

Pikes Peak River Runners

Grand Canyon: A Journey Through Heaven and Hell Aug 2001



By Christina King

Day 1, Aug 6, 2001: Hot Na Na

Here we are again getting ready to launch on Pete's 13th Grand Canyon trip with 13 people and a plan to run Lava Falls Rapid on Day 13. Will we ever learn!? After spending a hot August night at the Marble Canyon Lodge, we gathered the last of our gear and tried to stuff it in the rafts. Chris and Dana ended up sweating in their room last night due to lack of air conditioning. Chris got so hot he ended up sleeping outside on the walkway. I wonder how he will handle the heat in the next 14 days.

Our group consists of the Peter Way (permit holder) family [wife Frances, and children, Monica (13) and Daniel (11)], Pete and I (Christina) King, Chris Canady, and Dana Eriksen (from New Hampshire, yes, they drove all the way!), Ralph Hoffman, Beth (Buller) Roren, Mel Lips, and son Julien (12), and William Henry Crew III. Peter Way and William Henry kayaked (sort of) and the rest of us rowed our rafts with passengers.

River Ranger, Dave Chapman, gave us an excellent talk about the rules and regulations on the river. Not only did he explain the rules but elaborated on the reason why the rules were in place. Dave's appreciation for the Grand Canyon was apparent during his presentation. We also appreciated his swamp cooler. We promised to send him some pictures of our trip illustrating his points. The river flows are predicted to be highs of 18,000-20,000 cfs and lows of 9,000 cfs. The forecast turned out to be correct, we enjoyed moderate water levels for the entire trip.

We did not set any speed records at our pre-launch rigging and ended up eating lunch at the Lee's Ferry put-in. Many large commercial motor rigs launched with us today. After lunch, we began our

14-day trip! Badger Creek rapid was our first rapid and it had the big Grand Canyon hidden horizon line and enormous waves. After running Badger Creek rapid my pre-trip jitters subsided. It is nice to be "on the Grand" again. Today was hot and sunny. Monica and Daniel took turns learning how to row my boat. They both mentioned that my wooden Gull 10-foot oars were very heavy. Frances also rode in my boat. After running Soap Creek rapid, the Way Family was kept guessing on the origin of the rapid name.

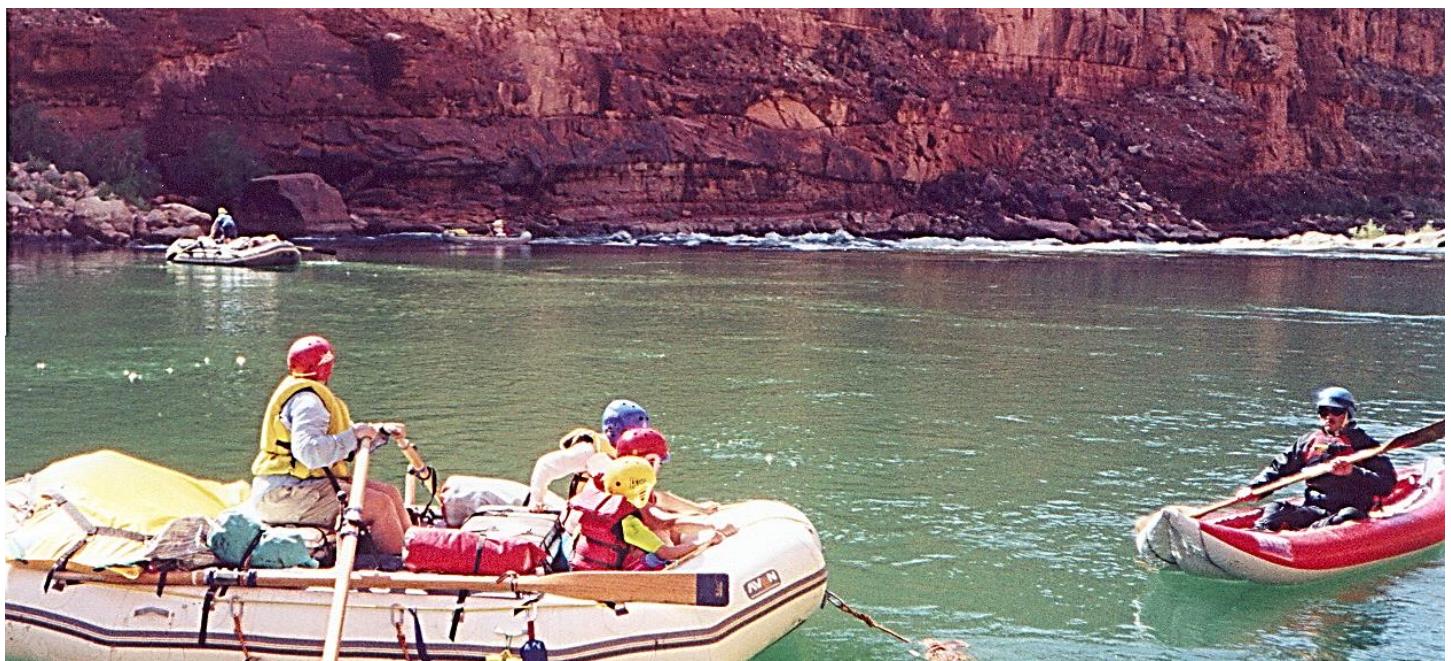


We got into quiet Hot Na Na camp late (5:30 PM) and quickly ate dinner and settled down for a hot night. The quiet of the camp was interrupted by a variety of human created noises throughout the night. The Way Family (flash)light show lasted well into the evening. Thank goodness that Day One was done, always a relief.

