

# The Ol' Pioneer

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## Verkamp Centennial Celebration



Susie Verkamp with  
Park Superintendent Joe Alston  
showing a certificate of appreciation



Michael Verkamp shares colorful stories about  
growing up on the edge of the Grand Canyon.



John Verkamp

[Above photos from Grand Canyon News]



## Witch Pool



^ Judge Stephens

[Photo from NAU Special Collections, Call no.: NAU.PH.99.21.28, dated 1930, Item: 4926]

# President's Letter

It is summer at Grand Canyon National Park. Here at Grand Canyon Village it is hard to avoid the observation that at this time of year, visitors from around the globe arrive in droves while wildlife heads for the backcountry. More accurately said, all the human activity diverts year-round residents' attention from the park's natural wonders to humanity's hubbub, where silence, rules of the road, concern for litter, and small-town courtesy erode for a few months.

But of course, if we did not have the visitors, we would not have the national park, and I would not have a job (or one this good), so who am I to complain? This year, visitation may indeed reach five million for the first time in our history, and park administrators are engaged in the planning and construction of facilities to accommodate park visitors. Since I do live here and most of you do not, I thought I would let you know some of the projects recently completed, underway, or in the planning stages.

Some of our larger projects concern South Rim roads and traffic circulation in general. Last year we completed the reconfiguration of the road at Desert View, steering traffic and parking away from the viewpoint itself. After a brief hiatus (a year or so) we are again finishing up the new east entrance station, and travel through the area will improve greatly once that is done. Desert View Road itself was widened a few years ago, and our trail crew is beginning to rehabilitate historic walls at viewpoints on the way to the village.

For several years, I have been involved with the planning to overhaul Hermit Road out to the west of the village. This historic road, completed in 1935, has lasted 70 years without major work, but is in dire need of rehabilitation. It is so bad in places that the asphalt ruts could irrigate an ancestral puebloan's cornfield, and shuttle bus drivers in their 8-1/2-foot-wide buses have to inhale as they pass each other on 9-foot lanes designed for Model-A Fords. The years of planning have been devoted to cultural and natural resource concerns surrounding this road, as well as to sensitive design, but it looks like the actual roadwork may begin as early as the spring of 2008.

Several Greenway paths have been built in the past few years, such that visitors can now walk—and, in some places, ride bicycles—along or near the rim from Pipe Creek Overlook beside Desert View Drive all the way to Powell Point along Hermit Road, a distance of five miles or so. Most of this route is also accessible to people in wheelchairs, with grades generally less than 5%. Plans call for extending the Greenway to the South Kaibab Trailhead, and from the village south to the town of Tusayan, as well as to complete a Greenway from the Grand Canyon Lodge on the North Rim as far as the North Kaibab Trailhead. We are also studying the most logical path of the Arizona Trail from the park's south boundary, across the canyon along the Kaibab Trails, and north to the park boundary, connecting with forest service trails on either side.

And the park has once again embarked on an overall South Rim Transportation Plan to help relieve some of the congestion at Grand Canyon Village. Remember the "light rail"? It is currently sidetracked, but public scoping is underway on a plan that will probably include a parking lot at Canyon View Information Plaza (which we have begun to call the visitor center), a parking lot in Tusayan, and a shuttle bus system between the two—mandatory at the peak of summer season, voluntary or perhaps not operational in winter. Time will tell the ultimate configuration, but this project is on the fast track, along with another project to organize better the Bright Angel Trailhead area west of Bright Angel Lodge.

In a period of diminishing appropriations for our national parks, you might ask how we come up with the money for these and other projects. Well, "soft" funding (as opposed to congressional appropriations, which is "hard" funding) comes from many sources, and one good and consistent source of construction and maintenance monies derives from the Fee Demonstration Program, implemented in 1997. Prior to that year, park entrance fees went to the federal treasury, and most money was doled out to the various parks through annual appropriations bills; now, 80% of your entrance fee remains within the park (the other 20% goes to smaller parks with less visitation) to fund new construction, maintenance, and cultural and natural resource studies related to these projects.

