

GRAND CANYON EXPLORER

Grand Canyon Pioneers Society - Monthly Bulletin

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Grand Canyon Collection Tour and Annual Picnic

On June 17, a fine gathering of about 75 members met for the annual picnic at the Grand Canyon, where many new acquaintances were made and old friendships renewed.

Those who were able to attend Kim Besom's 10:00 AM tour of the Grand Canyon Collection prior to the picnic were well rewarded. Contemporary items such as Dr. Harvey Butchart's

well-worn backpack and hiking boots are on display in the lobby. Four thousand-year-old split-twig figurines, arrowheads, clay jars, mining implements, and historic paintings were also among the many items in this marvelous special collection of Grand Canyon artifacts. Bob Ribokas stayed busy taking pictures of many of these items with his digital camera.

The weather has not always cooperated with Pioneer outings. A few years ago a very wet snowfall at the Canyon that made the Shoshone Point picnic area unsuitable for the annual picnic. Not to be daunted by the poor weather, a group of Pioneers drove over to the Trading Post in Cameron for their famous Navajo tacos as an alternate to the picnic. This year, the severe drought in the area caused the Park Service to implement restrictions that included the closure of dirt roads in the park and prohibition of cooking fires on the rim. These restrictions included the closure of the Shoshone Point picnic area. The closures happened within a week of the GCPS picnic date. Jeanne Schick and Nancy Green were able to secure the Ramada in Grand Canyon Village as an alternate location for the picnic. An attempt to notify the membership of the location change was made. At noon, a cool breeze prevailed. Thunderstorms and dry lightening threatened in the west. By the time most had eaten, the weather had become more pleasant.

Later, Tom Carmony recognized those who have served the society in various capacities (see article [below](#)) Next, Al Richmond and Robert Arnberger, Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park, along with the assistance of Jeanne Schick, presented the Grand Canyon Hall of Fame Award for community service to Edwin W. Cummings (posthumously) and John D. Bradley. The selection of Edwin Cummings to receive the award was unknown to Jeanne Schick, who is Edwin Cummings' daughter. Superintendent Robert Arnberger



Brad Fuqua/GCPS
The Grand Canyon Pioneers Society and the National Park Service honored John D. Bradley, second from left Saturday afternoon for his contributions to the community. Pictured from left, Al Richmond of the Pioneers Society Bradley, Jeanne Schick, who accepted the award for her father Edwin W. Cummings, and Robert Amberger, Grand Canyon National Park superintendent.

challenged the Pioneers to participate in a Grand Canyon Village community work project, a cleanup of the Pioneer Cemetery. The Grand Canyon Hikers and Backpackers Association along with the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association have expressed interest in having their organizations participate along with the Grand Canyon Pioneers Society in this project. Members will be kept informed about future plans for this community service project.

Some photographs from the collection tour can be found at
<http://www.kaibab.org/tr001/gcnpcoll.htm>

- - - Webmaster Bob

GCPS Meetings for 2000

July 15: Lauzon Homestead and Bass Camp tour by Pat Lauzon.

Time: 9:30 A.M for carpool

Place: Moqui Lodge (just past Tusayan)

Bring a picnic lunch to eat under the pines at the picnic table at the South Bass Trailhead. If you have pictures of the Bass and Lauzon families, please bring them to share.

August 19: Phantom Ranch history by Keith Green, ranger at Grand Canyon and former ranger at Phantom Ranch. Meet at Maswik Lodge for lunch at 12:00 Noon with program at the Albright Training Center afterwards.

September 16: Condor Release Program presentation by Robert Mesta of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Meet at Marble Canyon Restaurant at 11:30 A.M. for lunch, and then go a few hundred yards to a meeting room behind the convenience store to hear the presentation. After driving this far, why not spend the weekend at the North Rim? To make weekend reservations at the North Rim Lodge call 1-303-297-2757 or at Marble Canyon call 1-520-355-2225. Reservations have been made for dinner at the North Rim Lodge Dining Room.

Make overnight reservations soon if you plan to go, as North Rim accommodations are limited.

October 21: Annual Board Meeting and a talk by Tom Vail in Flagstaff.

November 18: Rescues and other mishaps in the Canyon by Ken Phillips, head of Search and Rescue at the South Rim, and Bil Vandergraff, backcountry ranger at the South Rim. Meet at Poco Diablo Resort at 1736 Highway 179 in Sedona at 12:00 Noon for lunch. The presentation will be at 1:00 PM. Don't miss this exciting talk.

December: No meeting

Powell Escapes

by Jack Hefley

Major John Wesley Powell's exploration of the Grand Canyon in 1869 endlessly fascinates. One of the oddest things about the journey is that it almost didn't happen. In fact, vital statistics of that period in America specified that it "couldn't" happen. The life expectancy of a white male born in 1834 (Powell's year) was thirty-five. Coincidentally, Powell was 35 years old in 1869.

After starting out, statistics nearly caught up with Powell in Utah's Cataract Canyon. Despite having only limited use of his right arm--amputated below the elbow--the ever adventuresome Powell left his boats and scrambled up a formation to reach a ledge a thousand feet above the Green River.