Day 2, Aug 7, 2001: Silver Grotto

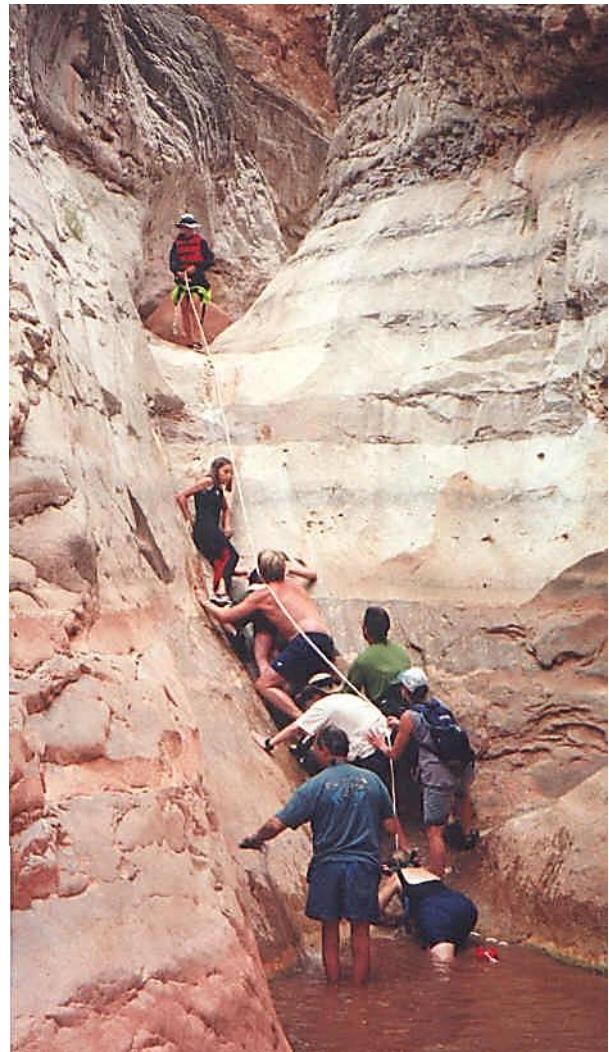
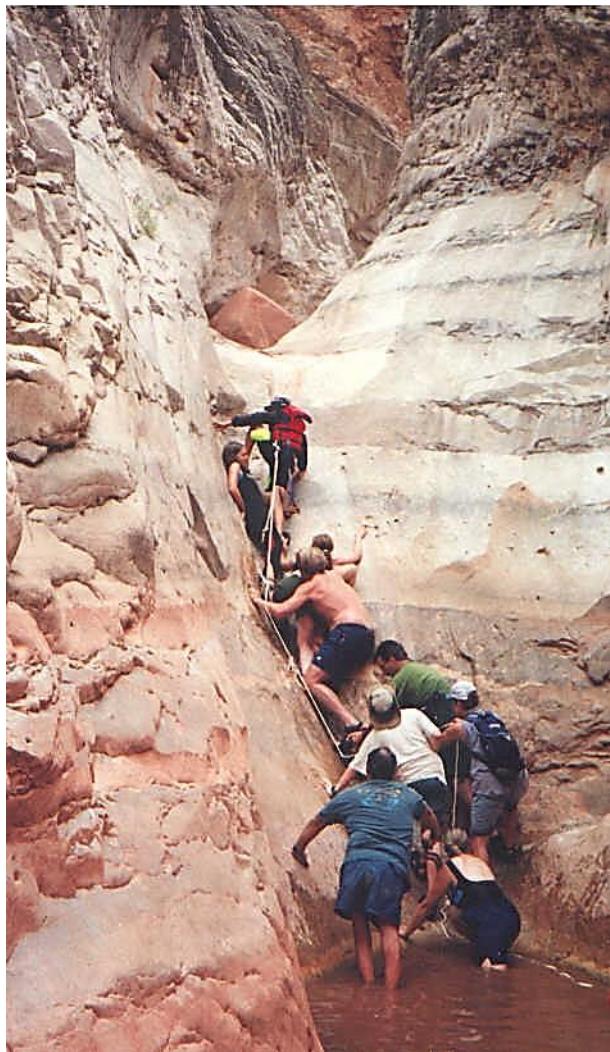
We rose early and began to pattern our lives around the rising and setting of the sun. We still struggle as a group to launch at a reasonable time.

We had hoped the water would rise for our first tough rapid of the day, House Rock rapid, but no luck. We arrive at the rapid too early in the morning for the dam released flow to reach us. We scout the rapid and it was a tough pull to the right, but everyone did fine. Mel had an adventurous run and almost fell out when he got too far left but managed to stay in his boat.



We passed the Boulder Narrows section with the huge boulder (w/ driftwood on top). There must have been amazing high river flows to put that driftwood on top of the massive boulder! The Roaring 20's series of rapids proved to be easy, but Peter Way just couldn't master his roll and ended up bailing out of his kayak (and swimming almost every rapid). We pulled into Silver Grotto for camp and spotted the craziest driftwood shapes perched on logs. Chris tries on a driftwood shape that looks exactly like a mask with eyes, nose, and mouth. William Henry introduces us to a game called Ammo Can tonight. Ammo Can is played like tug of war between two people standing on ammo cans (small cans 20 feet apart) with a rope in between. The rope is left on the ground and quickly picked up (by both players facing each other) and pulled in at the Start command. The goal is to pull your opponent off the ammo can first and the player left standing on the ammo can wins. I think Monica was the reigning champion. The Southwest monsoons make their first appearance tonight, so we tarp the kitchen and put up tents. Good thing we do because it rains off and on all night. We decide to save the Silver Grotto (side canyon) exploration until tomorrow morning.

Day 3, Aug 8, 2001: Overhang



The hike up Silver Grotto is always a great group project. It is virtually impossible for one person to negotiate the slickrock wall to gain access into Silver Grotto – even for a skilled climber like Chris. The secret to success is using many group members – build a human ladder – and launch the smallest and lightest person into the Silver Grotto. A rope can then be secured to assist everyone else. This side hike up Silver Grotto turns out to be a trip highlight, especially for Peter Way. Peter uses canes to walk and was unable to climb up 12 years ago. Today he made it up with the help of the group. Everyone laughed about the dirty water in Silver Grotto and we even spotted a dead bat. Then we worried about Hanta-Virus, but not for long. I

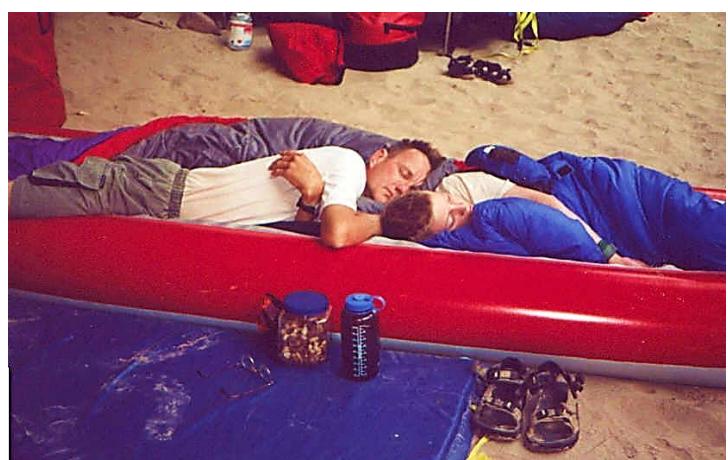


woke up with a cough and laryngitis this morning and struggle with a cold for the rest of the trip. Several others in our group also get the cold (including Daniel). Whoever heard of catching a cold in the middle of summer, what a pain?! We started the day with clouds and cool temperatures. At breakfast, the first mention of missing forks is made. Missing forks become a mystery as our trip progresses. We stopped for photos at Vasey's Paradise and have lunch at Redwall Cavern. Chris helps Peter Way into the eddy at Redwall Cavern (after an eddy line flip) while the rest of us look on from the beach wondering "what's for lunch"?