Yesterday, I was driving home from the village store along Market Plaza Road and got caught in a traffic jam. One of our NPS garbage trucks had stopped in the middle of the road while the park employees got out to direct traffic around a visitor's car that had plowed into the ditch while the occupants ogled a deer on the other side of the road.

I long for November.

*Mike Anderson*

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EDITOR: Diane Cassidy

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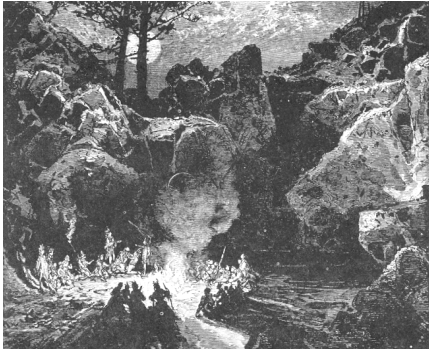
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# Witch Pool

by John S. Azar - Fredonia



Witch Pool (Illustration from Powell)

Of the four plateaus that slope into the Grand Canyon from the north (Kaibab, Kanab, Uinkeret, and Shivwits), the Uinkeret is currently the least explored. Other than the motorists who travel the 120 mile round trip on dirt roads to see the view of the river from the Toroweap Overlook, the plateau gets few visitors. The Mormon families that homesteaded here are gone, their descendants living in Utah. The weathered remains of their homes and fences are in the red dirt, woven into the fields they farmed during the wet years. To the west is Mt. Trumbull, and to the south the Colorado River winds its way to Lake Mead. On the flank of Trumbull, a reliable water source holds much of the human history found on this plateau. This pool of seemingly permanent water is referred to variously as Witch Pool or Witches' Pocket. Near the pool on the lava wall, a white cross has been painted onto the surface. Who painted this cross? When was it painted? Was it the Spanish Priests, Powell's men, or one of the early homesteaders?

The reference to witches comes from Clarence Dutton, who visited the pocket in 1880. In his treatise *The Tertiary History of the Grand Canyon District*, he describes the water pocket as "a weird place, the abode of witches." This term agrees with Piute legend for the locale. A story told to John Wesley Powell by the Shivwits Chief Tomor'rountikai is a tale involving the murder of a Crane/Man named Sikor' by "He Who Had a Stone

Shirt." (Tumpwinai'rogwinump). After killing Sikor', Stone Shirt orders his captive slave (wife of Sikor'), to kill her newborn son. Instead, she hides the baby under her skirts and secrets him away to his grandmother. The grandmother raises the child and after he splits into two identical brothers, avenges his father's death. Moments after the death of Stone Shirt, his two magical twin daughters commit suicide, and in doing so are transformed into *Innupin*, or spirits that inhabit dust devils. They blow around nearby cliffs during the day, then come home to Witch Pool for the night. Frederick Dellenbaugh, in his book *A Canyon Voyage*, describes a Kaibab Piute chief's (Chuar'rumpeak) encounter with the *Innupin* while camped at the water pocket in March of 1872:

*After one of his obliging men pulled off his shoes, the chief smoked a cigarette reclining in a princely way beside the fire. Suddenly, he jumped to his feet and listened intently as he peered through the night gloom.*

Dellenbaugh asked him what he had heard:

*'Innupin,' the chief whispered solemnly, never breaking his stare.*

Another observer of a night at Witch Pool was the famous artist Thomas Moran. In a letter to his wife dated August 13, 1873 Mr. Moran writes:

*My Dear Wife,*

*The noon after my last letter was dated we left camp for the Grand Canon at the foot of To-Ro-Weap Valley...we got into a volcanic country full of old craters and lava and reached the In-nu-pits peccavo, or Witches pocket in the lava rocks at the foot of Mt. Trumbull where we found a large pocket of clear water but of bad taste from decomposed vegetation. This day we travelled 35 miles. From our camp at the pocket the wall of the Grand Canon was visible some 15 miles down the*

