

## 2004 Outings

### January 17: *Grand Canyon National Park Library Tour* by Susan Eubank, Librarian.

In 1920, one year after the National Park was established, a library was started at Grand Canyon intended for both the Grand Canyon community and the staff of Grand Canyon National Park. Donations came from Ellsworth Kolb and others and a loan of 50 reference books came from Arizona State University Library. Since that time, the Library has grown to about 12,000 volumes with about 6 branches all over the Park. Come spend the afternoon with, Susan Eubank, the current Park librarian and discover the Library's rare books and its comprehensive collection of Grand Canyon materials.

Susan Eubank came to Grand Canyon National Park Library in October 2001. She is a professional librarian with 15 years experience in specialized collections. She has worked in two botanic garden libraries, a mountaineering organization library, and an architecture college library. Her passion is creating more access to these small collections that contain the "gems" of the library world.

Place: Park Headquarters Building  
1 Village Loop, Grand Canyon  
[old Visitor's Center, Parking Area A]

Time: 1:00 PM \*

To access the library go through the lobby glass doors into the interior courtyard of the building. The Library is in the Northwest corner of the courtyard.

\* Let's meet at Maswik cafeteria at 11:30 AM for lunch before the program.

*(Carolyn Castleman, January Outing Leader)*

[Editor's note: Maybe make a weekend of it and stay for a tour of the Kolb Studio or head to Prescott for the Grand Canyon Association's first lecture in their new Lecture Series – see Calendar in *The Ol'Pioneer*.]

...continued on page 2

## A Tribute to George Steck, Grand Canyon Hiker (Part II)

*[continued from December 2003 Bulletin]*



The evening's extravaganza continued with a multi-media presentation in three parts. First was premier photographer Gary Ladd. We have had the pleasure of Gary's great presentations to the Society before, and this was no exception. However, the focus was on George – hikes with

him, or routes pioneered by him. Gary said this presentation was the UNgrand part: Unnering, UNkar, UNexpected details, UNbearable weather and the Great UNconformity. He also hoped that the "George part" would prove to be highly embarrassing for some.

Gary's images are so rich, that I will just attempt to describe some of them. There was a fluted snow cave on the trail from the North Rim to Nankoweap, providing refuge from the blazing sun. Human beings as mere specks against a huge rock face forming a bay. Gary said that this was "kind of a steep place" as he showed a hiker grasping a rope to prevent plummeting over a 3,000-foot drop. Another slide showed the faintest hint of a trail with sheer rock walls above and below, and Gary said this was one of Harvey's (Butchart) sporting routes. Gary stated that another mistake in his hiking career was going anywhere with Tom. (Martin) On this particular hike, Gary said that he had to reach into his brain and pull out the fuses that normally scream DANGER so that he could follow Tom over a ridge which had big parts missing.

Other images included fossils so clearly exposed that you could almost feel the life

...continued on page 2

## George Steck ...continued from page 1

emanating from it. A pink Grand Canyon rattlesnake coiled by a small plant. A piece of Vishnu Schist, the oldest rock in the Grand Canyon, juxtapositioned with a small pair of barefoot human feet. Gary and George were fortunate to witness, and escape safely from a flash flood in Soap Creek. A series of slides showed the progression of the flood from a trickle to a roaring waterfall. There were spooky images of fires on the North Rim with smoke drifting hauntingly through the canyon. There was a progression of slides showing fire damaged areas in different stages of recovery from charred aspen bark to new aspen growth. An agave twisted against the sky in a serpentine pattern. There was Grand Lodge on the North Rim buried in snow, with tunnels running under the eaves across the front of the lodge. There was House Rock Rapid at dawn, with the sunlight not yet down on the water. There were 2 pictures of Gary's dory, Tatabatso, on a good day, and on a bad day. The good day was sitting quietly by itself on a deserted beach with the canyon walls behind it. The bad day was when it was being helicoptered out of the canyon because the cfs was too high. Some trail humor shots included John Azar's fashion don'ts – pink sweat pants, socks, Texas, and boxer shorts over the sweatpants. Equipment failure on George's hikes usually meant ripped out bottoms on pants, because so much time must be spent butt hiking. A pumpkin carved on a beach during a river trip must mean it's Halloween. A body bag on the trail in Havasupai campground must mean that someone found a tent, an old pair of sneakers, and created a "grave" complete with grave marker, which got lots of strange looks from passing hikers. A ledge just big enough for one foot in front of the other is labeled as "kinda narrow in places" in George's books. (This was somewhere a big horned sheep might have hesitated!) At 150-mile canyon, with the river reflecting the curvaceous rock above, were hikers who were not only off trail, but also off their rockers! With temperatures soaring to 114°, even a pond with cracked mud in it looked inviting.