Peter Way and Daniel did a fair amount of unplanned swimming from their kayak and ducky. We had no rapids of significance today. Dana earned the first "semi-valuable" prize of the trip for spotting the first Nautiloid fossil at the side canyon of the same name. The enthusiasm for duckying has been lost and I end up paddling one ducky into camp and Dana rows my boat to Overhang. Dana did not like my oars and really blistered up her hands. After tonight the duckies

become expensive mattress pads. They are never used again, and we must carry them the rest of the way down river. At least, we do not have to put up tents tonight because of a cliff overhang, hence the camp's name. The storms are threatening, and we have lots of lightning.



Day 4, Aug 9, 2001: Nankoweep

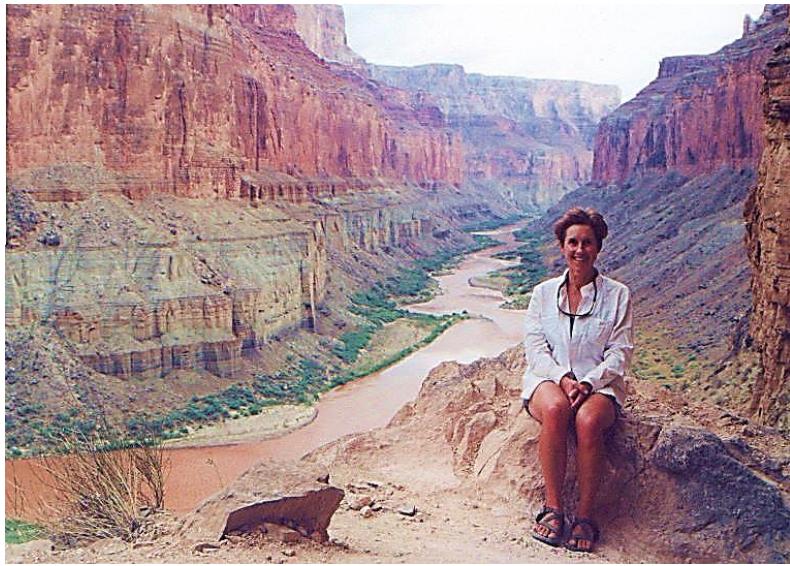


We had a nice dry night under our cliff Overhang. When we awoke, the river had turned bloody red during the night and dropped quite a bit. Beth's boat took a lot of work to get her off a tightly wedged rock. A side canyon (maybe the Paria) had flashed, and the clear river would be muddy the rest of our trip.

Beth noted that our Overhang camp last night was just like a youth hostel (snoring,

coughing, talking, pounding of sand stake in the middle of the night). We stopped at Bert Loper's boat ruins and spied the Anasazi Bridge high up in the cliffs. We ran President Harding rapid to the left because of the debris squeezing the right channel.

We camp at Nankoweep and some of our group hike up to the Anasazi granaries. Forks are now a prized possession since we have brisket tonight. Some people are already eating with only spoons. I spied a Grand Canyon pink rattlesnake on the path to the Groover. We leave it alone and hope it will go away. An hour later the snake is still on the path. Of course, the children want to rile it up by poking it with a stick. We stop that nonsense, reroute the trail to the groover and the next morning the snake is gone.



We had an easy schedule up to this point having only gone 52 miles in 4 days. Our group is still struggling to make this easy mileage. These first four days were designed to be the break-in period. I also noticed that the group whining level seems to be escalating (heat, rain, sand, miles to go before we sleep, getting going in the morning, blisters, heavy boats, hauling trash, groover duty, etc.....).

Day 5, Aug 10, 2001: 12 hours @ Nevill's

We ran Kwagunt rapid first thing this morning and enjoyed the big waves. Further downstream, we pulled into the Little Colorado River (LCR) and thoroughly enjoyed the muddy almost chocolate pudding consistency of the water. The highlight of the stop was playing "Crack the Whip" in the LCR current.



The Tanner Wash stretch is a long section of the canyon and we were tired when we reached Unkar Delta. We looked at the ancient Anasazi pottery chards and scouted Unkar rapid at the same time. The rapid focused everyone's attention on the river and not on the Anasazi ruins. There were "extra" exciting runs through Unkar, but everyone made it fine. Our plan was to camp at Nevill's that night. Nevill's is a great camp because it is large, flat and receives early shade. It was here the missing forks mystery became a crisis as hungry boaters pondered the possibility of eating BBQ pork with spoons.

The mystery of the missing forks began to unravel though as Peter Way showed several of us his approach for dealing with dirty forks. He throws them into the sand and under the tables "so that we clean them later".... Hmm?

As we were preparing to eat a lovely dinner prepared by Chris and Dana, one of the most violent windstorms descended on our group and proceeded to destroy camp. First blowing sand ruined the food, then the ducky and paco pads took flight, and then Beth's boat executed an unscheduled departure. As William Henry would say "Beth's away!" In between the storms ferocious moments there was time to "rock down" everything in camp, set up tents, and secure boats to a safe harbor. Rain, wind, thunder, and lightning dominated the night. As a reward for surviving "12 hours @ Nevill's", the Inner Gorge and many of Grand Canyon's most notorious rapids await us in the morning.

Day 6, Aug 11, 2001: Trinity Creek

The morning dawned hot and sunny, finally! Daniel has officially caught my cold, so I make sure everyone in my boat is dressed well for the big rapids today. Ralph told us that he had heard Daniel coughing so hard through the night, he thought Daniel had "died".

We stopped to scout Hance and ran it with no problem. Ralph missed the river ferry to the left at Sockdolager and ran through the big hole. He was incredibly lucky he did not flip. He had a rough ride but came out okay. At lunch we told Ralph its ok to blink your eyes again. No problems at Grapevine. Peter Way took the day off from kayaking and rode in Pete's boat today (good idea). After filling up water jugs at Phantom Ranch we walked up to the ranch and got boatman's mail and goodies. The ice-cold lemonade always tastes great. Today's high temperature was

reported as 107° F. The Cooke's sent us a surprise package of presents; battery operated hand fans, M&M's, and a KC Chiefs bear. The



Way family also got a surprise package of treats and notes from their little sister at home.



We floated away from our last brush with civilization and went down to scout Horn Creek rapid. We all ran Horn Creek well ("splitting" the horns for which the rapid takes its name). We camped early at Trinity Creek and slept on the boats to cool off that night.