*valley. The Indians are very superstitious and Jim did not much like our camping so near the pocket. During the night I was awakened by a wolf ...he was not more than 12 feet from where we were lying, and it being moonlight, I saw him clearly. ...[the next] evening Jack Hillers the photographer was bringing a canteen of water from the pocket when a huge rattlesnake glided between his feet and he got a thorough scare. We searched for the snake with some burning sage brush and I killed it with a stone. It measured fully 3 1/2 feet long...the Indian boy I told you had been bitten by one died after living nearly 3 days. We left the Canon pocket at the In-nu-pits peccavo, and Indian Jim was very desirous that we should go somewhere else to camp as he said the little imps would hurt the horses as well as ourselves.*

John Powell knew he would have his men surveying the plateaus north of the Grand Canyon in 1872 and wanted assurance from the Piutes that they wouldn't attack them. He also wanted to confirm the deaths of the three men that left his first expedition (1869) at the mouth of Separation Canyon. He first went to Salt Lake City and met with Brigham Young. Brigham was planning a trip to Pipe Spring and invited Powell to accompany him. Powell accepted the offer. The party arrived at the spring on September 13, 1870. At Pipe Spring, which is located at the base of the Vermillion Cliffs west of Fredonia, Arizona, Powell engaged two Piute guides to show him the way to the Shivwits Plateau. Powell hoped to meet with members of the Shivwits Piute tribe that inhabited the area. Jacob Hamblin also went along to act as an interpreter at the meeting. In addition to meeting with the Shivwits, Powell wanted to find a way to the river near Vulcan Rapid (Lava Falls) where he might re-supply his upcoming river trip. The

*...continued on page 4*

# Witch Pool...continued from page 3

party left Pipe Spring on September 14 and camped at Wild Band Pockets the first night out. The next day's travel brought them to Witch Pool. In his book, *The Exploration of the Colorado River and its Canyons*, he describes coming into camp:

*At dusk we reach the water pocket. It is a deep gorge on the flank of this great mountain [Mt. Trumbull]. During the rainy season the water rolls down the mountain side, plunging over precipices, and excavates a deep basin in the solid rock below. This basin, hidden from the sun, holds water the year round.*

In September of 2004, I decided to visit Witch Pool to see for myself what it held. Joining me for the weekend were two vehicles, four spare tires, extra gas, plenty of food and water, three friends, and three dogs. We headed out from Fredonia early on Labor Day morning and motored out to the vicinity of Mt. Trumbull. We stopped and admired the rebuilt Bundy Schoolhouse, signed the register, and continued on our way. We reached the camp below Witch Pool and hiked up to inspect. The pool had plenty of water but was muddy. Some animals had been playing in it recently, leaving their footprints in the mud in front of the pool. Etched onto the rock face below the pool are Native American petroglyphs, the initials PE, a zia sign, and the white cross. Above the pool on another rock face, an image of a coiled snake is found.

The locals living on the Strip believe the white cross was painted on the rock by the Spanish Priests Dominguez and Escalante. This seems unlikely as the expedition was never closer than 14 miles from this site. They were in a big hurry to get back to Santa Fe and had no time for exploration. Their provisions and morale were extremely low when they camped near Hat Knoll for two days, on October 18 and 19, 1776, at a camp they named San Samuel. There is no mention in their journal of anyone leaving camp on either day.



Innupin Pikavu Witch's Water Pocket by J.K. Hillers, 1872

There are others that believe the cross was painted on by Powell's men on September 16, 1870. On that day Powell hiked to the top of a nearby hill while his men were busy breaking camp and preparing the horses for travel back to Pipe Spring. There is no evidence that any member of Powell's party painted the cross. There is, however, the inscription with the initials "PE" scribed onto the lava face. These initials could stand for Powell Expedition.

Clarence Dutton makes no mention of the white cross when he visited the site in 1880. John Riffey, a ranger at Tuweep for four decades, said that Dutton would have mentioned the white cross in his journal:

*He [Clarence Dutton] came in the late 1800's and was meticulous in reporting and would have mentioned the cross. We know the cross was there in 1917.*

It took some time to put the cross on the wall. According to Earl Spendlove (Desert Magazine, June 1964):

*It was approximately two feet high, a foot and a half across, and the horizontal and vertical bars were*

*about three inches in width. It had been picked into the black lava rock with a pointed object and the bottoms of the depressions filled in with a whitish material. Apparently after the cross was completed, it had been pounded with a piece of limestone and the lime adhered to the roughened rock, giving it a grayish cast.*



Who is responsible for the cross? If we are to believe John Riffey (which I do), it was applied between 1880 and 1917. Early white settlers came into the area in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and survived until the climate changed from wet to dry. Most left during the great depression of the 1930's. The two

families that homesteaded closest to the Witch Pool were the Kent and Schmutz families. There are inscriptions pecked by these families scattered from Tuweep to Tuckup, but none of the descendants of these early ranchers I've contacted remember their parents or grandparents relating any information about the white cross.

