

**GRAND CANYON EXPLORER****Grand Canyon Pioneers Society - Monthly Bulletin****Vol 5, No 8****August 2001****GCPS Outings for 2001****August 18:** Glen Canyon-The Early Fight by Harvey Leake

In the late 1920s and early 1930s the unique scenic beauty of Glen Canyon, Navajo Mountain, and the surrounding sandstone canyon country was brought to the attention of the National Park Service in a campaign to create an extensive "Navajo National Park". Officials in Washington, at first skeptical of the proposal, eventually supported it with enthusiasm.

During the same period, a competing campaign was underway to extend the northern border of the Navajo Reservation to the banks of the Colorado and San Juan Rivers. Horace Albright, director of the Park Service, obtained broad support for a compromise solution, but senior Navajo statesman Chee Dodge, after some consideration, recommended against it. The Reservation enlargement was approved by Congress in 1933, ending the viability of a major national park in the region.

Nearly a quarter of a century later the destiny of the area was further altered when Congress authorized construction of Glen Canyon Dam to impound the waters of Lake Powell. This action resulted in inundation of the northern portion of the proposed parkland. Former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall believed that, had the park effort succeeded, "there would be no Glen Canyon Dam."

The presentation will include old photographs and documents from the collection of John and Louisa Wetherill, Harvey Leake's great grandparents, who were major players in this drama.

Place: Cline Library Screening Room  
NAU - Flagstaff

Time: 12:00 Noon for lunch at Furr's  
1:30 PM presentation

**September 15:** Rock Art Ranch tour with owner Brantley Baird.

**October 20:** Board Meeting. and a talk about "Sunk Without A Sound: The Tragic Colorado River Honeymoon of Glen and Bessie Hyde" by author Brad Dimock. We'll meet at Furr's Cafeteria in Flagstaff for lunch at noon and then go to the Cline Library for the presentation at 1:30 PM in the Screening Room.

**November** Backpacking remote areas of Grand Canyon - a slide program by Carol  
**17:** Castleman. Carol has lead Sierra Club trips around the world -- including many, many Grand Canyon backpacks to remote areas as well as about two dozens rafting trips. Program will be at the Church of the Red Rocks off 179 [state route] in Sedona.

**December:** No Meeting

---

## Shhhhh!

Isn't it nice to sit on the rim of the Grand Canyon and enjoy the silence? How peaceful and contenting it is. Just who am I kidding? Where on the rim can you do that in this day and time? The answer to that is NO WHERE! as Dick Hingson pointed out in his well presented and interesting talk at the July 21 Grand Canyon Pioneers meeting. With the constant sound of air traffic overhead and the cars on the roads as well as the humdrum sound of mobs of people jammed against the rails at the rim there is no place left where you can enjoy peace and quiet. There is not much we can do about the people. But there has been a law on the books since 1987 to reduce the noise of aircraft over the canyon. A law that even today is not enforced, and there is no great effort to enforce it.

What can we do? According to Dick, we can write a letter to the park Superintendent and to your congressman telling them to get busy and do something to bring the peace and quiet back the way it should be.

If you love the Canyon the way I do, write today before we are robbed of the Canyon's tranquillity forever.

[Article submitted by Bill Suran]

Editors note: Jim McCarthy, originally scheduled for this event, was unable to meet his commitment and he arranged for Dick Hingson to take his place. Jim and Dick together worked for years on the "power of place". the importance of natural quiet in natural places like Grand Canyon National Park.

---

## Gunnar Widforss Visit by Bruce Aiken

In early June, the grand nephew of artist Gunnar Widforss, also named Gunnar Widforss, visited the Grand Canyon. Gunnar, a Lutheran minister and university researcher, along with his wife Katarina, a nurse, and their five children, drove across the country from Louisiana for a week at the Canyon. The Widforss family came from Sweden in the Fall of 2000 to Louisiana where Gunnar was on sabbatical from the University in Sweden.

We had the greatest time with the Widforss family. They were amazing. Young, lively and beautiful sweet people. Gunnar and Katarina are in their late 30s, they have five children. Four girls age 14, 13, 11, 9, and a 5-year-old boy. They were all super kids. The experience with them was a treasured moment of Grand Canyon history.

We took the Widforss family to the South Rim for their first look at the Grand Canyon at Mather Point. They were stunned. Then we brought them to his uncle's gravesite at the Grand Canyon Cemetery. That was a very emotional thing. Very touching. The first of the Widforss family ever to see it since the artist died in 1934. We all stayed there a long time while they got the feeling of the place.

Then we went to the train station to see the spot where his uncle died, the Pinon tree where the artist lost control of his car when he had a heart attack. Gunnar was very touched...he talked about his uncle and family roots while standing in front of the tree. The train came in and I explained how the artist arrived at the Canyon for the first time on the same train...how he got off , walked up the hill to the El Tovar and out to the rim and saw the canyon for the first time there.

We walked up to the El Tovar and out to the rim, showed them where the artist spent his last few moments of life in the lobby visiting with a friend, organizing a card game, and where he hung out and painted along the rim.

Then on to the Bright Angel Bar, where the artist drank whiskey and played cards. The nephew ordered a shot of whiskey and thought about his uncle...I left him alone as he sat at the BA Bar sipping whiskey...lost in his thoughts of what things must have been like for his uncle. Then I joined him at the bar for a shot of whiskey and we toasted the memory of Gunnar Widforss.