Day 7, Aug 12, 2001: Evacuation Beach (below Crystal)

Our first big rapid of the day was Granite. During the scout Pete, Beth and I saw the rapid would be a challenge. A left run looked tricky and lacked a conservative "sneak". The right side looked worse. Daniel and Julien decided to walk around the rapid. Julien was very anxious about all the rapids and this rapid was making us all anxious. Large waves and holes abound in the rapid especially along the wall on the right side, just where all the river flow pushes boats. Pete and I ran left and did fine. Chris was running sweep and he was not

so lucky. Pete pulled out to pick up the kids and I kept running after I saw Chris's boat had flipped. Chris hit a hole, stalled, and then flipped. Chris was able to climb up on the bottom of his boat while I picked up Dana. Chris was flustered, and it took quite an effort for us to steer the out-of-control boat into an eddy so we could flip it back upright. Finally, we got the boat secured to shore and were able to clip on flip lines and turn the boat back right side up. While the rest of the group is focused on positioning flip lines, Peter Way hopped into the water to rescue his wooden paddle from the back of Chris's raft – fearing it would be damaged during the righting of the raft. Chris had to dry out his "dry boxes" that night at camp but otherwise he did not lose anything but confidence of course.



This is not the first time a new Cascade (Rec-Tec) dry box has failed. Pete's new Cascade "dry box" leaked miserably during its first voyage on the Middle Fork two years ago. The design and manufacturing quality of their "dry boxes" is suspect. Every flip really knocks the confidence out of most boatmen. After our first mile of the day, we have flipped our first boat. Chris is frustrated because as Dana says, he is used to running the "big stuff". However, in the Grand Canyon, boats our size running the "big stuff" sooner or later results in the "big flip".



With confidence shaken, a mile and a half behind us and 20 scheduled miles to go, our group heads across the longest $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of quiet water, the flat stretch between Granite and Hermit rapids. Peter Way chose to return to his kayak for another attempt at Hermit. Twelve years ago, Peter Way had flipped early in the rapid and had to swim most of the monstrous waves. History repeats itself! The rafts had better success as everyone accomplished the "left sneak" to one degree or another. There is a real worry, though. By now all the boatmen should have a sense of what it takes to move our heavy boats and what it takes to accomplish the Grand Canyon ferry (GCF). The GCF is a rowing technique used by boats to crash through lateral waves at a 45-degree downstream angle. Our boatmen are having trouble building the necessary speed to crash through the lateral

waves, making the mistake of riding up on the lateral wave line and turning the boats bow down river too soon.



Our next stop was to scout Crystal. We had hoped to watch a couple of motor rigs run the rapid, but they pulled in above the rapid for lunch instead. After discussing the run at Crystal, Pete and I ran first with Beth close behind us. We all ran well and turned around to watch everyone else. Mel was in trouble. The conservative run at Crystal rapid requires timing a hard ferry to the right while rowing backwards (downstream). The boatman is required to

continue rowing until they clear the lateral waves on the right and pass the large holes in the center of the rapid. Mel took one (and only one) pull to the right, gave up, straightened the boat out and promptly flipped in the first hole. Lower Crystal and Mel and Julien's reluctance to let go of their flipped NRS raft made it difficult to pull them from the river. However, Frances, Monica and Daniel had practiced their rescue skills and hauled them in with finesse. They had already practiced in the calm waters with Dana. We are turning into quite a rescue team. Then Pete, Beth and I shoved the upside-down loose boat into shore. I was able to grab it and secure it to shore. During our rescue of Mel and Julien, Peter Way had flipped his kayak and was swimming again. Chris and William Henry (the other kayaker) rescued Peter Way. Unfortunately, we later found out that Peter Way had dislocated his shoulder during his swim and had asked to be evacuated out immediately. Chris relayed the bad news about Peter Way. The Way family had brought two-way walkie-talkies, so we turned ours on after flipping Mel's boat back over. Mel had lost two oars but still had his two spares. He did not lose anything else. They could not move Peter Way easily, but Chris had run up the rocky and steep riverbank ("it was like running on bowling balls") and contacted the motor rig seconds before they pulled out of their lunch spot above Crystal. They had seen our flip but had no idea that we had a hurt kayaker. Peter Way was in a poor shore location position for



transport (along a cliff wall with lots of current and boulders). Grand Canyon's Expeditions (GCX) head boatman (Art) did some delicate and skillful maneuvering of his motor rig to pick Peter Way up and eventually they had him moved down river to "Evacuation Beach". GCX even had a nurse, Teresa, aboard. GCX had a satellite telephone and called the National Park Service (NPS) helicopter rescue/evacuation team. GCX had helped on seven other evacuations at this same beach just this summer alone. They knew the routine and we were GRATEFUL for their help. We were very appreciative of their skill, expertise, and calmness during our evacuation. On our previous trips we have always had a good relationship with commercial companies and this trip proved positive again.



The helicopter came in "hot" blowing sand everywhere and almost knocking us over. The beach was tiny. It was very scary seeing the helicopter blades getting closer and closer. They did not like the first place they set down and turned around with the tail rotor pointed towards us, then drifted back our direction. I thought for sure that we would be chopped up like potatoes in a Cuisinart. Not so, they landed it perfectly but kept the rotors going. NPS got the background information from Art (GCX) and then questioned Peter Way. Next, they carried Peter Way into the helicopter and departed after about 20 minutes on the ground.