It remains one of the unsolved mysteries of the Uinkeret Plateau.



# Memories of Dad at the Canyon in 1941-1946

by Barbara Stephens Odderstol – North Carolina

I am Barbara Stephens Odderstol; my sister is Ruth Stephens Baker and a member of the "Pioneers Society". (I have neglected to join, lo, these many years.) Ruth asked me to convey any memories I had of our father, Stanley G. Stephens, during the war years.

In 1941-1946, I was away attending Wasatch Academy in Mt. Pleasant, Utah, because the elementary school at the Canyon only had grades 1-8. At the time I graduated from the eighth grade at the Canyon, the students numbered 60! Much of the tourist business (accommodations and sight-seeing) had closed down. Only the El Tovar remained open with a much reduced staff. There were still some tour buses and trail trips, mostly in the summer. And the Santa Fe Railroad still ran a regular schedule on the spur line from Williams.

Our father was bookkeeper for the Fred Harvey Transportation system, and he had an office in the main garage. Very few people had cars. I don't remember when it was purchased, but our first car was a 1936 Chevy. However, we walked everywhere because of the rationing of tires and gas. Everyone had a Victory Garden, Dad included, and these were tended in a fenced-field behind the "New Elementary School" near the tennis courts and the grandstand where occasional rodeos had been held. During that time, Barry Goldwater would occasionally visit. My dad claimed that he and Barry were the only two Republicans in Arizona at the time. Barry loved the Canyon and even discovered an arch near the North Rim on one of his solo flights.

Our dad was known for his integrity, wit, and wisdom. I don't recall when he was appointed Judge, but he kept the office for as long as I remember and he kept the title until the day he died. He loved the "people of the world" who came to see our Wonder of the World and he always

enjoyed people-watching whenever he chanced to travel to a metropolitan area: Washington, DC, NYC, Paris. I know he practiced his Free Masonry principles every day of his life. The Masonic Lodge, at the Canyon, was quite active and contained a wonderful brotherhood of men. Just about everyone I knew was a Mason.

If I remember correctly, there were just about 300 people in the Village during the winter months of the war, but then, Christmas vacation would have been the only time I was there. I'm certain that my mother saved her ration stamps for special treats when I came home. Shopping, of any kind, was done at the General Store. Now and then, someone would offer to drive to Williams or Flagstaff for a large shopping excursion for groceries, clothes, or a trip to the dentist. There always was one doctor in residence at the Canyon, but no dentist. The social hierarchy consisted of the various managers of the hotels, the Masons, and the ladies' bridge group.

During the war, there was an active Red Cross group of women who knitted and rolled bandages. The men (our father included) also had air raid duty since we were located not too far from several major Army Air Corps fields in the Phoenix area. Several of

our citizens joined or were drafted into the Armed Forces, including more than one Hopi Indian, one of whom may have been one of the Ghost Whisperers. George Scheck, husband of a close friend of my sister's and mine, was one of the original Navy Seabees who was killed in the Pacific.

I do remember sensing the early morning shock waves of the first atomic explosion at Alamogordo. Of course, we were all told that it was an earthquake.

Then, on V-J Day there was a tremendous celebration, Grand Canyon style, of the power plant whistle blasting while all of the younger generation hung on to the fire engine or anything else that had wheels. No fire works, just wild, abandoned joy and tears.

I hope this has given you some insights into the lives and life of the Grand Canyon Village so many years ago. I'm glad to have had the reason to cull up the memories and write it all down. Please let me know if I can elaborate or explain anything further.