The ending slide featured George Steck and author Craig Childs holding up a sign along the river that read "Last chance to dispose of extra



beer before entering rapids." When asked to comment on the slide show, George said, "It amazes me that no one was killed on those trips!"

The next portion of the program was an 8mm movie shot by George on a 1958 river trip with Georgie White. This was in the pre-dam era, and the flow was 150,000 cfs. To say it was flood stage was an understatement. However, being George Steck's first river trip, he didn't know any different. Georgie was running her "Georgie sandwich" boat (3 pontoons lashed together, which can fold and buckle easily) as well as naval assault type craft which were 8 feet wide and 14 or so feet long. Normally this trip would be 7 days to Phantom Ranch. Because of the high flow, it was a 3 day trip!! There were NO rapids in Marble Canyon. Redwall Cavern was underwater. (These images just stagger the minds of modern river runners.) There were standing waves so big that the boats would go past each other without even seeing each other. A log forcibly punctured a pontoon in the naval assault craft, stranding the boat, unable to maneuver to shore. Finally, one of the passengers, an Indiana State swim team member, put the bowline in his teeth and swam to shore with about 3 feet of rope left to spare.

At this point, I just have to comment on the audience. First of all, it was an incredible gathering of canyon expertise. There were river runners, hikers, and backpackers of all levels. There were people who had just been associated with the canyon for a short time, and other who have spent the bulk of their lives with the canyon as a focus. I kept overhearing comments like – "I'm getting heat exhaustion just watching this!" As different canyon scenes appeared on the screen, I heard people murmuring place names – almost always correctly. As the film rolled, the comments kept flowing, too. I wish I could have gotten them all down.

Hance Rapid was enormous. You could almost hear the roar of the water, even from a film with no sound.

As the film finished, George talked about being a VIP in the park. He said he could never get anyone to help him twice with projects, such as the Old Bright Angel Trail maintenance.

...continued on page 3

There was a brief intermission while the final presentation was set up. It was a computerized presentation of a hike to the Worm Hole, featuring John Azar, Ken Phillips, Tom Myers as narrator, and Mike Quinn as editor. As usual with computer presentations, it had a plethora of technical problems. When things would seem hopeless, someone in the back would turn on the old 8mm movie camera and we could all hear it whirring happily away.

This was a humorous but terrifying show about their hike to and through the Worm Hole, interspersed with interviews with George Steck and Brian Dierker describing this hike. (I use the word hike loosely here – it was a combination rappel, slither and fingernail experience.) This was an ancient transcanyon route through Marble Canyon by the Bridge of Sighs, River Mile 37. There are fragile archeological sites in evidence by the logs and sticks crammed into cracks in the rocks by the Anasazi. This route was rediscovered by someone named Dawson, who looked up from river level to notice “driftwood” about 80 feet up under the Bridge of Sighs. His comment was – “Kinda high up for driftwood, ain't it?” In fact, it is part of the platform set up by the Anasazi to facilitate this route from the North Rim to the river.

This trip was taken in October 2003. They started on the North Rim, traversing through sketchy terrain to reach the top of the Worm

Hole. Tom kept up a running commentary, with occasional good natured participation from John, and generally silence from Ken. Using his shadow and the camera, Tom played the part of Kokopelli on the opposite rock face. After an incredible physical ordeal of twisting and turning through the caves, rocks and crannies where they had to lie on their left side to wiggle through, because the rocks would only allow knees to bend THAT way – the 3 emerged onto the beach by the river. They were greeted by a Park Service river trip as part of the 2003 Blitz. This is a short period of time when as many rangers get on as many backcountry trails as possible, using the river as a pick up and drop off place. Dave Derosiers, Bryan Edwards, Bil Vandergraff and K.J. Glover were some of the crew. The presentation ended by John telling George - We made it all the way through the Worm Hole with our pants ON, unlike George. George immediately stood up to refute that, saying that it is easy to keep your pants on going DOWN the Worm Hole. However, George lost his wiggling UP the Worm Hole, which these guys did not do.

The festivities continued this weekend with over 50 people descending to Indian Garden to swap stories and lies with George and his family. What an outpouring of support and camaraderie for this remarkable man.

[Part II: Article by Nancy Green;  
photos by Diane Cassidy]

---

## Books on Books on the Canyon

Fifty years ago, Francis P. Farquhar compiled a list of the 125 most significant books on the Colorado River and Grand Canyon. Published in a limited edition in 1953, his bibliography became the classic reading and collecting list for those who wished to know the history of the Colorado. Now, half a century later, Mike Ford, a veteran Canyon fan and voracious reader, has compiled a sequel to Farquhar, giving us a list of the 225 most significant works on the Green and Colorado Rivers, the Colorado Plateau, and Grand Canyon. Like Farquhar, Ford gives a small review with each title, letting you know why he feels this book stands out of the field of thousands published since 1953.