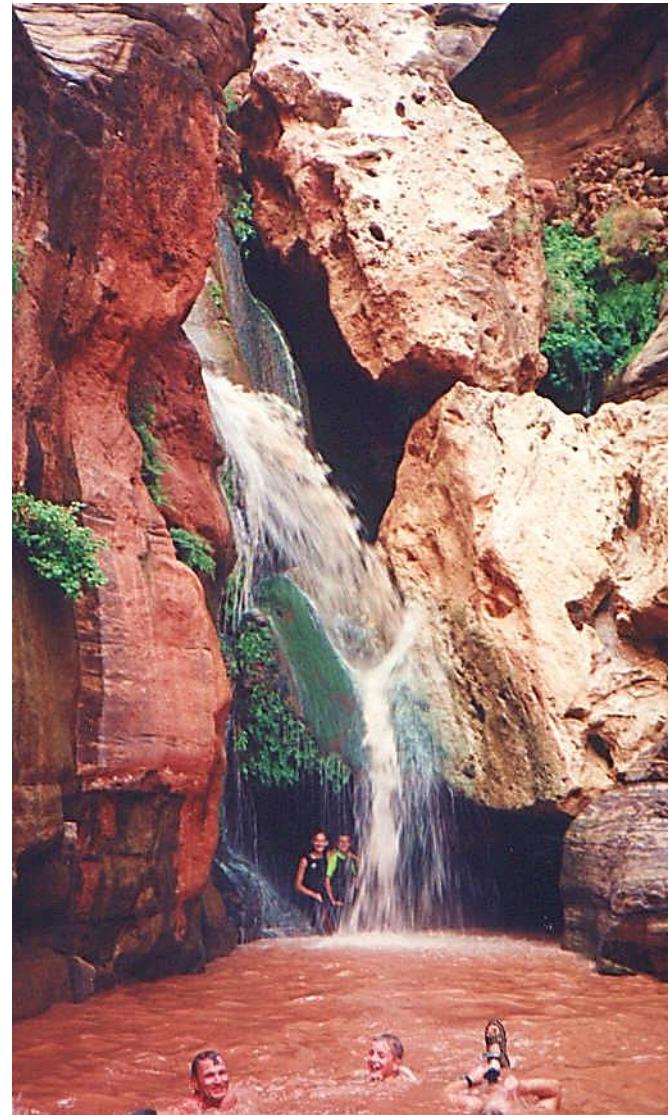
Peter Way's last words prior to being loaded on to the helicopter were "see you at Diamond". The Way family was terribly upset, and children were crying. We were all fairly shook up. After the helicopter and GCX left, we decided to camp on this very beach. Going down river that late in the day seemed like a poor decision. We had only traveled six miles, missed lunch, and spent the entire day in rescue/evacuation mode. We were stunned, hungry, and tired. Pete and I quickly made dinner and the weather deteriorated with a major storm right after dinner. We scrambled to set up tents and barely made it inside before the rain began. It rained all night. Rockfalls tumbled down behind our tents during the night. All of us struggle to survive Day 7 mentally and physically...the Grand Canyon is throwing the tough stuff at us.

Day 8, Aug 13, 2001: Big Dune (above Blacktail Canyon)

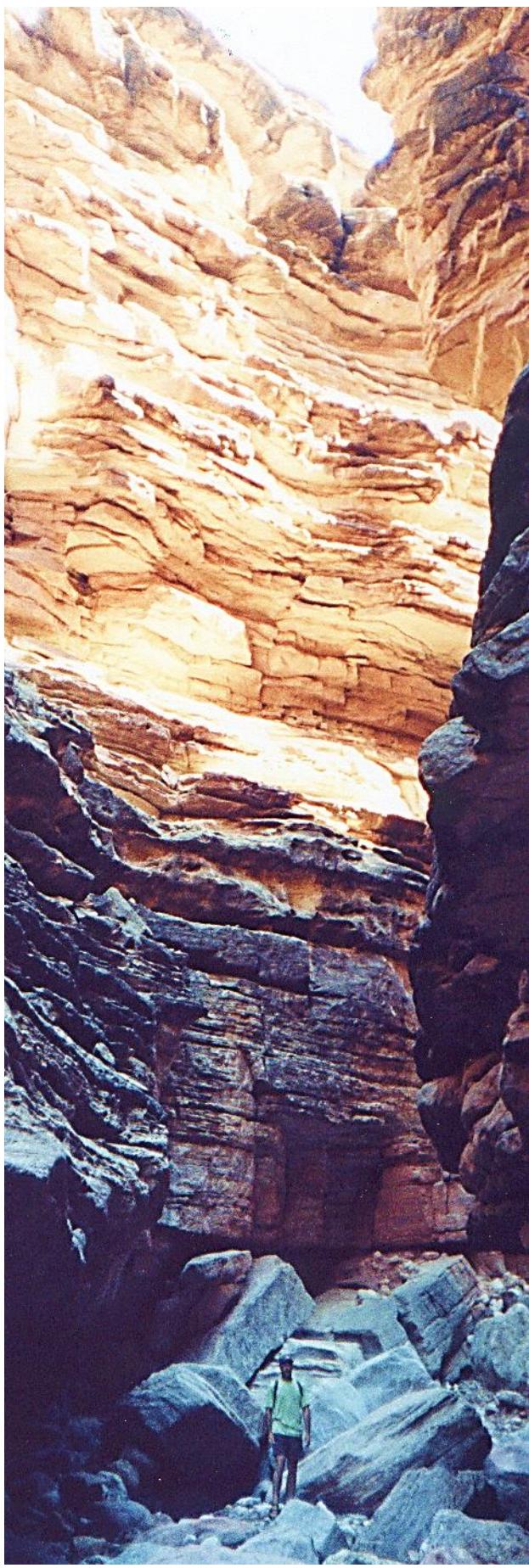
Day 8 begins.... Peter Way has been medically evacuated, the group is dealing with lost confidence, horrible weather, and escalated whining. We try to "wait out" the rain but it seems the Canyon is "socked in" and we decide it is best to go on. We are now a full day behind our planned schedule and will spend the next three days chasing this mileage, so we can take out on our scheduled day.

I make a mistake in Sapphire rapid and unintentionally hit the second hole on the right. It was a big hit, but we surfaced through the wave fine. The Peter Way remaining family members (Frances, Monica, and Daniel) have been remarkably positive and keep things upbeat in our boat. Children bounce back quickly, and they vow to write notes to Dad every night and are making the best of the situation. Frances is coping well considering this is not what she had expected. Pete mentions several times to me through the course of the trip how he is impressed with Frances – she has become a real strength for our trip. It is today that Monica declares this trip "an adventure – not a vacation". Everyone agrees. Monica is rowing at least once a day and both children have rowed some small rapids. They often speak of looking forward to seeing their Dad at Diamond Creek to share their stories.

Our next sightseeing stop is Elves Chasm, a wonderful waterfall that had been turned brown by the recent rainfall. We later found out that last night's rainfall was almost 3 inches which is probably one-third of the area's annual rainfall. The Bright Angel trail to Phantom Ranch was washed out and closed for the next 3 weeks. Two hikers were also caught in this same storm and killed up Havasu Creek. The river itself is very muddy and full of debris. I am sure that the Little Colorado river is dumping a huge amount of muddy water into the Colorado. Elves Chasm provides us warmer water than the cold (dam-released) water of the Colorado.