Sincerely,

Barbara Stephens Odderstol  
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New Bern, NC 28562  
bodderstol@cox.net



Grand Canyon Masonic Lodge #40 Officers  
left to right John Cunningham, Jimmy Ricca, Curley Ennis, Stanley Stephens, next  
five unidentified, Elmer Nelson, Art Metzger  
[Photo from NAU Special Collections, Call no.: NAU.PH.99.21.28, dated 1930, Item: 4926]

# Centennial celebration a tribute to family's strength

by Jackie Brown, Associate Grand Canyon News Editor

Though mention was made of the store's place in the National Register of Historic Places, last week's ceremony to mark Verkamp's 100th year on the South Rim was at heart a celebration of more lasting structures.

"I have so many wonderful feelings about this store here but really, it's just a box without people to direct it and to prepare it, take care of it and guide it. I have to say this is more of a celebration of family than of that shingled box there," said Michael Verkamp, one of seven brothers and sisters who grew up in the store their grandfather, the original John G. Verkamp, started in a tent on the rim in 1905.

Michael and siblings Susie, Jane, Steve, John G. III, Kelly and Lisa were joined last Thursday by more than 150 family members, friends, former employees and well-wishers from all over the country. The ceremony started at 2 p.m., but there was a celebratory air well before, as arriving guests greeted one another with hugs and exclamations as they gathered in front of the distinctive, century-old building that held memories for most of them.

As Park Superintendent Joe Alston noted in his remarks, "It's not only the 100th anniversary of Verkamp's store but it is obviously a reunion here. It's remarkable to see folks that a lot of us haven't seen for a lot of years."

Susie, who serves as president of the Verkamp's board, led off the ceremony with welcoming remarks.

"It's just incredible to see everybody here," she said, looking out at the gathering. "I hope my heart can contain this. This is just unbelievable."

Then, before going on, she reminded the audience of the backdrop for the last 100 years of the Verkamp story.

"I'd like to begin by just acknowledging where we are here," she said gesturing toward the view, "at this incredible manifestation of nature's power and beauty and just a total gift to humanity, and just this amazing place."

A blessing was offered, in Hopi, by Phyllis Kachinhongva, who grew up at the Hopi House alongside the Verkamp youngsters, sharing a common front yard and a lifestyle marked by the ebb and flow of the tourist trade.

"Our families have been woven together through time with strands of joy, hardship, mutual respect and big love for as long as I can remember," said Susie.

Intertwining stories was a theme that the speakers kept revisiting through the afternoon, underscored by a proclamation from Gov. Janet Napolitano recognizing the store's centennial and honoring the family for their "contributions to civic life, not just at Grand Canyon, but also in Northern Arizona."

"Something that I've really come to appreciate lately is how our story is not really unique," Susie noted. "If you tweeze out any of these little strands, we're all just part of these large historic pulses."

In his address, Alston recapped the family's story starting where it becomes intertwined not only with late 19th century Northern Arizona's history, but in the broader history of the westward migration.

Three Verkamp brothers John, Leo and Oscar came to Flagstaff from Cincinnati, Ohio, and joined their fortunes with five Babbitt brothers who were neighbors of theirs back in Ohio. John first attempted to set up shop on the South Rim, selling Babbitt merchandise, but abandoned that effort. In 1905, he started a store of his own in a tent on 2.5 acres, under a permit from the Forest Service manager of the Grand Canyon Forest and Game Preserve then the managing agency.

In January of 1906, he moved to the building, the same one being used today.

The Verkamp's store was part of a wave of early 20th century development on the South Rim that included El Tovar and Hopi House, aimed at providing services for the influx of visitors the newly-arrived Santa Fe Railroad was expected to bring.

"What an extraordinary time," said Alston. "What I admire is their spirit in order to take on those risks."

In the store's early years, John Verkamp hired managers to run things while he pursued other business interests throughout the county, including ranching, sheep-herding and prospecting.

In 1936, with his other interests lost to the Great Depression, he and his wife Catherine moved to the store, where it became their home and main livelihood.

His son, John Jr., took over in 1945, and Michael, representing the third generation to live in the store, managed it for 23 years starting in the mid-70s. Through all of those years, the Verkamp name became woven into the park's history as well.

