



THE WALL

BIG DROP II

## Best Wishes from Grand Canyon

Brad Dimock, President GCRG

Amid the mid-November snows at Pack Creek Ranch, several of us who have been heavily involved with Grand Canyon River Guides over the last six year history had the odd sensation of giving birth.

We had gathered at Ken and Jane Sleight's ranch for two purposes. First was to have our fall general meeting, bringing membership up-to-date on current issues, discussing tough topics, and most importantly, telling lies and reveling. Our second purpose was to bring together some of the Northern crowd who had expressed an interest in working on upper basin issues, to try to act as sourdough starter for a new and possibly similar group.

It was a pretty tentative plan and many of us were a bit skeptical--"the upper basin is too diverse," "there aren't enough grizzled, demented old timers around," "no leadership figures have emerged," "it ain't gonna happen." What the hell, though, we thought. We'll give it our best shot. And we did.

The GCRG meeting on Saturday morning went fine. We brought folks up-to-speed on some of the things we're accomplishing in Grand Canyon. What sorts of things? Well, a much improved dialogue has been established between guides and outfitters, and between guides and the NPS; we have come to have an influence on policy in many areas and achieved equitable solutions to a few sticky problems. Co-operative programs have been established and we've helped facilitate pension and insurance plans in several companies.

We've become a strong advocate on several environmental issues and have been acknowledged by friends in Washington as having a major influence on the passage of the Grand Canyon Protection Act and the implementation of the Glen Canyon Environmental Studies through our extensive on-river letter writing campaigns. Our opinions and help are now valued and sought after. Currently we're grappling with the finalization of the Glen Canyon EIS, the overflights issue, and trying to effect reform in the way Grand Canyon

superintendents continue to be capriciously moved from one position to the next.

Community and the heritage of the boating community are a big part of what we do too, via our (in all modesty) incredible quarterly journal and projects like our oral history program. Our membership, now over 1000, continues to grow, and it looks like, for better or for worse, we're going to be around for quite a while.

We wrapped our part of the program up around noon, and after lunch launched into the Great Unknown of the alleged new group. We started with a dozen of GCRG's old hands in the center of the room, giving advice, warnings, encouragement and ideas to a room full of interested folks. Although initially the northern folk seemed a bit timid, afraid to speak up too loudly lest they get put in charge, one-by-one voices and personalities began to emerge.

Mid-afternoon someone suggested it was time for the GCRG folks to move to the back of the room and see what would happen. We did, and were amazed and delighted. Tentatively at first, then with more and more momentum, a group developed and leaders emerged. There was denial at first, of course, "I'm not leadership material," "I don't have the qualifications," "I don't have the time," "no one knows who I am"... (familiar ground for us!) But their momentum got the best of them and at 3:07 (or was it (3:08?) they made it over the hump and went ballistic. There was no turning back. We broke for dinner. They didn't.

At their first official meeting on Sunday morning, we watched from the sidelines as responsibility was delegated and accepted, and issues were discussed and dispatched in a fraction of the time it took us when we started. For us at GCRG it was exciting, rewarding and even a little emotional. Something was born there with a potential and a direction we can only guess at.

We'd like to offer our heartiest congratulations and encouragement. Sure, there will be some incredibly difficult times when a very few people are shouldering a very hugh burden. Yes, there will be naysayers, critics and obstructionists. But hold firm, be stubborn. The rewards will come, your influence will grow and the education you get along the way will amaze you. The rivers you run and the community those rivers bring together will be much richer for your efforts.

And to the naysayers: wake up! Send in your dues. Call Susette and ask how you can help. You've gotten a hell of a lot from the river over the years. It's time to start giving something back.

## So What's in a Name?

Tim Thomas, Vice-president CPRG

For some, a name is simply a description. For others, it's a reflection of self. Yet for others, it's symbolic of a cause and a larger purpose. And the origins of CPRG's name? Although it would be embellishing a bit to say the folks who gathered at the Grand Canyon River Guides (GCRG) fall meeting in Moab, last November, delved deeply into their souls to decide on Colorado Plateau River Guides as the name. There was indeed thought (albeit a bit obscure at times) and there is meaning.

Primarily we wanted to let others know what area we are concerned about - the area where we work and play. Of course, there was debate over whether we had included or excluded someone or something. But like most names it falls far short of encompassing the totality and potential latent when people come together to achieve a common purpose (like beer drinking and saving the world). An obvious example that comes to mind is our sister organization, GCRG, and their successes over the past six years, from championing causes such as the passage of the Grand Canyon Protection Act, to perhaps their crowning glory--the inception (conception) of CPRG.

So hopefully the "Colorado Plateau" gives focus and definition to our purpose, and "river guides" simply gives us a starting core of concerned individuals upon which we can build an organization open to all who wish to be involved. At best we'll succeed in our goals. At worst, we'll have a few people running around with meaningless titles tacked onto their names.

## From the Eddy

John Weisheit, Editor CPRG

At the first meeting of the newsletter committee, we decided that the name for the printed format of Colorado Plateau River Guides would be *The Confluence*. In the upper basin of the Colorado River, river guides and private boaters float the tributaries too. These tributaries increase the flow of the Colorado River at a confluence--an appropriate metaphor to connect our ideas and needs for a meeting in print.

We feel this issue legitimizes CPRG and hope it inspires readers to join the membership. A membership form is included for your convenience.

I would enjoy expressing sincerest thanks to the officers, directors, and members of Grand Canyon River Guides for sharing their "sour dough starter" and for getting CPRG in the oven. We express our sincerest thanks to Jane and Ken Sleight for allowing us to have our first CPRG meeting at Pack Creek Ranch. I also would like to thank all the contributors for the articles received in what basically was short notice. Special thanks to the guides of the San Juan River; you became the strong arm to the formation of CPRG. Thanks also to Jeanne Treadway director of Canyonlands Natural History Association and to Karla VanderZander from Canyonlands Field Institute. Thanks also to the board members of the Dan O'Laurie Museum for allowing us to use their conference room for meetings.