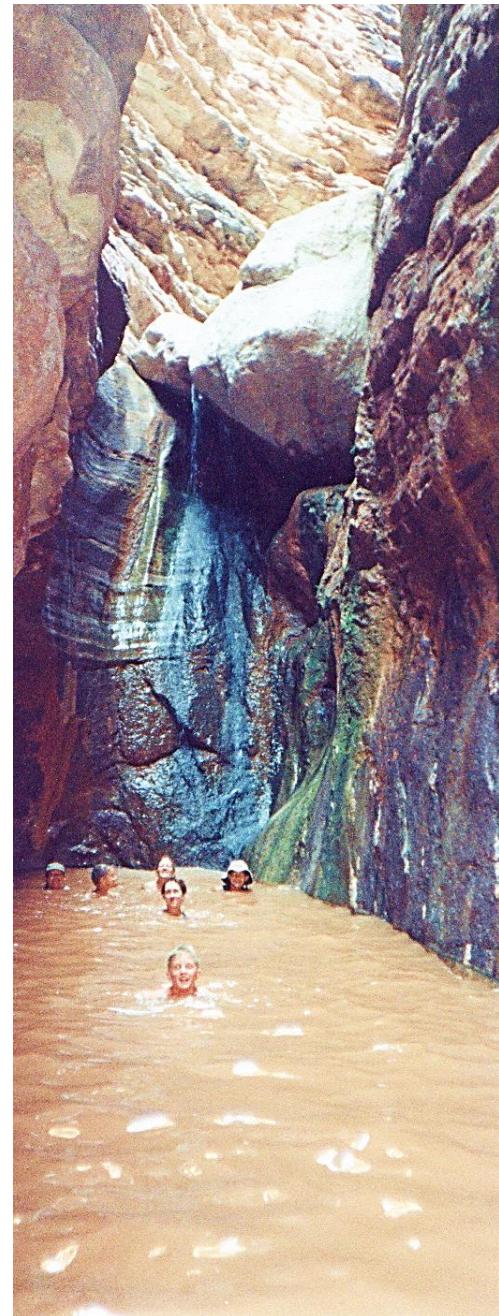
Twenty-four hours ago, the Canyon was throwing the tough stuff at us. But now, we are starting to see the magical side of running this river. The skies have cleared, a light breeze dries our gear while we enjoy one of the best camps in the area - Big Dune. Unfortunately, some of the group focuses on "getting out of here"....and do not seem to appreciate the Grand Canyon's "other moods".

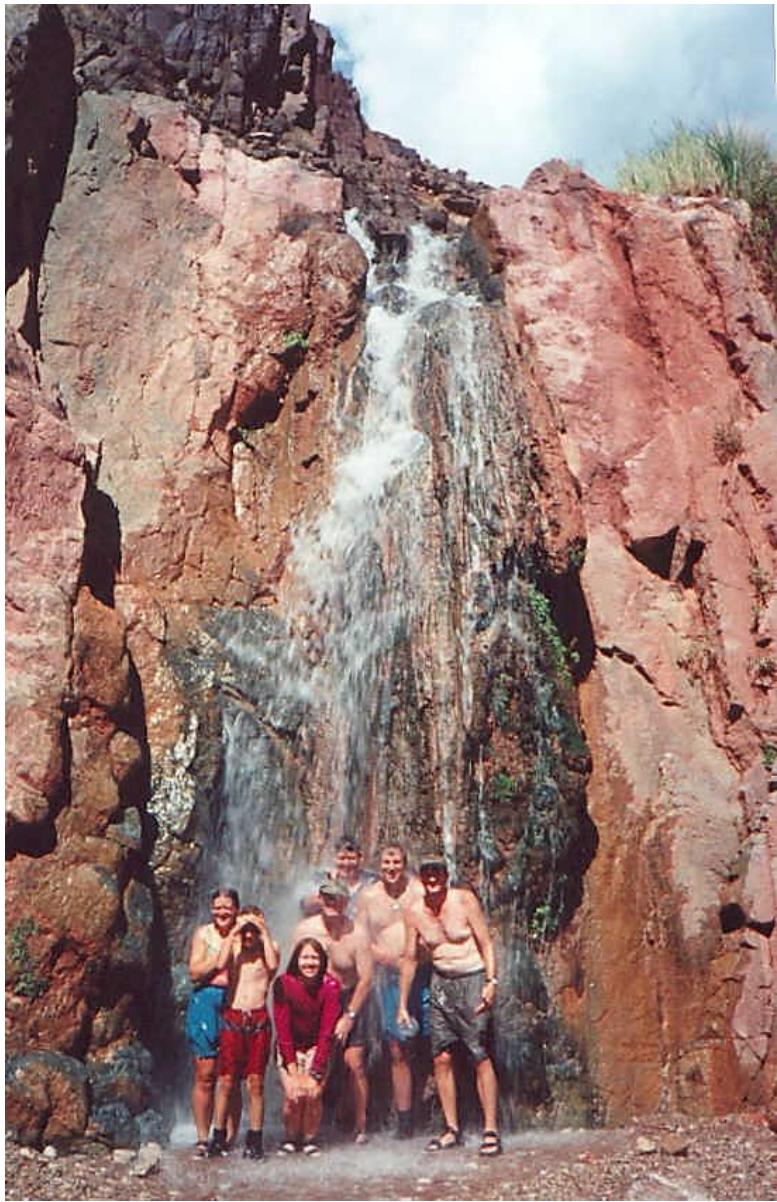


Day 9, Aug 14, 2001: Owl Eyes

After a great night without monsoons, we float to Blacktail Canyon and enjoyed the quietness and shade of this special side canyon. Blacktail had lots of water at the end (above our heads) where usually there is just a small 6-inch pool of water. No wonder, from all the rain we have had on this trip. We usually go in August or September, so we are used to the summer monsoon season in the Southwest. But this year we have had lots of storms, more than any on our other trips.

While running Fossil rapid, Mel fell out and lost one of his oars. Julien jumped up on the oars, slapped on the spare and rescued his Dad. Julien was the "Hero for the Day". When we eddied out to help, "Eagle-eye" Chris spotted Mel's oar swirling in the eddy and William paddled up in his kayak and retrieved it. We pulled back out into the current after this mishap only to watch William Henry swim in a swirly current further down river. Pete tried to rescue him and then we stopped at a shady spot above Randy's Rock to have lunch. We cannot seem to shake our group jitters. Pete and I fear that we might have trouble at Specter and Bedrock rapids, but everyone runs well. We run Deubendorff rapid, and Pete gets a big ride on the waves, which I sneak. They look too intimidatingly large for me.