"Park files to this day mention the family jumping in to help with social events, community emergencies, participating in the school district, PTA and Rotary, helping to build community structures like the Community Building, clinic and Shrine of the Ages," Alston said. "In fact (John Verkamp's daughter) Peggy was instrumental in establishing the first library at the Canyon as well as funding and construction of Grand Canyon High School."

Daily management of the store is now handled by Dan Ashley and his wife Terri. They are the first non-Verkamps to act in that role. The seven grandchildren of John Verkamp serve as the board of directors.

"It's fitting to remember that while the National Park Service endeavors turn to corporate enterprises, Verkamp's remains a family affair," Alston said to cheers and applause from the crowd.

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# Grand Canyon Association Events

The Grand Canyon Association has produced *Canyon Country Community Lecture Series*, a series of lectures held in Flagstaff and Prescott...and now also in Phoenix, Tempe, Glendale and Tucson.

**Prescott lectures** will be held at Sharlot Hall Museum, 415 W. Gurley (two blocks west of Courthouse Plaza). Space at the Prescott lecture series is limited; please call (928) 445-3122 to inquire about seating.

**Flagstaff lectures** will be held at Cline Library, at the intersection of Knoles Drive and McCreary Road on the NAU campus. Parking is available to the west of the library (Lot P13 on Riordan Road).

**Phoenix lectures** will be held at REI Paradise Valley, 12634 N. Paradise Village Parkway.

**Tempe lectures** will be held at REI, 1405 W. Southern Avenue.

**Glendale lectures** will be held at Glendale Foothills Library, 19055 North 57th Avenue.

**Tucson lectures** will be held at Western National Parks Association, 12880 N. Vistoso Village Drive.

All lectures are free and open to the public. If you have any questions about the events listed on this page, please write Grand Canyon Association at PO Box 399, Grand Canyon AZ 86023 or GCAssociation@GrandCanyon.org or call (800) 858-2808 or visit [www.grandcanyon.org](http://www.grandcanyon.org).

## July 19 – Tucson and July 20 – Glendale

***Carving Grand Canyon: Evidence, Theories, and Mystery*** by Wayne Ranney

The Grand Canyon is perhaps Earth's most recognizable landscape, yet scientists still vigorously debate how and when it formed. This is not for lack of trying: geologists have been studying the canyon for almost 150 years. Grand Canyon's story through time is full of mystery and intrigue, deciphered in part from the tiny bits of evidence in the walls of this stupendous chasm. Geologist Wayne Ranney will discuss the role of the Colorado River, which may have once flowed in the opposite direction. Wayne will also touch on the evolving ideas of many well-known early geologists, including John Wesley Powell, Clarence Dutton and Eliot Blackwelder. He will introduce the ideas of a host of modern-day geologists as well, who use sophisticated techniques to glean information of the canyon's cryptic geologic history. There are two presentations in Tucson at Noon and 2PM. The Glendale presentation begins at 7PM.

## September 17 -- Prescott

***Glen Canyon Dam: Ecosystem Impacts and the Scientific Search for Solutions*** by Andre Potochnik

Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River profoundly impacted the downstream river ecosystem in the Canyon. The loss of endangered species, archaeological sites and sand bars initiated studies resulting in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the dam. Completed in 1996, the EIS was guided by the Grand Canyon Protection Act, which requires continued scientific monitoring of downstream impacts to protect the river ecosystem. Andre Potochnik will highlight the state of the river ecosystem, discuss actions that have been taken and present future directions for preserving the natural, cultural and recreational resources in the Grand Canyon river ecosystem. Andre Potochnik, Ph.D., is a Flagstaff-based geologist, educator and river guide. For the past eight years, Andre has served on the Adaptive Management Work Group to improve operations of Glen Canyon Dam for the benefit of the river ecosystem in the Grand Canyon. This Prescott presentation begins at 1PM.