In December, Five Quail Books and Fretwater Press re-released Farquhar's *Books of the Colorado & the Grand Canyon: A Selective Bibliography* with a revised index and endnotes. In conjunction with that, Fretwater Press released Mike S. Ford's *The Books of the Grand Canyon, the Colorado River, the Green River, and the Colorado Plateau: A Selective Bibliography*. Both are available in hardbound, paperback, and a limited hardbound edition in slipcase.

For those of you just starting to compile a Canyon library, and for those who have become clinical biblioholics, these books will steer you to the cream of the crop.

*Editors Note: The newsletters and magazines of the Grand Canyon Historical Society are included among the 225 significant publications in the past 50 years in Mike Ford's selective bibliography.*

## 2004 Outings ...continued from page 1

**February 21: *Fighting Wildfires.*** Presentation will be at 11:00 AM in the Gurley Street Grill, 230 West Gurley Street in Prescott.

**March 27: *Grand Canyon Climber – The Story of Robert Benson.*** Robert is the hero of GC climbers. Known for walking from Horse Canyon (Green River, Utah) to Lee's Ferry to join up with George Steck and his group who were on their way to Grand Wash Cliffs, Robert continued the trek along the River from Lake Mead to Moab (with a broken pelvis). Gary Ladd and George Steck will tell their stories of Robert Benson. Join fellow hikers and historians at Marble Canyon.

**April 16-18: *Tour of Phantom Ranch.*** Keith Green, GCNP Ranger, will give us a tour of the ranch with stories of the history of every building and location around Phantom Ranch, along with showing historic photos of the same places. Keith will try to arrange for overnight accommodations if you are interested; there will be a limited number of spaces, so you MUST contact Keith by January 1, 2004, to reserve your space: 928-638-0666 or Keith\_Green@nps.gov

**May 15:** Author Craig Childs

**June 19:** Annual Picnic at Shoshone Point, South Rim Grand Canyon

**July 17:** Annual Campout at Jacob Lake, North Rim Grand Canyon

**August 21:** Annual Community Project (such as the Grand Canyon Cemetery clean-up)

**September 18:** Harvey Butchart book by Tom Myers

**October 16:** Annual Board Meeting

**November 20:** SARS Director Ken Phillips

**December:** No meeting

## Membership Renewal

If you have already mailed in your dues, THANK YOU. Otherwise, please review the Membership Renewal notice inserted with this issue, and help support the Society in its mission to preserve Grand Canyon history.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Scholarship Fund Donations

Thank you, all of you, for your generous gift to the GCHS Scholarship Fund:

Mike Anderson – Grand Canyon, AZ  
John Azar – Fredonia, AZ  
George Billingsley – Flagstaff AZ  
Gail Burak – North Woodstock, NH  
Roy Burris – Rio Verde AZ  
Dan & Diane Cassidy – Prescott AZ  
Margaret Cole – Chino Valley, AZ  
Michael Coltrin – Tucson, AZ  
David & Janis Cunningham – Kingman AZ  
Brad Dimock – Flagstaff AZ  
William Driscoll – Rockville, MD  
John & Pam Frazier – Grand Canyon, AZ  
Charles Hoffman – Flagstaff, AZ  
Mary Hoover – Williams AZ  
Robert Kerry – Tucson, AZ  
Betty Leavengood – Walker WV  
Earl & Frances Lewis – Newport Beach AZ  
Brian Miller – San Francisco AZ  
Dave Monet – Flagstaff AZ  
Stephen R. Owen – Chandler AZ  
Don Peterson – Albuquerque, NM  
Harry Phillips – LaJolla CA  
Robert Phillips – Encinitas CA  
Gus & Sandra Scott – Prescott AZ  
Bill & Sibyl Suran – Flagstaff AZ  
Charles & Beth Tolfree – Bakersfield CA  
John Turnbull – Hawthorne, CA  
Mr. & Mrs. R. L. Watts – Tucson AZ  
Frank Wilson – Tucson AZ

---

**Outings/Programs:** If you have a suggestion for a future outing/program or a question about an upcoming event, contact the **2004 Outings Coordinator:** Keith Green, PO Box 1986, Grand Canyon AZ 86023-1986; phone 928-638-0666; email: Keith\_Green@nps.gov.

**The Bulletin** welcomes comments, stories, or reflections and remembrances. Please send them to Diane Cassidy at 2112 Demerse Avenue, Prescott, AZ 86301; email: Pioneers@GrandCanyonHistory.org.