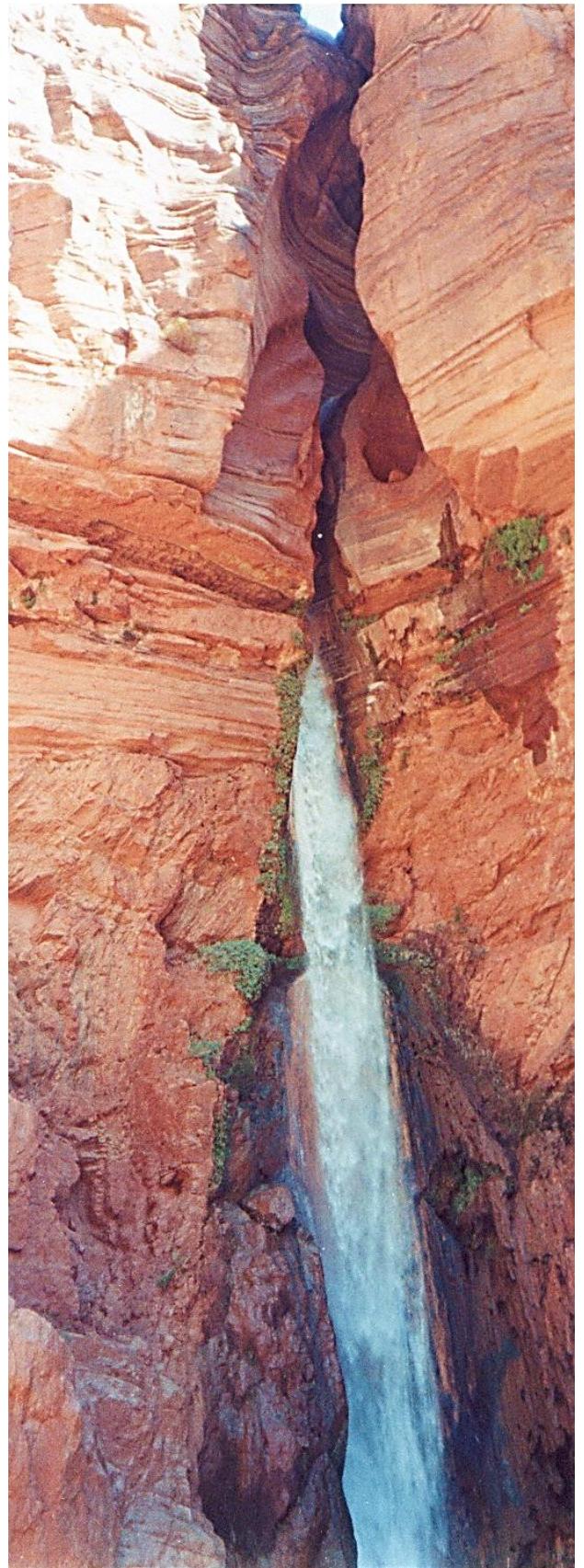
We stop at Stone Creek to enjoy the waterfall. I stand under the pounding water and wash all the sand out of every pore in my body. The cascading water feels great on my head. We lounged around the waterfall for quite a while enjoying the scenery. Since we lost a day during Peter Way's evacuation, our planned hiking day at Tapeats is cut short. We had planned two leisurely days in this section but had to make up the miles. Julien is unsure about hiking up Tapeats, but Pete convinces him to follow Monica wherever she goes. It turns out that Beth, Monica, and Julien are the only ones who want to hike to Tapeats Creek to see Thunder river. The group splits and we remain at Stone Creek and float to camp later in the day.

We set up camp at Owl Eyes and hold dinner for our hikers. Ralph dabbles in the kitchen preparing spaghetti for 12 while a heat exhausted Mel moans from a paco pad under the tamarisk. As dusk falls and Beth is overdue, the mere mention that Beth might have trouble in the Tapeats riffle sends panic through the heart of the parents; while Frances prays, Mel puts his lifejacket on and retrieves his throw rope from his boat. Fortunately, minutes later, Beth floats into camp with Monica and Julien. Ralph pulls his meatballs from Beth's cooler for the spaghetti, fires up the stove and we eat in the dark again. While Ralph fusses about having to do dishes at 9 PM; the monsoons threaten and up go the tents.

Day 10, Aug 15, 2001: Upset Hotel

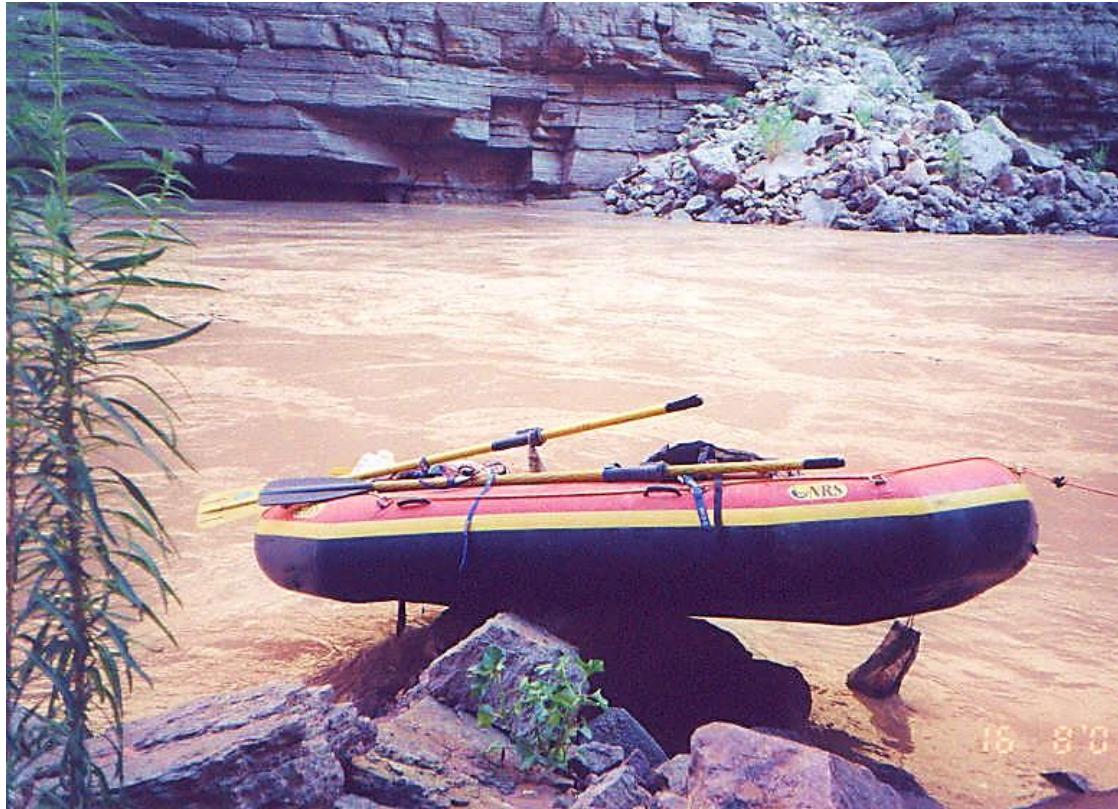
We pass the narrowest point in the canyon today (76 feet) then stop for drinking water resupply and swimming at Deer Creek Falls. We took turns swimming in the pool below the falls and trying to touch the wall behind the falls. The current blowing out of Deer Creek Falls shoots us out downstream. The wind is incredible, pouring out from the side slot canyon, high above us. Later we run Doris, Fishtail and Kanab rapids with no problem. We hiked up the sinuous Matkatamiba Canyon. This is one of my most fun favorite hikes on the trip.

