community Service. Emery C. Kolb, James "Art" Metzger, Frank and Hanna Rotter were this years inductees.

The four inductees were all members of John Ivens Post No. 42 of the American Legion and Auxiliary, which has served the Grand Canyon for 76 years. "The four individuals have all been members and made personal contributions of money, time and work over a period of many years," society member A1 Richmond said. "Two recipients are deceased and happily, the other two are still with us and continue in service to the community."

Richmond said the Rotters "are still up to their elbows in service. But they are not into publicity." With that, son Frank Rotter Jr. and granddaughter Jackie Wren accepted the

awards.

The two deceased inductees, Kolb and Metzger served the Canyon for several years. In fact, Kolb founded the local Legion post and along with 19 others, became involved in community improvements in schools and services. Richmond said Metzger had "well over 50 years of service."

J.T. Reynolds, Grand Canyon National Park deputy superintendent, spoke about the community experience at the Canyon and applauded those who contributed in the past, present and for those who will undoubtedly do their part in the future.

Earlier in the day at Grand Canyon Pioneer Cemetery, society members listened to a program by ranger Stew Fritts, whose presentation included backgrounds on some of the more notable people buried in the cemetery.

Hopi Dances

Back in the days when Fred Harvey had the concessions to operate the hotels and gift shops at the South Rim of Grand Canyon, Hopi Indians performed Indian dances on a raised platform beside the Hopi House. These dances were discontinued a few years ago, but now they are back. It is a pleasant surprise to walk by the Hopi House and see the Hopis in their colorful costumes dancing again. If you haven't seen them by all means do. The performance lasts about an hour and is free. Check at the El Tovar desk for the performance times.



A twelve year-old Hopi boy performs a complicated hoop dance near the Hopi House on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, reviving an entertainment of years past.

Photo by Bill Suran

The Bulletin welcomes comments, stories, or Reflections and Remembrances.

Please send them to

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