

## GRAND CANYON

September 9-18, 1994

### Friday, September 9

Flew to Phoenix without incident until a rocky landing in a dust storm. Picked up rental car and headed to Fairfield Inn.

### Saturday, September 10

Started day with a delightful continental breakfast. On the road by 9:30 for the 90-mile drive to Montezuma Castle. What a wonder to see a 20-room Indian dwelling so high up in the side of a mountain that's actually a valley wall! Walked all around the premises and then stopped briefly at the pit house on our way to Montezuma Well area. Reminded us a little of the cenote at Chichen Itza but it was bigger in circumference, had sheerer rock walls, people actually lived within the walls, and there were no Iggy's. Found where the water drains out and went wading. Took the rim path along one side and saw some yellow wild roses in bloom. Headed off for Sedona -- great photo opportunities and lunch at the Atrium. Hiked the Thomas Point Trail in Oak Creek Canyon and got thoroughly drenched on the return. (Randy said it never rains in the desert, so we took only rain jackets. We can now confirm with confidence that wool socks absorb one heck of a lot of rain as it runs down your legs, and Gore-tex leather boots will, in turn, contain one heck of a lot of water once it gets inside!) Still, things could have been worse -- we could have been fried by the lightning on that exposed hillside! Drove immediately to Flagstaff with the heater blasting, hoping to thaw out and dry out. Checked into hotel and jumped right into the shower. Quick dinner at a small Mexican restaurant and then off to bed.

### Sunday, September 11

Not a good night's sleep. Along the tracks across the street trains passed the whole night through, sounding their horns all the while, and the shower curtain rod came crashing down during the night under the weight of all our wet gear. Nevertheless, up early for a not-as-good continental breakfast and off again about 9:30. Did our week's grocery shopping, gassed up, and stopped at a local gear shop for Coleman fuel. On to Grand Canyon Village, arriving under ominous clouds at 12:45. Initial view of Canyon was at Mather Point but we cut it short when the rain began. Checked in at the campground, set up the tent in light rain, ate lunch in light rain, and then walked up to South Rim Trail towards the Yavapai Observation Station. It poured multiple times, providing unique opportunity to see a number of beautiful double rainbows. Rain is good??? After several attempts to leave and speedy returns to the station, we finally gave it up and walked in the rain. Headed to Bright Angel Lodge along the Rim Trail and located the trailhead. Returned to camp at sunset and cooked as usual in the dark. Walked over to trailer camp in search of the showers only to find out they were in our campground across from the check-in! A beautiful night sky full of stars at last. Off to bed at 10:30.

### Monday, September 12

Awake at 6:00 a.m. but not in motion until 6:45. Ate a leisurely breakfast, packed lunches, and headed off for start of West Rim Trail at Bright Angel Lodge. Walked 3.9 miles along the trail to the Abyss, stopping for every Kodak moment along the way. Caught the shuttle to Hermits Rest where I first noticed soreness in my left thigh. Immediately headed off for the trailhead and lunch. Walked Hermits Creek Trail to Dripping Springs Trail cutoff approximately 1.5 miles and 1200 feet down. Hard on my toes! A killer return but made it back only 30 minutes later than the hike in had taken -- surprised even us since I really struggled with nausea from cramps, my sore leg, my allergies and the dryness, and shortness of breath. Caught the 5:00 p.m. shuttle for the return to Bright Angel and our car. Cooked, ate and cleaned up in the daylight. Walked down for a shower and steamed clean! Back at the campsite by 8:40 and off to bed by 9:15!

### Tuesday, September 13

Headed for North Rim at 8:30 for what Randy described as an easy, restful day for me and my sore leg. Drove through some very desolate Indian reservation areas dotted with natural mounds of various colors (part of the Painted Desert), crossed the Colorado River, and traveled beside the Vermillion Cliffs before entering the Kaibab Forest and the North Rim area. Ominous storm clouds and strong, cold winds greeted our arrival at 12:45. Lunched at a picnic area along the rim with some local deer and then hiked the Transept Trail from the campground to Grand Canyon Lodge (1.3 miles). Walked out to Bright Angel Point (0.2 miles) where high winds almost blew us away. Souvenir shopped at the Lodge and then headed off for Widforss Trail. What a treat to see a sub-alpine forest of ponderosa pines and aspen! Hiked out 2.5 miles, stopping at many overlooks along the Canyon wall. Raced back to Lodge to photograph sunset on the North Rim. Couldn't get reasonable dinner reservations there so, on their recommendation, stopped at the Kaibab Inn. Had excellent food but terrible service, and it was 9:00 p.m. before we could start back. Made good time until we hit the park and all the deer feeding along the roadbed. Also saw an elk and a ringtail cat. A 23-mile stretch at 25 mph slowed our return to 12:30.