## August 1 – Grand Canyon

***Arizona Highways and the Grand Canyon: A Photographic How-to*** by Richard Maack

Join us for an evening of photography. Richard Maack will discuss the history of Arizona Highways magazine and the storied periodical's influence on photography of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado Plateau. Combining visuals from vintage and contemporary photographs with a discussion of photographic equipment and techniques, Richard's talk will offer insights into Arizona Highways magazine, the history of photography at the Grand Canyon and ways to improve your own photographs. Richard Maack is the photography editor of Arizona Highways magazine. He has shot images on assignment for a wide variety of editorial clients, including Arizona Highways, Sunset, Landscape Architecture, and many other state and national publications. This Grand Canyon presentation will be from 6PM to 7:30PM at Shrine of the Ages.

## September 27 – Flagstaff

***Preposterous Landscapes: Exploring the Wild Terrain of the Arizona-Utah Border*** by Gary Ladd

The Arizona-Utah border is a stunning landscape of ecological diversity and geologic features ranging from soaring mountains to nearly impenetrable canyons. This photographic journey will take you to many of the border country's wildest areas, including the slot canyon known as "The Dark Arm," Coyote Buttes and Area 52 in Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, Vishnu Temple in Grand Canyon and more. Gary Ladd is a freelance photographer specializing in the wilderness interior of Grand Canyon National Park and the sandstone canyons in and around Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. His photographs have appeared in many books and periodicals, including Life Magazine and Arizona Highways. Christa Sadler's lecture has been cancelled, we are pleased to have Gary Ladd presenting in her place. This Flagstaff presentation begins at 7PM.

## Kolb Studio Exhibit

**Through October 15: *Lasting Light: 125 Years of Grand Canyon Photography*.** The exhibit features historical modern-day images from the greatest photographers to aim their lenses at the Canyon. A book with the same title will be released to coincide with the event.

# Centennial

...continued from page 3

Jo Pendry, who oversees all Park Service concessions, presented the family with a certificate of appreciation signed by NPS Director Fran Mainella, in recognition of their service.

"This family really embodies the rich history of the pioneer spirit and the movement west," she said. "We're very proud of their contributions and the tremendous record of service to the park, the community and millions of visitors."

Michael said that keeping it a family owned enterprise has been a challenge and acknowledged support from family, coworkers and others over the years.

"I'm not a great believer in 'the Greatest Generation.' I'm not a Tom Brokaw type of guy," he said. "I think all the generations contributed equally with their energies."

Though he and Susie joked about their father's "captive, low-cost" labor pool that helped him keep costs down themselves, their siblings and visiting relatives who came out to work in the summer they express nothing but gratitude for the circumstances of their childhood.

"It's just been an incredible privilege filled with so many blessings for us to be able to call this extraordinary place our home," Susie said.

Michael, meanwhile, characterized himself and his siblings as "the luckiest kids in the world," witnessing some 300 "ho-hum, perfect sunsets," rainbows, double rainbows and inversions that would last for days good for the postcard trade, he noted.

Susie took time to pay tribute to the family's women, who, she said, often didn't get as much mention as the men though many were as brave and adventurous and left as deep a mark. Her grandmother came west with a sister to

keep house for their brothers, who worked on the railroad. And her Aunt Peggy pitched in when her brother, the first John Verkamp died unexpectedly in 1944, keeping the store in good health and looking after his widow and children until John Jr. returned home from the war the next year and assumed management.

Words of appreciation also went out to a host of others, though before she even got started, Susie made what she called her disclaimer.

"I wish there was time to talk about everyone who's sitting here, so know that you're included in my heart even if we don't get the words out to you," she said.

"First and foremost" she expressed deep gratitude to Dan and Terri Ashley. She also acknowledged the family members and friends who pitched in on the floor or were invaluable in their support over the years.

She also thanked the Native American dancers, Hopi sculptor Tony Pollacca and Navajo silversmith Tommy Jackson for sharing their traditional skills at the event.

And, she thanked the Verkamp's staff, who remained busy in the store serving customers and carrying on the Verkamp story.

"Even though they're in there working, we consider our staff to be the contemporary guardians of our family tradition and our tradition of service to the community and to the visitors at the park," Susie said.

During her closing remarks, one more, much anticipated guest arrived a condor who circled high above the "oohing" crowd, halting all remarks for the duration of its brief visit and departing to applause.

As Michael had remarked earlier, "It's just another day in paradise."

Grand Canyon Historical Society

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