We planned on running Upset rapid without a scout but a microburst (or macro, from our perspective) of severe wind, rain, and rock falls forced us to abandon the run at the last minute and eddy out above the rapid. Stones from the canyon rim hit our heads and the wind made the rapid impossible to read (due to whitecaps). Abort! Abort! everyone yelled. Thank goodness we were wearing helmets because the stones were bouncing off our helmeted heads. We waited about 20 minutes or so on the shore while scouting then ran the rapid. Ralph dumped over the big domer rocks on the right side. Pete kidded Ralph about knocking the domer over rather than rowing around it. It was difficult to pull away from the big hole at the bottom, but we managed. Beth got a piece of the hole but escaped safely. Beth remembered a good camp at Upset Hotel with a nice overhang. There is no need for tents since we were very cozy underneath our cliff shelter. The Hawaiian theme for dinner tonight is complete with leis and Pina Coladas.



Day 11, Aug 16, 2001: National Canyon

We woke up from a restless night, letting the boats out a lot. This is not a friendly tie up for the rafts. I have noticed that Ralph and Mel have rarely checked their boats during this trip. We have unbached their boats frequently and Mel's boat this morning had the most amazing perch. Mel never let his boat out and it was completely out of the water in the morning. Even the drag bag was not touching the water. Camera's capture the scene and Pete dubs the meaning of NRS ("No Reason to Save it").



We pulled into the mouth of Havasu Creek for a relaxing day. Everyone did their own thing, some napped, others hiked, and others enjoyed the scenery at nooks along the creek. Havasu Creek itself was murky from rain. We row 10 miles and camp at National. Pete patched Ralph's boat floor. We had to bail out in tents again due to rain at dinnertime. Beth receives an award for the best kayak throw. Beth and William Henry prepare another of their great meals. Tonight, the restriction about discussing Lava Falls has been lifted! Nervousness abounds and Mel and Julien look sick from worry. It is a hot and humid night we spend at National.

Day 12, Aug 17, 2001: Whitmore Wash



There is a long and difficult row to Lava Falls rapid. We touched Vulcan's Anvil (lava dike) for good luck. Lava Falls rapids is rated most difficult (10) on a scale of 10. We meet lots of other private boaters and they run left at Lava. We watch their runs, no flips. Good omen. We also run left through large waves/holes. Everyone runs it perfectly.



I drop in a little left and get surfed (as planned) to the exact spot where I want to hit the hole. The only rapid I have flipped in the Grand is Lava Falls (in 1992), so I always dread scouting and running it. It is such a good feeling to run it successfully. The Way family rode in my boat (a nice unspoken vote of confidence). I did not want to run empty and would have asked for another passenger if they would have walked around this rapid. I was proud of their adventurous family attitude. Monica and Daniel think my oars are not heavy anymore. They have turned into excellent rowers.

William Henry ran Mel's boat for him through Lava, while Mel and Julien both walk around. Mel is physically and mentally exhausted. The Grand has beat him up. Ralph has described the trip as work, sweat and terror. Chris's rebound from being sick and his flip is short-lived as he injures his back rowing to Lava Falls. He is barely able to move around by the end of the day.

We hiked up to see the Anasazi pictographs at Whitmore Wash and float to camp. There is a palpable relief in camp that Lava Falls is successfully behind us. Monica saw another rattlesnake in camp near the groover and left it alone! Tonight, we play [the "Weakest Link" game Grand Canyon Edition](#). Monica, Daniel, Frances, Dana, Julien, and Beth prove to be the strongest links and all win semi-valuable prizes.

Day 13, Aug 18, 2001: Dory (Mile 222)

Today is our big mileage day. We need to row 32 miles plus. We talked about the plan the night before and psyche the group up to do it. We typically do a long 32-mile day at the end due to heat and lack of major side hikes. It is better to float rather than bake in camp. We meet our goal of 20 miles by lunch and then coast in the last 14 miles (and go 2 miles extra). Mel has another mishap and surfs in a hole while Julien jumps out because he thought the boat would flip again. Once again, we pick up Julien.

Pete and I plan a "traditional" Georgie White last meal in the Grand Canyon diner...a pot full of cans without their labels, "dig in and good luck" Georgie would say. The significance of this small but historic tradition was lost. We all look in disbelief at a large storm passing across Diamond Peak. August is the month that storms wash out the road at Diamond Creek and this storm looks capable of doing just that. This group is whipped and the thought of rafting several more days and running additional significant rapids is horrific. IF the road is closed, we talk about the possibility of Peter Way sending a boat up from Lake Meade for us to takeout at Pearce Ferry. The monsoons continue all night.

Day 14, Aug 19, 2001: Diamond Creek takeout (226 miles)

We get up early in the morning to reach the takeout before storms threaten to wash out the only road out. Who know what this group would do if we had to float 2 more days (and ~75 more miles) to Pearce Ferry?! The takeout is OPEN and very crowded. Canyon REO, our shuttler, shows up at 8:30 am and we load. No sign of Peter Way and shuttle drivers have no information. The Diamond Creek road is in great condition and we stop at our traditional Delgadillo's lunch restaurant on the way back to Flagstaff. I call Canyon REO's office and find out that Peter Way is fine and flew home to Colorado. The group is shocked and never entertained the thought that Peter would not be at the takeout (or waiting for us in Flagstaff). Frances must face a two-day drive home with children. That is tough, but she has hung in there every day and made "lemonade out of lemons".

Monica Way said it best "this isn't a vacation this is an adventure"! A trip through the Grand Canyon is an unforgettable experience. The logistics are difficult; requiring everyone to plan, purchase and pack

food/supplies that will last a lifetime (okay...two weeks or so). Two weeks in a desert environment is both physically and mentally challenging. The heat can be stifling and the water overpowering. You are forced to live with nagging cuts, blisters, and bruises...injuries of all sorts. The rapids are big and intimidating. The boats themselves are too small to haul the freight and are overmatched in every significant rapid (yes, even the 18 footers).

Yet how do you not fall in love with this place? The Grand Canyon forces you to "step up to the plate" and face your fear and limitations "head on" day after day. There is a reason guides spend their lives here; people give their fortunes to protect it and the river community has made it the most sought-after permit of all time. But the river is different for everyone. If you were to ask a veteran of the Canyon, why do you keep going back? they probably cannot tell you, or they will not. All they know is the overwhelming urge to return season after season.