Suddenly, he slipped and would have fallen to a sure death. Fortunately, a crewman had accompanied him up the cliff. George Bradley lunged forward, grabbed Powell's shirt, and dragged the Major back from the brink.

Powell went on to make history on the Colorado River and to laugh at vital statistics. Age 68, he died in 1902 at Haven, Maine, which is about as far from the Grand Canyon as you can get in continental America.

Members Updates

One of our newest members is off on a trip around the world, something maybe most of us would like to do--but maybe not by the same means of transportation. John Stapsy and a group of others left the first of June to travel across Japan, China, Mongolia, Russia and Europe on BMW motorcycles.

This is a promotion for the BMW cycles. We will try to keep you up to date on his progress--it should be interesting.

"Always Make it Fun!"

"Always Make it Fun" is the way Bill Beer autographed his book "We Swam the Grand Canyon," a feat he accomplished in 1955. And it appears that he did live by those words.

According to the St. Thomas Source newspaper, in early June, Bill Beer was killed in Kayenta, Arizona, when an ultra-light aircraft he was flying crashed to the ground, after he apparently had a stroke or a heart attack. He was 71.

Beer had been flying the ultra-light planes for about 5 years. He had flown a lot, including from California to Arizona, from Arizona to St. Louis and from St. Louis to Canada. Beer, who was born in Utah, had a dream to fly the four corners area, back to the canyons that he loved.

The Beers moved to the Virgin Islands in 1965. Bill Beer is survived by his wife, Sue; his daughter, Barrie Jean Hibler; son Benjamin Beer; his father, Kenneth; two sisters, Dorothy

Lodato and Fran Kristofferson; and his brother, John.

[Source: St. Thomas Source, Saturday, June 17, 2000 - <http://www.onepaper.com>]

Balloon Crossing of the Grand Canyon by Tom Carmony

One evening, while snooping around the dining hall at Phantom Ranch, I spotted a strange plaque through the glass window of the employee entrance door. It was about two feet by three feet in size and appeared to be made out of wood. The inscription read:

"To Commemorate the First Balloon Crossing of the Grand Canyon by Capt. J. Gallagher M. Otoole Feb 3rd 1879 God Bless Ireland"

I knew that hot air balloons had been invented prior to this date. However, this was even before the arrival of John Hance at the Canyon. I wondered how a chase crew wagon would be able to get to the balloon's landing site, considering the scarcity of roads on either rim at that time.

Warren Tracy, Manager of Phantom Ranch, was able to shed some light on the history of this odd plaque. Warren wrote:

"The sign you referred to has quite a history. A member of my staff is from Paris. Her sister found it discarded in a dumpster in downtown Paris and sent it to us several years ago. I have attempted to research the names on the sign to see if there was any truth to it. However, I haven't made any progress."

"I haven't had the chance to examine the plaque for age. Nevertheless, I suspect that this is either a spoof or there may have been another place called the Grand Canyon somewhere in Europe. Does anyone have additional information about this plaque?"

Thanks for Your Service by Tom Carmony

It takes the dedication, time, and skills of many people to keep an organization such as The Grand Canyon Pioneers Society running smoothly. As president, I appreciate how well the organization generally runs. Few have ever declined a request for help. The following members are recognized for their generous contributions and efforts to the planning, organizing, and operations of this group.

Betty Leavengood - Vice-President and Outings Chairman

Lee Albertson - Secretary, Pioneer Award Chairman, and Easter backpacking trip coordinator

Fred Schick - Treasurer

Jim Ohlman - past President and Board Member

Jeanne Schick - Board Member, and annual picnic organizer

Gene Wendt - Board Member

Al Richmond - Scholarship Chairman and Grand Canyon Hall of Fame Award Chairman

Bob Ribokas - Editor of the GCPS Internet Web Site

Diane Cassidy - Editor of The Bulletin

Dan Cassidy - Printing coordinator of The Bulletin and The Ol' Pioneer

Bill Suran - Editor of The Ol' Pioneer

Sibyl Suran - New membership coordinator

In addition, we appreciate the participation of the outings presenters: Dick and Sherry Mangum, Dr. Michael Anderson, Maxine Edwards, Ruth Stephens Baker, Dr. Tom Myers, Stew Fritts, Jim Tuck, Ron Werhan, Jim Babbitt, Kim Besom, and John Westerlund.

John D. Bradley

John Bradley, long-time Grand Canyon Pioneer Society member, passed away on June 23 at his home in Cottonwood at age 92.

He worked for 20 years at the Canyon; he was in charge of the mule trips into the Canyon during the day and entertained with a cowboy band in the evenings at the Bright Angel Lodge.

John received the Grand Canyon Hall of Fame Award for community service on June 17 at the GCPS meeting. The award is in recognition and appreciation given by the National Park Service and the GCPS for many years of selfless contributions to the betterment of the Grand Canyon community.

Many long-time close friends attended his funeral. He will be sorely missed by all.



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

Please send them to

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