#### Wednesday, September 14

Slept in until 8:30. Left about 10:00 to explore east end of South Rim. First stop was museum and ruins at Tusayan, an Anasazi pueblo dated to about 1185 AD. Next stop was the Watchtower at Desert View which Randy refused to photograph because it was not the original but a reconstruction. Hit every lookout and vista on the way to Yaki Point, stopping along the way for lunch with a view. Started down South Kaibab Trail around 3:30, descending 1200 feet and a bit over a mile (into the red!). Were purposely at the rim to experience sunset but the sky was so clear that there was very little color. Back to camp to cook in the dark and then showers. Off to bed about 9:00.

#### Thursday, September 15

Hiked Bright Angel Trail down to 3-mile resthouse. Had hoped to get to halfway point at Indian Garden but it was 1.5 miles farther down and my ankles and sore leg said we had gone far enough. Actually had descended almost 2100 feet at the resthouse (down to Canyon floor is 4400 feet). It was a grueling climb out but we beat the mule train! Went through the 75th anniversary exhibit at Kolb Studio, had an ice cream, shopped for Chris, and then returned to camp to cook in the daylight. Since it had been another clear day, we skipped sunset at the rim and instead went to the evening program at the Amphitheater -- Ranger jokes and a slide show boating down the Colorado. Quick walk to the rim to see the Canyon by moonlight -- nearly a full moon but not a lot you could see. Showers and then off to bed.

#### Friday, September 16

Broke camp about 9:30 and finally stopped at the Visitor Center. One last quick stop at Tusayan Museum before heading out of the park for the Indian ruins at Wupatki Monument. Stopped first at Lomaki with Box Canyon ruins. Next to Nalakihi in front of Citadel perched on the highest hill in the area. Lunched at Doney Mountain and then hiked the two hills there for panoramic view of area and Painted Desert in the distance. Finally on to Visitor Center and the ruins behind. We saw three-story structure with amphitheater, ball court and blow hole. Last site was Wukoki ruin actually built on top of big boulders. Next drove to Sunset Crater on Bonito Lava Flow. Hiked the loop there through what felt like a lunar landscape. Almost sunset when we set off for Holbrook, stopping along the way for dinner in Winslow.

#### Saturday, September 17

Arrived at Petrified Forest Visitor Center at 9:45, got information about hiking trails beyond the loops at the overlooks and sites, and saw the film on how it all got that way. At north end of park is Painted Desert starting at Tiponi Point. At Tawa Point we took the path over to Kachina Point and went through the very famous 1930's mission-style Painted Desert Inn. Returned via same route to Tawa. Stopped next at Chinde Point, Pintado Point, Nizhoni Point, Whipple Point and Lacey Point

before arriving at Puerco Indian Ruin where we saw remains of a housing structure and the first petroglyphs. Many more petroglyphs at Newspaper Rock. Drove by The Tepees on way to Blue Mesa loop road where we lunched and saw first pieces of petrified wood. Took Blue Mesa Trail (1-mile loop) down into sandstone hills. Stopped briefly at Agate Bridge to see petrified log which earlier had served as a bridge but now was supported and inaccessible. At Jasper Forest we looked out over valley below where wood had been unearthed over time, had tumbled down the hillside, and now littered the area. At Crystal Forest we walked the loop among wood pieces which had been looted earlier of any quartz or amethyst. Much here and at Jasper Forest was dynamited long ago to get at the gems. Lots of beautiful multicolored logs at both locations. On to Agate House, an Indian pueblo ruin built of petrified wood chunks resembling stones, and the loop trail through Long Logs. Wood here was mostly reds and browns, and we were never quite sure which one was the record-breaking 116 ft. log. Final stop was Rainbow Forest Museum and Giant Logs loop nearby. Here we saw Old Faithful tree which measures 9+ ft. in circumference, supposedly the largest found to date. It's been reconstructed after being struck by lightning. Of course we closed the place. Onward to Phoenix, stopping for dinner in Payson. We drove along the Mongollan Rim through the mountains as Paul recommended, but it was very dark and we weren't able to see a thing. Arrived at the hotel at 11:00 and feverishly repacked the gear.

#### Sunday, September 18

After some of us overindulged in the continental breakfast, we loaded the car, gassed up and headed for the airport.