That evening we went to the sunset at Yaki Point...the kids got to pet some Mule Deer in the NPS corral.it was a good experience. The next day we went to the viewpoints where the artist painted. Hopi was especially memorable. I had the book on the artist, we opened it to the page with the image of his painting called "Hopi Point." We located the exact spot where he had sat to do the painting. It was a touching scene as the nephew stood, then sat and looked out at the Canyon and then to the book, and was feeling what his uncle felt.

We visited the NPS Study Museum Collection, where the staff brought out everything they had on the artist to show to the Widforss family: several paintings, some reproductions, and literature and writings by others, quotes from friends and so forth. The NPS folks treated them very nicely.

The next day we went to the North Rim. Mary, my wife, hiked them out to Widforss Point on the Widforss trail. This was especially touching for Gunnar, he was very much emotional about this. Standing on the point named for his uncle was a high point of the trip for him. Mary took care of the kids for them while Gunnar and Katarina went on out the last few miles to the point alone.

The next morning the Widforss family hiked in to Roaring Springs to stay with us at our house here. They spent the next two and a half days with us here and they saw Ribbon Falls and swam in Bright Angle Creek. I know that they had an amazing and full Grand Canyon experience.

They are back in Sweden where they live just outside of Stockholm.

[Article by: Bruce Aiken, Grand Canyon artist, who has lived within Grand Canyon for over 20 years with his wife, Mary, and their three children. Gunnar Widforss, the artist, was born in Sweden in 1879 and died at the Grand Canyon in 1934. Well known for his

watercolors, his works were published by Northland Press in a book entitled "Gunnar Widforss, Painter of the Grand Canyon" by Frances and Bill Belknap in 1969.]

---

## Letter to the Editor

Ms. Linda Knutsen  
Box 946  
Grand Canyon, AZ. 86023

Re: Your letter published in the Grand Canyon Pioneers, June 2001 Bulletin

Dear Ms. Knutsen:

Your above mentioned letter concerning the mine described in the "statement from the Havasupai Tribal council" (published in Volume 12 Number 2 of The Ol' Pioneer) was appreciated. Is the Havasupai word "Wii'i gdwissa" interpreted as "red Butte"? How far north of Red Butte (Owl Tank) is the mine you refer?

My wanderings in the Red Butte area occurred back in the 1970's & I failed to note any mining activity at that time.

I am inclined to agree with your opinion as to the identity and location of the mine referred to in the Havasupai statement.

Yours truly,  
Gene I. Wendt  
Vail Az.

---

## Greetings from Gunnar Widforss

Hello Diane!

I also regret that we never met, but our round trip was rather tight. We rode 4100 miles during those days and we wished to spend as much time as possible in GC--we were limited by the kids' schools and the family's flight home.

Yeah, we had a great time, and Bruce made sure that we experienced more than we ever had dreamt. We spent the first day going to some spots at South Rim where Gunnar Sr used to paint. Bruce is an artist also in performance and showed a great sympathy to Gunnar Sr. It was great to see the place where he once lived and died.

After two nights there, we went to North Rim, where we hiked Widforss trail. Mary Aiken stayed halfway with our youngest, which allowed the rest of us to reach point Widforss.

Next day we hiked down to Roaring Springs together with Mary, who was a wonderful guide and teacher in geology; we stayed there two nights. Katarina and I slept at the heliport under the canopy of God. It was just marvelous.

Bruce and Mary were just fantastic hosts to us, a couple of the most wonderful new friends in one of the most incredible places in the world.

Two other great occasions was when we were invited to visit both the archive of Grand Canyon National Park and the Northern Arizona Museum in Flagstaff to view some of Gunnar Widforss fine art pieces. I was deeply touched.

I am very grateful to you, Diane, that you put us in contact with Bruce. By this time, my family returned; but I am still here in New Orleans to finish my thesis. I will return to Sweden 1 of August.

Best wishes  
Gunnar Widforss, Rev, Mdiv  
July 5, 2001

---

## New Members

David G. Monet - Flagstaff, AZ  
Lisa Michaels - Healdsburg, CA  
Mike Martin - Grand Junction, CO

---

## Grand Ambition

Lisa Michaels has written a novel, GRAND AMBITION, based on the story of Glen and Bessie Hyde, which has just been published by W. W. Norton and Co. Michaels used Otis Marston's archives at the Huntington Library to provide the outlines of the story, but she has taken a novelist's liberties in imagining the young Hydies' experience on the river.

The New York Times Book Review called GRAND AMBITION "...an absorbing, affecting and beautifully written novel...Michaels' grandest achievement...is her depiction of the young couple--of how they move from first meeting to passionate love, from their hasty marriage to their dangerous honeymoon. She treats these two lovers delicately and tenderly, without resorting to gauzy sentimentality...The Hydies may not have been well served by the Grand Canyon or by history, but they are very well served here."

---

## Outings Contacts Information

### Outings Coordinator:

Betty Leavengood  
6045 Edison St.  
Tucson AZ 85712  
520-885-3570  
[HikerBetty@aol.com](mailto:HikerBetty@aol.com)

---

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

Please send them to

Diane Cassidy  
8540 N. Central Ave. #27

Phoenix, AZ 85020

or e-mail them to [GCPioneers@yahoo.com](mailto:GCPioneers@yahoo.com)

[ [Grand Canyon Home](#) | [Grand Canyon Pioneers Society](#) ]

*Copyright © Bob Ribokas, 1994-2001, all rights reserved. This publication and its text and photos may not be copied for commercial use without the express written permission of [Bob Ribokas](#).*